

  
**The Divine Elixir of Courage in Ancient Egypt**  
**"A Linguistic study application on Ptolemaic-Roman temples texts"**

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**The Divine Elixir of Courage in Ancient Egypt**  
**"A linguistic study applying on Ptolemaic-Roman Temples texts"**

إكسير الشجاعة الإلهي في مصر القديمة  
" دراسة لغوية استناداً علي نصوص المعابد البطلمية – الرومانية "

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**Abstract:**

Elixir of courage is a drink produced by dissolving a substance or several substances in wine. Rather, it is one of the drinks found in the divine community that will positively influence when drank it. We find it in Ptolemaic-Roman temples; courage is associated with drinking this elixir as it strengthens the person who drinks it.

This offering, which is represented in the elixir, has special formulas that we can recognize from the first terms; "offer the elixir", we find it repeated in 30 stelae in temples of (Philae, Edfu, and Dendara).

We are supposed to ask the following: what is the function of this elixir? What is its color? What deities is it associated with? To get the best answer these questions, we should study all About Elixir (texts and inscriptions). These texts and inscriptions clearly show the importance of this drink and its difference from other well-known drinks.

**Keywords:**

Elixir, Courage drink, Offering drink, Wine elixir, Sweet drink

**الملخص :**

إكسير الشجاعة هو مشروب يتم إنتاجه عن طريق إذابة مادة أو عدة مواد في النبيذ، بل هو أحد المشروبات الموجودة في المجتمع الإلهي الذي سيؤثر إيجاباً عند شربه، نجده في المعابد البطلمية-الرومانية، ونلاحظ ان الشجاعة مرتبطة بشرب هذا الإكسير لأنه يقوي من يشربه.

ذلك القران الذي يتم تمثيله في تقديم الإكسير ; له صيغ خاصة يمكننا التعرف عليها من المصطلحات الأولى ؛ "قدم الإكسير" نجده مكرراً في ٣٠ لوحة في معابد (فيلة ، إدفو ، دندرة).

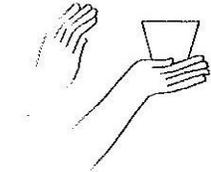
من المفترض أن نسأل انفسنا الاسئلة الآتية: ما وظيفة هذا الإكسير؟ ما هو لونه؟ ما هي الآلهة التي ترتبط به؟ للحصول على أفضل إجابة لهذه الأسئلة ، يجب أن ندرس كل شيء عن الإكسير (نصوص ونقوش) التي من شأنها ان توضح أهمية هذا المشروب واختلافه عن المشروبات الأخرى المشهورة.

**الكلمات الدالة :**

إكسير ، مشروب شجاعة ، مشروب قرباني ، إكسير نبيذ ، مشروب حلو المذاق.

**Introduction:**

People believed that some beverages were the long-sought elixir of life<sup>1</sup>, the wine and wine-drinking were important parts of the daily life of the well-to-do Egyptians. If the offering list can be regarded as the ideal menu of the Egyptians, then the wine was certainly indispensable<sup>2</sup>.



**In** Pharaonic Egypt wine became a vehicle for medicine; however, it could well have been considered an active drug in its own right<sup>3</sup>. From this point, we now have to review wine as a prestigious and divine drink, what are its different types of it? What is the attitude of Egyptians toward Wine-Drinking? And what is its symbolism as an offering to be considered an elixir of life?

**Q<sup>1</sup>: What is the elixir of courage?**

E.II, 70

D.IV, 18

D.VI, 128

Elixir of courage is a drink produced by dissolving a substance or several substances in wine<sup>4</sup>. The color of the elixir is pink<sup>5</sup> (which is a mixture between red and white), this color symbolizes the blood of enemies<sup>6</sup>.

**The components of the elixir<sup>7</sup>:**

A drink of grapes mixed with sweet syrups<sup>8</sup>, with regard to the specified type of wine (grapes drink), it is a mixture of these:

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<sup>1</sup> A.Maria, Beer and Wine in antiquity: Beneficial remedy or punishment imposed by the gods, 2012, P.238.

<sup>2</sup> M.Poo, Wine and wine offering in the religion in ancient Egypt, New York, 2009, P.27

<sup>3</sup> A.Maria, Beer and Wine in antiquity, P.254.

<sup>4</sup> S.Cauville, offerings to the gods in ancient Egyptian temple, Paris, 2012, P.48-49.

