

III. The Religious Meaning of the Great Sphinx



Reconstruction of the Great Sphinx by Mark Lehner.
(ARCE Sphinx Project)

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This is originally the third part of an in-depth study of the Great Sphinx at Giza. Here we look at the deities associated with the Great Sphinx to understand the religious meaning of the monument. Since the New Kingdom, inscriptions refer to the Great Sphinx as an image of Horemakhet (Horus in the Horizon), but the meaning of this deity is never exposed clearly to provide the reader with a clear idea of whom or what the Sphinx is originally intended to portray.

In order to understand the deity Horemakhet, it is necessary to go over some of the basic ideas of the Heliopolitan cosmogony, and how it is linked to the initiation process of Pharaonic religion, which deals with Man's evolution from an Osirian to a Horian mode of existence. After covering this process as portrayed by

the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and the Book of Going Out in Daylight, we will turn to the feline deities to analyze their portrayal and functions in Pharaonic religion. As we will see, their protective nature is easy to relate to the Great Sphinx as the guardian of the necropolis or "Sacred Land" where the dead continue their existence in spiritual form.

Finally, we will show how the feline deity Ruty is connected to the acquisition of the *nemes* headdress that the Sphinx bears, and which is probably the most iconic head cloth or crown of Ancient Egypt. The connections between feline deities, the initiation process, and the meaning of Horemakhet will then allow us to understand why the Great Sphinx has a human head, and not the head of a lion or that of the jackal as some authors have proposed.

Abbreviations:

PT = Pyramid Texts


CT = Coffin Texts

BD = Book of the Dead/Going Out in Daylight

Christian Irigaray,
Montevideo, 2020.


1. Horemakhet and Horakhty



We often read that **Horemakhet**  (*hr m ʒht*) is a “solar deity” or “sun-god” and that he was associated with a “solar cult”, but these are empty words which bring forth the illusion that his worshippers paid adoration to the sun. Unfortunately, this superficial depiction of many Pharaonic deities and Pharaonic religion in general permeates scholarly work since the 19th century, and such categories are still used quite often today. Books or articles where the authors dare to take on an in-depth study of these so-called “solar deities” is very uncommon, and even in many such instances where there is an effort to penetrate the symbolism, one can only read superficial analyses, mostly constructed on evolutionary prejudices regarding religious cults and a lack of insight into religious symbolism in general. Since our expertise is in the History of Religions, this problem stands out in an imposing manner in Egyptological works, and it has become clear that many Egyptologists are not trained in History of Religions, even though they are faced with studying what is probably the most religious culture in human history.

Everything in Pharaonic culture is imbued with a sense of the sacred, and its immense cache of symbolic art, along with its sacred scripture, presents a problem for the specialist that lacks religious sensitivity, for he will fail in trying to understand what its highly symbolic literature and art is meant to signify. At best, such a specialist will provide a superficial reading of such religious conceptions, and mistakenly adhere them to a basic mental mindset. Hence, most Egyptologists take on the path of an archeological-historical approach to Ancient Egypt: a materialist perspective of the Pharaonic Civilization and its prehistoric past that exempts one from having to immerse the mind into the ocean of religious and mystical meanings. This path facilitates the act of addressing Pharaonic religion, along with its gods and sacred symbols, by merely quoting other scholars in a sort of circular reference system that leads nowhere profound. Hence we repeatedly read of hundreds of “solar deities” with hundreds of different names and depictions catalogued under the empty categories of “solar cults”, “fertility rituals”, and other designations which give the impression that the Ancient Egyptians practiced some kind of Nature Worship.

One of these “sun-gods” is Horemakhet, the deity that is represented by the Great Sphinx according to New Kingdom and Late Period annals. The famous Dream Stela of Tuthmoses IV provides a bit of insight into the nature of Horemakhet when it states that the prince was visited in his dream by Horemakhet-Atum-Keheper-Ra. The god speaks to the prince saying: “*I am thy father, Horemakhet-Khepri-Ra-Atum...*” This is a reference to the Heliopolitan Supreme God, but in a particular setting of his first appearance. Hence, in order to understand the identity of this deity, it is important to understand the Heliopolitan cosmogony, and especially its very beginning.

In the Pharaonic cosmogonies, each stage of the coming to existence of things was carefully described in a highly symbolic way. The Heliopolitan cosmogony¹ begins with an abyss of water, **Nun**  (*nnw*). Water is the religious symbol of potential form, the *Fons et Origo* of all possible forms, and it possesses the power of transformation.² As such, water is found at the beginning of creation in many cosmogonies from spiritual cultures around the world, the best known case being the in the Hebrew *Genesis*:

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
And the earth was without form, and void;
And darkness was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.³*

¹ Naydler, 1996, 35-46; Allen, 1988, 8 ff; Schwaller de Lubicz, 1999; Lamy, 1981, 8-10; Rundle Clark, 1991, 35 ff.


² Eliade, 1996, 188-215; Van der Leeuw, 1964, 49-55.

³ *Genesis* 1:1-2.




Neheb-Kau as a double-headed serpent.
Tomb of Amenhotep II (KV 35)
(Naydler, 2005, 305, fig. 9.13)

These “waters”, however, should not be considered as physical water, but a representation of a Primordial “form without form”. They are not part of the universe nor are they the entire universe on a primordial state. Nun describes the very first formless and motionless state of creation, before anything whatsoever came into existence. It is beyond imagination and any form of mental apprehension.

The Heliopolitan cosmogony then depicted Nun in its second form as a serpent whose name is **Neheb-Kau**  “Provider of the Kas” or “Provider of Vital Energy”:

*I am the Outflow of Nun,
The one who emerges from the waters,
I am Nehebkaou, the serpent of many coils.*⁴

This serpent represents a second stage of becoming: Nun now possesses *movement*, and the coils of the serpent represent the loops or closed circuits from which forms may arise. But such loops can only generate forms inasmuch as they possess the active principle of creation, the power that brings about actual being from potential being. This creative principal or power is **Atum** or **Tem**  (*tm*).



*I was alone in the waters,
In a state of inertness,
Before I found anywhere to stand or sit,
Before Heliopolis had been founded.*⁵

*I bent right around myself,
I was encircled in my coils,
One who made a place for himself,
In the midst of his coils.*⁶



In the Book of Amduat, Sixth Hour, the text accompanying the image with the serpent of five heads around Atum-Kheper says: “Of him who is in this picture, with his tail in his mouth, his work is to rise up with this image, to journey to the West in his form, and to travel to every place of the Duat. Through the voice of Ra it is that the figures who are in him advance”
(Wallis Budge, 1905, 120, 122)
(Cf. Hornung & Abt, 2014a, 200-1)

In these lines from the *Coffin Texts*, we see that Atum is one and the same as the serpent and Nun. It is a multiple representation of the Supreme God with different names which specify *stages of a genesis*. Atum represents the power of actualization, of transforming potential being into actual being. In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle described God as a Supreme Being in a perpetual state of actualization of his potential, this is, of transforming potential being into actual being.⁷ Such is the Heliopolitan description of Atum as the creative power in Nun.

The next phase of cosmogenesis in the Heliopolitan cosmogony is **Kheper**  (*hpr.r*), the actual “becoming, coming to exist, adopting shape or form.” And the first shape or form of the Supreme God is **Ra**  (*r*):

⁴ PT 1146.


⁵ CT 80.


⁶ CT 321.

⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b.

