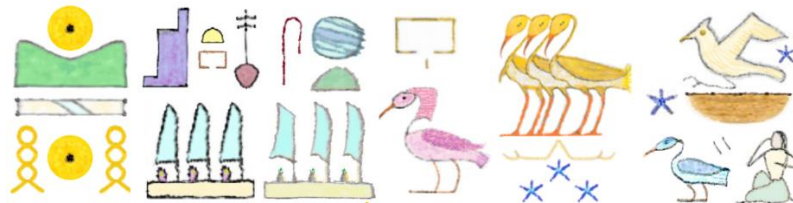


## Aspects and Influences of Ancient Egypt

by Teri Ekland, author of the novel *Ten Years Past Cairo*



Ancient Egypt was one of the first civilizations on Earth; it lasted nearly 3000 years. Inhabitants of the Nile kingdom called themselves “rational beings,” and their kingdom *Ta Meri*, *Ta Mehu* and *Te Shemau*. The ancients also called Egypt “Ta Kemet” after the black volcanic topsoil on each side of the river. Until the construction of the Aswan dam in the 1960’s, seasonal rains in the Ethiopian mountains caused the Nile to surge through Egypt and deposit fertile sludge. When the star Sirius, which the ancients knew as the goddess Isis-Sopdet, first rose each year, it announced the beginning of the annual flood and the time for planting grain, flax, melons, hemp, and fodder for domesticated donkeys, cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs.



Eternity in the Afterworld with Wise Souls

Ancient Egyptians called the desert beyond the black land, the Red Land, *Deshuret*. People were buried in the western desert. Their tombs, called *Per Ankh*, the house of life and

*Aakhut Sehtat*, the hidden horizon, were gateways to eternity, to the Afterworld where the night sky lies hidden during the light of day.



Hathor and Atum Ra

The beliefs and principles that guided the ancient Egyptians were established by the Old Kingdom in the third millennium BC. The king had absolute rule and his subjects revered him as a god on earth. He provided for them in life and death and interceded with the gods for their benefit. He was the gold cap of the social pyramid which touched the sky god Atum Ra, a resplendent falcon in the brilliant sun.



Old Kingdom Kings

From the third to the sixth dynasties, kings constructed about at least twenty pyramids. The first pyramid builder was king Djoser, 2630 BC. He called his Step Pyramid, *Netjerikhet*, “Divine of Body.” Djoser’s vizier, Imhotep, was a physician, priest, and architect of the Step Pyramid. Egyptians deified him 1,400 years after he died. Fifth dynasty king Wenis and sixth

dynasty kings Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II constructed pyramids with hieroglyphs on the inside walls. The Pyramid Texts are magic spells for the king on his journey to heaven. In death, the king became the “great Traveling Soul of God,” the Sahu Osiris-Orion.



Be Prepared for Eternity. The Great Sahu Breath of Atum Ra

Pyramid texts proclaim *The King takes the Mandjet boat of sunrise to declare the names of his subjects to God and pluck the smiters out of their hearts like lilies from pools. . . He is the falcon who soars in the firmament. With life and serenity, he passes over the Milky Way and the walls of Shu. Like a gander escaping its toils and with great flourish, he appears in heaven among the imperishable stars that never set.*



To the “rational people” of Ta Kemet, science and religion intertwined. They believed each person had eight souls. The Khat soul is the body, mummy, and statue of the person, Ren is the person’s name, Ib is his heart, Shueta is his shadow which a person leaves behind after death. The Ka is the soul that returns to the tomb, the Sahu is the spirit that travels the Night Sky, the Ba is the sublime noble heart, and the Akh soul is the thinking heart of rational people. Akhu is the soul of glorious intelligence awarded in Heaven.



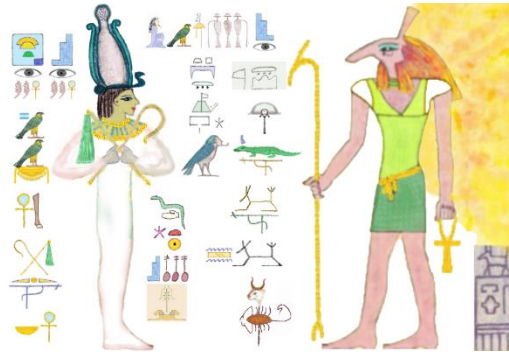
Eight Souls: Mummy, Ka, Heart, Shadow, Ba, Akh, Sahu

The Egyptians believed the Akhu were old souls that became the stars at night. They called the stars Akhakh which means divine flowers that never wilt, mirrors of life, and gates to the hidden world beyond the life we know on Earth. Through the Akhu soul the ancient Egyptians believed they could see the unknown which they called magic or “that which is hidden reflecting what is known.”



