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The mythological importance of the constellation *Mshṯjw* in mortuary representations until the end of the New Kingdom

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IN VARIOUS CULTURES of the world, and hence also in western culture, probably the most well-known asterism of the northern sky is the so-called *Big Dipper*, or *Plough*, which actually forms a part of the much greater constellation of *Ursa Major*, also known as the *Great Bear*. Various people have seen into it different formations, so it is not at all surprising that there is an apparent lack of uniformity in naming it in European culture as well.¹ The particular designations, as in the case of most other constellations, were based on the fact that respective cultures considered different groups of stars to be part of a given constellation. However, considering the sign the ancient Egyptian idea is in unison with modern concepts in a particular respect, namely that both emphasise the same seven stars that at clear-skied nights are easily observable even with a naked eye, even in the heavily light-polluted skies of modern cities, due to them being the brightest ones in *Ursa Major*. The ancient Egyptians identified the group formed by *Dubhe* (α UMa), *Merak* (β UMa), *Phad* (γ UMa), *Megrez* (δ UMa), *Alioth* (ε UMa), *Mizar* (ζ UMa), and *Alkaid* (η UMa) with a thigh or foreleg of a bull, or either a partial or full scale depiction of a bull, and called it *Hṗš* or *Mshṯjw*.² This very sign may be the only one that we can identify with great certainty among the northern constellations known by the ancient Egyptians.³ In its shape, or differently said, in its form designated by its respective stars, it plainly overlaps with one of the instruments by the same name, used during the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, an adze with a bent handle  (U19A). As Wallin has pointed out, the instrument's determinative, which at the same time is its very depiction, appeared already in the Pyramid Texts [Spell 302 (Pyr. 458b-c)] and later in the Coffin Texts [Spell 61 (CT I, 264c)] as the determinative of the asterism, hereby providing a clear reference to their early interrelatedness.⁴ Furthermore, the Pyramid Text just cited refers

¹ A most abundant collection of its designations has appeared in R.H. Allen's now somewhat distant and in some respects questionable, yet informative and colourful book. Just to mention few examples: "Grande Ourse", "Casserole", "Carles wæn/Karls vagn/Karl Wagen", "Lycaonia Arctos", "Otawa", "Riksha", "Kakkabu dabi", "Arthur's chariot", "Aganna", "Cataletto", "Hapto-iringas", "Saptar Shayar", "Tseih Sing", etc. For further variant and details, consult: R.H. ALLEN, *Star Names. Their Lore and Meaning*, 2nd ed. republication of: *Star-Names and Their Meanings* (1899), New York, 1963, p. 419-447.

² *Wb* II, 149, 3-4; *Wb* III, 268, 4-9.

³ O. NEUGEBAUER, R. PARKER, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts III. Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs. Text* (= *EAT* III/1), London, 1969, p. 183; R.A. PARKER, "Ancient Egyptian Astronomy", *PTRS. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences*, 276/1257, 1974, p. 60f; P. WALLIN, *Celestial Cycles. Astronomical Concepts of Regeneration in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, USE 1*, Uppsala, 2002, p. 95; B. ARQUIER, *Le double sarcophage de Mésehti SIC (CG 28118) - S2C (CG 28119): recherches sur l'organisation du décor iconographique et textuel*, PhD Thesis, egyptology, Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3, 2013, p. 486.

⁴ P. WALLIN, *Celestial Cycles. Astronomical Concepts of Regeneration in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*,

to the fact, that the group of *Mshṯjw* is a dwelling place to the gods.⁵ However, the case seems to have been reciprocally true, meaning that the adze could actually appear with the determinative of a bull's foreleg (F23).⁶ The asterism belonged to a group of stars and constellations of the northern sky that were circumpolar (i.e. at the time of origination of the sources referring to them never set below the horizon) and were coined by the term *j.ḥm.w-skj*, i.e. Imperishable Ones (lit. "Ones that do not know perishing").⁷ Its ancient origins have been amply emphasized in the cosmogonical texts of the Graeco-Roman temple of Edfu (Edfou VI, 182, n. 8, var. Edfou III, 31, 14). There it appears in the sky in the company of a constellation called *Hn.t* at the beginning of the creation of the universe, when the falcon god of Edfu expanding the limitless space of the cosmos made its first appearance.⁸ The constellations of the southern sky, opposite the asterism of *Mshṯjw* consisted of the 36 decanal stars, or group of stars forming the decanal belt dividing the basic annual cycle into 36 weeks of 10 days each with a surplus of decans representing the five epagomenal days, and the group of planets moving along the ecliptic. Many of these, if not all of them, in addition to their respective names, were called collectively *j.ḥm.w-wrḏ*, i.e. the Unwearying Ones (lit. "Ones that do not know weariness").⁹ As we may see from the previously mentioned Coffin Text, both the constellation of *Mshṯjw* itself, and the two larger group of stars, the Imperishable and the Unwearying Ones, were seen as stellar deities and as such were likened to or even identified with glorified *ḏḥ*-spirits invested with divine power.¹⁰ In Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead the constellation *Mshṯjw* appears as *Hpš*, i.e. *Bull's Foreleg*, where its

USE 1, Uppsala, 2002, p. 95. In Spell 302 (Pyr. 458b-c) of Unis' text the constellation is described as an eternal locality (or means) of purification: *w'b.n nṣf psḏ.tj m Mshṯjw j.ḥm-skj*, "The Two Enneads have purified themselves for him in *Mshṯjw*, the Imperishable", while in Spell 61 (CT I, 264c) the constellation of *Sḏḥ* (Orion) is said to address it: *Sḏḥ ḏḏ.f n Mshṯjw*, "Thus spoke *Sḏḥ* to *Mshṯjw*". In Pyr. 458 b-c the preposition *m* is crucial to understand this passage, as well as the nature of the constellation. Sethe finds it unlikely to be a reference to the specific location, where the purification takes place. Instead, he proposes an "*m* der Identität", with the group of seven stars being the very essence (7 essentiae) of the deceased king. Thus the self-purification of the Two Enneads is to be understood as an act of reverential greeting dedicated to the king in his quality of being identical with *Mshṯjw*. Correspondingly, according to Sethe, the king as the son of Sepdet (i.e. Sothis/Sirius), mentioned in the previous line: *'nh z3 Spd.t*, "the Son of Sepdet lives" (Pyr. 458a) must be identical with *Mshṯjw* (K. SETHE, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten* II, Hamburg, 1962, p. 255f. Sepdet being the most prominent star of the southern sky, and *Mshṯjw* the main constellation in the northern sky, this however does not seem likely. However Sethe's point stressing the stars of *Mshṯjw* being seven essences is all the more important, and will be further emphasized later on in the present paper. We must however mention yet another opinion concerning this somewhat unclear passage, namely that of Krauss, who following a presumption of Anthes interpreted it as follows: "die beiden Neunheiten verrichten für ihn (= NN) Priesterdienst mit dem *mshṯjw*-Haken, dem Unvergänglichen", whereby he meant, that the two Enneads basically performed the Ritual of Opening the Mouth for the glorified soul of the king, residing already among the stars, by means of the celestial prototype of the *mshṯjw*-adze, i.e. the constellation itself, imagined as a "stellar instrument". Unfortunately, Krauss finally rejected this interpretation, although it seems to be the closest to the idea, which the present paper is endeavouring to unfold (R. KRAUSS, *Astronomische Konzepte und Jenseitsvorstellungen in den Pyramidentexten*, Wiesbaden, 1997, p. 95f.). As for the cited Coffin Text Spell, it might be noteworthy to remark that among the four cited variants of the spell fragment (B10Ca, B10Cb, B10Cc, B4C) it is only B10Cc that adds the U19A adze-determinative which here precedes both the star- (N14) and the god-determinative (A40) appearing in B10Ca and B10Cb (B4C has only a god-determinative for both *Sḏḥ* and *Mshṯjw*).

⁵ L. KÁKOSY, *Egyptomi és antik csillaghit*, Budapest, 1978, p. 53.


⁶ *Wb* II, 149, 2.





⁷ *Wb* I, 125, 14-16; R. KRAUSS, *Astronomische Konzepte und Jenseitsvorstellungen in den Pyramidentexten*, Wiesbaden, 1997, p. 89. It is exactly the above quoted Pyr. 458c which refers to *Mshṯjw*'s circumpolar nature.

⁸ M. ALLIOT, A. BARUCQ, "Les textes cosmogoniques d'Edfou d'après les manuscrits laissés par Maurice Alliot", *BIFAO* 64, 1966, p. 140.

⁹ *Wb* I, 125, 15-16; 337, 10; *EAT* III/1, p. 66.

¹⁰ P. WALLIN, *op. cit.*, p. 97ff.

seven constituting stars are identified with the four Sons of Horus – Imsety, Hapy, Duamutef, Qebehsenuf and further divine beings. We may not exclude the possibility that the name *Mshṯjw*, used here as a proper name, is actually a masculine plural nisbe-adjective which became a noun derived from *msh.t* representing the foreleg proper, where the ending would imply the beings or entities related to the constellation and/or the adze.¹¹ If this were the case, the earliest written appearance of the spelling with  would at the same time mark the earliest evidence for the existence of this concept. This textual location is to be found also in the Pyramid Texts Spell 21 (Pyr. 13c, 14a) describing the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, where the text also tells, that the iron of the adze originated from Seth. The identification with the Bull's Foreleg is quite early, considering that it has been integral part of an important religious and mythological narrative already in the Pyramid Texts, whereas it signified the severed foreleg of Seth [Spell 61 (Pyr. 42c [Nt])].¹² From the glosses of Chapter 17 it becomes clear, that the seven figures may be identified with seven further divinities. Although the gloss describing the relationship between the latter divinities and the Bull's Foreleg is not yet apparent in the earlier Coffin Text version of Chapter 17 most of them appear in Spell 404 (CT V, 181a-200d), which later became Chapter 99 of the Book of the Dead, and Spell 1126 (CT VII, 457a-i) as characters tied either to the crew of the sun barque, or more prominently to the constellations of the northern sky.¹³

¹¹ H. GRAPOW, *Religiöse Urkunden. Ausgewählte Texte des Totenbuches V (= Urk. V)* Leipzig, 1915-1917, p. 41-43(20/XXXIX-LI). See also: Z. ŽÁBA, *L'Orientation astronomique dans l'Ancienne Égypte, et la précession de l'axe du monde*, *ArOr-Suppl.* II, Praha, 1953, p. 44f. For the nisbe-adjective rule see: GEG, § 79. The spelling of *Mshṯjw* as a constellation, but also as an adze of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth features the *tjw* sound-sign , which may appear simply as  or  respectively (See: *Wb* II, 149, 2-4). In the variants written with the -sign, it precedes the determinative(s), which is precisely the case with other feminine words or masculine words having a *t*-ending formed by the same process, like *mḥj.tjw* or *ḥftjw* mentioned by Gardiner.

¹² J. LULL, “Meschetiu in der Mythologie und der Orientierung der ägyptischen Tempel”, *APA* 40, 2008, p. 87.

¹³ The original version of Chapter 17 has been Spell 335 (CT IV, 184-325), and Spell 336 (CT IV, 327k-q; 328h-329b, 330g-q), which later came to be appended. Heerma van Voss presumed that the text originated at the time of Dynasty 9 and 10, in the city of Heracleopolis (q.v. M.S.H.G. HEERMA VAN VOSS, *De oudste versie van Dodenboek 17a. Coffin Texts Spreuk 335a*, Leiden, 1963, p. 4 ff.). Thus, the various groups of seven divinities are as follows: I: (1) *Jmstj*, (2) *Hpy*, (3) *Dw3-mw.tsf*, (4) *Kbh-snwsf*, (5) *M33.n jtšf*, (6) *Hrj b3kšf*, (7) *Hr(w) mḥntj n-jr.tj*: (1) Imsety, (2) Hapy, (3) Duamutef, (4) Qebehsenuf, (5) “The-One-Who-Sees-His-Father”, (6) “The-One-Under-His-Moringa-Tree”, (7) “Horus-Without-His-Eyes-In-His-Forehead”; II: (1) *Nḥdh*, (2) *3kdḳd*, (3) *k3 n rdj.n.f nbjšf ḥntj hw.tsf*, (4) *k-hr jmj wnw.tsf*, (5) *dšr jr.tj jmj ḥw.t Jnsj*, (6) *3sb-hr prj m-ḥtḥt*, (7) *m33 m grḥ jnj.n.f m hrw*: (1) Nedjehdjuh, (2) Akedked, (3) “The-Bull-Who-Does-Not-Set-on-Fire-the-Tip-of-His-Smouldering”, (4) “The-One-of-Setting-Face-Who-is-in-His-Hour”, (5) “Whose-Eyes-Are-Red-Who-is-in-The-House-Of-Red-Linen”, (6) “The-One-of-Glowing-Face-Who-Walks-Backwards”, (7) “The-One-Who-Inspects-by-Night-what-He-Brought-by-Day”. In the text of Spell 1126 five deities of the seven are identical (CT VII, 457a-i). At the place of *Hrj b3kšf* and *Hr(w) mḥntj n-jr.tj* we find *Jrj-rnšf dššf* as a sixth deity, while the company is lead by Apophis as seventh. Since the text presents them as sun-folk (*ḥnmm.t*) and crew (*js.t*), it is quite obvious, that the subject concerned here is the sun-bark itself, where Apophis is to be identified with Seth, who as member of the divine council in the previously cited gloss of Chapter 17 may be correlated with the above mentioned group as well. The contents of Spell 404 help the deceased proceed upon reaching the celestial Field of Rushes, where he is being interrogated by the ferryman about the various parts of his boat. Identified with the ribs [or perhaps the planks of the deck (?) – *wg/sjʿ?* (q.v. *Wb* I, 376, 7-8)] of the boat all the deities of Spell 1126 make their appearance in the company of *H3ḳw* and *jrj-m-ʿw3*, save for Apophis (or Seth) (CT V, 192c-f). The presence of the group of these gods in identical succession is a permanent feature of the depictions of the northern constellations, arranged in a row (one of the two opposing ones marking the deities of the northern sky) queuing behind the figure of the Hippo with or without the goddess Isis. The Petosiris-tomb from the Ptolemaic-era identifies them with the circumpolar stars and labels them with the following legend: *jj.n-s <j>ḥm.w-s[k]j wnn n hršs jw Mshṯ r' nb*, “Those who come to her are the indestructible stars, that <they> may be before her, when the Foreleg comes daily.” Parker and Neugebauer presume, that the sg. 3rd person feminine form might be a reference to the Hippo who has to protect the circumpolar stars from a possible assault of the

The Middle Kingdom star clocks

Operation and build-up

The fact that the constellation of *Mshṯjw*, and hence also its constituent stars, had a divine nature may be clearly deduced by examining its earliest depictions as parts of the so called diagonal star clocks on the inner sides of coffin lids as early as Dynasty 9 or 11.¹⁴ This dating however is still a matter of some debate at the moment, and newer research tends to treat these coffin lid type star clocks as a unique Middle Kingdom phenomenon. Since most them were found on coffins from Assyut, we may presumably identify this city as their place of origin.¹⁵ In the following section the depictions of *Mshṯjw* will thus be analysed based on these representations. The constellation in question appears in the company of the representations of the sky goddess Nut, Osiris as the constellation of *Sḏḥ*/Orion, and the goddess Sothis (*Spd.t*) identified with the star Sirius in a vertical strip. This strip divides the elongated tabular grid containing the columns for 36 weeks of 10 days each and the semi-week of five epagomenal days between columns 18 and 19, thus at the middle of the basic 360 day year. The name of *Mshṯjw* also makes its appearance in a wide horizontal strip which in turn acts as an axis for the 12 lines representing the 12 hours of the night between lines 6 and 7, thus between those of the sixth and the seventh hour. This horizontal strip serves as a textual field for invoking funerary offerings, where Re along with the above mentioned stellar deities, Nut and a group of decans provides the owner of the coffin with the offerings required.¹⁶ Returning to the vertical strip, we always find the depictions of the same four deities, standing perpendicular to the textual field of offerings, although their sequence may vary on certain coffins in accordance with a fixed order.¹⁷ The same is true for their appearance in the horizontal strip, which itself shows certain alterations. As Parker and Neugebauer presumes, these discrepancies are mostly due to the corrupted sources, although it may be also possible, that the usage of respective variants followed a given purpose, thus the collation of named variants will also take place in greater detail below. The two authors have demonstrated the operation of these star clocks, also called diagonal calendars, on the following schematized diagram [fig. 1]:

Sethian Foreleg (q.v. *EAT* III, p. 64ff.; 194ff.; concerning Chapter 99 of the Book of the Dead (BD 99), see: E. NAVILLE, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch* I, 1886, Reprint, Graz, 1971, p. CXI/25.

¹⁴ O. NEUGEBAUER, R. PARKER, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts I. The Early Decans* (= *EAT* I), London, 1960, p. 1ff.

¹⁵ B. ARQUIER, *op. cit.*, p. 14f., 78.

¹⁶ *EAT* I, p. 1ff.

¹⁷ See below in Chapter: *The constellation Mshṯjw in the Middle Kingdom star clocks*.

[illegible]

Fig. 1. Schematized diagram of a diagonal star clock (source: *EATI*, p. 1, fig. 1).

The columns for 10 day weeks, 36+4 in number, run from right to left in accordance with the horizontal strip for date appearing at the top, which on the above figure is marked “T”, following the writing direction of the horizontal strip of offerings. The presumed prototype of these clocks included 36+12 decans, those of the basic year, and those of the demi-week of the epagomenal days, respectively. The previously mentioned first 36 columns of 10 day weeks stand for the first 360 days of the 365 days civil year, the so called “Egyptian year”, or “Astronomer’s year”. The year was divided into three seasons of four months, which in turn consisted of three 10 days week each.¹⁸ According to Parker and Neugebauer, the list of decans representing the epagomenal days might have originally filled a single column only, and the three additional ones were injected only for the sake of relisting the decans appearing in the star clock. Bernard Arquier has drawn attention to the remarkable symbolical connections between the build-up of the star clock, and the positioning of the body in the coffin. Thus, both were in accordance with the passing of the year, i.e. the place marking the beginning of the year coincided with the head, while its end with the feet. As the first rising decans in line 1 marked the eastern horizon, the opposite side was to represent the west. Likewise, the orientation of the coffin lid was chosen to enable the texts appearing on the outside of the coffin to be read from the direction of the head towards the feet, i.e. from north to south. By the end of the year, as the annual cycle of the sun came to its end, and the start of the inundation, the marker of the new year was approaching, the star clock’s decanal columns culminating the year reached the very direction of the origin of the inundation, i.e. south.¹⁹ The rows proceeding from top to bottom represent the 12 hours of the night, this partitioning being the result of the usage of the decanal system, which in turn had its foundation in the decade (10 day weeks) based civil calendar. As a result of their intersection with the week columns, a regular grid of rectangles is formed, where each rectangle includes the name of the actual rising decanal star or constellation of the given nocturnal hour of the respective week of the year. Thus the decan appearing in the first rectangle was the ruling asterism of the actual week. By the first day of the next week, this star gave its place as ruling, first hour star to the following one, which in the case of the very first week of the year meant the decan of the second nocturnal hour. The formation hereby effected in a diagonal pattern, constituted by the respective decans, basically with each one moving upwards line by line as the weeks

¹⁸ D.H. KELLEY, E.F. MILONE, *Exploring Ancient Skies. A Survey of Ancient and Cultural Astronomy*, 2nd ed., New York, 2011, p. 263.

¹⁹ B. ARQUIER, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

progressed, until having reached the first line and becoming ruling decan, they disappeared from the chart. (For this very reason on the representational figure above, they were replaced by small diagonal lines).²⁰ From this fact it seems evident, that the decans were used as a means of measuring time, or more precisely, the hours of the night.

At the time of the heliacal rising of Sothis/Sirius, which coincided with the beginning of the annual inundation somewhat after mid July according to the Julian calendar, only twelve successive decanal risings would have been observed during darkness. According to Otto Neugebauer, it was then the decadic division of decans, which resulted in the introduction of the twelve-hour division of the night, consequently that of the star clock.²¹ Furthermore, they might have recognized that the system thus gained is a precise partitioning of the ecliptic into 36 identical arcs, with each 10 day week thus constituting a 10° unit. Although the ascertainable evidence for such a concept of the decanal system in ancient Egypt, i.e. one decanal arc being one third of a zodiacal sign, was based on the Babylonian zodiac and came only with the time of the Ptolemaic era. At the time of the first appearance of the here discussed diagonal star clocks on coffin lids the civil calendar in Egypt had been already known for a long time besides other religious festival calendars based on the more elaborate system of moon phases. As already hinted at above, this fact, i.e. the decadically divided 360+5 days civil calendar predating the diagonal star clocks, served as a proof in Neugebauer's hand in shaping his argument about the origins of the star clocks.²²

On the star clocks, as we have discussed above, the vertical strip (V) containing the group of representations of the goddess Nut (W), *Msh̥tjw*/Bull's Foreleg/Big Dipper (X), *S̥ḥ*/Osiris/Orion (Y), and the goddess *Spd.t*/Sothis/Sirius (Z) was divided by the horizontal strip of offerings (R), where the same stellar deities made their appearance in the company of certain decans. As for the rectangular grid of successive decans, we must emphasize, that their sequence is corrupt without exception, although there are significant differences in terms of degree in this respect.²³ In the ceiling decoration of the Deir el-Bahari tomb of Senmut, who officiated during the time of Hatshepsut (1479-1458 BC) as Steward of Amon, a star clock system of similar structure makes its appearance, thus forming a transition between the revised diagonal calendars of Dynasty 12 coffin lids marking risings, and the clocks of the Ramesside Period recording culminations (i.e. transits of the decans over the north-south meridian line of the observer). In addition, the decans of the epagomenal days came to be transformed into a mixed group of planets and decanal stars.²⁴

The constellation Msh̥tjw in the Middle Kingdom star clocks

The representations of *Msh̥tjw* in the inner side of coffin lids show an approximately identical appearance. If we take into account, that besides the function of these charts being star clocks, they, as we have seen, basically serve as a type of calendar recording the movements of the stars, we may look at these lids as simplified depictions of the night sky with a reason. When

²⁰ *EAT I*, p. 1f.

²¹ *EAT I*, p. 116; O. NEUGEBAUER, *The Exact Sciences in Antiquity*, 2nd ed., New York, 1969, p. 85.

²² O. NEUGEBAUER, *op. cit.*, p. 82f.

²³ *EAT I*, p. 1f., 23 (The letter labels follow the quoted passages of *EAT I*). Here, unless the circumstances require it, only the letters denoting the four most important deities will be marked (X, Y, W, Z). For the decanal names and letters of the 36 basic decans and the 12 others appearing during the week of epagomenal days see: *EAT I*, p. 2f.

²⁴ *EAT I*, p. 22f., pl. 24-25.

looking at the two axes partitioning the chart, we may see, that the textual field (R) of offerings divides the night in two separate halves, being situated between the 6th and 7th nocturnal hours. At the same time the picture column V marks the middle of the year by running between the columns of the 18th and the 19th week, at least in the original, standard Assyt versions, hereby marking the last day of the second month of the *pr.t* season – the month *rkḥ*- ʒ in the Middle Kingdom calendars.²⁵ It is not entirely clear, whether or not any particular religious festival could have had any role in determining the build-up of this picture column, and thus find its way into the depiction, or was based merely on aesthetic grounds. On the other hand, it seems evident, that the textual field R of the standard depictions divides not only the night into two consecutive 6 hour sections, but also the sky into two separate parts, namely into an upper northern, and a lower southern section. In the present case, this is an arrangement which is in accordance with the usual orientation of coffins, since the northern constellations coincide with the eastern, while the southern ones with the western side, although in the case of certain coffins the two respective pairs of stellar deities of the field V stand interchanged.²⁶

In the descriptions of picture field V below, when marked north and south, understandably the respective eastern, and western sides of the lid, and hence those of the coffin walls, are to be understood. Thus when the above mentioned change of placement occurs, the naming “north” and “south” remains because of the immutable nature of the asterisms proper, and the change is mirrored only in their order of description. The sequence of names of deities and decans included will be indicated below. (The placement of the textual strip R will be discussed further later on). Beside the descriptions of the actual star clocks the illustrations of *Mshṯjw* were also indicated wherever present next to which, save for coffin 6, stood the following label text: *Mshṯjw m p.t mḥ.t.t.*, “The Bull’s Foreleg in the northern sky”. The following list is based on the material published by Parker and Neugebauer.²⁷

1. Inner coffin of *Mshṯ(j)*, S1C (Cairo 28118)

The coffin of *Mshṯ(j)* originates from Assyt, and dates from Dynasty 9-10, although most recent scholarship places it to Dynasty 11-12.²⁸ Beside the star clock the inner coffin lid also gives place to two registers of Coffin Texts.²⁹ The order of stellar deities in the picture column V succeeding column 18 is as follows:

²⁵ J.P. ALLEN, *Middle Egyptian. An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 2000, 2nd ed., New York, 2010, p. 108f.

²⁶ B. ARQUIER, *op. cit.*, p. 359, 366.

²⁷ *EAT* I, p. 4-21, pl. 1-23. Since the publication of the monumental works of Parker and Neugebauer, further coffin lids with star clocks came to be published. In her PhD-thesis, S. Symons provided a more complete list, along with the layouts of the diagonal star clocks (S. SYMONS, *Ancient Egyptian Astronomy: Timekeeping and Cosmography in the New Kingdom*, PhD-Thesis, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Leicester, 1999, p. 17-27). Since this new data has not provided any considerable novelty from the point of view of the final conclusions of the present paper, only the original sources (12 coffins) provided by Parker and Neugebauer will be examined here.

²⁸ B. ARQUIER, *op. cit.*, p. 14f. Nevertheless, the exact date of the coffin itself does not necessarily have to coincide with the date recorded on the star clock proper, since the chart was almost certainly based on a master papyrus, itself being part of a longer textual tradition (J. KAHL, “Textkritische Bemerkungen zu den Diagonalsternuhren des Mittleren Reiches”, *SAK* 20, 1993, p. 98; S. SYMONS, *op. cit.*, p. 108).

²⁹ Concerning the connection between the texts and the decans, consult: B. ARQUIER, *op. cit.*, p. 366ff.



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 1.

North: 1. *Nw.t* 2. *Msh.tjw* South: 3. *S3h* 4. *Spd.t*

The list of divinities appearing in the horizontal field R of offerings is the following:

1. *R'* 2. *Msh.tjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *S3h* 5. *smd rsy+smd mhty* 6. *ntr d3 p.t+rmn hry* 7. *spd+jmy-ht spd* 8. *3h.wy+jmy ht 3h.wj* 9. *h3.t h3w+ph.wj h3w* 10. *hn.t.t hr.t+hn.t.t hr.t*.

Spd.t is not among the dedicatees of the list, while *Msh.tjw* appears in the text at around the 12th and 13th week columns.³⁰

2. Coffin of *Jt-jb*, S3C (Cairo J 36444)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 4.

The coffin of *Jt-jb* stems likewise from Assut, from Dynasty 9-10, or Dynasty 11-12.

The column V stands after column 18. The row of deities is as follows:

North: 1. *Nw.t* 2. *Msh.tjw* South: 3. *S3h* 4. *Spd.t*

The deities of the textual field R after the 6th nocturnal hour are the following:

1. *R'* 2. *Msh.tjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *S3h* 5. *Spd.t* 6. *smd rsy+smd mhty* 7. *ntr d3 p.t+rmn hry* 8. *spd+jmy-ht spd* 9. *3h.wy+jmy ht 3h.wj* 10. *h3.t h3w+ph.wj h3w* 11. *hn.t.t hr.t+hn.t.t hr.t*.

Msh.tjw appears in the list at column 6.³¹

³⁰ *EAT* I, p. 4f., pl. 1-2.

³¹ *EAT* I, p. 6, pl. 3-4.

3. Coffin of *Hw-n-Skr/Hty*, S6C (Cairo J 36320)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 6.

The coffin usurped by *Hty* originates from Assyut, and dates from the Dynasty 9-10, or Dynasty 11-12. The star clock consists of 20 columns only, where the column V appears after column 12 with the following contents:

North: 1. *Nw.t* 2. *Mshṯjw* South: 3. *Sḏḥ* 4. *Spd.t*

R similarly to the earlier examples stands after the 6th hour:

1. *R* 2. *Mshṯjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *Sḏḥ* 5. *smd rsy+smd mḥty*

Spd.t does not appear in the list, while *Mshṯjw* stands at column 8.³²

4. Coffin of *'Idy*, S1Tü (Tübingen, Archäologisches Institut der Universität)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 8.

