

The Resurrection, Renewal and Reconstruction of Order of the Ancient Egyptian Syed Festival from the Perspective of Transitional Ritual

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the specific process of the ancient Egyptian Syed Festival with the theory of transitional ritual, and explores its deep structure and symbolic significance on the basis of previous research. In the Syed Festival, both the people and the king go through the process of "structural-anti-structural-structure" transformation. The secret ritual of simulating death and resurrection is the core of the festival process, and through God's gift, the king realizes the renewal of vitality, which in turn symbolizes the re-establishment of the Egyptian social order. In addition, it is worth noting that the semi-divine nature of the king himself makes Syed's Day different from the general transitional ritual, and that the brief disappearance of the king's divine sanctity is typical of it.

Keywords: *Said Festival, Transition ceremony, Ancient Egypt, Resurrection ceremony*

1. INTRODUCTION

Syed Day is one of the most important rituals in the daily life of ancient Egypt and is closely related to the throne. The tradition of the Syed Festival has been extended for a long time in the course of the development of ancient Egyptian history. Existing information shows that more than 50 pharaohs, from Niuserre, the pharaoh of the fifth dynasty of the ancient kingdom, to Osorkon, the pharaoh of the third intermediate period, were associated with the Syed Festival, which was held by more than a dozen pharaohs.

As a ceremony for the renewal of the throne, the Syed Festival influenced the rhythm of the whole of Egyptian society. The Palermo stone is named after the Syed Festival. In the process of preparation and development, the festival mobilized resources and manpower up and down the country. As Emily Teeter puts it, "Festivals are social activities, a time to take urban and rural residents away from their daily affairs and celebrate together". Ordinary people are also affected by the festival atmosphere, rare opportunity to participate in the sacred environment related to the king, gods, experience the process of order over chaos.[1]

But the core ceremony of the Syed Festival remains strongly closed. The king was separated from the people,

entering the sacred space of the temple alone and performing the "resurrection" ceremony alone. Through this ceremony, the world order he represents overcomes chaos and society regains stability. This part of the secret ceremony, with Van Gainep proposed the "transition ceremony" paradigm of "edge ceremony" distinctive features. It suggests that from the perspective of "transitional ceremony", we may be able to better understand the significance of Syed Day in the functioning of Egyptian society.[2]

Based on the academic research on the specific procedures of the Syed Festival, this paper will summarize the various ritual activities in the festival process, with emphasis on the king's position and role in the Syed Festival, combining the images and the relevant materials of the pyramid inscriptions. On this basis, the multiple "separation-edge-integration" processes in space and time in the ritual structure of the Syed Festival are analyzed, and the nature of the transition ceremony is revealed. From this point of view, it explains the significance of the Syed Festival as a transitional ceremony in the renewal of the ancient Egyptian throne and the reshaping of social order.

2. THE RITUAL PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH STATUS OF THE SYED FESTIVAL

Marked by E. Naville's "The Festival Hall of Orsokon II" ("The Festival Hall of Osorkon II In Great Temple of Bubastis"), the Western academic community has been studying the Syed Festival since the end of the 19th century and has accumulated a wealth of achievements. Scholars focus on the restoration of the Syed Festival ritual process, the relationship between the Syed Festival and the crown, and the determination of the timing of the festival by studying the dates of different Pharaohs' Day. Despite the limited material, scholars have combed through the general flow of the Syed Festival ritual based on temple reliefs and inscription history.[3]

There are also scholars in China concerned about this issue, Guo Zilin's article "The Syed Festival and the King's Power in Ancient Egypt" outlines the ritual procedure of the Syed Festival, which is essentially a political means for the pharaohs to consolidate their rule. Zhang Bo's article "Syed's Day and ancient Egyptian Chronology" mainly discusses the observance and exception of the "Thirty Years Principle" of the time of the Syed Festival, and discusses its usefulness in the determination of the age.[4][5]

According to various historical records, the preparations for the Syed Festival began several years before it was held. The king chose the temple or ordered a new one as the main venue for the festival, and built a series of buildings, including "festival courtyards", "festival sanctuaries", palaces and shrines, among the selected temples. The people should also provide all kinds of supplies dedicated to God. During this long preparation period, the whole country is filled with the atmosphere of the beginning of the festival.[6]

