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Scenes of Ramesses II's Celebration of the Sed Festival on the Temples walls

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

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The *Hb sd* was one of the most important secular festivals, although it wasn't included in the festival calendars. The ancient Egyptian kings performed their celebrations with Sed festival after their first thirty years of reign. but not all kings waited for thirty years, as they celebrated its rituals before completing thirty of their reign , and After the first celebration every three years the king could commemorate the Sed festival like Ramesses II who celebrated the Sed festival 14 times .¹

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This research is concerned with studying the scenes of the *Hb sd* celebration during the reign of King Ramesses II, who celebrated many times with the sed festival more than any other king. This study depends on visual evidences. The research exposed the scenes of the different *Hb sd* rituals dating to reign of Ramesses II and its different purposes and its significance like the rituals of purification, running ceremonies, receiving the *Hb sd* sign, driving the four calves and presenting the four meret chests, and lastly the coronation ritual, the research also exposed the *Hb sd* shrine of Ramesses II at Arab El Hisn which proves that Ramses II actually celebrated the Sed festival and was not just scenes recorded on the temples walls. This research applies descriptive and analyzing methodology .The research ended by mentioning the most important results like that Ramesses II recorded on his temples walls most of the iconographical evidences which refer to the rituals performed in the *Hb sd* more than any other king, especially on the southern wall of the great Hypostyle hall of the great temple of Amun at El Karnak.

Introduction

The *Hb sd* :

The earliest evidences which referred to the celebration of the Sed festival appeared in the funerary complex of king zoser (3rd dynasty) , the solar temple of Ny wsr re (5th Dynasty Sun Temple at Abu Gurab), the temple of Amenhotep III at Soleb (18th dynasty), tomb of Kheruef at Asasif (18th dynasty from reign of Amenhotep III),

temple of Akhenaten at Karnak , The Festival Hall of Oserkon II(22nd dynasty, In the Great Temple of Bubastis,) , besides reliefs for Hatshepsut, Tuthmoses III, Ramesses II, and Ramesses III which were recorded on the wall of the theban temples, ²

Although there are some opinions like that of Eric Hornung and Elisabeth Staehelin who suggested that the Sed festival scenes in many cases represented only the wish of the king for millions of Sed festivals and did not record or assure the actual celebrations³ ,but Thutmose III, Amenhotep III, Ramesses II, and Ramesses III have textual evidences for their celebration of *Hb sd* , in addition to Hatshepsut who recorded in her Red Chapel at Karnak her celebration of the sed festival .⁴

Frankfort said that the aim of the celebration of the sed festival to renew the relations between the king and his people, and between the king and the gods who will permit him to rule Egypt for more years and grant him the legitimacy and the divine right to rule Egypt. ⁵

Rituals and Ceremonies of Sed Festival:

Kings before the date of the Sed festival should begin several months before in building new temple where they will perform all the ceremonies, or at least constructing a group of buildings like festival courtyards, festival sanctuaries, palaces and shrines⁶ , in addition to Obelisks which would be cut and brought to the temple to be erected in the celebrations of the festival.⁷

After the preparations were achieved, the priests started to purify the temple and lights it for five days until the end of the festival. In the other side priests, high officials, governors, and diplomats from other countries attended in the capital, and the local gods were invited to stay at shrines which were prepared for them.⁸

The iconographic evidences relating to the Sed festival contain many aspects like the following rituals (Purification of the king by gods, Running ceremony , Dancing ceremony, Erecting the Dd pillar, king kneeling in front of ished tree and Thoth writes names of king on the leaves of the tree , king receiving *Hb sd* from Theban triad, Khnum modelling king as child on potter's wheel , King being suckled by goddesses, King driving four calves to Amun , King with kA consecrating four boxes of colored clothes to Amun , King being crowned by Horus and Thoth), although There was no source that collected all rituals which were performed in the *Hb sd* , but king Ramesses II succeeded to represent most of these rituals in his temples .

Ramesses II celebrated the *Hb sd* 14 times as he recorded all the rituals of this festival on the walls of his temples except the ritual of erecting the Dd pillar, and recently in 2018 shrine of *Hb sd* celebration of Ramesses II was discovered at Arab El Hisn at El Mataria (fig. 1) .