The origin of the coffin of *'Idy* is Assyut, its precise date is unknowns. Parker and Neugebauer presume, that beside the appearing 18 columns only a final one is missing. The picture column V appears after hour 11. The sequence of deities is as follows:

North: 1. *Nw.t* 2. *Mshṯjw* South: 3. *Sḏḥ* 4. *Spd.t*

R appears after the 6th hour, as on the previous examples:

1. *R* 2. *Mshṯjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *Sḏḥ* 5. *smd rsy+smd mḥty* 6. *ntr ḏḏ p.t*

Spd.t does not appear, while the name of *Mshṯjw* stands between columns 7 and 8.³³

5. Coffin of *Mḏ't*, S2Chass (Location unknown)

The coffin of *Mḏ't* originates also from Assyut, and may be dated to Dynasty 9-10. The column V stands after column 9. The chart features the decans of 16 weeks only. The sequence of stellar

³² *EAT* I, p. 7, pl. 5-6.

³³ *EAT* I, p. 8, pl. 7-8.

deities in the R field is the following:

North: 1. *Nw.t* 2. *Mshṯjw* South: 3. *Sḏh* 4. *Spd.t*

R stands after the 6th hour line:

1. *R* 2. *Mshṯjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *Sḏh* 5. *Spd.t* 6. *smd rsy+smd mḥty* 7. *nṯr ḏḏ p.t+rmn ḥry* 8. *spd+jmy-ḥt spd*. For lack of a photograph the exact position of *Mshṯjw* in R cannot be marked.³⁴

6. Coffin of 'šy.t, T3C (Cairo J 47355)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 9.

The coffin of 'šy.t is the first Theban item in the material examined.

It dates from Dynasty 11, from the reign of Mentuhotep II. Similarly to coffin 1, and 2, it carries a relatively complete, though inconsistent list, where the decans of the epagomenal demi-week are also included. In the picture column V the sequence of representations appears after week column 17, and inverts the groups of stellar deities, by simply mirroring the previous order:

South: 1. *Spd.t* 2. *Sḏh* North: 3. *Mshṯjw* 4. *Nw.t*

The list of R is the following:

1. *R* 2. *Mshṯjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *Sḏh* 5. *smd rsy+smd mḥty* 6. *nṯr ḏḏ p.t+rmn ḥry*.

Although the list does not include the name of *4pd.t*, its build-up follows that of the previous examples, while *Mshṯjw* stands at week columns 12 and 13. Since naturally the real location of stellar deities in V could not have changed, it is conceivable, that the inverted delineation is not due to failure, but to a deliberate act to express a change in the concept of alignment. As such, it might mirror the original orientation of the coffin in the tomb.³⁵

7. The inner coffin of 'Ikr, G2T (Turin Museum, the item has perished)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 12.

³⁴ *EAT* I, p. 9.

³⁵ *EAT* I, p. 10f., pl. 9-10.

The coffin of *'Ikr* was found in Gebelein. It dates probably from the time of the First Intermediate Period, or Dynasty 11. Its column V stands after column 18 with the following content:

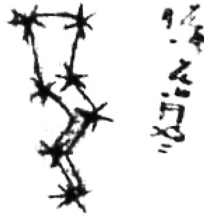
South: 1. *Spd.t* 2. *Sṣh* North: 3. *Mshṯjw* 4. *Nw.t*

The offering list R stand after the 6th hour. The order of deities is as follows:

1. *R'* 2. *Nw.t* 3. *Sṣh+Mshṯjw* 4. *Spd.t* 5. *smd rsy+smd mḥty* 6. *nṯr ḏṣ p.t+rmn ḥry* 7. *tpy-
spd+jmy-ḥt spd* 8. *ṣḥ.wy+jmy ḥt ṣḥ.wj* 9. *ḥṣ.t ḥṣw+ph.wj ḥṣw* 10. *ḥn.t.t ḥr.t+ḥn.t.t ḥr.t.*

The similarity between the lids of *'Iqr* and that of *ṣṣy.t*, including the agreement in the sequence of deities in column V, may be attributed to the influence of nearby Thebes, which is in close vicinity to Gebelein, where the coffin was found. A unique feature to this coffin is the way the text of R was written, since it runs vertically, hence parallel to the longer sides of the lid, whereas *Mshṯjw* appeared at the location of column 8.³⁶

8. Coffin of *Hkṣ.t*, A1C (Cairo 28127=J 36418)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 14.

The coffin of *Hkṣ.t*, found in Assuan forms a group with the two preceding ones, which shows in its build-up. Accordingly column V is placed after week 18 with the following order of stellar deities:

South: 1. *Spd.t* 2. *Sṣh* 3. North: *Mshṯjw* 4. *Nw.t*

The deities of the offering list R are the following:

1. *R'* 2. *Nw.t* 3. *Sṣh+Mshṯjw* 4. *Spd.t* 5. *smd rsy+smd mḥty* 6. *nṯr ḏṣ p.t+rmn ḥry* 7. *tpy-
spd+jmy-ḥt spd* 8. *ṣḥ.wy+jmy ḥt ṣḥ.wj* 9. *ḥṣ.t ḥṣw+ph.wj ḥṣw* 10. *ḥn.t.t ḥr.t+ḥn.t.t ḥr.t.*

Mshṯjw appears in the list at column 11.³⁷

³⁶ *EAT* I, p. 12f., pl. 11-13.

³⁷ *EAT* I, p. 14f., pl. 14-15.

9. Coffin of *Hw-n-Skr/Nht/Hnn*, S3P (Louvre)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 17.

Hw-n-Skr was the original owner of coffin 3 as well. This particular coffin of his has also been usurped, at the present case twice. In compliance with this, it was found in Assyut, and stems from Dynasty 9-10. The deities in picture column V appear in the following order after column 12:

North: 1. *Nw.t* 2. *Mshwtjw* South: 3. *Szh* 4. *Spd.t*

The horizontal strip R appears after the line of the 6th hour. The row of deities in R is the following:

1. *R* 2. *Mshwtjw* 3. *Nw.t* 4. *Szh* 5. *Spd.t* 6. *smd rsy+smd mhty* 7. *ntr dz p.t+rmn hry* 8. *zh.wy+jmy ht zh.wj*.

The field V follows the sequence of the first five coffins, and *Mshwtjw* stands between columns 5 and 6.³⁸

10. Coffin of *T3w3w*, S9C (Cairo J 44979)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 19.

The coffin of *T3w3w* originates from Assyut, and dates from Dynasty 12. The deities of the vertical strip V appear after week column 14 in the below arrangement:

South: 1. *Spd.t* 2. *Szh* North: 3. *Mshwtjw* 4. *Nw.t*

Their sequence mirrors the layout of coffins 6-8. The horizontal strip of R features fewer stellar deities than any of the previous examples, and divides the chart listing only 8 hours after the 4th nocturnal hour with the following short list:

1. *R* 2. *Szh* 3. *Mshwtjw*.

In respect of the sequence of decans, the chart shows considerable differences, among which it

³⁸ *EAT* I, p. 16, pl. 16-17.

is important to note the usage of numerous split secondary and tertiary decans (3a, 3b, 9a, 9b, 14a, 31a, etc.), which clearly suggest a readjusted list using the method of dividing earlier decans into newer ones. This manner of decanal division first appeared on coffin 9. *Mshṯjw* appears in R between week columns 17 and 18 closing the offering list.³⁹

11. Coffin of *Ṭẓwẓw*, S5C (Cairo J 45064)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 21.

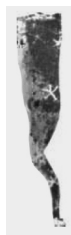
The coffin of *Ṭẓwẓw* originates also from Assyut. Although it shows certain similarities in its layout with coffin 10, it is not clear, whether their owner is one and the same. The decanal chart starts with decan No. 31a, i.e. *tpy-ḥ knmt*. Column V stands after week column 19, with the following list of stellar deities:

1. *Spd.t* 2. *Mshṯjw* 3. *Sẓḥ* 4. *Nw.t*

It is conspicuous, that the sequence of two groups of four stellar deities representing the northern and southern skies is altogether corrupt by pairing northern and southern deities into one group. The offering list R stand here again in a chart featuring 12 nocturnal hours after the 6th hour with the following short list: 1. *R* 2. *Mshṯjw* 3. *Nw.t*

The name of *Mshṯjw* appears at columns 15 and 16.⁴⁰

12. Coffin of *Šms*, S11C (Cairo J 44978)



Source: *EAT* I, pl. 23.

The coffin of *Šms* stems from Assyut, and dates from Dynasty 12. Just like in the case of coffin 11, the star clock starts with decan *tpy-ḥ knmt* (No. 31a). The list of V came to be placed after column 10, with the list of stellar deities below:

³⁹ *EAT* I, p. 17, 30, pl. 18-19.

⁴⁰ *EAT* I, p. 18f., pl. 20-21.

1. *Spd.t* 2. *Mshjtjw* 3. *S3h* 4. *Nw.t*

It also follows the pattern of the previous coffin by using an intermingled grouping of the deities of the northern and the southern sky.

The offering field R lists the following deities:

1. *R* 2. *S3h* 3. *Mshjtjw* 4. *Spd.t* 5. *smd rsy+smd mhty*.

It is likely, that originally an additional deity was to follow at the end of the list, and perhaps yet another week column. *Mshjtjw* appears at week column 9.⁴¹

Parker and Neugebauer arranged the coffins into five, well distinguishable groups based on the date line T, the picture column V, and the offering list R. In the following section a brief summary of their findings relevant in respect of the present paper will be discussed.⁴²

Group I: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; **Group II:** 6, 7, 8; **Group III:** 9; **Group IV:** 10; **Group V:** 11, 12

All members of Group I originated from Assyt, and were manufactures based on a common prototype. In Parker and Neugebauer's system T is less important from the point of view of grouping, although it has proven to be all the more important in later research, as we shall see later. Nevertheless in this respect items 1, 2, 3 and 5 are to be collected into a same group, while field V in terms of content is identical on all coffins. In respect of R, coffins 1, 3, 4 and 2, 5 may be placed into separate groups. Group II is formed by one coffin from Thebes, Gebelein, and Assuan respectively, following the build-up of Group I, which means that the main group of 36 decadic columns features only 34 separate decans repeating decan No. 1, and No. 2 in the last hours of weeks 23 and 24 on Coffin 6, and of weeks 24 and 25 on Coffin 7, 8. According to this taxonomy, Group III comprises of only Coffin 9, which is also of Assyt origin, and as we can see from V, it is in close relationship with Group I. Coffin 10, which forms Group IV stems similarly from Assyt and functions as a junction piece between the first three groups and the Coffins 11 and 12, also from Assyt, which constitute Group V. This latter group in terms of its arrangement, and its use of certain previously unused decanal names is already a harbinger of the star clock system to be used later in the tomb of Senmut. Since the heliacal rising of Sothis falls at column 18, i.e. II *pr.t*, day 21 (decan No. 31, *spd*, stands at hour 12), groups I and II may be dated to 2150-2100 BC, although on account of the two missing decans Sothis may just as well be 12th hour star of III *pr.t* day 11, which in turn would move the date to around 2070-2020 BC. This point in Group III falls on III *pr.t*, day 1, thus marks the date 2110-2060 BC. The dating of Group IV on account of its rather disorganized and defective layout provides controversial results. Coffin 12 of Group V however, which is itself defective with its 17 columns, if extended would place the heliacal rising of Sothis to column 24, hence it would enable a 1910-1860 BC dating, the period of Dynasty 12.⁴³ Corrections would have been necessitated by the constant shift of the system,

⁴¹ *EAT I*, p. 20f., pl. 22-23.

⁴² *EAT I*, p. 26-32.

⁴³ It must be emphasized at this point once again, that newer research has called attention to the probable inaccuracy of the dating established by Parker and Neugebauer (v. sup.). Here however the focus of scrutiny falls on the date recorded on the star clocks, so the authoritative date to be used later on will be that of the emphasized group, namely Group I, i.e. 2150-2100 BC. Nevertheless, it is important to note, that Jochem Kahl has rearranged the above delineated groups by establishing the stemma of the texts of date line T (q.v. *EAT I*, p. 26),

from which it may be deduced, that the star clock, which was most probably adjusted to the heliacal rising of Sothis/Sirius, might have originally been constructed at around 2830-2780 BC when decan G (*jmy-ḥt sp.d*, being identical with decan No. 32) could have appeared as one of the decans of the epagomenal days, while Sothis as that of the 12th hour of column 1. This means, that it would have marked the beginning of a so called “Sothic cycle” consisting of 1460 Julian years with I *ḫ.t* day I coinciding with the heliacal rising of Sothis/Sirius. The date approximating 2780 BC seems more probable based on the 238 AD report of Censorinus registering the start of a new Sothic cycle at July 20, 139 AD. This cycle was a unique feature to the Egyptian civil calendar, it being the period during which a full cycle of shifting between the shorter 365 day Egyptian year and the Julian year has elapsed, and the dates of the Egyptian civil calendar coincided yet again with the proper stellar risings, i.e. the beginning of the civil year, and hence that of the inundation occurred at the same time with the heliacal rising of the star Sirius.⁴⁴ If we accept the star clocks to be those primitively, and inaccurately compiled copies used for funerary purposes Parker and Neugebauer considers them to be,⁴⁵ we may easily understand the compulsory revisions of ancient Egyptian astronomers, on account of being incapable of making exact astronomical observations even with the help of the upgraded star clock system, and the aid of water and shadow clocks.⁴⁶ The authors have admittedly rejected almost all the astronomical texts of mythological purport save for the cosmogonic texts in the cenotaph of Seti I, the tomb of Ramesses IV, and pCarlsberg I,

an element somewhat neglected by Parker and Neugebauer previously, on the basis of apparently present orthographical mistakes. Kahl has regrouped the text claiming, that the source text (α) was Coffin 9 of Group III, while Coffin 1 of Group I, originally thought to be the earliest and most authentic version, is but a secondary variant of the sub-branch ε in the hierarchic chain of α-γ-δ-ε (J. KAHL, “Textkritische Bemerkungen zu den Diagonalsternuhren des Mittleren Reiches”, *SAK* 20, 1993, p. 101ff.).

⁴⁴ *EAT* I, p. 110ff., 127f. (Appendix II, III); Kelley and Milone place the date to 2776 BC, it being the same, though somewhat more precise calculation based, as the one used by Parker and Neugebauer. It may be worth noting, that the astronomical representations of the northern half of the ceiling in the tomb of Senmut, being the ones depicting the months of the year and more importantly the northern constellations, seem to record the skies of much earlier times, namely those of the beginning of the 3rd millennium. This presupposition is further emphasized by the alignment of planets on the southern side according to Kelley and Milone in a reference to Gleadow, who assumed, that this particular alignment marks the distinctive date of 2767 BC, during Dynasty III, the reign of Djoser (D.H. KELLEY, E.F. MILONE, *Exploring Ancient Skies. A Survey of Ancient and Cultural Astronomy*, 2nd ed., New York, 2011, p. 269f.).

⁴⁵ *EAT* I, p. 95, 109. As for accuracy, and precision, they had the same opinion about all the astronomical texts available.

⁴⁶ Actually, the present view of the two authors is contested by their own observations, since it is precisely on the basis of the shadow clock from the time of Thutmose III, along with the same type of instrument described in the cenotaph of Seti I, together with the clepsydra of Amenemhat from the time of Amenhotep I, and a similar water clock found at Karnak from the time of Amenhotep III, that they acknowledge the fact, that the Egyptians were capable of observing and measuring hours of different lengths (*EAT* I, p. 116-121, pl. 32; O. NEUGEBAUER, R. PARKER, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts II. The Ramesside Star Clocks* (= *EAT* II), London, 1964, p. X; *EAT* III/1, p. 12ff., *EAT* III/2, pl. 2). If we give some credit to the existence of the presumed golden (or gilded) astronomical ring, divided into 365 arcs of equal length, and marking the daily rising and setting points of stars, and which, according to Diodorus, is once supposed to have stood on the roof of the Ramesseum (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* I, Books 1-2.34 (= *Library of History* I), C.H. Oldfather (trans.), Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1920, I. 49, p. 175), the somewhat belittling remarks of Parker and Neugebauer immediately appear in a different light. All the more so, since Georges Goyon in his hypothesis about the ring has modified not only the irrationally sounding circumference of 365 cubits, but has offered valuable, and workable suggestions and solutions in terms of the exact measuring methods and instruments used, which if right, would allow for a qualitatively high standard of obtainable precision in terms of measurement (G. GOYON, “Le grand cercle d’or du temple d’Osymandias”, *BIFAO* 76, 1976, p. 291ff., 297ff., fig. 4). (Here, I would like to thank Gyula Priskin for having drawn attention to Goyon’s article during a discussion we had about the “Ring of Osymandias”).

although they emphasized their fundamental importance in understanding the concept behind the usage of decans as a means for measuring time. Furthermore, they have pointed out that the star clocks were created for purposes applicable in mortuary contexts, not for ordinary timekeeping used at the given period.⁴⁷ In this respect it is somewhat surprising, that they never seem to have tried to address the question of the possible underlying cultic motives pertaining to the star clocks. As we have seen, by the presumption of the two above authors for the reason of the ever changing yearly hours and the constantly shifting 365 days year, the decanal risings as well as the later New Kingdom culminations of decanal transits were inappropriate as a means for exact and long term timekeeping. In spite of this, from a Ramesside papyrus dating to the 12th century BC, which Parker and Neugebauer have themselves examined, it becomes evident that the Egyptians were fully aware of the nature of constant hours by which they could measure the length of days and nights of varying length during the year. Here they specified the actual lengths of respective days and nights in given hours for the 12 months of the year. The numbers, even if in terms of proportions are somewhat inaccurate, shed light to the fact, that the Egyptians were familiar with the notion of solstices, and equinoxes, which is but a new affirmation to a fact already surmised in Egyptology.⁴⁸

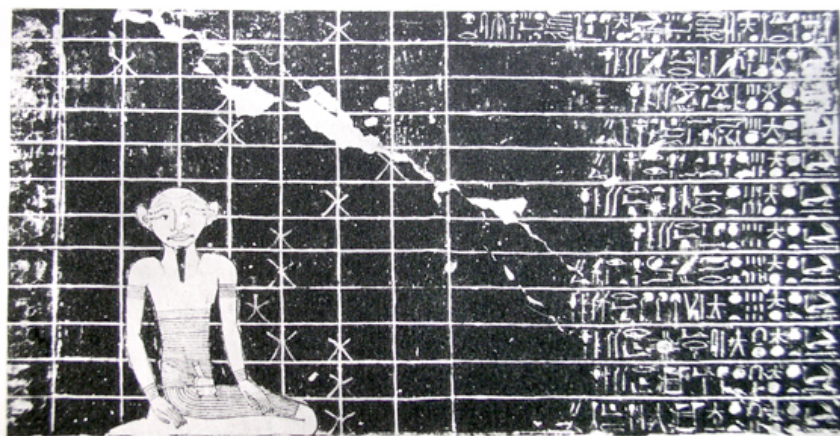


Fig. 2. Reference figure and grid from the tomb of Ramesses IX (source: *EAT II*, pl. 9).

To each of the later, Ramesside star clocks appearing on the ceilings of certain royal tombs of the Dynasty 20 consisting of 24 half-month intervals belonged a sitting reference figure facing outwards, and a table containing 9 vertical and 13 horizontal lines arranged perpendicularly, thereby forming a grid which appeared either behind or above the figure. The horizontals signified the beginning of the night and its 12 hours, to each of which belonged a text marking the position of a particular star of a certain constellation in relation to the reference figure [fig. 2]. The given hour was marked by a given star on one of the seven inner

⁴⁷ *EAT I*, p. vii, 112.

⁴⁸ According to the papyrus, the shortest day (6 hours) was measured in II *pr.t*, along with the longest night (18 hours), while in IV *šmw* they have recorded the longest day (18 hours) and the shortest night (6 hours). While the former marked the winter, and latter the summer solstice, the months of III *ḏh.t* and I *šmw* designated the autumnal and the vernal equinoxes respectively (*EAT I*, p. 119f.). See also: Z. ŽÁBA, *L'Orientation astronomique dans l'Ancienne Égypte, et la précession de l'axe du monde*, *ArOr-Suppl.* II, Praha, 1953, p. 21.

verticals corresponding to the text. The innermost or middle line (*r k3 jb*, “opposite the heart”) was identified with the meridian of the location of observation, while those pairs of lines, marked with the figure’s various body parts moving outwards from the middle, were seen as the hour circles standing before or after the meridian, at which the given star was observed at the represented hour in different altitudes.⁴⁹ The decanal transits measured in relation to the horizon, or the celestial equator, hence at a given altitude, as well as the familiarity with the point of the vernal equinox presupposes, that the Egyptians were aware of a system which is called in modern astronomy an equatorial coordinate system, and fully understood its basic principles.⁵⁰ We have no reason to suppose, that they did not possess these basic astronomical ideas already during the time of Dynasties 9 or 10, or according to newer presumptions, during Dynasty 11, when the star clocks on coffin lids were being manufactured, beyond doubt, based on a master copy. This fact is all the more emphasized by the above mentioned calculations that date the actual drafting of the star clock system at around 2780 BC, a date in immediate proximity to a new Sothic cycle. This obviates the observation, that the corruption of the charts appearing on the coffin lids is not of crucial importance from the point of view of the present paper, which tries to understand the functional, historical and more importantly the mythico-religious underpinnings of the astronomical representations of the constellation *Mshṯjw* and its surrounding asterisms in the northern sky, namely the circumpolar stars. If we step back to the earlier discussed system recording stellar risings we may see that due to the regular weekly shift of decans forms a diagonal pattern of individual decans across the chart, since each decan moves upward by an hour in its respective week column by the next week until it finally disappears from the list. If we now take the number of the particular date column of a given week of the year as the first coordinate, and the line of a given hour as the second, the result thus received shows not merely the specific decanal asterism, but also the actual *sidereal time*.

The diagram below [fig. 3], which is similar to the Middle Kingdom model, instead of twelve hours spanning from about sunset to sunrise charts 24 hours counting backward from midnight, with numbers in diagonal strips marking the actual sidereal time, i.e. the hour angle of the hour circle of the vernal equinox measured from the celestial meridian. If we draw a vertical from the date number, and a horizontal from the given hour, the intersection of the two would mark the actual sidereal time of the required date relative to the given location. From this data we would be able assess, which are the culminating stars of the specified hour, since it is the star with the same right ascension as the hour angle of the vernal equinox (sidereal time) which crosses the meridian at the given time. From this information the

⁴⁹ *EAT* II, p. ixff.

⁵⁰ There are two different types of equatorial systems. In both systems, the basis of horizontal coordinates is provided by the celestial equator, which is the projection of Earth’s equator onto the celestial sphere. This in turn is perpendicularly intersected by the axis of the northern and southern celestial poles. We may navigate on this axis north or southwards between + or – 90° respectively, where 90° is marked by the particular celestial pole. This coordinate is called *declination*. The data pertaining to longitude, the other coordinate, is provided by vertical hour circles, all crossing the two celestial poles. In one system the beginning hour circle stands at the two junction points, or nodes, of the celestial equator and the ecliptic, i.e. at the hour circle of the vernal equinox. The distance is measured out eastward beginning from the point of the vernal equinox in 0-24 sidereal hours, or 0-360°. The name of this second coordinate is *right ascension*. In the other system the longitudinal coordinate is measured clockwise on the celestial equator from the meridian to the hour circle of the celestial object observed, thus the beginning hour circle is basically defined by the meridian of the observer’s location. The name of this coordinate is *hour angle*, which is thus calculated by proceeding from the local meridian westward along the celestial equator by 0-24 hours or 0-360°. The hour angle of the vernal equinox is called *sidereal time* (*EAT* I, p. 122-126, Appendix I, G. Kulin, G. Róka (ed.), *A távcső világa*, Budapest, 1975, p. 102-108).

location of the neighbouring stars may be obtained likewise. As we may see, this diagram was based on transits. The Middle Kingdom model however recorded stellar risings. On the better drafted versions, which are likely the nearest ones to a presumed prototype, at the end of the 6th nocturnal hour, so right at the middle of the night, the sequence of hours is interrupted by the horizontal offering strip of R. Nevertheless, this point also marks the transit of the first hour decan of the given week. Accordingly, on the next week it will be the actual first hour star which will culminate at the end of the 6th hour, and so on. The hereby received diagonal strip will then mark the sidereal time. The 24 hour division of the modern version also draws attention to the fact that in the case the sidereal time of given celestial objects is known, their position in the sky can be defined with certainty also during daytime, when they are otherwise invisible. At this point however we must note that although the presumed knowledge about the notion of sidereal time cannot be proven on the basis of the known astronomical data, it cannot be fully excluded either.⁵¹ It is important to note, that the hours of sidereal time are always of the same length, irrespective the part of the day, being dependent only on the rotation of Earth and the culmination of stars.

⁵¹ J. KLEPEŠTA, A. RÜKL, *Taschenatlas der Sternbilder*, 4th ed., Hanau, Main 1975, p. 64. Based on the table of *EAT* I, Appendix II and III, the helical rising of Sothis/Sirius in 2100 BC occurred between day 21 and 30 of II *pr.t*, hence at the end of the month, which signified a date between the 19th and 28th of July in the Julian calendar. If we, following the admittedly somewhat hypothetical path of Parker and Neugebauer, on account of the two missing and doubled decans of Coffin 1 would start the first month of *3h.t* with decan No. 3 (*wšt bk3t*) (q.v. *EAT* I, p. 31), counting back 180 days from the last day of week 18 (II *pr.t* day 30, the last day of Sirius rising heliacally) and checking the date of I *3h.t* day 1, we would get the approximate date of January 31. So, if we would want to calculate the transit of the hour circle of the vernal equinox on Coffin 1 in order to get the “hour zero” of sidereal time, we would need to find the transit point of the decanal asterism ruling five weeks later, hence in the 6th week. If we would calculate with *wšt bk3t* as first decan, this asterism would be decan *tms n hnt.t*, otherwise, taking decan *tm3.t hr.t* as the first decan (as it actually appears on the coffin lid), it would be decan *hnt.t hr.t*. Following this logic, the culminating decan coinciding with the transiting hour circle of the vernal equinox would then be *tms n hnt.t*, so the imagined “hour zero” of sidereal time would be marked by the 6th hour line of week 6. This in turn would mean that according to the hereby modified star clock, the vernal equinox should have occurred between around II *3h.t*, day 21 and 30 (*EAT* I, p. 2ff, 127f., Appendix II/III). On the foundation of these calculations it would then be possible to draft a version of the present modified star clock, which would now mark the transits and hence the constant and precise sidereal time of decans starting with *wšt bk3t* at the 6th hour of column 1, the following on in the 7th, and so on. The diagonals here obtained would, mutatis mutandis, function basically as the modern chart discussed above. This however would signify the sidereal time of neighbouring decans just as well. Furthermore, if we take an identifiable decan, say *Spd.t*/Sothis or members of the *S3h*/Orion-group, based on the exact sidereal hours we would accordingly be able to obtain the data of right ascension, and the hour angle, which finally would open up the possibility to define further, otherwise oblique decans with great precision. This task however is not in the agenda of the present paper.

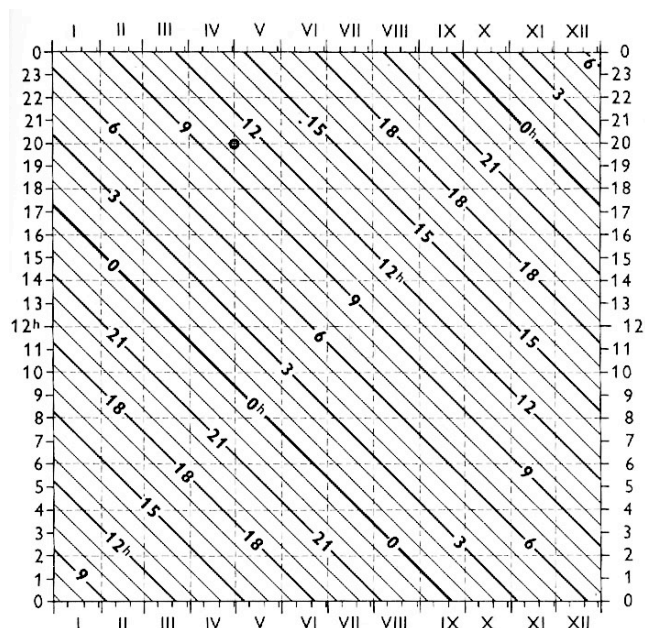


Fig. 3. Diagram for calculating sidereal time (source: J. Klepešta, A. Rühl, *Taschenatlas der Sternbilder*, 4th ed., Hanau, Main, 1975, p. 65, Abb. 14).