After the preparations, the newly built temple undergoes a purification ceremony and lights up for five days until the eve of the festival. Officials, priests, monarchs and diplomatic envoys from affiliated countries gathered in the capital, and the gods were invited to stay at the quaint shrine known as the "Syed's House".[7]

The official Said Festival is divided into three stages. The first stage begins with the sacrifice to the gods, and the Pharaohs give gifts to the gods in return for "life and domination" from the gods. Then the pharaohs, priests, statues of the gods and the people formed a vast procession toward the temple where the ceremony took place. Upon arrival at the temple, the pharaoh ascended to the altar in the courtyard and was blessed by the Quartet God, and the procession witnessed the scene. Over the next two or three days, officials and priests from all over the world came to the king to declare their allegiance, and the king went to different shrines to offer

his offerings and receive the blessings of important gods.[8][9]

The second stage of the ceremony is even more mysterious, with E. Uphill arguing that "it is the most decisive part of the Syed Festival, but rarely depicted in frescoes". The king accepted God's blessing, put on a Syed dress, carried a chainsuit and a cane, and entered a shrine-like building, probably a symbol of a tomb-like structure built in the temple.[10]

We know nothing about the mysterious ritual of the king alone, and in the embossed remains of Osorkon, the remaining image is entitled "Rest in the Tomb", in which the king faces four groups of eleven gods and his ka. The reliefs of the Temple of Nusra provide a more detailed depiction of the ritual: the king enters the tomb, near a bed carved with a lion's head, with an inscription by the bed that reads, "God gave this skull life." There is also a linen cloth associated with the mummies, a description reminiscent of the pyramids about the mummified resurrection.

In turn, Wu Pusir cites images of Sethi I in the tomb of Abedos. Seti -I, dressed in a linen-wrapped bodycloth shaped like a Syed Day dress, was placed like Affleck in the same shape as The Newsella scene, and God gave him a symbol of life, stability and domination. Remarkably, his face was painted green, a symbol that he had been considered dead. It also says "Wake up!" "The word, under the bed, is placed under the king's rebirth will have all kinds of symbols. The various elements in the picture suggest its connection to the Syed Festival, especially the twelve gods on the left that are highly similar to the depictions in the Orsokon relief. In his view, such actions and procedures would have been difficult to carry out had the king actually been alive, so it might have been a mock funeral, followed by a rebirth ceremony. [11]

Secret rituals highly similar to funerals also suggest that the rebirth process, which is not detailed in the image material, may be comparable to the death and rebirth of the mummies in the pyramid inscriptions. We can see common elements such as the eye of Horus, the Sam priest who performed the opening ceremony, the food for the dead, and so on. Thus, the secret ritual of the Syed Festival, which may be procedurally similar to the funeral after the king's death, reflects the idea of the cycle of life and death of the ancient Egyptians. The only difference is that the king who "survived" under God's guidance did not ascend to the sky to join God, but gained a new life in the world, beginning a new period of rule.[12]

After the king's "resurrection", the ceremony entered its third stage. He changed into a Syed dress, put on his usual clothes again, and returned to the temple where the festival was held to announce the beginning of the new reign through a series of ceremonies. Important rituals include erecting jedr pillars, running and "dancing" in an area that symbolizes upper and lower Egypt, and

dedicating the land to the gods. After these ceremonies, the king left the temple with the procession, returned to the city, and repeated the coronation ceremony in public to declare his rebirth. The people of the whole city joined in to celebrate this important moment. Finally, as the ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt, he carried out two different closing ceremonies in the manner of the two places, passing on his authority to the rest of the world. As a result, the Pharaohs led their families back to the temple to worship their ancestors, and the celebration of Syed's Day came to an end.[13]

3. THE CONCEPT AND APPLICATION OF TRANSITIONAL CEREMONY

The concept of "transitional ceremony" was first proposed by Van Ganepp in his book "Transitional Etiquette", which consists of three stages: separation ceremony, edge ceremony and aggregation ceremony. This theory, which focuses on the dynamics of ritual processes, refines the model of "transitional rituals from one place to another, from one world to another (cosmic or social) worlds". The theory put forward by Ganepp has far-reaching influence in the field of ritual research and has been widely discussed. The most striking of the latter is Victor Turner's "The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structural", which regards the three stages of the transition ceremony as the disorder and return of "structural-anti-structural".[14][15][16]

