



Meanings and Structures of Wd^c in Ancient Egyptian Onomastics

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ABSTRACT

Name (rn) was one essential element for resurrection in Ancient Egypt so the deceased can benefit from the offerings he receives and find his way in Netherworld. Most Egyptian personal names follow basic groups like (One-word names

or Compound names). The concept of " wd^c " represents a carpenter's tool in nature (\overline{w}) was known from the 4th dynasty, Old Kingdom. The core of the research is to trace Ancient Egyptian Onomastics contained wd^c in its structure from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom through different evidences that were found on tombs, false doors, and religious books. The study utilized descriptive and analytical approaches. The research is an attempt to answer the following question: Is there any particular relation between wd^c and the profession of the name-bearer? Moreover, the study of this onomastic material allows a linguistic and anthropological reflection on the form and meaning of anthroponyms based on wd^c . Ten characters were the study sample including three during the Old Kingdom, two during the Middle Kingdom and five during the New Kingdom.

1. Introduction

Choosing a name was an essential element for resurrection in Ancient Egypt; individuals wished their own names to be permanent and unforgettable in people's mouths. This desire for their name to continue existing was a family's duty to keep the memory of a deceased. Additionally, because Ancient Egyptians believed that everything was animated with BA-power; everyday objects were given names like (army divisions, statues, buildings: temples, fortresses, pylons, gateways and doors) (1).

The article of (Vittmann 2013) has dealt with names in Ancient Egypt and concluded that Most Egyptian personal names can be assigned to one of the following three basic groups:-

- 1) One-word names. (ex- hr : Horus)
- 2) Compound names not constituting a complete sentence. (ex- $rdw sbk$: Given by Sobek)
- 3) Names constituting a complete sentence. (ex- $Imn-m-h3t$: Amun is in the front)

Also Names in Ancient Egypt could be:-

- Names evoked an individual's physical features. (ex- Nht : Strong)
- Names based on titles either administrative, military, or any other profession. (ex- $P3 hm-ntr M3^c$: The Priest of Maat)
- Names expressing a relationship between the name-bearer, his parents, or a deity. (ex- $s3t hwt-hr$: Daughter of Hathor)
- Short names formed by the reduplication of single consonants. (ex- Ppy : Pepi) (2).

The concept of " wd^c " (3) is vital and diverse in the Ancient Egyptian language. This term was known from the Old Kingdom; 4th dynasty (4) until the Greek-Roman era (5). It represents a carpenter's tool in nature (\overline{w} Gardiner Aa 21) (6).

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This term refers to various meanings and implications like "to separate," "to judge," "to assign," "to sever," "to cut," "to part," "to open," and "to remove" (7, 8, 9). There were numerous styles of writing this specific word like (*wḏḏt*, *wḏḏc*, *wḏḏw*, *wḏḏ-mdw*, *wḏḏ-m3ḏt*, *wḏḏ-ryt*). (10-11).


The core of the research and its main focus is to trace, identify and uncover Ancient Egyptian Onomastics that contained in its structure *wḏ* through Ancient Egyptian history from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom through different textual evidences such as (royal and individual tombs, false door, and coffins)

The study is an attempt to answer the following question: Is there any particular relation between *wḏa* and the profession of the name-bearer? Moreover, the study of this onomastic material allows a linguistic and anthropological reflection on the form and meaning of anthroponyms based on *wḏa*. The study utilized descriptive and analytical approaches. Each clue would be interpreted and analyzed to highlight its value and significance to the research topic.

2. Evidenes from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom

2.1. Ancient Egyptian Onomastics in the Old Kingdom

1- *Wḏḏ- nṯr.f* (12, 13).

Name	<i>Wḏḏ- nṯr.f</i>	
Dating	Old Kingdom, 4 th Dynasty, reign of king Khafre. Mastaba of <i>N(y)sw-nṯr</i> (G 4970), Giza.	
Evidence	He is a servant appeared in the slaughter scene on the south wall. He grasps the front leg of the sacrificial animal.	

