



The Significance of Number Three in The Ancient Egyptian Religion

May Ahmed Hosny

Associate Professor of Egyptology,
Tourism Guidance Department, Faculty
of Tourism and Hotels Management

Kholoud Ahmed Emara

Bachelor degree, Tourism Guidance
Department, Faculty of Tourism and
Hotels Management

ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Symbols; Trinity;
Triads; Three.

Ancient Egyptian symbols were employed to represent a wide range of concepts and ideas during different periods of the Egyptian civilization like the idea of trinity. Trinity was formed by combining three components. This idea came into existence from the Pre-dynastic period till the Christian era. Moreover, the ancient Egyptians worshipped their deities in groupings known as triads. Triads are classified into two types: regular and irregular. Furthermore, three used to appear as guardian demons in the Ancient Egyptian religious books. Moreover, in the ancient Egyptian mythology, three signify conflict. Additionally, the ancient Egyptians communicated with the deceased in three different ways. Also, number three has an importance in the sacred architecture in ancient Egypt. This study aims to demonstrate the significance of number three and the earliest appearance of numerals in Ancient Egypt. Furthermore, the origin of the idea of trinity. Later, this idea developed into the triad. The methodology of this paper is to study number three and the idea of trinity from the ancient Egyptian religious aspect. However, while seeking to comprehend the ancient Egyptians, their culture, and their symbols one should first understand and study their religion, as the ancient Egyptian religion affects them in all the aspects of their life.

(JAAUTH)
Vol. 21, No. 4,
(December 2021),
PP. 17-33.

Introduction

The ancient Egyptians were enamored with all the details of the nature around them. As a result, they began to examine everything surrounding them to obtain all their ideas and conceptions. Therefore, they documented all their beliefs on the walls of their temples and tombs. As they observed nature, they represented their writings using natural symbols, and consequently this was the greatest method for their numbers to be expressed¹. The ancient Egyptians used to count from 1 to 10; they began by counting till number five on one hand and then added numerals such as six (5+1), and seven (5+2). Later, the numerals were formed by counting from one to ten

¹ Imhausen, A., (2016). **Mathematics in Ancient Egypt:A Contextual History**, London,p:15:16.

with the two hands¹. For example, ivory labels were found in the tomb of King Scorpion I² at the royal cemetery of Abydos³ (fig.1). The numbers are represented by these labels⁴ with vertical and horizontal strokes and spirals. These number signs represent Egypt's oldest recognized numbers in writing. Most probably the usage of these ivory labels would indicate the quantity or size of some objects⁵. There are various evidence that appeared to confirm the usage of numbers since the early dynastic period like the mace head⁶ of king Narmer which had the representation for numbers from the sign for one till million⁷ (Fig.2).

Number three in the Ancient Egyptian Language:

It can be written in two ways:

- First: three vertical strokes like:

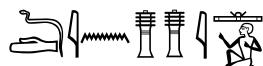
 called *hmt*⁸

- Second:



 called *hmt*

Document I:



dd.in Ddi

in smsw n pA hrdw hmt

nty m ht n Rd-ddt

² Seth, K., (1918) Ein Altägyptischer Fingerzählreim, *ZÄS* 54, pp. 16-39.

² Also called as U-J tomb: founded in the royal cemetery of Abydos (om al Qaab), belongs to king Scorpion I who ruled upper Egypt during presynaptic era (Naqada III). For more information, check: Campagno, M. P. Late Fourth Millennium BCE, UCLA, volume1, p. 1.

³ Van Haarlem, W.M., (2002) Umm El Qaad Idas Koingsgrabe U-J und Serine Fruhen Schriftz eugnis, *JEA* 88, p.255.

⁴ The ivory labels exhibited in the Egyptian Museum, Tahrir Square (JE 99070, JE 99071).

⁵ Dreyer, G. (1998). **Umm el-Qaab I Das Prädynastische Königsgrab U-J und seine frühen Schriftzeugnisse**, Mainz, p.27-28.

⁶ This mace head exhibited in Oxford Museum, E3631.

⁷ Quibell, J.E., (1989). **Hierakonpolis I**, London, p.9, pl. XXVI; Gautier P.& Reynes B., (1995). La tête de Massue du roi Scorpion, **ARCHEO**, volume 5, fig.2.

⁸ Abdelsalam F., (2014). **Hand Book of the Pharaonic Language**, Cairo, p 290.

⁹ This document is part of the Westcar Papyrus. It exhibited in Berlin museum no. 3033.; Westcar Papyrus is very important papyrus; its beginning is lost; contains a series of tales woven together by a narrative frame. It consisted of 5 tales: the first one only contains the last words, the second one has large lacunae, the third, fourth and fifth are complete. The works are written in classical Middle Egyptian; the papyrus dates back to the Hyksos Period.

“Djedi said: The eldest of the three children who are in the womb of Reddjedet will fetch it to”¹.

Plural in the Ancient Egyptian Language:

To get the plural form of a word, the ancient Egyptians repeated the last letter or added three strokes to get the meaning of the plural.

