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“Towers of Strength and More”: A Thematic Analysis of Royal Titularies in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract

In ancient Egypt, kings were believed to have both cosmic and political roles. One of the tools they employed to announce such roles was their royal titularies. This paper conducted a thematic analysis of the titularies of all native ancient Egyptian kings over the seven dynastic periods (from 3150 B.C. to 332 B.C.). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to conduct this thematic analysis of 1,164 titularies embraced by 260 native Egyptian kings in the fields of Onomastics or Egyptology. We examined the linguistic repertoire used in these titularies employing two methods: manual and via Word Counter and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The analysis yielded three main themes: Relation to the divine, theme of war and conflict, and relation to the land. Findings revealed a marked consistency in the thematic distribution across periods and titulary categories. Findings also showed significant changes in the use of theonyms and toponyms in all periods.

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1. Introduction

In *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare poses a rhetorical question: “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other name would smell as sweet” (Shakespeare, 1593/1999, Act 2, Scene 2). Yet he refutes this claim in *Richard III* by declaring, “A king’s name is a Tower of Strength” (Shakespeare, 1595/2011, Act 5, Scene 3). This study adopts the second point of view that there is more to a name than just the name. It examines the linguistic repertoire of the titularies of native ancient Egyptian kings over seven dynastic periods (from 3150 B.C. to 332 B.C.). It aims to discern the general governing themes in kings’ titularies and the various messages they carry. In the ancient world, names represented much more than just labels by which one identified people and objects. In some cultures, names are believed to be associated with the power of creation. They carry with them magical powers and features. This belief is found across cultures and religions. The story of creation in ancient Egyptian mythology was linked to the act of naming various entities by the primeval god *Re* (Leprohon, 2013). It is the great name of *Re* that gave him power over gods and men. In the burial rituals, the opening of the mouth was an essential final step to ensure the deceased the blessing of eternity as s/he speaks her/his name and thus can be granted eternity. As Isis puts it, “for he who is called by his Name is he who shall live” (Watterson, 2003). Existing in a language-conscious society, where people were praised for having “good speech” (Uljas, 2013, p. 2), a name of a person would decide his identity in the society and in the “social memory for eternity” and would determine “his survival for posterity” (Vittmann, 2013, p. 1). *Damnatio memoriae*, or erasing the personal name, was the punishment for crimes in ancient Egypt (Vittmann, 2013).

In order to fully understand the role of kings’ titularies in ancient Egypt, one has to get introduced first to the institution of kingship in ancient Egypt. The king was not just a political figure running the country but had both a cosmic and political role. Thus, the king is expected to retain and reinforce world and cosmic order, act as a mediator between the gods and ordinary mortal people, being himself both mortal and divine, as well as execute the

will of gods (Bárta, 2013). One of the tools that was used by ancient Egyptian kings to announce, define and reinforce such roles and relations was the four names a king assumes upon coronation. These names are *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, *Golden Horus*, and *Throne* names, in addition to a fifth name which is the *Birth* name of the king. Such names, as the analysis will show, were used to announce kings’ policies internally or externally and copy or imitate the names of a predecessor. A brief discussion of the five names will be presented in section 2.

Adopting a sociopolitical framework, this paper qualitatively and quantitatively explores the themes, and hence the functions, of ancient Egyptian kings’ titularies and titular categories. We shall investigate the linguistic repertoire of these titularies, including theonyms and toponyms. This study fills a gap in both disciplines of onomastics and archeology. Though royal titularies in ancient Egypt have been studied by Egyptologists, a thematic analysis of such titularies has not been discussed before. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to employ a thematic analysis of kings’ titularies in ancient Egypt. The study attempts to explore the major themes detected in kings’ titularies and examine the cross-dynastic and cross-titular similarities/differences. It also seeks to probe how titularies reflected the socio-political changes over a 30-century period.

2. Theoretical Framework

It was not until recently that modern linguists started to pay due attention to the study of onomastics (Algeo, 2000). The linguistic component of onomastics has been largely obscured among other components such as those of history, logic, and etymology. This made some linguists call for a remedy to this situation (Utley, 1963).

The common trends of research in the linguistics of onomastics focus on form rather than function (Anderson, 2007; van Langendonck & van de Velde, 2016). The current study concurs with Sapir’s (1949) argument that language, as represented here in kings’ titularies, is a social act that guides our perception of social reality. Language is an index of political and ideological beliefs, values, and structures of any given group of people (Isaac, 2016). The act of naming and

name choice is a political activity of universal significance that cannot be seen as separable from other political phenomena and is regarded as an important tool in analyzing power relations across cultures (Alia, 2006). By observing changes in naming practices and preferences, one has insights into the encompassing socio-political history of a period (Seymour, 1983). Names as identity markers are a bountiful source of information (Chen, 2020; Ennin & Nkansah, 2016). They mirror the polyphonic nature of humans, which is partly reflected in our chosen names and titles. Thus, they serve as the focal points around which we project our identity (Windt-Val, 2012). The distinctive aspects of human identity are highlighted when a name distinguishes its bearer from those around him (Aldrin, 2016). A person's name is his proxy and is equal to him/her (Mardieva & Vladimirovna, 2022). A change to a person's name may signify a change in a personality or condition. Moreover, naming is a phenomenon that defies boundaries of time, space, and culture. For some, the unnamed is not merely 'unnoticed' but is 'nonexistent' on both the cognitive and communicative levels (Algeo, 2000; Seymour, 1983). Names have been viewed as a tool for political messages and an exercise of political authority. This is manifested in the five-fold titularies of ancient Egyptian kings, namely, *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, *Golden Horus*, *Throne*, and *Birth* names, which will be briefly discussed below.

Horus name is the oldest designation of kings in ancient Egypt, dating back to Dynasty 0. It is the first name a king assumes after ascending the throne, and it is the name in which the king resembles the *Golden Falcon Horus*. As *Horus*, the king is announced to assume his cosmic role of retaining order, thereby becoming the agent of *Re* on earth (Quirke, 2001). In such a capacity, he also embodies the link between the celestial gods and terrestrial humans (Valbelle, 2002). With such mystique, the king possesses the ultimate legitimate power. The *Two Ladies* name is the one that announced the king as being under the protection of *Wadjet* and *Nekhbet*, the two goddesses of Lower and Upper Egypt. The *Golden Horus* name, the second oldest name of ancient Egyptian kings, is a combination of the symbol of *Horus*, the 'falcon god', and the gold, which symbolizes the sun and gold, giving the king an air of

celestial majesty. The *Throne* name, one of the two names that were encircled in a cartouche, was the last name a king adopted after his coronation. It was preceded by the phrase "dual king" in a reference that the king belongs to Upper and Lower Egypt. The *Birth* name is the name given to the crown prince or heir to the throne upon birth and is preceded by the phrase "son of *Re*." It was the second name to be encircled in a cartouche after the coronation.

