

## The Steering Oar: Its role in rituals and in religious ceremonies

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### Conclusion:

The steering oar has a daily and religious use in ancient Egypt. It has a symbolic meaning as it is connected with the sun god. It is represented in chapter 148 of the BD, associated with the four corners of the world and with the four sons of Horus.

It has also a very important role in the *Hb sd* festival. The king is seen holding an oar in the running rituals connected with the coronation ceremonies.

The four oars may be represented with four birds as they help the birds to navigate in the sky.

At the end of his running the king finally reached the god and the oar is offered to him. The oar is offered to many gods especially the most famous gods of the kingdom for example: Amun-Re, Amun-Re Kamutef, Amun- Min, Mut, Khonsu, Ptah, Hathor, Osiris, Isis, and Mrt.

The steering oar is a very important object in the ceremonies that are related to the coronation of the king. It is also a leading object used to help the king in his journey in the sky.

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### الملخص العربي:

استخدم المصري القديم المجداف في تسيير القوارب على صفحة النيل شمالا وجنوبا . كما ظهر في بعض الطقوس والاحتفالات الدينية وبصفة خاصة في مراسم وطقوس التتويج الخاصة بالملك .

ظهر المجداف في يد الملك في احتفالات السد ، حيث صور الملك في طقسة الجرى ممسكا بالمجداف في يده وهو يقوم بالجرى أمام الآلهة العظمى في البلاد . وفي نهاية طقسة الجرى فهو يقدم المجداف إلى الإله ويبدو أنه يقدم لإله المعبد الرئيسي الذي تم فيه طقسة الجرى .

إذا صحت القراءة للمنظر المصور في معبد دندرة ، فإن وجود أربعة مجاديف مصاحبة لأربعة طيور محلقة فوق كل من الإله حورس والإله أوزيريس في معبد دندرة يعتبر تفسير منطقي للمنظر ، فهذه الطيور التي تعلن ارتقاء الملك على العرش ما هي إلا الأبناء الأربعة لحورس الذين ارتبطت بهما المجاديف في الفصل ١٤٨ من كتاب الموتى .

وبذلك فالمجداف مرتبط بتتويج الملك المصري وصور ليساعد بالإسراع في الإعلان في الجهات الأربعة للكون عن ارتقاء الملك للعرش .

The steering oar is an object used in directing ships and boats in ancient Egypt. The Nile and its canals were the principal means of traveling in the Delta and along the valley. It was used in transporting people and all kinds of cargo as well as for some religious processions when the god's statue was taken from one temple to another as part of a festival<sup>1</sup>.

Even in pre-dynastic times these river journeys had been undertaken, images of a very early type of boats with banks of oars that carried the god's portable shrine were represented on the surfaces of rocks and of potteries especially those dated to Naqada period (C.3300-3100 B.C.)<sup>2</sup>.

In this paper I am trying to study the Steering oar as it plays a very important role in different rituals and ceremonies. I am presenting a probability that the oar is being held up by four birds<sup>3</sup>.

### Introduction

The Steering oar is known as *mawH*<sup>4</sup>, *dpw*<sup>5</sup>, *Wsrw*<sup>6</sup> in the OK<sup>7</sup>.

In CT another term occurred: *Hmw*<sup>^</sup> which become *Hmy(t)*<sup>9</sup> at the end of the NK.

<sup>1</sup> W.Helck, "Transportwesen" in: LÄ VI, 743-744; E.Martin-Pardey, "Schiffahrt" in: LÄ V, 613-616; R.David, Handbook to life in ancient Egypt, 2003, p.306ff; K.A.Kitchen, "Barke" in: LÄ I, 619-624.

<sup>2</sup> B.Williams, Decorated pottery and the art of Naqada III, 1988; Ch.Boreux, Études de nautique égyptienne, in *MIFAO* 50, Cairo 1925.; J.Vandier, Manuel d'Archéologie égyptienne, V, 1969, 741ff; G.Reisner, Models of ships and boats, CG 4798-4976 and 5034-5200, Cairo 1913; R.David, Handbook to life in ancient Egypt, 2003, p.306.

<sup>3</sup> I am giving a suggestion concerning a scene in the temple of Dendera which I read it in some way related to our subject.

<sup>4</sup> WB II, 49, 15; PT 889(b); C.Berger-El Naggar, J.Leclant, B.Mathieu, I.Pierre-Croisau, Les Textes de la pyramide de Pépy Ier, *MIFAO* 118, Le Caire 2001, p.126, fig.16; pl.VII(P/A/W 4-5)





<sup>5</sup> WB V, 447, 3; CT VI, 239 h-i



<sup>6</sup> WB I, 364, 1-4; D.Jones, A Glossary of Ancient Egyptian Nautical Titles and Terms, 1988, p.179; N.Düring, Materialien zum Schiffbau im alten Ägypten, in: *ADAIK* 11, 1995, p.81.




