DRUNKENNESS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE ACCORDING TO ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TEXTS AND SCENES

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ABSTRACT

[AR] **السُّكْرُ ومظاهره فى ضوء النصوص والمناظر المصرية القديمة**

كانت عادة «السُّكْرُ» معروفة فى مصر القديمة، بل نستطيع القول إنها كانت مقبولة ومطلوبة فى كثير من المناسبات والشعائر الدينية. كان للسُّكْرُ مظاهر إيجابية وسلبية، فكان من شأنه أن يجلب المتعة لصاحبه، وكذلك كان وسيلة للتواصل مع الآلهة والأموات، بل اعتبر المصرى القديم السُّكْرُ امتيازًا مقدسًا، وعلامة على الإخلاص، ليس لأنه يوفر المتعة فحسب، بل لأنه يؤدي إلى حالة حدودية تسمح للحي بالتواصل مع الموتى والدخول إلى عالم الآلهة. وهذا ما تدل عليه مناظر الأعياد والمآدب، وكذلك مواكب الدفن. من جانب آخر وصفت النصوص الأدبية والتعاليم السكير بالعديد من الصفات الذميمة من باب التحذير منه. فوصف بأنه عنيف، فظ الحديث، لا يدرك اقواله وافعاله، يفتقد للوعى والتفكير والأصدقاء، ويصبح عاجزا كالطفل الصغير. تهدف هذه المقالة إلى دراسة مصطلح « السُّكْرُ »، واستعراض المظاهر الإيجابية والسلبية لعادة السُّكْرُ فى مصر القديمة ودورها فى إبراز التوازن فى الفكر المصرى القديم وأخيرا، إلقاء الضوء على الآثار الجسدية لعادة السُّكْرُ.

[EN] Drunkenness was common in Ancient Egypt. It was even considered acceptable and required in many occasions and religious rituals. Drunkenness had both positive and negative aspects. It was pleasurable while also serving as a method of communication with deities and the deceased. The Ancient Egyptians saw drunkenness as a sacred privilege and a sign of sincerity, not only because it provides pleasure, but also because it leads to a borderline state in which the living can communicate with the dead and enter the realm of the gods. Scenes of feasts and banquets, as well as burial processions, attest to this. On the other hand, literary texts and teachings described the drunkard as having many repulsive characteristics, which served as a warning against drunkenness. A drunkard was described as violent, rude in his speech, oblivious to his own words and actions, lacking consciousness, thinking, and becoming helpless like a small child. The goal of this paper is to investigate the term "drunkenness", highlighting the positive and negative aspects of the habit of drunkenness in Ancient Egypt, as well as its role in highlighting the balance in Ancient Egyptian thought. Finally this paper sheds light on the physical effects of the habit of drunkenness.

KEYWORDS: Alcohol abuse, Beer, Drunkenness, Sleep, Unconsciousness, Vomiting, Wine.

I. INTRODUCTION

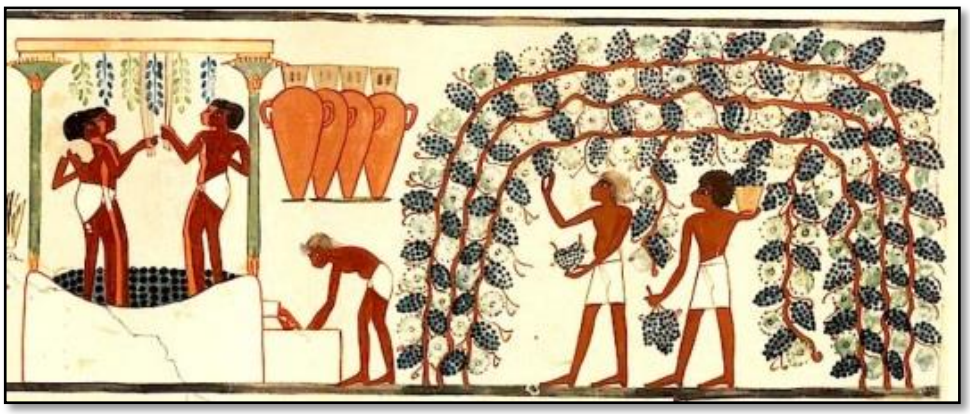
Before becoming a widely consumed alcoholic beverage, wine was a drink reserved for the upper class, only served to the public at major festivals, and in great quantities[1]. It was, nevertheless, increasingly made available to the lower classes in their daily lives. As the demand for it grew, so did the number of cultivated terrains. Wine production in the Delta can be traced back to at least the fourth millennium BC. It is believed that grapevine cuttings from Palestine were transported to the region during that time. The rulers during the Predynastic and early dynastic Periods (c. 3300-2700 BC) had access to wine from this area. Since the Predynastic Period (4000-3100 BC), wine jars have been placed in Egyptian tombs as funerary offerings. Large jars from the first and second dynasties, like the Canaanite jar type, had clay seals with hieroglyphics bearing the names of the kings, possibly the vineyard or estate, and its contents, such as wine. Additionally, wine was also imported from Palestine[2]. In the New Kingdom, Egypt had developed a large-scale wine industry – mostly for the upper social classes – with sophisticated and advanced technology and widespread development of several sorts of wine, classed under various names[3].

Ancient Egyptian private tombs feature reliefs and paintings that illustrate various stages of viticulture and winemaking. These include depictions of grape harvesting, treading, pressing, fermentation, sealing and labeling the jars, and ultimately storing them in cellars[4].

In a tomb from Dair al-Bersheh, which dates to the Middle Kingdom (1975-1640 BC), there is a depiction of winemaking, but it has been suggested that this tomb may depict the production of white wine. The reason behind this speculation is that the pressing scene immediately follows the grape harvesting scene, and the grapes in the harvesting scene appear to have a greenish color[5]. The accuracy or authenticity of the shedeh depicted in the scenes is uncertain. However, there is a single reference, found in Baquet III's tomb (Nrº.15) located in Beni Hassan, that might suggest a possible filtering and heating process involved in winemaking[6].

Additionally, there is a New Kingdom scene from the tomb of Nakht at Thebes, which provides a vivid portrayal of both the grape harvest and the winemaking process.[7] In the scene, two workers are shown carefully picking red grapes by hand and placing them in baskets on the right side. On the left, four men press the grapes in a vat using their feet, while another man collects the resulting red juice **[FIGURE 1].**

[1] GELLER 1992:19-26; LESKO 1996: 219; JAMES 2003: 204; KHAKHOLARY 2020: 1438.
[2] DREYER 1993: 23–62; MCGOVERN 1997: 90.
[3] KAMAL 1967: 498; HELCK 1971:104, 114-115; MCGOVERN 1997: 89.
[4] MURRAY et Al. 2000: 577–608; GUASCH-JANÉ 2008: 11, 29–30, 53–54, 56–59.
[5] MONTET 1913: 117–18; MURRAY et Al. 2000: 577–608.
[6] GELLER 1992: 19- 26; TALLET 1995: 459–92.
[7] DAVIES & GARDINER 1915: PL.26; GELLER 1992: 19- 26.



[FIGURE 1]: Wall painting of men making wine from the Tomb of Nakht, 18th dynasty (1479 –1420 BC). DAVIES 1917: PL.26

In the New Kingdom (1539-1075 BC), amphorae, the containers for wine, were inscribed with various textual details. The inscriptions included the year, the name of the product (*ỉrp* or *shedeh*), information about the quality of the wine, its provenance, whether it was for royal or private use, and the name and title of the wine-maker. These inscriptions, written in hieratic, provided valuable information about the wine and its significance in Ancient Egyptian culture and rituals[8]. «Year 4, wine from the Estate of Aten, in the Western River, chief vintner Nen» is written on an amphora from Tutankhamun's tomb (KV 62) in Thebes[9]. The inscriptions on the amphorae demonstrate that the Ancient Egyptians valued this information because it allowed them to distinguish between wines. Knowing the product's vintage and provenance was essential to them.

The significance of the red color[10] of Egyptian wine extended beyond its association with the god Osiris's blood. It was also connected to the reddish hue of the River Nile during its annual flood, which carried iron-rich sediments from the Ethiopian mountains when the grape harvest commenced[11]. However, both red and white wines were discovered in Tutankhamon's tomb. Khaa, a vintner from the Western River Estate, was responsible for both of these wines. The red wine was «Year 9, Wine of the Estate of Aten of the Western River, Chief Vintner Khaa» (JE 62314), while the white wine was «Year 5, Wine of the Estate of Tutankhamun, Ruler of Thebes in the Western River, Chief Vintner Khaa» (JE 62316). Tutanhamun had a third type, the *šdḥ* shedeh, as well (JE 62315)[12].

It is hardly an exaggeration to claim that beer played a crucial role in Ancient Egyptian civilization. Beer was a popular drink among both adults and children, and it was a staple of both the poor and wealthy Egyptian diets. Additionally, beer was frequently offered to the gods, and it was mentioned in the ritual offering formula[13]. There is some indication that Ancient Egyptian beer was not as highly intoxicating as

[8] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.): *Wb* 1926: vol.1, 115.
[9] CERNY 1965: 1–4; GELLER 1992: 19-26.
[10] AL-RASHIDI 2004: 39.
[11] *POO* 1986: 149–51; *POO* 1995: 1186–90.
[12] HELCK 1971:104,114-115; GUASCH-JANÉ 2011: 851–58.
[13] *POO* 1995: 5-7; *POO* 2010: 1-4.

today's beer. Instead, it was filling, thick, and sweet. On the other hand, during the festivals of Bast, Sekhmet, and Hathor, worshippers would consume significant amounts of beer, leading to noticeable intoxication. This suggests that beer, like Egyptian wine, could be equally potent in terms of its intoxicating effects[14].

