

The lord of Terror and the deceased in the Burial Chamber in the Valley of the Queens

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Abstract

One of the protector groups in the Valley of the Queens is Neb-nerou and Hery-Maat. Neb-nerou was responsible for protecting the deceased from any difficulties in his afterlife against the evils. Neb-nerou is a lion-headed man, while Hery-Maat is depicted as a seated man. They are shown together usually on the North-West wall, on the right hand when entering the burial chamber in many tombs in the Valley of the Queens. They are represented a few funerary Papyri.¹

This study focuses on Neb-nerou and Hery-Maat which aims to illuminate the name, the shape, the roles, and the depictions of them in the burial chamber in most tombs of the Valley of the Queens.

Keywords: Neb-nerou, Hery-Maat, the Valley of the Queens, Queen Tyti (QV 52), lord of terror, the Book of the Dead.

Introduction

Many tombs for queens and princes in the Valley of the Queens are decorated with the scenes of  Neb-nerou and  Hery-Maat. This scene is usually found on the northwest wall of the entrance to the burial chamber. Neb-nerou and Hery-Maat are represented in numerous tombs, such as the tombs of Queen Sat-Re (QV 38), Queen Tyti (QV 52), in tomb (QV 36) of unknown King's daughter, tomb (QV 74) of Duatentipet, the great royal wife of Ramses IV and mother of Ramses V, and tomb of Henutmire (QV 75),² and three sons of Ramses III: Prince Pa-Re-herwenem-ef (QV 42); Prince Set-her-khepsh-ef (QV 43); and Prince Khaemwaset (QV 44).³

The scene consists of two figures: Neb-nerou and Hery-Maat. Neb-nerou is usually facing the door of the sarcophagus chamber to protect the deceased. Hery-Maat is the deceased queen or prince who is always behind Neb-nerou, like the Tomb of Prince Khaemouset (QV 44) (Fig.1).

¹ Fekri, Magdi, " Les protecteurs du défunt dans la salle sarcophage de la Vallée des Reines", *the horizon studies in Egyptology*, volume III, 2009, p. 17.

² B. Bruyere, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat", *Chronique d'Égypte : Bulletin périodique de la Fondation égyptologique reine Élisabeth* 27, no. 53, France, 1952, p. 31.

³ Friedric, Abitz, *Ramses III. In Den Gräbern Seiner Söhne*, Switzerland, 1986, p. 80-83.

Sometimes, the name of Neb-nerou was written with a vulture's head, like in the funerary papyrus of Nou (chapter CXLVI) as  *nb nrri*.⁶ This is the name of the first guardian of the twenty-one gates of the afterlife that must be crossed to reach the fields of *Iarou* in the domain of Osiris. The deceased must know the name of this guardian who opens all the doors to all the secret places and shows him the way.⁷

The depiction of Neb-nerou:

Neb-nerou is depicted as the body of a man with the head of a lioness, as described in the Book of the Dead during the New Kingdom. Neb-nerou is represented standing or walking and raising his right arm outstretched at shoulder height. He is usually opening his hand and his fingers together, like that of the pilot at the prow of a ship, indicating the route to follow (PL.1). The left arm is falling vertically along the body and holding a knife in his fist, the usual weapon of the guards of doors. Neb-nerou is wearing a long garment with rosette pattern. He is also wearing a *shenti* held by a belt with a false tail, a large *wsh* collar and four bracelets.⁸

The Roles of Neb-nerou:

The shape of the god reflects his roles; the head of Neb-nerou took the form of a lioness goddess, which shows his fierce nature. Many deities were represented as a lioness such as Sekhmet, Bastet, Nut, Nit, Hathor, Isis, Mut, Tefnut, and Wert Hakau.⁹ The function of the lioness goddess possessed two separate personalities: one was as the protector from the war, destructive and dangerous, and the other was protective and healer.¹⁰

Some lionesses were considered as Re's daughters and were one of the most significant manifestations of the sun god. The lionesses breathe fire against her enemies in the battles and she was the destroyer of the enemies of Ra and Osiris. She was associated with the goddess Mut, so she was affected by the aggressive manifestation of goddess Mut. In the New Kingdom, lionesses held the title of "protectors".¹¹ A lioness headed god was figured in many tombs, especially the Ramesside tombs of the Valley of the Queens, protecting the daylight exit of the deceased, who appears in the shape of Hery-Maat.

