

Representation of the King in the Henu Praise on the Egyptian Temples During the Graeco-Roman Period

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ABSTRACT

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The souls of Pe and Nekhen used to be depicted in the Henu posture. It is done by striking the chest with a fist while raising the other arm, while kneeling on one knee. This praise was done to greet the new-born sun or celebrate the animated soul of the king during "the recitation of Glorifications" ritual. The king was represented in the Henu posture during the Pharaonic period in the tombs. However, he was rarely represented in this posture on the walls of the temples. In the late period, statues of the kings in this posture appeared. During the Graeco-Roman period, the king was more frequently represented in this posture on the walls of the temples, precisely on the doors and windows. It could be an imitation of the souls of Pe and Nekhen that used to be represented flanking the doors the mortuary temples of the Old Kingdom.

1- Introduction

The Henu posture is one of the traditional postures that appeared in ancient Egypt. It is done by striking the chest with a fist while raising the other arm. It can be done standing but is traditionally made kneeling on one knee. It demonstrates obedience and submission before a god. This posture used to be done in a praise by the souls of Pe (Buto in lower Egypt) and Nekhen (Hierakonpolis, Upper Egypt). the souls of Pe are shown with the heads of falcons, and the souls of Nekhen with those of Jackals. This praise was done to greet the new-born sun in the sky or celebrate the animated soul of the king during "the recitation of the Glorifications" ritual. The souls symbolized the old rulers of Buto and Hierakonpolis that support the living king and serve the deceased king by helping him to ladder in the sky (Wilkinson, 1999: 17).

There is only one detailed study concerned with the Henu praise: Ayman Mohamed Ahmed, "The concept of henu: gesture of praise and veneration in Ancient Egypt: multiple meanings in a single gesture", PhD Thesis, 2015. However, this study didn't deal with the Graeco-Roman era.

During the Pharaonic period, the henu praise was performed inside both the tombs and the temples. This praise was done either by the priests or the souls of Pe and Nekhen. All scenes of the henu praise found in the temples were done by the priests and is considered one of the stages in the process of the daily rituals. This appeared in the temple of Karnak and temple of Abydos (Ayman, 2015: 106).

As for the representation of the king performing this praise during the Pharaonic period, is considered rare. The king was represented on the walls of the tomb of Ramses I (KV 16), sarcophagus chamber, west wall (Fig.1). He is knelt making the ritual Henu gesture between the souls of Pe and Nekhen. The text above the scene : *"Words spoken by the Powers of Pe when they cheer the Horus of the horizon, their son, the Osiris-king Men-Pehty-Ra, son of the sun, Ra-Mes-Su, justified like one them. Words spoken by the Powers of Nekhen when they cheer the Lords of the Eternity and the Osiris-king, Lord of the Two Lands, Men-Pehty-Ra, justified like one of them."*

The King appeared also in this posture accompanied by the souls of Pe and Nekhen in the Opet festival. Amenhotep III mentioned in his description of the Amun-Userhet (Collier, 2013)¹: "The souls of Pe performed a dance of jubilation for it, and the souls of Nekhen adored it" (Baines, 2006: 261-302). On the interior west wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak temple, in the first register, (Fig.2) (Lergain, 1929) below this shrine on the left side of the hull is a kneeling figure of Ramses II in front of three jackal-headed figures, with hands in the position of jubilation, symbolic of the souls of Nekhen. while in the corresponding position on the right side of the hull the king is accompanied by three hawk-headed figures, in the same posture, representing the souls of Pe. (Seele, 1940: 70) another scene dates back to the reign of King Ramses III is depicted on the northern wall of the second court of the temple of Medinet Habu. The scene portrays the king offering offerings to the barque of the holy Theban triad. In the middle of side facing the spectator, three of Pe spirits are found at the bottom. They are in *hnw* gesture and are headed by the king and the same gesture (Ayman, 2015: 145).

