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### The Unusual Deification Scenes of Ramses II in Lower Nubia

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#### Abstract

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This paper illustrates “The Unusual Deification Scenes of Ramses II in Lower Nubian Temples”. Ramses II appeared in many scenes as a deified king in Lower Nubian Temples; but the most prominent or unusual and important scenes in which he appears as a deified king are illustrated. The figure of the deified Rameses II occurs in all his Nubian temples apart from Beit El-Wali, which was constructed before his deification. The image of the deified Rameses II was one of the main themes in the Nubian temples. Rameses II was one of the greatest pharaohs of ancient Egypt. He was so filled with the sense of his own importance as a pharaoh. He appeared as a deified king in six temples in Nubia and the most important one was the Great temple of Abu Simbel.

#### 1. Introduction

One of the greatest pharaohs in ancient Egypt, Rameses II ruled for an extraordinary sixty-seven years. He succeeded Sety I, his father. One could consider Rameses II to be the third monarch of the 19th Dynasty<sup>1</sup>. More monuments were left by this reign than by any other pharaoh. He was also the most prolific builder of temples in Nubia. During his lifetime, he was revered as a divine monarch<sup>2</sup>.

The process by which a person, living or dead, is declared a god is explained by the fact that the Egyptians did not deify living beings. Akhenaten, for example, may have been a living god, but he inherited his position because he was born as the living manifestation of Horus. During their reign, some monarchs erected sculptures of themselves as gods to further solidify their status as God on Earth. In the sanctuary of his temple at Abu Simbel, Ramses II positioned a statue of himself as Re, the sun god, next to Amun-Re, Re-Horakhty, and Ptah. Another statue of Ramses as Amun was found in his mortuary temple at the Ramesseum in Thebes. A handful of private people, revered for their knowledge, achieved deification after death<sup>3</sup>.

In Lower Nubia's history, Rameses II appears to have signaled a period of prosperity. Numerous temples were built there during his reign. Each of Egypt's major religious hubs had one or more temples constructed by Rameses II. He built six temples in seven separate locations. Although the reason behind his selection of these specific locations for the construction of these temples is unclear, it is reasonable to conclude that they were significant

<sup>1</sup> J. Tyldesley, *Rameses: Egypt's Greatest Pharaoh*, London, 2001, p.32.

<sup>2</sup> J. Gohary, *Guide to the Nubian Monuments on Lake Nasser*, American University in Cairo, 1998, p.12.

<sup>3</sup> P. Remler, *Egyptian Mythology A to Z*, New York, 2010, p.49.

at the time<sup>4</sup>. The king was one of the gods worshipped in some of these temples, which were all devoted to one or more deities. In the reliefs, he was depicted among the gods, bearing offerings in his human form. Additionally, Ramses II is shown as a statue with a unique cult name, the image of which can be seen in other temples. There are unmistakable signs in some places that the monarch and other people venerate these sculptures<sup>5</sup>.

Throughout Egyptian history, the practice of deifying humans—a process that was formalized in the New Kingdom—was a feature of the cultic environment<sup>6</sup>. The living monarch or his divine qualities were also worshipped, in addition to gods or deified dead kings. In order to justify their power and serve their own interests, the kings themselves promoted this. Following their passing, they were worshipped and turned into the focus of a cult, complete with cult structures<sup>7</sup>.

The king may make plans to provide himself a temple and a processional barge once he had proven that he had become a god. The Nubian temples of Ramses II are filled with these barges of deified rulers; for instance, the term "Ramses in the ship" came to be used to refer to the king's deified manifestations. Originally, the chapel was thought to be the location where a goddess suckled the young king until it was moved to the location where the king had transformed into a god<sup>8</sup>.

## 2. The Deification of Ramses II in Lower Nubian Temples

### 2.1. The Great Temple of Abu Simbel

The most crucial preconception to comprehend in order to "interpret" this temple is the notion of the deified Pharaoh and the symbolic manifestations associated with it. The Pharaoh served as a go-between for humanity and the divinity in ancient Egypt. There were only a few Pharaohs with particular political and theological circumstances, and it was thought that the pharaoh became completely divine after his death. Ramses, one of the few Pharaohs to do so, had his Sed festival in the 30th year of his rule, during which he was ceremoniously changed into a god. However, the temples' construction, which prominently portrayed him as a fully realized, living god, had already been commissioned 20 years prior. He sits on the same bench and is the same size as the ancient Egyptian deities in the sanctuaries of Abu Simbel and Derr, which are some indications that he united himself with them. The predominant architectural style of these temples was Ramses's creation of rock-cut temples, which were devoted to Ramses alone, with or without other gods. With the exception of Beit El-Wali, all of them featured enormous statues of the still-living, deified Ramses II<sup>9</sup>.

The king made the choices about the construction of the temple and its interior design. The temples honor the gods Ra-Horakty, Ptah, and Ramesses II, who is frequently portrayed in the reliefs as a ruler sacrificing to himself in the role of a deity. Ramses II elevates himself to the level of the gods<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> L. Habachi, *Features of the Deification of Ramses II*, Glückstadt, 1969, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> L. Habachi, *Features of the Deification of Ramesses II*, Glückstadt, 1969, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> M. Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, New York, 2014, p.95; M. Verner, *Temple of the World; Sanctuary, Cults, and Mysteries of Ancient Egypt*, American University in Cairo Press, 2013, p.19.

<sup>7</sup> M. Verner, *Temple of the World; Sanctuary, Cults, and Mysteries of Ancient Egypt*, American University in Cairo Press, 2013, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> D. Wildung, *Egyptian Saints: Deification in Pharaonic Egypt*, New York, 1977, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> N. Ramzy, "The Genius Loci at the Great Temple of Abu Simbel: Hermeneutic Reading in the Architectural Language of Ancient Egyptian Temples of Ramses II in Nubia," *Journal of Ancient History and Archeology*, June, 2015, p.53.

<sup>10</sup> N. Ramzy, Abu Simbel, *Journal of Ancient History and Archeology*, June, 2015, p.45.

Ramses II may have been a deified king, as Amon-Re, Re-Harakhty, and the king himself occupy nearly identical positions. The primary place in the temple is held by the king, who is unquestionably assimilated to the gods here<sup>11</sup>. Most scholars agree that Ramesses II was deified in his temple at Abu Simbel<sup>12</sup>.

