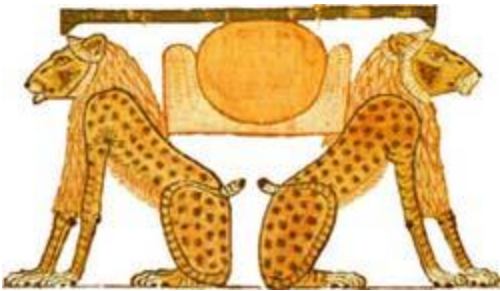


THE GODS

This is in alphabetical order!

 **Aker** - "the Bender"

Guardian of the traveling sun.



(Akeru, Akerui)

Symbols: *akhet*

Aker was an ancient earth-god in Egypt. He was believed to guard the gates of the dawn from which the sun rose each morning. He was portrayed as a double-headed lion, or a two lions sitting back-to-back. In between them is shown the sun with the sky overhead. In this way they form the *akhet* symbol, which was a symbol of the horizon. Occasionally they were portrayed bearing the *akhet* on their backs (as in the image to the right).

The two lions were called *Sef* and *Duau*, which means "Yesterday" and "Today" respectively.

As Egyptians believed that the gates of the morning and evening were guarded by Aker, they often placed statues of lions at the doors of their palaces and tombs. This was to guard the households and tombs from evil spirits and other malevolent beings. Sometimes they gave these statues the heads of men and women. The Greeks called this class of statuary, "Sphinxes."

It is believed that Aker is probably a more ancient earth god than the Heliopolitan god, Geb.

 **Ammut** - "Dead-Swallower"

Demon; ate souls.

Ammut



(Ammit, Ahemait)

Ammut was a creature which dwelled in the Hall of Ma'at awaiting the judgement of the deceased that passed through there. Those souls who were found unworthy to dwell in the Afterlife were devoured by her. The process of judgement involved the weighing of the deceased person's heart against the feather of Ma'at. If the heart (the seat of the soul, according to the ancient Egyptians) was found to be heavy with sin and impurities and did not balance with the feather, Ammut would devour them.

The goddess was depicted with the head of a crocodile, the forequarters of a lion, and the hindquarters of a hippopotamus.

Anubis - "the Royal Child"

Jackal-god of mummification.



(Yinepu, Anpu)

Symbols: jackal, ox-hide hanging from a pole, embalming equipment, flail, flags

Cult Center: Heliopolis, Cynopolis

The jackal-god of mummification, he assisted in the rites by which a dead man was admitted to the underworld. Anubis was worshipped as the inventor of embalming and who embalmed the dead Osiris and thereby helping to preserve him that he might live again.

Anubis is portrayed as a man with the head of a jackal holding the divine sceptre carried by kings and gods; as simply a black jackal or as a dog accompanying Isis. His symbol was a black and white ox-hide splattered with blood and hanging from a pole. It's meaning is unknown.

Anubis had three important functions. He supervised the embalming of bodies. He received the mummy into the tomb and performed the Opening of the Mouth ceremony and then conducted the soul in the Field of Celestial Offerings. Most importantly though, Anubis monitored the Scales of Truth to protect the dead from deception and eternal death.

Early in Egyptian history, Anubis was a god of the dead. This role was usurped by Osiris as he rose in popularity.

The god of embalming is probably associated with the jackal due to the habits of jackals to lurk about tombs and graves. One of the reasons the early Egyptians sought to make their tombs more elaborate was to keep the bodies safe from the jackals lingering about the graves. It is only natural therefore that a god of mummification would be connected with them. By worshipping Anubis, the Egyptians hoped to invoke him to protect their deceased from jackals, and later, the natural decay that unprotected bodies endure.

Anubis was the son of Nephthys, and his father was Osiris. One myth says that Nephthys got Osiris drunk and the resultant seduction brought forth Anubis. Yet another says she disguised herself as Isis and seduced Osiris and subsequently gave birth to Anubis.

Aten

Disk of the sun.

[Home](#) :: [the Gods](#) :: Aten



Aten

Symbols: sun disk, heat and light of the sun

Cult Center: Akhetaten (Tel El-Amarna)

Aten was a being who represented the god or spirit of the sun, and the actual solar disk. He was depicted as a disk with rays reaching to the earth. At the end of the rays were human hands which often extended the ankh to the pharaoh.

Aten's origins are unclear and he may have been a provincial Sun-god worshipped in one of the small villages near Heliopolis.

Aten was called the creator of man and the nurturing spirit of the world. In the Book of the Dead, Aten is called on by the deceased, "Hail, Aten, thou lord of beams of light, when thou shinest, all faces live."

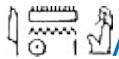
It is impossible to discuss Aten without mentioned his biggest promoter, the pharaoh Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaten. Early in his reign, Akhenaten worshipped both Amon (the chief god in Thebes at the time) and Aten. The first as part of his public duties, the latter in private. When he restored and enlarged the temple of Aten first built by his father Amenhotep III, relations between him and priests of Amon became strained. The priests were a major power in Egypt and if another god became supreme they would lose their own prestige. Eventually, relations became so strained that Akhenaten decided to build his own capital by the Nile, which he called, "Akhetaten", the Horizon of the Aten.

At Akhetaten, Akhenaten formed a new state religion, focusing on the worship of the Aten. It stated that Aten was the supreme god and there were no others, save for Akhenaten himself. It has been said that Akhenaten formed the first monotheistic religion around Aten. However, this is not the case. Akhenaten himself was

considered to be a creator god and like Aten was born again every day. Aten was only accessible to the people through Akhenaten because Akhenaten was both man and part of the cosmos.

Akhenaten systematically began a campaign to erase all traces of the old gods, especially Amon. He erased the name of Amon from the temples and public works. He even went so far as to erase his own father's cartouche because the word "Amon" was featured in it. Even the word "gods" was unacceptable because it implied there were other deities besides Aten.

It is clear that the Egyptian people never accepted their king's religion and view of the world. Even at his own capital, Akhetaten, amulets featuring Bes and Tauret have been found. Following Akhenaten's death, Atenism died rapidly. Mostly because the people never really believed in it and also because Akhenaten's successors did all they could to erase Akhenaten and Aten from the public eye. Eventually, Akhetaten became abandoned and the name "Akhenaten" conjured the dim memory of a "heretic king."



Amon - "the Hidden One"

Theban king of the gods.



Amon

(Amen, Amun, Ammon, Amoun)

Symbols: ram, goose, bull

Cult Center: Thebes, Hermopolis

The god of Thebes, he was shown as human. He was viewed (along with his consort Amaunet) in Hermopolis as a primordial creation-deity. Up to the time of the XIIth Dynasty Amon was a Theban god of no more than local importance, but as soon as the princes of Thebes had conquered their rival claimants to the rule of Egypt, and had succeeded in making their city a new capital of the country, their god Amon became a prominent god in Upper Egypt. It was probably under that dynasty that the attempt was made to assign to him the proud position which was afterwards claimed for him of "king of the gods".

In spite of Amon's political ascension, he also enjoyed popularity among the common people of Egypt. He was called the vizier of the poor. It was said that he protected the weak from the strong and was an upholder of justice. Those who requested favors from Amon were required to demonstrate their worthiness or to confess their sins first.

Typically, the strength of a god would add luster to the position of the *pharaoh*. However, as Amon grew in popularity, his *priests* grew increasingly powerful in influence and wealth. As such, they often attempted to assert themselves in the political arena. When the queen Hatshepsut found supporters among the priests of Amon, she honored their god by claiming that he was her father and she built her temple in Deir el-Bahri in his honor.

Ironically, such political maneuvering helped to destroy Amon's popularity. Starting in the reign of Thutmose IV, a movement began in the royal house to pay homage to a purer form of the sun. The sun-disc Aten slowly became the god of the pharaohs. The situation came to a head during the reign of Akhenaten. During his reign as pharaoh, he moved the capital of Egypt away from Thebes to Akhetaten where he and his followers could worship Aten exclusively. The pharaoh also began a campaign of erasing the name of Amon from the public works of Egypt.

Following the death of Akhenaten, his successor Tutankhamon moved the capital back to Thebes and restored the old gods. However, Amon never regained his former following and the pharaohs and the country focused their religious devotion to the gods of the Osirian family.

The word or root *amen* means "what is hidden", "what is not seen", "what cannot be seen" and the like. This fact is proved by many examples which may be collected from all periods. Now, not only is the god himself said to be "hidden", but his name is also "hidden," and his form is said to be "unknown." In the times approaching the Ptolemaic period, the name Amon appears to have been connected with the root *men*, "to abide, to be permanent;" and one of the attributes which were applied to him was that of *eternal*.

Amon was self-created according to later traditions. His wife was the mother-goddess Mut and his son was the moon, Khonsu. According to the older Hermopolitan customs though, Amon was made by Thoth as one of the eight primordial gods of creation (Amen, Amaunet, Heh, Heqet, Nun, Naunet, Kau, Kauket).

Amon was represented on five forms:

1. As a man, when he is seen seated on a throne, and holding in one hand the *was* sceptre, and in the other the *ankh*
2. As a man with the head of a frog
3. As a man with the head of a *uraeus* (cobra)
4. As an ape
5. As a lion crouching upon a pedestal

His sacred animals were the goose and the ram, although he was never depicted as them.

Anqet - "Embracing Lady"



Water goddess of Elephantine.



Anqet

(Anuket, Anukis, Anket)

Cult Center: Elephantine

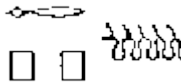
Anqet was the goddess of the island of Sahal, near the First Cataract of the Nile. She was shown as a woman who wears a crown of ostrich feathers. Her sacred animal was the gazelle. She was the daughter of Satet, the wife of Khnemu. Together, the three deities formed the Triad of Elephantine, the principal deities of that city.

Anqet was originally a water goddess from Sudan. Her name meant, "to embrace" which was interpreted to mean that her embrace during the annual Nile floods fertilized the fields. Later, she became a goddess of lust, whose attributes and cult were obscene. However, her cult's origins can be traced back to the Old Kingdom. She is closely associated with Nubia. She is not an imported goddess though.

Her worship was common throughout northern Nubia and the center of her worship was the island of Sahal, near Aswan. There she was called the "Lady of Sahal" (Nebt Satet). Anqet's temple at Sahal was called "Amen-heri-ab".

Apep

Snake who tried to kill the sun.



Apep

(Apophis)

Apep was a huge serpent (or crocodile) which lived in the waters of Nun or in the celestial Nile. Each day he attempted to disrupt the passage of the solar barque of Re. In some myths, Apep was an earlier and discarded sun-god himself. This helps to explain the snake's strength and his resentment of the daily journey of the sun. In Seth's battle for the throne of Egypt, he claimed that he was

stronger than Horus because it was he that stood at the prow of the solar barque and defeated the enemies of Re.

Apep was a genuine threat to Re and his daily travels. At times he was successful and when this occurred stormy weather would occur. When Apep swallowed the barque, there was a solar eclipse.

He never had a lasting victory though because of the prayers of the priests and religious. A book called, *The Books of Overthrowing Apep* contained a list of his secret names and a number of hymns that celebrate Re's victories. According to the book, Apep had been previously killed, hacked to pieces, dismembered and thrown into the abyss. However, he always came back to life to attack Re the next day. Egyptians would go to the temples and make images of snakes out of wax. They would spit in the images, then burn and mutilate them. Doing this and reciting the spells in the *Books of Overthrowing Apep* helped ensure Re's continued success and victory over the snake.