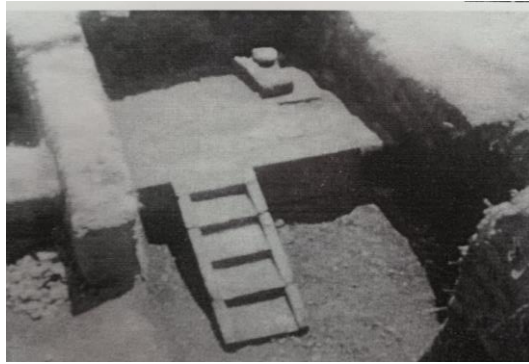


Fig.1 Hb sd shrine of Ramesses II at Arab El Hisn
After reports of the excavation of Ain Shams University in 2018, p. 10

Temple Scenes of Hb sd celebrations of Ramesses II

1-Purification of the King (TABLE N^o 1)

Ramesses II is represented while being purified by Horus and Thoth to be ready for the interaction with the gods. It was part of the *Hb sd* ceremonies. They purified him using the Hs vases from which flowing not streams of water but signs of anx and wAs signs granting him life and prosperity. (Fig. 2).⁹

This ritual will enable the king to participate in the other rituals as a deity or a divine form¹⁰

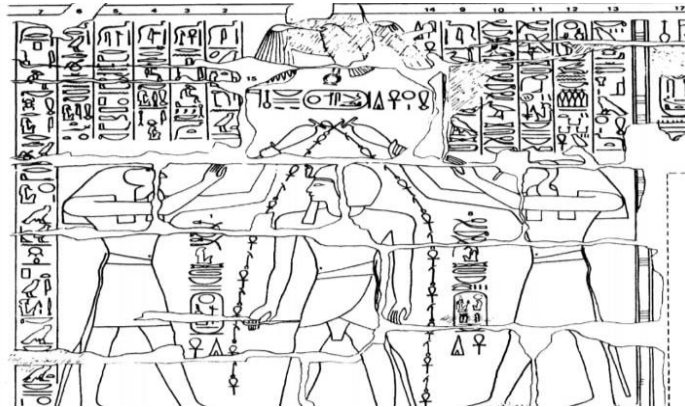


Fig.2. A scene represents king Ramesses II being purified by Horus and Thoth, East wall, southern half of the great Hypostyle hall, great temple of Amun at El Karnak

After H.H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak I, The wall reliefs*, OIP 106, Chicago, 1981, pl. 106

2-Presenting MAat to Amun (TABLE N^o 2)

King Ramesses II appears while kneeling in front of Amun and offering him the statue of mAat.

The ritual of presenting the mAat to the great god is one of the most important rituals should be performed in the sed festival to guarantee that the god will grant the king

many Sed festivals and an eternity as a reward for this offering, he assures by presenting the MAat that he will keep order and justice in Egypt (Fig. 3) ¹¹

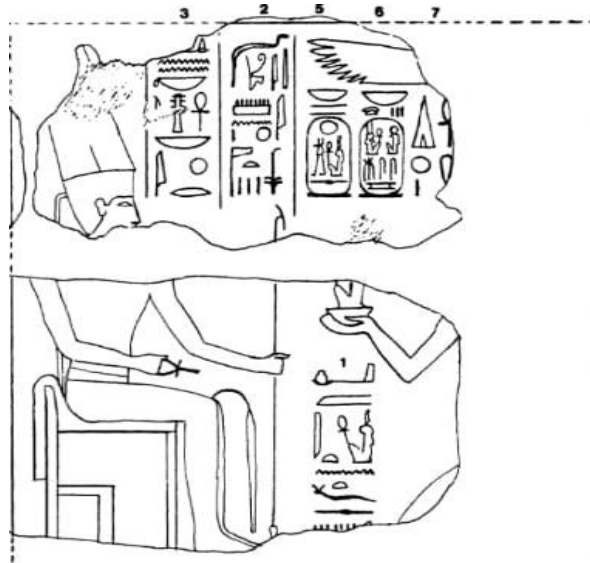


Fig.3. A scene presents king while giving statue of mAat to Amun Ra, south wall, east wing of the great Hypostyle hall, great temple of Amun at El Karnak
After H.H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*, pl. 81

