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“Dazzling of appearances”: the statue base in faience of the Archaeological Museum in Bologna (MCABo EG 3151)

INTRODUCTION

In the Egyptian collection of the Archaeological Museum in Bologna there is a small fragment in faience in the shape of a rectangular block (MCABo EG 3151) ⁽¹⁾, which was very likely part of a base for a little statue ⁽²⁾ (Figs. 1-3). The Museum acquired it as part of the Bolognese painter Pelagio Palagi's collection, which was donated to the city immediately after his death in 1860 ⁽³⁾. The first information on the fragment appeared in the catalogue of the Bolognese collection published in 1895 by Giovanni Kminek-Szedlo, who presented both a very short description of the object and its hieroglyphic inscription, omitting, however, a few signs ⁽⁴⁾. After that, the fragment, which is on display in the Egyptian section of the museum, has been altogether neglected until recently, when a photo of one of its sides appeared in an article by Daniela Picchi and Luca Chilò dedicated to Pelagio Palagi's interest in buying the Egyptian collection of the Belzoni family ⁽⁵⁾.

Although the provenance of the fragment is unknown, Thebes may be a possible original location, as examples of the terminology used in its text are not infrequently found at Luxor and Karnak. Some archival data also seem to confirm this. At present, the date and circumstances of Pelagio Palagi's purchase of the faience base remain uncertain. Daniela Picchi has very recently suggested it might be identified with a little base in faience included in a list of objects originally belonging to Giovanni Battista Belzoni and that Pelagio Palagi tried to buy it from Belzoni's family through intermediaries ⁽⁶⁾. The small base, referred to in the list as “un piccolo piedistallo... ornato di jerolifici”, is associated with a small figurine in two pieces, missing its feet, which has been identified by Daniela Picchi as the ushabti of Sety I (MCABo EG 2056), now in the Bolognese collection. Why, in the list of objects offered for sale, the statuette and the base are described as originally belonging to each other is unclear. However, as suggested by Picchi, the two objects, both in faience, may have been associated by Belzoni for commercial reasons, or because they shared the same provenance. Although

(1) I would like to thank Daniela Picchi, keeper of the Egyptian collection of the Archaeological Museum in Bologna, for allowing me to study and publish the faience base MCABo EG 3151.

(2) Statue bases in faience are not very common. For other examples, see: 1) Cleveland Museum 1914.615: fragment in turquoise faience with purple-black painted decoration of the New Kingdom: BERMAN – BOHAČ 1999, 261-262; 2) Cairo JE 91119: statue base for Ptah in blue faience with decoration and inscriptions in black glaze, from Saqqara and dated at the Twenty-first/Twenty-third Dynasty: HASTINGS 1997, 35, pl. XXXVII; 3) London UC16481: fragment of a green-blue faience base for royal statue, Twenty-fourth Dynasty.

(3) PICCHI 2009, 35.

(4) KMINEK-SZEDLO 1895, 350 no. 3151.

(5) PICCHI – CHILÒ (forthcoming).

(6) PICCHI – CHILÒ (forthcoming). See also PICCHI – CHILÒ 2019, 395-397.

negotiations between Palagi and Belzoni's family failed, the Bolognese painter managed – we do not know when or how – to acquire the ushabti of Sety I and it is therefore possible that, together with the statuette, he also acquired the small faience base. A further possibility would be to identify the Bologna base with a small base described as “un piedistallo con caratteri egizi” and the ushabti of Sety I with “2 pezzi di mumia porcellana”, both included in a list of objects that Palagi, after some unsuccessful attempts, purchased in 1843 from the antiquarian Francesco Pajaro. Although there is no proof, it seems plausible that the base in Belzoni's list and that in Pajaro's list are linked with each other.

Unfortunately, a large piece of the base in faience is broken away. The fragment measures 9.4 cm in length, 10.8 cm in width and 6.9 cm in height; it is hollow, corresponding to the fracture it has an internal wall, running in the direction of its width, which probably had the function of allowing the base to hold its shape during the drying and firing processes and to make it stronger as a support for the statuette. The presence of this internal wall also suggests that the length of the base was originally at least double the current size of the fragment. The paste of the inner core is whitish and granular and is covered in a bright blue glaze; its colour, however, is not uniform, ranging from a sky blue to a blue-green, typical of faience made with copper colorant. Around the base, dark blue hieroglyphs, very likely derived from cobalt colorant (7), are inlaid within two horizontal lines in the same colour. The upper platform and the underside are plain glazed. The latter has a small fracture; another hole with an irregular profile is on the top, which might have served as a joint for the statuette. The glaze layer is in good condition and largely intact, except for some areas near the edges where it is chipped.

THE INSCRIPTION

The text along the edges consists of a continuous horizontal line of hieroglyphs, beginning at the left and ending on the right side. It records a group of epithets, very likely attributed to a king, whose name is not preserved. Due to damage, the beginning and the end of the inscription are missing. However, a few features of this little monument suggest that it was produced for king Amenhotep III.