<sup>7</sup> L.Postel, Rame ou course? Enquête lexicographique sur le terme *Hpt*, in: *BIFAO* 103, 2003, p.383.

<sup>8</sup> WB III, 80, 16-17; 81, 4-5; CT III, 77e; IV 345a; V 139d, 14 d.h.

<sup>9</sup> WB III, 80(16-17), 81(1-10); WB III., 81(11-13); Lesko, A Dictionary of late Egyptian, 2002, p.114.

Another term is very closely associated with the oar it is: *Hpt*<sup>10</sup> written in PT <sup>11</sup> but it doesn't refer to the oar, it is a device used in navigation and it is written either by an oar  <sup>12</sup> or by the sign *Hp*  ( ,  )<sup>13</sup>.

From the MK the word  *Hpt* is used to refer to the "oar" itself <sup>14</sup> and as for the sign  <sup>15</sup>, it is difficult to precise its significance.<sup>16</sup>

The determinative in each word is either the simple oar  or an oar with an oblique angle  with a large paddle, a steering bar attached to its handle. The determinative  is used at the end of the Middle Kingdom for *Hmw/hmy*<sup>17</sup>.

### **-The Steering Oar as a sacred object :**

The steering oar has a sacred and symbolic meaning. In religious books, such as the book of the dead, four oblique oars are represented together and they are frequently placed in association




<sup>10</sup> WB III,68,4-5;R.Hannig,Die Sprache der pharaonen,1995,p.524

<sup>11</sup> PT 284;873;1346;2173.

<sup>12</sup> WB III,68(4).

<sup>13</sup> WB III,67(10)

This word really means "device" but it is also used in navigation, and that gives the reason of using the oar as a determinative beside the word.

<sup>14</sup> The sign  resembles the word for "oar" in its writing, by the time its connection to the oar disappeared especially in the NK when it was used only for its phonetic value, and the word  which means "device" become in that time  means "oar".

<sup>15</sup> WB III,67(10);Hannig,op.cit.,1101 ; H.Kees , Der Opfertanz des Ägyptischen Königs, 1912, pl.V,Abb.9.

<sup>16</sup> It seems to represent: A part of the steering gear of ships apparently made of rushes bound together.

A small manual oar used in small boats or an instrument of navigation used only for its phonetic value *Hp*. see:

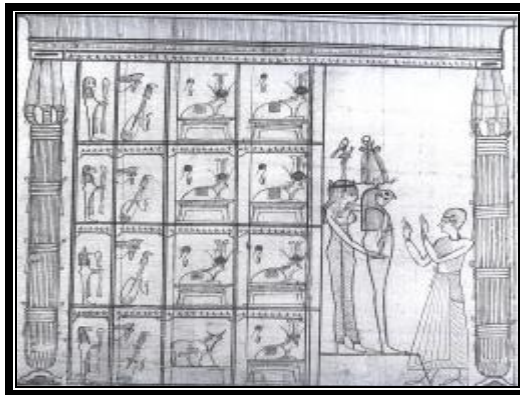
Gardiner,Egyptian Grammar,1957, p.540(sign list);H.Kees,Opfertanz, pl.5; N.Düring,op.cit.,p.82 et 87;

L.Postel,in: *BIFAO 103*, p.378,380,383.

<sup>17</sup> Postel,op.cit., p.383;R.Hannig,op.cit., p.530.

There are two kind of oars in a boat(the steering oars and the small oars on both sides of the boat) we are concentrating here in our study on the symbolic meaning of the oar in general.

with some solar symbols.<sup>18</sup> They may be seen to be decorated with lotus flowers at their tips and with uraei which spring from their steering bars. They are also clearly in association with the four *wDat* eyes, and other symbols in mythological papyri and in tomb paintings illustrating chapter 148 of the book of the dead<sup>19</sup>(fig.1).



(fig.1)

P.Barguet, Livre des Morts,206

Certain copies of the book of the dead and other papyri of the Late Period do interpret the four oars as having to do with the four corners of heaven.<sup>20</sup> They may represent the guiding powers of the universe, these oars are specifically labeled :

*Hmy nfr n pt rsyt*

"Beautiful rudder of the Southern sky"

*Hmy nfr n pt mHyt*

"Beautiful rudder of the Northern sky"

*Hmy nfr n pt imntt*

"Beautiful rudder of the Western sky"

*Hmy nfr n pt iAbty*

"Beautiful rudder of the Eastern sky"

<sup>18</sup> G.A.Reisner, CGC 4798-4976,1913; R.H.Wilkinson,Reading Egyptian art, 1992, p.156.

