Religious Significance of Embracing Members of the Heliopolitan Ennead in Royal Iconography from the New Kingdom

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The creation myth of Heliopolis was regarded as one of the most important ancient Egyptian mythological principals. The great dominance of the Heliopolitan Ennead in the Egyptian mythology has caused the rulers to seek association with its members. Through this association or divine relationship, the king was regarded as the tenth god of the ennead, being the earthly representative of Horus. The judicial court “the DADAt” of the God”, which is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts PT 309 and 313, is perhaps the same as the Great Ennead. The members of this tribunal are concerned with the ritualistic questioning of the pharaoh, regarding his divine descent. This is based on the fact that the title mAaa xrw is given to Horus when his mother Isis wanted to claim his divine origins in front of the court of the gods whose members are those of the court of Heliopolis. According to the Pyramid Texts, the members of the Heliopolitan Ennead were concerned with this aforementioned judging of the divine kingship of the ruler. Therefore, when the new sovereign, acting as Horus, proves his godly ancestry he will assure the Osirian theology and hence the mythology of the whole ennead.

The connection between the king and the members of the Heliopolitan Ennead assures that he plays a role of cosmic and political importance. The emergence of Atum from the chaotic water of Nun and the victory of Horus over Seth are actually cosmic and governmental happenings that guarantee the heir of both Atum and Horus the same qualities of their position. Consequently, royal figures are shown in numerous depictions with the divinities of the Heliopolitan theology. This is based on the fact that art was one of the ways that enabled the kings to insure their royal descendancy from the first king who ruled as the representative of Horus on earth. The association between the sovereign and the deities was regarded as one of the guarantors of kingship, aiming to prove their ancestry from one of the gods as a sign of kingship.

New Kingdom royal iconography is rich with many examples depicting the sovereign with different members of the Heliopolitan Ennead in different postures, especially in the intimate gesture of embracing which signifies their closeness and association with the divinities since it is regarded as a sign of intimacy and spiritual union. Moreover, through embracing, the eternal being, the divine essence and the scent of

3 H. TE VELDE, “Relations and conflicts between Egyptian gods, particularly in the divine ennead of Heliopolis” in H. G. KIPPENBERG (ed.), Struggles of gods: papers of the Groningen work group for the study of the history of religions, (Berlin, 1984), 245
4 For the usage of DADAt as a court of justice equal to the qnbt see W. Helck, “Kenbet” in W. HELCK, E. OTTO, (Eds.), Lexikon Der Ägyptiologie III, (Wiesbaden, 1980), 386 – 387
5 L. H. LESKO, A Dictionary of Late Egyptian, Volume IV, (Berkeley, 1989), 152; For the variants of the word DADAt see A. H. Gardiner, Miszellen, Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alttremskunde 73, (Berlin, 1937), 74
life residing in the gods are all transformed to the king\(^1\) which raises him to the divine rank.\(^2\) This article explains the different religious significances achieved through embracing different members of the Heliopolitan Ennead.

Atum\(^3\), who is regarded as the creator deity of the Heliopolitan Ennead, is frequently represented in the New Kingdom royal iconography embracing different royal figures. Through this embracing posture the sovereign insures the following:

I. **Father-Son relationship:**

The significance of this representation reflects; the father-son relationship between Atum and the King. Thus, the king appears embraced by Atum because he is his father; since all the kings looked upon their divinities as fathers.\(^4\) This significance of the father-son relationship has been achieved in religious architecture as in the Temple of Beit el-Wali where Ramesses II is embraced by Atum. This example is found on the eastern wall between the middle and the southern doorways of the vestibule of the temple (Fig. No. 1). In addition, Ramesses II is embraced by the deity in the Temple of El-Derr on the northern face of the third pillar in the southern aisle (Fig. No. 2).

This father-son relationship between the kings and Atum is highlighted in the Pyramid Texts; PT 212: “Come into being, go up on high, and it will be well with you, it will be pleasant for you in the embrace of your father, in the embrace of Atum” and PT 213: “O Atum, Raise this king up to you, enclose him within your embrace, for he is your son of your body forever.”\(^6\) Therefore, this father would guarantee his son the transformation into a great divinity in the afterlife. This latter perception is based on the fact that the Pyramid Texts mentioned that every deceased king hoped to unite with Atum. This aforementioned significance is achieved in the Temple of Medinet Habu which shows Ramesses III being embraced by Atum in the side chambers surrounding the hypostyle halls of the temple. These depictions are represented on the western side of the square pillar in room 5 (Fig. No. 3), the western side of the central pillar of room 18 “chamber of Re” (Fig. No. 4) and on the western wall of room 21. The latter scene portrays the king embraced by Atum while being purified by the iwn mwt.f priest\(^7\) (Fig. No. 5). In the realm of the Netherworld, Atum is embracing royal figures in their tombs as in the tomb of Sety I K.V. 17. In room E, Sety I is embraced by Atum on the eastern side of the first pillar on the right side. (Fig. No. 6). In addition, the ruler is embraced by Atum on the northern side of the first pillar on the north in room F\(^8\) (Fig. No. 7).