All we need to know is (1) the culmination of the vernal equinox signifying “hour zero”, and (2) the specific hourly distance of given stars measured from this point. We may assume, that this given hour is a duration, which the Egyptians could have easily measured and henceforth established at any vernal or autumnal equinox using a shadow clock or a clepsydra. For this reason such an established hour length would have provided a precise, by even modern standards accurate timekeeping.⁵² If we consider the fact that these star clocks, which were subject to regular readjustments, formed a coherent and more or less workable system at around 2150-2100 BC, it would be worth asking, whether there was any major event of cultic, religious, or perhaps historical significance, that would have necessitated the drafting of the present system in the domain of mortuary religion. In order to get even somewhat closer to a possible answer to this question, we need to proceed deeper in our examination of the star clock chart, and that of *Mshṯjw* and its neighbouring constellations. According to the group-categories established by Parker and Neugebauer, the earliest coffin is that of *Mshṯ(j)*. It is unique in the particular respect of being the only coffin with an almost complete star clock chart belonging to the group, which can be dated to the Heracleopolitan Kingdom hallmarked by Dynasties 9 and 10.⁵³ In this respect we may treat it as a *terminus post quem* in assuming that the state, and hence the date it recorded makes it suitable to be used as a point of origin. Its picture field V with the four figures of *Nwt*, *Mshṯjw*, *Sḫ* and *Spd.t* came to be placed after column 18, hence dividing the basic 360 day year into two equal halves, where the 12th hour decan of week 18 was decan No. 31, i.e. *Spd(t)/Sothis*. Considering, that in the present group (Group I) the division of decan No. 31 was not yet apparent, it has marked, as we have

⁵² If we consider the combined usage of the two instruments, we may realize that it would provide great precision, since in case the hour length measured by a shadow clock on a given equinox is combined with the respective, registered amount of water loss of a clepsydra, using the registered data of latter, the result would be a constant hour length. Although this is basically no more than a presumption, the simultaneous existence and use of named instruments opens up the possibility for assuming their value as being true.

⁵³ *EAT I*, p. 31.

seen above, the heliacal rising of Sothis/Sirius. This arrangement reappears on coffins 2, 7, and 8. It may be possible that beyond aesthetical considerations, the placing of V after column 18 was a result of an effort to emphasize the heliacal rising of Sothis. As we have seen, *Mshṯjw* stands straight after *R* in the line of dedicatees of the offering list R on most of the lids (8/12). From these examples 1-6 are members of groups I and II. However, examining the constantly varying placement of the name of *Mshṯjw* in the list relative to the week columns, its local concurrence with any of them does not seem to have any particular significance, beyond its formerly mentioned rank of being second only to *R* in the list. All the more important is the topographical arrangement of the lid, which arches over the deceased as the sky divided by the double axis of the offering list R, and the plane of the picture field V, with *Mshṯjw* and *Sḫ* on the respective northern and southern sides to guard him. In the domain of mortuary religion the measuring of the nocturnal hours was most crucial for a single reason, namely on account of the mortuary liturgies, which regulated the enactment of certain ritual activities at particular hours. Accordingly, they were given prime role in the precisely timed performance of the hourly vigil (*Stundenwachen*), which is basically a ritual re-enactment of the vigil for Osiris, where the deceased was to be treated as identical with the god, himself an Osiris. Hereby, the deceased would have been aware of the proper timing of necessary offerings, and could follow the passing of time during the course of the entire year. These facts draw our attention yet again to the horizontal strip of the offering list after the 6th nocturnal hour, which running straight along the path of transit points of the ruling decans of the year makes it conceivable, that using the transits, its role was to mark the appropriate times for performing the given offerings. It is all the more important, because by knowing the exact sidereal times, they would have known the proper timing of daily rituals as well.⁵⁴ Since the *Stundenwachen* was a 24 hour ritual, with both its daily and nightly sections subdivided into two consecutive 6 hour sections, this kind of astronomical knowledge about decanal transits and sidereal times would have been most useful in the maintenance of continuity and exact timing.⁵⁵

The role of Mshṯjw in the ritual of “Stundenwachen”

The main function of the ritual was the protection, glorification (*sḫw*) and mourning of the body of Osiris, and similarly that of the Osirian deceased, lying on its bier in the embalming chamber (*w'b.t*). As mentioned earlier, precise timing was of prime importance in the ritual. The participants of the vigil performed at specific daily and nocturnal hours were the protector deities, and mourning goddesses, among them the “Two Kites” (*ḏr.tj*), Isis and Nephthys, exchanging each other every hour, and the officiating priests, among them the *sm*-priest acting the role of Horus thus that of the king. Each god serving as actual vigil-keeper in one hour acted as officiator in the next, hereby exchanging one another in constant rotation. The first six hours were considerably more detailed and structured, than the following six, since they included the description of the given hours, thus a *sḫw*-recitation, the recitation of

⁵⁴ This is proven by the enactment of the butchering scene at the 6th hour of the day, during the course of which Osiris is described as “(...) Orion, who walks his lands all over in peace”: (E.VI/25-27: *jnd-ḥrꜥk Wsjr Sḫ m p.t sksk t3.wꜣf m ḥtp sqdd.f m 'b3 3ḫ3ḫ.wꜣ{s}* (sic) <*n p.t*>, “Hail to thee Osiris-Orion in the sky, who walks his lands all over in peace. He sails in the light of the stars of the sky.” (H. JUNKER, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, Wien, 1910, p. 57).

⁵⁵ J. ASSMANN, *LÄ VI*, 1986, col. 104, s. v. *Stundenwachen*; L. KÁKOSY, *Egyiptomi és antik csillaghit*, Budapest, 1978, p. 39; H. WILLEMS, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture. Religious Ideas and Ritual Practice in Middle Kingdom Elite Cemeteries*, CHANE 73, Leiden, Boston, 2014, p. 93f.

an offering text, and the mourning song of the “Kite”, in contrast with the considerably denser and more extracted 7-12 hours. Although the actual rite is known mainly from temples of the Graeco-Roman Period, its antecedents point straight back to the similar rites of nightly vigils appearing in the Coffin Texts that were themselves performed in the *w‘b.t.* Jan Assmann has pointed out, that although the decoration of the coffin served the means of perpetuating the rituals of “*Stundenwachen*” in the embalming chamber for all eternity, it served an important role in the mortuary cult as well since at least the time of the Middle Kingdom⁵⁶. The body of the dead Osiris had to be protected from Seth and his companions.⁵⁷ The second section of a liturgy originating in the Coffin Texts (*sḫw* 1, Spells 1-26) forming a single unit with Spell 1, and Spells 20-25 lived along in Chapter 169 of the Book of the Dead, while the closing formula of Spell 26 marked the end of the section.⁵⁸ Jan Assmann has indicated that Chapter 169 of the Book of the Dead, and thus the Middle Kingdom liturgy returned in the decoration program of New Kingdom and Late Period coffins where Isis, Nephthys, Geb, Nut, Horus, Anubis, Thoth, and the Sons of Horus addressed the deceased with the textual material of the chapter. The actors in the microcosm of the coffin surround him as participants of *Stundenwachen*.⁵⁹ Among the protective deities two gods appear, namely *Hkꜣ mꜣꜣ jt(j)ꜣf* and *‘Irj rnꜣf ḏsꜣf*, each with a particular section of Chapter 169 of the Book of the Dead, both of whom were identified by Assmann as grandsons of Horus.⁶⁰ Concerning one of the deities, *‘Irj rnꜣf ḏsꜣf*, and the collective appearance of the Four Sons of Horus some remark has already been made on account of Spell 404, Spell 1126, and one of the glosses of Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead, where they were identified as companions of Hippo, one of the northern constellations, and/or Isis, all of them lined up behind her/or them as the seven

⁵⁶ Spell 49 (*CT* I, 217a), Spells 1-26, Spells 63-74. The rites included anointing, fuming with incense, as well as butchering scenes in the 5th and 6th hours. The protective deities of the night were identical with those of the day, and appeared always in pairs, or in a group, while the actions of the first six hours of daytime were complemented after the *sḫw*-liturgies with dirges recited by the lector priest and the Kites, as well as with libations, burning of incense, and butchering scenes in hours 8-10 (J. ASSMANN, *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 104-106, s. v. *Stundenwachen*).

⁵⁷ It is precisely this mythological episode that forms the subject of a textual group defined by Assmann as a *sḫw*-liturgy, deemed to be of Ptolemaic, although clearly of much earlier date. To this group belongs the text of the liturgy marked as *sḫw* I. No. 13, consisting of 18 spells including also certain dramatic episodes, which was to be recited by the chief lector priest in the temple of Osiris at Abydos. According to the instructions of the text, it had to be recited regularly in the *w‘b.t.* and performed in a dramatized form on appropriate festivals of the god, as well as on mortuary festivals. What appears in the first three spells of the text is basically a mystery drama closely related to liturgy of *Stundenwachen*. Also to this type belong sections 7-14 and 24-25 of *sḫw* II. No. 1, a liturgy, which itself pertains to the Osiris-cult of Abydos, as well as spells 10-16 of *sḫw* III No. 15 C, from which it becomes evident that all these texts were intended to be performed, and were actually used at night. The above texts included stand-alone Pyramid Text spells, or sections written in their style, nevertheless, the textual material appearing in the liturgical frame, be those even Pyramid Text chapters, were originally used as Middle Kingdom coffin decoration, as well as the vigiliic liturgy sections similar to *Stundenwachen*, and *Stundenwachen* itself (q.v. J. ASSMANN, “Egyptian Mortuary Liturgies”, in S.I. Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology, Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* I, Jerusalem, 1990, p. 5-13).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15ff. Spells 20-23 were responsible for the reintegration of the body and personality of the deceased, Spell 24 contained the known rites of the vigil (Isis and Nephthys mourning the deceased, Thoth slaughtering sacrificial animals, Anubis embalming the body), while Spell 25 acted as a kind of colophon alluding to the admittance of the glorified deceased to the West, into the presence of Ra and the divine council (*dꜣdꜣ.t*).

⁵⁹ About the relationship with the *Stundenwachen*-liturgy, and their detailed, standard appearance in the decoration programme of Middle Kingdom coffins in relation to Coffin Text Spells 60-61 see: H. WILLEMS, *Chests of Life*, *MVEOL* 25, Leiden, 1988, p. 141ff.

⁶⁰ J. ASSMANN, “Das Grab mit gewundenem Abstieg Zum Typenwandel des Privat-Felsgrabes im Neuen Reich”, *MDAIK* 40, 1984, p. 288; *id.*, “Egyptian Mortuary Liturgies”, p. 18.

glorified *ḥ*-spirits who reside behind *Hps̄*, i.e. the stellar Bull's Foreleg (*Msh̄tjw*).⁶¹ The here appearing *Hk̄3 m33 jt(j)ḥf* actually designate two separate deities in the late *Stundenwachen*-ritual, namely *m33(.n) jtḥf* and *Hk̄3*, who belong to the same group behind Hippo and/or Isis mentioned before.⁶²

As we have seen the seven deities appearing in BD 17 closely overlap with those of Spell 404 and Spell 1126, as well as with the line of deities behind Hippo and / or Isis on the astronomical ceilings. These deities, along with the opposing row of divine characters, were originally the representatives of the days of the lunar month,⁶³ which alludes to the fact that they must have had some function in measuring time. If we take these groups and also add the earlier variant of BD 17, i.e. the list of Spell 335, the fact becomes all the more evident, that they are basically identical with the participants of the *Stundenwachen*-ritual.⁶⁴ What is interesting, though, is that the identity of the seven deities with the Sons of Horus and three other divinities becomes clear only from a New Kingdom gloss of BD 17.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, as we have seen from Spell 404 and Spell 1126, this formation of the divine group was also known in the corpus of Coffin Texts, yet, they were left out from Spell 335 for some unknown reason. On one of the vignettes and attached description of the late text of pJumilhac the same deities appear in the train of Osiris, entrapping Seth with their fishing nets, while after having bound him, put him as a footstool beneath Osiris, and drive back the companions of Seth into the desert. From the text we may also learn that the deities are identical with the *ḥ3.tjw*-demons, the ones causing the annual epidemic, whose role will be discussed in greater detail

⁶¹ Also in: W. WAITKUS, "Zur Deutung einiger apotropäischer Götter in den Gräbern im Tal der Königinnen und im Grabe Ramses III", *GM* 99, 1987, p. 74.

⁶² *EAT* III, p. 193, 196f. The former is also called *M33.n jtḥf*, *M3n jtḥf*, or *M3.n jtḥf* while the latter is sometimes spelled *H3k̄*, or *H3k̄w*, but it is clear that actually we are dealing with the same deities.

⁶³ *EAT* III, p. 194.

⁶⁴ H. JUNKER, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, Wien, 1910, p. 4 f.; W. WAITKUS, "Zur Deutung einiger apotropäischer Götter in den Gräbern im Tal der Königinnen und im Grabe Ramses III", *GM* 99, 1987, p. 51-82. p. 51, 68ff. (with reference to earlier studies with similar conclusions by J. Assmann); H. WILLEMS, *Chests of Life. MVEOL* 25, Leiden, 1988, p. 156ff.; *id.*, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, *OLA* 70, Leuven, 1996, p. 95; *id.*, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, *CHANE* 73, Leiden, Boston, 2014, p. 148. The gods standing beside the Sons of Horus are actually the children of (*M*)*hntj jr.tj*, the children of Horus of Letopolis. Concerning the two opposite rows of deities flanking the northern constellation, see: *EAT* III, p. 197-199. It is noteworthy, that the *tknw*, the mysterious participant of burial ceremonies wrapped into an animal hide (*msk̄3*), and represented in a lying or sitting position, being pulled on a sledge also makes its appearance. According to some scholarly views, this character might have symbolized the passage of the deceased through the animal skin, that is the "City of the skin" in TT 100, the Tomb of Rekhmire, i.e. through the Netherworld, and his rebirth in the "pool of transformation" (W. HELCK, *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 308-309, s. v. Tekenu; G. REEDER, "A Rite of Passage: The Enigmatic Tekenu in Ancient Egyptian Funerary Ritual", *KMT* 5/III, 1994, p. 58). Among the participants of the ritual we find Shezmu, the god of wine and oil press, who in BD 17/23 appears as a mutilator of Osiris, but at the same time also as being identical with Horus. As we will see later, he may be identified with a controversial deity of dual aspects called Anti/Nemti. (q.v. *Urk.* V, 57(23/LXIII), H. JUNKER, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, p. 35, 98. In the first hour of the night he is offering myrrh to Osiris and provides the soundness of his body, while in the fourth he offers him incense and ointments.)

⁶⁵ To collate the groups and the different variants, consult: *Urk.* V, 40ff.; Spell 335 (*CT* IV, 262b-272c); Spell 1126 (*CT* VII, 457a-i). Although it is already mentioned in the Coffin Text version, that it was Anubis who commanded the group of seven deities to stand behind Osiris as a divine council, it is only in section 20 of BD 17 of the New Kingdom version that we first come to learn they were actually commanded to act as guardians of the tomb of Osiris, i.e. to stand behind the embalming chamber (*w'b.t*). Thereby Anubis actually ordained them to perform the ritual of *Stundenwachen* (q.v. *Urk.* V, 43(20/XLVII). The depiction of the scene appears on the chapter's vignette on various papyri (q.v. E. NAVILLE, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch* I, p. XXIX).

later on.⁶⁶ The slaughtering of Seth and his companions appears at many places in the text of *Stundenwachen*. One of these scenes occurs in the 5th and the 6th hour of the day, when the butchering of the animals symbolizing Seth's followers, and the sacrificial bull representing Seth himself took place.⁶⁷ At this point, one of the Kites informs Osiris, that Horus has prepared the foreleg of the bull on the arms of Anubis, and also recounts the joy of the Sons of Horus, who have apparently taken their share of the punishing of the enemy, as can be seen from the related scenes of *Stundenwachen*. The actor of the upcoming section is somewhat unclear, nevertheless, it is evident, that the gate of the horizon opened up, something, or someone dwelling within emerged – most probably the foes of Osiris mentioned just afterwards –, and the evil (Seth) was sent back to the one, who sent it. Here follows the addressing of the demons protecting the slaughter-house of Osiris, asking them to massacre the enemies of the god. It is clear, that this scene is about the cutting of the Sethian bull's foreleg, and the slaughtering of the animals of the same nature by Anubis, the Sons of Horus and by the – with them identical – *ḥ3.tjw*-demons. The same may be said about the 8th, 9th, and 10th nocturnal hours.⁶⁸ A remarkable feature to the ritual is the fact that the first hour of the day begins with the opening of the mouth of Osiris. In this hour the *sm* and the *hrj-ḥb.t* open the god's mouth with the *wr-ḥk3w*-instrument as an unmistakable parallel with Scene 27 of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth. Junker himself remarked, that the ritual of *Stundenwachen* has drawn a great deal from various Pyramid Text and Book of the Dead spells, and in saying this, has pointed out precisely to its connections with Spell 443 (Pyr. 823) and Spell 444 (Pyr. 824).⁶⁹ Now, we may see at several points, that the liturgy of *Stundenwachen* is closely connected with the sky, more particularly with the main constellations of the northern sky, i.e. the Hippo, and the Bull's Foreleg. A further supportive argument is the Denderah-recension of the text, in which one of the priests – who in the other texts is identical with *wḏpw* – is played by *wr-m3(w)*, who was first of all known as the high priest of Heliopolis, who – as his name shows – has performed important astronomical observations. Nevertheless, there does not seem to be any direct reference to any such activity of his during the course of the ritual.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ J. VANDIER, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris, 1961, p. 139f., 246ff./vig. X, XII.1-I.6. The scene of Seth being thrown below the deceased king appears already in PT 367-368, there similarly in the context of defeating the Sethian enemies, reassembling and lifting the body into the sky and protecting it by the Sons of Horus, who – as we will see – can be treated as protective figures identical with the *ḥ3.tjw*-demons in many texts.

⁶⁷ The former slaughtering scene appears in the 5th hour performed by Anubis and the Sons of Horus, while the latter in the 6th by Horus and his followers, both at the door of the *w'b.t* (H. JUNKER, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, p. 51ff.).

⁶⁸ In the Denderah depiction of the 10th hour Seth appears as being tied to a post with three knives in his chest, along with the figure of Horus in his form of Horus-Son-of-Isis (Harsiese), and the Four Sons of Horus with knives in their hands (*ibid.*, p. 20, 59f., 120ff.). In a liturgy correlating with the present scene of *Stundenwachen*, where it seems quite probable, that a hidden reference is being made to the ritual slaughtering of a bull – itself a representative of the Sethian enemy –, the deceased devours the hearts of the followers of Seth [Spell 60 (CT I, 250f)]. R. NYORD has indicated, that such cannibalistic actions appearing in mortuary texts are actually signs of integrating magical forces or power, and are most of the time peculiar to texts of astronomical purport (R. NYORD, *Breathing Flesh. Conceptions of the Body in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, CNI Publications 37, Copenhagen, 2009, p. 288ff.). This is yet another allusion to the presumption, that the ritual might have had an interpretative layer that was valid for the astral region, i.e. for the context of the stars.

⁶⁹ Otto has emphasized various further Pyramid Text parallels on account of Scene 27 of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth (H. JUNKER, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, p. 23, 33, 35; E. OTTO, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual II. Kommentar*, ÄA 3, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 84ff.).

⁷⁰ *Wb* I, 329, 7. In the text from Denderah the *wr-m3(w)* burns incense at every hour of the night, while in the 6th and 7th hours he also emerges to speak (H. JUNKER, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, p. 5, 15-22).

It seems probable that the events of the vigil were recorded not only in the sphere of condensed Netherworld depictions as constituents of the textual and pictorial programme of the coffin decoration, but as we have seen from the texts of Coffin Text Spell 335 and BD 17, also in the northern sky behind and around the constellation of the Bull's Foreleg. Thereby, this region could have served as the celestial representation of the *w'b.t*, where the Osirian dead would have been provided with divine protection, offerings, libations, ointments, and incensing to all eternity. The fact, that the earliest version of Spell 335 originated, as mentioned earlier, from the time of Dynasty 9 or 10 from the city of Heracleopolis, which at that time was still the dominant ruling centre,⁷¹ may yet again hint to a presupposed religious or historical turning point, already alluded to earlier, the importance of which could have necessitated its recording in the domain of the mortuary sphere. The strong correlations between the earliest star clocks, but actually the entire coffin decoration containing it with the ritual of *Stundenwachen* might be a clue to justify such a theory. In the lid of L4Li, a coffin stemming from the late part of the reign of Senusert I, we find Spell 335 while on the bottom of the coffin chest Spell 397. This feature was part of a decoration pattern carrying a new system of religious thinking which later came to be very popular and widespread. This decoration programme was peculiar to the period between the reign of Amenemhat II and the end of Dynasty 12. L4Li was the only earlier example, according to H. Willems not coincidentally as a coffin belonging to a vizier, its origins however may be tied to the late Dynasty 11, or earlier part of Dynasty 12, to some of the priests of the Pyramid of Teti.⁷² Mention has already been made about these text columns of the external side as parts of the new decoration scheme, and as locations where the officiating deities of *Stundenwachen* made their appearance.⁷³ The purpose the protective deities served by the outside decoration of the coffin was to perpetuate the ceremonies performed in this world to the Afterlife of the deceased, since, besides the protection of the body the main purpose of the liturgy was to resuscitate the deceased to a new life.⁷⁴ Willems discussed the picture of the deceased lying on a lion-headed mummification bed appearing in numerous royal and elite tombs stemming from the period between the New Kingdom and the Saite Period, as well in the temple of Hathor at Denderah, with special attention to the Tanite tomb of Shoshenq III, where Horus is shown holding a *w3s*-sceptre with an *'nh*-sign at its top to the nostrils of Osiris as a means to

⁷¹ v. sup., and also in: M. HEERMA VAN VOSS, *De oudste versie van Dodenboek 17a. Coffin Texts Spreuk 335a*, Leiden, 1963, p. 4ff.

⁷² H. WILLEMS, "The Embalmer Embalmed. Remarks on the Meaning of the Decoration of Some Middle Kingdom Coffins", in J. Van Dijk (ed.), *Egyptological Memoirs 1. Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde*, Groningen, 1997, p. 356ff. The elements of the programme constituted of the theme of purification on friezes H and F (the lettering is that of used by Willems), the offering of the royal insignia on B and FR, the text columns and the representation of the palace façade on the external side of the coffin, the appearance of Isis and Nephthys at the short ends, and the usage of Coffin Text spells 335 and 397 on the above named places. Behind the group of these elements stood a coherent system of ideas correlating with the application of the Coffin Texts in a new context. According to Willems the three most important themes were (1) mummification, (2) the ideas of kingship, and that of (3) the rituals of sacrificial offerings.

⁷³ Concerning the protective goddesses as the walls of the coffin, and the connection between the epithets of the goddesses and their relationship with the deceased, and hence with Osiris, see: R. NYORD, "The Body in the Hymns to the Coffin Sides", *CdE* 82, 163-164, 2007, p. 10. The mythological connotations of the epithets actually refer to the own hourly vigil, or *Stundenwachen*-ritual, of Osiris himself.

⁷⁴ W. WAITKUS, "Zur Deutung einiger apotropäischer Götter in den Gräbern im Tal der Königinnen und im Grabe Ramses III", p. 69; Since the background plot of the present ritual, and similarly that of all the mythological narratives discussed in the present paper was the vindication and justification of Horus, and by him that of his father Osiris against Seth, ending with the coronation of Osiris, the mummification of the deceased as Osiris also represented his coronation (H. WILLEMS, "The Embalmer Embalmed. Remarks on the Meaning of the Decoration of Some Middle Kingdom Coffins", p. 358).

resuscitate him, who is apparently on the verge of returning to life. The group of 36 deities forming the retinue of Horus and appearing by the two sides of the mummification bed were identified by Willems, based on the ideas of Assmann and Waitkus – with the characters performing the ritual of *Stundenwachen* in the *w‘b.t*.⁷⁵ We encounter the same scene on the vignette of BD 182, with the title of the chapter emphasizing the main purpose as being a means to make Osiris to endure, as well as to provide him with breath, along with protection and guarding from his enemies by the deeds of Thoth.⁷⁶ It is curious, that in the inner decoration of the coffin lids going back to the time of Dynasty 11, we find Spell 335 with the seven *ḏh*-spirits, while on the outside text columns we basically encounter the performers of the same ritual, with whom the 36 deities appearing on the previously mentioned representations could be identified. The number of these officiating deities is identical with that of the decans officiating during the basic Egyptian civil year consisting of 360 days, not counting those of the epagomenal days, who in terms of their role as acting measures of timekeeping were in fact identical with the deities mentioned before.⁷⁷ Nyord has drawn attention to the fact, that the scene of the *Stundenwachen* could have been a tent-like structure the columns of which were identified with the arms of Nut, when guarding Osiris [Spell 60 (CT I, 254a-b)].⁷⁸ Hence, the deceased in the Middle Kingdom coffin was Osiris himself in the *w‘b.t* arched over by the sky. The Osirian dead thus became part of the sky, as a pendant of Re, the sun-god waiting to be reborn in the celestial womb of his mother Nut, the sky goddess at dawn, while the proper timing of offerings was pre-ordained for him for the entire span of the year by the star clock, which was duly emphasized by the positioning of the deceased in the coffin.⁷⁹ The stars on the body of Nut were represented by the depictions of the decans and their annual, cyclical movement, hereby integrating the deceased by the ever repeating cyclical intervals of hours, days, decades, months, and years into cyclical eternity itself (*nḥḥ*).⁸⁰ By considering the above references and arguments, we may now allow the assumption, that the liturgy of *Stundenwachen* had an astronomically interpretable layer. But with the presently available evidence in hand, we are still far from being sure whether we are dealing with a stellar depiction of a basically earthly ritual, or its actual origins imagined in the settings of cosmic circumstances.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁷⁶ E. NAVILLE Naville, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch*, p. CCVIIIf. [Version of *Mw.t-ḥtp* (Af.)].

⁷⁷ One of the inscriptions of one Djehutinakht, known from Deir el-Bersha, informs us that he “knew the hours of the night in all its periods”, but also adds the following saying he also knew “the opening days of the akhet-season, which lead to the opening days of the peret-season, and the opening days of the shemu-season”. Willems, originally quoting these passages, commented that in order to know these hours with such precision, Djehutinakht must have used an instrument or means similar to the star clocks depicted in the coffin lids of the day. By mentioning the ever shifting starting days of the seasons, in his capacity as astronomer he must have referred to corrections implemented in these continuously shifting hour-charts, which he in fact seems to have been able to perform. Willems has also pointed out, that with his astronomical expertise Djehutinakht could have possibly supported the work of the officiating priest performing the ritual of *Stundenwachen* (H. WILLEMS, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture. Religious Ideas and Ritual Practice in Middle Kingdom Elite Cemeteries*, p. 93f.).

⁷⁸ R. NYORD, *Breathing Flesh: Conceptions of the Body in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*. CNI Publications 37, Copenhagen, 2009, p. 266.

⁷⁹ v. sup (at the description of the star clocks).

⁸⁰ B. ARQUIER, *Le double sarcophage de Mésehti SIC (CG 28118) - S2C (CG 28119)*, p. 100.