Neb-nerou is usually opening his arm forward to show the deceased the way to follow in the afterlife, but the other arm is along the body, and holds a knife, the usual weapon of the guards of doors to protect the deceased from any enemies or evils.¹² The knives were carried by demons, gods, the doorkeepers and gates of the

⁶ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 33.

⁷ Fekri, Magdi, "Les protecteurs du défunt dans la salle sarcophage", p. 18.

⁸ Campbell, Colin, *Two Theban queens*, London, 1909, p.100.

⁹ De Wit, C, *Le Rôle et la sens du lion dans L'Égypte Ancienne*, France, 1951, p. 312.

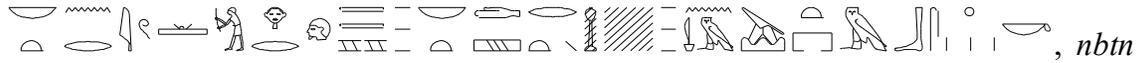
¹⁰ Bolton, Chelsea, *Flaming Lioness*, United States of America, 2019, p. 251.

¹¹ Wilkinson, Richard H., *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, New York, 2003, p. 181.

¹² Fekri, Magdi, "Les protecteurs du défunt dans la salle sarcophage", p. 17.

Netherworld.¹³ The Egyptians envisaged the netherworld as a place of many dangers. Others kept them safe from physical harm. Deities armed with knives ensured the dead person's safety. One spell in the Book of the Dead describes gods who could repel enemies. Protective gods with knives were painted on the walls of the tombs, coffins, and statues to create a cordon of safety around the mummy.¹⁴

In the Book of the Dead of *Pacheri-en-ta-ihet*, this god appears as a male god. He holds several titles, such as:



, *nbt nriw Hr tp t3wy nbt dšrt [HdD] nmt m bswk*, "the governor of the north and south of the country, the lord of the red earth, the gatekeeper of the western horizon. He has an access to the mystery of the world, the lord of victory and the great devourer of millions of years."¹⁵

The spelling of the name of Neb-nerou with a vulture hieroglyph sign in



nb-nrii which was written in some tombs, such as in the tomb of Queen Tyti (QV 52). The vulture was related to the role of this god, which represents the fierce nature of the vulture goddess.¹⁶ The vulture is usually classified in the feminine gender as the goddess Mut and Sekhmet. Goddess Mut is associated with the lioness goddess Sekhmet during the New Kingdom. Goddess Mut was the wife of the great god in Thebes. She had a role in the afterlife; she was described in Chapter 164 of the Book of the Dead as a goddess who gives souls and bodies to the demons. The other side of Mut's aspect is her fierce power against the traitors who were against the king. They were destroyed, so the goddess was not only protected the king but also the country itself during the New Kingdom.¹⁷ She was also the lady of the stars at night. The ancient Egyptians also used the lioness amulets to appease these goddesses and to elicit awe or fear from their enemies.¹⁸ The importance of the vulture goddess appears in her protective role alongside the deceased and his jewelry. She was also venerated as a protector and as a goddess of childbirth.¹⁹ She was presented as a monarchical symbol, utilizing the image of the protective nurse of the king. The roles of Neb-nerou confirmed the female sex of this character, but the body of the god shows male sex, and the meaning of his name is also masculine: "the lord of fear". She is the goddess of terror and destruction; who knows the words that prevent the storm and saves from hell.²⁰

¹³ El-Sharkaway, Basem, *The horizon: studies in Egyptology in honor of M. A. Nur El-Din*, The American University in Cairo Press, 2007, p. 308.

¹⁴ <https://dl.icdst.org/pdfs/files1/cfab03be267893109647c8b2c2b0e5bb.pdf>

¹⁵ Fekri, Magdi, "Les protecteurs du défunt dans la salle sarcophage", p. 18.

¹⁶ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" dans *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 33.

¹⁷ Wilkinson, Richard H., *The Complete Gods and Goddesses*, p. 153.

¹⁸ Wilkinson, Richard H., *The Complete Gods and Goddesses*, p. 182.

¹⁹ Wilkinson, Richard H., *The Complete Gods and Goddesses*, p. 14.

