Communicating Power through Text and Iconography: A Suckling Scene from the Temple of Seti I at Abydos

Cannon Aileen Fairbairn

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COMMUNICATING POWER THROUGH TEXT AND ICONOGRAPHY: A SUCKLING SCENE FROM THE TEMPLE OF SETI I AT ABYDOS

by

Cannon Aileen Fairbairn

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: Art History

The University of Memphis

May 2020
For
My Family
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Abstract

This study looks at a scene on the lower register of the south wall of the First Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos, in which Ramesses II is shown held by the goddess Isis and suckled by four forms of the goddess Hathor. The only complete line drawing of the relief, by Mariette, dates to 1869 and the only known published photograph, by Capart, dates to 1912. First, I interpret the scene in the context of the Temple of Seti I, which demonstrates the extent of Ramesses II’s power over both the geographical land of Egypt and the divine realm. Next, I provide a translation of the entire text accompanying the scene. Finally, I examine the scene’s ideology, looking at the roles played by Hathor and Isis, the Suckling motif, the locations presented in the epithets of Hathor, and the crowns worn by the figures.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Within the First Hypostyle Hall\(^1\) of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos, dated to the New Kingdom, Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1292 – 1191 BCE), is a relief on the south wall, in the lower register depicting Ramesses II, son of Seti I, interacting with five goddesses (PM VI [1991], 5 [49], Figure 3 and 6). On the viewer’s far right, Ramesses II is held on the forearm of the goddess Isis who caresses his chin.\(^2\) Viewing the scene from right to left, Ramesses II is suckled first by Hathor, Lady of Dendera as he wears the White Crown, then by Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem as he wears the Red Crown, followed by Hathor, Lady of Cusae as he wears the Atef Crown, and, finally, Hathor Lady of Atfih as he wears the Nemes Headdress. The text accompanying the relief is located in front of Isis and along the top of the scene (Figure 3).

The relief has suffered significant damage over the years and lost most of its original paint. Remnants of paint remain on the heads and crowns of the Ramesses II figures. There is significant damage to the text, the heads of various figures, and the lower portion of the figures (Figures 1 and 2). While Mariette indicates the damage to the text in his line drawing, he depicts figures without the damage (Figure 3).\(^3\) Either the figures were undamaged in 1869 when


\(^2\) The hand placed such under the chin is a common motif in Egyptian art. It appears within temple reliefs, such as on the west of the Second Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos where the king sits on the lap of a goddess as she has her hand under his chin. Amice M. Calverley and Myrle F. Broome, *The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos Volume IV* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933-1958), pl. 20. It also appears between members of Akhenaten’s family. Dorothea Arnold, *The Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty from Ancient Egypt* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 57, fig. 49.

Mariette created the line drawing, or, more likely, he chose to reconstruct the figures without the damage.\(^4\) David’s line drawing, which does not contain the text, does indicate the damage to the figures (Figure 4).\(^5\)

I first came across this scene while researching the Vulture Cap and its symbolism as a queen’s crown. I was struck by the variety of crowns worn by Ramesses II and the repetitive nature of the Suckling motif. While I have not been able to see the relief in person, thanks to the digital photographs provided for me by Dr. Iskander in February 2020, I have been able to study the details of the relief up close.\(^6\)

Scholarly attention to the scene has been rather limited. The most recent complete line drawing of the relief including the text is by Mariette from 1869 in his publication of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (Figure 3).\(^7\) The sole published photo was by Capart in 1912 in his publication of the Temple. He also provided a translation of the portion of the text associated with Isis.\(^8\) In 1960, Leclant mentioned this scene in his examination of the Blue Crown and its relation to suckling.\(^9\) David mentioned the scene in her analysis of the symbolic program of the scenes of the Hypostyle Halls of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos.\(^10\) Later, David included a

\(^4\) Brand has suggested that it is more likely that Mariette chose to reconstruct the figures without damage as early copyists were more concerned with recording the subject of reliefs rather than creating true facsimiles showing their present conditions. Peter J. Brand, personal communication, March 26, 2020.


\(^6\) I am grateful to Dr. Sameh Iskander, who is currently conducting epigraphic fieldwork at the Temple of Ramesses II at Abydos, for providing me with these photographs of the relief. I thank Dr. Lorelei Corcoran for her help in facilitating my request.

\(^7\) Mariette, *Abydos*, pl. 25.

\(^8\) Jean Capart, *Abydos. Le Temple de Seti Ier* (Bruxelles: Rossignol & Van Den Bril, 1912), 16-17.


description of the scene and a simplified line drawing of only the figures along with the other reliefs of the First Hypostyle Hall (Figure 4). She also included a partial translation of the Hathor speeches.\textsuperscript{11} Collier used this scene in her study of the purpose and symbolism of the Blue Crown.\textsuperscript{12} Goebs examined the interaction of the four crowns worn by Ramesses II in terms of their geographical associations.\textsuperscript{13} While this is the most extensive analysis of the scene to date, Goebs includes it as simply a footnote. Budin referenced the relief in her analysis of what she defines as the \textit{kourotrophic} motif, or images of a woman caring for an infant or child, during the New Kingdom.\textsuperscript{14} In 2016 David once again included the scene in her record of the First Hypostyle Hall. Her treatment is nearly identical to that of her 1981 publication.\textsuperscript{15}

Only David names the scene, calling it the “Royal Induction.”\textsuperscript{16} However, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, this name can also apply to a scene on the northern wall of the First Hypostyle Hall. Thus, in order to distinguish the scene from other scenes within the First Hypostyle Hall and other suckling scenes, I suggest calling it the Investiture Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. This name identifies the two primary actions taking place within the scene – the bestowal of crowns and the suckling of the king. The use of the word “induction” implies the scene depicts the moment in which the king is placed in the office of king. However, as will be

\begin{enumerate}
\item Sandra A. Collier, “The Crowns of Pharaoh: Their Development and Significance in Ancient Egyptian Kingship” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1996), 119.
\item Katja Goebs, \textit{Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature} (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2008), 135, fn. 335.
\item Stephanie Lynn Budin, \textit{Images of Woman and Child from the Bronze Age: Reconsidering Fertility, Maternity, and Gender in the Ancient World} (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 78-80. However, Budin identifies the king in this scene as Seti I rather than Ramesses II and states that it is impossible to know for certain the identity of the goddess furthest to the right, though the text with that figure identifies her as Isis. See p. 38, fn. 21.
\item David, \textit{Temple Ritual}, 54-55.
\item David, \textit{Temple Ritual}, 54-55.
\end{enumerate}
discussed later, this scene is part of a larger process by which Ramesses II becomes king and specifically, depicts the king receiving divine attributes and crowns. Thus, the word “investiture” would be more appropriate. This name also serves to distinguish it from other scenes of Ramesses II being suckled by goddesses. However, for the sake of brevity I will refer to it throughout this analysis as simply the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II.

In my analysis of the scene, I will be utilizing the methodologies of Elizabeth Warkentin and Benoît Lurson. Warkentin studied the iconographical use of different forms of Hathor with geographical epithets. She focused specifically on a Ramesside scene from the interior of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak Temple that depicts fifteen forms of the goddess, each distinguished by a different geographical epithet, including Lady of Dendera, Lady of Hu-Sechem, and Lady of Cusae. By analyzing the history and cult of Hathor at each location, construction at the locations during the New Kingdom, and each locations connections with other major cities, She suggests that such a variety of Hathors were used to demonstrate a king’s acceptance by the gods, his relationship to the various cults of Hathor, and the extent of his power as king. She concludes that Hathor’s long history in Egypt and many roles in Egyptian society made her a powerful choice for the scene, especially following the turmoil of the Amarna Period. Based on the presence of four Hathors with geographical epithets in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II and its identical New Kingdom date, I will be applying Warkentin’s methodology in order to

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17 For her discussion of each of these geographical epithets see, Elizabeth Rose Warkentin, “Looking Beyond the Image: An Exploration of the Relationship Between Political Power and Cult Places of Hathor in New Kingdom Egypt” (PhD diss., University of Memphis, 2018), 62-84, 166-184, 222-232.


better understand the purpose of the four Hathors and their relationship to the themes of legitimisation, rebirth, and power (See further discussion in Chapter 4).

In addition, I will use the methodology established by Lurson for interpreting Ramesside scenes using various principles, like symmetry, framing, adjunction, type-pairs, and alternation which he developed through his examination of two scenes that are also from the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak Temple. In general, his methodology encourages viewers to pay attention to the layout of a scene. He suggests that this will not only reveal meaning, but also keep the researcher from “over-interpreting a scene.”

While I will not be analyzing two scenes as Lurson did, the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is from the same time period, has symmetrical elements, demonstrates various patterns, and, as will be discussed later, suggests the presence of type-pairs. Thus, I will utilize Lurson’s methodology, specifically, in my analysis of the crowns present in the scene (See further discussion in Chapter 5).

My investigation of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II will inevitably address the divinity of the Egyptian king, a topic of much debate in Egyptology. As such, it warrants a brief discussion here before continuing with the analysis. While early Egyptology understood the king to literally be a divine being, scholars such as Posener, Hornung and Kitchen became skeptical of this interpretation. Posener suggested that while the king may have embodied divine power in the divinely created position of king, he himself was not a divine being and was not recognized as such by the Egyptian people. Hornung, likewise, made it very clear that the king was not a deity and suggested that the king was understood to be an image of the gods, even comparing

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him to a cult image. By analyzing changes over time, Kitchen divides the personage of the king between the mortal man and the divine office. He suggests that New Kingdom cults dedicated to living rulers were actually dedicated to the divine office of kingship as held by that specific king. General skepticism of defining the Egyptian king as a wholly divine being, especially in the eyes of ancient Egyptians, has continued in Egyptology.

Current scholarship on the topic of the divinity of the king generally accepts the idea of the Royal Ka as proposed by Lanny Bell in 1985. Bell suggested that the divinity of the king was embodied within the Royal Ka which passed from king to king upon coronation. According to Bell, any worship of the king or reference to his god-like nature was referring to the Royal Ka, not the king himself. However, in 2018, Winnerman reexamined the theory of the Royal Ka. He argued that the divinity of the king was too dynamic to be reduced to a single explanation like the Royal Ka. Winnerman points out that the theory of the Royal Ka does not address every situation and suggests that, though scholars have been seeking a single explanation for kingship,
one is not possible because it will always ignore or contradict some evidence due to the complexity of Egyptian kingship. Instead of seeking a single theory to explain all aspects of Egyptian kingship, Winnerman suggests that scholars should, instead, look at how the Egyptians approached this complex issue.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the conversation regarding the mortality or divinity of the Egyptian king continues.

Taking into consideration all of the arguments above, along with evidence from the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II, I find the conclusion made by Winnerman most convincing and will follow his suggestions in my analysis. As such, I will focus instead on whether Ramesses II was believed to be a wholly divine being or not, but will focus on the divine attributes and manifestations of divinity as evidenced in the scene. As will be discussed in the following chapters, the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II indicates that Ramesses II was in possession of divine attributes and some level of divinity. It should also be noted that despite diverse opinions and theories on the nature of kingship, many scholars agree that coronation was the moment when the king received divinity, however they chose to define this.\textsuperscript{29}

This analysis of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II will first look at the context of the scene within the area of Abydos, the Temple of Seti I, and the Hypostyle Halls (Chapter 2). This will be followed by my translation and analysis of the text of the scene (Chapter 3). I will also look at the significance of the presence of Isis and Hathor, along with the Suckling Goddess Motif (Chapter 4). Finally, I will consider each of the crowns and headdresses depicted in the scene.

\textsuperscript{28} Winnerman, “Royal Ka,” 5-6.

scene and how they interact with each other, in order to determine their symbolism within the greater purpose of the scene (Chapter 5). Finally, I will evaluate the major themes of the Sucking Scene of Ramesses II using all of these features in order to draw conclusions regarding its symbolic and ideological purpose (Chapter 6).
Chapter 2

Geographical and Historical Context

The Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is located on the lower portion of the south wall of the First Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (Figure 6).\(^1\) While hundreds of books and articles have been dedicated to the topics of Seti I, Ramesses II, Abydos, and the Temple of Seti I,\(^2\) this chapter will discuss only the relevant and specific contexts in which this scene can be placed – Abydos, the Temple of Seti I, the Hypostyle Hall, and the south wall. By looking at these contexts, the themes and meanings communicated through the text and iconography can be situated within a larger picture and, by so doing, its meaning is best elucidated. Primarily, the context strengthens the scene’s themes of rebirth, kingship, and legitimation, while suggesting potential reasons for its creation.

Seti I came to the throne as the second king in his family line. His father, Ramesses I, was not of royal birth, but came to power by means of his military career under the reign of Horemheb (ca. 1319-1292 BCE).\(^3\) Great emphasis has been placed on the desire of early Nineteenth Dynasty kings, such as Seti I (ca. 1290-1279 BCE), to prove the legitimacy of their dynasty, their strength as kings after the fall of the previous dynasty, and their dedication to the

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traditional gods after the religious upheaval of the Amarna Period,\textsuperscript{4} (ca. 1390-1292 BCE) the time initiated by king Akhenaten when Egyptian state religion was changed to the worship of the Aten as a single god and the capital was moved to Akhetaten.\textsuperscript{5} Seti I’s ambitious building plans, including his Temple at Abydos, have been attributed to his need to prove the legitimacy of his reign and line.\textsuperscript{6}

After ascending the throne upon his father’s death, Ramesses II recorded a visit to Abydos.\textsuperscript{7} The Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II records that upon his visit to Abydos, he found that the tombs and temples were in states of disrepair or incompletion. The text goes on to record his commission for their restoration, renewal, and general care.\textsuperscript{8} Whether or not this reflects actual events, Ramesses II did commission a sizable amount of work at Abydos throughout his reign, including at the Temple of Seti I.\textsuperscript{9} The commissioning of this stela and


\textsuperscript{5} Murnane, William J. Texts from the Amarna Period (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1995), 1-15.

\textsuperscript{6} David, Religious Ritual, 9.

\textsuperscript{7} Redford dates the inscription of this visit to Year 1 of Ramesses II’s reign. Donald B. Redford, “The Earliest Years of Ramesses II, and the Building of the Ramesside Court at Luxor,” The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 57 (Aug. 1971): 110.


\textsuperscript{9} O’Connor, Abydos, 117.
Ramesses II’s work at Abydos attests to his desire to associate himself with his father and previous kings, legitimizing his reign and claim to the throne.\footnote{Inscriptions, recording a king finding his predecessor’s temples and tombs in disrepair and commissioning their restoration (which fall under what Redford calls the “Dissolution and Restoration Theme”) are a common topos in ancient Egypt, such as Tutankhamun’s restoration stela and the Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut. While these documents likely were not meant to serve as historical documents and literal records of events, they attest to the desire of the new king, Ramesses II, to legitimize his reign and claim to the throne. Donald B. Redford, \textit{Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals, and Day-Books} (Mississauga, Ontario: Benben Publications, 1986), 259 – 275; James P. Allen, “The Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut,” \textit{Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar} 16 (2002): 4; J. Bennett, “The Restoration Inscription of Tut’ankhamun,” \textit{The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology} 28 (1939): 9-10. See also Thomas Schneider, “History as Festival? A Reassessment of the Use of the Past and the Place of Historiography in Ancient Egyptian Thought,” in \textit{Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World}, ed. Kurt A. Rafflaub (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 24-25.}

\textbf{Abydos}


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Abydos, the Osiris Temple, which originally dates to the Old Kingdom, underwent rebuilding during at least the Twelfth Dynasty (ca. 1939 – 1760 BCE), Eighteenth Dynasty (ca. 1539 – 1292 BCE), and Late Period (ca. 736 – 332 BCE). Abydos also hosted the annual festival celebrating the death and rebirth of Osiris, as events from the Osiris myth were believed to have taken place at Abydos. Due to its association with Osiris, rebirth, and death, Abydos became a place of pilgrimage. Those who were unable to travel to Abydos could commission stelae to be set up symbolizing their pilgrimage. In addition, perhaps as far back as the Old Kingdom, kings had often built cenotaphs at Abydos. These traditions and associations solidified Abydos’ tie to Osirian worship and Egyptian kingship.

O’Connor suggests that the Temple of Seti I was meant to complement the Osiris Temple and present Seti I as not only the servant of Osiris but also as a transformed being, reborn through his association with the god. Seti I was not the only king to ensure his rebirth in this way. Senwosret III (ca. 1837-1819) and Ahmose (ca. 1539-1515) both built complexes at

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17 David, Religious Ritual, 9; David, Temple Ritual, 23.