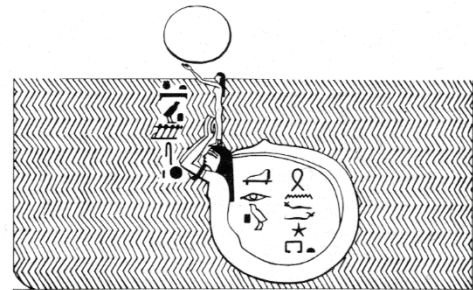
*I am the divine soul of Ra,
Who issued from Nun . . .
I came into being of myself,
In the midst of Nun,
In this my name of Khepr.⁸*

Ra is not the sun, for we are yet in a purely metaphysical mode of existence, the very first form of existence, before the creation of heaven, earth, stars, or any physical form. Ra is the Primordial Light, the Platonic Sun, the Idea of Ideas or Form of Forms which exists above all intelligible things and provides them with their essence.⁹

At this stage of the Heliopolitan cosmogony we are able to understand what is meant by Kheper-Ra-Atum as the “father” who speaks to prince Tuthmoses IV in his dream. To this trinity is added Horemakhet which is vulgarly translated as “Horus on the Horizon”. The **Akhet**  has two meanings, for it literally means “Spirit-Place” and this was the term used for the “Horizon”, the latter being a symbol of the first, for it represents a sort of *limina* where Heaven and Earth meet to the eye, and the place where the physical sun is seen to emerge. Sunrise is the natural analogy of the creation process characterized by Kheper-Ra in the cosmogony, for the sun appears “between” the dyad of Heaven and Earth, evoking the idea of the One that creates Two and brings about light. In the Heliopolitan cosmogony, the creation of Heaven and Earth (Nut and Geb) does not arise directly from Atum, but through a previous dyad: Shu and Tefnut. These gods were often depicted with as anthropomorphic although lion-headed beings, and this links them to the imagery of the double lion Ruty, as we will later see.

For now, let us remark that Horakhty or Horemakhet has an anthropological meaning insomuch as Horus represents the completed process of creation: Spiritual Man. The creation process brings about the Osirian Cycle of birth, growth, decay, death, and rebirth, and this cycle is represented by the **Duat** . Much like the Hindu *Samsāra*, it is the cycle by which God re-creates Himself perpetually in a multitude of manifest forms. The Greek mysteries portrayed this process in the god Dionysius, and the legends of the birth and death of Zeus.

Plutarch, better known in Egyptological circles for his *Isis and Osiris*, also wrote another important treatise in the form of a dialogue: *Of the E at Delphi*.



*“This is Osiris, he encircles the Duat. This is Nut, she receives Ra..”
Book of Gates, 12th Hour.
(Tomb of Ramses VI)*

Then if any one ask “What is all this to Apollo?” Much, we will answer, not to Apollo only but also to Dionysus, who has no less to do with Delphi than has Apollo. Now we hear theologians saying or singing, in poems or in plain prose, that the God subsists indestructible and eternal, and that, by force of some appointed plan and method, he passes through changes of his person; at one time he sets fire to Nature and so makes all like unto all, at another passes through all phases of difference –shapes, sufferings, powers– at the present time, for instance, he becomes “Cosmos”, and that is his most familiar name. The wiser people disguise from the vulgar the change into fire, and call him “Apollo” [$\alpha\text{-}\rho\omicron\lambda\upsilon\varsigma$ = “not-many”] from his isolation, “Phoebus” from his undefiled purity. As for his passage and distribution into waves and water, and earth, and stars, and nascent plants and animals, they hint at the actual change undergone as a rending and dismemberment, but name the God himself Dionysus, or Zagreus, or Nyctelius, or Isodaites. Deaths too and vanishings do they construct, passages out of life and new births, all riddles and tales to match the changes mentioned.¹⁰

⁸ BD 85.

⁹ This is how Plato describes God in his Allegory of the Sun, in *Republic*, 507a-509c.

¹⁰ Plutarch, *Of the E at Delphi*, 5.



Schist statue of Osiris.
Tomb of Psametik I, (664-610 BC),
26th Dynasty.
(Cairo CG 38358)

Other gods who symbolized this multiple-form of the One God are Opheus,¹¹ the Syrian Adonis,¹² and the Phrygian Attis.¹³ Like Dionysius, they participate in a myth of dismemberment and resurrection, and were the protagonists of ancient mystery cults. These deities are known to scholars as “dying and resurrecting gods” since the time J. G. Frazer published his *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, but Frazer’s evolutionary prejudice never allowed him to recognize that these gods represent The One God becoming many living forms (dying), and yet coming back to life; that is, coming back to the original Unity of Being.

In Egypt, this god was **Osiris** 𓂏𓂐, whom Plutarch describes as a god dismembered by his brother Seth.

*I live, I die: I am Osiris.
I have entered you, and have reappeared through you . . .
I have grown in you.
I have fallen upon my side [died].
The gods are living from me . . .
The earth god has hidden me.
I live, I die, I am barley, I do not perish!*¹⁴

In the myth related by Plutarch, Isis is able to recover the body parts of Osiris, except for his phallus: the symbol of the fecundating and re-generative power. Nevertheless, she becomes miraculously pregnant, and bears the infant Horus.¹⁵ The Immaculate Conception

is an archaic symbol of a metaphysical “pregnancy” or “gestation” as opposed to a physical one, for the Holy Child represents the process of Osirian Man becoming God-like again.

In Christianity, this process is described by Paul as the transformation from Adam into Christ:

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (...) So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.¹⁶

¹¹ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.30.1 Guthrie, W. K. C., *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, Princeton NJ, 1993, 25 ff.




¹² Frazer, James G., *Adonis, Attis, Osiris: Studies in the History of Oriental Religion*, London, 1980 (1913), pp. 3-56.

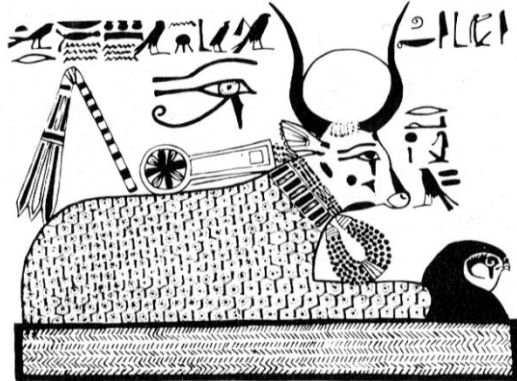
¹³ Frazer, 1980 (1913), 264-72.

¹⁴ CT 330, in Mojsov, 2005, 8.

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris*, 13-19.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; 45-49.


In Egypt, this transformation of Adam into Christ is symbolized by the transformation of Osiris into **Horus**  (*hr*). Horus is the Divine Child whose most archaic mother is **Hathor**  (*hwt hr*), the goddess represented with the totem of the Heavenly Cow, and whose hieroglyph and name “Mansion of Horus” depicts that she is the container or “womb” of Horus. Although anthropomorphic depictions of Hathor exist from the Old Kingdom, the goddess was later made analogous to **Isis**  (*ʿst*), and the figures of the goddess always preserved the horns surrounding the disk.

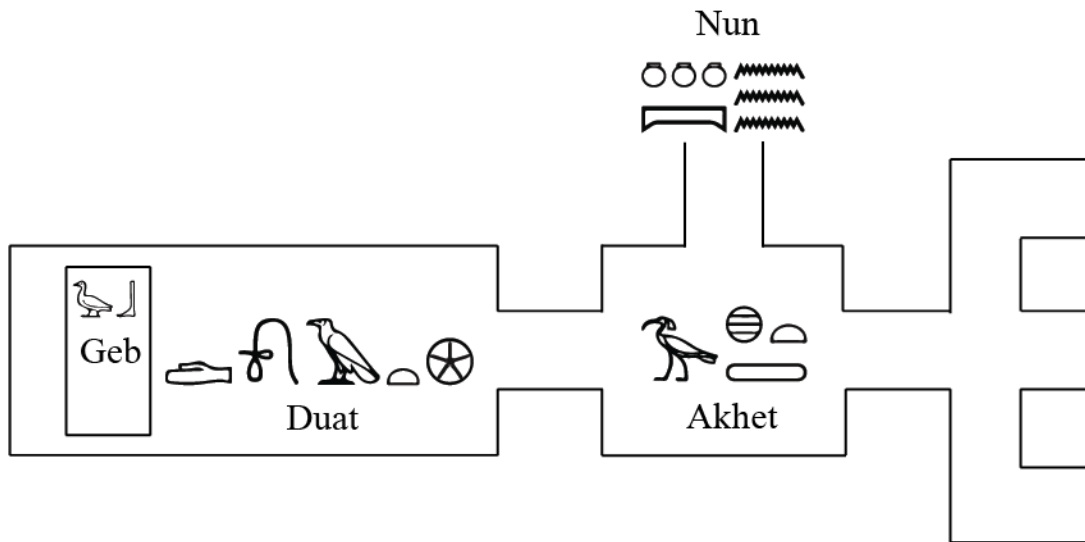


Tomb of Nefertari, wife of Ramses II (1279-1213 BC)
19th Dynasty.
(Thebes, QV66)




