

All'alba venceró: **a violent metaphor at dawn**

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The study of the context in which the expression *ḥd t3* appears permits the advancement of some conclusions about its meaning and implications. The idea of violence and death which it seems to express can be identified iconographically in some documents. All this contributes to the debate about the reality or symbolism of the scenes of “smiting the enemies” adding some new arguments in favour of the former.

El estudio del contexto en el cual la frase ḥd t3 aparece permite avanzar una serie de conclusiones sobre su significado e implicaciones. La idea de violencia y muerte que parece expresar puede rastrearse iconográficamente en varios documentos. Todo ello contribuye al debate sobre la realidad o simbolismo de las escenas de aniquilación de enemigos aportando nuevos argumentos en apoyo de la primera opción.

EXAMPLES of the phrase *ḥd t3* 𓏏𓏏 share a common meaning referring to the morning, time in which light falls upon earth (second element in the phrase) and lightens its color to become white (first element). The sense of the sentence is, therefore, basically circumstantial expressing time meaning “at dawn, when dawn comes”. It is also true that most of the occurrences seem to come from a ritual environment, funerary or cultic (Wb. III, 207-208).

Occurrences of the phrase in a narrative or literary context seem to enlarge its meaning. Some cases will be considered here. The first one takes place in the *Story of Sinuhe*. This example occurs in the passage in which the protagonist crosses the military border, leaves Egypt and meets a group of bedouins who help him and feed him after having experienced (literally and metaphorically) the taste of death:

Sinuhe R46-48: *ir=i šmt tr n ḥ3wy ḥd.n t3
ph.n=i ptn ḥn.kwi r iw n kmwr ḥr n ibt
3s.n=f wi nd3.kwi ḥḥ=i ḥmw dd.n=i dpt mt
nn*

I travelled in the night. When dawn came I had reached Peten and stopped at the island of Kemur. An attack of thirst overtook me, I was scorched, my throat parched and I said “This is the taste of death”

The phrase shows also here a temporal value, expressing the moment in which the action takes place. Nevertheless, the passage seem to transgress the limits of an interpretation too close to a time consideration. At dawn Sinuhe has ended the sad and bitter night symbolising the abandonment of his lord and country. The outcome of this night has driven him to a new territory and space and, fundamentally, to a new condition. He is now a foreigner to the eyes of Egyptian moral and values. Later developments in the text will make explicit this circumstance, and as a foreigner he will be received by the king in the last scene in the palace. He arrives as a bedouin, an ʿ3mw, being reintegrated to his Egyptian condition by means of the revivification performed by the royal children in which the presence and role of Hathor have been explained as essential (Derchain 1970, Purdy 1977). After his

symbolic death fleeing from Egypt, Sinuhe is born to a new life in which the bovine metaphor, related with Hathor, plays a prominent role, based on the presence of milk given to him by the beduins and the circumstance of the sound of cattle being the first perception of his new world:

Sinuhe B23: *tst=i ib=i s3kt=i h^cw=i sdm.n=i
hrw nmi n mnmnt*

I raised my heart and gathered my limbs as
I heard the sound of cattle lowing

This metaphor is reinforced by the food offered by the bedouins in which milk is openly present (Fischer 1976). The beginning of this new life seems to be introduced by the temporal expression related to dawn in *hd.n t3*. Dawn is when animals and humans open themselves to life. The impression is that the choice of phrase has gone beyond the mere circumstantiality of time and the author has made use of it signaling the beginning of a new phase. The next two occurrences of the same phrase *hd.n t3* in the text present a similar context and meaning. The duel with the champion of Retenu has been interpreted as crucial point in the story. At this moment the protagonist turns his mind back towards his return after having spent a whole life in the service of the foreign ruler. During this period no thoughts of Senusert or Egypt are expressed in the text. In the scene of the duel with the champion of Retenu the phrase *hd.n t3* appears in relation with the vigil spent preparing the weapons he will use in the morning to defeat and kill the challenger. From this moment on, a new situation is opened to Sinuhe, a phase in which the dominant feature is his explicit desire to return to his king, Senusert, and to Egypt. A radical change has happened in his life and everything in his mind is focused towards his final return. The last occurrence of the phrase in this text takes place in the final scene, at the encounter of the two main characters in the story, Sinuhe and Senusert. At the end of his

whole life, Sinuhe enters through main gate of the palace (or the temple), with the explicit mention of the threshold and the sphinxes. He is ushered to the interior. After his introduction he is recognized as an ^c*mw* by the king and his children. The following ceremony of revivification will make Sinuhe alive again as an Egyptian person (Derchain 1970) and, therefore, to a new existence inaugurated by the phrase *hd.n t3*.