A king may choose to change one or more of his names or add "epithets" to an already existing name in case there was a change in the geopolitical and religious conditions that necessitated a new statement. In case of a change of a name, it is referred to as an "additional" name. These names were an important part of the royal inscription texts that depicted kings' deeds and were impressive visual displays for documentation and propaganda purposes (Hsu, 2012). Royal titularies were fully developed by the 12th Dynasty (Leprohon, 1996). Creating and using titularies was an elaborate process as they were designed to carry "great symbolic weight" (Wilkinson, 2000, p. 24), reflecting the royal ideologies. Nevertheless, there are a few texts that give a glimpse of the "logistics" involved in choosing the four names a king had upon his accession to the throne (Leprohon, 2013, p. 9). From the few texts that survived, we can deduce that a name is "created," "assigned," "fixed," "specified," "given," "established," or "consolidated" by the palace, then "sanctified," and is ready to be "recorded," "inscribed," "engraved," "copied," "written down," and "displayed" (Leprohon, 2013, pp. 33-34). As for the *Birth* name, which is the king's fifth name, there is no definite information to ascertain who names the heir to the throne upon birth (For further discussion, see Iskander, 2002).

This study adopts a thematic approach that focuses on the functions of names in light of sociopolitical contexts. Through this thematic analysis, we attempt to identify, analyze and report patterns within our data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Unlike other forms of political discourse, titularies, being linguistically limited in the number of words, carry succinct messages. In ancient Egypt, they were repeatedly and consistently displayed on temple walls, papyri, stellas, etc. This verbal and visual

repetition, or what is referred to as “the illusory truth effect,” rendered such messages more powerful and reinforced their credibility (Hassan & Barber, 2021).

3. Methodology

In this section, we shall discuss the materials under investigation (data) as well as the procedures adopted in the analysis.

3.1. Materials

The data were drawn from Leprohon (2013), a comprehensive source that included all titularies encompassing the lists of royal names gathered by other Egyptologists. He also resorted to Kings’ Lists compiled in Later Period. The data included kings’ titularies from the early dynastic period in 3150 B.C. till the 31st Dynasty (332 B.C.). The period under investigation is divided into seven chunks specified by Egyptologists. These chunks are divided into two main categories: Kingdoms and Intermediate Periods. The Kingdom Periods are those in which Egypt was unified under one king, while the Intermediate Periods are those in which Egypt suffered from division and turmoil. These seven chunks are as follows:

- Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom (3150 - 2161 B.C.)
- First Intermediate period (2160 - 2060 B.C.)
- Middle Kingdom (2060 - 1650 B.C.)
- Second Intermediate (1663- 1570 B.C.)
- New Kingdom (1570- 1070 B.C.)
- Third Intermediate (1069-656 B.C.)
- Late Period (664- 332 B.C.)

To fit the scope of our research, we limited our study to native Egyptian rulers. We, therefore, excluded non-Egyptian dynasties (14/15/21a/22/25/27) along with their rulers. The data were not limited to original names but included additional names and epithets added to the names as they are reflective of the geopolitical and social change. The total number of monarchs included was 260, with 1,164 titularies, as shown in Table 1.

For the purpose of this study, the following should be put into consideration:

- “King” refers to male and female rulers.
- “Old Kingdom” refers to Early Dynastic Period and Old Kingdom.
- “Titulary” refers to original name, additional name and epithet.

Table 1

Number of Native Kings and their Titularies (From 3150 B.C. till 332 B.C.)

Period	Titular Categories						# of entries	# of kings
	Horus	Two Ladies	Golden Horus	Throne	Birth	Late Cartouche		
Early Dynastic Period & Old Kingdom	56	34	21	36	25	47	219	87
1 st Intermediate	5	1	1	7	15	1	30	18
Middle Kingdom	29	26	25	61	54	0	195	67
2 nd Intermediate	18	9	9	31	27	0	94	32
New Kingdom	155	73	72	112	89	0	501	33
3 rd Intermediate	4	3	3	17	24	0	51	8
Late Period	12	10	12	19	21	0	74	15
TOTAL	279	156	143	283	255	48	1164	260

3.2. Procedure

The analysis was conducted on three levels. The first is to decide the themes discussed in kings’ titularies across the seven dynastic periods. The second is to determine the theme in terms of titular category in order to discern the type of message assigned to each titular category. The

third level of analysis is to examine the linguistic repertoire of the data to explore any changes that occurred as a reflection of the socio-political changes of each period. The analysis of the first and second layers was conducted manually, while the third level was done by the use of Word Counter software. This software extracted the most common words and

phrases in each titular category and period. The coding was done by identifying certain lexical items to be indicative of each theme. This coding process guarantees that the classification is data-based. To ensure the reliability and objectivity of the results, we discussed them with an expert in the ancient Egyptian language. Statistical results were extracted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program (Version 23). The statistical transactions, tests, and treatments utilized were frequencies and percentages.

4. Results

The data revealed three major themes tackled in kings' titularies across the seven periods and the various titular categories. These are (1) Theme of the relation to the divine; (2) Theme of land; and (3) Theme of war and conflict (See Figures 1 & 2). In the following sections, a detailed discussion of the three themes will be presented.

