



FIRAMUN '26

FIRA MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2026

AD HOC: COUNCIL OF THE GODS

AGENDA ITEM:
MAINTAINING MA'AT AND
PREVENTING CHAOS IN
EGYPT.

UNDER SECRETARY
GENERAL:
DORUK SAPMAZ &
RAMAZAN YANDI
ACADEMIC ASSISTANT:
NADIN RONA

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1. Letter from the Secretaries General

Dear Participants,

As the Secretaries-General of FIRAMUN'26, we are very happy to welcome you to Antalya for the first edition of our conference, which will take place from September 1st to September 3rd, 2026.

When we first started planning FIRAMUN'26, we had a simple goal: to organize a conference that we would enjoy attending ourselves. Since then, our executive, academic, and organization teams have spent months working on every part of the event. There have been long meetings, difficult decisions, last-minute changes, and a great deal of excitement. Now, we are finally ready to share the result with you.

During these three days, you will discuss real problems, defend your god's position, disagree with one another, and hopefully find solutions together. Some moments may be challenging, especially for those attending their first MUN conference. That is completely normal. Nobody enters their first committee knowing exactly what to say or when to speak. What matters is having the courage to participate.

For experienced delegates, we hope FIRAMUN'26 gives you something different to remember. For first-time delegates, we hope it becomes the beginning of a much longer MUN journey. Either way, do not spend the whole conference worrying about awards. Take the floor, meet the people around you, make mistakes, and enjoy the experience.

A conference is shaped by the people in its committee rooms. We have done our best to prepare those rooms for you. What happens inside them is now in your hands.

We hope you leave FIRAMUN'26 with good memories, new friends, and at least one story you will still be telling months later.

Lastly, we want to finish our letter with Father of Turks, our visionary Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's delightful phrase:

"You, the young people of the new Türkiye! Even if you grow exhausted, you will follow me. Those who resolve to keep walking without resting will never, ever grow tired."

Welcome to FIRAMUN'26. Requiem Aeternam!

Sincerely,

Baran İNCE & Doruk ŞENTÜRK
Secretaries-General of FIRAMUN'26

2.Letter From Under Secretary Generals

Hello everybody my name is Doruk Sapmaz and I will be serving you guys as you Co-Under Secretary General next to my brother Ramazan Yandı for this masterpiece of a conference. I'm currently a student at the University of Pamukkale and studying English Language and Literature.

We know this guide is long but this guide really has it all for you to study and debate about. Do not worry about that part. This committee has been a dream of mine for quite some time and it wouldn't have been possible without our lovely Academic Assistant Nadin Rona who wrote nearly the whole guide herself. Before I finish the letter I would like to thank the executive team Baran İnce and Doruk Şentürk for believing in us and Miray Fidanboy for making this conference a reality. I can't wait for the opportunity to meet all of you in person and I will be leaving my contact information below so feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Doruk SAPMAZ

(530) 011 47 01

dorukdoam@gmail.com

Dear Delegates

I, Ramazan YANDI welcome you all to FIRAMUN'26 and to the AD-HOC Council of the Gods committee. In this committee I will be serving as your Co-Under-Secretary General along with my Co-Under Secretary General Doruk SAPMAZ and my Academic Assistant Nadin RONA . I believe this committee will be flawless and perfect with their high efforts.

Also, I would like to give my thanks to the Executive Team for this conference. I am honoured to serve as an Under-Secretary-General in this conference.

I believe that this conference will be a good opportunity for everyone to express their ideas and thoughts. While learning and developing yourself in this conference, do not forget to relax and enjoy. Be strong on these difficult days.

If you have anything unclear about the guide or procedure do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

Ramazan YANDI

3. Letter From the Academic Assistant

Dearest delegates,

Welcome to the Council of the Gods! My name is Nadin Rona, and I am more than honoured to serve as the Academic Assistant for this committee. Rest assured that the Under Secretary Generals, Ramazan Yandı and Doruk Sapmaz, and I have prepared an absolutely wonderful committee for this conference. This committee holds a special place in my heart, as Egyptian mythology has been my interest since the age of three, therefore this guide is a love letter to the mythology and thousands of years of civilization that bloomed in Kemet. This guide, though impossible to hold every bit as much more of Ancient Egypt has not been discovered yet, contains all that you need for this committee but personal research is highly advised. It is of great importance that you read this study guide UNTIL THE END. If you have any questions about the committee, your allocation, source accuracy or the context please do not hesitate to contact me. The sky is the limit (but it's not to the gods of the universe such as you), and I'm sure that this conference will be an unforgettable experience for you.

The world is all yours, waiting to be conquered.

Sincerely,

Nadin RONA

0532 262 53 67

nadinrona8@gmail.com

4. Committee Procedure

4.1.) What is a AD HOC Committee

4.1.1.) Directive

Directives are the main materials of Joint Crisis Committees; they are what distinguish a JCC from the General Assembly. As the name implies, the term "directive" refers to an order or instruction. On the committee, any realistic and feasible action can be taken by writing directives. Consequently, it is guaranteed that the majority of the time spent on the committee will be devoted to writing directives. (Triumphs are attained through concrete actions, rather than mere speeches or campaigns.) Unlike the GA procedure, it is unnecessary to encourage, suggest, or demonstrate any ideas to make it happen; only a decent directive is required. There are several types of directives depending on what one wants to do, and they will be discussed in the latter section. To summarise, directives are written when one wishes to accomplish or do something. Writing a directive allows one to take any realistic action; therefore, instead of long discussions and talking sessions to execute your ideas and progress in the committee, directives will be written.

4.1.2.) Updates

1- Updates are the outcomes of directives, which are either granted or rejected based on how precisely one wrote and phrased the directive. The crisis team evaluates whether they are adequate or not; every conference with crisis committees includes a crisis team that reads and inspects directives.

2- Updates can also come as a result of a new occurrence in your cabinet. For example, if the other cabinet launches a successful attack on one of your cities and captures it, an update will come. If the directive only concerns your cabinet, such as building a new military base in your country, then the update will only come to your cabinet, but if it is a conflict that both sides participate in, then the update will come to both cabinets.

3- The update doesn't necessarily have to be the result of a directive; for instance, if you are in the Hundred Years' Wars committee during the 14th century, then the crisis team may bring

a plague update that will infect the majority of soldiers. Hereupon, it can be understood that the update may also be a crisis.

4.1.3.) Crisis

Crises emerge when one submits an insufficient directive, the other cabinet successfully affects you in a negative way, or temporal crises occur depending on the crisis teams' wishes. To clarify:

1- In order for a sufficient directive to be written, there are a few rules and necessities that must be followed; failing this, an inevitable crisis will occur based on what was wanted to be done in the directive.

2- Finally, depending on how the committees' actions progress, a periodic crisis like a plague or a political disagreement may arise and affect a cabinet adversely.

4.2.) Directive Types and How to Write Them

4.2.1.) Personal Directive

Personal directives are written when an action is within your character's authority or is possible due to their abilities. Now take a look at how to write a personal directive: Firstly, there is a format for writing directives; thus, one has to write who is sending the directive and to whom (from, to). After that, the cabinet sending the directive, the real-world time and the current date of the committee. Lastly, the type of your directive and the headline of it. And that's it; this is all the format one needs to know to write a directive. The only thing left is the content of the directive, and the method by which one writes it is fairly straightforward; it is written by addressing the WH questions, which are what, why, when, who, where, and, most importantly, how. Write down the action you want to take by answering the WH questions, then detailing and explaining it as much as possible to ensure that your plan is as comprehensive as possible. Also, the use of the future tense is critical; try to use it whenever possible. Here is how a directive looks on paper:

From: Menelaus Personal

To: Related Authorities

Capturing Tiryns

Directive Date: 1192 BC May 3 Time: 12.34 (Spartan Cabinet)

What: I will capture Tiryns with my 5,000 agoge men stationed on the Tiryns frontline. My soldiers will kill and destroy any enemy forces they come across, as well as any enemy military bases. Women and children in the city will not be murdered unless they attack the soldiers.

Why: Tiryns plays a crucial role in the war, and it must be captured in order to cut the enemy's supply lines.

When: Soldiers will charge at 02.00 a.m. to catch the enemy off guard.

Who: I will be operating this attack, and if I fall during the war, my right-hand man, Analus, will take over. 5,000 agoge soldiers will assault the enemy under his command.

Where: 2,500 of my soldiers will charge from the southeast frontline, and the other 2,500 will charge from the west to capture Tiryns.

How*: To reduce noise, the 5,000 agoge soldiers will be divided into 50 groups, with 100 soldiers per group. Soldiers will check and control their weapons before charging. Each group will have a commander, and the commanders will be the best warriors among their groups. They will be well-armed with their hoplons, xiphos, and dorus (Spartan agoge soldiers' shields, spearheads, and small swords). Each group will apply the doctrine properly to face the fewest casualties. If needed, 3 soldiers from each group will bring supplies to their own group from the frontlines, and these 3 soldiers will be picked randomly from the commanders. They will take the safest route and avoid the enemy. Our men will take the safe paths suggested by our spies. They will pray, remember how brave they are, and then honour their nation and gods by demolishing the enemy. They will not disobey their commander's orders and apply the doctrine as they say. To avoid being affected by attrition, our soldiers will study their geographical situation as well as the enemy's to use it in their favour. They will not be wearing inappropriate armour and clothing, only those that will fit the current

climate. Any careless mistakes shall not be forgiven, and the commanders of the groups will eliminate the soldiers who made the mistake, such as sleeping on a night's watch. If by any chance a soldier catches a disease that may spread, he will be killed if there are no precautions that can be taken in order to heal him without letting it spread. If the siege and the road take unusually long to take and pass, they will shave properly to prevent any lice growing, mating and distracting the soldiers. Soldiers will use an offensive phalanx formation when I order them to charge, and they will slaughter each enemy troop they face. They will use the offensive formation until they face a larger enemy force to quickly capture as many critical areas as possible. If they face a larger enemy force, to be exact, 1.5 times larger than them, they will quickly change to a defensive phalanx formation and wait for recruitment while defending themselves. Their priority will be killing the enemy rather than cutting supply lines. In mountain areas, they will use the highlands in their favour and quickly oppress the enemy to finish them. Once they reach the city, their priority will be killing the cabinet members of Tiryns. If possible, they will defenestrate them to entertain themselves. The meaning of mercy will disappear from their minds, and any offers made by the enemy will be rejected, for they have disrespected our nation. After the military bases and the city are captured, soldiers will go to the possible conflict areas to recruit other soldiers. Even though we've sent spies before, our soldiers will be vigilant for any kind of trap. Their main objective is to capture the city, and for that purpose, they will sacrifice themselves without hesitation.

Once one gets used to it, it is quite simple and straightforward to write. While it lacks details and additional information, the directive nicely illustrates its format. As one keeps writing and contributing to their cabinet's goals, in no time one will witness that the directives one has written have already surpassed that one above. And to write such a directive, here are a few tips and tricks:

For every action that is written in the directive, it has to answer all the WH questions. The longer and more detailed, the better. Drawing your war doctrine, charging plan, or strategy may significantly increase the directive's preciseness and effectiveness. The success rate of the directive will grow in proportion to how clear your action and directive are.

Do not use abbreviations such as "etc."; instead, detail the directive explicitly.

WH questions are not necessarily broken into paragraphs (one can write the directive like a book), but if you are a beginner, doing so will dramatically improve the quality of your directive; hence, I strongly recommend it.

4.2.2. Joint Directive

Directives written by more than one individual are considered joint directives. Joint directives are written when one can only achieve the purpose of the directive by utilising the authority of other cabinet members. Consider the scenario where one is a commander responsible for capturing Warsaw. Recognising the insurmountable challenge of achieving this objective without air superiority, a collaborative effort can be initiated by writing a joint directive with the Air Force general. In this case, the "from" field of the directive would include the commander's name alongside the name of the air force general, and instead of a personal directive, you write "Joint Directive" at the top of the directive. Everything else is the same.

4.2.3.) Committee Directive

A committee directive is written when one wishes to use everyone's authority or when one is about to deliver their final directive (in most cases). Delegates frequently ask, "How are we meant to write a committee directive with the other cabinet?" However, this concern stems from a widespread misunderstanding. The committee directive is essentially formulated collaboratively within the confines of your cabinet, with the members of your cabinet. Although it is formally referred to as a "committee directive", its essence remains akin to that of a cabinet directive. So, simply writing "Committee Directive" in the "from:" part will do

4.2.4.) Intelligence Directive

Intelligence directives are written when one wants to acquire the necessary information

about their country/cabinet/character. The format is exactly the same, except for the "WH Questions" part. For example:

From: Winston Churchill Intelligence Directive Date: 1942 May 3

To: Crisis Team Our Troop Counts Time: 16.21

How many troops does our country have? Do we possess any nuclear weapons? How many of our military factories are assigned to manufacture infantry weapons, and what kind of weapons are they producing?

When one wants to acquire a piece of information, one must write "To: Crisis Team", but when one wants to take action, one must write "To: Related Authorities". The reason behind this is that the crisis team are not the people who will cause the action to happen; hence, "Related Authorities" must be written.

4.2.5.) Top Secret

Top secret directives are those that your chair is not allowed to read. Top secret directives are directly handed to the admin. They are written precisely the same, but one must fold the paper and write "TOP SECRET" on the backside of it. The major reason for writing a Top Secret Directive is treason, a diabolical strategy to crash one's own cabinet or switch sides. For instance, if a person secretly kills his cabinet members and becomes dictator, the winning condition changes and only that person wins, whereas the cabinet loses. But I do not recommend writing top secret directives unless you're planning on writing a brilliant 10-page directive, because failing to do so will backfire much worse. If one fails to accomplish their nefarious plan and gets busted, one will earn their cabinet's distrust and may die and be given an insignificant character. Additionally, updates to the Top Secret Directives are only sent to the person who sent them unless they directly affect other cabinet members.

4.2.6.) Press Release (Declamation)

Press releases are written when one wants to make a declaration, a speech, or a notice. When one writes a press release, depending on the era of the committee, the other cabinet members may hear it or not. In our case, there are no printers, social media, or newspapers, so it is very unlikely to hear other cabinets' press releases. The format is once again exactly the same, except for the "WH Questions" part. For example:

From: Erwin Smith

Press Release

Date: 845

July 23

To: Related Authorities

Hyping Up the Soldiers

Time: 18.17

Everything that you thought had meaning: every hope, dream, or moment of happiness. None of it matters as you lie bleeding out on the battlefield. None of it changes what a speeding rock does to a body; we all die. But does that mean our lives are meaningless? Does that mean that there was no point in our being born? Would you say that of our slain comrades? What about their lives? Were they meaningless? ... They were not! Their memory serves as an example to us all! The courageous have fallen! The anguished fallen! Their lives have meaning because we, the living, refuse to forget them! And as we ride to certain death, we trust our successors to do the same for us! Because my soldiers do not buckle or yield when faced with the cruelty of this world! My soldiers push forward! My soldiers scream out! My soldiers RAAAAAGE! —————

A press release like that might be written before a conflict to increase the motivation and morale of soldiers, or it could be written in any way one wishes, depending on their goal. Since one is addressing your people rather than the Crisis Team, the language can be informal. Plus, press releases can prevent crises, especially those related to the public; they can be used for propaganda, making promises, or spreading misinformation. This is a different form of press release that could be submitted:

From: Rollo

Declamation

Date: 802

August 28

To: Related Authorities

Standing our Ground

Time: 10.27

All of my life and all of your lives have come to this point. There is nowhere else to be but here. Nowhere else to live or die but here. To be here now is the **only** thing that matters. So, gather yourselves. Gather all of your strength and all of your sweetness into an iron ball. For we will attack again and again until we reach and overcome their king or die in the

attempt! We will attack! Attack! Attack! Blow the horns! Beat the drums! And have courage!
For there will be no turning back. Only victory! Or death!

4.3.) Procedure of the Committee

4.3.1.) Roll Call

When your character's name is called out during a roll call, you can respond with "I", "present", or simply by raising your placard.

4.3.2.) Tour de Table

Tour de Table is an introduction, similar to the opening speech. Following the roll call, it can be done at the beginning or end of the sessions, depending on the chair's initiative. Delegates are expected to briefly introduce themselves and voice their goals or vision for their cabinet.

4.3.3.) Semi-moderated Caucus

Unlike moderated caucuses, delegates in a semi-moderated caucus are allowed to speak without the chair's permission, as long as they do not interrupt other cabinet members and treat each other with respect.

4.3.4.) Unmoderated Caucus

In an unmoderated caucus, delegates are free to draft any kind of paper they want to achieve their goals and support others. The majority of the cabinet's time should be spent on unmoderated caucuses rather than semi-moderated ones

5. Introduction to the Committee

The Ennead or Great Ennead was a group of nine deities in Egyptian mythology worshiped at Heliopolis: the sun god Atum; his children Shu and Tefnut; their children Geb and Nut; and their children Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. These deities created the universe, the earth and everything imaginable lies within them. Ennead's father, Atum, was the first pharaoh of Kemet, and his blood has flown from every pharaoh since. These creators gather for a Council summoned in dire matters concerning the universe. This Council stands on the matter of preserving eternal peace, justice and harmony; Ma'at. With the first human appearing of The Sun God's tears, corruption grows stronger in the waters of Nun and in the hands of dark souls, expecting a distortion in the balance.

6. General Understanding of the Egyptian Pantheon

The Egyptian Pantheon consists of hundreds of deities over the centuries dynasties and pharaohs. Some are minor deities who appear in the realm of Duat, and some are great beings from whom cult followings arose. With pharaohs passing, some deities faded from the spotlight.

Myths usually are shaped around the events of the period in Kemet, like solar eclipses, Nile floods, yearly harvests and celebrations, so were the gods that accommodated the peoples' needs.

Amun

Amun (also spelled Amon, Amen, or Amone) is one of the most important deities in ancient Egyptian religion. Amun began as a local creator and wind god of Thebes (Waset). His name means "The Hidden One." He wasn't originally a major national deity, but rose to power alongside Thebes during the Middle Kingdom. Around 2050–1650 BCE (Middle Kingdom), Thebes became politically dominant, and its local god Amun rose with it. By the New Kingdom of 1550–1070 BCE, Amun became the king of the gods. He was fused with the sun god Ra to form Amun-Ra, symbolizing his supreme cosmic and solar power.

Amun is often depicted as a man wearing a tall double-plumed crown, sometimes as a ram or a ram-headed man (symbol of fertility and strength). In combined form Amun-Ra often appears with solar imagery. Major centers of worship for Amun include Karnak Temple Complex in Thebes/Luxor, the primary cult center with vast temples built by many pharaohs. As well as Thebes, Siwa Oasis was home of the famous Oracle of Amun, visited even by Alexander the Great.

In his role in Egyptian beliefs, Amun represented creation- a self-created deity whose hidden nature suggests creation from the unseen and kingship, for which pharaohs often called themselves “the son of Amun.”



Ra

Ra (also spelled Re) is one of the most important gods in ancient Egyptian religion - the sun god and often considered the creator of the world. Ra is the sun personified, representing light, warmth, life, and order. In many periods, he was regarded as the king of the gods. Egyptians believed Ra traveled across the sky each day in a solar barque (boat) and passed through the underworld at night.

Ra is commonly shown as a man with a falcon head, wearing a sun disk encircled by a cobra (the urey). Sometimes purely as a sun disk or a scarab beetle (Khepri), especially at dawn.

The Egyptians imagined the sun's motion as Ra's eternal voyage: Dawn (Khepri), Ra is reborn as a scarab beetle pushing the sun into the sky. At midday he shines at full strength as the sun god. At sunset he ages into the form of Atum, descending into the underworld. Throughout the night, Ra travels through the underworld, battling the serpent Apophis (Apep) to ensure the sun rises again.

The important centers of Ra worship include: Heliopolis "the Place of Pillars", later known to the Ptolemaic Kingdom as Heliopolis and today located in the suburbs of Cairo. He was identified with the local sun god Atum. As Atum or Atum-Ra, he was reckoned the first being and the originator of the Ennead, consisting of Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, Osiris, Set, Isis and Nephthys. Priests developed elaborate theology surrounding Ra. Obelisks and pyramids were associated with his solar symbolism. Pharaohs claimed to be "sons of Ra" to legitimize their rule.

In his role in Egyptian beliefs, Ra represented: creation, kingship, order (ma'at), renewal and resurrection.



Mut

Mut, in ancient Egyptian religion, a sky goddess and great divine mother. Mut is thought to have originated in the Nile River delta or in Middle Egypt. She came to prominence during the 18th dynasty (1539–1292 BCE) as the companion of the god Amon at Thebes, forming the Theban triad with him and with the youthful god Khonsu, who was said to be Mut's son. The name Mut means “mother,” and her role was that of an older woman among the gods. She was associated with the uraeus (rearing cobra), lionesses, and royal crowns.



Hathor

Hathor is an ancient Egyptian goddess known for being associated with love, beauty, music, dance, fertility, and motherhood. In the Egyptian pantheon, Hathor is one of the most important deities in the Egyptian, she is often depicted with the head of a cow or as a woman with a headdress of a sun disk surrounded by cow horns.

Hathor was also considered a goddess of joy and celebration, often linked to both the afterlife and the nurturing aspects of life. In many depictions, Hathor was shown playing the sistrum and was regarded as a goddess who could bring about harmony and joy.

Cattle goddesses similar to Hathor were portrayed in Egyptian art in the fourth millennium BC, but she may not have appeared until the Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2181 BC). With the patronage of Old Kingdom rulers, she became one of Egypt's most important deities. More temples were dedicated to her than to any other goddess; her most prominent temple was Dendera in Upper Egypt. She was also worshipped in the temples of her male consorts. The Egyptians connected her with foreign lands, such as Nubia and Canaan, and their valuable goods, such as incense and semiprecious stones, and some of the peoples in those lands

adopted her worship. In Egypt, she was one of the deities commonly invoked in private prayers and votive offerings, particularly by women desiring children.

There were cults of Hathor in many towns in Egypt and also abroad, for she was the patroness of foreign parts and of many minerals won from the desert. In the Sinai turquoise mines, for example, she was called “Lady of Turquoise.” At Dayr al-Baḥrī, in the necropolis of Thebes, she became “Lady of the West” and patroness of the region of the dead. In the Late Period (1st millennium BCE), women aspired to be assimilated with Hathor in the next world, as men aspired to become Osiris. The Greeks identified Hathor with their Aphrodite.



Sekhmet

Often depicted as a lioness or a woman with the head of a lioness, symbolizing her fierce and protective nature. Sekhmet was associated with both destruction and healing, embodying a duality that made her one of the more complex deities in the Egyptian pantheon. She was considered the goddess of war, the protector of the pharaoh, and the one who helped defeat Egypt's enemies. However, Sekhmet also had the ability to heal, and many believed she could cure diseases and diseases of the body, making her a goddess of both destruction and restoration.

One of the most famous myths surrounding Sekhmet is the story of her almost destroying humanity. The sun god Ra, in some versions of the myth, sent Sekhmet to punish humankind for their disrespect. Her violent rampage threatened to annihilate all of humanity, but Ra,

realizing the danger of her wrath, tricked her by creating a pool of red beer, which she mistook for blood. Sekhmet drank it, became intoxicated, and stopped her destruction, restoring balance.

Her symbolism of both destruction and healing reflects the ancient Egyptians' understanding of life as a balance of opposites, chaos and order, life and death, war and peace.



Bastet

Bastet (also called Bast) is the ancient Egyptian goddess of protection, fertility, motherhood, music, joy, and domestic harmony. She is especially famous for her connection to cats, which were sacred animals in Egypt. Bastet is associated with grace, agility, and protective ferocity. Often depicted as a lioness-headed woman in early periods she is later, and more commonly shown as a woman with the head of a domestic cat, or sometimes as a full cat.

Bastet is regarded as a protector of homes and families, Goddess of music, dance, pleasure, and celebration. She is a defender against evil spirits, diseases and a guardian against snakes and misfortune. Bastet is also associated with motherhood and fertility. Her main center of worship of Bastet was Bubastis (Tell Basta) in the Nile Delta, annual festivals for Bastet were some of the largest and most joyful in Egypt.

In her role in Egyptian beliefs, Bastet represented: protectress of the home, fertility and women's secrets, a warrior and lioness.



Ma'at (Divine Order)

Maat is an ancient Egyptian deity and concept representing truth, justice, balance, order, law, morality, and cosmic harmony. Maat is both a goddess and the personification of the principles that govern the universe and human society. She is often depicted as a woman with an ostrich feather on her head, which are symbolic of truth and justice. More often than not, Ma'at represented the divine harmony within the Earth, existing as a concept.

Maat was considered the daughter of the sun god Ra and sometimes associated with Thoth, the god of wisdom. She maintained the order of the cosmos and society, ensuring that chaos (known as Isfet) did not take over.

In Egyptian mythology and symbolism, Maat played a role in the judgment of the dead. In the afterlife, the heart of the deceased was weighed against Maat's feather on the Scale of Justice. A heart lighter than the feather meant the person was righteous, while a heavier heart indicated wrongdoing. Egyptians were expected to live according to the principles of Maat, which involved honesty, fairness, and moral integrity. The concept was central to law, governance, and personal behaviour.