That substance, or rather the several substances, is, in a more accurate sense, a sweet water drink with honey added to wine. This is according to what the drink has been described in the linguistic dictionaries and according to its components, which will be explained in detail in the following pages.

For more information on all things wine as a drink, see;

A.Farouk, The liquid offerings in ancient Egypt, PhD thesis: Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University, 2015, P.82 ff.

<sup>5</sup> **Pink color:** It is a mixture of red and white, If we look at this mixture, we find that it combines (strength, anger, blood, death, victory) represented by the red color and between (joy, joy, celebrations) represented by the white color, This is in line with the concept of a brave drink that achieves the death of the enemy (red color) and victory (white color).

For further more information; see T.Elrashidy, The symbolism of colors and their connotations in ancient Egyptian architecture and arts, MA thesis, Faculty of Archeology, Cairo University, 2004, P.112ff, 125ff.

<sup>6</sup> S.Cauville, offerings to the gods, P.48.

<sup>7</sup> At this point, the researcher has put some types that may be used in the elixir. For those types see M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.24-27.


  
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-  *Irt-hr wd3t (Green Horus Eye)*<sup>9</sup>

The term Green-Horus-Eye represents the Green *sh*t-fruit<sup>10</sup> , not wine, but it was only since the Ptolemaic period that Green-Horus-Eye was employed as a designation for wine in the offering-liturgies. It is mentioned having come from the oasis such Kharga, Bahria, Edfu, *w3dt*  interpret as "dark color" not "green color", and this type is fresh and prosperous. This wine was designated as Green-Horus-Eye implied the rejuvenating power that creates prosperity.

-  *3pd (3pd wine)*<sup>11</sup>

this term is difficult to explain etymologically, it has the same phonetic value as *3bd*-bird, possibly it derived from a word for a kind of jar that had a bird like beak, such as the *nms*-jar.

-  *sšp (grapes wine)*<sup>12</sup>

This term *sšp* combined with vine (*sšpt nt i3rrt*), it means grapes or raisins, for this reason *sšpt* may have been used as a term for wine.

-  *wnš (grapes wine)*<sup>13</sup>

This term was originally a term for a edible fruits, including grapes. Only once is *wnš*  found in pharaonic period with the meaning of wine. In demotic also appears once with meaning of "grapes" or "wine" and in offering liturgies in the Greco-Roman period, by extension, it came to signify vine, grapes, and wine.

**As for a sweet syrup is;**  *irr r mw*

That sweet syrup; it is water mixed with sweet which was mentioned in texts here includes the classification of quality.

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<sup>8</sup> A sweet water drink with honey added to wine, as mentioned above in margin No 4.

<sup>9</sup> This type was mentioned in D II.186

<sup>10</sup>  *sh*t fruit: Wb IV,267;9-12.

<sup>11</sup> Sometimes, it is pronounced *3pd-ib* as mentioned in E.VIII, 55; See also, ME.96.

<sup>12</sup> Wb.IV, 284,12, WPL,924;E.I (71,86,109), E.VII (142,199, 278-279, 284, 287)

<sup>13</sup> Wb.I, 325,8, E.VII, 283-284, D II,76; III,16,19,60.

**Important Note:**

**The Attitude of the Egyptians toward wine-Drinking<sup>14</sup>:**

**Firstly;** the references to the vineyards and the remains of wine-jar labels show that wine-drinking was a natural enjoyment<sup>15</sup>.

In daily life, the enjoyment of wine was restricted to the upper echelons of society. The royal court was a major center for its consumption, as indicated by the court's numerous vineyards.

**Secondly;** naturally wine was a reward for soldiers<sup>16</sup>.

Soldiers could receive wine as a reward for their actions; the common workers, on the other hand, had fewer opportunities to enjoy wine.

**Thirdly;** drinking wine is a part of holiday celebrations<sup>17</sup>.

In religious festivals: as the valley festival, in which drinking and drunkenness played an important part.

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<sup>14</sup> M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.31-37

<sup>15</sup> As stated in Sinuhe story, in the paragraph B 86-88

For this text see; R.Bullock, The story of Sinuhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Probsthain, London: 1980, B 86-88.

<sup>16</sup> According to Stela of Sethos I text. For this text see; R.Caminos, New Kingdom Temples of Buchen I, Egypt Exploration Society, 1974, P.85.

