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**Title**

Patterns of Royal Name-giving

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/51b2647c>

**Journal**

UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, 1(1)

**Author**

Leprohon, Ronald

**Publication Date**

2010-09-25

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Short Citation:

Leprohon, 2010, Patterns of Royal Name-Giving. *UEE*.

Full Citation:

Leprohon, Ronald J., 2010, Patterns of Royal Name-Giving. In Elizabeth Frood, Willeke Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles.

<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz001nx697>

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1086 Version 1, September 2010

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## PATTERNS OF ROYAL NAME-GIVING

### طرق تلقيب الملوك

Ronald J. Leprohon

Muster in der königlichen Namensgebung  
Tendances dans la distribution du protocole royal

*In ancient Egypt the selection of royal names could follow a number of patterns, including borrowing from the ruler's own family or from an illustrious predecessor. The names often announced a king's policy or the situation in which the ruler found himself at his accession.*

استندت التسميات الملكية بمصر القديمة إلى عدة أشياء، منها استخدام أسماء وألقاب سلفاء الملك من عائلته أو سلفاء ذوي سيط، وأحياناً تعلن أسماء الملوك عن الحالة السياسية وقت إعتلاء الملك العرش.

**C**lose examination of the four names taken by the king at his coronation—that is, the so-called Horus, Two Ladies, Golden Horus, and Throne names—demonstrates how carefully such names were chosen. The nomenclature could be original to the incumbent, borrowed from his own family, or could hearken back to an illustrious ancestor; it could also announce a monarch's policy or anticipate a victory over ignoble foreigners. The original titulary of Amenhotep III (von Beckerath 1999: 140 - 143) illustrates a number of the themes to be considered here. His Horus name, *k3 nht hꜥ m mꜣt*, “The victorious bull who has appeared in truth,” is patterned after Thutmose III's Horus name, *k3 nht hꜥ m Wꜣst*, “The victorious bull who has appeared in Thebes,” and directly borrowed from another Horus name of the same king, *k3 nht hꜥ m mꜣt*. The latter designation is found on a number of obelisks erected at Heliopolis and Thebes to celebrate Thutmose III's third Sed Festival (Sethe 1906-: 587, 591, 593). Because of their setting in temples, such monuments would have been readily available to Amenhotep III's court. Thanks to his predecessors' vigorous military campaigning as well as his father's diplomatic

alliances (Bryan 1991: 336 - 347), Amenhotep III felt secure enough within his realm to declare in his Two Ladies name that he was “One who established laws and made the Two Lands peaceful” (*smn hpw sgrh tꜣwj*), thus revealing his internal policies. The king's external policy was expressed in his Golden Horus name, *ꜥ3-hpꜥ hꜣwj stjw*, “The great-of-strength one who has struck down Asiatics”; the phrase approximates one of Thutmose III's Golden Horus names, *ꜥ3-hpꜥ hꜣwj pdt 9*, “The great-of-strength one who has struck down the Nine Bows” (Sethe 1906-: 585), the latter from an obelisk set up at Karnak Temple. Moreover, Amenhotep III's throne name, *nb mꜣt Rꜥ*, “Possessor of the cosmic harmony of Ra,” associates him with the divine realm.

#### *Paucity of Terminology*

Amenhotep III's appropriations of part of his great-grandfather's titulary is also a subtle reminder that the repertoire of vocabulary used for composing the royal titularies was actually fairly limited, as the following examples illustrate.

Certain words or phrases could be used in specific names within the titulary and sometimes during particular periods. Although the adjective *šm*, “powerful,” can be found in various royal names throughout Pharaonic history, it is seen almost exclusively in throne names in the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period; this pattern was not kept by subsequent kings. Similarly, though the adjective ʕ, “great,” was used to qualify too many nouns (*jb*, *bꜣw*, *nꜣw*, *nḥtꜣw*, *nswꜣt*, *ḥꜣꜣw*, *ḥꜣꜣꜣ*, and *šꜣꜣt*) to form a pattern, its use in the phrase ʕ-*ḥꜣꜣ* *Rꜣ*, “Great of manifestation, (in the manner) of Ra,” is seen exclusively in throne names of Dynasties 21 and 22. During Dynasty 18, the noun *nswꜣt*, “kingship,” is only found in Two Ladies names, while it appears mostly in Horus names in Dynasties 19 and 20. The dual noun *tꜣꜣwꜣ*, “the Two Lands,” often preceded by participles (e.g., *mꜣꜣ*, *sꜣḥ*, *zmꜣ*, *šꜣꜣꜣ*, etc.), was mostly used in Horus names, while the word *mꜣꜣꜣꜣ*, “years,” is mostly seen in Golden Horus names. The noun *ḥꜣꜣꜣ*, “manifestation,” and its plural equivalent, *ḥꜣꜣꜣꜣ*, were mostly confined to throne names from the 18th Dynasty onward.