Titles of the chapters of the first book are as follows:

1. Chapter of Spitting Upon Apep
2. Chapter of Defiling Apep with the Left Foot
3. Chapter of Taking a Lance to Smite Apep
4. Chapter of Fettering Apep
5. Chapter of Taking a Knife to Smite Apep
6. Chapter of Putting Fire Upon Apep

Following books describe in detail the destruction which will fall upon Apep. According to these, Apep will first be speared, then sliced with red-hot knives so that every bone of his body has been separated, his head, legs and tail are cut off. His remains are then scorched, singed, and roasted, finally to be consumed by fire. The same fate awaits Apep's confederates and everything which formed parts of him, them, and all their offspring (their shadows, souls, doubles, and spirits).

Atum - "the Complete One"

God of the setting sun.



Atum

(Tem, Temu, Tum, Atem)

Symbols: Udjat, Bennu (phoenix), lotus/blue water lily, obelisks and pyramids

Cult Center: Heliopolis

Atum was one of the most ancient gods in Egypt and was part of the Heliopolitan cosmology. Originally an earth god, he became associated with Re, the sun god. Specifically, he was considered to be the setting sun. In later times he became associated with Ptah and eventually Osiris.

According to the priests of Heliopolis, Atum was the first being to emerge from the waters of Nun at the time of creation. Originally, he was a serpent in Nun and will return to that form at the end of time. However, Atum was depicted in art as a man wearing the Double Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. As such, he is the first living man god conceived of by the ancient Egyptians. Until then, their gods were all forms of animals.

Following his self-creation from Nun, Atum created his children Shu and Tefnut by masturbating. This may seem impossible but Atum was a bisexual god. He embodied both the male and female aspects of life. Therefore, his semen contained all that was necessary to create new life and deities. The Egyptians called Atum "Great He-She" and his name meant "the complete one."

Later myths said that his children were products of his relationship with his shadow, or with the goddess Iusaaset.

Baal - "Lord," "Power"

Semetic god of storms



Baal

Symbols: bull, cedar tree

Cult Center: Baal-Saphon, Memphis

During the New Kingdom, as Egypt began expanding its empire into the Near East, several gods local to that region began to be worshipped by Egyptians. Among these foreign gods were [Qetesh](#), [Reshep](#) and Baal. Baal was a western Semitic god of storms and the skies whose worship in Egypt was established by the 18th Dynasty. By 1400 B.C., he was an important god to the Canaanites and was mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as a competitor with God for the affections of the Israelites. The Bible described Baal as killing and eating human beings (Jeremiah 19).

According to Near Eastern mythology, Baal destroyed Yam, the god of the Great [Green](#) (the Mediterranean Sea). Baal himself was killed later by Mot, the Semitic god who personified death. Baal's sister and consort, Anat, resurrected him. Anat was a warrior-goddess who went on to avenge Baal's murder by cleaving Mot with her sword, throwing his body into a fire, then grinding his bones and feeding the remains to the birds and animals of the fields.

Baal and Anat were also said to have mated while in the guise of a bull and a cow.

Despite the obvious parallels between Baal's murder and resurrection and [Osiris's](#) murder and resurrection by his sister [Isis](#), a connection between the two gods was not made by Baal's worshippers in Egypt. Rather, Baal was commonly identified with Osiris's murder, [Seth](#). Seth and Baal were both gods of storms. In the narratives of the Battle of Kadesh, Pharaoh Rameses II was called "Seth, great of strength, and Baal himself."

Baal was depicted as a powerful warrior with a curved, Syrian-style, beard. He wore a horned helmet and carried various weapons, including a sword, a club made from a cedar tree, or a thunderbolt.

Bastet - "Devouring Lady"

Cat-goddess of the home.



Bastet

(Bast)

Symbols: cat, lioness, sistrum, Udjat (Eye of Horus)

Cult Center: Bubastis

Links: The Name of Bast

The goddess Bastet was usually represented as a woman with the head of a domesticated cat. However, up until 1000 BC she was portrayed as a lioness. Bastet was the daughter of Re, the sun god. It may have been through him that she acquired her feline characteristics. When Re destroyed his enemy Apep, he was usually depicted as a cat. As portrayed as a cat, she was connected with the moon (her son Khonsu was the god of the moon). When shown as a lioness, she is associated with sunlight.



Bastet was the goddess of fire, cats, of the home and pregnant women. According to one myth, she was the personification of the soul of Isis. She was also called the "Lady of the East". As such, her counterpart as "Lady of the West" was Sekhmet.

Bastet seemed to have two sides to her personality, docile and aggressive. Her docile and gentle side was displayed in her duties as a protector of the home, and pregnant women. Her aggressive and vicious nature was exposed in the accounts of battles in which the pharaoh was said to have slaughtered the enemy as Bastet slaughtered her victims.

Her center of worship was in Bubastis (Per-Bast, Pa-Bast, Pibeseth, Tell-Basta), in the eastern Delta. Her chief festivals were celebrated in April and May. Herodotus, the

famous Greek historian, provides the following description of one of the festivals:

"When the Egyptians travel to Bubastis, they do so in this manner: men and women sail together, and in each boat there are many persons of both sexes. Some of the women shake their rattles and some of the men blow their pipes during the whole journey, while others sing and clap their hands. If they pass a town on the way, some of the women land and shout and jeer at the local women, while others dance and create a disturbance. They do this at every town on the Nile. When they arrive at Bubastis, they begin the festival with great sacrifices, and on this occasion, more wine is consumed than during the whole of the rest of the year."

Buto - "She Who is Green"

Cobra-goddess of Lower Egypt



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Buto

(Uatchit, Udjat, Wadjit, Edjo)

Symbols: cobra, Udjat, Red Crown and the cobra-headdress or *uraeus* worn by royalty.

Cult Center: Buto

Buto was a cobra-goddess whose original home and cult center was in the Delta of the Nile at Per-Uatchit. In time she became a prominent protectress of all of Lower Egypt. As such she was routinely connected to the goddess of Upper Egypt, Nekhebet. Together, they appeared in many pieces of art as symbols of the Two Lands, a united Egypt.

Buto did not just protect Egypt, she also was an aggressive defender of the king. She was portrayed as the *uraeus* cobra first worn on the brow of Re, and later the pharaohs'. Her hood is spread in a threatening position and she is ready to spit poison on all of the pharaoh's enemies or burn them with her fiery glare. It is thought perhaps that her powers could be used *against* the pharaoh as well. Her bite may have been the deadly device used by Anubis at the appointed time of the pharaoh's death.

Buto was a personification of the sun's burning heat and she was called the "Lady of Heaven" and the queen of all of the gods. She was closely associated with Horus the Elder, who was the protector god of Lower Egypt. Also she was associated with Harpocrates (Horus the Younger); she protected him from Seth in the marshes of the Delta while Isis was searching for the body of Osiris.

Buto was depicted in art as a woman wearing the *uraeus* or the Red Crown of Lower Egypt. She was shown carrying a papyrus stem around which was coiled a cobra. Sometimes she was shown as just a cobra coiled in a basket and wearing the crown of Lower Egypt.

Bat

Ancient celestial cow-goddess.



Bat

Bat is a very ancient goddess; the earliest evidence of her dates to the late Pre-Dynastic period. She was a cow-goddess of the sky with the power to see the past and into the future. This ability is referred to in the Pyramid Texts, where she was called "Bat, with her two faces."

The deceased pharaoh associated himself with Bat in this form. Later, she seemed to be the personification of the sistrum.

Bat was the chief deity for centuries in the 7th nome of Upper Egypt. During the Middle Kingdom, she was superseded by Hathor, who dominated the 6th nome - just next door.

Bat was not depicted very often in Egyptian artwork, however she was more commonly seen in amulets. She was shown as a woman with a human face, bovine ears and curly horns which emerged from her temples. She is most likely the cow-goddess seen at the top of the famous Narmer palette, which celebrated the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Bat is also famously seen on a unification pectoral in which she, as a sistrum, sits between Horus and Seth. Horus and Seth were the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt. Her image influenced the cult of Hathor.

Bes

Dwarf-god of music & warfare.



Bes

Symbols: Lion, knives, bells, drums

Cult Center: the private home; during the Greek Period, Abydos

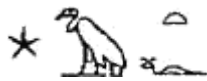
Bes was the god of music and dance, the god of war and slaughter, and a destroying force of nature. He was also a protector of children. Bes is most likely of equatorial African origin, although some think he is Semitic (Middle Eastern).

Bes was usually portrayed as a dwarf with a large head. He is bearded with his tongue sticking out. He has a flat nose, bushy eyebrows and hair, large projecting ears. Around his body, he wears the skin of an animal and its tail hangs down behind him and touches the ground. He wears on his head a tiara of feathers, suggesting an African origin. Sometimes he is shown in profile, but he is usually seen full face (highly unusual in Egyptian artistic conventions). As a god of music he is sometimes shown playing a harp. As a warrior he wears a short military tunic and holds a shield and a short sword.

One of the earliest portrayals of Bes is in the Temple of Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut was a female Pharaoh of the New Kingdom.

Duamutef - "Praising his Mother"

Protected stomach of the dead.



Duamutef

(Tuamutef, Golden Dawn, Thmoomathph)

Duamutef is one of the four sons of Horus, he was portrayed as a mummified jackal.

Horus (the elder) had numerous wives and children, and his 'four sons' were grouped together and generally said to be born of Isis. Duamutef was one. The other three were Imsety, Hapy and Qebehseuef. They were born from a lotus flower and were solar gods associated with the creation. They were retrieved from the waters of Nun by Sobek on the orders of Re. It was believed that Anubis gave them the funerary duties of mummification, the Opening of the Mouth, the burial of Osiris and all men. Horus later made them protectors of the four cardinal points (north, south, east and west). In the Hall of Ma'at they sat on a lotus flower in front of Osiris. Most commonly, however, they were remembered as the protectors of the internal organs of the deceased. Each son protected an organ, and each son was protected by a goddess.

Duamutef's role was to protect the stomach of the deceased and was the guardian of the East. He was protected by the goddess Neith.

Geb - "Earth"

God of the earth.



Geb

(Seb, Keb)

(Seb, Gebb, Keb, Kebb)

Symbols: goose, earth

Cult Center: Heliopolis

Geb was the son of Shu and Tefnut and the brother and husband of Nut. Through Nut he had four children, Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephthys.

Geb was the god of the earth. Even so, Geb guided the dead to heaven and he gave them meat and drink. It is interesting to note that while in most cultures the deity associated with the earth and it's bounty is a woman ("Mother Earth", Demeter of the Greeks, etc...), the Egyptians chose a male for this role.

A Late Period stele, the Phakussa stele, tells how Geb fell in love with his mother, Tefnut. He pined for her and traveled throughout Egypt until his father Shu, who was the king of Egypt, died. On that day, Geb went to his father's palace in Memphis and found Tefnut. He took his mother and violently raped her. It seems that he was not punished for this. He went on to become a mighty king and earned the exclusive title, "Heir of the Gods." Geb was so admired as a ruler, that the Egyptian throne was known by the epithet, "Seat of Geb."

He is usually shown as a man wearing either the crown of the North or of the South. Added is either the *Atef* crown or a goose. The goose was a sacred animal to Geb, as such he was sometimes called "The Great Cackler" It was said that Geb's laughter was the source of earthquakes.

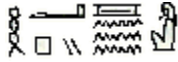


Other images show him lying underneath his wife (Nut, goddess of the sky) and his father (Shu, god of the air). He reclines on one elbow with a knee and arm in the air. In this way he symbolized the valleys and hills of the land, which was called "The House of Geb." He is shown either as a dark or green skinned man (the colors of life, the soil of the Nile and vegetation, respectively) with leaves on his skin.

The religious center of Geb seems to be Heliopolis (near Cairo), where he and Nut produced the Great Egg from which the Sun-god sprang.

Hapi - "Runner"

God of the Nile.



