

CHAPTER III.12

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PRACTICAL ISSUES WITH
THE EPIGRAPHIC
RESTORATION OF
A BIOGRAPHICAL
INSCRIPTION IN THE
TOMB OF DJEHUTY
(TT 11), DRA ABU
EL-NAGA

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ANDRÉS DIEGO ESPINEL

“... This wall, rust-stained
and covered with moss, has seen one kingdom after another,
stood in the storm, steep and tall, then tumbled.”

“The Ruin” (Anglo-Saxon poem; translation by R. Liuzza)

INTRODUCTION

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THE past is a heap of ruins. Despite the great number of decorated Egyptian monuments that have survived to this day, few of them are completely intact and fully legible. Consequently, while reading an ancient text, it is common to come across lacunae and sequences of illegible signs that, in many instances, seem vital for its complete understanding. Without some phrases, a word, or even a single sign (i.e., a semagram or numeral), epigraphers are deprived of information that can be critical for understanding

and interpreting past events. Conversely, in some instances, only a few inscribed blocks from a larger text can be placed or rearranged and used to argue for the reconstruction of an entire text, thus, consequently, creating a false sense of the text's completeness. That is the case, for example, with the different restorations of the Old Kingdom annals that were made by guessing the arrangement of the fragments of the Palermo Stone (Hornung, Krauss, and Warburton 2006, 21–25; Hsu 2010, 80–81) and the restoration from a few fragmentary blocks of a *Weihinschrift* (votive inscription) in Niuserre's sun temple at Abu Gurob (Helck 1977).

In some instances, researchers have opted to fill in the small gaps with restorations inferred by the general context, by well-known formulae and expressions, or by iterations in other sections of the preserved text or in similar texts. The same line of reasoning has been applied to restoring larger lacunae of texts from smaller preserved fragments. These practices are attested, for instance, in frequently consulted and referenced works, such as Sethe and Helck's (1906–1958) *Urkunden*, and prove the linguistic and epigraphic proficiency of their authors. However, these brilliant exercises of erudition can lead to unexpected consequences. Sometimes the texts are taken as correct and decisive readings by other researchers or especially by the general public who, when reading translations derived from those texts, do not recognize editors' marks signaling the Egyptologists' restorations. Consequently, these provisional additions become inserted in the interpretative discourse of Egyptian history, creating the impression that the text is more complete than it is and even leading to inaccurate interpretations.

Restoring a fragmentary text must involve less enthusiastic practices. Such a restoration should be based not only on the text's content but also on other factors that, sometimes, are as decisive and informative as the text, such as the support materials—the material on which the text is inscribed or painted—the epigraphic features of the text, or the various states of preservation of its fragments. Epigraphy is not only the study of carved and painted decoration, but also the analysis of the interaction between the decoration and its support. As sides of the same coin, both sets of elements intermingle, shaping and displaying a common message. Therefore, as stated in what follows, any epigraphic restoration involves both texts and their inherent materialities. Like a message in a bottle recovered from the sea, the information contained in epigraphic texts has been retrieved by the very fact that the texts were intentionally put on a precise material and in a precise place.

This chapter¹ deals with “bottles” rather than with “messages,” even though both are closely connected. In the following pages, practical considerations related to the material restoration of ancient Egyptian epigraphic texts are presented, taking as a case study the author's experience on the restoration of an inscription, the so-called “red stela”

¹ I thank José Manuel Galán (CSIC), director of the Spanish mission at Dra Abu el-Naga, for allowing me to participate in his project as epigrapher for more than ten years, for his assistance regarding the images in this article and other information from the excavation, and for his suggestions after reading a draft of this chapter. Thanks are also extended to all the Egyptologists, archaeologists, restorers, geologists, and Egyptian workers who have contributed to the restoration of the “red stela.” I am also indebted to the volume editors, Vanessa Davies and Dimitri Laboury, for their invitation and comments, and for improving greatly my English.

or second biographical inscription in the tomb of Djehuty (Galán 2014a, 252 and fig. 11.1, no. 22). Research on the history of the stela and its fragments, as well as the problems and applied solutions derived from its physical reconstruction are discussed in order to serve, hopefully, as a piece of advice for the study and restoration of similar monuments.

TT 11: GENERAL FEATURES

The tomb of Djehuty (TT 11), Hatshepsut's overseer of the treasury (c. 1470 BCE), is located in the central area of Dra Abu el-Naga (Galán 2014a, 247–252). Contrary to the rest of the key officials of Hatshepsut's court, who were buried at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Assasif, and el-Khokha, Djehuty chose a different area: an already overbuilt landscape occupied by different kinds of tombs dating back to the First Intermediate Period. Djehuty's reasons or circumstances for building his tomb in such an atavistic place are not clear (Diego Espinel 2014, 299; Galán 2014b, 8). Whatever they were, they decisively shaped the later history and subsequent deterioration of the monument.