19 O’Connor, Abydos, 43; See also, Spalinger, Great Dedicatory Inscription, 88-89. for further discussion.


Abydos where they are depicted associated with Osiris.\textsuperscript{22} Thus, the Temple of Seti I became part of a cultic landscape focused on death and rebirth.\textsuperscript{23}

**Temple of Seti I at Abydos**

The Temple of Seti I has seven distinct chapels dedicated to a deified Seti I, Ptah, Re-Harakhty, Amun-Re, Osiris, Isis, and Horus, along with suites for Sokar and Nefertem (Figure 6).\textsuperscript{24} Special focus seems to be placed on the chapel of Amun-Re as it is slightly larger than the other six and is located along the central axis of the temple with three chapels to each side.\textsuperscript{25} While it might, therefore, appear that Amun-Re was the primary deity of the temple, the layout beyond the chapels and hypostyle halls suggests otherwise. An entire complex dedicated to Osiris, including depictions of the identification of Seti I with Osiris, is located behind the barque chapels of the other deities.\textsuperscript{26} O’Connor suggests that the scenes and texts of this temple have three primary meanings: (1) “It records rituals and documents the legitimacy of the cult;” (2) “celebrates kingship and its central role in Egyptian life;” and (3) “is a kind of materialized hymn, manifesting and confirming the wondrous nature of the divine being to whom the temple is dedicated.”\textsuperscript{27} David suggests that the temple itself was an attempt by Seti I to reaffirm the


\textsuperscript{23} For the idea of Abydos as a cultic landscape see O’Connor, *Abydos*, 108-109; For additional information on the topic of cultic landscapes, see Janet Richards, *Society and Death in Ancient Egypt: Mortuary Landscapes of the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

\textsuperscript{24} David, *Temple Ritual*, 125-181, 190-209.

\textsuperscript{25} David, *Temple Ritual*, 126.

\textsuperscript{26} O’Connor, *Abydos*, 49.

\textsuperscript{27} O’Connor, *Abydos*, 52.
legitimacy of his line and their dedication to traditional Egyptian beliefs. It was necessary for all kings to legitimize their rule through the performance of various cultic acts, building projects, and other royal duties; however, David’s suggestion is that Seti I also had special need to legitimize his rule due to his family’s non-royal origins. Brand believes the primary messages stressed by Seti I during his reign were royal piety and royal divinity. These ideas of piety and post-Amarna orthodoxy are evident in the temple’s focus on six major deities in addition to Seti I. Seti I’s dedication to the traditional ways is also exemplified in the temple’s association with the Osirieon. Uncovered by Margaret Murray and Hilda Petrie in 1902-1903, the Osirieon refers to the building at Abydos which Egyptians believed to be the tomb of the god Osiris. The building is in the shape of a massive Eighteenth Dynasty royal tomb with the groundwater creating a moat within the sarcophagus chamber. The building itself dates to the reign of Seti I. Thus the Osirieon functions as a tomb for the assimilated Osiris and Seti I. Within the Temple of Seti I, the idea of royal divinity is evident in the presence of a chapel for Seti I and the king’s identification with Osiris throughout its Osiris complex. While these themes have focused primarily on Seti I’s transformation and deification after death, David’s interpretation of the Hypostyle Halls and pathways through the temple suggests some of the scenes were understood to take place during the king’s lifetime (her interpretation will be discussed below), which


parallels the temple’s role as a “Mansion of Millions of Years” which would have been effective and usable during the king’s life as well as after his death.

Caulfield has chosen to interpret the purpose of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos as being a “Temple of the Kings.” Due to its proximity to the Royal Tombs of Abydos and the king list located within the temple itself, he proposes that the temple was meant to honor all prior kings, concluding that the temple was built for ancestor worship. Indeed, one of the most famous features of the Temple of Seti I is the Abydos King List. Redford states the this list had cultic functions including use in the bestowal of offerings upon deceased kings. While ancestor worship may be part of its purpose (and would certainly facilitate Seti I’s goal of legitimizing his reign), based on the inclusion of chapels dedicated to major deities and the Osiris complex, I suggest that this was not the primary purpose of the temple. The presence of the Osiris complex at the rear of the temple and the Osireion implies, rather, that a greater focus was meant to be placed on Osiris and his assimilation with Seti I.

Within Egyptian temple walls, Egyptians tried to create a world in which the gods could dwell. As mentioned previously, the Temple of Seti I at Abydos was a “Mansion of Millions of Years.” As a “Mansion of Millions of Years,” the Temple of Seti I at Abydos was part of a greater pattern in New Kingdom temple construction. Royal cult complexes were built independent of the builders’ tomb, including these “Mansions of Millions of Years.” In addition to the temple at Abydos, Seti I built a “Mansion of Millions of Years” at Memphis. His

31 Redford, Pharaonic King-Lists, 18-20.
35 Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 90-106.
son, Ramesses II built many “Mansions of Millions of Years” during his reign, including the Ramesseum, Abu Simbel, el-Derr, and his own temple at Abydos. Such structures were meant in part to memorialize the name of the founder, Seti I, before the gods for millions of years. This “memorialization” was effective before and after the king’s death. Often the king was associated in these “Mansions” with major deities, thereby promoting the royal cult along with the cult of the god, such as Osiris at the Temple of Seti I at Abydos.

Within the Hypostyle Hall

After the death of Seti I, his son, Ramesses II, completed and/or usurped various reliefs and areas of decoration within the temple at Abydos. This included the First Hypostyle Hall where the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is located, and the outer pylons and courts. While those reliefs completed under Seti I were in raised relief, Ramesses II chose to have them converted to sunk relief and commissioned new ones done in sunk relief. This appears to be the case with the entire First Hypostyle Hall. As such, the figure of Seti I does not appear in any of

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36 Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 115-119.

37 Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 90, 107-112. Many refer to such temples as “mortuary temples;” however, Haeny argues that the term “Mansions of Millions of Years” should be used instead, see Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 86-87.


39 Brand, The Monuments of Seti I, 157; Baines, “Colour use and the distribution of relief and painting in the Temple of Sety I at Abydos,” 147. Björkman suggests that the usurpation of the works of a king’s predecessor was not driven by contempt or the like, but rather “It was a means of achieving the ideological goal, of repeating the First Occasion, of re-creating creation.” Gun Björkman, Kings at Karnak: A Study of the Treatment of the Monuments of Royal Predecessors in the Early New Kingdom (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1971), 122. This is similar to Hornung’s discussion of the king’s requirement to “extend the existing” during his reign. In order to “extend the existing,” kings had to build upon and improve the work and deeds of their predecessors. Erik Hornung, Idea into Image: Essays on Ancient Egyptian Thought (New York: Timken, 1992), 82-92. Brand agrees that usurpation was not negative in every case and that Ramesses II’s usurpations reflect the “use of sacred space for political and ideological ends.” Peter J. Brand, “Veils, Votives, and Marginalia,” in Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes, ed. P. F. Dorman and B. M. Bryan (Chicago: Oriental Institute Publications, 2006), 51-65.
the reliefs of this portion of the temple. However, the cartouche of Seti I does appear in a scene of Ramesses II worshipping Osiris, suggesting the scene was originally designed under Seti I before being redone for Ramesses II. While some of the scenes that were re-inscribed under Ramesses II replicate the original lines carved under Seti I, others replaced the older scenes entirely with new images. Without closer inspection of the wall, it is not possible to determine which of these scenarios held true for the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. Either the relief originally depicted Seti I in a similar scene or the scene was created for Ramesses II. However, even with further inspection it might be impossible to tell which of these is the case.

Little attention has been paid to the First Hypostyle Hall at the Temple of Seti I at Abydos. Possibly because of its poor preservation in comparison with the rest of the temple or because it was completed by Ramesses II rather than Seti I, many scholars have opted to ignore this portion of the temple. The hall itself is composed of two rows of papyrus-bud columns arranged to create seven aisles, each in line with one of the seven barque chapels further within


41 David, *Temple Ritual at Abydos*, 52. I am grateful to Dr. Peter J. Brand for bringing my attention to this appearance of Seti I’s cartouche and its significance.


45 Calverley’s extensive four volumes recording the reliefs of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos does not include the First Hypostyle Hall. Calverley, *Temple of Sethos I Volume I-IV*. 
the temple. The Hall is composed of both limestone and sandstone – the columns are of sandstone and the north and south walls are of limestone. One of the few analyses of the First Hypostyle Hall belongs to David, whose analysis is compelling and enlightening in regard to the suckling scene in question. David interprets the iconography of the First Hypostyle Hall as being divided into two. The north side of the Hall focuses on the induction of the king as ruler of Lower Egypt, while the south side (where the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is located) focuses on the induction of the king as ruler of Upper Egypt. This is accentuated by the decorative band of personified nomes lining the bottom of the walls of the Hall. On the north wall are the nomes of Lower Egypt and on the south wall are the nomes of Upper Egypt. Further, she suggests that the First and Second Hypostyle Halls are best understood as a continuous program. Within the Second Hypostyle Hall, the north side is aligned with the chapel of Osiris and focuses on the king as an Osiris and as king of the gods. The south side, aligned with the chapel of Seti I, focuses on the dead, deified king being installed as king of the dead. By combining the two Halls, David suggests that the king, having been enthroned on earth, continues into the next life where he is crowned king and becomes Osiris.

46 David, Religious Ritual, 30.; Arnold, Ancient Egyptian Architecture, 54.; Caulfield calls them “lotus topped” columns, Caulfield, Temple of Kings, 4. However, I have compared the typology provided by Arnold and photos of the columns and confirm they are papyrus columns.


48 While personified nomes, like those here, are not Fecundity Figures, they are personifications which are important elements of Egyptian religion and art. Baines discusses the principles and purpose of personifications in the first part of his book. John Baines, Fecundity Figures (England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1985), 1-82.

49 David, Religious Ritual, 29-30, 75-84.
There is no set repertoire for scenes that occur within the hypostyle halls of Egyptian temples. Scenes of coronation and legitimacy are the most common,\textsuperscript{50} such as the kingship rituals which decorate the north and south walls of the First Hypostyle Hall.\textsuperscript{51} Scenes of festivals or rituals can also appear as part of the decorative program,\textsuperscript{52} such as the Foundation Ritual that appears in the First Hypostyle Hall.\textsuperscript{53} In general, hypostyle halls were meant to represent the marshlands surrounding the primeval mound and the world at its very beginning.\textsuperscript{54} The large, tightly packed columns and limited, filtered light all served to enhance this image. David concludes “Perhaps, however, the main concept of these halls was that they represented in mythological terms the place where events had occurred at the beginning of time.”\textsuperscript{55} She suggests that the Halls could also represent the audience hall of Osiris where kings had received kingship in premaeval times and would once more after death.\textsuperscript{56} Thus, symbolically, the Hall became a place of creation and beginnings, especially for the king – an appropriate setting for the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II which was meant to ensure the king’s rebirth eternally.


\textsuperscript{51} David, \textit{Religious Ritual}, 78.

\textsuperscript{52} Refai, “Notes on the Function of the Great Hypostyle Hall in the Egyptian Temple,” 393-394.

\textsuperscript{53} David, \textit{Religious Ritual}, 75.

\textsuperscript{54} Wilkinson, \textit{Temples of Ancient Egypt}, 66; David, \textit{Religious Ritual}, 84; O’Connor, \textit{Abydos}, 61.

\textsuperscript{55} David, \textit{Religious Ritual}, 83.

\textsuperscript{56} David, \textit{Religious Ritual}, 83.
On the South Wall

The Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is located on the lower register of the south wall along with many scenes related to the coronation and rebirth of Ramesses II. Just as the text and iconography of the scene can help explain its meaning and purpose, the context of the scene and its interaction with the scenes adjacent to it can also illuminate much of its meaning. To the left of the suckling scene is the “Baptism of Pharaoh,” featuring Horus and Thoth. To the right is a relief of the king as a child being modelled by Khnum on a potter’s wheel before Ptah. After study, David suggests that these three scenes were meant to be read from right to left – the king being modelled by Khnum, followed by the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II, and finally the “Baptism of Pharaoh.” In addition, I would note that the right-to-left orientation of the majority of the hieroglyphic inscriptions supports David’s interpretation of the scene’s iconography (Figure 5). In the register above these three scenes are, on the left, a scene of the king running

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57 All of these directions will be given from the perspective of a viewer of the scene.

58 David, Temple Ritual, 51. The “Baptism of Pharaoh” scene is a traditional component of coronation relief programs. The scene shows the king standing between two gods (though Gardiner proposes that they are meant to be understood as being four gods) who pour libations over him. Mostly commonly, these gods are Horus and Thoth, as appear in this version of the scene. The “baptism” was a transformative ritual which cleansed the king and, more importantly, facilitated the king’s rebirth much like suckling scenes. Lorelei H. Corcoran, Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt (I-IV Centuries A.D.) with a Catalog of Portrait Mummies in Egyptian Museums (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1995), 59-60; William J. Murnane, “Reconstructing Scenes from the Great Hypostyle Hall in the temple of Amun at Karnak,” in Essays in honour of Prof. Dr. Jadwiga Lipińska (Warsaw: National Museum in Warsaw, 1997), 116-117; Aaron Smith, “Kingship, Water and Ritual: The Ablution Rite in the Coronation Ritual of the Pharaoh,” in L’acqua nell’antico Egitto: vita, rigenerazione, incantesimo, medicamento: proceedings of the first International conference for young Egyptologists: Italy, Chicancian Terme, October 15-18, 2003, ed. Alessia Amenta, Maria Michela Luiselli, and Maria Novella Sordi (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2005), 329-336.

59 David, Temple Ritual, 52. This is similar to a series of scenes found in the Temple of Hatshepsut where she is formed by Khnum on a potter’s wheel before being breastfed by goddesses. Edouard Naville, The Temple of Deir el-Bahari Part II (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1896), pl. XLVIII.

60 David, Religious Ritual, 75.
with a bird in his hand and, on the right, an unidentifiable, damaged figure standing before the Ennead, the nine primordial gods of creation.

On the north wall, opposite the wall described above, the upper register contains four scenes. It too contains a scene of the king running with a bird in his hand along with a scene of the king in the embrace of gods and goddesses. This wall also contains a scene of Horus standing before the Ennead and a scene of Ramesses II kneeling before Thoth as he writes his name on the jšd-tree. The lower register contains the “Baptism of Pharaoh” scene also with

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61 Scenes of the king running with a bird originate in the New Kingdom (ca. 1539-1077 BCE). Most commonly, depictions of the king running are associated with festivals, primarily the Heb Sed or Jubilee festivals where the king ran and laid claim to his domain, proving his physical ability to rule Egypt. These are likely the counterpart to depictions of the king running while holding various objects (including a bird) during coronation rituals, as is present in the First Hypostyle Hall under discussion. In general, depictions of the king competing in sport demonstrated his superiority and role as victor. Wolfgang Decker, “Some Aspects of Sport in Ritual and Religion in Ancient Egypt,” *ARYS. Antigüedad: Religiones y Sociedades* 15 (2018): 13-14; Wolfgang Decker, *Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 25-33; Katherine Eaton, *Ancient Egyptian Temple Ritual: Performance, Pattern, and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 156.


63 Due to the parallelism between the south and north walls, Horus may be the unidentifiable, damaged figure in the scene from the south wall mentioned previously.

Thoth and Horus, the induction of the king to the temple, and the king presenting a small statue of himself to Osiris.

David has called the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II the “Royal Induction.” This reflects the scene’s relationship with the scene on a lower register of the north wall where the king is shown being brought into the temple. Leclant, analyzing a suckling scene from the barque room at the temple of Karnak, suggests that the suckling scene is an exact equivalent of the enthronement scene. When discussing the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II, Leclant noted that this was the moment at which the king received his crowns. This would suggest that these two scenes – suckling and induction – served as key moments in the process by which Ramesses II became king. There are other details that also suggest a parallel. First, Hathor, Lady of Dendera, a key figure in the suckling scene, also appears in the induction scene. Further, both scenes depict rituals in which the king received dominion along with his crowns. Additionally, both

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65 The “king’s induction” appears in many New Kingdom temples. The motif can include multiple deities or just one. Most commonly the king is led by Montu and Atum, or even Horus and Seth. In these scenes the king receives dominion over the two parts of Egypt. The scene is also often in parallel with “crowning” scenes, which, in this case, could be understood as the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. Murnane, “Reconstructing Scenes from the Great Hypostyle Hall,” 115-116.


67 David, Temple Ritual, 54.


69 Leclant, “Cérémonial Pharaonique du Couronnement,” 139.

70 Leclant, “Cérémonial Pharaonique du Couronnement,” 140.

71 David, Temple Ritual, 50.

focus on points of transition – rebirth and entrance into the presence of a god. The Suckling Scene itself could also be interpreted as entrance into the presence of a god as Ramesses II is reborn onto a higher plane, welcomed and nursed by Isis and Hathor. Finally, whereas the suckling scene has a great focus on nurses and mothers, the induction scene seems to pay special attention to fathers. Osiris is referred to as Ramesses II’s father, Horus is called “Protector of his Father,” and both Horus and Wepwawet refer to Osiris in their speeches as “your father.” As complementarity is an integral part of the ancient Egyptian thought process, references to male-female dualities are not uncommon. I suggest these two scenes might have a mother-father counterpart relationship. More research would need to be done to investigate this issue.