Turner highlighted what He called the "marginal ritual" of the transition ceremony, preferring the word "threshold." Turner believes that at this stage, the main body of ritual is located in a special stage in the culture of the native people, they are not clear characteristics, secular hierarchical identity is deprived, free from the normal social structure. The transformation of social culture is treated ritually, and one of the characteristics of threshold state is that it is often associated with death. In addition, he also suggested that in the threshold state, the temporary disappearance of the sacredness of the subject of the ceremony means that its "sacred component" temporarily lapsed, and different social status was briefly integrated.[17]

When He proposed the theory of transitional rituals, he included the case of ancient Egypt, arguing that the ceremony of Pharaoh's coronation was a "collective ritual" that gave him sanctity, and that the funeral instrument was a "very appropriate commentary" on the transitional ceremony of death and rebirth. In Egyptology, scholars have also begun to explore the classification of rituals involving "transitional rituals", which Anna Stevens classifies ancient Egypt into three categories, including "exchange and sharing rituals," "disturbing rituals" and "transitional rituals." In her triage, "transitional rituals" include the separation and integration of the mother and child from normal society

at birth, and the categories of "death, funeral and rebirth".[18][19]

According to the concept of the Cycle of Life of the Egyptians, the king was resurrected after his death in conjunction with Osiris, and then joined the circular movement of the sun god pull, and ascended to the heavens to obtain eternal life. Death and regeneration have always been two processes that follow, either as two separate transition rituals or as two stages of the same transition ritual - death is separation, and regeneration is aggregation. Then, in Syed Day, the king's "death" and "return to earth" can also be regarded as a special form of regeneration. The process of the Syed Festival is a condensed display of the rituals of Egyptian life. In a short period of time, the king experienced a cycle of life-death-regeneration, linking the beginning of life to the rituals at both ends, achieving a "changeless transition".

4. THE SYED FESTIVAL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRANSITION CEREMONY

In the Syed Ceremony, the king was the center of a convergence of relationships, interacting with the gods, with the people, and with the state and the land. This interaction has led to the mobilization of the whole society, and the Syed Festival thus has the dual attributes of "life crisis ritual" and "annual ritual". It is not only for the king's own life course, is a crisis and renewal of his vitality, but also has the "30-year principle" of a relatively fixed time, for the whole population. The key reason why the Syed Festival presents this complex facet lies in the king's special status as "the bridge of communication between God and man, the maintainer of God's order". The king himself can be regarded as the representative of the world order, and the change of his life state also means the disturbance of the world order.[20]

In the eyes of the public, the entire Syed Festival is an annual transition ceremony. It affects the functioning of society as a whole, and Egyptians often use Pharaoh's Syed Day as an era. In festivals, they are detached from the fabric of daily life, briefly given the opportunity to come into contact with sacred things, to watch and participate in religious activities and State affairs that cannot be involved in secular life. The process of preparation and development of the festival is a kind of "counter-structure" of people's life, although the public is still in a relatively marginal position in this ceremony, but they and the pharaohs and the sacred nature of the gods have produced an indirect bond, through contact and out of the complete secular state. In this sense, Syed Day is not only a transition in time, with the significance of the commemorative node updated, but also make the people and the gods, pharaohs and the divine order have a real connection, so as to be united around the kingship, strengthen the national identity.[21]

For the king, the Syed Festival is a transitional period closely related to the life cycle. It presents a typical three-stage, before and after the two stages of the emphasis on order just highlights the second stage of the secret ritual of the anti-structural characteristics. Broadly speaking, the three stages of the Syed Festival are a "structural-anti-structural-structural" course.

At the beginning, the king interacted with God in public, giving gifts to God, and receiving the blessings of the great gods, who were most important. And the place where he performed the ceremony itself was "purified" and sacred. Such acts are designed to isolate the secular world from its sacred attributes. As God's "highest priest" in the world, the king plays an intermediary of God-human interaction in religious activities, and the performance of human-human interaction highlights the way the normal world order operates in the eyes of Egyptians. As a process of "affirmation" of land and state, the king accepted God's blessing and human allegiance, thereby linking the whole social order, thus making him more clearly the representative of the world order for the next ritual procedure.[22]

