

# Faq and Info about Egyptian Mythology

Part I: The Gods

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Herein I have placed short summaries explaining the functions of many of the more important gods worshiped in Ancient Egypt.

If anyone can suggest any additions, modifications, clarifications, etc. please feel free to contact me by Email at knightster+@cmu.edu . Also, if anyone catches any typos, let me know. Typos in the names of gods may or may not be corrected, depending upon whether (upon consulting my sources, grammars, dictionaries, etc.) they're actually typos! If some fact is blatantly wrong, please contact me with a reference, and I will see if I can find some further information on the subject. In such cases, we may be considering two different versions of the myth, in which case I will add the variant information as such to the FAQ.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The bulk of this material is to be found, in a more comprehensive and scholarly form, in Sir E. A. Wallis Budge's The Gods of the Egyptians; or, Studies in Egyptian Mythology (Dover, New York, 1969 ed. reprinted paperback from original London 1904 printing). However, much of it is collected from various other sources which I have read during the course of my nearly 15 years as an amateur Egyptologist.

If you want a bibliography, I will start by recommending all the works of Mr. Budge; particular titles include Egyptian Magic, Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, The Egyptian Book of the Dead, and Egyptian Language.

Those particularly interested in the language of Ancient Egypt should be aware also of Budge's An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary. For the most highly interested students (with sufficient time, interest, and background in linguistics) I cannot overly recommend Sir Alan Gardiner's Egyptian Grammar, latest reprinting 1988, contact Oxbow Books if interested but be forewarned: my copy, the absolute prize of my book collection, cost \$80 if I recall correctly. (I keep my copy right next to Crowley's Magick in Theory and Practice and Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled.)

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## SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks is due to Amen, for all things, and to Nephthys, for her love.

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Amen (Amon, Amun, Ammon, Amoun)

Amen's name means "The Hidden One." Amen was the patron deity of the city of Thebes from earliest times, and was viewed (along with his consort Amenet) as a primordial creation-deity. He is represented in five forms: (1) a man, enthroned; (2) a frog-headed man (as a primordial deity); (3) a cobra-headed man; (4) an ape; (5) a lion. His sacred animals were the goose and the ram, though he was not depicted as them.

Up to Dynasty XII Amen was unimportant except in Thebes; but when the Thebans had established their sovereignty in Egypt, Amen became a prominent deity, and by Dynasty XVIII was termed the King of the Gods. His famous temple, Karnak, is the largest religious structure ever built by man. According to E.A.Wallis Budge's *Gods of the Egyptians*, Amen by Dynasty XIX-XX was thought of as "an invisible creative power which was the source of all life in heaven, and on the earth, and in the great deep, and in the Underworld, and which made itself manifest under the form of Ra."

Amen was self-created, according to later traditions; according to the older Theban traditions, Amen was created by Thoth as one of the eight primordial deities of creation (Amen, Amenet, Heq, Heqet, Nun, Naunet, Kau, Kauket).

During the New Kingdom, Amen's consort was Mut, "Mother," who seems to have been the Egyptian equivalent of the "Great Mother" archetype. The two thus formed a pair reminiscent of the God and Goddess of other traditions such as Wicca.

SEE ALSO Amen-Ra, Mut, Thoth.

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Amen-Ra

A composite deity, invented by the priests of Amen as an attempt to link New Kingdom (Dyn. XVIII-XXI) worship of Amen with the older solar cult of the god Ra.

SEE ALSO Amen, Ra.

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Amset (Imsety, Mestha, GD: Ameshet)

One of the Four Sons of Horus, Amset was represented as a mummified man. He was the protector of the liver of the deceased, and was protected by the goddess Isis.

SEE ALSO Four Sons of Horus, Isis.

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### Anubis (Anpu, GD: Ano-Oobist)

Anubis (the Greek corruption of the Egyptian "Anpu") was the son of Nephthys: by some traditions, the father was Set; by others, Osiris. Anubis was depicted as a jackal, or as a jackal-headed man; in primitive times he was probably simply the jackal god. Owing to the jackal's tendency to prowl around tombs, he became associated with the dead, and by the Old Kingdom, Anubis was worshipped as the inventor of embalming, who had embalmed the dead Osiris, thus helping preserve him in order to live again. Anubis was also worshipped under the form "Wepuat" ("Opener of the Ways"), sometimes with a rabbit's head, who conducted the souls of the dead to their judgement, and who monitored the Scales of Truth to protect the dead from deception and eternal death.