Another textual example deserves to be mentioned. It occurs in Carnarvon Tablet I and is also present in the fragments of the I Stela of Kamose (Gardiner 1916, Lacau 1954, Habachi 1972, Smith and Smith 1976). In this context the phrase refers to the attack on the town of Nefrusi by the Theban king. Here, as in the examples in the story of Sinuhe, dawn is brought to mind preceded by a paragraph in which the night is central.

Carnarvon Tablet I: *...m b3w ^cmw... sh3.n=i
m dpt=i ib=i nfr hd.n t3 iw=i hr=f mi
wn bik*

...in the power of the aamu ... I spent the
night in my ship my heart being glad and at
dawn I was over him as if I was a falcon

In all these four occurrences the expression appears in a narrative context and signals both the dawn and the immediately preceding phase, the night. The nights of Sinuhe end in dawns starting new periods in his life exactly the same as the vigil of Kamose (similar to the vigil of Sinuhe before the duel) bursts in his victorious attack on Nefrusi (like the attack of Sinuhe on the champion of Retenu), the frontier town. This ends a situation of dependance and control lamented by the king at the beginning of the text, among his courtiers. In all the examples quoted an event is characterised by its most prominent moment, its result. This is similarly expressed in art with the representation of an event by its culminating moment (Gaballa 1976: 140). The chaotic element, expressed in the nocturnal nature, finds its solution with the lights of

the new day and the bright victory of the solar disk. This is clearly stated in the Hymn to the Aten (Davies 1908: pl. XXVI).

Hymn to the Aten (col. 3-4): *t3 m kkw m shr n mt=s dr m šspw tpw hbsw n ptr n ir.ty nwt=s it3.tw ht=sn nb iw hr tpw=sn n ʿm=sn m3iw nb pr n rwtj=f ddftw nb psh=sn kkw ʿhw t3 m sgr p3 irr=sn htp m 3ht hq t3 wbn.ti m 3ht psd=t m itn m hrw wi=k kkw rdi=k stwt=k t3.wy m hbw...*

...(at night) the land is in darkness in the fashion of death, one sleeps in rooms with the heads covered and the eyes do not see, they are robbed of all their things which were under their heads without their knowledge. Every lion comes from its den, all the snakes bite (when) darkness abounds, the land is in silence and its maker rests in the horizon. At dawn (when the earth brightens) you shine in the horizon as the Aten of the daytime, you drive away darkness as you put your rays to the Two Lands in festival...

Another aspect is common to the examples of *hq t3* in Sinuhe and Kamose. The above mentioned occurrences seem to remark the violent aspect of the phrase. It carries the idea of victory and ulterior annihilation of a defeated enemy by violent means at dawn, and the mace of *hq* as a weapon reinforces this idea. This violent victory is shown in the above mentioned contexts as essential an element as the temporal one, if not more. The story of Sinuhe presents it in three occasions:

- 1) when an egyptian (Sinuhe) is thrown to the condition of ʿ3mw and tastes the flavour of death,
- 2) when an ʿ3mw (the champion of Retenu) dies at the hands of Sinuhe who has been gradually adapting his own behaviour to fit the description of the monarch he abandoned and
- 3) when Sinuhe, as an ʿ3mw (in the literal words of the king), returns to the presence of Senusert to die in order to be reborn as an egyptian again.

It seems relevant to examine the appearance of the phrase *hq t3* in the story of the Shipwrecked Sailor in connection with the this last circumstance:

ShS 185 *in m rdt mw n 3pd hq t3 n sft dw3*

Who will give water at dawn to a bird to be slaughtered in the morning?