First, the chapel was hewn into a series of four narrow strata of limestone of the "Thebes geological formation" (Cuezva et al. 2016). In that precise area, these beds are frail and contain many natural cracks and fissures (Galán 2014b, 4). Consequently, carefully cut blocks were frequently fixed with mortar by the stoneworkers and carvers in the spaces where original degraded limestone pieces previously fell down, and minor breaks were plastered with gypsum that, when necessary, were painted, carved, or modeled. Moreover, the limestone there is porous and very sensitive to changes caused by salt crystallization (i.e., the flowing of internal salts toward the rock surface due to the nature of the substrate, to salt-system features, or to changes in humidity and temperature) (Galán 2014b, 13). In many instances, this feature and some events connected to it have seriously affected, as stated later, the legibility and preservation of the tomb decoration.

Second, Djehuty's tomb is located next to other earlier and later chapels and shafts. Because of the tombs' proximity to one another, stoneworkers cutting later tombs often opened holes into earlier tombs and created stairs carved into the stone or made with mudbricks in order to communicate between the tombs. Many of these entrances could have been hewn intentionally in the Third Intermediate Period (Galán 2014a, 247n3), or even earlier, when the workers cutting a tomb accidentally ran into older ones, as is evident in Djehuty's shrine (Galán 2014a, 252–253). Subsequently, these interconnected spaces were enlarged and readapted not later than the second century BCE to create a series of subterranean galleries or "catacombs" devoted to the burial of animal mummies (Galán 2014b, 13–14). Actually, the wall containing the inscription under study was cut to connect TT 11 with Kampp's tomb, numbered—399—(Kampp 1996, 190–192, 769). As part of a bigger complex, not yet delimited or fully understood, Djehuty's chapel also suffered from the site's later abandonment at an unknown date. The history and rambling arrangement of the subterranean galleries played a role in a sequence of different

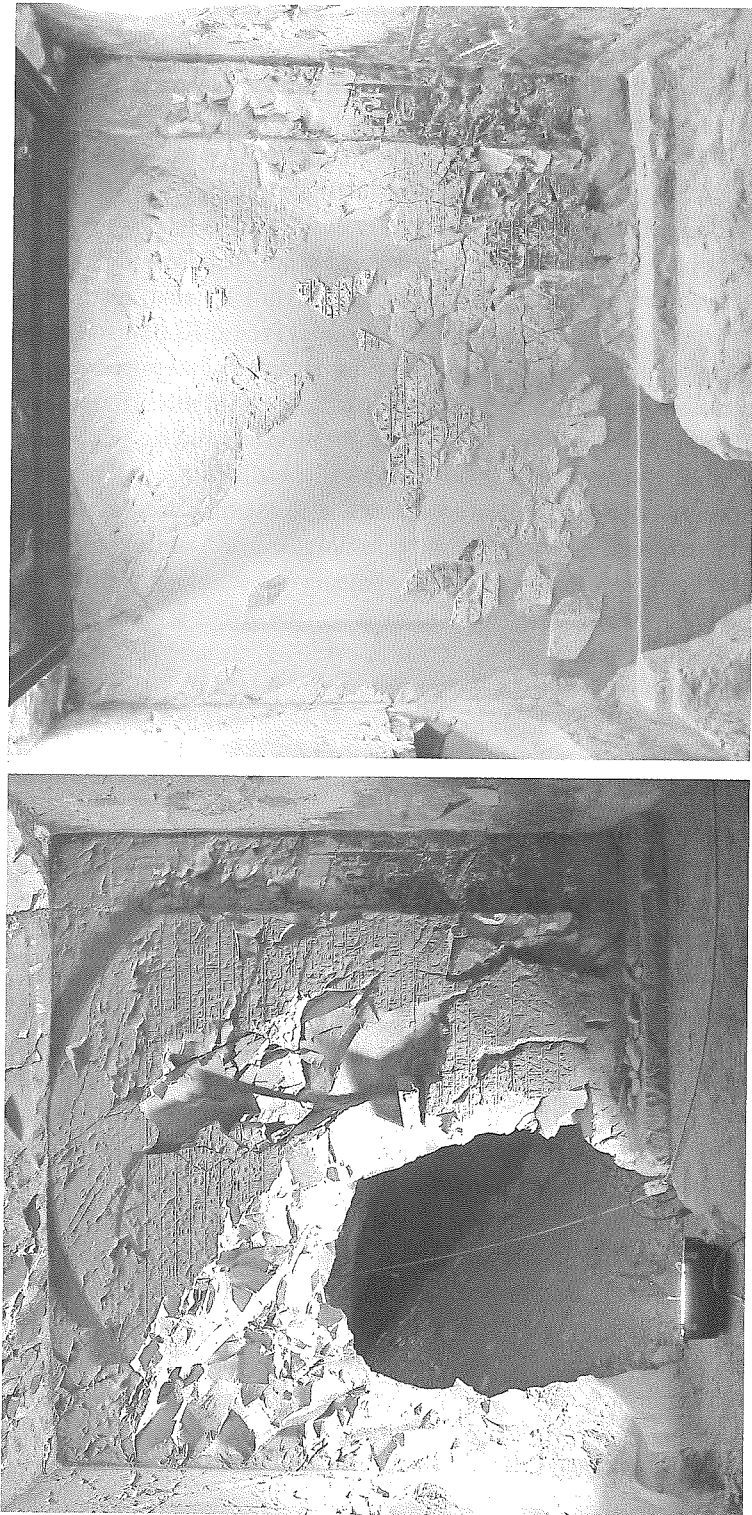
human and natural events that transformed them. For instance, on the walls of TT 11, there are attestations of Djehuty's and Amun's *damnatio memoriae*, marks of water that ran through breaks in the rock, and evidence of intense fires possibly connected to the cremation of mummies or human remains, intense air currents, or the tomb's later religious reuse (Galán 2014b, 13). All of these processes, the sequence and impact of which are not yet completely understood or ordered chronologically (team geologist S. Sánchez-Moral pers. comm.), led to several erosive processes related to the aforementioned porosity of the local limestone. These circumstances contributed to an irregular state of conservation of the decoration and inscriptions of TT 11 that, apparently, did not suffer any other significant damages after the Roman Period (Galán 2014b, 14). From that moment on, the most noteworthy alterations are several attempts, some of them successful, to cut out reliefs during the past century. The evidence of these attempts is found in a few parts of the corridor and shrine (Serrano 2014, 283, fig. 12.8, at the left).