SEE ALSO Nephthys, Osiris, Set.

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### Bast (Bastet)

A cat-goddess, worshiped in the Delta city of Bubastis. A protectress of cats and those who cared for cats. As a result, an important deity in the home (since cats were prized pets) and also important in the iconography (since the serpents which attack the sun god were usually represented in papyri as being killed by cats).

She was also worshiped as the consort of Ptah-seker-ausar; and is joined with Sekhmet and Ra (a very unusual combination of male and female deities) to form Sekhmet-bast-ra, also worshiped as Ptah-seker-ausar's spouse, and viewed as a deity of the destructive, purifying power of the sun.

SEE ALSO Ptah, Ra, Sekhmet.

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### Bes

A deity of either African or Semitic origin; came to Egypt by Dynasty XII. Depicted as a bearded, savage-looking yet comical dwarf, shown full-face in images (highly unusual by Egyptian artistic conventions). Revered as a deity of household pleasures such as music, good food, and relaxation. Also a protector and entertainer of children. However, many texts point to the idea that Bes was a terrible, avenging deity, who was as swift to punish the wicked as he was to amuse and delight the righteous.

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### Duamutef (GD: Thmoomathph, Tuamutef)

One of the Four Sons of Horus, Duamutef was represented as a mummified man with the head of a jackal. He was the protector of the stomach of

the deceased, and was protected by the goddess Neith.

SEE ALSO Four Sons of Horus, Neith.

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#### Four Sons of Horus

The four sons of Horus were the protectors of the parts of the body of Osiris, and from this, became the protectors of the body of the deceased. They were: Amset, Hapi, Duamutef, and Qebhsenuf. They were protected in turn by the goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Neith, and Serket.

SEE ALSO Amset, Duamutef, Hapi, Isis, Neith, Nephthys, Qebhsenuf, and Serket.

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#### Geb (Seb)

The god of the earth, son of Shu and Tefnut, brother and husband of Nut, and father of Osiris, Set, Isis, and Nephthys. In the earliest stages of Egyptian history his name was Geb; in later forms of the language it became Seb, but the old pronunciation has become so common in popular works on the subject that it is used herein. His sacred animal was the goose, and he was often referred to as the "Great Cackler". He is generally represented as a man with green or black skin - the color of living things, and the color of the fertile Nile mud, respectively. It was said that Seb would hold imprisoned the souls of the wicked, that they might not ascend to heaven.

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Hadit: SEE Hor-behedet.

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#### Hapi (GD: Ahephi)

One of the Four Sons of Horus, Hapi was represented as a mummified man with the head of a baboon. He was the protector of the lungs of the deceased, and was protected by the goddess Nephthys.

The name Hapi, spelled identically in most but not all cases, is also the name of the god who was the personification of the River Nile, depicted as a corpulent man (fat signifying abundance) with a crown of lilies or papyrus stems.

SEE ALSO Four Sons of Horus, Nephthys.

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#### Hathor (Het-heru, Het-Hert)

A very old goddess of Egypt, worshiped as a cow-deity from earliest times. The name "Hathor" is the Greek corruption of the variants

Het-Hert ("the House Above") and Het-Heru ("the House of Horus"). Both terms refer to her as a sky goddess. The priests of Heliopolis often referred to her as Ra's consort, the mother of Shu and Tefnut. Like Isis, Hathor was considered by many to be the goddess "par excellence" and held the attributes of most of the other goddesses at one time or another. Like Isis and Mut, Hathor was a manifestation of the "Great Mother" archetype; a sort of cosmic Yin.

She had so very many manifestations that eventually seven important ones were selected and widely worshiped as the "Seven Hathors": Hathor of Thebes, Heliopolis, Aphroditopolis, Sinai, Momemphis, Herakleopolis, and Keset.

The Greeks identified her with Aphrodite, and this is not too far off, as she represented, in the texts, everything true, good, and beautiful in all forms of woman; mother, wife, sister, and daughter; also the patron of artists of every kind, and of joyful things, festivals, and happiness. The star Sirius (called by the Egyptians Sepdet) was sacred to her.