Shu

Shu, in Egyptian religion, god of the air and supporter of the sky, created by Atum by his own power, without the aid of a woman. Shu and his sister and companion, Tefnut (goddess of moisture), were the first couple of the group of nine gods called the Ennead of Heliopolis. Of their union were born Geb, the earth god, and Nut, the goddess of the sky. Shu was portrayed in human form with the hieroglyph of his name, an ostrich feather, on his head. He was often represented separating Geb and Nut, supporting with uplifted arms the body of Nut arched above him. In some Middle Kingdom texts Shu was given the status of a primeval creator god. Later he was frequently termed the “Son of Ra”, and he was also identified with Onuris, a warrior god, thus acquiring martial associations.



Tefnut

Tefnut is the first daughter of Atum and the sister of Shu. Her children are Geb and Nut. She is called the goddess of moisture, based on the fact that creation myths tell that she was

created by Atum spitting her out. The same is also true of Shu, however. It thus appears that her most important role was that of Shu's partner. In Egyptian mythology there are many beings that appear to have been created to satisfy the Egyptian's need to have pairs. Besides Nephthys, the rather colourless pendant of Isis, the female gods from the Hermopolitan Ogdoad are examples of this. Tefnut does indeed usually appear in company with Shu. Their link was so close that in the Roman period they became the Twins in the zodiac. As early as the Pyramid Texts from the Old Kingdom, Shu and Tefnut are mentioned as a lion pair. It is mainly Tefnut who is often shown as a lioness later on. Egyptian mythology has various stories about the search of a god for a lioness. For example, the gods of This, Onuris and Mehyt have such a tale. Shu and Tefnut were also regarded as the eyes of the sky falcon, with Shu usually the sun and Tefnut the moon. But Tefnut could also be the sun eye, who spits fire, annihilating her enemies and who in other versions of the myth is considered to be the uraeus. From there it was only a small step to associating her with the eye of the sun who is far away from her lord and who has taken on the form of a bloodthirsty lioness; Shu and Thoth were then sent after her to fetch her back. This contradictory nature meant that Tefnut was compared with both the angry lioness Sekhmet and the friendly cat Bastet.



Khonsu

Khonsu, in ancient Egyptian religion, moon god who was generally depicted as a youth. A deity with astronomical associations named Khenzu is known from the Pyramid Texts (circa 2350 BCE) and is possibly the same as Khonsu. In Egyptian mythology, Khonsu was regarded as the son of the god Amon and the goddess Mut. In the period of the late New Kingdom (circa 1100 BCE), a major temple was built for Khonsu in the Karnak complex at Thebes. Khonsu was generally depicted as a young man with a side lock of hair, and on his head he wore a uraeus (rearing cobra) and a lunar disk. Khonsu also was associated with baboons and was sometimes assimilated to Thoth, another moon god associated with baboons.

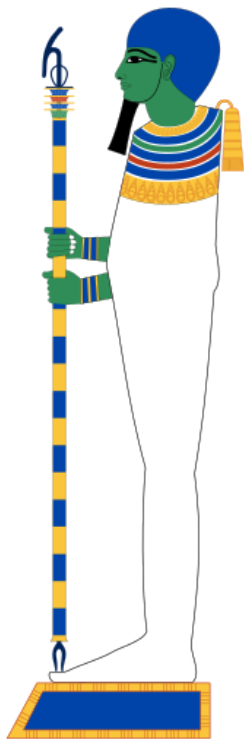


Ptah

In ancient Egyptian mythology Ptah was the god of creation, craftsmen, builders, and architects. He was considered a creator god who brought the world into existence through thought and speech rather than physical labor, he conceived ideas in his heart and spoke them into being. Unlike gods who physically fashioned the world, Ptah is credited with thinking the world into existence and then commanding it with his words. This aligns him with a kind of intellectual or conceptual creation, something that makes him unique among Egyptian deities.

He is typically shown as a mummified man with a tight-fitting skullcap. Ptah is depicted holding a scepter combining three symbols: Ankh (life), Djed (stability), Was (power). These symbols collectively represent life, stability, and dominion core aspects of creation and order.

He was considered the patron of artisans, sculptors, and architects, and craftsmen who often invoked him before beginning their work. Ptah's main cult center was in Memphis, Egypt's ancient capital. The cult of the god Ptah quickly spread throughout Egypt. With the major royal projects of the Old Kingdom, the high priests of Ptah were particularly sought after and worked in concert with the vizier (The vizier was the highest official in ancient Egypt to serve the pharaoh during the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms.), filling the role of chief architects and master craftsmen, responsible for the decoration of the royal funerary complexes.



Taweret

Taweret was an ancient Egyptian patron of childbirth and a protector of women and children. Like Bes, she was considered to be a ferocious demon as well as a protective and nurturing deity. She was associated with the lion, the crocodile, and the hippo; all animals that were feared by the Egyptians but also highly respected.

Initially, she was viewed as a dangerous and potentially malignant force. Taweret was associated with the northern sky as Nebetakhmet, the "Mistress of the Horizon". She represented the circumpolar stars of Ursa Minor and Draco (the little dipper formed her back)

who guarded the northern sky. The northern sky was thought to be cold, dark and potentially dangerous and was associated with both Apep and Seth.

When acting as a protective force Taweret is described as a goddess. She was thought to help women in labor and to ward off evil spirits and demons who intended harm to mother or baby. She was also thought to help with matters of female sexuality and pregnancy, and so she was often associated with the goddess Hathor.



Geb

In Egyptian mythology Geb is the son of the sky goddess Nut and the air god Shu. He was the god of the Earth and associated with the earth's fertility, and his name literally means "the earth" in Egyptian. Geb is one of the most important deities in the Egyptian pantheon. Geb was also considered the ruler of the earth's creatures, including animals, and played a significant role in the cosmic order. He was sometimes shown as a judge in the afterlife, with his decisions affecting the souls of the dead. In some depictions, Geb is shown with a goose's head, and that's where the word "Geb" might even come from, since "goose" is pronounced "Geb" in Egyptian.

It was believed in ancient Egypt that Geb's laughter created earthquakes and that he allowed crops to grow. One interesting myth about Geb is his rivalry with his brother Osiris. Geb was said to be part of the creation of the world but also involved in struggles that shaped the roles of other gods, particularly the later god Osiris, who would become king of the dead.



(Geb, bottom center, Nut, top center)

Nut

According to ancient Egyptian mythology, Nut is the goddess of the sky and heavens. She was the daughter of Shu, god of vital breath, and his wife Tefnut, goddess of heat. She was usually depicted as a woman bent over Earth with her head in the West and feet in the East. She was sometimes depicted as a celestial cow. She was part of the cosmogony (a theory of the origin of the universe) of Heliopolis. The ancient Egyptians believed that she protected the Earth deity Geb, her husband, from the night sky. Myths also state that the sun deity Ra traveled through her - she swallowed him at night and then gave birth to him every morning. Ra was then replaced by Thoth at night. She was often associated with coffins and sarcophagi because she protected the dead until they were reborn in the Afterlife.

Isis

Isis is an important deity in the Egyptian Pantheon. Isis has an association with many aspects of Egyptian mythology, including magic, motherhood, fertility, healing, and protection. Isis is often depicted as a loving mother, especially in her role as the mother of Horus, the

falcon-headed god associated with kingship. She is also considered a goddess of fertility, helping to ensure the prosperity of both people and the land. Isis is often depicted as a woman with a throne-shaped crown on her head, or sometimes with a solar disk encircled by cow horns. She may also be shown nursing her son Horus or holding a scepter and ankh. Isis is noted for her magical powers, she was thought to possess the ability to heal and protect. In Egyptian mythology, Isis is a master of magic and spells, using her knowledge to protect and heal her family and the people of Egypt.

One of the central myths involving Isis is the story of her brother-husband Osiris. According to Egyptian mythology, Osiris was murdered by his brother Set, who dismembered his body and scattered the pieces across Egypt. Isis, with the help of her sister Nephthys and others, searched for the pieces of Osiris's body. She eventually reassembled him, and through her magical powers, was able to conceive Horus, thus bringing Osiris back to life in a spiritual form.

Isis was highly revered not only in Egypt but also in other parts of the ancient world, especially the Mediterranean. Her cult spread through the Roman Empire, and she was often seen as a protector and mother figure. In some places, she was worshipped alongside other gods as part of a larger religious system.

The most famous and largest temple dedicated to Isis was the Temple of Isis at Philae in southern Egypt, which became a major center of her worship.

In her role in Egyptian beliefs, Isis represented: the Moon, concept of wisdom and learning, healing, protection, magical power of the Gods.



Osiris

Associated with the afterlife, resurrection, and kingship. He is both a god of death and a symbol of eternal life, and thus a perfect example of how the Egyptians intertwined religion with morality, kingship, and the cycles of nature. Osiris is one of the most important deities in ancient Egyptian mythology, and presides over the underworld (Duat), judging the souls of the dead. He embodies death and rebirth, symbolizing eternal life. This symbol of rebirth also links Osiris to the fertility of the Nile and crops, representing regeneration and growth.

Osiris is depicted with a white crown of Upper Egypt flanked by ostrich feathers, and a crook and flail acting as symbols of kingship and authority. His green skin represents rebirth and fertility. Osiris is connected to the pharaohs and Egyptian kings were often seen as his living representatives on Earth.

The most famous story about Osiris involves his death and resurrection. Seth, jealous of Osiris, tricks him into a coffin and kills him and then scatters Osiris's body parts across Egypt. The Goddess Isis collects Osiris's body and uses her magic to bring him back to life, where he subsequently becomes the ruler of the underworld, while his son Horus avenges him and rules the living world. Osiris's myth emphasized moral order, the triumph of life over death, and the hope for eternal life.

The "Weighing of the Heart" ceremony in the afterlife, recorded in the Book of the Dead, is linked to his role as judge of souls.



Nephthys

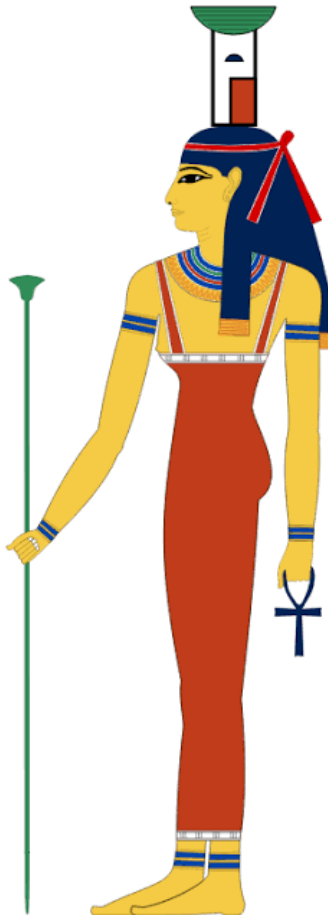
An intriguing and multifaceted figure in ancient Egyptian mythology, Nephthys is often depicted as the sister of Isis, Osiris, and Seth. She forms part of the powerful group of deities associated with death and the afterlife. Nephthys is primarily known as a protective goddess and is often associated with funerary practices. She's considered a guardian of the dead and is linked to the care of deceased souls. Nephthys is sometimes described as the "mistress of the house" and is connected with night, death, and rebirth. Her quiet but significant role in Egyptian mythology reveals the complex nature of Egyptian religious beliefs, particularly regarding life, death, and rebirth.

Although she is sometimes depicted as a more passive figure in mythology, Nephthys is essential to the rituals surrounding death and the protection of the deceased. She often accompanies her sister Isis in funerary scenes, helping to protect and guide the soul in the journey through the afterlife.

Nephthys is married to Seth (the god of chaos and disorder), but their relationship is often depicted as troubled. Despite being married to Set, she is closely associated with Osiris (her

brother-in-law), with whom she has a son, Anubis, the god of embalming and the protector of graves. In some versions of the myth, she is seen as a supportive figure during the resurrection of Osiris, showing her importance in the narrative of death and rebirth.

Nephthys was normally portrayed as a young woman, wearing a headdress in the shape of a house and basket.



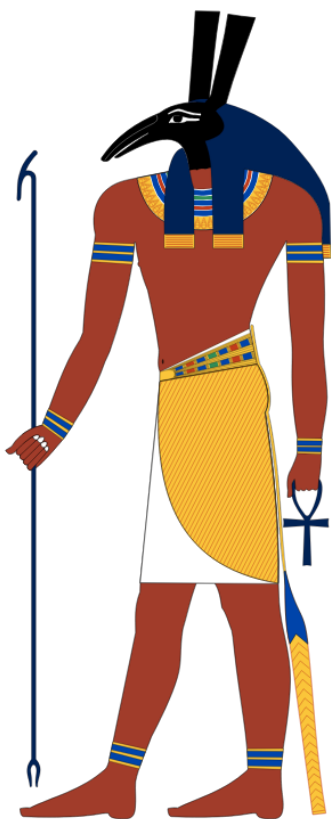
Seth

One of the most intriguing and complex gods in ancient Egyptian mythology, Seth is a god of deserts, storms, disorder, violence, and foreigners in ancient Egyptian religion. Seth represents chaos, disruption, and the harshness of the desert, but also strength, protection, and survival. He embodies the Egyptian concept that chaos is a natural and necessary counterpart to order, and although sometimes vilified, Set was revered as a necessary force of balance. He protected Ra from Apep each night in the underworld.

Often shown as a man with the head of the Set-animal, a mysterious, unidentifiable creature with a long, curved snout and square ears. His scepter was a symbol of power.

In the notable Osiris myth, the most important Egyptian myth, Set is portrayed as the usurper who murdered and mutilated his own brother, Osiris. Osiris's sister-wife, Isis, reassembled his corpse and resurrected her dead brother-husband with the help of the goddess Nephthys. The resurrection lasted long enough to conceive his son and heir, Horus. Horus sought revenge upon Set, and many of the ancient Egyptian myths describe their conflicts.

His centers of worship was Ombos (Naqada region), later associated with Tanis.



Horus

One of the most important gods in the Egyptian pantheon, Horus is an intriguing figure in ancient Egyptian mythology. He's often depicted as a falcon or a man with a falcon head.

There are two major forms of Horus in Egyptian mythology: Horus the Younger (or Horus of the Horizon) and Horus the Elder.

Horus the Younger: He's perhaps the most well-known Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris. After his father Osiris was killed by Set, Horus sought to avenge him, leading to a famous battle between Horus and Set for control of Egypt. Horus eventually triumphs, symbolizing the restoration of order (maat) over chaos (isfet).

Horus the Elder: He is often associated with the sun and is sometimes depicted as a sky god, with his right eye representing the sun and his left eye the moon. This eye became the "Eye of Horus," a powerful symbol of protection, royal power, and good health.

Horus was also the god of the pharaohs. The pharaoh was believed to be the living Horus on earth, a direct connection between the divine and the mortal realm. His protection was invoked for the well-being of the king and the nation.

In his role in Egyptian beliefs, Horus represented: The sky, The Sun, kingship, healing, protection.



Anubis

Anubis is a deity of ancient Egyptian closely associated with mummification, funerary rites, and the protection of the dead. He is typically depicted as a black jackal or a man with a jackal's head. Protector of graves and tombs and guardian of the embalming process during mummification, Anubis was the guide of the dead on their journey to the afterlife.

Anubis conducted the “Weighing of the Heart” ceremony in which the heart is weighed against the Feather of Ma’at (Also known as the Feather of Truth) to determine whether a soul is worthy of entering the afterlife. Anubis is venerated throughout Egypt, especially in areas with necropolises (cemeteries) and a major cult center was Cynopolis ("City of the Dog).

While Anubis had a role in the judgment of souls, Osiris was the god of the afterlife and resurrection. Some myths suggest that Anubis was originally the son of Osiris, though other traditions mention that Anubis was the son of Nephthys and Set. In the most common story, Anubis was adopted by Osiris and played a significant role in embalming Osiris after his death.

In his role in Egyptian beliefs, Anubis represented: protection, purification, transition from life to death, justice and truth.



Hapy

Hapi (Hep, Hap, Hapy) was a water and fertility god who was popular throughout Ancient Egypt. It is thought that his name was originally the predynastic name for the Nile. However,

by the Dynastic period the Nile was known as “iterw” (“the river”) and the word was used to refer to the god of the Nile (the name “Nile” derives from the Greek word “Neilos” which was a corruption of the Egyptian word “nwy”, meaning “water”). He was worshiped throughout Egypt, but was particularly popular around Aswan and Gebel El-Silisila.

Hapi was the patron of Upper and Lower Egypt. In this capacity he was described as twin deities named Hap-Reset (Upper Egypt) and Hap-Meht (Lower Egypt). These deities were depicted either pouring water from a jug (representing the inundation) or tying together the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt (the papyrus and the lotus respectively) in a knot which resembled the hieroglyphic word “sema” (“joined”). This role, together with his connection with the Nile and the inundation, made him one of the most popular and powerful deities of Ancient Egypt and yet no temple has been discovered which was specifically dedicated to him.



Thoth

Thoth is primarily known as the god of wisdom, learning, writing, and magic. He was considered the divine scribe and record-keeper of the gods. He is credited with inventing hieroglyphs and maintaining the universe's balance through record-keeping. In art, he was most commonly depicted with the head of an ibis, a bird associated with wisdom and writing. Occasionally, he appears as a baboon, another animal linked to wisdom and lunar cycles.

He is sometimes described as self-created, emerging from the primal chaos (Nun) to bring order. As God of Time and the Moon, Thoth is sometimes associated with the moon and considered a regulator of time, particularly through his connection to calendars and

astronomical calculations. He often took on the role of divine mediator in disputes and assisted in the judgment of the dead in the underworld, recording the outcomes of the “Weighing of the Heart” ceremony. He often carries a scribe’s palette and stylus, representing writing, or an ankh and scepter, signifying life and authority.

Thoth played a crucial role in many myths, including the Osiris myth, where he helps resurrect Osiris and assists Isis with magical knowledge.

Ancient Egyptians relied heavily on Thoth as the divine source of wisdom, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and magical practices. His reputation as a scribe and recorder made him essential in both religious and governmental functions.



Neith

Neith is one of the most ancient and powerful goddesses in Egyptian mythology. Neith was commonly depicted as a woman with a headdress of the red crown of Lower Egypt,

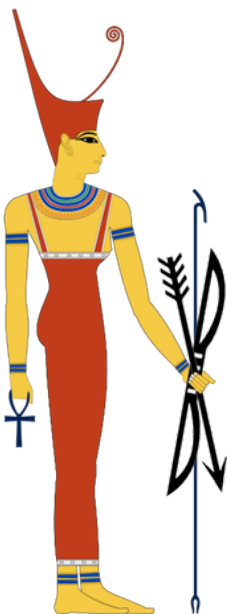
sometimes holding a bow and arrow. Alternatively, she could also be shown as a lioness or with a lioness head, emphasizing her role as a protector and a fierce warrior.

Neith was often depicted as a warrior goddess, associated with both hunting and combat. In some myths, Neith is considered a primordial goddess who played a role in creation. She was sometimes regarded as the mother of the sun god Ra or even as the creator of the world itself. Neith was said to have fashioned the world with her words and actions, and some texts describe her as the "mother of the gods."

Neith was also connected to wisdom and weaving, a skill that symbolized the creation of the universe. The ancient Egyptians believed she was the inventor of weaving, which was associated with the weaving of fate and life itself.

One of the interesting aspects of Neith is her ambiguity and her association with both creation and destruction, which is a common theme in many ancient mythologies. The balance between these aspects made her a powerful figure in Egyptian thought. In her role as a goddess of both war and death, Neith was sometimes invoked to protect the dead in the afterlife. She was considered a guardian of the underworld, alongside other gods like Osiris.

While Neith was most prominently worshipped in the city of Sais, her influence spread throughout Egypt, especially during the time of the Old Kingdom. She was even associated with the famous "Book of the Dead," where her name appears in various hymns and invocations for protection in the afterlife.



Khnum

Often depicted as a ram-headed deity, Khnum is the ancient Egyptian god primarily associated with the creation of humans and water, and he is considered the god of the Nile's inundation, which was crucial for agriculture in ancient Egypt. Khnum was thought to be a creator god who shaped human beings out of clay on his potter's wheel, a role that tied him to the earth and the river's life-giving waters. Khnum's role was not limited to humans; he was also involved in the creation of animals.

In Egyptian mythology, Khnum's power extended beyond mere creation. He was also considered a protector of fertility and the guardian of the sources of the Nile, he was sometimes called the "guardian of the source of the Nile." In Egyptian cosmology, the waters of the Nile were thought to have come from the primeval waters of Nun, and Khnum played a central role in controlling these waters.

His temples were often located near the Nile, especially at places like Elephantine Island, where he had a major cult center.



Serqet

Serket is a shortened version of 'Serket hetyt' which means "she who causes the throat to breathe." Serket is an ancient Egyptian goddess, often depicted with a scorpion gracing her crown. She holds the ankh, the symbol of life, in one hand and a was-sceptre, representing power, in the other. She was considered a protective deity, especially in funerary contexts. Serket's primary role was to guard the deceased from harmful forces, particularly in the afterlife.

In Egyptian mythology, she was one of the four protective goddesses who guarded the body of the deceased and were associated with the embalming process. The other three were Nephthys, Isis, and Neith. Serket's specific responsibility was to protect the body from venomous creatures and from the dangers of the underworld.

She was also considered a goddess of healing, specifically related to snake and scorpion stings. In some accounts, she played a role in the protection of Ra, the sun god, from the serpent Apep, who was a symbol of chaos.



Sobek

Sobek is an ancient Egyptian god associated with the Nile, water, fertility, and crocodiles. He was often depicted as a man with the head of a crocodile, symbolizing both the dangerous and protective qualities of the crocodile, which was common in the Nile River. He was also represented with a crown composed of ram horns, a sun disk, and feathered plumes.

Sobek was seen as a god of strength, and he had a dual nature. On one hand, he was linked to the life-giving qualities of the Nile and its fertile banks, making him a deity of agriculture and fertility. On the other hand, he was feared for his fierce, predatory nature as a crocodile. This duality made him a powerful figure in Egyptian religion. He also prevailed in the Divine Judgement as he would feast on the impure hearts who did not pass.

Sobek's worship was widespread, and he had temples dedicated to him, most notably the temple at Kom Ombo, which still stands today in Egypt. He was also thought to have had protective qualities, guarding people from dangers, particularly in the Nile.



Montu

Montu was a falcon-god of war in ancient Egyptian mythology. Montu was primarily the god of war and the sun, often associated with valor, military strength, and kingship. He was considered a protector of pharaohs in battle. Montu is usually depicted as a man with the head of a falcon, often wearing a solar disk and two plumes on his head. Sometimes he is shown as a full falcon or with a bull's attributes, emphasizing strength.

His symbols included the bull, the sun disk, and weapons like a spear or sword. The bull symbolizes ferocity and power, with Pharaohs often invoked him for military success. Pharaohs often took on the title "Mighty Bull of Montu" to emphasize their military prowess.

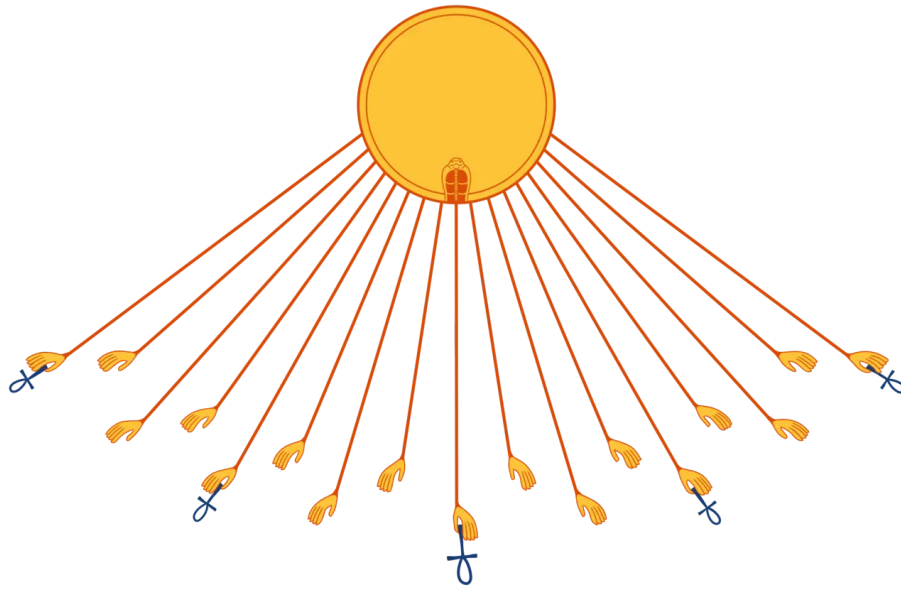
Montu was primarily worshiped in Thebes (modern Luxor) and in Medamud and Karnak.



