

*Original article*

MONTU, THE ORIGIN OF A SACRED NETWORK

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**Abstract**

*A key issue in understanding the sacred landscape of Thebes is the origin of god Montu and how his cult, and system of temples, changed through time and in relationship to other gods. He had several temples built for him in the Theban region including those at the closely connected sites of Armant and Tod south of Thebes, and also at Medamoud north-east of Karnak. One aspect of Montu is his division into multiple forms, particularly visible by the time of the new kingdom where he can manifest himself in the form of four Montus connected with the four primary cult places of the Theban nome: Thebes proper, Tod, Armant and Medamoud. A network that could imply an originally linked series of Theban religious sites defined by the rituals and festivals dedicated to Montu. The evolution of Montu within a cultic and temple framework of the Theban nome is an issue yet to be resolved. However, the comparatively limited state of excavation and publication of these sites complicates the analysis and has led to various controversies such as that regarding the specific origin of Montu.*

**Keywords:** *Montu, Thebes, sacred landscape.*

**1. Introduction**

A temple was believed to be the house of a deity who lived there in the shape of his or her cult statue and was taken care of and fed by humans. By their layout and architectural features, the temples of ancient Egypt expressed in many respects cosmic symbolism. It would be of course quite obvious to deal with permanent religious architecture such as temples that could reach enormous dimensions. This raises questions: to what extent can temples create a cosmos, as opposed to reflecting one? And, by what definite approaches might ritual simplify itself into something of universal or "cosmic" significance? [1]. Beyond that, the movement through ritual and religious

space, for example also expressed symbolism, during the processions of the gods during the festivals of the cultic calendar. During diverse festivals, the deities left their sanctuaries in the city and went in ceremonial processions to other temples. In some cases, Archaeologists identify and unravel evidence related to ritual practice based on data originating in the archaeological record, leading to an understanding of the manner and structure that form the structure for an ancient religion. Others start with religion as known through text and mythologies and use this knowledge to reconstruct ritual practice and belief. Ideally, these options would function in a discussion and correspo-

ending fashion, but without texts or oral traditions, the archaeologist is left with

only the first approach—the Archaeological record [2].

## 2. Montu's Solar Aspect

The sun was known as a supreme deity, it is the most visible and obvious of sources of superhuman power [3]. Montu of solar origin was the counterpart of the Lower Egyptian god Re of Heliopolis “*Iwnw*”, or *On* known nowadays as Heliopolis [4]. Thus, giving birth to, Montu-Re. Developing from it a considerable enhancement of the theology of the one who was also appointed as Amun-Re-Montu, sun warrior and universal creator. Besides, he was also called the ‘*On of Mont*’ which was the origin of the name ‘*Hermontis*’ known nowadays as Armant. The concept of Montu and Re/Atum of Heliopolis as a “divine pair” was used to represent the duality of Upper and Lower Egypt. Montu, an early god of Theban origin with solar aspects and following with Amun’s rise, scholars debate the fact that Montu was substituted as the god of war after the reunification done by middle kingdom founder Nebhepetre Mentuhotep [5]. Whilst, few scholars believe he only became a martial god afore the new kingdom or he acquired this new martial god only with the dynastic change [6]. A key issue in

understanding the origin of god Montu is derived from his Theban network of temples, which reformed through time. He had several temples built for him in the Theban region including those at the closely connected sites of Armant and Tod south of Thebes, and also at Medamoud north of Karnak. One aspect of Montu is his division into multiple forms, particularly visible by the time of the new kingdom where he can manifest himself in the form of four Montus connected with the four primary cult places of the Theban nome: Thebes proper, Tod, Armant and Medamoud. A network that could imply an originally linked series of Theban religious sites defined by the rituals and festivals dedicated to Montu. The evolution of Montu within a cultic and temple framework needs to be set by chronological analysis of Montu with reference to the inscriptions, iconography, temple development at the four major cult centers of god Montu at Tod, and a further verification was the priesthood which served the cult at those sites.