### The Adoration Formulae<sup>13</sup>

#### Document 1:

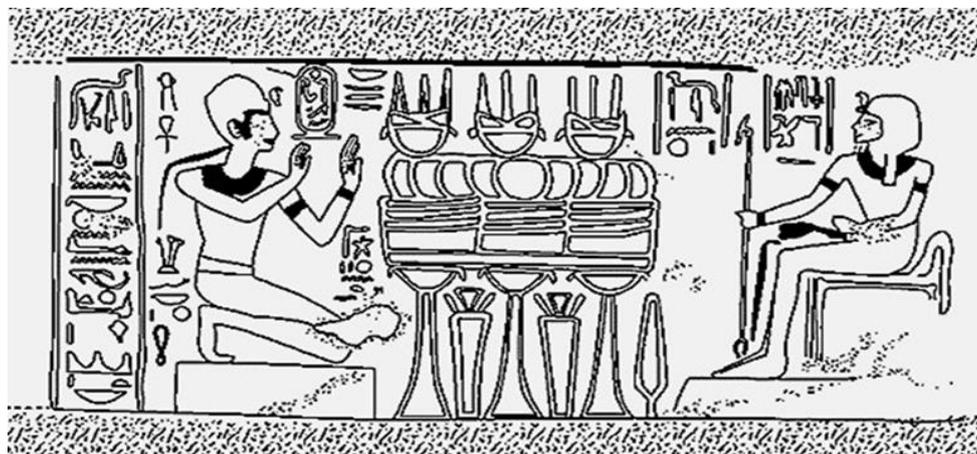


fig.1, Ramses II adores himself in the Great Temple of Abu Simbel.

After, R. Eissa, "The Worshipping Formulae of Royal Adoration Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Temples From The Old Kingdom Till The End Of The Late Period," *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*, Vol.8, No.5,( Jan.2023), p.71.

**Location:** Outside the shrine.

**Description:** This is the one of the most rare and important scenes that depicted Ramses II as a deified king. The adorer king Ramses II hymns his deified form by saying *dw3-ntr sp snw n it.f* «Adoring the god two times to his father»<sup>14</sup>. The adored god is sitting on his throne outside a shrine in complete human form (fig. 1). The inscription before the god reads: *dd mdw in Rms-sw p3 ntr t3* «Word spoken by Ramses, god of the Earth».

In general, Ramses II's formulae of worship depicted him as a part of the realm of the gods. The addition of "to his mother" and "to his father" makes the equivalency evident. To be distant from an absolute divinity, Ramses II praised himself only twice instead of four times. The phrase "to his father," which is added to the formula for devotion, further demonstrates Ramses II's humanity by portraying him as a regular king and the son of the god. Interestingly, another technique to demonstrate Ramses II's divinity could be the way his name appears outside the

<sup>11</sup> Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.2.

<sup>12</sup> D. Arnold, *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, Cornell University Press, 1997, p.115.

<sup>13</sup> The development of the royal adoration formulae that appear as a title introducing the adoration scenes. There are various formulae describing the king during worshipping; Adoring the God Four Times: The formula «adoring the god four times» appeared in Ramses II's scenes in new hieroglyphic writings such as  $\star \text{𓏏} \text{𓏏} \text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$ , *dw3-nfr sp f dw*, «Adoring the god four times» And this formulae in Ramses II's scenes witnessed important additional of the unique expression *n it.f* «for his father». With this phrase, the king emphasizes that he belongs to the deities' family and being a god. This phrase was not associated with the adoration of a specific god, but it appears in a number of scenes showing him adoring Ptah, Thoth, Re-Harakhty, Khonsu, in R. Eissa, "The Worshipping Formulae of Royal Adoration Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Temples From The Old Kingdom Till The End Of The Late Period," *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*, Vol.8, No.5,( Jan.2023) ,p.65,68.

<sup>14</sup> Adoring the God Two Times: Only two adoration scenes with formula «Adoration the god two times» were found and dated to the Nineteenth Dynasty, The second example is the most important. It is in a unique scene of Ramses II adoring himself in the Great Temple at Abu-Simbel, in Eissa, "The Worshipping Formulae", p. 71, 79.

cartouche, similar to how the names of the deities were inscribed. It is acknowledged that spelling royal names without cartouches highlights the king's celestial presence and purposefully reflects the orthography of their divine names. There are several formulas for royal adoration that were used to introduce scenes of devotion in temples; Ramses II alone uses the formula for adoring the god twice at the Great Temple of Abu-Simbel<sup>15</sup>.

The pharaoh's dual function as a human and a divine being during his lifetime. Ramses II, for example, was frequently elevated to godhood at Abu Simbel prior to his demise<sup>16</sup>. At the celebration of his coronation or the celebration of his first *Hb-sd*, he may have been deified<sup>17</sup>.

## Document 2:



fig.2, The Deified king between the Two goddesses

After, L. Habachi, *Features of the Deification of Ramesses II*, Glückstadt, 1969, p.9.

**Location:** On the south of the doorway, The second court.

**Description:** Ramses II had to be presented seated beside Amon-Re, while the goddess has been forced to stand<sup>18</sup>.

Amon-Re and Isis were shown in the scene that corresponded with it. Isis has been made to stand in order to place the figure of the deified ruler between the two goddesses (fig. 2). It's fascinating to observe how the ribbon that hung behind the god's back was changed into a scepter for the king and how the goddess's hand, which had previously held a scepter, was altered to lay it on the deified monarch's shoulder. The last two columns of the inscription appertaining to the god were replaced by one belonging to the deified king, which reads: "Utterance of User-mare-meramon 'I gave to thee'. These modifications appear to suggest that the concept of the king's deification was ultimately solidified when the scene above the facade's main gateway needed to be carved<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> R. Eissa, "The Worshipping Formulae of Royal Adoration Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Temples From The Old Kingdom Till The End of The Late Period," *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*, Vol.8, No.5,( Jan.2023) ,p.65,68,71,79.

<sup>16</sup> M. Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, New York, 2014, p.276.

<sup>17</sup> M. Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, p.335.

<sup>18</sup> J. Gohary, *Guide to the Nubian Monuments on Lake Nasser*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1998, p.77.

<sup>19</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.9.

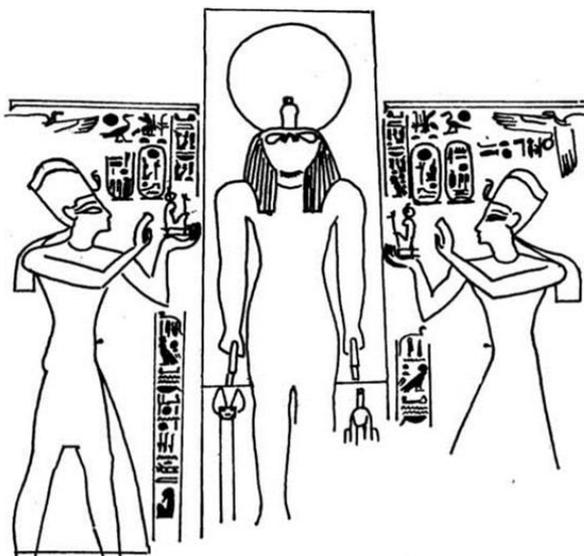
**Document 3:**

fig.3, The king Ramses II is adoring is a Sun god.  
After, L. Habachi, *Features of the Deification of Ramesses II*, Glückstadt, 1969, p.9.