As a result of their storied geology and history, the walls of TT 11 constitute a lavish catalog of epigraphic and preservation problems, such as blank areas, faded texts, salt-crusted or mud-covered surfaces awaiting cleaning, burned surfaces, Demotic texts traced over the reliefs, and well-preserved fragments recovered mainly from the debris outside the tomb.

RESTORING THE "RED STELA"

Many of the aforementioned features are visible on the "red stela," which is one of the four big stelae carved on the walls of Djehuty's tomb. Two of the stelae are at either ends of the façade of TT 11, forming a monumental entrance along with two life-size statues and a carved sidewall (Diego Espinel 2014, 299–303; Galán 2015, 184, fig. 1). At the north is the so-called Northampton stela or first biographical inscription (Spiegelberg 1900), and at the south is a stela with a hymn to Amun-Re (Galán 2015, 185–192). Two other stelae were carved at both ends of the transverse hall (see e.g., Galán 2009, 162–163). Because of the color in which their carved hieroglyphs were painted, these two stelae have been conventionally called the "blue stela" or third biographical inscription, located at the southern end of the transverse hall, and the "red stela" or second biographical inscription, which stands opposite it, at the northern end of the same room (Figure III.12.1a). Both stelae have suffered extensive damage.

The "blue stela" sustained damage long ago, possibly even before the fires and floods that destroyed the chapel at some point during the late New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic Period. Nowadays there are no remains in situ of the original inscription that was written in lines from right to left. Its general content can only be guessed, despite the recovery of approximately 280 fragments inside and outside of the chapel. Many of the fragments are small and contain only a few hieroglyphs in any single line. Around fifty were retrieved during the excavations of the area by P. E. Newberry and



FIGURES III.12.1A – B. The “red stela” in 2002 and at the completion of the restoration work (photographs courtesy of J. M. Galán).

W. Spiegelberg in 1898 and 1899 under the auspices of the Marquis of Northampton (Northampton, Spiegelberg, and Newberry 1908), but those were only partially placed by Sethe (*Urk.* IV 441.15–444.8). More than half of them, aside from portions of other ones, are currently lost. Although the stela has not yet been studied, its fragments suggest that the original inscription contained an apparently formulaic biographical text, a list of offerings to and feasts of various deities, and different religious expressions. Because only small and extremely fragmentary sections of the text have been recovered, it is possible that the text might contain additional biographical information about Djehuty.

The “red stela” inscription was also carved from right to left. It is an important document because it offers new insights on Djehuty’s life and works that complement the information given by the “Northampton stela.” The wall on which it was carved was opened in order to connect the corridors of Djehuty’s chapel and Kampp’s tomb—399—at some point in the New Kingdom or early Third Intermediate Period. The big hole destroyed a large portion of the right part of the stela. Fortunately, part of the original inscription remained in place. As with many other parts of the tomb decoration, however, it subsequently suffered different erosive processes because of water, fire, and eolic action. As stated in what follows, these processes, and others, are important factors in determining the original location of the fragments, since direct work with blocks at the site of the stela is essential in order to better understand their material characteristics and avoid false assumptions concerning possible locations of the blocks.