II. **Ruling in the hereafter**

Since the Old Kingdom, Atum is among the deities who accompany the king during the rites of the sd festival performed in the tomb,\(^9\) being the father of gods\(^10\) and kings.\(^4\) The embracing posture of Atum to

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3. K. MYŚLIWEJ, “Studien zum Gott Atum, Band II”, Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 8, (Hildesheim, 1979), 175–175
10. E. HORNUNG, Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt. The One and the Many, (London, 1982), 147
to the pharaoh is regarded as one of the jubilee features,\(^2\) in which the dead king is represented embodied in the company of deities in order to guarantee him the rule in the hereafter.\(^3\) This significance has been achieved through a pectoral that shows Tutankhamun embraced by Atum, now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo JE 62627. The scene shown on the pectoral is regarded as a celebration of the s\(\text{d}\) festival,\(^4\) which represents the dead king embodied in the company of deities in order to guarantee him the rule in the hereafter.\(^5\) (Fig. No. 8).

1. **Shu** and Tefnut

Shu and Tefnut are regarded as the first divine couple in the creation mythology of Heliopolis.\(^6\) They are depicted in embracing postures with royal figures in ritual scenes\(^7\) to guarantee their association with the Heliopolitan Ennead.\(^8\) This significance appeared on the second pillar in room 22, one of the chambers surrounding the A\(\text{X} \ m\text{nw}\) in the Karnak temples, where Thutmosis III is being embraced by Shu and Tefnut\(^9\) (Fig. No. 9).

2. **Shu** , **Shu-Re** and Onnuris-Shu

Shu, as part of the Heliopolitan Ennead, as well as Shu-Re and Onnuris-Shu that are closely associated with him are also depicted while embracing royal figures. Through this the kings are aiming to guarantee:

1. **Position on the throne**

Shu is regarded as the deity who appears in the form of the sun rays.\(^10\) Therefore, he is considered as the manifestation of the rays of Re; which means that Shu and Re are completely the same.\(^11\) The embracing posture of royal figures by Shu means that Re is the one who actually embraces them. This enhances their position on the throne, being embraced by their creator god Re,\(^12\) who is not only regarded as the personification of kingship but also as the father of both gods and kings.\(^13\) Shu is shown embracing royal

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figures in the tomb of Sety I K.V. 17, where he is being embraced by the deity on the western side of the second pillar of hall E\(^1\) (Fig. No. 10).

In addition, Shu and Re are united together to form the deity Shu-Re whom is observed as the rays of Re that acted as Shu.\(^2\) One example has shown Thutmose III embraced by Shu-Re and his kA on the eastern side of the second pillar of room 21, one of the chambers surrounding the Ax mnw\(^{3}\) (Fig. No. 11).

**II. Protection and victory over the enemies**

Shu is also connected with god Onnuris, as both are regarded as the most associated deities with the king. This is based on the fact that Shu is the first male god in the Heliopolitan Ennead and the first son. Furthermore, he is given the same violent traits given to Onnuris;\(^3\) since the latter is a warrior deity who is supposed to fight for the king.\(^4\) In his unification with Shu, he became Onnuris-Shu\(^5\) who is also known to have murdered the enemies of the Sun god.\(^6\) Thus the form of Onnuris-Shu,\(^7\) appears embracing the king to guarantee his protection and victory over his enemies as well as assuring his divine nature in joining the realm of the divinities.\(^8\)

The form of Onnuris-Shu\(^9\) has appeared once in the temple of Wadi es-shboua'. The scene is represented on the northern section of the eastern wall of the ante-chamber which depicts Onnuris-Shu embraced by the deified Ramesses II who is embraced by Tefnut, and the latter is embraced by Nekhbet\(^1\) (Fig. No. 12). The appearance of Tefnut in this assembly is a result of being the “fearsome eye”.\(^10\) The embracing posture here

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6. God Onnuris-Shu whom is given the title “son of Re” is the unification between the two divinities Onnuris and Shu. This association is made due to the roles played by both deities in bringing the revengeful eye of Re personified in goddesses Tefnut and Mekhit; since later on Tefnut became the counterpart of Shu and Mekhit became the consort of Onnuris. The name of the deity in ancient Egyptian is Anhur which means “He who leads back the distant one” which corresponds to his own role in the aforementioned legend, G. J. SHAW, *The Egyptian Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends*, (London, 2014), 50; G. HART, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, (London, New York, 2005), 113; R. H. WILKINSON, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, (Cairo, 2003), 118
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will grant the king all the protection and victory over his enemies as well as assuring his divine nature in joining the realm of the divinities.  

3. **Geb** [Image] and **Nut** [Image]

Geb and Nut are the divine children of Shu and Tefnut. They are closely connected with kings as both of them are shown in embracing postures with royal figures, either alone or with each other, to signify;

I. **Position on the throne**

Geb is closely connected with the Egyptian kingship and its legal and smooth transformation. This is based on his role in the “myth of the transmission of kingship to Horus”, where Geb was chosen by Atum to judge between Horus and Seth. Since Osiris was the heir of the throne after Geb, Horus his son was the rightful of kingship after him. Therefore, Geb announced Horus as the legal ruler of Egypt. The association of the king, being the ruling Horus on Earth, with Geb guarantees him a strong position over the throne and destroys his foes. This strong relationship between the kings and Geb is enhanced by the embracing posture of them as that example shows Thutmosis III being embraced by Geb on the northern face of the seventh pillar on the east in the Ax mnw in the Karnak temples (Fig. No.13).

