



Mansoura University
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels

**Representations of τ vessels in the New
Kingdom scenes, Significance and Symbolism**

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Research Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels
Mansoura University
Issue No. 13, Jun. 2023

Representations of $\epsilon\eta\tau$ vessels in the New Kingdom Scenes,
Significance and Symbolism

تمثيلات أواني العنخ من خلال مناظر عصر الدولة الحديثة، الأهمية والرمز

الملخص

تعتبر أواني العنخ واحدة من أواني سكب الماء والتي ظهرت خلال عصر الدولة الحديثة فصاعداً. كانت تصور هذه الأواني إما في مناظر طقسة سكب الماء أمام الآلهة أو كقرايين تقدم من الملوك للآلهة المختلفة. كانت هذه الأواني تحمل بواسطة الآلهة، الملوك وكذلك الكهنة وذلك لتطهير المعابد، القرايين، والمتوفى نفسه فالماء المسكوب من هذه الأواني يعطي الحياة. أما بالنسبة لغطاء أواني العنخ فنجده يأخذ أشكال مختلفة ترمز للعديد من الآلهة مثل رأس الصقر والتي تمثل عدد من الآلهة مثل حورس، ورأس الكبش والتي تمثل الإله آمون رع، أو برأس آدمية والتي ترمز إلى الملك الذي قدم الإناء للإله أو بعض الآلهات مثل موت، ورأس اللبوة التي ترمز للإلهة سخمت. وفي بعض المناظر نجد أن غطاء الإناء يأخذ الشكل

المخروطي أو الشكل المسطح. تمثل اواني العنخ مفهوم إعادة الولادة أو البعث. يعتقد أن قوة العنخ الواهبة للحياة يمكن أن تنتقل إلى الماء الذي تحتويه مما يجعل الماء أكثر فعالية اذا سكب الماء فوق القربان المقدمة للآلهة أو للمتوفى. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة وفحص المناظر المختلفة لطقسة سكب الماء بواسطة اواني العنخ وكذلك تقديم اواني العنخ كقربان داخل معابد ومقابر الدولة الحديثة.

الكلمات الإفتاحية: أواني، عنخ، سكب الماء، تقدمه، تطهير.

Abstract

The nh vessel was one of the libation vessels which was appeared during the New Kingdom onwards. It was represented either in libation scene before the gods or as offering object from the kings or priests to deities. It was held by gods, kings, and priests to purify the temples, the offerings, and the deceased himself as the water which poured from such vessel is to give life. The ' nh vessels' lids take the shape of different heads of different gods like falcon's head which refer to deities like Horus, ram's head which symbolize Amun-Re, human's head which

symbolize the king who offered the vase and some goddesses also like Mut, lioness's head which symbolize Sekhmet or vessels with a conical and flat head. The *ꜥnh* vessel was represent the symbolic conception of rebirth or of resurrection. The life-giving power of *ꜥnh* would be though to be magically transferred to the water it contained, making it more efficacious if it were poured out in offering to the god or the deceased. The paper aims to examine the different scenes of making libations and offering with the *ꜥnh* vessels and vases on the walls of the New kingdom temples and tombs.

Keywords: *vessel, ꜥnh, libation, offerings, purification.*

Introduction

The *ꜥnh*-sign is one of the most significant symbols in ancient Egypt and played an important role in the ancient Egyptian religious. The *ꜥnh*-sign is used to refer to “life, living, everlasting life or immortality”¹.

The classical form of *ꜥnh*-sign was an almond loop with vertical stem separated by horizontal traverse. There were various theories about the origin of *ꜥnh*-sign and the most

¹ N.N. Sadek, The sign of *ꜥnh* in ancient Egypt till the end of the New Kingdom, unpublished master's degree (Minia University, 2003),2-3 .

acceptable one is that of Jéquier who mentioned that the *nh*-sign represent a talisman of magical knot ².

The ancient Egyptian artists used the hieroglyphic signs to provide images which could impart their importance in different contexts and one of these signs was the *nh*-sign.

The standard offering scenes of the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms consist of a set of libation vessels which were used at the beginning of the offering ritual- appears as a constant element in each of the numerous scenes of that type. One of the daily rituals of the temple is the rite of libation for purification by use a libation vessel such as the *nh* vessel.

Since water is like incense, it was used for the purpose of purification in both the temple and the funerary chapel. The ancient Egyptian cared about the cleanliness and perfume of their bodies by using water and incense. Through the libation and incense, vitality and strength are restored to the body of the deceased. The process of purifying the deceased with water is associated with God Osiris, who was purified by washing his body from impurity, and the purulence and wilting of his body stopped, and the reason behind bringing him back to life and his natural state. Also,

² G. Jéquier, Les Talismans {*ânk*h} et {*shen*}, *Le Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 11 (Le Caire, 1914), 134.

the king believed that the pouring of water would resurrect the god³.

This paper will examine the funerary using of the ϵnh symbol as a libation vessel or ϵnh vase as a precious gift for deities.

Objectives of the study

1. Determining the main purposes for offering the ϵnh vessels.
2. Indicating the differences and characteristics of the depicted forms and places of the (ϵnh) vessels, are they the same, or differ according to the identity of the figure who offer the vessel?
3. Classifying the figures offering the (ϵnh) vessel according to the identity, are they kings, priests or deities.

Methodology



The paper applies the descriptive and analytical methodology in the study of the ϵnh vessel in the ancient Egyptian scenes either royal or private. The present study aims at examining a group of scenes from the New Kingdom temples and tombs where the owners are holding





³ A.M. Blackman, The significance of incense and libations in funerary and temple ritual, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 50(1-2) (1912), 71.



ḥnh vessel in their hands, whether in purification scenes or offering them to gods. Description of various scenes' context will be also provided, in addition to the indications of the held objects and to classify the ḥnh vessels held by gods, kings and priests and analyse their symbolism and indications.

Discussion and results

ḥnh vessel in ancient Egyptian language

-   ḥnh : a vase which used by deities to sprinkle water ⁴, or vessel for libations ⁵.


-     ḥhy : vase, vessel ⁶.

The texts which are talking about the vases ḥhy don't give us any determinative to recognize its form; they only indicate that they were part of the furniture of the temple like censers and the  ḥs and  ḥbh vases. While the scenes which represent the cult vases and jars, objects

⁴ R. Hannig, Die Sprache der Pharaonen; Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch- Deutsch (Maiz, 1995), 147.

⁵ Wb I, 204.

⁶ L.H. Lesko, A dictionary of Late Egyptian I (United States of America, 2002), 70, Wb I, 204: 15.

correspond exactly in information and form with the sign  itself; the identification of these vases with these objects which have the name *ḥny* is certain ⁷.

The First Appearance of *ḥny* vases

The *ḥny* vases is an Egyptian type which appeared from the beginning of the New Kingdom onwards but without being determined with the sign for *ḥny* vessel as it had been always done since the Ptolemaic Period ⁸.

The uses of the *ḥny* vases

The *ḥny* vessel carries the water of life and sometimes water dripping from it in the form of a sign of life (*ḥny* sign). The *ḥny* vessel was made to serve deities, as it was used in the funerary rituals. This type of vase or vessel is used for the libations of Gods, and it was mentioned in the pyramid

⁷ G. Jéquier, Matériaux pour servir à l'établissement d'un dictionnaire d'archéologie Egyptienne, *Le Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 19 (Le Caire, 1922), 137.