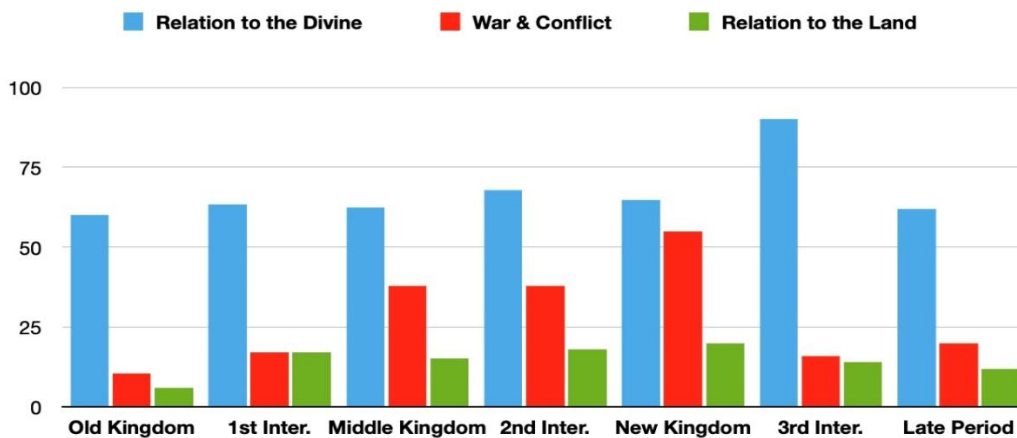


Figure 1
Thematic Distribution across Periods

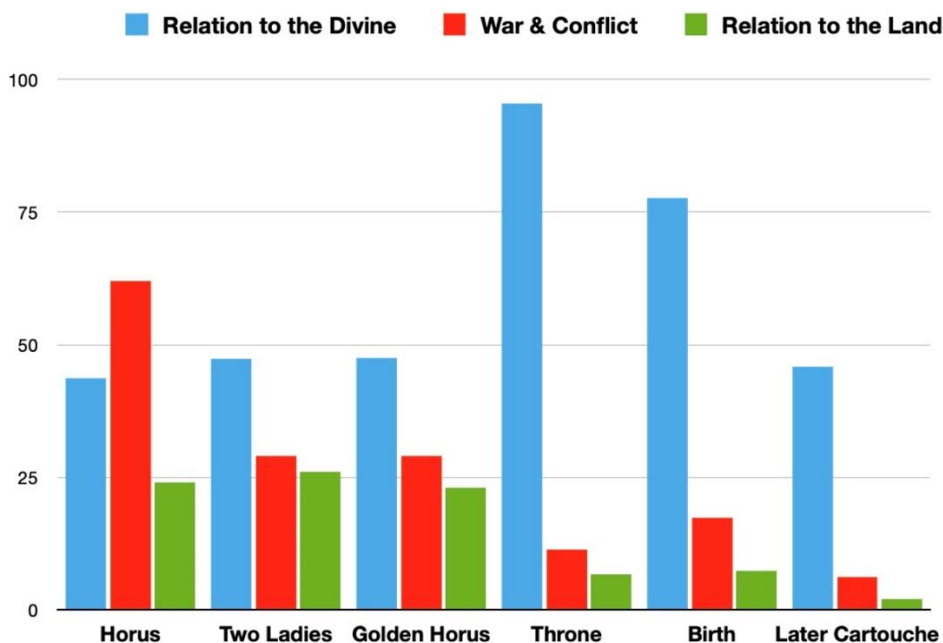


Figure 2
Thematic Distribution across Titularies

4.1. Theme of the Relation to the Divine

Titularies under this theme explicitly include a lexical item that denotes the relation to the divine such as a god/goddess’s name, lord, father/mother, and the one who bore him (i.e., the king).

The cross-dynastic analysis showed that this theme was the most prominent in all periods (See Figure 1). There are strong similarities between all seven periods. This shows a strong

consistency in the religious belief that defies time and transcends political and social changes.

4.1.1. Gods and their Representation

The data revealed both consistency and change in terms of theonyms and what they signify. As shown in Figure 3, the analysis reveals the development of the usage of theonyms in royal titularies.

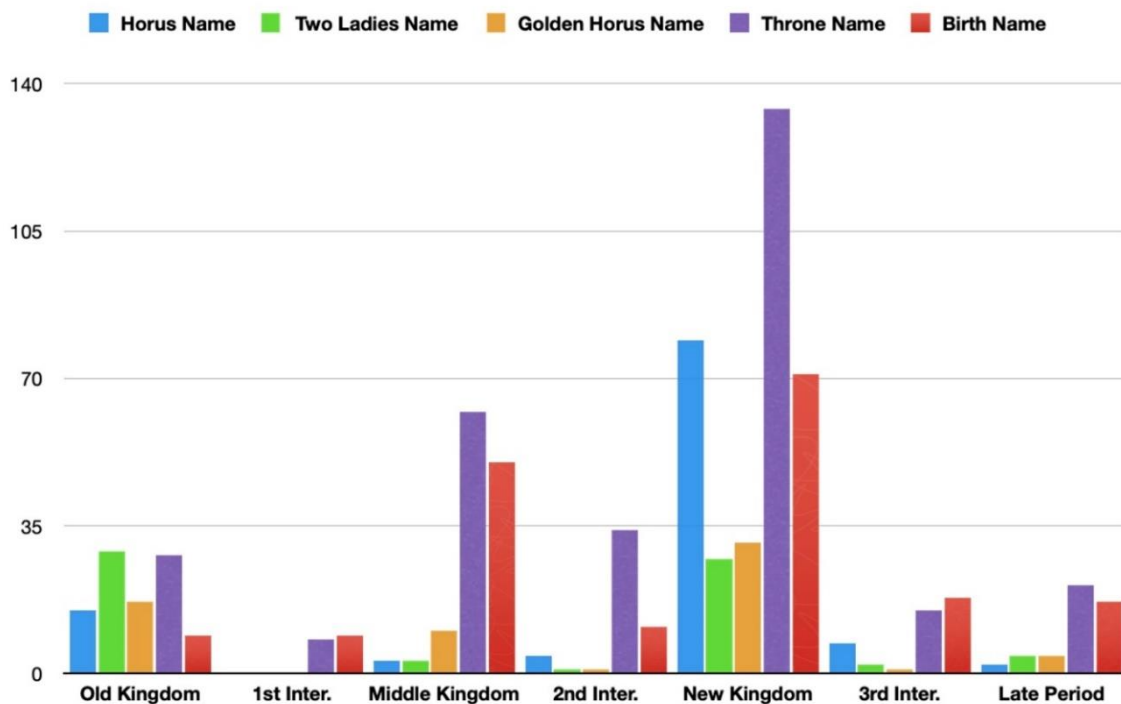


Figure 3
Use of Theonyms across Dynastic Periods and Titular Categories

In the Old Kingdom, theonyms were included in the Throne and Two Ladies names. Starting from the First Intermediate Period, they were mostly present in Throne and Birth names. Yet, in the New Kingdom, kings chose to significantly use theonyms in Horus names along with Throne and Birth Names. This fairly consistent usage of theonyms bears witness to the rigorous rules that governed Egyptian

royalty. An example corroborating such consistency is that from among 1400 gods worshipped in ancient Egypt, the sun god *Re* was the one who was ubiquitous in all periods. The presence of deities reflected the religiopolitical changes across periods (See Figure 4; a more detailed discussion will be given in the following sections).