Aten

During the reign of Akhenaten, The Aten was installed as the principle god of ancient Egypt, and the worship of many of the traditional gods of ancient Egypt was rejected. The Aten was not a new god but an obscure aspect of the sun god worshipped as early as the Old Kingdom. “Aten” was the traditional name for the sun-disk itself and so the name of the god is often translated as “the Aten”. For example, in the coffin texts of the Middle Kingdom the word “Aten” represents the sun disc, and in the ‘Story of Sinuhe’ (also from the Middle Kingdom) Amenemhat I is described as soaring into the sky and uniting with Aten, his creator.

During the New Kingdom, the Aten was considered to be an aspect of the composite deity Ra-Amun-Horus. Ra represented the daytime sun, Amun represented the sun in the underworld, and Horus represented the sunrise. Akhenaten proclaimed “the Aten” (the visible sun itself) to be the sole deity, taking sun worship a stage further. Because of the naturalistic qualities of some of the art works of the time, some have suggested that his religion was based on the scientific observation that the sun’s energy was the ultimate source of all life.

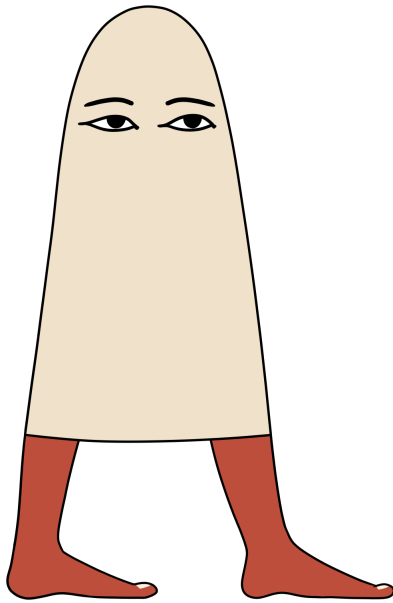


Medjed

Very little is known about Medjed, the Egyptian god who was known as "The Smiter", and there will be no definitive position taken in this Chapter about him; but some things can be pointed out anyway. As of today, because it was said that Medjed belonged to the House of Osiris, and that he was unseen of anybody, could indicate that he is a representation of the pressurized air that was created inside the central wooden Djed caisson; the Djed caisson was indeed "the House of Osiris".

This hypothesis isn't certain, but it would explain why Medjed is also associated with a bird taking flight, and why nobody could ever see Medjed: you cannot see the air, even if it is pressurized.

Everything about Medjed is about some kind of air, air with force, air with enough force that a bird can take its flight, air that you cannot see but you can represent just like we represent clouds today. This air with the force of Medjed, only is the glorification of pressurized air, the one that was created in the Great Pyramid, inside the central wooden Djed caisson: the House of Osiris, the place where Osiris was endlessly moving up and down.



7. Egyptian Mythology 101

Before proceeding with the council's meeting, it is surely of necessity to understand the turning points of creation, life, and major conflicts among the anchors holding up the world mortals stand on. For that purpose we shall begin with:

The Ennead Myth (Creation of Earth)

Before Kemet, before Heliopolis, and before the glorious Sphinx, the black soils were nothing but a sea of darkness and chaos, a void named Nun. In a moment, from those waves of darkness arose a ray of light, Atum, the Father of Gods. He had created himself with his

sublime power, and upon creation had seen how he could create other gods, and possibly mortals living on the soil that could be created out of Nun. But this stood as the first challenge to Atum. He saw nothing but darkness in the endless sea. He hovered above Nun, pronouncing incantations, and by the end a small island would be created among the waves, an island Atum would call Ben-Ben.

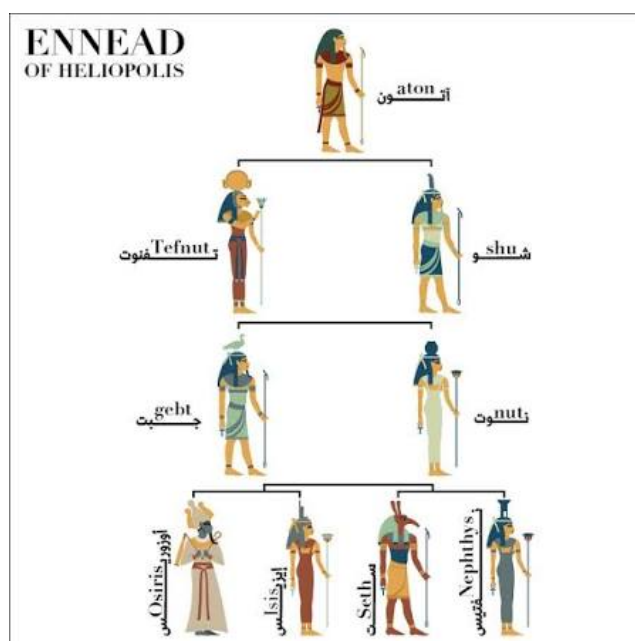
Atum placed himself on the island, in the thoughts of whether humans should be created and what he should do next. How would humans survive on Ben-Ben? There were no sources of nutrition, no animals to help humans in their daily lives, and no wheat to harvest. In those thoughts Atum understood that creation is not a job for one, so he decided to start by creating gods who would be his helpers.

First he created the god of wind, Shu, to control the tides and waves of Nun; and the lion-headed goddess of water, Tefnut, so Nun would be within her domain. God, the creator was clearly pleased by not being alone anymore.(In another iteration, it is stated that Shu and Tefnut were created with Atum spitting them out of his mouth, resulting in the name meaning ‘from the mouth’, or ‘birthed of the mouth’.) But Atum was not pleased for long, as the darkness of Nun had not yet perished, and the newly-created gods were lost out of sight in a mere second. Atum called out to them, but received no answer. A fear of them drowning in the void of Nut crept up on him. So to search for his children, he took out his eye and ordered it to look for them and bring them back. What felt like ages had gone by when out of the depths of chaos Shu and Tefnut were brought to Atum by his eye. The eye saw it had a replacement and raged at Atum. But Atum found a solution in placing the eye on his forehead, physically opening the third eye. The eye remained rageful and disappointed regardless, turning into a poisonous cobra, attacking Atum. While the cobra flared the hood on its neck, Atum effortlessly held down the snake and wrapped it around his head, letting it take on the responsibility of overseeing upcoming threats. The snake was named Urey, and the Urey remained on top of every Egyptian rulers’ headpiece, as a protector.

Just as Atum wrapped Urey around his head, the waters in front of Atum split in two, and a lotus flower beaming with light arose. Out of the lotus came out the sun god, Ra, with a sun bestowed upon him as a halo. Once Ra saw the gods standing in front of him, he shed tears of joy, which ended up falling on the soil of Ben-Ben, creating humans.

The god of wind Shu and goddess of water Tefnut became a divine pair, ending up in the birth of Geb and Nut. Nut was the goddess of air, and Geb was the god of land. The siblings loved each other so much that they have never separated once, not even in birth. But eventually they had a fight and they let go of each other, creating the atmosphere and the lands that the humans could now stand on. Despite their fights, Geb and Nut had several children: Osiris, Set, Isis and Nephthys.

The previously mentioned gods -Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Ra, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Set, Isis, Nephthys- compose what is known as the 'Ennead of Heliopolis' or the 'Great Nine Gods'. The Ennead would follow on to create more gods and make Kemet an empire of glory, as they are considered the first rulers of the Ancient Egyptian Empire.



(Please note that some myths combine Atum and Ra as a singular deity under the name Atum-Ra, which does not apply to the Ennead myth, and not all mentioned Ra's in the future are Atum-Ra.)

7.1 The Solar Dynasty

Uprisings Against The Gods

Nearly every religion persists in having a regeneration of human kind due to sinful acts or the disobedience to the gods, and Egyptian mythology is no different to that rule. Ra ruled over Egypt for centuries, raising the sun, providing humans with happiness, resources, fruits, growing seeds into fields of wheat, and so much more. While in the night, he left the kingdom on land for the night skies, sailing in his air fleet, protecting his people from the darkness and the evil it held within. Though he wasn't alone on this journey of reign. He had two daughters, Nekhbet, ruling over Upper Egypt, and Wadjet, ruler of Lower Egypt of the Nile Delta. These names aren't unfamiliar to us, as they appear on the headdress of Atum and all pharaohs, serving as a means of protection to the wearer. Wadjet appeared in the form of a cobra, while Nekhbet was either a griffon or a vulture, as represented in their respective areas of reign. Ra also had a son, Horus, who could take the form of a sun disc with wings. Most popular depictions of him are with a head of a falcon, nonetheless. The father and son had much in common as they were both depicted the same way, adorned with a Urey on their heads. Some iterations state that Horus was created from the marriage of Isis and Osiris.

Returning to the myth itself, as centuries passed, evil souls had decided to overthrow the gods. They took on forms of all kinds of pests, lizards, crocodiles and snakes, and charged at the palace of Ra. Seeing the attack, Ra ordered his son to handle the threat. Horus turned into the sun disc and flew up high, overseeing all demons. He shone his blinding sunlight on them, burning the demons, turning them into ashes, and melting them. Sun-arrows hit them through their hearts, ending any part of their evil creations that may have survived the heat. The demons have perished in a matter of seconds. To show his gratitude to his son Horus, Ra ordered all temples on Earth to bear the mark of a flying sun disc to honour the protector of the kingdom. Though the threat was long gone, a sense of impending doom hollered over Ra. A few centuries later, another wave of uprising was to come.

Until that day came, Ra, though was a god, had aged. He did not hold the sheer power he could before. He still was the ruler of Egypt and the most powerful god of all, no doubt. With completing heavy duties day and night, working for his people nonstop, he started to fear whether he could not raise the sun one day. One of those fearful days he spoke his thoughts out loud while sitting on the golden throne: 'What am I to do?' he said to himself, without realizing. 'What shall I do if an uprising occurs like the one centuries ago? Would I be able to stop it?...'

A passerby merchant ended up hearing his words. The merchant was clever, but extremely selfish and scheming, and he ended up spreading rumors that the King had gone weak. The people began to gather for a riot. On the next day, while raising the sun, Ra noticed the large group. At a loss of ideas on what the meaning could be, Ra approached Thoth, the God of Wisdom. Thoth was often depicted with a head of an Ibis, and was known as the father of scholars. Thoth answered the Sun God, as the people had heard some rumors of him becoming old and weak, had begun an uprising to kill him and take over the rule. Upon receiving the information, Shu, Tefnut, Isis, and many more gods and goddesses gathered the Council of Gods to discuss the settlement of the issue. The Council wanted a peaceful prevention, but negotiating with these selfish humans was to no avail. Therefore, a punishment was deemed necessary for the betterment of both the gods, and the innocent civilians who were not a part of the rioters. The other gods, seeing the evil behavior of men, advised him also to destroy men through the goddess Sekhmet.

Ra, with his eye, which gave away a terrifying look, created the goddess Sekhmet. Ferocious and bloody like a lioness who pursues her prey and delights in slaughter and blood.

Following Ra's orders, he unleashed his fury upon all those who ridiculed his father, sowing terror and despair throughout Egypt. The men fled to hide, but the goddess Sekhmet chased them and killed them, relaxing with the blood.

When Ra saw what Sekhmet had done, he called her to his presence to ask if he had obeyed him. Sekhmet replied that he was happy because he had avenged his father Ra, eliminating all the men he had given him. All of Egypt was stained with the color of blood and it was impossible to stop the fury of the cruel and bloody Sekhmet.

But Ra took pity on the men and decided to do something to stop the killing. He then sent fast and silent messengers in search of large quantities of amber. Then he ordered to prepare mucous liters of beer until he filled seven thousand jugs. Later, he had the amber mixed with the beer. By moonlight, beer acquired the red color of blood. He filled the jars again and sent his messengers to dump them at the place where Sekhmet was. As the sun rose, Sekhmet was ready for his next hunt, when he saw the earth flooded with red color and thought it would be royal blood because there was no man nearby. She came up and drank in a fuss as she laughed and enjoyed thinking it was blood. He drank so much that on that day, that he was drunk, he could not kill any man. When Sekhmet returned to the presence of Ra, the god greeted her with joy because he had not killed anyone and decided to change his name to Hathor. From that moment she became the goddess Hathor was the goddess of sweetness,

love and passion. Humanity was redeemed and Ra continued to reign in his old age, although he knew that the time had come to delegate the Egyptian government to the young gods. Let's not forget that Ra's power was in his secret name. If anyone found out, Ra would stop reigning. Ra knew this and kept it hidden in his heart. Only by using great magical powers could one be known.

Eternal Battle For the Sun

Since the dawn of human civilization, the sun has been the ultimate symbol of life, hope, and renewal. For the ancient Egyptians, this force of nature was not just a ball of fire in the sky — it was Ra, the supreme sun god. Worshipped as the creator, ruler, and source of all life, Ra was seen as invincible. Yet behind this divine image was a god locked in an endless cycle of struggle and survival. Every night, Ra faced death, betrayal, and uncertainty before rising again at dawn. His myth is not just a story of a deity but a profound mirror of human life itself. Apep, on the other hand, was the serpent god of chaos and darkness. He represented everything that was evil and tried to disrupt Ma'at, the harmony of the universe. Each night, when Ra traveled through the underworld on his solar boat, Apep would lie in wait, ready to attack. Apep wanted to stop Ra from rising in the morning and bringing light to the world. The battle between Ra and Apep was a fierce struggle between good and evil. Every evening, as Ra's sun boat began its journey through the dark underworld, Apep would spring into action. He would try to wrap himself around Ra's boat to stop it from moving forward. When Apep attacked, the darkness would grow, and chaos threatened to take over. But Ra was strong and wise. He would fight back with his power and the help of other gods. They would cast spells and use magical weapons to keep Apep at bay. One of the most famous parts of this story is how Ra would summon his followers, the gods of the sky, like Horus and Set, to help him in his battle against Apep. Together, they would use their strength and courage to defend the sun god. Every time they fought, it was a huge battle, full of light and darkness, good and evil. Sometimes, the fight was so intense that it seemed like Apep might win. But no matter how strong Apep was, Ra always found a way to defeat him. Each morning, when the sun rose in the sky, it was a sign that Ra had triumphed over Apep once again. The people of Egypt would cheer and celebrate the sun's return, knowing that Ra had defeated the forces of chaos for another day.

Ra's Secret Name

Ra, the chief god and sun god, has a secret name, which is the secret to his power. The goddess Isis (healing, childbirth, "throne") wants "to rule over the earth jointly with Ra. She thought she could get this power by learning Ra's secret name. Ra was getting old, dribbling at the mouth and having "little or no control over his body." Isis took some earth and after adding some of Ra's drool (which, naturally, dropped from the sky), she worked and kneaded the clay into the shape of a snake. Somehow, with her magic powers, she brought the snake to life and placed it in hiding by the path that Ra traveled every day.

Soon, Ra came along with his retinue of gods and servants. The serpent leaped out and bit Ra in the leg. Ra began to feel woozy right away, feeling his "vital power" leaving him. As the serpent's poison flowed through his veins, Ra screamed in pain. All the gods gathered round him, asking what was the matter. However, Ra was in the grip of the poison, and could not tell them what had happened—his teeth rattled and his limbs shook, "for the poison had flooded all his members, just as the Nile during the Inundation floods all of the land of Egypt".

When Ra finally does manage to speak, he says that he has been wounded "by some deadly thing" which he did not see or make, and he asks who would do such a thing to him. He says, "I have never suffered pain such as this before." Then he talks about what a mighty god he is and how many wonderful and powerful names he has. His real, secret name, however, "was hidden inside my body by my begetter so that the words of power of those who would work magic upon me might not obtain dominion over me". He then talks about his pain again and asks the gods to help cure him with spells.

All the gods try, but only Isis seems to have a clue as to the nature of this disease. She says immediately that Ra has obviously been poisoned by a serpent, and moreover, that she can cure him with her efficacious words of power. Ra again complains about shaking and feeling chilled and feverish hotter. Isis says, "Tell me thy name, O divine father, for the person liveth who repeateth thy name".

However, instead of telling his name, Ra boasts of his creation of the earth and mountains and of his power to make the Nile rise. He tells Isis some of his other names, "I am Khepera

in the morning, Ra at noon-day, and Temu in the evening." but he will not surrender his secret name.

Isis is not fooled by these well-known names, and she asks again for the secret name. Since he is so ill, Ra finally says, "I will allow myself to be searched through by Isis, and will let my name come out from my body and pass into her body". Ra hides himself from the other gods, and Isis, assisted by her son Horus, performs the name operation in some unspecified manner. She then utters a magic spell, curing him with her words of power. No doubt this magic spell for curing snakebite could be used by humans who were in similar straits as Ra.

7.2 The Osirian Dynasty

The Battle of Osiris and Seth

Geb, god of the Earth and Nut, goddess of the sky, produced four children, Isis, Osiris, Seth and Nephthys. Osiris, as the firstborn son, was given the right to govern the land of Egypt. He married his sister Isis. Their brother Seth however, known as a bit of a rebel, was jealous of the success of King Osiris of Egypt and set about plotting his assassination. Seth constructed a fine chest and at a banquet he tricked Osiris into lying in the box, which he quickly nailed down and threw into the Nile. When Isis heard of her husband's death (while she was in the town now known as Coptos), she set about looking for the chest and the body of Osiris, eventually hearing that it had been washed ashore in the land of Byblos. The coffin landed in a tamarisk tree which grew around it and was eventually cut down and made into a pillar for the palace of the king (this later became the origin of the djed pillar, symbol of strength). Isis travelled to Byblos and gained a reputation with the ladies of the court for being a great healer and was given the pillar as a gift in return for her services. Isis had the chest containing the body of Osiris hewn out of the tree trunk and she sailed with it back to Egypt. When she arrived in the Delta, Isis opened the coffin and she and her sister Nephthys tried to revive the body. Egyptian legend tells that the goddesses breathed life and warmth into the body of Osiris enough for him to be able to impregnate Isis with their son, Horus, who she hid for protection in the northern papyrus marshes until he was grown.

Meanwhile Seth was still worried that Osiris would return again to disrupt his own assumed rule of Egypt. He found the embalmed body and had it cut into fourteen pieces, which he scattered throughout Egypt. Once more Isis set out to find the scattered parts of her husband's

body, sailing up and down the Nile attended by the birds and beasts, who loved her. Eventually Isis found all but one of the parts of Osiris's body. The goddess pretended to bury each part of her husband's body where she found it, explaining the many shrines to Osiris found throughout Egypt. What she actually did was to take the body to Horus who, with the help of Thoth and Anubis, reassembled it, except for his 'manhood' which had been eaten by a fish. The body of the god Osiris was buried at Abydos, where he became once more immortal.

Horus spent his life avenging his father Osiris, in the pursuit of his enemy Seth and there were many battles fought. Seth took many guises, especially the crocodile and hippopotamus. He could call up violent storms at will and had a great voice like thunder. One of these battles was fought at Elephantine Island (Aswan) when Seth took the form of a red hippopotamus and used his storms as a terrible weapon. In the last battle, Seth was overcome by the young god Horus, who killed him with a harpoon, avenging the humiliation of his father and bringing peace at last to his mother. At Edfu, the tradition of Horus's triumph over Seth can be seen in the 'Edfu Drama' reliefs on the ambulatory wall. The drama is a universal myth of kingship and resonates throughout the world in many different cultures. It also explains many of the traditions of ancient Egypt seen in different temples up and down the Nile.

Isis and the Seven Scorpions

After the murder of Osiris, Isis tried to hide from Seth, but he found her and imprisoned her in a spinning-mill and left her to weave her husband's funeral linen. Thoth realised that Isis would be in danger if Set realised she was pregnant and came to her aid. He freed Isis from the mill and advised her to go into hiding in the marshes with seven scorpions named Tefen, Masetetef, Petet, Tjetet, Matet, Mesetet, and Befen who swore to protect her and her unborn son.

The goddess disguised her true form and began her journey. It was a long journey to the marshes and so she decided to stop at the house of a rich woman named Uset to ask for sustenance and a place to sleep for the night. When the rich woman saw Isis and the scorpions, she rudely slammed the door in her face, enraging the scorpions. Isis continued on to the house of a poor fisher-girl who welcomed her warmly and invited the goddess into her home, and offered her food and shelter. However, the scorpions were not about to forget the

rich woman's cruel actions and so they put all of their combined poison into their leader, Tefen, and he bit the woman's child.

The poison racked the poor boy's body and his distraught mother ran into the town with her child looking for help, but no-one could aid her. Thankfully, Isis heard the cries of the child and was overcome with pity for the boy she returned. She called out the name of each scorpion and commanded the poison to leave the child's body. The rich woman was overcome with remorse when she realised that she had snubbed the goddess while the poor girl had invited her into her home. To make amends she took all of her own property and gave it to the poor fisher-girl, causing the goddess to rejoice.

This story and the spell to cure scorpion stings were inscribed on numerous stelae and "cippi", the most famous of which is the Metternich Stela (composed during the reign of Nectanebo II during the Thirtieth Dynasty).

7.3 The Dynasty of Horus

The Battle of Seth and Horus

Horus, the Avenger of Osiris, came before the Great Ennead. With his mother beside him, he spoke of the cruel murder of his Father at the hands of Seth. He spoke of the usurpation of the Throne of Egypt. The Gods were impressed by the eloquence of the Falcon-Headed One, and they pitied him. Shu, Son of the Creator, was the first to speak: "Right should rule might. Mighty Seth hath force on his side, but Young Horus hath justice. We shall do Justice unto Horus by proclaiming, 'Yes! Ye shalt have the throne of Thy Father!' Thoth, Lord of Wisdom, spoke unto Ennead, "This is right a million times!" Isis gave a great cry of joy. She begged the North Wind to change direction westward to whisper the news unto Osiris. Lord Shu declared, "Giving the Throne unto Horus seems right to the whole of the Ennead! Thoth shall give the royal signet ring to Horus. We shall crown him with the White Crown!"

And, to this, Seth proclaimed, "It is I who slay the enemy of Ra daily. It is I who stand in the prow of the bark for millions of years, and no other god can do it. It is I who should receive the office of Osiris!" The gods knew the terrors of the Serpents of Chaos. They muttered that Seth was right. Horus, Lord of Light, spoke and said, "Shall one give office to the uncle when

the bodily son is there?" Isis became furious at the Ennead for not speaking in favour of her Son. She complained to Them until, for the sake of peace, They promised that Justice should be given unto Horus.

Mighty Seth was angered. "How dare you cowards break thine oath! I shall fetch my Great Sceptre and strike one of you down with it each day! I swear that I will not argue my case in any Court where Isis is present!" Ra proclaimed, "We shall cross the river to the Island in the Midst, and try the case thereon. I shall further order the ferryman not to ferry Isis across."

Isis, changed herself into a bent old woman. She carried a jar of flour and honey cakes. She offered a golden ring to the ferryman to give her passage, and they were soon across. She slipped through the trees, and towards the camp of the Ennead. The Gods were holding a feast, but Seth stood apart from the Divine Company. Isis had changed her shape once more. She now appears as a beautiful young woman, dressed as a widow. The Great Lady approached the Lord of Storm. "Who are you, my lovely lady?" asked Seth, "And why have you come here?"

Isis hid her face and wept, "Oh Great Lord, I am looking for a champion. I was the wife of a herdsman, and I bore him a son. Then, my dear husband died, and the boy began to tend his father's cattle. But a stranger came and seized our byre, and told my son that he would take our cattle and turn us out. My son wished to protest, but the stranger threatened to beat him. Great Lord, help me! Be my son's champion!" Seth heard her words and dried her tears. "Do not cry, my beautiful. I shall be your champion and destroy this villain! How dare a stranger take the father's property whilst the son is still alive!" Great Isis shrieked with laughter. She became a kite. She flew into an acacia tree. "Cry thyself, Mighty Seth! You have condemned yourself! You judged your own case!"

Seth was angered unto tears of rage. The Gods demanded to know what had transpired. He told them of how he had been tricked by Isis. Ra said to the Dark God, "It is true, Seth. You have judged yourself."

Now the Ennead crossed over the river and camped in the Western Mountains. Plans were made for the coronation of Horus. Seth, still, would not admit his defeat. He exclaimed, "I challenge You, Horus! Let us turn ourselves into hippopotami and fight deep within the river! Who-so-ever surfaces first shall admit defeat!"

Horus accepted gladly, but Isis fell to the ground and wept, afraid that Seth would slay her son. The two Gods plunged into the depths of the river. The battle raged for many days. Victory inclined first to one side, and then to the other; and the heart of Isis suffered bitterly. She took yarn and copper; making them into a magickal harpoon. She threw the weapon into the white water. The copper point stabbed Horus in the flank; He surfaced and roared, "Mother! Your spear has pierced me! Let me go!"

Isis called to her magic weapon to release Horus. It returned to her hand. She threw it again, and this time it caught hold of Seth. With a bellow of pain Seth arose. "My sister, why must you always be my enemy? What have I done to you? I am your brother; let me go!" Great Isis' heart grew soft, and she released her pleading brother.

Horus was furious with his mother for the release of his enemy. He leaped out of the river, his face like a leopard, and cut off the head of Isis with one stroke of his copper knife. He then strode away towards the Mountains of the West. Isis calmly turned her body into a statue; She walked towards the tent of Ra. The Gods were horrified, even Thoth himself. The God of words of power transformed Isis' head and set it again upon her shoulders in the form of that of a cow. The Ennead went into the Mountains of the West in search of Horus.

