

# Priestly officiants in the Old Kingdom mortuary cult

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# Priestly officiants in the Old Kingdom mortuary cult

Edited by Raúl Sánchez Casado & Antonio J. Morales



Universidad  
de Alcalá

EDITORIAL  
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## GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

BD	Book of the Dead
cf.	<i>confer</i>
col(s).	column(s)
CT	Coffin Texts
doc.	document
ed(s).	editor(s)
edn.	edition
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i>
fig(s).	figure(s)
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i>
id.	<i>idem</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i>
l(l).	line(s)
n(n).	note(s)
no(s).	number(s)
pl(s).	plate(s)
PT	Pyramid Texts
Pyr.	Pyramid Texts line(s) (first at Sethe's edition)
s.v.	<i>sub voce</i>
tab.	table

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	<i>Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</i> , Liverpool
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament, Münster
ACER	Australian Centre for Egyptology Reports, Sidney – Warminster – Oxford
ADAIK	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo, Cairo
AegHelv	Aegyptiaca Helvetica, Basel
AegLeod	Aegyptiaca Leodiensia, Liège
ÄgAb	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, Wiesbaden
ÄgFo	Ägyptologische Forschungen, Glückstadt – Hamburg – New York
Ä&L	<i>Ägypten und Levante</i> , Vienna
AnOr	<i>Analecta Orientalia: Commentationes scientificae de Rebus Orientalis Antiqui</i> , Rome
ArFo	Archäologische Forschungsergebnisse, Hamburg
ARG	Archiv für Religionsgeschichte, Leipzig – Berlin

<i>ArOr</i>	<i>Archiv Orientalní: Quarterly Journal of African and Asian Studies</i> , Prague
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i> , Cairo
<i>ASE</i>	Archaeological Survey of Egypt, London
<i>AuOr</i>	<i>Aula Orientalis</i> , Barcelona
<i>AVDAIK</i>	Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Berlin – Mainz am Rhein
<i>BA</i>	Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, Malibu
<i>BAR IS</i>	British Archaeological Reports International Series, Oxford
<i>BdE</i>	Bibliothèque d'Étude (IFAO), Cairo
<i>BEHE</i>	Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études, sciences historiques et philologiques, Paris
<i>BEM</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Egyptian Museum</i> , Cairo
<i>BiAe</i>	Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, Brussels
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i> (IFAO), Cairo
<i>BIFAO 81 Suppl.</i>	Bulletin du centenaire: Supplement au <i>BIFAO 81</i> (1981)
<i>BMSAES</i>	British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan, London
<i>BMPES</i>	British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan, London
<i>BSAK</i>	Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur – Beihefte, Hamburg
<i>BSEG</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie</i> , Genève
<i>BSFE</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société française d'Égyptologie</i> , Paris
<i>CASAE</i>	Cahiers Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Cairo
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i> , Cairo
<i>CGC</i>	Catalogue General du Musée du Caire, Cairo
<i>CNIP</i>	Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications, Copenhagen
<i>CRIPEL</i>	Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille, Paris – Lille
<i>DAWW</i>	Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Vienna
<i>DÖAW</i>	Denkschrift der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Vienna
<i>EA</i>	<i>Egyptian Archaeology</i> , London
<i>EES OP</i>	Egypt Exploration Society Occasional Publications, London
<i>EEF Memoir</i>	Egypt Exploration Fund Memoir, London
<i>EGeA</i>	Études genevoises sur l'Antiquité, Bern
<i>EgUit</i>	Egyptologische Uitgaven, Leiden
<i>EME</i>	Études et mémoires d'Égyptologie, Paris
<i>ENiM</i>	<i>Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne</i> , Montpellier
<i>ERA</i>	Egyptian Research Account, London
<i>ÉtudÉgypt</i>	Études égyptiennes, Cairo
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i> , Göttingen