The king appeared also in the Henu gesture accompanied by the souls of Pe and Nekhen in the Valley festival. The king is depicted before three spirits of Pe or Nekhen in *hnw* gesture. They are cheering and glorifying the deity during the festival. The scene appeared on the temple of Sety I at Qurna (Ayman 2015: 147)

However, the King didn't appear in this posture on the walls of the temples accompanying the souls of Pe and Nekhen in any other rite. It seems in somehow that the king appeared only in this posture if it is connected to the bark of Amun whether in the Opet festival or the Valley festival. This shape appeared on a granite bark stand in the temple of Amun at Jebel Barkal (Fig.3). The stand is preserved in the Museum of fine Arts in Boston (Inv. 23.728). In the Upper register, the goddess Meret of Upper Egypt (at left, wearing lilies on Her head) followed by king Atlanersa (wearing the skullcap with the Two Uraei) and by the three 'B3w'-Souls of Nekhen-Hierakonpolis represented in the kneeling jubilation position. (Museum of Fine Arts, Inv. 23.728)

During the Late Period statues of Pharaohs started to appear, although rare, in the Henu gesture. There are five bronze statues of this type, date back to the 26th dynasty (Josephson, 1997: 33-39). One of them is preserved in the British Museum (Inv.N.

¹ A ship was made out of cedar and used to transport the sacred images of the gods of the Theban triad during festivals. It was gilded and decorated with precious stones. The Amun-Userhet (and its smaller portable version) played a key part in several festivals celebrated during the New Kingdom.

"King of Upper and Lower Egypt (The heir of the two gods, the elect of Ptah-Khépri, the one who accomplishes the justice of Amon-Re)".

Souls of Pe accomplish the Henu ritual.



s3 R^c ptwlmys ḥnh d.t mry Pth

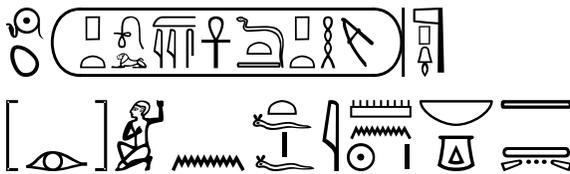
b3.w Nhn ir(.w) hn(w)

Son of Re (Ptolemy, live forever, beloved of Ptah)

Souls of Nekhen accomplish the Henu ritual. (Temple of Deir el-Madineh online database)

3.2 Opet temple at Karnak

In the central hall (VII), southern wall to the left of the door, in the 5th register (Fig.7), king Ptolemy VIII is representing in the henu posture (Karnak Project online database: Cfeetk 178305) accompanied with the following inscription:



s3-r^c ptwlmys ḥnhsh-dt-mry-Pth p3(ḥ) ntr mnsh (iri) hnw n it-f'Imn-R^c nb-nswt t3-ḥwy

The son of Re, Ptolemy-may-he-live-to-ever-loved-of-Ptah, the god Everget, [makes] henu for his father, Amon-Re, master of the thrones and the two lands. (De Wit, 1968: 41)

The scene here is a continuation of the scenes of the souls of Nekhen. (Karnak Project online database: Cfeetk 78103)

3.3 Temple of Dendara

In the shrine on the roof of the temple, precisely on the western embrasure of the third window, the king is represented performing the Henu accompanied by the souls of Nekhen. While on the eastern embrasure of the first window, a repetition of the previous scene appeared but with the representations of the souls of Pe (Fig.8) (Dend.VIII, 140-142). Thus, we can suppose that the lower register should have a depiction of the king performing the Henu (Chassinat, 1978: 140-142).



hnw n k3.t b3w hnw nhn

"Jubilation to your Ka, the souls of Nekhen"

3.4 Temple of Edfu

- On the thickness of the doorway leading to the “Mammisi” (First Pylon, west tower), west side, detail from the second register from above: Ptolemy VI Philometor is represented wearing the blue crown and performing the Henu before Hathor accompanied by the souls of Pe and Nekhen (Fig.11) (Junker, 1958: Abb. 140).
- In the western colonnade, on the lintel of the north gate, the King with empty cartouche (could be Ptolemy XII) is represented performing the henu dance before the enthroned Osiris and Isis. The text that accompanied the scene reads (Phila III, 164):

