

The veneration of the king in the New Kingdom

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The kingship is not only one of the most important characteristics and outstanding features of the Ancient Egyptian civilization, but also the institution that above all gave meaning, purpose and stability to the whole Egyptian way of life. It was the concept of kingship that enabled Egyptian culture to exist and flourish for three millennia. It was only culture or fiction, which enabled the Egyptians to stand for foreign domination.

The present study does not allege to be a complete and definitive one of institution of kingship in Ancient Egypt. The prime purpose of this article is to consider some scenes and texts in the temples and steles as well as other objects relating to the New Kingdom and to throw the light on the veneration of the king.

Description

The materials of this article are mainly obtained from the inscriptions and relief engraved on the walls or columns of the temples in Abydos and Luxor. In addition, there are scenes and texts on some steles, which belong also to the same period, i.e. the New Kingdom. There are also objects from the Egyptian Museum such as the shield of Tutankhamun, the basis of the chair of the same king and fragments coming from Madinet Habu. Thus the materials dealt with in this article could be discussed under two sections, i.e. scenes and texts.

1- Scenes:

The scenes in discussion can be divided into three types. These have similar structure and function with different styles of writing. These scenes are found on the lower register of the columns of the temples dated in the New Kingdom. On the other objects that are in Cairo Museum, the scenes appear also on the lower register.

The first type (Fig. 1)

This type of scenes consists of the following elements:

- 1-The *rhyt*-bird with human raised hands in adoration position, indicating the people of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- 2-The *nb*-sign which has different meanings, in our occasion will be translated as "all, whole".
- 3-The *dw3*-sign, which has different meanings such as adore, worship and praise.
- 4-The Cartouch which contains the name of the King.

Sites

This type of scenes is to be found on the lower register on the columns in the temples during the New Kingdom. But it appears only in the places, where the people are allowed to penetrate. Therefore, it could be found in the following places:

- 1-In Sity-temple in Abydos, it appears on all columns in the first court and the first two rows of columns in the second court, but other scenes replace the scenes on the third row.
- 2-In Karnak-temple, on all columns of the Hypostyl, with the exception of the two rows in the middle.¹
- 3-In Luxor-temple, on 13 columns only in the south and east sides of the first court.² It is noticeable that the scene is not to be found on the other columns of the same court.

¹Key plans, Pl. III

²Key plans, Pl. XXI no. 54, 55, 61, 65-74.

The scenes are on the two rows in the southern corner and on the inner row in the East Side. The *dw3*-sign is omitted from some positions. The omission of this sign does not change the meaning of the scene because the meaning of worship is to be understood from the position of the bird that indicates the adoration position.

4-In Madenit-Habu, on the upper register of the sidewalls flanking the entrance to the first court of the temple.³

5-CG 34.183, height 2.54 m., width 1.29 m. This stele may be by dating back to king Tutankhamun and is reused in the time of the king Horemhab. It was found in the northeast corner of the Hypostyl in Karnak temple⁴. The two Cartouches in the middle of the lower register of the stele, have the name of the king Horemhab (*Dsr-hprw-Rc stp-n-Rc Hr-m-hb mrj-Imn*). On both sides of the Cartouch, there are five representations for the *rhyt*-bird with *dw3*-sign on the *nb*-sign.

6-CG 34.026 JE 3109, height 2.07 m., width 1.10 m. The stele belongs to the time of Amenophis III. (*Imn-htp Nb-m3ct-Rc*). It was found in the Mortuary temple of the King Merenptah⁵. On the lower register, there is *dw3*-sign in the middle, which is flanked from both sides with three representations for the bird on the *nb*-sign. The Cartouch is omitted from this register. It is to be understood that the worship is for the king who is represented on the stele.

³Uvo Hölscher. The excavation of Madinet-Habu V. I. General plans and views, the uni. of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications v. XXI, Pis. 25-28.

⁴Lacau, Stele du Nouvel Empire, pp. 224ff, pl. LXX.

⁵Lacau, op. cit., pp. 59ff., pl. XX, XXI.

7-Fragments from Madinet-Habu are in Cairo Museum having Nr. 5125. There are representations of the *rhyt*-bird with *dw3*-sign on *nb*-sign on these fragments.

