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## **The Vizier as Intermediary in the Popular Religion During the New Kingdom**

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### **Abstract**

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This article deals with a topic entitled "The Vizier as Intermediary in the Popular Religion during the New Kingdom". The paper aims to shed the light on the various responsibilities of the vizier during the New Kingdom such as the managing director of the royal palace, the head of the civil administration and deputy of the king based on the famous text "Duties of the Vizier" in the tomb of Rekhmire at Western Thebes. As deputy of the King, it was the duty of the vizier to discuss the petitions of the people and to act as an intermediary between the King and his subjects. The paper will also discuss a number of the New Kingdom documents (votive and rock-carving stelae) with full transcription, transliteration and translation to prove that some of the New Kingdom viziers played the role of the intermediary on behalf of the people in the so-called popular religion. The best example of those viziers were Paser and Parahotep II from the reign of King Ramesses II, Panehsy from the reign of king Merenptah and Tao the vizier of King Ramesses III. The paper will use a descriptive historical method through analysing the cited data to come out with conclusions.

### **Introduction**

Some of the New Kingdom votive stelae found in sites of popular religion such as Deir El Medina reveal that some of the viziers of the New Kingdom played the role of intermediary on behalf of people in the popular religion. The most remarkable among those viziers were Paser, Parahotep II (from the reign of King Ramesses II of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), Panehsy (from the reign of king Merenptah of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) and Tao (from the reign of King Ramesses III of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty).

The vizier was the head and top official in the Ancient Egyptian administration.<sup>1</sup> The title *ḥ3ty*,<sup>2</sup> translated as "vizier", was known at least since the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty but probably derived from an office dating to the Pre-Dynastic or Early Dynastic Period. The position was held usually by only one vizier during the Old and Middle Kingdoms, but during

<sup>1</sup> LÄ VI. cols. 1227-1235; W. Helck. (1958). *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs*. Leiden. pp. 285 - 344; D. A. Warburton. (2001). "Officials". In D.B. Redford (ed). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt-II*. Oxford. pp. 579-580.

<sup>2</sup> Wb V, p. 343; R. O. Faulkner. (1962). *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. Oxford. p. 303.

the New Kingdom there were two viziers one for the North and the other for the South. Van den Boorn<sup>3</sup> in his study for the main aspects of the vizier activities based on the famous text "The Duties of the Vizier: Civil Administration in the Early New Kingdom" points out to three major responsibilities of the vizier: -

- The managing director of the royal palace (*pr-nsw*)
- The head of the civil administration
- The deputy of the King

Each of these three major responsibilities included numerous sub-responsibilities. As the managing director of the *pr-nsw* or the royal palace (major responsibility), it was his sub-responsibilities, for example, to receive daily reports by the officials on the opening, managing and closing the units or departments of the royal complex as well as reports from the overseer of the policemen on the security affairs of the royal complex. In the case of a royal journey, the vizier was responsible for organizing the military escort.<sup>4</sup> As the head official in the civil administration (major responsibility), the vizier was in charge of the appointment of the civil officials and punishing them in case of the improper behaviors. He was also in control of the work system and the control over the government departments.<sup>5</sup> As deputy of the king (major responsibility), he provided the king with all the up-to-date information regarding the situation of the state. In case of petitions made to the king personally, it is the vizier himself who must discuss the petitions.<sup>6</sup> The later task of the vizier (discuss the petitions) is best evident in a scene<sup>7</sup> from the east end of the north wall in the transverse Hall of TT 100 of the vizier Rekhmire. The scene shows the vizier Rekhmire seated on the left side and in front of him there are three registers showing officers on the left and the poor petitioners on the right including men and women, some of them are depicted with their hands up. The accompanied text of the scene points out to the intermediary role of the vizier by stating (going out on the earth at the dawn to perform daily rituals and to *sdm mdw rhyt* - hear the words of the common people and to hear *sprwt šm<sup>c</sup>w mḥw*- petitions of Upper and Lower Egypt). This text indicates that discussing the petitions of the poor people was a vital responsibility of the vizier as deputy of king and as intermediary between the king and the commoners.

It is obvious from the text "Duties of the Vizier" mentioned above that the viziers were powerful high officials by virtue of their office and that their responsibilities were varied, critical and vital. It is highly possible that such responsibilities due to his office were the reason or the authority that allowed some of the viziers to adopt some of the royal privileges in showing themselves while playing the role of intermediary on behalf of the people in the popular religion during the New Kingdom. On the other hand, Bonhême points out that the king as the sole intermediary between the gods and human and as the keeper of the universe cannot be present everywhere, so he delegates some of his administrative and religious authorities to specialists such as the viziers, the viceroys of Kush and the high priests.<sup>8</sup> However, the intermediary status of the viziers in the following documents is attested via the

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<sup>3</sup> G.P.F. Van den Boorn. (1988). *The Duties of the Vizier: Civil Administration in the Early New Kingdom*. London. pp. 310- 322.

<sup>4</sup> Van den Boorn. *The Duties of the Vizier*. pp. 311-314.