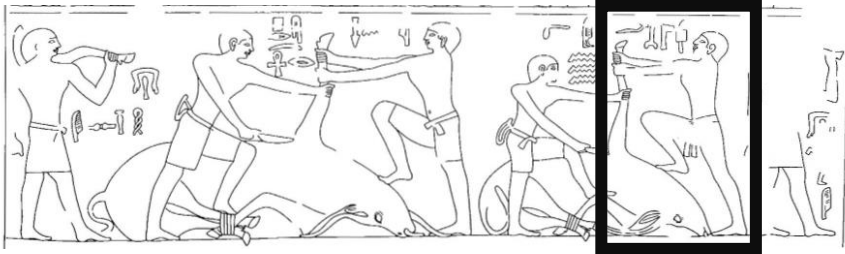



Figure 1: South Wall of the Chapel (14).

2- *Wḏḏ* (15); (16).

Name	<i>Wḏḏ</i>	
Dating	Old Kingdom, 6 th Dynasty, reign of king Pepi I	
Evidence	Inscription from Wadi El- Hamammat.	

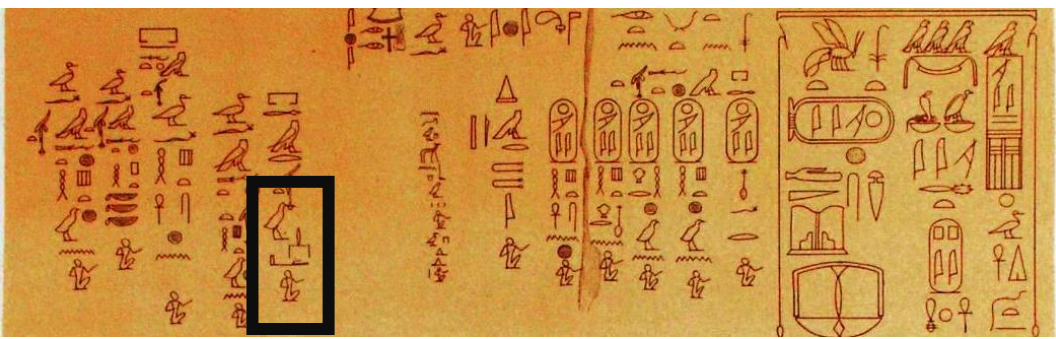


Figure 2: Inscription from Wadi El-Hamammat (17).

3- *Wḏḏ-dri* (18).


Name	<i>Wḏḏ-dri</i>	
Dating	Old Kingdom, 6 th Dynasty, reign of king Pepi I.	
Evidence	False door, preserved in the basement of The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, without number.	



Figure 3: False Door of *Wdꜥ-dri* (19).

2.2. Ancient Egyptian Onomastics in the Middle Kingdom


1) *dhwtj wdꜥ.f* (20, 21, 22).

Name	<i>dhwtj wdꜥ.f</i>	
Dating	Middle Kingdom, late 12 th Dynasty	
Evidence	Limestone stela of <i>snfr</i> preserved in The Egyptian Museum in Cairo CG. 27015, originally coming from Abydos, Northern necropolis.	

2) God Seth

In Coffin Texts *wdꜥ* has been shown with various meanings (23). It was also used with deities, the most deity associated with *wdꜥ* in CT was god Seth. There are almost 30 texts used to show the connection between *wdꜥ* and Seth (24) here only two examples would be mentioned:

1- Coffin Texts, Spell 1128 (25)


Found on inner coffin of  discovered in el-Bersha and displays at B.M. 30840 : B1L



snwt imyt h3t Ist Wdꜥ hr

The entourages on the brow are Isis, Seth and Horus (26, 27).