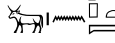



Schist statue of Hathor protecting
Psametik I (664-610 BC),
26th Dynasty.
(Cairo JE 38927)

In the **Pyramid of Unas** (2375-2345 BC), the process of spiritualization is described rather clearly in accordance with the architecture of the chambers where the texts are inscribed. The Sarcophagus Chamber is believed to represent the Duat, the “place” of the Osirian Cycle. Thus Unas is called “Osiris-Unas” on the northern wall, much like the way in which the later *Book of Going Out in Daylight* (Book of the Dead) will call the owner of the papyrus Osiris-(Name). On the southern wall of the Sarcophagus Chamber, Unas undergoes the process of uniting with Atum: he becomes “embraced”  by Atum and thus gains his Ka: a







Plan of the inside of the Pyramid of Unas and the architectural interpretation of the chambers.

Divine Body composed of the gods. (PT 213-17) As the texts approach the eastern wall, where the opening passage leads to the Antechamber, they portray Unas acquiring the Red Crown of Lower Egypt, the Crown of Horus with the Uraeus, and so the doors of the Akhet become open for Unas. (PT 220-2).


In the passage, Unas is identified with Min and acquires the **Ka-Mut-ef**  (*k3.mut.f*) or “Ka of His Mother”, the Vital Energy of the Cow Goddess Hathor (PT 246). Upon entering the Antechamber, the texts of the western wall celebrate Unas as the “Bull of Heaven”  (*k3 n pt*), the “Bull of Nekhen” (Hierakonpolis)  (*k3 nhn*), and the Apis Bull  (*hprw k3*). (PT 254-5) The Bull is an archaic symbol of Pharaoh’s spiritualization as Horus, for he is now the son of Hathor and possesses the “Ka of his Mother”. The reader will notice that “ka” (*k3*) means “bull”, and the symbol of the Ka  as the Divine Body with god-like vitality is an imitation of the bull’s horns with human arms upraised.

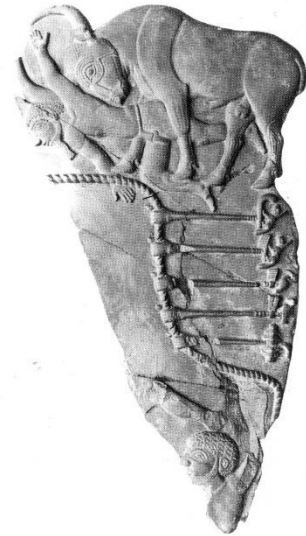
Horus is thus not only symbolized by the falcon, but also as **the Bull who tramples his enemies**: an icon that, like the falcon, goes back into the earliest periods of Pharaonic Culture.

*My heart is satisfied!
I am the Sole Bull of Heaven!
I have trampled those who wished to do that to me,
I have annihilated their survivors in the Earth.¹⁷*

As we mentioned, the iconography of Hathor shows us the Heavenly Cow with the Solar Disk or Aten  (*itn*) between her horns, and this element was preserved in the later periods of Pharaonic culture with the images of Isis. The disk or Aten in between the horns it is an image of the Soul or **Ba**  (*b3*) being transported from the Duat into the Akhet, from the Osirian Cycle towards the immortal Place of Spirit. The Ba was also represented with a falcon with a human head  (*b3*), and in the *Book of Going Out in Daylight*, chapters 77-78 describe the transformation of the Ba into a falcon. Chapter 78 describes the ascent of the Ba with falcon form to Djedu , the City of the Double Djed where the soul is able to meet the Soul of Ra.

*It is I, I am the transfigured spirit (akh) who is in the light,
The one whom Atum created himself,
In forms from the root of his Eye,
Whom he brought into being, whom he transfigured,
Whom he distinguished for it, when they were with him,
When he was alone in Nun.¹⁸*

Horemakhet or **Horakhty “Horus in the Akhet”** thus represents a stage of the spiritualization of Man, and is naturally pictured in the image of Pharaoh, *Royal Man*. Although our secular history portrays Pharaoh as a historical ruler and king, the religious symbolism of Pharaoh is in most part ignored in order to emphasize the secular and profane aspect of what was originally a symbol of a sacred monarchy. The individual monarch (the historical king) plays the role of an ahistorical religious figure: **Pharaoh**  (*pr. ʿ3*) “**Great House**” or “**Great Temple**”. Much like the Christian Pope or the Muslim Imam, Pharaoh has an esoteric value as a living symbol of Spiritual Man, of Man accomplishing the process of release from the



Fragment of a Schist Palette
dated to the Naqada III
Period (3200-3000 BC)
(Louvre E 11255)

¹⁷ PT 254.

¹⁸ Quirke, 2013, 184.


Osirian Cycle and his commendation to the final phase of initiation: *apotheosis*. The Great Temple or Great House is Man, not the individual, but the archetype: the physical abode of God in Osirian form.

In the *Pyramid Texts*, the first union of Man with the Supreme God is accomplished in the Duat with Atum, the creative power of the Supreme God in his function of Creator. In the Akhet, the second union occurs with Ra, the first manifestation of the Supreme Being. The Pyramid Texts of Unas announce in the antechamber that Pharaoh is able to ascend towards Ra and to take his throne:

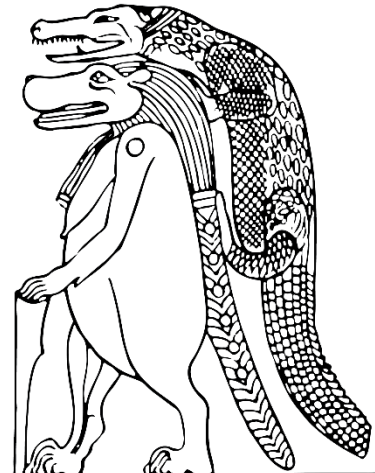
*A Ladder to Heaven is placed before me,
That I may rise through it to Heaven.
I ascend in the smoke of the Great Censing.
I fly upwards as a bird, light as a beetle,
I pose myself upon your empty throne of your bark,
Oh Ra!*¹⁹

But the final release from the conditioned mode of existence not only requires the abandonment of earthly or physical form, characterized by the life experience in the Osirian Duat, but also the metaphysical or spiritual mode of being in the Horian Akhet. Hence the Antechamber, which represents the Akhet, has an opening towards the North, towards the exterior of the Pyramid and pointed to the Celestial Pole. The latter is described as the doorway or portal of Nun (PT 272), and the ascent of Pharaoh is described in PT 269, where the circumpolar stars are mentioned along with Ipy/Ipet:

*My father Atum has taken me by the hand,
And destines me to the excellent and wise gods,
To the Imperishable Stars.
Oh mother Ipy (Ipet), give me your breast,
So I can place it in my mouth and suckle,
This milk of yours, white, brilliant and sweet.
In that land which I shall walk,
I shall never be thirsty or hungry with it.*²⁰

The goddess **Ipy/Ipet**  (*ipy*) was figured as a female hippopotamus with the paws of a lion. With the crocodile on her back, Ipet was imaged as the constellation Draco, the star Thuban being the polar star of the northern hemisphere between 3000-1000 BC, and coinciding with her nipple.²¹ Thus we see that the rising of Pharaoh to the Celestial Pole signifies his final release from the Duat and Akhet, finding a complete fusion with Ra.

