

2023

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Recommended Citation

El-Badrawy, Dr. Sahar samir (2023) "THE RELIGIOUS FUNCTION OF OILS IN ANCIENT EGYPT," *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2, Article 6.

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THE RELIGIOUS FUNCTION OF OILS IN ANCIENT EGYPT

BY

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ABSTRACT

[AR]

الوظيفة الدينية للزيوت في مصر القديمة

يكشف البحث عن أهمية «الزيوت السبعة المقدسة» من خلال الطقوس الدينية التي كانت تجري في معابد الآلهة و الطقوس الجنائزية التي كانت تجري للمتوفي لاستدعاء الروح. فقد كانت الزيوت السبعة المقدسة أعلى مكانة من سائر القرابين؛ فقد تم مساواتها بعين حورس المقدسة التي عظم شأنها علي مدار الحضارة المصرية القديمة. كما يبرز البحث العلاقة بين الزيوت المقدسة و الثعبان الملحق بالتاج الملكي و الآلهة و مركب أوزيريس (نشمت). قسم البحث إلي ثلاثة أجزاء: ففي الجزء الأول يتحدث البحث عن الزيوت النباتية الشائعة في مصر القديمة، و ذلك من خلال مشاهد قوائم تخزين الزيوت و كذلك من خلال النصوص التابعة لمشهد «وحدة تخزين الزيوت» في مقبرتي حيسيرع» و «ني-عنخ-خنوم و خنوم – حتب» في سقارة. أما الجزء الثاني من البحث فهو يذكر أسماء «الزيوت السبعة المقدسة» التي عرفت منذ عصر ما قبل الأسرات و العصر العتيق، ثم وثقت هذه الزيوت العظمية المقدسة بوضوح منذ عهد الأسرة الثالثة من خلال مشهد الزيوت لمقبرة «حيسيرع» بسقارة. ثم ذكرت «الزيوت السبعة المقدسة» في المشاهد الجنائزية الخاصة بقوائم القرابين المرتبطة بطقوسة «فتح الفم». كما تعد «نصوص الأهرامات» المصدر الديني الرئيسي لأسماء «الزيوت السبعة المقدسة» ووظيفتها الدينية. يلي ذلك عرض للطقوس الدينية التي تتم من خلال دهن جهة تمثال المعبود في قدس الاقداس لاستدعاء روح الاله أو روح المتوفي. الأمر الثاني هو "حدث تجلي المتوفي" من خلال دهن جهته في طقوسة «فتح الفم» لتحويل روح المتوفي إلي «نور». الأمر الثالث هو مساواة «الزيوت المقدسة» الأساسية مع عين حورس التي عملت ضد قوى الشر والتي تتمثل في المعبود «سيث». يتم تحضير هذه «الزيوت المقدسة» في مختبرات المعابد بتوجيه من الإله تحوت. فقد كانت تعاويذ الإله «تحوت» هي التي تمنح الطاقة الفعالة للزيوت المقدسة المستخدمة في الطقوس الدينية. أما عن الجزء الثالث من البحث، فهو يتحدث عن طقوسة دهن الحية (*Uraeus*) المرتبطة بتاج الملوك والآلهة. إن التمثيل الجداري الأساسي لمعبد دندرة (قاعة حورسماتاوي) الذي يصور «زهرة اللوتس» داخل مركب أوزيريس «نشمت» مع الثعبان السام (*Uraeus*) الخارج من «زهرة اللوتس» والإله الصقر حورس يشير إلى وحدة إلهية لاهوتية يعمل ضد قوى الشر. فهدف البحث إلى الكشف عن الأهمية الدينية «للزيوت المقدسة» على وجه التحديد و العلاقة بينها وبين جنات أوزيريس.

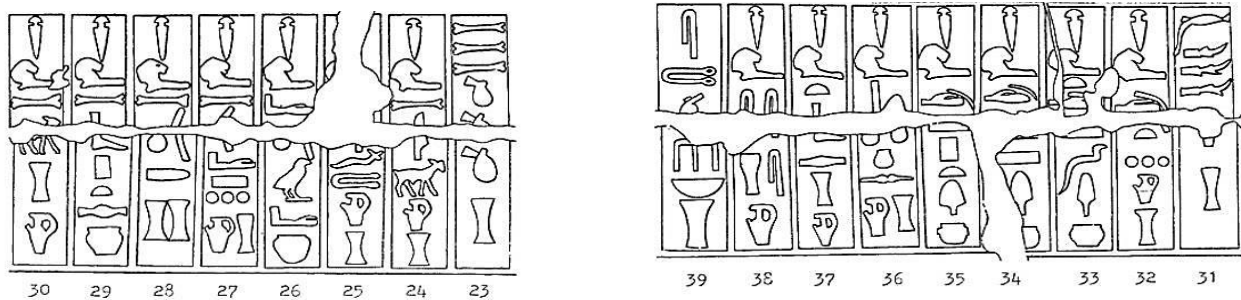
[EN] This paper explores the significance of the «Seven-Sacred-oils» and burning incense in religious and funerary rituals. The sacred Oils were more frequent than all other offerings. They were divine and equated with the «Eye-of-Horus». The first part of this research indicates that common vegetable oils were included in the tomb's oil-storage lists. The second part mentions the names of the Seven Sacred Oils. The Pyramid Texts are the main source of the names of the «Seven-Sacred-Oils» and their religious function. The Offering lists related to the «Opening-of-the-Mouth» ritual are recorded as well. Cult rituals were performed in the temple-sanctuary, which involved anointing the forehead of the cult-image. This ritual was prominent among the religious rituals. A transfiguration of the deceased happened through the anointment of his forehead in the «Opening-of-the-Mouth» ritual. These sacred oils had been prepared in the temple laboratories under the directions of the god Thoth. The spells of Thoth consecrated the sacred oils that were used in religious rituals. The third part of the research clarifies the anointment of the serpent (*Uraeus*) attached to the crown of the kings and gods. A mural in the chamber of (*Hr-Sm3-T3wy*) 't Denderah temple depicts the fragrant «Lotus Bloom» inside the «Neshmet-bark of Osiris», with the poisonous serpent (*Uraeus*) coming out of the «Lotus-flower» and the falcongod Horus. This image indicates a divine unit that functions against the evil powers of Seth's realm. This research aims to reveal the prominent religious importance and divinity of the sacred-oils.

KEYWORDS: Cult-image, *Neshmet* –bark, oils, oil-jars, oil-lists, opening of the mouth, purification scenes, ritual, sacred-oils, *Uraeus*.

I. INTRODUCTION

Names of Vegetable Oils in Storage Lists [Pre-dynastic, Archaic Period and Old Kingdom]

Oil-storage lists are recorded at Saqqara in the 3rd dynasty tomb of Hesire and the 5th dynasty tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, where it is painted on stucco in two pictorial registers on the east wall of the elongated tomb corridor. Professor Hartwig Altenmüller compares the representation of the oil-magazine that the British Egyptologist James Edward Quibell discovered in the *mastaba* of Hesire with the oil-storage representation of the *mastaba* of Niankhkhnum and his brother Khnumhotep. The oil-magazine includes pictures of the funerary household and consists of explanatory inscriptions on ointment jars that were placed in a storage unit [FIGURES 1/A&B] & [FIGURE 2]¹



[FIGURE 1/A]: Oil storage unit in the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep in Saqqara. ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 18, FIG.5.

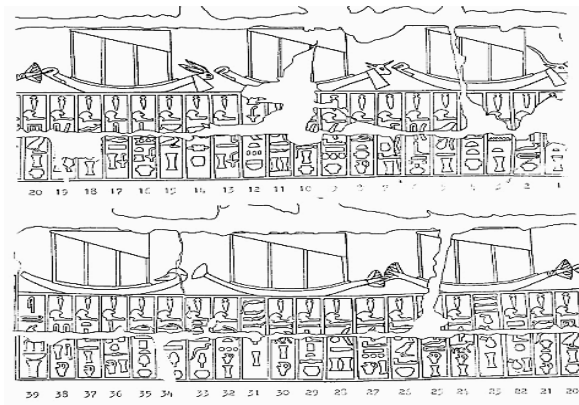
[FIGURE 1/B]: Oil storage unit in the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep in Saqqara, 5th Dynasty. ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 25, FIG.7.

Ointment jars with specific oil are placed in each individual compartment. However, the names of the different oils are often difficult to interpret. The oil list in the tomb of «Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep» in Saqqara (at the foot of the causeway- of Unas Pyramid complex) from the 5th dynasty represents an essential aid for the interpretation of the «Hesire» list. It lists the same oil designations as the «Hesire» list, but does not show the ointment cabinet. The oil-list of «Nianckcknum and Khnumhotep» tomb is located on the west wall of the entrance-hall. It stands 3.60m high. These oil storage lists are independent of pictures of the tomb owner (Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep) and have no relation to offering bearers; they are therefore identified as a «Magazine-List» or «Oil-storage List».

The setting of the number «seven» of oils represented in the scene of the oil-cupboard may have ritualistic or magical-religious significance. A comparable number of seven oils appeared during the 4th dynasty as well: *stj-h3b*; *hknw*; *sft*; *nhnm*; *tw3wt*; *h3tt-š*; *h3tt-thnw*. The names of some of these «Holy Oils» of the Old Kingdom are preserved in the «Oil-Magazine» of Hesire and in the «Oil-List» of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, but not in the later canonical order. The interpretation of the various designations remains unclear². The title preceding the oil-names is *tpj h3t* = «first» or «best»³ anointing-oil [FIGURES 1/ A & B].

¹ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 3, FIG.1.

² FRANKFORT 1929: PL. 9; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 12.



[FIGURE 2]: The «Oil-Magazine» scene in the tomb of *Niankhkhnum* and *Khnumhotep* in Saqqara

Names of Oils in storage magazine

1- *tpj h3t sft*: The oil *sft* is one of the seven holy oils from the Old Kingdom. It is obtained from the resin of the $\zeta\text{š}$ –pine tree (of Lebanon). *Sft* is mentioned in Hesire's magazine in connection with foreign oils [FIGURE 1A, N°.25]. This kind of oil is encountered in medicine alongside *jb(r)*. *Sft* is an oil, a product of «pine tree» ($\zeta\text{š}$), and used as a substance in ointments. It seems that this oil has a special sacredness.

The first documentation of this product dates back to the Second dynasty, precisely to the reign of Khasekhemwy. Since that time, *sft* is mentioned in the ritual texts as oil; its aromatic properties are underlined. It appears mainly in tomb offering lists. Textual sources underline the healing and aromatic properties of this substance. *Sft* is mentioned as one of the «Seven Sacred Oils» in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts. It has been used as a resin as well as oil in the mummification process. Burning *sft*-resin in the place of incense was also practiced during the funerary rites⁴.

Sft in Papyrus Salt

Papyrus Salt clarified the religious meaning of fragrant-oils. The oil *sft* is «from the fallen blood of the god Geb»⁵. Column II of Papyrus reads: «When Horus weeps, the water that falls from his eyes turns into the gum (*ntjw*)⁶ myrrh. Geb lets blood fall from his nose; it turns into **cedar trees**, and (*sft*) -oil. When Shu and Tefnut weep copiously and let their tears fall to the ground, the teardrops change into plants that produce **incense**. When Re weeps a second time, and water falls from his eyes, his tears turn into **flies that build (bees)**, and these working in the flowers of every garden turn into **wax (*mnh*)⁷ and liquid honey**. The sweat that falls from the members of *Ra* when he is weary turns into the **water-flood**, Column III, and the water that flows from him when he is exhausted turns into **papyrus plants (*twff*)** »⁸. «Every herb, plant or substance that was used in magical ceremonies was believed to be of divine origin»⁹.

³ HANNIG 1995: 925.

⁴ KAPIEC 2018: 201f.

⁵ BUDGE 1910-1923: vol.2, N°.3[19-20] (Papyrus Salt 825), Second Series/N°.3[10051], COL.1-3.

⁶ WB 1926: vol.1, 206, 7-14, 207, 1-3 (resin named «myrrh», in the form of «oil», ointment, and incense).

⁷ HANNIG 1995: 340.

⁸ HANNIG 1995: 950.

⁹ BUDGE 1910-1923: vol.2, 19-21.

- 2- *ḏnt*¹⁰: Name of oil known since the Old Kingdom; oil¹¹.
- 3- *tpj ḥꜣt ṯḥnw stj-wr*: «Fragrance oil of the Elite»¹². The «throwing-stick» sign placed between *wr* and *stj* indicates the foreign origin of the oil, which is probably «Libya»¹³. The following contents of ointments and oils in the storage list are titled «Fats of Good Fragrance» *ḏw stjw*.
- 4- *tpj ḥꜣt ḏ jb(r)*: The substance *jb(r)* on which the fragrant fat is based has been documented as an ointment since the archaic period¹⁴ [FIGURE 1/A, N°.24]. This ointment is possibly the same as the later mentioned *ḥꜣtt (nt) ḏ* «Best Cedar-oil»¹⁵, which belongs to the seven holy oils of the Old Kingdom. The basic substances of this pine tree oil were imported directly from Lebanon in the form of red lumps during the New Kingdom. The «throwing-stick» sign in the name indicates «Libya» as the country delivering this «fragrant fat»; this complicates an interpretation of the original land producing this substance. Probably, Libya was an intermediate supplier for this «pine tree oil» ḏ that was originally produced in Lebanon¹⁶. *Jbr* is used for preparing ointments (*wrḥ* and *rdj*), hair remedy, and eye remedy (ophthalmic agent)¹⁷.
- 5- *tpj ḥꜣt ṯḥnw ... mḥ* (destroyed) The fragmented oil name designates a Libyan oil of unknown composition, perhaps from northern Libya.
- 6- *tpj ḥꜣt ḏ ṯḥnw ḏ* «Fat of the pine» [FIGURE 1/A, N°.27]. Although the raw materials «pine tree fats»¹⁸ certainly come from Lebanon, the designation of origin of the ointment indicates that it is a Libyan import. The fat from the pine obtained in Lebanon could have been transshipped and possibly refined in Libya.
- 7- *tpj ḥꜣt ḏ ṯḥnw* «Libyan¹⁹ Oil» was one of the «seven holy oils» known since the Old Kingdom. *ḏ* signifies the product as «fat» for preparing an ointment²⁰ [FIGURE 1/A, N°.28]. *ḏ* is used in wound treatment, in preparation of ointments (*gs*, *wrḥ*, *mrḥ*), in smoking substances (incense), and in Coptic medicine²¹.
- 8- *tpj ḥꜣt stj ṣmꜥj* «Nubian Oil»²²: Oils brought from the 1. Upper-Egyptian Nome (Nubia). *ṣmꜥw* «Oil of the South»²³; *stj ṣmꜥj* «Oil»²⁴; *tꜣ stj* = designation of the 1st Upper Egyptian Nome²⁵.
- 9- *tpj ḥꜣt jb sꜣ*: This name is used several times in the archaic oil lists and refers to a kind of oil that may have been extracted from fruit, leaves or wood of an Upper Egyptian bush

¹⁰ WB 1926: vol.1, 242, 4.