3- King Receiving Jubilee (TABLE N^o 3)

King Ramesses II appears while sitting or kneeling in front of the *ished* tree and both Thoth and *Sefkhet abwy* or one of them writing his name , while Atum sits writing his name on the leaves of the tree, and he appeared while receiving the Hb sd sign from the triad of Thebes (Figs. 4-6)

Ramesses II ruled about 67 years and he celebrated 14 times with the Sed Festivals. He was represented many times while receiving the jubilees, referring to his ambition and his wish to survive through generations, and to secure his status Among his people and maintain the order by the rituals of sed festival. He expressed also his wish to celebrate a Sed Festival hundreds of thousands of years by inscribing his name and the years of his reign on the leaves of the sacred *Ished* tree ¹².

Ished tree related to the coronation rituals and the Sd- festival, as the names of the king were written on its leaves to guarantee him eternal life, writing the king's name also on leaves of the *isd* tree is associated with the coronation of the new king, granting him the justification and the legitimacy to his ascent to the throne, and affirming the permanence of his kingship by the the celebration of the sed festival , as It is thought that every inscribed leaf will represent one of the years which the king will rule. ¹³

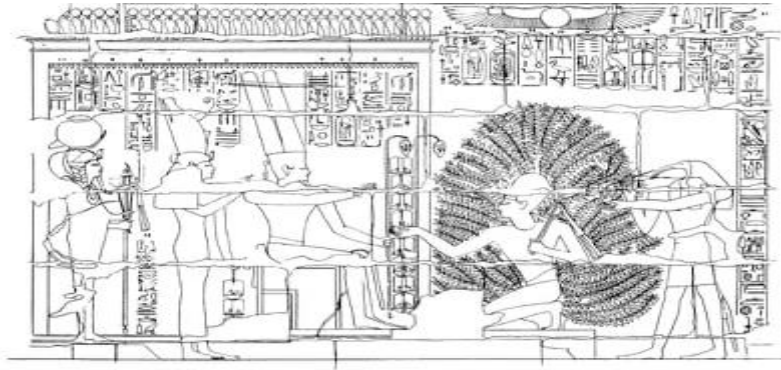


Fig.4. Ascene represents Ramesses II while receiving years of reign and jubilees from Amun, South wall, east wing , bottom register, Hypostyle hall , great temple of Amun at Karnak temple

After H.H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*, pl. 79



Fig.6. A Scene represents Ramesses II receiving jubilees from Amun-Re, with Khonsu and Mut., second court, western wall, south half, lower register, Ramesseum temple

After S. Costa, *Las Representaciones del rey recibiendo los jubileos en los templos tebanos de Epoca Ramésida*, Barcelone, 2004, fig. 17

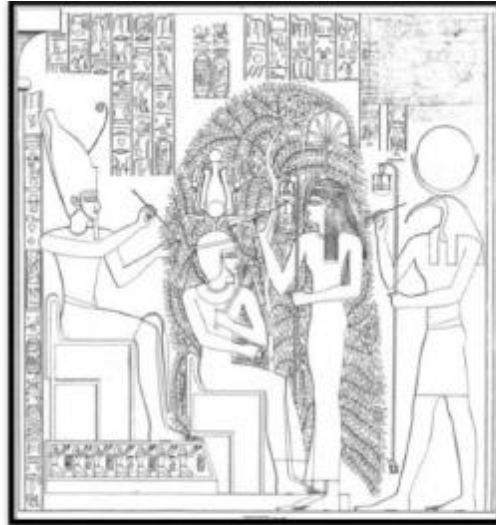


Fig.5. A scene represents King sitting in front of the ished tree and both Thoth and sefekhet abwy writing his name , while Atum is represented sitting writing the names of the king on the leaves of the tree

After T.F. Bayoumy, “Some Remarks on the *iSd* tree, the Sacred tree of Heliopolis”, *JAAUTH* 18, 3, 2020, pl. 3