2- Coffin Texts, Spell 424 (Spell for driving away the crocodiles who steal magic) (28)

Found on coffin of  (Women) discovered in Assyut and displays at Cairo J 44981 : S14C



iw m.n.i wsrw Wsir ink Wdꜥ

I have absorbed the powers of Osiris; for I am Seth (29, 30).

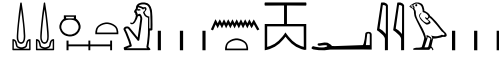
2.3. Ancient Egyptian Onomastics in the New Kingdom

wdꜥ was part of the names of various minor deities in the Egyptian pantheon who appeared in the Netherworld books like (Book of Night, Day, Aker and Gates).

2.3.1. Deities in the Book of Gates

Book of Gates, it consists of 12 hours of the night. Each one ends with a gate. Each gate has a guardian in form of a serpent, and two other guardians with menacing names and fire-spitting uraei. The earliest version dates back to Horemheb and the earliest complete one found on the alabaster sarcophagus of king Seti I (31).

• *d3d3t nt Wdꜥyw* (32, 33, 34, 35).

Name	<i>d3d3t nt wdꜥyw</i>	
Dating:	New Kingdom, 20 th Dynasty.	
Evidence	Left wall of Corridor C in KV 9 (Tomb of Ramses VI), Valley of the Kings, Luxor.	

Twelve gods without attributes, called *ḏḏḏt n Wḏw*. It is they who judge at the gate and who judge the dead. They appeared in the Book of Gates (7th Division, 8th Hour, Lower register).

Role



wḏw r sbḥt tn sḏmw ḥrt imyw

Ones who judge at this gate, Ones who examine those who are in it.

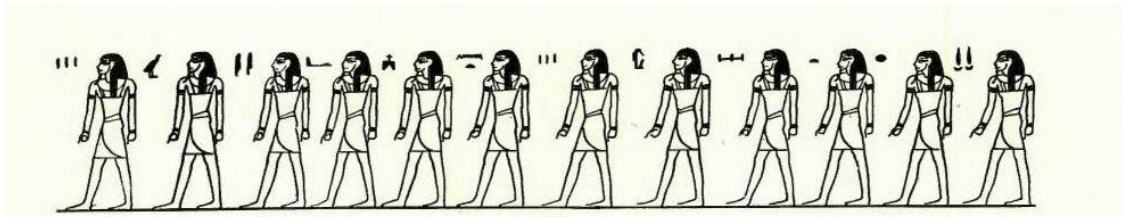


Figure 4: The Council of Judges (36).

2.3.2. Deities in the Book of Day

Book of Day, it's a book shows the journey of the sun god represented with a falcon's head through daytime. It consists of 12 hours but with no divide between them. Everything is arranged under the figure of goddess Nut. The only known complete version is from the tomb of king Ramses VI (37).

- *Wḏw* (38, 39).

Name

Wḏw



Dating: New Kingdom, 20th Dynasty.

Ceiling of the Sarcophagus Hall in KV 9 (Tomb of Ramses VI), Valley of the Kings, Luxor.

Evidence

A male deity appeared in the Book of the Day, (1st Hour, Upper register).

He is represented standing between two goddesses Nephthys and Isis.

