

Eighteenth Dynasty imperial borders at the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth

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ABSTRACT

Some of the rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty applied the designations of “Cool Waters of Horus and Seth” for marking their borders. These terms most certainly referred to the northern and southern celestial borders of the Egyptian Empire, and although they were surely geographically inspired, they cannot be tied to any specific geographical locations. The probable location of “the Cool Water of Horus” can solely be found on the Yale fragment of a late Egyptian world map positioned in its north-western corner at the outer edge of the primal waters of the cosmos, beyond the depiction of the foreign countries of the region. Interestingly, “the Cool Water of Seth” was contrasted with the location of that of Horus in some of the royal inscriptions of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It must have been placed along the outer margin of the southern border of the Egyptian cosmos. According to the royal ideology of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the pharaoh – who simultaneously embodied the composite power of Horus and Seth as he received his legitimacy to rule from both gods – was responsible for ensuring the eternal unity and prosperity of Lower and Upper Egypt, the mighty earthly river of which would also have been fed by these heavenly waters. Because of the will of the two gods, the Eighteenth Dynasty rulers could extend their power not only over Egypt but even farther to the surrounding foreign countries as far as “the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth” were imagined at the outer edges of the cosmos. There lay the ideologically “legitimate” northern and southern borders of the Egyptian Empire or at least for some of the most dominant Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs, who were regarded with great appreciation by later rulers attempting to follow suit in their own royal ideology from time to time in a somewhat altered form.

KEYWORDS

royal ideology – northern and southern borders – firmament – constellations – cosmos – inundation – *kḥḥ* – *wpt t3* – *rth(w)-k3b.(w)t*

حدود إمبراطورية الأسرة الثامنة عشرة عند المياه الباردة لحورس وست

ريتا سيمون

الملخص

أطلق بعض حكام الأسرة الثامنة عشرة اسم «المياه الباردة لحورس وست» لتحديد حدودهم. تشير تلك المصطلحات بالتأكيد إلى الحدود الإلهية الشمالية والجنوبية للإمبراطورية المصرية، وعلى الرغم من أن تلك الأسماء مستوحاة بالتأكيد جغرافياً، إلا أنه لا يمكن ربطها بأي مواقع جغرافية محددة. ويمكن تحديد الموقع المحتمل لـ «ماء حورس البارد» حصرياً فقط على جزء من خريطة مصرية قديمة تؤرخ بالعصر المتأخر محفوظة الآن بجامعة بيل، حيث يحدد الموقع عند الزاوية الشمالية الغربية لها الموجود بالحافة الخارجية للمياه البدائية للكون، وذلك خلف مناظر الدول الأجنبية للمنطقة. ومن المثير للاهتمام أن «مياه ست الباردة» تناقضت مع موقع «مياه حورس الباردة» في بعض النقوش الملكية للأسرة الثامنة عشرة. ولا بد أنها حددت على طول الحافة الخارجية للحدود الجنوبية للكون المصري. وفقاً للأيديولوجية الملكية للأسرة الثامنة عشرة، كان الفرعون – الذي جسّد في نفس الوقت القوة المركبة لحورس وست، وذلك عندما نال شرعيته للحكم من كلا الإلهين – مسؤولاً عن ضمان الوحدة الأبدية والازدهار لمصر السفلى والعليا، وأيضاً النهر الأرضي الذي كان من الممكن أن يتغذى من تلك المياه السماوية.

وبسبب إرادة الإلهين، تمكن ملوك الأسرة الثامنة عشرة من بسط سلطتهم ليس فقط على مصر، بل إلى نقطة أبعد من ذلك، إلى البلدان الأجنبية المحيطة بها بل وأيضاً إلى «مياه حورس وست الباردة» عند الحواف الخارجية للكون. هناك تكمن الحدود الشمالية والجنوبية «الشرعية» الأيديولوجية للإمبراطورية المصرية أو على الأقل لبعض ملوك الأسرة الثامنة عشرة، الذين كان يُنظر إليهم بتقدير كبير من قبل الحكام اللاحقين الذين حاولوا أن يحدوا حذوهم في أيديولوجيتهم الملكية من وقت لآخر، وذلك بشكل متغير إلى حد ما.

الكلمات الدالة

rth(w)- – *wpt t3* – *kbh* – الفيضان – الكون – الأبراج – القبة الزرقاء – الحدود الشمالية والجنوبية – الأيديولوجية الملكية – *k3b.(w)t*

My fascination with old maps led me to come across the so-called Late Period “Yale Map of Cosmos” (fig. 1) which is kept in the Yale Map Collection at Peabody Museum of Natural History.¹ It presents the earliest depiction of the Egyptian world in keeping with the usual south-north upside-down orientation of the Egyptian point of worldview but in a spherical way of three circles. The surviving pieces of the fragment only show the north-western section of the Delta of the Nile, which can be identified based upon the depicted six north-western Lower Egyptian nome standards and those of the three following northernmost nomes of Upper Egypt in the middle circle (Zago 2021: 519). Interestingly enough, the middle circle, which represents the mainland of Egypt itself, is lined off from the third outer circle of the foreign countries as well as of the space and god (*H3*) displaying the Western desert with contoured lines reminiscent of water (Calmettes 2017: 35; Pecoil 1993: 108). Each of these lines ending in a drop-like form seems to connect the mainland of Egypt with each of the foreign countries. The third outermost circle of the foreign lands is also surrounded with exterior wide lines that illustrate the boundary between the Egyptian world (inner cosmos) ideologically ruled by the pharaoh and the outer cosmos, that is, the celestial domain of primal waters (of the ocean of Nun) or the firmament of darkness where the gods were believed to dwell². Just at the outer edge of this boundary but already in the outer north-western section of the cosmos a crenelated cartouche can be seen with the inscription $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{𓏏} \\ \text{𓏏} \end{array} \right\} (kbh Hr)$ “the Cool Water of Horus” with the last subsequent sign completely damaged. Parallel to the “Yale Map of Cosmos”, the Late Period (722–332 BC) sarcophagus of Wereshnefer (*Wrš-nfr*) on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibits an effectively full version of an almost identically arranged ancient Egyptian spherical world map (fig. 2).³ However, in this well-preserved map nothing relates to “the Cool Water of Horus” in the north-western section of the outer cosmos or anywhere else. Yet, in some of the much earlier royal or royally related inscriptions of the Eighteenth

1 Accession Number 61. Probably from between 664–332 BC (Manassa 2023). Its provenance is not known (Clere 1958).

2 Another circular cosmograph could be outlined based on the bipartite tableau of the awakening Osiris in the Cenotaph of Sety I at Abydos (Roberson 2013: 128–131).

3 Accession Number 14. 7. 1a, b. Probably from the 4th century BC (Thirtieth Dynasty) from Saqqara (Clere 1958; Calmettes 2017).