Evidence both in the remaining parts of the stela and in their fragments suggests at least eleven different events that changed the stela’s original state:

1. Embedding of blocks—at least one—with mortar in wall spaces where the original limestone fell down. This repair happened while carving the inscription or preparing the stela’s stone surface.
2. On least in three occasions, the carvers corrected the text, recarving new signs over older ones. At that time, the surface of the stela had already many cracks, as evidenced by the fact that red paint had dripped into them. Some crevices were possibly plastered with gypsum, as is attested in other parts of the tomb.
3. Systematic *damnatio memoriae* of the name of Djehuty and his parents—mainly his father—shortly after the tomb was finished (Galán 2014, 252, fig. 11.3). The *damnatio* also affected the name of the god Thot.
4. *Damnatio memoriae* of Hatshepsut’s royal cartouches both in the lunette and in the main text a few decades after the tomb was completed, possibly at the end of the reign of Thutmose III (Dorman 2005; Roth 2005). Again, the *damnatio* was exhaustive throughout the tomb.
5. Atonist iconoclasm of Amun’s name is attested in the façade and courtyard. In some instances, the attacks show evidence of the semiliteracy of the Atonist agents. For instance, they attacked the word “*mnḥ*” because of its visual and audial similarity to the deity’s name *ʿImn* (Manuelian 1999). Regarding the “red

stela,” Sethe (*Urk.* IV 433nd) cautiously suggested that the destruction of Gardiner’s sign S28 (fringed cloth) occurred as a result of Amun’s proscription because of the visual similarity between that sign and game board sign (Y5) in the name of Amun. However, this idea should be discarded, as the name of the god was not canceled in other parts of the inscription. Amun’s name in the *hṯp dī ny-swt* formula at the beginning of the stela is destroyed, but due to the poor preservation of the text, it is impossible to discern whether or not this damage was intentional. Actually, there is no evidence of Atonist iconoclasm of Amun’s name in the internal decoration of TT 11.

6. Accidental fall of blocks caused by the frailty of the stone. The reliefs on these blocks are well preserved, still retaining red paint and, in some instances, red guidelines. These “fresh” features indicate that this event occurred soon after the completion of the stela, but, at least in one instance, after Djehuty’s *damnatio*.
7. A hole was cut in the wall when both relief and painting were relatively well preserved, long before the reuse of the tomb as part of the Ptolemaic galleries. The aggressors probably took advantage of a shallow rectangular-shaped depression carved on the floor at the bottom of the left side of the stela (Figure III.12.1b). The depression may have been intended for a shaft. If so, it was abandoned soon after its initial cutting. It is not possible to know whether the depression formed part of the original plan of Djehuty’s tomb or whether it was carved later, as a mirror shaft to a smaller and square-plan shaft (1 × 1.2 m) cut at the other side of the transverse hall during the Saite Dynasty (Galán 2010).
8. Remnants of an intense fire that obscured the surface of the stela and, in some instances, cracked part of it, mainly in the lower left border. The burned surface did not suffer any other alterations probably because it was partially covered by debris.
9. Highly “washed out” surfaces in the upper half of the stela due to the combination of fire, water, and wind. All signs are legible, but with no side-lighting reading is difficult. In other parts of the tomb, such erosive process happened before the second century BCE, since Demotic graffiti were painted on the already worn walls (Galán 2014b, 14). The borders of the shallow shaft at the foot of the stela also suffered such erosion.
10. Carving of some steps in the shallow shaft and in the hole on the stela during the Ptolemaic Period.
11. Subsequent fall of fragments—generally small—from the worn surfaces and the lower right border of the stela. Small sections of the text recorded in situ by Sethe (Northampton, Spiegelberg, and Newberry 1908, pl. 34) are currently missing, indicating that those blocks fell down in the last century.

This sequence of events had different effects on different parts of the stela and its blocks. One hundred twenty-five fragments have been retrieved so far. Five of them cannot be ascribed to the stela with complete certainty. Thirty-four fragments were discovered by Newberry and Spiegelberg and were subsequently studied and published

by Sethe (*Urk.* IV 431.15–444.8).² Moreover, Sethe’s restoration of the inscription was included in a plate of the final report of Northampton’s excavations (Northampton, Spiegelberg, and Newberry 1908, 1*, pl. 34; Figure III.12.2). When the German scholar visited the tomb in 1905, fourteen blocks were already missing, and he had to rely on Spiegelberg’s notes and drawings to study the inscription (Galán 2009, 162–163). During the cleaning and excavation of the chapel, courtyard, and other surrounding areas by the Spanish mission at Dra Abu el-Naga since 2002, all but twelve of the missing blocks have been rediscovered—some only partially—along with many previously undiscovered ones (Figure III.12.3). Seventy-two fragments have been placed in their original spots on the wall (Figure III.12.1b, 4–5).

