



Egyptian Mythological Manuals

Mythological structures and interpretative techniques in the Tebtunis Mythological manual, the manual of the Delta and related texts

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Mythological structures and interpretative techniques in the Tebtunis Mythological manual, the Manual of the Delta and related texts

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Abstract

This thesis consists of an analysis of two ancient Egyptian mythological manual; the Tebtunis Mythological Manual and the Mythological Manual of the Delta. The analysis is focused on the different modes of structuring and interpreting mythology found in the manuals.

The first chapter is a critical overview of the different Egyptological theories on Egyptian mythology, with special emphasis on aetiological myth and etymology. Structuralist theories are drawn upon to formulate two approaches to the mythological material found in the manual and utilized by the Egyptians themselves, viz. the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic.

The manuals are found to use model mythological narratives or key myths built upon the myths of the Heliopolitan Ennead to structure the wealth of local mythological traditions. This creates a redundant structure in which the mythology of the individual district becomes an echo or actualization of basic mythic patterns.

The Delta manual demonstrates the heuristic nature of this system by adding an extra deity to the Ennead in the form of the female Horus. This goddess is practically unknown outside of priestly manuals but was included to better interpret and associate myths of the Egyptian goddesses.

Finally the techniques and structures found in the mythological manuals are compared to those found in the other priestly manuals found in archives, temple libraries or written on temple walls. I conclude that they share similar and compatible approaches which can also be applied to Egyptian ritual texts and narratives.

Resume

Denne afhandling består af en analyse af to oldægyptiske mytologiske håndbøger: den mytologiske håndbog fra Tebtunis og den mytologiske Delta håndbog. Analysen fokuserer på de forskellige måder hvorpå håndbøgerne strukturerer og tolker mytologi.

Det første kapitel er et kritisk blik på egyptologiske teorier om egyptisk mytologi, med særlig fokus på ætiologiske myter og etymologi. Ud fra strukturalistiske teorier foreslås to tilgange til det mytologiske materiale i håndbøgerne som også blev brugt af egypterne selv: den paradigmatiske og den syntagmatiske.

Det vises at håndbøgerne benytter sig af mytologiske model narrativer eller nogle myter som bygger på myterne omkring nigudekredsen fra Heliopolis for at strukturere den store mængde af lokale mytiske traditioner. Dette skaber en redundant struktur i hvilken det enkelte distrikts mytologi bliver et ekko eller aktualisation af basale mytiske mønstre.

Delta håndbogen demonstrer systemets grundlæggende heuristiske funktion ved at inkludere yderligere en guddom i nigudekredsen i form af den kvindelige Horus. Denne gudinde er næsten ikke attesteret i andet end præste håndbøgerne, men blev inkluderet for bedre at kunne tolke og forbinde de egyptiske gudinders myter.

Til slut sammenligner jeg teknikkerne og strukturerne i de mytologiske håndbøger med dem som man finder i andre præstehåndbøger i arkiver, tempelbiblioteker og tempelmure. Jeg konkluderer at de deler lignende og kompatible tilgange som også kan benyttes på egyptiske ritualtekster og mytiske narrativer.

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The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive.

And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country. placing it under its mental deity.

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realise or abstract the mental deities from their objects; thus began Priesthood.

Choosing forms of worship from Poetic tales.

And at length they announced that the Gods had ordered such things.

Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

William Blake,

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

This book is a study of the Egyptian mythological manuals and their place in the large corpus of priestly literature that has come to light from ancient Egypt. Despite scholarly differences as to the precise nature of Egyptian mythology and its function, its importance for religious discourse and ritual mechanics is beyond doubt. The mythological manuals present us with a unique insight into how the Egyptians themselves collected and presented mythological material.

The quote from Blake appears to depict accurately the evolution of Egyptian mythology as described by numerous Egyptologists; from a poetic 'animistic' phase to institutionalized religion in which the gods are removed from men and worshipped at a distance. I have chosen the quote as it condenses, at least earlier, scholarly opinion and, more importantly, highlights questions and problems that have served as focal points for my study of the Egyptian mythological manuals.

Egyptian mythological manuals can be seen as the repositories of localized mythological knowledge: of how the Egyptians placed each province and region under its 'mental deity'. The degree to which this knowledge forms a system and if this system still serves creative poetics or is only the dead end product of cold mental abstraction is intimately connected to the context in which one chooses to view it. Does written and systematic mythology belong to a period in which the Egyptians too had forgotten 'that All deities reside in the human breast'? In Egyptology this perspective translates into how the Greco-Roman period from which the majority of these manuals are preserved is perceived; as either a final blossoming of old traditions or an age nostalgically lost in these traditions.

Connected to this is the status of aetiological myths. Many schools of the study of myth characterize these as a lower form of myth than the pure unbridled mythopoeic thought of early man, a form of myth that only serves to 'announce that the Gods had ordered such things'. In Egyptology too, aetiological myths, and aetiological formulae in myths are often regarded as extraneous to the core of Egyptian myth. They are mostly seen as a futile intellectual exercise without connections to the practical, ritual, aspects of ancient Egyptian religion.

In Blake's writing the transition between the Poet, imaginative and creative, and Priesthood, impersonal and restrictive, is the fall of divine humanity enslaved by a system that it itself created. A system at some point becomes inevitable, but is the same true of its abuse and reification? The present study remains too pedestrian to answer such questions, but in the analysis of the manuals and the way that they present and interpret Egyptian mythology, I examine whether the systems present are dogmatic or heuristic, i.e. whether they expand or reduce the possibilities inherent in the wealth of myths and their applications.

The study is divided into three main parts. The first is a critical survey of some of the most important Egyptological theories of myths, especially aetiological myths, and how these can be enriched by cross-pollination with theories derived from other cultures. This discussion leads to a statement of the methods employed my following analyses of the Egyptian mythological manuals. Using the structuralist concepts of paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis, I look at the way mythic episodes are associated in larger mythological patterns.

The second section is devoted to the analysis of the mythological manuals. After a brief presentation of the sources, the two largest national mythological manuals, one from the Roman period temple library in Tebtunis and the other the Saite Mythological manual of the Delta, are analysed. The second section is concluded with a discussion of the different mythological patterns and modes of mythological interpretation found in the mythological manuals. The manuals are found to use a 'Heliopolitan interpretation' in which different myths and gods are identified with mythic episodes and gods from the Heliopolitan ennead, with special emphasis on the gods of the Osiris' cycle.

In the last section these manuals are viewed in the light of other genres of priestly literature from Egypt, and it is examined how the manuals could have seen use in the education of priests and in ritual practice. The Heliopolitan interpretation is seen as a recurring mode of mythological interpretation used in priestly literature and ritual texts, and

the mythological manuals are found to be primers not only in general mythology but also in a mythological discourse aimed at imbuing rituals acts with efficacy.

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Approaches to Egyptian mythology

To Plutarch, a Greek philosopher, historian and priest at the oracle at Delphi writing in the first century CE, we owe the longest and most explicit account of the myth of Osiris. Even though a priest, Plutarch was living in an environment where the status of myth was no longer a given, but something which was subject to continual discussion and reinterpretation. Some centuries before, the Greeks had begun to question the authority of myth, a process that led to a differentiation between two former near synonyms, *mythos* and *logos*. Now *mythos* came to denote the traditional stories concerning the gods and heroes that took place in the past and were inaccessible to first hand examination and normal modes of reasoning. *Logos* began to be used for the argumentative reasoning approach to a given problem¹. This process was not merely intellectual but parallel to changes in traditional cult and society. The differentiation between the two terms deprived *mythos* of its authority in cult and society and it was denigrated to serve as material for poetry and rhetoric. It was occasionally admitted access to philosophy, but for illustrative purposes only or as a problem to be explained². In one area *mythos* appears to have maintained its former authority, namely in the mysteries where it was connected to the *legomenon*, the things said, together with *dromenon* and *deiknymon*, the things done and shown. However, due to the secrecy inherent in these mysteries we do not know exactly what status myth had here³.

This state of affairs forms the background for Plutarch's approach to Egyptian Mythology. After his initial recount of the myth, he devotes the rest of his book to the different ways that this myth could be interpreted. This is done for the benefit of a priestess, Clea, also serving at Delphi, to demonstrate to her how wisdom could be extracted from the myth⁴:

Thus whenever you hear the myths told by the Egyptians about the gods, those, for instance, which tell of their wanderings, mutilations, and many other such tales, you should remember what was said above and not think that any of these things is said to have actually happened so or to have been enacted so: for they do not call Hermes 'the Dog' in a literal sense, but inasmuch as the animal discriminates friend and foe by recognition and non-recognition, as Plato says (...) If you hear the matters pertaining to the gods in this way, receiving the myth from those who interpret it reverently and philosophically, and if you perform and observe constantly the accepted rites, considering that nothing is more pleasing to the gods, whether

¹ Calame, 'Mythe et rite en Grèce. Des catégories indigènes ?', *Kernos* 4 (1991), 179-204.

² Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths* (2004).

³ For the ancient mysteries Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987) is still an excellent introduction.

⁴ *De Iside et Osiride*, 1.11 with omissions. Translated by Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (1970), 134f.

sacrifice or ritual enactment, than the true belief about them, thus you will avoid superstition, which is no less evil than atheism.

In Plutarch's time, Egypt had long been an object for fascination and repugnance, famed for its millennium long cultic traditions for wisdom, medicine and magic as well renowned for its insistence on the ties between animals and deities. The process in the western world outlined earlier did nothing to diminish this fascination - it enhanced it. The many traditional ways of approaching, using or speaking about the gods that became antiquated or even outlawed, did not just disappear. The memory of them, distorted beyond recognition, was projected onto faraway countries: Persia, Babylonia and above all Egypt⁵.

For intellectuals such as Plutarch, the problem was how to distil the wisdom of the Egyptians from the gross cases of superstition, 'How to interpret them philosophically' and, we might add, academically; a problem that has continued to plague western approaches to Egypt ever since.

Plutarch discusses and applies a number of theories of mythology on the Myth of Osiris: The literal, the euhemeristic, the demonic (concerned with demi-gods), the nature-allegorical, and finally the moral. In his exposition Plutarch only excludes the first two as non-valid. For the other theories he demonstrates their usefulness for illuminating different meanings in the mythological material. A multitude of approaches is needed for bringing out all the different aspects of the myth, and if used correctly and in succession, these approaches, from the demonic to the 'moral', allows gradual penetration of the mysteries that are ultimately to be found in the mythic form, eventually preparing the student of myth for philosophical insights comparable to the experience gained in the mysteries⁶.

The different approaches to mythology used and rated by Plutarch have one thing in common: they are all ways of interpreting myth that see myth as primarily a kind of explanation, even if, for mystagogical purposes, a veiled one. This intellectual approach to mythology was long the only one and numerous examples can be adduced from both the history of religion and within the field of Egyptology itself.

The euhemeristic approach looms large over the early discussion of the myth of Osiris. In 1898 Amelineau thought to have uncovered the grave of Osiris in Abydos, soon followed by his identification of a nearby tomb as the final resting place for Seth and Horus. Later on Sethe, Gardiner, and still in some ways Kees, Griffith and Assmann derived the myth from events in pre-dynastic and early dynastic times when the tribes of Horus, Seth fought for

⁵ Cf. e.g. Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West* (2001); Ucko and Champion (eds.), *The Wisdom Of Egypt: Changing visions through the ages* (2003).

⁶ Cf. Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (1970), 18-33, 98-100.

supremacy over Egypt⁷. These early events entered history as fundamentals of Egyptian theology, commemorating in mythological form the formative period of the Egyptian state.

A modified form of nature allegorical approach also sees continuous use in the discussion of the nature of Osiris, and Seth. Osiris has been seen as if not the earth, the Nile, or the moon itself, then at least the divine power responsible for and somehow embodied in the natural phenomenon, and likewise Seth has been variously interpreted as the red desert land, storms and eclipses⁸.

The more encompassing astronomical interpretation of Egyptian myth, was for some time out of date in Egyptology, probably to distance itself from the excesses of the nature-myth school and the astrological craze of new age Egyptology, but has in recent years seen a resurgence, set in motion by the work of Krauss on astronomical concepts in the pyramid texts and followed by Goebis and others⁹.

The allegorical moral interpretation, favoured by Plutarch, is rarely seen anymore, but in popular writings Seth is still often seen as the personification of evil, Horus as the force of good etc.

Another way of viewing myth is in connection with ritual. William Robertson Smith redefined the study of religion by focusing on acts instead of beliefs, and was followed by Frazer, who in turn acted as the main inspiration for the Cambridge Myth-Ritual School¹⁰. One of the leading figures of this movement was the classicist Jane Harrison who in her book *Themis* (1912) combined the influence from Frazer with the sociological approach of Durkheim to give an overview of how myth gradually developed alongside ritual.

According to the Cambridge school, ritual was at first pure action, an expression of excitement; only gradually did it become connected with myth. At first myth, or rather proto-myth, only served as the spoken part of the ritual acts, and it too expressed emotion. As ritual developed it became centred on a charismatic leader who served as the centre of attention for the inarticulate emotions vented in ritual, which gave rise to the notion of a divine being present at ritual and separate from the actors themselves. Thus ritual came to be associated with gods and correspondingly the spoken part of the ritual became myth¹¹:

When the emotion that started the ritual has died down and the ritual though hallowed by tradition seems unmeaning a reason is sought in the myth and it is regarded as aetiological.

⁷ Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (2002), 57-58.

⁸ For the history of research of Seth cf. teVelde, *Seth. God of Confusion* (1977).

⁹ Leitz, *Tagewählerei, das Buch ḥ3t nḥḥ pḥwy dt und verwandte Texte* (1995); Krauss, *Astronomische Konzepte und Jenseitsvorstellungen in den Pyramidentexten* (1997); von Lieven, *Der Himmel über Esna* (2000); Von Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufe der Sternes* (2007); Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature: Royalty, Rebirth and Destruction* (2008).

¹⁰ Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889); Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ (1906-1915).

¹¹ Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (1912), 16.

In Egyptology similar lines of reasoning gave birth to what may be termed the German school of Egyptian mythology, which views mythology as the explanation of rituals acts whose meaning had been forgotten¹². The process of applying mythology to rituals brought on, not only a set of rituals consisting of acts accompanied by mythical statements but also a development in mythical thought – or theology – which reflected the emergence of anthropomorphic personal gods living in a sphere apart from the mundane. The school centres on myth in early Egypt and consequently most discussion has focused on the origin of myth, while evidence from the Late Period has been seen as uncontroversial¹³. However since discussions of origins are often intertwined, even confused with discussions of essence a review of the debate is useful for highlighting particular features of Egyptian Myth.

A general point for all theories of Egyptian myth is the relative paucity of longer narrative myths, especially in the earlier periods, and its strong connection in the sources to ritual texts. This has led to theories focusing upon the use of myth in ritual and its growth out of ritual practice and about what have been seen as a fundamental absence of narrative myths and mythology, theories which has since been refuted or softened by drawing attention to the, for us, inaccessible oral tradition of myth and story telling. However, what can be characterized as the fragmented and largely non narrative nature of myths in the available sources remain a central point in all discussions of Egyptian myth.

The development of myth in connection with ritual was largely defined and outlined by Siegfried Schott in his fundamental work *Mythen und Mythenbildung im Alten Ägypten* (1948). Schott posited a gradual emergence of myth in the early Old Kingdom (dynasties 3-6), and aspired to show how the different layers of the earliest Egyptian ritual texts, the

¹² See e.g. Schott, *Mythe und Mythenbildung* (1945), Otto, *Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen* (1958), Assmann, 'Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten', *GM* 25 (1977), 7-43, Altenmüller, 'Etappen des Mythos: Vom Ikon zum Epitheton, vom Epitheton zum Götternamen', in: Bárte and Krejci (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (2000), 305-316. Another school of theory of myth and ritual inspired from Frazer, The Myth and Kingship school of Hooke and Engnell and others, with its pattern of dying and rising gods tied to seasonal kingship rituals, which were thought to be common for the ancient Middle East, has seldom found full-scale application within Egyptology since the set model for rituals was soon found to be inadequate for Egypt. Early influence from Frazer can be traced in such works as Morets, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (1902). In his review of The Adonis, Attis, Osiris volume of The Golden Bough, Gardiner was cautiously positive about Frazer's ideas (*JEA* 2 (1915), 121-126). In his book on Egyptian and Mesopotamian kingship, Frankfort attacked Frazer's thesis, stressing the differences found (*Kingship and the Gods* (1948), 286-294), and the whole trend of scholarship in his 1950 Frazer Lecture *The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near Eastern Religions*. On a smaller scale Bleeker tested the applicability of the pattern on an Egyptian festival for the god, a test that proved negative (*Die Geburt eines Gottes* (1956), 60-62; 99f.). For a recent reassessment of the field see Mettinger, *The Riddle of Resurrection: "dying and rising gods" in the Ancient Near East* (2001).

¹³ E.g. Baines, 'Egyptian Myth and Discourse: Myths, Gods, and the Early Written and Iconographic Record', *JNES* 50 (1991), 81 n.

Pyramid Texts, corresponded to the different phases of the application of myth to ritual and of the development of myth itself from earlier stories about gods of fairy tale character. Central to Schott's argument is the development in use of demonstrative pronouns in different redactions of the pyramid texts from the last king of the fifth dynasty, Unas, through the sixth. Schott observed that earlier pronouns that indicated nearness ('here') were replaced by others indicating distance ('there'). For Schott this observation provided proof of a gradual removal of the gods, from an initial presence in ritual to a mythical sphere, which was established in the same period¹⁴. On stylistic grounds, Schott chronologically divided the early religious texts into dramatic texts, name formulae, litanies and transfiguration texts, genres that correlated to the emergence of myth as form¹⁵.

In the dramatic texts the mythic statements are contextually bound. The ritual action performed by king and priests enacting godly roles dominates so that the statements cannot be said to refer to a mythical world outside the ritual sphere. Furthermore the focus on actions causes the mythic statements to frequently change not allowing a coherent mythological narrative to materialize. With the hymns with name formulae the situation has changed. Instead of priests enacting deeds of the gods we now see priests, in the ritual sphere, addressing gods in the mythical sphere. The loosening of mythical statements from cultic acts is accompanied by a transition from the ritual roleplay of the dramatic texts to names invoked. The only remains of the presence of the gods in the ritual sphere are the invocations in the second person. When this is later replaced by the third person, a decisive step towards mythological narratives, i.e. stories about the gods, have been taken. The litanies form a transitional phase, where the most important innovation is the systematizing of epithets and groupings of gods that makes up an important step in forming coherent divine personalities. Finally with the transfiguration texts, *Verklärungen*, the mythic statements have been totally liberated from relation with cultic acts. The statements now refer to a mythological world completely inaccessible to mortals. Schott sees the ferryman spells as symptomatic of this phase since they further expand the now fundamental gap between the world of the ritual and that of the gods, a distance that can only be crossed by the assistance of mythological beings.

Schott provides a consistent account of the development of myth in early Egypt, but this account is only partially based on actual evidence. Despite Schott's subtle distinctions between forms and ingenious reconstruction of their relations, it is doubtful whether the

¹⁴ *Mythe und Mythenbildung* (1948), 33 – 34. For the use of these demonstratives see now Jenni, 'The Old Egyptian Demonstratives *pw*, *pn* and *pf*', *LingAeg* 17 (2009), 119-137, whose conclusions do not match those of Schott.

¹⁵ *Mythe und Mythenbildung* (1948), 28-54.

chronological scheme that he imposes on the texts is correct¹⁶. All the different genres with different styles that Schott uses for his reconstruction already coexist in the pyramid texts of Unas. Furthermore the texts do not always conform to Schott's patterns. He readily admits that the texts as found are often mixed, but explains this as older forms living on influenced by later stages of mythic development¹⁷. This is the greatest weakness in Schott's exposition as the development that he traces is actually supposed to have taken place in the early Old Kingdom, a period for which we have no longer written sources. In the end his idealized account rests on some unfounded assumption regarding the development of religion in this period, namely the anthropomorphisation of powers and increasing distance to the world of the gods.

Eberhard Otto questioned many of these assumptions in his essay on myth and ritual in Egypt, focusing not on the development of myth in ritual but on actual usage¹⁸. Though differing from Schott in details and the underlying reasons for the process, he subscribes to a similar theory of myth in its relation to ritual as explanations of ritual acts whose meanings had changed or been forgotten, and he too operates with an evolutionary approach that begins with un-mythologized rituals and end with cultic dramas re-enacting myths in the Late Period. The most important contribution of Otto's essay is the notion of *Mythic Schemata*, or *Constellations*, as the permanent or fixed aspect of an otherwise extremely flexible mythology rich in variants. Since myth in its application in ritual is very malleable, the question of the possibility of a stable element arises. Otto finds this element in the constellations or schemata which encapsulates relations between actors such as the Brotherly struggle and the Mother-Son scheme¹⁹:

Sie gehen wie Ordnungsschemata durch die verschiedenen Verwirklichungen und Benennungen hindurch, können miteinander kombiniert werden und erweisen sich als Kristallisationspunkte der erzählenden historischen Mythe.

Following the studies of Schott and Otto, Egyptologists, mainly German, now sought out further evidence for the mythologization of ritual and how gods and myths emerged from these rituals²⁰.

¹⁶ cf. Goebis, 'A Functional Approach to Egyptian Myth and Mythemes', *JANER* 2 (2002), 40 n. 53.

¹⁷ *Mythe und Mythenbildung* (1948), 53.

¹⁸ Otto, *Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen* (1958).

¹⁹ Otto, *Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen* (1958), 26.

²⁰ See for instance Helck, 'Bemerkungen zum Ritual des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus', *Orientalia* 23 (1954), 383-411. Altenmüller, 'Zur Lesung and Deutung des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus', *JEOL* 19 (1965/66), 421-442; 'Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys', *SAK* 27 (1999), 1-26; 'Etappen des Mythos: Vom Ikon zum Epitheton, vom Epitheton zum Götternamen', *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (2000), 305-316.

Thus the status of myth in egyptological discussion was relatively uncontroversial until Jan Assmann's groundbreaking study of 'Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten' appeared in 1977²¹. From Schott Assmann got the idea of the gradual development of a mythological world and from Otto the concept of constellations, which Assmann then used as the basis for his radical rethinking of the concept of myth.

Assmann's argument concerns the status of myth in Egypt in two ways. One concerns the origin of myth and the other the essence of myth. Rather than proceeding from preconceived notions of what a myth is, based on *literary* myths as handed down by the Greek and Latin mythographical and poetical works, and then assuming that myth for the Egyptians must have shared the same properties, Assmann attempts a rethinking of the concept as it applies in Egypt. First he sharply defines myth as narrative. In order to deserve its name myth must be in narrative form. The narrative demands that a myth according to Assmann must meet are considerable. The myth must be told in sequential episodes that are logically or causally connected. This connection rests on mythical actors, gods, who are conceived of as having consistent personalities and motives for their actions. These narrative demands entail a set of preconditions that must be met for myths to appear. In order for the gods to be personal and actors in a narrative they must be anthropomorphic, or at least endowed with human motives, and furthermore, since mythical narratives are set in the past there must be a distance between men and gods. For Assmann all these demands and preconditions are only met in the Middle Kingdom, and only fully in the late New Kingdom, a period from which we have the Contendings of Horus and Seth, which for Assmann satisfied all his criteria. A precursor in a Middle Kingdom papyrus from Lahun is viewed as a *historiola* for a magical text and thus falls on the criterion of multiple episodes²². Earlier theorists had explained the dearth of myths in the surviving sources as due to the medium of myth. The patterns of sources that we find matches the assumption that myths were transmitted orally and only alluded to in ritual and other contexts. Against this assumption, Assmann uses his preconditions to rule out myth before the New Kingdom even in the, for us, inaccessible oral sphere.

²¹ 'Die Verborgenheit des Mythos', *GM* 25 (1977), 7-43

²² The case of the Kahun Horus and Seth fragment (pUC 32158: Collier and Quirke (eds.), *The UCL Lahun Papyri: Religious, Literary, Legal, Mathematical and Medical* (2004), 21) remains problematical. Cf. Baines, 'Egyptian Myth and Discourse', *JNES* 50 (1991), 85-86 and 99, and now also Röpke, 'Überlegungen zum „Sitz im Leben“ der Kahuner Homosexuellen Episode zwischen Horus und Seth (pKahun VI.12 = pUniversity College London 32158, rto)', in: Roeder (ed.), *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 239-290.

Instead of myths, Assmann prefers to speak about *constellations*²³. These constellations consist of grouping of gods with reference to their relations and actions. Assmann emphasizes that constellations do not in themselves amount to a narrative though they can be utilized for episodes in a mythic narrative. A typical constellation is the *Father-Son* constellation, which is structured according to the ideal situation in the funerary cult, where the duties of the oldest son include taking care of the father's funeral²⁴. This constellation is commonly expressed in mythical statements referring to Osiris and Horus. What sets these mythical constellations and statements apart from real narratives is the *momentary* character of the roles and the fact that they take place in the *present*.

Assmann is not very clear on how mythological narratives are supposed to have developed on this background, but it would appear that when the gods filling slots in these constellations became fixed and several constellations were consecutively ordered and re-conceptualised as taking place in the past, this would result in mythological narratives. Contrary to what we would expect, this is not done at the level of utterance; instead the process of combining constellations creates a new *narrative* substratum or structure, what he calls the *Geno-text*, which can then be realised according to function on the level of the *Pheno-text*, as *non-narrative* mythical statements or, in time, as *narrative* myth²⁵. Into this already slightly confusing picture Assmann later added the notion of *icons* and the iconicity of myth. In Assmann's use icons have much in common with his constellations; they exist independently of their actual usage and are not in themselves narrative, though they may be used for narrative purposes. One is at loss to explain this shift in terminology for no apparent reason²⁶, but perhaps it can be explained by Assmann's notion of the narrative *geno-types*²⁷.

Classical structural analysis of myth, in the vein of Levi-Strauss, operates with the surface level, the level of utterance which is narrative, and the level of structure which is non-narrative and made up of binary oppositions and their mediators. At a first glance this

²³ The term constellation is adopted from the earlier study by Otto, *Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen* (1958), but defined differently.

²⁴ See his chapter 'Das Bild des Vaters' in *Stein und Zeit Mensch und Gesellschaft im alten Ägypten* (2003), 96-137.

²⁵ Assmann's comments on the status of the *geno-types*, a term borrowed from the narratological theories of Kristeva, are not very clear in the original paper, but in a footnote he stresses that narrativity is a characteristic that belongs to the *geno-typical* level of mythic discourse ('Die Verborgenheit des Mythos', *GM* 25 (1977), 39 n. 72)

²⁶ Consequently the article in which he introduces the term has largely been ignored and critics have focused on the first. See for instance Goebis, 'A functional Approach', *JANER* 2 (2002), 27-59 who only refers to icon as a terminological variant of constellation (p. 31 n. 18).

²⁷ For the irreconcilable differences between the different stages of Assmann's theories of myth blurred by shifting terminology see the discussion in Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 56-57.

would appear to correspond to Assmann's Geno-typical and Pheno-typical levels²⁸. But this is evidently not the case. Assmann wishes to stress that the notion of narrative myths is something fundamentally new, first appearing in the Middle Kingdom, and not just as a surface phenomenon, i.e. a new way of realising the same basic structure, but a *restructuring* of the notion of the divine. This he accomplishes by the use of the notion of narrative Geno-types, being the basis for all Pheno-types.

But this bold move has left Assmann in a dead-end since it now becomes a problem how to interpret any myths, or mythic statements from the New Kingdom onwards as anything but essentially narrative, namely at the level of the Geno-type. This problem is circumvented by the introduction of the term icon that despite its similarity to constellation, does not carry the along the baggage from the first paper. In a second article from 1982²⁹ he focuses on the synchronic analysis of a single myth and here iconicity serves as the *non-narrative* core of myths, i.e. exactly the opposite stance as in the first article³⁰. In the first article the narrative setting in the past was seen as indicative of a real distance to the gods, while in the second he explicitly warns against mistaking narrative ploys for theology. The question of which features of myth are due to narrative and which can be taken seriously, as theology, becomes pressing. This is an issue that Assmann does not address, but his choices can be seen to follow his overall reading of Egyptian history and development of religious thought.

Assmann's first provocative paper has instigated a discussion of the nature of myth in Ancient Egypt, and he has been criticized for his narrow definitions, his appraisal of the early evidence and for his preconditions. All of these points come together in John Baines reasoned critique that appeared in 1991³¹.

Baines proceeds from his pioneering work on decorum and early uses of writing³², i.e. what could be properly depicted or written where and by whom. Using this approach he asks what status mythical narratives had as opposed to other forms of references to gods. He comes to the conclusion that apart from ritual texts the early sources show a preference for lists, tables and schemas, i.e. precisely such genres as are favoured by writing, over

²⁸ Assmann himself refers to the relationship between myth and mythological statement as a *langue – parole* phenomenon ('Die Verborgenheit des Mythos', *GM* 25 (1977), 53).

²⁹ 'Die Zeugung des Sohnes', in: Assmann, Burkert and Stolz (eds.), *Funktionen und Leistungen des Mythos* (1982), 13-63.

³⁰ Cf. Baines, *JNES* 50 (1991), 84. For Assmann it is crucial to preserve the possibility of mythical statements with a non-narrative basis, as this is integral to his interpretation of solar theology in the New Kingdom (see e.g. *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom* (1995)).

³¹ *JNES* 50 (1991), 81-105.

³² Summarised in 'Restricted Knowledge, Hierarchy, and Decorum', *JARCE* 27 (1990), 1-23, see also 'An Abydos List of Gods and an Old Kingdom Use of Texts', *Pyramid Studies Fs. Edwards* (1988), 124-133.

narratives, which was probably an oral genre. One of the means by which the elite displayed its power was writing, knowledge of which was at this time extremely limited and belonged to the courtly sphere. With his more sophisticated approach which discerns between the different layers of the Egyptian population and what they used writing for, Baines counters Assmann's argument *ex silentio*. Baines opposes Assmann's set of preconditions for myth regarding anthropomorphism by referring to comparative anthropological data as well as pointing to the demotic narrative of the *Myth of the Eye of the Sun*, which has a cat and a monkey as protagonists³³. Concerning the needed distance between men and gods, Baines questions Assmann's reconstruction of the situation in the Old Kingdom as being characterised by an almost complete symbiosis between mankind and the divine and having no need of myths, and thus also the relationship between myth and secularisation³⁴.

In conclusion Baines considers the place for narrative myth in Egypt, and argues for a non-exclusive oral transmission. He briefly considers an exclusive or esoteric, written or oral transmission of mythological narratives, but dismisses the idea because of the lack of prestige accorded to narratives, though he admits that much may depend on the contents of temple libraries.

With Baines the discussion seems to have reached if not a consensus, then a temporary conclusion³⁵. However the discussion has brought to light questions that are still relevant: What was the essence of myths for the Egyptians and in which contexts were they mobilised? Did they think mainly of narratives or of constellations and icons when it came to the gods? Finally the relationship between the narrative demands, a setting in the past and personal gods, to conceptions of gods in a wider sense is important to clarify to gain an understanding of what characterized mythic thought in Egypt.

³³ Baines, *JNES* 50 (1991), 97-98. However it could be argued that animals speaking and acting as humans do constitute a classical case of anthropomorphism.

³⁴ Baines, *JNES* 50 (1991), 91-92.

³⁵ Since Baines' article only minor additions to the discussion have been presented, apart from van Dijk' entry discussed earlier, some of the most prominent are Goebis, 'A Functional Approach', *JANER* 2 (2002), 27-59, Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen. Vom Astartepapyrus zu den koptischen Märtyrakten', in: Roeder (ed.), *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 291-314a useful newer discussion of many of the problems with updated bibliography can be found in Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009).

Mythic time

In the wake of the *oeuvre* of the historian of religion Mircea Eliade the concept of a particular mythic time has been widely discussed³⁶. In Egyptology the discussion of mythic time has often been conflated with that of the increased historical awareness of the later New Kingdom³⁷. From this period the first, longer, literary mythological narratives are preserved and also sources testifying to change in how the Egyptians viewed events and history. The elevation of the vernacular, *Late Egyptian*, to official language has been seen as one crucial element in this change. *Late Egyptian* is mainly based on temporal, and not aspectual, oppositions, which according to some views on the evolution of the verbal system applies to the earlier stage of the language, *Middle Egyptian*³⁸. Concurrent with this change in language one witnesses the emergence of a new concept of history, that not only strayed from the cyclical mythic way of looking at history but even, as some scholars have argued, in some ways, redefined mythic time. Events began to be viewed as historical, i.e. occurring once at a specific point in time instead of being repetitions of mythic schemata.

Following fundamental articles by Assmann³⁹, Antonio Loprieno has provided an overview of what he sees as the three different conceptions of time in Ancient Egypt as it applies to the relationship between humanity and the gods⁴⁰:

- 1) The historical
- 2) The mythic (or cosmic)
- 3) The mythological

The historical conception is characterised by linearity and descent. Its primary context is the ancestor cult and by extension the royal king lists. The mythical conception involves the ceaseless repetition of a mythic event, the first time (*sp tpi*) in the flow of time, similar to Eliade's notions of *l'éternel retour*. Finally the mythological conception, which arises in the

³⁶ See e.g. *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour: archétypes et répétition* (1949).

³⁷ Loprieno, 'Temps des dieux et temps des hommes en ancienne Égypte', *Représentations du temps dans les religions* (2003), 123-133; Luft, *Beiträge zur Historisierung der Götterwelt und der Mythenschreibung* (1978).

³⁸ Winand, 'Réflexions sur l'anthropologie du temps: le cas de l'Égypte ancienne', *Représentations du temps dans les religions* (2003), 29-35

³⁹ Building on Assmann, *Zeit und Ewigkeit im Alten Ägypten* (1975), and for the view of changes in mentality in the Rammeside period *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (2002). The article by Assmann discussed above: 'Die Verborgenheit des Mythos', *GM* 25 (1977), 7-43, is not referenced but appears to have been an influence as well.

⁴⁰ Loprieno, 'Temps des dieux et temps des hommes en ancienne Égypte', *Représentations du temps dans les religions* (2003), 123-133.

New Kingdom, can be seen as a combination of the two others in that the mythic is accorded a historical era, an *illo tempore* preceding the reign of human kings. This new mythological conception shifts the focus from repeating a mythic event to emulating a mythological event that took place in the primal era (*p3wti*). In linguistic categories Loprieno expresses the shift as a change from an *aorist*-mythic time to a *perfect*-mythological time⁴¹.

That something happened to the conception of time in the Ramesside period is practically certain⁴². In the Turin king list the era of human rulers is preceded by that of the Akhu-demigods and the gods. In this way the mythic era is historicized and given an expanse in time which even though innumerable times larger than that of the human rulers is still finite. However the question of the nature of sources available for the different historical periods may have skewed Loprieno's account. Like Assmann he argues *ex silentio* and consequently lays too much emphasis on the new types of sources available in each period. It would be preferable to view the three conceptions of time as coexisting for all periods, and subject to selection due to genre. When legitimating the king as successor in a series of dynasties, the historical mode is chosen. Ritual and cosmographic text will mostly prefer the mythic conception, whereas mythological narratives and expositions will prefer the mythological⁴³.

Taking these reservations towards Loprieno's characterisation to heart, it is still possible to use his description of mythological time, since narratives will mostly be set in a more or less sharply defined past, something that is of consequence to our understanding of mythological thought in Egypt. However instead of taking this distance in time as a narrative *precondition*, I will examine the distance as a narrative *mechanism*.

My starting point will be the Egyptian father of Neoplatonism, Plotin's concise theory of myth, whose significance for the egyptological discussion was recognized by Michelle Broze⁴⁴. In one of the *Enneads*, Plotin analyses the myth of Eros, a myth which in his philosophical reading amounts to an account of creation and redemption of the soul and ends with the following remarkable appraisal of the value of myth⁴⁵:

'Our way of speaking' [referring to a preceding discussion of the platonic myth of Eros] – for myths, if they are to serve their purpose, must necessarily import time-distinctions into their subject and will often present as separate, Powers which exists in unity but differ in rank and

⁴¹ Using *aorist* in the Egyptological sense as a repeated action.

⁴² See e.g the study by Luft, *Beiträge zur Historisierung der Götterwelt und der Mythenschreibung* (1978).

⁴³ For discussion of the parallel uses of the Mythic and Mythological modes see Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmography: On the union of Re and Osiris in two types of religious discourse', in: Horn et.al. (eds.), *Current Research in Egyptology 2010* (2011), 71-80.

⁴⁴ *Mythe et roman en Égypte ancienne* (1996).

⁴⁵ Plotinus, *Enneads* III.5, 9 translation by Stephen Mackenna in Plotinus, *The Enneads* (1969).

faculty; and does not philosophy itself relate the births of the unbegotten and discriminate where all is one substance. The truth is conveyed in the only manner possible; it is left to our good sense to bring all together again

For Plotin philosophy, as well as mythology, must introduce distinctions into its subject in order to be able to speak about it at all. This is especially relevant for monistic worldviews among which we may include Egypt⁴⁶. As Plotin notes the necessary narrative mechanisms deal with time and personality, categories to which space may be added. In ritual all these categories are extremely fluid, time may run backwards or stand still, personalities change for each action or utterance and space is negated or defined anew, as the priest assumes all identities, inhabits all spaces and reaches back in time to the first occasion. Characteristically this fluidity leads to paradoxes when mythological statements are applied in ritual⁴⁷.

Outside of ritual gods are characterised as being in some ways distant, or not immediately accessible. This distance, which Finnestad has shown to be ontological⁴⁸, is conceptualised as spatial or temporal. The gods exist; have their abode, function etc. in another time or in a different place⁴⁹. Apart from these ontological considerations, the past is the usual mode of the narrative, there has to be very special reasons for setting a narrative in the present (or the future). We cannot therefore, as Assmann, generalise the narrative setting to mean that gods are no longer present in ritual, or only symbolically present. Characteristically the mythological statements *when uttered in ritual* are set in the *present*, but in the *past* when part of a narrative. That Assmann's generalised assumption from the narrative setting to the distance to the gods cannot hold is demonstrated by the fact that the notion of a truly transcendent god only begins to appear as part of the new solar theology which dispenses with the mythical world of the then and there in favour of a system of the here and now⁵⁰.

This does not render irrelevant Assmann's observations, but gives them a different scope. If the categories of Time and Space are *metaphors* for ontological distances, in ritual

⁴⁶ Cf. Jamblichus' similar opinions on the possibility of talking about god and the world in his theurgic apology (*De mysteriis*, 1.2-4). For the monist character of Egyptian religion see the works by Finnestad, *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator* (1985); 'On Transposing *Soul* and *Body* into a Monistic Conception of *Being*. An Example from Ancient Egypt', *Religion* 16/4 (1986), 359-373.

⁴⁷ On the appliance of mythology to ritual and cosmology and the mechanisms involved see Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmography: On the union of Re and Osiris in two types of religious discourse', in: Horn et.al. (eds.), *Current Research in Egyptology 2010: Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Symposium* (2011), 71-80.

⁴⁸ See e.g. *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator* (1985).

⁴⁹ Rather than being unique in this respect, it would seem that mythological language exploits one of the basic functions of temporality in language. For the function of the past tense as 'graded possibility' or 'epistemic modality' see Jaszczolt, *Representing Time: An Essay on Temporality as Modality* (2009).

⁵⁰ As brilliantly analysed by Assmann in *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom* (1995).

as well as myth, then we can study the ways in which these are expressed as aspects of the changing conceptualisation favoured by the Egyptian priests, i.e. the evolution of mythological systems. This becomes evident when we deal with myths that are not set simply in the past but contains specific dates or when different generations of gods are set against each other, and similarly for spatial metaphors that locate gods in different areas of mythological geography.

As an example of the temporal projection of ontological categories in myth we can use the case of the union of Re and Osiris⁵¹. In cosmology this phenomenon takes place every night at midnight or just before dawn. In two mythological monologues in ritual texts in the Coffin Texts spell 1030 and Book of the Dead chapter 175, the union is instead said to take place once and only after an eternity has elapsed after the creation of the world. The key to explaining this discrepancy is to look at the different timespans involved as basically temporal metaphors or projections of ontological distances. The union of the gods of life and death are an origo for the cyclical rejuvenation of the world, a state of potentiality in which all is united and thus the furthest possible ontological distance from the created differentiated world. When this difference is plotted in temporal terms in mythological discourse it results in an eternity. In the cosmological texts the basic idea is that of the sun god's nocturnal gradual descent into and ascent from the chaos of pre-existence. Since the timespan is already defined here, as the Egyptian night has twelve hours, the union is said to take place at midnight, i.e. furthest removed from the daylight that characterises the sun god and the created world.

In ritual texts spatial and temporal metaphors of ontological distances are often mixed. The clearest example of this comes from the celebrated spell 148 of the Coffin Texts, which shows how the two different mythological mechanisms could be combined. The mythological focus of this spell is the pregnancy of Isis and the birth of Horus set in a dramatic framework of dialogues and monologues. Upon birth, Horus first action is to soar high up into the air. This flight is simultaneously a journey through the different regions of the cosmos towards the castle of the unknown creator god, and a regression through time to the first occasion⁵²:

I am Horus, the great falcon on the battlements of the temple of Him whose name is hidden. When my flight had reached the horizon I surpassed the gods of Nut and advanced my position more than that of the primeval ones. (Even) Iaa could not reach my first flight. My place is far from Seth, the enemy of my father Osiris.

⁵¹ See Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmogony: On the union of Re and Osiris in two types of religious discourse', in: Horn et al. (eds.), *Current Research in Egyptology 2010* (2011), 71-80.

⁵² CT II, 222e-224a.

This ascent is a regression through the different stages of creation. First Horus reaches the horizon, passing the borders between sky, earth and netherworld. Then having soared above the sky, i.e. regressed beyond the separation of heaven and earth and the primeval gods of that era⁵³, he places himself on the battlements of the temple of him whose name is hidden⁵⁴ at the border of the pre-existent. He even surpasses Iaa, a mysterious deity perhaps denoting the negative aspects of the creator god, existing with him in the latent state before being excreted in the initial stages of creation⁵⁵. In this way Horus has not just distanced himself from Seth, but has sought out the roots of conflict at the extreme border of the existent, in time as well as space.

Compared to temporal mechanisms, the use of space in mythological narratives is more problematical. One of the main difficulties lies in discerning when a given location is to be taken in its normal sense or in its mythological, or if such discrimination is even relevant. This can be seen already in the Pyramid Texts, and more markedly in the Coffin Texts where Heliopolis is both an actual location in Egypt and the mythological starting point for all things connected to solar creation. These problems only multiply when we are dealing with local Late Period texts, in which localities may be assumed to be significant in accordance with local geography and cultic ties, giving rise to local mythic geography. For this question the geographically structured mythological manuals are of prime importance for which reason the discussion is better postponed until after these manuals have been analysed.

Aetiological myths

The specific form of myth found in the mythological handbooks is the aetiological. These provide an aetiology – reason – for the existence and forms of gods, rituals and *materiae sacrae*. In biblical studies, aetiological myths have long been a subject for research, mostly focusing on whether or not they are historically accurate⁵⁶. In the field of Egyptology aetiological myths have gathered far less interest and have often been seen as a lesser product of mythological reasoning than the more elusive ‘real’ myths.

⁵³ In CT IV, 36f [286] the *p3wtiw* are witness to the separation of sky and earth.

⁵⁴ For this motif cf. Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne* (1994), 184-185.

⁵⁵ CT II, 396b [162] describes him as living in the belly of the unique one (the creator god) before two things came into existence in the world. As Frandsen suggests Iaa was probably spat out, analogous to the emanation of the gods as sweat and humans as tears. For this and other spells featuring Iaa cf. Frandsen, ‘On the Origin of the Notion of Evil’, *GM* 179 (2000), 9-34 and *Idem*, ‘Faeces of the creator or the temptations of the dead’, in: Kousoulis (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology* (2011), 58-61.

⁵⁶ See e.g. Golka, ‘The Aetiologies in the Old Testament. Part 1’, *VT* 26 (1976), 410-428; ‘The Aetiologies in the Old Testament. Part 2’, *VT* 27 (1977), 36-47.

In Assmann's model for the evolution of myth in Ancient Egypt, aetiological myths are found at the end of a long development⁵⁷. Though they already existed on a small scale in the Middle Kingdom, they become the dominant form in the Late Period. For their emergence the aetiological myths depend, not only on elaborate concepts of myths and mythical precedents such as those used in the magical texts but also on a new concept of history. In the form of a narrative *set in the past* they give the reason for the existence of a feature of the cosmos, for cultic matters or for political divisions. The use or 'funktionale Differenzierung' of the basic mythic constellations responsible for this actualisation of myth is 'knowledge'. However the knowledge found in these myths is not cosmographical but explanatory. This distinction is important for Assmann since he sees codified cosmology as existing from the Old Kingdom⁵⁸, and more importantly sees this cosmological knowledge as ritually effective⁵⁹, an effectiveness that is not accorded to mere explanations. For Assmann the narrative forms in the aetiological myths are related to the genre of the king's novel, i.e. from official writing of history. By borrowing from this source, myth comes to be seen in the reflection of history and history in the reflection of myth, in accordance with Assmann's view of history as an emergent dimension of *Gottesnähe* in the Rameside period.

Assmann furthermore distinguishes between cosmological aetiologies, which he sometimes discusses when dealing with theology⁶⁰, political aetiologies, which for Assmann is a significant late period phenomenon⁶¹, and finally cultic aetiologies, which he seldom touches upon. Though nowhere explicitly stated, it nevertheless appears that Assmann considers these cultic aetiologies as part of neither theology nor cultic effectiveness but instead as part of a specific form of Late Period history writing, something that is firmly focused on seeking connections with the ideal past and beyond to primeval times and the creation of the world in an attempt to canonise cultural identity⁶².

⁵⁷ 'Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten', *GM* 25 (1977), 34-36.

⁵⁸ See his chapters 3-4 in *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur* (1984), where he distinguishes between cosmological knowledge which belongs to the cosmological dimension of *Gottesnähe* and mythical knowledge, primarily names, which belongs to the linguistic dimension.

⁵⁹ Assmann, 'Unio liturgica', in: Kippenberg and Stroumsa (eds.), *Secrecy and Concealment* (1995), 37-60.

⁶⁰ e.g. *Ägypten* (1984), 138-141; *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (2002), 186-191 on the Book of the Heavenly Cow.

⁶¹ See the chapters in Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (2002) entitled 'Memory and Renewal: The Ethiopian and Saite Renaissance', with the sections: 'Discovering and Inventing the Past' followed by 'Shabaka's Memphite Manifesto'.

⁶² Phrase taken from his article 'Der Tempel der ägyptischen Spätzeit als Kanonisierung kultureller Identität', in: Osing and Nielsen (eds.), *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt. Studies in Honour of Erik Iversen* (1992), 9-25. On page 13-14 of the same article he discusses the mythological monographs which for him focus on the primeval hill aspect of the temple, which in his optic constitutes a *historical* dimension in distinction to the solar depictions that have to do with the *daily* recreation of the world.

Apart from the positive value accorded the cult aetiological myths for identity work in the Late Period, Assmann appears to be reiterating the same scheme for the historical development of myth found already with Jane Harrison, the figurehead of the Cambridge myth and ritual school. We have already reviewed her opinions on the early development of myth and noted how aetiology was the end state of this development. When ritual lost its original importance and meaning, myth now had to provide a reason for the continued performance of the ritual⁶³. This is echoed in Samuel Hooke's statements to the fact that aetiological myth has 'no magical potency, and does not seem to satisfy any more fundamental need than curiosity'⁶⁴, functioning only as an ephemeral explanation of the ritual.

In the first volume of the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*⁶⁵, Joachim Spiegel provided another Egyptological appraisal of aetiology, this time with an intellectualist approach to myth. For Spiegel aetiological myths were evidence of faulty causal thinking, or causal thinking in its infantile state. Not having developed insight into basic causality, the Egyptians provided mythological explanations for natural and cultic phenomena. The things explained are more often individual cultic entities in the world than general and natural. In cult, where aetiology is created when the reasons for the existence of the cult is forgotten or changed, this brings about cult legends in attempts to give order to the confusing array of gods and cults and make connections between different elements. The system or method used for the creation of aetiology is the pun, resting on the identity of word and object and given a philosophical basis in the Memphite theology. Given this view of aetiology as immature causality, it comes as no surprise that Spiegel seeks an earlier, rather than a later, date for the aetiological myth - a date he finds in the Middle Kingdom. The predominance of aetiological myth in the Late Period temples is acknowledged but found to rely on Middle Kingdom sources.

The opposite view is found in Schenkel's analysis of the great Horus myth from the temple of Edfu⁶⁶. Schenkel posits that the great number of aetiologies found in this text is due to the period in which it was written, i.e. the Ptolemaic. In this period the traditional Egyptian way of life was coming apart, but in fierce defiance of facts the indigenous priesthood authored texts which revelled in the native gods, ownership of the land, mastery of both local and foreign enemies and the unchanging nature of the godgiven Egyptian nation.

⁶³ Harrison, *Themis* (1912), 16.

⁶⁴ Compared to *ritual myth*, which is magical in character, cf. *The Siege Perilous: Essays in Biblical Anthropology and Kindred Subjects* (1956), 43.

⁶⁵ 'Ätiologie', *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (1975), columns 80-83.

⁶⁶ Schenkel, *Kultmythos und Märtyrerlegende* (1977), 121-123.

All of the three characterisations of aetiological myth thus depend more on the authors' view of the development of Egyptian culture and mentality than on the close reading of actual aetiological myths and their use. All three exploit the uncertain date of composition for most of the Ptolemaic Roman period temple texts to place the aetiologies wherever they fit into an overall perceived pattern of Egyptian history.

In her analysis of mythological texts of the Late Period Heike Sternberg deals with these aetiological myths but chooses to concentrate on their structure rather than their age of origin⁶⁷. She follows Assmann's distinction between the different levels of myth and focuses on the *genotypical* level, the level of the underlying structure. This means that the myths, as they appear at the *phenotypical* or surface level, can be reduced to strings of *mythemes*, which can be then combined to reconstruct the mythical genotypes. While acknowledging the fact that aetiologies feature prominently in these myths she demotes them to interjections⁶⁸:

Die Verknüpfung der einzelnen Mytheme kann im fortlaufenden Text durch Ätiologien unterbrochen werden. Diese Einschübe haben ihren Sinn darin, dass sie eine ganz bestimmte, speziell auf die jeweiligen Lokalitäten abzielende Kulturtradition zum Ausdruck bringen wollen. Sie haben primär also nichts mit dem Inhalt und der Struktur der Mythen zu tun und können bzw. müssen aus dieser Untersuchung ausgegliedert werden.

After excising these interjections, Sternberg finds intact at the core a mythical narrative that does not serve 'kultischen Fundierung', but codification of models for cosmogony and more importantly cosmology, i.e. precisely that area of knowledge which Assmann implicitly denied the aetiological mythological texts⁶⁹. While Sternberg disagrees with Assmann on the cosmological function of these myths, she too regards aetiology as something secondary and of lesser importance, even when not focusing exclusively on the *genotypical* level but also on the level of their actual function in the temples where these texts were written. Nevertheless, relegated to a footnote, one finds a statement on the function of these peripheral aetiologies⁷⁰:

Das bedeutet nicht, dass die Ätiologien in Hinblick auf die Bedeutung der Mythen unwichtig sind. Sie übertragen den allgemeingültigen Handlungen und Aussagen über die Götter, die sich im ‚Makrokosmos‘ abspielen, auf die Ebene des ‚Mikrokosmos‘ eines bestimmten Gaus, Bezirkes oder einer Stadt und vermitteln den Bezug zu den kulttopographischen Gegebenheiten.

⁶⁷ *Mythische Motive und Mythenbildung in den ägyptischen Tempeln und Papyri der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (1985).

⁶⁸ *Mythische Motive* (1985), 211.

⁶⁹ *Mythische Motive* (1985), 3-14.

⁷⁰ *Mythische Motive* (1985), 211 n. 1.

In this apt and concise characterisation, aetiology functions as a means of applying fundamental mythological patterns to specific and local places and rituals. Aetiology can thus simultaneously subsume the local differences in nationally acknowledged mythological schemes and stress these differences as *actualisations* of the same overall schemes. At least for the mythological manuals, this aspect of aetiological myths is the primary and part of the overall interpretative strategy of mythology presented in these manuals.

A similar view of mythological aetiologies is given by Barbara Kowalzig in her book on performances of myth and ritual in classical Greek choral performances, of which a large part of is applicable to the Egyptian material. She finds that 'Aetiology is the narrated form of diversity in Greek religion'⁷¹. This entails that aetiology does not focus on the particular in order to isolate it but to connect it to the general, so as to create a dynamic notion of religious space. In Ancient Greece this was brought about by the itineraries of gods and heroes travelling through the countryside performing acts that transformed natural landmarks into foci of religious attention and left cults and rituals in their wake⁷²:

Aetiology brings to the fore the largely unexplored phenomenon of the 'diffusion' of mythic figures and the cults they found. Heroes and gods act as unifying figures for entire areas; they are definitely more than local but they do not spread randomly. It would thus be wrong and unproductive to reduce the issue to an opposition between 'the local' and 'the Panhellenic'. Rather, aetiology is socially especially active in the space in between, in those in intermediate realms that characterize the local histories of Greece. Aetiology functions as a connective both within a local religious framework and in its relationship to others; heroes and gods related to each other in intricate networks constitute a valid reference system through which the relations between cults and their worshipping communities are expressed. The thing to keep in mind for the moment is that aetiology is a way of connecting individual localities to a wider framework of religious activity.

Her comments on the relationship between local and Panhellenic myth and ritual is especially pertinent to the Late Period Egyptian material, in which, as Quack has recently shown, it is exceedingly difficult to single out material that can unambiguously characterised as local, in opposition to 'official' mythology. Instead we find a complicated interdependence; local mythology becomes part of official mythology, which in turn acts upon the formulation of the local traditions⁷³. Rather than embarking on a futile quest for purely local myths it is more relevant to analyse the connections and links established between what was conceptualised as locally bound and universally valid.

Since Kowalzig's focus is on the public character of Greek religion, she consequently interprets the ties that she finds as being social and political, and as something that is

⁷¹ *Singing for the Gods. Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece* (2007), 24-32, quote from page 25.

⁷² *Singing for the Gods* (2007), 32.

⁷³ Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie? Zur Relevanz und Situierung geographisch strukturierter Mythologie im Alten Ägypten' *ARG* 10 (2008), 5-29

perpetually being contested and redefined, especially when performed in ritual, which is seen as an effective social agent⁷⁴. This approach proves fruitful in dealing with the situation in Greece with its public rituals and competitive city states but is much harder to apply to the Egyptian material where rituals are concealed inside the temple and the accompanying mythological knowledge reserved for the higher ranks of priesthood⁷⁵. Instead an analysis of how the mythological 'networks constitute a valid reference system' must look to the Egyptian priests, and not the community as a whole, and focus on what part aetiology had in construing the mythological system used by the same priests. Still Kowalzig's definitions provide a good starting point for an analysis of mythological aetiology in Egypt.

Concerning the way aetiologies work, she studies the particular view of time and history implicit in aetiological claims. Whereas Spiegel regarded aetiology as faulty causality, Kowalzig sees in Aetiology a substitute for causality. The endless chain of historical causation is severed by an immediate link between the mythic formative past and the (ritual) present. As such aetiology is paradoxical since it both asserts and denies the course of time. The phenomenon illuminated by aetiology becomes grounded in the mythical past, but is not influenced by the passage of time; it continues to exist in the exact same state as in its origin - 'until this day' (*r mn hrw pn*) as Egyptian aetiological myths often conclude.

In the previous chapter I discussed the use of past tense in myths as a narrative ploy and as one of the ways to project an ontological distance onto a narrative. The other world of the gods is inaccessible outside ritual or extraordinary circumstances, and is placed in faraway regions or in a mythical time that in the temple becomes the here and now of the ritual. If we apply this insight to aetiological myths and their transcendence of time we arrive at a different picture of the history told by these myths. First of all, their cosmographic nature becomes clear if the mythological reasons are not to be regarded as something that were only relevant for the first occasion but are still working as models in the re-enactment and re-creation of the mythical event. This is the point made by Sternberg, however, I would stress that it applies not only to the myths *abstracted* from their aetiological statements and despite of these, but precisely because of these statements which allows for the myths to be incarnated in the present and the particular, in the same way that the mythological statements, when associated with an act, allows for effective ritual action. As Spiegelberg

⁷⁴ *Singing for the Gods* (2007), 43.

⁷⁵ Especially the view of different aetiologies claiming absolute and exclusive authority when uttered does not fit the 'multiplicity of approaches' found in Egyptian texts. The notion of competing aetiologies recalls the writings of Sethe and Kees, in his cult-topographical works, who both looked for different mythological layers thought to reflect phases of redaction according to shifting centres of power.

noted the mechanism used for forming aetiologies is most often the pun; significantly the same mechanism is used in ritual to associate myth and act. When aetiology makes use of puns, this is often signalled by the name of the thing expounded coming into being, whereby aetiology becomes etymology, revealing the true meaning of the name given - just as it happens in the so called hymns with name formulae that Schott placed near the beginning of the mythopoeic process⁷⁶. Apart from suggesting a link between the two, the interpretation of names in both aetiology and ritual by means of puns testifies to the importance of interpretative activity and merits a closer view of the mythical etymologies.

Puns and mythical etymology

The importance of the phenomenon of puns or wordplays, especially in its ritual guise, has long been recognized⁷⁷. In combination with etymology it has often formed the basis of sweeping generalisations of Egyptian thought in accordance with ideas about the mental faculties of 'der altorientalische Mensch'. Morenz summarised the classical opinion in his article on puns in Egypt⁷⁸:

Für die alt-orientalischen Hochkulturen darf bemerkt werden, dass im Akkadischen (*amātu*), im Hebräischen (*dâbâr*) und auch im Ägyptischen (*md.t*) derselbe Ausdruck ‚Wort‘ und ‚Sache‘ bezeichnet.

These cultures display a tendency not to, or even inability to, distinguish between word and object, and for this reason the word is seen as (potentially) magical with the power to influence the thing with which it is connected. In this regard the power of the puns is an ingredient in sympathetic magic, what is also called *contagious magic*. In Morenz view, magic was gradually expelled by reason in Egypt, and so punning was eventually reduced to a literary or stylistic feature devoid of magical potency⁷⁹.

This simplistic view of Egyptian thought has long been disputed. For instance, Junge remarks that the premise of Morenz characterisation falls apart when it is remembered that the Egyptian word *md.t* is only used abstractly, for matters that can be spoken about, and

⁷⁶ Schott, *Mythen und Mythenbildung* (1948), 28-54 especially 37-42.

⁷⁷ See e.g. Loprieno, 'Puns and Word Play in Ancient Egyptian', in: Noegel (ed.), *Puns and Pundits. Wordplay in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (2000), 3-20; Malaise, 'Calembours et mythes dans l'Égypte ancienne', in: Limet and Ries (eds.), *Le mythe. Son langage et son message* (1983), 97-112.

⁷⁸ Morenz, 'Wortspiele in Ägypten', *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten* (1975), 329-342. Quote from page 331.

⁷⁹ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (1980), 9-10, as part of the gradual secularisation and 'the rise of the transcendent god'.

not for physical things, where *ḥt* would be used⁸⁰. Instead, Junge reconstructs an Egyptian theory of the *rightness of names*, seeking a rational explanation for the use of word play⁸¹. He bases his theory on an analogy between the intentionality of proper names and substantives. In the story of papyrus Westcar and the Birth Legend, the future kings receive their names from the utterances of their mother or other persons present at the moment of birth or conception. The utterances are intentional in that they express a wish for the child or that they relate to the moment. The reason that all Egyptian names do not express a meaning that can immediately be grasped is due to a posterior normalising of the name according to a traditional 'list' of proper names. However the meaning or motivation behind the name always remains there to be discovered, if not by recorded utterances then by resorting to similar words.

The names given to things also rely on the words uttered at the moment of their creation, that is by the creator god when he called the world into being. The name of the thing is then connected to the sounds that make up that name, but the meaning of these sounds or name is dependent on discovering the motivation behind the name. For Junge this analogy provides a reason for the etymological word plays, since names can be connected to other words by similarity of sounds. The Egyptian use of puns is then not based on faulty logic or procedure, 'the contagion principle', but is instead a perfectly rational practice based on faulty premises, viz. the notion of a creator god who provided names for all things⁸²:

Mann kann sich für die Weltbewältigung kaum ein geeigneteres Instrument Vorstellen, um Unbekanntes auf Bekanntes zurückführen. Die ägyptischen "Wortspiele" sind keine Spiele sondern Beispiele einer in ihren Voraussetzungen wohlbegründeten E t y m o l o g i e.

Junge's theory is remarkable because it escapes the two dead ends usually met in discussions of 'folk' or 'magical' etymology. One is the appeal to a notion of sympathetic magic, that like produces like, the other is the idea of sounds having a meaning in themselves, instead of being sounds or 'signs' arbitrarily connected to a meaning, as in linguistic theory since Saussure. Ideas of sympathetic magic and meaningful sounds are both unpalatable to modern science, but seem inescapable in theories of etymology, at least when applied to ritual. Especially sympathetic magic seems to inevitably seep in through the cracks of even the tightest formulated rational theory of ritual or magical language to

⁸⁰ Junge, 'Zur 'Sprachwissenschaft' der Ägypter', *Studien zur Sprache und Religion Ägyptens Fs Westendorf I* (1984), 263-264. The same argument holds for the Hebrew *ḏbr* and Akkadian *amatu*.

⁸¹ Junge, 'Zur 'Sprachwissenschaft' der Ägypter', *Fs Westendorf I* (1984), 263-268.

⁸² Junge, 'Zur 'Sprachwissenschaft' der Ägypter', *Fs Westendorf I* (1984), 267.

somehow characterise the beliefs of the actors⁸³. Thus Junge's theory constitutes real progress if one wishes to avoid the Frazerian notion of sympathetic magic, if only in the case of Egypt. Other cultures were not ashamed of the connection between etymology and sympathetic magic and sometimes gave it basis in fully developed and sophisticated theories of language. This is the major weakness in Junge's approach, because the magical or folk-etymologies are a universal phenomenon and require an equal universal solution if a theory is to be satisfactory. Apart from this, it is not at all certain that the name giving process in Egypt functioned as Junge, here he follows Ranke, would have us believe. Far from being the regular basis of naming, the cases from the birth of kings could be derived from the magical and ritual etymologies, based on sympathetic magic and usually reserved for the gods and only occasionally applicable to remarkable individuals.

For the moment I will ignore the question of the ontological or epistemological basis for these etymologies and concentrate on their actual use; in what contexts they were used and what form they took. To avoid further use of the words magical and folk etymology, which are both too narrow, and in some cases misleading⁸⁴, I adopt the term *semantic etymology*, coined by the indologist Johannes Bronkhorst⁸⁵. Bronkhorst's focus is on India in the Vedic period, for which he lists four characteristics of semantic etymologies:

- 1) Etymologies are not just for amusement, it is important to know them and they are a source of power
- 2) Etymologies are almost exclusively mythical
- 3) Etymologies deal with and reveal hidden layers of language
- 4) The number of etymologies for each word is not necessarily confined to just one

These characteristics also apply to ancient Egypt. That etymologies are not just for amusement or only function as stylistic features is clear from the sacred contexts in which they appear. For instance the spells for knowing the secrets of the sacred sites (CT spells 154-160) list advantages accrued by those who know the etymological aetiologies contained

⁸³ Cf. Tambiah's remarks (*Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality* (1990) 82): 'It would seem that we cannot yet completely exorcize the ghosts of Tylor and Frazer.' The concepts of metaphor and metonymy, which have been elevated from a status of poetical language to essential cognitive techniques, might in the future provide a backdoor for the re-introduction of Frazer's concepts.

⁸⁴ As Morenz noted etymology in Egypt is never folk-etymology but the work of the cultural elite ('Wortspiele in Ägypten', *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten* (1975), 337).

⁸⁵ 'Etymology and Magic: Yaska's *Nirukta*, Plato's *Cratylus*, and the Riddle of Semantic Etymologies', *Numen* 48 (2001), 147-203.

therein, such as free passage and acceptance among the gods⁸⁶. The second characteristic is valid for Egyptian religious texts as well since etymologies almost always refer to actions of the gods⁸⁷, but as to the third matters are more uncertain. From India Bronkhorst adduces evidence for secret names for gods, which differ from their ordinary names and which better fit etymological interpretation⁸⁸. In Egypt too we encounter secret names. These do not appear explicitly in connection with etymology⁸⁹ but could be the result of series of etymological permutations. The fourth characteristic is important for Egypt too. As in the case of aetiologies several etymologies for a single word can be produced. The name of the sun god, Re (*r-ꜥ*), is explained in different texts as the one who rises (*iꜥr*)⁹⁰, or as the one whose rays reach until (*r-ꜥ*) earth⁹¹. The specific etymology arrived at depends on the demands of the context. Even in a single text more than one etymology for the same word may be present. In the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* the name of the nome Meh, is etymologised by reference to the production of a boat (*smḥ*), the filling or completion (*mḥ*) of the god's relics, or to the wounding of the eye by the Oryx (*mꜣi-ḥꜥ*)⁹². Bronkhorst's comments on this phenomenon as it appears in the Brahmanas are equally pertinent to the Egyptian material⁹³:

The fact that multiple etymologies for a single word are frequently met with, suggests that the connections established with their help constitute a network rather than a one to one correspondence.

The idea of a network of correspondences was also noted in the section on aetiologies, and further underscores the function of the aetiological etymologies in establishing and using a mythological system.

In his exposition Morenz emphasized something that is often ignored in the treatment of Egyptian puns. Namely the intellectual work required by the Egyptian priest in working them out. Often the association of different words is tacitly assumed to be automatic and/or

⁸⁶ Sethe, 'Die Sprüche für das Kennen der Seelen der heiligen Orte', *ZÄS* 57 (1922), 1-50 plates 1-13, *ZÄS* 58 (1923), 1-24, 57-78, plates 14-31, *ZÄS* 59 (1924), 1-20, 73-99, plates 32-59.

⁸⁷ Malaise, 'Calembours et mythes dans l'Égypte ancienne', in: Limet and Ries (eds.), *Le mythe. Son langage et son message* (1983), 97-112.

⁸⁸ For instance Indra should really be Indha, meaning the kindler, but is he is still called Indra 'for the gods love the cryptic' (*Satapatha Brahmana* 6.1.1.2) quoted from Bronkhorst, op. cit. p. 154

⁸⁹ See for instances the lists of inverted names or 'seman' (*nr*) Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hieratiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh*, 2, 2 (1952), n° 1212, discussed in Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (1982), 89.

⁹⁰ e. g. *Pyr* § 452 b, references to further instances of this etymology in Malaise, 'Calembours et mythes dans l'Égypte ancienne', in: Limet and Ries (eds.), *Le mythe. Son langage et son message* (1983), 110 n. 35.

⁹¹ *Esna* 163,16.

⁹² Osing, 'Manuale mitologici', *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 7, 13-15 with still further etymologies for Meh found in the same section.

⁹³ Bronkhorst, 'Etymology and Magic', *Numen* 48 (2001), 155.

involuntary, but this is not the case and would, if true, be tantamount to diagnosing all Egyptians as schizophrenic⁹⁴. It needs emphasis that first of all, puns and etymologies are only applied in specific contexts, mainly the literary and the religious, and even in these contexts they are neither mandatory nor automatic. In the temple of Edfu a mandatory application would result in the instant collapse of all theology since the main god of the temple – Horus as the flying disc (ꜥꜣy) would have to be identified with Apophis (ꜥꜣꜣ), leaving all sense behind in an equation of god and anti-god. Secondly, it is a matter of tradition as some puns become permanent and fixed in their association with the words they explain and are mostly used for establishing links between two things that are already considered related; either by theology or by appearing together in a ritual. Thus puns are sought to strengthen a link or provide support for an argument already there.

As an illustration the etymology for the god Amon can be used. In texts from the Ramesside period, Amon is often explained as ‘the one who remains (*mn*) in all things in his name of Amon (*imn*)’⁹⁵, where Amon does not become the god of hidden immanence *because* of the pun, but the pun provides evidence for a characteristic already established in the *new solar theology*.

Even with these restrictions the range of word play is vast. Egyptian mythology is not a closed system and by equating one god with another, or by merging gods or splitting up a god into further beings the possible permutations of mythical statements that can be used without violating the borders of the system is practically infinite. This can be observed when it comes to ritual. Here the fixed part is the individual rite or action, which can move from one ritual to another, and in the process the spoken part of the act can be varied to provide links to other acts of the same ritual or to fit the mythological focus determined by the ritual⁹⁶.

The different levels of meaning, innovation and tradition at play in the pun are best illustrated by an example, which provides some basic insight into the mechanisms of aetiological etymology in Egypt. Spell 335 of the *Coffin Texts* gives the closest we get to an Egyptian definition of aetiology and puns in a passage, which has deservedly become the most often cited instance of aetiology: the coming into being of the feline form of Re⁹⁷:

⁹⁴ Cf. Bronkhorst, ‘Etymology and Magic’, *Numen* 48 (2001), 148.

⁹⁵ Sethe, *Amon und die acht Urgötter von Hermopolis* (1929), § 217-230 cf. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom* (1995) for further discussion of the formula.

⁹⁶ Cf. e.g. Otto, *Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen* (1958).

⁹⁷ *CT* IV, 282-289. For the construction *miw sw* cf. Uljas, ‘Noun/personal pronoun + personal pronoun as a grammatical construction in earlier Egyptian’, *JEA* 92 (2006), 245-248 and Schenkel, ‘Substantiv/Selbständiges Personalpronomen + enklitisches Personalpronomen, eine grammatische Konstruktion des älteren Ägyptisch?’ *GM* 217 (2008), 97-109.

I am that great cat, at the side of which the fruits of the Ished tree were split in Heliopolis, on that night of fighting and guarding the rebels, on that day of destroying the enemies of the lord of all. Who is that great cat? It is Re himself. He is called cat since Sia said of him: He is like (*miw*) the things he does. That is how his name of 'cat' (*miw*) came into being

The incident related here deals with the destruction of the rebels at dawn at the side of the sacred tree in Heliopolis. In the *Book of the Dead* version this is depicted in the vignette showing a cat cutting a snake to pieces beneath a tree. The cat is a form of Re, among other deities, and chosen for its ability to kill snakes. The text establishes a connection between a particular mythological episode and a manifestation of the god; it does this by punning on the utterance of a god. Sia, the divine intelligence states that the god is identical (*miw*) to what he does, which by association makes him a cat (*miw*).

The statement of Sia is worth exploring in some detail as it reveals a basis for aetiological etymology. Saying that 'the god is like his actions' creates a link between the actions of the god and the form that this god takes, in this case a cat, which is also a phenomenon of the natural world. This implies that the gods become manifest in or as the world by their actions, and as such the statement of Sia can be seen as formulating a principle of immanence. Eberhard Otto noted this long ago⁹⁸, but it has not been recognized that this interpretation is corroborated by the *Myth of the Eye of the Sun* in the Leiden papyrus⁹⁹:

And furthermore: He should be called 'Cat'. He acquired the face of a cat, since it is the divine form that remained from the great god at¹⁰⁰ the first time, namely Pre. It is his form as a cat. The cat is also the eye, which is the uraeus.

Here the cat is explicitly stated to be the immanent form of Re as the form that is left over from primeval times and as such it is also identified with the eye, i.e. the sun itself. As the gods are immanent in the created world, all things are essentially part of the divine¹⁰¹. This is not equivalent to stating that all things are divine or a treated as such¹⁰², but that they are

⁹⁸ Otto, 'Die Ätiologie des "grossen Katers" in Heliopolis', *ZÄS* 81 (1956), 65-66.

⁹⁹ Spiegelberg, *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonnenauge (der Papyrus der Tierfabeln – „Kufi“) nach dem leidener demotischen Papyrus I 384* (1917), pp. 24-25. Latest translation by Quack in Quack and Hoffmann, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 209.

¹⁰⁰ Note the archaic use of *m* instead of the usual *n* in the sentence *hpr p3 šp-ntr r.ir spi r p3 ntr 3 m sp tpi p3i dd p3-r* which may indicate that the explanation offered here might be a quote from an earlier text.

¹⁰¹ As argued by Finnestad, 'On Transposing Soul and Body into a Monistic Conception of Being. An Example from Ancient Egypt', *Religion* 16/4 (1986), 359-373.

¹⁰² As noted by Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (1982), 127-128. However Hornung's objections are only relevant at the level of practice, not theory. While everything may be part of the divinity, divinity is not equally present in all parts and cult is naturally orientated towards points of foci. This explains why the gods are not habitually identified with everything but tend towards specific manifestations; the pantheism of Egyptian religion is practical and cultic and not primarily philosophical.

potentially divine, and it is this potential than can be discovered or realised by means of aetiological etymologies.

Usually the agent behind aetiological etymology is anonymous. The aetiological formula usually consists of *dd* and the indefinite pronoun *tw*: *dd.tw* 'It is said'. In the rare instances where the agent is named it is either Thoth or, as in CT spell 335, Sia.

The temple of Tod contains another instance of what can be seen as an aetiology for aetiologies in general. It occurs as part of a punning aetiology on the name of the Tod itself¹⁰³:

Concerning this mound: It is the place at which Re arrived when he fought the Children of the weak one, when¹⁰⁴ he had departed from Heka-Anedj to search out his enemies in the towns and districts. When he travelled through the mounds and traversed both ridges of the valley, he inquired into the nome regarding its name, while the Ibis was in his following, his majesty's heart, providing counsel for the city he had arrived at. He entered the desert of Dep, belonging to the town on the western side, his enemies having fallen for his fearsomeness. He repeated his actions at the eastern nomes driving away the Evil of character from Egypt. He found them all together in this city. Djertu came into being as its true name.

Here names are given to the places encountered by the Solar god in his travels through Egypt. As he asks his way about, Thoth, the divine intelligence or mind of Re, provides answers or counsels (*shrw*), in the form of names for things encountered based on the divine actions taking place there. The answers are creative in that they fix or determine the nature of a place that is thus determined by the actions of the sun god and the language of Thoth

A very similar account is provided in the Legend of the Winged Disk in the temple of Edfu, where Thoth accompanies Re on his search for his enemies throughout Egypt, with each victory being the cause for a punning aetiology that fixes the nature of the individual nome¹⁰⁵. In both the myth from the temple of Tod and from Edfu, Thoth is present as the interpreter or intelligence of the Sun god. In the Edfu version it is notably that we find two different kinds of aetiologies. In the first Re speaks (*dd*) and, by a pun, something comes into being (*hpr*). In the second Re acts and Thoth supplies the linguistic aspect of the interpretation by himself uttering the pun. In both types of aetiology speech is included as an essential element needed to link the actions of the god to the coming into being of the different places, which can thus be seen as the conceptualisations, i.e. names, of divine powers and processes. The aetiologies are therefore not simple word plays, but an activity

¹⁰³ Tôd n° 188 = Thiers, *Tôd. Les inscriptions du temple ptolémaïque et romain II* (2003), 24.

¹⁰⁴ Restoring *dr*, cf. Tôd n° 40: *ir niwt tn hwt-r^c rn=s dr pr hm=f m k3 nht*.

¹⁰⁵ For an overview of the aetiologies in the Legend of the Winged Disc see Schenkel, *Kultmythos und Märtyrerlegende. Zur Kontinuität des ägyptischen Denken* (1977), 96-97 and passim.

calling for divine intelligence¹⁰⁶, and when engaged in semantic etymologies the Egyptian priest is essentially conducting a divine activity of linking natural phenomena with gods. In this respect the priest is involved in divine creative activity when he discovers, creates or applies etymologies, in the same way as he acts as a god when performing ritual.

As Assmann has emphatically stated the Egyptian cosmos is not primarily viewed as spatial and static but as an ongoing process¹⁰⁷. It is this process that the priest gains insight in by etymology and aetiology, which begins with an object or name and dissolves this into gods and actions. This 'loosening' of names into mythical constituents by aetiology and etymology, has an Egyptian term namely *wḥ*^c, which also covers other, related, interpretative actions as I will demonstrate in a later chapter, and which is central for the analysis of the Egyptian mythological manuals whose main focus is on the different locations or nomes of Egypt and the interpretation or 'loosening' of these into divine agents and actions.

¹⁰⁶ As such the hidden layers of language that Bronkhorst saw present in etymologies can be relevant for Egypt.

¹⁰⁷ *Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (2001), 73-74.

Method

The analysis of mythological manuals presented here focuses on the mythological systems that appear when the different mythological interpretations given in the various myths found in the manuals are compared to each other. The manuals can be divided into two types: those concerned with the traditions of Upper and Lower Egypt and divided into nomes and those dealing with the traditions of the individual nome.

Some of the relevant characteristics of Egyptian mythology, especially as they pertain to these priestly compendia, were outlined in the previous chapters; Realisations of myth are often episodic, rather than epic, and display a stunning variety of details, which are used in the semantic etymologies for establishing links between different myths and localities. The only previous study fully dedicated to Late Period myth by Heike Sternberg concentrates on the stable motifs or mythemes behind the different attestations of myth, neglecting both the actual form that the myth takes, and the context in which it appears¹⁰⁸. However, the details are important for the both the application of the mythological schemes and for reconstructing of the structure itself.

Mythemes or 'mythic episodes'?

Sternberg's use of the term mytheme is ill defined, and the criteria for equating one mytheme with another are not given. From her list of mythemes that make up the myths she studies, it is apparent that for her what characterises a mytheme is its surface structure resulting in 'Fight', 'Dialogue' etc. mythemes. By only equating mythemes with each other if they share the same theme, Sternberg does not risk equivalating what for the Egyptians were separate myths. On the downside it prevents her analysis from becoming anything more than a catalogue of items in the myths studied, and it leaves an insurmountable gap between this catalogue and her establishment of these myths' underlying structure. In contrast Katja Goebis views mythemes in terms of their functionality¹⁰⁹. A mythic episode

¹⁰⁸ Sternberg, *Mythische Motive* (1985).

¹⁰⁹ Goebis, 'A Functional Approach', *JANER* 2 (2002), 27-59. The functional approach is partly influenced by Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore* (1984), who also influenced Zeidler, 'Zur Frage der Spätentstehung des Mythos in Ägypten', *GM* 132 (1993), 85-109, but Goebis differ from Propp in viewing 'function' not as a text inherent category but as a feature of the context of use, i.e. in most cases the ritual's purpose.

expresses a relation between an actor and either what he acts upon, or whom he acts for. This structure, in which the actors fulfil a certain function, is the stable element in myth, and it is this structure which explains its function in a ritual context. Goeb's approach is intended to account for the use of myths in rituals, but when it comes to the myths themselves this functional approach is too abstract to take into account the differences in the myths, even though she allows for different contexts giving different forms to the same mythic structure.

It is thus a problem determining whether we are dealing with variants or 'allomorphs' of the same mytheme or different mythemes. However, this may in essence be caused by the very use of the term 'mytheme' which carries with it much of the baggage of the term from which it is derived, i.e. 'phoneme'. Levi Strauss' approach to myths was groundbreaking, but the strict equivalence between the analysis of language and the analysis of myths - to the degree that the two are in essence identical - is problematical and does not have many adherents today.

In this study I use a softer version of the term 'Mytheme' as roughly equivalent to 'Mythic episode', without claims to any analogies to the linguistic term 'phoneme', other than being a building block for constructing myths as phonemes are for constructing utterances. Instead of strictly defining how long a mythic episode can be, or how many actions it can contain, I have frequently let myself be guided by the texts when determining what makes up a mythical episode. In the mythological manuals studied here, each aetiology or interpretation usually contains a small excerpt from myth which can be a single action or short interaction between gods. Except for the obvious cases where a longer myth is narrated as an aetiology, I follow the manuals in taking each such aetiology as minimal meaningful episode that can be used on its own or combined with other episodes. This pragmatic approach to the nature of the mythemes or mythic episodes has consequences for the question of which mythic episodes can be equated, or better: how much an episode can vary. Not restricting myself to identical surface structures, I have in many cases used structural criteriae for equating one mythic episode with another. A case study of a single mythical episode can be found in the appendix *Gods Eating Gods* where I examine the possible transformations of an episode and how cognitive linguistics, metaphor theory and ritual concerns may provide explanations for these.

Paradigmatic and syntagmatic approaches

A similar loose definition of the terms paradigmatic and syntagmatic applies to this thesis. Again these are used as terms of analogy for characterising ways of reading the manual, and not in their strict structural-linguistic meaning. Hitherto, the manuals have mostly been read in a syntagmatic way, i.e. as a comprehensive mythological catalogue that covers the different regions from south to north. In this reading, each individual mythological episode is viewed as unique within the manual and relevant only for the section in which it is found. For instance, Meeks brilliant publication of the Brooklyn Delta papyrus is concerned with sorting and pursuing the different mythological elements appearing in the papyrus, tracing them in the entire corpus of Egyptian texts to reconstruct the individual myths for the different nomes from countless allusions and references. By his admirable detective work Meeks has both laid the foundations for all future studies, and set an ideal for anyone wishing to study Egyptian mythology. Meeks primarily uses the manual as basis for reconstructing the myths for *us*, but as he notes the purpose for the Egyptians priests were not the conveying of just an assembly of myths but instead a mythological system. While Meeks' provides many of the pieces for reconstructing such a system and gives an outline in his introduction, the pieces are scattered throughout his comments, and are not brought together in a synthesis¹¹⁰. Such a task, which demands a more focused paradigmatic reading of the manuals, is attempted here for the Tebtunis manual and for the Brooklyn Delta Papyrus.

The focus on systems and structure means that I will not primarily be concerned with elucidating all details of the myths featured in the manuals. Meeks have provided extensive material for the myths found in the Brooklyn papyrus, and while an intensive search for materials for fully reconstructing the myths found in the Tebtunis mythological manual would no doubt reveal many interesting parallels, I will not pursue this topic beyond what is necessary for understanding the structure and purpose of the manual. As a further word of caution it should be noted that I do not present any longer interpretations of myths, instead the study here could be seen as a necessary prolegomena for such an enterprise, as it allows for the necessary contextualisation of single myths and mythic episodes within a larger system of reference¹¹¹.

¹¹⁰ Meeks, *Mythes et légendes Du Delta: D'après Le Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84* (2006)

¹¹¹ For an interpretation of some of the myths found in the Delta Manual see my article 'Myths, Menarche and the Return of the Goddess', in *Of Lotus and Laurel, Fs. Frandsen* (Forthcoming).

Given the resemblances between the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* and the *Mythological Manual of the Delta* it is necessary to establish their relation. Here it will be argued on grounds of structural and linguistic similarities and matters of content that the two different works are based on sources of the same type, and that the Tebtunis Manual perhaps even contains edited material from the composition found in the Delta Papyrus. Unfortunately in the existing material there is no overlap of the nomes treated and so crucial evidence for establishing similarities and relations between the two texts and for exploring the role of recurring episodes is lacking. However in their present state each manuscript contains many seeming redundancies in the form of repeated information, and also recurring key words and gods.

These patterns point to two ways of reading the manuals¹¹². First of all there is the progressive reading starting with the first nome and ending with the last. This syntagmatic reading establishes one kind of meaning, concerned with the overall mythological shape of Egypt concerned with the characteristics of the individual nome, often in the form of semantic etymologies providing mythological interpretations or aetiologies for local divine and cultic phenomena. These etymologies are in the form of set verbal formulae, referring to the coming into being of an entity using the verb *hpr* or the naming of the entity using verbs of utterance (*dd*, *hr*, *k3*). The syntagmatic approach gives an image of Egypt in its totality as determined by the gods in primeval times. The actions of the gods left an imprint on Egypt 'to this day' that can be understood and actualized by means of interpretative techniques.

These interpretative techniques as they unfold in narratives of the individual sections will be the focus of my syntagmatic analysis of the manuals and the different means of establishing aetiologies will be explored in detail.

The other kind of reading is the paradigmatic, wherein the myths of single nome can be seen to be slight variations of a limited number of mythological schemes. This interpretation is supported by key words and what can be termed second order mythological interpretations, whereby gods or myths are identified with other gods or myths. This second order interpretation is usually offered in the form of nominal sentences, in which the local gods are identified with other gods. My paradigmatic analysis will mainly be concerned with the repetition of mythological schemes, in the Tebtunis manual episodes from the myth of Osiris, and especially the connections established by means of repetitions or allusions between the different nomes.

¹¹² For the history of the following two structuralist methods as applied to the study of myth see Csapo, *Theories of Mythology* (2005), 181-261.

The interaction between these two readings establishes a system capable of both incorporating variance and stable elements and the analysis will focus on exploring the details of this geographically structured mythological system.

The systems found in the super-regional mythological manuals should then ideally be compared to that found in the local manuals, as they exist in papyri and on temple walls. As these works to a greater degree operates with actual cultic reality and not just textual entities, they display greater variance, but this variance is again connected to larger patterns. This relationship between the local and national mythologies would be at the focus of such an undertaking. However, due to limitations of space the discussion of the local mythological manuals have been restricted to just one, the papyrus Jumilhace, and relegated to an appendix.

Mythological interpretations and aetiologies are not limited to mythological manuals but are also found in other types of religious literature. Some of the longer mythological narratives such as the *Pa-Nun cosmogony*¹¹³, from the temple library of Tebtunis, the *Legend of the Winged Disk*¹¹⁴ and the *Cosmogony*¹¹⁵, both from Edfu, and the *Fragments of the Memphitic Cosmogony*¹¹⁶ all contain aetiologies as part of the narrative. The set of aetiologies offered by these texts differ in focus from the local and cultic emphasis of the manuals in including a greater number of cosmic aetiologies, i.e. of significant features of the natural world such as the Nile, sun or moon, or the human condition.

Compared to the bewildering multitude of local myths found in the manuals, these and other late period mythological narratives such as the demotic version of the Contendings of Horus and Seth and the Myth of the Sun's Eye, deal with what can be termed the three dominant mythic complexes:

- 1) The myth of Osiris
- 2) Cosmogonies in general
- 3) The myth of the Return of the Goddess¹¹⁷.

¹¹³ Smith, *On the Primaeval Ocean* (2002).

¹¹⁴ *Edfou* 6, 108, 15 - 132, 5.

¹¹⁵ *Edfou* 6, 181, 9 - 185, 2.

¹¹⁶ Erichsen and Schott, *Fragmente memphitischer Theologie in demotischer Schrift* (1954).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Assmann, *Ägyptische Geheimnisse* (2004), 12-15. Assmann excludes the myth of the distant goddess from his list, while including the course of the sun. However, the daily course of the sun is not the subject of mythological narratives, but instead part of cosmological texts and above all hymns. For the distinction between mythic and cosmological discourse see Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmography', *Current Research in Egyptology 2010* (2011), 71-80.

In contrast to the remarkable overall homogeneity of style in the mythological manuals¹¹⁸, notwithstanding included excerpts from other genres, the longer narrative texts differ considerably among themselves in both form and content. This variance reflects different purposes, for instance as recitals accompanying major feasts, or as framing for didactical texts. Again due to limitations on space, an examination of and comparison to these texts have been reserved for an appendix, as is also the case for some comparisons with ritual handbooks. The mythological knowledge acquired by the priests was put to practical use in ritual. By examining ritual handbooks incorporating mythological narratives or episodes the relationship between theoretical and practical mythology can be better understood without need of resorting to a priori assumptions about the historical development and priority of ritual over myth.

I have devoted the last part of the thesis to an overview and comparison with the different genres of priestly literature containing mythological material. Priestly literature also contained other ways of systematizing mythological knowledge. By comparing the system found in the manuals with that of onomastica and other sources, the universality of the system found in the manuals can be estimated, something of relevance for determining whether the focus on the myth of Osiris in the manuals is theologically determined or an heuristic tool for understanding and applying mythology.

¹¹⁸ For the style of the mythological manuals see Rothöhler, *Neue Gedanken zum Denkmal memphitischer Theologie* (2006), 304-306.

The Tebtunis Mythological Manual

Manuscripts

The Tebtunis Mythological Manual is known from five different manuscripts from the temple of Tebtunis¹¹⁹, all written in Hieratic and dating to the second century CE¹²⁰:

PSI inv. I 72

pCarlsberg 308

pCarlsberg 592

pCarlsberg 593

pX¹²¹

The individual papyri are located in Florence (PSI inv. I 72) and Copenhagen (pCarlsberg 308, 592 and 593), with fragments interspersed in the collections. Jürgen Osing is editing the papyri, and has so far fully published one papyrus, PSI inv. I 72, in the volume *Papiri geroglifici e ieratici da Tebtynis*¹²² with parallels from the three other papyri noted. Osing has also translated a small section of pCarlsberg 308 in the *Festschrift* for Günther Dreyer¹²³. Papyrus PSI inv. I 72 consists of one large fragment of papyrus together with 13 greater and 57 lesser ones. The papyrus, as preserved, covers the Upper Egyptian nomes 7 through 16, but there are only insignificant fragments for nomes 7 through 9. Osing notes that the parallel manuscripts partially preserve nomes 10 to 16 in PSI inv. I 72, as well as further nomes from both Upper and Lower Egypt. As long as the other manuscripts remain unpublished it is hard to estimate their exact relationship, but judging from the variant readings offered by Osing there appears to have been only slight variation between them.

¹¹⁹ Personal communication from Jürgen Osing.

¹²⁰ See Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 130-131 for palaeographical dating of the PSI inv. I 72 manuscript.

¹²¹ I do not know where this last manuscript mentioned by Osing is located.

¹²² Osing and Rosati, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), pls. 17-21 with translation and comments on pages 129-188. As part of the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* project Frank Feder has transliterated and translated the manuscript, which is available on line: <http://aew2.bbaw.de/tla/>.

In the following, references to PSI inv. I 72 are given as *TM* (Tebtunis Manual), *column*, *line*.

¹²³ Osing, 'Zum Namen des Gaeus von Oxyrhynchos', *Zeichen aus dem Sand. Fs. Dreyer* (2008), 517-524 (translation on page 521 with partially hieroglyphic transliteration based on pCarlsberg 308 and perhaps further manuscripts from Florence).

Language, Date and Sources

The Tebtunis manual is based, at least in part, on older sources. For some sections the manual has close phraseological parallels in the temple of Edfu and Dendara, but no exact parallels exist for longer passages¹²⁴. In most cases the exact sources utilized by the author of the manuals are lost for us now, but the number of phraseological parallels indicates that much material was taken from works that enjoyed a wide circulation.

Also there are some interesting points of contact between the Tebtunis manual and *The Mythological Manual of the Delta*, most notably the presence of the rarely attested deities Horit and Dedun in both texts¹²⁵, and the section on Hermopolis in the Tebtunis manual is probably based on a, now lost, section of the Delta manual¹²⁶. This section is of particular interest for the transmission of the manual since it has many phraseological parallels and part of it, either in the Delta manual or Tebtunis manual redaction, can be seen as a source of epithets in a Maat-offering scene to Nehemetaua in the temple of Edfu¹²⁷, exemplifying how these manuals could be used as a collection of mythological motifs and epithets for composing rituals scenes. Finally the preserved parts of the geographical vulture section in the Book of Thoth provide an abstract of the individual nomes using their principal myths, which have much in common with the myths of the Tebtunis manual and could be either based on this manual or using a common source.

On linguistic criteria the sections of the Tebtunis manual can be characterized as ranging from Middle Egyptian to Late Egyptian with traces of Demotic¹²⁸. The language is mostly Middle Egyptian, but with some irregularities and Late Egyptian influence, notably in the use of the verbal forms $\underline{s}dm=f$, $\underline{s}dm.n=f$ and the particle *iw*. The manual makes use of *m-dr sdm=f* often written unetymologically as *mtw sdm=f*, in which only the placement of the suffix distinguishes it from the conjunctive. The full range of narrative verbal forms is used: $\underline{wn.in=f}$ (*hr*) $\underline{s}dm$, $\text{ḥ}^c.n=f \underline{s}dm.n=f$ and $\underline{s}dm pw ir.n=f$. The $\text{ḥ}^c.n=f \underline{s}dm.n=f$ is often written $\text{ḥ}^c.n \underline{s}dm=f$ as in Late Egyptian, but this could be a feature of changed orthography rather

¹²⁴ Contra Quirke who in his review of the publication by Osing and Rosati states that the text for nomes 15 and 16 are also found in the temple of Edfu (*JEA* 89 (2003), 286).

¹²⁵ For Horit see the attestations listed in Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 49-50. Dedun appears more often but mostly in standardised phrasings as god of incense or of the desert, cf. the *Wb* Belegstellen. However Dedun may have had a wider role in the national pantheon as he is also mentioned in the *Book of the Temple* as part of the supra-regional aspects of the temple decoration, see Quack, *Die Götterliste des Buches vom Tempel und die überregionalen Dekorationsprogramme*, 6. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung* (2007), 215. Cf. also the curious presence of Dedun in a tableau of statues in *Tôd* n° 248, I.

¹²⁶ See discussion below.

¹²⁷ See discussion below.

¹²⁸ Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 133 characterises the language as Late Middle Egyptian with Late Egyptian traits. The genitival phrase $\underline{db}z\omega=f n(ly) wrd-ib$ in *TM* 3, 11 is Roman Demotic cf. Osing, *ibid* 149 n. ab. See also the Late Demotic construction *rḥ r* in *TM* 2, 10.

than indicative of the original date of composition, the same is probably true of the writing *wnn=f (hr) sdm* for *wn.in=f (hr) sdm*.

As in Late Egyptian the *sdm=f* is often used for the past, alongside *sdm.n=f*, and often the distinction between the two forms have not been observed by the author or compiler of the manual. Some *sdm.n=f* forms are to be interpreted as non-attributive relative forms; in three instances subordinated by *is*, indicative of standard Middle Egyptian¹²⁹. No traces exist of the Late Egyptian emphatic or relative *i.sdm=f*, however three instances of *nty (hr) sdm* are found¹³⁰, and one case of the non-initial main sentence¹³¹ and the negative pattern *bw ir=f sdm*¹³².

The use of demonstratives and articles is often erratic, even within a single section. A single passage is markedly, if not exclusively, Late Egyptian with use of the first present¹³³. It may be significant that this occurs in a dialogue since other texts have been observed to display variances between the language of the main text and direct speech, with the latter more open to later redaction, shortening or widening¹³⁴.

All this points to an author or compiler making use of sources of various dates who was unable to or unconcerned with keeping a single standard of language. The inhomogeneous style and language of the text, which varies in style and language from section to section, and even from paragraph to paragraph, poses serious problems for a proper linguistic dating aiming at discerning between the different layers of redaction¹³⁵, however the presence of Demotic seems to provide a *terminus post quem* for the *final* redaction date in the 25th or 26th dynasty.

The contents support a dating post 25th dynasty. According to Derchain's study of the sacrifice of the oryx, the demonisation of this animal and reconfiguring of the emblem of the 16th U.E. nome is a phenomenon that only began in the Late Period under the Saïtes¹³⁶. From simply depicting an oryx on top a standard it now changed to show the Horus falcon

¹²⁹ *TM* 4, 4 and 5; 5, 6. Possible further example in 4, 21.

¹³⁰ *TM* 2, parallel to 24-31, no antecedent or definite article. 4, 4 & 21 both used attributively.

¹³¹ *TM* 2, 11. A possible further example in *TM* 6, 14.


¹³² *TM* 6, 17, in a dialogue.

¹³³ *TM* 2, 1-4.

¹³⁴ Cf. von Lieven's remarks on the editorial history of the Esna cosmogony, *Die Himmel über Esna* (2000), 101 n. 33. She suggests a Saïte date for the composition, consisting of an older text from Sais in Middle and Late Egyptian, which was subsequently enriched with a dialogue, which displays a grammar that differs considerably from that of the main text with features of Demotic.

¹³⁵ Following the method used by Quack for the pJumilhac ('Corpus oder membra disiecta? Zur Sprach- und Redaktionskritik des Papyrus Jumilhac', *Diener des Horus FS. Kurth* (2008), 203-228. For the methods and criteria of linguistic dating of Egyptian texts see von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 223-250.

¹³⁶ Derchain, *Le sacrifice de l'oryx* (1962), 15-16 and 23-38. Accepted and refined by Beinlich, *Osirisreliquien* (1984), 268f.

dominating the oryx . This domination is the main theme of the Tebtunis manual's treatment of the 16th U.E. nome, which, if Derchain's theory is accepted¹³⁷, should then stem from this period or later.

Title

The original title for the manual is partially preserved in pCarlsberg 308, which in the present state begins with the enemy determinative, followed by *sp3wt* 'nomes' and the book-roll determinative. As the enemy determinative is often used in the manual for forms of Seth (Be, Nebedj etc.) the end of the title can be reconstructed as: 'Seth (under some name) of the nomes', probably referring to Seth's appearance in all of the individual nomes in the manual. In the whole of this otherwise unattested title, Seth, in whichever form he took in the individual nome, would probably only have been one of the elements, perhaps starting with some element as *rḥ nt-ꜥ nt šmꜥ mḥw*, X, Y, Z, *stš sp3wt*: 'Knowing the traditions of Upper and Lower Egypt being the X, Y and Z, as well as the enemy/Seth of the nomes'. In the pJumilhac as well as in the temple of Edfu, *rḥ* is attested as heading for sections dealing with mythological material¹³⁸. Another word that might have been part of the title is *wḥꜥ* 'interpretation', used in the pJumilhac for those sections that not only lists *materia sacra* but also provides aetiologies for them¹³⁹.

After the book-roll determinative there is a small spatium followed by further rubrum, perhaps a sub-heading for the work. The first line of the text breaks here, but the rubrum continues in the next line interrupted by writing in black ink, probably the name of a god, and ended by another book-roll determinative.

¹³⁷ The problematical Middle Kingdom case of *CT* spell 157 in which the oryx is already responsible for damage to the eye of Horus is not sufficiently explained by Derchain (loc cit). In his review of Derchain's book Sauneron drew attention to a rameside depiction of a god standing on an oryx spearing it and attestations of the sacrificial ritual of the oryx from the 18th dynasty and suggested an origin between the end of the Old Kingdom and Early New Kingdom (*RdE* 15 (1963), 132).

¹³⁸ See the Osiris myth in Edfu (*Edfou* VI, 214, 1-223,2) and the examples in pJumilhac (5, 1; 6, 17; 10, 3; 11, 16; 12, 22; 15, 9; 16, 9).

¹³⁹ 7, 23; 3, 19 (lower register).

An origin legend?

The papyrus itself (*TM*, 2, 7) has a tantalizing fragmentary passage that reads: ‘...in the reign of the majesty of *Baunetjer*, life, prosperity, health’. The mention of king *Baunetjer*, with the Horus name *Hetepsekhemui*, the first king of the second dynasty is remarkable. It is tempting to see this as part of a legend of the origin of the manual, despite the fact that it appears in the section on Henu, the 11th U. E. Nome, whereas one would expect such a legend in the beginning or end of the manual and though the space, about one line, is a bit short for an elaborate legend. If the mention of the king is unrelated to the question of the origins of the manual as such, the king may instead be included because of his Horus name, which translates as ‘The two powers are at peace’. This is often interpreted as referring to the reconciliation of Horus and Seth¹⁴⁰, something of importance in the section of the 11th U.E. nome. As far as can be gathered due to the fragmentary state, the section is particularly concerned with the circumstances surrounding the bestowal of this nome to Seth. The preserved parts contain a dialogue between Geb and Horus in which Geb explains why the nome should be given to Seth, recalling his role in the Memphite cosmogony on the Shabaka stela where he also distributes rule over Egypt between the two warring gods¹⁴¹. However if this is the reason for including the king it is problematical that he is not referred to by his Horus name. Perhaps some legends existed that accounted for his role in the strife between Horus and Seth? Summing up, all that can be said with certainty is that at least part of the manual was ascribed to a very early period or that it purported to preserve legends or institutions from that date.

Contents and structure

While only some of the original work is preserved it seems certain that it originally covered all of Upper Egypt¹⁴², and probably Lower Egypt as well¹⁴³. The contents of the manual are close to that of *The Brooklyn Delta Manual* and the mythological sections of *The Papyrus Jumilhac*. The manual is structured on key concepts, mainly those found in the so-called *Priestly Manual*, which contains a geographically structured list of the nomes of Egypt,

¹⁴⁰ E.g. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (1992), 54.

¹⁴¹ See e.g. the discussion in Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt* (2002) 39-42.

¹⁴² pCarlsberg 308 begins with nome of Elephantine following the title, and virtually all nomes of Upper Egypt are attested on the four papyri.

¹⁴³ As stated by Osing, In the published papyrus and the pCarlsberg papyri there are no sections devoted to nomes of Lower Egypt.

naming their capitals, gods, priests, etc¹⁴⁴. While no formal division into nomes is found in *The Tebtunis Mythological Manual*, neither by section titles nor spatia, the mythological information can be seen to follow from south to north and offered one nome at a time. Each nome is divided in subsections by means of the particle *ir* ‘concerning’, written in rubrum, which introduces the topic for the following passage. This topic is then explained by mythological aetiologies, often ending in an aetiological formula.