Wine and beer were frequently used in medical and pharmaceutical purposes, along with honey and oil, which were believed to be a remedy for almost every ailment. They were valued for their properties as anaesthetics, or pain-relievers, stimulants, antiseptics to cleanse and heal wounds, emetics, digestion regulators, purifiers, and antidotes against poisonous plants, bites, and stings[15].

According to STROUHAL et Al. beer has also been used medicinally, either as the treatment itself or as part of a mixture to improve the flavour of other medications. Medical papyri list 17 types of beer[16]. Wine was employed in practically all types of remedies. It was primarily used in orally administered medication, but was also described being used with enemas, bandages or poultices, *gs*-ointments or poultices. Wine is listed as a treatment for more than twenty diseases in Ancient Egyptian prescriptions[17].

Unlike wine, beer appears to have been consumed regularly by all Ancient Egyptians. It appears to have been widely produced and used in occasions such as festivities, offerings, and even sacrifices[18].

According to 18th dynasty tomb paintings, men oversaw wine manufacturing, whereas women were most likely in charge of beer production, which was a basic part of the Egyptian diet. Beer spoiled quickly and had to be made in a single batch just before use, whereas wine could be stored, transported, and traded for up to five years and used as a reliable product[19].

Beer and bread were viewed as ordinary foods, consumed by everyone, according to inscriptions in tombs and administrative documents in Ancient Egypt, with beer being defined as the 'national drink'[20]. A scene of sellers selling beer in a marketplace was discovered in the New Kingdom city of Akhetaten (1550-1170 BC)[21].

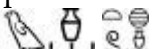
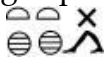
II. METHODOLOGY

This research paper examined the wisdom texts and the scenes of drunkenness. It studied the following:

- The term of *tḫt* 'drunkenness'.
- The positive aspects of drunkenness.
- The negative aspects of drunkenness.
- The physical effects of drunkenness.

[14] ROSSO 2010:238.
[15] HELCK 1971:104,114-115; GELLER 1992: 19-26; ROSSO 2010: 251.
[16] STROUHAL 1992: 18–25, 128.
[17] DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: 47–50; BLÁZOVICS & SÁRDI 2019: 461–65.
[18] GELLER 1992: 19- 26; KHAKHOLARY 2020: 14384.
[19] HELCK 1971: 104,114-115; JENNINGS et Al. 2005: 286, 295.
[20] DARBY, GALIOUNGUI & GRIVETTI.(eds.) 1977: 532.
[21] JAMES 1984: 252; GELLER 1992: 19- 26.

1.The Term of *tḫt* «Drunkenness»

The Egyptian word,  *tḫt*[22] for 'intoxication' or 'drunkenness' is derived from the verb  [23],  ,  ,  *tḫi̯* [24], «to be drunk», 'to become intoxicated', 'drink deep' which is also the root of the words for a habitual drinker or drunkard,  ,  , *tḫw*[25]. The verb originates from the *tḫ* root, which implies notions of descending rapidly, likely caused by the effects of alcohol[26]. It also provides us with the word,  *tḫtḫ*, meaning confused[27]. Other common terms related to intoxication include  *nz ḥnḳt*, which means «drunkards»[28].

The Egyptian calendar contained a  *ḥrw n tḫ* «day of drunkenness»[29].  *tḫ*[30] was a monthly festival, specifically on the twentieth day of the Thot month. The first month of the year, Thot, was originally referred to as  *tḫy*, which referred to the «vintage-festival», or, «vine-festival», which marked the beginning of the Egyptian New Year[31].

The word *tḫ* «drinking to drunkenness» corresponds to the word *tḫ*/ *tḫn*  «reins of the scales»[32]which was used as an epithet for *Thot* during the postpharaonic period: «who belongs to the reins of the scales» and which is also present in the name of his month, which could be referred to as «*tḫj*» starting in the 18th dynasty. There may also be a goddess named *Tekhi* (*tḫj*), whose name is taken from this name[33].

According to the temple inscription of Dendera, Hathor is referred to as *nb.t tḫ*  «the mistress of intoxication»[34] or even, «the intoxicated one» .' *tḫy.t* is probably in connection with the myth of the destruction of mankind. Dendera's name and its temple was recorded as  ,[35]  *s.t-tḫn.t* 'the place of drunkenness[36]. A special part of Hathor's temple was named *ḥwt tḫ*  'the house of drunkenness[37].

Drunkenness appears to have been widespread in Egyptian society, affecting people from all walks of life. Herodotus and Athenaeus, while contemplating the

[22] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 324; FAULKNER 1962: 301.
[23] ERMAN & GRAPOW(eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 323.
[24] LESKO 1989: 96; BRUNNER 1986: *LÄ* vol.6, 773-777.
[25] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 325; FAULKNER 1962: 301.
[26] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 324.
[27] LESKO 1989: 97; BRUNNER 1986: *LÄ* vol.6, 773-777.
[28] IVERSEN 1979: 84; LESKO 1989: 123.
[29] DUMICHEN 1869: 25, 51.
[30] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol. 5, 325: 18–20.
[31] LUTZ 1922: 107: BRUNNER 1986: *LÄ* vol.6, 773-777.
[32] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 326: 25- 27.
[33] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1926: *Wb,* vol.4, 325:19.
[34] CHASSINAT 1935: 8, 58; ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 325:7-9.
[35] DUMICHEN 1865: 5,10; CHASSINAT 1935: 8, 82.
[36] DUMICHEN 1865: 57a.
[37] DUMICHEN 1865: 14; GELLER 1992: 19- 26.

cultural differences between Egyptians and Greeks regarding alcohol consumption, proposed an economic measure to discourage alcohol abuse: raising taxes[38].

In fact, abstaining from alcohol on one's own volition was exceptional, and it was considered to be a significant statement. As a sign of repentance, Tefnakhte, chieftain of Sais and later king and founder of the 24th dynasty, abstains from drinking on the stela of *Piya* during the Third Intermediate Period. Furthermore, some passages lament the period when a person is unable to drink owing to old age or death[39]. For example: in P. Insinger, when described old age, it says, that at that time: «*He who has passed sixty years, everything has passed for him. If his heart loves wine, he cannot drink to drunkenness*»[40].

The songs of harpists and lutists in the tomb of *Tjanefer*, TT 158, 20th dynasty, hint at a striking juxtaposition between the pleasure of alcohol consumption during banquets in life and the requirement for abstinence in the afterlife[41]: «*Their faces are ignorant [concerning] holiday; their hearts have forgotten drunkenness*»[42]. Similarly, funerary laments like one from Mose's tomb 137 also highlight the sobriety of the afterlife: «*He who liked to get drunk is now in a land without even water*»[43].

Excessive drinking was common in Egypt among all classes. According to a demotic papyrus, king Amasis of the 26th dynasty during the 8th-7th century BC, consumed copious amounts of alcohol at the royal palace, leading to constant intoxication and an inability to manage state affairs, which resulted in grievances among his entourage[44]. Rosso commented on this story by stating that «*It could be said, from a general perspective, that these kinds of vices might have contributed to the decline of the Egyptian Empire*»[45].

Throughout Egyptian history, priests, like the elite and high-ranking officials, drank wine on a regular basis. The inscription on the temple statue of *Nebnetjeru*, from the twenty-second dynasty Thebes, reads:

ỉr.n.ỉ ꜥḥꜥ.ỉ m nḏm-ỉb n(n) mḥ n(n) mnt sḫb.ỉ hrw.ỉ m ỉrp ꜥntyw

«I spent my lifetime in happiness, without worry and without malady; I made festive my days with wine and myrrh»[46].

During their time at the temple, priests' lifestyles were regulated, and this most likely included rules around wine use. In his treaty concerning Isis and Osiris, Plutarch most likely transmits one such rule. He says in his note:

[38] EL-GUEBALY & EL-GUEBALY 1981: 1207–1221.
[39] SIMPSON 2002: 368; BRUNNER 1986: *LÄ* vol.6, 773-777.
[40] JOHNSON 1976: 151;LICHTHEIM 1980: 199; 1983: 52: 214.
[41] SEELE 1959: PL.28, BRUNNER 1986: *LÄ* vol.6, 773-777.
[42] PORTER & MOSS 1960: 268, 158; WENTE 1962: 126.
[43] LÜDDECKENS 1943: 134, Nrº.64; SWEENEY 2001: 44.
[44] «Story of a mariner»: Great demotic papyus of the Biblothèque Nationale de Paris, Ptolemaic Period, r. 11-12. MASPERO 1915: 280-286.
[45] ROSSO 2010: 81–87.
[46] LEGRAIN 1906: 60; OTTO 1954:136-139; LORTON 1968: 43; BRUNNER 1986: *LÄ* vol.6, 773-777.

«As for wine, those who serve the god in Heliopolis bring none at all into the shrine, since they feel that it is not seemly to drink in the daytime while their Lord and King are looking upon them. The others use wine, but in great moderation. They have many periods of holy living when wine is prohibited, and in these they spend their time exclusively in studying, learning, and teaching religious matters»[47].

Women, especially those from the upper classes, were urged to drink freely at banquets to 'not spoil the entertainment'[48]. Drunkenness was considered a «holy intoxication» in Ancient Egypt, and it was thought to be a way for women to connect to the gods through a new state of mind[49].

Egyptians had a strong penchant for beer and wine, and this drinking culture was ingrained from an early age. The «Instructions of Ani» highlights that a caring mother would regularly provide her son, who attended school, with three loaves of bread and two jars of beer daily[50].

dỉ.tw sw r ꜥ.t-sbȝ m-ḫt sbȝyt.k r sḫȝ
ỉw.s mn.t r-ḥry.k m mn.t ḫr ꜥḳ ḥnḳ.t m pr.s

«[He] was sent you to school, when you were ready to be taught writing, She kept watching over you daily, with bread and beer in her house»[51]

Egyptian love poetry contains numerous references to drinking. Even if he doesn't have his usual beer, the lover is content if he is in the presence of his sweetheart. The following is a lovely love song[52] with a reference to the darling making her lover intoxicated on love as well as beer or wine:

«*Her companion sites to her right side, (and) she makes him drunk, she is obeying that which he says (when) the drinking-bout becomes disordered by drunkenness*»[53]

2. The positive Aspects of Drunkenness

A. Drunkenness and Banquets

In 18th dynasty tombs, banquets featuring both men and women reveling in intoxication, feasting, dancing, and music were commonly depicted in an idealized and

[47] GRIFFITHS 1970: 6; GELLER 1992: 19- 26.