The Young God had found an oasis. He was asleep in the shadow of a palm tree. Seth found Horus, seized hold of him, threw him down, removed his two eyes from their sockets, and buried them on the mountain so as to illuminate the earth. The two balls of his eyes grew into lotuses. When he returned to the encampment, he told the gods that he had found no trace of His nephew.

Hathor, Lady of the Southern Sycamore, finally came upon the blinded god. She pitied his agony. She caught a gazelle and milked it, and then knelt beside the young god, saying gently, "Uncover your face." She dripped the milk onto his wounds. At once the pain vanished. "Open your eyes," commanded Hathor. He obeyed and found that the healing magic of the goddess had restored His eyes and He could see again.

Hathor returned to the Ennead and said, "Seth has been lying to you. He had torn out the Eyes of Horus. I have healed the young god. His return is near!"

Ra called the two contenders before him. He passed Divine Judgment upon them for Their wrongdoings. He demanded that they cease their quarreling. Seth appeared to agree. He invited Horus to stay with him in his palace.

One evening, as the two lay together resting, Seth inserted his penis between the thighs of Horus. Horus, however, unknown to the chaos god, had caught Seth's semen in his hand. With the help of his mother, Isis, he placed Seth's semen upon lettuce growing in a garden; lettuce that he himself was to eat.

Seth spoke to Horus, "Come, let us go, that I may contend with you in the Court." Within the Court, Seth declared, "Let the office of the ruler be given to me, for as regards Horus who stands here, I have done a man's deed to him."

Horus laughed and said, "What Seth has said is false. Let the semen of Seth be called, and let us see from where it will answer." And so Thoth called upon the semen of Seth. The answer came from a far-away marsh, where Isis had long since deposited it. Horus said, "Let mind be called, and let us see from where it will answer."

Then Thoth laid his hand on the arm of Seth and said, "Come out, semen of Horus!" And it spoke unto him, "Where shall I come out?" Thoth said to it, "Come out of his ear." It replied to him, "Should I come out of his ear, I who am Divine Seed?" Then it came out as a Golden Sun Disk upon the head of Seth. Seth became very angry, and He stretched forth His hand to seize the Golden Disk.

In desperation, Seth demanded one more contest with Horus. Before the whole Ennead he declared, "Let both of us build a ship of stone. We shall race them down the Nile. Who-so-ever wins the race shall wear the Crown of Osiris." Horus agreed to the contest at once.

Mighty Seth took up his club. He struck the top of a mountain. Then he built a huge ship of solid stone and dragged it to the river. Horus' ship was already afloat, for the young god had secretly made a boat of pine and plastered it so as to appear as stone. Seth tried to launch his boat; it sank to the bottom of the Nile and the Ennead laughed. Seth leaped into the water. He turned himself into a hippopotamus once more. He attacked the bark of Horus. The wooden boat splintered and sank. Horus grabbed his spear and thrust at Seth, but the Ennead shouted at him to stop; He had to obey the command of the Great Gods of Annu.

Horus made his complaint against Seth: "It is now eighty years we are in the Court, but they do not know how to judge us. I have contended with him in the Hall of the Way of Truth. I was found right against him. I have contended with Him in the Hall of the Horned Horus. I was found right against him. I have contended with Him in the Hall of the Field of Rushes. I was found right against him. I have contended with him in the Hall of the Field Pool. I was found right against him."

In the Trial, Re-Atum asked this important question: "What shall we do about these two gods, Who for eighty years now have been before the tribunal?"

Geb commanded the Nine Gods to gather. He judged between Horus and Seth; he ended their great quarrel. He made Seth as king of Southern Egypt, up to the place in which he was born, which is Su. And Geb made Horus king of Egypt in the land of Northern Egypt, up to the place in which his Father was drowned, which is the Division of the Two Lands.

Thus Horus stood over one region, and Seth stood over one region. They made peace over the two lands. That was the division of the two lands.

Geb's words to Seth, "Go to the place in which you were born." Seth: Southern Egypt. Geb's words to Horus, "Go to the place where Your Father was drowned." Horus: Northern Egypt. Geb's words to Horus and Seth, "I have separated You."- Lower and Upper Egypt.

Then Horus spoke and said, "It is not good to defraud me before the Ennead and to take the office of my father Osiris from me!"

Shu and Thoth persuaded the Court to send a letter to Osiris. After a time, the messenger returned. He bore an angry letter from the King of the Dead. Osiris demanded to know why his son had been robbed of the throne. He demanded to know if the Gods had forgotten that it was him, Osiris, who had given the world the precious gifts of barley and wheat.

Ra was offended at Osiris' words. He returned a letter of arrogance. After many days, another weary messenger returned. He bore a second letter from the King of the Dead. Thoth read it aloud: "How good are the deeds of the Ennead? Justice has sunk into the underworld. Now, listen to me; The land of the dead is full of demons who fear no god or goddess. If I send them out into the world of the living they will bring back the hearts of evil-doers to the place

of punishment. Who among you is more powerful than I? Even the gods must come, at last, to the Beautiful West." At these words even the Creator was afraid.

Then it seemed wrong to Geb that the portion of Horus was like the portion of Seth. So Geb gave Horus his inheritance, for he is the son of his firstborn son.

Geb's words to the Nine Gods: "I have appointed Horus, the firstborn, Him alone, Horus, the inheritance. To the son of My son, Horus, the Jackal of Southern Egypt...the firstborn Horus, the Opener of the Ways."

Then Horus stood over the land. He is the uniter of this land, proclaimed in the Great Name Ta-tenen, South of His Wall, Lord of Eternity.

Then sprouted the two Great Magicians upon his head. He is Horus who arose as King of Upper and Lower Egypt, who united the two lands in the Nome of the Wall, the place in which the two lands were united.

Reed and papyrus were placed on the double door of the House of Ptah. That means Horus and Seth, pacified and united. They fraternized so as to cease quarreling in whatever place they might be, being united in the House of Ptah, the Balance of the two lands in which Upper and Lower Egypt had been weighed.

The Seven Year Famine

On an island in the Nile, near the ancient city of Elephantine, stands a granite rock carved with both an inscription and a scene depicting a king with three deities: Khnum, Satis, and Anukis. The carving and inscription are about two thousand years old, but the story itself is set during the reign of King Zoser, who ruled Egypt more than four and a half thousand years ago. The story illustrates just how vital the River Nile was to the people of ancient Egypt. The Blue Nile rises in the mountains of Ethiopia, while the White Nile begins in the lakes and marshes of central Africa. The two rivers join near Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, before flowing north toward Egypt.

Each year, heavy summer rains in Ethiopia and Sudan cause the Nile to swell. Today, the river is controlled by the great Aswan High Dam, but in ancient times the swollen waters

overflowed into the valley, leaving behind a layer of rich mud ideal for growing crops. When the waters finally receded, planting could begin.

A particularly powerful flood could sometimes damage settlements built on higher ground, but a weak flood, known as a “low Nile,” was far worse. If the floodwaters failed to spread across enough farmland, Egypt faced starvation.

In the eighteenth year of Zoser’s reign, the Nile failed to rise and flood the land with its life-giving waters. For six years Egypt had suffered from low Nile floods. The floods reached only half the fields, and too little grain was harvested to feed the people. Year after year the Egyptians prayed for a great flood, yet each year the waters grew lower still. By the seventh year, Zoser was in despair.

Food of every kind had become scarce. Men robbed their own brothers to obtain enough to eat. Children wailed with hunger in their mothers’ arms. Old men crouched in the dust, hugging their knees, and even the nobles had become gaunt and grim. The temples had been closed for lack of offerings, and the shrines of the gods stood deserted. None of the king’s advisers knew what to do until Zoser turned to his vizier, the wise Imhotep. “Tell me,” said Zoser, “where is the source of the Nile? What is the city of the Sinuous One, and what god dwells there? If I knew this, I could pray to him to end our seven years of famine.”

Imhotep was famous throughout Egypt for his skill in architecture, medicine, and every other branch of learning, but even he could not answer the king immediately. “Sovereign, my lord,” said Imhotep, “I shall go to the temple of Thoth and consult the sacred books in the House of Life. If the answers exist, I will find them there.”

For many days Imhotep studied the sacred writings, texts so ancient and mysterious that only he possessed the wisdom to understand them. At last he discovered everything the king wished to know and hurried back to court.

“Sovereign, my lord,” said Imhotep, “far to the south, on an island in the Nile, lies the city of Elephantine. It stands upon the first mound of land that rose from the dark waters of Nun at the beginning of creation. The hills surrounding the city are rich in red and black granite, as well as copper, silver, gold, turquoise, carnelian, emerald, and jasper.

In the heart of the city stands a temple called Joy of Life. Beneath this temple lie two caverns from which the Nile emerges. From these hidden chambers the river rises and rushes toward Egypt in a mighty flood.

“Khnum is the god who opens the floodgates. He sits enthroned at Elephantine, his sandals resting upon the Nile and his crown touching the sky. Khnum is lord of barley and wheat, fruits and flowers, birds and fish, and all living creatures. Each day offerings are presented in his temple to Khnum, to Satis his consort, to Anukis their daughter, and to all the other deities of Elephantine.”

Zoser was delighted to learn of such a wondrous place on the edge of his kingdom. He immediately consulted the secret books to learn the rituals that would please Khnum and the gods of Elephantine. The king spent the entire day leading processions of priests and presenting offerings. That night, as Zoser slept, he dreamed that the ram-headed god Khnum stood beside his bed. In his dream, the king leapt up and kissed the ground before the deity. Khnum spoke kindly to him.

“I am the maker of mankind. My arms surround you to steady and protect you. I have given precious stones to Egypt so that temples may be built and the statues of the gods adorned.

“I am master of the flood. When I open the two caverns, the Nile pours forth to nourish your land and kiss your fields.

“Mourn no longer. Because you have called upon me, I shall end the seven years of famine. I will make the Nile flow abundantly once more, and the great flood shall again shine upon the fertile shores of Egypt.”

Then the glorious god faded from the king’s sight.

When Zoser awoke, he remembered every detail of his dream. Filled with joy and renewed vigor, he knew with certainty that Egypt would be saved.

The Birth of Hatshepsut

Amun-Ra, the King of the Gods, sat upon his throne and looked out upon Egypt. Presently he spoke to the assembled council of the gods - to Thoth and Khonsu and Khnemu, to Isis and Osiris, Nephthys, Horus, Harmachis, Anubis and the rest - saying: 'There has been many a Pharaoh in the Land of Khem, in the Double Land of Egypt, and some of them have been great and have pleased me well. Khufu and Khafra and Menkaura long ago who raised the great pyramids of Giza; Amenhotep and Thutmose of today who have caused the peoples of the world to bow down at my feet. Now is the dawning of the golden age in Egypt, and it comes into my mind to create a great queen to rule over Khem: yes, I will unite the Two Lands in peace for her, I will give her rule over the whole world, over Syria and Nubia besides Egypt - yes, even to the far-distant land of Punt.'

Then said Isis in her silvery voice that sounded like the shaken bells on her sistrum, 'Father of Gods and Men, no queen has yet ruled in Egypt, in the holy land of Khem, save only one, when the good god Osiris had passed into the Duat, and the good god Horus was still but a child, while Seth the Evil, the terrible one, stalked unchained up and down the land. Father of Gods and Men, if you create such a queen, my blessing and wisdom shall be upon her.'

Then Thoth spoke, Thoth the thrice-wise from whom no secrets were hidden: 'O Amon-Re, Lord of the Two Lands, King of the Gods, Maker of Men, harken to my words. In the royal palace at Thebes set in the Black Land, the rich country that Khnemu has made fertile with the dark mud of the Inundation, dwells a maiden. Ahmes is her name, and none in all the world is fairer than she nor more beautiful in all her limbs. She is the new-made bride of the good god Pharaoh Thutmose, who has but now returned to Thebes after his conquests beyond the Great Green Sea in the lands of the Syrians and the Apura. She alone can be the mother of the great queen whom you are about to create as ruler of the Two Lands. She rests alone in the palace of Pharaoh. Come, let us go to her.'

So Thoth took upon himself his favorite form, that of an ibis, in which he could fly swiftly through the air unrecognized by any. In this guise he flew into the palace of Thutmose at Thebes, to the great chamber with its painted walls where Queen Ahmes lay asleep.

Then Thoth cast a spell over the palace so that every living thing slumbered. Only the Pharaoh, King Thutmose himself, seemed to be awake and yet it seemed that it was only his body which did not sleep. For, as if he were already dead, his three spiritual parts: the Ba, or soul; the Ka, or double, and the Khou, or spirit, left his body and gathered about it where it

lay on the royal bed as they would in days to come when the good god Pharaoh Thutmose would be left to lie in his deep tomb chamber beneath the Valley of Kings until the coming of Osiris.

Yet the body of Thutmose now rose up from the bed, and the Ka took its place, lying there in the likeness of the King himself, while the Ba, like a bird with a human head, and the Khou in a tongue of flame, hovered over it. Now for a space the body of Thutmose was the dwelling-place of Amun-Ra, the greatest of the gods, the maker and father of gods and men, and of all the earth. Great was his majesty and splendid his adornments. On his neck was the glittering collar of precious stones that only Pharaoh might wear, and on his arms were Pharaoh's bracelets of pure gold and electrum; but on his head were two plumes and by these alone might it be known that here was Amun-Ra. Yet it seemed as if light shone from him, for as he passed through the dark palace, hall and chamber and corridor gleamed and faded in turn as if the sun shone in them for a space and then was veiled behind a cloud. And as he passed and faded there lingered behind him a scent of the richest perfumes that come from the land of Punt.

He came to the sleeping-place of Queen Ahmes, and the double doors of ebony bound with silver opened before him and closed when he had passed. He found the Queen lying like a jewel on a golden couch that was shaped like a lion; he seated himself upon the couch, and he held to her nostrils Amun-Ra's divine symbol of life, and the breath of life passed into her as she breathed, and the couch rose and floated in the air. Then, waking or asleep, it seemed to Queen Ahmes that she was bathed in light so that she could see nothing above or below or round about her but the golden mist, save only the form of her husband the Pharaoh Thutmose who spoke in a voice that seemed to echo away into the distance, saying: 'Rejoice, most fortunate of women, for you shall bear a daughter who shall be the child of Amun-Ra, who shall reign over the Two Lands of Egypt and be sovereign of the whole world.'

Then Queen Ahmes sank into deep and dreamless sleep, while the form of Thutmose hastened back to where the Ba and the Khou hovered above the bed on which lay his Ka. A moment later Thutmose lay there sleeping -as if nothing had happened, while the Ba, the Ka and the Khou had faded from mortal sight.

But Amun-Ra, Father of Gods and Men, summoned to him Khnemu the Fashioner and said, 'Mould clay upon your wheel, potter who forms the bodies of mankind, and make my

daughter Hatshepsut who shall be born to Ahmes and Thutmose in the royal palace of Thebes.'

And when the time came Hatshepsut was born amid the rejoicing of all Egypt, and lay in her cradle beside the royal bed in the great room lit only by the moonlight.

Then once again the silence of deep sleep fell upon all the palace of Thebes. And presently the double doors opened of themselves and Amun-Ra entered in his own likeness attended by Hathor the goddess of love and her seven daughters, the Hathors, who weave the web of life for all who are born on this earth.

Then Amun-Ra blessed the baby Hatshepsut, taking her up in his arms and giving her the kiss of power so that she might indeed become a great queen, as his daughter should. And the Hathors wove the golden web of her life as Amun-Ra directed; and as they wove it seemed to pass before the eyes of Queen Ahmes so that she saw her daughter's life laid out before her.

She saw Hatshepsut as a beautiful girl kneeling in the temple at Karnak or Eastern Thebes while Amun-Ra and Horus poured the waters of purification upon her head, while the other gods and goddesses gathered in the shadows between the great columns to bless her. Then she saw Hatshepsut beside her human father Pharaoh Thutmose journeying through all the land of Egypt from Tanis on the Delta to Elephantine in the south, hailed by all as the Great Queen to be. She saw Hatshepsut being crowned as Pharaoh of Egypt, the only woman ever to wear the Double Crown save for Cleopatra the Greek who was to bring about Egypt's fall fifteen hundred years later. Then she saw her seated in state while the kings of the earth bowed down before her, bringing her gifts from the ends of the earth. And she saw Hatshepsut's great expedition to distant Punt the ships sailing out of the Red Sea and far upon the waters-of the ocean beyond to reach it on the coasts of central Africa: she saw the beehive huts of the black dwellers in Punt built on piles in the water and overshadowed by palms and incense trees with ladders leading up to the entrances.

And then she saw the expedition returning to Egypt and bringing all the treasures from Punt to the Pharaoh Hatshepsut, and of how she dedicated them to her father Amun-Ra - Horus weighing the gold in his scales and Thoth writing down the measures of incense; and 'the good god' Hatshepsut herself offering the best of all she had before the ceremonial Boat of Amun-Ra that was carried by the priests of Thebes.

Last of all she saw the masons and the carvers and the artists fashioning the great mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, cutting out and painting on its walls all the pictures that she had seen in the Web of Fate the Hathors were weaving before her on this night of Hatshepsut's birth.

All things were fulfilled even as Queen Ahmes had seen, and Egypt reached its greatest glory under Hatshepsut and under her nephew Thutmose III who succeeded her. And all the tale is told in pictures and hieroglyphs in Deir-el-Bahri, the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut in Western Thebes which still stands for all to see.

The Taking of Joppa

There was once in the time of King Men-kheper-ra a revolt of the servants of his Majesty who were in Joppa; and his Majesty said, "Let Tahutia go with his footmen and destroy this wicked Foe in Joppa." And he called one of his followers, and said moreover, "Hide thou my great cane, which works wonders, in the baggage of Tahutia that my power may go with him."

Now when Tahutia came near to Joppa, with all the footmen of Pharaoh, he sent unto the Foe in Joppa, and said, "Behold now his Majesty, King Men-kheper-ra, has sent all this great army against thee; but what is that if my heart is as thy heart? Do thou come, and let us talk in the field, and see each other face to face." So Tahutia came with certain of his men; and the Foe in Joppa came likewise, but his charioteer that was with him was true of heart unto the King of Egypt. And they spoke with one another in his great tent, which Tahutia had placed far off from the soldiers. But Tahutia had made ready 200 sacks, with cords and fetters, and had made a great sack of skins with bronze fetters, and many baskets: and they were in his tent, the sacks and the baskets, and he had placed them as the forage for the horses is put in baskets. For while the Foe in Joppa drank with Tahutia, the people who were with him drank with the footmen of Pharaoh, and made merry with them. And when their bout of drinking was past, Tahutia said to the Foe in Joppa, "If it please thee, while I remain with the women and children of thy own city, let one bring of my people with their horses, that they may give them provender, or let one of the Apuro run to fetch them." So they came, and hobbled their horses, and gave them provender, and one found the great cane of Men-kheper-ra (Thutmose III), and came to tell of it to Tahutia. And thereupon the Foe in Joppa said to Tahutia: "My heart is set on examining the great cane of Men-kheper-ra, which is named ' . . . tautnefer.' By

the ka of the King Men-kheper-ra it will be in thy hands to-day; now do thou well and bring thou it to me.” And Tahutia did thus, and he brought the cane of King Men-kheper-ra. And he laid hold on the Foe in Joppa by his garment, and he arose and stood up, and said, “Look on me, O Foe in Joppa; here is the great cane of King Men-kheper-ra, the terrible lion, the son of Sekhet, to whom Amen his father gives power and strength.” And he raised his hand and struck the forehead of the Foe in Joppa, and he fell helpless before him. He put him in the sack of skins and he bound with the hands of the Foe in Joppa, and put on his feet the fetters with four rings. And he made them bring the 200 sacks which he had cleaned, and made them into 200 soldiers, and filled the hollows with cords and fetters of wood, he sealed them with a seal, and added to them their rope-nets and the poles to bear them. And he put every strong footman to bear them, in all 600 men, and said to them, “When you come into the town you shall open your burdens, you shall seize on all the inhabitants of the town, and you shall quickly put fetters upon them.”

Then one went out and said unto the charioteer of the Foe in Joppa, “Thy master is fallen; go, say to thy mistress, ‘A pleasant message! For Sutekh has given Tahutia to us, with his wife and his children; behold the beginning of their tribute,’ that she may comprehend the two hundred sacks, which are full of men and cords and fetters.” So he went before them to please the heart of his mistress, saying, “We have laid hands on Tahutia.” Then the gates of the city were opened before the footmen: they entered the city, they opened their burdens, they laid hands on them of the city, both small and great, they put on them the cords and fetters quickly; the power of Pharaoh seized upon that city. After he had rested Tahutia sent a message to Egypt to the King Men-kheper-ra his lord, saying: “Be pleased, for Amen thy good father has given you the Foe in Joppa, together with all his people, likewise also his city. Send, therefore, people to take them as captives that thou mayest fill the house of thy father Amen Ra, king of the gods, with men-servants and maid-servants, and that they may be overthrown beneath thy feet for ever and ever.”

The Sphinx and the Prince

During the seventeenth century BC, Egypt was divided. Foreign rulers controlled much of Lower Egypt, while Egyptian kings continued to govern from Thebes in the south. These foreign rulers became known as the Hyksos, a name derived from an Egyptian term meaning “rulers of foreign lands.” People from western Asia had been settling in the Nile Delta for

generations. Many arrived peacefully as traders, workers, or migrants. They brought new technologies and military practices, including improved bows, new types of weapons, horses, and horse-drawn chariots.

Over time, powerful foreign dynasties established themselves in the eastern Delta. Their capital was Avaris, a prosperous city connected to trade routes leading into Canaan and the wider Near East. The victories of the Theban kings increased the importance of their patron god, Amun. Amun had once been a relatively local deity associated with hidden and invisible power. As the rulers of Thebes became kings of all Egypt, their god also rose in status.

Amun became closely linked with Ra, the ancient solar creator. As Amun-Ra, he was worshipped as king of the gods, creator of the world, and divine protector of the pharaoh. His principal temple stood at Karnak in eastern Thebes. There Amun was worshipped with his consort Mut and their son Khonsu. New Kingdom kings enlarged Karnak with pylons, courtyards, obelisks, shrines, and enormous columned halls. They recorded military victories upon its walls and presented the god with wealth taken from conquered lands. Gold, silver, precious stones, livestock, chariots, weapons, prisoners, and foreign tribute flowed into the temple. The king's military success proved that the gods supported him. In return, he rewarded the gods who had granted him victory. New Kingdom princes were trained to become soldiers, hunters, athletes, and charioteers. They learned archery, wrestling, rowing, horse riding, and the use of weapons. A future king was expected to possess courage, physical strength, and skill in battle.

Amenhotep II, the son and successor of Thutmose III, was especially proud of his athletic ability. Royal inscriptions praised him as an exceptional archer, oarsman, horseman, and chariot driver. One account claimed that he could shoot arrows through thick copper targets while driving a chariot at full speed.

Amenhotep II had several sons. Among them was a young prince named Thutmose. Whether Thutmose was originally expected to inherit the throne is uncertain. The famous story preserved on the Dream Stele may suggest that he was not the first choice, although the inscription never says this directly. It tells instead how a sleeping prince encountered a god beneath the shadow of the Great Sphinx.

Carved from the natural limestone of the Giza Plateau, it has the body of a reclining lion and the head of a king. Most Egyptologists associate its construction with King Khafre of the

Fourth Dynasty, although questions about its precise origin remain. The monument is approximately 73 meters, or 240 feet, long and about 20 meters, or 66 feet, high. It lies near the pyramid complexes of Giza, facing east toward the rising sun. By the New Kingdom, the Sphinx was already more than a thousand years old.

The Egyptians worshipped it as a solar deity called Horemakhet, meaning “Horus in the Horizon.” The Greek form of this name is Harmachis. A temple and cult developed around the monument, and New Kingdom rulers left offerings, inscriptions, and chapels in its honor. The Sphinx was carved partly from layers of relatively soft limestone. Windblown desert sand repeatedly accumulated around its body. At times, only its enormous head and upper back remained visible. Clearing the monument required immense labor, and the sands always threatened to return.

According to the story, Prince Thutmose enjoyed leaving the royal court to hunt and exercise upon the desert plateau near Giza. He drove his chariot across the sand, hunted lions and gazelles, practiced archery, and raced with his companions. One day, during the heat of noon, the prince stopped near the Great Sphinx. Most of the monument lay buried beneath the desert. Only the head rose clearly above the drifts. The sun burned fiercely overhead.

Exhausted from hunting, Thutmose ordered his companions to rest. The horses were tethered, and the prince settled in the shadow cast by the Sphinx. The air was still. The desert stretched silently around him. Thutmose leaned against the ancient stone and fell asleep. As soon as he slept, the prince entered a vivid dream. He found himself standing between the enormous paws of the Sphinx. The buried monument was no longer silent.

A powerful voice rolled across the desert.

