



## The Offering of the Two Cobras in the Mammisi of Philae

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### Keywords

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Mammisi  
Philae  
Greco-Roman Period

### Abstract

The walls of Greco-Roman Egyptian temples are covered with scenes of offerings. One of the most important offerings in Egyptian temples of the Greco-Roman period is the offering of the two cobras. It shows the king presenting two cobras associated with each other. This article deals with the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae. It focuses on the scenes and texts of the offering of the two cobras and the purpose of this offering. This study aims to studying the main function of the offering of the two cobras, which appears to express the unification of the two lands and for the king to obtain the rule of all Egypt, i.e. Upper and Lower Egypt, as a legitimate ruler on a united country. This study will be achieved through collecting and translating the texts, identifying the deities, and examining the symbolism and purpose of the ritual.

## Introduction:

Wadjet is the cobra goddess of Buto, or Pe which is an ancient city northeastern Delta (modern Tell el-Fara'in) in the sixth Lower Egyptian nome. The vulture, which represents Nekhbet, the goddess of Nekhen or Hierakonpolis, is her counterpart. The two goddesses were included in the royal emblem as nbty, or "Two Mistresses," one of the king's titles. These two goddesses were the female protectors and guardians of the two lands' crowns. The vulture and the cobra might be merged, for example, the two uraei around the solar disk were frequently regarded as Nekhbet and Wadjet. These goddesses were also the king's mythological mothers, suckling him at their breasts. Wadjet, the young, human female figure, is frequently depicted accompanying the king in Old Kingdom royal reliefs. She is dressed in a vulture headdress with the head and hood of a cobra emerging from under the feather to rise above her forehead. Throughout Pharaonic times, the cobra goddess remained an effective symbol of royal-divine protection.<sup>1</sup>

Egyptian kings and priests continued to give expression to the already well-established belief in the cobra as a powerful, divine spirit or goddess from the beginning of kingship and a state religion. Their artisans represented the cobra as a protective, royal-divine symbol of life and order bestowed by the creator god, carried out and maintained by his son, Horus the king, who united Upper and Lower Egypt. The presence of the vulture (Nekhbet) and the cobra (Wadjet) goddesses combined (Neby) with Horus, or the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, symbolized both the legitimacy and the protection of the throne.<sup>2</sup>

During the Greco-Roman Period, Egyptian temple walls depicted two types of offerings: private offerings for festivities and daily service offerings like food and drink. The second is offerings made to a deity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, S., *The cobra goddess of ancient Egypt Predynastic, Early Dynastic, and Old Kingdom periods*, London, Kegan Paul International, 1990, PP. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, S., *The cobra goddess of ancient Egypt Predynastic, Early Dynastic, and Old Kingdom periods*, London, Kegan Paul International, 1990, P. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Zaki, F., *Scenes of Presenting Boquetes of Flowers in the Egyptian Temples during the Graeco-Roman Period*, Minia University, 2013, P. 139;

عبد الرحمن علي، المعابد المصرية في العصرين البطلمي والروماني، الجزء الأول، القاهرة، ٢٠٠٩، ص ١١.

The cobra goddess has been subject to extensive research in recent years. Scholars have addressed the cobra goddess from different perspectives. In her study on the cobra goddess in ancient Egypt, Sally Johnson has presented a comprehensive investigation into the cobra from pre-dynastic times to the end of the Old Kingdom. She has identified the earliest appearances of the cobra, its forms, and names from the beginning of time until the end of the Old Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> In a similar study, Azza Farouk has drawn attention to the association of the two cobras with the two goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet until the end of the New Kingdom. She has also focused on the appearance of the two goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet, their relationship to royalty, and prominence in ancient Egyptian religion.<sup>5</sup> Equally importantly, Lesley Jackson has also dealt with the cobra's forms and names, as well as the most important deities associated with it.<sup>6</sup>

Scholars have approached the offering of the two cobras from various perspectives. Asmaa Atia, Fatma Salah El Din, and Mery Magdy investigated the offering of the two cobras in their studying. They have only described two scenes in which the two cobras are offered in the temple of Dendera. This is followed by a detail analysis of the texts accompanying the scenes to determine the nature of the offering of the two cobras of various kinds and its purpose in terms of religious symbolism and the benefit that accrues to the king by presumption. They have also showed the differences between the two types of cobra offerings (*Nbty* and *W3dty*).<sup>7</sup> Saeed Ali presented a full description of the offering of the two cobras without considering the accompanying texts. He drew attention to the religious symbolism associated with the two cobras offering and the benefit accruing to the king.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, S., *The cobra goddess of ancient Egypt Predynastic, Early Dynastic, and Old Kingdom periods*, London, Kegan Paul International, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> عزة فاروق سيد حسنين: الألهتان نخبت ووادجيت منذ أقدم العصور وحتى نهاية الدولة الحديثة، رسالة دكتوراه غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، ١٩٩٧.