Hapi

(Hapy)

Symbols: running water

Hapi is the ancient Egyptian god of the Nile. He is ancient not only to us of the modern world, but to the Egyptians as well. In fact, "hep", the root of Hapi's name is probably an ancient name for the Nile.

Hapi was portrayed as a man with women's breasts and protruding belly. The full breasts and stomach indicate fertility and his ability to nourish the land through the Nile's annual floods.

Just as Egypt was divided into two parts (the north and the south) so was Hapi's domain, the Nile. As a god of the northern Nile, Hapi was depicted wearing papyrus plants, a symbol of Lower Egypt, on his head. In this form, he was called "Hap-Meht". The Nile-god of Upper Egypt was "Hap-Reset" and wore lotus plants (a symbol of the south) on his head. When an artist was attempting to portray Hapi as a god of the entire Nile, he holds both lotus and papyrus plants in his hands or two vases.

The female counterpart and wife of Hapi in the south was Nekhebet, who was a goddess of the south in general and portrayed as a vulture. The wife of the Hapi of the north was Buto, who was depicted as a cobra and the equivalent of Nekhebet in the south.

Osiris was originally a water or river god and eventually Hapi was identified with him. However, in his own right, Hapi was recognized as one of the greatest Egyptian gods and he was declared not only the maker of the universe, but the creator of everything from which it and all things sprang. Hapi was also associated with Nun, as the Nile's source was believed to be located somewhere in the watery chaos of Nun's domain.

Hapi had a certain mysteriousness about him. The Egyptians believed that the Nile rose out of the ground between two mountains (Qer-Hapi and Mu-Hapi) between the islands of Elephantine and Philae. However, the Egyptians had no clue how or why the Nile flooded each year. They believed that the gods Khnemu, Anqet, and Satet were the guardians of the source of the Nile. Their duty was to make sure that the right amount of silt was released during the yearly inundation. Hapi was in charge of the waters that flowed during the floods. The flood was commonly known as the "arrival of Hapi". The Egyptians would toss sacrifices, amulets and other offerings into the Nile at special places to appease Hapi and to ensure that he would provide an adequate inundation to water their fields.



Hathor - "House of Horus"

Cow-goddess of love & music.



Hathor

(Het-hert)

Symbols: cow, lioness, falcon, cobra, hippopotamus, sistrum, musical instruments, drums, pregnant women, mirrors, cosmetics

Cult Center: Dendera

The horned cow-goddess of love, she was also the deity of happiness, dance and music, and a protector of women. She is depicted as a cow, as a woman with the head of a cow, or as a woman with who wears the stylized cow-horns which hold in them the solar disk. Her symbols also included the papyrus reed, the snake and a rattle called a *sistrum*.

Early in Egyptian mythology she was known as Horus' mother (later Isis assumed this role). Proof of this is seen in her name, "Hathor" which means the "house of Horus". As the mother of Horus, the queen of Egypt was identified with her. This is natural, as the queen was the mother of the Pharaoh, the living Horus. Isis was often shown with cow-horns like Hathor's on her head when the artist wanted to emphasize her role as the mother of Horus.

It was said that when a child was born, Seven Hathors came to his bedside to announce his fate. The Seven Hathors were believed to know the future and the moment of death for every Egyptian. A person's destiny

depended on the hour of their death and the luck of ill-fortune was connected with it. It was believed that the Hathors would exchange a prince born to ill-fortune with a more fortunate child, therefore protecting the dynasty and the nation. The Hathors were shown as a group of young women playing tambourines and wearing the disk and horns of Hathor. During Ptolemaic times (when Greeks ruled over Egypt), they were identified with the Pleiades.

In the Story of Re, she was created by her father Re as "Sekhmet" as a destroyer of men, who were disobedient to him. Later Re changed his mind, but even he could not stop her from killing men. He then disguised beer as blood and when Sekhmet became drunk, she could no longer kill and was known thereafter as Hathor, a goddess of love.

Her cult was centered in Dendera where she was a goddess of fertility and childbirth. In Thebes she was seen as a goddess of the dead, and the Greeks identified her with Aphrodite (their goddess of love).

Heket



Heket

(Heqat)

Cult Center: Elephantine, Her-wer

Heket was the Egyptian frog-goddess of childbirth. She was depicted as a frog or a woman with the head of a frog. On temple walls she was typically in anthropomorphic form, while on amulets Heket was usually in animal form.

Heket was initially described in a magic spell (PT 1312) of the Pyramid Texts -- which was designed to enable the pharaoh to rise to the heavens.

Heket's association with childbirth was first clearly attributed with birth in the Westcar papyrus which dates to the Middle Kingdom. The text details the miraculous birth of the first three pharaohs of the 5th Dynasty. Heket hastened the final stages of labor and delivered the babies safely.

Pregnant women often wore amulets and scarabs featuring Heket to protect them during childbirth. She was often featured on ivory knives dating to the Middle Kingdom. These knives were used to magically protect the home. Midwives were called "servants of Heket."

Temple to her at Qus in Upper Egypt. In the tomb of Petosiris there is a text relating a story of how Heket led a procession in her honor to her temple at Her-wer and requests its restoration. Her cult center may have been in Her-wer, but this has not been proven. Heket was featured on the temple walls at Abydos receiving an offering of wine from Seti I.

Hapy - "Runner"

Guarded the lungs of the dead.



Hapy

(Hapi, Ahephi)

Hapy is one of the four sons of Horus, he was portrayed as a mummy with the head of a baboon.

Horus (the elder) had numerous wives and children, and his 'four sons' were grouped together and generally said to be born of Isis. Hapy was one. The other three were Imsety, Duamutef and Qebhsenuf. They were born from a lotus flower and were solar gods associated with the creation. They were retrieved from the waters of Nun by Sobek on the orders of Re. It was believed that Anubis gave them the funerary duties of mummification, the Opening of the Mouth, the burial of Osiris and all men. Horus later made them protectors of the four cardinal points (north, south, east and west). In the Hall of Ma'at they sat on a lotus flower in front of Osiris. Most commonly, however, they were remembered as the protectors of the internal organs of the deceased. Each son protected an organ, and each son was protected by a goddess.

Hapy's role was to protect the lungs of the deceased and was the guardian of the North. He was protected by the goddess Nephthys. He is sometimes confused with the Nile-god "Hapi".

Heh

God of infinity.



Heh

Heh was the god of infinity and formlessness. He was shown as a crouching man holding out two palm ribs in his hands, each of which terminated with a

tadpole and a *shen* ring. The *shen* ring was a traditional symbol of infinity. The palm ribs were symbols of the passage of time, in the temples they were notched to record cycles of time. The tadpole was a hieroglyph that represented the number 100,000.

The image of Heh himself with his arms raised was the hieroglyph for the number one million.

Heh was a member of the Ogdoad of Hermopolis. He and his consort Hauhet together were the aspects of formlessness and endlessness that existed in the universe prior to the Creation. In Hermopolis, he was depicted as a serpent.

Horus - "High, Above"



Horus

(Hor, Heru, Her)

Symbols: hawk/falcon, bull, Double Crown, Winged Disk, Udjat, Sphinx, weapons, iron, blacksmiths

Cult Center: Edfu, Buto and Heliopolis

Myths: *Isis and Osiris*

The falcon-headed god, the kings of Egypt associated themselves with Horus. Horus was among the most important gods of Egypt, particularly because the Pharaoh was supposed to be his earthly embodiment. Kings would eventually take the name of Horus as one of their own. At the same time, the Pharaohs were the followers of Re and so Horus became associated with the sun as well. To the people this solar deity became identified as the son of Osiris. Attempts to resolve the conflicts between these different gods in different parts of Egypt resulted in at least fifteen distinct forms of Horus. They can be divided fairly easily into two groups, solar and Osirian, based on the parentage of the particular form of Horus. If he is said to be the son of Isis, he is Osirian; otherwise he is a solar deity. The solar Horus was called the son of Atum, or Re, or Geb and Nut variously.

As **Harsiesis**, he is "Horus, the son of Isis". Horus was conceived magically by Isis following the murder of his father, Osiris. Horus was raised by his mother on the floating island of Chemmis near Buto. He was in constant danger from his evil uncle Seth but his mother protected him and he survived.

As a child, Horus was known as **Harpokrates**, "the infant Horus", and was



portrayed as a baby being suckled by Isis. He was said to be stunted from the waist down. This may be because his father was dead when he was conceived or perhaps because he was born prematurely. In later times he was affiliated with the newborn sun. Harpokrates is pictured as a child sucking his thumb and having his hair fashioned in a sidelock that symbolized his youth. On his head he wore the royal crown and *uraeus*. Also, in Egyptian art, such as the example to the right, Harpokrates is shown as a child with the sidelock of youth standing on crocodiles and holding in one hand scorpions and in the other hand snakes.

As **Harmakhis**, "Horus in the Horizon", he personified the rising sun and was associated with Khepera as a symbol of resurrection or eternal life. The Great Sphinx at the Giza Plateau is an example of this form of Horus.

Haroeris, "Horus the Elder", was one of the earliest forms of Horus and the patron deity of Upper (southern) Egypt. He was said to be the son, or sometimes the husband of Hathor. He was also the brother of Osiris and Seth. He became the conqueror of Seth (the patron of Lower Egypt) c. 3000 BCE when Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt and formed the united kingdom of Egypt. He was depicted as a falcon-headed man, sometimes wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Horus (the elder) had numerous wives and children, and his 'four sons' were grouped together and generally said to be born of Isis. The four were known as: Duamutef, Imsety, Hapi and Qebehsenuef. They were born from a lotus flower and were solar gods associated with the creation. They were retrieved from the waters of Nun by Sobek on the orders of Re. It was believed that Anubis gave them the funerary duties of mummification, the Opening of the Mouth, the burial of Osiris and all men. Horus later made them protectors of the four cardinal points. In the Hall of Ma'at they sat on a lotus flower in front of Osiris. Most commonly, however, they were remembered as the protectors of the internal organs of the deceased. Each son protected an organ, and each son was protected by a goddess.



Horus Behdety was a form of Horus the Elder that was worshipped originally in the western Delta at Behdet. As the son and heir of Re, Behdety was a form of Horus that was assimilated into the Heliopolitan system of beliefs yet not completely identified with Re. Behdety was a defender of Re during his earthly kingship against Seth. He was usually portrayed as a winged sun-disk or as a falcon hovering over the Pharaoh during battles. When shown as a falcon-headed man wearing the double crown he carries a falcon-headed staff, the weapon he used to defeat Seth.



Ihy - "Sistrum-Player"

Son of Hathor, god of jubilation

Ihy

Symbols: sistrum, *menet* necklace

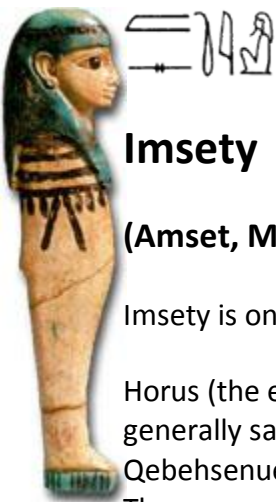
Cult Center: Dendara

Ihy was the child of the cow-goddess Hathor. He was depicted as a young naked boy wearing the sidelock of youth, and usually carrying a sistrum or *menet* necklace. Ihy's name means "sistrum-player" or "musician" and he was the personification of the jubilation experienced while playing Hathor's divine musical instruments.

At Hathor's temple in Dendara, Caesar Augustus built a *mammisi*, or birthing house. On the walls of the *mammisi* are scenes celebrating Ihy's conception and birth. In the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead, Ihy was called the "lord of bread" and said to be "in charge of beer." This has been interpreted to mean that Ihy was connected to religious offering and ritual celebrations of Hathor.