4-Performing Running Ceremony (TABLE N^O 4)

Ramesses II appears while performing the running ceremony carrying hap and oar¹⁴ to Amun and Mut, while on the other side he carries Hs vases. (Fig. 7-8)

the king here in this ritual should run around the field of the festival building four times as if running towards the four cardinal points of Egypt, once while wearing white crown and other time while wearing red crown. He runs carrying the will which legitimate his kingship and assure his right to rule Egypt for a new period and he will ensure continued prosperity during his reign.¹⁵ This ritual reflected his superiority, and he proved his physical ability to rule Egypt.



Fig.7. A Scene represents Ramesses II running with hap and oar to Amun, The southern inner part of Hypostyle hall, Great temple of Amun , EL karnak temple

After H.H. Nelson, The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, pl. 54



RAMESSES II RUNNING WITH VASES BEFORE AMUN-RE AND MUT, WITH UPPER EGYPTIAN MERET
B 101E SOUTH WALL, DOORWAY, LEVEL, EAST SIDE

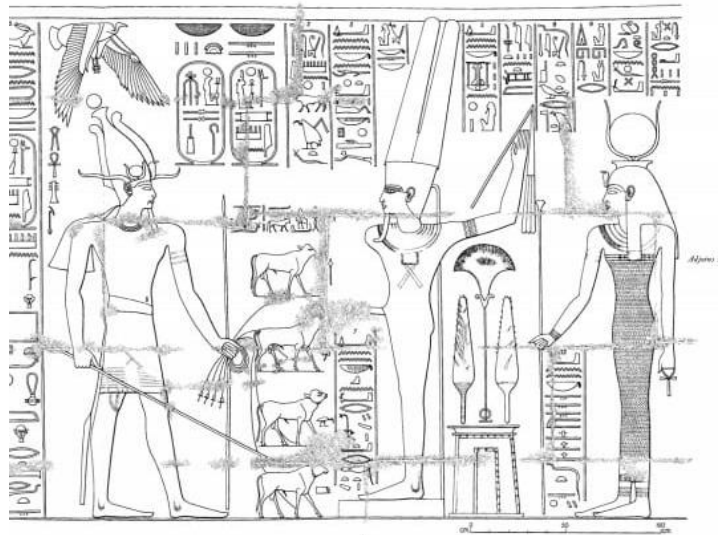
Fig.8. A Scene represents Ramesses II running with vases on the right to Amun and Mut, The southern inner part of Hypostyle hall, Great temple of Amun , EL karnak temple

After H.H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*, pl. 58

5-King Driving Four Calves to Amun (TABLE N^o 5)

This scene represents king Ramesses II while driving four calves to Amun. The calves here may refer to the four cardinal points, another opinion says that in this ritual the king will act as a herdsman who protects the crops by threshing the grain referring to his role in protecting Egypt and its people during his reign .¹⁶ (Fig. 9)

PLATE 286



KING RAMSES II OFFERING FOUR CALVES TO IMN KA MUT AND ISIS
WEST WALL, TOP REGISTER, FIRST AND SECOND REGISTERS FROM SOUTH

Fig.9. A Scene represents King Ramses II while offering four calves to Imn ka mut . f and isis

After A. Egberts, *In quest of meaning. A study of the ancient Egyptian rites of consecrating the "Meret"-chests and driving the calves*, Leiden, 1995, pl. 96

6-King with kA Consecrating Four Boxes of Colored Cloth to Amun (TABLE N^o 6)

King Ramesses II in this ritual appears while wearing Atef crown offering four mrt chests to Amun . Each one is decorated with four feathers. They included different colored clothes, it is thought to contain the mummy bandages of Osiris.¹⁷ They represented the four cardinal points, or in other word all lands of Egypt, this ritual is closely related to the ritual of driving the four calves which also refer to the four cardinal points.¹⁸(Fig. 10)