<sup>6</sup> Jackson, L., *The Cobra Goddess & the Chaos Serpent in Ancient Egypt*, Avalonia, London, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> أسماء عطية زكي محمد عطية & فاطمة صلاح الدين موسى & ميري مجدي أنور كامل، مناظر الإمبراطور الروماني تيبيريوس نيرون قيصر في مصر (١٤-٣٧ م) بمعبد دندرة، المجلة العلمية لكلية السياحة والفنادق، العدد ١٧، الإسكندرية، ٢٠٢٠، ص ٩١-١١٦.

<sup>8</sup> سعيد علي محمد محمد، تصوير الأباطرة الرومان بمعبد إيزيس بدندرة ودير شلويط، دراسة أثرية فنية مقارنة، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآداب، جامعة المنيا، ٢٠١٨ م.

No comprehensive study has come to light on the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae during the Greco-Roman period. This study brings together all the scenes and texts associated with the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae to fully understand its context and symbolism.

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the scenes of the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae, providing full descriptions.
- To provide a linguistic and cultural study of the accompanying texts for gaining a deeper understanding of the ritual.
- To identify the symbolism of the offering of the two cobras.

To achieve these objectives, the study is based on iconographical texts related with the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae. This includes collecting and translating the texts, identifying the deities, and examining the symbolism and purpose of the ritual.

Offering scenes on the walls of these temples are also classified into two types based on the number of participants in each scene: simple offerings, in which the king or donor offers to one deity, such as scenes depicting the king offering to Hathor in Dendara or Horus of Bhdty in Edfu. The second type of offering is compound offerings, in which the king or donor offers to multiple deities. He may make an offering to the triad of the temple (the triad of Edfu) or to a couple of deities (Hathor and Horus of Bhdty).<sup>9</sup>

The scenes of the offerings on the temple walls are of great importance among the temple texts, and thus they occupy a large area of the temple's wall surfaces. In most of the scenes, the king appears while presenting offerings, symbols, and various tools to the various gods and goddesses, especially the god or goddess to whom the temple was primarily dedicated. For example, the goddess Hathor is the main deity in the temple of Dendara, to whom the temple was dedicated with all of its halls and catacombs, whereas Horus of Edfu is the main deity in the temple of Edfu.

The system used to coordinate the distribution of offering scenes on the walls of those temples, where there is always a close relationship linking each scene with the adjacent

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<sup>9</sup> Zaki, F., *Scenes of Presenting Boquetes of Flowers in the Egyptian Temples during the Graeco-Roman Period*, Minia University, 2013, P. 139;

عبد الرحمن علي، المعابد المصرية في العصرين البطلمي والروماني، ص ١٢.

or opposite scene on the other wall, either in terms of the type of offering or in terms of the goddess or deity. This is one of the distinguishing features of the temples in the Ptolemaic period. For the recipient of the offering, the offering text is divided into three parts:

1- The introduction that includes the following:

A- The introduction form includes a title that includes the offering's type and name.

B- The introduction's content includes an overview of the type of offering and its purpose.

2- The presenter's words:

The presenter of the offering is usually the king, who begins his words by listing his titles as the king of Upper and Lower Egypt and the master of the two lands, as the son of Ra and the master of transfiguration, and a supplication for him with all protection, life, and power, and then the king attributes himself to a god or goddess frequently associated with the type of offering that he offers. The king's title changes with each new sacrifice he offers and the hieroglyphic writings in front of the king describe his actions: "The king brings an offering", "offers the vessel", "holds the sistrum", "carries the sky", "plants the tree", and "slays the evil forces". When the king approaches the god, his arms are always aligned with his body, or his hands are raised in front of him as a sign of worship.

