

# PROBLEME DER ÄGYPTOLOGIE

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SETH,  
GOD OF CONFUSION



LEIDEN  
E. J. BRILL  
1967

# SETH, GOD OF CONFUSION

A STUDY OF HIS ROLE IN  
EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY AND RELIGION

BY

H. TE VELDE



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E. J. BRILL  
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- 7 F. Ll. Griffith and P. E. Newberry, *El Bersheh*, II, London, 1895, pl. XVI.
- 8 J. Leibovitch, *Une statuette du dieu Seth*, ASAE 44 (1944), pl. XIII.
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- XII, 2 G. Michailides, *Papyrus contenant un dessin du dieu Seth à tête d'âne*, *Aegyptus 32* (1952), p. 48.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS I

- AcOR Acta Orientalia ediderunt societates orientales batava danica norvegica svecica, Leiden, Copenhagen.
- Aegyptus Aegyptus. Rivista Italiana di Egittologia e di Papirologia, Milano.
- Anthropos Anthropos, Posieux (Fribourg, Switzerland).
- APAW Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin.
- ASAE Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Le Caire.
- ASAW Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Berlin.
- BIE Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte, Le Caire.
- BIFAO Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale, Le Caire.
- BIOR Bibliotheca Orientalis, Leiden.
- BSAW Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Berlin.
- BSFE Bulletin de la Société française d'Égyptologie, Paris.
- BZAW Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Berlin.
- CdÉ Chronique d'Égypte. Bulletin périodique de la Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, Bruxelles.
- Dialog Dialog. Tijdschrift voor wijsbegeerte, Antwerpen.
- DWAW Denkschriften der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Wien.
- JEA The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, London.
- JEOL Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch gezelschap Ex Oriente Lux, Leiden.
- JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago.
- Kêmi Kêmi. Revue de philologie et d'archéologie égyptiennes et coptes, Paris.
- MDAIK Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo, Wiesbaden.
- MVAG Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft, Berlin.
- NTT Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift, Wageningen.
- Numen Numen. International Review for the History of Religions, Leiden.
- OLZ Orientalistische Literaturzeitung, Berlin.
- OMRO NR Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden Nieuwe Reeks, Leiden.
- PSBA Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, London.
- RB Revue Biblique, Paris.
- RdÉ Revue d'Égyptologie publiée par la Société française d'Égyptologie, Paris.
- RHR Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Paris.
- RHS Revue d'histoire des sciences et de leur applications, Paris.
- RT Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes, Paris.
- SBAW Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München.
- SPAW Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin.
- SSAW Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Berlin.
- Syria Syria. Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie, Paris.
- UGÄ Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens, Berlin-Leipzig.
- Welt des Orients Die Welt des Orients. Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes, Wuppertal, Stuttgart, Göttingen.
- ZÄS Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde, Berlin-Leipzig.
- ZRGG Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte, Leiden-Köln.



# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS II

AEO	A. H. Gardiner, <i>Ancient Egyptian onomastica</i> , 3 vols., Oxford, 1947.		
ANET	J. B. Pritchard, <i>Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament</i> , Princeton, 1955 <sup>2</sup> .		
BD	The chapters of coming forth by day. The Theban recension of the Book of the Dead. The Egyptian hieroglyphic text edited from numerous papyri by E. A. Wallis Budge, 3 vols., London, 1910. (Books on Egypt and Chaldaea, vols. 28-30).		
CT	A. de Buck, <i>The Egyptian Coffin texts</i> , I-VII, Chicago, 1935-1961.		
EG	A. H. Gardiner, <i>Egyptian Grammar</i> , London, 1957 <sup>3</sup> .		
Edfou	M. Rochemonteix-E. Chassinat, <i>Le temple d'Edfou</i> , 14 vols., Paris and Cairo, 1897-1934.		
Medinet Habu	Medinet Habu I. Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III. By the Epigraphic Survey (H. H. Nelson, Field Director), Chicago, 1930 (Oriental Institute Publications).		
	Medinet Habu II. Later Historical Records of Ramses III. By the Epigraphic Survey (H. H. Nelson, Field Director), Chicago, 1932 (Oriental Institute Publications).		
PM	B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, assisted by E. W. Burney, <i>Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings</i> , I-VII, Oxford, 1927-1951.		
PW II	Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von G. Wissowa, 2nd. series, vol. II, Stuttgart, 1923.		
Pyr.	K. Sethe, <i>Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte</i> , I-IV, Leipzig, 1908-1922.		
RÄRG	H. Bonnet, <i>Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte</i> , Berlin, 1952.		
Urk.	Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums begründet von G. Steindorff, Leipzig-Berlin, 1903-1958.		
	I K. Sethe, <i>Urkunden des alten Reichs</i> .		
	II K. Sethe, <i>Hieroglyphische Urkunden der griechisch-römischen Zeit</i> .		
	III H. Schäfer, <i>Urkunden der älteren Äthiopienkönige</i> .		
	IV K. Sethe-W. Helck, <i>Urkunden der 18. Dynastie</i> .		
	V H. Grapow, <i>Religiöse Urkunden</i> .		
	VI S. Schott, <i>Urkunden mythologischen Inhalts. Bücher und Sprüche gegen den Gott Seth</i> .		
	VII K. Sethe, <i>Historisch-biographische Urkunden des mittleren Reiches</i> .		
	VIII K. Sethe-O. Firchow, <i>Thebanische Tempelschriften aus griechisch-römischer Zeit</i> .		
WB	Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache herausgegeben von A. Erman und H. Grapow, I-VI, Belegstellen I-V, Berlin, 1926-1955.		
c.	caput, chapter	pap.	papyrus
cf.	confer, compare	pl.	plate(s)
col.	column(s)	rt.	recto
ed.	edidit	sq.	sequens
id.	idem	sqq.	sequentes
ibid.	ibidem	s.v.	sub voce
fig.	figure(s)	vol.	volume
l.	line (s)	vs.	verso
n.	note	O.K.	Old Kingdom
o.c.	opus citatum	M.K.	Middle Kingdom
p.	page(s)	N.K.	New Kingdom

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE NAME AND THE ANIMAL OF SETH

#### I. THE NAME OF SETH

Many different forms of the name of Seth occur in the Egyptian texts.<sup>1)</sup> In the texts of the pyramids, except in the Unas pyramid, it is written: *stš*.<sup>a)</sup> In the Unas pyramid the name is written only with the so-called Seth-animal, lying down.

Afterwards also, the name may be written with the Seth-animal alone, lying down or seated or with a seated god with the head of the Seth-animal.<sup>b)</sup> These signs may be supplemented or replaced as in the Pyramid texts by one-letter signs, not always the same ones. The first letter is usually *ś*, less often *s*. Whenever the *ś* or *s* is written, the *t* is written also. Other signs show more variation. Often combined with one of the usual determinatives of gods or one of the different forms of the Seth-animal as a more special determinative the various spellings are as follows: *stš*; *stš*; *stḥ*; *stḥ*; *ś(w)tḥ*; *stḥ*; *ś(w)t(y)*; *st(y)*; *st*.<sup>c)</sup>

In the course of the history of Egyptian language and script, *š*, *ḥ* and *ḥ* sometimes prove interchangeable.<sup>2)</sup> In group-writing *św* stands for *ś* and *ty* for *t*.<sup>3)</sup> Therefore it seems certain that these are all various spellings of the same name. There is no convincing reason to translate *st* and *ś(w)t(y)* with "it" and "he".<sup>4)</sup> Since the



1) A survey of the various ways of writing the name Seth in hieroglyphs, employing the textual material gathered for the Berlin dictionary was given by G. Roeder, *Der Name und das Tier des Gottes Set*, ZAS 50 (1912), p. 84-86. See also CT V, 337a.

2) G. Lefebvre, S. Sauneron, *Grammaire de l'égyptien classique*, Le Caire, 1955<sup>2</sup>, § 40. An Egyptian word meaning "saliva" may be written as *nšš*, *nḥḥ* or *nḥḥ* (WB II, 342, 314, 319). See further: J. Vergote, *Phonétique historique de l'Égyptien*, Louvain, 1945, p. 64 sqq.

3) A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, London, 1957<sup>3</sup>, p. 482; A. Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1933<sup>2</sup>, § 29. For practical reasons the transcription *ś(w)* and *t(y)* is maintained.

4) So P. E. Newberry, *The cult-animal of Set*, Klio. Beiträge zur alten Geschichte 12 (1912), p. 207.

writing  $st(y)$  also appears<sup>1)</sup>,  $ś(w)t(y)$  seems indeed to be group-writing and not to be derived from the name of the locality  $św$ .<sup>2)</sup>

The suggested distinction between an Egyptian god Seth and a non-Egyptian god Sutekh, supposed to have been absorbed into Seth,<sup>3)</sup> has now been abandoned.<sup>4)</sup> The group-writings<sup>5)</sup>  $ś(w)t(y)$   $ś(w)tḥ$  are interesting. Although not only loan-words but also real Egyptian words were written in group-writing,<sup>6)</sup> it was yet mainly foreign words and names that were so written. As in iconography the exotic character of Seth sometimes was brought out,<sup>7)</sup> so the inclination may also have existed to accentuate it in the script of his name. Since the M.K. the script  $ś(w)t(y)$  comes into use beside the traditional form  $stś$ , and since the 19th dynasty also the script  $ś(w)tḥ$ .<sup>8)</sup>

It may be concluded from the writing  $ś(w)t(y)$  beside  $stś$  and  $ś(w)tḥ$  that the final consonant had become weakened. This may have been so especially in Upper Egypt: in Coptic, Bohairic retains the  $ś$  while Upper-Egyptian Sahidic reduces the original  $ś$  or  $ḥ$  to  $q$ .<sup>9)</sup>

According to the Berlin dictionary<sup>10)</sup> the Babylonian rendering of the name was  $śutah$ . In cuneiform writing  $s$  and  $ś$  may interchange and the Egyptian personal name  $ś(w)t(y)$  was pronounced as Suta.<sup>11)</sup> The vowel  $\bar{e}$  may have evolved from  $\bar{u}$ .<sup>12)</sup> It is not known however when the  $\bar{u}$  passed into  $\bar{e}$ . The Greek renderings of Egyptian royal names from the 19th dynasty composed with the name Seth do not show the  $\bar{u}$ . Just as the way of writing is not uniform but has

1) CT V, 337a.

2) So V. Loret, *Le dieu Seth et le roi Séthosis*, PSBA 28 (1906), p. 128, and P. Montet, *Les constructions et le tombeau d'Osorkon II à Tanis*, Paris, 1947, p. 20.

3) H. P. Blok, *De beide volksverhalen van papyrus Harris 500 verso*, Leiden, 1925, p. 57.

4) H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1952, p. 705.

5) A. H. Gardiner, *EG*, p. 593 and § 60; A. Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches*, SBAW, Philos.-hist. Kl., Jhrg. 1947/Heft 4, p. 44 n. 100.

6) W. A. Ward, *Notes on Egyptian group-writing*, JNES 16 (1957), p. 198 sqq.

7) Cf. Chapter V.

8) Cf. the article by G. Roeder mentioned in the first note of this chapter.

9) B. Gunn and A. H. Gardiner, *New rendering of Egyptian texts. 2 The expulsion of the Hyksos*, JEA 5 (1918), p. 44 n. 1.

10) WB IV, 345.

11) E. Edel, *Neue keilschriftliche Umschreibungen ägyptischer Namen aus den Boğazköytexten*, JNES 7 (1948), p. 19 sqq.

12) W. F. Albright, *The vocalization of the Egyptian syllabic orthography*, New Haven, 1934, § 29; B. H. Stricker, *Trois études de phonétique et de morphologie coptes*, AcOr 15 (1937), p. 1-20; J. Vergote, *Où en est la vocalisation de l'égyptien?*, BIFAO 58 (1959), p. 1-19.





variants, the pronunciation will also have been different according to time and place. The harder Lower-Egyptian pronunciation may have been Sūtekh evolved to Sētekh; the Upper-Egyptian pronunciation may have been Sūt, evolved to Sēt. The h in the modern rendering of the name Seth might be reminiscent of the Coptic  $\xi$ . It seems practical to maintain in this book the long established rendering that follows the Greek: Seth.

## 2. THE MEANING OF THE NAME SETH

The explanations of the name given in the 19th century under the influence of the famous theory that religion and belief in gods arose from language and a disease of language are now outdated; indeed they were never valid since at that time the letter  $\xi$  was still read as a determinative.<sup>d)</sup> 1) The meaning of the name Seth is uncertain by modern etymological standards.<sup>2)</sup> For the historian of religion, however, pseudo-etymological explanations of the believers themselves are certainly no less valuable than the etymological derivation. They may have influenced the religious conceptions, and may represent them.

Apparently the explanation given by Plutarch is not his own invention, but goes back to Egyptian tradition. He writes<sup>3)</sup>: "And the name 'Seth' by which they call Typhon denotes this: it means 'the overmastering' and 'overpowering' and it means in very many instances 'turning back' and again 'overpassing'." According to Kees<sup>4)</sup> this pseudo-etymology derives from late Egyptian interpretations and goes back to an Egyptian word that means "verwirren, zerstückeln." He seems to be referring particularly to Plutarch's first sense of "overmastering" and "over-

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d)  was confused with .

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1) E. Meyer, *Set-Typhon*, Leipzig, 1875, p. 1 sqq.; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, Leipzig, 1885-1888, p. 702 sqq.

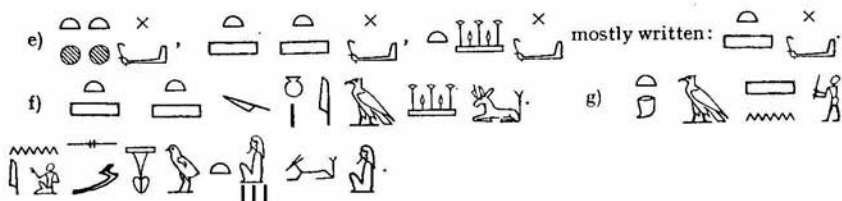
2) G. Roeder in: *Roscher's Ausführliches Lexikon*, vol. IV, col. 727, H. Kees in: *PW* II, col. 1897; A. Scharff, *o.c.*, p. 44 n. 100.

3) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 49; cf. F. C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia V*, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1957, p. 120 sq.

4) H. Kees in: *PW* II, col. 1897.

powering" and the Egyptian words *thth* e) 1) or *tšš* e) 2) or *tš* e) 3). Thus Kees suggests that the Egyptian etymologists reduced the name *Štš* or *Šth* to a verb preceded by an *š*. The *š* prefixed to a verb usually has a causative value, but sometimes it may confer the force of a declaration or an estimation. 4)

There are two instances of punning with the name of Seth that I know of, and there may be more. These show that the Egyptians themselves were acquainted with this pseudo-etymology, and applied it. The first is of a late period and comes from Denderah: "I have cut *išš* (meaning Seth, as is evident from the determinative) into pieces (*tšš.n.i išš*)."<sup>5</sup>) The second is older and comes from the Coffin texts: "I have cut the gang of Seth into pieces (*tšš.n.i smšwt Štš*)."<sup>6</sup>) In the Coffin text Seth is not written with alphabetic signs but with the ideogram of the Seth-animal, just as in the example from Denderah the spelling of Seth's name avoids the traditional letters in which one would recognise the verb concerned. Apparently there was a reluctance to ascribe the ominous force of this word to Seth. His essential being is unriddled, but on no account must he be paid homage as "Zerstücker" and so on. The play of words, or rather of letters, is purposely broken up. We cannot enter into a further discussion here of the interesting subject of play upon letters and words. 7) The Egyptians will not have paused to consider the truth of this etymology according to our Western standards. The etymology had to be theologically tenable and true. The unriddling of the name must also unriddle the essence. The



1) *WB* V, 328, 8 sqq.

2) *WB* V, 330, 5 sqq.

3) *WB* V, 329, 17 sqq.

4) Cf. B. H. Stricker, *De lijkpapyrus van Sensaos*, *OMRO* NR 23 (1924), p. 44 n. 1.

5) A. Mariette, *Dendérah, description générale du grand temple*, Paris, 1873, IV, pl. 80.

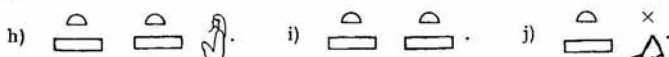
6) *CT* VI, 213 i.

7) On this subject, cf. S. Morenz, *Wortspiele in Ägypten*. In: *Festschrift Johannes Jahn*, *zum XXII. November MCMLVII*, Leipzig, 1957, p. 23-32.

Egyptian theologian will have acknowledged the etymology of the name Seth as instigator of confusion, oppressor or "Zerstückeler" as true, because this explanation agreed with the mythical function of Seth.

Osiris, Seth's victim, is sometimes called *tštš h*). Allen translates: "the dismembered one".<sup>1)</sup> One may suppose there is some connection between the motive of the "Zerstückelung" in the myth of Osiris and the pseudo-etymology of the name Seth, but it is hard to say which arose from which. Generally speaking, it may be said that punning has fostered the formation and elaboration of myths in Egypt (see the article of Morenz referred to above). G. Daressy subscribes to the views of the Egyptian pseudo-etymologists, and declares that *tšš* is an apposition: "ce serait 'celui qui a fait la division, le morcellement' d'Osiris." <sup>2)</sup> We shall see below that Egyptian representations show there was a close relation between the Seth-animal and the griffin. The name of a griffin with an animal body, wings and a falcon's head, is *tštš i*). Leibovitch has translated this name as: "celui qui déchire, qui met en pièces." <sup>3)</sup>

Our quotation from Plutarch shows that at least two pseudo-etymologies were current, for he also gives "turning back" and "overpassing." The letters *tš* do indeed offer more than one possibility. *Tšš* or *tš* is also "frontier." Although Seth will appear further on as lord of foreign countries and frontier god, I do not know of any Egyptian speculations that could directly support what Plutarch calls "overpassing." There is a verb "*tši*" <sup>4)</sup> that means "to desert", or something similar, that is: "turning back." Hayes has carefully examined the meanings of this verb: "In the numerous contexts in which it occurs *tši* nearly always means "to desert," "to abandon," "to be missing" when duty, loyalty or some other obligation, demands one's presence." <sup>4)</sup> This seems to be what the writers of Coffin texts founded their speculations on. The name Seth is often







1) T. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. Documents in the Oriental Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1960, p. 69, 284.

2) G. Daressy, *Seth et son animal*, BIFAO 13 (1916), p. 86.

3) J. Leibovitch, *Le griffon I*, BIF 25 (1943), p. 188 and fig. 5.

4) W. C. Hayes, *A papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum*, New York, 1955, p. 48.



replaced in the Coffin texts by the  sign,<sup>1)</sup> which can be translated as "to separate." By writing Seth with the  sign, one could avoid confirming Seth in writing as the instigator of confusion, the "Zerstücker" and so on, and it was also unnecessary to draw the mysterious Seth-animal, which the scribes of the Pyramid texts already avoided, except in the pyramid of Unas. This  sign merely characterised him as the one apart, the cause of separation, the deserter. When this writing with the  sign fell into disuse, the Egyptians still had the word *tš* to characterise Seth: "He who is pleased with desertion (*tš*) and hates friendship."<sup>2)</sup>

These pseudo-etymologies are not confined to the writing *štš*, but could also be applied to *š(w)th*. Beside *tštš*<sup>3)</sup> there is *thth*,<sup>4)</sup> and beside *tšw* (Ausgewanderte) there is *wthw* (Flüchtlinge).<sup>5)</sup>

From M. A. Murray we learn of a no less interesting pseudo-etymology than those transmitted by Plutarch, but one that is entirely bound up with *sth*. She writes:<sup>6)</sup> "As the name begins with S, one is inclined to suspect a causative as in the name of the crocodile god Se-bek, 'He who causes to be pregnant'. Se-tekh would then mean 'to intoxicate, to cause to be drunken', and would imply a cult of the same type as that of Bacchus, where drunkenness was regarded as possession by the god." She is clearly thinking of the verb *th* k) (to be drunk). Her explanation is obviously only acceptable as a possible rendering of Egyptian priestly speculation, and not as a modern scientific etymology.

According to a papyrus in Leiden,<sup>7)</sup> a sick person may be cured by giving him a great deal of beer to drink, for then the demons who are tormenting the patient become fuddled. Seth is represented as the intoxicating power of the beer:

k)  .

1) A. H. Gardiner, *EG*, Sign-list Aa 21.

2) *Urk.* VI, 7, 15.

3) *WB* V, 330, 5 sqq.

4) *WB* V, 328, 8 sqq.

5) *WB* V, 329, 14.

6) M. A. Murray, *The splendour that was Egypt*, London, 1949, p. 131.

7) *Pap. Leiden I 348*, rt. 13, 4; cf. J. Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 148.

"Seth will be irrestrainable, when he wishes to conquer the heart in this his name of beer (*hnt*).

He confuses the heart to conquer the heart of the enemy, the evildoer, the male and female dead person."

Although here again the author has not written down the pun, in this case *sth—th*, he may well have had it in mind. It is significant, that Seth's name is given as "beer."

As to the bacchanalia assumed by Murray, we can only say that according to Yoyotte <sup>1)</sup> Seth and Hathor, the well-known goddess of drunkenness and love, were tutelary god and goddess of wine. There is no means of showing, however, that the Egyptian who left us a stela on which Seth and Hathor are depicted together, <sup>2)</sup> was a participant in such Egyptian bacchanalia. A wine-offering is sometimes made to Seth <sup>3)</sup> and wine from the Kharga oasis is a gift of Seth. <sup>4)</sup> According to the dream papyrus, a craving for drink is characteristic of the Sethian type. Of such a man it is said: "If he drinks beer, he drinks [it so as to engender strife (?) and] turmoil." <sup>5)</sup>

To sum up, the Egyptians seem to have attached the following three meanings to the name of Seth: instigator of confusion, deserter, drunkard. As remarked above, the *ś* prefixed to a verb has a wider meaning than the causative. It is not impossible, that to the mind of Egyptian intellectuals the striking characteristic of Seth given by J. Sainte Fare Garnot <sup>6)</sup> was in part already contained in his name, and so touched his essence: "Grand amateur de femmes, bien qu'il ait en même temps des moeurs inavouables, toujours prêt à la bagarre et point ennemi du chantage, il apparaît comme la personnification de la violence et de la mauvaise foi."

### 3. THE EARLIEST KNOWN REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SETH-ANIMAL

It is assumed that an ivory animal figure, found at Mahasna, is the earliest representation of the Seth-animal we know up to the

1) *Knaurs Lexikon der ägyptischen Kultur* von G. Posener in Zusammenarbeit mit S. Sauneron und J. Yoyotte, München-Zürich, 1960, s.v. Wein.

2) W. M. F. Petrie and J. E. Quibell, *Nagada and Ballas*, London, 1896, pl. XLIII, 3.

3) P. Montet, *La stèle de l'an 400 retrouvée*, *Kémi* 4 (1931-1933), p. 191 sqq., pl. XI.

4) *Edfou* I, 469.

5) *Pap. Beatty III*, rt. 11, 6, cf. 10; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, 3rd. Series, London, 1935, Text volume, p. 20.

6) J. Sainte Fare Garnot, *La vie religieuse dans l'ancienne Egypte*, Paris, 1948, p. 22.

present, although it has not got a tail.<sup>1)</sup> The excavators write: "The small ivory animal figure . . . was no doubt the ornament

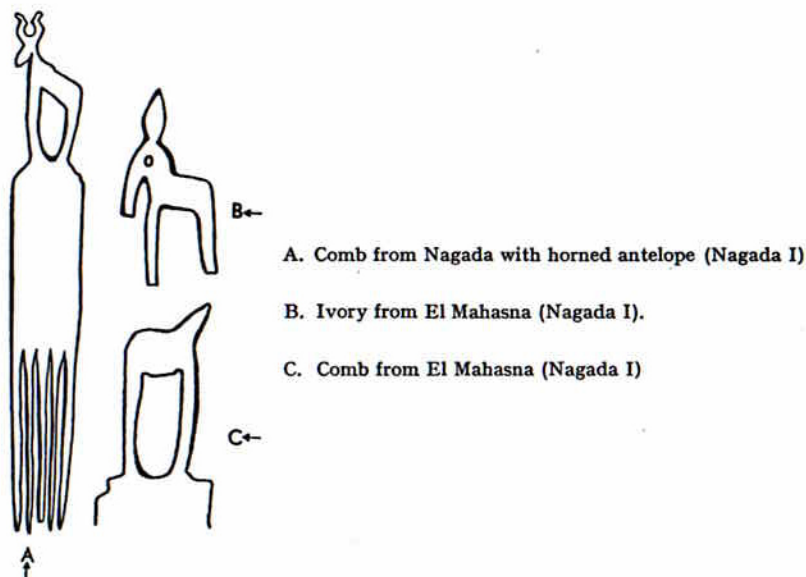


Fig. 1.

on a comb or some similar object. It is of interest, since it appears to be the earliest instance of that strange beast sacred to the god Set of which so much has been written without satisfactorily determining whether it was dog, donkey or okapi. Here its huge ears and long face and nose seem to suggest an asinine origin."<sup>2)</sup> Elsewhere in their report they refer to this find as "the small ivory donkey."<sup>3)</sup> A comb from another grave of the same cemetery might also be ornamented with such a Seth-animal, although head and tail are lacking.<sup>4)</sup> As the head of this latter figure seems to be broken off, its representing a Seth-animal becomes very doubtful. Another ivory comb, which has some resemblance to these two and also belongs to Nagada I, but was not found at Mahasna but in

1) E. J. Baumgartel, *The cultures of prehistoric Egypt I*, London, 1955, p. 34.

2) E. R. Ayrton and W. L. S. Loat, *The Predynastic Cemetery at El Mahasna*, London, 1911, p. 27; cf. pl. XII no. 2.

3) E. R. Ayrton and W. L. S. Loat, *o.c.*, p. 30.

4) E. R. Ayrton and W. L. S. Loat, *o.c.*, p. 30; pl. XVII no 2; E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.*, p. 34.

Nagada itself, is ornamented with a horned antelope.<sup>1)</sup> An animal depicted on a pot in Berlin<sup>2)</sup> that came from a cemetery at Chozam, was explained by Scharff as "zweifellos das Sethtier und zwar in der deutlichen Gestalt eines Esels."<sup>3)</sup> When he afterwards realised that the animal in question has not got a raised tail like the Seth-animal, he abandoned this view and described the animal as an ordinary donkey.<sup>4)</sup> Finally, he again came to regard it as "wahr-



Fig. 2. Animal on a pot found at El-Chozam (Nagada I)

scheinlich" a Seth-animal.<sup>5)</sup> These finds are reckoned as belonging to Nagada I. It is not the place here for a further discussion of the complicated problems of prehistoric and predynastic Egypt and its chronology: Badarian, Amratian (Nagada I), Gerzean (Nagada II) and late Gerzean.<sup>6)</sup> Radiocarbon dating has given the absolute date of 3790 B.C. for the beginning of Nagada I, with a possible variation of 300 years.<sup>7)</sup>

Baumgartel remarks that the data given above "form the only evidence offered in favour of the opinion that Seth was already worshipped during Nağada I. This may have been so, but further

1) H. Asselberghs, *Chaos en Beheersing*. Documenten uit Aeneolithisch Egypte, Leiden, 1961, pl. XLVII, fig. 72.

Combs could also be decorated with giraffe, hartebeest, gazelle, ibex etc. Kantor supposed that on a white cross-lined bowl painted with what can only be animal-topped combs, now at Princeton, a Seth-animal is represented (E. J. Baumgartel, *The cultures of prehistoric Egypt* II, London, 1960, p. 49, referring to: H. Kantor, *Prehistoric Egyptian Pottery in the Art Museum. Record of the Art Museum Princeton University* 12 (1953), p. 67-83.

2) Berlin 22391; A. Scharff, *Vorgeschichtliches zur Libyerfrage*, ZÄS 61 (1926), pl. I, 2.

3) A. Scharff, *o.c.*, p. 17 sq.

4) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 30, cf. A. Scharff, *Die Altertümer der Vor- und Frühzeit Ägyptens*, II, Berlin, 1931, p. 118.

5) A. Scharff, A. Moortgat, *Ägypten und Vorderasien im Altertum*, München, 1950, p. 18.

6) H. Asselberghs, *o.c.*, p. 1 sqq.; W. Kaiser, *Stand und Probleme der ägyptischen Vorgeschichtsforschung*, ZÄS 81 (1956), p. 87 sqq.

7) W. C. Hayes, *Most ancient Egypt*, JNES 23 (1964), p. 273.



evidence is needed to make it certain." 1) Griffiths 2) mentions some animal figures with raised tails and ears, but admits that they have little resemblance to the Seth-animal, and he takes no further account of them in his argumentation. Baumgartel stresses, that no "definite opinion" is possible regarding Seth-worship in Nagada I, owing to lack of material. 3) She concludes from what is depicted that the religion of Nagada I must have consisted in the cult of animals, trees and an anthropomorphous fertility goddess. 4) After such restraint, her final conclusion is surprising: "Seth may have been their chief god." 5) This conclusion seems to have been furthered by non-archaeological data. In the later Egyptian tradition Seth is often called lord of Ombos, 6) and in Ombos or Nagada very many graves have been found of predynastic times. The supposition that Seth was already the local god of Ombos in predynastic times, is tempting. It must be observed, however, that so far no Seth-animals of Nagada I or II have been found in Ombos, let alone any predynastic temple of Seth. 7) Those animal figures which may represent the Seth-animal and may have something to do with the god Seth, and which date from Nagada I, were found outside Ombos. From Nagada II nothing is known referring to Seth, neither in Ombos nor elsewhere. 8) Griffiths is of opinion, 9) in contrast with Baumgartel, 10) that falcons are already depicted in Nagada I, as they are in Nagada II.

It is interesting to see what a fascinating hypothesis the archaeologist Emery has built up from this scanty material of Seth-animals or asses. The original inhabitants of Egypt who lived around Ombos, where so many graves have been found, would have venerated Seth as their principal god. Later they would have been subjected by the dynastic race, who worshipped Horus. A certain synthesis between the two races and their religions would have been the result. In this context he makes an interesting remark

1) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 34.

2) J. G. Griffiths, *The conflict of Horus and Seth*, Liverpool, 1960, p. 133.

3) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 37.

4) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 36.

5) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 50.

6) *wbty*: since the third dynasty, cf. W. S. Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, London, 1946, fig. 51.

7) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 27.

8) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 46.

9) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 132.

10) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* I, p. 47.

of far-reaching significance for the understanding of the figure of Seth in the lengthy history of Egyptian religion: "But Seth was not assimilated and throughout Egyptian history he remains a deity apart . . . obviously on grounds of political expediency, Seth was considered to be the personification of evil; so much so that in Classical times he was identified with Typhon." <sup>1)</sup>

Zandee subscribes to this theory, which not only presupposes "a definite opinion" regarding the religion of Nagada I, but also affords an explanation of the positive and negative aspects of Seth in the history of Egyptian religion and his final identification with the evil Typhon. He summarises: "Es steht einem rechten Verständnis des Seth im Wege, dass er schon früh zum Feind des Osiris und des Horus geworden ist. Deswegen ist er vorzüglich in seinen negativen Aspekten bekannt . . . Wahrscheinlich war Seth der Gott der einheimischen Bevölkerung von Ober-Ägypten, angesiedelt um Ombos herum, der Stadt des Seth und später bekämpft von den Horusstämmen . . ." He then takes the step to the "definite opinion": "Damals war Seth der wohltuende Gott eines grossen Teils der Bewohner des Niltales." <sup>2)</sup>

W. B. Kristensen once remarked, that the supposition that the origin of a phenomenon is simpler and more easily understood than that which proceeds from it, is untenable. Every origin is in itself already a complex phenomenon, sometimes of an even more mysterious nature than that which it is supposed to explain. <sup>3)</sup> Griffiths comes to the conclusion: "It is suggested that Seth was the god of the Nakada I people. But all one can be confident of is that his animal is once represented there." <sup>4)</sup> Even if one might assume that none of these animal figures is an ordinary donkey, but that all three are sacred animals of Seth, lack of head and tails being of no account, and even if other new material might be hoped for, it would yet seem hardly justified to pronounce upon the size of a supposed "community of Seth" and upon the character of the god. Why should Seth and his earliest animals then have been simply "wohltuend" and not also malignant already? To the

1) W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, Harmondsworth, 1961, p. 120 sq., cf. already: W. Pleyte, *Lettre à M. Théodule Déveria sur quelques monuments relatifs au dieu Set*, Leiden, 1863, p. 59.

2) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 155.

3) W. B. Kristensen, *Symbol en Werkelijkheid*, Arnhem, 1954, p. 96 sq.

4) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 134.

intriguing hypothesis of Emery and Zandee it must be objected, that the earliest material concerning Seth is not simple and does not shed light upon the ensuing millennia, for at present it remains obscure. The theory that the devil of one religion is the god of the former, conquered religion has been heard before, and is not to be rejected in itself, but two or three donkeys resembling the Seth-animal, and lacking voice, are not enough to make it applicable to the Egyptian religion.



Fig. 3. Seth-animal from tomb 721 of Nagada



Fig. 4. Detail of votive mace-head

Although Petrie dated tomb 721 of Nagada in which four animal figures, viz. a Seth-animal, two falcons and a lion were found, to Nagada II on grounds no longer known to us, Baumgartel assigns it to the early dynastic period because of the style of the animal figures, the lion in particular.<sup>1)</sup> So we have no definite evidence of Seth in Nagada II, as Wainwright<sup>2)</sup> supposed.

Should it become evident that the animal figures from Nagada I referred to above have nothing to do with Seth, then the earliest known representations of the Seth-animal are to be found on the proto-historic votive mace-head of king Scorpion on which undoubtedly Seth-animals with their truncated ears and raised tails are represented.<sup>3)</sup>

1) E. J. Baumgartel, *o.c.* II, p. 75 and pl. VI, 6-8.

2) G. A. Wainwright, *The origin of storm-gods in Egypt*, *JEA* 49 (1963), p. 13.

3) J. E. Quibell, *Hieraconpolis I*, London, 1900, pl. XXVI C; H. Asselberghs, *o.c.*, pl. XCIX, fig. 175.



## 4. THE SETH-ANIMAL

After Champollion, Rosellini and Lepsius had declared the animal of Seth to be a fabulous beast, many scholars have attempted to determine its zoological identity. A survey of the various hypotheses with a list of the relevant literature was given by Newberry.<sup>1)</sup> The Seth-animal has been connected with the ass, oryx antelope, greyhound, fennec, jerboa, camel, okapi, long-snouted mouse, aardvark or orycteropus, giraffe and a kind of hog or boar. A. S. Jensen<sup>2)</sup> drew attention to the fact that it has also been regarded as a hare, jackal, tapir, long-snouted mormyr of the Nile or the *nh* bird of the Egyptians. He did not follow Newberry in the hypothesis defended in the article mentioned above, that it was the wild boar of Europe, but again advanced the idea of Brugsch and Von Bissing that it was a stylised giraffe. Hieroglyphic script itself, however, already shows that the Egyptians themselves made a distinction between the giraffe and the Seth-animal. Since then, Frechkop<sup>3)</sup> has attempted to revive the former hypothesis of Schweinfurt, that the Seth-animal was an orycterope, although Boussac had already set forth objections to this.<sup>4)</sup> Boussac had come to the conclusion: "En un mot l'animal sacré de Set-Typhon est un *Canis lupaster maquillé*." <sup>5)</sup> When the okapi was discovered in Africa, some thought the Seth-animal might with advantage be identified with this, and that the confused discussion might thus be raised to a new level. Finally, however, this hypothesis also was rejected by Keimer. The expert and authoritative judgment of this specialist on the subject of the flora and fauna of ancient Egypt was, that a zoological identification of the Seth-animal is impossible.<sup>6)</sup> Newberry's article, quoted above, shows that there have always been supporters of the theory that the Seth-animal, as known from Egyptian depictions and hieroglyphic writing,

1) P. E. Newberry, *The pig and the cult-animal of Set*, *JEA* 14 (1928), p. 233 sqq.

2) A. S. Jensen, *The sacred animal of the god Set*, *Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Biologiske Meddelelser XI*, 5, Copenhagen, 1934, p. 7.

3) S. Frechkop, *L'oryctérope ne serait-il pas le prototype de l'incarnation de Seth-Typhon?*, *CdÉ* 21, no. 41, 1946, p. 91 sq. For Seth and giraffe cf. W. Westendorf, *OLZ* 61 (1966), col. 540.

4) P. H. Boussac, *L'animal sacré de Set-Typhon et ses divers modes d'interprétation*, *RHR* 82 (1920), p. 191 sqq.

5) P. H. Boussac, *o.c.*, p. 208.

6) L. Keimer, *Die fälschlich als Okapi gedeuteten altägyptischen Darstellungen des Gottes Seth*, *Acta Tropica* 7 (1950), p. 110-112.

represented a fabulous animal; Roeder and Borchardt in particular held this view.

Possibly this representation of the Seth-animal that cannot be zoologically determined, developed from the representation of some actual living animal. In the previous section it was noticed that predynastic figures of donkeys have been brought into relation with the Seth-animal, and for this reason a suggestion of Helck is worth mentioning. According to him the wild ass was held in regard by the nomads, though not by the farmers. "Als Wildesel verkörperte er die Macht der Wüste, sein Schrei war etwas numinoses." To the farmers, and the nomads turned farmer, these numinous experiences with the ass were incomprehensible. "So veränderte sich in ihrer Erinnerung Bild und Wesen des nomadischen Esels zu einem Fabelwesen, eben dem Seth-tier."<sup>1)</sup> Now in the late period, when it is no longer customary to depict Seth with the Seth-animal, he is shown as an ass or with the head of an ass.<sup>2)</sup> Also, the Egyptian word for ass is sometimes determined with the Seth-animal.<sup>3)</sup> There is no evidence, however, that the predynastic donkey figurines of Nagada I constitute the prototype of the Seth-animal. A definitive conclusion as to the identity of the animal from which the representation of the Seth-animal could have developed, an ass or any other kind of animal, does not seem possible. With the material at present available, this discussion has as little prospect of success as that which raged about the zoological identity of the Seth-animal itself.<sup>4)</sup>

1) W. Helck, *Herkunft und Deutung einiger Züge des frühägyptischen Königsbildes*, *Anthropos* 49 (1954), p. 971.

2) G. Daressy, *o.c.*, *BIFAO* 13 (1916), p. 88.

3) *WB* I, 165.

4) Since the above was written, there has appeared an important article by B. H. Stricker, *Asinari I*, *OMRO NR* 46 (1965), p. 52-75. In Stricker's opinion there can be no reasonable doubt that the Seth-animal represents an ass. Apart from the late data of the Graeco-Roman period, his arguments are the unusual script of the word ⚡ (ass) with the Seth-animal as determinative, already mentioned above, and Daressy's description of the ⚡-animal on the sarcophagus of Nesamon as having an ass's head: G. Daressy, *L'animal séthien à tête d'âne*, *ASAE* 20 (1920), p. 165-166. These arguments only prove, it seems to me, that the ass was one of the Typhonic animals, as the pig was for instance. From the fact that the ⚡-animal may have a pig as determinative, while ⚡ is indeed a common word for pig, I conclude that the pig, like the ass, is a Typhonic animal. On the socle Behague the Seth-animal or ⚡-animal has a jackal as determinative (A. Klasens, *A magical statue base (socle Behague) in the Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*, Leiden, 1952, (= *OMRO NR* 33), p. 41, h 14). The Seth-animal does not seem to be exclusively an ass, but a mythical animal that if necessary or desired can be connected with various zoologically definable animals. In Graeco-Roman times there is a reluctance, connected with the ending of the official cult of Seth, to depict this mythological animal itself. The earlier multiplicity of approach with





griffin. The Egyptian draughtsmen of Beni Hasan, then, associated the Seth-animal with the griffin.

In the characteristic representation of the Seth-animal, as known since the third dynasty, the form of the body resembles that of a dog. Typical are the long curved snout, the truncated square ears, such as no wild animal possesses, and the raised tail, which also remains raised when the animal is lying down.<sup>1)</sup>

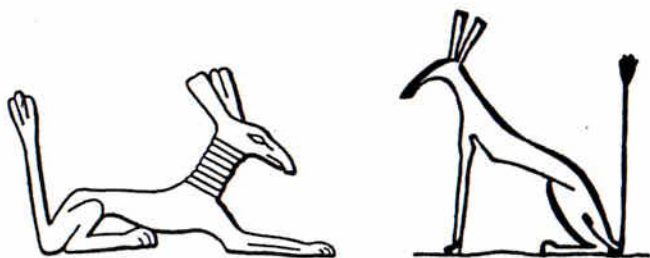


Fig. 6. Seth-animals from O.K. and M.K.

The stiffly raised tail is a much debated point in the discussion of the Seth-animal. It is often called forked or divided, but according to Borchardt<sup>2)</sup> this characteristic is not seen in the earliest depictions and hieroglyphs. Borchardt regarded the tail as a feathered arrow.<sup>3)</sup> Bonnet<sup>4)</sup> protested against the opinion of Sethe<sup>5)</sup> that this arrow, supposed to be thrust into the hind quarters, was a sign of religious or political hatred of the Seth-animal, which is sometimes also depicted with a knife stuck into its back or head. Bonnet observes that the arrow only just touches the body; he offers no other explanation, however.

On the basis of the only text (apart from parallels and later variants) in which this tail of Seth is mentioned, Zandee has attempted to present a new view and explanation. In his translation this text<sup>6)</sup> reads: "Ihre  $\xi\xi$ -Pflanzen sind der Haarbüschel, der sich auf dem Schwanz des Seth befindet." He remarks that the

1) M. A. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas I*, London, 1905, pl. XXXVIII. This Seth-animal of Sekerkhabau is often reproduced in modern books.

2) L. Borchardt, *Das Sethtier mit dem Pfeil*, ZÄS 46 (1909), p. 91.

3) L. Borchardt, *o.c.*, p. 90.

4) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 702.

5) K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter*, Leipzig, 1930, p. 73.

6) CT V, 86 c.



thickening at the end of the tail is regarded as a bundle of §3 plants, and so would be a symbol of vegetation.<sup>1)</sup> He points out that the tail of the bull of Mithras ends in a form of vegetation. In the Beni Hasan tombs there also appears a falcon-headed griffin, whose tail ends in a lotus flower.<sup>2)</sup> For the rest, representations of griffins have been found at Beth Shean with the head of a Seth-animal, wings, and instead of a tail the feather of Maat.<sup>3)</sup>

Having regard to the context of this text, the exegesis of Zandee hardly seems tenable. The passage reveals the secret nature and names of various parts of the ship. Its §3, which the determinative shows to be of a vegetable nature, and which already recalls the Seth-animal because of its name, is called *ḥbst ḥrt šd n Štš*. The intention does not seem to be to make out that the tail of Seth is of a vegetable kind, but to give a name of mythical speculation to the §3 plant or the §3 rope.<sup>4)</sup> Elsewhere this §3 plant is said to be the two eyes of Horus.<sup>5)</sup> The point is, therefore, that mythical reality, eye of Horus, tail of Seth, should be discerned in the earthly reality of a ship's rope, and not the other way round. One can hardly deduce much more from the text than that not only modern Egyptologists, but also the Egyptians themselves were fascinated by the peculiar tail of the Seth-animal.<sup>6)</sup>

The Seth-animal, the griffin with a falcon's head and the snake-headed animal that appear together in the hunting scenes of Beni Hasan, and are thus characterised as imaginary animals of the desert, also appear in that quality, not together but by turns, on the so-called amuletic wands of the M.K. Besides one or more of these creatures, these wands also often figure Bes and Thoreris,

1) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 152.

2) P. E. Newberry, *o.c.* II, pl. 16; J. Leibovitch, *Le griffon I*, *BIE* 25 (1943), p. 202 and fig. 20.

3) J. Leibovitch, *Le griffon II*, *BIE* 26 (1944), p. 236, fig. 6a and 6b.

4) Cf. one of the determinatives in *CT* V, 130 b.

5) *CT* V, 131 a.

6) The long curved snout also seems to have intrigued the Egyptians. They had a story that when Seth was forced to bow down deeply before Osiris, he hit his nose so hard that blood ran out. He immediately buried this blood, and thus arose the ritual of hacking the earth (*BD* 175; cf. H. Kees, *Göttinger Totenbuchstudien. Ein Mythos vom Königtum des Osiris in Herakleopolis aus dem Totenbuch Kap. 175*, *ZAS* 65 (1930), p. 73). It does not say, though, that Seth knocked his nose so badly that it always remained hooked. There is a word *ḥ3bt* which can designate Seth, and which is translated as "Verbrecher" (*WB* III, 362, 6). *ḥ3bt* (*WB* III, 362, 5) is given as "Unrecht, Sünde eigtl. das Krumme," and *ḥ3b* (*WB* III, 361, 13) as "krumm sein (von der Nase nach einer Verletzung)." It does not seem entirely unfounded to take the literal and figurative sense together, and to look upon the noticeably curved snout of Seth as an outward sign of his "crookedness."

the gods who are connected not with the desert, but with the house.<sup>1)</sup> Bonnet<sup>2)</sup> assumes that all the gods and symbols depicted serve for protection. James<sup>3)</sup> supposes that these magic wands were also "engraved with the creatures they were intended to combat."

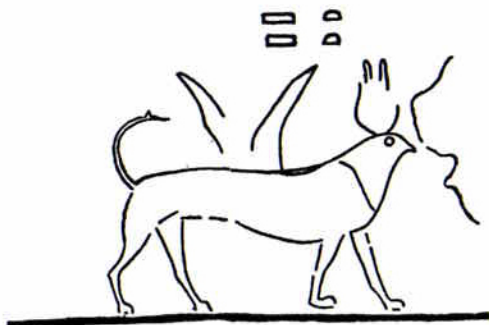


Fig. 7. Griffin called *teshtesh*

According to a late Egyptian text cited by Bonnet,<sup>4)</sup> one of the characteristics of the griffin would be the beak of a falcon; his ears would be taken from a fish and his tail would be a snake. This is important, because precisely the snout, ears and tail are the chief obstacles to a zoological determination of the Seth-animal. It may be that the Egyptians stylised these in an unnatural way, because they regarded the Seth-animal as a kind of griffin or at least as related to the griffin. There is little reason to suppose, though, that the Egyptians looked upon the tail of the Seth-animal as a snake. For the forked tail, which would then be representative of the forked tongue of a snake, does not appear on the earlier monuments. The Egyptian text stating the tail of the griffin to be a snake, is indeed late.

Not all griffins are represented with the beak or the head of a

1) *Dynastic Egypt in the Royal Scottish Museum*, Edinburgh, 1955, pl. 7 (Seth-animal); H. Bonnet, *RARG*, fig. 199; *A general Introductory Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum*, London, 1964, fig. 43, p. 120 sq., 146.

2) H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 880.

3) T. G. H. James, in: *A general Introductory Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum*, p. 146.

4) H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 262.

falcon.<sup>1)</sup> Borchardt described the 'hh griffin as "ein geflügelter Panther mit Sethkopf und Jagdhundhalsband."<sup>2)</sup> Leibovitch<sup>3)</sup> remarked: "D'autre part les griffons égyptiens attelés aux chars tels qu'ils sont représentés sur les stèles magiques montrent



Fig. 8. Bronze Seth with wings

clairement que le museau sethien pourvu même de ses oreilles caractéristiques et la tête de vautour furent employés indifféremment." The 'hh griffin sometimes, but not always, has a raised tail. It also has wings.