The pJumilhac: The judgement of Horus and Seth, and the punishment of Seth; the Pyramid Texts

In the here discussed story of pJumilhac stemming from the late Ptolemaic Period or early Roman Period Horus throws the thigh of the defeated Seth up into the sky. The connection and identification of Seth with the constellation was known already in the Pyramid Texts, as already pointed out earlier.⁸⁶ A *w3s*-sceptre with the head of the god as well as the particular

⁸⁶ The section is part of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth: Pyr. 13c-14a: [wp n=k r3=k] m nw3(-'Inpw) mshṯjw bj3 wp r3 n ntr:w ° Hrw j.wn r3 n N. pn ° [Hrw wp r3 n N. pn ° wn.n Hrw r3 n N. pn ° wp.n Hrw r3 n N pn ° m wp.t.n.f r3 n jt=f jm ° m wp.t.n.f r3 n Wsjr jm m bj3 prj m Stš mshṯjw [bj3 wp r3 n ntr:w], "[Your mouth is opened for you]" with the *nw3*-adze (of Anubis) and the *mshṯjw*-adze of iron which opens the mouth of the gods. Horus, open up the mouth of this N. [Horus open the mouth of this N. Horus opened up the mouth of this N. Horus opened the mouth of this N.] with the one wherewith he opened the mouth of his father, with the one wherewith he opened the mouth of Osiris, with the iron that emerged from Seth, with the *mshṯjw*-adze [of iron which opens the mouth of the gods]". The advanced technology of today allowed us to deduce that the material of iron was quite rare in Ancient Egypt, and the only means to obtain it locally, even at the time of the New Kingdom, was to extract it from ferric meteorites. They thought that every meteorite, and hence iron, issued from the constellation of *Mshṯjw*, thus the adze by the same name, as well as iron itself played a crucial role in the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, a rite closely connected with the city of Letopolis, which according to Spell 670 (Pyr. 1983) was originally performed by the Sons of Horus with their "iron fingers". Wainwright has drawn attention to the fact, that the symbol of the Letopolitan nome standard was the fleshy part of a bull's thigh, which according to him symbolized the asterism of *Mshṯjw*, more precisely the Four Sons of Horus, who appear to be four of the seven *3h*-s appearing in BD 17, while the seventh member of this group was, again from Wainwright's point of view, non other than Horus of Letopolis itself. With this in mind it may seem clear, that the adze used during the Opening the Mouth ritual served as an exact counterpart to its stellar peer in terms of material and function. It is probably due to an early identification of the constellation with Seth, that Plutarch claimed the bones of Seth to be of iron. According to Wainwright, the ancient belemnite appearing in name of Letopolis (𓂏𓂏𓂏), and similarly in that of Akhmim (𓂏𓂏) is actually a meteorite, and behind the symbolism of the Opening the Mouth ritual is in fact the picture of an impacting meteorite striking down like a thunderbolt. This was imagined to have split the eyes and mouth of the deceased or its statue wide open like an explosion. Concerning the above mentioned ideas, see: PLUTARCH, *Moralia* V. *Isis and Osiris (De Iside et Osiride)*, F.C. Babbitt (trans.), Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1936, 2003, 62, p. 146 f.; H. BONNET, *RARG*, 1952, p. 709; E. OTTO, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual I. Text*, *ÄA* 3, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 105-108; *id.*, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual II*, p. 106ff.; G.A. WAINWRIGHT, "Iron in Egypt", *JEA* 18, No. 1/2, 1932a, p. 6f.; *id.*, "Letopolis", *JEA* 18, No. 3/4, 1932, p. 159ff., 163. (the closely related findings in Qau and Matmar will be discussed later in detail.) If the identification of the *mshṯjw* adze with the constellation by the same name is correct, it may be worth examining yet another instrument used during the ritual, which could then possibly also matched with a constellation in the northern sky. Otto in his commentary to the Ritual of Opening the Mouth concerning the various instruments and their functions used in Scene 46 stated that they are identical with the ones in Scenes 26 and 27. Their names are *dw3-wr* and *dwn-*, or *nw3(-Jnpw)*. The spelling of the *dwn-* instrument in Texts 2, 4 and 45 starts with the hieroglyph 𓂏 (A200). In Text 2 the instrument is spelled 𓂏𓂏𓂏, which Otto deems to be an erroneous writing, influenced by the orthography of the god *Dwn-'n.wj* (E. OTTO, *Mundöffnungsritual I*, p. 104; *id.*, *Mundöffnungsritual II*, p. 18f., 106f.). Otto may be right about the influence of the god's name, however the connection is not at all coincidental. On the contrary, as Waitkus has pointed out, the instrument may with certainty be paralleled with the constellation an, or more appropriately *Dwn-'n.wj*/or *Dwn-'wj* depicted as a falcon-headed deity harpooning *Mshṯjw*, which may perhaps be identified with our modern day *Ursa Minor* with additional stars from constellation *Draco*, and the spear with the line of the meridian. According to Waitkus the two constellations depicted the combating rivals of Horus and Seth, and were in turn mirrored in the two ritual adzes, *dw3/dwn-* (or *dwn-'n.wj*) and *mshṯjw* (W. WAITKUS, "Zur möglichen Identifizierung einer weiteren Konstellation des nördlichen altägyptischen Sternhimmels", in N. Kloth et al. (ed.), *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück: Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller*, *SAK* 9, 2003, p. 453ff., 464ff.). The observation was made already earlier by Volten. He accepted Wainwright's earlier assumption, and identified *Dwn-'n.wj* with the constellation *Cygnus* (See: G.A. WAINWRIGHT, "A Pair of Constellations", in *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith*, London, 1932, p. 373-382; A. VOLTEN, "Das Harpunierergestirn", *MDAIK* 16, 1958, p. 348ff.; see also: Z. ŽÁBA, *L'Orientation astronomique dans l'Ancienne Égypte, et la précession de l'axe du monde*, *ArOr-Suppl.* 2, Praha, 1953, p. 45ff.).

foreleg, or thigh, wherewith he as a bull killed Osiris according to Pyramid Text Spell 580 and pLeiden I 348, was given a prime role in the cult centres of Seth, while at Ombos and Sepermeru he bore the epithet “powerful of forefoot”. The story of pJumilhac recalls the verdict and the subsequent defeat of Seth in his affair with Horus. According to this narrative Seth turned himself into a red dog and came to be chased by the gods who finally stabbed him on the neck with their spears. Horus then defeated the companions of Seth and destroyed the cities and nomes under their command, demolished the statues of Seth and finally cut off his thigh and lifted, or threw it up into the middle of the sky. There the *h3.tjw*-demons came to guard it the, Bull’s Foreleg of the northern sky, while the Great Sow took hold of it so that it might never advance again among the gods.⁸⁷ The fact that the narrative is much older becomes clear already in the Pyramid Texts, from an episode belonging to the Horus and Seth story (Spell 570, Pyr. 1463e), and from other textual places where the *h3.tjw*-demons appear in the company of the circumpolar stars (Spell 578, Pyr. 1535b-c; Spell 611, 1726c).

Similar mythological episodes employing a particular kind of wording, though often only in fragmentary form were characteristic to various textual genres already at the time of the New Kingdom, which on account of their intertextuality were readily connectible through these specific mythological fragments. We find an interesting connection in Spell 571 (Pyr. 1469a), where the deceased king (in this case Pepy I) appears as a circumpolar star (*j.hm-skj pw Ppj*), the son of the Great Sky (actually a personified form of the northern sky) who (i.e. most probably this segment of the sky) resides here in the Mansion of the Scorpion (*[z3] p.t wr.t hr.t-jb hw.t Srk.t*). The Mansions of the Scorpion are also mentioned in Spell 534 (Pyr. 1273c) followed immediately by the arrival of the *h3.tjw*-demons (Pyr. 1274a).⁸⁸ If we take a look at the depictions of the northern constellations from the time of the New Kingdom, we may see, that the goddess *Srk.t* appears behind *Mshtjw* often wearing a disc on her head. Thus, the descriptions of Spell 571 and Spell 534, latter also on account of the following passage of Pyr. 1274a recounting the appearance of the *h3.tjw*-demons, may allude to her.⁸⁹ In the ascension text of Spell 539 describing the elevation of the deceased into the sky by means of the deification of its body parts, Neith and the Scorpion-goddess [*Srk.t* = Serket, or Selket,

⁸⁷ Chr. LEITZ, *Tagewählerei. Das Buch h3t nh3 ph.wy dt und verwandte I. Texte*, ÄA 55, Wiesbaden, 1994, p. 28, 437. Concerning the *h3.tjw*-demons Leitz remarked here that being united they could appear as a single deity in the form of *Twtw* / Tithoes or Bes, then quoted an Esna inscription (*Esna* II, 55, 2 = *Esna* V, 11 stating that on the day preceding the Festival of *Mshtjw*, i.e. I *zh.t* 14, a separate festival was dedicated to the former deity, i.e. to Tithoes, where he was, or the *h3.tjw*-demons were, celebrated as repeller(s) of the calamity against Osiris. There appears also an explicit warning concerning the 2nd and 3rd thirds of the night, these being the times when Seth made seven attempts to enter the Netherworld. Chr. LEITZ, *Tagewählerei. Das Buch h3t nh3 ph.wy dt und verwandte II. Tafelband*, Tf. 51; H. TE VELDE, *Seth, god of Confusion. A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*. PdÄ 6, Leiden, 1967, p. 87ff.; J. VANDIER, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris, 1961, p. 129/XVII, 6-12.

⁸⁸ In order to avert her “evil coming” (*jw.t-s jt看 dw.t*) the text directs Nephthys, who in the earlier part of the spell appears as one of the protector deities of the tomb of the deceased, to the Mansions of the Scorpion (*hw.wt Srq.t*), where she gets stricken on her feet(?) (*r bw pw hwy <n>-t jm ‘nn.tj-s*). The meaning of the word ‘*nn.t*’ is uncertain. Which is clear from its determinative is that it appears in dual form, which according to Sethe is to denote the two clawy feet of a bird, although it also bears close resemblance to the word *phwj* (hinder-parts) (For this interpretation consult Faulkner’s translation [R.O. FAULKNER, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford, 1969, p. 201ff.]). The *Wörterbuch* cannot give us any further clarification either, beside the fact that some part of the body is meant here. We can agree with Sethe in assuming that as a pair to the earlier passage addressing Isis, we are to understand the word ‘*nn.tj*’ as the two clawy feet of Nephthys the Kite (*dr.t*, the usual form of appearance of the two goddesses in this context) mourning Osiris (qq.v. *Wb* I, 192, 11; K. SETHE, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten* V, Hamburg, 1962, p. 167).

⁸⁹ *EAT* III/1, p. 184-188/fig. 27-31, p. 192.

actually two from the group of four goddesses protecting Osiris) are identified with the thighs (*mn.tj*) of the deceased king (Pyr. 1314a-b). In another text the same goddesses appear as his spine (Pyr. 1547c). This text is part of Spell 580, mentioned already earlier, which describes the slaughtering, cutting up, and eating of the Sethian red ox.⁹⁰ In the first section of the text Horus, i.e. the royal heir representing him, or his deputy the *sm*-priest, addresses the Sethian bull or ox, who has killed his father appearing in the same form. For the sacrificed Sethian ox was cut into 14 pieces, and the various pieces were given to separate gods, as if the spell were the complete reversal of the texts of Spell 315 (Pyr. 148-149), which similarly to Pyr. 1547c are themselves part of yet another ascension text. Each one of the named gods, in the case of the Sons of Horus, they are treated as one collective, is given a piece from the slaughtered animal, while the remnants are given to the souls of Hieraconpolis and Buto. On one hand, this text may be interpreted as the ritual execution of a verdict imposed on the basis of the “eye for an eye” retaliation principle, where the same punishment is inflicted upon Seth, which he himself imposed upon Osiris. On the other hand, in other texts [Spell 570 (Pyr. 1453-1454); Spell 571 (Pyr. 1467)] the deceased king is either likened to or identified with Seth by evading his death as Seth managed to evade his own. It is precisely this latter text of Spell 571 which places the king, turned into a circumpolar star, into the Mansion of the Scorpion. The structure of Pyr. 1546a differs from the similar ones surrounding it. Its translation is somewhat uncertain, and raises the question whether there are two gods mentioned in it, namely Khepri and Atum, or just a single one, i.e. Atum. Here, following Sethe’s interpretation we accept the latter presumption for the following reason: This particular line of the utterance is the one which talks about the distribution of the *hps̥*, the foreleg of the sacrificial bull or ox. Since the group of partaking deities is actually the extended Divine Ennead, with the obvious exception of the victimized gods, Osiris and Seth, we may probably see in the foreleg (*hps̥*) given to the head of the Ennead, i.e. Atum(-Re), the nightly counterpart and revivifier of Osiris, who appears here as the “father of the gods”, i.e. a cosmocrator, the constellation of *Mshṭjw*, transmuted by Atum(-Re) himself. Thereby this ritualistic act may actually be an early precursor of the later Anti/Nemti-narrative to be discussed later in greater detail.⁹¹ As Seth evaded death so does the king evade death, his bones are of iron as those of Seth, and since he resides among the circumpolar stars, it is not at all surprising that Seth is also to be found there. Moret has drawn attention to the fact that burial rituals have changed over time as did the means of preparing the body for burial. In accordance with this prior to the dawning of proper mummification practices the body of the deceased was cut into pieces, flesh and bones alike.⁹² Evidence for this is to be found in Spell 368 and Spell 369 (particularly in Pyr. 639b, and Pyr. 642c and 644a), where the episodes of defeating the enemy and cutting up its body, returning the Eye of Horus (the soul) to the deceased, reassembling his body, putting back his head, and opening his eyes and mouth are

⁹⁰ The red goat, or ox traditionally represented the sacrificial Sethian animal. Its sacrifice was recounted by both Diodorus and Plutarch (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* I, 88, p. 300f; Plutarch, *De Iside*, 31, p. 74ff.).

⁹¹ K. SETHE, *op. cit.*, p. 494-499. In this latter case the defective form *hpr*, amended to *hpr <m>*, would refer to the upper foreleg’s transformation into the lower one. For the objections raised by Faulkner concerning this passage see: R.O. FAULKNER, *op. cit.*, p. 235, n. 3. The entire sentence is the following: *hps̥f hr<j> hpr <m> hps̥f hr<j> [n Jm(w) jt] ntr.w*, “His upper foreleg turned into the lower foreleg for Atum, the father of the gods”. Contrary to Faulkner’s opinion it seems certain, that the first part of the sentence cannot be translated as “Its upper foreleg is on Khopr(er?)”, since *hr* cannot be a preposition and an attribute at the same time. As pointed out above, there seems to be a connection of the dead king as Osiris, and as Seth. Thus, the resolution to this paradoxical situation seems to be the transformation of the offered foreleg of Seth into that of Osiris by Atum.

⁹² A. MORET, *Le rituel de culte divin journalier en Égypte*, Paris, 1902, p. 33.

all to be presented.⁹³

Taken all these into account it is presumable that the ancient sacrificial victim was actually non other than the king himself as a symbol and representative of the Sethian aspect of fertility. The dichotomy may be resolved by Wainwright's theory, that the king was actually a "fertility-king", the earthly representative of the celestial "fertility-god", i.e. Seth. This theory presumes that the life and wellbeing of the entire country depended upon the proper performance of rituals carried out by the king. Accordingly, both of them had to die at a ritually set time, however they could avoid this, as the evidence of the above texts have shown, in the present case by the hoeing of the earth which as a mystical act had to be performed by the king. Contrary to this, Pyr. 1454a directs the king, that in order to evade his death, he should not plough the earth, but instead should keep his arms busy in raising the vault of the sky (i.e. *Nw.t*) as Shu did.⁹⁴ At the "night of the hoeing of the earth" the blood of the Sethian animals was shed before a divine council. The 18th chapter of the Book of the Dead gives a precise description of the ceremony, in which Seth and his companions turned into goats which were then slaughtered, with the shedding of their blood providing the fertility of the earth. The text may refer to a substitute sacrifice for the king, since originally he himself was the Sethian victim to be sacrificed by his successor. The ancient fertility ceremony of the king, the *sed*-festival was intertwined with these events, where his power and fertility had to be proven and regenerated.⁹⁵

The Book of the Day

These reflections and their mobilizing power hold true not only for the previously discussed calendars,⁹⁶ but also for other works of the mortuary literature like the Book of the Dead or the netherworld guides appearing in New Kingdom royal tombs. The most detailed etiological narrative to the above scrutinized story of pJumilhac surfaces in the Book of the Day, which appears in the tomb of Ramesses VI in two versions.⁹⁷ The closing text of 22 columns appearing in the version of the ceiling of the sarcophagus chamber in the third register of the 11th diurnal hour, talks about the four *b3*-souls of the North, who withhold the storm on "that day of the great fight" (*hrw pf n 'h3 '3*). The storm (*nšnj*) refers to Seth, which becomes clear from the word's determinative. A similar fight concocted by Seth and his companions is also

⁹³ We can confer this with the 25th scene of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth (especially with Scene 25e) with particular emphasis on Otto's remark, who in the background of these actions assumed the presence of an old ritual of non-Egyptian origin consisting of the cutting up and reassembling of the desiccated, skeletal body (E. OTTO, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* I, *ÄA* 3, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 51-55; II, p. 78f.).

⁹⁴ The reason for this may probably lie in the following lines (Pyr. 1454b-1455a) explaining, that the king's bones are of iron, and his body, thus he himself is actually an imperishable (i.e. circumpolar) star. The first phrase is a reference to the bones of Seth, thus to the meteoritic iron issuing from the constellation *Mshṯjw*, which resonates well with the second phrase about the king's limbs being (of) a circumpolar star. His stellar nature with plainly Sethian allusions probably means that he has already evaded death, as Seth did, so there is no need for further substitution offering.

⁹⁵ *Urk.* V, 127 (8/XXV)-128 (8/XXVIII) (BD 18); G.A. WAINWRIGHT, *The Sky-Religion in Egypt. Its Antiquity & Effects*, Cambridge, 2011 (1938 First edition), p. 20-30, 53f. As Wainwright remarked, the agricultural nature of the festival, i.e. its connection with the land can be clearly seen from its determinative *ⲛ* (N21) (q.v. *ibid.*, p. 20). From the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, Sethian animals were occasionally replaced by men (q.v. *ibid.*, p. 53f.).

⁹⁶ T.A. BÁCS, *Studies in Ancient Egyptian Hemerology: A Contribution to the History of Divination in the New Kingdom* I, PhD Thesis, Budapest, 1994, p. 48f., 52.

⁹⁷ A. PIANKOFF, É. DRIOTON, *Le livre du jour et de la nuit; Un chapitre sur l'écriture énigmatique*, *BdE* 13, Le Caire, 1942, p. 22ff., 93ff.

mentioned in BD 17 between Horus and Seth (as *hrw pw n ḥ3*),⁹⁸ as well as in the pJumilhac.⁹⁹ As the Book of the Day continues, the four *b3*-souls are towing the sun bark by its bow-warp and stern-warp (actually around the northern celestial pole) with the “crew” of the northern, “imperishable”, i.e. circumpolar stars.¹⁰⁰ These souls, according to the text, are identical with the four stars appearing to the north of *Mshṯjw*, who in BD 17, along with three other gods, are named *3ḥ*-spirits residing behind the *Ḥpš* (i.e. the Bull’s Foreleg), and are identified with the four Sons of Horus.¹⁰¹ The text explains, that four particular stars of the constellation are meant here, which shine at the center of the sky towards the southern side of *S3ḥ*/Orion, until they turn back (*nn*) towards the Western horizon. This is no other than the description of the axial rotation of the Big Dipper, i.e. *Mshṯjw*, around the northern celestial pole, which due to Earth’s precession at the beginning of the 13th century BC has already shifted from the star *Thuban* (α Dra), the Pole Star of the 26th century BC, and was to be found approximately at around the midpoint of the line connecting *Thuban* and *Kochab* (β Umi). In any case, at the latitude of Memphis, and even at that of Thebes, the Big Dipper remained above the horizon. From the time of Dynasty 30, a granite bull-sarcophagus originating from Kôm Abû Yâsîn (JE 86723) [fig. 4] prepared for the sacred bull venerated here by the name *p3-k3-wr*, the depictions of the Big Dipper appear in two strips showing the various positions it took at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end of the night, at dawn during the 12 months of the year. Sadly, the chart is rather inconsistent, and for this reason it cannot be used for dating purposes. On the other hand, the present monument is somewhat special, for its texts identify *Mshṯjw* with Osiris.¹⁰²

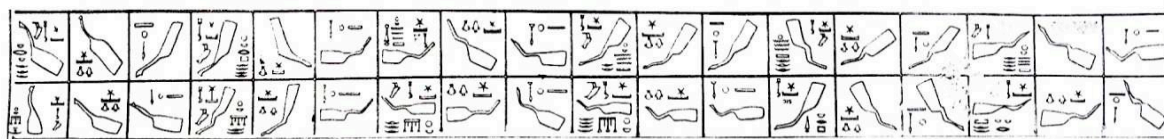


Fig. 4. Segment of the bull sarcophagus from Kôm Abû Yâsîn (source: *EAT* III/2, pl. 24).

Returning to the narrative of the Book of the Day, we may see that the constellation of *Mshṯjw* was tied to two flint-poles with a golden chain which was held fast in the hands of Isis who appeared here in the form of a female hippopotamus. Although the name of latter appears as *Rrt*, i.e. “Sow”, from the determinative it is evident, that we are dealing here with the Hippo of the northern constellations,¹⁰³ while the gods of the horizon surrounding the Bull’s Foreleg

⁹⁸ *Urk.* V, 32 (16/XXX), 52f. (22/LV, LVII-LVIII), 56f. (23/LXII-LXIII).

⁹⁹ J. VANDIER, *op. cit.*, p. 129/XVII, 3; (pl. XVI-XVII).

¹⁰⁰ In a schematized form the phenomenon could be described with the picture of a dome from the top of which hangs a lamp attached to a chain, which after being given an impetus would start rotating around the vertical axis running down from its central point of fixation. Thereby, the movement of the chain would render the superficies of an imagined cone, while the lamp would mark out the circumference of its base in the form of a circle. See also Pogo’s similar idea in reference to the stellar diagram on the coffin fragment of Heny (See: A. POGO, “The Astronomical Inscriptions on the Coffins of Heny (XIIth Dynasty?)”, *Isis* 18/1, 1932, p. 11).

¹⁰¹ *Urk.* V, 41(20/XLI,15)-43(20/LI,17)

¹⁰² *EAT* III/1, p. 49-52, 191; *EAT* III/2, pl. 24; L. KÁKOSY, *Egyiptomi és antik csillaghit*, Budapest, 1978, p. 51.

¹⁰³ Both the pig and the hippopotamus were animals consecrated to Seth. During the course of Pharaonic Egypt keeping and eating swine was held mostly abominable, hence the animal was quite rare. Still, in Maadi and Merimdah-Beni-Salamah locals consumed the animal on a regular basis, which means that it was rather common (G.A. WAINWRIGHT, *The Sky-Religion in Egypt*, 1938, p. 10f.).

were identified with the “water of the gods”. Furthermore, it was Re, who entrusted *Mshṯjw* to Isis lest he proceed towards the water of the gods of the southern sky, who all came into being from Osiris, who in turn resides behind the constellation *Sḫ/Orion*.¹⁰⁴

Among a group of objects appearing on the object friezes of Middle Kingdom coffins, apparently related to certain mortuary rituals, we find a pair of mooring posts with human heads held erect by two kneeling figures. Although the relation of these objects along with the attached bow-warp and stern-warp to mortuary rituals of multiple scenes was already remarked by Jéquier,¹⁰⁵ their deeper context was outlined by Willems, who connected them to Spell 234 (*CT* III, 311a-b), and the Rituals of the Mooring Post. The actual spell is rather short, mentioning the presentation of offerings at the four basins of Khepri and Heqet, the offering to the two mooring posts of the towing-ropes, as well as the turning over of gifts for the deceased. Willems has shown, how the basins of the two deities relate to the primordial waters of Nun, as well as to the fact, that in several New Kingdom tomb representations the basins, with the addition of that of Sokar, are located in the Sacred District. In these tombs the mortuary procession ends here, while in others at the entrance of the tomb, where the presentation of offerings and the Ritual of Opening the Mouth takes place. Some important rituals are performed in the vicinity of these basins, which are places of purification, among them the sleep of the *tekenu*, which ceremony, according to Willems, is basically identical with Scenes 9 and 10 of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth. This is further stressed by the fact, that in TT 21 these scenes along with Scenes 2-3 occur in the Sacred District, close to the above named basins. A place located here called the “women’s tent”, which could have been an ancient institution of female clergy, known earlier as the “acacia house”, officiating at royal funerals was closely tied to the Rituals of the Mooring Post. As Willems pointed out, their placement must be secondary, the mentioned rites being originally tied to “Sais” during the funerary ritual, which actually meant the Place of Embalming. The rituals have strong nautical underpinnings, featuring a boat transporting a priest or priests, and a Kite or Kites, and have a slaughtering scene with the offering of the foreleg of an ox. One of them is the “Überfahrt” while the other the “Riten um die Landepflöcke”, both part of the funerary ritual. As Willems presumed, the scene of the “Überfahrt” with the above crew and “cargo” of the boat approaching a lector priest with the two human headed mooring-posts could have been connected with a rite in the Place of Embalming, around the bier, on the night before the funeral. This rite features libations, and is presumably part of the *Stundenwachen*-ritual, which is also true about the final acts of the “Riten um die Landepflöcke”.¹⁰⁶ These rituals are dedicated to divinities and protective deities, among them the Great Mooring Post goddess, the same goddess who appeared already in Pyr. 794c, Pyr. 884b, Pyr. 1711c identified with a Kite, besides the two other kites Isis and Nephthys, who are themselves counterparts of the two mooring posts,¹⁰⁷ while the latter, i.e. “mooring-post” was an actual title of priestesses in the above mentioned acacia house and in a temple of el-Kab in the Old Kingdom.¹⁰⁸ The set is

¹⁰⁴ A. PIANKOFF, É. DRIOTON, *Le livre du jour et de la nuit*, BdE 13, Le Caire, 1942, p. 23 f., 96.

¹⁰⁵ G. JÉQUIER, “Quelques objets appartenant au rituel funéraire sous le Moyen Empire”, *BIFAO* 15, 1915, p. 153ff.

¹⁰⁶ H. WILLEMS, *op. cit.*, p. 107-116.

¹⁰⁷ As an example for the divinized mooring posts, we find Isis and Nephthys, whose most important role was to protect the body of Osiris, on a canopic chest from the Middle Kingdom, where they were called *Ḳs.t mnj.t mḥ.t.t*, “Isis, the northern mooring post” and *Nb.t-Ḥw.t mnj.t rsj.t*, “Nephthys, the southern mooring post” respectively, although they feature in an inverted order here compared to a related line of Pyramid Texts Spell 548 (Pyr. 1347b) (q.v. G. JÉQUIER, *op. cit.*, p. 164).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155; K. SETHE, *op. cit.* IV, p. 17; H. WILLEMS, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

the same, i.e. the bier in the *w'ḥ.t*, and, as we can see in the tomb of Rekhmire,¹⁰⁹ we encounter the same slaughtering scene with the foreleg and heart of a bull as in *Stundenwachen* and the Ritual of Opening the Mouth. The severed forelegs are presented to the mooring-posts, to which the landing boat is tied with the two ropes. The justifiably raised question concerning the seeming contradiction, namely the improbability for a boat to land in the Embalming Chamber, may be answered on the one hand by Willems' own reply, that is the boat journey is symbolical, where the bier itself was to play the role of the boat, while the libations that of the waters, and the "navigation to Sais".¹¹⁰ From a different point of view, however, there may be another solution to this problem. As we have seen above in the analysis concerning the role of *Mshṯjw* in *Stundenwachen*, the ritual had an apparent astronomical background. If we step further, and take the boat and the shrine to be identical with the bier or the mummification bed of the Osirian deceased, and hence that of Osiris himself, under the tent-like structure, which are actually the arms of the sky goddess, Nut, we may realize that the waters around the boat could be understood as the celestial waters in which the solar boat journeys, the "water of the gods", i.e. the gods of the horizon surrounding *Mshṯjw* in the above mentioned passage of the Book of the Day, while the solar boat is towed by the *ꜣḥ*-souls of BD 17, i.e. the Sons of Horus. But should this identification be correct, the towing-ropes and the mooring posts are to be understood as the counterparts of the golden chain and the flint knives in the hands of the Hippopotamus in the Book of the Day, and in the northern constellations. The hippopotami were seen as water pigs, hence the above mention name of *rr.t*. By this token, the Hippopotamus goddess, in the northern sky could be identified with Nut, who also had a sow form, but also with Taweret, the "Great One", whose role will be discussed in detail later, who could represent the watery regions of the sky. In her form as Hathor Mehet-Weret she could also signify the fertile aspect of the primeval waters of Nun, but the life giving potential or power of water in general. It may be important to mention here, that in the New Kingdom, Taweret was held to be the "Mistress of Pure Water", who revived and nourished the dead.¹¹¹ In this context, we may presume that there could have been a syncretistic connection between her and the goddess of the Great Mooring Post as well. To conclude this section, we may state, that we have identified yet another piece from the celestial puzzle of the group of northern constellations, which actually seems to have been an astral representation of the *Stundenwachen*-liturgy. We may clearly see how the mythical narrative of the New Kingdom text and that of pJumilhac overlap in describing the fixed trajectory of *Mshṯjw*.

The pJumilhac: Anti/Nemti and the animal hide; pChester Beatty I: The contentions of Horus and Seth

The collation of the two narratives

A different myth appearing in pJumilhac talks about a certain Anty or Antywey,¹¹² a deity of dual aspect venerated in the 12th and 18th Upper Egyptian nomes, who was actually identical with the Anty/Nemty/Nemtywey-Antaios of the 10th Upper Egyptian nome, a warlike falcon god, having both a Horus-like and a Sethian aspect. In the myths, however, his role tends to

¹⁰⁹ q.v. fig. 32, in *ibid.*, p. 116.

¹¹⁰ H. WILLEMS, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹¹¹ G. PINCH, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology*, Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford, 2002, p. 141f.