**Summary**

As stated above, Ramesses II would have most probably had these reliefs created with a political or ideological purpose. While we cannot be entirely sure what this purpose was, it has been demonstrated in this chapter that the setting and the scene complement one another. Through its ties to Osiris, Abydos was a location traditionally associated with rebirth and transformation, themes which are evident in the text and iconography of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. Just as Osiris was rejuvenated, the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II aimed to ensure the continuous rebirth and rejuvenation of Ramesses II. Its location within the Temple of Seti I further emphasizes this, as Seti I identifies himself with Osiris in order to ensure his rebirth in the next life, Ramesses II also wanted to ensure his own rebirth. Within the First Hypostyle Hall, the scene is located in an area of symbolic “creation.” The rebirth depicted in the Suckling Scene of

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Ramesses II is supported further by its location next to the creation of Ramesses II by Khnum. Just as in mortal life, when nourishment and care are required after the birth of a child, Ramesses II required the nursing of goddesses after his body was created by a deity, as discussed further in Chapter 3. This not only emphasized the continuous rebirth of Ramesses II but also his close relationship with the gods.

Within his father’s temple, Ramesses II highlighted his connection with his father and predecessors. He emphasized his dedication to traditional Egyptian beliefs by associating himself with a temple dedicated to six major deities and with a location held sacred since Early Dynastic times. These are similar themes to those found in the text and iconography of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II.
Chapter 3
Translation and Analysis of the Text

The text accompanying the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is located to the viewer’s right of the figures of Isis-Ramesses II and runs along the top of the entire scene, finishing to the left of Hathor, Lady of Atfih (Figures 2 & 3). It is composed entirely of the goddesses’ speeches and the titulary of Ramesses II. The text has suffered damage on the bottom portion of the first column to the right of Isis, the beginning of the line above Isis, portions above Hathor, Lady of Cusae, and the bottom portion of the left-most column.

Translations of the text have been limited and fragmentary. Capart provided a partial translation, only translating the portion to the right of Isis and Ramesses II.¹ David translated the speech of Hathor, Lady of Dendera; Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem²; and Hathor, Lady of Atfih.³ Utilizing the line drawing of Mariette first published in 1869⁴ (Figure 3) and the photos taken by Dr. Iskander in February 2020 (Figures 1 & 2), I have completed the first complete translation of the preserved text. The text serves to create a cyclical “reading” of the figural scene and links it to the prior scene on the south wall of the First Hypostyle Hall.

¹ Capart, *Abydos*, 16-17.
² David identifies this Hathor as “Lady of the Mansion of Sekhmet” (David, *Temple Ritual*, 54); however, Leitz, cites this scene as one of the appearances of the epithet *Nbt-hwt-shm*, translated as “Die Herrin von Hu” (Christian Leiz, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen. Band IV* (Leuven; Paris: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 2002), 103). Given the geographical association of the other three Hathoric epithets, the interpretation offered by Leitz appears to me as preferable.
⁴ Mariette, *Abydos*, pl. 25. Overall, Mariette’s line drawing seems to be generally accurate; however, a few corrections have been made possible by the photos of Dr. Iskander which will be discussed later in this chapter.
Transliteration and Translation

Section A (To the right of Isis-Ramesses II)

[1] ḏḏ-mdw ḥn ḥs t n sḏ-w WARDS-mr t-Rḥ-ḥpt-n-Rḥ
šsp-j ḥn ḥt n sḏ-w WARDS-ḥḥ ḥpt-k m ḫrd […]

[1] Recitation by Isis to her son User-ma’at-Re, Setep-en-Re:
Let me receive you, my arms embracing you as a child […]

[2] pr. n-k ḥm nbḥ nj-sw.t mnḥ.t ḫrw.t(w)ḥ njmnw ḥm ḫḏ.ḥ ḥmnwy f.ḥm <Pṯḥ m> nb(.w)

[2] Having ascended there, O Lord and King, you have become effective, after having
appeared with the Khepresh (Blue) crown, and after Khnum fashioned you with his
hands, <while Pth was> gilding your limbs.

5 While on the line drawing it appears that a ḫḏ sign (Gardiner M13) is located within the lacuna, the recent photo
shows no traces of this hieroglyph.

6 Mariette indicates damage at this portion of the text but indicates what looks to be a nb sign. However, the reading
of the sign as nb cannot be confirmed by the photograph due to substantial damage to this portion of the wall.
Therefore, the nb-sign is not certain.

7 The verb ḫṯj has been used in coronation inscriptions since the Old Kingdom either meaning “to appear,” “to
crown,” or in expressing accession to the throne. It can also refer to the luminosity of crowns. See Kate Liszka,
“Tracing Stylistic Changes Within Coronation Scenes,” in Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of
(Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2007), 1158-1159; Adolf Erman and Hermann

8 The scribe appears to have reversed the order of the subject and adverbial predicate m.
Hathor, Lady of Dendera, is there. She is the wet-nurse, Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem. The one who gives suck is the nurse.

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9 What appears as st n at this point in Mariette’s line drawing poses confusion, with regard to the expected Hathorian epithet, as found in Section C, col. 3. It does not appear in any of the spelling variations provided by Leitz, nor does it serve a grammatical purpose. After examining the photograph provided by Dr. Iskander, J. A. Roberson (personal communication, February 12, 2020) correctly identified what Mariette recorded as an s behind the throne as the hanging or folded cloth that normally adorns the back of the object. Examples of this style of throne are seen throughout the Temple of Seti I, such as in the scenes located directly above Suckling Scene of Ramesses II on the south wall of the First Hypostyle Hall (David, Temple Ritual at Abydos, 53). The bread loaf next to the s can then be understood as a phonetic complement for nb.t, written here in semi-cryptic fashion with the seated goddess (direct representation of a nb.t, “lady”), but elsewhere written with (J. A. Roberson, personal communication, February 12, 2020; for additional examples of similar spellings nb.t and nb, see Joshua Roberson, Enigmatic Writing in the Egyptian New Kingdom II: A Lexicon of Ancient Egyptian Cryptography of the New Kingdom (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2020 in press), s.v. A310.2, B23.1. I am grateful to Dr. Roberson for providing me with a pre-publication PDF of his book for my thesis research.)

10 Although this verb appears in the text here spelled snk, it should be understood to be snk, spelled elsewhere in the text as mk, “to suckle, give suck.” There is significant internal evidence to suggest this is the case. While snk appears in line A3 and C15 of the text, the traditional spelling, snk, appears in line C4. The context of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II also suggests the word should be read as snk with the definition “to suckle, give suck.” For the interchange of k and q, attested first during the New Kingdom, see Carsten Peust, Egyptian Phonology: An Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language (Göttingen: Peust und Gutschmidt, 1999), 84.

11 Leitz, Lexikon IV, 10-12.

12 Leitz, Lexikon IV, 103.
[4] nb.t Kṣy Hv. t-Hrw nb.t Tp-jlw ḫṛ ṛmn nfrw=k

dmḏ-sn r ṣw ḫw-sn ḫm-k r ḫk3 t3 nb

[4] Lady of Cusae, Hathor, Lady of Atfih rears your beauty. Uniting everything, as they protect your incarnation from the ruler of every land.

Section B (Above Isis)

[2] nb t3,wy Wsr-ms3.t-Rʿ-stp.n-Rʿ


[1] nb ḫʾ.w Rʿ-msj-sw-mrj-Jmn ḫ ṣnh ṣw3 mj Rʿ

[1] Lord of appearances, Ramesses, Beloved-of-Amun, given life and dominion like Re

13 According to Wb III, 436.4-9 this word rarely appears in entirely human contexts, “zumeist von Göttinnen, die den König aufziehen.”

14 While “beauty” is the generally accepted way to translated nfrw, this may not be the most appropriate choice of word. Corcoran suggests, in terms of the phrase “beautiful burial” that nfr might more accurately be translated as “perfection in the sense of completeness,” implying their burials were thoroughly equipped with all the elements essential to attain efficaciously an eternal and blessed afterlife as an ‘Osiris’ or a ‘Hathor.’” Lorelei H. Corcoran, “A miscellany of funerary material from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt,” review of The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt, Art, Identity and Funerary Religion, by Christina Riggs, Journal of Roman Archaeology 23, no. 2 (2010): 772. This translation of “perfection in the sense of completeness” makes great sense in this coronation context as the king is also experiencing a “complete” transformation.

15 For ḫ + Aw see Raymond O. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 1; Rainer Hannig, Großes Handwörterbuch: Die Sprache der Pharaonen (Mainz, Germany: Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 3.

16 Leitz, Lexikon IV, 146.

17 Leitz, Lexikon IV, 160.

18 “Unite everything” could refer to uniting all the crowns as dmd often appears in association with the bestowal or reception of crowns, including uniting one crown with another. See Wb V, 457.22, 459.17, 458.6, and 459.17. However, dmd could also refer to the assembling or reassembling of a body, especially in reference to the body of Osiris. Faulkner, Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 313.; Wb V, 457.5-6. Additionally, dmd has Solar-Osirian connotations, see Colleen Manassa, The Late Egyptian Underworld: Sarcophagi and Related Texts from the Nectanebid Period (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 430-435.

19 Wb III, 244.14, indicates that the combination of ḫwj + r, meaning “to protect from,” dates to the Late Period. The unambiguous occurrence of that same idiom here necessitates a revision of that date to the Nineteenth Dynasty (J. A. Roberson, personal communication).

20 The columns that appear above Ramesses II containing his titulary are listed here in reverse order because the hieroglyphs for these sections are read in the opposite direction (left to right) from the rest of the scene. This is because the text parallels the direction Ramesses II is facing, which is opposite to the goddesses. As the rest of the text is spoken by or refers to the goddesses, it is read in the direction of the goddesses (right to left).
Section C (Above the Hathors)

[3] [3s.t wr.t]{21} mw.t ntr.w{22}

[3] Isis, the great, mother of the gods.

[2] nb tz.wy Wsr-ms5.t-Rdstp.n-R

[2] Lord of the Two Lands User-ma’at-Re, Setep-en-Re.

[1] nb h.r.w R-c-mdj-sw-mri-Jmn dj ‘nhl wzs mj r

[1] Lord of appearances, Ramesses, Beloved-of-Amun, given life and dominion like Re

[3] dd-mdw jn Hw.t-Hrw nb.(t) Jwn.t hrt(y) jb.t sbgw

[3] Recitation by Hathor, Lady of Dendera, who is in the midst of Abydos: [4] It is by means of my milk that you have nursed, after having appeared{24} in the White Crown.

[6] nb tz.wy Wsr-ms5.t-Rdstp.n-R

[6] Lord of the Two Lands User-ma’at-Re, Setep-en-Re,

[5] nb h.r.w R-c-mdj-sw-mri-Jmn dj ‘nhl wzs mj r

[5] Lord of appearances, Ramesses, Beloved-of-Amun, given life and dominion like Re

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{21} I thank Lorelei Corcoran for suggesting this restoration (personal communication, February 19, 2020). For this common sequence, see Leitz, Lexikon I, 69-71. Mariette had previously recorded the wr bird (Gardiner G36). However, the entire section has since been replaced with modern plaster (See Iskander’s photo, Figure 2).

{22} Leitz, Lexikon III, 268.

{23} The dd-mdw group, which brackets the Perfect infix, 2 m.s. subject pronoun, and following preposition m, must function here as a non-grammatical border for the top of column 4.

{24} Or, “after having been crowned.”
Recitation by Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem, who is in the midst of Abydos:
I shall offer my arms, while embracing your beauty.
I am the one who nurses this Red Crown.

Lord of the Two Lands User-ma’at-Re, Setep-en-Re,

Lord of appearances, Ramesses, Beloved-of-Amun, given life and dominion like Re,

given life and dominion like Re

Recitation by Hathor, Lady of Cusae, who is in the midst of Abydos:

You belong to the one who rears (you). I shall nurse [...]

This word for breastfeeding appears with goddesses nursing Horus or a king. Wb II, 77.10-11.

David, Temple Ritual, 54, transliterates and translates this section jnk mn tw, “it is I who nurse thee,” but this ignores the presence of the Red Crown (Gardiner S3) in the line. The present study understands the red crown here as an ideogram, dšrt, followed by tw as the archaic f.s. demonstrative pronoun, for which see Elmar Edel, Altägyptische Grammatik (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955), §§182, 188–192. The reading preferred here is strengthened also through the resulting parallelism with the speeches of the other Hathors which mention by name the crowns depicted on Ramesses II.

The n tw appears too damaged to read in the photo (Figure 2). Mariette also marks the tw as damaged. Thus, the exact reading of these signs cannot be known for sure.
[14] $h^r.t(w) m \, stf \, snk \, n \, nb \, m^{28} \, jr.t=j$

[14] after you appeared in the Atef Crown, which gave suck to the Lord,\(^ {29}\) by means of my milk.

[16] $nb \, ts.wy \, Wsr-m^s.t-R^c-stp.n-R^c$

[16] Lord of the Two Lands User-ma’at-Re, Setep-en-Re,

[15] $nb \, h^r.w \, R^c-msj-sw-mri-Jmn \, dj \, nh \, w3s \, mj \, R^c$

[15] Lord of appearances, Ramesses, Beloved-of-Amun, given life and dominion like Re

[17] $dd-mdw \, jn \, Hw.t-Hrw \, nb.t \, Tp-jhw \, h\,r(y) \, jh.t \, [18] \, sb\,gw \, jnk \, mw\,t=k \, k\,ms.t \, nfr(w)=k$

[17] Recitation by Hathor, Lady of Atfih, who is in the midst of\(^ {18}\) Abydos: I am your mother, who created your beauty.

\(^{28}\) In the line drawing (Figure 3) this appears as $ts.wy$ (Gardiner N16) \(\equiv\). However, upon inspection of the photograph (Figure 2), this sign should in fact be an $m$ (Gardiner Aa 13) \(\equiv\). This correction to the line drawing is also supported by the parallel between this line and section C, line 4. I am grateful to Dr. Lorelei Corcoran for this observation.

\(^{29}\) While a crown nursing the king may seem unusual, the idea of a crown nursing is not without precedent. The Red and the White Crown appear as mothers of the deceased and are explicitly described nursing the deceased in the Pyramid Texts. Goebs does note that in her study of funerary literature only the White and Red Crowns ever appear in this motif. Goebs, *Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 182-185. However, it should be kept in mind that this section of the text has suffered heavy damage and thus, cannot be read with certainty.
I am Isis, who bore (you). Appearing with the Nemes headdress, you came forth there as the seed of Wen-nefer, after your incarnation was placed as heir upon his throne, his crowns having appeared [...] for your day. Look! I am with you while your limbs are young and while your power is strong [...]
suckled by Hathor (interestingly, also after being modeled by Khnum on his potter’s wheel) from the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak and a scene from the Second Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos depicting Seti I being suckled by Mut (PM VI [1991], 9 (93)), state that the goddess has created his “beauty.”35 Additionally, in a scene depicting Ramesses II in the company of Khnum, Horus, Thoth, and Seshet from the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (PM II [1991], 47 (158.2)), Seshet states “I am your mother, who bore you by means of my beauty, you being suckled upon my two breasts.”36 Although Seshet is not shown breastfeeding the king, it is interesting to note that it too links beauty (nfrw) with suckling. In addition to the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II, life and dominion are extended to the king in the scene of Ramesses II being suckled by Isis at the Beit El-Wali Temple of Ramesses II (PM VII [1991], 26 (37)) and in a scene of Ramesses II being suckled by Hathor in the Hypostyle Hall of Karnak (PM II [1991], 48 (159.6)). In the scene of Seti I being suckled by Mut in the Second Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (PM VI [1991], 9 (93)), the king is given life.37 These are evidently some of the “divine attributes” extended to the pharaoh through the divine milk of mother goddesses (See Chapter 4). Leclant suggests that the gift of dominion meant the king was destined to triumph and ensured victory as he ruled.38 Thus, as the king was reborn and suckled by Hathor, he was granted gifts and powers enabling him to rule as king.


37 Calverley, Temple of King Sethos I, IV, pl. 23.

38 Leclant, “Cérémonial Pharaonique du Couronnement,”143-145
Connection to Khnum and his Potter’s Wheel

Another noteworthy feature of the text is the presence of an ideogram depicting Khnum sitting at his potter’s wheel (Figure 3).\textsuperscript{39} It is not uncommon for Khnum as a seated god to appear as a determinative for this word,\textsuperscript{40} but representing the word with the seated god at his potter’s wheel is a “non-traditional spelling.” Such direct representation is a well-attested phenomenon in Egyptian texts. Roberson explains: “Direct representation employs individual hieroglyphs as a sort of miniature vignette, illustrating the cryptic word. Such derivations might result in novel and highly iconic hieroglyphs that blur the already fuzzing line between art and writing.”\textsuperscript{41} I suggest that the creator of this relief chose to depict Khnum at his potter’s wheel for the word \textit{hnm}, which is traditionally spelled 𓊐𓊓𓊙.\textsuperscript{42} The ideogram’s meaning as \textit{hnm} is suggested by context as the image to the viewer’s right of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II depicts the king being formed by Khnum on his potter’s wheel (Figure 5). According to the \textit{Wörterbuch} the word \textit{hnm}, meaning “to form, create,” can be associated with creation specifically on a potter’s wheel and determined with and image of the god Khnum.\textsuperscript{43} Additionally, its proximity to the name of the god Khnum suggests a pun– \textit{hnm.n tw hnmw}, “Khnum fashioned you.”