Example:

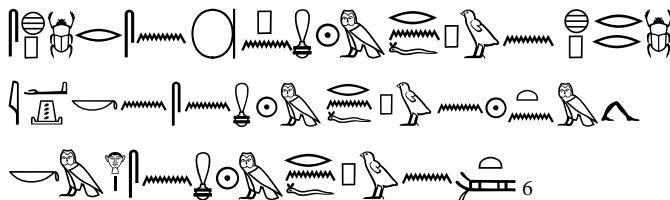


Snwy meaning brothers².

The Idea of Trinity

The idea of Trinity is derived from the union of three components into a single entity having three parts. These three components may be of the same sort, such as three deities, shapes, signs, or they could be different. There is a vessel³ dating back to Naqada II. This vessel has three representations. The first one is for two ladies and a man standing above a staircase, and there are geometrical motifs in the shape of triangles (fig.3, A). The second one represents three ladies (fig.3, B) and the third is a representation of goats with the geometrical motifs taking the shape of triangles (fig.3.C), so this vessel is considered as the first representation for the idea of trinity⁴.

Later on, during the Old Kingdom, the Sun god used to appear in three forms at dawn called khepri (*Hpr*), at mid-day called Re (*R*) and at the sun setting called Atum (*Tm*), and this evidenced in the pyramids texts⁵, spell no.1695 a-b-c:



shpr .sn (m) pn mi Ra m rn.f pw n hprr iar.k n .sn mi

Ra m rn.f pw n Ra tm.k m hr .sn mi Ra m rn.f pw n tm

¹ Lichtheim, M., (1975). *Ancient Egyptian Literature -Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. California, p 215; Zonhoven, L., (1992). *Middel-Egyptische Grammatica: Een Praktische Inleiding in de Egyptische Taalen het Hiërogliefenschrift*. Leiden, p.275.

² Gardiner, A. (1926). *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to The Study of Hieroglyphics*, Oxford, p. 438.

³ This vessel exhibited now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, No.20.2.10.

⁴ Griffiths, J., (1996). *Triads and Trinity*, London, 1996, pp 13:14; Hayes, William C., (1953). *Scepter of Egypt I: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom*, London, pp. 22–23, fig. 14.

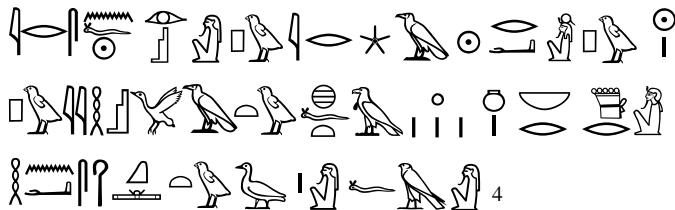
⁵ The Pyramid Texts: the oldest religious texts in Ancient Egypt. Appeared for the first time on the walls of Unas Pyramid at Saqqara. It consisted from magical texts, myths, songs, prayers and spells. Those texts provide safety for the king in afterlife.

⁶ Setht,K.,(1910). *Die Altagyptischen pyramiden Texte*, Darmstat, p.394.

“They cause (king) to come into being as Re, in this, his name of Khepri.
you mount to them as Re in this his name of Re
you turn back again from their face as Re, in this his name of Atum”¹.

By the Middle Kingdom trinity developed by merging three divinities together such as god Ptah-Soker-Osiris (Pth-Skr-Wsir), who was regarded as single divinity in some texts by stating a single pronoun (*di.f*) or by stating plural pronoun (*di.sn*)². The ancient Egyptians merged these three gods because they represented three stages; creation, death and afterlife, as god Ptah formed the creation, god Soker represented the necropolis and god Osiris represented the afterlife.

Furthermore, during the New Kingdom in the Book of the Dead³ in chapter seventeen, the idea of the trinity was expressed by mentioning “Osiris (Wsir) was yesterday, current day is Hours (Hr) and tomorrow is Re (Ra)”.



*ir snf Wsir pw ir dwA Ra pw hrw pwy hst.tw hftyw nw nb-r-dr hmA shkA -tw sA .f Hr*⁵

“Yesterday is Osiris, and tomorrow is Re on the day when he shall destroy the enemies of lord of the universe, and today he shall establish as prince and ruler his son Horus”⁶.

However, Trinity developed during the Ramesside period among the hymns of several deities such as in Amen hymns:



hmt pw ntrw nbw nn snw. sn

“All Gods are three, there is nothing like them”⁷.

Moreover, the ancient Egyptians believed that the human identity was divided into two main elements: materialistic and spiritual. Our main concern will be directed to the spiritual elements as it comprises three main elements which were:

¹ Faulkner,R.O, (1969). **The Ancient Egyptian pyramid Texts**, Oxford, p.251.

² Morenz,S., (1960). **Egyptian Religion**, London, p.150.

³ The Book of the Dead: the most important religious book in Ancient Egypt. Flourished from the 18th dynasty till 21st dynasty.

