

CHAPTER 6. SELECTING STELAE FOR FURTHER TESTS

Objective

The discussion of the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree and the corresponding Decision Table has been based on the assumption that we are dealing only with stelae known to have originated in the Twelfth Dynasty. But, when we set out to date a stela that has no internal dating, we do not know that it belongs to the Twelfth Dynasty. We need some means of checking the dynasty from which the stela comes. This chapter describes an approach to overcoming that difficulty and then introduces a sample of stelae selected to test the approach and to demonstrate its use with the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree.

Preprocessing

Estimating the dynasty in which an undated stela originated requires an approach such as a decision tree or decision table similar to those that have already been discussed. But we do not have data about stelae from other dynasties that is sufficient to provide the level of confidence comparable with that for known Twelfth Dynasty stelae. A specific weakness of the approach is that some kings were deified (even in their lifetime, though Senusret III was deified much later¹). It would conceivably be possible for the cartouche on a stela to represent one of such deified kings rather than the deceased king whose memory the stela commemorates.

Using the information brought together in Chapter 2 about the evolution of funerary stelae, I have selected a group of features that can be readily determined for any stela, and can be built into a database for any sample of stelae. These features are shown in Figure 7 as the Preprocess Database.

PREPROCESS DATABASE

Identification:	Id:	Museum identification <i>or</i> equivalent.	
	No:	Assigned reference number.	
Features:			
Cartouche:	Crt:	Not Twelfth Dynasty:	1
		None:	2
		Twelfth Dynasty:	3
Offering formula:	Off:	𓆎 Δ $\frac{\text{a}}{\text{b}}$ or variant:	1
		𓆎 $\frac{\text{a}}{\text{b}}$ Δ or lacking:	2
Shape:	Shp:	Vertical (Portrait):	v
		Horizontal (Landscape):	h
Tableau:	Tab:	At top:	t
		At bottom:	b
		At side:	s
		All tableau:	c
Parents:	Par:	Present:	x
		Absent:	z
Bookroll Ties:	Bkr:	None:	z
		1 or 2	x
		No bookroll	Blank

Figure 7

The Preprocess Decision Table (Figure 8) uses these features to predict whether an undated stela might date from the Twelfth Dynasty. If a stela satisfies the conditions to reach one of the terminating nodes described below, it can then be tested using the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree to date it in more detail within the Twelfth Dynasty.

The terminating nodes are indicated with a dagger (†) or an exclamation mark (!). The terminal nodes with daggers indicate that the stela under consideration did not originate in the Twelfth Dynasty. It would be theoretically possible for a stela from Dynasty 12, without a cartouche and with the late form of *ḥtp-di-nswt*, to reach Node 4 and so be incorrectly set aside from the Twelfth Dynasty. But, in the light of comments by Smither (1939), Barta (1964) and Lapp (1986), the existence of such a stela seems very unlikely.

Any stela leading to a terminating node with an exclamation mark might date from the Twelfth Dynasty. It would be worth submitting it to the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree, though confidence in the conclusion drawn from that analysis would be less than it would be for a stela known (on other evidence) to be from the Twelfth Dynasty. Of course, any stela leading to Node 3 is already shown to date from the Twelfth Dynasty.

The Test Sample

The remainder of this chapter discusses stelae, other than those from which the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree and Decision Table were developed, whose features and characteristics were submitted to that decision tree and to the Preprocess Decision Tree.

Five groups of stelae are included:

- Group 1: Stelae dated internally (by cartouche) to dynasties other than Dynasty 12. These are included for two reasons: first, to test the Preprocess Decision Tree and Table and, second, to demonstrate the need to provide a much better means of making a preprocessing decision in order to prevent mistakes being made by submitting a stela from another dynasty to the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree.
- Group 2: Stelae which, because of their landscape rectangular format, might be expected to date from earlier than the Twelfth Dynasty.
- Group 3: Stelae containing the form of the *ḥtp di nswt* in which the *di* sign is in second place (𓆎 𓆑 ^𓆑𓆑), and which therefore probably do not date from the Twelfth Dynasty.
- Group 4: Stelae which are stated by others, e.g. Simpson (1974) or Freed (1996), to date from the Twelfth Dynasty, with the aim of dating them to the periods used in the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree. I have chosen to include with these a number of stelae chosen randomly from Lange and Schäfer (1925), accepting that some might not belong to the Twelfth Dynasty and not be excluded by the Preprocess Decision Tree, which, as already stated, cannot be treated with the same confidence as the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree.
- Group 5: Stelae of the Twelfth Dynasty, either damaged or incomplete, that can nevertheless be dated internally. Where these can be submitted to the Twelfth Dynasty Decision Tree, they give an unbiased check of the process.

Selecting Test Sample

PREPROCESS DECISION TABLE

Node		Observation	Go to	Conclusion
0		The inscription includes, at or near the top, a cartouche of one of the rulers of another dynasty.	1 †	The stela dates from the reign of the designated ruler.
	*	The stela contains no cartouche.	2	
	*	The inscription includes, at or near the top, a cartouche of one of the rulers of Dynasty 12.	3 !	The stela dates from the reign of the designated ruler of Dynasty 12.
2		The offering formula begins with 	4 †	The stela probably dates from later than the Twelfth Dynasty.
	*	The offering formula begins with 	5	
5		The stela is rectangular, of portrait format, with or without a curved top <i>or</i> the stela is similar in format to a false door.	6	
	*	The stela is rectangular, of landscape format.	7 !	The stela is probably no later than Dynasty 11, but might date from early Dynasty 12.
6		The inscription comprises a tableau (or tableaux) in the top half, text in the bottom half.	8 !	The stela probably dates from later than the Middle Kingdom, but might date from as early as the reign of Amenemhat III.
	*	The upper half of the inscription is text, possibly through lunette and top of the rectangle, with tableau or tableaux in the lower half.	9	
9		The owner's father and/or mother appear in the tableau(x).	10	
	*	The owner's father and mother do not appear in the tableau(x).	11 !	The stela probably dates from Dynasty 11, but might date from early Dynasty 12.
10	*	The bookroll determinative is shown with only a lump of mud for the seal.	12 †	The stela was probably made before Dynasty 12.
	*	The bookroll determinative shows one or two ends of the tie emerging from the seal.	13 !	The stela is from Dynasty 12 or later.

Figure 8