

Original article

THE NOTION OF THE "THREE HILL COUNTRY" IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

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




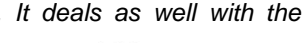






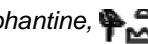
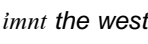

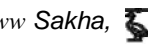








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Abstract

The ancient times witnessed no deserts as the vast deserts were once agricultural territories enriched by water of the heavy rains. By the Pharaonic Periods, the Nile Valley was restricted between two barren plateaus; these deserts were formed of several hilly chains of sands traversed by valleys linking between the Nile and the deserts. These hilly chains were represented on the Egyptian monuments and its accompanying texts by the sign  *h3st* which is the origin of our main concern. The research deals with the significance of the  *h3st* sign such as the deserts, the foreign countries the necropolis; and its various ways of writings in the ancient Egypt Language . Then, the study throws some light on the types of land referred to as  *h3st* such as the mountainous land, the foreign countries surrounding the Egyptian land and the deserts. It also focuses on the names of the geographical divisions determined with the  *h3st* sign  *dšrt*,  *smyt*,  *Mrw*,  *Nw*,  *Wrt*,  *Bw*. It deals as well with the names of the Egyptian provinces and regions determined with the Sign  *h3st* such as:  *3bw* Elephantine,  *imnt* the west,  *h3sww* Sakha,  *s3ww* Wadi El-Guawassis,  *šw* El-Kosseir,  *swn3* Shouna,  *d3fty* Safa,  *wh3t* The Oases, etc... Then the research focuses on the notion of the  "three hill country" in the ancient Egyptian texts through the different historical phases indicating the various significances meant by the determinative  *h3st*:- the determinative of the eastern and western mountains, the determinative of the necropolis and the determinative of the foreign countries. It also studies the titles related to the term  *h3st*: either titles related to the foreign countries or the deserts. Finally, the study ends by the scenes and monuments related to the sign  *h3st*, and the gods' titles and names related to the  *h3st* sign as the Gods Spd, Ha and Min.


Keywords: *h3st*, deserts, foreign countries, hills, Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom, land.

1. Introduction




The ancient times witnessed no deserts as the vast deserts were once an agricultural territories enriched by the water of the heavy rains, of which traces





of plains could be visible till now in the Egyptian deserts. Then, these places faced great climatic changes that led to the desertification of the lands [1]. By the

Pharaonic Periods, the Nile Valley was restricted between two barren plateaus; these deserts were formed of several hilly chains of sands traversed by valleys linking between the Nile and the deserts. Nowadays, the Egyptian farmers are linked to their fields located in the vicinity of the Nile Valley that could be reached through numerous sandy ups and downs. These farmers (fillah) as soon as they traverse their agricultural line of land, they consider themselves in the deserts depicted in their minds as the mountain (el-gabal). The mountain which

was the same idea thought by their ancient Egyptian predecessors who represented the sandy hilly ups and downs for (el-gabal) or the mountain on the Egyptian monuments and its accompanying texts by the sign , which is the origin of our main concern in the following pages (the three hill country) sign that had a variety of significances for the ancient Egyptians determining the necropolis, the deserts, the mines, the quarries and the foreign countries [2].

2. The Significance of the *h3st* Sign

This hieroglyphic sign, fig. (1) appeared in the ancient Egyptian texts and inscriptions representing the hilly areas outside the Nile Valley: vast distances including the deserts and semi desert regions surrounding the valley as well as any foreign land. The three hills of the sign adapted the signifying colors (yellow-pink and reddish) of the deserts and the sandy terrains with scattered darker spots indicating the roughness of the area. The  *h3st* sign was used in most of its aspects to refer to both the geographical point of view and the cultural interaction with the foreigners [3]. From the ancient Egyptian point of view, it is hypothetically assumed that the  *h3st* sign was the contrary of the sign  *t3* “the land” [4] that is on the other side indicated the green line running along the bottom, illustrating the cultivated land of the Nile Valley. Thus, the *h3st* sign is a mixture of naturalistic image and graphic convention: the idea of asperity of the earth and its sandy, rocky nature that also characterizes the natural