[48] LUTZ 1922: 85; EL-GUEBALY & EL-GUEBALY 1981: 1207–1021; BREWER & TEETER 2001.

[49] GRAVES-BROWN 2010: 168.

[50] In Ancient Egypt, beer was a primary source of nutrition, with daily consumption. Its significance was such that it also functioned as a form of currency. Unlike European beer, which is typically clear, Egyptian beer shared similarities with many contemporary African brews, being notably hazy with abundant particulates and rich in nutrients, much like a porridge. It played a crucial role in providing protein, minerals, and vitamins, and its value was so substantial that beer jars often served as a unit of measurement and had medicinal applications. HOMAN 2004: 84-95.

[51] QUACK 1994: 141: 110, 315.

[52] *P.Turin* 1966/ *P.Turin Cat.* 1966, Dair al-Medina, 20th dynasty, New Kingdom, Possibly the reign of Rameses IV (1,155–1,150 BC), Collection: Museo Egizio, Turin, *P.Turin* 1966. TOBIN 2003: 319-322.

[53] ERMAN 1885: 272-273; MÜLLER 1932: 39–40; GELLER 1992: 19- 26.

symbolic manner. It remains uncertain whether drinking customs altered after the 18th dynasty, when the mortuary banquet scenes were no longer depicted in tomb decorations. However, the Festival of Drunkenness persisted well into the Greco-Roman period, implying that even if images of alcohol consumption with the deceased were no longer created, the tradition itself might have endured[54].

The banquets linked with burial rites were thought to provide connection with the deceased's spirit as well as the gods, and were not seen as disrespectful[55]. The presence of alcohol (beer and wine), musicians, dancers, and attendants, as well as flower collars, water lilies, oil and unguent, are all common features of funeral banquet scenes[56].

People should be eating and drinking in a proper banquet atmosphere. But individuals are not shown eating anything in the Egyptian banquet scenes, even when food may be represented. They, however, drink[57].

Ancient Egyptian drinking traditions are mentioned however, the picture is a bit confusing. Drinks were plentiful during the celebrations, and the goal of the activity was intoxication. This is evident in both the images and the accompanying text. This fact alone reveals a great deal about the character of the banquet scene[58]. The Middle Kingdom *'Dispute between a Man and His Ba'* suggests that drinking could lead to mystical connection. Death's proximity and appeal are suggested:

ỉw mwt m-ḫr.ỉ mỉn
mỉ sṯ sšnw mỉ ḥmst ḫr mryt nt tḫt

«Death is before me {lit.in my face} now, like the scent of a lotus, like sitting on the shores of drunkenness»[59].

This could explain the banqueting scenes where no food is served but alcohol is consumed[60]. Banquets scenes show both men and women holding wine bowls and beer jars, and are often depicted as heavily intoxicated. Elite women and men are occasionally illustrated on separate registers but they can be attended to by either female or male servants. Couples are commonly shown seated together[61].

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[54] HARRINGTON & STAMATOPOULOU 2016: 155.

[55] HARRINGTON & STAMATOPOULOU 2016: 210.

[56] HODEL-HOENES 2000: 1-26.

[57] KROETER 2009: 47-56.

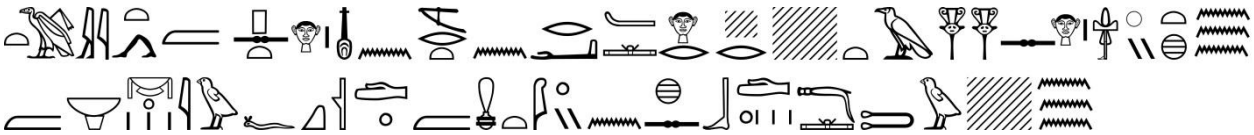
[58] The earlier scenes found in tombs of the Middle Kingdom in Beni Hasan, like the Tomb of Khety, are comparable to the Theban tombs of private citizens from the New Kingdom. Examples of the latter include Pahery at Elkab, Amenemhat TT53, Rekhmire TT100, Djeserkareseneb TT38, and Horemheb TT78. MANNICHE 1997: 31-32.

[59] FAULKNER 1956: 21-40; GOEDICKE 1970: 3; LICHTHEIM 1975: 163-169; HANNIG 1995.

[60] PARKINSON 1940:151-65; OBIN 1991: 342-63; GELLER 1992: 19- 26; SIMPSON 2003: 186; RAVES-BROWN 2010: 168.

[61] In the tomb of Neb-Amun at Thebes, depictions of both men and women gathered at feasts were present, while in the tomb of Pahery at Elkab, distinct scenes of men and women were individually showcased. SALT COLLECTION, BRITISH MUSEUM, ROOM 61: TOMB-CHAPEL NEBAMUN, EA 37986; TYLOR & GRIFFITH 1894: PL.VII

Servants and maids are seen offering alcoholic beverages to the diners. However, the small vases they hold raise the question of what these vessels contain, as they appear too small for wine or beer **[FIGURE 2].** In the tomb of *Horemheb* TT78, a song praising the goddess *Mut* suggests that a certain product might have been mixed with wine or beer:



Mwt ỉỉt[ỉ] m ps[d].t ḥr nfr n mrt n rdỉ(n) ḥ(r)ḥr ṯzt.s sššt.s ḥr ȝbb tḫ
m kṯ? n nbw ỉw.f ḳd m mỉty n ḫsbd mḥ m w[62]*….*
«*Mut has come as the glowing one of the beautiful face, to cause her sistrum players to be joyful desiring d drunkenness from a goblet of gold, while its pouring container is the likeness of lapis lazuli filled with /// [a liquid]* »[63].

If the purpose of the banquet was to induce intoxication (as evidenced by male and female guests vomiting during the meal), it is plausible that the substances contained in these small vials or double vessels were mixed with the beverages intentionally to boost their strength and hasten the alcoholic effects[64]. Some have evoked the ingestion of a psychedelic chemical that would have allowed the participants to enter an ecstatic condition[65].

In support of this idea, Egyptian art and literature features two plants were used as aphrodisiacs. In the erotic Turin papyrus, for example, there is a depiction of a woman engaging in acrobatic sexual acts beneath a large lotus flower. Furthermore, a love poem suggests that the scent of mandrake was used as a seductive technique. A woman seduces her partner by having him smell the fruit, claiming that it would reveal the color of her entire body[66].

Moreover, both lotus and mandrake were believed to possess properties that heightened the senses and had narcotic effects. It is possible that during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, these substances were employed to induce a psychic state that allowed participants to have a stronger connection with both the divine and the deceased[67].

[62] *URK* 1951: vol.4, 1591.
[63] LICHTHEIM 1945: 184; BRACK & ARTUR 1980: PL.32A; GALAN et Al. 2014: 113, note. a-f.
[64] HARRINGTON & STAMATOPOULOU 2016: 210.
[65] MANNICHE 1997: 33; KROETER 2009: 47-56.
[66] HARTWIG 2004: 100.
[67] MANNICHE 1997: 31.

[FIGURE 2]: Servants carrying small vases rejected by guests - Bahri, al-Kab.
TYLOR & GRIFFITH 1894: PL.VII

The tomb of *P3-Ḥry* (Paheri), belonging to the middle of the 18th dynasty, under the reign of Thutmosis III, features a scene on the east wall's middle section. This scene depicts the banquet guests facing Paheri and his wife[68] **[FIGURE 3].**

Amensat, one of the female relatives of Paheri, refuses the bowl by her raised arm, and the servant, forgetful of his position while the drinking-bout progresses say jokingly[69]:

[FIGURE 3]: East Wall, Centre: Guests at the Banquet- Tomb of PA-Hry.
TYLOR & GRIFFITH 1894: PL.VII

n kȝ n swr r tḫt ỉr hrw nfr ỉ sḏm nȝ ḏdw tȝyt ỉrt m ỉr gtḥ m ʿḏȝ
«For the ka, drink to drunkenness, Make it a happy day! Oh, listen to what the companion is saying, do not sham tired!»

But her companion and distant cousin Nub-mehy requested a very large quantity of wine to get drunk, as the caption in the tomb of Paheri explains:

ỉm n.ỉ 18 ynrw n ỉrp mk mrr.ỉ r tḫt ỉst ỉm.ỉ n dḥȝ
«Give me eighteen cups of wine, behold I should like (to drink) to drunkenness, my inside is as dry as straw!» (lit. «the place in me is of straw».
Another servant addresses Sensenbet.

[68] TYLOR & GRIFFITH 1894: PL.VII.
[69] LUTZ 1922: 100; GELLER 1992: 19- 26.

ḏd.f swr m ỉr nḏb mt nn ỉw.ỉ r wḥ ʿt

«He says, may you drink, do not refuse (?); See! (lit. Behold) I am not going to leave you»

Here again, the artist has portrayed Sensenbet alongside a lady, the nurse Tupu, who urges her to drink and not, by her refusal, spoil the entertainment. She says:

swr m ỉr ḥwȝ ṯnf dỉt pḥw.ỉ tȝ sṯt mt nsỉ pȝ ḥȝ n swr

«Drink do not spoil the entertainment: and let the cup come to me: See! it is due to the ha to drink». The noble ladies in the tomb of *Paheri* conduct themselves differently. Two ladies refuse to drink more wine, while one turns back for asking more. This image clearly demonstrates the attitude towards wine: to abstain or drink moderately, or to become inebriated[70].