¹¹² In Vandier's French text the spelling Anti, and Antiouy is used.

be tied more to the latter.¹¹³ We need to have a closer look at this narrative in order to gain a deeper understanding about the nature of the main subject of the present paper, the constellation of *Mshṯjw*. Eric Wélvaert's brilliant article on the fossilized bones of Qau el-Kebir has presented an in depth scrutiny of the mythological narratives pertaining to the legends of Anty/Nemty and Seth in the 10th Upper Egyptian nome.¹¹⁴ Although Wélvaert has never touched upon the subject of the constellation *Mshṯjw*, nor its ties to the works of mythological and religious literature, furthermore, his interpretation of the significance of mythical narratives relating to Qau differs in many points from the one expounded in the present article, he provided valuable insight and an important addition to the list of background narratives. Hence, his presumptions will be applied in this section, wherever deemed appropriate for the present study.¹¹⁵ The basis of the narrative is offered by an episode from the story recounting the contentions between Horus and Seth in pChester Beatty I rto, being almost a continuation of the events described there, as Vandier and Wélvaert presumed.¹¹⁶ Here the two contenders both turned themselves into hippopotami and started fighting in the sea, whereupon Horus, infuriated by the mercy his mother, Isis has shown for his opponent Seth, decapitated Isis, who afterwards turned into a headless flint statue. The divine Ennead orders his punishment, yet instead of a trial Seth pursues Horus, and takes a personal vengeance upon him by tearing off and burying his eyes. The weeping Horus is found by Hathor, the Mistress of the Southern Sycamore, who milking a gazelle and pouring its milk into the eye sockets of Horus, returns his sight.¹¹⁷

The actual, lawful punishment is discussed already in the pJumilhac, where we learn, that the crime committed against Isis was actually perpetrated by the Sethian aspect of Anty (i.e. Antywey/Nemty/Nemtywey) in Aphroditopolis (Atfih), in the 22nd Upper-Egyptian nome, in the temple of Hathor, Mistress of the Turquoise, thus the retaliation must be measured out upon this aspect. So the original victim could have been Hathor, the goddess of the nome of Atfih, whose figure came to be assimilated with that of Isis in the Late Period. The skin and flesh of Anty/Nemty's hippopotamus body was removed, because these were his inheritance from his mother, Hesat, a sky-goddess venerated here in the form of a white cow already around the time of the early Middle Kingdom.¹¹⁸ Hesat was known as mother not only to the here discussed *imiut* (here designating a fetish made from the stripped off skin of Anty/Nemty, but also a related form of Anubis), and to the Mnevis- and Apis-bulls. Thus, Anty/Nemty could keep only his bones, these being his inheritance from his father Seth, which in turn came to be embalmed, hence the name *imiut* (*jmj-wt*), "One who is in the mummy-wrappings". The ancient origins of the myth are alluded to by the fact, that *imiut* appears already in Pyr. 2080e as one born from Hesat (*msk3 n jmj-wt msj.n Hs3.t*). The logic of divine retribution here seems to be reversed, for the gods' punishment was measured out upon the maternal part (i.e. the skin and the bones), while the bones, belonging to Seth, remained.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ P. MONTET, *Géographie de l'Égypte Ancienne* II, Paris, 1961, p. 118f.; H. TE VELDE, *Seth, god of Confusion*, *PdÄ* 6, Leiden, 1967, p. 68ff.; E. OTTO, *LÄ* I, 1975, col. 318-319, s. v. Anti; J. VANDIER, *op. cit.*, p. 68f.

¹¹⁴ E. WELVAERT, "The fossils of Qau el Kebir and their role in the mythology of the 10th nome of Upper-Egypt", *ZÄS* 129/2, 2002, p. 166-183.




¹¹⁵ From the texts dealing with the topic of the punishment of Anty/Nemty, we are going to discuss here only the most important mythical narratives. For further study, see: *ibid.*, p. 179f.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.



¹¹⁷ A.H. GARDINER, *Late Egyptian Stories, BiAeg* I, Bruxelles, 1932, p. 48/8, 9-51/10,11.

¹¹⁸ Z. HORVÁTH, "Hathor and her Festivals at Lahun", in G. Miniaci, W. Grajetzki (ed.), *The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1550 BC)* I, *Middle Kingdom Studies* 1, London, 2015, p. 126ff.

¹¹⁹ Besides Osiris with whom it could also appear, the *imiut*-fetish was a symbol mostly associated with Anubis, as the epithet "One who is in the mummy-wrappings" referred likewise to him, as mentioned above. Thus here

We may also learn, that the same happened in the 12th Upper Egyptian nome of *Dw-ft* on account of which gold became a taboo here, this being the material of the skin and the flesh of the god, while his bones were silver. For this reason a statue made of silver was erected for him. His mother Hesat, pouring her milk into his flayed skin and smearing it with an unguent, resuscitated him, but no longer in his earlier form, having gotten rid of his Sethian aspect, but as Horus, while the *imiut*-fetish came to be placed before Osiris, as a replacement of Horus. At this point Hesat becomes identified with Wadjet named Isis in *Dwn- 'n.wj*, the 18th Upper Egyptian nome, and the flayed deity is reborn in the form of a child as Horus. As Welvaert pointed out, the name of the goddess Wadjet is identical with that of the 10th Upper Egyptian nome (*W3d.t*), which might be a clue that it is actually the place of origin of the discussed myth. The close relationship between these locations becomes even more evident if we consider, that the original emblem of the standard, as well as the original name, of the 18th Upper Egyptian nome was actually identical with the ideogram of the chief god of the 12th nome () i.e. that of Anty, who later came to be replaced in the inscriptions of Edfu and Denderah by a god called *Hrw nbw*, Horus of Gold (). From the New Kingdom the emblem of the 18th nome changed to the falcon with outstretched wings () whence its name derives.¹²⁰ It is noticeable, how considerably the differences between Anty, Anubis, the *imiut*, and Horus, originally all different gods have blurred. The situation is similar with Hathor, Isis, and Hesat. This kind of syncretistic blurriness may be due to a willingness to stress a sense of identity which is present at a deeper level. To make things a bit even more complicated, we may notice, that although the narrative of the two myths draws parallels between the characters of Horus and Anty/Nemty, in pChester Beatty I Anty appears as a separate figure, namely a ferryman, who according to the story lets himself bribed by Isis, who offers him her golden ring, whereupon he ferries her to the island where the council of the gods takes place.¹²¹ Later on Anti, whom Re-Horakhty strictly forbade to transport any women to the island, who has any resemblance to Isis, becomes punished by having the front part of his feet cut off, whereupon he pledges before the divine Ennead that from then on gold will be banned

the connection between Anty/Nemty and Anubis is quite conspicuous. Originally, the name of the goddess could have been “The hide of the horned cattle”. The divinity behind her figure is certainly Hathor, while the identification with Isis is only a secondary connection. When discussing the origins of the term *jmj-wt*, Bonnet presumed an earlier, outdated use of the word *wjt*, meaning ‘great’, or ‘high’, which in certain textual sources could have referred to the jackal as firstborn heir, hence to Horus. This relationship with Horus might also give an explanation for the here discussed role and retribution of Anty/Nemty. In one of the stories of pJumilhac Anubis fights Seth, whereupon the blood of Seth and that of his companions (i.e. the enemies of Horus) flows into a lake, which thereby turns into the Lake of Fire, which may have a connection with the *msk.t*-region close to the horizon. From the continuation we may learn, that by means of the *szh.w*-liturgies, Thot and Anubis “made the head of Osiris be able to talk”. Here we are definitely dealing with the sacral moment of reanimation described in Pyramid Text Spells 368 and 369 and in the 25th scene of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth of identical context. After this, the legend of pJumilhac recalls, that Anubis having turned himself into a falcon took the head of Osiris into the district of *Dwn- 'n.wj*. Probably the fact, that Horus and Anubis are actually identical becomes most evident at this point, reinforcing the same ideas described by the 24th section of BD 17 (*Wb* I, 73, 14-15; *RÄRG*, p. 324, 402f.; consult also: *Urk.* V, 61(24/LXVIII-LXIX); A. MORET, *Le rituel de culte divin journalier en Égypte*, BdE 14, Paris, 1902, p. 45f.; J. VANDIER, *op. cit.*, p. 63ff.; 120/IX, 1-2; 121f./XI, 18-22; E. WELVAERT, “The fossils of Qau el Kebir and their role in the mythology of the 10th nome of Upper-Egypt”, *ZÄS* 129/2, 2002, p. 174ff.).

¹²⁰ P. MONTET, *Géographie de l'Égypte Ancienne* II, Paris, 1961, p. 129ff., 172 f. [See also as  (12th nome),  (18th nome)]; J. VANDIER, *op. cit.*, p. 63ff., 120/IX, 1-3, 124/XII, 22-XIII, 10; E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

¹²¹ A.H. GARDINER, *LES*, p. 43/5,4-44/6,2. Actually, Anty appeared in a somewhat perturbed inscription under the emblem of the 18th Upper Egyptian nome claiming (?) to be the ferryman of the Royal Mansion (*hnw hwt-nsw.t hr 'nty*). q.v. A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 172f., fig. 16.

in his city.¹²² Vandier, approaching the problem with due caution opined, that the interconnections between the elements of the three intertwined legends appearing in the final, amalgamated narrative of pJumilhac are so complex, that it does not seem to be possible to mark out the original, distinctive narratives themselves. Hence, the origin of the here discussed legend remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the common ground seems to be the relationship between Anty and Hathor. Thus in case there indeed existed a direct relationship between them, it could have originated in the 10th Upper Egyptian nome, housing dominant cults for both the dualistic Anty/Nemty on the eastern, and for Hathor on the western side of the Nile.¹²³

The relationship between Hathor, Seth, and Anty/Nemty

As we have seen, Anty had a Sethian side, and this aspect had a connection with Hathor. In terms of the mythological background discussed here, this relationship had a close link, which was the notion of *gold*. From earliest times Hathor bore the name “the Gold” or “the Golden One” (*nb*). The origin of this epithet is thus far uncertain. According to Bleeker, the goddess may have received it on account of the timeless, glittering and immortal features she and the metal had in common. But there is also another explanation. The most important cult centre of Hathor was at Denderah, which stood very close to the city of Ombos, in its Egyptian name *Nbw.t/Nbj.t* or *Nb.t* (“Gold city”) in the 5th Upper Egyptian nome, which was the central and ancient cult centre of Seth (hence its Greek name Τά Τυφώνια), who was venerated here under the name *Nbj.tj*, or “The Ombite”, i.e. “The One of Gold city”.¹²⁴ Bleeker along with Daumas, in reference to G. Jéquier’s theory, remarked, that originally two gods, a god and a goddess, were venerated here, namely *Nbj.tj*, and *Nb(w)* or *Nb(w).t*. The goddess *Nb(w)/Nb(w).t* is supposed to have moved to the neighbouring Denderah along with a group of denizens of Ombos, and took the name of Hathor there. We can agree with Bleeker in presuming, that this theory is hypothetical, nevertheless, in view of the here outlined presumptions, it might gain some further relevance.¹²⁵ This city between Naqada and Ballas might have been the centre of a prehistoric empire governed by Seth, from which the later Upper Egypt, known as the kingdom of Seth of the early historic times was formed.¹²⁶ In the third element of the royal titular, the so called Horus of Gold, or Gold Falcon name which is also known as *rn n nbw*, i.e. “Gold name”, there appears a royal falcon perching on the sign of gold. Since gold was the skin of the gods, the king symbolized by the falcon could appear as the incarnation of the god of kingship. However, the sign of gold could also signify the ancient residence of Seth,


¹²² A.H. GARDINER, *op. cit.*, p. 46/7, 12-47/8, 1. Welvaert explained the motive of the severed feet with the fossilized hippo bones found at Qau. These were first smoothed by the current of the river, then by the grains sand through wind erosion, thus smaller bones constituting the feet became swiftly crumbled (E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, p. 178).

¹²³ J. VANDIER, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, CNRS, Paris, 1961, p. 68ff. Vandier here called attention to the fact, that both the 10th and the 22nd Upper Egyptian nomes had important cult centres dedicated to Hathor bearing the same Greek name of Aphroditopolis. Nevertheless, he also claimed, that more solid proof emphasising the relationship between the two regions is still wanting. He also remarked, that Anty/Nemty in the 10th nome is named Antywey, who appears here as two separate falcon-formed deities, usually identified with Horus and Seth, but as Vandier assumed, Horus’ counterpart is most likely Anty. The name in turn refers to the two sides of the deity, i.e. “The Two Clawed Ones”.

¹²⁴ A.H. GARDINER, *AEO* I, 28f.; *RÄRG*, p. 542; L. STÖRK, *LÄ* II, 1977, col. 730, s. v. Gold.

¹²⁵ C.J. BLEEKER, *Hathor and Thoth. Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion*, *SHR* 26, Leiden, 1973, p. 25f.; Fr. DAUMAS, *LÄ* II, 1977, col. 1024, s. v. Hathor.

¹²⁶ F. GOMAA, *LÄ* IV, 1982, col. 568, s. v. Ombos.

thereby the god himself. Hence, the symbol of the third name also represented Horus, who became victorious over Seth, the Ombite in the warfare that occurred between the two ancient lands.¹²⁷ If we hark back to the above mentioned fact about the later symbol of Anti, chief god of 12th Upper Egyptian nome, we may see that it is identical with the Horus of Gold name. It makes even greater sense if we take into account, that the neighbouring 11th Upper Egyptian nome on the opposite bank of the Nile, actually the smallest of all, belonged to Seth who appeared here as *Šzy*. This is conspicuous from the nome standard, which carries either a crouching Seth animal, or, as in Edfu and in some Late Period lists, a donkey with a knife in its back. In Abydos, where the representations of Seth would never be allowed to appear, the figure is replaced by the expression or *ḥwj-n.t* or *ḥwj-bb.t* / *b3b3.t* (“Who Stirs the Water”), which, according to Montet, is a reference to Seth as hippopotamus in the marshwaters. From the representations of the White Chapel it becomes clear, that originally there were two prominent deities venerated here side-by-side, namely Horus and Seth/*Šzy*. The related local priestly titles appearing in the lists of Denderah are *šḥtp* and *ḥtpy*, “the pacifier” and “the pacified” in reference to the ancient myth of the strife between the two gods. Furthermore a local region is called *j3.t Ntr.wj*, “the mound of the two gods”, appearing in Edfu as , yet another allusion to the ancient narrative. It is noteworthy, that both gods appear as falcons, not unlike Antywey in the neighbouring 10th nome, thus, in the light of the apparent dualities, the question concerning the true meaning of the falcon perching on the sign of gold, and its relationship with Hathor remains still open.¹²⁸

The connection between Hathor and Seth is emphasized by a further circumstance, namely by the fact, that Anty who was also a patron deity of the east, could appear in the Sinai-region as a form of Seth, who was held to be lord of the desert, liminal regions, and foreign lands.¹²⁹ In these regions, however, Hathor as Mistress of the Turquoise (i.e. *Mfk3t*) was also held in high esteem on account of her temples at the turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadim in the Sinai-peninsula, or those in Kôm Abu-Billou, in the 3rd Lower Egyptian nome, and the one in the 19th (or 8th) near the Wadi-Tumilat, both situated in respective liminal regions of the Delta. Serabit el-Khadim was one of the most important Egyptian Temples on foreign soil, actually in the deserted region of the Sinai. Ever since the 3rd millennium BC she was identified with the Semitic patron deity “Lady of Byblos”, a local mother-goddess, as yet another solid proof for her strong contacts with foreign, in this case Semitic lands. This latter fact is all the more important, since Seth, through being identified with the god of the Hyksos, had close associations with Semitic deities, among them with Baal and Reshep. The latter was tied to Astarte and also to Anat, who later became identified with the figure of Hathor.¹³⁰ In the temple of Kôm Abu-Billou, her high priest was called *s3k-ḥ3.t*, “Who Pulls Together the Forepart” (with the rest of the body), while the one officiating in that of the 22nd Upper Egyptian nome in Aphroditopolis had the name *smn-ḥ3.t*, “Who Sets in Place the Forepart” (upon the rest of the body). As Vandier has pointed out, this refers to Hathor, the goddess of the myth. He also opined that this latter priestly title was associated with others used in the 9th

¹²⁷ J.P. ALLEN, *Middle Egyptian*, New York, 2010 (2nd ed.), p. 67; H. FRANKFORT, *Kingship and the Gods*, Chicago, London, 1978 (1948), p. 46; W. HELCK, *LÄ II*, 1977, col. 740, s. v. Goldhorusname; H. TE VELDE, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹²⁸ P. MONTET, *op. cit.*, p. 124-130. Strangely enough, this dichotomy seems to be the heart of the matter, as we will see later. According to Montet, Seth could have had a vast region under his command in this part of Middle Egypt, most of which were won over by other gods.

¹²⁹ *RÄRG*, p. 703ff.; H. TE VELDE, *LÄ V*, 1984, col. 910, s. v. Seth.

¹³⁰ H. FRANKFORT, *op. cit.*, p. 292; *RÄRG*, p. 705

to the 13th Upper Egyptian nomes.¹³¹

The modern name of the city where the myth is supposed to have originated is Qau el-Kebir, preserving the ancient *Dw-k3*, the later Coptic *ⲧⲕⲱⲟⲩ*, *ⲧⲕⲱⲟⲩ*, which was probably the name of the local necropolis. The city's other ancient Egyptian name was *Tbw*, while the Greeks called it Antaioupolis after Antaios, the giant of Greek mythology.¹³² In Welsaert's summary expounding the excavations in Qau we learn, that large deposits of black, fossilized animal bones were unearthed first by Schiaparelli in 1905-06 and the Ernst-Von-Sieglin-Expedition in 1913-14, followed by Brunton and Petrie in 1923 and 1924. These finds were mostly blackened, heavy, fossilized remains, which, although included those of various other species, even that of humans, comprised mostly of hippopotamus bones. The 1923-1924 excavations included finds consisting of two huge pit deposits collected in the mouth of tomb shafts, mostly of fossilized hippopotamus bones and ivory fragments of cosmetic items, placed in older tombs. Brunton's 1929-1931 excavations near Seth's Dynasty 19 temple in Matmar, and its temenos wall discovered similarly a huge amount of fossilized bones and ivories. The hippopotamus bones at both locations were cleared of all tissues of skin and flesh, then wrapped in bandages and buried, similarly to the skin of Anty/Nemty, which was also removed, as being the manifestation of the dual deity's Sethian aspect. As the priests of the 12th Upper Egyptian nome banned gold due to their respect for the deity, the hunting of hippopotami came to be prohibited in the 10th and 11th nomes. The priests have undoubtedly seen at the buried bones as the remains of their skinned and dismembered god.¹³³ Wainwright has made the important observation, that the ancient idea recorded by Plutarch claiming that the bones of Seth were of iron has found fair enough proof in the huge, heavy, lustrous, fossilized hippopotamus bones. He also referred to a stela unearthed by Petrie in Qau, which was dedicated to Seth and represented a hippopotamus in a papyrus swamp.¹³⁴ Considering the interlinking pattern related to Qau and the tangibly intense cultic presence of Seth in the region, it might be worth mentioning yet another Qau find, which might serve as a further evidence for an early cultic belief, which associated the locally venerated god with the northern constellation of *Mshtjw*, the main subject of this study.

The find in question is a hieratic pottery bowl, possibly from about Dynasty 6, carrying two letters to the dead, authored by a man named Shepsi addressing his deceased parents to intervene in his favour and to make a lawsuit on account of the hardships, apparently caused by his deceased brother. On the inner surface (recto) we find the address to the father, while on the outer (verso) the one to the mother. The two different addresses are quite similar in terms of content, but also in terms of form. At the beginning of the recto, Shepsi mentions the bringing of the foreleg of an ox by his father, who offered it for him and for a certain Newa'yof to eat it with him. As a parallel, on the verso Shepsi recalled the bringing of seven quails requested by his mother, who after having received the birds, ate them.¹³⁵ The parallel

¹³¹ C.J. BLEEKER, *op. cit.*, p. 72f; J. VANDIER, *op. cit.*, p. 64, 69f.

¹³² H. BEINLICH, *LÄ V*, 1984, col. 48, s. v. Qau el-Kebir; E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹³³ G. BRUNTON, *Qau and Badari III*, London, 1930, p. 18ff.; *id.*, *Matmar*, London, 1948, p. 65f.; W. GRAJETZKI, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, s. v. Qau el-Kebir, <<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002dmv5s>> (accessed 12 April 2018), p. 8; *RÄRG*, p. 528; E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 167ff., 175. According to Wainwright, in the predynastic strata of Maadi and Merimdah-Beni-Salamah upright hippopotamus bones were found on several occasions (G.A. WAINWRIGHT, *The Sky Religion in Egypt*, p. 11).

¹³⁴ *Id.*, "Iron in Egypt", *JEA* 18, 1932, p. 14. Also consult: G. BRUNTON, *Qau and Badari III*, London, 1930, p. 20; pl. xxxii, xxxiii/6.

¹³⁵ G. BRUNTON, A. GARDINER, F.I. PETRIE, *Qau and Badari I*, London, 1927, p. 76ff.; A.H. GARDINER,

drawn here may seem artificial at first sight. However, taking into account the similarities of form between the two letters, and the fact that the bowl was found as part of a burial equipment of a tomb situated in Qau, a locality well known for its veneration of Seth, we may probably allow for the presumption of a hidden reference. The leg and skull of a calf interred with the deceased could have served as meat-offerings, and the soul-houses used in this region carrying the relief of the haunch of an ox or a calf were believed by Brunton to be its substitutes.¹³⁶ He had the same idea about the predynastic and protodynastic graves of nearby Matmar, which along with later Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period graves included bones, mostly the skull, and the leg or foreleg of a gazelle, a calf or some small ruminant at the feet of the body, which he held to be the remains of pet animals, when found at the foot end of graves. Pets could have belonged to individuals of both sexes. However, supposed meat offerings were found only in tombs of males.¹³⁷ Could it be a mere coincidence, that in many cases only the leg, and/or the skull of the animal remained? The fact, that many of the interred bodies had the head and the upper part of the body either missing, or disturbed poses yet another question, namely could this be only due to plundering? The finds in a Dynasty 6 grave (804) which had a head in the pelvis of the body with a string of beads around it, along with a wooden head-rest, together with those in a Dynasty 8 grave (5323) where the head was at a distance from the body, yet some gold beads remained at the neck, refer to something else, which instead could be of ritualistic or devotional purport. This might be further confirmed by a grave dating to Dynasty 7 or 8 (620), in which beside the body of the interred person the bones of a calf were found, the positioning of which was deliberately paired with that of the human, i.e. the skull and the fore-quarter of the animal were placed at the head, while its two legs at the feet of the human body.¹³⁸ As we have discussed above, in the Ritual of Opening the Mouth the cut off foreleg, i.e. *Mšhtjw*, along with the iron adze by the same name was used to reanimate the mummified body of the deceased or its statue. Thus, the interred animal bones and the soul-house reliefs, besides having been meat-offerings, could have just as well served the purpose of perpetuating this crucial act of the burial. If we carry on with this premise, which it undoubtedly is, we may see that since *mšhtjw/hpš* was treated as the foreleg of Seth, which was symbolically, and functionally identical with the *Mšhtjw*-adze of the ritual, in essence it was identical with the constellation by the same, or related, name (i.e. *Mšhtjw/hpš*). This in turn would suggest, that the interred leg bones of calves, and the haunch-reliefs of soul-houses were meant to be references to the constellation as the dual symbol of destruction and reanimation, death and glorification, while the removed head and forepart could have been related to the narrative discussed above about the punishment of Anty/Nemty or Seth. With all this in mind, it may be worth considering, whether the two letters of the Qau bowl mentioning the meal of the bull's foreleg and the meal of the seven quails had anything to do with the constellation Bull's Foreleg, and its seven stars.

On a rock-stela ordained by Ramesses III, which was found near Qau, the dual aspects of Anty/Nemty are depicted separately, where the king stands flanked from one side by the Horusian, and from the other by the Sethian aspect, both of them wearing the double crown and holding the king's hand in one of their hands, and an *nh*-sign turned towards him in the other. A small, but all the more significant detail is the feather appearing behind the crown of Seth. Welvaert rejected the possibility of an early Antaios-representation with a reference to

K. SETHE, *Egyptian Letters to the Dead. Mainly from the Old and Middle Kingdoms*, London, 1928, 3ff.; 17ff.; pl. II, IIA, III, IIIA.

¹³⁶ G. BRUNTON, A. GARDINER, FL. PETRIE, *Qau and Badari I*, p. 67.

¹³⁷ G. BRUNTON, *Matmar*, London, 1948, p. 22.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32, 36, 43.

Libya by the ostrich plume, and instead purported to identify a positive aspect of Seth, who defeated Apophis, hence the object is non other, than a feather of *m3'ṯ*. He furthermore referred to two other reliefs depicting Anty/Nemty as Antaios, dating from the Roman Period, who appeared here in Greek attire, wearing a pair of ostrich feathers, with Nephthys, the consort of Seth in ancient Egyptian mythology, on his side. He is shown sacrificing an antelope, an animal well known for its Sethian character, with a vine- or ivy-tendrill growing before him, which in turn seems to be a conspicuous reference to Dionysus, whose name even appears on one of the reliefs. Ever since Dynasty 19/20 on account of being the consort of Seth, Nephthys had her own cult tied to that of Seth, and from the time of the Late Period also to that of Antaios, in their respective cult centres, hence also in Qau.¹³⁹ Welvaert remarked that the Greeks and Romans have identified the fossilized bones of prehistoric mammals they have found in the region of ancient Tingis (Tangiers, Morocco) with their giant Antaios, who was defeated by Heracles, so it was easy for them to identify him in Qau with the figure of Anty/Nemty.¹⁴⁰

Anty/Nemty in the Cairo Calendar (C rto XIII-XIV)

The figure of Anty/Nemty surfaces again in the Cairo Calendar, which we have already mentioned above on account of the Festival of *Mshtjw*, on III *3h.t*, day 13 and 14 repeating several points of the narrative of pChester Beatty I describing the contentions of Horus and Seth.¹⁴¹ Since the title is broken in the remaining versions, our exact knowledge concerning the contents is somewhat deficient. All we know is that something was done against (?) Anty/Nemty on the day of the procession, or coming forth of Isis, and this action seems to have been the cutting off of a certain body part. This is also confirmed by Leitz, and due to the obvious parallels of the day with the other story, it might have been the forepart of his feet. It may be worth noting, that the month in question is that of Hathor, and the text of the calendar talks about the journey of the *nšm.t*-barque of Osiris to Abydos. In the barque Seth, turning himself into the form of an old man, probably into that of the old sun-god, tried to bribe Anty/Nemty with gold to ferry him to the West who in turn accepts the offer. This section of the narrative may be paralleled with that of Isis turning herself into an old woman and bribing the ferryman with her golden ring. Then upon entering the gods realized what Seth has done in the Embalming Chamber to the body parts, or the body of Osiris.¹⁴² Afterwards, Seth and his companions took the form of Sethian small cattle, then the gods piled them up for animal sacrifice,¹⁴³ shared them, and flayed(?) Anty/Nemty, as a punishment.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ E. GRAEFE, *LÄ IV*, 1982, col. 458f., s. v. Nephthys.

¹⁴⁰ E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, p. 170ff.

¹⁴¹ Chr. LEITZ, *Tagewählerei. Das Buch h3t nh3 ph.wy dt und verwandte Texte I. Textband*, p. 119-122.

¹⁴² *h'w* may be translated either as members, or as the collective of these, the body itself. It seems more likely that the word body is meant here, and since the text applies a perfective relative form (*jrj.n.Stš*), Seth has already committed his crime, which from the clue of parallel texts could have been the hacking of the body. The sadness felt by the gods on account of the affairs that happened to the divine body/or body parts and Anty/Nemty, mentioned on the next day, seems to confirm the above premise (Chr. LEITZ, *Tagewählerei I*, p. 122).

¹⁴³ *hry*; Leitz proposed solutions for the translation of this uncertain word. It seems almost certain, that what we have here is an overlap between the words *hrw*-enemy (*Wb III*, 321, 7-13; 322, 1) and *hry.t*, sacrificial animals (*Wb III*, 322, 6-13; 323, 2-7), thus the sacrificed hostile animals, also referred to by the word *k3* ("high") and the context itself.

