

# Das Horn des Steinbocks. Die Treppen und der Dachkiosk in Dendara als Quellen zum Neujahrsfest by Alexa Rickert

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*Das Horn des Steinbocks. Die Treppen und der Dachkiosk in Dendara als Quellen zum Neujahrsfest* by Alexa Rickert

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The publication reviewed here is a slightly revised version of the doctoral thesis submitted by the Alexa Rickert in 2017 to the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Tübingen. It deals with the evidence for the Egyptian Festival of the New Year found in the stairwells and roof kiosk of the Temple of Hathor in Dendara.

Section 1 of part 1 is devoted to the introduction and an examination of terms. Rickert bases the calendar days on the religious texts from the Greco-Roman temples presenting an idealized calendar in which the I. Achet 1 was marked by the actual rising of Sothis [3]. The first day of the new year started with sunrise [4]. The extensive information on the theology and ritual practice of the New Year begins with the temple inscriptions of the Greco-Roman era [5]. The first part of «wp rnp.t» is interpreted as “Eröffner” due to parallels from the Old Kingdom [9]. In the inscriptions from Dendara, the substantive «wp rnp.t» is mentioned 139 times as the most common name for the New Year’s Day, of which 81 spread over the walls of the stairwells and kiosk [10–11]. In the temples of the Greco-Roman period, the explicit identification of «wp rnp.t» with I. Achet 1 occurs primarily in the fixed calendars [13]. The term «wp rnp.t» was also used as the name of a month, where it originally goes back to the first month of a solar year [15]. The term «wp rnp.t» could also refer to a rising of Sothis, which does not take place on I. Achet 1 [17]. The Canopus Decree applies «wp rnp.t» to a ruler’s personal annual cycle [19]. The term «wp rnp.t» could also serve as designation for the I. Peret 1 [20]. The distinction between «tp rnp.t»

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(Beginning of the Year) and «tpi rnp.t» (First of the Year) has probably to be dropped [25]. The Morning of Purity is likely to be on the New Year's Day [36]. The New Year's designation «tr n win tr.w» (Time of Departure of the Seasons) may indicate that the old cycle finished [38]. The birth of Isis in her small temple in Dendara, associated with the "Night of the Child in his Nest", is connected with the early heliacal rising of Sothis [40]. In the inscriptions of the stairwells and kiosk, the "Night of the Child in his Nest" is related to New Year's Day on I. Achet 1. [46]. The term "Horn of the Ibex" for the first day of the year hints at the knowledge of the Greek zodiac [47]. The New Year's designation "The First Festival" occurs 22 times in the texts of the stairs and kiosk [52]. The New Year's Festival could also be called the First Day of Drunkenness [53].

The transliteration and translation of the texts for Stairs W and X, Roof Kiosk W' and the Chamber of the eastern Stairs V are developed in part 2. The catalog of the text components is, among other things, made up of calls, requests, exclamations, and building inscriptions offering ritual formulas and descriptions of festivals [69–78].

The evaluation is undertaken in part 3. In section 1, the spatial and temporal embedding of the stairs and kiosk in the festive events is examined. The starting point of the New Year's procession is probably to be found in Krypta South 1 [340]. Room J must have served as end point of the procession [346]. *Couloir mystérieux* was used as passage to certain places of worship on New Year's Day [349]. Chamber F' and Stairs X probably played an important role in transporting things for the New Year's ritual to the roof [358]. The ensemble of Wabet [S] and Court [R] took an important position before the New Year's procession ascended to the roof [359]. The Wabet has clear architectural references to the kiosk such as stairs, columns with Hathor capitals, and door with a "broken lintel" [362].

In section 2, the stairs and kiosk are treated as locations for the festivities. The ensemble of stairs and kiosk belongs to the Naos, which was built between 54–20 BC [386]. The stair decoration most closely related to Dendara appears in the Horus temple from Edfu [395]. The ascent and descent of the New Year's procession in Dendara may be linked to the course of the Sun [407]. The "Sonnenschatten" of the New Kingdom may be considered the forerunners of the roof kiosk in Dendara [434].