⁴ Griffith, J., (1992). **Some Egyptian Conceptual Triads**, London, p.223:228.

⁵ Naville,E., (1886). **Das Ägyptische Todtenbuch der 18-20 Dynastie aus Verschiedenen Urkunden Zusammengestellt und Herausgegeben**, Berlin, p 17.

⁶ Davis,C., (1894). **The Egyptian Book of the Dead**, New York, p.78.

⁷ Zandee, (1948). **De Hymmenan n Amon**, Leiden, p.84; Gardiner, A.H., (1905). **Hymns to Amon from a Leiden papyrus**, p 35:36.

- **Ka (k3)**: it is the sole companion which is born with the creation of the human being¹
- **Ba (b3)** : It is the spiritual entity that can move between worlds of living and death.².
- **Akh (Ah)**: it is the illuminated spirit in which the deceased wished to be resurrected in³.

The idea of trinity did not only exist during the ancient Egyptian History, but also continued to exist during the Christian era and it became the holy belief of Christianity. It was emphasized in the Christian belief of three shapes for one god⁴.

Ancient Egyptians used the idea of trinity even in their symbols, scepters, and decorative items as these three symbols were used to appear together, (*anh*, *dd*, and *wAs*) which meant life, stability, and prosperity⁵.

The Idea of the Triad:

This term used to describe three deities in one group⁶. It can also refer to a collection of statues, as there are five triad statues of king Menkaura from the Fourth Dynasty. Each one depicts the king with goddess Hathor and a female figure representing the local deities of Egypt's nomes⁷. They didn't just worship the gods in a single identity in ancient Egypt but they also, used to combine three different divinities into one family.

The Main Reasons for the Creation of the Idea of Triads:

- 1- **Human Nature Concept:** Human nature dictates that one seeks stability in his life by making a family. As a result, the Ancient Egyptians assumed that their divinities had the same needs as humans, such as having children, loving, hating, and even dying⁸.
- 2- **Religious Concept:** During the different historical eras the ancient Egyptians made unity between the divinities to ensure their beneficial function, so they solved the problem of pluralism by making the triad⁹.
- 3- **Political Concept:** Sometimes, the priests who have the most influential political role wanted to emphasize the role of their local deities, so they merge them with two powerful deities¹⁰.

Types of Triads in Ancient Egypt:

Triad in ancient Egypt was divided into two kinds (regular and irregular)

¹Wisseman, sarah.U, (2003). **The Virtual Mummy**, Chicago, p.5, 9, 11.

²Wisseman, sarah.U, (2003). **The Virtual Mummy**, p.22.

³Cerny,J., (1952). **Ancient Egyptian Religion**, London, p.56.

⁴ David,R., (1988). **The Ancient Egyptians**, England, p.15.

⁵Cerny,J., (1952). **Ancient Egyptian Religion**, London, p.56.

⁶Lurker, M., (1980). **The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt**, London, p.125.

⁷ Shaw, I., Nicholson, P., (1996). **British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt**, London, p296.

⁸ Examples for the dead divinity: god Osiris.

⁹ Sauneron,S., (1962). **Triad in Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization**, London, p290.

¹⁰ Sethe, k., (1929). **Amun und de Achturgotter von Hermopolis**, Berlin, p. 32, 55.

1- Regular Triads:

They mainly comprised from a religious family having father, mother and son or daughter.

2- Irregular Triad:

A religious family like the regular type, but with different construction. This type has many shapes¹:

- a- Triad consisting of one god and two goddesses, for example, second triad of Armant (Montu, Iwnyt, and Tjenenet)²
- b- Triad consisting of a mother and two sons like Sais triad (Neith, Sobek and Horus)³
- c- Triad consisting of a father, a son and a daughter like triad of Heliopolis (Atum, Shu and Tefnut)⁴ and the second triad of Memphis (Ptah, Shu and Tefnut)⁵.
- d- Triad consisting of two divinities regarded as a father and mother and the king in between them or two mothers and the king between them varies according to the ruling king (Horus on the earth)⁶.

Reasons for the Creation of the Irregular Triads:

1- The Triads of one god and two goddesses: This triad comprising of a deity who is considered a husband and two goddesses who were considered wives. Polygamy existed between rulers and divinities in ancient Egypt, even though it was not a popular practice⁷. Montu was the lord of two lands, therefore he married two females from Upper and Lower Egypt⁸. Because goddess Iwnyt was identified as the goddess one from Upper Egypt, and the other goddess Tjenenet had a connection with the deity Tatenen, "god of Lower Egypt", therefore this triad unified the two lands. As a result, the god Montu ruled over both Upper and Lower Egypt in this triad⁹.

2- The Triads of a goddess and two gods:

It is comprising of a goddess regarded as the mother and two gods regarded as sons, like: the triad of Madi city (south west El fayoum, called DjA by the ancient Egyptians) goddess Renenutet and the two gods, Sobek and Horus. In this triad, gods Sobek and Hours had the same power, so they could be brothers. They had a temple at Kom Ombo and the temple was divided between them. Also, God

¹ Bierbrier, M. L. (2008). **Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt**. Maryland, p. 182, 183; Velde, H. T. (1971). Some Remarks on the Structure of Egyptian Divine Triad, **JEA** 57, p. 83.