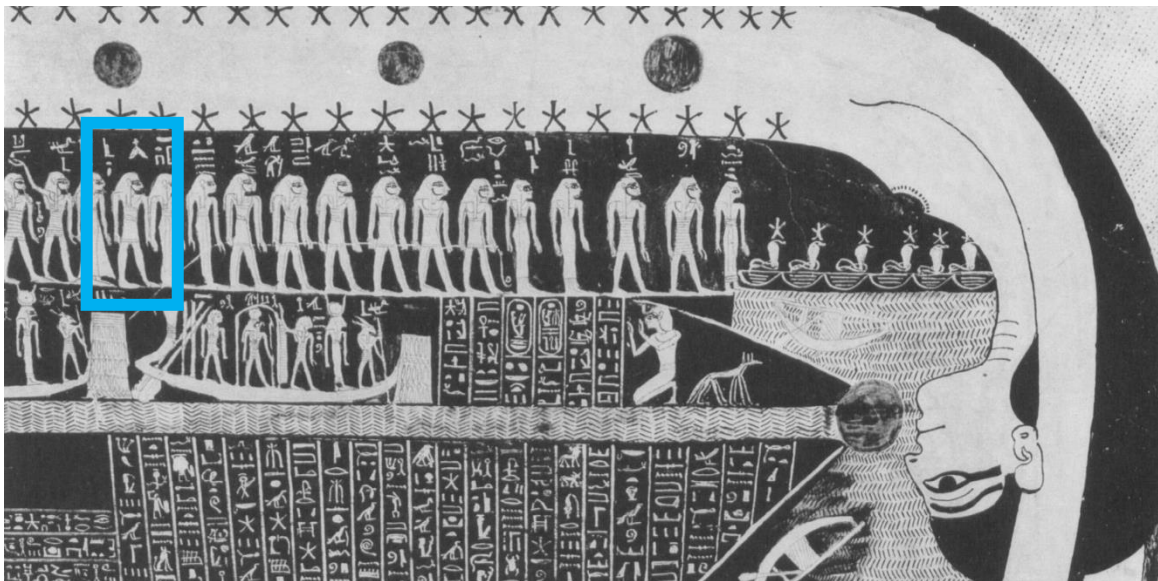
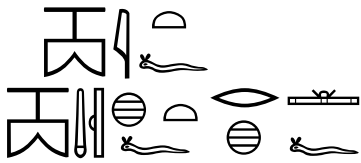


Figure 5: Book of the Day from the tomb of Ramses VI (40).

2.3.3. Deities in the Book of Night

Book of Night, it's a book divided into 12 hours of the night starting from the moment when goddess Nut swallows the sun disk till its birth in the next day as a scarab beetle. The earliest version of the book existed on the ceiling of the sarcophagus chamber of the Osirion at Abydos (41).

- **Wd^c it.f:**
- **Wd^c mdw hft rh.f:** (42, 43, 44, 45).

Names	<p>Wd^c it.f</p> <p>Wd^c mdw hft rh.f</p>	
Evidence	<p>Dating: New Kingdom, 20th Dynasty.</p> <p>Ceilings of Corridors C and D in KV 9 (Tomb of Ramses VI), Valley of the Kings, Luxor.</p> <p>Male deities appeared in the Book of the Night, (12th Hour, Lower register).</p>	
Role	<p>In the lower register of the Twelve hour: There is a procession of 10 gods moving toward the east have an identical attitude with their arms lifted in adoration. It specifies their function as worshippers of the sun.</p> <p>The 3rd deity: Wd^c it.f and The 8th god: Wd^c mdw hft rh.f.</p>	