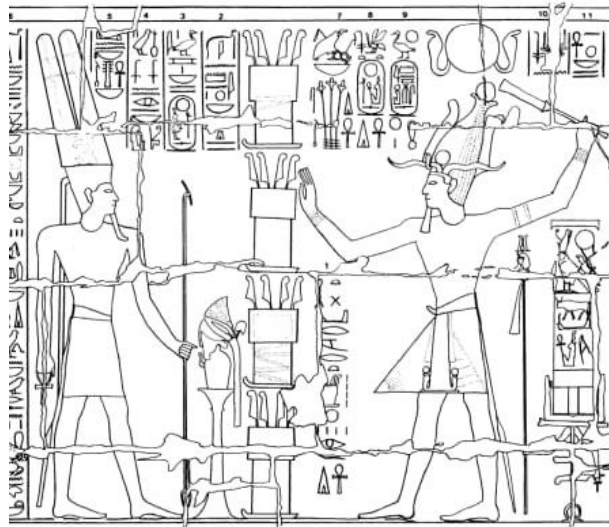


Fig. 10. Ascene represents Ramesses II while offering the four mrt-chests to Amun, Southern interior wall of Hypostyle hall

After A. Egberts, *In quest of meaning. A study of the ancient Egyptian rites of consecrating the "Meret"-chests and driving the calves*, Leiden, 1995, pl. 30

7-Khnum Forming The New Born king on The Potter's Wheel (TABLE N^o 7)

In the south wall of the Hypostyle hall , east half, God Khnum was represented while sitting in front of the potter's wheel modeling the young king in front of goddess . Khnum says " I placed you on the throne as a king , so you may celebrate the sed festival like Atum "¹⁹(Fig. 11)

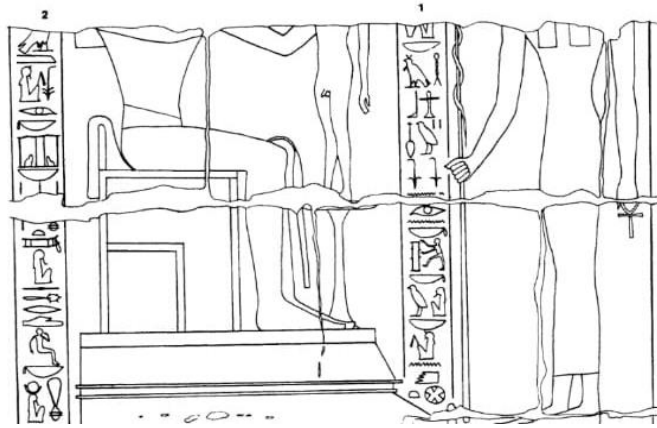


Fig.11. A scene represents Khnum forming the young king (Ramesses II on the potter's wheel, great temple of Amun at El Karnak, south wall of the Hypostyle hall , east half

After H.H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*, pl. 66

8-Suckling From Goddess (TABLE N^o 8)

On the inner southeastern wall of the great Hypostyle Hall of the great temple of Amun at Karnak temples king Ramesses II appears in a standing attitude while suckling from the breast of an unknown goddess. She encircles his shoulders with her right arm while holding her breast with her left hand to his mouth, and the king at the same time holds her left arm. (Fig. 12)

It seems that the ancient Egyptian kings in general appeared while suckling from goddess in three occasions as follow:²⁰

- 1 At his birth like the scenes of Amenhotep III at luxor temple and Hatshepsuit at Deir El Bahari temple to legitimate their rule
- 2 At his coronation and during his celebration with the sed festival, as the sed festival is considered a repetition of the coronation rituals.²¹
- 3 After his death to guarantee his rebirth in the afterlife.

The ritual of suckling from goddess was important as her milk provided the king with life, youth, protection, and sovereignty, conferring upon him his divine status and assuring his royal legitimacy.²²



Fig.12. A scene represents King Ramses II while suckling from unknown goddess , the inner southeastern wall of great Hypostye Hall at Karnak temple.