² Sales, J. (2012). **Divine Triads of Ancient Egypt**, in: **Hathor Studies of Ancient Egypt 1**, p. 121.

³ Sales, J., (2007) **Estudos de Egipciologia. Temáticas e Problemáticas**, Lisboa, p 177.

⁴ Maspero, (1892). **Sur l'enneade, Rev. de l'Hisdtoire des Religions**, Paris, p.42.

⁵ Wilkinson, T., (2005). **Dictionary of Ancient Egypt**. London, p. 251.

⁶ Habachi,L., (1975). Building Activites of Sosostris I in the Area South Thebes, **MDAIK** 31, p 32.; Murray, (1931). **Egyptian Temple**, London, p.66.

⁷ نحفة حندوسة، الزواج و الطلاق في مصر القديمة، القاهرة، ص 26-29.

⁸ Velde, H.T., (1971). Some Remarks on the Structure of the Egyptian Divine Triads, **JEA** 57, p.85

⁹ Watterson, B., (1948). **Gods of Ancient Egypt**, England, p.139.

Sobek didn't have a wife or children in the old era¹. There is another example: The triad consisting of the goddess Hathor, god Ihy, and god Her-sema-tawy, as goddess Hathor was the mother of god Ihy in Dendera and the mother of god Her-sema-tawy in Edfu, it is normal for her to be seen with her two sons in the scenes².

3- The Triad of two gods and a goddess:

It is comprised of two gods regarded as father and son. One goddess is regarded as a daughter for example god Atum, god Shu and goddess Tefnut, because the father was the creator god, he created himself and created his children from himself “enneed of Heliopolis”³. There is another triad consisting of god Ptah regarded as a father, god Shu regarded as a son, and goddesses Tefnut regarded as a daughter. This triad was formed to certain the importance of the two creation myths (The myth of Memphis and Heliopolis). It emphasized the importance of these divinities to the myth of Memphis as well as the Enneed of Heliopolis as god Ptah was presented as the creator god who created god Shu and goddess Tefnut⁴.

4- The Triad of two divinities and the ruling king:

In this triad, the ruling king was regarded as a son because the king represented god Horus on the earth. For example, king Menkaura between two goddess regarded as two mothers, goddess Hathor and goddess Wenet in Giza⁵, King Senusret I with god Montu regarded as a father and goddess Hathor regarded as a mother in Armant⁶, King Ramses II with goddess Hathor and goddess Isis in Qeft⁷.

The Guardian Demons:

Among the encounters of the deceased during his journey, a special place is given to those creatures which called guardian demons who guarded certain gates, portals and doors; these encounters are described in book of the dead chapters 144-147 (fig.4). The importance of these demons is motivated by the fact that the deceased must be ready not only to know their names, but also to visually recognize them. Their outward appearance is not much different from the way deities are depicted in their animal and hybrid forms⁸. These demons represented in triads guarding the gates of the house of Osiris. Moreover, they have three types called: doorkeeper, watcher, and herald⁹. The names of these demons appeared in Book of the Dead chapter 144 in

¹Velde, H.T., (1971). Some Remarks on the Structure of the Egyptian Divine Triads, **JEA** 57, p.85.

² El Sayed, R. (1982). **LaDesseNeith de Sais**, Cairo, p.60.

³Maspero, (1892). **Sur l' Enneade, Rev.de l' Hisdtoire des Religions**, Paris, p.42.

⁴Junker, H., (1939). Die Gotterlehre von Memphis, **APAW**, volume 23, p.16.

⁵ Bothner, B.V., (1950). **Notes on the Mycerinus Triad**, Boston,p 10-17.

⁶ Habachi, L., (1975). Building Activities of Sosostris I in the Area South Thebes, **MDAIK**,volume 31, p.32.

⁷Petrie, F., (1896). **Koptos**, London, p.IXVIII.

⁸ Lucarelli,R., (2006). The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen: Ancient Egyptian Funerary Religion in the 10th Century BC, **Egyptologische Uitgavan** 21. Leiden, p.95-104.

⁹Lurcarelli, R. (2010). The Guardian Demons of the Book of the Dead, **BMSAES** 15, p 87- 93.

Turin papyrus¹, secondly in the western Osirian chapel in Dendera temple² and the papyrus of Imuthes³. Many of the guardians have double names, one referring to a physical feature and the other to the moral behavior. As a result, they appeared with various names.

