

# Astronomical and Cosmographic Elements in the Corpus of Mining Inscriptions of Wadi 'el-Houdi

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No matter if a mining expedition was intended to cover the Northern Deserts, the Sinai Peninsula or the Eastern Deserts, all these aforementioned areas were highly rich in minerals and (semi-) precious stones, hence their significance in the broader Pharaonic Project of Mining was outstanding. Out of the successful results of these difficult but usually very prosperous undertakings there would be financial benefits for the King and the State, proving the royal function of the former as a master of rituals and actions (*nb irt-ht*) and thus contributing to the preservation and enforcement of the social and political order as a distant echo of the primeval cosmic harmony (*M<sup>3</sup>t*). The Corpus of the amethyst mining inscriptions of Wadi 'el-Houdi has been published in a complete form by Dr. Ashraf Sadek. Some of these very inscriptions include astronomical and cosmographic (or cosmovisional) terms, the presence of which is going to be discussed in this paper. As we have noticed in our previous articles and/or books, the use of astronomical and/or cosmovisional terms in various non-astronomical texts was common, but it was meant under a purely non-scientific or non-astronomical context, that is to express everyday notions referring to the periodicity of heavenly phenomena connected to calendrical purposes, religious feasts, royal dating and other cosmo-geographical notions. The term *w<sup>c</sup>rt* (= *district*), for instance, is found in the mining inscriptions (3 times), but also in the *PT* (3 times) and in the *CT* (50 times) with the meaning of the *northern polar celestial area*. On the other hand, terms like *3bd*, *itn*, *rnpt*, *3ht*, and the like are also met in the amethyst mining inscriptions. In the present short article we are going to examine in detail all these, presenting some preliminary conclusions.