After J.P. Brand and J. W.Murnane, *The Great Hypostyle hall : in the temple of Amun at Karnak I, part 2-3, OIP 142, Chicago , 2018, pl. 67*

9-King's Coronation (TABLE N^o 9)

When the king completed all the previous rituals and after being purified , he is ready to be crowned by god Amun or by his son god Khonsu, or by Horus and Thoth like the following scenes : (Fig. 13-15)

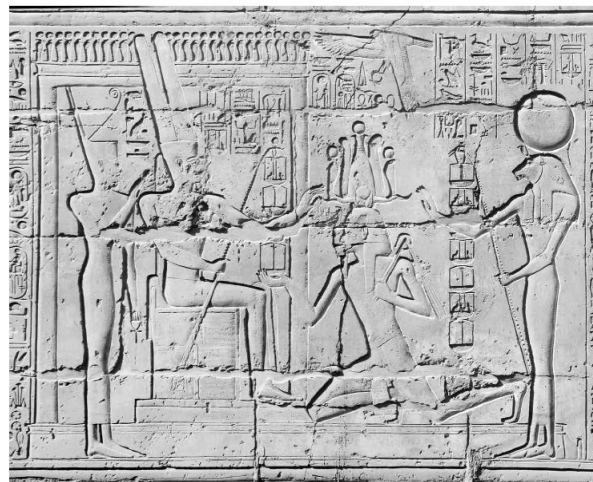


Fig.13. Ascene represents Ramesses II being crowned by Amun Ra and received the jubilees in the presence of Sekhmet and Neith , South wall , east half of the great Hypostyle hall, great temple of Amun at El karnak

J.P. Brand and J. W.Murnane, *The Great Hypostyle hall* , pl.70

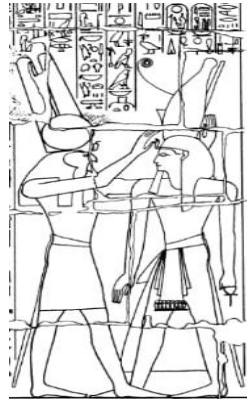


Fig.14. Ascene represents Ramesses II being crowned by Khonsu , east wall , south half of the great Hypostyle hall, great temple of Amun at El karnak
After H.H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*, pl. 106



Horus and Thoth steadying crowns on the head of Ramesses II, flanked by Nekhebet and Wadjet. A. Chéne/© CNRS-CFEETK (8115). South wall, east wing, middle register in situ ("blind"), seventh scene from west

Fig. 14. Ascene represented Ramesses II being crowned By Horus and Thoth in the companion of Nekhebet and Wadjet , South wall, eastern half , great Hypostyle hall, El karnak temple

J.P. Brand and J. W.Murnane, *The Great Hypostyle hall* , pl. 78

Analytical Tables

TABLE N⁰ 1

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
King is purified by Horus and Thoth	Luxor temple Great temple of Amun at El Karnak	The court Eastern wall of Southern Interior side of Hypostyle hall
King is purified by Horus son of Iset and Thoth	El Derr Temple	Western wall of Second pillared hall

TABLE N^o 2

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
King Ramesses II kneels in front of Amun while offering him the statue of mAat	Great temple of Amun at El Karnak	south wall, east wing of the great Hypostyle hall

TABLE N^o 3

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
king kneels in front of ished tree and Thoth writes his name on the leaves and receives the Heb Sed sign from the triad of Thebes . King kneels and behind him by Mut and Thoth, and he receives life and jubilees from Amun-Re and behind him Khonsu. Ramesses II kneels receiving jubilees from Amun-Re in the presence of Neith and Mut with lioness head.	Great temple of EL Karnak	Hypostyle hall, southern interior wall, east half, bottom register, west end Hypostyle hall, southern interior wall, east half, bottom register, west end Hypostyle hall, western interior wall, south half, Hypostyle hall, southern interior wall, east half, middle register
King kneels in front of ished tree and Thoth writes his name on the wand of the Heb Sed and receives Heb Sed from Amun	Luxor temple	The forecourt, southern wall, east half, first register.
King sits in front of the ished tree and both Thoth and sefekhet abwy write his name and Atum sits writing his name on the leaves of the tree King kneels in front of Amun receiving the Heb Sed wand in the presence of Mut, Khonsu, and Thoth Ramesses II kneels receiving the jubilees from Amun in the presence of goddess Mut	Ramesseum	Astronomical room Second court, western wall, south half, lower register Hypostyle hall, western wall, and south half, lower register.
King sits in front of the ished tree, and he is followed by Thoth who write his name and he receives the jubilees from Ptah in the presence of goddess Sekhmet	El Derr Temple	Western wall of Second pillared hall
King kneels under ished tree receiving the jubille from Re Herakhrty , and Thoth and Sefkhet abwy writes his names and years of reign on leaves of the tree	Abu Simbel. Great temple	Southern wall of the great hall