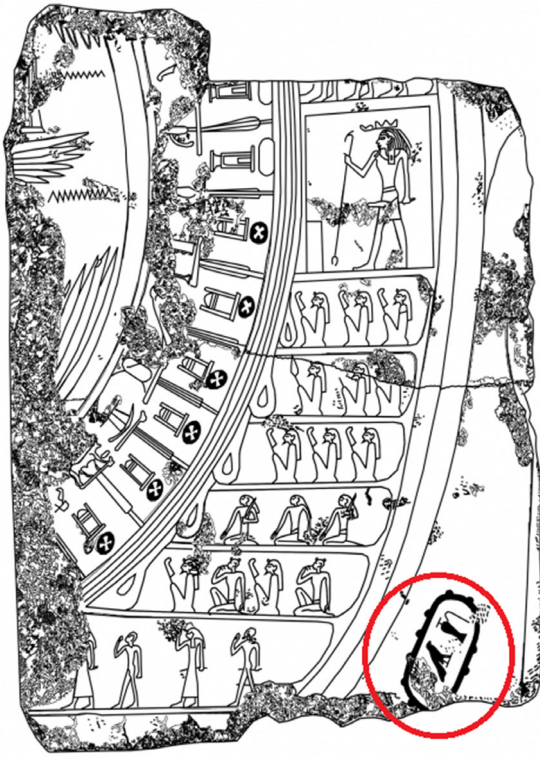


Fig. 1 Yale Map of Cosmos (after Zago 2021: 528; drawing S. Zago)

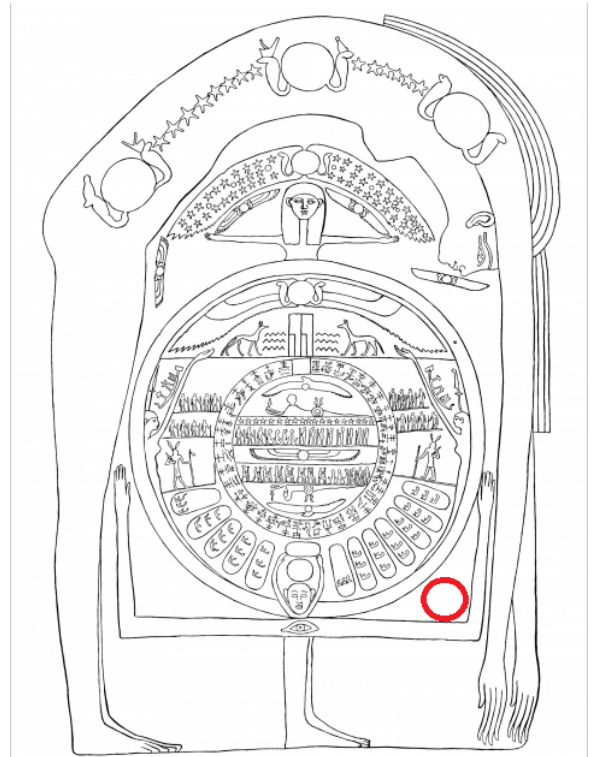


Fig. 2 Sarcophagus of Wereshnefer (after Zago 2021: 529; drawing A. Urcia)

Dynasty (1539–1292 BC) “the Cool Water of Horus” happen to have been mentioned occasionally and sometimes even curiously paralleled with $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏}$ (*kbh Sth*) “the Cool Water of Seth”.⁴ In the following, it is the specific location and imperial border-wise significance of “the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth” in the royal ideology of the Eighteenth Dynasty that this paper is going to focus on.

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS


The first possible border related reference to “the Cool Water of Horus” can be attested from the time of Thutmose I (1493–1483 BC). In the autobiography of Ineni engraved in his Theban tomb (TT 81) it was remarked about the pharaoh that $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎} \text{𓆏}$ (*ir.n.f t3s.fr wpt t3 phw.w m kbh.w*) “he made his border at the Horn of the Earth (in the south),⁵ (and at the) distant swamps (in the north) (that are) in the cool waters” (Sethe 1906a: 55, 4–5).⁶ In accordance with the usual south-north upside-down orientation of the Egyptian point of worldview, firstly the southern border was characterized and then the northern. The southern border was set out at “the Horn of the Earth”, which was usually applied for the boundary southernmost to Egypt at the farthest end of the foreign land of Nubia and invoked a high-altitude location possibly


4 All dates in the following will be based on Hornung (2006: 490–495).

5 Other occurrences of *wpt t3* can be found in Sethe (1906a: 270, 9; 1907: 808, 8).

6 In the following the transcriptions and translations are always mine if not stated otherwise.

close to the zenith of the sky or the great openness of the beginning of the earth (Gauthier 1925: 194–195). In turn, the northernmost limits were described as the “distant swamps in the cool waters” that may have been a prior correspondent to “the Cool Water of Horus”. These “distant swamps” must customarily have referred to the extensive marshy regions of the Delta of the Nile forming a natural boundary of the mainland of Egypt by the Mediterranean Sea, whose watery territory was presumably thought to be overlapping with the edges of the firmament of the outer cosmos. Thutmose II (1482–1480 BC) as well as Thutmose III (1479–1425 BC) also had similarly worded border characterizations.⁷

However, in his Buhen fortress inscription (e.g. Sethe 1907: 807, 17 and 808, 3),⁸ Thutmose III specifically indicated that  (*iti.n.f t3 pn hr hnt.f kbh Sth hr st hr:f htm.n.f sw hr mhty.f r-mn kbh Hr nn*) “he occupied this land (Nubia), to the beginning of the Cool Waters of Seth (in the south), which is under his control. He closed these (lands) in the north as far as the beginning of the Cool Waters of Horus”. There “the Cool Water of Horus” was not only explicitly mentioned for the first time in connection with the northern border,⁹ but also it was immediately paralleled with “the Cool Water of Seth” at the southernmost end of Nubia. Presumably, based upon a new kind of deliberate royal ideological revelation, “the Cool Water of Horus” seems to have taken the place of the former “distant swamps in the cool water”, just as “the Cool Water of Seth” took over the position of “the Horn of the Earth”. We can assume that the nature of the equated expressions must have been the same, so “the Cool Water of Horus” would have been a marshy place connecting to the celestial waters of the outer cosmos and “the Cool Water of Seth” would have been a high-altitude location close to the firmament.

Although the Konosso Stela of Amenhotep III (1390–1353 BC) adopted the expression of “the Cool Water of Horus” for the northern border (Lepsius 1849–1856a: 82A), it is at the temple of Soleb that, yet another border characterization text survived, the wording of which is like that of the Buhen inscription of Thutmose III. In the bandeau text of a ram-headed sphinx from the avenue in front of his temple at Soleb, Amenhotep III reported that  (*ir.n.f m mnw.f n it.f lmn nb nswt-t3wy wd n.f knt nht r h3swt nb.t rdi iti.f kbh Hr r-mn kbh Sth sn ny.wt dww r:f.t w3d-wr r rd.w ntr pn nfr*) “he made his monument (temple) to his father, Amon, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, who commanded him to win bravely against all foreign countries, and granted him the capture of the Cool Water of Horus as far as the Cool Water of Seth surrounded by a ring of mountains and the sea at the feet of this beautiful god”.¹⁰ This is the only border related inscription that discloses further particulars about “the Cool Water of Seth”. Taking these into account, the former assumption about its high-altitude location seems to be right. It is said to be surrounded by lofty mountains and a (high-flown?) sea at the feet of a god who must have been close to (the watery edge of) the sky.