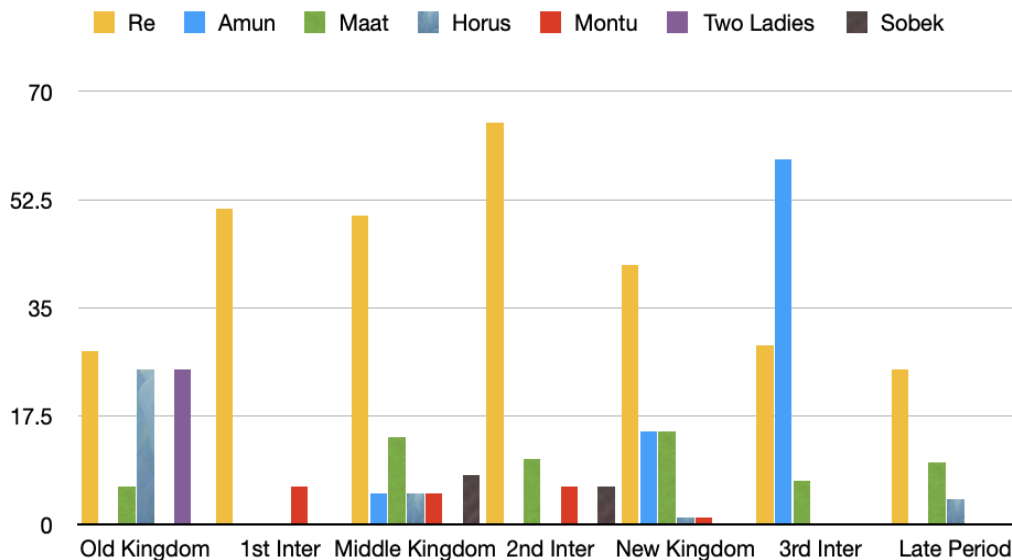


Figure 4
Representation of Deities across Dynastic Periods

The analysis revealed four sub-themes under the relation-to-the-divine theme.

4.1.2. Friend/ Filial Relation with the Divine

Kings of ancient Egypt as early as the prehistoric Dynasty stressed the close relation that associated them with the divine. Such relation was present in different forms, starting in the prehistoric Dynasty and Dynasty 1, depicting king *Iry Hor* (Dyn. 0), as “the companion of Horus” and *Semerket* (Dyn. 1) as “friend of the (divine) body.” This type of relation was only present in the Old Kingdom. The 4th Dynasty (Old Kingdom) witnessed a change toward a more direct link with the divine, with king *Radjedef* declaring himself to be “the son of *Re*.” This might be explained in terms of the fact that *Radjedef*, who did not have a strong claim to the throne, wanted to associate himself with *Re* in an attempt to acquire the type of legitimacy he might have lacked. This relation was adopted by kings of all subsequent periods (except for the Second Intermediate Period), where it was established using phrases like, “son,” “daughter,” “his father,” “the one who bore him/her,” “the egg of,” and “issued from his limbs.”

4.1.3 The Belonging-to-the-Divine Relation

Titularies under this category include the verb “to belong.” This relation was constantly present in the titularies throughout the seven periods. It was only in the First Period that this

“belonging” was detected in all titularies and came in association with four deities: *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, *Re* and *Neith*. This can be ascribed to the fact that this was the early beginnings of the monarchy and the unified state. Stressing the fact that the king belongs to deities is a way of conferring legitimacy and protection upon him.

In the Middle Kingdom, the two deities that were all-pervasive in this belonging subtheme in this period were *Re* and *Wosret* – a pattern to be copied in the Second Intermediate and New Kingdom. The choice of deities is significant as *Re* is the supreme creator and the omnipresent god in all periods (See Figure 4). As for *Wosret*, she was always depicted as carrying a bow and a spear. The choice of *Throne* and *Birth* names reinforces the visual impact of the name and bears evidence of the importance of this relation.

In the New Kingdom, the powerful kings of the 18th Dynasty neglected such relation. Such “belonging” relation reappeared, however, in the 19th and 20th dynasties in the *Throne* and *Birth* names. This relation was witnessed in the original titularies of kings, not the additional names or epithets.

4.1.4. Divine Love Relation

This subtheme exhibits the emotional side of the relation between the king and the deity. The data here explicitly include phrases such as “beloved of,” “whom (the divine) loves” or

“who is loved by (the divine).” The analysis showed that the king was always the recipient, not the giver, of love. This is a constant theme that appeared in all periods. It was introduced in the Old Kingdom, Dynasty 6, by *Pepy I* “Beloved of the *Two Ladies*’ bodies.”

In the Middle Kingdom, 13th Dynasty kings introduced a new addition in which the king proclaimed himself to be the beloved of an “attribute” of god. Thus, the king was “the beloved of the peace of *Re*” (*Ini I*); “the beloved of the power of *Re*” (*Ined*); “the grandeur of *Re*” (*Ini II*); “the mind of *Re*” (*Ini II*); “the perfection of *Re*” (*Iy*); or “the *kas* (i.e., souls) of *Re*” (*Sobekhotep VII*).

In the New Kingdom, it was the 19th dynasty that presented this theme the most. Unlike the two previous periods, the king was depicted to be the “beloved” of the divine, not the “attribute” of the divine. This can be exemplified by *Thutmoses I* and *Ramses II* “Victorious bull, beloved of *Maat*.” This first appearance of *Maat*, the goddess of order and justice, in association with this relation and in the titularies of kings as powerful as *Thutmoses I* and *Ramses II*, accentuates the significance of order and justice for those warrior kings. In this

period, the change of theonyms reflected the religious and political changes that took place in the New Kingdom, especially in the 18th Dynasty. Before the Amarna period and monotheism, *Re* was the god that dominated this love relation with the divine. During the Amarna period, *Aten* was the god dominating this relation. Changing his name to *Akhnaton*, *Amenhotep IV* declared himself to be “beloved of *Aten*.” To confirm the end of monotheism and the return of *Amun*’s domination, *Horemheb* (Dyn. 18) announced that he is “whom *Amun* has loved.” In the Third Intermediate Period, the overwhelming influence of the priests of *Amun* in the south is reflected in the dwindling presence of *Re* against the pervasiveness of *Amun* in such relation.