The compendia format of the manual does not preclude an analysis of the manual as a single text; the final author or editor probably had a variety of different sources at his disposal, and did not just mechanically copy all information¹⁴⁵. The text is a result of his choices, arrangements and additions. In contrast to the structure of *The Priestly Manual*, the aetiologies and items featured in the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* do not slavishly follow a set sequence, as is illustrated in the following table which lists the order of appearance of important features for nomes 12-14. Due to lacunae in the manuscript, the exact order and number of items attested is sometimes uncertain and necessarily simplified since the different items often recur several times within a section:

12 th U.E nome	13 th U.E. nome	14 th U.E. nome
Nome	[Nome	Capital
Capital	Capital]	Gods
Gods	Gods	Relics
Taboo	Temple	Temple
Temple	Relics	Nome
Statue	Statue	Priest
Inundated area	Tree	Taboo
Relics		Dress
Festival		Tree
		Statue

Since the Tebtunis manual does not follow the same simple system as the nome lists, the order in which items appears were probably conditioned and modified by other concerns, some of which may have been order of importance and narrative structure. The often-conflicting demands of comprehensiveness and narrativity result in a compromise which,

¹⁴⁴ For *The Priestly Manual* from Tebtunis see Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1996) with further material edited by Rosati in Osing and Rosati, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 19-54, pls. 1-5.

¹⁴⁵ For this discussion see Quack, ‘Corpus oder membra disiecta? *Diener des Horus FS. Kurth* (2008), 207. Quack prefers to view the pJumilhac as a repository of tradition resulting in a additive uneven text. this might depend on a to close comparison between modern scholarly text editing and ancient scribal activities, since modern editing is aiming to be historical and comprehensive while ancient editing was probably more concerned with meaning.

while neither list nor narrative in the strict sense, nevertheless displays a remarkable coherence and potential for meaning.

The narrative coherence - centered upon (often repeated) items of importance and often depending on tacit knowledge of a whole array of myths - and the aetiologies tying the myths to the items in the material sacra list will serve as the focal points in the following analysis of the better-preserved sections dealing with U.E. nomes 12 to 15. These individual analyses will provide material for an interpretation of the text as a whole.

12th Upper Egyptian nome: Atfet

The text concerning the first nomes in the manual is too fragmentary for a proper analysis. The first nome for which sufficient text is preserved to allow a detailed study is the 12th Upper Egyptian nome, Atfet, with its capital Per-Nemty¹⁴⁶. The main part of the chapter concerns the adventures of the gods Horus, Nemty and Ukh.

From other sources two myths involving Nemty have been known for a long time. One is *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, with a parallel in *The Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days*, in which Nemty appears as a greedy ferryman. In the other, from *The Papyrus Jumilhac*, Nemty decapitates his mother. These two myths are brought together in *The Tebtunis Mythological Manual* in what amounts to a single mythological narrative¹⁴⁷. To achieve this goal the author had to make some concessions to narrative demands, the most striking of which is the substitution of Nemty for Horus in the second myth, to prevent having Nemty search for Nemty. While Horus is otherwise well attested in this role¹⁴⁸, the substitution is nevertheless remarkable in a chapter dealing with Nemty's nome. For an Egyptian of the Late Period this change was probably less dramatic, since Nemty is identified

¹⁴⁶ Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 138-143, pl. 19, 2-31 = *TM*, 2, 7-2, 31.

¹⁴⁷ For a study of these myths see Welvaert, 'The fossils of Qau el Kebir and their role in the mythology of the 10th nome of Upper-Egypt', *ZÄS* 129 (2002), 174-178. Ultimately Welvaert sees in all these myths an aetiology of the fossilised bones found in this region – a monolithic explanation which reduces myth to pre-scientific pondering. While I am sceptical of his line of reasoning, and especially of his political reading of the later versions of the myths, which founders on ascribing the myth in pJumilhac to the Ptolemaic Period when it can be shown to derive from the late New Kingdom or third Intermediate Period (see Quack, 'Corpus oder membra disiecta', *Diener des Horus FS. Kurth* (2008), 203-228), the fossils may very well be a factor in shaping the mythic-ritual complex of the region, a process which involved many other aspects than just natural surroundings. For the interplay between the natural world and local mythology see Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 5-29.

¹⁴⁸ See e.g. the episode from *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, with the close parallel in *The Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days* (entry for first month of Akhet, day 26 = Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 54-58). Plutarch makes a passing reference to the myth mentioning the mutilation of Horus and alludes to the decapitation of Isis (*De Iside* 19-20).

with Horus in many contemporary sources¹⁴⁹. By skilfully combining the two myths the author manages to present the mythological information in a narrative framework without neglecting aetiologies for almost all *materia sacra* relevant for Atfet. Alternate aetiologies for some of these are placed at the end of the section, so that the main narrative is only significantly interrupted by the exposition of the standard of Ukh.

The chapter opens with the patron god of the nome. Ukh, or Nemty in the variants, is named as the principal god, identified with Horus who is on the back of a wild bull -referring to an alternate name of the nome in the Graeco-Roman period and the emblem of the god. This is implicitly understood as Horus defeating Seth which here is accorded an aetiology since it stated to happen as retaliation for damage done by Seth to Horus' face. Attention is focused on The 12th Upper Egyptian as the place wherein this crime is punished. The injury sustained by Horus forms a bridge to the exposition of the combined myth of Horus-Nemty.

First myth: Horus decapitating his mother

As part of the background to the main narrative section we are told that Horus fled from Seth to the mountain of Dedun¹⁵⁰. As the incident has entered the Tebtunis Manual the reason for his flight is uncertain and depends on the translation of a single phrase. Either Horus seeks the safety of his mother Isis or else she is named as the one who ordained the damage done to Horus. The crux of the passage is the preposition *r-ht*, restored from a parallel, which usually means 'under the command of', as when the army travels *r-ht* under the command of the king, or when work is carried out under the command of a magistrate¹⁵¹. However the preposition *m-ht* 'after' is also sometimes written as *r-ht* in this period¹⁵². Osing chooses the second option, as does Feder, but by its position in the sentence *r-ht* probably refers to the injury, which then becomes the injury sustained under the command of his mother.

However, the parallel used by Osing for restoring the preposition is only given in hieroglyphic transcription and not in facsimile, but judging from Osing's notation even the parallel only partially preserves the preposition. It is tempting to restore *hft* instead, which

¹⁴⁹ Book of Fayum I. 260 identifies Nemty as the great Horus (Beinlich, *Buch vom Fayum* (1991), 162); *Edfou* III, 278: *nmti ntr ʿ3 s3 wsir*; *Edfou* V, 189: *nmti nb ʿ3ft hr ʿ3 s3 wsir*; Junker, *Philae* 1, 116 fig. 61: *nmti nb ʿ3ft hr ʿ3 s3 wsir*; Dendara: Beinlich, *Osirisreliquien* (1984), 120-121 (= *Dendara* X, 77): *nmti nb ʿ3ft [hr] pw s3 wsir* (Secure restoration based on traces).

¹⁵⁰ Either because he did not know what else to do, or because this place was safe from Seth who did not know how to (could not) enter it, depending on the restoration and translation of the sentence.

¹⁵¹ *Wb* 3, 347.8-12

¹⁵² The subtle differences between the writing of *r-ht* in the first sense and *r-ht* in the second sense attested in the *Wb* is of no use in deciding between the two since the phrase is missing in the main manuscript and only partially preserved in the parallel.

fits the lacuna, and the passage as: *dr kn=f r hft mwt=f*: Since he had damaged 'the enemy' of his mother, where *hft* is used in its well known euphemistic sense for referring to damage done to a (benevolent) deity¹⁵³.

As Osing notes¹⁵⁴ the location mentioned in the narrative, a mountain, and the damage done to the face of Horus recalls an episode from *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*; Horus was enraged because Isis chose to be lenient towards her brother Seth and retracted her harpoon from his flesh during a combat with Horus. Horus decapitated her and fled into the desert¹⁵⁵:

Then Horus son of Isis became enraged at his mother and he came out fierce faced like an upper Egyptian panther with his cleaver in his hand of 16 deben. He removed the head of his mother Isis and he hugged it and ascended the mountain (...) Then Pre cried out loud and he said to the ennead: 'we must hurry and we must punish him greatly'. Then the ennead ascended the mountain to search for Horus son of Isis.

Seth found him on a mountain in one of the oases, gouged out his eyes and buried them. Horus was left wounded and blind until Hathor found him and restored his eyes with milk from a gazelle¹⁵⁶. *The Brooklyn Delta Manual* offers a closer parallel to the Tebtunis manual¹⁵⁷:

Then her son Horus of Medenu defended his mother and protected his father bringing an end to his enemies. Some time after this they were fighting again and again. Then a possibility for victory arose for Horus of Medenu. He tied up Seth as a fettered prisoner. He was released by this goddess. Then Horus committed a crime because of this and this evil deed befell her head. Then Dedoun made him ascend, and the same was done to him.

The mention of Dedun, a rare presence in mythological texts, adds to the probability that this is the same myth as in the Tebtunis manual. In Meeks' interpretation of the Tebtunis version, Horus flees after having injured his mother and enters the mountain domain of Dedun, the god of the eastern desert, considering himself to be safe from Seth, only to be punished by Dedun instead¹⁵⁸.

Conceivably, the same plot found in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* and the delta manual is present in the Tebtunis manual. If Re decrees that Horus is to be punished for the

¹⁵³ Posener, 'Sur l'emploi euphemique de *hftj(w)* "ennemi(s)", *ZÄS* 96 (1969), 30-5 and Goebis, '*hftj ntr* as Euphemism: The Case of the Antef Decree', *JEA* 89 (2003), 27-37.

¹⁵⁴ *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 140.

¹⁵⁵ pChester Beatty rto, I, 9, 7-10, 2 = Gardiner, *LES*, 49, 12-50, 8.

¹⁵⁶ As these two myths are related, the reference to a mountain of *Dedun*, could find an explanation if the mountain had to be located outside Egypt proper, whether in an oasis or in Dedun's home in Nubia.

¹⁵⁷ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 11, 6-8 (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 24).

¹⁵⁸ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 260-262. In a broken passage, Dedun's violence is mentioned again in TM 1, 20: *in ddwn* 'wy=fy nkn' 'It was Dedun, with his two arms who injured...'. The Brooklyn papyrus also contains an interesting variant in which the culprit is Haroeris-Onuris who decapitates Tefnut and which is linked to the two damaged eyes of Horus-Khentynirty (pBrooklyn 47.218.85, 8, 11-9, 2, Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 19).

sins against his mother, this explains why he is sought after, something that is not readily apparent in the text which uses the passive voice for telling about the reward given to Ukh for searching out Horus.

The Ptolemaic *Papyrus Jumilhac* contains a number of parallels to the episodes found in the Tebtunis manual. The papyrus focuses on the local traditions of the 18th Upper Egyptian nome, but in the section of concern for the myth of Nemty, Atfet is mentioned¹⁵⁹:

Knowing the secrets of the Mehet-Imiut in this place according to another version. Someone committed this crime in Aphroditopolis, which happened in the temple of Hathor the lady of Mefkat. Then Re and the ennead heard about it and they raged and became very appalled because of it. Then Re contemplated¹⁶⁰ (the matter) with the ennead: 'Concerning his flesh and his skin, which his mother created with her milk and concerning his bones from the fluid of his father: Let his skin and his flesh be removed but his bones remain with him.' Then it was done accordingly in Atfet (...) Then he travelled to the nome of Dunawi with the gods who are in his following. Thoth was in front carrying his (Nemty's) skin. Then Hesat became concerned because of it. She created her milk for him anew in renewing his birth, and she milked the milk from the tip of her breasts to give it for his skin in this place, letting it (the milk) flow thereby, and she created an ointment in her jar treating his skin and his flesh with it (...) Then he became well in this place and his flesh grew back for him in renewing (his) birth and renewing his form (...) Then his mother Isis regarded him as a young infant since she gave birth to him again in this nome.


In the papyrus Jumilhac the different episodes of the myth; the crime committed against the mother and following punishment, the restoration and rebirth are parcelled out to different gods, who can be said to fill the slots in different phases of the same icon or constellation of mother and son¹⁶¹. The gods who interchange are Nemty, Anubis and Horus paired with the goddesses Hathor, Hesat and Isis. As the myth has entered the Tebtunis manual there is no explicit mention of Nemty, for whom a different section has been reserved treating another myth in which Nemty acts as the culprit, namely as the greedy ferryman. In the end the conflict between mother and son is resolved; the papyrus Jumilhac tells of the restoration of the son, Horus by his mother's, Isis, action. In this last phase the animosity between mother and son has been erased by the punishment of Horus and he is regarded as re-born. In the Tebtunis manual this phase is not treated in detail, but there is mention of a Horus *hpr-ms*, whom Osing identifies as the newly born Horus, perhaps even Horus in the process of being born¹⁶², who is rescued by Matit, a local goddess here identified with Isis and Nephtys¹⁶³,

¹⁵⁹ pJumilhac 12, 22-13, 9 with omissions.

¹⁶⁰ As Vandier notes (*Le Papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), n. 364) the use of the verb *dd* with the preposition *hm* is uncommon. Since the preposition implies some sort of cooperation with the ennead it is unlikely that Re just speaks *to* the gods.

¹⁶¹ See Vandier's study of the myth in his edition of the papyrus (*Le Papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 64-73). For the use of the term 'constellation' in myth analysis see above.

¹⁶² *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 142 n. r. For the designation *hpr-ms* cf. the name given to the foetal (?) sun god in *Dendara VI*, 163 *r^c-hpr-iwf* 'Re becoming flesh' contrasted with the born sun god *r^c-iwf*

from Apophis¹⁶⁴. In pJumilhac the rebirth is seen in connection with rituals carried out in the mammisi of the nome, while the Tebtunis Manual refers to a mountain containing a temple of Horus (?) where Horus is healed of his injury, by being reunited with his putrefaction, i.e. the bodily fluids that escaped his body during his injury¹⁶⁵. As suggested by Osing this episode may provide aetiology for the writing of Atfet that displays a mountain over a snake ¹⁶⁶, or it could refer to the local divine mound.

Second myth: Nemty the ferryman

Onto this myth is latched another mythic episode revolving around Nemty as the greedy ferryman. It is previously known from two New Kingdom sources, *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, and *The Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days*. These two versions differ among themselves, and are both considerably different from the version in the Tebtunis manual, to which the calendar version appears to be the closest. The manual and calendar use the same word for the actual transgression committed by Nemty since he reveals (*sri*) the divine corpse, but in the calendar the corpse belongs to Osiris while it probably belongs to Horus in the Tebtunis Manual¹⁶⁷ where it is found guarded by a crocodile and not in a tent¹⁶⁸.

‘Re (as) flesh’. Differently read by Cauville, *Dendera V-VI. Traduction: Les cryptes du temple d’Hathor I* (2004), 466.

¹⁶³ This identification is also found outside the Tebtunis manual. The expression *m3tit m s3t3=s (n) 3st* recurs verbatim in Dendera (*Dendara I*, 94, 7; *Dendara X*, 77=Beinlich, *Osirisreliquien* (1984), 120-121).

¹⁶⁴ Given the circumstances this could be connected to Apophis as the umbilical cord of Re. For this motif see von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 140.

¹⁶⁵ *rdw* and other fluids are usually said to come from the corpse of Osiris, but Feder refers to a vignette in pJumilhac (5, bottom row, left): A shrine houses the *imi-wt*, containing the body parts of Osiris, and a jar with sprouting corn bearing the legend: *iwtw hr* ‘putrefaction of Horus’.

¹⁶⁶ See Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 140. However, if an aetiology was intended here this would leave the snake unaccounted for. In the extant parts of the Tebtunis manual there are no traces of an aetiology for the serpent. Such an aetiology is found in the pJumilhac, which refers to a serpent of silver:

‘The 27th: ‘The day of finding the thigh of ‘someone’ (Osiris) on the eastern side while it had produced a silver worm (pun on *hd* ‘white, a white worm = maggot) and it (the worm) was established on the head of an ox which is called Nemti’ (*sw 27 hrw n gm sdh mn hr w3t i3b iw=f ir fntt n hd iw=w smnt=f hr tp n w3 ih iw=w dd n=f nmti* pJumilhac 4, lower section ll. 18-20).

For the association with the 12th U. E. nome see Vandier, *Papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 233 n. 893.

Lexemes that cover snakes as well as worms are discussed in Egberts, *In Quest of Meaning* (1995), 284ff. For Nemty and desert mountains in connection with silver mining cf. Aufrière, *L’univers mineral II* (1992), 385-386.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 142 n. 1. This difference is not very great since the damaged or wounded Horus was easily identified with Osiris, the section in the Tebtunis Manual contains a reference to Osiris buried but in a broken passage which defies any closer analysis (*TM*, 2, 19). The Book of Fayum lists the gods of this nome as: Nemty the great Horus, Ukh and the dismembered one (*nmti hr 3 wh t3t3*. Beinlich, *Buch vom Fayum* (1991), 162-165 ll. 260f). The delta manual juxtaposes the buried Osiris and the buried Horus (pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 16, 2. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 35).

¹⁶⁸ If the word is read as *hmst* (with crocodile det.) ‘Sitting female (crocodile)’ then it might be a reference to Isis, who in the Hibis temple is depicted as ‘a crocodile headed canine reclining on a stand’ (Cruz-Urbe, *Hibis Temple Project I* (1988), 30-31) - perhaps even the local form of Isis giving birth to

The calendar entry for the third month of inundation, day 13 is designated as: 'Dangerous, dangerous, dangerous'. Osiris had been transported to Abydos onboard the Neshmet-bark and Seth was anxious to get across the Nile. Since the ferryman Nemty had been told not to ferry any worms across¹⁶⁹, Seth transformed himself into an old man, seemingly on the verge of death¹⁷⁰. If appeal to his condition was not enough Seth offered gold as a reward to Nemty, who in this case acted as the Egyptian equivalent of Charon, for transport across the Nile to the West, the land of death and re-birth. Nemty accepted the price offered, effectively revealing (*srt*) the divine limbs of Osiris¹⁷¹, allowing Seth and his army of worms to enter the embalming tent of Osiris. The other gods interceded and slaughtered Seth's gang, in the form of cattle, while Seth himself escaped having disposed of the relics of Osiris in the water¹⁷². For his greed Nemty was punished by removal of his tongue or skin¹⁷³.


The mention of the slaughter of sacrificial animals, a common fate for the followers of Seth in aetiologies for sacrifices¹⁷⁴, finds resonance in the Tebtunis Manual, which also refers

Horus-Nemty. The presence of Matit here as well as in the section concerning *hr-hpr-ms* supports such an interpretation.

In a section devoted to the wisdom of Isis, Diodorus (First book, chapter 2) relates how she even managed to bring her son Horus back to life after he had been killed by the Titans and thrown into the water.

¹⁶⁹ To avoid infestation of the corpse of Osiris. For worms in connection with decomposing corpses cf. e.g. *BD* 154.

¹⁷⁰ So I interpret the phrase: 'A short, old man in the embrace of the great embracer'. i.e. Nut who receives the dying sun-god at sunset. Cf. Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 121.

¹⁷¹ Leitz translates *srt* here as 'Schädigen (?)'. However the word is written  as usual, and should be translated in accordance with the root meaning of the word which is 'to announce' (*Wb* 4, 189,15-190,17). At least from the Middle Kingdom the act of revealing or uncovering the corpse of Osiris becomes a metonymic expression for doing damage to the corpse (see for example the Book of Gates, 9th hour, lower register scene 59 = Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits I* (1979), 318-323)

¹⁷² This is my interpretation of the broken passage here, taking *hft* as yet another instance of the euphemistic use of this word. Leitz takes *m hft hr* as the composite preposition *m-hft-hr* despite the enemy determinative of *hft*. For the disposal of the relics of Osiris in water cf. Quack, 'Die rituelle Erneuerung der Osirisfigurinen', *WdO* 31 (2000/01), 5-18. This motif includes not only the theft of relics after the death of Osiris but also an act immediately following the murder, see pBM 10090, x+5,4 = Herbin, *BIFAO* 88 (1988), pl. 7 and p. 103. Occasionally the motif is extended to Seth's actions against other gods than Osiris; so in pJumilhac 17, 4-5 (Vandier, *Le papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 129), where Seth throws the writings of Thoth in the water, Thoth then replaces the writing by means of magic, recalling the incident in the Contendings of Horus and Seth where Isis cuts off the semen tainted hands of Horus throws them into the water and replaces them by magic (pChester Beatty I, 11,4-11,7 = Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories* (1932), 52). The older version in CT spell 158 has Sobek reclaim the hands from the depths.

¹⁷³ Leitz (122) regards *ns* as an error for *imm*, however it might have been a deliberate choice by the scribe influenced by the similar punishment visited upon Sobek for devouring the floating limbs of Osiris. The calendar is structured by a number of complex systems and associations between mythic episodes on different dates are probably intended, cf. the chapter on the different systems at work in the calendar in Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 452-479.

¹⁷⁴ See for example the aetiology for the ritual *Hoeing of the Earth* in Busiris in *BD* 18. In CT I, 155 b-c [37] the confederates of Seth are likewise small cattle.

to slaughter in connection with an aetiology for the local ban (*bwt*) on gold, which is a appropriate for an area renowned for its silver¹⁷⁵: 'Gold is *bwt* on account of its colour because of the stench that is 'far from' the slaughter of his fattened beasts'. This is probably a reference to a ritual wherein cattle are slaughtered. Ritual slaughter might occasionally be brutal¹⁷⁶ and was definitely smelly; however in texts slaughter is usually not associated with smells but instead with concern for purity¹⁷⁷. The stench mentioned in the Tebtunis manual couched in the euphemistic 'far from' is designated by *snsn*, a word otherwise attested only for the rotting corpse of Osiris¹⁷⁸, and is better explained as coming from the tanning of the skin, a procedure which involves partial rotting of the skin to remove the fur¹⁷⁹. The mention of the 'colour' (*inm*) of gold is probably intended as a pun on 'skin' (*inm*)¹⁸⁰. This in turn leads us back to the passage from *The Papyrus Jumilhac*, the primary purpose of which is to provide an aetiology for the imi-wt fetish which was made from cow hide. The Tebtunis manual is not concerned with the imi-wt, but is focused on the emblem of Ukh, which is envisioned as a (gilded) silver statue adorned with four feathers on a standard atop the skin of Horus¹⁸¹.

The combined myth of Nemty-Horus and the 12th U.E. nome

If we apply the information offered from the parallels to the Tebtunis Manual, it would appear that Horus and Nemty suffer the same fate since both are flayed. The reasons for this sentence differ according to their respective crimes: Horus is punished by removal of the parts coming from his mother, i.e. the gold, while Nemty has to give up the gold he received

¹⁷⁵ *TM 2*, 17. The *ṣrk-wr* silver is the tribute offered by Atfet in nome processions cf. Beinlich, *Studien zu den „Geographischen Inschriften“ (10.-14.o.äg.Gau)* (1976), 134 and pl. 18.

¹⁷⁶ cf. the butchering techniques used in *The Ritual for Opening the Mouth* wherein the leg is removed from the still living ox, followed by the heart, to be presented still twitching to the statue of the deceased. The violent aspects of this ritual are stressed by Lorton, 'The Theology of Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt', *Born in Heaven, made on Earth* (1999), 158-166.

¹⁷⁷ In reliefs we find the Sakhmet priests examining the purity of the blood coming from the slaughtered animal, which shows that the Egyptians were concerned with the purity of the animals chosen for sacrifice. Cf. Engelmann & Hallof, 'Der Sakhmetpriester, ein früher Repräsentant der Hygiene und des Seuchenschutzes', *SAK 23* (1996), 103-146.

¹⁷⁸ See BD 154.

¹⁷⁹ For attestations of this stage in the preparation of leather see Hasanien, 'Leather manufacture in Egypt', *GM 161* (1997), 75-85. For the stench associated with this procedure cf. the Satire of the Trades in papyrus Lansing and Dua-Kheti. A new treatment is given by Stephan Jäger in *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*, *LingAeg-StudMon 4* (2004).

¹⁸⁰ For other puns on 'skin' and 'colour' see the papyrus of Pwerem (pBM 10288 Column A, ll. 7-11 Caminos, *JEA 58* (1972))

¹⁸¹ This passage solves the problem of identifying the object attached to the base of the standard, shown variously as a piece of cloth of (*Wb 1*, 352.2) or a slanted T on a mount (Posener-Kriéger & de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri* (1968) pl. XIV and Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï* (1967), 65-66, 75-79). For a discussion of the Ukh-standard see Willems, *Coffin of Heqata* (1996), pp. 228-231.

as payment for ferrying Ukh across the river. It is unclear whether Ukh himself is punished or not. Since his standard is usually gilded, he would appear to escape the ban on gold imposed on Nemty. In the manual there is on the one hand a reference to a god Nebty whose divine flesh is of gold because of the reward of gold given¹⁸², which points to Ukh since he was the one given gold to search for Horus, but it might also be a reference to Horus of Gold who in the Ptolemaic period was connected to the 12th U. E. nome¹⁸³, sometimes identified with Nemty¹⁸⁴. Perhaps the whole purpose of introducing Nebty in this passage is to provide a reason for the presence of Horus of Gold in this nome by equating him with Ukh, rewarded with gold. If, on the other hand, the fattened beasts slaughtered belong to Ukh, this would point to a similar punishment of Ukh himself, as he was traditionally depicted as a bull¹⁸⁵. In this case the skin forming part of his standard might ultimately derive from himself, which would also explain the euphemism used to describe the stench from the animals. The evidence does not allow the question to be settled finally, probably the same subtle system of transference of punishment is at play here that we find in the Papyrus Jumilhac concerning the imi-wt standard of Anubis, which displays his skin¹⁸⁶.

As aetiology the narrative further explains the appearance of Ukh-standard, as well as the writing of the name Nemty with the sign of a finger on line: \perp , the latter unfortunately in a broken passage were we learn of a man 'who causes that a finger is made as his sign (*tit*)'¹⁸⁷. The interpretation might have been along the lines of the interpretation given by the papyrus Jumilhac¹⁸⁸:

Because of this gold became but in Atfet. Concerning gold: it is his flesh. Concerning silver: it is his bones. A silver statue of Nemty was erected because of this. Concerning this \perp which is made on the $_$: Concerning \perp : it is his bones; concerning $_$: it is his skin

Alternatively the aetiology offered in the Tebtunis Manual would have focused more on the actual finger, given that this was considered the local relic of Osiris. This is supported by the mention of Hapy, the son of Horus, also a local relic in the preceding paragraph¹⁸⁹. In the

¹⁸² *TM* 2, 15.

¹⁸³ See for instance the Edfu nome list (*Edfou I*², 340) and cf. Osing and Rosati, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 142 n. m with references on p. 138 n. 42.

¹⁸⁴ Edfou V, 189 (plate 119): *nmti nb 3fti hr 3 s3 wsir bjk n nbw hnti wts.t drti wr ph.ti m wts.t-hr 3 sfti hnti 3fti-hnti*

¹⁸⁵ See the references in Osing and Rosati, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 142 n. p and 66.

¹⁸⁶ See the discussion in Köhler, *Das Imiut* (1975), 387-422.

¹⁸⁷ *TM*, 2, parallel to 24-31.

¹⁸⁸ 12, 26-13, 2

¹⁸⁹ For the finger and Hapi as relics in the 12th U. E. nome see the nome list in Edfu (*Edfou I*², 340). The king has come that: 'he may bring to you Atfet, the House of Horus of Gold, together with Hapi and the finger (?) in the jar'. Unfortunately it is not certain whether the correct reading is 'finger' (*db*⁶) or 'nail' (*nt*). Cauville suggests reading the sign here and in the geographical procession in the Osiris

Contendings of Horus and Seth, Nemty is punished by the removal of the front of his toes, i.e. his toenails¹⁹⁰ a reference to the talons of Nemty as bird of prey¹⁹¹. In the Tebtunis Manual the finger might have been cut off in a variant aetiology of the sign. Finally the geographical section of *The Book of Thoth*, the so-called Vulture text, offers a last option. The entry for the 12th U. E. nome¹⁹² runs: 'A vulture whose finger is extended, while its young...[It is] Per[-Nemty].' The gesture made by the vulture is probably a sign of reproach, it points its finger, and the object of its contempt could very well be Nemty¹⁹³. Apart from these aetiologies the section in the Tebtunis manual also contains references to the inundated area of the nome, Tbtj, and finally the main local feast on the third month of Peret day 3¹⁹⁴.

While the section on the 12th U.E. nome inserts the majority of these aetiologies in a single combined myth of Horus-Nemty in which the local gods and their actions are anchored, it is clear that it is not intended as a straightforward narrative. We do not find any references to motives or causes to carry the narrative¹⁹⁵ and some episodes are only alluded to by a single keyword, others by short passages, while further mythic episodes are simply latched onto the main part without any concern for narrative coherence. However the rudimentary narrative structure would allow persons already familiar with the myth, or accustomed to think in mythic patterns, to quickly grasp the sequence of events to see how the different gods mentioned would fit these patterns. By keeping the narrative passages to the bare minimum a skilled reader would require to decipher the mythic references, the text remained open for multiple interpretations and associations. Furthermore the focus on key words might have had a mnemotechnic function, as myths could be memorized by first

chapel on the roof of the temple of Dendara (Beinlich, *Reliquien* (1984), 120-121 = *Dendara X*, 77), which also mentions Hapy, as *šbb* 'tracheé' (*Le temple de Dendara : les chapelles osiriennes II* (1997), 40).

¹⁹⁰ pChester Beatty I, rto, 7, 13 = Gardiner, *LES*, 47, 2-4.

¹⁹¹ For a discussion of the nails or talons of a bird of prey associated with Atfet and probably linked to Nemty in the form of a falcon see Beinlich, *Studien zu den „Geographischen Inschriften“ (10.-14.o.äg.Gau)* (1976), 130ff. with reference to *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* and *PT* § 461 where the animal is probably a feline.

¹⁹² L01 (vs.), x+2/11: *w^c.t nly.t r p3e=s tb3 swtn r p3e=s dw...š...pr[-Nmtj (?) p3y]* (Transliteration and translation in Jasnow and Zauzich, *The Book of Thoth* (2005), 340 and 342).

¹⁹³ The verb *db^c* 'to reproach' appears in the section on Hermopolis in the Tebtunis Manual. The expression *wstn db^c* in the Book of Thoth probably represents a change in the figure of speech from Middle Egyptian to Demotic since *db^c* as a verb is not attested in Demotic (?). For the expression in Coptic **ⲧⲉⲕⲥ ⲧⲏⲏⲉ** cf. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary* (1939), 397 and 407.

¹⁹⁴ Restored with reference to the nome list at Edfu (*Edfou I*², 341).

¹⁹⁵ For the lack of interest in personal motives and for related stylistic properties of these texts cf. Rothöhler, *Neue Gedanken zum Denkmal memphitischer Theologie* (2006), 304-306.

reducing them to an aetiology which could then be condensed into a single name or epithet¹⁹⁶.

13th Upper Egyptian nome: Atef-Khent

The next nome is Atef-Khent with its capital Assiut. The patron god of this nome is the jackal Upwawet, The Opener of the Ways, who is one of the most frequent attested gods in Egyptian reliefs since, as his name suggests he often heads processions atop his standard. Hitherto no myths exclusive to Upwawet has been known, though he often appears as substitute for either Horus, in the role of Son of Osiris, or Anubis, in the role of guardian of the dead Osiris. It is the connection with Anubis and the guardian role that is emphasized in this section, detailing a myth involving Anubis eating of the corpse of the god; something alluded to in other texts. Onto this myth is added a section that refers to the relationship between Hathor-Isis, The lady of sixteen and The one of the Granary (a temple), as the Mother of God in this nome¹⁹⁷ here apparently the combined Upwawet-Horus as the heir of Osiris. Apart from a few lines lost in the beginning of the section it is almost complete¹⁹⁸.

The lacuna in the beginning contained a listing of the important gods, of which only Anubis remains and continued with an aetiology for the name of the nome 'Atef-khent'. Next the area in Assiut which was home to The one of the Granary is designated as a protected district (*w h_w*), which here probably means an area of limited access and concerned with Osiris¹⁹⁹. This place appears to be the locale for the main myth. This myth is introduced by another aetiology for Assiut, which is explained as 'The guardian of things' (*s3w ht*), being Upwawet or Anubis guarding the relics of the dead Osiris.

¹⁹⁶ For this aspect of mythological manuals cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 169-170. The pJumilhac lends itself especially well to such an interpretation since it includes list of names, lists of short mythic explanations of or aetiologies for these names and finally longer narratives giving these myths in detail.

¹⁹⁷ For this relationship cf. DuQuesne, 'The Great Goddess and her Companions in Middle Egypt', *Mythos und Ritual* (2008), 1-26.

¹⁹⁸ Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 143-150, pl. 19 = *TM*, 2, 31-3, 22. Quack has translated the passage dealing with Upwawet and the corpse of Osiris in 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 12-13.

¹⁹⁹ For *hw* see Malaise 'Du mot chu exprimant le caractère "exceptionnel" des divinités ou des êtres', *CdÉ* 64 (1989), p. 111-120. In connection with sacred trees the word is discussed by Komoeth, *Osiris et les Arbres* (1994), 69-70, 98. For statues that are *hw* see Ockinga, '*ti.t šps.t* and *ti.t dsr.t* in the Restoration Stele of Tutankhamun', *GM* 137 (1993), 77 who notes the overlap in meaning between *hw* and *dsr* 'secluded'.

Anubis-Upwawet eating the corpse of Osiris

This part of the section begins with a quick outline of the myth: 'A dog fed on it and it vomited'. The geographical section of the Book of Thoth demonstrates the importance of this myth for Assiut, which is described as: 'A vulture in whose hand her young is while it vomits what it has eaten: That is Assiut.'²⁰⁰

Anubis or Upwawet unwittingly eats of Osiris and licks the fluids oozing from the decaying corpse. As Joachim Quack notes the description is based on actual behaviour of dogs, which devour rotting flesh and often eat their own vomit²⁰¹. Their subservient behaviour is echoed in the way that the dog presents Osiris with his relics and barks for a reward and later becomes shameful after having learned the nature of what it ate.

The rudiments of this myth have previously been known from the judgment scene in the *Book of Gates* and from *Coffin Text* spell 156, in both places inserted in a lunar context²⁰². The repeated action of eating and vomiting and then eating again lends itself particularly well to a lunar oriented cosmological interpretation, since the waxing and waning of the moon can be expressed in mythical terms without violating basic narrative demands for conclusive actions having a permanent consequence²⁰³. In the present section of the Tebtunis manual there are no traces of such lunar interpretations, and as a whole the manual appears unconcerned with astronomical interpretations. Instead the repeated action is inserted into an aetiological account of the local relic, standard and a ritual connected to these.

As background for the myth it is stated that Upwawet hid the dismembered one in the caverns of his house. The notion of a cavern (*tpht*) underlines the Osirian aspect introduced with the mention of protection (*hw*) and perhaps also a feature of the *šn^c*-temple. *šn^c* 'The Granary' as the name of a temple in the region is attested several times but with only little information given as to its nature apart from what can be gathered by the name²⁰⁴. In geographically structured offering scenes the offering from Assiut is often said to be 'All

²⁰⁰ L01, x+2/12 *w^c.t nly.t [r] p3e=s dw n-drt=s iw=fk^cy n3 wnm=fšy[wt p3y]*: (Jasnow & Zauzich, *The Book of Thoth* (2005), 340 and 342) for the reading cf. Quack, 'Die Initiation zum Schreiberberuf im Alten Ägypten', *SAK* 36 (2007), 287 s.v. S. 340.

²⁰¹ Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 13-14.

²⁰² For the Book of Gates see Hornung, *Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* II (1980), 143-152. With a lunar interpretation supplied by Manassa 'The judgment hall of Osiris in the Book of Gates', *RdÉ* 57 (2006), 109-142, cf. further Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 270 for another lunar reading and Köhler, *Das Imiut* (1975), 388-391 for the mythological context. Coffin Text spell 156 is part of a sequence of knowing the powers of the sacred sites, whose lunar ties were already noted by Kees, 'Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen', *ZÄS* 60 (1925), 1-15.

²⁰³ See the discussion on the relationship between mythical time and cosmology above.

²⁰⁴ See the references noted by Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 145f.


good things which came forth from the Granary'²⁰⁵. As well as serving as a place of storage, *šnꜥ* could occasionally be used as a designation for the underworld or a tomb²⁰⁶, which would fit the tenor of the section, which revolves around Upwawet's actions for Osiris. As Osiris is specifically said to be in his dismembered state (*tštš*) the hiding of him corresponds to the embalming stage in his life cycle, a stage over which Anubis presides.


This part of the section mysteriously ends with a reference to an obelisk that is called Atef-Khent and which houses the finger of Osiris. In the description of the Obelisk, the object itself is said to be the divine limbs, while the finger is inside 'being unknown'²⁰⁷. Osing surmises that the obelisk could be a cookie²⁰⁸. This would relate to the Granary as not only a place of storage but also a place for preparing food. Alternatively it could be similar to the portable object stored in the Mansion of the Leg in the temple of Edfu, which similarly served as a receptacle for a relic of Osiris, in this case a leg or thigh, called the Secret chest (*hnt š3t*) of the Thigh²⁰⁹. If some sort of connection exists between the two objects this would explain the opening of the next section where we learn that Seth had injured the thigh of the one in the chest (*hny*)²¹⁰.

The standard of Upwawet

Into this myth is inserted a likely aetiology for the standard of Upwawet²¹¹:

²⁰⁵ Beinlich, 'Die spezifischen Opfer der oberägyptischen Gaue', *SAK* 7 (1979), 16f.

²⁰⁶ Ward, 'Lexicographical miscellanies' *SAK* 5 (1977), 289-290 and Ruffle, 'A new meaning of the word ', *JEA* 50 (1964), 177-178.

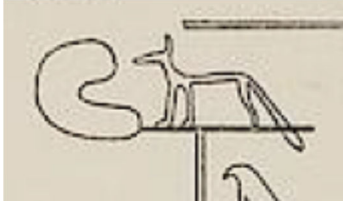
²⁰⁷ A possible mention of this object as a local relic exists in the procession inscription in the southern Osirian chapel on the roof of the temple of Dendara. Here gods bring the local relics to participate in the reunion of Osiris' corpse. For Assiut the relic is said to be Duamutef, as in the Edfu list, followed by a damaged part. In the illustrations accompanying Beinlich's treatment of the text, traces that can be restored as  exists (*Studien zu den "Geographischen Inschriften"* (1976), 95 and *Osirisreliquien* (1984), 122f.). However in *Dendara X*, 77 no traces of signs in the lacuna are indicated.

²⁰⁸ Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 147 n. g, with reference to *Wb* V, 326, 23-24.

²⁰⁹ As noted by Goyon, 'De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux. Osiris et Isis-Hathor aux portes de la Moyenne Egypte', *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag* (2003), 154. E.g. *Edfou* I, 262: *dd-mdw hm n=k thn hnt š3t nt sbkt*: 'To recite: Take for yourself the obelisk, the secret chest of the thigh'. For this room in the temple of Edfu see Blackman & Fairman, 'A group of texts inscribed on the façade of the sanctuary in the temple of Horus at Edfu', *Miscellanea Gregoriana* (1941), 416-418. For actual reliquaries in the forms of obelisks from funerary contexts see Satzinger, 'Osirianische Obelisken in der wiener Sammlung', *Egyptian Religion: the last thousand years Gs. Quaegebeur* II (1998), 419-421. The height of these obelisks ranges from about 8 to 15 cm, and one of them (Vienna Inv. Nr. 956) even contained a long dried mass wrapped in linen.

²¹⁰ *TM* 3, 16.

²¹¹ Image from Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the Earliest Dynasties* II (1901), pl. 15.



This standard has a standing jackal on top of the *šdšd*-emblem²¹². In the manual this emblem is probably referred to and explained as ‘the food in wrappings’ which in a pun on the name of the nome is called *ʒtf-hnt*, here perhaps to be read as ‘*ʒtf* in front, pointing to the buckled up shape of the *šdšd*’.

The jackal on top is explained with reference to Horus who liberates or shows the way for his father Osiris (*dīt wʒt*), precisely the function that the standard has in processions. However here a specific ritual or feast seems intended since the text states that ‘It is the statue in Assiut which is sought in the granary of the lady of 16, until the day of standing’. Joachim Quack notes that the phrase ‘day of standing’ is a technical term used in the *Book of the Temple* for the son’s assumption of his father’s office²¹³. In the given mythical context this would allude to burial rites of Osiris and the coronation of his son Osiris. Furthermore the statue is fetched from the storage or granary of the lady of sixteen, which apart from providing a welcome identification of this goddess with The one of the Granary²¹⁴, also gives a location for this ritual.

Inserted into the sequence is a short passage that deals with the bones of Seth, being iron, and Horus, being gold, in connection with their fight. This may be a reference to the statue previously mentioned in the preceding paragraph, in which some parts would then be of gold and others iron, interpreted as Horus and Seth fighting²¹⁵.

While the main manuscript gives ‘gold’ as the bones of Horus, the variants have ‘magnetite’. Not only the principle of *lectio difficilior* supports the variant reading but also the following passage, which speaks of Horus and Seth fighting. Plutarch refers to a common saying, affirmed by the authority of Manetho, that magnetite is the bones of Horus and Iron the bones of Seth²¹⁶. Plutarch adduces this as an illustration of the relationship between the two gods who waiver between attraction and repulsion: A magnet attracts iron, which then when magnetized is repulsed. In the Tebtunis manual the same mythological reasoning, if

²¹² For discussion and further literature see Evans, ‘The *Shedshed* of Wepwawet: An artistic and behavioural interpretation’, *JEA* 97 (2011), 103-115.

²¹³ Quack, Joachim F., ‘Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?’, *ARG* 10 (2008), 12 n. 27.

²¹⁴ The location of which is discussed by DuQuesne, ‘The Great Goddess and her Companions in Middle Egypt’, *Mythos und Ritual* (2008), 21 with further references.

²¹⁵ The section on the 14th U.E. nome mentions a statue with the head of a crocodile that is Seth who is opposed by Isis and Nephtys, apparently as part of the same statue.

²¹⁶ *De Iside* 62.

not the interpretation, seems present and the passage can be seen as a very short aetiology for the physical properties of magnetite and iron. However such an aetiology seems out of place here if the materials were not intended for the statue in question, was ample in the area, or of use in the ritual alluded to.


Hathor the Lady of Sixteen and the goddesses of Assiut

The final parts of the section are concerned with role of the goddesses in Assiut. First Hathor the Lady of Sixteen is given an Osirian interpretation and stated to be Isis when she protects Osiris. This is linked to a specific statue of the goddess 'The *rpyt*-statue seated on a throne with a human face'²¹⁷, and to a specific ritual in which this statue is carried in procession in The chapel of the Sistrum, and which involves Isis searching or lamenting Osiris²¹⁸ as she calls out to her brother.

This search leads on to Isis' part in the embalming of Osiris in the next section introduced by 'Concerning Assiut', which provides further aetiologies for the name of Assiut as well as the name of the nome 'Atef-Khent'. Isis bandages (*ḥḥ*) the efflux that came forth from the front (*ḥḥt*) of Osiris because of the damage done by Seth to the thigh of Osiris. This could be related to the local relic of Osiris, however in the Edfu nome list, the local relic is given as 'Duamutef inside the divine mother'²¹⁹.

As part of the treatment of Osiris, his bandaged efflux is placed in an otherwise unknown temple in Assiut called 'House of the Ogdoad of the trees inside this place'²²⁰. The word eight is written without determinatives and the whole phrase is determined by house, *pr*, and the divine determinative, *ntr*. It is unclear if the place is to be envisaged as a small grove of eight trees²²¹ or if it refers to a single tree sacred to the Ogdoad²²². The latter is the most probable since it would be parallel to the Osirian mounds carrying a single tree as sign of the buried god's regeneration²²³. At any rate a connection with an osirian mound or

²¹⁷ For a similar statue of Isis cf. pJumilhac 19, 10 (Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 131 and n. 675-676): *ḥst im m rpyt ḥmst ḥr bhdt ḥr m pḥt Ḥ m tp=s sḥ=s m kni=s*: 'Isis is there as a *rpyt*-statue seated on a throne with a human face, her 'crown' on her head and her son in her embrace' This statue is shown in the accompanying vignette.

²¹⁹ *dwḥ-mwt=f m-ḥnw mwt-ntr*: Edfou I², 340, 16-17 The reading *ḥḥt* is also possible for the group  which would yield 'inside the secret container' or similarly.

²²⁰ Reading not certain but cf. the form of Horus 'Horus of the trees' and the toponym 'Seth of the trees'. References in Komoeth, *Osiris et les arbres* (1994), 68. and idem 'Bosquets, arbres sacrés et dieux guerriers', *Egyptian Religion: the last thousand years Gs. Quaegebeur* II (1998), 647-648.

²²¹ For groves and gardens in connection with the burial places of Osiris see Komoeth, *Osiris et les arbres* (1994), 327-250.

²²² The section on Hermopolis mentions the *nḥrt*-tree whose blooming is connection with the arrival of the Ogdoad in Hermopolis (*TM* 6, 14-15).

²²³ Komoeth, *ibid.* passim, especially 165-178.

mounds is probably intended since the temple is used for storing the relic of Osiris. Afterwards Anubis, as lord of the necropolis Roqerret is placed as protection (*s3*) of the relic allowing for an aetiology for an epithet of Assiut, which also invokes the name of the nome *3tf-hnt*: 'The name of Assiut was made to be Bandaged in front of the embalming (*ʕrf m-hnt wt*) because of this'²²⁴. The mention of trees is elaborated in the following passage where the trees in Assiut are explained as Isis, Horus and Nephtys searching²²⁵. The object of their search is not stated and by default is probably Osiris. This search for Osiris is expanded by the punishment of Seth by the hands of Horus who transforms himself into Anubis and seizes him at Roqerret, which like the House of the Ogdoad of the tree is also said to be 'in this place'. The reoccurrence of this last phrase means that this temple can probably be situated somewhere in the vicinity of Roqerret in the necropolis area of Assiut²²⁶.

When Horus transforms himself into Anubis, he also provides a mythological interpretation of the local god in terms of the myth of Osiris. This mode of interpretation is continued in the last passage which picks up on the identification of Hathor the Lady of Sixteen with Isis and offers an aetiology for this epithet.

The epithet of Hathor, the Lady of Sixteen, has been variously interpreted: as a number of cult litanies, as an expression for joy, a pun on protection and for the ideal height of the inundation, and for the numbers of essential relics of Osiris²²⁷. Recently the case for sixteen referring to the (ideal) height of the Nile has been reargued by Rene Preys, who from offering scenes of 16 jars to the goddess in Dendara has seen a connection between the inundation and the epithet²²⁸. In the Tebtunis Manual, the epithet is explained as 16 secret things, an explanation that does not exclude any of the interpretations and which might even be an indication that the meaning of this epithet was unknown to the Egyptians themselves at the time of composition of the manual. Upwawet, who as lord of the necropolis was also the lord of silence, commands Isis not to speak to any persons, but unfortunately the things which she is to refrain from mentioning are lost in the following

²²⁴ *TM* 3, 17-18.

²²⁵ As the trees are specifically said to be made (*iri*), perhaps this is a reference to a ritual in which saplings are planted? A planting ritual is known for the willow cf. Erroux-Morfin, 'Le saule et la lune', *Encyclopédie religieuse de l'Univers végétal* 1 (1999), 293-216.

²²⁶ It is not entirely clear what 'this place' refers to, it could be the nome or a part of the nome, indicative of a more specific use here is the fact that both passages concern trees, however the in the next passage 'concerning the Divine mother in this place' the referent appears to be simply the nome.

²²⁷ References in Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 143, n. 74 Preys, 'Hathor, maîtresse des Seize et la fête de la navigation à Dendara', *RdÉ* 50 (1999), 259-268, and Goyon, 'De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux' *Fs. Altenmüller* (2003), 149-160.

²²⁸ 'Hathor, maîtresse des Seize', *RdÉ* 50 (1999), 259-268. It should be noted, however, that the epithet does not appear in the actual offering scenes studied by Preys, for which see also idem, *Les Complexes de la Demeure du Sistre et du Trône de Ré* (2002), 122ff.

lacuna. All that remains is the sentence ‘She did not talk to any people’ and the closing aetiological formula: ‘The sixteen hidden things are not known in the districts of this nome in this day because of this’. As Goyon notes, this passage contains an aetiology, not only for the secrecy, but also for the number 16 since the phrase *n md.n=s* ‘She did not speak’ is intended as a pun on the word sixteen (*md-sis*)²²⁹.

Given the Osirian tenor of the section, the hidden things could refer to Osiris’ body parts, which in some versions of the mysteries of the month of Khoiak amounted to sixteen²³⁰. However, since the Lady of Sixteen is connected to the title Divine mother in the Tebtunis manual, it is tempting to see a connection between the two, if not in general then at least as they appear in the Tebtunis manual. If Preys’ interpretation of the epithet as referring to the ideal height of the inundation is correct, then this might also apply to Hathor of the Granary since this goddess is shown in the Hibis temple as emerging from a jar²³¹ and furthermore offer a way of combining the title of Divine mother and epithet as Lady of Sixteen. In Roman times the Nile god could be shown along with sixteen infants. Bonneau has seen this as a depiction of the 16 cubits of the ideal inundation²³². In the Tebtunis manual the one to whom the Divine mother gives birth must be Upwawet, who is said to be in her embrace. His procession from the tomb can be seen as a rebirth, effected by the Divine mother, who in the Edfu nome list was said to contain Duamutef, the jackal headed son of Horus²³³. Perhaps the Divine mother becomes impregnated by the relic of Osiris and gives birth to his heir²³⁴ in the form a wolf²³⁵. This interpretation is supported by the canopic procession in the Osirian chapel in Dendara, where Upwawet as representative of the 13th Upper Egyptian nome offers a canopic jar shaped as Duamutef and tells Osiris that²³⁶:

²²⁹ Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux’, *Fs. Altenmüller* (2003), 156.

²³⁰ For this interpretation and a study of these texts see Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux’, *Fs. Altenmüller* (2003), 149-160. Goyon’s arguments against taking 16 as the height of the ideal inundation are not very clear. First he notes that a height of 16 cubits at Assiut would result in a catastrophe, but then he refers to classical authors who give 28 cubits as the ideal height at Aswan and 14 at Memphis (ibid 150). This suits an inundation at Assiut of 16 cubits perfectly – as disastrous as it might be.

²³¹ As *ḥwt-ḥr tp šn^c*. See Davies, *Hibis* (1953), pl.4 discussed by Preys, ibid. 127 and n. 169.

²³² *La Crue du Nil* (1964), 337-342. Cf. the remarks in Preys, *Les Complexes de la Demeure du Sistré et du Trône de Ré* (2002), 127. It might be relevant that Horapollon’s association of the number 16 with joy is based on speculations regarding the age suited for reproduction, see the discussion in Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux’, *Fs. Altenmüller* (2003), 149 and 160.

²³³ *Edfou I*², 340, 16-17.

²³⁴ This occurs in pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 11, 1-2 where Isis gathers the efflux of Osiris in Mendes and hides the divine member inside her flesh, thereby becoming pregnant and gives birth to Horus of Mendes (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 23).

²³⁵ For the rebirth or revivification of Osiris as Upwawet see Komoeth, ‘A propos de la stèle d’Apollônios (Louvre N 328): Ophoïs, Osiris et Sérapis en Abydos’, *SAK* 29 (2001), 219-221.

²³⁶ *Dendara X*, 77-78.

I am come to you, Osiris. Take for yourself the divine relic (*h^c-ntr*) which issued from you; Duamutef hidden in Ibtjet [...] your finger. Your sister embraces (*shn*) the egg of gold (*swht n nbw*) in its form (*irw*) of Duamutef. Take them for yourself at their proper place that they might unite with your body that you may move about in the form of a wolf at your desire.

Cauville interprets this passage as referring to parts of the human anatomy. Instead of the usual reading of 𓆎 as *db^c*, she suggests reading *šbb* ‘duct’, here the oesophagus which leads food to the stomach, the ‘egg of gold’²³⁷. While her suggestion makes sense in terms of the focus on the reconstitution of Osiris’ body, the suggested reading and translation is without parallels. In his earlier study Beinlich has suggested that the egg may be a way of referring to a grain of corn²³⁸, where *nbw* is specifically the grain used for manufacturing effigies of Osiris²³⁹, and is said to make up his flesh²⁴⁰. Since the standard offering for Assiut is grain, a link between the offering, resulting in the restoration of the gods flesh, and the donor becomes apparent²⁴¹.

If we look at the phrasing in detail we see that Isis is said to embrace the egg²⁴², as the womb contains the egg which is broken at birth, and furthermore that the egg is characterised by its *irw*-form. The *irw*-form is also mentioned in a text dealing with Isis’ pregnancy, the famous *Coffin Texts* spell 148, where Isis has tied (*ts*) the *irw* of Horus in the egg to be ruler of the gods²⁴³. Here the specific form is Duamutef, the canine-headed son of Horus, which affords an explanation for the last part of the offering text, which speaks about Osiris moving about in the form of a wolf. As suggested above, this is best explained as Isis renewing the life of Osiris by giving birth to his heir in the form of a wolf.

In the Salakhana stelae, published by DuQuesne, a recurring feature is Upwawet on top a standard accompanied by the goddess Hathor and surrounded by a horde of smaller jackals – from just a few to over a hundred²⁴⁴. It is possible that the sixteen secret things refer to

²³⁷ Cauville in *Le temple de Dendara : les chapelles osiriennes* (1997) I, 43; II, 40

²³⁸ Beinlich, *Osirisreliquien* (1984), 123.

²³⁹ *Wb* 2, 240.7-10 and Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon* (1997), 504f.

²⁴⁰ Perhaps the offering scene is also alluding to the role of the mother as the one who supplies the flesh of the child, in mythological terms the gold contrasted to the silver bones inherited from the father.

²⁴¹ For the consubstantiality of the offering with both donor and recipient cf. Frandsen, ‘Trade and Cult’, *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (1989), 95-108.

²⁴² For the relation of *shni* ‘to embrace’ (or similarly – the precise reading can not be established) to pregnancy, the writing 𓆎 can be compared to the gesture of the goddess pregnant with the sun god in the beginning of the Book of the Day (Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI* (1954), fig. 130) and similarly in many other scenes in the books of the underworld.

²⁴³ *CT* II, 212b-213b, although in this case it is the child inside the egg which is referred to by *irw* in contrast to the Dendara scene where it is the egg itself. For a study of the role of the egg in pregnancy and the associated vocabulary in the Coffin Texts see Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009), 467-475.

²⁴⁴ The Salakhana Trove: Votive Stelae and Other Objects From Asyut (2009), Thanks to Terence DuQuesne for this information. See also *idem*, ‘The Great Goddess and her Companions in Middle Egypt’, *Mythos und Ritual* (2008), 1-26, with further references. The multitude of Jackals on these

this multitude of Jackals born by the Divine mother²⁴⁵, and at the same time the inundation brought by this goddess, both as signs and results of the resurrection of Osiris within his tomb. This is all very speculative but nevertheless fits both well known mythological patterns and the scanty information found in the manual and other sources relating to the Granary and Hathor the lady of sixteen:

Information on the Granary and the lady of sixteen in the Tebtunis Manual:

- It is a protected district
- It is the House of Hathor, the Lady of Sixteen who is Isis protecting Osiris who is the Divine mother with Upwawet in her embrace
- In this temple the statue of a dog is sought until 'the day of standing'.

Information from other sources:

- It is a place of Grain and source of abundance.
- It and the Lady of Sixteen are related to the inundation.

As can be seen from this short recapitulation of the essential information, the temple is both a tomb for Osiris as well as the birthplace of his son in the form of a canine, who remains there until maturity. The temple is a source of fertility, being related via its patron goddess to the inundation and the resulting growth in the fields. All things known to have connection to the mythical cycle of Osiris, whose rebirth is manifest in his son, the rising Nile and the sprouting grain. Besides being the instrument of this rebirth and the keeper of the wealth and offspring produced, the above analysis has also provided hints that the goddess should be seen as a *potnia theron*, the lady of animals, or in the phrasing of the manual, 'the lady of the lords²⁴⁶ who are in her embrace', namely Upwawet and the multitude of canines who embody him²⁴⁷.

Rammeside stelae may be echoed in the many jackals that appear in Saqqara during the same period in graffiti on older tombs (I owe this information to Nico Staring's paper at the Current Research in Egyptology XI, Leiden 6th January, 2010: *Interpreting figural graffiti. Case studies from a funerary context*).

²⁴⁵ For the secrecy of the infancy of Horus being comparable to the secrecy surrounding the corpse of Osiris cf. *Urk.* VI, 129, 1-4 where Seth is to be restrained 'so that not the shrubbery of hiding is revealed and the one who hides in it ousted' - a clear reference to Horus hiding in the marshes of Khemmis.

²⁴⁶ Note the plural *nbw* and the concluding *sp-sn* which here must be an indication of repeated action. For the different translations given for this passage see the notes to my translation in the appendix.

²⁴⁷ For the precedence of Hathor over Upwawet on the Salakhana stela cf. DuQuesne, 'The Great Goddess and her Companions in Middle Egypt', *Mythos und Ritual* (2008) 24: 'But more often Hathor is seen close to, and indeed perhaps protecting, a much smaller entirely faunal figure of Upwawet on

In ritual terms the section on Assiut can be viewed as an account of the local Osirian festival in which the god is transferred from one temple to another for his internment in a grave. Already in the Middle Kingdom account of Ikhnofret on the Osiris mysteries in Abydos, we find the procession of Upwawet who leads the procession to Upoke, where Osiris is buried²⁴⁸. In the Middle Kingdom a procession of Upwawet in Assiut proceeded from the temple of this god to the temple of Anubis in Roqerret²⁴⁹. Judging from the Tebtunis manual, the procession in Assiut²⁵⁰ went from the Granary to the House of the Ogdoad of the trees, an elusive place in or near Roqerret, which was marked by either a small grove of trees or a single tree, perhaps sacred to both Osiris and the Ogdoad. The resurrection of Osiris took place in the Granary, where for cultic purposes his rebirth as Upwawet completed the ritual cycle. We also learn about a procession of Isis, who, as a seated statue, was carried out in the Chapel of the Sistrum, perhaps located in the Granary.

Compared to the section on the 12th U. E. nome, Atfet, the narrative is here much simpler, consisting primarily of variations on a few mythological themes. The interpretation offered here must by necessity remain uncertain and tentative given the lacunae and lack of parallels in other sources. Nevertheless, precisely this lack of other sources demonstrates exactly how little information was needed to grasp the narrative and aetiologies offered by the manual. Familiarity with basic mythological patterns and what may be considered commonplace knowledge about the nome, i.e. its canine deities, proved to be adequate to interpret the section. Here it is significant that the more obscure deities of the nome, such as Ur-Sekhmu²⁵¹, Hereret²⁵² and the cult of Merymutef in the northern part of the nome²⁵³, are not mentioned at all. It may be that these gods and cults, mainly attested from the Middle Kingdom through the Ramesside period, had disappeared at the time of the composition of the manual, but it remains equally possible that they were deliberately

his standard. She seems, indeed, to take precedence'. On these stelae female canines are sometimes shown together with the male ones, in these cases the female is often the larger, which supports the notion of the feminine as being most important and probably related to motherhood of the jackals. Elsewhere too Hathor appears to have had a special connection to the animals of the desert, even being their mother. See the texts quoted and discussed in Quack, 'The animals of the desert and the return of the goddess', *Desert Animals in the Eastern Sahara* (2009), 347.

²⁴⁸ See e.g. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (2005), 227-229.

²⁴⁹ For these and similar processions in the New Kingdom cf. DuQuesne, Terence, 'Exalting the God: processions of Upwawet at Asyut in the New Kingdom', *DE* 57 (2003), 21-45, with further references.

²⁵⁰ In the tomb of Hapidjefai the nomarch speaks of having lead the local version of the Osiris mysteries in a procession to bury Osiris in his tomb (*h^ct Urk*. VII, 57)

²⁵¹ For this god see DuQuesne, 'The Great Goddess and her Companions in Middle Egypt', *Mythos und Ritual* (2008), 19-21.

²⁵² For the Jackal goddess Hereret of Assiut with references see Kahl, Jochem, 'Die Determinative der Hereret in Assiut', *ZÄS* 135 (2008), 180-182.

²⁵³ See Zecchi, 'In search of Merymutef, "Lord of Khayet"', *Aegyptus* 76 (1996), 7-14.

omitted since they played no part in the image of the nome as part of the *overall* system of Egyptian mythology.

14th Upper Egyptian nome: Atef-Pehui

The first fourteen lines of this section, approximately the first half, are much damaged, but the second half, beginning on column 4 of the manuscript is almost intact with only minor damage to the first line. From the few intact passages in the first half we can gather that it concerned the major goddess of the nome, Hathor, and her actions for Osiris, specifically the efflux from his corpse which was the local relic²⁵⁴. The gathering of the efflux (*rdw*) as libation water (*kbh*) and the bandaging of the god in the house of the Heben-jar is a pun on the relic of the god which in the Edfu nome list is given as: 'The Heben-jar with the efflux of Kebehsenuet'²⁵⁵. Remains of an aetiology for both the name of the nome and the capital Cusae (*kis*), involving a pun on burial (*krs*), are visible. In the end of the damaged section, the local priest is also mentioned.

The second half of the section deals with three myths: first the myth of Nephtys searching for the Corpse of Osiris in the Nile and finding him beneath the *rw*-tree, secondly the bandaging of the rear of Osiris, and finally the cursing of Seth from the Acacia tree. Again the geographical vulture section of the Book of Thoth relates to the principal myth(s) of the nome, which is characterised as²⁵⁶:

(x) Vultures (who are on) an acacia, while their young is in the river opposite them. That is Cusae.

First myth: Nephtys finds Osiris

The flowing corpse of Osiris is mentioned at the beginning of the second half '...The divine limbs in the water'. In Osings reconstruction of the basic myth alluded to here, Isis was unable to participate in the search for Osiris since she had to breastfeed the infant Horus in the marshes of Khemmis. Therefore Nephtys went instead, as the substitute (*idnw*) of Isis to search for the body. However the determinative preserved at the end of the lacuna × is not

²⁵⁴ Dendara 10, 78.

²⁵⁵ Edfou 12, 341, 5-6: *hbnt m rdw nt kbh-snw* (=f) for the importance of this jar for the nome cf. Beinlich, *Studien zu den "Geographischen Inschriften"* (1976), 164-165.

²⁵⁶ L01, x+2/13. Jasnow & Zauzich, *The Book of Thoth* (2005), 341-342 read [*w^c.t*] *nly.t iw=s* [...] *n w^c.t šnt.t r p3e=w dw ...yl* [...]...*Qs p3y* and translates '[A] Vulture which is (in?) an acacia-tree, while their young ...[...]...It is Qusae.' The translation given above is adopted from Quack, 'Ein ägyptischer Dialog über die Schreibkunst und das arkane Wissen', *ARG* 9 (2007), 286. Quack reads [...] *nlyt [hr]* *w^c.t šnty t n3y=w dw n p3 yl wb3=w* (Personal communication).

commonplace for any of the verbs of searching, but points to some word for damage or similar. The following passage mentioning milk is unfortunately not entirely clear: *gm.n.tw snm m mw bsi/bz3* followed by: 'Milk is *taboo* there because of it. 'It is Nephtys' as it is said in this nome'²⁵⁷. If we follow Osing, the final nominal sentence would serve to identify the substitute of Isis as Nephtys, while the middle part would be an explanation for why Isis needed a substitute. However given the usual role of Nephtys as the wet nurse of Horus it is strange that it is she and not Isis who goes to search for Osiris. In the phrase '*snm m mw*' it is the word *mw* 'water' that carries the divine determinative. This speaks against Osing's reading: *mw bz3* 'breastmilk'²⁵⁸. These things taken into consideration the reading should perhaps be: 'Since it was found that the *Nourishment in the water* had surfaced'. Here the nourishment in the water would be a way of referring to Osiris flowing in the Nile, and now resurfaced after having been eaten by a crocodile, probably Seth whose statue at the end of the section is said to have the head of crocodile. While this makes sense in the general context of the Osiris myth it complicates the connection with the taboo on milk. This could be an instance of the so-called complex wordplays known from Old Kingdom onwards but especially proliferate in Demotic literature²⁵⁹. Here the pun would proceed from *mw-bsi* 'flowing water' via the unspoken *mw-bz3* to the synonym *irtt*. However such a pun would only make sense if supported by the mythological context.

Nephtys as the wet nurse of Horus is connected to milk. By mythological circumstance and punning this milk is linked to the fate suffered by Osiris, which reverses the usual positive connotations of this substance and makes it *bwt*. Here the myths concerning the relationship of Nephtys to Seth might be important since she forsakes her own son by Seth, and so condemns him to death, to take care of the son of Osiris and Isis²⁶⁰. As Osing observes the *bwt* on milk in Cusae was probably in origin connected to the cow form of the local goddess Hathor. In the interpretative scheme of the Tebtunis manual a way of connecting this to the myth of Osiris was sought and found in Nephtys as the nurse of Horus.

The ζ_{rw} -tree under which Osiris is seen is otherwise known as a manifestation of the god. In the embalming ritual the tree is said to be Osiris, and in papyrus Salt 825 the tree has a special role since Seth finds Osiris sitting under an ζ_{rw} -tree in Abydos and kills him there²⁶¹.

²⁵⁷ *TM* 4, 1-2

²⁵⁸ As does the writing of the following word, though this argument is not decisive since the writing is attested for *bz3* since the New Kingdom (*Wb* 1, 475.5).

²⁵⁹ Lippert, 'Komplexe Wortspiele in der Demotischen Chronik und im Mythos vom Sonnenauge', *Enchoria* 27 (2001), 88-100

²⁶⁰ Von Lieven 'Seth ist im Recht, Osiris ist im Unrecht!', *ZÄS* 133 (2006), 145-146.

²⁶¹ For Osiris and the ζ_{rw} -tree see Komoeth, *Osiris et les arbres* (1994), 179-193. For dead gods beneath the ζ_{rw} -tree confer perhaps *Tôd*, 284 II, 31-32, where a falcon headed crocodile god guards a

pSalt discerns between this tree; the eastern ϵ_{rw} which is a manifestation of Seth, and the western ϵ_{rw} -tree which is stated to be given Osiris as recompense for what happened to him²⁶², a reference to the death of Osiris beneath the eastern ϵ_{rw} -tree as described in the first pages of the papyrus discovered by Herbin²⁶³:

[Then] he arrived at a land and Osiris said: 'How great is this land!' – it is called Great Land (*t3-wr*) until this day because of it. The Osiris grew exceedingly perfect in it. It became known to Seth and Seth came in haste. He arrived against the 'enemy' of Osiris within Nedyt in Hat-Djefa beneath a tree called an ϵ_{rw} -tree in the first month of Akhet, day 17. He committed a great crime against his enemy as he let him sink in the water. Then Nun appeared to cover it completely. He rose to hide his mysteries to rebuild him inside him.

The two ϵ_{rw} -trees in pSalt have complementary roles: at the eastern one, the one belonging to Seth, Osiris sinks beneath the waters and at the western he reappears²⁶⁴. In the Tebtunis manual it is here that Nephtys finds him, in the form of a statue (*sh̄m*).

Second and third myths: Osiris is bandaged and Seth is cursed

The section in which Nephtys finds Osiris is mostly devoted to supplying information on the dress of the goddess and the cloth in which Osiris was wrapped. Interestingly these passages do not contain any aetiologies - some mythological allusions may be intended since it goes beyond a mere listing of the different items, but if so these completely escape me. Perhaps it picks up on information offered, but now lost, in the damaged first half of the section. A few basic schemes are discernable; in her dress, Nephtys is compared to Renenutet, and the clothing of Osiris is said to hide him in the west, presumably as part of the interment of his corpse.

The manual goes on to deal with the local relic and the burial of Osiris in Cusae²⁶⁵. Seth did damage to the rear (*ph̄wy*) of Osiris, which is of course related to the name of the nome *3tf-ph̄wy*, though this pun is not made explicit here²⁶⁶. The efflux which came forth from Osiris is stored in a jar in a temple 'The Mansion of the Heben-Jar', the name of which is

mound beneath an ϵ_{rw} -tree, with the following captions: *hwt-imn d3t št3t h̄pti r̄ hr.tw r=s h̄t mr̄h̄ ε_{rw} ntrt* 'Hidden temple: 'Secret Dat of the two crowns of Re' it is called. Anointed wood. Divine ϵ_{rw} -tree'.

²⁶² pBM 10051, 5, 3; 5, 7-8 = Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt* 825 (1965), 5*, 13-14; 6*, 9-10. For the Sethian nature of the (eastern) ϵ_{rw} -tree cf. perhaps *Kom Ombo* n° 701 where the lord of the second month of Akhet, day 20, is called *nb-ε_{rw}*. In the Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days, Leitz finds a reference to Seth killing Osiris for this date (*Tagewählerei* (1994), 90-91)

²⁶³ pBM 10090, x+5, 1-5 = Herbin, *BIFAO* 88 (1988), 103 and pl. 7.

²⁶⁴ For the doubling of sacred trees into eastern and western aspects cf. Komoeth, *Osiris et les arbres* (1994), 53-64.

²⁶⁵ With a close parallel in the canopic procession at Dendara where Hathor brings Kebehsenuf to Osiris saying: 'I bandaged the efflux which came forth from the rear of the divine limbs' (*Dendara* 10, 78)

²⁶⁶ Presumably because it was already used in the first, damaged, part of the section (*TM* 3, 25). Note here the use of the words ϵ_{rf} and *df3w* as in the section on Assiut (*TM* 2, 2-3).

explained by a pun involving Seth: ‘Seth may not traverse (*hb*) this place’. Finally the passage on the relic closes by repeating the aetiology for Cusae, as the place where Osiris was buried (*kr̥s*)²⁶⁷.

The section now shifts focus from Osiris and his relics to his heir Horus, giving an aetiology for the local sacred tree, or pair of trees in this case. Horus asks his mother and aunt to curse (*šn*) Seth giving rise to the two acacia (*šndty*). In this brief aetiology we can perhaps see an echo of the Contendings of Horus and Seth in which Isis, in disguise and by an elaborate ploy, tricks Seth into conceding the rule of Osiris over Egypt to Horus, before she reveals herself²⁶⁸:

Isis transformed herself into a kite and flew up and perched on the top of an acacia and she called to Seth and said to him: ‘Be ashamed, it is your own mouth which said it. It is your own cleverness which has judged you, what is left for you?’

The section closes with a description of the local statue, a composite statue with different parts identified with Seth, Horus, Isis and Nephtys, which encapsulates two of the three principal myths used in the second half of the section: ‘The two *hwrt*-birds are with the disc on the head of a statue (*twf*) with the head of a crocodile’. The disc is probably to be identified with Horus, mentioned as ‘the god’. His placement on top of the crocodile headed statue, identified as Seth, is a sign of his victory over this god, and an indication that Isis and Nephtys’ curse worked: These goddesses are identified as the two birds which are said to oppose Seth. As mentioned above the crocodile form of Seth is to be seen in connection with his crimes against the body of Osiris in the water.

At least the second half of the section on the 14th U.E. nome appears to involve basic narrative mechanisms. It begins with the search for Osiris, and proceeds with Nephtys finding him, the care for his relic and his burial, before moving on to the strife between Horus and Seth. The outcome of this strife is not explicitly mentioned, but by virtue of the sequence of events the final description of the statue logically takes the place of such a conclusion. As in the section on the 12th U.E. nome the reader’s familiarity with the basic narrative outline of the myth is used to tie together different mythemes and *materia sacra*. Despite the damage in the first half, the section contains references to many of the categories included in the material sacra lists: nome, capital, goddess, relic, temple, mound, tree, bwt, priest and perhaps inundated area²⁶⁹.

²⁶⁷ The prominence given to Cusae as the burial place of Osiris has been explained by Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux’, *Fs. Altenmüller* (2003), 149-160.

²⁶⁸ Gardiner, *LES*, 45, 9-12 = pChester Beatty 1, 6,13-7,1.

²⁶⁹ *TM* 3, 34.

The active role of Nephtys is remarkable but well in accord with the importance granted her in the Tebtunis manual, as well as in the earlier manual of the Delta. In the section she perhaps serves as the mythological interpretation of Hathor, who as the principal goddess of the nome is mentioned at least twice in the first half of the section. Elsewhere too Nephtys is identified with Hathor, especially, as noted by Meeks, in connection with evening, night and matters of the West²⁷⁰.

15th Upper Egyptian nome: Wenu

Along with the, as yet unpublished Herakleopolis section, the section on Wenu and its capital, Khemenu, or *Hermopolis Magna* as the Greeks knew it, is the largest preserved in the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual*. A large part is dedicated to the Hermopolitan cosmogony involving the eight primeval deities who gave name to the city, but more surprisingly this cosmogony is interweaved with local versions of the myth of Geb's rape of his mother Tefnut, the Return of the Goddess and the myth of Osiris. Adding further to the complexity, the section contains a number of references to the myths of the other nomes present in the manual, making Wenu a focal point in which the different mythological traditions blend together. This complexity is apparent in the structure of the section, which confounds any simple narrative reading and constantly shifts between the different myths and their related rituals during the festival of Thoth as it was ideally performed in Hermopolis. This festival, celebrated on the 19th day of the first month of Akhet, was a national feast observed throughout Egypt. Plutarch mentions that on this day the Egyptians ate figs and honey and greeted each other with the words: 'the truth is sweet', a phrase in which the Egyptian word Maat can be recognized, giving a succinct formulation of the renewal of the world at beginning of the New Year²⁷¹. In the Tebtunis manual the references to Maat at this festival are concentrated in one part of the section where Thoth, as 'the Bull of Maat', is installed as 'united with Maat', and the festival is said to be in honour of 'lord of Maat'. This renewal of Maat depends on several factors, most of which concern the Goddess to different degrees: first Geb must be punished and the goddess return. Secondly, Osiris must be rejuvenated and Re reborn from the flood. In the interaction of these and other myths in the frame of a

²⁷⁰ See Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 189 for the hypothesis that Nephtys represents the deceased wife of Osiris, as does Isis the living. Here Plutarch's statements that Isis represents Death or Finality as does Isis life (*De Iside* 12; 38; 63; 59) and that Nephtys is beneath the earth and invisible (44) may be of relevance.

²⁷¹ For the possible Egyptian parallels to this phrase and appraisals of Plutarch's account see the references in Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 156 with note 135.

festival, the section may be seen as a mythological manual *en miniature* and requires much the same methods to grasp. First, the different mythological strands must be isolated before an attempt to see how they are associated can be made.

First myth: The rape of the goddess

This myth is the Hermopolitan version of a myth, best known from the 30th dynasty naos of El-Arish, in which Geb rapes his mother Tefnut²⁷². *The Mythological Manual of the Delta* offers further information, primarily in the section on Sebennytos²⁷³. The different versions differ among themselves and only the beginning of the myth is the same: In connection with the absence or resign from rule by Shu, Geb rapes his mother Tefnut as he assumes kingship over Egypt, represented by a sacred object.

The el-Arish version

In the el-Arish version Shu has grown tired after an only partially successful war with invaders lead by Apophis. Geb finds his mother in the palace in Memphis and rapes her. No evil actions against Shu are mentioned but his ascent to heaven, i.e. his death, is part of the same passage that contains Geb's crimes against his mother. By juxtaposing these two events the text implies some sort of connection between them, and this is corroborated by other sources. The death of Shu and Geb's actions leads to chaos (*nšny*). For nine days the gods are confined in the palace while an unnatural storm rages outside. After this Geb assumes kingship and upon an additional 75 days he travels north to the Delta where he learns of the royal Uraeus that Shu bore and which allowed him to combat his enemies. However, when Geb dons the serpent it strikes him inflicting a burn on him and killing all his companions. The burn proves incurable and only heals after Geb has removed the uraeus from his forehead and placed it in a chest. Here it remains until, finally, it assumes the form of a crocodile and takes up residence in the Lake of Knives where it battles the enemies of the gods. At the end of this chain of events Geb becomes a just ruler of Egypt and restores the works of his predecessor Shu²⁷⁴.

It would seem logical if the negative actions taken by the serpent against Geb were somehow connected to his unlawful mode of accession. However, a similar myth is known

²⁷² Goyon, 'Les travaux de Chou et les tribulations de Geb', *Kemi* 6 (1936), 1-43. Newest translation of the text is by Sternberg el-Hotabi in *TUAT* 3, 100.

²⁷³ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 12, 5-13,5 = Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 26-28.

²⁷⁴ The doubt raised by Verhoeven ('Eine Vergewaltigung', *Religion und Philosophie* Fs. Derchain (1991), 319-330) against taking Geb's action as rape is put to rest by the section in the Delta Manual discussed below. See also Derchain, 'Deux essais: I. L'inceste et le serpent', *GM* 224 (2010), 36-41.

concerning Osiris' accession in Herakleopolis, where he too suffers pains when the Atef-crown is placed on his head²⁷⁵. In this myth the crown causes Osiris' head to swell up with pus. Re ends his suffering by releasing the pus, forming the local sacred lake.

Delta manual version

This version provides details of importance for understanding the myth as it appears in the Tebtunis manual, and so a detailed exposition is in place²⁷⁶.

The Section on Sebennytos first gives a quick summary of the myth²⁷⁷:

Geb hurt his father as he copulated (*bnbn*) with his mother Tefnut. The lance was placed in his thigh while Tefnut was in Bagsety. He hurt wickedly Shu. He triumphed over (? *hb*) him on the Ished-tree in Heliopolis, variant: in Memphis'

In this local version Shu is identified with Onuris, the lord of the lance. While not mentioned in the manual the myth should probably be seen in connection with the local *bwt*: 'to have sex with a married woman'²⁷⁸. Apart from these local details, the Delta manual introduces a further element of utmost importance for the version in the Tebtunis Manual: the *m^cnht*-counterpoise, which is identified with the raped goddess²⁷⁹:

The beloved of Ptah in Memphis, the Great Horit of Osiris. Concerning Sakhmet of Sebennytos: She is called the daughter of Re. Her son suffered after he had acted against his father. The *m^cnht*-counterpoise is his 'necklace' (*iry-hh=f*) which establishes Tesh and which came into being by itself like that which is in Oubenu.

Here we have a chain of identifications: The beloved of Ptah in Memphis, otherwise an epithet of Sakhmet²⁸⁰, is identified with the goddess of 'sexual activity'²⁸¹ Horit. The local form of Sakhmet is named as the daughter of Re, an epithet which connects her to the myth of *The Return of the Goddess*, in which the goddess as Re's eye and daughter leaves Egypt and has to be coaxed back and pacified. She is further identified with the *m^cnht*-counterpoise worn by her husband or father. The divine identity of this object is emphasized

²⁷⁵ See the third section of The Book of the Dead chapter 175 (Kees, 'Göttinger Totenbuchstudien: ein Mythos vom Königtum des Osiris in Herakleopolis aus dem Totenbuch Kap. 175', *ZÄS* 65 (1930) 65-83). In BD 17 even Horus appears to suffer when Isis and Nephtys take their place on his head: 'concerning the two feathers on his head. It is the movement made by Isis and Nephtys when had placed themselves on his head as they were kites while he suffered to his head' (Naville, vol II; 42). See below for a possible placement of the episode within the mythic complex of father-daughter relations.

²⁷⁶ Meeks (*Mythes* (2006), 267-270; 272-274) has noted and discussed most of the relevant parallels for the myth as it appears in the delta manual, and unless otherwise noted it is his analysis which forms the basis for the account of the myth provided here.

²⁷⁷ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 12, 7-12,8 = Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 26-27.

²⁷⁸ *Edfou I*², 333, 8-9.

²⁷⁹ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 12, 11-13,2 = Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 27.

²⁸⁰ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 126 n. 415.

²⁸¹ For this characterisation of Horit cf. the discussion below.

by the epithet ‘Which came into being by itself’, otherwise reserved for primeval gods²⁸², and the association with the raging eye of the sun by the comparison with the one of Oubenu: the lion goddess Mehyt²⁸³. The use of the *m^cnht* to establish Tesh, probably a form of Osiris²⁸⁴, is mirrored in pSalt 825 in which Shu fashions an amulet to protect or heal himself after his son Geb rebels against him. Later, when Osiris has been killed, the amulet serves to vivify the dead god²⁸⁵.

The *m^cnht*-counterpoise was apparently hung by a string of leather, a *w3r*²⁸⁶, which is included in a passage that identifies Geb with the Sem-priest²⁸⁷:

The greatest of the leaders of craftsmen who is the stand-in for Geb - the Sem in the place of lunmutef: ‘cutting (*grg* ?)’ was done to the member of Geb, while the Sem was safe and sound. He was carried in arms when he got sad, while his *w3r* was in the field of The one who lets the throat breathe. He was overpowered from head to toe. He cut of his toes²⁸⁸. Concerning (*ir*) Geb: His toes were damaged on the mound of Oxyrhynchos, after he had placed Horit in prison in Sebennytos. Her son, Onuris, drove away the abomination of his father: that which Seth had done to his mother.

This section contains several difficulties that need to be resolved. Meeks reads *in* instead of *ir*: *hty.n=f s3hw=f in gb* yielding: his toes were cut of by Geb’. However if the first is a *sdm.n=f* form then the introduction of the agent by means of *in* would be superfluous and highly unusual, if not wholly unprecedented²⁸⁹. Von Lieven finds support for Meek’s

²⁸² Leitz, *LGG* V, 703-706.

²⁸³ For the connection of the *m^cnht* to Oubenu and the role of the goddess Mehyt see Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 273.

²⁸⁴ Compare the more common name *tštš* ‘the dismembered one’ (*Wb* 5, 330.11) and the discussion in Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 127 n. 420.

²⁸⁵ pSalt 825, XIV, 6 - XV,1 = Derchain, *Le papyrus Salt 825* (1965), pl. 15, 11-16, 10, noted in Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 274. Derchain considered this section of the papyrus to revolve around the rebellion of Osiris against his father Shu who had to kill him but revived him again by using an amulet (*Le papyrus Salt 825* (1965), 31-35), however now that the first section of the papyrus has resurfaced it is clear that the person responsible for the death of Osiris is Seth (Herbin, *BIFAO* 88 (1988), 95-112). Geb is not explicitly named since the text uses the euphemistic *mn* ‘Someone’. Geb, when named, assumes a beneficial aspect in the papyri, however there is one thing that may hint to his darker side: The long section on the creation of the different substances to be used when making the effigy of Osiris and Re refers to several modes of creation. The sweat and tears of tired or mourning deities fall to the ground and become plant and animal life. However the text also contains two other modes of creation, which are reserved for only a few gods. Re creates not only by sweat or tears, but also by vomiting or spewing, perhaps in imitation of the first creative act of the sun god when he spat out Shu and Tefnut (pSalt 825, III, 1-3). For Geb too a special act is reserved: he becomes ill and blood flows from his nose to create the pine tree (pSalt 825, II, 2). Later on in the text the principle for assigning a god to a specific location is the sweat of the tired gods falling on the ground, but when it comes to Seth the choice of locations are determined by the places where his blood fell. The relationship between the blood of Seth and materia sacra is also found in the aetiological account of Herakleopolis found in Book of the Dead chapter 175 where blood runs from Seth’s nose to be buried by Re who in this way instigates the Festival of Hoeing the Earth.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 128 n. 426.

²⁸⁷ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 13, 2-13,5 = Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 28 and textual notes 422-434.

²⁸⁸ The reference for the suffix changes here. Probably some line(s) was left out in the redaction of this passage.

²⁸⁹ *GEG* § 227.5

interpretation in a parallel to this passage in the *Book of the Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars*²⁹⁰. In the chapter on the moon the seclusion and emergence of the Sem priest from his house is used as a mythological analogy for the waning and waxing of the moon. As reason for his seclusion the book offers the following:

The Sem is sitting in his house and cannot come out. It is Horus who was angry (*špt*) and mourned (*i3kb*) that Geb had caught (*shb(h).n*)²⁹¹ him. He let his strength be fierce (*nʿš*) after he had rescued his eye at dawn.

Von Lieven draws a further parallel between this brief outline of a myth and the story about the crime and punishment of Horus in the Contendings of Horus and Seth²⁹². Despite these parallels, I would prefer to see the reference, in this passage here, to a restriction and confinement of Horus rather than the physical punishment of having his eyes removed. Geb, as the earth (?), confines Horus against his will until Horus gains the strength to leave when he regains his eye. In this reading of the myth, the one who is responsible for stealing the eye of Horus would, by default, be Seth. In fact Geb appears as the one who regains Horus' eye for him by means of a net later on in the section²⁹³. If Geb does not punish Horus here but actually helps him regain his eye, then Geb is probably also the one who lets Horus' strength be fierce, and rescues the eyes at dawn. This reading finds some support in the explanation for the Sem sitting in his house offered earlier on in the chapter. Here Seth is the culprit, and Horus is placed inside his grandmother Nut that she may protect him²⁹⁴.

In light of this interpretation of the passage in the *Book of the Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars*, the parallel to Meeks' interpretation of the passage in the Delta manual no longer exists. An option is to disregard the parallels to the myth above and see instead a reference to the myth of Geb violating his mother and his subsequent punishment. This makes sense as part of the theme of the Sebennytyos section, which concentrates on this crime. Considering that Geb and the Sem-priest are identified in the beginning of the passage it is odd that Geb himself should punish the priest. This difficulty, as well as the grammatical anomaly noted above, disappear if we, instead of *in gb*, read *ir gb*²⁹⁵. This then introduces the following clause: 'Concerning Geb: his toes were damaged on the mound of

²⁹⁰ Von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 181 with reference to §x+10-12.

²⁹¹ Von Lieven (*Grundriss* (2007), 98 and 366) reads *shbn* and translates as 'punish' here. Meeks (*Mythes* (2006), 217) also reads *shbn* but translates as 'imprison'. As this verb does not seem to be attested elsewhere, I have opted for an elliptical reading of the verb *shbh* 'To catch' (often with a net *Wb* 4, 235, 5-6), which apart from being well attested also ties Geb's action together the following paragraphs which mention Geb catching (§ x+17 *iʿh*) the face or eyes of Horus for him with a net.

²⁹² Von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 181.

²⁹³ Von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), §x+17, p. 99 (Translation).

²⁹⁴ Von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), § 152-159, p. 97 (Translation).

²⁹⁵ For the writing of *ir* as *in* elsewhere in this papyrus, cf. Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 9 and n. 18.

Oxyrhynchos'. In this reading it is not Geb who punishes the Sem-priest but Geb himself who is punished. In an unpublished part of the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* Seth injures his father's legs in Oxyrhynchus, in an aetiology for the Egyptian name of the nome: $\frac{\text{KJ}}{\text{TT}} \text{HHH}$
'w3sb'²⁹⁶:

Da eilte Seth in die Wüste zu seinem Vater Geb und packte ihn an seinen Beinen (*sbk.wj*). Da sagte Geb zu seinem Sohn Seth: „[Tu mir kein Leid an o.ä.] mit fußen eines Stiers! Geh doch über zu einem anderen Mittel, das aufhören lässt, was mir? ... angetan wurde (*sb.k m s3=s m ky sp jrj ... r.j*)“ (so) wurde gemacht der Name $\frac{\text{KJ}}{\text{TT}} \text{HHH}$. $\frac{\text{KJ}}{\text{TT}} \text{HHH}$ wurde gesagt mit Bezug auf den Herrn von Wns (=Seth)

In the preceding section in the Delta papyrus Geb was also punished by being impaled by a lance in his thigh, probably by Onuris who in the same section gains the epithet 'lord of the lance'. Similarly in the Tebtunis manual, as we shall see, Geb is punished by Unut as 'the one who grasps the lance'. While the thigh is not the same as the toes it nevertheless belongs to roughly the same area of the body and could be seen as a reasonable alternative. Meeks interprets this punishment in light of the myth of Nemty the ferryman in the *Contendings of Horus and Seth*. While it is possible that the toes are meant to evoke the punishment of Nemty - not because it is the same myth, but because both Geb and Nemty are punished for crimes against their mother²⁹⁷, there may also be another rationale behind it, concerned with a pair of sandals alluded to in the Sebennytyos section but only understandable when combined with the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis manual.

But first, the interpretation offered above leaves the preceding paragraphs in the Delta Manual unresolved: *phty=w im=f m tpw -wt=f r tbw*. *phty=w* is a Late Egyptian form in a section that is otherwise Middle Egyptian, and so must belong to a later stage of redaction than the main part of the section. As Meeks remarks the construction with *im=f* is otherwise unattested, however the sense is relatively clear; in Meeks translation: 'Il y eut puissance sur lui, sur ses extrémités, à l'encontre de la plante des pieds'. In the following passage: *hty.n=f s3hw=f* 'he pulled off his toes', it is not clear who hides behind the suffixes. As we saw Meeks suggests the Sem-priest as the victim and Geb as the punisher. While Geb is unlikely as the agent, the Sem-priest, and more precisely the Sem-priest as lunmutef is most probably the victim. The evidence for this interpretation comes from the celebrated Book of the Dead chapter 125, in which the deceased must name the different parts of the doorway in order to enter to Osiris' hall. Here the bolt of the door is said to be 'the toes of lunmutef'. Now, in

²⁹⁶ Osing, 'Zum Namen des Gaues von Oxyrhynchos', *Zeichen aus dem Sand. Fs Dreyer* (2008), 521. The passage in question is part of pCarlsberg 308.

²⁹⁷ Though Nemty's toes are removed in his role as a greedy ferryman and his skin because of his crimes against his mother cf. the chapter on the 12th U. E. nome above.

the Daily Temple Ritual the bolt is interpreted as the finger of Seth in the eye of Horus, so that the priest removes the finger from the eye when he pulls out the bolt to open the door²⁹⁸. If the same scheme is applied to the situation in BD 125, then the one seeking entrance to Osiris would pull off the toes of Iunmutef²⁹⁹, reiterating the punishment of this god.

In the Delta manual the agent behind the punishment stays anonymous, perhaps lost in the redaction or omitted as self evident to the Egyptian reader, as do the persons responsible for the punishment done to the member of Geb in the first paragraph. Of relevance for a possible ritual connected to the myth is the system of identifications and punishments present. The Greatest of Craftsmen priest (*wr-hrpw hmwwt*) is identified as the Sem-priest, as is normal for this priest³⁰⁰. These two priestly titles are connected to the gods as the Greatest of Craftsmen is said to be 'the stand in (*sty*)' for Geb, while the Sem is 'in the place (*m st*)' of Iunmutef. These gods are both punished, whereas the priest that takes on the identity of both these gods is left unharmed. For the Sem we only hear that he becomes sad or tired and has to be carried, as a child is carried in its mother's arms. As in the myth of Horus-Nemty in the 12th U. E. nome, we have a pattern consisting of a crime against the mother, followed by punishment of the son by mutilation which restores the proper relationship between mother and son. Here the crime is only euphemistically mentioned as 'Onuris has driven away the *bwt* of his father that which Seth did to his mother' where Seth takes the place of Geb, but the passage does impart one piece of information that recurs in the Tebtunis manual, namely that Geb not only raped the goddess but also placed her in confinement or prison.

Again we must be dealing with some sort of transference of punishment, this time not only between gods, but also of priests to gods, and again we have the different roles imparted to different characters. While the Sem can also be a mythic being, a god with close ties to Horus, he is usually a human priest and as Meeks notes the word is here determined by the sitting man and not the god³⁰¹. In the section on Sebennytyos it is possible that the

²⁹⁸ Scene 9. Latest treatment by Guglielmi and Buroh, 'Die Eingangssprüche des Täglichen Tempelrituals', *Essays on ancient Egypt in honour of Herman te Velde* (1997), 120-122.

²⁹⁹ Lapp, *Totenbuch Spruch 125* (Totenbuchttexte 3) (2008), 238-239a. This pushes back the date of this myth to the redaction date of BD 125 and also shows that is not just a borrowing from the Nemty myth discussed above and as suggested by Meeks. For the role of Iunmutef as not just provider of passage cf. Pyr. Utt. 587. For Iunmutef and toes/toenails cf. CT spell 294 with the remarks by Meeks, 'Notes de lexicographie (§5-8)', *BIFAO 77* (1977), 82. For Iunmutef in Book of the Dead 125 see also the discussion in Rummel, *Pfeiler seiner Mutter – Beistand seines Vaters I* (2003), 107-110.

³⁰⁰ Here the identification is implied by simple apposition. For the habitual use of the two priestly titles to denote the high priest of Memphis cf. Maystre, *Les grand prêtres de Ptah de Memphis* (1992), 3-15.

³⁰¹ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 127 n. 422.

priest carries out some negatively valued actions that are nevertheless essential for the proper ritual.

While the Sem (and Geb and Iunmutef) undergo his trials, his *w3r* is located in 'The Field of the One who lets the throath breathe'. This place is otherwise unattested, but can perhaps be identified with the cosmic region 'The one who lets the Throath breathe' found in passage in the *Book of the Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars*. Here it is a place connected to the migratory birds which come into being at the edge of the outer darkness as *Ba*-birds with human heads speaking in human tongues before assuming the form of regular birds to feed in Egypt³⁰². Apart from the possible connection to this region, the name in the Delta papyrus is probably also meant to evoke associations with (Onuris)-Shu as the god of the wind who provides breath and with the goddess as the *m^cnht*-counterpoise at the neck of this god³⁰³.

The notion of the mutilated feet is also present in an earlier passage in the Delta Manual section on Sebennytyos that is not readily associated with the rape of Tebnut but can be seen as such when the myth in the Tebtunis manual is taken into consideration. In the Delta Manual we learn that Geb is connected with dogs and that: 'One takes his soles/sandals as leather (*t3.tw tbtj=f m hnt*) and its pelt is cut from his skin (*ht.tw tm3t=f m ntt=f*)'. The (dog) skin from Geb is probably used to manufacture sandals and so the passage provides an aetiology of the name Sebennytyos, in Egyptian: *tb-ntr* 'The god's sandal', of which it is said: 'It is called 'The god's sandal' because of the place of the rebels in this place and their forceful copulation (*d3d3 ir=w m hwtj*)³⁰⁴.

To summarise this dense mythological discussion, the information of relevance for the myth as it is found in the Tebtunis manual are the following:

- Geb rapes his mother and injures his father Shu
- Geb imprisons the goddess
- This goddess is identified with the *m^cnht*-counterpoise, which is seen as a mythical self generating object
- Geb is punished by having his thigh impaled, his member cut and, as a dog, by having the soles of his feet cut off to manufacture sandals.
- The *w3r* leather string used to tie the *m^cnht* disappears to a mythic region

³⁰² Liven, *Grundriss* (2007), § 4 and 77a (PC1), cf. the commentary on pp. 128 and 156-157.

³⁰³ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 129 n. 427.

³⁰⁴ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 114 n. 354 and 121 n. 394.

The Tebtunis version: Geb's rape of his mother

After introducing the local statue of Re, the Hermopolis section of the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* proceeds to the myth of Geb raping his mother³⁰⁵:

It is the dwelling place of the one who punished the son who committed a crime against his father in the slaughtering yard in Unu. He lay with his mother Tefnut, so that they were doing harm to Shu.

Apart from mention of a specific location there is initially nothing local about the myth here; it is essentially the same as that found in the Delta Manual version and the El Arish naos. A short aetiology of an eight weave garment (*hmnw*) fabricated for the protection of Shu the eldest son in Hermopolis (*hmnw*), leads to the purification of Shu³⁰⁶:

He overflowed (*ttf*) his limbs in the well, so that he was whole (again). He lifted the sky over his son in Heliopolis as the monkey-headed one in front of the primeval hill (*h^c-t3*).

The lifting of the sky takes place in Heliopolis, as Shu heals himself. While not specifically said to be a punishment, the subsequent separation of Geb and Nut could very well be a consequence for the actions taken by Geb against his parents. This fairly short recapture of the myth, with protagonist taken from the Heliopolitan ennead and placed in a Heliopolitan setting, frames the complex local version that follows³⁰⁷.

The local version is written as part of an interpretation of the local goddess Unut³⁰⁸:

Concerning Unut who grabbed her spear: She made a slaughter of the arrogant son, it is the wretched character, who was judged according to his deeds, and slain because of having fornicated with Nehemt-awai in Khemenu and Nehbet-anet in Dep.

Here Geb is the arrogant son who has committed his crime against two hypostases of the goddess. In Hermopolis it is Nehemet-awai and in Dep, in the Delta, it is Nehbet-anet. The doubling of a myth into an Upper and Lower Egyptian variant is attested for other myths³⁰⁹, but the reason for this doubling is hard to grasp since we do not have the entry for Dep preserved³¹⁰. That Unut is herself often identified with both goddesses would appear problematical, but we are once again dealing with a myth in which the different phases are parcelled out unto different aspects of the same gods: Here Unut, the tutelary hare and lion goddess of the nome is the angry vengeful goddess, while the two others are the victims of

³⁰⁵ *TM* 4, 12-13.

³⁰⁶ *TM* 4, 15-16.

³⁰⁷ In *TM* 5, 18 the *h^c-t3* is mentioned again. Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 162, sees this passage as indication that the primeval hill *h^c-t3* was located in Hermopolis, but it is equally possible to see this mention as part of the interpretive strategy of the manual in connecting Hermopolis with Heliopolis.

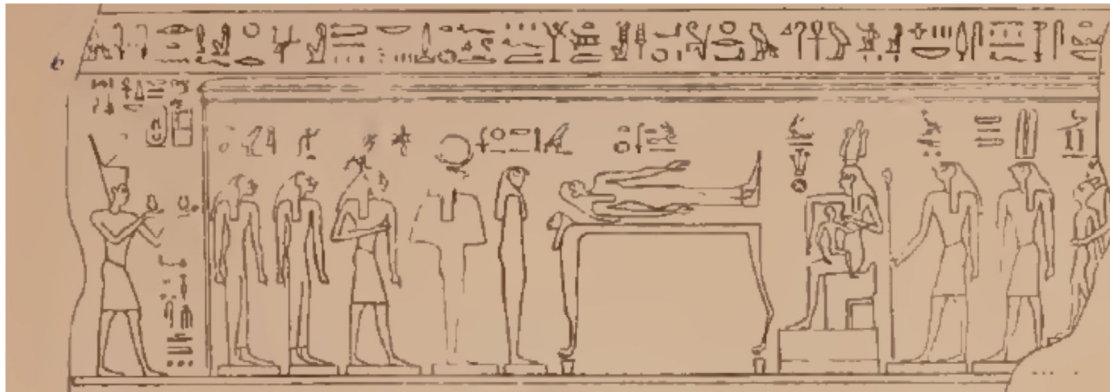
³⁰⁸ *TM* 4, 16-18.

³⁰⁹ See the chapter on mythological space.

³¹⁰ The Mythological manual of the Delta is replete with accounts of goddesses being raped, but here too there is no entry for Dep or references to a fitting myth for this locality.

the crime that is punished. As in the Delta manual, Geb is punished with a spear, but here it is the goddess that avenges herself instead of Onuris-Shu³¹¹. Geb's course of action is detailed later in the section where we learn that: 'When he had brought her to bed (*itt*), he took her to the great house (*hwt-wrt*) and he placed her there thrown in prison (*hnrt*)'³¹².

The mention of a bed is ambivalent since it could be both a reference to the place of the sexual act³¹³ and to the funerary bier. The word for bed *itt* is often used for the lion headed bier on which the mummy is placed³¹⁴. On the Saft el Henneh shrine we find a goddess: *wnt šmꜥt* 'the Upper Egyptian Unut' lying on a lion (or falcon) headed bier, next to her *wnt mḥt* 'the Lower Egyptian Unut' is shown wearing the Atef crown, sitting on a throne breastfeeding an infant³¹⁵.



This could be a scene depicting an episode in the myth in the Tebtunis manual, but the bed could also be for the goddess' labour³¹⁶. Other objects from the Late Period show the goddess lying, not on a bed, but in a coffin or shrine. On the walls of the naos of the temple of Hibis, the section on Hermopolis display a host of enigmatic gods, which include 'nḥm-ꜥnwꜣt who is upon the high seat' lying in a coffin surmounted by a sistrum³¹⁷.

³¹¹ The epithet used to describe her is found verbatim in the temple of Dendara (*Dendara X 225,5-6*) in a long list of goddesses, but there the culprit is explicitly identified as Seth.

³¹² *TM 5*, 31-6,1. The name of Geb is presumably lost in the preceding lacuna.

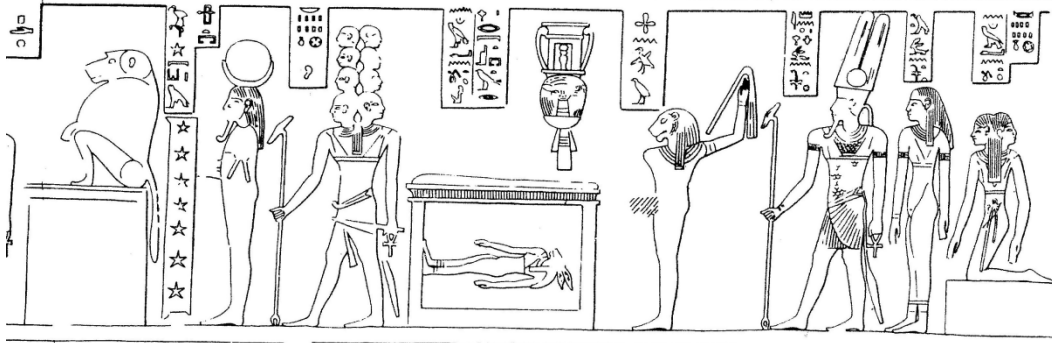
³¹³ Compare the scenes of Birth of the Divine King, Brunner, *Die Geburt des Gottkönigs* (1986), 38-42 and pl. 6.

³¹⁴ *itt* from *ꜣtt Wb 1*, 23.11-12.