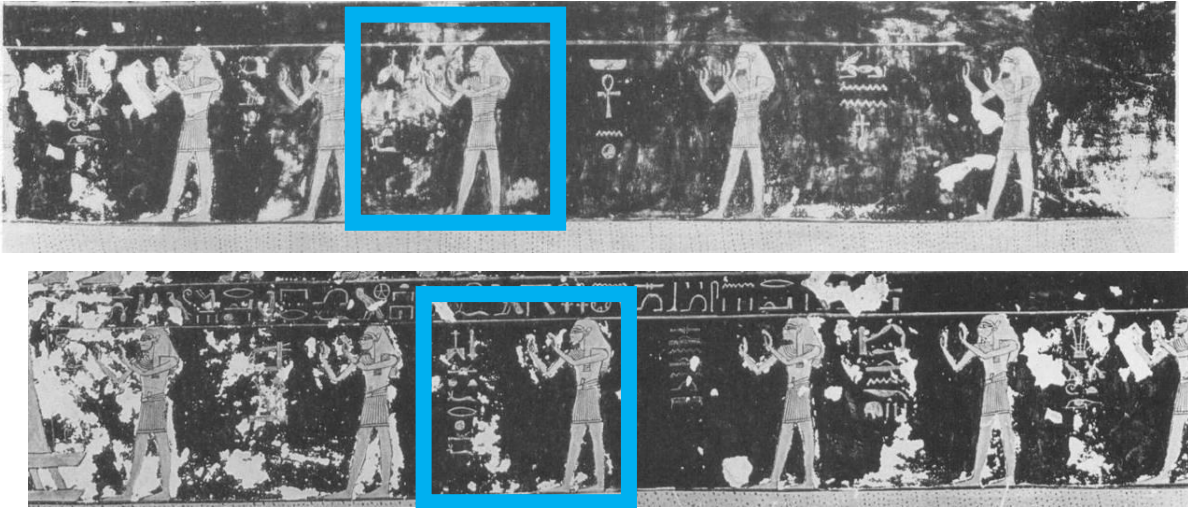


Figure 6: Hour 12 from the Book of the Night (46).

2.3.4. Deities in the Book of Aker

Book of Aker, it's the standard version of the book of Creation of the Solar Disk which appeared since the New Kingdom. The predominant visual features of the Books of the Creation of the Solar Disk include scenes of the birth of the solar disk, the double-headed Aker sphinx, and the punishment of enemies (47).

- **Wd^cyt** (48, 49).


Name	<p>Wd^cyt</p>	
Evidence	<p>Dating: New Kingdom, 20th Dynasty.</p> <p>Right wall of sarcophagus hall, KV 9 (Tomb of Ramses VI), Valley of the Kings, Luxor.</p> <p>A female deity appeared in the Book of Aker (Middle register).</p>	
Role	<p>The bark has god Khepri and five attending deities; two females on the prow and three divinities on the stern. The last goddess on the prow of the solar bark is Wd^cyt.</p>	



Figure 7: Book of Aker (50).

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The Orthographical Writing of the Names

Table 1: The Orthographical forms of The Names from OK till NK

Form	Dating	Graphical Forms
<i>Wd^c-Ntr.f</i> 	4 th Dynasty Reign of king Khafre.	<i>Ntr</i> written using (Gardiner R8). It was written first to prove the transposition with honorific intent then followed by <i>wd^c</i> sign (Gardiner Aa21) and ends with suffix pronoun . <i>f</i> (Gardiner I9).
<i>Wd^c</i> 	6 th Dynasty Reign of king Pepi I.	The name written using phonetic complement before and after the sign of <i>wd^cw</i> (Gardiner G43) ^c (Gardiner D36) then ending with the determinative of a seated person (Gardiner A1).
<i>Wd^c-9ri</i> 	6 th Dynasty Reign of king Pepi I.	<i>Wd^c</i> was written using (Gardner O30) and <i>dri</i> using (Gardiner M37, M17)
<i>dhwty wd^c.f</i> 	12 th Dynasty	<i>dhwty</i> written using t (GardnerX1) and sign of Thoth of MK (Gardner X3) as for <i>wd^c.f wd^c</i> sign (Gardiner Aa21) and ends with suffix pronoun <i>f</i> (Gardiner I9).
<i>d3d3t nt Wd^cyw</i> 	20 th Dynasty KV 9: Ramses VI.	<i>d3d3t</i> written using (Gardiner U28, W24, X1 and Aa8) and seated god and 3 strokes for plurals as determinatives, then followed by the article of indirect genitive <i>nt</i> (Gardiner N35 and X1) then <i>Wd^cyw</i> written using <i>wd^c</i> sign (Aa21A/ Aa126), phonetic complement ^c (Gardiner D36) then <i>y</i> using 2 of (Gardner M17) and <i>w</i> (Gardner G43) then ends with 3 strokes for expressing plural.
<i>Wd^c</i> 	20 th Dynasty KV 9: Ramses VI.	The name of the god was written using <i>wd^c</i> sign (Aa21A/ Aa126)
<i>Wd^c it.f</i> 	20 th Dynasty KV 9: Ramses VI.	The name of the god was written using <i>wd^c</i> sign (Aa21A/ Aa126) then <i>it.f</i> (Gardiner M17, X1 and I9).
<i>Wd^c-mdw hft rh.f</i> 	20 th Dynasty KV 9: Ramses VI.	The name of the god was written using <i>wd^c</i> sign (Aa21A/ Aa126) then <i>mdw</i> using (Gardiner S43) and determinative (Gardiner Y2) then <i>hft</i> (Gardiner Aa1, X1 and I9) then <i>rh.f</i> (Gardiner D21, X1 and determinative Y1) then <i>f</i> (I9)
<i>Wd^cyt</i> 	20 th Dynasty KV 9: Ramses VI.	The name of the goddess was written using <i>wd^c</i> sign (Gardiner Aa22) then <i>y</i> using 2 of (Gardiner M17) and ends with <i>t</i> (Gardiner V13).