## 3. Chronological Analysis

The origin of Gods goes back to pre-historic times; which is beyond human comprehension. Archaeology and myths

have recorded and offered clues to the birth of the gods.

### 3.1. Archaic period

The cult of the bull was worshipped as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, reign of Den. Moreover, a fragment of a vase found at Saqqara attests the epithet *W̄r mnt* “Montu is great”. Kaplony [7] dates

it back to the archaic period whilst Ranke attributes it to the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. [8] The latter was known from the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty Palermo stone.

### 3.2. Old kingdom

Montu appears in the Pyramid Texts and archaeological contexts of the old kingdom but his importance only rose by the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty [9]. Bisson de la Roque states that by the late 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty Montu was mentioned

in the Pyramid Texts of Kings Unas, Teti, Pepi I, Merenre and finally Pepi II [10]. Furthermore, Pyramid texts are of great significance declaring Montu’s name <sup>(a)</sup>, but none in coffin texts. Later, his name was also found twice in the

“Book of the Dead or the book of coming forth by day” [11]. PT spells include utterance 503 § 1081 at the pyramid of Pepi I: “*K3 Mntw K3.f Hn:f Hip Mntw Hip.f*, When Montu is high, he (the dead king) will be high with him: when Montu courses, he will course with him.” Sethe suggests that *Mntw* is mentioned as the name of a star but Montu was believed to be a celestial falcon with a stellar association whom the king follows in his ascent [12]. 1) Utterance 555 §1378b “It is as Montu that he has gone up to the sky” *pr.n.f ir pt m Mnt* [4,13]. 2) Utterance 412 §724 found in the pyramids of Teti and Pepi II preludes Montu to be later known as a god of war. Remarkably, Montu’s name does appear in old kingdom pyramid texts but not in the middle kingdom coffin texts [14]. During the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty a cylinder seal found at Armant dating

### 3.3. First intermediate period and middle kingdom

Montu’s evolution as a supreme god requires combining the first Intermediate period and the middle kingdom to assess him as a local deity that supported the victory of Mentuhotep but later unfortunately fell eventually from supremacy by the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. The Theban control under the reunification extended Montu to become the official god that was similar to Re for the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty kings and their solar temples construction [17]. The Upper Egyptians were gratifying to Montu for the reunification as discovered on the stela of *Meru* at Turin (no. 1447) [18] mentioning “Montu’s giving the two lands to the sover-

### 3.4. Middle kingdom priesthood

The following are evidence of middle kingdom priesthood: 1) A stela at Berlin (no. 13272) of *Inyotef*, son of *Meyet* is evidence belonging to an official from Armant. He worked at Thebes and was buried in the Theban necropolis. 2) Another stela belongs to *Inyotef* (NY Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, no. 1241) states that he was a priest in the temple of Montu and also participated

back to the reign of Pepi I reads “*niswt bity mry Mntw*” King of Upper and Lower Egypt Pepi I, beloved of Montu,” has titles of the overseer of the priests of Montu and a falcon topped *Serekh* with Pepi I’s name [15]. There was a Montu priesthood attested from the time of Pepi I. The first preserved depiction was found in the funerary temple of Pepi II at Saqqara, he is mentioned on the south wall of the antechamber of Montu and on the northern wall of the causeway. There are references of both a formula, as well as, Montu represented in a complete human form along Upper Egyptian deities [16]. The last presence of Montu during the old kingdom was found in the tomb of *Ihy TT 186*. “One revered by Montu, Lord of Armant” proves the existence of a cult for god Montu even though there is no Old Kingdom monumental evidence dating back to this era at Armant <sup>(b)</sup>.

reign, Nebhepetre, who lives forever”. Also, the Metropolitan museum of arts has tablets no. 22.3187 and 128 [19] mentioning “beloved of Montu” and “Beloved of Montu Re” respectively. Thus, becoming the earliest suggestion mirroring “Montu-Re’s” presence as an Upper Egyptian counterpart to the northern Re of Heliopolis. The typical form of Montu dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty; a falcon headed man wearing a crown with the sun disc and two falcon feathers, as well as, a double uraei on the forehead. The middle kingdom had the greatest enlargement of Montu’s constructions [16].