They viewed the five visible planets as boats with Falcon gods sailing the celestial sphere. Mars was Horus Desher, the Red Horus of the horizon, the wandering star that retraces its steps. Mars was depicted as a red flamingo. Saturn was Horus, Bull of the Sky. Jupiter was

Horus Wepes Tawy, Horus who brilliantly illuminates the two lands and opens the mysteries of the sky. Mercury was Sabgu, the malevolent god Seth. The morning star Venus was the traveling benu bird of resurrection or the Phoenix. Venus in the evenings was the goddess Hathor-Sekhmet who, as the Eye of Re, was a bad omen. Khonsu was god of the moon along with Thoth who marked the passage of time.



Osiris and Seth

To the Egyptians, the moon told the story of Horus and Seth. In Egyptian mythology, the corrupt brother Seth murdered the benevolent brother Osiris and then vied for the throne against the rightful heir Horus, son of Osiris and Isis. In battle, Seth plucked an eye from his nephew. But beneficence overcame the corrupt heart of Seth and Horus took the throne as the living king on Earth, as the kings of Egypt. The Egyptians considered the new moon as the blind eye of Horus. *Heru Khenti n Arti*. And the full moon occurred when the merciful Hathor, mother goddess of all, gave Horus back his eye.



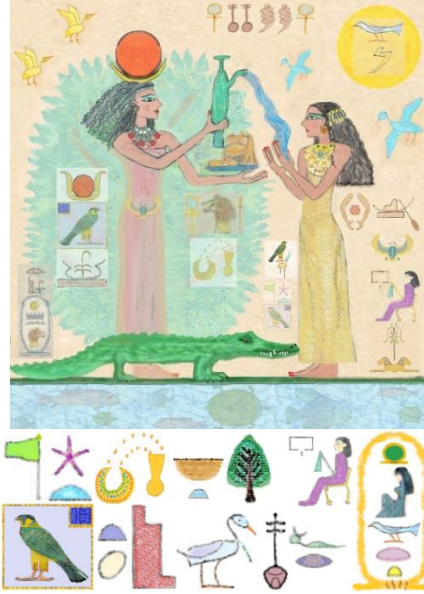


In their creation myth, the Earth rose from Nun, a Great Green Sea, with the Creator God Atum Ra. The night sky was Sha Nun, the Celestial Great Green Sea, a reflection of life along the river. They called their universe Nefertum. It consisted of Earth, the day sky, and the night constellations which they knew as the 42 “Mansions of Horus and Seth.”



Sobek and Ipet

The main Goddess of Egypt was Hathor, Lady of the Mansion of Horus. Seth was the Hippopotamus and Crocodile constellation in the circumpolar stars. Because the northern stars never set, Egyptians viewed them as the place of their heaven which they called Sekhet Aaru, the Field of Reeds, Aset Neferu, the Seat of Happiness, and Sekhet Hotep, the Field of Offering. Seth was also the dark parts of the circumpolar region. Until sunrise occurred, the jealous brother Seth eclipsed Osiris, the Resurrected Lord who dwelled at the center of the universe in the Field of Reeds. Re-Horakhty, the avenging Falcon son who embodied the sunrise, destroyed the darkness of Seth.



Hathor and the Sycamore Tree. Hathor Symbols

The ancient Egyptians understood that the night sky consisted of many circles that included “Shen en pet,” the circle of the stars, “Shen ent ta,” the circle of Earth, and “HetHeru shen urit hephep,” the great circle in the celestial abyss, another name for the goddess Hathor. They believed that when star gates opened at the solstice, equinox and at sunrise and sunset, worthy souls entered heaven to become the imperishable Akhakh souls. Those deemed sinners couldn’t pass through the gates in the Hall of Ma’at, the place of judgment, because they didn’t even know the name of God. The Judgement Hall of Ma’at was the Winter Hexagon. Canis Major and Minor were the Mansions of the jackal gods Anubis and Wepwawet, guardians of the Judgment Hall.



The ancient Egyptians believed in a principle called Ma'at, the force that kept their universe in order, moved stars across the sky, and enabled the sun to rise and set and return the next day. As highest priest of the kingdom, the king sustained this force. Without him, the universe would relapse into the primordial chaos of the Sea of Nun.