<sup>5</sup> Van den Boorn. *The Duties of the Vizier*. pp. 315-320.

<sup>6</sup> Van den Boorn. *The Duties of the Vizier*. pp. 320-322.

<sup>7</sup> PM I. p. 209 (6); PH. Virey. (1889). Le Tombeau de Rekhmara, préfet de Thèbes sous la XVIIIe dynastie. *MMAF* 5. p. 165; N. D. G. Davies. (1943). *The Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes – I*. New York. p. 68. pl. LXXII.

<sup>8</sup> M. A. Bonhême. (2001). "Kingship". In D.B. Redford (ed). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt – II*. Oxford. p. 243.

mediated compositional form Type B<sup>9</sup> of the votive stelae and its sub-types. The compositional form<sup>10</sup> Type B shows a royal intermediary or high-official intermediary depicted in the upper register of the stela usually standing opposite of a god or gods to whom he is supposed to intercede with on behalf of a lower-rank dedicator depicted in the lower register alone or with members of his family.

### Paser

Paser<sup>11</sup> was the son of Nebneterw,<sup>12</sup> the high priest of god Amun and Merytre, the chief of Harem of god Amun. The texts of his tomb TT 106<sup>13</sup> in Western Thebes indicate that he started his career under King Seti I (1290-1279 BC), when he was appointed as the first companion of the palace. Then, he was promoted to the rank of the chief chamberlain and high priest of goddess Werethekaw. The texts of Paser's tomb attested that he was appointed as a vizier toward the end of Seti I's reign. During the reign of King Ramesses II, he was reappointed in the same offices that he held during the reign of Seti I. The last reference to Paser as a vizier dates back to year 21 of Ramesses II (1292-1190 BC). Later in his career, it seems that he was assigned as high priest of god Amun. As an intermediary interceding with the gods on behalf of the workmen of Deir El Medina, Paser is depicted in some of the New Kingdom votive stelae either alone or with King Ramesses II.

**Document 1** fragment of stela no.7 from Deir El-Medina TT 360<sup>14</sup> (Fig.1 A-B)

Dedicator/Title: Qaha<sup>15</sup>/Chief of Workmen in the Place of Truth<sup>16</sup>

Material: Limestone

Height: 105 cm

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty/Ramesses II

Compositional Form: Type B

Place of Discovery: Deir El-Medina/Court of TT 360 of Qaha

Description:

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<sup>9</sup> K. Exell. (2006). *A Social and Historical Interpretation of Ramesside Period Votive Stelae – II*. Durham. pp. 326-327.

<sup>10</sup> There are two other types of the compositional form of the votive stelae namely type A and type C. The compositional form type A refers to a direct access to the god by the petitioner who is shown standing or kneeling on the same register before the god. The compositional form type C refers to indirect access to the deity as the god is represented alone in the upper register of the stela, while the petitioner is represented in the lower register. see: Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. pp. 322-325, 328-329.

<sup>11</sup> KRI III. pp. 1-36; LÄ VII. cols. 13-4; Helck. *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs*. pp. 311-315; V. A. Donohue. (1988). The Vizier Paser. *JEA* 74. pp. 103-123; M. Rice. (1999). *Who is Who in Ancient Egypt*. London. pp. 146-147; E. Frood. (2007). *Biographical Texts From Ramessid Egypt*. Atlanta. p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> For more information about statue Cairo Museum CG.630, see L. Borchardt. (1925). *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo –II*. Berlin. pp. 177-179; KRI III. p. 13 (13-14); KRITA III. p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> PM I<sup>1</sup>. pp. 219-224.

<sup>14</sup> PM I<sup>2</sup>. pp. 425; KRI III. p. 609 (1-6); KRITA III. p. 417; B. Bruyère. (1933). *Rapport sur Les Fouilles de Deir El Médineh (1930)*. Le Caire. p. 87, 90-91. fig.23; P. Pamminger. (1996). *Magistrale Intervention: Der Beamte als Mittler*. *SAK* 23. p. 301. no. 4; Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. p. 450. no. 307.

<sup>15</sup> PN I. p. 336 (22).

<sup>16</sup> J. A. Taylor. (2001). *An Index of Male Non-Royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the 18th Dynasty*. London. p. 80, no. 727; A. R. Al-Ayedi. (2006). *Index of Egyptian Administrative, Religious, and Military Titles of the New Kingdom*. Cairo. p. 220. no. 685.



**Fig.1A.** Fragment of stela no.7, TT 360 at Deir El-Medina by Bruyère. (1933). fig. 23

**Fig.1B.** Facsimile of a fragment of the stela no.7, TT 360 at Deir El-Medina

On the left side of the upper register, a mummified god probably Osiris is portrayed sitting on his throne. In front of the god, a king probably Ramesses II is represented as the first intermediary in the middle while offering a bouquet of flowers to the god. Behind the King, the vizier Paser as a second intermediary is shown standing. In the lower register, the owner of the stela Qaha<sup>17</sup> and his wife are depicted on the right side offering and adoring the god depicted above. The left section of the lower register is lost.