Furthermore, the guardian demons had a helpful and protective function indicated on the monuments. Like the wooden statuettes⁴ of nameless guardians like gods (fig.5), which were apparently objects of funeral worship and were discovered in several royal tombs of 18th and 19th `Dynasties⁵. Later, the guardians are sometimes explicitly dealt with as if they were gods. Moreover, demons might be divinized and given a cult like the gods. Like the iconography of the netherworld guardians appeared on unique type of non-funerary monuments, called architectural slabs like, the slab dating back to the reign of Psamtik I (26th dynasty, Saite Dynasty)⁶ (Fig. 6) and shows depictions of demonic beings, where offerings are brought to them by the king. Also, there is similar greywacke slab⁷ that belonged to the temple of Atum at Heliopolis in Lower Egypt (fig.7), represented king Nectanebo I (30th dynasty) kneeling in front of demonic figures whose iconography identifies them as guardians (crocodile- multiple snake headed figures with long knives). Nectanebo I offered jewelry and clothes to them and in the inscriptions he thanks them for having granted victory and power over Egypt and the foreign countries ⁸. In this type of scenes, the guardians dealt with as gods⁹.

Three in the Ancient Egyptian Mythology:

Three in ancient Egyptian mythology represent a harmonious structure among gods, but they were also symbol of struggle or tension, as in the Myth of Isis, Horus, and Seth. When Isis was pregnant and concealed in the marches of the delta until Horus was born, Horus grew to fight and destroy god Seth. There were two gods with the same power and manners in this mythology. However, the third deity was responsible for restoring equilibrium and ending the battle by defeating the adversary¹⁰.

¹ Lepsius, R. (1842). **Das Todtenbuch der Ägypter nach dem Hieroglyphischen Papyrus in Turin.** Leipzig, plate LX, LXI.

² Cauville, (1997). **Le Temple de Dendara: Les Chapelles Osiriennes.** Cairo, P 186-187.

³ Goyon, J.C., (1999). **Le papyrus d'Imouthès Fils de Psintaê.** New York, p 34-35.

⁴ It exhibited in the British museum no. EA 50699.

⁵ Reeves, N., and Wilkinson.R., (1996). **The complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs,** London, p132-133; Strudwick, N. (2006). **Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt,** London, p 188-189.

⁶ It Exhibited now in the British Museum no. EA20.

⁷ This slab exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Bologna, no. ks 1870.

⁸ Morigi Govi, C., and S. Pernigotti (eds.), (1994). **La Collezione Egiziana: Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna,** Milano, p103.

⁹ Kaper, O. 2003. The Egyptian God Tutu: A study of the Sphinx-God and Master of Demons with Acorpus of Monuments. **OLA 119.** Leuven, p 62.

¹⁰ Willkinson,R., (1994). **Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art,** London, p.128.

Communicating with the Dead

The Ancient Egyptians believed that the living world was comparable to the land of the dead, therefore they sought to speak with the dead to win the assistance and protection of their ancestors. They communicated in three different ways¹.

1- By Offerings to the Ka:

The ka (*kA*) was not just a sole companion, but also a guide and guardian gifted with the powers of the gods. The ka's strength was derived from the food offerings left in the tomb, which were absorbed by the Ka. As a result, the deceased family members are making offerings to the Ka².

2- By Letters to the Dead:

The latter to the dead appeared from the Old Kingdom till the Late Period of ancient Egyptian history. Letters to the dead, inscribed on pottery bowls, linen, or papyrus by the family of the deceased. These letters were sent with food and drink and were subsequently read by the deceased soul. It had a standard format which began with greetings, then a request from the family of the deceased³.

3- Dreams and Nightmares

Dreams and nightmares were the third way to connect with the dead. The Egyptians believed that dreams and nightmares were connected the land of the living with the afterlife. Also, sleeping allowed people to access another world and regions that were far away. There are letters to the deceased from their families requesting to visit them in dreams. Danger arrived in the dreams and nightmares to the sleepers so that the deceased could protect them. There are amulets that can maintain happy dreams and protect sleepers from negative ones⁴.

The Importance of Number Three in the Ancient Egyptian Sacred Architecture:

- Triangles:

The architectural constructions and designs of the ancient Egyptians are among their most famous and long-lasting achievements. Like their pyramids, Obelisks, temples, tombs, and chapels. In 1863, Viollet-le-duc proposed that the most popular form of ancient Egyptian architecture was based on three triangles. These three triangles are known as the 3-4-5 triangle, the equilateral triangle, and the Egyptian triangle⁵.

¹ Teeter,E.,(2011). **Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt**, New York, p.149.

² Cerny,J., (1952). **Ancient Egyptian Religion**, London, p.110; Teeter,E., (2011). **Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt**, New York, p.151.

³Silverman, D. P., (1997). **Ancient Egypt**. Oxford, p 142.

⁴ Teeter,E., (2011). **Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt**, p 159; Szpakowska, K., (2007). **Nightmares in Ancient Egypt**, Straburg, p 21.