In addition to what is stated in the second Stela of Kamose text. For this text see; L.Habachi, The second stela of Kamose, Abandlungen des Deutschen archaologischen instituts Kairo: Agyptologische Reihe, Egypt, 1972, P.36. Furthermore in Urk IV, 1459, 15-1463.

<sup>17</sup> According to the valley festival texts. For this texts see;

S.Schott, Das Schone fest vom Wustentale, Wiss, 1952, P.889, n.127; L.Boruiant, Les Hypogees royaux de Thebes, MMFAO,II, 1886, fac.III, Pl.1 In addition to Davis texts and plates, for this see; N.Davies, The tomb of two sculptors, JNES, 4, P.182; N.Davies, Five Theban tombs, Egypt Exploration Society, 1977, P.183; N.Davies, The tomb of two Officials, London, 1923, Pls.XX-XXIII.


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Q <sup>2</sup> : How was the elixir expressed linguistically?	E.I, 460	E.II, 70
	E.IV, 256	E.VII, 199
	E.VII, 122-123	E.VII, 283-284
	D.IV, 18	D.VI, 128

**Discussion:**


*hrw-<sup>c</sup> irr* (combined term), we now have to display this term in all its forms in dictionaries and linguistic texts.

**Table 1: linguistic Sources of elixir of courage:**

Writing forms	Sources	Texts	
	Wb.I, 157 LD.II, 133	E.VII, 283-284	
	Wb.I, 157 ff LD.II, 133 ff	E.II, 70	E.VII, 199
		D.IV, 18	
	Wb.I, 157 ff LD.II, 133 ff	E.VI, 132	
	Wb.I, 157 ff LD.II, 133 ff	D.VI, 128-129	
			
	WPL; 63	E.VII, 200	
	Wb.I, 157 ff LD.II, 133 ff	E.IV, 256	
	Wb.I, 32 WPL; 63	E.I, 460	E.IV, 46
		E.VI, 112	E.VI, 133
		E.VII, 122	




  
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Q <sup>3</sup> : What is the function of elixir?	D.VI, 128	D.IV, 18
	E.II, 70	E.VII, 122
	E.VI, 133	E.VI, 112
	E.VII, 199-200	E.VII, 283-284

**Discussion:**

- **The Elixir's Functions:**

**1<sup>st</sup>: This elixir is for warriors. As we read in (E.VI, 112):**

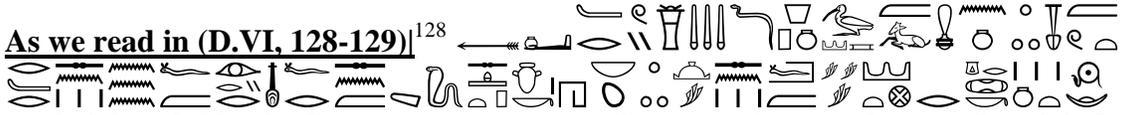
|<sup>112, 1</sup>  *dd.f in Hr Phdt r<sup>c</sup> n.k irr r mw pri im3 shtp ib.k hr sirw hrw-<sup>c</sup> mw* "saying a recitation by Horus Behdet, that wine mixed with water that comes out of the Emma tree pleases your heart and removes sadness from your face by this elixir"

**And also in (E.VI, 133):** |<sup>133, 7</sup>  *rdi irr r mw f3i nisw [dd] mdw s3 r<sup>c</sup> nwt nb nhh sn h3.f m r htyt minw.i irr* "Bring wine mixed with water, a saying recited by sun of re, the master of heaven, the protector of eternity around him, [Horus Behdet], who has the elixir in his throat"

|<sup>133.9</sup>  *[Dd] mdw hr irr r mw f3i sr spd w m wnm wnn hr.f m-ht.f* "saying a recitation regarding the elixir that was in god Soped's stomach, that's Horus, ate it also"

**2<sup>nd</sup>: there are many functions for drink this elixir; they are as follows:**

- **Gives courage, and Fight without fear**

**As we read in (D.VI, 128-129):**<sup>128</sup>  *sšr hnk hrw-<sup>c</sup> dd-mdw bnw m iw mi nw sm3t rhr sn mw.f m irr nfr sn m shtp ib.k* " offers Elixir; this bowl is filled with grapes mixed with syrup, Horus the hero on the battlefield who eliminates evil, the beast in the wake of his enemies "

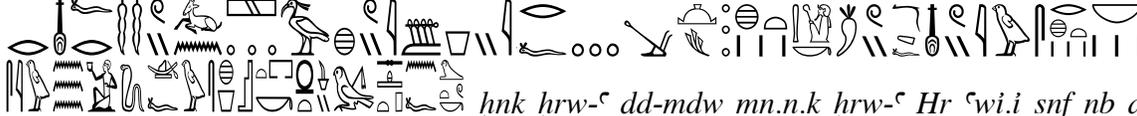
- **Quenches thirst and relieves pain**

As we read in (E.II, 70)  *sšr hnk hrw-<sup>c</sup> tf.f šps sh<sup>c</sup> ib.f m ht.(w).f* "Take the elixir to quench your thirst and relieve your pain".

