

The Relation between the Name of Goddess *sr*t and the term *hp*

Noha Mohamed Hafez

Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Suez Canal University

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ABSTRACT

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The name of goddess Seret appeared for the first time during the 5th Dynasty. It was written twice in an inscription on the dorsal pillar of a statue of *wsr-k3.f-ꜥnh* at Abusir. He had the titles of Priest of Seret and Overseer of the Mansion of the Cow of Seret. Goddess Seret was also called goose goddess relating to the bird determinative borrowed from the homophone *sr* which means “goose”. She is also the duck in Apis’s name, which is written during the Old Kingdom containing the duck determinative along with the determinative of the bull. The bird in Seret’s name is attributed to the common appearance of the *sr*-goose and the *hp*-duck in the animal queue and the offering lists during the Old Kingdom. Her worship arised from an area in the Nile delta which was inahbited by Lybians at that time. This research aims to spot light on goddess Seret which was rarely mentioned in the ancient Egyptian texts and the relation between the goddess’ name and the term *hp* in the ancient Egyptian language.

Introduction



In ancient Egypt, birds were first venerable as items of food and the other records related to this topic. Scenes showing the collecting, sustenance and prepration of birds were depicted in the tomb-chapels. One of the unique representations of birds were drawings scratched on the rocks ‘Geese of Meidum’, now in the Egyptian Museum. It is one of the masterpieces of ancient Egyptian paintings¹.

It was scarce to identify the exact species of ducks and geese from the scenes of the Old Kingdom. There were many words in ancient Egypt meant duck such as; *pht*, *st*, *s* and *ꜥpd*. Gardiner supposed that *ꜥpdw* means birds, ducks and geese. On the other hand, Faulkner supposed that *ꜥpdw* means duck². Ducks were also important among the funerary offerings³. As they were sometimes mummified to be presented as an offering to the deceased as a symbol of rebirth. Geese were associated with various deities such as; Amun, Geb⁴, Hapi⁵, Horpokratis and Seret.⁶


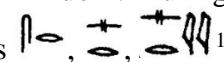
The name of *sr*t

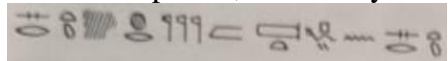
The leonine goddess Seret was slightly documented in ancient Egypt. She was probably considered to be one of the forms of the lioness goddess Sekhmet at Memphis⁷. She sometimes was identified as a memphite goose goddess⁸. This designation is incorrect and the only reason for it was the existence of the goose *sr* in her name⁹. In fact, the

word *sr* is nothing more than a phonetic supplement and does not refer to the form of the deity¹⁰.


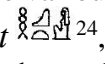

¹¹ This figure of the goddess' name was written on the statue of *Wsr-k3.f-^ḥnh*. Therefore her name has two aspects to be discussed. The lioness determinative related to her role as a protective deity. On the otherhand the duck determinative related to the duck which also appeared along with the bull determinative in the name of Apis ¹². The *ḥp* duck appeared in a few scenes dating back to the reign of the Old Kingdom. It was depicted in the procession of fowls in the tombs of *ḥtp-k3*¹³, *Mrrw-k3i*¹⁴, *R^c m k3.i*¹⁵ and *spd-ḥtp*¹⁶.

sr, was one of the various names given to the geese¹⁷. It was depicted with this figure


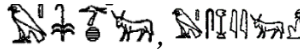
 in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom. During the New Kingdom it was depicted in other different figures such as ¹⁸. The word *srt* could be the female name of the species¹⁹. In the offering lists of the New Kingdom *srt* is shown instead of the previous *sr.w* which was existed during the Old and New Kingdoms²⁰. There was also an inscription, dated back to the Ptolemaic period, from a hymn to

goddess Isis from Aswan mentioned the word *sr.t* . It reads *sr.t /// ḥr ntrw m rn.t nfy*²¹ *n sr.t* which means ‘Seret /// before the gods in this your name of Seret’²².