What are now called “cryptographic” or “enigmatic” writings would not, however, have been considered by the ancient Egyptians as anything more than an extended use of the

\textsuperscript{39} Roberson, \textit{Cryptic Lexicon}, s.v. C35.

\textsuperscript{40} Wb III, 382.1-3.

\textsuperscript{41} Roberson, \textit{Cryptic Lexicon}, §6.4.

\textsuperscript{42} See Wb III, 377-382.2.

\textsuperscript{43} Wb III, 382.2.
traditional hieroglyphs.\textsuperscript{44} So-called cryptographic writings appear on New Kingdom monuments,\textsuperscript{45} including at the Temple of Seti I at Abydos.\textsuperscript{46} The purpose of such writings has been debated. Darnell explores various reasons suggested for their use including to hide text, to entice readers, to add interest to formulaic texts, or to offer additional meaning.\textsuperscript{47} Darnell suggests that because “cryptographic” writing of the New Kingdom appears in scenes dealing with solar regeneration and the crossing of cosmic boundaries, it “may thus be said to have associations with the sun, as well as with the areas of passing between the upper and lower worlds.”\textsuperscript{48} Darnell explains that this purpose applies to any use of “cryptography” including its use on scarabs, tombs, books, or temples.\textsuperscript{49} Interestingly, the scene in question would qualify as a crossing of boundaries as Ramesses II is reborn into a higher divine realm. I would suggest that part of the purpose of the $\text{hnm}$ ideogram here is to draw the reader’s attention back to the prior scene of Khnum and Ptah, linking the two scenes together.

The relief prior to the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II is a scene of Khnum fashioning the king on his potter’s wheel in the presence of Ptah.\textsuperscript{50} The text, spoken by Isis, links the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II to the scene of Khnum and Ptah by summarizing it, saying “after Khnum

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Darnell, \textit{Enigmatic Netherworld Books}, 15, 17-18.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Darnell, \textit{Enigmatic Netherworld Books}, 472.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Darnell, \textit{Enigmatic Netherworld Books}, 479-481.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Darnell, \textit{Enigmatic Netherworld Books}, 479.
\item \textsuperscript{50} David, \textit{Temple Ritual}, 52.
\end{itemize}
fashioned you with his hands, <while Ptah was> gilding your limbs.” The ideogram then reinforces their connection by referencing the Khnum scene in miniature.51

This textual and visual connection with the Khnum and Ptah scene not only attests to the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II’s place within the greater context of Ramesses II’s coronation depicted in the First Hypostyle Hall, but also reinforces its connection with the rebirth of Ramesses II as a king. This theme will be discussed more in the following chapters. In this way, his rebirth reflects the Egyptian understanding of male and female roles in creation. Egyptians believed that in mortal birth the male provided the entire embryo, while the female provided the womb and further nurturing after birth.52 First Khnum and Ptah, the males, create the physical body of the king, then the Hathor and Isis, the females, nurture the king and complete the (re)birth process (Figure 5). This is similar to the scene’s relationship to the Royal Induction scene on the north wall of the First Hypostyle Hall (see pp. 22-23).

Cyclical Narrative of the Text

The cyclical nature of this text is another significant feature.53 The text identifies the right-most figure as Isis. In her speech, recorded in the text in front of her, Isis connects this scene to the scene of Khnum and Ptah, crowns Ramesses II with the Blue Crown, and gives a summary of the rest of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. Isis names each of the four Hathors

51 Though the ideogram does not include the king on the potter’s wheel as appears in the previous relief.


53 Davis, looking at the Narmer Palette, proposes the use of the circular narrative to guarantee the perpetuation of the purpose of the palette, “an order both outside and a precondition of that history as a continuous cycle of afters-to-befores and befores-to-afters. In all of history itself, the ruler – and his dynasty – is always coming around in the other direction from his enemy.” Whitney Davis, “Narrativity and the Narmer Palette,” in *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art*, ed. Peter J. Holliday (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 48. I am grateful to Dr. Lorelei Corcoran for bringing my attention to this invaluable research.
with their epithets, identifying them as his nurses. She states that they have come to “unite everything” and to protect Ramesses II. This gains a cyclical nature when the Hathor furthest to the viewer’s left, after being identified by the text as Hathor, Lady of Atfih, states “I am Isis, the mother.” This links her back to Isis on the far right (Figure 3). This cyclical nature might also be emphasized by mention of the king’s limbs in the speeches of Isis and Hathor, Lady of Atfih. Isis states that “Ptah gilded your limbs,” while Hathor, Lady of Atfih, says, “I am with you while your limbs are young.” Thus, the reader is brought from Hathor, Lady of Atfih back to Isis, creating a cyclical narrative meant to ensure the eternal continuation of the ritual depicted within it. I suggest it also emphasizes unity among the goddesses, potentially emphasizing the unity of deities behind the rebirth and coronation of Ramesses II as king.

Summary

Similar to other suckling scenes, the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II documents some of the divine gifts Ramesses II receives from his Divine Mothers – “beauty,” “life,” and “dominion.” The text also creates a cyclical reading of the scene, ensuring that the king’s rebirth and the gifts given him by the goddesses continue into eternity. These themes are further reinforced by the presence of Isis and Hathor, the act of suckling, and the crowns that appear in the scene as will be discussed in the following chapters. It also connects the scene with Khnum fashioning the king before Ptah, attesting to the scene’s role as part of the king’s rebirth. Together, the two scenes function as a very literal “birthing” moment for Ramesses II.
Chapter 4
Goddesses and the Suckling Motif

The Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II scene consists of five vignettes of Ramesses II and a goddess, either Hathor or Isis. At the viewer’s far right Isis is shown holding Ramesses II as a child. Moving to the left, she is followed by Hathor, Lady of Dendera; Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem; Hathor, Lady of Cusae; and Hathor, Lady of Atifh. Each of the Hathors is shown suckling an adolescent-sized Ramesses II (Figure 3). The goddesses’ presence in the scene complements the themes discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. They reinforce Ramesses II’s identity as the incarnated Horus and legitimate heir to the throne. Their connections to rebirth establish the setting as the rebirth of Ramesses II. Hathor’s nursing assures the king protection, divinity, power, legitimacy, and victory. Beyond playing a crucial role in the overall message of the scene, the goddesses facilitate the circular flow of the scene through their words and presence, as discussed above (p. 32). This guaranteed the eternal and continual rebirth of Ramesses II as king of Egypt.

Isis

As Isis’s text and iconography serves as a transition from the prior scene into, and a summary of, the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II, the analysis will begin with her. She appears standing, wearing the Vulture Cap (see pp. 61-68) topped with the Hathor/Isis Headdress (see pp. 68-69). A child Ramesses II, wearing the Blue Crown, is held on her forearm as her hand gently

1 Though Ramesses II is depicted in this scene as a child or adolescent, his body’s proportions reflect those of an adult rather than a child or baby. His size is what indicates that he is to be understood as a child. Edna Russmann, *Egyptian Sculpture. Cairo and Luxor* (Austin: University of Texas, 1989), 41.
caresses his chin. Isis has close associations with the king through her roles as mother of Horus and wife of Osiris. Some have suggested that Isis was also the personification of the Egyptian throne, as her name is written with the throne hieroglyph (Gardiner Q1). As Isis nurses or holds the king upon her lap, she thus embodies the throne upon which he sits. Through both her suckling and maternal care, Isis bestows upon the mortal king the throne of Egypt, along with her protection and divinity. She raised Horus to the throne of Egypt just as she now raises up Ramesses II. During the New Kingdom, many of Isis’s roles and imagery overlapped and intersected with that of Hathor. For example, through her association with Hathor, Isis could at times become the wife and mother of Re.

**Role in the Suckling Scene**

The configuration of Isis and Ramesses II in this scene (Figure 3) is reminiscent of other depictions of the two figures, especially those that became popular in the Late and Ptolemaic Periods. Statues of this motif appear starting in the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (ca. 722-655 BCE). In many of these statues, Isis appears wearing the Hathor headdress with Horus sitting on her lap, such as a statue from the Cairo Museum (JE 3983) and three additional examples at

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5 James Romano, “A Statuette of a Royal Mother and Child in the Brooklyn Museum,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 48 (1992): 140. While no evidence exists of this motif appearing in three-dimensional form before the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (ca. 722-655 BCE), Romano suggests that they might have been made of bronze or copper and later melted down. However, with no way to prove this, it remains speculation. I am grateful to Dr. Lorelei Corcoran for bringing this invaluable article to my attention.
the Cleveland Museum of Art. While Isis is shown standing in the Suckling Scene, the position adopted by Ramesses II is very similar to that of Horus upon Isis’s lap. Explicitly called “son” by Isis in the text, Ramesses II begins the scene presented as the incarnation of Horus.

While Isis does appear as the king’s nurse, suckling him in various scenes, her association with birth is most often in the role of midwife along with her sister Nephthys. For example, she acts as midwife in the story of the birth of the three kings in the Westcar Papyrus. As discussed in Chapter 3, Isis summarizes both the prior scene of Khnum and Ptah and the actual scene in which she appears. Isis, therefore, really does appear to play a transitional role between the creation of the king’s body by Khnum and Ptah and the Suckling Scene. I suggest that her transitional role in the scene reflects her role as a midwife. This is, potentially, why she is the only goddess not shown breastfeeding but rather holds the king in her arms. However, without any specific evidence from the scene for this idea, it is impossible to propose a definitive interpretation.

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Hathor

As with Isis, Hathor played an important role in the ideology of Egyptian kingship. She was a goddess referred to as the king’s mother and associated often with royal women, and she plays a pivotal role in the scene at hand. It was common for Hathor to appear in a single scene in multiple forms, especially with geographical epithets. Depictions of her suckling the king whether in her cow or human form are also common. In this scene, she appears in four different forms.

The earliest known textual reference to Hathor dates to the Fourth Dynasty, in the valley temple of Khafre (ca. 2472-2448 BCE). She continued to be worshipped with great popularity throughout Egypt’s history. More votive offerings have been found for Hathor than any other deity in the New Kingdom (ca. 1539-1077 BCE). As evidenced by the numerous and varied votive offerings left for her, worship of Hathor knew no class barrier. She remained a popular goddess throughout Egyptian history, but especially in the Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1292-1191 BCE).

Hathor encapsulated many roles and domains within her person. She was a goddess of fertility, associated with festivals of drunkenness and music, and nourished the living and the

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10 See for example the research in Warkentin, “Looking Beyond the Image.”


dead. On the other hand, she could also be ferocious and cruel. Hathor rode with Re on the sun bark and could take the form of the eye of Re, as a fiery uraeus. She was a mother of Horus, later becoming the partner of Horus of Edfu, and was also the mother and daughter of Re. Some have suggested that she also played the role of Re’s wife and consort. In addition, she was a goddess of foreign lands like Punt. Due to her many roles, it is rather difficult to define Hathor. Authors like Friedman, Lesko, Troy, and Quirke have defined this complicated goddess broadly. Friedman suggests that Hathor represented all divinity within her person. Likewise, Lesko concluded that, as the partner of Re, Hathor personified the entire Ennead.


17 Hathor is one of the deities that battles Apophis on the sun bark, Thomas George Allen, The Book of the Dead or Going Forth By Day (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), spell 39; She is also the Eye sent by Re to destroy mankind, Adolf Erman, The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, from the Third and Second Millenia B.C. (London: Methuen & Co., 1927), 47-49; Robins, Reflections of Women, 99.


22 Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 117.

23 Graves-Brown, Dancing for Hathor, 166.


25 Lesko, Great Goddess of Egypt, 82.
role as mother and daughter of Re has led some to suggest that she represents a divine “potency” necessary to the sun-god.²⁶ By being mother-daughter of Re and mother-wife to Horus, Hathor takes on all female roles within her being. This has led Troy to suggest that Hathor represented and served as the all-encompassing female element of kingship.²⁷ Quirke defines Hathor as the “complement to the solar creator” and “feminine principle of creation.”²⁸ All of these descriptions harmonize with the characterization of Hathor as a goddess with an encompassing role who played an essential role in creation. As Ramesses II demonstrates the vast extent of his power, it is only fitting that such a goddess bestow power upon him.

**Hathor and the King**

Among her many roles and domains, there exists a very special relationship between Hathor and the Egyptian king. As mother to Horus, who was incarnate in the Egyptian king,²⁹ she often appears as the king’s mother.³⁰ Various kings such as Pepi I and Nebehepetre Mentuhotep paid special attention to Hathor, taking on the epithet “son of Hathor.”³¹ In Hatshepsut’s divine birth scene at her temple of Deir el-Bahri, Hathor, depicted with a cow’s

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²⁷ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 57.


²⁹ Horus is called the “son of Hathor” in multiple Book of the Dead spells, see Allen, *Book of the Dead*, spell 151, 166.; Warkentin, “Looking Beyond the Image,” 82; Manniche, “Goddess and Woman,” 5. As mentioned previously, some have suggested Hathor was also wife and consort of Re. However, the Book of the Dead does not clarify if Horus is here the “son of Hathor” as she acts as Re’s consort.


head, is identified as the mother of the king Hatshepsut and is shown suckling her. For each king, Hathor acted as nurturer and protector. Thus, the presence of Hathor as the nurse of Ramesses II has great precedence in tradition.

Hathor’s association with Horus also appears in her name $Hwt-Hrw$, meaning “enclosure of Horus.” While it is unknown what the Egyptians understood her name to imply, it has been suggested that this refers to the womb of Hathor and her role as mother of Horus. Others have taken a less literal approach stating that it demonstrates her role as simply the protector of Horus. Regardless, many images exist of a cow, caring for and protecting the young Horus as he grows up in the papyrus swamp. In the New Kingdom, this cow was most often associated with Hathor. In the spells of the Book of the Dead, Horus is referred to as the “son of Hathor.” In the king’s role as the living incarnation of Horus, it was only fitting that Hathor would be his nurse/mother.

Hathor was also associated with Re, whose close ties to Egyptian kingship are made clear by the $s$ $R^*$ name in the king’s titulary, identifying the king as the “son of Re.” Hathor was one

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32 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 55.; Naville, Temple of Deir el Bahari Part II, pl. LIII.


34 See for example the Statue of Amenhotep II with the goddess Hathor as a cow from the temple of Thutmosis III at Deir el-Bahari where he is shown being both protected and nursed by her (JE 38574-38575, c. 1440 B.C.). Mohamed Saleh and Hourig Sourouzian, The Egyptian Museum Cairo. Official Catalogue (Organization of Egyptian Antiquities, 1987), no. 138.


38 Allen, Book of the Dead, spell 151, 166.
of the solar-eyes and the one whom Re sent to destroy mankind.\textsuperscript{39} She was both daughter and mother of Re,\textsuperscript{40} which, as discussed above, has led many to suggest that she was, in general, the feminine counterpart to Re.\textsuperscript{41} In this way, Hathor was tied to the regenerative cycle of the sun and the process of rebirth. Her role as creative principle renewed the solar cycle just as it renewed Ramesses II upon his rebirth in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II.

An informative depiction of the relationship between the king and Hathor appears in the Old Kingdom triads and dyads of Menkaure. Studied in detail by Friedman, she states that “as divine mother (and wife) to the king, she [Hathor] was the state’s most important Old Kingdom goddess.”\textsuperscript{42} The triads, which depict the king with Hathor and a nome personification, show the king in close, intimate contact with the goddess which Friedman interprets as a sign of divine legitimation.\textsuperscript{43} Friedman also suggests that by Hathor representing all deities, she bestows the acceptance of all deities upon Menkaure.\textsuperscript{44} The Menkaure dyads also demonstrate the association of Hathor with royal women, in this case, the king’s mother. The features of the female in the dyads, including her wearing the Vulture Cap and her stature being equal to the king, suggest that the woman depicted is to be identified as both mortal and divine. Friedman suggests this apparent conflict was purposefully used to represent both Hathor and the king’s mother. She

\textsuperscript{39} Erman, \textit{Literature of the Ancient Egyptians}, 47-49; Bleeker, \textit{Hathor and Thoth}, 53; Roberts, \textit{Hathor Rising}, 8.


\textsuperscript{41} Quirke, \textit{Cult of Ra}, 31, 36; Troy, \textit{Patterns of Queenship}, 57.

\textsuperscript{42} Friedman, “Reading the Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 3.

\textsuperscript{43} Friedman, “Reading the Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 3; Florence Dunn Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” in \textit{Egypt and Beyond: Essays Presented to Leonard H. Lesko upon his Retirement from the Wilbour Chair of Egyptology at Brown University June 2005}, ed. Stephen E. Thompson and Peter Der Manuelian (Brown University, 2008), 139.