Wings are already attributed to the god Seth in the Pyramid

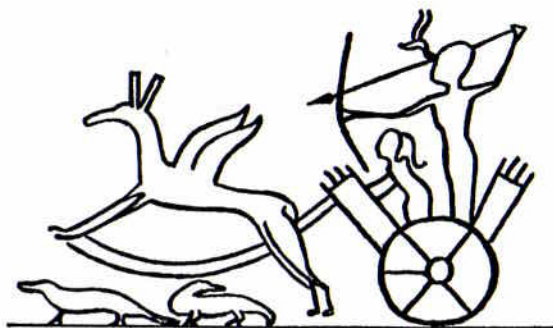


Fig. 9. Griffin with Seth-head (?) drawing a chariot

1) Cf. the many illustrations in the studies on griffins by J. Leibovitch: *o.c.*, *BIE* 25 (1943), p. 183 sqq.; 26 (1944), p. 231 sqq.; 27 (1945), p. 379 sqq.

2) Cited by J. Leibovitch, *o.c.*, *BIE* 26 (1944), p. 240.

3) J. Leibovitch, *o.c.*, p. 242.



texts.<sup>1)</sup> He may also be depicted with wings.<sup>2)</sup> Leibovitch<sup>3)</sup> regards the falcon-headed winged god appearing on a relief in the temple of Hibis in the oasis of Kharga, which dates from the Persian period, and who according to the inscription is Seth, as a griffin. In late times, when Seth was no longer represented by the Seth-animal, he might therefore, besides as an ass, also be depicted as a falcon-headed griffin. The 'hh griffin, resembling the Seth-animal in head and bodily structure, suggests speed. It may draw a chariot.

Of Ramses III it is said that he is "like Seth, the chosen of Re, his roaring is heard like that of an 'hh." <sup>4)</sup> The god Seth himself is known to be capable of loud roaring. I do not know of any representation showing the wingless Seth-animals drawing the chariot as the 'hh griffins do. Seth-animals do appear, like jackals, drawing the solar barque.<sup>5)</sup> It may be concluded from a text, however, that the conception of Seth-animals drawing the chariot did exist, or that no difference was made in this respect between Seth-animals and 'hh griffins. Of the horses before the chariot of Tuthmosis III it is said that they became Seth (*hprw m Swth*).<sup>6)</sup> It is stated of Ramses III: "There is a young man like an 'hh griffin . . . his horses are as falcons."<sup>7)</sup> Capart<sup>8)</sup> observed that sometimes not only the solar disk and feathers, but also a falcon's head or the head of the griffin of Month were drawn over the horse's head. Later Montet<sup>9)</sup> brought to notice, that the image of Seth was sometimes engraved on the blinkers of the horses. This motive of falcons and Seth-animals is brought together in the description of a hunt of Ramses

1) *Pyr.* 1742a.

2) Ny Carlsberg A 706: M. Mogensen, *La collection égyptienne de la glyptothèque Ny Carlsberg*, Copenhagen, 1937, pl. 103. Statue of Seth in the Michailides collection: J. Leibovitch, *Une statuette du dieu Seth*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 101-107 and pl. XIII.

3) J. Leibovitch, *Le griffon I*, *BIE* 25 (1943), p. 190, fig. 10.

4) *Medinet Habu I*, pl. 28, 45 sq.

5) W. Pleyte, *Set dans la barque solaire*, Leiden 1865, pl. 1; G. Daressy, *L'animal séthien à tête d'âne*, *ASAE* 20 (1920), p. 165-166.

6) *Pap. Turin* 1940 + 41, rt. 2, 13; cf. G. Botti, *A fragment of the story of a military expedition of Tuthmosis III to Syria*, *JEA* 41 (1955), p. 66.

7) *Medinet Habu I*, pl. 27, 22 sqq.

8) J. Capart, *Le cheval et le dieu Seth*. In: *Mélanges Maspéro I, Orient Ancien*, Le Caire, 1934, p. 230, with reference to W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte I*, Leipzig, 1923, pl. 94 b.

9) P. Montet, *La vie quotidienne en Égypte*, Paris, 1946, p. 228 and n. 25, giving a reference to W. Wreszinski, *Atlas II*, 18.

III, where the king is compared to Seth trampling down the game and to a falcon on the watch for birds.<sup>1)</sup>

According to the demotic papyrus Leiden I 384, the griffin is the shepherd of everything living on earth, and the avenger upon whom there is no vengeance. Leibovitch<sup>2)</sup> concludes from this: "Le griffon est alors un berger protecteur et c'est peut-être en cette qualité qu'il accompagne les scènes de chasse à Beni Hasan." One may wonder whether the same positive quality was ascribed to the Seth-animal, which proves to be related to griffins, and which is depicted at Beni Hasan beside the falcon-headed griffin. In another connection, Leibovitch once remarked<sup>3)</sup> that as "dieu sauveur" Seth is a griffin. On the one hand, however, the griffin is a guardian angel, but on the other an avenger, pursuing its enemies at furious speed or crushing them underfoot, as appears from the many illustrations in the articles by Leibovitch. It might be, that at Beni Hasan these two functions are divided over the falcon-headed griffin and the Seth-animal, and that the occurrence of griffins with a falcon's head or the head of the Seth-animal is not altogether arbitrary, but is connected with the duality of the gods Horus and Seth in mythology.

Each time, the word ⚡ is written over the Seth-animal. Now one can bring this name into connection with a word ⚡ signifying "hog", and make this one of the reasons for supposing the Seth-animal to be a hog.<sup>4)</sup> There is also a word ⚡, however, that means "destiny", both "Lebenszeit" and "Todesgeschick."<sup>5)</sup> Leibovitch<sup>6)</sup> has drawn attention to the fact that this word may be determined with the Seth-animal, not with a stiff, but with a curved tail. If this Egyptian word for destiny can be determined with the Seth-animal, then the name of the Seth-animal at Beni Hasan might be translated as "beast of destiny."<sup>7)</sup> A familiar scene is a monkey

1) *Medinet Habu II*, pl. 116, 1 sqq.

2) J. Leibovitch, *o.c.*, *BIE* 26 (1944), p. 244.

3) J. Leibovitch, *Une statuette du dieu Seth*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 101.

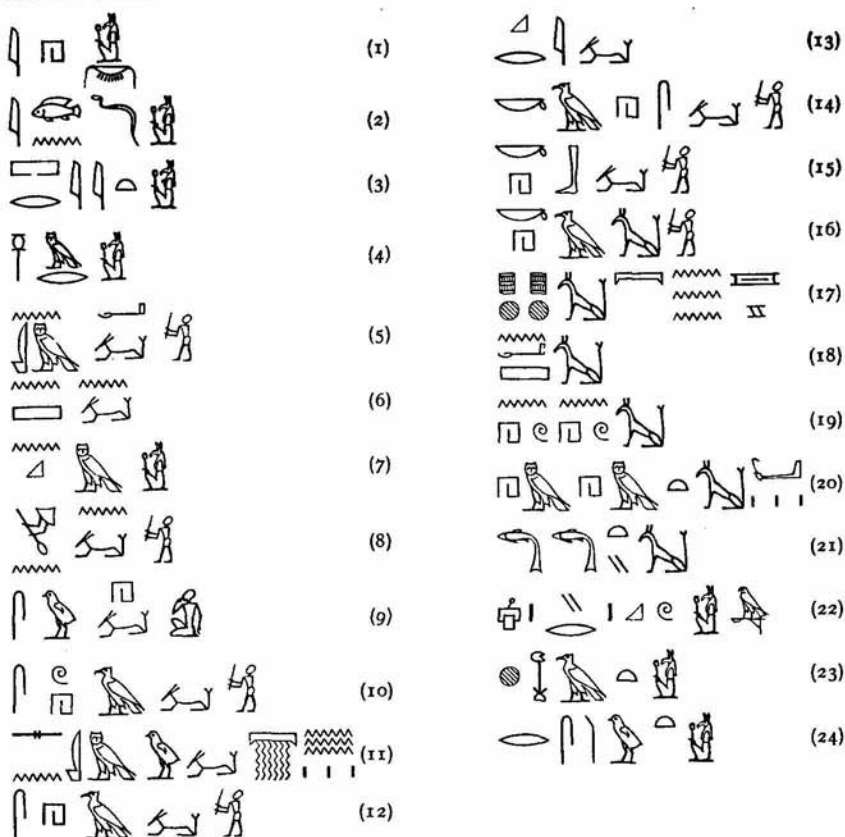
4) P. E. Newberry, *The pig and the cult-animal of Set*, *JEA* 14 (1928), p. 211-225.

5) S. Morenz, D. Müller, *Untersuchungen zur Rolle des Schicksals in der ägyptischen Religion*, *ASAW*, Phil.-hist. Kl., Bd. 52 Heft 1, Berlin, 1960, p. 20.

6) J. Leibovitch, *Le griffon II*, *BIE* 26 (1944), p. 238, fig. 8.

7) This does not imply that all Egyptians always regarded the ⚡ animal as the beast of destiny. There is merely an indication that a connection was made between destiny and the ⚡ animal. In the *mag. pap. Harris*, V, 4, the name of the animal is written in group-writing, from which one might conclude that to the writer of this papyrus the name was etymologically obscure or foreign and suggested no deeper connection.

with raised stick driving away a hog in a boat from the dead and the judgment throne of Osiris.<sup>1)</sup> The symbol of the pig is fitting here, not merely as being one of the sacred animals of Seth, or even the Seth-animal itself, but because its name is the same as that of the Seth-animal and fatality. The "Todesgeschick" disappears as soon as the dead is with Osiris. The strange text of BD 112<sup>2)</sup> becomes more explicable if one realises that Seth who comes to Horus in the shape of a black pig, appears to him as the  $\xi\beta$  animal, the beast of fate. It is because Horus sees fate, that is his coming relations and quarrel with Seth, so already experiencing them, that he faints.



1) A. Piankoff, *Le tableau d'Osiris et les divisions V, VI et VII du Livre des Portes*, ASAE 55 (1958), p. 157-165, 285-300, with figures.

2) CT II, 326 sqq.

Fate could be personified, and was venerated as *šw nb ššhtp*. Shashotep or Hypsele is the capital of the 11th nome of Upper Egypt, one of the nomes of Seth, where the nome-standard bears the Seth-animal. It seems more reasonable to associate this god — Shay with Seth, as Newberry and Gardiner do, than with Khnum.<sup>1)</sup> Shay himself, however, is ambivalent: he brings a change of destiny. Fate in the shape of the Seth-animal at Beni Hasan, however, does not seem to represent the good fortune, but the bad fortune of the hunter, accompanying his guardian angel, the falcon-headed griffin. The animal with the snake's head might

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1. <i>ih</i> ,	illness
2. <i>ind</i> ,	to be afflicted
3. <i>pryt</i> ,	crisis (?)
4. <i>mr</i>	to be grievous
5. <i>nm'</i> ,	to be one-sided, partial
6. <i>nšni</i> ,	rage, storm, disaster
7. <i>nkm</i> ,	to suffer
8. <i>hnn</i> ,	to disturb; tumult
9. <i>šwhi</i> ,	to boast, vaunt
10. <i>šwh(š)</i> ,	to break up (of ship)
11. <i>snmw</i> ,	squalls of rain
12. <i>šhš</i> ,	to be in confusion, to confound
13. <i>krī</i> ,	storm (cloud)
14. <i>kšhs</i> ,	to be harsh, overbearing
15. <i>khb</i> ,	to harm, to be violent, to roar
16. <i>kħš</i> ,	to roar etc.
17. <i>phph</i> ,	storm
18. <i>n's</i> ,	to be strong, to roar
19. <i>nħnh (= nhmhm)</i> ,	to roar
20. <i>hmhmt</i> ,	war-shout
21. <i>hšhšti</i> ,	storm
22. <i>šrk</i> ,	snow
23. <i>hšyt</i> ,	illness
24. <i>ršwt</i>	nightmare

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1) S. Morenz, D. Müller, *o.c.*, p. 25; P. E. Newberry, *The cult-animal of Set*, *Klio* 12 (1912), p. 397; A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian onomastica* II, Oxford, 1947, p. 67\*.

stand for a synthesis of both aspects. Psais or Agathos Daimoon was afterwards represented in the form of a snake.<sup>1)</sup>

The view that as beast of destiny the animal of Seth does not represent an animal of good fortune but a beast of ill luck, is confirmed by its function as determinative in the system of writing. The falcon of Horus indicates divine reality and is used, for instance, as a determinative for the names of gods. The Seth-animal functions as a determinative for words indicating concepts divergent from the normal order, which to the Egyptian mind was given by the gods and is guarded by them, and it has a negative meaning. In the Pyramid texts inscribed in the pyramid of Unas, the Seth-animal is used as ideogram of the god Seth, and also already as determinative of the word *nšn*.<sup>2)</sup> In the course of their history, the Egyptians gave a number of words the Seth-animal determinative. Obviously they felt that the meaning of these words was connected with Seth. In the time after the N.K. this way of writing falls out of use. This slow change is bound up with the decay and ruin of the cult of Seth.

The words on page 22 and 23 could be determined with the Seth-animal.<sup>3)</sup>

Derived forms of the above verbs, e.g. *šhnn* and *nšmt*, have been left out. This is not the place to consider possible etymological connections and examine groups such as: *ššn*,<sup>4)</sup> *nšn*, *hnn*; *khh*, *khš*, *kšhs*; *šwhi*, *šwhš*, *šhš*. The shades of meaning are probably richer than the dictionaries are able to give from the available text-material; in any case they are more varied than the selection given above. Although the list makes no claim to completeness, it affords some impression of the unfavourable aspect of reality symbolised by the Seth-animal. The word *nšš*, "to be strong" etc., can also have the Horus falcon as determinative instead of the Seth-animal.<sup>5)</sup>

1) C. E. Visser, *Götter und Kulte im ptolemäischen Alexandria*, Amsterdam, 1938, p. 5 sqq.; On griffins and animals with snake's head at Esna and Beni Hasan cf. S. Sauneron, *Remarques de philologie et d'étymologie* 26 — *Les animaux fantastiques du désert*, BIFAO 62 (1964), p. 15-18.

2) *Pyr.* 298b, 326d.

3) I. R. O. Faulkner, *A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1962, p. 3; 2. id., o.c., p. 24; 3. id., o.c., p. 91; 4. id., o.c., p. 110; 5. id., o.c., p. 133; 6. id., o.c., p. 140; 7. id., o.c., p. 141; 8. id., o.c., p. 202, 203; 9. id., o.c., p. 217; 10. id., o.c., p. 217; 11. id., o.c., p. 232; 12. id., o.c., p. 237; 13. id., o.c., p. 280; 14. id., o.c., p. 284; 15. id., o.c., p. 287; 16. *WB V*, 136; 17. *WB I*, 544; 18. *WB II*, 209; <sup>š</sup> (*WB I*, 229, 12) = *nšš*; 19. *WB II*, 286; 20. *Urk.* IV, 1008, 5; 21. *WB III*, 363; 22. A. H. Gardiner, *AEO I*, 6\*; 23. R. T. Rundle Clarke, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1959, p. 115; 24. *JEA* 52 (1966), pl. IX.

4) *WB IV*, 294, with Seth-animal.

5) *WB II*, 209.

The word *šwhi*, "to boast", makes perhaps the most positive impression. This activity, however, can easily lead to disturbance of the world order. One can say: "a king to be boasted of" <sup>1)</sup>, but also: "Nor was there any likening of words to boast for myself with lies, but that was my colour, which I showed." <sup>2)</sup>

About half the words refer to atmospheric disturbances. Discussing some words that are determined with the Seth-animal in his article about Seth as storm-god, however, Zandee has rightly placed the use of the Seth-animal as determinative in a wider setting than only that of storm and thunder and its god. He points out that *hnnw* is the opposite of *mꜣꜥt*.<sup>3)</sup> According to the Berlin dictionary *nšni* is the opposite of *hꜣp*.<sup>4)</sup>

Going through the list of words determined with the Seth-animal, one gains the impression that Egyptian culture, as it shows itself in the script here, regarded the Seth-animal as an unpleasant rowdy and disturber of the peace. Writing on the divine joker, Van Baaren remarks "... the originator of confusion, like the creator who sets in order, is an aspect of total reality which cannot be spared." <sup>5)</sup> This aspect of reality in cosmic, social and personal life, which finds expression in the key words storm, tumult, illness, the Egyptians could typify by means of a Seth-animal with a curved snout and a straight tail. Thus this disturber of the peace became an element of order in the Egyptian system of writing with its many hieroglyphs. Van Baaren continues: "Indeed, it is certainly not by chance that in the West-Indian Voodoo cult the god Ghede is at once the divine joker and the god of death, for the necessity of dying is in a sense the cruellest joke the gods have played upon mankind." In Egypt Seth is god of death, as appears from the myth of Osiris. On a coffin there is written:

"I do not die, Seth gains no power over me." <sup>6)</sup>

The Seth-animal seems to be an imaginary animal related to the griffin, but unlike the falcon-headed griffin it does not function as a guardian angel, but as an animal of fatality, a beast of ill omen,

1) *Urk.* IV, 1291, 13.

2) *Urk.* IV, 973, 12-14.

3) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 147.

4) *WB* II, 340.

5) Th. P. van Baaren, *Menschen wie wir*, Gütersloh, 1964, p. 70.

6) *CT* III, 349 e, f.

an angel of death, sometimes accompanying the good shepherd as the god Seth accompanies the god Horus.

Besides the Seth-animal, the ass and the pig, the oryx antelope, the gazelle, the crocodile, the hippopotamus and the fish can also be accounted animals of Seth. Kees, who gave a survey of the Sethian animals, also added the aurochs and the snake. The animals of Seth were animals that were sacrificed or despised.<sup>1)</sup>

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1) *PW* II, col. 1897-1902.



## CHAPTER TWO

### SETH, THE ENEMY AND FRIEND OF HORUS

#### I. SETH AND THE ENNEAD

Seth is one of the gods composing the Ennead of Heliopolis: Atum, Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, Osiris and Isis, Seth and Nephthys.<sup>1)</sup> Primaeval time may be described as the time before duality had arisen in the land.<sup>2)</sup> The one primaeval god Atum, the lord of all,<sup>3)</sup> as the first act of creation brought forth a male-female twin by self-fecundation: the god Shu and the goddess Tefnut. This twin brought forth another twin: the earth god Geb and the sky goddess Nut, who in turn produced Osiris and Isis. The duality so far is that of man and woman and is complementary. However, Geb and Nut did not bring forth only one male-female twin, but also Seth and Nephthys. This disturbs the harmonious development of creation, wherein each pair of gods only produced one other pair. Thus the birthday of Seth is the beginning of confusion.<sup>4)</sup> Seth is the one who caused disorder before his name existed.<sup>5)</sup>

Seeing that the birth of Seth disturbs the regular process of creation, we can understand that the birth itself is represented as irregular. Plutarch<sup>6)</sup> says that Seth was born "not in due season or manner, but with a blow he broke through his mother's side and leapt forth." The idea of Seth's disorderly entry into the world appears to be already evidenced in the Pyramid texts. It would seem that the word *msi* "to be born" is deliberately avoided there with regard to Seth.<sup>7)</sup> When in his ascension to heaven the king embraces not only the mode of existence of Horus but also that of Seth, Pyr. 205 states (Sethe's translation): "Du den die Schwangere von

1) *Pyr.* 1655 a, b.

2) *CT* II, 396 b.

3) *CT* III, 27 b: I am Atum (*tm*) the lord of all (*tm*).

4)  $\text{S}^c$  *hnmw*, *Pap. Leiden I 346*, II 12; B. H. Stricker, *Spreuken tot beveiliging gedurende de schrikkeledagen naar Pap. I 346*, *OMRO NR 29* (1948), p. 68.

5) *Urk.* VI, 39, 9.

6) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 12; cf. Th. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris I*, Praha, 1940, p. 21 sq.

7) *Pyr.* 144 b, 211 b.

sich gegeben hat, als du die Nacht spaltetest, Gestaltet bist du als Seth der gewaltsam ausbrach." 1) This substantiates the image of Seth as unpredictable and violent. Sartre 2) attempted to assess the significance of his birth for the state-nurtured foundling Jean Genet: "Il se sent maudit: dès sa naissance il est le mal-aimé, l'inopportun, le surnuméraire. Indésirable jusque dans son être, il n'est pas le fils de cette femme: il en est l'excrément. . . . par sa faute un désordre s'est introduit dans le bel ordre du monde, une fissure dans la plénitude de l'être."

One of the most frequently employed epithets of Seth is "son of Nut"; it is so widely known that it can be used without any further addition as an equivalent of the name Seth. It is not to be concluded from this, however, that between Nut and Seth there exists a link such as that between Isis and Horus (Harsiesis). Seth is not a child god and there is no trace of love on the part of or for his mother. The texts cursing Seth do not forget to include, that his own mother has turned against him. 3) The epithet tells us something about Seth himself. It suggests the idea of mother fixation in the sense of immaturity, in seeming contrast with the other epithet "great in strength." Because Seth's birth was untimely, he is not free and can scarcely be given a place by himself. He remains a part of his mother, her excrement, to speak with Sartre, or her vomit. 4) The texts suggest no particular causal relation between this epithet and the homosexual tendencies of Seth.

During her pregnancy, Isis goes in fear of Seth. 5) She had good grounds for this, but there might also be a particular reason: it might be feared that Seth, himself untimely born, causes abortion. 6)

"As the mouth of the womb of Anat and Astarte was closed, the two great goddesses who were pregnant but did not give birth, they were closed by Horus and they were opened by Seth." 7)

The opening of the womb of these two goddesses does not mean

1) K. Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten*, Glückstadt, n.d., Vol. I, p. 116.

2) J. P. Sartre, *Saint Genet Comédien et Martyr*, Paris, 1952, p. 15.

3) *Urk.* VI, 57, 4 sqq.

4) *Pyr.* 205 a.

5) *CT Spell* 148.

6) Cf. now: W. Westendorf, *Beiträge aus und zu den medizinischen Texten*, ZÄS 92 (1966), p. 128-154.

7) *Mag. pap.* Harris III, 8, 9.

defloration here. A. A. Barb<sup>1)</sup> has remarked: "Closing implies the cessation of the menses and so effective pregnancy, opening produces menorrhage and abortion." Seth, then, would be the god who brings about abortion. In the Greek period pregnant women wore amulets engraved: "Contract womb, lest Typhon seize upon you."<sup>2)</sup> Plutarch's statement<sup>3)</sup> that Seth was deserted by his concubine Thoeris is significant here, for Thoeris, the pregnant hippopotamus, is the protectress of women in pregnancy. One of the names of Bes, who has feminine traits as well as masculine ones, is Hit. Abortions were put into his care and even buried in wooden Bes figures.<sup>4)</sup> One of the meanings of the verb *h3i* is "to commit abortion."<sup>5)</sup> A relation between this verb and one of the names of Seth, *h3y* or *hy*,<sup>6)</sup> cannot be determined with certainty. In a Turin pap.<sup>7)</sup> Seth says:

"I am a Man of a million cubits, whose name is Evil Day. As for the day of giving birth or of conceiving, there is no giving birth and trees bear no fruit".

Seth accidentally came into existence not a generation after Osiris and Isis, but beside Isis and Osiris. Seth and Nephthys do not form an equivalent parallel or reduplication of the divine pair. Klasens,<sup>8)</sup> who has examined the texts referring to the marriage of Seth and Nephthys, remarks: "Statements of the marriage of Nephthys and Seth are rare in the Egyptian sources." Bonnet<sup>9)</sup> says: "Aber die Verbindung zwischen beiden ist doch eine sehr lose; sie beschränkt sich mehr auf eine Nebeneinanderstellung." Nearly always Nephthys is the inseparable companion of Isis, who is parted from her husband by death. Once she is derisively called "the substitute without a vagina".<sup>10)</sup> Presumably this means that the marriage with Seth is only a marriage in appearance. An unpublished text of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, however, seems to refer to Nephthys deserting a child of Seth for

1) J. G. Griffiths and A. A. Barb, *Seth or Anubis?*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, London, 22 (1959), p. 368.

2) C. Bonner, *Studies in magical amulets chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, Ann Arbor, 1950, p. 84.

3) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 19.

4) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 105.

5) *WB* II, 473, 15.

6) *WB* II, 483, 15.

7) J. G. Griffiths, *The conflict of Horus and Seth*, p. 52.




8) A. Klasens, *A magical statue base (socle Behague) in the Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*, Leiden, 1952, (= *OMRO* NR 33), p. 86.

9) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 519.

10) *Pyr.* 1273 b.

the sake of Osiris.<sup>1)</sup> Nephthys's child is Anubis.<sup>2)</sup> But according to Plutarch<sup>3)</sup> it is not Seth, but Osiris who is the father of the son of Nephthys. In an Egyptian text Osiris is called "Bull of the two sisters."<sup>4)</sup> Besides the two sisters (*sn.ty*), Isis and Nephthys are also called the two women (*rh.ty*), as Horus and Seth are called the two men (*rh.wy*).<sup>5)</sup>

Disorder is not disguised by the union of Seth with Nephthys, rather is it revealed. The name of Nephthys suggests the image of a housewife: *nbt-ht* = the mistress of the house. Seth, however, is anything but a suitable partner for a housewife. Nephthys becomes a wailing-woman, and essentially Seth remains lonely. The connection between Seth and Neith<sup>6)</sup> is also merely incidental. According to the account given in the "Contendings of Horus and Seth," Neith, the mother of the gods, suggested doubling the possessions of Seth and giving him Anat and Astarte, in order to put an end to the quarrels between the two gods. However, the gods do not entertain this proposal. Apparently it is not actually possible to get out of the difficulties by arranging a marriage for Seth. Seth remains an outsider.

In the Coffin texts the name Seth is regularly replaced by the hieroglyphs . Sethe and Kees translated  as "der Gerichtete."<sup>8)</sup> The view that this name of Seth is connected with the trial at law between Horus and Seth seems to be generally accepted.<sup>9)</sup> Yet in a study regarding the eunuch in Egypt, Jonckheere<sup>10)</sup> draws a different conclusion from this name of Seth. He takes the hieroglyph  to be the depiction of an instrument used for castration. His strongest argument for this daring thesis is, that Seth was castrated by Horus and is therefore called the

1) S. Schott, *Altägyptische Liebeslieder*, Zürich, 1950, p. 164.

2) *Mag. pap. Harris VII*, 7 sq.

3) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 14.

4) *Pap. Bremner-Rhind* 2, 6; cf. J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 91.

5) C. J. Bleeker, *Isis and Nephthys as wailing women*, *Numen* 5 (1958), p. 1-18.

6) *Pyr.* 1521 b.




7) A. H. Gardiner, *EG*, Sign-list Aa 21.




8) K. Sethe a.o., *Die Sprüche für das Kennen der Seelen der heiligen Orte*, *ZAS* 58 (1923), p. 76; H. Kees, *Horus und Seth als Götterpaar II*, *MVAG* 29 (1924), p. 83.

9) *WB I*, 407, 2: "Der über den Gericht gehalten wird als Bezeichnung des Seth."; R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 75: "He who is judged, ep. of Seth."

10) F. Jonckheere, *L'eunuque dans l'Égypte pharaonique*, *RHS* 7 (1954), particularly p. 154 sq.; p. 155: "celui dont on a séparé une partie du corps."

castrated god. Yet no other terms are known in reference to Seth, of which the meaning "eunuch" is incontestably ascertained. Seth is sometimes called *hmty* <sup>a)</sup>, but this word means rather "homosexual" than "eunuch". Nowhere in the Egyptian pantheon does Seth fill the place of divine eunuch. In the imperialistic and militaristic period of Egyptian history (dyn. 18-20) he is even worshipped as an aggressive god of war. It will appear in the sequel that the motive of castration is less prevalent in the myth of Horus and Seth than it is often thought to be. Abduction of testicles does not always imply castration, rendering Seth a eunuch. From the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" it is evident that the carrying off of the testicles can be understood not as castration, but as theft of seed. The hypothesis of Jonckheere cannot be accepted unless further evidence is forthcoming.


In consideration of the wider sense of , however, it must be said that it is also a one-sided view to connect the meaning with the judgment of the gods. In a spell of the Coffin texts the dead man is identified with the god Baba and the  . As the dead man states: "My sexual power is the sexual power of such-and-such (a god)," and the rubric promises that he who knows this spell will be able to copulate day and night, the translation proposed by Jonckheere is singularly inappropriate.<sup>1)</sup> It is scarcely credible either, though, that the dead man would represent himself as one who was condemned. Always it is the desire of the Egyptian dead to be justified at their trial even as Horus was justified before the tribunal of the gods. Possibly this instance is no more than a slip of the pen. In that case the mistake is surely a very painful one for the owner of the coffin!

In my opinion  as a term for Seth should not be only connected with castration or the divine tribunal, but should be assigned a wider meaning; as a verb *wḏ* <sup>b)</sup> means to "separate" <sup>2)</sup> and Seth as   is the separated god. Seth is an anti-social god, cut off from the



1) CT VI, 191 d, k.

2) WB I, 404.

community of the gods. Bonnet <sup>1)</sup> already remarked: "Seth steht immer abseits; er ist stets der gefürchtete und unheimliche Gegenspieler." It is this quality, I think, which was indicated when the Egyptians replaced the hieroglyph of the Seth animal by the  hieroglyph. This way of writing the word afterwards fell into disuse, but the idea that Seth is the god set apart, or the god who separates, was preserved. Apparently this was also discovered in the name Seth (*Štš*) itself.<sup>2)</sup>

In the myth of Osiris the duality of Osiris and Seth is that of death and life.<sup>3)</sup> Seth makes separation between life and death. The restoration of the unity of life here and yonder is symbolised by the birth of the divine child Horus. Isis receives the seed of the living dead Osiris. Yet Seth also limits the existence of Horus and his mother. The child Horus is brought forth by Isis in solitude. In the difficulties and dangers mother and child have to endure, not in ordered society, but in the inhospitable marshes of Khemmis, the glorious, original divine life is almost lost. Not only is the cosmos surrounded by primaevial chaos, the cosmos itself proves to be fissured at Seth's first stirring. Horus no longer has a female complement, like the gods before him. In contrast with the gods of the ennead, he also displays the state of being a child (Harpo-crates) and of being brought up. Bringing up had become necessary because the cosmos had become disordered through the untimely birth of Seth.<sup>4)</sup> The Osiris hymn of Amenmose relates, that Horus was not presented to the gathering of the gods by his mother until he was sufficiently equipped physically and mentally: strong of arm, firm of heart. Horus had to learn and win adult divine life through sad experience. The quarrel of Horus with Seth, who originated accidentally, but is now a determining factor in reality, was inevitable.

## 2. THE DISORDERS OF HORUS AND SETH

The texts contain many references to a conflict between Horus and Seth.<sup>5)</sup> They are not only called the two gods, the two lords,

1) H. Bonnet, *Der Gott im Menschen*. In: *Studi in memoria di Ippolito Rosellini nel primo centenario della morte* I, Pisa, 1949, p. 238.

2) p. 6.

3) p. 95.

4) *šd* (*Louvre C 286, 16*) is not only "to suckle", but also "to bring up".

5) *Pyr.* 1242 c; *Shabaka text* 8; *CT* I, 19 c; *BD* 123, 2.

the two men, the two rivals, but also the two fighters.<sup>1)</sup> As the conflict is only briefly hinted at in the religious texts, it is not easy to form an idea of its nature. The image that has been compounded from scattered data, of Horus and Seth doing battle and wounding one another, the one losing his eye and the other his testicles, is not confirmed by more detailed sources such as the "Contendings of Horus and Seth." There not a word is said to suggest castration of Seth. The vicissitudes of the religious symbols "eye" and "testicles" bear a certain relation to the fight that occurs between the two gods. The connection seems to be less direct, however, than is usually assumed by egyptologists.

Two phases may, we think, be distinguished in the quarrel. First there are irregularities of a homosexual nature. Subsequently they start a fight. The eye and the testicles are injured during the first disorders, before the actual combat. Complications enter into the scheme, however, as we find the fear voiced that Seth may maltreat the eye during the fight, and because the myth was afterwards extended to the idea that Horus did not merely steal the seed of Seth's testicles, but castrated him in the fight. Naturally so important an Egyptian myth as that of Horus and Seth appeared in many variations, which cannot be discussed in detail here, and underwent expansion in the thousands of years of its existence.

The two phases cannot be strictly separated. They form a unity. The fight must be understood as a result of homosexual disorders invited by Seth, who does not keep to the boundaries of sex. In the primordial period, when Horus and Seth had not yet come into existence and were not yet forced to live with one another, there was no conflict:

"when no anger had yet arisen  
 when no shouting had yet arisen  
 when no conflict had yet arisen  
 when no confusion had yet arisen  
 when the eye of Horus had not yet turned yellow  
 when the testicles of Seth had not yet been made impotent."<sup>2)</sup>

According to this text the testicles of Seth were made impotent. We are not told how this came about: Seth's homosexual inclination and action are wellknown. Something happened to the eye of Horus.

1) *WB I*, 216, 6, *Belegstellen*.

2) *Pyr.* 1463.



Perhaps *ḫni* is to be translated as "turning yellow."<sup>1)</sup> There is confusion, leading to conflict, shouting and anger. The quarrel arises after Seth has lost his virile potency and because Horus has not got the eye in his possession. It stood on the forehead of Seth<sup>2)</sup> and Seth is not willing to give it back to him. How the eye got there, we shall see presently.

Other Pyramid texts do not seem to confirm this exegesis:

"Fallen is Horus because of his eye  
powerless is Seth because of his testicles."<sup>3)</sup>

"Horus has wept because of his eye  
Seth has wept because of his testicles."<sup>4)</sup>

There is no statement here, however, that Horus castrated Seth after or in the fight, or that Seth struck Horus a blow on the eye or plucked it out. We regard these and similar texts as a drastic condensation of the story; they do not depict the situation after a bloody combat.

A passage from the famous chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead gives further particulars of the encounter of Horus and Seth. Griffiths calls it "a locus classicus for the injured eye."<sup>5)</sup> As our interpretation of the disorders of Horus and Seth differs a little from the usual view, it seems a good plan to take this classic text as our starting-point. The dead man says that he has carried out a particular ritual, the filling of the eye. The theological commentary treats the mythological background of this ritual:<sup>6)</sup>

"I have filled the eye, after it had become small, in this night of the conflict of the two men. What is the conflict of the two men? That is the conflict of Horus and Seth. After he (Seth) had caused a discharge from the face of him. After Horus had taken away the (sexual) strength of Seth. It was Thoth who did this with his fingers."<sup>7)</sup>

According to the commentator the dead man has filled the eye in imitation of Thoth. The eye did not become small in the night of the combat, but was filled that night. The filling, which Thoth was the first to carry out, is ritually repeated as soon as the eye has become small. Derchain<sup>8)</sup> remarks in a study of myths and rites

1) R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 280.

2) *Pyr.* 84 a.

3) *Pyr.* 418 a.

4) *Pyr.* 594 a.

5) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 29.

6) A full discussion of this text may be found in: M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *De oudste versie van dodenboek 17A*, Leiden, 1963.

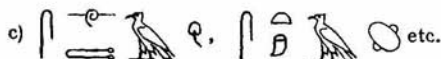
7) *CT IV*, 232 a-238 a.

8) Ph. Derchain, *Mythes et dieux lunaires en Egypte*. In: *La lune. Mythes et rites. Sources Orientales V*, Paris, 1962, p. 23.

concerning the moon: "pour l'Égyptien, l'univers est sous la menace permanente de la désintégration, et c'est l'effort permanent des rituels qui empêche les phénomènes de destruction de se manifester trop ouvertement."

It seems that the eye became small not as a result of the conflict of Horus and Seth, but as a result of homosexual acts between these two gods. Texts referring to homosexual relations between Horus and Seth have been known for a long time. Griffiths <sup>1)</sup> gave a survey of the material. So far this homosexual intercourse has been regarded as an isolated episode. It would appear to me, though, that it forms an integral part and an indispensable link in the myth.

Seth brings about a discharge from the face of Horus. Grapow <sup>2)</sup> translated *m[ht]wdit.f št3 m hr n Hr* "als [nachdem] er Schmutz in das Antlitz des Horus warf [geworfen hatte]." Kees <sup>3)</sup> replaced the disputed word *št3* <sup>c)</sup> by "Kot." Heerma van Voss <sup>4)</sup> gives: "after he had wrought damage in the face of Horus." One of his reasons is that Gunn <sup>5)</sup> definitely concluded from the medical papyrus Ebers that *št3* was to be translated as "wound." In a note, however, Heerma van Voss mentions that Von Deines and Westendorf now translate *št3* as "Sekret (einer Wunde)." <sup>6)</sup> This seems to destroy the force of Gunn's argumentation. Faulkner, <sup>7)</sup> however, still gives "injury" for *št3w*. It would not seem necessary to separate this word so far from the verb *št3* "to drag," "to pull out" and intransitive: "to flow." This not only applies to the loci where the word appears in funeral texts, but also to pap. Millingen 2, 5. There the dead king says to his son, after giving particulars of the attempt upon his life: "Behold the *št3w* took place when I was without you before the court had heard that I transmit (authority) to you." <sup>8)</sup> This

c)  etc.

1) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 41 sqq.

2) *Urk.* V, translation, part I, p. 14.

3) H. Kees, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch*, ed. A. Bertholet, 2nd revised edition, 10: *Ägypten*, Tübingen, 1928, p. 32.

4) M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 30.

5) *JEA* 6 (1920), p. 301 n. 10.

6) M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 30 n. 7, with reference to: H. von Deines, W. Westendorf, *Wörterbuch der medizinischen Texte*, 2. Hälfte, Berlin, 1962, p. 820.

7) R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 255.

8) A. Volten, *Zwei altägyptische politische Schriften*, Copenhagen, 1945, p. 112.

is not the "Mordversuch,"<sup>1)</sup> neither the injury, but dying, being drawn to the underworld. The Man who was tired of Life says that his *ba* draws him to death.<sup>2)</sup>  $\dot{S}t\dot{3}$  is a discharge from a wound or as in this case a discharge from the eye, but there is no need for the eye to have been wounded or injured through Seth having struck Horus in an actual fight. But the Berlin dictionary conveys the suggestion that the eye is wounded by translating the expressions *hkst*<sup>3)</sup> and *nknknt* or *nkkt*<sup>4)</sup> as "das beschädigte Auge" or "verletztes Auge." Heerma van Voss,<sup>5)</sup> however, has translated *hks* as a verb as "reduce." There is no doubt that *nkkt* and *nknkt* are connected with *nk* "Buhlknabe"<sup>6)</sup> and *nki* "den Beischlaf vollziehen."<sup>7)</sup> This might indicate that Seth did not cause the suffering of Horus's eye by a blow, but by an act of a sexual nature.

The expression *wđi st̄3* seems to be causative of *st̄3*.<sup>8)</sup> The preposition *m* can often mean "in," but *st̄3 m* means "drag out," "pull out," "flow out" etc. The finger of Seth i.e. the latch of the naos, named elsewhere,<sup>9)</sup> in more plainly sexual symbolism, the phallus of Seth, is withdrawn from the face of Horus.<sup>10)</sup> Yet has *st̄3* a transitive meaning in CT IV, 236 a? There is no mention of finger or phallus as direct object. The translation, then, would be: "after Seth had withdrawn," suggesting an original unity of Horus and Seth, or at least a union consisting in a homosexual embrace, which was ended by Seth.

We choose for the intransitive meaning to flow out. The eye of Horus can drip.<sup>11)</sup> Liquid issues from the eye of Horus.<sup>12)</sup> The act of Seth has an unfavourable effect: the eye becomes small and loses its strength. It is not impossible that by the discharge of the eye tears were meant; we know of speculations regarding tears of the eye.<sup>13)</sup>

1) WB IV, 355, 12.

2) R. O. Faulkner, *The man who was tired of life*, JEA 42 (1956), p. 21, p. 31 n. 11: *hr st̄3.i r mt*.

3) WB III, 401, 1.

4) WB II, 347, 6, 9.

5) M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 29 and n. 12.

6) WB II, 347, 8.

7) WB II, 345, 3-10.

8) Cf. R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 141: *nkn* and *wđi nkn*.

9) E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual I*, Wiesbaden, 1960, scene 74 B.

10) WB IV, 352, 12, *Belegstellen*.

11) *Pyr.* 133 a.

12) *Metternich stela* 170; A. Klasens, *o. c.*, p. 54 and p. 84.

13) Mankind arose from the tears of the sun's eye (CT VII, 465 a). According to the Greeks the inundation of the Nile was due to the tears of Isis (Th. Hopfner, *Plutarch über*

It is improbable that Seth was thought to have caused the discharge from the face of Horus in open fight by striking him. Horus does not strike back, but seizes the testicles of Seth. We think this reaction should be regarded not as just the grip of a wrestler, but as an act of a sexual nature. We know that in the Egyptian view an affection of the eye may be caused not only by a blow, but also by rape. Seth's coition with Anat, who "is dressed like a man," results in illness. Seth suffers from his forehead and his eye.<sup>1)</sup> In a text adduced as parallel by Gardiner<sup>2)</sup> it is the victim of the rape who suffers in head and eye. According to Gardiner's interpretation the Egyptians thought that the *mtwt*, which can be translated both as "seed" and as "poison", flowed to head and eyes and caused pain there.

The illness of Seth might also have been caused, though, by loss of seed, i.e. loss of vital juices. The Greek view may be of interest here. "Aristotle tells us that the region round the eyes was the region of the head most fruitful of seed ("most seedy" σπερματικώτατος), pointing to generally recognised effects upon the eyes of sexual indulgence and to practices which imply that seed comes from liquid in the region of the eyes. It is this liquid from the eyes which Homer calls αἶων and which he three times says "wastes" or "flows down" as husband or wife weeps, yearning for the other."<sup>3)</sup> These Greek data can help to explain more than this one Egyptian text, they also confirm our suspicion that the eye of Horus became small as a result of homosexual acts between Horus and Seth.

The stories of the Metternich stela and Socle Behague, which relate how Horus was bitten by poisonous snakes and scorpions, fit in with the idea of homosexual acts on the part of Seth. The intention of the texts is certainly to conjure injurious results from the bites of these harmful creatures, but the mythological back-

*Isis und Osiris*, II, Praha, 1941, p. 175). The tears of Isis fall into the water when she is violated by her son Horus (*Mag. pap. Harris* VII, 10).

1) *Pap. Beatty* VII vs. 1, 5 sqq. W. R. Dawson remarked: "The method by which Seth took his pleasure of 'Anat is interesting, as it further illustrates his already well-known homosexual tendencies" (*JEA* 22 (1936), p. 107). R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*, Leiden, 1967, p. 131 sqq., stresses the Canaanite background of the story: Anat is a cow and Seth a bull according to him. He does not pay attention to the expression that Anat is dressed like a man.

2) A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 62 n. 10.

3) R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge, 1951, p. 203, where references are given.

ground is, that the evil Seth sexually abused the child Horus. A woman comforts the despairing Isis:<sup>1)</sup> "Horus is protected against the malice of his brother. His followers do not injure him. Look for the reason why this happened, then Horus will live for his mother. Certainly a scorpion has stung him or an evil snake has bitten him." Isis fears, however, that the perpetrator is not a common snake or scorpion. She cries out: "Behold, Horus is in distress on account of the poison [i.e. semen]. The mischief is the deed of his brother."<sup>2)</sup> She had already observed: "the innocent fatherless child had moistened the banks with liquid of his eye [!] and saliva of his lips."<sup>3)</sup> The spells end: "Your hands belong to you, Horus. Your right hand is Shu, your left hand is Tefnet; they are the children of Re. Your belly belongs to you, Horus; the children of Horus, who are in it, do not receive the poison of the scorpion. Your strength belongs to you, Horus, the strength of Seth does not prevail against you. Your phallus belongs to you . . ." <sup>4)</sup>

As a series of parts of the body are enumerated, we prefer not to translate *phity* as "strength," but to mention the translation of Sander Hansen <sup>5)</sup>: "Du hast dein After, oh Horus, und die Kraft des Seth soll nicht gegen dich entstehen." In connection with the homosexual actions of Seth, one can understand this part of the body being specially mentioned. The homosexual papyrus fragment found in Kahun shows that a particular interest in it was attributed to Seth. "The Majesty of Seth said to the Majesty of Horus: 'How beautiful are thy buttocks' (*ph(wy)ky*')." <sup>6)</sup>

The strength of Seth is here his sexual strength. Hintze <sup>7)</sup> remarks that in *phity* the accessory meaning of sexual potency is heard, in contrast with *tnr*, which only means physical strength.

The "poison of the scorpion" is the seed of Seth. From a papyrus fragment published by Griffiths in his book, we see that the concept existed that Seth had discharged his seed into the body of Horus:

1) A. Klasens, o.c., p. 55; *Metternich stela* 187 sqq.

2) A. Klasens, o.c., p. 56; *Metternich stela* 215.

3) A. Klasens, o.c., p. 54; *Metternich stela* 170.

4) A. Klasens, o.c., p. 62; *Metternich stela* 149 sqq.

5) C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die Metternichstele*, Copenhagen, 1956, p. 58 sq.; cf. *WB* I, 537, 3, 5.

6) F. Li. Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob*, London, 1898, Pl. 3, VI, 12, l. 29. Seth is often called *c3 phity*, cf. p. 132 n. 7.

7) F. Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache neuägyptischer Erzählungen*, Berlin, 1950, p. 75. In *pap. d'Orbiney* 3, 5-6, the woman says to Bata: "There is great sexual strength (*phity*) in you, for I see your physical strength (*tnr*) daily."

"The seed of Seth is in the belly of Horus since Seth has emitted it against him." 1)

It was suggested above that the seizing of the testicles by Horus was not simply an act of undirected hostility towards Seth. This action appears in a very particular light if we also look into the text of the papyrus fragment found in Kahun and of the "Contendings of Horus and Seth," which deal with the homosexual relations of the two gods. It is understandable that earlier research did not stress this homosexuality. The relevant texts are sometimes published in a Latin translation, and thereby isolated from the whole. It was indeed only the so-called folk-tales or magical papyri that furnished a circumstantial account. It would be wrong to conclude from this, however, that the homosexual view of the strife between Horus and Seth is a later, non-religious elaboration of the ancient sacred myth. Early data are scarce and incomplete. According to a Pyramid text Thoth came forth from Seth. 2) This implies the idea of sexual relations between Horus and Seth and the manipulations with the seed of the two gods that are reported by later texts. It hardly seems likely that such a statement of mythic fact would cause the myth of Horus and Seth to develop in the direction of homosexuality. However, those who think that the myth of the conflict of Horus and Seth can be derived from a historical war between two groups of people will find it hard to admit that the contention between the two gods was imbued with homosexuality from the beginning. Van Baaren remarks 3) that in Egyptian mythology, unlike the Greek, we find hardly any quarrels among the gods. The conflict between Horus and Seth would be an exception. This statement calls for some remark. The conflict became such an isolated case in the descriptions of Egyptian mythology, because its nature was not understood. The quarrel was not recognised as essentially an erotic game with the inevitable conflicts this implies. As a result, the conflict was always represented as of a warlike nature. Certain Egyptian sources, e.g. the Horus myth of Edfu, do indeed offer inducement so to regard it. There does not seem to be any reason to divide the myth into an esoteric and exoteric version. Although the homosexual inclination seems

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1) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 45.

2) *Pyr.* 1999 c.

3) Th. P. van Baaren, *Mensen tussen Nijl en Zon*, Zeist-Antwerpen, 1963, p. 60.



to have been met with in Egypt,<sup>1)</sup> it certainly did not take the same place there as in Greece. We may assume therefore that many Egyptians were accustomed, as we are, not to accentuate the homosexual traits of the Horus and Seth myth or to interpret them in terms of a militant conflict.

If it was indeed the experience of a militant conflict, in this case the wars before the union of the country, which gave rise to the myth of Horus and Seth, then it is strange that these wars are only mirrored in the battle of the gods Horus and Seth and not elsewhere in Egyptian mythology. It also remains inexplicable, why these wars are related in such unmistakably sexual terms as the theft of testicles.