<sup>19</sup>W.Budge,The Book of the Dead,the Papyrus of Ani,1913; Allen,The book of the dead or going forth by day,1974;P.Barguet,Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens,1967,206-208;J-Louis De Cenival,Le Livre pour sortir le jour,Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens,1992,91.

<sup>20</sup> Th.G.Allen, op.cit., 1974, p.139f.

Although the order of their listing may vary, this is the standard inscription which appears in vignettes from the book of the dead and paintings.

In queen Nefertari's tomb in Western Thebes, a representation of chapter 148 of the book of the dead is illustrated<sup>21</sup>. None of the actual text from that chapter is shown here, just names of the participants. The scene actually extends onto the adjoining first section of the west wall where Nefertari stands in adoration. In the top register of the South wall there are seven cows and a bull (bottom left), each standing behind a small offering table, not intended for animals, but for the nourishment of Nefertari and all the animals are named. In the same chapter, there are references to the Steering oars which help Nefertari manoeuvre among the stars; With Ra serving as the helmsman and the oars propelling her pilgrimage, none of Nefertari's enemies will know her or even recognise her (or so the full text promises). Each oar is linked with a cardinal compass point.

When the oars appear in conjunction with bovines (seven cows and a bull) it seems probable that the essential concept being expressed has to do with the supernatural direction of the sustaining powers of the cosmos, as these bovines are specifically said to provide sustenance for the deceased in the book of the dead<sup>22</sup>.

#### **-The Steering Oar in ceremonies:**

The Steering oar is present in some principle rituals related to the Egyptian king. They are:

- The Steering oar in his running ritual during the *sd* festival.
- The Steering oar is offered by the king to the god after the running ritual.
- The Steering oar may be present at the end of the coronation ritual.

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<sup>21</sup> J.K.McDonald, The Tomb of Nefertari, House of Eternity, 1996, p.80-81; M.A. Corzo, Art and Eternity: The Nefertari wall paintings conservation Project 1986-1992, 1993, p.30.

<sup>22</sup> H. Wilkinson, op.cit., p.157; J. Malek, Egypt 4000 years of art, Newyork 2003, p.232.

### **-In the *Hb-sd* festival:-**

The Sed festival was a renewal of kingly potency and a rejuvenation of rulership. Sometimes it was celebrated thirty years after the accession, but several rulers celebrated it repeatedly and at shorter intervals.<sup>23</sup> The king performs many rituals in the feast and among these rituals he runs through the territory which he rules to establish his territorial claim and to show that he is fit to rule. This is a very ancient ritual connected with the *Heb- Sed*.<sup>24</sup>

The running was the basic ritual in the feast. The king runs around cairns which symbolically mark his terrestrial territory<sup>25</sup>.

The king is seen running or taking a fast walk towards one of the most famous gods of the Kingdom (Amun,Min,Osiris...),wearing the white crown or the red crown<sup>26</sup>, holding different symbolic objects in his hands such as: The flail,The *Mekes* ,Two *Hs*-vessels, Four satves each surmounted by a bird, a bird or a set square and an Oar<sup>27</sup>.

Running scenes are known from early dynastic times and continued to be represented on temple walls until the Roman period.This demonstrates the beginning of the ritual of the king running on the king "Den's" palette from the first dynasty<sup>28</sup>(fig.2).

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<sup>23</sup> K.Martin, "Sedfest" in: LÄ V,782-790;E.Uphill,The Egyptian *Sed*-Festival Rites,in: *JNES* 24,1965, pp.365-383;H.Frankfort,Kingship and the gods,Chicago 1948, p.79-88;E.Hornung und E.Staehelin,Studien zum Sedfest, AH 1,1974;W.J.Murnane,The Sed festival, in: *MDAIK* 37, 1981, 369-76.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson,PTL , p.638-639.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson,op.cit., p.638f.

<sup>26</sup>W.Decker,Bildatlas zum sport im alten Ägypten,HdO 1/14, Newyork 1994.

<sup>27</sup> L.Postel,op.cit.,p.377ff.

<sup>28</sup> علي رضوان ، الخطوط العامة لعصور ما قبل التاريخ، 161 (٨٠)، ١٧٤، (١١٢).

May be the oar is represented here with the running king on this palette and that would be the first appearance of the oar in the running ritual.