³¹⁵ Naville, *The Shrine of Saft el Henneh* (1888), pl. 6.

³¹⁶ Compare with the similar scene on pl. 3, and the scenes of the Birth of the Divine King: Brunner, *Die Geburt des Gottkönigs* (1986), pl. 9.

³¹⁷ Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis III: The decoration* (1953) pl. 4. Persian Period. For the writing of the goddess here cf. Parlebas, *Die Göttin Nehemt-awaj* (1984), 29-30.



Tebtunis version: The imprisoned goddess

The same naos also has a section devoted to the Hermopolis Parvae of the Delta where the goddess, this time as *wnt mhꜣw* 'Unut of Lower Egypt' is also shown enshrined³¹⁸. Perhaps the enshrinement is meant to evoke the imprisonment of the goddess, which is laconically stated in both the Delta manual and the Tebtunis manual, but absent in the El Arish version unless the confinement of the gods inside the palace is a structural variant of this theme. Interestingly the imprisonment motif can also be present in the myth of Osiris. On the Mettenich stele Isis is said to exit the weaving-shop where Seth had placed her³¹⁹. The occasion of her forced labour is not stated but she exits it to make for Khemmis in the north and give birth to her son Horus. This would place her confinement between the death of Osiris and the conception of Horus. On the structural level this corresponds to the misdeeds of Geb against his father Shu and his imprisonment of Tefnut³²⁰. The mythological role of weaving has never been treated in detail, but relates to the Goddess Neith, as well as Tayt and Hedjhotep³²¹. Backes suggests that *rḥti* and *rḥti* are designations of Isis and Nephtys as weavers³²², if this is true then the references to Isis as a weaver would multiply and become an important aspect of her character, an aspect that is only fully explained in the sole reference from the Metternich stele. It would seem that these goddesses spend their time weaving the funerary shroud of Osiris during Seth's brief reign after the death of Osiris and before the accession of Horus³²³. In the Tebtunis manual the introduction to the treatment

³¹⁸ Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis III: The decoration* (1953) pl. 5.

³¹⁹ Sander-Hansen, *Die Texte der Metternichstele* (1956), 35: spell 6, ll. 49-50.

³²⁰ The analogy could be taken further if the attack of Isis' scorpions is compared to the Distant goddess' killing of the rebels, and the birth of Horus to the birth of Re from the Heavenly Cow, the last association is found in the myth fragment published by Mark Smith, 'A Fragmentary Account of a Rebellion Against the Sun God', *The Carlsberg Papyri 3* (2000), 95-112.

³²¹ See Al-Sayed, *La déesse Neith de Sais* (1982), 76ff and idem, *Documents relatifs à Sais et à ses divinités* (1975), 180-193.

³²² Backes, 'Von nun an sollt ihr *Rḥ.ti* heissen: "Die beiden Kolleginnen" von Sais', *GM 180* (2001), 23-28.

³²³ *Mutatis mutandis* it is hard not to recall Penelope beleaguered by suitors and weaving the funerary shroud for Laertes, all the while waiting for the return of her husband Odysseus or for their son

of the myth of Geb raping his mother and injuring Shu also contains an aetiological reference to weaving, which perhaps is to be seen as the produce of the goddess in her imprisonment³²⁴:

Eight strands linen was made into a skirt. It is called Siat-linen from Khemenu. It was made as a cultic object (*dbḥw*) in Khemenu for the protection of its lord, Shu, the eldest son (of Re).

In the Tebtunis manual there is not stated any reason why the goddess is imprisoned, but, as we shall see, the motif is an important part of parallel myths. If, as conjectured in the following, it belonged to the basic pattern of the myth, it probably did not need a stated rationale, any more than Seth's murder of Osiris was in need of an explanation.

Second myth: Thoth and Geb

The part of the section explicitly devoted to the festival of Thoth is introduced by³²⁵:

Concerning the festival that is performed on the first month of Akhet day 19: Hedjhotep is (*m*) Thoth and Geb is (*m*) a dog.

In his study of the god Hedjhotep, Backes recognizes this identification of Geb as a reference to the strife between Thoth and Baba in the form of a dog³²⁶. The connection of the myth to the festival of Thoth appears to have been recognized at least since the New Kingdom. In the Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky days the entry for first Akhet provides a brief outline³²⁷:

First month of Akhet, day 19: Good, Good, Good: A good day in heaven and on earth in front of Re. The great ennead is in festival while incense is on the fire for those who are in his following, the Evening and the Morning barque: this day when Re is received by the gods, with sweet hearts; this day when Thoth comes forth from the necropolis with the 'Enemy' of Baba in his hand.

In the Ptolemaic period two sources, the papyrus Jumilhac and a text in the library in the temple of Edfu elaborate on this myth.

Telemachus to step into character. For the question of Egyptian influences in Homer cf. von Lieven, 'Fiktionales und historisches Ägypten. Das Ägyptenbild der Odyssee aus ägyptologischer Perspektive', *Geschichte und Fiktion in der homerischen Odyssee* (2006), 61-75.

³²⁴ TM 4, 14-15.

³²⁵ TM 5, 6-7.

³²⁶ Backes, *Rituelle Wirklichkeit. Über erscheinung und Wirkungsbereich des Webergottes Hedjhotep* (2001), 9. Osing interprets the designation of Geb as *tsm* as a pejorative use (*Papiri geroglyphici* (1998), 173 n. b to translation with n. 207).

³²⁷ Leiz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 32-33.

Thoth and Baba in the papyrus Jumilhac and temple of Edfu

The myth is divided into two parts. In the first Baba, perhaps truthfully, accuses Thoth of having stolen of the food of Re³²⁸. His case falls for lack of witnesses as the collected enneads testify that: 'We have not seen it'. When Baba commits his crime Thoth in turn ensures witnesses are present³²⁹:

Knowing the copulation of the dog which will 'tense up': Baba spoke evil against 'the enemy of' Thoth again. Then Thoth came against him while he was abed with 'some female' sleeping and he (Thoth) stroke his phallus with his scribal-reed and he recited his magic against him and he held fast his phallus in the vagina of 'some female'. He was not able to take it out. Then Thoth summoned the greater and lesser enneads and he showed it to them. Re said: 'You have failed'. Thoth said to him: 'Great one, your testicles are hanging out'. Then he came against 'the enemy of' Thoth equipped with his weapons. Then Thoth recited his magic against him and he lifted his weapon and placed it in his own head. Then the gods said 'He has fought himself'. His name of 'enemy' came into being until this day. Then it was reported to Re by the gods and Re gave Baba in the hand of Thoth and he slew him on the slaughter block to let the same happen to the dog which will 'tense up' to this day. Knowing the interpretation of the red dog which is slaughtered on the feast of Thoth: Regarding the red dog: it is Baba. Regarding Baba: it is the fiend (*nbd*).

The strife between Thoth and Baba has received much attention in later years. Allusions to the natural coupling of dogs have been clarified, and the attitude towards dogs in Egypt and the classical world have been invoked to explain the myth³³⁰. With all these articles it is astounding to see that the identity of Baba's sexual partner has never been discussed. However given the possible relevance for the connection between the two myths this question is worth considering.

In the papyrus Jumilhac the partner is called *mnt* 'someone' (f.). Presumably scholars have taken this to mean that the identity is not important; Baba copulates with just some female or other. However, it may mean just the opposite. Quack has brought to light examples of *mn* used to blur the identity of gods in delicate situations³³¹. In this case the partner of Baba would be someone not flattered by the association with the god. A clue to her identity is found in the parallel text from the temple of Edfu discovered by Dieter Kurth³³². The text is found in the library, or better book storage³³³. Here the conflict between

³²⁸ For the veracity of Baba's accusation see Schott, 'Thoth, le Dieu qui vole les offrandes', *CRAIBL* 114/3 (1970), 547-556.

³²⁹ pJumilhac, 16, 14- 22. I have followed the latest translation by Quack, 'Corpus oder membra disiecta?', *Fs Kurth* (2008), 226-227.

³³⁰ Kurth, 'Bebon und Thoth', *SAK* 19 (1992), 225-230; Leitz, 'Auseinandersetzung zwischen Thot und Baba', ...*quaerentes scientiam*, *Fs. Westendorf* (1994), 103-118; Aufrère, 'À propos du chien Bébon, d'Anubis et de l'adultère', *Égypte Afrique & Orient* 23 (2001), 23-28; Quack, 'Corpus oder membra disiecta?', *Fs. Kurth* (2008), 226-227.

³³¹ Quack, 'Corpus oder membra disiecta?', *Fs. Kurth* (2008), 212-213, with examples from the pJumilhac (T.B. 3, 19-4, 28 passim) and pBrooklyn 47.218.84 (14, 7). To the examples adduced by Quack may be added pSalt 825, 14, 9.

³³² 'Bebon und Thoth', *SAK* 19 (1992), 225-230.

Thoth and Baba is mentioned, drawing upon the same two themes as the pJumilhac; theft of the food of Re and sexual encounter. The relevant passage is as follows³³⁴:

To recite: Get back raging one, rebel, enemy of Thoth, Bebon of seven cubits, who emits semen and who sniffs at putrefication with open nostrils. You have no virility with the God's wife, with whom there is no 'sexual relations' by gods or men³³⁵, you have no partaking of the food of the divine limbs which are sealed. Your nose will be cut off and your crimes put against you.

That Baba is said to be impotent in the company of the wife of god, is a confirmation of the negative character of the sexual union of the god and the female. Just as Seth is adjured not to commit violence against Osiris or Apophis is said not to combat Re, the negative statement is relevant exactly because this *has* already happened: once Seth did kill Osiris, Apophis did come near to defeating Re, who was only saved by his retinue, and, so we may reasonably presume, Baba has in fact copulated with the wife of god. Besides being a title for a priestess, the wife of god is attested for a few goddesses: Isis, whom Kurth suggested, and goddesses related to Re as his daughter or eye³³⁶, including Tefnut, which brings us back to the myth of Geb raping his mother Tefnut.

The Mythological Manual of the Delta provides the link between the myth in papyrus Jumilhac, the Tebtunis manual and the text in Edfu. In the section of Behbeit an alternate version of the rape of the goddess by Seth is narrated³³⁷:

The Divine mother was 'far from' being bound at her legs by Seth since he desired sexual satisfaction beneath the *hb3yt-tree*. He bound her hands to her thighs, very much. She grabbed (*h3f=s sw*) him.

Here it is Seth who rapes the goddess, who is again not named but only alluded to by an epithet, after having tied her up. As Meeks notes the last sentence is probably a variant of a

³³³ For the texts here see Kurth, *Treffpunkt der Götter* (1998), 140-146.

³³⁴ *Edfou* III, 341, 13-14: *bn n=k b33wt m hmt-ntr iwty shn hr=s m ntrw rmt*. For *shn* used of sexual relations cf. pBrooklyn 47.218.84 (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 404 s,v, *shn* and textual note 310), and the Tebtunis Mythological Manual, *TM*, 4, 13.

³³⁵ The mention of a celibate wife of god is problematical for several reasons. First it seems to be a contradiction in terms, but this is resolved if we assume that she is reserved for one god. Furthermore if 'wife of god' refers to a goddess then the mention of being untouched by men would seem superfluous, as Plutarch noted Egyptian goddesses do not consort with mortal men (Plutarch's *Symposia*, Book 8, question 1, 3) though the reason given by Plutarch appears spurious; he refers that the Egyptians consider mortal men unable because of goddesses being made of 'thin air, subtle heat and moisture'. An exception should be made for kings who are hardly ordinary mortals, and a further possible exception to this principle is the Middle Kingdom *Story of the Herdsman*, in which a goddess approaches a herdsman (latest treatment with references: Schneider, 'Contextualising the Tale of the herdsman', *Egyptian stories, Fs. Lloyd* (2007), 309-318). For the Edfu passage a solution would be to take 'wife of god' as a priestess, playing the role of a goddess in ritual. The celibacy of this priestess has been the object of some controversy, but it appears that for the Late Period this priestess was indeed celibate and chose her successor by adoption (Latest discussion with further references in Quack, 'Herodot, Strabo und die Pallakide von Theben', *Tempelprostitution im Alterum* (2009), 167-171).

³³⁶ Leitz, *LGG* V, 136.

³³⁷ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 14, 1-2 (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 30).

similar motif in pJumilhac where the rapist is restrained from leaving his victim³³⁸. In the pJumilhac the motif included reference to the mating behaviour of dogs, but here the gods are seen as anthropomorphic which necessitates a different approach. The goddess is immobilised by binding, but she nevertheless manages to grab hold of her assailant preventing him from escaping. In this version of the myth the motif of mutual restraint cannot simply be described as due to naturalist concerns, as in the coupling of dogs, but must be essential to the myth. At any rate it is one of the mythemes that allow for an association of this myth to the Myth of Geb raping Tefnut: In both a god rapes a goddess and restrains her.

The different points of similarity between the two myths, Thoth and Baba and the Rape of the Goddess, explain why Geb is identified as the dog in the Tebtunis Manual. In the Delta manual we saw how Geb could have the form of a dog, and due to the association of the two myths he could assume the place of Baba in the dog offering that took place at the festival of Thoth³³⁹. The presence of Hedjhotep is harder to explain³⁴⁰. In a discussion of the passage, Backes notes the early association of this god with Hermopolis³⁴¹. However, it may be Hedjhotep's association with Shu that is of relevance since Thoth too can also be identified with Shu³⁴². In this chain of identifications, Hedjhotep – (Shu) – Thoth, the last two can be recognized as the national god of the myth of the Rape of the Goddess, Shu as the

³³⁸ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006) 283. Meeks finds a further version of the myth in the section on Imet, where Horit is raped by Be (pBrooklyns 47.218.84, 15-6-9, *ibid* 34 and mythological commentary, 303-304).

³³⁹ References in Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 156. A closer association between Geb and Baba as dogs might have existed. The section on knowing the different forms of the *ḥstt*-beast in the pJumilhac (XV, 9-XVI, 22) has a long passage on the ninth dog, which is a manifestation of Baba (XVI, 7-22). This dog is characterized by sunken eyes bordered by a yellow rim in a black face, while the rest of the dog is speckled red. There is no mention of Geb here, but this may simply be due to different (local) interpretations of a single festival ritual. However there is material that can be utilized in an attempt to harmonize the two accounts. The eight dog in the list in pJumilhac is a manifestation of Geb. The sole characteristic listed for this dog is its speckled hide (*s3b*), which it has in common with the ninth and which furthermore is not shared by any of the other dogs. If a traditional scheme of classification can be used for these dogs then 'speckled' constitutes a category of dogs, while 'speckled with red face etc.' is a member of this category while forming a sub-category of its own. The dog sacrificed on the festival would then manifest Baba, as well as Geb. Interestingly the list of dogs also mentions a dog manifesting Thoth-Shu (6th dog XVI, 5) this dog is all white; a characteristic which may be linked to Hedj-Hotep in the Tebtunis Manual. For colour as a criterion for distinguishing manifestations of different gods in the same species cf. von Lieven, 'Das Göttliche in der Natur erkennen. Tiere, Pflanzen und Phänomene der unbelebten Natur als Manifestation des Göttlichen', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 160-162.

³⁴⁰ Osing (*Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 173 n. a) sees Hedjhotep as identical with the festive clothing mentioned in the section. Backes refutes this with the argument that Hedjhotep is the god of weaving and not the product of this action. Backes discussion of the reasons for Hedjhotep's presence is based on functional similarities for Hedjhotep and Thoth, who can both be helpers of Osiris and Horus (Backes, *Rituelle Wirklichkeit* (2001), 90-92). These functions are not specific enough to constitute an explanation since basically every god, apart from Seth and similar gods, could act as helper of Osiris or Horus.

³⁴¹ Backes, *Rituelle Wirklichkeit* (2001), 91.

³⁴² Backes, *Rituelle Wirklichkeit* (2001), 62ff.

husband of Tefnut and father of Geb, and his local manifestation Thoth. This still leaves Hedjhotep, a god primarily associated with weaving. Clothes also play a prominent part in the section on Hermopolis, but there may be more to inclusion of this god in the Hermopolis section. The Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky days preserves tantalizing allusions to myths involving Hedjhotep³⁴³. The most relevant of these for the Tebtunis manual is found in the entry for the second month of Akhet, day 5³⁴⁴:

Dangerous, Dangerous, Dangerous: You should not leave your house to go anywhere on this day. You should not have sex with a woman: This day of performing rites of the penis. Hedjhotep is against ‘someone’³⁴⁵ on this day. Whoever is born on this day will die because of the sex.

Here Hedjhotep is somehow involved in an intercourse with negative association, which demonstrates that Hedjhotep had a mythology of his own, and that at least some of it was connected to sexuality. From the phrasing of the entry it is impossible to see precisely what Hedjhotep does³⁴⁶; it could be committing or preventing a rape dependent on the gender of ‘someone’. Irrespectively of what myth is alluded to here, we glimpse an additional reason for including the god in the section on Hermopolis, besides his associations with that nome and his function as a god of weaving³⁴⁷.

Third Myth: The return of the Goddess

The manual contains another myth of the goddess, related to the myth of The Return of the Goddess³⁴⁸, which can be viewed either as a continuation of the myth of her imprisonment,

³⁴³ The entry for first month of Akhet, day 10 mentions a procession of Hedjhotep, as does the entry for the fourth month of Akhet day 14, this time in conjunction with Tayt from the Benben-house (Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 21 & 165-166).

³⁴⁴ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 67-68. Following the Cairo papyrus which by *lectio difficilior* should be the primary version.

³⁴⁵ *mn(t?)* Emended from *mnt* ‘Monthu’. For IV. Peret 12, Leitz argues that the presence of Monthu is due to a scribal error, and suggests that the original reading would have been *mnt3y*, a designation for Osiris in Philae (*Tagewählerei* (1996), 312-314). Here too it would be simpler to have *mn(t?)* ‘someone’ which could easily be misread or interpreted as Monthu. Euphemistic use is found elsewhere in the Calendar with *hftj N* ‘The enemy of N’ (Day, Month: 19, 1; 23, 1; 26, 1; 22, 2; 13, 3; 14, 3; 9, 4; 18, 4; 23, 10 (?)) and *db^c* for reproachable actions (See the discussion of this word *ibid* 23 n. b)).

³⁴⁶ The explanation offered by Leitz (*Tagewählerei* (1996), 69-70) with recourse to the Osiris myths is not satisfactory. Firstly, despite being the producer of cloth for bandaging the corpse, Hedjhotep is never specifically responsible for or identical to the substitute penis of cloth. Secondly, Leitz assumes this day to be the date for the conception of Horus with reference to Plutarch (*De Iside*, 65) and Edfou (VI, 214). However in a related Edfou text the date of conception is explicitly the third month of Shemu, day 9 (*Edfou* VI, 223).

³⁴⁷ For the importance, or even primacy, of Hedjhotep it may be relevant that he is the topic and Thoth the comment in the identifying sentence: *ḥd-ḥtp m ḏhwty* ‘Hedjhotep is Thoth’, and not the other way around. However, later in the section we find: *isdn im m ḥd-ḥtp* (*TM* 5, 23-24).

³⁴⁸ For literature on this myth see Quack, ‘Die Rückkehr der Göttin nach Theben nach demotischen Quellen’, in: Thiers, (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (CENiM 3), Montpellier

or as a different myth to the same effect, namely to explain her absence. In the Tebtunis manual the exile and return of the goddess is part of the festival of Thoth which also serve as the ritual framework for the composite myth of Geb's crimes:

Isden is there as Hedjhotep, while Nehemtaua is there as Horit. It is her who allows the throat of Shu to breathe since she was brought from the faraway region for her initiation to Shu in the great lake while the land was performing a festival for the lord of Maat.

The goddess Nehemtaua (*nḥmt-ꜥw3*) is brought from a distant region (*ꜥ-w3*) providing an aetiology for this goddess that connects her to the Myth of the Return of the Goddess. This myth centres upon Tefnut who, for unknown reasons, left Egypt for Nubia and has to be brought back by Thoth and Shu. In the different nomes of Egypt the return of the goddess, in her local forms, was celebrated at the festival of inebriation as part of, or immediately subsequent to, the festival of Thoth.

A Hermopolitan form of the goddess was also celebrated in Herakleopolis, from which two demotic ostraca preserve part of the liturgy for the local festival of the Return of the Goddess. Here the goddess Ai or Tai, represents the fiery savage aspect of the goddess while Nehemant is the pacified, erotic goddess³⁴⁹. In the Tebtunis manual Unut is the raging goddess, while Nehemtaua is the pacified goddess. She is stated to be initiated or inducted (*bsi*) to Shu in the great lake, the temenos of Hermopolis, to conclude her return.

Usually the myth of The Return of the Goddess, begins with her sojourn in Nubia without any explanation for why she left Egypt, but in the Tebtunis manual we hear that the Goddess, identified with the *mḥnt*-counterpoise, was desired by Seth: 'She/it was claimed by the Castrated one in multiplying for himself the possessions of Geb'³⁵⁰. Seth is here both the son of Geb, who seeks to regain the ill-gotten possessions of his father, and a manifestation of Geb himself, who in the Delta manual was also castrated. The goddess flees from Seth, not to Nubia but to Naunet³⁵¹:

Then she fled before The Dark One, and she settled inside Naunet. Then Nephtys and Thoth came to ask of her condition. Then he said to her: 'Do you have a man who is truly near the noble ones (*n3 špsw m wn m3ꜥ*)?' Then she said to him a sound. Then he said to her: 'Look a noble one is inside my own house'. Then they took the right path (*m3ꜥ*) and they were called: 'the siblings in the temple of Khemenu'.

The dialogue between Thoth and Nehemtaui is cryptic but is certainly to be associated with the goddess epithet of the truly noble one (*špst (m) wn-m3ꜥ*) as well as the local form of the

2009, 135-146 and Jørgensen, 'Myths, Menarche and the Return of the Goddess', *Lotus and Laurel fs. Frandsen* (Forthcoming).

³⁴⁹ Depauw & Smith, 'Visions of Ecstasy', *Fs Zauzich* (2004), 67-93. For the goddess Ay see now Leitz, 'Das Ichneumonweibchen von Herakleopolis', *SAK* 38 (2009), 161-171.

³⁵⁰ *TM* 6, 5-6.

³⁵¹ *TM* 6, 6-9.

sun god. The epithet ‘the truly noble one’ refers to the goddess whereas the second speech of Thoth refers to a male, probably the local sun god Shepsy ‘The noble one’³⁵².

This god is a local form of the newborn sun god, or alternatively the father of the Ogdoad³⁵³, and reflects Hermopolitan pantheon like the provincial god Aha³⁵⁴, who is included in the manual as a form of Thoth³⁵⁵. Here Shepsy assumes the plural, and in all probability refers to the Ogdoad, whose connection with (the singular) Shepsy is generally accepted³⁵⁶. Interestingly the Hermopolitan stele of Nektanebo also refers to the goddess in connection with the Ogdoad, a connection that found some form of architectural realisation in the goddess’ temple in Hermopolis. In the temple dedicated to the goddess, eight sistra were located and somehow connected to the Ogdoad³⁵⁷:

(It is) the resting place of his (i.e. the King’s) mother Useret Nehemtaui. It is called ‘The temple of the Ogdoad, the temple of the Golden One’. The eight sistra of Hathor Nehemtaui are in it. It is the place of repose (*hnt*) for the Ogdoad at the first occasion.

The sistra in the temple are perhaps linked to the sistrum on the reliefs in the temple of Hibis, where it denotes the risen form of the goddess, in contrast to the goddess lying in her coffin.

The name accorded to Thoth and the goddess snty ‘the siblings’ seems very generic, but is to be related to the similar names appearing in temple versions of the Return of the goddess, where Hathor-Tefnut as *t3 snt nfr* ‘the perfect sister’ united with her brother Shu³⁵⁸. The name snty thus evokes the siblings united by the return of the goddess, whose relationship has been set right (*m3^c*), and it is specified that they belong to the temple of Khemenu, i.e. that they constitute the local version of the sister-brother constellation in the myth of the Return of the Goddess.

Instead of Nubia, the place of refuge for the goddess is Naunet, the inner or nether sky, providing a further example of the basically metaphorical nature of mythic space in which different locations expressing the same ontological distance or frame can be substituted for

³⁵² Or more accurately ‘the manifest one’ or ‘shining one’ cf. Kruchten, ‘Profane et sacré dans le temple égyptien’, *BSEG* 21 (1997) 28-29, and Idem *Le grand texte oraculaire de Djéhoutymose intendant du domaine d’Amon sous le pontificat de Pinedjem II* (1986), 27 and 388.

³⁵³ Schmitz, ‘Ein weiterer Beleg für den Gott Schepsi’, *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens Fs. Westendorf* I (1984), 841-852.

³⁵⁴ Altenmüller, ‘Aha’, *LdÄ* I (1975), 96-97.

³⁵⁵ *TM* 6, 15.

³⁵⁶ E.g. Westendorf, ‘Schepsi’, *LdÄ* V (1984), 584.

³⁵⁷ Roeder, ‘Zwei hieroglyphische Inschriften aus Hermopolis’, *ASAE* 52 (1954), 89.

³⁵⁸ Sternberg, *Mythische Motive* (1985), 115. This name of the goddess is given by aetiologies which connect to the myth of the Return of the Goddess (Kom Ombo n° 167, 251, 613, 709-710).

each other³⁵⁹. Naunet plays a prominent role in the Hermopolis section. Since Naunet belongs to the Ogdoad, also one of the main characters of the section, the explanation for her presence in the Hermopolitan version of the Return of the Goddess should probably be sought in her connection to this group of gods.

Despite the association with Hermopolis, the Ogdoad is mostly known from Theban texts, which appear to have had their own versions of the myth³⁶⁰. In the Theban version the Ogdoad is born or created in Luxor. They then swim or float (*mḥi*) to Hermopolis where they participate in the creation of the sun before returning to Djeme for their burial. Here they are the object of the decade feast in which Amon of Luxor visits the ancestral gods every ten days to provide for them. Their place of burial is described in the Theban texts as being in a crypt or inside Naunet. In death they thus return to their origin, the Nun, located and contained in his spatially conceived feminine counterpart Naunet. Applied to the Tebtunis manual this would mean that the goddess in her refuge shares abode with the Ogdoad, and also that her return is related to the re-invigoration of these gods at the festival of the New Year. In other texts the activity of the Ogdoad is related to the inundation and the myth of The Return of the Goddess had as its primary cosmological correlate the first visibility of Sothis as heralding the imminent rise of the Nile³⁶¹. Nubia and Naunet are both set outside the cosmos proper; Nubia on the national level and Naunet on the cosmological, and play similar roles in the different versions of the myth of the Return of the Goddess, namely as mythic realisations of ontological distances. The association between the return of the

³⁵⁹ A further example of the equation of natural and cosmic geography involving the Myth of the Return of the Goddess can be found in the Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars (§5-6, cf. von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 128-130), where the stars sojourn inside Nut is equated with the goddess' stay in Punt.

³⁶⁰ Zivie-Coche, 'L'Ogdoade thébaine', *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (2009), 167-225. Contrary to Zivie-Coche, I would see the Theban Texts as reflection of local reworking of national mythology, even if this spread to other places (cf. Sethe, *Amun* (1929), 48-49 for Dendara) and find no reason for doubting an the importance of Hermopolis for the Ogdoad. The lack of sources reflecting this is simply due to the greater number of theological texts surviving from the Theban area. That Hermopolis could be seen as their place of Origin, as part of national mythology can be gathered from *TM* 6, 18-19 in which Hermopolis is specifically said to be the place where Ptah created (*shpr*) the Ogdoad, see discussion below. For another local variant of the myth see Edfou IV, 358-359, where the Ogdoad, here as the Shebtyw gods, come from Herakleopolis to Edfu, to return again to Herakleopolis where they are mummified. A connection between the Ogdoad and Herakleopolis may also be intended in the Tebtunis manual which associates the Ogdoad with the nart-tree (*TM* 6, 10 and 14). In the Demotic Myth of the Sun's Eye the Ogdoad is also associated with Herakleopolis (pLeiden I 348, 4, 19-21 = Spiegelberg, *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonneauge* (1917), 19-20. Translated in Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 205-206).

³⁶¹ For this astral application of the myth see especially Quack, 'A Goddess Rising 10,000 Cubits into the Air...Or only one Cubit, one Finger', *Under one Sky. Astronomy and Mathematics in the Ancient Near East* (2002), 283-294.

goddess, the inundation and the creative activity of the Ogdoad, leads to the next item in the Tebtunis manual, the Island of Fire and its role in the cosmogony³⁶².

Fourth Mythic complex: Cosmogonies

As home to one of the classical Egyptian creation accounts, the Hermopolitan Cosmogony detailing the role of the Ogdoad in creation, it is natural that cosmogonies play a large part in the Hermopolis section. A short reference to food offerings to Hathor as the hand of god, an allusion to the myth of Atum as the masturbator, is found³⁶³, but otherwise it is the Hermopolitan creation, and the subsequent separation of heaven and earth that is emphasized. The creation of light in the primeval flood, the primordial egg and the subsequent birth of the solar god from the *mḥt-wrt*, the cow goddess 'Heavy flood' is the subject of an interpretation of the Isle of Fire, while the section begins with Shu's separation of heaven and earth, located on the primeval hill in Heliopolis.

Separation of heaven and Earth

In the first part of the section we are told that Shu elevated the sky over his son Geb in Heliopolis, when or as he purified himself of the injury done to him by Geb. If anything can be inferred from the sequence of events, the separation of sky and earth could be seen as a punishment of Geb for the crimes against Shu and Tefnut. In the Heliopolis section of the mythological manual of the Delta we find the same structure of transgression and separation, but with different myths.

In the Delta manual Geb eats the eye of Re, which is often said to be his daughter and can be identified with Tefnut³⁶⁴. Here it is connected to a celestial body as it said to be invisible when eaten, but shining once again when recovered³⁶⁵. Geb, in the form of a pig, is punished by being fed offal, which is said to be the same done to him for 'the damage which he did to his father Shu'. In the next passage, the topic is the elevation of the sky over Geb. This takes place in the same location as the punishment, the Great house (*ḥwt-ʿ3t*) in Heliopolis. Geb lies down with his face downwards and his flesh begins to flourish while

³⁶² This association between the mythic complexes of the Return of the Goddess and cosmogony was also made in the Late Period versions of the Amduat in the 'Amduat Cosmogony', see Manassa, 'Sounds of the Netherworld', *Mythos & Ritual* (2008), 109-135.

³⁶³ *TM* 5, 14.

³⁶⁴ pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 6, 6-6, 11 = Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 14-15.

³⁶⁵ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 218, sees the eye of Re referring to the moon, but it could also be Sothis, which would relate the myth to the Return of the goddess in which the heliacal rising of Sothis was the primary celestial correlate, cf. Quack, 'A Goddess Rising 10,000 Cubits into the Air...Or only one Cubit, one Finger', *Under one Sky* (2002), 283-294.

guarded by uraei and vultures, recalling the flora often said to grow on the back of Geb³⁶⁶. Finally, Geb's water is expelled (*wdi*) beneath the *kkw*-plants, which are on him. In these waters Meeks see a reference to the Nile inundation as a source of water for the plant life³⁶⁷ but it also makes sense in purely mythological terms since Geb is deprived from intercourse with Nut and his semen, a common sense of the word 'water' now flows freely, manifesting itself in plant life on earth.

Support for this interpretation can be found in the papyrus Jumilhac in a passage where Seth is similarly barred from intercourse with Isis³⁶⁸:

Then Seth saw Isis in this place and he transformed himself into a bull running after her. She changed her form into a dog with a knife on the tip of its tail. She ran before him and he could not reach her. He ejaculated his semen on the ground. This goddess said 'It is *bwt* that you have emitted (*wdi*) semen'. Then his semen grew as plants on this mountain and its name became '*btt-k3*'.

Seth, who in this myth is unable to reach the object of his desire, emits his semen unto the ground where it grows into plants. In pictorial representations of the separation of the sky and earth, Geb can be shown in two ways; one is in a languid state with his face looking downwards, reminiscent of the pose mentioned in the Delta papyrus, the other is clutching his erect member³⁶⁹.

While involving to different goddesses, Tefnut and Nut, it is easy to see the similarities between the myth of the raped goddess and the separation of earth and sky. In the myth of the raped goddess, Geb and Tefnut, cling to each other as does Geb and Nut before their separation. Some versions of the last myth may have been closer to the myth of the raped goddess since Plutarch mentions that other traditions regarded the relationship between Geb and Nut (Cronus and Rhea) as illegitimate³⁷⁰, and that Nut was originally the wife of the solar god.

The Decan chapter in *The Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars* has another aetiology for the separation of sky and earth. According to this book Geb and Nut argued over the fate of their children, which Nut kept eating. Apparently Geb was not supposed to interfere as he was punished for disputing with Nut – again by being separated from Nut at

³⁶⁶ Bedier, *Die Rolle des Gottes Geb in den ägyptischen Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (1995), 173-182. See e.g. *Edfou* VII, 210, 6: (Horus): I give to you all that grows on the back of Geb.

³⁶⁷ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 221.

³⁶⁸ pJumilhac 3,1-3,5. Translated and discussed in Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 15.

³⁶⁹ See the examples collected in Lanzione, *Dizionario di mitologia egizia* (1884), s.v. sb. Newest discussion of the scenes of Shu separating Geb and Nut is Kramer, 'The Symbolic Meaning of the Scene of Nut, Geb, and Shu', *Kubaba* 1 (2010), 20-37.

³⁷⁰ Plutarch, *De Iside* 12.

the raising of the sky³⁷¹. The 'planet chapter' in the book provides a similar aetiology, only this time called a "second strife"³⁷². As von Lieven argues it is hard not to see the two versions in the Fundamentals as dealing with the same strife, and not two separate ones³⁷³. She does not venture an explanation, but perhaps one can be found in the character of the Fundamentals, as essentially an anthology of texts dealing with mythic astronomy. If the 'planet chapter' originally formed a text of its own, it could have contained references to two strifes, of which the second is the same one as in the 'decan chapter'. The first strife, part of the text not incorporated into the Fundamentals, must then precede the separation of the earth and sky, and could have been the rape of the goddess by Geb.

In all versions the separation of the two deities is a form of punishment which invites for a comparison to the myth of the heavenly cow, in which the sky is elevated as a place of refuge for Re because of the crimes of mankind.

The Egg and the Ogdoad, The Primeval Cow and the Birth of the Sun God

The primeval heavenly cow is also present in the Tebtunis manual but her appearance is preceded by that of the Ogdoad, who gave name to the city. The Ogdoad plays a crucial role in the so-called Hermopolitan Cosmogony, which is primarily known from Ptolemaic and Roman period temples and papyri³⁷⁴. A lot has been written on this aspect of cosmogony and an in depth study will not be undertaken here, but only the main points noted as the feature in the Tebtunis manual. The Ogdoad and their actions are dealt with in two instances, one in a commentary on the presence of the Ogdoad in Hermopolis while the other is part of a commentary on The Island of Fire. These two passages provide slightly divergent versions of the cosmogony regarding the relation of the Ogdoad to the primeval egg and the birth of the solar god from the lotus or from the cow goddess. In the first version the origin of the Ogdoad is left untold, they are simply there in Hermopolis³⁷⁵:

Concerning the Ogdoad in this city: four males, and four females, eight who give praise to Re, who created completely everything. When they had created their seed as a ball when they procreated in emitting sperm, then 'otherness' was placed against Egypt, since the flood had overflowed (*hfy*) the banks.

In this version the Ogdoad emits their seed in the form of a ball or sphere, which somehow relates to "otherness" being placed against Egypt and the flood. These cryptic phrases are

³⁷¹ Von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), §96.

³⁷² *Grundriss* (2007), §126.

³⁷³ *Grundriss* (2007), 170-171.

³⁷⁴ The classic study of the Ogdoad and their role in creation is Sethe, *Amun und die acht Urgötter von Hermopolis* (1929), newest study with further references: Zivie-Coche, 'L'Ogdoade thébaine', *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (2009), 167-225.

³⁷⁵ *TM* 4, 20-23.

perhaps to be understood as the first necessary distinction between cosmos, identified here with Egypt, and chaos, the 'Other' that is to be excluded, suppressed or domesticated - in mythological terms enemies are cast down at the Island of Fire, as mentioned in other sources for the Hermopolitan cosmogony and briefly further down in the Tebtunis manual³⁷⁶. What can be gathered with certainty from the passage is the equation of the primeval state with the flooding of the shores at the time of the inundation, which while a common idea, is of special relevance for this section which includes the Return of the Distant Goddess into its cosmogony.

Into the primeval waters the Akhet-cow appears and gives birth to the young sun god. The child seeks nourishment from the udder but finds it empty; it only contains a single drop of milk, and even this is denied him as it falls to the ground where it becomes a lotus. In this, the version here resembles the process of creation outlined in the so-called *Fragments of the Memphite Cosmogony*. Here the male members of the Ogdoad coalesce into Amon, as a black bull, and the Females into Amunet as a black cow³⁷⁷. Amon desires Amaunet but is frustrated in his attempts to reach her so that his seed drops into the water where it forms a lotus. In both cosmogonies we have a combination of unfulfilled desire and a drop of liquid growing into a lotus³⁷⁸, similar to the fertility that resulted from Geb's and Seth's frustrated attempts at intercourse with Nut and Isis discussed above.

In other versions of the cosmogony the emergence of the lotus can be accompanied by the creation of light; often the lotus contains the solar child whose opening of his eyes corresponds to the opening of the flower's petals³⁷⁹. In the Tebtunis manual too, the opening of the lotus is followed by the creation of light, but they are not causally connected in any way, only the sequence in which they are mentioned links the two³⁸⁰:

A drop fell down and a great lotus opened, having become great. The child caused the dark clouds to disappear for himself without knowing it. This is light instead of his blindness. The Radiant established the child between her horns, (she being) Mehet-Urt in crossing Nun, the mother of god. Re came up (*hfy*) at the place of the lotus in his festival in the great lake, all his enemies were cast down on the island of flames.

³⁷⁶ TM 5, 20-22 and 27. For the Island of Fire cf. Altenmüller, 'Messersee', 'Gewundener Wasserlauf und 'Flammensee', *ZÄS* 92 (1966), 86-95 and Hermesen, 'Die Bedeutung des Flammensees im Zweibegebuch', *Hermes Aegyptiacus*. Fs Stricker, (1985), 73-86.

³⁷⁷ Erichsen and Schott, *Fragments memphitischen Theologie in demotischer Schrift* (1954), 313 = Demotic pBerlin 13602, 2, 6.

³⁷⁸ The relationship between milk and semen has often been noted (cf. DuQuesne, 'Milk of the jackal', *Cahiers caribéens d'Égyptologie* 1 (2000), 53-6), however here the significant point of resemblance is unfulfilled desire as a driving force in the early stages of the cosmogony.

³⁷⁹ Cf. Ryhiner, *L'Offrande du lotus dans les temples égyptiens de l'époque tardive* (1986).

³⁸⁰ TM 4, 24-27.

Having been denied nourishment, the child must seek it out and this requires the use of sight. Unknowingly, that is not caused by any premeditation but fuelled by his hunger, the child creates light, to dispel the darkness and allow him to see. The cow establishes the young sun god between her horns and crosses the Nun to the place where the Lotus grows and thus Re reaches his goal, the single drop of milk that escaped him, and finds it transformed into a vehicle of creation. Here Re ascends, using the verb *hfy* that was also used for the 'overflowing of the banks' earlier on in the section, perhaps to establish an homology between the ascent of Re and the rise of the flood. The place of Re's ascent, the Island of Fire, is also the place where his enemies are defeated as part of the creation of the cosmos.

The Island of fire is explained as a 'the place of the two groups of four of the Ogdoad on the High hill on the bank of the great lake beside Nun, from whom all things came forth'³⁸¹, and is later accorded its own subsection³⁸², which explains that the island is situated inside a garden called 'Great lake', which harbours the *n^crt*-tree. This tree, primarily known as the sacred tree of Herakleopolis, serves as the resting place for the Ogdoad in Hermopolis. By copulating, the males and the females of the Ogdoad produces a scarab-ball, which emerges from the waters as a lotus with the solar child inside. As he takes his place between the horns of the primeval cow he emerges out of the darkness and begins to spread light. This light is received by the nart-tree, which explains the presence of it in Hermopolis³⁸³: 'Then the Ogdoad came to be there while the nart-tree budded. The *nrt*-tree is the same unto this day'.

The two different versions of the cosmogony are included without explanation or attempts at harmonizing them. Both variants are known from other sources and were probably included as two different but equally valid approaches to the same myth. In the Tebtunis manual the cosmogony is associated with the Myth of the Return of the Goddess, and also to a myth involving the gathering of Osiris' members by Thoth.

Myths of Osiris

Compared to the other sections Osiris and Horus as well as Seth are conspicuously absent, only making their appearance in passages at the end of the section. The first concerns an aetiology for the name of the nome; Unut. Thoth is said to have transformed himself into a

³⁸¹ *TM* 4, 28-29.

³⁸² *TM* 6, 9-15.

³⁸³ *TM* 6, 14-15.

fighter (*ḥ3*), an old epithet of the god in Hermopolis³⁸⁴ which is here interpreted as a form of Horus who is said to have been injured fighting (*ḥ3*) with Seth. Horus calls upon his mother for healing³⁸⁵: ‘You shall come mother. Do you not wish to speak (*mdw*)?’ Apparently Isis intercedes for her son, because: ‘It happened that the name of Unut (*wnt*) was made, since words existed (*wn mdw*). Because of this the name was created in this nome’. The next myth is an aetiology for the different ibis forms of Thoth³⁸⁶:

Concerning the Ibis (*hb*): This bird had eaten of the divine limbs in the water, while Horus was floating on the river ‘far away’ from being because of the great crime in Upper Egypt due to a vile Nubian who was in the southern land. This bird ate of him in the water. Then he made himself comfortable on his belly when he was satisfied. (but) his innards were heavy for him, and he is called Ibis (*hb*) because he had gorged (*hb*) in the corpse of Osiris when it landed at the ‘great sea of fire’. [He is called the crested Ibis (*3ht*) of] the heart, since he had eaten of the relics (*ih*)...of this noble corpse in Nun.

In what is probably a nighttime setting both Osiris and Horus are floating in the river. It appears that Thoth is unable to recognize the god and so he begins to eat of the corpse. In contrast to the similar myth of Osiris and Upwawet from the Assiut section, there is no mention of Thoth later vomiting but such an action might be implied as we learn that the god’s innards ‘were heavy for him’. If so Thoth might be instrumental in retrieving the limbs in the water, specifically stated to be *The Great Sea of Fire*, of the local temple area and bringing them ashore. This would accord with his customary role in helping the dead Osiris, only by different means. Apart from providing aetiologies for the ibis forms this myth also serves to connect Osiris to the cosmogony myths present in the chapter. There, the prerequisites for creation were listed as: ‘The one in the crypt, the mistress in the temple of Khemenu, the sandal and *mḥt*-counterpoise and the divine efflux in the effigy (*km3wty*)’. As Goyon suggests, the effigy is an Osirian receptacle for the divine efflux scattered at his death³⁸⁷. In the Hermopolitan setting it becomes identical with the inundation which serves as the *fons et origo* for the new creation. In this perspective Thoth’s actions as an Ibis emerge as ultimately positive as he gathers the efflux of the god, or the god himself, and brings it to the island of fire at the site of creation. This myth is probably depicted at the temple of Hibis, where we find Thoth sitting on top of a *dbh*-jar containing the floating Osiris³⁸⁸.

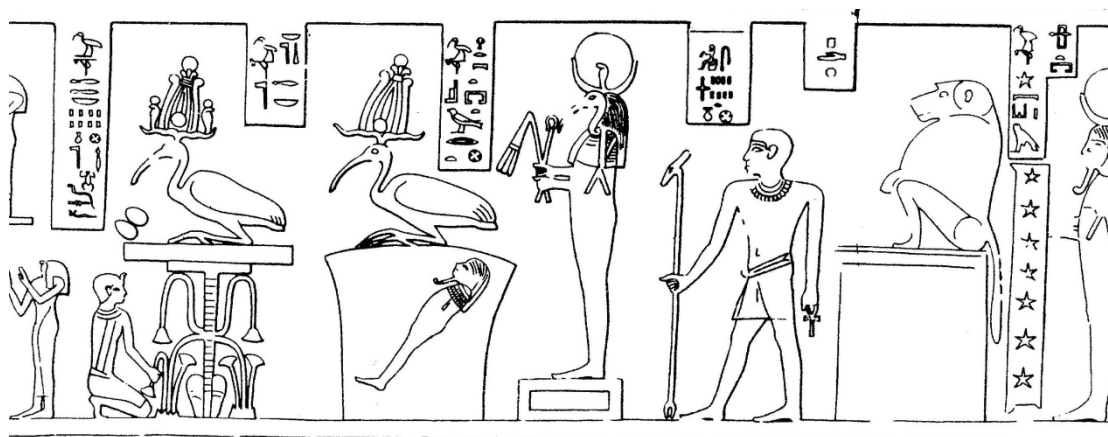
³⁸⁴ *TM* 6, 15.

³⁸⁵ *TM* 6, 15-18.

³⁸⁶ *TM* 6, 19-25.

³⁸⁷ Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux’, *Fs. Altenmüller* (2003), 157.

³⁸⁸ Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis III* (1953), pl. 4.



In his analysis of the scene, Kessler notes that Thoth's crown is devoid of uraei, something which indicates a night time setting³⁸⁹. From the arrangement of the scenes in the Hibis reliefs, this scene can be seen to precede creation; next to it Thoth is shown with uraei on his crown, this time sitting upon the *sm3-t3wy* emblem. In front of him two ovoid forms are displayed, probably a representation of the two halves of the primeval egg which in the inscriptions in the tomb of Petosiris are said to be stored in the temple of Hermopolis³⁹⁰. In the Hibis reliefs this in turn leads to the birth of the sun god from the lotus, adored by the Ogdoad.

Thus the myth of the Ibis, which at first seems to be appended as an afterthought to the main section, can be seen to provide an Osirian interpretation of the Hermopolitan cosmogony. By eating Osiris, Thoth gathers the members of the god scattered in the river and the collection of the efflux of Osiris in his effigy is equated with the rising inundation at the beginning of the New Year, the return of Nun, from which a new creation commences.

Due to the damaged state of the rest of the page, it is unfortunately not clear where the myth ends, but on the next page we learn that Horus combats The Fierce Faced One (*nh3-hr*), Seth in crocodile form, in the northern part of the nome, in what must be a variant myth of the rebellion to the north of Hermopolis, alluded to in other sources³⁹¹. The remains of the myth are phrased in a series of aetiologies for the local temple 'The great house', the local taboo on crocodiles and for the state of mankind. From what can be gathered from the remains of the last lines of the previous page and from what follows, Horus battle with the crocodile concerned the Eye of Horus, and somehow 'The people were joined as one to the eye of Horus', by reason of this the crocodile that threatens the eye is also dangerous to

³⁸⁹ Kessler, 'Hermopolitanische Götterformen im Hibis-Tempel', *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück Fs Altenmüller* (2003), 217-220.

³⁹⁰ Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris II* (1924), 157 = Texts 81, 67-68 and 62, 5-

³⁹¹ Smith, *On the Primaeval Ocean* (2002), 77.

mankind and thus 'The crocodile is *bwt* for the people on account of this'. Yet, the connection with the eye goes further as the manual proceeds with a singular aetiology for the origin of mankind that succeeds in tying together the two previous known origin stories. One concerns the emergence from the eye or tears of the solar god, via a pun on tears (*rmyt*) and humans (*rmt*)³⁹², whereas the other deals with creation on the potter's wheel of the god Khnum³⁹³, who was also the patron god of the 'The great house'³⁹⁴:

Khnum, the lord of Hut-weret, overseer of secrets of this great one, took the red ochre which was there. He is called Khnum, the fashioner of mankind as lord of the potter's wheel. Mourning was fixed therein because he desired them

The red ochre used for fashioning mankind comes from the eye of Horus³⁹⁵, probably created from blood trickling from the eye when Seth harmed it³⁹⁶. Because mankind is produced from this material, which originated in damage done to Horus, mourning becomes a part of the human condition³⁹⁷. As the manuscripts reads, this state was fixed 'when he (Khnum) desired them'. It is tempting to emendate this paradoxical sentence, in which Khnum establishes the sorry state of mankind *when* he desires or loves mankind, by substituting the verb *3bi* 'to desire', by the almost homophonic and homographic verb *3bw* 'to form' or to 'brand'³⁹⁸. If Khnum fixes mourning in mankind when he forms it, this can then be seen to follow directly from the material used to create it.

The section on Hermopolis ends with a reference to a frog headed goddess that, though she remains anonymous in the manual, is to be identified with the consort of Khnum, Heqet³⁹⁹. In the manual she is said to repel the renewed attacks of Seth against the relics of Osiris, and is helped by the *w^cb*-priests of Khnum. As in the preceding passages we are to think of Seth in a crocodile form since Heqet uses a water song to protect the limbs of the

³⁹² See e.g. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (1982), 149-150.

³⁹³ Otto, 'Chnum' *LdÄ I* (1975), 951-952.

³⁹⁴ *TM* 7, 4-6.

³⁹⁵ This aetiology runs counter to the majority of red minerals which are usually connected to the blood of enemies cf. Aufrère, *L'univers mineral* II (1991), 655. For the different minerals associated with the eye of Horus in Graeco-Roman period temples cf. *Ibid.*, 213-303, and for the general connection of deities to minerals, 308-325.

³⁹⁶ Cf. Origins of other minerals from blood of deities, to the examples collected by Aufrère (last note) should be added pBrooklyn 47.218.84 9, 2-3 = Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 19, where the menstruation blood of Horit materialises as turquoise.

³⁹⁷ The creation from tears could also be used as an explanation for this condition. Cf. *CT VI*, 344f-g where the creator gods characterises humans as belonging to the blindness of his weeping eye. Passage discussed by Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (1982), 150.

³⁹⁸ *Wb* 1, 6. Another interpretation is possible where mourning only applies to part of humanity; the descendants of those who participated in the rebellion and whom Khnum marked as outcast by branding. Cf. Yoyotte, 'Héra d'Héliopolis et le sacrifice humain', *Annuaire. École Pratique des Hautes Études Ve* 89 (1980-1981), 29-102, especially pp. 49-52 for the word *3bw/3bwy*.

³⁹⁹ For the Heqet in Hermopolis see the tomb of Petosiris: Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris II* (1924), 57-58 = Texts 81, 70-72 and 61, 33-41.

god⁴⁰⁰. It is interesting that the section on Hermopolis both begins and ends with the crocodile. In the beginning the crocodile was regarded as a form of Re in the primeval ocean, worshipped in a statue, while at the end the animal is a rapacious form of Seth, which is *bwt* for all people. This contradiction could be seen as a supportive argument for regarding the manual as an anthology put together from different sources without much regard for coherence. However it could also testify to the ambivalent nature of the crocodile and the mythological motif of gods eating gods⁴⁰¹.

Ritual schemes

The Hermopolis section has a greater degree of reference to actual rituals than the other extant chapters. In the other sections the mythical structures are occasionally tied to specific rituals most of them of relevance for rituals in all temples, notably the form of statues, processions, burial of Osiris effigies and butchering of animals. This takes the form of short aetiologies or mentions of ritual activities as a layer of interpretation, however in the Hermopolis section the rituals take up a greater part of the text. This is probably due to two factors: One is the source of the Hermopolis section, The so called Mythological manual of the Delta, which gives greater prominence to rituals, and the other is the nature of the festival of Thoth, which was a national feast observed in all of Egypt, and so of relevance not just for the place of Hermopolis within the religious system of Egypt, but for actual or ideal ritual practices throughout Egypt.

Offering rituals and slaughter

The initial mention of Geb as a dog is probably related to the flaying of a dog at the Thoth festival but this is not pursued any further in the manual. Another slaughter and offering said to take place on the same date and is laid out in detail and intertwined with the myths of Hermopolis as presented in the section⁴⁰²:

The triumph of Shu, the eldest son, over Geb who comes into being therein at the place of slaughter by means of a *bt*-goose⁴⁰³. If it happens that it produces much blood in its lungs: 'a goose for Naunet', in accordance with/for the inspection of (its) breast, when it has reached a state in slaughter. A jar comes overflowing with this offering that it may go around in the Temple of the Net. The snakes are not reproached when they eat with their tongues.

⁴⁰⁰ TM 7, 6-8. The phrase *hs r mw* is surely to be connected to the genre of magical utterances (*s*)*hs m mw* used to repel crocodiles. For this term see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (1993), 48 and 50.

⁴⁰¹ See the appendix.

⁴⁰² TM 5, 7-10.

⁴⁰³ As noted by Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 173 n. d, the reason for choice of a *bd* goose could be to facilitate a pun on *mt* phallus, referring to Geb raping his mother.

Shu is vindicated over his son Geb and this is ritually realised by the slaughter of a *bt3*-goose, also called 'The *srw*-goose who gives its blood while Horus is the Sem-priest'⁴⁰⁴. The mention of the Sem-priest recalls the episode from the Delta manual where Geb and Inmutef was punished while their ritual correlate, the Sem-priest was left unharmed. In the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis manual the Sem-priest is simply a form of Horus, which implies a more forceful dissociation between the god and the priest fitting for a slaughtering ritual where the priest was probably active. Two phases of the ritual are indicated, both of them unfortunately hard to translate as the text requires some form of emendation here. First the lungs of the goose are inspected at the critical moment of slaughter, and the levels of blood present determine if the goose is fit for an offering to Naunet. Secondly the blood is collected in a jar that is brought to the Temple of the Net, one of the central temples of Hermopolis⁴⁰⁵.

The verbs used for the slaughter and handling of the blood are all in the passive mood or infinitives, so no agents performing the ritual are indicated. From other texts we know that the inspection of sacrificial beasts was one of the main duties of the pure priests of Sakhmet. Before the slaughter, they checked the animals to see whether they had the right colour and markings, and afterwards they collected the blood in jar and inspected it⁴⁰⁶. In the Tebtunis manual, the focus of the inspection of the goose is its chest and lungs; this could refer to the local relic which in the Edfu nomelist and the canope procession at Dendara is designated as the chest⁴⁰⁷. If so, the case would be similar to Oxyrynchus where the local relics, the leg and the testicles⁴⁰⁸, were interpreted in mythological terms, not with reference to the body parts of Osiris, but to the body parts of his mutilated enemies.

While blood from the slaughter of beasts for offering was routinely collected in jars, the presentation of such a blood filled jar is a most unusual ritual for Egypt in which blood played virtually no role as an offering and was usually substituted by wine or beer⁴⁰⁹. To get at the meaning of this ritual it is worth studying the exact phrasing of the passage in question. The verb translated here as overflowing *ttf* is relatively rare and mostly used for

⁴⁰⁴ *TM* 5, 2.

⁴⁰⁵ Mentioned as the principal temple in the nome list of Edfu; *Edfou* I², 341. Latest treatment is Budde, 'Das „Haus-der-Vogelfalle“', *GM* 191 (2002), 19-25.

⁴⁰⁶ Engelmann & Hallof, 'Der Sachmetpriester, ein früher Repräsentant der Hygiene und des Seuchenschutzes', *SAK* 23 (1996), 103-146.

⁴⁰⁷ *Edfou* I², 341 and *Dendara* X, 78, 11 (translation in Cauville, *Le temple de Dendara: les chapelles osiriennes* (1997), I, 44 & II, 41) cf. Beinlich, *Osirisreliquien* (1984), 230-232.

⁴⁰⁸ For the Oxyrynchus relics see Osing, 'Zum Namen des Gaus von Oxyrhynchos', *Fs. Dreyer*, (2008), 517-524.

⁴⁰⁹ For a discussion on the ritual use of blood see Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn* (2002), 97-105.

the Nile overflowing the banks at the inundation⁴¹⁰. The image conjured up here is appropriate for a festival that takes place at the beginning of the year and which, among other things, celebrated the return of the distant goddess, Sothis, and the rise of the inundation. Apart from this common connotation of the verb the Tebtunis manual itself provides another as Shu is said to ‘overflow’ his limbs in a well to heal himself in the beginning of the Hermopolis section. In mythological terms it makes sense to associate the punishment of Geb and the healing of the damage done by Geb to his father Shu. In ritual terms Shu is healed by the blood of Geb as a goose, and the reiteration of the verb serves to connect the ritual act with the associated mythological interpretation. This does not exhaust the meaning of the ritual, which also somehow concerns snakes, of which it is said: ‘The snakes are not reproached when they eat with their tongues’. These snakes are most likely identical to the female members of the Ogdoad, who is made up of: ‘Snakes who eat the old one (*s3-t3w snm=sn i3w*) and frogs as the female and male among them’⁴¹¹. The old one must here be a designation for Geb as the offering, perhaps because he belongs to that part of the old world that must be destroyed to make way for a new in the New Year Ritual⁴¹². So alongside providing retribution and healing for Shu, the blood offering also provides nourishment for the (female members of the) Ogdoad which are instrumental in the recreation of the world, and which in the final analysis perhaps also serves to cleanse and renew Geb⁴¹³.

We thus see why the snakes should not be reproached for eating of the blood spilt from the jar, since it is partly an offering directed at them⁴¹⁴. ‘to reproach’ (*dbʿ*) is here an euphemism for some violent act, a use primarily known from the Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days⁴¹⁵, where we also find references to not killing snakes, one of them on the First of Akhet, day 23 with mythological references to creation⁴¹⁶. The common denominator between the abjurations in the calendar and the Tebtunis manual appears to be the concept

⁴¹⁰ *Wb* 5, 411.12-413.2.

⁴¹¹ *TM* 5, 5.

⁴¹² For a related use of *smsw* and *i3w* in the Heliopolis section of the *Mythological Manual of the Delta* cf. the discussion in Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 203.

⁴¹³ For the motif of gods eating gods see the appendix.

⁴¹⁴ For offerings to snakes a parallel exists in the temple of Edfu (VI, 85, 9) where the vanquished hippopotamus is divided into offerings for different deities and animals and the snakes given the fat (*dt*). Cf. perhaps also Pyr. § 292, where the blood of slaughtered enemies is allotted to the denizens of the earth. In the London-Leiden Demotic magical papyrus, the blood of a Nile goose is once used in a spell in which the speaker identifies himself with Geb (Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus* (1904), rt. 10, 22-25 = *PDM* 14, 295-308 with duplicate in 27, 1-11 = *PDM* 14, 805-816, translated by Janet Johnson in: Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*² (1992), 213; 236-237).

⁴¹⁵ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 23-24.

⁴¹⁶ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 46-50. The ban is tied to not eating a goose, which could be related to the myths in the Tebtunis manual.

of the primeval creator god(s) as snakes. In the mythological frame established in both the calendar and the Tebtunis manual, harming these snakes would by analogy interrupt the process of creation⁴¹⁷.

The other recipient of the goose; the goddess Naunet is herself also a member of the Ogdoad, but should probably be seen here as the goddess of nether sky, perhaps architecturally embodied in a chapel in the Temple of the Net housing the Ogdoad⁴¹⁸. The temple or chamber of Naunet also has a prominent role as the place of refuge for the Nehemauat as well being the location for Unut in her aspect of the raging vengeful goddess⁴¹⁹. The shrine of Naunet could even be seen as identical to the inner temple *hnw-pr*, which is part of the epithets of Horit in this section⁴²⁰.

The procession at the Festival of Thoth

The process of creation is described as a procession in which all things emerge from the primeval waters. The procession is lead by the mistress of the inner temple and her brother Shu wearing 'the secret image of the keeper of the treasury', in which we can probably detect the *manxt*-counterpoise, which is also the goddess which allows Shu to breathe. These are followed by different manifestations of Seshat and: 'Shu, Khnum, Muyt, *Isden who skins the dog without fear and the one who eats when he vomits again to eat again*'. The last two are references to Thoth as the punisher of Geb, and the myth of the dog eating of the corpse of Osiris in the section on the 13th Upper Egyptian nome, probably alluded to here to signal the presence of the standard of Wepwawet in the procession, and perhaps also to prompt a comparison with the similar myth told of Thoth and Osiris further down in the Hermopolis section. Next come Thoth as: 'The messenger who repeats words, the divine ibis, the heart of Re, when he has united with his shrine, inside it as the lord of the Ogdoad'. Here, in the context of a festical procession involving the re-creation of the world, the well known designation of Thoth as the heart or intellect of Re must be intended as a reference to the role of this god in creation, which would also explain the repeated presence of Seshat, who as the goddess of words and writing was also associated with verbal or intellectual modes of creation⁴²¹.

⁴¹⁷ While not specified as a *bwt* the ban can be seen to follow the same rationale. For *bwt* and mythology cf. Frandsen, 'The Bitter Honey at Dendara', *Timelines, Fs. Bietak III* (2006), 197-201.

⁴¹⁸ For a similar relationship between Naunet and the Ogdoad in Thebes cf. Zivie-Coche, 'L'Ogdoade thébaine', *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (2009), 191.

⁴¹⁹ *TM* 5, 20-22; 5, 6.

⁴²⁰ Naunet and Horit associated in *TM* 5, 19-20.

⁴²¹ Cf. The Khonsu cosmogony in which both Thoth and Seshat are prominent, see Mendel, *Die kosmogonischen Inschriften in der Barkenkapelle des Chonstempels von Karnak* (2003).

Following this we have the daughter of Osiris, a designation for Horit in her relation to Osiris, and by extension, other aspects of this goddess, the fiery Sakhmet, Sobekt, and the mother Isis. The listing of goddesses is interrupted at this point to provide space for the ritual punishment of Geb and the counterpoise and sandals which were taken from and of this god: ‘The goose who gives its blood while Horus is the Sem-priest. Concerning the ring which is as his mark of dignity: The *m^cnht*-counterpoise and his sandals’.

After further aspects of the goddess, we move onto the Ogdoad: ‘The donkey of god with whom the baboons unite, Amon, the greatest of the Ogdoad, being snakes who eat the old one and frogs as the female and male among them. Osing sees the donkey as a ritual manifestation of the defeated enemy carrying his conqueror, but it is equally possible to see the donkey as referring to Amon⁴²². While often identified with Seth and sharing with this god an uninhibited sexuality, occasional references attest that the donkey was not regarded in purely demonic terms⁴²³. The passage quoted here involves two different conceptualisations of the Ogdoad: one in the classical ‘canonical’ in which the Ogdoad are divided into two groups of four males and four females, with the heads of snakes and frogs, and the other, perhaps an older one, as baboons⁴²⁴. The statement that the baboons unite (*snsn*) with the Donkey, recalls the episode in the so-called Demotic Memphite cosmogony where the male members of the Ogdoad unite as Amon in the form of a black bull who seeks intercourse with Amaunet. If something similar is at stake in the Tebtunis manual, the somewhat unexpected theriomorphic form of Amon could be explained as pointing to the sexual potency concentrated in the god at this stage in creation.

The procession ends on an Osirian note, with the two crown-goddesses guarding the funerary bier. The procession involves an array of different deities who in one way or the other can be seen as manifesting different phases or aspects of the cosmogony that makes up the main part of the chapter. In the same way as the myth of the Return of the Goddess is intertwined with the cosmogony, the goddess also features prominently in the procession which mirrors the mythical return of the goddess, and which was probably accompanied by the music, dancing, sex and inebriation which gave name to the festival of drunkenness. In a

⁴²² Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 170 n. bc. The question is whether Amon refers to ‘donkey’ or to ‘god’ in donkey of god. While Osing’s interpretation is perfectly possible, I have opted for an interpretation in which the donkey of god is a manifestation of the deity – and not its property as such. In this light it is not important whether Amon refers to either.

⁴²³ See the examples collected by Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 210-212 who also discusses the passage in the Tebtunis manul. To Meeks’ examples should be added the Book of Thoth, where the donkey is associated with cognitive capabilities (B02, 10/13, 13/3 = Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 47, read with Quack, *SAK* 36 (2007), 288) and *BD* 40: ‘To repel the donkey swallower’.

⁴²⁴ See the discussion in Zivie-Coche, ‘L’Ogdoade thébaine’, *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (2009), 172-173.

temple restoration inscription from the reign of Nectanebo, the instalment of the goddess in her temple in Hermopolis and the offerings instituted draw upon imagery from the myth and festival to frame the event⁴²⁵. Similarly in the Tebtunis manual Unut is accorded a festival: ‘A festival was assigned her – It is all the men and women who sing for her [Ka].⁴²⁶’ The sexual union or desire of the worshippers echoes the union of the goddess with her spouse Shu or her father Re. In the Demotic version of The Return of the Goddess, the ape evokes the sexual union with Shu to entice the goddess to return⁴²⁷. The goddess returns to Egypt in a state of fury and needs to be appeased. One of the means used for this is music. In addition to the singing performed by mortal men and women, Isden as Haroeris of Cusae takes on the role of overseer of singers⁴²⁸:

Isden is raised in his form (because of this). A leather wrapped in fat was made for Haroeris residing in Cusae. The clothing of Haroeris as the overseer of singers is called ‘leather’. When he had taken it on him(self), he put on a garland. A leather was made for her as the shroud of Nehebt-anu in the temple of Khemenu, her ‘god’s breast’ (amulet) for the Kherep priest, like the great Horit. She is the beloved of Ptah, she is Sakhmet of Memphis, Tefnut in the house of disease. Food for Hathor, the lady of manifestations, the hand of god, with libations and praise.

The passage here follows immediately after the passage dealing with the slaughter of Geb as a goose. It is an aetiology for a statue of Isden and the specific clothing worn by this god as Haroeris. The leather may be yet another reference to the skin taken from Geb, and in other texts fat is commonly interpreted in mythological terms as coming from butchered enemies⁴²⁹. As the clothing is another way of ritually claiming the victory of the god over his enemies it is logical that it is here accompanied by the god putting on a wreath, which apart from its use in the festivities of the Return of the Goddess⁴³⁰ also signifies *m³c-hrw* or vindication over ones enemies⁴³¹. In the festival calendar of Esna a feast called ‘The vindication of Thoth in front of Re’ was held at the 21st day of Akhet, two day after the commencement of the festival of Thoth⁴³². Conceivably, the crown of vindication was offered to the god on this day, in celebration of his victory over his enemies. In the phrasing of the Tebtunis manual, with its blending of Shu, Thoth and Isden: ‘The vindication of Shu,

⁴²⁵ Roeder, ‘Zwei hieroglyphische Inschriften aus Hermopolis’, *ASAE* 52 (1954), 399-401. For the festive rituals at the arrival of the goddess at the temple, cf. also the hymn at Medamud (Darnell, ‘Hathor Returns to Medamud’, *SAK* 22 (1995), 47-94) and for men and women rejoicing at the festival *Urk.* VIII, 62.

⁴²⁶ *TM* 4, 18-19

⁴²⁷ Cf. pLeiden I 384, 4, 15-20 see Quack in Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 205

⁴²⁸ *TM* 5, 11-15.

⁴²⁹ cf. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexicon* (1997), 186 s.v. ‘*c³dt*’.

⁴³⁰ For celebrants wearing garlands or wreaths during this festival cf. The inscription of Nectanebo in Hermopolis (Roeder, ‘Zwei hieroglyphische Inschriften aus Hermopolis’, *ASAE* 52 (1954), 400).

⁴³¹ Derchain, ‘La Couronne de la justification’, *CdE* 30 (1955), 225-287.

⁴³² *Esna* II, 124. Translated in Sauneron, *Esna* V, 11.

the eldest son, over Geb⁴³³. Similarly, the goddess Nehebtanu is also clothed, and her God's breast amulet – another designation of the *m^cnht*-counterpoise - identified with Horit the Great, who is further identified with the beloved of Ptah in Memphis and Tefnut, is given in the possession of the Kherep-priest. With the mention of this priest we can probably detect the person responsible for carrying out the ritual of clothing and crowning the gods and for singing the songs needed to appease the goddess. A passage further down in the section is devoted to the clothing of Isden and the Kherep priest of Horit⁴³⁴. The first part of this is unfortunately damaged, but next we learn that the *w3r*-leather for the *m^cnht* was taken from, or off a person, probably Geb, as punishment for raping and imprisoning the goddess⁴³⁵:

Then they sat judging in taking the *w3r*-leather from him, since this god had robbed her of this her protection. It was protected there by the Kherep-priest in guarding it. It is the decoration on his breast. He hid it on his limbs, clothed in fine linen, very protected and very hidden, while it remains there in the proper place at the place where he elevated it. It is the *m^cnht*-counterpoise and *w3r*-leather that he made there, without expelling her at all.

The m^cnht-counterpoise and the sandals

The *m^cnht*-counterpoise is one of the primary ritual themes of the Hermopolis section and it also appears in the Mythological manual of the delta. The reason for the space devoted to it in both manuals should probably be sought in its ritual importance. The counterpoise is consistently identified with the goddess especially Hoirt, or alternatively said to be her protection. Depictions of the *m^cnht* sometimes show it as consisting of a weight surmounted by a falcon head⁴³⁶, which reinforces the link between the mythological falcon goddess and the ritual implement. As a counterpoise it could be worn alone, or more often in connection with a breast piece and the two items connected by strings or chains. While it is not always clear what words denote which items in the manuals, I have worked with the hypothesis that the *w3r* is the leather strings used for connecting the two pieces of jewellery⁴³⁷. In contrast to the attention lavished on counterpoise and string, the front item is not discussed at all. Other words for pendants, necklaces and similar items are present in the Hermopolis section, but these appear to refer to the whole assembly of counterpoise, string and breast piece, and not to the breast piece itself.

The unequal treatment of the front and back pieces is not unique to the manuals but can also be observed in reliefs of one of the gods who wears the counterpoise: Ptah, is often

⁴³³ *TM* 5, 7.

⁴³⁴ *TM* 5, 26-6, 5.

⁴³⁵ *TM* 6, 1-5.

⁴³⁶ See the *wb*- Zettlen for *m^cnht*.

⁴³⁷ See *TM* 6,5: 'It is the (ensemble of the) Mankhet-Leather string pendant that he made there'.

shown with the manxt-hanging down his back but with the front piece missing or hidden inside his clothes. In other cases it may be that the front itself was identified with the god, often Shu, or the Ba of Shu, and so would not necessarily need independent depiction or treatment. At least this appears to be the case in the spells of the so-called Shu theology from the Coffin texts. These spells are designed to be read over an amulet in the shape of the front parts of a lion and placed at the neck of the deceased. This will enable him to become the Ba of Shu and participate in the continued re-creation of the world. In the cosmogony that can be inferred from the spells Shu is the neck or throat of his father Atum that allows him to breathe and speak. Tefnut plays no independent role in the spells but together with Shu she encircles or fathoms Atum, the one at the back of the god and the other in front of him⁴³⁸:

Then Atum said: This is my living daughter Tefnut. She will be with her brother Shu. His name is Life and hers Maat. I will live together with my two children, my two fledglings, while I am between them: one at my front (?), one at my back. Life will sleep with my daughter Maat, one in my embrace (?) the other behind me. It was because of them that I arose, with their arms around me.

This hypothesis explains the importance of the *m^cnht* and also the myths connected to it. Geb disrupts the bond between Shu and Tefnut, in ritual terms: the counterpoise and breast piece. Perhaps Geb wore the *m^cnht* himself, just as he appropriated the Uraeus of Shu in the myth on the El Arish naos⁴³⁹. After Geb's reign, or interregnum, he is forced to re-establish the link between them by supplying from his own skin the leather used to tie the pieces together. Re-uniting the two pieces and offering the assembled item to Shu, or other creator gods, was thus interpreted in mythological terms as uniting the god with his creative powers, even his feminine aspect needed in creation. For the Kherep priest in the Tebtunis manual, being equipped with the *m^cnht* and performing the rituals meant becoming the manifestation of Thoth-Shu-Isden, and able to participate in the re creation of the world at the festival of Thoth: However to do this he also, according to the manual, needed the sandals.

The Kherep or Sem-priest carries both the manxt and the Sandals and both are mentioned together with the effigy of Osiris as cosmogonic tools. The *m^cnht* is an embodiment of the goddess and her ability to give breath and, as noted above, the effigy

⁴³⁸ CT II, 32b-33a [80]. Interestingly these spells also provide an early example of the Myth of the Return of the Goddess in the context of a cosmogony as the rage of the fiery goddess is cooled or extinguished by Shu (CT I, 378a-383c [75]).

⁴³⁹ Cf. Lines 25-28 of the Abydos stele of Ramses IV, where Geb and Shu are hailed in almost identical words, with only slight stylistic variation such as *snbt* and *h_h*, and great emphasis laid on their collars (Korostovtsev, 'Stèle de Ramsès IV', *BIFAO* 45 (1947), 159.

serves to collect the efflux of Osiris, as the forces of the primeval waters are concentrated in the *bnn*-ball or egg. The function of the sandals is more enigmatic but the information offered by the Mythological Manual of the Delta, that they were made from the skin of Geb as a dog, provides a clue to their function. Dog headed sandals are sometimes worn by the pantheistic Bes, Thoth and the Ogdoad. Quaegebeur, who has studied the iconography of these sandal bearing gods, associates the sandals with the Upper and Lower Egyptian Upwawet, who opens the way for the god⁴⁴⁰. In connection with the flood and cosmogony, the Late Period motif of the inundation as flowing from the sandals or foot soles of Amon may also be relevant⁴⁴¹. All of these items and gods are brought together in the closing words of a short cosmogony dealing with the appearance of Re⁴⁴²:

The one in the crypt, the mistress in the temple of Khemenu, the sandal and *m^cnht*-counterpoise, the divine efflux is in the effigy when the flood unites with the Semen of the place of the great one who came forth from the Nun at the brightening at the time of the passing of the seasons⁴⁴³.

This concise passage summarizes the cosmogonical aspects of the Hermopolis section: The goddess in the crypt of Naunet who returns with the flood, the three ritual tools; sandal, counterpoise and Osiris effigy as focal point, all of which are instrumental in the ascent of Re at the New Year festival of Thoth. However, one more mythological association may be drawn from the *m^cnht*-counterpoise. This last aspect of its mythology involves the motif of the castration of Geb and Seth, as present in the Delta manual section on Sebennytos and the Tebtunis manual section on Hermopolis

Hieros gamos and materiae sacrae

In the Delta manual section on Sebennytos we find a puzzling sentence that concerns the local sacred objects of Shu and Tefnut and the correct ritual stance towards them⁴⁴⁴: 'The Lance (°) of the eldest Shu and the Net (*ibtt*) of the Divine Mother are avoided (*nmmty.tw*)'. The interpretation of this cryptic sentence is wrought with difficulties. The 'arm' or lance of Shu, is sometimes equated with the pillar supporting the sky, and points to one of the central functions of this god. Here however it should probably be equated with the lance that Onuris, the lord of the lance (*nb-m^cb3t*) carries at this location, which is furthermore the

⁴⁴⁰ Quaegebeur, 'Les pantouffles du dieu Thot', *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia, Atti I* (1992), 521-527.

⁴⁴¹ Gabolde, 'L'inondation sous les pieds d'Amon', *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 235-258.

⁴⁴² *TM* 5, 18-20.

⁴⁴³ For the phrase *wintrw* 'passing of the seasons' as referring to New Year cf. the examples from Dendara collected in Cauville, 'Le bâton sacré d'Hathor', *Diener des Horus Fs. Kurth* (2008), 45.

⁴⁴⁴ *DM* 12, 7

weapon that impales Geb between the thighs, i.e. in the genitals, as punishment for his rape of Tefnut. The net is used for catching birds, and in some texts another Divine Mother, Isis uses such a net for catching the enemies of her deceased husband. In the present context, the Divine Mother is more likely Tefnut, who forms a more natural pair with Shu. As the lance is used for punishing Geb, the same is probably true for the net, especially given the parallels between the Sebennytos section and the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis manual where Geb is punished as a goose in the house of the Net (*hwt-ibt*), the same location that serves as the place of punishment in the Heliopolis section of the Delta manual⁴⁴⁵.

The net and the lance, objects belonging to Shu and Tefnut, can be used for capturing or punishing Geb who harmed them both. Things are relatively uncomplicated, until we pay attention to the verb, *nmnty* 'to avoid', here used in the passive *sdm.tw=f* form, which is elsewhere used in the manual for the observation of sacred taboos, aetiologies and ritual prescriptions, making the avoidance a part of a proper ritual stance towards the two objects⁴⁴⁶. Why should these objects, which were apparently used for meting out just punishment, be avoided? A clue is provided by the author of the manual who uses the verb again in the same section a few lines later: *nmnty hmwt d3i r t3i=sn hft sm3 gb m mwt=f* 'The women avoid sex with their husbands when Geb unites (sexually) with his mother'⁴⁴⁷. Here the avoidance of intercourse is a reflex of the mythical crime committed by Geb. The repeated use of the verb is probably intended to tie together the two sentences so that the avoidance of the Lance and Net is associated with the avoidance of sex – both caused or concurrent with Geb's rape of Tefnut. In the Ritual for Repulsing the Angry One, Seth, who here substitutes Geb, has committed several crimes in Sebennytos⁴⁴⁸:

You raped, together with the *wtyw* in Sebennytos, so that (now) your wife has intercourse in front of you, without you having the power to save her. You took away the lance of the Overseer of his Banks (Shu), the one who saves his father in Sebennytos, so that (now) Shu impales you with his spear, while the two sisters spit at you.

⁴⁴⁵ DM 6, 10. There the primary reference is to the *hwt-3t* which is identified with the *hwt-ibt* precisely in connection with the punishment of Geb.

⁴⁴⁶ *bwt.tw DM 7, 2; 8, 1* (read with Quack, review of Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, *Orientalia* 77 (2008), 108); 9, 5.

⁴⁴⁷ DM 12, 8-9: *nmnty hmwt d3i r t3yw=sn hft sm3 gb m mwt=f*. For the verb *nmnty* cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 122 n. 396. This is not restricted to the Delta Manual, since a spell of the Demotic London-Leiden papyrus (rt. 13, 1-10) invokes the union of Geb with his mother to separate a woman from her husband (Griffith & Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (1904), pl. 13-2 translation in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*² (1986), 217 with discussion in Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 269-270).

⁴⁴⁸ *Urk.* VI, 131, 9-18

The rape of Tefnut is here juxtaposed to the theft of the lance of Shu – and the punishment is made to reflect the crime; first Seth’s own wife is raped, while he is powerless to stop it and then the lance that he stole is used to stab him. In both this ritual text and the Delta manual, the actions involving the lance are thus associated with the rape of Tefnut. Unfortunately it is not stated how one avoids the lance and net, but given their association with a husband and his wife, it is perhaps their union, in the sense of a ritually enacted *hieros gamos* involving the deities’ sacred objects, that should be avoided?

For other rituals a sacred wedding of the gods represented by their statues has often been proposed⁴⁴⁹, and in the Mendes section of the Delta manual, the union of Osiris and Isis is effected by placing a mock vagina made of metal next to the Djed-pillar⁴⁵⁰:

Anpet as Mendes is called: The place of the Akh-power of the Weary of Heart, the renewal of life of the One who wakes whole. It was as a Ba that he flew to Busiris as the horns were fixed: It means that he travels - It is Hu and Sia in his following. This god is called phallus (*mnhp*) of the great god while it was as a copulating Ba that he emitted sperm. The divine limbs are called The living one on account of the member on the spine. The ‘Beings’ were emitted on the Djed pillar while a vagina of metal is next to it, because the two sister-women, are next to the phallus (*mntʒ*). Shentayt and Merkhetes, as they are called, are guarding him. His life time is Neheh, his alits on Djed.

If something similar is the case in the Sebennytyos section, then the Lance would represent the phallus of Shu, and the Net the vagina of Tefnut. Besides being a painfully obvious Freudian interpretation, it also finds some measure of, indirect, support in Egyptian texts.

In the Tale of King Kheops and the Magicians, the young maidens rowing to please king Snofru are dressed in Fishnets⁴⁵¹, and in the spell for ‘Knowing the Powers of Heliopolis’ in the *Coffin Texts* we find a beautiful woman created as a trap to help Re gain the upper hand over his enemy. In this spell, Tefnut, as a woman with a braid traps the serpent enemy *imy-ins=f*⁴⁵². The lance is found as the weapon of choice for punishing adultery in the Tale of the Two Brothers, where Anubis, upon hearing the lies of his wife who claimed that Bata tried to rape her, sharpens his spear and chases Bata. As Bata manages to escape, Anubis strikes the back of his own hands two times instead, but the following morning Bata castrates himself

⁴⁴⁹ For instance between the statues of Horus of Edfu and Hathor of Dendara during the festival of the Beautiful Union. For this festival see Kurth, ‘Die Reise der Hathor von Dendera nach Edfu’, *Ägyptische Tempel - Struktur, Funktion und Programm* (1994), 211-216 who stresses that such a union is not mentioned in the text and only hypothetical, and that the sacred wedding, if present at all, was only a minor part of the festival.

⁴⁵⁰ *DM* 11, 9-12,2.

⁴⁵¹ *pWestcar* 5, 11-12.

⁴⁵² *CT* II, 282a-b: ‘Then he set a trap (*sh*) for him as a woman with a braid (*st-hmt-hnsktt*). It was the coming into being of the braided woman in Heliopolis’. It may be significant that this spell also features a lance (*mʿbʒ*) used by the Serpent to claim inheritance of the city (278b). The Delta Manual contains a variant of this myth in which a beautiful woman comes into being as the thumb of the masturbatory hand of Re (*DM* 4, 9).

with a reed-knife and throws his phallus in the water. While this last text does not equate the spear with the phallus it nevertheless serves to strengthen the association between the spear and the rape of the goddess found in the Sebennytos section.

If the lance represents the masculinity of Shu, the crime makes perfect sense as part of Geb's rape of his mother Tefnut. By stealing the Spear he steals the potency of his father, who is thus emasculated and robbed of his power, which is then put to use in raping the consort of the same father, i.e. his mother. Thus taking the spear in itself corresponds to a castration, but the association with the act of castration is more profound as it is also the weapon used to castrate Geb. The different actors of the myth become even more intertwined in the version found in the Hermopolis Section of the Tebtunis manual, where it is the goddess herself who wields the lance and punishes Geb⁴⁵³. When the goddess takes the lance, which variously represents the potency of her husband and her son, and uses it to castrate her son is this then not a combination of both rape and punishment in one act charged with meaning? Since Geb is punished in the form of a goose, the Net is probably also part of this punishment, as the instrument in which he is caught; an act which has sinister sexually ambiguous undertones.

Unfortunately we do not know whether the goddess was the recipient of the phallus of her son, but as Barguet has shown the counterpoise of the Menat could be equated with the testicles of Seth, cut off by Horus or the goddess herself and presented to her in an offering⁴⁵⁴. This last equation brings us back, in a disconcerting way, to the question of the *m^cnht*-counterpoise which was identified with the goddess herself and which was robbed by Geb as he raped her, and which was sought after by Seth as the 'Emasculated one' claiming the property of his father Geb⁴⁵⁵. This last turn of events demonstrates how a whole series of mythological and ritual events could be focused on one single ritual implement, the counterpoise, but also that it is impossible to settle for one simple neat and tidy mythological interpretation of it. In the Sebennytos section the whole complex of myths and rituals is connected to the Net and the Lance, which are 'avoided' – before being brought together in the reunion of Shu and Tefnut and the punishment of Geb.

To conclude this overlong discussion of the mythology and ritual aspects of the Hermopolis section the preceding account of the birth of Re should be mentioned⁴⁵⁶:

⁴⁵³ *TM* 5, 16-18.

⁴⁵⁴ Barguet, 'L'origine et la signification du contrepoids de collier-menat', *BIFAO* 52 (1953), 103-111, and cf. Preys, 'Études tentyrites. Quelques remarques sur la relation entre le Sistre et la menat', *GM* 188 (2002), 98, who sees the pearls of the Menat as representing the testicles of Seth.

⁴⁵⁵ *TM* 6, 6.

⁴⁵⁶ *TM* 5, 15-18.

Lo, Re is in Unut and in Imet, his boat being a ship in Nun on its waters while Hesat, the nurse of Re, the great flood was crossing the river with Re on her brow as a child. The mound-dwellers are counted at Arthribis and the High hill of *Those who protect*⁴⁵⁷, while Re is in the house of his pregnancy in the necropolis. A Ba belongs to them in the temple of Khemenu that they can ascend to the arising land.

The identity of 'Them' in the last sentence is far from clear, however perhaps it should be considered as the Ogdoad and the passage related cryptic characterisation of the 15th Upper Egyptian nome in the *Vulture Text of the Book of Thoth*:

Eight vultures and their nine offspring, one is caused to fly therefrom [...] it is Hermopolis⁴⁵⁸.

Here the eight vultures of course relating to the Ogdoad, and the nine offspring perhaps the Ennead, and finally Re, as the young who ascends from the primeval waters.

Questions of sources and transmission

The Hermopolis section offers a window into the sources of transmission for the Tebtunis manual. The parallel to the *Vulture Text of the Book of Thoth*, was not so striking as for the sections on the other nomes, but another, more interesting, parallel presents itself.

The Hermopolis section stands out from the rest of the preserved sections in including Horit, the female Horus, and Haroeris, gods who to some degree violate the basic repertoire of mythic motifs of the other sections in the Tebtunis manual. These deities are very prominent in the Mythological Manual of the Delta, where great emphasis is placed on the goddess who is almost unknown outside the manuals as more than an epithet. Furthermore, the medical technical term *spr r ht* found in the directions for the slaughtering of the goose is also used twice in the Delta manual⁴⁵⁹. Finally a use of particle *is* in the Hermopolis section appears to belong to the same strata of language as that of the Delta manual⁴⁶⁰. A crucial piece of evidence for comparing the two manuals is missing since no passages dealing with the same nomes are found across the manuals. Based on the stage of language and style it seems improbable that Tebtunis Mythological Manual is merely a later redaction of the Delta Manual, but it remains very likely that at least parts of the Hermopolis section was

⁴⁵⁷ For the *s3w n=sn* cf. Goyon, *Les dieux gardiens* (1985).

⁴⁵⁸ L01, x+2, 14 8 (Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 341-345. reading 8 (?) *nly.t irm p3e=w 9 dw.w ti=w hl w^c n-im=w ... hmnw p3y*, and following Quack's translation ('Ein ägyptischer Dialog', *ARG* 9 (2007), 286).

⁴⁵⁹ *DM* 10, 3; 11, 4;

⁴⁶⁰ *TM*, x+5, 13: *šnbt-ntr=s n hrp hrt wrt is* 'her god's breast' (amulet) for the Kherep priest, like the great Horit'. For this use of the particle which is mainly attested in Old Kingdom texts cf. El-Hamrawi, 'Substantiv + *is* im Altägyptischen', *Proceedings of the ninth international Congress of Egyptologists* (2007), 545-566. The use of the particle in the Delta manual is worth a separate study that will not be attempted here.

taken from the, now lost, Hermopolis section of the Mythological manual of the Delta, which would then have covered all of Egypt.

A possible reason for the inclusion of the Delta manual material could be the importance of Geb in the temple of Tebtunis. As one of the major deities, the local scribes would have been motivated to include all mythological information pertaining to Geb⁴⁶¹. It is noteworthy that no attempts are made at smoothing out the negative actions of the god – which could easily have been done by substituting Seth for Geb. Here, as always, we must distinguish between what was permissible in knowledge texts from what could be included in ritual texts, and this further points to the necessity of studying the mythological manuals for understanding what precisely was at stake in the phrasing of texts for recital, both for Egyptian priests and for Egyptologist.

Apart from providing some hints to the sources for the Tebtunis manual, the relationship between the Delta manual and the Tebtunis manual also causes some difficulties regarding a parallel to the Hermopolis section in the temple of Edfu. It has been noted that especially the temple of Edfu contains many phraseological parallels to the sections on the 15th and 16th Upper Egyptian nomes of the Tebtunis manual⁴⁶². Despite this it has gone unnoticed that one scene in the temple implies direct knowledge of the section⁴⁶³. However, if the Tebtunis manual section on Hermopolis is based on the corresponding section of the Delta manual, then the question of which of the two texts were used becomes impossible to settle.

The scene in question is an offering of Maat to Nehemtau⁴⁶⁴. The act of offering Maat encapsulated the essence of the gods, the king and their mutual relation⁴⁶⁵. In the case of the Maat offering scenes in the Theban temple of Khons this led to the incorporation of a

⁴⁶¹ Cf. the remarks by von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 298. A demotic mythological narrative, as yet unpublished, from the Tebtunis library also deals with the mythology of Geb (information supplied by Kim Ryholt). However the explanation suggested here does not deal with the question of whether the Tebtunis manual was a local redaction of a national manual or a faithful copy of such a manual.

⁴⁶² The following is a list of the parallels in Edfu and Dendara noted by Feder (*TLA*) for the Hermopolitan section:

TM 4, 20-21: *Edfou* III,312; IV,139; V,85

TM 4, 21-22: *Edfou* IV,139

TM 4, 25: *Edfou* IV 139,11; VI 248,8-9; 339,11; *Dendara* IX, 172,7-8; XII, 126,15 and for the sunlight coming into being from the lotus: *Edfou* IV, 140; V, 84; VI, 247-48; VII, 162; 321

TM 4, 26: *Dendara* I, 95,5

TM 4, 27-28: *Edfou* IV, 140; V, 85,15; VI, 247,12; *Dendara* VI, 107,5

TM 4, 30-5,2: *Edfou* IV, 294

⁴⁶³ In his edition of the Tebtunis manual Osing cites the parallels but does not consider the question of transmission. For references to Osing's translation see the notes to the translation of the scene on the following pages,

⁴⁶⁴ *Edfou* IV, 294-295. Most of the scene translated by Parlebas, *Die Göttin Nehmet-Awaj* (1984), 61-63.

⁴⁶⁵ Frandsen, 'Trade and Cult', *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (1989), 95-108.

local mythological manual in the reliefs, used as a sort of running commentary to the ritual⁴⁶⁶. In the Maat offering to Nehemtaua, the reliance on the manual is more subtle but still discernable since practically all epithets, as well as the speeches of the goddess and the king can be seen to correspond to the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis manual.

Part of scene	Transliteration	Translation	Parallel in Tebtunis manual
Title	<i>ḥnk m3ᶜt</i>	Presenting Maat	
Recital	<i>ḏḏ-mdw ḥm n=t [...] im=t K3^{fem det.} pw šḥtp ntr ᶜnt r-ḥḥ=t irt šn=t mrt={k}t im=t snty n bkst n snt^{fem det.} šw sšt3^{fem det.} sšt3 n imy- r3 pr ḥḏ</i>	To recite: Take for yourself ...by you. O! You Ka who pacifies the gods. The beautiful one to your throat, “Eye”, your encircler Your Meret eye with you, the duplicate of the throat of the sister of Shu, the Secret image of the keeper of the treasury.	TM 4, 29-30: Shu with the secret image of the keeper of the treasury
King	<i>nsw-bit (N) ntr mnḥ s3-rᶜ (N) ntr mnḥ šḥtp ntr m ᶜb[...]</i>	King of U. & L. Egypt N. Efficient god, Son of Re N. Efficient god, who pacifies the gods with...	
Recital	<i>ḏḏ-mdw ii.n=i ḥr=t [ᶜš3t]⁴⁶⁷ ḥbw wnt ḥnt ḥmnw in=i n=t m3ᶜt ibw m iry-ḥḥ t3 ḥnwt n ḥnw- pr r/iw ḥm=t twt ḥrt- tp ᶜnt m wnt mry-ptḥ m it-Ḕwy</i>	To recite: I have come before you, the one with many feasts, Unut, the foremost of Khemenu that I may bring to you Maat, the Ibu-jewelry ⁴⁶⁸ as the neck-piece, the lady of the inner temple While your majesty is complete (as) the Uraeus, the beautiful one in Wenet, the beloved of Ptah in Itjtawy ⁴⁶⁹ .	TM 4, 19; 4, 30; 5, 28: The lady of the inner temple TM 5, 4-5: The beautiful in Wenet (...) the beloved of Ptah in Ankh-towe
Nehemtaua	<i>ḏi=i n=k m3ᶜt m iw- nsrsr dr=k isfti m-ḥnt t3 pn</i>	I give to you Maat on the Island of Fire that you may expel falsehood from this land	TM 5, 21-22: (Unut) which is on the Island of Fire to expel falsehood from Wenu
Recital	<i>ḏḏ-mdw in nḥmt-ᶜw3 irt-rᶜ ḥrt-ib bhḏt ḥk3t wrt ḥntt ḥwt-ibtḥ ḥrt n it=f ᶜnt n sn=s špst wn m m3ᶜt</i>	Recital by Nehemtaua, the eye of Re, residing in Behdet, the great ruler, the foremost of the house of the trap, the Horit ⁴⁷⁰ to her father and beautiful one to her brother, the splendid one who is as Maat	TM 4, 19; 5, 13; 5, 24; 5, 28-29: Horit TM 6, 8: a man who is truly near the noble ones
Recital	<i>ḏḏ-mdw ii.ti m ḥtp s3 k3 m3ᶜt m ḥprw=f pfy n sm3 m3ᶜt di.n=i šfyt=k is- sw m nb wḏw m wpt n šmᶜ mḥw nḥm.n=i ᶜw3 r bw ḥr ḥm=k ḥtm.n=i ḏt nt wn- mw=k</i>	To recite: Welcome, Son of the bull of Maat in that his form of United with Maat. I provided your awesomeness as the lord of commands ⁴⁷¹ , the great judge of Upper and Lower Egypt. I have removed for you the rapacious one from the place where you are. I	TM 5, 22-23: The Bull of Maat is installed in that form, united with Maat, the regulator of Unut as lord of commands, the judge of Upper and Lower Egypt.

⁴⁶⁶ See Mendel, *Die kosmogonischen Inschriften in der Barkenkapelle des Chonstempels* (2003).

⁴⁶⁷ Restored from *Urk. VIII*, 62.

⁴⁶⁸ For the *ibw*-neck piece or jewelry in the maat offering cf *Edfou VII*, 254, 7-10.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 166 n.ad)

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 155, n. 132.

⁴⁷¹ For this use of *is-sw(t)* cf. Kurth, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische II* (2008), 794.

		have cut of the member of the one who transgresses against you ⁴⁷² .	
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The parallels noted here do not concern unique epithets and all occur elsewhere. However as a *set* they speak in favour of direct reliance on the manual. This impression is reinforced by the end of Nehemetaua's speech to the king which contains an unusual phrase that encapsulates the myth of the Rape of the Goddess: 'I have cut of the member of the one who transgresses against you'. When designing the scene, the scribe must have aimed at condensing the information from the mythological manual to fit the space available. This meant selecting epithets from the ones offered in the manual, and at the end boiled down the myth of the Raped Goddess into a sentence that was both recognizable as referring to the myth as well as conforming to the general principle of avoiding direct mention of negative actions in ritual texts.

While borrowing from different sources the Hermopolitan section of the Tebtunis manual still manages to present a coherent whole embraced by the overall mythological and ritual structures discussed. The myths of Horus and Seth in *hwt-wr* to the north of Hermopolis proper first appear appended, but the motif of the crocodile refers the reader back to the beginning of the section where Re too was a crocodile. So, whether a deliberate ambiguity or contrast the end of the long section loops back to the beginning.

In the Hermopolitan section of the Tebtunis manual, five strands of myth are weaved together: The rape of the Goddess, Thoth and Baba, The Return of the Goddess, Creation myths and the myths of Osiris, with numerous allusions to other myths adding to the complexity of the account. Sometimes the myths are explicitly identified, while others are associated by juxtaposition or subtle shifts in the identity of agents. Furthermore, while formally self-contained and nominally dealing only with Hermopolis, the section contains a number of references to myths of other nomes⁴⁷³, making it one of the focal points of the whole composition. One of the reasons for this state of affairs must be sought in the importance of the festival of Thoth for all nomes and temples of Egypt. Other national feasts, such as the Osirian festival in the month of Khoiak, existed but these were more readily understood in the light of one myth, viz. that of Osiris, than the festival of the New Year. Another reason must be sought in the twofold purpose of the manual itself, one of which was a detailed mythological definition - an aetiology - of the religious landscape of Egypt, and another a specific way of thinking in mythological structures. Simplified these two

⁴⁷² Cf. Osing, *Papiri geroglifici* (1998), 162 n. t)

⁴⁷³ In addition to the examples discussed above, the damaged passage *TM* 6, 25-32 contains allusions to the myth of Ukh in the 12th Upper Egyptian nome.

aims correspond to two ways of reading the text, which I have here called the syntagmatic and paradigmatic approach.

Tebtunis manual – conclusions

From Osing's notes and discussion in his publication of the text and from the discussion above it should be apparent that the manual contains much new material that sheds light on little or un-known myths from Ancient Egypt. Together with the similar Mythological Manual of the Delta, the wealth of ideas should be enough to dispel the notion that Ancient Egypt had a paucity of myths. At first glance it is much harder to see what new perspectives if any the manual offer on mythology in Ancient Egypt, apart from the welcome additions of new myth. However, the manual contains not only myths but also interpretations of them. This is done on several levels, from the lexicographic to the narrative, and serves to identify the myth, mythic episodes or mythic protagonists with their counterparts in the Heliopolitan Ennead.

For instance, in the 13th nome Isis was identified with Hathor and a local mythic complex involving the gestation and fertility of the desert animals is connected to the myth of Osiris and in essence becomes a reflex of the general theme of regeneration implicit in the myth of the concievement and birth of Horus. Thus we find the image of the nome and its peculiarities subsumed under a general, and transregionally valid mythological theme.

The 12th U.E nome is dominated by the interwoven myth of Nemty, Ukh and Horus thus connecting local gods to a prominent member of the Ennead.

In the 13th U.E nome Anubis-Wepwawet is said to be a form of Horus and Isis as Hathor, as the local pantheon is subsumed under the Osirian aegis.

The text for the 14th U.E nome is damaged and without mention of the local goddess Hathor in the extant text that focuses on Nephtys' search for Osiris.

For the long 15th U.E. nome text we learn about Thoth identified with Shu fighting against Geb with many allusions to but no explicit mention of Thoth's traditional enemy Baba. The cosmogony expounded in the section is twofold and centers on the Ogdoad as the local creator collective on the one hand and the birth of Re as the head of the Heliopolitan Ennead on the other hand. Another part of the chapter mentions two forms of Thoth; Isden and Hedjhotep and identifies these with Horus the Elder, an occasional member of the Ennead. The female complement to Horus as member of the Ennead, Horet, is similarly invoked to interpret the local consort of Thoth, Nehemet-awai. The cosmogony is further

connected to Osirian myth via the gathering the limbs and efflux of Osiris that are eaten and vomited by Thoth as part of regeneration of the god and the recreation of the cosmos from the flood. For the location Hut-Urt north of Hermopolis proper we find an aetiology centered upon Khnum and the battles of Horus and Seth.

Finally the extant text for the 16th U.E. nome exclusively deals with the myths and rituals of the Oryx in which Thoth and Horus punish Seth for having eaten of the divine eye.

When giving these interpretations the manual aims at redundancy in multiple aetiologies and myths as in the juxtaposed variants of cosmogenic myths found in the Hermopolis sections or in the wealth of puns on the name *mḥ* found for the 16th U.E. nome. The author of the manual does not appear to have been fazed by the different versions of myths as there are no attempts at harmonizing them. Frankfort's multiplicity of approaches could be invoked here as could matters of redaction⁴⁷⁴; however the two versions of the cosmogony can be seen as structurally identical and involve the same agents and results, even though they differ in motives for actions and the precise nature of these actions. In this perspective it becomes clear that the narrativity of these cosmogonies is but the uppermost, albeit important layer and subject to change to accommodate different aetiologies. The myths are flexible within the limits of preservation of the basic structures or constellations. In their juxtaposition in the manual, different versions of the same myth point beyond their narrative varnish to the structure and allow the readers, both contemporary and modern, to start wondering about the essence of the myths while simultaneously learning to apply them by the aetiological method. Thus each myth or mythic episode is situated between larger mythological complexes and basic structures on the one hand and specific aetiologies applied to ritual and *materiae sacrae* on the other.

These identifications and contrasts are created by different means, what I loosely termed the paradigmatic and syntagmatic in the chapter on methodology. The syntagmatic or narrative reading has suffered the most from the fragmented state of the manual. We might expect a narrative unfolding of the Ennad – with battles between Horus and Seth proceeding from south to north as in the *Legend of the Winged Disc* and the *Horus legend* from Tod. However fragments of such a progression exist in the treatment of the efflux of Osiris in nomes 13-15 as reconstructed by Goyon. According to Goyon we can see a gradual gathering and reforming of the efflux of Osiris, culminating in the 15th nome in the creation of the effigy as a source of the inundation.

⁴⁷⁴ Frankfort, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (1946).

In the present state of the manual it is the paradigmatic aspect that dominates, wherein each nome can be seen as the mirror or allomorph of (all of) the others. In this aspect the predominant myth is also the conflict between Horus and Seth, whose battles over the fate of Osiris take on ever new forms in each nome and incorporates myths attributed to the individual localities. This aspect was included in the title of the manual which mentions the Seth(s) of the nomes, which is probably meant as a reference to the differentiation of this god in the individual nomes.

Connections between nomes are sometimes explicitly stated as when a statue in Hermopolis (15th U.E.) is said to be similar to a statue in Cusae (14th U.E.)⁴⁷⁵. An interesting case is found later in the Hermopolis section when Geb is punished for ‘having fornicated with Nehemt-awai in Khemenu and Nehbet-anet in Dep’, i.e. a doubling of a mythological motif to cover Lower as well as Upper Egypt⁴⁷⁶.