II. **Protection and regeneration**

As for Nut, she is regarded as the tomb, sarcophagus and the mother of the dead king. She is frequently represented with open arms so as to embrace him. Among the titles of Nut is “Xmont wrt” or the “great embracer” which signifies that the embrace of Nut to the king will assure his protection, rebirth and resurrection. In addition, Nut is regarded as the mother of the king. This is based on the fact that the kings are sons of Re who himself is born by Nut; thus the king is the son of Nut. The divine couple; Geb and Nut are depicted embracing Thutmosis III on the eastern side of the first pillar in room 22, one of the rooms surrounding the Ax mnw in the Karnak temples (Fig. No. 14).

4. **Isis** [Image] and **Nephthys** [Image]

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4. For further reading about the myth of kingship see G. HART, “Egyptian Myths”, The Legendary Past, (London, 1990), 29 – 41
12. B. S. LESKO, The Great Goddesses of Egypt, (Norman, 1999), 33
Isis and Nephthys are regarded as mothers and guardians of the kings. The two goddesses are either shown embracing royal figures together or each of them is embodied alone. This embrace helps insure the following:

I. **Vigor and potency**

Isis is regarded as the guarantor of fertility and protection for the king, playing a double role. During his rule, she is his mother who nourishes him and donates him life being the living Horus. The embrace of Isis would transmit her vigor and potency to the royal figure. This significance has been achieved through the different embracing postures of Isis to the rulers. It has appeared in statuary as in the triad enclosed within the southern niche of the temple of Beit el-Wali which represents Ramesses II between Horus of Kuban and Isis which shows both deities embracing the king (Fig. No. 15). In addition, the sixth niche of the northern wall of the temple of Gerf Hussein is housing a triad of Ramesses II with Horus of Miam and Isis, where the goddess is shown embracing the sovereign (Fig. No. 16). In the Karnak temples, Isis and Osiris are depicted embracing Thutmosis III on the southern wall of the second pillar in room 22, one of the chambers surrounding the Ax mniw (Fig. No. 17). In the Temple of Amada, Isis is depicted embracing royal figures in two occasions. The first one is in the hypostyle hall where the goddess is embracing Thutmosis IV on the eleventh engaged pillar on the southern side wall of the hypostyle hall (Fig. No. 18), while the second second one shows her embracing Thutmosis III on the left section of the western wall of the vestibule (Fig. No. 19). In addition, she is portrayed embracing Ramesses II on the eastern face of the third pillar in the southern aisle of the second pillared hall in the temple of Derr (Fig. No. 20). In the Temple of Abu Simbel, the northern side of the western wall of the second hall of the temple shows Ramesses II being embraced by Isis (Fig. No. 21). This scene in the temple of Abu Simbel is representing the deified king Ramesses II joining the realms of the gods. Moreover, the goddess is embracing Thutmosis III as shown in one of the scenes of the exterior side of the eastern wall of the main building of the temple of Semnā (Fig. No. 22).

II. **Rejuvenation and rebirth**

In the afterlife, the pharaoh is transformed into Osiris whom Isis protects and grants his resurrection. The embrace of the goddess in the realm of the dead guarantees the rejuvenation of the kA of the king in the hereafter. Isis appears embracing royal figures in the funerary architecture as in the Temple of Abydos. The scene is represented on the northern wall of the smaller chapel of Horus and shows the goddess

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3. Kuban is the modern name of the ancient Egyptian town of bAk.i. It is one of the villages that was submerged under Lake Nasser, once was about 107 km to the south of Dakka. The chief deity of the city is Horus of bAk.i who was worshipped together with Horus of Buhene and Horus of Miam.
embracing Sety I while introducing him to the seated Horus (Fig. No. 23). In addition, Isis is embracing Sety I in his tomb KV. 17 on the northern side of the second pillar on the left hand side of Hall E (Fig. No. 24).

Nephthys is the one who protects dead kings and escorts them in the Netherworld. This appears in the tomb of Sety I, where he is being embraced by the goddess on the southern side of the second pillar on the right hand side of Hall E (Fig. No. 25). After his death, the sovereign became Osiris. Isis and Nephthys were responsible for the rejuvenation of Osiris. In this case, he is accompanied by his wife and sister Isis who has brought him back to life once by her magic and protected by his sister Nephthys who escorts him in in the darkness of the Netherworld. The existence of the two goddesses assures the protection and rebirth of the pharaoh. On Sarcophagi Lids of Siptah, Sethnakht, Ramesses III and Ramesses IV; the kings are shown in the Osirid form embraced by both Isis and Nephthys (Fig. Nos. 26 – 29). The mummy form of the dead sovereign and his insignia are attributing him to god Sokar-Osiris the gate keeper of the realm of the dead. The safety of the pharaoh in his afterlife is doubled by being embraced by the two protective sister goddesses Isis and Nephthys together with the two female serpents on either side.

These types of lids upon which the figures of the king are sculptured in the Osirid form were begun by Sety I; which unfortunately is in fragmentary condition now. The first survived one of these kinds of sarcophagi covers belong to Siptah.

