THE TITLE w′ wrw slaughters

Eltoukhy, M.

Egyptology dept, Faculty of Archaeology, Luxor Univ., Luxor, Egypt
E-mail address: mohsen-toukhy@hotmail.com

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1. Introduction

The title w′ wrw slaughters was only mentioned with few details about the title bearers by Jones [1], Margaret [2], and Helcky [3] who discussed different meanings of the title.

1.1. The historical appearance of the title

The title was one of many that appeared during the old kingdom, and it lasted at least to the middle kingdom. Its earliest example is most probable to be found in the tomb of Rʿ-ḥtp in the 4th dynasty.

1.1.1. Rʿ-ḥtp

Rʿ-ḥtp, during the 4th dynasty, held many titles, this title was recorded by both of Mariette [4] as 𓊆𓊪𓊥𓊪, and Petrie [5] as 𓊣𓊪𓊥𓊪, and 𓊣𓊥𓊪 [6]. However, Weil [7] translated it as “grand du harpon (†) du bassin de la ville d’Horus”. He held other titles as [8]: s3 nwsw n ht fr mr mš ʿtm ʿmr ñpt mp-ḥt slslaughters is w′ wr slaughters wr w′wr ʿlmw w′ wr ḫb mdh 3ms

King’s son of his body, general of the army expedition, supervisor/overseer of the works, elder of the chamber, unique one of the Shepenty (†), great prophet (Priest) of Heliopolis, unique one of festival, craftsman of the Ames scepter.

Abstract:
The title w′ wrw slaughters is well known from 4th dynasty wall decoration. At that time, the bearer was functioning mainly as “the unique of great of the slaughters”. It has been an attested title since the old kingdom. The w′ wrw slaughters is a person acting as a unique person from Wadi Natroun. Moreover, it was established that the importance of that person depends on the administration employing him and the hierarchical level occupied. In this study, the author establishes that this title can be employed according to a specific scheme in which the title refers to a person. Relying on all the reachable examples, the author proves the ambivalence of the slaughters, both substitute and leader, and proposes to translate the term by “Truchsesse” in the cases corresponding to that scheme. His hypotheses are confirmed by the study of several particular cases. The aim of this paper is to examine the social standing of the w′ wrw slaughters by concentrating on known tombs and objects of this title’s bearers (e.g. the tomb of Rʿ-ḥtp), specifically tombs that contain a complete list of titles.
1.1.2. Unknown person
This example most probably is from the same time of R'htp, in tomb no. 7 Medum, this title was recorded by Petrie as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ fig. (2) [5] and Weil, who added the sign $[\theta]$ between two brackets as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ [5, 7], however, its owner is unknown, he held a few titles such as “big harpoon from the kiosk” and “big harpoon from the city of Horus”.

Figure (2) Shows portion of lintel from mastaba no. 7 (After, Petrie, 1892)

1.1.3. k$\text{\textcopyright{}}$-htp/ $\text{\textcopyright{}}$
Most probably this example is from the same time of R'htp, in k$\text{\textcopyright{}}$-htp/ $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ tomb’s, pillar 4 east face, fig. (3) [9] the title was recorded as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$. Although, Kanawaty read it as $[w^r]$ wr$[\text{\textcopyright{}}]$ $[\text{\textcopyright{}}]$, and Strudwick read it as “the unique among the great ones of the $[\text{\textcopyright{}}]$”. [9] as it appears in the text only this part is clear, so he considered it to be as In $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ which he wrote $[w^r]$ between two brackets as $[w^r]$ [9]. However, Martinet translated it as "unique among the great of festive meals (?)” [10]. $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ held other titles as: The hereditary prince, the count, the overseer of upper Egypt, the sole-companion, the lector priest, the semi-priest, the director of every kilt, the keeper of the headdress, the director of black vase, the overseer of the two houses of silver, the overseer of the two granaries of the divine offerings, the greatest of seers, the greatest of the five, the privy to the secret of the god’s treasure, the commanders of the chiefs of distribution.

Figure (3) Shows pillar 4 east face tomb of K$\text{\textcopyright{}}$-htp/ $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ (After, Kanawty, 1982)

1.1.4. tp-m$^5$nh
Under the reign of king Ne-User-Re, the tomb of tp-m$^5$nh [11, 12] shows the title written as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ and reads it as $w^r$ wr (w)-$\text{\textcopyright{}}$, although the p sign is missing here in the text. In this example Kaplony [13] mentioned that this example is unquoted evidence of the title $w^r$ wr(w)-$\text{\textcopyright{}}$ in which $hb$ must be part of the title.

1.1.5. Thyns
A lintel fragment of Thyns from most probably from the 6th dynasty, fig. (4) [12, 14] shows the title as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$. However, Strudwick read it as $[w^r]$ wr$[\text{\textcopyright{}}]$ (w)’$[\text{\textcopyright{}}]$ in Cairo museum JE 15048 early/mid-6th dynasty or later, [3, 15-18] shows the title as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$, and Strudwick read it as $w^r$ wr$\text{\textcopyright{}}$. It is remarkable here that the title is written in a different order as shown above.