[...] *tḥn ḥ'w shḏ t3wj mj*
3ḥtj wr jm3t m ḥr mj jtn
ḥ''f 'nh rhjt [...]

“[...] dazzling of appearances, who brightens the two lands like Akhty, great of graciousness on the face like Aten, (when) he appears the *rekhyt*-people live [...]”.

(7) This is based on an autoptic analysis. On the use of cobalt see, for example: ABE *et al.* 2012; HODGKINSON *et al.* 2019.

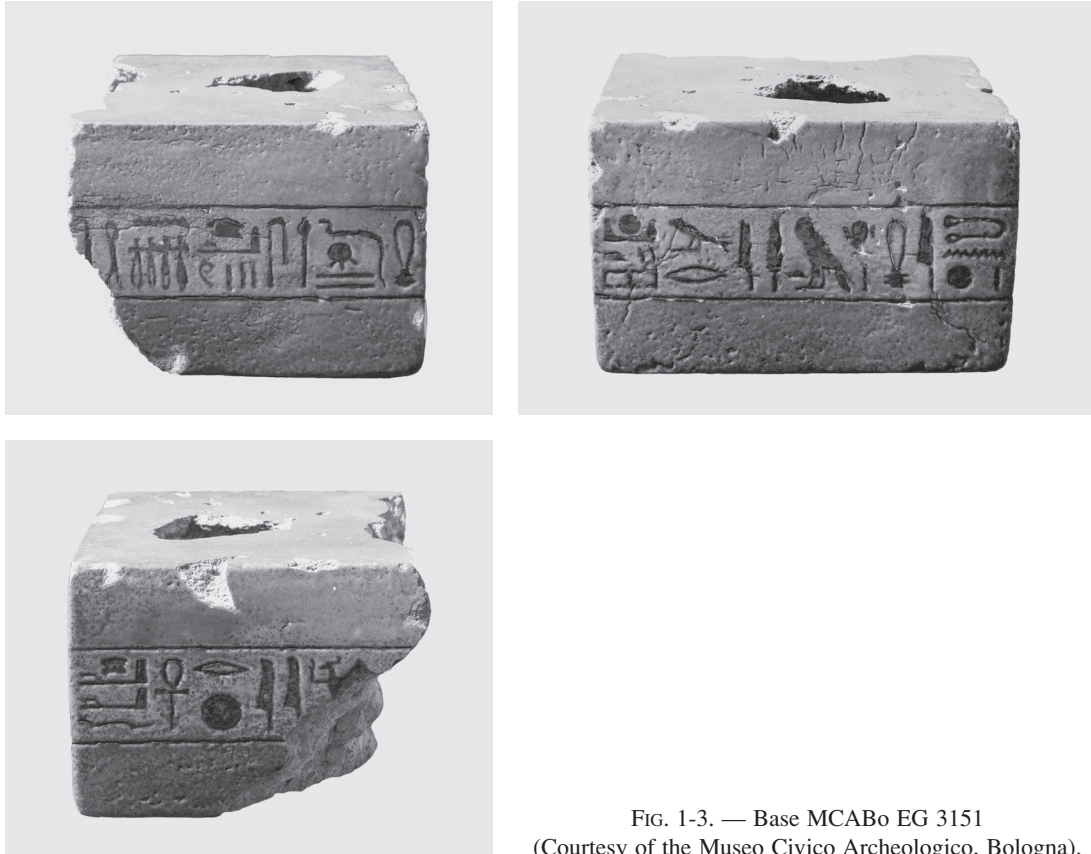


FIG. 1-3. — Base MCABo EG 3151
(Courtesy of the Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna).

Despite its fragmentary condition, the object is of interest both from an art historical perspective and for its text. The short inscription displays an explicit solar character, emphasising the glowing qualities of the king and his association with solar deities. The first surviving phrase – *ṯn ḥʿw*, “dazzling of appearances” – is of particular interest. Amenhotep III was the first sovereign to adopt in his titulary the verb *ṯn* in its intransitive meaning (“to glitter”, “to dazzle”, “to shine”, “to be radiant”). Prior to his reign, *ṯn* had rarely been used in divine epithets⁽⁸⁾, but with Amenhotep III it became one of his favourite verbs in the creation of names and epithets that magnified the solar interpretation of his nature. The combination of this verb with the plural noun *ḥʿw* (“appearances”), which was a more prominent element in the compositions of the Eighteenth Dynasty titulary⁽⁹⁾, was an invention of Amenhotep III, who used it in a variant of his Two Ladies name. On a white faience cartouche-shaped box lid from Karnak⁽¹⁰⁾, associated with his

(8) The oldest example is in CT VI, 244s. In the Theban Tomb 53 of the time of Thutmose III, the sun god is *ṯn ḥrwj*, “the one with two dazzling faces”: ASSMANN 1983, 66, 2; on a statue of the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty Amen is *ṯn jm3w*, “the one with a dazzling shine”: VANDIER 1958, pl. CLIX.4. See also LEITZ 2002, VII, 479-485.