Both the remaining text of the stela in situ and the recovered fragments show very different states of preservation (Figure III.12.4). For instance, a large part of the stela and some of the fragments are badly weathered, according to which of the aforementioned events they were subjected to, as well as various other episodes they “lived” later. Some fragments seem brand new, while others are severely worn or are damaged by salts, soot, or smoke. The diversity of their current conditions is also related to the different places from which the blocks have been recovered (Figure III.12.3). All these elements are meaningful. They suggest that every fragment essentially had a different history before it was deposited in the many layers of debris that accumulated over several thousand years in the neighboring areas of the tomb. With this in mind, it is important to state that, for the sake of better epigraphic study and restoration, it is necessary to consider both the original epigraphic support and the fragments as artifacts in their own right.

Historical information about Djehuty’s “red stela” is rich and interesting despite its fragmentary state, and a philological study of this document is currently in progress by J. M. Galán. The themes of the different sections help guide a relocation of many fragments. The “red stela” begins with an initial dedicatory inscription—a *hṯp dī ny-swt* formula—related to different gods (lines 1–5) and a series of conventional epithets of Djehuty (lines 5–14). The rest of the inscription is a biographical text dealing with different building and reckoning activities by Djehuty during the joint reign of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut and more conventional biographical phrases (lines 14–25). The final lines contain an appeal to the living (lines 25–30).

Relying exclusively on the contents of the text, however, can lead to incorrect interpretations. Sethe’s restoration of the “red stela” is surprisingly accurate (Northampton, Spiegelberg, and Newberry 1908, pl. 34; *Urk.* IV 431.6–441.13), considering the few blocks he had to work with (Figure III.12.2). Apparently, he worked directly with some of the blocks recovered during Northampton’s excavations when he visited the tomb in 1905 (Diego Espinel 2014, 303). His study was also informed by notes and drawings, now lost, that were given to him by Spiegelberg and perhaps also by Newberry (see, for

² Some blocks discovered inside the tomb from Northampton’s excavation and one other, at least, that was not recorded by Spiegelberg have barely legible numerals painted on their backs with a luminous green pencil. Unfortunately, it has not been determined whether they were painted by Spiegelberg, Sethe, or someone else.



FIGURE III.12.2. Sethe's restoration of the "red stela." Light gray areas are blocks currently lost. Dark gray areas are misplaced fragments (after Sethe in Northampton, Spiegelberg, and Newberry 1908, pl. 35).

instance, *Urk.* IV 436na-b.). Despite having a limited number of blocks to work with, Sethe matched different blocks to one another and correctly placed many of them in their original positions. Even with his mastery and skill, some fragments were placed in the correct register, but in the wrong location, and the position of others is completely incorrect. Moreover, the width of the stela in his restoration drawing is considerably narrower than the stela's actual width.

