البحث

IDENTIFICATION OF GODLIKES THROUGH THE EGYPTIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS

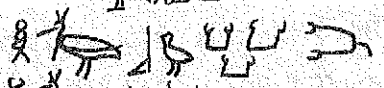
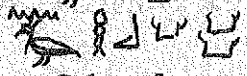
Dr. Abou El Eyoun Barakat
Dr. Adel El Toukhy

A comprehensive review of the religious texts; pyramid texts(1), coffin texts(2), and book of the dead(3), reveals that numerous names of characters, who resemble gods, appear in these texts having no reference in the other texts or in the inscriptions on the walls of temples and/or tombs. The ancient Egyptians, in their life, did not express any petitions or prays to those characters indicating doubts about their god-being and whether they were gods acting in the netherworld or they were spirits who had a definite duty in the netherworld. So, they will be dealt with as the so called "godlikes" in this paper.

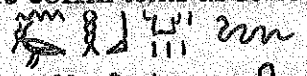
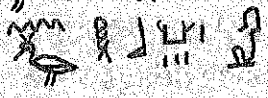
Among the godlikes under this study whose names frequently appear in the religious texts, Nḥb-K3w, M3-ḥ3.f, and ᶜqn are the godlikes to be considered in this respect.

Nhb-k3w

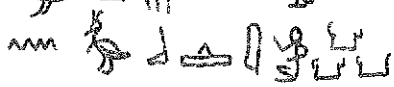
This name appears in the pyramid texts in various forms of writings as follows :

1.  (PT I 489 b)
2.  (PT I 361 a)
3.  (PT I 340 b)
4.  (PT I 346 a)

Other forms of the name Nḥb-k3w writings appear in the coffin texts as follows:

1.  (CT III 318 d)
2.  (CT IV 311 b)

3.  (CT VI 133)

4.  (CT VII 116 g-h)

Also, the form  (BD30) appears in the book of the dead.

Moreover, WB dealt with this name as "der die kas macht" describing it as a characteristic of some gods particularly, both of Horus and Thot. In addition, this name refers to the evil snake and the feminine form Nḥbt-k3w means the snake who guards the queen(4).

Nhb-k3w was drawn in various snaky forms. The most important forms are : (1) a great snake having two heads each with a different neck,(5) and the tail is ended with a snaky head(6). (Fig. 1,2), (2) a snake having a human limbs with raising hands to the mouth or carrying a small container, with w3dt eye. This form is also graved on the basis of Sekhmet and Bastet thrones(7). (Fig. 3), and (3) a human form with snaky head. This form is represented in the ivory statues in the British Museum(8). Also, the form of a kneeling man catching a snake in both hands.(9) (Fig. 4).

Concerning the duty of Nḥb-k3w, it is obvious, from the religious texts and the drawings, that he had a conflict duties. For example, Nhb-k3w is mentioned in the pyramid texts in a letter to the snakes in the netherworld.

ḏd mdw ꜥnt tw nn nt Itm ḥrt ṯs qbsw Nḥb-k3w ss3t ḫnw m Wnw jḫr sbn.

. Words to be said: O you adze of Atum which is upon the vertebra of Nehebkau, which brings to an end the strife in Unu; fall! perish! (PTI 229 a-c).

Another example from the coffin texts reveals that Nḥb-k3w had a similar duty, besides to describing the dead with the name of Nhb-k3w.

j 3m hm Nḥb-k3w
"O you who burn Nehebkau." (CT V 40 b).
jnk Nḥb-k3w
"I am Nehebkau" (CT V 37 l).
ḫpr m Nḥb-k3w
"To become Nehebkau" (CT VI 133 i).

Moreover, the name of Nhb-k3w is mentioned as a judge of the forty-two judges of Osiris in the netherworld at the 125th chapter of the book of the dead. It is also shown, in the religious texts, that Nḥb-k3w is one of the sun god characteristics(10) with a supporting references in the pyramid texts.

jn.sn n.f fdw jpw 3ḫm smsw ḫntjw ḳnsktjw ꜥḥꜥw m gs j3bt n pt ḏsrw ḥr ḏꜥmw sn ḏd.sn rn nfr n Wnjs pn n Rꜥ sjw.sn Wnjs pn n Nḥb-k3w.

"They (the gods) bring to him those four eldest spirits who are in front of the tresses of Horus, who stand in the east of the sky, adorned with their sceptres. They tell the beautiful name of this Weins to Re, they announce this Wenis to Nehebkau." (PTI 339b-340b).

njs.tw jr Ttj jn R^c dj.tw n.f jḫt jn Nḥb-k3w
"Teti is summoned by Re, food is given to him by Nehebkau. "(PTI 346a).

