

Christ In Egypt

The Horus-Jesus Connection



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The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold
Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled
Who Was Jesus? Fingerprints of The Christ

CHRIST IN EGYPT: THE HORUS-JESUS CONNECTION

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Left: Statue of Isis suckling Horus, from the Gregorian Egyptian Museum in the Vatican, Italy

Right: Statue of Virgin Mary suckling Baby Jesus, Venice, Italy.

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Preface

“So there grew, during those first centuries of Christianity, a whole literature of the Hermetic sort in which the symbols, interpreted in the orthodox Christian tradition as historical, were being read in a proper mythological sense. And these then began to link the Christian myth to pagan analogues. The Gnostics, for instance, were in that boat. But the orthodox Christians insisted on the historicity of all these events.”

Joseph Campbell, *An Open Life* (77)

Over a century ago, renowned British Egyptologist Sir Dr. E.A. Wallis Budge (1857-1934), a Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum, as well as a confessed Christian, remarked that a study tracing the “influence of ancient Egyptian religious beliefs and mythology on Christianity” would “fill a comparatively large volume.”¹ Since Dr. Budge’s time, for a variety of reasons, including the seemingly irreconcilable academic gap between historians and theologians, no one has taken up the call to produce such a volume—until now.

This book is the result of decades of study of the world’s religions and mythologies, focusing on comparative religion with the intention of showing from where Christianity in particular likely devised many of its most cherished beliefs. My previous books on the subjects of comparative religion, mythology and Christian origins include: *The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold*; *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*; and *Who Was Jesus? Fingerprints of The Christ*. I continue this ongoing investigation with the fascinating land of the pharaohs not only because that nation was extremely influential in the world into which Christianity was born, but also because it possesses so much material preserved from the centuries of destruction—much of it quite deliberate—that it is to Egypt we may look for solid, primary-source proof of our premise.

It should be noted, however, that I did not originally set out to prove a thesis established *a priori* but that, having been engaged in this field for so many years and, having been raised a Christian and knowing that faith very well, I have been struck over the decades by the profound and relevant resemblances between it and pre-Christian and non-Christian religions, and it has become clear that Egypt was the fount of much of this religious and spiritual knowledge.

In this groundbreaking effort, I have used the latest and best technology to search far and wide through a massive amount of material across several languages, beginning with the ancient primary sources and extending into the modern era. In order to demonstrate a solid case, I have been compelled to do extensive and

¹ Budge, *GE*, I, xvi.

exhaustive research in the pertinent ancient languages, such as Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Coptic, while I have also utilized authorities in modern languages such as German and French.

Not only have I provided much important and interesting information directly addressing the striking comparisons between the Egyptian and Christian religions, but also I have exposed on several occasions various biases, censorship and other behaviors that have impacted mainstream knowledge over the centuries, allowing for certain revelations to come to light in English here possibly for the first time in history.

In order to set the stage for the various premises of each chapter, I have included quotations at the beginnings thereof, at times both modern and ancient. After thus providing a summary of the premise, in each chapter I delve into the appropriate *primary sources* to whatever extent possible. In my analysis of the ancient Egyptian texts, I consulted and cross-referenced as many translations as I could find, and I attempted to defer to the most modern renditions as often as possible. All of this work was accomplished as truly independent scholarship, without funding from any group, organization or institution, as has been the case with all of my past endeavors as well.

The result is that *Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection* comprises nearly 600 pages with almost 2,400 footnotes and citations from more than 900 books, journals and assorted other sources from experts in germane fields of study from different time periods beginning in antiquity up to the most modern Egyptologists, in order to create a consensus of opinion since the topic is so contentious. In this regard, brief biographical material is also included for many of these authorities, so that readers may be assured of the individual's credentials. The broad scope of these sources dating from thousands of years ago to the most modern research means there can be no dismissive argument based on either a lack of primary sources or because the authorities cited are "outdated."

Yet, for all this erudition, I have hopefully succeeded in making *Christ in Egypt* as readily accessible to the average reader as possible, so that the book can be enjoyed by all who wish to know the hidden history of the origins of religious ideology. Some of the material may strike some readers as difficult and/or tedious, but I hope it will be understood that, in consideration of the controversial nature of this issue, it was necessary to be as thorough as possible. This book is therefore not meant to be a "quick read." Rather, it is intended as a reference book providing knowledge for years to come.

In comparison to other literature on the subject, the present book might be considered the most complete and scientific study of the Egyptian influence on Christianity ever produced in English. Each major contention and many minor ones have been carefully cited

with an eye to as exacting accuracy as is possible, and every effort has been made to doublecheck particularly controversial facts. My intent has always been to restore the proper milieu of the eras in question, resurrecting cultures that have been the object of disinformation and disdain. In creating this opus, I experienced great delight at a number of significant features that came to light, and I offer this unusual but intriguing research in the spirit in which it was intended: To wit, to demonstrate that mankind's most cherished and fervently held religious beliefs are rooted firmly in *human* creation based on natural phenomena, without the need for supernatural genesis but nonetheless extraordinarily marvelous and meaningful.

D.M. Murdock
aka Acharya S
February 2009

Introduction

“Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

The Gospel of Matthew (2:15)

“For what is now called the Christian religion existed of old and was never absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh. Then true religion which already existed began to be called Christian.”

Saint Augustine, *Retractiones* (1:13)

“The Religion proclaimed by him to All Nations was neither New nor Strange.”

Bishop Eusebius, *The History of the Church* (2:4)

“Christianity represents the last term of [the] invasion of oriental ideas into the West. It did not fall like a thunderbolt in the midst of a surprised and alarmed old world. It had its period of incubation, and, while it was seeking the definitive form of its dogmas, the problems for which it was pursuing the solutions preoccupied the thoughts in Greece, in Asia, in Egypt. There were in the air stray ideas that combined themselves in all sorts of proportions.”¹

Dr. Louis Ménard, *Hermes Trismégiste* (ix)

“There can be no doubt that the oldest Egyptian writings contain some vestiges of primeval faith. Egyptians in very remote areas believed in the immortality of man, with reward or punishment in the future state. They believed in the existence of good and evil powers in this life, and were not without a sense of personal responsibility...”

Rev. Dr. W.H. Rule, *The Horus Myth and Its Relation to Christianity* (66)

Over the centuries, it has been the contention of numerous scholars and researchers of comparative religion and mythology that one of the major influences on the Christian faith was that of ancient Egypt. Although we today may find the ancient Egyptian religion bizarre and amusing, with all its peculiarities, including gods and goddesses in the forms of many kinds of animals, the truth is that the Egyptians themselves took their faith *very* seriously, so much so that, as with religions of today, murder in its name was not unknown. One need only look to the cautionary tale of the notorious monotheistic pharaoh Amenhotep IV, aka Akhenaten, for an example of how sincerely the Egyptians and their priesthods upheld their religion. Indeed, many Egyptians—and especially their priests—were as devout in their own religion as are the most pious among us today. And this faith was not isolated or fleeting: The Egyptian religion was

¹ Translation mine. The original French of Ménard is: “Le christianisme représente le dernier terme de cette invasion des idées orientales en Occident. Il n'est pas tombé comme un coup de foudre au milieu du vieux monde surpris et effaré. Il a eu sa période d'incubation, et, pendant qu'il cherchait la forme définitive de ses dogmes, les problèmes dont il poursuivait la solution préoccupaient aussi les esprits en Grèce, en Asie, en Égypte. Il y avait dans l'air des idées errantes qui se combinaient en toute sorte de proportions.” (Ménard, ix-x.)

exceedingly widespread and possessed an antiquity unparalleled in the known world at the time. As the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-c. 425 BCE¹) wrote in his *Histories* (2.37) almost 2,500 years ago, the Egyptians were “religious to excess, beyond any other nation in the world.”² Concurring with this assessment, renowned Egyptologist Dr. Jan Assman (b. 1938), a professor of Egyptology at the University of Konstanz, remarks:

In ancient Egypt, mortuary religion was not simply one area of cultural praxis, among others, such as the cult of the gods, economy, law, politics, literature, and so forth. Rather, in this case, we are dealing with a center of cultural consciousness, one that radiated out into many—we might almost say, into all—others areas of ancient Egyptian culture.³

In *Egyptian Religion*, Egyptologist Dr. Siegfried Morenz (1914-1970), a director of the Institute of Egyptology at the University of Leipzig, likewise describes religion as the “matrix of culture” and “womb of culture,” especially as found in Egypt.⁴

Over its vast life of several millennia, hundreds of millions of people engaged in the Egyptian religion, with its major themes and motifs well known and highly respected. In fact, it has been estimated that some 500 million Egyptians were mummified during the time of the pharaohs, indicating there were at least *half a billion followers* of the Egyptian religion during that era.⁵ Hence, any competing faith would be hard-pressed to overturn this deep and abiding reverence for the Egyptian religion and its gods, and would need to incorporate as much of the Egyptian mythos and ritual into itself as was possible. The fact is that such devoutly religious people do not easily and

¹ In dating notations, “c.” means “circa” or “around,” while “b.” is the abbreviation for “born” and “d.” means “died.” The abbreviation “fl.” means “flourished,” representing the time during which a ruler was in power or any other individual was active in his/her occupation. “BCE” is equivalent to “BC” and means “Before the Common Era,” while “CE” equals “AD” but means “Common Era.”

² Herodotus/de Selincourt, 99.

³ Assman, *DSAE*, 2-3.

⁴ Morenz, 13.

⁵ See “The Pyramids and the Cities of the Pharaohs.” This figure apparently comes from calculations done by Egyptologist Dr. George R. Gliddon (1809-1875) as follows: “Let us call the period of mummification 3,000 years, which would be greatly below the mark. The average population of Egypt during the time probably amounted to five millions, which died off every generation of thirty-three years. We have, then, by a simple process of calculation, 450 millions of mummies for the 3,000 years; but as the time was probably more than 3,000 years, the number of mummies might be estimated in round numbers at five hundred millions.” (Gliddon, 73.) This mindboggling number of half a billion appears impossible at first; however, it works out to only 167,000 or so people dying per year over a period of 3,000 years, so it is in reality rather plausible. It should be kept in mind that not all Egyptians could afford to be mummified by human methods; many of the poorer classes would bury their dead at the edge of the desert in order to allow for natural mummification to occur. (Redford, 233.) Nevertheless, one may reasonably presume that even the poorest of the deceased were afforded some sort of burial ritual.

readily abandon their religion and god(s)—do fervent Christians, for instance, give up their god without a fight?

Also, much of the disparagement of the Egyptian gods and religion emanates from the Christian Church fathers of the second century and onwards, such as the particularly snide Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-211/216 AD/CE), in a transparent play to usurp the others' deities with their own faith, which was, in reality, no less ridiculous overall.¹ This behavior is unwarranted, in light of what we know today about the Egyptian religion, which, largely because of these prejudicial efforts, was almost lost to us forever. Fortunately, a number of individuals over the centuries were able to overcome these prejudices to see for themselves what the Egyptian religion truly represented—and they did so often at great risk, as there was a concerted effort by the Church to censor this information. This type of abuse continues to this day, with those who dare to suggest that Christianity is not original but basically constitutes a reworking of old faiths subjected to all sorts of derision and ridicule, as well as irrational and impossible demands for evidence of an obvious fact, when, in upholding their own religious beliefs, these same detractors require little or no evidence at all. As independent philosopher N.W. Barker says, “If there were valid scientific evidence in support of the supernatural religious claims, *faith* would not be the main requirement.”

Despite the disparagement and dismissal, the reality remains that the many Egyptian myths and rituals, including numerous gods and goddesses, prayers and hymns, were not obscure and ignored but were known by millions of people over a long period of time. *These hallowed Egyptian motifs included the sacredness of the cross, the virgin mother who gave birth to the divine son, a godman who taught on Earth, led 12 followers, healed the sick, and raised the dead, and who was murdered, buried and resurrected, etc.* Although they were often deemed “mysteries,” a number of these important concepts were undoubtedly in the minds of many people by the time the Christian religion appeared in the same areas of the Mediterranean. As pointed out by renowned Swiss Egyptologist Dr. Erik Hornung (b. 1933), a professor emeritus of Egyptology at the University of Basel, the Egyptian mysteries were not necessarily secrets but were carried out in public, such as the annual passion play of the god Osiris.² As Dr. Morenz also points out, “The participation of large masses of the population was necessary at the so-called mysteries...”³ These *mysteries* were particularly known to those responsible for the creation of religion, the priests, who actively studied and imitated

¹ For more on the problems with Christianity, see my book *Who Was Jesus? Fingerprints of The Christ*.