¹¹ HANNIG 1995: 167.

¹² KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 312.

¹³ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 17.

¹⁴ BALCZ 1934: 79; KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 304.

¹⁵ WB 1971: vol.3, 28, 10.

¹⁶ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 19.

¹⁷ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 23f.

¹⁸ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 120.

¹⁹ HANNIG 1995: 1406.

²⁰ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 21.

²¹ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 113ff.

²² KAPLONY 1963: 314; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: FIG.6, N°.3.

²³ HANNIG 1995: 821.

²⁴ HANNIG 1995: 778.

²⁵ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 23, N°.61a.

(small trees)²⁶. Possibly the oil comes from the *jb-s3* plant, which has been used since the Middle Kingdom in the drugs that were officially used in the ointments²⁷. *jb-s3* is generally used in ointments, ointment (*gs*) and (*wrh*), in a powder (*tmt*), in jar (*mt.w*) treatment²⁸.

- 10- *tpj h3t ds šm3j*: It is a kind of oil produced from an unknown Upper Egyptian *d3s*-plant, which is perhaps identical to the *d3s*-plant attested since the Old Kingdom²⁹: Pyr. 2083a: N. has not eaten the *d3s* -plant, ...³⁰. Apparently, the old name was *d3s* and then developed to *d3js* -plant. It has a bitter or offensive taste³¹. *D3s* is an unknown plant, likely with a repulsive taste: it is used as a substance in smoking-incense and ointments³². Papyrus Salt mentioned the divinity of (*d3s*) plant: 'The sweat of *Isis* and *Nephtys* when they are weary becomes (*d3s*) plants; while the blood that falls from Seth rises up in the form of the (*n3r.t*)³³-«tree of the East»³⁴.
- 11-*tpj h3t jdt* «Fragrance-Oil»³⁵. *jd.t* = Fragrance; *jd.t n3r* = «God's Fragrance»³⁶; Oil delivered from Libya [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.32].
- 12-*tpj h3t jdt š(n)dt* = The name should be translated as a «scent of acacia», which is otherwise unknown³⁷ [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.33].
- 13-*tpj h3t jdt d3* = The name is only fully preserved by *Hesire* and is translated as «fragrance oil of the *d3* -tree»³⁸ [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.34].
- 14-*tpj h3t jdt špt* = The otherwise unknown is translated as «the scented oil of the *špt* -tree»³⁹ [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.35].
- 15-*tpj h3t bnw s* = The name of the oil can probably be broken down into a word *bnw* and a word (*s*); it remains an unknown oil-name [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.36]⁴⁰.
- 16- *tpj h3t tb* = Probably denotes a «tree-oil»⁴¹ [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.37].
- 17- *tpj h3t sw* = The otherwise unknown oil-name can be designated as «tree-oil» like previous oil-names⁴² [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.38].
- 18- *tpj h3t stj-hb* = The festival scent [FIGURE 1/B, N^o.39].
- 19- *hknw* = It is one of the «Seven-holy-oils»⁴³; documented since the Pyramid texts. It appears in rituals, offering lists and occasionally elsewhere as one of the seven holy

²⁶ BALCZ 1934: 79; KAPLONY 1963: 304.

²⁷ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 26f; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 23[N^o.14 & N^o.63], Abb.6.

²⁸ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 26f.

²⁹ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 592 ff; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 23, Abb.6, N^o.15a.

³⁰ MERCER 1952: 306 [Utterance 688].

³¹ WB 1931: vol.5, 520, 12.

³² DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 592f.

³³ WB 1928: vol.2, 14, 208; HANNIG 1995: 395.

³⁴ BUDGE 1910-1923: vol.2, Papyrus Salt 825, 3. Papyrus N^o.10051: 19-20.

³⁵ KAPLONY 1963: I: 305; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 25, Abb. 7 [N^o.32].

³⁶ WB 1926: vol.1, 9, 152.

³⁷ KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 305; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 26, Abb. 7 [N^o.33].

³⁸ KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 305f; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 26, Abb.7 [N^o.34].

³⁹ KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 305; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 26, Abb.7 [N^o.35].

⁴⁰ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 26, Abb.7 [N^o.36].

⁴¹ KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 316; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 26, Abb.7 [N^o.37].

⁴² KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 310; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 26, Abb.7 [N^o.38].

⁴³ HANNIG 1995: 565.

oils⁴⁴. *Hknw* was one of the most popular oils throughout ancient Egypt. It is known since the Pre-dynastic–until Coptic times. It was brought from foreign lands for religious rituals and was also used in medicine. *Hknw* is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts, and the Book of the Dead⁴⁵.

II. THE SEVEN SACRED OILS

1- Names of the Seven Sacred Oils

Stj-ḥb Hknw Sft Nḥnm Twꜣt Ḥꜣtt-nt-ꜥš Ḥꜣtt-nt-Ṯḥnw

The «Seven Sacred Oils» is a term used by Egyptologists based upon the archaeological evidence of ancient Egyptian temple inscriptions, tomb paintings, and magical papyri. These seven oils were known collectively as *mrḥt* (*Merhet*). It was a generic expression for vegetable oils used for their consecrated anointing oils. From the archaic period 3200 BC until the final Ptolemaic dynasty, the Egyptians consistently recognized seven primary varieties of *Merhet*, associating each with a jar of a different shape. The oldest of these surviving jars, dated back to pre-dynastic times, were found deep under the Step-Pyramid of Saqqara. Many of them are carved exquisitely with high precision in extremely hard crystalline stone. The jars originally date back to the archaic period but were reused and inscribed with the cartouche of a New Kingdom king. These Seven Sacred Oils were used in funerary rituals, offerings, and embalming the deceased's body.

In addition to the «Seven Sacred Oils» from the Old Kingdom, new names appeared during the New Kingdom under the reign of Hatshepsut: The *ꜥntjw* «myrrh», which was a symbol of the Queen's power and was dedicated to the goddess *Hathor*. Later, in the inscriptions of the temple at Abydos, Sethos I added three additional sacred oils: *bꜣk*, *jbr* and *mdt* oil and *Madjet*-ointment. From the New Kingdom until the Ptolemaic times, there were often three to five additional sacred oils added to the *Merhet* lists in the temples and tombs, quoting from the translations of the lists and recipes in the *Edfu*-laboratory chamber. Recipes of ingredients are recorded in *Edfu*, *Denderah*, and *Esna's* Temple laboratories. Some examples of ointment ingredients are: *Storax* resin or oil; Lotus; White Frankincense; ox-fat; Grape wine; Cinnamon; Tiger nut oil and Juniper berry oil.

• *Sft* usually appears in funerary contexts: in the processional scenes with offering bearers, offering lists or as fragrant oils necessary for the «Opening of the Mouth» Ritual. The sacred fragrant oils are depicted on the walls of the burial chamber, beside the false doors or in the so-called friezes of objects (late Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom). The *Mastaba* of Queen Mersyankh III, wife of king Chephren, in Giza (G. 7530-7540), 4th dynasty represents a list of «Sacred Oils»: *sntr*, *stj-ḥb*, *ḥknw*, *sft*, *twꜣwt*, *ḥꜣtt-ꜥš*, *ḥꜣtt-Ṯḥnw* [FIGURE 7/A]⁴⁶. There is no depiction of *sft* without a vase showing the product itself. It can be assumed that it could have been delivered in red-brownish clumps as the gum of the pine tree (ꜥš), which is represented in the Syrian tribute scene represented in the tomb of *Rekhmire* (TT 100) [FIGURE 3]⁴⁷. There are some travertine vases still containing traces of

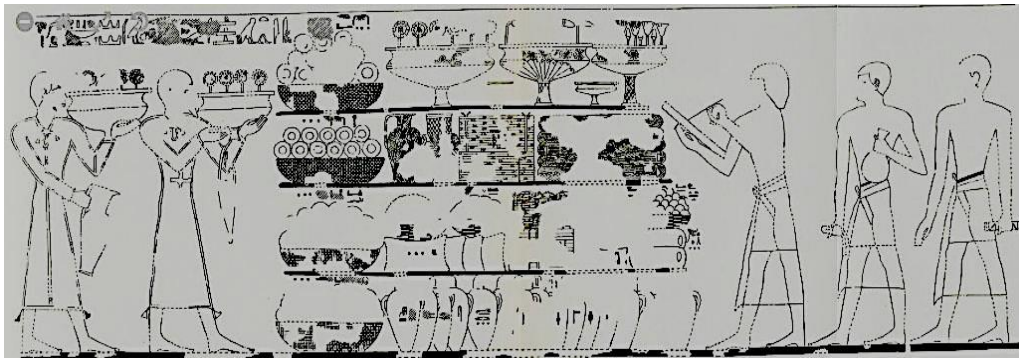
⁴⁴ WB 1971: vol.3: 5-7, 180.

⁴⁵ KAPIEC 2018: 204.

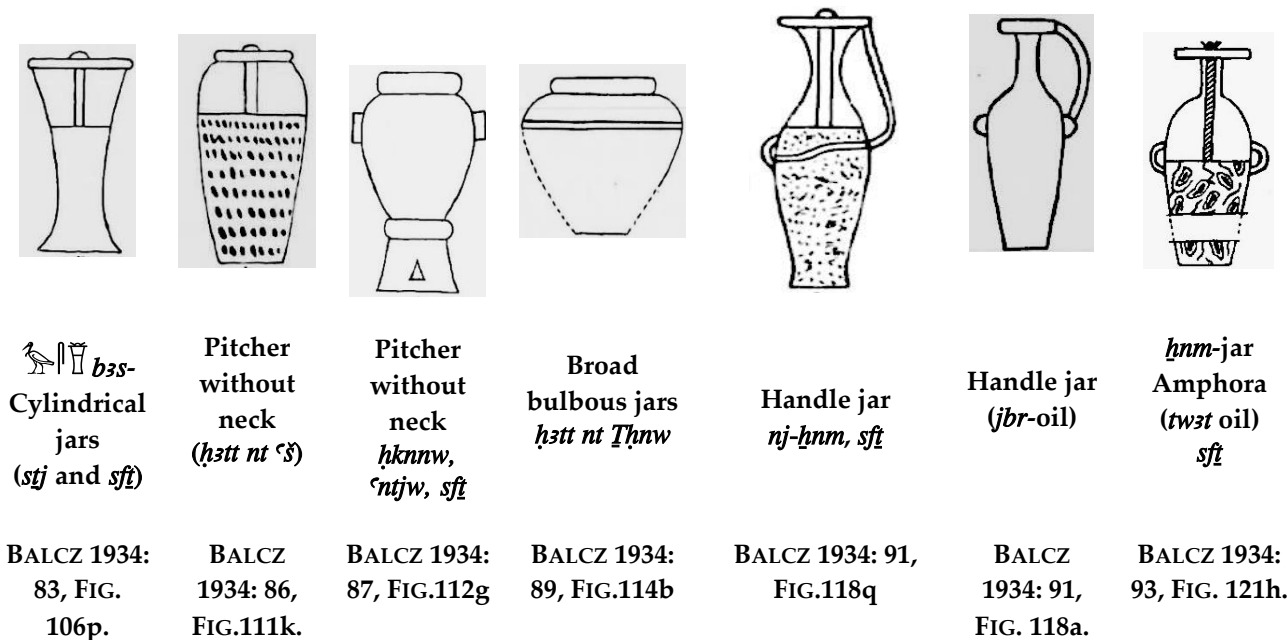
⁴⁶ Offering (West) Room, South Wall (17). DOWS & SIMPSON 1974: 17, PL.10, FIG.9)

⁴⁷The Hall: West Wall, South Half. Syrian- and Cretan merchants bringing tributes: basket of gold rings (one of them is a silver-ring); planks of *mrw*-wood; baskets of best «cedar gum»; *mnj*-amphorae: three jars of

oil or resin. *Sft* is usually represented as being inside the *hnm*- vase, the jar (bottle) with a long neck and vertical handle⁴⁸ [FIGURE 4]⁴⁹. During the early 18th Dynasty, *sft* was mainly represented in the *b3s*- vases, the cylindrical alabaster jars [FIGURE 6/A].