HÄB	Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge, Hildesheim
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik, Leiden – Boston
HES	Harvard Egyptological Studies, Leiden – Boston
IBAES	Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie, London
JARCE	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i> , Boston – Princeton – New York – Cairo
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i> , London
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> , Chicago
JSSEA	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i> , Toronto
KSG	Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen, Wiesbaden
LÄ	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , 7 vols., eds. W. Helck – E. Otto – W. Westendorf (1972-1992), Wiesbaden
LD	Lepsius, C. R., <i>Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: Nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition</i> . 12 vols. (1849-1859), Berlin
LingAeg	<i>Lingua Aegyptia. Journal of Egyptian Language Studies</i> , Göttingen
MÄS	Münchener Ägyptologische Studien, München
MDAIK	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i> , Abteilung Kairo, Mainz – Cairo – Berlin – Wiesbaden
MET	Mond Excavations at Thebes, Liverpool
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Cairo, Berlin – Cairo
MMA Papers	Metropolitan Museum of Art, Papers, New York
MMJ	<i>Metropolitan Museum Journal</i> , New York
MonAeg	Monumenta Aegyptiaca, Brussels
MonÄS	Monographien zur Ägyptischen Sprache, Göttingen
MVEOL	Mededelingen en Verhandelingen Ex Orient Lux, Leiden
NSA	Nova Studia Aegyptiaca, Barcelona
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Fribourg-Göttingen
OCE	Oxfordshire Communications in Egyptology, London
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications, Chicago
OIMP	Oriental Institute Museum Publications, Chicago
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, Leuven
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Leuven
OLZ	Orientalische Literaturzeitung, Berlin
OrNS	<i>Orientalia</i> . Commentarii periodici Pontificii instituti biblici, Nova Series, Rome
PAM	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i> , Warsaw
PdÄ	Probleme der Ägyptologie, Leiden – Boston – Cologne

- PM* Porter B. – Moss R., *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic, Texts, Reliefs and Paintings* (1927-), Oxford  
*PMMA* Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
*RAPH* Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie et d'histoire (IFAO), Cairo  
*RdE* *Revue d'Égyptologie*, Paris  
*RGRW* Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, Leiden  
*RHR* *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Paris  
*SAE* Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Cairo  
*SAGA* Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens, Heidelberg  
*SAK* *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*, Hamburg  
*SAOC* Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation, Chicago  
*SASAE* Supplément aux Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Cairo  
*SDAIK* Sonderschrift Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Kairo, Cairo  
*SÖAW* Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Vienna  
*SPAW* Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin  
*SSR* Studien zur spätägyptischen Religion, Wiesbaden  
*TAVO* Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Wiesbaden  
*TMO* Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient, Lyon  
*TTS* Theban Tombs Series, London  
*Urk.* *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*, 8 vols., ed. K. Sethe – W. Helck – H. Schäfer – H. Grapow – O. Firchow (1903-1957), Leipzig – Berlin  
*VDI* *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii* (Revue d'Histoire ancienne), Moscow – Saint Petersburg  
*WAW* Writings from the Ancient World, Atlanta  
*Wb* *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 vols., ed. A. Erman – W. Grapow (1926-1971), Berlin – Leipzig  
*YES* Yale Egyptological Studies, New Haven  
*ZÄS* *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Berlin – Leipzig

## FOREWORD

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*“They should come for performing the mortuary offering for me in the necropolis”*. This caption is one of the most recurrent sentences in any Egyptian Old Kingdom tomb. It shows the willingness (and urge) of the deceased to have someone to perform the mortuary cult on their behalf in order to ensure their well-being in the netherworld. Undoubtedly, not all Egyptians enjoyed an organized mortuary cult carried out by ‘professional priests’, but surely all of them hoped to have an offering service. Modest as it might be, the offering service would guarantee their spiritual sustenance and ensure their remembrance among those who walk on earth.

Unquestionably, the mortuary cult is one of the most attractive topics for whoever approaches Egyptology and one of the most recurrent subjects in previous and current research on ancient Egyptian beliefs, thoughts, and practices. The significance of the mortuary sphere in the ancient Egyptian culture has provided researchers with a wide variety of viewpoints and approaches that has generated (and will generate!) an important amount of literature on the topic. One key aspect for understanding the mortuary cult is, doubtlessly, its actors, the ‘priestly officiants’ that once performed the rites. Despite this, there are not many works specifically devoted to the mortuary ‘priesthood’, and even less for a period as remote as the Old Kingdom, of which unfortunately we do not possess as much evidence as we do for later periods. This dearth of evidence does not mean that there are no studies on the topic, but only that it has been addressed in the frame of analyses with very particular focus or larger scope. This is the case for studies that analyse the mortuary ritual and funeral proces-