“Look upon me, my son Thutmose. I am your father, Horemakhet-Khepri-Ra-Atum.

“I shall give you my kingdom upon earth. You shall wear the White Crown of Upper Egypt and the Red Crown of Lower Egypt.

“You shall sit upon the throne of Geb, and the Two Lands shall belong to you. All that the sun encircles shall be placed beneath your authority. Riches and tribute shall come from every land, and you shall enjoy a long and glorious reign. My face is turned toward you, and my heart has chosen you.”

The prince listened in amazement. Then the Sphinx spoke of its suffering.

“The desert sand lies heavily upon me. It covers the body through which I exist. Come to me. Clear away the sand and free me. Do this, and I shall grant what I have promised. I know that you are my son and my protector.”

The divine voice faded. Thutmose awoke beneath the blazing sun. The desert appeared unchanged, but the dream remained clear in his mind. He believed the god had spoken directly to him.

Thutmose returned to the royal residence and arranged for offerings to be made to Horemakhet. He then summoned laborers to clear the sand from around the Sphinx. The workers came with baskets, ropes, wooden tools, and carrying poles. Day after day, they dug into the drifts and carried the sand away. Slowly, the hidden body of the monument emerged.

First the great paws appeared. Then the lion’s chest, flanks, and tail were uncovered. Walls may also have been built to help protect the enclosure from returning sand. Once the work was complete, the Sphinx stood revealed again beneath the Egyptian sun. Thutmose had fulfilled his side of the promise.

In time, he became king.

The Princess and the King

It was in the reign of King Rameses, son of the Sun, beloved of Amon, king of the gods. A mighty warrior was Rameses; on the day of battle like Mentu, god of war; very valorous was he, like the son of the Sky-goddess.

Now his Majesty was in Naharaina, where the great river Euphrates rolled down to the sea. And he received the tribute of the vassal-princes, for he was the conqueror of the nine Archer-tribes, and none could stand before his face when he came forth equipped with all his weapons of war. The princes prostrated themselves before him, bowing their foreheads to the ground, breathing the earth which his feet had trodden. Great and splendid was their tribute: gold, and precious stones of all colours, blue lapis lazuli and the green turquoise sacred to

Hathor, goddess of love and joy. And slaves came bearing on their backs sweet-scented woods, perfumed and aromatic, like the trees in the land of the Gods.

The prince of Bekhten came also, and with him his eldest daughter; and he placed her in front of the slaves, for she was the choicest part of his tribute. Very beautiful was she, fair in her limbs, tall and slender as a palm-tree, and the heart of the King turned to her with delight, and he loved her more than anything on earth. He made her the Great Royal Wife, and he gave her a name by which she should be known in the land of Egypt; Neferu-Ra, "Beauty of Ra," was she called, for her beauty was like the shining of the sun. And the name was written in the royal oval, as is the custom of the kings of Egypt and their queens.

Then King Rameses returned to Egypt, and with him went the Great Royal Wife, Queen Neferu-Ra. And when they came to the Black Land, the land of Egypt, she performed all the ceremonies of a queen in the temples of Egypt.

Now it happened that King Rameses was in Thebes the Mighty on the twenty-second of the month Payni. And he went into the temple of Amon, for this was the day of the beautiful festival of the god, when the boats go up and down upon the water with torches and lights, and the Sacred Barque, adorned with gold and painted with glorious colours, is borne aloft, that men may see the figure of Amon-Ra himself within. And Queen Neferu-Ra was with his Majesty, for the Great Royal Wife in Egypt has ever been the worshipper of Amon-Ra, king of the gods.

They came into the temple courtiers of the King to announce the arrival of a messenger from the prince of Bekhten. Loaded with gifts for Neferu-Ra, Queen of Egypt, daughter of the prince of Bekhten, he also carried a message to the King. When he entered the royal presence, he bowed to the earth saying, "Glory to thee, O Sun of the nine Archer-tribes! May we live before thee!" Then he bowed to the earth again and spoke the message that he had brought from the prince of Bekhten to Rameses, King of Egypt:

"I come to thee, O living King, my Lord, on account of Bent-reshy, the little sister of the Great Royal Wife, Neferu-Ra; for there is a malady in all her limbs. Send therefore a learned man that he may see and heal her."

The King turned to his courtiers and said, "Bring hither a scribe of the House of Life, and bring also those who speak the hidden things of the Inner Chamber." And the courtiers

hastened and brought them into the presence forthwith, and the King said to them, "I have brought you hither to hear this matter. Tell me then of a man, learned and skilful, to send to the prince of Bekhten."

Then they took counsel among themselves as to a learned and skilful man, and they brought the scribe Tehuti-em-heb before the King, and the King bade him go with the messenger of the prince of Bekhten to heal Bent-reshy, the little sister of the Great Royal Wife.

When the scribe Tehuti-em-heb came to Bekhten, he was brought into the presence of Bent-reshy. He was a learned and a skilful man, and he found the princess under the dominion of a spirit, a spirit that was hostile to him, against whom his learning and skill were of no avail, who set his magic arts at naught.

Then the prince of Bekhten was sad, and sorrow was in his heart, but Tehuti-em-heb the scribe counselled him to send again to Egypt and to implore the help of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, to cast out the evil spirit from Bent-reshy, the little sister of the Great Royal Wife.

Now so great was the distance from Bekhten to Egypt that from the time that Tehuti-em-heb the scribe departed out of Thebes till the second message came to King Rameses was three years, and throughout that time the evil spirit dwelt in Bent-reshy and would not be cast out.

And when the second messenger arrived, King Rameses was again in Thebes, and it was the first of the month Pakhons, the month that is sacred to Khonsu. He entered into the temple, and with him came his courtiers, and the messenger of the prince of Bekhten. In the temple were two statues of Khonsu; very marvellous figures were these, very sacred, very holy; the one was called Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep, and the other Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons. Now Khonsu is the God of the Moon, the son of Amon-Ra and of Mut, Lady of Ashru, and men represent him with the curled lock of youth, for he is ever young and beautiful.

Then the King stood before the great statue of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep and said, "O my good Lord, I come again into thy presence on account of the daughter of the prince of Bekhten."

Then the priests lifted the statue of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep and placed it in front of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons. And the King spoke again before Khonsu in Thebes

Neferhotep and said, "My good Lord, turn thy face to Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons. Grant that he may go to Bekhten."

Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep inclined his head twice in token of assent. Very marvellous was the figure of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep.

And yet again King Rameses spoke, "Let thy protection be with him. Grant that I may send the Majesty of Khonsu to Bekhten to save Bent-reshy, the little sister of the Great Royal Wife."

Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep inclined his head twice in token of assent. Very marvellous was the figure of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep. And he gave his magical protection four times to Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons.

Then King Rameses gave command, and Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, was placed in the Great Boat; and around the Great Boat were five small boats, with chariots and horses, numerous and splendid, on the right hand and on the left. The retinue of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, was the retinue of a king. For a year and five months they journeyed until they reached Bekhten.

The prince of Bekhten came out with his bowmen and his courtiers to meet Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, with a royal welcome, and they entered into his presence as into the presence of a king. The prince of Bekhten fell on his knees and laid his forehead on the ground at the feet of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, and said, "Thou hast come to us. O, be kind to us according to the words of Rameses, King of Egypt."

They brought Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, to the chamber of Bent-reshy, the little sister of the Great Royal Wife; and he made a magical protection over her. Lo, there happened a wonder and a marvel, for she was well and whole in a moment.

Then the spirit, who had been in her, spoke in the presence of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, "Thou hast come in peace, O great God, Expeller of Demons. Bekhten is thy city, its people are thy slaves. I bow before thee, for I also am thy slave. I will go to that place from which I came that thy heart may have peace. But ere I go, let the Majesty of Khonsu give command that a holy day be made for me by the prince of Bekhten."

When he had heard these words, Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, inclined his head to the priest and said, "Let the prince of Bekhten make a great sacrifice for this spirit."

The prince of Bekhten, and his soldiers and his courtiers heard the voices of the spirit and of the god, and they trembled and were exceedingly afraid. They obeyed the command of the god and prepared a great sacrifice for Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, and for the spirit that came out of Bent-reshy, the little sister of the Great Royal Wife, the daughter of the prince of Bekhten. And they made a holy day with offerings, sacrifices, and libations.

So the spirit, in the form of a Shining One, went his way in peace out of the land of Bekhten, and he went whithersoever it pleased him, as Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, had commanded.

The prince of Bekhten was glad and his heart rejoiced, and all the people rejoiced also that the spirit had been driven out of Bent-reshy and out of the land of Bekhten. But in the midst of his joy and gladness, fear came upon the heart of the prince of Bekhten lest the spirit should return and take up his abode again in the land, when Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, had departed. He took counsel with himself and said, "I will keep Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, in Bekhten. I will not let him return to Egypt." So Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, remained three years, four months, and five days in Bekhten, for the prince of Bekhten would not let him go.

And at the end of that time the prince of Bekhten lay upon his bed at night and slept, and while he slept a vision passed before his eyes. He dreamed that he stood before the shrine of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons; the great doors of the shrine were folded back and the god came forth, stepping out between the doors. He changed into the form of a hawk with feathers of gold, burnished and beautiful, and soared high into the air with wings outspread, and like an arrow he darted towards Egypt.

When the prince of Bekhten awoke, he was exceedingly afraid, for he feared the wrath of the Gods. And he sent for the priest of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, and said to him, "The god is estranged from us, he has returned to Egypt. Let his chariot also return to Egypt." The prince of Bekhten gave command that the god should be taken back to Egypt, and he loaded the god with gifts. Great and numerous were the gifts of all manner of beautiful things that the prince of Bekhten gave to Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons.

For many months they journeyed, and with them went an escort of soldiers and horses from the land of Bekhten. They arrived in safety at Thebes, and entered into the temple of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep.

Then Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, gave to Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep all the gifts, the rich and costly gifts, which he had received from the prince of Bekhten; nothing he kept for himself. Thus ended the journey of Khonsu, the Expeller of Demons, the great God.

The Book of Thoth

Nefer-ka-ptah is the prince of Egypt, husband of the beautiful Ahura and father to Merab. Although he has incredible riches available to him, he cares only about studying the ancient writings and wisdom of his ancestors. One day, Nefer-ka-ptah goes into his temple to worship. The walls of the temple are filled with engravings, and Nefer-ka-ptah soon forgets to pray, finding himself caught up in reading the old writing. When a priest sees him, he begins to laugh, telling Nefer-ka-ptah that he is wasting his time. Instead, the prince should seek out the Book of Thoth, the holy text written by the god of wisdom. The priest explains that this book allows one to communicate with the birds, enchant the sky, and come back from the dead. Nefer-ka-ptah is enthralled, and even though the priest warns that the book is buried in a chest at the bottom of a river and protected by magical snakes and scorpions, Nefer-ka-ptah insists that he will find it.

Nefer-ka-ptah runs to tell his wife of his plan. She foresees that his quest will bring him great sorrow but is unable to dissuade him from seeking the book. Accompanied by Ahura and Merab, Nefer-ka-ptah takes the royal barge and sails to Koptos, where the chest is hidden. Once there, he consults with the priests of Isis, and together they make magical workers whom they task with searching for the box under the river. After three days, the workers uncover an iron box protected by a gigantic, immortal snake and countless smaller snakes and scorpions. Nefer-ka-ptah casts a spell that puts the smaller creatures to sleep, but he is forced to battle the larger snake. He slices it in half twice, but each time the head returns to the body and the snake goes on fighting. At last, he slices the snake in half and kicks sand between the two parts so that they cannot rejoin. With this done, the snake lies powerless on the ground, and Nefer-ka-ptah is able to retrieve the box.

Inside the box is the Book of Thoth, and indeed, as soon as Nefer-ka-ptah reads it, he receives great power. Ahura next reads the book and likewise learns the spells inside of it. As they rapidly gain this ancient knowledge, however, Thoth learns that his book is missing. Enraged, the god approaches the sun god, Ra. Ra understands Thoth's anger and grants him the permission and power necessary to take revenge.

As Nefer-ka-ptah sails his barge on the river, Thoth uses Ra's power to lure Merab to the edge of the barge and pull him into the water, where he drowns. Nefer-ka-ptah uses his magic to retrieve Merab's body and even to make the boy speak; Merab reports that Thoth seeks revenge for the theft of his knowledge. Nefer-ka-ptah and Ahura mourn the death of their son but also recognize that this is only the start of Thoth's vengeance. Soon, Ahura is also drawn into the water to drown. As with his son, Nefer-ka-ptah retrieves her body and makes her speak, hearing further of Thoth's anger. Only a short time passes before Nefer-ka-ptah himself is drawn to the water with an irresistible urge to drown.

Nefer-ka-ptah manages to tie the Book of Thoth to his body before succumbing to the god's power, and the book remains with him until his body is discovered. The king orders that Nefer-ka-ptah be buried with highest honors alongside his treasure. Although Thoth's vengeance costs Nefer-ka-ptah his life, the prince is never truly separated from the knowledge he so desperately craved.

The Land of the Dead (Duat)

The one visit to the Duat of which a record remains was paid by Se-Osiris, the wonderful child magician who read the sealed letter, and his father Setna, the son of Pharaoh Rameses the Great.

They stood one day in the window of the palace at Thebes watching two funerals on their way to the West. The first was that of a rich man: his mummy was enclosed in a wooden case inlaid with gold; troops of servants and mourners carried him to burial and bore gifts for the tomb, while many priests walked in front and behind chanting hymns to the gods and reciting the great names and words of power which he would need on his journey through the Duat. - The second funeral was that of a poor laborer. His two sons carried the simple wooden case: his widow and daughters-in-law were the only mourners.

'Well,' said Setna, watching the two funerals going down to where the boats were waiting to carry them across the Nile, 'I hope that my fate will be that of the rich noble and not of the poor laborer.'

'On the contrary,' said Se-Osiris, 'I pray that the poor man's fate may be yours and not that of the rich man!'

Setna was much hurt by his son's words, but Se-Osiris tried to explain them, saying, 'Whatever you may have seen here matters little compared with what will chance to these two in the Judgement Hall of Osiris. I will prove it to you, if you will trust yourself to me. I know the words of power that open all gates: I can release your Ba and mine - our souls, that can then fly into the Duat, the world of the dead, and see all that is happening there. Then you will discover how different are the fates of this rich man who has worked evil during his life, and this poor man who has done nothing but good.'

Setna had learnt to believe anything the wonderful child said without surprise, and now he agreed to accompany his son into the Duat, even though he knew that such an expedition would be dangerous: for once there they might not be able to return.

So the prince and the small boy made their way into the sanctuary of the Temple of Osiris where, as members of the royal family, they had power to go.

When Setna had barred the doors, Se-Osiris drew a magic circle round them and round the statue of Osiris and round the altar on which a small fire of cedar wood was burning. Then he threw a certain powder into the flame upon the altar. Thrice he threw the powder, and as he threw it a ball of fire rose from the altar and floated away. Then he spoke a spell and ended with a great name of power, a word at which the whole temple rocked and the flame on the altar leapt high, and then sank into darkness.

But the Temple of Osiris was not dark. Setna turned to see whence the light came - and would have cried out in horror if the silence had not pressed upon him like a weight that held him paralyzed.

For standing on either side of the altar he saw himself and his son Se-Osiris only suddenly he knew that it was not his own body and the boy's for the two bodies lay in the shadows cast by these two forms - the forms of their Kas or doubles, and above each Ka hovered a tongue of

flame which was its Khou or spirit - and the clear, light of the Khou served to show its Ka and the dim form of the body from which Ka and Khou were drawn.

Then the silence was broken by a whisper soft as a feather falling, yet which seemed to fill the whole Temple with sound: 'Follow me now, my father,' said the voice of Se-Osiris, 'for the time is short and we must be back before the morning if we would live to see the Sun of Re rise again over Egypt.

Setna turned, and saw beside him the Ba or soul of Se-Osiris - a great bird with golden feathers but with the head of his son.

'I follow,' he forced his lips to answer; then, as the whisper filled the Temple, he rose on the golden wings of his own Ba and followed the Ba of Se-Osiris.

The temple roof seemed to open to let them through, and a moment later they were speeding into the West swifter than an arrow from an Ethiopian's bow.

Darkness lay over Egypt, but one red gash of sunset shone through the great pass in the mountains of the Western Desert, the Gap of Abydos. Through this they sped into the First Region of the Night and saw beneath them the Mesektet Boat in which Re began his journey into the Duat with the ending of each day. Splendid was the Boat, glorious its trappings, and its colors were of amethyst and emerald, jasper and turquoise, lazuli and the deep glow of gold. A company of the gods drew the Boat along the ghostly River of Death with golden towing-ropes; the portals of the Duat were flung wide, and they entered the First Region between the six serpents who were curled on either side. And in the great Boat of Re journeyed the Kas of all those who had died that day and were on their way to the judgement Hall of Osiris.

So the Boat moved on its way through regions of night and thick darkness and came to the portal of the Second Region. Tall were the walls on either side, and upon their tops were the points of spears so that none might climb over; the great wooden doors turned on pivots, and once again snakes breathing fire and poison guarded them. But all who passed through on the Boat of Re spoke the words of power decreed for that portal, and the doors swung open.

The Second Region was the Kingdom of Re, and the gods and heroes of old who had lived on earth when he was King dwelt there in peace and happiness, guarded by the Spirits of the Corn who make the wheat and barley flourish and cause the fruits of the earth to increase.

Yet not one of the dead who voyaged in the Boat of Re might pause there or set foot on the land: for they must pass into Amenti, the Third Region of the Duat where the judgement Hall of Osiris stood waiting to receive them.

So the Boat came to the next portals, and at the word of power the great wooden doors screamed open on their pivots - yet not so loudly did they scream as the man who lay with one of the pivots turning in his eye as punishment for the evil he had done upon earth.

Into the Third Region sailed the Boat of Re, and here the dead disembarked in the outer court of the judgement Hall of Osiris. But the Boat itself continued on its way through the nine other Regions of the Night until the re-birth of Re from out of the mouth of the Dragon of the East brought dawn once more upon earth and the rising of the sun. Yet the sun would not rise unless each night Re fought and defeated the Dragon Apep, who seeks ever to devour him in the Tenth Region of the Night.

The Ba of Setna and Se-Osiris did not follow the Boat of Re further, but flew over the Kas of the newly dead who came one by one to the portal of the Hall of Osiris and one by one were challenged by the Door-Keeper.

'Stay!' cried the Door-Keeper. 'I will not announce thee unless thou knowest my name!'

'Understander of Hearts is thy name,' answered each instructed Ka. 'Searcher of Bodies is thy name!'

'Then to whom should I announce thee?' asked the Door-Keeper.

'Thou shouldst tell of my coming to the Interpreter of the Two Lands.'

'Who then is the Interpreter of the Two Lands?'

'It is Thoth the Wise God.'

So each Ka passed through the doorway and in the Hall Thoth was waiting to receive him, saying: 'Come with me. Yet why hast thou come?'

'I have come here to be announced,' answered Ka.

'What is your condition?'

'I am pure of sin.'

'Then to whom shall I announce thee? Shall I announce thee to him whose ceiling is of fire, whose walls are living serpents, whose pavement is water?'

'Yes,' answered the Ka, 'announce me to him, for he is Osiris.'

So ibis-headed Thoth led the Ka to where Osiris sat upon his throne, wrapped in the mummy-clothes of the dead, wearing the uraeus crown upon his forehead and holding the scourge and the crook crossed upon his breast. Before him stood a huge balance with two scales, and jackal-headed Anubis, god of death, stepped forward to lead the Ka to the judgement.

But before the Weighing of the Heart, each dead man's Ka spoke in his own defense, saying: 'I am pure! I am pure! I am pure! I am pure! My purity is as that of the Bennu bird, the bright Phoenix whose nest is upon the stone persea-tree, the obelisk at Heliopolis. Behold me, I have come to you without sin, without guilt, without evil, without a witness against me, without one against whom I have taken action. I live on truth and I eat of truth. I have done that which men said and that with which gods are content. I have satisfied each god with that which he desires. I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked and a boat to him who could not cross the River. I have provided offerings to the gods and offerings to the dead. So preserve me from Apep, the 'Eater-up of Souls', so protect me - Lord of the Atef-Crown, Lord of Breath, great god Osiris.'

Then came the moment which the evil-doer feared but the good man welcomed with joy.

Anubis took the heart out of the Ka that was the double of his earthly body and placed it in the Scale; and in the other Scale was set the Feather of Truth. Heavy was the heart of the evil-doer and it dragged down the Scale: lower and lower it sank, while Thoth marked the angle of the beam until the Scale sank so low that Ammit the Devourer of Hearts could catch the sinner's heart in his jaws and bear it away. Then the evil-doer was driven forth into the thick darkness of the Duat to dwell with Apep the Terrible in the Pits of Fire.

But with the good man the Feather of Truth sank down and his heart rose up, and Thoth cried aloud to Osiris and the gods, 'True and accurate are the words this man has spoken. He has not sinned; he has not done evil towards us. Let not the Eater-up of Souls have power over him. Grant that the eternal bread of Osiris be given to him, and a place in the Fields of Peace with the followers of Horus!'

Then Horus took the dead man by the hand and led him before Osiris, saying, 'I have come to thee, oh Unnefer Osiris, bringing with me this new Osiris. His heart was true at the coming forth from the Balance. He has not sinned against any god or any goddess. Thoth has weighed his heart and found it true and righteous. Grant that there may be given to him the bread and beer of Osiris; may he be like the followers of Horus!'

Then Osiris inclined his head, and the dead man passed rejoicing into the Fields of Peace there to dwell, taking joy in all the things he had loved best in life, in a rich land of plenty, until Osiris returned to earth, taking with him all those who had proved worthy to live for ever as his subjects.

All these things and more the Ba of Se-Osiris showed to the Ba of his father Setna; and at length he said, 'Now you know why I wished your fate to be that of the poor man and not of the rich man. For the rich man was he in whose eye the pivot of the Third Door was turning - but the poor man dwells for ever in the Fields of Peace, clad in fine robes and owning all the offerings which accompanied the evil rich man to his tomb.'

Then the two Ba spread their golden wings and flew back through the night to Thebes. There they re-entered their bodies which their Kas had been guarding in the Temple of Osiris, and were able to return to their place as ordinary, living father and child, in time to see the sun rise beyond the eastern desert and turn the cliffs of Western Thebes to pink and purple and gold as a new day dawned over Egypt.

7.4 Integration of the Hellenistic Pantheon

The Story of the Greek Princess

In the days when Seti II, the grandson of Rameses the Great, was Pharaoh of Egypt, there came a great ship driven by a storm from the north, which sought shelter in the Canopic mouth of the Nile.

Near the place where the ship anchored stood the temple of the ram-headed god Hershef, who watched over strangers. If any man took sanctuary in the shrine of Hershef, he was safe from all his enemies; and if a slave knelt before the statue and vowed to serve the god, he became free from his master.

The ship which had come to Canopus was reported at once to Thonis, the Warden of that mouth of the Nile, and he learned that it belonged to a prince of the people whom the Egyptians called the People of the Sea, or the Aquaiusha that is the Achaeans, those who dwelt in Greece and the islands of the Aegean and in Ionia, whom we now call the Mycenaeans.

Thonis discovered this from a group of the sailors on the ship who, when they learned of what chanced to those who sought sanctuary in the Temple of Hershef, deserted in a body and asked to be allowed to serve the god. When Thonis asked them why they wished to leave their master, since it seemed strange to him that men of the Aquaiusha, should wish to enter the service of an Egyptian god rather than return to their homes, they replied that they feared the vengeance of their own gods if they remained on the ship.

For it seemed that the Prince their master had carried off the wife of one of the kings of Greece, together with much of his treasure - and this after the Greek king had received him as a guest and friend, and entertained him kindly in his palace.

Thonis was as much shocked as the sailors by this behavior - for in Egypt as in Greece to behave thus to one's host was thought to bring a sure vengeance from the gods. And he seized the Prince's ship with all on it and guarded it closely until he learned the will of Pharaoh. But the Greek Princess was escorted with all honor to the Temple of Hathor, the goddess of love and beauty.

When Seti heard of all this, he commanded Thonis to bring the ship, with all who had sailed in her, up the Nile to Memphis.

All was done as he commanded, and when they arrived the Princess was placed for safety in the Temple of Hathor at Memphis. But the Prince was led at once before Seti where he sat in his great hall of audience.

'O Pharaoh, life, health, strength be to you!' cried Thonis, kissing the ground before Seti's feet according to custom. 'I bring before you this stranger, a prince of the Aquaiusha, that you may learn from his own mouth who he is and why he has come to your shores.'

Then Seti spoke kindly to the stranger Prince, saying, 'Welcome to the land of Egypt, if you come in peace and as one who serves the gods. My Warden of the Nile, Thonis, tells me that

in your own land you are the son of a king. Tell me of that land of that king - for it is my delight to hear strange stories and tales of other lands.'

The handsome young Prince in his bronze armor that shone like gold bowed before Pharaoh and said, 'My lord, I come in peace - driven here against my will by the god of the sea whom we call Poseidon. I am the son of Priam, the great King of Troy, and I have been on a visit to Greece where I have won to be my wife, the most beautiful woman in the world - Helen, Princess of Sparta, and daughter of its King, Tyndareus.'