Imsety - "the Kindly One"

Guarded the liver of the dead.



Imsety

(Amset, Mestha, Golden Dawn, Ameshet)

Imsety is one of the four sons of Horus, he was portrayed as a mummified human.

Horus (the elder) had numerous wives and children, and his 'four sons' were grouped together and generally said to be born of Isis. Imsety was one. The other three were Duamutef, Hapy and Qebehseuef. They were born from a lotus flower and were solar gods associated with the creation.

They were retrieved from the waters of Nun by Sobek on the orders of Re. It was believed that Anubis gave them the funerary duties of mummification, the Opening of the Mouth, the burial of Osiris and all men. Horus later made them protectors of the four cardinal points (north, south, east and west). In the Hall of

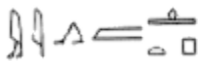
Ma'at they sat on a lotus flower in front of Osiris. Most commonly, however, they were remembered as the protectors of the internal organs of the deceased. Each son protected an organ, and each son was protected by a goddess.

Imsety's role was to protect the liver of the deceased and was the guardian of the South. He was protected by the goddess Isis.

main

Imhotep - "He Comes in Peace"

Vizier of Djoser; son of Ptah.



Imhotep

Cult Center: Memphis

Imhotep is one of the few Egyptian gods (other than the pharaohs) who was actually a real person. He was the vizier of Djoser, a pharaoh of the third dynasty. He was skilled in all areas of administration and royal enterprises. Imhotep was also a priest, writer, a doctor and a founder of the Egyptian studies of astronomy and architecture.



Imhotep was known perhaps best of all as the architect of the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, near Memphis. The Step Pyramid was the first structure created by human hands to be built entirely from stone.

It was as a wise man and scribe that Imhotep was first honored as a god. In the New Kingdom he was venerated as the patron of scribes. Scribes would pour a couple of drops of water in libation to him before beginning to write. During this time, this form of ancestor worship to Imhotep was privately practiced and his cult was similar to that of any of the dead (although more wide-spread). Also at that time, Imhotep was identified with Nefertem, the son of Ptah.

During the Late Dynastic Period when the capital of Egypt was moved to Sais, Imhotep was fully deified. He was called the son of Ptah and his mother was either Nut or Sekhmet. He was also associated with Thoth and became a patron of wisdom and medicine. Miraculous cures were often attributed to him. The Greeks identified him with Asclepius, their god of medicine and healing.

Imhotep was supposed to send sleep to those who were suffering or in pain. He was the physician to both the gods and men.

During the Ptolemaic Period, a small temple to Imhotep was built on the Island of Philae.

In art, Imhotep was portrayed as a priest with a shaven head, seated and holding a papyrus roll. Occasionally he was shown clothed in the archaic costume of a priest. He was not represented with divine insignias.

Isis - "the Throne"

Goddess of magic.



Isis


(Aset)

Symbols: *tiet* (the "Knot of Isis"), throne, kite, scorpion, sistrum

Myths: "Isis and Osiris", "Isis and the Seven Scorpions"

Cult Center: Heliopolis, Philae

Isis was the sister of Osiris (who was also her husband), Nephthys and Seth, the daughter of Nut and Geb and the mother of Horus the Child.

Isis is depicted as a woman wearing a vulture head-dress and the solar disk between a pair of horns (which is sometimes underneath the symbol of her name , the throne). Occasionally she wears the double-crowns of the North and the South with the feather of Ma'at, or a pair of ram's horns. Isis as a woman (not a goddess) is portrayed with the ordinary head-dress of a woman, but with the uraeus over her forehead.

As the wife of Osiris, Isis assisted her husband during his earthly reign. In the Pyramid Texts, allusions are made that indicate that Isis foresaw her husband's murder. Following his death, Isis tirelessly searched for his body so that he may be properly buried and may rest in peace in the Underworld. Through her magic, she brought Osiris back to life so that he could impregnate her with their son Horus.

Isis was a vital link between the gods and mankind. The pharaoh was her son, as the living Horus. In the Pyramid Texts the pharaoh suckles as Isis' divine breasts. There are numerous statues and imagery of Isis holding the young Horus in her lap. Often the images of the queen-mother and current pharaoh were styled in the same way. Isis protected Horus during his childhood from his uncle Seth who wished to murder him. It was her hope that he might one day grow up to avenge his father's murder.

In the *Book of the Dead*, Isis is regarded as the giver of life and food to the dead. She may also be one of the judges of the dead. Another of her roles was to protect Imsety, one of the four sons of Horus, as he guarded over the liver of the deceased.

Isis was a great magician and is famous for the use of her magical skills. For example, she created the first cobra and used its venomous bite to coerce Re into revealing his secret name.

From the beginning of Egypt's history to the end, Isis was the greatest goddess of Egypt. She was the beneficial goddess and mother whose love encompassed every living creature. Isis was also the purest example of the loving wife and mother and it was in this capacity that the Egyptian people loved her the most.

Her worship spread well beyond the borders of Egypt, as far away as England. The works of the classical writers identified her with Persephone, Tethys, Athene, etc, just as Osiris was associated with Hades, Dionysos and other foreign gods.

In fact, the early Christians deferred some of her attributes to the Virgin Mary. As a loving and protective mother, Isis appealed to the Eastern peoples who were familiar with her cult. The images of Isis suckling the Horus child undoubtedly inspired the multitude of icons showing the Madonna and Child.

Khepera - "Comes Into Being"

Beetle-god of the rising sun.



Khepera

(Khepra, Khepri)



Symbols: scarab beetle

Cult Center: Heliopolis

Links: Scarabaeus - a game in which you are a dung beetle.

Khepera is a form of the sun-god Re. Khepera was specifically the god of the rising sun. He was self-produced and usually depicted as a human with a beetle on his head, or sometimes with the beetle *as* his head. His name comes from the Egyptian word, *kheperer* or "to become".

Khepera is the manifestation of the rising sun. Khepera would roll the sun along the sky, much as the dung beetle rolls a ball of dung in front of him (sometimes the Khepera was also shown pushing the moon through the sky). This ball of dung is what it lays its eggs in. The beetle larvae eat the ball of dung after they hatch. The Egyptians would see the beetle roll a ball of dung into a hole and leave. Later, when many dung beetles emerged from the hole, it would seem as though they created themselves. Khepera also had this attribute of self-generation and self-renewal.



The particular dung beetle the Egyptians identified with Khepera was the *Scarabaeus sacer*.

Khonsu - "Traveler"

Theban god of the moon.



Khonsu

(Khensu, Khons)

Symbols: crescent moon, hawks, knives

Cult Center: Thebes

Myths: "the Princess of Bekhten"

Khonsu was a moon-god and the son of Amon-Re and Mut. His name derives from the root, "khens" which means *to travel, to move about, to run*. He was usually portrayed as a man with the head of a hawk and wearing the lunar disk. He was also shown as a child with the sidelock of youth.

Khonsu was a very old god of primitive times. Khonsu was associated with the moon and was considered a form of Thoth by the Thebens, and it was in Thebes that Ramses III built the "House of Khonsu in Thebes, Nefer-hetep"

It was said that when Khonsu caused the crescent moon to shine, women conceived, cattle became fertile, and all nostrils and every throat were filled with fresh air.

Khnemu - "Protector/Enricher"

God of the Nile inundation.



Khnemu



(Khnum)

Symbols: ram, potter's wheel

Cult Center: Elephantine, Esna

Myths: "the Seven Years Famine"

Khnemu was one of the oldest gods of Egypt. The Egyptians' views of him changed somewhat through Egyptian history. He always was an important god and he remained so even in some semi-Christian sects two to three centuries after the birth of Christ! His symbol was the flat-horned ram and was depicted as a ram-headed man who wears the White Crown on his head. Khnemu was originally a water-god, and as such he is shown with water flowing over his outstretched hands and wearing a jug on his head above his horns. His name comes from the root, *khnem*, "to build".

It was believed that he built the first egg from which the sun sprang. Khnemu also made the gods and he sculpted the first man on a potter's wheel and he continued to "build up" their bodies and maintain their life. Khnemu built up the material universe (with Ptah) under the guidance and direction of Thoth. As the architect, he had seven forms:

1. Khnemu Nehep, "Khnemu the Creator"
2. Khnemu Khenti-taii, "Khnemu, governor of the two lands"
3. Khnemu Sekhet ashsep-f, "Khnemu, weaver of his light"
4. Khnemu Khenti per-ankh, "Khnemu, governor of the House of Life"
5. Khnemu Neb-ta-ankhtet, "Khnemu, lord of the Land of Life"
6. Khnemu Khenti netchemtchem ankhet, "Khnemu, Governor of the House of Sweet Life"
7. Khnemu Neb, "Khnemu, Lord"

Khnemu was worshiped from Thebes to Philae, but the principal sanctuaries were at the First Cataract (Elephantine and Philae).

Ma'at - "Truth"

Goddess of order & truth.



Ma'at

(Mayet)

Symbols: ostrich feather, scales, 

Ma'at was the goddess of the physical and moral law of Egypt, of order and truth. She said to be the wife of Thoth and had eight children with him. The most important of

her children was Amon. These eight were the chief gods of Hermopolis and according to the priests there, they created the earth and all that is in it.

Ma'at is depicted in the form of a woman seated or standing. She holds the sceptre in one hand and the *ankh* in the other. A symbol of Ma'at was the ostrich feather and she is always shown wearing it in her hair. In some pictures she has a pair of wings attached to her arms. Occasionally she is shown as a woman with an ostrich feather for a head.

Another symbol of Ma'at is the primeval mound (◻) upon which the creator god stood at the beginning of time. It was when the world was created and chaos was eliminated that the principles of Ma'at were set in place. The Egyptians believed that if the pharaoh ever failed to live by and maintain *ma'at* that chaos would return to Egypt and the world and all would be destroyed. Thus, the pharaohs of Egypt saw it as their cosmic role to uphold the principles of Ma'at, and was due to Ma'at that the pharaohs had the authority to rule the land. Amenhotep stated that *ma'at* was placed upon his breast by Amon himself. Akhenaten, the "heretic" king who was accused of deviating from her laws by his successors, repeatedly emphasized his adherence to Ma'at on many of his monuments.

When the dead were judged, it is was the feather of Ma'at that their hearts were weighed against. If hearts of the deceased are as "light as a feather", they were granted eternal life in the *Duat*. The near-weightlessness of their hearts indicated that their souls were not burdened with sin and evil. If their hearts did not "measure up", the soul of the deceased was consumed by Ammut. This judgement occurred in the "Hall of the Two Truths", *Maaty*.

The last role of Ma'at was to help guide the Sun-god Re as he made his journey across the skies. It was she that determined the course that his boat took across the sky each day. It was sometimes said that she actually traveled in his boat with him, guiding its direction.

Meshkhent - "Birthing Place"

Brick-goddess of childbirth.



Meshkhent

(Meshknenet, Meshkhenit)

In ancient Egypt, women squatted upon a pair of bricks when delivering their babies. Meshkhent was personified as a female head on top of a birth brick. She was a goddess who presided over and assisted with childbirth. Alternately, Meshkhent was shown as a woman with the symbol of a cow's uterus on her head.

After bringing a baby safely into the world, Meshkhent decided the future of the child. In a famous myth, Meshkhent was present at the birth of three brothers - triplets - and foretold that each would become Pharaoh. These three babies grew up to be Pharaohs Userkaf, Sahure and Neferirkare; the first three kings of the 5th Dynasty. Meshkhent was also assisted at the birth of Queen Hatshupsut and predicted her glorious future. Meshkhent was said to be the consort of Shay, the god of fate.