In section 3 of part 3, Rickert comments on the participants in the festivities. In the New Year's procession in Dendara, the main form of the goddess Hathor emerges most prominently [470]. The close relationship to the Sun

God was strongly emphasized [471]. The descriptions of the Sun God are characterized by a high degree of abstraction [481]. Next, attention should be paid to the group of gods carried in 10 Naoi behind the shrine of Hathor [482]. The king holds the most important place among the non-divine participants [493]. The standard group in the stairwells seems to be in the tradition of the Hebsed and foundation depictions [510]. Priests and the bearers of offerings also march in the procession [513]. The procession at the end of the staircase is held by the priestly bearers of the Naos of Hathor and her godly followers [534]. The sides of the entrances to the kiosk show a special concentration of groups of divinities [540]. The human actors appear joyful and jubilant at the celebration of the New Year [562].

In section 4, chronological processes, events in the sky, and their theological interpretation are considered. The union with the disc of the Sun is to be set as the central cult act of New Year's Day in the morning [571]. The personal relationship between Hathor and the Sun God is in the foreground in the union ritual on New Year's Day [580].

Festival-specific items and New Year gifts are discussed in section 5. The image of Hathor carried in the procession is probably anthropomorphic [600]. The stick in the hand of the first of two representations of the king is an important utensil, which obviously had a geographical meaning [613–614]. In the texts of New Year's Day, minerals and metals play a crucial role [618]. The "Stoffopfer" in connection with the "Salbenopfer" can be counted among the most important gifts of the New Year [656].

In section 6, the structural features of the texts in the stairwells and kiosk are analyzed. The first text-pattern includes accompanying text in spatial and content-related proximity to representations of persons or a group of persons [667]. The second text-pattern is formed by ritual scenes with the juxtaposition of king and gods [673]. The text-pattern of the ritual scenes occurs particularly frequently in stairwells and on door lintels as well as on the bars and columns of the kiosk [676]. The third text-pattern can be seen in the monographs,<sup>1</sup> for which there are two examples on the outer door jambs of the door between sacrificial hall and Stairwell V [677]. The fourth text-pattern confirms the close relationship between king and temple lord [678]. The fifth-text pattern consists of hymns, the main concern of which is praise [680].

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<sup>1</sup> In Egyptian temples of the Greco-Roman period, the term "monograph" refers to a group of texts in which the religious peculiarities of a cult site or a larger cult region are recorded and explained theologically.

Some facts are compiled in the synthesis. The representations and inscriptions in the stairwells and kiosk show parallels to other cult buildings [702]. In several cases there are allusions to the ritual Opening of the Mouth [702]. In the synopsis, selected texts are compared [711–725]. The parallels are clearly arranged.

The book contains bibliography [737–765], indices [767–809], tables [1a–41b], and color tables [1–7].

The following remarks may be of some help to readers:

- page 90      The «n» after «dw<sub>3</sub>» (to praise) can also serve as an indirect object connector. For this use of the preposition, cf. A. H. Gardiner. *Late-Egyptian Stories*. BibAeg 1. Bruxelles, 1932. p. 69a; G. Vittmann. *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*. ÄAT 38. Wiesbaden, 1998. p. 514.
- page 96      In the German translation “Der Sohn des Re ist dauerhaft auf seiner Thronstrade”, the word “dauerhaft” has to be canceled.
- page 112     for the verb «bd» (to purify): cf. N. Tacke. *Das Opferritual des ägyptischen Neuen Reiches*. Band 2: Übersetzung und Kommentar. OLA 222. Leuven/Paris/Walpole MA, 2013. p. 108.
- page 120     for the verb «wrh» (to dance): cf. D. Klotz, “Remarks on Ptolemaic Epigraphy and Lexicography”. *RdE* (2013) 64: 34ff.
- page 123     The German translation “indem sie ihren Leib mit der Salbe des Gottesopfers schmücken” should be corrected to “indem sie ihren Leib mit der Salbe des Gottesopfers angenehm machen”.
- page 144     In the German translation, “weil sich das rechte Auge des Re mit der [Sonnen]Scheibe vereint”, the word «stw.t» (rays) has been accidentally omitted.
- page 288     The German translation, “ich habe deinen Leib weich gemacht” has to be corrected to “ich habe deinen Leib gesalbt”.
- page 472     In the German translation “wie Re inmitten seiner Genossen”, the word “Genossen” has to be replaced by “Hofstaat”.

Rickert’s book is quite interesting to read. The translations are correct in most cases, though they rely too often on outside help. The factual backgrounds are adequately described. The Egyptian texts might have been streamlined in one place or another.