SEE ALSO Isis, Mut, Ra, Shu, Tefnut.

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Heru-ra-ha

A composite deity in Crowley's quasi-Egyptian mythology; composed of Ra-Hoor-Khuit and Hoor-par-kraat. Apparently without basis in historical Egyptian mythology, but the name, translated into Egyptian, means something approximating "Horus and Ra be Praised!"

SEE ALSO Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Hoor-pa-kraat.

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Hor-akhuti (Horakhty)

"Horus of (or in) the Horizons," one of the most common titles of Horus, especially when in his function as a solar deity, emphasizing his reign stretching from one horizon to the other.

SEE ALSO Horus, Ra, Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

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Hor-behedet (HADIT)

A form of Horus worshipped in the city of Behdet, shown in the well-known form of a solar disk with a great pair of wings, usually seen hovering above important scenes in Egyptian religious art. Made popular by Aleister Crowley under the poorly transliterated name "HADIT", the god appears to have been a way of depicting the omnipresence of Ra and Horus. As Crowley says in *Magick in Theory and Practice*, "the infinitely small and atomic yet omnipresent point is called HADIT." This is a good expression of the god - seen almost

everywhere, yet at the same time small and out-of-the-way.

SEE ALSO Horus.

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Hor-pa-kraat (Horus the Child, GD: Hoor-par-kraat)

Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, distinguished from Horus the Elder, who was the old patron deity of Upper Egypt; but the worship of the two gods became confused early in Egyptian history and the two essentially merged. Represented as a young boy with a child's sidelock of hair, sucking his finger.

The Golden Dawn attributed Silence to him, presumably because the sucking of the finger is suggestive of the common "shhh" gesture.

SEE ALSO Horus.

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Horus (Her)

One of the most important deities of Egypt. Horus as now conceived is a mixture of the original deities known as "Horus the Child" and "Horus the Elder". As the Child, Horus is the son of Osiris and Isis, who, upon reaching adulthood, becomes known as Her-nedj-tef-ef ("Horus, Avenger of His Father") by avenging his father's death, by defeating and casting out his evil uncle Set. He then became the divine prototype of the Pharaoh.

As Horus the Elder, he was also the patron deity of Upper (Southern) Egypt from the earliest times; initially, viewed as the twin brother of Set (the patron of Lower Egypt), but he became the conqueror of Set c. 3000 B.C.E. when Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt and formed the unified kingdom of Egypt.

SEE ALSO Hor-pa-kraat, Horus the Elder, Isis, Osiris, Set.

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Horus the Elder (Her-ur, Aroueris)

Horus, the patron god of Upper Egypt from time immemorial; distinguished from Horus the Child (Hor-pa-kraat), who was the son of Isis and Osiris; but the two gods merged early in Egyptian history and became the one Horus, uniting the attributes of both.

SEE ALSO Hor-pa-kraat, Horus.

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Isis (Auset)

Perhaps the most important goddess of all Egyptian mythology, Isis assumed, during the course of Egyptian history, the attributes and

functions of virtually every other important goddess in the land. Her most important functions, however, were those of motherhood, marital devotion, healing the sick, and the working of magical spells and charms. She was believed to be the most powerful magician in the universe, owing to the fact that she had learned the Secret Name of Ra from the god himself. She was the sister and wife of Osiris, sister of Set, and twin sister of Nephthys. She was the mother of Horus the Child (Hor-pa-kraat), and was the protective goddess of Horus's son Amset, protector of the liver of the deceased.

Isis was responsible for protecting Horus from Set during his infancy; for helping Osiris to return to life; and for assisting her husband to rule in the land of the Dead.

Her cult seems to have originally centered, like her husband's, at Abydos near the Delta in the North (Lower Egypt); she was adopted into the family of Ra early in Egyptian history by the priests of Heliopolis, but from the New Kingdom onwards (c. 1500 BC) her worship no longer had any particular identifiable center, and she became more or less universally worshiped, as her husband was.

SEE ALSO Amset, Hor-pa-kraat, Horus, Nephthys, Osiris, Ra, Set.