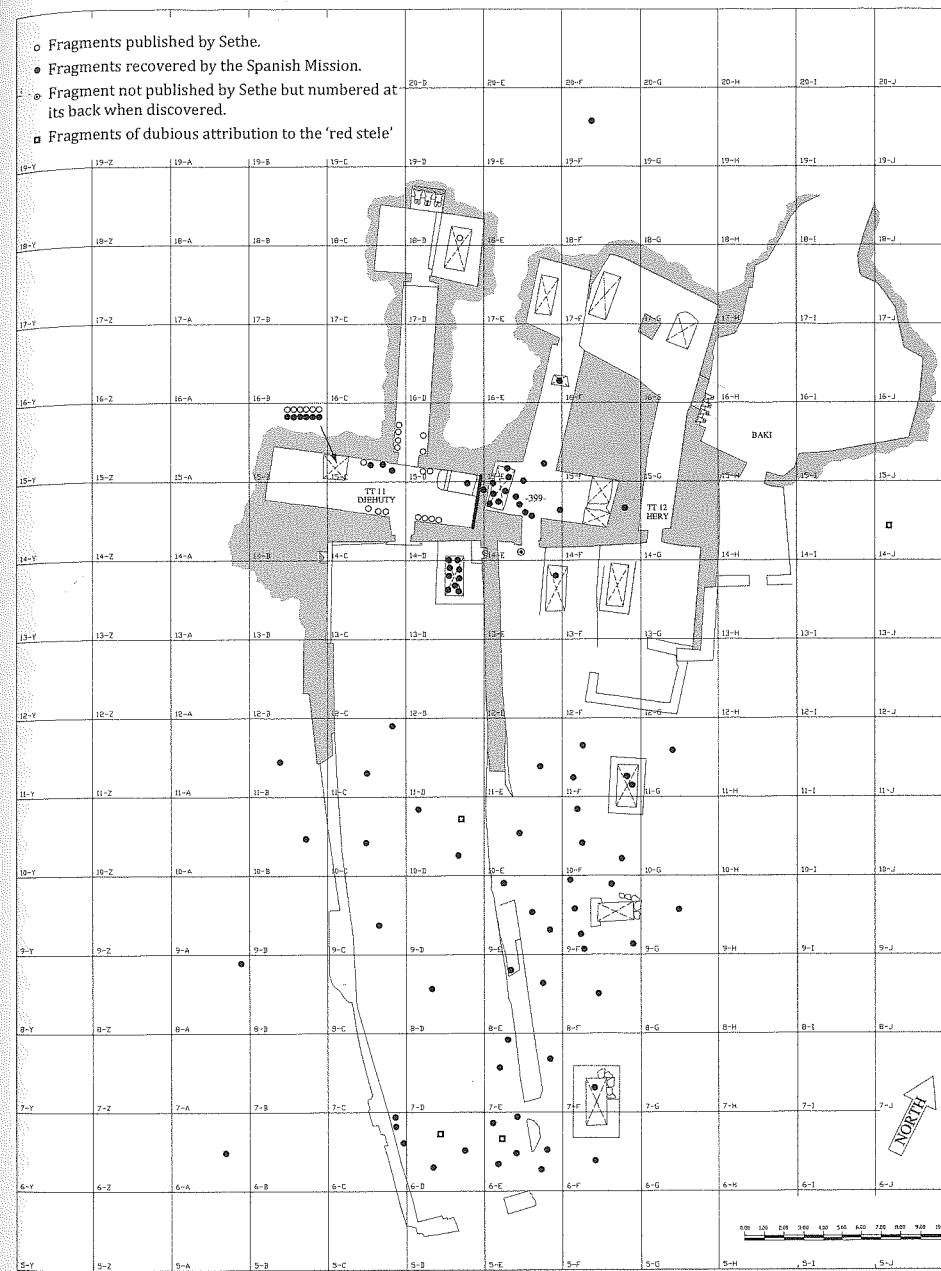


FIGURE III.12.3. Dispersion of fragments of the "red stela." The stela is marked as a bold black line at the right end of the transverse hall of TT 11 (original map by C. Cabrera and J. Ivars, courtesy of J. M. Galán). This map does not include two fragments of the inscription with no clear provenance.

Working from the texts of the fragments, Sethe's restored inscription is, in many instances, far from close to the original one. His experience serves as a good piece of advice for avoiding long textual restorations. The best technique is to follow the preserved text and the way the fragments physically fit with each other. Personal experience has demonstrated that any textual restoration, even one based on remaining traces or similar parallels, can lead to wrong readings and conclusions (see, e.g., Diego Espinel 2013, 28nh).

Aside from their epigraphic contents, the stela fragments have a series of physical features that have been shaped by their depositional lives and are connected to the events mentioned above. Together with their texts, they permit one, in many instances, to locate the blocks on the wall or, on the contrary, to help to dismiss them from certain parts of the stela. Such features, of course, interact and cannot be ordered in an unambiguous hierarchical order since any of them can be decisive—either alone or in connection with other ones—for locating single fragments or small groups. There are, at least, five physical features to be considered:

1. The condition of the surface of the inscription in situ is relevant. Keeping in mind the various episodes of the progressive degradation of the stela, the blocks' different states of preservation have been of great help for placing fragments back on the wall. For instance, many "washed out" fragments come undoubtedly from the upper half of the stela that lost a considerable part of its text after the erosive process that began possibly after the Ptolemaic Period. Consequently, according to the moment when the reliefs fell down, the breaks on the wall appear as either worn cuts or clean and fresh negative scars. More precisely, the emplacement of the worn blocks may even be more exact due to their different color: grayish-colored blocks come from the upper half of the stela, and yellowish- or ochre-colored fragments come from the lower right half.

2. The shape and size of the fragments is also important. Based on their contents alone, some blocks could be ascribed to precise lines. However, when they were placed in their alleged original positions, they did not fit with other fragments whose position was totally clear or with the remaining traces on the stela. Consequently, the initial presumed location had to be discarded. For example, Sethe had placed block "i" close to the remaining text of the stela, in lines 19 to 21 (Northampton, Spiegelberg, and Newberry 1908, pl. 35, fig. 2). When physically placed in this spot, this block turned out to be too thick. It was eventually placed at the end of lines 18 to 20. Moreover, the lower border of block "i" had been recarved, indicating that this part of the wall had been reworked in order to insert a limestone block that, happily, was also recovered.