(9) Examples are found in the Horus name of Thutmose IV and Ay, in the Two Ladies name of Thutmose I, Amenhotep II, and Thutmose IV, and in the Golden Horus name of Thutmose III, Hatshepsut, Amenhotep IV, and Tutankhamen: LEPROHON 2010, 16, 22, 25, 27-28, 31-34. For examples in the previous periods, see LEPROHON 2010, 16-17, 19.

(10) MMA acc. no. 26.7.910: HAYES 1948, 276 and *Urk.* IV, 1748, 14 – 1749, 4.

jubilee festivals⁽¹¹⁾ and showing his complete titulary, the king has become the “Two Ladies dazzling of appearances, great of awesomeness (*wr šfjt*)”, evoking the feelings inspired by his luminous and daunting manifestation.

To be ‘dazzling’ was first of all a characteristic of the sun-disc/Aten. The verb occurs in its causative form in a text on a stela from the king’s mortuary temple, where it is the prow of the sacred barque of Amen to be dazzling like Aten during the Opet festival: “its prow makes radiant (*stħn*) the primaeval waters like (when) Aten appears in the sky”⁽¹²⁾.

The great relevance attributed to Aten and his connections with the king found an echo in the new expression *jtn tħn*, “dazzling Aten”⁽¹³⁾, which was firstly used as a name of the royal barque on the scarabs dated to year 11 and commemorating the construction of an artificial lake for queen Tye⁽¹⁴⁾: “His Majesty was rowed in the royal barque *Aten-Tjehen* in it (= the lake)”. *Jten tjehen*, however, was above all applied to the king himself both at Luxor⁽¹⁵⁾ and on wine-jar sealings from Malqata and Amarna⁽¹⁶⁾, particularly in designations of the palace at Malqata⁽¹⁷⁾ and its personnel⁽¹⁸⁾ and of a regiment of the king’s army⁽¹⁹⁾. Moreover, on the statue representing the king on a sledge discovered in the Luxor *cachette* (now in the Luxor Museum, Luxor J.838), Amenhotep III is called “Dazzling Aten of all lands, his uraeus has brightened the two banks” (*jtn tħn t3w nbw šd.n 3ħt.f jbwj*)⁽²⁰⁾.

Amenhotep III coined another expression focused on the verb *tħn* combined with another plural noun often used in royal names: *tħn ħprw*, “dazzling of manifestations”, a designation that was elaborated in a few variants of his names. On the architraves in the portico at Luxor, the king is named the “Two Ladies, who establishes law and pacifies the two lands, dazzling of manifestations when he appears like Akhty (*tħn ħprw ħ“f mj 3ħtj*)”⁽²¹⁾, “Horus, Mighty bull, who appears in Maat, king dazzling of manifestations like the one who created him (*nswt tħn ħprw mj jr sw*)”⁽²²⁾, and the “Two Ladies, who establishes law and pacifies the two lands, dazzling of manifestations in all lands (*tħn ħprw m t3w nbw*)”⁽²³⁾. In the

(11) BELL 1985, 285, notes 182-183.

(12) Stela Cairo CG 34025: *Urk.* IV, 1653, 14.

(13) On the reading *jtn tħn*, see REDFORD 1976, 51.

(14) DE BUCK 1948, 67, 10; BERMAN 1998, 13-14.

(15) On an architrave, written inside the cartouche with his throne name and written with the *tjehen*-sign preceded by the sign of the sun: *Urk.* IV, 1697, 6.

(16) In the rebus throne name of Amenhotep III, the figure of the king is enclosed in a sun disc on a solar barque placed on the hieroglyphic of the sky, beneath which is the hieroglyph *tjehen*, to be read “Nebmaatra is the Dazzling Aten”: HAYES 1951, fig. 25 (E, F); JOHNSON 1998, 88 and note 145, fig. 3.35. *Jten tjehen* was still occasionally used by kings in the following periods, as Sety I, who was “dazzling Aten over his army” (*jtn tħn ħrj-tp mš‘f*) (*KRI* I, 39, 11), and Rameses II, who was “dazzling Aten of the *rekhyt*-people” (*jtn tħn n rħjt*) (*KRI* II, 236, 2 and 256, 14) or “of the field” (*jtn tħn n 3ħt*) (*KRI* II, 710, 11).

(17) On some wine docketts from Malqata: HAYES 1951, 96-98, figs. 17-21.

(18) See numerous stelae from Thebes and Abydos belonging to members of the palace staff: HAYES 1951, 178-179. Inside his tomb (TT 107), Nefersekeru bears the titles of “royal scribe and steward of the House of Nebmaatra, the Dazzling Aten (*jmj-r n pr nb-mš‘t-r‘ jtn tħn*)” (*Urk.* IV, 1881, 18 and 1882, 16). See also the inscriptions of canopic jars belonging to some royal women associated to “the House of the Dazzling Aten”: LEGRAIN 1903, 145-147.

(19) See the statue of the British Museum EA 1210, belonged to the standard-bearer Kamose of the “company of Nebmaatra, the Dazzling Aten” (*Urk.* IV, 1923, 12, 18).