In the creation account of the Hermopolitan section, a specific aspect of creation ‘the counting of the mound-dwellers on the primeval hill’ is divided between Athribis and the High hill of Hermopolis⁴⁷⁷, associated with the prototypical raising of the sky in Heliopolis⁴⁷⁸.

Apart from explicit mention associations between nomes are also drawn in more subtle ways; for instance in the choice of striking vocabulary. In the section on Atfet the primary myth is of Nemty and how gold came to be an abomination in his city and how his sign became \perp . It turns out that the god was punished for receiving bribe or payment in gold by having his gold, i.e. his flesh, removed from his silver bones reducing him to a skeleton shown by the hieratic-hieroglyphic sign resembling the finger mounted on a horizontal stroke. In the chapter further punning aetiologies are made by having Nemty be ‘pointed the finger at’ (\underline{db}^c), reproached, by the gods for his actions. The verb \underline{db}^c is occasionally used in religious texts as a euphemistic phrase to soften or blur violent or aggressive actions, and thus belongs to a specific religious terminology that veils and alludes to mythic actions rather than simply stating them⁴⁷⁹. As such it is eminently suitable as a linguistic device for drawing associations between different mythic episodes in different nomes. In the Tebtunis manual the verb \underline{db}^c ‘to reproach’, and related noun \underline{db}^c ‘finger’, appear in the following contexts:

3, 11-12	In Assiut the dog eats of Osiris and vomits:	The efflux which had issued from his statue, and his fingers of the weary-
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⁴⁷⁵ *TM* 4, 12. Later in the Hermopolis section we find a further reference to Cusae (*TM* 5, 11-12).

⁴⁷⁶ *TM* 4, 17-18

⁴⁷⁷ *TM* 5, 17.

⁴⁷⁸ *TM* 4, 16.

⁴⁷⁹ See the appendix on euphemisms.

		hearted
3, 13	This gives rise to a local relic, an obelisk:	'Atef-Khent' is said about an obelisk. It is the fingers of the weary-hearted Inside the divine limbs, being unknown. Gold is his But on account of its colour.
5, 11	In Hermopolis the snakes who eat of the old one (Geb) are exempt from punishment ⁴⁸⁰ :	The snakes should not be reproached (<i>db</i> ^c) when they eat with their tongues.

From the papyrus Jumilhace we gain the additional crucial information that the bones of Nemty are the starting point for regenerating the god when wrapped in a skin and nourished by the milk of a mother goddess. In the case of Anubis eating of Osiris in the Assiut section, the fingers are wrapped or enveloped inside the dog so that the myth beomes an expression of the transformation and regeneration of Osiris. As so often in the mythological manuals the dynamic myth is associated with a piece of static cultic imagery in this case an obelisk said to be 'the fingers of the weary-hearted inside the divine limbs', i.e. a momentary image of the process of regeneration. To underscore the connecion between this object, myth and the similar entities found in the Atfet section the manual repeats the catchphrase from that chapter 'Gold is his But on account of its colour'. Finally the use of the verb for the snakes eating of Geb in the Hermopolis section associates this episode inside the mythic complex and imparts to it a benevolence and promise of regeneration otherwise missing from the account of the punishment of the god.

The manual can be seen to utilize both common methods, i.e. the Heliopolitan interpretation with focus on Horus, Seth and Osiris, and more specific intratextual strategies, i.e. the use of the root *db*^c, to tie the wealth of material together. All these interpretative layers or strategies are also present in the other preserved transregional mythological handbook; the Mythological manual of the Delta.

⁴⁸⁰ Perhaps further references in the Hermopolis section *TM* 6, 26-27.

The Mythological Manual of the Delta

Manuscript

The Mythological Manual of the Delta is known from a single papyrus, pBrooklyn 47.218.84. The papyrus is written in Hieratic and datable to the 26th Dynasty. It has been published with translation and commentary by Dimitri Meeks in his *Mythes et légendes du Delta d'après le papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84*⁴⁸¹. In its present state the papyrus consists of 16 consecutive columns and a number of smaller fragments, covering 12 of the Lower Egyptian nomes.

The papyrus is part of the large assembly of Late Period papyri bought by Charles Wilbour in Cairo somewhere between 1880 and 1896 and later, in 1947, donated to the Brooklyn Museum of Arts. The provenance of the papyri is hard to ascertain. Due to the content matter of the papyri, Heliopolis has been suggested⁴⁸². However given the nationwide importance of Heliopolis within the system of religious geography, the fact that the papyri deal with Heliopolis does not necessarily mean that they originate in this place⁴⁸³. As the Delta does not provide optimal conditions for preserving papyri, Elephantine, and recently Thebes have been suggested as more likely places of provenance⁴⁸⁴.

Due to the content matter of the papyri which includes royal rituals, wisdom texts, medical texts, and manuals of priestly knowledge the papyri were probably in the possession of a person with close ties to a temple: a high ranking priest, temple scribe or similarly⁴⁸⁵.

⁴⁸¹ The manual has also been translated by Frank Feder for the *Thesaurus*, and extracts translated by Quack in, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 9 (*DM* 8, 2-11) and , Servajean, 'Des poissons, des babouins et des crocodiles', *Verba manent, Fs. Meeks* (2009), 405-424 (*DM* 15, 6-10).

⁴⁸² Sauneron, *Le papyrus magique illustré de Brooklyn* (1970), vii-ix and n. 8.

⁴⁸³ Von Lieven, review in *BiOr* 65 n° 5/6 (2008), 619-620.

⁴⁸⁴ Hoffmann & Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 230 and 361 n. [a]. Quack, Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte: Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur2 (2008), 230, 261). On the basis of the presence of the Saite Oracle Papyrus, Ryholt ('Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt' (forthcoming)) argues for a Theban origin, probably as the personal belonging of a priestly family deposited in family tomb.

⁴⁸⁵ For the Delta Manual Meeks suggests a priest practicing as a doctor, however not all of the instances noted by him can be accurately characterised as medical terminology (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 170 with n. 9), and even those that can are not sufficient to make it a medical papyrus nor to limit the interest or understanding of the papyrus to a doctor. For the some kind of medical training being obligatory in the advanced learning for the higher priesthood see the section on the head teacher in the Book of the Temple (Quack, 'Die Dienstanweisung des Oberlehrers aus dem Buch vom Tempel', 5. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung* (2002), 159-171).

Language, date and sources

Dating of the papyri in most cases rely exclusively on palaeography. On this basis most of the papyri have been ascribed to the 26th Dynasty⁴⁸⁶. For the Mythological Manual of the Delta, Meeks have undertaken a thorough palaeographic dating arriving at a date early in the 26th dynasty. A linguistic dating of the document supports a final date of redaction around the 26th dynasty⁴⁸⁷, with much of the manual considerably older. Especially the use of the particle *is* is remarkable⁴⁸⁸. As in the case of the Tebtunis manual, it is uncertain whether the Delta manual was assembled around the date of the manuscript, or much earlier and then subject to slight alterations in the course of transmission. Compared to the Tebtunis manual, the Delta manual, whose manuscript predates the Tebtunis manual by 800 years, displays a more classic Middle Egyptian, with more sparing use of Late Egyptian verbal forms and *iw* used to introduce main sentences except for three cases⁴⁸⁹.

Regarding the question of sources, Meeks has identified a passage as coming from the *Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars*. With von Lieven's edition and study of this composition, it is likely that the some of the individual parts antedate the first attestation in the Osireion. Thus the passage in question does not help us with the date of composition for the Mythological Manual of the Delta. However it is noteworthy that the author did not simply copy from the Fundamentals but in one place chose to modernize the vocabulary, exchanging the common phrase *k3p ʿ.wy* for the rare verb *tnhnh*⁴⁹⁰.

Another passage in the Delta manual preserves a first person suffix in direct speech. As noted by von Lieven in her review of Meeks' book, this is indicative of a passage inserted from another text, which together with the extract from the Fundamentals shows how the Delta Manual must have built upon a variety of different texts, of which only a single can be identified at present⁴⁹¹.

Based on similarities in gods and phrasing, the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* section on Hermopolis is probably based on a corresponding section of the Delta Manual⁴⁹². Apart from demonstrating the large degree of intertextuality between the different mythological

⁴⁸⁶ In the following references to the Delta manual will be given as *DP* column, line.

⁴⁸⁷ Von Lieven, review in *BiOr* 65 no 5/6 (2008), 620-621.

⁴⁸⁸ With several examples of the rare use of the particle to emphasize adverbial phrases (*GEG* § 247.1): pBrooklyn 47.218.84, 3, 11; 5, 2; 7, 4; 8, 4-5; 15, 5; 15, 9.

⁴⁸⁹ *DP* 4, 9; 10, 6; 15, 8 (?). In *DP* 10, 7 perhaps a Late Egyptian non initial main sentence.

⁴⁹⁰ Von Lieven, review in *BiOr* 65 n° 5/6 (2008), 620.

⁴⁹¹ Von Lieven, review in *BiOr* 65 n° 5/6 (2008), 620.

⁴⁹² See discussion above.

manuals, the passages re-used in the Tebtunis Manual also provides evidence that the Delta manual originally covered not just the Delta region, but also probably the rest of Egypt.

The Mythological Manual of the Delta has a short but verbatim parallel in an inscription in the Ptolemy XII period temple of Athribis⁴⁹³, which demonstrates that at least extracts of this text were known in the late Ptolemaic period. However as this quote is quite short, we have no way of knowing whether the Athribis text quoted the Delta Manual or another composition based in part on this text. Unfortunately the corresponding section of the Tebtunis Mythological manual, which has many phraseological parallels in other Ptolemaic temples, has not survived. The question of the source for the Athribis text is important not only for matters of text criticism but also for the status of the individual manuals. If the Athribis text is a direct quote from the Delta Manual, this would mean that at least two different supra regional mythological were in use at roughly the same time at different places in Egypt and that none of them could claim absolute canonical status. Until further Ptolemaic or Roman period copies of either the Delta Manual or the Tebtunis Manual are discovered this question will remain unsettled.

Contents and structure

The twelve nomes treated in the papyrus are not listed according to any known series of Lower Egyptian nomes, nor does the arrangement follow any simple geographical criteria, such as a south-north or west-east. The individual sections are set apart by rubra and occasional use of spatia. The sections are often initiated by an aetiological formula such as *dd.tw Y r X 'X is called Y'*, and further aetiologies are often presented in sections. As in the Tebtunis manual the elements treated are often those of the *materia sacra* lists, but with more diverse foci and a greater emphasis on rituals and festivals, especially those concerning Osiris. The Delta manual is also more encompassing in its interpretative approach, using basically the whole of the Heliopolitan Ennead as explanans. The most drastic difference between the two manuals is the all-pervading presence of the goddesses in the Delta manual, most of whom are identified with the goddess Horit. As Meeks has provided analyses of the individual sections in the manual, the analysis presented here focuses on the overall interpretative strategy of the manual, an analysis which must begin with the goddess.

⁴⁹³ *DM*, 7, 3-4. Information supplied by Christian Leitz. The text will be published in a later volume of the Athribis text publishing project.

Horit

From other sources Horit, 'the female Horus', is mostly known as an epithet or in lists of goddesses. Often undifferentiated in orthography from the word *bikt* 'female falcon', it is impossible to give a precise count of the times she appears in the sources. However as the *bikt* is used as an epithet of roughly the same goddesses, this confusion should not lead to despair. Meeks has collected the attestations of Horit and from his list it can be concluded that she is mainly found in areas connected to fertility and sexuality and associated with the goddesses Isis, Hathor, Sakhmet and Bastet⁴⁹⁴, perhaps especially in connection with the mythic complex of the distant and returning goddess. These roles and goddesses reappear in the Delta manual, where Horit becomes the dominating figure in all matters pertaining to divine sexuality. As Horus is the son, she is once in the Delta Manual called the daughter of Osiris, which formally associates her with the Heliopolitan Ennead⁴⁹⁵. Since the goddess is unknown from elsewhere as an independent goddess, her importance in the manual poses a problem for, but also, I believe, a clue to the correct interpretation of the manual.

Horit in Heliopolis

The largest preserved section covers Heliopolis in connection with Letopolis. In its present state the section covers 8 columns with an unknown amount lost in the beginning. Given the importance of the Ennead of Heliopolis as main point of reference for the mythological interpretations the pages accorded the section is natural. The section clearly shows that it is not the locally bound and defined Ennead that is used but an abstract entity: the Ennead as a system, in which also the local gods of Heliopolis are subjected to interpretation. In the Heliopolis section the deities used in the interpretative N *pw* 'It is N' nominal sentences are never characterised by an epithet that ties them to the local cults or geography of Heliopolis, but always refer to a base member of the Ennead; Atum is simply interpreted as 'It is Re' (*r^c pw*) followed by a subordinate sentence detailing under which circumstances the two are identical⁴⁹⁶. It is worth noticing that in the system used for interpretation Re, and not Atum, is at the head of the Ennead.

⁴⁹⁴ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 49-50.

⁴⁹⁵ Meeks has collected a list of the attestations of a daughter of Osiris (*Mythes* (2006), 104) to which should perhaps be added Herodotus mention of Bastet as a daughter of Osiris since he claims that the Egyptians viewed Apollon and Artemis as children of Dionysos and Leto (Herodotus, II, 156).

⁴⁹⁶ *DM* 2, 3-4; 2, 11; 5, 5; 6, 11, 7, 3. The cases *DM* 3, 8 and 4, 7 are interesting since these passages refer to the *drt n r^c* 'hand' and *drt* thus interpreting deities in light of one of the key myths of Re.

The Heliopolitan section is divided in topics treating the relationship between Re and Atum, the masturbation of the solar god, the punishment of Geb and elevation of the sky, several lunar festivals and of course the local relics of Osiris:

Concerning *sp3-b3w-špsyw-iwnw*: The divine relic of Osiris which is called ‘the shoulder blade’. It is the divine relic which lives of itself without being seen or heard. It is preserved in *lyt*. It is mourned by Isis, Nephtys and Horit. They place the divine relic of Osiris, which is found in Letopolis, on the back of the *rhy*-beast.

This treats the relic of Osiris in Letopolis, with the succeeding subsections detailing how it came to rest there. As is usual, Isis and Nephtys mourn the relic, but here Horit follows them. This goddess is either intended as complement to Isis and Nephtys, the two usual mourners for the dead Osiris, in the same way as Tefnut later in the section⁴⁹⁷, or perhaps as replacement for Horus, the son who acts for his dead father. The preference for a feminine deity here is perhaps due to the sexual aspects of loading and goading the beast, which is the topic of a passage further down in the Heliopolis section. Here Isis and Nephtys accompanied by Tefnut envelop the relics of Osiris and place them on the back of an ass. When the ass sinks to the ground beneath the heavy load, Isis and Nephtys display their thighs and offer the divine *mtwt* or their own *mtwt*⁴⁹⁸ to its nostrils, which provokes the ass to both rise from the ground and ejaculate⁴⁹⁹.

The myth expands on the well-known motif of Seth being forced to serve as the funerary vehicle for the relics of Osiris. The fluid from the goddess(es) and its invigorating function is largely unknown from other sources but plays a central role in the myths of the goddess related in the Bubastis section of the Delta Manual.

In the Heliopolitan section, Horit is not confined to being the female complement of Horus, or to the last generation of the Ennead, but is also granted a role in the central mechanics of the Heliopolitan cosmogony identified with the female aspect of Atum⁵⁰⁰:

Hetepet: The staircase of the golden one in her form (*irw*) designated by her name (*wp.tw m rn=s*); Horit-Hathor-Nebt-Hetepet: She is the divine hand of Re in her form of the divine member as the sycamore in the place of union (*hnnt*). ‘The beings’⁵⁰¹ were expelled (*wdi*) in front of Re. The sycamores were made to grow for him when the god was moved to rest in

⁴⁹⁷ In the Temple of Dendara, Mut assists Isis and Nephtys in transporting Sokar-Osiris see *Dendara X*, 389 and X/2 pl. 240. Cauville, *Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire* (1997), 181.

⁴⁹⁸ *mtwt* is usually semen, but since it belongs to the goddesses (*mtwt=sn*), it must in this case be another substance. See the discussion by Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 76. n. 163; 211-212. Meeks refers to the medical papyri where the *mtwt* of an *ḥmḥt* is once attested (pEbers, 88.7. *Wb*, äg. *Drog.*, 292), which O’Rourke, ‘The *ḥmḥ*-male’, *ZÄS* 137 (2010), 52 n. 77-78 seems to equate with the more common *mwit* ‘Urine’. For the problem of *ḥmḥ* and *ḥmḥt* designations see also O’Rourke, ‘The *ḥmḥt*-woman’, *ZÄS* 134 (2007), 165-171. O’Rourke sees in *ḥmḥt* a term for a woman ritually impure from having menstruated.

⁴⁹⁹ *DM* 5, 4-6, 2.

⁵⁰⁰ *DM* 3, 8-4, 3.

⁵⁰¹ *wnnt* referring to Shu and Tefnut (cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 63 n. 91).

Heliopolis⁵⁰² – the mound of *pr-bḥḥ*, the place of combat of the two lords – the combat performed by Horus against Seth because of his father. Re clenched his hands and in doing so made a vagina. He expelled ‘his beings’ thereby: Shu and Tefnut were created thereby. This god told me (concerning) his daughter: ‘She is the divine hand of Lord of the whole land’. He made it as a vagina [...] the great, her divine hand in her form when the hand of Re was separated when [...] of her in *st-mnt3m* growing as the sycamores. The ancient [...] as Re guiding the hand. It is also Hathor as Horit [...] which she did without being seen or heard.

This passage deals with Hetepet; the sacred district in Heliopolis dedicated to Hathor-Nebt-Hetepet, which is expounded in a series of mythological associations, from hand to member to tree. According to one possible interpretation of her name, Nebt-Hetepet is to be rendered as Lady of the womb⁵⁰³, which suits this passage where she is identified with the vagina that Re forms with his hands and with which he copulates, but she is also the virile member itself. As the hand she is further identified as the Sycamore in the place of union, referring to the union of the Sun god with the goddess in the shape of a tree⁵⁰⁴. It is noteworthy that Horit is included as the first element in the composite name of the goddess, which according to some theories of the *Bindestrichsgötter* should be translated as Horit, namely in the function of Hathor-Nebet-Hetepet, i.e. with the *rectum* indicating which aspect of Horit is meant⁵⁰⁵. This ties in well with the assumption stated above, that Horit is used for certain aspects of the divine female principle, aspects which can be specified by the addition of genitival constructions as needed.

Horit is mentioned again in the last sentence as identified with Hathor in a specific function, which the lacunae unfortunately prevent us from establishing.

Horit and Bastet in Bubastis

While Horit takes on the role as the major goddess in the Delta Manual, this does not mean that she is everywhere identified with all the goddesses present. A quick reading of the Delta Manual section on Bubastis shows how the author sometimes avoids a direct identification, even when, for us, it seems most obvious that such an equation is intended. Closer analysis makes it clear that the choice whether to state the identification or not is based on

⁵⁰² i.e. Osiris as both the following sentence and the passage following later passage proves. For the interment of Osiris in Heliopolis in the Delta Manual cf. *DM* 4, 3-4.

⁵⁰³ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship* (1986), 29.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), and for the sexual connotations of the image see the parallel in *PGMI*, 1-42 where the sungod is the one ‘Who ejaculates seeds into the sacred fig tree of Heliopolis continually’ (Third century C.E. translated in Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*² (1992), 4). Perhaps the same motif is present in *CT* II, 367 [159].

⁵⁰⁵ Schenkel, ‘Amun-Re: Eine Sondierung zu Struktur und Genese altägyptischer synkretistischer Götter’, *SAK* 1 (1974), 275-279.

mythological reasoning, and that due attention to the way these identifications are used allows for a better understanding of the mythological schemas presented in the manual.

Elsewhere I have argued for an interpretation of the Bubastide myths of Horit as menstruation myths and part of the mythic complex of the Return of the Goddess myths in which the onset of menstruation, the menarche, emerges as one of the crucial mythological episodes⁵⁰⁶. This reading is largely dependent on the new mythological material presented in the Mythological manual of the Delta. However since the myth is simply used in the manual as merely one part of the interpretative inventory of the goddess Horit, it is convenient here to simply recapitulate the findings and to concentrate on the interpretative stance of the manual and the function of Horit herein. Thus the reader is referred to the separate study for a full justification for the reading of the myths discussed in the following as concerned, on one level, with menstruation.

The basic structure of the myth of the Return of the Goddess, involves the departure and return of the daughter of the sun god. Neither the reason for her departure nor her return are provided in the sources and the former is largely ignored in favour of a narrow focus on the return of the goddess and her reunion with her father or brother following the resolution of a crisis in which the goddess threatens to burn or kill all of humanity and/or the gods. The goddess is pacified by being cooled or cleansed with waters from the primeval ocean or its cultic embodiment in the sacred lake, or by being worshipped with music, dance or intoxicating beverages. The return of the goddess also frequently involves sexual union with a male deity⁵⁰⁷. Whereas earlier research has tended to view this myth in astronomical terms as a mythological interpretation of the solstice or reappearance of the star Sothis heralding the return of the inundation and marking the beginning of a new year in the Egyptian calendar, I have demonstrated that this is only one interpretative stratum and that the myth on a more fundamental level is concerned with menstruation and perhaps (defunct) initiatory rituals.

In light of menstrual symbolism and ritual practices the basic structure of the myth can be seen as the:

- 1) Departure and Isolation of the young goddess at the onset of menarche (in some instances provoked by the sexual assault of Seth)
- 2) Purification and return of goddess as sexually mature being

⁵⁰⁶ Jørgensen, 'Myths, Menarche and the Return of the Goddess', *Lotus and Laurel. Fs. Frandsen* (In press).

⁵⁰⁷ For an overview of the different versions of the myth see Richter, 'On the Heels of the Wandering Goddess', 8. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between temples* (2010), 155-161.

In the myth this is tied to the general fertility of Egypt, which is seen as dependent on the transformation of the goddess in her menstrual rage into the pacified bringer of life. In the association of the myth to the coming of age of adolescent girls, it can be viewed as the female analogy to the coming of age myths of Horus, who grew up in the seclusion of the Delta marshes to return as new king of Egypt and the triumphant avenger of his father Osiris.

The Bubastis section is concerned with the different manifestations of the goddess; the first a combination of astral, mineral and cultic:

Bubastis. Concerning Bastet who is in Bubastis: This is the efflux when she came forth as Horit⁵⁰⁸ on the eastern mountain of Heliopolis. The blood came forth from her and it transformed into turquoise⁵⁰⁹. She is in the form of a female statue (*rpyt*) with the face of a lion. She is kneeling (*wrd*)⁵¹⁰ with her thighs beneath her (i.e. in a squatting position). She is on the staircase of casting down the enemies while a falcon protects her, two hippopotami encircle her and a 'semblance' of the Hen-lake is all around her, the length thereof is 87 (units of?) (and the breadth) 42⁵¹¹.

The emphasis on the eastern mountain as well as the verb *pri* 'to come forth', suggests an astral interpretation referring to Bastet as the Eye of Re, probably on the occasion of the heliacal rising of Sothis⁵¹². At her appearance she sheds some efflux, which is specified as blood and said to transform into a blue-greenish mineral, following the pattern of the angry goddess whose wrath is appeased as she herself transforms. Here the motif appears to primarily serve as an aetiology for the presence of local minerals⁵¹³ and perhaps for the material from which the statue of the goddess was produced. The cultic image of Bastet as a seated female on a staircase appears to have been central in the cult-theology of Bubastis. The description has several close parallels in the temples of Edfu and Dendara and in the Bubastis section on the reliefs of the Hibis temple, the image is repeated no less than 5 times, of which one seems intended as an illustration of the pose mentioned in the Delta manual⁵¹⁴.

Depending on the precise relationship with the earlier passage concerning turquoise as a manifestation of the goddess, the cultic image mentioned here might be envisioned as

⁵⁰⁸ Feder *TLA* emendates *pr.n=s(n)* and translates: 'Das sind die Ausflüsse, die aus Horet herausgekommen sind'. This emendation is only necessary if Meeks' interpretation of the passage is accepted.

⁵⁰⁹ *DM* 9, 2-3.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 101 n. 279.

⁵¹¹ Reading of numbers adopted from Feder *TLA*.

⁵¹² For Bastet as Sothis see e.g. *Edfou* III, 322, 8 (Goyon, *Le Rituel du sꜥtp sꜥmt au changement de cycle annuel* (2006), 115-117 and 118 textual note 9.)

⁵¹³ For blood of deities becoming minerals cf. Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 18-19.

⁵¹⁴ See Davies, *Hibis* III (1953), pl. 4 register 7.

made of this material, in which case it would have to be a smaller than life-sized statue. The question of scale also imposes itself on the final sentence in which no units are given for the dimensions of the Hen-lake; a cultic body of water central to appeasement and purification rituals for the Return of The Goddess, the prototype for which was probably located in Bubastis. The use of the word ‘semblance’ (*twt*) might be taken as an indication that we are dealing with a scaled down model ritual in which figurines are manipulated, which would also make the task of handling hippopotamuses and falcons much easier⁵¹⁵. If so, the cultic ensemble of statuary also implies a loosening from the local topography of Bubastis and an emphasis on the relationship between the goddess, the water and her entourage which could be ritually enacted in any nome.

The appeasement and purification motif is continued in the next section which deals in veiled terms with the contents of the Bas-jar that gave Bastet her name:

There is another noblewoman with the balm-jar with the Oudjat-eye of Re inside it. She is called Tefnut, his daughter Horit as the lady of the two lands. One keeps the *phyt bwt* for her when its insides are showing forth (*bw.tw n=s phyt dr wbn št(3)t=s r rwtj*).

The text appears to provide an explanation for the *b3s* ‘balm-jar’ that gave name to the goddess Bastet (‘The one of the *b3s*-jar’), here in connection with ‘another noblewoman’ or another aspect of the raging goddess⁵¹⁶. The passage states that the jar contains the eye (*wḏ3t*) of Re, which accords well with the fact that both Bastet and Tefnut are goddesses that can be called ‘Eye (*irt*) of Re’. It is more difficult to discern the possible connection between the eye in the jar, the taboo and the following narrative about the goddess’ rescue of the eye from Seth. The key to understanding the passage is the phrase *wbn š3t* which is normally used for birth but which is here to be understood as another term for menstruation. This provides an explanation for the taboo on the *ph3t* – lower body part, i.e. vagina, a taboo probably limited to the duration of the menstruation. In my article I have argued for this on the basis of the semantics of the two terms, but the point can also be stated on mythological grounds, based in the scarceness of references to the motherhood of Bastet and their total absence within the mythological manual of the Delta.

It is noteworthy that no references are made to her offspring in the Delta Manual, and only very seldom in any of the many texts adduced by Meeks, which contain close parallels

⁵¹⁵ For a possible modelscale ritual involving the Isheru cf. Richter, ‘On the Heels of the Wandering Goddess’, 8. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung* (2010), 173.

⁵¹⁶ As noted by Perdu, ‘Un monument d’originalité’, *JEA* 84 (1998), 139-140, the epithet ‘lady of the two lands’ refers to the goddess as a raging lioness.

to the manual. Even in the Bubastis section of the Delta manual Horus is born by Horit, who in this case is *not* identified with Bastet⁵¹⁷:

Concerning Horus of the divine field which is in Bubastis: He is called Horus-Hekenu. It is the divine corpse of Horus. He is the son who was born by his mother Horit to her father Osiris.

Furthermore a sexual partner of Bastet is never mentioned, which we would expect in case of a pregnancy since one of the main themes of the manual is sexual relations between deities.

While offspring of Bastet are sometimes mentioned, the role of Bastet as mother appears not to have been that important⁵¹⁸. Bastet's children are mostly atropopaic gods. For instance Khonsu son of Bastet⁵¹⁹ and the god Horhekenu who are both child gods and whose status may ultimately be concerned with their premature death, either because they were stillborn or died soon after birth⁵²⁰. Furthermore, a myth in the Delta manual provides a completely different account of the motherhood of Bastet.

In the Delta manual section on Bubastis the list of the five sons of Horit and the narratives detailing the birth and fate of these gods follows the short passage on Horhekenu in Bubastis. The account of the five Horuses is not confined to a single locality but is explicitly related to all of Egypt. For the editor of the manual, what was essentially a self-contained mythological manual with focus on Horus, could be logically placed as an appendix to any mention of Horus⁵²¹, and the decision to have it follow the passage on Horhekenu was probably influenced by the aetiological narrative of Horhekenu that is part of the Horus passages⁵²²:

He (Osiris) joined with her another time. She became pregnant again. She gave birth to her son in Upper Imet. Then a lioness came and stole away this infant beneath the bushes of the field. Then she tore and ate (*knkn*) of him. His mother searched for him night and day (*m dt=f m ht=f*) in this field. He was found in the mound of Bubastis at 'the window of the sky', while the arrow-serpent (*šsr*) 'Great of strength' was his guardian. Thoth and Nephtys skinned the lioness and they wrapped him in its skin to be placed in a box likewise (*hnt mitt sp sn*). He is called Horus-Hekenu. He is protected as a Hesy.

⁵¹⁷ *DM* 9, 8-9.

⁵¹⁸ For possible references to Bastet giving birth and acting as wet nurse see Fischer-Elfert, 'Papyrus demot. Rylands no. 50', *Enchoria* 22 (1995), 7-12. Here we should probably distinguish between the different local forms of Bastet at different periods and allow for a certain flexibility in the conceptions of the goddess. One of the first mentions of the goddess has her act as a mother and nurse to the deceased king (Pyr§ 1111).

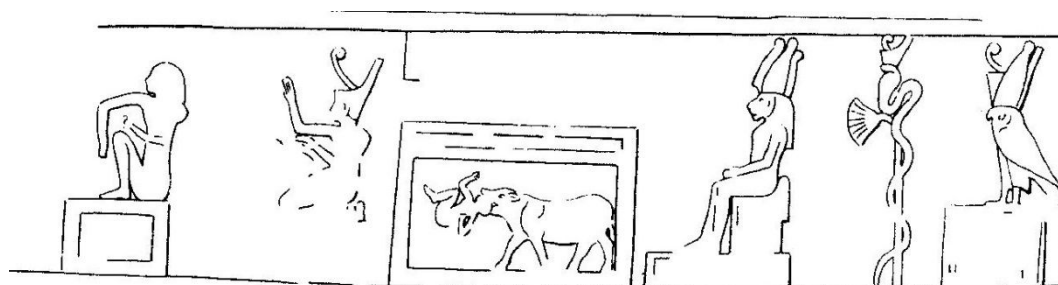
⁵¹⁹ Klotz, *Kneph* (2008), 102-103.

⁵²⁰ Cf. the case of Bes, discussed by Meeks, 'Le nom du dieu Bès et ses implications mythologiques', *The Intellectual Heritage of Ancient Egypt Fs. Kakosy* (1992), 423-436.

⁵²¹ For instance in the section on Imet following the alternate version of the Rape of the Goddess by Be (*DM*, 15, 6-10).

⁵²² *DM* 10, 3-7. Discussed by Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 247-251.

In the narrative Horhekenu is in essence twice born or conceived, once to life by his mother Horit, and secondly as a Hesy, a revered dead, by being wrapped in the skin of a lioness and placed in a box. Meeks plausibly suggests that the lioness is to be identified with Bastet, in which case her motherhood would be of a different character than that of Horit. Whereas Horit gives birth naturally, Bastet's 'birth' is by eating the child and by having her skin serve as wrapping⁵²³. The juxtaposition of the two related motifs of being eaten by an animal and being wrapped in the skin of the same animal in a box is remarkable and can also be found in the temple of Hibis, where a pictorial representation of the myth can be found in which a lion eats an infant, both enshrined within a coffin. Next to the scene an enthroned lion headed god wearing the Atef crown, possibly Mysis, is shown, perhaps as the form in which the child is reborn⁵²⁴.



Otherwise Mysis is depicted subjecting his victims to a fate similar to his own, as a lion gnawing at the head of a back bound prisoner. In this shape he, or a similar god, appears in another scene from the Temple of Hibis⁵²⁵, where we also find similar representations of the god Nefertoum⁵²⁶; once as Nefertoum son of Sakhmet, and once as Nefertoum-Hekenu, both designations, which could be interpreted to mean that similar myths existed for Nefertoum as for Horhekenu 'son' of Bastet⁵²⁷.

Finally a scene on the Saft el Henneh shrine already discussed for its relation to the myths of Unut in Hermopolis should be mentioned⁵²⁸. The two aspects of the goddess, one in labour and the other enthroned and breastfeeding her child, are shown surrounded by

⁵²³ The juxtaposition of being eaten by an animal and being wrapped in the skin of the same animal should be noted, for a discussion of these phenomena see the appendix *Gods eating gods*.

⁵²⁴ Davies, *Hibis* III, pl. 4, register 9.

⁵²⁵ Davies, *Hibis* III, pl. 4, register 7.

⁵²⁶ Davies, *Hibis* III, pl. 3, register 4.

⁵²⁷ Like Horhekenu, Nefertoum could also be seen as the son of Bastet (Schlogel, 'Nefertem', *LdÄ* IV, 379). It is perhaps also worth considering whether the epithet of Horus *w3d-mwt=f*, usually translated as 'the fresh sprout of his mother' could also be an ambiguous allusion to this myth, i.e. 'The raw meat of his mother'.

⁵²⁸ Naville, *Saft el Henneh* (1888), pl. 6.

host of gods and goddesses, among them three different (deceased) sons of Bastet, Horhekenu, Khonsu and Miysis, again a composite showing a lion eating a back bound prisoner, and also Nefertoum.

For this interpretation of the sons of Bastet, it may be significant that the Greeks identified her with Artemis, the perennial nubile virgin, who assisted at childbirth and was the protector, and occasional slayer, of children even though she did not have any offspring of her own⁵²⁹. The interpretation proposed here explains why Horit and Bastet are not equated in the passages that deals with the birth of Horus, but only in preceding passage that concerns the bleeding of the goddess, which in light of the discussion above can be equated with the menstruation of this goddess.

Thus the two initial passages of the Bubastis section all appear to relate to the menstruation of the goddess. In the first case her appeasement or purification, washing off the blood of menstruation, in the waters of the Hon-lake and in the second case perhaps as the contents of her jar and the rites of the Isheru-lake. This mostly ignored aspect of the *Return of the Goddess* or even of Egyptian mythology in general, has a series of consequences for our understanding of the myth that I have treated in detail elsewhere⁵³⁰.

Either way, the relationship between the Eye of Re and the contents of the jar under the protection of the goddess must be of relevance for understanding the following passage dealing with the rescue of the eye from Seth in a ritual setting⁵³¹:

She is ferried in the Oryx on the Isheru-lake at the moment when she reclaims his eye from him. Seth took on the form of an Oryx to rob the Oudjat-eye in Mehet. When he came to Bubastis bearing the things which he had swallowed, Horit rescued her father's eye.

In the examples of the slaughter of the Oryx collected by Derchain⁵³², Horit features conspicuously in texts associated with Bubastis. While not much information is supplied by the texts, the number of attestations points to a central place for this incident in the mythology of Horit⁵³³. Interestingly the text here concerns the Oudjat-eye of Horit's father,

⁵²⁹ Goddess given as Artemis by Herodotus, Book II, 59-60. For the many different aspects of Artemis, see e.g. the articles collected in Fischer-Hansen & Poulsen, *From Artemis to Diana* (2009).

⁵³⁰ 'Myths, Menarche and the Return of the Goddess', *Lotus and Laurel, Fs. Frandsen* (In press).

⁵³¹ *DM* 9, 6-8.

⁵³² Derchain, *Le sacrifice de l'oryx* (1962).

⁵³³ It may be significant the Priestly Manual gives the local taboo of the Oryx-nome, where Seth ate the Udjat-eye, as 'a bleeding woman' *snft. Edfou I*², 342, 2 with parallels. See the discussion in Frandsen, 'The Menstrual "Taboo" in Ancient Egypt', *JNES* 66/2 (2007), 85-88. Perhaps the explanation for the taboo and its connection to the rituals of the Oryx/gazelle is ultimately rooted in the conceptualisation of menstruation in hunter-gatherer cultures in which the secluded menstruating women and their emergence at the end of their period are sometimes associated with the hunting and killing of game animals. For a possible connection see the woman's grave in Naga ed Deir (N1532) in which was found a gold foiled oryx amulet with a Tit-sign around the neck (Reisner, *The Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Naga-Ed-Dêr* 1 (1908), pl. 6).

who must be Re and not Horus. This further serves to strengthen the association with the myth of the *Return of the Goddess*, in which the goddess as the eye of the sun returns to Egypt. In the Demotic version of papyrus Leiden I 384, the goddess herself assumes the form of a gazelle and has to be rescued. At the onslaught of Apophis and his gang, the monkey awakens the goddess and ferries her across the water to rescue her, providing an aetiology for a local festival in Thebes⁵³⁴.

In the myth in the Delta Manual, the goddess is not in any specific form, but the ferry that she uses is in the form of an Oryx, i.e. made from the hide of the slaughtered beast, of which images exist on Greco-Roman period temple walls⁵³⁵. Perhaps we are here dealing with two permutations of the same myth, of which the main points of comparison can be listed as:

	<i>Delta Manual</i>	<i>pLeiden I 384</i>
<i>Ship</i>	Oryx	-
<i>Passengers</i>	Goddess	Goddess as a gazelle
<i>Route</i>	Mehet-Bubastis	To Thebes
<i>Purpose</i>	To save father's eye	To save goddess: The eye of her father
<i>Enemies</i>	Seth	Apophis

Quack has treated the episode of the Demotic version of the myth and has pointed out the remarkable idea of the goddess' need for rescue, since she is usually the one who rescues her father from Apophis. However, the incident is not entirely without precedents. In the spells against poison on the Metternich stela, in three cases the patient is designated as the cat (Spruch III, IV, XIII), as the daughter of Re (III and IV) as wife of Shu and sister of Isis (IV) who is to be saved from the venom of a poisonous snake⁵³⁶. In the Demotic version Khonsu and Amon slaughter the enemies in Thebes, and one form of punishment mentioned is the devouring of the skin of the enemies. Perhaps this is akin to the skin of the Oryx which decorates the ship in depictions of the slaughter of the Oryx and we are dealing with local mythological interpretations of ritual trimmings for a sacred barque?

The different variations presented in the Demotic Myth of the Sun's Eye and the Delta Manual:

⁵³⁴ This part of the myth has been treated in detail by Quack, 'Die Rückkehr der Göttin', *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (2009), 135-138.

⁵³⁵ For a connection between the goddess and the barque in the festival of Sokar cf. Graindorge, 'La Quête de la lumière au mois de Khoiak: Une histoire d'oies', *JEA* 82 (1996), 83-105, concerning a scene of the festival shown in Medinet Habu (*Medinet Habu* IV, 196), where five individual manifestations of the goddess are each provided with a boat.

⁵³⁶ Sander-Hansen, *Die Texte der Metternichstele* (1956).

- 1) The eye eaten by an animal
- 2) The eye inside the skin of an animal
- 3) The eye itself becoming an animal

are all known from other texts. For instance the nightly sojourn of Re in the netherworld, can be likened to him being swallowed by a crocodile or becoming a crocodile himself, and as Rössler-Köhler has demonstrated; being wrapped in the jackal skin in the Imyut fetish is comparable to being eaten by this animal⁵³⁷.

In all accounts the eye is brought from one place to another, across an expanse of water and enemies are being slaughtered or their skin used as container for the eye. It is easy to see how this schema is applicable to a ritual, and indeed is probably intended as an interpretation for such a ritual. While the resulting interpretations vary, the basic schema stays the same; the eye is transformed and brought safely to its destination just as the ritual in essence remains stable.

Summing up, the results gleaned from the analysis of the Bubastis section are twofold. One relates to the way that identifications are used, and *not* used, according to underlying mythological schema, and the other to how these schemas were connected to ritual practices. For the latter we see that rituals and mythology did not correlate on the level of narrative, i.e. at the surface level, but instead shared in the same structure.

The five births of Horit and the different aspects of Horus

In succession to the initial mention of Horhekenu, the Delta manual lists the five forms of Horus birthed by Horit, as well as giving a narrative elaboration on these⁵³⁸:

Then this goddess gave birth to five sons: 'Houron'⁵³⁹, 'The son of the two lords', 'The child who is in Medenu', this 'Horus who is in Upper Imet' and 'The child of Isis' who is in the south and north, who is the king in the palace in his likeness (snn). It is he who is in his image (*sšm*) in all the temples starting from Abydos down to the Delta. It is he who rescues his father Osiris from his enemies. It is he who searches for his limbs in the districts because of the damage that Seth himself inflicted upon them and who places them in their [proper positions]. He exercises his strength as the unique god with Thoth, with the Great Horus, with Isis and Nephtys and with the gods who are in their following. What is said of each of them: (Narrative section follows)

⁵³⁷ For these motifs cf. the appendix *Gods eating Gods*

⁵³⁸ *DM* 9, 9-10, 2.

⁵³⁹ For this reading cf. Quack, *Orientalia* 77 (2008), 109.

This text provides a précis of the national Horus myth which accords well both with the account given by Plutarch and our own contemporary understanding of the myth⁵⁴⁰. The principal deeds of the Horus who is worshipped and has statues in all of Egypt are:

- 1) Rescuing his father from his enemies
- 2) Searching the districts of Egypt to collect his limbs and gather the corpse of the slain god
- 3) Exercising his strength

This Horus is to be differentiated from the other Horuses, who are more limited in their field of action and perhaps more closely tied to local cult topography. The list is in itself a remarkable piece of mythological interpretation as the five sons of Horit includes two forms that explicitly have different lineage, namely 'The son of the two lords' and 'The child of Isis'. Perhaps it was the intention of the author to provide an overall view of all Horuses, re-interpreted in the light of the Goddess Horit.

Unfortunately, the list and the following narrative section are clearly incompatible. Of the five names mentioned in the list, two of them (Horus in Medenu and Horus the child of Isis) refer to the same narrative passage (Horus of Medenu). Of the five narrative passages, the myth of Isis in Mendes is unparalleled in the list. Furthermore the myth of Houron is clearly a variant of the myth of Seth and the goddess in lower Imet, which corresponds to the list item 'The son of the two lords', a designation for Thoth as born of Horus and Seth⁵⁴¹. The discrepancy between list and narrative cannot be easily resolved, and may be due to alterations made in the narrative section or list without changes in the corresponding narrative or list.

<i>List item X Corresponding to</i>	<i>Narrative passage Y</i>
1) Houron	1) Houron
2) Son of the two lords	5) Rape of goddess by Seth
3) Horus in Medenu	3) Horus in Medenu
4) Horus in Upper Imet	2) Horus Hekenu in Upper Imet (=Horus in Bubastis!).
5) Horus child of Isis	3) Horus in Medenu
-	4) Horus in Mendes

⁵⁴⁰ The battles with Seth are not explicitly mentioned but are probably subsumed under 1) and 3).

⁵⁴¹ *Wb* 2, 231.6; *LGG* VI, 83 f.

The narrative passages are in chronological order, starting with the first intercourse with Horit and her abortion, proceeding to the prematurely born Horus Hekenu, and at the end Horus of Medenu. The following myth, of the conceiving of Horus in Mendes upon the death of Osiris is slightly out of place unless we assume that the conception in the other cases took place *before* the death of Osiris⁵⁴², while the last myth is offered as a variant of the first.

As the myth of Horus of Medenu is in most regards only a slight variant of the basic well known myth of the birth of Horus, with Horit substituted for Isis, I will concentrate on the two variants of the rape of Horit, by either Osiris or Seth. The myth will be used as a *key myth* for not only unlocking the role of Horit in the manual, but also for discovering a whole web of associations between myths that at first glance appear unconnected. The term key myth is here used in two senses, one of which primarily concerns our interpretation of Egyptian myth and the other one the interpretative strategy of the manual, though the two are not unconnected. The first is the sense used by Levi-Strauss in his analysis of myth, wherein a key myth is an arbitrary interpretative pivot for constructing and analyzing the mythical system under scrutiny, chosen for either its clarity or contrast to other myths in the mythological system⁵⁴³. The second sense is as a myth of outstanding importance, not only for *our* analysis but for the mythological manual itself. This second sense is supported by the fact that the myth is repeated at least three times in the manual; two in the section on the five births of the goddess Horit, with an additional variant in the section on Imet.

The rape of Horit

The passages detailing the birth of the five Horuses contain two narratives of the rape of Horit, with a further variant found in the section on Imet. Of these three narratives, the first two are almost identical, mainly differing by the identity of the culprit; in the first instance Osiris as the father of Horit, and in the second Seth. The variant in the Imet section again

⁵⁴² Recall here Plutarch's distinction between the Horus conceived before the death of Osiris and the one after his death. Both traditions are attested in the Egyptian material, see e.g. Quack, 'Der prenatale Geschlechtsverkehr von Isis und Osiris', *SAK* (2004), 327-332 for the conceiving of Horus already before Isis and Osiris were born, and Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods* (1996), 69 & n. 151 for the other extreme: that Isis never even saw Osiris before his death.

⁵⁴³ See e.g. Levi Strauss, *The raw and the cooked* (1969), 2: 'In fact, the Bororo myth, which I shall refer to from now on as the key myth, is, as I shall try to show, simply a transformation, to a greater or a lesser extent, of other myths originating either in the same society or in neighboring or remote societies. I could, therefore, have legitimately taken as my starting point any one representative myth of the group. From this point of view, the key myth is interesting not because it is typical, but rather because of its irregular position within the group. It so happens that this particular myth raises problems of interpretation that are especially likely to stimulate reflection'. For the use and concept of key myth see also Miles-Watson, *Welsh Mythology: A Neo-Structuralist Analysis* (2009), 8-9.

gives Seth (Be) as the culprit but has a wholly different format and mostly shares in the general structure of the myth.

In the first myth Osiris has sex with his daughter for the first time⁵⁴⁴:

Concerning Houron: Osiris joined (*shn*) with his daughter Horit for the/her first time. She became pregnant and she sat down and mourned. Then when she approached the moment of giving her *sʕ3* (*spr r ht n rdit sʕ3=s*), like that which was earlier done by Tefnut (*mi irwt hr-h3t n tfnwt*), her *sʕ3* was placed on the path to the Great Green of the west.

The key phrase here is *sʕ3*, which refers to matter exuded at birth or menstruation⁵⁴⁵. In the passage here act of giving the *sʕ3* does not necessarily refer to birth as such since no child is mentioned, but rather to an abortion very early in pregnancy, probably indistinguishable from menstruation. The phrasing *spr r ht n rdit sʕ3=s* is crucial but does not imply something premature but only the decisive moment of giving *sʕ3*. The manual associates this act with a precedence set by Tefnut, the first goddess of the Heliopolitan Ennead, but as we know next to nothing about the mythology of Tefnut and how birth was given to Geb and Nut⁵⁴⁶, the reference does not help us much. We do not know whether Tefnut also had abortions or if either Geb or Nut was prematurely born. Further adding to the puzzle the text purports to be an account of a specific form of Horus, but no child is mentioned apart from the *sʕ3* that is left to float downstream to the marshy areas in the western Delta.

The Canaanite god Houron, who is sometimes associated with and depicted as Horus or Harakthe, is mentioned only in the beginning. In Ugaritic texts he is connected to snakes, the desert and underworld and a single myth features him as somehow associated with the sexuality of the daughter of the sun goddess, but no sure connection between that myth and the episode in the Delta manual can be drawn⁵⁴⁷. Elsewhere I argued that the narrative should be seen primarily an aetiology for the menarche of Horit, whose adolescence is ended by being having sex with her father. The placement of the *sʕ3*-menstruation in the water then becomes purification by bathing a motif found in permutations in many related myths most importantly in the parallel version of the myth also found in the Delta Manual in the narrative that corresponds to the list item 'The son of the two lords':

Then Seth greatly harmed this goddess in Lower Imet. He copulated with her by force. She became pregnant with his semen – He became Thoth the one who came forth from the

⁵⁴⁴ DM 10, 2-3.

⁵⁴⁵ See the discussion in Jørgensen, 'Myths, Menarche and the Return of the Goddess', *Lotus and Laurel Fs. Frandsen* (In press).

⁵⁴⁶ Meeks suggests that the reference to Tefnut is simply because she, as the first goddess of the Heliopolitan ennead, was the one who instigated the act of birth (*Mythes* (2006), 108 n. 317).

⁵⁴⁷ For Houron in Egypt cf. van Dijk, 'The Canaanite God Hauron and his Cult in Egypt', *GM* 107 (1989), 59-68. For the Ugaritic myth cf. Kottsieper, 'KTU 1.100. versuch einer Deutung', *UF* 16 (1984), 99-110.

brow⁵⁴⁸ - Then she reached the critical moment before she had completed her full term. Her s^c was put in the water. The black ibis found it in the water as a monkey which had not yet been (fully) formed amid the rising efflux ($rdw bs$) since he was (still) in the 'Body' of the s^c from her. He was not born as the (other) gods.

A Seth replaces Osiris the act is unequivocally marked as rape. Besides being a myth of the rape of the goddess it is also an aetiology for the unusual birth of Thoth, whose name is inserted as an explanation in terms of other myths where he emerges from the forehead of Seth impregnated with Horus' semen. In this way the manual creates a link between the different mythological traditions surrounding the birth of Thoth⁵⁴⁹.

In the Delta manual version he is found in the s^c in the form of a monkey, in which, as Meeks has shown, the prenatal foetus can be recognized⁵⁵⁰. He is found by the black ibis, the bird that represents the darkened new moon, which of course is also associated with Thoth⁵⁵¹. Thus the new moon version of Thoth finds the foetal form of Thoth and presumably takes care of his growth, in astronomical terms; the waxing of the moon. If as argued above, the first sexual act of the goddess, whether with her father Osiris or with Seth, brings on the Menarche, it would also make sense to see this first act as the birth of Thoth, the good of the moon, whose relationship to the menstrual cycle is occasionally found in other texts⁵⁵².

The section on Imet includes yet a third version of the rape of Horit which is clearly related to the first two accounts in the manual, not only by virtue of the location but also by the phrasing and mythological details. Unfortunately this version is riddled with linguistic peculiarities which seriously hinder a precise view of what is going on. However the overall meaning is obviously connected to the other two narratives; in all three versions the semen ends up in the waters instead of leading to a normal birth:

<i>DM 15, 6-10</i>	
<i>dd.tw imt n šd=s-w3d=s n hwt-hr wrt nbt imt hrt w3d=s hw=s s3=s šd ntr m w3h</i>	The site $šd=s-w3d=s$ ('she raises her young one) of Hathor the great, lady of Imet, the one who is on her papyrus, is called Imet. She protects her son and raises the god in the papyrus thicket.

⁵⁴⁸ As noted by Feder the sentence is out of place here. I take it as an interjection or comment to explain the myth narrated here as an alternative to the usual birth of Thoth from Horus and Seth.

⁵⁴⁹ For these cf. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 146-161.

⁵⁵⁰ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 258-260. To the parallels adduced by Meeks should be added *PT 669* in which the deceased king is born as a deity associated with Thoth without arms and leg (Discussed by Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009), 468-472.

⁵⁵¹ For the Ibis and the different phases of the moon cf. Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 269 with n. 25.

⁵⁵² Westendorf, 'Beiträge aus und zu den medizinischen Texten', *ZÄS* 92 (1966), 153 and Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 200, n. 19.

<i>šhn b hr hrt hft šm m sd3m=s</i> ⁵⁵³	Be laid down with Horit in accordance with the movement of copulating with her
<i>ti sw nhs(.w)</i> ⁵⁵⁴ <i>m wb3</i> <i>ʕi</i> ⁵⁵⁵	While he was bent over (her) and emitting sperm
<i>nkk mi ir.n=s</i> ⁵⁵⁶	? (se below) ⁵⁵⁷
<i>šsp.n.tw iht=s m-hnw irw.n=s</i> ⁵⁵⁸ <i>3m.tw=f hft rmww(?)</i>	Her 'things' inside 'what she had done' was taken. It ⁵⁵⁹ was grasped in accordance with the fish
<i>iw rdi.n.tw mtwt=f hr mw ti sw m krkrwt n hnn s3w sw nwyw šsp s(w) mhyw</i>	His semen was placed on the water and it was as lumps of dust. The waves guarded it and the swimmers took hold of it
<i>dd.tw n=f imy n wd^cw srh.n=f is m t3y imyw mw hft imwty rdww</i> ⁵⁶⁰	He is called 'The inside of a mussel' ⁵⁶¹ . It was as a male of the water dwellers that he procreated, in accordance with those who are in the efflux.
<i>ir.tw w3hwt n w3dt nbt imt w^cbt m dsr=s</i> <i>ʕry=s pw ntt m tp=s mi šhrw n t3 ntt m kmt</i>	A garland is made for Outo the lady of Imet It is the reeds that are on her head after the fashion of the one who is in Athribis

Overall the myth relates the spawning habits of fish with the rape of Horit. The use of the preposition *hft* is probably a means of connecting these two. Further the myth is an aetiology for certain local cultic practices. Somehow we are to connect the myth with a garland made for the goddess Outo, but the only connection I am able to detect is between the purified woman or priestess and Horit who gets rid of Seth's semen in the water. Perhaps the knowledgeable reader would have picked up the necessary information by the reference to 'the one who is in Arthribis'.

Imbedded into the myth we also find an aetiology for the local taboo on a *nkk* or male passive homosexual, viz. having sex with such a person. The passage in question is *nkk mi ir.n=s* which is problematical for several reasons. First of all it is uncertain whether *nkk* is a noun or verb, which further adds to the difficulties in interpreting the following phrase. The most palatable interpretation combines a reading of *nkk* as an infinitive with a slightly emendated version of the following phrase: *nkk mi ir(w) n=s* 'A violent intercourse like that

⁵⁵³ Feder emendates: *hft šm=(f)*: 'Be' (Seth) schief mit Horit, nachdem <er> sich aufgemacht hatte, um sich mit ihr geschlechtlich zu vereinen

⁵⁵⁴ *nhs*: KoptHWb 132

⁵⁵⁵ *ʕi* < ʕʕ. The few parallels for the phrase *wb3 ʕʕ* all refers to the Ogdoad.

⁵⁵⁶ As noted by Meeks, the reading *mi ir(wt) n=s* 'like that which had been done to her (previously)', would yield a more readily understandable meaning, however the writing of *iri* here and elsewhere in the papyrus supports a reading as a *sdm.n=f*.

⁵⁵⁷ Feder: 'Sie machte sich jedoch starr beim Samenerguß, (während) sie (noch) begattet wurde, wie sie es (schon einmal) getan hatte'

⁵⁵⁸ Feder: (n) *šsp.n.tw iht=s m-hnw irw{-n}=s*

⁵⁵⁹ The sperm *ʕi* (masc.).

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. DM, 11, 5 for *imwty rdww*

⁵⁶¹ Feder: 'Es (das Sperma) war aber (wie) Kügelchen von Staub(?), der Fluß nahm es mit sich (und) die Flutbewohner (die Fische) nahmen es auf, (denn) sie meinten es sei der Inhalt einer Muschel'.

which was (*irw*) done to her'. Meeks prefers this option and takes it as an indication of an earlier rape of the goddess, like the one narrated in Horus section⁵⁶², despite the similarities in wording and details which point to them being variants of the same myth. Even if we adopt the trend of Meeks' reading of the passage with only a slight change it can be translated in a way which radically changes the meaning of the phrase 'A violent intercourse like that which *is* (*irrw*) done to her' or paraphrased: 'That is how she is (usually) fucked'. This second translation of the passage suits the other myths in the Delta manual and Tebtunis manual which frequently has her being raped by either Seth or Geb. The whole phrase would thus be a commentary relating the myth told in the section to the wider sphere of the sexual activity of the goddess.

Unfortunately this reading suffers from two minor flaws. *nkk* is elsewhere only known as a noun referring to a the passive male homosexual⁵⁶³ and the writing of the following phrase strongly suggest the active verbal (relative) *ir.n=s* 'That which she did' or perhaps better 'That which she acted'⁵⁶⁴. Together this yields 'A PMH is like that which she acted', paraphrased: 'It was the role of a PMH she performed'⁵⁶⁵. While this second reading of the passage is not obviously meaningful it does hold some advantages besides doing away with the need for emendations. Firstly it makes the myth relate to and explain the local taboo which is precisely the *nkk*. Since the goddess acted as a *nkk*, or had the role forced upon her in this nome the narrative provides the sought after negative mythological precedent.

This interpretation would be a bit forced had we not access to parallel myths which stresses the sexual ambiguity of the victim of Seth's assault. The first is found as a historiola in a Rammeside magical texts in which Seth rapes the seed of Re who in this myth is closely connected to Anath whose androgenic nature is well known⁵⁶⁶. The second is the incident narrated in the Contendings of Horus and Seth, in which Seth seeks sexual intercourse with his nephew Horus.

In the Myth of Seth and the Seed of Re, Seth rapes the Seed, conceived as the daughter of Re, as she purifies herself by the shore - perhaps from menstruation⁵⁶⁷. Unlike the stories narrated in the Delta manual the focus is not on the goddess but on Seth and the

⁵⁶² Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 149.

⁵⁶³ As the passive perfective participle of the verb *nk*.

⁵⁶⁴ Compare the phrases *iri m* 'act as' or *iri mi* 'act like', Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary* (1962), 27.

⁵⁶⁵ The two remaining options 1) *nkk* as verb + ' *mi ir.n=s* and 2) *nkk* as noun + *mi irw n=s* are not viable. The first is problematical since all variants of the myth gives Horit as the passive object of intercourse, and I am unable to derive any meaning from the second.

⁵⁶⁶ See van Dijk, 'Anat, Seth and the Seed of Pre', *Scripta Signa Vocis. Fs. Hospers* (1986), 31-51.

⁵⁶⁷ See the discussion by van Dijk, *ibid*, 34. Perhaps the enigmatic location *hmkt* is a pun on *hm3gt* 'blood red minerals' and the passage alternatively translated as 'When she purified herself from the blood red matter'; a reference to menstruation.

consequences the crime has for him. Somehow he becomes impregnated by the seed, which rises to his forehead causing pain. Being the daughter of Re, the seed is said to be reserved for 'The god above', in which van Dijk proposes to see the moon god as the nocturnal aspect of the sun god. As in the delta Manual the seed is considered to be a virgin whom the god above has to open (*wb3*)⁵⁶⁸. While van Dijk has convincingly argued that the Seed is not identical to Anath as earlier interpretations of the texts claimed, he also demonstrated the close connection between the two and noted the masculine aspects of the seed.

The myth of Seth raping an androgynical deity with the result that he himself becomes impregnated is readily associated with the Contendings of Horus and Seth, in which Seth tries to demonstrate his masculine authority and sexual dominance over Horus. By Isis' aid, Horus manages to trick Seth who in turn becomes the one impregnated by Horus seed, while Seth's seed end up in the water of the marshes. As in the Delta Manual the myth includes the birth of Thoth, who in this instance is born from the forehead of Seth, the active part, instead of Horus, the passive part.

The salient features shared by the myths look like this - the last column includes parallels from other myths analysed elsewhere in this book:

	Delta Manual 1&2	Anat and Seth	Contendings	Others
Rape of	Seth rapes Horit/ This goddess	Seth rapes Seed	Seth 'rapes' Horus	
Position	From behind	From behind: as rams and bulls	From behind (?)	
Goddess is	Adolescent - (but local <i>bwt: nk nkk</i>)	Adolescent Androgynous (as Seed and as Anat)	Adolescent A male deity	Androgyny: Cf. Re's masturbation (hand is <i>t3y</i>) Adolescence: Cf. Behbeit-section in Delta Manual: Goddess is released from imprisonment (having been tied when raped) when she comes of age.
Characterised as		Of beautiful buttocks	Of beautiful buttocks	
Actions of Goddess	Purifies herself (post)	Purifies herself (pre) in water	Horus hands purified (?) in water (post) var: fetched by a crocodile	Cf. Geb and Tefnut (El Arish): Uraeus becomes crocodile in water. Cf. Behbeit-section in Delta Manual where women purify themselves and goddess with water.
Time	-	At evening	At evening – Re must not see	
Seths sperm is	In sea	-	In sea	Cf. Re's masturbation

⁵⁶⁸ For the verb *wb3* used of defloration cf. the first spell of the ostracon Bruxelles E 3209 (see discussion below).

placed in				
Seth impregnates	Goddess	-	Hands	Cf. Re's masturbation
Seth engenders	Fish/Thoth	-	-	
Affliction of Seth	- (Wig equated with that in Athribis ⁵⁶⁹)	Pain to the forehead as Seed rises	Seth impregnated by Horus – Thoth emerges from the forehead	Cf. Geb and Tefnut (El Arish) Geb rapes goddess and is afflicted by pain in the head (Uraeus/head garment) Cf. <i>Pyr</i> 519 in which the goddess lusaas is said to have come forth from the vertex of Geb (<i>pṛt m wpt gb</i>)
Various		Seed given to god above (= Moon acc. to Dijk)		

Despite the many differences there appears to be an affinity between the different myths. What emerges is the status of the sexual partner as androgynous or sexually ambivalent. This might be a feature of their adolescence, or, if viewed in the optics of initiation, their liminal status between child and adults. In van Dijk's interpretation of Anath and Seth, the goddess is purifying herself in the river after her first menstruation, while in the Behbeit section of the Delta manual, the goddess and her priestesses do the same after the rape and escape, since the goddess has come of age, that is: reached sexual maturity.

Mark Depauw has studied the different terms for marking sexual ambivalence or androgynous behaviour. He noted that in the Demotic Myth of the Sun's Eye, men-women took part in the celebrations for the Return of the Goddess. Perhaps they can even be identified with the goddess, whose sexual nature is one of the topics of the lengthy discussions between the cat and the ape, as they belong to 'a distant land' like the goddess herself⁵⁷⁰. As was suggested above in the discussion of the Bubastis section of the Delta Manual, the myth of the Return of the Goddess should be linked to rituals surrounding the menarche, in which case the androgynous status of the goddess' worshippers and perhaps herself, would fit into the patterns of the myths concerning the rape of a young goddess.

In the case of the Contendings of Horus and Seth, this aspect is attenuated since Horus is in fact a boy and not a girl. However, in the Rammesside version, Seth seeks to prove Horus' unmanliness by taking the role as the dominant male in sexual intercourse, thus

⁵⁶⁹ It may be significant that the local *bwt* in Athribis was a *ḥsmnt* 'menstruating woman' (*Edfou I*², 332, 17 cf. Frandsen, 'The Menstrual "Taboo" in Ancient Egypt', *JNES* 66.2 (2007), 88).

⁵⁷⁰ Depauw, 'Notes on Transgressing Gender Boundaries in Ancient Egypt', *ZÄS* 130 (2003), 49-59, especially pp. 51f. Following Quack and Hoffmann, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 228, I read *t3 w3*.

demonstrating that Horus is unfit to rule. Apart from basic sexual desires, Seth's ruse is to force the adolescent⁵⁷¹, and therefore ambiguous, Horus into the mould of a female.

The different myths or variations of the same mythological scheme thus combine purification, menstruation, rape and coming of age - with emphasis corresponding to the specific uses of the myth. When compared, it becomes apparent that the ambiguous status of the protagonist is ended by either being the passive sexual partner, and thus becoming female (Delta manual), or being the active and thus becoming male (Contendings). So in addition to Seth's actions being the cause of menstruation, they are further responsible for making the pubescent girl a female⁵⁷².

Another aspect of the rape of the young goddess that emerges when the variant myths are compared is the negative impact that the act has on the assailant. In the myth of Seth and the Seed of Re, the seed rises to the forehead of Seth and causes pain there, similar to what happens in the Contendings where Thoth springs from the forehead of Seth⁵⁷³. In a series of related myths told of Horus and his seven wives, the scorpion goddesses, in spells against venom, Horus deflowering of his wives likewise results in him being poisoned⁵⁷⁴. In the last case there is no mention of menstruation, but instead the blood of deflowering is emphasized.

Thus the main features of the mythic complex can be summarised as follows:

- A nubile, virgin, androgynous goddess has intercourse

⁵⁷¹ For the sexually ambivalent nature of male adolescents proposed here, not much has been written, but cf. here the remarks by Gay Robins on cutting the sidelock: 'Thus, male gender seems to become fully constructed only with the transition to adulthood, when nudity and female jewelry are abandoned, and hairstyles and clothes become gender specific.' ('Hair and the Construction of Identity in Ancient Egypt, c. 1480-1350 B.C.', *JARCE* 36 (1999), 57. In one case the sidelock - of a priest - is marked as a feminine trait (*CT* II, 274b [154] in a spell where the sidelock is associated with Tefnut). For a study of adolescent gender and hair and in a Greek and comparative perspective see Leitao, 'Adolescent hair-growing and hair-cutting rituals in Ancient Greece: a sociological approach', *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives* (2003), 109-129, and for Egypt also Tassie, 'Hair-Offerings: an Enigmatic Egyptian Custom', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 7 (1996), 59-67.

⁵⁷² This connection might make sense of an enigmatic crime attributed to Seth in the Ritual of repulsing Seth. Under threat of revealing his crimes, the priest seeks to dispel Seth: 'If you come I will tell what you did before Re: that you took away the phallus of Tefnut on that day of saying: Sia is pure.' (Goyon, 'Textes Mythologiques II', *BIFAO* 75 (1975), 392-395= p. New York 35.9.21, 31, 16-32, 1).

⁵⁷³ Once in the pyramid texts §1210a [519], the goddess Iusaas is said to have emerged from the forehead of Geb. Since Geb is also known as a rapist, this could be interpreted along the same lines as the myths treated here.

⁵⁷⁴ van de Walle, 'L'ostrecon E 3209 des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire mentionnant la déesse scorpion Ta-Bithet', *CdÉ* 42 (1967), 13-29. Discussed by Ritner in 'The Wives of Horus and the Philinna Papyrus (PGM XX)', *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years* II, GS. Quaegebeur (1998), 1026-1041. The mating habits of scorpions, in which the female sometimes stings the male after copulation, have been suggested as the basis for this myth (Ritner, *Ibid.* 1031), however as argued above for the cases of the rape of the goddess treated in the Chapter on the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis Manual the existence of variant myths with anthropomorphic protagonists speaks against laying too much emphasis on zoological explanations, which can be seen to contribute to the specific form of the myths but without altering the structure.

- Blood flows as menstruation or from deflowering
- The seed of the god ends up in the water in which the goddess purifies herself
- The god is afflicted with pain which must be released
- Though not a regular child, something is 'born' of the union of the deities

At the edges of this mythical complex, we find the masturbation of Re. Here the god's hands become a goddess, Hathor-Nebt-Hetepet, who is also Re's daughter, transforming the masturbation into sexual intercourse. Now, with the additional details supplied by the Delta Manual, we can see that in some respects this myth too follows the pattern of the Father-Daughter myths studied so far. In the Delta Manual version, the digits revolt against their possessor and end up being thrown into the water. Here we can detect a parallel to the semen that ends up in the water in the myth of Osiris and Seth's rape of the goddess in the Delta Manual. Simultaneously with the hypostasis of the digits, the thumb comes into being as an independent goddess⁵⁷⁵. In the Delta Manual, the product of the intercourse is given as the 'Beings', Shu and Tefnut, that are expelled from Re. In other versions, however, the semen is first swallowed by Re and only then spat out in the form of the divine twins⁵⁷⁶. Thus intercourse has three results:

- The hands bearing semen ends up in the water
- The semen is swallowed and expelled from the head (mouth) of Re or Atum
- The goddess is transformed and becomes an independent goddess

All of which have their counterparts in the mythic complex studied above, though here in a wholly different setting in which the different actors are the result of the differentiation of the original unity that is the creator.

The second point deserves further discussion. In the Shu spells of the Coffin texts, the exhalation of Shu from Atum is emphasized as the true birth of Shu, even to the point of denying the initial masturbation any real significance⁵⁷⁷. In the Delta Manual references to this second phase of the creation of Shu and Tefnut are absent, and it is specifically stated that the hand became pregnant (*bk3t*). This neglect of an important part of the myth is probably due to the emphasis on the goddess in the manual, which was also observed above

⁵⁷⁵ This motif is also present in the small precis of the myth narrated in the priestly manual from Tebtunis, which, however, situates the myth in Herakleopolis. See Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998), 158-161: Papyrus I, 2, 10-17.

⁵⁷⁶ For instance in Khepri-cosmogonies of the pBremner-Rhind. See Allen, *Genesis in Ancient Egypt* (1988), 28-30.

⁵⁷⁷ CT I, 354b-356b [75] and cf. II, 3f-4a [76].

in the discussion of the rape of Horit by Seth and the birth of Thoth. There the author of the manual acknowledged the usual myth of Thoth's birth from the brow of Seth; in the list by naming him as 'The son of the two lords', and in the narrative section by including the sentence 'He became Thoth who came forth from the brow', as a reference to this myth, but otherwise focused on the goddess as the one who gave birth to Thoth⁵⁷⁸.

Due to the incomplete preservation of the Delta manual, it is uncertain whether it also included its own version of the myth of Thoth born from Horus and Seth. However since the myth is referred to in the myth of the Rape of Horit and furthermore has connections to the myth of the masturbation of Re, a comparison of these myths is useful as an illustration of how the same set of mythemes could be used in different configurations in associated myths. Compared to the Masturbation of Re, which deals with the differentiation of this god and thus starts out with a minimum of actors, the myth of the sexual encounter of Horus and Seth is at the other end of this spectrum. Here the different mythemes are divided onto a wider array of gods producing a myth that, on the surface, is wholly different.

The versions of the myth used here are the ones found in the Middle Kingdom *Coffin Text* spell 158 and the Rammesside, *Contendings of Horus and Seth*. The relevant aspects of the myth are the following: Seth seeks intercourse with Horus who collects Seth's semen in his hands, which are then cut off by Isis, thrown in the water and finally retrieved or re-created. Isis makes Horus ejaculate into a jar, and the semen is scattered over a field of lettuce where Seth usually takes his meal. Seth eats the semen which erupts through his forehead as the lunar disk.

The motif of the semen tainted hands which are detached from its owner is also found in the Delta Manual version of the masturbation of Re. In the coffin text spell 158 it is stated that the hands have become rebellious⁵⁷⁹, in the same way that the hands of Re rebels against him. In the myth of Horus and Seth, however, the motif has been divided onto two gods, Seth and Horus, where Seth is the source of the Semen and Horus the owner of the

⁵⁷⁸ Though the normal version appears to have been his birth from Seth, other attestations for Thoth born from a goddess exists (cf. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 146-161; Kurth, 'Thoth', *LdÄ VI* (1986), 499 and 513; Quack, 'Das Pavienshaar und die Taten des Thoth', *SAK* 23 (1996), 325). Especially the birth from Rat-Tau, the daughter and eye of Re, occasionally referred to in the goddess' epithet, is interesting since this could take place in connection with the lotus. Similar to the theogony of the solar child, Thoth can appear in the lotus. In some versions of the theogony, this flower is the product of semen that ends up in the water, and we thus have a (hypothetical) scenario much similar to those found in the Delta manual. De Wit, *Opet* 1 (1958), 55; Clère, *La porte d'Evergète II* (1961), pl. 24 = *Urk. VIII*, n° 082; Aufrère, *Le propylône d'Amon-Rê-Montou à Karnak-Nord* (2000), 430 = *Urk. VIII*, n° 14; Zivie, *Le temple de Deir Chelouit I - IV* (1982-1992), n° 142; *Urk. VIII*, n° 181; *Tôd* n° 139, and cf. Gutbub, 'Rat-taui', *LdÄ V* (1984), 152.

⁵⁷⁹ *CT* II, 358b: *ht pw itnt-ib* 'They are difficult company'.

hands. To further complicate things, the masturbation motif can also be seen in the actions of Isis for her son Horus, in the Rammeside version:

Then she brought some sweet ointment and applied it to Horus penis. Then she made it hard and she placed in a jar (*iw=(st) dit=fr w^c d3d3*) and he let his semen descend into it.

This is the usual rendering of the passage, dependent on an emendation made by Gardiner in his edition of the story, noted in the translation above, which makes Isis the active part in all but the ejaculation itself. In this way Isis acts the role of the female hands in the myth of the masturbation of Re, except that she is the mother, instead of the daughter in her relationship to Horus. However the passage can also be interpreted from another approach, which can be brought out by emending the passage differently: and *he* placed it into a jar (*iw=(f) dit=fr w^c d3d3*). With This emendation, Horus assumes a more active role; instead of just letting his semen fall into the jar he copulates with it. Since the Egyptians, at least in the later periods, imagined the uterus in the form of a jar⁵⁸⁰, this vessel should probably be viewed as more than an arbitrary receptacle. So, similarly to the masturbation myth, Horus semen is in the end twice born, once from the jar or hands of Isis and secondly from the forehead of Seth. In contrast to the myth of the rape of Horit in the Delta manual, the moon is born from the assailant and not the victim, and as noted above the consequences of the myth is also reversed since the Delta manual focused on the maturation of Horit, who by being raped started menstruating, whereas Horus becomes a man by not being raped, but instead imposes himself on Seth (via the jar).

For understanding the different transformations of the motif, it would have been helpful if the earlier versions of the myth that treats the intercourse of Seth and Horus as voluntary and mutual also made reference to the birth of Thoth⁵⁸¹, however in the Rameside myth the focus is on an aetiology for the supremacy of Horus over Seth, which would make such an approach unthinkable, and which makes the motif of the renegade hands a secondary interest that is quickly resolved by Isis creating new ones so as not to disrupt the main narrative.

Thus, the different aspects can be emphasized or left out altogether depending on the context in which the myth is being used and according to the specifics of the individual myth⁵⁸². In the Delta Manual the suffering of the rapist is left out since the focus is on Horit

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Frandsen, 'The Menstrual "Taboo" in Ancient Egypt', *JNES* 66.2 (2007), 100-102.

⁵⁸¹ Amenta, 'Some reflections on the 'Homosexual' Intercourse between Horus and Seth', *GM* 199 (2004), 7-21.

⁵⁸² As an illustrative example of just how much the mythic pattern could be stretched see spell 14 of the *Magical Harris Papyrus* (P. mag. Harris 501 = pBM EA 10042, rt. 7,8-7,12) in which Horus rapes his

and her development; from the first intercourse leading only to menstruation, the second to an abortion, and finally the third to the birth of Horus of Medenu. For each of these, it is stated that the goddess becomes pregnant (*iwr*), but the third pregnancy is distinguished as the goddess becomes 'really (lit.: greatly) pregnant' (*iwr ʿ3*)⁵⁸³:

Then her father joined with her another time after three months. She became really pregnant and gave birth to Horus of Medenu, with the efficient nature (*rn*) without likeness among the gods while his father had gone to the necropolis because of the attack of that evil one. His mother, Horit became pregnant with him in the fourth month of Shemu. She gave birth to him on the fourth month of Peret, day 28. Then she hid in the papyrus swamps with him. She made (him) great like her father; he was absolutely perfect in his members. He rescued his father and drove away the adversaries and collected his efflux and brought order to this land driving away strife. He drove away sorrow from the mind of the widow. He searched the relics which had become scattered. He exercised his force as the unique god and he brought peace to his father in Ouha-To

The characterisation of Horus of Medenu is almost the same as that given for Horus son of Isis in the list. However the list also mentions Horus of Medenu. To account for this discrepancy between the list and the narrative passages that follows, it may be that Horus son of Isis is the (abstract) national deity, subsuming the local Horus of Medenu within him. Still Horus of Medenu is present, perhaps as the prototypical 'Son of Isis', who shares in most of his characteristics.

The last two accounts following Horus of Medenu, take up a special place. Whereas the first three births are narrated in sequence and have Horit as the mother, the fourth instead uses Isis as the mother who gives birth to Horus⁵⁸⁴. It also differs from the rest in having the conception of Horus take place after the death of Osiris. As this myth is not mentioned in the list it will not be considered here. The fifth and final myth of the birth Horus has been analysed above as a variant of the first.

These myths of Horit and her birth of three different forms of Horus, all feature Horit as a young woman who has sex with her father or in the variant myth, her uncle Seth⁵⁸⁵. In the Delta Manual the prominence of this myth makes it an excellent starting point for analysing the role of the goddess and for discovering links between different myths. It is striking that, if present in the Delta manual, all the myths discussed include reference to the goddess Horit. This could be seen as an indication that the Egyptian's themselves saw a connection between these myths and that the inclusion of Horis as a goddess of divine sexuality was

mother Isis. Here it is not the seed but the tears of the goddess that falls into the water. For the connection between this spell and the mythic complex studied here as it appears in the Delta Manual section on Imet cf. Servajean, 'Des poissons, des babouins et des crocodiles', *Verba manent, Fs. Meeks* (2009), 405-424.

⁵⁸³ *DM* 10, 7-11, 1.

⁵⁸⁴ *DM* 11, 1-11, 3.

⁵⁸⁵ This relationship is not explicitly stated but simply inferred from Osiris being her father.

meant to emphasize these connections. The meta-myth of the rape of Horit, a myth of Father-Daughter relations was complemented with myths of Son-Mother relations, which were also of sexual nature⁵⁸⁶. In the Delta Manual the Son-Mother constellation is dealt with in section on Sebennytos, where Horit assumes the role of Tefnut being raped by her son Geb.

Horit in Sebennytos, Behbeit and Hermopolis

The different variants of the myth of Geb, as the son raping his mother, were discussed above in the chapter on the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis manual. In both Hermopolis and Sebennytos, Horit assumes the role of Tefnut raped by Geb. For the Hermopolis section it should be noted that Horit is also present as *hrt-wrt* 'The great Horit', perhaps to make explicit her identification with the second generation goddess Tefnut, in the same way that Horis is found in the chapter as Haroeris (*hr-wr*) identified with Thoth-Shu.

The general features of the myth in the Delta Manual and the Tebtunis Manual are the following:

- A goddess is raped by her son
- The goddess is imprisoned, tied up or bound to her assailant
- The rapist is punished and the goddess freed

The rape of the daughter and the rape of the mother could sometimes be combined. In the magical papyrus Harris, Horus has intercourse with his mother, Isis, whose tears fall into the Nile. As noted by Servajean the details of this myth has several points of similarity to the myth of the raped daughter, especially as it appears in the Imet section of the Delta Papyrus⁵⁸⁷. Servajean associates the waters falling into the Nile with the semen of Seth that likewise ends up in the water, an association that is strengthened by the fact that both the tears and semen have an effect on the fish in the water and references to a baboon is found in both versions. Thus the two myths, of the rape of the daughter and of the mother, are closely connected, but there are indications that they should nonetheless be viewed as separate entities, and that especially the sexual relationships between son and mother was the basis for more than one myth. Not much literature exists on the subject and most is

⁵⁸⁶ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship* (1986).

⁵⁸⁷ Servajean, 'Des poissons, des babouins et des crocodiles', *Verba manent, Fs. Meeks* (2009), 405-424.

confined to discussions of Amon or Min as Kamutef, ‘the Bull of his Mother’⁵⁸⁸, which is perhaps to be understood differently from the Myth of Geb raping his mother depending on what point of view is taken. As Kamutef, the god has sexual intercourse with a goddess from whom he is later reborn. The Son aspect thus appears to belong to the end-phase of the myth, and not to the initial state of affairs. However a Middle Kingdom hymn to Min invokes the intercourse of Horus, here intended as a form of Min, with his mother Isis, as the mythological precedence for the relationship between Min and the King⁵⁸⁹.

While the two mythological complexes are difficult to separate in most of the sources, they appear as relatively distinct in the Delta Manual, and luckily the Behbeit section helps us define the precise relationship between the two myths, even if this definition cannot be indiscriminately applied to attestations of these and similar myths from other sources. The Behbeit section deals with the rape of the mother-goddess, her death or imprisonment and subsequent release.

In the papyrus Behbeit follows immediately upon the Sebennytyos section, detailing the rape and punishment of Geb. The last passage of the section describes how Geb imprisoned Horit, a theme pursued in the opening of the Behbeit section where we learn of the release of a goddess who is only referred to as ‘This goddess’⁵⁹⁰:

Per-Hebyt being the place for laying down offerings, Paqery is close by: Its *bwt* is the Khesayt-plant. The third month of Shemu is called Epiphi because of it: After being imprisoned this goddess came of age. ‘She is free’, it is said when she is liberated. Fire is put to the Khesayt-plant. The third month of Shemu is called the feast of her majesty. Women disrobe and sprinkle (themselves) with cool water, purifying (themselves), purifying the goddess and dispelling all evil.

This passage opens the Behbeit section but as is clear from the subsequent passages it relates just one phase of the myth. A goddess, named as the Mother of God (*mwt-ntr*) is tied up by Seth when he desires her beneath the Hebayt-tree⁵⁹¹. Given the similarity between being tied and imprisoned, we might read this myth as a variant of the imprisonment motif. If understood in this way, a further variation of the motif suggests itself since the Hebayt-tree is also the location for the burial of the local sacred cow⁵⁹², from which it can be

⁵⁸⁸ Jacobsohn, *Die Dogmatische Stellung des Königs* (1939).

⁵⁸⁹ Parma Stela 178. The relevant passage translated and discussed in Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009), 420.

⁵⁹⁰ *DM* 13, 6-9.

⁵⁹¹ *DM* 14, 1-2. Discussed above.

⁵⁹² *DM* 14, 7-8. For the burial of a cow-goddess Meeks refers to pBM 10288, A, 7-11 (Caminos, ‘Another Hieratic Manuscript from the Library of Pwerem son of Kiki’, *JEA* 58 (1972), 210-211.

perhaps be inferred that the rape and imprisonment of the goddess can also be viewed as her death⁵⁹³.

In the Behbeit section these variations of the myth follow in inverted sequence, beginning with the release of the goddess, with the imprisonment or burial then ensuing. This inversion might be intended to create a narrative link between the Sebennytos and Behbeit section, whose relationship is otherwise not at all clear⁵⁹⁴. In terms of nomes, Sebennytos and Behbeit was part of the same district and in other geographical texts they are only accorded one entry, which covers both localities. The goddesses worshipped in the two places differed; in Behbeit the dominant goddess was Mut-Hathor, later supplanted by Isis, while Tefnut was present in Sebennytos. By only referring to the goddess 'as this goddess' this distinction could be blurred, allowing the reader to see in the liberation of 'This goddess' a continuation of the myth laid out in the Sebennytos section of the rape and imprisonment of Tefnut-Horit⁵⁹⁵.

However there are some problems with a simple sequential reading of the two sections; whereas the imprisonment of the goddess is part of the myth of the son raping his mother, the release must be seen as part of the myth of the goddess' youth. After being imprisoned she comes of age (𓆎)⁵⁹⁶ simultaneously with her release, and just as in the myths of Horit and Bastet treated above for the Bubastis section, this involves purification by bathing, which makes it plausible that menstruation is once again referred to. This reading dissolves the apparent paradox of a mature goddess (the *mwt-ntr*) being imprisoned and a young goddess later released since the two myths are clearly related, each dealing with a different phase of the same mythic complex. The old goddess, the *mother* is raped, by the son, and imprisoned which leads to her death and subsequent liberation and rejuvenation as the *daughter* - who is also raped, by the father, in connection with the onset of the menarche. In this way the two myths mirror each other even to the point of having opposite consequences: when Geb rapes Tefnut this results in the avoidance of sex among mortals: 'Women avoid sex with their husbands when Geb unites (sexually) with his mother'⁵⁹⁷, and furthermore has negative repercussions for the father, whereas the rape of the daughter does not appear to have any ill results. If this complex is also part of the arrival of the nubile daughter of the Myth of the Return of the goddess, the *hieros gamos* is even accompanied

⁵⁹³ Cf. the discussion of the reliefs of the goddess in a coffin above in the analysis of the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis manual.

⁵⁹⁴ See the discussion of the sequence Sebennytos – Behbeit in Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 169.

⁵⁹⁵ Also noted by Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 275.

⁵⁹⁶ For 𓆎 as 'coming of age' see especially the Doomed Prince: pHarris 500 vs. 4, 6-7.= Gardiner, *LES*, 2, 1.

⁵⁹⁷ *DM* 12, 8-9.

by rituals of sexual nature and general license. In the last myth however it is usually brother and sister, Shu and Tefnut, that unites sexually and not father and daughter, even though the union with the father is part of the myth. When the fiery goddess returns she is accorded a place on the brow of her father, where she becomes the Uraeus-serpent slaying her father's enemies. Given the affliction of male gods in this precise location in the parallel myths treated above, it might be worth considering whether the emplacement of the uraeus on the brow can be seen as the result of a sexual intercourse⁵⁹⁸. Perhaps Shu, as the representative of the father, has sex with his (father's) daughter, becoming pregnant himself and giving birth to the uraeus from his brow as the father?⁵⁹⁹ In some version of the myth the union of Shu and Tefnut leads to the final union of these two gods with the body of Re in a rejuvenation of this god⁶⁰⁰. In all cases it should be noted that the Delta Manual does not appear to operate with sex between peers, even the prototypical mythological sexual relation between deities of the same generation, Osiris and Isis, is here mostly replaced by Osiris' violation of his daughter Horit.

These considerations can also be applied to the sequence of events found in the myth of Geb and Tefnut found the El Arish Naos, wherein we can detect both the Son-Mother and Father-Daughter motif. The second half also displays another variety of the violation and release/purification in water, wherein it is neither the menstruation nor venom, but instead the fiery goddess herself that is first contained in a jar and then released into the water:

Geb the prince:

- Rapes his mother
- Son and mother caught in palace unable to come out for nine days

Geb exits as the new king:

- Dons uraeus ('daughter') and is burnt in face
- Serpent contained in jar released into water

⁵⁹⁸ The link between the moon emerging from the brow of Seth and the uraeus on the brow of the sun god was noted by Kees, 'Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen', *ZÄS* 60 (1925), 1-2. In the Pyramid Texts the emergence of the serpent on the brow of Re is juxtaposed to the Uraeus coming out of Seth (*Pyr* § 2047d [683]).

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. *Pyr* § 1210 [519] where Iusaas is said to have risen from the brow of Geb, which given this gods involvement in the myths treated here could be interpreted as being the result of his sexual assault of a goddess.

⁶⁰⁰ e.g. in the temple of Tôd, see discussion in Sternberg, *Mythische Motive* (1985). This is comparable to the function of Shu as breast piece and Tefnut as the *m^cnht*-counterpoise discussed above in the chapter on Hermopolis in the Tebtunis manual.

If this overall mythological frame for understanding the individual myths is correct, then it might serve a basis for interpreting the rituals for the Return of the Goddess. When the goddess returns she and her brother Shu unites with their father and this ushers in a new golden age with Re once again the ruler and characterised by abundant food⁶⁰¹, drink and sexual license. As in related rituals from neighbouring cultures, such as the roman Saturnalia, this state of affairs cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely but must eventually end⁶⁰². In Mythological terms the golden age is ended by the rape of the goddess, now become mother, by Geb, which as we saw in the Hermopolis section was connected to the parting of sky and earth, one of the two major events, along with the death of Osiris, to end the golden age, and eventually leading to the instalment of Horus the king on the throne of Egypt as the defining feature of the ordered world⁶⁰³. After having been raped and imprisoned the rejuvenated goddess is released and once again leaves for Nubia.

Some support for the last episodes of this sequence may be found in the Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky days. In the days following the festival of Epihi, in the Delta manual the time of the release of the goddess, there are a lot of entries dealing with the rage and pacification of the lion goddess, the most important of which is 3 Shemu, day 5⁶⁰⁴:

Third month of Shemu, day five: Dangerous, Dangerous, Dangerous: You should not go out of your house. You should not travel by ship. You should not do any work then, this day when this goddess left for the place from whence she returned. The hearts of the gods are very sad because of this.

Here both the negative effect on the gods and the phrase: 'When this goddess left (*šmt*) for the place from whence she returned (*iyt*)' shows that it is the departure of the goddess to the foreign lands and not her arrival, though the latter can also be characterized by rage. There are, however, some uncertainties connected with the events in the calendar. Already at 3 Shemu, day 9, the Akhet-eye and Re are reconciled, which does not accord well with the 70 days which should be expected if the myth deals with the disappearance and rising of

⁶⁰¹ For food at the Bastet festival cf. the Demotic lyrical texts in preparation by Hoffmann and Quack. A preliminary translation has appeared in Hoffmann & Quack, Joachim, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 305-311. For abundance of food as a marker of primeval times see my discussion in 'The Dispute between Re and Osiris over the Creation of Grain in the Contendings of Horus and Seth' (forthcoming), and for a general discussion of Egyptian festivals as a temporary return to a golden age see Assmann, 'Das ägyptische Prozessionsfest', *Das Fest und das Heilige* (1991), 105-122.

⁶⁰² Versnel, 'Myth and Ritual: The Case of Kronos', *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (1987), 129-152.

⁶⁰³ This hypothesis provides a frame for understanding the curious transference of punishment that was observed above in the discussion of the Sebennytyos section of the Delta Manual where a Sem and Inmutef-priest was linked to the crimes of Geb.

⁶⁰⁴ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 377

Sothis⁶⁰⁵ or with changes in the course of the sun from winter to summer solstice. Since the calendar often prolongs, compresses or shifts these periods⁶⁰⁶, a more serious objection is the lack of any explicit references to the myth in the entry for 3 Shemu, day 1⁶⁰⁷:

Third month of Shemu, day one: Good, Good, Good: A big festival is in the southern sky. Every country and all humans (*irt-nb*) take up rejoicing (*šsp nhm*). The lady of heaven and *ipt-ḥmt* and every country is in festival on this day.

Concerning the goddess *ipt-ḥmt* and the festival in the southern sky, Leitz refers to the prominent position of the constellation of the female hippopotamus in the southern sky at this time. All in all, the calendar supports a general sequence of Epiphi and departure of the goddess, rather than being a confirmation of a specific mythical sequence.

So far we have treated the myths of the mother and the daughter as separate, with the imprisonment motif belonging to the rape of the mother and the withdrawal belonging to the myth of the daughter. This allows the two to be ordered in a sequence, but the question whether the two myths should be considered paradigmatically rather than syntagmatically has to be raised. It is possible that the withdrawal of the goddess is equal to her imprisonment, and thus in positive terms; her arrival equal to her release⁶⁰⁸. This might be implied by the Hermopolis section of the Tebtunis Manual in which both myths, naming the same goddesses, were invoked for the local festival of Thoth. In this second reading, the rape of the goddess by Geb would not constitute the end of the festival, but is negative prerequisite – similar to the implied killing of Osiris - necessary for all rituals and myths dealing with his reconstitution. Thus the festival would end a period of abstinence from sexual behaviour caused by the rape and absence of the goddess.

However, if the basic premise of my analysis of the manuals is valid, we are not obliged to settle for one of these interpretations; If the mythology consisted of a series of clusters of mythemes around central divinities, which could be given narrative expression as individual myths, but was not restricted by one dogmatic telling and if one of the objectives of the mythological manuals was to provide a network of associations between these different myths, then a search for the one and right way of telling or understanding these myths will inevitably prove futile. In connection with the reconstructed myth(s) of the goddess suggested here, it should be noted that this myth is never narrated in full but only emerges

⁶⁰⁵ The date is only 60 days prior to first month of Akhet, day 1 which is the ideal date for the rising of Sothis (55 if the epagomenal days are discounted).

⁶⁰⁶ See Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 469-473.

⁶⁰⁷ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 375.

⁶⁰⁸ Comparable to the Greek myths of Demeter and Persephone where the rape and imprisonment of Persephone is accompanied by the withdrawal of her mother from the Olympus, and where only the return of the daughter from the underworld persuades Demeter to return (Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (1979), 123-142).

when the different myths of goddesses identified with Horit are pieced together. It thus belongs to the interpretive layer of the manual, and should perhaps be characterised as a meta-myth. However the same can be said of the myths of the death and rejuvenation of male deities, which does not emerge from any single mythic narrative, but from contrasting several of these and more clearly by observing the uses of these myths in ritual and cosmological texts. This is no coincidence but is due to the characteristics of mythological *narratives*. In myths causes have lasting and irreversible consequences, and this precludes any gods coming to life again, in the sense of returning to their former existence.

On the level of mythology, as distinct from individual myths, these mythic patterns of the goddess, supply an otherwise missing aspect of Egyptian mythology that deals with the re-generation of the goddesses or the female aspect of creation. For male deities the death and rejuvenation of Re, Osiris and Horus have long been known and discussed in details, including the role of the goddesses in this process. However goddesses often give the impression of being static, or at least only active for the sake of the male deities⁶⁰⁹. When Isis gives birth to Horus it is usually not her transformation to motherhood that is noted, but mostly the incarnation of Osiris in his heir Horus. The only major exception to this has so far been the myth of the Return of the Goddess, which we are now able to fit into a larger mythical complex surrounding the goddess(es), who, like the gods, are born, grow up, mature and die. In the case of the different manifestations of the goddesses, the Egyptian priests saw a coherent whole or pattern behind the individual myths that could be summarised in the goddess Horit.

The status of Horit in the mythological manuals

In both the Delta manual Horit primarily serves as the passive, and often unwilling, sexual partner of different gods; either her father or her son, both of which can be substituted by Seth when the negative aspects of the intercourse are emphasized. The only active role accorded her is as the lamenter of Osiris, and the retriever of her father, Re's eye, with which she is herself identified, from the hands of Seth.

Given the importance of the goddess in the manuals, it is striking that attestations for her are so sparse in other sources. Meeks treats her as a particular form of Hathor, with whom she serves many characteristics, matching the characteristics of the Hathoric prototype deduced by Lana Troy in her study of Egyptian queenship⁶¹⁰. However if she is simply a form of Hathor, then why is she present in the manual at all? If Hathor were indeed

⁶⁰⁹ A notable exception is Troy, *Patterns of Queenship* (1986), 20-32.

⁶¹⁰ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship* (1986).

intended, it would be simpler to just identify the goddesses with her. From the New Kingdom onwards we find topographical lists of Hathor, which can be interpreted to indicate that she was seen as a universal goddess with different local manifestations all over Egypt⁶¹¹, and the same types of lists are attested for Isis⁶¹². Both of these goddesses are amply attested in all kinds of sources from all periods, and both have a history as being important goddesses, with Isis on the rise in the later periods⁶¹³. Horit on the other hand is mainly confined to the manuals, and if we look at the other attestations for her name these are mostly epithets in texts from temple rituals, some of which could be based on the mythological manual themselves⁶¹⁴. If her importance in the manuals were a reflection of her popularity then we would expect her name to turn up in a host of different sources, even if we allow for a vast number of sources lost to us. Thus it seems safe to conclude that Horit never was an important deity of popular worship, but was a result of and a tool for priestly interpretation. In the temple of Edfu, we find one of the few independent usages of the goddess⁶¹⁵. In a list of different resins and their colouring, cultic uses and divine associations, a red tinted resin is identified first as coming from the heart of 'the god' (Osiris) and then from the goddess: 'The Ahemu-resin came into being from the vagina of Horit after the sufferings of her heart in traversing Punt'⁶¹⁶. Apart from providing a further welcome attestation of the link between the menstruation of the goddess and her return from Punt, it is noteworthy that the text is not a ritual text but a list, i.e. belonging to the same overall category of texts of priestly knowledge as the mythological manuals themselves. The function of Horit is also the same as in the mythological manuals, namely as explanans for a

⁶¹¹ In Tebtunis we find such a list in the Priestly manual: Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998), 166-177 (Papyrus I, fr. X 3,3-4,7). Such lists could also be recited as part of rituals, see for instance Bremner-Rhind, (19-13) 20,1-20, 14, Translated in Faulkner, 'The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: II', *JEA* 23 (1937), 13-14 (10-16). For geographically structured lists and hymns to deities in general cf. Quack, 'Geographie als Struktur in Literatur und Religion', *Altägyptische Weltsichten* (2008), 131-157.

⁶¹² Also in the Priestly manual: Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998), 163-164 (Papyrus I, fr. X, 2,3-3,6). Cf. also *Dendara I*, 21. Further examples listed by Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998), 164-165.

⁶¹³ For the precedence of Isis over Hathor, see for instance: Osing, Jürgen, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis*, 166-177 (Papyrus I, fr. X 4,2), in a list of the manifestations of Hathor: *hr hwt-hr nbt 3st pw*: 'Concerning any Hathor: It is Isis'. For Isis as 'Hathor in every nome' see the examples listed by Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998), 164-165. And cf. Esna n° 163, 23-24 where the epithet is conferred on the local goddess Neith.

⁶¹⁴ See the discussion of the Edfu text above. The close phraseological relation between the Bubastis section and the Edfu texts adduced by Meeks could also point to the temple texts as based on the Delta manual.

⁶¹⁵ The writing does not let us decide between *hrt* or *bikt*.

⁶¹⁶ *hpr 3hm is m k3t nt hrt m-hr 3h3m (<ihm) ib=s m ht pwnt*. Edfou II, 206, 11-12. Translation in Chermette & Goyon, 'Le Catalogue Raisoné des Producteurs de Styrax et d'Oliban d'Edfou et d'Athribis de Haute Égypte', *SAK* 23 (1996), 64 and discussed by von Lieven, 'Das Göttliche in der Natur erkennen. Tiere, Pflanzen und Phänomene der unbelebten Natur als Manifestation des Göttlichen', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 164.

phenomenon, this time not local mythology but a resin used in rituals. In both cases the presence of Horit serves to associate the explanandum to the wider array of mythological patterns in which the goddess is involved.

This use of the goddess as a figurehead for mythological interpretations for goddesses appears to be confined to the Delta manual, a section of the Tebtunis manual that was probably based on the Delta manual and temple texts, which are conceivably also partly based or influenced by the Delta manual. In the other texts from Tebtunis the goddess is absent, perhaps because the goddesses Hathor and Isis became increasingly universalised, rendering the need for heuristic goddess of sexuality superfluous. Another reason, purely hypothetical, may be sought in the waning importance of priestesses in the Late Period, which after the descent into oblivion of the Theban wife of God were not very prominent in temple cult as independent ritualists⁶¹⁷. For earlier periods a reasonable conjecture would be that priestesses would assume the role of Horit, as priests would Horus, but since the decline of priestesses had set in already by the Middle Kingdom⁶¹⁸, this interpretation of course hinges on the uncertain date of the Delta manual and especially those sections concerning Horit.

In the two mythological manuals studied here, the inclusion of Horit in the Heliopolitan Ennead allowed for a concise yet comprehensive system for mythological interpretation. Like Horus, who can appear as Haroeris, Horit is not confined to a single generation of the gods, but can be identified with goddesses of all ages and generations, greatly improving her potential as an interpretative tool. The ability to span several generations is rooted in another aspect of the mythological set up of the manuals, an aspect that, though also present in the Tebtunis manual receives special emphasis in the Delta manual.

Generations of the Ennead

That the same mythological patterns can be applied to different gods and generations of gods is another characteristic feature of the Delta manual; each succeeding generation of gods repeats the myths of the earlier generations, but permuted in new ways. Here we must differentiate between variations on the structural level that involve shifts in the

⁶¹⁷ For mythological identifications of this priestess see Stela Cairo JE 36907 where the initiation of Ankhnesneferibre is described: 'There was performed for her all rites and rituals like what was done for Tefnut at the first occasion (*mi irt n tfnwt m sp-tpy*)'. See Leahy, 'The Adoption of Ankhnesneferibre at Karnak', *JEA* 82 (1996), 145-165.

⁶¹⁸ See e.g. Gillam, 'Priestesses of Hathor: Their Function, Decline and Disappearance', *JARCE* 32 (1995), 211-237.

relationship between actors, or constellations, and variations at the level of narrative, i.e. differences in persons, motives, setting and even basic sequences of events.

The resemblance of the different generations is sometimes made explicit. In the narratives of the five Horuses born of Horit, the daughter of Osiris' menarche is said to be 'like what was earlier done by Tefnut', a goddess two generations removed from Horit. This involves more than recognition of basic biological characteristics shared by the goddess, in as much as both goddesses are raped by a god. However, whereas Horit is raped by her father, Tefnut is raped by her son, unless the section alludes to an earlier violation of Tefnut before she became a mother. In his book on the 'Daily life of the Egyptian Gods' Meeks remarked that the rape of the mother was by no means confined to Geb, since Horus too raped his mother⁶¹⁹. Meeks sees the rape of the mother as a prerequisite for assuming kingship and as a myth that can be applied to both the relationship of Horus with his mother Isis, as well as to that of Geb to Tefnut⁶²⁰. In the case of the rape motifs, we should probably distinguish between the rape of the daughter and the rape of the mother as separate myths, which can of course be combined to allow for new mythological associations. Thus the overall use of the rape motive is more complex, and it is not certain whether the permutations found are deliberate and caused by the mytheme's shift in generation, or whether they are simply a reflex of adaptations made to best fit the narrative and mythological schema.

An illustrative example is the decapitation of Isis by her son Horus. Even though the individual myths differ in detail, all have the son decapitating his mother, for which he is punished by being blinded, in the version of the Delta Papyrus⁶²¹:

Then her son Horus of Medenu defended his mother and protected his father bringing an end to his enemies. Some time after this they were fighting again and again. Then a possibility for victory arose for Horus of Medenu. He tied up Seth as a fettered prisoner. He was released by this goddess. Then Horus committed a crime because of this and this evil deed was 'far from' befalling her head. Then Dedoun made him ascend, and the same was done to him.

Also in the Delta Manual a variation of the myth has Haroeris-Onuris decapitate Tefnut⁶²²:

Then Haroeris (*hr-wr*) as Onuris decapitated the 'woman of Tefnut'⁶²³ and Geb covered him on him (? *mł* *sw gb hr=f*). He is a [mummified] falcon on his Serekh, his *m^cht* beneath him with the two eyes of Horus that were damaged (*kn.tw hr=sn*) in this Letopolis.