depiction of the desert regions within the numerous hunting scenes decorating the Egyptian tombs and temples. Moreover, being on the borders was a source of danger emphasized by the invasion of nomads attacking Egypt to benefit from the stable life on the boundaries of the River Nile. These nomads formed one of the dangers that threatened the Egyptians because of their usual and repeated attempts to penetrate the Egyptian territories because of the bad conditions of their countries that led to a great difficulty of living due to the increasing aridity (that started in the remote Pliocene Era and ended in the Third Millennium BC) that was linguistically and scenery expressed by the three barren hill country sign  *h3st* [3]. Thus, the term is closely connected with the arid, barren desert of which the main aspect was the sands that perhaps can be explained by the usage of the term *h3st* as a related phrase with the vocabulary indicating sands  []  *h3st s'ci* signifying the sandy desert as a land or an inhabited region [5].

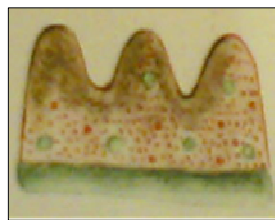























Figure (1) the *h3st* sign (After Smith, 1949, p. 379, plate B.)




3. The *h3st* Sign in the Ancient Egyptian Language



The word  *h3st* was written in various ways as  during the Old Kingdom [5], then became  by the Middle Kingdom [7], and then  and  in the New Kingdom [5]. The term was attested in other variants such as  since the Old Kingdom to be read as *h3st* referring to the foreign countries or the desert. Sometimes read as *smyt* indicating the desert and the hilly lands which was also written as , ,  [5]. Moreover, Gauthier mentioned that the term  *h3st* is a general term that was used to indicate the mountainous foreign countries, the desert, the deserted provinces and the necropolis [7]. Brugsch supposed that the word *h3st* is derived from the verb  *h3s* meaning to escape, to run away, or to be saved of a danger [8]. Meeks defined the term  as the hills flanking the Nile Valley that were naturally cultivated then they were deserted due to the climatic changes to be complete deserts [9]. However, Gauthier refused these ideas

stating that the word *h3st* is a name applied in general for all the foreign countries in addition to the deserts and the provinces on the desert edge as what will be explained in the following pages.

It is well attested that  *h3st inb h4d* referred to the deserts surrounding Memphis on which the great pyramids are built [10]. As a general expression, *h3st* was used to express the foreign countries as *h3st w3it* expressing the far countries, *h3swt mh3tiw* referring to the northern countries and *h3swt sm3w mh3tiw* indicating both the northern and southern countries [10]. The dual form of the word was  *h3sty* means the two foreign regions (outside the Egyptian proper borders) that was referred to by Brugsch as foreign countries depending on the ancient Egyptian texts that applied the word on the lands located outside their borders. Thus, it is considered to be foreign lands. Finally, the plural form of the word *h3swt* varied as it was written as , ,  [5], , , , and  [7].




4. Types of Lands Referred to as *h3st*




The term *h3st* appeared usually with both the determinatives  and  [5] that was hypothetically applied on three kinds of lands as follows: **1-** The mountainous lands as a contrary for the flat fertile land  *t3* that may explain the reason why it was written with three hills or mountains. Most probably as an indication for the mountainous inflated lands [10]. **2-** The *h3st* lands as the foreign countries surrounding the


Egyptian lands such as  *h3st pwnt* “the land of Punt” recorded on the walls of the temple of Hatshepsut. **3-** The *h3st* lands as deserts; the term was sometimes used to indicate the deserts in general [5] that are evidenced in the description of Amun-Rê as  *Imn r3 nb h3st* “Amun-Rê Master of Deserts” the title occurred in an inscription of Ramses IV at Wadi Hamamat [11].