niswt bit (.....) p'.t p'.t wr.w nn n.w t3 r 3w.f hr iri(.t) hnw n hꜥꜥ3.w n.w t3

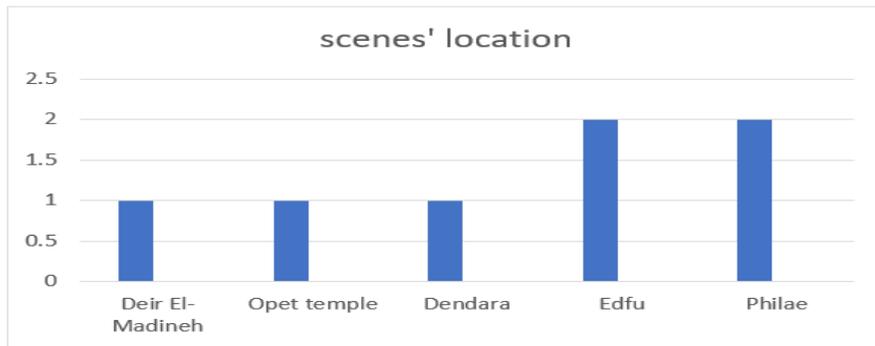
"King of Upper and Lower Egypt (.....), and Pat-people, the greatest of the whole country, perform the henu for the master of the lands".(Kockelmann, 2016: 164)

On the same previous place, the scene is completed to see the King with also an empty cartouche represented kneeling performing the henu dance in front of the enthroned Harendotes and Hathor (Fig.12). The text that accompanied the scene reads (Phila III, 170):

"Son of Re (.....), and the Rehit people, the Great one, who the sun shines through. Perform the worship of the kings of the land". (Kockelmann, 2016: 170)

4- Results

- The Henu praise used to be done during the Pharaonic period by the priests or by the souls of Pe and Nekhen and it was related to different rites. The King during the Pharaonic period appeared accompanying those souls on the walls of the tombs. As for the temples, the pharaoh appeared only in this gesture flanking the bark of Amun during the Opet or the Valley festival. During the Late period, statues of the king in the Henu gesture started to appear.
- The presence of the king accompanied by these souls could be related to the desire of the king to be linked to these legendary leaders to appear as the rightful successors of their ancestors who ruled these two cities. Or it could be related to the desire of the king to be connected with the souls of various groups of gods associated with these cities, who could provide him with the necessary protection and power to overcome his enemies in battle, protecting and assisting the king in the renewal of his powers and ability to uphold Maat, as well as ensuring the continuous provision of offerings.
- During the Graeco-Roman period the King was represented performing the Henu praise on the Egyptian temples. The researcher spotted seven scenes in the following temples: Deir el-Madineh, Opet at Karnak, Edfu, and Philae. All of them date back to the Ptolemaic period (table 1).



- All the scenes appeared on the gates and doors, or ?s inside the temples. The souls of Pe and Nekhen used to be represented flanking the false doors or the real doorway in the mortuary temples of the Old Kingdom (Sahura, Unis, Merenra, Pepy II). (Cwiek, 2003: 269) Thus, the depiction of these souls on the gates and doors in the Graeco-Roman era could be an imitation of older representations.
- All the scenes representing the king before the deity except for three scenes: in the temple of Deir el-Madineh, in the Opet temple, and Dendara temple.
- There are only two scenes in the temple of Philae where the king is not represented accompanied with the souls of Pe and Nekhen, but with the Pat and Rechit people. The Rechit is considered as a city in Northern Delta. Later, its people were regarded as being the representation of Seth. (Wolfgang, 1968: 20, 42) In the Language the word used to refer to the defeated people. (Vomberg, 2006: 1448) It could also to the infer sector of the society that contains peasants. While, Pat is regarded to be controlled by Horus. In the language it could be also refer to the elite sector of the Society. Thus, the ancient Egyptian Society consists three sectors: Rechit (the infer sector), the Pat (the elite), and the Henmemet (the highest class). (Griffin, 2007) It seems that in the scene here, the Rechit and the Pat replaced the shape of the souls of Nekhen and Pe. Thus, they refer here to the people of Upper and Lower Egypt.