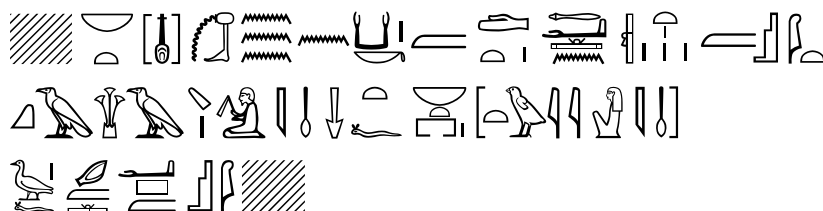
Behind the vizier:



*Tmy-r niwt t3ty P3 sr m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

"The City governor and vizier, Paser, the justified (lit: true of voice)".

In front and above the couple:



*.....nbt (nfrt) w<sup>c</sup>bt n k3.k m drt 3 n iswt m st-m3<sup>c</sup>t*

*K3h3 m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw snt.f nbt pr (Twy m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw)*

*s3.f sdm-3<sup>s</sup>18 m st-m3<sup>c</sup>t ....*

".....Everything (beautiful) and pure for your ka by the hand of the chief of workmen in the place of Truth, Qaha, the justified; his sister, the lady of the house (Tuy, the justified) and his son, the servant in the place of Truth ,....".

<sup>17</sup> Qaha was a well-known foreman at Deir El-Medina during the time of king Ramesses II and the owner of TT 360. See: B. G. Davies. (1999). *Who's Who at Deir El-Medina. A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen's Community*. Leiden. pp. 12-30. chart-3; Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. pp. 147-148, 204, 215.

<sup>18</sup> R. Hannig. (1995). *Die Sprache der Pharaonen Grobes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch – Deutsch*. Mainz. p. 795.

**Document 2** Lower part of the stela no.317 at Deir El-Medina<sup>19</sup> (Fig.2 A-B)

Dedicator/Title: Ramose<sup>20</sup>/Scribe in the Place of Truth<sup>21</sup>

Material: Limestone

Height: 25 cm

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty/Ramesses II

Compositional Form: Type B iii

Place of Discovery: Deir El-Medina/Hathor Chapel of King Seti I - Shrine of Bukentef

Description:



**Fig.2.** Lower part of the stela no.317 at Deir El-Medina by Bruyère. (1952). fig. 212

**Fig.2B.** Facsimile of lower part of the stela no.317 at Deir El-Medina

The remains of the scene in the upper register show two gods seated facing each other. In the lower register, Paser as intermediary is portrayed in the middle with his hands raised up in adoration attitude. He is followed by the owner of the stela, Ramose<sup>22</sup> who is depicted in the same attitude. On the left side, the divinized Ramesses II is shown with long staff in his left hand and a scepter in his right hand.

King Ramesses:



*nb t3wy Wsr-m3<sup>c</sup>t-r<sup>c</sup> stp-n-r<sup>c</sup>*

"Lord of the two lands, Weseremaatra Setepenre (the justice of Ra is powerful, the chosen by Ra)".

<sup>19</sup> PM I<sup>2</sup>. p. 695; KRI III. p. 26 (1-6); KRITA III. pp. 19-20; B. Bruyère. (1952). *Rapport sur Les Fouilles de Deir El Médineh (1935-1940)*. Le Caire. p. 129. no. 317. fig. 212; Donohue. The Vizier Paser. *JEA* 74. p. 107. no. 13; Pamminger. Magistrale Intervention: Der Beamte als Mittler. *SAK* 23. p. 301. no. 12; Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. p. 435. no. 243.

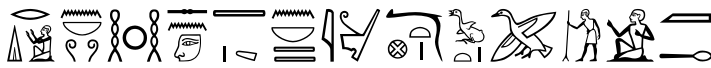
<sup>20</sup> PN I. p. 218 (3).

<sup>21</sup> Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. p. 547. no. 1776.

<sup>22</sup> A very famous scribe at Deir El-Medina during the reign of king Ramesses II and the owner of three Theban tombs TT7, TT212, TT250. See: J. Černý. (1973). *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period*. Cairo. pp. 317-327; M. Bierbrier. (1989). *The Tomb-Builders of the Pharaohs*. Cairo. pp. 32-33; Rice. *Who is Who in Ancient Egypt*. p. 169; Davies. *Who's Who at Deir El-Medina. A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen's Community*. pp. 79-83, chart-22; Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. pp. 169-171, 311.



Paser:



*rdit i3w<sup>23</sup> n nbw nhh sn-t3<sup>24</sup> n nb t3wy in imy-r niwt<sup>25</sup> t3ty P3 sr m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

"Giving praises to the lords of eternity, paying homage (lit. kissing the ground) to the lord of the two lands by the city-governor, the vizier, Paser, the justified".

Ramose:



*rdit i3w n nbw nhh sn-t3 n ntr nfr di.sn ..... sš m st-m3<sup>c</sup>t R<sup>c</sup>-ms ....*

"Giving praises to the lords of eternity, paying homage (lit. kissing the ground) before the good god so that they may grant ..... (to) the scribe in the place of Truth, Ramose ....." .