5. Names of the Geographical Divisions Determined with the Sign *h3st*


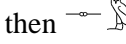




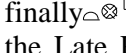




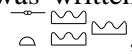
-  *d3rt*

The denomination, that was applied to the deserts since the Old Kingdom, was ,  to be  during the Middle


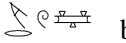



Kingdom, then it was written as  by the New Kingdom (Eighteenth Dynasty) and, finally, , 

and  during the Greco-Roman Period [5]. The term was translated by Faulkner [12], as the red land referring to the red color indicating the extreme barren nature of the deserts with the reflection of the sun rays and temperature on the yellow sands giving the red color [13]. Also, it was




-  *smyt*

This term; indicating the foreign countries, the deserts and the necropolis; attested in the Egyptian texts was written in different variants as  during the Old Kingdom, then  by the Middle Kingdom that was changed twice during the New Kingdom as the texts of the New Kingdom (Eighteenth Dynasty) recorded the term as ,  and . Whereas, the Amarna period texts mentioned the *smyt* as  [5] and finally , , , ,  during the Late Period. The term was written in the plural form as:- .

-  *Mrw*






One of the terms that was applied to the adjacent barren regions since the New Kingdom. It was written as  *mrw* during the Eighteenth Dynasty [14],  by the New Kingdom and ,  and  in the Late Period [5]. Moreover, the pronunciation *mrw* continued in the Coptic language [15]. The term was used in the Egyptian language to indicate the desert and the



-  *Nw*



The deserts were known as *nw* in the ancient Egyptian language as it appeared since the Old Kingdom in the pyramid texts , in addition to , . It refers also to

-  *W^crt*



explained by Gauthier as the black yellowish lands referring to the deserts flanking the River Nile including the rocky, sandy and barren lands. Moreover, he mentioned that the term *dšrt* is a contrary of the term "*kmt*" or the black fertile land of Egypt [7].

, , , ,  [7].

The term *smyt* was meant in one of its aspects to indicate the place of the wild animals or the mines [5]. The word *smyt* appeared either with the determinative  referring to the three hill country on the edge of the cultivated land and the town hieroglyph  or the two crossed streets [4] perhaps to indicate the exploitation of these sandy hills surrounding the Egyptian lands, the establishment of a living town for the workers of mines, or the planning of the necropolis taking the form of a town for the deceased.



bad conditioned living regions; the places where the wild animals live (deserts in a metaphoric reference) [5]. However, it was stated by Faulkner that the term *mrw* signifies the adjacent coastal regions, port and sea shores [12]. The term was written usually with the determinative three hill country sign *h3st*  or the avenue with trees *w3t*  [4].


the hunting zones [5] in the deserts (that is emphasized by the hunting stick in the written hieroglyph of the word, used in the wild animals hunting activities) [16].

Faulkner stated that the word was meant to indicate the deserts, in addition to the desert hill bases. The term was usually written with the determinatives  and  [12].




-   *Bw*

The word signifies the place, but in some cases it was written with the

During the Old and the Middle Kingdom the word *W^rrt* referred to the necropolis and it was written as  and  [5].



determinative  to indicate the desert [12].

6. Names of the Egyptian Provinces and Regions Determined with the Sign *h³st*

-    *3bw* **Elephantine**

One of the Nile islands at the northern end of the First Cataract that



existed since the early Pre-Dynastic Period [17].

-   *imnt* **the west**

The Third Nome of Lower Egypt [18], it extended along the western boundary of the Canopic Nile for about 147, 523 km [19]. This Nome

was referred to by the Greek and Latin geographers as the Libyan province due to its borders with the western desert [20].

-  *k3 h³st*   *h³sww* **Sakha**

 *k3 h³st* [20]  *h³sww* Sakha [18], the sixth Nome of Lower Egypt, current Sakha about some

kilometers to the south of Kafr El-Sheikh governorate [21].

-    *r3pwh* **Raffah**




The city is located along the Mediterranean between Egypt and Palestine about 45 km to the east of El-

Areish, on the eastern borders of Egyptian land [22].