⁸ H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der Ägyptischen religions geschichte* (Berlin, 1952), 420.

texts as renewing the cold water offered to the god, and the water that poured from these vessels is give life ⁹.

The shape of *ꜥnh* vessel was represents the symbolic conception of rebirth or resurrection. The life-giving power of *ꜥnh* would be though to be magically transferred to the water it contained, making it more functional, if it were poured out in offering to the deceased ¹⁰.

The king used *ꜥnh* vessel for making libation before the God while holding with the other hand censor, or the gods reverse the vase upon last of the vase *ꜥnh* shows pure symbolic significance, so that the Egyptian priests took out the vivifying water from of a vase having the form of a sign of life ¹¹.

The use of the *ꜥnh* vessel in temple ritual was restricted to the king. The king can be represented performing some ceremonies while making use of the *ꜥnh* vessel as the most suitable vase for libation or purification. Also, the king was depicted making libations with *ꜥnh* vessels in front of the sacred barks or before the deities ¹².

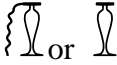

⁹ H.G. Fisher, Some Emblematic uses of Hieroglyphs with particular reference to an archaic ritual vessel, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 5 (New York, 1972), 9.

¹⁰ Sadek, op.cit, 103.

¹¹ Jéquier op.cit, 1922, 138.

¹² Ibid, 139.

In the new Kingdom, some private individuals (priests) were depicted acting with ζnh vessel in their hand. Also, the ζnh vessels were used by deities in the private tombs to purify the deceased as the water that pours from the ζnh vessel is to symbolize the rebirth of God Osiris.

According to Jéquier, it is placed on the ground before the images of gods, small pieces of furniture serve in supporting the series of vases  or  and under which there is a censor ¹³.

One of the daily rituals of the temple is the rite of purification, as is one of the most important ritual offerings in ancient Egypt. The king or the priest used ζnh libation vessel to perform libation before the deities in two ways, either poured onto the ground or onto the altar or offerings as a gesture of general purification ¹⁴.

It was believed that the body of the deceased was dry and loses its fluids, and that the vital fluids that emerged from him should be revived, even if he no longer come to life, nor the heart beats again with the offering of the libation, as they thought that liveliness and strength are restored to the body by pouring of water. Also, the king believed that the

¹³ Jéquier op.cit,139.

¹⁴ M.C. Poo, Liquids in temple ritual, *UCLA Encyclopaedia of Egyptology* 1 (1) (Los Angeles, 2010), 4.

pouring of water would resurrect the god, as it was resurrecting himself, and perhaps the pouring of water would not remain for long, so there were many scenes of the ritual of pouring water, as Horus did to his father Osiris¹⁵.

Here the significance of libation is no longer merely purification; rather, it has been grand to the level of cosmic rejuvenation by associating the pouring of water with the coming of the annual Nile flood. This metaphor, found in the Pyramid Texts, was of course very ancient: *O King, your cool water is the great flood that issued from you*¹⁶. So, the great ritual significance of water was its likeness to the Nile flood: the rejuvenating power of nature¹⁷. Whether the water was poured before the deities. Usually, the water used in the rite was the Nile water, which symbolized purification and life together¹⁸.

The libation vessels (𓆎 , 𓆏 , 𓆑 , 𓆒), termed by E-Schott ‘Holy Vases of Amun’, are known to have been carried in a procession leading to the Nile during the New Year celebrations to draw fresh water which would then be

¹⁵ Blackman, op.cit, 71


¹⁶ J.P Allen, *The ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Atlanta, 2005), 120, 348

¹⁷ Blackman, op.cit, 71

¹⁸ Poo, op.cit, 4

used for the purification of the temple ¹⁹. In all the dedicatory texts accompanying the libation vessels are titled by the term *wḏḥw*. Scholars agreed that these were items used for ritual purposes, stored in the temple's treasury ²⁰.

In ancient Egyptian language the word *ḳbhw* ²¹ means the libation of cold water from the Nile, and the offering

Formula was  *irt sntr ḳbh* “offering incense and libation (cold water)”²². Three different libation vessels, or serving containers, commonly appear in scenes of “doing libation” (*iri ḳbh*) in 19th Dynasty scenes— *ḥs* vase, *nmst*-vessels, and *ḥnh* -vessels. These were used to pour libations and fill cups ²³.

¹⁹ E. Schott, Die heilige Vase des Amon, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 98 (1970), 34-50.

²⁰ S.Tawfik, Aton Studies 5. Cult objects on Blocks from the Aton Temple(s) at Thebes, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 35 (1979), 335-344.

²¹ Wb 5, 27. 2-4.

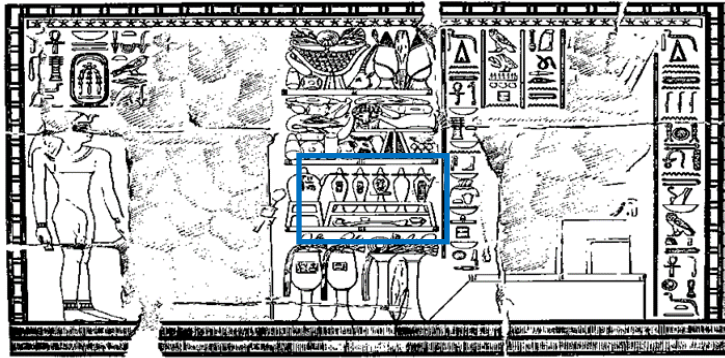
²² عادل أحمد زين العابدين السيد، القرابين والرموز المقدسة المقدمة من الملوك للإلهة في مناظر الدولة الحديثة، رسالة دكتوراة (جامعة طنطا- كلية آداب آثار، 2001)، 44.

²³ K. Eaton, *Ancient Egyptian Temple Ritual: Performance, Patterns, and Practice* (Routledge, 2014), 166.

Scenes of ʕnh vases and vessels in Temples

Hatshepsut Temple at Deir el-Bahari

Date: New kingdom, 18th Dynasty.



(Fig.1) after: E. Naville, The temple of Deir El Bahari I (London, 1849), Pl. XVI.

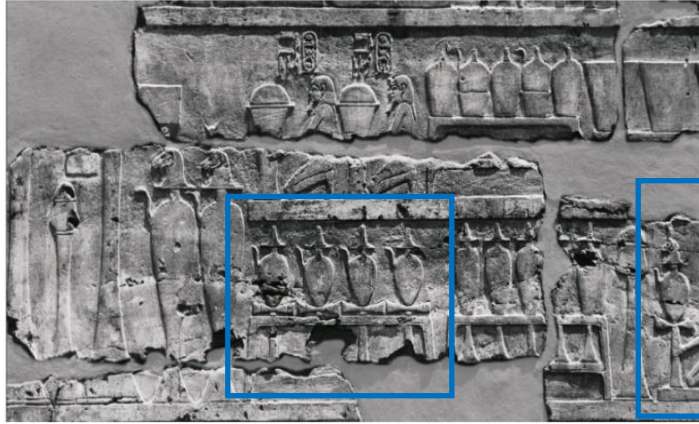
Location: Nich in the Funerary chapel, southern wall.