As for the coffin texts, Nhb-k3w has the characteristic of the god Ptah. Also, he was considered the godson of the god Geb and the goddess Rennut.

nšm.j njw.j. m wj3 R^c dj.j swt n Nḥb-k3w
"I departed and returned in the bark of Re, that I give thrones to Nehebkau" (CT VII 169 f-h)
h3 Wsjr N pn twt Nḥb-k3w S3 Gb n mwt.f Rnnwt twt jrf k3 n nṯr nb sḫm m jb.f.

"Ho! this Osiris N ! you are Nehebkau, son of Geb, born of his mother Rennut; you are indeed the double of every god, having power in his heart." (CT VI 392 j).

jnk rs jnb.f jtjj nṯrw jnk nsw n pt Nḥb-k3w srr t3wjj Nḥb-k3w ddj b3w ḫ^cw k3w S^vc^w jnk Nḥb-k3w jw ^cnḫ.sn r c.j mrr.j ^cnḫ.sn.

"I am he who is south of his wall(11), Monarch of the gods; I am king of the sky, even Nehebkau who rules the two lands, Nehebkau who grants souls, crowning doubles and beginnings, I am Nehebkau, and their lives are at my hand, when I wish I act they live." (CT VI 268 h-l).

In the book of the dead, messeges for the sun god and Nhb-k3w to let the former sails in the sky leading an enjoyable and healthy life and later in the Mᶜndtj - bark(12) which belonged to the god Re.

> *d3.k ḥrjj m ᶜnḫ w3s Nḥb-k3w m mᶜndt ršj wj3.k jb.k*
> "You sail over the sky in life and health, Nehebkau being in the Mᶜndt-barque, your barque rejoices your heart "(BDI 15 a.).

M3-ḥ3.f and ᶜqn

Another godlikes named M3-ḥ3.f and ᶜqn appear in the religious texts in relation to the deceased's jurney to the field of Iaru across the winding waterway(13). They have special duties with the ferry-boat by which the deceased traverses to the field of Iaru.

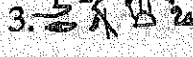
M3-ḥ3.f.

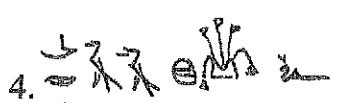
The godlike M3-ḥ3.f appears in the religious texts in various writing forms:

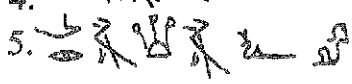
In the pyramid texts :

1.  (PT 1 383 a)
2.  (PT 1 597 a)
3.  (PT II 925 c)

In the coffin texts.

1.  (CT V 73 n)
2.  (CT V 74 i)
3.  (CT V 170 g M2N4a)

4.  (CT V 170 g M_2N_4b)

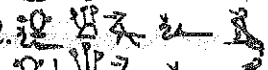
5.  (CT VI 17 a)

Also the book of the dead involves the same name in numerous locations.

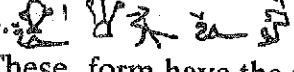
From the previously mentioned writings, the name can be transliterated in different types; m-ḥ3.f, m3.n ḥ3.f and m3-ḥ3-tp.f. In spite of being written or transliterated in different forms, the name M3-ḥ3.f has sole translation with the meaning of "a person who can see his back" or "who can see backwards". This meaning is in agreement with the translation given by Mueller(14), Budge(15) and Faulkner(16).

The abovementioned meaning is in accordance with the appearance of the name in other forms such as :

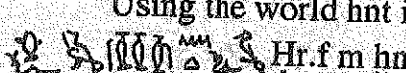
1.  (PT I 383 a)

2.  (PT II 999 a)

3.  (PT II 1441)

4.  (CT III 174 i)

These form have the transliteration: Ḥr.f-ḥ3.f which has the synonymous of the name M3-ḥ3.f. Als it was written in the form Ḥr.f-m-ḥ3.f (PT I 493) as translated with the meaning "his face is in his back", which leads to the same meaning.

Using the world ḥnt instead of ḥ3 with indication in  Ḥr.f m ḫnt.f (PT I 493) was another form for the godlike name.

The duty of M3-ḥ3.f is obviously shown in the various religious texts. He is frequently mentioned in the spells related to the deceased's jurney in the netherworld at his way

to the field of Iaru[17]. He seems to be responsible of the ferry-boat, by which the deceased traverses to the field of Iaru across the winding waterway which surrounds its northern edge.