4.1.5. Deity-King Acts

Kings announced both the acts they received from gods and what they did to gods (See Tables 2 & 3). The acts differed from one period to the other according to the messages kings chose to send regarding the political and social conditions. Such messages are conveyed by kings, as political leaders, to exhibit “their ability to impress and persuade” their people of their power (Allami & Barzegar, 2020, p. 91).

Table 2
Most Common Divine Acts toward the King

S	Acts	Old Kingdom	1 st Inter.	Middle Kingdom	2 nd Inter.	New Kingdom	3 rd Inter.	Late Period
1	Strengthen	√	√		√	√	√	
2	Make perfect	√		√	√			
3	Cause to appear	√		√		√	√	
4	Make/Cause to flourish			√	√			
5	Sustain			√	√			
6	Endow	√		√				
7	Choose the king					√	√	√
8	Make great					√	√	
9	Create					√	√	

Table 3
Most Common Kings’ Acts toward the Deity

S	Acts	Old Kingdom	1 st Inter.	Middle Kingdom	2 nd Inter.	New Kingdom	3 rd Inter.	Late Period
1	Satisfy	√			√		√	√
2	Protect					√		

3	Build/Elevate temples for the divine					√		√
4	Please the divine						√	√
5	Magnify the land for the divine			√		√		

Throughout all periods, except for the First Intermediate, kings played the roles of both doers and recipients of actions. In the Old Kingdom, kings were more recipients than doers. The *Two Ladies* were more present in this relation than any other deity. A plausible interpretation might be that the *Two Ladies* were the deities representing the south and north and that it was essential to assert the importance of the fact that they confer their blessings on the king, who, in return, pacified and satisfied them.

In the First Intermediate Period, this was limited to one deity, *Montu*, the god of war, whose choice underpins the political situation at that time (See 4.2). In the Middle Kingdom, there was an almost equal distribution of actions in the deity-king relation. The king is depicted to “cause *Maat* to appear” (*Senwosret II*, Dyn. 12) and “inaugurate *Maat*” (*Neferhotep I*, Dyn. 13). These two examples are a clear reference to the end of the turmoil, division, and chaos the country underwent in the previous period. Two gods dominated this theme (*Montu* and *Sobek*). The inclusion of these two gods, who were closely associated with war and power, is symbolic of the political and military context of this period witnessing the struggle to expel the foreigners and reunite Egypt (See 4.2).

In the Second Intermediate Period, there was an almost equal distribution of the roles of the doer between the king and the deity. Three new divine acts were introduced: make (the king) “firm,” “victorious,” and “brave.” As a doer, the king introduced two new acts: make the deity “festive” and “discern” *Maat*. In the New Kingdom, kings, as a sign of their supreme power, introduced a new notion that the king is the one who “protects” the deity as in *Thutmose II* (Dyn. 18), “Protector of *Re*.” They also introduced several new acts such as “protect,” “be beneficial build/elevate temples for the divine,” “exalt the temples of the

divine,” “make the temples (of the divine) festive,” and “elevate the name of the divine.”

As for the divine acts, kings added two new roles to the divine. The new acts pertained to the accession to the throne. *Thutmose I* (Dyn. 18) introduced the notion of “Chosen by *Re*.” As *Thutmose I* was not the heir to the throne. This may explain why he employed such an epithet as an act of divine legitimation. The second new act was introduced by *Ramses II* “... his father *Amun*, who put him on his throne.” Kings introduced the new phrase “(The divine is) upon his (i.e., king’s) strong arm,” which was introduced by *Ramses V* “*Amun* is upon his strong arm.” In the Third Intermediate Period, the act of the deity making the king appear or choosing him reigned supreme. In the Late Period, acts attributed to the deity were limited to the passive structure “chosen by the divine.” As a doer, kings of this period kept the same roles that were present in previous periods.

4.2. Theme of War and Conflict

This theme was employed by ancient Egyptian kings to propagate their war-related ideology. The data in this theme are of two types: Explicit and implicit. Firstly, explicit words have three sub-levels: (1) Enemy names: Nine bows, *Temehu* Libyans, *Temehu* (i.e., a Libyan tribe), Bedouin, *fenkhu* Asiatics, enemies; (2) Toponyms of the enemy: foreign land, high land, low land; and (3) Lexical items and phrases such as “those who attacked him,” “those who approached Egypt,” “troops,” “armies,” “the Two Lands,” “his opponents,” “the rebellious,” “the battlefield,” “victorious,” and “victories.” Secondly, the analysis revealed phrases that implicitly pertain to war, such as “pacify,” “unite,” “peace,” as well as aggressive phrases that will be cited below. Any reference to “power,” “might,” “strength” or “establishing *Maat*” is considered to be an implicit reference to a current or past conflict.

The data showed a number of (in)consistencies in all periods. In the Old Kingdom, the theme was found in all name categories. There was no specific naming of who the enemy was. Some kings used aggressive phrases in their titularies, like King *Den* (Dyn. 1), “the severer (of heads),” and *Qahedjet/Hui/Hun* (Dyn. 3), “the smiting king.” Others used lexical items to denote victories, such as *Qaa* (Dyn. 1), “whose arm is raised,” and *Djer* (Dyn. 1), “the one who repulses (enemies).” Other kings referred implicitly to victories by announcing the act of “uniting” and “pacifying” the Two Lands.

In the First Intermediate Period, the theme was mainly incarnated in the *Birth* name. There was the borrowing of aggressive epithets from the Old Kingdom, such as *H(U)* (Dyn. 9), “The smiter.” Reference to conflicts and victories was explicit as in *Intef III* (Dyn. 11), “The possessor of a perfect beginning is victorious,” or implicit as in *Shed* (Dyn. 9-10a), “The savior.” Implicit reference was also made in the announcement that the god of war *Montu* is satisfied.