in a festival of Montu [20]. 3) At the British Museum stela no. 134 (11641) of *Inyotef* dates back to the reign of Mentuhotep Nebhepetre [21]. 4) And finally a stela in Florence (no.1774 = 6365) belongs to an official named *Mentuoser* [22]. Of all the above stelae, another most significant stela of a Montu priest belonged to *Samentu* (CG 20172), it is probably of Theban provenance. It

has inscriptions that he served in every cult of Montu in the Theban region. Moreover, he participated in Montu's festivals. Of substantial importance the owner was a *w'b* priest of the Lord of Armant "*nb Inny*", who purifies the offering tables of Montu, Lord of the Theban nome "*nb w3st*". He has accomplished praiseworthy in Tod "*m Dri*" and desired to be in Medamud "*m M3dn*" to perform rituals [23]. Therefore from all the mentioned above, apparently

### 3.5. The rise of Amun

Montu's supremacy lasted only through the reigns of the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty Mentuhotep rulers. However, by the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty Montu was replaced by Amun, Amun's origin was Hermopolis [4] but unexpectedly its kings ordered the construction of Montu temples at Tod, Armant and Medamoud [25]. Evidence of such veneration was found at Wadi El Hudi where Senusert I placed Montu's

### 3.6. Second intermediate period

The construction of temples continued during the 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty at Medamoud and Tod. Armant was completely neglected and later by the Third Intermediate period Medamoud had also

### 3.7. New kingdom

Inscriptions are scarce of Montu in the early 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, yet a stela housed in the University College of London has inscriptions of Ahmose I documenting his constructions of Montu at Armant. The text reads "He built as his monument this edifice anew for his father Montu, Lord of Thebes, the bull who dwells in Armant" [28]. Tuthmosis I, Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III, all have inscriptions reading "beloved of Montu, Lord of Thebes" [29]. An example of the latter is found on the Red chapel of queen Hatshepsut, as it reads: 1) "*Mntw hry ib w3st*, Montu dwells in Thebes" [30], 2) "*Mntw nb w3st*, Montu Lord of Thebes", 3) "*Mntw m Ipt swt m w3st*, Montu in Karnak in Thebes". Tuthmosis III's titulary is "beloved of Montu, Lord of Thebes who dwells in Armant". This titulary was also repeated at Armant [29]. Later, during

*Samentu* was a priest serving Montu at all his cult temples in the Theban nome. "Lord of the Theban district" followed his epithets during the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty and by the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty "Lord of Thebes" even though god Amun became part of the name of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty kings (Amenemhat or Amen is at the fore) [16,24]. Noteworthy, Montu's name was mentioned in the middle kingdom story of *Sinube* and in the *Hekanakht* letters <sup>(c)</sup> as "Montu, the Lord of Thebes.

name before Amun; "All lands work for him, Senusert I, the deserts grant to him what is in them, by the command of Montu, *t3w nbw hr b3k n.f di.n Kh3swt imyt.sn m wd mntw*" and "Who dwells in Armant and Amun, Lord of the Thrones of the two lands, existing and enduring forever, *hry-ib inw(y) Imn nb nswt t3ny wnn mnn dt*" [26].

become neglected. The Priesthood record of a 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty stela at the Cairo museum CG20030 of Abydene provenance; it includes the names of many officials with the title "the priest of Montu" [27].

the Amarna period, the reign of Akhenaten, Montu experienced the same doom as Amun, since both their names were chiseled out at Medamoud and other sites [4]. Nevertheless, Tutankhamun re-opened the Montu temples at Armant, Karnak, Medamoud and Tod. He allowed the images of Montu to be restored and presented offerings in his honour. In KV62 of Tutankhamun, a few artifacts were inscribed with the name of Montu, as a martial god. An example was the game board reading "brave like Montu" [29]. Clearly in the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty the rulers who were most involved in warfare, including Tuthmosis II, Amenhotep II and Tuthmosis IV were the ones of chief occurrence of Montu confirmation in Urkunden IV. Amenhotep III built north of Karnak a temple for Amen Re-Montu, a temple that might have

replaced an older sanctuary, in which the *w3st* scepter was kept. [The triad included Montu, Rattawy (at Thebes) and the son