## Parahotep II

Parahotep II<sup>26</sup> or Rahotep was an ancient Egyptian vizier during the last half of the reign of King Ramesses II of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. He was the son of the high priest of god Ptah, Pahemner<sup>27</sup> and his wife Huneroy. It seems that Parahotep held the rank of vizier (of the north) for at least 17 years and the position of high priest of Ptah for about 12 years at the end of King Ramesses's II reign. His tomb was found by Petrie at Sedment El-Gebel west of the Beni-Suef governorate. Parahotep II is shown playing the role of intermediary in some stelae found by Petrie at Sedment.<sup>28</sup>

### Document 3 Stela of Nebuhotep<sup>29</sup> (Fig.3 A-B)

Dedicator/ Title: Nebuhotep<sup>30</sup>/Servant,<sup>31</sup> *Wab*<sup>32</sup> and lector priest<sup>33</sup>

Material: Limestone

Height: 67 cm

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty/Ramesses II

Compositional Form: Type B

Place of Discovery: Sedment/Tomb of Vizier Parahotep

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<sup>23</sup> Hannig. *Handwörterbuch*. p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Hannig. *Handwörterbuch*. p. 716.

<sup>25</sup> Hannig. *Handwörterbuch*. p. 57.

<sup>26</sup> KRI III. pp. 52-67; LÄ IV. cols. 899-900; Helck. *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs*. pp. 317-318; H. Altenmüller. (1975). Zur Frage der Vergöttlichung Des Vezirs (Pa-)Rahotep. *JEA* 61. pp. 154-160.

<sup>27</sup> Rice. *Who is Who in Ancient Egypt*. p. 145.

<sup>28</sup> PM IV. p. 117.

<sup>29</sup> PM IV. p. 117; KRI III. p. 66-67; RITA III. p. 46; W. F. Petrie. (1924). *Sedment-II*. London. p. 30, pl. LXXVI, 4; Pamminger. *Magistrale Intervention: Der Beamte als Mittler*. *SAK* 23. p. 302. no. 19.

<sup>30</sup> PN I. p. 192 (1).

<sup>31</sup> Taylor. *An Index of Male Non-Royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases*. p. 222. no. 2174; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. pp. 606-607. no. 1956.

<sup>32</sup> D. Jones. (2000). *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom*, vol. I. Oxford. p. 368, no. 1360; W. Ward. (1982). *Index of Egyptian Administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom*. Beirut. p. 78. no. 639; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. p. 235-236, no. 741.

<sup>33</sup> Jones. *Index of the Old Kingdom*. p. 781. no. 2848; Ward. *Index of the Middle Kingdom*. p. 140. no. 1202; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. pp. 481-482. no. 1571.

Description:



Fig.3A: Stela of Nebuhotep

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/1268/> (accessed 28 June 2021 at 2:00 pm)

<https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/tags/australia> (accessed 28 June 2021 at 2:20 pm)



Fig.3B: Facsimile of stela of Nebuhotep by Petrie. (1924). pl. LXXVI. 4

In the upper register, the vizier Parahotep II as intermediary is depicted on the right side standing with his hands raised up in an adoration attitude. On the left side, god Osiris is represented sitting on his throne wearing the *Atef*-crown and holding the crook and flail. In front of him, the four sons of Horus are shown standing on top of flower. In the lower register, the donor of the stela, Nebuhotep is portrayed on the right-side kneeling in an adoration attitude. In front and above him, there is a text consisting of 6 hieroglyphic columns.

God Osiris:



..... *Wsir hnty imntt*

"....., Osiris, chief of the West"<sup>34</sup>.

The text above the hands of the vizier can be read as:



..... *nt* ..... *imy-r niwt* .....

"..... of .....the city-governor ....."

The text in front of the donor can be read as:



<sup>34</sup> Leitz. LGG V. p. 784.



- 1-*i3w n k3.k Wsir nb imntt ntr 3 ntr nfr hk3 dt*  
 2-*di.f t t3w mw (n) Wsir Nbwh-htp m3c-hrw m htp*  
 3-*htp di nsw (n) Wsir hnty (imntt) ntr 3 nb pt n k3.n sdm (cs)*  
 4-*wcb n k3.n Wsir imy-r niwt t3ty (p3) Rc-htp m3c-hrw*  
 5- *sdm (cs) wcb hry-hb Nbwh-htp m3c-hrw*

"1- Praises to your ka Osiris, the lord of the West,<sup>35</sup> the great god, the good god, the ruler of everlasting<sup>36</sup> 2- that he may give bread, breath and water (to) the Osiris Nebuhotep, the justified, in peace. 3- An offering which the King gives (to) Osiris, the chief (of the West), the great god, the lord of heaven for the ka of the servant 4- and the *Wab*-priest, and for the ka of the Osiris, the city-governor, the vizier, (Pa)Rahotep, the justified, 5- The servant, the *Wab*-priest, the lector- priest, Nebuhotep, the justified".