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Table 1

Scenes of the king performing the Henu praise

N.	Temple	Location of the scene	Date	Description	Deity
1	Temple of Hathor Deir el-Madineh	interior door of the southern chapel (B)	Ptolemy VI	King accompanied souls of Pe and Nekhen	None
2	Opet Temple, Karnak	Door of the central hall	Ptolemy VIII	King accompanied souls of Pe and Nekhen	None
3	Dendara	Window in the shrine on the roof of the temple	Ptolemaic period	King accompanied souls of Pe and Nekhen	None
4	Edfu	Door of the court of the mammisi	Ptolemy VIII	King accompanied souls of Pe and Nekhen	Horus
5	Edfu	Central door in the pylon	Ptolemy XII	King accompanied souls of Pe and Nekhen	Horus
6	Philae	Door leading to the mammisi in the pylon	Ptolemy VI	King accompanied souls of Pe and Nekhen	Isis
7	Philae	North gate in the western colonnade	Ptolemy XII	King accompanied Pat and Rehit	Isis and Osiris Harendotes and Hathor

Figures**Fig.1.** tomb of Ramses I (KV 16), sarcophagus chamber, west wall



Fig. 2. west wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak temple, in the first register, Lergain, 1929: Fig.128



Fig.3. granite bark of Amun, Museum of fine Arts in Boston (Inv. 23.728).



Fig.4. Bronze statue,
British Museum (Inv.N. EA11497)



Fig.5. Bronze statue
Royal-Athena Gallery at New York

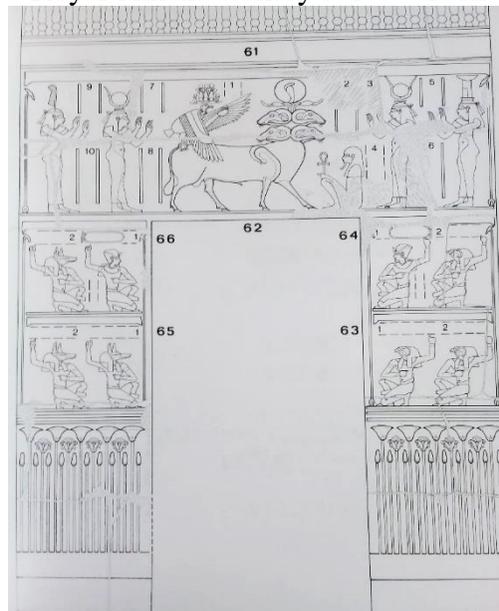


Fig.6. interior door of the southern chapel (B), Temple of Hathor, Deir el-Madineh



Fig.7. central hall (VII), southern wall to the left of the door, Opet Temple, Karnak

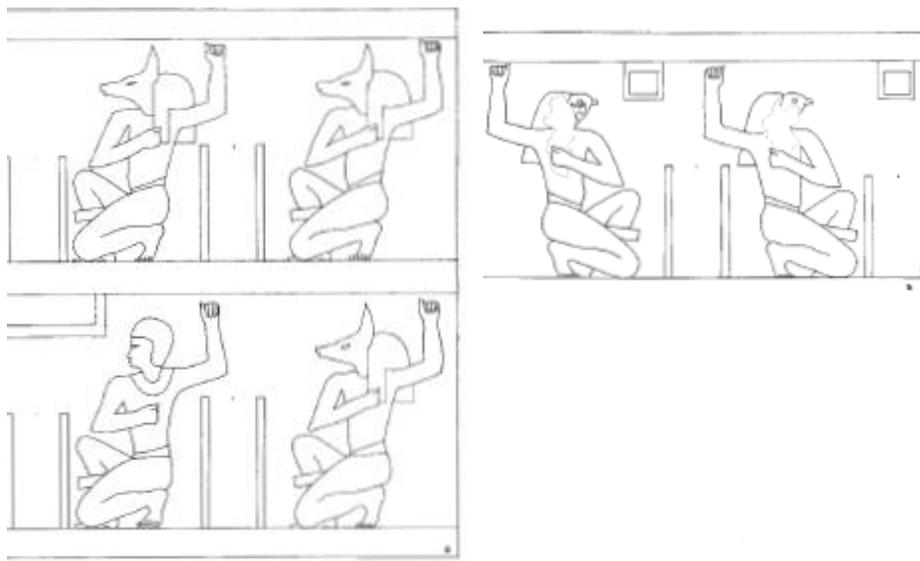


Fig.8. Temple of Dendara, Shrine on the roof, Chassinat (1978), Pl. DCCCX.