\textsuperscript{44} Friedman, “Reading the Menkaure Triads: Part II,” 111.
concludes “The point seems to be that the king’s mother and Hathor, in appearance and essence, are aspects of each other.”

Friedman suggests this relationship was meant to represent the means by which the king was reborn in this life and the next. Hathor becomes the conduit for his rebirth just as the king’s mortal mother had brought him into the world.

Especially during the New Kingdom, there appears to be a special association between Hathor and royal women, specifically the mother and wife of the king. Many have suggested that the role of royal women was exemplified in Hathor. Lesko proposes that depictions of the queen wearing the tripartite wig were a means of indicating the queen’s nature as a manifestation of Hathor, such as in depictions of Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II, at her temple at Abu Simbel.

In trying to understand this relationship between Hathor and the king, Troy’s interpretation can offer much insight. She suggests that the feminine counterpart to kingship was essential to the continuation of the Egyptian cosmos and, thus, the Egyptian nation. This counterpart could come in the form of a mortal woman or goddess. Troy suggests that as Hathor was a medium of renewal and rebirth, both mother and wife, she served as the female counterpart to the male king, fulfilling the feminine role required for regeneration and renewal. In general, this idea of the feminine counterpart relies on the idea of duality – the need of two seemingly opposing parts to create a whole – and the necessity of male and female for the creation of life.

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45 Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 135-137.

46 Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 139.

47 Warkentin, “Looking Beyond the Image,” 45-46; Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 91; Tyldesley, Daughters of Isis, 191; Quirke, Cult of Ra, 7.

48 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 54; Callender, Hathor’s Image, 338-340; Tyldesley, Daughters of Isis, 197.

49 Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 91, 121.

50 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 55-58.

51 Hornung, Conceptions of God, 240; Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 58
These ideas regarding the feminine counterpart, are reminiscent of the interaction between the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II and the scene of Khnum and Ptah prior to it. In her many forms, Hathor seems to encapsulate all of the regenerative and reproductive feminine aspects as mother, wife, and daughter. As such, Hathor appears to represent that essential feminine presence in rebirth. Through the milk of Hathor, Ramesses II receives divine attributes, protection, power, victory, and legitimacy. The scene is one of rebirth and regeneration, implying that at his coronation Ramesses II was reborn into a new life, while his association with Horus and Re is also reinforced.

_Hathor’s Geographical Epithets_

Each of the Hathors present in the scene has a geographical epithet. Such geographical epithets are not uncommon in depictions of the goddess. This scene contains four: Lady of Dendera, Lady of Hu-Sechem, Lady of Atfih, and Lady of Cusae. All of these epithets are attested in other contexts for Hathor. Based on the research of Warkentin, it is clear that such geographical epithets served multiple purposes. First, they reinforced the relationship between Ramesses II and Hathor, highlighting his devotion to the goddess. Second, they tied Ramesses II to the land of Egypt. In her research, Warkentin looked at a scene in the Hypostyle Hall of Karnak Temple containing fifteen forms of Hathor each with a geographical epithet. She concludes that these epithets “symbolically reinforce the king’s connection to the land as well as

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52 For this portion of the analysis I have tried to apply the methodology of Warkentin in her dissertation “Looking Beyond the Image” in order to understand the usage and purpose of the geographical epithets of Hathor. See also, Daumas, “Hathor,” 1024.

53 Lady of Dendera – Leitz, _Lexikon_ IV, 10-12; Lady of Hu-Sechem – Leitz, _Lexikon_ IV, 103; Lady of Cusae – Leitz _Lexikon_ IV, 146; Lady of Atfih – Leitz, _Lexikon_ IV, 160.
the gods granting him the power to have dominion over these lands.” Assuming this holds true for other uses of Hathor with geographical epithets, the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II serves to tie Ramesses II to the land of Upper Egypt and the gods granting him this power. The geographical epithets also fit within the Upper Egyptian theme of the south portion of the First Hypostyle Hall, as all four locations represent major centers of Hathoric worship in Upper Egypt. This has been discussed previously in Chapter 2. Additionally, Hathor had gained great popularity during this time, being worshipped by all social classes. As Warkentin observes, that choosing Hathor was a strategic move as she held many roles in Egyptian society and had a long history as part of Egyptian religion. Each of these locations not only represented a major center of Hathor worship, but also of political and social power. A brief introduction to each of the geographical epithets is provided here to provide further information.

Lady of Dendera

The first Hathor shown suckling Ramesses II identifies herself as Hwt-Hrw nb(.t) Jwnt, Hathor, Lady of Dendera. Resting on the edge of the western desert, Dendera was a center of Hathor worship early in Egyptian history and continued as such into the Ptolemaic Period. Private monuments as early as the Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2435-2306 BCE) document the presence of


55 David, Religious Ritual, 82.


57 For Lady of Dendera, Lady of Hu, and Lady of Cusae, see Warkentin, “Looking Beyond the Image,” 62-84 (Dendera), 166-184 (Hu), and 222-232 (Cusae).

58 Leitz, IV, 10-12.
a cult of Hathor at Dendera. Together with Giza and Cusae, Dendera was one of the three major centers of Hathor worship in the Old Kingdom. While it is unknown which king was first to build at Dendera, various kings are known to have commissioned work there, such as Amenemhet I, Thutmose III, Thutmosis IV, Amenhotep III, Ramesses II, and Ramesses III. Construction at Dendera continued into the Ptolemaic period with the Ptolemaic temple still standing today.

Additionally, Hathor, Lady of Dendera, came to prominence at various times throughout Egyptian history. Pepi I seems to have favored Hathor, Lady of Dendera as she appears in his titulary – “Son of Hathor, Mistress of Dendera.” Nebehepetre Mentuhotep also had a special relationship with Hathor, Lady of Dendera, as she appears as a principle deity in his funerary temple in Western Thebes where he too appears as the son of Hathor, Lady of Dendera. He also built a chapel at Dendera for Hathor where he was again designated as “Beloved of Hathor, Lady of Dendera, and son of Re.” At his funerary temple at Qurna, Seti I, wearing the Blue Crown, is shown suckled by Hathor, Lady of Dendera. In the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, Ramesses II is shown suckled by Hathor, Lady of Dendera.

59 Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 93.
62 Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 93; Allam, Hathorkult, 46.
63 Allam, Hathorkult, 47-48; Pinch, Votive Offerings to Hathor, 11, 25.
64 Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 93-94; Pinch, Votive Offerings to Hathor, 4; Bleeker, Hathor and Thoth, 51.
Lady of Hu-Sechem

The second Hathor in the scene declares herself to be $Hwt-Hrw\ nb.t\ Hwt-shm$, translated as “Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem.” Known by many names, including Diospolis Parva, the region of Hu sits on the west bank of the Nile and served as the capital of the Seventh Upper Egyptian Nome. Evidence for settlement in the area extends back to the Predynastic period. Known as “The Mansion of the Sistrum of Senwosret I, deceased,” Hathor had long been associated with this area, as the “sistrum,” a symbol closely associated with Hathor, would suggest. During the New Kingdom, Hu-Sechem’s importance lay in its position along the trade routes from Thebes. It was also located along trade routes to Nubia and into Lower Egypt. Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem also appears in a scene in the Great Hypostyle Hall of Karnak with Seti I where she says, “(I) have given you south, north, west, and east gathered together.”

Lady of Cusae

Hathor, Lady of Cusae, $Hwt-Hrw\ nb.t\ Ksy$, appears as the third Hathor suckling Ramesses II in this scene. Capital of the Fourteenth Nome of Upper Egypt, Cusae is located on

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67 Leitz translates this epithet as simply “Lady of Hu.” Leitz, Lexikon IV, 103.


70 Alan H. Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, Volume II (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 33*.


73 Leitz, Lexikon IV, 146.
the West bank of the Nile. Evidence for Hathor, Lady of Cusae, primarily comes from the tombs in the nearby Middle Kingdom, specifically Twelfth Dynasty (ca. 1939-1760 BCE) cemetery of Meir, often in the titles of individuals. Cusae appears to have been a center of Hathor worship as early as the Sixth Dynasty (ca. 2305-2118 BCE).

Hathor worship at Cusae likely reached its peak during the Middle Kingdom as suggested by studies of Twelfth Dynasty graves (ca. 1939-1760 BCE). There are accounts of a “Feast of Hathor of Cusae” from the Middle Kingdom as well. Cusae remained a center of Hathor worship into the New Kingdom. In the Eighteenth Dynasty Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut (ca. 1479-1458 BCE), Hatshepsut claims to have found the Temple of the Lady of Cusae in ruin and to have restored it. Hathor, Lady of Cusae also appears in the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak in a relief of Seti I. Cusae continued as a focal point of Hathor worship into the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.

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74 Gardiner, Onomastica, II, 77*; Allam, Hathorkult, 23

75 Allam, Hathorkult, 23; Galvin, “Hereditary Status of the Titles,” 43-46; Lesko, Great Goddesses of Egypt, 96; Galvin, Priestesses of Hathor, 46.

76 Charlène Cassier, “Persistance des lieux de culte a Atfih: vers une carte archéologique des antiques espaces cultuels,” Géographie et archéologie de la religion égyptienne: espaces cultuels, pratiques locales (Montpellier Université Paul Valéry, 2017), 50; Galvin, Priestesses of Hathor, 102.

77 Allam, Hathorkult, 24.

78 Pinch, Votive Offerings to Hathor, 240; Allam, Hathorkult, 27-31.


Lady of Atfih

The form of Hathor seen suckling Ramesses II in the scene furthest to the left is *Hwt-Hrw nb.t Tp-jḥw*, or Hathor, Lady of Atfih. Capital of the Twenty-Second Upper Egyptian Nome, Atfih is located on the east bank of the Nile opposite Medum. The cult of Hathor, lady of Atfih has also been documented at Abydos, Thebes, and the Fayum. The Lady of Atfih even appears with Hathor, Lady of Cusae at the Temple of Hathor at Dendera. The cult of Hathor of Atfih appears to have been established by the end of the Old Kingdom.

There is evidence of construction during the reign of Ramesses II at Atfih along with patronage of Hathor, Lady of Atfih. A stone, possibly the lintel of a temple or chapel entrance, was found at Atfih depicting Ramesses II interacting with Hathor, Lady of Atfih. In one scene, Ramesses II, wearing the Nemes Headdress, offers wine to Hathor. In another, he offers her water and incense. Beyond this lintel, little remains from the New Kingdom. Pinch records only a few votive offerings from the New Kingdom present at the site.

Hathor and Isis

The assimilation of Hathor and Isis was common due to their shared maternal characteristics. Evidence on Syro-Palestinian cylinder seals suggests the conflation of the

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82 Leitz, *Lexikon IV*, 160.


87 Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 78.
iconography and roles of these two goddesses had begun at least by the Middle Kingdom.88 As both were considered mothers of Horus, both were mothers of the king. Both goddesses independently had ties to rebirth and kingship. Isis restored Osiris after his death and Hathor nursed the dead to assist in their rebirth.89 Isis was the mother and protector of Horus, while Hathor was daughter and mother of Re. Their ties to rebirth and kingship accentuate these themes within the scene.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the conflation of Hathor and Isis also serves to facilitate the cyclical narrative of the scene which ensures the eternal rebirth and renewal of Ramesses II.90 Isis begins the scene identifying each of the other goddesses. Then Hathor, Lady of Atfih states “I am Isis, the mother” connecting herself back to Isis. These goddesses, therefore, were united, together facilitating the eternal rebirth of Ramesses II.

**Suckling Motif**

Depictions of mothers breastfeeding their children are common in Egyptian art and the women appear in a number of postures.91 Three-dimensional depictions of nursing women

88 Beatrice Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age* (University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1996), 168.


90 Davis suggests the idea of cyclical narratives ensuring the continuation of the depicted ritual in his article on the Narmer Palette. Davis, “Narrativity and the Narmer Palette,” 14-54.

91 Maruejol divides nursing scenes into eight types: a) woman is kneeling and sitting on her heels; b) woman is crouching with one leg underneath her; c) woman is squatting and carries her infant between her abdomen and thighs; d) woman sits on a seat with both feet on the ground; e) woman sits on a seat with her feet on a cushion; f) woman is standing, leaning slightly forward while holding the infant; g) woman stands straight, looking forward; and h) woman is standing with her body bent a right angle with the child on its tiptoes to reach. Interestingly, all standing scenes (f-h) come from the New Kingdom. Florence Maruejol, “La Nourrice: Une Thème Iconographique,” *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte,* 79 (1983): 318-319. See also Patricia Rigault, “Scènes d’Allaitement: De la Scène de Genre à la Composition Symbolique,” in *L’Art du Contour: le Dessin dans l’Egypte Ancienne* (Paris: Louvre Éd., 2013), 96-98.
appear as early as the Old Kingdom. Primarily three groups of women are shown in such positions – non-elite mothers, royal nurses, and goddesses. For reasons unknown, royal mothers are rarely shown breastfeeding their children. While it may be assumed that showing such powerful women in such a position was deemed improper, it is unknown why depicting goddesses in such a way was therefore appropriate. However, the custom was for elite women to hire nurses to breastfeed their children, which may explain the lack of images of elite women breastfeeding. The second group of women that are depicted in nursing scenes are royal nurses. Beginning in the Eighteenth Dynasty (ca. 1539-1292 BCE), these royal nurses held powerful social and political roles. A woman could increase her social status by becoming a nurse for the royal family. Maruejol even suggests that depictions of nurses in tombs were meant to recreate the world as it was when the tomb owner was alive. The nurse of Tutankhamun, Maia even received a beautiful tomb decorated with a depiction of her with the young king.

Finally, the last group of women to appear in suckling scenes is goddesses. Whereas suckling scenes depicting mortal women, whether non-elites or nurses, appear more realistic in

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92 Romano, “Statuette of a Royal Mother,” 140.
93 There are a few exceptions. One is a statue of Nefertiti suckling one of her children, Maruejol, “La Nourrice,” 315. Another is the statuette of Princess Sobek-nakht (43.137) from the Thirteenth Dynasty (ca. 1759-1630 BCE). The inscription and presence of uraei on the head of both mother and child attest to the royal identity of the figures. Romano, “A Statuette of a Royal Mother and Child in the Brooklyn Museum.”
94 Graves-Brown, Dancing for Hathor, 67.
96 Catherine Hershey Roehrig, “The Eighteenth Dynasty Titles Royal Nurse (mn t nswt), Royal Tutor (mn f nswt), and Foster Brother/Sister of the Lord of the Two Lands (sn/snt mn f n nb tAwy),” PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1990, 1-4.
98 See Alain Zivie, La Tombe de Maïa: Mère Nourricière du Roi Toutânkhamon et Grande du Harem (Toulousse, France: Caracara Edition, 2013). Zivie believes that Maïa was in fact more than the nurse of Tutankhamun but also his sister, Princess Mariataton. Zivie, La Tombe de Maïa, 109-113.
their depictions of breastfeeding, images of goddesses suckling appear idealistic and in unrealistic positions, such as the standing position depicted in this scene. 99 Goddesses could be shown suckling the living king or described in text as sucking the deceased. 100 Scenes of the king being breastfed by goddesses appear in the Fifth Dynasty with a scene of Ini (ca. 2402-2374 BCE) suckled by a lion headed goddess, 101 while scenes of the king being suckled by Hathor specifically appear as early as the Middle Kingdom (ca. 1980-1760 BCE). 102 Textual references to the deceased being breastfed by a goddess appear in the Pyramid Texts. 103

Egyptians saw rebirth as having much the same requirements as birth, including nourishment by suckling. The deceased required such care as a part of their rebirth into the next life. 104 Goddesses such as Isis, Nephthys, Hathor, and Renenutet are all known to have taken part in the nursing of the deceased. 105 While the average Egyptian expected to be suckled at birth and upon their rebirth after death, the king was reborn at an additional time – his coronation (and subsequent Heb-Seds 106). 107 Coronation was the moment when the king was reborn into a higher, divine plane in which he could interact with the gods and be bestowed with the required


attributes and gifts required for him to rule Egypt. While the king would clearly not physically become a child at his coronation, he would, in an ideological sense, become a child and therefore require the same care and nourishment as all children.

In such instances, however, the king would not be receiving the milk of a mortal woman, but that of a goddess. Thus, the “nourishment” received through this nursing is more than physical. By having a goddess as a nurse, the king was symbolically adopted by the goddess and, thus, accepted into the realm and ranks of the gods. By receiving the milk of a divine being, the king also received some of the divine attributes from his divine mother. Leclant suggests that through breastfeeding, the king received dominion, victory, and divinity. Many texts, including the one accompanying this scene, mention the bestowal of protection in association with nursing. Thus, it is through the milk of his Divine Mothers that Ramesses II is transformed.