Seth was not only the god of chaos, war, and foreign lands, but also of storms, rain, lightning, and thunder. As a sky god he had power over the cosmic waters of the firmament,

7 See e.g.: Thutmose II in Sethe (1906a: 138, 7–8) and Thutmose III in Lepsius (1849–1856a: 60).

8 Other copies of this inscription also survived in Wadi Halfa and Ellesiya.

9 For the history of the usage of “the *kbh.w* cool waters” see Zago (2021: 520–521).

10 The ram-headed sphinx was found in Gebel Barkal, to where it was transported in antiquity (Lepsius 1849–1856a: 89E; Maciver 1911: 29; Gauthier 1928: 171–172).

after sunset and before sunrise.¹⁴ Because of the periodicity of the annual rising of Sirius as well as the matching appearance of the other constellations and decans, the southern sky can be considered as the place of cyclic renewal causing recurrent regeneration periods to the whole of Egypt. This cyclic renewal would have been identified with the annually returning new creation of the world from the celestial primal waters of the ocean of Nun (Pecoil 1993; Von Bomhard 2012; Gozzoli 2006; Collombert 2018). In all that Seth's task was to protect the cyclic processes of the sun and to generate rain from the primal waters of the firmament that initiated the flood of the Nile somewhere at the outer edge of the cosmos. The decan of the tortoise, which appeared in the Constellation of the Two Tortoises of the southern sky (*štwy*) in the tomb of Senenmut, was similarly associated with the rebirth of the new year, materialized by the arrival of the inundation. Presumably from the Ptolemaic Period (332–30 BC), the tortoise became the symbol of the evil-spirited Seth and had to be harpooned by Horus as the enemy of the sun god (Guilhou 2010; Soliman 2020: 157–158; Gutbub 1979).

From the Nineteenth Dynasty (1292–1191 BC) in the Abydos Cenotaph of Sety I (1290–1279 BC) the first version of the *Book of Nut* survived. The texts enclosing the north-western (Dd, § 81) and north-eastern (Dd, § 82) outer side of the west-east oriented depiction of the body of Nut (fig. 3),¹⁵ the goddess of the cosmos, contain references to “bird nests that are in the celestial cool waters (*ḳbh.w*)” (Ff, § 70).¹⁶ It is also claimed there that it is “the primeval darkness (of the outer cosmos), the *ḳbh.w* of the gods, the place from where the birds come” (Von Lieven 2007: 77; Dd, § 80) and “these birds... after they come to eat greens and nourish themselves in the marshes of Egypt, they settle in the light of the (inner) cosmos” (Von Lieven 2007: 76–78; Ee, § 73–78).¹⁷ This could reinforce the idea that the northern marshy

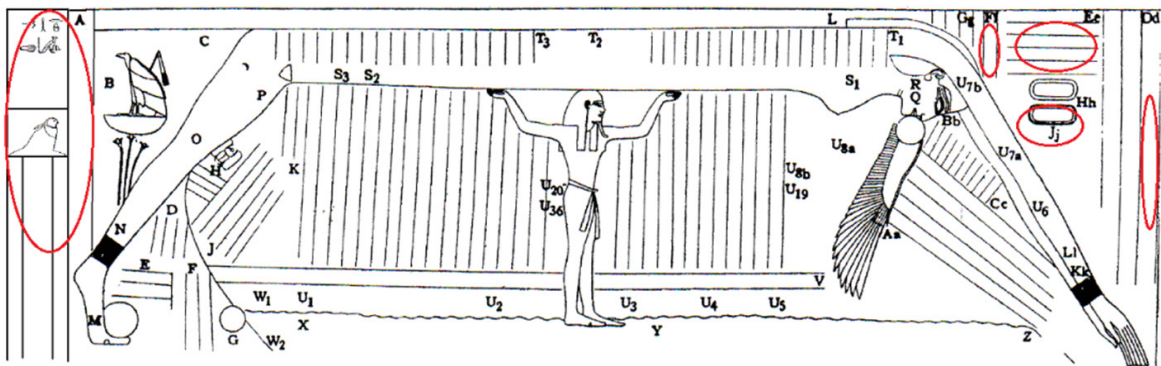


Fig. 3 The Book of Nut in the Cenotaph of Sety I at Abydos (after Von Bomhard 2014; drawing A. S. Von Bomhard)

- 14 Horus as planet Mars is missing from the astronomical ceiling of Senenmut (Neugebauer – Parker 1969: 180–181).
- 15 Von Lieven (2007: 77–78; Dd, § 81–82) explicitly says that the birds came from the north-western and north-eastern side of the body of Nut, where the cool waters of the gods (*ḳbh.w ntr.w*) were in the sky.
- 16 At the outer edge of Nut's head in the north-western direction, birds resting in island-like features can be seen (Von Lieven 2007: 76; Jj, § 72).
- 17 These birds were believed to be *bau* (PC1 Dd, § 83). Later, the solar *ba* of Re was also thought to enter Egypt in the form of a migratory bird from the cool waters (Manassa 2007: 82–83).

border region – either in the western and the eastern side of the Delta – was believed to be the place of constant regeneration. This characteristic may also have been attributed to “the Cool Water of Horus” situated in the same celestial region. A later version of the Book of Nut annexed to this section of the north-western and north-eastern part of the sky, where the birds were located, extended to the south-eastern side of the sky (Von Lieven 2007: 78; PC1 Dd, § 82).¹⁸ Possibly, there could also have been a comparable connection between these cardinal directions even in the New Kingdom (Condon 1978: 11, 18, 27–29, 39). The region of *Rth-k3b.t* (A, § 2–4) was likewise mentioned in the Book of Nut in the Cenotaph of Sety I. Its location is enthralling because it was placed far beyond the south-western edge of the world, that is, at the rear upper edge of the body of Nut, in the watery territory of the primeval darkness of the sky (Von Lieven 2007: 49–50, 59; S § 2; PC1 § 3–4).¹⁹ It was a region for the periodically revolving matutinal journey of a falcon form of the sun god that progressed from the south-west to the south-eastern part of the sky at every sunrise (Von Lieven 2007: 59).²⁰ Thus, with just a few years after the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, *Rth-k3b.t* seems to have been mentioned again to characterize the mythically far southern border, the enigmatic territory of which was previously circumscribed with the possibly relatable terms of “the Horn of the Earth” and “the Cool Water of Seth” in the mentioned royal border descriptions.

THE CARDINAL POINTS AND THE FLOOD OF THE NILE

According to Edel, the birds that came from the celestial cool waters (*kbh.w*) of the western and eastern side of the northern marshy lands in the Book of Nut (Dd, § 81–82) were migratory birds from the Mediterranean region or even farther from the north. Egypt was only a transit station for them in their annual flight and many flew over to the south (Edel 1963: 105). He thus believed that just as the northern “Cool Water of Horus” could have had a western and eastern section, so could the southern “Cool Water of Seth” (Edel 1963: 105–113).²¹ These four sections of the cool waters would have defined the cardinal points of the Egyptian world, which doubtless represented the expansion of the authority of the pharaohs.