This whole process of apotheosis is synthesized in a phrase of the *Book of Going Out in Daylight*: **“Yesterday is Osiris, tomorrow is Ra”**.²²



Ipet as depicted on the ceiling of the Tomb of Seti (KV 17) (Wallis Budge, 1969 II, 313.)



¹⁹ PT 267.

²⁰ PT 269.

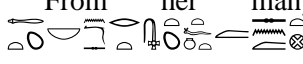

²¹ Wallis Budge, 1969 II, 312-3; Wilkinson, 2001, 184; Naydler, 2005, 262-3.

²² BD 17. (Quirke, 2013, 55; Wallis Budge, 1895, 30.)

2. Sekhmet-Bastet

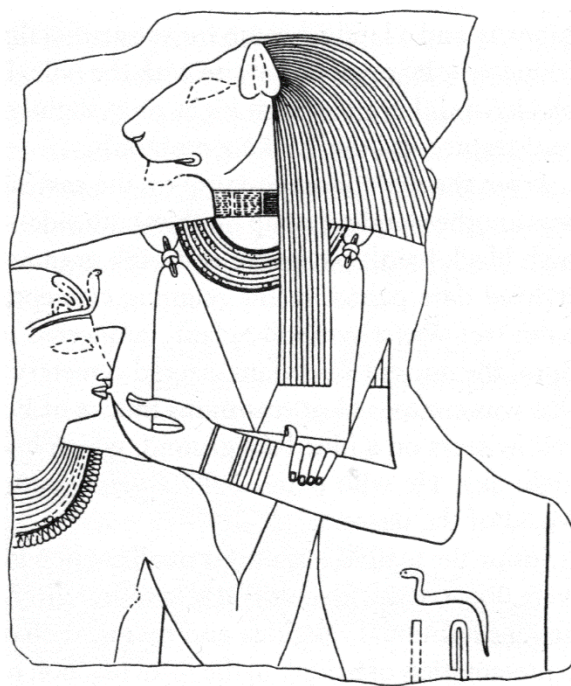
Sekhmet  (*shmt*) is best known by her lioness form and was considered the wife of Ptah, the couple bearing for son Nefertem. Sekhmet's name is a feminine form of *sh*  "power, might, grimness", so it may be translated as "The Powerful One" with a feminine connotation that is not available in the English language, where neither articles nor adjectives have genders. In Spanish, she is "La Poderosa", in French: "La Puissante", and German "Der Mächtige".

Sekhmet is mentioned in line 6 of the Dream Stela of Tutmoses IV, but the goddess is perhaps best known for her participation in the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*. Also known as the *Legend of the Destruction of Mankind*, it is a composition found in the tombs of the New Kingdom Pharaohs Seti I, Ramesses II, Ramesses III, Ramesses VI, and Tutankhamun. The myth goes back to a *primo tempore* when humanity has become impious and began to scorn the Supreme God Ra. Weakened by humanity's irreligious behavior, Ra invokes the primordial gods to a council in order to see how he should act. Hathor steps up and decides to carry off an extermination of the impious in the form of the Eye of Ra, where she is then named as Sekhmet. The latter appears to be an alter ego of Hathor in this story, since the distinction between one and the other is never clear, and seems intentional by the author. When Ra witnesses the slaughter carried off by Sekhmet, he fears she will exterminate the entire human race and so decides to trick by brewing beer with human blood and spilling it over the earth. Sekhmet then becomes drunk with the blood and halts her carnage.²³

From her many epithets we read  "Mighty Lady of the Flame, Tefnut in Senemet", or a variation: .²⁴ Tefnut, the goddess of the primordial dyad of Heliopolis also had a lioness face as her consort Shu,

yet the appellation to the fiery serpent reminds one of the Red Crown and the Uraeus,²⁵ apart from the fact that she was "Mistress of Reed Linen", an epithet that again associates her with Lower Egypt as the Red Crown would.²⁶ This association seems to be confirmed by the fact that one of her epithets is simply *Nesert* ("Flame"), and a quote from Brugsch once again recalls the power of the Uraeus of the Red Crown from the Pyramid Texts: "I set the fierce heat of the fire for a distance of millions of cubits between Osiris and his enemies, and I keep away from him the evil ones, and remove his enemies from his habitation."²⁷

In the Pyramid Texts (704, § 2206) Sekhmet is recognized as the mother of Pharaoh, and while she appears breast feeding a young Pharaoh Niuserre, we have already seen one of the fragments from Sneferu's Valley Temple where she holds Pharaoh to her feline face and appears to be breathing into his



The goddess Sekhmet suckling a young Pharaoh Niuserre. 5th Dynasty.
(Verner, 2001, 48, after Borchardt, 1907, 40, fig. 21)

Original: Berlin Museum 17911.
Limestone with patches of plaster,
H: 112.2 cm, W: 63 cm

²³ Wallis Budge, I, 363-71, 388-99.

²⁴ Wallis Budge, I, 514.

²⁵ PT 220-222.

²⁶ Wilkinson, 2003, 182.

²⁷ Wallis Budge, I 515, quoting from Brugsch, 1887, 520.

nostrils and mouth. Sahure dedicated a shrine for the goddess at the necropolis of Abusir, and there can be no doubt that she was a very important –if not the most important– goddess in every necropolis of Memphis.

Her depictions will vary quite a bit from the lioness-headed goddess with the solar disk encircled by the uraeus. She also appears standing and holding the scepter of Nefertum or bearing the Atef Crown with two plumes as an anthropomorphic figure, but she is also depicted in complete lioness form, as well as a hippopotamus with lion’s head, wearing the Atef Crown and with ram’s horns. Yet another most interesting depiction is the goddess is as an ithyphallic Min type goddess, undoubtedly invoking the theme of androgyny. Lastly, there is an example of Sekhmet as a serpent with a lioness’ head.²⁸

There can be little doubt that the fundamental totem of Sekhmet is the lioness, and by a quick look at the variations, including the hippopotamus and serpent, we find that Sekhmet represents a fierce and dangerous divine power. But a close look at this “Powerful One” in her mythological context reveals that she it is not necessarily malignant, but morally positive in the sense that she symbolizes a sort of protective power of Ra against his enemies, both human and spiritual. In this context, we should also note that the enemy of Ra in the Book of Going Out in Daylight, the serpent Apophis, is shown to be sliced into pieces by the feline form of Atum, again a female deity by the name of Mafdet, portrayed next to the sycamore.²⁹






Sekhmet depicted as a Lioness,
Hibis Temple, Memphis.

(De Garvis Davies, 1953 (III), pl. 3 reg. V.)

Thus it was only natural that the Egyptians took Sekhmet as the military patroness against foreign enemies, bearing epithets like “smiter of the Nubians,” or portrayed on Ramses II’s war horses spitting fire upon the Hittites at Kadesh. Being the lioness-goddess of the west, the hot desert winds were called the “Breath of Sekhmet,” and her appearance could be both feared and avoided under the negative polarity of her influence –where it was seen as inflicting disease and plagues– or invoked in the face of danger, since she could protect one from these ills.³⁰ Hence, the role of Sekhmet, like other feline deities is that of *protector or guardian against evil*.

In Thebes, Sekhmet was intimately associated with Mut, the Great Goddess of the Theban triad, an analogy that seems natural since she was known in Memphis as “Chief of all the Gods.” As many as 572 diorite and black granite statues were commissioned by Amenhotep III for the temple of Mut, their remains being one of the best known features of the precinct.³¹ In the Temple of Khonsu at Thebes, she was called “Lady of Heaven, Mistress of all the Gods,”³² so there can be little doubt that she was analogous to the Great Goddess Mut in Thebes, just as she was to Hathor in Lower Egypt.

