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**The Four Montus of the Theban Palladium in the Late and Graeco-Roman
Periods: a cult-based approach**
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The Four Montus of the Theban Palladium in the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods: a cult-based approach

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AS THE ORIGINAL GOD *par excellence* of the 4th Upper Egyptian Nome, Montu was a prominent member of the ancient Egyptian pantheon whose career began in the late Old Kingdom and lasted until the 3rd-4th century AD. Despite the relative abundance of primary sources concerning the god, modern Egyptology still lacks a comprehensive, published monography on the subject. It is, however, not surprising if one considers the ongoing excavations and epigraphical works at his cult places¹ that will further enlarge or even modify the current knowledge of specialists on Montu, his late theology and the organization of his cult in the Thebaid. In the following, my intention is to determine some principles of a cult-based approach to Montu in the Late, Ptolemaic and Roman Periods which still calls for a proper treatment among the studies of the late Theban divine cults.

A brief overview of the research history

The earliest studies of the deity appeared during the nineteenth century, however, their number increased by leaps and bounds in the twentieth century when systematic archaeological works began on the sites of Medamud, North Karnak, Armant and Tod, i.e. in the temples of the Theban Palladium. The first scholarly mentions of Montu can be found in Jean-François Champollion's *Panthéon égyptien* (1823)² and in P. Pierret's *Dictionnaire d'archéologie égyptienne* (1875).³ Champollion apparently confused the Theban god (represented on plate 27) with Mandulis, the local Nubian deity to whom the temple of Kalabsha was dedicated.⁴ Pierret briefly noted that Montu was both a solar deity in Thebes

* The present study is part of the author's ongoing dissertation on the Theban cult of the Four Montus in the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods under the supervision of the late Dr. Gábor Schreiber (2017-2020) and Dr. Éva Liptay (2020-).

¹ F.R. MONTSERRAT, "Médamoud", *Bulletin archéologique des Écoles françaises à l'étranger* [En ligne], 2020, p. 1-10; Chr. THIERS *et al.*, "Ermant", *Bulletin archéologique des Écoles françaises à l'étranger* [En ligne], 2020, p. 1-24. The North Karnak precinct is excavated by a joint Egyptian-Chinese archaeological mission since 2018: www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2018-11/30/c_137640502.htm (accessed: 06/04/2021). The scattered blocks from Tod will be published by Christophe Thiers in a forthcoming volume (personal communication).

² J.-Fr. CHAMPOLLION, *Panthéon égyptien, collections des personages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte d'après les monuments*, Paris, 1823, no. 27.

³ P. PIERRET, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie égyptienne*, Paris, 1875, p. 337-338.

⁴ The mistake of Champollion was already noticed by S.H. Aufrère in: S.H. AUFRÈRE, *Le propylône d'Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord, MIFAO 117*, Le Caire, 2000, p. 441 (with n. 5). For Mandulis, see: H. LEWY, "A Dream of Mandulis", *ASAE* 44, 1944, p. 227-234.

and a warrior usually holding the *ḥpš*-scimitar.⁵ Later, E.A.W. Budge collected some of the most important deities of the ancient Egyptian pantheon in his monography *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology* (1904) where Montu is mentioned, in connection with Amun, as “an important form of the Sun-god”⁶ whose most important cult places – as stated – were Southern Heliopolis, Thebes, Northern Heliopolis, Tcherçet (Edfu), Dendara and the temples of the First Cataract.⁷

Among the studies of Montu during the first half of the twentieth century, one should mention, first and foremost the papers of G. Legrain (1916) and F. Bisson de la Roque (1941) bearing the same title “Notes sur le dieu Montou”.⁸ While Legrain principally dealt with the local manifestations of Montu at Medamud and Tod, Bisson de la Roque prepared the first systematic and chronologically structured study on the god. As for the works of É. Drioton, he devoted a few pages to the “theology of Montu” and the “arena of the sacred bull” when treating the Graeco-Roman inscriptions of the temple of Medamud in *FIFAO* 4/2 (1927).⁹ Later he published the four-four limestone statues of Montu and Rattawy (1931)¹⁰ which were unearthed in the rear temple in 1926 as well as the cryptographic inscriptions from the “bandeau de soubassement” of the “Porte de Tibère” (1936),¹¹ the large entrance gate at Medamud giving access to the temple precinct on the west. Discussing the origins of the Buchis bull in the second volume of the *Bucheum* publication (1934), H. W. Fairman briefly treated Montu as well.¹² In 1961 J. Leclant presented a paper on a small statue of Montu, today kept in the Musée Rodin, Paris,¹³ in which he discussed the god based on the inscriptional and pictorial evidence of the Kushite Period.