⁶¹⁹ Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods* (1996), 66-69.

⁶²⁰ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 270 see also Derchain, 'Deux essais: I. L'inceste et le serpent', *GM* 224 (2010), 40-41.

⁶²¹ *DM* 11, 6-8 (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 24). For a discussion of this passage in relationship to the Tebtunis Manual see above.

⁶²² *DM* 11-9, 2 (Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 19

⁶²³ 'Woman of Tefnut' is probably a euphemism for Tefnut herself, cf. Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 98 n. 270.

The designation of the culprit as Haroeris, the elder or greater Horus, can be seen as a way of associating this myth to that of Horus decapitating Isis. Onuris is usually identified with Shu, which makes him the brother of Tefnut and not her son, but the latter affiliation is also found in the Delta Manual⁶²⁴. In his mythological commentary Meeks refer to the legends of Mekhentirty, who in his periodical blindness was dangerous to friend and foe alike in his blind rage. In contrast to the first myth where the damage to the eyes were seen to happen after the decapitation of Isis and as a consequence of this, this myth has the damage to the eyes come first, and the decapitation of the goddess ensue as result. We thus have an inversion of cause and effect.

This can be viewed as merely coincidental similarity between two otherwise unrelated myths. However it can also be seen as an illustration of the different choices available to authors of myths, when transforming basic mythic patterns into narratives. Not only motives for actions can vary, but also basic causality. In the pattern, all we have is the connection between an eyeless god and the decapitation of a goddess. The Constellations, with Assmann, or Mythemes are thus not narrative as such but only establishes a pattern in which some classes of gods, actions and events go together. In this way they resemble the schemata of Otto and testify to what Assmann has elsewhere called the iconicity of myths, the static and stable character of motifs that can then be elaborated in different ways according to genre and use⁶²⁵.

In the case of headless deities the motif was used in cosmographical texts as well. In his study of the enigmatic scenes in some New Kingdom books of the underworld Darnell draws attention to the numerous headless gods present. In these cosmological works, the missing heads of the gods are signs that they are in a state of latent existence in the darkness deprived of the light of the sun. When the latter appears, they sprout heads⁶²⁶. The intimate connection between the dead Re and Osiris, found in the underworld books⁶²⁷, is also present in the Delta Manual; either explicit⁶²⁸ or established by juxtaposition so that Osiris

⁶²⁴ DM 13, 4-5.

⁶²⁵ For these concepts and references see discussion above.

⁶²⁶ Darnell, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity* (2004), 111-117. In a scene from the sixth division of the *Book of Caverns* the headless gods are 'Those who are in the following of the Datian Horus, whose heads are placed in his eyes' (Piankoff, *BIFAO* 43 (1945), pl. 131, 5-9.). For the motif see also Meeks, 'Dieu masqué, dieu sans tête', *Archeo Nil* 1 (1991), 5-15.

⁶²⁷ Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmography', *Current Research in Egyptology 2010* (2011), 71-80.

⁶²⁸ DM 16, 2.

can be transferred to Heliopolis in one sentence, and in the next Re can be mentioned performing some deed⁶²⁹.

A more straightforward generational mirroring is the existence of an embalmed Osiris and a Horus⁶³⁰. Like his father Horus can himself be embalmed, and both can be present in their effigies on earth, and in the Delta Manual section on Imet they are explicitly juxtaposed and differentiated⁶³¹:

Heliopolis is distinguished from Imet (*wꜣ iwꜣw (r) imt*): At first Osiris was buried (*š3ꜥ.tw ꜣꜣꜣ wsꜣr*) in Heliopolis – he is the eldest Re of the past (*rꜥ smsw ꜣw ꜣꜣ ꜣꜣt*) (then) Horus was interred (*ꜣꜣꜣ*) in Imet. He cannot be moved (*mꜣmꜣ*) after being placed in Djeme, as he is visited (*ꜣꜣꜣ*)⁶³² every (ten) days (*ꜣꜣ sw (10)*) and offerings are laid down for him at the proper place. His limbs were gathered and his mummy was ferried upstream along with the Followers of Horus. His image (*sm*) is sent from one city to another like what is done to this day (*mi irwt n ꜣꜣꜣ ꜣꜣ*). The followers of Horus searched for their lord and they ferried his splendid mummy upstream making pause at (every) place he wished (*šꜣꜣꜣ=sn m bw ꜣꜣ ꜣꜣ=ꜣ*).

Both Osiris and Horus are buried, each in their respective place. As the embodiment of the corpse of Re, Osiris is buried in Heliopolis, while Horus is instead placed in Imet, in the local Djeme-mound where he receives a funerary offerings at the decade-festival. Horus' followers search for his corpse and their travels with his image become the precedent for the custom of despatching an image of the king to every (major) city.

In the section on Letopolis an embalmed Osiris and Horus also appear side by side. Having been killed by Thoth and Horus (!), he is interred in Letopolis in the Serekh-decorated palace tomb⁶³³:

Thoth had him embalmed. He was made sacred in the relevant treatment in the gold house and was embalmed as he left. He placed him in a sarcophagus in the fields. He is there until this day in the Serekh of the lord of Heliopolis with Shentayt and Merkhetes surrounding him. His son Horus is driving away (his enemies) for him. All of the divine limbs are with him.

Horus, in the form of Haroeris, also meets his fate in Letopolis, as he is killed for beheading Tefnut, and placed on the Serekh as a mummified falcon. In this fashion the dead Horus becomes the visible marker for the dead father unseen within his tomb, in the same way that the living Horus was king on earth as the representative of the revived father living as king of the underworld.

⁶²⁹ DM 4, 3-4,4 interjected passage about the voyage of Osiris to Ouha-To, amid myths of the hand of Re.

⁶³⁰ I see no reason for Meeke's translation of *ꜣꜣꜣw-nꜣꜣ* in DM 9,8 (*Mythes* (2006), 21 and 104 n. 297) as emanation, especially since the following narrative of Horus-Hekenu informs us that he has been eaten by a lioness, wrapped in its skin and is worshipped like a Hesy. In the Tebtunis manual section on Atfet the death of Horus is also treated, see discussion above.

⁶³¹ DM 16,2-16,5.

⁶³² In the sense of sought or visited. Cf. the term *ꜣꜣ-nꜣꜣ* used for oracular spells involving a face to face encounter with a deity (Gee, 'The Earliest Example of the *ꜣꜣ-nꜣꜣ*?' *GM* 194 (2003), 25-27).

⁶³³ DM 8,9-8-11.

This mirroring of the fates of the father and son is also found in connection with the resuscitation of Osiris in Mendes and the post-mortem conceiving of Horus⁶³⁴:

The Isis collected the efflux in Mendes. She hid the divine member in her flesh and it united with as when he was alive. It was in her womb (*bd*) that his semen (*mtwt*) emitted flowed forth (*stp*). She gave birth to Horus in Mendes. His days of life are the 14 of the corresponding treatment by the work of the embalmer, so that he is buried (*krs*) in this place.

The birth of Horus is here associated with the revival of Osiris. Meeks sees this fourteen-day life span primarily as a reference to the waning half of the lunar cycle but also to the rituals of funeral. The passage ends with the activities of a priest, an embalmer, which begs for a ritual explanation of the short lifespan⁶³⁵. In some versions of the Khoiak festival, the collected members of Osiris amounted to a total of 14, which could be associated with the fourteen days of Horus of Mendes' life. At the conclusion of the festival the effigy of Osiris is deposited in the upper Duat⁶³⁶, and as he is interred in his tomb, it appears that also Horus must die⁶³⁷.

The relationship between Horus and Osiris is thus very intimate with Horus not only being the representative and heir of his father on earth but also sharing his father's fate in death.

Also Seth and his father Geb can interchange. One time Seth assumes Geb's place, when the local taboo of Sebennytos is said to be: 'What Seth did against his (Onuris') mother', referring to the account of Geb's rape of Tefnut discussed above. In the Tebtunis manual too, Seth was found to repeat the negative actions of Geb against Horit. Perhaps the most intriguing instance of the phenomenon of generational mirroring, is the case of Re's demiurgic masturbation and the possible connections to the homosexual encounter between Seth and Horus, discussed above.

The different generations of the Ennead are thus separated but close links exists between them, so that the four generations that have issued from Atum all undergo processes that are variations of a single scheme. Particular close ties exist between Re and Osiris, Osiris and Horus, Seth and Geb, and Horit and the goddesses, but as the myths of the hand of Re and of Horus demonstrates, the same mytheme can be applied to both the first and the last generation. Further research is needed to determine whether the variations found are to be viewed as incidental or as deliberate modalities of the basic mythemes and

⁶³⁴ *DM* 11, 1-3.

⁶³⁵ Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 253-254.

⁶³⁶ Leitz, 'Die obere und die untere Dat', *ZÄS* 116 (1989), 41-57.

⁶³⁷ Here I diverge from the interpretation of the passage by Meeks, who prefers to see the 'Days of life', lit: 'Days on earth' as a designation of the time spent by the lunar Horus on earth before ascending to the night sky.

mythological patterns to accommodate the shifts in mythological and cosmological mechanics as the world gradually unfolds from the creator⁶³⁸. What is clear, however, is that the recurring myths serve to counteract the impression of rupture and fissions that emerges from all the intergenerational conflicts; even though one generation of gods succeed another, similar myths apply to all.

In addition to the strife between Geb and his father Shu, the Delta manual also has Horus kill his own father⁶³⁹, and in the Tebtunis manual section on Oxyrhynchos Seth injures his father Geb⁶⁴⁰. As a consequence of the numerous myths of rape and violence, creation becomes a gradual fall and the current world the results of numerous violations of Maat. As is known from other sources the defining event that separates the mundane world from the earlier golden age can be the death of Osiris or the rebellion against Re⁶⁴¹.

However it would appear that this process is reversible - not only by revenge and punishment of the gods responsible for the ill events but also by restoration of the initial harmony between the generations. This at least seems to be the premise behind a persistent motif in the monographs in the temple of Kom Ombo of the reconciliation of the generations and the re-creation of Osiris⁶⁴²:

It is said of this place: 'Shu, the son of Re, is at joyful peace (*sndm ib*) with his son Geb in it', likewise Tefnut with her daughter Nut. They are joyous there forever, in reaching the end of chaos and expelling rage. It is said of it: 'The father is at peace with his son, the mother is at peace with her daughter there'. The district of expelling combat' is said of it. This city: They created their son Osiris there again. The exaltation of these gods came into being therein. They are there in joyful peace to this day. The name of this district came into being since Osiris was created there as the youth of his father Geb, and his father Shu in it. The two sisters are there in joyful peace because of these things that happened.

Geb also rests in it at the side of his father Shu creating their son Osiris as a youth. The two sisters are united with him to make him joyous each day. Likewise, Tefnut rests with her daughter Nut. They are joyous there forever, in reaching the end of chaos and expelling rage. It is said of it: 'The father is at peace with his son, the mother is at peace with her daughter there'

The fall brought into the world by the warring gods, and culminating with the death of Osiris, is not final. The initial harmony can be restored and the world be brought back into its pristine state, here expressed as the re-creation of Osiris as a youth.

⁶³⁸ The use of the same motif for different generations of gods was also noted by Sternberg, *Mythische Motive* (1985), 222-224. The monographs of the temple of Esna are particular insistent on the motif of the uraeus assuming its place on the brow of the god, and frequently juxtapose Re and Shu as possessors of the serpent, which is identified with Neith or Tefnut (Esna n° 60, 104, 127).

⁶³⁹ DM 8, 2-8, 11.

⁶⁴⁰ Osing, 'Zum Namen des Gaeus von Oxyrhynchos', *Zeichen aus dem Sand FS. Dreyer* (2008), 521.

⁶⁴¹ Hornung, *Der Ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh* (1997).

⁶⁴² *Kom Ombo* n° 708 and 194 Similarly in n° 608. See Gutbub, *Textes fondamentaux de la théologie de Kom Ombo* (1973), 12 ao, ar; 79 ae, 4; 102-104 z-aa.

This has previously been interpreted as a reference to the birth of Osiris from homosexual incest⁶⁴³, but in light of the myths told in the mythological manuals the sense of the formula becomes clearer and profounder, just as our understanding of the ritual texts concerning the restoration of Osiris and the defeat of Seth relies on knowledge of the preceding death of Osiris at the hand of Seth.

It may be conjectured that the myths of generational strife served the dual purpose of detailing the preconditions of the current state of the world, i.e. as aetiologies, and at the same time provided the necessary knowledge for the (ritual) re-creation of the world that depended on the restoration of harmony between the divine actors. In this, the ritual-cosmological processes resembles, *mutatis mutandis*, the use of the Gnostic myths, which were simultaneously accounts of the fallen state of the cosmos, and a fixing of waypoints for the Gnostic seeking his way back to the fullness of the monadic origin⁶⁴⁴.

For the mythological system established by the manual, the links between the different generations of the ennead provides support for the dual reading of the myths as both syntagmatically and paradigmatically connected. The first reading gives a story of the gradual unfolding and differentiation of the primeval deity who makes himself into millions, whereas the second stresses the associations and the possibility of reducing this multitude to a few basic mythic principles.

Connections between nomes: Gods departing and arriving

Even more so than the Tebtunis manual, the Delta manual stresses the interdependence of the different nomes. This can be done paradigmatically by comparing a deity or ritual to that found in another nome: the *m^cnht*-counterpoise in Sebennytos is similar (*mi*) to that found in Oubenu⁶⁴⁵, and the head garment made for Wadjet in Imet similar (*mi shrw n*) to a goddess found in Athribis⁶⁴⁶. Imet and Heliopolis differ (*wp*) in what god: Horus or Osiris, is buried there⁶⁴⁷. In addition to these explicit comparisons, we find instances of myths that are so similar that they must have been recognized as identical or at least closely associated variants of the same myth. In the Tebtunis manual a recurrent mythological pattern is the battles of Horus and Seth, and this is also found in the Delta manual. However the Delta

⁶⁴³ Sternberg, *Mythische Motive* (1985), 119, Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009), 296 n. 3100.

⁶⁴⁴ This does not, however, mean that the world for the Egyptians was evil, as Stricker (*De Grootte Zeeslang* (1953)) claimed, only that it was in need of constant maintenance.

⁶⁴⁵ *DM* 13, 1-2.

⁶⁴⁶ *DM* 15, 9-10.

⁶⁴⁷ *DM* 16, 2.

manual also contains three versions of the myth of the rape of Horit. The first, with Osiris as the perpetrator, is not located spatially but the remaining two, committed by Seth, are set in Imet. The myth of the rape of Tefnut by Geb is likewise found in two versions, one in Sebennytos and the other in Hermopolis.

More often the approach chosen to associate individual nomes is the syntagmatic in which a deity moves from one nome to another:

Movement between districts of gods in the Mythological Manual of the Delta:

<i>Text</i>	<i>God</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Purpose or cause</i>
Heliopolis					
II, 5-6	Guardian serpent emerging from the head of Osiris	<i>pri</i> , ?	Abydos	Mountain of the necropolis of Mendet (Heliopolis)	To guard corpse of Osiris in <i>hwt-sr</i>
II, 6-8	Relic of Osiris	None	Letopolis	Heliopolis (Iyt)	Finding and guarding
II, 8-11	Mnevis	<i>rdit sm, spr</i>	Athribis	Heliopolis	Carrying relics of Osiris
II, 12-III, 2	Atum-Re	<i>rkrk</i>	Xois	Kheraha, Benben in Heliopolis	
III, 6,7	Eyes of Horus	<i>ini</i>	Imhedj ⁶⁴⁸ (Letopolis)	Benben in Heliopolis	Brought by Nephtys
III, 9-10	Re	<i>mnmn</i>		Heliopolis	To rest there
IV, 3-4	Osiris	<i>wd3</i>		Ouha-To	
V, 4-VI, 1	Osiris	<i>ini</i>	Letopolis	Kheraha, Pi-Hapy	Brought by Isis and Nephtys
VII, 4-10	Re	<i>spr</i>	Xois	Pi-Hapy, Kheraha	To rest there
Letopolis					
VIII, 2-IX, 2	<i>Ba</i> -birds	<i>r</i>		Letopolis	
Bubastis					
IX, 2-3	Horit-Bastet	<i>pri</i>	Eastern mountain of Heliopolis	Bubastis	
IX, 6-8	Horit	<i>hn</i>	Mehet	Bubastis	To save Oudjat-eye
X, 2-3	<i>s3=s</i>	<i>rdit w3t</i>		Great green of the west	
X, 4-7	Horus Hekenu		Upper Imet	Bubastis	Taken by lioness
Sebennytos					
XIII, 2-5	Geb 1) <i>w3r=f</i> 2) Geb			1) <i>sht-srkt-htyt</i> 2) Oxyrhyncos	1) Lost 2) Punishment
Behbeit					
XIV, 3-5	Thoth	<i>spr</i>		Sebennytos	To make effigy of Osiris
Khentiabet					
XV, 4-5	Scarab beetle of Osiris	<i>spr</i>		Khentiabet	God of Heliopolis looking in every town for it
Imet					
XV, 10-11	Outo	<i>iw</i>	Bubastis	Imet	Via mounds of Dep north of Khemmis – to hide with her child
XV, 12-XVI, 5	Deceased gods				
XVI, 5-6	Dead enemies (?)	<i>mḥ</i>	Desert	Imet	Floating in river

⁶⁴⁸ The necropolis of Letopolis, see Meeks, *Mythes* (2006), 59 n. 72.

As can be gleaned from the table, special connections exist between Letopolis and Heliopolis, which reflects both their sequence in the manual and the short distance separating them geographically⁶⁴⁹. The movement between the two nomes is uni-directional: *From* Letopolis *to* Heliopolis. The relics are found in⁶⁵⁰ or brought from⁶⁵¹ Letopolis, and in one case we learn how these came into being by the death of Osiris and the punishment of Haroeris, both events which take place in Letopolis⁶⁵². In all likelihood, this distribution of myths is not due to circumstance, but is caused by the special relationship between the two, found already in the Pyramid texts. Letopolis is early associated with destruction and its deities often have bloodthirsty and sinister aspects⁶⁵³, while Heliopolis is the site of the creation of the world. In pairing the two cities, the Egyptians could give the cycle of destruction and creation a concise formulation⁶⁵⁴, as in *Book of the Dead* chapter 64: 'I have come from Letopolis to Heliopolis to let the phoenix know the state of the underworld'⁶⁵⁵.

This discussion of different modes of mythical geography supports the view of the manual as focused on associations and interconnections. The different nomes are connected by gods traveling from one district to another or by the nomes being equated. In the same way that the different generations of gods fit the same mythical patterns, the different nomes can also be seen as variations of patterns found in other nomes. Even though the manual focuses on the important nomes, in the surviving part Heliopolis, no district appears to have been accorded a status as the absolute point of origin for everything.

⁶⁴⁹ See the remarks by Meeks, *Mythes* (2006),

⁶⁵⁰ *DM* 2, 8.

⁶⁵¹ *DM* 3, 5.

⁶⁵² *DM* 8,2-9,2.

⁶⁵³ Cf. Ciccarello, 'Shesmu the Letopolite', *Fs. Hughes* (1976), 43-54. Though his interpretations are obsolete, Wainwright, 'Letopolis', *JEA* 18 (1932), 169-172, can be conferred for a set of examples.

⁶⁵⁴ Examples from the funerary texts abound. See e.g. *Pyr* § 810 [438] Movement from Letopolis to Heliopolis associated with not dying, *Pyr* § 908 [469] throw-stick armed deity of Letopolis removes (destroys) evil, similarly in *Pyr* § 2086 [688]. For the Coffin Texts see spell 322: 'To become the foremost of Letopolis', where the deceased is the lord of slaughter who catches prey like a falcon and eats of the slaughtering block of Horus, a diet which includes entrails (*CT* IV, 148-151). In the *Book of the Dead* we learn about the ritual burning of enemies in the *ht-hʒwy* 'Things of the night' festival rite (*BD* chapters 18, 181, 182). For this ritual cf. Ritner, 'O. Gardiner 361: A Spell Against Night Terrors', *JARCE* 27 (1990), 30-31.

⁶⁵⁵ *BD* 64, 29, Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch* II (1886), 135.

The Delta Manual: Conclusions

It is lamentable that the manual is not preserved in its entirety which would allow for a better assessment of its degree of systematic ordering of nomes and gods, and a fuller appreciation of its different modes of associating different myths and mythological patterns. However, enough remains to both affirm the results of the analysis of the Tebtunis manual and complement them with new aspects of mythological knowledge.

The aetiologies of the Delta manual function in the same way as in the Tebtunis manual. The gods of the Heliopolitan ennead are differentiated into local aspects and their actions in the individual nomes result in the institution of local temples and rituals. As in the Tebtunis manual the different phenomena interpreted appears to be mainly those of importance for all of Egypt, such as the different lunar festivals, and rituals which in some form or other were enacted in all of Egypt. A single hieroglyph, the emblem of the west [R13], is also interpreted, in accordance with established system, here with focus on Osiris⁶⁵⁶. Almost every section has one or more references to Osiris and his relics, some of them with designations for the fabrication of statues⁶⁵⁷. References to other statues are not found, except for a tableau of the Ished-lake in Bubastis, which might have dramatized the arrival of the goddess with small figurines.

Very few longer coherent narratives are given. As in the case of the Tebtunis manual, knowledge of basic narrative patterns are both presupposed and used to tie together mythologems featuring different gods and phenomena. In the analysis of the Sebennytos and Behbeit section and it was hypothesized that this mechanism was used for establishing a link between the different phases of the myth of the goddess, and that this accounted for the sequence of the myths referred to in the Behbeit section. Meeks has interpreted the lack of narratives and the insistence on keywords as a result of the manual as an aide-memoire, usable only for those who knew the myths in advance⁶⁵⁸. Oral versions of these myths must have been present, however it is also possible that only knowledge of mythical patterns were necessary. In my analysis of the manual I have focused on detecting and fleshing out these patterns which become apparent only when the focus is shifted from discrete myths with a constant cast, to complexes of myths involving a larger array of deities fulfilling the same functions or appearing in similar constellations. In these patterns the motives for the gods actions are largely irrelevant – and seldom stated – and even the basic sequence of

⁶⁵⁶ *DM* 14, 10.

⁶⁵⁷ Meeks and Meeks, 'Les corps osiriens Behbeit', *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millenaire av. J.-C.* (2010), 39-48.

⁶⁵⁸ *Mythes* (2006), 169.

events and consequences can be reversed. This allows for association between a host of different myths, which can be further associated by linking just one mythologem in a myth to another. The question of which myths belong to a specific mythological complex then becomes meaningful only in a classification system of family resemblance, rather than as matter of each myth fulfilling a set number of characteristics. As was demonstrated above in the case of the masturbation of Re and the associated myth from *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, these two myths were at the edge of the mythic complex of the Rape of the Daughter while at the same time belonging to other mythic complexes, viz. a certain class of cosmogonies and the battles of Horus and Seth.

Some myths are repeated in several variations. The combat between Horus and Seth is referred to repeatedly, though the Delta manual is not as insistent on this motif as the Tebtunis manual. The rape of Horit, which are given three times, one in which the goddess is raped by Osiris, and two in which she is raped by Seth, and overall the Delta manual is more focused on the sexual life of the gods, which may be a reflection of different mythological outlook or a feature of the mythology of Lower Egypt as compared with Upper Egypt. The inclusion of variants has a number of effects and impressions upon the mythological system conveyed by the manual. First of all it allows for a greater number of applications of the same myth according to the narrative logic of each variant, secondly the repetition greatly aids the awareness of mythological patterns, over and above the individual narratives, which can then be seen as mechanisms for applying the patterns.

The manual thus provided the aspiring priest with an arsenal of both applied mythological knowledge, as aetiologies, and mythological patterns which could be used to link different myths and their associated phenomena. It would be simplifying matters to say that the manual reduces complexity, but it provides a tool for handling this complexity creatively. As in the case of the Tebtunis manual this is done by applying the system of the Heliopolitan Ennead to wealth of local myths integrated in national mythology. Only those local myths which either fit the pattern, or were too important to ignore were included, while minor details were ignored.

The context of the mythological manuals: The contents of a temple library and practices within a temple

The present section is intended as a preliminary situating of the mythological manuals as part of the textual tradition of Egyptian priests found in temple libraries, both as a resource used for educating these priests and as a practical manual assisting them in their daily duties. Emphasis will be on the Tebtunis mythological manual since it is the only one with a firmly established provenance and context as part of the Tebtunis library.

The primary intertextual context for the manuscripts of the Tebtunis Mythological Manual should be sought in the contents of that library⁶⁵⁹. The temple library boasts of a host of narrative, scientific and ritual texts, which for the local priest-scribes were their entrance to the world of the written part of the Egyptian tradition. In comparison with other places, such as Dime and especially Oxyrrhyncos, Tebtunis appears to have been a place where high esteem was placed on preserving the texts in their traditional script and language. At Dime, many texts were transliterated into Demotic⁶⁶⁰, and at Oxyrrhyncos which was very much influenced by Greek, we even have transliteration of a ritual text into Greek, probably to preserve the correct pronunciation⁶⁶¹. Due to the apparent conservatism of the Tebtunis library, it is perhaps similar to those of earlier periods, and some of the conclusions reached on the basis of this library partially applicable to these periods as well. At least on linguistic grounds it is likely that the vast majority of the Hieratic texts were composed either earlier than their attestations in the library or were based on earlier texts⁶⁶². The centrality of the Tebtunis Library for establishing the context of the mythological manuals and mythological knowledge in general stems from its privileged position as the best preserved Egyptian temple library where material is preserved in more than fragments⁶⁶³. Even though, for instance, the temple of Edfu features many works of priestly knowledge incorporated in scenes on the temple walls, these represent an

⁶⁵⁹ For an overview of the library and its contents see Ryholt, 'Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt' (in press). For the religious texts found in the library cf. von Lieven, 'Religiöse Texte aus der Tempelbibliothek von Tebtynis — Gattungen und Funktionen', *Tebtynis und Soknopaiu Nesos. Leben im römerzeitlichen Fajum*. (2005), 57-70.

⁶⁶⁰ See e.g. the discussion in von Lieven, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶¹ pBM 10808. I owe this interpretation to Joachim Quack's presentation 'The last stand? What remains Egyptian in Oxyrhynchus' at the *Problems of Canonicity and Identity Formation in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia* conference in Copenhagen May 28 2010.

⁶⁶² For linguistic dating of texts from the Tebtunis library see e.g. von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007). For the date of the Tebtunis Mythological Manual see discussion above.

⁶⁶³ For other Egyptian temple libraries and preserved texts see Ryholt, 'Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt' (in press).

adaptation of material that was primarily studied and transmitted as papyri⁶⁶⁴. The same reasoning is applicable to the texts that survive as adaptations in funerary literature⁶⁶⁵. These texts speak abundantly of the prestige and sacred power placed in the priestly texts and the knowledge it contains, but are less suited to study this knowledge's relevance for living priests. Thus the Tebtunis library provides us a unique chance to examine the works of priestly knowledge within their primary context. Furthermore, I would posit that it is only once this context is known that the derivations and adaptations found in secondary contexts become explicable.

Manuals of priestly knowledge: Heliopolitan interpretation and mythic geography

Of the texts found in the library, the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* compares most easily to the other works of priestly science. Two of the most important, the *priestly Manual*, and *Tebtunis Onomasticon*, categorize and list the different entities of the cosmos⁶⁶⁶. In addition the onomasticon also functions as a dictionary with a section devoted to nouns and verbs⁶⁶⁷. The script is hieroglyphic but with supralinear comments made in Demotic and old Coptic. As would be expected of an onomasticon found in a temple library, the manuals devote much space to *materiae sacrae*; gods, temples, festivals and substances.

One section of the *Priestly Manual* provides a hierarchy of the gods modeled on the royal court in which the most important deities, primarily from the Heliopolitan Ennead, are accorded positions within the court of the king of the gods, Re⁶⁶⁸. By listing the gods in this way the section effects an ordering of the gods according to the roles they perform. The list should not be mistaken for theology, but is to be understood as a quick guide to the most important gods that harmonizes with how these gods appear in those mythological

⁶⁶⁴ This aspect is often missing in discussions of Greco-Roman period temples and the texts found on their walls. See e.g. Assmann, 'Der Tempel der ägyptischen Spätzeit als Kanonisierung kultureller Identität', *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt Fs. Iversen* (1992), 9-25.

⁶⁶⁵ See below. Cf. Quack in *The Carlsberg Papyri 7: Hieratic Papyri from the Collection* (2006), for the case of *The Ritual for Opening the Mouth*.

⁶⁶⁶ Published by Osing, *The Carlsberg Papyri 2: Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998).

⁶⁶⁷ The latter extracted from the Sea-people inscription of Ramses III. Among the other texts primarily used for educating scribes in traditional Egyptian should be mentioned the copy of inscriptions from a Siut tomb (Osing in Osing and Rosati, *Papyri geroglifici e ieratici da Tebtunis* (1998), 55-83) and the alphabetically ordered hieroglyphic dictionary with transliteration and religious interpretations of hieroglyphic signs similar to that found in Tanis (Iversen, *Papyrus Carlsberg No. VII: Fragments of a Hieroglyphic Dictionary* (1958))

⁶⁶⁸ Osing, *The Carlsberg Papyri 2: Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I* (1998).

narratives that use the same principles⁶⁶⁹. The most important is the Ramesside tale of *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, and presumably its Demotic successors⁶⁷⁰, but other narrative myths, found in variety of contexts, use the same setting⁶⁷¹.

The *Priestly Manual* is mostly made up of lists. In a few cases lists with identifications are expanded into small mythological aetiologies, which demonstrate how closely the list texts and the mythological manuals proper are connected. For many of these mythological list texts we must consider the possibility that they functioned as *aide memories* for an oral tradition of interpretations and mythic episodes⁶⁷² as narratives can be condensed into lists, and lists can be expanded into narratives⁶⁷³:

Concerning Amon [Lord of Thebes] He is the man of the [god's] wife. His [name] is the male. Iusaas: She is the hand of Atum. Another of the enemies who planned rebellion against him saw him/her. A woman was made in whom his hair was tied up (?)⁶⁷⁴, the unseen who pacifies his heart in her name of Sekhem unto this day. She is the Wife of god, God worshipper and Hand of god carrying the Menat and Sistrum to pacify the heart of her father in the nome of Herakleopolis.

The list texts with the closest ties to the mythological manuals and their focus on geographically structured mythological knowledge are the nome lists which are found in different versions in the Tebtunis library. Some appear within the *Priestly Manual*, while others are apparently independent texts, some of which bear close resemblance to the famous Tanis and Edfu nome lists⁶⁷⁵. In contrast to the mythological manuals, the nome lists are purely non-narrative and more systematic; each nome is characterized by a fixed set of

⁶⁶⁹ For the royal setting as a narrative *topos* used in mythological discourse see the appendix for a discussion of its use in the pJumilhac. For these narratives it is imperative not to confuse narrative genre conventions with theology. For *The Book of the Heavenly Cow* the fact that Re is called king and his name written within a cartouche has been taken as evidence that the text cannot be earlier than the post-Armana period, i.e. dating to the time it appears in the tomb of Tutankhamun, even though this does not fit even the more cautious linguistic dating of the text which places it in the early part of the New Kingdom (see references in the appendix).

⁶⁷⁰ Hard to gauge since the hitherto discovered manuscripts are all very fragmented: Zauzich, 'Der Streit zwischen Horus und Seth in einer demotischen Fassung (Pap. Berlin P 15549 + 15551 + 23727)', *Grammata demotika*. Fs Lüddeckens (1984), 275-281. Fragments of another Demotic version from the Tebtunis library is soon to be published in Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 10: Narrative Literature from the Tebtunis Temple Library* (Forthcoming 2012).

⁶⁷¹ See the appendix. for a discussion of the use of this mythological frame in the papyrus Jumilhac.

⁶⁷² This entails that the divide between list texts and narratives discussed by Baines, 'Egyptian myth and discourse', *JNES* 50/2 (1991), 101-102, may not be that great after all.

⁶⁷³ Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis* (1998), Papyrus I, 158-159 and notes 159-161. For the myth outlined here see discussion above.

⁶⁷⁴ *sps Wb* 4, 107.9-10. 'To tie up (by the hair)'.

⁶⁷⁵ Quack, 'Die hieratischen und hieroglyphischen Papyri aus Tebtunis', *The Carlsberg Papyri 7: Hieratic Texts from the Collection* (2006), 2. For the Tanis lists see Griffith & Petrie, *Two Hieroglyphic Papyri from Tanis I* (1889) and for the Edfu list *Edfou I*², 329-344. The Edfu nome list was written on the walls of the temple walls and imbedded in an offering ritual framework where the king presents each nome and its attributes to the gods. This entails a few changes in the phrasing of the list, but preserves its basic characteristics.

attributes that recur in the same order for each nome. In the way that the nome lists deal with the individual nomes we can detect another means of simplifying diversity while at the same time emphasizing it. The lists provide details about the different regions of the country and contain the 42 nomes of Egypt, given in geographical order from south to the north. However, only those characteristics that fit the overall classification are included and so in essence each nome becomes an example of a set template, losing whatever special features it might have had that set it apart from its neighbors. In the Mythological manuals many of same attributes found in the lists are included and accorded aetiologies. However due to the looser structure of the manuals important details not found in the list can be treated and trivial details left out. Thus the nome lists are essentially closed and complete systems⁶⁷⁶, whereas the mythological manuals are open and can always be added to.

The Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars, found in Hieratic with Demotic commentary, also contains much mythological knowledge centered on the Heliopolitan Ennead. It is essentially a guide on how to interpret astronomical phenomena in mythological terms. Its earliest attestation hails back to the 19th dynasty, in the Osireion at Abydos, but in the opinion of Alexandra von Lieven, who has recently edited the text, the bulk of the text may date to the Old Kingdom with an early redaction in the Middle Kingdom⁶⁷⁷. In later periods this first edition was then furnished with an elaborate Demotic commentary. Many obscure myths found in the *Fundamentals* reoccur in the mythological manuals, and the *Mythological Manual of the Delta* even contains an excerpt from the *Fundamentals*. However in function the *Fundamentals* is closer to those lists that interpret features of the natural world in terms of deities, than to the mythological manuals. Common to the *Fundamentals* and *materia sacrae* list is the exclusive use of what may be termed first order mythological interpretation, which starts with an item in natural world and identifies it with a god. The two differ in how these interpretations are made. In most list texts the interpretations are limited to identifications through the use of nominal sentences, whereas the *Fundamentals* uses short verbal sentences. This difference in style and complexity is a natural consequence of the *Fundamentals* interest in processes, which require myths, whereas the lists mostly deal with sacred substances, features of geography etc. That is things which in most cases can be adequately interpreted by indicating affiliation to a god. This occasionally accompanied by a short mythical aetiology that establishes the precise link with that god. Usually how the substance came into being from the god's bodily excretions, i.e. from tears, sweat, semen or blood. In contrast to the lists and the *Fundamentals*, the

⁶⁷⁶ See the remarks by Frandsen, 'The Menstrual "Taboo" in Ancient Egypt', *JNES* 66/2 (2007), 87

⁶⁷⁷ Von lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), with discussion of dating and transmission pp. 251-254.

mythological manuals also contain second order mythological interpretation in which localized myths and gods, i.e. first order mythological interpretations of local *res sacra*, are interpreted in terms of other myths.

Geographically structured mythological manuals are also found for regions other than the Nile valley itself. For Tebtunis and other Fayum sites in which Sobek was worshipped the *Book of Fayum* served as an alternative local mythological handbook centered on the mythological and religious interpretation of the Fayum landscape⁶⁷⁸. The mythic geography found in this book deviates from those of the other mythological manuals where the Nile Valley and its religious locations formed the mainstay of the mythological system ordered from south to north. The *Book of Fayum* operates with the same basic principle but here the Bar Yussuf and the Fayum is viewed as an extension of the Nile valley substituting for the regions north of Herakleopolis. The book also operates with an alternative approach in which the Fayum is seen as a self-enclosed entity that mirrors the whole of the valley. Given the local nature of the manual it is natural that the Heliopolitan emphasis is shifted on to the crocodile god Sobek, while still preserved as an interpretative layer. In the *Book of Fayum* Sobek becomes the embodiment of the three most important gods of the Heliopolitan Ennead, namely Re, Osiris and Horus.

In the temple of Edfu we find a geographical manual that deals with the oases and their mythological makeup⁶⁷⁹. The text is part of a procession of the genies of the delta that present their gifts to the divine triad of Edfu, the case is similar to that of the Edfu nome procession, in which an original manual of priestly knowledge has been incorporated into a ritual procession scene. The different oases are characterized by the gods in them, some of which are accorded brief mythological explanations, sometimes followed by a specification of which materials the statue of the god is made and how it should look. The gods and myths are all related to the Osiris myth, in a pattern familiar from the Tebtunis mythological manual. Osiris is furthermore identified with Ha, the god of the (western) wastelands as part of the interpretation of the deities of the Oases in terms of Osirian myth, an interpretation which Aufrère explains by the stark contrast between the fertile oases, whose waters are associated with Osiris, and the adjacent arid regions associated with Seth⁶⁸⁰.

Even though the contents of the Tebtunis Library can be seen as representative for a small regional temple library, many other texts existed and were transmitted in temples and especially for the earlier periods we must rely on other sources. For the Saite period we have

⁶⁷⁸ Beinlich, *Das Buch vom Fayum* (1991).

⁶⁷⁹ Edfou VI, 19-25. Translated and discussed by Aufrère, 'La liste des sept oasis d'Edfou', *BIFAO* 100 (2000), 79-127 with references to older literature.

⁶⁸⁰ Aufrère, 'La liste des sept oasis d'Edfou', *BIFAO* 100 (2000), 80.

the collection of papyri in the Brooklyn Museum to which the *Mythological Manual of the Delta belongs*⁶⁸¹. The precise context is difficult to establish since no provenance is known. Based on the contents which include many references to Heliopolis some researchers have favored Heliopolis as a likely provenance. However as the myths of the Heliopolitan ennead was at the center point of mythological systematization, it is to be expected that this location has a strong presence in texts from all areas of Egypt. Since conditions at Heliopolis are not favorable towards the preservation of texts, the collection was probably found in another location; Elephantine and Thebes have been suggested as likely places of origin⁶⁸². The other papyri in the set have much in common with the distribution found in the Tebtunis library of priestly manuals, ritual texts and scribal literature. Alongside the mythological manual itself is found another manual of priestly knowledge: the *Ophiological Treatise* that categorizes snakes and interprets them in terms of their divine counterparts⁶⁸³.

Finally, from The New Kingdom, another manual that contains many obscure myths should be mentioned; the *Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky days*⁶⁸⁴. This calendar existed in two major variants. The first was purely a list of the individual days of the year and their portent. The three major divisions of the day, morning, noon and evening were each evaluated as bad, uncertain or good. The other variant, attested on two New Kingdom papyri, added mythological allusions that provide reasons for the evaluation of the days. Also added were injunctions on how to behave and the prospected fate of one born on special days. Though the main papyri are from the Ramesside period and from Thebes and Deir el Medina⁶⁸⁵, and thus probably from the archives of private individuals, Spalinger has demonstrated by drawing attention to the inclusion of a calendar of Lucky and unlucky days in festival calendar at Esna⁶⁸⁶, that calendars of lucky and unlucky days should primarily be viewed in the context of temple literature. The long New Kingdom calendar shares the characteristics of the *Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars* in being an application of

⁶⁸¹ See Ryholt, 'Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt' (in press), for overview of published or mentioned papyri and references.

⁶⁸² Quack has suggested Elephantine as a likely provenance (*Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte: Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*² (2008), 230, 261). On the basis of the presence of the Saite Oracle Papyrus, Ryholt ('Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt' (in press)) argues for a Theban origin, probably as the personal belonging of a priestly family deposited in family tomb.

⁶⁸³ Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie, papyrus du Brooklyn Museum no 47.218.48 et .85* (1989), for these lists cf. von Lieven, 'Das Göttliche in der Natur erkennen. Tiere, Pflanzen und Phänomene der unbelebten Natur als Manifestationen des Göttlichen (mit einer Edition der Baumliste P. Berlin 29027)', *ZÄS* 131 (2004) 156-172.

⁶⁸⁴ Leitz, *Tagewählerei . Das Buch ḥ3t nhḥ pḥ.wy dt und verwandte Texte* (1994).

⁶⁸⁵ For the provenance of the two main papyri cf. Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 1-2 and page 6 for the dating of the text.

⁶⁸⁶ 'An unexpected source in a festival calendar', *RdE* 42(1991), 209-222.

mythological patterns to the ritual and natural cycle of the year, including both mythological interpretations of phenomena such as seasonal shifts in weather and Nile currents, astronomical observations as well as inferences relevant for choosing auspicious dates for performing various actions. The calendar is also characterized by the presence of several mythological patterns or cycles that recur on specific dates, in specific intervals or placed according to complex manipulation of numbers⁶⁸⁷. It is interesting to note that while the manual contains many references to myths otherwise unknown, the vast majority of myths present are part of the Heliopolitan system⁶⁸⁸. Thus the calendar can be seen as another mode of applying the overall system of mythology found in the mythological manuals.

Common to all these manuals is their non-regional character; they all appear to have been in use in several temples throughout Egypt. The mythological interpretations they use draw mainly upon the gods of the Heliopolitan Ennead. It is likely that these two observations are correlated so that a manual intended for general use would turn to a common system of mythology. In distinction, the local mythological manuals are more complex in their use of mythology since they were intended for a readership familiar with local gods and rituals. However, even local mythological manuals, on papyri or found on temple walls as 'monographs', included reference to the larger mythological system found in the other manuals: that of the Heliopolitan Ennead. The importance of Heliopolis for religious texts is of course well known and has been explained in different ways. Long ago Sethe looked for textual layers in the Pyramid Texts to construct a historical and political model for the prehistory of pharaonic Egypt in which the historical kingdoms had been predated by a period of Heliopolitan supremacy⁶⁸⁹. Far from the naïve assumptions that Sethe operated with, Susanne Bickel, in her treatment of Egyptian cosmogonies before the New Kingdom nevertheless argues for a politically answer to the question: the centralization of political power in the Memphite region during the Old Kingdom influenced religious texts which were mainly composed in Heliopolis. This made Atum the sole creator god for the period preceding the New Kingdom in which diversification or regionalism increased⁶⁹⁰. However since the Pyramid Texts are the oldest extant religious texts from Egypt they

⁶⁸⁷ For the different systems and patterns found in the manual cf. Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 452-479.

⁶⁸⁸ Heliopolis is the most often mentioned locality in the manual, with Abydos and Busiris close seconds. The absence of any references to Amon or Thebes despite the provenance of the two papyri led Leitz to hypothesize a probable origin of the text in Heliopolis (*Tagewählerei* (1994), 7-8). However while one would indeed expect at least oblique references to Thebes if the text was composed there, the predominance of Heliopolis is not strong evidence for anything other than the prevalence of the Heliopolitan system in Egyptian mythology.

⁶⁸⁹ Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Aegypter* (1930).

⁶⁹⁰ Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne* (1994), 291-293. For the question of where these funerary texts were composed see also Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 94-99.

cannot be used as evidence for the emergence of religious notion, unless the text transmission itself during the Old Kingdom shows signs of such a development. It is of course evident that some changes in religion, and quite likely mythology occurred during this period. But as we do not have any longer textual evidence for the earlier periods any speculations on the centrality of Heliopolis as due to political transformations of the country rest on arguments *ex silentium*. For the Heliopolitan Ennead, it is indeed doubtful that all members originated in Heliopolis itself⁶⁹¹. For the best studied and most discussed case of Osiris, an origin in the lower reaches of the Delta, at Busiris, is the most probable and both Horus and Seth appears to have been Upper Egyptian deities⁶⁹². Thus far from being a grouping of gods originating in Heliopolis, the Ennead is a collective of gods from various places in Egypt. It could be argued that such a mythological collective must be the consequence of political amassment of power in one place, but the evidence could also be interpreted in otherwise. First of all, if what mattered most was politics, then we are at a loss to explain the relatively minor role of Ptah in the Pyramid Texts, and why would Memphite kings actively choose Heliopolis as the religious center? Instead it could be the case that Heliopolis was already a center for a religion based on the cooperation of individual cult centers, even though it didn't hold any political power. This cooperation need not have been accompanied by any political union. For the relationship between Memphis and Heliopolis it is worth again considering the age of the Memphite cosmogony found inscribed on the Shabaka-stone where we find a re-interpretation of Heliopolitan cosmogony in terms of Memphite divinities⁶⁹³:

His (Ptah's) Ennead is before him as the teeth and lips and this semen and hands of Atum, since it was through his semen and hands that the Ennead of Atum came into being. The Ennead is the teeth and lips of this mouth that pronounced the name of everything, through which Shu and Tefnut came forth.

Recently Alexandra von Lieven has argued the case for a date in the Old Kingdom⁶⁹⁴. If this dating is correct, the text could be seen as affirmation that the religious dominance of Heliopolis was not a result of the early Memphite kings' sponsorship, but instead a given that they had to consider when claiming Memphis as the center of Egyptian culture.

⁶⁹¹ Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?' *ARG* 10 (2008), 26.

⁶⁹² See for instance the discussion in Barta, *Untersuchungen zum Götterkreis der Neunheit* (1973).

⁶⁹³ Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (1928), 57. For this passage and Heliopolitan interpretation cf. the remarks of Assmann, 'Rezeption und Auslegung in Ägypten. Das "Denkmal memphitischer Theologie als Auslegung der Heliopolitanischen Kosmogonie"', *Rezeption und Auslegung im Alten Testament und in seinen Umfeld* (1997), 125-139. Similarly in *idem*, *The Mind of Egypt* (2002), 345-355.

⁶⁹⁴ Cf. von Lieven, *Grundriss* (2007), 255-257 for a linguistic dating of the texts with references and discussion of the relevant literature.

From other cultures, for instance the Mesopotamian, it is known that cultic cooperation and a form of shared mythology could exist in a climate of political strife between otherwise independent city states⁶⁹⁵. In Sumerian Mesopotamia Enlil of Nippur was the leader of the pantheon, a position he held to such a degree that for instance the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* can be partially seen as an interpretation of how Marduk came to hold that position instead. Similar to Heliopolis, Nippur never was a politically dominant city but owed its religious prestige to factors largely unknown to us. Another interesting point of comparison with Heliopolis is found in the difference between the local religious hierarchy and the national. At Heliopolis we find that some of the gods attributed to that city in national mythology were not particularly venerated in the city itself⁶⁹⁶ and judging from local inscriptions, the god Ninurta was more important for the inhabitants of Nippur than Enlil⁶⁹⁷.

Another case, further removed in space and time from Egypt, is Aboriginal Australia where feuds between clans co-exist with a 'totemic' division of ritual labor and responsibilities. As guardian of a set of myths and rituals a clan participates in larger festivals working together with other clans to cover the different areas of expertise⁶⁹⁸.

It is widely acknowledged that the period before the unification of Egypt under one ruler saw a harmonization and spread of cultural elements such as burial rites and pottery, and though less tangible in the surviving evidence, a similar trend could have been at work in the wider field of ritual and religion⁶⁹⁹. In her work on the origins and early history of the phyle system in Egyptian temples Macy Roth hypothesizes that the phyles originally were clans, ordered by totemic emblems, who shared responsibility of the cult of the dead king⁷⁰⁰. Only later with the reformation of the system during the Middle Kingdom was the system reduced to a purely administrative tool for circulating labor in the temple. For the earlier periods Macy Roth finds evidence that the different phyles were individual, sometimes competing groups that had their own cultic equipment and represented different groups. Macy Roth sees the cooperation between these clans as due to the unification of Egypt under one ruler, but it could just as well be a continuation of a previous religious system put to a new task. Another area where this cultic co-operation is evident is in the so-called

⁶⁹⁵ Lambert, 'Ancient Mesopotamian Gods. Superstition, philosophy, theology', *RHR* 207 (1990), 119, jestingly suggests a prehistoric ecumenical conference to decide which city got which god and also notes that this division and collaboration in religion did not preclude or was made impossible by political strife or warfare between city states.

⁶⁹⁶ As seems to be the case with the goddesses Iusaas and Nebethetepet, who were apparently more important in national mythology than in local religion cf. Vandier, 'Iusâas et (Hathor)-Nébet-Hétépet' *RdÉ* 16 (1964), 123.

⁶⁹⁷ van Driel, 'Nippur and the Inanna Temple during the Ur III Period', *JESHO* 38/3 (1995), 393-395.

⁶⁹⁸ Berndt, *Australian aboriginal religion* (1974).

⁶⁹⁹ Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt* (1999), 230-250.

⁷⁰⁰ Macy Roth, *Egyptian Phyles in the Old Kingdom*:(1991), 205-216.

funerary pilgrimage found as part of the burial rituals found on tomb reliefs⁷⁰¹. After being embalmed the dead is ferried to locations in Lower Egypt, Sais, Buto and Heliopolis and in Upper Egypt to Abydos. Whether this pilgrimage was actually performed or, more likely, only ritually enacted in miniature or by simply crossing the Nile, it demonstrates again that several holy sites, at least ideally, were expected to participate in a single ritual.

The predominance of Heliopolis in the Egyptian textual record from the earliest evidence onwards, especially in those texts that can be considered pan-Egyptian, i.e. the great mortuary and funerary corpus and the priestly manuals⁷⁰², could have been the result of prehistoric formation of a ritual and mythological system that involved the collaboration of several and not necessarily politically unified religious centers. Though centered on Heliopolis, the system was not identical, as far as we can tell, to local Heliopolitan religion⁷⁰³. It included gods originating elsewhere who continued to have strong links to other localities so that often Heliopolis appears to be more a place for convening than the permanent home of these gods. It was thus from the start an abstract system for thinking about the internal relationship of the regions of Egypt, their gods and mythology.

While using Heliopolis to interpret the individual myths, the supra-regional mythological manuals also attest to the importance for including every single nome in the system. Again this could have its origin in an earlier system of cultic co-operation between the different cult centers of Egypt, but in the Late and Greco-Roman periods and for the actual usage of the manuals another aspect is more important. When such a system of ritual and mythological relations has been established and consolidated, it can be detached from its ties to real-world geography and become a self-referential system that can be put to new uses. This appear to have happened quite early, in the First Intermediate Period at the latest, as geographical designations in rituals such as the pilgrimage to the holy places during the funerary ceremonies referred only to mytho-ritual mechanics and could be situated within the local necropolis or applied model scale to a small basin in front of the tomb⁷⁰⁴. It is characteristic of this system, as noted by Brunner, that the places are no longer defined by

⁷⁰¹ See e.g. the examples collected in Settgast, *Untersuchungen zu altägyptischen Bestattungsdarstellungen* (1963).

⁷⁰² While trends in which chapters are preferred and the ensembles in which they occur vary from place to place, geographical theological differences do not appear to have been an issue in the selection or editing of funerary texts. See for instance Hoffmeier, 'Are There Regionally-Based Theological Differences in the Coffin Texts?', *The World of the Coffin Texts* (1996), 45-54 and Morenz, 'Zu einem Beispiel schöpferischer Vorlagenarbeiten in den Sargtexten: Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte', *GM* 143 (1994), 109-111. For a thorough discussion on the question see Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 99-109.

⁷⁰³ For an example of this distinction in the Delta manual see above.

⁷⁰⁴ Assmann, *Death and Salvation* (2005), 305-206 and Hays, 'Funerary Rituals (Pharaonic Period)', *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2010).

their actual existence in a specific region in Egypt, but by the mythological and rituals processes taking place there⁷⁰⁵. Once the system was formed, rituals could invoke different holy sites as part of the linguistic framing devices to situate actions within the mythological complexes associated with that site. For instance, *The Dramatic Rammesseum Papyrus* places the rite of threshing corn in Letopolis to embed the rite in the battles between Horus and Seth that took place there⁷⁰⁶.

The realization that sites invoked in ritual texts should be seen primarily as part of the dynamics of that ritual and need not refer to real-life localities aids in the interpretation of these texts. Previously it has been noted that many places named in funerary literature are ambiguously situated and could refer to places in Egypt as well as in the Underworld⁷⁰⁷. However, when seen as part of a mythological system this ambiguity vanishes. When, e.g. Buto appears as the destination of the deceased in the Book of the Dead, then the primary referent for 'Buto' is neither a place in the underworld nor the Buto found in the Delta of this world. Regardless of the precise status and nature of the Osiris cult in Buto at the time the text was composed, the term should be understood as part of the system of ritual mythological language, as a shorthand reference to mythological events and rituals associated with Osiris that is utilized to aid in the ritual transformation of the deceased.

The study of this system is not identical with the cult-topographical approach of Hermann Kees, since that fails to distinguish between actual sites and their places in national mythology⁷⁰⁸. When focus is on the role of place within the collective memory as established in religious texts, it is not the political importance, nor in the final analysis local mythology that is important. Emphasis should rest on those characteristics of a place that entered the overall system⁷⁰⁹. An illustrative example of this is the role of the so called Sethian nomes in Egyptian mythology. Here it is obvious that the strife and hatred found in mythological and ritual texts is not transferrable to the relationship between Oxyrhynchos and its

⁷⁰⁵ Brunner, 'Zum Raumbegriff der Ägypter', *Studium Generale* 10 (1957), 612-620. This idea has been succinctly re-phrased by Assman who argues that the Egyptian cosmos was not spatially, but processually defined (Search for God in Ancient Egypt (2001), 73-74). For rituals as part of this system see e.g. the Edfu text studied by Derchain where each nome is characterized by a specific ritual 'Un manuel de géographie liturgique a Edfu', *CdE* 73 (1962), 31-65.

⁷⁰⁶ Sethe, *Dramatische texte zu altägyptischen mystereinspielen* (1928), 134-138.

⁷⁰⁷ See e.g. Assmann, *Death and Salvation* (2005), 233 for the Field of Reeds as variously located in the underworld and in the sacred precinct of Heliopolis.

⁷⁰⁸ For instance Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten*⁷ (1977). Much of the work done and many of the texts gathered are of course still relevant for this approach.

⁷⁰⁹ For an enlightening case study of Hermopolis see Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 67-115.

neighbors⁷¹⁰. Furthermore, it is improbable that Seth was worshipped in these nomes in the form that he appears in national mythology – at the very least we would expect a different mythology that interpreted the relationship between Seth and Osiris differently⁷¹¹. Another example is the late inclusion of Thebes in the system despite having been the political center in the Middle Kingdom and early New Kingdom

Despite the pronounced geographic embeddedness of Egyptian mythology, the question of mythic space has been given very little attention in recent years⁷¹². Even though Sethe's and Kees' political readings of religious texts have been discredited, attempts at geographical readings of Egyptian mythology are still dominated by questions of expanse of cults and regional influence.

Also the myth of the center, in the form of the primeval mound has long dominated the stage. It was primarily Mircea Eliade who defined and popularized the idea of a religious need to maintain relations to the center, understood as the point of contact of *the real*, the ontological sphere of the divine. The idea predates him and has its origins in the pan-babylonian and the ritual kingship discussions of the nature of the temple. As the primeval mound or the world mountain, the temple as centre is the focal point of creation, the first place to emerge from the flood, the first resting place of the creator, and afterwards the centre of communication between the profane and the sacred, spatially conceptualised as earth and sky. However, the universalism of this theory, as well as its specific manifestation in Mesopotamian culture has been doubted. In Egyptology, already deBuck's study of the concept of the primeval mound showed that it did not hold the privileged position given it by Egyptologists, and could be subjected to different interpretations⁷¹³.

⁷¹⁰ However mythology would probably be invoked in case of strife arising on other grounds as in the case reported by Plutarch, *De Iside* 72, of a quarrel between Oxyrhynchos and the neighboring Kynopolis (cf. Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 27).

⁷¹¹ See the discussion and sources in von Lieven, 'Seth ist im Recht, Osiris ist im Unrecht!', *ZÄS* 133 (2006), 141-150. However, unlike von Lieven, I cannot see that the mythology in these sources should constitute the approach of the Sethian nomes, since they at the most it partly vindicates Seth in giving him a reason for slaying Osiris while still remaining culpable for destroying the original pristine quality of the cosmos. So long as no local sources are found that deals with the question it remains pure speculation in what mold Seth was cast in these nomes.

⁷¹² See however Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 5-29, and 'Geographie als Struktur', *Altägyptische Weltsichten* (2008), 131-157. For an earlier study see Klimkeit, 'Spatial Orientation in Mythical Thinking as Exemplified in Ancient Egypt: Considerations toward a Geography of Religions', *History of Religions* 14/4 (1975), 266-281.

⁷¹³ For the lack of ancient Near Eastern support for the theory see Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (1972). Eliade's concept relies on a specific, and incidentally false, interpretation of the name of Enlil's temple in Nippur, the *Dur-An-Ki*, and his readings of several key myths has similarly been shown to both ignore and impute important details to bring them into accord with his ideas Cf. Smith, *To take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (1987), 1-23. For Egypt cf. DeBuck, *De egyptische voorstellingen betreffende den oerheuvel* (1922) and cf. Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne* (1994), 67-70.

Unfortunately the emphasis on Egyptian texts focussing on the primeval mound has resulted in a static image of mythic geography; the god and the world appear in one place and continue to do so in a self-contained perpetual movement. It is an image of mythic geography very much at odds with the texts which regularly defy the borders drawn by scholars between myths of different nomes. Whereas Sethe and Kees explained this discrepancy by textual redactions caused by direct pressure by the centres of political power on the periphery, newer studies instead tends toward placing the initiative for syncretism with the periphery: If provincial temples make references to the cults and gods of Heliopolis or Memphis, it is to leech of the prestige and age of these centres, be it because of ambition or for feelings of unworthiness.

To explain how different locales could also have their own primeval mounds, the idea of Late Period regionalism is often invoked: In the absence of a real political and religious centre each nome came to be regarded, in the eyes of the local inhabitants, as the centre of the cosmos and privileged point of contact with the gods⁷¹⁴. This theory stands and falls with the moot question of the date of the texts found in Late Period temples, as most of these can be linguistically dated to earlier periods, the ideas contained in them cannot be seen as exclusively belonging to the later periods. The theory is also discredited by a comprehensive reading of the texts, which side by side with temple claims to occupy the place of origin of the cosmos speaks of the primeval gods coming to the temple from other sites in Egypt.

The cosmogonies are a good place to start in an examination of mythical space, since these texts deal with the questions of sources, origins and centre and periphery at fore in the discussion. Earlier texts often locate the initial phases of creation in Heliopolis, but the texts tend to be short and allusive rather than narrative⁷¹⁵. In later periods cosmogonies are ampler and more complex, often fusing several myths in a single narrative or exposition. For example, the cosmogony found in the temple of Khonsu from the Ptolemaic period details a process involving both local and national gods and incorporates the cosmogonies of Heliopolis, Hermopolis and Memphis. According to the editors of this text, Richard Parker and Leonard Lesko the text is a local Ptolemaic interpretation of earlier material which serves⁷¹⁶

[...] to assert the importance of his [the local priest-scribe] own gods both by modifying the earlier beliefs and by syncretizing the newer Theban gods and the old gods from all the major cult centers of Egypt.

⁷¹⁴ See e.g. Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne* (1994), 295-296 and the remarks in Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (1982), 223-227.

⁷¹⁵ See Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne* (1994).

⁷¹⁶ Parker and Lesko, 'The Khonsu Cosmogony', *Fs. Edwards* (1988), 169.

Often this syncretizing process is seen as primarily dependent on politics, by associating and appropriating national important deities the local theology, and by extension, the local priests are aggrandized⁷¹⁷. However if this is the whole of the truth we may wonder at the necessity of having the gods come to Thebes from somewhere else in Egypt, as they do in the Khonsu cosmogony, instead of focusing all of creation at the site, from the primeval ocean to the present. Is this merely a concession to tradition because only limited deviation from time-tested myths was possible?

A similar situation is found in the Neith cosmogony from the temple of Esna. Here Neith arrives from Sais in the Delta, which is subsequently identified with Esna and the local mounds with the Delta sites of Pe and Dep. Sauneron reasons that it is a ritual text of the Saite period that originated in Sais, and which was afterwards adapted for use in Esna⁷¹⁸:

De cette dualité d'attributions géographiques résulte un curieux compromis [...] On peut suivre, de manière remarquable, au long de ces deux textes (n^{os} 206 et 207) les méthodes syncrétistes des théologiens, apprécier à l'occasion leur habileté, mais aussi noter leurs inconséquences.

In his discussion of how this syncretism functions, Sauneron further points out that the Heliopolitan, the Memphite, and the Hermopolitan systems are all scholarly abstractions that were not shared by the Egyptians themselves since they did not perceive a geographical border to the influences of the god or the different mythological traditions. He further makes the pertinent observation that far too often analyses of Egyptian religious texts operating with these models results in a view of the texts as incongruent jigsaws pieced together from disparate ideas and text fragments originating in different places⁷¹⁹.

Here again the value of distinguishing mythological language and the system of mythological geography from the actual history and geography of Egypt becomes apparent. In some respects Sauneron has a valid point but he does not address the question of why the Egyptians still linked different modes of creation to particular localities. For instance in the Esna cosmogony, where the parts of the cosmogony dealing with the action of the Ogdoad is explicitly located in Hermopolis. Here Sauneron falls back on the disavowed scholarly abstractions and hypothesises an influence or loan from Hermopolitan texts, incompletely expunged by the ancient scribe⁷²⁰. Instead of positing such an omission in the

⁷¹⁷ See e.g. Cruz-Urbe, 'The Khonsu Cosmogony', *JARCE* 31 (1994), 188-189. On pages 185-186 Cruz-Urbe notes many of the characteristics of the cosmogonies treated here but opts for a political and historical interpretation.

⁷¹⁸ Sauneron, *Esna 5* (1962), 251, cf. von Lieven, *Die Himmel über Esna* (2000) 101 n. 333, who operates with a New Kingdom (?) original from Sais, later elaborated with proto-Demotic additions in the 26th dynasty or later.

⁷¹⁹ Sauneron, *Esna 5* (1962), 273-274.

⁷²⁰ Sauneron, *Esna 5* (1962), 262.

text it we should rather approach the mentions of the different localities as utilizations of the mythological geography found in the priestly manuals.

In these manuals different locales are brought into relation by paradigmatic and syntagmatic mechanisms. In the paradigmatic different nomes or temples are equated with each other or a local temple or ritual etc. said to be similar to what is found in another nome. Places are also associated in syntagmatic chains in which deities travel from one nome to another. Thus in the Tebtunis Mythological Manual and the *Mythological Manual of the Delta* gods are often said to travel between different locales. This pattern is also found in the temple monographs where we often hear of a god 'arriving' (*spr*) at the site of the local temple⁷²¹. In temple of Tod, a temple monograph describes how Re's search for his enemies led him to tour Egypt with Thoth as his side. Whenever they arrived at a place, Thoth would establish the characteristics of the place by his divine intelligence. In this way it is the arrival of the god at a place and his actions there that leads to the differentiation of the place from all others, in what is equal to its creation⁷²². This mode of creation is known from other types of texts as well. In the Underworld Books, Re's arrival at the different hours of the underworld illuminates the individual hours and caverns, dispersing the darkness enveloping them. When he leaves, the region sinks back into darkness and potential being⁷²³. It is also found as a characteristic of the cosmology of the temple, where the local creator god each morning arrives from his nightly abode, bringing the cosmos defined by the temple into renewed being⁷²⁴. In the version of heavenly cow in Book of Fayum, Fayum becomes the place of refuge for the sun god Re, when he escapes from the rebellion against him in the Nile valley. The watery marshes become his resting place and the place where heaven and earth are separated, but not the place of origin for the cosmos⁷²⁵.

In the frequent motif of the arriving god, we thus find affirmed that the discourse of the centre and the primeval hill is just one possible way of framing creation in mythological terms. In the 'Arriving god', the powers of creation always come from somewhere else, a foreign place, from which it arrives of its own volition or is brought by the actions of the

⁷²¹ *Esna* n° 58, 4, 60, 1-2. *pJumilhac* 8, 10; 11, 4; 5tb, 3; 6tb, 1. *Kom Ombo* n° 613, 1, 4. The verb also used in cosmogonies. In The long Edfu cosmogony it appears three times (182, 2; 183, 5; 184, 4), though there the preferred verb is *s3h*.

⁷²² *Tod*, n° 188 See the discussion above.

⁷²³ Wiebach-Koepke, *Phänomenologie der Bewegungsabläufe im Jenseitskonzept* (2003).

⁷²⁴ The verb is also used in cosmogonies: in the long Edfu cosmogony it appears three times (182, 2; 183, 5; 184, 4) though there the preferred verb is *s3h*. In the Neith cosmogony Neith arrives at Esna and her creation of the world is equal to her arrival from Sais in the Delta (*Esna* n° 206, 12-15; 77, 16; 163; 18). The idea can be expressed with other verbs of motion, often chosen for their connotative value: in the temple of Khonsu in Karnak, Khonsu travels (*hns*) to Thebes bringing the cosmic egg that was created in Djeme (Mendel, *Die kosmogonischen Inschriften* (2003), 74).

⁷²⁵ *Das Buch vom Fayum* (1991), 314-319.

gods. This can be viewed as a mythological interpretation of actual interconnection between different temples, where priests gods and rituals and constantly being exchanged in festivals⁷²⁶, or as an illustration of one of the functions of mythological space as a metaphor for ontological distances⁷²⁷.

In the language of cognitive theory, the basic metaphor is that 'creation is a journey'⁷²⁸. The goal of the deities' journey is always stated whereas their point of departure is sometimes left out or placed in zones far removed from the ordered world of the Egyptians when focus is on the initial phases of creation. However mostly we find a movement from somewhere, by reason of which the myth becomes related to later phases of creation, what is perhaps better termed *transformation*. For instance, in the Delta Manual, Horit's rescue of the eye of Re from Seth in Hebenu and her journey to Bubastis involves a transformation of the Eye so that in this myth the healing of the eye becomes equivalent to the journey itself⁷²⁹.

Both aspects of creation could be expressed in Egyptian using verb *hpr*. The difference between arriving from somewhere and arriving from nowhere corresponds to the two uses or translations of *hpr* which can both signify creation, in the sense of actualization of a hidden potential, and change or transformation from one actualized state to another dependent on the adjuncts of the verb⁷³⁰.

The notion of the arriving god could be used side-by-side and combined with notion of the center. The different cosmogonies in the Edfu temple show how different texts adopted

⁷²⁶ The basic festival rite of the procession is always a movement from one temple to another, and may involve covering considerable distance and crossing borders between individual nomes. For examples of actual and ideal connections between temples see e.g. the articles collected in Beinlich & Dolinska (eds.), *8. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between Temples* (2010). Cf. for ancient Greece Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (1992), 70: 'Arrival demands travel, which can serve in myth as a linkage between different centres'.

⁷²⁷ This use is related to the ritual use of space in which movement similarly becomes a way of ritually embodying ontological transformations, especially when combined with crossing thresholds doorways etc. The Late Period temples are eloquent an architectural version of this since the route from the pylon to the sanctuary is simultaneously a journey from the actual world to the potential realm of pre-creation (see e.g. Finnestad, 'Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods', in: Schafer (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt* (1997), 185-237).

⁷²⁸ Similar to the well known metaphor 'Life is a journey'. For the importance and structuring qualities of such metaphors see the works by Lakoff and Johnson, e.g. *Metaphors We Live By*² (2003). For an Egyptological application of the theory on the bodily conceptions in the Coffin Texts cf. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009).

⁷²⁹ The association or even identity between journey and healing is clearly expressed by the Ferryman spells of the Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead. Cf. also the remarks by Assmann on the 'topomorphic' and 'biomorphic' modes as two complementary metaphors for the ontological transformation of the deceased in Egyptian funerary texts ('Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt', *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* (1989)).

⁷³⁰ For the meaning of *hpr* cf. Buchberger, *Transformation und Transformat* (1993). Despite the title of the book, Buchberger is skeptical about the traditional understanding of *hpr* transformation or change in many passages, and instead emphasizes the aspect of coming into being. For translations of *hpr* as 'change, develop, evolve' see Allen, *Genesis in Egypt* (1988), 29.

different approaches according to their function. The long Edfu cosmogony, *The Enumeration of the Mounds of the earliest primeval era*⁷³¹, has god arriving to create the cosmos. His place of origin is not noted, but the different places he arrives at are all toponyms found in the vicinity of the Edfu temple and include the temple as well. Even though the source of creation is ultimately found elsewhere, or to be more precise: nowhere, given the non-spatial character of the potential from which the creator emerges, Edfu is still the center of the cosmogony as far back as it can be followed. The Edfu cosmogony is also characterised by its scarcity of references to the system of mythology found in the mythological manuals and funerary texts in which different localities and their deities cooperate to achieve a goal, be it the creation of the world or the rejuvenation of the deceased. A few times Re and Tanen are named, but without any topographical epithets.

Finnestad has argued for the text as being used in a ritual recital, which could have taken place during a festival which celebrated the local cosmogony⁷³². The placement of the text on the inner side of the enclosure wall supports such an interpretation since it is found alongside the texts for the Triumph of Horus celebrated at 21. Mechir or 27. Tybi⁷³³ which were probably recited as part of this festival⁷³⁴. For establishing the precise function of the cosmogony a more close analysis of the text is needed since it probably includes both a main text and a running commentary, the status of which is not fully understood⁷³⁵. If recited this would probably have taken place the outer courtyard, which became semi-accessible for other than the main staff during the major festivals. So despite being a very difficult and obscure text, it was not in any way esoteric in the meaning of being reserved for the high priests.

This semi-public placement of the long cosmogony and its emphasis on local geography can be contrasted with a shorter text found inside the temple proper, on the inner wall of the pronaos⁷³⁶. This text is appended to the speech of the *šbtyw*-creator gods in a ritual scene, and has close parallels to the longer cosmogony. However here we find another pattern of mythological interpretation in which in their origin is located in Herakleopolis and they are called the children of Tateten and Chemet and He who is south of his wall, a

⁷³¹ *Edfou* VI, 181, 5-186, 10. See Finnestad, *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator: On the Cosmological and Iconological Values of the Temple of Edfu* (1985) and Kurth, 'Über den Ursprung des Tempels von Edfu', *Religion und Philosophie im Alten Ägypten, Fs. Derchain* (1991), 189-202 with further references.

⁷³² *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator* (1985), 68-74.

⁷³³ For the discussion of the dates see Egberts, 'Mythos und Fest', 4. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Feste im Tempel* (1998), 17-29.

⁷³⁴ Cf. Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 295 with reference to Alliot, *Culte d'Horus* (1954), 680.

⁷³⁵ Cf. Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 296.

⁷³⁶ *Edfou* IV, 357-25-359,9 translated in Kurth, *Treffpunkt der Götter* (1998), 185-187.

common epithet of Ptah as well as a geographical reference, i.e. precisely the kind of topographical epithet that was avoided in the long cosmogony. The *šbtyw*-creators not only have their origin in Herakleopolis but are also said to return to complete their creation and their mummies are placed in the House of the Ram, a temple in Herakleopolis. This temple is then implicitly, by *parallelismus membrorum*, equated with the Mesen sanctuary of the Edfu temple.

In this parallel version of the local cosmogony, creation is associated with larger mythological patterns. As in the mythological manuals this is done partly syntagmatically: the gods arrive from Herakleopolis, and partly paradigmatically: the temple of Edfu is identified with temples in Herakleopolis. The difference between the two versions is caused by their different functions. In the festival version focus was on the local cosmos of Edfu and on the visible aspects of creation as it manifested itself there⁷³⁷. The version on the pronaos was reserved for high ranking priests by virtue of its placement and drew upon the full mythological systems that these priests were familiar with and used.

This discussion of different modes of mythical geography supports the view of the mythological manuals as focused on associations and interconnections. The different nomes are connected by gods traveling from one district to another or by the nomes being equated. In the same way that the different generations of gods fit the same mythical patterns, the different nomes can also be seen as variations of patterns found in other nomes. Even though the manuals focus on the important nomes, no district appears to have been accorded a status as the absolute point of origin for everything.

Thus the relations between nomes constituted in the mythological manuals should be seen as part of the training in mythological thought required of priests. Unfortunately due to the incomplete state of preserved manuscripts we are deprived from what would have been a unique chance to see one version of the system of mythological geography fully unfolded. Nevertheless, the many connections drawn between different nomes urge us to recognize mythological geography as an important aspect of mythological interpretations; an impression that is reinforced when we turn to cosmogonies where different localities are referred to highlight specific aspects or modalities of the process of creation. Likewise the different genres of funerary literature make ample use of the system of mythological geography.

⁷³⁷ For the emphasis on vision in this text cf. Finnestad, *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator* (1985), 90-91.

A striking example of the desire for inclusion in the system of mythological geography and ritual mechanics and the creative use of it is found in *The Book for Traversing Eternity*⁷³⁸, a text that was probably composed in the Saite period, addressing the deceased and urging him to participate in festivals in three of the great cult centers of Egypt. The structure of the text is still debated, but according to Herbin it is structured by the sacred year and can be divided into several cycles of festivals while Assmann instead finds a geographical structure of 39 festivals in Abydos, 39 in Thebes and 78 in Memphis⁷³⁹. Earlier interpretations saw the text as a guide to the otherworld, i.e. viewing the places as otherworldly; however since none of the festivals take place in the netherworld, Jan Assmann has instead interpreted the text as a key text for understanding changes in Late Period funerary beliefs. According to Assmann the Egyptians of this period ceased to seek: 'divine presence in the afterworld, but rather in the religious centers of their land'. Thus Assmann sees a shift in focus from underworld locations to locations in Egypt, an interpretation that retains the emphasis on actual geography and in using a ritual text as a source on beliefs. In my opinion this emphasis bars a proper understanding of the text which should be seen as revolving around mythological and ritual systems.

Apart from the large number of festivals which already reveal a desire for a system and completeness, what sets this text apart from other funerary literature is the choice for an allusive or veiled style of reference to the festivals. Instead of simply naming the festival in question reference is instead made to a key element of this festival or similarly - knowledge of which is required to decode the text. Rather than being an incidental aspect of the text, I believe this demonstration of mastery of the ritual mythological systems of relations established throughout the centuries, is the key to a proper understanding of the text. What is at stake here is not really a shift between seeking divinity in the underworld or in religious centers, but instead an added emphasis on knowledge of the traditional sacred geography and ritual cycles alongside an *intentional* arcanisation of this tradition⁷⁴⁰. The text reflects

⁷³⁸ Herbin, *Le Livre de parcourir l'éternité* (1994) - with an introduction by Jan Assmann. For a new translation and commentary of the text see Smith, *Traversing Eternity* (2009).

⁷³⁹ Herbin *Le Livre de parcourir l'éternité* (1994) and Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (2005), 232. For a skeptical view of Herbin's theory see the review by Quack in *OLZ* 91 (1996), 155-157 and his comments in 'Geographie als Struktur', *ÄAT* 68 (2008), 133-135.

⁷⁴⁰ For the forerunners of this text see Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (2005), 225-234, who looks at the Middle Kingdom focus on Abydos as establishing a theme of the deceased's participation in divine festivals. Assmann rightly stresses that occurrences of funerary stela etc. outside of Abydos but with reference to Abydos, should be viewed as usages of this theme and understood as part of *local* ritual practices, i.e. when Abydos is referred to in a Theban setting it is not because the Theban deceased wishes to go to Abydos, but because the pattern for interaction between the deceased, his living relatives and the gods, that is associated with Abydos is invoked. While this interpretation

upon a desire to become part of the ritual and mythological tradition and its efficacious transformational power, and since this at the time the text was composed was largely a part of a textual universe, access to it became, as is also seen in *The Book of Thoth* discussed below, scholarly and a matter of gaining and demonstrating knowledge of a restricted and exclusive system.

The importance of Osiris and Isis in the manuals

Not all members of the Heliopolitan Ennead are accorded equal attention in the manuals; the main characters of the Osiris cycle, Osiris, Seth, Horus and Isis receive the lion's share of the texts. In this a historical development can perhaps be detected, as the earlier mythological manual, the Delta manual, uses a much wider repertoire of myths than the Tebtunis manual. However this question is at least as thorny as the origin and status of the Heliopolitan Ennead. Again much rests on the proposed datings of central texts, such as the nome lists the mythological manuals themselves and the Book of the Temple. According to the latter, every temple is supposed to hold a precinct dedicated to Osiris and to employ priests maintaining his cult⁷⁴¹. The Osirian emphasis found in the priestly manuals is closely connected to the system of Osirian relics, the date of which is also uncertain. In his study of the relics, Beinlich opts for an inception of the system in the 26th dynasty, but on slim evidence and mostly debatable *ex silentio* arguments⁷⁴².

Only slightly easier to assess is the import of Osiris and Isis for the Egyptian priests of the Greco-Roman era. Here the emphasis on these gods appears to have reflected contemporary cult and theology to a large degree. However for some areas the focus on the gods of the Osirian cycle must have remained a heuristic device; in Kom Ombo and Esna the monographs only occasionally mention these two gods and the role of Osiris is instead filled by Geb and Re⁷⁴³. And interesting example of the appliance or non-appliance of Osiris to local mythology and ritual is found in the first century BC Demotic Narrative *The Struggle for the Benefice of Amun*, in which a priest of Horus presents an Osirian interpretation of the

could be extended to the Book of Traversing Eternity, Assmann here opts for a Late Period radical shift. For the concept of arcanisation see the appendix.

⁷⁴¹ Quack, 'Les normes pour le culte d'Osiris. Les indications du Manual du Temple sur les lieux et les prêtres osiriens', in: Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millenaire av. J.-C.* (2010), 23-32.

⁷⁴² See above for a discussion of the dating criteria used.

⁷⁴³ For a quick overview of the theology of these temples cf. Sternberg, *Mythische Motive* (1985).

Amun's barque during the Theban decade festival⁷⁴⁴. To prove that he is entitled to the god's treasures, he identifies Amun on his way towards the primeval gods of the western bank with Horus on his way to Osiris. Pharaoh, who had promised his son the treasure is mortified and consults Amun in his barque, but to no avail since the god's oracle agrees that the Horus priest should receive the treasure. Since this is narrative, which often uses plots and motifs from religious texts, it cannot be taken as evidence of a general political use of mythological interpretation. However since even Amun himself apparently agrees to an identification which leaves him and his priesthood inferior to Horus⁷⁴⁵, the text does suggest that for some regions at least Osiris, Horus and Isis, had begun to be viewed as the primary gods of whom the rest of the pantheon was only emanations.

The question of the ascendancy of Osiris and Isis in late antiquity deserves more attention than can be lavished upon it here⁷⁴⁶. The mythological manuals appear to fit into the general trend of replacing other goddesses with Isis and focusing on Osiris, but are not in themselves strong evidence of this. If the systems of mythological interpretation proposed for the manuals here is true, then they could have been used both as heuristic tools in a polytheistic and syncretic religion in which the mythological language and system was primarily a source of ritual power and as testimonies of the primacy of Osiris in a more theistic inclined worldview, such as found in the larger Greek speaking world in the form of the Isis aretologies, and such works as Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, where the primacy of Osiris and Isis is a given.

The Book of the Temple: Mythological manuals, mythological interpretation and the priestly curriculum

Apart from the insights that can be derived from comparing and contrasting the mythological manuals to other texts from the temple library containing mythological information and to similar texts from elsewhere, the Tebtunis library offers two meta-texts that contain passages dealing with the nature and acquisition of mythological knowledge

⁷⁴⁴ pSpiegelberg G,1-2, 5, cf. the translation and notes by Hoffmann in Hoffmann and Quack, *Antologie der demotischen Literatur* (2007), 88-107.

⁷⁴⁵ The case is not entirely clear as Amun in pSpiegelberg 10, 18 apparently gives the opposite answer. Cf. Quack, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III: Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*² (2009), 65, who explains this as caused by a combination of different motifs in the story.

⁷⁴⁶ See e.g. Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millenaire av. J.-C.* (2010).

within a temple context. The first is the Book of the Temple, a normative text that describes both the physical layout of the ideal temple and its internal organization, including the duties of the different classes of priests working in the temple⁷⁴⁷.

The text is attested in about forty different manuscripts all of which date to the Roman period. The majority are written in Hieratic, with seven or so manuscripts in Demotic translation. At least part of the book was also translated into Greek. The language of the hieratic text is Middle Egyptian which points to an earlier date for the composition⁷⁴⁸. Preserved page numbers in some manuscripts provides a minimal length for text as 24 pages of 30 lines each.

Luckily, the section of the Book of the Temple that deals with mythological knowledge can be almost wholly reconstructed from the surviving fragments. In the section on the duties of the schoolmaster (*imy-r3 sb3wt*) a curriculum for the education of the higher priesthood is found⁷⁴⁹. For entrance into this class demands on descent and scribal abilities are in place. The Schoolmaster examines the writings of the children of the *hm-ntr* priest, lector priests and other high ranking priest in order to select those suited to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. Those selected are then trained in the art of singing and the rules and regulations that govern conduct within the temple and the correct performance of rituals. The children of the highest ranking priests, the *hmw-ntr*, then receive additional training in priestly disciplines divided into four phases of which the first two are particularly relevant for the mythological manuals⁷⁵⁰:

Vorschrift, die dem Oberlehrer aufgetragen wurde, die Kinder der Propheten anzuleiten, um sie in die Gottesworte eindringen zu lassen, zu veranlassen, dass sie [alle] Gebräuche (*n.t-ḥ.w*) von Ober- und Unterägypten ergreifen und alle Spezifika des jeweiligen Gaus, sowie alle Gebräuche beim ersten Mal.

Sie sind es, welche "das Herz empfangen" als Jüngling in seinem Moment, ohne willkürlich zu [verändern,] die Festrolle getreu erhalten, die Gebräuche festigen, die ihre alltägliche Lehre sind, die Schwierigkeiten aller Schriften erklären beim zweiten Mal.

The first phase consists of linguistic training in the *mdw-ntr* 'the words of god', which here probably designates the script, language and contents of the priestly manuals⁷⁵¹. Of special importance is the acquisition of the traditions of the nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt, and

⁷⁴⁷ Quack, 'Das Buch vom Tempel und verwandte Texte', *ARG 2* (2000), 1-20, *idem*, 'Organiser le culte idéal', *BSFÉ* 160 (2004), 9-25.

⁷⁴⁸ This linguistic dating is backed up by the book's use of a four phyle system, which provides a *terminus ante quem* for the text in the phyle reform of the Canopus-decree of 237 BC which added a fifth phyle (Quack, 'Das Buch vom Tempel und verwandte Texte', *ARG 2* (2000), 10-11).

⁷⁴⁹ Quack, 'Die Dienstanweisung des Oberlehrers im Buch vom Tempel', in: Beinlich et al. (eds.), 5. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung Würzburg, 23.-26. September 1999*, *ÄAT* 33/3 (2002), 159-171.

⁷⁵⁰ Translation from Quack, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵¹ For some aspects of *mdw-ntr* see Saleh, 'Plural Sense and Cultural Aspects of the Ancient Egyptian *mdw-ntr*', *BIFAO* 68 (1969), 15-38.

special knowledge of the specific nomes to which the priests belonged. These two categories of knowledge correspond exactly to the information contained in the supra-regional mythological manuals and the local mythological manuals. The second phase of the advanced learning is devoted to rituals. Despite uncertainty as to the meaning of the phrase ‘das Herz empfangen’, it is clear that knowledge about ritual was twofold. The first kind aimed at preserving the ritual tradition and demanded that the priests could perform the ritual correctly without inadvertently changing it due to ignorance. Simplified, it could be said that this was practical knowledge concerned with the correct form and performance of the ritual. The second kind of knowledge is related primarily to the hermeneutics of Egyptian rituals, and demands some discussion.

The verb *wh^ε*⁷⁵² is found in a variety of scholarly texts to designate different ways of gaining access to the texts. In Egyptian, *wh^ε* is used for a number of intellectual processes that are derived from the root meaning of the word ‘to loosen’. When used as ‘interpretation’ it is enlightening to contrast it with the word for utterance *ts*, derived from the verbal root with the meaning ‘to tie something together’, here in the sense of words (*mdw*) tied together into a coherent sentence (*ts-mdw*). In the two words *ts* and *wh^ε* we find a theory of communication *in nuce* where the message tied together by the speaker is loosened by the addressee to get at meaning of the message. In practice, however, we only find *wh^ε* with *ts* as the object in metaphorical expressions with the meaning ‘to resolve problems’, and never in the linguistic sense, where *wh^ε* is primarily used with other objects⁷⁵³:

⁷⁵² *Wb* 1, 348.3-349.15

⁷⁵³ Less common, but still relevant, are the following uses:

wh^ε drf : “Interpreting hieroglyphic signs”: *Urk. IV*, 969, 14 where the mayor of Thinis Antef is called: ‘The excellent scribe who interprets hieroglyphs’. Cf. here the title of the lexical pCarlsberg 7 where *wh^ε* is also used (Iversen, *Papyrus Carlsberg No. VII: Fragments of a Hieroglyphic Dictionary* (1958), 13-14)

In the following I ignore the role played by the hieroglyphic script in itself and its importance as a source of mythological interpretation. However, it should be noted that, at least by the Ptolemaic era, the use of mythological interpretation was occasionally extended to the hieroglyphic writing itself cf. Kurth, ‘Die Lautwerte der Hieroglyphen’, *ASAE* 69 (1983), 307-308.

wh^ε snty : “Interpreting (ground) plans”. As far as I know this phrase is only found once, In the Daily Temple Ritual chapter 22, where the priest who enters the sanctuary asks Amon: ‘May you open for me the doors of heaven, may you open for me the doors of the earth and *wh^ε snty* of the temple for me that I may see the god’ (Moret, *Rituel du culte divin journalier* (1902), 79-82). *wh^ε snty* may be a variant of *wh^ε w3w3t* found in temple construction scenes, however, it is worth considering whether it could be a use of *wh^ε* as ‘interpret’. In that case it would mean that the priest asks Amon for an interpretation or revelation of the ground plan of the temple. Along with the access granted by the opening of the temple doors, the interpretation of the temple plans would allow for ritual access to the different cosmic realms that the temple embodied. *snty* is elsewhere attested in this larger sense cf. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium* (1968), 48.

*wh̄c̄ sšt3*⁷⁵⁴: ‘Interpreting inaccessible (texts)’

*wh̄c̄ itnw*⁷⁵⁵: ‘Interpreting difficult passages’

The latter is the most common and found for instance in Papyrus Anastasi I, where Hori taunts his colleague saying that he is a scribe: ‘who has interpreted the difficult passages of the chronicles (*wh̄c̄ itnw gnwt*) as the one who made them’⁷⁵⁶. In the address to the living on stela Louvre C 232: ‘(you) who have penetrated into the archives of the Library and interpret the difficult passages of the souls of Re (*wh̄c̄ itnw b3w r̄c̄*) (...) who interpret the difficult passage (*wh̄c̄ itnw*)’⁷⁵⁷. The phrase could be slightly varied as on a statue of Amenhotep son of Hapu (CG 583), where Amenhotep says: ‘Furthermore I was initiated (*bs*) into the god’s book that I might see the glorifications of Thoth and become learned in their mysteries. I explained all their difficulties (*pg3.n.i itnw nb*) so that I was consulted concerning all their matters’⁷⁵⁸.

As Alexandra von Lieven has noted we should distinguish between different kinds of interpretation⁷⁵⁹. The first is mainly philological and is the translation of older texts into younger stages of the Egyptian language. This was necessitated by the development of the Egyptian language, especially in the verbal system, that led to problems in understanding older texts. The translations that have survived are all from Middle Egyptian to Demotic, apart from a single Middle Egyptian text translated into Late Egyptian or Proto Demotic. The latter text, *the Ritual for Averting the Raging One*, has interlinear translations and is given the title⁷⁶⁰: ‘The Interpretations of the inaccessible (language) of the Ritual for Averting the Raging One’.

The phrase *wh̄c̄ itnw* is also used for the priestly onomasticon from the temple library of Tebtunis⁷⁶¹, but here it is uncertain whether it refers to the general text that orders and classifies a wide range of phenomena, or to the running supralinear additions in demotic and proto Coptic that provided the reader with both translation and a pronunciation aid.

⁷⁵⁴ Urk. VI, 61,10

⁷⁵⁵ Wb 1, 146.3; 348.12.

⁷⁵⁶ Fischer-Elfert, *Die satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I* (1986), 26.

⁷⁵⁷ Gardiner, ‘House of Life’, *JEA* 24 (1938), 172-173

⁷⁵⁸ Varille, *Inscriptions concernant l'architecte Amenhotep, fils de Hapou* (1968), 36 – Text 13 line 12

⁷⁵⁹ Von Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne* (2007), 258-267.

⁷⁶⁰ Urk. VI, 61,10. Cf. Schott, *Die Deutung der Geheimnisse des Rituals für die Abwehr des Bösen* (1954), 143-237.

⁷⁶¹ Osing, *The Carlsberg Papyri 2: Hieratische Papyri Aus Tebtunis I* (1998), 68.

According to von Lieven (*Grundriss* (2007), 263-264) commentaries should be divided into primary and secondary comments, in which the first are those comments that are already found in the original text, and secondary those added in the course of the text’s transmission. According to her, texts that explain or provide aetiologies for sacred phenomena, such as the mythological manual, are not commentaries in themselves. While this criterion is important when trying to establish genres and look at different modes of textual transmission it is less crucial for the present study.

Translations are often accompanied by commentaries which can be seen as another kind of *whꜥ* or interpretation. These commentaries are mostly philological in character, but seamlessly grow into commentaries that are more interpretative. An example is the use of the phrases *ky-dd* and *ky-sp* ‘another saying’, ‘variant’, which served to introduce semantically interesting variants of a text found when collating papyri for copying. However, apart from its purpose in text editing, the phrase was also used to introduce and add divergent interpretations. An example of this is found in the papyrus Jumilhac as part of the mythological interpretation of the Imiut-relic. Here *ky-sp* serves to introduce a whole paragraph which looks at the Imiut from a different angle⁷⁶². The most extreme case of this usage is found in Book of the Dead chapter 17 where the main text is interspersed with questions and answers, most of which have variants introduced by *ky-dd*.

Even though this spell is one of the most analyzed religious texts from ancient Egypt it is still worth reviewing for the present study⁷⁶³. Apart from the occasional interjection in other ritual texts, Book of the Dead chapter 17 along with its precursor Coffin Texts spell 335 is one of the only ritual texts with surviving commentary. The text is basically a monologue in which the speaker identifies himself with a range of deities, occasionally and mostly in the second half of the text, this is combined with admonitions to the gods for protection. In this it resembles many other texts found in the funerary corpus⁷⁶⁴, but what sets it apart is its running commentary.

Since The Book of the Temple includes interpretation of ritual texts as one of the mandatory subjects for the education of higher priesthood, we may infer that commentaries or interpretations must have existed for a number of religious texts. For some reason such a commented text entered the funerary corpus. This novelty was perhaps due to the desire to incorporate the prerequisite knowledge for using a spell in the spell itself⁷⁶⁵. In the Coffin

⁷⁶² pJumilhac 12, 22-13, 10.

⁷⁶³ For the commentary see Rössler-Köhler, ‘Text oder Kommentar’, in: Assmann & Gladigow (eds), *Text und Kommentar* (1995), 111-139.

⁷⁶⁴ For the pattern see Assmann, *Death and Salvation* (2005), 241. I cannot follow Rössler-Köhler, *ibid* 113, in her characterization of the text as very unusual. The text has also been viewed as a catechism (Goedicke, ‘Das ägyptische Credo’, *SAK* 27 (1999), 87-106) or as an initiatory interrogation (Assmann, ‘Tod und Initiation im altägyptischen Totenglauben’, *Ägyptische Geheimnisse* (2004), 146), but these speculations are as far as I can see, unfounded.

⁷⁶⁵ What singled this precise spell out from others may have been accident and circumstance that set a precedent or it might be because this precisely this text was the object of extensive study and interpretation at the time of the composition of the Coffin Texts. The title given the spell in the Coffin Texts: ‘Spell for coming forth by day from the necropolis’ is very generic and does not hint at any special ritual use. In the Book of the Dead version, the title has been greatly expanded and includes references to the Senet-game but this probably reflects a later ritual usage prompted by the veneration of the text rather than its original purpose. In this it could perhaps be compared with the *Book of the Heavenly cow*, see appendix below. The reference to the Senet game is already present in the *Nachschrift* on one Middle Kingdom sarcophagus T1Be (CT IV, 326a-k), which anticipates the

Text examples, the spell is found both with commentary and without, and the number of comments vary from text to text, though the general trend is towards a larger amount of and more fixed commentary, culminating in Book of the Dead version where both the number of commentaries and how they are introduced are fixed. The Coffin Text version display great variety in the interpretations, including some that did not make it through to the Book of the Dead⁷⁶⁶. The different coffin text versions and their varying interpretations and the tendency to add to the text in its commentary once these had begun to be written down, tell us that what was at stake was not knowing *the* correct mythological interpretation but more to demonstrate a general ability to interpret ritual texts and that this process was open ended⁷⁶⁷

If we go through the mythological interpretations offered by this text is seen to revolve almost exclusively around the Heliopolitan Ennead, with special focus on Re, Osiris and Horus. The interpretations appear to be of two kinds. The first explicates the referent for an epithet as in this example from the Book of the Dead⁷⁶⁸:

I am yesterday, I know tomorrow.

What is this? Concerning yesterday: It is Osiris. Concerning tomorrow: It is Re on the day on which the enemies of the Lord of All are slaughtered and on which his son Horus is made regent. Variant (*ky-dd*): It is the day of 'We are established', after his father, Re, ordered this burial of Osiris.

In these lines the flow of time mastered by the speaker is interpreted as the succession of Re, Osiris and Horus. Another kind of interpretation is found when an already named god or ritual is re-interpreted⁷⁶⁹:

I am Min in his procession; I have placed the two feathers on my head.

What is this? Concerning Min: It is Horus who rescues his father. Concerning his procession: It is his birth. Concerning the two feathers on his forehead: It is because Isis and Nephtys moved after they had placed themselves on his head when they were as the two mourners. Look: they have remained on him. Variant: It is the two great uraei on his father, Atum's forehead. Variant: They are his two eyes, the two feathers on his head.

Both kinds of interpretations are found in the range from the obvious to the most obscure and often add to the complexity of the text. Thus, in the words of Jan Assmann⁷⁷⁰:

introduction in BD 17. For the ritual use of board games see Piccione, 'The Gaming Episode in the Tale of Setne Khamwas', *For His Ka. Gs. Baer* (1994), 197-204, and for the use of (pictorial) objects in rituals in general Eschweiler, *Bildzauber im alten Ägypten* (1994). For the title given in the Book of the Dead as a general summary of all things desired in the afterlife see Rössler-Köhler, *ibid*, 113.

⁷⁶⁶ Rössler-Köhler, *ibid*, 115.

⁷⁶⁷ A parallel phenomenon is found in the interrogation spells, where different attestations of a single spell on the same coffin occasionally display variant mythological identifications, cf. Bickel, 'D'un monde à l'autre: le thème du passeur et de sa barque dans la pensée funéraire', in: Bickel (ed.), *D'un monde à l'autre* (2004), 91-117. For the Book of the Dead spell 17 see also the comments along similar lines by Hornung, *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter* (1979), 424.

⁷⁶⁸ Naville, *Das Aegyptische Totenbuch der XVIII. Bis XX. Dynastie II* (1886), 35-37.

⁷⁶⁹ Naville, *Das Aegyptische Totenbuch der XVIII. Bis XX. Dynastie II* (1886), 41-43.

The problem of these glosses is that they operate on exactly the same level as the “main text”. Nothing is “translated” into another language level or conceptual world. Equally nothing is explained. Only possible references are produced.

Assmann’s characterisation of these comments are apt, though the ‘problem’ only arises if we expect the glosses to translate the spells into something else, that is something meaningful outside its ritual context. This is not only the case with Egyptian ritual texts, but a common denominator of interpretation of religious texts found in many cultures, the scholars of which have often noted its lack of explicative power⁷⁷¹. In the discussion on aetiologies and puns above we noted that they were ‘magical’ in nature, and should not necessarily be viewed as explanations but more as means of making associations, that is a source of ritual power. Thus the meaning the comments impart to the ritual is not the meaning of the ritual as such, but a linguistic device that should be judged within the special rules that govern ritual semantics and efficacy⁷⁷². So Assmann’s characterisation of the comments in BD 17 can be accepted but with the modification that what is seen by him as problems is exactly what these comments intended.

Furthermore, it is also worth considering whether there is not, after all, some sort of additional meaning behind the commentaries and interpretations besides the need for further referents. If this was all that was intended it is curious that the interpretation mostly focus on the Heliopolitan Ennead. Instead, it seems obvious that the interpretations operate with the same kind of mythological system also found in the mythological manuals, and that they probably serve the same kind of purpose, namely to embed the ritual sayings in this system to allow for comprehension of the texts and as a nexus for applying further interpretations and associations: As soon as, say an epithet, is given a place in the system it ceases to be an isolated substantive as it is embedded in a whole network of possible mythological associations. In my analysis of the mythological manuals, I argue that they convey such a mythological system, which serves as a bridge between different strands of local and national mythology and thus as a heuristic device for understanding and applying all sorts of mythological knowledge and the same seems to be the case for the comments found in this funerary text.

Due to its uniqueness, it is hazardous to generalize from Book of the Dead chapter 17 to ritual interpretation in general. However since nature of the interpretations found is comparable to that of the Mythological manuals, it must have at least been one viable

⁷⁷⁰ *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom* (1995) 6, n. 27.

⁷⁷¹ See for instance the classical study on symbolism by Dan Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism* (1975), and the more provocative articles by Frits Staal, ‘The Meaninglessness of Ritual’, *Numen* 26:1 (1979), 2-22 and the monograph *Rules without Meaning. Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences* (1989).

⁷⁷² Cf. Sørensen, ‘Efficacy’, in: Kreinath et al (eds.), *Theorizing Rituals* (2006), 523-531.

option for interpreting rituals. Thus the course in ‘resolving the difficulties’ of ritual texts referred to in the Book of the Temple, was not (only) an education in classical Egyptian grammar which dealt with grammatically obscure phrases, since the reading of ritual texts must have focused on how the verbal parts of rituals could be enhanced by techniques of mythological interpretation.

Local and national deities in the Book of the Temple

In a more indirect fashion, the Book of the Temple also adds to our knowledge about other aspects of the mythological manuals. While not primarily concerned with theology, the core of a system for classifying deities is still present in sections of the book devoted to a list of gods and the decoration of temple walls. Both operate with a distinction between national gods, or groups of gods that should be present in every temple and local gods viewed as manifestations of these gods. So a temple relief could be composed featuring a god *X* and his local manifestation *Y*. It is not possible to establish a simple correspondence between the gods mentioned in the mythological manuals and the Book of the Temple⁷⁷³, but it is nevertheless significant the latter operates with this distinction and that it was taken for granted that the priest or scribe responsible for determining the concrete visual layout of temple walls was familiar with it and could decide which of the locally worshipped gods would correspond to the national gods mentioned in the Book of the Temple. This knowledge and interpretational capacity is exactly one of the key points stressed by the mythological manuals, in both their national and local versions.

Outside the Book of the Temple, in the Ptolemaic temple of Khonsu we find an example of a ritual tableau in which the distinction between local and national gods is observed both in image and text, as the accompanying text consists of not only ritual titles but also excerpts from what must be a local mythological manual, it seems particularly apt to illustrate the different ways in which local and national deities could be linked⁷⁷⁴.

The ritual is a Maat-offering to the primeval aspects of the gods of the local temple divided unto the western and eastern walls of the barque chapel. On the Eastern walls we find the king offering to Amon, behind whom Ptah is seated. These two enthroned gods are followed by Ogdoad, in smaller scale, and finally a standing Hathor. On the eastern wall of

⁷⁷³ On account of the fragmented state of both manuals and the different purposes that the two serve. However the somewhat unexpected appearance of the god Dedun in both the mythological manuals and the Book of the Temple should be noted.

⁷⁷⁴ *Editio princeps* Parker and Lesko, ‘The Khonsu Cosmogony’, *Fs. Edwards* (1988), 168-175. Further translations by Cruz-Uribe, ‘The Khonsu Cosmogony’, *JARCE* 31 (1994), 168-189 and Mendel, *Die kosmogonischen Inschriften in der Barkenkapelle des Chonstempels von Karnak* (2003).

the chapel a similar scene shows Thoth seated behind Khonsu, followed by series of primeval deities including the seven creative words (*ḏḥisw*) of the creator god, before the scene ends with the enthroned Osiris. According to Daniela Mendel's interpretation of these scenes, the pairs of two seated gods are intended to convey in pictures a local mythological interpretation of the cosmogony. By juxtaposing Amun and Ptah, these two gods are identified so that Amun becomes the local manifestation of the creator god Ptah. On the western wall Khonsu, is seen as the local aspect of Thoth, who assists the creator god with the verbal aspects of the cosmogony. The text written above the two rows of deities provide a detailed, partly narrative, commentary to the individual gods and their role in the cosmogony. The text is extremely complex, but appears to corroborate Mendel's analysis since Amun and Ptah are closely linked in the text where each god is accorded parallel and slightly overlapping function. The relationship between Khonsu and Thoth is even more complex, since Khonsu as proprietor of the temple is also identified with Re – the creator god whose 'heart' or 'mind' Thoth is.