▪ **Provides protection and strength.**

As we read in (D.IV, 18)  *sšr ḥnk ḥrw-ᶜ dd-mdw nb nḥḥ šn.k ḥ3.k mi s3 ḥm ir snw.k ḥw.k* " offers Elixir: Lord of eternity, your world is behind you, warriors like locusts protect you every day"

**and also we read in (E.VII, 199-200):** 

 *ḥnk ḥrw-ᶜ dd-mdw mn.n.k ḥrw-ᶜ Hr ʿwi.i snf nb ḏw r ḥtṯ.k mw.f m mtr r nfr* " offers elixir: words to say; Take the elixir from my arms, the opponent's blood in your throat. It is a pure and complete liquid drink".

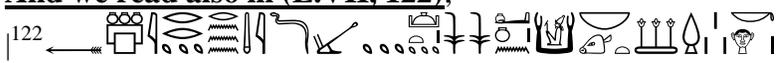
 *ḏi.n.k mw irr iw nfr šḥtp ib.k m-ḥt n k3 nswt-bity psḏt nḥt nb psḏt nḥt m mi mnw gt irr nḥt s3(w).f* "give water mixed with wine, it is beautiful, it will satisfy your heart before the spirit of the strong king of ninth, the master of ninth, that drink protects the one who drinks it, it is strong".

▪ **Gives breast festive**

**As we read in (E.VII, 283-284)**

 *ḥnk ḥrw-ᶜ dd-mdw mn.n.k wnšt Hr sbḥt snbt.k prt-i3t min im.s s3 nn nti ḥḏt m nḥn iw.w nb nḥḥ* " offers elixir: words to say; take the elixir that makes your breast festive, the elixir that god Min substance is in. this is the protection of the whites of Nechen (Nekhbet), which is [.....] lord of eternity"

**And we read also in (E.VII, 122):**

 *sšr ḥnk irr r mw dd mdw in šnᶜ i3t ḥnk.n.k3 nb ḥnt šḥt im(w).k ḥr s3b* "offer wine mixed with water, say a recitation through the holy places, offer the elixir to the lord's spirit in front of the Emma tree".


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<b>Q<sup>4</sup>: why is elixir classified as an offering?</b>	Urk. VIII, 15	
	D.VI, 129	
	E.I, 469	
	E.I, 448	E.I, 460
	E.IV, 46	E.IV, 256

**Discussion:**

We may turn our attention to the significance of the offering in religious rituals. Consequently, we may discuss the significance of the offering of wine elixir regarding mythological and theological allusions found in the offering liturgies, and blessing expected from the dieties<sup>21</sup>.

▪ **As a Divine Drink<sup>22</sup>:**

**In general:** wine is a part of the funerary offering, and it is the principal drink of the king after he ascension to heaven. As the provision of the gods, wine is endowed with a divine essence. As we see it presented to the gods Ra, Horus Behdet **as we read in (E.VI, 132)**


  
*sšr ḥnk ḥrw-ꜥ mw ntf wdn ʿ3 m ḥt nfr nb n k3.k rꜥ nb ntrw ḥr pḥdt ntr ʿ3 nb psdt ntr ʿ3t imi.m.pḥdt*
  
 " Present the elixir mixed with water, the great, lovable, good thing to your soul, Ra, the master of the gods, Horus, the great god, the master of the ninth, the great goddess in Behdet (Hathor).

**1<sup>st</sup> Wine and Blood<sup>23</sup>**

The assimilation of grape-juice, or wine, with blood is a recurring theme in Egyptian religion. The main basis for this assimilation was their common color. A mixture of blood, wine, grape-juice and other ingredients can be used as a potion.