Description: Hatshepsut and her mother Ahmose making offering to God Amun-Re. Hatshepsut stood holding mace and sceptre. The offerings lies between the Queen and the God who seated on a throne, some of vases are supposed to be dedicated by the king who's cartouche they bear, but these cartouches are evidently late additions. Two vases are inscribed with the name of king Tuthmoses III, one with the name of Tuthmoses I, one with the name of Ramaka and

one with the name of Ahmose Nefertari ²⁴. The *ḥnḥ* shaped vase with conical lid was inscribed with the name of *imn-Re nb {t3wy}* ²⁵

Temple of Amun-Re at Karnak

Date: New kingdom, 18th Dynasty.



(Fig.2) after: B. Letellier & F. Larché, La cour à portique à Thoutmosis IV, *études d'égyptologie* 12 (Paris, 2013), pl.57.

Location: The courtyard in front of the 4th pylon at Karnak.

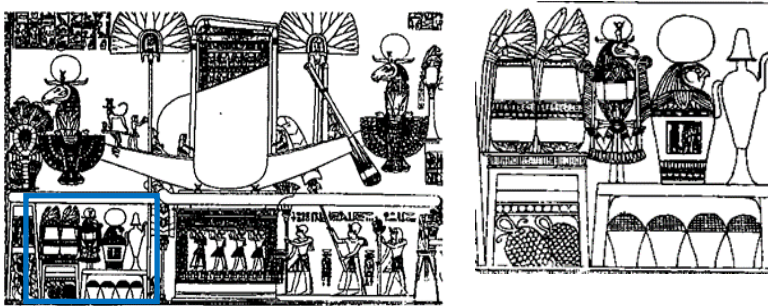
²⁴ Naville, op.cit, 11.

²⁵ A.S. Lubczyńska, Inscribed Vessels Represented in the Chapel of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari?, *Études et Travaux (Institut des Cultures Méditerranéennes et Orientales de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences 27)* (2014), 407, fig. 4a.

Description: A scene shows Thutmose IV presenting the treasure to Amun. An rnh -shaped jar held by a kneeling king's figure with ram-headed lids, are represented along with other precious objects among them a group of four rnh -shaped jars with conical-lids in the centre of the scene.

Temple of Seti I at Abydos

Date: New kingdom, 19th Dynasty.

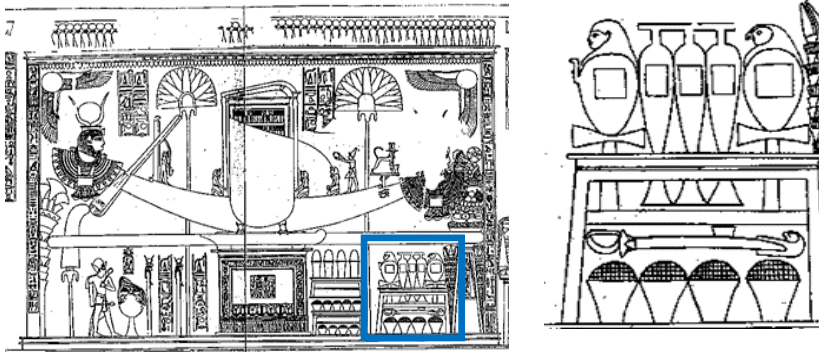


(Fig.3a.b) after: A.M Calverley, The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos II: The Chapels of Amen-Re', Re'-Harakhti, Ptah, and King Sethos (London-Chicago, 1935), pl. 10.

Location: Chapel of Amun-Re, South wall, western wall.

Description: Some of libation vessels represented in front of the sacred barque of Amun- Re. The barque of Amun-Re differs from the depiction of barques found elsewhere. The most significant difference is the figurehead that has the head of Amun-Re-emerging from a lotus flower, So the rnh vase here with a ram head, symbolizing God Amun-Re and

the body of the vase takes the shape of Lotus flower looks like the barque's head. The ϵnh vase has two hands holding two $m3^{\epsilon t}$ feathers. Sayed Tawfiq believes that the first appearance of the vessel with a spout that takes the form of the feather of justice ($m3^{\epsilon t}$) was during the reign of Akhenaten, and after that it continued in Egyptian art as a decorative element only until the end of the 20th dynasty ²⁶.



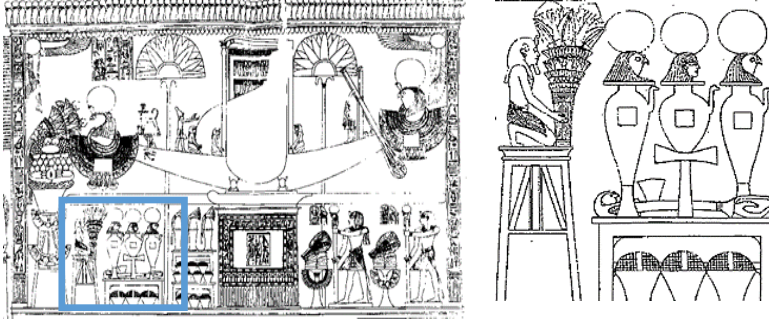
(Fig.4a.b) after: A.M. Calverkey, The temple of king Sethos I at Abydos I: The chapels of Osiris, Isis and Horus (London, Chicago, 1933), pl. 10.

Location: Chapel of Isis, North wall, Western section.

Description: The divine barque of Isis resting on a plinth. Libation vessels represented in front of the sacred barque of Isis. There are two ϵnh shaped jars; the first one with human

²⁶ Tawfik, op.cit, 335-344.

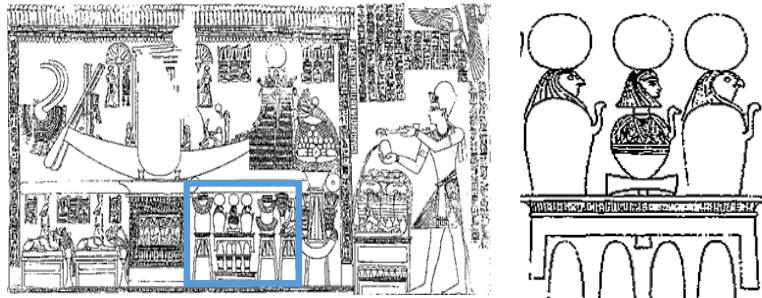
head (represents either goddess Isis or king Seti I) and the second one with a falcon's head (represents God Horus).



(Fig.5a,b) after: Calverkey, op.cit, 1933, pl. 31.

Location: Chapel Horus, south walls, western section.

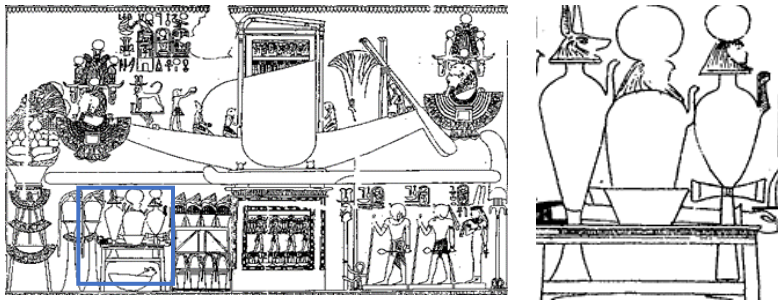
Description: Libation vessels represented in front of the sacred barque of God Horus. One 𓆎 vessel in the middle with human head with the sun disk which the researcher thought that it represents goddess Isis or king Seti I.