As the Egyptians were well aware, «mystical drunkenness» should not be confused with «profane drunkenness». There is a dual discourse going on here. The Wisdom texts warned against excessive drinking and chastised public drunkenness. Other texts, however, speak of drink and inebriation as a sacred prerogative, a sign of sincere devotion that leads to a liminal state that allows the living to communicate with the dead and enter the realm of the gods[71].

This clarifies why the servants offer to accompany guests who seemed hesitant: their role is to tempt, persuade, and reassure them to drink. In case they become unwell, the servants won't leave them alone and will ensure they are safely taken home[72].

On some occasions, we witness a gesture that clearly indicates refusal, but the underlying reason behind it is not immediately apparent. In these instances, a guest declines the cup handed to them by a servant or refuses further service. The gesture involves raising the arm and forearm vertically, with the palm facing forward in a dramatic manner. The other hand might be a closed fist, occasionally gripping a piece of rolled cloth[73].

The issue is better understood by looking at a scene from the tomb of *Rekhmirê* TT100. Three drinking ladies are looked after by two maidservants. The text says, *«Is it maat (= good, nice) in her (= goddess) eyes that one should get drunk? »*[74] **[FIGURE 4].**

Fischer points out that the word 'Maat' is written in reversing writing, in which inverted signs are pointed towards the three guests. Additionally, the goddess's image is included as a determinative. He concludes: «Yes, for Rekhmire, drunkenness is justified and has the approval of the goddess»[75].

[70] TYLOR & GRIFFITH 1894: 25, PL.VII.

[71] SZPAKOWSKA 2003: 225-237.

[72] MANNICHE 1997: 31–33; KROETER 2009: 47-56.

[73] TYLOR & GRIFFITH 1894: PL.VII

[74] DAVIES 1943: PL.LXIV.

[75] FISCHER 1977: 91–92.

[FIGURE 4]: Three drinking ladies are looked after by two maidservants. Tomb of Rekhmire. DAVIES 1943: PL.LXIV

The gesture of refusal is not an artistic embellishment by the painter to add variation to the repetitive arrangement of guests, nor does it solely indicate individual preferences regarding drinking. According to Betsy Brian, this gesture is symbolic of a societal concern that has been portrayed in certain tombs[76].

Surprisingly, the servant's response was «May you drink; do not refuse... do not spoil the entertainment; and let the cup come to me». According to Darby, The psychological impact of wine played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of a joyous banquet, as not being intoxicated would hinder the achievement of the gathering's purpose[77].

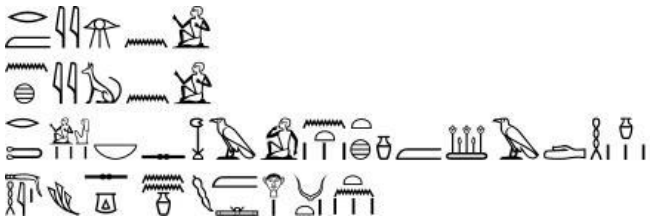
B. Drunkenness and Funerary Rites

Drunkenness was associated with funeral processions in Ancient Egypt. For example, this relief from the tomb of *Merymery* in Saqqara, who was the Custodian of the Treasury of Memphis and was most likely alive during the reign of King Amenhotep III, depicts a grand funeral procession scene. This detail shows a group of mourning females [78] and is accompanied by an inscription:

[76] KROETER 2009: 47-56; BRYAN 2014: 187–98.

[77] DARBY 1977:172.

[78] The relief illustrates an elaborate depiction of a funeral procession, specifically highlighting a gathering of grieving women. This relief is currently housed in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (National Museum of Antiquities) in Leiden, the Netherlands. In Ancient Egypt, many women pursued a vocation centered around mourning. Those with the means hired professional mourners to openly express sorrow within the household during the seventy-day process of mummification. These mourners would also accompany the funeral procession to the tomb. The mourning ritual involved actions such as putting dust on the head, tearing clothing, and scratching cheeks while emitting wails of grief. Tomb paintings suggest that the role of a mourner could commence at a young age. In the tomb of Ramose at Thebes, for instance, a group of mourning women includes a very young girl among them. All these figures are depicted standing with raised arms, clearly engaged in loud lamentation – mirroring the mourning practices of contemporary Egyptian women. BARBARA 2011: 35-53.



rmy.n.i nḫy.n.i rmṯ nb sḫȝ nt tḥ m šdḥ mḥy sgnn nḏm ḥr wpt.tn
«I have swept, I have mourned! O all people, remember getting drunk on shedeh, with wreaths and pleasant ointment on your forehead»[79].

This funeral procession scene encourages its viewers to become inebriated[80] **[FIGURE 5].**

[FIGURE 5]: A group of mourning females, tomb of Merymery. BOESER 1911: PL.XV

A magnificent funerary stele dating to the Third Intermediate Period of Egypt, specifically the 22nd dynasty (945-715 BC), also shows the importance of wine in the funerary rites. Crafted in honor of Sheny-Nefer, it depicts funerary offerings and a hieroglyphic inscription. The scene portrays the profile of the deceased, adorned in a white linen loincloth, and worshipping two deities associated with the afterlife. These deities stand before an opulent table laden with offerings. Beneath this table, there are two sealed amphorae, potentially containing wine. The accompanying inscription conveys that the departed individual, often equated with Osiris, the god of the dead, pays reverence to the deity Ra-Harakhte. This deity is described as, among other things, 'the arbiter of the two wines and oil'[81].

The evidence present thus far supports the argument that intoxication in Ancient Egypt was perceived to dissolve the boundary between existence and death, facilitating a connection with deceased ancestors. This aspect further elevated the significance of wine within funerary practices and depictions found in tombs[82] Wine was believed to have a revitalizing effect on the departed[83]. One ritual aimed at achieving this state was

[79] BOESER 1911: PL.XV; SCHNEIDER & RAVEN 1981; WATTERSON 2011: 109.
[80] ERMAN 1966: 167–69; SIMPSON 2002: 93; DAVIES 2003: 9.
[81] MARIANI «Wine in Ancient funerary rites», https://vivancoculturadevino.es/blog/en/2017/05/25/vino-ritos-funerarios-antiguedad/, accessed on (30/08/2023).
[82] *POO* 1995: 37; TEETER 2011: 71.
[83] *POO* 1995: 126.

referred to as the «opening of the mouth». In this ritual, wine was thought to symbolically open the mouth of the deceased statue, as this act was seen as a prerequisite for the deceased to be revived and partake in the offerings presented during the ritual[84]. Following a king's passing, wine held a prominent role as the primary beverage once the king had joined the divine realm in the afterlife[85].

C. Drunkenness and the Army

Alcohol misuse appears to have had a long history in the army; it is even recorded in the account of the siege of Joppa, Harris 500, which occurred during the reign of Thotmes III and Ramses III. According to this account, troops became intoxicated within an hour.

n ḏḥwty ỉm .w..f ..[wʿ]w tȝ ỉwʿyt Pr-ʿȝ ʿnḫw wḏȝw snbw [r] ḥrw.sn ḫr ỉr ḥr-sȝ wnwt st tḫ
«…..to Djehuty, let there be given to him ….soldiers of the troops of Pharaoh, may he live, prosper, and be healthy…..before them. Now after one hour they had become drunk»

A better translation of the word 'drunkard' in this context would be «cause of drunkenness». As part of his strategy to capture Joppa, Djehuty cleverly orchestrated a plan where he lured the enemy's horse-troops into a drunken party, enabling him to capture and secure their horses. The first step toward Joppa's capture was drunkenness[86]. Soldiers always indulged in heavy drinking during holidays, as follows:

ỉst wnn mšʿ n ḥm.f tḫ gsw m bḳ rʿ nb mỉ nty m ḥb Tȝ-Mry
«The soldiers of his Majesty were drunk of wine and anointed with oil each day as on a holiday in Egypt»[87].

Moreover, alcohol consumption was limited to Egyptian troops, who had to wait until the conclusion of a military campaign to receive their ration. This was in contrast to other societies, where being intoxicated was believed to grant strength and courage both in war and love[88].

D. Drunkenness Inspire Happiness

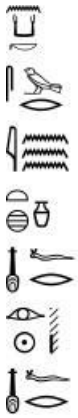
Drinking for pleasure is supported by many sources. Songs, love poems, stories, and even wisdom literature praise the pleasures of intoxication, whether for its own sake or for the conviviality it promotes. Drunkenness is typically associated with seduction and sexual activity among ordinary Egyptians, but it is more commonly seen

[84] *POO* 1995: 78, 162.
[85] MCGOVERN 2003: 102.
[86] DAVIES 2003: 77.
[87] SETHE 1907: 688.
[88] ROSSO 2010: 257.

during parties, banquets, and other social gatherings. The Egyptians viewed drinking parties to be an excellent leisure activity, although it was more for the upper classes than for the lower classes. Informal social gatherings among friends and neighbors in Ancient Egypt often led to varying degrees of intoxication[89].

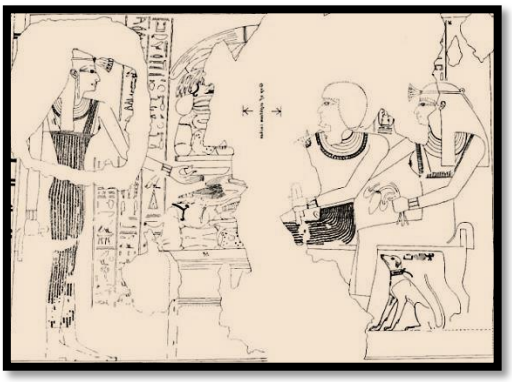
The effect, not the taste of the wine, seems to have impressed the guests, as evidenced by the texts. The intoxicated state was clearly associated with happiness. The sorrows and stresses of everyday existence were driven away by drinking. The god, it was believed, had provided the beverage[90].