Meshkhent was primarily associated with the birth of mortal babies, while the goddess Heqet was more closely associated with the births of royal and divine births.

Like other deities associated with birth, Meshkhent was also influential in the re-birth of people following death. She was often depicted in the Hall of Judgement, near the scales where the deceased's heart was weighed against the feather of truth. At the Judgement, Meshkhent would testify on behalf of the deceased and his good character.

Mut - "Mother"

Theban mother-goddess



Mut

Symbols: Double Crown, vulture, cobra, lioness, queen

Cult Center: Thebes

Her name means "mother" and in many ways she was regarded by the Egyptians as the great "world mother," and mother of the pharaohs.

It appears that Mut was originally the female counterpart of Nun. However, in Thebes she replaced Amaunet to become the wife of the great god Amon. Her son was the local god of the moon, Khonsu. Together, the three formed the triad of Thebes that would dominate Egypt during the New Kingdom.

Mut is one of the few goddesses who were self-created. She was called, "Mut, who giveth birth, but was herself not born of any."

The goddess is usually portrayed as a woman wearing the united crowns (or Double Crown) of the North and the South. In her hands she holds the papyrus scepter and the emblem of life, *ankh*. Other images show her as a woman standing upright. Her arms are stretched out at 90 degree angles to her body and have large wings

attached to them. The feather of Ma'at is at her feet. Some portraits depict Mut with the heads of a man, a woman, a vulture and a lioness. She has a phallus, a pair of wings and the claws of a lion. The center of her worship was a quarter of Thebes called Asher (Ashrel, Ashrelt, Isheru). Her temple, Het-Mut, was just south of that of Amen-Ra

Meretseger - "Loves Silence"

Goddess of the Valley of the Kings.



Meretseger


(Mertseger)

Cult Center: Thebes

Meretseger was the goddess of the Valley of the Kings, the famous necropolis outside of Thebes. She was believed to live in a pyramid-shaped mountain that rose a thousand feet above the Valley of the Kings. In ancient times, the mountain was named after her. She was also called "Dehenet Imentet", which means "Peak of the West".

During the New Kingdom, Meretseger was the chief deity over the Valley of the Kings. For the tomb builders living in their village, now known as Deir el-Medina, Meretseger was a dangerous, yet merciful, goddess who would punish sinners and liars with blindness and snakebites. She was described as the lion of the summit, for she was fierce in her pursuit of sin. For the pious, she was a protective being who defended the workers against snakebites. The workmen of Deir el-Medina dedicated many stelae to her. Her cult declined rapidly after the 21st Dynasty, as the Valley of the Kings was abandoned.

Meretseger was portrayed as a coiled snake, or as a cobra-headed woman. Her name means, "She Who Loves Silence."

 **Mihos** - "True Before Them"

Lion-god, son of Bastet.

Mihos

(Maahes, Mahes, Mios, Miysis)

Symbols: lion, knives, lotuses

Cult Center: Leontopolis

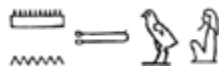
Mihos was a lion-god and the son of Bastet. He was depicted as a lion or a lion-headed man. When shown as a lion-headed man, Mihos would wear a short kilt and any one of a number of headdresses. He would often be shown holding a knife and with a bouquet of lotuses near him.

He helped Re in the daily battle against Apep. Mihos was a god of war and a patron of sacred places. A late Greek text described him as a god of storms and darkness.

Mihos was the local god of Leontopolis (Taremu) in Nome 11 of Lower Egypt. The ancient buildings have not been well preserved, and there is some debate on the age of the temple ruins. There may have been a temple to Mihos in Leontopolis as early as the 18th Dynasty. Osorkon III built a temple was built for him in the 23rd dynasty in Bubastis (the sacred town of Bastet).

Montu - "Nomad"

Egyptian god of war.



Montu

(Mont, Monthu, Mentu, Menthu)

Symbols: weapons, bulls, falcons

Cult Center: Hermonthis

Montu was the falcon-headed god of war. He was called the "lord of Thebes" even though his chief seat of worship was 10 miles to the south in Hermonthis. Hermonthis was the capital of the Theban nome.

Montu was portrayed as a falcon-headed man wearing a headdress consisting of the sun-disc encircled by the *uraeus* topped by two plumes. In his hands he would hold various weaponry, including the schimtar, bows and arrows, and knives.

Early in Theban history, Montu was an important and prominent god. Later when Amon rose in popularity, Montu became overshadowed and was incorporated into the Theban worship of Amon. He was sometimes

shown with a bull's head during this period. He was said to be the destructive element of the sun's heat. Also, Montu was said to slay the sun's enemies from the prow of the night-boat of the sun.

During the 11th Dynasty, Montu was particularly powerful. Four kings in this period were named after him as Mentuhotep.

In all periods, Montu's warrior aspect was evident. He was almost always shown carrying a weapon of some sort and even slaying the enemies of Egypt. In the famous narrative of the Battle of Kadesh, Rameses II was said to have seen the enemy and "raged at them like Montu, Lord of Thebes."

Nefertem - "Lotus"

Memphis god of the lotus.



Nefertem

Symbols: lotus, perfume

Cult Center: Memphis

Nefertem was an ancient sun-god of Lower Egypt. He was important to various creation myths. Nefertem was associated with the young boy (Atum) who emerged from the lotus of Nun at the beginning of time. It was this boy that shed the tears from which all of mankind emerged. Due to this relationship, Nefertem was often called "the young Atum".

The lotus from which Nefertem emerged was sacred to him from the earliest times. He was almost always depicted as a man wearing the lotus and two plumes on his head. It was said that Nefertem brought Re a sacred lotus to ease his suffering.

Nefertem was a member of the holy triad of Memphis. He was the son of the god Ptah and the goddess Sekhmet. In Buto, he was called the son of the cobra-goddess Buto.

In art, Nefertem was usually portrayed as a man wearing the lotus and two feathers on his head, sometimes this elaborate headdress also included two *menet* necklaces. Occasionally, Nefertem was also shown as a lion-headed man.

Nekhebet - "She of Nekheb"

Vulture-goddess of Upper Egypt.



Nekhebet

(Nekhbet)

Symbols: vulture, White Crown

Cult Center: Nekheb

Nekhebet was the vulture-goddess of Upper Egypt whose cult center was the city of Nekheb. She was a protective deity of the south along with Seth. When Seth became disgraced as the murderer of Osiris, she became more important and prominent.

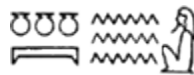
Nekhebet was often shown with Buto, the cobra-goddess of the North. As protective deities, they symbolized a united Egypt and guarded the pharaoh. Nekhebet was often shown with her wings spread above the pharaoh in a protective and almost motherly gesture of protection.

Nekhebet was called the right eye of Re, and the wife of Hapi or Khenti-Amentiu, the First of the Westerners.

Nekhebet was portrayed in art as a vulture or as a woman wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt. In her hands she holds a lotus flower with a cobra wrapped around it and an *ankh*.

Nun - "Abyss"

God of the primordial waters.



Nun

(Nu)

Cult Center: Hermopolis

Links: the Ennead of Heliopolis

Despite all the various Creation myths that the Egyptians subscribed to, they had one thing in common, Nun. Even though the myths named different gods as the original creator, they all agreed that he sprang from Nun, the primordial waters. Nun was more than an ocean, he was a limitless expanse of motionless water. Even after the world was created, Nun continued to exist at its margins and would one day return to destroy it and begin the cycle again.

Following the creation, Nun played a role in the destruction of mankind when humans no longer respected and obeyed Re in his old age. Re called together all the gods and goddesses together, including Nun, and asked them what he should do about the problem. Nun suggested that Re should call forth his Eye to destroy mankind. Re did so, and his Eye, in the form of the goddess Sekhmet traveled across Egypt killing all men. Also, Nun protected Shu and Tefnut at birth and he kept the demonic powers of chaos (represented as serpents) in check.

Nun was portrayed as a bearded man with a blue or green body, symbolizing water and fertility. Sometimes he is shown with female breasts as well. In one hand he holds a palm frond, a symbol of long life and wears another one in his hair.

Neith - "One Who Is"

Goddess of war & weaving.



Neith

(Nit, Neit, Net)

Symbols: bows and arrows, shields and weapons, Red Crown, weaving shuttle

Cult Center: Sais, Esna

Neith is one of the oldest Egyptian goddesses. Early in Egyptian history she was honored throughout Egypt. Later on, she was mostly recognized in her cult center of Sais.

She was sometimes depicted as a woman wearing the crown of the north and holding either a sceptre or a bow and two arrows. At other times she was shown as a woman wearing a shuttle (a tool used in weaving) on her head.

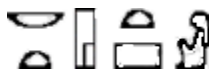
It is believed that she was originally a goddess of war (due to the bow and arrows imagery) and may have become later a goddess of weaving (when wearing the shuttle). She was occasionally shown suckling a crocodile who represented her son, Sobek. She was self-produced and the Egyptians believed she was of both a masculine and feminine nature. It was said that Neith gave birth to Re while she was still in the waters of Nun. Neith was the protectress of Duamutef, the guardian of the deceased's stomach.

During the dispute between Seth and Horus for the throne of Egypt, the gods could not decide how to resolve the issue. They sent a letter to Neith requesting her advice. She suggested that Horus be made king and Seth be given two Semetic goddesses as consolation. All the gods (but Seth) agreed with the wisdom of her solution.

Her largest temple, Sapi-meht, was located at Sais, the capital of the fifth nome of Lower Egypt. In Upper Egypt, she was portrayed with the head of a lioness. Here her husband was Khnemu, the ram-headed creation god of the First Cataract, and her son was Tutu. Tutu was a form of the god Shu.

Nephthys - "Mistress of the House"

Sister of Isis & wife of Seth.



Nephthys

(Nebt-het, Nebhet)

Symbols: kite, crow, bones and skulls

Cult Center: Heliopolis

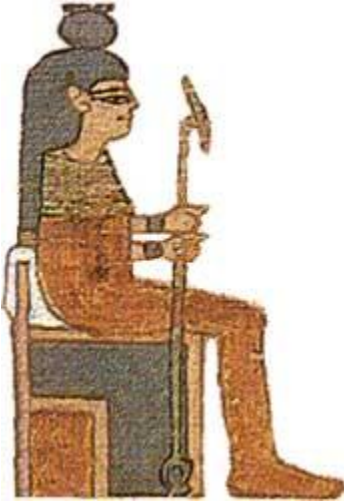
Nephthys was the daughter of Geb and Nut and the sister of Osiris, Isis and Seth. She was also the wife of Seth. The name "Nebt-het" means the "lady of the house." By "house" it is understood to be the portion of the sky where Horus lived. Nephthys was portrayed as a woman wearing on her head the symbol of her name, or the symbol on top of a pair of horns.

Her son was Anubis, whose father was Osiris. Some myths say that Nephthys intoxicated Osiris and seduced him, thus creating Anubis. Yet others say that she disguised herself as her sister Isis, Osiris' wife, and became pregnant by him. It was Nephthys' affair with Osiris which enraged Seth and was one of his motives for murdering Osiris.

Since the earliest of times, Nephthys was considered to be Seth's counterpart and wife. She was always associated with him. Even so, she was depicted as the loyal friend and sister to Isis. It was Nephthys who helped Isis search for and rebuild Osiris' body. One of her roles was to protect Hapy, one of the four sons of Horus, as he guarded over the lungs of the deceased.

Nut - "Sky"

Goddess of the sky.



Nut

(Nuit)

Symbols: stars, the night sky, cows

Cult Center: Heliopolis

The goddess Nut was the daughter of Shu and Tefnut and the wife of Geb, the earth god. She was the goddess of the daytime sky and the place where clouds formed. In later periods, she was no longer the goddess of the daytime sky, but

of the sky in general.