Then the king, dressed in a special Syed Dress, went alone into the site of the secret ceremony and began the simulated process of death and rebirth. The process of disengaging from the crowd can be seen as a separation ritual in space-time. Changing into linen-like robes, alone, entering the "grave", considered death, the king step by step into the threshold, at which moment his sanctity disappeared, social life was suspended, and separated from the previous social order. From the reliefs, it is difficult to tell whether the king is in a place where he will be buried after his death, or whether the temple is used to simulate the sacrifice of a real tomb. In either case, the king of the moment is indeed in a state of "death", divorced from the normality of divine identity. At this moment, the king walks alone into the tomb, leaving the normal social structure, which, although one may not be aware of, does have a temporary vacancy at the top of the pyramid. Symbolically, his special status leads to greater confusion in the social fabric. The disappearance of the king's vitality meant that chaos triumphed over order, and society as a whole was broken from its usual structure, and with his death it entered a threshold.[23]

Being associated with death is one of the typical characteristics of threshold periods. In the threshold period between the two normal social structures, the identity characteristics of the king are not clear, he passes through the special field of culture, does not have the sacred characteristics of the two periods before and after. A series of special items placed under the bed, ready for use by the resurrected king. This means that the king of the transitional period lost his symbolic status of clothing, property, power, and even life, which he described as typical of "people with nothing." Extremeizing the threshold state can make the front and rear threshold

stages distinctly distinguished. The deliberate display of the king's sacredness and noble identity before and after the threshold can also highlight his weakness and passivity in the transition. The state of death highlights the "humility, obedience and silence" of the subject of the ceremony. Thresholds provide a blend of humble and divine at this time and place.[24]

But the king's marginal state was short-lived, and God came before him, like the resurrection of the real dead, to awaken the king in a state of death. In the images presented in set in Seth I's tomb, the elements contain a wealth of symbolism. The same image suggests simulating a funeral and reawakening two back-and-forth rituals. The king's face was painted green, his body was similar to Othoris's, dressed like a mummy, giving off a strong sign of death; in the same picture, the words "wake up" stood out, and under the bed there were piles of clothes, weapons and symbols of the throne that the king would regain when he returned to life, and the gods gathered to resurrect him. The message before and after forms a sharp contrast, in the sharp contrast between death and rebirth, from God's life replaced death, the divine order overcomes chaos. The king was re-granted the sanctity, and walked from the edge into the structure and back to the supreme throne. With rebirth as an aggregation ritual, he was re-integrated into a stable cosmic order with the power of God, the legitimacy of the throne was re-established, and the secular world and the divine order were coupled in a specific space-time node.

Symbolically, the reborn king returns to the "visible" state when the rebirth of the sacred order is completed. Next, the ceremony moves to the third stage, where he steps out of the threshold step by step in space. He returned to the king's dress and declared his sacred return. The king stepped into the temple and completed a series of rituals that symbolized order and stability. But the temple is still not a fully open space, and its sacred aura isolates ordinary people. In order to complete his own return and the reconstruction of order, the king followed the procession back to the city, repeating the coronation ceremony at the time of the throne. Only then did the king return to the sacred top of social life, and the structure of daily life was finally put in place. The success of the integration ceremony is marked by the grand celebration of the people and the royal worship of their ancestors, and the festival ends. After the public celebration, the whole society returns to the secular life controlled by the holy order.

5. THE TRANSITION CEREMONY WITH EGYPTIAN CHARACTERISTICS

Unlike the "secular sanctification" that anthropologists often observe, the king's own sacred attributes add a double antagonism to this transitional ritual - space changes from secular to sacred, while the

subject of ritual undergoes a reverse shift from sacred to secular.

Looking at the whole process of Syed's Day, we can clearly see that the aura of the divine retreats briefly, while the secular have the opportunity to be contaminated with the divine, but the two do not occur in the same time and space. The king quickly returned to his sacred status in a secret ceremony, and the people could only touch the sacred edge in public celebrations. The sacred nature of the king is indisputable, so the reversal of his status can only be presented in a private, short-lived, ritualistic manner. Turner's social integration is achieved in a soft and hidden way, which is what the Syed Festival presents. It condenses the pharaoh's life crisis and the tension of social order into the process of "resurrection-rebirth", trying to complete the reconstruction of order in a festive atmosphere.