The social aspect of drinking is highlighted in texts where daughters seem to encourage their deceased parents to indulge in excessive drinking, using the phrase «May (you) make a good day» (*iri hrw nfr*) and offering a bowl of wine[91]. This is demonstrated on the northern wall of the Theban tomb of *Wsr* (User) TT21, who served as a scribe and steward for King Tuthmosis I during the early eighteenth dynasty. On this wall there is a depiction showing User and his wife Bekt's daughter offering a white saucer of wine to them. She is addressing her parents in the image:



n kȝ.k swt ṯḥ nfr ỉrỉ hrw nfr

«*For your ka Drink the perfect inebriating drink and make a perfect day*!»[92] **[FIGURE 6].**



[FIGURE 6]: Daughter of User and his wife Bekt extends a white saucer of wine to the pair. DAVIES 1913: PL.XXV

[89] SIMPSON 2002: 343, 488.
[90] MANNICHE 1997: 32.
[91] LORTON 1975: 23-31.
[92] DAVIES 1913: 26, PL.XXV.

Manniche provided a comment regarding this particular scene, expressing that the day would become «A happy day» after the cup was empty. Drunkenness was the goal, and it was accomplished with the help of god. It was a way of connecting with the divine and being near the divine[93].

Participants at social occasions were encouraged to drink freely. In the tomb of Ahmes at al-Kab, we read:

swry r tḫt ỉry ḥrw nfr
«*Drinking unto intoxication and celebrating a festive day*»[94].

Further evidence can be found in the tomb of Petosiris, called Ankhefenkhons, located in the necropolis at Tuna al-Gebel. He lived during the 28th dynasty[95]. On the northern side of pillar C in the chapel, his father encourages him to experience sacred drunkenness induced by wine, and urges him to surrender to its effects, saying:

sỉ3 tḫ m 3b.n hrw nfr šms ỉb.tn m 3t ḥty-tp t3
«Drink till drunk while enjoying the feast day! Follow your heart in the moment on earth!»

In naturalistic environments, wine may also inspire happiness. For example, The P. Lansing document contains a letter-writing instruction created by Nebmare-Nakht, the royal scribe and chief overseer of the cattle of Amen-Re, King of Gods, for his apprentice, the scribe *Wenemdiamun*. In his writing, *Nebmare-Nakht* mentioned that the vineyard was a popular spot for relaxation. He went on to describe the plantations of the beautiful mansion with the following words:

ỉw.k ḥms m n3y.sn ḫ3yty ỉw.k wnm n3y.sn dḳrw
ỉry.tw n.k mḥw m n3y.sn spr tḫ.k m n3y.sn ỉrpw
«*You sit in their shade, you eat their fruit, and garlands are made for you of their branches. You are drunk with their wines*»[96].

E. Drunkenness and Festivals

Heavy drinking took place in connection with religious festivals. The intoxication of the celebrants, according to Schott, broke down walls separating the living from the dead[97].

Intoxication could, of course, have religious significance. Even the gods were intoxicated from time to time. Hathor (as Re's eye) was tricked into drinking an excess

[93] MANNICHE 1997: 32.
[94] LUTZ 1922: 106.
[95] LEFEBVRE 1924: 1:90; LICHTHEIM 1980: 51.
[96] ERMAN 1925: 114–15; LICHTHEIM 1976: 173.
[97] SCHOTT 1953: 76–77; DAUMAS 1970: 65.

amount of beer, which was dyed red to seem like blood. She became so inebriated that she passed out, which ultimately saved mankind.

Hathor was dubbed the «Mistress of intoxication» because of this myth, as well as her associations with music, dance, and pleasure. Intoxication was associated with various goddesses, such as Mut, Sekhmet, Tefnut, Bastet, and the beer goddess Menqet. Additionally, certain religious festivals were also connected to the consumption of alcohol and its intoxicating effects[98].

The Festival of Drunkenness

The Drunkenness Festival (*ḥb tḏ*)[99] was a public, state-sponsored ceremony held on the 20th day of the first month of Akhet, the inundation season. The festival was devoted to Hathor, known as  *nb(.t) tḏ* «The lady of drunkenness»[100], and it celebrated the salvation of humanity, attributed to beer. The Festival of Drunkenness was a major sociopolitical and religious event; it allowed society to reenact Hathor's pacification by providing plentiful alcohol, which was provided by the king[101].

The festival of drunkenness extends from at least the 12th dynasty to the Graeco-Roman period, but according to Jensen, it had its roots in prehistoric times[102]. The earliest recorded evidence for the festival can be found in a calendar from Niuserre's (5th dynasty) sun-temple, however, the text is incomplete and not infallible[103]. The next evidence comes from Lahun, from which 12th dynasty papyri detail temple festivals and attendees, particularly entertainers.

Luft[104] rebuilt a festival calendar from these documents, putting the celebration on the 20th day of the first month (1 Akhet 20); the festival name is *tp-tḏ*, corresponding to the Egyptian term *tḏj* «drunkenness»[105]. The next known occurrence of the rite occurs during the 18th dynasty when Hatshepsut constructed a «porch of intoxication» (*wʒh/whʒ n tḏ*) at the temple of Mut at Karnak[106]. At the beginning of the 18th dynasty, this feast was so prominent that its month was called «Drunkenness» (*tḫy*) – later it

[98] REDFORD 2002: 185, 196, 285; WILKINSON 2003:178.

[99] RYHOLT & QUACK 1996: 21; BRYAN 2000: 181; SPALINGER 2000: 260; SZPAKOWSKA 2003: 236; RAWASH 2011: 230-231; HORVÁTH 2015:125, 134; JENSEN 2017: 300.

[100] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 7-9, 325; *LÄ* vol.2, cols.1024-33, NN 338; MARIETTE 1870-1875: PL.66A; CHASSINAT 1934-1947: PLS.180-181.

[101] Consuming food and beverages held a sacred significance, serving to not only establish a physical link between humans and the vital cosmic energies but also to connect them with the deities who bestowed this life force. Similarly, the descriptions of the outcomes of consuming wine and beer during religious gatherings should not be interpreted as symbolic references to a metaphorical state of spiritual elation or inspiration. These descriptions were meant to convey actual states of physical intoxication. Clearly, intoxication had important ceremonial roles, signifying the presence of divine beings. As a result, Hathor was also recognized as the Mistress of Drunkenness. DAUMAS 1969: 10-12; SPALINGER 1993: 166–167; QUACK 2009: 353; JENSEN 2017: 296.

[102] GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132; JENSEN 2017: 296.

[103] HELCK 1977: 57, PL.II; SPALINGER 1993: 297.

[104] LUFT 1992: 217; GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132.

[105] ERMAN & GRAPOW (eds.) 1931: *Wb,* vol.5, 324–25.

[106] BRYAN 2005: 181–83; 2014: 103–106.

became the month: Thot (*Ḏḥwty*)[107]. There is a millennium-long gap until abundant evidence of the celebration resurfaces in Ptolemaic temples.

The festival is unique in that it combines royal and popular components. A procession of priests brought the goddess's statue, escorted by her entourage of other gods, to various chapels of the temple. As recounted at Dendera, she passed through the hypostyle hall and into the front courtyard, where she was set on a kiosk where the population could see her[108]. The celebrants would feast and drink themselves to sleep in the temple's courtyard[109].

It was a ceremony intended to appease the goddess in order to turn her from a destructive lioness into her beneficent aspect as the anima of love, fertility, music, dance, and wine. Once Hathor was appeased, it was anticipated that the annual inundation, when the Nile brought new, fertile soil to the fields and bathed them with life-giving water, would resume its appropriate duty. As a result, the king made offerings to the goddess to make her drunk, while Egyptians staged banquets with plenty of alcoholic beverages. According to a hymn from Medamud, it was a huge celebration[110].

This feast was associated with mythological ideas about the Sun deity Re and his daughter Hathor[111]. The ritual was performed in an attempt to appease the goddess and turn her from a destructive lioness to her beneficent aspect as the animal of love, fertility, music, dancing, and wine. Once Hathor was appeased, it was believed that she would allow the annual inundation, when the Nile brought new, fertile soil to the fields and bathed them with life-giving water, to resume. The king became needed by constructing himself as the link between gods and humanity and therefore as the semi-divine agent capable of propitiating this vital natural force[112].

Hathor's dual character is featured in the tale of the 'Destruction of mankind'. Re is the ruler of the world in this narrative when he discovers that mankind is trying to overthrow him. He dispatches Hathor to slay the rebels. She does so, transforming herself into Sekhmet. Re, on the other hand, reconsiders his intention to exterminate humanity and devises a strategy to calm Sekhmet. He orders the addition of red ochre to 7,000 jars of beer, which are then spilled into the area, flooding it. The goddess sees the lake the next morning and sucks it up in her hunger for blood. She is pacified by her intoxicated state, and she returns to Re as a beautiful woman[113].

As per the myth of the Destruction of Mankind, alcohol played a role in calming the goddess during her rage, which might be associated with the desire to appease (*sḫtp*) the deceased, who could also become angered and pose a threat to the lives and well-being of the living[114].

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[107] SPALINGER 1993: 293, 297–303.
[108] GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132; CAUVILLE 2002: 55.
[109] GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132; BRYAN 2014: 103–6.
[110] GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132; JENSEN 2017: 296.
[111] STERNBERG-EL HOTABI & KAMMERZELL 1992: 101–9.
[112] GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132; JENSEN 2017: 296, 113-132.
[113] HORNUNG 1982; DESROCHES-NOBLECOURT 1995: 28–30.
[114] MCDOWELL 1999: 104; SZPAKOWSKA 2003: 235.

Drunkenness in the setting of these rites had a deeper meaning than everyday experience. Both the king and the commoner had a hand in recreating political power system by participating in the festival. The king's role in financing large festivals performed a legitimizing purpose, renewing the king's status among his subjects while also renewing the cosmos, since it retold the story of the goddess's pacification, which brought the annual inundation back to Egypt[115].

