



بحث رقم ٣

The Iconography of the God Banebdjedet

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Abstract:

Banebdjedet was the principal ram-god in the area around the delta city of Djedet, known to the Greeks as Mendes. He is depicted in a number of forms which reflects a kind of relationship with his roles played to maintaining peace and harmony across the whole Egypt. Taking into account that his worship extended over nearly three thousand years, it seems inevitable that his iconography has seen some changes: he is usually represented with a human body and a ram's head and occasionally with four rams' heads. In some circumstances the image of the entire animal evokes the divinity. However, Greek texts refer to the sacred animal of Mendes as a billy-goat.

Basically on the representations in relief, this paper aims to identify and explain the main moments of the iconography evolution of this god through answering the following questions: is it possible to identify Banebdjedet in spite of the absence of his legends? May the different aspects of his personality influence his iconography? Whether the image of this divinity varies according to the period and the function? and finally, to what extent the representation of Banebdjedet could be used as a criterion of dating? Thus, this paper tries to understand the personality of Banebdjedet throughout his iconography.

The Egyptians have always preferred to represent Banebdjedet in a hybrid form (human ram headed) at least since the New Kingdom until the Greco-Roman period. It is significant to note that the representations of Banebdjedet before the New



Kingdom is unknown, although the presence of few attestations for this divinity in the Middle Kingdom. The New kingdom attested the earliest known representations of Banebdjedet. The atef-crown was specific to Banebdjedet; it is a key element and an identification index for the god, especially on appearing without inscription. Other crowns are considered less common and occur in specific contexts. The representation of Banebdjedet, especially the way of portraying the horns and ears, could be used as a criterion of dating, even if one should remain prudent and careful about the interpretation of certain iconographic forms.

Keywords: ram-god, Banebdjedet, Hatmehit, Mendes, Djedet, iconography, ram, a ram-headed man, billy-goat, atef-crown.