Doc.1. Seret in an inscription from a statue of *Wsr-K3.f-^ḥnh*

The mastaba-tombs of priests and High officials surrounded the pyramids of the kings during the Old and Middle kingdoms. *Wsr-k3.f-^ḥnh* was a high official of the 5th Dynasty. He held the titles of “Overseer of the two halves of the Delta” and “Overseer of all works of the king”. He was responsible for the projects in the Western Delta. He was related by priestly titles to various deities of the Delta such as: Horus of Damnhur, **Seret**, *ḥ3* or *h3* ²³, *ḥk3t* ²⁴, *Inpw*^{HS} , the White bull and the Hesat-cow²⁶. *Wsr-k3.f-^ḥnh*'s tomb is located at Abusir, to the south of the Great Pyramids of Giza. The site was excavated by Borchardt in year 1902-1908. One of the upper rooms in the mastaba was a secret chamber for portrait statues. As the portrait statues of the deceased were placed among other equipments in the tomb. The ancient Egyptian believed that the deceased could complete his life after death through these statues. These statues were sometimes placed in the cult chamber or in a chamber built for them and entirely walled up²⁷.

Outside the two cult-chambers of *Wsr-k3.f-^ḥnh*'s wife is an important statue of him (**Fig.1a,b**). It represents *Wsr-k3.f-^ḥnh* standing with his arms hanging down and folded his hands. He wears a *nemes* headdress and a short pleated kilt. As usual the left leg is slightly in front. The inscription on this statue gave his name and helped to specify the date of his tomb. One of his positions was the priest of the funerary temple of Sahure the second king of the 5th Dynasty²⁸. The inscription of *Wsr-k3.f-^ḥnh*'s statue is considered the only documented text of goddess Seret²⁹.

Wsr-k3-f-ꜥnh also held titles belonged to the herding environment. This strengthens the explanation of the name of the goddess of shepherds as Seret. This *ḥwt-ihjt* located in Western Delta, so it could be assumed that the origin of herding was there. It is probably that Seret was another name for the goddess Sechat-Hor³⁰ (*sh3t-ḥrw*) ³¹, ³². She was a cow-shaped goddess, who mainly appeared in the role of a nursing cow. She was the goddess of Herd and mythological. She was also the nurse of god Horus. This goddess was mentioned during the 6th Dynasty onwards. Later, texts showed Sechat-Hor as a form of goddess and also Hathor. They also associated her with the divine Horus the child as well as Apis³³. This association with Apis could be the reason of the relation between the *ḥp* duck which is depicted both names of Seret and Apis.

The text on the right side of the dorsal pillar- that mentioned goddess Seret reads:




//// m /// pr n nsw sr n iwnw ḥ3t inwt ḥm-ntr srt³⁵ imj-r3 ḥwt-ihwt³⁶ srt ḥm-ntr ḥrw m dmjt nb im3ḥ ḥr ntr-ꜥ3 Wsr-k3-f-ꜥnh³⁷.



//// in /// the House of the King, Official of Heliopolis, First of the count, Priest of Goddess Seret, Overseer of the Mansion of the Cow³⁸ of Seret, Priest in the town of Horus (Dammhur), Lord of Prestige at the Great God Userkaf-ankh.

Doc.2. A bowl of king ḥr-ꜥḥ3³⁹ of the 1st dynasty

ḥr-ꜥḥ3 was the first king of the 1st dynasty (2920-2975 B.C). Lately, he was considered to be king Menes. This belief is supported because one of *ḥr-ꜥḥ3*'s names is *Mnj*⁴⁰. There is a small ivory from the tomb of his mother *Nt-ḥtp* showed *ḥr-ꜥḥ3* along side with *Mnj*. Manetho attested him with a reign of 63 years. He thought that he was killed by a hippopotamus⁴¹.


Manetho suggested that the Apis firstly worshipped at Memphis as a god during the reign of the 2nd king of the 2nd Dynasty. In contrast, Aelian related the cult of Apis to the reign of Menes. There is a clay seal of king Den *Wdi-mw*, depicting him wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt and running before Apis bull in a ceremony known as “the running of the Apis” *phrr-ḥp*⁴². This means that the cult of Apis dates back to the reign of the 1st Dynasty⁴³.