[FIGURE 3]: Tomb of the Vizier Rekhmire in West Thebes (TT 100 – in Sheikh Abd El-Gurna)



[FIGURE 4]: Jars of the «Seven Sacred Oils»

• *Stj-hb* is attested for the first time by the end of the 3rd dynasty and was in use until Ptolemaic times⁵⁰. The meaning of its name is «the scent of the festival». According to the sources from the Edfu temple, it was made as a mixture of different seeds, frankincense and flowers.⁵¹ In the Pyramid Texts, *stj-hb* together with the *md.t*- oil are mentioned in the context of healing the Eye-of-Horus. In the Coffin Texts, it appears in a similar context, as well as in the Book of the Dead. On the west wall of the Southern Room of Amun, in the

olive oil; six of *sntr* incense, four of ointment *sft* of Lebanon, four of wine jars; two ivory ointment holders. DAVIES 1943: vol.2, PL.21.

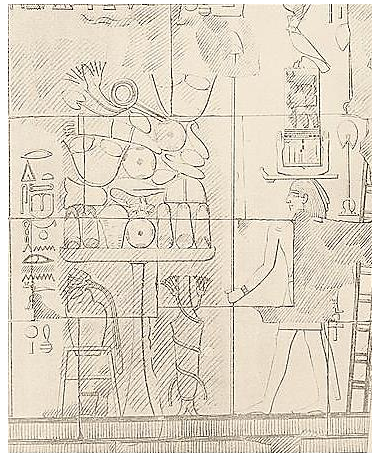
⁴⁸ BALCZ 1934: 91, FIG.118q.

⁴⁹ BALCZ 1934: 79-82.

⁵⁰ KOURA 1999: 157.

⁵¹ KAPIEC 2018: 203.

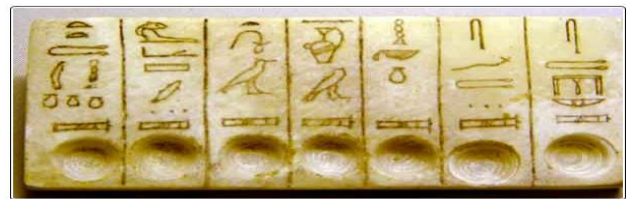
temple of Hatshepsut in Deir El-Bahari, the king (originally Queen) is making an offering to Amun-Kamutef. In front of the offering table are inscriptions mentioning the sacred oils, *stj-hb* and *hknw*. Two jars are placed under the offering table, decorated with lotus flowers, denoting that fragrant oils are contained within [FIGURE 5]⁵².



[FIGURE 5]: Sacred Oils *Sft* and *Hknw* are inscribed at the Offering-table: The Upper Court of Hatshepsut's temple at El-Deir El-Bahari. Chamber at South-West Corner, West Wall



[FIGURE 6/A]: Typical cylindrical alabaster ointment jar with lid from a foundation deposit at Hatshepsut's mortuary temple. Traces of oil-content can be recognized inside the jar. Dimension: Height 13.3 cm. New Kingdom, 18th dynasty, ca. 1479-1458 BC. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gallery 116, Public Domain. Metropolitan Excavations 1923-24. N^o.25.3.44a,b. <http://www.metmuseum.org> 01/12/2022.



[FIGURE 6/B]: A limestone palette with seven depositories is inscribed with the names of the '«Seven Sacred Oils»' from Saqqara, ca. 2500 BC. HAWASS 2002: 19.

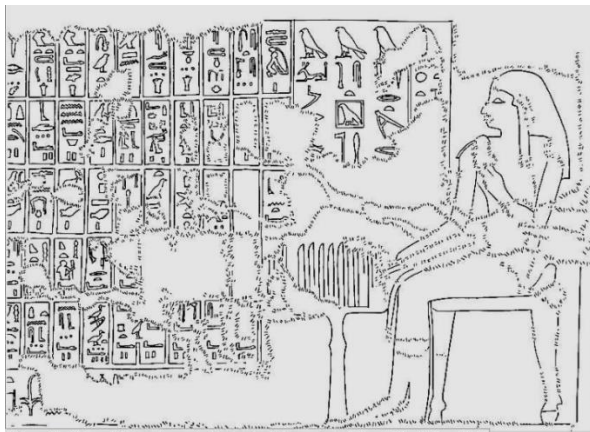
- *Hknw* was one of the most popular oils throughout ancient Egypt. It has been known since Pre-dynastic times, and was attested in all the dynasties up to the Coptic times. *Hknw* is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead. It was also used in medicine.
- *Nhnm*- oil is attested for the first time in the Fifth dynasty. The wooden False door of *Ika*, the royal *w^cb*-priest and chief of the Great House, Old Kingdom, 5th dynasty (before the time of Unas), 2475-2355 BC. His wife *Iymeret* was a priestess of Hathor. In the tablet

⁵² NAVILLE 1906: vol.5, Pl.132.

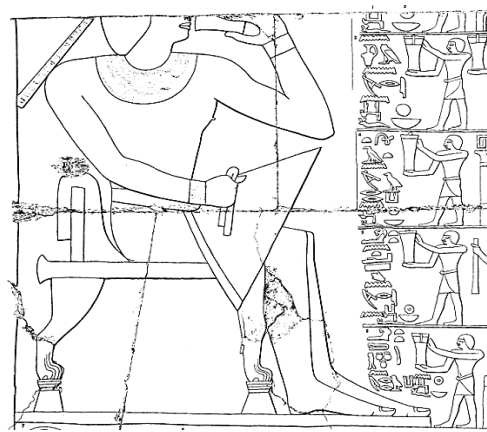
scene above, the square part of the so called «window», Ika and his wife *Iymeret* are seated face to face at an offering table laden with loaves of bread. The inscription above the offering table mentions: *sntr*, *stj-ḥb*, *ḥknw*, *sft*, *nḥnm*⁵³. It is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts and is used in the process of embalming the deceased.

- *Tw3.wt* is attested since the Fourth dynasty. The scene in the *Mastaba* of Queen Mersyankh III in Giza (G. 7530-7540), in the Offering (West) Room, south wall represents the Queen in front of an offering table, loaded with loaves of bread. Above is an inscribed list of offerings including sacred oils: *stj*, *sntr*, *stj-ḥb*, *ḥknw*, *sft*, *tw3.wt* [FIGURE 7/A]⁵⁴.

Ḥ3tt-nt-ꜥš and *Ḥ3tt-ḥnw* appeared in the tomb of the Vizier «Mereruka», which is located to the north of the Pyramid Teti, in Saqqara. King Teti was the first king of the 6th dynasty. The Vizier Kagemni was the predecessor of «Mereruka». A scene in Chamber A12 (East Wall) of the *Mastaba* represents Mereruka drinking from a cup; in front of him, offering bearers are depicted. They are bringing big cylindrical *b3s*-vases with the inscriptions revealing their contents: *nḥnm*, *tw3wt*, *ḥ3tt-nt-ꜥš*, *ḥ3tt-ḥnw* [FIGURE 7/B]⁵⁵.



[FIGURE 7/A]: Sacred Oils List inscribed in the *Mastaba* of queen Mersyankh III in Giza (G. 7530-7540). The first row contains the names of the sacred oils. Old Kingdom, 4th dynasty. Offering (West) Room, South Wall (17). DOWS 1974: 17, PL.10, FIG. 9.



[FIGURE 7/B]: Mereruka holding a fragrant oil-jar. Before him are presented various oils of the «Seven Sacred Oils». Chamber A12. Old Kingdom, 6th dynasty. East Wall, Scene 1. DUELL 1938, vol.2, PL. 117.

2- Sacred Oils and Incense mentioned in the Pyramid Texts

A. Oils Equated the Horus-Eye

Pyramid texts

(2. Ritual of Bodily Restoration of the Deceased, And Offerings, Utterances 12-203):

Pyr. 50a: 'Pouring a libation of oil' is the heading; the following utterances mention «the Eye of Horus», which explains the tight relationship between Horus-Eye (*Udjat*-eye) and ointments.

Pyramid texts: Utterance 72-78

50a. Pouring a libation of oil

50b. Osiris N, I fill your eye for you with ointment; to say four times *Stj-ḥb* oil.

50c. Osiris N, take to you that with which a liquid offering is made *ḥknw* oil.

⁵³ SALEH & SOUROUZIAN 1987: 58.

⁵⁴ DOWS 1974: 17, PL.10, FIG.9.

⁵⁵ DUELL 1938: vol.2, Chamber A 12.

- 51a. Osiris N, take to you the eye of Horus, on account of which he (Seth?) was punished *Sft* oil.
51b. Osiris N, take to you the eye of Horus, which is united with him *Nhnm* oil.
51c. Osiris N, take to you the eye of Horus, with which he brought and carried the gods *twꜣwt* oil.
52a. Oil, Oil, arise, open you; you (the oil) who are on the brow of Horus, arise, open you.
53a. Make him have power over his body (over himself); put his fear in the eyes of all spirits, 53b. who shall look at him, and of everyone who shall hear his name through thee (you) *hꜣt.t ʕš*.
54a. Osiris N, I bring to you the eye of Horus, which he took from thy (your) brow *hꜣt.t thnw*⁵⁶.

Pyramid texts: Utterance 200, 55

- 116a. Homage to thee (you), Incense; greetings to thee, Divine Brother; greetings to thee *mnwr* (incense, cf. *mn-wr*)⁵⁷, in the limbs of Horus.
116b. Be great, my father; propagate thyself (yourself) in thy name of *pꜣd* (incense pellets). Here we can find evidence revealing the close relationship between Horus and incense. Horus was reproduced by incense pellets.
116c. Thine (yours⁵⁸) odor (scent) is for N; thy (your) perfume is for N.
116d. Eye of Horus, thou (you) art (are) higher, thou art greater than N. –incense.

B. Rejoice and Sparkle of the Deceased as Oil Function

Pyramid texts

12. The Ferryman and the Deceased King's Ascension, Utterances 300-311, p. 101:
453a. Put it on thy brow, in this, its name of «Choice oil»,
453b. that thou mayest rejoice in it, in this its name of «Willow tree»⁵⁹,
454a. that though mayest sparkle thereby among the gods, in this its name of «that which sparkles», *thnw.t* – oil.
454b. that thou mayest be pleased with it in this its name of «oil of pleasure», *hkn.w* – oil⁶⁰.

C. Oils Preserve the «Healing Power» of the Deceased

The sacred Pyramid texts clarified the «healing power» of oils.

The dead body has crumbled; its limbs are paralyzed and loose, but the powers of oils are «joining the limbs, connecting the bones, joining the flesh and removing all evil discharges».

D. The Odor of Oils is Sweet Like that of Re

Pyramid texts: 48. Texts of Miscellaneous Contents, Utterances 628-658: Utterance 637, 271

- 1799a. To say: Horus comes; filled [with ointment], he sought his father, Osiris.
1800b. Oh N, I have come to thee also,
1800c. that I may fill thee with the ointment that came forth from the eye of Horus.
1801a. Fill thyself (yourself) with it.
1801b. It will assemble thy bones; it will unite thy limbs;
1801c. it will collect thy (your) flesh; it will let thy evil sweat flow to the ground.
1802a. Take its odor to thee, that thy odor may be sweet like that of Re,
1802b. when he ascends to the horizon, and the gods of the horizon delight in him.
1803a. Oh N, the odor of the eye of Horus is upon thee;
1803b. the gods who follow Osiris delight in thee⁶¹.

⁵⁶ MERCER 1952: 35.

⁵⁷ HANNIG 1995: 339.

⁵⁸ 'Yours' means «The scent of Horus».

⁵⁹ Willow trees (*Salix*) are found primarily on moist soils in cold and temperate regions. Willow Bark Extract benefits: -Provides gentle exfoliation for more radiant skin- Helps reduce acne and excess oil- Helps reduce signs of aging and the appearance of wrinkles- Refines pores and smoother look of skin. Google-Willow Plant.

⁶⁰ MERCER 1952: 101; <https://www.sacred-texts.com-Pyt> Accessed on 09/09/ 2022.

E. Illuminating Function of the Horus-Eye (as above N^o.3 «Rejoice and Sparkle» as Oil Function

Pyramid texts, Utterance 639, 272

1807a. To say [Osiris N], take the eye of Horus, being alive, that thou mayest see with it.

1807b. Osiris N, thy face is opened by the light.

1807c. Osiris N, thy [face is illuminated] as the earth is illuminated.

1808a. Osiris N, I have given the eye of Horus to thee, as Re gives it (the light).

1808b. Osiris N, [put the eye] of Horus to thyself, that thou mayest see with it.

1909a. Osiris N, I have opened thine eye that thou mayest see with it.

1809b. Osiris N [I have given to thee] the ointment⁶².

3- Oil List of the «Opening-of-the-Mouth» Ritual⁶³ (Eberhard Otto)

- | | |
|---|--|
| A. <i>md.t</i> ointment ⁶⁴ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus, the <i>md.t</i> –ointment! |
| B. <i>stj-hb</i> ointment: | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus, the <i>stj hb</i> – ointment! |
| C. <i>hknw</i> ointment: | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus! Your both eyes will be filled with ointment. It should not flow from your face. |
| D. <i>sft</i> – ointment ⁶⁵ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus, under which Seth was punished! |
| E. <i>njhnw</i> (<i>njnm</i>)– ointment ⁶⁶ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus! Unite yourself with the ointment! |
| F. <i>twz.w.t</i> ointment ⁶⁷ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus that is brought to him and in which the gods support him! |
| G. <i>hst.t-š</i> – Best Cedar Oil ⁶⁸ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus! Take (it) on your face (face-visage)! |
| H. <i>hst.t thnw</i> – 'Best Libyan Oil' ⁶⁹ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus! Take (it) to your forehead! |
| I. <i>Ibr</i> – ointment ⁷⁰ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus, under which (under its effect) Seth is kept away, (but) does not move away from you! –Ointment functioning against Seth! |
| J. <i>dt</i> (<i>djt</i>) Olive- tree ⁷¹ : | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus, which is imputed to you, so that you just illuminate [FIGURE 1] ! |
| K. Bag of green Eye-paint: | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus by which you are made safe! |
| L. Bag of black Eye-paint: | Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus by which you are made safe! |

⁶¹ MERCER 1952: 271.