²⁰ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 33.



The name of Hery-Maat:

Hery-Maat represents the deceased tomb owner, whether a queen or a prince in the Valley of the Queens, whose name means "the one who is upon Maat or the one who dominates it". The deceased is usually represented under the protection of the guardian, Neb-nerou.²¹ The name of this god is written in the burial chambers of the Valley of the Queens above his head as in the tombs of Prince Pa-Re-her-wenm-ef (QV 42), and Prince Set-her-khepsh-ef (QV 43), as  *Hri m3t*, which means: "the great god, Hery-Maat, he who presides over the truth".²² But in the tombs of Prince Khaemouest (QV 44) and Queen Tyti QV 52), his name was written as, , *hrii m3t*.

His name consists of two words:  *hrii* and  *m3t*.²³ There are different meanings for *hrii*, such as "to be frightened" or related to "God Horus". The other meaning of the word *hrii* is "above", "the distant one" or "the one on high",²⁴ which is above something, which explains the depiction of this god seated on a cushion in the shape of  *3ht* -sign which means "horizon".²⁵ The horizon is "the place in the sky where the sun rises" or "the mountain with the rising sun", so the sign of *3ht* or the horizon represents the horizon and the sun above it. Many shapes found at the base would be considered the symbols for mountains, or  *dw*, which surrounds the sun's disc with the lion god Aker, who protects the sunrise and sunset. Therefore, the depiction of this god seated on an *3ht*-shaped cushion symbolizes the movement of the deceased into and out of the underworld.²⁶

The deceased would follow the path of the sun. So as the sun is an important source of life, the horizon becomes a highly significant symbol as well. The horizon represents the transition point between the world of the living and the world of the dead. So, the tombs are often called the horizon of eternity. The western horizon is the place where the gods welcome the deceased into his new life.²⁷

The mention of justice *m3t*, after the word *hrii*, means that he can be Horus, but whose name is attached to that of *m3t* , which is used to represent the base for the thrones of gods and kings, a symbolic support for deities and spirits. This sign is also used to refer to offerings, rest, peace, and happiness. But Maat usually represented as a goddess holding the coiled cross of divine life and wearing on her head the feather of

²¹ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 36.

²² Fekri, Magdi, "La Tombe de la Reine Sat-Rà, No 41 dans La Vallée des Reines" dans *ASAE*, in press.

²³ Fekri, Magdi, "Les protecteurs du défunt dans la salle sarcophage", p. 19.

²⁴ Gardiner, Alan, *Egyptian Grammar*, Cambridge, 1957, p. 582.

²⁵ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 36.

²⁶ <https://www.pyramidsland.com/blog/ancient-egyptian-symbols>

²⁷ Taylor, John, *the horizon of eternity: living and dying in ancient Egypt*, The British Museum, 2012, P. 5.

the West as the symbol of justification, is the expression of the universal order established according to truth and justice.

The depiction of Hery-Maat:

Hery-Maat is depicted as a squatting, naked, male child and represents the deceased tomb owner, whether a queen or a prince. For instance, he appears in the tomb of Queen Tyti (QV 52), thus representing the deceased queen's entry into or emergence from the underworld. Hery-Maat is usually seated behind Neb-nerou.²⁸ He is wearing four bracelets, anklets and *wsh* collar.²⁹ The *wsh* main purpose was to protect the wearer, a concept related to Egyptian iconography's concern for the safety and efficacy of the mummy. The u-shaped collar is associated with the creator-God Atum and is usually made of plants and flowers to ensure the ability of fertility after death,³⁰ which is related to rebirth and eternal life.³¹

Hery-Maat is depicted wearing an *Afnit*-headdress, sometimes with a uraeus, a sign of royalty (Pl.1).³² The uraeus is a major protective symbol that appears in several architectural decorations, jewelry, amulets, and texts. Fear of the cobra turned it into the ideal symbol of power for the Egyptian pharaohs, who wanted their enemies to fear them.³³ Uraeus was derived from the word "*iaret*", meaning "the risen one", which means the symbolized the authority and power of the gods and kings. It was believed to give magical powers and ensure magical protection for the wearer.³⁴

This child is squatting, folding his right arm; he puts his hand on the opposite shoulder in a gesture to show respect and fear, while his left hand was on the thigh.³⁵ This god is depicted seated on  an *3ht*-shaped cushion, which symbolizes the movement of the deceased into and out of the "horizon" like the sun god. The seat is sometimes dotted with red and yellow like the desert sands; it rests on a mat like that used for the offerings or as a carpet for the throne of gods and kings. The seat was made from limestone.³⁶

In the tomb of Sat Re (QV 38), the figure has been sketched in red and details have been reproduced here in black, for the head and the costume. Above his head, the

²⁸ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 36.