TABLE N^o 4

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
King runs with hap and oar to Amun and Khonsu and the other side he appears running with vases on the right	Great temple of Amun, Karnak temple	The southern inner part of Hypostyle hall
King runs with hap and oar to Amun and with vases on the left	Luxor temple	Inner face of the pylon, central shrine of Amun in the court
King runs with hap and oar to Amun and with vases on the left	Ramesseum	the Hypostyle hall
Double scene represents Ramesses II running with hap and oar to Amun and the other part is broken	Rock temple of Beit El wali	Above the central doorway of the vestibule
King runs with hap and oar to Amun on the left and with vases on the right	El Derr Temple	On the lintel of the Entrance to sanctuary
Double scene represents Ramesses II running with hap and oar to Amun and Mut, and he carries His vases to Re Herakhety and Weret Hekaw	Abu Simbel. Great temple.	Lintel of the outer doorway of the entrance

TABLE N^o 5

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
King presenting four calves to Amun and Hathor	Great temple of Amun at El Karnak	Southern interior wall, eastern half of Hypostyle hall, West wall of outer wall of court I Griddle wall, exterior part , eastern south half Cachet court, interior western wall
	Luxor temple	The upper register on the north western wall, of the court.
	Temple of Wadi El Sebua	Southern wall of Inner forecourt

TABLE N^o 6

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
King presents four meret chests to Amun	Great temple of Amun at El Karnak	Southern interior wall of Hypostyle hall
	Luxor temple	the upper register on the north western wall, of the court
	Abu Simbel	Southern wall of the great hall
	Temple of Wadi El Sebua	Southern wall of Inner forecourt

TABLE N^o 7

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
Khnum sits in front of the potter's wheel modeling the young king (Ramesses II)	Great temple of Amun at El Karnak	Southern interior wall of Hypostyle hall, east half

TABLE N^o 8

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
Ramesses II appears while suckling from the breast of an unknown goddess	Great temple of Amun at El Karnak	Southern interior wall of Hypostyle hall, east half

TABLE N^o 9

The scene	temple name	Place of scene
King is crowned by Horus and Thoth	Great temple of Amun , Karnak temple	South wall, eastern half , great Hypostyle hall
King is crowned by Khonsu	Great temple of Amun , Karnak temple	East wall of southern interior half of the great Hypostyle hall
King is crowned by Horus and Thoth		South wall, eastern half , great Hypostyle hall

Conclusion

After studying the scenes of the Hb sd of Ramesses II it is concluded that :

- Ramesses II actually celebrated the sed festival 14 times to express his wish for millions of Sed festivals.