3- The deities receiving the offering says:

The goddess or god who receives the offering begins by listing his titles, which are also related to the type of offering, and these words frequently end with a reward given to the king for his efforts and in exchange for the offerings that serve the rituals of serving the god inside the temple.<sup>10</sup>

A birth house, also known as *mammisi*, was a small temple with a very special and distinct function. The term *mammisi* is derived from Egyptian *Pr-Mst* (house/place of birth) transcribed into Coptic and describes a small building never independent but always accompanying the main temple of a cult center. It was dedicated to the cult of a divine son, the third deity of a local triad of gods.<sup>11</sup>

The birth of a child god was associated with the rising sun, which was revived every day, so a celebration of the god's rebirths had a cosmic meaning and was tied up with

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<sup>10</sup> سيلفي كوفيل: *قرايين الآلهة في مصر القديمة*، ترجمة/سهير لطف الله، مطبعة بي إتشرو، ٢٠١٠، ص ٩.

<sup>11</sup> Dumas, F., *Les mammisis des temples égyptiens*, Paris, 1958, P. 21.

the annual revival of ma'at. This concept was firmly associated with the birth of the king, who was perceived as a young god, and with an eternal renewal of his reign.<sup>12</sup> During the reigns of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Ptolemy III Euergetes, the first Ptolemaic birth house was built beside Isis temple on the island of Philae, and it was dedicated to the young Horus. It is one of the best-preserved monuments of its sort, thanks to a salvage effort during the construction of the Aswan dams in the 1960s, when it was relocated to the adjacent island of Agilkia. Unlike other mammisis, it happened to be in a courtyard between the first and second pylons on the parallel axis to the main temple, probably due to the island's limited acreage.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Arnold, D., *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, Oxford, 1999, P. 285.

<sup>13</sup> Dzwonek, A., *Birth Houses of the Ptolemaic Period and their place in Egyptian temple building*, Warsaw, (n. d.), PP. 1-2.

## A Descriptive Study:

### Scene No. 1: Offering of the two cobras *w3dty*

Location: The mammisi of Philae – North wall – Eastern side – Scene No. 2.

Publication: *Junker, H., & Winter, E., Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Wien, 1965, P. 84*




*Fig. 1: Scene of presenting the two cobras to the goddess Wadjet in the mammisi of Philae. After, Junker, H., & Winter, E., Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Wien, 1965, P. 84*

### Description:


The king stands with the right leg advanced and wears a short kilt with a belt that hangs behind him the tail of a bull, a wide collar, a royal false beard, and his head adorns with a feather crown with a sun disk carried upon the horns of a bull. The king offers with his right hand the cobra that wears the White Crown, symbol of the south, while offers with his left hand the cobra that wears the Red Crown, symbol of the north. The goddess Wadjet appears in front of the king in a human form. She wears a long transparent dress, and the red crown, symbol of the north. She holds with her left hand the *wadj* - amulet, while holds with her right hand the *ankh* - sign. The scene is accompanied by the following text:

**1.1. Text<sup>14</sup>:**

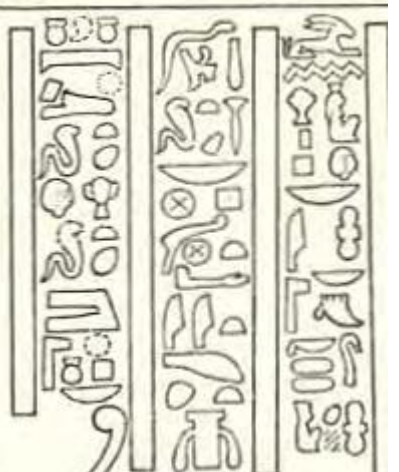
**1.2. Title:**

	<p><i>di w3dty n nbt [.sn] r<sup>c</sup>-nb [rdi] inw n nbt Dp</i></p> <p>Giving the two cobras for their lady every day ... and [ giving] offerings for the lady of Dp.</p>
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**1. 3. The king:**

	<p><i>nswt-bity (iw<sup>c</sup>-n-ntrwy-prwy stp-n-Pth ir-m3<sup>c</sup>t-R<sup>c</sup> shm- nh-Imn)  s3-R<sup>c</sup> (Ptwlmys nh dt nry Pth) </i></p> <p>King of Upper and Lower Egypt (the heir of the two manifest gods, chosen by Ptah, the performer of justice of Ra, the living image of Amun)  son of Ra (Ptolemy, living forever, beloved of Ptah) .</p>
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**1. 4. Wadjet:**

	<p><i>wnn.i hry tp.k mi nb-dr hk3 t3wy mi s3 3st dd mdw in W3dty nbt P-Dp T3yt hnt nnt w<sup>c</sup>t hryt-tp m tp n ntr nb</i></p> <p>I remain upon your head like the lord of all, the ruler of the two lands, like the son of Isis. Recitation by: Wadjet lady of Buto and Dp, Tayt (i.e. goddess of weaving) in the sky, the unique cobra which is upon the head of every god.</p>
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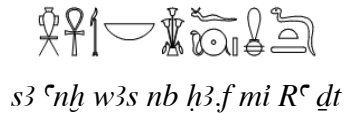
<sup>14</sup> Junker, H., & Winter, E., *Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä*, Wien, 1965, P. 84.