(20) EL-SAGHIR 1991, 22, figs. 47-48; JOHNSON 1996, 69.

(21) *Urk.* IV, 1698, 18-19 and 1700, 5.

(22) *Urk.* IV, 1702, 10.

(23) *Urk.* IV, 1704, 5.

pylon of the temple of Khonsu, the king is the “Golden Horus, dazzling of manifestations (*tḥn ḥprw*)” (24). In the temple of Soleb, he designates himself as the “Golden Horus, dazzling of manifestations, great of wonders” (*tḥn ḥprw wr bj3wt*) (25), while on a bracelet or anklet in faience at the Louvre Museum he is the “beautiful god, dazzling of manifestations like Amen in Thebes (*tḥn ḥprw mj jmn m w3st*), lord of the two lands Nebmaatra...” (26). A further example of the verb *tḥn* occurs on a pedestal of a jackal-statue from the mortuary temple at Kom el-Heitan, where his Golden Horus name (“[great strong of arm], who smites the Asiatics”) is followed by “beautiful god, image of Ra, who dazzles on appearing like Aten (*tḥn ḥr ḥ' mj jtn*)” (27).

During the reign of Amenhotep III’s son and successor, Akhenaten, *tjehen* became one of Aten’s several designations (28) that depicted the god as the only source of light and life; in particular, *tḥn ḥ'w*, “dazzling of appearances”, was applied to Aten only once, inside the tomb of the standard-bearer Suty at Amarna (TA 15) (29). Apart from this last example, for the whole New Kingdom, *tḥn ḥ'w* was exclusively a royal epithet. Tutankhamen adopted it on one of his chests (30). His successor, king Ay was clearly indebted to his illustrious predecessor Amenhotep III in choosing one of his names. Indeed, Ay must have regarded the image of the radiant sovereign as particularly effective, since he used both the epithets *tḥn ḥ'w* and *tḥn ḥprw* in his Horus name: *k3 nḥt tḥn ḥ'w*, “Mighty bull, dazzling of appearances” in the temple of Luxor, (31) and *k3 nḥt tḥn ḥprw*, “Mighty bull, dazzling of manifestations”, in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings (32). In the following dynasties other rulers occasionally used *tḥn ḥ'w* in order to emphasize their solar connections: Sety I (*tḥn ḥ'w mj ḥprj*) at Karnak (33), Ramses II (*tḥn ḥ'w mj r'*) on a granite column originally from Pi-Ramesse (34), Ramses III both as a variant of his Horus names at Medinet Habu (35) and as an epithet at Medinet Habu (*tḥn ḥ'w mj j'h*) (36) and Karnak (*tḥn ḥ'w m it.f tm*) (37), Ramses IV at Karnak (*tḥn ḥ'*) (38) and Herihor (*tḥn ḥ'w*) in the temple of Khonsu (39). The epithet survived as a royal designation until the first century AD. As far as I am aware, the last example occurs – in its singular form – on an architrave of the temple of Esna, where the emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) is addressed as “dazzling of appearance like Horus” (*tḥn ḥ' mj ḥr*) (40).

(24) *LD Text III*, 57.

(25) *LD III*, 83a.

(26) Louvre N 805, inscribed on both its faces: KOZLOFF – BRYAN 1992, 422, 446.

(27) *Urk.* IV, 1761, 6. Another possible translation might be “dazzling of face, who appears like Aten”.

(28) SANDMAN 1938, 11, 6-10; 40, 1; 53, 6; 54, 7; 59, 9; 93, 14. See also SANDMAN 1938, 32, 4 (where Aten is *tḥn jwn*, “dazzling of colour”) and 75, 11 (“dazzling in your noble colour”).

(29) SANDMAN 1938, 59, 1. In connection with gods, it occurs again on the stela Berlin 22461 of the Third Intermediate Period as an epithet of Osiris: JANSSEN-WINKELN 1995, 180. In the Graeco-Roman period it became much less rare, being applied to other gods and goddesses: LEITZ 2002, VII, 482-483, 487-488.

(30) *Urk.* IV, 2052, 17.

(31) *Urk.* IV, 2106. See also VON BECKERATH 1999, 146-147 and LEPROHON 2010, 34.

(32) *LD III*, 113a.

(33) RONDOT 1997, pls. 17 and 19.

(34) *KRI II*, 433, 5.

(35) HÖLSCHER 1941, pl. 35B.

(36) *KRI V*, 21, 1.

(37) EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1936, pl. 16 (= *KRI V*, 274, 1).

(38) CHRISTOPHE 1955, 16, 105.

(39) EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1979, pl. 35.

(40) SAUNERON 1969, 454, 1.