The second type (Fig. 2)

The scenes of this type are similar to the first one, except for the replacement of the *rhyt*-bird by a kneeling man with bird's wings. This representation has the same function of the bird, namely the people of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Sites:

There is only one example for this type. The scene is on both side-walls flanking the entrance of the first court of the temple of Madinet-Habu. They are to be seen on the upper register.⁶

The third type (Fig. 3)

This type is similar to the last one, but the Cartouch, which has the name of the king, is replaced by the appearance window, from which the king ought to appear.

Sites:

The sole representation for this type comes from Madinet-Habu⁷. It is to be found on the wall above the entrance of the temple, on both sides of the appearance window.

II- Texts

There are many examples for the texts which refer to the meaning of the before mentioned scenes. They are inscribed on the monuments such as the walls of the temples and shrines, or steles or statues. These inscriptions belong also to the time of the New Kingdom. Here are some examples for these texts.

1- In Luxor temple: An example of texts is to be found on the lower register of the jambs of the entrance between the

⁶Key plans, Pl. XXIX.

⁷Uvo Hölscher, op. Cit., Pls. 25-28.

The king is represented through his name in the Cartouch. So the people were worshipping the king himself and not his name. This is clear from the third type of scenes, in which the appearance window from which the king by himself ought to appear replaces the Cartouch of the king. That the king was personified through his name can be supported by many evidences. For example, in Madinet-Habu first open court, on the lower register of the pillars on the right side the following scene appears:

Two hands coming from the Cartouch which contains the name of the king holding the hair of the enemies (Fig. 4). This historical representation is an imitation of the scene, which was common throughout the Egyptian History, but with the figure of the king in the same place of the Cartouch. Similar scenes are on the other pillars in the same court, but with other representation for the name of the king in the *srh*, surmounted by the falcon which has also human hands catching the hair of the enemies (Fig. 5).¹⁰

2- The verb *dw3*

The verb *dw3* has many meanings: 1) in Berliner Dictionary¹¹ are the following meanings: Meist mit directem Objekt der gepriesen Person, Menschen preisen den König oder einen Gott und von Göttern, die einen höchsten Gott u.ä. preisen. 2) In HWB¹²: preisen, anbeten und schätzen. 3) Faulkner¹³ translates it: praise and worship.

¹⁰Key plans, Pl. XXV.

¹¹Wb V, 426f.

¹²Hannig, R., Grosses Handwörterbuch, Ägyptisch-Deutsch, Die Sprache der Pharaonen (Mainz 1995), 972.

¹³Faulkner, R.O., A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian (Oxford 1962), 310.

From the different meanings in the abovementioned dictionaries, we have the attempt to translate verb *dw3* in our theme as worship. The following example clarifies this meaning: *dw3 Rc hft wbn.f* "worship Re while he shines". But when the object indicates another word as: *dw3 k3t* "the work praising". We can not translate this verb adore according to the following evidence: There are scenes relating to the theme in construction and function, but they have other elements. One of the most important scenes is to be found in the sanctuary of the temple of Madinet-Habu (Fig. 6). On the lower register on the columns is the representation for the temple and in both sides is a seated man with raised hands in adoration position. In front of the human figure are the *dw3*-sign and the hieroglyphic sign for God in the plural form. There is also *nb*-sign under this representation. On one side of the temple the phrase: *jmjw pt* is drawn, whereas the phrase: *jmjw t3* is engraved on the other. As we have mentioned before in the discussion of the personification of the king through the Cartouch, the same could be said that the drawing of the temple is a representation of the God who exists in the temple. Thus the scene could be read: *dw3 ntrw nb jmjw pt Hwt*, *dw3 ntrw nb jmjw t3 Hwt* "All Gods who are in the sky worship the temple (the God who is in this temple), and all the Gods who are on earth worship the temple (the God who is in this temple)" This is due to the fact that it is inconceivable that the Gods may adore another God.

3- The word *rhyt*

The word *rhyt* is not found as bird expression¹⁴. It was known in the Old Kingdom as feminine and it has been used with a weak consonant since the time of the Middle

¹⁴ Wb II, 447, 8.