5. **Osiris**

Osiris is the divine son of Geb and Nut. Being the father of Horus and the ruler of the Netherworld, he is closely associated with the king which resulted in mutual embracing postures between them.

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2. A. RADWAN, “Nekhbet and Wadjet or Isis with Nephthys: the Lasting Concept of Two Goddesses in Ancient Egypt”, Hommages à FAYZA HAikal, Bibliothèque d’Étude 138, (Cairo, 2003), 217
8. A. RADWAN, “Nekhbet and Wadjet or Isis with Nephthys: the Lasting Concept of Two Goddesses in Ancient Egypt”, Hommages à FAYZA HAikal, Bibliothèque d’Étude 138, (Cairo, 2003), 217
10. E. VASSILIKAA, Egyptian Art, (Cambridge, 1995), 86
The king wanted to be identified with Osiris after his death as to assure his regeneration and fertility. This association is achieved through the embracing posture. The embracing gestures between the kings and Osiris have been all attested in funerary architecture, as in the Temple of Medinet Habu. The scene is depicted on the left hand side of the Northern wall of the hypostyle hall and shows Ramesses III embracing the statue of Osiris while anointing him (Fig. No. 30). In addition, in the tomb of Sety I K.V. 17, the scene on pillar Ab in room N represents the sovereign embracing the statue of Osiris as Rs-wDA “He who awakens intact” or “He who awakens in peace” (Fig. No. 31).

Horus and Seth are regarded as the two gods and two lords who rule the country through the ruling king of Upper and Lower Egypt. Both deities are shown in embracing postures with royal figures based on their close relationship with them, that in fact aims to achieve the following:

I. **Secured reign, protection and victory**

The unification between Horus and Seth implies that the ruling king is not only the representative of Horus, but also of Seth. This is because the Pyramid Texts has showed the pharaoh as Horus-Seth. The existence of the two gods together indicates that the lands of Upper and Lower Egypt are united. The ruling pharaoh as Horus will need the power of Seth over the throne. Thus, the presence of the two divinities is mandatory for guaranteeing a secured rule. In this case they are ruling the country through the sovereign; since Seth is controlling Upper Egypt and Horus is controlling Lower Egypt. This is based on the fact that Horus and Seth are regarded as the personification of the contrasts; as they are symbolizing North and South, earth and the netherworld, heaven and earth, kingship and strength, life and dominion.

The aforementioned conception has been achieved in religious architecture in the Karnak Temples in the scene occupying the northern wall of corridor VI, one of the corridors surrounding the Ax mnW as (Fig. No. 32). Seth as illustrated in the scene; is teaching Thutmosis III to shoot arrows while embracing him. It is known that the deity is considered to be a conqueror who teaches the king how to use one of his favorite

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4. E. HORNUNG in K. R. WEEKS, Treasures of the Valley of the King. Tombs and Temples of the Theban West Bank in Luxor, (Cairo, 2011), 210; Rs-wDA is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts and among other Memphite divinities in the chapel of Sokar at Abydos. He is regarded as the son of Sokar in the Coffin Texts. The name of Rs-wDA later on became one of the epithets of Ptah or Osiris, E. BROVARSKI, “Sokar” in W. HELCK, E. OTTO, (Eds.), Lexikon der Ägyptologie V, (Wiesbaden, 1984), 1062
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weapons. It has been mentioned that one of the titles that was given to the high priest of Seth is ṣd-xw which could mean “who kicks up an arrow”. However, it is uncertain whether this was one of the performed actions of the priesthood of the deity or not. The relationship between Seth and Thutmosis III is specially documented; since he has given himself the title of “beloved of Seth”. In addition, Horus is protectively embracing the ruler. The portrayal of the two deities together assures a balanced rule for Thutmosis III. Thus, the presence of the two divinities in this scene is mandatory for guaranteeing a secured rule.

This is based on the fact that they both unite the lands of Upper and Lower Egypt so that the king could rule the country in security and harmony. Moreover, this depiction is signifying the protection given by the gods to the ruler by embracing and assuring his victory over his foes.

II. Close relationship with Horus

The embracing posture between Horus and the sovereign is assuring the close relationship between them. This association would guarantee him a smooth accession to the throne of Egypt. This is based on the fact that the pharaoh is regarded as the representative of Horus on earth. Thus, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt is playing an important role in his relationship with Horus as he is the ruler on Earth and the son of Isis.

The aforementioned significance has been achieved when royal figures are being embraced by the numerous forms of Horus in statuary. This has appeared as in the dyad of Amenhotep III and Horus that shows them in a mutual embracing posture (Fig. No. 33). In addition, Horemheb is being embraced by Horus in a dyad which has a special significance (Fig. No. 34). This dyad implies that the post Amarna statuary depicting a royal figure in embracing postures with Horus signifies his restoration to the old dogma. This idea has been achieved as the dyad represents the Horemheb’s restoration to the religious misconception of the Amarna period, since he wanted to legitimize his accession to the throne of Horus and be his earthly representative. In particular, Horemheb chose Horus to his part in connecting between the previous Atonism and religious principles of Heliopolis.