Additionally, the participial clause *shd t3wj*, “who brightens the two lands”, was part of the solar terminology of the New Kingdom connected with the king⁽⁴¹⁾. Though *shd t3wj* remained an infrequent royal appellative, it began to be used much earlier, and more commonly, than *thn h'w*. The use of the dual *t3wj*, instead of the singular or plural (which are occasionally found), may be meaningful, as it evokes the theme of the ruler as source of light specifically for Egypt, rather than for the lands as a whole.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the expression *shd t3wj* appears for the first time as an appellative of Ra in Spell 355 of the *Coffin Texts*⁽⁴²⁾ in a passage where the sun god is associated with the word *aten*/sun disc: “O Ra, who are in his egg (*swht.f*), rising in his disc (*wbn m jtn.f*), shining in his horizon (*psd m 3ht.f*)... brightening the two lands with his sunshine (*shd t3wj m j3hw.f*)”. It did not take long for the epithet to pass to the royal sphere. The first example associated with a king is found on a stela from Buhen dated to year 18 of Senusret I, where the sovereign is said to be “the only star, who brightens the two lands” (*sb3 w' shd t3wj*)⁽⁴³⁾. A similar set of ideas appeared a few years later on the stela from Abydos, belonging to the royal seal-bearer and deputy chief treasurer Sehetepibra of the reign of Amenemhat III. The document is well-known for its “loyal instructions”; in a passage where the king is compared to various deities, it is said that “he is Ra by whose rays one sees, who brightens the two lands more than the sun disc (*aten*)” (*r' pw m33w m stwt.f shdw sw t3wj r jtn*)⁽⁴⁴⁾. After Amenemhat III’s reign, the expression seems to have fallen into disuse for about three centuries, only readopted in the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty in some royal contexts and as an epithet for solar deities inside the tombs of a few officials⁽⁴⁵⁾. The first new example of its use in a royal context occurs in the reign of Hatshepsut, who, however, did not use the appellative for her own person but for the obelisks erected at Karnak in honour of her divine father Amen. On a block from the red chapel, the queen is represented standing in front of a pair of tall obelisks, behind which Amen stands; the inscriptions refer to the dedication of the couple of monuments, whose height reached the sky, brightening “the two lands like Aten” (*shd.n t3wj mj jtn*)⁽⁴⁶⁾. In the so-called “Northampton” stela in the tomb of Djehuty (TT 11), who was overseer of the treasury and overseer of the craftsmen under the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, it is the sacred barque of Amen, named Userhat-Amen and wrought in gold, to brighten “the two lands with its rays” (*shd.n.f t3wj m stwt.f*)⁽⁴⁷⁾.

It was only with Amenhotep III that *shd t3wj*, besides being used for the sun god on the stela of his architects Hor and Suty⁽⁴⁸⁾, was adopted again as a royal appellative. In the temple of Montu, the sovereign bears the same epithet as on the faience base in Bologna:

(41) For a first discussion on this epithet, see CHRISTOPHE 1952, 22-23.

(42) CT IV, 292-297 (variant: *shd t3 m wbn.f*, ‘brightening the land with his rising’).

(43) Stela Florence 2540/1542: BOSTICCO 1959, 31-33, pl. 29a.

(44) Stela Cairo CG 20538: LEPROHON 2009, 281.

(45) See: TT 84, *shd t3wj m jm3w.f*: VIREY 1889, 340; *shd t3wj m wnm.f*: ASSMANN 1983, 101, 7; *shd t3wj m swt-jrtj.f*: Urk. IV, 937, 15; TT 96, *shd t3wj*: VAN DEN BOORN 1985, 16; *shd t3wj m jm3w.f 3ht.f*: ASSMANN 1983, 105, 3; TT 59, *shd t3wj m d'm*: ASSMANN 1983, 81, 3.

(46) LACAU – CHEVRIER 1977, 232 (= Urk. IV, 374, 14). See also the inscription carved on the shaft (west-side) of the standing obelisk at Karnak, where the two obelisks are said to be “wrought with very fine electrum, they brighten the two lands like Aten (*shd.n t3wj mj jtn*)” (Urk. IV, 357, 6-7).

(47) Urk. IV, 421, 3-5.

(48) Stela BM 826: *shd t3wj m jtn.f* (Urk. IV, 1946, 1).

“who brightens the two lands like Akhty” (*shd t3wj mj 3htj*); this is followed by another epithet with a similar grammatical construction to the Bologna monument: “lord of rays on the face like Aten” (*nb stwt m hr mj jtn*)⁽⁴⁹⁾. Amenhotep III also adopted other variants: on a statue from his funerary temple, he “brightens the two lands like Ra-Horakhty” (*shd t3wj mj hr-3htj*)⁽⁵⁰⁾, while, according to the inscriptions on a royal sphinx, he can do the same “with his beauty” (*shd t3wj m nfrw.f*)⁽⁵¹⁾. Not surprisingly, during the time of his son Akhenaten, the expression *shd t3wj* was used at Amarna as an epithet for Aten⁽⁵²⁾ and also for the king’s mother Tye⁽⁵³⁾. After Akhenaten’s reign, however, it returned to its dual use both for gods⁽⁵⁴⁾ and kings, such as Tutankhamen⁽⁵⁵⁾, Ramses I⁽⁵⁶⁾, Sety I⁽⁵⁷⁾, Ramses II⁽⁵⁸⁾, Ramses III⁽⁵⁹⁾, Ramses IV⁽⁶⁰⁾ and Herihor⁽⁶¹⁾.