**Comments:**

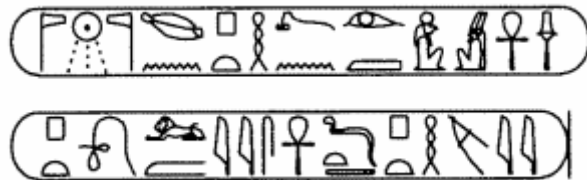
(a) The broken part of the text could be complete with the verb  *rdi* that gives the meaning of "Giving".


(b) The protection formula that comes behind the king is missing here in this scene, and it could be completed as:



All protection, life, and authority are behind him like Ra eternally.

(c) The royal cartouches belong to King Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II Tryphon, and his complete cartouches are:



(d) The goddess Tayt / Tait  *T3yt*:

She is the goddess of weaving and textile.<sup>15</sup> Some texts are detective for the goddess Tayt, and the hymn enumerates different kinds of clothes and their qualities and their which will be bestowed on Osiris. The first cloth is the *idmi-cloth* which is made by the goddess Tayt. While the clothes of Ra will enable Osiris to be triumphant against his enemies. As for the *irtyw-cloth*, made by Wadjet, it makes those who wear it healthy and it seems that the eye of Horus cloth also has the same qualities as the former.<sup>16</sup>

The name of Tayt / Tait is written in various orthographies:



<sup>15</sup> Leitz, C., *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, Bande VII, Leuven: Peeters 2002-2003, P. 359.

<sup>16</sup> Gaber, A., *The Central Hall in the Egyptian Temples of the Ptolemaic Period*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/88/>, 2009, P. 272.

<sup>17</sup> LGG, VII, P. 359.

**Scene No. 2: Offering of the two cobras wrty - *hk3w***

Location: The mammisi of Philae – Screen wall No. 6 – Southern side.

Publication: *Junker, H., & Winter, E., Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Wien, 1965, P. 238*

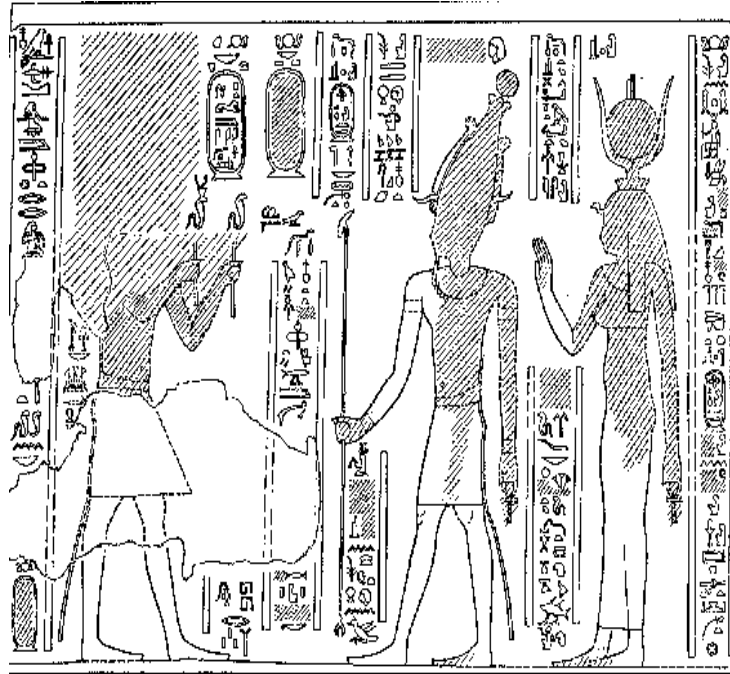


Fig. 2: Scene of presenting the two cobras to the god Osiris and the goddess Isis in the mammisi of Philae. After, *Junker, H., & Winter, E., Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Wien, 1965, P. 238*