We already remarked that the Egyptians did not represent Seth as a eunuch. We know from the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" that Horus robs Seth of his testicles, not in the sense that he castrated him, but that he intercepts the seed of Seth's testicles. He prevents Seth from introducing the seed into his body. The Berlin dictionary has ten different Egyptian words, which are indiscriminately translated as "testicles."<sup>2)</sup> The determinatives, often a great help in translation, have in this case occasioned an unnecessary curtailment of meaning. The Egyptian words with the testicles as determinative do not invariably mean the concrete bodily part, as evidenced by a passage of the pap. Jumilhac.<sup>3)</sup> Thoth cries out, when he has caught Baba having connection with a bitch: *iswy.k r wj*. Obviously it is not the testicles themselves, but sexual potency which disappears. This example may serve to show that the theft of the *hrwy Stš* need not necessarily imply castration of the testicles. It may also stand figuratively for the ablation of sexual power.

The papyrus found in Kahun, dating from the M.K., relates that Isis instructed Horus what he was to do, if Seth were again to approach him with lascivious intent:

"The Majesty of Horus said to his mother Isis . . . Seth desires (?) to have intercourse with me. And she said to him, take care, do not approach him for that; when he mentions it to you again, say to him: It is altogether too difficult for me because of (my) nature (?), since you are too heavy for me; my strength will not be equal to yours, you shall say to him. Then, when he shall have given your strength,

1) G. Posener, *Le conte de Néferkaré et du général Siséné*, RdÉ 11 (1957), p. 119-137.

2) WB VI, 80, s.v. Hoden.

3) Pap. Jumilhac XVI, 18.



place your fingers between your buttocks. Lo, it will give . . . . Lo, he will enjoy it exceedingly (?) . . . .<sup>1)</sup>

Duped by this trick, Seth loses his seed. According to the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" Isis throws the seed of Seth into the water. Even unto a late period we find the motive of theft of virile power, otherwise than by castration. In the pap. Jumilhac we read that Isis, who had changed herself into a bitch, ran along in front of Seth until he lost his seed. Then Isis ridiculed him because of this ejaculation.<sup>2)</sup>

The motive of castration also appears in the pap. Jumilhac.<sup>3)</sup> Not only the testicles, but also the phallus is cut off. He who does this, however, is not Horus but Anubis, who elsewhere in this papyrus is a form of Seth himself. It seems rather too far-fetched to think of self-emasculatation here. Seth undergoes castration as a bull in Saka. His name in this town is Bata. In the pap. d'Orbiney of the N.K., there is transmitted to us the story of the two gods Bata and Anubis. Vandier<sup>4)</sup> takes this story to represent the version of the Horus and Seth myth current among the worshippers of Seth. In this "Tale of the Two Brothers", Bata castrates himself after his brother's wife has attempted to seduce him, and goes to foreign parts.

There seems to have been some uncertainty in antiquity as to the effects of castration. Onians<sup>5)</sup> concludes from various texts that the Greeks regarded the testicles not as the source, but as a reservoir of seed. It would follow, that castration was not held to be a definitive destruction of virility. Self-emasculatation for religious reasons would not have been "the bestowal of the seed vessels wholesale upon some deity (see Frazer Golden Bough, Attis I pp. 268 ff.) or the loss of virility or the avoiding of defilement but the positive conservation of the seed, the life-stuff, the soul-stuff . . ." Attis, who castrated himself, did not suffer death in the normal way. His body did not decay and his hair continued to grow. On the analogy of this we may perhaps understand the metamorphoses of Bata, who does not die in a normal way but is continually reborn, until he reaches the highest possible status by Egyptian

1) F. Ll. Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob*, Pl. 3, VI, 12, l. 31-36.

2) *Pap. Jumilhac III*, 1 sqq.

3) *Pap. Jumilhac III*, 18-21; XX, 15-18.

4) J. Vandier, *Bata, mattre de Saka*, *RHR* 136 (1949), p. 9.

5) R. B. Onians, *o.c.*, p. 109 n. 4.

norms, that of king. Particular attention is paid to the heart of Bata.<sup>1)</sup>

In the opinion of the physician and egyptologist Jonckheere,<sup>2)</sup> it is evident from their art that the Egyptians were aware of the bodily changes ensuing upon castration before or after puberty. No one would doubt the difference. The problem is, however, in what the difference consisted. Does the conservation of life-stuff or soul-stuff really imply a higher degree of virility? It is not superfluous to consider this problem. The idea might have existed that the semen, produced in the heart or elsewhere, could not be voided if the testicles had been removed. This might be an excellent explanation of the virile part played by Seth in the Egyptian religion as god of thunder and war, whereas he is commonly understood to have been castrated according to the Egyptians. The late Egyptian text quoted below, however, shows that the Egyptians may call an impotent old bull an ox. It is said of the moon-god Khons:

The moon is his form. As soon as he has rejuvenated himself he is a brilliant (burning) bull, when he is old, he is an ox (*s'ḥ*), because he occasions only darkness. His waxing moon, however, causes the bulls to cover, brings the cows in calf and causes the egg to grow in the body.<sup>3)</sup>

The castrated male, then, is not more, but less virile than a man in the prime of his life. It follows that the virile role of Seth is in conflict with the concept that he was castrated.

An actual myth regarding castration of the moon-god is not included in the Egyptian religion. By using the word ox, the writer was merely expressing that the moon-god, grown old, has lost his virile powers. The following, earlier text relating to Khons, quoted below, does not speak of castration, but of loss of semen. There being no serious physiological reasons for making an essential distinction between castration and theft of seed, as the testicles were a reservoir of semen, one motive could be replaced by the other. This may also help to explain that Seth's loss of seed during homosexual actions

1) *Pap. d'Orbiney* 8, 1 sqq; B. H. Stricker, *De geboorte van Horus* I, Leiden, 1963, p. 31, has shown that according to the Greeks and Egyptians the "spermatic organ" is the heart and not the testicles. Cf. also: D. Müller, *Die Zeugung durch das Herz in Religion und Medizin der Ägypter, Orientalia* 35 (1966), p. 247-274. The idea that according to the Greeks castration did not entail "loss of virility" must not be exaggerated. Stricker discusses the divergent opinions of Aristotle and Galen on this subject and concludes "The learned were unable to understand what . . . everyone knew."

2) F. Jonckheere, *o.c.*, *RHS* 7 (1954), p. 139-155.

3) *Urk.* VIII, 74, (89 b).

before the conflict, could afterwards be altered into the more comprehensive concept of castration during or after the battle, when Seth was no longer worshipped as the virile god of thunder and war. The difference between loss of seed and castration seems to be not qualitative, but quantitative.

"I am Khons . . . I am the only one, the fruit of the gods . . . this god who does not die on the day of rams when the seed (*stt*) was taken away from this spirit, when he separated *hntt-*tf** from Heliopolis, when he separated Horus from Seth." 1)

Derchain,<sup>2)</sup> who has discussed this text in his study on the moon referred to above, thinks the "day of rams" is the 15th day of the month. The loss of semen takes place then, because the moon begins to wane and loses its virile powers. In Urk. VIII, 74 (see above) this is expressed in terms of castration and age. On the 15th day of the month the ritual of filling the eye was carried out. Following a different reckoning, based on the six parts of the eye of Horus, it was carried out on the 6th or the 7th day.<sup>3)</sup> The ritual of filling the eye of Horus is also connected with the conflict between Horus and Seth by the commentator on BD 17: Seth has sexually abused Horus, and Horus has tricked Seth. Thereby cosmic powers have been wasted. Seth's homosexual act threatens to change the cosmos into chaos.

BD 17 does not explicitly recount the sequel of the myth. The dead man only says he is re-establishing cosmic order in imitation of Thoth. The way this was done in the myth is related in the "Contendings of Horus and Seth." In this text Derchain has found the story of the origin of the moon.

Having learned from Seth's gardener that Seth eats only lettuce, Isis takes up the seed of Horus and spreads it out upon the lettuce. Presumably Seth is represented as a lettuce-eater, because this vegetable was accounted an aphrodisiac.<sup>4)</sup> Through this ruse of Isis, Seth becomes pregnant. He is the victim of his own desire for sensual enjoyment. Upon the command of Thoth, the moon-god, the seed of Horus appears from the forehead of Seth as a golden

1) CT IV, 65 j, 66 c, f-j.

2) Ph. Derchain, *o.c.*, p. 41.

3) Ph. Derchain, *o.c.*, p. 25.

4) A. Erman, *Beiträge zur ägyptischen Religion*, SPAW, 1916, p. 1142; L. Keimer, *Die Pflanze des Gottes Min*, ZÄS 59 (1924), p. 140-143; G. Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens de l'époque pharaonique*, Paris, 1949, p. 196 n. 79; H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 120.

disk, and takes up its station upon Seth's head. Only now does Seth find out that not Horus, but he himself is the victim of deceit, and he becomes furious. He stretches forth his hand to seize the disk. But Thoth is too quick for him, and sets it as an ornament upon his own head. This disk of the moon is the same as the eye when it is filled, or the god Thoth in person. According to a Pyramid text 1) the eye of Horus is taken from the forehead of Seth.

Thoth came forth from Seth.<sup>2)</sup> The form of words indicates that he was not begotten by Seth. Thoth says to Osiris: "I am the son of your son, the seed of your seed, he who separated the two brothers."<sup>3)</sup> As sprung from Seth he is called "the cutter."<sup>4)</sup> The sickle of the moon has been suggested in connection with this name. The eye of Horus can also be represented as "the one great in magic, the cutter, who came forth from Seth."<sup>5)</sup>

Thoth is also called "the son of the two rivals,"<sup>6)</sup> or "the son of the two lords."<sup>7)</sup> Or "the son of the two lords, who came forth from the fore-head."<sup>8)</sup> Then there is the well-known text from Edfu, which confirms the above scattered data of earlier periods:

"I bring you the beautiful green plants on which you have emitted your seed, which is hidden there, which the effeminate one has swallowed. Your seed belongs to him and he will conceive for you a son, who will come forth from his forehead."<sup>9)</sup>

These words are addressed to Min-Horus; the "effeminate one" (*hmty*—homosexual) is a contemptuous designation of Seth; the son is Thoth.

Elsewhere Thoth is called the "son of Re"; "eldest son of Re" or "he who came forth from Re."<sup>10)</sup> These terms aim at formulating the relationship between the sun-god and the moon-god, and disregard other aspects.

1) *Pyr.* 84 a.

2) *Pyr.* 1999 c.

3) *CT* I, 229 g, 230 a, b.

4) *mdš*, *Pyr.* 1999 c.

5) *BD* 149, XI 5; cf. H. Kees, *Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen*, *ZAS* 60 (1925), p. 3.

6) C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*,

Copenhagen, 1937, p. 91 sq.

7) *Pap. Jumilhac* V, 21.

8) *WB* II, 231,6.

9) *Edfou* II, 44 (cf. I, 82).

10) P. Boylau, *Thoth the Hermes of Egypt*, London, 1922, p. 186, 194; H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*,

p. 809.

A hymn to Thoth says:

"... come and behold Thoth, who has appeared in his crown, which the two lords have made fast for him in Hermopolis." 1)

As we have seen, Horus and Seth are not usually imagined as working together in concord. The two combatants bring forth the god of peace. He appears and places himself between the two gods, 2) thereby interceding in the struggle and ending the homosexual relationship. He makes separation between the two gods. The third ends the discord of the two gods.

This myth of the birth of Thoth or the eye of Horus or the moon may be embellished with various particulars. A passage in a Leiden papyrus shows, that Seth is not always represented as so guileless as not to notice that he has eaten the seed of Horus:

"The voice of the incantation is crying aloud because of the *mtwt* like the voice of Seth contending with the *mtwt*." 3)

Stricker 4) connected this text with the "Contendings of Horus and Seth." *Mtwt* is poison and seed. Seth was not bitten by a poisonous snake. He is pregnant, i.e. poisoned by the seed of Horus.

The appearance of the semen of Horus upon the head of Seth in the form of the eye is an extremely critical moment, for then the eye is at the mercy of Seth's anger. 5) In sacrificial liturgies where the offering is termed the eye of Horus, lapidary sentences enumerate what may happen. Seth seizes the eye; 6) he treads it underfoot; 7) he has stolen it 8) etc. It is taken from him. 9) All texts in which one can read open combat and a militant conflict, are to be placed in this stage of the myth and not elsewhere. Yet even here it is not always necessary to imagine a violent fight. Together with the cause of the conflict, peace also becomes apparent: the mediator Thoth. According to the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" Thoth obtains the desired object with the greatest ease. L. J. Cazemier 10) remarks in an article on prayer in the Pyramid texts, that Horus does not

1) B. von Turajeff, *Zwei Hymnen an Thoth*, ZAS 33 (1895), p. 121.

2) CT IV, 66 j.

3) *Pap. Leiden* I 349, II 9.

4) B. H. Stricker, *Teksten tegen schorpioenen naar Pap. I 349, OMRO NR 21* (1940), p. 61.

5) *Pyr.* 1407 b.

6) *Pyr.* 1233 b.

7) *Pyr.* 73 a.

8) *Pyr.* 1839 a.

9) *Pyr.* 95 c.

10) L. J. Cazemier, *Das Gebet in den Pyramidentexten*, JEOL 15 (1957/58), p. 63.

always obtain the eye by fighting or violence. Horus implores or asks Seth for the eye.<sup>1)</sup>

This myth of the homosexual relations between Horus and Seth, ending in a reconciliation after a quarrel, is not only the story of the origin of the moon. Derchain<sup>2)</sup> remarks: "... le mythe devait être pour les Égyptiens non une simple description de la réalité sensible, mais plutôt une force réelle, commandant les phénomènes, qui sont dès lors des espèces de projections du mythe." Understanding of the essential being of the moon is founded upon the dramatic story of the eye of Horus and the gods Horus and Seth. Then the moon is no longer a strange phenomenon of nature, but a religious symbol. Van Baaren<sup>3)</sup> has defined the symbol as "a sign that conveys an image, that in this our reality gives expression to a reality of another order, so that the symbol may be a living point of contact between a human being and his gods." He who carries out the ritual of filling the eye of Horus not only shields the cosmos from disintegration, but also comes into contact with the gods and benefits spiritually.

The Egyptians beheld the eye not only in a phenomenon of nature such as the moon, but also in cultural phenomena: the grain-measure,<sup>4)</sup> the crown, the uraeus. Seth's issue may be variously expressed.<sup>5)</sup>

### 3. SETH AND THE EYE OF HORUS

The eye of Horus is not a random and indissoluble part of this god's body. Sometimes it is regarded as a divine entity having separate existence:

"whose appearance Re ordained, whose birth Atum established."\*)

1) *Pyr.* 65 b.

2) Ph. Derchain, *L'authenticité de l'inspiration égyptienne dans le "Corpus Hermeticum"*, *RHR* 161 (1962), p. 192.

3) Th. P. van Baaren, *o.c.*, p. 122.

4) *Pap. Hearst* XIV, 2-4.

5) It is an instance of logical thinking upon the basis of theological insight, that the Egyptians brought the crown and the uraeus and the eye into connection. There is no need to regard the identification of crown, snake and eye as an example of primitive mentality or of a "type of religious thinking, which is surely different from our own" (cf. C. J. Bleeker, *NTT* 14 (1959-'60), p. 441). It is not the logic or the thinking, but the religion of the Egyptians which is different from our own.

6) *CT* IV, 98 f, g.



"When did this god come? Before the shadows were separated, before the natures of the gods were made."<sup>1)</sup>

In this CT spell no distinction is made between the eye of Horus and the eye of Re. We sometimes see the same elsewhere. According to a Pyramid text<sup>2)</sup> Re hears the word of the gods with the eye of Horus. This text also shows that the eye is not only an instrument of vision. Kristensen's view is known: the eye represents divine life and energy.<sup>3)</sup> Helck<sup>4)</sup> has since pointed out that many Egyptian words for parts of the body are replaced by a paraphrase indicating their function, which can be translated. Ear (*msḏr*) is the place one sleeps on, hand (*ḏr.t*) is the seizer. The eye (*ir.t*) is the doer. When Re finds that mankind is plotting against him, he takes action, i.e. he sends out his eye as Hathor or Sakhmet to punish the people.<sup>5)</sup>

According to BD 112<sup>6)</sup> Seth caused pain (*škr*) to the eye of Horus in the shape of a black pig. *Škr* is here not an action, but the result of an action: shooting pain.<sup>7)</sup> So the action which caused the suffering of the eye need not have been a blow in the face of Horus. We do not hear of belligerency or martial spirit on the part of the pig in Egypt. Its sexual conduct, on the other hand, does not pass entirely unmentioned.<sup>8)</sup> As soon as the eye sees the black pig again, it begins to rage and so stops functioning. Consequently Horus faints and has to be laid on a bed. Thus an ailment of the eye not only causes blindness, but also general inactivity.

Another name for the eye of Horus is the *wḏjt*-eye, the sound eye, the eye which was healed, not the eye which remained healthy (the other eye of Horus), as argued by Griffiths.<sup>9)</sup> Van Baaren calls this eye a symbol of all good and holy things in a sound and undamaged condition.<sup>10)</sup> In this eye-symbol contrasts are united

1) CT IV, 101 g, h.

2) *Pyr.* 1231 d.

3) W. B. Kristensen, *Inleiding tot de godsdienstgeschiedenis*, Arnhem, 1955, p. 120.

4) W. Helck, *Bemerkungen zu den Bezeichnungen für einige Körperteile*, ZÄS 80 (1955), p. 144.

5) Cf. Deliverance of Mankind from Destruction. In: J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton, 1955<sup>2</sup>, p. 10 sq.

6) CT II, 341 a.

7) K. Sethe a.o., *Die Sprüche für das Kennen der Seelen der heiligen Orte*, ZÄS 58 (1923), p. 14.

8) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 8.

9) J. G. Griffiths, *Remarks on the mythology of the eyes of Horus*, CdÉ 33 no. 66 (1958), p. 183.

10) Th. P. van Baaren, o.c., p. 48.

and raised to synthesis on a higher level. The whole eye proves to be more than the sum of its parts.

The separate elements of the *wḏꜣt*-eye were used to write down the fractional parts of the grain measure. Now we find, if we add up these fractions  $1/2$ ,  $1/4$ ,  $1/8$ ,  $1/16$ ,  $1/32$ ,  $1/64$ , that they do not make 1 but only  $63/64$ . If we set the individual signs in their correct place, however, we obtain the hieroglyph of the *wḏꜣt*-eye in which nothing is lacking. The point is that each fraction does not remain on its own, but is united with its invisible counterpart in a higher synthesis:  $1/64$  unites with its counterpart and becomes  $1/32$ . This new unit again unites with its counterpart and becomes  $1/16$ . Following this method, the final result is not  $63/64$ , but the totality in which nothing is lacking. The above explanation differs from that of Gardiner <sup>1)</sup>; "presumably the missing  $1/64$  was supplied magically by Thoth." The *wḏꜣt* is a symbol of soundness in the sense of integrated contrasts.

The eye that passed through Seth in the form of semen, was reborn as *wḏꜣt*-eye and comprises not only the reality of Horus, but also the reality of Seth, the outsider. Thoth, the famous healer of the eye, is the son of the two lords, as stated above:

"I am Thoth, who has seized the great goddess. I have come to search for the eye of Horus. I have brought it and numbered it. I found it (so that it is now) completely numbered and whole (*wḏꜣt*)." <sup>2)</sup>

We also find the idea that "the great Isis who renders the two men contented" <sup>3)</sup> had a part in the matter:

"As for this *ḥꜥꜣt*-measure, it is the eye of Horus, which was measured and examined. Isis brought it to her son to purge his body, to work out the evil which was in his body." <sup>4)</sup>

Thoth has constructed the eye in such a way, that he has designed a new image of reality, which takes account of the existence of Seth. According to the Egyptians, reality is not only being, but being and non-being, a current formula for totality.<sup>5)</sup> Here we meet with the "deeply rooted Egyptian tendency to understand the world in dualistic terms as a series of pairs of contrasts." <sup>6)</sup> The ritual of

1) A. H. Gardiner, *EG*, § 266.

2) *CT* III, 343 b-h.

3) *CT* IV, 22 c.

4) *Pap. Hearst* XIV, 2-4.

5) Ph. Derchain, *Zijn en niet-zijn volgens de egyptische filosofie, Dialoog 2* (1962), p. 171-190.

6) H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the gods*, Chicago, 1958<sup>3</sup>, p. 19.

the completing of the eye, which was carried out not on the 15th but on the 6th day of the month, paid less attention to astronomical observations than to the symbolism of the parts of the eye. On the 6th day the moon was in the first quarter. On the first day of the month the  $\frac{1}{64}$ th part of the eye was ritually united with its counterpart to make  $\frac{1}{32}$ ; on the second day the  $\frac{1}{32}$  part with its counterpart to form  $\frac{1}{16}$ , and so on in the following days. Finally on the sixth day one half was united with the other. Thus the eye was filled. According to Derchain,<sup>1)</sup> the ritual might derive from the Heliopolitan tradition. It is precisely in Heliopolis that one might expect such a ritual accentuating integration, because Seth came into being beside Osiris, Isis and Horus, disturbing the male-female unity of the preceding generations of gods. The integration of Seth in the cosmic order costs him his independence. In his study on the eye of Horus, Rudnitzky argues that the hostile force of life is compelled to serve the favourable force by a kind of metamorphosis. "Diesem Gedankengang zufolge werden Horus und Seth in einem polaren Antagonismus — in Unterschied zu der Antinomie eines Gott- und Satanglaubens gegenübergestellt."<sup>2)</sup> Seth teaches Horus through bitter experience:

"Osiris NN, take for thee the finger of Seth, that causes the clear eye of Horus to see. Osiris NN, take for thee the clear eye of Horus, that is lighted by the tip of Seth's finger."<sup>3)</sup>

Rudnitzky<sup>4)</sup> supposes that the finger of Seth actually means a sculptor's tool, which chisels out an eye in the stone image. Yet what leads to the statement, that the finger of Seth causes the eye of Horus to see and illuminates it? In another connection the finger of Seth actually means the bolt of the naos containing the divine image. When pulling out the bolt one must recite:

"I pull out the finger of Seth from the eye of Horus. It is comfortable. I loose the finger of Seth from the eye of Horus. It is comfortable."<sup>5)</sup>

In the various texts of the ritual of opening the mouth and the ritual for Amenophis I the bolt is called not the finger, but the phallus of Seth.

1) Ph. Derchain, *Mythes et dieux lunaires en Égypte*, p. 25.

2) G. Rudnitzky, *Die Aussage über das Auge des Horus*, Copenhagen, 1956, p. 36.

3) *Pyr.* 48.

4) G. Rudnitzky, *o.c.*, p. 47 sq.

5) *Pap. Berlin* 3055, III 8-9; cf. *Edfou* III, 333, 19; *CT* I, 16 d, 17 a.

"I am Horus, my father Osiris, who seizes the phallus of Seth for you with his hand" 1)

Finger and phallus seem to be interchangeable. We surmise that it can be said that the finger of Seth lights up the eye of Horus, because it is the phallus of Seth that is thought of. Seth's phallus emits fire.<sup>2)</sup> Not only the open conflict, the homosexual play too is from the beginning of a violent nature. He who looses the finger or seizes the phallus, puts an end to the ascendancy of Seth. Elsewhere there is mention of the theft of seed. At the same time, it must be admitted that this attack on the part of Seth ultimately led to the appearance of the eye of Horus. Thus one can say: the finger or the phallus causes the eye to see or illuminates it. The familiar hieroglyph of the *wḏꜣt* might be an eye overflowing with moisture or light.

In the sacrificial liturgies we find the longing for and the belief in the restoration of peace and harmony. The lector-priest who says that he is Thoth, recalls discordance that was overcome:

"The distress that causes confusion, has been driven away, and all the gods are in harmony.

I have given Horus his eye, placed the *wḏꜣt*-eye in the correct position.

I have given Seth his testicles, so that the two lords are content through the work of my hands." 3)

In the "ritual of Amenophis I" the offerings made are called "eyes" and "testicles":

"come to these offerings . . .

I know the sky, I know the earth, I know Horus, I know Seth. Horus is appeased with his eyes, Seth is appeased with his testicles.

I am Thoth, who reconciles the gods, who makes the offerings in their correct form." 4)

Van Baaren<sup>5)</sup> remarks: "In Egypt sacrifice is not so much a gift from men to the gods, as a sacred act whereby man can contribute to the restoring or the maintaining of cosmic harmony." From the texts we have quoted it is evident that this harmony is attained when both Horus and Seth have received their attributes, eye and testicles respectively. It is noticeable, though, that in by far the most numerous instances the offering is only called the eye of

1) E. Otto, *o.c.* I, Scene 74 B; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 85; H. H. Nelson, *Certain reliefs at Karnak and Medinet Habu and the ritual of Amenophis I*, *JNES* 8 (1949), p. 228.

2) *Pap. Beatty VII* vs. 2, 2; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 63.

3) E. Otto, *o.c.* I, scene 71 t-x.

4) *Pap. Beatty IX* rt. 1, 3-5; cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 83.

5) Th. P. van Baaren, *o.c.*, p. 68.

Horus, and no explicit mention is made of the testicles.<sup>1)</sup> Now the *wꜥꜣt*-eye in itself presupposes an integration of contrasts and a certain harmony between Horus and Seth. Such an integration, however, implies that Seth, the privateer and outsider, shall be of service to others. Offering the testicles to Seth is apparently a risky business. There seems to be some hazard attached to establishing a harmony in which Seth is so positively concerned that the testicles are independently stressed beside the eye.

Apparently it is no historical accident that the symbols "eye" and "testicles", light and sexuality, are paired in this way in Egypt. Elsewhere too, where no historical link whatever with the Egyptian religion can be pointed out, light and sexuality are opposed to each other. According to a Tibetan myth mankind had originally no sexual desires. They bore the light within themselves and were radiant. When the sexual instinct awoke, the sexual organs originated, but the light in man was extinguished and sun and moon appeared in the sky.<sup>2)</sup> A Tibetan monk added that originally mankind propagated themselves through contemplation and light and that physical contact and sexual union was a phenomenon of degeneration. Eliade,<sup>3)</sup> from whose work we quote the above, remarks: "Selon ces croyances, la Lumière et la Sexualité sont deux principes antagoniques: lorsqu'une d'entre elles domine, l'autre ne peut pas se manifester, et inversement. Il faut peut-être là chercher l'explication du rite tantrique que nous avons analysé plus haut (the maithuna, ritual union with the Shakti): si l'apparition de la sexualité force la lumière à disparaître, cette dernière ne peut se trouver cachée que dans l'essence même de la sexualité, la semence."

We are struck by the fact that in Egyptian mythology also the light has diminished, the eye of Horus has become small owing to the homosexual relations of Horus and Seth, and that here too the light is hidden in the semen. The moon comes forth out of Seth, who has devoured the seed of Horus. Naturally there are great

1) Offerings of eye and testicles: *Pyr.* 535 a,b, 946 b,c (cf. *CT V*, 73 k; 76 a, b; 120 b; *Urk.* V, 181, 13).

2) Cf. the Egyptian text, *pap. Berlin* 3055, XVIII, 3, quoted by J. Zandee, *De hymnen aan Amon van papyrus Leiden I* 350. Leiden, 1948, p. 65: "thou art Horus, who illuminated the two lands with his two eyes when the sun (*Itn*) had not yet originated."

3) M. Eliade, *Expériences de la lumière mystique*. In: M. Eliade, *Méphistophélès et l'androgyné*, Paris, 1962, p. 49.

differences between the Tibetan and the Egyptian religion. An Egyptian priest would not judge sexuality to be a phenomenon of degeneration. Even that sexuality, which in its symbol of the testicles of Seth is shown to be by no means confined to heterosexuality, does not remain in conflict with the light. Horus and Seth, light and sexuality, are reconciled. In the sacrifice eye and testicles, light and semen can be joined. Indeed, according to the Egyptian concept of life they must be joined. Such is also evident from passages not taken from sacrificial texts. Of the many texts published by Stricker in a study of ancient embryology, we only quote a passage of the famous great hymn to Aten:<sup>1)</sup> "Thy rays penetrate into the ocean. Thou dost cause the seed in women to take shape, and makest moisture into men." It is evident from this that without the influence of sunlight the seed cannot develop. An old problem brought up for discussion by F.L. Griffith in his publication of the homosexual papyrus fragment from Kahun can now be solved.<sup>2)</sup> In this corrupt fragment Seth purposely does not show his seed to the sun-god Re, or Isis instructs Horus not to let the sun see the seed of Seth. In the first reading the foolishness of Seth is evident, who wastes seed because he will not combine it with light, so infringing the cosmic order. In the second reading, the subtle Isis dupes Seth and manages to prevent the pregnancy of Horus. The latter possibility is the more probable. For in the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" Isis throws the seed of Seth, which Horus had caught in his hands, into the water. Although in the hymn to Aten quoted above it is professed that the sunlight penetrates even into the water, it is plausible to suppose the water to be one of the most inaccessible places for the light. Thus Isis prevents a disorderly conjunction of light and seed, though the union in itself must be brought about. Isis sees to it that the light is not lost in the seed, but the seed infused with light. To put it less abstractly and more in the form of the personal myth: Not Seth, but Horus is the leader after the reconciliation of the two gods.

We find this expressed on another level in the wisdom literature: God "gives wind in the eggs, although there is no instruction therein. He causes all wombs to bear from the seed that is brought

1) B. H. Stricker, *De geboorte van Horus I*, p. 16.

2) F. L. Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob*, Text volume, p. 4.



into them. In that same seed he raises up stone and bone." 1) In other words, God, to whom light pertains, gives growth. Here the contrast between light and sexuality does not constitute the drama of a polytheistic myth, but is the contrast between God and world.

The contrasting of light and sexuality not only in the Egyptian, but also in the far distant Tibetan religion, can hardly be explained by euhemerism. We see neither necessity nor a decisive reason for tracing the religious symbolism of the eye and testicles to blinding and emasculation during acts of war between prehistoric Egyptians. Eye and testicles form a stock pair of symbols, and give the impression of stemming from a single, grandiose religious conception. This would also imply that the contrast between Horus and Seth might be primary, and not a secondary historico-political development or the commixture of a separate Horus religion and a separate Seth religion.

#### 4. THE TESTICLES OF SETH

It is not really strange that much more has been written about the eye of Horus than about the testicles of Seth. This so nakedly sexual symbolism seems to lead to very unattractive forms of religion.

Griffiths 2) calls the testicles "a symbol of power." The supposed castration would mean "a loss of sovereignty." Seth's testicles, then, would have nothing to do with sexuality. In his translation of a passage to which Griffiths attaches considerable importance, Sethe, who is known to have paid much attention to the political background of the Egyptian religion, wisely shows the sexual character of power: "Horus ist das, der die Hoden des Seth sich einverleibt, damit er Zeugungsvermögen gewinne." 3) These words are spoken at the offering of sceptres. Surely the Egyptian pharaoh, who bears the sceptre, was not considered exclusively as a political ruler, but also as a representative of the cosmic order. By taking unto himself the testicles besides the eye, the king is not only incorporating

1) *Pap. Insinger* XXXII, 7-9, quoted by B. H. Stricker, *o.c.* I, p. 16.

2) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 39 n. 1.

3) *Dram. Ram. pap.* 83; K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen*, UGÄ, Leipzig, 1928, p. 196.

political power. He is the symbol of the god Horus, in whom Seth is integrated. In a "Book of Aphrodisiacs" <sup>1)</sup> one may read:

"thou strengthenest thy testicles together with Seth son of Nut."

This shows that the testicles of Seth were not regarded as a symbol of political power only. The impotent man can turn to Seth in his distress.

It is not by chance that the dead man who desires sexual pleasure in the hereafter, identifies himself successively with Baba, the god of the phallus in erection, "une sorte de parangon de la virilité" <sup>2)</sup> and with Seth:

"My phallus is Baba. I am Seth." <sup>3)</sup>

Kristensen <sup>4)</sup> called the testicles of Seth a fertility symbol. Now it is worth while to examine the nature of this fertility symbolised by the testicles of Seth. It would seem to us that everything which is called fertility in earlier works of religious history—and that is a good deal—is not summarised in the symbol of the testicles.

Van der Leeuw's view, that it was thought fertility would cease because of the mutilation of Seth, is not supported by texts. <sup>5)</sup> An interesting remark of Anthes, <sup>6)</sup> "the destruction of the testicles of Seth may recall the sterility of the desert," also fails to find confirmation in the texts.

More recently, however, Zandee <sup>7)</sup> has tried to show by means of a great number of texts that Seth was a fertility god. Yet the texts he adduces prove no more than that Seth has great strength, and particularly great sexual strength. It is true the rain, which Seth was lord of, promotes the growth of plants. Yet in Egypt vegetation and the fertility of the soil is not dependent on rain, but on the inundation of the Nile. Seth is called a bull, but in this comparison he is not a paragon of fertility, but of strength. According to Plutarch, <sup>8)</sup> Seth is the contrary of a fertility god:

1) *Pap. Beatty* X; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 115.

2) Ph. Derchain, *Nouveaux documents relatifs à Bébon (B3b3wj)*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 23; cf. *CT* VI, 144 d-e.

3) *CT* VI, 191 c, d.

4) W. B. Kristensen, *Het leven uit den dood*, Haarlem, 1926, p. 19 sq.

5) G. van der Leeuw, *Godsvoorstellingen in de oudaegyptische pyramideteksten*, Leiden, 1916, p. 131.

6) R. Anthes, *Egyptian theology in the third millennium B.C.*, *JNES* 18 (1959), p. 119.

7) J. Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 153 sq.

8) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 51; cf. F. C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia* V, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1957.

"Therefore it is only right and fair to condemn those who assign the orb of the Sun to Typhon, to whom there attaches nothing bright or of a conserving nature, no order nor generation nor movement possessed of moderation or reason, but everything the reverse." We hesitate to call Seth a god of fertility, for, precisely, his boundless energy is not productive. He is the voluptuary who is tricked, for his sexual power is taken from him. One might object that the testicles are offered to him. The sacrifice of the testicles to Seth, however, never takes place separately, as far as can be ascertained, but in conjunction with the eye of Horus. This means that eye and testicles are sacrificed to a double-god; Seth no longer has an individual place of his own, but is integrated in Horus. A man who is ill or dead may, in extreme need, have recourse to Seth <sup>1)</sup> and identify himself with him, but Seth is not the ideal of fertility. Even lacking the support of the notorious unpublished erotic papyrus of Turin, it must be granted in a general way to Yoyotte, who gives various examples, that Egyptian eroticism is not summed up in fertility symbolism.<sup>2)</sup> The points mentioned above, Seth's homosexuality and the fact that he was credited with practices of abortion, demonstrate that Seth is a god of sexuality which is not canalised into fertility. The aspect of sexual life which finds expression in marriage is not connected with Seth but with other gods, e.g. Amon, Khnum, Re.<sup>3)</sup> Mankind arose from the tears of the eye,<sup>4)</sup> but nowhere is man said to have come from the seed of Seth's testicles.

Seth's sexuality cannot be equated with fertility, yet we must take heed not to mark it down as homosexuality only. He experiences heterosexual desire towards the goddess Isis. His feelings are not returned. He is so badly deceived by Isis, that he complains in tears to Re. Perhaps this passage <sup>5)</sup> cannot be held to constitute convincing evidence of heterosexuality. Yet we deem it a mistake to set up homosexuality or heterosexuality as an alternative choice. The sexuality of Seth is irregular. The Sethian man is beloved of

1) *Pap. Beatty X*; *CT VI*, 191 c, d.

2) G. Posener et al., *Knaurs Lexikon der ägyptischen Kultur*, p. 63, s.v. Erotik. The French and English editions were not available to me.

3) J. Zandee, *De hymnen aan Amon van papyrus Leiden I 350*, p. 91 sqq.

4) *CT VII*, 465a; according to *Pap. Jumilhac III*, 5, only the *bddk3w*-plant (watermelon?) arises from the seed of Seth.

5) *Pap. Beatty I*, 6, 2 sqq.

women "through the greatness of his loving them." <sup>1)</sup> A rather disparaging remark is made, however, to the effect that this man, given to drink and quarrelling, does not care whether a woman is married or not. The Sethian animal, the ass, is the very example of lasciviousness:

"Man is even more inclined to sex than the ass; his purse prevents him." <sup>2)</sup>

A passage already quoted <sup>3)</sup> describes a *coitus* in the style of Seth. He leaps upon the goddess Anat as a ram, deflowers her with a chisel, and rapes her with fire. It is remarkable, that in this passage bisexual traits are ascribed to Anat: she is "clad as men and girt as women" and "acting as a male." The story can hardly be called paradigmatic for the relations of husband and wife.

The testicles of Seth represent the savage, elementary, yet undifferentiated urges which require to be shaped and integrated before they can be truly fruitful. Kerényi said in another connection: "Disorder belongs to the totality of life, and the spirit of this disorder is the trickster. His function in an archaic society, or rather the function of his mythology, of the tales told about him, is to add disorder to order and so make a whole, to render possible, within the fixed bounds of what is permitted, an experience of what is not permitted." <sup>4)</sup>

The testicle symbol is the counterpart of the *wdꜣt*-eye, that symbol of all good and holy things in sound and unimpaired condition. This other aspect of reality could not be ignored. The symbol of the testicles played a part in Egyptian religion from the time the Pyramid texts were composed till Graeco-Roman times. Horus is appeased with his eye, but Seth must also be appeased with his testicles. Thus he is recognised and worshipped as the "spirit of disorder", as the lord of the unbridled forces in nature and in civilisation. Sexually he proves to be an "enemy of boundaries," for he does not respect the boundaries of sex and wants to

1) *Pap. Beatty* III rt. 11, 1 sqq.; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 20.

2) Maxim of Ankhsheshonk; cf. B. H. Stricker, *De wijsheid van Anchsjesjong*, *JEOL* 15 (1957-'58), p. 30; see also the obscene curse in the Adoption-papyrus from the town of Seth, Sepermeru: "May a donkey copulate with him and a donkey with his wife." (A. H. Gardiner, *Adoption extraordinary*, *JEA* 26 (1940), p. 24).

3) *Pap. Beatty* VII vs. 1, 5 sqq.; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 62 sq.

4) P. Radin, *The Trickster*, with commentaries by K. Kerényi and C. G. Jung, London, 1956, p. 185. Kerényi called the trickster: "the spirit of disorder, the enemy of boundaries" (*ibidem*).

have relations which are sometimes homosexual and sometimes heterosexual.

In the Graeco-Roman period, in imitation of Horus, the testicles are taken from Seth but no longer offered to him. We shall see presently that this is linked with doubt as to the possibility of reconciliation between Horus and Seth. The Sethian reality is placed under the protection of other gods. Thus the king says, on offering the *mnit* to Isis:

"Take for you the testicles (*sm3ty*) of the enemy of your brother, the testicles (*b3kty*) of the Evil One.<sup>1</sup>)

N.K. texts in which it is stated that the testicles will not be offered to Seth, however, are of quite different nature:

"If he does not hear what I say, I shall not give to Horus that eye of his, I shall not give to Seth his testicles in this land forever."<sup>2</sup>)

The presumption of this text is that peace is attained when not only Horus, but also Seth has received his attributes. But the man with a grievance who pronounces these words will not co-operate in maintaining the harmony of the world. He will no longer serve the gods if they do nothing for him.

Someone else goes to extremes to cure his patient of headache:

"I shall cut off [the testicles of Horus]. I shall make blind the eye of Seth."<sup>3</sup>)

Apart from the Graeco-Roman period, texts regarded as evidence for the castration motive are extremely rare. Of the Pyramid texts only Pyr. 1463e need be mentioned: *n š3d.t hrwy šts*: "Before the sexual strength of Seth was made impotent." The motive of castration does not appear in this text, and we see no reason to put it into the translation by exegetical methods.<sup>4</sup>)

The uncertainty whether the motive of castration was generally

1) H. Junker, *Der grosse Pylon des Tempels der Isis in Philä*, Wien, 1958, p. 3.

2) *Pap. Leiden I 343 + 345*, rt. XXVII, 3-4; A. Massart, *The Leiden magical papyrus I 343 + I 345*, Leiden, 1954 (= Supplement to *OMRO NR 34* (1954)), p. 96.

3) *Pap. Beatty V* vs. 6, 2 sq. Here the symbols have changed owners. It is unlikely that the writer calls the eye of Horus "eye of Seth" to recall its provenance from Seth. The phrase "testicles of Horus" is an emendation of Gardiner "to obtain a balanced antithesis." (A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 51 n. 4). The verb *k3mn* (to make blind) conveys no particulars of the method of blinding. The verb *š3d* (to cut off) must mean here "castrate".

4) The Berlin Dictionary (*WB IV*, 28, 1) gives for the verb *š3d*: "(Die Hoden des Seth) abschnüren o.ä.". The only reference quoted is this place. *š3d* might be related however to *šid*: "Zur Ruhe und Ordnung bringen" (*WB IV*, 41, 8), cf. *šd*: "Matt werden" (*WB I*, 25, 3).



accepted in earlier times is not removed by the Coffin texts. It was already pointed out that the passage "after Horus had taken away the sexual strength of Seth" <sup>1)</sup> need not imply castration. <sup>2)</sup>

In CT I, 30 b the verb *f3* is used in connection with the testicles of Seth. Griffiths <sup>3)</sup> follows Massart <sup>4)</sup> in translating this verb as squeeze off. Faulkner, <sup>5)</sup> however, translates to devour (?). As alternative, Griffiths mentions a suggestion of Gunn: to heal or to replace. His final reference to the verb *i'f* certainly does not strengthen the case for castration, but rather suggests a homosexual act: squeeze out.

Offering the testicles to Seth <sup>6)</sup> need not be interpreted as returning testicles which had been cut off. It suggests at most that Seth is a god of sexual potency and impotence, but by no means that he is the divine eunuch. It is not possible, then, to establish the castration motive with certainty in earlier texts. <sup>7)</sup> There seems every reason to suppose that it did not originally form part of the Horus and Seth myth. The motive may have found its way into the myth from the cult. In the texts of Graeco-Roman times castration is most usually mentioned in the context of animal sacrifice. <sup>8)</sup>

The wily theft of seed in the myth becomes castration by violence in the cult, because there is no other means of taking away the sexual power of the sacrificial animal than castration. This castration in the cult to represent Horus's clever stealing of the semen, may be ancient. In Pyr. 418 where the testicles are mentioned, a variant replaces the name of Seth by a word for bull. Yet even there no explicit mention is made of castration. A text quoted by Griffiths <sup>9)</sup> seems reminiscent of animal sacrifice:

"This room in which Isis cried out and the testicles of Seth were cut off." <sup>10)</sup>

1) CT IV, 237 b.

2) The same applies to the variant Sq7Sq (CT IV, 411): "when he struck the testicles of him."

3) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 35.

4) A. Massart, *o.c.*, p. 96.

5) R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 42.

6) *Pyr.* 535 b.

7) Cf. for this motive the loci relating to the testicles of Seth: *Pyr.* 142 b; 418 a (cf. 679 d); 594 a; 946 c (cf. CT V, 73 k, 76 b, 120 b, *Urk.* V, 181, 13); *Pap. Ebers* 2, 3-2, 6; *Pap. Beatty* IX rt. 1, 4; W. Pleyte, F. Rossi, *Papyrus Turin*, Leiden, 1869-1876, pl. 125, 3-4. E. Otto, *o.c.* I, scene 71 and other loci given in the *Belegstellen* of the Berlin dictionary s.v. the various words for testicles (*WB* VI, 80).

8) *WB* I, 131, 12, *Belegstellen* = Philae Photo 360: "The king slaughters Seth *hr štp tšwy.f.*" *Pap. Jumilhac* III, 18-21; XX, 15-18 refers to castration of Seth in the shape of a bull which is sacrificed.

9) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 36.

10) *Pap. London Med.* 10059, 13, 3-4.

After the N.K. the possibility of reconciliation between Horus and Seth begins to be doubted. People become so convinced of the demonic nature of Seth, that he can hardly be imagined any more as a foolish, hot tempered, lecherous god whom Horus got the better of, so that he has to take a second place. He can no longer be granted a place at all. He is conquered and driven out of Egypt and castrated.

"But this Horus himself is perfected and complete; but he has not done away completely with Typhon, but has taken away his activity and strength. Hence they say that at Koptos the statue of Horus holds in one hand the privy members of Typhon." <sup>1)</sup>

In Edfu Horus is the formidable guardian at the gate of the sanctuary, with the testicles of Seth in his hand, a victorious god inspiring the demons with terror.<sup>2)</sup> Finally, in the Horus myth of Edfu we find the story of the actual fight and the castration of Seth as a hippopotamus.

"The seventh harpoon is struck fast in his body and hath spiked (?) his testicles." <sup>3)</sup>

The relief illustrating this text <sup>3)</sup> shows Horus thrusting the seventh harpoon into the testicles of the hippopotamus that represents Seth. We can hardly think it correct, though, to assume that this version of the myth was always valid everywhere in Egypt, and that those data referring to erotic play and the theft of semen leading to a quarrel, are to be regarded as entirely secondary.

## 5. THE SEPARATION OF HORUS AND SETH

The birth of Seth is the beginning of confusion.<sup>4)</sup> He is the author of confusion.<sup>5)</sup> Seth does not respect existing boundaries. The frontier between the sexes, which was created by Atum, is ignored by Seth. The homosexual relations between Seth and Horus

1) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 55.

2) *Edfou* I, 346.

3) A. M. Blackman and H. W. Fairman, *The myth of Horus at Edfu* II, *JEA* 29 (1943), p. 14; *Edfou* XIII, pl. DIV; *Edfou* VI, 75, 1.

4) *Pap. Leiden* I 346, II 12; B. H. Stricker, *Spreuken tot beveiliging gedurende de schrikkel-dagen naar Pap. I 346*, *OMRO* NR 29 (1948), p. 68.

5) *BD* 39, 14.

ended in a quarrel. Before a solution is found and reconciliation is brought about, a separation is made between the two gods, thus ending open conflict.

The separation is not an ideal solution, but a necessity. Without it, confusion would have become general and the cosmos would have turned to chaos. Thoth, who came into being as the fruit of the disorders between Horus and Seth, has said:

"I am he who limits the flood, who separates the two men."<sup>1)</sup>

The separating of Horus and Seth is equalled to setting a boundary between the cosmos and the chaos surrounding it like a flood. The separation, indeed, has creative significance, for it is a decisive mythical event. The Egyptians could link all kinds of distinctions or contrasts in contemporary reality with the separation of Horus and Seth: heaven and earth,<sup>2)</sup> earth and underworld,<sup>3)</sup> right and left,<sup>4)</sup> black and red,<sup>5)</sup> to be born and to be conceived,<sup>6)</sup> rulership (*ḥkꜣ*) and strength (*nḥt*),<sup>7)</sup> life (*ꜥnḥ*) and dominion (*wꜣꜣ*).<sup>8)</sup>

The separation also means a dividing of the world. In the Pyramid texts there are mentioned the places (*iꜣwt*) of Horus and the places (*iꜣwt*) of Seth.<sup>9)</sup> This horizontal division is traversed by a vertical one, that of above and below. In the name Horus (*ḥr*) the word above (*ḥr*) was read. Thus there was no difficulty in interpreting the *iꜣwt ḥryt* as not only the places of Horus, but also the places above. There are indeed a few instances where the places of Seth are contrasted with the *iꜣwt kꜣyt*: the high places.<sup>10)</sup> Sometimes to this divided world there is added the field of rushes (*šḥt iꜣrw*) as the place where Osiris and the dead reside. In the Shabaka text<sup>11)</sup> and in texts of the M.K.<sup>12)</sup> and of the N.K.<sup>13)</sup> the two portions (*psšty*) of Horus and Seth are spoken of.

1) CT VII, 346 a (cf. BD 4, 2).

2) Pyr. 518 a, b.

3) CT VI, 327 d, e.

4) Pyr. 601 d, f.

5) Pap. Beatty VII rt. 8, 4; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, text volume, p. 61.

6) Pyr. 211 b.

7) Urk. IV, 366, 4, 5.

8) Urk. IV, 249, 14.