A hymn to the goddess Rat-Tawy, depicted as Hathor, the sun's returning eye, was intricately carved on the inner west wall of the central kiosk situated at the entrance of the temple of Medamud. The hymn is probably a description of a portion of the festival of inebriation *tḫy* of I *ȝḫt* 20.

The hymn begins with a summons to the goddess to come and attend the celebrations in her honor.

mi̯.t swtwt m s.t n tḫ

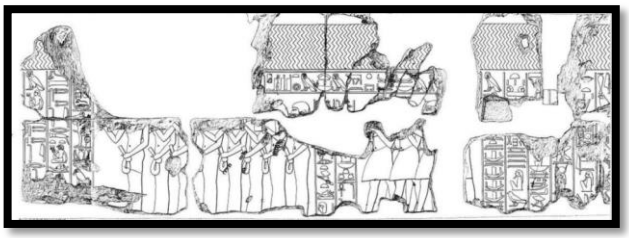
«*May (you) come! The procession is in the place of inebriation*»[116].

There follows a description of the Egyptian celebrants and their activities, in the presence of the returning goddess.

tbṯb n.t nwḥ.w m sḳbbwy

«*The drunken celebrants drum for you during the cool of the night*»[117].

The Egyptian celebrants welcome the goddess into the entrance kiosk of the temple, termed a *s.t n tḫ*, 'place of inebriation'. The *s.t n tḫ* should be a festival booth on the bank of the Nile, like the *mswr* of the 'songs of drinking place' accompanying the Poet procession in Luxor Temple[118] and the  *.t ḥḳ.t* of love poetry. An inebriated place is ideal for a riverside procession and festival[119]. The drinking spot referred to here is a booth set up by celebrants during nautical festivals. These booths align with the theme of sexual union that is inherent in the Opet Festival[120] **[FIGURE 7].**



[FIGURE 7]: In the colonnade hall of Luxor Temple, scenes from the Opet Festival depict priestesses and priests singing the «Songs of the Drinking Place» as part of the celebration. From the festival scenes of Tutankhamen. EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1994: PL.26

[115] GUGLIEMI 1994: 113-132; JENSEN 2017: 301.
[116] DARNELL 1995: 49–50.
[117] DARNELL 1995: 54.
[118] DARNELL 1991: 76–80; EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY 1994: 12–14, PLS.67-68; FISCHER-ELFERT 1999: 65-85.
[119] DERCHAIN 1975: 82–86; FOX 1985: 14-16, 46, 48 n.q.
[120] DARNELL 1995:59; DARNELL 2010: 8.

The association of the entrance of the temple with a place of inebriation helps to clarify a portion of a song from the tomb of Amenemhat[121]. The temple of the deity, in which he rises and sets can, like the horizon, be a feminine consort of the deity. So according to a singer in the tomb of Amenemhat:

«*How well it goes for the temple of Amun-Re, she who spends the day in the festival, with the king of the gods within her, [spending the night (?)…*
[ỉw.s mỉ tḫ].tỉ ḥms.tỉ r-rwy ḏrỉ.t
She is like a drunken woman, seated outside the dwelling place (*of the god*)»[122].

Archaeological excavations have brought to light Ancient festivals centered around drunkenness and porches where participants would indulge in libations, seeking near-death experiences. Death was seen as a state of being closest to the divine, and the potency of the beverage consumed at these sites played a role in heightening this experience. Furthermore, sanatoriums have been uncovered at Hathor temples where patients underwent trance-like states to establish connections with deities for healing purposes[123].

Festival of the Goddess Bastet

The festival of the goddess Bastet[124] took place at the cult center of the goddess Bastet in Bubastis. It was the most extravagant and widely celebrated festival in all of Egypt. The event revolved around joyful activities like dancing, singing, and indulging in drinks as a tribute to Bastet. The purpose was to express gratitude for the blessings received from the goddess and to seek her favor for the times ahead[125].

These events involved a formal procession in which the representation of the community's deity was taken out, allowing even regular people to catch a glimpse of at least its moveable shrine. Despite providing a remarkable account of the festivities honoring Artemis-Bastet, Herodotus did not offer any details regarding how the goddess appeared in her sacred boat during the river procession[126]. But based on

[121] DAVIES & GARDINER 1915: PL.15.

[122] DARNELL 1995: 60.

[123] GUTIERREZ HADDAD 2021: 33.

[124] The town of Bubastis celebrated numerous festivals dedicated to its patron goddess, Bastet. According to the festival schedule found in the Temple of Horus in Edfu during the time of Ptolemy X, the major Bubastis festivals occurred on specific dates: the 13th of the 2nd Month in *ȝḫt*, the 13th of the 1st Month in *šmw*, and the 18th of the 2nd Month in *šmw*. Herodotus mentioned a festival, which was likely one of these, especially since the list indicates that on the 1st of the 2nd month (Pauni) in *šmw*, there was a festival honoring the goddess Hathor of Dendera, who resided in Bubastis. Hathor would travel to Bubastis during this time, aligning perfectly with Herodotus' description. She played a role, albeit a divine one, in the grand Bubastite festival. According to the Canopus Decree, the Greater and Lesser Boubastia occurred on the first day of the 2nd Month in *šmw*, possibly linked to the harvest season and the rising of the Nile River. The Saite Calendar and the Esna Festival List also mention a festival on the 16th of the 2nd Month in *šmw*. Additionally, other texts refer to a procession of Bastet at Karnak on the 29th of the 1st Month in *prt*, a procession in Herakleopolis on the 5th day of the 4th Month in *prt*, and a festival in Thebes on the 4th day of the 4th Month in *prt*. *LÄ* vol.1, col. 628–630; HELCK 1971: 84; DARBY, GHALIOUNGUI & GRIVETTI 1977: 571; LLOYD 1994: 272-3; MALEK 1997: 98; RUTHERFORD 2005: 141-142.

[125] GERMOND 1981: 259; PINCH 2004: 116.

[126] STADLER 2008: 3; COPPENS 2009: 2.

various clues from various sources, it is conceivable or anticipated that religious festival processions encompassed five fundamental components. These included: firstly, the primary deities from the temple in their ceremonial boats; secondly, additional deities represented as standards leading the way for the boats; thirdly, the presence of the king; fourthly, the gathered audience; and finally, the participants who played roles in the procession[127].

It becomes evident that during the celebration of Bastet's festival, the goddess was brought out of her sanctuary, as documented on the statue of General Hor, who stated: «I brought out Bast in procession to her bark, at her beautiful feast of the fourth month of the second season, the fifth day until [///]». Undoubtedly, the central location for this festival was the temple. Consequently, the river and canals would not only have been crowded with small boats but also grand ceremonial ships, potentially carrying deities like Hathor. They sailed down the Nile from various parts of Egypt to converge on Bubastis in their divine boats, joining their worshippers in this renowned Bastet festival[128].

Recent evidence confirms the presence of the king at this event, as depicted in an autobiographical inscription on the left side of a block statue belonging to Nefer-ka, a priest of the lion-goddess Sekhmet during the reign of King Amenhotep III (approximately 1388–1350 BC)[129].

Regarding the gatherings of individuals, Herodotus mentioned that: «When the people are on their way to Bubastis they go by river, men and women together, a great number of each in every boat. Some of the women make a noise with rattles, others play flutes all the way, while the rest of the women, and the men, sing and clap their hands. As they journey by river to Bubastis, whenever they come near any other town they bring their boat near the bank; then some of the women do as I have said, while some shout mockery of the women of the town; others dance, and others stand up and expose their persons. This they do whenever they come beside any riverside town. But when they have reached Bubastis, they make a festival with great sacrifices, and more wine is drunk at this feast than in the whole year beside»[130].

The Feast of the Valley

The Beautiful Feast of the Valley, renowned in Thebes, had a long history, dating back to the Middle Kingdom and continued to be observed through the Greco-Roman period[131].

The name of this significant festival, known as «*Ḥb nfr n ỉnt*» has been documented in various tombs from the 18th dynasty. In the Medinet Habu Festival Calendar, which is dated to the reigns of Ramesses II and Ramesses III, this celebration is referred to as «*Ḥb ỉnt*»[132].

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[127] STADLER 2008: 3 .

[128] ALLIOT 1954: 335, 5-6.

[129] BAKR, BRANDL & KALLONIATIS (ed.) 2010: 176-9, Nrº.53.

[130] HERODOUTS 2008: vol.2, 60; LUTZ 1922: 2.

[131] ALLAM 1963: 68-72.

[132] FOUCART 1930: 50ff; SCHOTT 1952: 67; KITCHEN 1983: 124.

It seems that «*Ḥb ỉnt*» was one of the designations used for the Beautiful Feast of the Valley at al-Dair al-Medina, at least during the 19th dynasty. This feast, «*Ḥb nfr n ỉnt*» is also mentioned in the inscription on the rear support of a statue belonging to Neferhotep found in his tomb (TT216), which is attributed to the 19th dynasty[133].

During the 20th dynasty, the name of the Feast of the Valley may have been «*pn-ỉnt*». In document O. DeM 645, dated to the reign of Ramesses IV, which records court proceedings, an unidentified individual is said to have sworn an oath to make a reimbursement before «*pn-ỉnt*». This might possibly be a reference to the name of the festival itself[134].

It was associated with the god Amun-Re, who then embarked on a journey to the western hills on the opposite side of the river, believed to be the dwelling place of Hathor. The ceremonial journey was initiated during the 11th dynasty[135]. It passes through the funerary temples of the ancestral kings and settles in the funerary temple of the contemporary king for the events of the feast. It is believed that the observance of the Valley Festival and the arrival of the deceased on the western mainland evolved from an earlier celebration in which Hathor, known as the «goddess of the West», traditionally emerged from the hills to receive the departed souls. This practice dates to at least the Old Kingdom period. However, with the advent of the worship of Amun in Thebes starting from the 11th dynasty, Amun took over Hathor's role in visiting the deceased in the West. Nevertheless, this did not diminish Hathor's status as the deity associated with the West. She continued to hold a significant role by accompanying Amun, along with a group of Hathor priestesses, during his visits to the western mainland as part of the Valley Festival[136]. During the Valley Festival, the priests carried the portable boat of Amun, known as «*wṯs nfrw*» and paraded with it through the temple's courtyards until they reached the courtyard of the columns. At this location, they presented splendid offerings to Amun, including bouquets of flowers and soft linen garments that were distributed to the audience as part of the festivities[137].