sion, especially when an iconographic approach is used,<sup>1</sup> those centred on titles and officialdom,<sup>2</sup> and publications of tombs dealing incidentally with priestly titles when elaborating on wall iconography.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, studies devoted to Egyptian priesthood in general mostly focus on the later periods of the Egyptian history, where evidence is more abundant based on Demotic and hieratic papyri as well as the account by Greek authors.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, the nature and role of the mortuary officiants in the Old Kingdom is often mentioned on the surface.

The ground for this book is to offer a comprehensive overview of the principal figures associated with the mortuary practices and cult in the Old Kingdom. Our knowledge and understanding in this area of research within the field of Egyptology has experienced a considerable growth in recent years. In addition, the amount of significant evidence has also increased throughout the most recent and advanced excavations, analyses, and studies in the field. Reassessment of sites, chronologies, iconographic and textual evidence, as well as of material culture, has also provided us with the opportunity to look at the evidence with different eyes and reconsider old presumptions, hypotheses, opinions, and interpretations.

The publication of several works in recent times –in the form of PhD theses or monographs<sup>5</sup>– has also come to fill a gap in the study of the individual figures that played an important role in the domain of the mortuary beliefs, practices, and traditions. In this sense, this book aims at establishing clear definitions of each figure in an attempt to consolidate our understanding of the actual practices and beliefs and define the role of those who guarded, developed, and sustained the most professional duties involved in the respect and care for the dead in the necropolis.

Regular attestation in the textual and iconographic sources of the Old Kingdom has determined the selection of officiants for this volume. In addition, their degree of relevance in the performance of mortuary cultic activities in both private and royal domains has also governed their incorporation and prominence. Of course, as it happens with any selection, there exist other titles that have not been considered for this book, mainly because they are not so common in the sources or play a less visible role in the mortuary ritual (and hence the lack of evidence). Officiants who served in other religious spheres such as the temples of the gods or in the royal court have not

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<sup>1</sup> Blackman 1924: 47–59; Montet 1925; Baly 1930: 173–186; Junker 1940: 1–39; Grdseloff 1941; Grdseloff 1951: 129–140; Otto 1960; Settgast 1963; Badawy 1981: 85–93; Strudwick 1984: 35–49; Assmann 1991: 105–122; Bolshakov 1991: 31–54; Dominicus 1994; Wilson 1994: 201–218; Fitzenreiter 2001; Morales 2002: 123–146; Russo 2007: 195–209; Theis 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Murray 1908; Helck 1954; Baer 1960; Jones 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Among others: van de Walle 1930: 19–49; Junker 1938: 115–122; Reisner 1942: 369–371; Junker 1943: 6–26; Moussa – Altmüller 1977: 30–42; Roth 1995: 39–47.

<sup>4</sup> As examples, one can note Kees 1953; Griffith 1970; Sauneron 1988; Römer 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Larcher 2013; Forshaw 2014; Thompsom 2014; Legros 2016; Mournon 2019; Sánchez Casado 2020.

been considered as their primary obligations were not associated with the mortuary cult. Neither are included in our selection those cases in which the title can hardly be considered as ‘priestly’, having a more secular or civil set of attributions.<sup>6</sup> Titles such as *ḥtmtj-bitj*, *imj-r(3) pr* or *imj-r(3) sšrw* often appear in the scenes of the Old Kingdom tombs, but it is problematic to assert in what cases the religious service performed by some officials is the fundamental *raison d’être* of their participation. The exception to this general rule is made with the figure of the *se(tem)*, whose later developments justify its inclusion in this volume even if his role as funerary officiant is not so clear in the Old Kingdom; in this case, we seek for its origins as a key figure of the funerary cult from the Middle Kingdom onwards. Obviously, it is essential to keep in mind that the margins between civil and religious domains are always tenuous and imprecise in the Ancient World.