²⁹ Fekri, Magdi, "Les protecteurs du défunt dans la salle sarcophage", p. 19.

³⁰ Rigges, Christina, Forms of the Wesekh Collar in Funerary Art of the Graeco-Roman Period, *Chronique d'Égypte: Bulletin périodique de la Fondation égyptologique reine Élisabeth*, Volume 76, Issue 151 – 152, France, 2001, p. 63.

³¹

<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3453#:~:text=Like%20many%20things%20in%20ancient,to%20make%20out%20of%20flowers.>

³² B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 36.

³³ Sankiewicz, Marta, "Cryptogram Uraeus Frieze in the Hatshepsut Temple at Deir El-Bahari." *Centre D'Archaeologie Mediterranee de L'Academie Polonaise des Sciences (Etudes et Travaux XXII)*, 2008, p 203.

³⁴ <https://hartmannhomeworkdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/egyptiansymbols1pdf>

³⁵ Bénédite, Georges, "Le tombeau de la reine Thiti", *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire*, 1891, p. 405.

³⁶ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Hery-Maat" dans *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 36.

outline of an ear is drawn. His name, *ḥery-maât* was inscribed on his head.³⁷ This character would be the image of young Horus at the time of his coronation in Heracleopolis (Fig. 2).³⁸



Fig.2: Neb-Nerou and Ḥery-maat, the tomb of Sat Ra (QV 38).

(After : Fekri, Magdi, “La Tombe de la Reine Sat-Rà, No 41 dans La Vallée des Reines”).

In the Louvre Museum, there is a small stela of Ramses II, which has the same shape as the Hery-Maat child. On one side, it depicts Ramses II seated on a curved cushion in the center, which echoes the hieroglyph of the horizon, a scene of the sunrise (PL. 2). This image depicts the pharaoh as the son of Re, while identifying him with the sun god, who is reborn in the morning in the form of a child between the mountains of the horizon. Under his aspect of child, the king, whether Ramses II, assimilates the creative powers of the god Re. The image of the sun reborn as a child on the sign of the horizon is then taken up by funerary collections, such as the mythological papyrus of *Hérouben* in the Cairo Museum.³⁹

The roles of Ḥery-Maat:

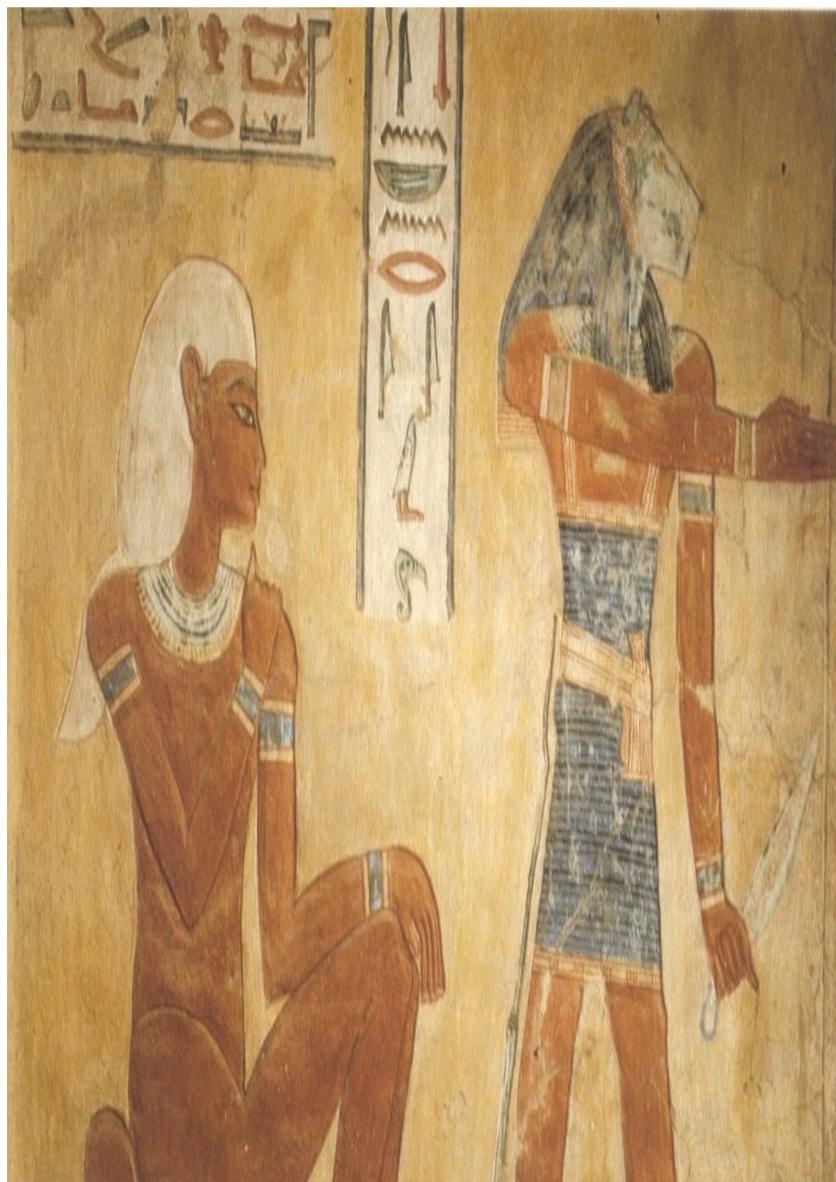
Ḥery-Maat is crouching behind Neb-nerou waiting for dawn at the door of the horizon and the moment that precedes the opening of the door, hiding the mystery of the

³⁷ Fekri, Magdi, “La Tombe de la Reine Sat-Rà, No 41 dans La Vallée des Reines” dans *ASAE*, p. 12.

³⁸ F. Hassanein et M. Nelson, *La tombe du Prince Khaemouaset*, France, 1997, p. 78.

³⁹ B. Bruyère, "Neb-nerou et Ḥery-Maat" *Chronique d'Égypte*, p. 37.

Pl.1



Neb-nerou and Hery-Maat

The tomb of Khámwaset (QV44), the Valley of the Queens.

(After: https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/qv_voll.pdf)

Pl. 2



Stela of Ramesses II is seated on the curved cushion, the hieroglyphic symbol of the horizon - Musée du Louvre.

(After: Florence Maruéjol, *L'ABCdaires des Pharaons*, France, 2004, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010024871>)

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دور النب نيرو والحري ماعت في حماية المتوفى في غرفة الدفن في وادي الملكات

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الملخص:

تشمل الآلهة الواقية التي تظهر في غرفة الدفن "نب نيرو" و"حيري ماعت". اسم "نب نيرو" يعني "سيد الرعب". كان "النيب نيرو" أدوار مهمة في حماية المتوفى من أي خطر وإرشاده إلى الطريق الذي يجب أن يتبعه. وهو أيضاً حارس بوابة الغرب، الذي يفتح أبواب الأفق الغربي ويتيح الوصول إلى سر العالم. يمثل "حيري ماعت" المتوفى، فهو يجلس دائماً خلف "نب نيرو" ليكون تحت حماية نب نيرو. إنه طفل خائف وعار يجلس القرفصاء ويرتكز على الحقيقة في مكان العدالة والصدق؛ جلس على رمز الأفق. تستحضر "يري ماعت" إعادة البعث لأصحاب المقابر المتوفين.

وقد تم تمثيلهم على الجدران الشمالية الغربية للعديد من المقابر في وادي الملكات مثل مقابر الملكة سات رع (QV 38)، والملكة تيتي (QV 52)، وثلاثة من أبناء رمسيس الثالث: الأمير. با-ري-هير-وينم-إف (QV 42)، والأمير ست-هير-خبش-إف (QV 43)، والأمير خايمواست (QV 44).

الكلمات الدالة: نب نيرو، حيري ماعت، وادي الملكات، الملكة تيتي، سيد الرعب، كتاب الموتى .