An explicit allusion to this assumption can be found in a Twentieth Dynasty hymn to Ramses VII (1138–1131 BC) (P. Turin CG 54031) which was probably sung during his royal en-

18 Papyrus Carlsberg I version of the Book of Nut is from the 2nd century AD (see Carlsberg Foundation 2017).

19 “The top of this heaven is in primordial darkness. The outside of heaven is in darkness... it is called *Rth-k3b.t*... which is the boundary of heaven. Its borders are unknown to the south, north, west, and east” (Von Lieven 2007: 59, PC1 L, § 31–32).

20 In Papyrus Carlsberg I (PC1, § 3–4), in accordance with the texts of the Cenotaph of Sety I, the falcon god (next to section A) is said to be “on the south-eastern side beyond the land of Punt... he is the shape of Re that rises from the water every morning. He... comes out of Nun... (he) is on the way before the light of heaven... his back is still in *Rth-k3b.t* (which is in darkness, while) his front is in *Srk-hty.t*, where there is brightness” (Regen 2015: 218–225). Regen promotes the view that *Rth-k3b.t* might have referred to the southernmost meanders of the Nile from where the sun falcon emerged at dawn and moved towards east. Therefore, the Nile would possibly have been believed to originate from the south-western darkness of the outer cosmos.

21 He also suggested that the last subsequent damaged hieroglyph sign in the crenelated cartouche of “the Cool Water of Horus” in the “Yale Map of Cosmos” must have referred to the west.

thronement. In the hymn, after the *kbh.w* migratory birds were said to have filled every pond in Egypt, “they turned their faces to Napata” and flew to the far south. The district of the biblical Lake of Horus (*p3 š Hr*) in the easternmost Delta of the Nile got also filled by them (Condon 1978: 18; Allen 2003: 15).²² Thus, it is plausible that through the flight of the migratory birds the expansion of the kingdom of Ramses VII could have been associated with the location of the four cardinal points at the edges of the Egyptian cosmos. Also, upon coronation, four birds are presumed to have been released to fly towards the four quarters of the Egypt signalling the installation of the new ruler into power (Condon 1978: 39).²³

In the Egyptian Hymn Dedicated to the Flooding of the Nile, presumably from the time of the Eighteenth or the Nineteenth Dynasty (Van Der Plas 1986a: 187–189), comparable ideas can be attested. From the hymn it seems to be clear that the migratory birds of the *kbh.w* regions were characteristic of the flooded country. The beginning of the flood brought them towards the south (II. 1–2) (Van Der Plas 1986a: 79–81), but at the end of the flooding season they returned to where they came from in the north (X. 5–6) (Van Der Plas 1986a: 136–137).²⁴ Therefore, during the annual flood of the Nile the spreading of the migratory birds in the distant muddy waters at the farthest edges of the Egyptian world might have symbolized the expanse of the influence of the Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs (VII. 9–10) (Van Der Plas 1986a: 118–119; Wiercińska 1997: figs. 2–3). The more extensive they became, the more beneficial they were for the survival of the ancient Egyptian world. Upon the appearance of the inundation, its waves were said to be hailed the same way as the pharaoh himself (VI. 3–4) (Van Der Plas 1986a: 105–106). For this reason, the relationship between the flood and the pharaoh must have been close (figs. 4–5) (Collombert 2018; Berlandini 1993: 25).²⁵

Although already present in the Middle Kingdom (1980–1760 BC; Van Der Plas 1986a: 106, 183), it was in the New Kingdom (1539–1077 BC) that an especially tight connection between the pharaoh and the flood (Hapy) became paramount. The ritual identification of the king with Hapy can well be attested in the reliefs of Amenhotep III (figs. 4–5).²⁶ The king of Egypt, as a representative or an intercessor for the sun god, was in charge of maintaining the cosmic order (*m3ʿt*) on earth. His receiving this task upon coronation (Teeter 1997: 82–83, 89–90; Ass-

22 P. Anastasi III from the time of Merneptah (1213–1203 BC) likewise mentioned that the birds from the cataract region flew to the Lake of Horus (Hoffmeier 2005: 107).

23 See e.g. Thutmose III shooting four arrows in the company of Hours and Seth at his Sed Festival. For further discussion, see *infra*.

24 The flight of the *kbh.w* migratory birds in story of Wenamon may lead to similar conclusions (Egberts 1991: 65–67).

25 Several New Kingdom sources stated that the king was responsible for the inundation: “It was the duty of the king through his offerings to convince the supreme solar deity to provide Egypt with the inundation” (Gulyás 2007: 905).

26 According to Baines, the greatest innovations for fecundity figures took place during the reign of Amenhotep III (Baines 1985: 260, 317). In the temple of Luxor, after his divine birth, Amenhotep III was carried on the arms of Hapy as if they were father and son (Van Der Plas 1986a: 105–106, 154). In a relief picturing many gods in the eastern Crypt No. 1 (Room B, West Wall) of the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, Amenhotep III appears in the form of Hapy bearing the royal praenomen on the head (see fig. 5). In Cauville’s view this depiction must be a faithful representation of a statue of the king preserved for more than a millennium in the treasury of the temple (Cauville 2004: 23–24, pl. 9). In the accompanying text Hapy is said to “bring everything that exists into being thanks to (his) magnificence” (Cauville 2004: 86–87; Dend. V, 12).

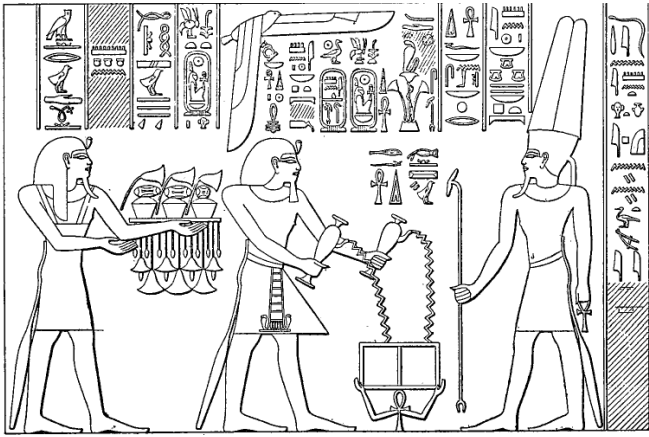


Fig. 4 On the eastern wall of the Hypostyle Hall of Luxor Temple, while Amenhotep III is libating into two basins, he is followed by a fertility figure wearing the royal uraeus and most probably personifying the king (after Gayet 1894: pl. 8, fig. 47)

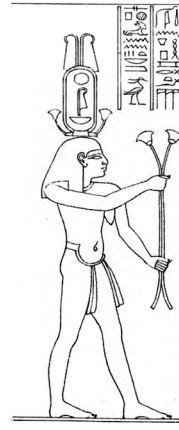


Fig. 5 Representation of Amenhotep III as Hapy in a relief in the eastern Crypt No. 1 (Room B, West Wall) of the Temple of Hathor at Dendera (after Mariette 1871: pl. 12i)

mann 2006: 205–212) implied his decisive influence and sustaining force even on the arrival of the inundation (Van der Plas 1986a: 110, 183; Grimal 1986: 264, 267–270; Desroches-Noblecourt – Kuentz 1968: 114, 118; Roberson 2012: 232–234, 474).