-    *tkw* **Tell El-Maskhouta**




The capital of the Eighth Nome of Lower Egypt, located on the site of ancient (Beithoum). Now, it is cons-

idered as a village in El-Esmaeliya governorate.

-    *brw* **El-Kantara**

According to Gauthier 1925-1931 [7] It was the capital of the Fourteenth

Nome of Lower Egypt called "*hnt i3bt*" [23].

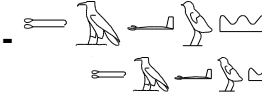

-    *ti k3* **Gabel Ataqa**


Gauthier has mentioned a mountainous region to the east of Egypt


between the Red Sea and the land that must have been named Gabel Ataqa [7].


-     *s3ww* **Wadi El-Guawassis**


One of the Red Sea ports near Safaga about 7 km away from the Red

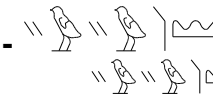
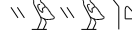
-  *B^cw* **El-Kosseir**
 *B^cw* El-Kosseir, it is a port which is considered


-  *dr3w, r3 3w wsir* **Tora**
 The site is located about some kilometers south eastern Cairo, it represented for most of the historical


-  *pr h3 nb imnty* **Berenbal**
 A site located on the Lake Brollous nearby Menyet El-Morshed



-  *Bršibi* **Dershaba**
 One of the ancient villages in Gharbiya governorate. It was mentioned by Gauthier as a site in

-  *swn3* **Shouna**
 The site was stated to be located in the Monofiya governorate or it represented the ancient name of Sa

-  *iwiw* **Ebia El-Hamraa**
 *iwiw* Ebia El-Hamraa, a name of one of an ancient

-  *b3b3wy* **Biban**
 The name was stated addressing a site separating between the Libyan Desert and Wadi EL-

-  *dmitiw* **Demitio**
 One of the ancient villages at Kom Hamada mentioned several times in the ancient Egyptian and the Coptic

-  *ibhit* **Ebheet El-Haguar**
 Gauthier mentioned this name as  *bhiti* stating that it

-  *d3fty* **Safa**

Sea coast. It existed at least since the Old Kingdom [24].

one of the most ancient ports on the Red Sea [25].

periods the source of the fine limestone that was used in the great constructional works [21].

about 65 km to the north of "Kafr El-Sheikh" governorate [18].

Syria or Palestine. The name of the site was stated to be a part of the Egyptian land nearby Fowa [7].


El-Hagar [18]. The name was mentioned by Gauthier as a site in Palestine [7].

village at EL-Dalanguat [7] that lies in the northern western part of Egypt.

Natrun. Thus, the site is one of the ancient villages belonging to Beheira governorate [18].

texts as one of the Lower Egyptian villages [18].

represents a non specific region either in Asia or in Africa [7].

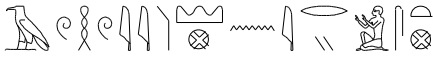
 *d3fty* Safa, it is one of the ancient villages that belonging

to Assiute governorate at the present time [7].

-  **mr Meir**


Gauthier has mentioned a locality called Moirai or Moirou stating that it was in the nearby of Manfalout located on the western boundary of the Nile about 15 km

north of Assiout including the necropolis of the rulers of the Fourteenth Upper Egyptian Nome in the Old and the Middle Kingdom [26].

-  **Paris**

An ancient village called originally Iris then it became Paris. It was mentioned by Gauthier as




Tkhonenyris stating the position nearby the Kharga Oasis [7].

-  **The Necropolis**

The term was used to indicate the necropolis in the New Kingdom texts, especially in the texts of Deir El-

Medinah that will be explained later on.

-  **The Necropolis**

The sign  used to determine different words related to the west and the necropolis of which the term  *hrt-ntr* as 


im3hw hr wsir nb krs m hrt-ntr revered with Osiris the lord of burial in the necropolis [27].