¹⁴⁴ Leitz offers a fitting solution by pointing at the scribal failure, which most probably arose from the similitudes between the writing of the determinative of *jnm*, "skin" and that of the word *ns*, "tongue" in hieratic. Thus

So here again we encounter the motif of the sacrifice of Sethian animals, and the punishment of Anti/Nemty by mutilation, on account of which gold became banned in Anty/Nemty's house (probably temple). It may be worth mentioning, that in one of the stories of pJumilhac Thoth creates the lake of 'nbw by using his magic in order to prevent Seth from reaching the *w'b.t*, The embalming chamber of Osiris. Contrary to this, however, in one of the texts from Edfu (*Edfu* IV, 220,5-7) it is Nemty(wey)-Seth, who was albeit punished by the Horus of Edfu for the misdeeds he committed in the form of a hippopotamus, after the cutting off of his Sethian part, was embalmed by the same god to be able to resurrect. So what we are dealing here is not only the resurrection of Anty/Nemty as Horus Maati, as Welvaert presumed, but also with a reference to the reassembling, embalming and rebirth of the body of Osiris.¹⁴⁵

Anty/Nemty in Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead

In section 23 of Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead the figure of Anty/Nemty appears, although with a different name. The given passage is the following: "(...) Save N. from this god of mysterious form, whose two eyebrows are the two arms of the balance, on that night of calling to account the Robber."¹⁴⁶ About the meaning of the named night, mentioned in the main text, the following gloss expounds, that it is the "night of the flame and the slaughtered ones"; concerning the god of mysterious form it tells, that he is "the one who brings his own part" and "the one who lassoes from among the wicked ones to his slaughtering block, to massacre *b3*-souls". Afterwards, going beyond circumscriptions, a second gloss identifies the god with Shezmu, the mutilator of Osiris, and also with Apophis, "who has justice in one head". The chain of associations then goes on explaining, that Apophis is actually Horus, "who has two heads, one bearing justice, the other bearing wickedness; who does wickedness to those acting wickedly, and justice to those who come bearing it". Finally we learn that this god of dual aspects is the Great Horus of Letopolis, who is besides identical with Thoth, Nefertem, the son of Bastet, and the "(divine) council, that keeps away the affairs of the enemies of the Lord of All". The structure of the text is seemingly impenetrable, still it is clear that here we are dealing with a Sethian and a Horus-like aspect of Horus. Shezmu as the mutilator of Osiris and Apophis both represent the Sethian aspect. Concerning the other personalities of the variants, on account of the two arms of the balance we may understand the presence of Thoth, who in the Judgement-scene of BD 125 often appears in the form of a baboon overseeing the propriety of the weighing, or in that of a man with ibis-head recording the confession of the deceased's soul.¹⁴⁷ His appearance as Nefertem son of Bastet is probably a reference to his martial aspect, who in the role of punisher is also known as the son of Sakhmet, and in BD 125 can be a member or even the head of the divine tribunal judging the deceased.¹⁴⁸ Apparently, the text cited above is a reference to the Judgement-scene of BD 125. Thus Anty/Nemty, yet again, appears in the context of a trial waiting for a judgement, with the composite creature Ammut, who is related to the Hippopotamus goddess of the northern

instead of the word tongue and its cutting, the text speaks about the pulling off of the skin, as in the parallel story of pJumilhac (Chr. LEITZ, *Tagewählerei* I, p. 122; *id.*, *Tagewählerei* II, Taf. 13-14).

¹⁴⁵ E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, p. 178f., 181. The plot is set in the 10th Upper Egyptian nome, thus although the ongoing contention of the texts is between Horus and Seth, it is clear, that the dual god Anty/Nemty(wey) is meant here.

¹⁴⁶ *Urk.* V, 56 (23/LXI).

¹⁴⁷ E. NAVILLE, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch, Der XVIII. Bis XX. Dynastie. Aus verschiedenen Urkunden zusammengestellt* I, 1886, Reprint, Graz, 1971, p. CXXXVI.

¹⁴⁸ H. SCHLÖGL, *LÄ* IV, 1982, col. 379, s. v. Nefertem.

constellations, before him, who is likewise waiting for the verdict of the tribunal. Furthermore, judging from the context, the council keeping away the enemy and its affairs may perhaps be related to the forty-two judges of BD 125, or probably the *h3.tjw*-demons of pJumilhac. The god appearing here with two heads, thus bearing both a Horus-like and a Sethian aspect, is evidently identical with Antaios, the Anty/Nemty of the 10th Upper Egyptian nome, who appears in further netherworld books, namely in the Book of Amduat, and the Book of Gates as *Hr.wjzff*.¹⁴⁹ As clearly pointed out by H. te Velde, the scene of the two embracing (uniting) *h3*-souls appearing in section 21 of BD 17, contrary to the Osiris-Re pair of most sources, in a variant (Sq7Sq) of the earlier Coffin Text version is said to represent the unification of Horus and Seth, which consequently refers, yet again, to Anty/Nemty. This unification however appeared in the *msk.t*.¹⁵⁰

The Ritual of Opening the Mouth and the Daily Temple Ritual

At this point we need to examine the mythological roots of yet another mortuary ritual we have already touched upon earlier in this study. The scene 23 of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth is act of sacrificial slaughtering, in which an Upper-Egyptian long-horned bull was brought forth, and having been knelt upon, its foreleg and heart were cut off (23/Ia-b). From certain variants it becomes clear (Nos. 7, 83), that before the removal of the foreleg they also cut off the head of the animal. During the next episode, one of the main characters of the ritual, called the “Great Kite”, whispered the following words into the ear of the animal: “It is your lips that have done this against you. Does your mouth open already?” (23/IIa). The phrase is a clear parallel with an episode of the Horus and Seth story in pChester Beatty I, in which Isis tricked Seth into pleading guilty, then turning herself into a kite measured out almost the same words upon him: “Weep for yourself! It is your very mouth that said this, it is your very intellect that judged on you. What do you want then?” Then a goat and a goose were brought forth, and their heads were also cut off (23/IIb). Afterwards, in the final sequence of the scene a verbal affirmation of the destruction of enemies took place (23/III). Otto has opined, that originally the slaughtering consisted only of the sacrificing of the bull hence the goat and the goose are actually extensions to the sacrifice. From this fact, and from the parallels with the Horus and Seth narrative, it is evident, despite Otto’s doubts, that the sacrificial animal was identified with Seth, and the enemy of the deceased.¹⁵¹ Here followed scenes 24 and 25, in the course of which the thigh and the heart were offered to the deceased or to his/her statue. This in turn was followed by the scenes of opening the mouth of the deceased with various instruments.¹⁵² The slaughtering and offering scenes were repeated in scenes 43-46.¹⁵³ The most complete depiction of the 75 scenes of the full ritual is found in the Dynasty 18 Theban tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100). Here it is plainly noticeable, that in scenes

¹⁴⁹ H. TE VELDE, *Seth, god of Confusion. A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, PdÄ 6, Leiden, 1967, p. 68ff.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70; *Urk.* V, 48 (21/LI-LII); Spell 335 (CT IV, 412); H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, OLA 70, Leuven, 1996, p. 266. According to the New Kingdom version of BD 17, the two *h3*-souls are identical with two forms of Horus (Horus-Protecting-His-Father and Horus-Without-His-Eyes-In-His-Forehead (Mekhentienirti), and also with those of Shu and Tefnut.

¹⁵¹ E. OTTO, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual I. Text*, ÄA 3, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 43ff.; *ibid.*, II. *Kommentar*, p. 73-76; A.H. GARDINER, *LES*, p. 45, 6, 13-7, 1.

¹⁵² E. OTTO, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual I*, p. 47-55; *ibid.*, II. *Kommentar*, p. 76-80.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, I. *Text*, p. 96-110; *ibid.*, II. *Kommentar*, p. 102-106.

23 and 43 the female priestess of the “Great Kite” is also present.¹⁵⁴ In the same tomb, on the scene presenting the beginning of the mortuary ceremonies appears the depiction of a lake or a pool with a barque, with two figures standing within it. The two are catching a heart and the severed foreleg of one of the sacrificed Sethian animals, so that upon landing at the sanctuary of the deceased they could bring it to him. The Chapter 113 of the Book of the Dead talks about the two hands (or the two eyes), which in this text belong(s) to Horus and are said to be cut off by Isis, then caught by Sobek with a net and brought back to Horus, to be put back at their proper place by Isis. The two arms are actually the god’s two eyes.¹⁵⁵ Based on Fraser’s ideas, Baly stressed that behind the butchering of the Sethian animal and the cutting out of its heart stands the basic notion of the ritual, which aims to regain the soul of the deceased for him/her, which was gulped down by Seth. We may agree with Moret, that the act is concerned with the actual recovering and healing of the lost Eye of Horus, and the picture of the heart fished out from the water in the previously mentioned scene is a clear reference to the soul of the deceased, while the foreleg is identical with the Sethian animal gobbling it.¹⁵⁶ This is also manifestly evident from the connections, examined also by Moret, that are present between the ceremonies of the Daily Temple Ritual and the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, since in the pBerlin 3055 variant of the former (Chapters VII-VIII) the eye of Horus and the viscera of Osiris are interchangeable.¹⁵⁷ The representations of the Daily Temple Ritual in the Abydos temple of Sethi I appear on the walls of seven separate sanctuaries dedicated to seven deities, among them to Sethi I himself. These sanctuaries, save for that of the king, are almost identical and follow a single pattern, still they are incomplete. The Berlin papyrus, despite the fact that it is the most complete one with altogether sixty-six chapters, could be an abridged

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, II. *Kommentar*, Abb. 1. About the fact that the female figure is identical with the goddess appearing in Coffin Text Spell 229 as Isis see: H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, OLA 70, Leuven, 1996, p. 96f. Just as the slaughtering scene of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, Spell 229 stood for the punishment, and actually the destruction of the Sethian enemy. As Willems has also emphasized, the scene with the same function, also in the presence of the Kite, appeared at several places in the late Ritual of *Stundenwachen* (qq.v. H. JUNKER 1910, *op. cit.*, p. 51f., 55ff., 112f., 120ff.).

¹⁵⁵ A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 40f.; E. NAVILLE, *op. cit.*, p. CXXV (var. Aa.). It is not only the relationship between the two figures that needs to be emphasized here, but also the crocodile embodying Sobek, which in this context could be a possible hint to one of the crocodiles of the northern constellations. This could be either the one appearing in the hand or on the back of the Hippopotamus goddess, who is actually identical with Isis, or the one called *s3k* or *h(3)k(w)*. Be this supposition correct, the closest match could probably be the constellation called *ḥtp-rd.wj* (“restful of feet”). Concerning this name Parker and Neugebauer claimed, with a reference to Gardiner, that it also appeared as an attestable epithet of Sobek at least since the time of the Middle Kingdom (*EAT* III/1, p. 194).

¹⁵⁶ T.J.C. BALY, “Notes on the Ritual of Opening the Mouth”, *JEA* 16, No. 3/4, 1930, p. 173f., 177; A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 33ff., 41ff.; E. SCHIAPARELLI, *Libro dei funerali degli antichi egiziani* I, Roma, Torino, Firenze, 1882, p. 84f. Presumably we have more to deal with here, than that supposed by Schiaparelli, who argued, that the sacrifice of the bull’s foreleg for the deceased at this point may be likened to those magical texts in which the originally negative power of divine creatures, demons belonging to the retinue of Seth, or that of Seth himself, is used for opposite ends, i.e. for positive purposes. Taking into consideration the further mythological parallels examined in the present paper, the Sethian power, which may probably be called re-creative, opening the mouth on one hand, yet killing Osiris on the other, might refer to a deeper interrelation pertaining to a specific and essential meaning, which becomes manifest in the duality, or dichotomy apparently present in the figure of Anty/Nemty, and between the pairs of Hathor and Seth, and that of Osiris and Seth. The attire of the *sm*-priest playing the role of the officiating son could also refer to this idea, it having been a panther-skin, since, according to Moret, the panther was one of the most important animals of all to have played the role of Seth. It was believed that Seth killed Osiris by water, though other sources claim he did it with his foreleg, with the coming of the inundation, however, water also became a symbol of the resurrection of Osiris, much like the bull’s foreleg in the here discussed scene of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth (H. TE VELDE, *Seth, god of Confusion*, p. 86f).

¹⁵⁷ A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

version of a longer ritual service-book used in the daily cult of Amun in the god's temple at Karnak, and in terms of age is somewhat later (Dynasty 22) than the texts of Sethi I. The daily ritual is a combination of older solar and later Osirian ceremonial elements, which were performed separately until their amalgamation during Dynasty 18. The original starting point was the ritual of the daily morning toilet in the *pr dwꜣy.t*, which was performed on the king, then on the cult statue of the god, embodying the sun-god waiting to be reborn at the eastern horizon.¹⁵⁸ Originally both were enacted by the king as the son, i.e. the heir of the god for the sake of his father. The king could be represented by an officiating priest in both rituals, which was actually the common practice, whose identity with the divine seed was thus confined to the time span of the performance of the ritual service, he nevertheless kept symbolizing the king as the son, and thus the divine heir.¹⁵⁹ In both rituals: (1) animals representing Seth were sacrificed, and (2) their hearts and cut forelegs were placed before the statue of the deceased, (3) who, or mutatis mutandis the god, was wrapped into the flayed animal's skin. The fact that the Ritual of Opening the Mouth appearing in the tomb, and the divine cult are basically, intrinsically the same rite, can be clearly deduced from the Abydene temple reliefs recording the Daily Temple Ritual. Initially the temple ritual was the mortuary rite of Osiris the individual variants of which became the Daily Temple Ritual of other gods.¹⁶⁰ The deceased, or the cult-statue of the god, was originally wrapped into a slaughtered animal's hide (*mskꜣ/msk.t*), from which, similarly to his/her own soul, he/she could reborn. The son returned the regained soul of his father by embracing his mummy or his statue, it being the prerequisite of the life in the netherworld. Nevertheless, the wrapping into the *msk.t* could also represent the passing through the *msk.t*-region, which could have signified a passage from the old life through the liminal region of death into the new one, strongly akin to the initiatory experiences of so called primitive societies.¹⁶¹

Chapters 17 and 176 of the Book of the Dead (BD 17, BD 176)

We have already mentioned Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead earlier at many occasions. Taking into account, that section 32 of the text¹⁶² is a crucial source for understanding the role of the sacrificial scene discussed above, and the passing of the deceased through the *msk.t*, we need to examine it on a deeper level. The relevant elements of the presently discussed context are clearly separable, namely: (1) The demons with knives guarding over the enemies of the Lord of All, who are identified by a gloss with Isis and Nephthys; (2) the scene of the massacre of the enemies of Osiris and the sun-god, i.e. Seth and his companions, referred to at

¹⁵⁸ A.R. DAVID, *Religious Ritual at Abydos (c. 1300 BC)*, Warminster, 1973, p. 89ff. Willems has drawn attention to the fact, that the place, or region called *msk.t* was connected not merely to an Abydene cultic site of Osiris, but could just as well designate a section of the Heliopolitan sun-temple. Presumably, this was the place where the ritual of the royal toilet came to be performed by Horus and Thoth, or by Horus and Seth, actually by two officiants wearing their masks, hence it could likely be identical with the *pr dwꜣy.t*. (A.M. BLACKMAN, "The House of the Morning", *JEA* 5, No. 3, 1918, p. 156f.; H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata*, p. 265f.)

¹⁵⁹ A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 6, 30.

¹⁶⁰ A.R. DAVID, *op. cit.*, p. 90; A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 32f., 65.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34f., 42ff., 62ff. (See also the image of scene 22 and 25 of Abydene ritual); M. ELIADE, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation. The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth* (W.R. Trask trans.), Reprint of: *Birth and Rebirth* (1958), New York, 1975, xi.

¹⁶² *Urk.* V, 80-82(32/XC-XCVIII).

several other places of the text of BD 17¹⁶³; (3) the passage of the deceased through the *msk.t*, who is at the same time Osiris, Horus son of Osiris, and Anubis, who, as we have seen earlier, is also connected to the ritual object of the stuffed animal hide presented to Osiris, the *imiut*-fetish. The criterion of passing the *msk.t* was purification. The text here plainly identifies the deceased with Anubis, who stands behind the chest protecting the viscera of Osiris, which can be paralleled directly with the *msk.t*-hide containing the viscera of Osiris mentioned in Chapters VII and VIII of pBerlin 3055, where, as we have seen, the entrails are identical with the Eye of Horus, which in turn represents the soul of Osiris and hence that of the deceased. Here the *msk.t*, as in BD 72, is identical with the liminal zone of the eastern sky below the horizon, from where, according to pCarlsberg I (C. II, 4-6) the sun-god rises with the stars.¹⁶⁴ Goyon and Hornung opined, that *msk.t* represented the liminal region between the sky and the Netherworld, and also the entrance to the latter, as referred to by the above text of pCarlsberg I.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand it was also a slaughter-house, through which the deceased had hoped to pass safe and uninjured.¹⁶⁶ Section 32 of BD 17 in turn identified the eye of Horus with a sacrificial supper of fayence (*msy.t m tñn.t*) from the sanctuary of Sokar or Osiris (the *tnn.t*-sanctuary), which might allude to the offering of an *wdj.t*-amulet of fayence. By continuing with this analogy the symbolical nature of the offering becomes clear, where the supper of fayence may be a reference to heaven and earth, while the sanctuary whence it came is no other than the tomb of Osiris. The section identified the act of offering with an event that occurred in Neni-nisut (Heracleopolis), where Shu has stricken down upon the Two Lands. The city is being referred to at several places in the chapter,¹⁶⁷ which probably has to do with

¹⁶³ *Urk.* V, 6f.(1/V), 53(22/LVII-LVIII), 56f.(23/LXII-LXIII), 60-62(24/LXVII-LXXII), 75(30/LXXXVII), 87, 89(33/CIV, CIX). From other sections [*Urk.* V, 61(24/LXX) and *Urk.* V, 80(32/XCII)] we even learn, that the massacre was carried out by knives made of flint.

¹⁶⁴ *EAT I*, p. 50.

¹⁶⁵ P. BARGUET, *Le Livre des Morts des Anciens Égyptiens*, LAPO 1, Paris, 1967, p. 63, 111. Barguet supposed, that *msk.t* also signified a locality, which belonged to the Abydene cult topography, and played a role in the cult of Osiris. Some identified the region with the Milky Way. See also: K. SETHE, *op. cit.*, II, p. 19f. on account of Pyr. 279d (*msk.t*), and Pyr. 334c (*msk.t shd.w*); E. HORNUNG, *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter*, Zürich, München, 1998, p. 426. Goyon also touched upon the subject when talking about *hw.t msk.t* in the text of a late phylactery illustrated with protective figures. Here Goyon, also pertaining to a parallel on the Metternich-stele, interpreted it as an entrance to the Netherworld. This is the place from where the deceased emerged as Ra, who exceeded transitoriness. Goyon has seen a relationship between the pair of legs with the head of Anubis appearing in the mentioned text of the phylactery and Ra-Atum, both having been connected to the *msk.t*, which he reinforced with the gloss of section 32 of BD 17, where the two gods were indeed identified (*Urk.* V, 81(32/XCVI)). He presumed, that the representation may be treated as an evidence for the amalgamation of two separate traditions, in which an Anubian aspect of Ra-Atum on one side, and the ancient role of the jackal-formed deity as leader of the *h3.tjw*- and *šm3(j).w*-demons, known also from pJumilhac as bringers of yearly pestilence, on the other eventually came to merge (qq.v. J.-Cl. GOYON, "Un phylactère tardif: le Papyrus 3233 a et b du musée du Louvre", *BIFAO* 77, 1977, p. 49, 51f.; J. VANDIER, *op. cit.*, p. 130/XVIII, 5-8). This however, elucidates the statements of section 24 of BD 17, which identified the slaughterers armed with knives forming the retinue of Osiris with Anubis and Horus (Mekhentienirti). Thus the group "that keeps away the affairs of the enemies of the Lord of All" could just as well be identical with the *h3.tjw*- and *šm3.w*-demons (For the interpretation of H. Willems: H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata*, p. 264 f.).

¹⁶⁶ On T.G. Allen's point of view about the discussed section of BD 17 in his 1974 translation, consult: T.G. ALLEN, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day. Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, SAOC 37, Chicago, 1974, p. 31, 65). In BD 72 this interpretation is rather questionable, since the deceased is hardly willing to stay in the "place of smiting". Thus, *msk.t* here is more likely to be understood differently, as "place of rebirth".

¹⁶⁷ So the location referred to in *Urk.* V, 23(12/XX-XXI) which likewise talks about purification, may be identical with the place of purification mentioned in section 32; 72(28/LXXXIII-LXXXIV); 75(30/LXXXVI-LXXXVII); in certain variants also at the textual location of *Urk.* V, 6(1/IV) so in La(pLe1), pL5, Ani (pL3), Ap(pL13), Da(pDu1)(q.v. G. LAPP, *Totenbuch Spruch 17*, Basel, 2006, p. 14f.).

the Heracleopolitan origin of the text.¹⁶⁸ From the above motives (1) and (2) also feature in the short spell of BD 176, which are actually brief quotations of the respective sections of BD 17.¹⁶⁹ By rolling back and substituting the chain of metaphors, the narrative presents the Osirian deceased, who by the act of passing through the animal hide came to be reborn purified, and was given back his soul, which was regained and brought for him from the liminal region of heaven and earth (*msk.t*). According to another layer of the text however, he was also identical with the sun-god, who came to be reborn at the eastern horizon.

Astronomical references

It is noteworthy that in Pyramid Text Spell 367 (Pyr. 635c) Seth and his companions had to suffer the same fate, which was measured out upon Isis in the story of pChester Beatty I, as well as the fact, that in Pyr. 643b Seth was defeated by the sons of Horus. This latter text is part of Spell 369 which talks about the reassembling of the deceased king by Horus and the gods, as well as the opening of his mouth and eyes, i.e. the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, one of the main instruments of which was the *Mshwtjw*-adze. At the beginning of this ritual, in scene 2 (IIc-d) is dedicated to the re-attachment of the head to the body, and the reassembling of the bones of the body, which was performed upon divine command, so that he would thereby be freed from the unfavourable condition in which he was.¹⁷⁰ These unfavourable conditions were certainly the state of being torn or cut into peaces, which also befell to Osiris himself. As we have seen earlier, by the *jh*-spirits mentioned in BD 17 the four Sons of Horus and their three companions were meant, whose role was played by the *h3.tjw*-demons in pJumilhac. As Mathieu has pointed out, the four Sons of Horus lift the deceased into the sky in accordance with the coffin decorations, where the particular inscriptions pertaining to each of the pairs appear either close to the head, or close to the feet, respectively. Similarly, they carried and protected the deceased, who himself became an Osiris, in the northern and the southern skies. While in the former they were to be found in the constellation *Mshwtjw*, where Osiris was invisible and only the four Sons of Horus, carrying him, were to be seen as stars (δ UMa = Imsety, γ UMa = Hapy, β UMa = Duamutef, α UMa = Qebhsenuf), in the southern sky in the constellation of the four *jh*-spirits Osiris was visible as the three stars of Orion's Belt surrounded by Orion's two corner star-pairs as the Sons of Horus (α Ori = Hapy, γ Ori = Duamutef; κ Ori = Imsety, β Ori = Qebhsenuf). This picture is made altogether complete by the findings of Wainwright, who stated that Letopolis was a location of special interest not only on account of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, with regard to its high priest having carried the title of *Wn-r3* ("The Opener of the Mouth") during the entire course of history of the city. In the "Gliedervergottung", described in Spell 215 (Pyr. 148-149), which basically consisted of texts identifying the parts of the body with particular gods as Imperishable Stars, as part of the "deification" of the deceased king the children of the Horus of Letopolis, i.e. the Sons of Horus, helped the king, already as a stellar deity, in his heavenly ascent and descent as his arms and legs. They appear in the same role, likewise as the children of the Horus of Letopolis, in the liturgy of *Stundenwachen* as the ones who carry and protect Osiris.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ M. Heerma van Voss placed the origin of the earlier Coffin Text version to the city of Heracleopolis, and dated it to Dynasty 9 or 10 (q.v. M. HEERMA VAN VOSS, *De oudste versie van Dodenboek 17a. Coffin Texts Spreuk 335a*, Leiden, 1963, p. 4ff.).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4; E. NAVILLE, *op. cit.*, p. CC, var. Ca.

¹⁷⁰ E. OTTO, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* I, p. 5f.; *ibid.*, II, p. 38.

¹⁷¹ H. JUNKER, *op. cit.*, p. 3ff.; B. MATHIEU, "Les Enfants d'Horus, théologie et astronomie", *ENiM* 1, 2008, p. 8, 11ff.; G.A. WAINWRIGHT, "Letopolis", *JEA* 18, No. 3/4, 1932, p. 160, 168.

Overview

A formation of mythical leitmotives and their presumed representations in prominent New Kingdom examples

If we attempt to summarize the above discussed sources, which include certain Pyramid Texts, hemerological texts, the closing section of the 11th hour of the Book of the Day, the given segments of pChester Beatty I, the two myths of pJumilhac, the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, the Daily Temple Ritual, Chapter 17 and 176 of the Book of the Dead, and the Ritual of *Stundenwachen*, we may see that we are dealing with intertwined stories with overlapping semantic layers and presumably derivative narratives that seem to converge into a presumed mythical source narrative. We have seen how deeply rooted the astronomical correlations of the derived sources with the northern constellations, in particular with *Mshṯjw*, are. We are not mistaken then in assuming that the source narrative itself must have shared the same feature. But going a step further we may even presume, that the morphological process we encounter in the overlapping mythical elements of textual sources seems to be mirrored in the representations of the above mentioned constellations. By accentuating the formative key elements, protagonists, actions, attributes of the presumed myth, we may achieve a “set of keys” or a group of definable leitmotives, which by good approximation may function as the basic elements of the presumed source narrative, and thus have a key role in inducing further variations, and the formation process of other elements appearing in the source. Considering the semantic layers of our sources, an attempt for a rough list of these elements, or leitmotives can be summed up in the following list:

bull’s foreleg, hippopotamus, animal hide, mutilation, eye of Horus/soul of Osiris, flint/iron (meteorite), gold, harpoon/spear, rope/chain, milk, water, knife, mooring post/pole, northern sky¹⁷²

In addition to this list we may enumerate a group of divine characters, who are key figures of the narratives, fulfilling either an active or a passive role:

Horus, Seth, Thoth, Anubis, Anti/Nemti, Sons of Horus, *h3.tjw*-demons, Tefnut, Nut, Isis, Nephthys, Neith, Serket, Sakhmet, Hathor, Hesat, Taweret, Re(-Atum), Shu, Geb, Osiris, Nefertem, group of deities.

To clarify the outlined considerations in treating the listed elements, it seems necessary to present certain exemplary guidelines or principles along which the present systematizing is formulated. For instance, Horus and the *sm* have the same function, thus in the scene of the sacrificial slaughtering in the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, in his role as officiator, i.e. slaughterer of the Sethian enemy, the *sm* as Horus is helped by the *hrj-hb.t*, as well as a butcher, who actually performs the slaughtering, thereby in this case a single role is performed by three, while the Great Kite, acting in the role of Isis is also present in order to “validate” the mythological framework by quoting Isis’ words to Seth concerning his self-inflicted

¹⁷² The list could be further extended with related items: (red) ox, gazelle, goat, dog (these being, based on the present context, all Sethian animals) or the notion of “flesh”, which signifies the parts of these animals. Although the hippopotamus itself belongs to this line of Sethian animals, her distinctive aspects which can be clearly separated from the figure of Seth, prompt us to treat her as a separate figure. Furthermore, in those cases where Anti/Nemti is treated in his function as ferryman, as in pChester Beatty I rto or pCairo JE 86637 (C rto XIII-XIV), based on the above outlined circumstances, he himself is to be examined in his Sethian aspect.

punishment. By the same token, in the appropriate places, the figures of the deceased king and that of Osiris are also identical. Similarly, the various Sethian animals (listed in n. 171), may all be identified with Seth. Or likewise, in case of Chapter 17 and 176 of the Book of the Dead and the Daily Temple Ritual, based on the context of the texts, Osiris and Re-Atum are in a theological qualitative level treated as identical, and so on. As we may see, the pattern follows syncretistic principles, which judged from the very nature of these texts and general mythological patterns is not only lucrative in terms of clarification, but expressly a necessity in order to peel the narrative down to its very bones. This method however, by approaching the respective narrative layers, carries within itself a number of apparent contradictions, since some elements of identical polarity could connect with others of the opposite sign, e.g. in the Anti/Nemti, Horus, Seth triangle, or in the case of the Sons of Horus, the *h3.tjw*-demons, and Anubis, all of whom are seemingly of the same protective function, yet the *h3.tjw*-demons could pose a threat either to the enemies of Osiris but also to the Osirian deceased himself, as we have seen in BD 17. There are, however certain functions, which are devoid of such discrepancies, as characteristically, those of goddesses functioning as mothers, but also as divine consorts, or sisters, like Isis or Hathor. We must understand that the process we are dealing with is not a simplification, but a reduction, like substituting variables in a complex mathematical equation. Naturally, these reductions by substitutions must be clearly circumscribed at a certain point, yet, this functional reduction is fundamental in an effort to make certain basic characters, and fields of activities identifiable. Besides, we must emphasize, that certain information makes their way into the source narrative not via the individual texts themselves, but by various forms of the here discussed correlations between certain given elements, such as Seth's and Hathor's mutual connection to gold, and thereby to one another. Thus, what we have in the end is a conglomerate of basic, yet clearly definable qualities with identical signs. If we can interiorize this approach, we would be able to see the related stellar representations likewise from a different perspective.