Kingdom. The scientific name is "*Vanellus Cristatus*" and known as "Peewit, Lapwing or Crested". The word *rhyt* appeared since the time of the Pyramid Texts, determined by the bird only or with the determinative of the people in later periods.¹⁵ It is generally translated as Egyptians or Commoners. This translation is accepted by many Egyptologists, such as Sethe¹⁶, Berliner Dictionary¹⁷ Kaplony¹⁸ and others. Gardiner discussed a Stele from the New Kingdom having the phrase: "gate of the adoration of the Rekheyet" in the temple of Amun-Re. He meant that the populace being obviously kept outside.¹⁹ J. Pirenne believed that *rhyt*, *pct* and *hnmmt*, which mostly appear together, indicate the different classes of Egyptians, and the *rhyt* was the lowest classes.²⁰

There is a great contrast: that the *rhyt* refers to Egyptians disagrees with the scenes and texts which represent them together with the enemies of Egypt, especially with the nine bows from the archaic period. The earliest example is that on which the *rhyt*-birds are hung together with the bows on the scepter of Heraconopolis.²¹ We find also that the nine bows are preceded by the *rhyt*-birds on the basis of Zoser Statue,

¹⁵ Pyr. Texts. 655 b, 17726 b; Sethe, Die Altäg. Pyr. Texts, 1908-22; Wb II, P. 447.

¹⁶ Sethe, Die Achtung Feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefäßscherben des Mitteleren Reiches, 1926, PP. 60-1.

¹⁷ Wb II, P. 447.

¹⁸ P. Kaplony, Kiebitz, in: LÄ III, Cols. 417-22.

¹⁹ Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, 1947, vol. I, P. 107.

²⁰ J. Pirenne, Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales Bruxelles. T. II, 1934, PP. 689-717.

²¹ Ashmolean Mus., no. 349.

upon which the king's feet stand. This theme is common throughout the pharaonic time.²² The same could be seen in the texts that mention the *rhyt* as enemies. Explaining this outstanding contrast, Kaplony has aptly argued that the *rhyt* were rebels at the beginning of the Egyptian History. As the king has controlled them and gave them protection, they ought to respect him. Therefore the *rhyt*-birds are usually represented with raised human hands behind the name of the king.²³

But Nibbi²⁴ refused this opinion and gave a different explanation. She argues that there is a relationship between the *rhyt* and Lower Egypt. The scenes in Abydos Temple show them in relation with the crown of Lower Egypt.²⁵ In addition, there are many scenes that represent them upon the papyrus plants, the symbol of Lower Egypt.²⁶ She indicates through many examples, that the *rhyt*-birds not only were inhabitants of Lower Egypt, but also foreigners and enemies who came to the Delta of Egypt where they dwelt. For the topic *dw3 rhyt*, it refers to the Middle Kingdom²⁷. There are many examples, which include this form:
*dw3 wj r-tn rhyt*²⁸

²² A. Nibbi, *Lapwings and Libyans in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 1/ff.

²³ Kaplony, *Kiebitz*, in: *LÄ III*, Col. 418.

²⁴ Nibbi, *Op. Cit.*

²⁵ A. Zayed, *ASAE* 57, 1972, pp. 115f.

²⁶ Hayes, *JNES*, 10, 1951, fig. 25 h.

²⁷ Edward Naville, *The XI Dynasty Temple at Deir el-Bahari I*, *EEF* 28, 1907, Taf. 24; Lacau-Chevrier, *Sesostris Ier*, 86 (scenes 15, 23/24).

²⁸ *CT II*, 118i.

*dw3 tw pct sms tw rhyt*²⁹
*pct rhyt sw3s.sn tw*³⁰
*j(3)w m t3 jn rhyt*³¹
*rhyt nb(t) jr bnw zp 4.*³²

It was generally accepted as a word referring to the people of Lower Egypt³³. That the bird means the people of Upper and Lower Egypt can be supported by examples from the temple of Ramsis II. in Abydos. The scene is on the lower register on the columns in the first court (Fig. 7). It is identical with the scenes dealt with in this article, but a seated man in adoration position replaces the bird. The word *pct* is in front of the human figure, whereas the word *rhyt* is in front of the other. Both words refer to all people of Egypt. In this situation they worship the God of the temple, because the figure in the middle is a representation for the temple and not the Cartouch of the king. There is a similar type of this representation is to be found in the other temple in Abydos i.e. the temple of Sity (Fig. 8). On the lower register of the columns of the last row in the second court and on the columns in the small temple of Osiris, connected to Osiris Chapel.