1 G. MICHAIILIDES, “Papyrus Contenant un Dessin de Dieu Seth à tête d'âne”, Aegyptus 32, 1, Raccolta di Scritti in Onore Onore di Girolamo Vitelli II (Milan, January-June 1952), 49
4 E. S. MELTZER, “Horus” in D. B. REDFORD (ed.), The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt II, (Cairo, 2001), 120
6 H. Te Velde, “Relations and conflicts between Egyptian gods, particularly in the divine ennead of Heliopolis” in H. G. KIPPENBERG (Ed.), Struggles of gods: papers of the Groningen work group for the study of the history of religions, (Berlin, 1984), 255
13 G. HARI, Horemheb et la reine Moutnedjemet, ou la fin d’une dynastie : Thèse présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Genève pour obtenir le grade de docteurés letters (Genève, 1964),264
This association shows the devotion of the pharaoh to the accompanying deity, according to his unlimited favors. The union achieved was not only witnessed in the current depiction, but also with the birth name of the ruler “Horus is in festival” which practically is the role played by the deity in his official coronation. During the Ramesside period, kings also wanted to be associated with Horus. This is evidenced by the triad showing Ramesses II being embraced by Horus of Kuban and Isis in the southern niche in the western wall of the temple of Beit el-Wali (Fig. No. 35). Moreover, kings are being identified with Horus statuary as in the triad of Merenptah with Osiris and Isis playing the role of Horus (Fig. No. 36). As evidenced from the inscriptions, it was intended to be placed within the sanctuary of Osiris as to receive offerings, and to guarantee that the king would be identified with Horus till eternity in the presence of his father Osiris.

Moreover, these depictions showing royal figures being embraced with Horus have been found in religious architecture. In the Karnak Temples, there are representations of Thutmosis III being embraced by Horus of Behdet on the southern side of the second pillar on the east in the Akh mnu (Fig. No. 37) and by Horus the Great on the northern side of the fifth pillar on the west in the Akh mnu (Fig. No. 38). In room 22, one of the chambers surrounding the Akh mnu, a scene on one of its pillars shows Thutmosis III being embraced by Horus and an unknown goddess (Fig. No. 39). In the Temple of Beit el-Wali, Ramesses II is shown embraced by Horus on the lower register of the southern pillar of the vestibule (Fig. No. 40) and embraced by Horus of Miam on the left hand side of the doorway of the vestibule (Fig. No. 41). In the Temple of Amada, Thutmosis IV is shown embraced by Horus on the fifth pillar in the middle aisle of the hypostyle hall (Fig. No. 42). In addition, the southern wall of the vestibule of the temple depicts Thutmosis III being embraced by Horus of Miam and Re-Harakhty (Fig. No. 43). In the sanctuary of the temple, Amenhotep II is embraced by Horus of Behdet on the lower register of the northern wall (Fig. No. 44). In addition, Ramesses II is embraced by Horus of Miam in the Temple of El-Derr. The scene is illustrated on the western side of the eighth pillar in the northern aisle of the second pillared hall (Fig. No. 45).

In the funerary architecture, these embracing postures have appeared in the Temple of Abydos where Suty I is embraced by Horus on the northern side of the eastern wall of the chapel of Horus (Fig. No. 46). Moreover, royal figures are embraced by Horus in their tombs as in the tomb of Horemheb K.V, 57; the king is embraced by Horus son of Isis on the south east wall of the well room (Fig. No. 47). In Hall E in the

1 G. HARI, Horemheb et la reine Moutnedjemet, ou la fin d’une dynastie : Thèse présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Genève pour obtenir le grade de docteurès letters (Genève, 1964), 27; G. HARI, Horemheb et la reine Moutnedjemet, ou la fin d’une dynastie : Thèse présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Genève pour obtenir le grade de docteurès letters (Genève, 1964), 264
3 G. ROEDER, “Der Felsentempel von Bet el-Wali”, Les Temples Immergés de la Nubie, (Cairo, 1938), 77–78
6 G. ROEDER, “Der Felsentempel von Bet el-Wali”, Les Temples Immergés de la Nubie, (Cairo, 1938), 42
8 B. PORTER, R. MOSS, Topographical Bibliography of the Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. Nubian Desert and Outside Egypt VII, (Oxford, 1995), 70
tomb of Sety I K.V. 17, he is embraced by Horus on the rear wall of hall E1 (Fig. No. 48), by Horus son of Isis on pillar Ab (Fig.No. 49), by Horus on pillar Ba (Fig. No. 50) and pillar Cc (Fig. No. 51).

### III. Reciprocal role between the king, Osiris and Horus

In the Osirian triad, the king is playing interchangeable roles. He is once the son of Isis and Osiris being the representative of Horus on Earth. While after his death, he is the deceased Osiris the eternal ruler of the world of the dead. This significance has been achieved in statuary where the sovereign is identified as Horus or Osiris in the Osirian triad. These statue groups of four are showing the kings with Isis, Osiris and Horus in embracing postures as those groups of Thutmose III (Fig. No. 52) and Horemheb (Fig. No. 53). The religious importance of the two statue groups is actually manifested from the sequence of the four figures and the association between them. In both cases, the group in itself represents a triad; once Isis-Osiris-the king and Isis-Osiris-Horus. The structure of the monuments is that god Osiris is embraced by Isis and the king from both sides while Horus is on the left of the ruler. The interpretation of the groups is to determine the relation between the two outermost figures – Isis and Horus – and the central ones of Osiris and the sovereign. When adopting this aspect, the structure must be revealing the mother-son relationship together with the connection between the living ruler and his dead counterpart Osiris. The king is playing a mutual role in the assembly; as he is the living Horus on earth and the dead Osiris the ruler of the netherworld. The composition of the group jointly with its original location in the holy city of Abydos indicates that the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty is back to the old tradition of the multiplicity of deities' manifestations – a convention that extended to the following Ramesside era.