(Fig.6a,b) after: Calverkey, op.cit 1935, pl. 15.

Location: Chapel of Re- Horakhty, north wall, western section.

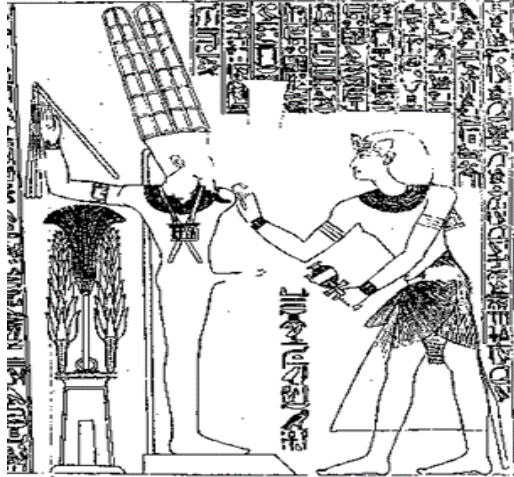
Description: scene similar to the precious one; ζnh vessel with human head which represents Isis or Seti I. The lid and covered with decoration of Lotus flower.



(Fig.7a,b) after: Calverkey, op.cit 1935, pl. 35.

Location: Chapel of king Seti I, south wall, western section.

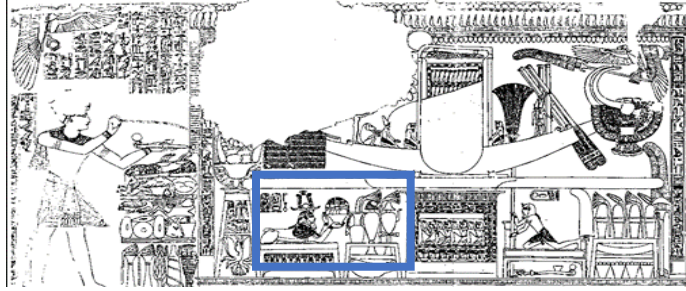
Description: The ζnh vase is depicted under the sacred barque of king Seti I. The lid of the vase takes the shape of Seti I's head with a sun-disk or goddess Isis and the spout is take the shape of $m^{\zeta}t$ feather.



(Fig.8) after: Calverkey, op.cit 1935, pl. 5.

Location: Chapel of Amun-Re, North wall. Western section.

Description: king Seti I holding with his left hand nh vessel in front of god Amun-Re, but without water or offering under the vessel. The nh vessel is decorated with lotus plant decorations. As for the inscriptions between the king and the deity reads “*di.n.i n.k iw wdt iw hm.k m hk3 nhw*” “*I give for you the happiness forever to be your majesty ruler for the living*”.



(Fig.9a,b) after: Calverkey, op.cit 1935, pl. 18.

Location: Chapel of Re- Horakhty, south wall, eastern section.

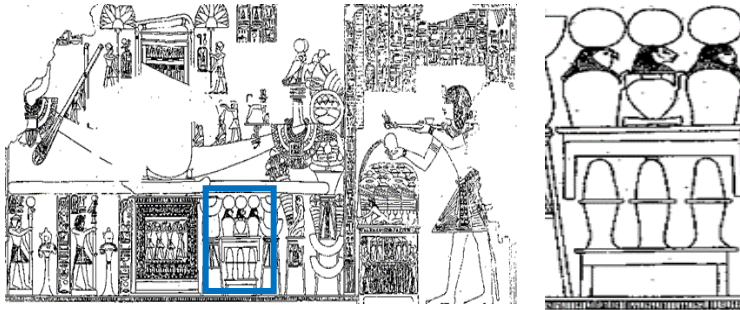
Description: king Seti I making libation and burning incense in front of the sacred barque of God Re-Horakhty. Under the barque, the king in a sphinx form making offering to the God. Among the offering there are a furniture including 'nh vase with falcon's lid which symbolizing God Ra- Horakhty.



(Fig.10) after: A.M Calverkey, The temple of king Sethos I at Abydos III: The Osiris complex (London- Chicago, 1938), pl. 31.

Location: Shrine of Horus, east wall, southern portion.

Description: King Seti I wearing *hprš* crown and the royal *šndt* kilt burning incense and libation with ϵnh vessel before god Horus. The ϵnh vessel pours water from its spout over the bouquet of flowers offerings.



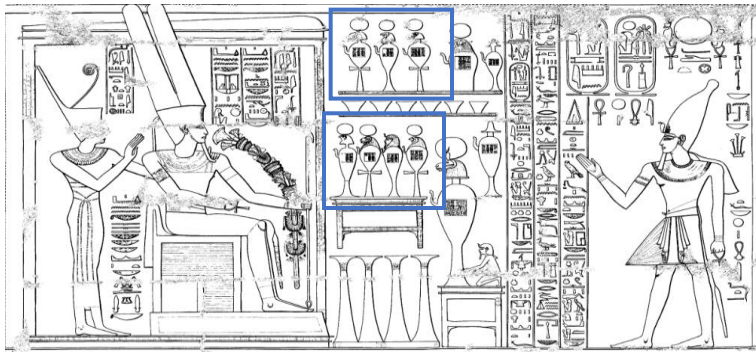
(Fig.11a,b) after: Calverkey, op.cit 1935, pl. 23.

Location: Chapel of Ptah, north wall, western section.

Description: king Seti I is making libation and burning incense in front of the sacred barque of God Ptah. Beneath the barque there are vessels; the middle one takes the shape of ϵnh with lioness lid with a sun disk, the researcher thought that the vessels represent the Memphite Traid (Ptah- Sekhmet (the ϵnh one) - Nefertum).

Ramses III temple at Madinet Habu

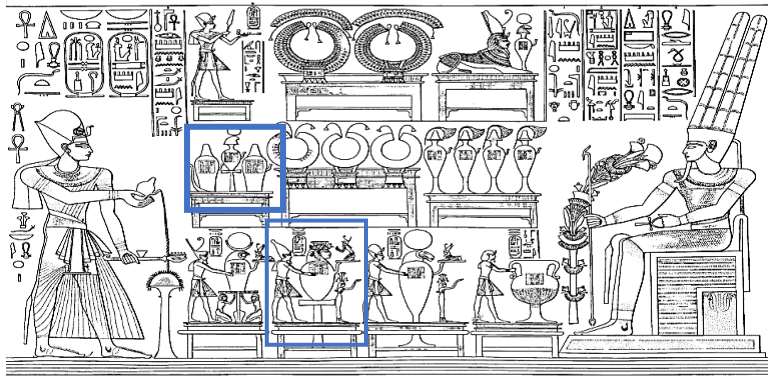
Date: New Kingdom, 20th Dynasty.



(Fig.12) after : The Epigraphic Survey, Medinet Habu V, The Temple Proper I, OIP LXXXIII (Chicago-Illinois, 1957), Pl. 327.