**Description:**

The king stands with the left leg advanced and wears a short kilt with a belt that hangs behind him the tail of a bull. Unfortunately, the rest of the king's body is damaged, including the part of the crown. What remains of the king's body are his hands that hold the two cobras. He offers with his right hand the cobra that wears the Red Crown, symbol of the north, while offers with his left hand the cobra that wears the White Crown, symbol of the south. The god Osiris appears in front of the king, standing in a human form, and wearing the Atef crown. He holds with his right hand the *Was* - scepter, while holds with his left hand the *ankh* - sign. Behind him we can see goddess Isis in a human form. She wears a long transparent dress, and the Hathorian crown with her distinctive symbol upon it. She holds with her right hand the *Wadj* - amulet, while holds with her left hand the *ankh* - sign. The scene is accompanied by the following text:

### 1.1. Text<sup>18</sup>:

#### 1.2. Title:

[*hnk*]<sup>a</sup> *wrty-hk3w<sup>b</sup> dd mdw nfr hdt tn ..... m hdt Nhn nty psi m Dp ..... [rdi] hh r sbyw*  
 [Offering] of the two cobras, recitation: What a beautiful is that white one (i.e. Nekhbet) ..... with the white of Nekhen that shines in Dp, .... [who send] flame against the enemies.

#### 1.3. The king:

*nswt-bity nb-t3wy (.....)| s3-R<sup>c</sup> nb-h<sup>c</sup>w (Ptwlmys <sup>c</sup>nh dt mry 3st)|*

King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the two lands (.....)| son of Ra, lord of crowns (Ptolemy, living forever, beloved of Isis)|.

#### 1.4. Behind the king:

*s3 <sup>c</sup>nh w3s nb h3.f mi R<sup>c</sup> dt*

All protection, life, and authority are behind him like Ra eternally.

#### 1.5. The inscription column behind the king:

*<sup>c</sup>nh ntr nfr bh n hdt Nhn rr .... [hnk] w3dty n nb [.sn] ..... nswt-bity .....*

Long live the good god who was born from the white of Nekhen (= Nekhbet), who was suckled by ..... [who offering] the two cobras for the lord of [them] ..... the king of Upper and Lower Egypt (.....).

#### 1.6. Osiris:

*dd mdw in Wsir (wnn-nfrw m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw)| ntr <sup>c</sup>3 nb T3t-w<sup>c</sup>bt nswt t3wy hry-tp idbw hk3 nfr  
 hnty ..... tni.i .... st.... n nswyt h<sup>c</sup>.tw hry-tp rhyt*

Recitation by: Osiris (wenn – nefer, the victorious) the great god, the master of Philae (= The pure hill), the king of the two lands, the ruler of the banks, the good ruler within ..... I distinguish ... a place .... and make your property shining, and you rise upon humans.

#### 1.7. Isis:

*dd mdw in 3st wrt mwt nt ntr hwyw hwy sn.s Wsir .... i<sup>c</sup>rt m-<sup>c</sup>b nbt 3hbyt stp-s3 n.k hr  
 bs.k*

Recitation by: Isis the great, the divine mother and protector who protects her brother Osiris ..... The cobra with the lady of the town of Khamis (= Buto), while the palace holds your image.

<sup>18</sup> Junker, H., & Winter, E., *Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä*, Wien, 1965, P. 238.

### 1.8. The inscription column behind Isis:


*Nswt-bity nswt n nhh ity bity n dt hk3 nfr [n] ntrw B3kt; Wsir (wnn-nfrw m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw) |  
shw šps hnty I3t-w<sup>c</sup>bt<sup>c</sup>*


King of Upper and Lower Egypt, king of eternity, ruler king of eternity, the good ruler [of] the gods of Egypt, Osiris (wenn–nefer, the victorius)| the strong, noble, the foremost inside Philae (= The pure hill).

#### Comments:


(a) The verb of the offering formula is missing. The verb is *hnk* according to the verb that used in most scenes of the offering of the two cobras. The verb could be written as:




(b)  *wrty-hk3w*: The two cobras are one of various terms that refers to the two cobras. The main meaning of the term is "The two greats of magic". In the singular form the term is used of the uraeus or uraei, though it can be an epithet of goddesses such as Hathor (especially at Dendara), Isis and also Seshat. Wadjet and Nekhbet could be individually identified as *wrty-hk3w* of *šm<sup>c</sup>w/Mhw*. Together, the two serpents are *wrty-hk3w* who encircle the brow of the king. The king is also adorned with the *wrty-hk3w*.<sup>20</sup>

(c)  *i3t-w<sup>c</sup>bt*: The pure hill / mound = Philae:

One of the various names and epithets belong to Philae. The name refers to Philae as the sacred and pure place. The word *i3t* means hill or mound and it used in various names of the town of Edfu such as:<sup>21</sup>

1-  *i3t 3ht nhh* Mound of the horizon of eternity

2-  *i3t i3hw* Mound of the shining one

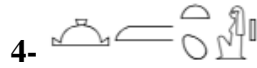
<sup>19</sup> Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*, Vol III, Berlin und Leipzig, 1957, 17 (5); Wilson, P., *A Ptolemaic Lexikon: A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu*, OLA, 78, Leuven, 1997., P. 657.