-  **The Life of the Two Lands**

The name applied to one of the districts of ancient Memphis. Kitchen, mentioned that outside the white wall district (the ancient name of Memphis) at the very beginning of its history there was "*nh t3wy*" [28] where a number of funerary temples for a number of


successive kings starting from Amenhotep III till Ramses II extend. It was mentioned that this part is closely connected to the western part of the city in an earlier period. However, it is difficult to determine the proper site of this part of the city [29].



-  **The Oases** [30]

The ancient Egyptians applied the term  *wh3t* for the oasis that gives almost the same pronunciation for the modern Arabic word Waha [5].

Gauthier stated that  was linguistically used as a general term for the oases of the western desert and not any specific oasis [7].

-  **Sinai**

Meaning the scales [5] as the peninsula was connected with the scales of turquoise to the extent of applying the term  *mfk3t*

written as  in the Old Kingdom,  by the Middle Kingdom on Wadi Maghara at Sinai which is the

same denomination of the turquoise in the ancient Egyptian language.

7. The Notion of "Three hill country" in the Ancient Egyptian Texts through the Different Historical Phases

This part of the study concerns indicating the various significances mainly of the different textual examples meant by the determinative  *h3st*

7.1. The determinative of the eastern and western mountains

7.1.1. The coffin texts

Spell 404

(The arrival at the first portal of the field of Rushes)



tkm rn.f htp.f (m) 3ht imntt iw.f rh.f 3ht i3btt

“He (the gate-keeper) opens up the western horizon, he knows the eastern horizon, and his name is "Tkm" [31].

Spell 818



ndm ib.f m m ntrw m 3ht imntt htp.f m ʕnh m 3ht hr nw

“He is happy among the gods in the western horizon, (and) he sets in life in the horizon with Nu”.

7.1.2. The book of the dead

Chapter 17



Wbn.f m 3ht i3bt nt pt

“he (Rê) rises in the eastern horizon of the sky [32].

7.1.3. Stela of (*hr m hb*) in the British museum (N. 551)

Both the eastern and the western horizons were mentioned in the context of this stele as:



p3 wbn m 3ht i3bt

“This shines in the eastern horizon” [33].

7.2. The determinative of the necropolis

7.2.1. A text from the temple of Deir El-Medinah reads

10. Côte nord (→) 



Bikt wrt mryt inm s3t rʕ mry ib.f nsyt bit 3st wrt mwt ntr ht-hr špst wrt m hnm ʕnh t nbt styt m imntt w3st mryt di ʕnh dt.

Bikt hmt nsyt wrt ir .. rr hk3 mwt ntr ms hr nsyt-bit 3st wrthntw imntt špst wrt nbt t3-dšrt m i3t-d3mwt mryt di ʕnh dt

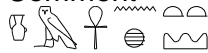
“The great falcon, beloved of Amun, the daughter of Rê, beloved of his heart. The queen of the south and the

north, Isis the great, the mother of the god, Hathor..... The honored in the necropolis, the mistress of the necropolis

to the west of Thebes, the beloved to be given life forever". "The falcon, the great royal wife who ..., suckles the ruler, the mother of the god who gave birth to Horus. The queen of the south and the

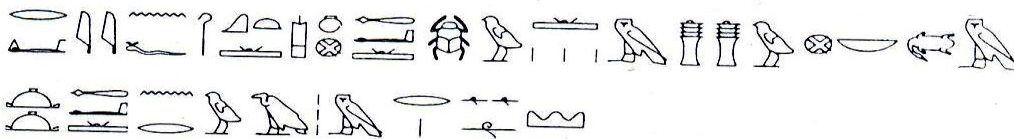
north, Isis the great.....mistress of the west, the strong, mistress of the necropolis in the "Djamut" the beloved one, to be given life forever".

▪ **Comment**



hnm nht is the name of the funerary temple of Thutmose I that was extended afterwards to contain the necropolises of the western border [34]. Gauthier stated that this expression meant (the hilly region united with life), that refers to the southern part of the Theban Necropolis including the Ramesseum, Deir El-Medinah and Medinet Habu. Then it was used as one unit addressing the necropolis in general [7].