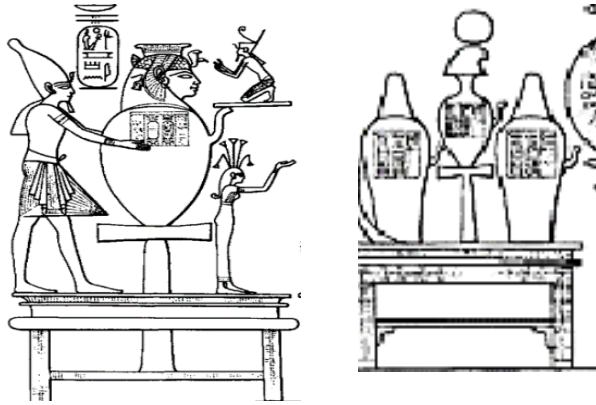
Location: Treasury, southeast room (11), south wall.

Description: Ramses III offering objects of gold (libation vessels) before Amun-Re and Amunet, and these offerings are shown in rooms 10²⁷, 11 and 13 (fig.13). Along with common libation vessels (*hs*, *nmst* and ʕnh shaped jars), at the upper register there are two ʕnh vases with lids of rams' heads with sun disk (Amun). Also, at the lower register there are two ʕnh vases with falcon (Khonsu) and ram (Amun) heads with the sun disk. The body of the vases contains inscriptions written inside a rectangular panel which consists of three columns of texts; the 2nd and 3rd columns includes the names of royal dedicatee, designated as: beloved of + name of a deity (Amun-Re, Mut, Khonsu)²⁸.



²⁷ The Epigraphic Survey, op.cit, pls. 322, 324.

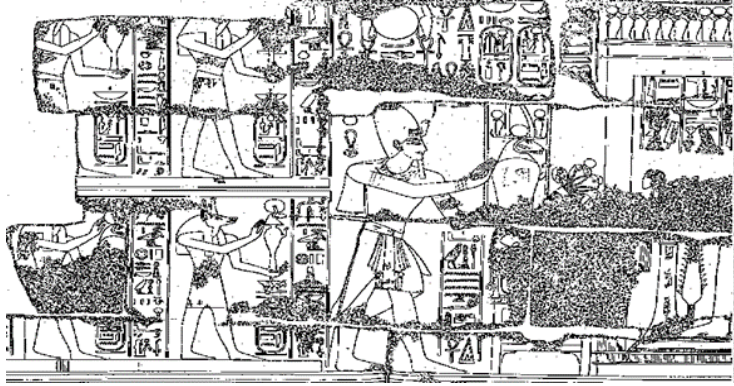
²⁸ A.S. Lubczyńska, On the Question of So-called Amun-vases Observations from the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari. *Études et Travaux (Institut des Cultures Méditerranéennes et Orientales de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences 28)* (2015), 163, 167.



(fig.13a, b, c) After: Epigraphic Survey, op.cit, Pl. 331.




















Location: Treasury, northwest room 13, south wall.

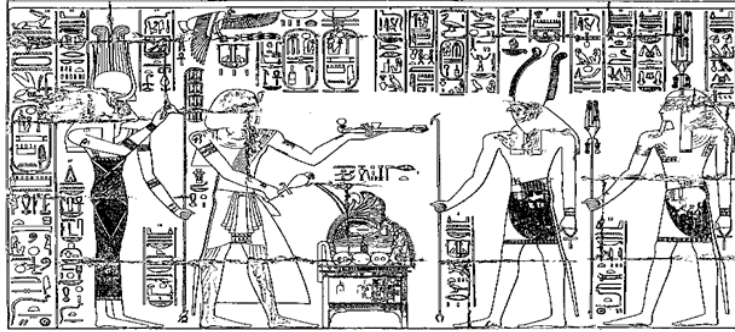
Description: Ramses III offering the golden Amun vases (libation vessels) before Amun-Re. Among them ʿnh shaped vases, the scene shows more elaborate form supported by figure of the king, with its lid with Mut's head. Also, there is another ʿnh vase over Mut's one with falcon's head lid. The bodies of the vases inscribed with some inscriptions. The inscriptions on the bodies of the vases includes the names of Ramses III, designated as: beloved of Mut, Khonsu.



(fig.14) after: Epigraphic Survey, op.cit. Pl. 327.

Location: Room 45, east wall.

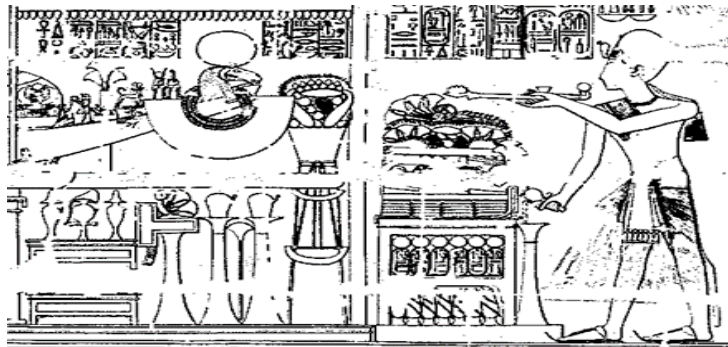
Description: the scene represents the procession of the Souls of Pe and Nekhen carrying libation vessels with ram-headed lids which represents god Amun-Re. Ramesses III is depicted in front of the procession presenting to Amun a *nmst*-vase and behind him, in two registers the Souls of Pe and Nekhen are depicted (four of six figures preserved), carrying *hs*, *nmst*-vases and ʕnh -shaped vessels, all with ram-headed lids. Text accompanying the king's figure terms the presented vessels as $w\text{d}h\text{w}$                   



(fig.15) after: Epigraphic Survey, op.cit, Pl. 289.

Location: The 2nd court, west wall.

Description: king Ramses III, attended by Hathor, offering incense, and making libation by using ʿnh vessel before God Soker- Osiris and Nefertum. The ʿnh vessel depicted with falcon's head which symbolizing god Soker- Osiris, while the spout which poured water to purify the offerings.



(fig.16) after: The Epigraphic Survey, Ramses III's temple within the great inclosure of Amon I (Chicago, 1936), Pl. 56.

Location: Shrine of Amun- Re.

Description: King Ramses III wearing the *hprš* crown and along *šndt* kilt, standing before the barque of God Amun-Re. Between the king and the barque there is a pile of offering table. The king is burning incense and making libations with nh vessel over the offerings as a kind of purification for the offerings. The nh vessel with spout to pour waters and with flat lid. Also, there is an nh vase placed under the barque.

Ramses III temple at Karnak

Date: New kingdom, 20th Dynasty.

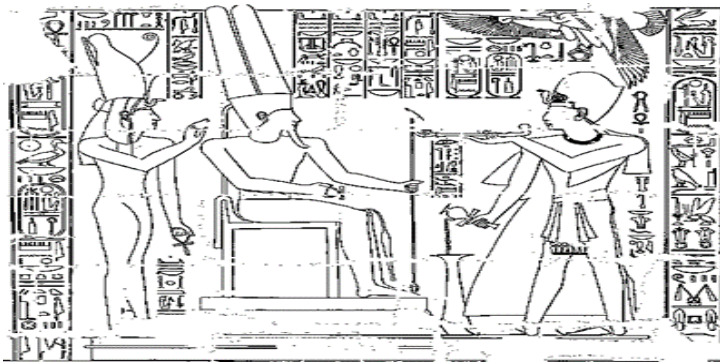


Fig. 17 after: The Epigraphic Survey, Ramses III's temple within the great inclosure of Amon, Part II and Ramses III's temple in the precinct of Mut (Chicago, 1939), Pl. 98.