The solar character of the fragmentary inscription of the faience base is highlighted by the mention of Aten, the sun disc, and Akhty, personification of the Horizon, or of the two Horizons, where the sun rises and sets. In particular, Akhty, who previously appeared once in the *Pyramid Texts*⁽⁶²⁾ and on the coffin of the lector priest Sesenebef of the Late Middle Kingdom from el-Lisht⁽⁶³⁾, was a rediscovery of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The name was very likely intended as an abbreviation of Ra-Horakhty, who enjoyed a prominent position within the royal sphere from mid-Eighteenth Dynasty on⁽⁶⁴⁾. Queen Hatshepsut was the first sovereign to style herself as an image of Akhty⁽⁶⁵⁾, in order to strengthen her connection

(49) *Urk.* IV, 1670, 7-8.

(50) *Urk.* IV, 1960, 17.

(51) JÉQUIER 1912, 217.

(52) In its simplest form *shd t3wj*: tomb of Tutu (TA 8): SANDMAN 1938, 76, 1; pyramidion Berlin 14123: ROEDER 1924, 234. In the form *shd t3wj m nfrw.f*: tombs of Meryra I (TA 4), Panehsy (TA 6), Meryra II (TA 2) and Huya (TA 1): SANDMAN 1938, 5, 9; 21, 10; 22, 8; 32, 3; 39, 19.

(53) In the tomb of Huya (TA 1): *nbt t3wj shd t3wj m nfrw.s*: SANDMAN 1938, 39, 4.

(54) LEITZ 2002, VI, 484-490, 493-494.

(55) On the lid of a chest, the king “brightens the two lands with his divinity” (*shd t3wj m ntrt.f*): *Urk.* IV, 2050, 2-3.

(56) On a statue base from Medamud, dedicated by his son Sety I: *shd t3wj mj 3htj* (KRI I, 200, 5).

(57) At Karnak, *shd t3wj mj 3htj*: KRI I, 17, 13; *shd t3wj mj hr-3htj*: RONDOT 1997, pl. 17. In the hypostyle hall, the king has the same epithets that Amenhotep III has in the temple of Montu (*shd t3wj mj 3htj nb stwt m hr mj jtn*): KRI I, 204, 10.

(58) At Karnak, *shd t3wj m stwt.f*: RONDOT 1997, pl. 42. On two obelisks from Tanis: *shd t3wj h' mj 3htj* (KRI II, 417, 2-3 and 419, 4-5); on two granite columns from Tanis: *shd.n.f t3wj mj 3htj.f* (KRI II, 431, 10) and *shd.f t3wj m nfrw.f* (KRI II, 436, 12); on a stela from Tell el-Maskuta: *shd.k t3wj* (KRI II, 404, 5); on the statuette Cairo CG 42144 from Karnak: *shd t3wj mj jtn* (KRI II, 588, 7).

(59) Temple of Ramses III, Karnak: *shd t3wj m jm3w.f mj 3htj* (EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1936, pl. 16 = KRI V 274, 11) and *shd t3wj m stwt.f* (EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1936, pl. 39).

(60) The same epithet *shd t3wj m nfrw.f* occurs both on a stela from Wadi Hammamat (KRI VI, 13, 2) and the stela, dated to year 3, from Coptos (KRI VI, 16, 13).

(61) EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1979, pl. 20, l. 10: *shd t3wj mj [...]*; EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1981, pl. 143: *shd t3wj m wbn.f*.

(62) *Pyr.* §1085a. See also LEITZ 2002, I, 53-6.

(63) Written *3ht*: GAUTIER – JÉQUIER 1902, pl. XXIII.

(64) The relation between king and god is more often of filiation rather than of identification, see, for example: Thutmose II: *Urk.* IV, 143, 14-145, 2; Hatshepsut: *Urk.* IV, 295, 14; Thutmose III: LD III, 29b; *Urk.* IV, 295, 14; Amenhotep II: *Urk.* IV, 1276, 13-14; ZIVIE 1976, 97; Thutmose IV: *Urk.* IV, 1558, 7; 1562, 17-1563, 4; ZIVIE 1976, 127; BRYAN 1991, 185-189.

(65) Red chapel at Karnak, block 141: LACAU – CHEVRIER 1977, 248, pl. II and GOEBS 2015, 149; northern obelisk at Karnak, base inscription: *Urk.* IV, 361, 13; temple of Deir e-Bahari, lower colonnade: NAVILLE 1908, pl. CLIV.

with the solar theology. A few years later, it was again Amenhotep III who revived the name Akhty, presenting himself as an earthly manifestation of the deity both in the temple of Montu, where he “brightens the two lands like Akhty” (*shd t3wj mj 3htj*)⁽⁶⁶⁾, and at Luxor, where the king is “Ra (when) he shines like Akhty” (*rˁ psd.f mj 3htj*)⁽⁶⁷⁾ and “dazzling of manifestations (when) he appears like Akhty” (*tḥn ḥprw ḥˁ.f mj 3htj*)⁽⁶⁸⁾.