⁶² MERCER 1952: 272.

⁶³ OTTO 1960: 121f.

⁶⁴ BARTA 1963: 129.

⁶⁵ Documented since the Pyramid texts; one of the seven holy oils; appeared in rituals and offering lists; Syrian origin. *WB* 1971: vol.4, 11-16, 118; HANNIG 1995: 699. One of the seven sacred oils; from the pine tree. BARTA 1963: 56 [N^o.5].

⁶⁶ *WB* 1928: vol.2, 319, 1-3 documented since the Pyramid texts; one of the seven sacred oils; in rituals; in offering lists. BARTA 1963: 55; HANNIG 1995: 429.

⁶⁷ *WB* 1931: vol.5: 251, 4-7 (documented since the Pyramid texts; one of the seven sacred oils; ointment in rituals and lists. BARTA 1963: 55; HANNIG 1995: 920.

⁶⁸ MERCER 1952: *Pyr*.53b; BARTA 1963: 55; *WB* 1971: vol.3, 28, 10; HANNIG 1995: 159.

⁶⁹ MERCER 1952: *Pyr*.54a ; BARTA 1963: 55; *WB* 1971: vol.3, 28, 11.

⁷⁰ Kind of precious ointment for body and hair; often used in temple-cults; officially used alone or as part of ointments. *WB* 1926: vol.1, 63, 10-13; HANNIG 1995: 41. A gum resin used in perfumery and for fumigation.

⁷¹ Oil tree documented since the New Kingdom; the fruit of the olive tree. *WB* 1931: vol.5, 618, 4-5; HANNIG 1995: 1016.

M. Ointment! Ointment! It is you who are on the forehead of Horus; you are on the forehead of Horus!

N. You (the ointment) put the terror (fear) of him in the eyes of all the dead who look at him, and likewise of all who hear his name!

Ritual Offering list from the End of the 4th dynasty⁷²

N ^o .1: <i>sꜣt</i>	Pyramid texts; pouring water in purification ritual; offering lists ⁷³ .
N ^o .2: <i>sꜣt snꜣr</i>	Incense; documented since the Pyramid texts; imported from Punt, Nubia and Incense on the flame (<i>sꜣt snꜣr</i>); fresh and dry incense; in form of balls (pellets); u purification rituals; appeared in offering lists; in medication ⁷⁵ .
N ^o .3: <i>stj ḥꜣb</i>	«Festival-scent», described as fragrant oil; in offering- and temple rituals, in offering lists; anointing ⁷⁶ .
N ^o .4: <i>ḥknw</i>	Documented since the Pyramid texts; one of the seven sacred oils; used in rituals, offering lists, and others ⁷⁷ . Unknown drug, used since Pyramid texts until Coptic medicine ⁷⁸ . I suggest that <i>Hekenu</i> is the «Lotus-Oil».
N ^o .5: <i>sft</i>	Documented since the Pyramid texts; one of the seven sacred oils; in rituals and offering lists; imported from Syria; used for anointing and embalming ⁷⁹ .
N ^o . 6: <i>nḥnm</i>	Documented since the Pyramid texts; one of the seven holy oils; used in rituals and offering lists ⁸⁰ .
N ^o .7: <i>twꜣwt</i>	Documented since the Pyramid texts; name of one of the seven sacred oils; used for anointing; offering lists and rituals ⁸¹ .
N ^o .8: <i>ḥꜣtt-ꜥš</i>	«Best Cedar-oil» ⁸² from Lebanon. <i>ḥꜣtt</i> ⁸³ was a general expression for «Best Ointment-oil» which could substitute <i>nḥnm</i> , <i>twꜣwt</i> , <i>ḥꜣtt-ꜥš</i> ꜥnd <i>ḥꜣtt-ḥnw</i> ⁸⁴ .
N ^o .9: <i>ḥꜣtt-ḥnw</i>	Best Libyan-oil ⁸⁵ .

⁷² BARTA 1963: 56.

⁷³ WB 1971: vol.3, 423, 3-4.

⁷⁴ WB 1971: vol.4, 180, 18-22.

⁷⁵ WB. 1971: vol.4, 181, 1-17.

⁷⁶ WB 1971: vol.4, 350, 7-11.

⁷⁷ WB 1971: vol.3, 180, 5-7.

⁷⁸ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 384.

⁷⁹ WB 1971: vol.4, 118, 11-16.

⁸⁰ WB 1928: vol.2, 319, 1-3.

⁸¹ WB 1971: vol.5: 251, 4-7.

⁸² WB 1971: vol.3, 28, 10.

⁸³ Best of ointment oil, best kind; documented since Pyramid texts. WB 1971: vol.3, 28, 8.

⁸⁴ BARTA 1963: 55.

⁸⁵ WB 1971: vol.3, 28, 11.

Common Oil-Names

Essential oil names that are mentioned in Pyramid texts (Pyr. 50a until 54a and others), appeared in offering and ritual lists as well⁸⁶. These oil-names are:

	<i>sft</i>	Oil (one of the seven holy oils); pine tree oil.
	<i>stj-wr</i>	Fragrance of the Greats (oil imported from Libya).
	<i>stj-hb</i>	Festival Fragrance (one of the seven holy oils); nice scent; in offerings; temple-rituals; offering lists; ointment.
	<i>hknw</i>	Oil (possibly lotus extraction); one of the seven holy oils; <i>stj-Hr</i> is earlier expression for (<i>hknw</i>).
	<i>stj-ntr</i>	Fragrant of the God (since Pyr.); also generally: nice fragrant, incense, ointment.
	<i>nhnm</i>	Oil (one of the seven holy oils).
	<i>tw3wt</i>	Oil (one of the seven holy oils).
	<i>h3t.t nt 3s</i>	Best Cedar Oil (<i>3nd 3s</i>) = oil of the pine tree.
	<i>h3t.t nt thnw</i>	Best Libyan Oil.
	<i>stj-sm3j</i>	Upper Egyptian-Oil.

[TABLE 1]: Oils Names© Done by researcher

General terms for oils, fats and incense

	<i>mrht</i>	«Oils, Ointments»; (<i>Fats of mammals or plants, as ointments, ingredients of medications, perfumed ointment, burning oil</i>) ⁸⁷ . Collective word for «Sacred Oils».
	<i>h3tt mrht</i>	«Best oil», «kind finest oil» ⁸⁸ ; «ointments of the first quality» ⁸⁹ .
	<i>3d</i>	«Fats of mammals: beef, goat, ibex and goose»; «burning fat» ⁹⁰ .
	<i>h3t.t nt 3s</i>	«Resin and Oil of Cedar» ⁹¹ .
	<i>3d-3s</i>	«Cedar Oil» in medical terms ⁹² ; Lumps of fat for putting on fire ⁹³ .
	<i>3d(w)</i>	«Ointment» or «Fragrance» ⁹⁴ .
	<i>3d.t</i>	«Oil» (evident since the Old Kingdom) ⁹⁵ .
	<i>3dnt</i>	«Oil» ⁹⁶ .
	<i>stj</i>	«Fragrance-oil» ⁹⁷ .
	<i>stj</i>	(three linen pouches) = «Fragrance» ⁹⁸
	<i>3dw stjw</i>	«Fats of fragrance» ⁹⁹ [FIGURE 2, N°.23].
	<i>h3tt</i>	«Ointment-oil of best quality» ¹⁰⁰ .
	<i>sntr</i>	«Making incense-smoke with burner-device», «Purifying» ¹⁰¹ . «Incense» ¹⁰² . <i>sntr</i> = «putting incense on the flame for getting fragrant smoke»; «smoking a sacred place with incense». In «Purification-ritual»: putting incense on the flame together with pouring water ¹⁰³ . <i>sntr</i> used in smoking substances, in ointments, and eye-remedies ¹⁰⁴ .

4- Oil Jars

The oil and ointment jars that appeared in magazine lists and tribute scenes (*Rekhmire* tomb) are of different types, namely the cylindrical ointment jar (*b3s*-jars), the low bulbous, the broad-shouldered jugs (*mnj*-jars), and pitchers with handle [FIGURE 3]¹⁰⁵.

There were not specific jar types for particular types of oils [FIGURE 4]. A part of the tomb funerary equipment is formed by the well elaborated and skillfully decorated «perfume-jars». The tomb of *Tut-Ankh-Amen* contained a number of alabaster perfume-jars for its religious function¹⁰⁶.

A large number of highly elaborate stone vessels had been excavated in the subterranean galleries beneath Djoser step-pyramid at Saqqara. The vessels are dating

⁸⁶ OTTO 1960: 121-122; KAPLONY 1963: 301-315; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 1-29.

⁸⁷ WB 1928: vol.2, 110, 16; HANNIG 1995: 349.


⁸⁸ WB 1928: vol.2, 111, 6.

back to grave-goods of earlier archaic period tombs. The traces of oils reveal what they contained. Later, Kings of the New Kingdom inscribed their own cartouches on these extraordinary oil-jars [FIGURE 6/A]. Sacred Oils gained significant importance in religious rituals since the 1st dynasty.

The dozens of excavated palettes with seven depositories, which were inscribed with the names of the «Seven Sacred Oils», are evidence for the divinity of these «fragrant-oils» [FIGURE 6/B]. These special offering tablets have been discovered in ancient Egyptian tombs especially those of the 5th and 6th dynasties at Saqqara. Its depressions were repositories for small quantities of the seven oils for fingertips to dip into. The name of each kind of oil is inscribed in hieroglyphs. Tablet dimensions: Length 16.5 cm; Width 7.7 cm; Depth 1.5 cm. The tablet is dating to the Old Kingdom, the beginning of the 6th dynasty.

A wide variety of vases were used to store oils. Lists in tombs since the 2nd dynasty have included a multitude of drugs and the containers in which they were kept. The most detailed sources are the depiction of the ointment cupboard in the tomb of *Niankhnum* and *Khnumhotep* and the incomplete list of oil names mentioned in *Hesire's* tomb, which originally contained about thirty compartments of different ointments and oil.

The Sacred Oils Jars [TABLE 2]

<i>stj-hb</i>	Dominantly a cylindrical vase.  <i>b3s</i> - cylindrical jar ¹⁰⁷ .
<i>hknw</i>	Almost exclusively a cylindrical vase
<i>sft</i>	Almost always the cylindrical vase; the bottle with handle and the amphora.
<i>nj-hnm</i>	Mostly handle-vase, rarely amphora.
<i>tw3t</i>	Different forms; multiple wide jars with eyelets.
<i>h3tt ʕš</i>	Cylindrical vases, bulbous, slender jugs, amphorae, bowels with eyelets
<i>h3tt Ṭhnw</i>	

[TABLE 2]: Sacred Oils Jars ©Done by researcher

⁸⁹ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 7.

⁹⁰ WB 1926: vol.1, 239, 8-13; HANNIG 1995: 165.

⁹¹ WB 1926: vol.1, 228, 6.

⁹² WB 1926: vol.1: 239, 14.

⁹³ WB 1926: vol.1: 239, 17.

⁹⁴ WB 1926: vol.1: 208, 1; KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 301.

⁹⁵ WB 1926: vol.1, 240, 4.

⁹⁶ HANNIG 1995: 167.

⁹⁷ KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 311, WB 1971: vol.4, 349, 5; HANNIG 1995: 783.

⁹⁸ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 7.

⁹⁹ BALCZ 1934: 81; KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 311; ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 7.

¹⁰⁰ WB 1971: vol.3, 28, 8; HANNIG 1995: 508.

¹⁰¹ HANNIG 1995: 725.

¹⁰² HANNIG 1995: 725.

¹⁰³ WB 1971: vol.4, 180, 7-18.

¹⁰⁴ DEINES & GRAPOW 1959: vol.6, 450ff.

¹⁰⁵ ALTENMÜLLER 1976: 4f.

¹⁰⁶ SALEH & SOUROUZIAN 1987: N^o.190.

¹⁰⁷ HANNIG 1995: 242.

III. SECOND PART: SACRED OILS IN RELIGIOUS RITUALS

A. Scenes of Anointing and Censing the Cult-image:

Ointment was an integral part of the temple cult. The countless depictions of cult events on temple walls revealed the following inscription: *jrjt rdjt ḥnk mdt* «Giving the Ointment»¹⁰⁸. In purification rituals, whether of God or the deceased, the anointing is not skipped. Various types of oils are used for them. It may be that when performing the ritual of anointing, the ritual itself was actually limited to the anointments of the head *ḥst.t* and the forehead *ḥst*¹⁰⁹. Only the anointing of the head is shown in the representations of *wrh tp* «anoint the head»¹¹⁰. The actual anointing is also represented with the little finger stretched out to apply the ointment on the cult-image.