The second part of the Valley Festival celebrations on the western mainland in Thebes can be divided into two sections. The first section involved a celebration within the mortuary temple of the reigning king of the festival. The inscriptions at the Ramesseum temple described how, in the evening, the people of Thebes would participate in a torch-lit procession, ascending slopes and hills until they reached the tombs of their ancestors. They brought with them ample provisions such as food,

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[133] BRUYÈRE 1925: 41-43; *PM* I². 1: 312–315.

[134] ČERNÝ 1970: PL.10; KITCHEN 1983: 125; HELCK 2002:379–380.

[135] The ceremonial journey was initiated during the 11th dynasty, as archaeological evidence indicates the existence of a mud brick temple dedicated to Amun-Re on the eastern bank of Thebes as early as the reign of king Intef II. Nebhetepre Mentuhotep II, one of his successors from the 11th dynasty, built a terraced temple within a natural valley of cliffs directly facing Karnak, known as Deir el Bahri. The absence of supporting structures around it suggests that it was constructed primarily as a staging area for ceremonial events and as the focal point for the local festival. BLACKMAN 1925: 249-255; BERLANDINI 1965: 9-41; DORESSE 1979: 36-65; BAILEY 1996: 15-28; GABOLDE 1999: 31-49; AMOLD 2005:137.

[136] FOUCARD 1930: 50ff; GRAEFE: *LÄ* vol.6, col.187-188.

[137] RAWASH 2011: 197-198.

drinks, sweets, wine, and everything needed for an entire night in the cemetery alongside their deceased loved ones. They engaged in music, dance, singing, and hymn-chanting dedicated to their deity, Amun. Many tombs in the western mainland feature scenes and texts depicting the Feast of the Valley, including one that reads: «*The beer has matured for the sake of the day of the feast, and people are awake all night enjoying the beauty of the night, and on the roofs his name is repeated, and his direction hymns to him in the darkness of the night*»[138].

During the Feast, a song was performed, describing Hathor in a manner that left no doubt about her significance and presence in the celebration as follows:

«The goddess is like a woman, who sits drunken outside her room, with locks of hair falling on her breast» (Theban Tomb N^{ro}. 82)[139].

On the feast of the valley, the dead used to share with the living in the banquets held in the feast, eating what they loved during their lives, drinking wine and beer, and enjoying dancing and singing. In fact, the participation of the dead in the feast was through the ka of the deceased, and this is what we notice in all the offerings that the family of the deceased made to him, such as offerings, food, drink, and bouquets of ankhs. The priests performed purification rituals during Amun's procession to the cemetery[140].

It's still possible that the beverages consumed at the Feast of the Valley and other such events were stronger than the alcohol concentration alone would indicate[141]. The belief in the rejuvenating and fertility aspects of inebriation may lie behind the (*tḫw)* title at the Min festival, which is clearly derived from the 'drunkard'(*tḫw*). Two wab-priests at the festival carried this title[142].

3. The Negative Aspects of Drunkenness

In Egypt, drinking excessively outside of designated festivals was considered socially unacceptable[143]. Concerns about intoxication-related unrestrained behavior are expressed in texts. Alcohol not only reduces inhibitions, enabling men to act inappropriately: Their conversation becomes more romantic, their body more expressive. They hug each other more freely, laugh, cry, and dance in ways that are claimed to convey their actual feelings and personalities. As a result, the sacred gatherings involving the consumption of wine served as vital outlets for the outpouring of suppressed emotions and behaviours[144].

A. Instruction of Kagemni

Drunkards are frequently violent; that is reflected in the Old Kingdom instruction of Kagemni, which says:

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[138] MARCINIAK 1971: 54-64; HAIKAL 1972: 11-16; KARKOWSKI 1979: 359–364; WIEBACH 1986: 263–291; NAGUIB 1991: 21–32; HARTWIG 2004: 91–103.

[139] MANNICHE 1997: 32.

[140] AL-NUBI 1994:166.

[141] MANNICHE 1997: 33.

[142] ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971: *Wb,* vol.5, 325: 6, 19.

[143] HARRINGTON, DRAYCOTT & STAMATOPOULOU 2016: 155.

[144] GEFOU-MADIANOU 1992: 13.

ỉr swr.k ḥnʿ tḫw šsp.k ỉw ỉb.f ḥtpw

«*When you drink with a drunkard, take when his heart is content* » [145].

B. Instructions of Ani

In Ani's New Kingdom Instructions drunkenness is described as a result of excessive drinking. Ani advises his son to avoid alcohol, explaining to him in a lively speaking picture why the drunkard appears to be in terrible condition.

ỉmỉ.k hd.k m swr ḥnḳt bn (tw)t smy sn.nw prỉ m r.k nn rḫ.k ḏd.s tw.k hzy.t ḥʿ.k szw nn kỉỉ (ḥr) dỉ.t dr.t.k nzy.k ỉry-swr st (ḥr) ʿḥʿ (ḥr) ḏd ḥry (r) pzy swr.f ỉw.t wḫz.k r nḏnḏ.k gmỉ.t.k sḏr ḥr ỉtn ỉw.k mỉ ʿḏ šrỉ

«Don't indulge in drinking beer, lest you utter evil speech. And don't know what you're saying. If you fall and hurt your body, none holds out a hand to you: your companions in the drinking, stand up saying: Out with the drunk! If one comes to seek you and talk with you, one finds you laying on the ground, as if you were a little child» Herodotus[146].

C. Anastasi Papyrus

A dismissive attitude toward this behaviour is mirrored in the Anastasi IV Papyrus (BM EA10249, col. 11, 8-12, 5). According to a letter written by a teacher to his student, the young Egyptian student had a tendency to neglect his studies and spend time in the city's taverns, where he would consume both locally made and imported wines, leading to drunkenness. The teacher writes:

«*You are like a broken steering-roar in a ship that is obedient to neither side. You are like a shrine without its god, like a house without bread. People meet you, when you climb on a wall, and you brake … People run away from behind you, because you inflict wounds upon them*»

After this description the master gives his apprentice this summary:

ḥn ṯw.k rḫ.tw ỉw bwt ỉrp mtw.k ʿrḳ.k ḥr šdḥ mtw.k tm dỉ.t ṯ(z)bw m ḥzty.k

«*Did you know that wine is abomination, you would divert from shedeh, and you would not put the jugs in your heart*»[147].

[145] GARDINER 1946: 73; LICHTHEIM 1973: 6.

[146] SUYS 1935: 35; LICHTHEIM 1976: 137; QUACK 1994: 141:95- 96, 290.

[147] GARDINER 1937: 47; FEUCHT 1990: 65.

D. The Instruction of Papyrus Insinger

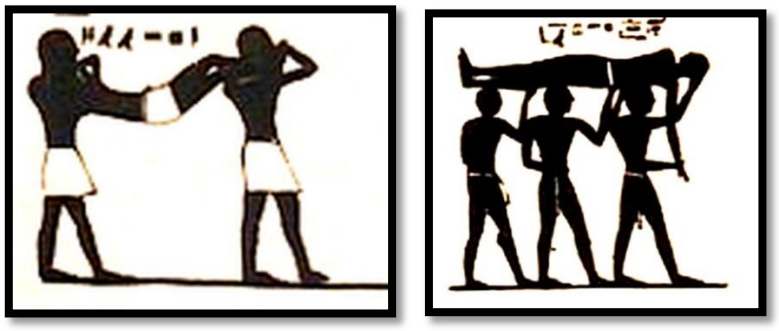
According to the author of the Papyrus Insinger, various illnesses are attributed to excessive eating and drinking. It mentioned that «*He who drinks too much wine lies down in a stupor with the head lost*»[148].

4. Physical Effects of Drunkenness

Certain wall paintings portray scenes of a lavish banquet hosted by a wealthy man, where a sick lady is shown vomiting, likely due to excessive alcohol consumption. In other depictions, a manservant is seen asleep behind the cellar door, clearly intoxicated from wine, while slaves carry away the master and a guest, both heavily inebriated[149]. These scenes illustrate that the Egyptians indulged in wine despite the consequence of losing their sobriety[150].

A. Passing out (unconsciousness)

The tomb of ḫty (khety) from the XIth dynasty depicted drunkenness on the south wall, eastern section. The scene shows two slaves, one at the master's feet and the other at his head, carrying him while he is completely intoxicated. Following them are three slaves who lift their master onto their heads, carrying him like a rigid pole. The first slave supports the master's head with his hand[151] **[FIGURE 8].**



[FIGURE 8]: Unconsciousness cases from tomb of khety. NEWBERRY1893: PL.XVI

B. Sleep

A part of the vintage scene in the tomb of Antef (TT 155) shows that the wine has been determined to be excellent, and the full jars are now being brought to the cellar by a procession of four men led by a stick-wielding overseer. The man who has arrived at the door discovers that it is closed; he knocks but gets no response, and then says to the man behind him **[FIGURE 9].**

[148] JONCKHEERE 1950: 224–25; LICHTHEIM 1980: 190; LICHTHEIM 1983: 52, 13.