### 3.8. The Ramesside period

Although god Seth had extended veneration, yet, Montu's cult prolonged to flourish. The Ramesside kings were proud to call themselves "great of strength, like Montu". Montu was worshipped at *PiRamesse*, known nowadays as Qantir. L. Habachi believes that at Qantir there were only temples in honour of Amun, Ptah, Re and Ma't. Nevertheless, Gauthier disputes, as he believes there was a "domain of Montu" *pr Mnt* attesting a temple, plus even attachments, warehouses, grounds and other establishments. The later been proven by a tomb of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty belonging to *Huy*, which has the titles "overseer of craftsmen of the lord of the two lands and the temple of Montu" [31]. The only remains or verification was a limestone altar of Ramses II found in the middle of the great temple belonging to Ramses II. It has inscriptions reading "Montu, Lord of Thebes, the great god, Lord of heaven". It is likely the presence of a small temple in honour of Montu [32]. Of the Ramesside priests, a high priest of Tuthmosis III by the name of *Khonsu-Ta*

### 3.9. The third intermediate period

Montu stood in the shadows of Amun until the end of the 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty when Taharqa enlarged the north Karnak

## 4. The Four Cult Centres

The fourth nome of Upper Egypt (the Theban region), fig (1) four cult centres dedicated to, and under the protection of Montu, forming what is called

was Harpare, who has had a smaller temple for him at north Karnak.]

was buried in TT31; was interestingly bestowed the titles "High priest at Armant, high priest of Montu, Lord of Tod [33]. In this tomb, on its southern wall it mentions that Montu resided at Tod but returns from Armant, where he was of a temporary residence [34]. Another Theban tomb with evidence of a Montu priest that served Seti I and his son Ramses II was the tomb of *Paser* TT 106. It mentions "Montu, Lord of Thebes, the bull who dwells in Armant" [33]. At Madinet Habu, Ramses III provided a barque chapel with a dedication "He made it as a monument for his father Montu, Lord of Thebes, *ir.n.f m mnw n it.f Mntw nb W3st*". In the clothing room Montu is located twice "Montu, Lord of Thebes who dwells in Armant" [33]. Though Montu was regularly located at this temple but no "feast of Montu" was listed in the Madinet Habu calendar [35]. It is thought that even the Deir El Madineh workmen during the Ramesside period left documented evidence of their Montu adoration [36].

precinct. Later rulers Ptolemy III and IV added both a pylon and a gate.

the "Theban Palladium", which was a sacred area of land placed under the protection of Montu.

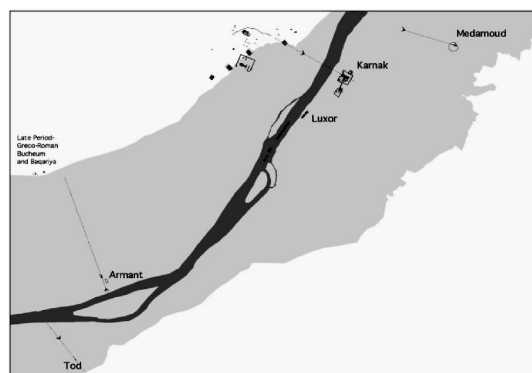


Figure (1) Shows the Theban Nome (by the author).