Since these early contributions several others have been published focusing on different aspects of Montu including the papers of J.F. Borghouts (1981),¹⁴ R. van Walsem (1982),¹⁵ J. Yoyotte (1984-1985),¹⁶ E.K. Werner (1986)¹⁷ and D. Valbelle (1992).¹⁸ Complementing these references, one cannot forget about the most recent studies of R. Soliman (2017),¹⁹

⁵ For the *ḥpš*-scimitar as an offering to Montu, see: LD IV, 65a; C. DE WIT, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, a Karnak I, BiAeg* 11, Bruxelles, 1958, p. 252 (= KIU 4228). Cf. J.-Cl. Grenier, *Tôd: Les inscriptions du temple ptolémaïque et romain I. La salle hypostyle, textes N^{os} 1-172, FIFAO* 18/1, Le Caire, 1980, no. 138.

⁶ W.E.A. BUDGE, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, II, London, 1904, p. 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24-25. Budge based his assumption on a scene from the propylon of Montu at North Karnak (S.H. AUFRÈRE, *op. cit.*, §§ 187-189 = *Urk.* VIII, no. 34) where most of these places are mentioned.

⁸ G. LEGRAIN, “Notes sur le dieu Montou”, *BIFAO* 12, 1916, p. 75-124; F. BISSON DE LA ROQUE, “Notes sur le dieu Montou”, *BIFAO* 40, 1941, p. 1-49.

⁹ É. DRIOTON, *Médamoud: Les inscriptions*, II, FIFAO 4/2, Le Caire, 1927, p. 7-12.

¹⁰ É. DRIOTON, “Les quatre Montou de Médamoud, Palladium de Thèbes”, *CdE* 6, 1931, p. 259-270.

¹¹ É. DRIOTON, “Le cryptogramme de Montou de Médamoud”, *RdE* 12, 1936, p. 21-33.

¹² R. MOND, O.H. MYERS, *The Bucheum, II: The Inscriptions*, London, 1934, p. 46-49.

¹³ J. LECLANT, “Une statuette d'Amon-Rê-Montou au nom de la divine adoratrice Chepenoupet”, in *Mélanges Maspero*, I/4. *Orient Ancien, MIFAO* 66, Le Caire, 1961, p. 73-98. See most recently: Fl. GOMBERT-MEURICE, Fr. PAYRAUDEAU, *Servir les dieux d'Égypte: Divines adoratrices, chanteuses et prêtres d'Amon à Thèbes*, Paris, 2018, p. 296-297 (Cat. 144 a).

¹⁴ J.F. BORGHOUTS, “Monthu and Matrimonial Squabbles”, *RdE* 33, 1981, p. 11-22.

¹⁵ R. VAN WALSEM, “The God Monthu and Deir el-Medina”, in R.J. Demarée, J.J. Janssen (eds.), *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina*, Leiden, 1982, p. 193-214.

¹⁶ J. YOYOTTE, “Montou à Karnak, Haremsunis à Tanis: deux structures théologiques parallèles?”, *BSEF* 34, 1984-1985, p. 12-14.

¹⁷ E.K. WERNER, “Montu and the “Falcon Ships” of the Eighteenth Dynasty”, *JARCE* 23, 1986, p. 107-123.

¹⁸ D. VALBELLE, “Les métamorphoses d'une hypostase divine en Égypte”, *RHR* 209, 1992, p. 3-21.

¹⁹ R. SOLIMAN, “Montu, the Origin of a Sacred Network”, *EJARS* 7, 2017, p. 149-160.