When found in Horus names, the verbs *zmꜣ*, “to unite,” and *šꜣꜣꜣ*, “to propitiate,” are mostly used with the dual noun *tꜣꜣwꜣ*, “the Two Lands,” as their direct object; the same noun is also used as the only direct object of the verb *tꜣꜣꜣ*, “to bind.” When seen in Two Ladies names, *šꜣꜣꜣ* usually takes the noun *nꜣꜣꜣwꜣ*, “gods,” as its direct object. The noun *ḥꜣꜣꜣ*, “might,” was used over 40 times in kings’ titularies, yet the only adjectives used to qualify the noun were *wꜣꜣ*, “great,” *wꜣꜣꜣ*, “strong,” ʕ, “great,” and *šm*, “powerful.” And finally, the compound *wꜣꜣḥ-nswꜣt*, “Enduring of kingship,” is used a number of times, notably by Thutmose III in his original Two Ladies name and Psusennes I as part of his own Two Ladies name. It is tempting to think that the former used the phrase because he had succeeded a father whose reign had been cut short and he wished a longer reign for himself. As for Psusennes I, he ruled during a difficult period, when he had to share control of the country with the High Priest of

Amun in Thebes, and thus his wish for enduring kingship may have come from that power struggle.

Lastly, it can be noted that, starting with the New Kingdom, aggressive phrases are mostly seen in Golden Horus names (Parent 1992). Obvious examples are Amenhotep II’s *ḥꜣꜣ m šm.f m tꜣꜣwꜣ nꜣwꜣ*, “Who seized by means of his power in all lands”; Sety I’s *wḥm ḥꜣꜣw wꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣ m tꜣꜣwꜣ nꜣwꜣ*, “Who repeated appearances, strong of troops in all lands”; Merenptah’s *nꜣwꜣ sꜣꜣꜣ ʕ-šꜣꜣꜣ*, “Lord of fear and great of majesty”; and Shoshenq I’s *šm-ḥꜣꜣꜣ ḥꜣꜣꜣ ꜣꜣ ꜣꜣ wꜣꜣ-nḥtꜣwꜣ m tꜣꜣwꜣ nꜣwꜣ*, “The powerful-of-might one who struck down the Nine Bows, great of victories in all lands.”

#### *Anticipatory Phraseology*

When examining various kings’ choices for their titulary, the temptation is to perhaps look through a king’s subsequent accomplishments to find that he had seemed to foretell his achievements in his titulary at the very onset of his reign. The phrases must, of course, be anticipatory (Cabrol 2000: 178 - 179). Amenhotep III’s Golden Horus name is a good case in point. Since he and his immediate predecessors hoped to be seen as ruthless military leaders, Amenhotep III used an aggressive tone toward people of the Levant in his Golden Horus name, assuring his subjects that he had “struck down Asiatics.” This was surely wishful thinking on his part, given that the new king may have been no more than ten years old at the time of his accession (Bryan 2001: 72; Cabrol 2000: 95).

However, one may also be too easily dismissive of the ancient evidence. The previously mentioned Golden Horus name of Amenhotep III only mentions Western Asia. This is in contrast to earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty kings, who had “seized all lands” (Thutmose I), “struck down the Nine Bows” (Thutmose III), “seized ... in all lands” (Amenhotep II), and “repelled the Nine Bows” (Thutmose IV), thereby (collectively) covering all of Egypt’s enemies. If Nubia had been a consideration in the earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty phraseology (Zibelius-