Bastet  (*hꜣstt*), better known for her depictions as a cat-goddess, was originally a lioness like Sekhmet, as we see from a depiction of the 2nd Dynasty, and it is not until c. 1000 BC that she begins to appear as a cat.³³ She seems to represent yet another alter ego of Hathor or the Great Goddess in general. Her name is usually written with the container for oil, and although the etymology is not entirely certain, it probably derives from the root  (*hꜣst*) “Devour,”³⁴ a term that is present in the city of Bubastis  (*hꜣst*) in the Delta, where she was patroness.

Like Sekhmet, Bastet bears the traits of a feared and terrible power as much as a nutritive and protective agent, as we read in the Pyramid Texts³⁵ and in the Coffin Texts.³⁶ In the former, Pharaoh is again nurtured

²⁸ Wahlberg, 2002, 43. De Garvis Davies, 1953 (III), pl. 3 reg. V, pl. 5 reg. IV; and JE 41677; Khonsu Temple at Karnak, Room I.

²⁹ BD 17; cf. PT 230, 297, 438, 440-2

³⁰ Wilkinson, 2003, 181; Hart, 2005, 138-9.

³¹ Lythgoe, 1919, 3.



³² Wahlberg, 2002, 44.

³³ Hart, 2005, 45; Wilkinson, 2003, 177-8.




³⁴ CT 69 (Faulkner, 1973 I, 65-66.)


³⁵ PT 467, 508, 539.

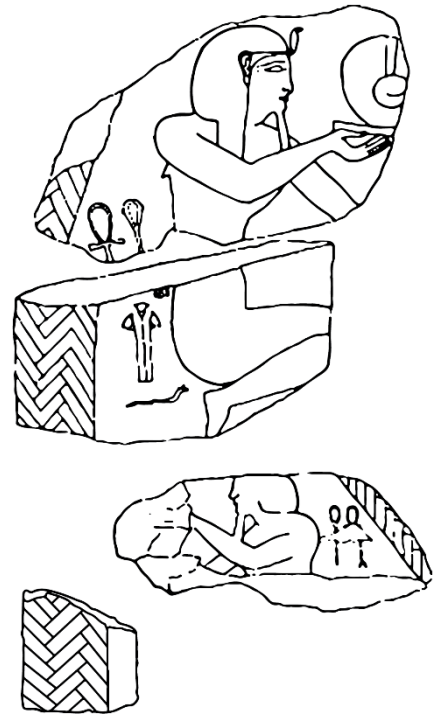
³⁶ CT 60, 265, 378, 652.

as a son of Bastet (PT 508), while in the latter she is “daughter of Atum, the first-born daughter of the Lord of All,”³⁷ and plays a protective role against the serpent.³⁸ In CT 955, the identification between Sekhmet and Bastet is explicit: “I am Sekhmet, Bastet the beloved”.³⁹ More analogies to Sekhmet may be inferred from Bastet’s association to the Eye of Ra, and her role as the feline deity which cuts the Apophis serpent with knives,⁴⁰ but there are also the cat-headed depictions that associate her to Hathor since she appears holding the Sistrum  (sššt) and Menit necklace  (mnit), both symbols being sacred to the Goddess. We should note that the fragments of the beard of the Great Sphinx portray pharaoh offering this very necklace to the Sphinx

Bastet’s epithets leave no question about her analogy to the Great Goddess as she is called “Lady of Heaven,” “Lady of the Two Lands,” and “Mistress of all the Gods”... She was also linked to “the Secrets of Atum” and mentioned as the “Eye of Horus,” and “watching over her brother Osiris”. That we are speaking of one and the same goddess is also clear by her appellative as “who is fighting darkness as the flame”.⁴¹

As we have seen, Bastet is mentioned on the northern entrance of the eastern portals of Khafra’s Valley Temple, and this is no doubt due to her association with the east and with the north. It seems that in Late Dynastic times, Bastet and Sekhmet were associated to the East and West respectively,⁴² but our research has shown that the lioness-goddess was one and the same image of the Great Goddess Hathor depicted as the protector and guardian of the necropolis. This is apparent in one of the epithets of Bastet as “Ruler of the Divine Field”,⁴³ the  (sht-ntr) being a variant for the  (dsrw) “Sacred Place”, a name for the necropolis  (hrt ntr) or divine abode of eternity for the soul of the deceased.

The fact that Sekhmet-Bastet was a form of the Great Goddess is attested in chapter 164 of *The Book of Going Out in Daylight*, when Mut  (mwt), the Great Mother Goddess of Thebes is called **Sekhmet-Bastet-Ra** .



Fragments of the Great Sphinx’s beard recovered by Caviglia in 1817. (Vyse, 1842 III, pl. A)

³⁷ CT 60 (Faulkner, 1973 I, 55.)

³⁸ CT 378 (Faulkner, 1977 II, 12.)

³⁹ CT 955 (Faulkner, 1978 III, 88.)

⁴⁰ Wahlberg, 2002, 46; Wilkinson, 2003, 178.

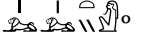
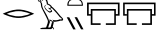

⁴¹ Wahlberg, 2002, 49.

⁴² Wallis Budge, 1969 I, 514.

⁴³ Hart, 2005, 46.



⁴⁴ Wallis Budge, 1969 II, 28.


3. Ruty, Aker, Mafdet, and Pakhet

We also have the figure of **Ruty**  (*rw.ty*) –literally “Two Lions”– representing the  (*rwtj*) “two gates” of the horizon on the east and west. In the *Pyramid Texts* (PT 301), Ruty appears to be the feminine companion of Atum in the enumeration of the primordial gods, and appears to be identified with Shu and Tefnut, the primordial dyad of Heliopolis that were sometimes represented with a lion’s face.⁴⁵ The iconography of Ruty from *the Book of Going Out in Daylight*, chapter 17,⁴⁶ shows us two lions back to back with the Akhet symbol  between them.⁴⁷



Depiction of Ruty from the *Papyrus of Ani* pl. VII.

They are called  (*sf*) “yesterday” and  (*dw3w*) “tomorrow”

There can be little doubt that Ruty was analogous to **Aker**  (*skr*), a primordial “earth-god” who appears as early as the 1st Dynasty and was also named in plural form as Akeru. While the *Pyramid Texts* mention Aker only in passing, we read how he protects Pharaoh by restraining serpents in order to allow his entrance into to the Akhet.⁴⁸ In the tomb of Ramses VI, the *Book of Aker* mentions how the god imprisons the coils of the serpent Apophis when it is cut into pieces: another analogy to the feline-goddesses Sekhmet, Bastet, and Mafdet. In this case, Aker is depicted as two sphinxes with human heads back to back, upon which travels the Boat of Ra.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Cf. PT 687 § 2081

⁴⁶ Quirke, 2013, 59 (Papyrus of Nebsemi British Museum EA 9900); Wallis Budge, 1895, 41 ff (Papyrus of Ani, Plate VII, EA 10470) Cf., Papyrus of Qenena, Papyrus of Iufankh in Quirke, 2013, 64.

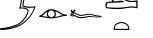

⁴⁷ Cf. BD, 130, 169.

⁴⁸ PT 314 § 504,

⁴⁹ Wilkinson, 2003, 176.



Another depiction of Ruty, Hathor, and the Horus Child within the Ouroboros. From the Papyrus of Her-Weben-Khet, 22nd Dynasty, (Cairo JE 19323)

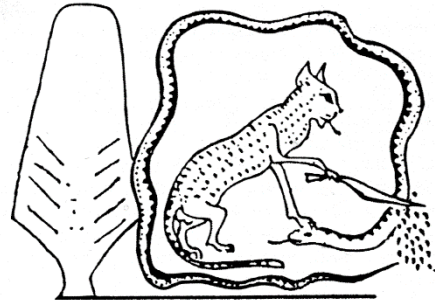
Another important feline deity is **Mafdet**  (*mꜣfꜣt*). Believed to be a lynx, leopard, or perhaps an African mongoose, Mafdet appears in the *Pyramid Texts* as a personification of Ra that injures and cuts the head of serpents, nullifying their power to induce harm.⁵⁰ She is frequently said to inhabit the House of Life , and her power is described thus:

*The hand of Unas comes upon you!
Oh cursed serpent!
The one that comes upon you is Mafdet,
Lady of the House of Life.
She injures you in your face, scratches your eyes,
So that you fall in your own excrement,
And crawl in your urine. . .*⁵¹

Mafdet seems to appear in the *Book of Going Out in Daylight* as the lynx or leopard that chops off the head of the serpent in chapter 17. In the *Papyrus of Ani*, the meeting and fusion of the Ba with Ra in the City of the Double Djed is followed by the

depiction of Atum-Ra in feline form cutting the serpent next to the perseia tree.