The volume is divided in eight chapters. As noted above, each of them deals with one of the most recurrent and prominent priestly titles of the Old Kingdom mortuary ritual. Invitation to contribute to this volume was addressed to established and aspiring scholars who have demonstrated a keen interest on these officiants with major and recent works on the subject (monographs, articles, and dissertations). The editors of the book—in an attempt to present a uniform volume and reach a scholarly and broader public alike—requested to the authors to cover fundamental aspects of these officiants (nature and development of the title, functions and domains of practice, sources for their study, primary settings of attestation, etc.) and to scrutinize the most recent hypotheses and interpretations in the domain of the religious and social components in the Old Kingdom mortuary ritual. The result is a comprehensive and thorough treatment of the major ‘priestly’ figures of the Old Kingdom with a fresh approach that incorporates the newest theories and positions in the study of the Old Kingdom mortuary officialdom. Thus, the purpose of the volume is to outline the major roles of priestly officiants in the Old Kingdom, prioritizing practice, function, and settings.

Alcalá de Henares  
September 2022

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<sup>6</sup> This fact does not mean that the ‘priestly’ figures included in this volume did not play a secular or civil role in subsidiary duties in the environment of the necropolis.

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# 1. THE *KHENTIU-SHE*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

From written and pictorial evidence of the Old Kingdom we know of a group of people called *khentiu-she* (*hntjw-š*), who, on the one hand, were connected with the palace of the reigning king (*pr-č*) and, on the other hand, belonged to the cult personnel at the royal pyramid temples. Their exact role and significance are difficult to grasp, as the available sources do not provide a coherent picture. Therefore, a lot has already been written about the *hntjw-š* and different translations have been proposed: “*employé*”,<sup>1</sup> “resident of the pyramid city”,<sup>2</sup> “attendant”,<sup>3</sup> “provisioner”,<sup>4</sup> “guard”,<sup>5</sup> “land tenant”,<sup>6</sup> “*khenti-she* priest”,<sup>7</sup> “servant”.<sup>8</sup>

Over the past twenty-five years, papyrus finds in the pyramid temple of Neferefre in Abusir and excavations in the Old Kingdom capital region around Memphis and its associated royal necropolises have brought new material to light that keeps the discussion alive.<sup>9</sup> It seems therefore time for a new assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Posener-Kriéger 1976: 659.

<sup>2</sup> Stadelmann 1981: 153.

<sup>3</sup> Roth 1995: 42.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkinson 2000: 151.

<sup>5</sup> Kanawati 2003: 14.


<sup>6</sup> Posener-Kriéger – Verner – Vymazalová 2006: 453.



<sup>7</sup> Dobrev 2010: 55.

<sup>8</sup> Nuzzolo 2010: 306.

<sup>9</sup> Three academic theses have also been completed specifically dedicated to the *hntjw-š*: Bogdanov 2000 (quoted from Spalinger 2013); Adams 2003; Fettel 2010.

## 2. THE MEANING OF THE TERM

To get closer to the meaning of the designation *hntj-š*, firstly an analysis of the term itself is recommended. Many different spellings are documented, including those with the hill-country sign as determinative () but without any recognisable semantic difference.<sup>10</sup>

Concerning the word structure, there is fundamental agreement that *hntj-š* is a compound term. It consists of the *nisbe* of the preposition *hnt*, followed by the noun *š*, whose independence is indicated by the occasionally written ideogram stroke.<sup>11</sup> That it is not a four-radical word *\*hntš* is further proven by the feminine form  *hnt(j)t-š* as well as by the detailed plural spelling .

The *nisbe* of the preposition *hnt* has the meaning “foremost of”, which can have a local meaning, but is also used in the figurative sense of “number one”; the latter often in epithets of deities.<sup>13</sup> Both indicate a prominent position of the bearer of the designation in relation to *š*. However, opinions differ as to what this position implied, what was meant by *š* and, consequently, how the entire term *hntj-š* can be translated and interpreted.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.1. On the meaning of *š*

#### 2.1.1. *š* related to “pond”, “garden”, “estate/property”

The word *š* has a wide range of meanings. Water lines inside the hieroglyph suggest a basic meaning of “body of water”, which can refer to natural as well as to artificial water basins.<sup>15</sup> In the decree of Pepy I in favour of the two pyramid towns of Snofru in Dahshur, *š(w)*-ponds are mentioned as a basis for taxation, along with *mr*-channels and wells.<sup>16</sup>