1.1.6. htp-hr-n-pth
A door jamb of htp-hr-n-pth in Cairo museum JE 15048 early/mid-6th dynasty or later, [3, 15-18] shows the title as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$, in the tomb of htp-hr-n-pth [9], and translated it as “the unique among the great ones of the $[\text{\textcopyright{}}]$” [9] as it appears in the text only this part is clear, so he considered it to be as In $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ which he wrote $[w^r]$ between two brackets as $[w^r]$ [9]. However, Martinet translated it as "unique among the great of festive meals (?)” [10]. $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ held other titles as: The hereditary prince, the count, the overseer of upper Egypt, the sole-companion, the lector priest, the semi-priest, the director of every kilt, the keeper of the headdress, the director of black vase, the overseer of the two houses of silver, the overseer of the two granaries of the divine offerings, the greatest of seers, the greatest of the five, the privy to the secret of the god’s treasure, the commanders of the chiefs of distribution.

Figure (4) Shows a lintel fragment of Thyns (After, Lauer, 1937)

1.1.7. hnty-hty
The statuette of hnty-hty is dated back to the second half of the 12th dynasty [19], it shows the title written on the right side as: $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ and read as $w^r$ wr $\text{\textcopyright{}}$. It is remarkable here that the title is written in a different order as shown above.

1.1.8. Mntw-htp
Middle kingdom during the reign of Sesostris I = the title appeared on the stela of Mentu- Hip (CG 20539) Bulaq 78, as Brugsch [21] as $\text{\textcopyright{}}$. The title here has two type of determinatives: 1. $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ 2. $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ He held other titles as: “Master of the secrets of the house of life” [22].

2. Meaning and Duties of the Title
The title $w^r$ wr $\text{\textcopyright{}}$, is divided into $w^r$ wr and $\text{\textcopyright{}}$; $w^r$ wr’s meaning is well cleared, however, $\text{\textcopyright{}}$ could be problematic here in this title.
2.1. \textit{wr} \textit{wr} 

\textit{wr} \textit{wr} appeared in other titles, such as: \textit{wr} \textit{wr}(\textit{w}) \textit{hbk} giving the meaning of “unique one of greatest of the festival” [1,2,23], and it seems that this title didn’t last long and it was used at the same time with \textit{wr} \textit{wr} \textit{spntjw}. In some other cases it appeared as \textit{wr} \textit{wr} \textit{m wrw}, such as: \textit{wr} \textit{m wrw} \textit{hsww} [pr]-\textit{dt} giving the meaning of “unique one among the great ones” [1], \textit{wr} \textit{m wrw} \textit{hsww} [pr]-\textit{dt} giving the meaning of “unique one among the great ones and among the singers of the funerary estate” [1]; Fischer mentioned \textit{wr} \textit{wr}(\textit{w}) as a title that gives the meaning of “unique one of the great” [23]. Doxey [24] noted that \textit{wr} \textit{wr} was used as a part of a title that gives the meaning of “Uniquely great one” CG 20539, although he didn’t mention the complete title \textit{wr} \textit{wr}(\textit{w}) \textit{spntjw}. In very rare examples this designation was used in a different order as \textit{wr} \textit{wr}. It could be just a substitution between them.