- 1- **Scene:** The Temple of Abydos depicts Sethos I anointing the forehead of the cult-image of *Amen-Re* with his small right finger, while the left hand holds the small oil jar [FIGURE 10, left]. This significant ritual invokes the spirit of the deity. The anointing of this specific region awakes all the deceased's senses.
- 2- Another scene shows the kneeling king Sethos I handing over two (*mdt*) ointment-jars to *Re-Harakhty*. According to *Hartwig Altenmüller* the scene of «handing-over ointment» to the deity is substituting the ritual of «anointing god's forehead». Above the scene is an inscribed list of the «Sacred Oils» [FIGURE 8]¹¹¹.
- 3- A third scene depicts king Sethos I handing over two *mdt* –ointment jars with lids to *Amen-Re*. Behind the figure of the king is a large scale inscription of the «*Litany-of-the-Sacred Oils*» [FIGURE 12]. The inscription reads: Chapter (Utterance) to offer *Madjet* Oil: «Give *Madjet* to his father, whom he has endowed with life». The inscription clarified that the *mdt*-oil, which king Sethos I offered, endowed the «breath-of-life» to the cult-image of *Amen-Re*.
- 4- According to *Eberhard Otto*, a ritual scene shows the *Sm*-Priest, followed by *hrj ḥbt* (Lector Priest), touching the statue's mouth with the little finger of his right hand. The spells uttered during the «Mouth-Opening»- ritual: «*Sm, open your mouth, open your eyes with your little finger*»¹¹². A speech of *hrj ḥbt* priest, reads: «*I opened your mouth (wpj), I opened your eyes (wn) with my little finger*»¹¹³. The Tablets containing seven depositories for the «Seven-Sacred-Oils» were used to perform the ritual [FIGURE 6/B]. The names of the sacred oils are inscribed above each depository:
Stj-ḥb, Sft, Ḥknw, Nḥnm, Twst, Ḥstt-nt-š, Ḥstt-nt-Ṛḥnw.
- 5- Another scene¹¹⁴ depicts the *Sm* priest¹¹⁵, followed by *Xrj Hbt* «Chief lector priest»¹¹⁶, touching the mouth of the statue with his right forefinger, while holding a jar filled with *sfr*¹¹⁷ -ointment in his left hand.

¹⁰⁸ HANNIG 1995: 380.

¹⁰⁹ BONNET 2000: 647.

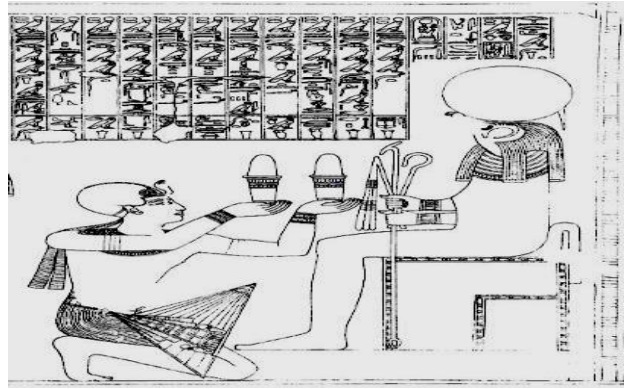
¹¹⁰ HANNIG 1995: 923.

¹¹¹ CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1935: vol.2, PL.18.

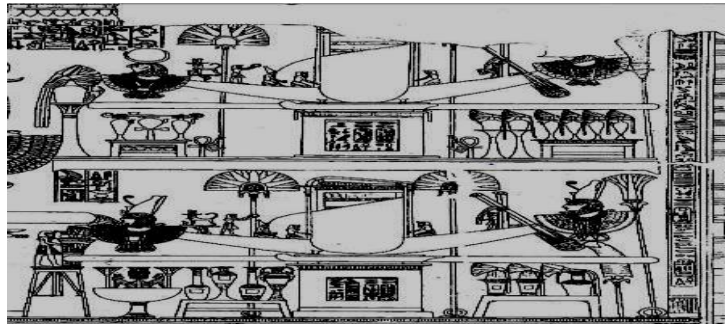
¹¹² OTTO 1960: 93-95, Scene 33 & 65 Scene 14.

¹¹³ OTTO 1960: 95.

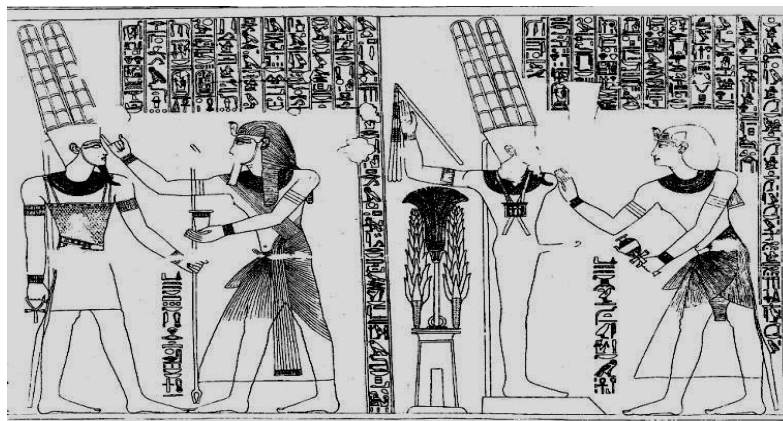
¹¹⁴ OTTO 1960: 120, Scene 55.



[FIGURE 8]: King Sethos I kneeling and handing-over *Madjet* ointment jars to Ra-Harakhti. Above is a list of sacred oils inscribed. Temple of Sethos I at Abydos, Chapel of Re-Harakhti: South Wall, Western Section.



[FIGURE 9]: Sacred Barks of Khonsu and Mut. Beneath the barks are incense burner with *Ankhy* water dispenser, fragrant oil-jars decorated with Lotus-flowers and *Madjet* ointment-jars aligned. Chapel of Amen-Re, south wall, western section. CALVERLEY 1935: vol.2, PL.10.



[FIGURE 10]: Left: King Sethos I anointing Amen-Re image with his pinky right finger and holding ointment-jar with his left. Right: King Sethos I «laying his right hand on the god's image» and holding a water dispenser shaped in the form of *Ankh* life-sign (*Ankhy*-jar) for the performance of «purifying-ritual» by cleansing the cult-image of Amen-Re with fresh water. . A lotus and lettuce are depicted behind the cult-image as well as oil-rich plants. Temple of Sethos I at Abydos: Chapel of Amen-Re, North Wall, Western Section. CALVERLEY 1935: vol. 2, PL.5.

¹¹⁵ Priestly title; documented since the Pyramid texts; in ceremonial festivals and funerary cult. *WB* 1971: vol.4, 119, 3-9. Priest in «Opening of the Mouth» rituals and «Annual Festival-Processions». *HANNIG* 1995: 700

¹¹⁶ *HANNIG* 1995: 640.

¹¹⁷ documented since early OK, one of the anointing oils. *WB* 1971: vol.4, 115, 11; anointing oil. *HANNIG* 1995: 697.



[FIGURE 11]: King Sethos I burning incense on the flame using the burner-arm device. In front of the prow of the sacred bark are Lotus-flower bouquets and Ankh (life-sign) placed. The scene is expressing the ritual of invoking god's spirit using incense and fragrant flowers. Temple of Sethos I at Abydos: Chapel of Amen-Re, South Wall, Western Section. CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1935: vol.2, PL.10.



[FIGURE 12]: King Sethos I offering Madjet-ointment jars, covered by lids, to Amen-Re. The «Litany-of-Madjet Ointment» is inscribed behind the king. Above the whole scene the hieroglyphic sign for sky (*pt*) is depicted. Chapel of Amen-Re, South Wall, Western Section. CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1938, PL.10.

Scene Inscription

- *Sm*, ointment offering, the utterance of the chief lector priest *hrj hbt* .
 - *Sm*, giving the ointment, the green and black eye cosmetics; anointing with light *ibr* – oil¹¹⁸.
 - Prepare ointment for N, the utterance of the chief lector priest *hrj hbt*
 - *Sm*, giving (*wdj*) the ointment for N.
 - Oh, N! I have filled your face with ointment!
 - I have fixed the eye of Horus (*dmj* = put on ointment¹¹⁹), so that your face is whole (safe) within it.
 - Sweet is his fragrance to you in his name «the sweet smelling».
- 6- The Enclosure-wall of King Ramses II in Karnak represented the ritual of «anointing the cult-image with the small right finger»: King Ramses II anoints the image of the lion-

¹¹⁸ Kind of precious ointment for body and hair, often used in temple cult, officially alone or as part of ointments. *WB* 1926: vol.1, 63, 10-13; oil for hair and skin. HANNIG 1995: 41.

¹¹⁹ HANNIG 1995: 979.

headed goddess «*Sakhmet*» with *stj-ḥb* (festival-scent)¹²⁰. Ramses II is holding the anointment jar with his left hand and anointing with his right; between both figures a group of oil jars is represented. The alignment of jars is shown on the upper shelf of the oil jars stand, and is identified by Lotus flower bouquets. Meanwhile, the lower shelf shows (*nmst*-jars), a pouring device used for the purification ritual. The scene is represented on the south-wall of the enclosure¹²¹.

7- Censing with burner-arm *shṭp*¹²²

- A. Utterance of the Chief-lector-priest (*hrj-ḥbt*); *Sm*-priest, taking the incense-burner-arm (*shṭp*); Purifying N, four times; Incense on the flame.
- B. Pure is Horus! He deifies him (the deceased) with the Eye-of-Horus. Purify yourself, N! Cense yourself with the Eye-of-Horus.

8- Prophet *ḥm-nṯr* with incense-burner in front of the cult-image¹²³:

- A. Utterance of the Chief-lector-priest; *Sm*-priest circulate N four times with incense on the flame.
- B. Oh, N! Take yourself the Eye-of-Horus! Its scent comes to you!

B. Purification Scenes

The purification ritual forms a group of rituals that includes the «anointment of the cult-image», «censing», «Natron-balls», and «purifying with water dispenser». The anointment and censing are rituals involved in «purification-rituals». These rituals are building the main cult performance in the temple sanctuary.

1. Scene: A representation in the temple of Sethos I in Abydos, shows the king purifying the cult-image of Amen-Re: he is holding an *Ankh*-shaped liquid-jar (decorated by Lotus-bloom motif) with his left hand while touching the cult image with his right [FIGURE 10, right]. This scene is representing one of the purification-rituals called «Purifying with water dispenser»¹²⁴. The *Ankh*-shaped jar probably contains (*ḥknw*) «fragrant-oil», which I suggested to be a Lotus-Extraction.
2. Typical Purification Ritual Scene: King Sethos I is holding a water dispenser with his right and an incense burner-arm *shṭp*¹²⁵ with his left in front of the sacred barks of *Amen-Re*, *Mut* and *Khons* [FIGURE 14]¹²⁶. The ritual of «burning incense on the flame» with the *shṭp* burner arm is depicted several times in the temple cult. *Eberhard Otto* explained that the name of the burner device (*s-ḥtp*) means (causative) to «Satisfy», to «Gratify»¹²⁷. I suggest it means that the ritual of burning incense, four times around the cult image, frees the image-owner from any evil spirit, which pleases and satisfies the deceased. The inscriptions accompanying the burning incense scene with the *shṭp* device, reads: «the utterance of *hrj ḥbt* priest; *Sm*-priest, taking the *shṭp*-burner arm; cleaning the N,

¹²⁰ KAPLONY 1963: vol.1, 312.

¹²¹ HELCK 1968: 21, PL.25 &18 [PL.19].

¹²² OTTO 1960: 130, Scene 58.

¹²³ OTTO 1960: 131, Scene 59A.

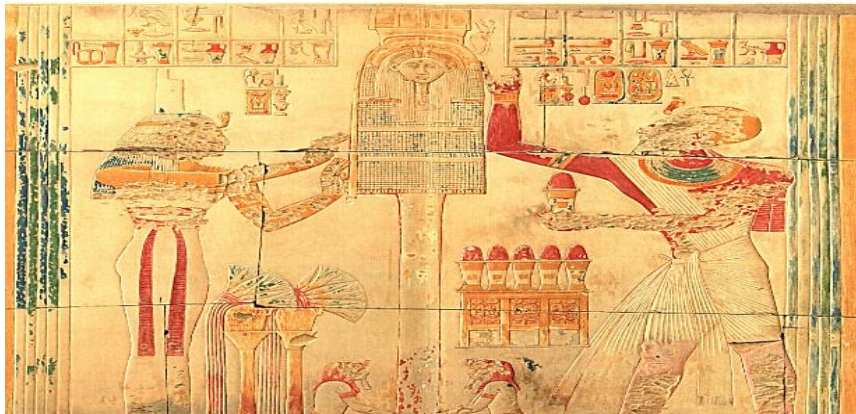
¹²⁴ ALTENMÜLLER 1969: 23, N^o.23.

¹²⁵ HANNIG 1995: 738.

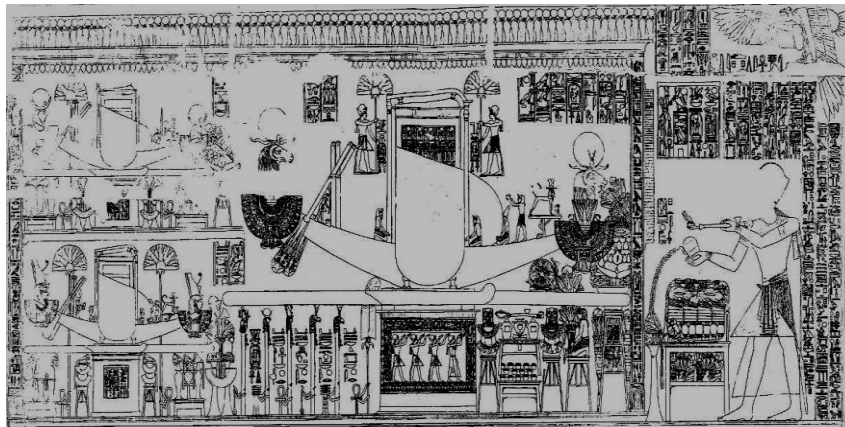
¹²⁶ CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1938: vol.3, PL.6.

¹²⁷ OTTO 1960: 131.

four times; incense on the flame. Pure is Horus! He deifies him with the Eye-of-Horus. Purify yourself, N. Cense yourself with the Eye of Horus»¹²⁸.



