The Egyptian Egyptologists Publications of Dendera Temple Texts منشورات العلماء المصريين لنصوص معبد دندرة

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ملخص

يعد معبد دندرة بمحافظة قنا أهم المعالم الأثرية والسياحية بالمحافظة، ظلت نصوصه غامضة واستغلق فهمها على الباحثين لفترات طويلة حتى قدم العالم الفرنسي مارييت ومن بعده العالم الفرنسي شاسيناه نشرًا لهذه النصوص دون ترجمة لها، ثم جاءت بعد ذلك جهود العلماء الأجانب في ترجمة هذه النصوص وتحليلها، ويأتي في مقدمة هؤلاء العلماء الأجانب في فرنسا والمانيا فرانسوا دوما، ثم تبعته العالمة الفرنسية سيلفي كوفيل. وهناك إسهامات أخرى لبعض العلماء الآخرين من فرنسا والمانيا وأمريكا وإنجلترا.

في هذه الورقة البحثية يحاول الباحث تتبع جهود العلماء والباحثين المصريين وإسهاماتهم في ترجمة نصوص معبد دندرة، وحيث إن معظم الدراسات المقدمة باللغة العربية فإن الكثير في مجال علم الآثار لا يعرفون عن هذه الجهود شيئًا؛ وهنا يأتي دور هذا البحث لتعريف الباحثين الجدد بمجهودات من سبقهم وكذلك فتح الباب للاستمرار في هذا المجال.

قدم العديد من العلماء والباحثين المصريين دراسات وأبحاثًا علمية ساهمت بشكل كبير في فك غموض نصوص معبد دندرة، وأصبح لمصر الآن مكانة متميزة وبرزت أسماء مصرية كثيرة في مجال اللغة المصرية القديمة في العصر البطلمي والروماني، وقد كان هذا المجال حتى زمن قريب حكرًا على الباحثين الأجانب وخصوصًا الفرنسيين.

من أمثلة العلماء والباحثين المصريين في هذا المجال:

• حسان عامر	• شافية بدير	• زينب الكردي
• عادل طوبيا	• علي عمر عبد الله	• ممدوح الدماطي
• أيمن وهبي	• محمد التونسي	• حنان محرم
• أحمد سفينة	• ميسرة عبد الله	• عبد الرحمن على

Dendera is the modern name of the ancient town *iwnt* During the late period, the epithet *tA-nIrt* (meaning 'of the goddess') was added to distinguish it from similarly named places.

The form *Iwnt-tA-nIrt* is the direct ancestor of the Greek Tentura and Coptic Nitntwre and modern Dendera.

Dendera lies on the edge of the Western Desert (on the western bank of the Nile), 60 kms to the north of Luxor and 4 kms to the north west of Qena.

It was the capital of the sixth Nome of Upper Egypt, this Nome extended from just south of Qena to Hu, including both sides of the Nile.

Its importance lies in the fact that it was the main cult center for the goddess Hathor who is identified by the Greeks with the goddess Aphrodite.¹

Egyptian Egyptologists presented many studies on Dendera texts in different ways such as:

(1) Doctorate Degrees

Zeinab El-Kordy was a pioneer in the field of studying Greco-Roman temple texts; she conducted her PhD research, in French, on the 'Crypts of the Dendera Temple: An archaeological and Religious Historical Study'² under the supervision of Professor F. Daumas, Montpellier University, but unfortunately it has not been published yet.

In 1987, Hassan Amer presented his study on the doors and entrances of the Temple of Dendera, in French. He gave descriptions and translation of the inscriptions of the main gates and doors of the temple.³

In 1995, Mamdouh El-Damaty presented a study on the chapel of Sokar-Osiris in the Temple of Dendera, in German. This chapel is located to the east of the sanctuary, number (F) according to the plan of Chassinat of the temple.⁴

He included transliterations, translations and comments on all the texts in the chapel. The texts referred to important rituals and festivals such as: the resurrection of Osiris in the month of Khoiac.⁵ The texts refer to the procession of Osiris when the priests move his statues from the Crypts and from Sokar Chapel on the temple roof to the outside of the temple on the 24th day of Khoiac. The procession has to reach to the sacred lake, then return to the chapel (F).

In the early morning of the 25th day, the procession of Osiris leaves the main temple to reach to Khadi on the east bank of the Nile where it was believed that a symbolic cenotaph of Osiris existed.

