

Study on the Birth Houses' Architecture of the Late Period

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Abstract

Birth houses were added as subsidiary buildings to a number of Late Period temple for a period of more than 500 years; they were dedicated to various child-gods. Moreover they occupy a special location within a temple precinct, standing laterally in front of the temple façade with the entrance facing the axis of the main temple.

Furthermore the ancient Egyptian name of Birth house was *pr-mst*, "house of birth." This name refers to the key theological topic of the decoration of the birth house, which centers around the birth of the divine child of the triad of the main temple. More and above, the birth house comprises a sanctuary and a hall of offerings plus additional rooms such as side chapels. Frequently, there is a staircase for accessing the roof. At this stage of its development, the birth house may stand somewhat elevated on a foundation pedestal and also have a forecourt surrounded by columns and screen walls; in older birth houses, the court is attached as a separate structure.

The birth houses were constructed for the celebration of the divine birth therefore assumed "cosmic dimensions". The concept of the infant god and the daily rebirth of the sun encouraged an equation between the young king and the eternal renewal of kingship. The birth house could therefore be understood in the wider sense as a royal cult chapel. According to the previous this study shed light on the architectural design of the birth houses during the late period (1070 B.C-385 A.D) as well as compare between the birth houses material of building, plan, dimensions, Axis, screen wall, rooms and columns.

Key Words

Birth house, Mammisi, Architecture, Late Period, Ptolemaic Period, Roman Period.

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