**Location:** Niche above the main entrance.

**Description:** This consists of a niche containing a big figure in the middle flanked by signs. On each side the king is shown with uplifted arms and holding the *mꜣt*-sign in one hand. The figure inside the niche which the king is adoring is a Sun god with large *wꜣr*-sign on the right and a Ma'et-figure on the left. Because of this, the figure was regarded as Re-Harakhty (fig.3), and the temple was believed to have been devoted to that deity. However, he is portrayed here not as an individual but rather as one of the symbols used to write the king's prenomen, to whose divine form the temple appears to have been devoted. The temple was given this name for this reason: "The House of Ramesses Meramon". This opinion is supported by the statue of the deified Ramesses with Ptah, Amon-Re, and Re-Harakhty at the end of the sanctuary, which is the final section to be finished<sup>20</sup>. The deified pharaoh physically overshadows the sun-god Re-Herakhty<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.10.

<sup>21</sup> D. Richardson, *The Rough Guide to Egypt*, London ,2013 , p.367.

**Document 4:**

fig.4, Bark of the deified Ramesses II  
After, L. Habachi, *Features of The Deification of Ramses II*, p.5.

**Location:** On the northern wall, in the second court of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel.

**Description:** The bark is represented with hawk is head surmounted by sun-disk on the stern and prow . There is the king is shown in a standing position (fig.4).

He has a libation container in one hand and a censer in the other. The text "Doing incense and libation" shakes the sistra in front of him as the queen Hathor follows him. An additional inscription above him is similar to the one on the other side, with the exception that the offering is for the deified king. Residing in the House-of -Ramesses-(Meramon)<sup>22</sup>.

Only the deified king, to whom libations and incense are dedicated, is mentioned in this inscription. He is shown as a hawk-headed deity with a sacred bark who is eligible to 'Residing in the House-of-Ramesses-Meramon' <sup>23</sup>.

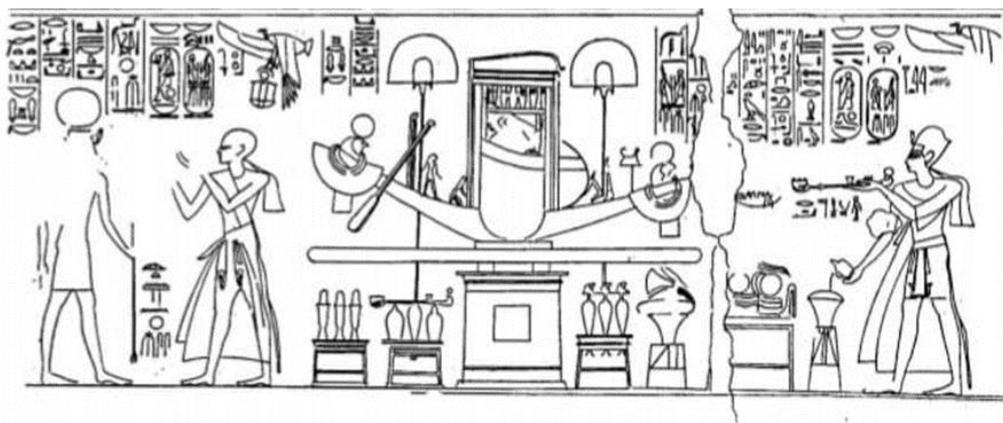
**Document 5:**

fig.5, Bark of the deified king in the Sanctuary of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel.

After, L. Habachi , *Features of The Deification of Ramses II*, 1969, p.6.

**Location:** In the Sanctuary on the southern wall.

**Description:** The king is shown standing and making offerings in front of Thoth's barque. Re-

<sup>22</sup> Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

Harakhte appears standing on a barque<sup>24</sup>. The king then anointed the uraeus on Amonre-Kamutef's ithyphallic forehead.

The bark's prow and stern are ram-headed. Additionally, an inscription that goes with the entire image mentions Amon-Re. On the opposite side, the king is depicted presiding in front of another bark while standing on a stand. He also presents cloth to his deified self (fig.5). There are two inscriptions between the bark and the king. "Giving incense to Re" is written in a horizontal line beneath the king's left hand, which is holding the censer. However, as he does in the Second Hall, the king is presenting to the holy bark of his deified self, particularly since the inscription above the king makes it clear that the incense is being offered to the king and not to any other deity<sup>25</sup>.

### Document 6:

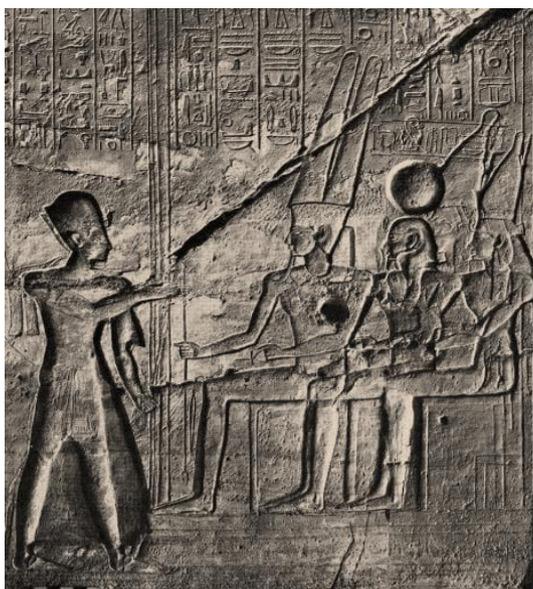


fig.6, Ramses II offers captives to Amun-Re

After, R. Bradshaw, *The Commission, Design and Production of Royal Iconography in Ancient Egypt*, 2010, p.93.

**Location:** Great Hall South of the doorway leading to the Second Hall.

**Description:** Rameses II is standing, he appears presenting Amun-Re, Mut, and the deified Rameses II with captives (fig.6)<sup>26</sup>. He joined a community of gods after this scene was recut to include the deified Rameses<sup>27</sup>.

### (2) The Small Temple of Abu Simbel<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> L. Török, *The Image of the Ordered World in Ancient Nubian Art*, 2006, p.13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> R. Bradshaw, *The Commission, Design and Production of Royal Iconography in Ancient Egypt: Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, University of Cambridge, 2010, p.93.

<sup>27</sup> Rameses deified image is worshipped by the mortal Rameses in the second of two halls, in P. Roberts, "Ancient History," Pascal Press, 2006, p.34.