F. Relats Montserrat and L. Medini (2018),²⁰ D. Šichan (2019)²¹ and U. Matić (2019)²² concerning the god.

Additionally, one should also indicate the fundamental syntheses of Montu provided by the lexicon entries of H. Bonnet (1952),²³ J.F. Borghouts (1982),²⁴ E.K. Werner (2001)²⁵ and C.M. Sheikholeslami (2013).²⁶

Drawing the early career of the Theban god, Werner submitted his thesis *The God Montu: From the Earliest Attestations to the End of the New Kingdom* in 1985.²⁷ Later in 2003, another dissertation was prepared by A. Fortier with the title *Recherches sur le dieu Montou*²⁸ at the École Pratique des Hautes Études focusing on the period after the New Kingdom. Although this latter work is admittedly exhaustive, it did not treat the cult and the personnel of the deity. As only these two unpublished dissertations have so far been written on Montu, a monograph is yet to be expected.²⁹

Nowadays, two tendencies can be differentiated regarding the approaches to Montu. On the one hand, C.M. Sheikholeslami has been studying the divine cult in the Third Intermediate Period³⁰ from the 2000s concentrating mainly on the burial assemblages of the priesthood of Montu found in Deir el-Bahari, the social status of the prominent sacerdotal families and the interconnection between the Montu priests and the other Theban cults. The need for a complete prosopographical study of the cult personnel of Montu during the 25th-26th

²⁰ F. RELATS MONTSERRAT, L. MEDINI, A. FORTIER, “Quelques considérations sur le ‘tableau de l’oracle de Médamoud’: un relief culturel?”, *BIFAO* 118, 2018, p. 363-401.

²¹ D. ŠICHAN, “Moncu – válečník v době 18. dynastie”, *PES* 22, 2019, p. 81-94.

²² U. MATIĆ, “The Good God in the Form of Montu’: Pharaoh as the Warrior God on the Battlefield”, *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 34/2, 2019, p. 80-91.

²³ H. BONNET, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1952, p. 475-479.

²⁴ J.F. BORGHOUTS, “Month”, in W. Helck, E. Otto (eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, IV, Wiesbaden, 1982, p. 200-204.

²⁵ E.K. WERNER, “Montu”, in D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* II, Oxford, 2001, p. 435-436.

²⁶ C. M. SHEIKHOLESAMI, “Montu”, in R. Bagnall *et al.* (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (First Edition), Hoboken, 2013, p. 4591-4592.

²⁷ E.K. WERNER, *The God Montu: From the Earliest Attestations to the End of the New Kingdom*, A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University, New Haven, 1985.

²⁸ A. FORTIER, *Recherches sur le dieu Montou*, Thèse de doctorat, École pratique des hautes études, section des Sciences religieuses, Paris, 2003. I am most indebted to Alain Fortier for authorizing me to read his dissertation while I was on a scholarship in Cairo in 2019 (Campus Mundi, Short Study Programme founded by Tempus Public Foundation).

²⁹ A new study on the cult and priesthood of Montu during the New Kingdom is, however, currently being prepared by David Chapman in his dissertation at Macquarie University purposing to extend the corpus of Werner (personal communication, 16/04/2021).

³⁰ C. M. SHEIKHOLESAMI, “The Burials of Priests of Montu at Deir el-Bahari in the Theban Necropolis”, in N. Strudwick, J.H. Taylor (eds.), *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future*, London, 2003, p. 131-137; *id.*, “The End of the Libyan Period and the Resurgence of the Cult of Montu”, in G.P.F. Broekman, R.J. Demarée, O.E. Kaper (eds.), *The Libyan Period in Egypt: Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st -24th Dynasties: Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25-27 October 2007*, Leiden, 2009, p. 361-374; *id.*, “Montu Priests in Third Intermediate Period Thebes”, in E. Pischikova, J. Budka, K. Griffin (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium BC: Art and Archaeology of the Kushite Period and Beyond*, *GHP Egyptology* 27, London, 2018, p. 375-393; *id.*, “Montu Priestly Families at Deir el-Bahari in the Third Intermediate Period”, in Z.E. Szafranski (ed.), *Deir el-Bahari Studies 2, Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 27/2, Warsaw, 2018, p. 325-363; *id.*, “Montu Priestly Families and the Cults of Amun and Osiris in Twenty-fifth Dynasty at Thebes”, *BSFE* 204, 2021, p. 91-113.