*I am that cat,
Beside whom the ished-tree was split in Heliopolis,
On that night,
When the enemies of the Lord of All were destroyed.
What is that?
The male cat is Ra himself,
Called Miu (Cat) when Sia (Wisdom) said of him:
“That is how (Miu) he is, by what he has done.”
And so his name Miu came to be.*⁵²



Variant of the scene from a Papyrus at Dublin. (Wallis Budge, 1895, 280)

Once again, the symbolism describes the creative process by which the Supreme God comes to appear in the beginning of creation. The perseia tree is another symbol of the Primeval Mound, the *archetypal axis mundi*, for the Cosmic Tree is the symbol of Life *par excellence* and the cosmos itself as the container of all forms of life.⁵³

Now, **chapter 17** from the *Book of Going Out in Daylight* is one of the most important, and it was one of the most widespread compositions used in the *Coffin Texts* of the Middle Kingdom, and numbered CT 335.⁵⁴ The chapter begins with **an identification of the owner with the Supreme Being, Atum-Ra**. The title of the chapter reads: “*Formulas for elevation and transfiguration, for going out and descending in the God’s land, being transfigured in the beautiful west, for going out by day and taking any form he desires to take, playing the board-game senet, sitting in the pavilion, and going out as a living Ba...*”⁵⁵

⁵⁰ PT 230, 295, 297-8, 384-5, 390, 519.



⁵¹ PT 298.

⁵² Quirke, 2013, 59.

⁵³ Naydler, 1996, 38-9; Eliade, 1996, 265-326.

⁵⁴ Quirke, 2013, 53.

⁵⁵ Quirke, 2013, 55 (Papyrus of Nebseny). Cf. Wallis Budge, 1895, 27-8 (Papyrus of Ani, pl. VII)

Chapter 17 is characterized by a series of statements followed with the question:  (“*What is that?/Who is that?/What is meant by that?*”), and an answer or a series of answers that put things in a different way  (“*Said Another Way*”).

Here we offer two versions of how the chapter begins:

*Mine is all existence alone in Nun,
(I am) Ra in his emergence,
When he began the reign that he made.*

*What is meant by that?
It is Ra when he began the rule that he exercised,
That is, when Ra began to arise in the kingship he exercised,
When there were (yet) to be created the supports of Shu,
Being over him at the high ground which is in Hermopolis,
When the children of the rebel were give to him,
On the (high ground) which is in Hermopolis.
I am the Great God who comes to be of himself.*

*What is meant by that?
The Great God who comes to be of himself is Water,
He is Nun, Father of the Gods.
Said another way:
It is Ra creating his names, Lord before the gods.*


*What is meant by that?
It is Ra creating the names of his limbs,
It is when those gods in the following of Ra came into being,
Unopposed among the gods.
What is meant by that?
It is Atum who is in his disk
Said another way:
It is Ra shining in the eastern horizon of the sky.⁵⁶*

*I am Atum in his rising up,
I am the only One who came into existence in Nun.
I am Ra in his appearance,
Who ruled in the beginning.*

*What is meant by that?
It is Ra, in the beginning,
When he rose up in Henen-Nsut as king.
The pillars of Shu had not come into being,
But he (Ra) was upon the high place of Hermopolis.
I am the Great God who came into existence by himself, Nun,
who created my name as “Primeval Gods in God.”*

*What is meant by that?
It is Ra, the Creator of the name of his limbs.
These have come to existence as the gods who are in the
following of Ra.
I am without opposition from the gods.*

*What is meant by that?
It is Atum in his Disk.
Said another way:
It is Ra in his rising on the eastern horizon of Heaven.⁵⁷*

We see in these lines how the chapter commences with a description of the Supreme Being coming to existence in primeval time. The “high ground” of Hermopolis (Khemenu) is the Primeval Mound, the Ben-Ben . The gods are the “limbs” of the Supreme God Atum, just as we read in the *Pyramid Texts*.

It is important to understand the context and content of chapter 17 of the *Book of Going Out in Daylight* before we look at the mention to the feline deity that is presented here. After numerous verses, an important section describes the meeting of the participant’s soul with the Soul of Ra in the City of the Double Djed (Djedu/Djedet)⁵⁸:

*I am the Ba of the One God, content with his two divine children.
What is meant by that?
It is Osiris entering Djedu,
There he finds the Ba of the One God as Ra,
Embracing one another in said divinity.
Here, embracing each other,
They become the Ba of the One God,
Content with his two divine children.
His two divine children means:
Horus is protected by his Father, the God,*

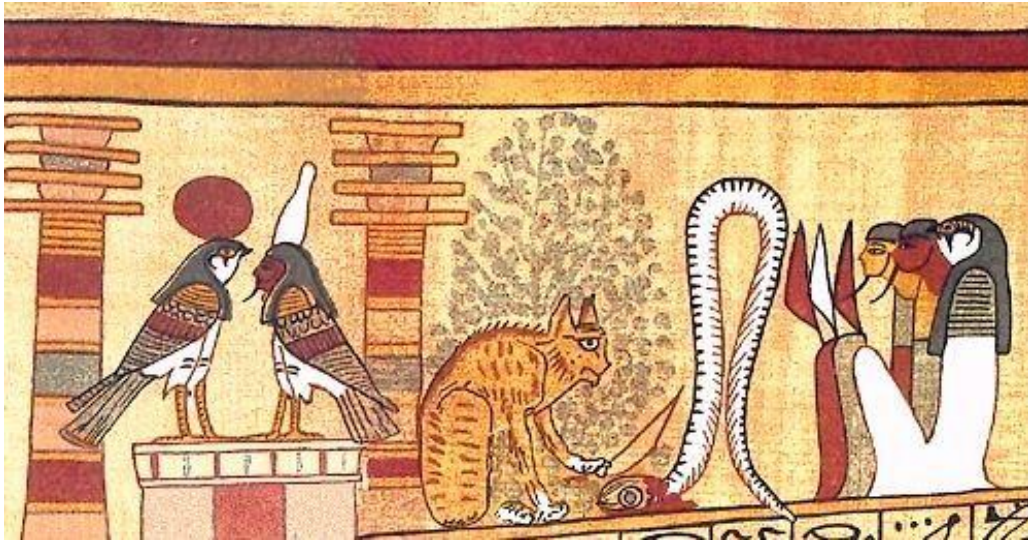


⁵⁶ Quirke, 2013, 55. (Nebseny) (Edited by present author.)

⁵⁷ Wallis Budge, 1895, 28-9. (Ani) (Edited by present author.)

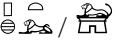
⁵⁸ BD 1, 78; PT 254, 271; CT 355, 629, 663.


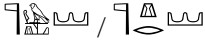

And Horus having on his Brow Two Eyes (Mekhent-irty).
 Said another way:
 His Ba as two gods is double contentment with his two children:
 One divine Ba meaning the God Ra, one divine Ba meaning Osiris.
 One divine Ba means the god Shu, one divine Ba means Tefnut.
 His Ba as two gods means those who are in Djedet.⁵⁹



Papyrus of Ani, Chapter 17, pl. IX-X

This representation of Mafdet cutting off the serpent’s head next to the meeting and fusion of the soul with Ra at Djedu is important because it seems to signify two acts that may be analogous. The killing of the serpent may be read as the liberation of Atum-Ra from the primeval waters of Nun at the beginning of creation, but it may also likewise relate to the liberation of the Ba from the Osirian Cycle through its identification with the Divine Self. As we will later see, when Ruty provides the *nemes* headdress in chapter 78 of *Going Out in Daylight*, the City of the Double Djed is once again invoked, like the primeval form of the Supreme God.