9) Pyr. 135 c; 218 d, e; 480 b; 487 b; 598 b; 770 b; 943 b; 948 c; 961 b; 994 a; 1475 c;

10) Pyr. 915 b; 916 a.

11) *Shabaka text* 10 c.

12) J. E. Gautier and G. Jéquier, *Mémoire sur les fouilles de Licht*, Le Caire, 1902, p. 34.

13) Very frequently; a good selection in: J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 69.

Not only the world, but also the primaeval flood that surrounds the world is divided into two. The mythical *ḳḫw-Hr* are to be sought in the North, and the *ḳḫw-Štš* in the South.<sup>1)</sup>

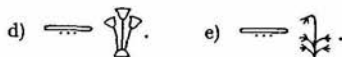
The places, portions and water regions of Horus and Seth are not strictly geographical, but cosmological terms. The first and the second together designate the world the Egyptians lived in. Horus became the lord of the papyrus country (*t3 mḫw*)<sup>d)</sup> and Seth the lord of the land of sedges (*t3 šm*)<sup>e)</sup> after the partition.

Although it is often Thoth who separates the two gods, also in earlier texts,<sup>2)</sup> greater gods may absorb this function. Thus Amen-Re, "the lord of the new moon that is celebrated on the sixth and seventh day" is hymned as "he who separated the two men in the great hall."<sup>3)</sup> As son of the two men, however, Thoth is pre-eminently the mediator who ends the contention. Yet this work of Thoth must be confirmed by greater gods. Thoth's name may even be passed over. In spite of the part played by Thoth in the "Contentings of Horus and Seth" it is Re, the lord of the universe, who divides the universe: Horus becomes king of the earth and Seth god of thunder in heaven.

Geb is the god of the earth from which the sky (*pt*) has already been separated (*wpi*). He is the *rp't*, i.e. the heir of the gods. He was regarded as the "earliest terrestrial ruler."<sup>4)</sup> His separating of Horus and Seth implies the dividing of the world into two parts (*psšty*) or two countries (*t3wy*): the land of the papyrus (*t3 mḫw*) and the sedge country (*t3 šm*):

"He (Geb) made separation between Horus and Seth.

He prevented their quarrelling. He appointed Seth as king (*nšw*) in the sedge country (*t3 šm*) in the place where he was born in *Šw* and Geb appointed Horus as king (*bḫy*) in the land of papyrus in the place where his father was drowned in Half of the Two Lands (*psšt t3wy*).



1) *WB* V, 29, 8; *Urk.* IV, 1751, 18. According to *WB* III, 372, 16 the *ḳḫw-Hr* was applied to Lower Egypt. This mythical place, however, could also be located in the extreme north, at the northern support of the sky (*Urk.* IV, 1662, 11, 12). The geographical fragment discussed by J. J. Clère assigns a place to the *ḳḫw-Hr* outside the rings of Egyptian nomes and neighbouring peoples (J. J. Clère, *Fragments d'une nouvelle représentation égyptienne du monde*, *MDAIK* 16 (1958), p. 46).

2) *Pyr.* 1963 a, b: *prt m šbk* is the moon-god Thoth, cf. H. Kees, *Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen*, *ZÄS* 60 (1925), p. 11.

3) H. Kees, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch*, p. 4, 6 (Pap. Boulaq 17).

4) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* I, 110\*.

And so Seth stood in his place (*št*); and so Horus stood in his place (*št*). They made peace with regard to the two lands in Ajan. That was the boundary of the two lands." <sup>1)</sup>

This separation is cosmological, and not a matter of politics or religious history. That the object of dividing the world in this way was not to keep alive the memory of the Sethian past of Upper Egypt and the town of Ombos, appears from the fact that Seth could sometimes be given the crown of Lower Egypt and Horus the crown of Upper Egypt. <sup>2)</sup>

Griffiths considers that the expression "portions of Horus and Seth" affords the most certain evidence of the historical and political basis of the myth. Horus and Seth receive the portions after the separation or trial: "It is the kind of theme that cannot be the kernel of a cosmic myth or a diverting folktale; it belongs naturally to the type of historical saga which reflects a nation's early struggles on the way to unity." <sup>3)</sup> As the theme of dividing the world into two is an extremely frequent motive in the religions of non-literate peoples, where there is no reason each time to assign the motive to historical saga, we are less convinced than Griffiths that it is the obvious course to do so for Egypt.

The bipartition of the world may not only be that of Upper and Lower Egypt but also that of home and foreign countries. Seth was regarded as lord of foreign peoples, of Libyans, Hittites and Semites. <sup>4)</sup> A N.K. text <sup>5)</sup> tells us that Horus is given *kmt* and Seth *dšrt*. Primarily, the Black Country (*kmt*) is the land inundated by the Nile, upon which the black mud is left lying. In principle and practice, however, it means the Egyptian kingdom ruled over by the pharaoh. The Egyptians cross the Euphrates to determine the frontier of *kmt*. <sup>6)</sup> The Red Land (*dšrt*) is the land which is not inundated by the Nile: the desert, the waste and desolate country inhabited by foreigners, which is claimed by the pharaoh, but over which he does not in fact rule.

This separation of Horus and Seth is part of the foundation of the Egyptian concept of life, in which reality is not simple but is built up upon two principles. "Es ist eine an vielen Einzelpunkten nach-

1) *Shabaka text* 7-9.

2) *Pap. Sallier* 4 IX, 7.

3) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 73.

4) Cf. Chapter V.


5) *Pap. Sallier* 4 IX, 4.

6) *Urk.* IV, 1370, 11.



weisbare ägyptische Vorstellung, dasz die existierende Welt durch die Aufspaltung ursprünglicher Einheiten in dualistische Begriffe existent geworden sei." 1)

A limit is posed to Seth, "the enemy of boundaries": sometimes his share is the sky and sometimes the sedge country or the papyrus country, and sometimes the red land. He has to be separated from Horus to prevent further disasters. The inflamed passions can now quieten down. It is the moment when Geb says to Horus and Seth: "Forget!" 2) This separation involves the acknowledgement of the contrasts existing in the world and means they are taken seriously. Neither of the two gods can be eliminated.

Yet this rest after the conflict also means stagnation. Totality has been split into two without the possibility of fruitful interaction and co-operation. The boundary between the two countries proves that the peace is of a limited nature. It is not all-comprehensive, not an open, but a closed peace. Seth is the , the god apart. Using a modern name for an ancient condition, one might call this peace a cold war. And indeed, this separation of Horus and Seth is not a final state, but only a necessary preliminary to what follows: the reconciliation and union of Horus and Seth.

## 6. THE JUSTIFICATION OF HORUS AND THE RECONCILIATION OF HORUS AND SETH

According to the Shabaka text Geb, on reconsideration, is not pleased with the partition and gives his entire heritage to Horus:

"Thus Horus appeared as *nsw - bity* uniting the two lands (*sm3 t3wy*) in the nome of the White Wall, at the place where the two lands were united." 3)

Junker 4) and Griffiths, 5) who interpret this story in the Shabaka text as a reflection of historical events, derive the mythical phases of division and union from various moments in Egyptian history.

1) W. Helck, E. Otto, *Kleines Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie*, Wiesbaden, 1956, p. 86; cf. also E. Otto, *Die Lehre von den beiden Ländern Ägyptens in der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*. In: *Studia Aegyptiaca I = Analecta Orientalia 17* (1938), p. 10 sqq.

2) *Dram. Ram. pap.* 57; K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen*, p. 166.

3) *Shabaka text* 14 c.

4) H. Junker, *Die Götterlehre von Memphis, APAW, Phil.-hist. Kl.*, 1939, 23, p. 9 sq.; cf. H. Junker, *Die politische Lehre von Memphis, APAW, Phil.-hist. Kl.*, 1941, 6, p. 13 sq.

5) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 140 sqq.

Griffiths supposes that after a war between worshippers of Seth and worshippers of Horus the two kingdoms were acknowledged as the portions of Horus and Seth. Another war would have been won by the worshippers of Horus, and that stage would be reflected in the incorporation of Horus and Seth in the king. After the kingdom, thus united, had again fallen apart, a new union would have taken place. The latter event would be mirrored in the last stage of the myth, when Horus receives both parts.

Griffiths is of opinion that the Shabaka text constitutes a "weighty piece of evidence" for this theory. We are unable to see how it is any evidence at all, much as we may admire the ingenuity of the hypothesis. We do not even see the necessity—quite apart from considerations of historical truth—of distinguishing different traditions in this story of the Shabaka text. One tradition would be that Horus and Seth were each given a part of the world, the other that Horus received both portions and Seth was disinherited. This does not seem correct, for here Seth is not the enemy of the gods. When Horus has become *nsw-bitj* not only Horus, but Seth too is satisfied:

"The sedge and the papyrus have been set on the two doors of the temple of Ptah. This means that Horus and Seth are contented and united (*htpwy smjw*). They fraternised so that they did not quarrel."<sup>1)</sup>

There is a development in this story, in which the division constitutes a temporary stage, and the union a definitive one. When disagreement and dissension had arisen between the two gods, Geb assembled the Ennead. Thereupon he made a division between the two gods, so that the quarrel came to an end. After this he united and reconciled them, so that they might collaborate for the good of the world. This peace is no longer restricted, but boundless. The rule of Horus is total, for the very reason that Seth has been accepted as a brother.

Seth as well as Osiris was born of Geb and his consort Nut. It is Geb who now reunites Seth with Horus, the son of Osiris, who is Osiris redivivus. Van Baaren<sup>2)</sup> has said: "It is an exception for the experience of polarity to be accepted as final; in most religions the

<sup>1)</sup> *Shabaka text* 15 c.

<sup>2)</sup> Th. P. van Baaren, *De mens in het licht van de godsdienstwetenschap*. In: *De mens in het licht der wetenschap*, Scripta Academica Groningana VI, Groningen-Djakarta, 1955, p. 82.

circle closes again. Man finds it hard to acquiesce in an ultimate and definitive dichotomy, dividing the world into two halves for ever."

There is no reason to put the ultimate collaboration of the two gods into homosexual terms. The stages of homosexual complications, conflict and estrangement have been conquered and subsumed in a greater unity, where there is no longer any place for paederastic symbolism. Horus has grown up (Harsiesis-Haroeris), and Seth has lost his ascendancy. In the original relationship the leading role naturally fell to Seth as the elder, and the uncle of the young Horus. However, Seth proves not to respect the order of being. He either will not or cannot keep within bounds, and entices Horus to homosexual actions. Now we have no texts from which it might be directly concluded, that Seth's homosexual act betrays his inability to assume the position of leader. Seth himself boasts of having brought Horus to submit to the part of pathic. The gods spit on the face of Horus and Isis chops off the hands of her son.<sup>1)</sup>

From another point of view, the homosexual episode may be regarded as an instance of the foolishness of Seth, who imagines that in this fashion he can win and bring about reconciliation. Goedicke<sup>2)</sup> rightly drew attention to the tendency in the "Contentings of Horus and Seth" to depict Seth as a fool. Not only in the homosexual actions, but also in other respects, for instance in the competitions, Seth is outwitted by Horus, who has the help of the subtle Isis. This irritates Seth beyond measure. That the separation is brought to an end, does not mean a return to the former situation. It is not the sensual, immoderate, foolish and irascible Seth, but Horus to whom the leadership is given and who receives the wreath of justification. Not by chance do the texts always name Horus and Seth in that order, and never the reverse.

Although the justification of Horus is often referred to without any mention of Seth by name, yet it may also be stated expressis verbis that Horus was justified with regard to Seth.<sup>3)</sup> The symbolism of the justification of Horus sometimes comes into conflict with the symbolism of the reintegration of Horus and Seth in a higher unity. The justification tends towards exclusiveness.

1) The Contentings of Horus and Seth, *Pap. Beatty I*, 12, 3 sq.

2) H. Goedicke, *Seth as a fool*, *JEA* 47 (1961), p. 154.

3) *CT I*, 43 a.

Sometimes it has become impossible to accept the formidable and originally so turbulent figure of Seth and include him in a renewed scheme of things. According to pap. Jumilhac Thoth first separates the two gods on the order of Re. He then enumerates the acts of Seth and the two gods are judged:

"Horus went forth justified with regard to Seth." <sup>1)</sup>

Horus receives Egypt and the throne of his father, and Seth is driven out into the desert. That is to say, the matter rests at the moment of the separation. However, the red land is not given to Seth, he is driven away to it. Horus is merely justified, and no integration is arrived at. No wonder that Seth is not satisfied, as he is in the Shabaka text. He gathers his followers for battle. The result is a general persecution of the wicked Seth. The gods stick their spears into his neck. His name is erased and his images are destroyed.

In the N.K. Seth could still function as the lord of the *dšrt*, who co-operates with Horus. Later there was little or no place left in the official theology for such a sense of totality. The image of Seth as the helper of Horus could no longer function when the rule of the pharaoh was confined to Egypt. When the Egyptian empire, that had stood in open contact with the whole world, collapsed after Ramses III, the flourishing cult of Seth began to fade. The personal names composed with the name of a deity show that in the 19th and 20th dynasty Seth was in high regard. In the 21st and 22nd dynasty he gradually drops out of the personal names. After that time we only find his name once in those personal names preserved to us. <sup>2)</sup> The close connection of Seth with foreign countries and with the god Baal was not only fatal to the cult of Seth, but also to the symbolism of the reconciliation of Horus and Seth. Egyptian nationalism and its dark reverse, the anti-Semitism that Egypt bequeathed to the ancient and modern world, <sup>3)</sup> supplanted the myth of the reconciliation of Horus and Seth, now odious as god of the Semites, by the justification of Horus. The reconciliation was maintained for some time in official theology. During the reign of Shabaka, the ancient text quoted above was still eternised in stone. The 25th dynasty, to which Shabaka belonged, was driven out by

1) *Pap. Jumilhac XVII, 1.*

2) H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen II*, Glückstadt, 1952, p. 246 n. 1.

3) J. Yoyotte, *L'Égypte ancienne et les origines de l'antijudaïsme*, *RHR* 162 (1963) p. 133-143.

the Assyrian conquerors. In the Saite, Persian and Ptolemaic periods the name of Seth is increasingly replaced in ritual texts by that of other gods, e.g. Thoth or Geb.<sup>1)</sup>

In general, we may observe in the Egyptian cult an increasing need to assign a permanent abode to evil. The reconciliation abolishes the exclusive localisation of evil in Seth. The Egyptians, captive to a glorious but crushing tradition, as is evident in the Saite renaissance, could not do without a scape-goat. No longer would they admit their own negative qualities, integrate them and so rob them of their dangerous potentiality. Their own negative aspect was now violently disowned, cut off, castrated and thrown out to the far country of the Asiatics. That which had been their own became there perverted into something foreign, into rampant destructiveness: into evil. Seth's birthday was acknowledged as the beginning of confusion.<sup>2)</sup> Egyptian theology aimed at integrating this. Afterwards the third epagomenal day is ignored. The festival calendars of Edfu and Esna mention the first, second, fourth and fifth epagomenal day, but pass over the birthday of Seth.<sup>3)</sup> Thus the negative aspect or complement of reality is no longer acknowledged, let alone celebrated and honoured.

The myth of the justification of Horus is not, however, a creation of the late period. It is as old as the myth of the reconciliation. In itself, this myth had long shown exclusive traits, as appears from the famous hymn to Osiris Louvre C 286, the text of which was already composed in the M. K. Horus is justified and crowned as king of heaven and earth. The "accuser," who very characteristically is not named, but who can be no other than Seth, has taken to flight.

In this hymn the interest centres on Horus, and no particular attention is paid to Seth. Thus the story of the justification gives an impression of exclusiveness which may be unintentional. During the conflict and the separation Seth was indeed paid out for his tricks. We may question, though, whether the author of this hymn purposely disregards the reconciliation. Perhaps he thought it unnecessary to mention the reconciliation in his hymn. In many Christian songs and sermons for Christmas, the cross and resur-

1) H. Kees, *Horus und Seth als Götterpaar* II, p. 82 sqq.

2) *Pap. Leiden* I 346, II 12.

3) Th. Hopfner, *o.c.*, I, p. 22.



reconciliation of Christ is left out. This need not entail special religious views on the part of the poet or preacher concerned.

The reconciliation and the justification of Horus existed side by side for a long time. From the Shabaka text, where we have mention both of the reconciliation and the crowning of Horus as *nsw-bity*, it is evident that they were not mutually exclusive. This mythological combination may be compared with sacrificial practice, when the offering is usually only called "eye of Horus", yet may also bear the name of "eye of Horus and testicles." Just as in later times the testicles were no longer offered to Seth, so there was no longer a belief in the reconciliation of Horus and Seth. There was always a tendency to slur over the negative aspect of reality. It was not, however, until the late period that this tendency dominated official theology. The scant attention that had been awarded Seth became deliberate negation and exile.

Although the need of a scape-goat was increasingly felt, and although the myth of reconciliation was unfavourably affected by Egyptian anti-Semitism, yet this myth seems to have lived on locally, also after the N.K., in spite of official theology.

With a multitude of carefully gathered data, which need not be adduced here, Kees has shown that in several Egyptian nomes a pair of falcons was worshipped. This pair of falcons was the divine pair Horus and Seth, worshipped in the cult as a single deity.<sup>1)</sup> The second part of Kees's study may serve to refute the opinion of Griffiths, that "the dual god Horus-Seth" was only "a projection of the dual divinity envisaged in the king."<sup>2)</sup> Antywey is not an example of "another composite deity"<sup>3)</sup> or "le double aspect de Seth,"<sup>4)</sup> but Horus and Seth united and reconciled in one god. Antywey is sometimes written with two falcons, from which one might conclude this dual god to be a local form of Horus. On a stela of the N.K.<sup>5)</sup> he is depicted as Seth, and the inscription calls him both Antywey and Seth. A late priest's title like *šhtp ntrwy* (who reconciles the two gods) leads us to think that in spite of alterations in the national theology, the reconciliation of Horus and Seth was

1) *Antywy* (dual) is the lord (singular) of *Tbw* (H. Kees, *o.c.*, p. 14).

2) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 122.

3) J. G. Griffiths, *ibidem*.

4) P. Barguet, *Parallèle égyptien à la légende d'Antée*, *RHR* 125 (1964), p. 8.

5) Stela Or. Inst. Chicago 10510; A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* II, p. 54\*.

celebrated in this nome until late times.<sup>1)</sup> A ceremonial name for the capital of this 10th nome in Upper Egypt was in Denderah: *hwt - šhtp* (house of reconciliation).<sup>2)</sup> Kees remarked: "Der Gott von Antaeopolis hat diese schwankende Stellung zwischen Seth und Horus nie wieder ganz verwinden können: so tritt uns in dem Ἀνταῖος der spätesten Periode ein seltsamer Mischgott entgegen, der durch seine Zusammenstellung mit Nephthys Sethcharacter zeigt, im übrigen aber durch den herrschenden Typus des siegreichen Horusgottes beeinflusst ist."<sup>3)</sup> One might perhaps say that for the Egyptians this god, whom the Greeks named Antaios, gave form to the *coincidentia oppositorum*.

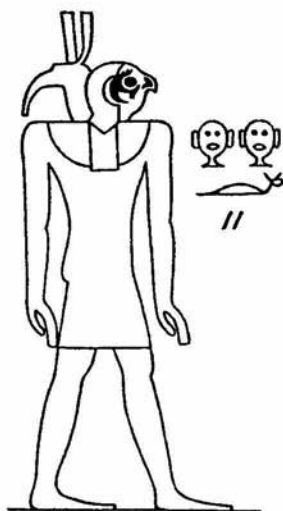


Fig. 10. *Hrwfyf*. Horus and Seth united as "he with the two faces"

An important point is the conclusion of Kees that Horus and Seth, who appear as two separate gods in mythology, are worshipped as one god in the local cult. Other scattered data also inform us that a temple was dedicated to Horus-Seth, and that there was a priest of Horus-Seth.<sup>4)</sup> This union of Horus and Seth was depicted in the Am Duat and the Book of Gates by a figure with two heads.

1) H. Kees, *o.c.*, p. 17.

2) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO II*, p. 53\*.

3) H. Kees, *o.c.*, p. 18 sq.

4) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 122, with reference to: H. Junker, *Giza II*, p. 189, 191.

*Hrwy.fy* has a falcon's head and a Seth head.<sup>1)</sup> Piankoff<sup>2)</sup> says of this portrayal: "the two opposites, the forces of good and evil, Horus and Seth, are conciliated and now form one figure." Griffiths<sup>3)</sup> calls this "a very unlikely explanation." We can agree with this in so far as he rejects the reduction of the opposition of Horus and Seth to an ethical problem of good and evil. Yet we can hardly imagine he means to repudiate the unity of Horus and Seth. It is a fact that they form a single figure. In the Shabaka text the uniting (*smj*) and the reconciling (*htp*) of Horus and Seth are spoken of in the same breath.<sup>4)</sup> In BD 17<sup>5)</sup> the dead says:

"I am He with the two ba's, who are in his two chicks."

Most of the Egyptian commentators explain this compound figure as an amalgamation of Osiris and Re.<sup>6)</sup> One commentator, however, does not explain this compound figure as Osiris and Re, but as Horus and Seth:

"Those are the ba of Horus and the ba of Seth, when he came to Letopolis. Finally they embraced one another and became He with the two ba's."<sup>7)</sup>

Here too the uniting of two opposites into a totality seems to be meant. Kees<sup>8)</sup> called the two-headed Horus-Seth figure the union of the forces of the two gods and De Buck<sup>9)</sup> a kind of Janus figure. According to him it stems from the impulse to see totality as a unity of two inimical and yet collaborating opposites.

In conclusion one may say, that according to the Am Duat and the Book of Gates the dead on their journey through the other world are confronted with the mystery of totality, in which the contrasts are subsumed. No wonder that the place where *Hrwy.fy* appears is the realm of the dead.

Horus and Seth are the gods who contend and are reconciled or

1) E. Hornung, *Das Amduat*. Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes, Wiesbaden, 1963, Vol. II (translation and commentary), p. 47; M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 78 sqq.

2) A. Piankoff, *The tomb of Ramesses VI*, New York, 1954, Text volume, p. 209, fig. 65 and p. 40.

3) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 122 n. 5.

4) *Shabaka text* 15 c.

5) *CT IV*, 276 a; M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 42.

6) M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 79.

7) M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *o.c.*, p. 80; cf. *CT IV*, 412 (Sq7Sq).

8) H. Kees, *Horus und Seth als Götterpaar I*, *MVAG* 28 (1923), p. 45.

9) A. de Buck, *De tegenstelling Noord-Zuid in Oud-Egypte*. In: *Academiedagen V*, Amsterdam, 1952, p. 35.

who are separated and reunited. The annual inundation of the Nile can be compared with the great mythical renovation, the integration of Horus and Seth:

"I (*H<sup>c</sup>py*) am one born of the underworld who establishes the head of Horus on Seth and vice versa." 1)

Horus and Seth can be imagined fighting the snake Apopis together:

"The spear of Horus goes forth against thee. The lance of Seth is thrust into thy brow." 2)

When Horus and Seth are reconciled, they do not fight with one another, but together against the common enemy:

"A club of iron is swung down on your head. Horus seizes it and Seth will destroy you." 3)

The pharaoh is the representative of Horus, but also the representative of Horus and Seth, who are united and reconciled. A well-known instance is the queen's title "who sees Horus-Seth." 4) The queen does not see her consort as a being divided in himself, but as the one who comprises totality, in whom the opposing contrasts are united and reconciled. The royal official Imenipet calls himself "uniter of the two men" (*hnm rhwy*) and "dresser of the two lords" (*dbj nbwy*). 5) The vizir Mentuhotep in the 12th dynasty calls himself a "hereditary prince by order of the two lords". 6) In the Pyramid texts also the pharaoh is represented as Horus-Seth. 7) The pharaoh Amenhotep sits upon the throne of Horus and upon the seat of Seth. 8) In many texts of the 18th dynasty the king is compared to Horus and Seth, and sometimes we see that in the unity two different aspects may yet be distinguished: Hatshepsut rules this country as the son of Isis (= Horus) and is strong as the son of Nut (= Seth). 9) Ruling, the king is Horus, when he must use force he is Seth. Neither of the two aspects can

1) CT IV, 140 b, c.

2) *Pap. Bremner-Rhind* 30, 5; cf. R. O. Faulkner, *The Bremner Rhind papyrus* (IV), *JEA* 24 (1938), p. 43.

3) *Mag. pap. Harris* X, 8. Cf. already: *Pyr.* 678 c; 685 a, b; 1264 b.

4) Already in the first dynasty: J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 121, gives references to W. M. F. Petrie, *The royal tombs of the first dynasty*, vol. II, London, 1901, pl. 27 nos. 96, 128, 129. During the O.K.: R. Weill, *Notes sur l'histoire primitive des grandes religions égyptiennes*, *BIFAO* 47 (1948), p. 83; cf. H. Gauthier, *La titulature des reines des dynasties memphites*, *ASAE* 24 (1924), p. 198-209. The title is found even in the N.K.: *Urk.* IV, 224, 16.

5) *Urk.* IV, 1439, 5, 6.

6) H. Frankfort, *o.c.*, p. 360 n. 15.

7) *Pyr.* 141 d; 798 a.

8) *Pap. Beatty* IX rt. 12, 4; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 95.

9) *Urk.* IV, 366, 4, 5.

be dispensed with. It is the co-operation of both gods in the king which guarantees the welfare of the world.

This Sethian aspect of the king is not expressed in his titulary, unless it were in the so-called golden Horus name. Griffiths has argued that during the O.K. at any rate *Hr-nbw* was interpreted as Horus and Seth.<sup>1)</sup>

So far as could be checked, only one king took a separate Seth name besides his Horus name. This happened in the 2nd dynasty. The Horus name of this king was Sekhemib and his Seth name was Peribsen. We are justified in calling it a Seth name, because the Seth-animal is depicted over the serekh, instead of the usual Horus falcon. The reason that led the pharaoh to take a separate Seth name, may have been precisely because at that time the Sethian nature could not yet be expressed in the golden Horus name. This might also explain the fact that afterwards no separate Seth names are made any more. Perhaps Sekhemib had a reason for expressing his Sethian aspect in a name. As Seth-Peribsen he is "conqueror of Asia" (*ini Št*). Seth was later accounted lord of foreign countries. It is not impossible that he already had this function in the time of the 2nd dynasty. In later times there is an inclination to compare the kings to Seth when they undertake a campaign in foreign parts.<sup>2)</sup>

The Seth name of Peribsen is usually regarded as a weighty argument for the political background of the opposition of Horus and Seth. Newberry<sup>3)</sup> distinguishes Peribsen from Sekhemib as a different king, and thought that this king Peribsen was not, like the other kings of the 1st and 2nd dynasties, from the country of Horus, but from the country of Seth. Grdselof too<sup>4)</sup> accepts the idea of a "période séthienne", although his basic concept is the identity of Sekhemib and Peribsen.<sup>5)</sup> Grdselof<sup>6)</sup> draws attention

1) J. G. Griffiths, *Some remarks on the Horian elements in the royal titulary*, *ASAE* 56 (1959), p. 63-86.

2) *Urk.* IV, 1301, 17. For Peribsen as "conqueror of Asia" cf. W. M. F. Petrie, *o.c.*, pl. XXII; E. Naville et al., *The cemeteries of Abydos*, vol. I, London, 1914, pl. X.

3) P. E. Newberry, *The Set rebellion of the IInd dynasty*, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), p. 40-46.

4) B. Grdselof, *Notes d'épigraphie archaïque*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 293 sqq.

5) The attempt of J. Černý (*La date de l'introduction du culte de Seth dans le nord-est du Delta*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 295) to date the supposed introduction of the Seth-cult in the Delta (Sethroe) to the reign of Peribsen does not seem right. H. Kees (*Das alte Ägypten*, Berlin, 1955, p. 110) has argued that the priestly title of *Phrnfr* was wrongly translated by H. Junker (*Phrnfr*, *ZAS* 75 (1938), p. 77). Peribsen is not conqueror of Sethroe, but conqueror of Asia.

6) B. Grdselof, *o.c.*, p. 294.



to the fact that a cult of Peribsen still existed in the 4th dynasty, and that it was located in the grave of the Horus-king *Snd*. At any rate this shows that Sekhemib-Peribsen certainly did not pass into history as a Sethian schismatic or heretic.

A strong argument against a religious and political revolution under Peribsen was advanced by J. Sainte Fare Garnot.<sup>1)</sup> The name of Peribsen can be translated. Like so many Egyptian names, it contains a verbal sentence. *Pri ibsny* means: "leurs sentiments (leurs désirs) à tous deux se révèlent." The suffix-pronoun *sn* or *sny* refers to the two gods Horus and Seth. According to him, Sekhemib-Peribsen on some occasion added a Seth name to his Horus name, and there is nothing to show an anti-Horian tendency in this action. Thus it is possible to give an explanation of Peribsen's Seth name without having recourse to the hypothesis of two henotheistic religions in Egypt, viz. that of the worshippers of Horus and that of the worshippers of Seth, getting into a kind of religious war with one another like Roman Catholics and Protestants in European history.

The Horus name of a successor of Peribsen is Khasekhem (the power has appeared). It has been suggested that Khasekhem is identical with Khasekhemui (the two powers have appeared). If that is indeed the case,<sup>2)</sup> then we should have a development reminiscent of Sekhemib taking the Seth name Peribsen. Over the serekh in which Khasekhemui is written, however, the Seth-animal does not appear alone, but in company with the Horus falcon. The name Khasekhemui is sometimes supplemented *hlp nbwy imyw.f* (the two lords who are in him, are reconciled). Thus both Peribsen's Seth name and Khasekhemui's Horus-Seth name proclaim the reconciliation of Horus and Seth. Unfortunately, with the scant data available at present, it is not possible to determine just why and when these Horus kings discovered a Sethian or Horian-Sethian aspect in themselves, complementary to their Horian nature, and were led to express this by a special name. At any rate that period, though we cannot accept the hypothesis of a revolution of Seth worshippers, took an interest in Seth reconciled with Horus.

1) J. Sainte Fare Garnot, *Sur quelques noms royaux des seconde et troisième dynasties égyptiennes*, BIE 37 (1956), p. 317 sqq.

2) Cf. E. Drioton, J. Vandier, *Les peuples de l'orient méditerranéen*, II. L'Égypte, Paris, 1962<sup>4</sup>, p. 164 sqq.; other literature listed on p. 638.

## 7. REMARKS ON THE ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MYTH OF HORUS AND SETH

Quotations have repeatedly been given in the foregoing from the book by J. G. Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth*. This lucidly written and excellently documented work deserves much appreciation. Our main objection to it is the tendency to explain religious phenomena as a reflection of social conditions and historical events. We read in the preface: "the conclusion is reached that the legend of the conflict, unlike the myth of Osiris, is political and historical in origin, and that it reflects tribal struggles." <sup>1)</sup> Naturally a religious phenomenon is not purely religious; it also has a social aspect, a historical aspect, etc. Yet no full understanding of religious matters is attained by resolving them into something else. Griffiths gives an explanation of the myth of Horus and Seth with the aid of a theory regarding its origin. He interprets it as a report of historical events: war between a realm of Horus worshippers and a realm of Seth worshippers, and the uniting of these two separate realms under King Menes. That is to say, he builds on the familiar theories of Sethe and others. We find the remark: "... the social and political background is likely to be crucial for the explanation of the legend. Frankfort's rejection of this approach seems a cardinal error." <sup>2)</sup> He concludes his book with the words: "and it is significant that the record of this earliest fashioning of a nation is steeped in religious concepts." He ends then, where religico-historical work is by no means concluded. For how is it that this supposed record of the fashioning of a nation could begin to function as a religious myth? Not every historical process is delivered to succeeding generations as a religious truth. The myth of Horus and Seth must, besides eventual historical ideas, also contain far-reaching anthropological concepts. Eliade <sup>3)</sup> says: "les mythes et les rites révèlent toujours une situation-limite de l'homme, et non pas uniquement une situation historique; situation-limite, c'est-à-dire celle que l'homme découvre en prenant conscience de sa place dans l'Univers."

One can indeed discern in the final sentence of Griffiths' book

1) J. G. Griffiths, *The conflict of Horus and Seth*, p. VII.

2) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 40.

3) M. Eliade, *Images et symboles*, Paris, 1952, p. 43.

some hesitation to explain the myth entirely on political grounds: "The record . . . is steeped in religious concepts." Where did these religious concepts come from? Were they already in existence, and was the historical tale included in them, because it fitted in, or could be made to fit, or even arose from them? In view of the tenor of his book, it is doubtful whether that would be in the spirit of the author. In that case Frankfort's approach could hardly have been called a cardinal error.

Frankfort<sup>1)</sup> called Horus and Seth the antagonists *per se*—the mythological symbols for all conflict, and he drew attention to the deeply rooted Egyptian tendency to understand the world in dualistic terms as a series of pairs of contrasts. As is well-known, this tendency to order reality in contrasting pairs is not only found in the Egyptian religion, but also in many other religions of non-literate peoples over the whole world. Helck<sup>2)</sup> reversed Sethe's idea that everything was based on history, and posited that the concept of duality was the principle according to which the Egyptians of the early historical period ordered and mentally controlled the world they lived in. According to Helck and Otto,<sup>3)</sup> the "dualistic" world concept led the Egyptians, in the religious field, to turn gods who originally had nothing to do with each other into pairs, or to split up one god into two gods. The myth of Horus and Seth might perhaps be an important exponent of this phenomenon. Helck and Otto write: "Bereits in der Frühzeit beruhte die Staatsorganisation auf der Vorstellung des Dualismus, die zum Doppelkönig, Doppelreich usw. führte, ohne dass dahinter tatsächliche Geschehnisse stehen. Nicht aus Ereignissen erwachsen Vorstellungen, sondern die Vorstellungen waren das Primäre und die Ereignisse wurden nach ihnen gewertet und geordnet."<sup>4)</sup> Seen in this light, the way Griffiths has reduced the myth of Horus and Seth to predynastic wars can no longer satisfy us.

None would venture to deny that in predynastic Egypt, as elsewhere, wars were waged, and repeatedly so. Yet we doubt

1) H. Frankfort, *o.c.*, p. 22 and p. 19.

2) W. Helck, *Herkunft und Deutung einiger Züge des frühägyptischen Königsbildes*, *Anthropos* 49 (1954), p. 962.

3) W. Helck, E. Otto, *Kleines Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie*, Wiesbaden, 1956, p. 86; cf. the list of examples in an article by E. Otto (*Die Lehre von den beiden Ländern Ägyptens in der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*) in *Analecta Orientalia* 17 (1938), p. 105qq.

4) W. Helck, E. Otto, *o.c.*, p. 117.

whether actual wars at the time of the uniting of the country were the origin of this religious myth of conflict and reconciliation. Wars begin in the minds of men. Mere facts can not be all-important here. What counts, is the way the historical fact is evaluated and interpreted by man and how he reacts to it. The religious historian hesitates to approach the many riddles connected with the material that we have of political facts in prehistoric Egypt. His subject matter is, in the words of Kristensen, the faith of the believer. We do not see what advance is gained by concluding that the complicated symbolism of the injury to the eye of Horus and the theft of the testicles of Seth, is to be carried back to a hypothetical war between two hypothetical realms. We can hardly credit that it will ever be possible to prove that the symbolism of eye and testicles can be derived from the historical fact of blinding and castration. The suggestion of Griffiths, that the Egyptians imagined the conflict of Horus and Seth rather in human than in animal form, is not a serious argument.<sup>1)</sup>

De Buck's view of the material of the time before and during the unification of the country under Menes is most illuminating: "The country did indeed become one at that time. Yet it was a protracted and confused process, that for the contemporaries was often bewildering and far from obvious, as is usually the case in such unions; and it is to be doubted whether the clear-cut expression "Uniting of the Two Lands" would ever have been coined, if the religious outlook of the Egyptians had not impressed this stamp upon the chaos of reality."<sup>2)</sup> There is little point, then, in trying to understand the myth of Horus and Seth from the obscure, chaotic course of political history. There are too many uncertainties. The problem changes its aspect. From De Buck's words we conclude that future research into Egyptian religion, apart from exact examination of the sources, will derive more profit from the results of cultural and religious anthropology than from a reconstruction of Egypt's earliest history. De Buck also remarks in his article: "The egyptologist who takes a look round in the field of ethnology

1) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 38. Not all gods with anthropomorphic features have been men in origin.

2) A. de Buck, *o.c.*, p. 33. Cf. now W. Kaiser, *Einige Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Frühzeit*, ZAS 84 (1959), p. 119-132; 85 (1960), p. 118-137; 86 (1961), p. 39-61; 91 (1964), p. 86-125, and E. Otto, *Geschichtsbild und Geschichtsschreibung in Ägypten, Welt des Orients*, III, Heft 3 (1966), p. 161-177.

is struck by the fact that this system of ordering things in contrasting pairs appears so frequently among the most dissimilar peoples, living far distant one from the other".<sup>1)</sup> We are forced to go back to man himself and his forms of religion, and the myth of Horus and Seth is one of those forms.

In his admirable work *Archaic Egypt* Emery has given an interesting interpretation of the place of Seth in the Egyptian pantheon. He suggests that Seth was, and remained, the god of the original inhabitants of Egypt, whereas the dynastic race who invaded Egypt worshipped Horus. The Horus and Seth myth would then be an echo of the struggle between the worshippers of Horus and the worshippers of Seth. In reading the chapter "Religion" of this book, scepticism overcame us. "Prior to the Unification there was a multitude of cults unconnected and entirely localized, each being the particular worship of the god of the tribe. The evolution of these cults was part of the political development of Egypt, for as the tribal areas became welded into principalities and finally into the two separate kingdoms of the North and South, so a mythology was created which united the tribal deities." <sup>2)</sup>

The idea of such an original, locally or tribally henotheistic, condition without mythology is rather surprising. One cannot help feeling this is a much over-simplified picture, when one thinks of the sometimes so complicated mythologies and polytheistic systems of very small tribes of non-literate peoples. On the other hand religion is not always a local matter. The boundaries of a religion do not always coincide with political frontiers. The people of prehistoric Egypt already had a long history behind them. Even if that history is prehistory to us, we see no reason to assume that man and his religion were essentially other in prehistoric Egypt than in historical times. It is too often forgotten that 5000 years ago may barely be called yesterday in the history of mankind. Although there is undoubtedly discontinuity, continuity must not be underestimated either. Having regard to the results of comparative religion, we cannot believe that matters of religico-historical research, so complicated and important as mythology and polytheism, arose in Egypt as "part of the political development." It seems impossible to us to explain all mythologies and polytheistic systems of non-

1) A. de Buck, *o.c.*, p. 34.

2) W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 119.

literate peoples from the political development of kingdoms or similar extensive states which afterwards disappeared again. "Political events do not create religion." <sup>1)</sup> It is a mistake to degrade religion to a political epiphenomenon. We think, indeed, that it is no Calvinistic prejudice to say that religion may be an important factor in political life.

Weill <sup>2)</sup> characterised the myth of Horus and Seth as "l'histoire de deux dieux primordialement égaux, rivaux et concurrents, complémentaires et nécessaires à l'équilibre du monde." One can completely agree with him so far. But he continues: "histoire construite en légende explicative de la qualité horo-sethienne du Pharaon." Here again, then, we find the view that the myth was created for political reasons. Surely an existing myth may just as well have been applied to Egyptian kingship; there is no need to assume that the myth was constructed in order to form a basis for Egyptian kingship since Menes. Politics does not make religion, but makes use of it. Myths are not constructed like machines by putting separate elements together. Neither are they formed from without like statues. They grow from within and appear spontaneously as an expression of faith. These children of man's spirit are received as a divine gift, as revelation. The religious historian who wishes to confine himself to the faith of the believer will not easily venture to reduce this revelation to something else. Gods and demons are experienced reality.

The above might easily give the impression of a total rejection of the method of Griffiths and others. Such is not the intention. Indeed, it could not be, for we owe much to his book. Historical, social and political factors influence and condition the origin and continued existence of a religion. What we want to emphasise is the word background that Griffiths uses. To the religious historian, the action in the foreground is not merely a reflection of the background.

We cannot, then, fully understand the myth of Horus and Seth from historical events and social conditions before and during the formation of Egyptian civilisation. This statement remains valid even if the scanty information we now have about that period were to be considerably supplemented. Its origin must be sought

1) Th. P. van Baaren, *Mensen tussen Nijl en Zon*, p. 157.

2) R. Weill, *o.c.*, *BIFAO* 47 (1948), p. 112.



not in political events, but in man and the religious revelation he feels he has received. The word revelation is used here not in a Christian theological sense, but as a term of religious history.<sup>1)</sup> How and when the revelation was received, lies beyond our horizon. The insufficient material of religious history does not permit of an exact answer to so precise a question. For that matter, Eliade<sup>2)</sup> has remarked in general: ". . . on n'a pas enrégistré l'invention d'un nouveau mythe. Il s'agit toujours des modifications . . . . Ce sont les spécialistes de l'extase, les familiers des univers fantastiques qui nourrissent, accroissent et élaborent les motifs mythologiques traditionnels." The origin of the myth of Horus and Seth is lost in the mists of the religious traditions of prehistory.

Morenz,<sup>3)</sup> Bonnet<sup>4)</sup> and Müller<sup>5)</sup> have warned against regarding the myth as a reflection of historical fact. Morenz remarks, however, that as a history of the gods the myth was not given its form till the 3rd dynasty, in Memphis. He bases this upon Schott,<sup>6)</sup> who defended the view that the form of the myth we can recognise from the dramatic texts came from Memphis, the capital of the Old Kingdom.

Conclusions from the texts must not be too positive, however. A text can prove the existence of a myth as divine history at a certain moment. But it cannot prove that this myth did not exist before that time. That matter must be left at least undecided. Religico-historical research has protested against the idea that gods were late arrivals in religion.<sup>7)</sup> From the study of the religions of primitive or non-literate peoples it has become evident that gods did not wait to reveal themselves until the faithful could report this manifestation in writing. We cannot assert that the people of prehistoric Egypt did not know myths as divine history, because they were unable to leave us written evidence. Elsewhere, indeed, Morenz remarks that the historical beginning of the Egyptian

1) Th. P. van Baaren, *Voorstellingen van openbaring phaenomenologisch beschouwd*, Utrecht, 1952, p. 11.

2) M. Eliade, *Aspects du mythe*, Paris, 1963, p. 179.

3) S. Morenz, *Die Heraufkunft des transzendenten Gottes in Ägypten*, SSW, Philol.-hist. Kl., Bd. 109, 2, Berlin, 1964, p. 10.

4) H. Bonnet, *OLZ* 57 (1962), col. 472-474.

5) D. Müller, *BIOR* 19 (1962), p. 43.

6) S. Schott, *Mythe und Mythenbildung im alten Ägypten*, UGÄ, Leipzig, 1945, p. 64.

7) Th. P. van Baaren, *De ethnologische basis van de fenomenologie van G. van der Leeuw*, NTT 11 (1956-'57), p. 329.

divinities cannot be determined.<sup>1)</sup> During the course of Egyptian history, the story of Horus and Seth functioned as a religious myth. There is no compulsive reason for assuming that it could not have been one as long as it existed. Van Baaren <sup>2)</sup> has argued that from the phenomenological point of view every form of religion implies a form of revelation, and that every religion begins with revelation. Because we want to stress the religious character of the myth of Horus and Seth, we cannot agree with Griffiths that it is the record of the earliest fashioning of a nation. From the phenomenological point of view it is the record of revelation.

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1) S. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, Stuttgart, 1960, p. 32.

2) Th. P. van Baaren, *Voorstellingen van openbaring phaenomenologisch beschouwd*, p. 11.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SETH THE MURDERER OF OSIRIS

#### I. THE MYTHICAL TROUBLER OF ORDER AND THE ORDERING MYTH

Seth the murderer of Osiris,<sup>1)</sup> like the friend and enemy of Horus, is originator of confusion. Our working hypothesis is that the theme of the Osiris myth is resurrection from death, that Osiris is god of the dead and that other aspects are to be understood from this disposition. In the words of Kristensen:<sup>2)</sup> "Seth has killed his brother Osiris, but death belongs to the essence of Osiris, since he is god of absolute life."

In itself, the dying of Osiris does not seem to be a wrong thing, for death is "the night of going forth to life."<sup>3)</sup> Out of death life arises:

"I am Osiris . . . I have fallen upon my side, that the gods may live on me."<sup>4)</sup>

As Re who manifests himself in the sun goes to rest in the evening and awakes from the sleep of death in the morning, so do the death and resurrection of Osiris seem to be equally inevitable and natural. In the famous conversation between Atum and Osiris about death and life in the hereafter the chief god finally says:

"How perfect is that which I have done for Osiris in contradistinction from all gods. I have given him the realm of the dead and his son Horus as heir upon his throne on the Island of Fire."<sup>5)</sup>

Yet as Re is threatened by Apopis, the monster of chaos, when he goes to sleep and when he awakens, so Osiris who must die is threatened, and that by his own brother Seth. As Re is protected by the goddess of the uraeus snake, so Osiris is protected by the

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1) No attempt can be made in this chapter to deal fully with the character of the god Osiris, his myth and his cult: "Um wirklich etwas einigermaßen Abschliessendes über Osiris zu sagen dürfte kaum ein einziges Forscherleben ausreichen." (A. Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches*, p. 36 n. 3).

2) W. B. Kristensen, *The meaning of religion*, The Hague, 1960, p. 467.

3) *BD* 170, 5.

4) *CT* IV, 168 c, 169 a, b.

5) *BD* 175, 19, 20.

goddess Isis, who with her magic spells frustrates the misdeeds of the "rowdy." 1) Apopis is repelled, but Osiris does not die a natural death in the order of things, but is murdered by Seth. He is sought for and lamented.

It is an interesting question in how far the death of Osiris is to be regarded as the sacrifice of the god, and part of the order of existence. A. E. Jensen 2) has shown that in the early farming cultures the killing of the dema-god was the central mythologoumenon, and that this was ritually repeated in the cult. Jensen even uses the term "Tötungsritual". Ritual slaughter is indeed found in the cult of Osiris. It is not Osiris, however, but his enemy who is killed in the cult. The significance of this matter will be discussed in the final paragraph of this chapter. The Egyptian cult centres upon the resurrection of Osiris, and his death is mourned.

It is to be deduced from a few Pyramid texts, though, that not only Seth but also Thoth failed to participate in the lament:

"Behold what Seth and Thoth have done, your two brothers, who knew not how to weep for you." 3)

According to H. Jacobsohn 4) this would afford an indication that Thoth was the actual instigator of the murder: "Seth, eine prahlerische Krafternatur und ein notorischer Tölpel und Rüpel, . . . war zu einer solchen Gewalttat leicht zu verführen. Thoth aber war der Gott, der genau wusste was er wollte. Er hatte offenbar das ganze göttliche Drama in Gang gesetzt . . ."

It is said of the wise moon-god Thoth that he reckons the lifetime of gods and men. 5) In the ritual of the opening of the mouth, the lector priest who represents Thoth upon earth says:

"I have made Osiris (*mst* = to bring forth) after his change (*hprt*). He is more perfect than before". 6)

The idea that Osiris had to go to the realm of the dead seems to have been accepted to some extent, but his death is to be deplored because he was murdered by Seth. This act is disorderly because

1) Louvre C 286, 14: *šhmt spw šd hrw*.

2) A. E. Jensen, *Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur*, Stuttgart, 1948; idem, *Mythos und Kult bei Naturvölkern*, Wiesbaden, 1951.

3) *Pyr.* 163a, cf. *pyr.* 173, 175.

4) H. Jacobsohn, *Das Gegensatzproblem im altägyptischen Mythos*. In: *Studien zur analytischen Psychologie C. G. Jungs*, vol. II, Zürich, 1955, p. 191.

5) P. Boylan, *Thoth the Hermes of Egypt*, p. 193.