⁵ Rossi, C., **Architecture and Mathematics in Ancient Egypt**, United Kingdom, 2003, p 9

- 1- **The Right Angled Triangle:** It has one right angle and the proportions of its sides were 3-4-5, therefore it was also known as the 3-4-5 triangle.
- 2- **The Equilateral Triangle:** It had three equal angles and sides, and it divided the circle into three equal sides. Also the height split the base into two equal pieces when drawing a perpendicular from the vertex. As a result, it totally satisfies the eye.
- 3- **The Egyptian Triangle:**
It is a triangle with two equal sides and a different third side; the ratio between the base and its height is 8:5, therefore the Egyptian triangle is also known as an 8:5 triangle¹.
These three triangles may be seen in the building of any pyramid, such as the Equilateral Triangle in the vertical portion parallel to the base's side length. The Egyptian Triangle as seen from the diagonal of the base. It was noticed that the height of the equilateral and Egyptian triangles that created two right angled triangles (fig.8).

Conclusions

The ancient Egyptians employed symbols for everything in their lives. The sign of three is among these symbols. It has been noted that number three has important connotations based on the field in which it was utilized. They used to write it as a number and a sign for plurality in mathematics. Number three was not only used as a number in Ancient Egypt, but it also had religious significance and symbolism. It appeared in the Pre Dynastic era under the idea of the trinity. Even when the ancient Egyptians wanted to worship gods and goddesses, they worshipped them in groups consisting of three divinities. They connected the concept of the Egyptian family to three members: father, mother, and son or daughter. It first appeared in the Pre dynastic era and is still in use today by dividing our meals into three times: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Also dividing every season into three months. Number three, and its symbolism, was essential in the religious, mathematical, and social life of the ancient Egyptians.

Figures

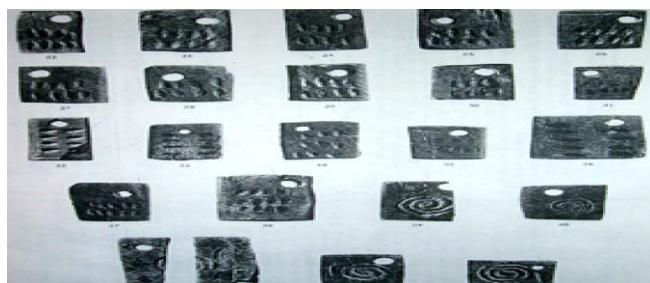


Fig.1. The Ivory Labels from U-J Tomb

After: Dreyer,V.G., *Umm El-Qaab I Das Prädynastische Königsgrab U-J und seine Frühen Schriftzeugnisse*, Mainz 1998, p.27-28.

¹Rossi,C., **Architecture and Mathematics in Ancient Egypt**, ,p.11

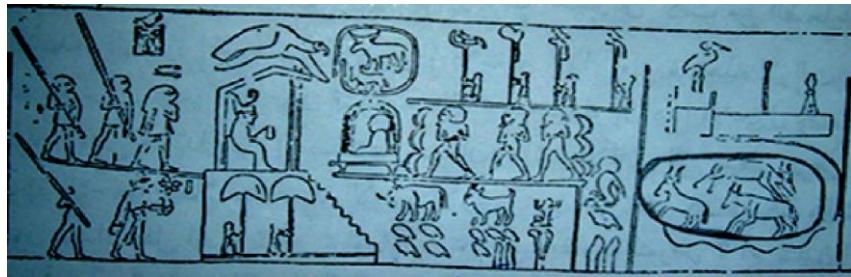


Fig.2. The Mace Head of king Narmer

After: Gautier P.& Reynes B., "La Tete de Massue du roi Scorpion" ARCHEO-NIL 5 ,1995, fig.2.



Fig.3, A: Representation of Two Women and Man above Mountain on a Vessel

After: Hayes, William C., *Scepter of Egypt I: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom*, 1953, London, pp. 22–23, fig. 14.



Fig.3, B. Representation of Three Ladies beside a Staircase

After: Silverman, David P., edited by Diana Craig Patch, Text and Image and the Origin of Writing in Ancient Egypt. In Dawn of Egyptian Art,2011, New York, p. 207.



Fig.3, C. Representation of Goats with Triangles

After: Cox, Warren E, The Book of Pottery and Porcelain, 1979, New York, p. 33, pl. 8.



Fig.4. Representation for Guardian Demons from Ani Papyrus

After: LURCARELLI, R. (2010). „The guardian- demons of the Book of the Dead“, BMSAES 15, fig.1.



Fig.5. Wooden Statuettes of Guardian Demon Figures

After: Strudwick, N. (2006). Masterpieces of ancient Egypt, London, p 189.



Fig.6. Architectural Slab

After: Kaper, O. 2003. The Egyptian God Tutu: A study of the Sphinx-God and Master of Demons with acorpus of monuments. OLA 119. Leuven, p 62.



Fig.7. Greywacke Slab that Belonged to the Temple of Atum at Heliopolis
After: Morigi Govi, C., and S. Pernigotti (eds.), (1994). La Collezione Egiziana:
Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna, p103.