Fig.2

على رضوان ، الخطوط العامة ...، ١١٢

The texts that accompany these scenes stress that the king seizes the boundaries of his rule and hope for him a long and a good life<sup>29</sup>. The running is a ceremony which occurs often at the entrance of temples and refers to the foundation of the building. The king in this rite is seen measuring in strides the ground which is to be consecrated to the god. This ceremony is called "*it Hpt*" and it means "taking possession of the oar" or "of the square"<sup>30</sup>.

In running scenes we have some differences depend on what the king holds in his hand, he holds the oar and the *Hpt* sign and sometimes a bull accompagnies the king in the rite<sup>31</sup> :

<sup>29</sup> Kees,Opfertanz...p.22.

<sup>30</sup>WB III,67(11-15);WB III,68(2); PT 2173; 284; Champollion,Monuments de l'Égypte, II, p.176; Postel,op.cit., p.382; E.Naville,op.cit., part I, p.4, pl.XII e.

Kees says that the expression means "to go fast to the god"and the oar is the tool that he goes with.So he translate the expression:"Navigate fast to the god x" and he literally "Holding the oar for the god X" see:

Kees,Opfertanz...p.74ff.

<sup>31</sup> PM II2,386;É.Naville,The Xith dynasty temple of Deir El Bahari,part I, 1907, pl.XII.

E;Kees,Opfertanz,p.23,276(No.29);W.Decker,op.cit.,pl.VII;

Postel,op.cit., p.388.

-King Mentuhotep 1<sup>st</sup> with the oar in front of the goddess Hathor , nothing left from the goddess except the *Was* Scepter in her hand and the rest of the text says:*di.s anX* the scene is entitled" *it Hpt*"



### **-Running with the oar and the " hpt":**

The earliest examples of this ritual go back to the Middle Kingdom<sup>32</sup>(fig.3) .



Fig.3

É.Naville, Temple of Deir El Bahari, pl.XII

From the NK onwards the representation of the kings running with the oar and the *Hpt* sign are wide spread on temple walls<sup>33</sup>.

The oar in the hand of the king and the fast walk he takes tells the meaning of the whole scene: "Navigate fast to the god...".The text that accompanies this rite is *IIt Hpt n* .... and wherever that expression is found in PT it refers to the events of the hereafter as the journey of the deceased to the world of the blessed<sup>34</sup>.

When the king holds the oar he becomes ready to navigate and to join the sun god in the sky. The Egyptians believed that when the king dies he ascends to join the sun god and become one of his crew aboard the sun boat.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Thutmosis I, Hatshepsut, Thutmosis III, Amenophis II, Thutmosis IV, Amenophis III, Haremhab, Seti I, Ramses II, Seti II, Ramses III, Shabaka, Darius I, Hakoris, Ptolemy II, Ptolemy VIII, Ptolemy XII.

See: W.Decker, op.cit., passim

<sup>33</sup> WB III, 67(11-15); 68(2).

<sup>34</sup> PT 152; 200; 308

In PT and CT we read some spells of the deceased and of his role as a helmsman as he holds the oar in the boat of the sun god Ra<sup>36</sup>. We read:

*Ssp N pn mawH.f*

This N holds his oar- *mawH*<sup>37</sup>

In CT we read:

"*hAy.i m wiA.T, apr.i nswt(.i), Ssp.i dpw.i*"

"I descend in your boat after I equip my thrones, to hold my oar"<sup>38</sup>

The king is described as the Steering-oar itself as we reading in PT:

"*n N is pw Hmw aA...*"

I am the Great Steering-oar...<sup>39</sup>

So when the king holds an oar, he resembles the sun god Re, as one of the sun god 's titles is "he is the lord of oar" and this title is clear in the coronation name of king Mentuhotp "*nb Hpt Re*" meaning 'the lord of the oar is Re'<sup>40</sup>.

So in his running with the oar the king is associated with the journey of the sun god and he is acting like the sun god<sup>41</sup>.

The oar is a symbol of the whole boat as in some scenes we see the king holding the oar and rowing by himself<sup>42</sup> or dragging the whole boat by his hand<sup>43</sup> (fig.4).



<sup>35</sup> Kees, Opfertanz, p.81.

When the Osirian cult arose the pilgrimage to the residence of Osiris was represented instead of sailing in the sky. Abydos became the new residence for the deceased king with all his crew on the boat of Ra.

<sup>36</sup> PT. 467.

<sup>37</sup> CT VI, 239 h-i

<sup>38</sup> PT 917b.