An offering liturgy of the Ptolemaic period states that the king **as we read in Urk.VIII, 15(G)**


  
*mḥ ir ḥr mwt r snf in mm n k3*
  
*n np pt np ḥꜥw* "fills the eye of Horus with its blood, who pours wine for the k3 of the lord of heaven". Here the act of pouring and offering wine symbolizes the filling of the eye of Horus with its blood<sup>24</sup>. From this point; we find that the king offers a drink of elixir to Horus and Nephthys.

<sup>21</sup> M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.159.

<sup>22</sup> On the one hand Using wine mythological and theological as a divine drink one of the important points so see M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.148

<sup>23</sup> The symbolism of the link between wine and blood it has been shown by many scholars sor this point see M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.153

<sup>24</sup> Probably this refers to the myth of the conflict of Horus and Seth, in which blood was shed when the eye of Horus was injured.

**As we read in (E.I, 460)**

 sšr ḥnk irr ḥr mw n d3 m r<sup>c</sup> mi n mr tw.s "offer wine mixed with water, that pure running water that looks like a Re boat"

**In another wine offering liturgy, the king pronounces, as we read in (E.I, 448)**

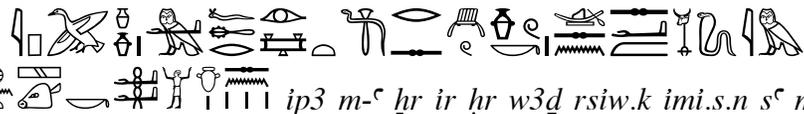
 sšr ḥnk irp ntf.f šps ḥpr rmt.k m-ḥt.s dd mdw(w) mn.n.k irp ḥr w3dt ḥ3t.k m km3.n.k b3ḥ.n.k w3dt n p rim.s imn sni.r<sup>c</sup> "I fill for you the wd3t-eye with what came out from it"<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, the myth of filling or healing the eye of Horus, also a metaphor for the restoring of the cosmic order, for the eye represents divine life and energy<sup>26</sup>. From this point; we find that Horus is mentioned as the warrior who, thanks to drinking this elixir, can defeat the enemies.

**And also as we read in (D.VI, 129)**

 ḥpy<sup>c</sup> ḥr b3 kk.nḥt pr.<sup>c</sup> ḥwy ḥnt mtr wn iw ḥr<sup>c</sup> ḥr ptr m ḥnh išw(w).f "The hero on the battlefield, who eliminates evil, the beast in the face of enemies"

**2<sup>nd</sup> Seth and wine**

Seth was worshipped at the Oases, so wine is considered the gift of Seth, the lord of Oases, which is offered to Horus by the king, whereas wine is the Green eye of Horus<sup>27</sup>.

**as we read in (E.I, 469)**  ip3 m<sup>c</sup> ḥr ir ḥr w3d rsiw.k imi.s.n s<sup>c</sup> m ḥtyt im srw imy ḥt(w).k ḥnt.k ḥ3i.ib.sn "in his hand, containing the green Horus eye (wine), in order to please your heart through it, may you drink, may you rejoice, so that their hearts be happy"

**Note:**  jar (kind of jar), might have some relationship with one of the designations for wine 3pd  (wine container)<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> The eye should also refer to the blood of Horus.

<sup>26</sup> M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.153.

<sup>27</sup> The connection between wine and god Seth one from of the point that needs more studies for this point see M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P. 158

<sup>4</sup> M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.158


  
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**As we read in (E.IV, 256)**



*št.k n.k šps stḥ pḥdt shp šn.tw np nhḥ r.k ir hr m ḥt.k šn ḥ3.k m sn m.s(w) m3<sup>c</sup> m.i minw wš<sup>c</sup>t.i n.k  
 wnš n sk3 mrt dt* "offer the elixir, words to say; Servant of the falcon (Horus), and he is also  
 Seth's son the drink in the oases"

**Note:** Wines of Oases were most likely known for their wine production as early as the archaic period<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> A royal domain located in khargeh oases.  
 For this point, see M.Poo, Wine and wine offering, P.19.

**Conclusion:**

**1-**Scholars generally agree that wine was not a daily drink for ordinary Egyptians, whose main drink was beer, and of course the elixir in particular was a private drink, not a public.

**2-**wine was about five to ten times more expensive than beer. The high price of wine must have curtailed the commoners' ability and desire to indulge.

**3-**The elixir, which is rather; a drink mixed with syrup (it was this addition that made it distinct from the usual wine). It is the first festive drink in the whole year.