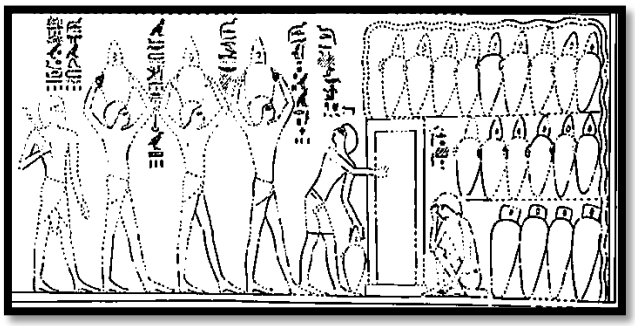
[149] EL-GUEBALY & EL-GUEBALY 1981: 1207–21; LUTZ 1922: 88; BREWER &TEETE 2001:52.

[150] For example: In the poem about a woman who fearlessly displays her closeness with her lover to his family, or the women aboard boats described by Herodotus who boldly reveal themselves and shout indecent words, the intoxicated celebrants were freely wandering through the wetlands, seeking companions for the festive night. QUACK 1996: 22.

[151] NEWBERRY 1893: vol.2, PL.XVI; LUTZ 1922: 98.

ḏd.f bȝk sḏr ḏd.f sw tḫt m ỉrp

«*He said: [The] servant is sleeping. He said he is drunken with wine*»[152]

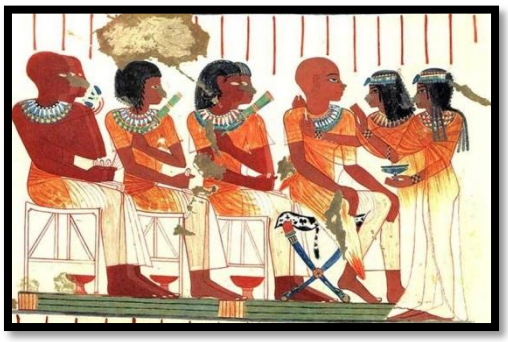


[FIGURE 9]: Sleep case from the tomb of Antef. SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1957: PL.XV

C. Vomiting

In the New Kingdom, depictions of guests vomiting during banquets and parties were found in scenes featuring the elite. For example, on the tomb of Nebamon (TT181) and Ipuky, specifically on the south-west wall, in the sub-register of men, the guests at the banquet are portrayed. There are seven characters, four of whom have bald heads.

They are seated on elegant folding stools with blue legs, and beneath each stool, there is a small bowl. It is believed that these bowls were provided in case anyone consumed excessive amounts of alcohol and needed to vomit[153] **[FIGURE 10].**

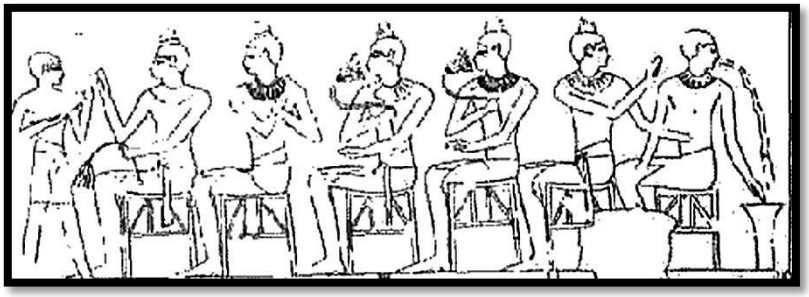


[FIGURE 10]: Bowls use in case of vomiting. Tomb of Nebamon. DAVIES 1925: 33.

On the tomb of Djeserkareseneb (TT38), also known as Djeserka, the south wall on the west end shows the men partaking in Djeserka's feast. The guest positioned

[152] SAVE-SODERBERGH 1957: 18, PL.XV; WILFONG 2001: 181.
[153] DAVIES 1925: 33.

at the far right in the scene diverts away from the others and vomits into a large-necked container placed behind his stool (although due to wall fading, the vomit is not clearly visible today). The man seated in front of him tries to assist him. It is evident that this situation is a clear consequence of excessive drinking[154] **[FIGURE 11]**.



[FIGURE 11]: A guest vomits into a tall wide necked vessel. Tomb of Djeserkareseneb. DAVIES 1963: PLS.I-VII

At Thebes, there is a wall painting that portrays a particularly graceful scene. In this depiction, the ladies are shown overwhelmed by the effects of excessive wine consumption. One of the intoxicated ladies holds a lotus flower, which represents intoxication and therefore also symbolizes her state. Their female attendants take care of them. Similarly, the banquet scene of Neferhotep (TT49) in the Theban necropolis illustrates a woman in the top register who is shown vomiting after indulging in too much wine[155] **[FIGURE 12].**

[FIGURE 12]: Excessive consumption in Ancient Egypt, Theban Tomb, New Kingdom. LUTZ 1922: 99

III. RESULTS

Kings, like priests, elite, and high-ranking officials, drank wine throughout ancient Egyptian history. Women, especially those from the upper classes, were urged to drink freely at banquets to «not spoil the entertainment». Drunkenness was

[154] DAVIES 1963: 421– 432, PLS.I –VII.
[155] PETERS-DESTÉRACT 2005; STÜNKEL 2021: 1

considered a «holy intoxication» in Ancient Egypt, and it was thought to be a way for women to connect to the gods through a different state of mind.

«Mystical drunkenness» and «profane drunkenness» were not confused by the Egyptians. The attitude toward alcohol in banquet scenes demonstrates this: abstinence from drinking, moderate drinking, or drunkenness. Furthermore, the Wisdom texts warned against excessive drinking. Other texts, on the other hand, speak of inebriation and wine as a sacred right, a sign of real devotion.

In most cases, intoxication was considered beneficial and appealing. It was associated with pleasure, and companionship, and a way to establish a connection with both the divine and the deceased. The significance of drunkenness lies not solely in the pleasure it brings but in the altered state it induces, allowing the living to communicate with the departed and access the realm of the gods. As a result, inebriation was seen as a sacred privilege and an indication of genuine devotion. This belief is evident in the presence of feasts, banquets, and funeral processions that encouraged and embraced drunkenness as part of their rituals.

Nonetheless, instructions, wisdom, and Miscellanies are examples of texts that express concern about the disordered behavior that can result from intoxication. They described the drunkard with several characteristics as follows: the drinker is frequently violent, his speech is terrible, he has no idea what he is saying, he misses friends' assistance, he passes out and loses his head and he is helpless as a small child.

Furthermore, depicting the drunkard with a variety of symbolic themes is as follows: he is like a broken steering oar on a ship, like a shrine without its god, like a house without bread. Because he inflicts harm on others, they run from behind you.

Behaviors such as having a hot temper, being overly gluttonous, lacking piety, displaying arrogance towards strength or knowledge, engaging in intemperate actions, scheming, disrespecting those of higher status or the elderly and ill, being greedy, and being excessively talkative are all deemed as undesirable conduct. However, these actions are not subject to any formal punishment, but result in disapproval from one's peers, potentially impacting the wrongdoer's social or professional life.

The Ancient Egyptians believed in balance, so being able to control one's drinking, as well exert control in other parts of one's life, was necessary. If not taken to extremes, intoxication was acceptable in a variety of situations. Though most of our evidence for the Ancient Egyptians' attitudes against intoxication comes from the New Kingdom, earlier and later sources appear to show a degree of consistency over time.

A person could drink while experiencing the divine and magical through holy drunkenness. Excavations have uncovered festivals focused on drunkenness and porches where participants would seek near-death experiences through libation. Death was viewed as a state where one becomes closest to the divine, and the intensity of this connection could be heightened by the type of beverage consumed at the site.

To comprehend the behavior exhibited during these festivals, it is crucial to grasp the connection between their purpose and the accompanying mythological narratives. There was an undeniable shift in the acceptability of behavior over the course of these festivals. Participants were not only encouraged but also expected to go to great lengths to please the goddess during her celebration. This was achieved through activities such

as drinking, dancing, singing, making noise, and engaging in overt sexual behavior. It's important to note that this behavior contrasted with the typical image of an Egyptian, who are characterized as composed, of high status, and literate. Wisdom literature would suggest that an Ancient Egyptian would not typically be involved in such activities. Therefore, I believe that understanding the festivals' underlying significance and their role in the cycle of the world is necessary to explain this difference in attitude.

Several recurring themes can be observed in the preceding texts. One of the most prominent themes is the excessive consumption of alcoholic drinks, which is reflected in the modern name of the festivals. Additionally, there is a shared emphasis on activities such as dancing, singing, and creating noise as offerings to the goddess. Furthermore, it appears that certain behaviors were widespread at these events, including the indulgence in food as described in various texts. Some sources even suggest that alongside intoxication, individuals may have used the inhalation of blue lotus fumes to establish a connection with the divine. The wall paintings highlighted three of the most important symptoms of drunkenness, which are vomiting, unconsciousness and sleep.

IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, in Ancient Egypt, two contrasting perspectives on drunkenness prevailed. The positive perspective regarded drunkenness as a source of pleasure, companionship, and a means of connecting with gods and the deceased. In this context, self-control was advocated, as moderation was considered essential for leading a wise life and earning respect.

On the other hand, the negative view was associated with the sinful nature of excessive intoxication, which had the potential to ruin individuals' lives. When someone exhibited extreme drunkenness and lost control, they were generally met with varying degrees of disapproval. Though efforts were made to caution the young against excessive and frequent intoxication, drunk individuals were mostly treated with amusement or little concern.

When examining the recommended behavior outlined in Ancient Egyptian instructional texts, it becomes evident that it significantly contrasts with the actions observed during festivals dedicated to the Solar Eye Goddess. The motivation behind the Egyptians' willingness to deviate from cultural moral norms during these festivals was primarily ideological. The objective was to ensure the appeasement of the Solar Eye Goddess, who was known for her capricious and formidable nature. To maintain her favor and prevent potential catastrophes, it was deemed essential for as many people as possible to engage in her preferred activities during her celebration.

If the Solar Eye Goddess remained dissatisfied during her festival, it was believed that this dissatisfaction could trigger a wide range of disasters in the world. Consequently, by participating in these activities, which were typically discouraged, every Egyptian contributed to the preservation of world stability.

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