The Middle Kingdom followed the same pattern as that of the Old Kingdom, incorporating the theme in all categories of titularies, with more preponderance in *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, and *Birth* names. The theme was mainly represented implicitly using verbs that denote victory, such as “unite,” “widen” or “seize power.” This is exemplified in *Sobekhotep II* (Dyn. 13), “The one who has united the Two Lands.” Kings assumed the role of “protector” of the land in another implicit reference to victory. They also continued the association with *Montu* in their *Birth* names and with *Sobek* who refers, *inter alia*, to power as in Queen *Sobeknefru* (Dyn. 12). They also associated themselves with *Wosret*, the goddess of protection (See 4.1.3). The explicit reference to this theme was in the one incident in all periods in which a king assumes a military rank, as in *Imy-ra Meshu* (Dyn. 13), “The General (lit. Overseer of the army).”

The theme was explicitly and implicitly present in the titularies of the Second Intermediate Period. Firstly, the explicit reference was instantiated in King *Djehuty* (Dyn. 16), who introduced the noun “victories” in “The one who has seized through victories.” *Intef VI* (Dyn. 17) was the first to use the adjectival phrase “the victorious.” This phrase was copied

by *Senakhtenre*, *Ahmosé (I)*, and *Kamose*. Yet it was the latter who used the two words “victorious” and “bull” “*Kamose* the victorious,” and “The bull is born.” Striving to repel the *Hyksos* and reunite Egypt, *Kamose* copied the word “bull” from the first period of unification in the Old Kingdom. The combination of these two phrases into one “victorious bull” was extensively used by kings in subsequent periods.

Secondly, this theme was implicitly referred to by using certain verb phrases such as “rescued the Two Lands/*Thebes*” and “brought peace.” *Seqenenre Tao* introduced the adjective “brave” in “The one whom *Re* has made brave” and “*Tao* the brave.” The highest representation of this theme was in the titularies of the New Kingdom (See Figure 1). Such prominence reflects the military activities and political conditions of that period. The theme was present in all titular types but with more frequency in the *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, and *Golden Horus* (See Figure 2). It was also detected in the titularies of 31 out of the 33 kings of this period (the exception is the Amarna Period).

There was some noticeable change in the lexical repertoire used to introduce the new concept of territorial expansion. The kings introduced phrases that denote territorial expansion: “all lands,” “every land,” “foreign lands,” “foreign countries,” “ends of the earth.” For instance, “all lands” was introduced by *Thutmose II* “who has seized all lands.” His successors copied this phrase with a variation stressing this military supremacy. *Amenhotep III* introduced the variation ‘every foreign land’ as in “Great of dread in every foreign land.” *Ramses II* introduced the variations “every land” and “every foreign country” in “Victorious bull who has struck every land,” and “Great of victories in every foreign country.” *Ramses II* also introduced the phrase “end of the earth” in “... who has captured the ends of the earth.”

New Kingdom titularies introduced a second new concept, explicitly identifying the enemy. This was done either by using the generic terms “enemies” or “Nine Bows,” the latter being the visual representation of foreign enemies in ancient Egypt. The word “enemies” was introduced by *Ramses III* “The brave one, possessor of a strong arm, who has made (his)

border as he wished, on the back of his enemies.” “Nine Bows,” on the other hand, was fashioned by *Thutmose I* “struck down the Nine Bows.” Moreover, kings of this period were the first to specify the exact identity of their enemies in their titularies. The first one to do this was *Amenhotep III*, who was imitated by subsequent kings. He mentioned the Asiatics, the Libyans, and the Bedouins “The great-of-strength one who has struck down the Asiatics,” and “who has struck down the Bedouins and repelled the *Tjehenu*-Libyans.” Several kings followed suit. Some kings announced the number of their enemies in their titularies, such as *Ramses VI* “The one great of strength who has attacked hundreds of thousands.”

Kings identified themselves in their titularies as warriors. They used phrases that reflect warriors’ characteristics; namely, (1) The victorious bull; (2) Might; and (3) Denotations of physical strength. The phrase “the victorious bull” was introduced by *Thutmose I*, and was adopted by every subsequent king/queen of this period, who started their various *Horus* names with it, except for the Amarna period. The absence of the theme of war in the Amarna period was ascribed to the policies of its rulers who were more engaged with harmony and peace. Proclaiming their military supremacy, kings used the word “might” which was introduced in the Old Kingdom. In the New Kingdom, *Ahmose II* introduced it “The possessor of the might of *Re*” and *Thutmose I* declared that he is “great of might.” Subsequent variations followed such as “strong of might,” “powerful of might,” and “mighty-armed” (i.e., sword). They also used phrases denoting physical strength, such as “great of strength,” “sharp of horns,” “the powerful one,” “sharp horned,” “strong-armed,” and “great of strong arm.” The iconic visual representation of the king with a mace in his hand smiting the enemy is reflected in this strong-arm (i.e., sword) metaphor.

The titularies of the New Kingdom witnessed the introduction of military words such as “sword,” “troops,” “armies,” and “battlefield.” *Sety I* announced himself to be “strong of troops in all lands” while *Ramses II* declared “Who has fought with his sword/strong arm, the protector of his armies.” Kings of this period draw images of the battlefield in their titularies using verbs that denote aggressive acts such as

“struck down,” “subdued,” “trampled,” “repelled,” “exercised power,” “shattered,” and “annihilated.” Warlike images of the battlefield were more evident in certain royal titularies. While queen *Tawosret* stated that she has “subdued foreign countries,” *Ramses II* drew a more descriptive image “victorious bull, beloved of *Re*, who has trampled all the foreign countries under his sandals.”

The titularies also presented justification for war and aggressive acts. *Thutmose III* (Dyn. 18) announced that he did not start the war “The one who has struck down the rulers of the foreign lands who approached him.” Likewise, *Ramses III* (Dyn. 20) justifies his actions by announcing that he was not the first to attack “powerful of strength, who has attacked hundreds of thousands, overthrown those who have attacked him, and gathered (them) (under) his sandals.” Kings justified their going to war to satisfy the gods as in *Merenptah* (Dyn. 19) “Who has strengthened Egypt and repelled the Nine Bows in order to satisfy the gods with what they love/wish for.” Kings also specified the whereabouts of the battle as in *Ramses III* “Powerful of strength like his father *Montu*, who has annihilated the Nine Bows and repelled (them) in their (own) countries.” Moreover, New Kingdom kings continued to associate themselves with *Montu*.