6) E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual*, vol. I, scene 71 w; vol. II, p. 159.

done by the originator of disorder, a part in which Seth also appears outside the myth of Osiris.

It is striking that in the many religious texts relating to Osiris so few particulars are given of Seth's deed. In the great Osiris hymn Louvre C 286 and on the Ikhernofret stela it is not related in what manner Osiris died nor that he was murdered by Seth. The cause of this vagueness lies in the nature of the matter. Myth and ritual create order, "the chaotic is assembled into a structured order."<sup>1</sup>) In the sacred words or actions the deeds of the originator of confusion are not celebrated, and if they do appear there they are almost unrecognisable. Disorder must become order or be made subservient to it.

It may be that in stories outside the narrow circle of myth and ritual and that had no religious function, more independent attention was paid to the outrage of Seth. We have seen in the preceding chapter that in religious texts the homosexual nature of the relations between Horus and Seth was only hinted at, while texts that had no religious function supplied details. The detailed report left us by Plutarch<sup>2</sup>) of the way Seth murdered Osiris may go back to such non-religious Egyptian tales.

The image of Seth that results from his account is that of a divine murderer and deceiver, who employs ruse. Seth had made a chest, which afterwards proved to be a coffin to the measure of Osiris, Seth having secretly obtained information as to his stature. At a feast he promised to give the chest to him who would fit into it. As soon as Osiris proved to fit in, Seth did not make him a present of it as he had promised, so that Osiris might be buried in it after his natural death, but immediately closed down the lid, thus prematurely taking his life. Moreover, he did not place the coffin in a tomb, but had it thrown into the water and let it float away to sea. Thus Seth promised eternal life, for to the Egyptian mind the possession of a sarcophagus guaranteed a continued existence after death, but he gave death.

Myth gives no independent stress to the disorderly, and therefore the Egyptian religious texts contain not a single detailed coherent account of the murder of Osiris by Seth. Neither have any literary

1) Th. P. van Baaren, *Oorsprong, functie en verklaring van de mythe*. In: *Mythe en realiteit*, Amsterdam-Antwerpen, 1963, p. 22.

2) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 13.

texts been preserved dealing with this mythical material. The story about "Truth and Falsehood" is too fragmentary to draw conclusions from. This is a regrettable gap, for Seth seems to have some of the traits of a trickster, the figure of whom it may be said that "not all the tales told of him deserve the name of myth." <sup>1)</sup> While for the study of some Egyptian gods literary story material is unimportant, the lack of it is much felt in studying Seth, both to serve as a background and to complete and elucidate the primary sources of religious history, which only proclaim that which the faithful held to be the truth.

## 2. THE MURDER OF OSIRIS BY SETH, REVEALED AND CONCEALED IN THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER, BULL'S LEG AND W3Ś-SCEPTRE

In the earliest religious texts about Osiris, the Pyramid texts, it is already hinted at that Seth murdered Osiris:

"You have come in search of your brother Osiris, when his brother Seth had thrown him on his side on that side of the land Gehesti." <sup>2)</sup>

"They found Osiris when his brother Seth had thrown him on the ground in Nedit." <sup>3)</sup>

"Osiris was thrown down on his side by his brother Seth. But he who is in Nedit, moves himself . . ." <sup>4)</sup>

It is generally agreed that the expressions "to throw on the ground" or "on his side" paraphrase "to kill." Later the expression *rđi hr gś* is indeed used in that sense. Faulkner <sup>5)</sup> translates it as "lay low (an enemy)." Elsewhere, sacrificial texts have the words:

"O Osiris N.N., unto you is brought he who killed you." <sup>6)</sup>

Other Pyramid texts <sup>7)</sup> state that Osiris was drowned. Bonnet <sup>8)</sup> considers that "die Überlieferung schon früh zwiespältig war" and that the opposition between Osiris and Seth was "weder kultpolitisch noch wesensmässig," but that through his alliance with unhallowed forces in his rivalry with Horus, Seth became the

1) Th. P. van Baaren, *Menschen wie wir*, p. 70.

2) *Pyr.* 972.

3) *Pyr.* 1256 a, b.

4) *Pyr.* 1500 a, b.

5) R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 291.

6) *Pyr.* 1339 a; 1337 b.

7) *Pyr.* 24 d; 615 d; 766 d.

8) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 568, 710.



murderer of Osiris. Frankfort <sup>1)</sup> and Griffiths <sup>2)</sup> on the other hand suggest that the belief may have obtained that Osiris had been drowned by Seth. Kees <sup>3)</sup> and Scharff assume that the figure of the murderer had a place in the earliest form of the Osiris myth, which they localise in the North-eastern Delta. Scharff supposes that Seth formed part of the Osiris myth in Busiris. Kees thinks that the priests of Heliopolis gave the name of Seth to the murderer of Osiris. Lack of material makes it impossible to determine whether, and in how far, the role of Seth in the Osiris myth is secondary. Since the texts do no more than hint, it is to be surmised that they render the tradition incompletely. The death by drowning and the murder by Seth would appear to be two aspects of the same event. A Coffin text states:

"He (Seth) let him (Osiris) be drowned." <sup>4)</sup>

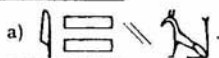
Death by drowning does not seem to me to be the natural death of a god of the Nile, but a disorderly death caused by Seth, who manifests himself in thunder, storm and rain. A Pyramid text says that an offering protects Osiris from the gushing water of the arm (?) of Seth. <sup>5)</sup> In a Coffin text the deceased prays:

"May I have power over the water, as Seth had power when he harmed (w3) Osiris in that night of the great confusion." <sup>6)</sup>

In the lament for Osiris in pap. Bremner-Rhind it is said of Seth:

"He has inundated the land with his evil designs. He has felled the sky to the ground." <sup>7)</sup>

Seth, who manifests himself in rain and thunder-storms, is a god who spews. <sup>8)</sup> The Ennead places Seth underneath Osiris to prevent him "from spitting out his saliva against you." <sup>9)</sup> Seth is the spewer (iššy <sup>a)</sup> determined with the Seth-animal, who is vanquished by Horus on behalf of his father. <sup>10)</sup>



1) H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the gods*, p. 191.

2) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 6 sq.

3) H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten*, Berlin, 1956<sup>2</sup>, p. 257 sqq.; A. Scharff, *o.c.*, p. 24 sqq.

4) *CT* III, 261 b.

5) *Pyr.* 20 d.

6) *CT* IV, 396 a, b.

7) *Pap. Bremner-Rhind* 5, 7, 8; cf. R. O. Faulkner, *The Bremner Rhind papyrus* (1), *JEA* 22 (1936), p. 125, 135.

8) *Pyr.* 26a.

9) *Pyr.* 1628c.

10) *WB* I, 136, 3, *Belegstellen*.

From these texts it is evident that water could be conceived as a symbol of death and chaos. Seth murdered Osiris by means of water. There is no need to adduce texts, however, to show that in myth and cult the Egyptians stressed the positive aspects of the water symbol. Then the inundation is no longer the symbol of the death, but of the resurrection of Osiris. Thus in the ritual confusion is re-created into order. The symbol of death is comprehended as the symbol of life.

In an article on ancient Egyptian ideas about the end of the world, S. Schott incidentally remarks that Seth, in the shape of a bull, killed Osiris with his fore-leg. He quotes a passage from pap. Leiden I 348 rt., which alludes to the possibility of conflict arising in the northern sky. In this context, his comment was that the everlasting stars in the northern sky guard the "Stierschenkel, die Keule des Seth mit der er als Stier Osiris tötete" <sup>1)</sup> thus preventing

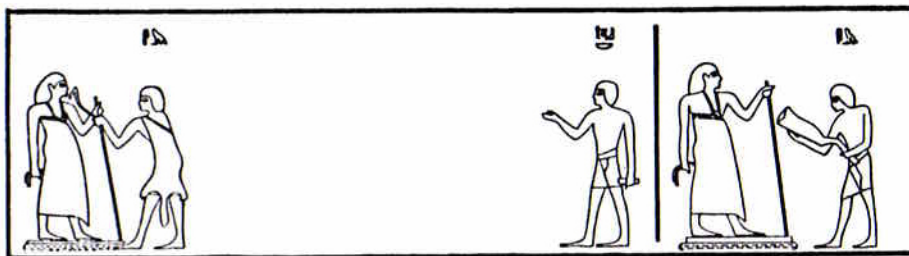


Fig. 11. Scenes from the ritual of opening the mouth

a new outbreak of the fight. The constellation of the Great Bear is the sign of Seth, as Orion is the star of Osiris and Sirius the star of Isis. In the pap. Jumilhac it is related that Horus had cut out the fore-leg of Seth:

"And after he had cut out his fore-leg (*hps*) he threw it into the sky. Spirits (*h3tyw*) guard it there: The Great Bear (*mshtyw*) of the northern sky. The great Hippopotamus goddess keeps hold of it, so that it can no longer sail in the midst of the gods." <sup>2)</sup>

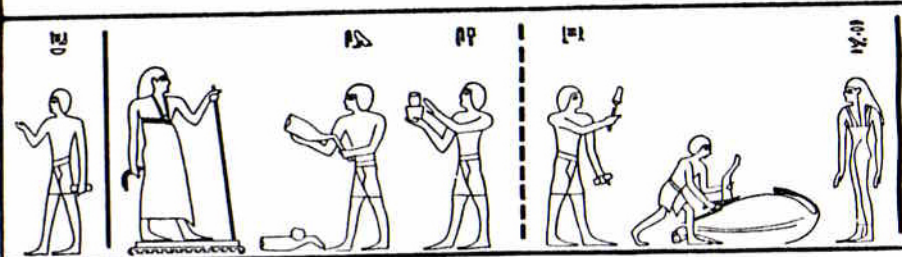
In the stars of the Great Bear the Egyptians saw an adze

1) S. Schott, *Altägyptische Vorstellungen vom Weltende*, *Studia biblica et orientalia*. Vol. III: *Oriens Antiquus*, Roma, 1959 (= *Analecta biblica* 12 (1959)), p. 328.

2) *Pap. Jumilhac* XVII, 11-12.

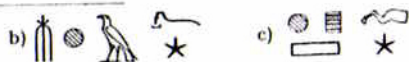
(*mšhtyw*)<sup>b)</sup> or a fore-leg (*hps*).<sup>c)</sup> In BD 17 the four children of Horus are named as guardians of the Bull's leg in the northern sky.<sup>1)</sup> In variants not 4, but 7 guardians are enumerated, corresponding to the 7 stars. The best, although indirect support I have found for the view of Schott is a text from the tomb of Ramses VI.<sup>2)</sup> From this it appears that it is the task of Isis and the four gods "who repulse the tempest of the sky on this day of the Great Contest" to prevent the *mšhtyw*-fore-leg of Seth from going to Osiris. We note from this text that it is not only a matter of concern generally to prevent Seth from approaching Osiris, but that it is his fore-leg which may not approach Osiris. Shortly afterwards the fore-leg or arm of Seth proves to be a redoubtable weapon with which Apopis may be vanquished. Part of the spell of the sixth hour of the day is:

"Let Seth stretch forth his arm to let Apopis fall!—says Isis in her incantation."<sup>3)</sup>



In the course of the history of the Egyptian language, the *hps*, which hieroglyphic writing and the use of the word in the Pyramid texts show to have been the fore-leg of a bull, came to mean not only the constellation of the Great Bear, but also "strong arm," "strength," and even "scimitar."<sup>4)</sup> Seth uses this scimitar in the battle against demons of disease:

"The *hps* of Seth is against you o *smn*; the *ktp* of Baal is struck in your head; the *bt3* of Horus is struck in your vertex."<sup>5)</sup>



1) *Urk.* V, 42,3 sq.

2) A. Piankoff, *The tomb of Ramesses VI*, p. 400.

3) A. Piankoff, *o.c.*, p. 401.

4) R. O. Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 189 sq.

5) *Pap. Leiden I* 343 + 345, rt. II, 2-4.



As other gods do also, Seth presents the scimitar to the king who is at war.<sup>1)</sup> Possibly the Egyptians called the scimitar "bull's leg" because they attributed a deadly force to the latter. The *hꜥꜥ* is a dangerous object as a scimitar and as the bull's leg in the northern sky, for it must be guarded there. This does not yet prove, however, that Seth killed Osiris with the bull's leg. Yet after the foregoing such becomes highly probable, considering the function of the bull's leg in the ritual of the opening of the mouth,



Fig. 12. The constellation of the Bull's leg

and allowing for the ambivalence of a symbol, as also obtains with regard to water, which seems to symbolise both the resurrection and the death of Osiris. In the ritual of the opening of the mouth, indeed, the *mšhtyw* or *hꜥꜥ* seems to bring not death, but life. Four scenes are important for our subject.<sup>2)</sup> In the first scene a bull is slaughtered and its fore-leg is cut out. In the second scene heart and fore-leg are brought in to the dead (Osiris) and laid upon the ground. In the third scene the fore-leg is presented and raised up to the face of Osiris. Finally, in the fourth scene, the mouth of Osiris is opened with the *mšhtyw*. The accompanying utterance is as follows:

"Horus has opened the mouth of N.N. with that wherewith he opened the mouth of his father wherewith he opened the mouth of Osiris, with the metal which came forth from Seth: the *mšhtyw* of metal. That with which the mouth of the gods was opened, with that do you open the mouth of N.N. so that he goes and speaks corporeally before the great ennead of the gods, in the palace of the ruler who is in Heliopolis." <sup>3)</sup>

1) L. Habachi, *Khatâ'na-Qantir: Importance*, *ASAE* 52 (1954), pl. XXIX and p. 508.

2) E. Otto, *o.c.* II, fig. 1, scene 43, 44, 45, 46.

3) E. Otto, *o.c.* II, scene 46 f-k (text) = *Pyr.* 13 e-14 c.

Since it is the *hꜥš* or *mšhtyw* which came forth from Seth that gives life here, the conclusion seems justified that the fore-leg of Seth, which according to other texts requires to be so strictly guarded by Isis and the sons of Horus, was the instrument with which Seth killed Osiris. Osiris is also raised up with the assistance of the spittle of Seth.<sup>1)</sup> An interesting point is that the bull's leg, like the *wꜥš*-sceptre to be discussed below, seems to have played a part in the local cult of Seth. Both in Ombos and in Sepermeru

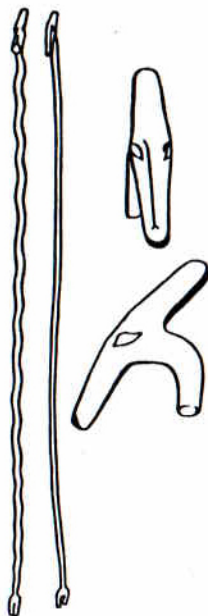


Fig. 13. *Dꜥm*- and *wꜥš*-sceptres

Seth bears the epithet "powerful of forefoot."<sup>2)</sup> The closeness of the tie between Osiris and his murderer or Seth and his victim is evident from the fact, that the bull's leg became one of the sacred relics of Osiris.<sup>3)</sup>

The *wꜥš*- and the *dꜥm*-sceptre, no distinction between which will be pursued here, both have an animal head, while the first has a

1) *Pyr.* 850.

2) W. M. F. Petrie, J. E. Quibell, *Naqada and Ballas*, pl. LXXVIII; R. O. Faulkner, *The Wilbour papyrus* edited by Alan H. Gardiner, vol. IV, London, 1952, p. 58: pap. Wilbour 45, 11; 64, 1.

3) J. Vandier, *Le papyrus Jumilhac*, (Paris, 1961) p. 230.

straight and the second a spiral shaft. Gardiner<sup>1)</sup> holds that the head of these sceptres is probably the head of the Seth-animal. Wainwright<sup>2)</sup> drew attention to the special relation between these divine sceptres and the god Seth. The nome sign of Oxyrhynchus, that was one of the nomes of Seth, consists of two  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptres, and an enormous  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptre was found in the temple of Seth at Ombos. Besides their function as sceptre in the hand of gods,  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptres serve to hold up the sky.<sup>3)</sup> As supporter of the sky Seth is appealed to in a prayer by Ramses II.<sup>4)</sup> In the pap. Bremner-Rhind<sup>5)</sup> Seth is accused of having let the sky fall upon the earth. In the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" Seth becomes angry with the gods and shouts:

"I shall take my  $d^c m$ -sceptre of 4500 nms-pounds and every day I shall kill one of you."<sup>6)</sup>

Thus the narrator supposes that with his heavy sceptre Seth was able to strike a god dead. The only god he actually did kill, according to mythology, was Osiris. However, I know of no text in which it is openly stated that Seth killed Osiris with the  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptre. There is a verb  $w\text{3}\text{5}i$  that means to collapse and to ruin. In a mortuary text it is used as follows:

"When she has been provided with a place, then the enemy of Osiris (= Seth) shall not ruin her (the dead woman)."<sup>7)</sup>

In BD 125<sup>8)</sup> the  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptre is called "giver of winds." If Seth killed Osiris with the  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptre, then this concept, like that of murder by means of a flood of water, could be brought into connection with Seth who manifests himself in thunder-storms and rain. The spiral shaft of the  $d^c m$ -sceptre might be an imitation of lightning.

The word  $w\text{3}\text{5}$  means dominion,<sup>9)</sup> the  $w\text{3}\text{5}$ -sceptre can apparently be regarded as a symbol of order. Gods often hold it. Considering the meaning of the verb  $w\text{3}\text{5}i$  and the suggestion that the  $w\text{3}\text{5}$  or  $d^c m$ -sceptre might be used as an instrument of murder, this sceptre

1) A. H. Gardiner, *EG*, Sign-list S 40, 41.

2) G. A. Wainwright, *Some aspects of Amün*, *JEA* 20 (1934), p. 148.

3) E. g. H. Bonnet, *RARG*, fig. 28, 61.

4) C. Kuentz, *La "stèle du mariage" de Ramses II*, *ASAE* 25 (1925), p. 232.

5) Cf. note 7, p. 85.

6) *Pap. Beatty* I, 5, 2.

7) C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*, p. 124.

8) *BD* 125, 25 (*Nu*).

9) A. H. Gardiner, *The baptism of pharaoh*, *JEA* 36 (1950), p. 12 n. 1: The sense given in *WB* I, 260, "Wohlergehen, Glück . . ." seems extremely unlikely.



seems also to be a symbol of disorder, in the same way as water and fore-leg manifest death and life in their symbolism. The three symbols water, bull's leg and *w3s*-sceptre each seem to have a negative aspect beside their positive aspects of renovation, strength and dominion. Perhaps the streaming rain, the stamping bull's foot and the fulgurant sceptre symbolised the dreadful night of horror in which the "aporrèton" took place, the murder of Osiris by Seth.

### 3. SETH AS DEMON OF DEATH

Plutarch <sup>1)</sup> and other Greek writers state that Seth cut the body of Osiris in pieces. The Egyptian texts are as reticent regarding the dismemberment as regarding the murder. Frankfort <sup>2)</sup> even says: "the story that Seth dismembered the body of Osiris and that Isis buried the parts where she found them . . . can hardly have been an original Egyptian belief . . . The pyramid texts abound in spells in which Isis and Nephthys, Horus or Nut, "unite" the members of the dead Osiris; they nowhere hint at an earlier wilful dismemberment." Frankfort's scepticism seems to stem from the lack of indications that the dismemberment of Osiris was ritually celebrated. Yet as the murder of Osiris by Seth was not celebrated directly while forming the often unexpressed presupposition of the many texts regarding the resurrection of Osiris, so the dismemberment might be the presupposition of the uniting of the members of the god and his mummification. Kees <sup>3)</sup> connects the uniting of the members of the deceased with the myth of the dismemberment of Osiris by Seth, but rejects dismemberment as part of a funeral ritual. The pap. Jumilhac <sup>4)</sup> relates in detail how during twelve consecutive days the various members of Osiris are searched for and found one by one. A previous dispersal of the members does not seem to have been celebrated. Vandier <sup>5)</sup> concludes, after having quoted some earlier, also indirect, allusions <sup>6)</sup> to the dismemberment in Egyptian texts of the N.K. and M.K.: "pour

1) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* c. 18.

2) H. Frankfort, *o.c.*, p. 201.

3) H. Kees, *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Ägypter*. Grundlagen und Entwicklung bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches, Berlin, 1956<sup>2</sup>, p. 16.

4) *Pap. Jumilhac* III, 19-20; IV, 1-28; V (text accompanying vignettes, and the lower register of the papyrus).

5) J. Vandier, *o.c.*, p. 99 n. 12.

6) *BD* 18, 30-31 ed. Naville; K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen*, p. 114 sq.

l'instant, aucune allusion au démembrement du dieu, antérieurement au Moyen Empire, ne nous est connue." He does not exclude the possibility that it was an original Egyptian concept, but wonders whether the Egyptian priests might not or would not speak of it.

A. Hermann<sup>1)</sup> argued that dismemberment of the corpse was originally a "Seligkeitshilfe" in Egypt, adducing numerous parallels from other religious systems. However, after bringing together a number of Egyptian texts dealing with the reuniting of members and sometimes with the preceding dismemberment, he remarks: "Nach diesen Zeugnissen rechnete der Ägypter also unzweifelhaft mit der Möglichkeit einer Zerstückelung im Tode. Wenn er davon redete, bewertete er sie aber negativ und suchte sie durch Zusammenfügungssprüche und -riten oder durch Massnahmen wie die Gliederbandagierung zu überwinden. Der aktiven Prozedur der Zerstückelung sprach er im Ritualspruch keinen religiösen Eigenwert zu, wenngleich diese die Gegenhandlung, deren Endergebnis die Mumifizierung ist, eigentlich erst ermöglicht hat."<sup>2)</sup> This idea that the Egyptians feared dismemberment and expected it after death is important. Seth disturbs the order of life and death not only at the moment of the murder, but also in the period between death and resurrection. During this transitional period, which lasted about 70 days,<sup>3)</sup> the deceased was exposed to being ill-treated by Seth. As soon as someone dies, Seth can obtain power over him: "I do not die. Seth obtains no power over me."<sup>4)</sup> This power of Seth over the dead person is expressed int. al. in the conceptions<sup>5)</sup> that Seth grasps him in his arms, has smitten him dumb and motionless and has bound him. In BD 163 it is asserted in the rubric that if this book is recited upon earth the dead person will not perish through the "slaughter (š'd) of Seth."<sup>6)</sup> In a spell to give back his head to a dead person in the netherworld there is the utterance:

"Dwn'wy has hidden me behind his arms to chase away the damage done by Seth."<sup>7)</sup>

1) A. Hermann, *Zergliedern und Zusammenfügen*. Religionsgeschichtliches zur Mumifizierung, *Numen* 3 (1956), p. 81-96.

2) A. Hermann, *o.c.*, p. 86.

3) J. von Beckerath, *RdÉ* 16 (1964), p. 227; cf. also L. Habachi, *A statue of Osiris made for Ankhhefnamun, prophet of the house of Amun in Khapu, and his daughter*, *ASAE* 47 (1947), p. 278 sqq.

4) *CT* III, 349 e, f.

5) *Pyr.* 1067 b; *CT* IV, 55 j, 56 a, b; *BD* 23, 2; 86, 6.

6) *BD* 163, 18.

7) *CT* VI, 126 j, k, l.

The following text is quoted by Moret:

"O Osiris, I lit a torch for you upon the day that your mummy was wrapped. I drove away Seth when he was on the point of stealing your body." 1)

From Pyramid texts and Coffin texts it is evident the deceased was held to be in great danger of entering upon the paths of Seth.<sup>2)</sup> The presupposition of the well-known "Stundenwachen"<sup>3)</sup> at the bier of Osiris is, that also after the murder Seth seeks to harm Osiris as a destructive demon of death. De Buck<sup>4)</sup> remarked, taking several Coffin texts together: "The idea that Osiris' death or wounds should be hidden occurs often. In a text which is written on the mummy-mask, it is said this mask was given to Osiris by Rē in order to hide (*sštj*) what was done against him, to keep secret (*?dr*) the blow which Seth dealt against him; to the initiated Osiris' weariness is uncovered and he may see his blows; but elsewhere it is said of the enemy that he has betrayed (?) Osiris' weariness to Seth and has talked about his hidden blows." In the Pyramid texts<sup>5)</sup> Nut is called upon to stretch herself over her son Osiris and to hide him from Seth. This prayer presupposes that Seth was considered capable of doing violence to a corpse. An impediment for the correct appreciation of the tradition lies in the fact that in the texts the myth of Osiris is actualised and the dead pharaoh or other person is identified with Osiris. The fear that Seth might commit an outrage upon the corpse seems to be founded on the conviction that Seth cut Osiris into pieces. In the Book of the Dead Osiris is sometimes called "the dismembered one" (*tštš*).<sup>6)</sup> The Egyptians hoped to see their friends and relations back in the hereafter "freed of the onus of Seth and of the count of Isis."<sup>7)</sup> The counting of Isis might allude to the counting of the limbs<sup>8)</sup> after the dismemberment. Then the onus of Seth would not be the

1) A. Moret, *Le rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte d'après les papyrus de Berlin et les textes du temple de Sêti Ier à Abydos*, Paris, 1902, p. 13, with reference to K. Piehl, *Stèle de l'époque de Ramesès IV conservée au Musée de Boulaq*, ZAS 22 (1884), p. 39.

2) *Pyr.* 1236 c; *CT* 11, 142 a.

3) H. Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien*, DWAW, Philos.-hist. Kl. Bd 54, 1, Wien, 1910; *CT* Spell 49.

4) A. De Buck, *The earliest version of Book of the Dead 78*, JEA 35 (1949), p. 92 n. 10; *CT* VI, 123 g, h; I, 141 g; I, 142 a; I, 155 d-f; IV, 69 g-70 c.

5) *Pyr.* 777 a, b.

6) T. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, p. 69, 284.

7) *CT* 11, 151 e.

8) *Pyr.* 179 c.

corvée to which the dead were called in the hereafter,<sup>1)</sup> but the dreaded dismemberment. In BD 17 the following supplication is addressed to Re: "Deliver me from this god, who seizes souls and licks that which is rotten, who lives on offal and is in darkness and obscurity, who terrifies the weary—it is Seth".<sup>2)</sup> Seth not only disturbs the order of life and death by murdering Osiris so that he suffered "ein schlimmer Tod," but even after this he tries to cause confusion. He is the griffin (*šrrf*) in whose hand Osiris is.<sup>3)</sup> He is the destructive demon of death, who "lives by robbing him (i.e. the deceased)." <sup>4)</sup>

It is notable that it is not the murdered victim, but the murderer who is generally represented as a demon of death who can find no rest. A solution of the problem will be attempted in the next paragraph.

#### 4. SETH AS SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL AND BEARER OF OSIRIS

When the Osiris myth, the crucial moment of which is not murder and dismemberment but resurrection, arrives at its height, it merges into the Horus myth, with which it constantly proves to be closely linked in the texts. Griffiths<sup>5)</sup> has acceptably argued that the two parties in the judgment of the gods are not Osiris and Seth, but Horus and Seth, for the dead person who is identified with the god who is at law and sometimes called Osiris, is given that name because everyone, once dead, is called Osiris. Data regarding a so-called punishment of Seth do not seem to refer to an essential part of the Osiris myth, but to have resulted from speculations about the ritual, particularly the sacrifice. As sacrificial animals are bound, killed and cut in pieces, so we hear that Seth and his following suffer this fate.<sup>6)</sup> Van der Leeuw remarked:<sup>7)</sup> "That the sacrificial animal is regarded as the enemy, and vice versa the enemy as the sacrifice of the god, is a common conception

1) So M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, *Hereniging in het Hiernamaals volgens egyptisch geloof*. In: *Pro regno pro sanctuario*. Een bundel studies en bijdragen van vrienden en vereerders bij de zestigste verjaardag van Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw, Nijkerk, 1950, p. 231.

2) *CT* IV, 319-321 b.

3) F. Ll. Griffiths, H. Thompson, *The demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden*, vol. I, London, 1904, p. 127.

4) *CT* VI, 294 l.

5) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 60 sqq.

6) *Pyr.* 575, 643; *CT* IV, 85 q, 97 i-1, 105 e, f; VI, 213 i, 125 d, e; etc.

7) G. van der Leeuw, *Godsvoorstellingen in de oud-aegyptische pyramideteksten*, p. 81.

both in earlier and later times." Van der Leeuw here seems to reject the idea that the killing of sacrificial animals was regarded as punishment or vengeance on Seth, as Kristensen did too.<sup>1)</sup>

The significance of Seth in the Osiris myth may, I think, be summarised as follows. Seth is he who opposes the order of life and death by murdering Osiris, who had to die. The Egyptians have hardly mentioned the motives of his act. Occasionally it is related that Seth excused himself by saying that Osiris had come too near to him and had defied him.<sup>2)</sup> Usually no activities towards Seth are ascribed to Osiris; he is essentially a passive god. Precisely this passivity, however, might be a defiance for Seth. Perhaps the Pyramid text mentioned above might be understood as signifying that Osiris had appeared to his brother Seth as the god whose essence is death and as he who must die, and that it was this which aroused the aversion and aggression of Seth, whose unbridled zest for life clashes with passivity.

I believe a better understanding of Seth's role in the Osiris myth may be gained by looking upon this fratricide as a suicide, not so much because of a few texts which state that Osiris is the ka of Seth<sup>3)</sup> or that Seth came forth from Osiris,<sup>4)</sup> but from general considerations. It was pointed out in chapter II that the successive generations of the gods, Shu and Tefnut and Geb and Nut, each time formed a single pair, but that beside the one pair Osiris and Isis the other divine pair Seth and Nephthys had come into being. If Osiris is the god of absolute life, whose essence includes death, then the duality of Osiris and Seth is that of death and life. Osiris is death from which life arises, and Seth is life which produces death. Owing to the duality of Osiris and Seth which now came into being, death, which before had formed a unity with life, became visible separately in the strange brother. Seth attempts to get rid of death, i.e. Osiris who must die, by murdering his brother. This is the behaviour of the self-murderer, in whose life death does not remain hidden until he is completed or overtaken by it, but to whom death appears as his double or alter ego and who feels the need to murder death, so taking his own life.<sup>5)</sup>

1) W. B. Kristensen, *The meaning of religion*, p. 466 sq.

2) *Pyr.* 959 c.

3) *Pyr.* 587 b.

4) *Pyr.* 1145.

5) E. A. D. E. Carp, *De dubbelganger*. Beschouwingen over dood en leven, Utrecht-

The Egyptians do not seem to have overlooked the suicidal character of Seth's act. In Pap. Bremner-Rhind <sup>1)</sup> it is said: "Seth is in all evil which he has done," that is to say, the evil which Seth has done rebounds upon his own head. It was remarked above that in representative Osiris texts such as the great Osiris hymn Louvre C 286 and the Ikhernofret stela the murder of Osiris by Seth is not mentioned, because the chaotic is assembled into a structured order. We can now go a little further. In the Osiris hymn <sup>2)</sup> it is related that he who committed the deed of violence is himself smitten by the outrage, and on the Ikhernofret stela <sup>3)</sup> that the enemies of Osiris were vanquished, that is sacrificed on the sand banks of Nedyt. I do not believe the faithful are deliberately blurring or distorting their truth here. They celebrate that which according to them is the truth and the actual purport of the act of Seth. By killing Osiris, Seth has slain himself and given himself as a sacrifice. The sacrifice of Seth and his following in the ritual is the dramatisation of the murder of Osiris in its true perspective. It symbolises the end of Seth the demon of death, who as a suicide could find no rest. It unites him with his brother, Osiris the god of the dead. It confirms the cosmic order and does away with duality. Since the murder is not only the culmination, but also the end of chaos, it can be celebrated as a sacrifice.

This does not mean that the Egyptians attached a positive value to the murder as such, for that remains not only the end but also the culminating point of the activities of the order-destroying Seth. Seth has upset the order of original being by manifesting death, the great evil. For this reason Seth is not merely a tragic figure who vainly tried to vanquish death, or a failure (*whi sp.f.*), <sup>4)</sup> but a demonic god. Death is revealed as an enemy. The import of this revelation of Seth is perhaps most easily apprehended on the psychological level. The former professor

Antwerpen, 1964, p. 55 sqq. Naturally this is not meant as an opinion regarding suicide in general. Carp bases his interpretation of suicide by melancholics upon psychiatric practice and European literature. Cf. S. Freud, *Trauer und Melancholie, Gesammelte Werke X*, London, 1949, p. 428-447.

1) *Pap. Bremner Rhind* 6, 21; cf. R. O. Faulkner, *o.c.*, *JEA* 22 (1936) p. 126.

2) *Louvre C* 286, 22.

3) H. Schäfer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos unter König Sesostri III*. Nach der 1. Denkstein des Oberschatzmeisters I-cher-nofret im Berliner Museum, *UGA IV*, Heft 2, Leipzig, 1904.

4) *WB I*, 339, 15, 17.



of psychiatry at Leiden university, Dr. E. A. D. E. Carp, remarks: "He who is mentally disordered lacks the blind spot which aids one who is mentally healthy to deny, annul and disregard as trifling, the reality of his own death and its surrounding presence, so that by far the greater part of mankind is 'surprised' by death." <sup>1)</sup>

Funerary texts repeatedly state that Seth must carry Osiris. Griffiths <sup>2)</sup> rejected the view advanced by Van der Leeuw that one of these texts hinted that after his resurrection Osiris homosexually abused the wicked Seth. He goes on to remark: "What is strange is that neither Rusch nor Sainte Fare Garnot in their studies of these 'carrying texts' have recognized that Seth's role is really that of a ship in a funerary voyage. Sainte Fare Garnot speaks of Seth as a 'mount for Osiris to ride'. But animals were not ridden, it seems, in the Old Kingdom. Rusch says, 'So muss denn wirklich im Osiriskult eine Sethfigur unter den liegenden Osiris gebracht sein'; that this was in the form of a ship is shown by the Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus."

The view of Van der Leeuw <sup>3)</sup> is indeed untenable, but the explanation of Griffiths is not entirely conclusive either. From the Saitic period on we often see depicted on coffins, in temples, in tombs and on head-rests a bull, i.e. the Apis bull, carrying a mummy to the tomb.<sup>4)</sup> According to a vignette with accompanying text in the pap. Jumilhac, Bata, that is Seth carries Osiris on his back in the form of a bull.<sup>5)</sup> It appears from a Pyramid text that this idea of Seth as a bull carrying Osiris is ancient. Osiris is addressed as follows:

"I have killed for you him who killed you... You are upon the back of him who is in the form of a bull." <sup>6)</sup>

The final clause of this utterance <sup>7)</sup> shows, that the bull or bull's

1) E. A. D. E. Carp, *o.c.*, p. 66.

2) J. G. Griffiths, *o.c.*, p. 41 and p. 15, with references to: J. Sainte Fare Garnot, *A hymn to Osiris in the pyramid texts*, *JNES* 8 (1949), p. 101; A. Rusch, *Ein Osirisritual in den Pyramidentexten*, *ZAS* 60 (1925), p. 39, and K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen*, p. 100.

3) G. van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 80; id., *The contendings of Horus and Seth*, *Egyptian Religion* 2 (1934), p. 110.

4) J. Vandier, *o.c.*, p. 250 n. 1068; E. Otto, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stierkulte in Ägypten*, *UGA* 13, Leipzig, 1938, p. 13.

5) *Pap. Jumilhac* XX.

6) *Pyr.* 1544 a, d. In *Pyr.* 1124 c it is said that the feet of the heavenly throne of the king or Osiris are hooves of the great bull.

7) *Pyr.* 1550 a.

head is connected with a ship. As the boat of Sokaris was decorated with the head of a gazelle and a bull<sup>1)</sup> that had been sacrificed, thus it seems that the ship of Osiris could be decorated with the head of a bull, so that the sacrificial bull representing Seth must carry Osiris as a ship.<sup>2)</sup>

No more than the binding, killing and cutting in pieces of Seth as a bull, would Seth's carrying as a ship or a ship with a bull's head seem to be purely a punishment or an act of vengeance upon Seth. It is indeed not only Seth, but also Horus<sup>3)</sup> or the children of Horus<sup>4)</sup> who carry Osiris. Sometimes Horus and Seth carry Osiris together.<sup>5)</sup> The only difference might be that Seth is compelled to do this servile work. In an article on the symbolism of the ship in Egyptian religion Kristensen<sup>6)</sup> remarked: "It is the true saviour from the realm of the dead, because it manages to carry the god and the dead person across the waters of death . . . All sacred boats have the same power of resurrection, and of all it may be said that this power constitutes their most typical characteristic". Viewed in this way, Seth is not only a murderer and demon of death, but also assists the resurrection of Osiris. This would mean that he is the demonic initiator, who leads his brother to life through death by violence.

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1) H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 725.

2) Cf. J. Zandee, *BIOR* 20 (1963), p. 252.

3) *Pyr.* 1824 a.

4) *Pyr.* 1338 a.

5) *Pyr.* 1148 a.

6) W. B. Kristensen, *Symbool en Werkelijkheid*, Arnhem, 1954, p. 181, 184.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SETH REPELLING APOPIS

In Egyptian mythology and religion Seth not only appears as hostile to Horus and as the slayer of Osiris, but also as repelling the Apopis snake.<sup>1)</sup> He is imagined as standing on the prow of the sun barque and conquering the monster of chaos by word or deed, and in this quality he is invoked and adored:

"Hail to you, O Seth, son of Nut, the great of strength in the barque of millions, felling the enemy, the snake, at the prow of the barque of Re, great of battle-cry, may you give me a good lifetime . . ." <sup>2)</sup>

"O Seth, lord of life, who is upon the prow of the barque of Re, save me from all evil clamour of this year." <sup>3)</sup>

"A royal offering to Seth of Ombos, the son of Nut, the mighty one on the prow of the ship and to all the gods in Ombos." <sup>4)</sup>

Elsewhere the notorious murderer of Osiris, Seth is shown in these texts to be the protector of Re, for that is what is implied by his fighting against the evil snake Apopis, and in this good office he is worshipped. Various scholars have attempted to solve the problem, how these so diverse roles could be filled by one and the same god.

E. Meyer <sup>5)</sup> thought this latter role was secondary, and borrowed from the Canaanite Baal, who according to him was a sun-god. Since then, various passages in the Coffin texts have made it evident that Seth's battle with Apopis was already known before the N.K. and the time of the Hyksos, so that this motive cannot be derived from the Baal-like cult of Seth in the North-eastern Delta during the 19th dynasty. The snake Apopis is not mentioned

1) In an article often quoted, *Set dans la barque solaire* (BIFAO 28 (1929), p. 33-40), G. Nagel gave a survey of all the material then known to him in which Seth was so mentioned or depicted, and listed the earlier literature on the subject. A year later he made some additions, the principal one of which was *BD 108 = CT Spell 160 (Un papyrus funéraire de la fin du nouvel empire, Louvre 3292, BIFAO 29 (1929), p. 65 sqq.)*. Since then further texts have come to light or become more easily accessible: *Pap. Beatty I, 4, 4-5; CT VI, 269 s, t; 271 d; VII, 458 g; Medinet Habu I, pl. 46, 31; 32, 5; II, 101, 23.*

2) Four Hundred Years-stela. Cf. K. Sethe, *Der Denkstein mit dem Datum des Jahres 400 der Ära von Tanis*, ZAS 65 (1930), p.87.

3) *Pap. Leiden I 346 II, 12; cf. B. H. Stricker, Spreuken tot beveiliging gedurende de schrikeldagen naar Pap. I 346, OMRO NR 29 (1948), p. 68.*

4) *Urk. IV, 1437, 8.*

5) E. Meyer, *Set-Typhon*, p. 52 sqq.

in the Pyramid texts. However, it would be rash to conclude from this that Seth's fight with Apopis, which seems so different from his other mythical acts, is of foreign origin. The very motive of a boat from which the fighting is done, is Egyptian.

Even before E. Meyer, W. Pleyte <sup>1)</sup> defended the view that Seth was originally the sun-god of Upper Egypt. He held that the myths of Osiris and Horus showed that there had been wars between Upper and Lower Egypt. After the union of Egypt under Menes, Seth was given a place among other gods, but bellicose and pernicious qualities were ascribed to him. Afterwards he became altogether the evil one. Thus according to Pleyte the role of Seth in the myth of Osiris and Horus is more secondary than his part in the myth of Re. It would be the data regarding the latter from which the original conceptions might be traced.

Although G. Nagel <sup>2)</sup> did not call Seth a sun-god, he did consider that this role of Seth belonged to "un vieux fonds mythologique." He distinguished a cycle of Re and a cycle of Osiris. The latter, in which Seth played the part of murderer, having gained the ascendancy, Seth became the enemy of the gods. "Mais l'Égypte et ses théologiens sont trop conservateurs pour que l'ancien fonds et les anciennes conceptions ne reparassent ça et là dans les textes et les représentations." The last to continue this line of evolutionistic thinking in religious history seems to be Zandee: Although at an early date Seth became the enemy of Osiris and Horus, he was originally the beneficent god of a large part of the population of the Nile valley; "... wenn Seth dem Re gegen Apophis beisteht, so wird der Gott günstig aufgefasst. Solches geht auf sehr alte Vorstellungen zurück." <sup>3)</sup>

An objection to the survival theory of Pleyte, Nagel and Zandee is, that it can not be directly demonstrated in the texts. If Seth's favourable role in the sun barque was a survival of pre-dynastic religion, one might expect the data to be numerous at first, becoming fewer in the course of time. Actually the reverse is the case. Most data come from the N.K., and the earliest ones from the time of the Coffin texts. From the fact that a sun is drawn above the Seth-

1) W. Pleyte, *Lettre à M. Théodule Devéria sur quelques monuments relatifs au dieu Set*, p. 56 sqq.

2) G. Nagel, *Set dans la barque solaire*, *BIFAO* 28 (1929), p. 39.

3) J. Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, *ZÄS* 90 (1963), p. 155.

animal on the serekh of Peribsen <sup>1)</sup> and from a single Pyramid text (Pyr. 128) in which G. Jéquier <sup>2)</sup> thought he saw an allusion to the role of Seth as it is known from later texts, nothing can be deduced with certainty. One can not, indeed, go so far on the strength of this objection as to posit an evolution in the opposite direction, as suggested by E. Meyer, for it must be remembered that our material is incomplete, particularly that from before the N.K. The difficulty remains, however, that an evolution, in whatever direction, is hardly to be made out from the texts now available to us.

It is problematic, and this may be regarded as a second objection to the above, whether a sharp distinction should be made between two traditions, one of an evil god Seth who kills Osiris, and the other of a good god Seth who protects Re, quite apart from matters of historical stratification. Not only as slayer of Osiris, but also as fighter against Apopis, Seth is called *nbd*.<sup>3)</sup> The *nbd* is an evil being.<sup>4)</sup> Sometimes the rage (*nšn*) of Seth is stressed when he is combating Apopis.<sup>5)</sup> As fighter against Apopis Seth is called "instigator of confusion" (*šd hnnw*).<sup>6)</sup> In BD 175, in the conversation with Osiris, Atum says that he has the ba of Seth safely guarded in the sun barque, so that he can not cause fright to the body of the god, i.e. the pantheon.<sup>7)</sup> Zandee <sup>8)</sup> remarks that in this instance the hostile and the friendly aspect of Seth are united, but one cannot help doubting whether these two aspects were ever entirely divided. Writing of the Vedic gods, Van Baaren <sup>9)</sup> says: "For a long time, it was the conviction of scholars that the fact that one and the same deity might display divergent and sometimes even contradictory qualities could best be explained by assuming that such a god had resulted by a historical process from several simple deities. This train of thought is based on a rationalistic misunderstanding and a failure to appreciate the nature of religious expe-

1) J. Černý, *La date de l'introduction du culte de Seth dans le nord-est du Delta*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 296, 298 sq.

2) G. Jéquier, *L'équipage primitif de la barque solaire d'Héliopolis*, *Egyptian Religion* 3 (1935), p. 19 sqq.

3) G. Nagel, *Un papyrus funéraire de la fin du nouvel empire*, *Louvre* 3292, *BIFAO* 29 (1929), p. 62.

4) *WB* II, 247; H. Kees, *Nbd als Dämon der Finsternis*, *ZAS* 59 (1924), p. 69 sq.

5) *Medinet Habu* I, pl. 32, 5; 46, 31.

6) *BD* 39, 14.

7) H. Kees, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch*, p. 28.

8) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, p. 152.

9) Th. P. van Baaren, *Van Maansikkel tot Rijzende Zon*, *Zeist-Antwerpen*, 1961<sup>2</sup>, p. 55.

rience. In essence, each important god comprises all possibilities. Gods can not be sorted out like buttons."

If we are not to disregard the Egyptian experience of religion, then our starting-point must be that the Egyptians surmised a certain intent at the back of reality to which they gave the name of Seth. The essence of this intent behind reality they expressed in various images and stories. The derivation of these images and stories is not easily determined, and the differences among them seem to be very great. Yet they could serve to reveal the quintessence of Seth. Thus the Egyptians must have been conscious of the resemblances as well as of the differences between his mythical acts. It is hardly to be imagined that those who glorified Seth as the defender against Apopis were not aware that he was also accounted the opponent of Horus and the slayer of Osiris. There is indeed not a single text which could lead one to suppose that worshippers of Seth denied that Seth had made attempts upon Horus and killed Osiris. The texts regarding Seth's fight with Apopis can not be looked upon as a survival of an earlier, possibly pre-dynastic tradition of the god Seth, but must be understood in the whole context of the material relating to Egyptian religion and to the god Seth.

Besides the hypothesis of survival, the concept of nature mythology must be mentioned here. Bonnet and Zandee have taken Seth's fight with Apopis to be the expression in myth of Seth's rule over thunder-storms. Seth is considered to drive away Apopis as "Wettergott" <sup>1)</sup> or "Wind am Himmel." <sup>2)</sup> Apparently Zandee, appealing to Wainwright, would connect this explanation as nature mythology with the survival hypothesis mentioned above. Wainwright <sup>3)</sup> supposed that the storm-god Seth was originally worshipped as the beneficent bringer of rain by Egyptians not yet living in the valley of the Nile. Afterwards, practising irrigation in that valley, they no longer owed their good harvests to thunder and rain from Seth, but to the inundation of the Nile. Seth then became a superfluous nuisance and finally "the very Devil himself." The hypothesis is ingenious, but data that Seth was ever adored exclusively as the good god of rain, are lacking. It is remarkable that

1) H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 704.

2) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, p. 151.

3) G. A. Wainwright, *The Sky-religion in Egypt*, Cambridge, 1938, p. 100.



some scholars assume Seth to have been originally a good god who acquired a bad reputation through changes of political or natural climate, as if it were only possible for a religious relationship to be established with a good intent surmised behind reality by the faithful.

One can assume with Bonnet that the Egyptians might experience tumult in nature or thunder-storms as a fight with evil forces or Apopis. Thus it is recommended to carry out a certain ritual to vanquish Apopis not only at fixed times but also "very often against storm so that the sun may shine".<sup>1)</sup> Yet a myth, and also this mythical act of Seth, is more than a way of glossing over meteorological uncertainty by the Egyptians, who lacked the knowledge of modern physics. It does not seem to be altogether superfluous to point this out, for in 1948 Scharff still thought it possible to explain this myth as a nature myth in the old sense, which had originated in Lower Egypt, "denn nur dort gibt es oft intensive Wolkenbildungen die primitiven Gemütern als Gefahr für die Sonne erscheinen können."<sup>2)</sup> An example adduced by Zandee<sup>3)</sup> to show that besides giving air, Seth was also regarded as the air itself, is not very well chosen, for it might be argued from two variant readings that the translation should not be "air" but "give me air." He concludes that this is an instance of pantheism.<sup>4)</sup> The natural phenomenon wind in itself, then, is not invoked here. Seth and Apopis are not natural phenomena, but they can be experienced therein. Zandee in his article not only states that Seth is wind, but also that he manifests himself in thunder-storms.<sup>5)</sup>

Having arrived at this formulation, we will leave the nature myth explanation as well as the hypothesis of survival and confine ourselves to a rendering of the theological significance this myth may have had for the Egyptians. An article by E. Hornung<sup>6)</sup> is epoch-making in this respect.