The goddess was typically portrayed as a woman who wears on her head a vase of water ☉. Many times she is shown as a woman whose hands and feet touch the ground so that her body forms a semi-circle. As such she represents the heavens. Her arms and legs represent the four pillars on which the sky rests. She is held up by her father Shu (the god of the air). Her husband Geb lies on the ground reclining on one elbow and his knees in the air. In this position he depicts the hills and valleys of the land. It was said that when Shu raised Nut (the sky) above Geb (the earth) he brought an end to chaos and if he ever left this position, chaos would return.



In one myth Nut gives birth to the Sun-god daily and he passes over her body until he reaches her mouth at sunset. He then passed into her mouth and through her body and is reborn the next morning. Another myth described the sun as sailing up her legs and back in the Atet (Matet) boat until noon, when he entered the Sektet boat and continued his travels until sunset.

Nut had four children with Geb. Osiris and his wife Isis, along with Seth and his wife Nephthys. The circumstances of their births is described in the *The Story of Re*. They were born on the five epagomenal days of the year (in Egyptian, "the five days over the year"). Every year these days were celebrated throughout Egypt.

1. Osiris, this day was considered unlucky
2. Horus the Elder, this day was described as either lucky or unlucky
3. Seth, considered an unlucky day
4. Isis, lucky day, called "a beautiful festival of heaven and earth."
5. Nephthys, unlucky day

Onuris - "Sky-Bearer"

Warrior and sky-god of Abydos.



Onuris

(Anhur, Onouris)

Cult Center: This, Sebennytos, Abydos

Symbols: plumes, spears and weaponry

Onuris was a warrior sky-god whose primary cult center was near Abydos. Onuris was often identified with the sky god Shu and was called the "son of Re. His name meant "He Brought Back the Distant One" (an alternate translation is "Sky-Bearer"). This is a reference to the myth in which Shu, as Onuris, retrieved Tefnut when she ran away to Nubia. Onuris' consort, Mekhit, was often identified with Tefnut, and both goddesses were portrayed as lioness-headed women.

With Shu's solar connection, Onuris became seen as a warrior aspect of the sun-god Re. He was depicted in Egyptian artwork as a bearded, spear-wielding man. He was often shown with his one of both of his arms upraised and prepared to strike at the enemies of Egypt. Onuris wore an embroidered robe and a crown with four high plumes.

As a warrior god, Onuris was identified with Horus. Onuris was seen as a protector of the people against enemies, evil spirits and pests. At festivals honoring him, mock battles were staged.

He became very popular during the New Kingdom. He was called "Savior", and the common people believed that he was a deliverer from their human burdens. His Egyptian name was "Anhur" and the Greeks called him Onuris. The Greeks associated him with their god of war, Ares. Following the fall of the New Kingdom, he remained very popular. During the Roman Era the Emperor Tiberius was depicted on the walls of Egyptian temples wearing the distinctive four-plumed crown of Onuris.

Osiris - "He Sees the Throne"

Lord of the afterlife.



Osiris

(Asar, Wesir, Ausar, Unnefer)

Symbols: crook and flail, *djed*, White and Atef Crowns, bull, mummified form, throne, Bennu (phoenix)

Cult Center: Abydos, Busiris and Heliopolis

Myths: "Isis and Osiris"

A god of the earth and vegetation, Osiris symbolized in his death the yearly drought and in his miraculous rebirth the periodic flooding of the Nile and the growth of grain. He was a god-king who was believed to have given Egypt civilization.

Osiris was the first child of Nut and Geb, and therefore the brother of Seth, Nephthys, and Isis. He was married to his sister, Isis. He was also the father of Horus and Anubis. These traditions state that Nephthys (mother of Anubis) assumed the form of Isis, seduced him (perhaps with wine) and she became pregnant with Anubis.



The oldest religious texts refer to Osiris as the great god of the dead, and throughout these texts it is assumed that the reader will understand that he once possessed human form and lived on earth. As the first son of Geb, the original king of Egypt, Osiris inherited the throne when Geb abdicated. At this time the Egyptians were barbarous cannibals and uncivilized. Osiris saw this and was greatly disturbed. Therefore, he went out among the people and taught them what to eat, the art of agriculture, how to worship the gods, and gave them laws. Thoth helped him in many ways by inventing the arts and sciences and giving names to things. Osiris was Egypt's greatest king who ruled through kindness and persuasion. Having civilized Egypt, Osiris traveled to other lands, leaving Isis as his regent, to teach other peoples what he taught the Egyptians.

During Osiris' absence, Isis was troubled with Seth's plotting to acquire both her and the throne of Egypt. Shortly after Osiris' return to Egypt, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, on the seventeenth day of the month of Hathor (late September or November), Seth and 72 conspirators murdered him. They then threw the coffin in which he was murdered into the Nile, with his divine body still inside.

Isis, with the help of her sister Nephthys, and Anubis and Thoth, magically located Osiris' body. Upon learning the his brother's body was found, Seth went to it and tore it into fourteen pieces and scattered them throughout Egypt. Isis once again found every part of his body, save his phallus (it had been eaten by the now-cursed Nile fish). She magically re-assembled Osiris and resurrected him long enough to be impregnated by him so that she could give birth to the new king Horus.

Seth of course was not willing to surrender the throne of Egypt to the youthful Horus and thus a tribunal of gods met to decide who was the rightful king. The trial lasted eighty years. Eventually through Isis' cunning she won the throne for her son.

Osiris meanwhile had become the king of the Afterlife. He was believed to be willing to admit all people to the Duat, the gentle, fertile land in which the righteous dead lived, that had lived a good and correct life upon earth, and had been buried with appropriate ceremonies under the protection of certain amulets, and with

the proper recital of certain "divine words" and words of power. His realm was said to lie beneath Nun, in the northern heavens or in the west.

It is as the King of the Afterlife that Osiris gained his supreme popularity. He was originally a minor god of Middle Egypt, especially in comparison to the gods of Heliopolis and Hermopolis, etc. Noting his increasing popularity, and sensing that Osiris would one day eclipse the adoration of their own gods, the priests of these cities adopted him into their own cosmogonies.

The elements of his story was seen as symbolic of real events that happened in Egypt. With his original association to agriculture, his death and resurrection were seen as symbolic of the annual death and re-growth of the crops and the yearly flooding of the Nile. The sun too with its daily re-birth and death was associated with Osiris. His rivalry with his brother Seth, the god of storms and the desert, was symbolic of the eternal war between the fertile lands of the Nile Valley and the barren desert lands just beyond. The pharaoh of Egypt was called Horus, while his deceased father was the new Osiris.

Several festivals during the year were held in Egypt, in celebration of Osiris. One, held in November, celebrated his beauty. Another, called the "Fall of the Nile" was a time of mourning. As the Nile receded, the Egyptians went to the shore to give gifts and show their grief over his death. When the Nile began to flood again, another festival honoring Osiris was held whereby small shrines were cast into the river and the priests poured sweet water in the Nile, declaring that the god was found again.

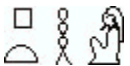
The name "Osiris" is the Greek corruption of the Egyptian name "Asar" (or Usar.) There are several possibilities as to what this name means, "the Strength of the Eye", is one. Another is "He Sees the Throne". The oldest and simplest form of the name is the hieroglyph of the throne over an eye (there are at least 158 versions of the name). At one point the first syllable of the name was pronounced "Aus" or "Us" and may have gained the meaning of the word *usr*, "strength, might, power". At this time the Egyptians supposed the name to mean something like the "strength of the Eye" (i.e., the strength of the Sun-god Re.)

Another possibility raised by an ancient hymn's author is that the name "Unnefer" (another name by which Osiris was known) comes from the roots *un* ("to open, to appear, to make manifest") and *neferu*, ("good things"). The author then wrote these lines in his hymn to the god, "Thy beauty maketh itself manifest in thy person to rouse the gods to life in thy name Unnefer". In any case, even to the ancients, the origin of Osiris' Egyptian name is a mystery.

Osiris was usually portrayed as a bearded, mummified human with green skin and wearing the *atef* crown. His hands emerge from the mummy wrappings and hold the flail and crook.

Ptah - "Creator"

Mummified creator god.



Ptah

Symbols: Architect's transit, level, plumb-line, bricks, djed

Cult Center: Memphis

Ptah was the chief god of the ancient city of Memphis. He was a creator god who brought all things to being by thinking of them with his mind and saying their names with his tongue. He was unique amongst Egyptian creation gods in that his methods were intellectual, rather than physical. According to the priests of Memphis, everything is the work of Ptah's heart and tongue: gods are born, towns are founded, and order is maintained.

Ptah was also the patron god of skilled craftsmen and architects. This may be due to the excellent sources of limestone near his temple in Memphis. As a craftsman, Ptah was said to have carved the divine bodies of the royalty. In Dynasty XIX, he was shown fashioning the body of Rameses II out of electrum.

In the artisan's community of Deir-el-Medina, near Western Thebes, Ptah was especially venerated. He was believed to determine the individual destiny of the artists there.

Craftsmen carved stelaes dedicated to their god. Ears were often carved on these stelaes to encourage Ptah to take notice of their prayers. In fact, one of Ptah's titles at Thebes was, "the ear which hears."

In Memphis, Ptah was part of a holy triad. His wife was the lioness-goddess Sekhmet, and his son was said to be either Imhotep or Nefertem.

Ptah is depicted as a bearded man wearing a skullcap and shrouded as a mummy. His hands emerge from wrappings in front of his body and hold the *was* sceptre, an *ankh* (hieroglyph meaning "Life") and a Djed (sign of stability).



Qebhsenuf - "Brother's Cooler"

Protected intestines of the dead.



QebhsenuEf

(Kabexnuf, Qebsneuf)

Qebhsenuf is one of the four sons of Horus, he was portrayed as a mummified falcon.

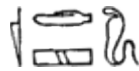
Horus (the elder) had numerous wives and children, and his 'four sons' were grouped together and generally said to be born of Isis. Qebhsenuf was one. The other three were Imsety, Hapy and Duamutef. They were born from a lotus flower and were solar gods associated with the creation. They were retrieved from the waters of Nun by Sobek on the orders of Re. It was believed that Anubis gave them the funerary duties of mummification, the Opening of the Mouth, the burial of Osiris and all men. Horus later made them protectors of the four cardinal points (north, south, east and west). In the Hall of Ma'at they sat on a lotus flower in front of Osiris. Most commonly, however, they were remembered as the protectors of the internal organs of the deceased. Each son protected an organ, and each son was protected by a goddess.

Qebhsenuf's role was to protect the intestines of the deceased and was the guardian of the West. He was protected by the goddess Selket.

Qetesh - "Holy"



Semetic nature goddess.



Qetesh

(Qadesh)

Qetesh is a goddess of Semetic origin. She was worshipped as a nature goddess, and a goddess of sacred ecstasy and sexual pleasure. Her cult became popular in Egypt during the New Kingdom. Qetesh's sexuality led to a natural association with the Egyptian goddess Hathor.

In early portrayals she is shown as a naked woman standing upon a lion. On her head is the crescent moon and disk. Later interpretations show Qetesh again on the lion, but with the headdress of Hathor, wearing a deep necklace and a tight-fitting dress which extends to her ankles. Her hands hold symbols of eroticism and fertility. In her right hand she holds lotus flowers and in her left, two snakes. Like Bes (and contrary to Egyptian artistic convention), Qetesh is always pictured full-face.

Qetesh was part of a triad with the child, Min, and her husband, Reshep (who, like her, was another foreign god).

Re - "Sun"

Creator god of the sun.



