

EGYPTIAN REFERENCES TO THE EDMITE DEITY QAUS

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A topographical list of Ramesses II at Karnak¹ contains four names prefixed by the consonants *q* and *ś* (Nos. 7, 11, 13, 21) and one prefixed by the letters *q* and *ṭ* (No. 8). This group of names is also inscribed in a list of Ramesses III at Medinet-Habu (Nos. 85, 89, 100, 101, 103).² S. Yeivin suggests³ that these names "compounded with a prefixed *qṣws*" refer to "five ethnic names of five Kushite clans, each characterized by a different suffixed clan-name."⁴ In my opinion it is more likely that the words under discussion are theophorous names prefixed by the divine name קוס (*Qōs*; Assyrian *Qaus*), the name of the Edomite national deity.⁵ This interpretation is based on the following arguments:

(1) It is not possible to indentify the prefix *q-ś/ṭ* with the ethnic name כוש since, on the one hand, this word is written in the Egyptian documents as *K(w)ś(w)* and, on the other hand, the West-Semitic consonant כ is not normally represented in Egyptian literature as *q*.⁶ The Egyptian *ś* usually represents ש or ט, but it may also represent the West-Semitic consonant

¹ J. Simons, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia* (Leiden, 1937), p. 158; W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1962), pp. 220, 221.

² Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 168, 169.

³ S. Yeivin, "The Five Kushite Clans in Canaan," *Atiqot*, III (1961), 176-180.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁵ On *Qos-Qaus* see Th. C. Vriezen, *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, XIV (1965), 331-353.

⁶ Yeivin tries to explain this difficulty by assuming that "the different signs may even have been used intentionally to differentiate between this Asiatic כוש and the Kush of Egyptian texts, namely (originally), the southern part of Nubia," Yeivin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

6.7 Yeivin bases his interpretation on the assumption of a similarity between *q3wš3n3rw* (according to Yeivin's transcription of Ramesses II, No. 13; Ramesses III, No. 89) and "Cushan (Rishathaim, the King of) Aram (Naharaim)," saying: "The biblical parallel . . . makes it quite clear that, in spite of the consistent use of *q* and *š* in the prefix, the latter is most probably to be transcribed as כוש (=Kush)." ⁸ Unfortunately, the Biblical "Cushan Rishathaim" is still enigmatic and subject to an abundance of old and modern interpretations. ⁹ Moreover, it is very doubtful whether one should read ארם and not נרם. As Yeivin himself says: "it would be highly surprising to find Aramean admixtures thus far in the SW, especially at this early date." ¹⁰

(2) Seir, that is Edom (Gn 36), is mentioned in the inscriptions of Ramesses II and Ramesses III, ¹¹ and there is clear

⁷ See Helck, *op. cit.*, pp. 568 (Nos. 189, 192), 569 (No. 209), 590, 591. We have no explanation for the variants *qa*, *qu*(*q3w*), and *qi* (cf. the Assyrian *Qauš*). However, there is nothing in this to refute my argument. The "syllabic orthography" used by the Egyptians for foreign words and names is still a subject of controversy. See lately K. A. Kitchen, *BiOr*, XXVI (1969), 198-202.

⁸ Yeivin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁹ See e.g., E. Taeubler, "Cushan-Rishathaim," *HCUA*, XX (1947), 137-142; A. Malamat, "Cushan Rishathaim and the Decline of the Near East Around 1200 B.C.," *JNES*, XIII (1954), 231-242.

¹⁰ Yeivin, *op. cit.*, p. 177, n. 19. Since the assumed parallel of *q3wš3n3rw* with כוש-ארם is used by Yeivin as a starting point for establishing the identity of *Qauš* with כוש we are not convinced that "it makes little difference whether we read this name as כוש-ארם or כוש-נרם." Yeivin, *op. cit.*, p. 177. "Aram" (*p3rm*) is explicitly mentioned in an inscription of Amenophis III (ca. 1406-1370), see E. Edel, *Die Ortsnamenlisten aus dem Totentempel Amenophis III.*, "Bonner Biblische Beiträge," XXV (1966), 28, 29.

¹¹ W. F. Albright, "The Oracles of Balaam," *JBL*, LXIII (1944), 228-231; B. Grdseloff, "Édôm, d'après les sources égyptiennes," *Revue de l'histoire juive en Égypte*, I (1947), 69-99; Kitchen, "Some New Light on the Asiatic Wars of Ramesses II," *JEA*, L (1964), 47-70. The view that one should make a distinction between the land of Seir and the land of Edom contradicts the established tradition of Gn 36 (cf. J. R. Bartlett, "The Land of Seir and the Brotherhood of Edom," *JThS*, XX [1969], 1-20). In any case, this distinction does not contradict the

"evidence for the activity of Ramesses II (or at least of his forces) in both Edom and Moab."¹² Edom is explicitly mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi VI, of the late 19th Dynasty.¹³ Archaeological findings in Transjordan¹⁴ have vindicated the assumption that the Edomites were already in southern Transjordan during the reign of Ramesses II. Hence it is not surprising to find a reference to the Edomite deity in the inscriptions of Ramesses II and Ramesses III.

(3) The interpretation of the five names as representing five chiefs or clans¹⁵ accords with the information in the Egyptian sources, relating to the way of life and social organization of the dwellers in the land of Seir/Edom. Papyrus Harris I mentions "the people of Seir among the Bedouin tribes"¹⁶ and an Egyptian frontier official reports to his lord thus: "[We] have finished letting the Bedouin tribes (*Ššsw*) of Edom pass the fortress (of) Mer-ne-Ptah."¹⁷ It follows that "the Edomites were partly sedentary . . . but still nomadic enough to abandon their homes in or near Seir and seek refuge in Egypt during a severe drought . . . the Egyptians regarded the peoples of Seir as still essentially nomadic."¹⁸

The name *qšwšrjʿj* (according to Yeivin's transcription of Ramesses II, No. 7; Ramesses III, No. 102)¹⁹ is a semantic equivalent of רִעְוָל one of the chiefs mentioned in the genealogical list of Esau (Gn 36:17). The second element *Ra-ʿa* is probably equivalent to the Semitic word רִעָה *roʿeh*, namely, evidence that Ramesses II or his forces were in south Transjordan. See *infra*, n. 12.

¹² Kitchen, *JEA*, L (1964), 67.

¹³ J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*, p. 259.

¹⁴ N. Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (New Haven, 1940), pp. 145-149.

¹⁵ Yeivin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

¹⁶ *ANET*, p. 262.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

¹⁸ Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 229. Also Grdseloff states: "Ainsi vers 1200 avant J. C. les Édomites du Mont Séir habitent encore sous la tente . . . leur organisation particulariste en clans indépendants les uns des autres." Grdseloff, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹⁹ Simons: *q-š-r-ʿ*; Helck: *qa-ša-ra-ʿa*.

"shepherd, herdsman," ²⁰ which accords with the pastoral life of Edom.

On the basis of this evidence we may reasonably assume that the names under discussion represent Edomite chiefs or clans, ²¹ each one bearing a name composed of the theophoric קוס.

To sum up: there are good reasons for considering the prefixes *q-š/t* as naming the divine deity קוס. From Egyptian documents we may infer that the Egyptians were active in south Transjordan against Edomite tribes, which is another good reason for assuming that the five names in question are theophorous names of Edomite chiefs or clans.

²⁰ Yeivin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

²¹ Compare with the term *ʿallūp* (Gn 36) which stands for clan or group. See E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (New York, 1962), p. 282.