[FIGURE 13]: King Sethos I anointing the serpent (*Uraeus*) attached to the Crown of the Osiris-Fetish of Abydos with his pinky right finger and holding the *Madjet* ointment jar with his left. Above the head of Sethos I are names of sacred oils inscribed. Temple of Sethos I at Abydos, Inner Osiris Hall: West Wall, First Section from North.



[FIGURE 14]: King Sethos I performing a «purification-ritual» in front of the barks-chapel Amen-Re, Mut and Khonsu. Chapel of Amen-Re, North Wall, Western Section. Temple of Sethos I in Abydos. CALVERLEY 1935: vol.2, PL.5.

3. Further scene depicts censuring in front of the cult-image: The priest *hm ntr* holds a burner arm in front of the cult image: «utterance of the lector priest; *Sm*-priest, circulate around N four times with incense on the flame. Oh, N! Take the Eye of Horus! His scent comes to you»¹²⁹.
4. A scene identical to scene N^o.2 (above), is in the temple of Sethos I in Abydos. In the Chapel of Amen-Re, Sethos I is performing a «purification-ritual». The king holds the incense burner-arm with his left while pouring water with *nmst*-jar with his right [FIGURE 14]¹³⁰. It is interesting to see that the flowing water is refreshing the Lotus flowers placed on the offering stand (possibly *h.t.*: a pool for accumulating the flowing water¹³¹). A servant is depicted on the offering table and approaching with a jar bearing conical-shaped incense 𓆎 *t-hq* «incense in conical shape»¹³². The accompanied inscription

¹²⁸ OTTO 1960: 130 , scene 58.

¹²⁹ OTTO 1960: 131, scene 59A.

¹³⁰ CALVERLEY & GARDINER: vol.2, PL.5.

¹³¹ Accumulator of the flowing water. HANNIG 1995: 157.

¹³² HANNIG 1995: 912.

clarifies the ritual as ḥsj «pouring-water»; the *Heset*-jar (*ḥst*) represents a specific jar-shape for pouring water¹³³ during purification rituals. The *ḥs.t* jar is made from metal and has been documented since the Old Kingdom¹³⁴. The Lotus-flowers accumulated beneath the prow of *Amen-Re* bark invoke its spiritual life-breath, moreover freeing its way from any evil power [FIGURE 8]. Another significant religious feature in this specific image will be clarified below. Beneath the carrying bars of the bark of *Amen-Re* are *nmst*- and ḥny jars aligned, topped by an incense burner-arm [FIGURE 14]. The burner-arm above the jars indicates that they contain water needed for «purification-ritual», because purification ritual scenes include pouring water and burning incense. Beneath the prow of *Khons*-bark, *ḥst* - and ḥny jars are aligned; the incense burner-arm is placed above the jars to indicate that they contain the water required for the «purification-ritual» [FIGURE 9]. Beneath the bow of *Mut*-bark are *Ankhy*- and *Hsj*- Jars with Lotus-bouquets [FIGURE 9]. In front of the prow of *Khons*-bark a Lotus-flower bouquet and a *Nemset*-water-jar are placed on a stand for the performance of the «purification ritual» aiming to defend the bark against evil powers. [FIGURE 9]. Beneath the bark of *Khonsu* are incense burner-arm and *Ankhy* water-disenser placed; oil jars decorated with Lotus flowers. Beneath the bark of *Mut* are many *Madjet* ointment jars and precious perfumes aligned.

Anointing the cult-image, handing-over oils, libation, censuring, *Natron*-balls and pouring water form a group of rituals under the title of 'Purification-ritual'. A similar scene is represented in the cult-chapel of *Re-Harakhty*¹³⁵.

Hartwig Altenmüller clarified these scenes as «Purification-rituals», which were performed with a water dispenser and incense on the flame. Scenes depicting oil-offerings are mostly represented on the south wall of cult-chapels in the temple of *Sethos I* at *Abydos*¹³⁶. The images of the gods are not only anointed, but they also receive ointments as gifts.

C. Religious Spells of Thoth for Ointments Preparation

According to instructions that *Thoth* himself gave, the ointments are prepared under the utterance of holy spells, which explains why they are full of secret powers. The oil heals and soothes wounds and damages. Oil and ointments bear divine power, and are equated with the *Udjat*-Eye of *Horus*. *Thoth* bears the epithet «Lord of the Divine Words» which signifies him as the «Lordship over the formulae of ritual and cult». Therefore, *Thoth* superintended the ritual ceremony. *Thoth* was the source of all such mysterious power contained in charms (fascinating formulae) and spells, and all invocations of the gods.

Thoth is «who has given words and script»¹³⁷. The various oils used in divine worship were prepared according to the directions of *Thoth*. Even the incense was carefully prepared according to what we are told in the Temple of *Sethos I* in *Abydos*: «oil prepared according to the writings of *Thoth* which are in the library»¹³⁸. I suggest that the

¹³³ HANNIG 1995: 557.

¹³⁴ WB 1971: vol.3, 154, 1.

¹³⁵ CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1935: vol.2, Pl. 15.

¹³⁶ ALTENMÜLLER 1969: 22 [FIG.2], 23 [Nos.20, 23, 33].

¹³⁷ BOYLAN 1922: 95.

¹³⁸ BOYLAN 1922: 96.

secret spells were kept in the library attached to the temples, notably Horus-temple in *Edfu* and Hathor temple in *Denderah*; this kind of library is mentioned as «*Scriptorium*» located in the «House-of-Life», a building attached to the temple for «Life-regeneration» rituals. The laboratories, the beautiful place of «Kyphi» and «Wine» existed in the following temples: *Esna*, *Edfu*, *Denderah*, *Kom Ombo*, Isis temple in *Philae*, and the temple of *Athribis*.

D. Sacred Oils equated the Horus-Eye

«Amen-Re is the oil-fragrance of the Eye-of-Horus»¹³⁹. Amen-Re was an overriding sovereignty, which let us understand that the «Eye-of-Horus» is divine and «Fragrant-Oils» are divine as well. «The oil of Horus unites its perfume with you». It means that the anointment-ritual endows a divine charm to the anointed image (through anointing the forehead) or person (anointment of the serpent at the king's crown). The anointed one shines; those who meet him are dazzled by the radiance emanating from his face. «The oil puts terror before him in the eyes of all spirits who see him or hear his name»¹⁴⁰ (Pyramid texts: 5). It opens the way to domination and power. This idea of triumph, power and domination let us equate the «ointments» with the «Eye-of-Horus». Hermann Junker explained the *Uraeus* at the forehead of Horus and Kings as «Power», which is equivalent to the power and function of «ointment»¹⁴¹. *Alexander Moret* suggests that the idea of «Triumph» and «Rise-to-Reign» of Horus also reflects the function of «ointment». «God *Geb* gives you his inheritance; you triumph over your enemies, you seize the crown before the gods on earth, *Upuaut* opens the way for your adversaries (enemies) ». «The brilliant oil of Horus burns for you, those who follow Seth».¹⁴² This event is repeated to the anointed: «Come, take with it (the ointment) the crown according to the command of Horus himself»¹⁴³. The oil gives power, so it creates pleasure. The oil-scent pleases not only people, but gods too; he bears the fragrance of the sun god¹⁴⁴. Ointment and incense are considered as the «discharge-of-Ra». Horus-Eye means God's Eye, while ointments and incense are considered the discharge of Re.

E. The Scale of Anointing and Censing in Cult-image Rituals performed in the Cult-Chamber

It is necessary to know the scale of anointing- and censing rituals among the whole ritual order inside the sanctuary to demonstrate its importance. The ritual order of the gods' chapels in Abydos can be considered as a model for most rituals performed generally in the sanctuary. The course of the rituals, which are depicted in the internal images of the chapels of the gods in Abydos, are similar to the course of the rituals performed to the cult-image mentioned in Berlin-Papyri. The images could be considered as a template for rituals performed to the cult-image in the sanctuary:

¹³⁹ MORET 1902: 76f; BONNET 2000: 648.

¹⁴⁰ MORET 1902: 198.

¹⁴¹ JUNKER 1917: 141; BONNET 2000: 648.

¹⁴² BONNET 2000: 648; MORET 1902: 193 (note 4).

¹⁴³ CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1935: vol.2, PLS.5, 15.

¹⁴⁴ MORET 1902: 76; CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1935: vol.2, PL.10; MERCER 1952: *Pyr.* 1802.

**A) North Wall of the Cult-Chamber in the temple of Sethos I in Abydos: North Wall
Scenes depict rituals preparing for the major ritual-moments on the South Wall.**

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1-Entering the region of the sanctuary. | 2- Breaking the clay door-seal. | 3-Pulling out the door-latch. |
| 4- Opening of the two door-wings. | 5- Look at the god. | 6-Kissing the ground and prostrating. |
| 7-Praising the God (four times) and «censing» while entering the chamber | 8-Censing with «Censing-device». | 9-Praising the forehead serpent (four times). |
| 10- Censing the forehead serpent. | 11-Entering the «Naos» (<i>hm</i>) ¹⁴⁵ ;
Entering the Sanctuary (<i>st-wrt</i>). | 12-Sweeping out the «Naos» (<i>pr-wr</i>). |
| 13-Dissolving the ointment (referring to the previous performed rituals). | 14- Loosening the robe | 15-Laying the hands on the god's image. |
| 16-Purifying with incense on the flame and walk around four times. | 17-Purifying with four balls (pellets) of <i>bd</i> -Natron. | 18- Purifying with incense on the flame. |
| 19-Purifying with four balls of Upper-Egyptian Natron from <i>El-Kab</i> . | | |

B) South Wall of the Cult-Chamber in the temple of Sethos I in Abydos

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 20-Purifying with four balls of Lower Egyptian Natron from <i>Wadi Natrun</i> . | 21-Purifying with a water dispenser and with Incense. | 22- Pouring Sand |
| 23- Purifying with incense on the flame and walk around four times. | 24-Covering the body of the cult image with <i>nms</i> –fabric ¹⁴⁶ . | 25- Putting on the white robe. |
| 26- Putting on the green robe. | 27- Putting on the red robe. | 28- Handing over the (<i>wsh</i>)-collar and the (<i>h3drt</i>)-pectoral. |
| 29-Handing over the «Strip of Fabric» (<i>sšpt</i>) ¹⁴⁷ and the «tassel» (<i>m^cnht</i>) ¹⁴⁸ . | 30-Presenting «Ruling-Staff» (<i>w3s</i>), «Scepter» (<i>hk3</i>), and «Shepherd Scourge» (<i>nh3h3</i>). | 31- Handing over «Oils». |
| 33-Covering the cult image with the large robe. | 34- Wiping the track-prints with (<i>hdn</i>) – fragrance brushwood and closing the door ¹⁴⁹ . | |

Summary of Cult-Image Rituals

It is noteworthy that before the actual coronation, which is the climax of the ritual, the offering of the holy oils and the anointing take place [Scene 31]. After all these ceremonies, the cult image is crowned and covered with a large cloak (32-33). Finally, the king performing the rituals runs a perfumed fan through the chamber [Scene 34]. The fragrance emanating from the

¹⁴⁵ HANNIG 1995: 599.

¹⁴⁶ *šm^cr h^cw m nms* «Clothing the body with *nms* –fabric» (a scene in the cult-image rituals). HANNIG 1995: 414.

¹⁴⁷ Cloth or dress of light color. HANNIG 1995: 763.

¹⁴⁸ As a counterweight on the back for a neck collar worn on the chest); (*rdt sšpt m^cnht*) = «Presenting the strip of cloth and tassel is a scene in the cult-image ritual». HANNIG 1995: 328.

¹⁴⁹ *Jnt rd m hdn jnt 3* = «Wiping the track with brushwood and close the door» (a scene in cult-image ritual). ALTENMÜLLER 1969: 23, N^o.36; HANNIG 1995: 500, (*hdn*) is a plant from Nubia.

*fan forces the god's enemies (evil spirits) to be driven out of the room, but it does not hinder the freedom of movement of the god incarnated in the cult-image. Then the chamber is closed.*¹⁵⁰

F. The Role of the Sacred Oils to invoke the Spirit «Ba»'

The rituals of the «Opening of the Mouth» magically bestows the spiritual «Life-Breath» and the ability to «speak» and «eat» upon either the statue of the deity or the mummified body (spirit) of the deceased. The order of rituals for the transfiguration of the spirit:

1-During the «Opening-of-the-Mouth» ritual the *Sm*-priest was accompanied by the »chief-lector-priest« who uttered the sacred texts during the performance of the rituals. The scenes representing the performance of '«Opening-of-the-Mouth» rituals using the *psš-ḳf*¹⁵¹ device document the role of the «Fragrant-Oils» and fresh «Lotus flowers» during the rituals. The ritual was intended to enable either the deceased or the temple statue to breathe through the fragrances of fresh lotus flowers, incense, and anointing oils, as well as to nourish him with food and drinks from the consecrated offerings on the temple altar or in the tomb. A common scene represents the mummified deceased wearing an «*mdt* -ointment cone» with a fresh lotus bloom attached to his head-band. The *Sm*-priest wearing the leopard skin is in attendance while the chief-lector priest utters the spells. Their fragrances were believed to invoke the deity's- or deceased's spirit.

2-Presentation of the offering altar accumulated with food.