Chen 1988: 237 - 239), its annexation was now a *fait accompli* from the Palace's perspective, and Amenhotep III could satisfy himself with smiting Asiatics (Cabrol 2000: 179). Another example may be 19<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty king Merenptah, who—notwithstanding the fact that he mentions having repelled the generic “Nine Bows” in a Horus name carved on a lintel in his palace at Memphis (Kitchen 1968: 54: 11)—chooses to specifically mention that he had “exercised [his] *ba*-power against the land of the Temehu” (ibid.: 20: 9) in his Two Ladies name on the Athribis Stela commemorating his victory over Libyans (ibid.: 19 - 23). The well-defined use of toponyms and of enemies' names in the titularies of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty rulers has been discussed by Iskander (2002: 259 - 260). Additionally, it has been suggested that Sety II's aggressive phraseology—e.g., the Two Ladies *nht-hpš dr pdt 9*, “The strong-of-sword one who repelled the Nine Bows,” and the Golden Horus *ʿz-nrw m tʿw nbw*, “The one great of dread in all lands”—may well have been a reflection of actual victories on the battlefield while he was still a crown prince (Kitchen 1987: 135 - 136).

#### *Historical Development of the Titulary*

As the titulary developed, specific patterns emerged in the names. The monarchs of the newly united country selected aggressive designations (Baines 1995: 123 - 124); obvious examples are the Horus Narmer (“The menacing catfish”), Aha (“The fighter”), Den (“The [head] cutter”), and Adjib (“The slaughterer of hearts”). Some early dynastic names may even reflect actual political changes, such as the Horus Khasekhem (“The powerful one has appeared”), who, after defeating the Seth Peribsen, changed his name to Khasekhemwy (“The two powerful ones have appeared”), with the word *shmwj*, “the two powerful ones,” referring to both Horus and Seth (Baines 1995: 17). This type of name change would become a vehicle for some kings to announce landmark victories, such as Nebhepetra Mentuhotep II, who changed part of his titulary according to the vagaries of his war against the Herakleopolitan foes. He first

called himself the Horus *sʿnh jb tʿwj*, “The one who sustained the heart of the Two Lands.” By his fourteenth year, this was changed to the Horus and Two Ladies *ntrj hdt*, “The divine one of the White Crown,” and some time before his year 39, with the civil war over, he styled himself the Horus and Two Ladies *zmʿ tʿwj*, “The one who has united the Two Lands.”

With rulers using more than one name early on, other patterns also emerged; for example, the Two Ladies name often reflected the Horus name during the Old Kingdom (Auffrère 1982: 41 - 43). Some instances are the 4<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty kings Khufu (Horus *mddw*, “The one who has been adhered to,” and Two Ladies *mdd r nbtj*, “The one who has adhered to the Two Ladies”) and Khafra (Horus *wsr jb*, “The strong-minded one,” and Two Ladies *wsr m nbtj*, “Who is strong by means of the Two Ladies”); the 5<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty king Niuserra (Horus *st jb tʿwj*, “The [perfect] place of the mind of the Two Lands” and Two Ladies *st jb nbtj*, “The [perfect] place of the mind of the Two Ladies”); and King Teti of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Horus *shtp tʿwj*, “The one who has propitiated the Two Lands,” and Two Ladies *shtp nbtj*, “The one who has propitiated the Two Ladies”).

It has been suggested (Scheele-Schweitzer 2007) that the second cartouche—usually thought to house the ruler's birth (given) name—of a number of 5<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty kings simply contained a short form of the throne name (in much the same manner as a nickname). Thus Neferirkara's second cartouche shows the name Kakai, Niuserra's shows the name Ini, and Menkauhor's holds the short form Ikau(hor). Because such hypocorisms were used so seldom, it is difficult to be too categorical about their significance, but they may help explain certain rulers' names that seem to defy translation.