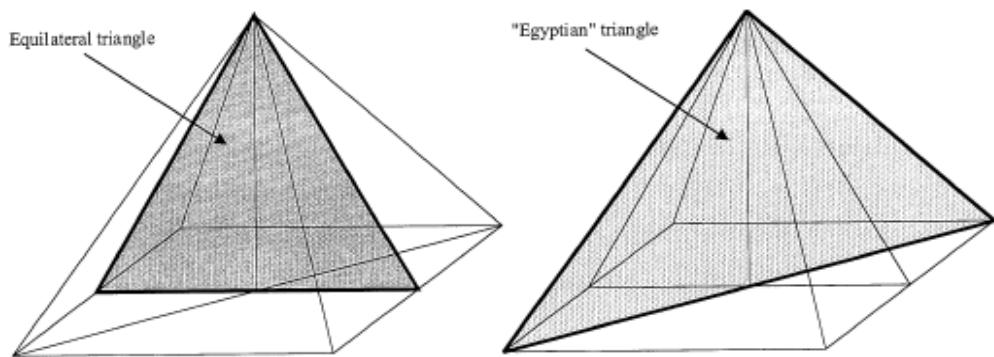


Fig.8: The Equilateral Triangle and The Egyptian Triangle from Khufu Pyramid
After: Rossi, C., (2004). Architecture and Mathematics in Ancient Egypt, London, p.413

Bibliography

- Abdelsalam F., (2014). **Handbook of the Pharaohnic Language**, Cairo, p 290.
- Bierbrier, M. L. (2008). **Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt**. Maryland, p. 182, 183.
- Cauville, (1997). **Le Temple de Dendara: Les Chapelles Osiriennes**. Cairo, P 186-187
- Cerny,J., (1952). **Ancient Egyptian Religion**, London, p.110
- David,R., (1988). **The Ancient Egyptians**, England, p.15
- Davis,C., (1894). **The Egyptian Book of the Dead**, New York, p.78
- Dreyer,G. (1998). **Umm el-Qaab I Das Prädynastische Königsgrab U-J und seine frühen Schriftzeugnisse**, Mainz, p.27-28.
- El Sayed, R. (1982)., **LaDesseNeith de Sais**, Cairo, p.60.

- Erman,A., Grapow,H., (1926). **Wörterbuch Der Ägyptischen Sprache**, Berlin, p283.
- Faulkner,R.O, (1969). **The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts**, Oxford, p.251
- Gardiner, A. (1926). **Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to The Study of Hieroglyphics**, Oxford, p. 438.
- Gardiner, A., (1905). **Hymns to Amon from a Leiden papyrus**, p 35:36.
- Gautier P.& Reynes B., (1995). La Tete de Massue du Roi Scorpion,**ARCHEO**, volume 5, fig.2
- Goyon, J.C., (1999). **Le papyrus d'Imouthès Fils de Psintaê**s. New York, p 34-35.
- Griffith, J., (1992). **Some Egyptian Conceptual Triads**, London, p.223:228.
- Griffiths, J., (1996). **Triads and Trinity**, London, 1996, p13:14.
- Habachi, L., (1975). Building Activities of Sosostris I in the Area South Thebes, **MDAIK**,volume 31, p.32.
- Hayes, William C., (1953). **Scepter of Egypt I: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom**, London, pp. 22–23, fig. 14.
- Imhausen,A., (2016). **Mathematics in Ancient Egypt:A Contextual History**, London,p:15:16.
- Junker, H., (1939). Die gotterlehre von Memphis, **APAW**, volume 23, p.16.
- Kaper, O. 2003. The Egyptian God Tutu: A study of the Sphinx-God and Master of Demons with Acorpus of Monuments. **OLA** 119. Leuven, p 62.
- Lepsius, R. (1842). **Das Todtenbuch der Ägypter nach dem Hieroglyphischen Papyrus in Turin**. Leipzig, plate LX, LXI
- Lichtheim, M., (1975). **Ancient Egyptian Literature -Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms**. California, p 215.
- Lucarelli,R., (2006). The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen: Ancient Egyptian Funerary Religion in the 10th Century BC. **Egyptologische Uitgavan** 21. Leiden, p.95-104.
- LURCARELLI, R. (2010). The Guardian Demons of the Book of the Dead, **BMSAES** 15, p 87- 93.
- Lurker, M., (1980). **The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt**, London, p.125.
- Maspero, (1892). **Sur l'enneade, Rev.de l'Hisdtoire des Religions**, Paris, p.42.
- Morenz,S., (1960). **Egyptian Religion**, London, p.150.
- Morigi Govi, C., and S. Pernigotti (eds.), (1994). **La Collezione Egiziana: Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna**, Milano, p103.
- Naville.E., (1886). **Das Ägyptische Todtenbuch der 18-20 Dynastie aus Verschiedenen Urkunden Zusammengestellt und Herausgegeben**, Berlin, p 17.
- Petrie, F., (1896). **Koptos**, London, p.IXVIII;
- Quibell, J.E., (1989). **Hierakonpolis I**, London, p.9.
- Reeves, N., and Wilkinson.R., (1996). **The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs**, London, p132-133.
- Sales, J. (2012). **Divine Triads of Ancient Egypt**, in: **Hathor Studies of Ancient Egypt 1**, p. 121.
- Sales, J., (2007) **Estudos de Egiptologia. Temáticas e Problemáticas**, Lisboa, p 177.
- Sauner,S., (1962). **Triad in Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization**, London, p290.
- Seth, K., (1918) Ein Altägyptischer Fingerzählreim, **ZÄS** 54, pp. 16- 39.
- Sethe, k., (1929). **Amun und de Achturgotter von Hermopolis**, Berlin, p. 32, 55.