Seti the Pharaoh looked thoughtfully at the proud young Prince, and said, 'Tell me, Prince of Troy, how did you come to win this Princess of Sparta? Do the kings of the Aquaiusha send their daughters across the sea to be wedded to the princes of other lands? For my learned scribe Ana, here, tells me that the city of Troy is far across the water from the land and islands of the Aquaiusha, and that there is war and rivalry between the two lands.'

'Then your scribe Ana is in error,' answered the Prince loftily. 'There was some fighting in my grandfather's day, but since then we have dwelt at peace. I came as one of the many princes of the Aquaiusha who were suitors for the hand of fair Helen - and King Tyndareus of Sparta gave her to me.'

At this the sailors who had sought sanctuary in the Temple of Hershef murmured, and Seti the Pharaoh said to them, 'Thonis reports that you who are now servants of Hershef tell another tale concerning these matters. Speak without fear, for you are now my subjects, and I will protect you.'

'King of Egypt,' answered the leader, 'we few sailors come from the islands and are of the Greek people, whom you call Aquaiusha, not men of Troy, whom we hold to be barbarians. We serve the gods of Greece and we fear them also and know that they punish wrongdoing.'

'This man, Prince Paris of Troy, who was our master, came as he says as a friend to Sparta. But he does not speak the truth of what happened there. All the people of our lands have heard of Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, the daughter of King Tyndareus of Sparta and Ledz his Queen - though it is said that in truth Zeus, King of the Gods, whom you call Amun-Ra, was her father.'

Seti nodded when he heard this and murmured, 'Even as Amun-Ra was the father of Hatshepsut, the Great Queen of Egypt. Yes, the gods can indeed be the fathers of the spirits that dwell in the bodies of kings and queens.'

'The princes of Greece and of the islands all sought the hand of Helen in marriage,' went on the sailor, 'not only for her beauty but also because whoever married her would become the King of Sparta. But Paris of Troy was not among their number. No, King Tyndareus gave his daughter to Menelaus, the younger son of the King of Mycenae, and made all the rest of her suitors swear to abide by his choice and to stand by Menelaus should anyone strive to steal his wife. That was several years ago. Since then Tyndareus has made Menelaus King of Sparta and he has reigned there with Helen as his Queen. The Prince of Troy came as a guest and an ambassador, and was welcomed as such. He dwelt at Sparta for many days, until Menelaus was forced to leave the city for a while on some affair of state. When he was gone, Paris carried off Helen by force, together with much treasure, and sailed away - only to be caught in a storm sent by the angry gods and driven hither.'

'That is false!' shouted Prince Paris angrily. 'Helen came of her own free will. She begged me to take her, for she hated her husband, Menelaus! And the treasure we took with us was her own.'

'Prince of Troy,' said Seti the Pharaoh 'You have already told me two tales which do not agree. First you say that you won this princess from her father when all the princes of the Aquaiusha came as her suitors, and then you admit that you took her from the husband whom her father had chosen for her and made King of Sparta... Vizier, lead this prince of Troy with all honor to the Royal Guest-House - and see that he and his followers are well guarded and ready to appear before me again when I command their presence.'

'Pharaoh has spoken - life, health, strength be to him!' cried Para-em-heb the Vizier, prostrating himself before Seti. Then at a sign from him the guards closed in and led the Prince of Troy and his followers away.

'And now,' said Seti the Pharaoh, 'we will visit this princess of the Aquaiusha where she dwells in the Temple of Hathor.'

Seti and his companions, the scribe Ana and Roi the High Priest of Amun-Ra, made their way to the Temple of Hathor where the lovely Princess Helen had been lodged in the care of the priestesses of the goddess.

When he beheld her, Seti felt that he was indeed in the presence of the loveliest woman in the world, perhaps even a goddess upon earth.

The tale of the Princess was far different from that of the Prince. According to her, she had dwelt in great happiness with her husband Menelaus and her two children, and felt no love at all for Paris the Trojan. Indeed, from what she told him, Seti understood that Paris had carried her off by magic, taking upon himself the shape of Menelaus to lure her way from the palace, down the long valley to the sea and away in the ship which had so soon been caught by the storm.

Such shape-shifting was familiar among the magicians of Egypt, though it seemed from Helen's words that only the gods practiced it in Greece, and that magic was hardly known in her country.

'Therefore, great Pharaoh,' begged Helen, 'protect me in honor here until my lord and love Menelaus comes to seek and claim me from you and do not let this evil prince carry me as a shameful captive to Troy.'

Helen wept, and the great red jewel she wore, the Star Stone which the goddess of love had given her, seemed to weep tears of blood as it trembled on her bosom in the dazzling sunlight that fell between the columns.

Seti was much moved by her tale and he swore an oath to her, saying, 'By Amun-Ra, Father of Gods and Men, I swear that here in the Temple of Hathor you shall dwell with all honor until Menelaus comes for you. And I will send away this evil Prince of Troy without his treasure or his captive - and if he strives to steal you again he shall meet his death, and any of his nation who come to Egypt seeking you stand in danger of death also.'

All things were done as Pharaoh Seti commanded. The Prince of Troy raged and threatened in vain. The treasure he had stolen was taken from him and set in Pharaoh's treasury until Menelaus should come to claim it; and Paris was told that he must depart forthwith in his ship down the Nile before sunrise on the next day.

'I will depart indeed!' he shouted when Pharaoh's messenger brought him the royal command. 'But it will be up the river to rescue my wife from those who would keep her from me!'

Yet before the sun rose the Trojan ship was speeding down the river below Heliopolis, and where the next sun rose it was out on the Great Green Sea, heading northwards towards Troy on the outskirts of the world.

All this came about very strangely, or so any of the Aquaiusha would have thought: but to the people of Egypt it was not at all out of the ordinary.

On the night before the Prince of Troy set sail, Pharaoh Seti's daughter Tausert knelt in prayer in the Temple of Hathor, for she was High Priestess of that goddess. As she knelt it seemed to her that the temple shook and a great light shone behind her. Turning she beheld the shape of Thoth himself, the great god of wisdom and messenger of Amun-Ra.

'Fear not,' said Thoth as Tausert fell on her face before him. 'I come hither to work the will of the most high god Amon-Re, father of us all - and by his command you, who shall one day be Queen of Egypt, must learn of all that is performed this night so that you may bear witness of it in the days to come, when that king of the Aquaiusha who is the true husband of Helen shall come to lead her home.

'Know then that it is the will of Amun-Ra that the Aquaiusha, amongst whom he is worshipped by the name of Zeus, shall fight a great war for Helen which shall last for ten years and end only when the city of Troy lies in ruins. For the beauty of Helen shall it be fought - for an empty beauty, since here Helen remains until Menelaus comes. But this night I, whom the Aquaiusha name Hermes the Thrice Great, must draw forth the Ka, the double of Helen, the ghostly likeness of her that shall deceive all eyes and seem to Paris and to all at Troy to be none other than the real woman. For the Ka of Helen and not for Helen herself shall the great war of Troy be fought and the will of the Father of Gods and Men shall be accomplished.'

Then Thoth passed out of the shrine towards the cell where Helen dwelt. And presently the light shone in the shrine once more and Tausert saw him pass through it followed by the Ka of Helen - so like Helen herself that none could tell the difference. Thoth leading the way, they passed through the closed door of the temple and so onwards through the night until they reached where the ship lay at the quay-side below Memphis. And there Thoth, taking on the

form of Hermes by which Paris would know him, delivered the Ka of Helen into his hands. And, rejoicing greatly, Paris cast off the mooring ropes and set sail northwards for Troy.

Yet Helen dwelt still in the Temple of Hathor at Memphis. And as the years passed most of the Egyptians forgot how she had come there, and many worshiped her as Hathor came to earth in human form, and most spoke of her as the Strange Hathor.

In time Seti died. His spirit went to dwell in the Hall of Osiris and his body was laid to rest in a great tomb below the Valley of Kings in Western Thebes. There was then a time of trouble in Egypt when various of his sons struggled for the throne. But at length Set-nakhte wore the Double Crown and held the scourge and the crook - and his half-sister Tausert sat by his side as Queen of Egypt.

Set-nakhte did not reign for long, and when he too was gathered to Osiris, his son the third Rameses became Pharaoh of Egypt.

All this while Helen had dwelt in the Temple of Hathor at Memphis and, though it was nearly twenty years since Paris had brought her to Egypt, she seemed scarcely to have aged at all but was still more lovely than any other woman in the world.

Now both Seti and Set-nakhte had faithfully observed the oath made to her. But young Rameses was of a different metal, and as soon as he became Pharaoh he declared that he would marry Helen and make her his Queen.

'She may be only a Princess of the Aquaiusha,' he declared. 'She may long ago have been the wife of one of the kings of that people - but she is still the loveliest of women, and she shall be mine!'

In vain Queen Tausert tried to persuade him against such a wicked deed. 'I care nothing for what my father and my grandfather may have sworn,' he cried. 'I have sworn no oath, except one, to marry Helen!'

'But,' urged Tausert, 'suppose her husband King Menelaus is still alive?' This troubled Rameses a little, and he waited before marrying Helen until his chief magicians had looked into the matter for him.

While they were doing so, a shipwrecked sailor went up the river to Memphis and knelt at the shrine of Hathor to pray for help. Tausert was still the High Priestess of Hathor, and now that

her son was Pharaoh, she had returned to dwell in the Temple. So when she saw the sailor kneeling in the shrine, she went to ask him whence he came and why he had come to the Temple of Hathor instead of that of Hershef, where strangers usually sought sanctuary.

'I come in obedience to a dream,' answered the man. 'Hermes, whom you call Thoth, visited me as I slept and made me seek the Strange Hathor in her temple at Memphis and tell all my tales without hiding anything.'

'Speak on,' answered Tausert, 'and fear nothing. The Strange Hathor sits hidden in the shrine and hears all that you tell me.'

'Then know,' said the sailor, 'that I am Menelaus, King of Sparta. Troy fell several years ago, and since then I and my ships have been blown hither and thither about the seas. At length I came in my ship to the mouth of the River of Egypt, and with me was my wife the beautiful Helen, whom Paris stole and to rescue whom the war was fought. My other ships anchored behind the Island of Pharos, but I sailed into the mouth of the Nile, and there my ship was struck by a sudden storm of wind and wrecked on a little island.

'We all escaped safely to the shore and sought shelter in some caves nearby. Helen and I were alone in one cave - and when I awoke in the morning she had vanished. All day we searched for her, but there was no trace. She could not have left the island, for the river ran deep and fierce all round it, and we could only think that she had strayed too near the water's edge and been carried away by a crocodile.

'I was in despair. To have fought for ten years at Troy to win back Helen; to have wandered on the sea for seven years trying to bring her home to Sparta - and then to lose her like this seemed unbearable. I was tempted to fall upon my own sword and seek her in the fields of asphodel where Hades reigns, whom you call Osiris.

'Then, as I lay mourning for my loss, Hermes appeared to me. "Do not despair, Menelaus," he said. "All that has changed is by the will of Zeus. Helen is not lost to you - she was never found. In the morning a ship of the Egyptians will carry you to Memphis. They seek Helen in the Temple of the Strange Hathor. Enter the temple and tell all your tales to the priestess there - and you will find the true Helen."

'All this I have done. A ship came to the island the next day and carried us up the river to Memphis - and here I kneel as Hermes bade me.'

'King of Sparta,' said Tausert solemnly, 'the will of Amun-Ra, whom you call Zeus, is accomplished. Seventeen years ago, in the days when the good god my father Seti Merneptah was Pharaoh, Paris the Prince of Troy was driven with his ship into the Nile, and Thoth the all-wise, whom you call Hermes, decreed that Helen should remain here in safety and honor until you came for her, and here she still dwells.'

'But Priestess,' gasped Menelaus, 'Helen went with Paris to Troy! We sacked Troy and I carried Helen away on my ship. She was with me until two days ago when she vanished from the island. How can she have been here ever since Paris stole her from my palace in Sparta?'

'By the will of Amun-Ra the Ka of Helen was drawn forth by Thoth and sent with Paris,' answered Tausert. 'For a double, a mere spirit form, did you of the Aquaiusha fight and Troy fall. Here is Helen!'

As she spoke Tausert drew back the curtains of the shrine and Helen stepped forth with outstretched arms - beautiful Helen, unsoiled by years of siege and wandering, or by the unwished love of Paris.

Like a man in a dream Menelaus took Helen in his arms and held her as if to feel whether she was a shadow or a woman.

'Helen!' he murmured. 'Did you dwell here all these years while Paris carried a mere thing of air to Troy? Have we fought and died for a mere eidolon, a magic likeness, not a real woman? Truly the magic of the Egyptians is greater even than we have ever thought - and in Greece they are spoken of as the wisest of all men!'

Then Helen said: 'My lord and my love, we are not safe yet. Although I have dwelt here all these years honored and unharmed, a great danger has come upon me suddenly. The new Pharaoh, Rameses, the son of this lady, my protectress Tausert, wishes to make me his wife - and today he comes for his answer: whether I will be his willingly or by force.'

'This royal lady, Queen Tausert - does she favor the match?' asked Menelaus.

So little," replied Tausert, 'that I will do all in my power to help you both to escape from Egypt - provided no harm comes to Rameses my son.' Then the three of them spoke together and devised a daring scheme.

At noon that day Rameses the Pharaoh went to the Temple of Hathor to claim fair Helen as his bride. He found her clad in mourning garments with her hair hanging loose, while Menelaus, still ragged and unshaven as befitted a shipwrecked sailor, stood respectfully at a little distance and Queen Tausert strove to comfort Helen.

'What has happened here?' asked Rameses.

'That for which you prayed, my son,' answered Tausert. 'This man is a messenger whom you should welcome. He was a sailor who came from Troy in the ship of Menelaus of Sparta, that prince of the Aquaiusha who was husband to Helen. The ship in which he sailed was wrecked on the island of Pharos, and Menelaus is dead.'

'Is this true, stranger?' asked Rameses.

'O Pharaoh - life, health, strength be to you!' answered Menelaus, kneeling before him in the Egyptian manner. 'With my own eyes I saw him dashed on the rocks, and the waves carried his broken body out to sea.'

'Then, Helen, nothing stands between us!' cried Rameses.

'Only the memory of him, who was my husband,' answered Helen.

'Your grief cannot be great after all these years.'

'Yet he was my husband, and a great king among my people the Greeks, and I would mourn him and pay due funeral rites to his memory so that his spirit may be at rest and dwell in the land where Hades rules. Wherefore I beg you to let me honor him as a king should be honored though his body is lost in the deep sea.'

'That I grant willingly,' said Rameses. 'You have but to command, and all shall be done as you wish. I know nothing of the funeral customs of the Aquaiusha, so you must instruct me.'

'I must have a ship,' said Helen, 'well furnished with food and wine for the funeral feast, and a great bull to sacrifice to the spirit of my husband. And I must have treasures also - those which Paris stole long ago from my husband's palace when he carried me away. This sailor here and his companions in the shipwreck should accompany me, for they know all that should be done, and it will take many men to perform the sacrifice. I must accompany them to speak the words and pour the last offering to my husband's spirit - and all this must be

done on the sea in which his body lies, for then only can his spirit find rest in the realm of Hades - and only then can I be your bride.'

In his eagerness to win Helen, Rameses agreed to all that she asked. A ship was loaded with the treasures that Seti had taken from Paris; the Greek sailors, Menelaus among them, brought the great sacrificial bull on board and took charge of it; Helen, clad in her mourning robes, stood in the prow of the ship, the sunlight flashing on the red Star Stone that she wore - and the ship sailed swiftly down the Nile and out on to the sea near Canopus.

But next day there came a messenger, stained with brine and the dust of travel, and knelt before Rameses, crying, 'O Pharaoh - life, health strength be to you! - that sailor of the Aquaiusha who came with the news of the death of Menelaus was none other than Menelaus himself! When the ship was well out on the Great Green Sea beyond Canopus, the Aquaiusha sacrificed the bull indeed - but to the sea-god to give them a safe passage back to Greece. Then they seized us of Egypt who were on the ship and cast us into the sea, bidding us swim back to Memphis and tell you, O Pharaoh, that the will of Amun-Ra and of Thoth was accomplished and Helen, safe both from Paris the Trojan and from you, was on her way back to Sparta with her lawful husband, Menelaus.'

Now in his anger and disappointment Rameses wished to kill Tausert, his mother, for he realized that she had known about Menelaus and had helped to rob him of Helen. But that night ibis-headed Thoth appeared to him and said, 'Pharaoh Rameses, all these strange happenings have been by the will of Amun-Ra the god and father of all Pharaohs. By his will Helen was brought to Egypt; at his command I drew forth her Ka and sent it with Paris, to deceive him and all the Aquaiusha and the Peoples of the Sea; and he brought it about that Helen should be restored to her husband and sent to her home with him and with the treasures that Paris stole.'

Then Pharaoh Rameses bowed his head to the will of Amun-Ra and heaped greater honors yet upon his mother-queen Tausert, High Priestess of Hathor.

The Myth of Typhon

The last battle in the Olympians' fight for superiority was Typhon's revolt against them (referred to as the Typhonomachy). Like the Titans and Giants before him, Typhon wanted to

rule the heavens. He threw rocks that were on fire up to heaven while hissing and screaming his battle cry. Fire emerged from his mouth like a flowing river. He was such a menacing sight that the Olympian gods immediately fled to Egypt in terror. Typhon pursued them, causing the gods to transform into animals to try and lose him for good. Zeus was said to have transformed into a ram, Apollo into a crow, Dionysos into a goat, Artemis transformed into a cat, Hera into a white cow, Aphrodite into a fish, and Hermes into an ibis (although the animals sometimes differ depending on the source).

Zeus threw thunderbolts at him from a distance, and as Typhon got closer, he stabbed him with an adamantine sickle and chased him. Zeus pursued him to Mount Casion (a mountain range near Syria), where he saw that Typhon was seriously injured. Typhon and Zeus engaged in hand-to-hand combat, with Zeus believing that he could easily kill a weakened Typhon. However, Zeus underestimated Typhon's strength, and before he knew it, Typhon had trapped Zeus in his coils, snatched the sickle from him and slashed the tendons in his hands and feet. Typhon carried Zeus through the sea to the Corycian Cave (near Delphi). Zeus' tendons were hidden in a bear's fur, and Typhon made the she-dragon Delphyne (half-woman, half-monster) guard them. Hermes and Aigipan (rustic spirit) stole the tendons under the nose of Delphyne and put them back into Zeus without being caught. After Zeus had regained his strength, he left the heavens on a chariot with his thunderbolts and continued chasing after Typhon. He found him on Mount Nysa, where Typhon had met the Fates and been tricked by them. They offered him a taste of the ephemeral fruits, promising they would give Typhon extra strength if he consumed them.

Once he realised that Zeus was in pursuit of him again, Typhon escaped to Thrace and battled Zeus near Mount Haimos. He lifted up mountains and hurled them at Zeus. Zeus responded by striking him with thunderbolts. Blood began streaming from Typhon's body and was absorbed by the mountain.

As Typhon prepared to retreat across the Sicilian Sea, Zeus threw Mount Etna at him and trapped Typhon underneath, ending the battle. To this day, every time Mount Etna erupts, it is said to be caused by the fire in Typhon's eyes or the fiery rocks that flow from his mouth.

8. Crucial Points in Mythos

8.1 Ma'at

The 42 Laws of Maat are a set of ethical guidelines that formed the core principles of morality and justice in ancient Egypt. These laws, believed to have been recited by individuals in the afterlife as they stood before the judgment of the gods, were more than religious prescriptions; they represented the ideal behavior required to live a life of balance, truth, and harmony.

Maat, the personification of truth, justice, and cosmic order, was central to Ancient Egyptian belief systems. The Laws of Maat, often referred to as the "Negative Confessions" or "Declarations of Innocence," were not commandments issued by a deity to humanity, but rather affirmations of one's own integrity and adherence to the principles of Maat. By following these ethical laws, an individual could ensure a favorable judgment in the afterlife and contribute to societal harmony during their life on earth.

1. I have not committed sin – A general statement affirming one's adherence to ethical principles and avoidance of harmful behaviors.
2. I have not committed robbery with violence – Condemns both theft and the use of force, emphasizing peaceful coexistence and respect for others.
3. I have not stolen – This law speaks to the respect for others' property, a crucial element of social trust.
4. I have not slain men or women – Killing, as a violation of the sanctity of

life was strictly against the principle of Maat.

5. I have not stolen food – Taking food, a basic necessity, was considered an affront to community well-being.

6. I have not swindled offerings – Religious offerings were sacred, and cheating in religious duties was seen as a grave violation of order.

7. I have not stolen from God/Goddess – Taking what was meant for the gods disturbed the sacred balance and was viewed as a serious offense.

8. I have not told lies – Truthfulness was paramount in maintaining social and cosmic harmony.

9. I have not carried away food – This law emphasizes fairness and the importance of not depriving others of their sustenance.

10. I have not cursed – Avoiding foul or harmful language helped to preserve peaceful and respectful interactions.

11. I have not closed my ears to truth – Ignoring or denying the truth disrupts personal integrity and the balance of society.

12. I have not committed adultery – Faithfulness in marriage was valued, as it preserved family stability and social trust.

13. I have not made anyone cry – Causing unnecessary emotional distress to others was seen as a violation of compassion and kindness.

14. I have not felt sorrow without reason – Emotional self-regulation was considered a virtue, with unnecessary sorrow indicating a lack of balance.

15. I have not assaulted anyone – Physical violence was discouraged, as it disrupted social peace and order.

16. I am not deceitful – Deception undermined trust and disrupted the truth, essential elements of Ma'at.

17. I have not stolen anyone's land – Land was sacred and essential for survival, so taking it unlawfully was a serious offense.

18. I have not been an eavesdropper – Respecting privacy helped to maintain trust and order in relationships.

19. I have not falsely accused anyone – Truth in justice was crucial to maintaining social harmony, and false accusations were damaging.

20. I have not been angry without reason – Anger, when unjustified, disrupts emotional and social balance.

21. I have not seduced anyone's wife – This law emphasized the importance of respecting marital bonds and not disrupting familial harmony.

22. I have not polluted myself – Personal purity, both physically and spiritually, was considered necessary for living according to Ma'at.

23. I have not terrorized anyone – Instilling fear in others was a violation of the principles of peace and security.

24. I have not disobeyed the law – Respect for legal and moral order was essential for a society guided by Ma'at.

25. I have not been exclusively angry – Holding onto anger, especially without justification, was seen as harmful to oneself and others.

26. I have not cursed God/Goddess – Reverence for the divine was essential, and disrespecting the gods was considered a serious moral violation.
27. I have not behaved with violence – Avoiding violence was key to maintaining peace and respect within the community.
28. I have not caused disruption of peace – Peace and order were central to Ma'at, and disturbing them was considered a breach of social responsibility.
29. I have not acted hastily or without thought – This law promotes careful consideration and thoughtful actions, preventing impulsive decisions that could cause harm.
30. I have not overstepped my boundaries of concern – Respecting others' space and roles was important for maintaining balance and harmony.
31. I have not exaggerated my words when speaking – Speaking truthfully and accurately was necessary for maintaining trust.
32. I have not worked evil – Committing harmful actions was a violation of Maat and disrupted personal and societal harmony.
33. I have not used evil thoughts, words, or deeds – Purity in thought and action was essential for a life guided by Ma'at.
34. I have not polluted the water – Water was a sacred resource, and polluting it would harm both the environment and the community.
35. I have not spoken angrily or arrogantly – Humility and controlled speech were valued, as arrogance and anger could lead to conflict.
36. I have not cursed anyone in thought, word, or deeds – Ill will in any form was discouraged, as it created disharmony.
37. I have not placed myself on a pedestal – Humility was a virtue, and putting oneself above others was discouraged.
38. I have not stolen that which belongs to God/Goddess – Respecting what was sacred to the divine was crucial in maintaining cosmic balance.
39. I have not taken food from a child – Taking from those who are vulnerable, such as children, was a serious violation of ethics.
40. I have not acted with insolence – Insolence or disrespect, especially toward authority or elders, was seen as disruptive to social harmony.
41. I have not destroyed property belonging to God/Goddess – Destroying sacred or divine property was considered a direct attack on cosmic order.
42. I have not offended the gods – Respect for the gods and living in accordance with their will was central to achieving personal and societal harmony.

8.2 Duat

The ancient Egyptians believed that death marked the beginning of a soul's journey to eternal life. Central to this belief was the Duat, the Egyptian underworld, through which the soul had to travel. This article explores the twelve gates of the Duat, the guardians who watched over them, and the meaning of each stage in the soul's passage to eternity.

To the ancient Egyptians, death was not seen as an end but the start of another journey through the Duat, the Egyptian underworld.

The Duat, also known as Tuat, Amenthes, Amenti, or Neter-khertet, was not a single place but an underworld which combined elements of paradise, purgatory, and chaos. It was the dwelling place for a large majority of powerful deities, where the dead traveled to meet Osiris, god of the afterlife, where Ra, the sun god, fought the serpent Apep each night to ensure dawn's return and finally where souls were judged, purified, and, if worthy, granted eternal life in A'aru (Field of Reeds).