### IV. Participation in the Solar-Osirian unity

The idea of the unification between Re and Osiris has firstly appeared in Chapter 17 in the Amduat when the BA of Osiris and Re had embraced and thus united in Mendes. This would imply their transformation to the BAwayEy or “The One who has Two BA” whom could be named as “Horus who saved his father.” This aforementioned unification had again occurred with deeper implications in the Book of the Solar – Osirian Unity. The alliance between Re and Osiris stands for the association between the BA and the corpse; Re is the BA of Osiris, while Osiris is the corpse of Re where the link between both of the BA and the body is indispensable. In fact, Re symbolizes the day, Horus is regarded as the sun deity for the sky and

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8 M. SEIDEL, “Die königlichen Statuengruppen. Die Denkmäler vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende der 18 Dynastie”, *part I, Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 42*, (Hildesheim, 1996), 246
10 E. HORNUNG, *Die Nachfahrt der Sonne: eine altägyptische Beschreibung der Jenseits*, (Düsseldorf, Zurich, 1998), 95
the sun as well as his both eyes are the sun and the moon thus identified with Re as Re-Harakhty. As for Osiris, he refers to the night.¹

The king has participated in the aforementioned myth through statuary as in the triad that shows a royal figure in a triad with Horus and Osiris. The triad shows Osiris occupying the middle position while being embraced by Horus and the king on either side² (Fig. No. 54). The ruler is regarded as the son of Re based on his titular, the representative of Horus on Earth and the dead Osiris in the afterlife. The dead sovereign not only wished to be Osiris, but also wanted to join the course of the sun god in his daily journey.³ In the triad, the pharaoh plays several roles. He is once deified as Amun-Re when embodied with the nms and the double crown. Moreover, he participates in the myth of Re; as he is once identified with Horus because of their similar costume and with Osiris as a result of their parallel facial features. Thus the king here is the sun that rises in the morning as Horus, shines in the day as Re and weakens at sunset as Osiris.⁴

Horus of Miam is regarded as the local deity of Qasr Ibrim.⁵ The divine nature of royal figures is attested in their representations in shrines of Qasr Ibrim which are regarded as small temples dedicated to their worship together with Horus of Miam being the local deity and Satet as one of the goddesses of the Nubian area.⁶ This idea has been achieved twice through triads that represent Thutmosis III (Fig. No. 55) and Amenhotep II (Fig. No. 56) embraced by Horus of Miam and Satet.

The representation of royal figures embraced by Horus could participate in the cultic program and rituals in the temples; depending on their original location inside the temple and the type of the crown worn by the king.⁷ This significance has been achieved through statuary in the dyad of Amenhotep III and Horus (Fig. No. 33). This dyad was part of a statuary program begun by Amenhotep III showing him with different deities as to signify his divine nature.⁸

7. **Re-Harakhty** ![Re-Harakhty](image) and Iusaas ![Iusaas](image)

Iusaas is a minor Heliopolitan goddess related to the Heliopolitan ennead and the first female aspect who has symbolized the body parts of the creator deity, Atum Re. This is because she is regarded as the hand of royal figures is

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³ E. HORNUNG, *Die Nachtjagd der Sonne : eine altägyptische Beschreibung des Jenseits*, (Düsseldorf, Zurich, 1998), 97
⁵ Qasr Ibrim is a fortified crag in the current district of Ibrim that is located 235 km to the south of Aswan on the eastern bank of the Nile. What remains today of Qasr Ibrim is a small island after it was nearly totally submerged under Lake Nasser in 1981. R. A. CAMINOS, “Qasr Ibrim” in W. HELCK, E. OTTO, (Eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie V*, (Wiesbaden, 1984), 43
⁷ The original location of the dyad and its function in the temple of Luxor are based on the fact that it is small in size so that it might have been placed on some kind of platforms in order to be installed within the sanctuary cult program; so that the surrounding statues and wall representations brought the monument’s function into action. In addition, Amenhotep III is wearing the double crown surmounting the nms which is worn during the ḫb-sd. Moreover, the dyad bears no inscriptions or illustrations rather than the two cartouches of the king. Thus, its complete significance must have been achieved from its original location in the temple, M. SEIDEL, “Die königlichen Statuengruppen. Die Denkmäler vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende der 18 Dynastie”, part I, *Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 42*, (Hildesheim, 1996), 196
Atum and his phallus as well as being the eye of Re.\(^1\) Her name means “she arrives, she grows”. Together with Hathor, they symbolize the “hand of god” which is the source of the creative ability of either Atum or Re.\(^2\) In addition, together with goddess Nebet-Hetepet “mistress of contentment” they played the role of the creator goddesses and were considered as the feminine factor that personified the hands of god Atum with which he held his phallus to create the world.\(^3\) It is noteworthy to mention that, Atum and Re can replace each other interchangeably;\(^4\) because both them are regarded as creation gods.\(^5\) In addition, based on the involvement of the sun personified in Re in the early stages of creation; Re became an element of Atum so that both deities are closely connected with each other.\(^6\) The creator deity of the Heliopolitan ennead is usually named as Atum-Re.\(^7\) Atum in his role as Horus is the representative of kingship in heaven and earth; earth: he is thus equal to Re-Harakhty.\(^8\) Thus, Iusaas is the divine couple of Re-Harakhty\(^9\) who acts as the equivalent of Atum.