7.2.2. In the recitations and prayers for the god in the Middle kingdom Pap. Louver C30



Rdy n.f hk3t Iwnw 3 hprw m ddw nb snd m T3ty 3 nrw m R3-st3w

"The one who is given the rule of *Iwnw* (Heliopolis), the great of appearances at *ddw* (Abu Sir), master of freight in *T3ty* , the powerful in *R3-st3w* (The Necropolis)" [35].

7.3. The determinative of the deserts

The sign  *h3st* referred to the vast deserts flanking the narrow strip of the Nile Valley that was evidenced

through some textual evidences as follows:


7.3.1. The sphinx stele of Amenhotep II



sh n.f sw mity ds.f hr nst.f nt n3hw sip n.f kmt r - ht.f d3rt m dtw.f

"He (the god Amun), made him (the king) appear like himself on his throne of the life giving him Egypt and the desert with its people" [33]

▪ **Comment**

Here, the sign  appeared as a determinative in the word *d3rt* that was used to signify the desert lands. Therefore, the role of the three hill country sign is apparent in ensuring the sandy nature of the regions in which it was used as determinative.

7.4. The determinative of the foreign countries:

The hieroglyphic sign  related to the foreign countries appeared in different textual evidences as follows:

7.4.1. A text from the reign of Thutmose III stating the great power of this great warrior



di.i n.k knt nht r h3swt nbt

"I gave you the victorious power over all the foreign countries" [33].

▪ **Comment**

Here, the vanquished *h3swt* foreign lands were mentioned as being conquered by the powerful pharaoh who was supported by the gods giving him *kn* that was used to indicate the materialistic power that leads usually to the victories [36].

7.4.2. Ramses II was mentioned as the conqueror of the foreign lands in a text reading



tnr hr h3swt nbt nb hps̄

“the seizer king of all the foreign countries, master of power” [5].

7.4.3. The foreign countries were mentioned as *h3st* in another text dated to the reign of Ramses III



di.n.(i) n.k phty.k r h3st nb(t) dt di.n.(i) n.k phty nbwy nhtw mntw

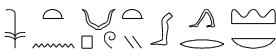
“Amun says "I gave you your power against any foreign country forever; I gave you all the power and victories of Montu”.

▪ **Comment**

The text here indicated the Egyptian control over all the foreign countries using the word *phty* that means human strength, the word that was used in the titles of several gods and kings referring to their power. The text here states the victories of Ramses III in all the foreign countries as he was given the power of the gods against them forever.

8. Titles Related to the Term  *h3st*

8.1. Titles related to the foreign countries



wpwty nsw r h3st nbt:

“The messengers of the king to all the foreign countries”, this title might have been held by the ambassadors of the Egyptian Kingdom to the adjacent foreign countries with whom Egypt had any kind of relationship [37].



imy-r h3swt nbt

“The overseer of all the deserts and the foreign countries” that was held by some Egyptian employees [5].



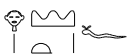
wʿf h3swt [5].

“The one who subdues the foreign nations”, this title appeared in the New Kingdom texts describing some great conqueror kings such as Ramses II [12].




hr h3swt

“The one who is over the foreign countries”, a title that was repeated many times concerning the relationship with the foreign countries [5].



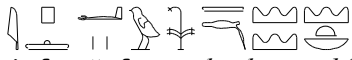
hr h3st.f

“The one who is over his desert (The foreign country)” that was used with some metals such as gold, silver and copper which were mainly extracted either from the


mines of the deserts or imported from some neighboring countries such as the gold of Nubia that was recorded as  *nwb hr h3st.f* “The gold over his desert” [5].


nb h3st

“Master of the foreign countries”. It was one of the titles of Amun-Rê the official god of ancient Egypt.


ip wy smw t3-mhw h3swt nb(w)t [38].