<sup>28</sup> In the Small Temple of Abu Simbel Nefertari was honoured. She was deified while she was still alive. The smaller temple was intended for the deified royal wife Nefertari and her cult in Nubia. There is only one scene refers to the deified king. In the sanctuary, which shows Rameses worshipping before depictions of the deified

**Document 7:**

fig.7, Ramses II and his wife as divine lords of the small temple of Abu simble .  
After, D. Wilding , Egyptian Saints, 10.

**Location:** on the North wall of the Sanctuary .

**Description:** The reliefs on the sanctuary walls depict Ramesses II worshipping himself and Nefertari (fig. 7).<sup>29</sup> On the north wall of the sanctuary Ramses II is shown offering incense before his deified-self and the deified Nefertari<sup>30</sup>. There are indications that the work on the Small Temple was started early in the reign of the king<sup>31</sup>.

### (3) The Temple of Gerf Hussein.

Ramses II was Worshipped in Gerf Hussein<sup>32</sup>. Some parts of the temple of Gerf Hussein were dismantled<sup>33</sup>. The king is seen in this temple worshipping and presenting to numerous deities, including Amon-Re, Re-Harakhti, and Ptah."The Temple of Rameses-meramon-in-the-House-of-Ptah" is the name of the temple. Along with his own deified self, ses II worships a number of deities there, including Rameses I. Additionally, this temple was devoted to various sets of triads and several ancient gods, primarily Ptah<sup>34</sup>.

Ramesses and of the deified Nefertari, in M. Smith, *Imaging Ancient Egypt: Abu Simbel Old and New*, 2007,p.15; Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, p.269; Verner, *Temple of the World* , 240;

<sup>29</sup> D. Redford , *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford University Press, 2001 ,p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> A large rock stela at the Small Temple to the north depicts Yuny, the viceroy, standing in front of his seated ruler. The fact that there are no references to the deified king in this temple other than in the Sanctuary suggests that construction on the temple was initiated early in the reign., in *OEAE*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.10.

<sup>32</sup> Verner, " *Temple of the World*", p.119.

<sup>33</sup> J. Josephson, *Offerings to the Discerning Eye* , Brill , 2009, p. 238.

<sup>34</sup> Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.12.

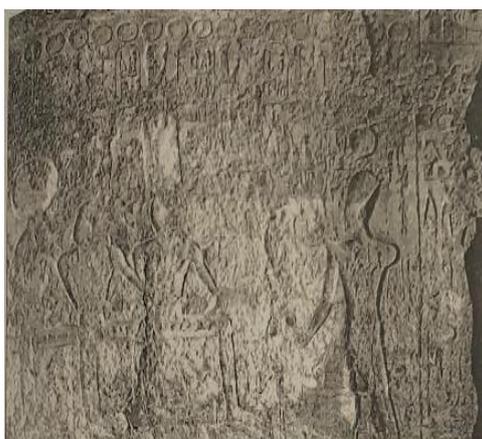
**Document 8:**

Fig. 8 a- Vestibule of Gerf Hussein temple      Fig. 8 b- Vestibule of Gerf Hussein temple (Rest of the scene).

After, CEDAE, n° 10323

After, CEDAE, n°. 10325.

**Location:** The Vestibule of the Temple of Gerf Hussein.

**Description:** Standing on the right and donning the blue crown is King Ramses II. In front of four seated deities Onnuris god, the disobedient Ramses I, Pakhet goddess, and Nekhbet. He is depicted libating and censing. Sitting one behind the other, they are shown accepting the presents from King Ramses II, whose cartouches are visible above his head, while holding the "nh" symbol in their right arms (fig. 8 a, 8b)<sup>35</sup>.

The goddess Pakhet is seen sitting behind the disobedient Ramses I. She is shown reaching out to accept the sacrifices made by the divine Ramses II. Regretfully, the inscriptions on the remaining portion of the wall have been destroyed<sup>36</sup>.

**Document 9:**

Fig. 9, Sanctuary of Gerf Hussein temple (A Goddess embraces the king).

After, CEDAE, n°. 7272.

<sup>35</sup> *LDT* V, p. 56; *PM* VII, p. 35; J.F. Champollion, *Notice descriptive des monuments égyptiens du musée*, Paris, 2013, p. 135.

<sup>36</sup> *CEDAE*, pl.10323.

**Location:** The Sanctuary of the Temple of Gerf Hussein.

**Description:** The deified Ramses II is depicted standing and being held by the goddess of wild cats, Pakhet, while donning the scarlet crown of Lower Egypt (fig.9)<sup>37</sup>.

#### Document 10:



Fig. 10, Ramses II Standing in front of a shrine.

After, <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A3264174/view>, on 5/7/2023.

**Location:** The Right side of the doorway of the temple.

**Description:** Ramesses II appears before Ptah, Sekhmet, and the holy being. A depiction with Ramesses II holding the *mꜣt*- sign and wearing the Crown of the North was displayed to the right of the entrance (fig.10)<sup>38</sup>. Standing in front of a shrine in which Ptah, Sekhmet and the pharaoh himself were depicted<sup>39</sup>. (4)

#### Temple of Wadi El-Sebua<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> CEDAE, pl.7272.

<sup>38</sup> B. Margit, *What Was Left Behind: A study of the temple of Ptah at Gerf Hussein and the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia*, Leiden University, 2022, p.18.

<sup>39</sup> A triad, typically consisting of a god and his consort with the king in between, is seen in each of the four niches on either side of the First Hall of the temple dedicated to Gerf Hussein. The monarch, who is depicted sacrificing to the triad in the panels between these niches, is worshiping the triad as well as himself. Ptah-of-Ramesses-meramon, the king himself, Ptah-Tenen-of-Rameses-meramon, and Hathor-of-the-South-Sycamore are the four statues in the niche in the rear of the Sanctuary, arranged from south to north. Notably, the same deities are depicted as being adored by the king in both this temple's vestibule and El-Sebu's., in Habachi, p.12.

<sup>40</sup> Wadi El-Sebua Temple is known as the "Temple-of-Ramesses-meramon-in-the-House-of-Amun," but it was not just Amun who was worshipped there; other gods, including Re-Harakhti and the deified king, were also revered. The deified ruler is frequently portrayed alongside the other gods and at least once takes the place of Re-Harakhti in the Sanctuary. in Wadi el-Sebua's temple. In this case, Ramesses II's divine persona might somewhat separate him from the human realm. The deification of the king was already an established fact before El-Sebu Temple was decorated, in E. Frood, *Biographical Texts From Ramessid Egypt*, United States, 2007, p.27.

Ramses II erected a temple there honoring Re-Harakhti, Amun and his own deified person<sup>41</sup>. The king can be seen worshipping or making offerings to a number of deities at the temple, including the deified Ramses II<sup>42</sup>.