The text links the pairs of gods in different ways involving such notions as manifestation (*ba*), and embodiment (heart) in addition to the simple juxtaposition found in the reliefs. Furthermore the text also takes on the task of linking the different localities involved. Creation begins with Ptah in his Memphitic Tjennenet-shrine, which is linked to the mound of Djeme in the Theban nome. Khonsu's involvement is explained as the one who brings the Ogdoad found in the swelling primeval waters (*bnt*) to his temple Bennenet by swallowing, carrying in his stomach and finally regurgitating them. This might appear far removed from Thoth, the god he is identified with, but in the Tebtunis mythological manual Thoth is in fact part of a similar myth where he eats and collects the dismembered Osiris flowing in the waters and brings the body ashore at Heliopolis as part of the initiation of a new cosmic cycle.

Theological details aside, the Khonsu cosmogony exemplifies how the distinction between national and local gods could manifest itself in images, and how mythological manuals explored and elaborated upon this difference to provide avenues of mythological associations using a variety of means that allowed the Egyptian priests to re-think the divine constellations in ever new ways⁷⁷⁵.

⁷⁷⁵ The rich variety of techniques and nuances are often wasted on us, and deserve further studies.

The Book of Thoth and the interpretation of religious texts

Alongside the *Book of the Temple*, the most important composition for understanding how sacred texts were read, copied and interpreted is the Demotic *Book of Thoth*⁷⁷⁶. The text dates to the Ptolemaic period⁷⁷⁷ and is written in demotic except for one manuscript written in Hieratic. The text consists of a dialogue between 'The one who wishes to learn' and his mentor called variously 'He spoke in Hesperet' and 'He spoke in praise of knowledge'. The subject of the dialogue is the art of the scribe and how to navigate in the vast corpus of religious texts; as such it touches upon many of the problems of this study and puts flesh on the bare bones of the outline of priestly education found in the *Book of the temple*. However the study of this text complicated by many factors, not the least of which is the fragmented state of the manuscripts. Despite existing in multiple copies from different places in Upper and Lower Egypt, a full reconstruction of the text is not feasible and many fragments are unsecure in their placement. Added to this the text revels in archaic writings and lexemes and is full of allusions and puns; in the words of the editors⁷⁷⁸:

The author often consciously expresses himself in an oblique manner, and rejoiced in epithets, allusions and figures (...) The author's use of word play is very prominent in the *Book of Thoth*. One may even wonder whether it was not one purpose of the composition to illustrate the possibilities of word play, or to impress on the student the potential for puns embedded in the Egyptian language. Indeed, one of the difficulties of interpretation of the *Book of Thoth* is that the motivation, as it were, behind a series of statement may only become apparent due to word-association, and not due to surface meaning.

What can be derived from the text with certainty is that it deals with the initiation of a scribe priest into the sacred and secret study of ancient religious texts. The initiand is in dialogue with an examiner. In the title the initiand is associated with Imhotep, during whose festival the ritual is said to take place, and Osiris Nefer-Hotep and the scribal goddess Seshat and the text is said to be a 'prescription (*tp-rd*) for entering the chamber of darkness (*ʕt-kkw*)'⁷⁷⁹.

⁷⁷⁶ Published by Jasnow and Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth* (2005). Important review article with many improved readings by Quack, 'Die Initiation zum Schreiberberuf im Alten Ägypten', *SAK* 36 (2007), 249–295, and translation in 'Ein ägyptischer Dialog', *ARG* 9 (2007), 259-294. See also the article by Schneider, 'Scribes, sages, and seers in ancient Egypt. Knowledge and knowledgeable men in ancient Egypt : queries and arguments about an unsettled issue', in: Perdue (ed.), *Scribes, sages, and seer* (2008), 35-46, based on the preliminary account on the *Book of Thoth* by Jasnow and Zauzich, 'A Book of Thoth?', in: Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists* (1998), 607-618.

⁷⁷⁷ With much older roots cf. Quack, 'Ein ägyptischer Dialog', *ARG* 9 (2007), 288-289.

⁷⁷⁸ Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 109 and 114.

⁷⁷⁹ Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 364, 369, unless otherwise mentioned I follow Quack's reconstruction and reading of the text.

Since the text is definitely literary and not ritual⁷⁸⁰ the initiation may be a metaphor, or perhaps we are dealing with some form of ‘Lesemysterium’ in which the initiation is effected by the initiand’s reading or copying the text⁷⁸¹. If each scribe was required to make his own copy of the text this would account for the large number of manuscripts found, 25-30, exceeding even the Book of the Temple attested in about 20 manuscripts⁷⁸², and perhaps also for the apparent care taken in the writing of the manuscripts. If indeed, as has been suggested, the text is intended as a companion to an initiation ritual, then this must have been in a very loose way – as a sort of charter myth for the scribe who was to be initiated, rather than a step by step guide to the actual ritual. The text itself makes some reference to the festivals of the New Year’s Day and the festival of Osiris Neferhotep⁷⁸³ and Imhotep, who is often alluded to in the text, in the temple of Ptah. The specific location name here adds to the probability of the dates being a framing device; here for the purpose of affirming the link between the text and Imhotep. If the location was given as the correct place to conduct an actual initiation, such would be impossible for e.g. Tebtunis, whose temple was dedicated to Sobek and Geb.

Other locations named are situated within a temple or ‘House of Life’ institution⁷⁸⁴. The initiand is envisaged as leaving the Chamber of Darkness and ascending to the roof of the pronaos of the temple. The Chamber of Darkness has a significant mention in an autobiographical text from the 30. dynasty and may denote a temple crypt, akin to the Osireions and their cultic functions⁷⁸⁵. In the *Book of Thoth* the chamber serves as a place of nocturnal hardship and examination. Its dense darkness is related to that of the charcoal used for making black ink in a number of passages of extended imagery. It appears that the initiand himself undergoes a process similar to that which produces coal, as he too is burned

⁷⁸⁰ Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 75-76. Quack (*Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III*² (2009), 160-161 and ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, *ARG* 9 (2007), 290) characterizes the texts as a companion (*Begleittext*) to an initiation ritual, however it is difficult to see how this would have been used in practice. For a companion we would expect more of a framing than the nitty-gritty of the actual initiatory questioning of the scribe.

⁷⁸¹ The term *Lesemysterium* was used by Reitzenstein as a characterization of the Hermetic Corpus (*Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (1927), 51-52) as a composition the reading of which was intended to effect a spiritual transformation of its reader.

⁷⁸² Von Lieven, *The Carlsberg Papyri 8: Grundriß des Laufes der Sterne* (2007), 296-297.

⁷⁸³ Probably a deified sage, cf. Quack, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III*² (2009), 161, who also notes the presence of other deified persons.

⁷⁸⁴ For the House of Life and its links with the cult of Osiris cf. Ryholt, ‘Libraries from Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt’ (in press).

⁷⁸⁵ Statue Cairo JdÉ 37128 (Jansen-Winkeln, *Biographische und Religiöse Inschriften der Spätzeit* (2001), 115-117), noted and discussed by Quack in ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, *ARG* 9 (2007), 291-292. For the texts and rituals performed in the Osireions cf. von Lieven, ‘Mysterien des Kosmos: Kosmographie und Priesterschaft’, in: Assmann and Bommas (eds.), *Ägyptische Mysterien?* (2002), 47-58 and ‘Bemerkungen zum Dekorationsprogramm des Osireion in Abydos’, in: Haring and Klug (eds.), *6. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung* (2007), 167-186.

and charred in preparation for his initiation into scribedom. The other tools of the scribe: Reeds, water pots, palettes, are similarly interpreted in mythological-mystical ways.

Besides drawing upon the long tradition of wisdom texts, the language used revolves around agricultural and hunting metaphors. The scribal art is compared to the tending of a field and hunting in the marshes. In numerous passages the Book of Thoth makes statements on interpretation of religious texts and the use of mythological knowledge. The verb *w3h*, the demotic successor to *wh*⁷⁸⁶, figures as one of the skills that the scribe must attain in his involvement with the sacred tradition⁷⁸⁷:

Mögen seine Finger arbeiten am Haus des Löwen, des Einzigartigen,
des ‚Starken auf dem Dach‘, bis er die Kontrolle über Auge, Ohr, Herz, Zunge, Hand und
Fußsohle
findet, und er kennt ‚Erkenntnis‘ (*sy<si3*), ‚Ansehen‘, ‚Annalen‘, ‚Erziehung‘, ‚Erklärung‘ (*w3h*),
... und ...und er trinkt ‚Anordnung‘, ‚die Anbetungen‘, ‚Lobpreis‘, ihren Vater, der mächtig ist,
und er findet das ‚Geheimnis‘ (*itn*), und er erklärt (*w3h*) die Anbetung, und er wird Gehilfe der
Majestät des Thot.

Over and beyond such explicit passages the *Book of Thoth* revels in more veiled allusions to the art of interpretation, often as part of elaborate metaphors:

The-one-who-loves-knowledge, he says: “What is writing? What are its places of storage? Compare it to its like, O overflowing one! He speaks, namely The-one-of-Heseret, he says: “Writing is a sea. Its reeds are a shore. Plough a little bit in it, lift up the reed! count waves/difficult passages (*tn tny.w*) in it. If it is a myriad, do not weaken with regard to it (the sea), until its lord permits that you swim in it and it all become a straight pathway (*m3c*) before you”⁷⁸⁸

The phrase *wh^c itnw* is utilized both in its normal sense, wherein the scribe is told to learn how to resolve the different passages found in a text, but also in a figural when the world of texts is likened to a dangerous ocean in which the inept scribe might drown. The one who wishes to know is told to watch the waves (*tny.w < itnw*⁷⁸⁹) until he learns to swim. By punning on the word for ‘difficulties’ the metaphor is explicated and even supports a kind of morale in which the pupil should focus on the difficulties of a text if he wishes to master it. For the question of mythological interpretation it should be noted that the term ‘difficulties’ does not seem to be concerned with difficult grammar, but appears to operate on the level of the lexeme or phrase. The instances found in Papyrus Jumilhac, all provide interpretations of a single word or phrase, often the name of a god with following epithet.

⁷⁸⁶ Hoffmann, Demotische Wortliste online (<http://www.dwl.aegyptologie.lmu.de>), 01197-01199.

⁷⁸⁷ Quack, in ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, *ARG* 9 (2007), 270 and Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 191, 198-201 and 447.

⁷⁸⁸ Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 448. (B02, 4, 12-15)

⁷⁸⁹ See the discussion of this passage in Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 211.

The hunting metaphor revolves around a series of key concepts. One is a pun between *wh̄c* ‘to interpret’ and *wh̄c* to catch, the second the conception of ritual books as the Souls (*b3.w*) of Re⁷⁹⁰:

Der Weisheitsliebende sagte: „Ich wünsche, ein Fischer (*ir why<wh̄c*)⁷⁹¹ nach den Anbetungen des Isden zu sein, und daß ich seine „Seelen“ fange (*grg*).“ Er-hat-die-Seelen-gefangen sagte: „Dein Fangnetz hat gefangen, was auf der Zunge deines Mundes ist, dein ..., was auf deiner Brust(?) ist. Deine Netze haben gefangen, was [auf] seiner Nase ist; deine Angelhaken, was auf seinem [...] ist. Die Fische und Vögel, die in sein [...] hineingehen, ich habe für ihn ...geschützt, [sie werden den] Mund [nicht] öffnen.

Since the Ba-soul is depicted as a bird we arrive at the image of the scribing catching birds with a net as a metaphor for the scribe interpreting sacred books. This image is more than bland allegory as it evokes the art of interpretation as a struggle in which one gains power over and harnesses the ritual powers inherent to the sacred texts⁷⁹², analogous to the toiling referred to in the agricultural metaphors.

The elaborate metaphor and punning on the root *wh̄c* has a precursor in the Fishermen spells of the Coffin Texts⁷⁹³. Framed in dialogues with the fishermen, these texts consist mainly of mythological interpretations of the components of nets barring the deceased from access to the sky. One of the spells, spell 473, even establishes the link between correct interpretation and right of passage by means of a pun on the word *wh̄c*, ‘interpret’ and ‘loosen’, as the deceased says: ‘It is I who loosened the bonds (*ink wh̄c dsfw*)... I ascend to the sky with the gods, I have attained and repeated the words of god (*mdw-ntr*)’⁷⁹⁴

In both the fisherman spell and the Book of Thoth, the priest versed in sacred language becomes a master of interpretation that imposes himself on the world of the gods. In the metaphorical language of the Book of Thoth the scribe does not merely reach an understanding of the sacred texts but gains power over them. Indeed, given the focus on mythological interpretation for the sake of drawing associations, it could be argued that gaining understanding of the text as such is secondary to whatever ritual use may be derived

⁷⁹⁰ Quack, ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, 9 (2007), 266 and Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 152 and 158.

⁷⁹¹ Here ambiguity between the two derivatives of the root *wh̄c* is heightened by the lack of a determinative cf. Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 159 on V01, 3/18.

⁷⁹² In one passage he even fights them (B02, 8, 11 cf. Quack, ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, *ARG* 9 (2007), 274, Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 240 and 241).

⁷⁹³ For these spells see Bidoli, *Die Sprüche der Fangnetze* (1976). The combination of nets and *mdw-ntr* also appears in the Book of Thoth: Ein Hund gab mir (B04, 6/10) ein Band aus Gottesworten, er sagte mir: ‚Das ist ihr Jagdnetz.‘ Meine Glieder bedrängten die Leute des Ruderpfostens(?), mein Herz fischte für sie mit Netzen; die Zunge erjagte in ihrem Geviert(?). See Quack, ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, *ARG* 9 (2007) 280, Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 305-306 and 310

⁷⁹⁴ *CT* VI, 15b-e. The combination of nets and *mdw-ntr* also appears in the Book of Thoth: Ein Hund gab mir (B04, 6/10) ein Band aus Gottesworten, er sagte mir: ‚Das ist ihr Jagdnetz.‘ Meine Glieder bedrängten die Leute des Ruderpfostens(?), mein Herz fischte für sie mit Netzen; die Zunge erjagte in ihrem Geviert(?). Quack, ‘Ein ägyptischer Dialog’, *ARG* 9 (2007) 280, Jasnow and Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005), 305-306 and 310.

from it. An extreme form of these 'radical hermeneutics' is found in some strands of Kabbalah, where the mystical uses of a biblical texts could go to such extremes that the surface meaning of whole passages would be dismissed and the text interpreted in terms wholly alien to it⁷⁹⁵. It would seem that Egyptian hermeneutics were never taken to such extremes. One of the reasons for this is undoubtedly to be found in the lack of a closed canon of texts and in the large number of traditional and ritual texts available for exegesis. Whereas Jewish mystics searching for an authoritative text to be used for ritual purposes were confined to the Torah, Egyptian priests already had at their disposal a large number of texts already composed for ritual purposes and so ritual mythological interpretations of them more had the nature of enhancement or adaptation than a radical altering of the original text's function.

The Vulture text

Concerning geographical and mythological knowledge, of the variety found in the mythological manuals, the *Book of Thoth* contains a section devoted to the 42 nomes of Egypt, the Vulture Text⁷⁹⁶. Vultures are also found as guardians of the House of Life in the *Book of Fayum* and from other texts as well, the House of Life is known to be guarded and inhabited by a host of sacred animals, the most prominent of which is the vulture⁷⁹⁷.

The House of life is said to contain 42 mounds, each of which is inhabited by a vulture and its young. These vultures correspond to the 42 nomes of Egypt, and the characterisation of the vultures and their young contains allusions to the nome it inhabits. The initiate is questioned about these and learns about them from their own mouths⁷⁹⁸:

Der türhüter fragten nach den Seelen des Re, die Wächter nach ihrer Natur. Man sagte mir: ‚Es gibt 42 Hügel im Lebenshaus, die bewachsen sind mit [...] Binsen. 42 Geierinnen haben zwischen ihnen geboren, indem ihre Jungen [...] acht(?)‘. Ich fragte nach den Geierinnen und ihren Namen, die Jungen sagten mir ihre Gesänge, während eine große Geierin sie alle umarmte, wobei sie begierig(?) war nach dem Schutz, während der Löwe bei ihrem Thron sitzt, [...], indem er festgesetzt ist zu ihrer Seite, wobei sie sagt: ‚Er wird ein Gemetzel unter denen anrichten, die er töten wird [...].Wobei sie öffnet und er die Gabe der Schriftrollen verschließt unter [...].‘Der Öffner auf seiner Standarte sagte: ‚Du wirst große Begierde haben [...]. Oh mögest du sie herbeiführen, daß wir sie kennen, daß wir unsere Herrin anbeten, die [...] gegründet hat! Der Weisheitsliebende sagte:71 „Eine Geierin, die einen Bogen spannt,

⁷⁹⁵ Idel, *Absorbing Perfections* (2002), 250ff.

⁷⁹⁶ See now Leitz, 'Die Geierweibchen des Thothbuches in den 42 Gauen Ägyptens', *RdÉ* 63 (2012), 137-186.

⁷⁹⁷ Quack ('Ein ägyptischer Dialog', *ARG* 9 (2007), 284) has noted a parallel in the description of the House of Life in the *Book of Fayum* and in the *Rituals for Praising Horus who Establishes the Inheritance*, pBrooklyn 47.218.50, 16, 9-11.

⁷⁹⁸ Quack, 'Ein ägyptischer Dialog', *ARG* 9 (2007), 288.

während ihr Junges [...] – das ist Elephantine. Eine Geierin, [die] eine Waage [...], während ihr Junges aus Gold in ihrer Hand ist – [das ist Edfu].

(...)

Summe der Geierinnen und ihrer Jungen in ihrer Spezifikation auf dem Korb(?) mit Gerste. Der König, der älteste Bruder der Schentait, und(?) Seschat, das sind die Geierin und ihr Junges. Die Brust des Wissens, welche die Wissenden sugt, ist es, die bei ihnen als Amme ist. Das Tier, das zuerst Wissen erlangt hat, der Esel, ist es, der den Weg vor ihm leitet. Der wissende Ibis, der die Alten ausgeschickt hat, ist es, welcher der Größte der Großen ist. Er ist es gewißlich, der für seinen Vater und seine Mutter – Variante: Vorvater – kundig gewesen ist, indem er .[.]. Mir sagend: ‚Kopiere seine Kinder, dann wird er Größter derer, die größer als er sind.‘

Several inferences can be drawn from this passage. One is the confirmation of the emphasis on geographic religious knowledge found in the Book of the Temple; here knowledge about the nature of all the nomes becomes a condition for the entrance into the House of Life, and thus a successful career as scribe-priest. In this respect it resembles the 42 guardians of the Hall of two Maats found in the Book of the Dead chapter 125, with which the deceased must deal if he is to emerge vindicated from the weighing of his heart. Given the importance of mythic geography as an element in the collected mythological system, and the focus in the *Book of Thoth* on gaining access to this accumulated store of religious knowledge, it is only natural that the geographical section is this large and couched in allusions to be explored and gradually understood by the scribe. As in the *Book of Traversing Eternity* we find that traditions that were perhaps already obscure by reason of being old and only partially understood are further veiled so that even the basic mythological patterns are not explicitly stated but becomes a matter of inference reserved for the cognoscenti.

The allusions used in the vulture section, might also be of concern to the status of the *Tebtunis Mythological manual*; many of these individual characterisations of nomes closely resemble the myths found in the manual. This may be due to both texts drawing upon the same store of traditional mythological knowledge, or it may be a direct reference to the Tebtunis manual, which in some redaction or other appears to have been the staple source of geographical religious knowledge in the Greco-Roman period.

Conclusion

The mythological manuals were not just random repositories of myth. Rather they were structured collections of mythic material that were interpreted according to principles also found in other religious texts. These principles were focused on the Heliopolitan Ennead as the common denominator for the wealth of local and regional mythic traditions established and emerging throughout Egypt. From the beginning of the Old Kingdom this interplay between the local and national was a driving force in the formulation of an open ended system of mythic patterns and use of mythology.

By virtue of becoming a linguistic or semiotic system whose signs could be attached to different signifiers, and by becoming a set of *relations* between different terms, mythology could both be freed from a 1:1 relation with the physical, political and historical realities of Egypt as well as preserve the traditional Egypt of the Pharaohs in a pristine world of its own.

In this way the manuals speak of the importance of myth, and mythology but also warn against a literal reading of myths. The often quoted, and often abused, dictum of Frankfort about the multiplicity of approaches applies here since what was crucial was the wealth of associations and applications that the system could produce and manage, particularly as a tool for drawing mythological inferences in rituals to render these efficacious.

In contrast to Frankfort the apparent superabundance of imagination was not left unbridled, but instead was trained and guided to follow certain patterns or traces. In the Book of the Temple prescriptions were given for the training of priests, and apart from the oral tradition and transmission of knowledge, it would appear that the mythological manuals were among the most important resources for this training and knowledge.

Some of the insights that the manuals enable are simply due to the added material on myths that were previously little known, for instance the case of Anubis eating of the corpse of Osiris. Here the extra information, coupled with the sister myth, previously unknown, of Thoth eating of Osiris, allowed for a clearer view of the the myth that can be used for further research into this mytheme⁷⁹⁹. Also the myth of how Thoth and Horus caught Osiris in a net and killed him nuances greatly our understanding of the relationship between father and son in the myths⁸⁰⁰.

I have argued that the greatest contribution that the mythological manuals make is on the level of meta-texts, as interpretations and structuring of mythology. The constant

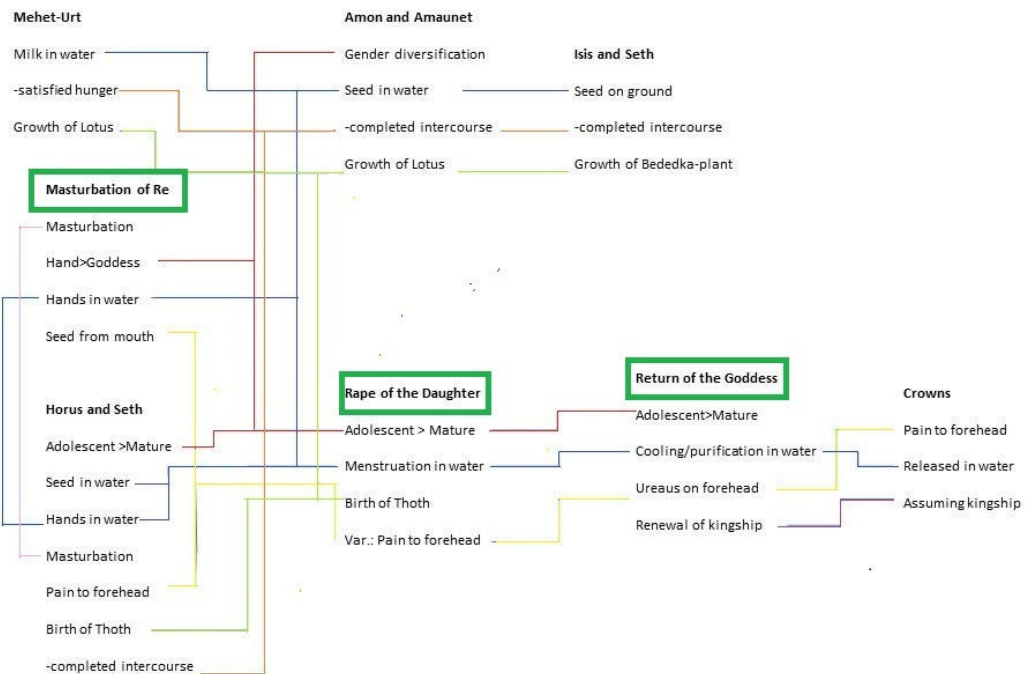
⁷⁹⁹ See the appendix on gods eating gods for an overview.

⁸⁰⁰ *DM* 8, 2-8, 11. Unfortunately, due to limits on size, I had to omit this myth from my analysis.

reference to the Ennead, including Horit as the female version of Horus, demonstrate the need felt for ordering principles in order to take in the full richness of mythological variety and tradition, much of it only becoming apparent with the manuals themselves.

However, the study of individual myths should also benefit from the principles and patterns adduced here. When seen as part of a mythological system, myths cease to be isolated and demand to be studied in relation with the other myths in the system.

For instance the mythic complex of the rape of the daughter and its associated myths can be visualized thus, with the myths present in the Delta manual and involving Horit emphasized⁸⁰¹.



In this table the individual mythemes or episodes that make up the individual myths are connected so that the relationship between the myths is brought out. It is striking that so many elements recur throughout the myths, but also how much these same elements are differentiated, stressed and sometimes absent from variants of the same myth. Above I have argued that these variations are dependent on function and context: individual tellings or allusions to these myths only use what is demanded of the individual case, and can rely on the training of the priest to fill out the rest of the pattern if needed according to other variants of what was essentially the same mythic structure. The table also tells us something

⁸⁰¹ For a discussion of the details of the chart see the chapter on the Rape of Horit.

about the noted moral ambivalence of the Egyptian myths, since elements which are morally unsound in the narrative versions of some myths can be filled by neutral or positive actions in some of the associated myths.

Further research should aim to test and apply some of the mythological patterns established here to see how widespread these principles were, including how applicable they are on material earlier than the mythological manuals. Though much had to be left out of the present thesis, I hope to have demonstrated the centrality of the mythological manuals for any serious attempts at coming to terms with Egyptian myths and that we cannot afford to ignore the closest we have to actual native grammars of mythology.

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Appendix A: The Tebtunis Mythological Manual in Translation

- Published in Osing and Rosati, *Papiri geroglifici e ieratici da Tebtynis*, Florence 1998, pls. 17-21 edited and translated into Italian by Jürgen Osing, pp. 129-188
- German translation by Frank Feder on *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (<http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla>)
- Principal manuscript PSI inv. I 72 large pieces together with 13 greater fragments and 57 small isolated fragments
- Hieratic script, “Late Middle Egyptian”
- Contents: Mythological/Aetiological accounts of the (VII-IX very fragmented) X-XVI nomes of Upper Egypt.
- More unpublished manuscripts (P. Carlsberg 308, 592 and 593 with further fragments in Florence) currently being edited by Jürgen Osing.

The following is not intended as a full grammatical study and commentary of the text. It is a working translation to aid in the study of the myths and mythological patterns found in the manual. The translation is largely based on the translations of Feder and Osing, which also include the smaller unplaced fragments⁸⁰².

	10 th U. E. Nome <i>w3dt</i> Capital <i>tbw</i> (x+1, 6-1, 21)	
x+1, Line 6	...] <i>f w3dt</i> [...]	...Wadjet...
7	...] <i>r n=f r mn h[rw pn...</i>	...to him until this day...
8	...] <i>w3d hr sm=f r[...]</i> 3 <i>b</i> [...]	... <i>w3d</i> . Horus he went to ...eastern (?)
9	...] <i>it=f wsir dd hr wrmt=f [...]</i> <i>w3dt</i> [...]	...His father Osiris said on account of his statue... <i>w3dt</i>
10	...] <i>shnw</i> [...]	...embrace/search....
11	...] <i>f wn</i> [...]	...
12	...] <i>sš=s</i> ⁸⁰³ [...]	...Its linen...
13
14	...] <i>iw</i> [...] <i>yw iw/r tby</i> [...]	...Pair of sandals...
15	...] <i>hnwt</i> [...]	...
16	...] <i>hnw</i> [... <i>ḳ</i> (?)]= <i>n n=f</i> [...]	Inner/residence ...we had entered (?) for him...
17	... <i>nkn</i> ?]= <i>f m niwt tn mds</i> ⁸⁰⁴ [...] <i>m db</i> ^ḥ <i>w</i> [...]	...His injury in this city compensated ⁸⁰⁵ ... consisting of his fingers....
18	...] <i>stš in</i> ⁸⁰⁶ <i>tbw=f</i> [...]	...Seth. Concerning his sandals...

⁸⁰² Joachim Quack is preparing a translation of the text to be published in an anthology of Egyptian religious texts.

⁸⁰³ Read as ‘Qus (?)’ (*kis*) by Osing, p. 135.

⁸⁰⁴ A parallel has *mdn* from *mtn* ‘to inscribe’ or ‘reward’ (*Wb* 2, 170.11-12)

⁸⁰⁵ Translated according to the parallel.

⁸⁰⁶ Perhaps for *ir*. For the occasionally similar orthography of *in* and *ir* in later period texts cf. Quack, ‘Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?’, *ARG* 10 (2008), 9 n. 18.

19	...] p3 itn db3.n=f ʿn [nkn.n=f hʿw-ntr m t3-sti ⁸⁰⁷ ...	The disk. He became shoed again, after he had injured the god's limbs in Ta-Seti
20	...] in ddwn ʿ.wy=fy nkn[...	...It was Dedun, with his two arms who injured... ⁸⁰⁸

	11 th U. E. Nome hʿw-nt, hʿn Capital š3s-hʿtp (x+1, 21 – 2, 7) ⁸⁰⁹	
x+1, 21	...] š3 š3[s-hʿtp ⁸¹⁰nome of the Sha-animal. Shashotep...
1, 22	...nkn]. n=f[...	...He injured...
2,1	...] šm=i r dšrt iw=fʿh3 hʿnʿ=i rdi.n=k n=i hnt	...I went to the desert while he was fighting with me ⁸¹¹ . You gave me Hunet
2	...hʿn]n=i i[m=s] m wi m ʿkri r=s gb dd=f n hr sdg3t=k hnt	...I [travelled] to it. See I am in the vicinity of it. Geb, he said to Horus: 'You have seen the hnt-water of
3	...] dd.n=f m sw m dw3t iw n=k t3wy=k ⁸¹² iry.tw n=f sp3t mi ʿd=s hʿn.[tw]	...of which he said: 'See it is in the Duat'. Your two lands belong to you, while the whole nome was made for him, protected
4	m s3ht=f sw m hnt m kt 3ht hʿpr b m hnt [hr]=s	as his endowment. He is in the hnt-waters of another field. Therefore the bad one came into existence in Hunet.
4-5	iry [.tw rn n sp3t] tn hr=s r mn hrw [pn...] ds [...] wn rpyt n hr n š3yt	Therefore the name of this nome <u>was made</u> until this day... There is a female statue with the face of a sow
6	[m dsry]=f shkr.tw m? ⁸¹³ ...] hwt-hr hr.tw r=s it=s i[...	in its ⁸¹⁴ sanctity, ornamented with ? ...she is called Hathor. She took...
7	...] m rk hʿm (n) b3w-ntr ʿ w s	...in the reign of the majesty of Baunetjer, life, prosperity, health.

	12 th U. E. nome 3tft Capital pr-nmty (2,7 – 31) ⁸¹⁵	
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⁸⁰⁷ From Parallel, which also has the writing ...]  Which makes for a secure reading of the verb as *tbw* – written unetymologically in PSI 72: 

⁸⁰⁸ There are many possibilities for translating this broken passage – perhaps *in* is again to be read *ir* (?)

⁸⁰⁹ Much of the text for the second column is restored after a parallel.

⁸¹⁰ Read by Feder as the Sha-animal incumbent on the standard as emblem, however his reading of the following as Shas-Hotep, seems improbable – what one would expect would be a verb as part of a sentence interpreting the name of the nome – perhaps *š3s* – ‘to travel’, ‘tread on’.

⁸¹¹ Osing conjectures that the first person is Seth speaking to Geb (p. 136 n. b).

⁸¹² Either a corrupt writing of *t3wy=k* or some other word was intended between *t3wy* and the suffix.

⁸¹³ I can do no better than Osing on this one. Perhaps a corrupted reduplication of *grm* ‘carry off’ (Meeks, *AL* 77.4669) yielding: ‘adorned with the rest of what was carried off’.

⁸¹⁴ Masculine. It is not clear to whom or what the suffix refers.

⁸¹⁵ Much of the text restored after a parallel.

2,7	<i>3tft dd.tw r pr-nmty</i>	Per-Nemty is called Atfet.
7-8	<i>wh⁸¹⁶ ntr im=s</i> <i>hr pw hry-tp sm3 dr kni hr=f iry.n [stš]</i> <i>n(i)k.tw kni m st tn</i>	Ukh is the god in it. It is Horus on top of the wild bull because of the damage to his face which [Seth] caused. In this place the damage is punished.
9	<i>...]</i> ⁸¹⁷ <i>imn s(w) hr im hr-h3t=f dr kn[=f] r ht</i> <i>mwt=f</i>	Horus hid himself there before him after the injury [to him] by his mother ⁸¹⁸
10	<i>nn rh=f r c k hry [mnty] n dd-wn</i>	He did not know how to enter the upper region [of the mountain] of Dedun ⁸¹⁹
11	<i>c k hr sbht c k=s</i> <i>sp dw pfy hpr r s3 n 3st</i> <i>rdit.n=s hr [...]</i>	Horus entered the portico in which she had entered. That evil befell the son of Isis, when She had placed Horus ⁸²⁰ ...
12	<i>iw rdi.n.tw nbw n wh r hh p-nty imn</i> <i>spr.n=f c sww iw ntr pn rdit db3w n</i> <i>nbw n nmty</i>	Gold was given to Ukh to search for the one who was hidden. (when) He had arrived at the region of the districts, this god gave recompense of gold to Nemty,
13	<i>is nmty m wd3=f hr itrw sr.n=f kn r h cw</i> <i>ntr dg3.n=f hms msh hr ht</i>	Now Nemty was ferrying him on the river, and he revealed the damage to the god's limbs since he had seen a crocodile seated on the relics.
14	<i>dw pw nis.tw im[=f c k.n hr r]</i> <i>pr hr r st sns n iwtw[snb nn iwyt]⁸²¹=f</i>	It is the mountain in which was called [since Horus had entered]the temple of Horus to the place of reuniting the putrefaction [being whole and without] his suffering.
15	<i>m3tit š3it hr ht hr shri n=f šm3=f</i>	Matit, the pig, is on the relics, chasing away his šm3-demons for him.
	<i>nbw pw h cw-ntr n nbty hr fk3 pw rdit</i> <i>šm</i>	The divine limbs of Nebty are gold because of that reward which was handed out ⁸²² .
16	<i>ir wh3 wr sndm hr i3t=f</i> <i>šwty m b3h=f šwty (hr) phwy=f</i> <i>hnt hrt=f nt hr</i>	Concerning Ukh, the great one, resting on his standard: Two feathers are in front of him and two behind him, while the

⁸¹⁶ The parallels have 'Nemty'.

⁸¹⁷ Osing (p. 140 and 141 n. f) supplies: 'fuoco essendo messo [al cattivo]' 'when the bad one was set on fire' – as no trace of this exists in the papyrus it is unclear whether it is supplied from a parallel or conjecture.

⁸¹⁸ In the usual sense of the phrase *r-ht-(n)* under 'the authority of' someone. This yields something like: 'after/because of his injury (sustained) under the authority of his mother', perhaps referring to the well-known episode in Contendings where Isis cuts off the hands of Horus, or when he is punished for having cut off her head.

⁸¹⁹ The construction *rh r* is normal in Late Demotic (Joachim Quack personal communication). Osing (p. 142 n. g) reads: <hrw> *r/iw* 'except'. On this reading Horus does not know what to do, except go up into the mountains. Feder reads the passage as: *nn rh=f c k hrw mnti n ddwn* and translates the passage as: '(Denn) er (Seth) kann das [Gebirgs]plateau [des] Dedwen nicht betreten'.

⁸²⁰ Osing (p.140) restores the passage as: 'quando essa aveva posto Horo [nel] suo [abbraccio (?)]'.

Other readings are possible: 'Horus had given...to her' or 'Horus had placed her (*rdi.n s(y) hr*)'

⁸²¹ Restored by Osing (p. 140) in his translation without comments. Feder follows Osing and suggests a restoration based on puns between *snsn* and *snb* and between *iwtw* and *iwyt*

⁸²² With Feder understood as a pun and alternative name for Nemty.

		skin of Horus is underneath him.
17	<i>bwt nbw m-dr inm=f m-dr sns nty w3w.w r hr yw wnm=f</i>	Gold is taboo on account of its colour because of the stench that is 'far from' the slaughter of his fattened beasts.
18	<i>tn šwty hr i3t š3 w^ct r s3 w^ct im=sn bwt nbw m st tn inm pw (n) imw [n] hr hpr ms⁸²³</i>	The two feathers are elevated on a standard, each one to the back of the other. Gold is taboo in this place because of the colour of the skin of the new born Horus.
19	<i>šd n=f m3tit m sš3=s 3st hn^c [nbt-hw]t m hsfw n 3pp</i>	Matit in her secret form recited for him (being) Isis and [Nephty]s, in opposing Apophis
20	<i>... ib hr.tw r w^ct hnwt [hr.tw r ...]s⁸²⁴ wsir m-hnt=f kis [...]</i>	...of heart is said about one. Mistress is said of her ... Osiris is in front of him, buried (?)...
21	<i>... bwt nbw m-dr [...inm n] h^cw-ntr nn rh=f mty [...]</i>	Gold is But on account ...of the colour of the god's limbs.
22	<i>..ksw]=f is m hd^c rk [wr ...] rdit.n=s sbiw[...]</i>	The exact...is not known...
23	<i>... m db^cw=f bwt [...]</i>	While his [bones] are rk-wr silver.
24, 25	<i>...nbw] n hr [...] tbt y r nbw[...] i3t</i>	...She placed the rebels...as his fingers...is taboo...[gold] for Horus...Tjebty ⁸²⁵ for the gold...standard
From parallel 24-31	<i>... wsir. ir hd ksw im n s^ch n wh. hn[... ...] h^cw-ntr nn rdit=f wn hp m niwt tn m rdw [...] ... wh m niwt tn wn s pw imy-ht=f rdit.n=f [...] m-dr dd.tw n=f nty rdit iry db^c m tit=f bwt n=f nbw[hr=s ...] t3i [...] m h^cw=f m 3bd 3 prt, sw[3</i>	...Osiris. Concerning silver: The bones of the statue of Ukh is (made) thereof. The skin of... ...The god's limbs without permitting Hapi to be in this city with secretions... ...Ukh in this city. There was a man in his following. He caused that... ...Because it is said of him: 'the one who causes that a finger is made as his sign'. Gold became But for him because of this ...Taken away...in his appearance on the third month of Peret, day [3...
Unplaced fragment at to the end of the page (?)	<i>...pw hr[... ...]rdw[... ...]mh n imy[... ...]=f hr psd[...</i>	

	13 th U. E. Nome 3tf-hnt Capital s3wty (2, 31 – 3, 22) ⁸²⁶	
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⁸²³ Reading kindly suggested by Joachim Quack (personal communication).

⁸²⁴ Restoration proposed by Feder.

⁸²⁵ The name of the inundated area of the 12th U. E. nome cf. Beinlich, *Studien zu den "Geographischen Inschriften"* (10. – 14. o. äg. Gau), (1976), pl. 23.

⁸²⁶ Much of the first ten lines of column three restored after a parallel. Translation of *TM 3*, 1-12 by Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG 10* (2008), p. 12-13.

2, 31	...] <i>inpw nb</i> [... ⁸²⁷	Anubis, the lord of ...
3, 1	...] <i>nn rdit n=k is-pw</i> <i>hpr rn n sp3t tn hr=s</i>	...It is so that it is not given to you. The name of this nome came into being because of this.
	<i>ir s3wty</i> <i>[t-nt-pr/p3-šn]^c ww pw hw</i>	Concerning Assiut and the one of the granary: It is a protected district.
2	<i>dd.tw [s3wty] r s3w ht</i> <i>tsm snm.n=f sw k3^c=f</i>	The guarding of things is called 'Assiut'. A dog fed on it and it spewed.
3	<i>dd.tw 3tf-hnt r dβw m r^cf</i> <i>wrmt pw m s3wty wh3 m šn^ct hnwt 16</i> <i>r mn hrw h^c</i>	The food in wrappings is called 'Atef-khent'. It is the statue in Assiut which is sought in the granary of the lady of 16, until the day of 'standing' ⁸²⁸ .
4	<i>[ir⁸²⁹ bi3-ks-^cnh] nbw ksw pw (n) hr</i> <i>ir bi3-n-pt [ksw] pw n stš</i>	Concerning hematite and gold: It is the bones of Horus.
5	<i>iw=(s)n (hr) h3 [sp-sn] mi [iry=sn] dr</i> <i>rk</i>	Concerning iron: It is the bones of Seth. They are fighting repeatedly as they have done since time immemorial ⁸³⁰ .
6	<i>imn wp-w3wt tštš [m tpht] nt pr=f</i> <i>sdg3 s(w) hr nhp[=f r dit w3t n] it=f</i> <i>wisr hnw n=f sm3yw nbd nsb.n=f iwty</i> <i>s^ch</i>	Upuaut hid the dismembered one in the caverns of his house (When) Horus saw him he leaped up to show the way for his father Osiris, while the gang of the dark one was hurrying towards him after he had licked the putrefaction off the mummy.
7	<i>[ms]s.(t)w s3b pw hri wrmt hr=s⁸³¹</i>	It is because of this that a jackal on top of a statue is made.
8	<i>k3^c=f^cm=f</i> <i>smn irw šps</i> <i>s3w rdw ntr</i> <i>[nkn].n=f iht nt it=f wsir</i>	He spewed out what he had swallowed. The august form was established The efflux of the god was guarded After he had injured the relics of his father Osiris
9	<i>iw dd.tw n=f tsm pn wnm.n=f k3^c=f</i> <i>cn.n=f sw r wnm st cn</i> <i>mtw⁸³² dd.tw iwiw m iwt=f r wnm k3^c=f</i>	It is said of him: This dog, he ate in order to spew out. He turned to eat it again. Since they said: 'dog', when he

⁸²⁷ At least two lines of text lost at this point.

⁸²⁸ Goyon, 'De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux. Osiris et Isis-Hathor aux portes de la Moyenne Egypte', *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag* (2003), 156 proposes to read *wh3* as the word for pillar and as the verb. While *wh3* may

very well be intended as a pun on the pillar of the same name (*wh*) known from other texts to be connected to The Lady of Sixteen (loc. cit), the adverbial phrase 'until the day of standing' makes more sense if *wh3* is understood as the verb. This reading is also supported by the writing of the word, though this argument does not carry much weight since Ukh, the god of the pillar, is written in the same way in the section on the 12th U. E. nome.

⁸²⁹ Following the reading of Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), p. 12 n. 28.

⁸³⁰ No other instances of *dr rk* used without qualification is known to me. Perhaps a word fell out after *rk*?

⁸³¹ Following the reading of Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), p. 12 n. 29.

⁸³² Unetymological writing of *m-dr*, cf. Osing p. 149 n. z.

10	<i>hr iit n nb=f⁸³³ hr bfn m hr=f n fk3=f m̄d nb=f nn snm=f msd=f sp=sn m̄.n=f</i>	came to eat what he had spewed, returning to his master, barking in his face for his reward.
11	<i>rdw pr m wrmt=f hn̄ db̄w=f nt wrd ib h̄.n k3̄.n=f sn r t3̄</i>	His master became weak He did not eat and really hated what he had swallowed:
12	<i>rdit pw ir.n=f snm.n=f sn m wh̄m</i>	The efflux which had issued from his statue, and his fingers of the weary-hearted Then he spewed it out on the ground (Thus) he gave it back after he had eaten it again.
13	<i>dd.tw 3tf-h̄nt r w̄ th̄n db̄w pw n wrd-ib m-h̄nw h̄w-n̄tr nn rh̄=f bwt=f nbw m-dr inm=f</i>	'Atef-Khent' is said about an obelisk. It is the fingers of the weary-hearted Inside the divine limbs, being unknown. Gold is his But on account of its colour ⁸³⁴ .
14	<i>ir hwt-hr hn̄wt 16 3st pw m s3̄ n wsir rpyt h̄ms hr bdšt m hr n p̄y h̄y=s pw h3̄yt sš̄. wy=sn</i>	<u>Concerning Hathor, the lady of 16:</u> It is Isis as protection for Osiris. The feminine figure seated on a throne with a human face
15	<i>[...iw=s (hr)] nis hr sn=s</i>	The chapel of the sistrum is her appearance, their arms...and she called to her brother
16	<i>ir s3̄wty r̄f 3st rdw pr m h3̄t m h̄w-n̄tr wn wh3̄ ir.n stš̄ nkn m mnty n hn̄(y)</i>	<u>Concerning Assiut:</u> Isis bandaged the efflux that came forth from the front of the divine limbs that had been sought after when Seth had done injury to the thigh of Hen (Osiris) ⁸³⁵
17	<i>rdit m h̄nw hwt h̄mnw šnw m h̄nw st tn st h̄mnw-šnw rn=s</i>	(it) was placed inside the temple of the ogdoad of trees inside this place, the name of which is 'The place of the ogdoad of trees'.
18	<i>h̄r̄ rdi inpw nb r-krrt m s3̄=s ir.tw rn n s3̄wty r r̄f-m-h̄nt-wt hr=s</i>	Then Anubis, lord of Rokerret, was placed as its protection. The name of Assiut became 'Bandaged in front of the embalming' because of this ⁸³⁶ .
19	<i>ir šnw iry.tw r s3̄wty wh3̄ 3st pw hr nbt-hwt hr pw ir.n=f hprw n inpw m ndr h̄bd r r-krrt nty m st</i>	<u>Concerning the trees which are made for Assiut:</u> It is the searching of Isis, Horus and

⁸³³ Again following Quack, p. 13 n. 30.

⁸³⁴ Osing (p. 149 n. ad) considers this as an error on the part of the scribe who must somehow have written this phrase, which occurs two times in the section on Atfet, in the wrong place. However it is also possible to see this as an intended allusion to the myth of Nemty.

⁸³⁵ LGG IV, 804.

⁸³⁶ Or: 'Bandaged earlier and embalmed', See Goyon, 'De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux. Osiris et Isis-Hathor aux portes de la Moyenne Egypte', *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag* (2003), 153, who translates 'On a créé le vocable "Assiout" en ce qui concerne ce qui a été envelope auparavant [= Reliquies precedents], (ayant) l'emballotage par dessus'.

	<i>tn</i>	Nephtys It is Horus when he took form as Anubis when dragging the evil one to Rokerret which is in this place
	<i>ir mwt ntr nty m st tn 3st pw</i>	Concerning the mother of god which is in this place: It is Isis
20 21	<i>ir nbt nbw nty m knw{wn}⁸³⁷=s m nb sgr wp-w3wt pr m h3t 3st pw wrmt=f m knw=s sp-sn</i>	Concerning the lady of the lords who are in her embrace, being the lord of silence, Upwawet who comes forth from the tomb. It is Isis, and his statue in her embrace repeatedly ⁸³⁸ .
22	<i>dd.n.tw in wp-w3wt imi=t mdw m-di rmt nbt [... ..n-m3⁸³⁹] n mdw.n=s m-di rmt nbt nn rh 16 n imn m ww sp3t pn m hrw pn hr=s⁸³⁹</i>	Upuat said: You should not talk to any people... ...in truth. She did not talk to any people. The 16 hidden things are not known in the districts of this nome to this day because of this

	14 th U. E. Nome <i>3tf-phwy</i> Capital <i>kis</i> (3, 22 – 4, 14)	
3, 22	<i>dd.tw kis r rfw nw[...]</i>	The wrapping of...is called Cusae

⁸³⁷ Osing (p. 150 n. al), suggests that only has the value n here. But in that case we would expect it to precede the determinative of qni. A plausible, though far from certain, explanation for its presence could be a case of homeoteleuton from an original sentence reading: *kni=s wnn=s m h Y m nb sgr*: ‘...in her embrace. She is as X while Y is as the lord of silence’. Feder emendates extensively reading: *ir nb-nb.w n.ti m kn={wn}s m nb-sgr wpy pri-m-h³y.t 3st pw wrm.t=f m kn={s}<f> dd.n=tw n wpy imi.t mdw m-di r(m)t nb* and arrives at the translation: ‘Was den ‘Herrn der Herren’ anbetrifft, der auf ihrer Brust ist, (es) ist der ‘Herr des Schweigens’, Upuaut ‘der aus der Balsamierungshalle herausgekommen ist’. Isis ist seine (Amulett?-)Figur auf seiner Brust. (Und) man sagte zu Upuaut, mit keinem Menschen (darüber) zu sprechen’. For both *nb* and *nbt* the writing Δ is used throughout the manual. *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* has no attestations for the epithet *nbt-nbw* for Isis or Hathor (IV, 71-72), and only single attestation for the epithet *nb-nbw* as referring to *wp-w3wt* (III, 658): Ockinga & al Masri, *El Mashayikh* I (1988), plate 57, no. 71, which on closer inspection turns out to be wrong: *wp-w3wt ssm r itm nb nbw wsir hk3 psdt*: ‘Upwawet who guides Re-Atum, the lord of lords, and Osiris the ruler of the Ennead’. Considering both the placement of the epithet in the sentence and the fact that most attestations of the epithet refer to solar gods, including Re-Atum, it most likely refers to Re-Atum, and not Upwawet. In the case of the Tebtunis manual this leaves only the context to help us decide upon a masculine or a feminine reference. Here it seems clear to me that the intended reference must be Isis since the protasis with *ir* is followed by *3st pw*. In Feder’s reading, the apodosis is elliptic as we miss the pronominal *iw=f*, or a nominal sentence with *pw*. In the next sentence the emendation of =s into =f is forced, and if we follow Feder’s reading of the last sentence, *imi=t* then contains the wrong suffix and we are once more forced to emendate. Thus while possible, Feder’s translation requires too many emendations and makes for worse grammar than the original.

⁸³⁸ For this use of *sp-sn* cf. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta* (2006), 142.

⁸³⁹ The parsing by Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux. Osiris et Isis-Hathor aux portes de la Moyenne Egypte’, *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag* (2003), 156 fails to take into account the preceding *m-di*. His reading of the following would require an emendation: *rmt nb nn rh=[sn]* or similarly to yield his ‘quiconque ne doit pas connaître...’. His reading of the barque as *hnt* instead of *w* resulting in *m-hnt sp3t tn* ‘au dedans ce nome’ (loc. cit. n. 50) is a valid alternative to the reading proposed by Osing and adopted here.

23]w im hwt-hr pw[....	...therewith. It is Hathor...
24	...] s3k rdw ntr m kbhw [...] nwd.t=f m hwt-h[bn...] kis hr[...	The efflux of the god was collected as libation water...that he had embalmed in the house of Heben... Cusae on account of...
25	...]=f3tf-phwy r d3w[...sh mitt [... ...] iryw wn.in pr [...] h ^c w n [...	He Atef-Pehuy on account of the food...likevise...
26		Therof. Then...came out...the limbs of...
27	...] wsir [...] ntf [...	...Osiris...he...
28		
29	...] rk [...	...reign...
30	...]d3 nbt [...] pw hwt-hr [...	...The lady of... Hathor is...
31	...] nb s [...] rdw-ntr m[...	...The efflux of the god in...
32	...]h ^c w-ntr mn i/r[... ^c rf]m hnw krs [...	...the limbs of the god, established until...wrapped inside the bindings...
33	...]sms [...] (ntr) dit r imntt [...	...Placed in the west...
34	...] (mw) m [...] n.tw m 3tf [...	...(Watery area) in...was ... in Atef-
35	phwy...]rn n w ^c b[...idnw m sp3t	Pehuy ...the name of the w ^c b-priest ...a substitute in this nome...
4, 1	{m sp3t} tn iw [...] h ^c w-ntr m nt gm.n.tw snm m mw bs ⁱ .(w)	...the limbs of the god in the water. 'The nourishment in the water' surfaced ⁸⁴⁰ .
2	bwt irtt im hr=snbt-hwt pw k3.tw m sp3t tn	Milk is taboo there on account of it. It is Nephtys, so they say in this nome.
3	nrt tn m3r in nwt m p3kt nn šn ^c n.s m sšr n nsw ⁸⁴¹ nfr n 9db3.tw m rnnwtt	This goddess who was bound by the weave of fine linen, there being nothing held back from her, consisting of fine royal linen of nine-strands linen, she being clad like Renenutet.
4	hh=s h ^c w-ntr nty hr mh gm.n.tw=f is hr hf3(3t) sdg3=s shm ntr hr ^c rt	She searched for the limbs of god which were floating. When he was found on the banks, she hid/saw the statue of the god beneath the ^c rw-tree.
5	gm=s hh=s r=s m tštš ⁸⁴² s3t dhny m stt imn.w n imntt rdi.n.tw=f is-sw r imntt	She found what she was looking for as the dismembered one (in) the Siat-cloth, hidden in the stt-cloth, hidden in the west, since it was towards the west that he was placed.
6	šsr n nsw ^c rf hr rdw pr m phwy m-ht ir.n stš [nkn]=f im	<u>Royal linen</u> was wrapped around the efflux which came forth from the behind after Seth had caused injury there
7	iw nn {m} hb stš m st tn	While Seth may not traverse this place,

⁸⁴⁰ Osing and Feder provide different translation of the passage. Osing has: 'dopo che si era trovato nutrimento nel latte materno' (p. 152 and n. b). Feder has: '(Denn) man hatte den gefunden, der sich vom "schützenden Wasser" (Muttermilch) nährt (Horus)'. The only personal determinative, the falcon on a standard, follows the word water. Following Feder's translation we would expect this determinative after *snm* or *bs³*, and *snm* should have the 'man with hand to the mouth determinative' instead of the food determinatives.

⁸⁴¹ Or *šm^cyt*

⁸⁴² Feder reads: *iw sm tštš (m) s3t* 'while the image of the dismembered one was in the siat-cloth'.

	<i>ḥwt-h3bny rn=s</i>	the name of which is 'Hut-Heben' (Mansion of the Heben-jar).
8	<i>ḥ^c.n.f krs m sp3t tn ir.tw rn n kis ḥr=s</i>	Then he was buried in this nome. Cusae got its name because of this.
	<i>iw ḥ^cf m pḥwy nty im=s ḥr irt n=f</i>	While the wrapping of the behind which is in it is because of what was done to him
	<i>mwt=i 3st ḥn^c nbt-ḥwt šn.tn s(w)</i>	'My mother Isis, and Nephtys: You shall curse him.'
9	<i>ḥpr šnd.ty m ḥnw sp3t tn 3st w^ct nbt-ḥwt kt šn=sn stš</i>	The two acacia came into being in this nome; one Isis the other Nephtys as they cursed Seth.
10	<i>ḥwr.ty ḥn^c p3-itn nty ḥr tp n p3 twt nty m ḥr n msh</i>	The two Huret-birds/insects are with the disk which is on the head of the statue of the god with the head of a crocodile.
11	<i>ir p3 ntr ḥr pw ir p3 twt nty m ḥr (n)msh stš pw t3 ḥwrt snt snty d3i <r>=f</i>	Concerning the god: It is Horus Concerning the statue with the head of a crocodile: It is Seth. The two Huret are the two sisters who oppose him.

	15 th U. E. Nome <i>wnwt</i> Capital <i>ḥmnw/wnw</i> (4, 11 – 7, 8)	
12	<i>wn shm m sp3t tn mi sšm pn m 3tf nb ḥ^cw ḥr msh r^c pw m ḥfḥf k3 nt m tp=f</i>	There is a statue in this nome like this stau in Atef-(Pehuy) 'The lord of manifestations with the face of a crocodile'. It is Re in the Ka-flood, the red crown is on his head.
13	<i>st n ḥms pw nt [ḥsf ?] s3 [ḥb]n n it=f m swḥ3 m wnw</i>	It is the dwelling place of the one who punished the son who committed a crime against his father in the slaughtering yard in Unu.
14	<i>mk s(w) m shnyw ḥn^c mwt=f tfnw [kḥbw]⁸⁴³=sn r šw</i>	He lay with his mother Tefnut, so that they were doing harm to Shu.
	<i>ir.tw ḥmn m sd si3t ḥmnw ḥr.tw r=f</i>	Eight strands linen was made into a skirt. It is called Siat-linen from Khemenu.
15	<i>ir.tw s(w) m dbḥw m ḥmnw ḥr s3 n nb=f šw s3-smsw</i>	It was made as a cultic object in Khemenu for the protection of his lord, Shu, the eldest son (of Re).
16	<i>ttf.n=f ḥ^cw=f m šdt wd3 wd3 3ḥy=f pt ḥr s3=f m iwnw m ḥr n g3f m ḥnt ḥ^c-t3</i>	He overflowed his limbs in the well, so that he was whole (again). He lifted the sky over his son in Heliopolis as the monkey-headed one in front of the

⁸⁴³ I am not certain about Osing's restoration (p. 160 n. f). *kḥb* seems to be a physical violent act and not a transgression.

		primeval hill.
17	<i>ir wnwt 3mm m^cb3=s ir[=s ^cdw]⁸⁴⁴ m s3</i>	Concerning Unut who grabbed her
18	<i>wh3i hsi-ḳd pw wpd m shr=f rdi hr gs=f hft bnbn nhm-^cw3 m hmⁿw nhbt- ^cnw m dp</i>	spear: She made a slaughter of the arrogant son, that one of wretched character who was judged according to his deeds ⁸⁴⁵ and slain because of having fornicated with Nehemt-awai in Khemenu and Nehbet-anet in Dep.
19 ⁸⁴⁶	<i>hb nhb.tw n=s in t3yw [hmwt] sp-sn hs n [k3?]=s</i>	A festival was assigned her. It is all of the men and women who sing for her Ka (?) ⁸⁴⁷ .
	<i>hrt pw k3.tw hr t3 hnwt n hnw-pr</i>	It is Horit, so they say about the 'mistress of the inner temple'.
20	<i>wn=s⁸⁴⁸ [...] m nri nt hm nwt</i>	She was in...in the time (of the year) of the majesty of Naunet.
21	<i>ir [hmⁿw n] niwt tn ifd t3yw ifd hmwt hmⁿw nty hr rdit i3w n r^c irw iht nb tmw</i>	Concerning the Ogdoad in this city: four males, and four females, eight who give praise to Re, who created completely everything.
22	<i>[km3.n]=sn is mtwt=sn r bnn hft [wsn=sn m wb3] i^cw</i>	when they had formed their seed as a ball when they procreated in emitting sperm,
23	<i>rdi kwiw r kmt nt hfy hr hf3</i>	'Otherness' was placed against Egypt, since the flood had overflowed the bank.
	<i>ms sfi in 3hw smh sy</i>	A child was born by The Radiant, who immersed herself.
24	<i>wrt nsywt hr[=tw r=s ^ch^c sfy] hr=s hr wh3 mw ntrt</i>	The great royal one, so they say about her. The child stood up under her looking for the goddess' fluid.
	<i>hf pw nn mn] mw pr=f m mnd</i>	It was empty, there was not any fluid that could come out of the breast,
25	<i>hr [dfdf r] t3 wpd nhb [wr hpr m wsrt</i>	(however) a (single) drop fell to earth and a great lotus opened, becoming great.
	<i>rdi sfi dr.tw n]=f igpw nn rh=f sw hd[d pw m st bid]=f</i>	The child caused the dark clouds to disappear for himself without knowing it. Thus there was light instead of his blindness
26	<i>smn [3hw sfy imywt ^cbwy]=sy mht-wrt [m d3t nwn mwt-ntr</i>	The radiant established the child

⁸⁴⁴ or *s^ct*.

⁸⁴⁵ Frank Feder refers to *Dendara X*, 225,5-6, where the goddess carries the same epithet, but where the god punished is Seth.

⁸⁴⁶ The rest of the column heavily dependent on parallels.

⁸⁴⁷ For the joint celebration of the goddess by the men and women of Hermopolis cf. Nektanebo's stela from Hermopolis (Roeder, 'Zwei hieroglyphische Inschriften aus Hermopolis (Ober-Ägypten)', *ASAE* 52 (1954), 399-401) and *Urk.* VIII, 62 (Ptolemy III offers a 'necklace' to Khonsu-Thoth and Nehemet-awai).

⁸⁴⁸ or *wn is*.

		between her horns, Mehet-Urt in crossing Nun, the mother of god.
27	<i>hfy r^c (r) st nhb m hb=f m š]^{c3} hftyw=[f nb shr m iw-nrsr</i>	Re came up at the place of the lotus in his festival in the great lake, all his enemies were cast down on the island of flames.
28 29	<i>p3 iw [nrsr...st ifd ifd⁸⁴⁹] hmnw pw m [k3yt k3 hr nprt] nt š [^{c3} r gs nwn pr ht] nb im=f</i>	The island of flames It is the place of the two tetrads of the Ogdoad on the High hill on the bank of the great lake beside Nun, from whom all things came forth:
30 31 32	<i>t3 hnwt [nt hnw pr šw] hr sšt3 [sšt3 n mr-pr-hd s]fh ^cbwy [sš3t wrt ... šw] hnm mw[it isdn hks ts]m (m) nd3⁸⁵⁰=f nn [snd=f p3 snm k^c]=f ^cn[w sw r wnm ^cnw</i>	The mistress of the inner temple, Shu with the secret image of the keeper of the treasury, Sefekh-Abuy, the great Seshat, Shu, Khnum, Muyt (?) ⁸⁵¹ , Isden who skins the dog without fear, the one which eats when it vomits again to eat again,
5, 1	<i>p3] wpt [whm mdwt dhny ntr ib n r^c snsn.n=f] {ib n r^c sns n.n=f} shm=f, (m) k3b=f m nb hmnw</i>	The messenger who repeats words, the divine ibis, the heart of Re, when he has united with his shrine, inside it as the lord of the Ogdoad,
2	<i>sfl ^cbwy nbt sš t3 hnwt n pr md3t, s3t wsir [sfl] it=s ^cb shmt sbkt 3st sriw(t) rdi wtr⁸⁵²=s iw hr m stm</i>	Sefekh-Abuy, lady of writing, the mistress of the library, the daughter of Osiris, who loosens her reunited father, Sakhmet, Sobekt, Isis, the goose who gives its blood while Horus is the Sem-priest -
3	<i>ir {s^ch} (šnt)⁸⁵³ [nty m] s^ch=f m^cnht hry tby=f</i>	Concerning the ring which is as his mark of dignity: The m ^c nht-pendant and his sandals ⁸⁵⁴ .
4 5	<i>^cnwt m wnw t nbwt m imn sšt3 mr-ptḥ ^cnh t3wy ^c3t ntr sns n=f htwt imn-wr- n3-hmnw s3t3w snm=s(n) i3w 3bhwn m hmt t3yw im=sn</i>	- The beautiful in Wenet, the golden one in the hidden secret, the beloved of Ptah in Ankhtowe, the donkey of god with whom the baboons unite, Amon-the greatest of the Ogdoad ⁸⁵⁵ , snakes who eat the old one and frogs as the

⁸⁴⁹ Following the reading suggested by Goyon in his review of the publication, with the two tetrads referring to the male and female members of the Ennead (*Orientalia* 69/2 (2000), 173)

⁸⁵⁰ From *ntnt* cf. Goyon *Orientalia* 69/2 (2000), 173.

⁸⁵¹ In *Medinet Habu* VII, pl. 540 a goddess *bwy*t appears together with Khnum of *hwt-wrt*.

⁸⁵² From *trwt*.

⁸⁵³ Emended after parallel.

⁸⁵⁴ I prefer taking *hr* as coordinative here. But perhaps we should read *m^cnht hr(t) tby* ‘the lower (part of the) m^cnht-pendant and his sandals’.

⁸⁵⁵ Osing (p. 163) and Feder sees the donkey and Amon as being identical.

		female and male among them ⁸⁵⁶ .
6	<i>snty m hrt nmit=sn m šm^ct mhwt nm^c=sn is hr [3tyt] w^ct shk^r=sn m pyw nhn</i>	The two sisters are the ones on top of their litter as the upper and lower Egyptian crowns. It is on a single bed they lie when they have been decorated with Pe and Nekhen ⁸⁵⁷ .
7 8	<i>ir hb ury 3bd 1 3ht šw 19 hd-htp m dhwtj gb m tsm sm³^c-hrw šw s³-smsw r gb hpr m nkn⁸⁵⁸ im m bd³</i>	<u>Concerning the festival held</u> on the first month of Akhet day 19: Hedjhotep is Thoth and Geb a dog. The triumph of Shu, the eldest son, over Geb, which occurs at the place of slaughter by means of a Bedja-goose.
9	<i>sp⁸⁵⁹ ir=s wtr sš-m³^c r sm³t=s r³t r nwwt r sip šn^c=(s) spr(w) r ht m ^cdt⁸⁶⁰</i>	If it happens that it produces much blood in its lungs: a goose for Naunet, in accordance with the inspection of (its) breast, when it has reached a state in slaughter ⁸⁶¹ .
10	<i>ii t³⁸⁶² tf.tw hr iht tn (r) nm=f m hwt-ibt nn db^c s³-t³(w) snm=sn n(y)s(w)=sn</i>	A jar comes overflowing with this offering that it may go around in the Temple of the Net.
11 12	<i>š^ch^c(tw) isdn m irw=f ir.twgs³t⁸⁶³ iw=s ^crf.tw m ^cd n hr-wr hr-ib gsi iw dd.tw gs³t r m^cr n hr-wr m mr hs šsp.n=f s(y) hr-tp=f di=f s(y) m w³h</i>	Isden is raised in his form. A leather wrapped in fat was made for Haroeris residing in Cusae. The clothing of Haroeris as the overseer of singers is called 'leather'. When he had taken it on him(self), he placed it as a garland
13 14	<i>ir n=s⁸⁶⁴ gs³t m tm³w nhbt-^cnw m pr hmnw šnbt-ntr=s n hrp hrt wrt is mr-pt^h pw šhmt pw inb-hd tfnwt m hwt-h³</i>	A leather was made for her as the shroud of Nehebt-anu in the temple of Khemenu, her 'god's breast' (amulet) for the Kherep priest, like the great Horit. She is the beloved of Ptah. She is Sakhmet of Memphis, Tefnut in the house of disease
15	<i>df³w n hwt-hr nbt h^cw drt-ntr hrt-kbh^w j³f³f</i>	Food (was provided) for Hathor, the lady of manifestations, the hand of

⁸⁵⁶ I take the *sdm=f* as virtual relative clause. For a different reading see Leitz, 'Die Geierweibchen des Thothbuches in den 42 Gauen Ägyptens', RdÉ 63 (2012), 154: 'die Schlangen – das Alter hat sie verzehrt (?)'.

⁸⁵⁷ Subordinated cleft sentence, used as explanation for the concept *hrit-nmit*. Note the pun: *nmit* – *nm^c*.

⁸⁵⁸ var. *m st nkn*.

⁸⁵⁹ Osing (p. 171) reads *n-sp*: '<non> ha mai dato sangue'.

⁸⁶⁰ With Seth det.

⁸⁶¹ This is a technical term, used in the medical texts (e.g. p. Smith 2,10: *ir rh=k spr=f r iht, dd pw rh=k mwt=f r ^cnh=f*), to refer to a decisive moment in the progress or cure of the decease. Is the procedure here related to some kind of Omen?

⁸⁶² A few examples known to the Wörterbuch. Could this be a writing of the slightly more common *mnt³t*?

⁸⁶³ This reading from Feder, Osing (p. 193) has *gg^t* 'kidney'.

⁸⁶⁴ var. '*ir.n=f n=s*'.

		god, with libations and praise.
16 17	<i>is r^c m wnw^t m imt dpt=f m hr-mw m nwn hr mh^w=sn is ḥs3t šdt r^c mh-wrt m d3 hr itrw r^c hr wpt=s m nḥn</i>	While Re is in Unut and in Imet, his boat being a ship in Nun on its waters. While Hesat, the nurse of Re, the great flood is crossing the river with Re on her brow as a chil.
	<i>iw ḥsb.tw i3tyw hr km-wr hr k3yt k3t nt s3w(n)=sn</i>	The mound-dwellers are counted at Arthribis and the High hill of the guardians.
18	<i>is r^c m ḥwt bk3t=f(m) t3-dsr n=sn b3 m pr ḥmnw ts=sn r ḥ^c-t3</i>	While Re is in the house of his pregnancy ⁸⁶⁵ in the necropolis. A Ba belongs to them in the temple of Khemenu that they can ascend to the rising land.
19 20	<i>imy š3t ḥnwt m pr ḥmnw tbwt-m^cnḥt rdw-ntr m km3wty ⁸⁶⁶dmd ḥ^cpy bnnt n bw wrw pr m nwn ḥft išp r tr n win {ḥt wry} <tr>w⁸⁶⁷</i>	The one in the crypt, the mistress in the temple of Khemenu ‘the sandal and Mankhet-pendant and the divine efflux’ is in the effigy when the flood unites with the Semen of the place of the great one who came forth from the Nun at the brightening at the time of the passing of the seasons .
21 22	<i>ir wnw^t nt t3 šm^cw ntrt pw nbt ḥ3w ndyt⁸⁶⁸ nt pr nnwt k3yt k3t n ḥmnw nty m[iw]-nsrsr r dr isft m wnw</i>	<u>Concerning</u> Unut of Upper Egypt: She is the goddess, the lady of fighting of the chamber of Naunet in the High hill of Khemenu which is on the island of fire to expel unrighteousness from Unu.
23	<i>[s]ḥtp.tw k3-m3^ct m ḥprw pfy [n sm3-m3^ct gsgs] wnw^t m nb wd wptyw [n] šm^c-mh^w</i>	The Bull of Maat is installed in that form united with Maat the regulator of Unut as lord of command, the judge of Upper and Lower Egypt.
24 25	<i>isdn im m ḥd-[ḥtp iw nḥ]mt-^cw3 im m ḥrt nt[s srk] ḥtyt n šw dr in=s m-^c [^cw3y n bs hr šw] m š-^c3 iw t3 hr iry ḥb [n k3 m3^ct]</i>	Isden is there as Hedj-hotep, while Nehemet-awai is there as Horit It is her who allows the throat of Shu to breathe since she was brought from the faraway region for her initiation to Shu in the great lake while the land is performing a festival for the lord of Maat.
26 27, 28	<i>ir ḥtmt nt t3y šnbt [isdn hr]=s ḥknw db^cw [...] ḥš^cš=f pw db^cw[...]</i>	<u>Concerning</u> the treasure for clothing the breast of Isden, <u>a collier</u> , fingers...it is his throat. Fingers...
28	<i>ir p3 [...]n ḥrp[ḥrt wrt t3 ḥnwt n]ḥnw-pr</i>	<u>Concerning the</u> ...The kherep priest of Horit the great the mistress of the

⁸⁶⁵ An objective genitive: the pregnancy with him, i.e. the process that leads to his birth.

⁸⁶⁶ Reading suggested by Goyon, ‘De seize et quatorze, nombres religieux. Osiris et Isis-Hathor aux portes de la Moyenne Egypte’, *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag* (2003), 149-160.

⁸⁶⁷ Emended after a parallel. For the term *win tri* as a designation of New Year cf. Cauville, ‘Le bâton sacré d’Hathor’, *Diener des Horus FS. Kurth* (2008), 45.

⁸⁶⁸ A few examples known to the *Wörterbuch* – is it somehow connected to the mythic locality?

		inner temple
29	<i>ḥrt-wrt [...] šw s3 smsw [...] pw n šw</i>	Horit the great...Shu, the eldest son...it is...of Shu
30	<i>nw [...] sw im=f ky pw [...] ḥms.tw m sš[t3..]ḥwt nty wnw[...]rn=s rn n</i>	...him in it. There is another...sitting in the form...the house of Unu...her name. The name of...
31	<i>...]bs=f^cn[...</i>	...He entered again...
6, 1	<i>In.n=f s(y) m i[tt] it.n=f s(y) r ḥwt-wr rdi.n=f s(y) [im] sti m ḥnrt</i>	When he had brought her to bed, he took her to the great house and he placed her there thrown in prison
2	<i>ḥ^c ḥms.[tw] wpt m w3y w3r m-^c=f iw3t [s(y)] ntr pn r nh[t=s]tn⁸⁶⁹</i>	Then they sat judging in taking the bracelet from him, since this god had robbed her of this her protection
3 4 5	<i>dsr.tw=s im in ḥr[p m s3w]=s ḥkr pw hr šnbt=f sšt3.n=f s(y) imy ḥ^cw=f db3 m pg3 dsr wr sp [sn] imn sp-sn iw=s mniw im r st irw m bw tw3⁸⁷⁰.n=f sw im m^cnḥt w3r pw ir.n=f im nn⁸⁷¹ nš=f s(y) rsi</i>	It was protected there by the Kherepriest in guarding it. It is the decoration on his breast. He hid it on his limbs, clothed in fine linen, very protected and very hidden, while it remains there in the proper place at the place where he elevated it. It is the Mankhet-Leather string pendant that he made there, without expelling her at all.
6	<i>iki.tw n=s in shty (ḥr)^cš3 n=f iḥt gb</i>	It was claimed by <u>The castrated one</u> in multiplying for himself the possessions of Geb
7	<i>ḥ^c wn.in w^cr =sn ḥ3t nbd ḥfd.n=s m ḥnw nnwt ḥ^c ii.n.tw r nd-ḥt=s in nbt-ḥwt m-di dhwt</i>	Then they fled before The dark one, and she settled inside Naunet. Then Nephtys and Thoth came to ask of her condition.
8	<i>ḥ^c dd=f n=s in mtw(t) s tkn m n3 špsy m wn m3^c⁸⁷² ḥ^c dd.n=s n=f ḥrw⁸⁷³</i>	Then he said to her: 'Do you have a man who is truly near the noble ones?' Then she said to him a sound.
9	<i>ḥ^c dd=f n=s mk špsy m-ḥnw pr=i ds=i ḥ^c m3^c s(t) dd.tw n=s(t) n3 snty n pr ḥmnw</i>	Then he said to her: 'Look a noble one is inside my own house'. Then they took the right path and they were called 'the siblings in the temple of Khemenu'.
10 11	<i>iw nsrsr š3 š^c3 ḥr.tw r=f st ḥ^c in ḥmnw ḥr n^crt iw wn 3ḥw m-di=sn r [3w] iw n3y=sn t3yw-ḥnnw m s ifd irw</i>	<u>The Island of Fire:</u> A garden which is called 'The great lake'. The standing place of the Ogdoad

⁸⁶⁹ The reading proposed by Feder *di.n* does not take into account the usual writing in this manuscript: 'rdit.n'. The demonstrative better fits the writing.

⁸⁷⁰ The reading is secured by the determinative.

⁸⁷¹ Written *nty* cf. Osing p. 173 n. bd.

⁸⁷² A pun on an epithet of Nehemet-awai, cf. *Edfou* IV, 295: *špst m wn m3^c* 'The truly noble one'.

⁸⁷³ Feder proposes to read *m3^c ḥrw*: 'the voice is true'.

		beneath the Nart-tree. The Radiant one is there with them all while their phallic ones consist of four persons thereof ⁸⁷⁴
12	<i>km3=sn r=s sn m ntr ifd d3d3=sn im=sn hpr bnn nt hpr m hnw=sn m sp-tpy pr m nhb iw nhn im=f m sp nfr</i>	They threw themselves thereat as four gods and they copulated with them. The ball of the scarab came into being inside them at the first occasion, coming forth as a lotus with a child inside as a perfect event.
13 14 15	<i>phr tp 3ht r m33 s3=s shn.n=f hr wpt=s pr.n=f m kkw r driw sti h h wn hmnw im=f iw nrt⁸⁷⁵ fift nrt tn mitt r mn hrw (pn)</i>	The head of the Radiant turned around to see her son, and he descended on her brow and came out of the darkness to spread sunlight. Then the Ogdoad came to be there while the Nart-tree bloomed. The Nart-tree is the same unto this day
	<i>wnwt dd.tw r hmnw dhwty pw ir.n=f hprw=f h3</i>	Khemenu is called Unut: It is Thoth who made his form as the fighter.
16 17	<i>wn nkn hr m-ht h3 hn st iw hr dd=f n mwt=f m-ht m3.n=f b ii=t mwt=i wnn=t iw bw iry=(t) mdw=t</i>	Horus was injured after fighting with Seth, and he said to his mother after having seen Be: 'You shall come, mother. Do you not wish to speak?'
18	<i>i3dt m h w-ntr=f hpr ir.tw rn n wnwt iw wn mdw ir.tw rn m sp3t=tn hr=s</i>	The malady is in his divine limbs. It happened that the name of Unut was made, since words existed. Because of this the name was created in this nome.
19	<i>dd.tw hmnw hr shpr hmnw n km3.n pth m hnw sp3t tn ifd t3yw ifdt hmw ir.tw rn m h3swt tn hr=sn dhwty m hw nwr(?)=f hr=s</i>	They say: 'Khemenu' because of the coming into being of the Ogdoad which Ptah created in this nome; four males and four females. Because of them the name was created in this desert. Thoth is the slayer of his trembler (?) because of it.
20 21	<i>ir hbi 3pd pw snm=f m h w-ntr m mw wn hr hr mh hr itrw w3w r knw 3 m t3 sm w⁸⁷⁶ rdi k=f r pt in w h nhs hsy wn imy t3-hnty</i>	Concerning the Ibis (hb): This bird had eaten of the divine limbs in the water, while Horus was floating on the river 'far away' ⁸⁷⁷ from being because of the great crime in Upper Egypt due to a vile Nubian who was in the southern land.
22	<i>wn 3pd pn wnm im=f m mw sndm pw</i>	This bird ate of him in the water. Then

⁸⁷⁴ There must be some kind of scribal error here. One would expect a mention of the four goddesses and in fact 'four' is written as the feminine 'ifdt' but without a feminine noun present. Feder reconstructs the sentence as: *n3y=sn t3yw hmt m s ifdt irw* '(also) ihren männlichen (und) weiblichen (Kindern), nämlich jeweils vier Personen'.

⁸⁷⁵ Written as *nrt-hnt* the 20th U. E. nome.

⁸⁷⁶ Pace Quack, review of Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, in *Or* 77 (2008), 110.

⁸⁷⁷ I take *w3w.w r* as another instance of euphemism.

23	<i>ir.n=f hr ht=f hft s3w=f wdn ib=f r=f iw dd.[tw n=f hbi] dr hb.n=f r h3t nt</i>	he made himself comfortable on his belly when he was satisfied (but) his innards were heavy for him, and he is called 'Ibis' because he had gorged in the corpse of Osiris when it landed at the 'great sea of fire'.
24	<i>[wsir] hft mni=s r š-^{c3} m nsrsr</i>	
25	<i>[iw dd.tw n=f 3ht]⁸⁷⁸ ib n p[w] dr wnm=f iht [...]nt h3t tn špst m nwn</i>	[He is called the crested Ibis of] the heart, since he had eaten of the relics ...of this noble corpse in Nun.
	<i>...[drw=f r s3]=[f...]im pn [...]</i>	his side to his back...this skin
26	<i>gr[g..] sp[...] r tp=f [...]</i>	equipped...once...to his head
27	<i>sp[...] im=f r [...]m^cb3yt hr [...]</i>	once...his skin to...in the court of the thirty because of...
28	<i>ntr hr [...] r ksw=f wn.tw hdy [...] nnwt r kn</i>	God because of ...to his bones...They travelled north...Naunet concerning the crime
29	<i>shmt [...] m nhbt dd.tw [...] swt m tit r</i>	Sakhmet...in Nekhbet. It is called...the sedge as sign of...
30	<i>...[tn dd.tw n=f [...] špsy m hr [...]</i>	...this ...he is called...the honourable with the face of...
31	<i>...[m ntr pn r mn [hrwpn...] wr ir [...]</i>	...as this god unto this day...The Great. Concerning...
32	<i>...[h^cw-ntr n wh [...] ii pw ir[.n stš</i>	...the divine limbs of Ukh...Then Seth came
7,1	<i>{ii pw ir.n stš} m wn[wt...nty...]r h3 r [...]ihn</i>	In Unut ...of...to fight against...flowers
2-3	<i>...[nt hr h^c[(n) hw hr nh3]-hr [...] iw di=f ptr=f dd.tw n=f hwt-wr r [...hn]m.tw n3 rmt n [sp] r irt [hr] bwt n3 rmt pw msh hr=s</i>	...of Horus. Then Horus slew the fierce-faced, when he had let him see. It is called 'The Great Temple' because of...The people were joined as one because of/to the eye of Horus. The crocodile is taboo for the people on account of this.
4		
5	<i>hnm nb hwt-wr <hry> sst3 n wr tn hnm.n=f tmhy⁸⁷⁹ nty im iw dd.tw n=f hnm kdiw rmt m nb nhp prt snh.tw [im]= s m-di 3b=f sn</i>	Khnum, the lord of Hut-weret, overseer of secrets of this great one, took the red ochre which was there. He is called Khnum, the fashioner of mankind as lord of the potter's wheel. Mourning was fixed therein because he loved ⁸⁸⁰ them.
6		
7	<i>dd.tw pgg^t hr 3^c n itrw hs r mw iw swd3=s h^cw-ntr m iy stš r whm kni r h^cw-ntr m hwt-wr s3w n hnm nb hwt wrt m w^cbw n=f imyw</i>	They say: Frog, big faced of the river, who sang to the water while she protected the divine limbs when Seth came to repeat his crime against the divine limbs in Hut-weret. The protection of Khnum, the lord of Hut-
8		

⁸⁷⁸ Reconstruction by Feder.

⁸⁷⁹ Cf. Aufrere L'univers minéral dans la pensée égyptienne II (1991), 653 for the mythology of red ochre as the blood of enemies, albeit with different Egyptian terms.

⁸⁸⁰ A pun on the word for 'branding' 3bw; Khnum uses the red ochre for making humans, and in the process he fixes the negative aspects of the colour red on mankind.

	Weret is the priests belonging to him.
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	16 th U. E. Nome <i>mḥ/m3-ḥd</i> Capital <i>ḥbnw</i> (7,8 – 7, 31)	
7, 8	<i>dd.tw mḥ r rn n mḥ [nḥt]iry n ḥr ḥr it=f</i>	It (the nome) is called Meh according to the name of the victorious sailing which Horus did on behalf of his father.
9	<i>dd.tw ḥbnw r ḥw(t) bin m3i-ḥd</i> <i>Nḥm.tw wd3t m-^c=fr</i>	It is called Hebenu according to the beating of the evil one, the gazelle, when the Udjat-eye was taken from him.
10 11	<i>iw dd: ir smḥ bnw ḥn.tw b3 im=f m</i> <i>mnḥp ḥnty pw k3.tw m rdit dsr.tw [s3m]</i> <i>n ntr im=f s3^c.n=f mḥw⁸⁸¹ nw iḥt nt it=f</i> <i>nḥm.n=f m-^c pfy</i>	Namely ⁸⁸² : <u>Concerning</u> the boat of departure: the Ba was rowed in it in a Menhep-clothing. It is a southward journey, so the say, when causing the form of the god to be protected therein, when he had begun taking care of the relics of his father, which he had taken away from that one.
12	<i>s3 wsir ḥr psd n nbd bik špsy ḥr m3i-ḥd</i> <i>ḥr mrty pw ḥtm m iḥt=f sbi[w] ḥsw ḥr</i> <i>ḥry [...] =f</i>	The son of Osiris is on the back of the Dark one, the splendid falcon on the gazelle. It is Hor-merty completed with his relics, when the vile rebels have fallen under his [...]
13	<i>iw mḥ dd.tw r ḥ3st tn mḥ.tw iḥt ntr nb</i> <i>im=f</i>	This desert is called Meh ⁸⁸³ , when all of the god's relics have been completed in him.
14	<i>[iw dd.tw] mḥ r ḥbnw dr dd[tw] ir.tw=f</i> <i>smḥ</i>	Hebenu is called Meh, because they said: 'It is made, the boat'.
	<i>iw dd.tw mḥ r ḥdb⁸⁸⁴ ir.ty nḥm.w m-^c</i> <i>m3i-ḥd</i>	They say Meh according to the wounding of the two eyes and their rescue from the gazelle.
15 16	<i>nkn.tw[wd3t]=f m-^c ḥr is iw dd.tw n=s</i> <i>p3 h3 m-tw ḥpr b3gi iw ntry=f pw m-dr</i> <i>ḥtm.n=f sw m iḥt hrt=f nn nšn. {n}=f</i>	His Udjat-eye was injured by (?) Horus himself. They say to it: The damaged one when weariness arises. It is his divine eye when he has completed it with the relics, and its needs, without its raging.
17	<i>iry m ḥft dw pfy sbiw wd3t ḥr.twr m3i-ḥd</i> <i>ḥft nkn.n=f ḥr=s</i>	'The one who acts as that evil one, the rebel against the Udjat-eye', so they say about the gazelle when he had injured its face.
	<i>dd.tw kh3 ḥt⁸⁸⁵ pr m irt-r^c <iry> kniw r</i>	They say: 'The one who is violent

⁸⁸¹ Written as the word for 'flax'.

⁸⁸² Feder detects a missing sentence here, which would start *iw dd.tw*. Another option is to take the phrase as it stands and read *r-dd* 'namely' introducing the next rubricized section.

⁸⁸³ Feder proposes to emend *iw* to *ir*, 'Concerning Meh, it is said of this desert since...'

⁸⁸⁴ From *ḥtb/hdb* 'Overthrow/kill'. Cf. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon* (1997), 778-79.

18	<i>st hpr.n=f whm.n=f m wd3t irw n st m whm nhb sw im=f</i>	against the relics that came out of the eye of re who committed a crime against the place where came into being and repeated himself'. The form of seth again to which he is assigned ⁸⁸⁶ .
19	<i>wnp s(w) si3 ntry snm.n=f wd3t=f htm.n=f s(y) (m) hrt=f m hrt-hrw</i>	The Divine falcon stabbed him since he had eaten of his Udjat-eye and he completed it with its needs in the course of the day.
20	<i>ir mh dd.tw r hbnw stš pw hnp.n=f ht n wsir °h° hr hn° dhwtj hr shn m s3=f r int iht it.n=f</i>	Concerning Meh, which is said of Hebenu: It is Seth when he had stolen from the relics of Osiris. Then Horus and Thoth descended after him to bring back the relics he had taken.
21	<i>wn=sn ph=f ndr iw=sn (sw) wr sp sn nn gm=sn iht m-°=f hr mht n h3st tn</i>	They reached him and they held unto (him) good. They did not find the relics in his possession on the north side of this desert. Then Horus was on his back and then they beat him up good for what he had done.
22	<i>wn.in hr hr psd=f wn=sn hwt=f wr sp sn hr ir.n=f</i>	
	<i>hr dd=f mh.n=i mitt hr ir.n=f</i>	Horus said: 'I have taken care of the equivalent of what he has done'.
23	<i>ir bik p3 nty hr [psd] n m3i-hd sšm pn m-° i.dd.n=f pw hpr rn n h3st tn r mh hr=s</i>	Concerning the falcon on the back of the gazelle. It is in this form because of what that he said. Then the name of this desert became Meh because of this
24	<i>... s3[...] iw dd.tw (m rn n)⁸⁸⁷ st hsb[.tw] dw=f r=f ir[.n.tw m⁸⁸⁸</i>	...after..they said (as the name of) Seth: 'Let his evil be reckoned against him and was done/placed in...
25-26 ⁸⁸⁹	<i>... mi itm.n=f wdi kniw hry-nmt=f ipy hr [...</i>	Like he had not caused harm. The one on his bier was counted because...
27	<i>...mh[...]itrw</i>	...flood....river
28	<i>[krs.tw=f m st tn] tp-°nh [3bdw...t3w] wr[...]</i>	He was buried in this place, the living head in Abydos...Thinite nome...
29	<i>...nh]st hs [...psd n mdw⁸⁹⁰] ikm [=f m i3by=f</i>	...vile Nubian...back of the evil one his shield on his left.
30	<i>...]tby=f w3h hr[...nw[...]</i>	...his sandals were put down on...
31	<i>...mh[...]3h[...]</i>	...flood...Akh...

⁸⁸⁵ See Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon* (1997), 1088-89 sv *khh* and *khh-irt*.

⁸⁸⁶ As an animal of offering presumably.

⁸⁸⁷ After a parallel.

⁸⁸⁸ Parallel has *rdi.n.tw*.

⁸⁸⁹ The rest of the column restored after parallel.

⁸⁹⁰ Perhaps for *mtj Wb 2*, 169.15.

Appendix B: Local Mythological manuals: The Papyrus Jumilhac

The papyrus Jumilhac is a large papyrus consisting of texts of different genres and dates that together make up the essential local knowledge for the priests of the 18th Upper Egyptian nome and includes material on the bordering 17th U.E. nome with which it appears to have merged. In its present state the papyrus is nine meters long, with unknown amounts of text lost at the beginning and end. The papyrus is datable to the early Ptolemaic period, and shows signs of having been in use for at least fifty years. The papyrus is illustrated with vignettes to the texts and divided into sections by double vertical lines. The script is cursive hieroglyphic with comments added in demotic⁸⁹¹. Since the pJumilhac is a local mythological manual, it includes far more details than the supra-regional Delta and Tebtunis manual, including myths that are not only unattested elsewhere but also in some cases follow unfamiliar patterns⁸⁹². Many of the aetiologies are associated with local temples and their rituals and extending to geology and plant life and even old ruined temples⁸⁹³.

The contents of the papyrus includes lists of *materiae sacrae*, comments to these lists and longer aetiological myths, some of which are also headed by titles that indicate that they too can be seen as commentaries to the list items. Since the different types of texts treat the same material, it becomes obvious that a clear-cut distinction between list texts and aetiological mythological narratives is hard to maintain and that they should rather be seen as two ends of a spectrum with the bare listing of names at the one end and the individual narrative elaboration of one list item at the other. For instance the list of 'Knowing the names of the district' is followed by a section devoted to 'Resolving the difficulties (*whꜥ itnw*) of the 'names of the district''⁸⁹⁴. In the list the capital of the nome is simply given as Dunawny which is then interpreted in the following section by a myth which can be

⁸⁹¹ Text edition and translation: Vandier, J., *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris 1961. For the dating and redaction of the manuscript see Quack, J.F. 'Corpus oder membra disiecta? Zur Sprach- und Redaktionskritik des Papyrus Jumilhac', *Diener des Horus. Festschrift für Dieter Kurth zum 65. Geburtstag* (2008), 203-228. For the structure of the manuscript see Köhler, U., *LÄ IV*, 709-711 and *idem* 'Die formale Aufteilung des Papyrus Jumilhac (Louvre E.17110)', *CdÉ* 65 (1990), 21-40. The attempt of Derchain ('L'auteur du papyrus Jumilhac', *RdÉ* 41 (1990), 9-30) to read the papyrus as the work of one author influenced by eschatological ideas has been convincingly rebuked by Quack *op. cit.*

⁸⁹² See the discussion by Quack, J.F., 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 15-18. When the remaining manuscripts of the Tebtunis mythological manual have been published, the 18th Upper Egyptian nome will provide a welcome test case for the differences between local and supra-regional mythological handbooks since this location is included among the nomes in the unpublished pCarlsberg 308.

⁸⁹³ For these aetiologies see Gomaà, 'Bemerkungen über einige Volksetymologien und Ätiologien im Papyrus Jumilhac', *Hommages à Fayza Haikal* (2003), 93-99

⁸⁹⁴ pJumilhac 7, 13-7, 22 and 7, 22-10, 2.

considered the emblematic myth of the nome since we also find a reference to it in the geographical vulture text of the Book of Thoth⁸⁹⁵:

Concerning Dunawny. As for the falcon whose wings are deployed: It is Shu when his ba rose above this place as *dwn-ḥwy* in the presence of his son Geb. It is Horus who is behind his father Osiris.

For the more important locations, the manual also provides longer narratives. For the capital Dunawny the short definition given as interpretation of the list item, is somewhat expanded in a section devoted to the religious importance of the capital:

Concerning the mound of Dunawny: the great city of Shu, the son of Re, wherein he rose to heaven. He returned as the wind to give life to his creation and to make all things come into being (*shpr wmnt nb*). The sacred nome of Wennefer, complete of limbs therein being all (that was found) in the cities and nomes to be buried (*ḥts*) in this nome. Shu is there in his function (*irw*) as god. Thoth is there and Osiris with his son Horus, his sister Isis is there by his side along with the gods who guard Osiris.

The relationship between the falcon rising in the air and the burial of Osiris only becomes apparent when other myths of the manual are taken into account, in which the head of Osiris is found by Anubis⁸⁹⁶:

Concerning the mound to the north of this place facing this god: It is called 'barren (*fk*) land', it is called 'land of the bald one'. Anubis went searching for his father Osiris on the papyrus mound on this ridge of Nedjyt in the vicinity of Andjet after a great misfortune came into being in this land. Then he found the august bald head of his father on the hill. Then his son Anubis transformed into a falcon and he placed him between his claws and he flew up carrying him to Dunawny to the necropolis which is there, while Thoth was at his side.

By performing necromancy on the head Thoth makes it reveal the whereabouts of the remaining limbs of Osiris, the finding of which is accorded its own section with specifications of finding place and date. These limbs are then gathered and buried in the northern mound. The apparent incompatibility of this version of with the first, on account of the different protagonists, Shu in the first and Anubis in the second, is resolved by the equation of Shu and Anubis elsewhere in the manual⁸⁹⁷, which depends on the close ties between the 17th U.E nome with its main deity Anubis and the 18th with Shu.

The different versions of the myth emphasize different aspects of the protagonists and include different details according to which sacred feature is sought explained. In addition,

⁸⁹⁵ pJumilhac 7, 23-8, 1. In the Book of Thoth the entry for the nome is: *wḥt nryt iw=s [pš] tnh irm p3e=s dw iw=w hywy n p3e=w it hr-ty p3y* 'A vulture spreading the wing(s) together with its young while they are protecting their father: it is Hardai' (L01 vs., x+2/17 = Jasnow and Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth* (2005), 340-347). Instead of Jasnow and Zauzich's 'Hor-Behdetite' I read 'Hardai' following Quack, 'Ein ägyptischer Dialog über die Schreibkunst und das arkane Wissen', *ARG* 9 (2007), 286. Hardai is formally the capital of the 17th U.E. nome but the two nomes appear to have merged at some point.

⁸⁹⁶ pJumilhac 10, 21-11, 15.

⁸⁹⁷ pJumilhac 5, 3 and 5, 17.

the short interpretations might function as mnemotechnic aids which distil the important features of the longer mythical narratives into short concise aetiologies which can themselves be condensed into a name.

The myth of the head of Osiris also demonstrates that the focus on local myths, rituals and deities does not mean that the manual is wholly unconcerned with national mythology or mythological geography. The myth proceeds from well-known places with a firm tradition in national Osiris mythology, i.e. Nedjyt and Busiris, to the local integration of this myth within local topography. The nome of Dunawy then becomes the focal place for the gathering of the limbs of Osiris who were killed in lower Egypt and whose limbs were dispersed over all of Egypt to be finally recollected in Dunawy. The choice of Dunawy is of course logical from a local point of view since this would be exactly what took place during the local Osiris rituals.

The manual also contains another way of associating the traditions concerning the limbs of Osiris with national mythological geography; it equates the site of Dunawy with that of Memphis, so that Dunawy becomes the Upper Egyptian locus for the restoration of Osiris, mirroring Memphis in Lower Egypt⁸⁹⁸.

The mechanism used for associating different locations is the same as found in the national mythological manuals, where narrative devices such as movement expressed with verbs of motion serve to associate different nomes. Another example of this can be seen in the narrative of Nemty which serves as one of the available aetiologies for the local *imi-wt* relic. In the relevant version the relic is made of the skin of Nemty according to the myth of Nemty's decapitation of his mother and his punishment by flaying⁸⁹⁹. The myth of the decapitated mother is strongly associated with the nome of Medenu, in Lower Egypt, and so it is natural that the local version incorporates Medenu. This is done by locating the crime itself in Medenu, and the subsequent restoration of the relationship between mother and son in Dunawy. Again it should be noted that there are no attempts at making Dunawy the origin of all mythological events, rather Dunawy becomes the place where myths are concluded, often in connection with rituals as can be gathered from the aetiological contents of the myths.

When Anubis combats the gang of Seth, this can be said to take place in Letopolis, the choice of which must depend on the mythological connotations of this place as concerned

⁸⁹⁸ 5, 1-9 (*texte bas*). The Memphite and Heliopolitan rites of Osiris are given a short treatment in 6, 1-6 (*texte bas*),

⁸⁹⁹ See above for the different versions of this myth, and its use in the Tebtunis manual.

with the destruction of enemies⁹⁰⁰. However mythological concerns could also be combined with actual geography as in the special case of the arrival of the gang of Seth from the Oxyrhynchite nome. This Sethian nome is a traditional and natural choice for the provenance of Seth's allies, even more so since it lay just across the Nile from the seventeenth and eighteenth nome. A similar combination of natural and mythological geography can be found in the Book of Fayum, in which a southern district named 'Menmen' is said to be a protection against Seth and the not so distant nome of Oxyrhynchos⁹⁰¹.

Whereas the supra-regional manual effected a reduction of complexity by identifying local gods with the gods of the ennead and provided aetiologies for local relics and other *materiae sacrae* by recourse to the myths of the ennead, the papyrus Jumilhac instead expands the possible mythological associations of local *materiae sacrae*. Special attention is given to the sacred object of Anubis, the Imi-Ut fetish. It is accorded several variant aetiologies, each of which covers specific aspects of the object and its association with different gods⁹⁰². In the aetiologies the fetish is linked to the skin of Seth and Nemty according to a pattern also found in other mythological manuals in which the skin of an enemy deity is made to serve as the vehicle of regeneration for a god, usually Osiris, slain by the deity. Here the manual displays various ingenious means for transferring the punishment by flaying from Anubis, whose skin the fetish originally represents⁹⁰³, to Seth. However the two gods are extremely closely linked, even to the point where the manual includes a list of the transformations of Seth into Anubis⁹⁰⁴, which might be read as an inventory of the Sethian aspects of this god. This shows that the negative aspects of the main local deity was not something that could merely be ignored but needed mythological interpretation, probably because it was somehow related to actual ritual behaviour⁹⁰⁵.

In different versions of a longer myth, it is told how Seth transformed himself into Anubis in order to get access to the embalment tent of Osiris⁹⁰⁶. Beinlich has drawn attention to a passage from Diodor in which he recounts the rituals concerning mummification. The first incision into the corpse was seen as a violation of the deceased. It

⁹⁰⁰ For the mythological role of Letopolis see above.

⁹⁰¹ Book of Fayum I. 47-48. = Beinlich, *Buch vom Fayum* p. 143 and cf. also p. 136.

⁹⁰² Translated and discussed in Köhler, *Das Imiut*.

⁹⁰³ Cf. Köhler, *Das Imiut*

⁹⁰⁴ DuQuesne, 'Seth and the Jackals', *Egyptian Religion: the last thousand years*, I. GS. Quaegebeur (OLA 84), (1998), 613-628.

⁹⁰⁵ Beinlich, 'Das Paraschist bei Diodor und im Papyrus Jumilhac', *GM 222* (2009), 5-6.

⁹⁰⁶ In an unpublished manuscript of the Tebtunis manual (pCarlsberg 308), the section for the 18th U.E. nome is partially preserved. A fragmented passage reads: *ir.n=f hprw=f m inpw* 'He transformed himself into Anubis'. Though the reference for the suffix =f is not certain, it could be Seth, mentioned at the end of the preceding line, and the passage an allusion to the myth of Seth's ruse to gain access to the corpse of Osiris.

was the task of the *paraskistes* ‘Cutter’, who would afterwards be driven off by the other priests present. In the transformation of Seth into Anubis we can detect a mythological mechanism for transferring, if not the immediate punishment of his peers, then at least divine anger away from the funerary priest, acting as Anubis, to Seth in the form of sacrificial animal. In the papyrus Jumilhac Seth takes on the form of a bull using the phrase *sn-irw* when he is pursued by Anubis⁹⁰⁷. It is noteworthy that Anubis immediately recognizes Seth in the bull, which is then castrated and forced to carry the stolen relics of Osiris on its back. In terms of narrative the disguises of Seth serves no apparent purpose; he does not manage to fool the other gods, but in terms of aetiology and ritual, the different forms assumed by Seth allows for the application of a single mythological scheme to serve as aetiologies for several relics and rituals.

Couolumn, line	Seth transforms into	Is punished by	As an aetiology for
2, 5-15	A panther	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding • flaying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The speckled pattern of the panther • The vestment of the Sem-priest Variant: The <i>imi-wt</i> ⁹⁰⁸
3, 13-25 and 20, 16-17.	A bull	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castration and Imprisonment • Carrying the relics of Osiris 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of stables at Saka • The transportation of Osiris upon an ox in ritual


At the time of composition of the manual an actual ritual object made of skin would probably have been subject to ritual prohibition and made of a substitute material. The manual reflects this by also provides an aetiology which links the Imiut fetish to reeds in which Horus hid from Seth in the marshes of the Delta. This association also links the myth of the regeneration of Osiris with the upbringing of Horus in the marshes, both of which were processes that needed secrecy and protection⁹⁰⁹.

In its choice of myths the manual vacillates between local mythology, in which the gods of choice are Anubis and Isis, the latter probably substituting for an earlier local goddess, and myths of a more general flavour in which the setting is the court of Re and the Ennead.

⁹⁰⁷ pJumilhac 11, 18.

⁹⁰⁸ pJumilhac 13, 11-13.

⁹⁰⁹ As such disturbance of the required secrecy concerning both are ascribed to Seth in the list of his misdeeds in the Ritual for driving away the raging one. In a long list of possible consequences of the transgressions that should be averted (P. Louvre 3129, J, 39-52 and P. BM 10252, 11, 13-34 = Urk. VI, 122-129) we find: ‘That not the Coffin in Heliopolis be opened and what is in it seen’ and ‘That not the reeds that serve as a hiding place (*imnw*) are cut down to banish the one who hides (*sdgi*) there’, where ‘The one who hides there’ is clearly the infant Horus.