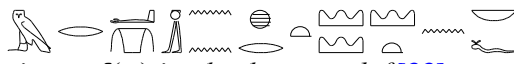
“The under-supervisor of the treasury who assesses the production of Upper and Lower Egypt and all the foreign lands”. [39].


imy-r ms hr h3swt

“The general of the army in the desert”, the person whose responsibility was to safeguard the frontier and the security of the mining expeditions sent to the desert [40]. The title was held by one of the Nobles of the Middle Kingdom during the reign of Montuhotep IV [41].



imy-r h3swt T3bt

“Overseer of the eastern desert”, the title was held by some of the Middle Kingdom Nobles indicating the importance of the eastern desert by the time of the Middle Kingdom [42].



imy-r3 (w) inn hrt h3swt n nb.f [33].

“Overseer of the foreign mercenaries” (most probably the Egyptian Nubians), who brings the products of the foreign lands to his lord [27].


8.2. Titles related to the deserts


imy-r (wy) smiwt nb (wt) [33].


“The overseer of the stock of production (products) of every desert region” [27].



imy-r3 smiwt

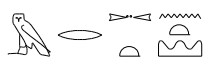
“Overseer of the deserts or the desert regions” [27].


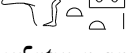


imy-r smiwt imntt

“Overseer of the western desert” [27].


Imy - r3 rthw smiwt mnnw nswt

“Overseer of the desert blockhouses and royal fortresses who had the alternative title”  *Imy - r3 wp (w)t mnnw* referring to the position as the “Overseer of the affairs of the fortresses” [40].


imy - r3 tst nt smit

“Overseer of the herd of the desert [27]. In addition to some other administrative titles related to the protection of the deserts and the desert regions were recorded in the Egyptian texts such as  *imy – r3 smit*, “The overseer of the desert”,  *imy – r3 w^{rt}* “The supervisor of the desert regions” and  *w^{rtw} n smit* “The manager of the desert regions” [7].

9. Scenes and Monuments Related to the Sign *h3st*

9.1. The sign *h3st* on the early dynastic monuments

A fragmented ivory label of the time of King Den representing the king standing with staff and mace. He is wearing an Early Dynastic garment style (most probably of military nature) and a long wig. The standing pose facing the right combined with the



mace head and the inscriptions reading  *h3styw* could prove the idea of striking the eastern foreign countries that was evidenced by other related monuments dated to the reign of the same king, fig. (2) [43].



Figure (2) king Den facing the east (the eastern foreign countries) (After Smith, 1949, p. 120, fig.36)

9.2. The sign *h3st* on the fragmented relief of king Khasekhem

The lower register of the fragmented inscription of King Khasekhem, fig. (3), discovered by Quibell at Hierakonpolis [44], is decorated by the *srh* of the King Khasekhem surmounted by the Hawk Horus and a group of hieroglyphs forming an inscription reading: 

tbt 3ht r h3st "The excellent sandal against the foreign countries". This phrase explained another attitude of crushing the foreign countries under the feet of the king replaced in this case by his sandal in a metaphoric representation [45].

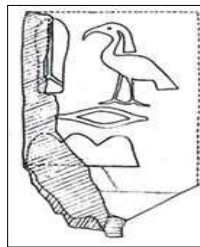




Figure (3) the lower part of the fragmented relief of Khasekhem (After Godron, 1968 "A propos d' Une Inscription de L'Horus Khasekhem", Cde XLIII, Bruxelles, p. 34)

9.3. The sign *h3st* on the scarabs of the Hyksos rulers

The sign  *h3st* was mainly connected as it was previously indicated in the titles and records of the Hyksos rulers who were usually described as  *h3swt* "the foreign rulers of the foreign countries" [5]. Our example is one of these records on the scarabs

commemorating the Hyksos Period in Egypt inscribed by the names of these foreign rulers who were not accepted by the Egyptians. Thus, they were referred to as foreigners by the three hill country sign for the foreign countries. This example represents the scarab of the *hk3 h3st* "nt hr" "The foreign ruler nt hr, fig. (4) [5].