Meuller believes that the name of the godlike M3-ḥ3.f is due to the fact that the ferry-man, during rowing, must sit at a position in which his back faces the foremast. In other words" his face is backward". That ensures the normality of the godlike M3-ḥ3.f 's face position.

There is a scene on Ani papyrus[18], in which the deceased appears carrying the writing tools in one hand and raising the other in front of the ferry-man (M3-ḥ3.f) sitting in the ferry-boat. with his face towards his back. (Fig. 5).

The duty of the godlike M3-ḥ3.f begins as the deceased calls him to be awake.

> *ḏd mdw rs.k m ḥtp Ḥr.f - ḥ3.f m ḥtp M3-ḥ3.f m ḥtp*
> words recited: "May you awake in peace! O Hr.f - h3.f in peace! O M3-h3.f in peace!" (PTI 383a).

Then the deceased asks him to bring the ferry-boat to traverse across the winding waterway, calling him with many different attributes and describing him as a gods ox to indicate the M3-h3.f powerful.

> *Ḥr.f-m-ḫnt.f Ḥr.f-m-ḥ3.f jn nw n Wnjs*

"O Herefemkhentef, Herefemhaef, bring this to king Wenis" (PTI 493).

M3-ḥ3.f k3 nṯrw jn nw n Wnjs dj Wnjs pn m gs pf n ᶜnḫ w3S
"O Mahaf, Bull of the gods, bring this to the king Wenis and set this king Wenis on that side of life and authority" (PTII 925 c-d).

j Ḥr.f-ḥ3.f m ḫntj n šNḫ3 jn n.j nw ḏ3 wj dj wj m pf gs ḥnᶜ šnw pn ntjw m-ᶜ.j
"O Herefhaf, Ferryman of the winding waterway, bring this to me, ferry me across , and put me in that side with these bags which are in my hand. "(CT III 174 i-l).

After that the deceased asks him to awaken ᶜqn (the other godlike who will be discussed in the next part of this paper).

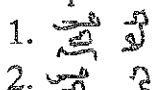
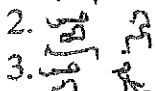
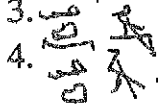
M3-ḥ3.f srs n.j ᶜqn ḥn.k m cnḫ mk wj jj.kwj
"O Mahaf, awaken Aqen for me, may you endow with life. Behold, I have come" (CT V 77 b-c).

M3-ḥ3.f SrS ᶜqn jn.tj.fj n.j nw ḥn.k m ᶜnḫ mk wj wr jj.kwj
"O Mahaf, awaken Aqen who will bring me this, may you endow with life.

Behold, I am a great one and I have come.
(CT V 74 i-l).

ᶜqn

The name of the godlike ᶜqn appears in the same texts of his companion M3-ḥ3.f in various writing forms as follows:

1.  (CT V 730)
2.  (CT V 77 b)
3.  (CT V 82 c)
4.  (BD 99)

He often is the ferry-boat servant or attendant who is responsible for preparing the ferry-boat to be ready to cross the winding waterway. It was mentioned before that the deceased asks M3-ḥ3.f to awaken ᶜqn. Here ᶜqn awakes saying:

jssšt pwj jn ᶜqn wnnt sgr. kwj
"What is it? says Aqen, I was asleep"
(CTV 107a).

In a long conversation between the godlike ᶜqn and the deceased which deals with the knowledge of the later about the gods names and the portions of the ferry-boat, indicates the ability of the deceased to reply most of the questions. However, the ᶜqn says:

nn n ḏd.n.k ḏ3.k r bw ḫr nṯr pf šps jm ḏd
jrf nṯr pn šps jn ḏ3.n.k n.j z n rḫ.f ṯnw
ḏbᶜw.f

"As for what you have said, that you would ferry over to the place where this august god is, this august god will say: "have you ferried over to me a man who doesn't know the number of his fingers?" (CT V 115 a-d)

Then, the ᶜqn permits the deceased to ascend the ferry-boat after the later shows his knowledge by counting his fingers.(19)

h3 rk r mḫnt tn n rḫ.k ṯnw nw ḏbᶜw.k

"Go abroad the ferry-boat, because you know the number of your fingers." (CT V 154 d-e).