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Khephra (Keper)

The creator-god, according to early Heliopolitan cosmology; considered a form of Ra. The Egyptian root "kheper" signifies several things, according to context, most notably the verb "to create" or "to transform", and also the word for "scarab beetle". The scarab, or dung beetle, was considered symbolic of the sun since it rolled a ball of dung in which it laid its eggs around with it - this was considered symbolic of the sun god propelling the sphere of the sun through the sky. In later Heliopolitan belief, which named the sun variously according to the time of the day, Khephra was the nighttime form of the sun.

SEE ALSO Ra.

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Khonsu (Chons)

The third member (with his parents Amen and Mut) of the great triad of Thebes. Khonsu was the god of the moon. The best-known story about him tells of him playing the ancient game "senet" ("passage") against Thoth, and wagered a portion of his light. Thoth won, and because of losing some of his light, Khonsu cannot show his whole glory for the entire month, but must wax and wane.

SEE ALSO Amen, Mut, Thoth.

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## Ma'at (Ma)

The wife of Thoth, Ma'at's name means "Truth", "Justice", and perhaps even "Tao". It cannot readily be rendered into English but "truth" is perhaps a satisfactory translation. Ma'at was represented as a tall woman with an ostrich feather in her hair. She was present at the judgement of the dead; her feather was balanced against the heart of the deceased to determine whether he had led a pure and honest life. All civil laws in Egypt were held up to the "Law of Ma'at", which essentially was a series of old conceptions and morals dating to the earliest times in Egypt. A law contrary to the Law of Ma'at would not have been considered valid in Egypt.

SEE ALSO Thoth.

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## Min (Menu, Amsu)

A form of Amen depicted holding a flail (thought to represent a thunderbolt in Egyptian art) and with an erect penis; his full name was often given as Menu-ka-mut-ef ("Min, Bull of his Mother"). Min was worshiped as the god of virility; lettuces were offered as sacrifice to him and then eaten in hopes of procuring manhood; and he was worshiped as the husband of the goddess Qetesh, goddess of love and femininity.

SEE ALSO Amen, Qetesh.

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## Mut (GD: Auramooth)

The wife of Amen in Theban tradition; seen as the mother, the loving, receptive, nurturing force (similar to Yin) behind all things, even as her husband was the great energy, the creative force (similar to Yang). The word "mut" in Ancient Egyptian means "mother". She was also the mother of Khonsu, the moon god.

SEE ALSO Amen, Khonsu.

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## Neith (Net, Neit, GD: Thoum-aesh-neith)

A very ancient goddess worshiped in the Delta; revered as a goddess of wisdom, often identified with Ma'at; in later traditions, the sister of Isis, Nephthys, and Serket, and protectress of Duamutef, the god of the stomach of the deceased.

SEE ALSO Duamutef, Ma'at.

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## Nephthys (Nebt-het)

The sister and wife of Set, and sister of Isis and Osiris; also the mother (variably by Set or by Osiris) of Anubis. She abandoned Set when he killed Osiris, and assisted Isis in the care of Horus and the resurrection of Osiris. She was, along with her sister, considered the special protectress of the dead, and she was the guardian of Hapi, the protector of the lungs of the deceased.

SEE ALSO Hapi, Horus, Isis, Osiris, Set.

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Nuit (Nut)

The goddess of the sky, daughter of Shu and Tefnut, sister and wife of Geb, mother of Osiris, Set, Isis, and Nephthys. Described by Crowley in his *\_Magick in Theory and Practice\_* thus: "Infinite space is called the goddess NUIT." Nut was generally depicted as a woman with blue skin, and her body covered with stars, standing on all fours, leaning over her husband, representing the sky arched over the earth. Her relationship to HADIT is an invention of Crowley's with no basis in Egyptology, save only that Hadit was often depicted underneath Nuit - one finds Nuit forming the upper frame of a scene, and the winged disk Hadit floating beneath, silently as always. This is an artistic convention, and there was no marriage between the two in ancient Egyptian legend.

SEE ALSO Geb, Hor-behedet (Hadit), Shu.