² Hornung, *SLE*, 13.

³ Morenz, 90.

other priesthods in their fabrications. Knowing what we do about the priesthood and the manufacture of religion, and noting the obvious parallels between the Egyptian religion and Christianity, it would seem disingenuous to suggest that Christianity represents a “unique, divine revelation” to a small group of people in the tiny area of Palestine/Judea. Instead of thus denying the clear connection between the two religions, we will explore it here, using as many relevant and quality sources as is possible.

A Word about Primary Sources

The field of comparative religion and mythology can be highly contentious because it confronts the fervent beliefs of modern religions, demonstrating that many religious notions are rooted in older mythology. In this regard, often unreasonable demands of proofs are required in order to show these correlations. Although they do not request such proofs when it comes to their own faith, likely for the reason that they were imbued with it from a very young age and simply accept it as “reality,” the devoutly religious require pristine “primary sources” from the very finger of God in order to believe anything outside of the religious box many have been closed in practically since birth. Basically, the cry for “primary sources” highlights a number of difficulties, such as that current religious beliefs are themselves not the result of examining pristine primary sources. Indeed, in the case of Christianity, there are no “primary sources” of the kind demanded as proofs of the correspondences between Christianity and Paganism. There are no originals of the gospels, for example, from the very hands of the evangelists themselves or any other alleged eyewitness of the events in the New Testament—why have these sources not been preserved along with a pedigree proving that they were written by the individuals claimed as their authors and giving the dates when they were composed? What about the so-called Pauline epistles, which have clearly been altered repeatedly—why do we not have the autographs so that we may see for ourselves that nothing has in fact been forged in them? Where are the originals of the extrabiblical texts, such as those from the Jewish historian Josephus (37-c. 100 AD/CE), to prove they have not been tampered with? Where are the certified autographs to prove that these texts are authentic and that they have not been altered, mutilated and interpolated?

The call for primary sources also serves to remind us that Christians went on a censorship rampage and destroyed as much evidence as they could in the name of “piety,” ravaging Pagan temples, murdering their priests, burning libraries and torturing and slaughtering nonbelievers and believers alike by the millions. Christian structures were built upon the ruins of the Pagan temples, such as in the case of the Vatican, which was founded upon the remains of a complex dedicated to the sun god Mithra. Indeed, at St.

Peter's Basilica in Rome stands an obelisk moved from Egypt by Emperor Caligula (12-41 AD/CE), who placed it in his circus, after which it was later transported during the 16th century AD/CE to the Piazza San Pietro,¹ eventually serving as the gnomon of a sundial.

In the end, the lack of artifacts and primary sources thus reflects the criminal destruction on the part of the devout. In this same regard, Christian writers also mutilated the works of ancient authors, both Christian and non-Christian. Much destruction of ancient culture has likewise occurred during the many wars, including both World Wars, which greatly affected Christian civilization.

Included in the "sources" debate is the constant dunning for credentials, along with the notion that only those with the highest qualifications in the most salient fields are able to give any truthful or educated opinion on a subject. In reality, such is not necessarily the case, with many non-specialists often capable of putting forth erudite and accurate views. Moreover, in shoring up their faith, fervent believers frequently require no credentials at all. Nevertheless, again, in order to satisfy this request for credentials, every effort has been taken here to provide commentary from highly credentialed scholars in relevant fields.

In any event, amid the rubble of the past destroyed remains enough primary-source material to show sufficiently that there is little original or "historical" about Christianity. This claim regarding primary sources ranks as especially true in Egypt, where the material could not be completely obliterated, as no matter how mightily the utter annihilation of evidence was attempted, there simply existed too much, despite the destruction ages before by grave robbers and other vandals. In addition to trashing texts and mutilating monuments, Christians even stuccoed over the hieroglyphs in order to remove them from sight, because they could not chip them away. However, this behavior had the effect of *preserving* the hieroglyphs for us to work with now, and scientists and scholars have only had serious access to the Egyptian culture over the past couple of centuries. Indeed, not so long ago even the massive Great Pyramid was partially buried in sand, while the Sphinx was covered up to its neck.

The ancient texts in which many of the aspects and myths of the Egyptian religion can be found date back millennia, with estimates varying from more than 4,000 to 7,000 years ago.² Precise dates for the oldest Egyptian texts are difficult to ascertain: For example, the Pyramid Texts—claimed to be the "world's oldest religious literature"³—are conservatively dated to at least 4,000 years ago and

¹ Tronzo, 19, 26ff; Jokilehto, 36.

² Allen, J., *AEPT*, 1.

³ This contention is up for debate, as Indian scholars assert that the portions of the Rig Veda are many thousands of years old, while Sumerian writings are also considered the "oldest literature in history," with some Sumerian religious texts dating to perhaps as much as 4,000 years ago. The Sumerian script purportedly preceded the Egyptian

are said to be the basis for what became the Book of the Dead (c. 1600 BCE).¹ Yet, parts of the Book of the Dead or “BD”—the *Egyptian Bible*, as many have styled it—have been dated to at least 7,000 years ago as well, based on the chronology provided by the Egyptians themselves, who asserted these portions to have been so old as to have been lost by the time of the First Dynasty (c. 3100 to c. 2890 BCE).²

In any case, beginning at least 4,000 years ago the Pyramid Texts (c. 2350 BCE) were inscribed all over Egyptian pyramids, eventually to adorn the many tombs, both royal and non-royal, as well as “sarcophagi, coffins, canopic chests, papyri, stelae, and other funerary monuments...”³ These texts continued in one form or another into the common era, some embodied into the more famous Book of the Dead and other writings such as on mummy wrappings that included portions of the BD.⁴

Beginning in the First Intermediate Period (2181-2041 BCE),⁵ the mortuary literature began to be written on coffins as well, constituting the “Coffin Texts.” The Coffin Texts represent a mass of “magical and liturgical spells”⁶ inspired by the Pyramid Texts that were written on the coffins of wealthy but non-royal individuals. However, the Coffin Texts ranks as “far less coherent than the Pyramid Texts, for they lack a unifying point of view.”⁷ Numbering over 1,000, these texts constitute a result of the “[f]ear of death and longing for eternal life [that] have been brewed in a sorcerer’s cauldron from which they emerge as magic incantations of the most phrenetic sort.”⁸ The Coffin Texts are important in that they allowed for the spread of the ideas within the Pyramid Texts, along with much material newly introduced, demonstrating not only longevity for the PT but also that the religion changed, as well as that it became pervasive and well known by even the common people.

Working with the Egyptian material is quite satisfying overall, since so much of it escaped destruction—again, much of which was deliberate. With a little teasing here and there, the secrets of the Egyptian religion yield themselves up beautifully, providing excellent

hieroglyphs as we have them, although earlier forms of writing do appear in Egypt as well, dating to almost as early as the Sumerian, both over 5,000 years ago. (Hornung, *SLE*, 11.) Davies and Friedman, however, relate that “recent discoveries at Abydos have shown that the Egyptians had an advanced system of writing even earlier than the Mesopotamians, some 150 years before Narmer.” (Davies, *V.*, 36.)

¹ Hornung, *VK*, 8.

² Bonwick, 188-189. The numbering used here for the chapters/spells of the Book of the Dead follows the convention of “BD 1,” “BD 2,” etc. (See, e.g., Griffiths, *DV*, 214.)

³ Allen, *J.*, *AEPT*, 1.

⁴ Gatty, 35.

⁵ Brier, 12.

⁶ *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 115.

⁷ Lichtheim, 131.

⁸ Lichtheim, 131.

primary-source data for our major contentions concerning the relationship to Christianity. Indeed, regarding the Egyptian mortuary literature, or “Books of the Netherworld,” Dr. Hornung remarks:

Their purpose was to provide the king with a systematic description of the world beyond death, one that followed the path of the sun after sunset through the twelve hours of the night.... Private tombs and sarcophagi of the Late Period were also decorated with copies of these works, and *it is not improbable that even early Christian texts were influenced by ideas and images from the New Kingdom religious books.*¹

Thus, by the words of a major modern Egyptologist, we are encouraged to look for “ideas and images from the New Kingdom religious books” that may have influenced “early Christian texts!”

Speaking of sources, it often appears necessary to repeat that searching encyclopedias will not yield adequate results when it comes to deep research, particularly since until lately most of the encyclopedias in English were written and edited by Christians who would hardly be keen on including obvious parallels to Christ in their various entries on gods and men.² Moreover, flipping through encyclopedias will not make an expert of anyone; thus, caution is required when reading hasty rebuttals from fervent believers—such commentaries tend to be inadequate, representing a cursory scan by those who are rarely experts. Such interpretations may sound impressive at first to the untrained eye; however, with serious, time-consuming research digging into long-forgotten and buried archives, most if not all of these shallow encyclopedia-rebuttals can be put to rest, as demonstrated in this present work.

Egyptian Language Translations

The most important and obvious place we may turn in our quest for data regarding the Egyptian religion is to the ancient Egyptian texts, monuments and other artifacts, including, of course, the fabled hieroglyphs, the ancient script used to describe, among other things, the many sacred concepts. In discussing the translations of these hieroglyphs, it should be kept in mind that, while some antiquated “religious” language is frequently used, there is in general not as

¹ Hornung, *VK*, 9. (Emph. added.)

² Encyclopedias provide for some consensus of opinion and a valuable starting point for research. In such generally short entries, of course, only a small portion of a subject can be addressed, and encyclopedias thus tend to be sanitized of controversial material. Older encyclopedias may contain material that has been omitted not because it is erroneous but because it is not popular with mainstream authorities. Some encyclopedias are simply better, regardless of their age, particularly in consideration of “timeless” subjects such as religious ideology. One such example is the renowned *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1911, which is still considered to be exemplary. Another is the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, which, although in some entries a century old, remains highly valuable not only because, other than in places where faith does not permit, it tends to be fairly accurate, but also because of its many admissions against interest.

much room for interpretation as some might aver, and the common renderings by older scholars such as Sir Dr. E.A. Wallis Budge and devout Catholic Sir Peter Le Page Renouf (1822-1897), the previous Keeper at the British Museum, tend to be fairly faithful and accurate for the most part.¹ Of course, various more modern translations represent improvements in certain areas and often may be preferable. We know this assertion concerning interpretation to be true in part because these scholars were using the keys provided by the famous Rosetta Stone (196 BCE), which included not only the Egyptian hieroglyphic and demotic scripts but also Greek, the main language along with Coptic that allowed for the Egyptian to be translated at last. The Greek language is very specific and readily translated into English, usually with little interpretation necessary. Hence, we can be relatively certain that the English renderings of the Egyptian hieroglyphs using the decoding provided by the ancient Greek translations are relatively accurate and generally require little interpretation, although at times some is necessary. Regarding the ability of modern scholars to read the Egyptian hieroglyphs, professor of Egyptology at Brown University Dr. James P. Allen (b. 1945) concludes:

Since Champollion's time, Egyptologists have continually refined our knowledge of ancient Egyptian writing, words, and grammar. Except for the most obscure words, hieroglyphic texts can be read today almost as easily as those of any other known language.²

¹ I am aware of the debate concerning Budge's voluminous work, a controversy that some have suggested represents a form of rivalry not uncommon in the academic world or in the world at large. I personally have found nothing egregious about Budge's discussion of the Egyptian religion, although I cannot vouch for everything in his hieroglyphic dictionaries, for instance, which are considered outdated in their system of transliteration (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 13). Nor can Budge be criticized for venturing what turned out to be certain flawed dates of pharaohs and texts; in consideration of the more limited knowledge of those particular subjects at the time, in general Budge did very well in his estimations, especially in view of the mass of material this pioneer sifted through. The fact remains that Budge was extremely talented linguistically, as well as extraordinarily well educated and experienced as to Egyptian antiquities, culture, religion and language. He also knew his own Christian faith very well, as evidenced by his remarks thereupon. I therefore provide Budge's assessment of Egyptian religion, including some linguistic interpretation, but no subject that would become "obsolete" within the decades since his passing. Moreover, in comparing the older and newer editions of Egyptian texts, I am not convinced that the latter are always superior in terms of translation. In fact, some more modern renditions seem stilted in their rigid adherence to academic sterility in the interest of purported precision, possibly lacking the potential spirit and potent spirituality intended by the text. In various instances, it is probable that *Budge is unpalatable to some because he repeatedly compared the Egyptian and Christian religions and stated that an investigation of the former's influences upon the latter would fill "a comparatively large volume!"* (*GE*, I, xvi.) In any event, the more modern translations are quite honorable overall and are referenced here as well whenever possible.