3. The aforementioned example introduces a third element of epigraphic study: the importance of studying the blocks and inscriptions directly. The size and color of the fragments and the kind of erosion they experienced, for instance, is necessary information that can only be obtained by directly studying the blocks. Relying solely on a virtual restoration on paper or on the computer can lead to mistakes. No doubt, Sethe's study of the blocks was basically made in this virtual way despite his visit to the tomb. In spite of his ability to match fragments from paper notes, Sethe would have better

approximated the original location of the blocks if he had had the chance to work leisurely with them in situ. As has already been mentioned, his restoration relied on the presumption that the stela was narrower than it really is.

A wooden sandbox of approximately 2.50 × 1.75 × 0.30 m has been a critical tool for directly studying the blocks of the "red stela" and for confirming or discarding matches and restorations. It was placed in the courtyard of TT 11, not far from Djehuty's transversal corridor, where the fragments were stored in plastic boxes just beside the "red stela." The close proximity of the sandbox, the fragments stored in boxes, and the stela were essential for a comfortable and efficient restoration.

4. Changes in the *ductus*—the writing and carving characteristics of a particular inscription—are another element to keep in mind when restoring texts. Virtually all of the scenes carved on the walls of TT 11 have their own features. The different kinds of carving, dimensions of signs, and even colors of the limestone become essential for identifying the provenance of many blocks. The same can be said about the *ductus*. Different artists' hands have not yet been identified on the "red stela." Such a task is hindered by the worn state of many parts of the stela. But the arrangement of the text and the way the signs were carved occasionally permit one to better define a fragment's possible location. This is especially evident in the lower lines of text. There, the hieroglyphic signs are slightly bigger, not as carefully carved, and spaced farther apart from one another. Being so close to the ground, the stonemasons probably had to adopt unsuitable postures for carving the lowest lines and so had difficulty executing carvings as precise as those found elsewhere on the stela.

5. The preservation of the blocks and other physical features, such as darkened surfaces because of fire or the presence of *damnatio* erasures, can offer clues about the fragments' locations or, conversely, mislead the restorer about a possible relocation. For instance, some of the fragments with fresher colors fell down from the stela before the text was completed (Figure III.12.4). Some of the fragments still have horizontal guidelines painted in red that marked where the tops and bottoms of the hieroglyphs should be carved or show fresh signs of the erasure of Djehuty's name and his filiation. These early fragments did not face the same fate as the fragments that fell off of the wall later, some of which are damaged on the surface that had been placed on the wall with mortar. The hieroglyphs on one fragment are well preserved, but they are completely darkened by a grayish layer of smoke, suggesting that the fragment was subjected to fire. Moreover, a fragment that matches it is even darker, but fits perfectly with another block that preserves the red paint.

Time is another important factor when facing this kind of restoration. The excavation and restoration of Djehuty's tomb and neighboring tombs started in 2002 and is still ongoing. Contrary to Sethe's brief visit to TT 11 in 1905, the annual dig seasons for over a decade have permitted a continuous study of the fragments and, therefore, a better understanding of the inscription. Moreover, new blocks from TT 11 and other tombs are