This enigmatic final sentence seems to refer to the uselessness of the sailor's words establishing a simile with the giving water to a bird due to be sacrificed at dawn. Whatever the ultimate meaning of the disgusted answer by the commander, this metaphor involves an element of sensed and immediate violence as the one to befall a bird bound to die. One could wonder whether the deprivation of water is a component of the sacrifice. If that were be the case, then, the mention of thirst in Sinuhe after the first dawn could result in a similar context for the two examples. Besides, the terrorised reaction of Sinuhe in the presence of Senusert could be connected with a statement in the Loyalist Teaching (Posener 1976) in which fear is mentioned as the feeling in the heart of a courtier in relation with the king.

Loyalist Teaching: *imy m-ʿ nrw=f m hrt-hrw*

...put the dread of him (the king) throughout the day

The context of the phrase *hq t3* here and elsewhere seem to be one of dawn, violence and sacrifice. The consideration of Sinuhe as a creature of chaos relates him with the goose to be slaughtered in the morning in the Shipwrecked Sailor and its terror in such a circumstance. In the occurrences of the phrase in Sinuhe and the appearance in the Kamose text, the common factor in all situations is the consideration of ʿ3mw as the object of the action. In the Kamose text this circumstance is particularly explicit due to the fact that the context is the defeat at dawn of an enemy defined in the the text as “the ʿ3mw Teti son of Pepi.”



Figure 1: Narmer Palette. Hierakonpolis. Cairo Mus. CG 3055
(after Hornung 1982: 106, fig. 9)

At this point it seems convenient to refer to the iconographic resemblance of the birds destined for sacrifice and the prisoners of war. Both are normally represented with the arms or wings tied at the back and both are to be considered as elements belonging to the chaos, from outside the first and from the marshes the second. If the phrase *hd tb* seem to go beyond the limits of a mere temporal expression maybe we need to think of the phrase more *de re* than *de dictu*, made explicit through the very significant used to express it. The image of victory in which the factual and potential enemy is killed through the violent action of the mace corresponds fairly well with the iconographical scene known as pharaoh smiting his enemies, object of a detailed catalogue by Hall (1986). Some archaic examples of this motive may illustrate this relation.

The first to be considered is the Narmer Palette (Fig. 1). In the *recto* the figure of the king raises prominently the mace *hd* about to hit the head of a prisoner emerging from a sign *tb*. A falcon controls him with a rope. When we connect this scene with the phrase mentioned in the Kamose text the context is present as similar. The metaphor A=B (king=falcon) explicit by the text is matched in the Narmer Palette with the confronted presence of the two figures (compare Goldwasser 1995: 15). The king is the falcon and as such is conceived and represented (A=B) by expressing the second term of the metaphor in front of his face and his eyes, where the identity and the name tend to appear in later documents. This is expressed in the Kamose text with the phrase *mi wn bik*.

In a cylinder-seal from Hierakonpolis (Fig. 2) again this king is represented by the fish of

his name. The attitude is similar and he is about to smite a number of prisoners before him bound and placed upon registers which also seem to resemble the sign *t3* marking their position on the ground, about to be killed. In this document the mace is not represented, but the object held by the fish is a club similar to those appearing in other representations of this scene of smiting the enemies such as the Old Kingdom reliefs at Wadi Maghara (Hall 1986: figs. 10 to 17), in the Tablet of Den (Fig. 5) and later examples. The prisoners are represented on three horizontal registers in front of the fish representing the name of the king. A falcon seems to collaborate in the royal action, and yet its action is coincident with the above mentioned metaphor $A=B$ as expressed in Narmer Palette. In such way the identification between the bird of prey and the fish-name performing the action is established, particularly by the touching of the club by both of them. This scenario is presented in another cylinder-seal from the same provenance (Fig. 3). In this document an anonymous figure



Figure 2: Narmer ivory cylinder-seal. Hierakonpolis. Ashmolean Mus. E.3915 (after Kaplony 1963)