Another feline-goddess is, **Pakhet**  (*pht*), a figure which appears in the Middle Kingdom and whose name means “Scratcher” or “Tearer”. In the *Coffin Texts* (CT 470) she is described as a night hunter with sharp claws, and like Sekhmet and Bastet, she was considered to invoke terror into her enemies.⁶⁰ It would be unnecessary to go into other feline deities such as Mekhit, Manhyt, Mesjet, Shesmetet, or Seret: they all share the traits of the mentioned goddesses and are only variants of the same theme.⁶¹

This information will suffice to show that the feline deities were most probably a totemic expression of a single Great Goddess in her role as protector and guardian of the Great God. Her fierce and violent aspect being an expression of her will to exterminate those who would cause harm to the Supreme God. Since Pharaoh was the living “image of Ra” , and his resting place was the divine necropolis  /  (*hrt ntr*).



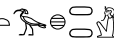
⁵⁹ Quirke, 2013, 59; Wallis Budge, 1895, 41-2. (Translation by present author.)


⁶⁰ Wilkinson, 2003, 180.

⁶¹ Wilkinson, 2003, 179-83.

4. Wearing the Nemes Headdress

Now, knowing these details about Sekhmet, Bastet, and the Lioness-Goddess' many manifestations, one is forced to ask whether the Great Sphinx was not originally an image of the goddess with a complete leonine form. The Arabic name of "Father of Terror" fits quite perfectly with Sekhmet's and Bastet's traits, except of course, for the masculine attribute. During his field work at the Sphinx Temple, Lehner noted that on the days of summer solstice, the sun would set right between the pyramids of Khafra and Khufu, forming a real-life image of the *Akhet* ☉ as the sun between two mountains.⁶²

But we should notice that the term Akhet, as we mentioned before, did not only mean "horizon" in a secular sense of the place where the sun rises and sets. It literally means "Place of Spirit" , the root being the Akh  (*ꜥḫ*) "Spirit". The term Akhty , translated as "horizon dweller" actually means "Dweller of the Akhet" or "Dweller of the Place of Spirit".⁶³ As we have seen, the portrayal of Horus in the Akhet in the Pyramid Texts was that of the Heavenly Bull, the son of Hathor who has the "Ka of His Mother". But we also saw that the Ba or Soul, in its horian form, is represented as a falcon with a human head, and the Book of Going Out in Daylight describes the meeting of the horian soul with the Soul of Ra in the City of the Double Djed.

This chapter (78) of the *Book of Going Out in Daylight* also contains many references to Ruty, and provides the most important text in reference to **the Nemes headdress**  (*nms*). But before we quote the sections linked to Ruty and the *nemes*, let us remember that the text describes the encounter between the Ba or Soul and the Soul of the Supreme Being, Ra.

The transformation into a falcon allows the Ba to ascend to Djedu, the City of the Double Djed where the encounter and fusion with Ra takes place. Once again we offer two translations from the Papyrus of Nu and the Papyrus of Ani:

*I am on of those transfigured spirits that are in the light,
I have made my forms into his forms,
He comes, he goes out to Djedu, noble with my Ba,
To tell you of my condition.
Then may he instill fear of me,
And create awe of me.*

(...)




*It is I, I am the spirit who is in the light,
The one whom Atum created himself,
In forms from the root of his Eye,
Whom he brought into being, whom he transfigured,
Whom he distinguished for it, when they were with him,
When he was alone in Nun.⁶⁴*

*I am, in truth, I am a spirit,
One who lives in the light,
Who has been created and come into being,
From the members of the God.*

I am one of those spirits that live in the light,

*That Atum has created himself,
Who have come into existence,
From the eyelashes of his Eye.
He makes the spirits to exist,
Makes his faces distinguished,
When they live with Him,
Contemplating the One in Nun.⁶⁵*

⁶² Lehner, 2001, 130.

⁶³ It is also interesting that other significant terms use the Akhet hieroglyphs:  "Eye (of god)";  "Uraeus"; and  "Flame". As we have seen, these are all terms intimately associated to the feline-goddess Sekhmet-Bastet

⁶⁴ Quirke, 2013, 184. (Papyrus of Nu)

⁶⁵ Wallis Budge, 1895, 157-8. (Papyrus of Ani) (Edited).

It is in the context of this encounter between the soul and Ra that Ruty is summoned in the text.

*Ruty, the overlord has spoken to me,
The keeper of the Temple of the Nemes-Headcloth,
That is in his hidden place:*

*“How is it that you will return, oh maker of the limits of Heaven?
Although you are ennobled in your forms by Horus,*

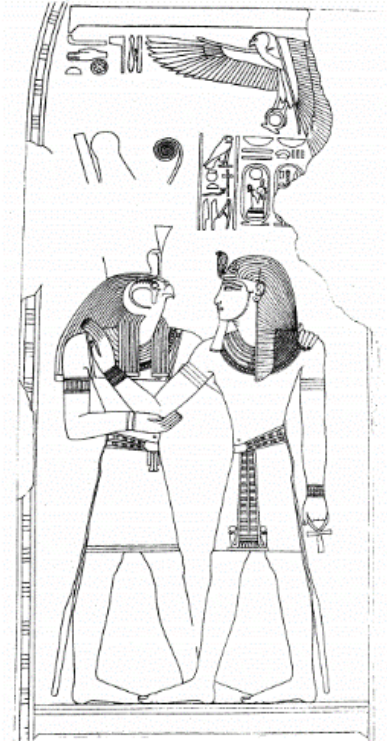
*You are not wearing the Nemes-Headcloth.
But your speech (reaches) the limits of Heaven.
I am the Guardian of the things of Horus,
For Osiris in the Duat.
Horus has told me what his father Osiris told him,
Of the days, of the years in burial.
I myself will provide my Nemes –says Ruty,
That you may come and go through the way of Heaven,
So that those in the limits of the Akhet see you.
May the gods of the Duat fear you!
May the battle in their portals for you!”*

*Their attack is against themselves,
Ruin is upon the words of the gods,
The lords of the boundaries,
Guardians of the shrine of the Lord, the Sole God.
The One who is high on his altar says to me:
“Take out a Nemes-Headcloth for him.”
–So says Ruty of me.⁶⁶*

Here we see how the *nemes* is given by Ruty to the Horian Ba, and it is no doubt a symbol of the power of Ra invested on the soul. This chapter in particular shows us that the so-called “Book of the Dead” is not meant for the dead, but for the living. As its original name implies, it is a book for attaining a Horian spiritual state, to surpass the Osirian mode of existence, to “Go Out in Daylight”, an expression that equates with the entrance in the Akhet of the *Pyramid Texts*.

*I am risen as a Divine Falcon,
Horus has ennobled me with his Ba,
To take things to Osiris to the Duat.⁶⁷*

This sentence in itself shows that there is a “going back” to “take things” (i.e. knowledge) back to the Osirian mode of existence. But it does not seem to mean a reincarnation. Rather, it seems to imply that Man takes his acquired knowledge of Self Realization “back” into his Osirian mode of consciousness, the mode of everyday being in the incarnate state.



Pharaoh with the Nemes and Horus.
Temple of Seti I (1294-1279 BC),
19th Dynasty,
(Abydos, Horus Chapel, East Wall.)

⁶⁶ BD 78. Wallis Budge, 1895, 159-60; Quirke, 2013, 184-5. (Edited)

⁶⁷ Quirke, 2013, 184.