The inundation of the Nile usually started during the month of the moon god, Thoth, at the end of the summer. Consequently, Thoth, was identified with the waves of the flood and would have been a master over the source of the southern Nile at the First Cataract (Drioton 1933; Boylan 1922: 168–170, 184; Gaber 2009: 371–372). In the Small Temple of Abu Simbel, as the maintainer of *mꜣt*, Ramses II (1279–1213 BC) represented Thoth himself in his royal duty of bringing back and directing the waves of the flood from the south to Egypt.²⁷ This way, appearing each year together with the new fertile waves of the flooding water, the pharaoh managed to renew his own royalty as well as the unity of the lands of Upper and Lower Egypt (XIV. 3–4; Van der Plas 1986a: 153, 155–156; Pecoil 1993: 110; Desroches-Noblecourt – Kuentz 1968: 109–124).

From the Old Kingdom in the sema tawy symbols of the unification, the two lands of Upper and Lower Egypt were often personified with the two Hapys representing the southern and northern sections of the Nile (Baines 1985: 85). However, in the outstanding representations on five of the throne bases of the enthroned Senwosret I (1920–1875 BC) statues from his funerary complex at Lisht, the two Hapys were substituted with the representations of Horus and Seth (fig. 6). According to Lorand, the statuary program of this king “undoubtedly used Old Kingdom royal statuary as referent” (Lorand 2015: 215), since Senwosret I was in great need to emphasize his legitimacy to the throne in the highly expressive symbolic language of royal ideology (fig. 10). In the Instruction of Amenemhet I for His Son Senwosret I, the former pharaoh endowed and equated himself with the creative power of Hapy on the fields of Egypt (Lichtheim 1973: 137; Gulyás 2007: 905). As a continuation of this line of thought, another ruler

27 In accordance with this, the Ramesside Chester Beatty Papyrus VIII (British Museum, EA 10688.3) labelled Thoth as “the one who brings the Nile from where it is” (recto 8.11; see Gardiner 1935: 70, pl. 42–43).

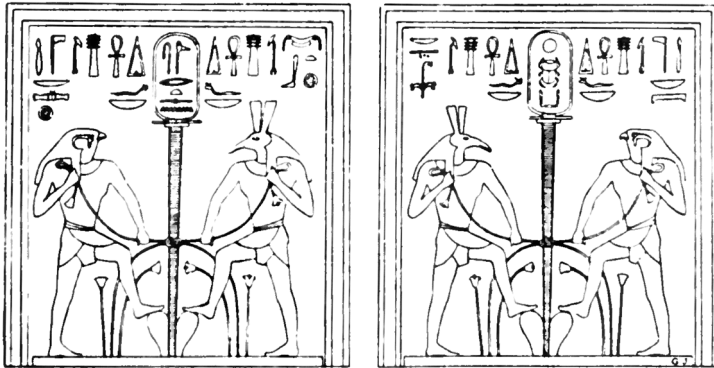


Fig. 6 Horus and Seth binding the Two Lands of Egypt together on one of the five throne bases of Senwosret III (Cairo, JE 31139) (after Gautier – Jequier 1902: 36, fig. 35)

of the Twelfth Dynasty, Amenemhet III (1818–1773 BC) had himself represented as the two Hapys (Cairo, JE 18221) at the end of the Middle Kingdom.

In the Eighteenth Dynasty the benefits of bringing the inundation of the Nile were not only attributed to the reigning pharaoh, but the deified late king could also have had a crucial influence on the proper and timely coming of the flood. On a scarab of Thutmose III (Louvre, E 3408) it reads that “*Mn-hpr-R* is in the sky like the moon (Thoth).²⁸ Hapy is at his service. He opens his source to give life to Egypt”.

The importance of the annual flood of the Nile was so immense that in the case of an inadequate water level the reigning pharaoh had to perform certain rituals to ensure that the coming of tide would be of quite appropriate measures for the whole of Egypt. Accordingly, from the time of Queen Hatshepsut (1479–1458 BC) the following prayer to Amon survived, demanding rain from abroad for the abundance of the annual inundation: “Bring down for her the dew that comes from the sky in its time. Give that every big flood would come to her during her time of reign” (Van der Plas 1986a: 71; cf. Sethe 1906a: 217, 10–11). In an inscription in the Temple of Luxor, Tutankhamon (1334–1324 BC) also encouraged the flooding of the Nile by performing an ancient ritual on a bark on the river (Van der Plas 1986a: 184).

As the expected inundation of the Nile was spreading over the lands throughout the whole of Egypt, so was the ultimate life-giving power of the king who seems to have represented the waves of the flood themselves or could have directed them with the magical rites that he performed (Pecoil 1993: 99, 110). Figuratively speaking, as far as the flooding water of the Nile reached the lands, the pharaoh was responsible for making them fertile. As the earthly representative of the gods, the inundated lands were all placed under his power. Since the migratory birds, whose appearance was closely connected with the flood, settled down in out of the way, secluded places that were faraway to reach for humans, they brought the sensation of where they were nesting was at the boundary of the world (inner cosmos) and the beginning of the outer cosmos. Therefore, the presence of these *kbh.w* birds would have endowed the idea that the water under their nests was nourished by celestial waters originating from

28 In P. Jumilhac (V, 21) “Thoth was also called the Son of the Two Lords” (Te Velde 1967: 44; see also Van der Plas 1986a: 185; Boylan 1922: 63–65; Drioton 1933: 46). Since in the Eighteenth Dynasty the pharaoh seems to have been regarded as the son of the Two Lords (see e.g. in the next section), then, in this capacity he might have been equated with Thoth.

the firmament (Calmettes 2017: 30–31; Pecoil 1993: 103). The nesting areas therefore may have symbolized the fringes of the power of the pharaoh as well.

For the Egyptians the annual inundation emerged from more sources on the mainland of Egypt (Pecoil 1993; Collombert 2018; Calmettes 2017: 30–31; Cauville 2021a; Cauville 2021b). First and foremost, it came from the underground caves of the first cataract region at Elephantine at the southern border of Upper Egypt, the Land of Seth, which were called *kbh.w*, *krty* or *tpht*.²⁹ There, the Nile was considered to be quite noisy in the New Kingdom, and its water had a rampageous, whirly, and violent character, which would compare to Sethian nature (Van der Plas 1986a: 127–128, 172–173). Later the flood calmed down, when it reached the northern parts of Egypt where several places and cities were acknowledged as its further possible orifices. In the north, at the southern apex of the Delta of Nile, a spring emerging from the ground near Kher-Aha (*hr-ḥ3*) was believed to be a major orifice for the northern Nile that, from a very early date³⁰, acted as a cult centre on the cool water (*kbh*) of the northern Nun for Lower Egypt, the Land of Horus (Aja Sanchez 2012: 219, 229; Pecoil 1993: 105).³¹ In effect, the way of the flood and its sources through Egypt were theologically combined into an all-in complex hydrological system (Pecoil 1993: 103, 107; Collombert 2018: 11).