<sup>20</sup> WPL, PP. 241 - 242.

<sup>21</sup> WPL, PP. 36 - 37.



*i3t ḥ3ty* Mound of the fighter



*i3t m3ʿt* Mound of the Maat



*i3t n Bḥdt* Mound of Edfu



*i3t n Wsir m db3t* Mound of Osiris of Edfu

**Scene No. 3: Offering of the two cobras w3ḏty**

Location: The mammisi of Philae – Eastern wall – Lower right side.

Publication: *Junker, H., & Winter, E., Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Wien, 1965, P. 382*

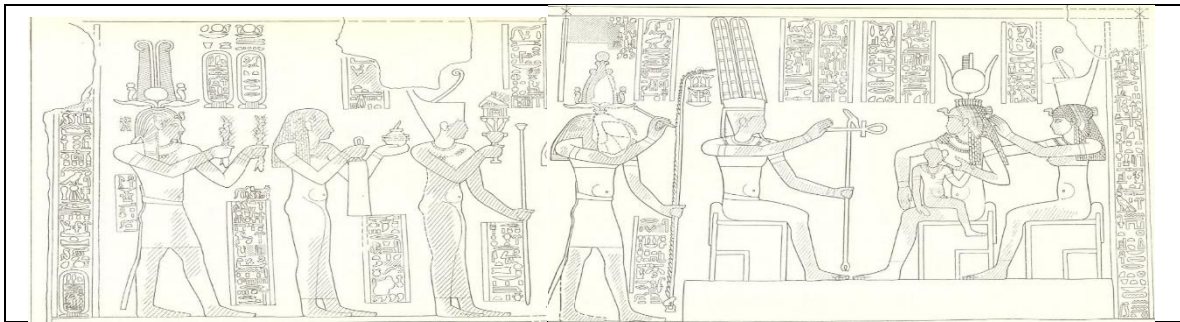


Fig. 3: Scene of presenting the two cobras to the goddess Isis and the god Horus in the mammisi of Philae. After, *Junker, H., & Winter, E., Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Wien, 1965, P. 382*



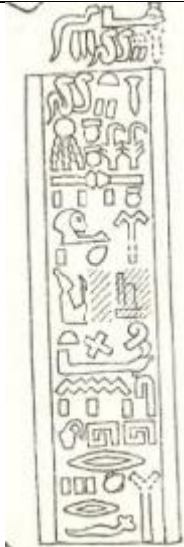
*Details of the scene of the king*

**Description:**

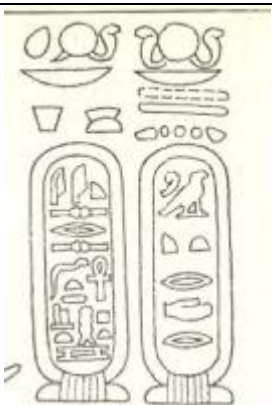
The king stands with the left leg advanced and wears a short kilt with a belt that hangs behind him the tail of a bull, a wide collar, a royal false beard, and his head adorns with a feather crown with a sun disk carried over the horns of a bull. The king offers with his right hand the cobra that wears the White Crown, symbol of Upper Egypt, while offers with his left hand the cobra that wears the Red Crown, symbol of Lower Egypt. The scene represents the king within a large scene of the bearer of sacrifices in front of Isis, who is breastfeeding Horus, as a symbol of the gods welcoming the divine child. The king here offers for Horus the child the two cobras, symbol of control over all of Egypt. The scene is accompanied by the following text:

**1.1. Text<sup>22</sup>:**

**1.2. Title:**

	<p><i>h<sub>nk</sub> w<sub>3</sub>d<sub>ty</sub> d<sub>d</sub> m<sub>dw</sub> w<sub>3</sub>d<sub>ty</sub> n<sub>n</sub> p<sub>s</sub>d<sub>.sn</sub> m h<sub>3</sub>t s<sub>3</sub> 3<sub>st</sub></i>  <i>W<sub>sir</sub>; w<sub>d</sub>.sn h<sub>h</sub> r s<sub>byw</sub> r .f</i></p> <p>Offering of the two cobras, recitation: These two cobras shine upon the head of the son of Isis and Osiris, and they throw flames towards the enemies who are against him.</p>
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**1.3. The king:<sup>a</sup>**