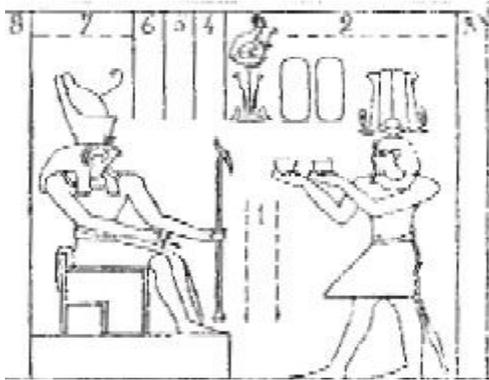
**4-**If we want to describe the drink in one sentence; it becomes an "energy drink", this practice continues even now in our time under the name of energy drink.


  
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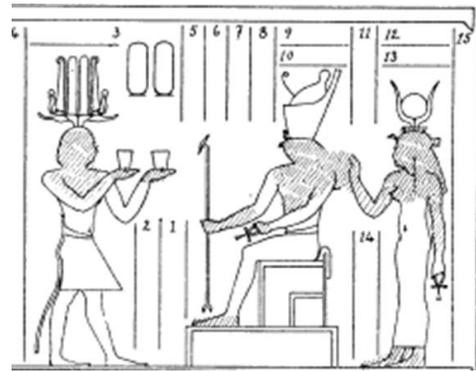
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**Elixir of courage Plates:**

**Plate I**



**Plate II**



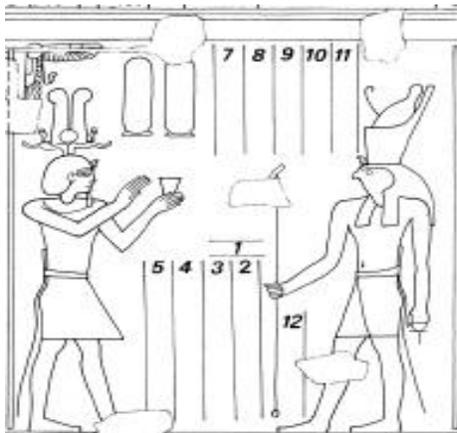
**Plate I:** God Horus is seated on the left side, and the king stands in front of him, offering him an offering of the elixir.

**Source:** T (E.II, 70), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.XL e.

**Plate II:** God Horus and goddess Hathor, are seated on the right side. The king stands before them, offering the Elixir Offering.

**Source:** T (E.IV, 256), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.LXXXIX.

**Plate III**



**Plate IV**



**Plate III:** God Horus stands on the right side; the king stands in front of him, offering the elixir

**Source:** T (E.VII, 199-200), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.CLXXII.

**Plate IV:** God Horus stands on the left side; the king stands in front of him, offering the elixir

**Source:** T (D.VI, 128-129), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Dendara Temple, I-XII, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-2007, Pl.DLVIII

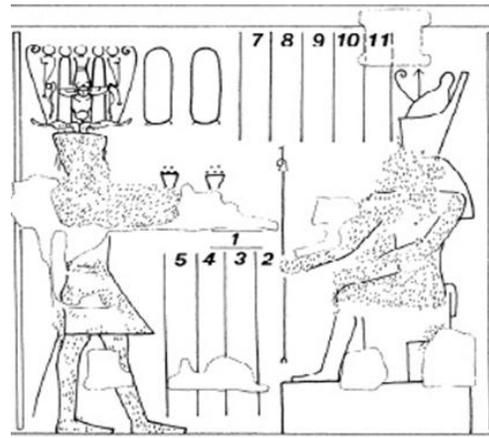
**Plate V**



**Plate V:** The king stands on the left side, offers elixir in front of him is a row of seated gods, Horus Behdet, Hathor, and the serpent Ahi.

**Source:** T (D.IV, 18), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Dendara Temple, I-XII, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-2007, Pl.CCL.