² Allen, J., *ME*, 9.

Thus, we can be reasonably assured when reading the various translations that we are faced with the essential intention of the writers of the original texts. In order to provide a consensus, in this present work I have used translations of not only Sirs Budge and Renouf but also several others, such as Dr. James Allen, Dr. Thomas George Allen, Dr. Samuel Birch, Dr. James Breasted, Dr. Heinrich Brugsch-Bey, Dr. Hellmut Brunner, Dr. Raymond Faulkner, Dr. John Gwyn Griffiths, Dr. Tom Hare, Dr. Richard Hooker, Dr. Samuel Mercer, Dr. William Murnane and Neil Parker.

Even though some of the renditions may seem “outdated” because they use the archaic English pronouns “thou,” “thy,” “thee” and “thine,” there was a method to the madness of these translators beyond simply attempting to emulate biblical verbiage: In Egyptian, like so many other languages, including French and Spanish, there were different forms for the word “you” and “yours,” etc., one formal and one informal. Where the Egyptian word for “you” was formal, addressing a god or higher up, the term was translated as “thou,” “thee,” etc. In more modern translations this salient distinction has become lost by the uniform rendering as “you,” “your” and so on. Although the modern language is more accessible, particularly to non-native speakers of English, in some instances the older form is preferable, as it reveals the sense of reverence indicated by the original Egyptian, also providing a better comparison with the equal but not exceeding reverence with which biblical figures, including God, are held.

When comparing translations, it is also important to keep in mind that various translators at times used different editions of the ancient texts, some of which possessed alterations and emendations. A study of the Egyptian texts themselves is thus eye-opening for a variety of reasons, including not only the content but also the differences from text to text over the centuries, with mistakes creeping in, transpositions changing meaning and interchangeability of characters, among other discrepancies. A careful comparison of editions reveals these discrepancies, which are at times meaningful, such that there is some leeway in the interpretation, as reflected in the translator’s notes, for example, in several places in the Coffin Texts rendered by Dr. Raymond O. Faulkner (1894-1982), a professor of Egyptian language at University College London.¹ Moreover, Faulkner’s notes regarding a number of Coffin Texts demonstrate that there are certain times when the writings are incomprehensible and therefore impossible to interpret in any fashion. In other words, there is at times uncertainty even with the best of translations.

¹ Faulkner is also forthcoming in his footnotes about disagreements between Egyptologists on various details, validating that there is not always a set-in-stone consensus by experts in any given field, as we know from many ongoing scientific debates.

In the long run, however, the painstaking work of the translators of the Rosetta Stone, Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) and Dr. Thomas Young (1773-1829), as well as the diligent labor of many others using a wealth of texts since then, to establish an accurate understanding of the Egyptian culture, including and especially the religion, were successful enough for us to reconstruct a fairly reliable picture of what the Egyptians believed about this world and the next.

God, Man or Myth?

A major source of confusion within the field of religion has occurred because there has existed a tendency over the centuries to make gods into men and men into gods. It is therefore imperative that we develop our skills for discernment as to what is historical and what is mythical. In the case of the Egyptian gods, all of the major deities have been mythical, not historical, despite the stories that place them into history and claim they were “real people” at some point.¹ Let us take for example the Egyptian god Osiris, upon whose “life” so much of the gospel tale appears to have been based. Was Osiris ever a “real person?” Concerning Osiris, Budge remarks:

...we can see that in very primitive times Osiris passed through many forms, and that his attributes were changed as the result of the development of the minds of the Egyptians and the natural modification of their religious views. Osiris, as we know him, was a compound of many gods, and his cult represented a blending of numerous nature cults, many of them being very ancient.²

Nevertheless, even in ancient times the story of Osiris included his advent on what seems to be Earth, and, as related by historians Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus (c. 90-27 BCE) beginning centuries prior to the common era, *many* people have believed Osiris was a real person, as they have with numerous other gods and goddesses worldwide for thousands of years. Even in the modern era we find statements such as, “That Osiris was actually an ancient divine king who reigned in the Delta is now generally agreed among Egyptologists....”³ Yet, as Renouf says, “It must be remembered...that many of the geographical localities named in the Book of the Dead have their counterparts in the Egyptian heaven.”⁴ In reality, Osiris is in large part a sun god, and, although there may have been real people by the same name, the figure in the myths was never a human being who lived on Earth. The tales that assert Osiris to have traveled here and there saving and civilizing humanity in fact refer to the

¹ One of the relatively few actual instances of what is called “euhemerism” or “evemerism”—making a human into a god or goddess, also deemed “apotheosis”—apparently occurred with the Egyptian architect Imhotep, who evidently lived during the Third Dynasty (c. 2687-2668 BCE). (Redford, 79.)

² Budge, *OER*, 1, 18.

³ Hornblower, *Man*, vol. 37, 155.

⁴ Renouf, *EBD*, 6.

spread of his *cult* or religion.¹ The same phenomenon may be claimed as concerns the tales of other gods and goddesses having supposedly walked the Earth, extending even to the story of Jesus Christ.

The tendency to make the gods into real people dates back into ancient times and was developed most notoriously by the Greek writer Euhemerus or Evemerus (c. 330/320-c. 260 BCE), who argued that the gods and goddesses of the day had been real people of old, such as kings, queens and other heroes and legendary figures. This thesis developed by Euhemerus may be called “euhemerism,” “evemerism”² or the “evemerist position,” defined as follows:

Evemerism represents the perspective that many of the gods and goddesses of antiquity had been real people, such as kings, queens and other heroes and legendary figures, to whose biographies were later added extraordinary and/or supernatural attributes.

While such a development has happened as concerns a relative handful of individuals, the fact will remain that the majority of popular deities have constituted *mythical* entities who never were real people but who often largely represented natural and astronomical phenomena.

In his long treatise in volume V of the *Moralia* entitled “Isis and Osiris,” Greek writer Plutarch (46-120 AD/CE) positively fumed while discussing the theories of Euhemerus/Evemerus. In his criticisms, Plutarch (23, 360A) harshly remarked:

I hesitate, lest this be the moving of things immovable and not only “warring against the long years of time,” as Simonides has it, but warring, too, against “many a nation and race of men” who are possessed by a feeling of piety towards these gods, and thus we should not stop short of transplanting such names from the heavens to the earth, and eliminating and dissipating the reverence and faith implanted in nearly all mankind at birth, opening wide the great doors to the godless throng, degrading things divine to the human level, and giving a splendid licence to the *deceitful utterances of Euhemerus of Messenē, who of himself drew up copies of an incredible and non-existent mythology, and spread atheism over the whole inhabited earth by obliterating the gods of our belief and converting them all alike into names of generals, admirals, and kings, who, forsooth, lived in very ancient times and are recorded in inscriptions written in golden letters at Panchon, which no foreigner and no Greek had ever happened to meet with, save only Euhemerus....*³

¹ The term “cult” is often used in a derogatory manner. In this present work, however, it is meant in its first, anthropological meaning of “a particular system of religious worship, esp. with reference to its rites and ceremonies.”

² The Greek spelling is *Ευήμερος*, with an upsilon or “u.” Because of pronunciation difficulties, I prefer the transliteration of “Evemerus” and “Evemerism,” with a “v,” as is done with the term *εὐάγγελος*, for example, which is transliterated in such words as “evangelism” but which is also spelled in Greek with an “u.” Moreover, in modern Greek the combination of “eu” is pronounced “ev” or “ef,” as in *ευχαριστώ*, pronounced “evhareesto.”

³ Plutarch/Babbitt, 56-57. (Emph. added.)

As we can see, Plutarch accused Euhemerus of spreading “atheism over the whole inhabited earth.” Plutarch’s sentiment is well founded that reducing to human exploits the glorious cosmic dramas of the Egyptian gods and others constitutes a degradation of “things divine to the human level.” In this regard, no such tendencies will appear in this present work, as we are convinced that these deities represent mythical and fabulous entities, and that, if there were any human beings named Osiris, Isis and Horus, it is not *their* story being told within Egyptian religion. The same contention may be made of individuals who happened to have been named “Yeshua,” “Joshua” or “Jesus” during the first century of the common era—they may indeed have been real people and historical individuals, but it is not *their* story being told in the gospels. In fact, the most scientific and valid evidence points to an origin for Jesus Christ as mythical and fabulous as that of the Egyptian, Greek and Roman gods of the same general era and area. Moreover, in the end the evidence also demonstrates a strong connection between these various mythical entities, including and especially the gods of Egypt and the Jewish godman of Christianity.

In this regard, when the mythological layers of the gospel story are removed, there remains no core to the onion, no “real person” to point to as found in the evemerist position. To put it another way, a composite of 20 people, whether mythical, historical or both, is no one. This perspective can be called “mythicism” or the “mythicist position,” which is defined as:

Mythicism represents the perspective that many gods, goddesses and other heroes and legendary figures said to possess extraordinary and/or supernatural attributes are not “real people” but are in fact mythological characters. Along with this view comes the recognition that many of these figures personify or symbolize natural phenomena, such as the sun, moon, stars, planets, constellations, etc., constituting what is called “astromythology” or “astrotheology.” As a major example of the mythicist position, it is determined that various biblical characters such as Adam and Eve, Satan, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, King David, Solomon and Jesus Christ, among other entities, in reality represent mythological figures along the same lines as the Egyptian, Sumerian, Phoenician, Indian, Greek, Roman and other godmen, who are all presently accepted as myths, rather than historical figures.

It should be kept in mind throughout this work that when we talk about “myth,” we are not dismissing something necessarily as being “false.” While it may be true that a myth never occurred in history, as a third-dimensional reality, myth nevertheless can be very profound and possess much meaning. As explained by Dr. Vincent Arieh Tobin, a professor of Classics at Saint Mary’s University:

...Myth is a means of sacred revelation, a method of communication that functions through symbolic expression and has its own inner

logic—a logic belonging to a realm of the mystical and metaphysical rather than to that of reason and rationality.¹

As may have been gathered from the important work of renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), rather than serving as something “fabricated” that needs to be dismissed, mythology possesses a vital role in culture worldwide. Hence, myth has a very real purpose and meaning, which is in reality depreciated when removed from its context and placed into “history.”

Who Is Gerald Massey?

In exploring the various Egyptian influences upon the Christian religion, one name frequently encountered is that of lay Egyptologist Gerald Massey (1828-1907). Born in abject poverty in England, Gerald Massey was almost entirely self-taught; yet, he was able to write and lecture about several subjects with tremendous erudition and authority. Despite his lack of formal education, Massey could read several languages, including not only English but also French, Latin, Greek and evidently Hebrew and Egyptian to a certain degree.

Massey was fortunate enough to live during an exciting time when Egyptology was in its heyday, with the discovery in 1799 of the Rosetta Stone and the subsequent decipherment of hieroglyphs in 1822 by Champollion. This monumental development allowed for the exposure to light of the fascinating Egyptian culture and religion, meaning that before that time no one could adequately read the Egyptian texts, which Massey ended up spending a considerable portion of his life studying and interpreting, and relatively little was known about the religion, for which Massey possessed a keen sense of comprehension.

In his detailed and careful analysis of the Egyptian religion, the pioneer Massey extensively utilized the Egyptian Book of the Dead—which was termed “The Ritual” by Champollion, a convention followed by Massey and others but since abandoned²—as well as several other ancient Egyptian sources, including the Pyramid Texts and assorted other funeral texts and stele. Massey quite evidently understood the Egyptian spirituality and was able to present it in a highly sound and scientific manner.

In these intensive and meticulous efforts, Massey studied the work of the best minds of the time—all towering figures within Egyptology, especially during Massey’s era, when most of them were alive and some were familiar with his work. These celebrated authorities in Egyptology whose works Massey studied and utilized included: Sir Dr. Budge; Dr. Brugsch-Bey; Jean-François

¹ Redford, 239.

² Renouf (xviii) objects that the *Book* does *not* constitute a “ritual” per se. Rather, it is, according to the British Museum’s T.G.H. James, a “compilation of spells, prayers and incantations.” In any event, this term “Ritual” will be used here occasionally along with the “Book of the Dead” and the abbreviation “BD.”