The origin of the inundation was alluded to in the Hymn Dedicated to the Flooding of the Nile as “it is in the underworld; heaven and earth rest on its props; who takes possession of the Two Lands (of Egypt)” (IV. 7–8; Van Der Plas 1986a: 95–96, 59–61).³² Impliedly, the flood of the river might have been believed to be present in all three layers of the Egyptian (outer and inner) cosmos: heaven, earth, and underworld (IX. 1–2; Van Der Plas 1986a: 126–131).³³ Thus, the flooding water not only would have emerged throughout Egypt, in its underworld and heaven, but via its comprehensive hydrological ways also even in the farther-off foreign countries, which then would have been nourished by the saturation of the water filtering through either


29 P. Anastasi III, 3. 1. or P. Turin CG 54031, 8 (Collombert 2018: 8; Pecoil 1993: 97–98).

30 Kher-Aha was identified as “the battlefield” from the earliest times where the mythical battle between Horus and Seth took place. The place may have been involved in a predynastic military clash. The location of Kher-Aha has previously been identified with Old Cairo (Sheehan 2010: 29–32). Kher-Aha was already mentioned in the Pyramid Texts (see e.g. Aja Sanchez 2012: 220).

31 Late texts from Edfu affirm that Horus extracted the water of Nun at Kher-Aha (see also e.g. Pyr. Texts 810c; Thiem 2000: 166). “Horus, according to Plutarch (Isis and Osiris 38) is the child of the Nile, and of the inundated soil, and hence his birthplace is the marshland” (Boylan 1922: 18). The presence of Horus in the celestial swamps bordering the Mediterranean Sea also relates to his growing-up in the papyrus thickets of Khemmis hidden away from the wrath of Seth. His mother, Isis, nurtured him there for long so that he could avenge the death of his father later (Te Velde 1967: 32; Desroches-Noblecourt – Kuentz 1968: 110–111).

32 See e.g. I. 1–2: “Who springs from the earth, who comes to give life to Egypt”. The concept of the Nile in the sky can be found in other Egyptian hymns collected by Assmann (1975). The Great Hymn to the Aten states that two sources of the Nile were believed to be “a Hapy from heaven for foreign peoples, and all lands’ creatures that walk on legs, and for Egypt the Hapy who comes from dat” (from underground at Elephantine) (Lichtheim 1978: 98–99).

33 See also the succession of the circles in the Wereshnefer map of the cosmos under the double *hwt*-like features flanked on both sides by lots of water signs at the top of the outermost circle under the sun disk (in the south) (see fig. 2). This water represented in the sky section must have got into connection with Osiris residing in the underworld through permeability (Calmettes 2017: 30–31; Łukaszewicz 1989: 195–196; Cauville 2021a: 95–98; Delia 1992).

from the underworld or from the skies (Allon 2007).³⁴ In accordance with this, in the late “Yale Map of Cosmos”, contoured lines and drop-like forms connected the mainland of Egypt with the foreign countries of the outermost circle (see fig. 1). From the Egyptian point of view of watery places, all these far-off lands seems to have been conceived to belong under the authority of the pharaoh within the schema of the four cardinal points³⁵. Thutmose III suitably marked his northern border in the Obelisk of Constantinople as at the  (*phw.w r nhrn*) “distant swamps at Naharin” (the foreign country of Mitanni in northern Mesopotamia between the Tiger and the Euphrates) (see e.g. Lepsius 1849–1856a: 60). Due to the permeability between the layers of the heaven, earth and underworld, the inundation of the Nile – as a circulating body of water around the inner and outer cosmos as well as the four cardinal points of Egypt – would have got back from where it primarily originated from, the great waters of the firmament. In the Hymn Dedicated to the Flooding of the Nile, the flood was said to finally join “the Great Green” (the Mediterranean Sea) (X. 3–4; Van Der Plas 1986a: 135–136). This northern sea was looked at by the ancient Egyptians as a vast rough body of water directly connecting to the celestial domain of the primal waters (the ocean of Nun) somewhere in the darkness of the outer cosmos.³⁶

HORUS AND SETH IN THE ROYAL IDEOLOGY OF THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY


In the royal ideology of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Horus and Seth as “the Two Lords” were largely referred to in connection with royal birth, coronation, legitimacy, rulership, the Sed Festival, and the physical properties of the pharaohs. To the best of my knowledge, any texts or depictions alluding to the two gods together with reference to royalty did not survive in the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty before the reign of Hatshepsut (1479–1458 BC). During her reign, however, it was reported that upon her divine birth she was purified by Horus and Seth with their waters (see e.g. Sethe 1906a: 232, 3). They “baptised” her as a form of initiation into the life of a legitimate ruler. Upon giving birth, her mother wore the title “She who sees Horus and Seth” which was the renewal of an ancient title for queens from between the Early Dynastic Period (2900–2545 BC) and the Old Kingdom (2543–2120 BC) (Shanley 2015: 16, 19, 21,

34 Seth as the Egyptian rain god was often identified with other Near Eastern rain gods, such as Baal or Hadad. (Siddal 2010; Kuentz 1925: 238).

35 The *sema tawy* symbol sometimes happened to be depicted in the New Kingdom above subdued foreign enemies of different regions on the royal throne bases. For example, in front of Luxor Temple as well as in its first court, one of the two Hapys on the north side of the throne bases of the seated statue of Ramses II says “I subdue the nine bows for you”. In Abu Simbel on the throne base of the third colossus seated in the front of the Great Temple, the Lower Egyptian Hapy above the kneeling Asiatic captives on the south side of the base says “I have given you (Ramses II) Syria and Kush” (Baines 1985: 248–250). Interestingly, in the temple of Sety I at Abydos, the Egyptian fecundity figures even appeared with products labelled for foreign areas (Baines 1985: 245–248).

36 Discovered by the underwater excavations of Franck Goddio, an over 5-meter-tall Hapy statue used to watch over “the eternal return of the divine flow” of the Nile at the harbour of Thonis-Heracleion. In Cauville’s view, a text in the Ptolemaic temple at Kom Ombo states that the Nile flew from the two mythical caves at Elephantine to the two farthest “mouths” at the Delta, one of which situated in the east and the other in the west. These would have been like “door leaves”, “mouths” or final orifices of the river into the waters of the firmament. The discovered colossal Hapy statue might have looked after one of such major orifices of the river at Thonis-Heracleion by the Rosetta-Canopus main branch of the Nile (Cauville 2021a: 91–95).