The bowl is made from a variegated black and white stone. A small piece of its edge is broken and was fixed in paste. The most interesting matter about this bowl is the text (**Fig.2**) that is engraved near the base. On the left side of the text, there is a serekh which has the falcon Horus standing on its top. The legs of Horus extended down into the upper part of the serekh to hold the shield and the battle-axe. Directly on the other side in front of the king's name is the text *sp tpj phrr ḥp* which means “the first occasion of the running of the Apis”. This text mentions name of Apis bull *ḥp* with the determinative of the duck. The phonetic sign *p* is written here with this symbol ⁴⁴.

Doc.3. An inscription from the mastaba of *Mrrw-kzi*  also known as *Mrj* 
 Mererkua was one of the high official of the 6th dynasty. He held many titles before he became the high office of Vizier. He succeeded *kzi-gmni* as “the Vizier of King Teti of Upper and Lower Egypt”. The mastaba of Mererkua is located to the north-east of the necropolis of Saqqara, to the north of the pyramid of king Teti of the 6th dynasty. It was originally consisted of two parts. The large part was for himself and the small one was for his wife *w3^ct.t-ht.hr*. Later the tomb was extended at its northern part for their son *Mrj.tj*⁴⁵.



The mastaba was discovered by J.Morgan who published its scenes for the first time in 1893. The tomb shaft and burial chambers of *Mrrw-kzi* and his wife were not cleared until 1921-1922⁴⁶. The tomb contains 10 ornamented rooms, a serdab and a passage leading to storerooms⁴⁷. It is the largest and most ornamented mastaba of the non-royal in Saqqara⁴⁸.

The text reads (Fig.3)


*hp r3-p-nb*⁴⁹.

Apis a duck, who belongs to Buto.

Doc.4. An inscription from a bowl

Among the objects found in the temple of Abydos, was the main group which was found in a chamber outside the early temple space. Only three stone vessels were found in the location of the temple. This is a part of a bowl made of rock crystal. It dates to the period before the 4th Dynasty. It is adorned with a crowned falcon and appears to be a royal bowl. It is probably related to the furniture of a royal boat. It has the inscription of the name of the *hp* duck  above a boat. Above this name is the hieroglyphic sign  *nbw*⁵⁰, which could be explained as *hp-nbw* ‘the Golden duck’ (Fig.4).

Doc.5. An inscription from the tomb of *dw3-hp*, Saqqara

dw3-hp had the titles of Prophet of god Re in the Sun-temples of *Nfr-irj-k3-R^c* and *Ni-wsr-R^c* of the 5th Dynasty. He was the He also held the title of Prophet of the pyramid of Neuser⁵¹. *Nfr-irj-k3-R^c* (2492-2482 B.C) was the third king of the 5th Dynasty. He was the brother of king Sahure. Manetho attested him with a 20 years reign. Although Turin canon mentioned that he reigned for a little more than 10 years. He built two pyramids at Abusir, one for himself and a smaller one for his wife *hnt-k3w.s II*⁵². *Ni-wsr- R^c* (2470-2440 B.C) was the sixth king of the 5th Dynasty. Manetho attested him with a reign of 44 years. However Turin canon mentioned that he reigned for at least 30 years. He might be the son of king *R3-nfr-R^c.f*. He built three pyramids for himself and for his queens at Abusir⁵³. Klaus Baer dates the tomb of *dw3-hp* to the reign of king Pepi II of the 8th Dynasty⁵⁴.

The text reads⁵⁵

- The *sr* phonetic in Seret's name of is not related to her function and form.
- The determinative of the *hp* duck in Seret's name also appeared in the name of Apis bull.
- As "the Mansion of the cow" *hwt-ihjt* -which was related to Seret in the title of *Wsr-k3.f-ꜥnh*- was located in the 3rd Lower Egyptian nome to the south of Naukratis. This region was inhabited by Libyans in the early period of the Egyptian history. Considering that, it is probably that Seret was a goddess of Libyan origin like goddess Neith of Sais.



a

Fig.1. Statue of Userkaf-anekh, 5th Dynasty
Liebieghaus-Museum Alter Plastik, Agyptische Bildwerke, Band III "Skulptur, Malerei, Papyri und Sarge", Melsungen (1993), Kat. Nr.22, p.81.