Dynasties has been also put forward in a short paper (2011)³¹ by A.M. Villar Gómez. One should also indicate the paper of L. Bohnenkämper (2015)³² on the distribution of titles in the Besenmut family as well as the contribution of K. Jansen-Winkel (2018)³³ on the title *smꜣty Wꜣsty* and its connection with the local priesthood.

On the other hand, studies of the past decades have greatly contributed to our knowledge on the local theology of Thebes and the deities involved.³⁴ Several papers focused on Montu mainly in the context of the rites of Djeme,³⁵ the annual Khoiak festival³⁶ or on his connection with Amun,³⁷ the protagonist of the local cosmogony. Montu was therefore treated from a theological point of view³⁸ in papers relating to the divinities of Graeco-Roman Thebes thus a cult-based approach to the god, his cultic and administrative personnel in the temples of Medamud, North Karnak, Armant and Tod would be most welcomed regarding the last millennium (7th century BC - 4th century AD) of his Theban career.³⁹

³¹ A.M. VILLAR GÓMEZ, “Los dignatarios tebanos de las dinastías XXV y XXVI: el sacerdocio del dios Montu”, in J.C. Oliva Mompeán, J. A. Belmonte Marín (eds.), *Esta Toledo, aquella Babilonia: Convivencia e interacción en las sociedades del Oriente y del Mediterráneo Antiguos*, *Collección Estudios* 131, 2011, p. 577-584.

³² L. BOHNENKÄMPER, “Diener von Month und Amun: Zur Tradierung von Priestertiteln in der *Bs-n-Mw.t-Familie*”, in L.D. Morenz, A. el Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe: Festschrift für die Ägyptologin Ursula Rößler-Köhler zum 64. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden, 2015, p. 103-135.

³³ K. JANSEN-WINKELN, “Der Titel *zmꜣ(tj) Wꜣst(j)* und die Propheten des Month in Theben”, *SAK* 47, 2018, p. 121-135.

³⁴ Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 1)*, *CENiM* 3, Montpellier, 2009; *id.*, *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 2)*, *CENiM* 8, Montpellier, 2013; *id.*, *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 3)*, *CENiM* 13, Montpellier, 2015; D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun: Egyptian Temple Construction and Theology in Roman Thebes*, *MRE* 15, Turnhout, 2012.

³⁵ C. SAMBIN, “Médamoud: le sanctuaire Djémê de Montou”, in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 3)*, *CENiM* 13, Montpellier, 2015, p. 273-294.

³⁶ Chr. THIERS, Y. VOLOKHINE, *Ermant I. Les cryptes du temple ptolémaïque: Étude épigraphique*, *MIFAO* 124, Le Caire, 2005, p. 77-79; D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 392-398.

³⁷ F. RELATS MONTSERRAT, L. MEDINI, A. FORTIER, *BIFAO* 118, 2018, p. 391-396.

³⁸ See *inter alia*: A. FORTIER, “Les Cinq dieux à Tôd et Médamoud”, in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 1)*, *CENiM* 3, Montpellier, 2009, p. 19-27; *id.*, “L’offrande du pectoral: une offrande spécifique de Montou?”, in Chr. Zivie-Coche (ed.), *Offrandes, rites et rituels dans les temples d’époques ptolémaïque et romaine: Actes de la journée d’études de l’équipe EPHE (EA 4519) « Égypte ancienne: Archéologie, Langue, Religion », Paris, 27 juin 2013*, *CENiM* 10, Montpellier, 2015, p. 123-147; E. JAMBON, A. FORTIER, “Médamoud n° 343”, in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 1)*, *CENiM* 3, Montpellier, 2009, p. 49-94; Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 4)*, *CENiM* 27, Montpellier, 2021; D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 147-167; C. NIVET-SAMBIN, “Montou, taureau de Médamoud à Karnak Nord”, in L. Gabolde (ed.), *Un savant au pays du fleuve-dieu: Hommages égyptologiques à Paul Barguet*, *Kyphi* 7, Paris & Lyon, 2015, p. 177-181; Chr. ZIVIE-COCHE, “L’Ogdoade à Thèbes à l’époque ptolémaïque (III): le pylône du petit temple de Médinet Habou”, in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 3)*, *CENiM* 13, Montpellier, 2015, p. 327-397; *id.*, “Isis et Montou en Thèbaïde: D’Auguste aux Antonins, histoire de Deir Chelouit”, in A. Gasse, L. Bazin Rizzo, Fr. Servajean (eds.), *Sinfonietta égypto-romaine: Hommages à Jean-Claude Grenier*, *CENiM* 26, Milano, 2020, p. 160-173.