Location: Ramses III's temple within the great Enclosure of Amon, Exterior, Karnak.

Description: King Ramses III wearing *hprš* crown and a short *šndt* kilt with a bull tail burning incense and making libation over the offering table with *ʿnh* vessel. The vessel with a spout to pour the water before the God Amun-Re and goddess Mut. There are similar scenes with the same *ʿnh* vessel in the same temple ³⁰.

Khnsu Temple at Karnak

Date: New kingdom, 21st Dynasty.

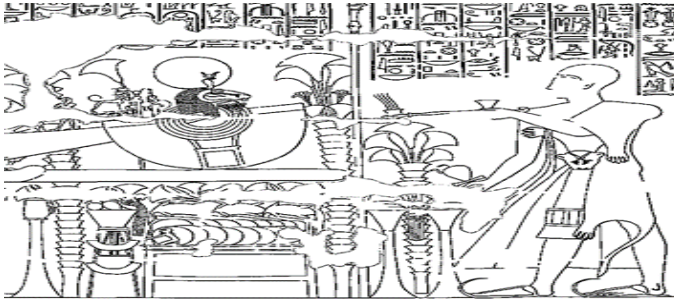


(Fig.18) after: The Epigraphy Survey, The Temple of Khonsu II, scenes, and inscriptions in the court and the first hypostyle hall (Chicago, 1981), pl. 185.

Location: The 1st Hypostyle Hall, North wall, west half, Lower register.

³⁰ The Epigraphic Survey, op.cit,1939, pls. 99, 108, 109, 714.


Description: king Herihor as a high priest burning incense and making libation over the bouquet of flower offerings with *ḥnh* vessel before the sacred barques of the Theban Traid. At the rest of the scene there are some *ḥnh* vases under the sacred barques. The body of the vessel contains some inscriptions.



(Fig.19) after: The Epigraphy Survey, The Temple of Khonsu I, scenes of king Herihor in the court (Chicago, 1979), pl. 87.

Location: court, 1st colonnade, shaft of column 14.

Description: king Herihor thurifying and pouring libation over the bouquet of flower offerings with *ḥnh* vessel before the god Amun-Re of the Akhmnu and goddess Amunet.

The inscription before the king is read as  *ir sntr* *ḥnh* *n it.f* “offering incense and libation (cold water)” for his father”. *ḥnh* vessel pours water from its opening and spout over the offering flowers. The body of the vessel is inscribed with some inscriptions of the name of the king and the deity.

Scenes of nh vases and vessels in tombs

I. The Royal Tombs

Akhenaten tomb

Date: New kingdom, 18th Dynasty.



(fig. 20) after:

<https://homepages.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/egypt/cairo/amarna.html> (Last accessed 3/5/2023).

Location: Now at the Egyptian Museum: Cairo.

Description: Relief of king Akhenaten and queen Nefertiti under the rays of the sun-God Aten. The king Akhenaten wearing the *hprš* crown and followed by his wife queen Nefertari and making libation by using nh vessel before God Aten. The nh vessel with spout and flat lid and poured water over the offerings of the god Aten.

Ramses IX tomb



(fig.21) after: M.F. Guilmant, Le tombeau de Ramsès IX (Cairo, 1907), pl. XXIV

Location: corridor B. New kingdom, 20th Dynasty

Description: king Ramses IX making libation with ϵnh vessel before God Amun-Re Horakhty- Hw³¹ with his four heads, over the flower offerings. The lid of the ϵnh vessel takes the shape of Ram with horns which symbolize Amun-Re Horakhty-Hw. There is another similar scene at Ramses XI, KV4 tomb ³².

³¹ محمد أحمد عبد الرحمن، عبادة رع حور أختي في عصر الدولة الحديثة، رسالة ماجستير (غير منشورة) (جامعة سوهاج، كلية اداب آثار، 2014)، 169.

³² <https://thebanmappingproject.com/tombs/kv-04-rameses-xi> (Last accessed 3/5/2023).

Tomb of Prince Montuherkhepeshef *- KV19

Date: New kingdom, 20th Dynasty, Reign of Ramesses IX.



(fig. 22) after:

https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/pharaons/montouherkhepeshef_kv19/e_montouherkhepeshef_kv19.htm (last accessed 2/5/2023).

Location: First corridor, the right-hand side.

Description: The prince is standing in front of God Banebdjedet* makes a libation of water with a golden ϵnh

* son of king Ramesses IX, he was the prince and heir who died before he could reach the throne.

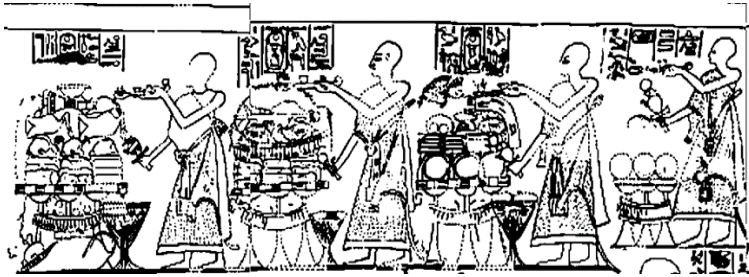
* The god Banebdjedet ("*b3 nb ddt*", "soul of the Lord of Djedet" (Djedet was given the name Mendes by the Greeks) is a ram god, the major divinity of the city of Mendes, his consort was the fish (or dolphin) goddess Hatmehyt and their child was Harpocrates. The god came to embody the souls of Ra, Osiris, Shu and Geb. Because of these associations, this god is often represented with four heads, two facing towards the front and two towards the rear. This god is a symbol of sexual power; see R.H. Wilkinson, *The complete gods and goddesses, of Ancient Egypt* (London, 2003), 192.

vessel, which is topped with a cover in the shape of a ram's head. The prince pours water over the offering as a sign of purification.

II. Private Tombs

Tomb of Khons at Qurna TT 31

Date: New kingdom, 19th Dynasty, Reign of Ramses II.



(fig.23) after: N.G. Davies, *Seven Private tombs at Kurnah* (London, 1948). pl XI

Location: The outer hall, East wall, south side.

Description: The scene represents the Festival of Montu with four priests welcoming the arrival of the God (Montu-Re); each making incense and libation upon a pile of offerings with golden ʕnh vessels in their left hands. All priests are dressed in a leopard-skins. The first priest is Neferhotep high priest of Amenhotep II, the father of Khons. Each of the others is described as his son; the two First, Nay and Iuy, are high priests of Tutmoses I, and the

3rd, Menthotep is a lector of Amenhotep II ³³. The vessels depicted with falcon-headed lids refers to God Montu- Re.



(Fig.24) after: Davies, op.cit, pl. XVIII

Location: The niche chapel, west wall.

Description: Osiris is seated on a cubic chair resting on a platform supported by Anubis. In front of the gods stands Khons, wearing a panther skin, and making libation in front of the god. He holds a censer with his left hand; while he pours water from an *nh*-cross shaped vessel with his right hand and holds a bouquet of lotus flowers which fills the small remaining space. The water poured from the spout of the vessel over Osiris is for purification ³⁴.

³³ Davies, op.cit, 12-14.

³⁴ Ibid, 24.