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Osiris (Ausar)

The god of the dead, and the god of the resurrection into eternal life; ruler, protector, and judge of the deceased, and his prototype (the deceased was in historical times usually referred to as "the Osiris"). His cult originated in Abydos, where his actual tomb was said to be located.

Osiris was the first child of Nut and Geb, thus the brother of Set, Nephthys, and Isis, who was also his wife. By Isis he fathered Horus, and according to some stories, Nephthys assumed the form of Isis, seduced him thus, and from their union was born Anubis.

Osiris ruled the world of men in the beginning, after Ra had abandoned the world to rule the skies, but he was murdered by his brother Set. Through the magic of Isis, he was made to live again. Being the first living thing to die, he subsequently became lord of the dead. His death was avenged by his son Horus, who defeated Set and cast him out into the desert to the West of Egypt (the Sahara).

Prayers and spells were addressed to Osiris throughout Egyptian history, in hopes of securing his blessing and entering the afterlife which he ruled; but his popularity steadily increased through the Middle Kingdom. By Dynasty 18 he was probably the most widely

worshiped god in Egypt. His popularity endured until the latest phases of Egyptian history; reliefs still exist of Roman emperors, conquerors of Egypt, dressed in the traditional garb of the Pharaohs, making offerings to him in the temples.

SEE ALSO Anubis, Geb, Horus, Isis, Nephthys, Ra, Set.

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Pharaoh (deified kings)

From earliest times in Egypt the pharaohs were worshipped as gods: the son of Ra, the son of Horus, the son of Amen, etc. depending upon what period of Egyptian history and what part of the country is being considered. It should be noted that prayers, sacrifices, etc. to the pharaohs were extremely rare, if they occurred at all - there seems to be little or no evidence to support an actual cult of the pharaoh. The pharaoh was looked upon as being chosen by and favored by the gods his fathers. The pharaoh was never regarded as the son of any goddesses, but rather as the son of the Queen his mother, fathered by the god, incarnate as his earthly father. (A few seeming exceptions to this include a sculpture of Pharaoh Tutankhamen being embraced by his "parents" Amen and Mut, but the intent here seems to be to compare the king with their son Khonsu, rather than to actually claim that Mut was his mother.)

SEE ALSO Amen, Khonsu, Mut.

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Ptah

Worshiped in Memphis from the earliest dynastic times (c.3000 BC), Ptah was seen as the creator of the universe in the Memphite cosmology. He fashioned the bodies in which dwelt the souls of men in the afterlife. Other versions of the myths state that he worked under Thoth's orders, creating the heavens and the earth according to Thoth's specifications.

Ptah is depicted as a bearded man wearing a skullcap, shrouded much like a mummy, with his hands emerging from the wrappings in front and holding the Uas (phoenix-headed) scepter, an Ankh, and a Djed (sign of stability). He was often worshiped in conjunction with the gods Seker and Osiris, and worshiped under the name Ptah-seker-ausar.

SEE ALSO Osiris, Seker, Thoth.

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Qebhsenuf (Kabexnuf, Qebsneuf)

One of the Four Sons of Horus, Qebhsenuf was represented as a mummified man with the head of a falcon. He was the protector of the intestines of the deceased, and was protected by the goddess Serket.

SEE ALSO Four Sons of Horus, Serket.

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Qetesh

Originally believed to be a Syrian deity, Qetesh was an important form of Hathor, specifically referred to in the latter's function as goddess of love and beauty. Qetesh was depicted as a beautiful nude woman, standing or riding upon a lion, holding flowers, a mirror, or serpents. She is generally shown full-face (unusual in Egyptian artistic convention). She was also considered the consort of the god Min, the god of virility.

SEE ALSO Hathor, Min.

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Ra

Ra was the god of the sun during dynastic Egypt; the name is thought to have meant "creative power", and as a proper name "Creator", similar to English Christian usage of the term "Creator" to signify the "almighty God." Very early in Egyptian history Ra was identified with Horus, who as a hawk or falcon-god represented the loftiness of the skies. Ra is represented either as a hawk-headed man or as a hawk.

Owing to the fact that the sun was a fire, the Egyptians realized that in order to travel through the waters of Heaven and the Underworld, it required a boat, and so Ra was depicted as traveling in a boat. During the day the boat was a great galley called Madjet ("becoming strong") and during the night, a small barge called Semektet ("becoming weak").