The Duat was a place where the deceased had to navigate dangers, recite spells, and prove their righteousness to progress through.

Through the course of this article, we will explore the Duat in Egyptian cosmology, the structure of each of the Twelve Gates as well as the guardians and challenges at every stage. By the end, the Twelve Gates were more than myth—they were a map of the soul's evolution, a guide to immortality, and understanding life, death, and cosmic order.

Hieroglyphically, the Duat was often symbolized by a star enclosed within a circle, and to bridge the gap between this realm and the tangible world, ancient Egyptians established burial chambers as checkpoints.

The west bank of the Nile, where the sun descended each day, became associated with the realm of the dead, and the entrance to the Duat. The Egyptians saw the sun's daily "death" in the west and its "rebirth" in the east, as a metaphor of what awaited them after they die. Furthermore, the association with the sun god Ra's nightly passage shows the Egyptian religious principle of the nature of death and the potential for rebirth, a mirror of the sun's daily resurrection.

Egyptians left detailed guides to help souls survive the Duat, and these guides are known as funerary texts, the most important of which include;

The Book of Gates, which focuses on the Twelve Gates and details Ra's journey as well as the challenges faced by the dead. The Book of the Dead which is a collection of spells to protect and guide the deceased. The Amduat which describes the twelve hours of the night, linking Ra's voyage to the soul's trials. And finally The Coffin Texts, which contains earlier spells inscribed on coffins to ensure safe passage.

These texts were often illustrated in tombs, ensuring the deceased had the knowledge needed to overcome each gate.

Each of the twelve gates of the Egyptian underworld wasn't an open passage but a threshold guarded by various minor deities. Oftentimes, a single gate was overseen by a triad of beings: a gatekeeper, a watcher, and a herald, they could either be serpents and monstrous beings. Beyond the doorway of each gate, the deceased could encounter two additional guardians accompanied by fire-spitting uraei, and to successfully pass through, it was important to know the names of these guardians. Since each gate was associated with a specific serpent deity, which in turn was linked to a particular goddess, this made it more difficult for the souls to bluff their way into the afterlife. The funerary texts provided this necessary information to the deceased as the names themselves hold a certain power, and reciting them correctly would establish a proper relationship with the entities guarding the gates.

The Twelve Gates of Duat

The Entrance

This is the first hour where Ra, arrives as Khepri (the dawn scarab) to begin his nightly voyage.

At the gate, are the guardians "Gods of the West" (spirits of the dead) and here the soul is challenged to shed all traces of the mortal world behind. This first step symbolises a soul's willingness to dive into the unknown.

Trials of the Dead

The second hour leads the soul down a gateway guarded by creatures known as "Treacheries," and the principal guardian deity called "Swallower Of Sinners." The deceased

must go through a series of trials designed to test the worthiness of their soul and only those souls deemed pure of heart could successfully pass through and continue their journey. On the other hand, Ra's boat proceeds through the Duat, it reaches a door guarded by the serpent Saa-Set,"Watcher of the Desert." Beyond the door is eternal darkness until the sun god manifests in his divine form. Bound figures, referred to as both "damned" and "blessed" by Ra surround the solar barque in this hour.

Piercing of Embers

Just beyond the door of this third hour, which is named "Piercing of Embers," where Ra calls for fire into the dark corridor, illuminating a Lake of Fire which he crosses on his barque. For souls of the dead, they must cross a fiery lake, assisted by mummified spirits, as a purification by fire of sorts. The guardian snake of this gate is known as "Stinger," while the portal itself is personified as the goddess "Mistress Of Food,". Additionally, jackals are depicted watching over the "Lake of Life," a place forbidden to the dead as it is where Ra draws his vital breath.

The River of the Dead

In the Book of Gates, during the fourth hour, Ra is bathed in darkness while his barque is pulled along by four deities until it reaches a structure containing nine shrines with each shrine containing mummified gods, identified as the "gods who follow Osiris, who are in their abodes." These deities are responsible for protecting the ba, or soul, of the deceased.

As for the deceased, they must pass the jackal-headed guardian gods, Aau and Tekmi, as well as the serpent Teka-Hra to progress to their next challenge, crossing the underworld's river (like the Greek Styx). Here, Osiris watches as ethnic groups Egyptians, Nubians, Libyians are assessed, showing universal justice.

Throne of Her Lord

The fifth gateway named "Throne of her Lord," is guarded by the serpent called "All-Seeing Eye," as well as twelve mummiform gods, leads the soul to a chamber of flames, where only those who could withstand the intensity of these flames without suffering harm were guaranteed passage onward. The fifth hour in the Book of Gates is when Ra's solar barque is pulled by the four gods of the Duat, towards nine deities who are holding the chaos serpent, Apep. In front of these nine gods are an additional twelve gods, who are designated as "the

souls of the men who are in the Tuat." Ra then orders the binding of Apep, the chaos serpent, preventing it from traversing the gateway.

The Gleaming One

Before continuing on its journey, the soul has to confront the guardian serpent of the sixth gateway called "the Hidden Eye" in order to move forward. This challenge is symbolic for the soul's overcoming of inner darkness.

As for Ra, once he has undergone Osiris' judgment in the Duat, he passes through this sixth gateway and reunites with his ba, or soul. In the depictions of this hour, mummies armed with tridents are shown protecting Ra from Apep during his reunification. After this, he breathes life into the mummies that guard him, and punishes his enemies by either beheading them or tossing them into the Lake of fire. The gate of this hour is named "the Gleaming One," and emphasizes the triumph over adversaries.

Gate of the Fiery Heat

The seventh gate is guarded by the deity "One who seizes with His Eye" who is in turn protected by the serpent "Face of Flames" and leads the soul to the Hall of Judgment (Hall of Ma'at), where Anubis weighs the heart against Ma'at's feather of truth on a golden scale. A heart heavy with sin would tip the balance, triggering Ammit—the "Devourer"—to consume it, erasing the soul from existence while pure souls received the sah (glorified body) and are rewarded with fertile fields of grain. Osiris himself would preside at this gate, making the final decision on whether a soul deserves eternal life or was destined for oblivion. In this hour, twelve men who carry ma'at feathers, proof that they have been judged to be truthful and good, come before Ra and require provision for the afterlife. Conversely, those who were judged to be evil are tied to Geb, the earth god's jackal-headed stakes for punishment.

Exalted in Veneration

The eighth gate, "Exalted in Veneration" is where the soul begins its transformation in earnest, a process of renewal where it sheds its earthly form and moves closer to divinity. The gate of the eighth hour in the Book of Gates is guarded by nine deities situated just inside, while the serpent guarding the door itself is named "Closed of Eye." Beyond this gate, Ra reaches deities holding a long rope, who are responsible for bringing forth the hours of the day, tying up the horizon god, Aken and offering praises to Ra. This space in the underworld

is said to be inhabited by a flaming snake whose purpose is to burn up the enemies of Osiris, as a form of protection to the righteous. Another protector of this gate is the serpent called "Earth Tusk," and the guardians at each end of the hall, Anhefta and Ermenta.

The Sacred Gate

At the ninth gateway, which is guarded by a deity known as "Flaming of Face," whilst the doorway itself named "Glowing One," the soul enters a vast and endless expanse known as The Starry Abyss. Here, the soul is permitted to reflect on the journey thus far. Beyond this gate, Ra reaches an Island of fire and the Waters of Nun, where the deceased souls who have reached this stage float, waiting for rebirth. The island of fire in this hour is where the god Horus is depicted burning those who have been condemned for committing evil acts against the sun god. The gate is named "the Sacred Gate," protected by the serpent Setu, and hall guardian serpents, Nemi and Kefi. It is in this hour that the evil serpent Apep, is subdued in chains, signifying the continued struggle against chaos.

Hidden Entrance

The tenth gate is the point where the soul gains access to Osiris's knowledge and wisdom. Osiris grants this wisdom only to those souls who had proven their worth through the previous trials. As Ra continues through the tenth hour, his fight to defeat Apep continues. At the height of this hour, Apep is shown captured by a group of gods with magical nets. In another depiction, Apep is chained to prevent him from causing harm to Ra during his transit through the underworld. The gate of this hour is named "Hidden Entrance," and is protected by the serpent "the Effluent One," with Metes and Chateau guarding the hallway. During this hour, Apep is also shown being attacked with knives by various deities, and several gods of light and stars appear in anticipation of the sun god's imminent return to the sky, heralding the coming dawn.

Mysterious of Approaches

The eleventh gate leads the soul to A'aru or the Field of Reeds, a paradise where souls who had successfully overcome all the trials of their journey would find their final rest for eternity, as well as solace and comfort in the company of loved ones who had died before. In the Book of Gates, Apep is still captured in the eleventh hour and is punished by the four sons of Horus and Geb. Following its destruction, Ra is surrounded by protective deities who guide his path through the sky. At the gate of this hour, there are two scepters depicted, one belonging to

Osiris and the other to Horus, both bearing inscriptions that praise Ra and speak of his soul and body residing in both heaven and earth. This gate is called "Mysterious Of Approaches" and is under the protection of the cat-headed god Meeyuty. It is also named "the gate of Sacred Power" and is protected by the serpent known as "Lord of the Dawn and Enveloper," with the guardians of the hall being Pai and Akhekhi.

Tesert-Baiu

The final gate is named Tesert-Baiu, with the bearded god Pai standing at its entrance and Akhekhi at its exit, and the goddesses Isis and Nephthys offer their protection in the form of snakes. Tesert-Baiu is the culmination of the soul's journey, the point where the soul ascends to attain eternal life in the realm of the gods. As Ra completes his passage through the afterworld, many figures holding various symbolic objects, such as scepters, stars, and disks, are depicted, representing the different aspects that aid Ra during the daytime. Ra passes by Apep, who is once again being punished by the Ennead, the council of gods. After traversing this final gate, Ra finds himself in the waters of Nun, who then lifts the solar barque. Ra returns to his scarab form as Kephri, symbolizing rebirth, and Nun raises the solar barque into the waiting arms of Nut, the sky goddess.

8.3 The Divine Judgement

In Egyptian mythology, it was believed that after death, a person's soul would undergo a series of trials and judgments before reaching the afterlife. Here's an overview of the judgment scene known as the "Weighing of the Heart" or the "Judgment of Osiris."

According to Egyptian mythology, after death, the deceased would enter the underworld, also known as the Duat. In the Duat, the soul would face the "Weighing of the Heart" judgment before the god Osiris, who was the ruler of the afterlife.

The judgment scene involved the deceased's heart being weighed against the feather of Ma'at, the goddess of truth and justice. The heart represented the individual's moral character and actions during their lifetime. If the heart was found to be lighter than the feather, it meant that the person had led a virtuous and just life. The weighing process was overseen by a panel of

gods and goddesses, including Anubis, the jackal-headed god associated with embalming and the afterlife. Thoth, the ibis-headed god of wisdom, recorded the proceedings.

If the heart was found to be heavier than the feather, it indicated that the person had led an immoral or unjust life. In this case, the soul would be devoured by a monstrous creature called Ammit, who was part lion, part crocodile, and part hippopotamus, and the person would cease to exist in the afterlife. If the heart passed the test and was lighter than the feather, the soul would be granted eternal life and would continue to the blissful realm of the afterlife to join the gods and other blessed souls.

It's important to note that the judgment scene varied somewhat over time and had regional differences within ancient Egypt. The specific rituals and beliefs surrounding the judgment scene evolved throughout Egyptian history. However, the core concept of the judgment of the heart and the weighing against the feather of Ma'at remained consistent.



9. Egyptian Rituals, Celebrations and Beliefs

Ancient Egyptian gods required a lot of attention. “The Book of the Dead” and wall inscriptions are full of details about rites and rituals for specific gods.

Before kings or priests entered a shrine they had to purify themselves in a sacred pool. After entering the sanctuary they said liturgy while they lighted charcoal and incense in a censer next to the statue, made some offerings, anointed the statue, redressed it in new clothes with a proper insignia and performed rituals which allowed the statue to speak and breathe. During the libation rituals an alabaster sistrum, a ritual noisemaker topped with cobras and the falcon-god Horus, was used to ward off violence. Feasts were held before statues were placed back in their shrines.

In a temple in Hierakonpolis dated to 3500 B.C. large dangerous animals such as crocodiles and hippopotami were sacrificed perhaps as symbols of natural chaos. Bulls were sacrificed by the ancient Greeks, Romans and Druids but treated with reverence by Egyptians (black bulls in particular were given harems and palaces because they were believed to be related to the bull-god Apis).

Daily Rituals Performed by Priests at Ancient Egyptian Temples

Everyday priests took care of the statues of the gods as if they were living people. In a daily ritual called the “opening of the mouth,” priests gave the statue offerings of food in the morning and evening, clothed them in clean linen and new jewelry and had new make-up applied. These rituals were performed in sanctuaries — in which only priests and pharaohs were allowed — within the temples. Ordinary people had no idea what went on in these sanctuaries. Sometimes the same rituals were performed on mummies.

The daily acts of worship performed by priests are known from several contemporary sources to have been essentially the same in the case of the various gods. Whether it were Amun or Isis, Ptah or the deceased to whom divine honours were to be paid," we always find that fresh rouge and fresh robes were placed upon the divine statue, and that the sacred chapel in which it was kept was cleansed and filled with perfume. The god was regarded as a human being, whose dwelling had to be cleansed, and who was assisted at his toilet by his servants.

These ceremonies doubtless differed both in detail and extent at the various sanctuaries; for example the priest at Thebes had about sixty ceremonies to perform, whilst at Abydos thirty-six were found to be sufficient. The form and object of the worship however were always the same, though the details might vary. As a general rule also, the priest had to recite an appointed formula at each separate ceremony.

At Abydos,' the priest first offered incense in the tlic hypostyle hall, saying : " I come into thy presence, O great one, after I have purified myself. As I passed by the goddess Tefnut, she purified me ... I am a prophet, and the son of a prophet of this temple. I am a prophet, and I come to do what ought to be done, but I do not come to do what ought not to be done." He then stepped in front of the shrine of the god and opened the seal of clay with these words : " The clay is broken and the seal loosened so that this door may be opened, and all that is evil in me I throw (thus) on the ground."

When the door was open, he first incensed the sacred uraeus snake, the guardian of the god, greeting it by all its names; he then entered the Holy of Holies, saying : " Let thy seat be adorned and thy robes exalted; the princes of the goddess of heaven come to thee, they descend from heaven and from the horizon that they may hear praise before thee... He next approached the " great seat," i.e. that part of the shrine where the statue of the god stood, and said : " Peace to the god, peace to the god, the living soul, conquering his enemies. Thy soul is with me, thine image is near me; the king brought to thee thy statue, which lives upon the presentation of the royal offerings. I am pure." The toilet of the god then commenced — " he laid his hands on him," he took off the old rouge and his former clothes, all of course with the necessary formulae. He then dressed the god in the robe called the Nems, saying : "Come white dress! Come to a white dress! Comes the white eye of Horus, which proceeds from the town of Nechebt. The gods dress themselves with thee in thy name Dress, and the gods adorn themselves with thee in thy name Adornvientr."

The priest then dressed the god in the great dress, rouged him, and presented him with his insignia: the sceptre, the staff of ruler, and the whip, the bracelets and anklets, as well as the two feathers which he wore on his head, because " he has triumphed over his enemies, and is more splendid than gods or spirits." The god required further a collarette and an amulet, two red, two green, and two white bands; when these had been presented to him the priest might then leave the chapel. Whilst he closed the door, he said four times these words : "Come Thoth, thou who hast freed the eye of Horus from his enemies, let no evil man or evil woman enter this temple. Ptah closes the door and Thoth makes it fast, closed and fastened with the bolt." So much for the ceremonies regarding the dress of the god; the directions were just as precise concerning the purification and incensing of the room, and the conduct of the priest when he opened the shrine and "saw the god." According to the Theban rite, for instance, as soon as he saw the image of the god he had to "kiss the

ground, throw himself on his face, throw himself entirely on his face, kiss the ground with his face turned downwards, offer incense," and then greet the god with a short psalm.

Execration Rituals in Ancient Egypt

Execration rituals were conducted throughout the history of ancient Egypt. They were intended to prevent rebellious actions by Egyptians, foreigners, or supernatural forces by textually and kinetically destroying enemies via inanimate, animal or human substitutes. Execution rituals were stylized magical actions aimed at thwarting or eradicating foes and were similar in nature to other protective measures, such as apotropaic animal sacrifice or walking on depictions of enemies. Execration rites took place from at least early in the Old Kingdom through the Roman Period. Over 1,000 execution deposits have been found, mostly in cemeteries, notably at Semna, Uronarti, Mirgissa, Elephantine, Thebes, Balat, Abydos, Helwan, Saqqara, and Giza. Main sources for understanding the rite are the surviving manuscripts of its various versions, plus texts that were often inscribed on the ritual objects and thus became a physical component of the ritual. Execration texts could be as simple as lists of forces and people against whom the rite was enacted, or could contain substantial formulae. Variations on the concept behind the rite eventually spawned both love charms and spells for warding off bad dreams.

The earliest traceable manifestations of aspects of the rite are motifs of bound prisoners (part of Egypt's earliest iconography) and actions connected to offerings and purification rituals. As to the latter, after red pots were used for offerings they had to be destroyed and that the smashing of these pots was assigned an overlapping meaning of scaring away, or eventually destroying, enemies. Purification rites also involved the use of red pots. In the Pyramid Texts, warding off enemies often precedes and/or succeeds both offering and purification pericopes. This connection continued throughout Pharaonic history and is perhaps best reflected in the Festival of the Kites (the birds that symbolized the goddesses Isis and Nephthys), which purified and placed protection around the temple, and during which Seth was driven to the executioner and a "great rite of protection" was performed. The text repeatedly notes that those who know creation can also eliminate their own enemies, thus tying the re-creative aspect of purification to execution. While the use of (predominantly red) pots continued in funerary offerings for millennia, by the Old Kingdom the ritual of smashing pots had given birth to independent execution rites. By

the Middle Kingdom execution texts had become standardized (though they would change over time), perhaps indicating that the rite had also taken a standard form. Some execution rites arose due to specific circumstances, but at least by the Late Period (712–332 B.C.) there were also both daily and cyclical festival executions.

Execration rites could be aimed at political, preternatural, or personal enemies. The political and preternatural were often tied together. The Book of Felling Apophis, for example, instructs that the rite will fell the enemies of Ra, Horus, and Pharaoh. Political rituals likely began as attempts to deal with rebellious Egyptians, but soon included rebellious vassals and foreign enemies, and were almost always directed toward potential problems as a type of proactive apotropaic measure. The victims of these rites were those who, whether dead or alive, would in the future rebel, conspire rebellion, or think of speaking, sleeping, or dreaming rebelliously, or with ill- intent. These vague enemies, as well as specific individuals, groups, or geographic locations, were named for things they might do in the future, though some individuals presumably were included because of things they had already done. The standardization of the texts, the concern with foreign entities, and the desire to protect the state, ruler, and divine, combined with the knowledge of foreign politics, geography, and leaders that the texts demonstrate, all indicate that these were state- sponsored rites.

The figures and pots used in the rites were often inscribed with the rebellion formula, but sometimes only with personal names, and were frequently not inscribed at all. Simple rites associated with private graves, and those exhibiting only personal names or no text, indicate an individual use of execution rituals, as well. Private, small-scale rituals are far less archaeologically visible, especially when they involve the use of cheaper, less durable substances. Versions of execution were carried out both on a large-scale basis by the state and on a small scale by individuals throughout Egyptian history.

While red pots were the earliest objects utilized in the rites, and remained a common article of manipulation, by the late Old Kingdom, papyrus, hairballs, figurines, statues, and statuettes made of clay, stone, wax, or wood were also used. Live animals also likely composed a component of the ritual. If the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus is any indication, wax figures and a fresh sheet of papyrus, on which the targeted name was written, were among the most commonly used materials. The animals, hair, papyrus, wood, and wax ritual victims are largely archaeologically invisible, making the known (mostly clay) remains of

the ritual a vast under-representation of the frequency of the rite. At the most complete execration find, the Middle Kingdom fortress at Mirgissa, besides the remnants of melted wax, other trace remains indicate the use of nearly 200 broken inscribed red vases, over 400 broken uninscribed red vases, nearly 350 mud figurines, four limestone figures, and one human, whose head was ritually severed and buried upside down as part of the rite. Similar evidence of human victims as execution figures also appears in an early 18th-Dynasty context at Avaris.

Within a full execration, each ritual action could require a separate rite, and though not every execration included all of the following components, some did: ritual objects could be bound, smashed, stomped on, stabbed, cut, speared, spat on, locked in a box, burned, and saturated in urine, before being buried. As an example, a portion of one rite calls for the object to be bound and gives subsequent instructions to “spit on him four times, trample on him with the left foot, smite him with a spear, slaughter him with a knife, place him on the fire, spit on him in the fire many times”. A full rite could employ any of these actions numerous times with numerous figures. Thus various magical measures were taken to prevent chaotic forces from acting before they could even begin.

Temple Offerings in Ancient Egypt

Not only had the priest to dress and serve his god, but he had also to feed him; food and drink had to be placed daily on the table of offerings, and on festival days extra gifts were due. In other countries these offerings have been generally maintained by the gifts of pious individuals, and in Egypt also this was probably originally the case; but, as we have said before, under the New Empire especially the state stepped into the place of the people, and if private individuals brought offerings, these were quite insignificant in comparison with the great endowments made by the kings.

We have much information as to the extent and the kinds of offerings; on the outer wall of the great temple of Medinet Habu there still exist parts of a list of the offerings instituted by Ramses II. and Ramses III. for this sanctuary, which was erected by them. These may have been richer than those of earlier temples, though they would certainly not equal those of Karnak and Luxor. If we leave on one side the less important items, such as honey, flowers, incense, etc, and consider simply the various meats, drinks, and loaves of bread placed on the tables of offerings, we shall find as follows: every day of the year the

temple received about 3220 loaves of bread, 24 cakes, 144 jugs of beer, 32 geese, and several jars of wine.

In addition to this revenue, which was doubtless chiefly used for the maintenance of the priests and the temple servants, special endowments were established for special days. There were extra offerings for the eight festivals which recurred every month. On the second, fourth, tenth, fifteenth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth days of each month, 83 loaves, 15 jugs of beer, 6 birds, and 1 jar of wine were brought into the temple; while on the new moon and on the sixth day of the month the offerings amounted to 356 loaves, 14 cakes, 34 jugs of beer, one ox, 16 birds, 23 jars of wine." Still more important were the offerings on great festival days, of which there was no lack in the ecclesiastical year of ancient Egypt. Thus, for instance, a feast of ten days was solemnised in the last decade of the month Koiak to the Memphis god Ptah-Sokar-Osiris; the temple of Medinet Habu took part in this festival. If we again pass over the unessential items, the following list of offerings shows us the royal endowment for these festival days :

One question forces itself involuntarily upon the reader, what became of all this extra food after it had fulfilled its purpose of lying on the altar before the god? We might think that it would be brought into the provision-house and used gradually for the maintenance of the temple servants and priests; the various amounts of the offerings would then merely prove the greater or less importance of the feast. On the different festival days the number of loaves of bread varies from 50 to 3694, and the jugs of beer from 15 to 905, the birds from 4 to 206, the different degree of sanctity between the individual days could not account for so much variation.

The 26th of Koiak, the feast of Sokar, was evidently the principal day of the whole festival, but it could not be twenty times more holy than the 30th of Koiak, the sacred day, when the pillar of Ded was erected. It is much more likely that there was a more practical reason for the choice of these numbers : the food probably supplied different numbers of persons, and these persons were not divine images, but the priests and the laity who took part in the festival. The number of the latter probably varied much on the different festival days; according to whether the festival was a closed or an open one, the crowd at the feast to consume the offerings would vary in proportion. This would also explain the difference in the quality of the food; at one time the people assisting would belong to the upper

classes, and would require roast meat and cake; at another time the lower classes preponderated, and for them loaves of bread would suffice.

Meaning of Temple Offerings in Ancient Egypt

The ritual offerings in Egyptian temples and funerary settings constitute an important part of the outward expressions of Egyptian piety. In temple rituals in particular, according to the images preserved on temple walls, we know that often, though not always, each ritual act was accompanied by a series of incantations (often inscribed on the wall beside the images), including the title of the ritual, the ritual liturgy, and the reply of the deity who was receiving the ritual performance or offering.

Although there is still some uncertainty regarding whether the temple reliefs represent actual ritual acts, most scholars agree that the meaning of the rituals can be deciphered, at least partially, by examining these texts. Although these ritual liturgies had a long-standing textual tradition that can be traced as far back as the Pyramid Texts, most of the best-preserved texts were from the Ptolemaic and Roman temples. The present discussion, therefore, mostly utilizes texts from this period.