Re

(Ra)

Symbols: Bennu (phoenix), obelisk, pyramid, Udjat (Eye of Horus), sun, falcon, bull

Cult Center: Heliopolis

Myths: "the Story of Re"

The sun god of Annu (Heliopolis, near modern-day Cairo), he became a state deity in the Fifth Dynasty. Some traditions made him the creator of men, and the Egyptians called themselves "the cattle of Re".

His name is thought to mean "creative power", and as a proper name "Creator". Very early in Egyptian history, Re was identified with Horus, who as a falcon-god represented the loftiness of the skies. He was represented as a hawk-headed man or as a hawk. A combination of the two, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, "Re, who is Horus of the Horizons" showed the two as manifestations of the singular Solar Force.

Re was the father of Shu and Tefnut, grandfather of Nut and Geb, great-grandfather of Osiris, Seth, Isis, Nephthys and great-great-grandfather of Horus.

Seeing as that the sun was a fire, the Egyptians believed that in order to travel through the waters of heaven and the underworld, one required a boat and so Re traveled in one. In the day, the boat was a great galley known as "Madjet" ("becoming strong") that rose in the east from behind "Manu" the mountain of sunrise and passed between two sycamores. As the sun set the boat Re used was a small barge called "Semektet" ("becoming weak").

The course that the boat took was determined by the goddess Ma'at. During his travels he had plenty of company. Several gods took the journey with him and their job was to help navigate the boat and thus make its passage successful. Thoth and Ma'at stood on either side of Horus, who steered the boat and was also apparently the captain of the ship. In front of the boat swam two pilot fishes known as "Abtu" and "Ant". Other passengers include: Geb, Hu, Sia (intelligence) and Hike (magic). At night the god Upuaut (the Opener of Ways) stood at the prow.

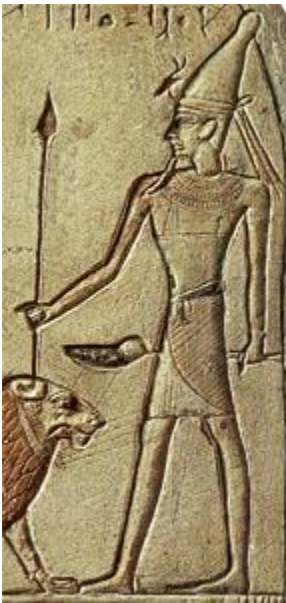
The journey was not an easy one though. Monsters would constantly try to stop the boat. Among these were Sebau, Nak, and Apep. Apep was the most powerful of these. He was a personification of darkness and Re had to fight him successfully every morning before he could rise from the east. Apep was pictured as a serpent or as a crocodile. Alternately, either Thoth or Seth defended the barque against him. When Apep was successful, stormy weather would ensue. A solar eclipse occurred when Apep actually swallowed the barque. There was a

book written about Apep called *The Book of Overthrowing Apep* which gives spells and information on how to defeat him. These spells were recited daily in the temple of Amon-Re in Thebes.

In later periods when Isis and Osiris overtook him in popularity, he remained "Re retjer-aa neb-pet" ("Re, the great God, Lord of Heaven") whether worshipped in his own right or later on, as half the Lord of the Universe, Amon-Re.

Reshep - "Lightning"

Warrior-god of storms.



Reshep

(Reshpu, Reshef)

Symbols: gazelle

Cult Center: Memphis

Reshep was a god of Syrian origin whose worshipped in Egypt was established as early as the 18th Dynasty of the New Kingdom. Reverence of Reshep extended as far away as Spain. In Egypt, Reshep was considered a god of war and pestilence. As such, Reshep was associated with Montu, Egypt's native god of war.

Reshep was also a protector of royalty. A stela erected near the Great Sphinx at Giza by Pharaoh Amenhotep II shows Reshep rejoicing at the then-Crown Prince's diligence in looking after his horses. However, Reshep's powers, especially against pestilence, extended beyond royal circles. Magical text included spells that call upon Reshep, and his wife Itum, to destroy the Akha demon which causes abdominal pains. He was also worshipped as a god who answers prayers.

Reshep was part of triad that included his wife, Qetesh, the Semetic goddess of love, and their child, Min.

Reshep was portrayed as a man who wears the White Crown, with a gazelle instead of the *uraeus* cobra at his brow. Long ribbons steamed from the back of Reshep's crown. In his right hand, Reshep carried a weapon, usually a spear, mace, axe or sickle. In his left hand, he held a shield, a *was* sceptre or the *ankh*. Reshep was frequently depicted with a Syrian-style beard.

Renenutet - "Nourishing Snake "

Goddess of the harvest.

Satet - "One Who Shoots"

Goddess of the Nile & fertility



Satet

(Sati, Satis)

Cult Center: Elephantine

Satet was the principal female counterpart of Khnemu and was worshipped with him at Elephantine (Abu). She was the mother of the goddess, Anqet.

Her name comes from the root, *sat* (to shoot, to eject, to pour out, to throw). With her arrows, she protected the pharaoh. Further, in the Pyramid Texts, Satet is described as cleansing the king with four jars of water from Elephantine.

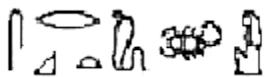
Satet was the goddess of the inundation (yearly flooding of the Nile) and of fertility. She was also connected with the star "Sept" whose return to the night sky marked the beginning of the flood season.

Satet's temple in Elephantine was one of the principal holy places in Egypt. The center of her worship was in the island of Sahal, two miles south of Elephantine.



Selket - "She Who Breathes"

Scorpion goddess of magic.



Selket

(Selqet, Serket, Serqet)

Symbols: Scorpion

Selket was the goddess of scorpions and magic. She was depicted in the form of a woman with a scorpion on her head.

Her roles in Egyptian mythology were many, mostly as a beneficial goddess. She watched over Qebhsenuf, one of the four sons of Horus, who in turn protected the intestines of the deceased. Other connections with the afterlife include her epithet, "Lady of the Beautiful Tent" which referred to her as a protector of the embalmer's tent. In the Afterlife she was said to watch over a dangerous twist in a pathway. She was also credited with guarding the snake, Apep following his imprisonment in the Underworld.

Selket was also associated with childbirth and nursing. Contrary to her typical beneficial characterization, she was also related to the sun's scorching heat. In the *Book of the Dead*, she is a protector of the deceased and his teeth are identified with hers.

Magically, Selket was a protector from venomous bites. She was the patroness of magicians who dealt with poisonous bites. Surprisingly though, it was usually Isis who was invoked in spells against scorpion stings.



Seshat - "Lady Scribe"

Goddess of measurement.



Seshat

(Seshet, Sesheta)

Symbols: seven-pointed star or flower atop a pole, palm branch, writing pen and palette, papyrus scrolls and books

Seshat was an ancient goddess of writing and measurement. She was also the patroness of mathematics, architecture and record-keeping. Though she shared these duties with her husband, Thoth, Seshat was primarily a royal goddess. As early as the Dynasty II, Seshat was shown with the pharaoh stretching a cord to measure the dimensions of a new temple. To grant the king immortality, she recorded the name of the king of the leaves of the Tree of Life, which grew near where she lived. Also, she calculated the days of the king's earthly life and marked the number on the notched palm branch which she carried.

Throughout Egypt's history, Seshat was shown recording the number of captives and other booty taken during the king's military campaigns. She also recorded the goods brought back to Egypt from Punt during Hatshepsut's famous expedition.

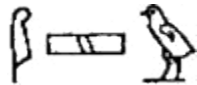


Seshat was portrayed as a woman wearing a dress and the priestly leopard skin. In her hands she holds the notched palm branch or the scribe's pen and palette. On her head she wears her headdress which resembles a star or flower atop a pole or a bow.

Seshat carried many titles, such as "Lady of Builders", "Mistress of Books", and "Foremost in the Library".

Shu - "Dry"

God of the air.



Shu

Symbols: ostrich feathers, wind, flags, lion

Cult Center: Heliopolis

His name means "dry, parched, withered." He was associated with the heat of the sunlight and the dryness of the air. Shu considered the god of the space and light between the sky and the earth. Shu was believed to also hold power over snakes and he was the one that held the Ladder the deceased used to climb to heaven.

As Lord of the Air or Atmosphere, it was Shu's duty to separate his children: the sky (the goddess Nut) and the earth (Nut's husband, Geb). His eternal occupation was holding Nut up above Geb. It was said that if he ever was removed from his place, Chaos would come to the Universe. Many images show him holding up his daughter, while his son reclines beneath him.

He was the brother and husband of Tefnut and they were usually mentioned together. It was said that Shu and Tefnut were two parts of one soul. Oddly, Shu and Tefnut do not appear to have any city of district especially dedicated to them. Shu was also the son of Re or Atum and, as mentioned previously, the father to Geb and Nut.

The oldest myth about the origin of Shu states that once upon a time the god Atum went to the city of Annu and he created Shu and Tefnut from his own body through masturbation. In the story of the creation, Atum is described as saying:

"I had union with my hand, and I embraced my shadow in a love embrace; I poured seed into my own mouth and I sent forth from myself issue in the form of the gods Shu and Tefnut."



Later myths called this story into doubt and claimed that Atum's shadow acted the part of his wife; still others state that the goddess Iusaaset was Atum's wife.

Shu is shown as a man who wears on his head one to four feathers. Some figurines show him holding up the sky with his two hands.

Sokar

God of the Memphis necropolis.



Sokar

(Soker)

Cult Center: Memphis

Symbols: barque (on a sledge), onions, geese

Sokar was a god of rebirth and rejuvenation that was depicted as a man with a falcon's head. Frequently, Sokar was mummiform yet with a falcon's head. He wore the white crown and held a sceptre and whip.

The Pyramid Texts describe Sokar as aiding in the re-birth of the king and transferring the divine royal powers to the deceased king's son and heir. In the Middle Kingdom, Sokar became involved specifically in the transfiguration of the body following death and the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. At this time, Sokar became associated with Ptah for his ability as a metallurgist and regenerative qualities.

In the *Book of the Dead* (a New Kingdom text) Sokar became Sokar-Osiris, and a nighttime incarnation of the sun. Sokar enabled the sun to complete its nightly journey through the Underworld, and to be reborn each morning.

Sokar was worshipped in several chapels within the larger temples of Egypt. As of yet though, no evidence exists that he had a temple of his own.

Sekhmet - "Powerful Female"

Goddess of war & destruction.



Sekhmet

(Sekhet, Sakhmet, Nesert)

Symbols: lioness, cobra, Udjat (Eye of Horus)

Cult Center: Memphis

Myths: "the Story of Re"

Sekhmet was the lioness-headed goddess of war and destruction. She was the sister and wife of Ptah. She was created by the fire of Re's eye. Re created her as a weapon of vengeance to destroy men for their wicked ways and disobedience to him (see *The Story of Re*).

Having once unleashed her powers for the destruction of mankind, the Egyptians feared a repeat performance by Sekhmet. The Egyptian people developed an elaborate ritual in hopes she could be appeased. This ritual revolved around more than 700 statues of the goddess (such as the one to the left). The ancient Egyptian priests were required to perform a ritual before a different one of these statues each morning and each afternoon of every single day of every single year. Only by the strictest adherence to this never-ending ritual could the ancient Egyptians be assured of their ability to placate Sekhmet.

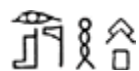
She is generally portrayed as a woman with the head of a lioness surmounted by the solar disk and the uraeus. The name "Sekhmet" comes from the root *sekhem* which means "to be strong, mighty, violent".

She was identified with the goddess Bastet, and they were called the Goddesses of the West (Sekhmet) and the East (Bastet). Both were shown with the heads of lionesses although Bastet was said to wear green, while Sekhmet wore red.



Serapis

Syncretic god of the afterlife.



