

Early Dynastic Egypt

Toby Wilkinson, page 15

One of the most significant objects was an ivory plaque, originally covered in gold foil, decorated in relief with the head of a cow goddess (Hathor or, more likely, Bat) between two 'thunderbolt' symbol of Min (*Klasens, 1958:50 fig. 20(y) and 53, pl. XXV*).

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(re: Khasekhemwy as predecessor to Netjerikhet)

The same store of ritual stone vessels seems to have supplied both kings' tombs, since both contained fragments with identical ink drawings of the god Min, clearly drawn from the same collection (*Petrie 1901:pl. III.48; Laucau and Lauer 1965: pl. 15.1-5*).

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(re: royal standards)

Altogether, ten different standards are attested: an east sign; the Min (thunderbolt?) symbol; a canine with the sdsd-device; a second unidentified canine; an ibis; a single or double falcon; a falcon perched on a crescent; the Seth-animal; a curious bag-shaped object; and the desert hieroglyph (Figure 6.4).

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The colossal statues of a fertility god found in the temple at Coptos indicate that the cult of the deity later named as Min was important from Predynastic times (*Payne 1993; cf. Kemp 1989: 81, fig. 28; Dreyer 1995b*). Although in origin a local deity of Coptos (which always remained the gods principal cult centre), Min probably enjoyed a national significance from an early period. The tradition in the Late Period that Min ruled Egypt at the beginning of history - a myth which linked Min with the first 'historic' King Menes - may preserve echoes of the god's importance during the period of state formation (*Hornung 1983: 108*).

The 'thunderbolt' symbol of Min, also attested from the Predynastic period, occurs on the Scorpion macehead, on a divine standard. Two such symbols are depicted flanking the head of Bat on a decorated ivory plaque from Early Dynastic Cemetery 300 at Abu Rawash (*Klasens 1958: 50, fig. 20(y), 53, pl. XXV*). The symbol is also shown on a private stela from the reign of Djer (*Petrie 1901: pl. XXVI.68*) and on a sealing from the tomb of Merneith at Abydos (*Petrie 1901: pl. XVII.135*). It has been suggested that, like other prominent deities, Min may originally have been a god associated with the celestial realm, in this case the phenomenon of thunder (*Wainwright 1941: 30*). The Palermo Stone records the fashioning or dedication of an image of Min as the eponymous event of year 7 of an unidentified First Dynasty king. An identical entry is given for year 6 of Semerket (on the main Cairo fragment), and for year 3 of an unidentified Third Dynasty king. A fragment of a slate bowl from the tomb of Khasekhemwy is inscribed in ink with the figure of Min (*Petrie 1902: pl. III.48*). Identical inscriptions were found in the galleries beneath the Step Pyramid, indicating that both sets of funerary provisions were drawn from the same source (*Lacau and Lauer 1965:pl 15.1—5*). The full text gives the legend *pr Mnw*, 'estate of Min', showing that the cult of Min was flourishing and in receipt of royal patronage at the end of the Second Dynasty.

Hathor Rising

Alison Roberts, page 82

His link with Amun can be traced back to the Middle Kingdom when scenes show Amun in the form of the ithyphallic Min. Before this time, however, the evidence becomes hazy, and, as with so much else, we depend on New Kingdom Egypt for our knowledge of the connection between these two gods.

Yet Min was undoubtedly already known in archaic times. His symbol – which is commonly described as a thunderbolt, but in early representations looks more like a double headed arrow – occurs already on predynastic vases dating from the fourth millennium BC.

The unusual epithet 'Bull-of-his-Mother' (Kamutef), already associated with the ithyphallic Amun by the Middle Kingdom ... provides a hint of his relationship with the mother goddess, who, at Thebes, more often than not is Isis⁵ ... much more explicit is an epithet of Min-Amun naming him as 'the fecundator of his mother'⁶.

5&6 Much of the evidence for the connection of Isis with 'Bull-of-his-Mother' dates from the New Kingdom and later, but her mother-son relationship with Min or Min-Horus dates back at least to the Middle Kingdom.



Palermo Stone

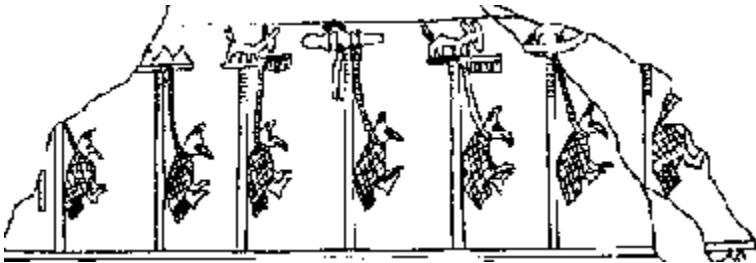
Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt, Toby Wilkinson

h^c(t)-nswt mst Mnu mh 5

Djer's 7th year

appearance of the king as nswt; creating (an image of) Min
5 cubits

The cult of a fertility god (later given the name Min) seems to have been established by the beginning of the First Dynasty, to judge from the colossal statues found in the temple at Coptos. The 'thunderbolt' symbol of Min, attested from the Predynastic period, occurs on the Scorpion macehead and on a private stela from the reign of Djer. This entry in the annals, if authentic, confirms that the cult of Min was the focus of royal devotion from the earliest period of Egyptian history.



Scorpion Macehead



Predynastic Vase

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A predynastic vase showing a broad-hipped female figure with upraised arms surrounded by animals. The boat is decorated with a regional standard of Min shaped like a double headed arrow over the cabin.

Thunderbolt symbol for Min

Pyramid Text 283

Indeed I dart this left thumb-nail of mine against you, I strike a blow with it on behalf of Min and the ikiw. O you who are wont to rob, do not rob.

Spruch 283 (Schack Kap. 72).