³⁹ D. VARGA, “The Cult of Montu and the Bull at Medamud in the Ptolemaic Period”, in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 4)*, Montpellier, 2021, p. 163-184; *id.*, “The Children of Montu: Harpara and Horus-Shu in Ptolemaic and Roman Thebes”, in *Proceedings of “Gods & Humans in Ancient Egypt”: Current Research & Multidisciplinary Approaches: First International Egyptological Conference in Romania* (in press).

Objectives and sources of a cult-based research

The intention of my research is to highlight the last millennium of the indigenous Theban cult of Montu by collecting the relevant sources associated with his personnel and analyzing them in the context of the local theological tradition of Thebes. The documentation is obviously distributed between the four temples of the god in the 4th Upper Egyptian Nome. Taking the current research of Sheikholeslami into account, my investigation begins with the Saite Oracle Papyrus (P. Brooklyn 47.218.3)⁴⁰ and the status and cult of Montu during the 7th century BC in the light of this private documentary text in which a *w'b*-priest of Amun is promoted to the rank of a prophet of Montu-Re-Harakhty of Armant by a public oracle of Amonrasonther.

After the relative abundance of primary sources from the 25th-26th Dynasties, provided by the burials of the Montu priestly families in Deir el-Bahari and its vicinity, one may find the evidence scarce and dispersed since such collective burial places – dated to the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods – have not been discovered as yet in any of the four cult centers of Montu. Private monuments of the Third Intermediate Period rarely mention his priesthood outside Thebes proper⁴¹ while Medamud, Armant and Tod appear more frequently in later sources thus enabling us to determine the local personnel of each temple to a certain degree.

Dealing with any kind of prosopographical research, one has to face with a major challenge, namely the scattered nature of primary sources in museums and private collections throughout the world. The database comprises mainly statues, burial assemblages (coffins, cartonnages, sarcophagi, stelae, papyri, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures), situlae, priestly seats, graffiti, abnormal hieratic/demotic legal and economic papyri and ostraca. The textual information of these private monuments are written in hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic and occasionally Greek. One of the primary group of sources for studying the cult of Montu in the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods comprises not funerary equipments, as opposed to the 25th-26th Dynasties, but temple statues from the Karnak Cachette. As H. de Meulenaere pointed out,⁴² no absolute dates can be ascribed to the statues of the last centuries BC due to the complete lack of royal cartouches on them thus one can date these monuments only on the basis of stylistic features, paleography, orthography and characteristic formulas. The collection of different types of monuments that once belonged to the same person or his/her relatives, however, can greatly contribute to the compilation of personal and family dossiers – an effective method to study the higher echelons of the Theban clergy.⁴³

⁴⁰ TM no. 56305: R.A. PARKER, *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum (Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.3)*, Providence, 1962.

⁴¹ Medamud: K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Inschriften der Spätzeit, Teil II: Die 22.-24. Dynastie*, Wiesbaden, 2007, p. 243-245 (25.51), 306-309 (29.23) (statues Cairo CG 42221 and CG 42224); Armant: K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften der Spätzeit aus dem Ägyptischen Museum Kairo*, I-II, *ÄAT* 45, Wiesbaden, 2001, p. 23-33 (statues Cairo JE 36971 and 36998); JWIS II, p. 156-159 (19.7) (statue Cairo JE 37374); Tod: Fr. PAYRAUDEAU, *Administration, société et pouvoir à Thèbes sous la XXII^e dynastie bubastite*, I-II, *BdE* 160, Le Caire, 2014, p. 457-458 (doc. 85-H), 459-460 (doc. 85-J) (intermediary coffins of Padiamenet (iii) and Nespaqashuty (vi)).