3-*Ankh-ifying* Ritual: After invoking the spiritual life-breath with fragrant ointment and the *psš-ḳf* the ritual of *ankhi-fying* follows: *The priest holds the «Life-sign» symbol ḥnh (Ankh) at the nose or mouth of the deity, or deceased.* This action signifies the spiritual breath of life in his earthly sanctuary, or of the deceased in his tomb. In this way, they are «*ankh-ified*» (according to Pyramid texts) and transfigured into an effective being, the «Light», the *šh* (*Akh*). The (*Akh*) represented the deceased, who was transfigured to «Light». This «*Ankh-ified*» ritual is clearly expressed in the scene of the sacred bark of Amen-Re [FIGURE 11]: King Sethos I is shown burning incense on the flame of the burner-arm in front of the chapel of the sacred bark of Amen-Re. A lotus-flower bouquet is placed at the nose of the ram-headed prow, which is determined by «*Ankh*» life-sign.

G. Ointment Function Against the Evil Power of Seth

The «Sacred-Oils» endow the deceased's safety against any of Seth's evil effects. The inscription of the «Opening of the Mouth» ritual, reads: *Sm* priest and Chief lector priest utterance: «*I fill your eyes with ointment; I fill your head with ointment, which comes from the eye of Horus, in that his name, ointment. I put them on your forehead!*» I suggest that the ointment that comes from the «Eye of Horus», the God's Eye, let us understand that the «Sacred-Oils» are God's gifts. The *Udjat*-eye and the ointment both function against Seth and his followers. The scene's inscription continues:

«The bright eye of Horus, it cooks the entourage (followers) of Seth for you. (But) God Geb gives you his inheritance! You are safe from your enemies. You have seized the wrt (the Uraeus –serpent at the forehead

¹⁵⁰ ALTENMÜLLER 1969: 23-24.

¹⁵¹ HANNIG 1995: 294.

of the king's crown) before the heavenly gods and the earthly humans. Upuaut, he opens the way for you against all your enemies. The Eye of Horus is kind to you! I put it in front of you and behind you (probably incense)! The eye of Horus on the forehead of N (probably ointment)! Four- times»¹⁵².

The lotus flower incarnated in god Nefertem is considered as «Giver-of-Fragrance». God Nefertem, the lord of the sacred oils, is merging itself with *Hr-Hknw*, the warrior falcon god, who triumphed against Seth. The Lotus flower that closes its petals at night and withdraws under water to re-appear in the morning from the primeval ocean «Nun» resembles the sun-god, who emerges from the primeval ocean «Nun» every morning. The lotus-flower was a symbol of the rising sun. The sun drives out the darkness and thus preserves itself as an enemy of Seth, in whom they are embodied. The combative Horus nature of the victorious god of light, «Re» remains stronger than his role as the «son of Isis». Horus appeared to join other warlike falcon gods such as Month, Sopdu, Harmerti, and Hor Hekenu. Nefertem showed particularly close association with these gods under the formula Nefertem-Hor-Hekenu.

Thus friendly and violent features are united in «Nefertem». He is the light child of the sun and a strong lion who destroys enemies. The bringer of light fights the forces of darkness. Even his role as a dispenser of fragrance conforms the same line, because ointments and oils keep evil away¹⁵³.

The last scene in the cult-image rituals is cleaning the cult-chamber against any evil thing: «The king runs a perfumed fan through the chamber» [Scene 34]. The fragrance emanating from the fan drives the god's enemies out of the room, but it does not hinder the freedom of movement of the god incarnated in the cult-image. Then the chamber is closed¹⁵⁴.

IV. THIRD PART: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SACRED OILS, URAEUS, HORUS EYE AND NESHMET-BARK OF OSIRIS

A. The *Neshmet* Bark-Lotus Bloom-Serpent and Horus as Theological Unit

The oil-magazine list depicted in the tomb of *Niankhkhnum* and *Khnumhotep* in Saqqara represented six ships symbolizing the six groups of listed oils [FIGURE 2]. Two ships have lotus bloom at the bow and stern, identifying the groups of precious imported oils. A similar representation in the Great Temple of Hathor in *Denderah* (Chamber of *Hr-Sm3-T3wy*) depicts a canoe with its bow shaped as a lotus bloom [FIGURES 2 & 15]. Inside the bark is a lotus-bloom placed in its center, with a serpent coming out of the flower; behind is the falcon god Horus [FIGURE 15]¹⁵⁵. In front of this group, the king offers a small ship with a group of falcons perched on standards. The parallel scene represents a specific festival date which is recorded at the back of the falcon Horus. This canoe probably represents the Sacred «Bark-of-Osiris» (*nšm.t*) in Abydos¹⁵⁶. It was the ship in which the

¹⁵² OTTO 1960: 123.









¹⁵³ BONNET 2000: 509-510.

¹⁵⁴ ALTENMÜLLER 1969: 24.

¹⁵⁵ MARIETTE 1870: vol.2, PL.49.

¹⁵⁶ WB 1928: vol.2, 339, 15, 17.

deceased wished to navigate to Osiris-Paradise (*Peker*), [FIGURE 17]¹⁵⁷. The bark was considered «the mistress of eternity» (*nšmt nbt dt*)¹⁵⁸. This specific ship appeared in many Theban Tombs with inscriptions revealing the deceased's wishes to join Osiris in his Paradise (*Peker*) and to become a member of his entourage in the afterlife¹⁵⁹. The «*Neshmet*-bark» scene with related garden pictures differs from the «Journey to Abydos» images, which depict «Sailing-Ships» with large crews rather than the theological canoe with the tomb owner and his wife alone¹⁶⁰.

The word  *Pkr* means «the district of Osiris' Tomb». It is the district where a certain festival has been celebrated concerning the heavenly «ascension of Osiris»¹⁶¹. According to *Heinrich Schäfer's* hypothesis, the word *pkr* denoted a species of tree. The place name is therefore to be understood as «the one with the *Peker* trees»¹⁶². On the other hand, there is a word *pkr*, which means the «fragrant substance in *Kyphi* preparation»,  or  ¹⁶³.    ¹⁶⁴ (*Pkr n mrht*), likely means the «precious fragrant substance» (*Peker*) of the Seven Sacred oils; this was mentioned generally as «*Merhet*». The serpent determinative of the word *Peker* resembles the *Uraeus*  at the forehead of the kings and deities; both were divine features. Otherwise, we have to remember that the word (*Peker*) was mentioned in funerary prayers included in private tombs, when the tomb owner wishes to join Osiris in his Paradise *Peker*. A stele in Cairo Museum CG 20561 is inscribed with offering formulae and then subsequently a «festival-list» including the festival name  *dz.t ntr r pkr* «Navigation of the God to *Peker*»¹⁶⁵. An inscription explaining the festival of Osiris, reads: «I held a procession of *Upuaut* when he went to avenge his father. I have rejected the rebels against the *Neshmet*-bark. I have crushed the enemies of Osiris. I organized the great procession following the god in his steps. I let the ship of God sail while *Thoth* regulated the voyage»¹⁶⁶. This inscription indicates «the ascension of the god Osiris to the heavenly spheres», while *Thoth* the journey across the sky regulated¹⁶⁷.

¹⁵⁷ WILKINSON 1983. www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/557808. Accessed on 14/10/2022.

¹⁵⁸ HANNIG 1995: 435.

¹⁵⁹ ASSMANN 2011: 108, FIG.128 & 111 , FIG.131.

¹⁶⁰ SHEDID 1994: 69 [PL.114].

¹⁶¹ WB 1926: vol.1, 561, 6.

¹⁶² SCHÄFER 1904: 107-110.

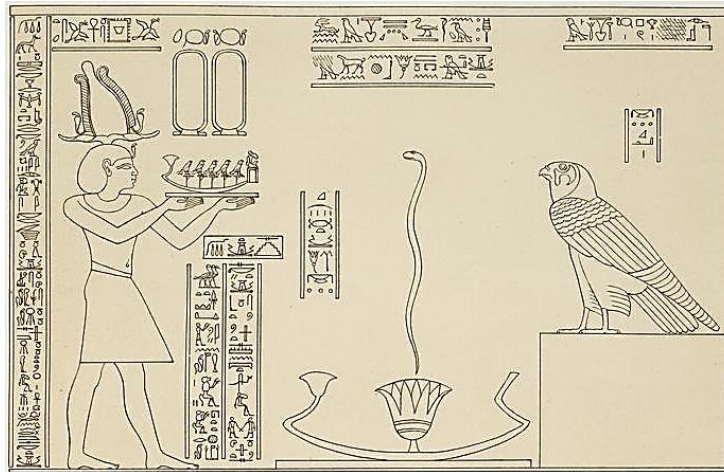
¹⁶³ WB 1926: vol.1, 561, 10.

¹⁶⁴ WB 1926: vol.1, 561, 11 (officially used).

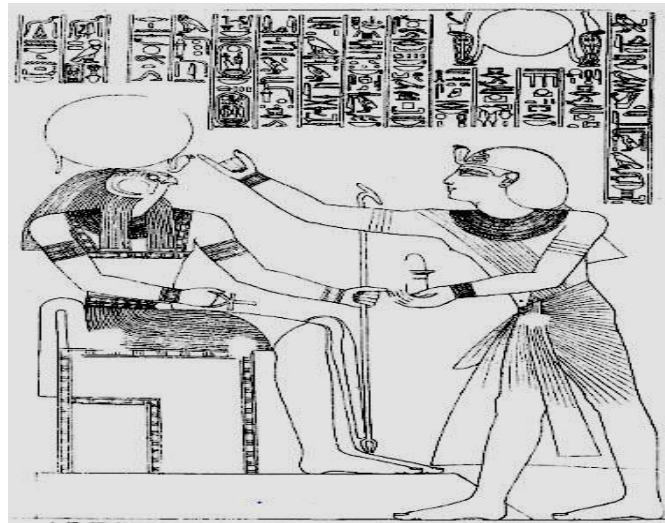
¹⁶⁵ VÉGH 2021: 212.

¹⁶⁶ VÉGH 2021: 232.

¹⁶⁷ SCHÄFER 1905: 26f.



[FIGURE 15]: King performing an offering ritual in front of the falcon god Horus, the *Uraeus* serpent *wrr.t*, *Neshmet*-bark of Osiris and the Lotus bloom. Hathor Temple in Denderah, Sanctuary: *Chambre V. [Hr-Sm3-T3wy]*.



[FIGURE 16]: King Sethos I anointing the serpent (*Uraeus*) attached to the crown of Re-Harakhti with his right pinky finger, while holding the *Madjet* ointment-jar with his left. Temple of Sethos I at Abydos, Chapel of Re-Harakhti: North Wall, Western Section.

CALVERLEY & GARDINER 1935, vol.2, PL.15.



[FIGURE 17]: Pilgrimage to Abydos: The *Neshmet*-bark carries Userhat and his wife to Abydos. They are performing adorations to the gods Osiris and Anubis. Userhat was the first Prophet of the royal «Ka» of King Thutmose I; he lived under the reigns of Horemheb, Ramses I and Seti I. Facsimile Norman de Garis Davies (1909-1910), Metropolitan Museum, Gallery 135, Userhat and his Wife visiting Abydos (*Peker*), Tomb of Userhat, Theban Tomb 51 (West-Thebes).

Otherwise, the *Neshmet* bark festival seems to be related to the «annihilation of the enemies» which is similar to ointment's function. The stele dating to the 1st Intermediate Period equates the god who navigates in the *Neshmet* bark as the «Great God, Lord of the Sky» *ntr ʿ3 nb pt* (Cairo CG 1622)¹⁶⁸. This inscription confirms the idea that (*Peker*) is the «Paradise in heavenly spheres» where Osiris dwells. The four features: the Neshmet bark of Osiris; the sacred oils headed by Lotus flowers; Uraeus; and Horus' Eye are heavenly features loaded with divine power and functions against evil Seth's evil powers.

A funerary scene depicts Userhat and his wife wearing fragrant ointment cones and smelling fragrant substance filled inside a small jar. The tree-goddess pours them water, while the «*Ba*»-bird spirits stand on a heavenly water-pond, possibly the heavenly afterlife [FIGURE 18]¹⁶⁹.



[FIGURE 18]: Userhat and his Wife Receiving Offerings: The high priest Userhat, his wife and mother seated in a garden receive fresh water, figs and bread from the tree-goddess of the sycamore fig, the *Ished* tree. The goddess appears in human form with a diminutive tree on her head. Her guests are wearing fragrant cones, lotus-blooms and smelling fragrant substances. Norman de Garis Davies, Original. New Kingdom, 19th dynasty, reign of Seti I, ca. 1320-1279 BC.

¹⁶⁸VÉGH 2021: 151.

¹⁶⁹WILKINSON 1983: MET 30.4.33. www.metmuseum.org/art/collection. Accessed on 14/10/2022.

B. Anointing the Forehead and Anointing the *Uraeus* *j'r.t*

The ritual of the «*anointment-of-the-forehead*» of the deity and the deceased aims to endow the «breath of life» needed for invoking the spirit [FIGURE 10, left], while the anointment of the serpent, the «poisonous cobra» (*Uraeus*) at the forehead of kings and gods invokes the spirit of the creator god *Atum-Re* as a protective power [FIGURE 16]. This protective power of the serpent was equated with the Horus-Eye; both were divine features functioning according to the instructions of *Atum-Re*. In the Pyramid Texts, the cobra (*Uraeus*) *hryt-tp* is described as a solar defensive unit, who sprays fire against enemies¹⁷⁰. The cobra had been identified with Horus as defeater of enemies¹⁷¹.

A scene in the Hall of Osiris, in the temple of Sethos I at Abydos, depicts Sethos I anointing the *Uraeus* of the «Abydos-fetish of Osiris» with *mdt* ointment, using his right pinky finger, while Isis blessing the anointment of the Abydos-fetish [FIGURE 13]. The Lotus bloom and *nmst*-jars placed on a stand in front of Isis are indicating the blessing of the performance of «Purification-Ritual» **using water dispenser and sacred oils**. Above the head of Isis sacred oils are listed *Sft*, *Nhnm*, *Twzt*. Over the head of Sethos I further sacred oils are inscribed, as *h3tt nt ʕš*, *h3tt nt Thnw*, *b3k*, *jbr*, *mdt*. In front of the king are five *mdt* ointment jars placed on a stand. Another scene depicts king Sethos I anointing the serpent at the forehead of *Re-Harakhty* [FIGURE 16].