### Assuring divinity and rejuvenation of the royal figure

The embracing posture of Re-Harakhty and Iusaas together to the royal figure assures his divine nature being part of the divine triad.\(^10\) In addition, the embrace of Iusaas to the sovereign is connecting him with the creation force of the Heliopolitan ennead, since Iusaas is regarded as the female counterpart of the creator deity. In the Pyramid Texts spell number 1210, the pharaoh who is regarded as the son of Khepri is said to be born of the vulva of Iusaas passing through her loops.\(^11\) Moreover, she is known to be one of the facets of Hathor that is associated with rebirth and regeneration.\(^12\) The king is thus embraced by the goddess who is considered as his biological mother. In addition, the presence of Re-Harakhty guarantees the association of the ruler with the sun deity in the morning.\(^13\) This kind of connection with the divinity was the aim of every pharaoh; since it would assure his rejuvenation every day with Re-Harakhty.\(^14\) The embracing gesture of both Re-Harakhty and Iusaas to royal figures appeared in statuary as in the triad of Ramesses II showing him embraced by Iusaas in the presence of Re-Harakhty (Fig. No. 57). This triad is located now in the fifth niche in the northern wall of the temple of Gerf Hussein.\(^15\) In addition,

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\(^1\) H. Te Velde, “Relations and conflicts between Egyptian gods, particularly in the divine ennead of Heliopolis” in Kippenberg (H. G.) (ed.), Struggles of gods: papers of the Groningen work group for the study of the history of religions, (Berlin, 1984), 249


\(^4\) H. Te Velde, “Relations and conflicts between Egyptian gods, particularly in the divine ennead of Heliopolis” in H. G. Kippenberg (Ed.), Struggles of gods: papers of the Groningen work group for the study of the history of religions, (Berlin, 1984), 249


\(^7\) Rikal, Studia Orientalia 101, 221


\(^9\) Ch. Leitz, “Lexikon der Ägyptischen Göter und Göttерbezeichnungen VIII: Register”, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 113 (Leuven; Paris; Dudley, 2003), 51


\(^13\) R. H. Wilkinson, The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, (Cairo, 2003), 205

\(^14\) Leitz, “Lexikon der Ägyptischen Göter und Gött*rbezeichnungen IV”, OLA 113, 631

in the temple of Abu Simbel, the deified Ramesses II is embraced by Iusaas while he is holding the arm of Re-Harakhty (Fig. No. 58). The scene is located on the right hand side of the western wall of the first hall of the temple.¹ Re-Harakhty is also shown embracing royal figures alone in religious architecture as in entrance B of the Temple of Amada, where the deity is embracing Thutmosis III on the left jamb and Amenhotep II on the right one.² Also in the vestibule of the temple of Amada, Amenhotep II is embraced by the seated figure of Re-Harakhty on the right section of the eastern wall³ and Thutmosis III is embraced by Re-Harakhty on the southern wall (Fig. No. 59). In the sanctuary of the temple, Amenhotep II is embraced by Re-Harakhty on the lower register of the northern wall⁴ (Fig. No. 60). In the temple of Deir El-Bahary, Thutmosis III is embraced by Re-Harakhty while given life by Amun-Re (Fig. No. 61). The scene is located on the western jamb of vestibule VI one of the chambers located to the north of the upper court.⁵ In the Temple of Medinet Habu, Ramesses II is embraced by Re-Harakhty on one of the faces of the squared pillar in the chapel of Re⁶ (Fig. No. 62). It is noteworthy to mention that there is not any detected example in statuary showing Re-Harakhty alone in embracing postures with royal figures.

Conclusions

From all the above-mentioned religious and mythological facts and based on the studied examples, the embracing gesture was an adopted theme of art in the royal iconography through which royal figures are granted legitimacy, divinity, protection, rebirth and eternity meaning that royal figures embraced these deities for religious and political motives.

The ultimate goal of the pharaoh was to achieve a smooth accession to the throne of the country and to establish the Maat which was assured by his affiliation to certain deities. This parental relationship between the sovereign and the divinities was assured by the different embracing gestures.⁷ This is because the embracing posture is considered as a sign of union between gods and the ruler, which assures the latter’s divinity or at least put him in a higher rank than normal individuals. This divine status is actually legitimizing the king’s position over the throne.⁸

According to the ancient Egyptian mythology, the first ruler deities were Atum-Re, Geb, Osiris and Horus whom was followed by his earthly representative, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt. The sovereign wanted to assure his creation and revival attributes by being a successor of Atum, Re and Geb. Thus, he should prove his descendancy from this line of divinities so that he could be able to rule the country and establish the Maat. Therefore, the embracing postures between royal figures and the aforementioned gods will guarantee their rightfully.