This similitude then between myth and picture should not take us by surprise, since the very point to stress here is that the varying mythical elements are actual variations based on themes of the source narrative, of which the, yet probably unknown, proto-form of the diagram of the northern constellations is but a manifestation in visual form.¹⁷³ So, at this point it seems appropriate to have an overview of the aforementioned shifting process as it becomes manifest in the representations of the main asterism of the present paper, i.e. *Mshjtjw*, but certainly in those of the other surrounding constellations of the northern sky as well in prominent New Kingdom examples, these, together with those of the earlier times, being the sources for all other depictions of the later periods.

– Compared with earlier Middle Kingdom representations on coffin lids the picture of *Mshjtjw* in Senmut's tomb [fig. 5] appears in a different form, namely that of a bull with an elongated body,

¹⁷³ When discussing the northern constellations, particularly the Hippopotamus and the Bull's Foreleg, Parker and Neugebauer themselves took into consideration the narratives of certain texts we have also discussed above, namely those of the Book of the Day (and Night), and pJumilhac, on account of which two texts of the Roman Period Esna temple (Texts No.400, and 450) were also mentioned. In one of these the Hippopotamus is identical with Isis, who keeps the Bull's Foreleg on a lead in the northern sky, lest it should proceed upside down into the Netherworld, while the other tells the same about Sothis. The identification of the two goddesses in later times is a common phenomenon in astronomical texts, yet the two authors seem somewhat puzzled upon seeing the mingling of the most prominent decan of the southern sky, Sothis, with a northern constellation. However, this phenomenon is simply a secondary syncretism, the primary being the identification of the Hippopotamus with Isis, who, appearing here in a definite astral character, was then easily identified with Sothis. Hence, the emphasis seemed to rest on the feminine character of a stellar goddess, not on a particular direction in the sky. (q.v. *EAT* III/1, p. 189ff.).

which has a head and horns of normal size, but its limbs are very thin and rudimentary. The tapering bottom part of the body ends in a line resembling a tail, which corresponds to the tapering lower segment of the earlier foreleg, with three smaller, quasi-circular shapes, apparently representing stars. The last one of these stars appears as a double red circle, which is the junction point of two, converging lines, thereby forming a steep triangle. The apex of this triangle points towards the hands of the goddess Serket standing behind *Mšḥtjw*, as if she would hold the two lines as two outstretched ropes, emphasized also by the position of her hands. According to J. Lull, the reason behind the extension of the foreleg into a full body stands the addition of surrounding stars beyond the basic seven. He based this idea on the stars appearing in the horns of the animal on certain versions of the stellar diagram.¹⁷⁴ Depicted above the triangle we find 'n(w) i.e. *Dwn- 'n.wj*,¹⁷⁵ harpooning *Mšḥtjw*. The Hippopotamus in one of its

¹⁷⁴ J. Lull identified the red circle with the last of the three corresponding stars of the Big Dipper, i.e. with *Alkaid* (η Uma), while he presumed the steep triangle to be an instrument used for astronomical observations, which also appeared in the tomb of Pedamenope much later, in a considerable smaller size. According to Lull, the instrument, which here resembled a pole, was used by the nearby standing figure holding an other instrument (*b3y*) in his outstretched hand for orienting buildings, most likely temples, and/or recording the meridian transits of *Alkaid*. *Mšḥtjw* could have had this role ever since the Old Kingdom. Lull based his ideas on an inscription from the Ptolemaic Edfu temple (*Edfu* II, 31), which mentioned this method of orientation as part of the *pd-šs*-ritual, i.e. the “Stretching of the Cord”, the ancient temple foundation-ritual. The foundation text of the temple of Denderah, also of the Ptolemaic Period, applied a specific star for the orientation, namely the “*3ḥ* of *Mšḥtjw*”, which Lull took for the brightest star of the Big Dipper, i.e. *Alkaid* (J. LULL, “Meschetiu in der Mythologie und der Orientierung der ägyptischen Tempel”, *APA* 40, 2008, p. 89ff.). Pogo however identified this third star with *Mizar* (ζ Uma), a match which he believed to be obvious (A. POGO, “The Astronomical Ceiling-Decoration in the Tomb of Senmut (XVIIIth Dynasty)”, *Isis* 14/2, 1930, p. 311ff.). The long vertical stab, line, or rope, which often runs into the hands of Serket, or the figure replacing her, could perhaps be yet another clue to the ritual, however for the standard depiction we would need the figure of Seshat and the king, who are both missing from the stellar diagrams (q.v. Abb. 7 in J. LULL, *op. cit.*, p. 91). Although the fact seems clear, that the above discussed instruments and the figure having used them did indeed serve the purpose of orienting the north-south axis and/or recording the transits of *Alkaid*, or *Mizar* if Pogo was right, we cannot tell for certain what particular event it was meant to record, and why the ancient Egyptians considered it so important to depict it on certain coffins, the ceilings of some temples and particular royal and elite tombs. From this very fact it seems all the more evident, that the mortuary sphere and the astronomical texts and representations were closely tied. Yet, the vague notion that would attempt to exhaust this question by merely stating, that the aim of these depictions and texts was “to transfer the deceased into the realm of the undying and unvarying stars, and to unite him/her with the eternal realm of the stellar *b3-s* and *3ḥ-s*, i.e. the stars, as one of them in the body of Nut, and provide him/her with the possibility to have his/her share from the daily sacrifices, and to partake in the full cycle of religious festivals of the year” would certainly remain superficial about some further, underlying ideas, which are, nevertheless, undoubtedly present. Consequently, it would be worth searching for answers in the realm of ritual practices, and literature relating to the afterlife of the deceased king or member of the nobility. Since a stellar transit is a clearly definable moment in time, the diagram of the northern constellations was by all likelihood meant to mark out a particular event during the night, when transits are observable. Considering the mortuary context in which it appears, this particular event probably had to do with certain allotted offerings, as the ones in *Stundenwachen*. Actually this particular ritual could have been of crucial importance in the puzzle game of tomb/coffin symbolism, employing the astral representations quite conscientiously, as we have discussed already in chapter 2.3. This presumption could easily hold true, if we take into account the diagonal star clocks discussed earlier, with their more concise examples actually recording the entire year with the list of 36+1 decadic weeks, each with its 12 nightly hours and their defining decans, as well as the list of offerings, most probably added for the purpose to allocate the proper time of their presentation (v. sup. in chapter 1). However, such events as the above mentioned sacrificial offerings, could actually point back to a particular event that occurred *in illo tempore*, that is, at a definitive, initial moment in the domain of mythical history, to serve as a prototype for all later events of similar nature and purpose. The here discussed pattern of mythico-religious dynamics was an intrinsic and universal feature of all traditional cultures and societies, hence also that of the ancient Egyptian. For a short, but all the more important overview of this phenomenon, consult: M. ELIADE, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation. The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth* (W.R. Trask trans.), Reprint of: *Birth and Rebirth* (1958), New York, 1975, xf.

¹⁷⁵ For the reason of using the name *Dwn- 'n.wj* instead of 'n(w), v. sup. n. 86, and also *EAT* III/1, p. 191f.

hands holds a mooring post, while in the other a crocodile standing at the tip of its tail, while on its back we see a larger crocodile. The picture is surely older, since in the fragmentary version of the 11th Dynasty coffin of Heny we already find the stellar diagram of the northern constellations.¹⁷⁶

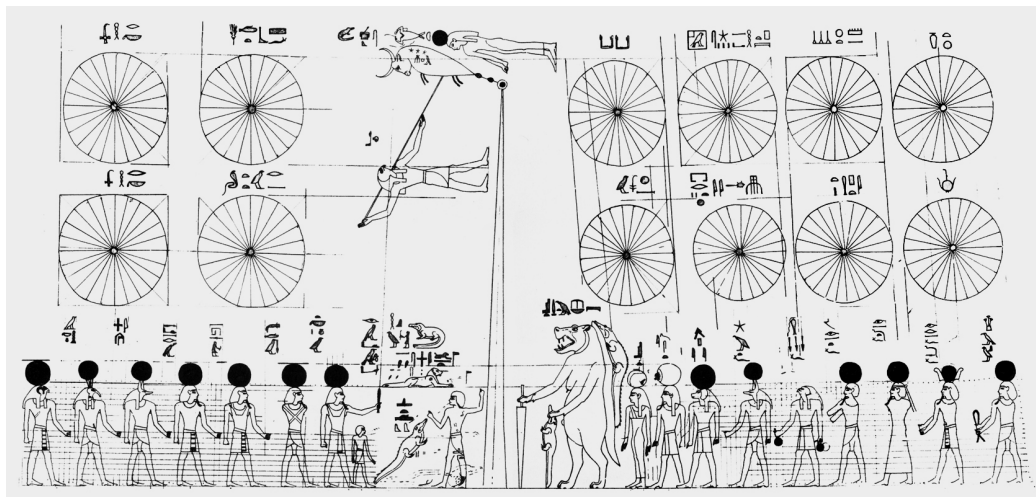


Fig. 5. Picture of *Mshytjw* in Senmut's tomb (source: *EAT* III/2, pl. 1).

– On the ceiling of the so called Astronomical Room of the Ramesseum of Ramesses II¹⁷⁷ we see *Mshytjw* depicted as a whole body yet again with the head and horns of the animal, although the limbs are all missing. The triangle is considerably smaller and stands beside a rope which runs into the hands of the goddess Serket, much the same way as the triangle did in the Senmut version. An important addition to the former is the double string, formed by small beadlike chain-links¹⁷⁸, which ends in the mooring post held by Hippopotamus. The reference to the golden chain by which *Mshytjw* was held back by Isis in the form of a female hippopotamus seems rather evident here. In this version of the stellar diagram the Foreleg resembles a thick animal hide, whereas the hieroglyphic name of the constellation is written inside its belly.¹⁷⁹ From its left the body is yet again harpooned by *Dwn- 'n.wj*. In the hands of the Hippopotamus we see the same mooring post and crocodile, however we see no crocodile on its back, but a thick mane culminating in a tail (?).


¹⁷⁶ *EAT* III/1, p. 8f., 190.

¹⁷⁷ *EAT* III/1, p. 183, fig. 28; O. NEUGEBAUER, R. PARKER, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* III. *Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs, Plates* (= *EAT* III/2), London, 1969, pl. 5.

¹⁷⁸ Brugsch also held the double row of small circles to be a chain, or a rope (H. BRUGSCH, *Astronomische und Astrologische Inschriften Altaegyptischer Denkmäler. Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum. Altaegyptische Inschriften. Erste Abtheilung*, Leipzig, 1883, p. 129f.).

¹⁷⁹ On the ceiling of the Dynasty 25-26 tomb of Pedamenope we see a similar depiction of *Mshytjw*, with its name written inside its body, although like in the Senmut version, its limbs appear in rudimentary form. The line with three circular shapes is replaced here with a dotted chainlike line ending in a single circle, which is itself tied into a similar dotted line which runs rectangularly with one end in the hands of Serket and the other, with yet another added circle below, right next to the lower end of the mooring post in the hand of the Hippopotamus. The close similarities between the here discussed three variants, the representations allow us to presume that the triangles of Senmut's tomb and that of the Ramesseum ceiling, along with the long rectangular rope of the latter monument may be related to the rectangular chain of Pedamenope. The chain actually has the lower circle at about the same height where we would expect the tip of the Ramesseum's triangle. (*EAT* III/1, p. 185; *EAT* III/2, pl. 19).

– In the depiction appearing in the Medinet-Habu temple of Ramesses III (Ramses III A) the build-up is very similar to the variant of Ramesses II, here however the bull, which is again depicted without limbs with the double (?) string of chain-links tied to the mooring post, turns its head towards the harpooning *Dwn-‘n.wj*. Due to the fragmentary state of the monument, we cannot tell for certain, whether or not the triangle featured on the diagram, although considering the missing amount of space, it seems more likely that it did not.¹⁸⁰ This becomes even more certain, if we examine the other monument from the same temple of Ramesses III (Ramses III B), which is very similar in its structure, as we may see from its remaining fragment, showing, that the triangle is altogether missing. The greater part of *Mshṯjw* is broken off, and all we can see is the protruding end of its tail.¹⁸¹


– In the group of four representations from the tomb of Ramesses VI there are two distinguishable types. One of these (Ramses VI C and D)¹⁸² follows the pattern of Senmut’s tomb, thus the Bull’s Foreleg appears with the full body of the animal with a bull’s head, although its limbs are altogether missing, perhaps as an allusion to its mythological mutilation or dismemberment, as does the triangle. The only familiar feature to be observed is the double dotted line, most likely the above mentioned golden chain, which similarly to the former variants runs to the mooring post in the hands of the Hippopotamus, who again holds a crocodile in her other hand. Below her arms from around breast level we see a long ribbon, actually probably one on both sides, hanging down, while on her back instead of a crocodile she has a thick plait reaching down to the ground straight behind the feet, while *Mshṯjw* is speared by *Dwn-‘n.wj*. The figure of Serket appears here as a man with a sun disk on its head, with the earlier hand gesture of the goddess as if holding a rope, which however is clearly missing. The degree of shifting in build-up is even greater in the two other variants from the tomb of Ramesses VI (Ramses VI A/B) belonging to the type appearing in the subgroup of the Seti I A family.¹⁸³ *Mshṯjw* appears in both variants in the form of an ox (or a bull) standing on a stripe resembling a stylized balance, above which appears a compound hieroglyph  (O23E), the reading of which according to legends of the Seti I A family is evidently *hb-sd*.¹⁸⁴ The reason for the presence of this sign is not entirely clear, although it may be a reference to the earlier mentioned *sed*-festival ritual, and the related sacrifice of the ancient Sethian “fertility-king”, and the sacrificed ox of Pyramid Text Spell 580, which originally had the same role as the former, and thereby to the sacrifice of the ancient sky god, Seth. While in this group we see the Hippopotamus leaning on a vase-like mooring post, in the Seti I C family¹⁸⁵ we clearly see a mooring post to which is attached a double rope or chain grabbed by the figure with the sun disk on its head apparently at the place of Serket, who however makes her separate appearance

¹⁸⁰ *EAT* III/2, pl. 11.


¹⁸¹ *EAT* III/1, p. 28, fig. 5.

¹⁸² *EAT* III/1, fig. 29; *EAT* III/2, pl. 13.

¹⁸³ *EAT* III/1, p. 187.

¹⁸⁴ Parker and Neugebauer pointed out that the label may be a misunderstanding of the label , *hb-p.t*, next to the Hippopotamus as *hb-sd*. The authors presumed that *hb-p.t* “feast of the sky” in the tomb of Senmut might be a reference to some of the lunar calendar circles surrounding the northern constellations on the basis of the Medinet Habu calendar, where the festival cycle of the lunar calendar was called by the same name: “feasts of the sky”. The first attestable occurrence of the label *hb-p.t* is to be found on the fragments on Heny’s coffin lid, which antedates the Senmut version by more than half a millenium. Pogo’s remark concerning the depiction of the northern constellations on Heny’s coffin is quite striking, in which he stated, that its sketchlike appearance had to do with the fact, that the traditional representation of these constellations and divinities was so well known in Heny’s time during Dynasty 11(?), that a rudimentary finish was sufficient to remind the viewer to all the further details of the related mythological background. This actually shows, that (1) Pogo himself presumed an underlying mythological framework behind the diagram, and if he was right about the reasons for working in such a rudimentary fashion, (2) the original design would much predate Dynasty 11 (*EAT* III/1, p. 189f.; A. POGO, “The Astronomical Inscriptions on the Coffins of Heny (XIth Dynasty?)”, *Isis* 18/1, 1932, p. 9f., fig. 1 = *EAT* III/1, p. 9, fig. 1).

¹⁸⁵ *EAT* III/1, p. 187f., fig. 31.

beyond the figure of *Mšḥtjw*. The pair of ropes or chains runs from the tail of the ox, or bull which, as in the Seti I A subgroup, stands on the stripe we have identified above as a simplified balance, though the  hieroglyph is missing here. *Dwn-‘n.wj* in both families Seti I A and Seti I C stands on the mooring post stretching a rope, which is clearly a merging of his harpoon and the rope held either by Serket or the figure with sun disk on its head, appearing most prominently in the Astronomical Room of the Ramesseum. In both families we find the large crocodile on the back of the Hippopotamus.

It is not entirely clear, whether or not certain hour stars appearing in the star clock tables of the Ramesside Period had any relationship with the so called northern constellations, which at least since Dynasty 11 with their first attested appearance in the Assyut coffin of Heny until the Roman Era appeared rather frequently in tombs, sarcophagi and tombs. What seems certain is that the hour stars show very few overlaps with the earlier decans, these being only *Spd.t*/Sirius, *Sḫ*/Orion, and the decan *ḥḫw*. On the other hand, concerning the here appearing *Rr.t* – (Female) Hippopotamus, *Mḫj* – Lion, *Mnjt* – Mooring post, and *ḫpd* – Bird, Parker and Neugebauer believed, that they were outside the decanal belt, and had no connections whatsoever with the similarly named northern constellations. Despite their scepticism, there are some signs for them having been related, as the two inscriptions of a statue of Taweret have shown,¹⁸⁶ nevertheless, the precise nature of this relationship seems rather unclear. The short summary above presenting the subtle variations of basic elements in the central segment of the northern constellations could hopefully demonstrate the process which, by applying the same principles, defines the shifting of leitmotives in our discussed mythological narratives as well. Nonetheless, if we want to avoid speculations, which would seem unavoidable in view of the fact, that the origins of the source narrative point back into a dim and blurry point in the past, we must accept, that beyond the basic descriptions, summaries, and enumeration of essential elements readily available, a precise reconstruction of the source myth is not an option at the moment. However, this basic pool of data obtained from the source texts allows us to examine certain deeper interconnections, the understanding of which would not be possible merely by the means of philology and archaeology.

¹⁸⁶ *EAT* II, p. 3-7. H. Brugsch believed the Hippopotamus of the northern sky, and the *rr.t* of the star tables to be one and the same, which he made probable by the fact, that the *mnj.t*, i.e. the mooring post, is itself marked in the tables, and apparently belongs to *rr.t* (H. BRUGSCH, *op. cit.*, p. 128ff.). László Kákósy has also pointed to the possibility of certain overlaps between the decans and the northern constellations on account of an inscription, which appeared on the statue base of the hippopotamus goddess Taweret from Karnak, from the time of Psammetik I (CG 39145), published by M. Verner (q.v. M. VERNER, “Statue of Twēret (Cairo Museum no. 39145) Dedicated by Pabēsi and Several Remarks on the Role of the Hippopotamus Goddess”, *ZĀS* 96, 1970, p. 55, fig. 1-3). The main *inscription* of the statue, which appeared with the well known features of the northern constellation of the Hippopotamus, namely with the head and body of a hippopotamus, the breasts of a pregnant woman, the tail of a crocodile, and the legs and arms of a lion leaning on a *sḫ*-sign, hails the goddess at the gates of the horizon (*ḫḫ.t*) when the decan *smd* walks the sky with the constellation of the Hippopotamus. The sign of the hippopotamus in the pedestal text could be read either as *rr.t* or *jp.t*. The other text appearing on the dorsal pillar addressed the goddess as *wr.t* and *Rr.t*, which were both known name variants of the Hippopotamus goddess of the northern sky beside *Ḍḫm.t*, or *ḥsḫ-mw.t* (*EAT* III/1, p. 190). Thus the statue as *rr.t* could just as well be the representation of the Ramesside hour star (decan in Kákósy’s understanding) by the same name and the northern constellation (M. VERNER, *op. cit.*, p. 55 ff.; L. KÁKÓSY, *Egyiptomi és antik csillaghit*, Budapest, 1978, p. 143). Due to the rules of symmetry, we have here two *sḫ*-signs, appearing on both sides. As we see on her depiction in the temple of Isis at Shanhūr from the Roman Period, the flint mooring posts could be replaced by the typical *sḫ*-sign of Taweret, here named *jp.t*. (q.v. *EAT* III/3, pl. 40/A). With this in mind, the hippopotamus goddess, shown wearing the sun-disc with the double feather-crown(?) and leaning upon a *sḫ*-sign, on a fragment of a water clock from Tanis, dating from the time of Necho II, could just as well be connected with her figure, illustrating one of the months of the year in the uppermost band of the object (q.v. *EAT* III/1, p. 42f., fig. 9).

The deep layers

Base-lines

The starting point of the present paper has been the examination of the decan-lists with the constellation of *Mshṯjw* appearing in a number of Middle Egyptian coffin lids, together with certain mortuary liturgies related to the cult of Osiris, and their dating and ritualistic connotations. With these results the “inaccuracy” of decans and the newer list of hour stars of the later New Kingdom also appeared in a different light, since it became evident, that the earlier diagonal star clocks and the Ramesside star clock tables served not only the purpose of continuous measurement of individual nightly hours, but also that of recording a precise moment in time. Afterwards we have examined the role of *Mshṯjw* as it appeared in the religious and mythological texts of various periods, and endeavoured to give an outline of their possible source elements and motives. In the concluding part of the present paper below we will attempt to give an insight into those layers of the main ideas of the examined texts that supposedly belong to the fields of depth-psychology, mythology, and comparative religious studies. We must also emphasize here, that at the present point the following analyses are merely intended to establish the base-lines, or starting points of a more engrossed and refined future research in these fields, where solid conclusions may be expected only after the results and ramifications of such an initiative will have been obtained and duly assessed. The initially examined constellation of *Mshṯjw* apparently connects with particular deities resulting in a triangle at the centre of which we may place the figure of Osiris. The overlaps and connections between these figures have been discussed above in great detail. Nevertheless, the core of the conflict seems to lie within that particular composite deity, i.e. Anti/Nemti and in the variants of his mythical narrative, whose character clearly represents and maps the entire sphere of problems discussed here along with its immanent dichotomies all by itself.

Anti/Nemti in the mirror of psychology and comparative mythology

The structural model

The two separate aspects of the character of Anti/Nemti, namely a Sethian and a Horus-like element, may be fittingly paralleled with the figures of Apollo and Dionysus, but Anti/Nemti is more in a sense, that he unites the two aspects in a single divine character.¹⁸⁷ It is important to see, that what we are dealing with here is actually not a duad but a triad, for the description of which we may find a fitting aid in Freud’s structural model of the psyche, and thereby reach a certain level of understanding of the deeper layers of the examined mythological narratives.¹⁸⁸ Accordingly, in the Sethian-Dionysiac aspect we may see the embodiment of the “id”, the unconscious, primitive, instinctive segment of the personality. The other pole, the Horus-Apollo aspect may in turn be correlated with the “super-ego”, which according to Freudian psychoanalysis is formed by the two compartments of “ego ideal” and “conscience”.

¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, as we have seen, he appeared in the form of two separate falcon-formed deities in the 10th Upper Egyptian nome by the name of Antywey, albeit, these deities were, as the name suggests, strongly connected, as the two sides of a coin (v. sup. n. 123).

¹⁸⁸ Psychology has evolved a great deal since the pioneering times and ideas of Freud, who himself established his structural model by superseding his earlier tripartite topographic model of the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious. Nonetheless, in our case the Freudian structural model offered itself as a perfectly fitting method for examining the discussed problem. (Concerning the models, see: G.R. VandenBos (ed.), *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2007, 2nd ed., Washington DC, 2015, p. 1039, 1094).

It consists of various basic and advanced forms of social and ethical norms, as well as moral precepts, representing means of supervision and guidance, keeping the instinctive-self, the pleasure principle dominated “id”, on a short leash, just to remain at our subject. Between these two extremes, the two ends of the rope, stands the “ego”, or “I”, which on the basis of the reality-principle is the measure of balance, and the centre of reference, harbouring personal aims and aspirations. It is the intellectual, mostly conscious, executive aspect of the human psyche, which in our case is represented by Anti/Nemti himself.¹⁸⁹

Hereby, we may realize, that similarly to the religious ideas of ancient Greece, where divine figures mirrored distinctively human characteristics, we may also see basic traits of the human psyche projected into various divinities of the ancient Egyptian pantheon as well, which, as we have seen in our example, remain present in religious and mythological narratives all along the history of ancient Egypt in a general level. This way the role of the ferryman, with whom he is basically identified, may also become easier to understand as a liminal figure crossing between the shores of the human psyche. On account of his skinning mentioned in the Cairo Calendar on III *zḥ.t* day 13, Leitz presumed, that the main role of the god lay not in his function of ferryman, but much more in his capacity of being the source of the skin, into which the members of Osiris were wrapped. He also emphasized, that this skin could have been the *imiut*, to which the text of pChester Beatty I might have referred by the mutilation of Anti/Nemti’s feet.¹⁹⁰

Regressus ad uterum: Return to the womb

If we examine the Horusian aspect of Anti/Nemti in the appropriate section of pJumilhac and the Horusian matricide appearing in the Horus and Seth story, we may observe a junction point between the two narratives. The horrible deed was committed by the Sethian aspect, as we have seen earlier, for which he had to suffer the punishment of being skinned and torn apart. The pJumilhac however recounts, that his mother, Hesat took the skin and having poured into it her milk, and having smeared it with and unguent, gave a new life to his son, who finally came to be reborn as Horus, while the *imiut*-fetish was placed before Osiris. This motif in the Horus and Seth story finds its appropriate parallel in the episode of the restitution of Horus’ eyesight by Hathor, who made Horus’ eyes whole again by pouring the milk of a Sethian animal into his eye-sockets. The subject of the mysterious *tknw* wrapped into an animal hide has also been touched upon earlier. If we now reduce the roles, remembering the fact that Hesat, Hathor, and Isis basically fulfil the same function in the respective narratives, i.e. that of the mother, who frequently appears in the form of a celestial cow, and keep in mind that the animal hide may also represent the place of being born into a new life, it becomes easy to realize that the picture depicts a newborn child emerging from his mother’s womb. As we have seen, the hide originally belonged to an animal representing the Sethian aspect (hippopotamus/long-horned bull, or ox/gazelle), yet at this particular point the hide turns into

¹⁸⁹ H.B. ENGLISH, A.Ch. ENGLISH, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms*, Toronto, 1958, p. 111f., 171f., 247f., 394f., 443, 535; D. Matsumoto (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, New York, 2009, p. 176f., 243f., 390, 425, 528; G.R. VandenBos (ed.), *op. cit.*, 353, 518, 886, 1050. For a detailed description of Freud’s ideas about the three aspects, see: S. FREUD, *Das Ich und das Es*, Leipzig, Wien, Zürich, 1923, p. 18-47.