B

The dorsal pillar of the statue of Userkaf-ankh
 Franke. D, “Anch-Userkaf und das Nildelta: Statue Frankfurt/M.Liebieghaus 1629” in
SAK 9 (2003), p.117-132.

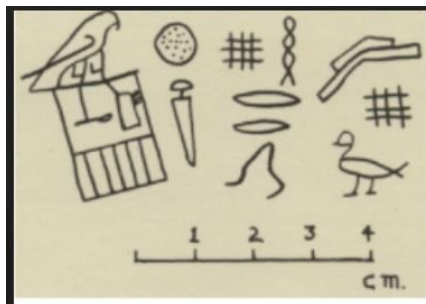


Fig.2. An inscription from a bowl of king *hr-h3*
 Simpson. W, “A Running of the Apis in the Reign of Aha and Passages in Manetho
 and Aelian” in *Orientalia*, Volume.26.no 2, Rome (1957), p.139-142, Fig.2.



Fig.3. The Titles of *Mrrw-k3i*
Duell.E. G, *Mastaba of Mererkua II*, pl.159

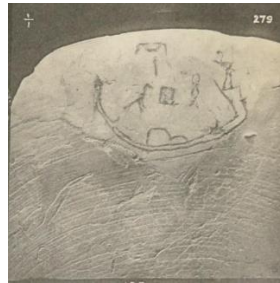
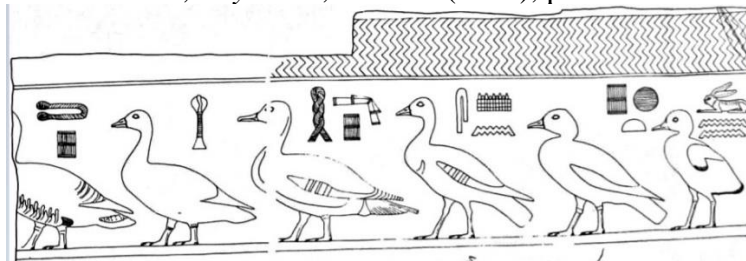
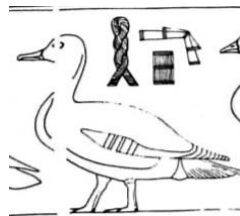


Fig.4. An inscription of *ḥp* duck from a rock-crystal bowl
Petrie. F, *Abydos II*, London (1903), pl.XII 279.




a



b

Fig.5. A procession of fowls from the tomb of *ḥtp-k3*
Geoferry.T.Martin, *The Tomb of Hetepka*, London (1979), p.14, pl.17(19).