#### Document 11:



Fig. 11, Ramses II censes before gods including his deified self (third from left). After, R. Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, p.100.

**Location:** El-Sebua Temple, Antechamber, west wall.

**Description:** In the Antechamber, the king is represented in a standing position, he is burning incense before Ptah, Ptah-Tenen, the deified Ramses II and Hathor<sup>43</sup>.

Ramses II censes before gods including the deified Ramses II. He is offering and receiving gifts to and from the deified Ramses II (fig.11)<sup>44</sup>.

#### Document 12:



Fig. 12, Ramses II offers to the bark of the deified Ramses II. After, R. Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, p.101.

<sup>41</sup> Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, p.427.

<sup>42</sup> D. Richardson, *The Rough Guide to Egypt*, London, 2013, p. 362.

<sup>43</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.13.

<sup>44</sup> Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, p.34.

**Location:** El-Sebua Temple, Sanctuary, North wall.

**Description:** With hawks' heads in the stern and prow, the monarch is seen standing and making an offering in front of the deified Ramesses II's bark. This has been believed to be the bark of Harmakhis, but the scene's inscription makes it abundantly evident that the sacred bark belongs to the king and not to any other deity. As a result, neither Harmakhis nor any other deity is mentioned; rather, it is made clear that the bark belongs to the deified king (fig.12)<sup>45</sup>.

### (5) The Temple of El-Derr<sup>46</sup>

#### Document 13:

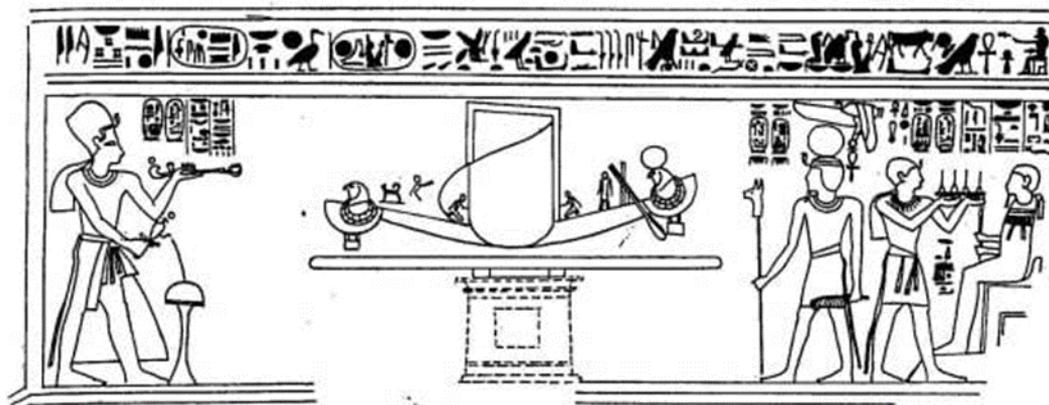


Fig.13, Bark of the deified Rameses II in the Sanctuary of El-Derr Temple, northern side.  
After, L. Habachi , *Features of The Deification of Ramses II*, p.15.

**Location:** Sanctuary in the North Wall.

**Description:** It is evident from this scene that the king, and not any other deity, is the rightful owner of the sacred bark<sup>47</sup>. In front of the bark and the deified Ramesses II, who is seen here with a sun-disk on her head, the king is presenting incense and libations. Another scenario when he is presenting Ptah with cloth follows this (fig.13).

<sup>45</sup> Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.14.

<sup>46</sup> The temple was named "The Temple of Ramesses-meramon in the House-of-Re" and was completely constructed by Ramesses II". In the Temple of El-Derr, Ramesses II was revered as a living deity and is depicted making an offering to his divine self. The temple has three chambers and two hypostyle halls, with the deified Ramesses II and cult statues of the three gods worshipped there in the center. At El-Derr, the deified king is depicted in several places, in A. Blackman , *Temples Immerges de la Nubia :The Temple of Derr* , Oxford, 1913 , p.2; Gohary, *Nubian Monuments* ,p.58; Blackman, *Temples Immerges de la Nubia* ,p.5; <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/15417/temple-of-derr-egypt/>, on 23<sup>th</sup> of April, 2023.

<sup>47</sup> In the Sanctuary of El-Derr Temple, on the northern and southern walls, the barks are shown placed on stands, in Blackman, *Temples Immerges de la Nubia* .p.5.

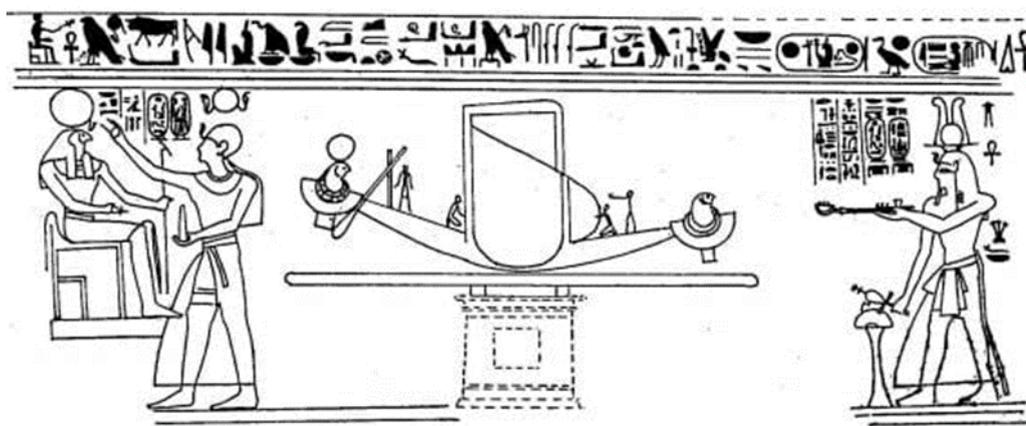
**Document 14:**

fig.14, *Bark of the deified Ramesses II in the Sanctuary of Ed-Derr Temple (southern side).*  
After, Habachi , *Features Of The Deification Of Ramses II*,15.

**Location:** Southern wall in the Sanctuary.

**Description:** The monarch is depicted anointing the god Re-Harakhti rather than Amon-Kamutef after presenting incense and libations to a bark on a platform (fig, 14). The barks in these images have no inscription, but they must have once more been the bark and cult idol of the deified Ramesses II. The bark of the deified king was only found on the northern walls of the Sanctuary and the Second Hall in Abu Simbel<sup>48</sup>.