39, 91, 101, 107, 155). At her coronation, the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt were put on her head by the two gods (see e.g. Sethe 1906a: 251: 11–13).³⁷ In her obelisk at Karnak, it was proclaimed that for her “the Two Lords united their parts that she may rule this earth (Egypt) as the son of Isis (Horus), and she may have strength as the son of Nut (Seth)” (e.g. Sethe 1906b: 366, 3–5). This way, she received the legitimacy to rule from both gods. Just like Thutmose III, who was also said to have been placed on the throne of Egypt by the two gods (see Lepsius 1849–1856a: 35B, 33C–G and 34C; Cwiek 2008: 39–45; Shanley 2015: 68). In fragmentary reliefs at the Akh-Menu in Karnak the empty sedan chair of the king was brought by the two gods at the beginning of the coronation of Thutmose III (fig. 7; Von Bissing – Kees 1922: 116). In Deir el-Bahari, in his coronation cycle, he was wearing the so-called “royal jacket” that covered his bust with the intertwining portraiture of Horus and Seth as if his body would directly have originated from both gods as their joint embodiment (Cwiek 2008: figs. 1–7). In his Sed Festival, Thutmose III was depicted in the company of Horus and Seth who were supporting him in shooting four arrows possibly towards the cardinal points of Egypt and beyond as a sign of his befitting claim over every land (fig. 8).³⁸ This must have been an allusion to the divine legitimacy of his rulership passed over by the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt. Alike, claiming that his northernmost and southernmost borders were established at “the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth” in his Buhen text, Thutmose III proclaimed that the legacy of his fathers was rightfully vindicated by him on the entire earth. Not only was he the ruler of the Two Lands, but also the guarantor of divine order (*mꜣꜣt*) and the inundation between his fathers’ heavenly waters where they could have dwelt.³⁹ His guarantorship granted well-being to the whole of Egypt and the related foreign lands by the grace of “the Two Lords”.

The mother of one of the next rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Thutmose IV (1400–1390 BC), also held the title of “She who sees Horus and Seth” upon giving birth to the pharaoh (Shanley 2015: 39). It meant the ideological continuation of the king’s bodily and legal descent from the two gods. On the occasion of his divine birth, Amenhotep III was purified by Horus and Seth with their waters, and he was wished that “the strength of the Two Lords [shouds] strengthen his limbs” (see e.g. Sethe 1957: 1720/3–4, 1716/20). In the same manner, his mother wore the title “She who sees Horus and Seth” (Shanley 2015: 90–91). In the Temple of Luxor, in his Two Ladies Name, he was addressed as  (*kni nht mi s3'ist shm-ib mi s3 Nwt*) “brave and strong like the son of Isis, stout-hearted like the son of Nut” (e.g. Sethe 1957: 10–11). Thus, in his royal program, Amenhotep III would have assumed to be the joint manifestation of both gods as their legitimate heir. At Soleb, by declaring that his territories spread between “the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth”, he ensured his rulership as far as his fathers’ dwelling places in the sky who watched over his earthly deeds throughout his reign. In another wall relief at the Temple of Soleb, the son of Amenhotep III, the later Akhenaten (1353–1336 BC) was primarily crowned the king of Egypt by Horus and Seth before his Amarna reform (Shanley 2015: 132–133; Schiff–Giorgini 1998: 6–9). In his case, this coronation would have meant the early

37 See her damaged coronation scenes in Deir el-Bahari (Cwiek 2008: figs. 8–9).

38 Senwosret III (1837–1819 BC) – in his Sed Festival lintel relief (Cairo, JE 6189) – was given stability in the form of *rnpt* sticks by the Two Lords. Thutmose III was likewise provided with the *rnpt* sticks by the Two Gods in another representation (Lepsius 1849–1856a: 33G).

39 Pyr. Texts 1278b, 1327b mention a “Mansion of Horus” (*hwt Hr*) located in the *kbh.w* region of the sky (for more, see Zago 2021: 520).

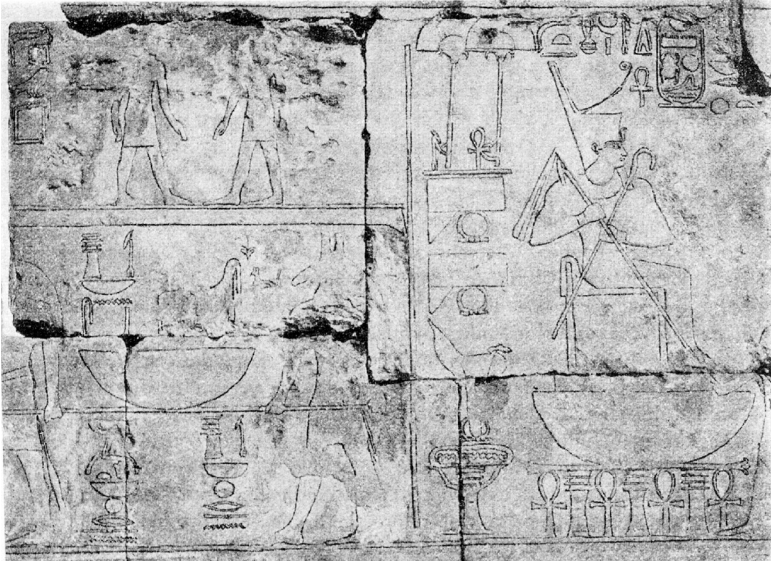


Fig. 7 Horus and Seth with the empty sedan chair of Thutmose III (after Von Bissing – Kees 1922: 116)

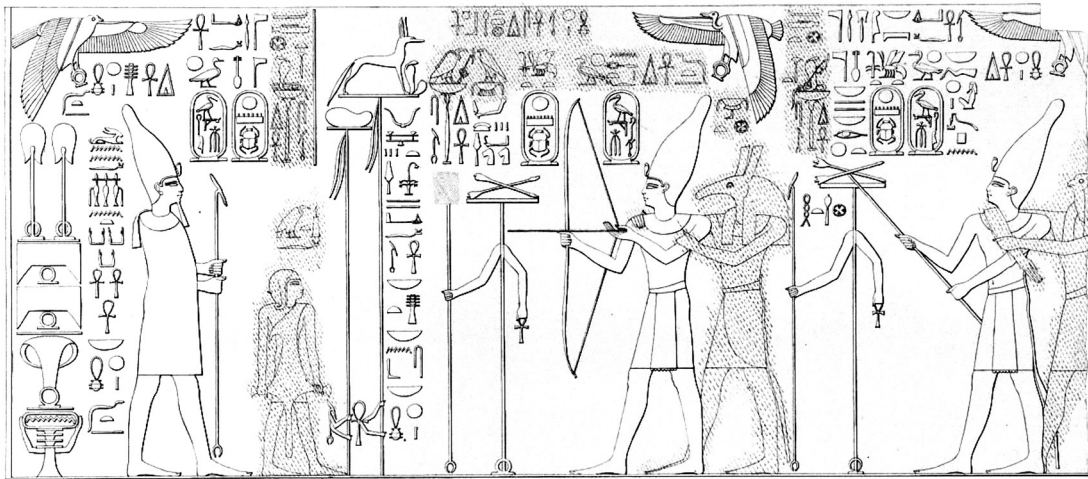


Fig. 8 Horus and Seth in the company of Thutmose III at the shooting of the four arrows (after Lepsius 1849–1856a: 36B)

continuation of his family’s traditional ideology before his big change (Murnane 2013: 103–125). And finally, Horemheb (1319–1292 BC), the last ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty, was called a “son by flesh” by Seth in a text from the Temple of Abahuda (Lepsius 1849–1856b: 122A). Unfortunately, the parallel speech of Horus to the king is lost in the scene. Horemheb was a commoner on the throne, possibly with no royal blood in his veins, so he had to strengthen his position by granting himself divine origin through the collaboration of “the Two Lords”. This way, he could legitimately rule over the Two Lands of Egypt just as his predecessors of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The purification of the pharaoh by Horus and Seth was not limited only to birth. It would also happen right before coronation. Only a few examples of such scenes survived with Horus and Seth, and exclusively from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties: three from the reign of Sety I (fig. 9; Gardiner 1950: nos. 13 and 27) and one from under Ramses III (1187–1157 BC; Gar-