<sup>39</sup> K. Sethe, Die mit den Bezeichnungen der schiffengeräte  und  gebildet en namen der Mentuhotep-könige, in: ZÄS 62, 1926, p.3-5 ; Postel, op.cit., p.386.

<sup>40</sup> Postel, op.cit., p.385.

<sup>41</sup> The king Thutmosis III in his tomb in the valley of the kings is seen holding the oar in the boat of the hereafter see:

K. Mysliwiec, Eighteen dynasty before the Amarna period, Leiden 1985, pl. XXII.

<sup>42</sup> Kees, op.cit., Abb.8

King Ramess II is dragging a boat in front of the Goddess Nekhbet, temple of Debod Champollion, Mon. II, pl. 140.

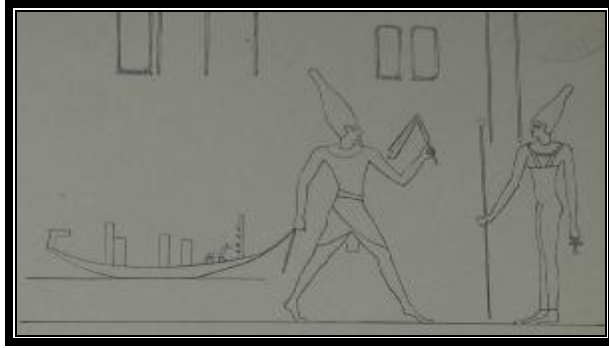


Fig.4

Kees,Opfrtanz..., Abb.8

Along with the running with the oar, there is another running with vessels (*xnp QbH*)<sup>44</sup>. The king is seen holding two vessels in his hands and runs, and whenever there is a scene of running with the oar, there is another of running with vessels<sup>45</sup>. They refer to the king as the king of Upper Egypt (when he runs with the vessels) and as a king of Lower Egypt (when he runs with the oar)<sup>46</sup>. This connection of the two rites refer to the re-assembly of the body of Osiris and the beginning of the inundation<sup>47</sup>. The Egyptian king re-assembled the body of Osiris and as a reward for doing that he gets the throne.<sup>48</sup> In the Ptolemaic period there is a great mixture in reliefs and in texts that accompany the two rituals<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> R.Preys, in *OLA 106*, p.160.

<sup>44</sup> W.Decker, op.cit., passim.

<sup>45</sup> R.Preys, op.cit., p.160; Postel, op.cit, p.389.

<sup>46</sup> R.Preys, op.cit., p.160.

<sup>47</sup> D.I 108; S.Cauville, *Essai sur la théologie du temple d'Horus à Edfou*, 1987, vol.I, 45, 79, 137.

<sup>48</sup> W.Decker, op.cit., pl.VII; Postel, op.cit, p.388.

### **-Running with the oar, the *Hpt* and the bull<sup>50</sup>:**

On the Palermo stone we read about the ceremony of "The running of Apis"; this ceremony is more clearly represented in the NK.<sup>51</sup> The king is running holding the oar and the *Hpt* accompanied by the bull<sup>52</sup>(fig.5).

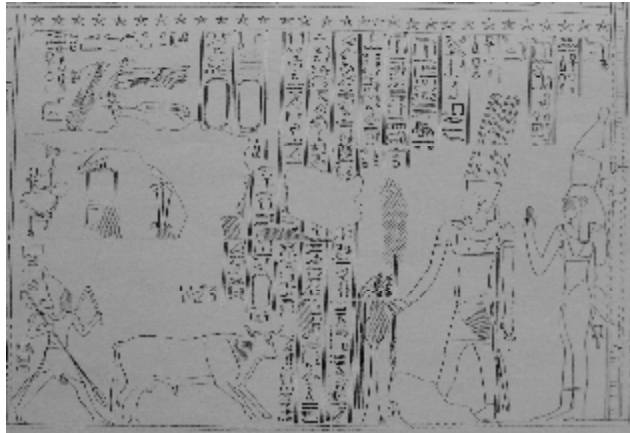


Fig.5  
Hibis III,pl.11.

The texts don't give any explanation to the role of the bull here<sup>53</sup>. The running ritual goes back to an old rite whose name is "*pHrr Hp*" "that means "Running of the Apis bull"<sup>54</sup> as the root of the verb *Hp* means "Hurry in running".<sup>55</sup>

The Running of the bull is known well in the *Hb- sd* rituals and here the king is running instead, as he is *KA nxt* "The strong Bull", the

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<sup>49</sup> Decker, op.cit., Taf. XXV;XLI;XLIII .

<sup>50</sup> J.Vercoutter, "Apis" in: LÄ I, 338-350.