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110 See Leclant’s two articles, “Le Rôle de l’Allaitement dans le Cérémonial Pharaonique du Couronnement” and “Le Rôle du lait et l’allaitement d’après les Textes des Pyramides,” where he discusses suckling in both coronation and funerary contexts. The conclusions of these two articles suggest similar purposes and results of the suckling in these two situations.

111 Leclant, “Cérémonial Pharaonique du Couronnement,” 142. Within the text of the scene itself it also states that all the Hathors are gathered to protect the king, “May they protect your incarnation from the ruler of every land.” See chapter 1. Additionally, Volokhine suggests that the milk was the flesh of the mother and became part of the composition of the child, Volokhine, “Le lait et l’allaitement,” 88.


The cyclical nature of this scene guarantees that this rebirth and transformation will continue on indefinitely. Ramesses II is guaranteed that he will never be “weaned.” He will continually receive divine milk, providing him with eternal protection, life, dominion, and power. He will be forever accepted by the gods and exist in this higher state.

The Suckling motif appears to have been popular in temple reliefs during the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II. At the Temple of Seti I at Gurnah, Seti I appears in a relief nursed by Hathor (PM II [1991], 410 (26)) and Ramesses II is depicted being nursed by Mut (PM II [1991], 410 (21)). Seti I also appears nursed by Mut in the Second Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (PM VI [1991], 9 (93)). At his Beit el-Wali temple, Ramesses II is shown nursed by Isis (PM VII [1991], 26 (37)) and by Anukis (PM VII [1991], 27 (40)). In the Great Hypostyle Hall in the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Ramesses II appears suckled by Hathor (PM II [1991], 48 (159.6)). Like the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II at Abydos, this suckling scene follows a relief of Khnum modeling the king upon his potter’s wheel (PM II [1991], 48 (159.5)). The textual similarities between contemporary suckling scenes and the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II have been discussed in Chapter 3. While each of the reliefs from the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II mentioned above depict a single goddess nursing the king, the multiplicity of goddesses depicted nursing in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II makes it unique.

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115 Leclant suggests this idea is implied in the Pyramid Texts, Leclant, “Textes des Pyramides,” 126.

116 Brand, Monuments of Seti I, 233, fn. 495; Budin, Images of Woman and Child, 81.

117 David, Temple Ritual, 86; Calverley, Temple of King Sethos I vol. IV, p. 23.

118 Ricke, Beit El-Wali Temple, 31, pl. 40.

The postures depicted in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II parallel those found in contemporary suckling scenes. While the goddesses are depicted sitting in the scenes from Abydos and Karnak, they are shown standing in the scenes from Beit el-Wali. In addition to Abydos and Karnak, the association of the Suckling motif with the Khnum scene appears in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari as part of Hatshepsut’s divine birth. While these scenes are not side by side as they are at Abydos or Karnak, Khnum is shown modeling the king and her ka which, following scenes of her birth, are nursed by Hathor. The appearance of multiple suckling scenes associated with scenes of Khnum at his potter’s wheel further supports understanding the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II as part of a larger birth motif and may even serve as an abbreviation of a larger narrative like that at Deir el-Bahari. This implies that these suckling scenes all shared a similar purpose and function within their iconographical programs.

**Summary**

The Divine Mothers play a key role in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. Sitting on the forearm of Isis, Ramesses II is presented as the incarnation of Horus. Proceeding from the arms of Isis to Hathor, Ramesses II continues to be associated with Horus, and also Re, as Hathor is nurse and mother to both gods. Through the nursing of Hathor, Ramesses II receives the attributes necessary to be king – victory, protection, divinity, and legitimacy. Representing the Ennead and divinity, Hathor assists in Ramesses II’s rebirth and transformation. All of these

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120 As mentioned in footnote 91 of this chapter, this standing posture is unique to the New Kingdom. Maruejol, “La Nourrice,” 318-319.

121 Naville, *Deir el-Bahari II*, pl. XLVIII and LIII.

122 More research will need to be done into further patterns and trends among such suckling scenes to determine overall functions and their greater ideological purpose. See Chapter 6: Conclusion.
elements reinforce Ramesses II’s claim to the throne and right to rule while emphasizing his dedication to the gods and tradition. The geographical epithets of Hathor further tie Ramesses II to the land of Egypt and its people, appealing to Hathor’s many roles and general popularity among all Egyptians.
Chapter 5
Crowns and their Iconographic Function

While the composition of the vignettes of Hathor and the king remain nearly identical in each of the four Hathor-Ramesses II pairs, and the Isis-Rameses II pair being similar to those four, the scenes differ in the crown worn by Ramesses II. He is shown wearing 1) the Blue crown; 2) White Crown; 3) Red Crown; 4) Atef Crown; and 5) Nemes Headdress (Figures 3 & 7). It could be argued that the appearance of the Red and White Crown side by side in the relief alludes to the Double Crown.

While very little evidence of crowns has survived in the archaeological record, they are abundant in art depicting royalty and divinities. Their great variety represented the many facets, duties, and roles of kingship and divinity. Additionally, individual crowns were often associated with a specific deity or deities. Goebs has suggested that crowns also had cosmic associations, with each crown representing a various point in the sun’s cycle. Less often discussed in the

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1 Sandra Collier identifies eight primary crowns worn by the Egyptian king which represent and communicate aspects of Egyptian kingship and function as the base for most of the compound headdresses developed and used throughout Egyptian history. This scene contains five of those eight. Those that do not appear in this scene are 1) Double Crown (though, as will be discussed, this could be alluded to by the Red and White Crown); 2) the Amun Crown; and 3) the ḫst headdress. Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” xiii, 1.

2 Though Collier identifies eight primary crowns for Egyptian kings, this is not a categorization or group established by the ancient Egyptians. It is based on her observation and research. So, while it is not known why the Amun and ḫst headdress do not also appear in the scene with the other five main headdresses, it is likely that the Egyptians did not think of these crowns as a grouping. They simply choose the crowns which best communicated the message of the scene. As all these crowns do represent various aspects of kingship, it might seem that aspects of kingship were left out through the exclusion of the Amun and ḫst headdress. I do not know why this might be the case. Further research regarding the frequency of all these crowns appearing together might help illuminate this question.


literature, feminine headdresses had similar import and significance in Egyptian iconography. While most often queens and goddesses wear variations of crowns worn by kings and gods, there are a few crowns, like the Vulture Cap, that were worn exclusively by women.\textsuperscript{5} These too had associations with aspects of divinity, queenship, and kingship. This Suckling Scene of Ramesses II depicts seven different crowns.

As with any Egyptian scene, the crowns in this relief were not chosen arbitrarily, nor for strictly aesthetic purposes. Instead they complement the overarching themes of the relief – divine kingship, legitimation, rebirth, and power. Upon receiving each crown, Rameses II obtained a different aspect of the kingship into which he was now reborn. By receiving this range of crowns, Rameses II made evident the expanse of his power and his dedication to tradition. While much could be written regarding crowns,\textsuperscript{6} this discussion will be limited to those characteristics relevant to their use in this scene and focus on their use by royalty and deities.

\textbf{Vulture Cap}

All five goddesses in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II wear the Vulture Cap (Figure 7A). The four Hathors wear it topped with a modius of uraei, whereas Isis wears it topped with the Hathor horns and sun disk.\textsuperscript{7} All of these are attested forms of the Vulture Cap and frequently appear worn by both Hathor and Isis. In the line drawing by Mariette, the heads of the Vulture

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{5} There is little distinction in scholarship between the terms “headdress” and “crown.” A few are called “cap,” such as the Vulture Cap, but are discussed alongside headdresses and crowns. Even the term “diadem,” though limited to headpieces composed of bands around the head, appears interchanged with “headdress”. For example, see Müller’s discussion of two very similar pieces, one as “diadem” and the other as “headdress.” Hans Wolfgang Müller and Eberhard Thiem, \textit{The Gold of the Pharaohs} (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 114, 128-129. Thus, in this paper, the terms “headdress” and “crown” will be used interchangeably and “cap” only in regard to the Vulture Cap.
  \item \textsuperscript{6} Topics like material construction and development will need to be saved for another discussion.
\end{itemize}
Cap are simply vulture heads; however, the photograph of the wall (Figure 1) reveals the presence of a uraeus wearing the Hathor horns and sun disk on the crown of Isis and the three central Hathors (the head on the crown of the Hathor furthest to the left is too faint to determine whether the uraeus is present).

The Vulture Cap, the most common headdress worn by queens, originated in the early Old Kingdom (ca. 2900-2545). The headdress itself was originally the crown of Nekhbet, the vulture goddess and protector of the king. At some point early in the Old Kingdom, the Vulture Cap was adopted as part of the regalia of the mother of the king, the mwt-nsw. It has been suggested that the earliest appearance of the cap is in the Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2435-2306) drawn on the determinative accompanying the name of the royal mother Khenkaues I. Others suggest it is to be identified earlier in a series of five fragments of a statue discovered at the Fourth Dynasty pyramid complex of Khafre (ca. 2472-2448 BCE). Either way, it appears in its final form in the Sixth Dynasty reign of Pepi II (ca. 2216-2153) from which time it continues throughout the Old Kingdom to remain exclusively the crown of the king’s mother, the woman who gave birth to Egypt’s ruler.

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11 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 117.

12 Sabbahy, “King’s Mother,” 308.

13 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 117.
During the Middle Kingdom (ca. 1980-1760 BCE), the use of the Vulture Cap expanded beyond that of the king’s mother and even appears to have been used by women outside the royal family. However, in the New Kingdom (ca. 1539-1077 BCE) the Vulture Cap once again was used primarily for women of the royal family, except during the Amarna period when royal women opted for other headpieces. Following the Amarna period, the Vulture Cap reached new heights of popularity in the Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1292 – 1191) and became the most common insignia of both the king’s mother and wife. Its popularity during the time of Ramesses II (ca.1279-1213) is evident by its prolific use in the tomb of his wife, Queen Nefertari (QV 64), where it is the sole headdress worn by the queen in her tomb decoration.

The Vulture Cap has often been defined as the crown of the goddess Mut. However this is not accurate as the Vulture Cap originates much earlier than the first appearance of Mut who is first documented in the Middle Kingdom (ca. 1980-1760 BCE) and it was worn by many goddesses prior to and in parallel with Mut. In addition, Mut was not a vulture goddess, but a

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14 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 118; Interestingly, it is during the Middle Kingdom that the depiction and use of crowns in funerary literature appears to no longer have been limited to deceased royalty. Goeb, Egyptian Funerary Literature, 27.


16 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 118.


lioness. Undeniably, the most common interpretation of the Vulture Cap – and by association the vulture – is motherhood. This interpretation has primarily been based on the use of the vulture hieroglyph (G14) in the word *mwt*, “mother,” in combination with the use of the Vulture Cap by wives and mothers of the king. For example, te Velde bases his interpretation of the symbolism of the vulture primarily on the use of the vulture hieroglyph in the word *mwt*, “mother.” He suggests Egyptians actively tried to disassociate the vulture and the vulture hieroglyph from the concept of death, as it does not appear in the spelling of *mt* “death.” He cites works of Roman writers who state that the Egyptians believed all vultures to be female and, thus, perfect symbols for femininity and motherhood. Te Velde suggests the vulture hieroglyph was used in the spelling of *mwt*, “mother” because it represented “joyous motherhood.” There is an issue with such analyses, however, because the vulture hieroglyph (G14) also appears in words like *nrw*, “fear, dread.” Clearly, it was not limited to terms related to motherhood, nor did Egyptians try to keep it from being associated with terms that could be linked with violence as evidenced by its presence in *nrw*.

While the Vulture Cap may have come to encapsulate the ideas of motherhood and femininity during its long use in ancient Egypt, studies have often neglected to examine the species of vulture on which the cap, and hieroglyph, are based. The Vulture Cap began as the cap

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of Nekhbet, a *vulture* goddess who stood in a dual relationship with Wadjet, a cobra goddess. Houlihan suggests that the vulture used for the goddess Nekhbet and depicted in the Vulture Cap is either the Griffon Vulture or the Lappet-faced Vulture. Features of both appear mixed and used indiscriminately in depicting the goddess and in representing the vulture hieroglyph.\(^{26}\) Understanding the nature of these vultures has the potential to add clarity to the meaning of the Vulture Cap itself.

The fleshy vulture head that can often be seen on the Vulture Cap, as in the depictions of Nefertari in her tomb, appears very similar to that of the Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*), also known as the King Vulture (Figure 7A). Named after its characteristic skinfolds or lappets along the head and neck, it is also recognizable by its ruff of black feathers and thick white feathers along the legs as depicted in the vulture pendant of Tutankhamun (JE 61892, Cairo Museum).\(^{27}\) With the largest beak of all birds of prey in the world, the Lappet-faced Vulture has an average wingspan of 2.80 m (approximately 9.19 ft) and weighs between 6.0 – 7.95 kg (approximately 13 – 18 lbs.). Known to charge at carcasses and other birds, their characteristic threatening posture comprises wings held out wide, tail straight out behind, and head low and thrust outward, also reflected in the vulture pendant of Tutankhamun. Furthermore, they are the only bird in Africa with the strength to tear through the skin of an elephant, rhinoceros, or hippopotamus. They are undeniably Africa’s dominate bird. While not as large as

\(^{26}\) Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt* (England: Aris & Phillips, 1986), 41-42.; This is different from the vulture that appears as G1. He identifies this sign as the Egyptian Vulture, which does not appear often in contexts outside the hieroglyph, see Houlihan, *Birds*, 39.

the Lappet-faced Vulture, the Griffon Vulture, whose features often appear combined with those of the Lappet-faced Vulture, is also a formidable bird.\footnote{Mundy, \textit{Vultures of Africa}, 112-120, 150-153, 156.}

The shape of the Vulture Cap clearly reflects known habits of the Lappet-faced Vulture and the Griffon Vulture. While flying, both vultures do very little flapping. Instead they glide on the wind for long distances.\footnote{Mundy, \textit{Vultures of Africa}, 117, 155.} Their outstretched, gliding wings are reflected in the draped wings of the Vulture Cap (Figure 7A). Some of the vulture’s behaviors might also suggest reasons the vulture was chosen for the goddess Nekhbet and the Vulture Cap. The Lappet-faced Vulture is known to pair off and is often seen flying in pairs. Even while gathering at a carcass, they remain close to their partners.\footnote{Mundy, \textit{Vultures of Africa}, 154-155.} While it is impossible to know for sure, I would suggest that seeing the Lappet-faced Vulture nearly always with its partner may have suggested something of the dual relationship between Nekhbet and Wadjet.

The appearance of the vulture upon the head of royal women suggests a powerful and fierce nature, something to be feared and not challenged. It is understandable therefore why Nekhbet as a vulture is often shown flying above and protecting the pharaoh, such as in various depictions of Seti I making offerings on the columns of the Second Hypostyle Hall.\footnote{Brunner-Traut, “Geier,” 514; For Example, Calverley, \textit{Temple of King Sethos I IV}, pl. 67-78.} Such a fierce nature is not unknown in female goddesses; Sekhmet serves as an example. Hathor and Isis both display fierceness at times – Hathor in her role in the mythological tale of the Destruction of Mankind and Isis in her role in the account of the Contendings of Horus and
Seth. Whatever the reason, the Vulture Cap came to be associated with royal women, specifically the wife and mother of the king. Troy suggests that the Vulture Cap designated the woman wearing it as an essential feminine counterpart to the king, an essential part of Egyptian kingship. Perhaps understanding the Vulture Cap in this way - as a marker of the feminine counterpart of the king and the protective, aggressive feminine aspect – we can best understand its general meaning in the Nursing Scene of Ramesses II.

While not exclusive, the Vulture Cap is common in scenes depicting a mother goddess, as with the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II and, especially, in the statues of Isis nursing Horus popular in the Late Period and Ptolemaic Period. Indeed, many of the goddesses throughout the Temple of Seti I at Abydos are shown wearing the Vulture cap. In terms of the king’s mortal mother, Queen Ahmose also wears the Vulture Cap in a scene at Deir el Bahri of the divine conception of Hatshepsut. In the statue of Pepi II and his mother Queen Ankhnes-meryre II (ca. 2245-2157, 39.119), the queen is shown wearing the Vulture Cap. Thus a common role is played by both goddess and mortal mother.

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33 Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 125.


36 Richard A. Fazzini, Robert S. Bianchi, James F. Romano, and Donald B. Spanel, *Ancient Egyptian Art in the Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn: Thames and Hudson, 1989), #15. This position is also identified by Maruejol as a distinct type in the overall breastfeeding motif. Maruejol, “La Nourrice,” 318.
The Vulture Cap’s close association with the goddess Nekhbet also links it to the White Crown, which is often personified as Nekhbet. Goebs has proposed that, with this connection in mind, when the cap is paired with the uraeus, a common symbol for the goddess Wadjet, the Vulture Cap became equivalent to the king’s Double Crown. In this scene the uraeus is combined with the Vulture Cap in the form of the modius of uraei and the presence of the uraeus alongside the vulture’s head.