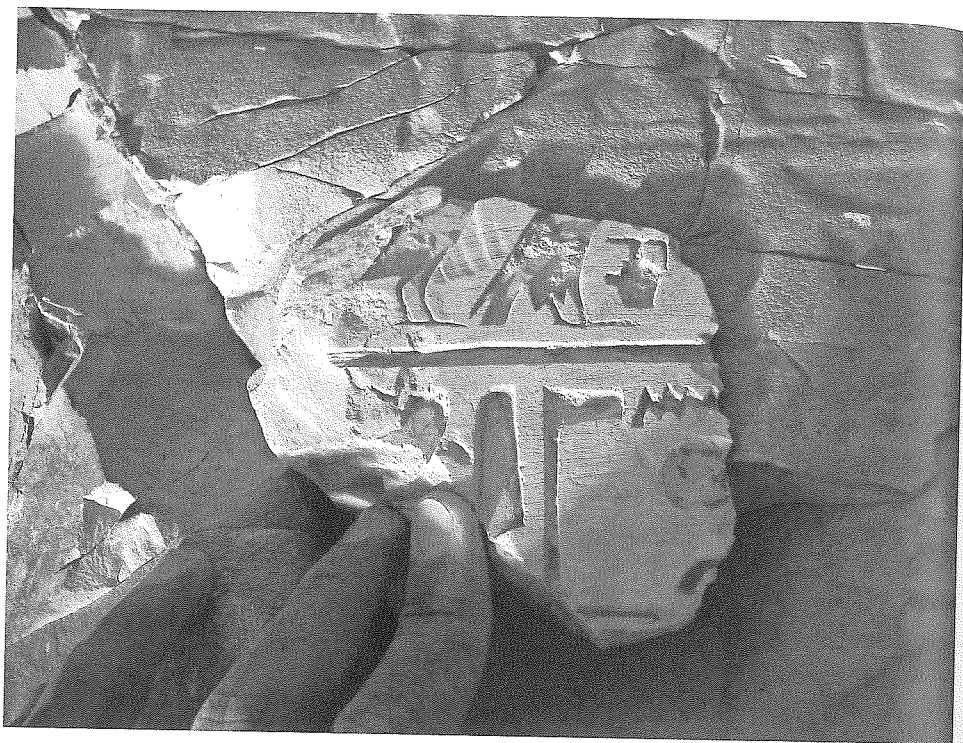


FIGURE III.12.4. Different states of preservation: a well-preserved block fitted into the worn inscription of the wall (photograph by the author).

discovered every season, and they help us to understand the text and relocate previously discovered fragments. Therefore, the current restoration of the stela should be taken as a final version . . . in progress.

PUTTING FRAGMENTS IN PLACE

Sometimes, after a virtual restoration of the stela on paper or in the sandbox, it is possible to attempt an actual reconstruction of the inscription by putting the fragments back in their original places. In the case of the “red stela,” such an initiative was a rather problematic affair, since it implied an important change to Djehuty’s tomb in relation to connected structures. The decision to put—or not—the blocks of the stela back on the wall spurred a long negotiation among different agents. Director, restorers, epigraphers, archaeologists, architects, antiquities inspectors, *reis*, workers, and even occasional visitors provided different insights and opinions—sometimes completely opposed to one another. Any possible intervention was constrained by material considerations, such as the number, size, and condition of the located relief fragments. Since any decision

would be controversial, the debate for choosing the best solution was lengthy. On the one hand, restoring the blocks meant, for instance, closing a side entrance to another tomb and altering the nature of the tomb in its final form when it was part of a complex catacomb integrated by a system of older interconnected chapels, burial shafts, and galleries during the Ptolemaic Period. Moreover, the restoration could make it more difficult to relocate blocks that might be discovered in future seasons. On the other hand, a restoration would consolidate an extremely damaged wall to prevent future collapses and degradations. Additionally, a restoration would delimit the initial extent of Djehuty’s chapel and would enable us to dispose of several boxes of stones stored inside the tomb. After a long debate and many different assessments, the second option was finally chosen mainly because it would enhance the conservation and stability of the wall.³ This solution was agreed on providing that the new wall would be built in such a way that parts of it could be easily removed in order to add new fragments to it.

Initially, a cleaning and consolidation was made in the dirtiest and most friable areas of the preserved parts of the stela in situ. When completed, a restoration of the rest of the stela started. It followed four separate steps (restorer M. A. Navarro, pers. comm.). First, the original shape of the stela was projected by means of vertical and horizontal threads. Since the left side was completely lost, the limit was estimated by studying and measuring the right side. Second, the hole of the wall was closed with bricks and cemented up to the level in which the fragments with texts would be placed. The third step was to place the fragments with the help of hydraulic lime mortar (1 part lime, 3 parts sharp—i.e., gritty—sand), bricks—some of them scored—and small limestone pieces. At the same time that the restoration was in progress, a solid brick wall was built at the stela’s back, from Kampp’s tomb—399—, in order to reinforce the common wall between both tombs. The surface of the front of the stela was then covered with a layer of mortar so that the fragments stood out from the wall by about 1.5 cm. Finally, the fill was covered with another fine layer (c. 1 cm) of nonhydraulic lime mortar colored with mineral pigments to be lighter than the original wall. The restoration took three seasons (2011–2013), and it was not easy. The fragments had suffered different erosions and damages, and the rock walls of the tomb had shifted over time. Consequently, blocks sometimes did not fit perfectly on the wall. Fortunately, however, such problems did not stop the completion of the restoration (Figure III.12.1b).

The possibility of painting on the wall the texts of six placed fragments that are currently lost but had been recorded by Spiegelberg and Sethe (Figure III.12.3) is still being considered. Sethe’s copies are far from meticulous, but the inclusion of the texts that they contained would be of great help since they would render the stela more complete and more understandable for visitors and, moreover, they would draw attention to the existence of the unrecovered blocks.

³ Cleaning, consolidation, and restoration of the walls was done by Pía Rodríguez, Nieves López, and Miguel Ángel Navarro, following the criteria suggested by Leandro de la Vega (†). Joan Ivars and the bricklayer Ahmed el-Tuamy also took part in the restoration.

This case study and the practical issues derived from it should be taken as pieces of advice rather than precise guidelines. As Caminos stressed (1976, 14–15), every wall has its own epigraphic difficulties and circumstances, and every epigrapher has to face them not with just one set of solutions, but by using, among other things, common sense, imagination, and skill.

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VANESSA DAVIES

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DIMITRI LABOURY

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