Champollion; Dr. Eugene Lefébure; Dr. Karl Richard Lepsius; Sir Dr. Gaston Maspero; Dr. Henri Edouard Naville; Sir Dr. William Flinders Petrie; Dr. Thomas Joseph Pettigrew; Sir Renouf; le vicomte de Rougé; Dr. Samuel Sharpe; and Sir Dr. John Gardner Wilkinson, among many other scholars in a wide variety of fields. As other examples, Massey also used the work of Sir Dr. J. Norman Lockyer, the physicist and royal English astronomer who was friends with Budge and knew Egypt well, along with that of Dr. Charles Piazzi Smyth, royal Scottish astronomer and professor of Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh. Massey further studied the work of Reverend Dr. Archibald Sayce, professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, as well as that of famous mythologist Sir Dr. James George Frazer, although he did not agree with their conclusions. He likewise cited the work of Francois Lenormant, professor of Archaeology at the National Library of France, as well as that of comparative theologian and Oxford professor Dr. Max Müller, philosopher and Jesus biographer Dr. Ernest Renan, and Christian monuments expert Rev. Dr. John Patterson Lundy.

Gerald Massey was very influenced by the work of Dr. Samuel Birch (1813-1885), archaeologist, Egyptologist and Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum. The creator of the first alphabetically arranged Egyptian dictionary, Dr. Birch also was the founder of the prestigious and influential Society of Biblical Archaeology, to which belonged many other notables in the fields of archaeology, Assyriology, Egyptology and so on.¹ Much of this eye-opening work on comparative religion, in fact, emanated from this august body of erudite and credentialed individuals. Birch held many other titles and honors, including from Cambridge and Oxford Universities. His numerous influential works on Egypt, including the first English translation of the Book of the Dead, were cited for decades in scholarly publications.

In the "Introduction" to his book *The Natural Genesis*, Gerald Massey writes:

The German Egyptologist, Herr Pietschmann...reviewed the "Book of the Beginnings"... The writer has taken the precaution all through of getting his fundamental facts in Egyptology verified by one of the

¹ Begun by Dr. Birch, Sir Joseph Bonomi and W.R. Cooper in 1870, the Society of Biblical Archaeology had over 400 members by 1877, with many more to come in the 30+ years of the organization's existence. The list of distinguished members included James Bonwick, St. Chad Boscawen, Dr. Heinrich Brugsch-Bey, Sir Dr. E.A. Wallis Budge, Ernest de Bunsen, F.C. Burkitt, Dr. A. Henry Layard, Dr. M. Eugene Lefébure, Francois Lenormant, Rev. Dr. J.B. Lightfoot, Dr. Gaston Maspero, Dr. Edouard Naville, Sir W.M. Flinders Petrie, Dr. W. Pleyte, Sir Henry C. Rawlinson, Sir Peter Le Page Renouf, Rev. A.H. Sayce, William Sloane, Henry Villiers Stuart and Dr. W.D. Whitney. While there was a relative handful of "Lady Members," it appears that initially not a single one held any degrees or positions of importance, or presented any papers at any time, although a few women made it into the later main list of members.

foremost of living authorities, Dr. Samuel Birch, to whom he returns his heartiest acknowledgements.¹

Dr. Richard Pietschmann was a professor of Egyptology at the University of Göttingen, an impressive “peer reviewer” for one of Massey’s early works on Egypt. By verifying his “fundamental facts” with Birch, Massey appears to be saying that his work was also reviewed by Birch, with whom he enjoyed a personal relationship expressed in his letters. Indeed, following this statement in *The Natural Genesis*, in his “Retort” to various attacks he endured, Massey remarked:

As I also say in my preface [to *The Natural Genesis*] I took the precaution of consulting Dr. Samuel Birch for many years after he had offered, in his own words, to “*keep me straight*” as to my facts, obtainable from Egyptian records. He answered my questions, gave me his advice, discussed variant renderings, read whatever proofs I sent him, and corrected me where he saw I was wrong.²

It is evident from these remarks that a significant portion of Massey’s work was “peer reviewed” by the eminent Dr. Samuel Birch, a remarkable development that should be factored into the assessment of Massey’s work. With such developments, it becomes evident that it is not the quality of Massey’s work at issue, since it is obviously sound, but that his conclusions as to the nonhistoricity and unoriginality of the Christian religion do not sit well with his detractors. This latter fact is critically important to bear in mind when studying Massey’s works, especially since he largely discovered and developed parallels between the Egyptian and Christian religions, crucial data that may have otherwise been left to lie fallow based on occupational considerations by the vested-interested professionals upon whose work Massey relied.

Massey was likewise personally friendly with Sir Lockyer (1836-1920), as well as Dr. Birch’s protégé Assyriologist Dr. Theophilus Goldridge Pinches (1856-1934). Naturally, among these various scholars of his era, Massey also had his critics, including, apparently, the devout Roman Catholic Renouf, who evidently was a mysterious anonymous Egyptologist who spewed calumny and vitriol at Massey, essentially calling him a lunatic. That Massey was so well known as to draw such attention and ire speaks to his efficacy, rather than his incompetence. As he himself said in his retort to such vituperation, “*Such damnation is dirt cheap! Also, the time has passed for denunciation to be mistaken for disproof.*”³ In his “Retort,” Massey also made the following observation, which readers of this present work might wish to keep in mind as well: “I had already warned my readers that they must expect little help from those Egyptologists and

¹ Massey, *NG*, viii.

² Massey, *GML*, 251.

³ Massey, *GML*, 250.

Assyriologists who are bibliolaters first and scholars afterwards. Bibliolatry puts out the eye of scholarship or causes confirmed strabismus," the latter term referring to a vision disorder. "Bibliolatry," of course, refers to "Bible worship," while "bibliolaters" are "Bible worshippers."

In his scholarly works on Egypt, in addition to the available Egyptian sources, Gerald Massey utilized numerous other ancient texts, including Judeo-Christian writings such as the Bible, as well as those of early Church fathers such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Epiphanius and Jerome. Massey also cited non-Christian, Jewish and Gnostic writers such as Herodotus, Philo, Pausanias and Valentinus, along with writings such as the Talmud and the Hindu Puranas. Having taught himself to read not only English but also several other languages including Egyptian hieroglyphs as well as Sanskrit, providing an extensive comparison between these two languages, Massey scrutinized and interpreted the texts and monuments for himself, such as the Book of the Dead, as well as the famous zodiacs in the Temple of Dendera and the "Nativity Scene" at the Temple of Luxor, texts and images that predated the "Christian era" by centuries to millennia.¹ Regarding his abilities with the hieroglyphs, Massey states:

...although I am able to read the hieroglyphics, nothing offered to you is based on my translation. I work too warily for that! The transcription and literal renderings of the hieroglyphic texts herein employed are by scholars of indisputable authority. There is no loophole of escape that way.²

Thus, while Massey did read hieroglyphs and therefore worked with *primary sources*, knowing the contentiousness of the subject, he purposely did not rely on his own translations and interpretations but consulted repeatedly with "scholars of indisputable authority," in other words, those previously mentioned, including Dr. Samuel Birch, with whom Massey conferred personally on much of his work.

Massey was not only skilled at interpreting the Egyptian data in a highly intelligent and unusual manner, but, having been raised a Protestant Christian compelled to memorize whole sections of the Bible, he was also quite knowledgeable about the scriptures and was able to see the numerous and significant correlations between the Christian and Egyptian religions, or the "mythos and ritual," as he styled them.

Gerald Massey appears to have possessed an understanding of the spirituality and *astrotheology* being conveyed by the Egyptians

¹ The term "Christian era" is misleading, as such a time varied widely depending on the area. For example, the country of Lithuania did not become Christian until the 14th century; hence, the "Christian era" did not occur there until then.

² Massey, *GML*, 1.

more profound than most who have worked on the subject. As was possibly the case with the Egyptian masses to a large extent, the astronomical or *astrotheological* meanings behind Christianity have been lost on the majority of its adherents. Concerning this “astronomical mythology,”¹ Lockyer, the founder of the respected journal *Nature*, remarks:

Naville rightly pointed out how vital the study of mythology becomes with regard to the advancement of any kind of knowledge of the thoughts and actions of the ancient Egyptians. Mythology, as Bunsen said, is one of the poles of the existence of every nation; hence it will be well not to neglect the opportunity thus afforded of studying the astronomical basis of one of the best-known myths.²

Dr. Henri Edouard Naville (1844-1926) and Dr. Christian C.J. Baron von Bunsen (1791-1860) were well-known Egyptologists, the former Swiss and the latter German. If mythology is “one of the poles of the existence of *every nation*,” we might rightly ask, where is the *Jewish mythology*, if not in the Bible, with its supernatural claims and bizarre tales? Isn't the gospel tale simply more of the same “god on Earth” mythology of the past?

In any event, the case demonstrating that “astrotheology”—the reverence for the sun, moon, stars, planets and other natural phenomena—has been the main motivating factor behind major religious myths and rituals the world over can be found in my book *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*. This fact of an astrotheological foundation for major religious and spiritual concepts—so brilliantly discerned by Gerald Massey, who was far ahead of his time—is being demonstrated on a regular basis by numerous archaeological discoveries around the world.

Although Budge also has been the subject of certain criticism, in part perhaps because, like Massey, he found many parallels between Christianity and the Egyptian religion, he too had a fine grasp of the spirituality within the latter faith, and expressed it in spiritual terms usually reserved—in a culturally biased move—for the Bible. Dr. James Allen likewise possesses an exceptional understanding of the Egyptian spirituality and *astrotheology*, remarking upon it throughout his important works on the Pyramid Texts and Egyptian language. Regarding Egyptian nature worship, in *Middle Egyptian*, Allen states:

¹ The phrase “astronomical mythology” has been shortened to “astromythology,” a term often used to describe what would also be called “astrotheology.” Although today we know it as mythology, ancient religion is represented better by the word “astrotheology,” in depicting how the ancients themselves perceived their faith, which constituted true *theology* in the same sense used today to describe current religions.

² Lockyer, *DA*, 148.

Just as there are hundreds of recognizable elements and forces in nature, so too there were hundreds of Egyptian gods. The most important, of course, are the greatest phenomena.¹

In *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Allen also says: "The Sun was the original and daily source of all life: his appearance at the creation and at every sunrise thereafter made life possible in the world."²

The astronomical science of the ancient Egyptians is likewise prominently displayed in the ancient astronomical papyri found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, dating from the first century BCE to the sixth AD/CE. Regarding these astronomical texts from Oxyrhynchus, Dr. Alexander Jones, a professor of Classics at the University of Toronto, remarks:

The fragments tend to be of three kinds: horoscopes, numerical tables, and prose texts. Horoscopes record the positions of the sun, moon, planets, and ascendant point of the ecliptic computed for the birthdate of a person, who is often named. Positions of the heavenly bodies also appear in many of the tables ("almanacs"), computed now for not an arbitrary given date but for a succession of dates at regular intervals or determined by some other astronomical criterion.... the prose texts are also by and large concerned with knowing the positions of the sun, moon, and planets and the disposition of the heavens at specific times, or the dates and circumstances of such conspicuous phenomena as eclipses and the alternating appearances and disappearances of the planets. In contrast to the modern conception of Greek astronomy as a theoretical enterprise, the papyri portray a science that was overwhelmingly directed towards prediction....

The papyrus horoscopes give an indication of the range of dates during which astrology flourished, from the earliest horoscope, a demotic ostrakon cast for a native born in 38 B.C., to the latest..., for a native born in A.D. 508.³

From early times, the Egyptians were keen observers of natural phenomena, including the movements and characteristics of celestial bodies, not only engaging in astronomical and astrological efforts, but, most importantly, developing an intensely *astrotheological* religion.

Indeed, rather than constituting alien and incomprehensible concepts, the Egyptian gods are reflective of these natural phenomena, the "greatest" of which would be the cycles and

¹ Allen, J., *ME*, 44.

² Allen, J., *AEPT*, 8.

³ Jones, 4-5. Regarding the individuals named in the horoscopes, Dr. Jones states, "The only recognizably Christian 'natives' among the horoscopes from Oxyrhynchus are the Anup of *P. Oxy.* 2060 and the Theodoros of 4275, who were born in A.D. 478 and 508 respectively." (Jones, 8) It appears the Egyptian name "Anup" may have been fairly common, possibly reflecting the popularity of the god called "Anubis" in Greek, well into the common era.

characteristics of the sun, moon, planets, stars and so on, a fact demonstrated repeatedly by Gerald Massey, for one, to reveal the true meaning behind not only the Egyptian but also the Christian religion.