During dynastic Egypt Ra's cult center was Annu (Hebrew "On", Greek "Heliopolis", modern-day "Cairo"). In Dynasty V, the first king, Userkaf, was also Ra's high priest, and he added the term "Sa-Ra (Son of Ra)" to the titulary of the pharaohs.

Ra was father of Shu and Tefnut, grandfather of Nut and Geb, great-grandfather of Osiris, Set, Isis, and Nephthys, and great-great-grandfather to Horus. In later periods (about Dynasty 18 on) Osiris and Isis superseded him in popularity, but he remained "Ra netjer-aa neb-pet" ("Ra, the great God, Lord of Heaven") whether worshiped in his own right or, in later times, as half of the Lord of the Universe, Amen-Ra.

SEE ALSO Amen, Amen-Ra, Geb, Horus, Isis, Nephthys, Nut, Osiris, Set, Shu, Tefnut.

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Ra-Hoor-Khuit (Ra-Hor-akhuti)

"Ra, who is Horus of the Horizons." An appellation of Ra, identifying him with Horus, showing the two as manifestations of the singular Solar Force. The spelling "Ra-Hoor-Khuit" was popularized by Aleister Crowley, first in the Book of the Law (Liber AL vel Legis).

SEE ALSO Hor-akhuti, Horus, Ra.

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Seb: SEE Geb.

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Sebek

The crocodile-god, worshipped at the city of Arsinoe, called Crocodilopolis by the Greeks. Sebek was worshipped to appease him and his animals. According to some evidence, Sebek was considered a fourfold deity who represented the four elemental gods (Ra of fire, Shu of air, Geb of earth, and Osiris of water). In the Book of the Dead, Sebek assists in the birth of Horus; he fetches Isis and Nephthys to protect the deceased; and he aids in the destruction of Set.

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Seker

A god of light, protector of the spirits of the dead passing through the Underworld en route to the afterlife. Seker was worshiped in Memphis as a form of Ptah or as part of the compound deities Ptah-seker or Ptah-seker-ausar. Seker was usually depicted as having the head of a hawk, and shrouded as a mummy, similar to Ptah.

SEE ALSO Ptah.

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Sekhmet

A lioness-goddess, worshiped in Memphis as the wife of Ptah; created by Ra from the fire of his eyes as a creature of vengeance to punish mankind for his sins; later, became a peaceful protectress of the righteous. She was worshiped with Bast and Ra as a compound deity, Sekhmet-bast-ra, and was considered the consort of Ptah-seker-ausar.

SEE ALSO Bast, Ptah, Ra, Seker.

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Serket (Serqet, Selket)

A scorpion-goddess, shown as a beautiful woman with a scorpion poised on her head; her creature struck death to the wicked, but she was also prayed to to save the lives of innocent people stung by scorpions; she was also viewed as a helper of women in childbirth. She is also depicted as binding up demons that would otherwise threaten Ra, and

she sent seven of her scorpions to protect Isis from Set.

She was the protectress of Qebhsenuf, the son of Horus who guarded the intestines of the deceased. She was made famous by her statue from Tutankhamen's tomb, which was part of the collection which toured America in the 1970's.

SEE ALSO Isis, Qebhsenuf, Ra, Set.

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Set

Originally, in earliest times, Set was the patron deity of Lower (North) Egypt, and represented the fierce storms of the desert whom the Lower Egyptians sought to appease. However, when Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt and ushered in the First Dynasty, Set became known as the evil enemy of Horus (Upper Egypt's dynastic god).

Set was the brother of Osiris, Isis, and Nephthys, and husband of the latter; according to some versions of the myths he is also father of Anubis.

Set is best known for murdering his brother and attempting to kill his nephew Horus; Horus, however, managed to survive and grew up to avenge his father's death by establishing his rule over all Egypt and casting Set out into the lonely desert for all time.

In the 19th Dynasty there began a resurgence of respect for Set, and he was seen as a great god once more, the god who benevolently restrained the forces of the desert; but this was short-lived and by around Dynasty 20 or 21 Set became once more dreaded as the god of evil.

SEE ALSO Anubis, Horus, Isis, Osiris, Nephthys.