It is important to note that in the scenario at Abu Simbel, the king offers cloth to his deified self after presenting to his sacred bark, whereas at El-Derr, he offers just to his bark and the deified Ramesses II. He is sacrificing to his own holy bark rather than Amun's, and he is anointing Re-Harakhti on the southern wall of El-Derr rather than Amon-Kamutef as he did at Abu Simbel. But when this temple was decorated, the religion of the monarch was already established, as evidenced by the group in Ed-Derr where the deified king is depicted between Amon-Re and Mut<sup>49</sup>.

#### 6) Temple of Aksha:

**Location :** Temple of Aksha, Lower Nubia.

The monarch built this final temple in Lower Nubia, which is devoted to his living image<sup>50</sup>. A plate depicting the king presenting flowers to the deified Ramesses II can be found on the exterior of the southern jamb of the still-existing pylon. The remnants of a scene showing the king standing in front of a statue known as the "Living Image of *R<sup>c</sup> mssw mry 'Imn*" may be seen on the northern jamb of the door leading to the vestibule '*Wsr M3<sup>c</sup>t R<sup>c</sup> stp n R<sup>c</sup>*', the great god, Lord of Nubia' is shown in front of the king on a lintel near the remaining pylon. The monarch was depicted as a god once more in this instance, and his statue was revered as "The Living Image of *R<sup>c</sup> mssw mry 'Imn*"<sup>51</sup>.

On the stela of Nakht, which was discovered in the forecourt of the temple of Aksha at Nubia, Ramses II's name as a deified king was also inscribed outside a cartouche. Nakht is seen on this stela worshipping Ramses II, who joined Amun (belongs to) *Wsr M3<sup>c</sup>t R<sup>c</sup> stp n R<sup>c</sup>*". During

<sup>48</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.14.

<sup>49</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.15.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/waltercallens/3452611440>, on 23<sup>th</sup> of April, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> L. Habachi, *Deification of Ramses II*, p.16.

his lifetime, Ramses II was considered a god. These scenes demonstrate how the king became a god and was revered as such during his lifetime<sup>52</sup>.

**Analysis:**

**1.1. The Deities accompanying deified Ramses II**

Table n°. 1:

Deities	Attitude	Location	Fig.n°
Amun	<b>The Great Temple of Abu Simbel</b>		
	-Sitting position.	South of the doorway in the second court.	2
	-Sitting Position	Great hall South of the doorway leading to the second hall.	6
Re-Harakhty	<b>The Great Temple of Abu Simbel</b>		
	-Standing Position	In the Sanctuary on the Southern Wall.	5
	-Standibg Position	Niche above the main entrance	3
	<b>Temple of Ed-Derr</b>		
	-Sitting Position	Sanctuary in the Southern side	14
Ptah	<b>The Temple of Wadi Es-Sebua</b>		
	-Sitting Position	Antechamber on the west wall.	11
	<b>Temple of Ed-Derr</b>		
	-Sitting Position	Sanctuary in the North wall.	13
Deified Ramses II	<b>The Great Temple of Abu Simbel</b>		
	-Sitting Position on his throne	Outside a Shrine in the Great temple	1
Isis	<b>The Great Temple of Abu Simbel</b>		
	-Standing Position while	Second Court of the Great temple	12

Mut	<b>The Great Temple of Abu Simbel</b>		
	-Sitting Position	Great Hall South of the doorway.	6
Pakhet	<b>Temple of Gerf Hussein</b>		
	-Sitting Position	The wall to the left of the vestibule leading to the sanctuary	8
	-Standing Position	The Sanctuary.	9
Hathor	<b>The Great Temple of Abu Simbel</b>		
	-Standing Position	The Northern in the second court.	4
	<b>The Temple of Wadi Es-Sebua</b>		
	-Sitting Position	Antechamber on the west wall.	11
Sekhmet	<b>Temple of Gerf Hussein</b>		
	-Sitting Position	The right of the doorway.	10

From the previous table, according to the selected prominent scenes in this paper it is clear that the most represented god with the deified Ramses II is god Re-Harakhty. Actually the most represented god with the deified Ramses II is god Amon-Re in many scenes in Nubian Temples.

<sup>52</sup> R. Eissa, “The Worshipping Formulae of Royal Adoration Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Temples From The Old Kingdom Till The End of The Late Period”, 2023, p.72.

### I.2. The Triad of deified Ramses II

To provide some structure to the multitude of gods they worshipped, the ancient Egyptians used a variety of techniques. The triad; a god, a goddess, and their children—was the most often used framework for classifying deities. Ramesses II is depicted in the interior chambers of the Nubian temples worshipping the patron deities of the three main Egyptian religious centers—Re of Heliopolis, Ptah of Memphis, and Amun of Thebes in whose honor the temples were built.

The number four indicated in the compound of the Egyptian gods the schema of classification; as being a symbol of perfection and full unity.

Table n°. 2:

The Triad	Scene Location	Scene Description	Fig. n°
Amun-Re, Mut, <b>Deified Ramses II</b>	The Great Temple of Abu Simbel [great hall south of the doorway Leading to the second hall]	Ramesses II offers captives to Amun-Re, deified Ramesses II and Mut.	Fig.6
Ptah, Sekhmet, <b>Deified Ramses II</b>	Gerf Hussein [the right side of the doorway]	the scene with in Ramesses II standing before Ptah, Sekhmet and the deified Ramesses II	Fig.10

From the previous table, it is noted that Amun-Re and Mut as a consorts in this scene and deified Ramses II is represented between of them and he is here represented as their son, also the same thing with the scene represented Ptah and Sekhmet as a consorts and deified Ramses II between of them and he is also here represented as their son.

### I.3. Deified Ramses II in a Group of Four Deities

Table n°. 3:

A Group of Four Deities	Scene Location	Scene Description	Fig. n°
Pakhet, Nekhbet, Onnuris god, Deified Ramses I	Gerf Hussein [The wall to the left of the vestibule, leading to the sanctuary]	The king Ramses II is represented Standing to the right, censuring and libation before The four seated divinities, who are depicted one behind the other.	Fig.8a,8b.
Ptah, Ptah-Tenen Hathor, Deified Ramses II	Wadi Es-Sebua [Antechamber on the west wall]	Ramesses II censes before gods including the deified Ramesses. And he offering and receiving gifts to and from the deified Ramesses II.	Fig.11

From the previous table, Ramses II appeared in the company with many gods, in the Nubian temples. Ramesses II is shown worshipping the patron deities of the three principal religious centers of Egypt, he is also shown worshipping the four Horus-gods of the local region. Perhaps the purpose of the symbolism associated with the exhibition of the state and local gods was to show that all of the gods, large and minor, backed Ramesses II in his endeavors. These scenarios were not mindlessly recreated; rather, the selection of gods to be displayed in these temples was carefully considered. This is demonstrated by the modification of the religious theme to incorporate gods with local associations<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, p.31.