- Setht,K.,(1910). **Die Altagyptischen Pyramiden Texte**, Darmstat, p.394.
- Shaw, I., Nicholson, P., (1996). **British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt**, London, p296.
- Silverman, D. P., (1997). **Ancient Egypt**. Oxford, p 142.
- Strudwick, N. (2006). **Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt**, London, p 188-189.
- Szpakowska, K., (2007). **Nightmares in Ancient Egypt**, Straburg, p 21.
- Teeter,E., (2011). **Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt**, p 159.
- Van Haarlem, W.M., (2002) Umm El Qaad Idas Koingsgrabe U-J und Serine Fruhen Schriftz eugnisse, **JEA** 88, p.255.
- Velde, H.T.,(1971). Some Remarks on the Structure of the Egyptian Divine Triads, **JEA** 57, p.85.
- Watterson, B., (1948). **Gods of Ancient Egypt**, England, p.139.
- Wilkinson, T., (2005). **Dictionary of Ancient Egypt**. London, p. 251.
- Willkinson,R., (1994). **Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art**, London, p.128.
- Wisseman, sarah.U, (2003). **The Virtual Mummy**, Chicago, p.5, 9, 11.
- Zandee, (1948). **De Hymmenan n Amon**, Leiden, p.84.
- Zonhoven, L., (1992). **Middel-Egyptische Grammatica: Een Praktische Inleiding in de Egyptische Taalen het Hiërogliefenschrift**. Leiden, p.275.

المراجع العربية:

- تحفة حندوسة، 1998، الزواج والطلاق في مصر القديمة، القاهرة، ص26-29

Abbreviations

- APAW: Abhandlungen der Preubischen Akademie der wissenschaften, Berlin.
- JEA: Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, London.
- MDAIK: Mitteilugen das Deutesch Instituts für Augsburg, Berlin.
- UCLA: Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Anglos.
- ZÄS: Zeitschrift für Ägyptische sprache und Altertumskunde, Berlin.



أهمية الرقم ثلاثة في الديانة المصرية القديمة

خلود أحمد عماره

مى أحمد حسنى

حاصلة على بكالوريوس الإرشاد السياحي، كلية
السياحة والفنادق، جامعة حلوان

أستاذ بعلم المصريات المساعد، قسم الارشاد
السياسي، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة حلوان

معلومات المقالة

الكلمات المفتاحية

فكرة التثلث هي عبارة عن جمع بين ثلاثة رموز أو آلهة أو عناصر للترين، هذه الفكرة ظهرت منذ عصر ما قبل الأسرات وظهرت في عصر الدولة القديمة في وجود ثلاثة أشكال لأنه الشمس (ع- خبر- آتون). وفي عصر الدولة الوسطى ظهرت فكرة التثلث في دمج ثلاثة آلهة لينتج إله واحد يسمى بتاح- سوكر-

أوزير. كما أن التثلث ظهر أيضاً في الدولة الحديثة في كتاب الموتى بوصف أمس بأنه أوزير واليوم هو حورس وغداً هو حورس. لم تقتصر فكرة التثلث في مصر القديمة فقط، بل امتدت الفكرة لتكون أساس الديانة المسيحية. لقد اشتق المصري القديم التثلث من فكرة التثلث وقام بعبادة ثلاثة آلهة معاً وكان لهذا

التثلث أنواع عده. علاوة على ذلك استخدم المصري القديم الشياطين في حراسة الأبواب في العالم الآخر، فلكل باب ثلاثة حراس وقسمهم إلى ثلاثة أنواع. كما أنه أيضاً في الأساطير المصرية القديمة قام بوضع شخصين بينهم خلاف ليتدخل الشخص الثالث ويوضع نهاية لهذا الخلاف. تواصل المصريون القدماء مع موتاهم

عن طريق ثلاثة طرق مختلفة. كما أن الرقم ثلاثة له أهمية في المبانى والعمارة المقدسة في مصر القديمة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إثبات أهمية الرقم ثلاثة وبداية ظهور الأرقام في الحضارة المصرية القديمة. وأيضاً بداية ظهور فكرة التثلث حيث أنها كانت بداية الديانة المصرية القديمة حيث أنها تطورت فيما بعد إلى التثلث. سوف تقوم هذه الدراسة عن طريق دراسة رمز الرقم ثلاثة في الديانة المصرية

القديمة، لأن الدين له أثر في كل جوانب الحياة في مصر القديمة.

(JAAUTH)

المجلد 21، العدد 4

(2021)

ص 33-17