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- ¹ - Houlihan. Patrick.F, “Birds” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol.1, Oxford (2001), p.189-191.
- ² - Mofida El Weshahy, “Some Remarks on Duck-Form Amulets in Ancient Egypt” in *The Sixth Conference of the Faculty of Archaeology*, Fayoum University, El-Fayoum (April 2007), p.1; Gardiner. A, *Egyptian Grammer*, Oxford (1973), p. 611; Faulkner. R, “Brief Communication *ꜣpd-duck*” in *JEA* 38 (1952), p.128; Straub. P, “Vogel” in *LÄ VI*, p.1046.
- ³ - Haulihan. P, *The Animal World of The Pharaohs*, Cairo (1996), p.14.
- ⁴ - Daumas. F, *Valeurs Phonétiques des Signes Hiéroglyphiques d'Époque Gréco-Romaine*, Montpellier (1988), p.327.
- ⁵ - Naville. E, *ZÄS* 15, 1877, p.30.
- ⁶ - Stork. L, “Gans” in *LÄ II*, 374.
- ⁷ - Constant de Wit, *Le Role et le Sens du Lion dans L'Égypte Ancienne*, Leiden (1951), p. 386.
- ⁸ - Stork. L, “Gans” in *LÄ II*, 374.
- ⁹ - Lesley. J, *Sekhmet & Bastet: The Feline Powers of Egypt*, England (2017), p.54; Wilkinson. R, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, London (2003), p.183.
- ¹⁰ - Valeria Turriziani, “Foreign Deities, Frontier Deities: Evidence from The Old Kingdom” in *Current Research of Egyptology 2013*, United Kingdom (2014), p.168-184.
- ¹¹ - WB IV, p.192; LGG VI, p.428; Constant de Wit, *Le Role et le Sens du Lion dans L'Égypte Ancienne*, Leiden (1951), p. 386.
- ¹² - Brovarski. E, “Seret” in *LÄ V*, 879, 880.
- ¹³ - Geoferry.T.Martin, *The Tomb of Hetepka*, London (1979), pl.17.
- ¹⁴ - Duell. P, *The Mastaba of Mereruka II*, Chicago (1938), pl.159
- ¹⁵ - Mariette. A, *Les Mastaba de L'ancien Empire*, Paris (1885), p.181.
- ¹⁶ - Harpur. Y, “The Identity and Position of Five Reliefs from Saqqara”, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), Fig.6.
- ¹⁷ - Faulkner. R, “Geflugel” in *LÄ II*, 504; WB IV,191.
- ¹⁸ - WB IV, 191.
- ¹⁹ - WB IV, 191,17.
- ²⁰ - WB IV, 192 5,6.
- ²¹ - WPL, p.513.
- ²² - Müller. D, *Ägypten und Die Griechischen Isis-Aretalogien*, Berlin (1961), p.89.
- ²³ - LGG V, 10; *ḥꜣ* was the god of the desert. He was of some importance in the western deserts, where he was a protective god against the enemies such as the invading Lybian tribes. He appeared as early as the 3rd dynasty. He was depicted with the three hills of the hieroglyphic symbol for the foreign lands and desert ; Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, London (2003), p.106.
- ²⁴ - LGG V, 490; *ḥꜣꜣt* was a frog goddess who helps in forming the child in his mother's womb. She appeared for the first time in the Pyramid Texts, where she helped the deceased king in his journey in the heaven. She was depicted as frog-headed goddess or as a frog; Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, London (2003), p.229.

- ²⁵ - LGG I, 390; *ḥnpw* was the most important funerary god in ancient Egypt. He was concerned with the burial and the afterlife. He was depicted as a jackal or a human with a jackal head. He was depicted with black skin relating to the color of the deceased's corpse while preparing for the burial and also to the color of the fertile earth; Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, London (2003), p.186-190.
- ²⁶ - Franke. D, "Anch-Userkaf und das Nildelta: Statue Frankfurt/M.Liebieghaus 1629" in SAK 9 (2003), p.117-132.
- ²⁷ - Caroline Ransom Williams C.L.R, "A Model of the Mastaba Tombs of Userkaf-ankh" in *the Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Volume 8, no.6 (1913), p.125-130.
- ²⁸ - *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ - Franke. D, "Anch-Userkaf und das Nildelta: Statue Frankfurt/M.Liebieghaus 1629" in SAK 9 (2003), p.117-132.
- ³⁰ - Ludwig D. Morenz, *Beiträge zur Schriftlichkeitskultur im Mittleren Reich*, Wiesbaden (1996), p.134, 135.
- ³¹ - WB IV, 233.
- ³² - LGG VI, p.500.
- ³³ - Ursula Rössler-Köhler, "Sechat-Hor" in LÄ V, 769-771.
- ³⁴ - Borhardt. L, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königes Ne-User-Re*, Leipzig (1907), p.113.
- ³⁵ - Strudwick. N, *The Administration of Egypt in The Old Kingdom*, London (1985), p.72.
- ³⁶ - Montet. P, *Geographie de L'Egypte Ancienne I*, Paris (1957), p.58; LGG VI, 428.
- ³⁷ - *Katalog Liebieghaus III*, Melsungen (1993), p.88-89.
- ³⁸ - The Mansion of the Cow *ḥwt-ḥwt* was situated in the 3rd nome of Lower Egypt 'the Western nome'. This nome was located by the Libyan in ancient times.
- ³⁹ - Jurger von Beckerath, *Handbuch der Agyptischen Königsnamen*, Mainz (1999), p.38.
- ⁴⁰ - *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ - Margaret. R. Bunson, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, United States (2002), p.14.
- ⁴² - WB I, 541.
- ⁴³ - Simpson. W, "A Running of the Apis in the Reign of Aha and Passages in Manetho and Aelian" in *Orientalia*, Volume.26.no 2, Rome (1957), p.139-142, Fig.2; Emery. W, *The Tomb of Hemaka*, Cairo (1938), p.64, fig.26.
- ⁴⁴ - *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ - Strudwick. N, *The Administration of Egypt in The Old Kingdom*, London (1985), p.97, 100.
- ⁴⁶ - Duell. P, *The Mastaba of Mereruka II*, Chicago (1938), p.xvi.
- ⁴⁷ - *Ibid*, p.1.
- ⁴⁸ - Hobson.C, *Exploring The World of The Pharaohs*, London (1987), p.85.
- ⁴⁹ - WB I, 489; WB II, 390.
- ⁵⁰ - Petrie. F, *Abydos II*, London (1903), p.29, 38.
- ⁵¹ - PM III, p.595.