¹⁹⁰ Chr. LEITZ, *Tagewählerei* I, p. 122. Contrary to the opinion of Leitz, Welvaert believed the function of the ferryman to be crucial, and emphasized the importance of the roles of the deity’s two aspects standing in opposing ends of the sun-bark, i.e. Horus in the stern as coxswain, and Seth in the prow harpooning Apophis (E. WELVAERT, *op. cit.*, p. 171).

the hide of the motherly celestial cow. Actually this is the circumstance which makes the above mentioned relationship between Hathor and Seth understandable, but also that of the connection of the northern constellation of the Hippopotamus with the aspect of the “eternal feminine” embodied in the figure of Isis, with Ipet, the “divine mother”, with *Hs3-mw.t*, the “fierce mother”, and with Taweret, the “protecting goddess of childbirth”, who at the same time was also the wife of Seth.¹⁹¹ With all this in mind, it would not be far-fetched to say, that

¹⁹¹ PLUTARCH, *De Iside*, 19 = PLUTARCH, *Moralia V. Isis and Osiris (De Iside et Osiride)* (F.C. Babbitt trans.), Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1936/2003, p. 46ff.; *RÄRG*, p. 535; G. PINCH, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology*, Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford, 2002, p. 141ff. The relationship between Taweret (*t3 Wr.t*), which means “Great One”, in feminine form, and the hippopotamus goddess appearing in the constellation, has been discussed earlier (v. sup. n. 186). The *s3*-sign or signs she leans upon, which signify magical protection, may be replaced by other symbolic objects conveying protection, endurance, or apotropaic power, like an ankh-hieroglyph, a torch driving away negative forces, or a knife for defeating the enemies. The two flint mooring posts appearing in the Book of the Day (*mnj.tj n ds*; *Wb* V, 485, 16) refer to the same knife (*ds*; *Wb* V, 486, 7) which, as its name suggests, is made of the same material, which, as it was shown by Wainwright, forms a connection with Seth, his *w3s*-sceptre, and consequently with storms, lightning, and thunderbolts, i.e. a form of meteorites, falling from the sky, and furthermore with the conflagration of enemies (G.A. WAINWRIGHT, *JEA* 18/3-4, 1932, p. 165f.). Ipy also appears on the vignette of Chapter 137B in Nebseni’s variant of the Book of the Dead (A.a.), as she is kindling the torch referred to in the title of the chapter with the following label text above her: *Jpy nb.t s3*, “Ipet, Mistresses of Protection”. We find her on the vignette of BD 186 as well, together with Hathor, the goddess of the West, who is emerging from the papyrus thicket at the Western mountains in her bovine form. Ipet is shown either wearing the horned sun-disk (A.p.; the variant of L.b. also features an uraeus) as Hathor, or the headpiece of Taweret (D.a.), or, as in L.a., without any of the above. In A.p. she leans upon a *w3s*-sceptre, while in L.b. it is a small ankh-sign paired with the torch in Ipet’s other paw we have just seen in BD 137B serving the purpose to drive away Seth. In Ani’s variant the *s3*-sign also makes its appearance below the left paw of the goddess. This chapter with its vignette was a frequent piece to conclude the Book of the Dead papyri from the Ramesside Period (qq.v. E. NAVILLE, *Das Aegyptische Tottenbuch* I, p. CLI, CCXII; H. MILDE, *The Vignettes in the Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet*, *EgUit* 7, Leiden, 1991, p. 5, 113; J.H. Taylor (ed.), *Journey Through the Afterlife. Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, London, 2010, p. 252f.). In the protective function of the goddess the main role is given to motherhood and the defence of the child to be born. In this capacity we may recognize the wrathful and rough force of the Sethian aspect of the hippopotamus. On this account Taweret may be paralleled with a composite creature of similar nature, the goddess Ammut, who appears as the devourer of hearts of the wicked in the Psychostasis-scene in Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, with a body that is part crocodile, part hippopotamus, and part lion. Actually all these creatures featured on ivory “wands” of the Middle Kingdom used to magically protect the mothers and their newborn children, but they could also appear in later Books of the Netherworld as punishers of hostile powers (J.H. Taylor [ed.], *Journey Through the Afterlife. Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, London, 2010, p. 38, 212ff.). Yet another, here apparently male, form of an iconographically very similar hippopotamus deity, here depicted leaning on a scarab-beetle, is found on the vignette representing mound (*j3.t*) 13 in Chapter 149 of the Book of the Dead in the version of Nebseni, by the name of *Hbd-r3f*, “Who-Gapes-His-Mouth” (qq.v. E. NAVILLE, *op. cit.*, p. CLXXI; *LGG* V, 115. For the antecedents in the Coffin Texts, consult: Spell 1139 (*CT* VII, 485 l). As we have seen above, one of the names of the Hippopotamus goddess was *Rrt* (*wrt*) which is clearly a pun on the homophonic word *rrt*, i.e. “(wet) nurse”. In Sahure’s Abusir temple, a faience figure forming part of the New Kingdom finds of the local cult of Sakhmet also depicts her, lifting her left breast with her right hand for breast-feeding. The body of the statuette was hollow, hence it could be filled with milk, and since the left nipple was replaced by a small opening, the milk could actually pour out (L. BORCHARDT, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sazhu-Re* I. *Der Bau*, Leipzig, 1910, p. 130, Abb. 177). The statue was probably meant to magically procure the plentiful milk yield of a young mother, almost as a sort of artistic representation of the closing section of a Pyramid Text passage, which talks about the hippopotamus goddess Ipy (Ipet) breast-feeding the reborn king with her sweet milk Spell 269 (Pyr. 381-382). The hippopotamus goddess had a Theban cult in the New Kingdom. On one of the here found monuments from the time of the late New Kingdom, among other titles, she was called “Mistress of Heaven”. This epithet clearly refers to her quality as a sky goddess, while as a form of Hathor she was venerated as a protector of the Theban necropolis. Furthermore, as Ipy/Ipet, the above mentioned Heliopolitan deity of the Pyramid Texts, she merged with the goddess of Karnak by the same name. Here she appeared as the mother of a solar form of Osiris who came to rise as Amun-Ra. This implies that she must have obtained a form connected with Nut, the goddess of the sky and the mother of Osiris (qq.v. *RÄRG*, p. 531ff.; *EAT* III/1, p. 189f.; G. PINCH,

here we are dealing with a Jungian mother archetype encompassing all its aspects as the “loving and terrible mother”.¹⁹² Thereby the sacrifice of Anti/Nemti carries within itself the purport of the classical initiation rite of *regressus ad uterum*, i.e. *return to the womb*. The motive of tethering the Bull’s Foreleg by a golden chain is just as clearly a leash for bridling the temper of the instinct driven “id”, as it is a force which raises and draws back into the motherly “primordial point”. As Eliade has pointed out, certain types of this ritual have the danger for the novice of being torn to pieces. The novice however does not die during the ritual, only in a symbolical way, whereas he undergoes a complete transformation, and renewal. In Brahmanic rites of *regressus ad uterum* renewal goes together with the abolition of past time, thus the new birth implies a real *tabula rasa*. Those novices, who have broken their vows, had to watch all night wrapped in the skin of a black antelope, and crawl out of it by dawn, which symbolized the gestation period and the new birth, respectively. In another Indian ritual of similar nature, the *Hiranyagarbha*, or “Golden Embryo”, the novice is placed into a golden container in the shape of a cow, and after having emerged from it he is treated as a newborn child, who then has to go through the rites of birth. Gold is universally treated as a metal of solar nature. Hence similarly to other initiatory circles, where the novice enters the darkness of the initiatory space (night) and comes to new life again by emerging from it like the sun, in our discussed example too, the novice represented by Anti/Nemti gets rid of his/her instinct-driven “id”-side, and comes to be reborn as a purified divine being (Horus), with golden skin (sun). The story recounted by Herodotus¹⁹³ about Mycerinus’ daughter whom her father buried in a gilded container formed like a cow, fits well into this concept. The gilded cow was said to be brought forth ceremoniously every year, according to the wish of the princess, who desired to see the sun once a year.¹⁹⁴

Anti/Nemti and Dionysus

We may justifiably presume, that the Dionysiac aspect of Anti/Nemti may point at the here examined question in a more clear-cut fashion, than the intricate and rather complex ancient Egyptian mythico-religious narrative, and as such, the figure of Dionysus may be more appropriate for examining the dynamics of the myth. He was called “twice born”, or sometimes “thrice born”. In the *Iliad* (VI, 128-140) Dionysus, pursued by Lycurgus the Thracian hero, threw himself into the waters of the sea to find shelter. Lycurgus was in turn punished with blindness by Zeus, and did not live long afterwards. Eliade remarked that the motives of the pursuit and the leap into the sea of a werewolf both belong to an ancient initiatory ritual sequence. Nonetheless, he did not allude to their conspicuous similarity with certain episodes of the above scrutinized Egyptian myths, save for an Argive rite referred to

op. cit., p. 142; M. VERNER, *op. cit.*, p. 52f.). The process in which the hippopotamus goddess was instrumental, namely the rebirth of Osiris in his solar form as Amun-Ra in the Temple of Ipet at Karnak may be paralleled with the rebirth of Anti/Nemti as Horus. Ipet and her Karnak temple appeared as the tomb of Osiris, but at the same time also as the womb which carried his new solar form. In Ptolemaic times “Lady of the Birth House” was an actual epithet of Taweret (G. PINCH, *op. cit.*, p. 142). Thus as Horus was reborn from his previous skin of Anti/Nemti by the help of her celestial mother, so was Osiris reborn as Amun-Ra from the womb of Ipet, which was symbolically identical with the tomb of Osiris, just as the demise of a seed is intrinsically connected with the germination of the sprout. In this respect, the birth house itself can be seen as the representative of the womb.

¹⁹² C.G. JUNG, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (R.F.C. Hull trans.), 1959, 2nd ed., 1968, 2nd printing, *Bollingen Series* 20, Princeton, 1969, p. 82.

¹⁹³ HERODOTUS, *The History* II, 129-132 = HERODOTUS, *The Persian Wars* I. Books 1-2 (= *The History* I-II) (A.D. Godley trans.), 1920, 7th ed., Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1975, p. 431-435.

¹⁹⁴ M. ELIADE, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*, p. 51-60.

by Plutarch in *De Iside* concerning the aetiological myth about Dionysus, who was pursued and later thrown into the Lernaean lake by Perseus. Actually, the very chapters in Plutarch's work, which mention the myth recorded by the Argive historian Socrates, go into great detail in discussing the identity of Dionysus with Osiris.¹⁹⁵ Eliade also referred to the relationship of Dionysus with water, germination, blood, and sperm, as well as to his appearances in the form of a bull, a lion, or a goat, as tokens of his excessive vitality.¹⁹⁶ In the features just listed we may easily recognize Osiris. However, in the raving frenzy of the nightly rites of the Bacchic women, or Maenads, the title characters of Euripides' *Bacchae*, as well as in their orgiastic ecstasy by which they attained unification with Dionysus, which thereupon became manifest in supernatural force, invincibility and the act of tearing apart (*sparagmos*) and devouring of living animals (*ōmophagia*), the main characteristics of Seth are easily identifiable. However, the excess and orgiastic storming of the bacchanalias reminds us rather to the festivals of similar kind celebrated in favour of Hathor and Bastet.¹⁹⁷ In this wild, ecstatic nature of the god Eliade believed to have identified his most original and archaic element,¹⁹⁸ as well as already K. Kerényi before him, who in accordance with Otto emphasized, that Dionysus is the "raving god" (Μαινόμενος θεός), whose very essence incorporates his aspect of being mad. He is the god of ecstasy.¹⁹⁹

At this point it may be worth considering, that the bulls which were torn apart and devoured by the Maenads at the peak of their cultic frenzy, were actually the epiphanies of Dionysus himself, symbolizing his dismemberment by the Titans. Furthermore, we may encounter a further parallel via the panther-skin worn by the *sm*-priest. The panther, a typically Sethian animal, also makes its appearance in the immanent symbolism of the Dionysiac "tiger-ecstasy". The panther, the lion, or later the tiger accompanying the god represents the already familiar dichotomy that is present in the overpouring, yet cruel life force intrinsic to Dionysus, as being simultaneously the symbol of the one who tears, and the one who is torn apart. One of the late characteristics of Dionysiac religion is the *kratēr*, the vessel used for mixing the mysterious, intoxicating liquid consisting of water and wine. In order to guard it, and at the same time being magically succumbed to its powers, on certain representations we may see a pair of panthers, or lions flanking the vessel from both sides.²⁰⁰ The connections between Orphic thinking and Dionysus were based on the syncretistic amalgamation of the god with Orpheus around the 5th century BC. One of the foundations of this phenomenon are found in a myth, which will be discussed here based on the much later accounts of Firmicus Maternus, a Christian writer from the 4th century AD. Following the summary of G. Hinge on the story,

¹⁹⁵ PLUTARCH, *De Iside*, 35-37, = PLUTARCH, *Moralia V. Isis and Osiris (De Iside et Osiride)* (F.C. Babbitt trans.), Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1936/2003, p. 85-91.

¹⁹⁶ M. ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas I. From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, Chicago, 1978, p. 357ff.; M.P.O. MORFORD, R.J. LENARDON, *Classical Mythology*, 1971, 3rd ed., New York, London, 1985, p. 219.

¹⁹⁷ For the processional festivals held at Bubastis in honour of Bastet, see the account of Herodotus who identified her with Artemis (Herodotus, *The History* II, 59-61 = HERODOTUS, *The Persian Wars I. Books 1-2 [= The History I-II]* [A.D. Godley trans.], 1920, 7th ed., Cambridge [Massachusetts], London, 1975, p. 345-49). Concerning the relationship between drunkenness and Hathor, and the "Festival of inebriety (or drunkenness)", consult: C.J. BLEEKER, *op. cit.*, p. 51, 91; Z. HORVÁTH, "Hathor and her Festivals at Lahun", in G. Miniaci, W. Grajetzki (ed.), *The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1550 BC) I, Middle Kingdom Studies 1*, London, 2015, p. 131ff.

¹⁹⁸ M. ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas I*, p. 363ff.; For Euripides' detailed narrative see M.P.O. MORFORD, R.J. LENARDON, *op. cit.*, p. 198-216.

¹⁹⁹ K. KERÉNYI, "Gedanken über Dionysos", *SMSR* 11, 1935, p. 20, 24.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30; M. ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas I*, p. 367.

we learn that Jupiter (Zeus) the Cretan tyrant placed his illegitimate son, Liber (Dionysus) on the throne already as a child, but in her jealousy his wife Juno (Hera) roused the Titans, who killed him, cut him into pieces, and cooked the parts. However, his sister, Minerva (Athena) saved his heart, and delivered it to their father, who in turn destroyed the Titans. Jupiter hid the heart into a statue of plaster, and placed it into a temple. To commemorate Liber's suffering, whereby they hoped to pacify the tyrant, the Cretans enacted annual celebrations, as well as mysteries in every two years. Accordingly, for the sake of symbolically re-enacting the events, they tore a living ox by their teeth, and entered the forest running to and fro screaming as if in a fury, while carrying the basket of Minerva, which hid the saved heart of her brother.²⁰¹

According to a variant of the above recalled euhemeristic version of the myth recounted by Firmicus Maternus, the saved heart of Dionysus was swallowed by Zeus, and by being begotten on Semele he came to be born again, while the Titans were punished by the thunder and lightning of Zeus. Thereupon from their ashes mankind was born, thus endowed with a dualistic nature being both mundane and divine, as having arisen in body from the Titans, while in soul from the god who was devoured by them. Hinge pointed out, that Herodotus must have known the Dionysiac myth, since he himself identified Dionysus with the Egyptian Osiris,²⁰² who was killed, and dismembered by his brother Seth, but Isis who was his sister and his wife, collected the pieces and embalmed his body. The act of the Titans, who dismembered the god, but thereby caused him to exceed his earlier form of existence, was retorted by the thunderbolt of Zeus, as we have seen, which incinerated them. This episode may be paralleled with that of Seth and his followers dismembering the body of Osiris in the examined narratives, who were themselves cut into pieces, and incinerated. Therefore, as Eliade pointed out, the Titans, and thus, *mutatis mutandis*, the Sethian beings, functioned as Masters of Initiation, who placed the novice into a higher sphere of existence. Hinge also believed that Herodotus' silence about the god's mysteries enacted behind the temple of Athena (Neith) at Sais²⁰³ was not due to an initiatory pledge he made in Egypt, but to the fact, that he identified these mysteries with their Greek counterparts, i.e. he held the mysteries of Osiris to be identical with the mystery cults of Dionysus, and by talking about them in detail, he would have trespassed against his own Greek laws protecting the religious secrecy of these mystery cults.²⁰⁴ The motif of the torn apart bull and the rescued heart arouses reasonable suspicion, that there may be a deeper connection between the two cults. Eliade refers to a work by Demosthenes (*De corona*), where the author gives an account about the rites of a Thracian god, Sabazius, who by name was believed to have been the indigenous form of Dionysus, but in any case, was certainly held to be homologous with him, and mentioned the "nebrizing", from the word *nēbris*, i.e. the fawnskin, as part of the rites. According to Eliade, this might have referred to a sacrificial act, including the eating of the raw meat of the animal. At the same time, it was also the fawnskin, which the Maenads wore during their mountain orgies. These rituals established a connection with ancient natural and cosmic forces arising

²⁰¹ G. HINGE, "Dionysos and Herakles in Scythia – The Eschatological String of Herodotos' Book 4", in P.G. Bilde, J.H. Petersen (ed.): *Meetings of Cultures in the Black Sea Region. Between Conflict and Coexistence. Black Sea Studies* 8, Gylling, 2008, p. 372.

²⁰² HERODOTUS, *The History* II, 144 = HERODOTUS, *The Persian Wars* I. *Books 1-2* (= *The History* I-II) (A.D. Godley trans.), 1920, 7th ed., Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1975, p. 450f.

²⁰³ HERODOTUS, *The History* II, 170-171 = HERODOTUS, *The Persian Wars* I. *Books 1-2* (= *The History* I-II) (A.D. Godley trans.), 1920, 7th ed., Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, 1975, p. 482ff.

²⁰⁴ M. ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas* I, p. 371; M.P.O. MORFORD, R.J. LENARDON, *op. cit.*, p. 218f.; G. HINGE, *op. cit.*, p. 373f.

from the levels of the most profound, which in the organized everyday life of the civilized world remained altogether hidden. Hence having reached connection with them was an actual proof of a successful initiation. The crossing of these liminal spheres was a means of approaching, or “tasting” the state of death, where the actual goal however was not to attain, but to exceed them. In fact, the dramatic act of the Titans mentioned by Firmicus Maternus recalls the two ancient shamanic initiations of dismemberment, and boiling through fire.²⁰⁵

Concluding remarks

The function of sacrifice in the Greek as well as in our here discussed main question of Egyptian myth is apparently identical with that of the seemingly distant, ancient sacrifice offered to Prajāpati, at least since the time of the Brahmanas, which was meant to be a means for restoring the primordial unity. The dispersed Prajāpati, an archaic type of the Lord of Creatures who was initially dismembered and scattered at the beginning of Time in order to let the world come into being from his body, becomes reconstituted by the sacrifice. However, simultaneously with the ritual reintegration of Prajāpati, the same process occurs within the officiant himself. Hence, the sacrificer is identical with the recipient of the sacrifice, and therefore with the dismembered god, as in the case of the myth of Dionysus or Osiris, thereby transcending his physical being. Interestingly enough, a tradition of the Brahmanas identified Prajāpati with the same constellation as the Egyptians did with Osiris, i.e. Orion.²⁰⁶ The ancient Egyptian notion of *m3.t*, and the preservation of *m3.t* fulfills the exact same purpose. The ritual of Pyramid Text Spell 369 places the body of the dismembered Osirian king into the pre-existent, initial moment of Eternity, the modality of Chaos, that primordial foundational state of the created universe, in which only Atum and Osiris exist as the initiators and potentialities of creation itself, as described in Chapter 175 of the Book of the Dead, in order to allow him to start his new life in Eternity by completely separating himself from his earlier world.²⁰⁷ Although the wording of the chapter refers to this state as offering “peace of mind and blessedness”, its transitional nature was all the more evident for the Osirian deceased,²⁰⁸ functioning merely as a kind of “spiritual chrysalis” in a process of existential metamorphosis from which he/she was necessarily willing to proceed towards a renewed existence, without any further confines. So is it conceivable, that the foreleg which killed Osiris is at the same time the guaranty of eternal life, since the initiatory complex, which was based on the Osirian martyrdom, could have come about only by means of his passing and transformation. Thus, from the state of being a king and cultural hero on earth he transcended to become the primary mortuary deity, and ruler of the Netherworld. In the present case however, the act of dismembering the Sethian animal is the basic element of two different, yet, closely interrelated rites, one of which is aimed at the attainment of an Osirian eternity, while the other at the intention to separate the immanently present Horus-like and Sethian, i.e. Apollonian and Dionysian aspects, these existential qualities within human personality, in the form of an initiation ceremony dramatizing the separation from the mother, represented by the

²⁰⁵ M. ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas* I, p. 364, 367, 371.

²⁰⁶ R.H. ALLEN, *Star Names. Their Lore and Meaning*, 2nd ed. republication of: *Star-Names and Their Meanings* (1899), New York, 1963, p. 309.

²⁰⁷ K. KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 21f.; W.C. Beane, W.G. Doty (ed.), *Myths, Rites, Symbols. A Mircea Eliade Reader* I, New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London, 1976, p. 252f.; M. ELIADE, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation.*, xiiif.; *id.*, *A History of Religious Ideas* I, p. 227ff., 365f., 371.

²⁰⁸ J.H. Taylor (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 240.

qualities of the Anti/Nemti and Hathor/Hesat/Isis duad, or, maybe more appropriately, triad.²⁰⁹

In the above examined northern constellations, with special emphasis on *Mshṯjw*, the Bull's Foreleg, a mystery drama appears to unfold as an eternal "pattern book" resisting oblivion, which serves as an eternal source of reference ready to be consulted about its events by those, who became familiarized with it. The differences between their representations thus become understandable, as alternative interpretations of the source patterns or elements. The same phenomenon is described in a uniquely mythico-religious wording in the closing section of the New Kingdom variant of BD 85, in the following passage:

(...) I prepared my nest in the confines of the distant firmament. I descend to the land of Geb, and reject my wickedness. I saw my father, the lord of the evening. N. kisses his body [var.: It is his body] (at the beautiful place, when he rejects his body) that is in Heliopolis (...).

The chapter is one of the last in the group of spells, known as the "Transformation-spells" (BD 76-88), and its purpose is to allow the deceased to become a living *bꜣ*-soul by knowing it. The quoted closing lines describe the apotheosis of the *mystes*, who as the sun-god wanders the ecliptic as he emerges on the East, and descends into the Netherworld on the West to meet his father Osiris, and kiss his body, i.e. to unite with him.²¹⁰ We have already encountered a similar passage in Sections 11, 12 and 32 of BD 17, which referred to the purification of the deceased, i.e. the riddance from all evil within him/her, which in Section 11 meant the cutting of his/her navel-cord.²¹¹ The parallel between the physical body and wickedness may be equated with the removal and annihilation of the Sethian aspect of Anti/Nemti, while the mentioning of Heliopolis may refer to the liminal zone of *msk.t*, the region below the eastern horizon, whence the Sun comes to reborn every morning, but at the same time it appears as a locality in cult topography, as part of the sun temple at Heliopolis.²¹² Willems referred to the fact, that upon reaching the *msk.t*, a sacrificial offering was made.²¹³ On the other hand, this is the place of annihilating the enemies of the sun-god at the eastern horizon, where the first blush of the dawn signifies the flames of their incineration and destruction, and at the same

²⁰⁹ For its modern parallels see: M. ELIADE, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*, p. 7ff.

²¹⁰ From the context it becomes clear, that it is not a scribal mistake. The word "wickedness" (*ḏw.t*) in the variant of pL17 u.a. is replaced by "body" (*ḏ.t*), so the passage becomes: "I get rid of my body", as in the case with the section in brackets in pW1 and pC1. Here pW1 uses the word *ḏ.t*, while pC2 writes *ḏw.t*. Which makes this pun important, is the seeming interchangeability of *ḏw.t* and *ḏ.t*, and their context. The speaker, or rather, according to the spell, his living *bꜣ*-soul, descends (*hꜣj*) to the realm of the earthgod, hence the earth, (*tꜣ Gb*), to see his father, i.e. Osiris, the lord of the night, which here means his own Osirian aspect, and to kiss his body in Junu. This could signify the reunion of the *bꜣ* and the deified body (*s'ḥ*), as in the case of the sun-god and Osiris during former's nightly journey. The reference to Geb might emphasize either (1) the god's solar aspect, hence the reference to Junu, or (2) his status as the father of Osiris, his heir, but it might just as well refer to (3) his status as the personification of the earth. In order to be able to reunite with the *s'ḥ*, the *bꜣ*-soul must get rid of its wickedness (*ḏw.t*), which according to the pun is identical with the body (*ḏ.t*), therefore with the physical body (*ḥ.t*), and later the corpse (*hꜣ.t*) that needs to be transfigured (*sꜣḥ*) to become a *s'ḥ* (q.v. B. LÜSCHER, *Die Verwandlungssprüche (Tb 76-88). Totenbuchtexte 2. Synoptische Textausgabe nach Quellen des Neuen Reiches*, Basel, 2006, p. 360-65).

²¹¹ The cutting of the navel-cord as a cosmogonic act is also known from a text in the temple of Esna, where Neith creates Apophis, the embodiment of primordial chaos, by cutting off the navel-cord of Ra, the creator sun-god (qq.v. J.Fr. QUACK, "Apophis, Nabelschnur des Re", *SAK* 34, 2006, p. 377f.; S. SAUNERON, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siècles du paganisme*, Esna V, Le Caire, 1962, p. 265).

²¹² We have seen earlier, that it may also refer to a locality in the Abydene cult topography, thereby possibly further testifying the merging theological concepts of the traditions of Ra and Osiris (v. sup. n. 165).

²¹³ H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata*, p. 263, 266.

time the blood of the sky goddess Nut, as she gives birth to the sun-god.²¹⁴ Nevertheless, the region is functionally identical with the *msk.t*-hide, through which the one who is about to be reborn into a new life first has to pass and thereby become purified,²¹⁵ before coming to life as a purified spirit, while by the redemptive symbolic death, which is denoted by the sacrificial offering alluded to by Willems, is delivered from his / her wickedness (the Sethian, instinctive-self), and becomes born again as the sun-god with the dawning light. In returning to the northern constellations, we may see, that the mystical drama of the death, and rebirth of Osiris, which is symbolically identical with the purified, reborn Horusan aspect, takes place there, at the center of the axis, around the *mnj.tj*, the two mooring posts in the hands of the primordial mother goddess, who herself symbolizes the apex of the *axis mundi*, around which the mythico-religious patterns of the later textual narratives unfold and thereby offer a means to remember and return to the maternal womb, into the timeless region of the imperishable stars of the northern sky.²¹⁶

Alles Vergängliche,
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
Das Unzulängliche,
Hier wird's Ereignis;
Das Unbeschreibliche,
Hier ist's getan;
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

²¹⁴ *Urk.* V, 53(22/LVIII); *EAT* I, p. 49f.

²¹⁵ Consult the above cited passages in BD 17: *Urk.* V, 22(11/XIX), 23(12/XX-XXI), 80f.(32/XCIII-XCIV); A. MORET, *op. cit.*, p. 46f.

²¹⁶ Z. ŽÁBA, *op. cit.*, p. 54.f; J. RELKE, A. ERNEST, "Ancient Egyptian Astronomy: Ursa Major - Symbol of Rejuvenation", *Archaeoastronomy: The Journal of Astronomy in Culture* 17, 2003, p. 71.

Résumé :

Étant une des rares constellations à pouvoir être identifiées avec une certitude raisonnable comme la (Grande) Casserole, une partie de la Grande Ourse, l'astérisme égyptien de *Mshṯjw* (la Cuisse du taureau) a reçu une attention particulière dans les études égyptologiques modernes. Sur certains couvercles de cercueil du Moyen Empire, il apparaît comme une patte antérieure du taureau, tandis que, depuis le Nouvel Empire, il est représenté soit comme un taureau, soit comme un taureau avec ou sans membres, surtout dans les tombeaux royaux et ceux des élites, faisant partie du diagramme qui présente les constellations du ciel du nord. Étant donné que les représentations de *Mshṯjw* apparaissent dans un environnement qui peut être étroitement associé à la sphère mortuaire, on peut poser la question de la relation qu'elles entretenaient avec les rituels et les textes funéraires et, plus généralement, avec la notion d'au-delà. Le but du présent article est de retrouver les traces des références mythologiques les plus importantes qui renvoient à la constellation en question et de tenter de souligner sa signification comme partie d'un ensemble ayant joué un rôle clé dans la résurrection du défunt osirianisé. Puisque toutes les sources prototypiques actuellement connues représentant *Mshṯjw* proviennent du Moyen et du Nouvel Empire, avec quelques variantes dérivées des périodes tardives, il a été jugé opportun de traiter principalement ces variantes au cours de cette étude. En conséquence, l'accent a été mis sur les sources textuelles de l'Ancien au Nouvel Empire, en tenant compte des allusions postérieures, qui complètent les sources les plus anciennes.

Abstract:

The ancient Egyptian constellation of *Mshṯjw*, or the Bull's Foreleg, has obtained a unique position in modern Egyptological studies as being one of the rare asterisms which can be identified with considerable certainty as our modern day Big Dipper, a part of *Ursa Major*. On certain Middle Kingdom coffin lids it appears as a bull's foreleg, while from the New Kingdom on it is represented either in the form of a bull, or as a bull with or without rudimentary limbs, mostly in elite and royal tombs as being part of the diagram presenting the constellations of the northern sky. Since these depictions of *Mshṯjw* appear in an environment intimately related to the mortuary sphere, the question arises as to what relationship it possibly had with mortuary rituals and literature, and – in a broader sense – with the notion of the Afterlife. The present paper endeavours to trace the most important mythological references pertaining to the examined constellation, and thereby attempts to pinpoint its significance as part of a presumed source narrative, which played a key role in the apotheosis of the Osirian deceased. Since all the presently known prototypal sources depicting *Mshṯjw* stem from the Middle and the New Kingdoms with only derived variants from the later periods, it was considered appropriate to discuss mainly these earlier variants during the course of this study. Accordingly, greater emphasis was put on textual sources spanning from the Old to the New Kingdom, supplied with the important echoes of mythico-religious references of later times, which tangibly justify and supplement the earliest attestable narratives.

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