Over the decades, much has been made about the numerous correlations determined by Gerald Massey between Horus and Jesus as well as other characters in the Egyptian and Christian religions. Independently of Massey, however, many others also noted these numerous and profound correlations between the two faiths, with Budge, as we have seen, definitively stating that a treatise on the Egyptian religion's influence on Christianity would fill a "comparatively large volume."¹ A professed Christian, Budge was so convinced of the important correspondences between the two faiths that *he believed the Egyptian religion had been fulfilled in Christianity.*

In 1877, William R. Cooper (1843-1878), a young lawyer and Egyptologist who was a co-founder and the Secretary of Dr. Birch's influential Society of Biblical Archaeology,² as well as a Fellow and Member of the Royal Astronomical Society, published a work entitled *The Horus Myth in Its Relation to Christianity*, in which he highlighted many germane correspondences between the myth of the Egyptian god Horus and Christianity. So many were these correspondences, including in numerous physical artifacts, that Cooper termed them "the Horus Christian class."³ From his constant apologies and declarations of devotion to the Christian faith, it is evident that Cooper was disturbed by his findings and hoped not to run afoul of the authorities who might censure him or worse. Indeed, at that time "blasphemy" laws in England were not only on the books—as they still were until 2008—but they were actually being used, ensnaring Rev. Dr. Robert Taylor (1784-1844), for example, who was imprisoned twice in Britain a half century previously for revealing Christianity to be based on previous religions and mythologies.

Unfortunately, William Cooper died at the early age of 35, but his valuable works on Egypt—and its relationship to the Bible and Christianity—were issued *years before* Gerald Massey published his famous writings on the same subject. Thus, the claim of correspondences between the Egyptian and Christian religions did *not* originate with Gerald Massey at all, and a significant number of the previous writers on the subject were well respected *Christians*. Moreover, in analyzing Cooper's assessment that "the works of art, the ideas, the expressions, and the heresies of the first four centuries of the Christian era cannot be well studied without a right comprehension of the nature and influence of the Horus myth," in *Isis and the Ancient World*, Egyptologist and University of London professor Dr. Reginald E. Witt (1903-1980) remarked that Cooper's

¹ Budge, *GE*, I, xvi

² *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology (TSBA)*, V, iii, v.

³ Cooper, *HM*, 49.

“words are still true” and then added that we must also look to the goddess Isis for clues about “emergent Christianity’s struggle.”¹ Dr. Witt’s comments indicate that behind the scenes within academia there persists knowledge of the Egypto-Christian connection, in bits and pieces among certain scholars.

This latter inference may be surprising in consideration of the fact that such scholarship is not readily forthcoming from the modern halls of academia. However, it is important to keep in mind that there are a number of mitigating factors involved in what is approved and current within scholarship in any given subject. First and foremost is what may be expedient to the goal of the institution in which the subject may be taught, its motivations and financial considerations. Next, over the past several decades, scholars have become increasingly specialized, and they may not be aware of various oversights and biases preventing them from putting forth the data as explicated by Witt. The colored perspective of Christian scholars, modern or otherwise, is well known, but secular scholars or those of other religions likewise possess biases. In this regard, the late great Dr. Cyrus H. Gordon (1908-2001), a chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Brandeis University and a director of the Center for Ebla Research at New York University, remarked that “we absorb attitudes as well as subject matter in the learning process. Moreover the attitudes tend to determine what we see, and what we fail to see, in the subject matter.”² Hence, it is very likely that the material found in treatises such as this present work is not widely known because it is not a focus of professional scholars.

Adding to this academic blind spot are deliberately induced biases such as described by Hornung regarding the attitude towards Egyptian religion following the famed discovery of King Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922. After discussing the unbridled “Egyptomania” that followed Napoleon’s opening up Egypt to the West, which culminated in “Tut Fever,” Hornung refers to the “next generation” of Egyptologists being “deterred” by noted Egyptian philologist Adolf Erman, who denigrated the Egyptian cosmology as “philistine.” Concerning this disdainful attitude of professional Egyptologists, in *The Valley of the Kings* Hornung remarks:

The intellectual treasures of the Valley, already remarked on by Champollion and Maspero, were thus buried beneath the debris of

¹ Witt, 279.

² Gordon, C., 11-12. A highly credentialed authority in the field of biblical archaeology, Gordon’s own groundbreaking work was dismissed and ridiculed, until significant aspects of it became the mainstream perspective. When asked shortly before his passing at 87 by Biblical Archaeology Review’s Herschel Shanks about Gordon’s take on how his views were first resisted and then came to be accepted as true, the wise scholar humorously responded to the effect, “I outlived all my critics.” Gordon’s experience perfectly exemplifies how new theories are initially resisted and then finally accepted as reality—and how preconceived notions and biases continually oppress potential truths.

prejudice, incomprehension, and the extension of modern values and ways of thought; strenuous efforts to free them once again for contemplation were required.¹

The prejudices of professional Egyptologists remained intact until the end of the 1930s, when Western scholarship began to return to its previous appreciative mentality.

Massey's impressive role in "Egyptomania" during the 19th to early 20th century is likewise verified by Hornung in *The Secret Lore of Egypt*, in which he remarks that "Gerald Massey also exerted a great deal of influence in esoteric circles with his book *Ancient Egypt: The Light of the World...*"²

In regard to higher education, Gerald Massey had the distinct disadvantage of having been born into crippling poverty that gripped him for most of his life, such that higher education and degrees were not easily available to him in Dickensian England of the 19th century, in which he was forced into manual labor as a child. This sad fact, of course, leaves him open to the charge of not possessing the proper credentials to analyze the data accurately—an argument that at times constitutes little more than the logical fallacy of "appeal to authority." While credentials can certainly be helpful because they may provide proper scientific training for any given subject, there are many instances where even "properly credentialed" individuals are in gross error in their perception of the data, and there are also numerous examples of individuals who, without any of the "correct" bona fides, have been able to work with the information in a brilliant and superior manner. As one example, the young British architect and amateur linguist Michael Ventris (1922-1956) possessed no formal higher credentials in the relevant field; yet, succeeding where all others had failed—including some of the most highly credentialed individuals of the time—Ventris deciphered the ancient Cretan script of Linear B. In the subject of Egyptology, another example would be that of Dr. Thomas Young, a talented linguist and giant of Egyptology, having helped decipher the Egyptian language and hieroglyphs by way of the Rosetta Stone; yet, Young was a *physician*, not a formally trained Egyptologist.³ Although Champollion is the more famous, not a few Egyptologists have placed Young ahead of the French scholar in their analysis of who contributed the most to the field of the day. As can be seen from these and many other examples, possessing a pristine pedigree is not always necessary for important

¹ Hornung, *VK*, 19.

² Hornung, *SLE*, 174. Hornung calls Massey a "theosophist." However, according to Massey biographer David Shaw, although Massey knew about the Theosophists, there is no evidence he ever considered himself one of them. In fact, various of Massey's remarks indicate that he did not support the Theosophists, such as: "I am opposed to all man-made mystery, and all kinds of false belief." (Massey, *GML*, 248.)

³ Dr. Young was widely ridiculed for his theory that light rays "interfere with each other"; yet, this "undulatory theory" was later accepted as scientific fact. (Clayden, 61.)

discoveries, breakthroughs and hypotheses. In any event, as we have seen, Massey took the precaution of having his work reviewed by eminent Egyptologists of his day.

Those who insist that Gerald Massey's work has been "debunked" or "refuted" have rarely read it. Although certain aspects of Massey's voluminous work may be considered speculative, as is the case with practically every scholar's work, it can be honestly stated that most of his analysis is not only brilliantly insightful but appears to be sound, based on what was popular religiously and mythologically prior to the Christian era, sometimes centuries and many times millennia before the period in question. This information, of course, is not amenable to Christian claims of veracity and uniqueness; hence, fervent believers and especially their leaders do not enjoy knowing or hearing about it. Regardless of what details of Massey's may have been lacking in total accuracy, the facts will remain that major aspects of the Christian myth and ritual can be found in the preceding pre-Christian religions and mythologies of the "known world." Moreover, the earlier characters such as Horus, Osiris, Isis, Hercules, Krishna and many other gods and goddesses cannot be deemed any more mythical or any less historical than Jesus, as the evidence for their existence on Earth is as, if not more, abundant and convincing than that of Jesus Christ.

Although we do not find meritable the severe criticisms regarding Gerald Massey—many of which appear driven by a desire to make the gospel story historical, no matter how much truth and facts are bent—this present analysis of the claims regarding the correspondences between the Egyptian and Christian religions is not dependent on Massey's work for the most part. Only a small portion of his exegesis will be cited, in places where extrapolation of the texts has been necessary in order to unearth the correspondences hinted at by Budge and other experts on the Egyptian religion.

For example, when one studies the pioneering work of Dr. Lockyer, who scientifically demonstrated various astronomical properties and alignments of Egyptian myths and architecture, one can readily understand how Massey would find astrotheological correlations within Christianity, as, combining the opinions of Lockyer and others,¹ with those of Budge and others, who definitively

¹ Lockyer's work was fundamental to the developing field of archaeoastronomy, as well as astrotheology. Yet, naturally, there have been debates as to its accuracy. Indeed, the reaction of other scientists to Lockyer's archaeoastronomy thesis of megalithic alignments was typical of how scholarship progresses in a faltering manner when new ideas are proposed. Lockyer's logical conclusions regarding the sophistication of ancient man's knowledge of the natural world were uncomfortable to those who had settled on interpretations of the ancient world based on the Bible and, subsequently, Darwin. The ancients, it was opined, were primitives, even though they could build something as spectacular as the Great Pyramid or Stonehenge. As such, common wisdom said, they could not have possessed the knowledge found within archaeoastronomy and astrotheology. This bias led to several decades of ignoring the

stated that the Egyptian religion was a major influence on Christianity, we are left with the following logical conclusion:

- If the myths of Osiris, Isis, Horus and Set, etc., are largely astronomical in nature; and
- If Christianity is highly influenced by—and is a fulfillment of—the Egyptian religion in significant part; then
- Christianity too must represent astronomical myth or *astrotheology*.

With such an impression in mind, someone with a passion may go on a quest such as Massey's to find these correspondences between the Egyptian and Christian religions, as well as the true astrotheological underpinnings of Christianity. Furthermore, many of Massey's most important contentions can be verified and demonstrated utilizing the primary sources of Egyptian texts and monuments—in other words, the parallels are real and significant.

Timeline of Destruction

Addressing why we have not seen a large effort among scholars to point to Egypt for Christian genesis, historian Dr. Richard A. Gabriel states, "That historians have overlooked the Egyptian origins of Christianity leaving the subject to the concern of theologians is not terribly surprising."¹ He next recounts the violent overthrow of the Egyptian religion by the Christian mobs during the fourth century. This destruction of the Egyptian faith included the outlawing of hieroglyphs to express it. Gabriel tersely recounts this disturbing history:

In 356 C.E. Constantius II ordered the Egyptian temples of Isis-Osiris closed and forbade the use of Egyptian hieroglyphics as a religious language. In 380 C.E. Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity to be the official Roman state religion, and all pagan cults were thereafter forbidden. These edicts were devastating to Egyptian culture and religion, both of which had been preserved over millennia through the Egyptian language and the writing systems of Egyptian priests. In 391 C.E., the Patriarch of Alexandria, Theophilus, summoned the monks to arms and turned them against the city of Memphis and the great shrine of Serapis, the *Serapeum*, the main temple of the Osiran-Isis religion. The attack was akin to

astronomical alignments of megalithic structures worldwide, until the door was blasted open again principally by the work of Drs. Gerald S. Hawkins and Alexander Thom. They too were resisted; yet, it is now commonly accepted that wherever archaeologists find ancient megalithic ruins, they will also likely discover astronomical alignments, largely associated with religion, which yields more evidence of the ancient astrotheological faith. This case serves to illustrate a number of points about censorship and why we have not known before much of the information found in this present work. (For more on this debate, see the works of Dr. Clive L.N. Ruggles, e.g., *APBI*, 6ff.) Regardless of any measurements or other details Lockyer may have gotten wrong, the fact will remain that his insight into ancient ruins possessing astronomical alignments has been proved correct numerous times over the past century.