<sup>51</sup> A.Moret, Du Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique, 1902, p.140; Lacau, in: ASAE XXVI, 1926, p.131ff.

-King Darius I running with the oar and the *Hpt* accompanied by the bull in front of the god Amon-Re and *WAdt* in the temple of Hibis.

N.G.Davies, Hibis III, pl.11.

<sup>52</sup> S.Gabra, Un sarcophage de Touna, in: ASAE XXVIII, 1928, p.75.

<sup>53</sup> Sethe, Kurt, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde, Bd. 13, Hildesheim 1964, p. 11-13.

<sup>54</sup> Kees, op.cit., p.74ff

running of the king holding the oar or holding two vessels is based on the running of the bull. In most scenes the king is seen accompanied by a bull, the texts do not explain clearly the role of the bull. But it is well known that the bull was identified with Osiris<sup>56</sup>, the bull was his soul and Osiris was represented as a mummy lying on the back of the bull.<sup>57</sup>

The ritual is linked with the Osirian Myth and the avenging of Osiris by Horus, making the king play the role of Horus. His run is a search for the god's limbs in all Egyptian nomes, each part of the body represents a nome, so that when they are put together, Osiris is resurrected and Egypt is whole and ruled by Horus the king<sup>58</sup>.

**-The Steering oar is offered to the god at the end of the *Hb-sd* festival:**

After performing the running ritual with the oar, the king finally arrives to the god and when he becomes closer to him, he stops running and he puts down the oar beside him (fig.6-7)<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> G.Hölbl, "Serapis" in: LÄ V, 870-874; L.Vidman, Isis und Sarapis bei den Griechen und Romern, RVV 29, Berlin 1970; S.Gabra, op.cit., p.75-79.

<sup>56</sup> S.Gabra, op.cit., p.77 with figures.

<sup>57</sup> Wilson, PTL., p.639.

<sup>58</sup> The king is seen at the end of the running with the oar in front of the god and here we can say that he ends his ritual in front of the supreme god of the temple.

In the chapel of Thutmosis III-Deir el Bahari:

The queen Hatshepsut is standing in front of goddess Hathor holding the oar beside her (fig.6)

In fig.7 king Ptolemy II is standing in front of the god Khonsou and queen Arsinoe II (fig.7)

Jean-Claude Dégardin, Khonsou-Re: Homme ou Enfant? dans: *CRIPPEL* 21, 2000, fig.2.

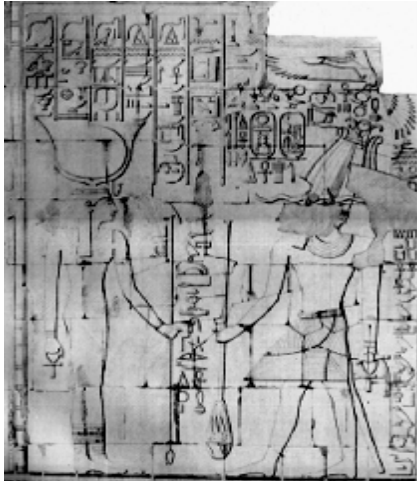


Fig.6  
<http://www.aegyptologie.com>



Fig.7  
LD III, Taf. 58.

This act reminds us of the pilgrimage journey to Abydos, when the boats arrive to their destination the grand steering oars depose on the floor and the sails men offer their oars to the god himself (Osiris ) and the ceremony begins in front of him<sup>60</sup>.

**- The Steering oar may be present at the end of the coronation ritual:**

At the end of the coronation of a king an announcement has to be made, and that is done by sending four birds to the four corners of the world to declare the event<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> G.Jéquier, Les frises d'objets sur les sarcophages du Moyen Empire, dans: *MIFAO* 47, 1921, p.328.

The oar is represented on sarcophages from the MK instead of boats used in the sacred pilgrimage to Abydos.

<sup>60</sup> H.Gauthier, Les fêtes de dieu Min, 1931; M.Maher-Taha & A.M.Loyrette, Le Ramesseum XI, Les fêtes du dieu Min, Le Caire 1979, pl.4B, 26, 27; E V, 312, 2-4; S.Cauville, Essai sur théologie..., p.193; Graindorge, Le dieu Soker à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire, 1994; A.Moret, Le rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte, 1902, p.28.

In the Osirian chapels in the temple of Dendera, there is a three register scene, some gods are making offerings to: the god Horus (in the upper register) and to Osiris (in the lower register) <sup>62</sup>.