As for being the living Horus on Earth, the pharaoh was playing different roles in which he was regarded as the celestial Horus son of Re, the ruling Horus son of Isis and Osiris who becomes after his death the dead

³ B. PORTER, R. MOSS, Topographical Bibliography of the Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. Nubian Desert and Outside Egypt VII, (Oxford, 1995), 70
⁵ B. PORTER, R. MOSS, Topographical Bibliography of the Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. Theban Temples II, (Oxford, 1994), pl. 36, 4
⁷ R. S. ANTELME, S. ROSSINI, Sacred Sexuality in Ancient Egypt, (Rochester, 2001), 139
Osiris, ruler of the Netherworld. He was considered as the son of Re, the fact that brought him in contact with the power of the cosmic gods of heaven. The embracing posture between Horus and the king is assuring the close relationship between them. This association would guarantee him smooth accession to the throne of Egypt as the earthly representative of Horus, the motherly protection as the son of Isis and Hathor as well as the regeneration of Osiris. Moreover, the affiliation of the ruler with Atum and Horus was mandatory to legalize his rule. This is because; at his coronation, the sovereign is granted the throne of Atum and the years of Horus.

The smooth accession to the throne of Egypt was guaranteed when the new king receives the royal regalia of his dead father and becomes Re in the morning. This actually explains the significance of the embracing postures between the pharaoh and Re; since rulers attained their position over the throne by proving their descendancy from the creator sun god. This affiliation with Re has been guaranteed also when royal figures are shown embraced by Re-Harakhty and Shu who is considered as the manifestation of the rays of Re; and thus the equivalent of Re himself. This will assure their regeneration and capability of maintaining the cosmic order.

Moreover, their divine protection is guaranteed by embracing certain deities to assure victory over their enemies. This actually is achieved by the embrace of Onnuris-Shu to the ruler, because Shu has the same violent traits given to Onnuris whom is regarded as a warrior deity who fights for the king and controls his enemies. In his unification with Shu, he became Onnuris-Shu who has murdered the enemies of the Sun god.

The same ideology is repeated with Geb; since he is the one who has announced the victory of Horus over Seth and declared him as the legitimate heir to the throne of Egypt. Since the Egyptian king is the ruling Horus on Earth, his association with Geb could guarantee him a strong position over the throne of Egypt and destroy his foes. As for, the embrace of Horus and Seth to the ruler, it will not only support him and assure his victory over his enemies, but also the presence of the two gods guarantees harmony and...
balance over the throne of Egypt because Seth is considered the harmonized counterpart of Horus and both of them are symbolizing the contrasts.2

After his death, the main wish of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt is to be associated with divinities who will assure his eternal rule in the Netherworld as Osiris and his joining to the course of the sun god as to be reborn with him every day.3 This fact is expressed in the Solar-Osirian unity where the deceased ruler would have the bA of Re and the x of Osiris.4 Thus, the pharaoh’s intention was to be associated with Re and Osiris in the afterlife.5 The embracing posture actually plays a vital role in this case; as the embrace of these divinities will help the dead sovereign in achieving what he aims. When the ruler is associated with Osiris himself being the king of the Netherworld, his rebirth and eternal rule are assured.6 In addition, when royal figures are embraced by Isis and Nephthys it guarantees their renewal and protection. Since the sovereigns became Osiris after their death;7 the two sisters were responsible for their rebirth, as they did with Osiris.8

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1 E. S. MELTZER, “Horus” in D. B. REDFORD (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt II*, (Cairo, 2001), 120
4 Fr. ABITZ, “König und Gott, Die Göterszenen in den ägyptischen Königsgräbern von Thutmosis IV. Bis Ramses III”, *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 40*, (Wiesbaden, 1984), 209
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Religious Significance of Embracing Members of the Heliopolitan Ennead in Royal Iconography from the New Kingdom

Aisha Masoud / Noura Hanad

The religious significance of embracing members of the Heliopolitan Ennead in royal iconography from the New Kingdom.

In this paper, we discuss the significance of depicting the Heliopolitan Ennead in royal iconography from the New Kingdom. The Ennead, comprising nine deities, played a crucial role in the religious practices of the time. Embracing these members of the Ennead was a common practice in royal iconography, symbolizing the king's connection to the deities and his role as a god-king.

The depiction of the Ennead was not just a simple artistic representation; it held deep religious significance. Each deity in the Ennead was associated with specific functions and attributes, and their presence in royal iconography symbolized the king's divine power and his role in maintaining the balance of the universe.

The relationship between the king and the Ennead was not just visual; it was deeply embedded in the religious practices of the time. The king was depicted interacting with the deities, showing his acceptance and embrace of their presence.

Furthermore, the use of specific objects and symbols, such as the DADAT and PT 309 and 313, was crucial in conveying the king's divine status and his connection to the divine realm. These objects were often associated with the king's role in the religious practices and were used to reinforce his divine authority.

In conclusion, the depiction of the Heliopolitan Ennead in royal iconography from the New Kingdom was a powerful symbol of the king's divine status and his role in maintaining the cosmic order. The significance of these depictions extended beyond mere artistic representation; they were deeply rooted in the religious practices of the time and played a critical role in the king's divine status.

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