#### *Dynastic Developments*

With the five-fold titulary fully developed by the time of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, a clear progression of names can be detected from one king to another (Leprohon 1996). After

the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was unable to furnish a proper heir or was replaced—perhaps even peacefully (Postel 2004: 266 - 267)—the first ruler of the new family, Amenemhat I, used the Horus name *shꜥp jb tꜥwj*, “He who has propitiated the mind of the Two Lands,” as well as the Golden Horus name *zmꜥ*, “The uniter.” An additional Horus name, *whꜥm mswꜥt*, “The one who has repeated births” (for a different interpretation of the word *mswꜥt*, see Baines [1986], who suggests “manifestations”), may well have announced a new era, reflecting the aspirations of a vigorous family to safeguard Egypt, and may have coincided with the move from Thebes to Itj-tawy, probably modern-day Lisht, south of the Memphite area. Amenemhat I’s son Senusret I pronounced himself the Horus *nhꜥ mswꜥt*, “Long live the (re-)birth,” referring to his father’s legacy. With the family firmly on the throne, Amenemhat II could then rightfully choose *hꜥkn m mꜥꜥt*, “The one who has rejoiced in cosmic harmony,” as both his Horus and Two Ladies names. An innovator, Senusret II proclaimed himself the Horus *sꜥm tꜥwj*, “The planner of the Two Lands,” perhaps anticipating his later reclamation works in the Fayum, and the Two Ladies *shꜥ Mꜥꜥt*, “The one who has caused Maat to appear,” following his father’s theme of *maat*-harmony. He also took a Golden Horus name *hꜥp nꜥrw*, “The gods are satisfied,” and the throne name *hꜥ hꜥpr Rꜥ*, “The one (whose) manifestation has appeared, (like) Ra.” His son Senusret III continued the “divine” theme by calling himself the Horus *nꜥrꜥj-hꜥprw*, “Divine of manifestations,” along with his family’s theme of “birth,” reflected in his Two Ladies name, *nꜥrꜥj-mswꜥt*, “Divine of births.” He then repeated his father’s theme of “appearing” with his throne name *hꜥ kꜥw Rꜥ*, “The one (whose) *kas* have appeared in glory, (like those) of Ra.” Following his father’s vigorous policies, which had expanded the frontiers of Egypt up to the Second Cataract, Amenemhat III could now proclaim himself the Horus *ꜥꜥ-bꜥw*, “The one great of might,” the Two Ladies *jtꜥ jwꜥt tꜥwj*, “The one who has seized the inheritance of the two lands,” and the King of Upper and Lower Egypt *nꜥj mꜥꜥt Rꜥ*,

“The one to whom belongs the cosmic harmony of Ra.” Similar progressions can also be found in the titularies of the 18<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty rulers (Leprohon 2010).

#### *Borrowings from Predecessors*

This adoption of forerunners’ titularies was, in fact, a common practice, especially within specific families or particular groups of rulers. Examples of the latter have been demonstrated for the Theban 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, who drew heavily from one another (Dautzenberg 1997). Names could also be borrowed from illustrious predecessors. Ramesses IX went back nearly 12 centuries to Pepy II for his throne name, Neferkara (Kitchen 1987: 139); and Nectanebo I used Senusret I’s throne name, Kheperkara, from nearly 16 centuries earlier, for his own prenomen (Koemoth 2002: 55). King Piankhy, the Kushite ruler who came north and defeated a divided Egypt to establish the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, provides another specific example. He chose a number of Horus names, one of which—*shꜥp tꜥwj.jꜥ*, “The one who has propitiated his Two Lands”—evokes the Horus name of the 6<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty king Teti, *shꜥp tꜥwj*, “The one who has propitiated the Two Lands.” He was also known as the Horus *kꜥ nhꜥt hꜥ m Wꜥst*, “The victorious bull who has appeared in Thebes,” a direct borrowing from Thutmose III, whose titulary would have been known to the Kushites from the earlier monarch’s triumphal stela left at the temple of Amun at Gebel Barkal (Sethe 1906-: 1227 - 1243). One of Piankhy’s throne names, *mn hꜥpr Rꜥ*, “The enduring one of the manifestation of Ra,” was also taken directly from Thutmose III’s throne name. Another, *wꜥr-mꜥꜥt Rꜥ*, “Strong of truth (in the manner) of Ra,” was appropriated from the throne name of Ramesses II, whose inscriptions were also widespread in Nubia (for discussions of Piankhy’s titulary, see Blöbaum 2006; Eide et al. 1994: 51 - 52; Gozzoli 2006: 59 - 62; and Török 1997: 153 - 154). In this respect, it is noteworthy that, for all their vaunted archaic tendencies (Der Manuelian 1994), the rulers of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty did not borrow

from previous kings for their own titularies (Spalinger 1978: 14), save for the fact that they returned to earlier, shorter, patterns for their names.