2.2. The word \textit{spntjw}

Brugsch [21] noted that \textit{spntjw} doesn’t have a clear meaning, Hannig [25] didn’t give a meaning to this noun, he only mentioned that it is used in the title \textit{wr} \textit{wr} \textit{spntjw} without clarifying its meaning or usage, the WB [26] confirmed that the word \textit{spntjw} appeared for the first time during the old kingdom in titles. The noun \textit{spntjw} with the writing \textit{spntjw}, in which the determinative \textit{idt} is a main part of the noun, wasn’t given a specific meaning too [25,27,28]. Braud [29] mentioned that \textit{wr} \textit{wr} \textit{spntjw} is a religious title gives the meaning of “unique among the great festive meals”, which is related festive rites. However, he didn’t clarify his reasons to consider this title as a religious one! He gave a different translation as “unique among the big party drinks”. Helck [3] considered the title \textit{wr} \textit{wr}(\textit{w})-\textit{spntjw} as an honorary title, also he mentioned that the title’s bearer has to be doing something with the royal dining room, and he gave the possibility of having a connection between the \textit{spntjw} jar and whoever held the title, then he translated it as “Einzige der Grossen der Truchsessen”. Also, Kaplony [30] agreed with Helck in translating the title as “Einer von den Grossen der Truchsessen” if \textit{spnt} really means “Truchsessen”, however, the determinative didn’t appear in any of the title examples, instead of that appeared the city determinative, otherwise another case in which the determinative was \textit{spntjw}. Here comes another theory, which Kaplony assumed, that the word \textit{spntjw} could be referring to a city name, due to the parallel similarities in which the title was mentioned besides the title \textit{wr}-\textit{Npt} with the city name \textit{Npt} is mentioned [30]. There are a few providences that could be related to the noun \textit{spntjw}, as follows: 1- \textit{sbt} \textit{spntjw} [31,32]. It is a town near Dendera. 2- \textit{sstb} \textit{spntjw} [31,32]. It is the main city of Deshna. 3- \textit{snp} \textit{spntjw} [31-33]. Pehu the 2nd nome of Upper Egypt, appeared only in one text from temple of Edfou. 4- \textit{spt} \textit{spntjw} [31,34,35]. It is the name of the main city of Wadi el-Natron, this name was used for a long time from the old kingdom till the Ptolemaic dynasty. However, later, this name was substituted by \textit{srp} \textit{spntjw} [32,34]. Kaplony [30] cited a different theory that perhaps the origin of \textit{idt-spnt} the so-called “\textit{spt} tree oil” is indicated with \textit{spnt} or \textit{st-pt} “Wadi Natron” and that the extension \textit{n} has been added to the root of the word. If one considered this theory, it could lead to another theory, that if Wadi Natron was called \textit{st-pt} during the old kingdom, after that it changed into \textit{sht-hm3t} during the middle kingdom, so the meaning of the title \textit{wr}-\textit{wr}(\textit{w})-\textit{spntjw} will be clear, this way as “The unique of the greatest of Wadi Natron people”, and this really makes sense if one considered the other titles, normally who held this title held other high ranked titles, so whoever held the title \textit{wr}-\textit{wr}(\textit{w})-\textit{spntjw} has to be someone great and high ranked in his family.

3. Results

It is clear now, depending on the found examples, that the best translation for the title \textit{wr}-\textit{wr}(\textit{w})-\textit{spntjw} should be “The unique (one) of the greatest of Wadi Natron
people”. This title was only used during the 4th, 5th, and 6th dynasties of the old kingdom, and once again during the 12th dynasty. It’s related to a high ranked person, as listed in tab. (1)

Table (1) The other titles used with $w^r$ wr(w) $\$$pntjw

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$R^r$-htp</td>
<td>4th dynasty</td>
<td>King’s Son of his Body, General of the Army Expedition, Supervisor/Overseer of the Works, Elder of the Chamber, Great Prophet (Priest) of Heliopolis, unique one of festival, craftsman of the Amun scepter. “big harpoon from the kiosk” and “big harpoon from the city of Horus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>unknown person</td>
<td>4th dynasty</td>
<td>The hereditary prince, the count, the overseer of upper Egypt, the sole-companion, the lector priest, the semi-priest, the director of every kilt, the keeper of the headress, the director of black vase, the overseer of the two houses of silver, the overseer of the two granaries of the divine offerings, the greatest of seers, the greatest of the five, the privy to the secret of the god’s treasure, the commanders of the chiefs of distribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$k$-htp/ tti</td>
<td>4th dynasty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$tp$-m$^r$nh</td>
<td>5th dynasty</td>
<td>…. the prince</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>privy councilor of the Dwat House</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Palace chief….</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>honored before the great god</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>loved by his master …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$hp$-pra-ntp</td>
<td>Early/mid-6th</td>
<td>Priest of the double Axe</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dynasty</td>
<td>The high priest of Hermopolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The unique one of festival</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pillar of the Leopard-skin Gayet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carpenter of Nekhen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$hn$</td>
<td>6th dynasty</td>
<td>Carpenter of Nekhen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$hty$-hty</td>
<td>The second half of the 12th dynasty</td>
<td>Seal of the King’s</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sole friend</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Head of the Great House</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prince</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$snt$-priest of Horus and Min</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$W^r$-$nt$-Father of God</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>priest of the dead ‘in the divine hall of Sakmet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The one who is at the head of his harem</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>keeper of secrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>writer of the Book of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The one who does not have his second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>only popular friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>head of the big house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$Mn$w$-$htp</td>
<td>Sesostris I 12th dynasty</td>
<td>Master of the secrets of the house of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Discussion
The title $w^r$ wr(w)-$\$pntjw was held by only 8 persons during the old and middle kingdoms, all of them held other high ranked titles, by comparing these titles with the above-mentioned results it shows the importance of the title $w^r$ wr(w)-$\$pntjw in ancient Egypt, that has become clear from the translations, and comments of the autobiography texts of the royal retinue in ancient Egypt. Therefore, the title $w^r$ wr(w)-$\$pntjw should be translated as “The unique (one) of the greatest of Wadi Natron people”.

5. Conclusion
By analyzing all found examples of the title $w^r$ wr(w)-$\$pntjw, that was held by the Royal retinue and the royal family members during the old kingdom and the middle kingdom, throughout the autobiography texts, it became clear that this title was a high ranked title and it should be translated as “The unique (one) of the greatest of Wadi Natron people”.

References