#### I. 4. Specifications of the Nubian Temples of deified Ramesses II

Table n°. 4:

<b>Great Temple at Abu Simbel</b>	
Name of Temple	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw mry 'Imn im pr R<sup>c</sup>mssw</i>
Cult Statues	Ptah, Amun-Re, Re-Horakhty, and deified Ramesses II.
Orientation	East to west
Date	Year 5. (first columned hall-first decade, second columned hall- second decade)
Viceroy	Yuni: selected site and built first columned hall. Paser: built second columned hall onwards
Nomen used	<i>R<sup>c</sup> mss(w)</i>
<b>Deified Ramesses II?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Number of children	8 sons, 9 daughters
<b>Temple of Ed-Derr</b>	
Name of Temple	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw mry 'Imn im pr R<sup>c</sup></i>
Cult Statues	Re-Horakhty, Amun-Re, Ptah and Rameses II
Orientation	North to south
Date	Years 15-20
Viceroy	Paser
Nomen	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw</i>
<b>Deified Ramesses II?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Number of children	8 sons, 9 daughters
Reliefs	Sunk
<b>Temple of Gerf Hussein</b>	
Name of Temple	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw mry 'Imn im pr Pth</i>
Cult Statues	Ptah, Ramesses, Ptah-Tatanen, Hathor
Orientation	South-east to north-west
Date	Years 35-50
Viceroy	Setau
Nomen	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw</i>
<b>Deified Ramesses II?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Number of children	Unknown
Reliefs	Sunk
<b>Temple of Wadi Es-Sebua</b>	
Name of Temple	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw mry 'Imn im pr 'Imn</i>
Cult Statues	Amun-Re, Re-Horakhty, and deified Ramesses II
Orientation	South-east to north-west
Date	Years 35-50
Viceroy	Setau
Nomen	<i>R<sup>c</sup>mssw</i>
<b>Deified Ramesses II?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Number of children	28 sons, 25 daughters
Reliefs	Sunk

From the Previous table, Since none of the temples have a regnal date, it is difficult to determine their chronology. Opinion among scholars is split. These researchers mainly base their conclusions on how many of Ramesses' offspring are shown on the walls, whether the story of the Battle of Kadesh is there or not, and depictions of Ramesses II's deification, which took place at some point during the second decade.

The dynasty's ideological significance during Rameses II's rule.

His family's frequent appearance sets Rameses' iconography apart from that of any other pharaohs<sup>54</sup>.

### **I.5. Ramses II 's Religious Roles**

Everything, including pharaohs and Egyptian temples, has a religious significance. Ramses II acted as a divine king and frequently appeared as a deity in many temples throughout Nubia.

The king's deification was a tactic to exalt the current ruler rather than representing a shift in Egyptian religious philosophy<sup>55</sup>.

#### **1) Living king = deified through ritual :**

Horus and Thoth are said to purify the pharaoh at his coronation by bestowing upon him signs of life and power<sup>56</sup>. During the jubilee celebration, known as "Heb Sed," the king's divinity and vitality are renewed<sup>57</sup>.

#### **2) Dead king = deified as royal ancestor:**

In temple reliefs, the god Thoth is depicted writing the name of the current pharaoh on the leaves of a revered tree that also has the names of all the king's forebears who were acknowledged as rightful heirs<sup>58</sup>. The governing monarch honors these predecessors by ordering the carving of a Kinglist in which the cartouches of past pharaohs receive offerings, sacred fluids, and incense from the hands of the present throne holder<sup>59</sup>.

Ramses II had a religious belief in God Seth<sup>60</sup>.

As military pharaohs with a violent bent for war, Ramses II and his father Seti I shared a bond with this deity. At the Sed festival, Ramses II was likewise transformed into a god. He would have been a divine being. Ramses II was revered by the Egyptians. Ramses II chose to alter the entire religious system since he was a god<sup>61</sup>.

Rameses II's conduct of several religious ceremonies and important festivals, the most well-known of which is the Heb-sed festival, further demonstrates his dedication to the gods<sup>62</sup>.

#### **3) Deified Ramses II & Relationship with other Deities:**

Religion received a lot of attention during Rameses II's rule.

It was crucial that the pharaoh and the gods had a positive connection. Re-Horakhty, Amon-Re, Ptah, Rameses II, and his primary wife Nefertari were among the many deities

<sup>54</sup> R. Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, Cambridge, 2010, p. 15, 67, 68, 69.

<sup>55</sup> R. Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, p.22.

<sup>56</sup> G. Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, London ,2005, p.127.

<sup>57</sup> Because the king's godhead is so strong, ceremonies are conducted in front of sculptures of a living monarch who are revered as separate gods. For instance, a statue of Rameses II, erected during his time and revered as the "RA of the rulers," may be found in the first courtyard of the Luxor Temple in Thebes, in Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary*, p.127.

<sup>58</sup> Hart, *The Dictionary of Gods* , p.127.

<sup>59</sup> Their proudly remembered deeds, some kings have emerged from the ranks of their forefathers to receive unique deification honors. For example, deified Ramses II is highly revered for his rule over Nubia., in Bradshaw, *Five Nubian Temples of Ramses II*, p.22.

<sup>60</sup> Seth was a god who stood for storms, wind, confusion, chaos, and the desert. He was a very negative god who was eventually thought to be wholly malevolent, in Hart, *The Dictionary of Gods* , p.127.

<sup>61</sup><https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Rameses-II-Whole-Structure-Of-Religion-FJUAGHSUGCB#:~:text=Rameses%20ii%20had%20a%20religious,viole%20nature%20for%20war%20effort>, on May 6, 2023.

<sup>62</sup> Heb-sed was an ancient Egyptian ritual that commemorated a pharaoh's continuous rule. During his lifetime, the pharaoh observed fourteen Heb-sed festivals, the first of which marked thirty years of rule and the others every three years after that, in R. Freed, *Ramses II; The Great Pharaoh and His Time* , Denver Museum of Natural History , 1987 ,p.53.

worshipped. Even though Ramesses adored a lot of gods, Amon, the god of Thebes, received a lot of praise. This might have happened because Ramesses thought Amon was the reason for his significant "victory" at the Battle of Kadesh.

Ramesses II's communication and commitment to the gods are seen in the quantity and size of temples that the pharaoh constructed. Given that they depict the pharaoh's primary deities, the temples might be seen of as mirrors of Ramesses II's faith. Ramesses aimed to securely establish the restored kingdom in the center of Egyptian religious faith and practice<sup>63</sup>.

Ramses II was the offspring of a heavenly father and an earthly mother, just like all past Egyptian kings. Goddesses watched over his upbringing and suckled him<sup>64</sup>. Certain named statues of him represented Ramses II's kingly office deified<sup>65</sup>.