The Apopis snake was never worshipped as a god, it is a being of chaos. Hornung remarks:<sup>7)</sup> "Die Mächte der Ordnung, die Götter,

1) *Pap. Bremner-Rhind* 23, 15; cf. R. O. Faulkner, *The Bremner Rhind papyrus (III)*, *JEA* 23 (1937), p. 168.

2) A. Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches*, p. 43 n. 89.

3) *CT* V, 216 c; cf. 215 a.

4) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, p. 146.

5) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, p. 155.

6) E. Hornung, *Chaotische Bereiche in der geordneten Welt*, *ZÄS* 81 (1956), p. 28-32.

7) E. Hornung, *o.c.*, p. 32.

werden geboren (sofern sie nicht Urgötter und damit letztlich wieder Kategorien des Chaos sind), und sie sind sterblich: Osiris wird getötet und zum Leben erweckt, der Sonnengott und die Gestirne werden täglich aufs neue geboren, nachdem sie Nut verschluckt hat bzw. nachdem sie das Reich der Toten durchwandelt und sich dort verjüngt haben. Ihre "Ewigkeit" ist die des kosmischen Kreislaufs durch Tod und Neugeburt. Nirgends aber ist von Geburt und Tod des Apophis die Rede, er ist ganz einfach da, wie die Elementarwesen der Märchen, er und alle Götterfeinde stehen ausserhalb dieses Kreislaufs." Apopis was not born. Words used in a spell of conjuration against him are: "Your body in which you are born, is not." <sup>1)</sup> Not until a late text in the temple of Esna is it related that Apopis (*ḥp*) originated from the spittle (*ḥt*) of Neith, the mother of Re, who was in the primordial waters. <sup>2)</sup> This spittle was warded off and became a snake of 120 yards long, which was named Apopis and revolted against Re. This recalls the motive in the Pyramid texts that Seth was spat out by the pregnant goddess Nut. <sup>3)</sup> When in the late period both Apopis and Seth were accounted enemies of the gods, they were identified with one another. <sup>4)</sup> As a rule Egyptian texts have no speculations regarding the origin of evil. Apopis is "ganz einfach da" as Hornung says, yet he is not in the same reality as gods and men. According to the Egyptians reality consists of being (*ntt*) and non-being (*iwtt*). <sup>5)</sup> The cosmos came forth from chaos, but it did not originate from Apopis, but from the primordial god. Therefore Apopis is not concerned about the preservation of the cosmos of gods and men. His indifference may easily come into conflict with the interests of gods and men and is a menace to the cosmos. Hornung remarks: <sup>6)</sup>

1) *Socle Behague* g 12; cf. A. Klasens, *o.c.*, *OMRO NR 33* (1952), p. 59.

2) S. Sauneron, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna*, Le Caire, 1962, p. 265; C. de Wit, *CdÉ 38 no. 76* (1963), p. 238.

3) *Pyr.* 205.

4) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 52.

5) Ph. Derchain, *Zijn en niet-zijn volgens de egyptische filosofie, Dialoog II* (1962), p. 171-190.

6) E. Hornung, *o.c.*, p. 28. In *Pyr.* 1453 Seth too is represented as immortal (E. Hornung, *o.c.*, p. 32 n. 11). This may be related to the controversial place of Seth in the pantheon, his disorderly birth (*Pyr.* 205) and his later identification with Apopis. As one of those in the solar barque, however, Seth shared with the gods in the process of death and rebirth. He is sometimes depicted in mummy form (Wien 3902: G. Roeder, *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren*. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Mitteilungen aus der ägyptischen Sammlung, Bd. VI, Berlin, 1956, Text volume, p. 215; relief in temple at Derr: R. L. B. Moss, B. Porter and E. W. Burney, *Topographical bibliography of ancient egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings*, vol. VII, Oxford, 1951, p. 89).

“Die Mächte des Chaos müssen immer wieder überwunden werden, so wie Marduk an jedem Neujahrfeste aufs neue über Tiamat siegt. Apophis wird zwar “abgewehrt” (*hsf*), “bezaubert” (*hk3*), “gefällt” (*shr*) und “bestraft” (*njk*), aber niemals getötet; er und das Chaos, dem er angehört, sind unsterblich.”

The god Re with the crew of his sun barque defends the cosmos against Apopis. Particularly at the critical moments or places of sunrise and sunset, on the borders of cosmos and chaos, is the conflict represented in the coordination of space and time. Osiris is enthroned in the underworld, but Re journeys continually. The sun barque is “die Stätte des Weltregimentes.”<sup>1)</sup> Sometimes Re is shown alone in it, but often various other gods also appear as members of the crew.

These gods have a particular relationship with Re. As occupants of the ship each expresses an aspect of Re himself. It is clear that *Hw* and *Ši3*, *M3t* and *Hk3* are hypostases of the sun-god, his authoritative word and insight, his justice and magic power. It is interesting that gods whom egyptologists do not usually regard as personifications of concepts, seem to be aspects of Re when they occupy a place in the sun barque. In his very thorough monograph on Thoth, Boylan remarks<sup>2)</sup> that in the solar barque this god represents the businesslike and efficient character of Re's rule. The problems of unity and plurality, monotheism and polytheism, can not be worked out here. E. Otto<sup>3)</sup> has drawn attention to an interesting parallel in the anthropological field: in a tomb of the 18th dynasty offerings were not only found addressed to the dead man or to his Ka, as usual, but the unity was extended to a more detailed plurality consisting of name, Ka, altar, tomb, fate, lifetime, Meskhenet, Renenet, Khnum, Ba, Akh, body, shadow and “all his forms.” Just as the human manner of being after death has many aspects relating to continued individual existence, so also the manner of being of Re, the lord of the universe (*nb r dr*), can apparently be specified in various gods or be more precisely qualified by them.

One of Re's characteristics is his aggressive action towards

1) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 738.

2) P. Boylan, *o.c.*, p. 60.

3) E. Otto, *Altägyptischer Polytheismus. Eine Beschreibung, Saeculum. Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte*, München, 14 (1963), p. 370.

opponents, in this instance Apopis. In sun hymns, where other gods are usually hardly mentioned, if at all, it is Re himself who drives off Apopis with his uraeus snake.<sup>1)</sup> This uraeus snake on the forehead of Re, marking him a warlike ruler, may be specified as a separate goddess in Egyptian mythology. Any occupants of the solar barque take part in the fight and assist Re. Essentially, in the barque of the sun the whole pantheon enters into combat with the monster of chaos. To gain the victory all available strength is required. Although the Egyptians might imagine goddesses also taking part in the struggle, e.g. the scorpion goddess Selkis, they are chiefly male gods of an aggressive character who come to the fore, e.g. Month, Onuris, Sopdu, Shu, Baba.<sup>2)</sup> It should be emphasised that Seth is not the only champion and helper of Re in the combat with Apopis. The Egyptians could choose among several mythical figures to specify the aggression of Re in a champion who had taken up his post at the prow of the ship. Surely the reason that Seth was often chosen for this part was not that he was as friendly and good as other gods, but that he was as aggressive as other mythical figures, even surpassing them in aggressivity and viciousness. As the notorious rowdy and thunder-god, the opponent of Horus and the slayer of Osiris, he was eminently suitable to do the dirty work. In BD 39, a spell to drive away Apopis, Seth is introduced as saying:

"I am Seth who causes confusion and thunders in the horizon of the sky, whose heart is as (that of) the *nbđ*." <sup>3)</sup>

This is the Seth who so excellently protects Re. As in the examination of the function of the Seth-animal in hieroglyphic writing, we may here also quote Van Baaren's remark: "... the originator of confusion, like the creator who sets in order, is an aspect of total reality which cannot be spared." <sup>4)</sup>

Seth in the solar barque might be interpreted as the violent aspect of Re. This obviates the necessity of splitting up Seth into a good and a bad god. As in the myth of Horus and Osiris, Seth in the myth of Re also fills the part of the originator of con-

1) Cf. A. Scharff, *Ägyptische Sonnenlieder*, Berlin, 1922, p. 30, 33, 34, 44, 52. The uraeus snake has come forth from Seth (cf. *Pyr.* 1459 b, 2047 d).

2) H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 476, 545, 742, 687; Ph. Derchain, *Bébon, le dieu et les mythes*, *RdÉ* 9 (1952), p. 37.

3) *BD* 39, 14 and 15.

4) Cf. p. 25.

fusion, with this difference that unlike Horus and Osiris, it is not Re who is the victim of Seth's aggression, but Apopis. It may be worth while, therefore, to examine the relationship between Seth and Re more closely, particularly as the formulation "violent aspect of Re" is not the translation of a term in Egyptian theology.

There are only a few data to show that Seth and Re together might be regarded as a single god. Of Sethnekht, the founder of the 20th dynasty, it is related that when he set the land in order after revolt, he was "like Khepri-Seth when he rages." <sup>1)</sup> It is conceivable that this Egyptian writer did indeed consider king Sethnekht to be possessed both of the qualities of an originator of confusion and of a creator who sets in order. It is interesting to observe that the Egyptian sacred king and representative of cosmic order is not only called Horus, but also Horus-Seth and not only Re, but also Khepri-Seth. The linking of Seth and Re is also seen in the personal name Seth-Re. <sup>2)</sup> A geographical list at Medinet Habu contains a god Seth-Re. <sup>3)</sup> It is very noticeable, though, that the name of Seth is less often connected with Re than the names of Amon, Sobk, etc.

The Egyptians had some other ways, however, of giving theological expression to the point that Seth might serve to specify an aspect of Re. Seth in the sun barque is often given the epithet "chosen of Re." <sup>4)</sup> Seth, known in Egyptian mythology as the rioter, foreigner, thunderer and murderer is not as such beloved of Re, but he is elected to drive off Apopis, thus making explicit Re's act of salvation.

Besides "chosen of Re," Seth in the solar barque may also be called "son of Re." <sup>5)</sup> The latter formulation goes further than

1) *Pap. Harris* 75, 8.

2) H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* I, 322, 4.

3) C. F. Nims, *Another geographical list from Medinet Habu*, *JEA* 38 (1952), p. 44.

4) *Pap. Beatty* IX vs. B 9, 3; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri* Text volume, p. 109; *Mag. Pap. Vatican* I, 11: P. E. Suys, *Le papyrus magique du Vatican*, *Orientalia* 3 (1934), p. 67; W. Pleyte, *La religion des Pré-Israélites*. Recherches sur le dieu Seth, Utrecht, 1862, pl. III; G. Maspero, *Notes de voyage*, *ASAE* 10 (1910), p. 132; B. Grdselof, *Notes d'épigraphie archaïque*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 301; K. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, vol. III, 246 b; R. O. Faulkner (*Dictionary*, p. 111) gives for *mrt*: "love" and "wish, want, desire." Seth, *mrt.n R<sup>c</sup>*, might be translated as "Seth, the beloved of Re." More meaningful, however, is the translation "who is desired by Re (as helper, champion, etc.)." The translation "Seth, the chosen of Re" is suggested here. Cf. also A. H. Gardiner, *EG*, § 291: "*mrt* 'love', 'wish' seems to prefer the *šdm.n.f* form when it means 'wish'."

5) *Marriage stela* I. 16; Ch. Kuentz, *La "stèle du mariage" de Ramses II*, *ASAE* 25 (1925), p. 229; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 109; W. M. F. Petrie, J. E. Quibell, *Naqada and Ballas*, p. 70, pl. LXXIX (fair child of Re, *šfy nfr n R<sup>c</sup>*).

the former, but yet it has not an entirely different meaning. In the first case Re chooses an existing mythological figure, Seth, to render a certain quality explicit; in the second he creates Seth. The writer of the "Contendings of Horus and Seth", who made a story of the mythical images and conceptions, relates that Re adopted Seth as his son.<sup>1)</sup> Thus election and creation pass one into the other. The term "son of god", though it may be taken in the biological sense, had a religious meaning in Egypt also, as the term "chosen" had too. The son and the father are one. As in the chosen one, the father manifests himself in the son who carries out his orders. Maat in the solar barque specifies as "daughter of Re" <sup>1)</sup> his truth and justice, Seth in the solar barque as "son of Re" specifies his anger and aggression.

Always it is the same intent at the back of reality whose essence is revealed in various myths, those of Horus, Osiris and Re, and which is glorified and abhorred as Seth.

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1) *Pap. Beatty I*, 16, 4: And Re-Harakhty said: give me Seth, the son of Nut, that he may stay with me, being with me like a child (*šr*) and he shall thunder in heaven and be feared.

2) C. J. Bleeker, *De beteekenis van de Egyptische godin Ma-a-t*, Leiden, 1929, p. 38.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SETH THE FOREIGNER

The history of the figure of Seth can be described as a piece of history of an Egyptian theologia religionum. Seth, who was known as a homosexual (Horus), a murderer (Osiris) and chucker-out (Apopis), was the foreign god, the lord of foreign countries, and could function in the pantheon as representative of gods who were worshipped abroad. The chief god of the Libyans, Ash, the chief god of the Western Semites, Baal, the chief god of the Hittites, Teshub, were recognised as forms in which Seth revealed himself. It is fascinating to see how the Egyptians laid aside their initial reserve towards the divine foreigner when they became better acquainted with foreign cultures, particularly the forms of religion pertaining among the Western Semites: they introduced him at court, while even pharaohs took their name from him (Sethos, man-of-Seth; Sethnekht, Seth-is-strong), and for a short time he was even elevated to the dignity of God of State, beside Amon, Ptah and Re. When contacts with the Semitic world became awkward after the collapse of the N.K., the intense interest in the foreigner diminished. Next, the Semitic Assyrians and the Aryan Persians with their Semitic auxiliaries plundered and occupied Egypt. Here and there hatred of foreigners or anti-Semitism made itself felt, and as Seth now bore the stereotype of God of the Semites, owing to his close link with Baal in Ramesside times, his cult was victimised. The temporary interest and later indifference changed into hatred. As enemy of the gods Seth lived on until the Egyptian religion perished. The homosexual was castrated, the murderer murdered, the chucker-out driven forth.<sup>1)</sup>

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1) It seems that rumours continued to circulate that Seth or Typhon, the demon with the ass's head, was worshipped in foreign parts, e.g. by Jews in the temple of Jerusalem. These rumours that Jews and Christians venerated an ass seem to have originated in Egypt. Cf. A. M. A. Hospers-Jansen, *Tacitus over de Joden*, Groningen-Batavia, 1949, p. 125. See now also the interesting article of B. H. Stricker, *Asinarii* I, OMRO NR 46 (1965), p. 52-75. This chapter was written before I could use the book of R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palastinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*, Leiden, 1967. It is interesting to see that we reach, wholly independent of each other, the same conclusions in many points.

In the chapter on Horus and Seth we have seen that the bipartition of the world could be imagined in such fashion, that Horus was lord of the home country and Seth of foreign lands or of the desert.<sup>1)</sup> There is a piece of evidence from the O.K. already, from which a connection may be deduced between Seth and a foreign country, in this instance Libya.<sup>2)</sup> As we may presume the Egyptians inclined to make a distinction between familiar and foreign, between their own and foreign countries, the image of Seth as lord of foreign lands may be very ancient. Kees does not object to the conclusion, from the sacerdotal title of *Phrynfr*, that there was a cult of Seth in Asia on the Sinai in the time of the fourth dynasty.<sup>3)</sup> The function of Seth as lord of foreign countries may be as old as the myth of the conflict and reconciliation of Horus and Seth. Seth is the other one opposite Horus, the royal god of Egypt.<sup>4)</sup> It was already pointed out that the pharaoh Sekhemib of the 2nd dynasty may have taken the Seth name of Peribsen because his power extended beyond the confines of Egypt, as appears from his epithet "conqueror of Asia" (*ini Štt*).

In this connection, though, one might also think of a more historical explanation of this function of Seth. The Egyptian Hathor was brought into relation with foreign countries. She is "mistress of Byblos"<sup>5)</sup> and since the M.K. was worshipped abroad in a temple on the Sinai.<sup>6)</sup> Hathor acquired this function in the time of the Sesostris kings. The name Sesostris means son of Wosret. This goddess is supposed to have been a local, Theban form of Hathor. The close link between Hathor or Wosret and the king of the 12th dynasty would have resulted in her becoming tutelary deity of the state expeditions to the Sinai, so that she was worshipped abroad.<sup>7)</sup> A similar explanation might also be applied to Seth. As Hathor was connected with foreign countries through her special link with

1) *Pap. Sallier* 4, IX, 4.

2) L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs S'ahu-re*, vol. II, Leipzig, 1913, pl. 5.

3) H. Kees, *Das alte Ägypten*, Berlin, 1955, p. 110.

4) E. Drioton, *Pages d'Égyptologie*, Le Caire, 1957, p. 375 sqq.: *Le nationalisme au temps des pharaons*.

5) *CT* I, 262 b.

6) J. Černý, *The inscriptions of Sinai by A. H. Gardiner and T. E. Peet*, Part II: *Translations and Commentary*, London, 1955, Chapter IV.

7) S. Allam and S. Morenz, *Warum hiess Sesostris Sesostris?*, *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 36 (1962), p. 8-10, R. Stadelmann, *o.c.*, p. 4. gives now a more convincing explanation of the relation of Hathor with foreign countries.

Sesostris, so Seth might also have acquired this connection because of his special tie with Peribsen, the conqueror of Asia.

It is probable, however, that Seth's connection with foreign countries already existed in some form or other in the time of Peribsen, and did not then originate more or less fortuitously. Apart from his role in the myth of Horus and Seth, as already described, and some traits in the myth of Osiris—Osiris is killed in the land of gazelles, i.e. in the desert <sup>1)</sup>—the animal of Seth already points to an original connection of Seth with the desert or foreign lands. In the graves of Beni Hasan the Seth-animal is depicted in hunting scenes.<sup>2)</sup> The Seth-animal was therefore imagined to live outside the inhabited world, or outside Egypt. The Egyptians went in fear of the demons of the desert <sup>3)</sup>.

A favourite theme in Egyptian literature (Shipwrecked Sailor, Sinuhe, Wenamon etc.) were the adventures or misfortunes that might happen to a man in foreign countries. "Pour un peuple sédentaire comme les Égyptiens, l'aventure était à l'étranger." <sup>4)</sup> The teaching for Merikarê <sup>5)</sup> shows the Egyptian idea of the barbarians. They live in a miserable part of the world. The water supply is wretched. This forces them to lead a nomadic existence, although the ways of communication are poor because of mountains and forests. Hence they have a restless nature and are always grumbling. They cannot be finally defeated since the time of Horus, however, because they are so treacherous that they do not openly announce the day of battle. Like thieves, they shun a united army. In the Egyptian Book of dreams, the characteristics of the followers of Seth are enumerated. It is surely not by chance we find the word for Asiatics here in a corrupt passage.<sup>6)</sup> It may not be going too far to suppose that according to the author of the Book of dreams the followers of Seth are typical foreigners, and that foreigners are Sethian people. Their sexual conduct is reprehensible. They are given to drink, they are quarrelsome and murderous. They will, indeed, not reach the West, but will land in the netherworld. Even if such a person becomes an official of pharaoh, he still retains the

1) *Pyr.* 972 c.

2) P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan* II, pl. 4, 13.

3) L. Keimer, *L'horreur des Égyptiens pour les démons du désert*, *BIE* 26 (1944), p. 135-147.

4) G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XIIe dynastie*, Paris, 1956, p. 90.

5) Line 91 sqq.; A. Volten, *Zwei altägyptische politische Schriften*, Copenhagen, 1945, p. 48.

6) *Štyw; Pap. Beatty* III rt. 11, 16; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 20.

personality of a *rhyt*. People are commonly divided into *p't* and *rhyt* and sometimes another category. The *p't* are the true people, the *rhyt* are the others, who usually come in the second place, or are contrasted with the *p't*. Gardiner <sup>1)</sup> defines the *p't* as "the autochthonous inhabitants of Egypt from the time when earth was first separated from sky and when Gēb became the earliest terrestrial ruler." He does not, however, venture upon a definition of *rhyt*. They are often enemies of the pharaoh, and are sometimes connected with foreign countries, <sup>2)</sup> but are usually regarded as subjects of the pharaoh, like the *p't*. Gardiner also gives the nuance "common folk." <sup>3)</sup> An important point is, that on an Egyptian map of the world the *rhyt* have been assigned a place outside the circle of Egyptian nomes. <sup>4)</sup> The man of Seth, then, who has the personality of a *rhyt* and is like an Asiatic, is closely linked with barbarians and presents a barbaric character.

Touching the Book of dreams, it is interesting to note that bad dreams are "evil filthy things which Seth, son of Nut, has made." <sup>5)</sup> The man who, after waking, is troubled by such a dream image must say that he sees "what is far from me in my city." <sup>6)</sup> In his dream, therefore, the dreamer has gone beyond the place where he actually lives, and may thus fall victim to the influence of Seth. To be able to return to reality and regain his mental balance, the dreamer must, when he wakes, recite a spell in which he identifies himself with Horus. Gardiner <sup>7)</sup> remarks that "Horus was regarded as the prototype of the normal Egyptian man."

In the foreigner, the reverse of civilised behaviour and self-control was seen, also in a sexual respect. Amenhotep III will not give his daughter in marriage to a foreigner. <sup>8)</sup> Later, too, it was accounted shameful for Egypt that Ankhesenpaamon was to marry a Hittite. <sup>9)</sup> The Egyptian scholar is warned not to have anything

1) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* I, p. 110\*.

2) *Urk.* IV, 223, 12.

3) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* I, p. 107\*.

4) J. J. Clère, *Fragments d'une nouvelle représentation égyptienne du monde*, *MDAIK* 16 (1958), p. 44.

5) *Pap. Beatty* III rt. 10, 15; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 19.

6) *Pap. Beatty* III rt. 10, 11; A. H. Gardiner, *ibidem*.

7) A. H. Gardiner, *ibidem*.

8) W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wiesbaden, 1962, p. 353.

9) W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 356.

to do with a girl of Cas.<sup>1)</sup> An adult Egyptian can be made fun of, because in Joppa he succumbed to the erotic arts of a foreign woman.<sup>2)</sup> Nothing particular is related of Sinuhe's marital affairs. The children born to him abroad, he does not take with him to Egypt. The queen gives a loud cry, when she perceives Sinuhe, who has become a real foreigner, at the court.<sup>3)</sup> The above throws a peculiar light on the suggestion of Neith, the mother of the gods, to give Seth Anat and Astarte.<sup>4)</sup> The pharaohs liked to take foreign women into their harems, though. The Egyptian men, who lived in a culture where self-control was held an ideal, sought erotic passions with foreign, and particularly with Asiatic women.<sup>5)</sup> Like so many other peoples, the Egyptians considered the habits and private life of foreign nations immoral, barbaric and sometimes funny, while convinced that their own way of life and their own manners and customs were "natural."<sup>6)</sup> The ambivalent attitude towards Seth and the unfavourable role he has in Egyptian mythology as a whole, becomes all the more comprehensible when one realises that he was a god of the desert and of foreign parts. The foreigner may sometimes be very hospitably received, but his position remains exceptional. He is interesting, but also suspect, for owing to his different, and apparently more free way of life he may be regarded as a danger to morality. The foreigner comes from a country that people who are yoked to the standards of conventional propriety, regard as the land of liberty.<sup>7)</sup>

From a text that goes back to the M.K. <sup>8)</sup> can be concluded that Seth is lord of foreign countries. As such he is repelled. The god Anty can be represented as a falcon god, i.e. as Horus, but also as Seth. On a stela dating from the M.K. and found on the Sinai, Anty is depicted with a Seth-head.<sup>9)</sup> Thus the Sethian aspect of

1) A. H. Gardiner, *Late-egyptian miscellanies* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca VII), Bruxelles, 1937, p. 107 = *Pap. Lansing* 8, 7.

2) *Pap. Anastasi* I, 25, 2 sqq.

3) *Sinuhe B* 265.

4) *Pap. Beatty* I, 3, 4.

5) W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 356.

6) W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 353 sqq.: Die ägyptischen Vorstellungen von Vorderasien. Cf. also: W. Helck, *Die Ägypter und die Fremden*, *Saeculum* 15 (1964), p. 103-115.

7) C. J. Bleeker, *The sacred bridge*, p. 147 sqq.: *Fremdling, Vogelfreier, Gottgesandter*.

8) H. Kees, *Ein alter Götterhymnus als Begleittext zum Opfertafel*, *ZÄS* 57 (1922), p. 97; cf. *CT* VI, 220 a, b; S. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, p. 252: "Seth . . . . . alter Gott der Fremde."

9) J. Černý, *o.c.*, vol. I, London, 1952<sup>2</sup>, no. 119 on pl. XLII.

the double god Anty reveals itself abroad. To some extent, this is comparable to the peculiar phenomenon at a later date, when the eldest and the eighth son of Ramses II bear theophorous names in Egypt composed with the name of the national Egyptian god Amon, and abroad, names composed with the name of Seth: *Imn-m-wi3* — *Sth-m-wi3*, *Imn-hr-hpš.f* — *Sth-hr-hpš.f*.<sup>1)</sup>

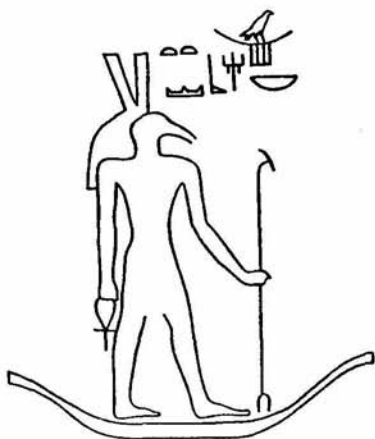


Fig. 14. "Anty, lord of the East" with a Seth-head, from the Sinai

Not only to the East of Egypt, but also to the West of it Seth reveals himself. Since the reign of Peribsen, the Libyan god Ash can be depicted with the head of Seth, as well as with a human head or a falcon's head.<sup>2)</sup> We see then that a considerable time before the N.K. Ash, the foreign god, could be conceived as a form of revelation of Seth, the lord of foreign countries. In the late period, the name of Ash, like the name of that other foreign god, Baal, is determined with the hieroglyph of the Seth-animal.<sup>3)</sup>

On the well-known Israel stela of Merneptah<sup>4)</sup> the god of the Libyans is simply called Seth. Re has turned towards the Egyptians, but Seth has turned away from the Libyans, so that the Egyptians won the battle:

1) H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* II, p. 8.

2) A. Scharff, *Vorgeschichtliches zur Libyerfrage*, ZAS 61 (1926), p. 23 sqq.; S. Morenz, o.c., p. 246 n. 6.

3) WB I, 20, 21.

4) Merneptah stela l. 11; text of the stela: W. Spiegelberg, *Der Siegeshymnus des Merneptah auf der Flinders Petrie-Stele*, ZAS 34 (1896), p. 1-10.



"On one day their roving have been ended and in one year the *Thnw* (Libyans) have been burnt, Seth turned his back on their chief, and their settlements were burnt to his order."

From the time after the N.K. there are a number of data to show that the Egyptians took Seth to be not only the lord of the desert, but also the lord of the oases it contains. The most important is the so-called Dakhle stela.<sup>1)</sup> This stela, dating from the 22nd dynasty, contains the report of an oracle given by Seth during his festival on the 25th day of the 4th month of the winter season of the 5th year of king Shoshenk. Seth is given the usual epithets: great of strength, son of Nut and great god. He is also called, however, Seth of the oasis. Although the oases had then long been under Egyptian rule and Egyptian religious and cultural influence, it is not impossible that local forms of religion there were rather different from the Egyptian cult. It may be that the Egyptian governor who came to set matters in order in the oasis, simply applied the name of Seth to a local deity who gave oracles, because the forms of the cult were rather exotic, and then assigned him the familiar epithets of Seth.

Later Egyptian texts, however, include the oases Dakhle and Kharga in an enumeration of localities, where there has been a cult of Seth:

"They see how Seth is fallen on his side, robbed of land in all his places. *Sw* laments, *Wns* mourns. Lamentation goes round in Oxyrhynchus. The oasis of Kharga (*knm*) and the oasis of Dakhle (*dsds*) are in affliction. Disaster goes about in them. Cynopolis (*hsb*, 11th nome of Lower Egypt) makes plaint: its lord is not in his territory. *W3dt* (10th nome of Upper Egypt) is a desolate place. Ombos is pulled down. Their temples are destroyed. All who belonged to them, are not. Their lord is not, he who thinks of enmity is not."<sup>2)</sup>

Pap. Salt gives a less extensive list, but does mention the oases:

"The land of Oxyrhynchus, the land of Ombos, the land of *Sw*, the land of Dakhle, the land of Kharga, towards them fell the blood of Seth, these are his places."<sup>3)</sup>

According to a text in the temple of Edfu, the king offers Horus the present of Seth, which is wine from the Kharga oasis.<sup>4)</sup> The relief from the temple of Amon at Hibis in the Kharga oasis, showing a god in the shape of a falcon defeating the Apopis snake, is well-known. According to an accompanying inscription this falcon-god

1) A. H. Gardiner, *The Dakhleh stela*, *JEA* 19 (1933), p. 19-30, pl. V, VI, VII.

2) *Urk.* VI, 15, 16-17, 3.

3) *Pap. Salt 825*, V, 1, 2; Ph. Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051), rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Egypte*, Bruxelles, 1965, p. 138, p. 41.

4) *Edfou* 1, 469.

is not Horus, but Seth.<sup>1)</sup> On a relief in the temple of Amon in the oasis of Siwah, built in the time of Nectanebo II, Wenamon, "great chief of the foreign lands", kneels before various gods, including Seth.<sup>2)</sup> In the temple of Deir el Hagar in the oasis of Dakhle, Vespasian offers flowers to Seth and Nephthys.<sup>3)</sup> As far as we know, the depiction of Seth in such a positive role in a Roman temple, after the commencement of our era, is unique. That this unique instance is found outside Egypt proper, is no accident. The desert with its oases, and more generally the foreign country that surrounds the home country and merges into chaos, is the territory where Seth is at home. It is not inconceivable that Egyptian priests who had long ceased to worship Seth in Egypt, had no objection to his adoration in more distant parts. He who is in the area where a god has power, must find a *modus vivendi*.

Kees observed<sup>4)</sup> that in Egypt itself the places with a cult of Seth lay on the border of the desert, particularly at points where important caravan routes began. This holds good for all the cult localities of Seth on the Western bank of the Nile, which lie near the Libyan desert. It also applies to the best known town of Seth: Ombos. Ombos or *Nwbt* means "gold-town". From the name alone, without regarding its location, one might deduce that this town was in contact with the gold mines in the Eastern desert.<sup>5)</sup> Seth might be the god of miners working in the desert, and therefore be especially honoured in the frontier-town Ombos. At any rate, Seth was worshipped especially in those places in Egypt which had connections with foreign countries or with the desert.

In order to profit to the full from this observation of Kees, it is necessary first to intercalate a remark of a more general nature. The Egyptian religion is not a collection of originally separate local cults of a god, but a polytheistic religion which is mainly ordered not, as it might for instance have been, socially, but locally. At national festivals, e.g. the sed festival, the gods appear in an order determined by locality. The kingdom is then seen to be a

1) J. Capart, *Contribution à l'iconographie du dieu Seth*, *CdÉ* 21 no. 41 (1946), p. 29-31, fig. 3.

2) *PM* VII, 312.

3) *PM* VII, 298.

4) H. Kees in: *PW* II, col. 1902.

5) H. Kees, *Kultlegende und Urgeschichte*, *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philol.-hist. Kl., Berlin, 1930, p. 355; H. G. Fischer, *Inscriptions from the Coptite nome*, *Dynasties VI-XI*, Rome, 1964, p. 4.

cosmos, each part or nome of it being represented by one or more gods. It is evident from a document such as the pap. Jumilhac that within the individual nomes the pantheon was again arranged in a local order, and that the order is indeed a theological one, and not only a summary of the various historical religious traditions of neighbouring villages. Here Seth, the lord of foreign lands, does not invade Egypt from Asia,<sup>1)</sup> but he invades the nome from the adjacent 19th nome of Upper Egypt.<sup>2)</sup>

In the geographical arrangement of the Egyptian pantheon<sup>3)</sup> the sun god Re was the local god of Heliopolis and the god of the dead, Osiris, the local god of Busiris and Abydos etc. Although the theological arrangement will in many cases have taken account of local religious traditions, desires and already acquired privileges, the influence of high authority must certainly not be underestimated either. In times of a strongly centralised administration, the government could exercise an enormous influence upon the development of religion in the various nomes. The building of a temple was very commonly dependent on state approval and state subsidy. It is not inconceivable, that the cult of a particular god might be encouraged or even introduced in a certain nome, because this agreed with a planned policy of geographical arrangement of the polytheistic Egyptian religion. It remains unproven, that the inhabitants of Seth nomes were descended from adherents of a henotheistic religion of the god Seth, who afterwards came to play a part in the myths of the polytheistic Egyptian religion. My hypothesis is: Seth did not become lord of foreign countries because in history he happened originally to be worshipped on the border of the desert, but ordering by locality required him, the mythical disturber of the peace, to be venerated on the verge of the cosmos.

It has often been puzzled over how, why and when the cult of Seth arose in the North-eastern Delta, by the Asian frontier. After the above, my next hypothesis is easily understood. As Seth had of old been worshipped on the border of the Libyan desert, so at any

1) *Urk.* VI, 13, 5 sqq.

2) *Pap. Jumilhac XXI*, 25.

3) H. Brummer has characterised the Egyptian pantheon as follows: "Das ägyptische Pantheon ist tatsächlich nur eine Brechung des göttlichen Prinzips, des Numen, das etwa in den nur religiös zu verstehenden Weisheitslehren einfach "Gott" genannt wird; bei aller Mannigfaltigkeit der Erscheinungen der Götter handelt es sich doch nur um verschiedene Aspekte der Gottheit, die selbst allumfassend und damit nicht ansprechbar ist, für den Frommen also ausser Betracht bleibt." (*Historische Zeitschrift* 174 (1952), p. 554).

time the need might be felt to venerate him also on the Asian frontier. On the mythological level Seth is a disturber of the peace, on the cosmic level a thunder-god, and on the geographical level a foreigner. In principle, therefore, he can be venerated in borderlands everywhere. It depends upon historical circumstance in how far this principle is actualised, and what evidence is preserved of it.

The earliest information we have regarding veneration of Seth in the North-eastern Delta is the obelisk of *Nḥsy*, which mentions Seth, the lord of *r-ḫwt*.<sup>1)</sup> It has not, so far, proved possible to locate a place bearing this name. Montet has literally translated the Egyptian words: "l'entrée des terrains cultivés." This epithet of Seth may be regarded as an indication that the cult of Seth developed in the North-eastern Delta because he was the god of frontiers and foreign countries.<sup>2)</sup> To our purpose, it matters little whether this *Nḥsy* actually venerated the Egyptian god of foreign countries, or whether he venerated a foreign god, whom on his monument the Egyptian artists named Seth.

The fascinating and confusing thing about this cult of Seth in the North-eastern borderlands is, that royal residences were built there. If the Hyksos had not built Avaris there, no inscription on stone referring to Seth as the lord of the entry of the cultivated land might ever have been preserved there. Not only the alien Hyksos, but also the Egyptian Ramessides afterwards settled in this border country and built the residential town there. The frontier god then became god of the residence. Geographical and historical chance was a factor in this development of the god Seth, but not its only cause. Owing to the contacts with foreign cultures, which were different and more intensive in the N.K. than formerly, it was indeed possible for the divine foreigner to occupy a place in the centre of interest for a considerable time. The climate had become favourable to the cult of the god of the foreigners. Growth into a world power had not proceeded without some shocks in the religious and cultural field. One of the factors that led to the Amarna

1) P. Montet, *Le drame d'Avaris*, Paris, 1941, p. 50, referring to W. M. F. Petrie, *Tanis I*, pl. III: cf. also W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 94.

2) The god Min, too, who like Seth is brought into relation with the desert and with foreign countries (H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 464) is once called Min of *r-ḫwt* (J. Leclant and J. Yoyotte, *Les obélisques de Tanis (troisième article). Inventaire des obélisques réemployés et des fragments d'obélisques de Tanis, Kémi 14* (1957), p. 57 sq.). The name of the place Sepermeru, which lies in the 19th nome of Upper Egypt and was known as a cult centre of Seth, signifies "near to the desert" (A. H. Gardiner, *AEO II*, p. 111 \*).

revolution was, that the traditional religious and cultural norms no longer offered sufficient hold. During the N.K. various foreign gods were introduced to the Egyptians by name, and were even venerated in Egypt. Rank and wild growth of exotic religions and religious needs could be counteracted and obviated by raising up Seth to be a state god by the side of Amon, Ptah and Re. To the mind of many Egyptians after the Hyksos period, foreign things no longer merely had a place on the fringe of their existence, but they were inundated by them.

Before inquiring more closely into the interpretatio aegyptiaca of Baal as a form of revelation of Seth and into the evaluation in the course of history of the divine stranger, who after all remained notorious as the killer of Osiris and seducer of Horus, there follow a few texts showing that not only the Libyan god Ash, but also the Hittite god Teshub was in Ramesside times regarded as a manifestation of Seth. It does not seem to have been coincidence of historical and local circumstance or an exact religico-phenomenological comparison of functions which led the Egyptians to interpret the principal gods of foreign peoples as forms in which Seth revealed himself. One gains the impression that the whole confusing labyrinth of foreign gods might be brought into relation with Seth.

In the treaty with the Hittites, an official state document,<sup>1)</sup> the Hittites enumerated several gods who were totally unknown in Egypt. In Egyptian these are called Seth, e.g. Seth of Zippalanda, Seth of Arinna. The treaty itself is described as "the modus vivendi Re and Seth have made for Egypt and the land of the Hittites."<sup>2)</sup>

As on the Israel stela of Merneptah, Re is the god who watches over the interests of Egypt. This time, Seth is not the god of the Libyans but of the Hittites: Teshub. In the copy of the treaty in cuneiform writing, Shamash and Teshub are named here.<sup>3)</sup> According to the Egyptian description<sup>4)</sup> of the cuneiform tablet sent to Ramses II by Ḫattusilis, the seal represented Seth embracing

1) Text edited by W. M. Müller, *Der Bündnisvertrag Ramses' II und des Chetiterkönigs*, *MVAG* 7, (1902), pl. I-XV.

2) I. 8.

3) S. Langdon and A. H. Gardiner, *The treaty of alliance between Ḫattušili, king of the Hittites, and the pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt*, *JEA* 6 (1920), p. 187; see also p. 185: "... the Hittite god of thunder, Tešub, is represented at Thebes by Sētekh, the stranger-god *par excellence*, an equivalence which, from the Egyptian point of view, gained rather than lost through the sinister association with the enemy of Horus and Osiris."

4) I. 36 sqq.

the sovereign of the Hittites. Presumably, it was a picture of Teshub. According to the "Stèle du Mariage," the Hittite king says to Ramses II:

"Thou art the chosen one of Seth. He has bequeathed you the land of the Hittites."<sup>1)</sup>

We need not elaborate that this remark and the name of this god are put into his mouth by the scribe of the Egyptian court. He also says:

"What is the matter? Our country is despoiled; our lord Seth is angered with us."<sup>2)</sup>

As Seth is the lord of the Libyans and Ash can be identified with him, and as Seth is the lord of the Hittites and Teshub can be identified with him, so Seth is the lord of the Semites and their principal god, Baal, can be identified with him. From the hieroglyphic way of writing Baal, one can already deduce that the god is a form in which Seth manifests himself. The divine name Baal is determined with the Seth-animal.<sup>3)</sup>

An example of Seth's ruling over the Western Semites is the story of the taking of Joppa.<sup>4)</sup> The story dates from the beginning of the 19th dynasty, but plays in the time of Thutmosis III. In this story Seth functions as the god of the inhabitants of Joppa, who is expected to deliver the Egyptians into their power. After capturing the town, the Egyptian commander reports to Pharaoh that Amon delivered Joppa to the Egyptians. Thus according to the author of this story Amon is the Egyptian god, the lord of their own country, and Seth as lord of foreign lands is the god of the Western Semites. This Seth undoubtedly cloaks a Semitic deity, most probably Baal.

In the Egyptian royal texts of the 18th dynasty there is no sign whatever of Baal-Seth syncretism. In contrast with the names of various other Semitic gods and goddesses, the name of Baal does not appear in the official texts of that period. It would seem that Baal, the principal god of the Western Semites, was for some time purposely not referred to, and the identification of Baal with Seth deliberately avoided. The reason lies no doubt in the memory of the rule of the Hyksos and their forms of religion.

1) *Marriage stela* l. 4-6; Ch. Kuentz, *La "stèle du mariage" de Ramses II*, *ASAE* 25 (1925), p. 224.

2) *Marriage stela* l. 31; Ch. Kuentz, *o.c.*, p. 231.

3) *WB* I, 447.

4) A. H. Gardiner, *Late-egyptian stories* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I), Bruxelles, 1932, p. 82-85; H. P. Blok, *De beide volksverhalen van papyrus Harris 500 verso*, p. 1-67.



This religion of the Hyksos is only known to us from indirect, Egyptian sources. The Egyptians state that the Hyksos were worshippers of Seth:

"Then king Apophis made him Seth as lord, and he did not serve any god who was in the land except Seth. And he built him a temple as a perfect and eternal house beside the palace of king Apophis. He appeared at the break of day to make the daily sacrifices of . . . to Seth, and the great ones of the palace came into his presence with nosegays, as it is done in the temple of Re-Harakhty." <sup>1)</sup>

Monuments of the Hyksos period, made by Egyptians for the Hyksos rulers and provided with hieroglyphic inscriptions, also afford evidence that the Egyptian artists represented the Hyksos as worshippers of Seth.<sup>2)</sup> It is highly probable that the Hyksos<sup>3)</sup> introduced an exotic form of religion into Egypt, which on the one hand showed traits of resemblance with the Egyptian cult, but on the other was so strange that the Egyptians regarded it as veneration of Seth, the god of foreign countries.

In later Egyptian tradition the Hyksos counted as enemies of Egypt. The Carnarvon tablet, according to J. G. Griffiths,<sup>4)</sup> displays nationalistic feeling and an inclination to reject every form of collaboration with foreigners:

"I will grapple with him and rip open his belly, for my desire is to deliver Egypt and to smite the Asiatics."

From the inscription of Hatshepsut at Speos Artemidos, it is evident that hatred for the Hyksos had a religious foundation:

"I have raised up what was dismembered, (even) from the first time when the Asiatics were in Avaris of the North Land, (with) roving hordes in the midst of them overthrowing what had been made; they ruled without Re and he acted not by divine command (?) . . . ." <sup>5)</sup>

That which according to the passage quoted from pap. Sallier I was called schismatic veneration of Seth, is here roundly declared

1) *Pap. Sallier I*, 1, 2-4; A. H. Gardiner, *o.c.*, p. 85 sq.

2) P. Montet, *o.c.*, p. 48 sqq.; 79 sqq.

3) According to T. Säve-Söderbergh (*The Hyksos rule in Egypt*, *JEA* 37 (1951), p. 53 sqq.) and A. Alt (*Die Herkunft der Hyksos in neuer Sicht*, *BSAW*, Philol.-hist. Kl., Bd. 101/Heft 6, Berlin, 1954), the Hyksos were Semites. Helck regards the rulers of the 15th dynasty as Aryans; the others are Semites in his opinion also (W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 92 sq.). Gardiner remarked: "The invasion of the Delta by a specific new race is out of the question; one must rather think of an infiltration by Palestinians glad to find refuge in a more peaceful and fertile environment. Some, if not most, of these Palestinians were Semites." (A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the pharaohs*, Oxford, 1961, p. 157). It is not going too far to suppose Baal behind the Seth of the Hyksos. Helck explains this Seth as Teshub and also as Baal (W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 109).

4) J. G. Griffiths, *The interpretation of the Horus-myth of Edfu*, *JEA* 44 (1958), p. 85.

5) *Urk. IV*, 390, 6-10; translation: A. H. Gardiner, *The great Speos Artemidos inscription*, *JEA* 32 (1946), p. 47 sq.

godlessness. This may be an explanation of the fact that Baal and adoration of Seth in his Asiatic form are not mentioned in the official texts of the 18th dynasty. Baal or Baal-Seth was too intimately linked with the oppressors of Egypt. During the 18th dynasty a liberal attitude developed towards Asiatic deities, but not yet towards Baal. The cult of Seth during the 18th dynasty may be called meagre compared with that of the 19th and 20th dynasty. His name is not avoided, however. The god who is meant, though, is not Seth in his Asiatic form, but the Seth of ancient Egyptian tradition.

Yet Seth in his Asiatic form or Baal could not be kept permanently out of Egypt. It was not the army and the courtiers, however, who introduced Baal into Egypt, but trade and the sailors. The earliest text mentioning Baal dates from the reign of Amenhotep II.<sup>1)</sup> It concerns a sacrifice to Baal in *Prw-nfr*. According to Helck,<sup>2)</sup> *Prw-nfr* is the harbour-quarter of Memphis. From this and other data enumerated by Helck, one may conclude that there was a temple of Baal in Memphis since the early 18th dynasty. Memphis was a port, and sea-faring an international affair. From Ugarit it is known that Baal could function as controller of the sea, and no doubt he was venerated as such in Memphis also. It is worth noting, that the ship of Baal-Zaphon is mentioned in a list of Memphitic gods.<sup>3)</sup> This particular aspect of controller of the sea will hardly have played any part in the presumed cult of Baal of the Hyksos, so that it will have been all the more easily acceptable in Egypt.

The Ugaritic myth of the combat with the sea is also known from an Egyptian source: the heavily damaged Amherst papyrus,<sup>4)</sup> which is dated to the time of Horemheb. In this, the goddess Astarte is called a daughter of Ptah. As Ptah is the chief god of Memphis, this papyrus might stem from the Baalite circle of Memphis. In those parts of the papyrus that are left, however, Baal is not named. It is not Baal, but Seth who seems to appear in the story as controller of the sea. If this papyrus really contained the cult myth of the temple of Baal in Memphis, one would

1) *Pap. Petersburg 1116 A* vs. 42; cf. R. Stadelmann, *o.c.*, p. 32 sqq.

2) W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 482.

3) *Pap. Sallier IV* vs. 1, 6; W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 483.

4) A. H. Gardiner, *Late-egyptian stories*, p. 76-82.

expect that at any rate the name of Baal would be maintained. Perhaps one may regard the Amherst papyrus not as the cult myth of the temple of Baal in Memphis nor merely as an Egyptian interpreter's exercise in translation,<sup>1)</sup> but as an indication that the Baalite circle of Memphis influenced the religious conceptions of a larger group of Egyptians. It would seem that the foreign god Baal, who is regarded as a manifestation of Seth because the latter is the lord of foreign countries, is now enriching the Egyptian concept of Seth with a new function. Elsewhere too in Egyptian texts of the N.K. we do indeed find references to the combat of Seth with the sea.<sup>2)</sup> Egyptian tradition recounts Seth's fight with the Apopis snake.<sup>3)</sup> The instruction for Merikarê, which is dated to the M.K., also relates that after the creation of heaven and earth the sun god suppressed the covetousness of the water.<sup>4)</sup> It is hardly conceivable, however, that the motive of Seth's combat with the sea should have originated without Baalite influence. Most of the data regarding Seth's fight with Apopis also date from the N.K. It would seem improbable, though, that this fight with Apopis should be caused by the myth of Baal's combat with the sea. Not only this cult of Baal as controller of the sea in the stricter sense, but also the influence it exerted, will, however, have been locally and socially restricted during the 18th dynasty.