- The aim of the celebration of the sed festival to renew the relations between the king and his people, and between the king and the gods who will permit him to rule Egypt for more years and grant him the legitimacy and the divine right to rule Egypt.
- Ramesses II recorded on his monuments most of the iconographical evidences which refer to the rituals performed in the Hb sd more than any other king, although there was no source that collected all rituals which were performed, but king Ramesses II succeeded to represent most of these rituals in his temples except for the ritual of erecting the Dd pillar which didn't appear in any of his temples.
- The southern wall of the great Hypostyle hall of the great temple of Amun at El Karnak gathered most of his Hb sd scenes.
- The iconographical evidences relating to the Sed festival contain many aspects like the following rituals (king offering mAat to god Amun, Running ceremony , king kneeling in front of ished tree and Thoth writes names of king on the leaves of the tree , king receives Hb sd from Theban triad, Khnum modelling king as child on potter's wheel , King is represented being suckled by goddess, King driving four calves to Amun , King with ka consecrating four boxes of coulered cloth to Amun , King being crowned by Horus and Thoh).
- The king is represented being purified in the Sed festival by Horus and Thoth to prepare him for the interaction with the gods, and they purified him using the Hs vase from which signs of anx and wAs signs granting him life and authority. to enable the king to participate in the other rituals as a deity or a divine form
- The king in the sed festival appeared while offering mAat to the great god to guarantee that he will grant him many Sed festivals and an eternity as a reward for this offering.
- King Ramesses II appeared many times while receiving the jubilees, referring to his wish to survive through generations, and to secure his status Among his people and maintain the order by the rituals of sed festival. He expressed also his wish to celebrate a Sed Festival hundreds of thousands of years by inscribing his name and the years of his reign on the leaves of the sacred *iSd* tree
- The *iSd tree* related to the coronation rituals and the Sed- festival, as the names of the king were written on its leaves to guarantee him eternal life, and affirming the permanence of his kingship by the the celebration of the sed festival, as It is thought that every inscribed leaf will represent one of the years which the king will rule.
- The running ceremony reflected the superiority of the king, and he proved his physical ability to rule Egypt.
- The ritual of driving the four calves and presenting the four merer chest were closely related as both of them refer to the four-cardinal point of Egypt

- The Sed festival is considered a repetition to the coronation ceremonies as the creator god Khnum appeared while forming the new king in the potters' wheel, then the king should be suckled from the mother goddess to provide the king with life, youth, protection, and sovereignty, conferring upon him his divine status and assuring his royal legitimacy.
- The main deities who associated with the celebration of the sed festival were Amun, Mut, Khonsu, Horus, Thoth, Ptah, Atum, Sefekhet abwy, and Khnum

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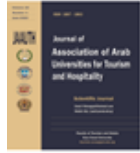
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مناظر احتفال رمسيس الثاني بعيد السد على جدران المعابد

منى عز على

كلية السياحة والفنادق – جامعة المنصورة

المخلص	معلومات المقالة
<p>كان عيد السد واحد من أهم الأعياد والاحتفالات الدنيوية وأقام الملوك المصريون القدماء احتفالاتهم بهذا العيد بعد الثلاثين عاماً الأولى من حكمهم. لكن لم ينتظر كل الملوك ثلاثين عاماً ، حيث احتفلوا بطقوسها قبل أن يكملوا الثلاثين عاماً من عهدهم ، وبعد الاحتفال الأول يمكن للملك أن يحيي ذكرى عيد السد كل ثلاث سنوات، مثل رمسيس الثاني الذي احتفل بهذا العيد ١٤ مرة.</p> <p>يهتم هذا البحث بدراسة مشاهد احتفالات عيد السد في عهد الملك رمسيس الثاني، الذي أحتفل بعيد السد مرات عديدة أكثر من أي ملك آخر. و عرض البحث المناظر المختلفة لطقوس عيد السد والغرض من كل طقس وأهميته مثل طقوس التطهير، وطقس الجري، وستلام علامة الحب سد، وتقديم العجول الأربعة، وتقديم الصناديق الأربعة، وأخيراً طقوس التتويج، كما عرض البحث مقصور احتفالات الخاصة بالملك رمسيس الثاني في منطقة عرب الحصن بالمطرية مما يثبت أن رمسيس الثاني أحتفل بالفعل بعيد السد ولم يكن مجرد مناظر مسجلة على جدران المعابد، وقد أعتمد البحث على الدراسة الوصفية التحليلية وتم عرض أهم النتائج ومنها أن رمسيس الثاني أكثر ملك قد سجل التفاصيل والطقوس المختلفة الخاصة بعيد الحب سد على جدران معابده وعلى الأخص على الجدار الجنوبي لصالة الأعمدة الكبرى بمعبد أمون في الكرنك.</p>	<p>الكلمات المفتاحية عيد السد؛ رمسيس الثاني؛ جدران المعابد.</p> <p>(JAAUTH) المجلد ٢٢، العدد ٢، (يونيو ٢٠٢٢)، ص ٣٨١- ٣٩٨.</p>