**Hathor/Isis Headdress**

Isis wears the Vulture Cap topped with a set of cow horns surrounding a solar disk (Figure 7B). While this is often referred to as a Hathor Headdress, it is often worn by Isis as well as other goddesses. The cow horns are associated with the goddess Hathor because she often appears as a cow with round horns, such as in the Hathor Chapel of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari and the statue of Hathor and Amenhotep II (JE 38574-5) from the Temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari. Hathor was also a solar goddess as daughter and mother of the sun god and a Solar-Eye, suggested by the solar disk.

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38 Goebs, “Crowns (Egypt),” 14.


Isis appears in this headdress early on, emphasizing the conflation of the two goddesses in their roles as feminine counterparts to the king, as mothers or wives or daughters. This is evident in the text of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. Isis announces herself and the four Hathors; however, the final Hathor, Lady of Atfih, states, “I am your mother who created your beauty. I am Isis who gave birth,” attesting to the conflation of the two goddesses (See Chapter 3 for further discussion).

In addition, Goebs suggests that the Hathor Headdress represented the role of the queen as partner (as wife, daughter, or mother) of the king, just as Hathor was to Re. Hathor’s role as the feminine counterpart to the king has been discussed in Chapter 4. While it is clear that Hathor serves a motherly function in this scene, the Hathor Headdress worn by Isis would imply that Isis also serves as partner to Ramesses II as well. As feminine counterpart, she is an agent of rebirth and rejuvenation.

Blue Crown

Shown with Isis, Rameses II wears the Blue Crown or the ḫprš crown (Figure 7C). Of all the crowns he wears in the Nursing Scene, this is chronologically the latest crown to develop. Unlike the White and Red Crowns that have their origins in the Pre-Dynastic Period, the Blue Crown developed in its final form (as seen here) at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty (ca.

42 Goebs, “Crowns (Egypt),” 14.
43 Goebs, “Crowns (Egypt),” 14.
44 Troy, Patterns of Queenship, 116.
45 Goebs, “Crowns (Egypt),” 6; Saleh, Egyptian Museum Cairo, #8; Gay Robins, The Art of Ancient Egypt (Cambridge, Massachuesetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 32.
Likely developing from an earlier cap crown worn by Egyptian pharaohs, the Blue Crown quickly rose to become one of the most popular among New Kingdom kings.

The scholarly interpretation of this perplexing crown has evolved over time and is still a topic of debate. In his 1960 article, Leclant proposed, based on scenes of the king being nursed by a goddess within a coronation context that the Blue Crown was a crown of victory and domination. He proposed that this is a more accurate definition than its previous interpretation as the “war crown.” In 1982, Davies proposed that the Blue Crown was the crown of coronation thereby indicating the legitimate succession of pharaonic power. In 1993, Collier similarly proposed that the crown signified the wearer as the legitimate heir to pharaonic power. By tracing the Blue Crown’s development and the most common scenes in which it appears, Collier noticed a parallel between its development and the rise of the cult of Amun as a national deity. Subsequently, she introduced the idea of the crown as indicating the living pharaoh. This has become a favored interpretation of current scholarship. By analyzing the use of the crown, its development, and its popularity, Collier suggests that it emphasized the king’s duties as a living heir to the throne, focusing specifically on the king as a mortal ruler. In 2003, Hardwick studied the eye shapes associated with depictions of the crown, the colors of the crown, the lack of deities to appear wearing the crown, and its use in statuary. He suggested that as it developed

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51 Collier, *Crowns of Pharaoh*, 107 - 123.
in the early New Kingdom, the Blue Crown originally signified the mortal state of the king and his duties as ruler of Egypt. He argues that later in the New Kingdom the crown came to represent the role of the earthy ruler and to encapsulate the symbolism of all pharaonic crowns. He specifically makes the point that the crown was used when not focusing on the king’s divine attributes. In 2013, Pompei worked from the assumption that the crown signified the living ruler. She also suggested a dual lunar and solar symbolism. As a crown of dual lunar and solar meaning, it represented the king’s duty as a unifier of the cosmos in the role of the living king of Egypt. Goeb's summarized the purpose of the crown as simply signifying the living ruler.

While scholarship rests on the definition of the crown as a representation of the mortal and living king, it appears that these later articles in favor of this theory have largely passed over the crown’s association with suckling scenes in their conclusions. Many of the authors mention the crown’s appearance in such scenes but ignore the interpretation of nursing scenes as being related to the deification and inherited divinity of the king. While Ramesses II is not nursed by Isis while wearing the crown (Figure 3), the association is clear as he proceeds to be nursed by four goddesses. The position in which he sits is also very reminiscent of statuary and reliefs in which the king is nursed while sitting on the lap of a goddess, where he often wears the Blue Crown. The Blue Crown also appears in a pendant from the tomb of King Tutankhamun, composed of a gold pendant depicting Isis suckling the king (JE 61952). In the scene, Isis wears

56 See for example the nursing scene Calverley, Temple of King Sethos IV, pl. 23.
a compound form of the Vulture Cap with Hathor horns while the king wears the Blue Crown.\textsuperscript{57}

This use of the Blue Crown within nursing scenes appears to contradict the idea that it marked the king as the \textit{mortal or living} ruler. In being nursed by a goddess, the king received divinity and divine attributes through her milk.\textsuperscript{58} Kings used suckling scenes to express their divine birth/rebirth.\textsuperscript{59}

Restriction of the Blue Crown to the living, mortal king is also brought into question by its appearance on the heads of deceased kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty in tombs of the Ramesside Period, Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1292-1191) to Twentieth Dynasty (ca. 1190-1077). In the tomb of Ameneminet, built during the Ramesside Period, Amenhotep III (ca. 1390-1352) appears wearing the Blue Crown. The image depicts the cult of the deceased Amenhotep III, identified as divine.\textsuperscript{60} In Theban Tomb 51, dated to the reign of Seti I (ca. 1290-1279), Thutmose I appears in the Blue Crown while receiving offerings from the tomb owner. In Theban Tomb 31, dated to the reign of Ramesses II, Thutmose III appears in the Blue Crown. On Cairo stela 34029, dated to the Ramesside Period, Amenhotep I appears wearing the Blue Crown facing an offering table. On Cairo stela 34037, dated to the Ramesside Period, and the Stela of Pahu and Neferkhaum, dated to the late Ramesside period, Ahmose appears in the Blue Crown.\textsuperscript{61} All of these scenarios depict the deceased king as an object of cult worship and, thus, was likely

\textsuperscript{57} T. G. H. James, \textit{Tutankhamun} (Friedman/Fairfax Publishers, 2000), 162-163.

\textsuperscript{58} Goebs, \textit{Egyptian Funerary Literature}, 185.

\textsuperscript{59} Leclant, “Cérémonial Pharaonique du Couronnement,” 137.


\textsuperscript{61} Redford, \textit{Pharaonic King-Lists}, 48-50.
assumed he was divine. Therefore, at the time of the creation of the Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II the Blue Crown was not restricted to being worn by a *living* king.

In a soon to be published article,” Corcoran assesses previous interpretations of the Blue Crown.62 Looking at a pectoral of Tutankhamun in which the king wears the Blue Crown (JE 61884), she disagrees with the interpretation of the Blue Crown as a crown of the mortal king. Instead she suggests it signified the king had undergone a divine transformation. Even the name *ḥprš* suggests the king had undergone a transformation.63 Research also done by Corcoran suggests that symbolically the color blue, by far the most common color for this crown, was one of animation, a color that could give life to inanimate objects, and objects “made in this color bore the quality of life and could also magically transfer it.”64 This too suggests a connection with transformation. Her research also suggests that the color blue had strong solar ties.65

In my opinion, Corcoran’s interpretation of the crown would be most accurate – the Blue Crown was worn by the transformed man who held the divine office of king in the mortal world. He fulfilled the earthly duties required by the gods, such as battling Egypt’s enemies or participating in temple rituals but was indeed divine. Though not a god like those worshipped within the temples, the Blue Crown seems to imply the king was in possession of divine attributes, having undergone a transformation upon his coronation. As such, by wearing the Blue Crown in these scenes, Rameses II emphasizes not only the divine origins of his role and personage, but also his commitment to fulfill the kingly duties given him by the gods.

62 I am grateful to Dr. Corcoran for providing me with a PDF of her pre-published article for my research.

63 Corcoran, “*Heb Sed* in Perpetuity?” 8-9.


65 Corcoran, “Color Blue,” 56-57.
Finally, it is important to look at the relationship of the Blue Crown and the other four crowns worn by the king. It has been observed by Hardwick that the Blue Crown seems to incorporate the symbolism of other crowns into its own.\textsuperscript{66} The Suckling Scene of Ramesses II not only supports this idea but can be better understood through its application. The other four crowns appear in complementary pairs (which will be discussed in more detail later) – White and Red, Atef and Nemes – making the Blue Crown an outlier of the pattern. However, if it is understood that the Blue Crown encapsulated them all within its own symbolism it explains its role in the pattern and composition of the scene. Goebs suggests, when analyzing this scene, that the Blue Crown serves to encapsulate all aspects of Ramesses II’s royalty.\textsuperscript{67} As the first crown to be worn in the scene, without a complement, it serves as an introduction to the other four. It also explains why it was chosen for the Isis-Ramesses II pairing as Isis’s text is a summary of the rest of the scene (See Chapter 3). Rameses II, seated in the forearm of Isis, highlights his divinely appointed position before going on to emphasize the various aspects of kingship.

\textbf{White Crown}

After appearing in the Blue Crown, Rameses II receives the White Crown from Hathor, Lady of Dendera (Figure 7D). This crown had many names - \textit{hêt} meaning “White Crown,” \textit{šmś}s referring to “Upper” Egypt, and \textit{wrr.t}.\textsuperscript{68} The White Crown is, along with the Red, one of the oldest crowns to be worn by Egyptian Kings. It first appears on the early dynastic Scorpion II

\textsuperscript{66} Hardwick, “Iconography of the Blue Crown,” 117-141; Goeb, “Crowns (Egypt),” 9; Gardiner suggests that during the New Kingdom, that the Blue Crown “simply took the place of the more cumbersome headdress of the earliest Dynasties.” This implies a similar idea but suggests a practical reason rather than symbolic. Alan H. Gardiner, “The Coronation of King Haremheb,” The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 39 (1953): 27.

\textsuperscript{67} Goeb, Egyptian Funerary Literature, 185.

\textsuperscript{68} Collier, Crowns of Pharaoh, 16, 20-21; Goeb, “Crowns (Egypt),” 6; \textit{Wb.} III, 211.5; \textit{Wb.} IV, 476.2; \textit{Wb.} I, 333.11.
Mace Head (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896.1908.E.3632). It also appears on the Narmer Palette (JE 32169, Dynasty 1, ca. 2900-2730 BCE, Cairo Museum), already in a complementary relationship with the Red crown. From this point on, it became a regular headpiece for every Egyptian king.

It is generally agreed that the White Crown’s primary meaning was Upper Egypt and the king’s rule over this region. As such it is often preferred on reliefs on southern portions of temples. For example, in the Second Hypostyle Hall, there are parallel scenes of the king flanking a Djed pillar. He wears the Red Crown on the north wall (PM VI [1991], 8 (88)) and the White Crown on the south wall (PM VI [1991], 7 (80)). The text is clear that Hathor bestows this White crown upon Rameses II, thus it is through her nursing that Rameses II is given kingship over Upper Egypt.

The White Crown also linked Rameses II to various traditional Egyptian deities. Most often, the White Crown was associated with the goddess Nekhbet, who is often the personification of the crown. As the goddess Nekhbet, the crown was a fiery protector of the king. As Nekhbet was a Solar-Eye goddess, the White Crown was also one of the Solar-Eyes or

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71 Collier, Crowns of Pharaoh, 20, 25-26. While most agree that the White and Red Crowns symbolize Upper and Lower Egypt respectively, Shulman suggests that the White, Red, and Double Crowns did not originally have geographical associations and that even by the Fifth Dynasty there were no geographical nuances to their meaning. He even suggests that their appearance along with various other crowns suggests that they lost their geographical meanings at various times later in Egyptian history. Allen Shulman, “Narmer and the Unification: A Revisionist View,” Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar 11 (1991): 91-92.

72 Calverley, Temple of King Sethos I IV, pl. 8 and 40.

73 Goeb, Egyptian Funerary Literature, 58-59.

Eyes of Horus.\textsuperscript{75} In funerary literature, the crown is worn by gods like Ihy, Horus, or Shu, and also has ties to Thoth.\textsuperscript{76}

As mentioned previously, Goebs suggests that, as with other crowns, the White Crown had cosmic significance. All crowns were associated with luminosity and radiance, and she specifically links the White Crown to the stars and moon. This is emphasized by its relationship with Thoth, a moon-god. While in Pyramid Texts 666 and 717, the crown is compared to a star.\textsuperscript{77}

**Red Crown**

Following his appearance in the White Crown, Ramesses II is shown wearing the Red Crown and being suckled by Hathor, Lady of Hu-Sechem (Figure 8A). As mentioned in the discussion of the White Crown, the Red Crown is one of the oldest crowns in Egyptian art. Its earliest known appearance is as a Predynastic hieroglyph on a piece of black-topped ware from Naqada I – II.\textsuperscript{78} It, too, had a number of names - \textit{dšrt} meaning “Red Crown,” \textit{n.t}, and \textit{wzd.t}, referring to the crown of Lower Egypt.\textsuperscript{79} This last name comes from the word \textit{wzd} meaning

\textsuperscript{75} Goebs, “Cosmic Aspects,” 448. (Pyramid Texts Spell 524)

\textsuperscript{76} Goebs, “Cosmic Aspects,” 453-456.


“green,” “fresh,” or “to thrive.”

It also appears on the Narmer Palette (JE 32169), where it appears in a complementary position to the White Crown.

At its core, the Red Crown signifies the king’s power over Lower Egypt. Together, the Red and White Crown created the Double Crown (Figure 8B) and represented the entirety of Egypt. Collier goes so far as to say that the two crowns were “more significant in their combined form than they are as separate crowns.”

In a complementary role to the White Crown, the Red Crown was often used to decorate northern portions of temples. Often, statues or scenes in which the king wears the Red Crown have complementary, nearly identical scenes where the pharaoh wears the White Crown such as the scenes discussed above from the Second Hypostyle Hall.

The significance of the function of the White and Red Crowns as counterparts is emphasized by the fact that the Red Crown never appears in compound-crown designs other than in the form of the Double crown. The same could be said of the White Crown, except for its possible use as the base of the Osiris Crown.

As with the White Crown, the Red Crown was associated with various traditional deities, primarily Wadjet the uraeus. Again, the complementary nature of the White and Red Crowns is

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80 Wb I, 264-265. For a further discussion as to the possible association of the Red Crown with “green” and “fresh,” see Goebs, Egyptian Funerary Literature, 155-164. Though it is interesting to note that ḫḥ is also the word for “papyrus,” a symbol of Lower Egypt. Wb I, 263.7-9.

81 Saleh, Egyptian Museum Cairo, #8; Robins, Art of Ancient Egypt, 32.

82 Saleh, Egyptian Museum Cairo, #8.

83 For Shulman’s disagreement with this interpretation see footnote 74.

84 Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 25.

85 Calverley, Temple of King Sethos I IV, pl. 8 and 40.

86 Collier, “Crowns of the Pharaoh,” 67; As it does not appear in this image, discussion of the Osiris crown will have to be saved for another paper.

87 Goebs, Egyptian Funerary Literature, 175.
evident in their association with Nekhbet and Wadjet and as Solar-Eyes. The goddess Neith was also associated with the Red Crown as this became her primary headdress in Egyptian art.\(^8\) In terms of its potential cosmic associations, Goebs suggests that the crown’s red color gives it solar connections, specifically the moments of sunrise and sunset. She adds that its identity as the Solar-Eye and name \(\text{ws\text{"dlt}}\) “Fresh one” or “Green one” supports this interpretation.\(^9\) Thus the White Crown, a lunar crown, finds its counterpart in the rising and setting of the sun encapsulated in the Red Crown. Red is also associated with “life-giving and life-letting blood.” It was a dual natured color representing warm and dangerous fire, the red land, and Seth, embodying both the positive and negative aspects of each.\(^{10}\)

**Double Crown**

As the entire scene is located on the southern wall, the purpose of the Red and White crowns in this scene does not appear to be geographical orientation, but rather for their relationship to kingship. While the crowns appear separately in the image, their pairing within the relief and their unavoidable counterpart relationship suggest that their use in this image includes the symbolism encapsulated in the Double Crown (Figure 8B). This crown, known as \(\text{p\text{\text{"st}mty}}\) “The Two Powerful Ones”\(^9\) or \(\text{wrty-hksw} \) “The Two Great of Magic,”\(^9\) represented the unified and dual nature of the Egyptian kingdom and the king’s rule over it. These names refer to

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\(^8\) Goebs, “Crown (Egypt),” 7.

\(^9\) Goebs, *Egyptian Funerary Literatures*, 173; See also, Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies*, 56.