The basic meaning of any offering was to incur the blessing of the deities, or deceased ancestors, who were regarded as capable of protecting or aiding those who presented the offering. In funerary settings, as we saw in the offering lists, the Egyptians would provide what they considered an appropriate amount and selection of offering items. The significance of the offerings as sustenance for the deceased is self-evident. However, in the temple-ritual setting, although the primary significance of offerings to deities remained basically the same as that of funerary offerings, the subsequent elaboration of the rituals and liturgies that accompanied the offerings to deities served to exalt the meanings attached to the actual offering items. Thus the offering of a certain item would become a symbolic action relevant to either the characteristics or functions of the recipient deities, or the offering item itself would become symbolic of a certain beneficent deed or cosmic force—on a level of importance matched by that of the deities.

Only occasionally do we find an item that is offered exclusively to a certain deity, the offering of mirrors to Hathor being an example. In most cases, however, there seems to be no one-to-one correspondence between the offering and the recipient god. This indicates that despite particular theological or mythological allusions implied by such offerings as

wine or water, the basic underlying significance of an offering as an object that supplies a “need” of the deity in exchange for blessings remains the same.

Liquids in Ancient Egyptian Temple Rituals

In ancient Egypt the liquids most commonly used in temple rituals included wine, beer, milk, and water. The meaning of the rituals were intimately tied to the qualities of the liquid used as well as to the religious and mythological associations the liquids were known to possess. With the exception of beer, all the ritual offerings of liquids were connected in some way with the idea of rejuvenation.

Of the numerous rituals recorded on temple walls, the offering of liquids occupied a rather large proportion. Here we discuss four kinds of liquids employed in temple rituals: wine, beer, milk, and water. The meaning of an individual ritual act was intimately related to the nature of the liquid employed, as well as to whatever religious and mythological associations the liquid was known to have. Certain deities might have some particular connections with a particular offering, as we shall see below. Yet as far as we can tell, there could be multiple recipients for the same kind of offering, and a particular deity could receive multiple offerings at different times.

In the Temple of Hathor at Dendara, on the outer wall of the sanctuary, the offering of wine was represented symmetrically opposite representations of beer offerings on the opposing walls, indicating a certain affinity between them, perhaps due to their alcoholic content. The offering of water, on the other hand, was paired with the offering of bread and beer, which suggests that water, bread, and beer were endowed with the power of sustenance. Moreover, the offering of wine was also in one instance paired with the “dance for Hathor,” which implicitly suggests a connection between wine and the “ecstasy of Hathor” .

It is interesting that all the ritual offerings of liquids were, each in its own way, somehow connected with the idea of rejuvenation. Perhaps this need not be surprising, since all the offering-liquids were, in a sense, nutrients that could be used by the human (or divine) body, and could thus be considered sources of rejuvenation. In the case of beer, the absence of specific allusions to the intoxicating power of alcohol and the mythological stories of Hathor-Sekhmet or Hathor-Tefnut in the offering liturgies remains unexplained.

Wine in Ancient Egyptian Temple Rituals

Wine was often an important item in funerary and temple cults. From as early as the Old Kingdom, wine was regularly mentioned in offering lists as part of the funerary establishment. In temple rituals, wine was also often offered to various deities. In the pyramid temple of Fifth Dynasty king Sahura, for example, the king was shown offering wine to the goddess Sekhmet. Besides its general significance as an item that pleased the deities, the offering of wine took on certain specific religious and mythological associations. Already in the Pyramid Texts, Osiris was mentioned as the “Lord of Wine in the Wag Festival”. The Wag Festival was celebrated at the beginning of the inundation, on the 17th, 18th, or 19th of Thoth, the first month of inundation. The festival itself was a funerary feast that was probably aimed at the celebration of the resurrection of life that the inundation brought.

Since Osiris epitomized resurrection, there may be a certain connection between Osiris as the god of vegetation and rejuvenation and the symbolic coming to life of the grapevine. The fact that wine production depended upon the coming of the inundation might therefore have fostered the meaning of wine as a symbol of life and rejuvenation. A text in the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu contains the following sentence: “The vineyard flourishes in Edfu, the inundation rejoices at what is in it. It bears fruit with more grapes than the sand of the riverbanks. They are made into wine for your storage.”. Thus the relationship between the inundation and the production of wine is clearly stated.

On the day following the Wag Festival, there was, at least in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, a festival of “the Drunkenness of Hathor” celebrated at Dendara. The calendar of festivals at Edfu alludes to the relationship between Hathor and the inundation: “It is her father, Ra, who created it for her when she came from Nubia, so that the inundation is given to Egypt.”

In the Ptolemaic and Roman temples, Hathor-Sekhmet was often referred to as “Lady of Drunkenness,” and this epithet was often regarded as an allusion to the famous story “The Destruction of Mankind”... Although beer was featured in the story, the effect of alcoholic drink in general was probably what made wine (and beer) an important temple offering, particularly in connection with the honoring of the goddess Hathor-Sekhmet.

In another mythological story about Hathor- Tefnut, or the Eye of Ra, the god Ra commanded that his daughter, the lioness Hathor-Tefnut, be brought back to Egypt from

Nubia. Parallel to the story of the Destruction of Mankind, Thoth and Shu were assigned the mission. After Hathor was brought back to Egypt, her wild and bloodthirsty nature needed to be appeased with dance and music, and the offering of wine. As Greek and Roman authors noted, the Nile water turned red during the inundation, which suggests the color of wine. As Hathor's return to Egypt corresponded to the rise of the Nile waters, which not only resembled wine in color, but could in fact bring a prosperous harvest of grapes and wine, it is fitting that she be referred to as the Mistress of Drunkenness and identified with the inundation.

On the other hand, when we examine the numerous offering scenes on the temple walls, it becomes clear that, as a common offering, wine could be offered to many deities other than Hathor. The religious meaning of wine, moreover, was not limited to the allusions to the mythological stories related to Hathor, or to its intoxicating nature, important as it was in many ancient cultures, but had wider significance. The color of wine, when it was red, and even disregarding its association with the mythological story, already suggested an association with blood and the life-giving force of nature. As this association was not limited to ancient Egyptian culture, it is all the more possible to believe that the symbolic association of wine and blood did exist in Egypt. The winepress god, Shesmu, for example, was referred to as bringing wine to Osiris on the one hand—"Shesmu comes to you bearing wine": shown pressing the blood of the enemies with the winepress. It is reasonable to suspect here an allusion to the grape juice being pressed from the winepress.

Moreover, offering liturgies testify that wine was regarded metaphorically as the "Green Eye of Horus"—that is, the power of rejuvenation: "Take to yourself wine—the Green Horus Eye. May your ka be filled with what is created for you...". And reference to the contending of Horus and Seth can also be found in the liturgy of wine-offering: "Take to yourself the wine that was produced in Kharga, O noble Falcon. Your wedjat-eye is sound and supplied with provision; secure it for yourself from Seth. May you be powerful by means of it . . . may you be divine by means of it more than any god."

Beer in Ancient Egyptian Temple Rituals

Being the most popular and affordable drink in ancient Egypt, beer featured prominently as an offering in funerary as well as temple rituals. The brewing of beer involves the fermentation of cereals, and, as studies of beer residues show, the brewing of beer in general comprises several steps. First, a batch of grain was allowed to sprout, thereby

producing an enzyme. Then another batch of grain was cooked in water to disperse the starch naturally contained within it. The two batches were subsequently combined, causing sugar to be produced, and then sieved. Finally, the sugar-rich liquid was mixed with yeast, which fermented the sugar into alcohol.

Like the offering of wine, the beer-offering was a common ritual in Egyptian temples. However, although Hathor's epithet "Mistress of Drunkenness" was found in beer-offering scenes, it is somewhat surprising to learn that, contrary to our expectations, the mythological story of the Destruction of Mankind does not appear to have been alluded to in the beer-offering liturgies. What were emphasized in the offering liturgies were concerns regarding the correctness and meticulousness with which the beer was brewed: "Take the sweet beer, the supply for your majesty, which is brewed correctly. How sweet it tastes, how sweet it smells! How beautiful are these beer jars, which are brewed at the correct time, which fill your ka at the time of your wish. May your heart be joyful daily. Take for yourself the wonderful beer, which the noble one has brewed with her hands, with the beautiful plant from Geb and myrrh from Nepy."

The deities' emphasis on the proper brewing of beer is interesting, since the production of wine was never mentioned as having been done by gods. It is mentioned that music was performed during the offering of beer: "Take the beer to appease your heart...for your ka according to your desire, may you drink it, may [you] be happy, as I make music before you". This leads us to rethink whether the epithet of Hathor as "Mistress of Drunkenness" necessarily alludes to the mythological story of the Destruction of Mankind, and not to a more general sense of intoxication and rejuvenation. After all, beer, above all other offerings, would be the obvious choice for alluding to the story if indeed the story gave rise to Hathor's epithet.

Milk in Ancient Egyptian Temple Rituals

Since the function of milk is to nourish, and its white color is associated with purity, the significance of the offering of milk in temple rituals was also built around these allusions. Milk was often offered, for example, to Harpocrates (the child Horus), milk being an obvious source of nourishment for children: "May you be filled with milk from the breasts of the hesat-cow" ; "Take the milk, which is from the breast of your mother". The result of nourishment was no doubt to strengthen the body, as the following texts indicate: "May your limbs live by means of the milk and your bones be healthy by means of the white

Horus Eye (milk)....The king rejuvenates his (Osiris's) body with what his heart desires (milk)".

Milk was also offered to other deities, among them Hathor and Osiris, in various rituals, especially in the Abaton-ritual, in which 365 bowls of milk were brought before Osiris daily. One offering liturgy reads: "Oh, 'White milk', which is from the breasts of Hathor. Oh, sweet [milk], which is from the breasts of the mother of Min; it entered the body of Osiris, the great god and lord of Abaton". Here the whiteness of milk is clearly referenced, thus indicating milk as a liquid of purification. This is confirmed by such liturgical texts as "offering milk to his father and purifying the offering of his ka," or "purifying the offering of His Majesty with this White Eye of Horus". Since the libation of water was metaphorically referred to as the "milk of Isis", the reverse is also true. These general religious significations aside, there seem to be no further mythological or theological allusions that can be connected to milk.

Water in Ancient Egyptian Temple Rituals

Of all the temple rituals, the ritual of purification was likely the one that needed to be performed first in any program of daily ritual. The priest, the temple grounds, and even the libation jars needed to be purified before any ritual offerings to the deities were performed. The water of purification could be presented to the deities in two ways, either poured onto the ground or onto the altar or statue as a gesture of general purification: "Spell for purifying as far as the heaven, the earth, to Harakhty, to the great Ennead, to the small Ennead, to Upper Egypt, and to Lower Egypt. My arms are given the water, that it may purify the offering and every good thing of Tebtunis, with its Ennead, for your ka. It is pure. Purification with the four jars of water: take the Eye of Horus, as it purifies your body. Oh water, may you purge all impurity and evil from the daughter of the Creator, oh Nun, may you purify her face." Thus the water cleansed the statue of the deity from the outside, as an ablution, purifying the image in a direct and mundane sense.

On the other hand, water could be offered to the deities as a drink (libation). In a papyrus found in the Roman Period temple at Tebtunis, no less than six libation rituals were included in the daily temple ritual program. The deities were urged to drink the water offered to them in symbolic recognition of the rejuvenating power of the Nile: "Offering libation. Words spoken: May this water rejuvenate your body, may your majesty drink from the water. Offering libation. Words spoken: This libation is brought from Abydos, it

came from the region of the Sea of Horus. May you drink it, may you live by means of it, may your heart be sound by means of it, the divine water to [fill?] your altar, the libation that I like.”

The act of drinking the water provided a sense of purification from the inside, thus imbuing the ritual with a heightened spiritual significance. Moreover, allusions to the inundation were often made, as the pouring of the water was regarded as symbolizing the coming of the inundation, and the libation water was compared to Nun: “Hail to you, precious libation jar, which inundates Nun and Nut. Spell for presenting libation. Words spoken: Hail to you, Nun in your name of Nun. Hail to you, Inundation in your name of Inundation. Pouring libation to the altar. Words spoken: Hail to you, the Powerful, take to yourself the libation, which begot everything living. I have come to you, the vases are inundated, the jars filled with the flood, and the vases filled with the inundation for your Majesty.

Here the significance of libation is no longer merely purification; rather, it has been elevated to the level of cosmic rejuvenation by associating the pouring of water with the coming of the annual Nile flood. This metaphor, found in the Pyramid Texts, was of course very ancient: “O King, your cool water is the great flood that issued from you. You have your water, you have your flood, you have your efflux that issued from Osiris.” In sum, the overwhelming ritual significance of water was its affinity to the Nile flood: the rejuvenating power of nature. Whether the water was poured before the deities, or on the statues of the deities as an ablution, or drunk by the deities as a libation, merely expressed a variation of the same idea.

Sacrifices in Ancient Egypt

In 440 B.C. Herodotus wrote that Egyptians were forbidden to sacrifice animals except pigs, bulls and bull-calves, if they are unblemished, and geese. In Book 2 of “Histories” he wrote:” Egyptians of whom I have spoken sacrifice no goats, male or female: the Mendesians [people that lived in the Mendes region along the Nile] reckon Pan among the eight gods who, they say, were before the twelve gods. Now in their painting and sculpture, the image of Pan is made with the head and the legs of a goat, as among the Greeks; not that he is thought to be in fact such, or unlike other gods; but why they represent him so, I have no wish to say. The Mendesians consider all goats sacred, the male even more than the female, and goatherds are held in special estimation: one he-goat

is most sacred of all; when he dies, it is ordained that there should be great mourning in all the Mendesian districts. In the Egyptian language Mendes is the name both for the he-goat and for Pan. In my lifetime a strange thing occurred in this district: a he-goat had intercourse openly with a woman. This came to be publicly known.

“All that have a temple of Zeus of Thebes or are of the Theban district sacrifice goats, but will not touch sheep. For no gods are worshipped by all Egyptians in common except Isis and Osiris, who they say is Dionysus; these are worshipped by all alike. Those who have a temple of Mendes or are of the Mendesian district sacrifice sheep, but will not touch goats. The Thebans, and those who by the Theban example will not touch sheep, give the following reason for their ordinance: they say that Heracles wanted very much to see Zeus and that Zeus did not want to be seen by him, but that finally, when Heracles prayed, Zeus contrived to show himself displaying the head and wearing the fleece of a ram which he had flayed and beheaded. It is from this that the Egyptian images of Zeus have a ram's head; and in this, the Egyptians are imitated by the Ammonians, who are colonists from Egypt and Ethiopia and speak a language composed of the tongues of both countries. It was from this, I think, that the Ammonians got their name, too; for the Egyptians call Zeus “Amun”. The Thebans, then, consider rams sacred for this reason, and do not sacrifice them. But one day a year, at the festival of Zeus, they cut in pieces and flay a single ram and put the fleece on the image of Zeus, as in the story; then they bring an image of Heracles near it. Having done this, all that are at the temple mourn for the ram, and then bury it in a sacred coffin.

Mummification

The methods of embalming, or treating the dead body, that the ancient Egyptians used is called mummification. Using special processes, the Egyptians removed all moisture from the body, leaving only a dried form that would not easily decay. It was important in their religion to preserve the dead body in as life-like a manner as possible. So successful were they that today we can view the mummified body of an Egyptian and have a good idea of what he or she looked like in life, 3,000 years ago.

Mummification was practiced throughout most of early Egyptian history. The earliest mummies from prehistoric times probably were accidental. By chance, dry sand and air (since Egypt has almost no measurable rainfall) preserved some bodies buried in shallow pits

dug into the sand. About 2600 BCE, during the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties, Egyptians probably began to mummify the dead intentionally. The practice continued and developed for well over 2,000 years, into the Roman Period (ca. 30 BCE–CE 364). Within any one period the quality of the mummification varied, depending on the price paid for it. The best prepared and preserved mummies are from the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Dynasties of the New Kingdom (ca. 1570–1075 BCE) and include those of Tutankhamen and other well-known pharaohs. It is the general process of this period that shall be described here.

Mummification Process

The mummification process took seventy days. Special priests worked as embalmers, treating and wrapping the body. Beyond knowing the correct rituals and prayers to be performed at various stages, the priests also needed a detailed knowledge of human anatomy. The first step in the process was the removal of all internal parts that might decay rapidly. The brain was removed by carefully inserting special hooked instruments up through the nostrils in order to pull out bits of brain tissue. It was a delicate operation, one which could easily disfigure the face. The embalmers then removed the organs of the abdomen and chest through a cut usually made on the left side of the abdomen. They left only the heart in place, believing it to be the center of a person's being and intelligence. The other organs were preserved separately, with the stomach, liver, lungs, and intestines placed in special boxes or jars today called canopic jars. These were buried with the mummy. In later mummies, the organs were treated, wrapped, and replaced within the body. Even so, unused canopic jars continued to be part of the burial ritual.

The embalmers next removed all moisture from the body. This they did by covering the body with natron, a type of salt which has great drying properties, and by placing additional natron packets inside the body. When the body had dried out completely, embalmers removed the internal packets and lightly washed the natron off the body. The result was a very dried-out but recognizable human form. To make the mummy seem even more life-like, sunken areas of the body were filled out with linen and other materials and false eyes were added.

Next the wrapping began. Each mummy needed hundreds of yards of linen. The priests carefully wound the long strips of linen around the body, sometimes even wrapping each finger and toe separately before wrapping the entire hand or foot. In order to protect the dead from mishap, amulets were placed among the wrappings and prayers and magical words written on some of the linen strips. Often the priests placed a mask of the person's face between the layers of head bandages. At several stages the form was coated with warm resin

and the wrapping resumed once again. At last, the priests wrapped the final cloth or shroud in place and secured it with linen strips. The mummy was complete. The priests preparing the mummy were not the only ones busy during this time. Although the tomb preparation usually had begun long before the person's actual death, now there was a deadline, and craftsmen, workers, and artists worked quickly. There was much to be placed in the tomb that a person would need in the Afterlife. Furniture and statuettes were readied; wall paintings of religious or daily scenes were prepared; and lists of food or prayers finished. Through a magical process, these models, pictures, and lists would become the real thing when needed in the Afterlife. Everything was now ready for the funeral.

As part of the funeral, priests performed special religious rites at the tomb's entrance. The most important part of the ceremony was called the "Opening of the Mouth." A priest touched various parts of the mummy with a special instrument to "open" those parts of the body to the senses enjoyed in life and needed in the Afterlife. By touching the instrument to the mouth, the dead person could now speak and eat. He was now ready for his journey to the Afterlife. The mummy was placed in his coffin, or coffins, in the burial chamber and the entrance sealed up.

Such elaborate burial practices might suggest that the Egyptians were preoccupied with thoughts of death. On the contrary, they began early to make plans for their death because of their great love of life. They could think of no life better than the present, and they wanted to be sure it would continue after death.

But why preserve the body? The Egyptians believed that the mummified body was the home for this soul or spirit. If the body was destroyed, the spirit might be lost. The idea of "spirit" was complex involving really three spirits: the ka, ba, and akh. The ka, a "double" of the person, would remain in the tomb and needed the offerings and objects there. The ba, or "soul", was free to fly out of the tomb and return to it. And it was the akh, perhaps translated as "spirit", which had to travel through the Underworld to the Final Judgment and entrance to the Afterlife. To the Egyptian, all three were essential.

Who Was Mummified

After death, the pharaohs of Egypt usually were mummified and buried in elaborate tombs. Members of the nobility and officials also often received the same treatment, and occasionally, common people. However, the process was an expensive one, beyond the means of many.

For religious reasons, some animals were also mummified. The sacred bulls from the early dynasties had their own cemetery at Sakkara. Baboons, cats, birds, and crocodiles, which also had great religious significance, were sometimes mummified, especially in the later dynasties.

Festivals in Ancient Egypt

More modest than the Drunkenness Festival, but no less cherished was the devotion shown to Bes, the lion-faced guardian of children, music, and mirth. Lacking great state temples, Bes was celebrated within the home, in local shrines, and likely with informal domestic feasts. His joyful and sometimes bawdy imagery seen on amulets, mirrors, and dance scenes, suggests that his “festivals” were more personal, filled with music, laughter, and the protective embrace of household ritual. Female musicians and dancers, often associated with Bes, hint at an ecstatic and sensual cult that thrived outside temple walls.

The lion-headed goddess Mut, consort of Amun, was honoured in Thebes during the grand Opet Festival, yet she also had rites of her own within the Mut Precinct at Karnak. These included processions and apotropaic rituals invoking her fierce, protective aspect, especially against disease and misfortune. The most sacred of all may have been the Osiris Festival at Abydos, another aspect of the Khoiak rites, where the god’s mythic death and resurrection were reenacted with great ceremony. Participants engaged in funerary rituals, wailing laments, and symbolic battles representing the triumph over Seth. Pilgrims planted Osiris-beds as living votives of renewal.

Amun, the hidden one and king of the gods, received not one but two splendid festivals in Thebes. The Opet Festival was a triumphal spectacle: the god’s statue was carried in procession from Karnak to Luxor, accompanied by music, incense, dancing, and jubilation. The Valley Festival, by contrast, crossed the Nile to the necropolis, honouring the ancestors and deities of the west. Both were attended by priests, nobles, and, most importantly, pilgrims, who flocked from across the land to witness and participate. In more rural or ancient contexts, the Min Festival was marked in places like Coptos and Akhmim, honouring the god of fertility and masculine potency. Public processions, agricultural rituals, and symbolic offerings, sometimes depicted rather boldly with the king holding an erect phallus, were part of the rites. It was a frank and fruitful celebration, linked to planting and renewal.

Even Ra, the sun god, though less known for raucous revels, was honoured with solar rites that followed the rhythm of the cosmos. His temples, particularly in Heliopolis, celebrated his daily journey and likely held New Year festivals timed with the rising of Sirius and the life-giving inundation of the Nile.

The Ancient Egyptian calendar was deeply intertwined with nature, Ma'at itself was cosmic balance and the seasons, lunar phases, and celestial phenomena were as sacred as the gods themselves. While many festivals were devoted to deities, others were intimately linked to seasonal cycles, the moon, the stars, and the flooding of the Nile, often blending agricultural necessity with religious meaning.

The Egyptian year was divided into three main seasons, each consisting of four months. These were not abstract divisions but lived realities, shaped by the annual rise and fall of the Nile:

Akhet

The season of inundation (roughly mid-July to mid-November)

Peret

The season of emergence or planting (mid-November to mid-March)

Shemu

The season of harvest (mid-March to mid-July)

Falling at the start of Akhet, the Egyptian New Year was one of the most important calendrical events. It coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius (Sopdet), a bright star whose reappearance in the dawn sky heralded the coming Nile flood. This event was seen not only as a celestial signal, but as a renewal of creation itself. Offerings were made to gods like Ra, Osiris, and especially Sekhmet, to pacify her fiery, disease-bringing wrath. It was during this festival that ritual drunkenness may have been encouraged, in imitation of the myth where humanity was spared when Sekhmet was lulled to sleep with dyed beer. There may also have been fertility rituals to ensure a prosperous inundation.

The moon was a sacred celestial body in Egypt, governed by gods such as Khonsu, Thoth, and occasionally Osiris. It was closely watched, particularly in earlier periods, and the lunar

cycle played a key role in ritual timing and festival calendars. The new moon may have also marked transitions in priestly duties or temple cleansing rituals.

Every new moon marked a renewal of divine power, especially for Thoth, the moon god, who also governed wisdom, writing, and sacred timekeeping. At temples dedicated to Thoth (such as at Hermopolis), the new moon was likely celebrated with offerings, hymns, and renewal rites. Thoth was believed to measure time and record the deeds of gods and men, and his association with the moon made each lunar cycle a moment to reset the cosmic ledger.

At Thebes, the moon god Khonsu, son of Amun and Mut, was honoured during lunar festivals. Reliefs at Karnak's Khonsu Temple suggest that his powers were invoked for healing and protection, and rites may have taken place during full moons and new moons, when the power of the moon was either at its peak or newly born.

The cycle of sowing, growth, and harvest was also marked by festivals, often woven into the worship of gods like Osiris, Min, and even Renenutet, the goddess of the harvest. Held in the month of Khoiak (late autumn, around October–November), this festival corresponded with the emergence of crops from the flooded land. It honoured Osiris as the god of both the dead and the grain.

Symbolic Osiris-beds (small plots of earth sown with barley) were cultivated during this time to represent the god's body regenerating in the earth. The withering and regrowth of grain was seen as a metaphor for resurrection, and thus, the seasonal and spiritual were made one.

10. Further Notes

Before the committee begins, it is of utter importance that you as delegates embody the deity you represent. For this purpose, additional personal research is necessary. It is important to note that during the committee your powers remain within your domain, but collaboration between gods is clearly possible, and some gods share domains. Also, utilising the mortals worshipping the Council will increase your effectiveness, with subsequently rewarding or punishing them based on their prayers, actions, sacrifices. The sky is the limit, it actually isn't, there is absolutely nothing the Council cannot achieve with the correct strategy.

Mythological accuracy may differ based on sources, therefore it is important to check the bibliography for used sources, as the materials of this study will be considered canon for the context of the committee.

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