¹ Gabriel, *JE*, 3.

ordering the destruction of the Vatican. Egyptian priests were massacred in their shrines and in the streets. The ferocity of the violence consumed priests, followers, and the Egyptian intellectual elite of Alexandria, Memphis and the other cities of Egypt who were murdered and their temples and libraries destroyed. The institutional structure of Egyptian religion, then more than four millennia old, was demolished in less than two decades.¹

Reading through this horrendous destruction, and knowing the cultural climate of our day, in which the Christian faith appears to be losing ground to secularism and a swelling Islam, one might wonder if Christianity is now suffering a global “mummy’s curse.”

The Art of Mythmaking

In order to understand the many important correlations between the Egyptian and Christian religions and how they have been framed in popular media, as well as in my books *The Christ Conspiracy* and *Suns of God*, we need to remember that these common motifs in the Egyptian religion do not necessarily emerge in story form, as they appear in the gospel tale, which itself, we contend, is a patchwork of motifs, myths, sayings and rituals found in pre-Christian religion. It also needs to be kept in mind that *the information concerning these previous myths, rituals and symbols was not written down in one neat, ancient encyclopedia but is found widespread around the Mediterranean and elsewhere.* Many of the elements of the tale, however, could have existed within the walls of the massive Library of Alexandria, Egypt, where undoubtedly much of the most serious work in creating Christianity, the gospel story and the character of Jesus Christ was committed.

Regarding how diverse elements of myths become unified into one narrative—the very act used by encyclopedists to create their entries—Egyptologist Dr. Ogden Goelet, a professor of Egyptian language and culture at New York and Columbia Universities, states:

...Myths, or stories about the gods, were seldom gathered into narrative passages of any length. In most cases when a book on ancient Egypt mentions a myth about a certain deity, what is actually meant is a series of facts and events which modern scholars have been able to compile from a wide variety of sources.... Although we probably know more about the legends concerning Osiris than about any other god, even this myth is essentially a scholarly reconstruction from many texts. Like most such reconstructions, it is occasionally uncertain which elements belong to which version of the myth.²

This lack of a comprehensive narrative is also related by renowned Welsh professor of Classics and Egyptology Dr. John Gwyn Griffiths (1911-2004): “The early religious texts of Ancient Egypt do

¹ Gabriel, *JE*, 4.

² Faulkner, *EBD*, 149.

not present long passages of coherent mythology.”¹ Dr. Griffiths further clarifies that Egyptian myths evolved into a more concrete account:

What emerges clearly from a study of the Horus-myth and the Osiris-myth is that although they appear in the Pyramid Texts as a composite story they were not originally so.²

The difficulty of discerning one particular myth for the Egyptian god Osiris, for example, is remarked upon by Dr. Thomas Hare (b. 1952), a professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University:

But even in looking for “the” legend of Osiris, we are misled: to assume the priority of “a” legend of Osiris over a web of narratives, prayers, topographies, and etymologies in which he is known in Egyptian texts already shrouds and mummifies the king. And if the voices of the Egyptians themselves are hard to make out, we must sharpen our intent upon them all the more, and recall that they had been utterly mute until 170 years ago. The faint and heavily accented murmur we can now discern is itself no small wonder.³

As we can see, even with the abundant, currently available primary sources there is no one place to find a unified myth. Indeed, there exists no single, unified myth, although there are basics repeated in many places, such that we can draw a general outline, to which we need to append varying details—such constitutes the very definition of myth.

Like the scholars of Egyptian myth who must create a narrative by piecing together bits of “biographical” material, it is our contention that the creators of the gospel tale likewise picked various themes and motifs from pre-Christian religions and myths, including and especially the Egyptian, and wove them together, using also the Jewish scriptures, to produce a unique version of the “mythos and ritual.” In other words, the creators of the Christ myth did not simply take an already formed story, scratch out the name of Osiris or Horus, and replace it with Jesus. They chose their motifs carefully, out of the most popular religious symbols, myths and rituals, making sure they fit to some degree with the Jewish “messianic scriptures,” as they are termed, and created a new story that hundreds of millions since have been led to believe really and truly took place in history. Over the centuries, those who have clearly seen this development have asserted that this history is a fallacy imposed upon long pre-existing myths and rituals that have been reworked to result in the gospel story. In other words, we are convinced that “Jesus Christ” may well be a *fictional character* created out of older myths, rituals and symbols.

¹ Griffiths, *OOHC*, 1.

² Griffiths, *OOHC*, 14.

³ Hare, 11.

It needs to be emphasized that we are not claiming that anyone took an ancient encyclopedia entry of the myth of Osiris and/or Horus, erased their names and simply inserted "Jesus." Mythmaking is never that simple. When we assert that the myths of older cultures were taken and reworked, we are stating that many factors were involved, including the politics of the day and, in this case, the intertwining of Jewish scriptures and thought, which put a decidedly unique twist on the older myths. Such is always the case with mythmaking, as it is utilized to integrate another perspective of reality, in other words, that of an individual, cult, tribe, nation or other group. New myths are always unique; otherwise, they would not be new! Yet, evidence demonstrates that they *are* myths, and that they were based on older precedents, as opposed to representing a "divine revelation" straight from God. Moreover, it becomes clear that even if the parallels and correspondences are not exact, as they would not be when a unique version of them has been created, the essential *concepts* did in fact exist in pre-Christian religion and were in reality utilized by the creators of Christianity.

While reading this present work, it is important also to recall these various caveats and points, including that what we ourselves are attempting to convey is that to the ancients these diverse themes, motifs and concepts shared by the pre-Christian and Christian religions were all important and very much in the front of their minds, such that they could not be overlooked or ignored when priests went about to create a new, empire-unifying religion that came to be called Christianity.

In writing this book about such a contentious subject that invokes such passion, it is my fervent hope to impart a clearer and more comprehensive sense of the ancient world, as well as an appreciation for the beauty and brilliance thereof, including and especially its religious and spiritual traditions, as can be discerned from the example of "Christ in Egypt." With these facts at hand, as well as that there is no one concrete source for the complete story as found in the New Testament, but that there are many scattered sources used by the priesthood which created this tale, and that reconstructing their deeds can be very difficult, let us proceed through a scientific analysis of "the Horus-Jesus connection."

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Columns at Philae, Egypt, defaced by Coptic Christians.

Horus, Sun of God

“Now when the ancient Egyptians, awestruck and wondering, turned their eyes to the heavens, they concluded that two gods, the sun and the moon, were primeval and eternal: they called the former Osiris, the latter Isis....”

Diodorus Siculus, *The Antiquities of Egypt* (14)

“There are some who without reservation assert that Osiris is the Sun and is called the Dog-star (Sirius) by the Greeks...and there are those who declare that Isis is none other than the Moon; for this reason it is said that the statues of Isis that bear horns are imitations of the crescent moon, and in her dark garments are shown the concealments and the obscurations in which she in her yearning pursues the Sun...”¹

Plutarch, “Isis and Osiris,” *Moralia* (V, 52, 372D)

“Ruling over the universe by day, the Sun was identified with Horus, the god of kingship; at sunset he was seen as Atum, the oldest of all gods. The Sun’s daily movement through the sky was viewed as a journey from birth to death, and his rebirth at dawn was made possible through Osiris, the force of new life....

“...In the middle of the night the Sun merged with Osiris’s body; through this union, the Sun received the power of new life while Osiris was reborn in the Sun.”

Dr. James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (8)

“In Osiris the Christian Egyptians found the prototype of Christ, and in the pictures and statues of Isis suckling her son Horus, they perceived the prototype of the Virgin Mary and her Child. Never did Christianity find elsewhere in the world a people whose minds were so thoroughly well prepared to receive its doctrines as the Egyptians.”

Dr. E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life* (48)

Over the millennia, one of the most pervasive and greatest forms of religious devotion has revolved around the celestial bodies and forces of nature, including the sun, moon, stars, constellations and planets, as well as earth, wind, water and so on. This natural system of worship found globally has been represented in large part by what is deemed “astrotheology,” which involves the science of *archaeoastronomy*,² and upon which have been built entire cultures,

¹ Plutarch/Babbitt, 129.

² The relatively new science of archaeoastronomy is defined as “the branch of archaeology that deals with the apparent use by prehistoric civilizations of astronomical techniques to establish the seasons or the cycle of the year, esp. as evidenced in the construction of megaliths and other ritual structures.” (*Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, 2006.)

This definition has only recently become necessary because the idea of the ancients astronomically aligning their buildings has become acceptable mainly in past four decades or so. This example illustrates how scholarship and knowledge can be held back for various reasons—indeed, we can see that this archaeoastronomical knowledge was completely lost to the point where we did not even know our ancestors possessed

including architecture, art, laws, literature, medicine, myths, philosophy, politics, science, time-keeping and other artifacts. The astronomical observations that led to the astrotheology of the ancients are described by royal astronomer Lockyer, who was one of the first modern scholars to analyze many of them:

There is no doubt that if we are justified in assuming that the stars were first observed, the next thing that would strike the early astronomers would be the regularity of the annual movement of the sun; the critical times of the sun's movements as related either to their agriculture, or their festivals, or to the year; the equinoxes and the solstices, would soon have revealed themselves to these early observers, if for no other reason than they were connected in some way or other with some of the important conditions of their environment.¹

The ubiquitous ancient astrotheological religion is likewise discussed by Griffiths in his article concerning the "Solar Cycle":

That the Sun and other heavenly objects should have universally affected human thought is a natural result of life on Earth; and the frequent evidence of their impact on religious thought is also beyond question. A clear example occurs in the *Deuteronomy* warning (perhaps of the seventh century BCE) against the worship of the Sun, Moon, and stars (4.19). Since a prohibition presupposes a practice, we may assume that some Israelites knew of or even indulged in such worship, as did several neighboring peoples.²

As one of these neighboring peoples and oldest advanced civilizations, with roots going back thousands of years, Egypt too developed a sophisticated system of worship and governance that incorporated practically every natural force and entity which humans of the time and place could possibly perceive and conceive. Again, the result constitutes a highly astrotheological religion, as found abundantly in the Egyptian religion and mortuary literature, exemplified further by a Coffin Text spell (CT Sp. 991): "I am that god who rises in the East and sets in the West..."³ Regarding the Egyptian faith, Lockyer concludes: "In Egypt, then, as India, the pantheon was astronomical and, to a very large extent, solar in origin."⁴

The Loving, Immortal Father-Mother Sun

In his book *The Sun: Symbol of Power and Life*, a fascinating study of the sun worship worldwide dating back many millennia and continuing to the present, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Dr. Madanjeet Singh (b. 1924) remarks of Egypt:

it. Yet, here it is being revealed as factual and actual. The same can be said for a number of the other germane motifs and details in the present work.

¹ Lockyer, *DA*, 61.

² Redford, 255.

³ Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 99.

⁴ Lockyer, *DA*, 39.

The solar theology of the Old Kingdom taught that the sun brought into being the entire universe—including gods, the earth, and all living things—at the moment of Creation.¹

Concerning this solar religion in Egypt, Hornung concurs:

Since the late Old Kingdom the sun god had been worshipped under various names as the most important deity and as the creator and sustainer of all creatures and things.²

Demonstrating the supreme reverence for the solar orb by the Egyptians, especially during certain periods such as Amarna (14th cent. BCE) and earlier in the New Kingdom (16th-11th cents. BCE), the sun's sacred epithets included:

Perfect of Form, Divine God, Ruler of all gods, Ruler, Chief of the gods, King of Eternity, Lord of Everlastingness, King of heaven, Universal Lord, Primeval One, Unique God, Greatest of greats, Ruler of rulers, Self-Created, Creator, Great Illuminator, Lord of Life, Lord of the gods, Great God, Lord of men, Father of the gods, Lord of all, God, Father of humankind.³

The Great God Sun is also “father and mother for those who put him in their hearts,”⁴ as well as both father and mother of mankind in general, as expressed in the sun hymns from the New Kingdom: “Mother of the earth, father of humankind, who illuminates the earth with his love.”⁵ Obviously, Christianity is not unique in these many divine epithets or in its traditional concept that “God is love.” The Egyptian faith demonstrates itself to be full of the same type of grace, glory, beauty and love considered to represent the best of human religion, including Christianity.

The Egyptian attitude towards the sun is expressed in the following sun hymn, as an example of the reverence developed during the reign of pharaoh Akhenaten (d. c. 1336 BCE) in particular:

You are the light, which rises for humankind;
the sun, which brings clarity,
so that gods and humans be recognised and distinguished
when you reveal yourself.
Every face lives from seeing your beauty,
all seed germinates when touched by your rays,
and there is no-one who can live without you.
You lead everyone, because they have a duty to their work.
You have given form to their life, by becoming visible.⁶

Another sun hymn eloquently invokes the beautiful and timeless Lord of creation:

You appear beautiful,

¹ Singh, 323.