## 4.1. Armant

(*Iuny*, *Hermonthis* or *On* which designates in this case the Heliopolis of the South), where the primordial sanctuary of Montu was located, situated to the southwest of Thebes, on the left bank of the Nile. Whilst in Armant the new bull was venerated as "the living image of Montu". Ancient names: *Jwmm*, *Jwmm Šm*,

### 4.1.1. Archaic period & old kingdom Armant:

The early dynastic evidence in this period includes potsherds and stone vessels of the first three dynasties, as well as,

### 4.1.2. Middle kingdom Armant:

In the Ptolemaic building middle kingdom limestone blocks were found, as well as, inscriptions of Sankhakare Mentuhotep. Interestingly, a couple of 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty limestone blocks had inscriptions reading "*Mntw nb w3st hry-ib Iwn(y)*, Montu, Lord of the Theban nome, who dwells

### 4.1.3. New kingdom Armant

By the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty Ahmose I renew a building for his "father Montu, Lord of Thebes, the bull who dwells in Armant." Blocks dating back to the reign of Tuthmosis I were also discovered. The largest constructions date back to the reign of Tuthmosis III, including architrave sections, sixteen sided column drums and a part of an offering scene on which he is called "beloved of Montu". Further later both Amenhotep II and his son Tuthmosis IV had also few remains at Armant. However, Thutmose III is known to have built the constructions of Montu at Armant and it is liable that this is the temple depicted in scenes of his festivals in TT31 and TT1961. The temple in the depiction in TT31 has the same name as

## 4.2. El Tod (Djeret or Djerty)

El Tod (Djeret or Djerty) is close to Armant, but on the western bank,

### 4.2.1. Old kingdom

In this era found at Tod was located on an incomplete red granite pillar, which had the cartouche of Userkaf. This was re-used in the Ptolemaic court but had no inscription or presence of god Montu dating back to the old kingdom. Also, a cylinder seal with the name of Pepi I was found

*Jwmm Mntw*, Hermonthis. Hermonthis was originally the chief sanctuary from the early middle kingdom to the Greco-Roman era. Luckily early nineteenth-century visitors to Egypt drew the ruins before the temple was used as a quarry for stone for a sugar factory.

half of a cartouche of the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty king Khafre [37].

in Armant." Of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, there are blocks that date back to the reigns of Amenemhat II, Senusert I and Senusert III. The inscriptions read "*nb w3st K3 iwn(y) pr m drty*, Lord of Thebes, the bull of Armant who comes forth from Tod."

the temple of Montu at Armant and supports the idea that the festivals of Montu and Thutmose III occurred at that site, although unfortunately the temple has not survived. It is difficult to confirm whether there was a sacred lake in the new kingdom on which the festival may have taken place. The town of Armant (*Iuny*) lies about 12 km south of Thebes, and so it is reasonable that men buried at Thebes could have been involved in festivals there. Of the Ramesside period no evidence was located except for the usurpation made by Ramses II and the Osirid statues that were restored by Merenptah, who naturally added his name to the pylon [38].

flourished the latest by the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

which is at the moment part of the Piers collection. The seal has verification of the Montu priesthood reading "overseer of the priests of Montu," but no location for the cult center affirming mainly a Theban provenance and belonging to a high priest of Montu [39]. It should be noted that a main old kingdom attesta-

tion was found in the TT186 of *Ihy*, mentioning Armant as the location. This was mere evidence to the belief

#### 4.2.2. Middle kingdom

By the middle kingdom Bisson de la Roque states that there was a small 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple built by Nebheptre Mentuhotep and completed by Sankhkare Mentuhotep. Later, Amenemhat I added to it. The middle kingdom temple of Montu ‘lord of *Djert*’ received from the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty king Amenemhat II four

#### 4.2.3. New kingdom to present times

Of the new kingdom scarcely only Tuthmosis III paid some attention to Montu’s Tod temple. Trivial restoration was done by Seti I, Amenmesse, Ramses

that Montu might have not existed at Tod during the old kingdom.

‘treasure chests’ of diplomatic gifts from Syria, the Aegean and Mesopotamia, now displayed in the museums of Cairo and Paris. By the 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty only the names of Kings Sobekhotep III, Sekhemre Swadjtawy and *Wchem’nkh*, Sobekemsaf I were found.