Such borrowings imply a knowledge of past royal names. Perhaps the royal administration kept records of all or most royal names, which could be consulted when needed. The so-called Turin Canon is the best example of such a list, with its throne names and lengths of reigns (Gardiner 1959). Other lists include the 5<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty Palermo Stone (Jiménez-Serrano 2004; Wilkinson 2000), the 6<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty annals found re-used as a sarcophagus lid (Baud and Dobrev 1995, 1997), and a list of kings dating to the Third Intermediate Period found re-used in a Fatimid-era wall in Cairo (Bickel et al. 1998). Although these catalogs are useful to us today, they do not supply the full five-fold titulary, which the Egyptians called *nhbt* (Aufrère 1982: 19; Bonhême 1978). Such records surely existed, although they have not survived.

Local centers may also have kept their own chronicles, since the titulary of a new king was disseminated throughout the country by means of royal decrees sent to institutions and high officials after the king's coronation (Beilage 2002: 750; Cabrol 2000: 177, 181), as a way of announcing the new king's names as well as the aspirations contained within the phrases. One such text heralds the titulary of Thutmose I to Turi, the Viceroy of Kush (Sethe 1906-: 80 - 81). The proclamation (translated here by the author) reads:

*“A royal decree to the King’s Son and Overseer of Southern Countries, Turi.*

*Now see here, this royal [decree] is brought to you to let you know that My Majesty—alive, sound, and healthy—has appeared as the King of Upper and Lower Egypt upon the Horus-throne of the Living, without his like within earthly eternity.*

*My titulary (nhbt) has been drawn up as follows:*

*The Horus ‘Victorious bull, beloved of Maat’;*

*He of the Two Ladies ‘The one who has appeared by means of the uraeus, the great-of-might one’;*

*The Golden Horus ‘Perfect of years, the one who has sustained hearts’;*

*The King of Upper and Lower Egypt Aakheperkara (‘Great of manifestation [like] the ka of Ra’);*

*‘The Son of Ra Thutmose, living forever and ever.’*

*Now, how you should have divine offerings presented to the gods of Elephantine of the Most Southerly Region is in doing what is praised on behalf of the life, prosperity, and health of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Aakheperkara, who is given life.*

*Likewise, how you should have the oath established is in the name of My Majesty—alive, sound, and healthy—born of the King’s Mother, Seniseneb, who is in good health.*

*This is a communication to let you know about it, as well as the fact that the Palace is safe and sound.*

*Regnal Year 1, 3rd month of winter, day 21, the day of the feast of the coronation.”*

Although it is inadvisable to assume a consistent policy from a single document, all kings must have sent similar communications throughout the realm at the beginning of their reigns.

### *Inaugurators*

Rulers who began an era set a noteworthy pattern. Ahmose, the first king of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, termed himself the Two Ladies *twi mswt*, “The (very) image of (re-)birth,” thus presumably announcing the dawn of a new age (an expression also used by Tutankhamun for his Horus name, following the Amarna episode), as well as the Golden Horus *t3z t3wj*, “The one who has bound the Two Lands,” here proclaiming his victory over the Hyksos. Similarly, the Persian conqueror Cambyses called himself the Horus *zm3 t3wj*, “The one who has united the Two Lands,” recalling the Horus names of Mentuhotep II, Sobekhotep I, and Shoshenq I. This motif of one inaugurator borrowing from another is also reflected in the phraseology of Ramesses I, the founder of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, who transformed Ahmose’s throne name of *nb phitj R*, “Possessor of the might of Ra,” into *mn-phitj R*, “Enduring of might (in the manner) of

Ra,” for his own throne name. Similarly, Sethnakhte, who ushered in the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, repeated the theme in his Horus name, *kꜣ nḥt wr-phḥj*, “The victorious bull, great of might.” The word *phḥj* was also used by Smendes, the first king of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, as part of his Two Ladies name, *šm-phḥj*, “Powerful of might,” a phrase copied by Shoshenq I, the

first ruler of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, for part of his Golden Horus name. Ramesses III—following his father Sethnakhte’s brief two-year reign—patterned his Horus name, *ꜣ-nswyt*, “Great of kingship,” after Ramesses I’s Horus name, *wꜣd-nswyt*, “Flourishing of kingship.”

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