We know another papyrus which might also have undergone the influence of the Baal centre of Memphis, and that is Leiden I 343 + 345.<sup>5)</sup> This collection of spells, besides the names of Egyptian gods, of whom Seth is one, also contains the names of Asiatic gods such as Baal, Reshef, Anat, Astarte, Kadšû, Ningal etc., and references to myths which are certainly of Asiatic origin. The Asiatic influence is so striking that Morenz, who refers to the work of Stadelmann,<sup>6)</sup> says the author must have had an onomasticon of Near Eastern gods to consult. It is not impossible to point out Memphitic couleur locale: the sea is mentioned once in passing

1) W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 491.

2) *Pap. Hearst XI*, 12-14; *Pap. Berlin* 3038 XXI, 3.

3) Cf. Chapter IV.

4) G. Posener, *La légende égyptienne de la mer insatiable*, *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientales et slaves* 13 (1953), Bruxelles, 1955, p. 472.

5) A. Massart, *The Leiden magical papyrus I 343 + 345*; cf. p. 2: "Though generally treated as two different papyri, 343 and 345 belong actually to the same papyrus . . ."

6) S. Morenz, *o.c.*, p. 251 n. 35, cf. R. Stadelmann, *o.c.*, p. 124.

and also a few times the Apis bull, which was adored in Memphis. It is striking, that according to the data of the Museum of Antiquities in Leiden the papyrus was found in Memphis.<sup>1)</sup> Magic is fond of employing foreign ideas and practices. It seems very plausible to suppose that the composer of these spells consulted the priests of the temple of Baal in Memphis. In this milieu, then, the Egyptian god of foreign countries is in high repute. He is often invoked. Massart<sup>2)</sup> remarks moreover: "Seth, whose magic is powerful while driving away his enemies (mag. pap. Harris V 8) always plays the part of agathos daimoon." The temple of Baal in Memphis seems to have been a centre of propaganda for Seth.<sup>3)</sup>

Owing to the influence of the foreigners in Egypt, the Egyptian god of foreigners, who formerly had only a modest and rather unfavourable role, attracts more and more interest. Pap. Leiden I 343 + 345 is dated to Ramesside times, when Baal was already accepted in Egypt; the pap. Amherst dates from the reign of Horemheb. It was some time before the 19th dynasty that something happened in the Eastern Delta, which Ramses II caused to be perpetuated on stone later, and which made the worship of Seth in his Asiatic form acceptable in court circles also.

On the so-called 400 years stela, Seth is not depicted in the ancient Egyptian manner with his characteristic Seth-head, but as a Baal with a human head. The features are not Egyptian but those of a foreigner, as is to be expected for a god of foreign countries: receding forehead, receding chin, thick nose and thick lips. The dress, ornamented with tassels, is exotic. The headdress, too, is not Egyptian. No crowns or similar attire, but a conical tiara with horns and sun, with a long ribbon hanging down behind. In the right hand, however, he has the ankh-sign and in the left the *wjś*-sceptre, as the Egyptian gods have.<sup>4)</sup>

The inscription shows that Ramses II had this stela erected in commemoration of his ancestors and the father of his forefathers,

1) A. Massart, *o.c.*, p. 1.

2) A. Massart, *o.c.*, p. 54 n. 18.

3) E. Drioton (*BIOR* 12 (1955), p. 164) characterises this papyrus as "... le témoignage positif d'un regroupement des idées religieuses égyptiennes autour de Seth, escorté de toutes les divinités d'Asie. C'est exactement la mythologie du mouvement séthien, patronné par les Séthi et les Ramsès..."

4) An exact description of this depiction of Seth, with a photograph, was given by P. Montet, *La stèle de l'an 400 retrouvée*, *Kémi* 4 (1931-1933), p. 191-215.



i.e. Seth. Not Ramses the Second's father king Sethos I, but his great-grandfather Sethos,<sup>1)</sup> governor of the bordertown Sile, had celebrated a festival in honour of Seth. He had celebrated this on the fourth day of the fourth month of the summer season of the year 400 of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Seth, great of strength, son of Re, the Ombite, the chosen of Re-Harakhty. These terms show that in spite of his exotic appearance Seth is not a suspect



Fig. 15. Seth the divine foreigner on the 400 years stela

foreigner, but a real Egyptian. He is king! It is erroneous to set the beginning of the domination by the Hyksos at c. 1730 B.C. on the basis of this stela. There is no reason to suppose that the 19th dynasty took a different attitude than the 18th towards this period

1) R. Stadelmann, *Die 400-Jahr Stele*, *CdF.* 40 no. 79 (1965), p. 46-60.

of humiliation, and would celebrate its commencement with festivities.<sup>1)</sup>

It might be that Sethos did not celebrate the beginning of the reign of Seth and the domination of the Hyksos, but was celebrating the fact that Seth already ruled before the Hyksos. He goes back 400 years to the time when the cult of Seth had not yet been made suspect and contaminated by the hateful Hyksos. The meaning is clear. If the worship of Seth in his Baalistic form is already at least 400 years old, then it is not a piece of reprehensible modernism. The cult of Seth is not a work of the Hyksos, but goes back to ancient Egyptian traditions. Every Egyptian of proper national thought and feeling can therefore worship Seth in his foreign manifestation without any objection. In the beginning of the Ramesside period there was undoubtedly a strong trend at court and in the army in favour of worshipping Seth in the Asiatic form of his appearance, i.e. as Baal. The kings, who came from a family of Seth priests, will not have been averse to this. With all its appeal to tradition, the setting up of the 400 years stela was an act of reformation. It sanctioned exotic forms of iconography and perhaps of worship, at a time when the frontiers of the Egyptian kingdom were to be sought far in Asia and Africa, and when foreign objects, people and gods were streaming into the country of the Nile. Now the divine stranger appears as a man of foreign features and in foreign clothing. How little the traditional Egyptian state cult was open to foreign influence, is evident from the paradoxical necessity to demonstrate that the divine foreigner had already been known and adored in this form for more than 400 years. The stranger had to be a foreigner, but also an Egyptian. Only the foreign god with Egyptian rights of citizenship was acceptable as state god beside Amon, Ptah and Re. This shows, on the other side, that the line between Egyptian and foreigner became vaguer in the Ramesside period. A god supposed to be an Egyptian god of ancient standing, can be so strongly a foreigner and representative of the foreign god Baal, that not a single image of Baal has been found in Egypt, in which he is not also Seth.<sup>2)</sup>

1) L. Habachi, (*Khatâ'na-Qantir: Importance, ASAE* 52 (1954), p. 513) remarks: "It is rather difficult to believe that the Egyptians should give special consideration to the god of the Hyksos and should celebrate his jubilee of Four Hundred Years as Montet and the others tried to prove." See now also: R. Stadelmann, o.c., p. 52.

2) Other representations of the Baalistic Seth are to be found in: J. B. Pritchard, *The*



Other explanations of the identification of Baal and Seth, disregarded so far, now demand attention. Because it was insufficiently realised, that like the Libyan god Ash Baal, being a foreign god, was essentially a form of manifestation of Seth, other explanations were sought, that are not themselves convincing.

In the first place there is the hypothesis of local syncretism. For a time it was thought to have been proved that Seth had been worshipped as the local god of Sethroe in the North-eastern Delta since the 4th dynasty and even since pre-dynastic times <sup>1)</sup> or since the 2nd dynasty. <sup>2)</sup> The Hyksos were supposed to have taken over the local cult of Seth when they built their capital Avaris in this region, and to have exerted an Asiatic influence upon it. Vandier has remarked: "Le dieu des Hyksôs était donc, contrairement à ce qui a été dit, un dieu purement égyptien, et ce ne fut que plus tard, précisément à cause du rôle que les Hyksôs lui avaient fait jouer, qu'il fut identifié au Ba'al et au Réshep des tribus sémitiques ainsi qu'au Téshep hittite." <sup>3)</sup> Since then, however, Kees <sup>4)</sup> and Helck <sup>5)</sup> have shown that the priestly title of *Phrnfr* had been read incorrectly, and so the evidence for a local cult of Seth in the North-eastern Delta before the time of the Hyksos has disappeared. It is however conceivable that as frontier god and lord of foreign coun-

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*Ancient Near East in pictures*, Princeton 1954, fig. 317 (Stela of Sethos I from Tell Nebi Mendou); J. Yoyotte, *Les stèles de Ramses II à Tanis*, *Kémi* 11 (1950), pl. VII; G. Goyon, *Deux stèles de Ramses II au Gebel Chalouf* (*Ismailia nos. 2757 et 2758*), *Kémi* 7 (1938), pl. XXI (stelas of Ramses II from Tanis and Gebel Chaluf); J. Černý, *Inscriptions of Sinai*, vol. 1, pl. 79, no. 308; H. Haas, *Bilderatlas zur Religionsgeschichte. Ägyptische Religion*, Leipzig-Erlangen, 1924, no. 54 (Stela from Thebes: Berlin 8440); L. Habachi, o.c., *ASAE* 52 (1954), pl. XXIX (Stela from Qantir). The Baal-Zaphon of Byblos on the stela of Mami (F. A. Schaeffer, *Les fouilles de Minet-el Beida et de Ras Shamra, Syria* 12 (1931), pl. VI and the Mikal of Beth-Shean (A. Rowe, *Beth-Shean, topography and history*, Philadelphia, 1930, pl. XXXIII) much resemble this foreign Seth.

There is no absolute division between the Asiatic Seth depicted with a human head and the Egyptian Seth with the head of the Seth-animal. Like so many Egyptian gods Seth may be depicted in turn with an animal head or a human head. The best known and finest of the few statues of Seth that are preserved, now in Copenhagen, bearing originally the head of the Seth-animal, betrays Asiatic influence (O. Koefoed-Petersen, *Catalogue des statues et statuette égyptiennes*, Copenhagen, 1950, pl. 95-97; G. Roeder, *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren*, Berlin, 1956, Text volume p. 64 sqq., § 98: Setech als Kampf-gott). See also the Asiatic influence in the bull-headed Seth "the bull of Ombos" on the fragment of a stela in Copenhagen (O. Koefoed-Petersen, *Les stèles égyptiennes*, Copenhagen, 1948, pl. 43).

1) H. Junker, *Phrnfr*, *ZÄS* 75 (1938), p. 84.

2) J. Černý, *La date de l'introduction du culte de Seth dans le nord-est du Delta*, *ASAE* 44 (1944), p. 295-298.

3) J. Vandier, *La religion égyptienne*, Paris, 1949<sup>2</sup>, p. 149.

4) H. Kees, *Das alte Ägypten*, Berlin, 1955, p. 110.

5) W. Helck, o.c., p. 106 n. 17.

tries, Seth was also worshipped on the North-eastern frontier before the Hyksos period. The hypothesis that Seth and Baal were identified because of local political and religious circumstances alone is hardly acceptable, quite apart from Seth's mythological role. It is more probable that the Hyksos worshipped a foreign god, whom the Egyptians named Seth, and that the Hyksos had their god designated thus in the hieroglyphic inscriptions on their monuments. Qualitate qua, the foreign god is Seth, and the hypothesis of a local cult of Seth before the Hyksos period is not necessary to comprehend the religious development.

The above also applies to the hypothesis of what might be termed Egyptian study of comparative religion. Vandier remarked: "Baal, dont le culte était très florissant au Nouvel Empire, est le dieu de l'orage et de la tempête; comme tel, il est identifié à Seth." <sup>1)</sup> No doubt one must assume that this does not invalidate Vandier's first-mentioned hypothesis. Zandee <sup>2)</sup> even maintained that the identification of Seth and Baal was "nur möglich" because the Egyptians had recognised the traits of their storm-god Seth in Baal. Seth and Baal do indeed have the function of gods of thunder and storm in common, but both Seth and Baal are more than that, while the function itself has quite a different significance in Egypt and in the Western Semitic world. In the latter, in contrast with the former, thunder and storm are connected with the rain that brings fertility. Egypt owes its fertility to the inundation of the Nile. It is striking that the Egyptians ignored the myth of the death and resurrection of Baal. <sup>3)</sup> They might also have recognised Osiris in Baal. It is interesting to trace the reasons why they found in Baal the traits of their storm-god Seth. Zandee <sup>4)</sup> has already given the answer in the beginning of his article: the Egyptians connected storm and thunder, as "nicht-bodenständig," with a god who had relations with foreign countries: Seth. Here we have the solution of the problem. Because Seth was the divine foreigner, he was the god of thunder and storm, and because Baal was a manifestation not of Osiris or some other Egyptian god but of Seth, traits that he shared with Seth were accentuated and given a

1) J. Vandier, *o.c.*, p. 218.

2) J. Zandee, *Seth als Sturmgott*, ZAS 90 (1963), p. 148.

3) W. Schmidt, *Baals Tod und Auferstehung*, ZRGG 15 (1963), p. 1-14.

4) J. Zandee, *o.c.*, p. 145.

different function, appropriate for instance to a war-god rather than a fertility-god, and other traits which did not fit in with the image of Seth as the lord of foreign countries, were rejected. If indeed, then, the Egyptians made a kind of comparative religious examination, this remained within the bounds of the theologically permissible.

Strictly speaking, Vandier's statement that the cult of Baal flourished widely during the N.K. is open to controversy.<sup>1)</sup> There is only a cult of Baal in the true sense in the temple of Baal in Memphis, referred to above, and perhaps on the Kasion.<sup>2)</sup> One presumes, however, that this cult was largely, if not entirely, the concern of Semitic immigrants. The priest of Baal in Memphis in the time of Akhenaten bore a Semitic name.<sup>3)</sup> From the fact that the name Baal often appears in Egyptian texts, one cannot conclude that there was a widespread cult of Baal. The name Baal is little more than a verbal symbol of strength and martial spirit. As such, the pharaohs of the 19th and 20th dynasty are compared to him. It is noticeable that most Egyptian texts containing the name of Baal date from the 19th and 20th dynasty.<sup>4)</sup> Only a few are to be dated to the ensuing period. The interest in Baal, then, is closely bound up with the prosperity and decline of the cult of Seth. The name Baal, already determined with the Seth-animal, seems to be in Egypt a foreign name for Seth. The names may appear together in the texts.

When Sethos I had become king, Seth came to great honour. The army that set forth for Palestine in the first regnal year of Sethos consisted of three divisions, that of Amon, of Re, and of Seth. The army of Ramses II, which was to fight the famous battle of Kadesh, consisted of four divisions, and again one of these was named for Seth: the division of Amon, of Re, of Ptah and of Seth. According to Faulkner,<sup>5)</sup> the divisions were named after the principal gods of the realm. Obviously Seth is now to be accounted one of these according to the army and to court circles. It seems

1) H. Bonnet (*RARG*, p. 77) remarked: "Seine Verbindung mit Seth war eben zu eng, als dass er sich neben ihm als selbständige Persönlichkeit hätte durchsetzen können. So hat er wohl die Gestalt des Seth beeinflusst, aber keinen eigenen Kult entwickelt."

2) H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 370.

3) J. M. A. Janssen, *Fonctionnaires sémites au service de l'Égypte*, *CdÉ* 26 no. 51 (1951), p. 54 sqq.

4) H. Gressmann, *Hadad und Baal nach den Amarnabriefen und ägyptischen Texten*, *BZAW* 1918, p. 191-217.

5) R. O. Faulkner, *Egyptian military organisation*, *JEA* 39 (1953), p. 42.

that in the 18th dynasty the army consisted only of the divisions of Amon, Re and Ptah, but not of Seth.<sup>1)</sup>

On the upper part of a stela found at Tell-Nebi Mendou, Sethos I is depicted adoring Amon-Re, Seth, Month and a goddess.<sup>2)</sup> The representation of Seth agrees in all respects with that on the 400 years stela. Seth is indeed not a particular local Syrian deity here, but the Seth of the dynasty,<sup>3)</sup> yet at the same time the divine foreigner, who is certainly not forgotten at the moment when the king and his army are abroad. In the royal inscriptions of Sethos I Seth is also repeatedly mentioned.<sup>4)</sup>

The trend that began under Sethos I continues during the long reign of Ramses II. Ramses was not, like his forefather, the commander of a frontier fortress, but his royal residence<sup>5)</sup> itself is celebrated as a border town, where naturally the frontier-god Seth is adored.

"His majesty has built himself a castle whose name is Great-of-Victories. It lies between Syria and Egypt and is full of food and victuals. It is after the fashion of On of Upper Egypt (Hermonthis) and its duration is like that of Memphis. The sun rises in its horizon and sets within it. Everyone has forsaken his (own) town and settled in its neighbourhood. Its Western part is the house of Amon, its Southern part the house of Seth. Astarte is in its Levant and Icho in its Northern part. The castle which is within it is like the horizon of heaven."<sup>6)</sup>

According to this song in praise of Ramsestown, then, the Egyptians have left their own cities and have gone to live half-way to a foreign land. No wonder that due attention is paid to Seth the lord of foreign countries!

The religious policy of Ramses II is characterised by the large place allotted to Seth.<sup>7)</sup> In the residence Re-Harakhty was adored

1) R. O. Faulkner, *The wars of Sethos I*, JEA 33 (1947), p. 37 n. 4.

2) G. Loukianoff, *Stèle du pharaon Sêti Ier trouvée à Tell-Nebi-Mendou en Syrie, Ancient Egypt*, 1924, p. 101-108.

3) W. Helck, *o.c.*, p. 485.

4) As "son of Nut": F. Hintze, *Die Felsenstele Sethos' I bei Qasr Ibrim*, ZAS 87 (1962), p. 34 sq.; C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Historische Inschriften der 19. Dynastie* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca IV), Bruxelles, 1933, p. 4, 11, etc.

5) It is disputed whether the residence of Ramses II should be sought in San el Hagar, as especially Montet, who has excavated there, has argued (P. Montet, *Les dieux de Ramsès-aimé d'Amon à Tanis*. In: *Studies presented to F. Ll. Griffith*, London, 1932, p. 406-411, and *Écrit à Tanis au printemps de 1956*, *Revue archéologique* 1 (1958) p. 1-20), or in Qantir. Habachi (L. Habachi, *o.c.*, p. 443 sqq.) considers that the monuments of Ramses II found at the former site were dragged there by the kings of the 21st dynasty when they built Tanis there. In any case monuments from both sites belong to Ramsestown.

6) *Pap. Anastasi II*, 1, 1-5; A. H. Gardiner, *Late-egyptian miscellanies*, p. 12.

7) J. Yoyotte, *Les grands dieux et la religion officielle sous Sêti Ier et Ramses II*, BSFE 3 (1950), p. 17-22; a complete list of all the monuments of the residence showing the name or

with Amon, Ptah, Seth, Shu and Geb in his retinue. There were special sanctuaries for Seth of Ramses, Amon of Ramses, Ptah of Ramses. In letters <sup>1)</sup> there may be an invocation to Re-Harakhty, Seth and the gods, the lords of Pi-Ramses-Miamun or to Re-Harakhty, Amon of Ramses, Ptah of Ramses, Re of Ramses, Seth great-of-strength of Ramses and the gods and goddesses, the lords of Pi-Ramses-Miamun. The treaty with the Hittites <sup>2)</sup> shows that worship was given in Ramsestown to Amon-Re, Harakhty, Atum lord of the two lands of Heliopolis, Amon of Ramses, Ptah of Ramses and Seth great-of-strength, the son of Nut. Apparently the addition "of Ramses" to the names of various gods in this period does not carry the geographical meaning "of Ramsestown," but indicates a special relation between these gods and Ramses II.<sup>3)</sup>

The temple of Seth in Ombos that was built in the time of Tuthmosis I also seems to have been restored in the time of Ramses II.<sup>4)</sup> Gardiner <sup>5)</sup> drew attention to the fact, that Ombos had become "a separate administrative province" in the time of Ramses II. The place Sepermeru in the 19th Upper-Egyptian Seth-nome also rises in Ramesside times.<sup>6)</sup> In the temple of Seth in Sepermeru, there seems then to have been a chapel of Nephthys.<sup>7)</sup> From the remains of a Seth temple at Matmar, this was concluded to have been built in the time of Ramses II from stones of a former temple of Aten.<sup>8)</sup> So the introduction of the divine foreigner into the residence was not without consequences for the cult of Seth in the provinces.

Also from texts which cannot be directly related to the local cult, it is evident that Seth took an important place in this period. The king is often compared to him. Strength and fighting spirit prove

image of Seth is not intended here. See, for instance, J. Yoyotte, *Les stèles de Ramsès II à Tanis, Kémi* 10 (1949), p. 62, 73; 11 (1950), p. 47 sqq. (stela III, IV, V); 12 (1952), p. 79; J. Leclant, J. Yoyotte, *Les obélisques de Tanis (troisième article). Inventaire des obélisques remployés et des fragments d'obélisques de Tanis, Kémi* 14 (1957), p. 43 sqq., (obelisk XIV).

1) *Pap. Bologna* 1094 VIII, 6 sqq.: A. H. Gardiner, *Late-egyptian miscellanies*, p. 8; *Pap. Leiden* I 360: J. J. Jaussen, *Nine letters from the time of Ramses II, OMRO* NR 41 (1960), p. 40.

2) l. 2; text-edition: cf. p. 119 n. 1.

3) B. Couroyer, *Dieux et fils de Ramses, RB* 61 (1954), p. 108-117.

4) W. M. F. Petrie, J. E. Quibell, *Naqada and Ballas*, p. 67 sqq.

5) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* II, p. 29\*.

6) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* II, p. 110\*.

7) The *Wilbour papyrus* (16, 34; 39, 6; 64, 5) mentions "the house of Nephthys of Ramses-Miamun which is in the house of Seth." As "of Ramses" is added to her name it may be presumed that this cult was introduced or altered in the time of Ramses II.

8) G. Brunton, *Matmar*, London, 1948, p. 64.

to be Seth's characteristics. Ramses II is the son of Seth.<sup>1)</sup> This sonship expresses the close relation between the king and his god:

"I know that my father Seth has decreed me victory over every country and that he makes my strength as high as heaven and my power as wide as the earth."<sup>2)</sup>

The imperialistic pharaoh and his subjects are convinced that the divine foreigner makes positive forces available for the maintenance of the cosmos, and must therefore be honoured.

It is interesting that in a passage where Ramses in the battle of Kadesh is compared to a god, the text of Luxor gives the name Seth, but the text of Abydos Month, while a papyrus text names Baal.<sup>3)</sup> It may well be that in the Osiris centre Abydos the name of Seth was deliberately replaced by that of Month.<sup>4)</sup> Month and Seth are both martial gods and are often spoken of together. Seth is very rarely joined with other gods in the way that Ptah, Sokaris and Osiris could easily be put together to Ptah-Sokaris-Osiris. One of the exceptions is Month-Seth, son of Re.<sup>5)</sup> Month could even be depicted with the head of Seth.<sup>6)</sup>

The function of war-god is for Seth a specialisation of his rule over foreign countries. A foreign country is a border region. That less orderly part of the world is where he belongs. Just as Europeans were long convinced that all Eastern despots were cruel and tyrannous, so the Egyptians will have imagined that the thunder-god Seth was forced to employ strong measures to consolidate his rule over foreign lands.<sup>7)</sup> Atmospheric disturbances are a chaotic

1) *Marriage Stela*, Abu Simbel, l. 6, 12; Ch. Kuentz, *o.c.*, *ASAE* 25 (1925), p. 226, 228.

2) *Marriage Stela*, Abu Simbel, l. 25 sq.; Ch. Kuentz, *o.c.*, p. 230.

3) J. A. Wilson in: J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*, p. 249 n. 10.

4) In the temple of Sethos I in Abydos, built by Ramses II, the name of Seth was also replaced by Geb in the purification ritual (H. Kees, *Horus und Seth als Götterpaar* II, p. 84). The name of Sethos was not written with the hieroglyph of the Seth-animal, but with the sign of Osiris, sometimes together with the symbol of Isis. This is an example of enigmatic writing: the Osiris hieroglyph has the value Š and the Isis symbol the value T. Together with the flowering reeds this gives Š(w)t(y) (A. Piankoff, *Le nom du roi Sethos en égyptien*, *BIFAO* 47 (1948), p. 175-177). This does not invalidate the opinion of Kristensen: "We can only see it as a deliberate equation of Seth with Osiris, a demonstration or a profession of their essential identity." (W. B. Kristensen, *Symbol en Werkelijkheid*, p. 294).

5) *Pap. Beatty* IX vs. B 11, 3; A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri*, Text volume, p. 109.

6) G. Legrain, *Notes sur le dieu Montou*, *BIFAO* 12 (1916), p. 121, fig. 4.

7) Like several other gods (cf. L. A. Christophe, *Les divinités du papyrus Harris I et leurs épithètes*, *ASAE* 54 (1957), p. 373 n. 1) Seth is often characterised as "great of strength" (Š phty). J. Zandee (*Seth als Sturmgott*, *ZAS* 90 (1963), p. 156) even remarks: "Für ein rechtes Verständnis des Seth müssen wir von seinem viel gebrauchten Epitheton 'gross an Kraft' ausgehen." W. Westendorf, *Beiträge aus und zu den medizinischen Texten*, *ZAS* 92 (1966), p. 142 sq., supposes that the original meaning of phty is: "testicles."



and therefore foreign phenomenon, and so there is a tendency to connect them with gods who have relations with foreign countries, with Min and in particular with Seth.<sup>1)</sup>

To conclude this survey of the position of Seth in the reign of Ramses II, we quote a prayer to Seth, which in itself is rather rare. Ramses addresses himself to the lord of foreign countries to afford protection to an expedition sent out to conduct a Hittite princess to Egypt, from foreign nuisances such as rain and snow. The divine foreigner is not merely a foreign god of foreign peoples, but he is accessible to Egyptians who honour him and expect his support:

"His Majesty considered, and took counsel with his heart: How will it be with those whom I have sent out, who have gone on a mission to Syria, in these days of rain and snow which fall in winter. Then he made a great offering to his father Seth, and with it pronounced the following prayer: Heaven rests upon your hands; the earth is under your feet. What you command, takes place. [May you cause] the rain, the cold wind and the snow [to cease] until the marvel you design for me shall have reached me. Then his father Seth heard all that he had said. The sky became peaceful and summer-like days began." <sup>2)</sup>

After Ramses II, during the 19th and 20th dynasty, i.e. as long as Egypt had colonial interests in Syria and Palestine, the positive attitude towards Seth does not seem to have altered in essence.<sup>3)</sup> The name alone of the founder of the 20th dynasty, Sethnekht, Seth-is-strong, shows that also after the 19th dynasty Seth was still held in honour. Sethnekht "was like Khepri-Seth when he rages. He set the whole country in order which had been in revolt." <sup>4)</sup> Seth is often mentioned on the monuments of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, as he was on the monuments of Ramses II.

Yet he no longer holds the place of a state god beside Amon, Ptah and Re. This appears from the papyrus Harris I. By far the largest donations go to the temples of Amon, Re and Ptah. All the

1) An Egyptian god like Amon can also function as thunder-god. There seems to have been a feeling, though, that in doing so Amon was performing a function of the divine foreigner (cf. *Wenamun* 2, 19).

2) *Marriage Stela*, Abu Simbel, l. 36-39; Ch. Kuentz, *o.c.*, p. 232-234.

3) The fact that Merneptah, the successor of Ramses II, had an image of Seth removed from a monument (R. Engelbach, *A monument of prince Merneptah from Athribis (Benha)*, *ASAE* 30 (1930), p. 197-202, pl. I, II) cannot be considered significant. In the temple of Seth at Ombos an inscription was found from the 5th year of Merneptah (W. M. F. Petrie, J. E. Quibell, *Naqada and Ballas*, p. 70). Besides the Israel stela, the name of Seth also appears in other inscriptions of Merneptah (cf. J. H. Breasted, *Ancient records of Egypt*, vol. III, Chicago, 1907, § 583), who was succeeded by a pharaoh who was again named after Seth: Sethos II.

4) *Pap. Harris I* 75, 8; W. Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca V), Bruxelles, 1933, p. 91.

same, the local temples of Seth in Ramsestown, Ombos, Sepermeru and Su still shared in the subsidies, while the temples in Ramsestown and Ombos were restored.<sup>1)</sup> Part of the work of restoration carried out in the temple of Ombos under Ramses III consisted in the placing of lintels in the rooms in the North-eastern corner of the temenos, as appears from archaeological data. On these lintels Amon and Seth are shown seated with their backs to one another over the joined plants of the North and the South.<sup>2)</sup>



Fig. 16. Amon and Seth united, from the temple of Seth in Ombos

It seems to have been especially in the circles of the colonial army that Seth was held in honour. A shield-bearer in foreign countries had Seth eternised on the boundary-stone of a piece of land that had been given him for military service abroad. The upper register shows Ramses III about to deal the death-blow to a couple of Asiatics. Opposite him is Seth in his Asiatic form, as depicted on the 400 years stela, handing the king his sword. This retired officer, then, seems convinced that he owes his prosperous state to the grace of Seth, who gave strength to his sword in foreign countries.<sup>3)</sup>

1) *Pap. Harris I* 59, 4-7; 60, 2-5; 62 a, 3; 61 b, 12; 61 b, 15.

2) W. M. F. Petrie et J. E. Quibell, *o.c.*, p. 70, pl. LXXIX. Amon is "lord of the gods" and Seth "lord of the South land, great god, lord of heaven, fair child of Re." The duality of Amon and Seth seems to be that of the typically Egyptian god and the divine foreigner. In this capacity Amon and Seth have been contrasted above ("Taking of Joppe," cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Late-egyptian stories* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I), Bruxelles, 1932).

3) Description and picture of the stone by L. Habachi, *o.c.*, p. 507 sqq., pl. XXIX.

The Wilbour papyrus,<sup>1)</sup> which is dated in the time of Ramses V, enumerates several tenant-farmers of foreign origin; possibly they were former soldiers, who had received a piece of land. It is striking that in this very papyrus we find so many names composed with Seth. Local temples of Seth, e.g. in Sepermeru, Su, and Pi-Wayna, and the priests and scribes attached to them are named. We hear of a Seth-of-the-dyke and Seth-powerful-is-his-mighty-arm. No more than a tantalising glimpse of a flourishing religious life never laid down in documents, is vouchsafed us by this administrative papyrus. Although there were scribes attached to temples of Seth, the intellectuals in general appear to have taken little interest in him.

The material regarding Seth supplied by the personal names<sup>2)</sup> may conveniently be summarised here. Seth does not appear in the personal names of the O.K., rarely in those of the M.K. and often in those of the N.K. Although this agrees fairly well with other data regarding the cult of Seth, it will in general be necessary to take account of the incompleteness of the material, also as to personal names.<sup>3)</sup> Ranke states<sup>4)</sup> that in the N.K. 160 names are known composed with Amon, 60 with Re, 50 with Mut and Ptah, 40 with Month and Khons, 30 with Horus, 20 with Hathor, Thoth, Min and Seth. The names of other gods and goddesses would appear even less often in the personal names. The number of personal names composed with Seth given here by Ranke is too low. He does not seem to have taken account of those in the pap. Wilbour, the names from which he includes in the "Nachträge." Twenty-seven of these are composed with Seth, and only 5 of them were known from other sources. My extract of names from his book composed with Seth, with the addition of those few names from before and after the N.K., comprises 53 different names. For the sake of completeness, the names are given below in transcription, with an indication where they are to be found in Ranke's work. There all particulars may be seen with regard to hieroglyphic script, gender, date, source and translation:


1) A. H. Gardiner, *The Wilbour Papyrus*, I-III, Oxford, 1941-1948.



2) H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen*, I-II, Glückstadt 1935-1952. In the next pages cited only with number of volume, page and if necessary with number of personal name on that page.

3) II, 235.

4) II, 239.

1) <i>wšr - sth</i>	— I 86,11
2) <i>b3k - n - sth</i>	— I 91,14
3) <i>b3k . t-n(.t) š(w)t(y)</i>	— I 92,19
4) <i>b3k . t-sth</i>	— I 92,24
5) <i>ppy-sth</i>	— I 132,12
6) <i>r<sup>c</sup>-mš-šw-mry-sth</i>	— I 219,2
7) <i>s3-sth</i>	— I 284,19
8) <i>s3 . t-sth</i>	— I 294,1
9) <i>šbk-sth</i>	— I 305,13
10) <i>š(w)t(y)</i>	— I 321,17
11) <i>š(w)t(y)-mšt(w)</i>	— I 321,18
12) <i>š(w)t(y)-nht . w</i>	— I 321,19
13) <i>š(w)t(y)ty</i>	— I 321,20
14) <i>sth</i>	— I 321,29
15) <i>sth-m-wi3</i>	— I 321,30
16) <i>sth-m-hb</i>	— I 321,31
17) <i>sth-m-hb . f</i>	— I 322,1
18) <i>sth . mšy(.w)</i>	— I 322,2
19) <i>sth . nht(.w)</i>	— I 322,3
20) <i>sth-r<sup>c</sup></i>	— I 322,4
21) <i>sth-hr-wnm . f</i>	— I 322,5
22) <i>sth-hr-hpš . f</i>	— I 322,6
23) <i>sth . i</i>	— I 322,7
24) <i>sth . y</i>	— I 322,8
25) <i>kri-sth</i>	— I 336,1 <sup>a)</sup>
26) <i>tnr-sth</i>	— I 381,22 <sup>b)</sup>
27) <i>‘3-š(w)t(y) (var. sth)</i>	— I 416,22
28) <i>š(w)t(y)-m-hb</i>	— I 429,9
29) <i>sth-p3-h‘py</i>	— I 429,10
30) <i>‘n-hry-sth</i>	— II 270,11
31) <i>‘n-sth</i>	— II 270,12
32) <i>p3-n-sth</i>	— II 281,4
33) <i>mry-sth</i>	— II 291,17

a) It is doubtful whether  should be considered as a determinative or should be transcribed. Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *The Dakkeh stela*, *JEA* 19 (1933), p. 22.

b)  should be . Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *o.c.*, pl. VII, l. 19.



34) <i>ny-wy-sth</i> (?)	— II 294,12
35) <i>sth-ḥb(.w)</i> ?	— II 317,11
36) <i>sth-ir-dy-š(w)</i>	— II 317,12
37) <i>sth-m-n'm</i> (?)	— II 317,13
38) <i>sth-m-ḥkḥ</i>	— II 317,14
39) <i>sth-(m-)mn(.w)</i>	— II 317,15
40) <i>sth-mn-šdr</i>	— II 317,16
41) <i>sth-n'm</i>	— II 317,17
42) <i>sth-hr(.w)</i>	— II 317,18
43) <i>sth-(hr-)š'nh</i>	— II 317,19
44) <i>sth-htp(.w)</i>	— II 317,20
45) <i>sth-h'i(.w)</i>	— II 317,21
46) <i>sth-šdi(.w)</i>	— II 317,22
47) <i>sth-šdi-šw</i>	— II 317,23
48) <i>šdi(.w)-sth</i>	— II 319,21
49) <i>kn-ḥpri-sth</i>	— II 320,10
50) <i>knr</i> (?) - <i>sth</i>	— II 320,14
51) <i>kḥ-sth</i>	— II 321,23
52) <i>tḥ-idy(.t)-sth</i>	— II 323,32
53) <i>dwḥ</i> (?) - <i>sth</i>	— II 332,21

Ranke distinguishes so-called "Festnamen." These were supposedly given to children born on a festival day of a particular god. Thus we find "Seth-is-born,"<sup>1)</sup> and "Seth-is-in-the-festival."<sup>2)</sup> "Seth-has-appeared"<sup>3)</sup> and "Seth-is-in-the-ship"<sup>4)</sup> might also be reckoned in this category.

From certain personal names it is evident that some people were greatly devoted to Seth:<sup>5)</sup> "servant of Seth," "serving-woman of Seth," "worshipper of Seth," "chosen of Seth," "son of Seth," "daughter of Seth," "I belong to Seth," "he who is Seth's."

The names composed with Seth also show that a notable thing about him was his strength. The word *phṯy* did not catch my at-

1) I, 322, 2.

2) I, 321, 31.

3) II, 317, 21.

4) I, 321, 30; as the name of a god with the addition "in the ship" is often seen, one can scarcely regard the name *Stḥ-m-wtḥ* as a reference to Seth's role in the sunboat (cf. Chapter IV), as G. Nagel did (*Set dans la barque solaire, BIFAO* 28 (1929), p. 34).

5) I, 91, 14; I, 92, 24; II, 332, 21; II, 291, 17; I, 284, 19; I, 294, 1; II, 294, 12; cf. I, 172, 10; II, 281, 4.

attention among these names, but there is *nht*,<sup>1)</sup> *tnr*,<sup>2)</sup> *kn*<sup>3)</sup> and *knr*.<sup>4)</sup> As indeed in other contexts also, in the personal names too other gods are called strong, since the M.K. It is unlikely that "beautiful is Seth"<sup>5)</sup> was meant in an erotic sense. Besides "beautiful", 'n can also mean "kind". For another word meaning "kind" in a Seth-name, *n'm*, Ranke refers to the Hebrew.<sup>6)</sup> A separate study would be required to examine in how far bearers of Seth-names were foreigners or had relation with foreign countries. Although it is usually not capable of demonstration, there might be many foreigners among those bearing Seth-names. He who was probably the last man to bear one was a foreigner from the oasis of Amon.<sup>7)</sup> One of the earliest men we know named after Seth also had contacts with the oases.<sup>8)</sup> There are no cursing-names known composed with Seth. In a few personal names Seth is combined with another god: Seth-Re,<sup>9)</sup> Seth-Hapy,<sup>10)</sup> Sobk-Seth.<sup>11)</sup>

It is interesting that the personal names show some did not hesitate to ascribe the same qualities to Seth, that others assigned to other gods:<sup>12)</sup>

"Seth is great," "Seth is gracious," "Seth is kind," "Seth is content," "Seth gives salvation," "Seth causes to live," "Seth has given him," "Seth is at his right hand," "Seth rules," "Seth is constant." In mythology and for many Egyptians Seth may be only god of confusion, for the faithful he was also unrestrictedly god.

It seems no new temples were built for Seth any more after the 20th dynasty. There is not even any evidence that existing temples of Seth were restored. Generally speaking, the cult of Seth received

1) I, 321, 19.

2) I, 381, 22.

3) II, 320, 10.

4) II, 320, 14.

5) II, 270, 12; cf. II, 270, 11.

6) II, 317, 17.

7) II, 246 n. 1; II, 317, 12.

8) H. G. Fischer, *A god and a general of the oasis on a stela of the Late Middle Kingdom*, *JNES* 16 (1957), p. 225 n. 11.

9) I, 322, 4.

10) I, 429, 10.

11) I, 305, 13.

12) I, 416, 22; II, 317, 20; II, 317, 17; II, 317, 18; II, 317, 22; II, 317, 19; II, 317, 12; I, 322, 5; II, 317, 14; II, 317, 15.



no new impulses any more. His name, which appeared so often in the personal names of the 19th and 20th dynasty, disappears from those of the ensuing period.<sup>1)</sup> The lack of information regarding building operations in the temples of Seth can therefore not be explained as merely due to incomplete sources or to the pharaonic policy of subsidies being arbitrary and parsimonious in less prosperous times. The point of departure will have to be that after the 20th dynasty the people of Egypt were increasingly uninterested in the worship of Seth. After the 20th dynasty the Egyptians no longer had authority over part of Asia. From the travel-story of Wenamon, for instance, it is evident how much relations with Asia and even with Byblos had deteriorated in the beginning of the 21st dynasty. It is natural to suppose that the cult of Seth, the divine foreigner, felt the reaction. Apart from those living close to his temples, the worshippers of Seth, after all, are mainly to be sought among Egyptians having some kind of connection with foreign countries, and among immigrants. In the course of the last millennium B.C. the Egyptians experienced disagreeable contacts with Asiatics. Around 670 B.C. the Assyrians conquered Egypt: Esarhaddon burned Memphis and Ashurbanipal plundered Thebes. The Egyptian sources are taciturn as to these humiliations, but it is probable that at this time the former self-assured goodwill of the Egyptians broke down and turned to hatred of foreigners, with desolating effects for the cult of Seth. In the 26th dynasty a certain Neshor calls upon his gods to be gracious, "as you have saved me from the distress of soldiers, Syrians, Greeks, Asiatics and others."<sup>2)</sup> This is very different from the interested and superior attitude of the Egyptians towards foreigners in the N.K.

Texts and images referring to Seth are scarce after the 20th dynasty, compared with the time before.<sup>3)</sup>

1) II, 246 n. 1.

2) E. Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit*, Leiden, 1954, p. 115.

3) Herihor, the founder of the Theban theocracy, is crowned in the traditional fashion by Horus and Seth (H. Kees, *Horus und Seth als Götterpaar* I, p. 14 sq., with reference to K. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, vol. III, 246 b). From the 22nd dynasty we know a priest of Seth, lord of Su (G. Daressy, *Notes sur les XXII<sup>e</sup>, XXIII<sup>e</sup> et XXIV<sup>e</sup> dynasties*, RT 35 (1913), p. 134). Further may be mentioned the Dakhle stela (A. H. Gardiner, *The Dakhle stela*, JEA 19 (1933), p. 19-30), monuments of Osorkou II (E. Naville, *The festival-hall of Osorkou II in the great temple of Bubastis*, London, 1892, pl. XII and passim, cf. P. Montet, *Dieux et prêtres indésirables*, RHR 141 (1952), p. 129 sqq.), Piankhi, the Ethiopian conqueror of Egypt, is still compared to Seth (*Urkk.* III, 49; cf. III, 24).

After the Assyrian period there are hardly any indications of Seth-worship.<sup>1)</sup> It would seem that after the conquest of Egypt by foreigners, particularly Assyrians and Persians, the Egyptians in general no longer believed that positive forces for the maintenance of the cosmos might be drawn from the divine foreigner, whose reputation had been doubtful from of old. Seth's violation of order could in earlier times be understood as a part of this order itself, and ultimately even accorded a positive evaluation. Horus required to be tried before he could become king. It was necessary for Osiris to be forcibly deprived of life in this world if he was to become lord of the realm of the dead. Seth had to cause commotion, so that Apopis might be driven from the path of Re. The necessity of all these events agreed with the former belief that the divine foreigner could be reconciled with Horus. Because Seth repeatedly proved to have been collaborating in maintaining the cosmic order, though in a peculiar way, Seth could be worshipped. The order, however, in which Seth had been given a place was not easy to fathom. His position in the Egyptian pantheon was precarious. In the Pyramid texts already it is mainly his malign aspect that is set forth.

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1) The squatting figure of the son of a priest of the temple of Seth in Heliopolis, which is in Vienna, seems not to be Ptolemaic, as Scharff thought (A. Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches*, p. 26), but to belong to the 20th dynasty (E. von Bergmann, *Inedite inschriftliche Denkmäler der Kaiserlichen Sammlung in Wien*, ZAS 20 (1882), p. 41 sq.; H. Demel, *Ägyptische Kunst*, Wien, 1947, p. 28, fig. 25). Does the scarab of a Seth-priest preserved in Leiden indeed belong to the 26th dynasty (A. Wiedemann, *Notes on the cult of Set and on the Hyksos-kings*, PSBA 8 (1886), p. 92), or should it be dated earlier? Traces of Seth-worship seem to have been found outside Egypt, in the oasis of Dakhleh as late as the reign of the Roman emperor Vespasian (R. L. B. Moss, B. Porter and E. W. Burney, *Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings*, vol. VII, p. 298).

In the second century A.D. a labourer in Egypt is still given a day off on occasion of a festival of Seth, cf. H. C. Youtie, *The Heidelberg Festival papyrus. A reinterpretation*. In: *Studies in Roman economic and social history in honour of A. C. Johnson*, Princeton, 1951, p. 178-209. Youtie thinks that these Typhonia must have been a recognised public festival and not a kind of "messe noire" (H. C. Youtie, *o.c.*, p. 191). The question arises, however, whether these Typhonia really consisted in worship or in the ritual cursing of Seth, which was so common in late times. G. Michailides has published a papyrus fragment with a picture of Seth, found in the Fayum among Greek and Coptic papyri (G. Michailides, *Papyrus contenant un dessin du dieu Seth à tête d'âne*, *Aegyptus* 32 (1952), p. 45-53). The invocation of Seth in the Greek magical papyri (H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 714) and the supposed connection made between the Egyptian god Seth and the biblical Seth, son of Adam and Eve, in the gnostic sect of the Sethians (W. B. Kristensen, *Symbool en Werkelijkheid*, p. 292; J. Doresse, *Des hiéroglyphes à la croix. Ce que le passé pharaonique a légué au Christianisme*, Istanbul, 1960, p. 15 sqq.) falls outside the scope of the present study.

Hornung<sup>1)</sup> has attempted to set up a historical sequence of the "Verfemung" of Seth. He places the beginning of the demonisation of Seth in the early 18th dynasty as a reaction upon the domination of the Hyksos. In the Amduat, first hour, top register, fourth scene, the goddess of the 7th hour of the night is called: "who repulses the gang of Seth." Such a conception of Seth, who must be repulsed like Apopis, seems to Hornung an important criterion for the dating of the Amduat. He considers that grammatical and lexical criteria lack conviction as long as we have not got a vocabulary and grammar of the Coffin texts. Because such a "Verfemung" of Seth, according to Hornung, would be unimaginable in the time of the M.K., and because the Amduat tradition becomes tangible in the tomb of Tuthmosis I (c. 1500 B.C.), he is of opinion that the origin of the Amduat can be placed in the beginning of the 18th dynasty after the Hyksos period. To counter this, it may be remarked that the idea that Seth and his gang must be repulsed need not necessarily be interpreted as a reaction to the domination of the Hyksos, and is already found in the traditional Osirian texts for the dead long before the N.K.<sup>2)</sup> Even though Seth brought death according to the myth of Osiris and even if the rough and ready fashion in which he initiated his victim into life in the hereafter was criticised, yet Seth retained his divine position in the pantheon. It is not well possible to deduce from the influence of the Osirian cult alone, which certainly spread in the course of Egyptian history, those factors which caused the worship of Seth to change into persecution. Hornung, indeed, does not do so, but it is yet to be proved that the reaction upon the domination of the Hyksos resulted in a lasting and general persecution of Seth. Not until the worship of Seth had dropped away for reasons which lie mainly outside the cult of Osiris, did Seth, from a divine foreigner and dreaded initiator into a different form of existence, become exclusively a demonic murderer and chaotic power, like Apopis. The unpopular part that Seth had played of old in the myth and cult of Osiris may well have contributed, though, to his persecution in all fields. We have observed above that in the beginning of the 19th dynasty, that is

1) E. Hornung, *Das Amduat* I, p. XI; II, p. 15 sq. Cf. S. Morenz, *Die Heraufkunft des transzendenten Gottes in Ägypten*, p. 33 p. 4.

2) *CT* IV, 97 k: "I repulse Seth for you."

while the cult of Seth was in full flower, the name Seth was sometimes avoided in the Osirian centre of Abydos.<sup>1)</sup>

Klemm<sup>2)</sup> has attempted to demonstrate, in an interesting and well documented article, that the explicit monotheism of the Amarna theology, which he distinguishes from the already existing implicit monotheism of Egyptian religion, necessarily resulted in the raising of an anti-god and that the god Seth was given this devil's role. To the fascinating account he presents, it must be objected that the Amarna theology and the consequences it could have entailed were not accepted. It was after the time of Akhenaten that the cult of Seth flourished. Nor was implicit monotheism all-inclusive. Apopis, whom the Egyptians knew long before Akhenaten, did not belong to the pantheon and was never honoured as a god. He would have been more suited for the part of devil than Seth.

It would seem that this demonisation was not just a consequence of the working out of the theology of Osiris priests or of Amarna, nor merely a result of the religious and political victory of the priests of Amon in Thebes over the Ramessides who resided in the Delta and worshipped Seth.<sup>3)</sup> The contrast of North and South or of Tanis and Thebes in itself is not sufficient explanation.

Montet, the excavator of San el Hagar, has set the beginning of the persecution of Seth in the end of the 20th dynasty, as a result of the war with the impure.<sup>4)</sup> According to Flavius Josephus<sup>5)</sup> who quotes Manetho, the impure had occupied Tanis and from there terrorised Egypt. After a hazardous struggle, the Egyptians under the leadership of Amenophis, drove the impure, to whom the Hyksos had lent support, out of the country. According to Montet, these events caused the undoing of the Seth cult, because the impure were adherents of Seth, the lord of Avaris-Tanis.