	<p><i>nswt-bity nb-t3wy (3wtwkrtr)  s<sub>3</sub> R<sup>c</sup> nb h<sup>c</sup>w</i>  <i>(Kysrs n<sub>h</sub> dt mry Pth, 3st) </i></p> <p>King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the two lands (Autokrator)  son of Ra, master of crowns (Caesar, living forever, beloved of Ptah and Isis).</p>
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<sup>22</sup> Junker, H., & Winter, E., *Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä*, Wien, 1965, P. 382.

### 1.4. Behind the king:



[s3] ḥw w3s nb ḥ3.f mi R<sup>c</sup> dt

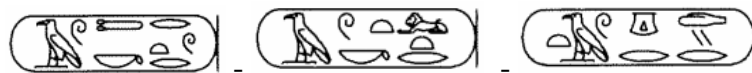
All [protection]<sup>b</sup>, life, and authority are behind him like Ra eternally.

#### Comments:

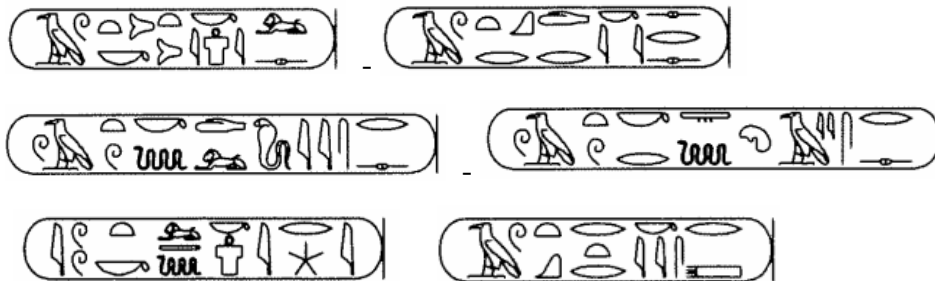
(a) The royal names and cartouches belong to emperor Augustus Cesar. The title Autokrator means "The individual king or dictator" and the emperor Augustus is the first one of Roman emperors who holds these titles. The full titles of the emperor Augustus are:



The title Autokrator is written in various orthographies such as:



It also come in the same cartouche with the title Cesar such as:



(b) The protection formula behind the king is missing. The word s3 means "Protection". The word could be written as:





This protection formula always comes behind the king to give him all protection against all his enemies.

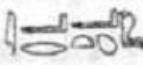
<sup>23</sup> Von Beckerath, J., *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, Berlin, 1984, PP. 249 - 251.

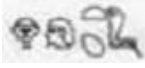
<sup>24</sup> WB. III 414 (9) - 415 (17); WPL, P. 782.

### An Analytic Study:

In the offering scenes in the texts of the mammisi at Philae the two cobras are given

two different names  *w3dty*<sup>25</sup> and  *wrty-hk3w*<sup>26</sup>, this is in addition

to terms and synonyms that express the cobra individually  *iʿrt*<sup>27</sup> and

 *hry-tp*<sup>28</sup>.

The verbs that used in the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae are *hnk*

 "To offer", *di*  "To offer - to give" and *rdi*  "To give".

The deities associated with the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae according to the arrangement of the scenes: goddess Wadjet, god Osiris, goddess Isis, god Amun-Ra, god Djehoty and goddess Neith.

The number of appearances of the gods and goddesses in the scenes of the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae and their arrangement according to these numbers are shown in the following table.

Total number	Scene	Deity
2	Scene No. 1 – Scene No. 3	Wadjet
2	Scene No. 2 – Scene No. 3	Isis
1	Scene No. 2	Osiris
1	Scene No. 3	Amun-Ra
1	Scene No. 3	Djehoty
1	Scene No. 3	Neith

<sup>25</sup> WB. I 269 (1-4); WPL, P. 208.



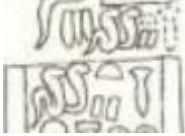

<sup>26</sup> Chassiant, E., Dendara, II, P. 79; Cauville, S., Dendara II traduction, PP. 126 – 129.

<sup>27</sup> WB. I 42 (1-4); WPL, PP. 44 – 45.

