Royal self-presentation in the self-presentation of payefjtjauemawyneith on naophorous statue Louvre A93

Abstract

The theme of this article is the non-royal involvement in building activities in the Saite period and it shows how royal prerogatives were probably seized by non-royal officials such as Payefjtjauemawyneith. This article deals with the concept of royal self-presentation used by a non-royal official in Late Saite Egypt. In his self-presentation on naophorous statue Louvre A 93, Payefjtjauemawyneith confirms his involvement in building activities in a kingly manner. He points out that: “I built the temple of Khentyimentt, as an excellent construction of eternity, at his majesty’s command, that he might see that I was busy in the affairs of Tawer”. It is notable to see an official expressing himself in such a way. Although Payefjtjauemawyneith’s self-presentation stresses that he was on a mission on the king’s behalf, reflecting his rule piety toward the deity, he states that was done “at his majesty’s command”. He further does not name the king, and the king’s presence is not that strong. This text reflects a sense of high self-esteem and a rise of individuality in the period. Payefjtjauemawyneith’s self-presentation may draw on royal texts dealing with the same activity.

Keywords: self presentation, payefjtjauemawyneith, royal self presentation, naophorous statue, Louvre A 93

Introduction

The building activities at Abydos by the Late Saite high official Payefjtjauemawyneith narrated in his self-presentation on naophorous statue Louvre A 93,1 is similar to those of the kings in their texts. In her monograph on Middle Kingdom self-presentations, M. Lichtheim2 excludes royal texts because, in her opinion, they are not “autobiographical”. However, S. Quirke3,4 does not agree that such texts fall outside autobiography, pointing out that the “Königsnovelle” affords “an analogy with the human autobiography”. He does believe that “the royal ideal” in royal texts differs from “the ideal of officials”; the royal “I” stresses “the ideal of kingship”, while the “I” of officials stresses “the ideal of human behavior in their society”. Royal texts can be also classified “self-presentation” in a sense. However, one should keep in mind the differences between the king as a special kind of human being, similar to a god acting on earth, and the officials who were representatives of the king in the administration, attempting to imitate him. Moreover, the textual formation, themes and concerns, iconography, placement of each self-presentation were different. Therefore, the relations and differences between “royal self-presentation” and “non-royal self-presentation” need further exploration. Actually, the royal “I” versus the non-royal “I”4 was different in some inscriptions of the first millennium BC such that of Payefjtjauemawyneith on Louvre A 93, in which he states:

1To the soul of H. De Meulenaere, one of our great pillars of Late Period Egyptian studies all over the world.

2On the term Königsnoviele, see Hofmann 2004; Spalinger 2011. For more on ideology and propaganda, Leprohon 2015.

3Blumenthal 1984, 88, refers to royal self-presentation in her study of the Teaching of King Amenemhat.

4For more on signs of the “I” (the narrator) in narrating, see Prince 1982, 7-16.

I built the temple of Khentyimentt, as an excellent construction of eternity, at his majesty’s command, that he might see that I was busy (Wb. II, 412.6) in the affairs of Tawer.5-7 It is notable to see an official expressing himself in such a way. Although he further states that was done “at his majesty’s command”, he does not name the king, and the king’s presence is not that strong. The royal building activities were different in some inscriptions of the first millennium BC such as that of Payefjtjauemawyneith on Louvre A 93, in which he states:

Hm=f mAn=f xwsj.n(=j) Hwt-nTr nt #ntj-Jmntt m kAt mnxt nt nHH m wD.n=j xr
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...many trees were planted in the ground, and its lakes were dug.

The main text of Taharqa's year 6 stela from Kawa (Kawa V) states (lines 1-3): 17

(jsk hm=f m njt=f nw ns=t f mrw rs=f m hrw sdt=r m gr=h hjt=f n mrw f)(mrw r)(mrw r)(mrw r)(mrw r)(mrw r)

Now his majesty is one who loves god, he spends the day and passes the night seeking what is good for the gods, building (their) temples where he had fallen into decay, recreating their images as the primeval time, building their food production places, provisioning their altars, presenting to them divine-offering(s) of everything, and making their offering-tables of electrum, silver, and copper. Now, moreover, the heart of his majesty is satisfied by doing what is good for them every day. The main text of year 10 stela of Taharqa from Kawa (Kawa VI) speaks of the monuments which the king made for his father Amun of Gempaaten (lines 14-15): 17

...nbw hst=f ... ... ... ... ... ... ... rd(j=f) n=s kriw rv=r m spw nw dsqf mj(t)=t m mwnv HAm f sn wb=sh nbw xAst=f ...

He appointed gardeners to it from the best of the Bahariya-Oasis and the likeness was made from the people of the Delta.

The same text goes on as follows (lines 19-21):

mh=n=f (st) m mr(t)=t stw rd(j)=t m hwn=f w=s r=f m hwn=f brw=nw

He filled it (20) with many servants, and he assigned female servants to it from the wives of the chiefs of the Delta. Wine is pressed from the vineyards of this city; they are more numerous than (those of) the Bahariya-Oasis. He assigned gardeners to them from the good gardeners of the best of the nomads of Asia. Thus, the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty kings took credit for building temples, using the verbal phraseology, which this king employed in the texts of his building activities; see Meeks 1979, pl. XXXVIII. The main verb usually used for "to build" in the source texts is hrw; see Wolfe 1991; Dallab 2005. On the king and his reign, see Pope 2014. 9

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sDm=f form qa=f: These passages show how the involvement with such projects was a royal prerogative. Although Taharqa’s inscriptions use the singular third person of the suffix pronom, not the first, they are done in the traditional way of this kind of royal inscription. Statements used by Payeftjauemawyneith are closer in phraseology to those of Taharqa. Payeftjauemawyneith’s self-presentation stresses that he was on mission on the king’s behalf, while Taharqa’s inscriptions reflect royal propaganda to legitimize his rule, the “King’s Novel”, and piety toward the deities. This nonroyal involvement in building activities in the period shows how royal prerogatives were probably seized by Saite officials such as Payeftjauemawyneith.

References

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