From the above table one can notice: There were four various styles to write *wd^c* over different periods:

- Old Kingdom used Aa21 during the 4th Dynasty, Aa21B and O30 during the 6th Dynasty
- Middle kingdom used Aa21 during 12th dynasty and Aa21A in Coffin Texts
- New Kingdom used Aa22 and Aa21A during the 20th Dynasty.

When written *wd^c* the scribe would use the generic determinative only (Aa21A) during the study period and sometimes they used phonetic complement with it like ^c or *w* as seen in the 6th dynasty either before or after the word. The sign Aa21A was used widely since the Middle Kingdom. Names of deities in New Kingdom used only Aa21A and Aa22 in their names.

3.2. The Structure of the Names in the Ancient Egyptian Language

Table 2: The Literal Meaning of The Names from OK till NK

Form	Literal Meaning
<i>wḏꜥ</i>	The Judge or the Divider.
<i>Wḏꜥyḏ</i>	The Severer.
<i>wḏꜥ-ntr.f</i>	<i>wḏꜥ</i> : judge <i>Ntr.f</i> : his god Literal meaning: The judge of his God.
<i>wḏꜥ-ḏri</i>	<i>wḏꜥ</i> : judge <i>ḏri</i> :strong, firm Literal meaning: He who judges firmly.
<i>ḏhwty wḏꜥ.f</i>	<i>ḏhwty</i> : God Thoth <i>wḏꜥ.f</i> : he judges Literal meaning: Thoth, he judges.
<i>ḏḏḏt nt Wḏꜥyw</i>	<i>ḏḏḏt</i> : judges, magistrates, tribunal <i>wḏꜥyw</i> : the judges Literal meaning: The Council of Judges.
<i>Wḏꜥ it.f</i>	<i>wḏꜥ</i> : judge <i>it.f</i> : his father Literal meaning: He who judges his father.
<i>Wḏꜥ-mdw ḏft rḏ.f</i>	<i>wḏꜥ-mdw</i> : judge <i>ḏft</i> : in front of, in accordance with, as well as <i>rḏ.f</i> : his knowledge, opinion Literal meaning: He who judges according to his knowledge.