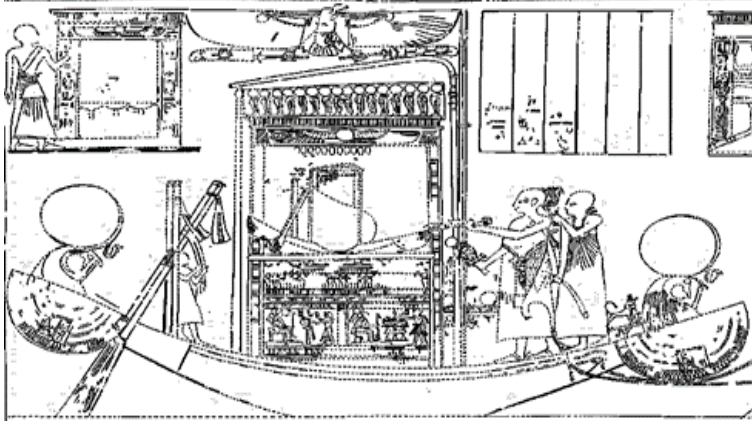


(fig.25) after: Davies, op.cit, pl.XIV.

Location: The west wall, north side.

Description: This wall devoted to the worship of Osiris. Behind Osiris stands God Anubis. The text may be: *The soul of Osiris, the {priest of Mont?}, born of (?) Tawsert, drinking water from out of the water-jar (?)*. The priest Khons is using an ϵnh vessel with lid and spout in the form of falcon's head on a lotus as a cover. The researcher thought that the lid of the vessel represents God Monto as the owner of the tomb is titles as priest of Montu. Khons wears a panther skin with a band of text into it, bearing the cartouche of Thutmosis III. Khons is represented wearing sandals, his feet resting on a slightly higher ground, which thus is "*d sr*", "sacred" ground ³⁵.

³⁵ Davies, op.cit,19.



(fig.26) after: Davies, op.cit, pl.XII

Location: The transverse chamber, south wing, south wall.

Description: The vizier Wsermontu and his brother Huy as high priests stand before the sacred barque of God Montu which rests on a small chapel structure. Huy makes the libation in front of the barque ³⁶ with an ϵnh vessel with falcon- head lid with sun-disk which symbolize God Montu.

³⁶ Davies, op.cit, 18-19.

Tomb of Nakhtamun TT 335, Deir el-Madina

Date: New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty, Reign of Ramses II.



(Fig.27) after:

https://osirisnet.net/tombes/artisans/nakhtamon335/e_nakhtamon335_05.htm (Last accessed 3/5/2023).

Location: Chamber C, south wall.

Description: A funeral scene, while the mummy of the deceased lies, head to the west, on a bed of mummification, inside an anthropoid coffin. Anubis holds the adze with which he gets ready to open the deceased's mouth. Goddess Nephthys, on the right, touches the deceased's head and pours a libation of water from ϵnh vessel surmounted by a falcon head. Isis, on the left, touches the deceased's feet. She doesn't make a liquid libation because her vessel doesn't have a spout and it has a cone of fragrant ointment.

Tomb of Neferabou, TT5, Deir el-Madina

Date: New kingdom, 19th Dynasty, Reign of Ramesses II³⁷.



(Fig. 28) after:

<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/archives/ttdem/?tt=5&os=19#galerie> (Last accessed 3/5/2023).

Location: chamber B, vault, western half.

Description: A funeral scene shows the deceased kneeling between Horus and Thot who purifying him. Both are pouring the holy water from a falcon-headed ḥnh vase in the hand of God Thot and from the m3t feather in the hand of Horus. The sprinkling of the holy water is to symbolize the Osirian resurrection³⁸.

³⁷ PM I, 12.

³⁸ Sadek, op.cit, 108

Tomb of Panehsy, TT 16, Thebes, Dra Abu El-Naga

Date: New kingdom, 19th Dynasty, Reign of Ramses II ³⁹.



(Fig.29) after: H.H. Nelson & U. Hölscher, *Work in western Thebes 1931-33* (Chicago, 1934), fig.31.

Description: A New Year festival scene, which coincide with the beginning of the annual Nile flood. It depicts two rows of priests carrying the golden Great Vase of Amun with bouquet of Amun from temple. Some priests sing and clap the rhythm while others follow and hold smaller ceremonial vases. Among the vases an ϵnh vase with flacon-headed lid. The upper row headed by Nebsumenu (who held the ϵnh vase) with braziers. The building with 8 flags may be the 2nd pylon of Karnak temple. During this festival the temple was cleaned, and when the procession

³⁹ PM I, 28.

moves to the left, the priests are on their way to the Nile to collect water⁴⁰.

Tomb of Imiseba TT65, Qurna

Date: New kingdom, 21st Dynasty, Reign of Ramses IX⁴¹.



(Fig.30a, b) C.R. Lepsius, Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien III (Berlin, 1849-1859), pl. 235 (a).

Location: The transverse hall, the eastern wall.

Description: Ramses IX making libation with *nh* vessel over a Bouquet of Lotus flowers and burning incense before the barque of God Amun- Re. The inscriptions in front of the king reads: *irt sntr n Imn-Re nswt ntrw kbhw* “offering incense for Amun-Re the king of gods and making libation of cold water”⁴². The vessel depicted with a ram-headed lid

⁴⁰ PM I, 28.

⁴¹ Ibid, 129.

⁴² فاطمة محسن حسن محمد، مناظر العائلة الملكية في مقابر الافراد في عصر الرعامسة، رسالة ماجستير (غير منشورة) (جامعة الفيوم، كلية آداب آثار، 2019)، 64.

with a sun-disk which represents God Amun-Re, while the body of the vessel decorated with *hpr* beetle.

Conclusion and Results

To start our investigation, it seems reasonable to recall scenes in which this sacred vessel is attested: its images occur in three major contexts:

- I. Presentation of precious objects to the deities.
- II. Some funerary scenes (e.g., libations, offerings for the god, scenes with sacred barques).
- III. New Year processional scenes.

The First Category Scenes: Presentation of precious objects to the deities

Scenes from temples depicting the presentation of precious object by the king to the deity and the ʕnh vases were depicted among these objects, depicted in figures (1, 2, 12, 13, 14)

The Second Category Scenes: Ritual Scenes (libations, offerings for the deity, scenes with sacred barques)

This category includes different groups:

- I. The first group is ʕnh libation vessels placed in front of the sacred barques (figs.3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 19).

II. The second group is showing ϵnh vessels used by kings or priests in temples or tombs making purification of offerings or libation (Figs.8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30). The ϵnh libation vessels are depicted being held from chin height down to kilt level. kings share this vessel with other offerings, like ointment jars and flowers.

III. The third group is offered the ϵnh vases by gods or kings to deities (figs. 9, 14).

III. The fourth group is using ϵnh vessels by gods for making a purification over the body of the deceased (figs.27, 28).

The Third Category scenes

This category is showing the sacred vessels carried as cult objects in the New Year festival processions leading to the Nile to draw fresh water which would then be used for the purification of the temple. The oldest known representation of this type may be dated to the reign of Amenhotep III. The scene is placed in the second antechamber of the Luxor Temple. The first example is to be found in the tomb of Panehesy (TT 16) dated to the reign of Ramesses II (fig.19). The second scene is represented in the tomb of Imiseba (TT 65) from the time of Ramesses IX. Both scenes show the real course of the festival in which the tomb owners were participating. In each case, only one

‘Amun-vase’ is depicted, carried by priests and behind it, a procession of priests carrying vessels of different forms among them an ʕnh -shaped vases with ram-headed lids covers with uraei on their foreheads known as the ‘holy vases of Amun’. Most probably, the vessels shown here depict real objects belonging to the cult equipment of the temple.