Uraeus is the Latinized form of the Greek *Ouraios*, undoubtedly taken from the ancient Egyptian word with the cobra determinative *j'r.t*, translated as «the sacred serpent»; «the serpent at the forehead of the king»¹⁷². A scene in the cult-image ritual has the following inscription: *t3-365 n ntr j'rt hr tp.f*, 'the 365 divine *Uraei* are on his head (of Osiris)¹⁷³. An extended translation is «the risen one», because of the poisonous snake that rears up menacingly with a bloated neck. The statements about the function of the serpent are largely the same. She glows and annihilates enemies with the glow of her fiery breath.

The *Uraeus* is considered as «the sun's eye» (the sun god *Re* as overriding sovereignty), both function according to the instructions of the creator-god *Atum-Re*. It means that kings and deities are gifted with a part of the overriding sovereignty's might through the poisonous *Uraeus*, which resists any evil power. Her violence is terrible and she resists any abuse. A coffin text belonging to a powerless deceased desires to be «transformed into the fiery Eye-of-Horus», created directly «from the fire of radiance» under the hand of *Re*, who gave her appearance and beings¹⁷⁴. I suggest that the *Uraeus* is a part of god's *Re* might; the Horus-Eye is a part of the overriding sovereignty's (*Atum-Re*) might as well.

The cobra's importance is explained by the *Bremner-Rhind-Papyrus*¹⁷⁵: The creator god *Atum*, while formless in the primeval waters, delivered an utterance which gave form to the visible world. He created *Shu*, «air» and *Tefnut*, «moisture». *Atum* uttered «... so I promoted it (the cobra) to the front of my face, so that it could rule the whole world»! Thus

¹⁷⁰ WAHBI 2001 :33.

¹⁷¹ WAHBI 2001 :152.

¹⁷² WB 1926: vol.1, 42, 1-3.

¹⁷³ HANNIG 2000: 31.

¹⁷⁴ BONNET 2000: 845.

¹⁷⁵ FAULKNER 1964 (British Museum 10188): 22ff.

the cobra became «Eye of Atum» loaded with power and might be used to protect gods against the formlessness in the abyss of chaos, and to protect kings against evil enemies in the created world. The creator god *Atum* satisfied the eye, which had become a cobra, by placing it on his forehead as the *Uraeus jꜣrt* «the Risen One», which guards the crown¹⁷⁶. The *Uraeus* at the foreheads of kings and deities are a spiritual power of the overriding sovereignty *Atum-Re*. In the Pyramid Texts the cobra goddess is mentioned as *wrt-ḥkꜣ*, «Great of Magic, who rises on the forehead of Horus»; *sby*, «guide serpent», «watch over»¹⁷⁷. *Sbj* could also mean «perish the enemies»; «burning incense on the flame» (the wicked who are burned)¹⁷⁸. The essential names of the *uraeus* are: «*ꜣht*», «Eye-of-the-God», «Flame», «Spirit» and «glorious»¹⁷⁹. The *Uraeus* can also mean «power of a god» and «magic power»¹⁸⁰ or (*tjt ꜣht*) «glorious part of the king»¹⁸¹. I suggest that the fragrant ointment invokes the glorious god's spirit (*Atum-Re*) dwelling in the *Uraeus* who acts against enemies and evil powers. Another name of the *Uraeus* mentioned in the Pyramid Texts is *nsrt* which means «Royal Serpent», «Flame of the *Uraeus*», «the flame against king's enemies»¹⁸². *Nsr.tj* is documented in the «Book of the Dead» as a designation of «Horus»¹⁸³. This word equates the *Uraeus* to the «Horus-eye» which has the same magical power as the creator god «Atum-Re». The cobra goddess is also named *tfnt*¹⁸⁴; it is addressed as the «Eye-of-Re» and the «Eye-of-Horus»¹⁸⁵.

From the Middle Kingdom «Hymns to the Diadem», ca. 1650-1550 BC: «Praise to thee, O Eye of Horus, which did cut off the heads of the followers of Seth. She trod them down. She spat at the foes with that which came forth from her. Her might is greater than that of her foes –in her name of Mistress-of-Might. The fear of her is instilled into them that famed her – in her name of Mistress-of-fear»¹⁸⁶.

A chant to awaken the royal serpent (the following chant was probably sung by Egyptian women or priestesses): «Awake in peace! Great Queen, awake in peace; Awake in peace! Snake that is on the brow of the king N, awake in peace; thine awakening is peaceful». The *Uraeus*, «the risen one» is consistently associated with Horus. Her raised head and expanded hood are threatening and powerful. She is protecting the king¹⁸⁷.

¹⁷⁶ JOHNSON 1990: 6.

¹⁷⁷ JOHNSON 1990: 7.

¹⁷⁸ WB 1971: vol.3, 430, 9-10; 18-21.

¹⁷⁹ JOHNSON 1990: 7.

¹⁸⁰ WB 1926: vol.1, 15, 4-6.

¹⁸¹ WB 1926: vol.1, 14, 15.

¹⁸² JOHNSON 1990: 8.

¹⁸³ WB 1928: vol. 2, 320, 6.

¹⁸⁴ FAULKNER 1964: 298.

¹⁸⁵ JOHNSON 1990: 8.

¹⁸⁶ JOHNSON 1990: 10f.

¹⁸⁷ JOHNSON 1990: 11.

Gods associated with Fragrant Oils

Nefertem-Hor-Hekenu

Hknw seems to be the extracted oil of the Lotus-flower, and refers to his warrior function against Seth. *Nefertem-Hor-Hekenu* was the god «dispenser of fragrance» that keeps evil away¹⁸⁸. The Lotus is known as the sacred lotus for its purity and ability to regenerate itself every morning. The lotus rises from the mud without stains, symbolizing purity. The lotus flower was the emblem of the god *Nefertem*; he was worshiped in the form of a lotus flower¹⁸⁹.

Nefertem-Re

The Pyramid texts indicate the relationship between the lotus flower and the sovereignty of *Re*:

Pyr. 266a. «N. appears as *Nefertem*, as the flower of the lotus at the nose of *Re*»; 266b. «as he comes forth from the horizon every day; the gods purify themselves, when they see him»¹⁹⁰. The Lotus-flower that incarnated god *Nefertem* is considered a «Giver-of-Fragrance».

Hr-hknw—The connection between the god *Horus* and *Hekenu*, the warlike falcon god, invokes the struggle between *Horus* and *Seth*. *Nefertem*, the lord of fragrant oils, merged himself with the falcon god *Horus-Hekenu*, in his warrior form. This significant function of *Horus* against evil explains the role of «oils and ointments» that heal and regenerate wounds and damages. Oils are equated to «light», while *Seth* is equated to «darkness».

Horus-Eye

The *Horus-Eye* and ointments are symbols acting against the evil function of *Seth*. The *Udjat-Eye* is described as the «God's Eye», while ointments as «Ointment-of-the God» (*stj-ntr*). *ntr* is written with causative (*s*) and (*ntr*), «god», which means «to make a place divine» with the smoke of the fragrant gum.

¹⁸⁸ BONNET 2000: 510.

¹⁸⁹ BONNET 2000: 509.

¹⁹⁰ MERCER 1952: 266a, b (Utterance 249).

V. CONCLUSION

Ancient Egyptians expressed the divinity of fragrant oils in their inscriptions and rituals. Papyrus Salt mentioned that the oil *sft* is «from the fallen blood of the god *Geb*». «When Horus weeps, the water that falls from his eyes turns into the «gum (*ḥntjw*) myrrh». *Geb* lets blood fall from his nose, which turns into «cedar trees», and «(*sft*)-oil». When *Shu* and *Tefnut* weep copiously and let their tears fall to the ground, the tears change into plants that produce «incense». The sweat that falls from the members of *Ra* when he is weary turns into the water-flood, and the water that flows from him when he is exhausted turns upon earth into papyrus plants (*twff*) »¹⁹¹. «Every herb or plant or substance that was used in magical ceremonies was believed to be of divine origin». «The sweat of *Isis* and *Nephtys* when they are weary becomes «*d3s* plants», while the blood that falls from Seth rises up in the form of the «(*nḥr.t*)-tree» of the East».

Pyramid Texts expressed clearly the healing power of the sacred oils. It illuminates the face of the deceased and provides him power to put fear in the eyes of his enemies. It removes all evil discharges which indicate the removing of bad mood. Sacred oils are equated with the Eye-of-Horus which reflects its highly honored position in Ancient Egyptian Religion.

The anointment of the cult-image occupied the most important part among the group of rituals performed in the sanctuary. The scenes represented this essential ritual by showing the king or the high priest anointing the forehead of the deity with his right pinky finger. The offering or the handing over ointment jars could substitute the anointment itself. The Litany of Sacred Oils was uttered during the ritual.

Sacred oils took place in the funerary ritual of the «Opening-of-the-Mouth». The anointment of the forehead of the deceased with fragrant oils aimed to invoke the spiritual life-breath of the deceased to permit the transfiguration of the spirit «*Ba*» into light «*Akh*».

The location of the sacred oils scenes occupied the south wall of the deity chapel and the southern section of the west wall, which was the area of the «false-door». The Lotus-flowers bouquet placed in front of the sacred bark of Amen-Re was determined by *Ankh* (Life-sign) to express the function of the fragrant Lotus bloom as method for invoking the god's spirit.

Censing, pouring water, handing-over oil jars and anointments were rituals included in «Purification-scenes».

The sacred ointments were prepared under the utterance of holy spells, according to the instructions of Thoth. This explains the reason that sacred ointments used in rituals were secretly prepared in temple laboratories such as Horus temple of *Edfu*, Hathor temple in *Denderah*, and Isis temple in *Philae*.

The poisonous serpent (*Uraeus*), attached to the crowns of deities and kings, was loaded with holy power derived from the creator god *Atum*. It was mentioned in *Bremner Rhind Papyrus* as the «Eye-of-Atum», which could rule the whole world. The anointing ritual of the *Uraeus* aimed to invoke its spiritual power to protect deities and kings against evil powers and Seth. The fire-breath of the serpent should burn the followers of Seth.

¹⁹¹ This explains the reason for the existence of Papyrus-plant inside the *Neshmet*-bark of Osiris [PL.15].

A significant religious relationship between the Lotus-bloom, *Neshmet*-bark of Osiris, the serpent (*Uraeus*), and god Horus appeared in two scenes depicted in the chambers called (*Hr-Sm3-T3wy*) located around the sanctuary of Hathor-Temple at *Denderah*. These scenes are representing a specific festival concerning the «ascension of Osiris» into heavenly spheres. A stele in Cairo Museum CG 20561 is inscribed with offering formulae and a «festival-list» including the festival name *d3.t ntr r pkr* «Navigation of the God to *Peker*». This festival inscription is recording «the heavenly ascension of God Osiris». It means that Osiris-bark *Neshmet*, sacred oils titled by its lord «Lotus-bloom», the poisonous serpent (*Uraeus*) and Horus were heavenly features, loaded with magical powers against Seth and his followers.

The word «*Peker*» is expressing two meanings: 1- «Paradise-of-Osiris» in heavenly spheres. 2- «Fragrant substance in *Kyphi* preparation», or . (*Pkr n Mrht*) that probably means «the precious fragrant substance (*Peker*) inside the Seven Sacred oils», which were generally named as «*Merhet*». I suggest that fragrant oils are divine features sourced from the heavenly paradise where Osiris is dwelling. The fragrant oils are able to invoke the *Neshmet*-bark spirit, which seems to help with the «annihilation of the enemies».

The word (*sntr*) «censing» is including the terminology of «god» (*ntr*), and the causative (*s*) which gives the meaning of «making a place divine». The smoke of this divine gum is purifying the spheres.

Egypt could not support its high oil consumption with its own production, but was dependent on foreign imports. Oil imports from Lebanon, Syria, Libya and Nubia have been documented since the 1st dynasty.

The large number of elaborate oil jars found in subterranean corridors beneath the *Djoser* Step-Pyramid, which belonged to earlier graves of the archaic period, are evidence for the religious importance of the «Sacred-Oils» since the 1st dynasty.

The deity *Nefertem-Hr-Hekenu* is merging friendly with violent features. *Nefertem* was the lord of sacred oils that bears regenerating and illuminating functions. When merging with the combative *Hr-Hknw*, it reveals the warrior function against Seth and evil powers.

Ancient Egyptians extracted vegetable oils from the seeds and fruits of various plants. The main oils mentioned in lists and inscriptions include: *sft*, *jbr*, *ꜥdnt*, *h3tt- thnw*, *h3tt-nt-ꜥš*, *jb-s3*, *jdt-ntr*, *hknw*, *d3s-šmꜥj*, *stj-ntr*, *sntr*, *mdt*, *stj-hb*, *nhnw*.

The Seven Sacred Oils were: *Stj-hb*, *Hknw*, *Sft*, *Nhnw*, *Tw3t*, *H3tt-nt-ꜥš*, *H3tt-nt-Thnw*. An Old Kingdom stone palette mentions seven depositories for the seven sacred oils to be used in anointment-ritual of the cult-image. During the New Kingdom emerged additional names for the «Sacred Oil»: *mdt*, *jbr*, *b3k*, *ꜥntjw*. The Sacred Oil (*Hknw*) seems to be the extracted oil of the Lotus blossom.

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