### Panehsy

Panehsy<sup>37</sup> was one of the viziers of King Merenptah of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. He first appeared in year 1 of Merenptah and is last attested in year 7 of that reign. Nothing is attested about Panehsy's family or his career before his appearance as the vizier of King Merenptah in year 1. He is known from the inscriptions at Gebel el-Silsila where his image appears on four stelae. His name<sup>38</sup> is also found on statues and stelae from Deir El-Medina, as well as some of the ostraca and graffiti. He appears as an intermediary on some of the stelae of Gebel el-Silsila.

### Document 4 Rock carving stela of Amunwahsu at Gebel el-Silsila<sup>39</sup> (Fig.4 A-B)

Dedicator/Title: Amunwahsu<sup>40</sup>/High priest of Sobek, Anubis and Khonsu<sup>41</sup>

Material: Limestone

Height: 115 cm

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty/ Merenptah

Compositional Form: Type B

Place of Discovery: West Wall of the Speos of Horemhab at Gebel el-Silsila

Description:

<sup>35</sup> Leitz. LGG III. p. 583.

<sup>36</sup> Leitz. LGG V. p. 531.

<sup>37</sup> LÄ IV. 662; Helck. *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs*. pp. 325-326.

<sup>38</sup> S. Iskander. (2002). *The Reign of Merenptah*. New York. pp. 338-346.

<sup>39</sup> PM V. p. 211 (28); KRI IV. pp. 147-148; KRITA IV. p. 112; L. Habachi. (1956). Amenwahsu, Attached to the Cult of Anubis, Lord of the Dawning Land. *MDAIK* 14. pp. 53-57. Fig. 2. pl. 2; Pamminger. *Magistrale Intervention: Der Beamte als Mittler*. *SAK* 23. p. 304. no. 28; Iskander. *The Reign of Merenptah*. p. 342. no (n).

<sup>40</sup> PN I. p. 27 (2).

<sup>41</sup> Taylor. *An Index of Male Non-Royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases*. p. 155. no. 1518; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. p. 382. no. 1212.





**Fig.4A.** Stela of Amunwahsu at Gebel el-Silsila by Habachi. (1956). pl. 2



**Fig.4B.** Facsimile of stela of Amunwahsu at Gebel el-Silsila by Habachi. (1956). Fig. 2. pl. 2

In the upper register, King Merenptah the first intermediary is depicted on the right side standing wearing the blue crown. His left hand is raised up in adoration, while with his right one, he is offering a statue of Maat to the gods portrayed in front of him. Behind the King, the vizier Panehsy as second intermediary is shown in an adoration attitude with his hands raised up. On the left side, god Amun is represented first followed by god Montu, god Sobek and goddess Hathor. The hieroglyphic text behind goddess Hathor refers to god Anubis, but he is not shown in the scene. In the lower register, the dedicator of the stela, Amunwahsu is shown on the right side with his hands raised up in adoration. In front and behind him, there is a long text consisting of 13 columns.

The title of King Merenptah can be read as:



*nb t3wy B3-n-R<sup>c</sup> mry Imn nb h<sup>c</sup>w Mry n pth htp-hr M3<sup>c</sup>t di 3nh*

"Lord of the two lands, Baenra-meryamun, lord of the diadems, Merenptah (the beloved of Ptah) satisfied with Maat, given life".

The offering:



*rdit m3<sup>c</sup>t n it.f*

"Offering Maat to his father".

The vizier Panehsy:



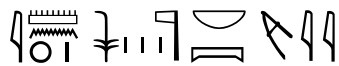
*ir hr-<sup>c42</sup> sb<sup>343</sup> n hm.f imy-r niwt t3ty P3-nh3sy m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

"Made by (lit. in the charge of) the one who was taught by his Majesty, the city-governor, the vizier, Panehsy, the justified".

God Amun:

<sup>42</sup> Faulkner. *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. p. 203.

<sup>43</sup> Faulkner. *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. p. 219.



*mry Imn-R' nsw ntrw nb pt*

"Beloved of Amun-Ra, King of the gods, lord of heaven".



*di.n.(i) n.k kn nb mi R'*

"(I) gave to you all strength like Ra".

God Montu:



*Mntw nb Twny ntr '3 mry di.n.(i) n.k kn*

"Beloved of Montu, the lord of Armant,<sup>44</sup> the great god, (I) gave to you strength".

God Sobek:



*sbk-R' nb sw-mnw hry-ib iw-m-itrw*

"Sobek-Ra, lord of Smen,<sup>45</sup> residing in Imiotru"<sup>46</sup>.

Goddess Hathor:



*hwt-hr nbt Inrty di.s 'nh .....*

"Hathor, lady of El-Gebelein,<sup>47</sup> may she give life .....".

God Anubis;



*Inpw nb t3 hd<sup>48</sup>*

"Anubis, lord of the dawning land".