<sup>28</sup> WB. III 141 (9-11); WPL, PP. 667 – 668.


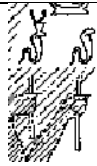


The table shows that goddess Wadjet and goddess Isis appeared twice in the scenes of the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae. God Osiris, god Amun-Ra, god Djehoty and goddess Neith came second, with only one occurrence for each of them. The iconographic and orthographic forms of the offering of the two cobras *w3dty* in the mammisi of Philae:

Orthographic form	Iconographic form	Scene
		Scene No. 1
		Scene No. 3

The iconographic and orthographic forms of the offering of the two cobras *wrtȝ-ḥk3w* in the mammisi of Philae:

The offering of the two cobras *wrtȝ-ḥk3w* appeared with this name once in the mammisi of Philae.

Orthographic form	Iconographic form	Scene
		Scene No. 2

The following table shows the number of appearances of the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae:

Total number	The two cobras
2	<i>w3dty</i>
1	<i>wrtȝ-ḥk3w</i>



Thus, the total number of the scenes of the offering of the two cobras that were studied in this paper is 3 scenes in the mammisi of Philae.

**The symbolic and religious meaning of the offering of the two cobras:**

The term *w3dty* or *wrtȝ-ḥk3w* refers to the two cobras that symbolize to the two goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. The offering of the two cobras by the king expresses his offering to Upper and Lower Egypt, the unification of the two lands of

the country, and the two crowns as well. It also represents a guarantee of the king's rule over the two lands.<sup>29</sup>

The origins of this tradition of the offering of the two cobras go back to the fact that god Horus was the heir to Osiris after he defeated his enemy Seth and united the two lands. He received two sacred cobras, the first a cobra that represents Lower Egypt and the second with a vulture head that symbolizing Upper Egypt. In turn, Horus delivered the two cobras to the pharaoh who represented his heir to the throne of the country.<sup>30</sup>

In this offering, the king usually bears titles and attributes that indicate his symbolic role in the unification of the two lands of the country together, in addition to the titles that link him to Upper and Lower Egyptian goddesses, Nekhbet and Wadjet, as their heir such as:  *Nswt-bity* and  *S3-R<sup>c</sup>* that appeared in these texts in the mammisi of Philae.

**The rewards that the king receives in return for the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae:**

The reward	Deity	Scene
I remain upon your head like the lord of all, the ruler of the two lands, like the son of Isis.	Wadjet	Scene No. 1
Make your property shining, and you rise upon humans.	Osiris	Scene No. 2

<sup>29</sup> WPL, P. 208.

<sup>30</sup> Cauville, S., *Offerings to the Gods in Egyptian Temples*, P. 129.

## Conclusion:

The offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae appeared 3 times. Once on the north wall, once on the screen wall no. 6 and once on the eastern wall.

The Ptolemaic kings (king Ptolemy VIII Euergetes and the second king may be king Ptolemy XII) offered the two cobras twice, while the Roman emperor (emperor Augustus Cesar) only once.

The names that express the offering of the two cobras in the mammisi of Philae varied, in addition to the terms and synonyms that express the cobra individually.

The verbs used in the offering of the two cobras are different, but they serve the same purpose.

The offering of the two cobras can be presented to only one god, one goddess, two gods, a god and a goddess, or to a group of deities together. So, the offering of the two cobras are present to both male and female deities.

At the mammisi of Philae, in most cases, the offering is made to goddess Wadjet and Isis.

The two cobras were presented only by male kings and emperors. It is offered on papyrus plant and lotus flower as symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt. It is presented by the two hands of the kings or emperors.

In the offering of the two cobras, the king usually bears titles that indicate his symbolic role in the unification of the two lands.

The iconographic and orthographic forms of the offering of the two cobras *w3dty* varied in the mammisi of Philae and it appeared twice, while *wrtj-hk3w* appeared only once.

Through the offering of the two cobras, the king receives many rewards, which reflect in turn, the symbolism of the two cobras and its association with the control over the two lands. So, the king's role in this offering appears as a legitimate ruler of Egypt who practices his full legitimacy.

The two cobras represented the two lands, Upper and Lower Egypt. The main purpose of the offering of the two cobras is for the king to obtain the rule of all Upper and Lower Egypt. The white-crowned cobra symbolizes Upper Egypt and the red-crowned cobra symbolizes Lower Egypt. When the king offers the two cobras, he hopes to obtain the reward that includes the rule of Egypt and also obtain the royal legitimacy in ruling Egypt.

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