In a conclusion, the mentioning of the name of Nḥb-k3w accompanied with and in equal to the god Re is a good indication that he is not a characteristic of Re and can be considered an independent creature named Nḥb-k3w, who often was a companion or an attendant of Re. Some texts mentioned that Nḥb-k3w was an enemy who was attacked by the god Atum. This evil role may be due to the appearance of Nḥb-k3w among the terrifying gods consisting the forty-two judges of Osiris tribunal.

Concerning the duties of M3-ḥ3.f and ᶜqn, it is evident that they have the responsibility of the ferry-boat. TheM3-ḥ3.f has numerous and different writings and transliterations i.e., Ḥr.f-ḥ3.f , M3-ḥ3.f , Ḥr.f-m-ḫnt.f , M3-ḥ3-tp.f and Ḥr.f m ḥ3.f, which all lead to the same meaning: "whose face is in his

back". That indicates his principal duty as a ferry-man whose face must be in this position. The ᶜqn is in charge of preparing the ferry-boat to be ready for sailing across the winding waterway to the field of Iaru. Also he has the duty to ask the deceased to prove his knowledge about the gods and he has the right to permit the deceased to ascend the ferry-boat.

Thus, the Nḥb - k3w, M3-ḫ3.f and ᶜqn are three characters who have different duties in the netherworld. Their duties give them the periorities to have characteristics that make them of god-being nature. But they can not be considered as real gods.

Notes

1. Sethe K., Altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrucken und photographien des Berliner Museums, 3 vols., Leipzig 1908; Faulkner R., The ancient egyptian pyramid texts, oxford 1969.

2. De Buck, A., The egyptian coffin texts, 7 vols. Chicago 1935-1961; Fanlkner R., The ancient egyptian coffin texts, 3 vols, Warmister, 1973, 1977, 1978.

3. Budge W., The book of the dead, 2 vols., London 1915; Naville E. Das egyptische Totenbuch, 2 Vols. Berlin, 1886; Faulkner R., The ancient egyptian book of the dead, New York 1972.
4. WB II 291-292; Shorter A., The god Nehebkau in JEA 21 (1935), P. 41.
5. Clark R., Myth and Symbol, P. 40.
6. Bucher P., Les Textes de Tombes de Thauthmosis III et d'Amenophis II, I.P. 25; Budge W., The egyptian heaven and hell, I. P.79; Shorter A., The God Nehebkau, JEA 21, p. 42.

7. Shorter A., Two statuettes of the goddess Sekhmet-Ubastet, JEA 18 (1932) pp. 121 ff.
8. Petrie F., Objects of Daily use, London, 1915, pls. 37. 39.
9. Shorter A., op. cit.
10. Grapow, H., Feligiose Urkunden, (Translation), P. 27, note 8; Piper M., Die grosse Inschrift des konigs Neferhotep in Abydos, Warminster 1976, p. 40.
11. About the phrase rs jnb.f as a title for the god Ptah see WB II 452.
12. Shorter A., op. cit. p. 45.
13. About the winding waterway (Nh3) see: Budge W., The book of the dead, An English translation of the chapters, Hymns, etc., of the Theban Recension with introduction, 3rd ed., London 1977, P. IX; Lesko H, The field of Hetep in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, JARCE 9, P. 93.
14. Mueller D., An Early Egyptian Guide to the Hereafter, JEA 58, P 104.
15. Budge W., op. cit., p. 324.
16. Faulkner R., CT, Vol. II, pp. 24 ff.
17. About the field of Iaru see: Weil R., Le Champ des roseaux et le champ des Offerands dans la religion funéraire et la rélgion générale, Paris 1936; Bayoumi A., Autour du champ des souchets et du champ des Offerandes, Cairo, 1940.
18. Faulkner R. BD, P. 94.
19. Sethe K., Ein alt ägyptische Fingerzahlrein, ZÄS 54, P. 16 ; Gunn B. , Fingernumbering in the pyramid texts , ZÄS 57, p. 71.