The text in front and behind the dedicatator can be read as:



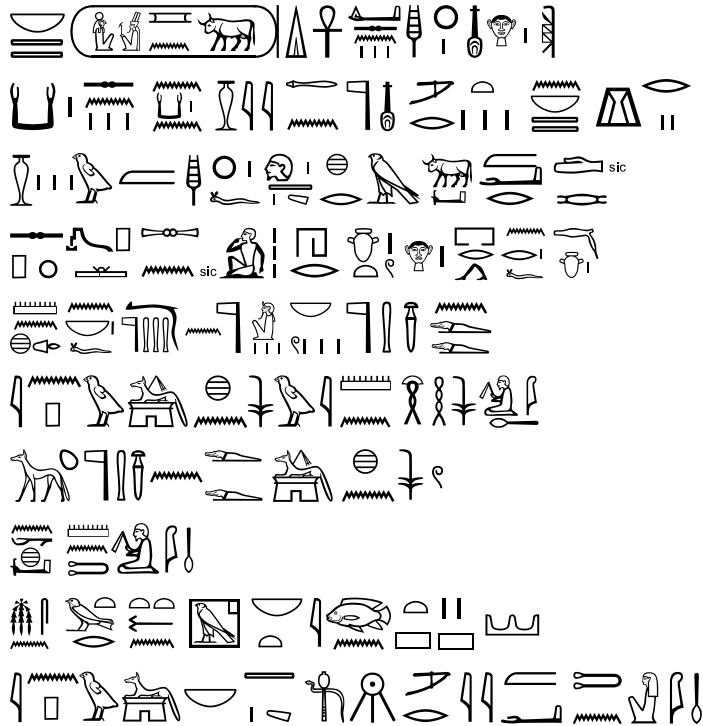
<sup>44</sup> Habachi. Amenwahsu. In *MDAIK* 14. p. 55; Leitz. LGG III. p. 577.

<sup>45</sup> Village of El-Rizeiqat الرزيقات in Luxor governorate, see: H. Gauthier. (1928). *Dictionnaire des Noms Géographiques contenus dans les Textes Hiéroglyphiques*–V. le Caire. pp. 16-17; CH. Kuentz. (1929). Quelques monuments du culte de Sobek. *BIFAO* 28. pp. 123-154; Leitz. LGG III. p. 727.

<sup>46</sup> Village of El-Mahamid المحاميد القبلية in Luxor governorate, see: H. Gauthier. (1925). *Dictionnaire des Noms Géographiques contenus dans les Textes Hiéroglyphiques* –I. le Caire. pp. 42-43; Leitz. LGG V. p. 314.

<sup>47</sup> Leitz. LGG IV. p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Leitz. LGG III. p. 771.



1-*i3w n k3.k Imn-R<sup>c</sup> p3wty hpr m*

2-*h3t iry.(i) hnw n Mntw nb Twny*

3-*sn-t3.(i) n ntr.i sbk sw3s<sup>49</sup> ntrt n k3-nsw*

4-*nb t3wy P3-n-R<sup>c</sup> mry Imn di nh di.sn h<sup>c</sup> nfr hr smsw*

5-*k3w.sn n k3.n hsy 3 n ntr nfr mrwt n nb t3wy hry*

6-*hsw m h<sup>c</sup>.f tp-t3 hr Hr k3-nht m<sup>c</sup>r<sup>50</sup>*

7-*spw<sup>51</sup> stp(ts)<sup>52</sup> (n) rw<sup>53</sup> hr-ib<sup>54</sup> tw hr pri n r3.f mh ib*

8-*mnh n nb.f imy-r hmw-ntr n ntrw nbw hm-ntr tpy n Sbkwy*

9-*Inpw hnsw Imn-w3h-su m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

10-*s3 s3b hm-ntr tpy n sbkwy Inpw hnsw*

11-*Nht-Mntw m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

12-*ms.n wrt hnrt n Hwt-hr nbt Inrty*

13-*Inpw nb t3-hd Mry-m<sup>c</sup>tn m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

"1- Praises to your ka, O Amun-Ra, the primeval one,<sup>55</sup> who came into existence in 2- the beginning.<sup>56</sup> (I) make jubilation for Montu, lord of Armant, 3- (I) kiss the ground to my god, Sobek, I extol the goddess for the royal ka, 4- of the lord of the two lands, Baenra Meryamun, given life, that they may grant a happy lifetime while following, 5- their kas for the ka of the

<sup>49</sup> Hannig. *Handwörterbuch*. p. 676; Faulkner. *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. p. 216.

<sup>50</sup> Faulkner. *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. p. 105.

<sup>51</sup> Faulkner. *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. p. 221.

<sup>52</sup> Habachi. Amenwahsu. In *MDAIK* 14. p. 55. note. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Faulkner. *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. p. 145.

<sup>54</sup> Wb. II. p. 496 (8).

<sup>55</sup> Leitz. LGG III. p. 20.