The scene is a part of a coronation ceremony and it seems to be at the end of it, as there are four birds flying over the two gods, two of them turn right and the other two turn left. The Egyptians used to set free four birds (either by the priests or by the king himself) to report the coronation of a king to the four winds of heaven <sup>63</sup>.

In her comment on the scene Cauville said that every bird is seen with a label hanging around their necks, it contains the news of the coronation. <sup>64</sup>

But there is a probability that these are not labels but they are four oars, each bird is holding an oar between its neck and wing (fig.8).

The four oars are represented here to help the birds to hurry up with the news to the four directions of the world <sup>65</sup>

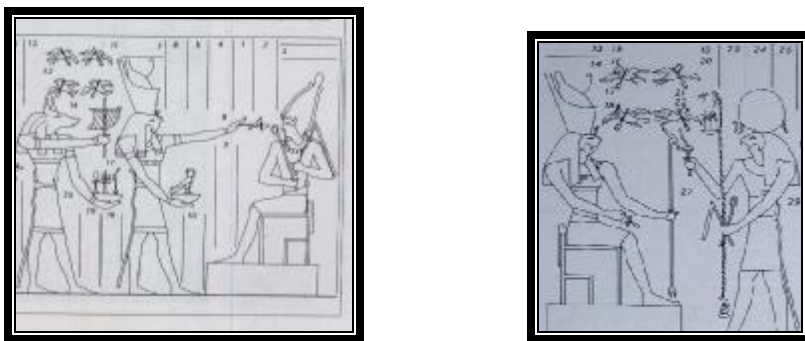


Fig.8  
Dendera X,pl.16,32

<sup>61</sup> LD IV,57a ;S.Cauville,Les Osirienne Chapel's,Dendera X, 1997, 35, pl.16, 32.;Moret,Du Caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique, 1902, p.104, fig.20;O.Keel, Vögel als Boten in: *OLO 14*, 1977, Abb.36.

<sup>62</sup> P.Baherns,"Pfeile,Aussenden, der" in: LÄ IV, 1007f.;W.Decker,"Bogen" in: LÄ I, 843;H.Altmüller,"Feste" in: LÄ II, 183.;

<sup>63</sup> S.Cauville,Dendera X,Commentaire,p.24.

<sup>64</sup> As we know the Egyptian considered the sky to be a great sea.

The four birds (the *sr.w* birds or *aprw*)<sup>66</sup> are lashed at the end of the feast to announce to the deities of the four corners of the world and to the whole kingdom that the king has been enthroned<sup>67</sup>.

Here the four oars have the same mission as the four birds, they are oriented to the four corners of the world, The four birds are seen in Medinet Habou<sup>68</sup>, Ramesseum<sup>69</sup>, Edfou<sup>70</sup> and Dendera<sup>71</sup>. No mention in the texts to the oars themselves, but these four birds are identified with the four sons of Horus<sup>72</sup>, as the texts that accompany the scene in Medinet Habou, in Edfou and in Dendera are directed to the four birds as the four sons of Horus<sup>73</sup>.

The four oars are associated with the four sons of Horus, as they are represented together in chapter 148 of the BD each god behind an oar<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> Gauthier, op.cit., p.220ff; O.Keel, op.cit., s.118.

<sup>66</sup> when we go back to the running rituals, we see the king in some scenes holding a bird (*Axt*) in one hand and in the other hand he holds four staves upon which there are four birds (the *baH* birds), each bird represents a symbol as in some scenes instead of the birds there are the signs: *anx*, *wAs*, *Dd*, and *wAD*. We may link between the flown birds with oars as givers of "*anx*, *wAs*, *Dd*, and *wAD*" to the whole kingdom and that of the rite of running with the four birds. Preys, op.cit. p.157; 159.; D III, 5, 10.; Decker, op.cit., Taf. XL, 231; XLIII, 243; LII, 306; D III, 11-5, 5; 8-6, 8; pl. CLXIX; H. Kees, in: ZÄS 52, 1915, 64.

<sup>67</sup> Medinet Habou IV, 205, 21; LD III, 212b; O.Keel, op.cit., p.111, Abb.34.

<sup>68</sup> LD III, 163; O.Keel, op.cit., p.111, Abb.33.

<sup>69</sup> E V, 133, 3; Brugsch, Drei Festkalender, 1877, p.13, pl.7, 19-22.; Rochemonteix-Chassinat, Edfou II, p.14-15.

<sup>70</sup> A. Moret, Du Caractère..., p.28 note 2.