It is worth noticing that, unlike the other epithets present on the faience base, the expression “great of graciousness on the face like Aten” (*wr jm3t m ḥr mj jtn*) seems to be entirely original in its application to a king⁽⁶⁹⁾. The epithet “great of graciousness” conveys an emotional nuance, as it presents the king in his most benevolent nature. The reading of the noun *jm3t* seems certain, even though one might have expected another appellative connected with the idea of light⁽⁷⁰⁾. Indeed, the expression “on the face” (*m ḥr*) occurs at times in the solar terminology of the New Kingdom, although it is not always clear to whom the “face” belongs: is it to the king equated to the sun god or to those who admire him? For example, in the above-mentioned text from the temple of Montu, Amenhotep III, identified with Akhty, is “the lord of rays on the face like Aten (*m ḥr mj jtn*), in whom the ladies rejoice (*ḥˁˁ n.f nbwt*)”⁽⁷¹⁾. The sentence could indicate that the light of the rays reflects off the face of the beholder or, conversely, describe the ruler’s face as the true source of light⁽⁷²⁾. However, in the example on the faience base it is evident that it is the face of the king that is described.

Associated with the idea of the identification between king and solar deities is the idea that the king, like the sun, is the source of life *par excellence*. His appearance is equated to the appearance of the sun at dawn: “(when) he appears, the *rekhyt*-people live” (*ḥˁˁ nḥ rhjt*). The life-giving presence of the sovereign towards the populace of Egypt finds parallels in other contexts⁽⁷³⁾, as for instance in an inscription at Luxor, where Amenhotep III is identified with Akhty and, as such, “(when) he rises, the *rekhyt*-people live” (*wbn.f nḥ rhjt*)⁽⁷⁴⁾.

(66) *Urk.* IV, 1670, 7.

(67) *Urk.* IV, 1695, 4.

(68) *Urk.* IV, 1698, 19; 1700, 5.

(69) I could not find any parallel to the epithet *wr jm3t* for a king. It also seems an extremely rare divine epithet, being bestowed only once to Horsematawy in the Graeco-Roman period: LEITZ 2002, II, 428.

(70) One might suggest the alternative reading *jm3w* (“glowing light”, “brilliance”), a noun known, according to *Wb.* I, 80, 9, from the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards. However, the absence of any determinative and the presence of the phonetic sign *t* make the reading *jm3t*, “graciousness”, “charm”, “kindliness”, more plausible. Moreover, the epithet *wr jm3w* would also not be otherwise attested.

(71) *Urk.* IV, 1670, 7-8.

(72) HELCK 1961, 205 translates: “Herr der Strahlen auf das Gesicht wie Aton”; DAVIES 1992, 10: “Lord of rays in the face(s) like the sun disc”; HOFFMEIER 2015, 79: “lord of rays in sight like Aten”. Of Ramses II, an inscription at Karnak says that his rays flood *m ḥr mj 3htj tp dw3jt* (*KRI* II, 580, 14), translated by Kitchen (*RITA* II, 378-379), as “his rays flooding into (?) the face, like the Horizon-god at dawn”. See also *KRI* I, 204, 10 (Sety I).

(73) On the identity of the *rekhyt*-people and their connections with the king’s appearance, see GRIFFIN 2018, 16-18, 44-46.

(74) *Urk.* IV, 1695, 4. An identical expression is found in connection with Sety I on an architrave in the temple of Abydos (*KRI* I, 138, 5). For Amenhotep III and the *rekhyt*-people, see also GRIFFIN 2018, 65, 89, 104, 141.

CONCLUSION

The characteristics of the text of the faience base – particularly its verbs and epithets – indicate that it refers to Amenhotep III. In addition to the solar phraseology, the spellings of the names Aten, written *jtn* ⁽⁷⁵⁾, and Akthy, written with the double determinative of the house ⁽⁷⁶⁾, are also consistent with a date to this king's reign.

The attribution of the object to this sovereign is confirmed by its two different shades of the colour blue: a light blue, derived very likely from copper, contrasting with a dark blue inscription, probably cobalt induced. As shown by Arielle Kozloff, cobalt blue was Amenhotep III's favourite colour in objects made in glass and in faience ⁽⁷⁷⁾. This shade of blue was used either as the body colour or as the inscription ⁽⁷⁸⁾. In particular, the king seems to have been partial to the colour combination cobalt blue with copper blue both in objects created for himself alone and in objects inscribed for him and a female member of his family. The base statue of Bologna displays a certain delicacy of workmanship and can be included among the small number of pieces from the time of Amenhotep III with a blue or blue-green body and deep blue glyphs, as found, for example, in the book-labels housed in the Yale University Art Gallery (1936.100) ⁽⁷⁹⁾, and the British Museum (EA 22878), and the kohl-tubes Cairo CG 51175 ⁽⁸⁰⁾, British Museum EA 37236 and MMA 26.7.910 ⁽⁸¹⁾.