<sup>56</sup> Leitz. LGG V. p. 692.

greatly praised one of the good god, the beloved of the lord of the two lands, the possessor of, 6- praises in his life on earth under the Horus, the strong bull; the one who is successful, 7- in deeds, selected of sayings, the one who is satisfied with what comes out from his mouth, the one is pleased, 8- the excellent one to his lord, the overseer of the priests of all the gods, the high priest of two Sobeks,<sup>57</sup> 9- Anubis and Khonsu, Amunwahsu, the justified, 10- the son of the dignitary, the high priest of two Sobeks, Anubis and Khonsu, 11- Nakhset-Montu, the justified, 12- born by the chief of the Harem of Hathor, the lady of Gebelein, 13- and of Anubis, lord of the dawning land, Merymaten, the justified."

## Tao

Ta or Tao was one of the viziers of King Ramesses III (1182- 1151 BC).<sup>58</sup> In year 12 of royal reign, Ta succeeded Hori as vizier of Upper Egypt. In year 29 of the royal reign, Ta was appointed as vizier of both Upper and Lower Egypt. His name appears on ostraca and graffiti from Deir El-Medina dating to years 16-29 of the royal reign especially with Amunnakhet<sup>59</sup> whom Ta appointed him as the scribe of necropolis in year 16 of the royal reign. Ta was in charge of the work in the royal necropolis at the time of the strikes, when the workmen of Deir El-Medina protested the lack of supplies and rations. He is shown acting as intermediary on behalf of the village workmen in two rock stelae engraved on the walls of the shrine of Ptah and Meretseger.

**Document 5** Rock carving stela of Khonsu<sup>60</sup> (Fig.5 A-B)

Dedicator/ Title: Khonsu<sup>61</sup>/ Chief of Workmen in the Place of Truth<sup>62</sup>

Material: Limestone

Height: 68 cm

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty/Ramesses III

Compositional Form: Type B

Place of Discovery: Deir El-Medina/Shrine of Ptah and Meretseger-chapel A

Description:

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<sup>57</sup> Leitz. LGG VI. p. 265.

هاله مصطفى منصور ابراهيم (2019). اللقب الكهنوتي كاهن "سوكوى وانوبيس وخونسو". المؤتمر السنوى لكلية الآداب – القوى الناعمة وصناعة المستقبل. جامعة عين شمس. ص 139 – 152.

<sup>58</sup> KRI V. pp. 378-380; *LÄ* VI. cols. 133-135; Helck. *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs*. p. 330-333; C. R. Higginbotham. (2012). "The Administrative Structure under Ramesses III." In E. Cline & D. O'Connor (eds). *Ramesses III; The Life and Times of Egypt's Last Hero*. Michigan. pp. 76-78.

<sup>59</sup> Rice. *Who is Who in Ancient Egypt*. p. 18; W. Egerton. (1961). The Strikes of Ramesses III's 29th Year. *JNES* 10. pp. 137-145.

<sup>60</sup> PM I.<sup>2</sup> p. 707; KRI V. p. 378; KRITA V. p. 313; B. Bruyère. (1929). *Mert Seger à Deir el Médineh*. Le Caire. pp. 14-15. fig. 10; Pamminger. *Magistrale Intervention: Der Beamte als Mittler*. *SAK* 23. p. 304. no. 31; Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. p. 431. no. 228.

<sup>61</sup> PN I. p. 270 (16).

<sup>62</sup> Taylor. *An Index of Male Non-Royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases*. p. 157. no. 1544; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. p. 395. no. 1254.



**Fig.5A.** Rock carving stela of Khonsu by Demas et al. (2012). p. 366



**Fig.5B.** Facsimile of rock carving stela of Khonsu by Bruyère. (1929). Fig. 10

In the Upper register, the vizier Tao as an intermediary is shown on the left side standing with his hands raised up in adoration attitude. He is paying homage to the two cartouches of King Ramesses III and goddess Meretseger who is depicted standing behind the two cartouches. Meretseger is portrayed holding in her hands two palm branches. In the lower register, Khonsu,<sup>63</sup> the dedicator of the stela followed by another three persons probably his father, his brother and his son are represented in adoration attitude with their hands raised up.

Goddess Meretseger:



*Mrt-sgr ḥnwt Imntt*

"Meretseger, mistress of the West"<sup>64</sup>

The cartouches of king Ramesses III:



*R<sup>c</sup>-ms-sw ḥkꜣ Twnw Wsr-mꜣ<sup>c</sup>t-r<sup>c</sup> mry Imn*

"Ramesses (III), Ruler of Heliopolis, Weseremaatra-meryamun (the justice of Ra is powerful, beloved of Amun)".

The title of the vizier Ta:



*tꜣy-ḥw<sup>65</sup> ḥr wnmy/ imntt n nsw<sup>66</sup> imy-r niwt tꜣty tꜣ mꜣ<sup>c</sup>-ḥrw*

"Fan-bearer on the right of the King, the city-governor, the vizier, Ta, the justified".

<sup>63</sup> The foreman Khonsu was one of the great grandsons of the famous foreman Sennedjem, owner of TT 1 at Deir El-Medina. See Davies. *Who's Who at Deir El-Medina. A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen's Community*. pp. 47-51. chart-7; Exell. *Votive Stelae – II*. pp. 185-186.

<sup>64</sup> Leitz. LGG V. p. 166.