Here it is significant that myths which are aetiologies of specific places in the local geography tend to concentrate on the most important local deities and includes more unusual mythological patterns. For instance Isis is as the daughter of Sakmet and as the mother of Anubis, and capable of transforming herself into Anubis in an aetiology for the nome emblem of the 17th U.E. nome Saka ⁹¹⁰:

Then Isis transformed herself into Anubis. She caught Seth and sunk her teeth into his back. He fell under her and he said to her: 'Why have you come on the water against this dog without fault? His name of Anubis came into being. Concerning this hieroglyph (*tit*): it is Seth, concerning the feather which is on his back: it is Osiris.

This transformation is unusual inasmuch as it crosses gender boundaries, but may be a reminiscence of an earlier local goddess Input, the female Anubis⁹¹¹. At any rate the myth must have been known outside of the nome since the geographical vulture text of the Book of Thoth includes it as the emblematic myth for the 17th U.E. nome⁹¹²: 'A vulture that bites a dog while its young grabs him: It is Saka'.

In contrast, the aetiologies for festivals and for relics, i.e. things that are not, to the same degree, bound by a specific local setting, uses myths featuring the gods of national mythology – the Ennead.

	Myth	Aetiology for
16, 9 -22	Thoth and Baba	Offering of red dog on the festival of Thoth
16, 23 - 17, 14	Conflict of Horus and Seth	Offering of red dog on the festival of Thoth
12, 22 - 13, 10	Nemty decapitates his mother	Imi-Ut and the rites of the Mammisi

In these myths Re has the role as the king of the gods. That this is a matter of mythological reasoning, and does not reflect local theology is demonstrated by the absence of Re in the list of the deities of the nome⁹¹³. Thus the different sections of the manual shifts seamlessly between local mythological systems and the national system found in the transregional mythological manuals, according to the interpretative purposes and ritual needs.

A curious mix of local and national traditions is found in the list of 'knowing the transformations of the Khestet-beast: The Wolf (*wns*), the dog (*tsm*) and the gods in which

⁹¹⁰ pJumilhac 20, 11-15, cf. also x+1, 14-15.

⁹¹¹ as suggested by DuQuesne, 'Seth and the Jackals', *Gs. Quaegebeur* (1998), 613-628. Cf. also Quack, 'Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?', *ARG* 10 (2008), 15-18, for a look at the unusual mythemes found in these myths.

⁹¹² *w^ct nryt iw=s p_hs n w^c iwiw r p₃e=s dw [mh]t n-im=f s₃-k₃ p₃y* (L01 vs., x+2/16 = Jasnow and Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth* (2005), 341-347.

⁹¹³ pJumilhac 4, 16-24.

they are manifested ($h^c=sn$ $n=s(n)$) and the nomes in which one buries'. The list contains ten entries or canines each of which is differentiated by colouring and the god to which it is ascribed. For some of the canines, entries one through three, the rituals concerning the death and burial of the animal is given along with specifications of which nomes the animal is venerated in. Here considerable problems for a coherent interpretation present themselves as the list contains information that appears hopelessly self-contradictory⁹¹⁴. The three canines, a wolf and two dogs, are all venerated in the same places, i.e. Assiut, Dunawy, Abydos, Busiris and Shenqebeh in the Heliopolitan nome. These canines are treated in two apparently incompatible ways; they are protected and live to a great age, but are also put to death even suffering a rapid or premature death. According to Joachim Quack's analysis of the section there are no linguistic markers that this is a compilation of texts of different dates⁹¹⁵ and there are no indications, such as the use of *ky-dd* found elsewhere in the papyrus, that different traditions are listed together. In one place the mutually exclusive alternatives are even juxtaposed by the preposition *hft* 'according to' so that the wolf is to be: 'Placed in the chamber of annihilation in the west to annihilate his Ba and corpse according to (*hft*) remaining on earth in perfect dotage'.

It is noteworthy that only the canines identified with Anubis are treated in this ambiguous manner. Of the remaining seven the first six are only characterised by colour and divine affiliation, and the last, a red dog, by an extensive myth that serves as an aetiology for the offering of a red dog on the festival of Thoth. This difference in template for the different canines may be indicative of different sources, but could also conceivably be caused by the special status of Anubis in the papyrus Jumilhac and his association with Seth as a recurring myth in the manual is Seth's transformation into Anubis to gain access to Osiris' corpse. However the geographical ties listed in the section on the Sethian aspects of Anubis are not the same as for the canines in the Khestet-beast section. Nevertheless the confusing ritual behaviour towards the canines is probably caused by a ritual status that demands their sacrifice and veneration at the same time. For the first canine, the wolf, we learn that Osiris suffered through him, pointing either to the myth of Anubis-Upuaut that we met in the chapter on the Assiut section of the Tebtunis manual or even to the dog playing the role of Osiris put to death in a ritual. Since the *Bau*, i.e. wrath, of the deity is directed towards these dogs perhaps they serve as scapegoats, attracting the anger and punishment of a deity for having breached some taboo. For the ritual purposes of the papyrus Jumilhac

⁹¹⁴ The list has been treated recently by von Lieven, 'Das göttliche in der Natur erkennen', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 160-162. and Quack, 'Corpus oder membra disiecta? Zur Sprach- und Redaktionskritik des Papyrus Jumilhac', *Diener des Horus. Fs. Kurth* (2008), 160-162.

⁹¹⁵ Quack, *Loc. Cit.*

perhaps the skin and body of the animal could be regarded as two separate beings, with the body belonging to the enemy god, whereas the skin from the animal achieving the status of a relic.

Interestingly the killing of these canines appears to have been taboo itself. According to the nomelist in the temple of Edfou, the local taboo for the nome of Assiut was to kill (*nkn*) the Khestet-beast, and similarly for the 18th U. E. nome where aggressive action (*d3-ʿ*) towards the beast was also taboo⁹¹⁶, which must be the rationale for the mention of the taboo in Dunawy as ‘the Khestet-beast’⁹¹⁷. A convincing interpretation of the section in the papyrus Jumilhac remains elusive, since it must rely on conjectures regarding the offering of sacred animals⁹¹⁸ and mytho-ritual mechanisms for transference of punishment that have been little studied. Despite the uncertainties concerning this section, some of the concerns of the authors can be distinguished. For the first three canines there was obviously an interest in connecting the local holy animal with that of other canine cults Upper as well as Lower Egypt. In this way the traditions concerning the animals transcend the purely local and becomes an aspect of a larger idealised system of canine-cult in all of Egypt, thus allowing for a greater number of mythological associations for local rituals.

At several places in the manual we find gods identified with other gods. Just as in the supra-regional manual this identification can be simply expressed as a nominal sentence or be given an aetiological narrative. The only goddesses that the manual uses for mythological interpretation are Isis and Hathor. For instance Isis transforms into her mother Sakhmet to burn the gang of Seth on the mountains, giving rise to a form of ‘Hathor the lady of the two braziers’, later on in the same narrative she transforms into a snake, this time becoming ‘Hathor the lady of Geheset’.

Whereas the supra-regional manuals interpret local mythology in terms of the Heliopolitan Ennad, the papyrus Jumilhac instead interprets a host of local gods in light its own local god, Anubis. One of the lists is a register of gods who are known under the name of Anubis⁹¹⁹:

Knowing the gods whose name is made Anubis after they perform the role of ‘Overseer of Secrets’ of Anubis to hide his father Osiris when he had taken on the function (*irw*) of Sem-priest to protect his father Osiris, opening his mouth to let him tell of the place where his limbs were.

⁹¹⁶ Edfou I², 341-342

⁹¹⁷ pJumilhac 12, 16.

⁹¹⁸ Cf. Vandiers commentary to the list and Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn* (2002), 82-83 passim for the different attitudes and concerns involved and Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir* (2009), 193-199.

⁹¹⁹ pJumilhac 4, 24-6,2

Concerning Anubis the foremost of the embalmment tent (*sh-ntr*) in this place: It is Shu, the son of Re, it is Thoth – according to another tradition: It was they who treated Osiris in the embalmment place (*w^cbt*)

Concerning Anubis *imi-wt*: It is Osiris when his Ba had transformed into Anubis imi-wt. It is he who expels the swellings in himself. It is he who embalms (*w^t*) himself.

Concerning Anubis *imi-wt* according to another tradition: It is Horus, the son of Isis. It was he who embalmed his father Osiris in order not to let another god see him. He hid him, covered him and secreted him away in his bandages.

Concerning Anubis the lord of the Necropolis (*t3-dsr*) who is in this place: It is Osiris when he appears every ten days to bind his offerings.

Concerning Anubis the lord of the coffer: It is Anubis the lord of Dunawny himself.

Concerning Anubis who assesses hearts in the hall of the two Maat: It is Anubis the lord of Dunawny.

Concerning Anubis who controls the sacrificial oxen: It is Anubis who is in Thebes.

Concerning Anubis the lord of Roqerret: It is Anubis who is in Siut.

Concerning Anubis the lord of Siut: It is Anubis the lord of Shesep

Concerning Anubis the lord of Sepa: It is Anubis who is in Heliopolis

Concerning Anubis the lord of the Shetayt-shrine: It is Anubis who is in Memphis

Concerning Anubis the lord of Shasrope: It is Anubis who is in Herakleopolis

Concerning Anubis the lord of Wenet: It is Anubis who is in Hermopolis.

Concerning Anubis who is on his mountain, the lord of the coffer, who is to the north of Memphis: It is Re-Harakhte.

Concerning Anubis himself of Per-Hapy: It is Shu the son of Re.

Concerning Anubis the lord of the coffer: It is Anubis himself who ties the coffer which causes the dread of Osiris.

Concerning Anubis the lord of Wenou: It is Osiris himself when he spoke with his own limbs when he was in the embalmment place (*w^cbt*)

Concerning Anubis: It was he who ...Osiris in the embalmment place (*w^cbt*) when he was in his hour on account of this great god.

Concerning Anubis lord of bandages (*w^t*): It is Thot the son of the two lords when he had transformed into Anubis to perform his hour.

Concerning Anubis the lord of Dunawny: It is Horus the lord of Letopolis. Concerning those (things) which he bears: It is the wrapping (*rj*) with the *s3w* together with a vase (*šsr*) which is beneath Osiris in the embalmment place together with the efflux of his own eye.

Concerning Uadjet lady of Dunawny: It is Isis the mother of Anubis

Concerning Harpokrates who is in this place: It is Anubis the son of Osiris, he is a noble child in the embrace of his mother Isis.

In this list purely local forms of Anubis are mixed with gods found in other areas of Egypt, not limited to forms of Anubis only, but also Osiris, Shu, Re-Harakhte and Horus, in other words the major gods of the Heliopolitan Ennad. The final aetiological passage reinforces the identification with Horus in the marshes of Khemmis and reaches its climax in an effective identification of Anubis with all regions of the universe; air, water and earth in an interpretation of the name which is seen as the hidden (?) name of both Osiris and Re:

Concerning Anubis as he is called. That is a name for Horus when he was a child.

Concerning that he is called Anubis: It was his mother Isis who said (it) according to the wind, water and mountain: Concerning this I it is the wind, concerning this water it is the N, concerning P it is the mountain, and she gave his name according to the name of his hidden father ...in him. Later Re said: 'Inpy that is me', then his name of Anubis came into being. Another tradition: Then Seth came to search for Horus in his childhood inside his nest in Khemmis. His mother hid him in the papyrus. Then Nephtys ...he hid him -..imy^t then his name of Anubis came into being and the Mehet-Imi-Ut came into being as likeness

By this chain of identifications the manual transcends the purely local and hints at the identification of all gods in Egypt with Anubis the god of the 18th Upper Egyptian nome.

The papyrus Jumilhac thus operates with several mythological systems, a local and a national. But as remarked by Joachim Quack, in most cases it is futile to make sharp distinction between the two as they are mostly found intertwined. This is no historical accident or a blurring of differences caused by the gradual acceptance of national mythology by a province⁹²⁰. Rather it is a product of a mode of mythological reasoning in which correspondences were sought and actively created in order to multiply the number of mythological associations possible and make use of the vast mythological tradition stored in the transregional manuals. Consequently it is equally faulty to view the interpretations as compensation for a feeling of regional inferiority. National mythology was not included in order to aggrandize the 18th Upper Egypt nome over and above the rest of Egypt, but simply because the dominant mythological discourse demanded such an approach. This is not to deny that the local universe was at the centre of concern for local theology and ritual, but in order to develop these it was necessary to associate the local with the national, or put in another way; the specific and locally bound realisations with the mythic prototypes – prototypes that were expressed using the mythological language of the Heliopolitan ennead.

⁹²⁰ Though such a process may perhaps be discerned in the prominent role of Isis, not as interpretative device but as substitution for one or more earlier local goddesses.

Appendix C: Narratives and rituals: Mythological narratives

In the analysis of the mythological manual, it became clear that the main purpose of them was not to present coherent narrative myths. In the manuals the focus is on mythological aetiologies and on providing a framework for ordering these by interpreting the mass of myths by means of the gods of the Heliopolitan Ennead. Often though, implicit syntagmatic knowledge of narrative myths are presupposed and made use of to tie together different mythic episodes given in sequence but without any explicit association. However, just as often the syntagmatic perspective is shifted to the paradigmatic when a sequence of mythic episodes is interrupted by several variants of one episode. Since the manuals in this way place a considerable demand for prior mythic knowledge on their readers and thus cannot be seen as a collection of narrative myths for the benefit of those unacquainted with the basic myths, it could be that these were preserved in other texts from the temple libraries. However as the following survey shows, this does not seem to be the case.

In the great mass of narratives in Demotic from the Tebtunis library, genuine mythic narratives are rare, if present at all⁹²¹. Several narratives remain unpublished, but from the longest extant mythological work, *On the Primeval Ocean*, and fragments of *The Return of the Goddess*, it is still possible to say something about the general nature of these narratives. *On the Primeval Ocean* is not primarily a narrative, and should perhaps be categorized as a tractate, a scholarly text on the cosmic workings on the primeval ocean which in Tebtunis was probably identified with the Fayum⁹²². The text contains a narrative section which gives an outline of the creation of the cosmos in geographical terms, apparently beginning in the south and moving towards the north as creation unfolds. The text is fragmentary but Hermopolis is mentioned as the place of the Ogdoad, and Herakleopolis as the site of the Rebellion against Re and the Delta as the site of the birth of Horus, which is simultaneously a rebirth of Re. The text narrates a cosmic cycle of creation-corruption-renewal in traditional

⁹²¹ In the present discussion I exclude the historical narratives found in the library. This is mostly due to practical reasons, as their inclusion would here would exceed the pages available. however it should be noted that the two categories are not wholly distinct since mythological material could be phrased in the style of the historical narratives as is the case with the unpublished Osiris narratives which emulates the legends of Alexander the Great (Kim Ryholt, Personal communication).

⁹²² Text published by Smith, *On the Primeval Ocean*. The Carlsberg papyri 5 (2002). The fragments edited by him in: 'P. Carlsberg 462 : A Fragmentary Account of a Rebellion Against the Sun God', *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*. The Carlsberg Papyri 3 (2000), 95-112, are in the hand of the same scribe and probably belong to *On the Primeval Ocean*, which would then be a collation of palimpsests (Kim Ryholt, Personal communication).

mythological terms which is then explained in images taken from the natural world as the in- and exhalations of the primeval ocean. Thus the text is not a primer in traditional mythology intended for a reader ignorant of cosmogonies, but a work in which basic knowledge of these are expected of the reader and in which this mythology is explored and elaborated in new ways. This second and most important part of the book is not written as a narrative but as an exposition.

In the myth of *The Return of the Goddess*⁹²³, the basic myth of the Goddess leaving Egypt for Nubia, whence she is then fetched by Thoth, only serves as a framing device for a series of dialogues between the goddess, in the form of a cat, and Thoth in the form of a dog headed ape. These dialogues fill up the majority of the text whereas the travel itself is mostly implied and only the final return given a fuller treatment. The work should be categorized as a philosophical scholarly text, and not a primarily a narration of a myth⁹²⁴.

When the different texts containing mythic narratives and interpretations are viewed together, and reservations taken for texts lost, it thus becomes apparent that none of them are simply basic mythic narratives written down for the sake of preserving a myth. Every one of them is either concerned with applying the basic myths to cosmology or geography, or uses the myths as framing devices. In both cases a considerable amount of mythic and mythological knowledge is presumed of the reader.

This pattern appears to apply also to demotic texts of different provenance dealing with mythological matters. For instance, *The Fragments of the Memphitic Cosmogony* edited by Erichsen and Schott⁹²⁵, contains one of the longest narrative cosmogonies in our sources, but neither in this case is the narration of the myth the primary function of the text. The narrative is only one section of a text praising Ptah and relating the importance of this god and Memphis and giving details of the local temples and festivals. Due to fragmentary nature of the papyrus, it is not possible to reconstruct the setting of this exposition, but it appears to have set in the speech of an unknown person, who once interjects that 'I have told Pharaoh this'⁹²⁶. Perhaps the frame of the text was historical and the setting one in which a (new) king needed to be told of the importance of the ancient capital? In such a frame the cosmogony can be recognized as primarily a Memphitic reinterpretation of and

⁹²³ The Tebtunis versions of this story are fragmentary and so far unpublished. For a recent overview of the text cf. Quack, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III. Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*² (2009), 128-240.

⁹²⁴ Even though the text may have been recited during the festival of the goddess cf. Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 304.

⁹²⁵ Erichsen & Schott, *Fragmente memphitischer Theologie in demotischer Schrift* (1954). The papyrus was found reused as mummy casing in Abusir-el-Meleq, and datable by paleography to the late Ptolemaic or early Roman period (*Ibid*, 5-7).

⁹²⁶ P. demot. Berlin 13603, 2, 22.

commentary on Hermopolitan creation myths⁹²⁷. The text is full of puns and aetiologies and could be a reworking of a local mythological manual in a literary setting⁹²⁸.

While the above is not an exhaustive survey of all mythological narratives, many of which still remain unpublished, it is probably at least somewhat representative of the kind of mythic material committed to writing and thus two things can be inferred:

- 1) Basic narrative myths must have primarily belonged to the oral sphere
- 2) No canonical version of myths existed

Ad 1): The oral sphere as the primary context for narrative myth has been argued by several scholars. Following John Baines' rebuttal of Assmann's theory of the myth free Old and Middle Kingdoms, van Dijk argued that myths were too secret to be written down on papyrus and were almost exclusively orally transmitted from priest to priest⁹²⁹. While a few examples of prohibition on writing down secret matters are known from religious texts⁹³⁰, these do not appear to deal with mythic narratives⁹³¹. Generally, the Egyptians placed higher value on written texts, than orally transmitted ones. On the famous Abydos stele of Ramesses IV, the king boasts of his ability to consult the ancient texts for the proper worship of Osiris instead of relying on oral tradition⁹³². On the contrary those few longer written narrative myths known can with some certainty be classified as texts for a temple or palace festival recital⁹³³. For *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, Verhoeven has argued that the

⁹²⁷ In their Late Period forms, cf. Zivie-Coche, 'L'Ogdoade thébaine à l'époque ptolémaïque et ses antécédents', *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (2009), 167-226.

⁹²⁸ Also in this aspect it resembles the Shakaba stela. It is interesting to note the identification of a temple complex in Memphis, The temple of the birth of Sothis, with the goddess' birth place in Heliopolis (4, 13-16)

⁹²⁹ van Dijk, 'Myth and Mythmaking in Ancient Egypt', in: Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East III*, 1697-1709. In his argument van Dijk operates with a definition of myth that includes such texts as 'The King as Sun priest' (Assmann, *Der König als Sonnenpriester* (1970)), which is undoubtedly secret. However, while this text refers to secret mythological knowledge it is not a mythical narrative. The reference to secrecy adduced by Van Dijk in pSalt 825 does not appear to concern the mythic parts of the papyri but only the ritual passages.

⁹³⁰ Quack, 'Explizite Aufzeichnungsmeidung im Alten Ägypten', *LingAeg* 10 (2002), 339-342.

⁹³¹ Cross-culturally, it is seldom myths themselves that are secret but more often special divine names or interpretations of myths that are restricted. Cf. for instance Wassmann on secrecy and myth among the Iatmul of the Middle Sepik in Papua New Guinea:

'One the one hand is the bewilderingly large number of totems, the thousands of names, the innumerable myths and fragments of myths that outwardly have no relationship to one another; on the other hand is the knowledge held by only a few men of the interconnections that simplify everything. It is therefore not so much the mythological tales themselves that are secret – some of them are even familiar to children as bedtime stories (wapuksapuk) – as their precise geographical location and the true identities of their protagonists'

(Wassmann, 'The Politics of Religious Secrecy', *Emplaced Myth: Space, Narrative, and Knowledge in Aboriginal Australia and Papua New Guinea* (2001), 44).

⁹³² *p3y m sš bn r n r* Line 7 = Korostovtsev, 'Stèle de Ramsès IV', *BIFAO* 45 (1947), 157.

⁹³³ In this paragraph I largely follow the article by Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 291-312.

pChester Beatty 1 on which it is written was intended for a royal festival for Ramesses IX. This specific attribution has been challenged by Quack who prefers to see the papyrus as a copy of an earlier text that, however, might very well have been written for a royal festival. More informative is the tale of *Astarte and the Sea*, fragments of which was originally edited by Gardiner in his *Late Egyptian Stories*. With the recent discovery of the beginning of the papyrus⁹³⁴, we now have part of the initial rubrum to the story in which it is said to be intended as proclamation of might (*sdd b3w*) of the god. This phrase clearly places the text as belonging to the public aspects of religion and not the secret ones. The editors of the text suggest that it was written for the inauguration festival of a temple for Seth or Seth-Baal and would have been recited in the outer courtyards, an area that was semi-public for the duration of the festival. If this is the case, then it is comparable to the exoteric hymns that were probably likewise sung by the admitted participants in temple festivals. Assmann, to whose groundbreaking studies in Egyptian hymns we owe this insight, contrasts these hymns to the esoteric that were reserved for the higher ranking priesthood that took care of the temple service in the inner, hidden, areas of the temple⁹³⁵. Thus even for the rare cases where narrative myths left the oral sphere and were written down - or better: *versions* of the myths were composed intended for committal to papyri - this was done with the aim of future recital to proclaim the might of the deity to his worshippers at a festival. Another, related use, of mythic narratives in a temple context is the case of the *Neith Cosmogony* at Esna. This text was read aloud as part of the goddess' festival and served as a charter myth for this festival. It establishes the general mood and mythological frame of the festival, the creation of the world and arrival of the goddess at her temple. Similarly *The Legend of the Winged disk* in Edfu was intended to be read aloud and served as a ritual for the protection of the king⁹³⁶. The narration of the myth served to affirm the close link between the King and Horus that is also found in the accompanying elaborate ritual of the king spearing the hippopotamus, and to accompany a protective ritual for the king. The placement of the relevant texts and depictions, on the inner side of the enclosure wall of the temple that would have been visible to those admitted to the temple during festivals, speaks against a secret myth reserved for the high ranking priests.

⁹³⁴ Collombert and Coulon, 'Les dieux contre la mer. Le début du "papyrus d'Astarte" (pBN202), *BIFAO* 100 (2000), 193-242.

⁹³⁵ Cf. the books *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott* (1969), *Der König als Sonnenpriester* (1970), *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete* (1975) and the article 'Unio liturgica. Die kultische Einstimmung in götterweltlichen Lobpreis als Grundmotiv "esoterischer" Überlieferung im alten Ägypten' In: Kippenberg and Stroumsa (eds.), *Secrecy and Concealment. Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions* (1995), 37-60.

⁹³⁶ Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 295-296 with further references.

Exceptions to this rule of narrative myths being used for (semi)public recitation exist; two clear examples are found as part of ritual handbooks and the *historiolae* found in magical texts seemingly provide a whole category of texts that defy this clear classification. However, as is demonstrated in the chapter on myth and ritual, these are special cases that do not invalidate the general trend of the *sitz im leben* of narrative myths within a temple context.

Ad 2): If narrative myths primarily existed in an oral tradition, this accounts for their much discussed flexibility⁹³⁷. If not embedded in songs or attached to ritual acts, such myths would be varied for each telling to make them relevant for the audience and their concerns and amusement. An Egyptian would thus from the onset have a different conception of the myths of his culture than we have. Instead of 'believing' in one canonical version, a myth would for him be a cluster of different stories that shared protagonist, events or patterns.

Use and non-use of narrative myth in ritual

In the preceding chapters I have touched upon the relationship of myth to ritual and the use of mythology in ritual. In this chapter I include some general cross-cultural observations and theories on the use of myth in ritual to explore possible reasons for way in which myth was applied to ritual in ancient Egypt. This is done in order to explore how the mythological manuals could have been used in rituals and how they prepared the priests for carrying out these rituals.

A sort of consensus exists in the way that Egyptian myth usage is characterised though the terminology differs. Gardiner wrote about allusions to myths⁹³⁸, while Otto preferred to see the application of mythic schemata⁹³⁹. Assmann introduced the mythic constellations as a similar structure used in ritual rhetorics⁹⁴⁰. Finally Goebis rephrased the question in terms of functionality⁹⁴¹. All agree however that myth is found in fragmentary sentences that

⁹³⁷ As noted, for instance, by Goebis, 'A Functional Approach to Egyptian Myth and Mythemes', *JANER* 2 (2002), 27-59.

⁹³⁸ Gardiner, *The Chester Beatty Papyri, No 1* (1931), 8.

⁹³⁹ *Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen* (1958).

⁹⁴⁰ 'Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten', *GM* 25 (1977), 7-43

⁹⁴¹ 'A Functional Approach to Egyptian Myth and Mythemes', *JANER* 2 (2002), 27-59

associate the ritual acts with divine actions, and furthermore that these fragments do not combine into sequential narrative myths⁹⁴².

Goebis makes the pertinent observation that this use of mythology is not confined to Egypt. An observation that in turn necessitates a theory of ritual myth usage that is wider in scope. Though the relationship between myth and ritual is not at the fore of contemporary ritual studies⁹⁴³, developments within the cognitive study of rituals is of relevance for the question. Following and expanding on the studies of Lawson and Mccauley⁹⁴⁴, Jesper Sørensen has put forth a model of ritual action structure based on cognitive theories⁹⁴⁵. The strength of this model is that it allows distinguishing between every day actions and those performed in ritual, something that is also of relevance for the question of narrative vs. non-narrative myths in ritual. Sørensen operates with a distinction between proximate intentions (the arm moves the bread into the mouth) and ultimate intentions (he eats to satisfy his hunger) both of which are important in normal processing of actions.

Normal action sequences are performed and cognitively processed as having a function and an intention. It is this intention which governs the individual acts in the sequence and gives them meaning⁹⁴⁶:

⁹⁴² See however the attempt of Altenmüller, 'Zur Lesung und Deutung des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus', *JEOL* 19 (1965/66), 421-442 to extract a sequential narrative myth from the mythological interpretations in a ritual. Altenmüller's reconstruction rests on a questionable rearrangement of the papyri as discussed by Quack, 'Zur Lesung und Deutung des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus', *ZÄS* 133 (2006), 72-89.

⁹⁴³ It is symptomatic to pick up one of the most cited study of rituals; Catherine Bell's *Ritual Theory – Ritual Practice* (1992), and discover that myth is only mentioned in the section on the history of research.

⁹⁴⁴ *Rethinking Religion: connecting cognition and culture* (1994). Lawson and Mccauley's theory of ritual that deals with the role of *Culturally Postulated Superhuman Agents* (in most cases 'gods') as necessary enablers of ritual actions could also easily be the basis of a theory for the use of mythology in ritual, in which aetiological myths are invoked as enabling actions for ritual acts.

⁹⁴⁵ 'Acts That Work: A Cognitive Approach to Ritual Agency', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 (2007), 281-300.

⁹⁴⁶ Sørensen, 'Acts That Work', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 (2007), 287.

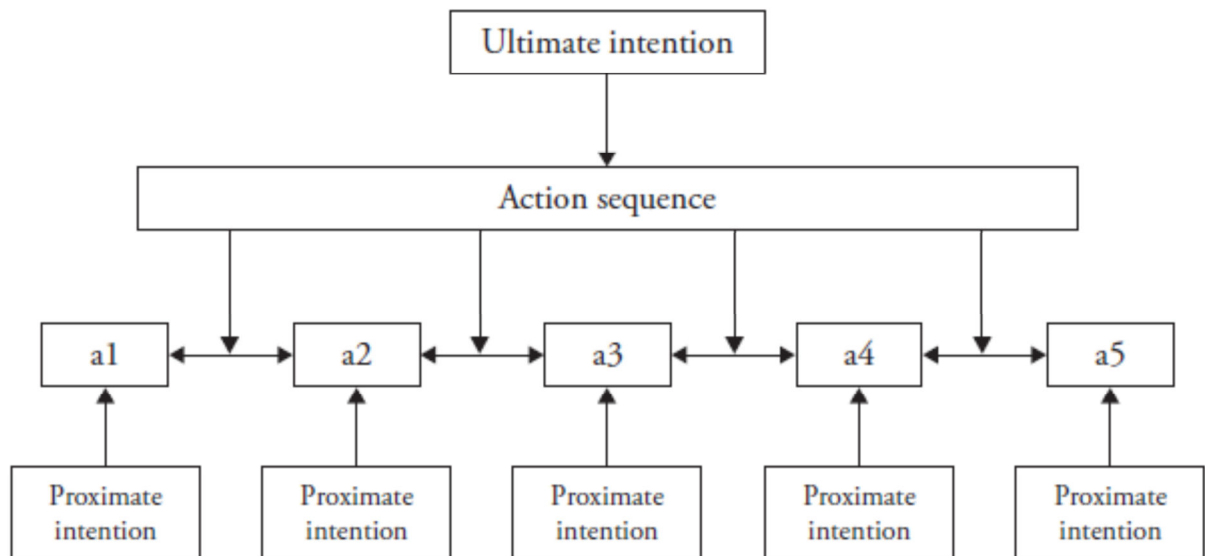


Figure 1: This schema models an ordinary action-sequence: An ultimate intention determines a possible action sequence that in turn specify the causal and temporal relation between a number of individual actions each specified by their own proximate intention.

Concerning the question of myths, it should be noted that this action structure, in which an overriding purpose governs the individual actions is similar to the plot-based character of narratives. Things are done with a purpose in mind, or in a narrative: events happen to drive the plot onwards to arrive at a conclusion to the story. In contrast the action structure of rituals is different. Three factors are decisive in generating this difference. The first two were emphasized by Levi-Strauss who characterised ritual as the *parcelling out* and *repetition* of actions⁹⁴⁷.

In ritual there is a strong tendency to break up actions into the smallest possible units. From ancient Egypt an illustrative example is the opening chapters of the Daily Temple Ritual in which the preparatory incense burning is accorded four chapters⁹⁴⁸:

1. Lighting fire
2. Picking up the holder for the incense burner
3. Putting the incense burner in the holder
4. Putting incense in the burner

⁹⁴⁷ Levi Strauss, *The Naked Man* (1981), 596-603.

⁹⁴⁸ For these opening chapters of the Daily Temple Ritual see Guglielmi and Buroh, 'Die Eingangssprüche des Täglichen Tempelrituals nach Papyrus Berlin 3055 (I, 1 – VI, 3), in: van Dijk (ed.), *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde* (1997), 101-113.

It is noteworthy that these actions are not associated in the ritual, in the sense of being interpreted as a causal sequence with a single intention. Instead they are accorded individual interpretations with the chapter titles forming caesurae that interrupt and compartmentalise what would normally be viewed as consecutive actions performed for the purpose of burning incense. A more extreme case is found later on in the same ritual where the proskynesis is divided into⁹⁴⁹:

1. (introductory chapter for) “kissing the earth” (proskynesis)
2. Laying (oneself) down on the belly
3. Laying (oneself) down on the belly outstretched
4. kissing the earth

The breakdown in four chapters interrupts and prolongs what would otherwise be one fluid bodily movement. The majority of the whole ritual follows the same pattern, only interrupted by long hymnic sections in which no ritual actions are interpreted. In these hymnic sections local theology and mythology specific for the deity to whom the ritual is dedicated is elaborated, but otherwise there is no or little trace of accommodation for a specific deity in the ritual. Instead the interpretations revolve around Osiris and Horus and the two major forms of the sun god, Re and Atum. The interpretations use the same basic mythological episodes or themes found in the mythological manuals, most often the restoration of the Eye of Horus and the gathering of Osiris’ limbs, without any narrative progression or influence on the mythic episodes used as the ritual progresses⁹⁵⁰.

The tendency towards repetition is also well attested from Egypt, ritual actions are often performed twice, four times, or even seven or nine times. Finally the rules that govern ritual actions are important. Rituals must be performed in the right way often down into its most minute details. Since these rules are more often than not purely aesthetic, i.e. not having any causal role in the performance of the act, they serve to further divorce the act from what meaning it could have held in a normal action sequence. According to Jesper Sørensen these ritual characteristics results in an action sequence that differ from the normal one, and in which there is no direct correlation between the mental representations of actions and their ultimate intention⁹⁵¹:

⁹⁴⁹ Chapters 13-15. *Ibid* 127-130.v

⁹⁵⁰ See the derogatory characterization by Erman, *A Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (1907), 44-48. On this aspect of the ritual cf. Sørensen, ‘Redundans og abstraktion i det daglige tempelritual’, *Chaos* 1 (1982), 49-61.

⁹⁵¹ Sørensen, ‘Acts That Work’, *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 (2007), 293.

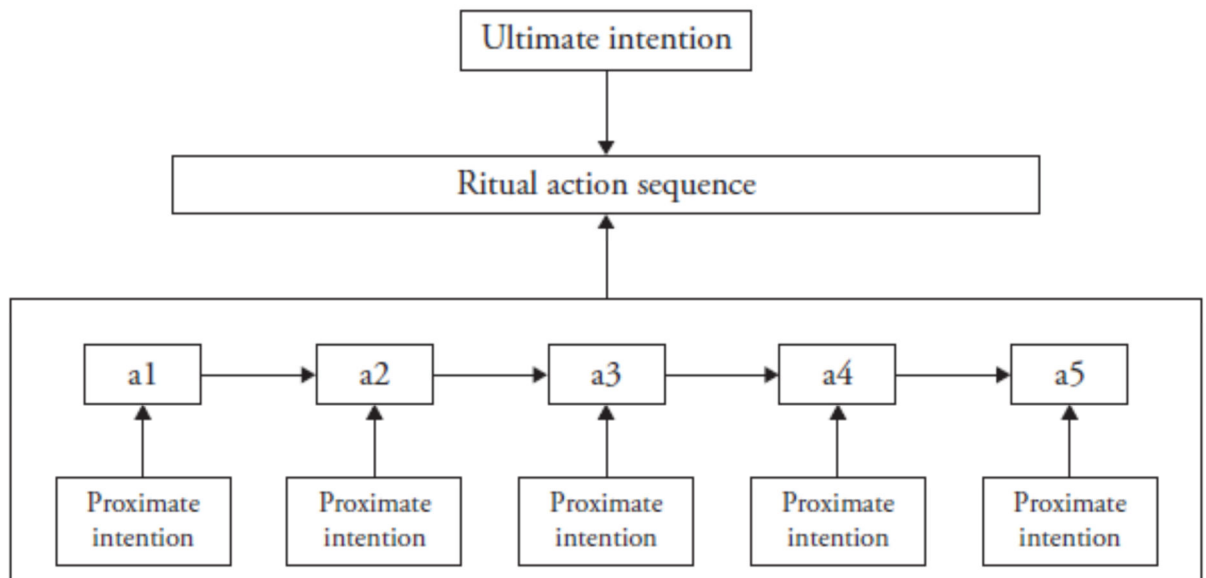


Figure 2: This schema models a ritual action representation: The performance of a specific ritual action sequence is determined by an ultimate intention. This, however, does not specify the actions performed or the causal relation between them. Instead the sub-actions are frozen into a stipulated series of proximate intentions, whose performance only signals that the ritual action sequence has been performed.

As an example of how this works Sørensen uses the communion⁹⁵²:

The amount of bread received during Communion, the special quality of the bread, the fact that the bread is being fed to you even as an adult etc. immediately disconnects all ordinary representations of ultimate intentions (e.g. eating in order to satisfy hunger). The very format of the ritual underscores the fact that this is *not* to be understood as an ordinary act of eating. As such it facilitates interpretations of the *agency* responsible for this connection and the necessary force used to obtain the desired result (...) the disconnection of proximate and ultimate intention has a curious result, namely that rituals attain an 'event-like' character. In contrast to action, events are changes in the world that are not specified by the ultimate intention of an agent. At the same time, however, the actions performed will necessarily produce representations of proximate intentions related to the specific actions performed, and as such are represented as actions involving agents, action, patients and objects. So, what are we to make of the fact that rituals are both like events and like actions? The solution to this problem lies in the human proclivity to ascribe ultimate intentions to actions whenever presented with proximate intentions. As participants in ritual actions cannot use their own ultimate intentions to explain the proximate intentions found in the actions performed, agents able to connect these two aspects of the actions must be found elsewhere. Superhuman agents are highly relevant in this respect as their projection into the ritual representation explain whose ultimate intentions specify the actions performed.

Sørensen uses his model to explain how ritual actions result in a lack that the human cognitive system will attempt to rectify. This is done by evoking gods to fill the gap of the

⁹⁵² Sørensen, 'Acts That Work', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 (2007), 292-294.

lacking ultimate intention. However the model that he proposes for ritual actions can also be used to explain how applied mythology functions.

First of all we see that the observations derived from Egyptian where narrative myths were applied both to interpret the ritual as a whole (i.e. the level of 'ultimate intention') and mythological allusions to the individual acts (i.e. the level of 'proximate intentions') but without any direct correlation between the two can be seen as a natural consequence of the way rituals are processed. The model is thus in accordance with the proponents of theories of ritual and mythological meaning discussed above, who aver that mythological interpretations of single ritual acts do not constitute the meaning of the ritual, but should be seen as modes of ritual rhetoric.

Furthermore, I would posit that the changes also occur at the level of proximate intentions – the level in which mythological interpretations are most often made. Since checks are constantly being made between proximate and ultimate intentions in an action sequence, the lack is a constant presence that not only makes itself felt when the ritual is viewed as a whole. The resultant delay in the otherwise automatic processing of actions allows for the application of mythological interpretations⁹⁵³ that further serve to remove the actions from the causal and intentional relations of everyday life and instead imbed them in the associative system that is ritual⁹⁵⁴. This was also argued for aetiological etymologies alone, one of whose main characteristics was a ritual ('magical') mode of reasoning, and we can now begin to grasp the impact that the large body of priestly manuals must have had on the cognitive processing of ritual acts. By long and arduous study of the specific aetiologies and word plays, and the internalization of the principles behind these, the Egyptian priest would have had in mind ready-made categories and strategies for interpreting the ritual acts which would come to the fore once the ritual environment set in and thus the shift in cognitive mechanisms prompted by the ritual would not leave him baffled or confused but would simply allow this other mode of thought to come to the fore⁹⁵⁵. I stress this shift here to avoid the misconception that the Egyptian priest would pause and bask in the poetic

⁹⁵³ For a suggestion of how this might work in more extreme cases cf. Lancaster, 'On the Relationship Between Cognitive Models and Spiritual Maps: Evidence from Hebrew Language Mysticism', *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7/11-12 (2000), 231-250 and *Idem, Approaches to consciousness, the marriage of science and mysticism* (2004).

⁹⁵⁴ For Egypt see e.g. Schneider, 'Die Waffe der Analogie. Altägyptische Magie als System', in: Bachman & Gloy (eds.), *Analogiedenken* (2000), 3-85.

⁹⁵⁵ As Susanne Bickel emphasized when dealing with the topic of the *sitz im leben* of myths, mythology was as much something you knew as something you spoke or wrote (*La cosmogonie égyptienne* (1994), 276-283). In Egyptian this was expressed as *Hu* and *Sia*, the outspoken and tacit knowledge of the Egyptian gods – and their priests – whose interplay was *Heka* or ritual power

niceties of puns and wordplays, and to view this as an invitation to speculation⁹⁵⁶. On the contrary, Egyptian texts occasionally speak of the necessity to clear one's mind during ritual, to not enter the sanctuary of the god with thoughts in mind⁹⁵⁷, and often they stressed that they were not 'responsible' for the ritual actions but performed the role of the gods themselves in ritual⁹⁵⁸. It is tempting here to recall Levi Strauss controversial statement about the mythological structures thinking themselves through the minds of mankind⁹⁵⁹, since for the Egyptians this would be close to the truth as they were conditioned for just this. In the words of the *Book of the Temple*⁹⁶⁰:

Sie sind es, welche "das Herz empfangen" als Jüngling in seinem Moment, ohne willkürlich zu [verändern,] die Festrolle getreu erhalten, die Gebräuche festigen, die ihre alltägliche Lehre sind, die Schwierigkeiten aller Schriften erklären beim zweiten Mal.

By supplying a mythological system into which these interpretations could be fitted, the manuals exploited the interpretative gap in rituals to the fullest: A single mythological interpretation would evoke resonances of the whole mythological system of which it could be seen as a specific manifestation. In terms of ritual power, a single outspoken mythic episode was the entry point for conceptual permutations that spanned the entire world of the gods and harnessed their power. Given the non-narrative nature of ritual, the breakdown of myths into its smallest constituents as found in the manuals could even be characterised as a deliberate deconstruction of narrativity to transform the myths into something applicable to ritual.

Thus cognitive theories can be used to aid our understanding of the role of mythological manuals in ritual, and this can be further refined by looking at the numerous mentions and allusions to rituals and festivals found in the manuals themselves. As with other *materiae sacrae* these are provided with mythological interpretations in the form of aetiologies. Many of these rituals and festivals were not exclusive to the *nomes* in which they are described. For instance the festival of Thoth was celebrated in all of Egypt, as was the Return of the Goddess. The manual thus provides the reader with a basic mythological interpretation of

⁹⁵⁶ This is worth emphasizing since some ritual theories highlight the speculative aspect and search for meaning in ritual as essential elements in ritual practice. See e.g. the study of Humphrey and Laidlaw, *The archetypal actions of ritual, a theory of ritual illustrated by the Jain rite of worship* (2004).

⁹⁵⁷ Statue Cairo JE 37883, belonging to a priest at Karnak during the early Ptolemaic period. The Priest describes himself as: 'One who silences the thoughts of the mind (*sgr mꜣt ib*) at the horizon of the great ram, who trembles at his secret form (*sꜣy gs bs.f sꜣtꜣ*) in his pure shrine' (Jansen-Winkel, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften der Spätzeit* (2001), 387 text 23b and 187 n. 8).

⁹⁵⁸ This is not meant as an exhaustive treatment of this fascinating subject but only one aspect. See also Hays, 'Between Identity and Agency in Ancient Egyptian Ritual', in: Kjølby & Nyord (eds.), *Being in Ancient Egypt* (2009), 15-30.

⁹⁵⁹ Introduction in *Myth and Meaning* (1978).

⁹⁶⁰ Translation from Quack, 'Die Dienstanweisung des Oberlehrers aus dem Buch vom Tempel', 5. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung* (2002), 161.

the most important rituals, rituals that were also performed in the local temple to which the priest belonged. While these specifically ritual aetiologies function as an inventory of important rituals and a mythological frame for these, the manuals as *a whole* can also be viewed as fundamental aids to performing rituals. By containing not only general interpretations of ritual, i.e. at the level of the ultimate intention, but also emphasising mythological episodes and their use in mythological interpretation, the manuals spanned the two different levels of interpretation. In order to flesh out this outline of the potential use of mythological manuals in ritual, it is fruitful to compare them to other manuals of importance for ritual of more practical nature.

Mythological manuals and ritual manuals

The ritual manuals containing mythological material can be seen to share many characteristics and functions with the mythological manuals. The ritual manuals also contain longer narrative passages which provide the rituals with charter myths setting the frame and mood of the ritual in question, whereas the mythological manual references these by means of short aetiological statements. At the level of ritual rhetoric and mechanics the two types of manuals are similar in that they provide mythological aetiologies of single ritual actions or ritual implements, which in the terminology of Jesper Sørensen can be phrased as concerned with the level of proximate intentions in the ritual. As is natural the mythological manuals provide more generic material for the interpretation of ritual actions, whereas the aetiologies in the ritual manuals are tailored towards the specific ritual. However even the ritual manuals are concerned with a meta-level of mythology in which the mythological interpretations are fitted into a larger frame of reference. In both types of manuals narrative coherence is not a desired quality in itself, but is only found inasmuch as it contributes to the performance of ritual, an activity which favours the aetiological mythological interpretation over longer narrative myths. To summarize, the importance of the Mythological Manuals for ritual practice is threefold:

- 1) As charter myths for rituals carried out all over Egypt
- 2) For deconstruction narratives to condition the mind-set for ritual practices
- 3) For establishing a mythological system that inspired and guided associations for interpreting rituals

The text adduced here as support for this thesis, could of course be interpreted otherwise. Since the manuals share the same characteristics as many other Egyptian religious text it is perfectly possible that the manuals were simply stores of accumulated sacred knowledge that by necessity and not by design would conform to these basic aspects of ancient Egyptian religious discourse. However I do believe that it is possible to draw upon both specific details in the texts as well as general observations that support my thesis.

The strongest evidence is the presence and importance of Horit in the mythological manual of the Delta. This goddess is not otherwise worshipped and not mentioned outside of the manuals as anything other than an epithet for other goddesses. The only other option than viewing her inclusion in the manual as anything other than a deliberate heuristic device is to hypothesize a goddess who was only, and not openly, worshipped by the higher ranking priesthood.

A general point concerns the question of the 'mind of the Egyptians'. Earlier it was commonplace to ascribe to ancient people specific mythic or mythopoeic thought patterns. However as has been made abundantly clear, mythological, associative, 'magical' thought did not force itself upon the Egyptians. If anything, all aspects of their religion, from the massive pyramids to Greco-Roman temples and the care in transmitting and elaborating on religious texts throughout three millennia testifies to a concentrated, orchestrated and deliberate effort. The host of priestly manuals should be seen in this light, i.e. as part of and tools for schooling a prospective priest in mythological thought. While much of the imagery found in Egyptian texts would have been easier understandable by contemporaries, the complexity of these texts and the conceptions would not have been accessible to the laity. In the Book of Thoth, drowning in the sea of texts was a real and possible danger, and the priest to be had to acquire a host of skills and techniques in order to understand and master these texts. This is not only a feature of Late Period and Greco-Roman Egyptian religion, but is found for all periods in texts which insist on the inaccessible nature of religious texts and rituals. To ease their entry into this confusing world the Egyptian priests had access to priestly manuals in which tradition was stored and systematised – for modern scholars deprived of the oral part of the teachings and the all-important practice, these manuals are even more important since they serve as a highly welcome aid in our attempts to grasp Egyptian religion.

Ritual manuals

The Papyrus Salt 825

For a few rituals, papyri exist that preserve not just the actual actions and words spoken but also some directions for use, and in even fewer instances mythological companions to the ritual. The Papyrus Salt 825, a hieratic papyrus of unknown provenance dating to the 26th dynasty contains the ritual for 'The end of the work'⁹⁶¹. This ritual involves the fabrication of an Osiris effigy in The House of Life of Abydos. As in *the Book of Thoth*, the chosen location may be an actual or ideal placement, of which the latter option would have been prompted by the strong mythological links of Osiris to that place⁹⁶². The papyrus contains different sections of which some are directions for use, others ritual phrases to be spoken and others again explanations of the layout of the House of Life, its staff and mythological interpretations of key ritual implements.

Unlike the mythological narratives that were recited during the public parts of festivals as well as being recorded in the outer, more accessible, areas of the temples, the ritual contained in Papyrus Salt 825 is of the utmost secrecy:

The Book of the End of the Work, day 20 of the first month of the inundation: The day of receiving writings and despatching writings. Life and death emerges from it. The End of the work is performed on it. The secret book that overturns magic, that ties down incantations, that affirms incantations that restrains the whole circuit of the world. Life is in it and death is in it. You should not reveal it. As for the one who reveals it, he will die a quick death immediately from terror. Stay well away from it. Life is in it and death is in it. It is (only) the scribe of the chamber, whose name is Per-ankh, who should recite it.

It is however not clear what parts of the papyrus this refers to and whether or not this includes the mythic passages. Alternatively it could allude to the actual ritual recitations,

⁹⁶¹ Papyrus published by Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B. M. 10051), rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (1965). The beginning of the text (pBM 10050) has been rediscovered and published by Herbin ('Les premières pages du Papyrus Salt 825', *BIFAO* 88 (1988), 95-112). Like the rest of the Late Period and Greco-Roman Period ritual papyri, pSalt 825 has been little studied except for its depiction of the House of Life, brought to attention by Gardiner, 'House of Life', *JEA* 24 (1938), 157-179. Cauville, 'L'hymne à Mehyt d'Edfou', *BIFAO* 82 (1982), 105-125 discusses a similar ritual in the chamber of Mehyt in Edfou. For the union of Re and Osiris as it is effectuated in the papyrus see now Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmography: On the Union of Re and Osiris in two types of Religious Discourse', *CRE XI. Proceedings*. The papyri have recently been republished by Fermat, *Le rituel de la Maison de la Vie: Papyrus Salt 825* (2010), but apart from combining the editions by Derchain and Herbin in a handy format it does not contribute anything new.

⁹⁶² In any case I do not think that the predominance of Abydos in the papyri is enough to assign the provenance to that location as is often done.

ascribed to the gods, some of which are in cryptographic writings⁹⁶³, or even omitted from writing⁹⁶⁴.

The accompanying mythic section touches upon the ritual in both its general aspect as well as its minutiae. The myth begins with the announcement of Osiris before Re. Apparently, Osiris is meant to bring an end to a rebellion against the sun god and restore harmony. His birth is on the twelfth day of the first month of the inundation and in just four days he arrives at maturity, nursed by Shu and Tefnut. Osiris then leaves his parents to arrive at Abydos to die at the hands of Seth the very next day⁹⁶⁵:

[...] He arrived at earthen soil (*s3tw*). Then Osiris said: 'How great (*wr*) this land (*t3*) is'. Because of this it is called Thinis (*t3-wr*) to this day. Then Osiris had it very pleasant there. Seth learned about it and he came running. He arrived against 'the enemy' of Osiris in Nedyt in Hatdjefau beneath a tree, of the species Aru, on the seventeenth day of the first month of the inundation. He did a great misdeed with 'His enemy'. He plunged him in the waters. Then Nun rose (*h^ci r wdi*) very greatly because of it and it rose to hide his Secret (i.e. his corpse) so that it engulfed him inside it.

The gods of the Ennead react to this crime with tears and sorrow, and here the myth moves on from recanting the mythological background to the ritual to function as narrative version of mythological manual on the different substances used for preparing the Osiris effigy that reappear in lists of ingredients. The beginning of this part of the myth is lost in a lacuna, but from what remains it seems that the recipe in the section on the 'First labour which is unknown' corresponds most closely to the narrative⁹⁶⁶:

Narrative Myth (pSalt 2, 1-3, 4)	Occurring in recipe (16, 9-17, 3)
<p>[Broken passage concerning the manufacture of Shedeh-wine]: This is how the Shedeh-wine that Re gave to his son Horus came into being.</p> <p>Then Horus began to cry. His tears fell to the ground and grew: This is how myrrh (<i>ḥntyw</i>) came into being. Then Geb fell ill because of it. The blood of his nose fell to the ground and grew: This is how the fir tree and resin came into being from his fluids.</p> <p>Then Shu and Tefnut began to cry exceedingly</p>	<p>Incense 1 (Hin)</p> <p>Myrrh 1 (Hin)</p> <p>Resin 2 ½ Hin</p> <p>Wax 2 (Hin)</p> <p>To be heated with a small amount of <i>Teshepses</i>-Oil.</p> <p>You process it when it has dissolved.</p>

⁹⁶³ A not very convincing reading of these passages can be found in Drioton, 'La Cryptographie du Papyrus Salt 825', *ASAE* 41 (1941), 99-134. The passage is an utterance of Geb. The possibility that secrecy was not the concern here exists since the characters used are almost identical to those occurring in the Sed-festival reliefs.

⁹⁶⁴ The passage is an utterance of Nut. For knowledge that should not be written down cf. Quack, 'Explizite Aufzeichnungsmeidung im Alten Ägypten', *LingAeg* 10 (2002), 339-342. Again something other than secrecy may be at stake here; the scribe could have omitted them by accident or purpose.

⁹⁶⁵ X+v, 1-5 (Herbin, 'Les premières pages du Papyrus Salt 825', *BIFAO* 88 (1988), plates).

⁹⁶⁶ Words in bold are my emphasis.

<p>much. The water of their eyes fell to the ground and grew: This is how incense (<i>sntr</i>) came into being. Then Re cried again. The water of his eye fell to the ground and transformed into bees. When the bee had been created, it began its task of the flowers in all the fields. This is how wax came into being and how honey came into being from his water. Then Re grew tired and the sweat from his limbs fell to the ground and grew and transformed into flax. This is how clothes came into being.</p> <p>And concerning the <i>Menkhet</i>-clothing [...] <i>Insy</i>-clothing [...]</p> <p>The <i>Idemy</i>-clothing came into being from [...]</p> <p>He threw up and vomited. This is how bitumen came into being.</p> <p>Then Neith gathered it to its right place. What had come forth from Re was placed on the divine limbs.</p> <p>Then Re vomited again. The water from his mouth went out unto the ground and it grew. This is how papyrus came into being.</p> <p>Then Isis and Nephtys grew very very tired. Their sweat went out unto the ground and it grew. This is how the <i>Teshespes</i>-plant came into being.</p>	<p>To be wrapped from its edges.</p>
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Except for the Shedeh-wine, fir, honey, the bitumen, clothing and papyrus all other ingredients are named in the recipe, albeit in a different order. Of the six extra ingredients, the wine is used in the next phase of the ritual and fir and honey are natural associates of resin and wax. For the remaining three missing ingredients in the recipe, they can perhaps be subsumed under the wrapping. To emphasize the link between the myth and the Osiris effigy, it is then recounted how Shu and Tefnut mould and refashion the god with these materials. Here the papyrus becomes fragmented but it appears that the gods worship and bewails Osiris again, this time in his new form. This involves a specific form of Osiris, 'The one in his tent' (*imy-shty*) which is the vessel for the union of Re and Osiris. Finally the myth concludes with the accession of Horus to the vacant throne of Osiris. This latter part is extremely terse in contrast to the many lines detailing the woes of the gods, and even omits any mention of joy the victory over Seth. This is probably due to the nature of the ritual that

this myth accompanies: While the victory over Seth and crowning of Horus could be seen as the climax of the overall Osiris myth and so is indispensable, the ritual focuses mainly on the burial of Osiris, an occasion which is cause for sorrow.

Even though the myth of the transformations of the gods' bodily fluids of focuses on Abydos, and locations within the Thinite nome, it is also generalized into a short aetiology for the allocation of deities to cult centres. The aetiology is divided into two parts. The first deals with Osiris, Re and Ptah before breaking of into a lacuna and follows the part of the myth quoted above⁹⁶⁷:

The land of the Benben-temple (Heliopolis) and the land of Iyt (Letopolis): Re took up residence in them. His sweat fell on them.

The land of the Tjenedet-shrine (Memphis): Ptah took up residence in it. His sweat fell on it.

The land of Abydos and the land of Hutmefau: Osiris took up residence in them. His sweat fell on them.

The land of the two wells of Elephantine [...]

The Second part follows the narration of the punishment of Seth. It differs from the first part in the mode in which affiliation is ascribed to a location; rather than sweat it is the blood of Seth that determines what nomes are allocated to him⁹⁶⁸:

The land of Oxyrhynchos, the land of Su, the land of Bahrieh, the land of Khargeh: The blood of Seth fell on them. They are his cities.

Apart from Abydos and Heliopolis, none of these places are otherwise featured in the papyrus. The reason for including these passages must instead stem from a desire to place the myth in a larger frame of reference, similarly to the local mythological manuals which do not lose sight of the national while focusing on the particulars of the individual nome. In papyrus Salt 825 this is achieved by evoking a pattern in which each god is linked by his emissions to the place of his worship.

Thus the ritual's 'charter myth' accomplishes several goals. One is providing aetiologies for the rituals and ingredients used, and another setting the general mood and tenor for the ritual. And finally the mythological interpretations used are incorporated into a larger system. Despite the presence of the central myth for the ritual in the papyri, the actual ritual itself was not a cultic drama in which the myth as such was enacted. In the sections containing words to be spoken during parts of the ritual, we see that it followed the Egyptian tradition of interpretations of individual acts or items without any attempts at sequencing these according to a narrative myth. The limits to the appliance of a single myth to explain all details in the ritual can also be discerned in the smaller mythic passages devoted to the

⁹⁶⁷ pSalt 825, 3, 4-3, 7.

⁹⁶⁸ pSalt 825, 5, 1-2.

interpretation of ritual tools. In the part of the papyrus devoted to access to the shrine that houses Osiris an amulet is mentioned that is instrumental in giving the priest access. At the end of this chapter, the amulet is given a detailed treatment in a commentary to the ritual, which adds new strands of mythology to the manuals arsenal⁹⁶⁹:

Concerning this amulet which is at the throat of Onuris the lord of Thinis, the secret sign of the bald priest: It was hidden in the presence of Re, as something for his throat, a secret of the writings of *The end of the Work* to rescue him from Someone ...Shu after his son had rebelled against him. Then he took *The end of the Work* to his throat to rescue him(self?) from him...caused a great crime to happen to him/thereby/therein. Then Shu cried after this great crime had happened to him/thereby/therein. Then he let him live in an instant with the breath of his mouth in return for /because of his son Osiris. What was said by Shu after he had placed *The end of the Work* at his throat: 'OH Living one who remains stable every day'. He is hidden in life and the flame courses around him as his protection according to *The End of the Work*.

The circularity in this small aetiology should be noted: The amulet is used in the Ritual for *The End of the Work*, but this ritual and the ritual instructions are presupposed in the aetiology for one of the ritual's key tools. This only causes problems, however, if we insist on a too literal reading of these aetiologies as belonging in a 'real' mythic past. This results in an apparent paradox since the ritual manual could not have existed prior to the gods inventing the ritual. If we instead focus on the ritual aspect as the predominant and the use of mythological aetiologies as a way of facilitating correspondences and room for interpretation, then this paradox evaporates leaving instead a strengthened link between the mythic episodes and the ritual in which they are invoked.

The difference between the small mythological narratives and the longer is the explicit connection to the ritual or its tools. The small narratives are introduced by the particle *ir* 'concerning' and are found embedded in sections of ritual instructions. Here they function as mythological interpretations of central parts of the ritual and even make reference to these rituals. There is no doubt that these aetiologies would have been reserved for the priests and not have been recited to an audience - if only for lack of relevance to the average participant at a festival. On the other hand the long myth might have served have been used in the public part of the ritual, if such existed, to grant the audience a gist of what was going on inside the temple and impart to them the general tenor of the festival: the sorrow surrounding the death of Osiris and his burial.

⁹⁶⁹ pSalt 825, 14, 6-15, 1.

The archive of Pwerem son of Kiki

Another interesting case is the fragmented papyrus BM 10288⁹⁷⁰. This hieratic papyrus dating to the Ptolemaic period belonged to a priestly family who were also the owners of many other ritual texts⁹⁷¹. Originally temple texts, they have been adapted to funeral use by the insertion of the name of the deceased at the appropriate places in the existing papyri or when copied. Among these texts a ritual manual contains different rituals and myths associated with Osiris. Two non-consecutive columns are preserved:

Column, lls.	Contents	Notes
A, 1-7	Ritual of protection against snakes	Similar to the 'Ritual of the four balls' ⁹⁷² .
A, 7-11	Mythological episode: 'Knowing the secret form which Isis assumed for hiding the god in his secrecy'	Aetiology for a tamarisk grove at the tomb of a divine cow ⁹⁷³ .
A, 12-17	Ritual: 'Spell for driving away the accomplices of the evil one'	
B, 1-11	Mythological account	Very fragmented. preserved text deals with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Eye of Horus 2) Sailing to Pe 'until this day' 3) Osiris in Herakleopolis
B, 11-14	Narrative myth: 'Knowing every place in which the throne of His majesty (i.e. Osiris) has been established'	Preserved text lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Busiris, 2) Heliopolis 3) Memphis 4) Abydos 5) Sais 6) Herakleopolis
B, 14-17	Mythological introduction: 'To repel Seth on the ways on which the gods travel in the house of the lower Egyptian kings. His son went down to the north to	

⁹⁷⁰ Published by Caminos, 'Another Hieratic Manuscript from the Library of Pwerem Son of Kiki (Pap. B.M. 10288): To Dr. Rosalind L. B. Moss' *JEA* 58 (1972), 205-224

⁹⁷¹ See Quack, 'Ein neuer funerärer Text der Spätzeit (pHohenzollern-Sigmaringen II)', *ZÄS* 127 (2000), 74-87.

⁹⁷² Similarities in wording to pBrooklyn 47.218.138 noted by Goyon, 'Textes mythologiques II. « Les révélations du mystère des Quatre Boules »', *BIFAO* 75 (1975), p. 351 n. 20. For the copy of the ritual found in pMMA 35.9.21 see Goyon, *Le Papyrus d'Imouthès Fils de Psintaês* (1999), 63-73.

⁹⁷³ Since Isis hides the tomb we may have an allusion to the ritual of 'Threading the tomb' (*ḥḥ is*) studied by Egberts, *In Quest of Meaning. A Study of the Ancient Egyptian Rites of Consecrating the Meret-chests and Driving the Calves* (1995), 345-363.

	<p>see the place where his father was, taking his followers to Khasetyu having inspected Re-Hone, enduring for eternity'</p> <p>Followed by ritual:</p> <p>'Spell for repelling the evil one and driving away his accomplices from the path of the Phoenix'</p>	
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As far can be gathered from the fragmentary state, the papyrus appears to be similar to pSalt 825 inasmuch as it contains ritual sections interspersed with mythological aetiologies and lists. Due to its condition it is impossible to make out the connections between the different sections.

The mythological account contains an alternate version of Osiris and the Atef-crown known from Book of the Dead chapter 175, wherein the holy sea in Herakleopolis is explained as the pus oozing from the swellings on Osiris' head caused by donning the Atef-crown:

Was...to him the great Atef-crown being placed on his head...now his majesty was in Naret, swellings being on him here (*šfyw hr=f*). Came into being his name of Herishef (*hry-š=f*). Said to him...because of this great Atef-crown which you gave to me...the serpent and the god which lives on mankind...his/he...in Naret

The version here is not identical to that found in BD 175, even though another papyrus from exactly the same archive demonstrates that the Book of the Dead version was known at the time⁹⁷⁴. Nor is it identical, as far as I can see, to the version found in the unpublished papyri of the Tebtunis Mythological Manual. The existence of three divergent versions at roughly the same period underlines the non-canonicity of these works. No definite version of a myth existed as myths could be re-focused and re-phrased to fit into different texts and contexts. The myth also forms part of the narration of localities in which Osiris' throne has been established. Here it is found in a shortened version that only retains the vital pun explaining the link between Osiris and Herishef:

Now his majesty was in Nart and his face became swollen there (*šfy hr=f im*). His name came into existence because of his face: His name of Heryshef came into existence

⁹⁷⁴ pBM 10081 adapted for the funerary use of the scribe Pwerem. See Schott, 'Totenbuchspruch 175 in einem Ritual zur Vernichtung von Feinden', *MDAIK* 14 (1956), 181–189. For another extract from the Book of the Dead chapter in an hymn to Osiris in the temple of Opet cf. Otto, 'Zwei Paralleltexte zu TB 175', *CdÉ* 37 (1962), 252.

Even though the papyrus is fragmented, it is not unreasonable to assume that it followed a pattern comparable to the papyrus Jumilhac in which list text alternated with narrative passages that elaborated the myths alluded to or outlined in the lists.

Read together the mythological narratives emphasize certain parts of the myth of Osiris, namely his burial and the protection of his corpse. The list of cult places is introduced by ‘Now his majesty was to be ruler of the Duat and he travelled to the Duat (from) Busiris’, and as is well known the myth of Osiris in Herakleopolis also concerns the post mortem existence of this god. The myth of the secret form of Isis likewise concerns the tomb of Osiris, and how it is hidden from Seth and his gang. This theme is also present in the ritual passages which focus on the protection of the deceased (god) and his tomb.

In the first ritual passage the corpse (of the god) is protected against snakes in a ritual in which four clay balls are deposited or thrown towards the four cardinal points. The narrative of knowing the cardinal points might contain an allusion to this since it mentions the goddess Neith, very prominent in the other versions of striking the ball:

[...] was revealed for him his path in Aperty at the side of the mother of god, the lady of Sais, who for his⁹⁷⁵ sake placed the horn against the southerners, northerners [...]

In the second ritual fragment the evil dead are banned from ‘Entering among the blessed spirits’, which can again be seen as a ritual for protecting the tomb of Osiris – or in the adapted version the tomb of Osiris *Pwerem* and his brother *Pkherkhons* as the connection between the mythic passages and the ritual explains why it would be desirable to include the myths as part of funerary ensemble.

The Papyrus BM 10288 thus corroborates the conclusions gained from the analysis of pSalt 825 as concerns the ways in which mythology is used in ritual manuals. Again we find the longer narrative passages used as charter myths for the whole ritual, while the actual ritual utterances are characterised by the non-narrative mode of employing mythology known from other ritual texts.

The Book of the Heavenly Cow

The last ritual manual treated here deviates in some respects from the previous two. Due to its placement in royal tombs and transmission alongside the books of the underworld, the Book of the Heavenly Cow, including its main narrative, surely belongs to an exoteric category of texts. The book is structured in 6 sections of which the narrative itself makes up sections 1 and 3 and 5, divided by instructions for the depiction of the heavenly cow and for

⁹⁷⁵ Emending *wpt n=s ʿb* into *wpt n=f ʿb* following Caminos, ‘Another Hieratic Manuscript from the Library of Pwerem Son of Kiki’, *JEA* 58 (1972), 221.

ritual recitals⁹⁷⁶. The narrative itself is a straightforward aetiological account of the separation of heaven and earth and the divine and cosmological institutions this entailed. There is thus nothing inherent in the tale to set it apart from similar aetiological myths in terms of secrecy or exclusiveness. In order to reach at an explanation for the status of this myth, which is unique in being a narrative myth that is uttered as part of restricted non-public ritual, it is necessary to briefly look at the connections between the myth and the rest of the Book of the Heavenly Cow.

- 1) First part of narrative (verses 1-165)
- 2) Instructions for the depiction of the cow (166-201)
- 3) Second part of narrative (202-249)
- 4) instructions for recital (250-270)
- 5) Third part of the narrative ending in Ba-theology passage (271-286)
- 6) Spell and instructions for figurines (287-330)

In the context the narrative primarily makes sense as an aetiology for present state of the cosmos which is divided between heaven and earth. Many of the details in the narrative are of no relevance for the ritual as such, concerning aetiologies for the different realms of the cosmos and for cultic institutions and practices at the New Year's festival for appeasing the raging goddess. The first part of the narrative ends with the Re parting with the troublesome as he ascends upon the heavenly cow. The sky goddess Nut quivers with fear because of the great height, but is supported at her legs by the eight Heh-gods and by Shu underneath her belly.

The instructions for the depiction of the cow begin with these supporting deities and how they should be placed in relation to the cow itself, but this appears to be the only obvious reference to the narrative⁹⁷⁷. This is similar to the state of affairs in the other ritual manuals analysed here, but with the important difference that in the Book of the Heavenly Cow the narrative not only serves as a frame or charter myth for the ritual but is recited as part of the secret ritual itself.

⁹⁷⁶ Hornung, *Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh* (1982). For the date of the text see Spalinger, 'The destruction of mankind: A transitional literary text', *SAK* 28 (2000), 257-282 (Early New Kingdom) and Quack, 'Perspektiven zur Theologie im Alten Ägypten: Antwort auf Jan Assmann', in: Oeming et al. (eds.), *Theologie in Israel und in den Nachbarkulturen*, (2004), 64-65 with n. 4 (Middle Kingdom).

⁹⁷⁷ In Hornung's emendation in line 184 a further reference appears: '[...]und ich werde nicht zulassen, dass sie (einen Aufstand) machen'. The text, only preserved in the Sethi I. Version, has: *nn di=i ir=sn* which obviously lack an object for the final verb. However the context does not appear to be at all concerned with the rebellion against Ra, but rather with the stability of the sky. Perhaps it is better to translate "I will not let them (the Heh-gods) do (anything)" this rendering of the text suits the following line in which Shu is admonished not to grow tired (from carrying the sky) - and when, a few lines later, it is written beneath his arm that he should 'Guard them (i.e. the Heh-gods)'.

The most probable explanation for this is found in the phenomenon of *arcansation* of texts⁹⁷⁸. In a religion based on secrecy, such as the Egyptian, a drift towards making texts secret, exclusive and wrought with hidden meanings exists. This often goes hand in hand with the veneration of ancient texts. For the Book of the Heavenly Cow this would mean that an original narrative aetiological myth, of the Middle Kingdom, at some point became attached to a traditional ritual centred on fabricating depictions and figurines⁹⁷⁹. Thus the text shifted category from a narrative to a ritual text, whose meaning was no longer only dependent on the internal semantics of the text, but just as much the divine power invested in it by tradition and by its use in the ritual. In this process it did not matter that most of the text was extraneous to the purpose of the ritual.

A few additional examples of this process can perhaps be found in the funerary corpus of the Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead. Coffin Texts spell 836 contains an incantation that is also found in the fragmentary Middle Kingdom Tale of the Herdsman⁹⁸⁰. At a central point in the narrative, the herdsmen have to cross the river and recite a water spell to calm it. The coffin Texts spell 836 is a shorter variant of the same incantation, contained in a narrative frame that is similar but different form that found in the Tale of the Herdsman. Internal evidence points to the narrative form being the primary and its use as a spell secondary⁹⁸¹.

A more relevant case is Book of the Dead chapter 175 which display striking similarities to the Book of the Heavenly Cow in interspersing an aetiological narrative with ritual passages. In the Book of the Dead the chapter is made up of three sections, divided by ritual speeches. Since these ritual utterances are known from other ritual texts, it would appear that we have a combination of original ritual texts and independent mythical aetiologies that merged into a new ritual text in which the status of the myths shifted from being part of a

⁹⁷⁸ See Assmann, 'Semiosis and Interpretation in Ancient Egyptian Ritual', in: Biederman (ed.), *Interpretation in Religion* (1992), 87-109. I use the term in the same way as Moshe Idel, who has adopted the term and used it to characterize an important aspect of Hebrew mysticism (*Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (2002), 202).

⁹⁷⁹ For the role of images in ritual cf. Eschweiler, *Bildzauber im alten Ägypten* (1997).

⁹⁸⁰ CT VII, 36i-s. The relationship between the two texts was first noted and discussed by Gilula, 'Hirtengeschichte 17-22 = CT VII 36m-r' *GM* 29 (1987), 21-22. See also Ogdon, 'A Hitherto Unrecognized Metaphor of Death in Papyrus Berlin 3024', *GM* 100 (1987), 73-80.

⁹⁸¹ Gilula (op. cit.) favours transference of the passage from the Coffin Text to the narrative, arguing perhaps from the fact that the Coffin dates to the 11th dynasty, whereas pBerlin 3024 containing the *Tale of the Herdsman* is datable to the 12th dynasty. Ogdon (op. cit.) prefers to see the tale as the primary and the Coffin Text spell as secondary, but does not present any valid arguments for his case. Both Gilula and Ogdon fail to note that the final line in the Coffin Text spell is a narrative formulae (*ḥd.n rf ḫ dw3 sp sn + sḏm.n=f* (here *ḏ3.n=f*) which does points to an origin in a narrative, since it does not fit well with the stylistic repertoire of the Coffin Texts. For this formula cf. Gilula, 'Shipwrecked Sailor, Lines 184-85', in: Johnson and Wentz (eds.), *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes* (1976), 75-82.

manual of priestly knowledge or 'charter myth' for the ritual to become an integral and outspoken part of the ritual itself, if perhaps only as a virtual ritual in funerary literature.

For the Book of the Heavenly Cow, it should be emphasized that it is not the ritual use of a narrative in itself that is extraordinary. Above we looked at cases in which narratives served as framing myths and for recital in the public phases of a festival. It is the way that the narrative is put to use in a ritual that is unusual; by a priest acting alone, at night and in secrecy. Thus the Book of the Heavenly Cow demonstrates that the schemes outlined in this chapter to explain the use of myth in ritual are only to be taken as general rules of thumb, since the different categories of texts were not clear cut and a large degree of fluidity was present. A factor in this is the oral role of written literature which were performative texts not meant for solitary internal reading. So even though the ritual mode favoured non-narrative texts, this did not *per se* exclude narrative myths from being used in ritual. The use of the narrative myth does not make the ritual itself narrative. The ritual does not conform to the plot of the myth, in the sense of being a cult drama in which the myth functions as a script. The other spoken parts of the ritual instead use the usual terse allusions to mythological roles and functions in order to secure access and passage for the deceased king.

Uses of narratives in magical texts

The observations and hypotheses on the Egyptian ritual use of narrative myth is further corroborated by a category of ritual texts in which narratives play a prominent role. In magical rituals of healing a common feature is the recital of a myth of the young Horus lying helpless and ill in the marshes of the Delta. At first sight the widespread use of myth in this ritual genre contradicts the speculations uttered above, but when the circumstances surrounding the use of magic rituals are taken into account, these will be seen to agree perfectly with the general trend.

Here the most pertinent characteristic is the inclusion of a patient – i.e. a person for whom the ritual is performed and who is not (usually) himself a trained priest⁹⁸². As far as I

⁹⁸² Other relevant factor that could be discussed is to what extent the narrative frame substitutes the elaborate framework of a temple ritual, see for instance the discussion in Frankfurter, 'Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells', in: Meyer and Mirecki (eds.), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (1995), 457-476. Quack, 'Erzählen als Preis', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 298-299, prefers to see the difference in application caused by the time span of the actions that the ritual utterances accompany. Short mythological allusions are used with momentary actions are used while the long healing rituals can accommodate longer narratives. However, this cannot be the sole reason since such rituals as the Daily Ritual also includes longer hymnic passages.

am aware, based on a non-exhaustive survey of magical texts⁹⁸³, magic rituals that do not involve a patient never use long narratives. The presence of a patient thus appears as a necessary condition for applying narratives in the ritual. As narratives are non-esoteric, this could condition their use in rituals involving a patient over and above rituals using mythological allusions. However the latter are also used in rituals with patients, which makes an explanation on the grounds of restricted knowledge unviable. Instead I would argue that the magician could choose between two divergent strategies when performing a magical ritual:

The first was the use of ritual formats basically comparable to those performed in temples. From exercising his duties in the temple, the priest would be familiar with these, while the patient would probably not. On the one hand, this mode allowed for a rapid succession of mythological allusions, something that inter alia cast a wider web of mythological signification, but on the other hand reduced the patient to an ignorant and inactive spectator to his own healing.

The second used a narrative format that emphasized one familiar mythic topos, often with the inclusion of textual frame that explicated the analogies between actor, patient and disease with the characters found in the myth. While this mode ran against the wider current of ritual appliance of mythology, it had the great advantage of being comprehensible to the patient, who could thus be mobilized in his own healing⁹⁸⁴.

⁹⁸³ I want to thank Joanna Kyffin for discussing the magical texts with me.

⁹⁸⁴ This aspect is also noted by Quack, 'Erzählen als Preisen', *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen* (2009), 299 and see levi-Strauss' classic essays on magical healing 'The Effectiveness of Symbols' and 'The Sorcerer and his Magic' in *Structural Anthropology* (1963).

Appendix D: Motifs: Gods eating gods

One of the recurring motifs in the mythological manuals is that of gods eating other gods. Often the god who is eaten is Osiris and the motif seen as parallel to embalming, which entails a collection of the scattered members and a gathering of the life that has been dispersed by death⁹⁸⁵. In mythic terms this healing can also be expressed by the action of devouring. This action is ambivalent as it can signify both destruction and reintegration. Despite its negative associations the motif is both effective and concise in as much as it involves most of the aspects of the Egyptian idea of regeneration.

According to Egyptian conceptions re-generation is:

- 1) Transformation that needs a catalyst and which takes place in a regenerative space and involves a journey of transition between states⁹⁸⁶.
- 2) Re-creation that necessarily involves a prior destruction, which is not automatic but actively brought about by someone⁹⁸⁷.
- 3) A social act that involves gods acting for gods, who may come into being by themselves as part of cosmogonies, but who are not usually able to bring themselves to life again after death.

Devouring is a major catalyst for change, things eaten are things transformed. If the process is to be beneficial it must be reversible – the digestive process is not brought to its conclusion but halted as the devourer, voluntarily or forced, vomits up what he or she has eaten. While even the maggots and flies emerging from the rotted corpse of Osiris or putrid eye of Atum can be a sign of regeneration⁹⁸⁸, excrements are never signs of new life⁹⁸⁹.

⁹⁸⁵ For this aspect of death and burial see Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (2005), 23-38. Assmann does not touch upon the positive role of being devoured for which see Köhler, *Das Imiut* (1975), 349 and 357 in connection with Anubis and the Imiut standard.

⁹⁸⁶ For the 'biomorphic' and 'topomorphic' modes of regeneration see the classic article by Assmann, 'Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt', *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* (1989), 135-159, and for the notion of regenerative space Billing, *Nut: the goddess of life* (2002).

⁹⁸⁷ Assmann, *Death and Salvation* (2005), 77-86 cf. further Zandee, *Death as an Enemy* (1977).

⁹⁸⁸ CT III, 350b-d, IV, 76b, 166a-e, VI, 1a-b, 342i, VII, 472i, BD 78, 16-18.

⁹⁸⁹ For the role of excrements in the regeneration of the dead cf. Frandsen (in press). This is not to say that excrements are purely negative, they can serve as material for generation as in the parables in the *Myth of the Eye of the Sun* (pLeiden I 348, 7, 1-14 = Spiegelberg, *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonnenauge* (1917), 24-25. Cf. further the *pChester Beatty Dreambook* wherein the eating of faeces in a dream is a felicitous sign (pChester Beatty III, 5, 15 and similarly for urine in 5, 5. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum I* (1935), 14 and pl. 6)

Being eaten is comparable to entering through the gates of the netherworld and emergence from the mouth equivalent to exiting⁹⁹⁰. The stomach of the devourer is a regenerative space comparable to the womb⁹⁹¹.

Due to the negative associations of eating, the texts differ in ascribing the action to deities. The mythological manuals are remarkable for the degree of ambiguity and ambivalence allowed and so we find that the harmful actions usually reserved for enemies of the god in ritual texts can be committed by beneficent deities. While the identity of the gods devouring other gods often changes, and the actual devouring is often substituted for more innocent acts of appropriation, the form assumed by the gods remain remarkably constant. In order to get an overview of the different myths it is thus more convenient to order them with reference to animal forms than the specific deities involved.

Canines

The myth of Anubis-Wepwawet eating of the corpse of Osiris is narrated in the Tebtunis manual in the clearest and most elaborate version, modelled upon the actual behaviour of dogs. The dog licks and eats of Osiris, specifically the efflux from his corpse and his fingers. Allusions to the myth are attested from the Coffin Texts onwards. The most concise reference is given in the geographical Vulture List of the *Book of Thoth* where the myth is used as the defining feature of Assiut⁹⁹². While this especially related to Assiut, the myth is not reserved for this place but can also be located in Busiris as in Coffin Text spell 155 where the deceased claims knowledge of 'What was damaged in the corpse of Osiris by the hand of Anubis', the text further specifies the occasion as⁹⁹³:

This night of covering his clawed paws⁹⁹⁴, on this day of binding what is in his mouth⁹⁹⁵. It was something that was missing from Osiris⁹⁹⁶ when his front was united with his rear in the woodwork of planking.

⁹⁹⁰ While devouring is not attested for the pelican, the mouth of this bird is often likened to gates. For example in CT III, 218b-221b [225]: 'The mouth of the pelican is opened (*wn*) for you. The mouth of the pelican is opened (*snš*) for you. The pelican has caused you to go forth by day to every place where your heart wants to be'. Where the verbs used for opening the mouth is the same as those used for temple doors. Other examples can be found in CT spells 243, 264, 619 and 622, and in the Litany of the Sun (Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung* I (1975), 187-194 cf. Lieven, 'Mysterien des Kosmos: Kosmographie und Priesterwissenschaft', *Ägyptische Mysterien?* (2002), 53. For the jaws of Geb and Matjeret opening to allow the deceased passage cf. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009), 221-222.

⁹⁹¹ In the cognitive linguistic framework introduced into Egyptology by Rune Nyord, both processes involve the image schemata of *container* and both take place in the *ib*-interior, which might be a factor in their mythical equation. For the *ib*-interior and containment cf. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh* (2009), 68-78 and for its application to the mythical scheme discussed here see *ibid* 388-392.

⁹⁹² L01, x+2/12 Jasnow & Zauzich, *Book of Thoth* (2005) 340-342, following the reading in Quack, 'Die Initiation zum Schreiberberuf', *SAK* 36 (2007), 287 s.v. S. 340.

⁹⁹³ CT II, 300-304

⁹⁹⁴ *k3p3p wrmtj.fy*. For the meaning of this passage see Köhler, *Das Imiut* (1975), 361 n. 3.

In the *Papyrus Jumilhac* there are two variants of this myth in a list of knowing the nine forms (*ḥprw*) of the xstt-canine. The first one is the wolf (*wnš*), which can be a manifestation of several gods. The manner of manifestation is differentiated by a terminology whose finer nuances elude us⁹⁹⁷, thus the wolf is said to *be* Anubis (*inpw pw*), *stand for* Upwawet (*ḥ^c=f n wp-w3wt*) and *be a form of* Isdes (*ḥprw pw n isds*). Using the euphemistic ‘enemy’, we are told that ‘It was the ‘enemy’ of Osiris that suffered because of it’. Despite this the wolf is honoured and buried after its death in the temple of Anubis in Assiut and elsewhere. In the other relevant entry in the list the culprit is not Anubis, but Horus son of Isis, who got entangled in the wrappings of his mummified father as he licked his flesh, thus explaining the appearance of the dog, which is black except for a white neck⁹⁹⁸.

Further examples come from the realm of funerary literature. In the judgement scene in the Book of Gates, Anubis as a black jackal is responsible for the darkening of the moon since ‘Anubis swallows his father’⁹⁹⁹. The same action is attested for Anubis as an epithet on a pillar in the tomb of Ramesses VI where we find ‘Anubis the foremost of the westerners, the great god who swallowed his father Osiris’¹⁰⁰⁰.

Ursula Rössler-Köhler has drawn attention to similar texts where Anubis has been substituted by Seth or Baba. Two examples occur in *Coffin Text* spell 335/*Book of the Dead* Chapter 17. Here the deceased implores Re to save him from the malevolent entities of the netherworld. These entities are not named but are expressed through the phrase ‘this god’ followed by a string of epithets¹⁰⁰¹:

May you save me from this god who robs bas who licks putrefaction (*nsb iwtyw*) and lives of rotting fluids (*ḥnh m ḥw33t*) who belongs to darkness and is in the gloom, he whom those who are tired fear.

While the eating habits of this god is close to those of Anubis in the texts cited above, the Egyptian running commentary to the text identifies him as Seth, who in this case personifies the negative aspects of Anubis or who appears in the guise of a related jackal deity. Similarly in the *Papyrus Jumilhac* guilt is transferred from Anubis to Seth when this god removes the relics of Osiris from the embalming place. Instead of just substituting the name of Seth for

⁹⁹⁵ *swdwd imyw r3.f* Discussed in Köhler, *ibid.*, 362, n.1.

⁹⁹⁶ *iw.(s) m iwtt ḥnt wsir* lit.: ‘It is ‘something that is not’ from Osiris’. Cf. Sethe, *ZÄS* 57 (1922), 33

⁹⁹⁷ von Lieven, ‘Das Göttliche in der Natur erkennen’, *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 161-162.

⁹⁹⁸ pJumilhac 16, 2-4 (Vandier, *Le papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 128).

⁹⁹⁹ Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* II (1980), 143-152. Interpretation in Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 270 cf. further Köhler, *Das Imiut* (1975), 388-391.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Piankoff, *Tomb of Ramesses VI*, pl. 139.

¹⁰⁰¹ *CT* IV, 319a-321b with a parallel in the *Book of Caverns* noted by Köhler, *Das Imiut* (1975), 405. Similar example in *CT* IV, 312b-316a.

Anubis, the narrative myth uses a transformation motif as Seth takes on the form (xprw) of Anubis to commit his crimes.

Pig

In Coffin Texts spell 157 Seth in the form of a black pig damages the eye of Horus¹⁰⁰². In this spell the eye suffers from looking at the pig and is not eaten, but probably the spell is a variant of a myth in which Seth as a pig eats of the eye. References to Seth having eaten of the eye of Horus exist from the Pyramid Texts onwards¹⁰⁰³. The eye causes abdominal pains in Seth¹⁰⁰⁴, and after the judgement of Horus and Seth the eye is even banned for Seth as food¹⁰⁰⁵, just as the pig is banned for Horus in Coffin Text spell 157. While none of these texts say that Seth was in the form of a pig when he ate of the eye such an extrapolation is substantiated by the Judgement scene of the *Book of Gates*, referred to above for its description of Anubis. Here the black pig has also eaten of the moon or the eye of Horus, and Thoth is said to 'let him expel what was swallowed (*di=f nh Ꞁmw*)'¹⁰⁰⁶.

In a variant version of this Geb, likewise as a pig, eats the eye of Re. The myth is found in the mythological manual of the Delta in the section of Heliopolis¹⁰⁰⁷. Geb eats the eye of Re but when asked he denies any knowledge of its whereabouts. The eye however manifests itself as the *hmt-s3* skin disease, thus revealing Geb's crime to onlookers¹⁰⁰⁸. Geb is punished in two ways, first by having to feed on urine (?) and secondly by being cast to the ground while Shu elevates Nut above him. The drinking of urine is probably not a connected to any ritual but should be seen as an aetiology for the eating habits of pigs, which in densely populated regions often feed on human waste¹⁰⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁰² For a lunar interpretation of this spell see Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 269-270 with further references.

¹⁰⁰³ *Pyr* §61 [90], *Pyr* §88 [145] and *CT VII*, 136m all offering spells containing the same phrase: Take for yourself the eye of Horus, it is only a little that Seth has eaten of it (*ndst wnm.t.n stš im=s*).

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Pyr*. Utt. 204, *BD* 137A, 178.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *CT VI*, 208f-209i likened (*mi*) to the deceased's refusal to eat faeces and drink urine.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits II* (1980), 143-152.

¹⁰⁰⁷ (VI, 6-VII, 2), Meeks (*Mythes et légendes du Delta* (2006), 218f.) considers the legend to be connected to the moon despite the use of the eye of Re instead of the usual Eye of Horus. Cf. perhaps *CT VI*, 307a-b 'It is N that has brought the Udjat-eye from the mansion of Busiris – that which is in the mouth of Geb'

¹⁰⁰⁸ Cf. Quack, 'Tabuisierte und ausgegrenzte Kranke nach dem "Buch vom Tempel"', *Papyrus Ebers und die antike Heilkunde* (2005), 67ff. for the nature of this disease.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Miller, 'Hogs and Hygiene', *JEA* 76 (1990), 125-140.

It is uncertain whether the undesirable 'Bread of Geb' mentioned in the Coffin Texts should be viewed in the context of this myth. Usually it is explained as 'dust' or just common terrestrial food, but it could also be a euphemism for faeces.

In the case of goddesses eating other gods an alternative to vomiting readily presents itself. In the book *The Fundamentals of the Course of the Stars*, Nut appears as the great swine which devours her litter and gives birth to them anew each day¹⁰¹⁰. In Esna 60, Neith, in what form is not stated, eats the two divine eyes to protect them from their enemies and afterwards gives birth to them - this text also provides an association with stellar myth as it is Thoth's action of filling/counting them that causes the eyes to come forth between the goddess' thighs¹⁰¹¹.

Antelope

In the Late Period the antelope, the emblematic animal of the 16th Upper Egyptian nome, Meh became the prototypical enemy of the eye of Horus. The section on Meh in the Tebtunis manual deals extensively with Horus and Thoths punitive actions against Seth, who in the guise of an antelope damages and eats of the eye¹⁰¹². In the Mythological manual of the Delta, the motif is present in the section on Bubastis, but characteristically the actual eating of the eye is again said to take place in Meh¹⁰¹³. In contrast to most of the other animals for which eating of the gods is attested, the antelope as an herbivore is not an obvious candidate for a devourer of a god's flesh. Derchain has demonstrated that the enemy role of the antelope is not an original characteristic of this animal¹⁰¹⁴ and so also the role of eater of the eye of Horus may be a transfer from other myths of the damage done by Seth, in the form of a different animal, to the eye.

Ibis

In a myth, so far only directly attested in the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual*, Thoth as an Ibis picks at the floating corpse of Horus-Osiris in the water¹⁰¹⁵. Despite the lacunae, it appears that Thoth was unable to recognize the god as the moon was darkened due to actions taking by a vile Nubian. There is no mention of Thoth later vomiting but such an action might be

¹⁰¹⁰ Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne* (2007), §95-103.

¹⁰¹¹ Esna 60, 3-4 translated in Sternberg, *Mythen und Mythenbildung* (1985), 68 and see *ibid* 50f and 72 n. s).

¹⁰¹² *TM* 7, 18-19.

¹⁰¹³ pBrooklyn 47.318.84, 9, 6-9-8 (Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta* (2006), 20)

¹⁰¹⁴ Derchain, *Le sacrifice de l'oryx* (1962), 15-38.

¹⁰¹⁵ *TM*, 6, 20ff. Due to the lacunae it is not clear where this passage ends.

implied as we learn that the god's innards 'were heavy for him'. If so Thoth might be instrumental in retrieving the limbs in the water, specifically stated to be *The Great Sea of Fire*, of the local temple area, and bringing them ashore. This would accord with his customary role in helping the dead Osiris, only by different means. Thoth's ambivalent role towards Osiris has been known from scattered references from the Pyramid Texts onwards¹⁰¹⁶, but it is not sure if any of these refers to this myth.

Crocodile

In the *Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days* a recurring motif is Sobek's devouring of the floating corpse of Osiris. In Leitz's interpretation this is connected to the moon so that Sobek eats a limb each day for a fourteen-day period corresponding to the waning phase. For this crime he is punished by the removal of his tongue¹⁰¹⁷, reference to which appears already in the Coffin Texts¹⁰¹⁸. Sometimes the crime is transferred to Maga, son of Seth¹⁰¹⁹, and in the Calendar the euphemistic use of *lfty* 'enemy' is used when Sobek himself is punished.

While Sobek acts against Osiris, he is shown in a similar setting acting for the benefit of Horus. In Coffin Texts spell 158 Sobek retrieves the cut off hands of Horus from the deep. When Seth had tainted Horus' hands with his semen, Isis cut them off and threw them in the water. In this version Sobek uses a fish trap to gather the hands and so avoids eating them. Here too the myth is used as mythological interpretation of the cycle of the moon, but this time in connection with the waxing phase¹⁰²⁰.

It is tempting to see the different results, the waning and the waxing, as consequences of the methods Sobek uses to gather the limbs. In the coffin texts Sobek is provided with fish for food as a reward, which provides an aetiology for the prescribed eating habits of

¹⁰¹⁶ For references see Meurer, Georg, *Die Feinde des Königs in den Pyramidentexten* (2002), 59-63. For a treatment of the contested case of the *Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus* with references to earlier discussion see Schneider, 'Neues zum Verständnis des Dramatischen Ramesseumpapyrus', *Myth und Ritual*, Fs. Assmann (2008), 236-238.

¹⁰¹⁷ For discussions of the myth see Posener, 'Aménémopé, 22, 9-10 et l'infirmité du crocodile', *Fs. Schott* (1968), 106-111; Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), passim.

¹⁰¹⁸ CT VII, 201k, a spell for becoming Sobek: 'I am that crocodile (*sbk*) whose tongue was cut out because of the mutilation (*ʕβt*) of Osiris'.

¹⁰¹⁹ As in the calendar entry for 4. Peret, 25, in which Maga is substituted for Sobek (the latter preserved in the pSallier version). See Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 324-325. Maga is also found instead of Sobek in pBrooklyn 47.218. 84, 14, 1-4 (Meeks, *Mythes et legendes du Delta* (2006), 33), where the later development of the section shows the crime to be committed by Sobek.

¹⁰²⁰ For lunar interpretations of this spell see Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 270f.

crocodiles¹⁰²¹, perhaps specifically a reward for not having eaten the hands? However on a structural level the two actions are identical since the god gathers severed limbs that have been separated from their owners.

While Horus was the beneficiary in the version just mentioned, the crocodile can also be a form of Horus, which in preparation for the embalming of Osiris gathers his father's limbs from the flood¹⁰²². In *papyrus Jumilhac* Sobek of Takhent is identified as Seth when this god had robbed the eyes of Horus¹⁰²³. Here the eyes are not eaten but placed in two chests and guarded by the crocodile, again a structural reading reveals a connection since robbing and enclosing the eyes within a chest is similar to eating them and holding them in the stomach. The following section in the papyrus concerns another location, Mernefto, which is also under the patronage of Sobek. The name Mernefto is provided with an aetiology that revolves around Sobek's appetites. Sobek had encountered the allies of Seth and devoured all of them except for their heads, which he carried with him on his back to display before the gods. In front of the lord of the gods he disposed of the heads on the ground and was apparently going to eat them since the god said: 'Do not let him eat them, give him bread. Because of this it is called Mernefto (*mr.n=f t* 'He likes bread')'¹⁰²⁴. Only implicit in the Coffin Text, Sobek is here explicitly encouraged to abstain from his natural food in favour of a substitution given by the gods.

In the *Amduat* a crocodile, carrying a head on its back appears in the middle register of the second hour of night, unfortunately without any accompanying texts. A similar scene is found in the lower register of the seventh hour where a crocodile stands on a dune with a Udjat eye on its back and a head protruding from the sands in front of it. The crocodile is called simply 'the crocodile that is in the Dat', but the head, and surprisingly also the eye, is said to belong to Osiris. Hornung suggests that it might refer to the myth of the crocodile rescuing the limbs of Osiris¹⁰²⁵ but the accompanying legend complicates things as the crocodile is said to be a guardian from which the eye and head emerges at the sound of the crew of the solar boat approaching, only to swallow them again when the sun god has

¹⁰²¹ Cf. *CT II*, 42b-43a where humans and different classes of animals; falcons, jackals, pigs, hippopotami, crocodiles and fish are accorded habitats and diets by the command of Atum.

¹⁰²² Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton* (1913), 42-43 Text from Dendara (Mariette, *Dendara IV*, 37, ll. 89-90) relating to the rites on 16th Khoiak.

¹⁰²³ pJumilhac 22, 19-23 (Vandier, *Les Papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 133).

¹⁰²⁴ pJumilhac 23, 8-9 (Vandier, *Les Papyrus Jumilhac* (1961), 133 and notes to restoration on page 221).

¹⁰²⁵ Hornung, *Die Unterweltbücher der Ägypter* (1989), 139.

passed. Thus there is no mention of rescuing as such, only a daily cycle of eating and releasing the head and eye¹⁰²⁶.

Another underworld book, the *Book of the Earth*, uses the crocodile motif as a way of summarising the whole passage through the underworld. In a scene present in the tombs of Ramesses VII and Ramesses IX, two groups of three deities stand on each side of an ascending crocodile from which emerges the solar disk surmounted by the head of a ram. The scene is said to take place in the 'Cavern of Penwenti, which is before the place of destruction'. The crocodile is called Wenti, a frequent epithet of Apophis, and equated with the underworld¹⁰²⁷:

The disc of this great god, it opens the Dat of Wenti. The god emerges from his crypt as Wenti vomits (*bs̄*) and expels (*ʿ3ʿ*) the eye of Re which is in his body.

That this process can also be seen as a rebirth is perhaps demonstrated by the presence of a goddess *bhyt*, whom Joshua Roberson plausibly interprets as 'The one who gives birth'¹⁰²⁸.

The crocodile's involvement in the nightly passage of Re through the waters of the underworld can also assume yet another form, which is the dominant in the *Book of Fayum*¹⁰²⁹. Instead of being eaten or transported by a crocodile, Re himself transforms into a crocodile, Sobek-Re, during his sojourn in the waters. In one depiction a crocodile carries a mummified corpse upon its back, which links this form of the myth to the ones previously discussed, even though the ensemble in accordance with the chosen approach of the *Book of Fayum* is simply called 'Re'.

In connection with crocodiles two final motifs should be mentioned. One is goddess Eater of the Dead, who appears next to the scales weighing the heart of the deceased in Book of the Dead chapter 125. With only the face of a crocodile, the middle being a lion and the rear a hippopotamus, she is peripheral to the discussion here, but is included to provide a further example of the ambivalent nature of devouring. As she appears in the Book of the Dead her role is to gulp down those whose hearts fail the test of weighing, but in Kerma she appears as a helper for the deceased and being devoured is here a means of regeneration instead of final destruction¹⁰³⁰. Also the goddess Thoeris combines the destructive role of the crocodile with the maternal aspects of the hippopotamus. Depicted as a standing

¹⁰²⁶ This brings the crocodile on par with other entities in animal form that likewise swallows and releases heads such as the snake in the lower register of the sixth hour 'the swallower of shapes' who is said to be against enemies but from which four heads belonging to the sons of Horus emerges when it hears the voice of the sun god, presumably to contain them anew when the god has passed.

¹⁰²⁷ Roberson, *Book of the Earth* (2007), 738 and 739. The tomb of R. VII has *šṭ3yt* 'crypt' while R. IX has *šṭ3wt* 'mysteries'. For translation, discussion and references see *ibid.* 224-230.

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.* 746 and n. 2893 with reference to *Wb* I, 472, 2-3: *bh*.

¹⁰²⁹ Beinlich, *Das Buch vom Fayum* (1991), 319-322.

¹⁰³⁰ Bagh and Frandsen 'Kerma – dødekult i Nubien', *Papyrus* 23/2 (2003), 26-41.

pregnant hippopotamus carrying on her back the skin of a crocodile, she is a complex figure in which can be recognized the same variant as found with Nut, of destruction by eating and regeneration by birth¹⁰³¹.

Snakes

The subject of snakes is complicated and no complete treatment will be attempted here. Since the Tebtunis manual contains a reference to snakes eating the elder in the section on Hermopolis¹⁰³² parts of the complex that is of relevance to the present discussion is presented.

The Snake as devourer is often called Apophis, or one of the many epithets of this god¹⁰³³. Apophis blocks the path of the solar barque and must be defeated. Usually it is not the actual gods that Apophis eats, but only the waters on which the gods sail, which accounts for the phrase 'sandbanks of Apophis'. At times the god eats the eye of Re and assume a role in connection to Re similar to that taken by Seth to Horus. The antagonism between Apophis and Re can take other forms as in the *Book of Repelling the Evil* in which Apophis as a snake eats the *ꜥdw*-fish of Re and is forced to spit it out again¹⁰³⁴.

Being devoured by Apophis is never positive, but suffering a similar fate from other snakes can perhaps be. In the Tebtunis manual the male members of the Ogdoad eat of the elder, and are said not to be reproached for their actions¹⁰³⁵.

As is the case with the other animals the motif can undergo many wide-ranging modifications. In the eleventh and twelfth hour of *Amduat* a snake called variously 'The Encircler' and the 'Life of the Gods' is brought to the eastern horizon to serve as a regenerative space for the gods. The rejuvenated gods exit the snake through the mouth, but there is no mention of them having been eaten. Instead it is explicitly stated that the gods enter through the tail! Perhaps this is a way of avoiding the association with being eaten by Apophis, who in the same hour is repelled by a number of gods and goddesses. However when looking closer at the role of Apophis vis-à-vis The Encircler in the underworld

¹⁰³¹ For these maternal and devouring goddesses cf. Spieser, 'Aveleuses et dévoreuses: des déesses aux démons en Égypte ancienne', *CdÉ* 84 (2009), 5-19

¹⁰³² *TM* 5, 4; 5, 10.

¹⁰³³ A full treatment of Apophis is a long-standing desideratum.

¹⁰³⁴ *Urk*, VI, 67, 7-8. Discussion of this passage with further literature in Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 295.

¹⁰³⁵ For the reading of the passages in question and a thorough discussion see the chapter on the Hermopolis section.

books the contours of a different picture emerges, in which the two snakes are intimately linked. The seventh hour of the *Amduat* in which Apophis is made to release the waters he has swallowed so that Re can pass, is the first hour in which Re is surrounded by The Encircler in his chapel on the boat. This could be a coincidence, but the fact that a similar thing occurs in the book of the earth suggests that Mehen could be the subjugated Apophis. Hornung has called attention to the ambivalent character of Apophis in the *Book of Caverns* and *Book of the Earth*, in which the snake sometimes appears as a helper, though not explicitly as a devourer¹⁰³⁶.

Swallowing and cosmogony

The following falls partly outside the trend of the previous discussion of gods as animals, but is included to demonstrate the wide range of the motif of swallowing and expelling. In the Heliopolitan cosmogony Atum or Re masturbates and ejects his semen, which becomes Shu and Tefnut. In many versions of this myth the god not only ejaculates but also swallows his semen before spitting it out in an act of self-impregnation. Geb mirrors this action in a myth only known from depictions: in a curled up position he performs fellatio on himself¹⁰³⁷, following the separation between him and Nut.