² Hornung, *CGAE*, 54.

³ Adapted from Assman, *ESRNL*, 105-106, 116, 117.

⁴ Assman, *ESRNL*, 118.

⁵ Assman, *ESRNL*, 84.

⁶ Assman, *ESRNL*, 78.

You living sun, lord of Endless Time,
 are sparkling, beautiful and strong,
 Love of you is great and powerful.
 Your rays touch every face...
 Your radiant skin animates hearts.
 You have filled the Two Lands with love of yourself.¹

The sun at midday is addressed in a hymn with the highest esteem:

You are beautiful, powerful and shining
 You are high over every land
 Your rays, they embrace the lands of the earth as far as the end of
 your whole creation
 As Re you penetrate to its limits
 And subject them to your beloved son
 You are remote, but your rays are on earth
 You are in their face, but your movement is not known.²

There are many concepts here evoking a typical religious sentiment and paralleling Christianity, even in detail, such as addressing the god's "beloved son," an epithet adopted much later for Jesus. In reality, right from the beginning of the Pyramid Texts appears an obvious comparison to the gospel story: At PT 1/T 5, the sky goddess Nut, speaking from *heaven* regarding the deceased, who assumes the role of Osiris, remarks, "...This is my son, my first born...this is my beloved, with whom I have been satisfied."³ Compare this scripture with that found at Matthew 3:17: "and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"⁴ This "son of God," as we have seen and will continue to see, is also the "sun of God."⁵

As in Christianity, within the Egyptian solar religion the sun god's power is illustrated by the divine qualities of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, typically defining *the* god of the cosmos within monotheism. For example, demonstrating his omnipresence, the God Sun is contained in everything, as in the "Great Hymn," which addresses the sun as "you create millions of incarnations from yourself, the One."⁶ In a section about the god "Re-Horakhty," Dr. Assman entitles a selection of hymns, "Omnipresence of the Light: God-Filled World." This material reflecting omnipresence,

¹ Assman, *ESRNK*, 94.

² Assman, *ESRNK*, 96.

³ Mercer, 20. See James Allen's translation of T 5b: "Teti is my son, whom I caused to be born...he is the one I have desired and with whom I have become content." (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 67.) Because Nut is a female, the utterance/hymn refers to her "womb" or "belly." A copyist rewriting the scripture to revolve around a male deity would naturally remove such instances of femininity.

⁴ Revised Standard Version (RSV).

⁵ This statement, while factual, is not dependent on the naturally arising play-on-words involving "son" and "sun." In other words, the claim is not being made that the two terms are cognates.

⁶ Assman, *ESRNK*, 95.

omnipotence and omniscience includes scriptures such as: “Every way is full of your light”; “Are you not the leader on all ways?”; and “There are no limits to the field of his vision and no place hidden to his ka.”¹ The *ka* is defined by James Allen as the “force of conscious life.”² In any event, the power of the sun is so strong as to impart omniscience in its worshippers—called in the texts the “sun-folks”³—as highlighted in this line from a sun hymn: “The morning sun, which enables one to know all things.”⁴

This concept of the “omniscience of light” is part of the “new solar theology” in which “the unattainably distant sun comes palpably near to earth creatures,” providing “the idea of the simultaneous remoteness and proximity of god....”⁵ The German scholar next says:

The idea of the proximity of god arises not from the sensual experience of light, but from the transcendental idea of a divine omniscience and omnipresence, in which god is right next to the heart “that turns to him.”⁶

As we can see, the Egyptian concept of God here is highly reminiscent of that found in Judeo-Christianity. The Egyptian God Sun is also depicted as hearing “the prayers of all who call him” and coming “from far away in a moment to those who call him.”⁷ Further demonstrating “his” personal nature, the god has a “face on all sides for those he loves,” much like Indian deities with multiple faces and eyes, as well as the depiction of the Christian god as the all-knowing, loving father, with whom one has a personal relationship.

Creator of “all that exists”⁸ and an “artist” in creation, the sun is also the “lord of endless time.”⁹ The sun is likewise called the “unique shepherd, who protects his flock, who leads millions with his light,”¹⁰ much like the later Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd and Light of the World. Also like the Christian Lord, in whom one must believe to gain eternal salvation, the God Sun “gives life only to those he loves...”¹¹

Highlighted in these texts as well is the sun’s role as “cosmic god,” “savior,” “helper of the oppressed” and “judge,”¹² once again like the biblical god. In the sun myths compiled by Assman appear so many correspondences between the Egyptian and Judeo-Christian concepts of God that space would not permit us to list them all here.¹³

¹ Assman, *ESR NK*, 76.

² Allen, J., *AEPT*, 434.

³ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 242.

⁴ Assman, *ESR NK*, 78.

⁵ Assman, *ESR NK*, 199.

⁶ Assman, *ESR NK*, 200.

⁷ Assman, *ESR NK*, 200.

⁸ Assman, *ESR NK*, 86, 92.

⁹ Assman, *ESR NK*, 85.

¹⁰ Assman, *ESR NK*, 86. See also Assman, *ESR NK*, 198.

¹¹ Assman, *ESR NK*, 117.

¹² Assman, *ESR NK*, 156ff, 198ff, 201ff.

¹³ See, e.g., Assman, *ESR NK*, 170, 172-173, 177 and throughout that work.

This conclusion is particularly true concerning the sun hymns of the Amarna period, during the “monotheistic” era of Akhenaten.

As we can tell by the ebullience of the speaker in many chapters/spells and hymns, the sun in its many permutations was the epitome of divinity to the average Egyptian, who may have heard such words as found in the funereal/mortuary literature that comprised the BD on a number of occasions during his or her lifetime, whenever someone close passed away.

In this regard, throughout the history of Egyptian religion, the great cosmic and celestial entities rate as venerated symbols of the everlasting life so highly prized within Egyptian religion, including and especially the sun. As James Allen relates:

This vision of daily death and rebirth lay behind the ancient Egyptian concept of the afterlife. Like the Sun, each person’s ba [soul] was seen as passing through the night of death before coming to life again with the sunrise.¹

In addition, the desired state of deathlessness was associated with the rebirth of the (other) stars as well as the sun:

Not only the Sun-gods, but the stars, were supposed to travel in boats across the firmament from one horizon to the other. The under-world was the abode of the dead; and daily the sun, and the stars which set, died on passing to the regions of the west, or Amenti, below the western horizon, to be born again on the eastern horizon on the morrow. In this we have the germ of the Egyptian idea of immortality.²

As we can see, the God Sun “dies” and is “born again” or “resurrected,” many centuries to millennia before the common era. Elucidating further the profoundly astrotheological Egyptian religion, tying in celestial phenomena with an afterlife, Hornung states:

In the Pyramid Texts of the third millennium B.C.E., the orientation toward a celestial afterlife led to intense concern with stars; in these texts, the king is a star in the sky among the gods... But in this oldest corpus of texts the solar afterlife is fundamentally more important than the stellar, and soon thereafter, emphasis shifted to the netherworld, where the sun was the only heavenly body to play a predominant role, assisting the dead in acquiring renewed life by means of its nightly journey.³

In his book *Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, in a note to CT Sp. 152, a description of “those who are in the sunshine” being released, Faulkner remarks, “Apparently the dead ascend to the sky at sunset, having previously gone forth from the tomb into the day to deal with enemies...”⁴

¹ Allen, J., *AEPT*, 8.

² Lockyer, *DA*, 35.

³ Hornung, *SLE*, 26.

⁴ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 131.

The overall solar salvation evoked in the Egyptian religion is described by Egyptologists Dr. Vivian Davies, a keeper of the Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum, and Dr. Renée Friedman, a curator also at the British Museum, thus:

To the Egyptians, creation was not a single, isolated event but an ongoing cycle of renewal to be repeated daily with the rising of the sun, as the sun god emerged anew from the mound of creation victorious over the demons of the netherworld who sought to destroy him each night.¹

In the sacred literature of Egypt, the sun is all-important, repeatedly invoked, beseeched and prayed to as facilitating the beneficent passage of the soul into the afterlife. In fact, it is evident from the ancient texts that there is no greater purifying power than the sun, and its function in faith of Egypt was supreme. As Assman says, "The life-giving effect of sunlight is clear and is expressed hundreds of times in the texts."²

Regarding the sun's path, its role in immortality, and the god Osiris, Allen also says:

The Sun's daily movement through the sky was viewed as a journey from birth to death, and his rebirth at dawn was made possible through Osiris, the force of new life.³

In reality, the sun was thus so singularly significant that its own cycles were closely tied with *the salvation of the human soul*, thousands of years before the common era.

Further illustrating the importance of the sun in Egyptian thought, after discussing the pharaoh Akhenaten's "Hymns to the Sun," Dr. Hare remarks:

The sun is seen as the vital force that maintains the multitude of natural phenomena; it is as well the original motive for life in all animate beings. The sun shapes the infant in its mother's womb, the sun creates semen in the father. In a particularly observant and artful passage, the sun is depicted as breathing life into an egg, to enliven the chick before it breaks forth from the shell...⁴

This solar breath of life pervades the Egyptian obsession with "cheating death," as the solar imagery throughout the extensive ancient Egyptian funereal and mortuary literature is clear and persistent, with the deceased in his efforts to attain resurrection and immortality continuously likened to the sun in its daily battle with the darkness of night. As Faulkner remarks, "The deceased is compared with the sun, which is renewed nightly to rise next day."⁵ In this regard, Renouf remarks that "all the forms assumed in the

¹ Davies, V., 154.

² Assman, *ESRNC*, 81.

³ Allen, J., *ME*, 8.

⁴ Hare, 193.

⁵ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 52.

Book of the Dead by the deceased are well known forms of the Sun-god.¹ Indeed, the original, ancient title of the BD, “Going Forth by Day,” demonstrates the hopes of immortality tied in with the sun’s daily resurrection from its nightly death.

In demonstrating the pervasiveness of religious awe in Egyptian life, Dr. Amanda-Alice Maravelia of Russian Academy of Sciences Centre for Egyptological Studies discusses the Egyptian perception of the widely used sculpting material faience as a “manifestation of the color of the sky and light itself...”² Dr. Maravelia next says, “The ancient Egyptians connected faience with the resurrection of the sun from the Netherworld and the bright light that followed, which was essentially for the well-being of a ‘justified’ deceased person in the afterlife.”³ The blue-green color of faience was symbolic also of Osiris, who is frequently depicted with green skin, representing life, as in the color of thriving foliage. Osiris’s role as “vegetation god” is demonstrated at CT Sp. 317:115: “I am the Nile-god, Lord of Waters, who brings vegetation...”⁴ It is possible therefore that Osiris as the “force of life” symbolized the very act of the foliage turning from brown to green representing the resurrection or imbuelement of Osiris into the world. In this case, Osiris could be said to be representative of photosynthesis, an action that may indeed have seemed miraculous and supernatural to the ancients. It is further possible that desert dwellers seeing a lush and green oasis may have believed it too exemplified the existence of Osiris in the world.

In this same regard, many amulets depicting the scarab beetle are made of this material for its Osirian symbolism. Concerning scarabs, Maravelia remarks:

...They were used in the symbolic context of the regenerating sun...connected with the heart of the deceased..., which would save him and allow him to become...triumphant and resurrected like the morning sun.⁵

As we can see, the reverence for the sun and its *resurrection* in the morning was all important to the Egyptians, representing the hope for humanity to attain to eternal life. This identification of the deceased with the solar life-renewal is evidenced throughout the mortuary literature, such as the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead.

The Deceased as Osiris

One of the main copies of the Book of the Dead is the Papyrus of Ani, designed to facilitate the passage of the deceased scribe by that name, and estimated to have been composed around 1250 BCE. As an

¹ Renouf, *EBD*, 141-142.

² Maravelia, *JNES*, 82.

³ Maravelia, *JNES*, 82.

⁴ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 241.

⁵ Maravelia, *JNES*, 86.

example of how much Egypt's spirituality was tied into the sun, chapter or spell 15 of the BD constitutes a long prayer or hymn to the divine solar orb, said in the voice of the deceased to ensure his passage into the afterlife as an immortal soul. The profound reverence for the sun is highly evident in this chapter, in which the speaker repeatedly addresses the sun—or "Re," also transliterated as "Ra"—including in several rubrics (titles of different sections) such as: "*Worship of Re when he rises in the horizon until the occurrence of his setting in life.*"¹ In another section of BD 15 appears the following expression of veneration for the sun, Re/Ra:

Worship of Re when he rises in the eastern horizon of the sky, when those who are in his following are joyful.