<sup>71</sup> RÄRG, s.115f; O.Keel, op.cit., s.129; M.H.van Voss, "Horuskinder" in: LÄ III, 52-53; R. Drenkhahn, "Kebehsenuf" in: LÄ III, 379.; A. Eggebrecht, "Amsset" in: LÄ I, 266.; Id., "Duamutef" in: LÄ I, 1150-1151.; Id., "Hapi" in: LÄ II, 951-952; A. Dodson, "Four Sons of Horus", in: Oxford Encyclopedia V.I, 561-563.; Ch. Leitz, "Qebehenuf" in: LGG VII, 180-182; "Imsty" I, 367-369; "Dwa-mwt.f" VII, 516-518.; Id., "Hpy" V, 119-123; O.Keel, op.cit., s.129.

<sup>72</sup> H. Gauthier, op.cit., p.216; É. Chassinat, Le Mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoik II, 1968, p.560 note.1; Moret, Du Caractère..., p.104-105.

<sup>73</sup> Allen, BD, Tf.46; P. Bargaet, Le Livre des Morts, 206-208; J-Louis De Cenival, Le Livre pour sortir le jour, 91.



So the presence of the four oars here seems to be a logical interpretation of the scene.

The attributes of the sons of Horus are not limited to their role as protectors of the canopic jars. They appear as the four rudders of heaven in spell 148 of the book of the dead, and they became associated with the cardinal compass points, so that Hapi was the North, Imsety the South, Duamutef the East and Qebhsenuf the West<sup>75</sup>.

The Egyptians linked them with the ancient kings of lower and upper Egypt (the souls of Pe and Nekhen).<sup>76</sup>

The four birds announce the accession of the king to the throne, the text here in Dendera gives the names of the four sons of Horus but it confines the announcement to be made only to the North and the South parts of the kingdom.<sup>77</sup> But the texts from

Medinet Habou and also in Ramesseum cite the four cardinal points:

**In Medinet Habou and In the Ramesseum:**

*Isi r rsy mHty imntt IAbtt Dd.k n nIrw n rsy mHty imntt IAbtt  
Ntt Hr sA Ist wsir iIt n.f HDt wrwt*

"O Amset, Hapi, Dwamutef, Qebhsennwef, Go fast South, North, East, West and tell the gods of South, North, East, West) that Horus son of Isis and Osiris has been enthroned."<sup>78</sup>

**In Dendera:**

*Hpy: Ms tw r mHw, ix Dd n.k nIrw mHtyw  
dWA-mwt.f: Ms tw r mHw ix Dd n.k nIrw mHtyw*

"Hapy and DWA-mwt.f : Go North you may tell the gods of the North"

*Imsti: Ms tw r rsy, ix Dd n.k nIrw rsyw*

<sup>74</sup> M.Lurker, Lexikon der Götter und symbole der alten Ägypter, Scherz 1974, p.104.

<sup>75</sup> S.Mercer, Horus, royal god of Egypt, 1942, p.108.

In the Book of the dead, chapter 112, Horus and the first two sons were cited as the "Souls" of Pe, and according to chapter 93 of the same, Horus and the other two sons were the "Souls" of Nekhen.

<sup>76</sup> Les Chapelles Osiriennes, commentaire, p.24.

<sup>77</sup> H.Gauthier, op.cit., p.217.

*KbH-snw.f: Ms tw r rsy, ix Dd n.k nIrw{rsyw}.*

Amset and *KbH-snw.f*: Go South you may tell the gods of the South"<sup>79</sup>

Here the scene of the four birds with oars summarizes the whole coronation ritual of the king, and the association of the four sons of Horus gives further meaning to the ritual.

Besides their connection to the four corners of the world , every god has a special character connecting him with the coronation ritual:

**Hapi** was sometimes connected with navigation for the spelling of his name includes the sign "*Hp*" which is connected with the steering of a boat.He is also mentioned in early references as the "great runner":

"You are the great runner, come that you may join up my father N and not be far"<sup>80</sup>. That connects him with the running king in the running ritual.He is one of the four pillars of Shu and one of the four rudders of heaven.

**Duamutef** was the opener of the roads , as he is associated with the god "Wepwaut "<sup>81</sup> , he has the head of a Jackal too.

**Qebhsenuf** was connected with libation which is performed in the coronation ritual.

**Imsety** as a human form god, he is referring to the king himself holding the oar.

Finally,the presence of the oar in the previous scenes tells us the role of the oar in the king's ceremonies and in rituals especially the coronation.

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<sup>78</sup> Cauville, 56, 61.

<sup>79</sup> R.O.Faulkner,The ancient Egyptian coffin Texts,p.521,2004.

<sup>80</sup> The god "Wepwaut" is seen in the rite of running with the oar to open the way in front of the king.