\(^{10}\) Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies*, 56.

\(^{91}\) Hannig, *Großes Handwörterbuch*, 746 for \(\text{s\text{"mty}}\).

\(^{92}\) *Wb* 1, 328.6.
the two goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet, who personified these two crowns. By wearing both the White and Red Crown, Rameses II emphasizes his divine right, bestowed in this scene through his divine mother Hathor, over the entirety of Egypt.

In addition, the Double Crown was also the usual crown of the god Horus. Thus, not only does Rameses II associate himself with Horus through his relationship and posture with the goddess Isis but also through the presence of the deconstructed Double Crown. As ruler of Egypt, the king was the reincarnation of Horus and, here, Rameses II asserts his legitimate claim to the throne by associating himself with this pharaonic god. Furthermore, the entire symbolism of the Double Crown, and thus the Red and White crowns, was based on the Egyptian idea of two counterparts, often opposites, coming together to create a perfect whole. By wearing both crowns, Rameses II represents this idea of Egypt as a perfect and unified whole under his power, attesting to his power as king, alignment with ma’at, and adherence to the designs and desires of the gods.

**Atef Crown**

The next grouping consists of Hathor, Lady of Cusae, nursing Rameses II wearing the Atef Crown. The Atef Crown is characterized by a stylized bundle of reeds tied at the top (Figure 8C). One can see the reed details on the crown in the photograph of the scene (Figure 1). This

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94 Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 60.


96 This center portion of the crown is very similar to the headdress worn by *mww* dancers who accompanied a coffin in transport. Interestingly, the *mww* dancers appear in tombs around the same time the Atef crown appears in images of the king. Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 37-38. I suggest that this possible association with *mww* dancers supports the crown’s links to the netherworld.
bundle is flanked by two feathers and topped with a sun disk. The Atef Crown also has early origins as it appears in a relief being worn by king Snefru (ca. 2543-2510) of the Fourth Dynasty.97

The debate pertaining to the difference between the Atef and Osiris Crowns is discussed by Collier.98 The two crowns have similar shaped cores flanked by feathers. Nevertheless, the presence of the reed detailing conclusively identifies this representation as the Atef, rather than the Osiris, Crown. The Atef Crown is often referred to as the crown of Re and seems to have been given by Re to Osiris, thus tying it to both gods. 99 The Atef Crown symbolized the king’s rule over the Netherworld and his eventual renewal there.100

While the Atef Crown was most often worn by Osiris, it was also tied to the united Re-Osiris, both of whom are associated with rebirth and the solar cycle. Both gods seem to have a claim upon the crown lending it their symbolism and powers as it bestowed those upon its wearer. Other gods associated with this crown also have ties to the sun and rebirth, such as Horus and Khepri.101 This same idea of birth and rebirth, especially in association with the sun, is represented in the construction of the crown itself. The sun disk rising out of the bundled reeds is an allusion to the story of Horus hidden away and raised in a papyrus swamp as a child.102 As the incarnation of the god Horus, the king is tied directly to the birth and life of his divine

97 Müller, Gold of the Pharaohs, 65.; Goeb, “Crowns (Egypt),” 10. Sandra Collier states that the earliest appearance of the Atef crown is Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2435-2306); however, Goeb was able to identify this earlier appearance. Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 38.
98 Collier, “Crowns of the Pharaoh,” 44-49.
101 Goeb, “Crowns (Egypt),” 10.
102 Goeb, “Crowns (Egypt),” 11.
counterpart. Finally, Goebs suggests, based in part on its Osirian association, that the crown symbolized the morning and dawn, a time of rebirth.\textsuperscript{103} She suggests that it was also associated with the night part of the cosmic cycle.\textsuperscript{104}

The symbolism of the Atef Crown revolves around the idea of rebirth, renewal, and the king’s rule and power in the Netherworld as he was to be reborn there.\textsuperscript{105} As such, it appears to have a possible counterpart relationship to the Double Crown, which we have identified as being represented by the separate White and Red Crowns. The Double Crown represented the king’s power over the land of Egypt, as Horus, and the Atef represented the king’s power over the Netherworld after this life, as Osiris.\textsuperscript{106} Thus, we have a continuation of the theme of Rameses II’s power and dominion. Additionally, as the king appears being suckled by Hathor, the Atef Crown complements the theme of rebirth. Rameses II’s choice of the Atef Crown as part of this scene further strengthens his ultimate agenda of legitimizing his rule and propagating his identity as a reborn, divine king.

**Nemes Headdress**

Finally, Rameses II is given the Nemes Headdress while being nursed by Hathor, Lady of Atfih. More like a kerchief in many ways, it probably originated from a practical head covering worn in Egypt’s hot, sandy environment over wigs or natural hair (Figure 8D).\textsuperscript{107} While the Nemes in its traditional form appears first on a statue of Khafre in the Fourth Dynasty (JE 10062,

\textsuperscript{103} Goebs, *Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 81, 111-112.

\textsuperscript{104} Goebs, “Crown (Egypt),” 10-11.

\textsuperscript{105} Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 48-50.

\textsuperscript{106} Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 50.

\textsuperscript{107} Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 75.
Cairo Museum), an early version is worn by Djoser (ca. 2592-2566 BCE) in a statue from the serdab of the Step Pyramid complex at Saqqara (JE 49158, Cairo Museum) in the Third Dynasty. While it remained popular throughout Egyptian history, the Nemes Headdress became popular in compound crown combinations in the Eighteenth Dynasty (ca. 1539-1292).

The Nemes Headdress is generally interpreted and understood as the crown of coronation and closely associated with the god Re. It appears in many coronation scenes, such as those of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep II. Collier suggests that first appearance of s ꜣ R in a king’s titulary and the first appearance of the traditional Nemes both dating to the Fourth Dynasty (ca. 2543-2436) is evidence for the association of the Nemes with Re. Goebs suggests that its close association with the sun is also expressed in the general design and color of the Nemes. In colored depictions of the Nemes, such as the mask of Tutankhamun and its other many appearances among his burial goods, it appears with horizontal stripes of blue and gold. These are rather reminiscent of the sun’s rays streaming through the sky at first light (Figure 8D). She proposes the Nemes Headdress symbolized the sunrise and in this way was

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111 Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 75.

112 Collier, “Crowns of Pharaoh,” 76-77.


complementary to the Atef Crown.\textsuperscript{115} This association with the sun symbolized the king’s nature as the heir of Re upon his coronation.\textsuperscript{116}

Lurson suggests that a key to understanding the iconography of Ramesside scenes comes in looking for patterns and symmetry, including objects that are “different but semantically complementary, most often type-pairs.”\textsuperscript{117} Applying Lurson’s methodology to the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II reveals much about the interaction of these crowns. The four Hathors in the scene create a rather symmetrical unit, and the presence of the White and Red Crowns beside each other suggest a type-pair (Figure 3). This established pair combined with the inherent symmetry of the scene imply that the Atef Crown and Nemes Headdress are also to be understood as a pair. This is not the only way to understand the interaction of the crowns within the scene but understanding them in this way is iconographically sound as it reflects changes in theology introduced in the New Kingdom.

The counterpart relationship between the Nemes and Atef is based on their association with Re and Osiris, respectively. While the Nemes represented the coronation of the king in the living world, the Atef Crown represented the king’s eventual coronation and rule in the Netherworld. As the White Crown and Red Crown demonstrated Rameses II’s rule over both parts, and thus the entirety, of Egypt, the Nemes and Atef represented his rule over the mortal and post-mortal/immortal worlds, and, thus, the cosmos. The Atef and Nemes together could also represent the entire journey of the sun – the Nemes for the day and the Atef for the night – as

\textsuperscript{115} Goebs, \textit{Egyptian Funerary Literature}, 112.


\textsuperscript{117} Lurson, \textit{A Perfect King}, 7-10.
well as the entire cosmos – Nemes for the celestial and Atef for the terrestrial. One might say they represent the boundlessness and extent of his power.

In addition, these two crowns together connect Ramesses II to Re and Osiris, and who had become complementary deities in the Solar-Osiran unity. Goeb's suggests the relationship between the Atef and Nemes was linked to the Solar-Osiran unity. The concept of the Solar-Osiran unity is that, during the night hours, the aged sun god Re would unite with Osiris in the Netherworld and, through this, is reborn. The idea of the Re-Osirian unity evolved in the New Kingdom, with a temporary union between the two gods appearing in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Suckling Scene of Ramesses II was created during the period of the Solar-Osiran unity’s development, which would become the predecessor of the more permanent Solar-Osiran unity of the Twenty-First Dynasty (ca. 1076-944). Thus, understanding Solar-Osiran symbolism in the pairing of these two crowns is completely logical. Both Re and Osiris brought life to Egypt – Re as the sun and Osiris as the force within the earth of rebirth and growth. In addition, Re was reborn when he united with Osiris in the sixth hour of the Amduat. This rebirth was

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essential to the continuation of the universe. Together, they created a cycle of eternal regeneration and embodied a single creative force.\textsuperscript{126} By his association with them, the king was ensured rebirth as well.\textsuperscript{127} Therefore, in this scene filled with rebirth symbolism, Ramesses II is ensured eternal rebirth along with powers over both the celestial and terrestrial realms, this life and the next. This link to the Solar-Osirian unity tied Ramesses II to one of the most powerful royal theologies of his day and charged him with the continuation of the cosmos.

\textbf{Summary}

While there is much more that can be said regarding crowns and their use in Egyptian art, this analysis contributes toward an understanding of the purposes of these specific crowns in the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. They are another way in which the major themes of legitimation, power, rebirth and divinity are manifest.

The Vulture Cap serves as a fitting identification of the role which Hathor and Isis perform as the king’s mother and protector. They are identified as the ideal female counterpart to the king and are, thus, essential to his rebirth. While the Hathor Crown emphasizes the idea of rebirth, it further serves to facilitate the circular flow of the viewer’s “reading” of the image, something that is reflected in the text (see Chapter 3).\textsuperscript{128} Thus, Ramesses II’s rebirth would be continual.

The Blue Crown, as a discernible outlier from the other four, serves as a summary. Just as the text associates the Blue Crown with an overview and summary of the entire image, it acts as


\textsuperscript{128} This cyclical nature to Egyptian art was suggested by Whitney Davis in regard to the Narmer palette. Davis, “Narrativity and the Narmer Palette,” 14-54.
the visual, iconographic summary of the other four pharaonic crowns in the scene. Additionally, the Blue Crown, as a symbol of the divinely appointed king, serves as a fitting introduction to a scene where the king’s rebirth entails being nursed by a goddess, imbuing him with her divine attributes. It emphasizes the king’s divine nature as king of Egypt.\textsuperscript{129}

It has already been identified that the four Hathor-Ramesses II pairings can be divided into two sets of complementary pairs – the Red and White Crown, and the Nemes and Atef Crown. The complementary meanings serve to communicate the extent of the king’s power. The Red and White indicate the king’s power over all of Egypt and thus the mortal world, while the Nemes and Atef suggest the king’s power in both the mortal world and the Netherworld, the celestial and terrestrial. Further, each of the four crowns can be understood to represent a direction – the Red Crown as north (Lower Egypt), the White as south (Upper Egypt), the Atef as west (the land of the dead and the setting sun), and the Nemes as east (the rising sun).

Thereby, Ramesses II is given the entire world to rule by the gods.\textsuperscript{130} I suggest that this is to be understood to represent more than simply the physical land of Egypt or even the world, but also the cosmos. As the Atef and Nemes represent more than the geographical west and east, but also the cosmic realms of sky and Netherworld, this implies the four directions are a means of expressing “everything.” Thus, together they represent the boundlessness and endlessness of Ramesses II’s power as king.

Additionally, the Nemes and Atef represent the Re-Osirian unity, ensuring Ramesses II’s eternal rebirth and power. The interaction of all four crowns indicates the overarching, all-

\textsuperscript{129} This is not to imply here that Ramesses II was considered a “god,” but rather that his rule was sanctioned by the divine and that through his nursing he was given divine attributes, making him more than a mortal man. See the discussion in Chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{130} This geographic idea was first suggested by Goebs. In her explanation of the scene, she suggests attributing each crown with one of the four cardinal directions as I have here. She suggests it demonstrates Ramesses II’s rule over the entirety of Egypt. Goebs, \textit{Egyptian Funerary Literature}, 185.
encompassing power given to Rameses II by the gods. A similar idea is found in a neighboring scene, the “Baptism of Pharaoh,” where the gods pour libations over the king and the king is reborn. It has been suggested that the gods pouring the libations over the king represents the cardinal directions (though two are most often shown for aesthetic reasons), thus demonstrating the king’s dominance over the four cardinal directions.131

Even without reading the text, a viewer understands Rameses II’s divine nature, his all-encompassing power, and his relationship with the gods. By means of these crowns Rameses II not only propagates the idea of being a divine individual, but also ties himself to Egyptian history, distancing himself from the Amarna Age. He legitimizes his rule by his appeal to tradition and ties to many of Egypt’s most popular and long-standing deities, while demonstrating that his power is not bound by time or distance.

131 Corcoran, Portrait Mummies, 59-60; Smith disagrees with the interpretation of the gods as cardinal directions and suggests that they represented aspects of kingship instead. Smith, “Kingship, Water and Ritual,” 336.
Chapter 6
Conclusion

This analysis of the Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II has analyzed the physical context, text, figures, and crowns of the scene. The location of the scene within the landscape of Abydos and the Temple of Seti I places it within a greater context of perpetual rebirth and association with the god Osiris, while its context within the First Hypostyle Hall identifies it as part of the coronation rituals of Ramesses II. The text associated with the scene emphasizes the literal nature of the rebirth being experienced by Ramesses II and its place within the process of rebirth experienced upon coronation. The figures of Isis and Hathor serve to link Ramesses II with Horus and Re while emphasizing Ramesses II’s acceptance by the gods. The Suckling Goddess motif attests to Ramesses II having received divinity and gifts from the gods necessary for his rule. Finally, the variety of crowns used within the scene emphasize the boundlessness and timelessness of the power bestowed upon Ramesses II.

While various conclusions have been drawn throughout this analysis regarding the symbolic and ideological purpose of elements of the scene, considering them together reveals much regarding the overall purpose and ideological meaning of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II. I suggest that the primary purpose of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II was to ensure the continual, eternal rebirth of Ramesses II as a king of Egypt with all the divinity, legitimacy, and power it entailed. The cyclical nature of the text and the crowns worn ensures Ramesses II would continually experience rebirth as king.

Ideologically, the scene suggests that, at the time of Ramesses II, kings were believed to be transformed upon their coronation, taking upon themselves some level of divinity and divine
attributes. This transformation is emphasized by text (especially Ptah’s role gilding Ramesses II’s limbs) along with the Suckling Goddess motif. It also suggests that though Ramesses II has some amount of divinity he had to, for an unknown reason, continually be reborn, repeatedly experience transformation, and recurrently receive dominion, life, beauty, and protection from his Divine Mothers. This parallels the need for kings to hold *Heb Seds* during their reigns to renew their coronation and rebirth. This continual transformation attests to the complex nature of divine kingship discussed by Winnerman.¹

This scene also emphasizes the necessary role played by nursing and the feminine aspect in the rebirth of the king. Reflecting the requirements of mortal birth, the mother and nurse were essential for the king’s rebirth and ascension into the divine realm. The importance of the feminine to the ideology of Ramesses II is attested, as well, by the large size of this four-part nursing scene in comparison with other suckling scenes.

While this analysis has reached various conclusions regarding the purpose of the Suckling Scene of Ramesses II, it has raised further questions. Why is this scene so much larger than other suckling scenes and what is its relationship with these scenes? Are there further connections between this scene and other scenes within the First Hypostyle Hall? Are there parallels to the grouping of these five pharaonic crowns in a single scene? Additional research comparing this scene with other suckling scenes throughout Egyptian history could reveal much regarding this suckling scene’s unique depiction of four nursing goddesses. Further study of the reliefs of the First Hypostyle Hall could provide added understanding as to this scene’s relation to the greater decorative program and why Ramesses II chose to usurp his father’s reliefs in this Hall. Additionally, studies regarding the connection of suckling scenes with the reception of

¹ Winnerman, “Royal Ka,” 5-6.
crowns, statistics regarding which crowns most commonly appear in suckling scenes and which crowns most often appear together, and the comparison of this scene with others containing a variety of crowns could do much to illuminate the interaction between various crowns and the thought process behind their inclusion in scenes. Finally, the significance of the pharaonic crowns, as emphasized by this research, suggests much regarding the potential significance of queenly crowns. Further research on the Vulture Cap and other feminine headdresses could increase Egyptologists’ understanding of Egyptian iconography, queenship, and power.
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Figures

Figure 1: Photograph of the Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II
Photo: Dr. Sameh Iskander
**Figure 2:** Photograph of the Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II Among the Other Scenes of the Southern Wall
Photo: Dr. Sameh Iskander
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Figure 7: Crowns Depicted in the Induction Suckling Scene of Ramesses II (Part 1)
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