The king's status is contradictory, representing not only the top of the whole secular social system that has been constructed, but also the unstructured, homogenized Egyptian society as a whole. Symbolically, as the ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt, he also represented all the land and resources within the territory. Social stability, economic development, the periodic flooding of the Nile, the fertility of the land, the agricultural harvest, and whether or not a water-drought epidemic would occur are all linked to his health and life status. Thus, the king's rebirth ceremony will have universal significance beyond the individual's power and status, and equally, because of his supreme position in secular life and the divine status of the half-human and half-god, the renewal of power can only come from transcendental existence. In the threshold, the power given to the king of new life is seen as coming from God, which is universal worldwide. The ritual of Syed's Day is closely linked to ancestors and gods. This unconcensive, transcendental force controls the transformation between structure and anti-structure, and also determines the governance and disorder of society.[25]

The transition through god-given resurrection is a universal feature of the Egyptian king's life ritual, and "resurrection" has always played a major role in shaping the throne. It can be traced back to the mythical resurrection of Osiris, and in real life includes the king's funeral and the resurrection of statues in the New Kingdom. The ceremony under the same master title has a similar meaning: "The king, or king, played a decisive role in the renewal of the ancient Egyptian cosmic order, through the mythical resurrection ceremony content, the king's secular power and divine authority combined, the process of continuous resurrection, but also the process of the renewal of the sacred cosmic order, and then achieve the reality of the reign of the king once again establish legitimacy and authority." "From this, we can assume that, from the perspective of transitional ritual theory, the resurrection ceremony, the core content of the

Syed Festival, is one of the most typical ways of releasing structural pressures in ancient Egyptian society. But it was still different from the real burial process, when the king was first separated from the structure of the world, but did not enter the posthumous "Duat", but returned with a God-given life.[26]

"Things that would otherwise be imperceptible appear in symbolic form and become perceptible." The allegation of disorder is the beginning of a change in chaos, the expression of social problems in the visible form of death, and the complete and thorough resolution of the problems in the form of rebirth. The implicit purpose of Syed's Day is to renew the king's life forces, to reshape the sacred aura, to re-emphasise the sacred attributes of society, and to restore the chaotic world order. In the Egyptian concept, the king will "re-grow" as the ruler and guardian of the holy order after the Syed Festival, thereby surviving the crisis of life. And their cycle of life and death, the world view of order and chaos alternating with each other, also determines that the Syed Festival needs to follow a certain period of time or event cycle repeatedly held.[27]

Disengage from the structure to release tension, is for the restructuring and perfection of the structure. The Syed Festival is a ceremony of renewal of the throne, and for Egyptians who value the sacred world, the symbolism of rebirth may not be less than the practical function of the monarchy. The practice of the "Thirty Years Principle" is the result of the dual influence of life cycle and social reality, and the Syed Festival changes the natural law to determine the decay of life forces, and also provides a channel for release of hidden pressure under the long-running ruling order. Scholars often argue that the occasional Syed Festival "often takes place when the pharaohs are facing a crisis of political or personal rule", and that the cycle of life and death in the festival expresses the ruler's desire to restore order to the world as soon as possible.[28]

6. CONCLUSION

From the ceremony process, the Syed Day ceremony in ancient Egypt showed a distinct transitional ritual characteristics. With the simulated process of death and resurrection as the center, the Syed Festival can be divided into three stages. In the secret ritual stage, the king went through the continuous process of de-sanctification and re-sanctification, and was reborn through God's gift. This represents an update of his personal vitality and the reorganization of the Egyptian society he symbolizes. And the people are also immersed in the atmosphere of the festival, feel the power of the sacred and the king. Thus, we can better understand the symbolism and practical function of Syed Day.

In this paper, the Syed Festival is analyzed in the form of transitional ritual, but there are still many specific

problems that need to be further explored. Due to the limited archaeological data and the author's own language level, there are still some blind spots for the restoration of the specific process of Syed Festival, the king's spatial transition process of the specific analysis has not been fully carried out, I hope that in the future can be combined with the "Syed Festival New Research" and other academic cutting-edge works in this field to be refined.

In addition, the discussion of this paper also shows that the perspective of structuralism can directly hit the symbolic essence of the festival, combined with the theory of ritual of the Syed Festival research there is still considerable room for development. In the preliminary inquiry, the author pays more attention to the typical characteristics of the Syed Festival, which is relatively short of time-running observation. Combining the theory of transitional ceremony with the time-long change of ritual process, we may be able to reconstruct the origin and ritual change of Syed Festival, and explore in greater depth the meaning of the word "Said Day" and the relationship between Syed Festival and the throne, which have long been the core issues of common concern to the academic circles.

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