Ma'at and Horus

Ma'at was a goddess with an ostrich plume crown; she upheld the scale of truth and justice in the Judgment Hall before the Afterworld. She was the star Spica in the Mansion Shu (Virgo and Leo).



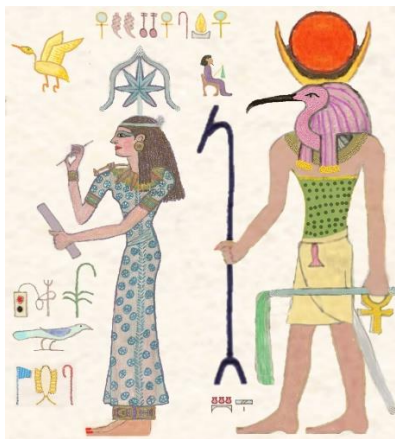
Shu and Tefnut. Nut and Geb

Shu was grandfather of Earth's first children, the gods Osiris, Isis, Horus, Nephthys and Seth. On his shoulders, Shu supported his daughter Nut, the Milky Way.





The ancient Egyptians believed Horus led the newly deceased before 42 judges of the night sky which were 17 bright stars and 25 constellations and asterisms. The 42 judges were witnesses at the “Weighing of the Heart” judgment ceremony. On the scale of truth, the gods weighed the deceased’s heart against Ma’at’s feather of truth and justice.

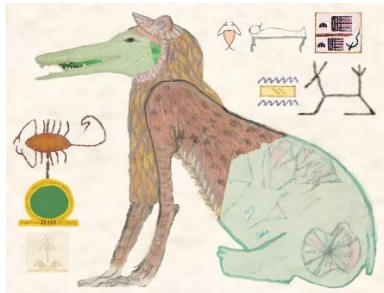


Sesheta and Thoth

Thoth, the ibis and baboon (Cygnus and Cepheus), recorded the results. If the judges absolved the deceased of his sins, Thoth proclaimed, “You are sinless, go forth and live with akh souls in the Field of Reeds.” The falcon god Horus escorted the ma’at kheru, the true of voice, through the gates of the Afterworld to meet Osiris-Orion, the Resurrected Lord.



The four sons of Horus, Imsety (human), Duamutef (jackal), Hapi (baboon) and Qebhsenuf (hawk) or Cephus, Ursa Minor, Cassiopeia and Perseus, stood before Osiris as caretakers of urns containing parts of the human soul.



Ammit

The gods tossed sinners who didn't pass the "weighing of the heart" judgment into the jaws of Ammit, a monster that was part crocodile, hippo and lion. Like a pack of wild dogs, Ammit ripped apart the sinner's flesh and soul, destroying his existence.







During the New Kingdom, kings were buried in the Valley of the Kings across the river from Luxor. These pharaohs included Amenhotep, Thutmose, Queen Hatshepsut, Tutankhamun, Seti and the great king Ramses II who reigned 67 years. Throughout Nubia, Palestine and Egypt, Ramses II built temples and monuments honoring his godlike stature and military victories. He waged wars in Syria-Palestine and fought the Hittite Empire at the Battle of Kadesh. He sealed a peace treaty by marrying a daughter of the Hittite king, Hattusil. Ramses first queen was Nefertari, who was as perfect in beauty and poise as the goddess Hathor, as Akhenaton's Queen Nefertiti.



Some pharaohs of ancient Egypt were Queens, many ruled as co-regents with their immature sons. Queen Meryneith was legendary queen of the first dynasty. Queen Nitocris,



daughter of King Pepi II and Neith, was last pharaoh of the Old Kingdom's sixth dynasty. Other ruling queens included Ankhesenpepi II, mother of Pepi II, Queen Sobekneferu and Queen Nefrusobek of the Middle Kingdom and the great Hatshepsut who ruled during the New Kingdom for more than 20 years.



After the death of her husband Thutmose II, Hatshepsut claimed the role of pharaoh while acting as regent to her step-son, Thutmose III. Queen Tewosret was final pharaoh of the nineteenth dynasty. Her royal name, Sitre Meryamun, means "Daughter of Re, beloved of Amun." Cleopatra Netjeret Mer-it-es "Goddess Beloved of Her Father," was lover of Caesar and last ruler of Egypt during the Greek Ptolemaic Dynasty. She died in 30 BC.