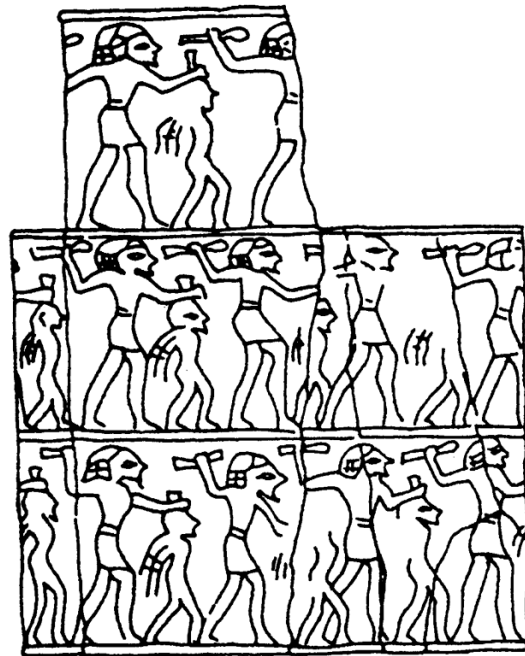


Figure 3: Ivory cylinder from Hierakonpolis. Ashmolean Mus. E.161 (after Quibell and Petrie 1900, pl. XV, 2)

(generally identified as the king) holds the mace about to smite a number of enemies repeated before him in the scene and in the three registers of the cylinder. The presence of the three registers may be connected with a circumstance already established for the first recorded scene of smiting the enemies found in the wall paintings from Hierakonpolis tomb no. 100 (Fig. 4). In this scene the figure of a chief is about to smite three prisoners tied and kneeling in front of him. This number (3) seems to correspond with the idea of plurality (Hornung 1966: 54). We can add this circumstance to those three registers in the above mentioned cylinder-seals, especially if we take in consideration the similarity among the above mentioned registers and the sign for *t3*. The rotative action of the cylinder-seal multiplies the enemies to the plurality it signifies. In later scenes during the New Kingdom, plurality of enemies will be expressed through

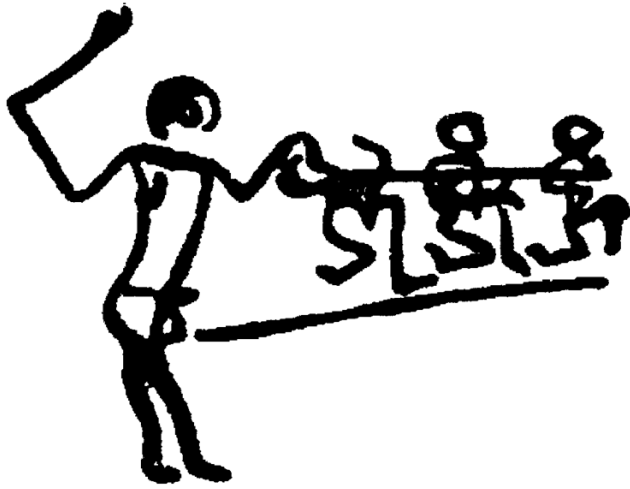


Figure 4: Scene from Tomb 100. Hierakonpolis
(after Hall 1986: fig. 5)

the repetition of the enemies in a particular representation similar to a “bunch” under the fist of the king (Hall 1986: fig 28 y 29). Another element to be considered is the very small amount of figures in the wall painting of tomb no. 100 of Hierakonpolis showing the ground under their feet. The prisoners about to be smitten are seated or crouched over a line marking the notion of their situation felled to the ground, expressing its direct relation with the word as it appears in the above mentioned cylinder-seals and also below the fallen enemy in the recto of the Narmer

Palette. All these factors connect these archaic monuments with the phrase *hd t3* not only in the iconographic context but by means of the explicit presentation of the configuring elements of what become the expression in later times.

The next document to be considered is the Tablet of Den (Spiegelberg 1897). Here the gesture of the king is similar to Narmer but in this occasion the fallen enemy adopts a posture which will become canonical with his knee on the ground (Fig. 5). The main elements are still present, the mace, the falcon (as a *srh*) and the fallen enemy kneeling on the ground. The representation of the ground in this document is not any more the sign — referring to the sand bank of the Nile and connected with the word *t3* (Gardiner 1956: 487) but a mountain (marked by the dots denoting its red color) prolonging itself under the figure of the enemy. This change may be understood as a reflection of a new historical situation, and it will become a permanent one in iconography. The enemy is not anymore represented upon a land conceived as a component of *t3.wy* “The Twin Lands”, a synonymous expression for Egypt once unified. Both banks of the Nile belong to a country in which there is no place, ideally,