⁴² H. DE MEULENAERE, “La prosopographie thébaine de l’époque ptolémaïque à la lumière des sources hiéroglyphiques”, in S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, P. L. Bat. 27, Leiden & New York & Köln, 1995, p. 84.

⁴³ J. QUAEGBEUR, “À la recherche du haut clergé thébain à l’époque gréco-romaine”, in S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, P. L. Bat. 27, Leiden & New York & Köln, 1995, p. 160-161; R. BIRK, *Türöffner des Himmels: Prosopographische Studien zur thebanischen Hohepriesterschaft der Ptolemäerzeit*, *ÄA* 76, Wiesbaden, 2020, p. 3.

Suitable approaches towards the theology and cult of Montu

Studying Montu in the context of the local theological doctrine of Thebes, scholars basically have to turn their attention to monumental evidence, i.e. various types of inscriptions in late temples of the Theban region (temples of Karnak, temples of the West Bank, satellite temples of Montu). These texts comprise countless divine epithets, hymns⁴⁴ and monographies,⁴⁵ namely longer texts theologically explaining the local peculiarities of different topographical elements in the sacred landscape, from which several, site-specific characteristics of Montu can be distinguished. With respect to monographies on ancient Egyptian gods,⁴⁶ M.A. Stadler has established that a geographical approach can be more suitable for the major temples of the Graeco-Roman Period which offer richer material and have a developed and coherent mythological base. The four temples, and hence the Four Montus, are perfectly suitable for such approach as late texts constantly emphasize their role as protectors of Thebes and Amun⁴⁷ which thus constitutes the mytho-theological background of the Theban Palladium. This could enable us to place each hypostasis both in a local and a supraregional context including, *inter alia*, the bellicose guardian Montus principally at Medamud and Tod, the deceased creator and solar successor manifestations at Armant and his form as royal heir to Amun in Karnak.⁴⁸

Investigating the cult of Montu in the Thebaid one could apply both a dossier-based and a corpus-based approach. By the former method independent personal data can be assembled and combined into dossiers in which the diversity of sources can provide different independent dating criteria. This approach can be used e.g. in the cases of the 30th Dynasty – early Ptolemaic family of Nesmin and his sons Amenhotep and Petemestous⁴⁹ or the family of Monkores and Pamonthes-Plenis⁵⁰ in the late Ptolemaic – early Roman Period. In other cases, however, when the number of satisfactory sources on a single person is limited, a corpus-based approach is more favorable in which the documents are arranged by other criteria such as a specific deity or cult place with whom/which the owners of the monuments are associated.⁵¹ The distribution of private sources between Medamud, North Karnak, Armant and Tod enables us, on the one hand, to study the personnel of each Montu separately highlighting the local characteristics of the cults. On the other hand, interconnections between the four temples can be also examined as many priests served in more than a single cult place

⁴⁴ See e.g. the Ptolemaic hymn on Bab el-Abd and the hymns of Antoninus Pius on the South Gate of the Small Temple in Medinet Habu: S.H. AUFRÈRE, *op. cit.*, §§ 212-216 (= *Urk.* VIII, no. 48); D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 355-359.

⁴⁵ For monographies, see: D. VON RECKLINGHAUSEN, “Monographien in den Soubassements”, in A. Rickert, B. Ventker (eds.), *Altägyptische Enzyklopädien: Die Soubassements in den Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Soubassementstudien I), *SSR* 7, Wiesbaden, 2014, p. 29-50.

⁴⁶ M.A. STADLER, *Weiser und Wesir: Studien zu Vorkommen, Rolle und Wesen des Gottes Thot im ägyptischen Totenbuch*, Tübingen, 2009, p. 7-8.

⁴⁷ É. DRIOTON, *CdE* 6, 1931, p. 259-270; A. FORTIER, in *D3T* 1, 2009, p. 19-27.

⁴⁸ D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 149-167.

⁴⁹ Statues Cairo JE 36714, JE 36715, JE 37140, JE 37193, JE 37215, situlae Louvre AF 6930 and Cairo CG 3447. For the sources, see: L. COULON, “Religion de l’Égypte ancienne”, *AEPHE* 125, 2018, p. 89-90.