Serapis

(Sarapis)

Cult Center: Alexandria

Serapis was an anthropomorphic god created by the Greek pharaoh Ptolemy I. Ptolemy I chose Serapis to be the official god of Egypt and Greece. He hoped a common religious base would unify the two peoples and ease tension in the country. Serapis' attributes were both Egyptian and Hellenistic. Serapis became very popular and his cult quickly spread from its center in Alexandria.

A Roman historian insisted that the god was originally from Asia Minor. However, Egypt probably provided the essential attributes of Serapis. Serapis' Egyptian nature can be seen in his roots, which were drawn from the cults of Osiris and the Apis bull. These cults had been combined prior to the reign of Ptolemy I. At that time, a sacred bull of Memphis called Osorapis was worshipped after its death. Osorapis was an agricultural god whose cult emphasized the Egyptian principles of life after death. The early Greek pharaohs seemed to have been drawn to Osorapis as a god who seemed to fuse the myriad of Egyptian deities and possessed aspects that were easily fusible with the gods of the Greeks.

The Hellenistic elements of Serapis dominate Serapis' "personality" and iconography. Many Greek gods contributed to his nature, including: Zeus, Helios, Dionysos, Hades and Aesculapius. From Zeus and Helios he received the aspects of sovereignty and sun-god. Dionysos brought to him the attribute of presiding over nature. Hades linked him to the afterlife and Aesculapius gave him the art of healing.

The Greek images of Serapis show him with long hair and a long beard. He is seated on a throne with the three-headed dog of Hades, Cerberus, at his feet. The Egyptian images of the god show him as a mummified human with the head of a bull. He is crowned with the crescent moon and two plumes.

Seth - "To Dazzle"

God of chaos; killed Osiris.



Seth

(Set, Suetekh)

Symbols: Seth-animal, pigs, donkeys, fishes, hippos

Cult Center: Tanis, Ombos

Regarded as the Lord of Lower (Northern) Egypt, Seth was represented by a big-eared imaginary animal with red hair resembling a donkey or maybe an aardvark. He was associated with the desert and storms. The Greeks associated Seth with their god, Typhon.

For many years, Seth was the benefactor of Lower Egypt; just as Horus protected Upper Egypt. When the Two Lands became united, Seth and Horus were often shown together crowning the new pharaohs. However, as Upper Egypt had conquered Lower Egypt, the pharaohs of the south often portrayed Seth as the evil enemy of Horus (deity of Upper Egypt). The earlier images of Seth crowning the pharaoh were usually modified to show Thoth crowning the king instead.

Seth was the brother of Osiris, Isis as well as Nephthys who was also his wife. Nephthys' son, Anubis was born from her tryst with Osiris. Seth never had any children, as emphasis of his association with the barren desert and of his status as the antithesis of the fertile Osiris. During his battles with Horus, the goddess Neith suggested a compromise by giving Horus the throne, and Seth the Semetic goddesses Astarte and Asat



Seth is most famous for the fratricide of his brother Osiris and the attempted murder of his brother's son, Horus. Horus survived though and avenged his father's death by ruling all of Egypt and exiling Seth to the desert for all time. The decision to banish Seth came from a counsel of the gods, ruled by Re. While most of the gods agreed with Horus and his mother Isis that Osiris' son was the rightful heir to the throne of Egypt, Re disagreed. He believed that Horus was too young to hold such a powerful position. Thus, the trial was stalemated for many years. Only the cunning of Isis could bring the case to an end.

Using her magic, Isis transformed herself into a beautiful young woman. Seth saw her with tears streaming down her face and asked what the matter was. Isis told a story not unlike the situation of herself and Horus, where an evil man had killed her husband and was trying to steal her family's flocks. Seth became angry at her plight and insisted that the evil man be destroyed and that the young woman's son should inherit the family's estate. By his own words, Seth condemned himself, and lost the throne of Egypt.

Seth was never a completely evil figure though. He protected the sun barge of Re, his benefactor during the struggles with Horus, during its nightly journey through the underworld and he fights the snake-like monster Apep. Also, for a short time during the 19th Dynasty respect grew for Seth as he was seen as a god who restrained the forces of the desert. Many pharaohs at this time took Seth's name as a part of their own, with names such as "Seti".

Sobek - "Watching Over You"

God of crocodiles.



Sobek

(Sebek)

Symbols: Crocodiles

Cult Center: Arsinoe (Crocodopolis)

A crocodile-god, he was worshipped in cities that depended on water, such as the oasis city of Arsinoe (Crocodilopolis), where the reptiles were kept in pools and adorned with jewels. Hundreds of the animals have been found mummified. He was worshipped to placate his sacred animals (the crocodiles).

He was portrayed as a man with the head of a crocodile, or sometimes simply as one. In the *Book of the Dead*, he assists in the birth of Horus and helps to destroy Seth. He also retrieved the Four Sons of Horus from the waters of Nun was the request of Re.



Sopdet

Goddess of the star 'Sirius.'



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Sopdet

(Sothis, Sopdu, Sept)

Symbols: star

Cult Center: Qesem

Sirius (the Dog-Star) was the most important star to ancient Egyptian astronomers because it reappeared in Egypt each year just as the annual Nile flooding began. Sopdet was the goddess of this star. The Greeks called her "Sothis." The "Sothis Rising" coincided with the actual solar year only once every 1460 years. This astronomical event occurred during the reign of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius in AD 139. He commemorated it with a special coin. The time period between Sothic risings is called the Sothic Cycle and it is one of the tools Egyptologists use to create a chronology of Egyptian history.

As early as the 1st dynasty, Sopdet was called "the bringer of the New Year and the Nile flood." She was depicted as a human woman with a star on her head. She also guides the king to the afterworld, the Field of

Rushes. In a 4th century BC papyrus, *The Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys*, Isis calls herself Sopdet and states that she will always follow Osiris in heaven.

Sopdet was the consort of Sah (the constellation Orion) and her son was Soped. This triad parallel Osiris, Isis and Horus. Therefore, in the Pyramid Texts, the king (in his Osiris form) copulates with his sister Sopdet, who gives birth to the planet Venus.

Sopdet was occasionally shown as a male, and was associated with Horus. In this form, Sopdet was one of the gods of the four corners of the earth and of the eastern frontier. As part of this duty, Sopdet would hold one of Nut's legs steady as her body arched over the earth.

Tauret - "the Great One"

Goddess of women & home.



Tauret

(Taweret, Taurt, Taueret, Thoeris)

Tauret was a predynastic hippopotamus-goddess of pregnant women and childbirth. She was also a mother-goddess who wore the solar disk and cow's horns to symbolize how she helped in the daily rebirth of the sun. She was even called the Eye of Re, his daughter, and the mother of Osiris and Isis.

Tauret was portrayed as a pregnant female hippopotamus with large human breasts, the hind legs of a lion and the tail of a crocodile. She is shown standing on her hind legs and leaning on the symbol for "protection" and holding an *ankh*.

Tauret was a domestic deity that was greatly revered. Her most common role was as a protectress of pregnant women. She was often shown with Bes in the birth chamber and she was a prominent assistant at the birth of Hatshepsut.

Tauret acquired an evil reputation because she was said to have been the concubine of Seth. When she sided with Horus in their dispute over who was the rightful claimant to the throne of Egypt following the death of Osiris she showed her kinder nature.



Thoth - "Leader"

Ibis-god of wisdom & the moon.



Thoth

(Djehuty, Tahuti, Tehuti)

Symbols: ibis, baboon, writing palette and reed pens

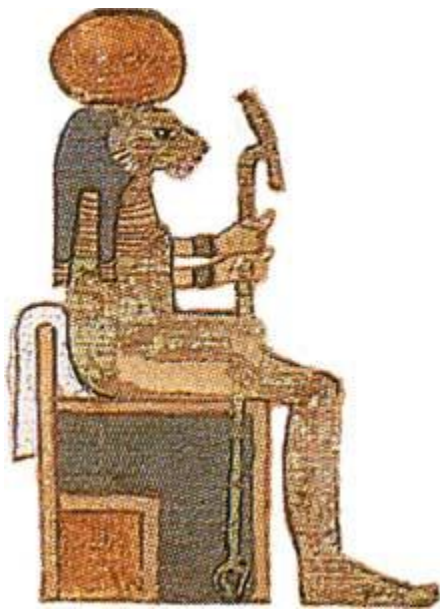
Cult Center: Hermopolis



The god of wisdom and learning. He was said to be self-created in the beginning along with his consort, the goddess Ma'at (truth). The two produced eight children, the most important being Amon. Alternately depicted as an ibis-headed human, an ibis, or a baboon (or dog-headed ape), perhaps because the grave facial expressions of these creatures suggested thoughtfulness. He carries a pen and scrolls with which he records all things.

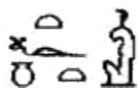
Thoth was believed to have filled many roles in the world of the gods. It was believed that he invented writing and was the vizier and official scribe of the afterworld. The *Book of the Dead* was written by him. He and Ma'at were believed to stand on either side of Re in his boat as he (as the Sun) traveled across the sky. It was thought that they also may have directed the course that the boat took. It was widely believed that Thoth invented the magical and hermetic arts, and thus the Tarot deck is frequently referred to as the "Book of Thoth" He was associated with the moon; as the sun vanished, Thoth tried to dispel the darkness with his light.

Thoth is shown attending all major scenes involving the gods, but most especially at the judgement of the deceased. It is here that he (shown as a dog-headed ape) sits on the top of the balance that weighs the heart of the deceased to determine if it is as light as *ma'at*. The concept of *ma'at* is one of truth, justice, and "that which is straight". It may even be related to "cosmic order". The baboon Thoth informs the ibis-headed Thoth when the balance is at equilibrium. The ibis-headed Thoth then makes his report to the other gods who then pass judgement on the deceased.



Tefnut - "Sky-Spittle"

Goddess of moisture & rain.



Tefnut

Symbols: throne, rain, lion

Cult Center: Heliopolis

The goddess' name is related to the root *tef*, "to spit, be moist" and *nu*, "sky, waters". Appropriately, she was the personification of the moisture of the sky. Tefnut was the counterpart to Shu and the mother of Geb and Nut.

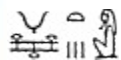
Tefnut and her husband Shu were the children of Atum who created them by masturbating. When Atum became associated with Re, Re became Tefnut's father. According to one myth, Tefnut became angry with her father Re and ran off to Nubia. The god Thoth went to find her and conjoled her into returning to Egypt.

Tefnut was depicted in the form of a woman who wears on her head the solar disk circled by two cobras. She holds in her hands the sceptre and *ankh*. Many times she has the head of a lioness or is shown as one.



Wepwawet - "Opener of the Ways"

Usher of the dead.



Wepwawet

Symbols: uraeus, king's placenta(?)

Cult Center: Abydos, Lycopolis, Quban, el-Hargarsa, Memphis, Sais

Wepwawet was a jackal-like funerary deity, whose name means "opener of the ways".

Unlike Anubis, who was also jackal-like, Wepwawet was shown with a gray or white head.

This leads some to believe that he may have originally been associated with the wolf. During the 12th Dynasty, Wepwawet was replaced by Khentyamentiu, a mummiform god, as the god of the Abydos necropolis and then finally by Osiris himself. Wepwawet was the nome god for the 13th nome of Upper Egypt, which the Greeks called "Lycopolis" (Wolf City).

Wepwawet's role was to protect and lead the deceased through the Underworld (hence his name). He also accompanied the king while hunting and while in this capacity was called "the one with the sharp arrow who is more powerful than the gods." Wepwawet was also thought of as a messenger and the champion of royalty. Like Shu, he was said to be "the one who has separated the sky from the earth."