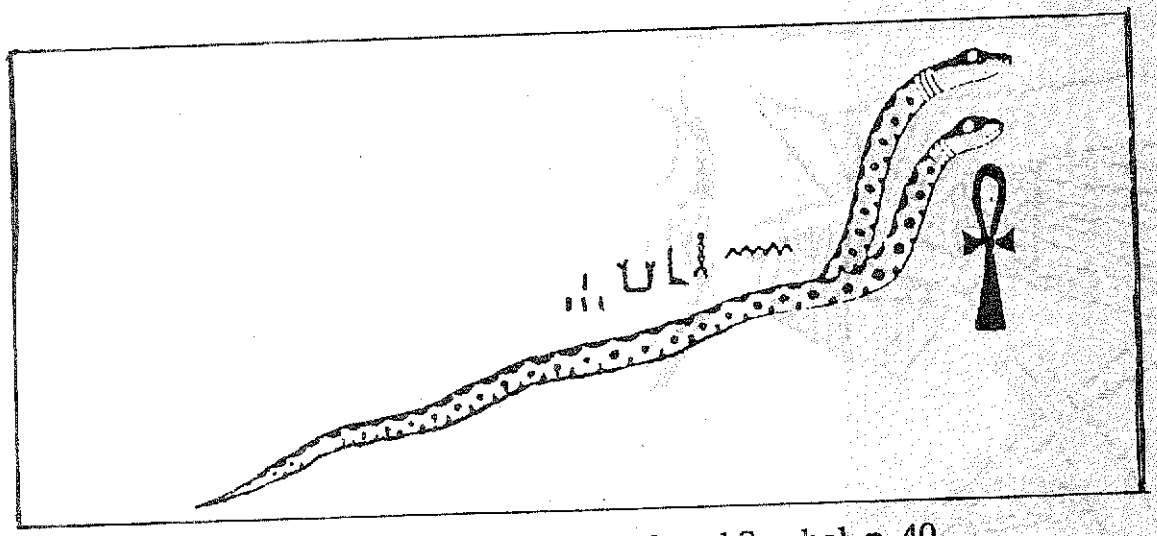


Figure 1 : Clark R., Myth and Symbol, p. 40

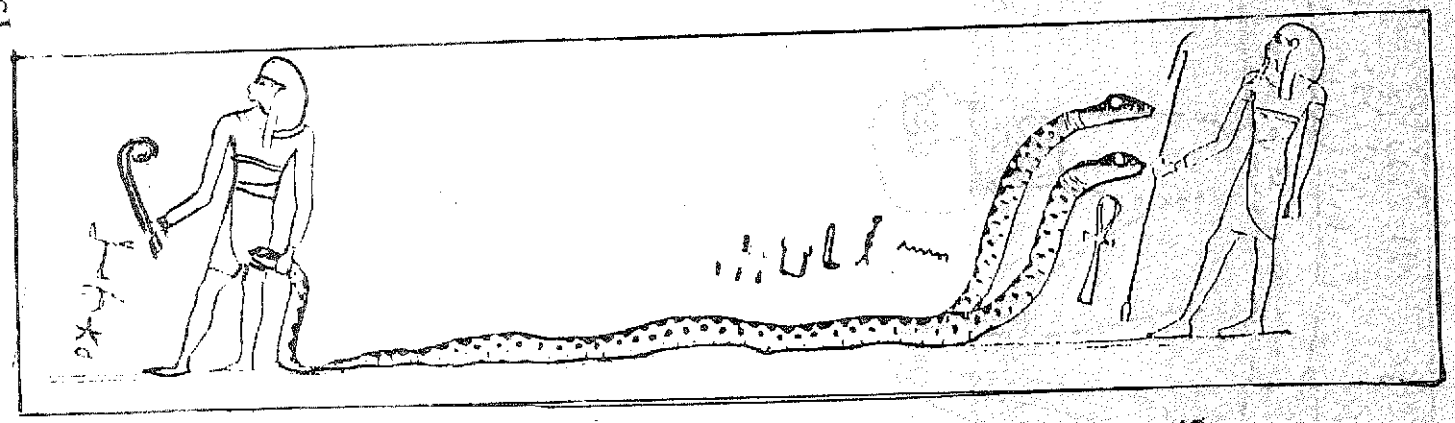


Figure 2 : Shorter A., The God Nehebkau, in JEA 21, p. 42

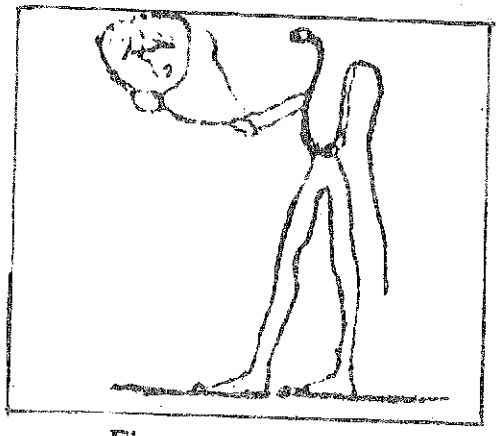


Figure 3 : loc. cit.

Figure 4 : loc. cit.

Figure 5 : Faulkner R., B.D., P. 94.