⁵⁰ H.J. THISSEN, “Zur Familie des Strategen Monkores”, *ZPE* 27, 1977, p. 181-191.

⁵¹ See e.g.: D. KLOTZ, “The Theban Cult of Chonsu the Child in the Ptolemaic Period”, in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (*D3T* 1), *CENiM* 3, Montpellier, 2009, p. 95-134; M. CLAUDE, *La IX^e province de Haute-Égypte (Akhmîm): organisation culturelle et topographie religieuse, de l’Ancien Empire à l’époque romaine*, Unpublished thesis, Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3, 2017; G. SCHREIBER, *The Sacred Baboons of Khonsu: History of a Theban Cult*, Budapest, 2020.

of the god. Thus the Four Montus and the local personnel attached to them were closely linked with each other reflecting both in the theological tradition and the cultic organization.

A few words should be also said on the onomastic approach to Montu, i.e. the study of anthroponyms comprising the name or epithets of the deity – an often neglected subject of *Göttermonographien*.⁵² Theophoric names with Montu was only treated by van Walsem relating to Deir el-Medina in the New Kingdom.⁵³ A thorough discussion of all occurrences lies outside the scope of my dissertation, however, some general remarks on the popularity of Montu in the Thebaid and on the intimate connection between the bearers of the names and the divinity can be deduced from the approximately 140 different name types collected in the course of the research.

Related deities and their inclusion in a study on Montu

A deity constitutes, in a manner, a micro-society with several other gods and goddesses;⁵⁴ accordingly, the nature of a divinity cannot be examined separately excluding his/her relation with other deities. Regarding Montu, one can list, at least, three divine consorts (Tjenenet, Iunyt, Rattawy),⁵⁵ two child gods (Harpre, Horus-Shu)⁵⁶ and three taurine manifestations (Buchis,⁵⁷ August Bull of Medamud, Bull of Medamud) connected with him. Accordingly, it is also essential to extend the investigation to these closely related divinities in order to offer an even more comprehensive picture on Montu.

Earlier scholars already devoted detailed studies on a number of these deities focusing mostly on the theological analysis, however, their cultic worship has been a rather neglected subject as yet.⁵⁸ All these gods, goddesses and taurine forms can be traced not only in monumental sources but in the Theban prosopography as well having their own cult with priests involved beside that of Montu.

It is enough here to mention only a few instances: a sacerdotal family whose male members (Rahat and his son Montuemhat) are known by a handful of private statues from the Karnak Cachette served the cults of Montu, Rattawy and the Bull of Medamud (*p3 k3 (n) M3dw*) in the temple of Medamud during the 30th Dynasty – early Ptolemaic Period.⁵⁹ On his fragmentary statue (Louvre E 20361) and the usurped sarcophagus of Ankhnesneferibre (BM EA 32) Pamonthes-Plenis, a member of the famous Hermonthite *strategos*-family,⁶⁰ lists a series of

⁵² O.E. KAPER, *The Egyptian God Tutu: A Study of the Sphinx-God and Master of Demons with a Corpus of Monuments*, OLA 119, Leuven, 2003, p. 179-186; H. KOCKELMANN, *Der Herr der Seen, Sümpfe und Flußläufe: Untersuchungen zum Gott Sobek und den ägyptischen Krokodilgötter-Kulten von den Anfängen bis zur Römerzeit, Teil 2: Kulttopographie und rituelle Wirklichkeit*, ÄA 74, Wiesbaden, 2017, p. 539-553 (§§ 183-188).

⁵³ R. VAN WALSEM, in *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina*, 1982, p. 198-206. For theophoric names with the Buchis bull, see: W. CLARYSSE, “Theban Personal Names and the Cult of Bouchis”, in H.-J. Thissen, K.-Th. Zauzich (eds.), *Grammata Demotika: Festschrift für Erich Lüdeckens zum 15. Juni 1983*, Würzburg, 1984, p. 25-39.

⁵⁴ M.A. STADLER, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 9.

⁵⁵ D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 132-133 (Iunyt), 204-212 (Rattawy), 218-221 (Tjenenet).