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Shu

The god of the atmosphere and of dry winds, son of Ra, brother and husband of Tefnut, father of Geb and Nuit. Represented in hieroglyphs by an ostrich feather (similar to Ma'at's), which symbol he is usually shown wearing on his head. He is generally shown standing on the recumbent Geb, holding aloft his daughter Nuit, separating the two. It was said that if he ever ceased to interpose himself between earth and sky, life would cease to be on our world - a very accurate assessment, it would seem. The name "Shu" appears to be related to the root "shu" meaning "dry, empty." Shu also seems to be a personification of the sun's light. Shu and Tefnut were also said to be but two halves of one soul, perhaps the earliest recorded example of "soulmates."

SEE ALSO Geb, Nuit, Ra, Tefnut.

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## Tefnut

The goddess of moisture and clouds, daughter of Ra, sister and wife of Shu, mother of Geb and Nuit. Depicted as a woman with the head of a lioness, which was her sacred animal. The name "Tefnut" probably derives from the root "teftef", signifying "to spit, to moisten" and the root "nu" meaning "waters, sky."

SEE ALSO Geb, Nuit, Ra, Shu.

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## Thoth (Tahuti)

The god of wisdom (Thoth is the Greek corruption of the original Egyptian Tahuti), Thoth was said to be self-created at the beginning of time, along with his consort Ma'at (truth). The two produced eight children, of which the most important was Amen, the hidden one, who was worshiped in Thebes as the Lord of the Universe.

Thoth was depicted as a man with the head of an ibis bird, and carried a pen and scrolls upon which he recorded all things. He was shown as attendant in almost all major scenes involving the gods, but especially at the judgement of the deceased.

It was widely believed that Thoth invented the magical and hermetic arts, and thus the Tarot deck, especially its revision by Aleister Crowley, is often referred to as the "Book of Thoth".

SEE ALSO Amen, Ma'at.

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## Part II - Frequently asked Questions (per se)

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### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Herein I have placed a few frequently asked questions, and their answers, concerning ancient Egyptian mythology.

If anyone can suggest any additions, modifications, clarifications, etc. please feel free to contact me by Email at knightster+@cmu.edu . Also, if anyone catches any typos, let me know. Typos in the names of gods may or may not be corrected, depending upon whether (upon consulting my sources, grammars, dictionaries, etc.) they're actually typos! If some fact is blatantly wrong, please contact me with a reference, and I will see if I can find some further information on the subject. In such cases, we may be considering two different versions of the myth, in which case I will add the variant information as such to the FAQ.

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\* In Liber AL, there are some Egyptian names that look funny. What's the deal?

Crowley, it seems, tried as much as possible to use the original Egyptian pronunciations of divine names, rather than use their popular Greek corruptions. Some of these (e.g. Hadit) have since been revised in the light of better knowledge of Egyptian, but his attempt was in general a good one.

\* Was there any Egyptian gematria?

Put simply, no. If there was a standard order used by the Egyptians for their alphabet, it has been lost. And unlike Hebrew, but like English, the symbols used to express numbers in Ancient Egyptian were not used for letters.

However, since the phonetics of Egyptian closely parallel Hebrew, it is possible to transliterate Egyptian names and phrases into the Hebrew alphabet for gematric computations much more readily than English.

\* What's the deal with all these 'hyphenated' gods like Amen-Ra, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Ptah-Seker-Ausar, etc.?

Most hyphenated gods' names are explained thusly:

In ancient Egypt, different cities often had completely different conceptions of cosmology. As the influence of a city grew, so often did the influence of its mythos. It became necessary to reconcile different gods who served similar roles, and so the priests took the enlightened viewpoint that the "gods" were merely one entity manifesting under different names and/or forms. The one entity was referred to by a compound name, such as Amen-Ra or Ptah-Seker-Ausar.

However, some hyphenated gods' names are merely hyphenated to make them easier to read, for example, Her-nedj-tef-f, from the Egyptian words Her "Horus", nedj "avenger", tef "father", and -f "his", thus "Horus, the avenger of his father."

In the case of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, we have both explanations in force: Ra "Ra", Hoor "Horus", khuit "of the horizons", thus "Ra, who is like Horus of the Horizons".