<sup>65</sup> Hannig. *Handwörterbuch*. p. 946.

<sup>66</sup> Taylor. *An Index of Male Non-Royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases*. p. 235. no. 2278; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. pp. 659-663. no. 2127.



The dedicator of the stela:



*ir.n ḥry iswt<sup>67</sup> m st-m<sup>3</sup>t ḥnsw m<sup>3</sup>t-ḥrw*

"Made by the chief of workmen in the place of Truth, Khonsu, the justified".

The 2<sup>nd</sup> person title:



*ḥry iswt Nḥt-m-mwt*

"The chief of workmen, Nakhetemmw".

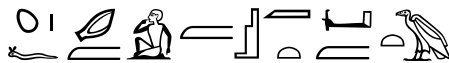
The 3<sup>rd</sup> person title:



*sn.f idnw<sup>68</sup> n t3 iswt<sup>69</sup> Imn .....*

"His brother, the deputy of the workforce, Amun ....".

The 4<sup>th</sup> person title:



*s3.f sdm m st-m<sup>3</sup>t Nḥt-m-mwt*

"His son, the servant in the place of Truth, Nakhtemmut".

## Conclusions

The Ancient Egyptian vizier was the top and most influential official in the Ancient Egyptian administration. The famous text "Duties of the vizier" in the tomb of Rekhmire at western Thebes sheds light on the various roles that were played by the viziers of the New Kingdom. This text reveals that there were three principal duties of the viziers at that time namely, the manager of the royal house, the head of civil administration and the deputy of the king. Some of the viziers of the New Kingdom, either due to the responsibilities of their offices and their close relationship with the king or because of the wish of the king himself to delegate some of his duties to specialists were allowed to depict themselves in the intermediary status, while interceding with gods on behalf of the people. Paser and Parahotep II were two major intermediaries during the reign of King Ramesses II of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Panehsy was the most remarkable individual intermediary during the time of king Merenptah. The vizier Tao was a key intermediary during the time of king Ramesses III of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The votive stelae of the New Kingdom found in places such as Deir El-Medina, Sedment and Gebel el-Silsila indicate that the intermediary indicator of these viziers was the mediated compositional form type B. A survey of the titles held by the viziers in the cited documents indicate that all of them held the two title "the city governor" and "the vizier" but the 5<sup>th</sup> document refers to a 3<sup>rd</sup> title "fan-bearer on the right of the king". All the cited documents show the viziers wearing their typical costume which is a long dress hanged down from the neck by means of a rope. All the

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<sup>67</sup> Taylor. *An Index of Male Non-Royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases*. p. 157. no. 1544; Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. pp. 395-396. no. 1254.

<sup>68</sup> Hannig. *Handwörterbuch*. p. 117.

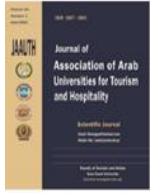
<sup>69</sup> Al-Ayedi. *Index of the New Kingdom*. p. 213. no. 666.

viziers are depicted in an adoration attitude with hands up except the 1<sup>st</sup> document where the vizier is portrayed with the left hand up and the right hand holding a long feather.

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## الوزير كوسيط في الديانة الشعبية خلال الدولة الحديثة

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معلومات المقالة	الملخص
<p><b>الكلمات المفتاحية</b> وسيط، وزير؛ باسر؛ بانحسى؛ تاو .</p> <p><b>(JAAUTH)</b> المجلد 22، العدد 2، (2022)، ص 399-415.</p>	<p>تتناول هذه المقالة موضوعا بعنوان "الوزير كوسيط في الديانة الشعبية خلال الدولة الحديثة". تتلقى الورقة البحثية في مقدمتها الضوء على المهام المتعددة للوزير خلال عصر الدولة الحديثة مثل دوره كمدير عام للقصر الملكي ودوره كمسئول أول عن الإدارة المدنية للبلاد ودوره ككاتب الملك استنادا على النص الشهير "واجبات الوزير" في مقبرة الوزير رخمى رع في طيبة الغربية من عصر الملك تحتمس الثالث. كان من أهم واجبات ومسؤوليات الوزير ككاتب للملك الاستماع للشكاوى المقدمة للملك ومناقشة التماسات الناس والعمل كوسيط بين الملك ورعاياه. تناقش الورقة البحثية بعد المقدمة عدد من الوثائق (لوحات نذرية ولوحات منحوتة في الصخر) بنص هيروغليفي ودلالة صوتية وترجمة والتي سوف توضح أن بعض وزراء الدولة الحديثة قد لعبوا دور الوسيط في الديانة الشعبية نيابة عن عامة الشعب. تتمثل أفضل نماذج هؤلاء الوزراء في كل من الوزير باسر والوزير با رع حوتب الثاني من عصر الملك رمسيس الثاني، والوزير بانحسى من عصر الملك مرنبتاح، والوزير تا أو تاو من عصر الملك رمسيس الثالث. سوف تستخدم المقالة منهج وصفي تاريخي بتحليل الوثائق موضوع البحث للوصول الي النتائج.</p>