III and Ramses IV at the Tod temple. The present scant ruins of the temple are of Graeco-Roman date.

## 5. Medamoud

A. Badawy determines the Medamoud temple to the old kingdom based on Egyptian architectural remains [40]. Equally, in A. Badawy’s middle kingdom architecture book he states that the rectangular platform embodied in the rear part of the Ptolemaic plan is a middle kingdom structure [41]. Medamoud has a pre-formal temple of superimposed layers of architectural foundations dating back to four different periods. There was insufficient masonry to account for a stone middle kingdom temple; therefore, it was thought to be of mud brick. Excavators had reproduced a reconstruction plan of the complex. However, inscriptions were not found concerning this curious building and the pottery appears to date back to the old kingdom. The latter caused the hypothesis that an earlier shrine was erected at site causing the survival of the pre-formal temple as evidence of architectural renewal within the dynastic period. The Upper Egyptian sites that included pre-formal temples were located at Medamoud, Elephantine, Hierakonpolis, Abydos and Coptos [3]. During the middle kingdom Medamoud (*Medu*), whose most ancient traces date from the time of Senusert III, is also on the right bank, but to the northeast. (Ancient *Medu*)-north- east of modern Luxor -

where a sanctuary founded by the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty king Senusert III was expanded during the new kingdom and Greco-Roman period. It remains uncertain that the Medamoud temple was dedicated to Montu especially that not a single monument was found sacred to Montu prior Senusert III, whose name was found on sandstone papyri columns and lentils [42]. However, Bisson de la Roque, suggests the presence of a statue’s base that dates back to the reign of Senusert I. Noteworthy, D. Arnold proposes that the “*temple primitive*” has unusual features in the Montu sanctuary, that later were reflected in the design of the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty mortuary temple of Nebheptre Mentuhotep at Deir El Bahari. This is an interesting proposition with no proof [43]. Hence, there is no evidence of a Montu temple at Medamoud dating back to or prior the old kingdom. Furthermore, the deity remains unknown. Thirteenth dynasty kings had enhanced and enlarged new reliefs and inscriptions at Medamoud. Such as, a red granite block with *Wegaf*’s name mentioning “beloved of Montu, Lord of Medamoud.” Later some other blocks had a similar inscription added by *Sedjekare Kay Amenemhat VII* [27]. In the papyrus Bulaq 18, there is reference to the temple of Medamoud and to royal gifts or offerings.

There were several priests titled “priests of Montu at Medamoud”, emphasizing the importance of the Montu complex at Medamoud during the 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty [44]. During the Ramesside period, there were only fragmentary monuments added by

## 6. North Karnak

North Karnak is currently a site, which is very ruined, situated outside the surrounding wall of the great Amun temple. North of Karnak Amenhotep III started a Montu temple in direction of earlier temple at Medamud. Later times are attested the following evidence of 1) A middle kingdom stela located now at the Cairo museum CG 20005 mentions

## 7. New Kingdom Priesthood

Most famous was Hatshepsut’s steward Senenmwt, who has three of his monuments stating his title as “overseer of the priests of Montu in Armant”. The statues of Senenmwt include: 1) A statue at the Cairo Museum CG 579 [46]. 2) A statue in the Kimbell Art museum [47]. 3) A statue at the British museum [48]. Further similar titles include: \* *Senemiah*, a mayor and steward of Montu in Armant.

### 7.1. Ramesside period

Of the Ramesside period blocks that belonged to Seti I, Ramses II, Merenptah, Ramses IV and Ramses VII were found. [49] As well as, statues of Ramses IV and Ramses IX were recovered [50]. (The cult of god Montu prospered during the new kingdom at Armant, which established most of consideration. As for at North Karnak, it was Amenhotep III who

### 7.2. Late period

King Taharqa of the 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty built a colonnade at the Karnak Montu temple, while Nectanebo I added an

### 7.3. Consorts

Montu is also sometimes accompanied by one of his consorts in ancient scenes. Three are known, consisting of Tjenenet, Iunyt and Rettawy (or Raettawy). Rettawy is the female counterpart of Re, and is depicted like Hathor as a cow with a sun disk surmounting her head. Through Rettawy, Montu is connected with Horus

Ramses II, Merenptah, Ramses III and possibly even Seti I [45]. Medamoud inscriptions describe that animals participated in fights with other bulls which were staged in a special arena [9].