- ⁵² - LÄ IV, 375; Miroslav Verner, "Old Kingdom, An Overview" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Volume 2, Oxford (2001), p.589.
- ⁵³ - Hartwig Altenmuller, "Old Kingdom: Fifth Dynasty" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Volume 2, Oxford (2001), p.599.
- ⁵⁴ - Baer. K, *Rank and Title in The Old Kingdom*, Chicago (1960), p.240.
- ⁵⁵ - Mariette. A, *Les Mastaba de L'ancien Empire*, Paris (1885), p.337.
- ⁵⁶ - WB III, 394.
- ⁵⁷ - WB V, 429.
- ⁵⁸ - PM III, p. 447.
- ⁵⁹ - Geoferry.T.Martin, *The Tomb of Hetepka*, London (1979), p.5.
- ⁶⁰ - WB V, 149,8.
- ⁶¹ - Geoferry.T.Martin, *Op.cit*, p.13, 14.



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العلاقة بين اسم المعبودة سرت ومصطلح حب

نهى محمد حافظ

كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة قناة السويس

المخلص	معلومات المقالة
<p>اسم المعبودة سرت ظهر لأول مرة خلال عصر الأسرة الخامسة. قد تمت كتابته مرتين في نقش على الدعامة الخلفية لتمثال أوسركا-اف-عنخ بأبي صير. كان هذا الموظف يحمل ألقاب كاهن المعبودة سرت والمشرف على قصر بقرة سرت. كانت المعبودة سرت أيضا تلقب بالإلهة الأوزه بالإشارة الي مخصص الطائر في اسمها والمستعار من لفظ "سر" والذي يعني أوز. وهي أيضا بطة أبيس التي ذكر اسمها في الدولة القديمة متضمنا مخصص البطة الذي كتب جنبا الي جنب مع مخصص الثور في اسمه. ان رمز الطائر في اسم سرت يرجع الي المظهر المعتاد للأوزه "سر" والبطة "حب" اللاتي ظهروا في طوابير الحيوانات وقوائم القرابين الخاصة بالدولة القديمة. وقد بدأت عبادتها من منطقة في الدلتا والتي كان يقطنها الليبين في ذلك الوقت. ويهدف هذا البحث الي القاء الضوء على المعبودة سرت والتي كانت نادرة الظهور في النصوص المصرية القديمة والعلاقة بين اسم الإلهة ومصطلح حب في اللغة المصرية القديمة.</p>	<p>الكلمات المفتاحية سرت؛ أوزه؛ بطة؛ أوسركاف-عنخ؛ أبيس.</p> <p>(JAAUTH) المجلد 22، العدد 2، (يونيو 2022)، ص 20-30.</p>