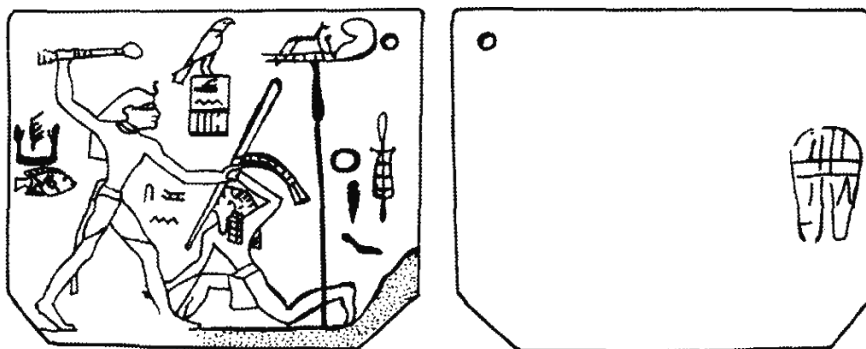


Figure 5: Tablet of Den. Abydos. British Mus. EA 55586
(after Adams and Cialowicz 1997: 63, fig. 44)

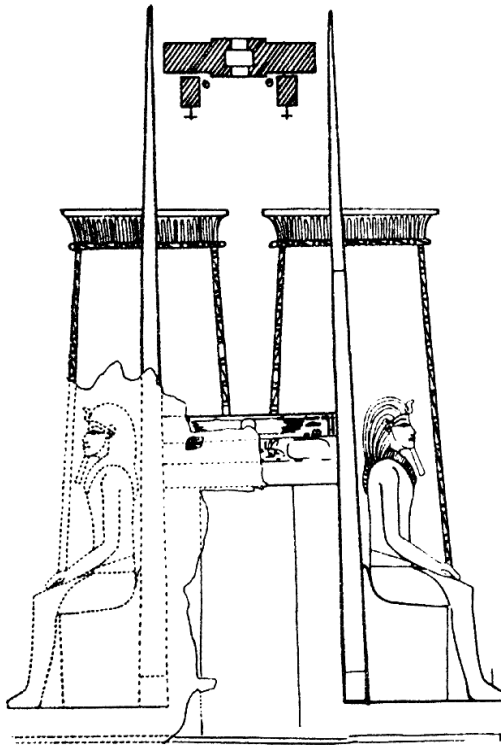


Figure 6: Two dimensional representation of sculptures in front of a temple pylon (after Schäfer 1986: 220, fig. 231)

for enemies. The foe must be, fundamentally, an external one and for such a task the sign β is not any more an appropriate one. As the liminal element *par excellence*, the mountain is the place in which the existence of an enemy is expectable and it constitutes the natural limit of the now unified country. It is interesting to note that almost all the occurrences of the this scene during the Old Kingdom come from the Sinai, from the mining region of Wadi Maghara, in a mountainous area. The remaining three come from the funerary complex of Niuserre, a cylinder-seal of Pepi I and the funerary temple of Pepi II in Saqqara (Hall 1986: figs. 7-12).

From this moment in the time of Den this relation between the enemy, the king and the limit of the country seem to correspond with the typical presence of the scene in the pylons of the temples. The characteristic form of the pylon resembles the shape of an idealised

mountain as expressed by the sign ∇ *dw*, and it is against this background the scene will be represented with remarkable consistency (Badawy 1968: 178). The transfer of the scene from the type of representation shown in the Tablet of Den to the pylons of the temples follows a pattern already described by Schäfer (1974: 220) to explain the two-dimensional illustration of statues at the front of pylons of temples (Fig. 6). In the tablet of Den the king and the prisoner are in the left of the image, with the mountain at the back of the last (Fig. 5). When the idea of the mountain is transferred to the pylon the same scene unfolds in a frontal way for the viewer and the relative position of the main figures would prevent its proper contemplation. The king is positioned before the pylon-mountain with his back to the viewer of the scene, which seems to take place at the front of the temple. The point of view of the scene has changed (Fig. 7). The action of the king emphasises the fact that the enemy before him cannot have any other existence but for his destruction. Some hieroglyphic signs seem to express the result of this action, showing a human figure with blood pouring from the head. Some examples of its use exist referring to the same concept and the following list is not an exhaustive indication:

Another archaic example of this situation is shown in an alabaster palette from the reign of Djer (Fig. 8) from Saqqarah (Emery 1949). In it, the scene is represented before a recumbent lion, assumed to represent the king. We could refer to the frontal position of lions in the archaic temples (Adams and Cialowicz 1997: 48) and later ones. The position of the scene corresponds with the same position before the temple mentioned above. The possible view of the figure of the lion as an early occurrence of the sign 𓇗 *h3t* in its literal meaning “front, frontal part” reinforces this argument. Hall (1986) comments on the “sudden” appearance of the lion because only half of its body is represented, and the document seems to be complete and not broken. This

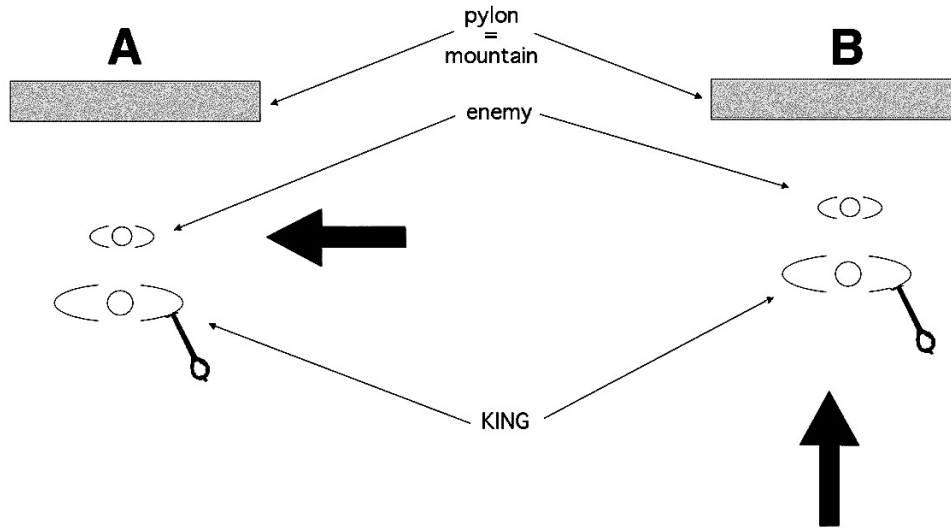


Figure 7: Analysis of the points of view (from above) of the scene of “smiting the enemies”
 A) as presented in the tablet of Den (Fig. 5) and
 B) as decoration on a pylon or temple wall

position in front of the temples and before the pylons coincides with conclusions reached by Schulman (1988) in his analysis of the scene of smiting the enemies in private monuments from the New Kingdom (v. *infra*).

The reference to the destruction of the enemy by Horus is as explicit in the Kamose text as it is in Sinuhe. Both cases refer to somebody external to the country subdued and brought under the control of the king to be sacrificed and killed. The violent metaphor expressed by the phrase *hd t3* signals the culminating moment and the characterisation of an event by its natural result, the control of the external element by the royal power inside the conceptual limits of Egypt. The enemy is represented within the control of the king, in the part of the universe which corresponds to the interior of Egypt. In such a position the foe cannot exist other than to be killed and trampled upon. That is the description of the killing by Sinuhe of the champion of Retenu,

in which the gradual similarity in character between Sinuhe and his abandoned king culminates in the virtually royal scene of smiting the enemy. The act of trampling on a foe constitutes an interesting aspect bearing in mind the sandals engraved in the *verso* of the tablet of Den, probably meaning that the tablet was originally attached to a pair of sandals belonging to the king. It is suggestive to think of these sandals as linked to the action represented on the tablet as something like “the sandals on which the king smote the enemy on his first occasion of attacking the east”. A similar circumstance could be expressed also in the sandals box found in Tutankhamon’s tomb (*PM II*, 1, p. 577) whose decoration clearly refers to the elimination of enemies, this time making use of the technological advance of a chariot of war, but expressing the very same idea. It is also suggestive to think that the prominently displayed royal sandals carried by an official in the Narmer Palette just behind the figure of