Figure (4) the scarab of the foreign ruler 'nt hr (After Newberry, 1905, *ancient Egyptian scarabs: An introduction to Egyptian seals and signet rings*, London, pl. XXIII, no. 11)

10. Gods Titles and Names Related to the h3st Sign

10.1. The god spd

The patron deity of the Twentieth Nome of Lower Egypt. His close connection with the desert led to his wide spread fame as the lord of the eastern desert which was near Asia that

resulted in his description to bear the title of *nb h3swt* "The lord (master) of the foreign countries" specially in the east, fig. (5-a, b) [46].

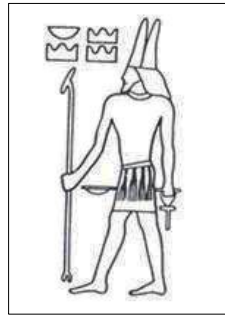

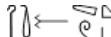


Figure (5) **a** God Spd as the lord of the foreign countries (After Lurker, 1995, *an illustrated dictionary of the gods and symbols of ancient Egypt*, London, p. 115) **b** the name of the god Spd determined by the sign *h3st* inscribed in the temple of Hathor at Sinai (After Valbelle D. & Bonnet, C., 1996, *Le Sanctuaire d'Hathor Maitresse de la Turquoise*, Paris, p. 38, fig. 50).

10.2. The god h3

Since the very beginning of the Egyptian Mythology, the God *h3* (the God of the Western Desert) was represented surmounted with an emblem composed of the three hill summits ( *h3st* sign) symbol of the desert, fig. (6). As known, this crested mountain was regarded as the symbol of the desert in

association with the foreign countries and even the necropolis. The god was entitled as "The Lord of the West" and in sometimes  *h3 tmhw* "The Ruler of the Temehu (Libyans) referring to the geographical position as westerners [47].

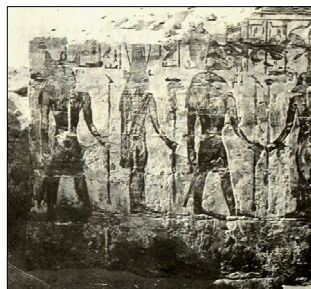



Figure (6) God *h3* of the deserts and the foreign lands with other gods at the Bahariya Oases (After Fahry, 1974, *the Oases of Egypt: Bahariya and Farafra Oases*, Vol. II, Cairo, p. 86, fig. 25)

10.3. The god Min as a bull striking the sign h3st

The god Min was regarded as the god of the eastern foreign countries (where his cult centers were concentrated). So he became the god of the eastern desert and the lord of the foreign lands who had a permanent position in Nubia fig. (7).The

adjectives of the god Min included his description as "The Bull who came from the foreign countries" so he was represented as a Bull with crescent-like horns crushing the sign  h3st that symbolized the foreign countries [48].

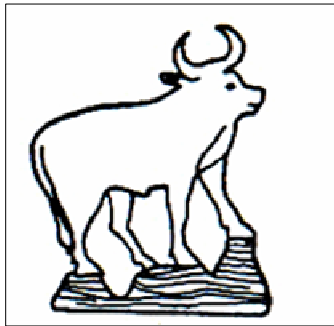




Figure (7) God Min in the form of a bull crushing the three hill country symbol of the foreign countries (After Petrie, F., 1939, *the making of Egypt*, New York, p. 64 pl. XXXIV)

11. Conclusions

- The sign h3st that was used in some of the ancient texts symbolizing the foreign countries was used as well to determine other significances such as the desert and the necropolis as both cases must have represented "The Outside" in the minds of the ancient Egyptians. The logic is - from the researcher's point of view - that the vast deserts are located outside the fertile Nile Valley. Besides, the Necropolis represented another world located outside their living boundary (as the realm of dead was usually on the western boundary of the Nile).
- Apart from the nature of the three hill country sign h3st, it was used as a determinative in the names of some Egyptian Nomes that is not bizarre as it determined either the desert or the mountainous regions in accordance with the significance of the sign.

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