3.3. Status of the Name-Owner

Table 3: The Occupations of The Charcters from OK till NK

Charcter	Occupation
<i>Wḏꜥ- ntr.f</i>	A servant appears grasping the front leg of an animal in a slaughter scene. It's located on the south wall in the Mastaba of N(y)sw-nfr, Giza.
<i>Wḏꜥ</i>	High official from the 6 th dynasty. Among his title overseer of the west (<i>imy-r imnt</i>). It's found on an inscription from Wadi El- Hamamat.
<i>Wḏꜥ-ḏri</i>	High official during the reign of Pepi I (6 th dynasty). He held serval titles like overseer of commissions (<i>imy-r wpt</i>) and superintendent of the <i>ḏntyw-s</i> officials of the palace (<i>shḏ ḏntyw-s pr-ḏ</i>). It's found on his false door preserved in The Egyptian Museum of Cairo.
<i>ḏhwty wḏꜥ.f</i>	He is a man represented with no title or job title. (12 th dynasty) He is found (5 th person in the 4 th register)on limestone stela preserved in The Egyptian Museum of Cairo CG 20715 of <i>snfr</i> .
<i>ḏḏḏt nt wḏꜥyw</i>	Twelve gods judge at the gate and examine those who are in it (<i>wḏꜥw r sbḏt tn sḏmw ḏrt imyw</i>) They appear in the Book of Gates (7 th Division, 8 th Hour, Lower register).
<i>Wḏꜥ</i>	A deity appeared in the procession of welcoming the sun into the Netherworld. He appears in the Book of the Day (1 st Hour, Upper register).
<i>Wḏꜥ it.f</i>	Male deities in a procession of 10 gods moving toward the east. They work as worshippers of the sun.
<i>Wḏꜥ mdw ḏft rḏ.f</i>	They appear in the Book of the Night (12 th Hour, Lower register).
<i>Wḏꜥyḏ</i>	A guardian goddess on the prow of god Khepri's bark along four other deities. She appears in the Book of Aker (Middle register).

From the above table, you can notice that the above ten characters have various occupations.

Old Kingdom characters: they are common people with higher status in the community (*Wḏꜥ* and *Wḏꜥ-ḏri*). As for (*Wḏꜥ- ntr.f*) he is a servant but his name indicates his attachment to his lord.

Middle Kingdom characters: in Coffin Texts *wḏꜥ* used to replace the original name of Seth (*stḏ* or *stḏs*) and used *Wḏa* to points that god Seth is the one to be judged and must held action against him and his evil deeds.

New Kingdom characters: (*Wḏꜥyḏ*, *Wḏꜥ mdw ḏft rḏ.f*, *Wḏꜥ it.f* and *Wḏꜥ*); all individuals in this period are deities appeared in various religious books from this period like (Aker, Gates, Day and Night). Their job was to uphold order and to insure the safe passage of the sun god's bark by worshipping and protecting it through its nigh journey.

4. Conclusions

$w\dot{d}^c$ shows various writing styles which reflects the extraordinary talent of the scribes and craftsmen in ancient Egypt. Five different signs appeared to express $w\dot{d}^c$ in Onomastics (𓂗, 𓂘, 𓂙, 𓂚, and 𓂛) from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom. Ancient Egyptian Onomastics including $W\dot{d}^c$ appeared three times during the Old Kingdom, two times in Middle Kingdom and five times during the New Kingdom.

Egyptian personal names with $w\dot{d}^c$ in their structure can be fitted into two categories:

1. One-word names ($W\dot{d}^c$ and $W\dot{d}^c\text{yt}$)
2. Compound names ($W\dot{d}^c\text{-dri}$, $W\dot{d}^c\text{-Ntr.f}$, $W\dot{d}^c\text{-it.f}$, $W\dot{d}^c\text{-mdw hft rh.f}$ and $\dot{d}3\dot{d}3t nt W\dot{d}^c\text{yw}$).

The answer to the proposed question: Is there any particular relation between $w\dot{d}^c$ and the profession of the name-bearer? "yes, there is. That connection appeared brightly in the New Kingdom period with the onomastic of deities who appeared in religious books from the New Kingdom (Gates, Day, Night and Aker); expressed their function as guardian deities of the sun in the netherworld and also they played a role in upholding justice and judging the dead.

The discussed ten characters one can notice their various occupations; some were high officials, servant, or deities either Minor in religious books or major from the Egyptian pantheon like Seth.

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Author Contributions

All authors contributed to this work. S. Elshamy searched for the samples. Both N. Omar and T. Abdelhamid shared choosing the title. Both helped the first author completing the writing and analyzing the data. S. Elshamy followed the revision and submission of the manuscript for publication.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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