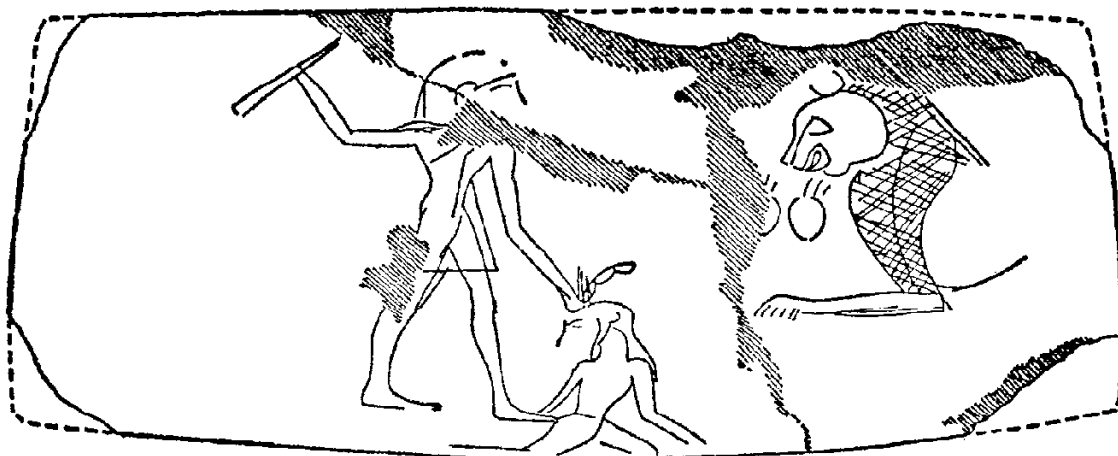


Figure 8: Alabaster palette of Djer. Saqqara (after Emery 1949: 60, no. 565, fig. 31)

the king in the act of smiting the enemy (Fig.1) could be another example of the same.

The scene on the pylons brings again the idea of sunrise and dawn. The pylons are the framework of the epiphany of the god, when he appears in procession on the earth. Dawn is the moment in which the divinity manifests itself on the land and materializes upon it conferring life as expressed in the Hymn to the Aten (v. *supra*).

This scene of smiting the enemies shows a taste for appearing on scarabs (Hall 1986: fig. 4) and it could have some relation with this argument. The scarab as *hpr* “become, be manifest, be formed” is part of the same discourse. The factual reality of ceremonial executions before the pylons of the temples has been proposed by Schulman (1988). In the representations examined by Schulman (all of them from rameside times) the scene would have taken place in front the façade of the temple. For such a circumstance and position what is proposed here would provide a context.

A related context seems to be provided by this passage from *The Taking of Joppa*:

Taking of Joppa 1,8: *hr ir p3 hry n ypw hr dd n dhwtj ib=i r ptr t3 ʕwnt ʕ3t n nsw (mn-hpr-rʕ) ʕ.w.s. [...] iw=f hr irt m mitt iw=f hr int t3 ʕwnt n nsw (mn-hpr-rʕ) [...] m*

p3y=f sdy iw=f hr ʕhʕ m-ʕ wn=f hr dd i nw im=i p3 hry n ypw [...] nsw (mn-hpr-rʕ) ʕ.w.s. p3 m3i-hs3 s3 shmt iw d n=f imn [...] iw=f hr f3 drt=f iw=f hr hw hr m3ʕ n p3 hry n ypw iw=f hr h3y m irt [...] m-b3h=f

Now, when the rebel of Joppa said to Djehuty: it is my wish to see the great baton of King Menkheperre, l.p.h. [...] he acquiesced and brought the baton of King Menkheperre concealed in his apron. And he stood straight up and said: Look at me, O rebel of Joppa! Here is King Menkheperre, l.p.h. the fierce lion, Sakhmet’s son to whom Amon has given his strength! And he lifted his hand and smote upon the rebel of Joppa’s temple so that he fell sprawling before him.

The weapon is considered in the text as the embodiment of the king himself, and the carrying of such an object to the battle would symbolize the presence of the monarch in campaign (Simpson 1972: 82 note 8). In such a reading, the smiting of the rebel offers a similar context for the scenes here described. Goedicke (1968: 224 ff.) has discussed the word *ʕwnt* used for the weapon itself. He proposes a misunderstanding by the rebel of the words actually pronounced and so enhancing the literary effect of such a pun reinforcing the stupidity of the rebel to be crushed. The