On the 26th day the procession returns to Horus temple to the east of Hathor Temple, then enters into the main temple and returns to the chapel (F) and to Osiris Chapel on the roof.⁶

The chapel texts mention the New Year festival⁷ and the drunkenness festival, which takes place on the 20th of the month of Thoth.

Another important festival that is mentioned is the birth of Isis.⁸

In 2000, Hanan Taha presented her PhD at Cairo University on *Ht-Wabt,Ht-IHyK*) Hall and two halls in southern *crypt* (1) *Ht-Wabt*(D) and *Ht-IHy* (E) in Dendera temple, in Arabic.(Not published yet).

She presented transliterations, translations and comments on texts of *Ht wabt* Chapel no.K in Chassinat plan⁹ and *Ht wabt* no. D & *Ht Ihy* no.E.¹⁰

The study had the following results:

The chapel (k) is located within the chapels surrounding the sanctuary. It is the first chapel to the west. It has two names, *Ht-wabt* (hall of purification) and *Ht- IHy* (hall of Ihy), these two names came within a long list of names which designate the town, the temple and the mammisi of Dendera are associated with goddess Hathor and god *Ihy*.¹¹

The chapel (k) is dedicated to Hathor rituals and for god Ihy, son of Hathor, the walls of the chapel are decorated with shapes of statues of the protective ancestor gods of Dendera who surround the main gods and accompany them during their annual feasts.¹²

The texts in this chapel (K) and two other chapels (D and E) mention the New Year festival.¹³

The study shows that chapel (k) is related to the purification of Hathor during the New Year festival as an indication of a new rebirth of the goddess.

 The texts of *Ht-wabt*, *Ht -Ihy* (k) and (E) at the southern crypt (1) and (E) at the western crypt (1) show the birth and the eternal royal authority of god *Ihy*.¹⁴

In 2007, I presented my study on the 'Inscriptions of the screen walls at Dendera and Edfu temples'¹⁵ to Cairo University, in Arabic. (Not published yet)

I included transliterations, translations and comments on the texts of the screen walls of Dendera at:

The Nectanebo I mammisi;¹⁶
The roman mammisi;¹⁷
The façade of the main temple;¹⁸
The Wabt chapel;¹⁹ and
The New Year chapel (kiosk).²⁰

The inscriptions and scenes on the mammisis of Dendera showed many important rituals connected with the divine birth of the king specially during the beginning of the year. It also focused on the king's ability to stop the danger that might happen at the beginning of the year. The offerings symbolize the god's protection of the new born child such as the crowns, amulets and collars.

Hathor and Isis play the major part in the mammisis, so each of the offerings presented to them (the Horizon symbol, the water clock, the bbt collar, the menit collar, crowns, food and different kinds of clothes) has its own meaning.²¹

The inscriptions and scenes on the outside façade of Dendera show many rituals such as presenting justice, presenting sistrum and amulets, and burning incense.

From the inside the scenes show the king coming forth from his palace to participate in the rituals and festivals of the temple; the purification of the king by Thoth and Horus; and the coronation of the king by Nekhbet and Wadjet.

According to the titles and epithets of the king on the screen walls in the façade of the Dendera temple, these scenes function as political propaganda to show the Ptolemies and Romans who is chosen by the Egyptian gods to ascend to the throne of Egypt due to their role in confirming the existence of Justice on land.²²

The inscriptions and scenes on the Wabet chapel at Dendara refer to the purification of the gods who participate in the New Year festival.²³

The New year chapel at Dendera is the place where the soul of the sun god Re joins the souls of the deities in the ritual known as 'the union with the solar disc', so many of the inscriptions on the screen walls at the chapel related with this ritual show many spirits with lion and cobra heads protecting the procession of Hathor and driving away the danger of the new year and sustaining the fertility of the king. ²⁴

In her study about god Geb²⁵ Shafia Bedier translated some of the Dendera texts.²⁶

In his study about goddess Niet²⁷ Ramadan El Sayed translated some of the Dendera texts.²⁸

(2) Master Degrees

In 1989, Mamdouh El-Damaty presented his MA thesis in Arabic to Cairo University on the chapel (E)²⁹ entitled 'The Chapel of Set-Meskhnet at Dendera Temple' (not published yet).

He gave transliterations, translations and comments on the texts of the chapel. From his translation, the names and titles of Hathor appeared³⁰, as well as the chapel dedicated to Hathor as a birth place in her form as Hathor-Isis.³¹

In 1991, Hanan Taha presented her MA thesis in Arabic to Cairo University on 'The chapel of Per-hedj-set-nefret (Q) at Dendera Temple' (not published yet).