### Conclusion:

The king is often shown in two different forms:

**1) Deified Ramses II as a Hawk-Headed God;** He had the disk and the crescent on his head. Thoth and Khonsu wear this unusual hat, but only the latter is depicted with a hawk's head. This suggests that the king, in this form, symbolized Khonsu, completing the Theban triad that is typically portrayed on the Temple's southern half. In various situations. The depiction of the deified king with a hawk's head may seem odd at first. However, this is definitely a form of absorption.

The hawk-headed divinized king is depicted hugging Anukis, who is holding the sign of life to his nose, on a pillar in the Second Hall, providing an odd illustration. The figure of Ramesses-Meryamun (without the cartouche) appears in another scene with a hawk head surmounted by the crescent and disk. Both exceptional marks, the downward-curving ram's horn and the crescent and disk and many scholars believe them to be clear signs of the king is deification.

**2) Deified Ramses II in a Human Form;** Carrying a side-curved horn and a sun-disk on his head. The sun-disk and sideways curled horn on the king's head are characteristics of the alternate form in which he manifests as a deity. The king in human form stands opposite himself in divine form, offering wine in one of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel's side halls. This is a somewhat rare image.

Since deification must be acknowledged as a possibility for all pharaohs, Ramesses II carries these signs. Interestingly, the ram's horn of Amun is typically wrapped around Ramesses II's ear when he is shown as a deified ruler.

- It is interesting to note that in most of the scenes in which the king is shown in one of these two forms, *the name of the deified king is not placed in a cartouche*. The appearance of Ramses II's name outside the cartouche, in the same way the deities' names were written, could be another method reflecting the divinity of Ramses II. The writing of royal names without cartouches is recognized as deliberately reflecting the orthography of their divine names and highlighting the divine persona of the king name.

### Had the king been already deified when the Nubian temples was decorated?

<sup>63</sup> <https://ramessesthesesecond.weebly.com/religion.html> , on May 6, 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Freed, *Ramses II; The Great Pharaoh and His Time*, p.53.

<sup>65</sup> Freed, *Ramses II*, p.53.

### **a - Great temple of Abu simbel:**

in Abu Simbel's Second Hall. The deified Ramesses II's figures have been added to the scenes, demonstrating the addition of the deified Ramesses figure between the Amun-Re and Mut statues. These modifications appear to suggest that the choice to deify Ramesses II was made after the Great Hall was completed and even after the carving of the Second Pillared Hall's eastern wall.

The fact that the deified Ramesses occurs in every room that follows indicates that this motif was intended to be permanently incorporated into the Nubian temples' artistic programs. It would then be during the first part of the reign of Ramesses, when the facade of the temple was being decorated, that the king had not been deified yet. It may be assumed, that when the facade was completed, the deification of the king had not yet taken place. But later when the First Hall was decorated, **features suggesting deification**; were introduced, for example:

- 1- When the statues were called 'Ruler- of-the-Two-Lands' instead of 'Beloved-of-Ruler-of-the-Two-Lands'.
- 2- When the king was depicted in the Hawk & Human forms. But it seems that **the idea of deification was not finally given whole-hearted expression until later in his reign, perhaps on the occasion of one of the king's jubilees.**
- 3- In the Great Temple of Abu Simbel the king had a statue in his own likeness added to those of the gods; thus, in some places in the temple decoration we see rather curious scenes featuring **Ramesses II bringing offerings to himself.**

### **b - Temple of Beit el Wali:**

Ramesses II not only inherited the warlike tendencies of his ancestors, he was also thorough in his self-deification and identification with the chief gods of the country. Not a single scene in the whole temple of Beit el wali shows the king as deified.

### **c- Temple of Wadi El-Sebua:**

- This temple wadi el Sebua seems to have been decorated at a time when the deification was already accomplished, unlike the Great Temple of Abu Simbel.

- The deification of the king was already an established fact before El-Sebu Temple was decorated. On the façade of this temple the deified Ramesses II again appears in the company of other gods.

### **d- Temple of El-Derr:**

The group in which the deified king is shown between Amon-Re and Mut in El-Derr proves that the cult of the king was already established when this temple was decorated.

- The frequent occurrence of images of the deified Ramesses II in his Nubian temples illustrates the determination of the pharaonic establishment to proclaim the divine nature of the sovereign and establish it as a reality in the mind of the Egyptian people.

- The decision to make the deified Ramesses II a central theme of the royal iconography seems to have had several purposes:

- 1- one was to bolster the regime by linking the king even more closely to the gods, by showing him as one of them.
- 2- Another purpose was probably self-aggrandizement.

- The deification of Rameses II was depicted on an altogether bigger scale. Significant numbers of monuments, both royal and private, identified the god Ramesses II in a

number of cult locations in Egypt.

-Rameses II's family and his status as a god are represented in the iconography with a frequency and prominence that is unique. The themes divinity seems to have been chosen relatively early in Ramesses II's reign, and both remained paramount themes in the iconography of all his temples.

- Images of the bark of the deified Ramesses II do not therefore reflect the popular belief that kings worshipped themselves in this way, but rather reflect the choices made by the designer. to illustrate the idea of deification in a new way. Temples were important materializations of the power, authority and political supremacy of the pharaoh and their access to resources of manpower and materials, which differentiated the king from the elites and the common people.

- It is also notable that the choice of Ramses II of Lower Nubia to declare himself as deified while he was still alive, might be suggested as trying to get far from Thebes in order to feel the pulse of the people if they would be accepting that idea.



### مشاهد التآليه الغير اعتيادية لرمسيس الثاني في النوبة السفلى

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المخلص	معلومات المقالة
<p>تدرس هذه الورقة المناظر الغير اعتيادية لتآليه رمسيس الثاني في المعابد النوبية الجنوبية ، فقد ظهر في العديد من المشاهد كملك مؤله. أبرز المشاهد أو المشاهد الغير اعتيادية والأكثر أهمية التي يظهر فيها رمسيس الثاني كملك مؤله تم الاشارة اليها باستخدام الاسلوب الوصفي. تظهر شخصية رمسيس الثاني المؤله في معابده النوبية باستثناء بيت الوالي ، الذى شيد قبل تأليهه. كانت صورة رمسيس الثاني المؤله واحدة من الموضوعات الرئيسية في المعابد النوبية. كان رمسيس الثاني أحد أعظم الفراعنة في مصر القديمة ، فقد كان مليئاً بالشعور بأهميته الخاصة كفرعون، وظهر كملك مؤله في ستة معابد في النوبة وكان أهمها معبد أبو سمبل العظيم.</p>	<p>الكلمات المفتاحية التقديس؛ رمسيس الثاني؛ النوبة السفلى؛ المعابد.</p> <p>(JAAUTH) المجلد 27، العدد 2، (2024) ص 349-330</p>