- The ʕnh - jars used either as a libation vessel (figs. 8- 10- 15-16- 17- 18- 19- 20- 21- 22- 23- 24- 25- 26- 27- 28- 30) or as a container vase presented to gods (figs. 1-2-3-4-5-6- 7- 9-11-12-13-14- 29).




- The libation vessels of various shapes ($\text{k}bh$, hs , $nmst$, ʕnh) named $w\text{d}hw$, got their covers in the shape of the heads of various deities no earlier than the reign of Amenhotep III, the peak of the popularity of this motif falls, however, in the post-Amarna time. While the large-scale ones named as ‘Amun vases’, and it was presented to gods as a temple treasure or used during the New year festivals.

The forms of the ʕnh vases or vessels’ lids

- The ʕnh vessels are depicted in front of the sacred barques or in front of different deities such as Amun, Mut, Khonsu, Horus, Isis, defied Seti I, Montu, soker, Osiris; the lids of these vessels were decorated with different heads of deities.

- Conical shaped lid cover.

- Flat cover or opened without lid.

No.	The Vessel's lid	The decorating symbol	Scene No.
1.	Rams' heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God Amun-Re or Amun-Re - Horakhty - God Banebdjedet. 	Figs. 3-12- 14-21-22-30
2.	Falcons' heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God Horus - God Ra-Horakhty - God Soker - God Munto 	Figs. 4-12- 13-14-15-23-25-26- 27-28
3.	Lionesses' heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goddess Sekhmet 	Fig. 11
4.	Humans' heads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The king who presented the vessel. 	Figs. 4-5- 6- 7-13

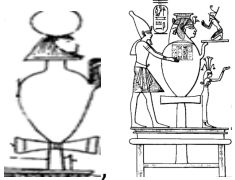


		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goddess Isis - Goddess Mut 	
5.	<p>Conical heads</p> 	Plain without symbol	Figs. 1- 2- 9- 19
6.	<p>Flat heads</p> 	Plain without symbol	Figs. 8- 10- 16- 17- 18- 20- 24

Table (1) : The forms of *ḥnh* vessel lids

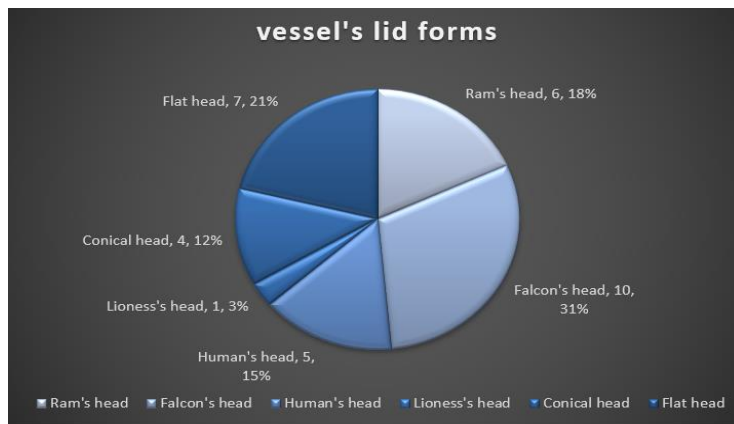


Chart 1 forms of *ḥnh* vessel lids

- Out of thirty scenes; the most represented one is the falcon-headed lid form and the least represented one is the Lioness-headed lid form.

- The researcher found that the ζnh vessels depicted inside both temples and tombs (Royal like the tomb of Akhenaten and Ramses IX- Private like tomb TT65-TT16). It was used in the temples in the libation rite before the gods, or presented to gods, while in the tombs it was used also in the libation before the gods or the sacred barques or used to pour sacred water over the deceased for purification.

- The most scenes of the ζnh vessels and vases with different lid shapes were depicted inside Seti I temple at Abydos, while the most scenes of ζnh vessels were depicted inside Tomb of Khons at Qurna TT 31.

- It is worthy to note that most ζnh libation vessel scenes which postdating the Amarna period bear inscriptions on their bodies. This applies to the large scale ‘Amun-vases’ and to the smaller $w dh w$ containers.

- The inscription in each vase consists of 3 columns of text within a rectangular panel (sometimes with a pt-sign closing the square at the top). The text – written in the 2nd and 3rd columns – includes the names of royal dedicatee, designated as: beloved of + name of a deity (Amun-Re, Mut, Khonsu, Osiris, etc). Sometimes the inscription consists of 4 columns, the 1st and 4th repeating the same text

(or containing names of two different gods), flanking royal cartouches placed in the middle. The images of vessels with such inscriptions are attested on temple and tomb walls from the reigns of Hatshepsut (fig. 1), Seti I (figs. 3, 4, 5), Ramesses II (figs. 27, 29), Ramesses III (figs. 12- 13), Ramesses XI (figs. 22, 30) and Herihor (fig. 18) as well as in TT 65 (fig. 30). The inscribed texts are not only on vessels with lids decorated with heads of gods, but also regular libation vessels with conical lids.

- As for the figures which holding the ḥnḥ vases and vessels; sometimes were held by Gods and goddesses like figures (14- 27, 28). Most of the above scenes the king is offered or held the ḥnḥ vessels and vases like kings (Akhentaen, Seti I, Ramses II, Ramesses III, Ramses IX, Herihor) and queens like Hatshepsut. In the private tombs the ḥnḥ vessels were held only by the high priests.

- All the libation scenes must include the formula of *irt sntr kbḥ* “offering incense and libation (cold water)”.

- Not all the ḥnḥ vessels pours water over the offerings, but in some scenes the king holding the ḥnḥ vessel without water or even without the offering cold water formula as the scene in Abydos temple (Fig. 8), and the inscription between them refers that the king intends to give the god a happiness and to be ruler of the living.

- The *ḥnh* vessel was made to serve the gods, as it was used in funerary rituals. As it used for the libations of God, and the water that poured from this vessel is to give life.

- Most of the *ḥnh* libation vessel was decorated with lotus flower cover as the flower leaf of Lotus may symbolize the *ḥnh* sign in some cases. Also, Lotus symbolized the resurrection and associated with Osiris⁴³ which similar to the function of *ḥnh* as a libation vessel.

- The *ḥnh* vase or vessel's shape was represents the symbolic conception of rebirth or of resurrection. The life-giving power of *ḥnh* would be though to be magically transferred to the water it contained, making it more efficacious if it were poured out in offering to the god or the deceased.

- The most remarkable point concerning the ritual function of the *ḥnh* vessel is without doubt its use in the cult of the dead. The process of purifying the deceased with water is associated with God Osiris, who was purified by washing his body from defilement, and the suppuration and wilting

⁴³ E.V, Pischikova, Representations of ritual and symbolic objects in Late XXVth Dynasty and Saite private tombs, Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt 31 (Cairo, 1994), 70.

of his body stopped, and the reason behind bringing him back to life and his natural state.

- The 𓆎 vessel is rarely used for the ritual bath of the king or private persons as the researcher didn't found any bathing scene with the 𓆎 vessel.

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