The chapel (Q)³² is located to the west of Ennead Hall (O) in Chassinat the plan. It has an entrance in its south wall that leads to the open court that proceed the chapel of the New Year.

Hanan Taha gave transliterations, translations and comments on the texts of the chapel, her translation showed offerings of different kinds of semi and precious stones, ointment, gold, lapis lazuli, food and drinks.

She also showed the role of the chapel during the New Year festival; she stated that the chapel was a storeroom for treasures and valuable materials for the daily and annual services in the temple.³³

Maissara Hassan presented his MA thesis to Cairo University in Arabic, in 1999, on 'The Wabt Chapel (S) at Dendera Temple' (not published yet).

The chapel (S) is located to the west of the Ennead Hall and south of the western staircase.³⁴

The study showed that the chapel was dedicated to the purification and adoration of goddess Hathor during the main festivals especially the New Year festival.³⁵

The chapel of the throne of Re (N) in Chassinat plan³⁶ was the subject of the MA thesis presented by Mohamed Abd-Rabo El-Tounsy in 2000 to Cairo University in Arabic, entitled 'The Chapel of the Throne of Re at Dendera Temple' (not published yet).

He stated in his study that the chapel was dedicated to the god Hor in his form as Hor-Re.³⁷

The only chapel which bore the name 'Menit' in the Greaco-Roman temples (located to the west of the sanctuary of Dendera) was the subject of Abdul Rahman Ali's MA thesis at Cairo University in 2002 in Arabic, entitled 'the chapel of Menit 'L' at Dendera temple', (not published yet).

He stated that the chapel (L)³⁸ played a major role during the New Year festival. The statues of Hathor and her sacred objects were brought from the crypts to this chapel annually and some rituals were performed on this occasion at the chapel.³⁹

My own study for MA degree to Cairo University in 2001 in Arabic was about the chapel (G) in Chassinat plan,⁴⁰ entitled 'The chapel of Harsomtus/ Horsmatawy at The temple of Dendera'.

The chapel is located to the south- east of the sanctuary.

The study presented valuable information about the god Harsomtus, his form, his role and titles.

The texts and scenes reflect many religious ideas such as the continuity of the solar religion; Harsomtus is depicted emerging in the form of a serpent from the lotus flower, which is inside a boat in similarity with the god Re.

The death and resurrection of Harsomtus is also depicted and his crossing the netherworld as well.

Harsomtus is considered as a primeval god in his form as a serpent. In addition, as the creator god, he gives life to the people everyday.⁴¹

The most recent study is presented by Ahmed Safina in 2008 to Cairo University (in Arabic) about 'The Chapel '*Hryt-ib*' (É)⁴² at Dendera Temple'⁴³ (not published yet).

(3) Articles

The texts, objects and scenes of Dendera Temple were part of many studies by Egyptian Egyptologists such as:

 Zienab El-Kordy; a pioneer among the Egyptian Egyptologists in the field of studying Greco-Roman temple texts.

Zienab El-Kordy discussed the names of the town of Dendera or, rather, the temple complex and its parts found in the crypt no. 9 = West Crypt 3), which is called by Daumas the Crypt of the Archives. They are here discussed, particularly with the divinities which occur in them.⁴⁴

 She did a study on Hathor's gold crown, one of the goddess's favorite objects for her daily and annual services in the temple of Dendera.⁴⁵

She gave translation and interpretation of the texts related to Harsomtus; his origin, his role and his aspects at Dendera temple.⁴⁶

She gave translations and made comments on the scene of goddess Hathor to the west of the New Year Chapel (kiosk) on the roof of the temple.⁴⁷

She presented a study on the New Year headband, which appeared at Dendera in the New Year chapel, set –meskhnet chapel and the Roman mammisi at Dendera.⁴⁸

She studied the texts in Dendera temple which refer to the leaves of the trees *iSd*, im, and *bAq*.⁴⁹

Also she studied the texts and scenes at Dendera temple related to the presentation of the toilet objects (makeup).⁵⁰

Finally El-Kordy presented a study on the scene, texts and role of the staircases of Dendera temple.⁵¹