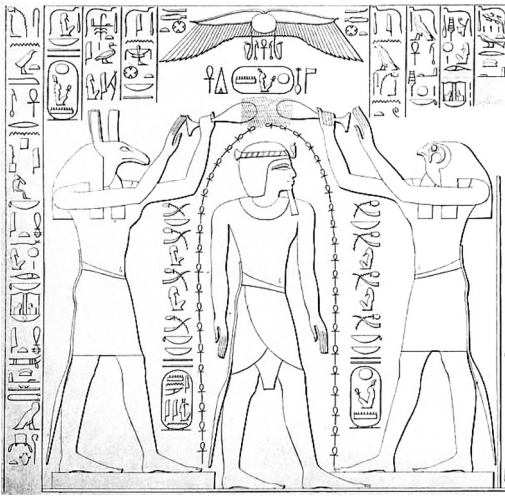


Fig. 9 Horus and Seth purifying Sety I; Karnak, Great Hypostyle Hall, West Side (after Lepsius 1849–1856b: 124d)

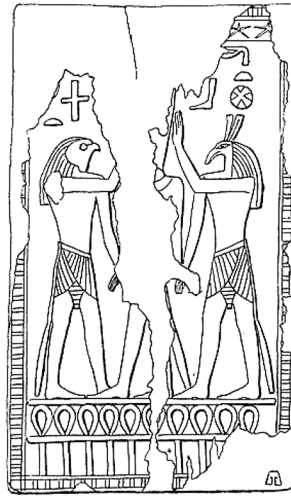


Fig. 10 Adoration of Pepi II by Horus and Seth from Saqqara, wooden box (after Jequier 1940: 39)

diner 1950: nos. 17). In the majority of such purification scenes Horus and Thoth can be seen performing the ritual cleaning (Gardiner 1950: 4–5). In the Eighteenth Dynasty, there must have been a discrepancy because the purification before coronation seems to have solely been carried out by Horus and Thoth,⁴⁰ while the coronation often took place with the help of Horus and Seth. It might have been the result of an ideological takeover from the time of the Old Kingdom (fig. 10).

In my view, in the Eighteenth Dynasty the reason for performing purification before coronation by Horus and Thoth would have been that Thoth was identified with the growing waves of the inundation in the south.⁴¹ Just as the appearance of Horus was surely attributed to his being a master over the northern section of the water of the Nile. In this view I would differ from Gardiner's who suggested that Thoth's presence at purifications before coronation would have referred to the western cardinal point because Thoth was the god of the western quarter of Egypt. In the same manner, Horus was the god of the northern cardinal point. Together these two gods would have represented the extension of the pharaohs' empire (Gardiner 1950: 9).⁴² However, as it was mentioned before, "the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth" would not only have indicated the northern-southern borders of the empire, but also all the cardinal points through their extensions to the west and east by the flight of the *kbh.w* migratory birds. Consequently, Horus and Seth performing the purification together, let alone the coronation, must

40 Six purification scenes survived from the Eighteenth Dynasty, all with Horus and Thoth (Gardiner 1950: 8): No. 7 (Hatshepsut), No. 8 (Hatshepsut), No. 9 (Thutmose III), No. 11 (Amenhotep III), No. 12 (Amenhotep III), No. 26 (Amenhotep II).

41 The Nile was called the wave of Thoth (Drioton 1933: 47; see also Desroches-Noblecourt-Kuentz 1968: 113, 219, 479–480).

42 In Baines' view, the purification scenes with the Two Lords and with Horus and Thoth are different. He suggested that Thoth was suited for purification because he was an aide to the sun god. Yet, he is still of the opinion that "there may be some more specific analogy with the purification scenes which adds to the appositeness of Thoth". A kinship between the *sema tawy* scenes and the purification by the Two Lords may show a reference. Therefore "the motivation for the use of Thoth is probably complex" (Baines 1985: 137).

have carried a different and more specific connotation to the king's initiation into the royal legacy and into the handover of the dominant divine power of "the Two Lords" of Upper and Lower Egypt. Also, they, as "Lords of the Sky" (Lepsius 1849–1856b: 122A; Lepsius 1849–1856a: 33D–E, 33G, 34C, 35E, 36B; Shanley 2015: 65, 107), had major powers over the celestial waters in their parts of the sky that they transferred to their "son by flesh" upon coronation. He thus could assert his rule up to the edges of the cosmos.

CONCLUSION

In this paper at first the location of "the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth" was analysed mostly in the light of the Eighteenth Dynasty royal inscriptions and various later sources. It was detected that they were located on the opposite sides of the sky at the northernmost and southernmost extremes of the Egyptian Empire, at the edges of the celestial waters of the outer cosmos. In connection with their location, it can be assumed that they would have had western and eastern subsections that incorporated into the four cardinal points characterizing the expansion of the empire of the pharaohs.

Concerning the imperial border-wise significance of "the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth" in the royal ideology of the Eighteenth Dynasty, it was showed that the unity as well as the prosperity of the whole of Egypt depended on the celestial waters of the two hereditary gods of Upper and Lower Egypt. Firstly, because by birth the pharaoh was believed to be their joint bodily manifestation. Therefore, as his legacy, he received all his powers, lands, rulership, and physical properties to become king from his fathers upon coronation. Secondly, because through their celestial waters "the Two Lords", as "Lords of the Sky", may have taken part in the generation of the inundation of the Nile that became notably equated with the actions and powers of the pharaohs. It was the pharaohs' royal duty to ensure *mꜣꜥt* and bring regeneration and fertility to Egypt by promoting the inundation of the Nile. In this manner, the country was able to undergo a recreative purification that kept it alive until the next inundation. The impact of the flood would even have been extended to the foreign lands, because through the justifiable power over the waters of "their fathers", the Egyptian pharaohs could legitimately rule all lands that came into touch with any water stemming from "their fathers". Thus, ideologically speaking, all foreign lands belonged under the rulership of the pharaohs, together with their fathers' homeland along the Nile between "the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth". In fact, by marking their borders at "the Cool Waters of Horus and Seth", the greatest Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs – Thutmose III and Amenhotep III – could efficiently prove their rightful hold over every piece of land as far as the starry edges of the then known world that, for them, all belonged within the boundaries of their huge empire.

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