In the Third Intermediate period, there was a limited number of titularies dealing with the war and conflict theme. All the *Horus* names start with the same phrase, “victorious bull,” continuing the same tradition of the previous period. The one category that shows a noticeable change in this period is the “enemy.” Though the generic term “Nine Bows” continued to exist, titularies of this period witnessed, for the first time, the use of the verb “subdue” with the “Two Lands” in reference to the enemy being from inside. *Pa-seba-kha-en-niut* (*Psusennes I*) (Dyn. 21) declares that he is “The possessor of might who has subdued the Two Lands.”

In the Late Period, the theme was ubiquitous in the titularies in all categories, but mainly in the *Two Ladies* name. In this period, no new concepts were introduced and some disappeared. The phrase “victorious bull,” which dominated *Horus* names in the two previous periods since its inception, was completely absent. The kings continued to use

words and phrases denoting strength. They continued to use the metaphor of "strong arm." The king was depicted as "brave," "strong," "strong-armed," "sturdy-armed," "possessor of might," "possessor of strength," and "great of strength." The kings are also portrayed to "strike down," "subdue," "attack" the enemy, who is generically referred to as "Nine Bows," "foreign land" and "foreign countries." Same justifications for war continued to be present, which were either to protect Egypt or to please the gods.

4.3. Theme of Relation to the Two Lands

Titularies categorized under this theme include both explicit and implicit references to the Two Lands (i.e., Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt). Firstly, the explicit reference is represented in the use of toponyms in Egypt, especially "Two lands," "Kemet, i.e., Egypt," "Two Banks," "the beloved land" (i.e., Egypt), "two districts" as well as any toponym in Egypt such as *Thebes*, *Thinis*, *Niut*, *Heliopolis*, *Mendes*, and *Baqet* (Egypt in the Late Period). They also include any names of temples and places of worship, such as *Ipset -Sut* (i.e., *Karnak Temple*), *Ipet-*

Resyt (i.e., *Luxor Temple*). Secondly, the implicit reference can be found in the phrases "white crown," "red crown," and "*rekhyet* people" (i.e., common folks). The titularies here also included the phrase "Two Ladies," when used toponymically not theonymically, referring to Upper and Lower Egypt, not just the goddesses *Nekhbt* and *Wadjet*. Titularies that contain phrases like "every land," "all lands," and "the lands" were considered the reference to foreign lands, not Egypt.

Titularies that dealt with the theme of land were mainly present in *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, and *Golden Horus* names (See Figure 2). Relation to the land was represented in two linguistic categories: Using verbs that represent the king's duties toward the land as land-related acts or using adjectives, person nouns, non-person nouns, and prepositional phrases, representing an attribute of the king in relation to the land (See Tables 4 & 5). It is also essential to note that in all periods, kings either copied attributes and acts from preceding periods, or created their own, reflecting the relation to the land they wanted to pinpoint.

Table 4

Most Common Kings' Attributes in Relation to the Land

S	Attributes	Old Kingdom	1 st Inter.	Middle Kingdom	2 nd Inter.	New Kingdom	3 rd Inter.	Late Period
1	Protector/ Protection	√		√	√	√		
2	With a raised crown/ High crown	√				√		
3	Beloved	√		√		√		√
4	Uniter	√		√				
5	Chieftain/ Mistress/Lord/ Ruler/ <i>Ka</i>			√		√	√	
6	Founder			√		√		
7	The life of the heart			√		√		

Table 5

Most Common Kings' Acts in Relation to the Land

S	Acts	Old Kingdom	1 st Inter.	Middle Kingdom	2 nd Inter.	New Kingdom	3 rd Inter.	Late Period
1	Satisfy	√		√		√		
2	Unite	√		√			√	
3	Pacify	√				√		
4	Sustain			√	√	√		
5	Widen			√		√		
6	Guide			√				√

7	Make Flourish			√	√			√
8	Strengthen				√	√		
9	Appeared in Thebes/ White Crown				√	√		
10	Propitiate the mind of the divine			√				

In the Old Kingdom, this theme was represented only in *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, and *Golden Horus*. An example of a king's act is in *Teti* (Dyn. 6) "The one who has satisfied the Two Lands." As for attributes, *Sanakht* was "the powerful protector." The relation with the land was explicit in the extant titularies of *Horus* and *Two Ladies* names, while it was mentioned implicitly in *Throne* name. At the time of chaos and political problems, First Intermediate kings used titularies as a means of political propaganda to project non-existent realities. King *Intef I* (Dyn. 11) announced that he "... made the Two Lands content" while *Nebkaure Khety VII* (Dyn. 10b) used the phrase "the dual king," implicitly suggesting the existence of a unified, stable country, which contradicted reality.

In the Middle Kingdom, the relation to the land was represented in all categories except the *Birth* name. Kings used more attributes than acts. Having succeeded in unifying the country, they looked back to their Old Kingdom predecessors and copied some of their attributes such as "protector," "beloved," and "uniter," and acts like "satisfy," "unite." They introduced new attributes such as "confidante," "founder," "the life of the heart," "possessor," as well as new acts like "protect," "sustain," "widen," "guide," and "make flourish," mirrored those previously assigned to the divine toward the king. This embodies the role of the king as the link between the divine and the land of Egypt.

Kings of the Second Intermediate deployed the relation to the land in all five titularies. In sheer political propaganda, some kings of this period used acts and attributes that did not reflect the turbulent conditions at that time under the *Hyksos* rule. Thus *Dedumose* (Dyn. 16a) claims to have "rescued" and "brought peace" to the Two Lands. It has been observed that toward the end of the 17th Dynasty and the partial success of native kings over the *Hyksos*, titularies truly reflected the status quo. The

warrior king *Seqenenre Tao* introduced the attribute "who appeared in *Thebes*" which was later copied by New Kingdom warrior kings. *Kamose* introduced a new act in which he "pleased the Two Lands."

Unlike the Second Intermediate Period, the New Kingdom was a period of military successes and expansions. Kings copied attributes and acts from their Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom predecessors. They also introduced new facets to their relation to the land. For the first time, there was an explicit mention of "*Kemet*, i.e., Egypt," not just "Two Lands" as *Sety I* (Dyn. 19) proclaimed himself to be "the protector of Egypt." Henceforth, he was followed by subsequent kings. They were also more specific in using toponyms such as *Thebes* and *Heliopolis*, which symbolizes the growing importance of these cities. They were also more explicit in the use of temple names, such as "*Ipet-sut*," "*Ipet-Resyt*" "*Karnak*," and "*Luxor*" – a reference to the growing temple-building movement that this period witnessed.