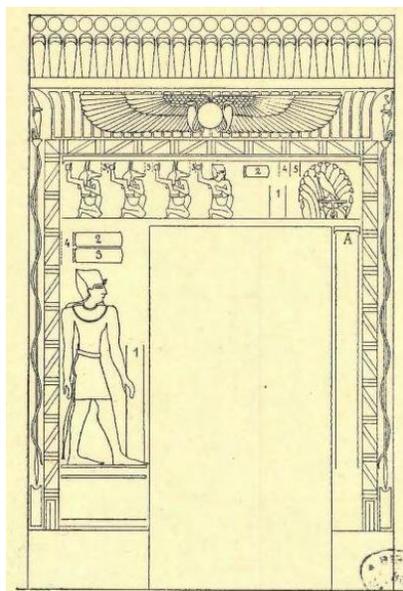


Fig.9. court of the mammisi, Edfu Temple, Chassinat (1939), Pl. LI (2).

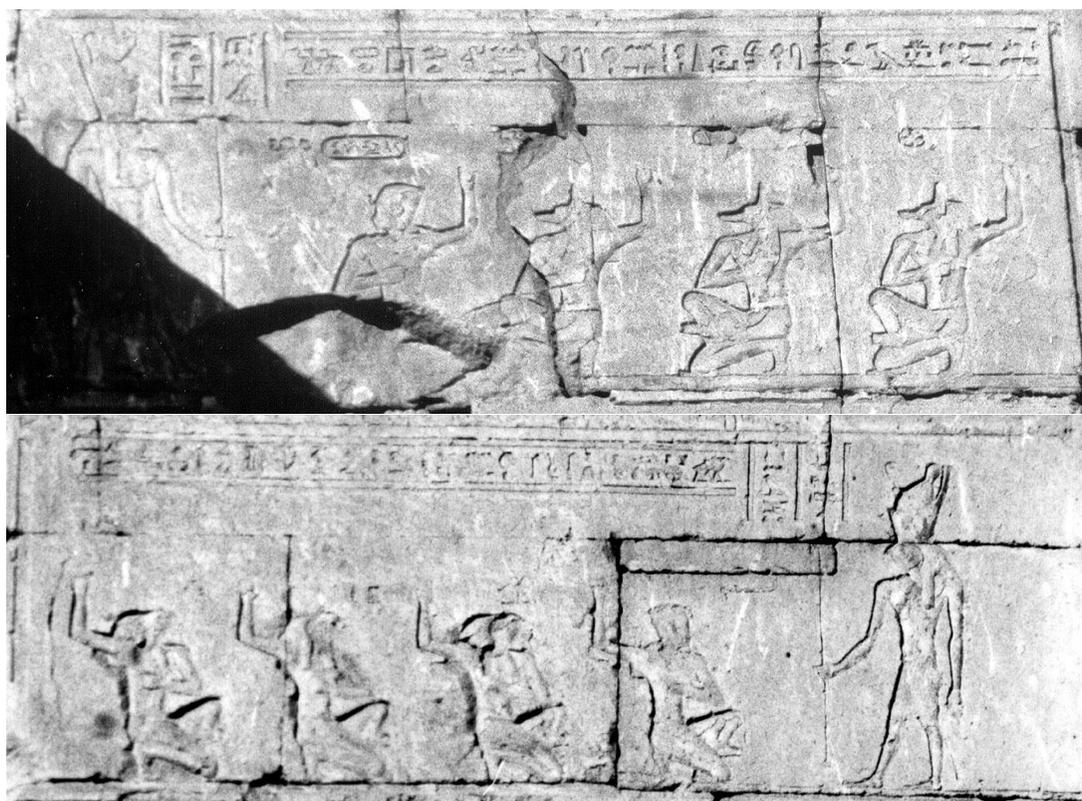


Fig.10. central door in the pylon, Edfu Temple, Chassinat (1933), pl. 179.