²⁹ CT VI, 159 c/f.

³⁰ Wb II, 447, 10 Belegstellen.

³¹ URK IV, 1874, 14.

³² Barguet, in: RdE 9, 1952, 7, 18.

³³ Wb II, 447ff; see also AEO I, 98ff; Clere, in MDAIK 16, 1958; 30ff; Edel, Zu den Inschriften auf den Jahrezeitenreliefs der Weltkammer, aus dem Sonnenheiligtum des Niuserre II. NAWG 1963 (1964), Nr. 4, 113ff; Kaplony, Beitr. Inschriften, 56ff, ders. in: MDAIK 25, 1969, 30ff; ders. Studien zum Grab des Methethi, monographien der Adegg-Stiftung Bern 8, (Bern 1976), 16f.

Conclusion

From the scenes and texts dealt with in this article, one can come to the following conclusions:

Verb *dw3* has different meanings. In our scene and texts, dealt with in this research it can be translated as veneration. This meaning depends on:

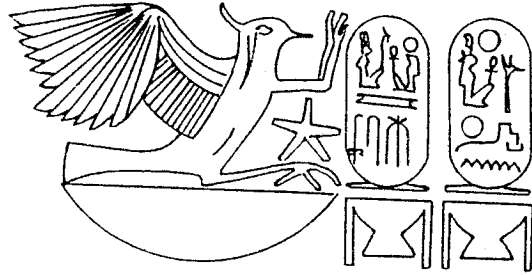
- The same verb is used between the Gods and it is not logic that the Gods who are in heaven and the Gods who are on earth adore another God, but it is reasonable to be translated as veneration.
- It is also clear from the texts, discussed above, that the Egyptians veneration the king, because the text contains the expression "under the feet (sandals) of the king" with the foreigners and verb *dw3* with the Egyptians.

The scenes showing the veneration of the king are represented in the places in which the people could penetrate. But the sanctuary or the adjacent are, the Cartouch is replaced by the drawing of the temple. In this situation we can translate verb *dw3* as adore.

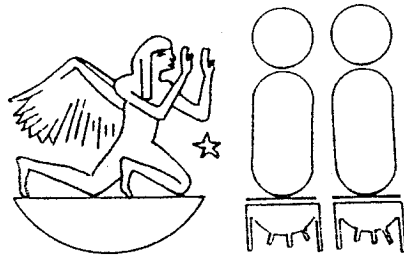
The bird refers to all people of Upper and Lower Egypt. That is clear from the scenes in the temple of Ramsis II. In Abydos, in which the words *pct* and *rhyt* are used instead of the bird.

Thus we came to the conclusion that the three types dealt with in this paper, irrespective of the different elements, could be read as follows:

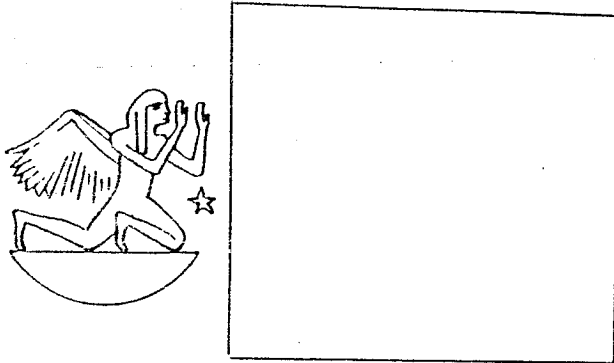
dw3 rhyt nb K. "All Egyptian venerate the King".