Montu as the Lord of Thebes [21]. 2) Of the second Intermediate Period no remains were found at North Karnak. 3) Of the new kingdom several 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty naturally had constructions at Karnak in honour of Montu, these were Amenhotep II, Amenhotep II, Tuthmosis IV, Tutankhamun and Horemheb.

\* *Humay*, a chamberlain of Montu, Lord of Tod. \* *Minmose*, in charge of the work in the temples of “Montu, Lord of Thebes, the bull who dwells in Medamud”. Besides, he is also twice titled “overseer of the priests of Montu, Lord of Thebes” [29]. \* At the Cairo museum a stela CG 34123 of *Ipunefer* states the title “Third prophet of Montu in Armant”.

had reproduced this bull cult. There are many references reading “Montu, the Lord of Thebes, who dwells in Medamoud”, indicating a continuation of the adoration of god Montu in all latter four sites. At these sites the stability of Montu’s iconographic assures his presence as a martial god during the new kingdom).

enclosure wall around the Montu temple at Karnak.

and thus the king, for their son was Harpocrates (Horus the child). At both Medamoud [51] and Tod [52] Montu’s consort is Tjenenet. At Armant both Iunyt and Tjenenet are his consorts “who dwells in Armant” [38]. Tjenenet, Iunyt and Montu form a triad in Armant, but their precise relationship remains uncertain. Possibly



both goddesses were co-consorts [53]; 1) Tjenenet of Tod, Armant and Medamoud, 2) Iunyt of Armant, 3) Rettawy of Thebes, and Karnak in particular. Lesser consorts included Renenutet on the Red Chapel of Hatshepsut. It has Tjenenet and Iunyt in a row of deities, whilst Hatshepsut makes

offerings to them. [30] A second lesser consort by the name of Rettawy appeared only during the new kingdom and was named “mistress of the gods, *hmt ntrw*” [46] and “dwells at Karnak” [54]. She became a consort of the Theban Montu.

## 8. Montu and The Falcon Ships

In the tomb of Ahmose Ibn Abana, he reports that he has returned from a Nubian campaign on his majesty’s falcon ship <sup>(d)</sup> [55]. Interestingly the numbers of these warships found in the tomb of *Kenamun* TT93 and of *Hwy* TT40 are always given in a group of four ships that connect to the four sites of Thebes, Tod, Medamoud, and Armant. Although in TT93 of *Kenamun*, there are two Montus titled “Lord of Thebes and Armant”, whilst the other two have no titles [56]. The parallel ships located in TT40 of *Hwy* were termed “Montu who dwells in Thebes,” “Montu, Lord of Tod,” “Montu, Lord of Medamoud”, and “Montu, Lord of

Armant” [33]. As for actual models of boats were found in the tomb of Amenhotep II KV35. Of which the finest conserved is currently at the Cairo Museum CG 4944. A second similar model CG 4945 is not so well conserved but its panels read “Montu, Lord of Thebes,” “Montu, Lord of Medamoud,” “Montu, Lord of Armant” and finally a wooden griffin, “Montu, Lord of Tod” [57]. Whether these are divine boats or emblematically small-scale falcon ships and clearly they are not connected to a certain king. It was assumed that the Montu figures were added for magical fortification during the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

## 9. Montu and Khonsu

Special topics discussed in the context of their periods are: Montu and the “falcon ships” of 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Montu as a griffin in the New Kingdom, the iconographic confusion between Montu and Khonsu during the Ramesside Period, and the special relationship between Montu and Ramesses II which was most dramatically expressed in the cult statue,

“*Usermaatse Setepenre*, Montu-in-the-Two Lands,” which he erected in his Delta capital. The obscurity of the connection between the two deities emerges as early as the reign of Ramses II when Khonsu trades his lunar form for Montu’s solar imagery in a substantial amount of reliefs at Karnak temples.