Digging a pond together with the creation of a garden was part of establishing a household of a high official. For example, the early Fourth Dynasty official Metjen reports that he built a house (*pr*) of 100 cubits in length and 100 cubits in width, in which he made a very large *š* and carried out various plantings.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See the detailed studies by Fettel 2010: 35–38; and Bogdanov 2020.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., the inscription in the offering table of Rawer (Roeder 1913: 63 [11465]).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Gardiner 1908: 129–130, n. V; Junker 1943: 17; most recently Fettel 2010: 36.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. e.g. the epithets of Anubis *hntj-Imntjw* – “foremost of the Westerners”, and *hntj sh-ntj* – “preceding over the God’s tent”, Hannig 2003: 956–957. Also with regard to deceased kings “in” their pyramid, *hntj* was occasionally used instead of the preposition *m*, cf. the title of Netjeraperef from the early Fourth Dynasty: *hm-ntj Snfrw hnt(j) h<sup>c</sup>-Snfrw* – “priest of Snofru foremost of the pyramid ‘Snofru shines’”, Helck 1957: 102; Kuhlmann 1982: 232.

<sup>14</sup> See above. Fettel 2010: 3–20 offers a detailed overview of the Egyptological literature on the topic until 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Fettel 2010: 57 regards “standing waters” as a basic meaning.

<sup>16</sup> Goedicke 1967: 56 (XI), 72, n. 30.

<sup>17</sup> *Urk.* I, 4: 10–17; 5: 1–3; see also *Urk.* I, 121: 13–16; Edel 1944: § 45.



was given two false doors by the king. Sahure had them finished in the portico of one of his palaces, the work being carried out in the presence of the king himself. The following line:  $\overline{\text{hpr}} \text{ } \overline{\text{s}} \text{ } \overline{\text{r}} \text{ } \overline{\text{nb}}$  has so far been interpreted in two different ways: as (stone)work<sup>28</sup> or as the area on which the palace with the portico stood.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, there is no further evidence for a translation of  $\overline{\text{s}}$  as “stonework”. The title  $\overline{\text{imj-r(3)}} \text{ } \overline{\text{s}}$ , which often appears among the leaders of quarry expeditions, was apparently seen in this context and translated as “overseer of quarry work” or “overseer of stone working”.<sup>30</sup> But this is not convincing because in this interpretation an activity would be equated with the processed object (stone) or the place of processing (quarry). And it was usually the word *k3t* which was used for manual activities.<sup>31</sup> That  $\overline{\text{s}}$  in this title has nothing to do with “stone” or “quarry” is proven by the more detailed title variant,  $\overline{\text{imj-r(3)}} \text{ } \overline{\text{s}} \text{ } \overline{\text{n}} \text{ } \overline{\text{m}} \overline{\text{s}}$  – “overseer of the  $\overline{\text{s}}$  of the army”.<sup>32</sup>  $\overline{\text{s}}$  here most probably refers to the “precinct” of the expeditionary army, i.e. its encampment, the establishment and maintenance of which was to be organised and supervised by a member of the executive staff of the army. As the Wadi el-Jarf excavations at the Gulf of Suez show, such encampments were not only sleeping places for the participants of the expeditions. There were also zones for the various types of craftsmen’s work needed for the supplies and equipment for the expedition, storage facilities and working places for the respective administrators.<sup>33</sup> For  $\overline{\text{imj-r(3)}} \text{ } \overline{\text{s}}$  a translation “overseer of the encampment” would therefore be appropriate, and a meaning of “(stone) work”, “quarry work” for  $\overline{\text{s}}$  must be rejected.<sup>34</sup> For  $\overline{\text{s}}$  we gain a meaning as an area where expeditionary troops could camp and were supplied.