Yoyotte,<sup>6)</sup> however, has cast doubt upon the historical value of the stories Manetho and others have transmitted to us. Montet has indeed failed to adduce convincing Egyptian material to support his placing of the war with the impure, known from Greek sources,

1) Cf. p. 132 note 4.

2) P. Klemm, *Die Verfehmung des Seth als Folge der Reform Echnatons*, *Studium Generale* 8 (1955), p. 301-309.

3) Cf. J. von Beckerath, *Tanis und Theben*, Glückstadt, 1951, p. 37.

4) P. Montet, *Le drame d'Avaris*, p. 173 sqq.

5) Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I, 227-277.

6) J. Yoyotte, *L'Égypte ancienne et les origines de l'antijudaïsme*, *RHR* 163 (1963), p. 133-143.

in the 20th dynasty. According to Yoyotte all versions of the war with the impure belong to the prophetic genre. They are always preceded by a prophecy or an oracular utterance. Unlike the Prophecy of Neferti, the Prophecy of the Lamb and the Potter's Oracle, however, in the Greek texts this prophecy is not given in the form of a story relating what will take place, but what has taken place. He writes <sup>1)</sup>: "On sera donc tenté de les rattacher à la littérature de propaganda, qui par la voix des oracles, se développa à basse Époque contre les dominateurs étrangers (cf. l'oracle de Bouto dans la *Stèle du Satrape* et la *Chronique démotique*, recueil héracléopolitain d'oracles commentés)." Furthermore, he points out that Amenophis at first retires to Ethiopia, as Shabaka did according to Herodotus. He judges that the impure display essential traits of resemblance with the image that had been built up in late times of foreigners and Achaemenian forces. On the ground of this criticism it would seem that the hatred of the impure and their god Seth should be shifted from the 20th dynasty to the Assyrian period and later.

On the Israel stela of Merneptah, everyone who ventures to violate the boundary of Egypt is called a fool:

"As for Egypt, they say, since the time of the gods she has been the sole daughter of Re. His son is he, who sits on the throne of Shu. No one can attack her inhabitants for the eye of every god pursues him who would despoil her." <sup>2)</sup>

Among these gods who protected Egypt, Seth was also counted one, for though he was the lord of the foreigners, yet he turned his back on the *Thnw* when they attacked Egypt, and their settlements were burnt at his command.<sup>3)</sup> In late times, the Egyptians were faced with the enigma that the chosen country (*t3 mri*) could yet be occupied and plundered by foreigners. Their dread and discontent were unloaded not upon the whole pantheon, but upon the traditional god of foreigners, who had always had a special and precarious place in the pantheon. Klemm <sup>4)</sup> thinks that the experiences of the Egyptians with other nations were not sufficient to explain the severe persecution of Seth, even if one were to take account of an already long existing dislike of Seth among the

1) J. Yoyotte, *o.c.*, p. 138.

2) Israel stela l. 12, 13; W. Spiegelberg, *Der Siegeshymnus des Merneptah auf der Flinders Petrie-stele*, *Z.ÄS* 34 (1896), p. 4.

3) Israel stela l. 11.

4) P. Klemm, *o.c.*, p. 302 n. 12.

people. This seems an underestimation of the emotions of a people, humiliated and oppressed by foreign conquerors. Guentch-Ogloueff has shown that in the late period there were many theophorous cursing names (*noms imprécatoires*) which she interprets not as directed against evil spirits, but against foreign enemies. From the long list she has published, a few examples follow here: "The eye of Horus be against them"; "Apis be against them"; "Bastet take them." Without postulating a connection, it may be remarked that this kind of personal name came into use, when Seth disappeared from the names. According to Guentch-Ogloueff these proper names, which date from the 22nd dynasty till Roman times, reveal that which is less visible in official documents: "les passions xénophobes du bas peuple égyptien." <sup>1)</sup>

Gunn and Gardiner remarked:<sup>2)</sup> "the persecution of Set during the Saite and later times, when his image appears to have been systematically excised from the monuments, was probably the result of a religious revival, when all old prejudices and hostilities were aroused by a wave of acute nationalism." Ed. Meyer <sup>3)</sup> already regarded foreign domination as the cause of the end of the worship of Seth. The material we now have confirms his conclusion that Seth was no longer officially venerated, when Egypt became independent again under the Saïtes. The Ethiopian kings, however, were not regarded as foreign despots.<sup>4)</sup> Though Seth is often connected with the foreign regions to the West, to the East and to the North of Egypt, I do not know of any text in which he is called lord of Nubia. The god Dedun was accounted one of the Egyptian pantheon from the time of the pyramids, without the detour of interpreting him as a manifestation of Seth. Nubia was egyptianised to such an extent, that it was no longer regarded as a foreign country; Seth does not take a special position in the Egyptian temples in Nubia. Not until Ptolemaic times, when Egypt and Nubia had become estranged, could Seth as the enemy of Horus be called a Nubian.<sup>5)</sup> The first foreign domination was that of the Assyrians. Therefore the

1) M. Guentch-Ogloueff, *Noms propres imprécatoires*, BIFAO 40 (1941), p. 133.

2) B. Gunn and A. H. Gardiner, *New rendering of Egyptian texts 2. The expulsion of the Hyksos*, JEA 5 (1918), p. 45.

3) E. Meyer, *Set-Typhon*, p. 62.

4) E. Otto, *c.c.*, p. 114.

5) G. Roeder, *Mythen und Legenden um ägyptische Gottheiten und Pharaonen*, Zürich-Stuttgart, 1960, p. 147.



Assyrian invasions may be regarded as the historical turning-point in the worship and execration of Seth.<sup>1)</sup>

The religious nativistic revival Gunn and Gardiner suggest as having caused the persecution of Seth cannot be directly demonstrated in the texts. This does not invalidate their supposition. In an ancient civilisation much may have happened, particularly in matters outside the official religion of the time, which was not written down in contemporary documents. If this revival were of a prophetic nature, one might seek traces of it in the prophetic literature known to us from later written sources.

Now there is indeed a prophetic writing, the Potter's Oracle, preserved in Greek manuscripts of the 3rd century A.D., which has a nationalistic and at the same time anti-Sethian tendency. The Egyptian origin of the Potter's Oracle is certain.<sup>2)</sup> It is not possible, however, to determine the date of the Egyptian original. The text seems to have been worked over in the Ptolemaic period and afterwards. The impulse that gave rise to it, though, might go back to the Assyrian period, as also for the Prophecy of the Lamb.<sup>3)</sup>

Like the prophesying Lamb, the Potter foresees a time when those left alive will wish that the dead might rise to partake of the good things. Yet before the coming of this Utopian prosperity, the country will be laid waste by foreigners, who are called Typhonians. The potter prophesies that from Syria the king will set forth who will be hated by all. The final period, comprising 110 years altogether, the ideal span of life in Egypt, is divided up between the Typhonian king and the Egyptian king, who descends from Helios and will be appointed by the great Isis. This bipartition of time recalls the bipartition of the spatial world between Horus and Seth. Apparently the author could no longer localise the Typhonians in foreign parts, and in this distress altered the ancient myth in an

1) H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten*, Berlin, 1956<sup>2</sup>, p. 412; H. Bonnet, *RÄRG*, p. 711.

2) E. Lobel and C. H. Roberts, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part XXII*, London, 1954. In introduction and text edition of the Potter's Oracle on p. 89-99 by C. H. Roberts. Cf. L. Koenen, *Die Prophezeiungen des Töpfers* (no place and date given).

3) J. Yoyotte (*o.c.*, p. 138) supposes that the nationalistic Prophecy of the Lamb, only fragmentarily preserved in demotic, originated "en milieu saïte à l'époque des ravages assyriens." According to the pap. Graf (cf. L. Koenen, *o.c.*, p. 7), the Potter gave out his oracle when Amenophis was king. Thus the figure of Amenophis links this oracle with the prophecies about the war with the impure, supposedly composed and worked over in the time of oppression by foreigners, Assyrians and Persians. The Potter's Oracle mentions the Prophecy of the Lamb in so many words, thus taking a place in the same tradition.

eschatological sense. The share of the Horus-king has become a future realm of peace with messianic traits, where there will no longer be any storm nor any other of those irregularities and catastrophes in cosmic, social-economic and religious respect, that will be caused by the foreign Typhonians. The foreigners will fall like leaves from the trees, and the Typhonians will perish. There is no question of reconciliation then, as there was in the ancient Prophecy of Neferti, dating from the M.K.<sup>1)</sup>

Although it is doubtful whether the Potter's Oracle stems from a hypothetical nativistic and prophetic movement in the time of the Assyrian troubles, it remains an interesting document because of its identification of foreigners and Sethians, and the hatred expressed towards them. One can hardly imagine, if the author lived in that period, that he will have taken a tolerant attitude towards the temples and the cult of Seth. Rather would he be an iconoclast.

It is common knowledge that little is left of the temples and images of Seth. Possibly this is not a result of neglect, but of deliberate destructiveness.<sup>2)</sup>

It seems the hypothesis of iconoclasm, drawn from archaeological data, can be confirmed by Egyptian religious texts. In the Sethian cursing texts, the manuscripts of which date from Persian to Ptolemaic times, triumphant remarks are made in general terms about the sad condition of the towns and nomes of Seth. Such a passage then ends with the recital:

"Ombos is pulled down. Their temples are destroyed. All who belonged to them, are not. Their lord is not."<sup>3)</sup>

An even more striking passage is found in the pap. Jumilhac:

"He (Horus) defeated Seth and annihilated his gang. He destroyed his towns and his

1) In that vaticinium ex eventu it is announced, that the messianic king Ameni will conciliate the two lords Horus and Seth with what they desire. Cf. J. A. Wilson in: J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*, p. 446.

2) C. Leemans, *Description raisonnée des monumens égyptiens du musée d'antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide*, Leiden, 1840, p. 9 sq.; W. Pleyte, *La Religion des Pré-Israélites*, p. 107; E. Meyer, *Sét-Typhon*, p. 62; G. Roeder in: *Roscher's Ausführliches Lexikon* vol. IV, col. 769; P. Montet, *Le drame d'Avaris*, p. 168 sqq.; J. Yoyotte is more reserved, however, with regard to the stelae found at San el Hagar (*Les stèles de Ramsès II à Tanis, Kémi 10* (1919) p. 64, 73). In general, he does consider that in the late period the names and images of Seth were destroyed (cf. J. Yoyotte in: *Knaurs Lexikon der ägyptischen Kultur*, s.v. Seth). The statue of Seth in Kopenhagen (Glyptothek Ny Carlsberg *AEIN* 614) has been purposely changed into an image of the divine potter Khnum. On Khnum and the Potter's Oracle, cf. V. V. Struve, *Zum Töpferorakel, Aegyptus 3* (1925), p. 273 sqq.

3) *Urk.* VI, 17, 1-3.

nomes and he scratched out (*š<sup>t</sup>.f*) his name in this land, after he had broken his statues in pieces (*fdk.n.f twt.f*) in all nomes . . . .<sup>1)</sup>

Such a version of the conflict of Horus and Seth implies the condemnation of the cult of Seth in every form. Even if one hesitates to interpret this religious text as evidence of historical iconoclastic action against Seth, it must yet be observed that such action is thereby legitimated from the theological point of view. If the god Horus was an iconoclast, then some of his worshippers may have imitated him in this. Perhaps one may assume that the faithful preceded the god in this matter, and that the myth of the combat was adapted to changed conditions after historical image-breaking.

In Ramesside times the ancient Egyptian god of the desert and divine foreigner had assumed Semitic traits. When Egypt was occupied by Assyrians and afterwards by Persians with their Semitic auxiliaries, Egyptian anti-Semitism raised its head. This sentiment may be distinguished, but cannot be separated from anti-Judaism, as is clear from Yoyotte's article on ancient Egypt and the sources of anti-Judaism.<sup>2)</sup> As the cult of Seth had come to flourish at a time when relations with the Semitic world were good from the Egyptian point of view, so also the worshippers of Seth, such of them as had not yet turned away from their god, will have experienced the consequences of this anti-Semitism.<sup>3)</sup> Texts giving information about the forms of religion in the various nomes, sometimes give imprecations with reference to the traditional nomes of Seth. Thus it is said of the 11th Lower-Egyptian nome:

"May the name of his priest fall into oblivion, may there be no singer among the women of the temple, may his sacred boat catch fire, may his chancel dry up, may his grove be destroyed and treeless, may his festival be miserable to all eternity."<sup>4)</sup>

The 19th Upper-Egyptian nome also receives its share of imprecation. Gardiner reads the text as a statement, but he remarks it is

1) *Pap. Jumilhac XVII*, 10-11.

2) J. Yoyotte, *L'Égypte ancienne et les origines de l'antijudaïsme*, *RHR* 163 (1963), p. 133-143.

3) The example that Morenz gives (BD 65, 4) for the fact that an Egyptian had to disclaim membership of a "Seth-society" fails to be convincing (S. Morenz, *Die Zauberflöte. Eine Studie zum Lebenszusammenhang Ägypten-Antike-Abendland*, Münster-Köln, 1952, p. 74 n. 2). In the late period, however, an Egyptian theologian could discredit a particular divine cult, that of Sobk, in an obscure village by calling it a cult of Seth. According to him, this Sobk is "Seth who has changed into a crocodile." Not only the god is aimed at, but also his priest: "*Šd hrw* (disturber, rowdy) is his name." (*Pap. Jumilhac XXII*, 19-23).

4) *Edfou I*, 333; cf. P. Montet, *Le fruit défendu*, *Kémi* 11 (1950), p. 91.

put "perhaps more piously than truthfully." 1) Religious zeal and piety towards the national Egyptian gods discriminated against the cult of the divine foreigner and finally choked it, so that he became a dreadful demon of the black magicians. 2)

The name of Seth was replaced in rituals by that of other gods. 3) Here and there, his name was maintained for a time in the traditional texts, but in the texts of the Ptolemaic period Seth has been expunged wherever he was shown there in a positive aspect. This change had a long preparation and was carried into effect very gradually. It seems to have been accelerated, though, around the Assyrian period, possibly owing to a nativistic movement coupled with image-breaking.

The hatred of Seth found in texts of Persian and Ptolemaic times expresses itself in the many terms of abuse with which he is indicated. Some of these bad names show that the abhorrence of Seth can be interpreted as an outcome in the religious field of feelings of fear and hatred towards foreign conquerors, who were identified with Seth.

Kees 4) has suggested that one of the names given to Seth, *mdy* c), the determinative of which is the Seth-animal with a knife stuck in it, means "Mede." Griffiths 5), however, is of opinion that a passage adduced by Kees in this context shows that this word, which does not have the Seth-animal as determinative there, but the sign for foreign country, does not mean Mede but Egyptian soldier. The Horus myth of Edfu, where this passage is found, relates that before the outbreak of armed combat between Horus and Seth, who had been banished abroad but had come back, there was a battle of words. "Seth said: Come *mdy*! It was said as a challenge (*mtj*)." It is indeed not Seth, but Horus who is called a *mdy* here. But it is Seth who is purposely insulting Horus, for Horus cries out: "A challenge to the name of the Egyptians from Seth." 6) It is hardly possible



1) A. H. Gardiner, *AEO* II, p. 111 \*.

2) A few eloquent instances from magic papyri: Th. Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris* I, p. 138 sq.

3) H. Kees, *Horus und Seth als Götterpaar* II, p. 82 sqq.

4) H. Kees, *Kultlegende und Urgeschichte*, p. 347 n. 2.

5) J. G. Griffiths, *The interpretation of the Horus-myth of Edfu*, *JEA* 44 (1958), p. 78.

6) *Edfou* VI, 214, 12; 215, 3.

to understand this otherwise than that the malicious Seth, who elsewhere is called a *mdy* himself,<sup>1)</sup> is now even casting doubt upon the Egyptianity of Horus. It seems that Seth's name of *mdy*, known from other passages, does indeed mean Mede.

Another abusive term stigmatising Seth as a foreigner might be *nhr*. The meaning is given as "Bösewicht o.ä."<sup>2)</sup> It might be connected, however, with *nhrj* "Bezeichnung für syrische Grossen"<sup>3)</sup> or *nhrn* "Land am Euphrath."<sup>4)</sup> The Persian army of occupation was recruited from many very different, mainly Semitic peoples. Indeed, these were often called "foreigners from all foreign countries."<sup>5)</sup>

Typhon<sup>6)</sup> is a very well-known name for Seth. This name has such an unfavourable meaning that it may be regarded as a term of abuse. Even the word itself is borrowed from a foreign language so accentuating the foreign nature of its bearer. But it is not possible to make out in how far Greek conceptions of Typhon have influenced the Egyptian idea of Seth.

Besides these names characterising Seth as a hated foreigner others are used for him which show that there was no longer a good word to be said for him. He is "whose name is evil."<sup>7)</sup> He is the "bad one"<sup>8)</sup> or "the son of evil."<sup>9)</sup> The difference between the foreigner and the bad one is not very great: In wisdom literature it is said that the ungodly man who goes abroad puts himself in the hands of the evil one.<sup>10)</sup> The "shouter"<sup>11)</sup> is naturally a bad creature in a culture where the silent one has become the ideal type in life. "Liar" and "blockhead" add little to this image of Seth.<sup>12)</sup>

1) *WB* II, 177, 21.

2) *WB* II, 286, 12.

3) *WB* II, 286, 11.

4) *WB* II, 287, 1.

5) G. Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte*. Recueil d'inscriptions hiéroglyphiques, Le Caire, 1936, p. 167 n. 6.

6) Egyptian *thh*: *WB* V, 262, 7; cf. *WB* V, 439, 5.

7) *WB* I, 443, 18: *btu rn.f*.

8) *WB* I, 48, 14: *tuty*; *WB* V, 549, 21: *duty*.

9) *WB* III, 409, 15: *s3 btu*.

10) F. W. von Bissing, *Altägyptische Lebensweisheit*, Zürich, 1955, p. 114 (pap. Insinger 28, 5).

11) *WB* III, 325, 16: *hrw*, cf. *šd hrw* (disturber; *WB* IV, 566, 7). E. Otto (*Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit*, p. 68) very rightly remarks that *šd hrw* is the opposite of *gr m3c*.

12) *WB* II, 164, 13: *mrgg*; Pap. *Bremner-Rhind* 8, 2: *nn rh*. I can offer no further explanation of the name *hm-m33* (*WB* III, 280, 9). The attempt of the compilers of the Berlin Dictionary to connect this word with a verb *hm33* (*WB* III, 281, 13) concerning the facial

Several bynames of Seth have the determinative of the crocodile.<sup>1)</sup> Although crocodiles may be the *b3w* of Sobk,<sup>2)</sup> they may also be regarded as messengers of Seth.<sup>3)</sup> Seth may be called *mg3*.<sup>4)</sup> On the other hand *mg3*, the crocodile, is sometimes called a son of Seth.<sup>5)</sup> It would be a mistake to deduce from this that Seth is the father of a particular mythical son, in the way Osiris is the father of Horus. The intention is merely to express that a dangerous crocodile is a Sethian product.<sup>6)</sup>

A good impression of the attitude and sentiments towards the divine foreigner in the time when Egypt was no longer independent, is given by the texts cursing Seth.<sup>7)</sup> In these he is designated as the enemy of the gods and the murderer of Osiris, as the being who revolted against the order established by the highest god. Re-Harakhty is reminded of his original decree, whereby Egypt was allotted to Horus and the desert to Seth.<sup>8)</sup> For Seth has not stayed in foreign parts, but has returned to Egypt and committed all kind of infamies there, which are extensively listed. Because of this he is cursed, banished and punished. The directions for the ritual "to overthrow Seth and his gang," which according to the superscription was carried out daily in the temple of Osiris in Abydos and in all the Egyptian temples, say that a figure of Seth is to be made of red wax, and "miserable Seth" written upon it. Instead of a waxen image, one may also make a wooden one or a drawing on paper. The figure is to be bound with tendons from a red ox. Then one must tread on the image of Seth with the left foot, thrust the spear

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expression of a patient suffering from a stomach complaint is interesting! Seth is often called *nh3* (*WB* II, 287, 14-16). The translation of this word is uncertain (E. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, vol. II, p. 103, 3). *Rnn* (*WB* II, 435, 15) is an indication of Seth, because the young bull (cf. *rnn*, *WB* II, 435, 13) as a sacrificial animal could symbolise Seth. There is no reason to suppose that this term accentuated the virginity of Seth (*rnn* — lad; *rnt* — maiden, *WB* II, 435, 17, 18).

1) *thy* (*WB* I, 122, 11), snarer; *tt* (*WB* I, 150, 9), seizer; *hwr* (*WB* III, 56, 14), robber; *k3pw* (*WB* V, 105, 6), bird-catcher; *w3y* (*WB* I, 171, 15), robber.

2) H. Kees, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch*, p. 22.

3) H. Bonnet, *RARG*, p. 393.

4) *WB* II, 164, 9.

5) *WB* II, 164, 8.

6) In a spell to become Sobk it is said: "NN is this worm . . . . that Seth has breathed out within the secrecy of Geb." (*CT* IV, 1 b, d). For Seth and crocodiles cf. Th. Hopfner, *o.c.*, vol. II, p. 222 sq.

7) *Urk.* VI (*Urkunden mythologischen Inhalts* — S. Schott, *Bücher und Sprüche gegen den Gott Seth*, Heft 1-2, Leipzig, 1929-1939).

8) *Urk.* VI, 17, 17.



into it, and cut it into pieces with the knife. Finally the remains are to be thrown into the fire, so that nothing is left.

A detailed analysis of the long text to be recited during these various actions would require a separate study. To close this enquiry into the part played by Seth in Egyptian mythology and religion, we will quote just one passage: <sup>1)</sup>

“Robber! Lord of lies; king of deceit; gangleader of criminals; who is satisfied with desertion and hates friendship; braggart among the gods, who causes enmity and occasions murder; Typhon, who creates rebellion; lord of looting, who rejoices at greed; master-thief, who suscitates theft; who gives offence” . . .

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<sup>1)</sup> *Urk.* VI, 7, 13-21; cf. E. Drioton, *Pages d'égyptologie*, p. 322: “une sorte de ‘hymne au diable’.”

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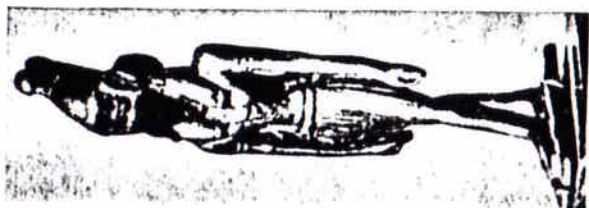
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—, 8, 2	149	— I 360	131
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Pap. Ebers, 2, 3-2, 6	58	Pap. London Med. 10059, 13, 3-4	58
Pap. Harris I, 59, 4-7,	134	Pap. Millingen, 2, 5	35
—, 60, 2-5	134	Pap. d'Orbiney	41
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—, 61b, 15	134	—, 8, 1 sqq.	42
—, 62 a, 3	134	Pap. Petersburg 1116 A vs. 42	122
—, 75, 8	107, 133	Pap. Ram. Dram., 57	63
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—, V, 8	124	Pap. Sallier I, 1, 2-4	121
—, V, 4	21	— IV vs. 1, 6	122
—, VII, 7 sq.	30	— IV, IX, 4	62, 110
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—, X, 8	71	Pap. Salt 825, V, 1, 2	115
Pap. Hearst, XI, 12-14	123	Pap. Turin 1940 + 41 rt. 2, 13	20
—, XIV, 2-4	46, 48	Pap. Vatican mag., I, 11	107
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—, III, 5	55	39, 6	131
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## 6. INSCRIPTIONS

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—, III, 333	19, 49	— II, pl. 116, 1 sqq.	21
—, VI, 75, 1	59	Metternich stela 149 sqq.	38
—, VI, 214, 12	148	— 170	36, 37, 38
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— 6, 12, 25 sq.	132	Socle Behague	37, 38
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—, 31	120	— h 14	14
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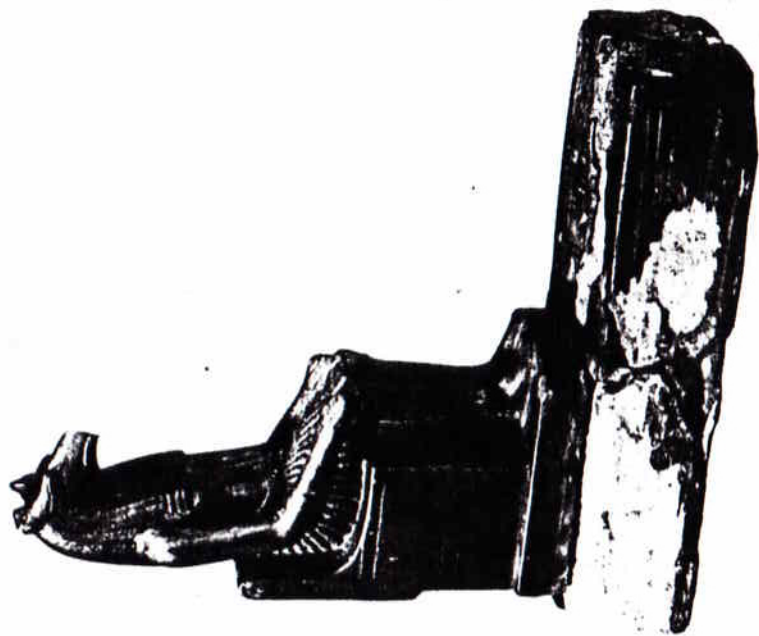




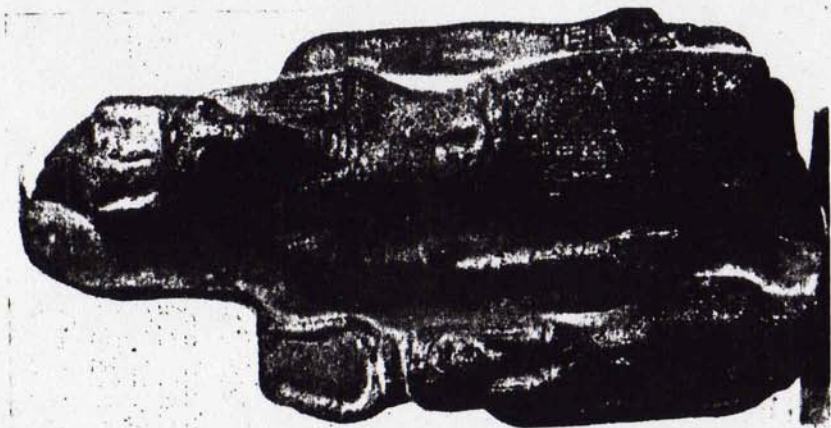
3 Bronze statuette of Seth, worn as pendant (p. 138).



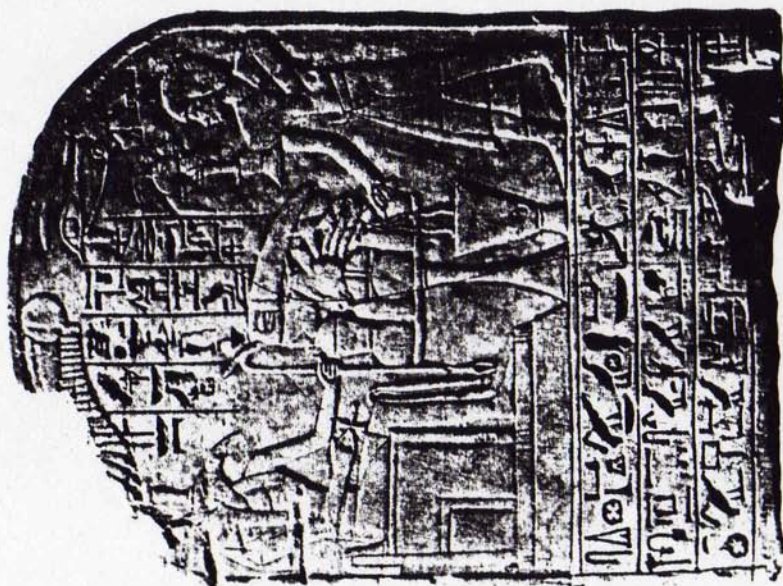
2 Ass-headed figure, probably Seth. Ptolemaic period (p. 14).



Wooden figure of Seth. In the Museum of Antiquities at Leiden (p. 138).

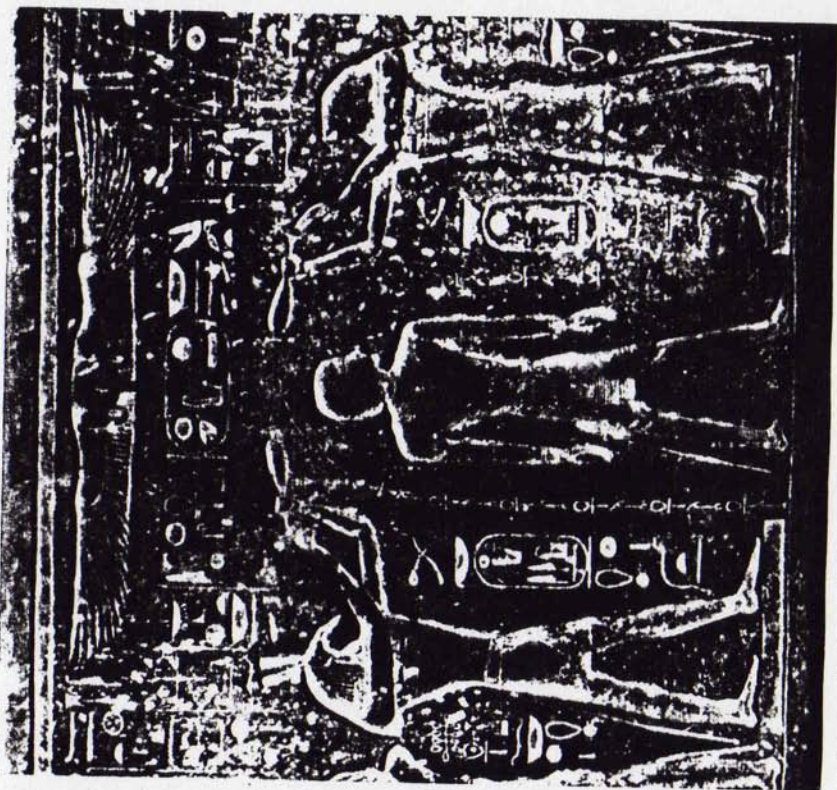


2 Seth and his consort Nephthys, her name inscribed on the back (p. 275sq., p. 131).

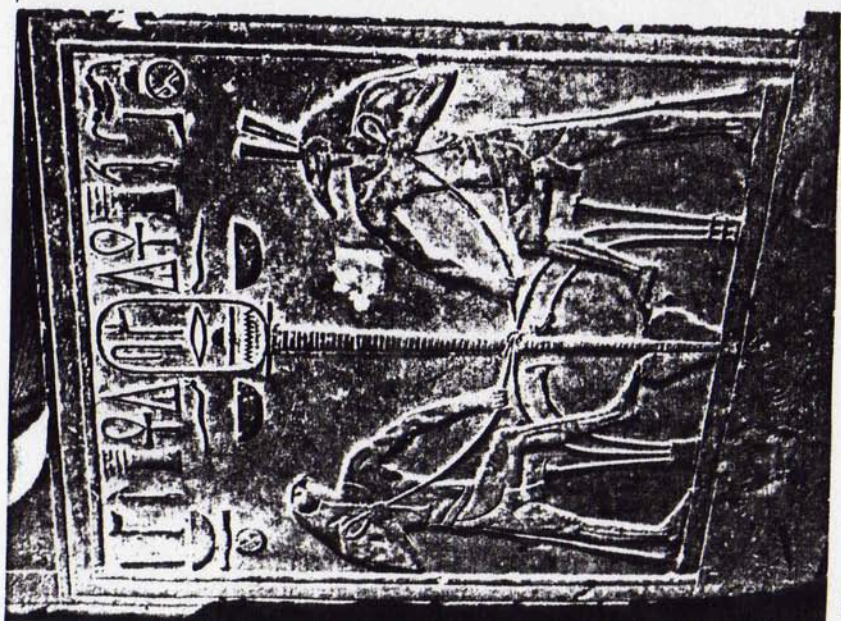


1 The god called both Antywey and Seth in the inscription, is here depicted as Seth, and not falcon-headed, as elsewhere (p. 68).



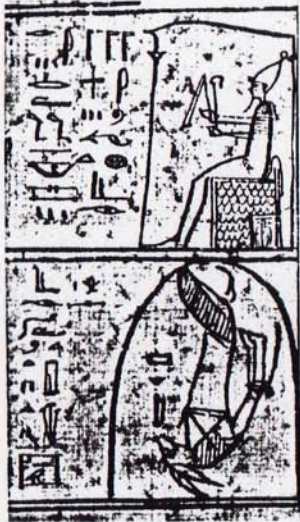


2 Pharaoh Sethos I being purified by Horus and Seth (p. 132 n. 4).

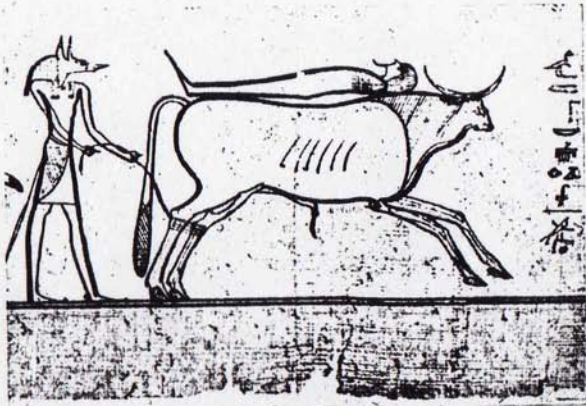


The two lands united by Horus and Seth. Relief on the throne of Sesostris I (p. 64).

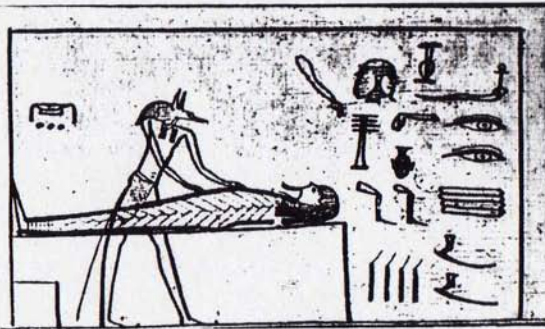




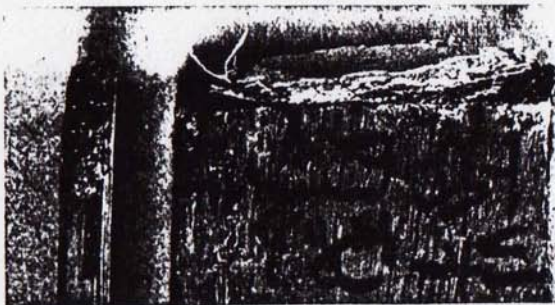
1 The throne of Osiris rests upon a fish-basket imprisoning the ass-headed Seth (p. 97 sq.).



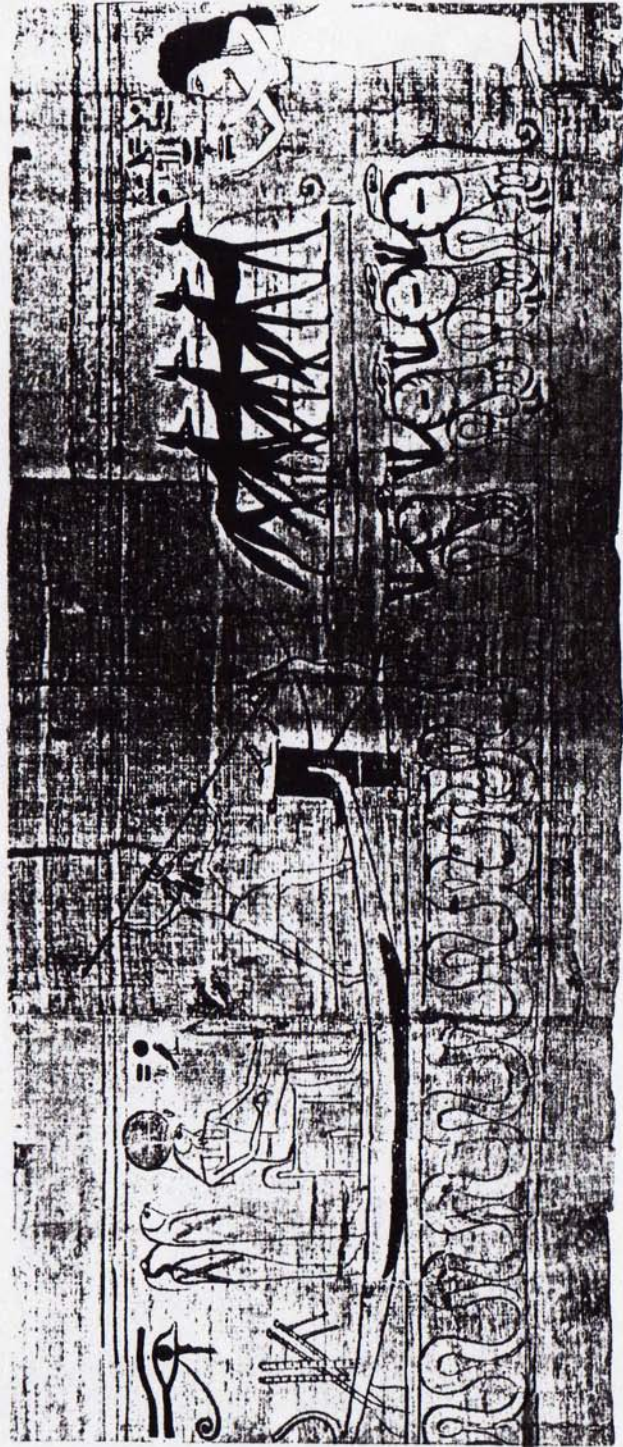
2 The bull Bata, i.e. Seth, carrying Osiris (p. 97).



3 Parts of the body of Osiris, being mummified by Anubis: entrails, eyes, ribs, jaws, lungs, phallus, heart, legs, fingers, head, arm and backbone (p. 91 sq.).



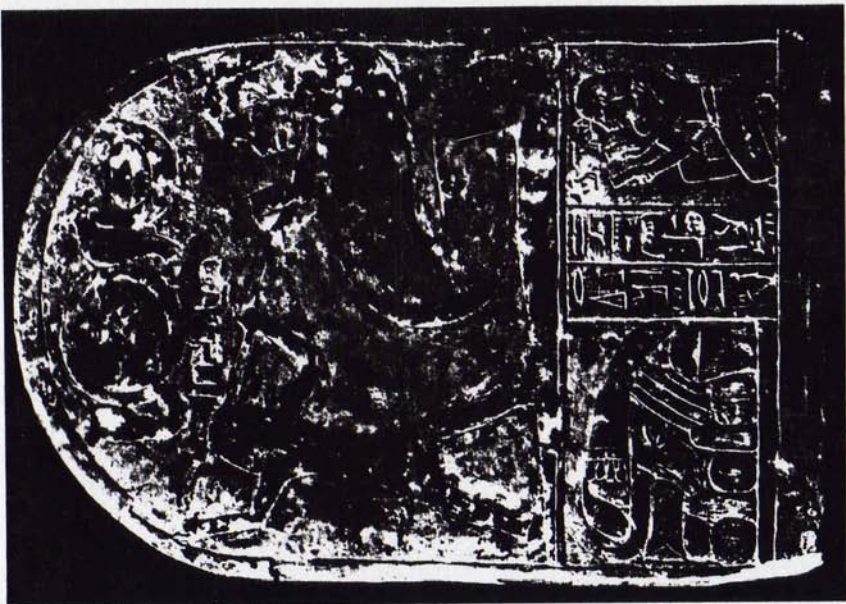
4 Fragment of a tenon of the coffin of queen Meryet-Amon at Thebes (18th dynasty) with hieratic inscription: "Hide these my limbs from Seth", (p. 93).



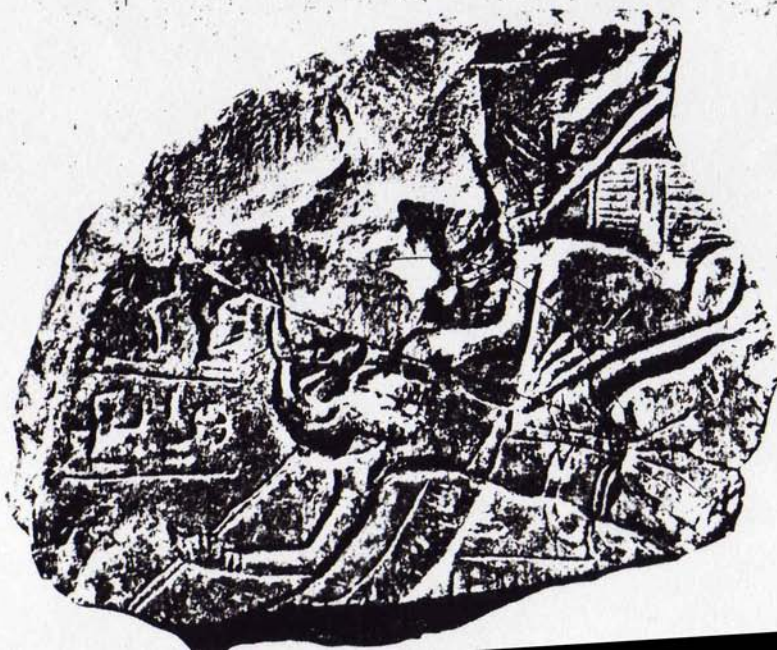
Seth, upon the prow of the solar barque, repels Apopis (p. 99 sqq.).



PLATE VIII



2 Seth fighting Apopis, who has hands and a human head (p. 99 sqq.).



Seth, winged and with a bull's head, in action on the prow of the sun barque. As "Bull of Ombos", his exotic costume remarkable (p. 20, p. 99 sqq., p. 126 n. 2).





Relief from the temple of Amon at Hibis in the Kharga oasis. According to the text, the falcon-god attacking the snake is Seth (p. 20, p. 99 sqq., (p. 115 sqq.)).



Seth on the 400 years stela (p. 124 sqq.).

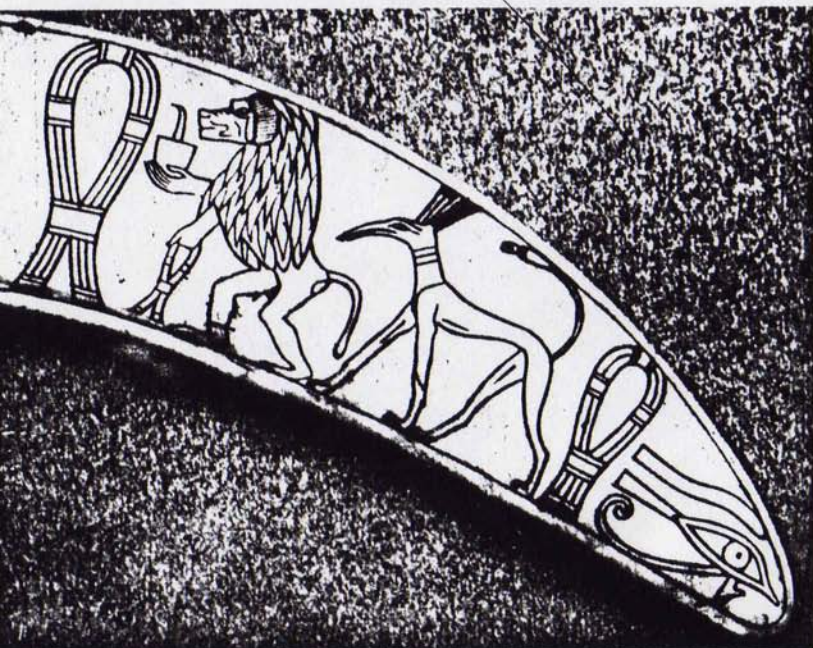




The aggressive god Seth. Altered later into a ram-headed god (p. 109sq., p. 146 n. 2, p. 126 n. 2).

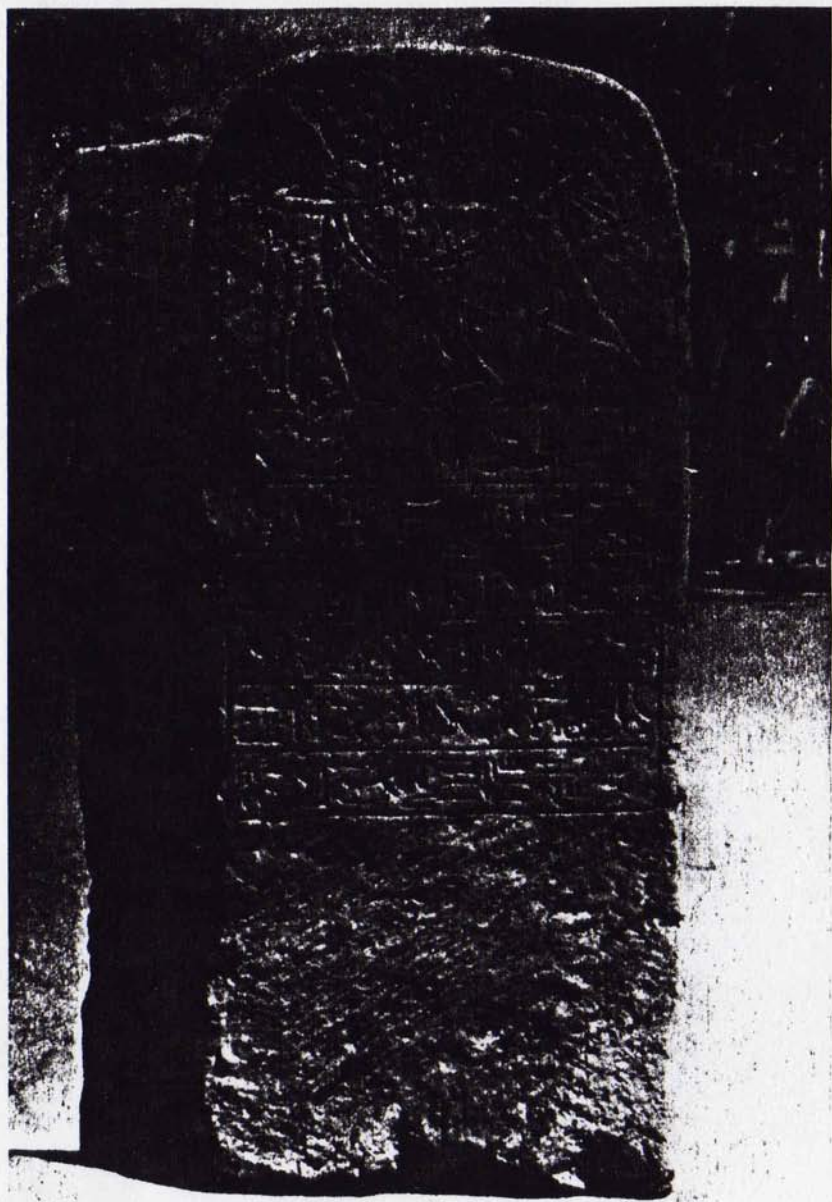


i Battle-axe with griffin  
(p. 17sqq.).



2 Fragment of an amuletic wand, showing the Seth-animal (p. 17sq.).





Seth in his Asiatic form hands the sword to Ramses III, who is about to despatch some Asiatics (p. 134).

1 Seth the foreigner upon the Theban stele.  
Berlin 8440 (p. 126 n. 2).



2 Figure with an Ass's head. The initials of the words "terrible yelling god" form the acrostic "Seth" (p. 14, p. 140 n. 1).