## 10. Sacred Animals

The origin of the sacred bull in which Montu was incarnated into still remains unknown. The bull represented several deities beside the king himself as a vivid image of Montu [4]. The King’s power was equated with that of a god, as when the king stood next to the Apis bull during the *Sed* Festival in aim of strengthening rejuvenation of his powers [9]. Montu was an ancient god of the Theban region of Upper Egypt of went through constructive stages before the foreword of numerous deities and the spread of

animal worship in which later periods concealed his fundamental nature. Evidence of the latter is found in the following: 1) At Armant blocks dating back to Amenemhat I attest “Montu, Lord of Thebes, the bull of Armant who comes forth from Tod”. The bull’s change of cult location from Tod to Armant was explained by Otto, in order to link it with the solar cult of Heliopolis *Iwny* [38]. 2) At Tod a formula reading, “Montu, the bull descends from Tod”, as well as, “Montu, the bull who dwells in Tod”. 3) At Medamoud a

12<sup>th</sup> dynasty formula read “Montu, Lord of Thebes, king of the two lands, the bull who resides at Medamoud” and

“Montu the bull who dwells in Medamoud” [4].

## 11. Conclusion

*The prayers that were performed within the ritual, both theological, and cosmic contexts were not just recitations loosely associated to them, but were a method in which the ritual performance in the temple's settings were connected and identified with the theological and cosmic observations. The ritual performance in the temple's settings were connected and identified with the theological and cosmic observations. In the Medamud texts Montu is attested to be of a cosmic character, with the temple's gate oriented toward the holy place of Djeme at Medinet Habu, where the Ogdoad went to rest after having given birth to the creator gods Ptah and Atum in Memphis and Heliopolis, respectively. Those conceptions of space are hypothetical but with the assistance of technologies of mapping and survey, and eventually with the gridded site plan. This quadripartite division of god Montu emphasizes his ability to control the universe through the domination of its four cardinal points, which occurred in the four cult cities of El Tod, Armant, North Karnak and Medamoud. The four cult temples besides also the Thoth hill temple were all dedicated to god Montu and were all at their zenith of structure during the Middle Kingdom. Remarkably, of what has been called the archaeology of landscape, a network of temples being all relatedly oriented and assert that sky watching played a role in the orientation of Montu's network of temples. Thus, at a first glance, astronomical or even topographical (layout perpendicular to the Nile) justified with all four cult temples, as well as the Thoth hill temple, were set on a latitude of 25 degrees (25.5 to 25.8) and a longitude of 32 degrees (32.5 to 32.7) and correspondingly “assuming” an arrangement of the shape of a Bull's thigh or a Khepesh, which its hieroglyphic writing and the use of the word in the Pyramid texts have been the fore-leg of a bull, came to mean not only the constellation of the Great Bear, but also “strong arm,” and “strength.” Thus unveiling both a celestial and earthly network in dedication of the bull god Montu. The real focus here is the mapping of a lived, politico-religious geography, in brief both “Ritual practice and temple topography provide evidence for the origin of the temple as a reflection of the cosmos”. Unfortunately, there is no written evidence (such as that concerning the Thigh) that any of these stars was ever used to align temples or even that they play any important religious role in the otherwise extremely rich Egyptian stellar mythology.*

## Endnotes

- (a) Utterance 503 §1081 and Utterance §1378b.
- (b) Noteworthy, several scholars disagree about the dating of TT 186, including W.S. Smith, Schraff and PM. They believe it dates back to the First Intermediate Period. Whilst, others such as, Fischer, Newberry and M. Saleh date it back to the late Old Kingdom.
- (c) MMA no. 22.3.157 discovered by the MMA expedition 19, NY, 1962.
- (d) Faulkner's dictionary translates “Schiff des Königs” as the term “falcon ship” WB I 445.

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