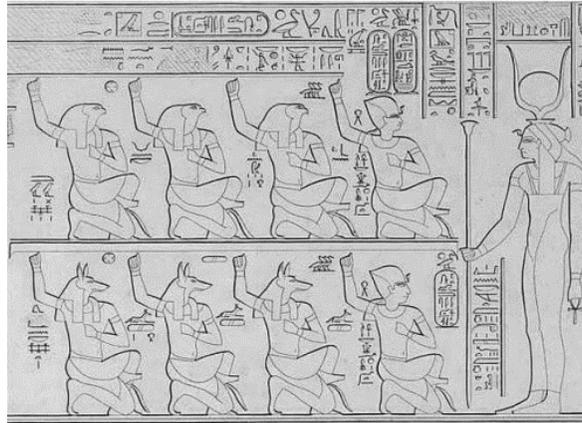


Fig. 11. First Pylon, west tower, Philae Temple, Junker H. & Winter E. (1958), Abb. 140.

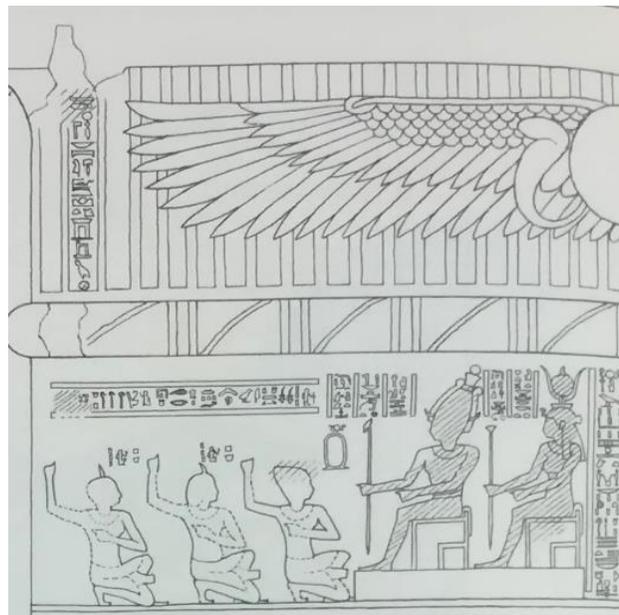


Fig.12. North gate, western colonnade, Philae Temple, Kockelmann (2016), tafeln, No. 69.

تصوير الملك في وضع الحنو على المعابد المصرية في العصر اليوناني- الروماني

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المخلص

الحنو من الأوضاع المعروفة في مصر القديمة والتي كانت دائما ما تصور بها أرواح نخن وبوتو. وهو عبارة عن الركوع على ركبة واحدة مع ضرب الصدر بقبضة يد مع رفع اليد الأخرى الى اعلى. عادة ما كان يتم هذا الطقس تحية لظهور الشمس الجديدة او احتفالاً بروح الملك اثناء طقس تلاوة الصلوات. لقد صور الملك في وضع الحنو مرافقا لأرواح نخن وبوتو خلال العصر الفرعوني داخل المقابر. ولكن كان من النادر رؤية الملك مصور في هذا الوضع على المعابد وكان دائما في هذه الحالة ما يكون مصاحبا لمركب الاله آمون. في العصور المتأخرة بدأت تظهر التماثيل المصورة للملك في وضع الحنو. ونظرا لأن أرواح نخن وبوتو ترمز الى حكام المملكتين الشمالية والجنوبية خلال عصور ما قبل التاريخ، لعل هذا هو سبب ظهور الملك مصاحبا لهم في وضع الحنو. اما خلال العصر اليوناني الروماني فلقد بدأ تصوير الملك بشكل واضح في هذا الوضع على جدران المعابد وبالأخص على عتب أبواب ونوافذ المعبد. وربما يكون ذلك تقليدا لأرواح نخن وبوتو التي عادة ما كانت تصور على أبواب المعابد الجنائزية التي ترجع لعصر الدولة القديمة.

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أرواح نخن وبوتو؛ طقس الحنو؛ المعابد المصرية.

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