The missing statue of the faience base in Bologna was very likely a king's figure of small dimensions, made of faience ⁽⁸²⁾ or of another material. During Amenhotep III's reign, many small-scale sculptures of the king and members of his family were produced in different materials, including Egyptian blue and faience ⁽⁸³⁾. These small sculptures were either votive offerings of the ruler to a temple god, or themselves the focus of a private cult ⁽⁸⁴⁾. Raymond Johnson has argued that Amenhotep III identified himself with the sun god as a consequence

(75) Although the writing *jtn* is not characteristic of Amenhotep III's time, it occurs frequently, for example: *Urk.* IV, 1667,7; 1670, 8; 1696, 20; 1702, 15; 1722, 17; 1754, 6. On the contrary, the writing *jtn* is not used during the reign of Akhenaten.

(76) In the three examples referring to Hatshepsut, the name Akthy is always written with two hieroglyphs of the sun rising between mountain peaks (*3ht*), with or without the determinative of the seated god, while during Amenhotep III's reign there are more variants, including the one as it appears on the faience base, with the single *3ht*-sign, accompanied by the *t* as phonetic complement and the sign of two strokes, followed by the double sign of the house as determinatives (*Urk.* IV, 1698, 19; 1700, 5).

(77) KOZLOFF 1997, 179.

(78) KOZLOFF 1997, 183-184.

(79) MANASSA 2013, 34.

(80) DAVIS 1907, pl. XLIII.

(81) The objects with a cobalt blue body and light or green blue glyphs are more numerous, while cobalt blue glyphs appear on objects also made in yellow or white faience: KOZLOFF 1997, 189-190.

(82) Some faience statues of Amenhotep III are known. One of the most remarkable examples is the fragment Cairo JE 91304 from Saqqara made in dark blue faience and with hieroglyphs inlaid in light blue faience, that belonged to a life-size statue of the king: HASTINGS 1997, 3, pl. I.

(83) In faience, see: three statuettes of the king as a sphinx: New York, MMA 1972.125: FRIEDMAN 1998, 78-79, 182-183; Cairo CG 42088: LEGRAIN 1906, 51, pl. LIII; Victoria & Albert 780.1923: BOTHMER 1990, 89, fig. 30. See also a seated figure of the king in white faience: SCHLÖGL 1978, 56, no. 178, 178a-c. In Egyptian blue, see: two statuettes of the queen Cairo CG 780: BORCHARDT 1930, 89, and MMA 1979.270 and the head of the king Lisbon 139: ASSAM 1991, 46-47. For a complete list of the small-scale royal statues of Amenhotep III, see KOZLOFF – BRYAN 1992, 474-475.

(84) BRYAN 1992, 193.

of his jubilee festival in year 30 ⁽⁸⁵⁾, while Betsy Bryan has suggested that he might have commissioned some of the small-scale statuary to commemorate his *sed*-festival and that the small sculptures that equate him to solar deities may have aimed at promoting the image of a divine and rejuvenated sovereign ⁽⁸⁶⁾. The base of Bologna and its missing statuette may also have belonged to this group of objects, since its inscription identifies the ruler with deities such as Akhty and Aten. In this respect, the use of the epithet “dazzling of appearances”, *tḥn ḥʿw*, is quintessential and may corroborate the suggestion of the presence of this little monument in the context of one of Amenhotep III’s jubilees. Indeed, although not exclusively, epithets and names based on the verb *tjehen* occur on objects prepared in occasion or after the king’s first jubilee, as in the above-mentioned royal statue standing on a sledge in Luxor (J.838). Notably, the only other known example of *tḥn ḥʿw* associated to Amenhotep III occurs in the aforementioned lid in white faience in the Metropolitan Museum (MMA 26.7.910), featuring an unusual titulary, with *tḥn ḥʿw* as part of his Two Ladies name and with a new variant of the Golden Horus name: “thriving of *kas* (*w3ḏ k3w*), perfect of years (*nfr rnpwt*), lord of the *sed*-festivals (*nb ḥbw sd*)”; moreover, the text ends describing “the appearing of the king at the *sed*-festivals (*ḥʿ nswt m ḥbw-sd*), the favoured one (*ḥsj*), the likeness of Ra (when) he arises (*mjtt rʿ wbn.f*)”. Whatever the original function of the base in Bologna may have been, the choice of faience for the creation of such a small royal sculpture, with an inscription in which brightness and divinity of the king are intimately linked, was probably a deliberate one. The “faience” (*tjehenet*) – with its symbolic value associated with “radiance” (*tjehen*) ⁽⁸⁷⁾ – emphasises the idea, conveyed by the text, of a king as a living, luminous manifestation of the sun god.

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(85) JOHNSON 1998, 86-90.

(86) BRYAN 1992, 193-196. See also BRYAN 1997.

(87) KEES 1943, 432-433; FRIEDMAN 1998, 24.

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