5. The Human Head of the Sphinx

On a final note, we should observe that in Egypt, the Supreme God is mostly figured in **human form**. Whether it be in his function of Creator as Atum in the Heliopolitan cosmogony, as Ptah in the Memphite theology, as Amun in the Theban theology, or as Osiris understood as the “dismembered” God, he is always anthropomorphic and does not have a totemic figure like other important gods. But the anthropomorphic portrayal of the Supreme Being is not unique to Egypt, nor to the Abrahamic religions as commonly believed. Despite one of the main traits of the worship of a Supreme Being is his aniconism, it is recorded all around the world, in both primitive and civilized spiritual cultures, that God sends an Anthropomorphic Avatar in the first time of creation to carry off the act of cosmogenesis.

Although it is impossible to quote all the references of the subject here, we will offer specific references in each case mentioned from ethnological studies carried out since the 19th century. There is a huge bibliography on this issue, and we have made a thorough investigation for the purpose of another study on the belief in a Supreme Being in primitive cultures, but here we can only restrict ourselves to mentioning a few examples in order to demonstrate the archaic nature of this anthropomorphic depiction.

Let us begin with a brief revision of the most primitive hunter-gatherer cultures registered in the ethnological record. The **Australian Aboriginals** of the southeast believed the Supreme Being Baiame sent his “son” Daramulun (in other places, Grogoragally, Tundun, or Binbeal) to provide mankind with its material and spiritual culture in the beginning of time.⁶⁸ While some depictions of the Avatar in human form have been recorded from the initiation ceremonies,⁶⁹ the descriptions of Baiame also show that he was figured in human form, residing in heaven and seated on his throne of quartz crystal.⁷⁰

Likewise, the **Selk’nam of Tierra del Fuego** recalled that Temáukel –a formless Supreme Being which is only spirit (*káshpi*)– sent Kenós, his anthropomorphic Avatar, to create the mythical first ancestors, the *hówen*. From these anthropomorphic ancestors were born all the animal species, as were the sun, moon, stars, and the geographical features of the world.⁷¹ In North America, the **Yuki and Maidu of California** were recognized as the most primitive people of the continent. The Supreme Being, often called “Creator” again has human form, like his alter-ego Coyote. Both Creator and Coyote participate in the creation of the world and mankind, the latter making things worse and introducing suffering and death⁷² The primitive **Naskapi** of the Labrador Peninsula, like the rest of the Algonquin tribes of North America, call their Supreme Being *Gitche Manidou* and consider him to be a “Great Spirit”. However, they described his soul as Mistapeo (“Great Man”) who aided them in hunting and appeared in their dreams.⁷³

The **Siberian tribes** likewise figure the Avatar of the Supreme Being to have human form and to be the First Shaman. Such is the case with the Yakuts who thus recall Oulou-Toion,⁷⁴ the Ostyak Ort-iki (“Old Lord”),⁷⁵ the Samoyedo Numkympoi (“He Who Exists”),⁷⁶ the Koryak Quikkinaqu (“Great Crow”),⁷⁷ and the Altai Bai Ulgan (“He on High”).⁷⁸

In **Africa**, the anthropomorphic aspect of the Supreme Being’s Avatar is found all across Bantu and Nilotic tribes which tell of a mythical age when God lived among the first men he created. Examples are

⁶⁸ Ridley, 1875, 135-7; Howitt, 1884, 192-3

⁶⁹ Howitt, 1884, 452, n.2; 1904, 495, 585 ff.; Worms, 1950, 653-6.

⁷⁰ Manning, 1882, 8; Howitt, 1904, 492.

⁷¹ Gusinde, 1990, 464-78, 549-54.

⁷² Kroeber, 1904, 319-56; 1932, 905-939; Dixon, 1905, 335 ff; 1902, 39-47.

⁷³ Speck, 1977, 28-36.

⁷⁴ Shieroszwesk, 1902, 306 ff.

⁷⁵ Petazzonni, 1954, 260.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁷⁷ Jochelson, 1904, 413-425.

⁷⁸ Eliade, 1960, 165-6.

found among the Ashanti,⁷⁹ Barotse,⁸⁰ Boshongo,⁸¹ and Pokomo⁸² just to name a few. After humanity transgresses the Supreme Being's moral code, he leaves the earth and punishes mankind with death.

These are only some examples of primitive (pre-civilized) cultures who portrayed the Supreme Being or his Avatar in human form. Among civilized cultures, Viracocha among the **Andean cultures** is anthropomorphic,⁸³ and so is Itzamná or Hun Hunahpú in the Mayan legends:⁸⁴ Quetzalcoatl Ce Acatl being no different in Toltec and Aztec lore.⁸⁵ In the Old World, the **Canaanite** Supreme Being El, was imaged as a bearded old man seated on a throne. Such is his portrayal in sculptures discovered in Ugarit and from the descriptions in the tablets.⁸⁶ In **Mesopotamian** lore, we also find An, Enlil, and Ea with human form like their Akkadian versions: Anu, Enlil, and Enki. Likewise, we may suppose that the great statue of Marduk that the Babylonians held in the greatest esteem. was no different.⁸⁷ Images of Brahman in **India**, or the later cult of Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma also depict God's Avatars in human form, and Greek and Roman depictions of Zeus and Jupiter obviously need no elaborate references.

The idea that Man was made in the image of God is not unique to a particular spiritual culture, rather, it is an innate and archaic aspect of religion or spiritual culture around the world, and as much as we might like to recur to the thesis of Xenophon, that if animals had religion they would depict the Supreme Being in their own image,⁸⁸ the testament of the ethnological record is clear in pointing out that the anthropomorphic imagery of the Supreme Being and/or his Avatar is not based on Man's stubbornness and a desire to portray himself in greatness among the species. Instead, it is based on a real phenomenological experience of God and the divine nature of Man that exceeds his conscious desires and finds its fundament on archetypal patterns of the unconscious psyche.

Hence, we should not be surprised that the Great Sphinx, representing Horemakhet, has a human head, and from a religious point of view, there is no reason to believe it originally had the head of a lion,⁸⁹ nor that of the jackal⁹⁰ as some writers have proposed. As we have seen, Horus in the Akhet represents a phase in the apotheosis of Man, and even though this may be symbolically pictured with totemic imagery such as the flying falcon, or the great bull, it always comes back to the ontological fundament of Man as Osiris, as the Great God experiencing the "dismemberment" of multiplicity, and seeking the return into the unified state of consciousness.

⁷⁹ Gray, 1925, 124-5; Rattray, 1913, 20-21; Forde, 1954, 192; Lystad, 1958, 163.

⁸⁰ Stirke, 1920, 104-5. Cf. Young, 1940, 145.

⁸¹ Torday, 1910, 20, 24, 38, 41, 120.

⁸² Werner, 1913, 363-4.

⁸³ Kemper Columbus, 1995; Rivara de Tuesta, 2000; 1985, 249-50.

⁸⁴ Thompson, 2008, 249-87.

⁸⁵ Séjourné, 1962; 1970, pp. 31-5, 150-59; León-Portilla, 1977, 477-9, 537-45,

⁸⁶ Stele Aleppo 4622 (Cf. Yon, 2006, fig. 14, 132-3 (Damascus Museum inv.3573, RS 23.393); fig. 13, 130-1 (Latakia Museum RS 88.070); KTU 1.3 V.23-25. (Wyatt, 1998, 86; Del Olmo Lete, Madrid, 1981, 190.)

⁸⁷ Black, Graham, Robson, Zólymi, 2004; Foster, 2005; Roux, 1990.

⁸⁸ DK 21 B.15, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 5.109.

⁸⁹ Schoch, Robert, Bouval, Robert, *Origins of the Sphinx: Celestial Guardian of Pre-Pharaonic Civilization*, Rochester VT, 2017; Reader, Colin, *Giza Before the Fourth Dynasty*, Journal of the Ancient Chronology Forum, Vol. 9, 5-21, 2002; Neyland, Robert S., *Mehit's Stump: Unmasking the Great Sphinx of Giza*, Archeological Discovery 8, 1-25, 2008.

⁹⁰ Temple, Olivia, Temple, Robert K. G, *The Sphinx Mystery: The Forgotten Origins of the Sanctuary of Anubis*, Rochester VT, 2009.

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