A further myth, attested in the *Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days* has Re devour all the gods and goddesses¹⁰³⁸:

Re called to every god and every goddess. They approached him and he let them enter his belly. They were broken up inside him and he killed them all and spat them out into the water. They became fish and their *bas* became birds which flew to the sky. Their corpses are fish; their *bas* are the birds of the Temyt-disease.

Christian Leitz sees in this myth a secondary creation following upon the first appearance of the solar creator god at the first day of the year. Lacking close parallels an interpretation of the myth is difficult, Leitz suggests a connection to the astronomical system of the Decans, which come into being in the water following their rebirth from the Dat, though this connection is denied by von Lieven who prefers to see some sort of punishment for the enemies of Re in the myth¹⁰³⁹.

¹⁰³⁶ Hornung, *Die Unterweltsbücher der Ägypter* (1989), 45-47.

¹⁰³⁷ Kaper, 'The Astronomical Ceiling of Deir el-Haggar in the Dakhleh Oasis', *JEA* 81, 179-182.

¹⁰³⁸ First month of Akhet, day 22 cf. Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1994), 38-46.

¹⁰³⁹ Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne* (2007), 170. For the latest discussion of these and related passages see Klotz, 'Fish at Night and Birds by Day', *ZÄS* 136 (2009), 136-140.

In a single instance the cosmogonic swallowing is connected to the god as a crocodile in a myth which skilfully combines many of the elements covered above. In the Khonsu cosmogony from the Ptolemaic temple of Khonsu in Karnak, the creator god as a crocodile¹⁰⁴⁰ swallows the Ogdoad in the waters of Hermopolis and travels (*hns*) with them in his stomach to Thebes where he vomits them up. This myth accounts both for the name of Khonsu and for the completion of the act of creation wherein the gods are brought to Thebes, a place which is simultaneously the apex of creation and a tomb for the primeval gods¹⁰⁴¹. The creator who swallows the Ogdoad, may also be the mythological background for the statue of Re in Hermopolis, which in the Tebtunis Manual is said to be ‘the lord of manifestations with the face of a crocodile’ and explained as ‘Re in the Ka-flood with the red crown on his head’¹⁰⁴².

The act of spewing appears sometimes to be a creative act, even when there are no references to things having been eaten prior. The *Book of the Earth* shows Nun and the gods of the two caverns of the Nile vomiting out the primeval waters¹⁰⁴³ and in solar hymns the verb *kꜣꜥ* is sometimes used of the creative process of the god¹⁰⁴⁴.

Conclusion

The motif of swallowing and vomiting is multifaceted and can serve a variety of purposes. The different myths involved can be varied, not least by disguising the act of devouring or by substituting the devourer by other more stereotypical enemy gods such as Seth, Baba or Maga. Ursula Rössler-Köhler has given a historical explanation of this picture in which devouring changes from being a prerequisite for regeneration to being a danger to the integrity of the mummified corpse¹⁰⁴⁵. In this process the original animal nature of the gods was neglected and their role in regeneration of the deceased was redefined. However she also suggested that the necessary devouring was never forgotten even in the late period, even if it moved from the realm of actual funerary practices to myth, only realised in

¹⁰⁴⁰ As shown by the determinative cf. Cruz-Uribe, ‘The Khonsu Cosmogony’, *JARCE* 31 (1994), 178 n. BE.

¹⁰⁴¹ For this cosmogony see Parker & Lesko, ‘The Khonsu Cosmogony’, *Pyramid Studies and other essays presented to I. E. S. Edwards* (1988), 169-175 and pls. 34-37, Cruz-Uribe, ‘The Khonsu Cosmogony’, *JARCE* 31 (1994), 169-189 and most recently Mendel, *Die kosmogonischen Inschriften in der Barkenkapelle des Chonstempels von Karnak* (2003).

¹⁰⁴² *TM* 4, 11-12.

¹⁰⁴³ Scene 43. Cf. Roberson, *Book of the Earth* (2007), 254-257.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Assmann, *Re und Amun* (1983), 219 and 235f.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Das Imiut* (1975).

exceptional cases¹⁰⁴⁶. Expanding on Köhler's study which focused exclusively on canines, the examples collected above from the mythological manuals amply demonstrated this state of affairs. The manuals speak uninhibited about gods devouring gods, only hesitating when it comes to the motives that they have for their actions. By including the motif the manuals reveal important mythological aspects of the regeneration of gods and deceased that would otherwise have remained hidden by euphemisms and substitutions. This allows us to detect a common mythological reasoning behind apparently wholly different myths.

For the Egyptian priests too, this recognition would have allowed for a multitude of associations to be drawn between myths, to form a web of interpretation and signification, and to modify the myths by toning down or emphasising the dangerous aspects of eating to suit a given context. Above I have described the association between myths in by looking at it in terms of structure. The methods and concepts of cognitive linguistics refine the structural argument by providing a frame into which the mythological permutations can be fitted. In his thesis on the concept of the body in the Coffin Texts, Rune Nyord analyses role of the heart or interior (*ib*) in connection with the appropriation of power by eating and with reproduction, both of which make use of the image-scheme of the *ib* as a container. Since image-schemes are crucial in the coining of metaphors, this might be a factor in the equation of eating, and regeneration. 'Containment' is a widespread image scheme and is also used for clothing, which can be said to cover and conceal the bearer¹⁰⁴⁷. The chain of associations continues into this domain and allows us to see how the donning of clothes or wrapping in skins can also be viewed in terms of regeneration. Again using the study of Rösler-Köhler as point of the departure, the role of Anubis who regenerates the dead by eating them, and the role of his skin as a regenerative container can be seen as utilizations of the same image-scheme, with the skin as an extension of the metaphor for regeneration - this time with the emphasis on transformation - that carries with it its own set of possibilities for mythological elaboration and permutation.

¹⁰⁴⁶ A case being the apotheosis of people killed by crocodiles, whom classical authors noted were given a special burial and were revered as more than human. See Brunner-Traut, 'Krokodil', *LÄ* III 791.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Herslund, 'Cloths – Garments – and Keeping Secrets. Textile classification and cognitive chaining in the ancient Egyptian writing system', *Textile Terminologies from the 3rd to the 1st mill. BC* (2010).

Appendix E: Euphemisms

The mythological manuals and related texts refer to many seldom attested myths that involve usually beneficent gods acting in unwholesome ways, and furthermore speak with greater frequency and more uninhibitedly about crimes befalling these gods. The reason for this greater freedom of expression is to be sought in the nature of these texts as encyclopaedic manuals that, though used for interpreting rituals, are not themselves ritual texts, and thus do not share the same prohibitions.

This does not mean, however, that the manuals are free from restrictions as to how these myths are told. In order to speak about problematical mythical events the manuals make frequent use of euphemisms or circumlocutions¹⁰⁴⁸. These expressions can be divided into those that blur the identity of the actor or victim and those that blur or soften the action itself.

mn 'Someone'¹⁰⁴⁹

The most radical way of blurring the identity is simply substituting *mn* 'Someone' for the deity's name. This is most common in texts dealing with Osiris¹⁰⁵⁰ but is also attested for goddesses¹⁰⁵¹ and for the one who commits the crime¹⁰⁵².

hfty n N 'The enemy of N'¹⁰⁵³

Of wider usage is the related *hfty (n) N*, 'Enemy of N'. In this phrase the insertion of the word *hfty* functions as a buffer between the negative action and the victim, and if read literally acts to reverse the damage sustained to the deity to his enemies. Of all the

¹⁰⁴⁸ Quack, 'Ein altägyptisches Sprachtabu', *LingAeg* 3 (1993), 59-79.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Quack, 'Corpus oder membra disiecta?', *FS Kurth* (2008), 212-213.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *DM* 14, 7 concerning the treatment of Osiris' mummy. pJumilhac, T.B. 3, 19-4, 28 passim, in a list of the relics of Osiris.

¹⁰⁵¹ pJumilhac: 16, 14- 22 in the feminine form *mnt*. Perhaps also in the Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days: IV. Peret 12 and II. Akhet, 5.

¹⁰⁵² pSalt 825 14, 8: Probably referring to Geb committing a crime against his father Shu, similarly in pJumilhac 12, 22 dealing with Nemty's decapitation of his mother.

¹⁰⁵³ Posener, 'Sur l'emploi euphemique de *hftj(w)* "ennemi(s)"', *ZÄS* 96 (1969), 30-5; Quack, 'Sur l'emploi euphémique de *hftj* 'ennemi' en démotique', *RdÉ* 40 (1989), 197-198; Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9* (1998), 509-510; Goebis, '*hftj ntr* as Euphemism: The Case of the Antef Decree', *JEA* 89 (2003), 27-37; Quack, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 51 (2005), 173.

euphemistic devices, this is the best attested with examples found not only in the manuals¹⁰⁵⁴ but also in longer mythological narratives¹⁰⁵⁵.

st n N 'The woman of N'

Related to this use of *hfty* is the phrase *st n tfnwt* 'Woman of Tefnut' found in the Delta Manual in a passage that deals with the decapitation of this goddess. As noted by Meeks, the word 'woman' acts as a buffer between the negative action and the name of the goddess¹⁰⁵⁶.

Direct mention of the deity involved can also be avoided by using only vague references. Thus the rape of Horit in Imet befalls only 'This goddess'¹⁰⁵⁷, and in the similar case of the rape of a goddess beneath a tree in Behbeit, the goddess is referred to by her title 'Mother of God' instead of by her name¹⁰⁵⁸. In a similar vein are the many phrases that speak of 'that crime' or the like, calling upon the tacit mythological knowledge of the reader instead of supplying the details of the crime in the text¹⁰⁵⁹.

*dbꜥ 'To reproach'*¹⁰⁶⁰

This method substitutes *dbꜥ*, 'To reproach', for the verb which would have designated the negative action. Thus, it softens the expression and blurs the actual action taken. At the present it is mostly known from the Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days¹⁰⁶¹, with a further example in the Tebtunis Manual¹⁰⁶² and in Edfu¹⁰⁶³.

*wꜣ r 'To be far from'*¹⁰⁶⁴

The euphemistic use of the verb *wꜣ* does not mask the action itself, but instead negates it stating that some crime or accident 'was far from' befalling a deity. The method is used in all

¹⁰⁵⁴ Perhaps in *TM* 2, 9. pJumilhac, passim. Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky Days: (Day, Month): 19, 1; 23, 1; 26, 1; 22, 2; 13, 3; 14, 3; 9, 4; 18, 4; 23, 10 (?). pBM 10090 x+v, 2, 4 = Herbin, 'Les premières pages du papyrus Salt 825', *BIFAO* 88 (1988), pl.1.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Myth of the Eye of the Sun: pLeiden I 384, 3, 11; 9,31; 18, 23; 21, 13.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *DM* 9, 1-2. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta* (2006), 98 n. 270.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *DM* 11, 3. Perhaps similarly in *DM* 13, 7 which refers to the freeing of 'This goddess' after being imprisoned.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *DM* 14,1.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *DM* 11, 8 & *TM* 2, 11: *sp dw pfy*. pJumilhac 12, 22: *pꜣy kn*

¹⁰⁶⁰ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 23 n. b

¹⁰⁶¹ Leitz, *Tagewählerei* (1996), 23 n. b

¹⁰⁶² *TM* 5, 10: The snakes are not 'reproached'.

¹⁰⁶³ *Edfou* II, 51, 9-10, where Re 'reproaches' the rebels.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Quack, 'Ein altägyptisches Sprachtabu', *LingAeg* 3 (1993), 59-79. Franke, 'Das Entfernen eines Sprachtabus: Nochmals zur Konstruktion *wꜣj r*', *GM* 165 (1998), 51-56.

sorts of texts. In mythological texts it is found in the Delta and Tebtunis manuals¹⁰⁶⁵, the Book of Fayum¹⁰⁶⁶, papyrus Jumilhac¹⁰⁶⁷ and Edfu¹⁰⁶⁸. The euphemism was first discovered by Quack¹⁰⁶⁹, but since then Franke has doubted this use of the phrase, preferring instead to see two different meanings of *w3 r*: 1) Be far removed *from* 2) be far removed *to*, depending on the possible different meanings of the preposition *r*¹⁰⁷⁰. Apart from the problem with two opposite meanings of the same phrase¹⁰⁷¹, the use of *w3 r* in three passages where some of the other euphemistic mechanisms are also used, strengthens the argument for euphemism:

'Vagueness of reference'

DM 11, 8: dw pfy w3 r hpr m tp=s: "That evil' which was 'far from' happening to her head'.

'Vagueness of reference' & 'mn'.

pJumilhac 12, 22 (Quack's example 68): *wn.in mn w3.(w) r irt p3y kn*: 'then 'Someone' was 'far from' committing 'this crime'.

'db'

Edfou II, 59, 9-10 (Quack's example 70): *dr w3 ntr r db^c shrw=sn*: 'Since the god was 'far from' 'reproaching' their state of being'.

Both the phrases *hfty n N* and *w3 r* essentially say the opposite of what the intended meaning is. When someone commits an action against the Enemy of N, or if N is 'far from' doing something, then the informed reader will know that it means that N himself is victim of some action or that he does do something. Theoretically the same effect could be achieved by simple negation of the verb, however in practice that would make it difficult for the reader to notice the euphemism. In contrast to both *hfty n N* and *w3 r*, the negated verb is not marked enough to help the reader discern that a euphemism is active. This is probably why we only find one possible use of this mechanism. In the Delta manual section on Pi-Sopdou, we learn about the local divine relics¹⁰⁷²:

It is the divine wrapping which is in the tomb. The inaccessible stone (*bmbn*) of the bird of prey (*gmhsw*), the skin (*imy*) of Qebah, as it is said, inside it. The Medjai of the wastes (*md3i smit*) [...] it. It is made [...] and placed in the tomb, positioned towards the bird of prey. 'The one who is in Shesmet' is called 'The *Ba* of the overseer of the fields'. It means that the god's skin (*im*) is **not** pierced (*wnp*). He is **not** lifted up on the Nebes-trees. His *hs3*-wig is **not** thrown on the Nebes-trees. She is called Khensyt. She is placed there as [...] as the cow foremost of Gesy

¹⁰⁶⁵ *TM 2, 17; 6, 21. DM 8, 8; 11, 8; 14, 1; 14, 4.*

¹⁰⁶⁶ Book of Fayum, l. 150.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *pJumilhac 12, 22.*

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Edfou II, 51, 9-10.*

¹⁰⁶⁹ Quack, 'Ein altägyptisches Sprachtabu', *LingAeg 3* (1993), 59-79.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Franke, 'Das Entfernen eines Sprachtabus: Nochmals zur Konstruktion *w3j r*', *GM 165* (1998), 51-56.

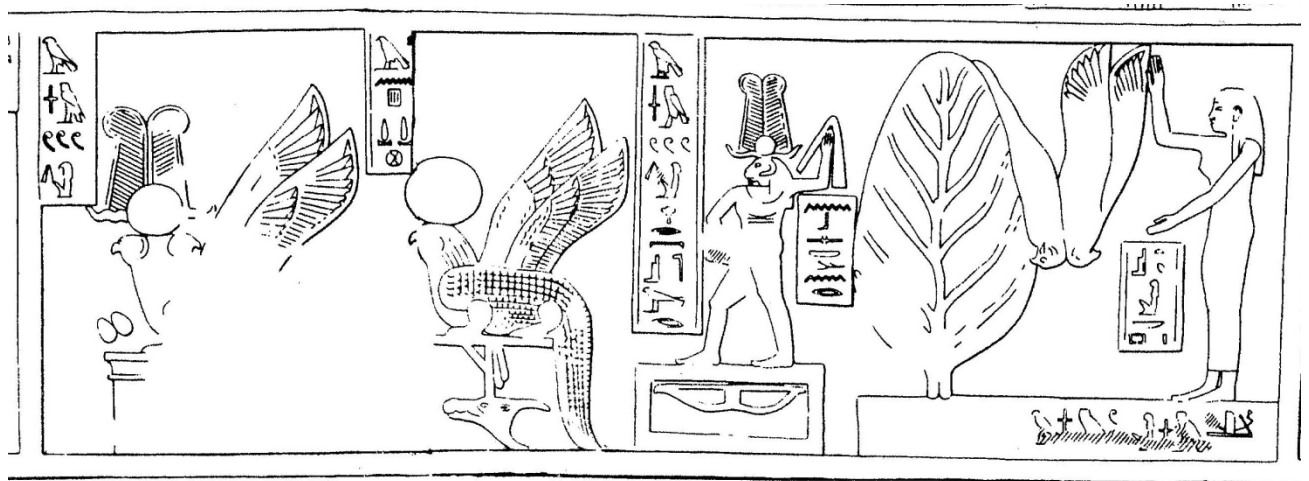
¹⁰⁷¹ *pace* Quack, 'Ein altägyptisches Sprachtabu', *LingAeg 3* (1993), 60.

¹⁰⁷² *DM 14, 8-17,3.* My emphasis.

inside [...] There is **not** entanglement (*h/f?*) among the nebes-trees, he is **not** bound by his hair. Concerning her incident/action [...]to see him. There is **not** injury to this goddess. He does **not** have knowledge about those who search for his eyes [...]

In this text it is the incessant repetition of the negation that signals that something is not to be taken at face value. Unfortunately, as the myths referred to are unattested elsewhere, there is no easy way to be certain that the negations are not meant literally, and this is indeed how Meeks has read it¹⁰⁷³.

However, among the many obscure reliefs of deities in the temple of Hibis we find a representation that might indicate that the passage in the Delta manual is euphemistic. The section is devoted to the gods of the seventh and ninth U.E. nomes. On the relief we see a bird hanging head down from a Nebes-tree and tended to by Isis¹⁰⁷⁴.



While the representation does not concern Pi-Sopdou, but nomes in Upper Egypt, and while the bird is of a very cryptic appearance¹⁰⁷⁵, it is nevertheless tempting to see in it a reference to a myth concerning the Nebes-tree which might be relevant also for the understanding of the passage in the Delta Manual. If the Hibis-relief has any bearing on the Delta manual passage, then we must probably take the repeated negations as a form of euphemistic expression.

¹⁰⁷³ Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta* (2006), textual notes 569-584 and pages 308-313.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Davies, *Hibis III*, pl. 4, register 4. For discussion of this scene and further references see Cruz-Uribe, *The Hibis Temple Project I* (1980), 30.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cruz-Uribe *loc. cit.* sees the image as being a 'double falcon-headed crocodile with extended wings'.

Appendix F: Jørgensen, Jens Blach, ‘Myths, Menarche and the Return of the Goddess’, in: Nyord, Rune and Ryholt, Kim (eds.), Lotus and Laurel. Studies on Egyptian Language and Religion in Honour of Paul John Frandsen (CNIP 39), Copenhagen (In press)

MYTHS, MENARCHE AND THE *RETURN OF THE GODDESS*

JENS BLACH JØRGENSEN

Abstract. The Saite mythological manual of the Delta (pBrooklyn 47.218.84) contains myths of Bastet and Horit that are reinterpreted here to shed light on how the Ancient Egyptians conceptualised menstruation within a mythological system. Implications for our understanding of a number of central rituals associated with the myth of the Return of the Goddess are suggested.

Among the many topics covered by Paul John Frandsen's research, Egyptian grammar and the category of *bwt*, 'taboo', have perhaps been the most visible to his students. Over the years he has included us in his research, sharing his findings and theories and has always been willing to discuss ideas, even when they went against his own results. It gives me great pleasure to dedicate the following pages on myth and menstruation to Paul in the conviction that it will be received in the interested and critical spirit that has always characterized him – and that he will forgive me for only including a single Late Egyptian text.¹

The myth variously known as the *Distant Goddess*, the *Return of the Goddess*, or the *Wandering Goddess*, was one of the central myths for ancient Egypt. The basic plot of the myth has the eye or daughter of the sun disappear to Nubia whence she must be returned. The goddess is variously identified as Tefnut, Sakhmet, Bastet or local goddesses, and the god responsible for retrieving her is usually Thoth but can also be Shu or Onuris. Upon returning, the goddess, for some reason, becomes enraged and must be appeased before she can reunite with her father.²

¹ I want to thank Fredrik Hagen, Rune Nyord, Joachim Quack and Susanne Töpfer for reading and commenting on drafts for this article.

² See the fundamental studies of Sethe, K., *Zur altägyptischen Sage vom Sonnenauge, das in der Fremde war* (=UGAÄ 5, 3), Leipzig 1912; Junker, H., *Der Auszug der Hathor-Tefnut aus Nubien*, Berlin 1911 and *Die Onurislegende* (=DKAWW 59, 1-2), Wien 1917. For an overview of the different versions and newer studies of the myth cf. Richter, B.A., 'On the Heels of the Wandering Goddess: The Myth and Festival at the Temples of the Wadi el-Hallel and Dendara', in: Monika, D. and Beinlich, H. (eds.), *8. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between temples, Warschau, 22.-25. September 2008*, Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 155-161.

The myth has been interpreted in many different ways but most agree that it should be seen as a myth explaining some natural phenomenon.³ Earlier the waxing and waning of the moon,⁴ the returning inundation⁵ and the dispersal of dark clouds covering the sun⁶ have been proposed, but in recent years the two dominant interpretations have been the movement of the sun⁷ and the heliacal rising of Sirius.⁸ While the astral interpretation of Egyptian myth has seen a renaissance in recent years and has made significant contributions to our understanding of a number of texts,⁹ an inherent danger in a one-sided focus is that it risks mistaking the application of myth to one phenomenon for the original *raison d'être* of the myth. In this paper I propose another interpretation that does not rule out a stellar application but which brings to the fore some of those aspects which have hitherto been ignored, and explore how they can shed light on some of the rituals associated with the *Return of the Goddess*.

Given the importance of the body and biomorphic models in Egyptian religious thought,¹⁰ a more anthropocentric interpretation focused on the

³ For a quick overview of these interpretations see Quack, J.F., 'A Goddess Rising 10,000 Cubits into the Air...or Only One Cubit, One Finger?', in: Steele, J.M. and Imhausen, A. (eds.), *Under One Sky: Astronomy and Mathematics in the Ancient Near East* (=AOAT 29), Münster 2002, pp. 285-287.

⁴ Junker, *Omurislegende*, pp. 129-131.

⁵ Sauneron, S., *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna au derniers siècles du paganisme* (=Esna V), Cairo 1962, pp. 58-59.

⁶ Sethe, *Zur altägyptischen Sage vom Sonnenauge*, pp. 38.

⁷ Originally proposed by E. Swarze and referred in Spiegelberg, W., *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonnenauge. Der Papyrus der Tierfabeln, "Kufi" nach dem Leidener demotischen Papyrus I. 348*, Strassburg 1917, p. 2. This hypothesis has now become standard cf. e.g. Otto, E., 'Augensage', *LdÄ I*, pp. 562-567 and Leitz, C., 'Die Götter, die ihre Majestät begleiten', in: Kessler, D. et al. (eds.), *Texte – Theben – Tonfragmente. Festschrift für Günter Burkard*, Wiesbaden 2009, pp. 289-311.

⁸ Quack, *Under one Sky*, pp. 283-294; von Lieven, A., *Der Himmel über Esna: eine fallstudie zur religiösen Astronomie in Ägypten* (=ÄA 64), Wiesbaden 2000; von Lieven, A., 'Scheiben am Himmel', *SAK 29* (2001), pp. 277-282; Von Lieven, A., *The Carlsberg Papyri 8: Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne. Das sogenannte Nutbuch* (=CNIP 31), Copenhagen 2007, pp. 128-130.

⁹ Important examples are the studies by Leitz, C., *Tagewählerei, das Buch ḥꜣt nḥꜣ pḥwy dt und verwandte Texte* (=ÄA 55), Wiesbaden 1995; Krauss, R., *Astronomische Konzepte und Jenseitsvorstellungen in den Pyramidentexten* (ÄA 59), Wiesbaden 1997; von Lieven, *Der Himmel über Esna*; Von Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne*; Goebis, K., *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature: Royalty, Rebirth and Destruction*, Oxford 2008.

¹⁰ See e.g. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh. Conceptions of the Body in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (=CNIP 37), Copenhagen 2009 and Finnestad, R.B., 'On Transposing Soul and Body into a Monistic Conception of Being. An example from ancient Egypt', *Religion* 16 (1986), 359-373.

goddess as a young woman and her transformation into an adult is worth considering. Some years ago te Velde suggested that the myth might be associated with the menstrual cycle.¹¹ This view is often met in popular Egyptology, particularly of the feministic variety,¹² but has so far received little attention in scholarly literature.¹³ In the following pages I present new interpretations of mythological sources that pick up this line of reasoning and explore how it can be applied to the myths and rituals of the returning goddess.

BASTET IN BUBASTIS

In the recently published 26th Dynasty mythological papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84, which contains aetiological myths for the nomes of the Delta,¹⁴ we find several myths associated with menstruation – one of which can be directly linked to the myth of the *Return of the Goddess*. The section on Bubastis opens with an aetiology for turquoise:

Bubastis. Concerning Bastet who is in Bubastis: This is the efflux when she came forth as Horit¹⁵ on the eastern mountain of Heliopolis. The blood came forth from her and it transformed into turquoise.¹⁶

Bastet is identified with Horit, ‘The female Horus’ used in the manual to interpret a host of different local goddesses. Here the identification is valid for a specific situation as this goddess comes forth on the eastern mountain of Heliopolis.¹⁷ The setting suggests an astral interpretation,

¹¹ te Velde, H., ‘The Cat as a Sacred Animal of the Goddess Mut’, in: van Voss, H.M. (ed.), *Studies in Egyptian religion, dedicated to professor Jan Zandee*, Leiden 1982, p. 136.

¹² e.g. Ellis, N., *Feasts of Light: Celebrations for the Seasons of Life based on the Egyptian Goddess Mysteries*, Wheaton 1999.

¹³ The connection between the rage of the goddess and her menstruation is cautiously suggested by Leitz, *Tagewählerei*, pp. 199-200 and note 19.

¹⁴ Magnificently published with impressive textual and mythological commentaries by Meeks, D., *Mythes et légendes du Delta d’après le papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84*, Cairo 2006. In the following I refer to this papyrus as *D(elta) M(annual)*, column, line.

¹⁵ Feder (*Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* <http://aeaw.bbaw.de/tla/>) emendates *pr=s* ‘She came forth’ to *pr.n=s(n)* and translates: ‘Das sind die Ausflüsse, die aus Horet herausgekommen sind’. This emendation is only necessary if Meeks’ interpretation of the passage as dealing with the identification of Bastet with the efflux of Horit is accepted.

¹⁶ *DM* 9, 2-3.

¹⁷ Meeks (*Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 239) takes the sentence *rdw pw* to mean that it is the efflux of Horit which is identified with Bastet, and not the goddesses themselves. However the *N pw* sentence can also be used for comments other than identification (i.e. ‘this means that...’). For another example of this use in the Delta Manual cf. *DM* 8, 1 (read *pace* Quack, J.F., review of Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, *Orientalia* 77 (2008), p. 108): *ir hbs [bwt.tw] m niwt tn nbt-hwt pw imn.n=s*

where the verb *pri* ‘to come forth’ should be understood in its astronomical sense as referring to the rising of celestial bodies.¹⁸ As Bastet is regularly identified with the Eye of Re, the occasion is probably the heliacal rising of Sothis as the primary celestial correlate.¹⁹ At her appearance she sheds some efflux, which in the last sentence is specified as blood, giving an aetiology for a local resource of the mineral *hb* – probably identical to *mḥkʿt* ‘turquoise’.²⁰ Hathor’s association with turquoise is known from other sources and connects her to sunlight, sometimes as the mother of the infant sun god,²¹ but also as the returning goddess, in astral terms: Sothis appearing on the horizon. In a Coffin Text sequence devoted to tying the *tstn*-clothing or pendant for Hathor,²² a festival taking place at the rise of Sothis²³ culminates with the appearance of Hathor as turquoise and the speaker clothing the goddess in the form of a falcon embellished with turquoises:

I have appeared as a god. I will raise my arms towards her carrying
Tayt; the *št*-garment on her left shoulder made of falcons’ hide as I
tie her right side with turquoise.²⁴

Similarly a monograph in the temple of Esna has Tefnut returning in rage and transforming herself into turquoise when Shu pacifies her,²⁵ and in Dendara Hathor is called ‘the lady of Punt, the one of turquoise

‘Concerning the lamp which is kept taboo in this city: This is Nephtys when she had hidden herself...’, where the *apodosis* is given as explanation for the taboo, and not to identify Nephtys with the lamp, since Seth used a lamp to find Nephtys who hid in the darkness of the night.

¹⁸ See e.g. von Lieven, *Grundriss der Laufe des Sternes*, §39.

¹⁹ Here I follow the astronomical interpretation of the myth. Cf. Quack, *Under One Sky*, pp. 283-294. For Bastet as Sothis see e.g. *Edfou III*, 322, 8 (Goyon, *Le Rituel du shḥt shmt au changement de cycle annuel*, Cairo 2006, pp. 115-117 and 118 textual note 9.)

²⁰ For the identification of the *hb* mineral see Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 99 textual note 277. For blood of deities becoming minerals and for possible connection with the geology of the different nomes cf. Quack, J.F., ‘Lokalressourcen oder Zentraltheologie?’, *ARG* 10 (2008), pp. 18-19.

²¹ Cf. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 240.

²² Coffin Texts spells 482-486. For the cultic context of these spells see Kees, H., *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen*, Leipzig 1956, pp. 216-217; Assmann, J., *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott* (=MÄS 19), Berlin 1969, p.52; Rhyhiner, M.L., *La procession des étoffes et l’union avec Hathor* (=Rites égyptiens 8), Bruxelles 1995, pp. 48-49.

²³ *CT VI*, 51d [482].

²⁴ *CT VI*, 64f-j [486].

²⁵ *mḥk kʿ=s*, *Esna* 58, 4 cf. Sternberg, H., *Mythische Motive und Mythenbildung in den ägyptischen Tempeln und Papyri der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (=GOFF 14), Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 60-61 and p. 65 textual notes q-t.

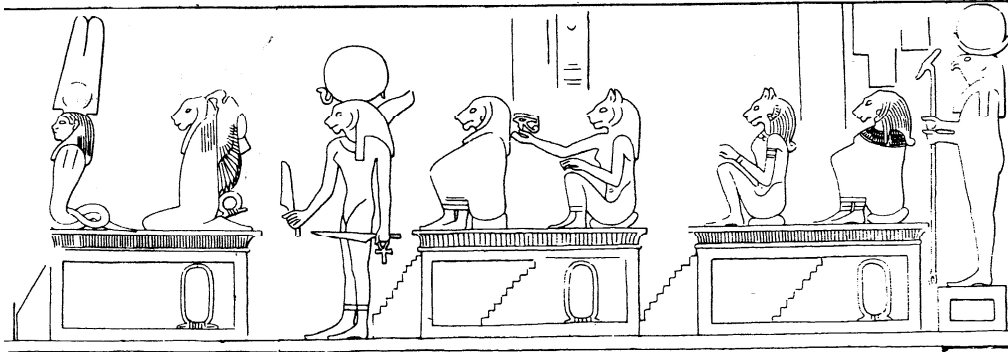


Figure 1. The goddess of Bubastis from the Hibis temple. After Davies, *Hibis III*, pl. 4, register 7. (Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art).

colour', again displaying a link between the returning goddess and turquoise.²⁶

While the Delta manual does not give any clues to why Horit bleeds, the editor of the text, Dimitri Meeks, suggests that it is the blood of parturition, which due to difficulties is ampler than normal.²⁷ This interpretation hinges on a specific reading of a difficult sentence later on in the section, which Meeks interprets as evidence for the goddess having given birth. Before this, the section gives an outline of the specific appearance of the goddess and her place of worship in Bubastis:

She is in the form of a female statue (*rpyt*) with the face of a lion. She is kneeling (*wrd*)²⁸ with her thighs beneath her (i.e. in a squatting position). She is on the staircase of casting down the enemies while a falcon protects her, two hippopotami encircle her and a 'semblance' of the Hen-lake is all around her, the length thereof is 87 (units of?) (and the breadth) 42^{29 30}.

The image of Bastet as a seated female on a staircase must have been important, for in the Bubastis section on the reliefs of the Hibis temple, the image is repeated no less than 6 times, of which one seems intended as an illustration of the pose mentioned in the Delta manual (Figure 1).

²⁶ *mfk3t inm*, cf. Preys, R., *Les complexes de la demeure du sistre et du Trone de Re: Théologie et décoration dans le temple d'Hathor a Dendera* (=OLA 106), Leuven 2002, p. 263 with n. 2374 for the attestations of this Epithet in Dendara and Aufrère, S., *L'univers minéral dans le pensée égyptienne* (=BdE 105), Cairo 1991, p. 507.

²⁷ *Mythes et légendes du Delta* (2006), p. 239. Meeks appears to have considered the possibility of menstruation. In his textual note to the word *rdw* in the passage discussed here he states that: 'Le terme désigne, apparemment, le sang des menstrues' (*Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 99 n. 275), but his mythological commentary focuses on the birth-interpretation with no further mention of menstruation.

²⁸ Cf. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 101 n. 279.

²⁹ Reading of numbers adopted from Feder, *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*.

³⁰ *DM* 9, 3-5.

Furthermore the description given here has close parallels in the temples of Edfu and Dendara.³¹

Depending on the precise relationship with the earlier passage concerning turquoise as a manifestation of the goddess, the cultic image mentioned here might be envisioned as made of this material, in which case it would have to be a smaller than life-sized statue. The question of scale also imposes itself on the final sentence in which no units are given for the dimensions of the Hen-lake. The use of the word 'semblance' (*twi*) might be taken as an indication that we are dealing with a scaled down model ritual in which figurines are manipulated, which would also make the task of handling hippopotamuses and falcons much easier.³²

As for the preceding passage, Meeks relates the image to birth despite the lack of explicit references either here or in the numerous parallel passages. What is certain is that the Hen, the kidney- or horseshoe-formed lake,³³ served as a place for rituals carried out in connection with the return of the goddess. At the moment when she returned to Egypt, she was in a state of red and fiery rage and had to cool herself down in a sacred lake connected to the temple, for which the one in Bubastis served as the prototype.³⁴ The most eloquent texts to describe this come from the temple of Mut in Karnak³⁵ where we learn that the Ogdoad dug out the lake at the command of Re, and that it partakes in the primeval nature of these gods and can be identified with Nun.

In addition to these texts, which deal with the appeasement of the goddess, other Late Period temple texts supplement the picture by occasionally characterising the immersion of the goddess in the lake as

³¹ Noted by Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 240-241 and cf. Goyon, J.-C., *Le Rituel de *shṭp shmt* au changement de cycle annuel*, Cairo 2006, pp. 55-59.

³² I owe this suggestion to Joachim Quack. For a possible model scale ritual involving the Isheru cf. Richter, 8. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung*, p. 173 and Preys, *Les complexes de la demeure du sistre et du Trone de Re*, p. 128 and pp. 511-512.

³³ For the shape of the lake as a copy of water forming in depressions heralding the return of the flood see Tillier, A., 'Notes sur l'*icherou*', *ENIM* 3 (2010), pp. 172-174.

³⁴ For these sacred lakes cf. Gessler-Löher, B., *Die Heiligen Seen ägyptischer Tempel: ein Beitrag zur Deutung sakraler Baukunst im alten Ägypten* (=HÄB 21), Hildesheim 1983, pp. 401-424.

³⁵ For the latest treatment of these texts see Klotz, D., *Kneph: The Religion of Roman Thebes*, Dissertation Yale University 2008, pp. 232-235, and Quack, J.F., 'Die Rückkehr der Göttin nach Theben nach demotischen Quellen', in: Thiers, C. (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives*, Montpellier 2009, p. 139. For the Isheru in other Ptolemaic temples and its role in the Return of the Goddess see Tillier, *ENIM* 3, pp. 167-176.

purification.³⁶ While purification is readily associated with water, it nevertheless begs the question of what impureness she needed purging from. This information is perhaps supplied by the next passage, which concerns another manifestation of the goddess in a statue, again with an illustration in the Hibis reliefs:

There is another noblewoman with the balm-jar with the Oudjat-eye of Re inside it. She is called Tefnut, his daughter Horit as the lady of the two lands. One keeps the *phyt bwt* for her when its insides are showing forth (*bw.tw n=s phyt dr wbn št(3)t=s r rwtj*).³⁷

The text appears to provide an explanation for the *b3s* ‘balm-jar’ that gave name to the goddess Bastet (‘The one of the *b3s*-jar’), here in connection with ‘another noblewoman’ or another aspect of the raging goddess.³⁸ In the Hibis reliefs we find another staircase, on which two felines are seated, the second of whom holds out the *wḏ3t* eye in front of her. The passage in the Delta manual states that the jar contains the eye (*wḏ3t*) of Re, which accords well with the fact that both Bastet and Tefnut are goddesses that can be called ‘Eye (*irt*) of Re’. It is more difficult to discern the possible connection between the eye in the jar and the taboo.

In his treatment of the passage, Meeks follows the standard usage of the word *phyt* as ‘anus’,³⁹ and interprets the passage as referring to a rectal prolapse brought on by a difficult birth.⁴⁰ However, it is a moot question whether all the attestations of *phyt* refer to this anatomical entity as derivations of the basic term *ph* do not seem to be anatomically specific, but merely relate to something situated at the end or bottom.⁴¹

³⁶ Cf. Junker, *Onurislegende*, pp. 126-128 and Inconnu-Bocquillon, D., *Le mythe de la Déesse Lointaine à Philae*, Cairo 2001, pp. 213-214. Purification of the goddess is very prominent in the Per-Nu sanctuary in Dendara, see the translations in Preys, *Les complexes de la demeure du sistre*, pp. 3-134 with conclusion pp. 135-142, where this theme, in my mind, is not accorded enough attention.

³⁷ *DM* 9, 5-6.

³⁸ As noted by Perdu, O., ‘Un monument d’originalité’, *JEA* 84 (1998), pp. 139-140, the epithet ‘lady of the two lands’ refers to the goddess as a raging lioness.

³⁹ Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 102 (textual note 288) and 243-245. cf. *MedWb* pp. 273-281 and Walker, J.H., *Studies in Ancient Egyptian Anatomical Terminology*, Wiltshire 1996, pp. 221-230 for an overview on the discussion on *phyt*.

⁴⁰ Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 243-245.

⁴¹ Leitz, C., *Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom* (HPBM 7), London 1999, p. 67 n. 151. For the different anatomical terms derived from *ph* see Walker, *Studies in Ancient Egyptian Anatomical Terminology*, pp. 221-230. For examples of different (?) derivations of *ph* and their usages within a single papyrus cf. e.g. BM EA 10059, 9 ll. 2, 9, 13; 10, 7 (Leitz, *Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom*, pp. 67-71).

If it is to be taken in this non-specific sense, it may have been a deliberate choice since the passage deals with a taboo.⁴² In the case of *phyt*, the feminine ending is perhaps indicative of a smaller, more localized body area than the unmarked male *ph*, which can of course be the anus but need not be so always.⁴³ In papyrus Leiden I 348, *pht* is used for the part of the body in which Isis has pains caused by the delayed delivery of Horus.⁴⁴ In this attestation the word is best translated as pubic or pelvic region. Similarly, in the passage discussed here from the Delta Manual, the following *wbn št(β)t=s* points in another direction. The phrase has recently been discussed by David Klotz in his treatment of a text in the temple of Opet where *wbn štβt* unmistakably refers to the opening of the womb.⁴⁵ This is probably also the case in the Delta manual, and as *wbn štβt* refers to the womb and not the anus, the preceding word *phyt* must relate to that region too; here perhaps the vaginal entrance. This also makes the best sense out of the pronominal suffix *=s* as referring to the *phyt* and not the goddess.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as the text parallels refer to uncomplicated births, the interpretation in terms of gynaecological pathology suggested by Meeks becomes redundant.

All of the parallel texts discussed by Klotz deal with birth, and thus a question of great importance for the different myths of the goddess is whether all the passages concerning Bastet in the Delta Manual refer to birth or if some of them do not refer to menstruation. The distinction is hard to maintain since Egyptian physiology held the two to be essentially identical events.⁴⁷ During pregnancy the blood that was usually exuded during menstruation, was retained in the womb and served to make the foetus grow. In the case of Bastet it is noteworthy that no references are made to her offspring in the Delta Manual in any

⁴² Elsewhere too the word is used to designate the local taboo, cf. *Edfou I*², 335, 6.

⁴³ Unequivocal examples in which *phyt* denotes the anus exists, e.g. *Dendara X*, 78, 8 and *MedWb*. pp. 273-281.

⁴⁴ Spell 34, vs. 11, 4 = Borghouts, J.F., *The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348*, Leiden 1981, pl. 15 and 31 with translation on p. 31

⁴⁵ Klotz, *Kneph*, p. 262, n. 1216 on *Opet I*, 7 (= De Wit, *Opet III* p. 6) and with references to related uses of *wbn* and *štβt*. For *štβt* as the womb see also the discussion by Frandsen, J.P., 'The Menstrual "Taboo" in Ancient Egypt', *JNES* 66 (2007), pp. 101-103 and the references quoted therein.

⁴⁶ For a mythological, but not phraseological, parallel involving Horit see *Edfou II*, 206, 11-12 discussed below.

⁴⁷ Frandsen, *JNES* 66 (2007), pp. 81-105. Ritner, R.K., 'A uterine amulet in the Oriental Institute collection', *JNES* 43 (1984), pp. 209-221. Westendorf, W., 'Beiträge aus und zu den medizinischen Texten', *ZÄS* 92 (1966), pp. 128-154; 96 (1970), pp. 145-151.

of the many texts adduced by Meeks, which contain close parallels to the manual.⁴⁸

Furthermore a sexual partner of Bastet is never mentioned, which we would expect in case of a pregnancy since one of the main themes of the manual is sexual relations.

In the temple of Edfu, we find another mention of the blood of Horit⁴⁹ manifesting itself as a cultic substance. In a list of different resins and their colouring, cultic uses and divine associations, a red tinted resin is identified first as coming from the heart of 'the god' (Osiris) and then from the goddess: 'The Ahemu-resin came into being from the vagina of Horit after the sufferings of her heart in traversing Punt'.⁵⁰ Though the passage concerns a resin and not a mineral, it is probably a reference to the same myth as in the Delta manual, and here the substance is explicitly said to come from her vagina upon her return from Punt. Again, no indication of a sexual partner exists, and so menstruation remains the most likely interpretation. In other versions of the *Return of the Goddess* sexual intercourse only takes place after the goddess has returned and has been pacified.⁵¹ The Ahemu resin and the turquoise on the other hand appear to come into being as the goddess returns, but before she is purified and pacified. In the Heliopolis section of the Delta Manual we find a related aetiology for faience, which comes into being when the anger or flames (*bst*) of the bright eye is extinguished.⁵² The underlying premise in both cases is the transformation of the dangerous red of blood and fire into the greenish or blue minerals.⁵³

⁴⁸ Even in Bubastis, Horus is born by Horit, who in this case is not identified with Bastet, *DM* 9, 8-9.

⁴⁹ The writing does not let us decide between *hrt* or *bikt*. Cf. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 49-50 textual note 31.

⁵⁰ *hpr 3hm is m k3t nt hrt m-ht 3h3m (<3hm) ib=s m ht pwnt*, *Edfou* II, 206, 11-12. Translation in Chermette, M. and Goyon, J.C., 'Le Catalogue Raisoné des Producteurs de Styraç et d'Oliban d'Edfou et d'Athribis de Haute Égypte', *SAK* 23 (1996), p. 64 and discussed by von Lieven, A., 'Das Göttliche in der Natur erkennen. Tiere, Pflanzen und Phänomene der unbelebten Natur als Manifestation des Göttlichen', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), p. 164.

⁵¹ See e.g. Richter, 8. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung*, p. 156

⁵² *DM* VII, 9-10.

⁵³ This opposition can also be stated in purely mineral terms as in the Teaching of Ptahhotep where the desired woman changes between faience and carnelian. See Troy, L. 'Good and Bad Women: Maxim 18/284-288 and the Instruction of Ptahhotep', *GM* 80 (1984), pp. 77-82. In a sistrum-playing scene in Dendara the King is the one who 'puts turquoise in the place of carnelian'. Dendara III, 12 and 22. Cf. Aufrère, *L'univers minéral dans le pensée égyptienne*, pp. 554-556. For the verb *3hn*, 'to shine', being used in a similar manner cf. *Edfou* IV, 373, 11 where Sakhmet shines (*3hn.ti*) after having raged.

The reason for the taboo on the *phyt* discussed above is given as *dr wbn št(3)t=s r rwty* ‘Because its insides came out’, which in light of the discussion above must relate to the menstruation of the goddess. A normal birth, even when not mentioned and unlikely given the mythology of Bastet, would not be due cause for a taboo, even though it required a period of purification afterwards.⁵⁴ In Greco-Roman times the birth of gods was celebrated in the *mamisis* throughout Egypt, with no traces of taboo to be found. However menstruation was a phenomenon that was *per se* regarded as something to be handled with ritual caution.⁵⁵ In the Nome list at Edfu the section on Bubastis designates the taboo on the *phyt* as not purely local but valid for the entire land.⁵⁶ The nome lists also contain other references to taboos on menstruation, but here the word *hsmnt* is used instead.⁵⁷ The taboo in the Bubastis section must therefore refer to something else; most likely the vagina during menstruation – implying a ban on sexual intercourse during menstruation.⁵⁸

Returning to the contents of the jar in the Bubastis section it may even in essence be the menstruation blood of the goddess, just as other substances such as honey used for rituals in the temple of Dendara are consubstantial with the goddess, having originated from her alter ego, the eye of Ra.⁵⁹ In the few texts which treat the contents of the jar, the ointment inside serves as protection from the goddess in her rage. As part of the ritual for *Confirming the Royal Inheritance* the king was anointed with the contents of several *b3s*-jars associated with a variety of the goddesses of the eye of Re who protects the king from the goddesses’ rage during the epagomenal days, including the messenger demons of the goddesses so that ‘neither the accusations of Sakhmet nor the plague demons of Bastet are against him’.⁶⁰ In the ritual the different anointments of the goddesses ultimately serves ‘to distinguish his skin’

⁵⁴ A 14 day period according to the birth legend in Papyrus Westcar 11, 18-19.

⁵⁵ Frandsen, *JNES* 66/2, pp. 81-105.

⁵⁶ *Edfou I*², 335, 6: *bwt=f n=s phyt m t3 nb*.

⁵⁷ Frandsen, *JNES* 66/2, pp. 88-89.

⁵⁸ The Myth of Seth and the Seed of Re, in which Seth rapes a goddess while she purifies herself in the water may be a mythological account of a transgression against this ban. See Van Dijk, J., ‘Anat, Seth and the Seed of Pre’, in: Vanstiphout, H.L.J. et al (eds.), *Scripta Signa Vocis. Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East, presented to J. H. Hospers by his pupils, colleagues and friends*, Groningen 1986, pp. 31-51, especially p. 34 textual note b.

⁵⁹ cf. Frandsen, P.J., ‘The bitter honey at Dendara’, in: Czerny, E. (ed.), *Timelines; studies in honour of Manfred Bietak*, vol. 3 (=OLA 149), Leuven pp.197-201.

⁶⁰ pBrooklyn, 47.218. 50, 2, 4. Publication: Goyon, J.-C., *Confirmation du pouvoir royal au nouvel an: Brooklyn Museum papyrus 47.218.50*, Cairo 1972.

so as to mark him as belonging to the goddess,⁶¹ a trait that is further enhanced by identifying him with Nefertem the son of Sakhmet.⁶²

The *b3s*-jar for sitting on the podium is introduced with a short hymn to Sakhmet who has returned from Asia, as in some versions of the myth of the *Return of the Goddess*. She is described and invoked in the following way: ‘Her *kns*-ochre is for her head and her red colour (*dšr*) at her feet when she steps forth as the light of the sky. As soon as you crossed the mountains you drove away the storms’.⁶³ Her appearance is accompanied by the great female hippopotamuses, creatures that also play a role in the rituals of the Hen-lake in Bubastis. In light of this parallelism it is possible to recognize in the red at her feet the menstruation shed by Horit at her appearance on the Eastern mountain of Heliopolis.

The next *b3s*-jar is for the appearance on the podium and is attributed to Wadjet:

He grasps you and provides for himself this your pure and perfect efflux which came forth from you, being as this pure and perfect efflux which came forth from Osiris. When he places you on his flesh your sorcery protects him from all evil wraths of this year like you protected Horus from Seth and vice versa. Oh this eye here, powerful and respected more than the gods. Purify (*twr*) Pharaoh, life (prosperity, health) from all evil things of this year. Protect (*hw*) Pharaoh, life (prosperity, health), from your red rage (*dšr*) and you shall let (*w3d=t*) Pharaoh, life (prosperity health), thrive in life.⁶⁴

Here the anointment is explicitly said to be the goddess’ efflux, in its pure and perfect state, i.e. in its transformed and life-giving state, which serves to protect the king from the goddess’s red rage, i.e. the negative dangerous aspects of the menstruating goddess. This is also stated in terms of purity as the anointment purifies the king, instead of being a source of impurity as would be expected of menstruation. It is interesting to note that the passage here likens the efflux of the goddess with the better known efflux of Osiris, a substance which similarly vacillates between purity and impurity.⁶⁵

The link between anointment and blood from the goddess is also found in other texts. In the temple of Tod, the king offers a *b3s*-jar to

⁶¹ pBrooklyn, 47.218.50, 2, 1-2, 2.

⁶² pBrooklyn, 47.218.50, 2, 4.

⁶³ pBrooklyn, 47.218.50, 2, 8-2, 9.

⁶⁴ pBrooklyn, 47.218.50, 2, 11-2, 14.

⁶⁵ For the latest treatments of *rdw*-efflux see Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 42-44 textual note 14 and Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 462-467.

Bastet containing the salve ‘Upper Egyptian protection’ made of natron.⁶⁶ In Ptolemaic temples, natron is found as the nome-specific offering for the third Upper Egyptian nome of El Kab and usually associated with Nekhbet, the patron goddess of this nome. In some of the examples of this offering the substance, perhaps red-tinted natron, is said to have come from the blood of the far-away eye,⁶⁷ which in this instance is to be identified with the local goddess Nekhbet assuming the role of the Eye of Re in the *Return of the Goddess*.

Thus the two initial passages of the Bubastis section all appear to relate to the menstruation of the goddess. In the first case her appeasement or purification, when she washes off the blood of menstruation in the waters of the Hen-lake and in the second case as the contents of her jar.

If this interpretation of the passages in the Delta Manual is correct then menstruation plays a key role in the *Return of the Goddess* – but also a role shrouded in secrecy and protected by taboos. This might account for the scarcity of direct references to menstruation in texts dealing with the goddess. This should not be overemphasized though or seen as extraordinary since texts that speak uninhibitedly about the murder of Osiris, Geb’s rape of Tefnut and other negative or ambiguous events are equally rare outside the mythological manuals.

The menstruation aspect of the *Return of the Goddess* has a series of consequences for our understanding of the rituals associated with this mythical complex and of the myth itself. First of all it might provide us with an origin of the myth as ultimately deriving from women’s initiation practices. In anthropological literature can be found many instances of girls being sent away or secluded at the onset of the menarche and celebrated upon their return to society as mature women.⁶⁸ Direct evidence of such ceremonies in Egypt would, however, be hard to find. For male initiation to adulthood, we have the *ts-mdh* ceremony attested in Old Kingdom texts, but even in this early period it appears to have been a custom on decline that almost disappeared by the end of the Old Kingdom with only one first Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom attestation.⁶⁹ If comparable women’s ceremonies

⁶⁶ *Tod* II, n° 280

⁶⁷ Beinlich, H., ‘Die spezifischen Opfer der oberägyptischen Gaue’, *SAK* 7 (1979), pp. 12-13.

⁶⁸ Cf. Buckley, T. and Gottlieb, A. (eds.), *Blood Magic: the anthropology of menstruation*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1988.

⁶⁹ For the *ts-mdh* see Feucht, E., *Das Kind im alten Ägypten. Die Stellung des Kindes in Familie und Gesellschaft nach altägyptischen Texten und Darstellungen*, Frankfurt and New York 1995, pp. 238-245 and for the FIP and MK attestations Willems, H. *Coffin of*

existed and followed a similar pattern of decline, then it is natural that the available sources – focused on men and their careers – do not include any references to women's initiation.

Consequently, I am not advocating that the Myth of the *Return of the Goddess*, in its attested Late Period versions, should be read as an initiation myth, only suggesting that it might originate in such and that it retains certain features that are only explicable when the connection with menstruation is brought out.⁷⁰

STREWING MINERALS FOR THE GODDESS

Jean-Claude Goyon has studied the custom of strewing green minerals at the different festivals of the goddess at new moon in the month of Epiphi attested for the Greco-Roman period. He concludes that the mineral green served to rejuvenate nature and heralded the fertility brought by the goddess upon her return.⁷¹ The phrase used to signal the green in these texts is *ṯhn*, which is normally faience but which Goyon argues is here a designation for some powdery substance suitable for throwing and made of a variety of elements. Certain texts make it clear that the substance thrown actually derives from the goddess herself: 'When she opened the sky in glistening (*ṯhn*) she spread the green (*ṯhn*) over that land',⁷² so that when her supplicants strew powdery green in front of the approaching statue of the goddess they are in essence mimicking the actions of the goddess herself. Above we noted the equation made by the Delta manual of one green mineral, turquoise, with the menstruation blood of the goddess and another, faience, with the pacification of the goddess as the eye of the sun. If this identification can be extended to the ritual of strewing mineral green in the festivals of the goddess, then another aspect of the ritual emerges.

Cross-culturally, menstrual blood is often seen as ritually powerful and often polluting, i.e. dangerous and therefore subject to taboos. Often menstruating women are kept away from food lest they should spoil it and in some areas of the world they can even accidentally kill a man

Hegata (Cairo JdE 36418): *A Case Study of Egyptian Funerary Culture of the Early Middle Kingdom* (OLA 70), Leuven 1996, p. 171 n. 902.

⁷⁰ For this distinction and why we should be wary of labelling myths as initiatory see Graf, F., 'Initiation: A concept with a troubled history', in: Dodd, D.B. and Faraone, C.A. (eds.), *Initiation in ancient Greek rituals and narratives: new critical perspectives*, London and New York 2003, pp. 3-24.

⁷¹ Goyon, J.-C., 'Répandre l'or et éparpiller la verdure. Les fêtes de Mout et d'Hathor à la néoménie d'Epiphi et les prémices des moissons', in: van Dijk, J. (ed.), *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde*, Groningen 1997, pp. 85-110.

⁷² *Esna* III, n° 236, 7.

should they by chance introduce a single drop of menstrual blood in his food, and in agricultural societies this negative effect can extend to the crops which might blight at the touch of a menstruating women. However in other cultures, menstrual blood can be used in rituals to enhance the fertility of the fields and for love potions.⁷³

In Egypt we know that menstruating women were secluded, either at a special place away from the centre of the village or, in later times, in a special room in the house. Paul John Frandsen, in his study of the menstrual taboo in Egypt, reasoned from the attendance lists from Deir el-Medina that workmen who came into contact with menstruating women were unsuitable for work in a ritually sensitive environment such as a tomb, specifically in its aspect of vehicle for rebirth.⁷⁴ Frandsen goes on to speculate that menstruation, since it indicates lack of pregnancy, might be associated with lack of fertility. This interpretation is based on just two medical texts (pEbers 808 and 809) where menstruation blood is smeared on the woman's breasts to cure hanging breasts or nipples. Frandsen, following the suggestion originally made by von Deines and Grapow that the breast hang because of too much milk, conjectures that menstruation reduces the amount of milk because it in essence is opposed to birth and by extension fertility in general.⁷⁵ Von Deines later proposed a new interpretation of the text in which the menstrual blood serves instead to reinforce the natural flow between womb and breast,⁷⁶ an interpretation which runs counter to the original one and implies that menstruation is not opposed to fertility and birth. Since the interpretation of this text is far from secure, it would be hazardous to use it for reconstructing the general attitude of the Egyptians towards menstrual blood.⁷⁷

The same reservations are relevant for Coffin Text spell 1117, of the Book of Two ways. Recently, Paul O'Rourke has suggested that this Coffin Text spell includes reference to menstruation. The spell gives instruction for a protective ointment (*b3d*) coming from an *cmct*,⁷⁸ a disputed word which, O'Rourke argues, is a designation for a woman

⁷³ Buckley, T. and Gottlieb, A., 'A Critical Appraisal of Theories of Menstrual Symbolism', *Blood Magic: the anthropology of menstruation*, pp. 3-50.

⁷⁴ Frandsen, *JNES* 66/2, pp. 104-105.

⁷⁵ Frandsen, *JNES* 66/2, p. 103

⁷⁶ Von Deines, H., 'Die Rezepte Eb 808 und 809 im Pap. Ebers, um *gs.w* bei einer Frau zu behandeln', *GM* 19 (1976), pp. 17-22.

⁷⁷ Relevant for this discussion might also be the *PGM* XXXVI, 320-32 in a recipe for a contraceptive that uses, *inter alia*, menstruation blood. While it is obvious that the substance is here in opposition to pregnancy it is more uncertain whether this can be extended to a general opposition to fertility.

⁷⁸ *CT* VII 450d.

impure from menstruation.⁷⁹ Here both the translation of *ꜥmꜥt* as menstruating women and the overall rationale for using the ointment is uncertain. If the ointment is indeed menstrual blood, then a viable hypothesis could be that it was used to scare away demons, a ritual use comparable to the ointment in the *bꜣs*-jar discussed above.

A final case is the manual for the priesthood of Sakhmet fragments of which are preserved from the Tebtunis library. A small fragment reads ‘menstruation (*ḥsmnt*) of a woman’ or ‘blood (*snf*) of a woman’.⁸⁰ The presence of menstruation in the manual tells us that this somehow fell within the duties of the priesthood. As one of the main concerns for the priests of Sakhmet was averting the annual plague brought on by the raging goddess, the text would seem to once again associate the dangerous aspects of the goddess with menstruation, but without the context it is impossible to tell what the Sakhmet priest should do with the blood or which precautions, if any, they should take when handling it.

In the case of the strewing of minerals it should be noted that the Manual of the Delta implies that the green minerals belong to the pacified aspect of the goddess, transformed from raging to docile and by extension also from the negative aspects of menstruation to the positive, in this case fertility. The powers manifesting themselves in their dangerous aspects during menstruation are thus transformed into powers of fertility used to invigorate the fields. Depending on the Egyptian attitude towards menstruation, the ritual can then be seen to serve two interconnected purposes, to pacify or transform the goddess and ensure that her power will be a blessing instead of a potential curse on the crops, if menstruation is indeed to be connected with infertility.

BARING OF VAGINA AND SEXUAL LICENSE DURING THE FESTIVAL OF BASTET

Herodotus informs us that during their journey downstream to Bubastis, women travelling to the festival would lift up their skirts while shouting

⁷⁹ O’Rourke, P.F., ‘The *ꜥmꜥt*-Woman’, *ZÄS* 134 (2007), pp. 166-172 and ‘The *ꜥmꜥ*-Male’, *ZÄS* 137 (2010), pp. 45-53.

⁸⁰ pFlorence PSI inv. I 73 + pCarlsberg 463, Fragment A, 7 = Rosati, G., ‘PSI inv. I 73 + pCarlsberg 463: Manuale del Sacerdote di Sakhmet’, in: Osing, J. and Rosati, G., *Papiri geroglifici e ieratici da Tebtynis*, Florence 1998, p. 197. Osing suggest reading *ḥsmn n ḥmt* ‘Menstruation of a woman’ while Frank Feder on the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* suggests the reading *snf n ḥmt* ‘Blood of a woman’.

obscenities at the populace on the riverbanks.⁸¹ Similarly in the *Contendings of Horus and Seth*, Hathor displays her genitals to encourage the sad and tired sun god.⁸² In light of the taboo on the vagina during menstruation found in the Delta Manual, a new perspective on this custom presents itself. Perhaps this action is meant to evoke the menstruation of the goddess just as turquoise, interpreted earlier in the section as her menstrual blood, is strewn during the festivities. In this case we could have a ritual breaking of a taboo sanctioned by the festival or a mockingly playful version of the goddess' rage. Alternatively it could be to show the new status of the nubile goddess after the menarche as one ready for sexual intercourse.

During the festival of Bastet, this gesture serves as a prelude to the parts of the festival characterised by drunkenness and sexual license, where the goddess's sexual readiness was mirrored in her human worshippers who indulged in orgiastic rituals.⁸³ While festivals of antistructure at liminal periods of the year are well known from a variety of cultures, the sexual elements of the Bastet festival nevertheless appears especially appropriate for celebrating the return of a goddess who has just come into sexual maturity. For example, among the Temne of Sierra Leone, girls' initiation rituals, the Bondo, involves seclusion of the adolescents at the onset of menstruation, and culminates at their return to the village in a festival that features lewd sexual jokes, cross


⁸¹ Rutherford, I., 'Down-Stream to the Cat Goddess: Herodotus on Egyptian Pilgrimage', in Elsner, J. and Rutherford, I. (eds.), *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity – Seeing the Gods*, Oxford 2005, pp. 131-149.

⁸² pBeaster Beatty I rt. 3, 9-43 = Gardiner, A.H., *Late Egyptian Stories* (BiAeg 1), Bruxelles 1932, pp. 40-41. Discussion by Morris, E.F., 'Sacred and Obscene Laughter in the *Contendings of Horus and Seth*', in Schneider, T. and Szpakowska, K.M. (eds.), *Egyptian Stories: A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of His Retirement*, Münster 2007, pp. 197-224. See also Volokhine, Y., 'Rire, fécondité et dévoilement rituel du sexe féminin d'Hathor à Baubô, un parcours revisité', in: Gasse, A., Servajean, F. and Thiers, C. (eds.), *Et in Ægypto et ad Ægyptum. Recueil d'études dédiées à Jean-Claude Grenier* (=CENiM 5, vol. 4), Montpellier 2012, pp. 755-772, for a thorough discussion of this and other ancient Egyptian and classical examples of the gesture and its ties to agricultural fertility.

⁸³ A preliminary translation of the texts for the festival of Bastet in the Tebtunis library has appeared in Quack, J.F. and Hoffmann, F., *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, Berlin 2007, pp. 305-311. For a similar festival see Depauw, M. and Smith, M., 'Visions of Ecstasy. Cultic Revelry before the goddess Ai/Nehemanit. Ostraca faculteit Letteren (K.U.Leuven) dem. 1-2', in Hoffmann, F. and Thissen, H.J. (eds.), *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004* (Studia Demotica VI), Leuven 2004, pp. 67-93. See also *Edfou* III, 316, 16: *hr-nb nk m-b3h=s*, 'Everyone copulates in front of her', and III 317, 1-2: *hmwt šbn hr t3yw*, 'Women mix with males', for which cf. the remarks by Goyon, *Le Rituel de shtp shmt*, p. 79.

dressing and loosening of the normal rules that govern sexual behaviour so that married women are allowed sexual intercourse with young unmarried men without fear of repercussions from their husbands.⁸⁴ The shouting of obscenities was also part of the journey to Bubastis, and thanks to the work of Mark Depauw on demotic lexicography, we know that cross-dressing played some part in the festivities held at the return of the goddess.⁸⁵

THE *WNŠB*-OFFERING

The last point I would like to make concerns an offering specific to goddesses who are aspects of the returning goddess: the *wtt*, *šbw* or *wnšb*  object. This object is depicted in offering scenes and is made up of three or four elements; the lower part is a basket, on top of which sits a baboon or other ape and behind this the *hn*-hieroglyph into which something resembling the *tr*-sign is sometimes inserted (Figure 2).⁸⁶ Some sculptural versions, perhaps intended as votive offerings are preserved and are almost invariably made of faience. These sometimes present variant versions of the object in which the baboon is mummified and a pillar with a forked convoluted ending replaces the *hn* and *tr* hieroglyph.⁸⁷

Earlier this object was identified as a clepsydra, but this interpretation has now been definitely rebutted.⁸⁸ A reading of the object as a cryptogram has been proposed in which the Baboon is seen as Thoth, the regulator and keeper of the calendar, and the *hn* and *tr* hieroglyphs designate regularity of seasons.⁸⁹ This is of course appropriate for a ritual concerned with the Return of the Goddess, but leaves several important questions unanswered: Why is it, with only two exceptions, exclusively given to goddesses and how can the variant forms be explained?

In the most thorough study of the object to date, Sambin notes that the offering scenes in temples do not make any references to time, an observation that casts severe doubts on the cryptographic

⁸⁴ Lamp, F., 'Heavenly Bodies: Menses, Moon, and Rituals of License among the Temne of Sierra Leone', *Blood Magic: the anthropology of menstruation*, pp. 210-231.

⁸⁵ Depauw, M., 'Notes on Transgressing Gender Boundaries in Ancient Egypt', *ZÄS* 130 (2003), pp. 49-59.

⁸⁶ Sambin, C., *L'offrande de la soi-disant 'Clepsydre'. Le Symbole šbt/wnšb/wtt*, Budapest 1988, pp. 242-248.

⁸⁷ Sambin, *L'offrande de la soi-disant 'Clepsydre'*, pp. 249-253 and Sambin, C., 'Les objets *Sbt* des musées', *BIFAO* 87 (1987), pp. 275-292.

⁸⁸ Sambin, *L'offrande de la soi-disant 'Clepsydre'*, pp. 254-257.

⁸⁹ Handoussa, T., 'A propos de l'offrande *šbt*', *SAK* 7 (1979), pp. 70-74.



Figure 2. Blue-green fayence *wnšb* from Hermopolis, Ptolemaic, h 14, 5 cm. Cairo J.E. 71 976 after Sambin, *BIFAO* 87, pl. I. (Courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo).

interpretation,⁹⁰ and sets up a list of basic data on the object that any future theories should be able to account for:⁹¹

- The object is often identified with the *wḏ3t* eye of Re and associated with the eye of Horus
- The object is the Ka of the goddess
- When offering the king assumes the role of Thoth or heir of Thoth

Sambin does not present a unified theory of the object but suggests that the *hn* is a container for either the ureaus or the curl of the red crown, which would explain the association with goddesses, but which leaves the baboon element and the variant versions unaccounted for.⁹²

Though the reader may guess what I am driving at, it might be useful to return to the Delta Manual which contains one more myth of relevance for these questions. Appended to the Bubastis section we find a small self-contained manual concerning the five Horuses born by Horit. An initial list is followed by five narratives, two of which are

⁹⁰ Sambin, *L'offrande de la soi-disant 'Clepsydre'*, pp. 260-261.

⁹¹ Sambin, *L'offrande de la soi-disant 'Clepsydre'*, pp. 266-269.



⁹² Sambin, *L'offrande de la soi-disant 'Clepsydre'*, pp. 367-375.

variants of the same myth. In the first of these Horit has intercourse with her father Osiris:

Concerning Houron:⁹³ Osiris joined (*shn*) with his daughter Horit for the/her first time. She became pregnant and she sat down and mourned. Then when she approached the moment of giving her *s^{c3}* (*spr r ht n rdit s^{c3}=s*), like that which was earlier done by Tefnut (*mi irwt hr-h3t n tfnwt*), her *s^{c3}* was placed on the path to the Great Green of the west.⁹⁴

In the variant, Seth instead rapes Horit:

Then Seth greatly harmed this goddess in Lower Imet. He copulated with her by force. She became pregnant with his semen – He became Thoth the one who came forth from the brow⁹⁵ – Then she reached the critical moment before she had completed her full term. Her *s^{c3}* was put in the water. The black Ibis found it in the water as a monkey which had not yet been (fully) formed amid the rising efflux (*rdw bs*). He was in the ‘Body’ of the *s^{c3}*. He was not born as the (other) gods.

A lexicographical problem concerns the status of the myths: The noun ,⁹⁶ var. ⁹⁷ *s^{c3}* occurs four times in the manual, all in the phrase *s^{c3}=s*, as part of these two narratives of the sexual violation of Horit.

Meeks argues for a derivation from the rare verb *s^{c3}(3)y* ‘Having birth pangs’,⁹⁸ which occurs a few times, and only (?) in royal texts where foreign subjects are said to suffer from *s^{c3}y* when the king issues commands.⁹⁹ For these texts, Gardiner reasoned that the metaphor of giving birth was used for paying tribute.¹⁰⁰ Meeks sees in the noun *s^{c3}* the results arising from these birth pangs:

⁹³ Reading Houron following Quack, *Orientalia* 77, p. 109.

⁹⁴ *DM* 10, 2-3.

⁹⁵ As noted by Feder (*Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*) the sentence is out of place here. I take it as an interjection or comment to explain the myth narrated here as an alternative to the usual birth of Thoth from Horus and Seth.

⁹⁶ *DM* X, 3, twice.

⁹⁷ *DM* X, 4 and 5.

⁹⁸ *Wb* IV, 43, 5-6.

⁹⁹ See references noted by Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 107-108 textual note 316, perhaps with an additional example in the *Book of the Temple* though there it probably denotes some kind of disease suffered by both humans and cattle checked by the Sakhmet priests (Personal communication by Joachim Quack).

¹⁰⁰ Gardiner, A.H., *The Chester Beatty Papyri, no. I*, Oxford 1931, p. 42 n.2.



Figure 3. Hieroglyphic group mentioning the 'birth' of Seth from the temple of Dendara. After Cauville, *BIFAO* 90, p. 86. (Courtesy of the IFAO).

Toutefois, dans notre texte, il s'agit de quelque chose de matériel qui est expulsé et prend le chemin du Grand Vert. Notre terme désignerait donc non seulement les douleurs provoquées par les contractions mais aussi leur conséquence visible. La suite du texte permet de penser que s^c désigne l'ensemble de l'œuf et ses annexes, tels qu'ils peuvent être observés lors de l'accouchement: les eaux, le fœtus et la délivre.¹⁰¹

Another possibility is to relate the word to the verb c3c which carries the root meaning of pouring out or shedding bodily fluids.¹⁰² s^c would then be a passive participle of a s -causative of c3c , yielding: 'that which is made to flow out'. Support for this interpretation can be found in two texts from the Greco-Roman period dealing with the epagomenal days and the unnatural birth of Seth.

The Ostrakon ODém.DelM 4-1, dating to the last century BC or first century CE, is a Demotic scribal exercise concerning the five epagomenal days and the gods born on these days¹⁰³. Whereas four of the deities are said to have been born (msi), the entry for the third epagomenal day avoids this term and instead uses what is probably a demotic form of the verb s^c from the Delta Manual¹⁰⁴: $sw 3 n s^c e$ (𓆏) ste 'Day 3: The expulsion (or sim.) of Seth'. The editor of the ostrakon, Devauchelle, also refers to a text from the temple of Dendara which deals with the creation and birth of the gods and where, again, the birth of Seth is set apart (Figure 3). Devauchelle tentatively suggests combining the s and t^i to read st^i , 'Seth', which then encloses a verb

¹⁰¹ Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 107-108 textual note 316.


¹⁰² *Wb.* 1, 166. Latest treatment in Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 473-474. For the alleged use of the verb used for 'birth' see below.

¹⁰³ Devauchelle, D., 'Écrire le nom des jours épagomènes et du premier jour de l'an (Odém. DEIM. 4-1)', *Studi di Egittologia e di Papirologia* 2 (2005), pp. 19-25.

¹⁰⁴ Col. 1, l. 4. This reading was suggested to me by Joachim Quack whom I wish to thank for drawing my attention to this article. Devauchelle reads she .

ꜥw/ꜥwꜥ. However, a passive: *sꜥ.tw N* ‘N was made to pour out’ involving the verb *sꜥ* is far more likely and was suggested by Cauville in her edition of the text where she reads: ‘*sꜥ.tw (?) Nꜥk (?) m Nbt*’, and translates ‘Le damné fut expulsé (?) a Ombos’¹⁰⁵.

In the inscription here the ‘egg’ determinative may be due to the, after all, biological nature of the process or it could be a substitute for the pustule sign (Gardiner Aa 2) which characterizes negative substances, and which is also found as determinative for the name of Seth in Demotic¹⁰⁶. Both these texts support the suggested derivation for the noun *sꜥ*. The premature birth of Seth is attested in sources from the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts where Seth is said to have been ‘spat out’ (*nšnš*) by Nut, a phrase which can be seen to represent the premature birth of Seth from his mother, to Plutarch who holds Seth responsible for his own birth¹⁰⁷.

In the Delta Manual, it is noteworthy that the word *sꜥ* is only used for the cases where the pregnancy does not go full term. This contradicts the close connection drawn by Meeks between the word and normal birth. A possible further attestation of the word from the mammisi of Ermant, and the main example used to associate *sꜥ* and birth, in fact has: *sꜥ pn (n) mst* ‘this *sꜥ* of birth’,¹⁰⁸ a phrasing which would be redundant if *sꜥ* exclusively referred to birth. I would hypothesize that *sꜥ* primarily refers to indefinite matter exuded either at birth or menstruation. Again the difference between the two is not clear-cut as every menstruation could be viewed as a premature birth; an abortion. The writing with the swallow determinative  suggests that the fluids shed in this way were associated with impurity or danger in some way¹⁰⁹ – something which better suits menstruation than the birth interpretation offered by Meeks.

The noun *sꜥ* appears to be confined to the Delta manual, with just one possible example from the mammisi of Ermant, but the number of attestations for the word is perhaps much larger since it could be part of the name of the goddess Iusaas. In Egyptian this goddess’s name is



¹⁰⁵ ‘Les inscriptions dédicatoires du temple d’Hathor à Dendara’, *BIFAO* 90 (1990), pp. 86-87 and textual note 10 on p. 94

¹⁰⁶ Gaudard, F., *The Demotic Drama of Horus and Seth* (P. Berlin 8278a, b, c; 15662; 15667; 15815; 23536; 23537a, b, c, d, e, f, g), University of Chicago unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago 2005, p. 186.

¹⁰⁷ *De Iside* 12.

¹⁰⁸ From the Mammisi of the temple of Ermant (Daumas, F., *Les mammisis des temples égyptiens* (1958), p. 342), Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, 107-108, textual note. 316.

¹⁰⁹ For the use of this determinative cf. David, A., *De l’infériorité à la perturbation: L’oiseau du ‘mal’ et la catégorisation en Égypte ancienne* (GOFF 38), Wiesbaden 2000.

written , later  *ḥw sꜣs*,¹¹⁰ normally parsed as *ḥw=s sꜣ=s*, ‘She grows as she comes’, and taken to refer to the penis of the sun god. Often, especially in the later periods, the name is written as *ḥw sꜣ* which defies the normal reading,¹¹¹ since **ḥw=s sꜣ* is bad grammar for all stages of the Egyptian language and also causes problems for the understanding of the normal orthography. It should be noted that in Demotic the different writings of her name are all unetymological,¹¹² which is an indication that the original meaning of her name was probably forgotten in later times. Consequently the faulty writings in the Late Period does not matter much. However, a different reading allows for both writings of the name. If we read *ḥw sꜣ=s* ‘Her *sꜣ* comes’ (i.e. *The one whose sꜣ comes*) this also allows for the abbreviated orthography *ḥw sꜣ* ‘The *sꜣ* comes’. The name of the goddess then becomes parallel to that of other goddesses such as *mḥr ḥt=s* ‘Her flame is painful’ (i.e. *The one whose flame is painful*).¹¹³ It is also worth noting that pEbers 808, in the recipe discussed above, uses the phrase *snf n ḥw ḥsmn=s m tp m tp ḥrf* ‘the very first blood of someone whose menstruation has come’, which correlates perfectly with the reading of Iusaas proposed here except for the use of the common word for menstruation *ḥsmn* ‘purification’, instead of *sꜣ*.¹¹⁴

Translating the name of the goddess as ‘Her *sꜣ* comes’ also helps explain her association with the goddess Nebthotepet ‘The lady of the womb’.¹¹⁵ As she is the goddess of the western horizon, Iusaas is the goddess of the eastern, which relates to the common schema of conception in the evening in the west, pregnancy in the night in the night sky or underworld, and birth at morning in the east.

It is not clear whether we should understand the name to mean a goddess whose *sꜣ* comes for the first time, i.e. has only now begun to menstruate or give birth, or as the goddess who generally does so and happens to do so now. Iusaas is often said to be the mother of the king

¹¹⁰ *Wb* 1, 45.6

¹¹¹ For the different writings of the goddess cf. the fundamental study by Vandier, J., ‘Iousâas et (Hathor)-Nébet-Hétépet’ I-III, *RdE* 16 (1964), pp. 55-146, *RdE* 17 (1965), pp. 89-176, *RdE* 18 (1966), pp. 67-142.

¹¹² Erichsen, W., *Demotisches Glossar*, Copenhagen 1954, p. 21.

¹¹³ For this goddess see Cauville, S., ‘Chentayt et Merkhètes, des avatars d’Isis et Nephtys’, *BIFAO* 81 (1981), pp. 21-40. For the reading *mḥr-ḥt=s* see Quack, J., ‘Zum Lautwert von Gardiner Sign-List U 23’, *LingAeg* 11 (2003), pp. 113-116.

¹¹⁴ For another example of the verb *ḥw* in connection with menstruation see pEdwin Smith 20, 13-14: *n ḥy n=s ḥsmn* ‘Whose menstruation does not come’.

¹¹⁵ Cf. the study of Vandier cited above. A short summary is given by Refai, H., ‘Nebet-Hetepet, Iusas un Temet - die weiblichen Komplemente des Atum’, *GM* 181 (2001), pp. 89-94.

or of other deities,¹¹⁶ which would appear to give her the status of a mother goddess, and which bears directly on the understanding of *s*^ḳ proposed above. However since as a primeval goddess she mainly gives birth to Shu and Tefnut, whose association with the fluids of the sun god is well known, it may very well be that again menstruation or premature birth and not a proper full term birth is intended.

In the first variant of the myth of Horit in the Delta manual, the act of giving the *s*^ḳ does not necessarily refer to birth as such, since no child is mentioned, but to an abortion very early in pregnancy, perhaps even indistinguishable from normal menstruation. The phrasing *spr r ht n rdît s*^ḳ*=s* is crucial since it does not imply something premature but only the decisive moment of giving *s*^ḳ, which could be her normal period. However in the second version it is stated that ‘she reached the critical moment before she had completed her full term’, and here the interpretation as an abortion in early pregnancy is fully valid, though still tied to menstruation, as I will demonstrate later.

In the first version the giving of *s*^ḳ is likened to what Tefnut, the first goddess of the Heliopolitan ennead, had done earlier, but as we know next to nothing about the motherhood of Tefnut and how birth was given to Geb and Nut,¹¹⁷ the reference does not help us much. We do not know whether Tefnut also had abortions or if either Geb or Nut was prematurely born, further adding to the puzzle the text purports to be an account of a specific form of Horus, but no child is mentioned apart from the *s*^ḳ that is left to float downstream to the marshy areas in the western Delta.

If we disregard the problematic presence of Houron, and take into account the connection between abortion and menstruation, the narrative can be seen as primarily an aetiology for the menarche of Horit, whose adolescence is ended by having sex with her father. From numerous medico-magical texts we know that incubi were responsible for haemorrhages and abortions,¹¹⁸ in mythological terms it would thus make sense to have sexual intercourse with a god provoke the onset of

¹¹⁶ See the epithets collected by Vandier, *RdÉ* 17, pp. 123-126. The objections to ascribing real motherhood to Iusaas (and Nebet-Hetepet) voiced by Derchain, P., *Hathor quadrifrons. Recherches sur la syntaxe d'un mythe égyptien*, Istanbul 1972, pp. 50-53 are not persuasive, at least not on the level of mythology, since the texts unequivocally speak of these goddesses as mothers – it is the mode of birth and not lack of motherhood that sets Iusaas apart.

¹¹⁷ Meeks suggests that the reference to Tefnut is simply because she, as the first goddess of the Heliopolitan ennead, was the one who instigated the act of birth (*Mythes et légendes du Delta*, p. 108 n. 317).

¹¹⁸ Westendorf, W., ‘Beiträge aus und zu den medizinischen Texten: III. Incubus-Vorstellungen’, *ZÄS* 96 (1970), pp.145-149.

menstruation. The placing of the menstruation in the water probably reflects purification by bathing, a motif also found in related myths, most importantly in the parallel version of the myth also found in the Delta Manual.

As Seth replaces Osiris, the act is unequivocally marked as rape. Besides being a myth of the rape of the goddess it is also an aetiology for the unusual birth of Thoth, whose name is inserted as an explanation in terms of other myths where he emerges from the forehead of Seth impregnated with Horus' semen. In the Delta manual version he is found in the form of a monkey, in which, as Meeks has shown, the prenatal foetus can be recognized.¹¹⁹ He is found by the black ibis, the bird that represents the darkened new moon, which of course is also associated with Thoth.¹²⁰ Thus the new moon version of Thoth finds the foetal form of Thoth and presumably takes care of his growth, in astronomical terms, the waxing of the moon. Cross-culturally, the link between new moon and menstruation is very common,¹²¹ and for Egypt it may be relevant that the festivals for the goddess in the month of Epiphi was a new moon festival.

If as argued above, the first sexual act of the goddess, whether with her father Osiris or with Seth, brings on the Menarche, it would also make sense to see this first act as the birth of Thoth, the good of the moon, whose relationship to the menstrual cycle is occasionally found in other texts.¹²² This interpretation finds support in a spell for attraction in one of the Greek magical papyri.¹²³ The woman can be influenced in a number of ways and invoking Artemis, Persephone and above all Selene, the goddess of the moon, with many references to Egyptian mythology. The third coercion formula involved is a slander spell¹²⁴ that makes use of many of the mythemes used in the Delta Manual. First the

¹¹⁹ Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 258-260. To the parallels adduced by Meeks should be added *PT* 669 in which the deceased king is born as a deity associated with Thoth without arms and legs (Discussed by Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 468-472).

¹²⁰ For the Ibis and the different phases of the moon cf. Leitz, *Tagewählerei*, p. 269 with n. 25.

¹²¹ See the examples collected in Knight, C., *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture*, New Haven and London 1991, pp. 252-255 and pp. 327-373.

¹²² Westendorf, W., 'Beiträge aus und zu den medizinischen Texten', *ZÄS* 92 (1966), p. 153 and Leitz, *Tagewählerei*, p. 200, n. 19.

¹²³ *PGM* IV, 2441-2621 (Third century C.E.). Translated in Betz, H.D., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*², Chicago 1992, pp. 82-86. Parallel spell *PGM* IV, 2622-2784 (*ibid* pp. 86-88).

¹²⁴ For these spells cf. Eitrem, S., 'Die rituelle ΔΙΑΒΟΛΗ', *Symbolae Osloenses* 2 (1924), 43-61 and for the Egyptian tradition of these spells the comments by Quack, J.F., *SAK* 23 (1996), 312.

incense used by the woman the spell seeks to influence is said to be made of, amongst other things: The menstrual blood of a virgin, a dog-faced baboon's dung and the egg of a young Ibis. Not content with perverting the offerings to the goddess, the woman has also spoken ill of her and, in the words of the beginning of the spell, 'brought your holy mysteries to the knowledge of men', which in this instance means an uncharitable account of all the goddess' more sinister aspects:

For she said that you slew a man and drank the blood of this man and ate his flesh, and she says that your headband is his entrails. That you took all of his skin and put it into your vagina. That you drunk sea falcon's blood and that your food was dung beetle. But Pan before your very eyes shot forth his seed unlawful. A dog-faced baboon is now born whene'er there's menstrual cleansing.

While many details remain enigmatic, there are so many points of similarity that some connection with the myth told in the Delta manual must be envisaged. That the goddess has killed a man and drunk his blood points in the direction of a feline goddess. In the myth of the *Destruction of Mankind* Sakhmet drinks the red-coloured beer thinking that it is human blood,¹²⁵ and in the *Ritual for Repulsing Seth*, Seth's entrails is given to Bastet,¹²⁶ perhaps even for use as the headband (*sšd*) which the goddess wears in some of the parallels to the description of the goddess on the Isheru lake.¹²⁷ For the next passages I am unable to find any Egyptian parallels, though the skin in the vagina might be a mythological interpretation of a linen tampon used for stopping unwanted bleeding.¹²⁸ In the last part of the cited text Pan probably takes on the role of Seth in the Delta manual as the violator of the goddess, with 'his seed unlawful', and with the same result, a baboon born as menstruation. Unfortunately the spell does not inform us whether this is a normal and natural menstruation, interpreted with references to unwholesome sexual acts for which the goddess is responsible, or something else.

¹²⁵ *Book of the Heavenly Cow* verses 79-91 = Hornung, E., *Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh*, Freiburg and Göttingen 1982, pp. 7-9. For Sakhmet drinking blood see also Germonde, P. *Sekhmet et la protection du monde*, Geneva 1981, pp. 50-51 and Goyon, *Le Rituel de šḥtp šḥmt au changement de cycle annual*, Cairo 2006, p. 31 textual note 17.

¹²⁶ Urk. VI, 13 = pLouvre 3129, G, 53: *rdi.t(w) mḥtw=k n bšst*.

¹²⁷ See Goyon, *Le Rituel de šḥtp šḥmt*, pp. 57-59.

¹²⁸ For a possible, though strenuous, association between these tampons, sometimes made of net-material, and the nets of the goddess Sakhmet see the remarks by Goyon, *Le Rituel de šḥtp šḥmt*, pp. 81-83.

The Greek magical papyrus provides evidence that is considerably later than the Delta Manual, however spell 334 of the Coffin Texts demonstrates that the basic ideas are much older. The spell for ‘Becoming Ihy’, the son of Hathor, contains a description of the birth of the deceased from his mother:

It is I, as I truly flow forth ($\epsilon^3\epsilon=i \ \epsilon^3\epsilon t$). I have truly flowed out ($s^3b.n=i \ s^3bt$) between her thighs in this my name of Twilight-Jackal. No sooner had I broken the egg than I hurried in the *sfs* and glided (*sbn*) on her blood. I am the lord of blood, I am a raging bull. My mother Isis expelled ($\epsilon^3\epsilon$) me when she had fainted beneath the fingers of the lord of the gods.¹²⁹

The connection established here between flowing out, blood¹³⁰ and what seems to be a description of the violation of Isis is strongly reminiscent of the scenario found in the Delta Manual. This impression is reinforced by Goebis’ interpretation of ‘Twilight-Jackal’ as a lunar epithet¹³¹ and the identification of the deceased as Khonsu earlier in the spell.¹³²

The tradition of a god born in from menstrual fluids might go back even to the Pyramid Texts. In Spell 570 the deceased says:

King N is the redness (*insy*) which came forth from Isis and the blood (*dšrw*) which came forth from Nephtys. His leather cord is at his coccyx¹³³ and there is nothing which the gods can do to this King N. King N is the representative (*stī*) of Re, and this King N will not die.¹³⁴

Unfortunately the connection between the two nominal sentences concerned with the blood from Isis and Nephtys and the following passage is far from all but clear, which seriously hampers attempts at understanding what is going on. However, it is tempting to interpret the final identification with the ‘representative of Re’ in light of this designation of Thoth in the Book of the Heavenly Cow, where Thoth is promoted to vizier of Re and one of his duties are to shine in the sky as the moon.¹³⁵ This text is probably of early New or Middle Kingdom

¹²⁹ CT IV, 181e-k. The parts of the spell discussed here have recently been treated by Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 472-474.

¹³⁰ Other references to the liquid nature of the deceased is found throughout the spell.

¹³¹ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, pp. 126 and 228, n. 575.

¹³² CT IV, 180j.

¹³³ Following the translation by Allen, J.P., *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Atlanta 2005, p. 179.

¹³⁴ §1464a-c.

¹³⁵ *Book of the Heavenly Cow* verses 225-250 = Hornung, *Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh*, pp. 22-24 and 45. For the epithet *stī-r^c* see *ibid.*, p. 66 note 160 and LGG VI, p. 68.

origins,¹³⁶ but it is highly debatable whether this epithet can also apply to Thoth in the Old Kingdom.

These examples testify to an alternate tradition concerning the birth of Thoth-Lunus from the menstrual blood of a goddess, instead of the forehead of Seth. By virtue of the full narrative version in the Delta manual, it is possible to recognize allusions to this myth at least from the Middle Kingdom and possibly even the Old Kingdom.

Before we move on to the consequences this has for the interpretation of the *wnšb*, I would like, in honour of Paul, to include one further, Late Egyptian, text in which the image of the baboon, or in this case an ape, is applied to menstruation. The shift between the two species is well known in the context of the *Return of the Goddess*. In the Demotic Myth of the Eye of the Sun, Thoth, normally a baboon, assumes the form of a *kwf* ‘guenon’ on his journey to retrieve the faraway goddess.

The Late Egyptian text is the eighth poem in the first group of love songs in papyrus Harris 500 that has recently been translated and discussed by Darnell in an article on the *Return of the Goddess*, where he plausibly suggests that these love songs originate in festivals for the goddess. For a central word, Darnell proposes a new reading as *ḳḳwt* ‘monkey’, that is worth considering¹³⁷:

¹³⁶ For the dating of this text in the early New Kingdom see Spalinger, A., ‘The Destruction of Mankind: A Transitional Literary Text’, *SAK* 28 (2000), pp. 258-261 and for a Middle Kingdom date Quack, J.F., ‘Perspektiven zur Theologie im Alten Ägypten: Antwort an Jan Assmann’, in Oeming, M., Schmid, K. and Schüle, A. (eds.), *Theologie in Israel und in den Nachbarkulturen* (=Altes Testament und Moderne 9), Münster 2004, pp. 64-65 with n. 4


¹³⁷ Darnell, J.C., ‘A Midsummer’s Night’, in: Melville, S.C. and Slotsky, A.L. (eds.), *Opening the Tablet Box: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Benjamin R. Foster*, Leiden and Boston 2010, pp. 119 textual note *b*. From *g(i)ft*, *Wb.* V, 158, 17-20. Darnell proposes the reading *ḳḳw wʒ=s (r) prt*, with the euphemistic use of *wʒ* (for the construction see Quack, J.F., ‘Ein altägyptisches Sprachtabu’, *LingAeg* 3 (1993), pp. 59-79. Unduly sceptical about the euphemistic use is Franke, D., ‘Das Entfernen eines Sprachtabus: Nochmals zur Konstruktion *wʒi r*’, *GM* 165 (1998), pp. 51-56). However this is unlikely as it leaves *ḳḳw* undetermined with no genitival suffix or article, and in parallel to the preceding sentences we would expect a subject+stative construction and not a *N+sdm=f*. Instead the *wʒ*-sign (Gardiner N31), if that is indeed the correct reading, could be the determinative of the word *ḳḳwt*, usually written without determinative, perhaps caused by some confusion by the scribe or as a marker of the special character of the monkey or possibly evoking the emergence or passage of the menstruation/monkey? This results in the sentence *ḳḳw=s pr.w* i.e. a noun determined by a genitival suffix followed by a stative, an identical construction to that found in the two preceding sentences. Another option which yields the same construction is to read *ḳḳw (n) wʒt=s* ‘The monkey of her passageway’, in which ‘her passageway’ would then be another architectural term used as a metaphor for female physiology. This latter reading would also account for the stroke (Gardiner Z1) after the *wʒ*-sign.

The portal (*bhn*) of my sister,
 Her doorway is in the middle (*hry-ib*) of her house,
 Her double doors are open
 Her monkey (*kḃwt*) has left and my sister is going ape.¹³⁸
 Oh, I should be her gatekeeper, so that she would rage at me, then I
 would hear her voice when she goes ape, and become (as) a child
 through fear of her.¹³⁹

The stress on the doorway as belonging to the beloved, and not the building, suggests that the architectural phrases are probably metaphorical expression for her body.¹⁴⁰ Her open doorway from which the monkey is coming out would then be her vagina. For ‘the middle’, we may compare the description of the pubic region of a girl in a love song from papyrus Chester Beatty I:

With provocative pubic region (*bdš pht*),¹⁴¹ and narrow ‘middle’,
 her thighs display her beauty.¹⁴²

The seemingly *non sequitur* of the monkey leaving and the ensuing rage is resolved when the myth from the Delta manual is taken into account and the monkey seen as a metaphor for menstruation. Such a state would also fit her rage, which is closely connected to the monkey, since the verb used is *knd* with the baboon determinative. It should be noted that even in this erotic text, there is no explicitly, nor implicitly as far as I can tell, expressed wish to have intercourse with the girl in her raging state, i.e. during her menstruation. The speaker simply wants to tease her and subject himself to her raging, a dangerous attitude indeed, given the analogies in these poems to the golden goddess, but one which suits the

¹³⁸ I have adopted Darnell’s apt translation of *knd* ‘raging’ often found with the  determinative (op.cit. p. 120 textual note e).

¹³⁹ Darnell, op. cit., pp. 118-121.

¹⁴⁰ The term *bhn* may also be intended as an allusion to one of the sacred objects of Hathor, the *bhnt*-pylon, primarily known from reliefs in the temples of Dendara and Edfu (Daumas, F., ‘Les objets sacrés d’Hathor a Dendara’, *RdE* 22 (1970), pp.77-78) but already alluded to in a New Kingdom magical spell for speeding up birth in pLeiden I 348, rt. 13, 9-11 = Borghouts, *The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348*, pl. 9 and 26 with translation on p. 28, which may also imply an equation between the vagina and this building.

¹⁴¹ Here too the sense of the word *pht* is better translated as pubic region.

¹⁴² Verso C.1, 5. For this and previous translations of the stanza see Röpke, F., ‘Überlegungen zum “Sitz im Leben” der Kahuner Homosexuellen Episode zwischen Horus und Seth’, in: Roder, H. (ed.), *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen I. Der Fall Ägypten*, Munich 2009, pp. 255-256 and Krauss, R., ‘Drooping of Buttocks (Chester Beatty I, verso C 5)’, *GM* 132 (1993), p.73.

playful stance taken in even the demonstrably religious poetry that accompanied some of the rituals in the festivals of the goddess.¹⁴³

After having gone through the myth from the Delta Manual, we are now in a position to give an explanation of the *wnšb*. The Baboon or monkey element corresponds to the animal in the myth that comes into being from the menstruation of Horit. The variant with the mummified baboon, finds an explanation in the not yet fully formed monkey that is exuded from Horit. The mummified form is amorphous with no visible limbs or only traces of limbs; a creature in a potential state of being whose full manifestation has yet to happen.

As for the second element in the object, I will start with the variant form, which Sambin suggested was the *psš-*kf**. It is possible to read this element as the uterus sign, which usually has more convoluted endings but can also be written with shorter and straighter endings, just as we find on the *wnšb*-objects.¹⁴⁴ The uterus is of course the seat of pregnancy and the container from which the menstruation flows forth. In the more common versions, this container is the more generic *hn*, whose mistress the recipient goddess is sometimes said to be. Now, in the second Bubastis myth, Tefnut-Horit was in the possession of a *bšs*-jar containing the eye of Re. Similarly in the offering scenes of the *wnšb*, the object is identified as the eye of Re and as the Ka of the goddess herself. For the equation of the *bšs* and the *hn* container it is significant that in the temple of Edfu, the *wnšb* offering is given as the specific ritual for Bubastis and offered to Bastet.¹⁴⁵ Above I tentatively suggested equating the contents of the *bšs*-jar with the menstruation of the goddess, which makes perfect sense for the *hn*-container as well. If it contains the menstruation, then giving it back to the goddess would be to return her life force – her ka – to her which had previously flown out of her as *rdw*-efflux, as the first Bubastis myth informs us. In this, the offering would be comparable to the much better known offering of the *rdw*-efflux to Osiris, in which the putrefaction fluids lost during

¹⁴³ See the Demotic texts for the festival of Bastet translated in Quack, and Hoffmann, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, pp. 305-311 and the Poem of the Harper, *ibid.*, pp. 311-320, published by Thissen, H.J., *Der verkommene Harfenspieler. Eine altägyptische Invektive (P. Wien KM 3877)* (DemSt 11), Sommerhausen 1992. The religious context of this poem is discussed by Quack, J.F., *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III: Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*², Münster 2009, pp. 100-102.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Daumas, F. (ed.), *Valeurs phonétiques des signes hiéroglyphiques d'époque Gréco-Romaine I*, Montpellier 1988, 288 n. 663-671.

¹⁴⁵ Derchain, P., 'Un manuel de géographie liturgique à Edfou', *CdE* 73 (1972), 39-51. The scene is found in *Edfou V*, 98.

embalmmment is given back to the god in a transformed state as the aromatic fluids that will preserve his corpse and restore his life force.¹⁴⁶

When we remember the connection posited by ancient Egyptian medicine between the blood of menstruation and the nourishment of the foetus, we can also explain why many of these texts emphasize the motherly aspect of the recipient goddess.¹⁴⁷ Having previously menstruated, the blood is now returned to her, to her womb, where it will serve to nourish the foetus conceived in her intercourse with her brother or father in the next phase of her transformation. The king himself assumes a double role as her offspring, but also as the representative or heir of Thoth. This dual affiliation accords with the two births of the goddess. First she gives ‘birth’ in menstruation to Thoth as the new moon, and secondly to a son. The birth of the moon from or as menstruation can be applied to one of the two exceptions to the rule that the object can only be given to goddesses.

In the second register of the south wall of the small shrine of Thoth from the temple of Dendara, the *wnšb* is offered to Khonsu. The legends to the scene are unfortunately lost and the epithets of Khonsu are generic. In the first register the field is offered to Harsomtous, and in the third the King is shown offering the *wḏ3t*-eye to Thoth.¹⁴⁸ It might seem strange that menstruation is offered to a male god, but in the case of Khonsu, here a form of Thoth-Lunus, this offering could evoke the myth of his birth from the menstruation of Horit. What is offered to the god is then, in essence, the means of his renewal.

The second exception to the rule is harder to explain. In hall five of the temple of Abu-Simble the object is offered to Ptah.¹⁴⁹ Sambin hypothesizes that in this particular instance, the offering is intended to be passed on to Sakhmet, ‘The beloved of Ptah’,¹⁵⁰ who is not present due to the emphasis on male deities in this hall, but who is otherwise very prominent in offerings of the object in the New Kingdom. Ptah is characterised by the epithet ‘The lord of the sky’ (*nb pt*), which is somewhat uncommon for him,¹⁵¹ but which, in the feminine ‘The lady

¹⁴⁶ Winkler, A., ‘The Efflux which Exuded from Osiris. A study on *rdw* in the Pyramid Texts’, *GM* 211 (2006), pp. 125-139 and cf. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta*, pp. 42-44 textual note 14 and Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 462-467.

¹⁴⁷ Sambin, *L’offrande de la soi-disant ‘Clepsydre’*, pp. 365-366.

¹⁴⁸ Cauville, S., ‘La chapelle de Thoth-Ibis à Dendera édiflée sous Ptolémée Ier par Hor, scribe d’Amon-Rê’, *BIFAO* 89 (1989), pp. 43-66, offering of *wnšb* on p. 60.

¹⁴⁹ For a discussion of this scene see Sambin, *L’Offrande de la soi-disant ‘Clepsydre’*, pp. 325-328.

¹⁵⁰ *Dendara I*, 46: Sakhmet ‘Beloved of Ptah’.

¹⁵¹ *LGG III*, pp. 624-625.

of the sky' (*nbt pt*) is one of the most common epithets for the recipient goddesses in the other offering scenes of the objects in this period. In conclusion, it seems practically certain that even though the recipient is in this case a god, the offering nevertheless preserves close ties to the usual offerings of the object to a goddess.

Thus the interpretation of the *wnšb*-object according to the myth of Horit in the Delta manual allows for a consistent interpretation of not only the standard scenes, but also the variants and gives a reasonable explanation for one of the two scenes in which the offering is given to a male deity. The offering is seen to fit the pattern emphasized by Paul John Frandsen in his study of the offering of Maat, in which he stressed the consubstantiality of the offering, the donor and the recipient.¹⁵² By giving back the goddess her menstruation the goddess is renewed and the donor, as Thoth, is in essence offering himself to the goddess, to be, in mythological terms, born anew from her womb.

CONCLUSION

The interpretation offered here provides a new look on the myth of the *Return of the Goddess*. The myth can be seen as the coming of age of a young nubile goddess, who travels into exile at the onset of the menarche and returns as a marriageable woman who can unite with her brother or husband. In the myth this is tied to the general fertility of Egypt, which is seen as dependent on the transformation of the goddess in her menstrual rage into the pacified bringer of life. Indeed, if the historical evolution of the myth as an initiation myth proposed here has some truth to it, it would be natural if the fertility aspects came to dominate once the ties to an actual initiation weakened. It would then have become possible to interpret the fertility brought on by the return of the goddess in a number of ways not exclusively tied to menstruation or in which menstruation becomes a metaphor for the cosmic aspects.

In the association of the myth to the coming of age of adolescent girls, it can be viewed as the female analogy to the coming of age myths of Horus, who grew up in the seclusion of the Delta marshes to return as new king of Egypt and the triumphant avenger of his father Osiris. Both myths are applicable to astral phenomena, but to fully appreciate these myths as something more than natural allegories, we need to remember both the distinction between myth and application and the inherent multivalent meanings and levels of myth – including a possible bodily

¹⁵² Frandsen, P.J. 'Trade and Cult', in Englund, G. (ed.), *The religion of the ancient Egyptians cognitive structures and popular expressions, proceedings of symposia in Uppsala and Bergen 1987 and 1988*, Uppsala 1989, pp. 95-108.

basis. I am not arguing that we should interpret *all* episodes in *every* version of the *Return of the Goddess* as menstrual mythology. However, for some time now, Egyptian astronomy has been reclaimed from the clutches of new age Egyptology, and hopefully the time is ripe for doing the same for such an important source for mythology as female physiology.