- Ali Omar Abdalla studied many objects and finds from the temple of Dendera like: the finds from the sebakh;⁵² an unusual statue from Greaco-Roman time found at Dendera;⁵³ two Middle kingdom monuments found at Dendera;⁵⁴ and other statues found in the sebakh at Dendera.⁵⁵
- Shafia Bedier published a door lintel from Dendera and kept in the Egyptian Museum (special Register no.4617).⁵⁶
- Hassan Amer studied the texts related to the bracelets hAdrt in the Dendera temple.⁵⁷

Prior to that, he gave a new interpretation of the text which is related to the date of the temple construction.⁵⁸

 Adel Farid wrote about the archaeological history of Dendera depending on the demotic inscription on some ostraca and other objects

- from Cairo and Louvre Museum⁵⁹ and on some stelae as well.⁶⁰
- Mamdouh El-Damaty worked on many texts and scenes of Dendera temple such as:

The identification of Hathor -Isis in the Dendera texts, he stated that the inscriptions of friezes, chapels and hall walls of the temple were divided equally between the two goddesses Hathor and Isis. This means that Hathor-Isis was a manifestation of one goddess of Dendera.⁶¹

He presented a study on the role of Sekhmet in the New Year chapel at Dendera temple⁶², he translated and commented on the protection formula behind the king in the New Year Chapel on the roof of Dendera temple.⁶³

He wrote two articles on the empty cartouches at Dendera 64 especially at the time of Cleopatra VII. 65

He translated and interpreted the presentation of the golden falcon referring to the Dendera texts.⁶⁶

Finally, he wrote an article about some texts and scenes of the eastern staircase of Dendera, and he stated that the eastern staircase was used for climbing up during the festivals in the temple.⁶⁷

- Wagdy Ramadan discussed the title 'The One whose Step is Large' in Dendera texts.⁶⁸
- Labib Habachi republished the Chapel of Menthuhotep which was found at Dendera in 1916 and is now in the Egyptian Museum under number JE 46068.⁶⁹
- Ramadan el-Sayed surveyed the texts related to light and brightness in Dendera temple.⁷⁰
- The festival Calendars of Dendera Temple were a subject to be examined by Sherif el-Saban.⁷¹
- The architectural elements of Dendera were a subject of study by Alexander M. Badawy when he suggested an entrance to the temple

- of Dendera to the north of it.⁷² The recent excavation by SCA confirmed his suggestion.
- The SCA made a major plan to restore the ceiling of Dendera. They finished the first part of the ceiling of the Hypostyle Hall, and I reported that in an article for Ancient Egypt Magazine which is issued in the UK entitled 'The Temple of Hathor at Dendera: revealing the painted ceiling'. ⁷³

Future Studies

Some young scholars are working now (2005-2009) on the texts of Dendera temple such as:

Ahmed Ali Khalifa Abdel-Latif from the Faculty of Arts Dept. of Egyptology at Ain Shams University is preparing his PhD thesis on 'Presenting Crowns in the Egyptian temples in the Greco-Roman Period' (since July 2006).

Yasmin Abdel-Mottaleb from the Faculty of Arts, Dept. of Guidance at Ain Shams University is doing her MA on 'Attributing to the Gods in the Royal Titles connected with the scenes of rituals- a practical study on the temples of Horus at Edfu and Hathor at Dendera' (since March 2005)

Ali Ahmed Ali is Doing his MA in Arabic at the Faculty of Arts Dept. of Egyptology at Helwan University on the 'Names and Titles of Hathor in the Temple of Dendera'.

Ahmed Mashhoot from Fayyoum University is doing his MA in Arabic on the Passage E>-H> to the west of the second hall (Z) in the Chassinat plan⁷⁴.

Most recent is Mohamed Abdel-Mawla form Mansoura University who is preparing his MA in Arabic on the texts of the Chapel (D') which is called the treasure in the same hall.

Notes:

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- H. De Meulenaere, Les stratèges indigènes du nome Tentyrite à la fin de l'époque ptolémaïque et au début de l'occupation romaine (Rome, 1959), 1-25
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- 7 El-damaty, Sokar-Osiris Kapelle, 42, 47,182,186,188,189,191
- 8 El-damaty, Sokar-Osiris Kapelle, 179-188
- 9 Dendera III, 94-129, pls.cciii-ccxvii.
- 10 Dendera V, 145-151, pls cccxxxviii-cccxlii, 151 (17-18)-152, pl. cccxxxviii, Pp.153-159, pls. cccxliii-ccccl
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Issue No.4 ______ 91

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Issue No.4 _______93