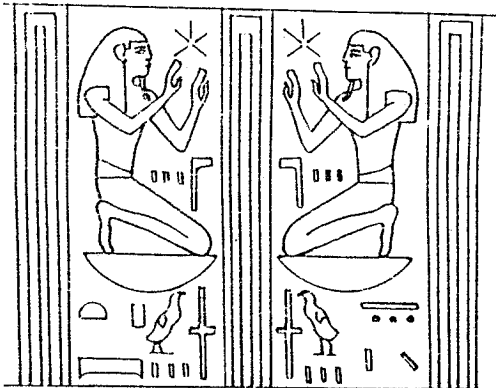
(Fig. 1)



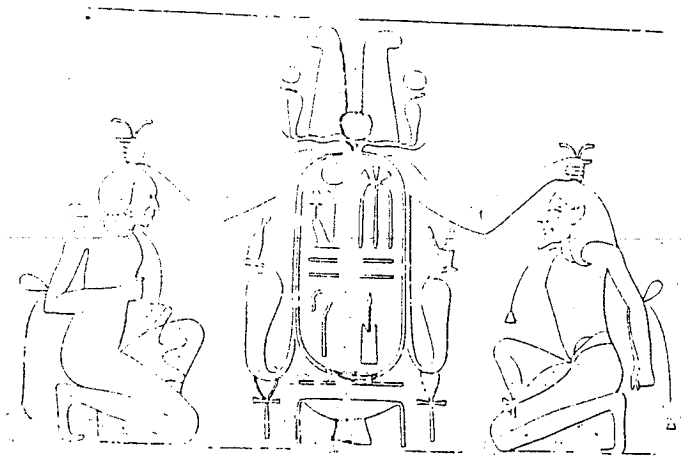
(Fig. 2)



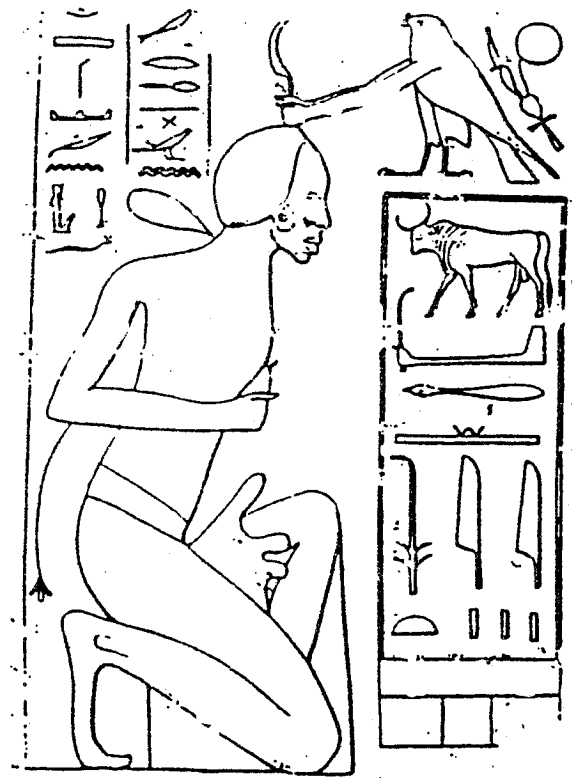
(Fig. 3)



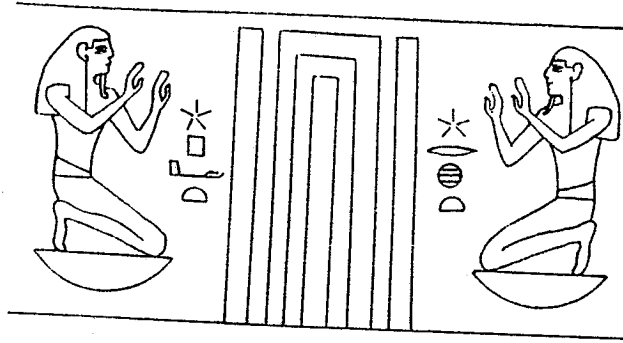
(Fig. 4)



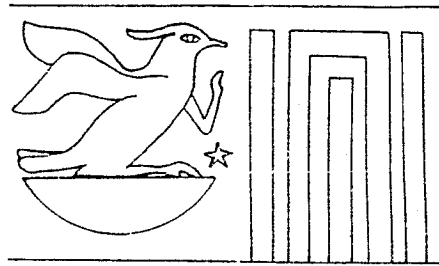
(Fig. 5)



(Fig. 6)



(Fig. 7)



(Fig. 8)