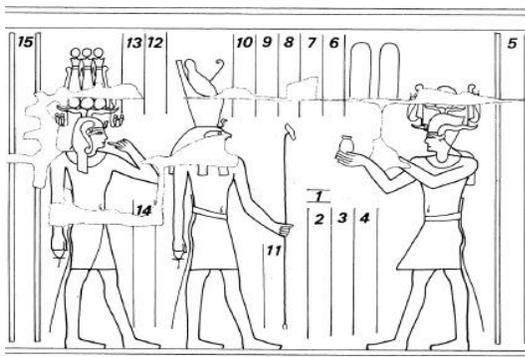
**Plate VI**



**Plate VI:** The king stands on the left side, offering the elixir, in front of him is the seated god Horus.

**Source:** T (E.VII, 283-284), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl. CLXXV.

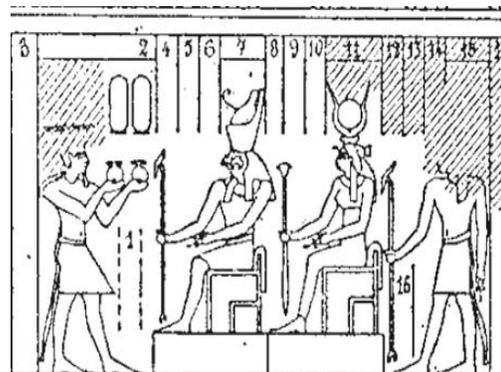
**Plate VII**



**Plate VII:** The king stands on the right side, offering the offering of wine. In front of him are the two standing gods, Horus and Ahi.

**Source:** T (E.VII, 122-123), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.CLXVIII.

**Plate VIII**



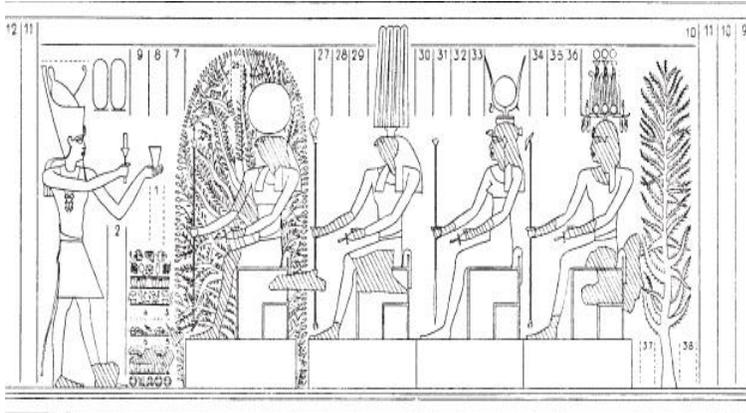
**Plate VIII:** The king stands on the left side, offering the offering of wine. In front of him is a row of seated gods, Horus and Nephthys.

**Source:** T (E.I, 460), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.XXXV.


  
**The Divine Elixir of Courage** in Ancient Egypt  
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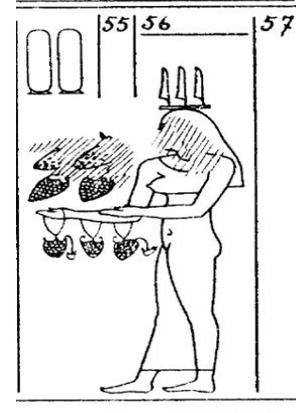
**Plate IX**



**Plate IX:** The king stands on the left side, offering the offering of wine. In front of him is a row of seated gods, Ra Hor my sister, Horus Behdet, Hathor, Hor Samatawy.

**Source:** T (E.VI, 132-133), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Caire, 1934-1985, Pl.CXLVI.

**Plate X**



**Plate X:** The goddess Hathor, standing with the sign of Sekht, holding grapes in both hands.

**Source:** T (E.IV, 46), Pl.XCVII.

**Plate XI**



**Plate XI:** The king stands on the right, offering the offering of wine. In front of him stands the god Horus, the goddess Hathor.

**Source:** T (E.I, 448), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.XXXV.

**Plate XII**



**Plate XII:** The king stands on the right side, offering the offering of wine, in front of him is the seated god Horus.

**Source:** T (E.I, 469), E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou temple, I-XV, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-1985, Pl.XXXV(b).

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## **Abbreviations:**

**D:** E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Dendara Temple, I-XII, IFAO, Cairo, 1934-2007.

**E:** E.Chassinat, S.Cauville, Edfou Temple, I-XV, IFAO, Le Cairo, 1934-1985.

**Urk II:** H. Grapow, O.Firchow, Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums , 8 Vols, Berlin, 1903-1957.

**WB:** A.Erman, W.Grapow, Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache, 7 vols, Berlin, 1926-1931.

**WPL:** P.Wilson, Ptolemaic lexicon: a lexicographical study of the texts in the temple of Edfu, Peeters, 2000

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