actual weapon described by the word wnt has been studied by Wolff (1926: 102) and Vandier (1940: 473 ff.). Although the weapon itself is not the royal mace expressed in the phrase hd t3 the scene recalls and mimics the royal action as the fowling scenes do in their own context (v. *infra*), and the use of the royal mace by persons other than the king himself is probably forbidden by decorum. A similar interpretation can be brought forward for the scene of the death of the champion of Retenu by Sinuhe, as mentioned above. Nevertheless, in this particular case, the mention of the strength given by Amun to the king seem to recall the scene in pylons during the New Kingdom and more specifically, those in which the god offers the scimitar $\text{hp}\delta$ symbolizing strength to the king while he smites the fallen enemy. Papyrus Harris 500 verso, where *The Taking of Joppa* is preserved, shows a lacuna precisely where this word could be restored (Gardiner 1932: 83a). It seems suggestive to understand the fatal hit in the temple of the enemy as a pun with the word $\text{m}^{\text{c}}\text{t}$ “temple” and $\text{m}^{\text{c}}\text{t}$ “order”.

Even in the case of a symbolic and ritual action by the king and not a real one (*contra* Schulman 1988 v. Ahituv 1991 and Ward 1992) it seems plausible to think of the dawn, the moment immediately prior to sunrise as the chosen time. The Egyptian day begins at dawn (Parker 1950) and the moment of contact in which the transfer of offerings to the divinity takes place. The word $\text{dw}3$ “adoration” uses the same star that is used to write the names of some festivals in which offerings are made. The notion of the sacrifice of prisoners at dawn bears relation with the transfer of the offerings to the god and the deceased. Among the objects and animals in offering scenes the bird receives the death at the very moment of the offering, as shown in a number of monuments (Fig. 9). The bird moves its wings and its neck is broken by the hand of the person making the offering.

There is no need to remark once again upon the metaphor expressed in the death of the bird at the time of the funerary offering and its relation with the fatal destiny, symbolic or real, of some prisoners of war. As mentioned above they are depicted with the wings or arms tied at the back. This analogy goes beyond the iconography and trespasses the limits of formality. The ancestral cult represented by the offerings given from a son to the memory of a dead father is but a privatised case of the relation between the king –Horus– and the dead father –Osiris– and, by extension, any other god as his father. The death of the bird expresses the adaptation of this royal cult to the world of the nobility. The scene of fishing and fowling in the marshes mimics and reflects the scene of smiting the enemies in the gesture of the protagonist, the deceased. It is not just merely the king killing prisoners, the aristocrat chasing fowl and the peasant beating domestic animals (Hall 1986: 4). It seems more functional to see it as a mimetic relation between the action of the king, bringing prisoners from an external and wild chaos and offering their life to the gods, to their ancestors and his own funerary cult and the action of the noble in the marshes, chasing birds as creatures of chaos destined to have the same destiny. The birds used in the funerary cult could come from the estates of the deceased or they could come from the marshes. This second possibility seems more believable in the context here proposed. Even the condition of 3mw cast upon the enemies in the texts of Sinuhe and Kamose materializes in the context of the tombs by the common presence of the verb $\text{m}^{\text{c}}3$ “throwing the stick”, determined by the throwing stick T14 shown in the scene and equivalent of the royal mace in such context, which is the common determinative for the word 3mw .

The substitutory role of the bird in the sacrificial context seems to be illustrated by the passage of papyrus Westcar in which after



Figure 9: Wringing the neck of the bird in offering scenes.
 From left to right, tomb of Senbi (Blackman 1914: pl. IX), Stela of Iti
 (British Mus. EA 586) and stela of Khuenbik (British Mus. EA 584)

the human being has been rejected as the object of killing in a non-ritual context, a bird and a bull are produced afterwards to that purpose:

pWestcar 8,17: *mk n wd.tw irt mnt n t3 3wt špst*
ḥ^c.n in.n n=f smn wd^c tp=f

‘...Look, doing such a thing to the noble flock is not ordained’ and a goose was brought to him and his head cut off

Concluding, the phrase ḥd t3 in a literary context seems to add a violent dimension which a merely temporal interpretation does not render in its full extent. In the context presented here the sacrifice of the bird seems to constitute the reflection of a real and royal ceremony in which the metaphor bird = prisoner is essential. This violent sacrifice appears to have been one of the main configuring elements of the Egyptian monarchy from its beginning (Finkenstaedt 1984).

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