For the first time, there was an explicit focus on the common people who were referred to as "common folks" and "*rekhyet*-people." The latter phrase came to have the meaning "common people" in the New Kingdom. This is a clear indication that kings of the New Kingdom regarded their duties in a different light, with more emphasis on their social duties toward the people. *Ramses II* identifies himself as the one "who caused Egypt to delight in his company; those who are in it continually rejoice because of love of him." Kings copied their Middle Kingdom predecessors in their exaggerated claims to be founders of the Two Lands. *Sety I* (Dyn. 19) identifies himself to be "the one who has created the Two Lands" – a titulary that will be adopted by subsequent kings.

In the Third Intermediate period, relation to the land was detected in all titular categories, yet

with scantier presence. Acts and attributes were significantly borrowed from previous periods. Kings of the Late Period borrowed from almost all previous periods. They have also adopted new acts that were previously limited to gods and goddesses. *Psamtek II* (Dyn. 26) declared to have “made the Two Lands perfect.” Further, they introduced the act of “restoring the Two Lands to order,” as illustrated in *Ahmose III*. Our findings show that the most recurrent relation to the land in this period was the king being the “beloved of the Two Lands.”

5. Concluding Remarks

This study is yet another proof that “there is more to names than one might suspect” (Seymour, 1983, p. 108). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first thematic analysis of kings’ titularies, either in the field of onomastics or Egyptology. It conducts a thematic analysis of 1,164 titularies of all native ancient Egyptian kings’ (260 kings). It also investigates the linguistic repertoire of these titularies as well as the messages they impart in light of the various geopolitical and socio-religious changes over the dynastic periods under investigation. The analysis gave evidence to Routledge’s (2007) argument that titularies, despite being limited in the number of words, were laden with kings’ ideologies and messages they wanted to send to their citizens and enemies alike. The thematic analysis revealed that there were three main themes that kings chose to include in their titularies; namely, relation to the divine; war and conflict; and relation to the land.

On the titulary level, the findings revealed that throughout the seven periods under investigation, and despite all political and social changes, there was a marked consistency that proved titularies to be the elaborate work of inherited rules transferred over generations and survived for three millennia. Relation to the divine was the most prominent theme in all periods, followed by the theme of war and conflict and the relation to the land, respectively.

In kings’ relation to the divine, four subthemes were detected: The king was the son of the divine; the one who belonged to the divine; the beloved of the divine; or the protégé of the divine upon whom certain divine acts and attributes are bestowed. Moreover, the king was depicted as the executor of certain required acts

ordained by the deity. Despite the recurrence of these sub-themes in all periods, there were significant differences across periods and titularies. Kings’ titularies were found to reflect both the fixed fundamental beliefs and fluidity of religion in ancient Egypt. Theonyms appearing in the titularies reflected not only the rising popularity of certain deities and the power of certain religious institutions but the political conditions of the period as well.

The analysis showed that the theme of war and conflict permeated kings’ titularies in all periods with varying degrees. It was most remarkable in the Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate, and New Kingdom. This prominence may be ascribed to the political stage, varying from unification in the Middle Kingdom, the struggle to expel the foreign kings (the *Hyksos*) in the Second Intermediate, and the establishment of the Egyptian empire under the great warrior kings of the New Kingdom. The results also revealed a change in the theme of war and conflict across periods in terms of the reason and justification of war, the type of enemy, the number of detailed descriptions of the battlefield, and the attributes of the king as a fighter.

Findings showed that the theme of the relation to the land was ubiquitously detected in the titularies of the kings who chose to specify their duties toward the land and the people. This theme witnessed some changes, however, in terms of kings’ duties as well as the referents to the country (i.e., Egypt). The most common regnal duties across periods were to “protect,” “unite,” “pacify,” “satisfy,” “cause to flourish,” and “strengthen.” New Kingdom kings, however, added new acts and attributes to their relation to the land, announcing that their duties were not just to “sustain,” “protect” and “establish” laws but also to make the people rejoice and happy. This signals a shift in the relation between the king and his subjects. It was also gleaned from the data that from the Old Kingdom till the advent of the New Kingdom, Egypt was referred to as “the Two lands” which can be interpreted as an emphasis of the importance of unification. In the New Kingdom, a period of territorial expansion, the country was referred to as “Egypt.” In the same period, there was also an increase in toponyms – a manifestation of the importance of certain cities.

On the titular level, the analysis revealed that there had been a marked consistency in terms of the name category and the theme it dealt with. The theme of the relation to the divine was predominant in *Throne* and *Birth* names. Allocating *Throne* and *Birth* names to the relation to the divine is indicative of the significance of this theme to ancient Egyptian kings. These are the two names encircled in a cartouche, giving them visually conspicuous reinforcement. *Horus*, *Two Ladies*, and *Golden Horus* names mainly depicted the two themes of war and conflict and relation to the land. A more granular analysis indicated that *Horus* name was the name that predominantly dealt with the theme of war.

Names reflect “different religious, political and other values associated with groups of people” (Sjöblom et al., 2012, p. 125). Names of ancient Egyptian kings were used not just for mere identification purposes but to bestow “legitimacy on the new holder of the throne” when it was lacking (Bosch-Puche, 2014, p. 11). Such legitimacy is sought to be established through three legitimation strategies: The link with gods, especially *Re*; the use of attributes and acts that reflect the strength and power of the king and his ability to protect the country and establish order and justice; and looking to the past to copy great strong predecessors. Moreover, as is the case with modern-time political leaders who articulate in their speeches their ideologies to resonate with the public (Surtikanti et al., 2022), ancient Egyptian kings employed their titularies to announce to their friends and foes their political religious, and social ideologies, and justify war. The limitation of this paper was represented in the fact that it covered all seven dynastic periods of analysis. Future research may focus on thematic analysis of the titularies of dynasties in a specific period. Future studies may also draw a comparison between the themes in ancient Egyptian titularies and those found in other cultures, either past or present. Such comparison may shed light on those narratives and their implications and may benefit political and intercultural communication studies. We believe that the use of titularies as a political and social messaging tool is a continuum that links them to similar discursive strategies employed by political leaders across times and cultures.

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