⁵⁶ D. BUDDE, “Harpare-pa-chered: Ein ägyptisches Götterkind im Theben der Spätzeit und griechisch-römischen Epoche”, in D. Budde, S. Sandri, U. Verhoeven (eds.), *Kindgötter im Ägypten der griechisch-römischen Zeit: Zeugnisse aus Stadt und Tempel als Spiegel des interkulturellen Kontakts*, OLA 128, Leuven, 2003, p. 15-110.

⁵⁷ L. GOLDBRUNNER, *Buchis: Eine Untersuchung zur Theologie des heiligen Stieres in Theben zur griechisch-römischen Zeit*, MRE 11, Turnhout, 2004.

⁵⁸ Cf. D. BUDDE, in *Kindgötter im Ägypten der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, 2003, p. 45-46; L. GOLDBRUNNER, *Buchis*, p. 256-281.

⁵⁹ On the family, see: D. VARGA, in *D3T 4*, Montpellier, 2021, p. 163-164.

⁶⁰ H.J. THISSEN, *ZPE 27*, 1977, p. 181-191.

priestly titles relating to the local cults of Montu, Tjenenet, Iunyt, Rattawy, Harpre, Horus-Shu and the Buchis bull.⁶¹ A Ptolemaic cuboid statue (Cairo T.R. 18/12/24/4)⁶² belongs to a man called Peteharpres whose paternal grandfather held the title “god’s father and prophet of Harpre, the very great child, first born of Amun” (*it-ntr hm-ntr Hr-p(3)-R p(3) hrd ʿ3 wr tpy n ’Imn*) which was not inherited either by his son or his grandson who, otherwise, had titles connected with the cult of Amun in Karnak.

From a diachronic point of view, Montu’s cult in Thebes enjoyed an apparently uninterrupted popularity from the Middle Kingdom to the Roman Period which can be traced in (1) his elaborated late theology inserted in the local tradition, (2) the extensive building activities in his temples and (3) the considerable number of his temple personnel throughout Thebes. At what point did the cult of Montu come to an end and in which temple can the cultic activity be traced at the latest? Among the several questions, arisen in the course of the research, this should be the most obvious one to be answered since we face one of the latest attested pagan cults in Thebes. The last traditional building projects in the temples of the Theban Palladium (especially at Medamud, Armant and Tod) were carried out under the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD)⁶³ while the last funerary stelae of the Buchis bull and his mother-cow from the Bucheum⁶⁴ can be dated to the beginning of the 4th century AD. How the cult of Montu changed during this period of almost two centuries, which then terminated with its eventual demise, is a challenging issue due to the scattered and incomplete documentation. We are forced to rely mainly on ostraca, proskynemata and onomasticon that can provide some hints on the final phase of this indigenous Theban cult.

⁶¹ For these objects and a detailed analysis of the titles, see: D. VARGA, “The Children of Montu”, 2021 (forthcoming).

⁶² K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *BRIS* I, p. 254-257; II, p. 436-437 (no. 40).

⁶³ D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 364-365.

⁶⁴ J.-Cl. GRENIER, “La stèle funéraire du dernier taureau Bouchis (Caire JE 31901 = Stèle Bucheum 20)”, *BIFAO* 83, 1983, p. 197-208; *id.*, “La stèle de la mère d’un Bouchis datée de Licinus et de Constantin”, *BIFAO* 102, 2002, p. 247-258.

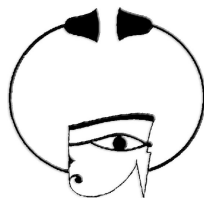
Résumé :

L'étude traite de quelques méthodologies et d'approches possibles concernant le culte de Montou dans les temples du palladium thébain (Médamoud, Karnak Nord, Ermant, Tôd) dans les époques tardives, ptolémaïque et romaine. Un bref résumé de l'histoire et de l'état actuel de la recherche est également inclus.

Abstract:

The study deals with some methodological possibilities and suitable approaches regarding the cult of Montu in the temples of the Theban Palladium (Medamud, North Karnak, Armant, Tod) during the Late, Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. A brief overview of the research history and the current state of research are also included.

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