### 2.1.3. $\overline{\text{s}}$ -precinct related to the king

$\overline{\text{s}}$  also referred to grounds on which royal buildings were erected. The master builder of king Isesi, the vizier Senedjemib/Inti, mentioned in his funerary inscription the  $\overline{\text{s}}$  of a building (*hwt*-sign with a badly preserved interior drawing) belonging to the *hb-sd* palace of Isesi with a size of some 525 x 231 m. This size is comparable to the Djoser complex. Therefore,  $\overline{\text{s}}$  probably designated here the building ground of

<sup>28</sup> “Und die Arbeit geschah daran alle Tage” (Junker 1957: 29); “This work was carried out daily...” (Strudwick 2005: 303); “Die Steinarbeit schritt täglich fort (,geschah’)” (Kloth 2002: 213).

<sup>29</sup> “...quand il était au Bassin” (Roccati 1982: 97); “wenn er (der König) täglich auf dem S war” (Stadelmann 1981: 159); “der täglich auf dem Schi erschien (bzw. zu dem Schi kam)” (Fettel 2010: 114–115).

<sup>30</sup> Jones 2000: no. 889; see also “officiers de liaison” (Tallet 2018: 120); “overseer of the body of troops” (Bogdanov 2019: 137, n. 109 with a collection of references), Bogdanov assumes here a meaning of  $\overline{\text{s}}$  as “closed space” or “concentration” in general – of people, resources, etc.”

<sup>31</sup> See also Fettel 2010: 115.

<sup>32</sup> Martin 1979: pl. 31, no. 74.

<sup>33</sup> See Tallet 2014.

<sup>34</sup> See also Fettel 2010: 115.



considered by Goelet and Bogdanov.<sup>42</sup> Here the donation of one altar each for Re and Hathor “on the *š* of the Great House” (*hr š n pr-š*) is listed for Neferirkare (Fig. 1).<sup>43</sup>

FIG. 1. DETAIL FROM PALERMO STONE VSO, SECTION *NFR-IR-K3-R<sup>c</sup>*, REDRAWN BY THE AUTHOR FROM WILKINSON 2000: FIG. 3



One might perhaps object that *š n pr-š* does not denote the location of the two altars here, but it is part of the name of the deities. However, the altars are written between the gods’ names and the place name *hr š n pr-š*.

We know from priest titles that Hathor was worshipped, among other gods, in *mrt*-shrines. At least some of them were built on the “*š n pr-š*”. The aforementioned master builder Senedjemib/Inti reports, for example, that he drafted the decoration of “the *mrt*-chapel of Isesi which is on the *š n pr-š*” (𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏).<sup>44</sup> A *mrt*-shrine “*hr š n pr-š*” is also attested for Teti.<sup>45</sup>

Little is known about this type of sanctuary.<sup>46</sup> They are always affiliated with a king’s name. Their cult focused primarily on Hathor, but also on her son Ihi and the king. This was the reason for the assumption that *mrt*-sanctuaries were places of the symbolical marriage of the king-Horus with Hathor “in order to increase the fertility of not only the royal couple but also all the men, animals and fields”.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Goelet 1982: 546; Bogdanov 2019: 135.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Palermo Stone, verso IV.3 after Naville’s drawing (see Wilkinson 2000: fig. 3, 172–173, whose translation is to be improved in: [n] R<sup>c</sup> Hwt-hr h3tj hr š n pr-š t<sup>n</sup>wt htpw-ntr 500(?) ir prwj-šn<sup>c</sup> r.s ts mrt r.s – “[For] Re and Hathor: one offering-table each on the *š* of the Great House, (for) the *t<sup>n</sup>wt*-feast: God’s offerings 500(?), two food-preparation houses were established and *mrt*-personnel was recruited for this purpose”). The only rarely documented *t<sup>n</sup>wt* festival (*Wb* V: 379, 17) seems to fit better according to the remains of the characters than *mnwt nb* – “daily”, which is missing the solar disk and is expressed by *hrt-hrw* elsewhere on the stone.

<sup>44</sup> Brovarski 2001: 92–93, n. d, inscription A2 (3)–(4).

<sup>45</sup> Kanawati – Hassan 1996: 66, pl. 64, TNE94:F123.

<sup>46</sup> Verner 2015 provides an overview of the sources. See also Fettel 2010: 81, n. 794.

<sup>47</sup> Verner 2015: 329, following Barta 1983: 103–104.