O Sun-disk, Lord of the sunbeams, who shines forth from the horizon every day: may you shine in the face of Ani, for *he worships you* in the morning, he propitiates you in the evening. May the soul of Ani go up with you to the sky...

The Osiris Ani says when he honors his lord, the Lord of Eternity:

Hail to you, Horakhty, Khepri the self-created! How beautiful is your shining forth from the horizon when you illumine the Two Lands with your rays! All the gods are in joy when they see you as king of the sky...²

In his translation of the Papyrus of Ani, Faulkner thus refers to the deceased as "the Osiris Ani,"³ identifying him with the god Osiris, the "Lord of Eternity," elsewhere deemed "Lord of Resurrections,"⁴ two epithets essentially describing the role of the much later Lord Jesus. In this regard, Sir Dr. James George Frazer (1854-1941) states that "every man after death was identified with Osiris and bore his name."⁵ In multiple Pyramid Texts as well, the deceased is named as Osiris, the father of Horus, as at PT 600:1657a/N 359: "this king is Osiris."⁶ Concerning the Pyramid Texts, Egyptologist Dr. Ann Macy

¹ Faulkner, *EBD*, pl. 18. It should be kept in mind that, although "Re" or "Ra" is used to designate the proper name of the sun god, the term in Egyptian simply means "sun"; thus, in some instances, James Allen, for one, differentiates between "the sun" and the name of the god by capitalizing the latter as "the Sun." (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 14.)

² Faulkner, *EBD*, pl. 20; Allen, T., *BD*, 12; Bunsen/Birch, 167; Budge, *EBD* (1967), 246.

³ Faulkner, *EBD*, pl. 11, etc.

⁴ Renouf, *EBD*, 118; Allen, T., *BD*, 56. Faulkner's translation seems contrived in order to steer away from this uncomplicated concept of "Lord of Resurrections." (Faulkner, *EBD*, 106) Birch's rendering certainly implies divine resurrection commanded by the God of Light, the sun: "I am the Yesterday, the Morning, the Light at its birth the second time... Lord of mankind seen in all his rays, the Conductor coming forth from the darkness." (Bunsen/Birch, 206.)

⁵ Frazer, *AAO*, 217.

⁶ Redford, 305; Allen, J., *AEPT*, 269; Mercer, 254. As concerns the numbering used here for the Pyramid Texts, references are to the "PT" system devised by Dr. Kurt Sethe in *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte* and utilized by Drs. Samuel Mercer and Raymond Faulkner in their translations, as well as to the numbering employed by James Allen, whose work *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* should be consulted for purposes of

Roth of Howard University says, "The king is identified throughout as the god Osiris, and the speaker acts as his son Horus."¹ In this same regard, Hornung remarks that "the deceased appears as Osiris, the suffering, murdered, and resurrected ruler-god, husband and brother of Isis."² Again, Hornung says that "the fact of death makes the king himself an 'Osiris'; he bears this name as a title of honor."³ Indeed, Morenz adds that "the entire ritual complex of Osirian burial, including mummification itself...enabled the dead to become Osiris."⁴

Regarding the epithet "the Osiris," Egyptologist Dr. Adolph Erman (1854-1937), a professor of Egyptology at the University of Berlin and director of the Egyptian Museum at Berlin, remarks, "From the time of the Middle Empire the deceased is addressed directly as the *Osiris N. N.*, as if he were that god himself..."⁵ In his description of Osiris, Dr. William J. Murnane (d. 2000), a professor of History and adjunct professor with the Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology at the University of Memphis, relates, "Dead individuals were identified with him (as 'The Osiris NN') in the orthodox religion..."⁶ Following the ancient convention, throughout his translation of the Book of the Dead, Renouf likewise refers to the deceased as "the Osiris" or "the Osiris N," the latter of which is favored by Goelet and Assman, while Budge uses "the Osiris Nu" and "Osiris Ani."⁷ Professor of Egyptology and Oriental History at the University of Chicago, Dr. James H. Breasted (1865-1935) discusses the kings Unis and Pepi I as "Osiris," and also calls the deceased "this Osiris."⁸ He likewise states, "In the earliest versions of the Book of the Dead...the deceased says of himself: 'I am Osiris, I have come forth as thou...'"⁹ In his translation of the Book of the Dead, Dr. T. George Allen prefers simply "Osiris N.,

cross-referencing the variously numbered texts. I have taken the liberty of combining the Utterance/PT numbers with the "Pyr." line numbers, separated by a colon. Footnotes indicate the pages in Mercer and Faulkner, as well as Allen for the equivalent verse. Allen's translation substitutes the name of the subject of the spell/papyrus, such as "Unis" or "Pepi," rather than the "N." or "Osiris" of Mercer and Faulkner. Regarding the Coffin Texts, I have chosen to follow Lesko in numbering each *spell* using the "CT Sp." designation. (See, e.g., Lesko, 39.) As concerns the numbering of passages in other ancient works, I have generally converted Roman numerals to Indian/Arabic numerals and separated books from chapters, and chapters from verses, with a period.

¹ Redford, 149.

² Hornung, *VK*, 25.

³ Hornung, *VK*, 115.

⁴ Morenz, 55.

⁵ Erman, 308.

⁶ Murnane, 283.

⁷ Renouf, *EBD*, 10, 22; Wilson, 391, etc.; Budge, *BD* (1899), 182; Faulkner, *EBD*, 154; Assman, *DSAE*, 152.

⁸ Breasted, *DRTAE*, 19.

⁹ Breasted, *DRTAE*, 22-23. Breasted further relates the deceased as saying, "I live as 'Grain.' I grow as 'Grain.'" Osiris also represented fertility and growth of nature, as brought out by Frazer.

while in *The Origin of Osiris and His Cult*, Griffiths settles on the term "Osiris-King."¹

This experience of being the "Osiris NN" was not limited to royalty, however, as the introduction of the voluminous Coffin Texts "eliminated the royal exclusivity of the Pyramid Texts, putting the texts at the disposal of all deceased persons and thus making the enjoyment of the afterlife something that all could attain..."² Now, Hornung continues, "every deceased person was an Osiris NN,"³ and Morenz says that "in that course of time all the Egyptian dead were mummified and became Osiris..."⁴ Thus, the deceased in the Coffin Texts also represents Osiris, as at CT Sp. 47,⁵ and the interchangeability of the deceased with Osiris—and Horus—is likewise illustrated at CT Sp. 215, in which the speaker states: "...he [Osiris] says: He is his son, he is his heir; He is Horus, and I am he."⁶ In a spell (CT Sp. 227) entitled, "Becoming the Counterpart of Osiris," the deceased says: "I indeed am Osiris, I indeed am the Lord of All, I am the Radiant One, the brother of the Radiant Lady..."⁷ Again, in the same spell, the deceased states, "I indeed am Osiris... I am Horus the Elder... I am Anubis..."⁸ As noted, the number of deceased followers of the Egyptian religion has been estimated at a half a billion—that would mean hundreds of millions of Osirises!

Moreover, as Griffiths relates, the deceased shares not only the name of the god but also his experiences:

The King is frequently addressed as *Osiris Wenis* [Unis], *Osiris Pepi* and so on; but the relation is also made clear, especially with regard to the benefits accruing from the identification, by an equation of the King's experiences with those of Osiris.⁹

This fact of the deceased being "the Osiris" in both name and deed ranks as highly important and needs to be recalled throughout this present work, as the subject becomes part of the composite Osirian myth evidently utilized in the later Christian effort.

As can be seen, the deceased is not only Osiris but also many other gods, including Horus, a fact that demonstrates these characters' interchangeability. Concerning the important chapter or spell 64—one of the oldest in the text—Budge states:

The formulae which constitute the Chapter are of a highly mystical character, and the recital of them gave to the deceased the power to

¹ Griffiths, *OOHC*, 18, et al.

² Hornung, *AEBA*, 9.

³ Hornung, *AEBA*, 9. (Emph. added.)

⁴ Morenz, 195.

⁵ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 42.

⁶ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 171.

⁷ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 179.

⁸ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 180.

⁹ Griffiths, *OOHC*, 45.

identify himself with all the great gods, and to make use of all their attributes as he pleased for his own benefit.¹

The deceased is identified as Osiris, who is reborn as the figure of “Horakhty,” mentioned in BD 15 and elsewhere, representing “Horus of the Two Horizons,” which refers to the sunrise and sunset. “Horakhty” or “Harakhte” is a combination of “Her/Har/Horus” with “Akhte/Akhty,” defined by Hornung as, “He of the horizon”; an epithet of Horus as a solar deity.² In other words, “Herakhty”—another variant spelling—is “Horus as the morning sun,”³ referred to by Morenz as “the sun-god Harakhti.”⁴ (The morning sun is also the “beetle” Khepri, who reproduces himself at dawn.)

Of Mysteries and Myths

A millennium and a half or so after the Book of the Dead was first compiled, the Greek historian Herodotus (2.42) discussed major Egyptian deities, such as Osiris and Isis, who, during the historian’s time, were “worshipped by everyone throughout Egypt,” demonstrating the continued massive popularity of the Egyptian religion.⁵ Herodotus (2.47) further related that the Egyptians equated Osiris with the Greek god Dionysus, stating, “The only deities to whom the Egyptians consider it proper to sacrifice pigs are Dionysus and the Moon.”⁶ Regarding these deities, Herodotus editor Marincola notes: “Dionysus is Osiris, the Moon (Selene) is Isis.”⁷ Herodotus (2.144, 156) also identified Horus as the Greek *sun god* Apollo.⁸ This identification of the hawk-headed Horus with Apollo rates as appropriate, as the latter had been associated with the *hawk* centuries before in *The Odyssey* (15.526) by Homer (9th cent.?), who styled the bird “Apollo’s swift messenger.”⁹ Beyond these mentions in his long treatise on Egypt, Herodotus does not spell out any comprehensive myths of Osiris, Isis and Horus. Nevertheless, in book 2, chapter 61, the Greek historian appears to imply that there are *mysteries* of Osiris that he cannot relate,¹⁰ which may refer to assorted myths, motifs and rituals not readily disclosed to the masses. Later in his book (2.171), while discussing the lake near Athena’s temple at Sais, Herodotus clearly raises the mysteries, disclaiming that he will not address them further:

¹ Budge, *BD* (1899), cxxxii.

² Hornung, *AEBA*, 153.

³ Armour, 28.

⁴ Morenz, 63.

⁵ Herodotus/Waterfield, 112.

⁶ Herodotus/de Selincourt, 104.

⁷ Herodotus/de Selincourt, 563.

⁸ Herodotus/de Selincourt, 139, 145.

⁹ Homer, 51. The phrase in the original Greek is “...κίρκος, Απολλωνος ταχυσ αγγελος...” The Greek word for “messenger” here is *angel*.

¹⁰ Herodotus/de Selincourt, 108, 564.

It is on this lake that the Egyptians act by night in what they call their Mysteries the Passion of that being whose name I will not speak. All the details of these performances are known to me, but—I will say no more.¹

Indeed, mysteries are often raised in the Egyptian texts: For example, in the Coffin Texts we find mention of “the private matters of the god...in the secret places” (CT Sp. 1099).² Also in the Coffin Texts, opening the windows on “the Ennead” or nine principal gods will allow the Osiris to “see the mysteries which are in them...”³ The mysteries are also mentioned in numerous places in the Book of the Dead, such as at BD 168, discussing the “gods of the tenth cavern in the Netherworld, who cry aloud and whose mysteries are holy.”⁴ Around 1360 BCE, Amenhotep/Amenhotpe “son of Hapu” referred in an inscription to his own association with the mysteries of “the transfigurations of Thoth.”⁵ The “true names” of Egyptian gods likewise represented secrets or hidden “mysteries.”⁶

As part of the mysteries appear sacred texts comprising hymns to the sun, categorized by Assman as one of three groups of such writings: “*Texts of an esoteric body of knowledge.*”⁷ Included in these sacred sun hymns were the “standard texts” that were “not secret or esoteric.” As the German scholar continues, “The sun cult must have had an exoteric side that enabled the lay person to participate in it.”⁸ In his analysis of the sun hymns from the New Kingdom, Assman sifted through some 500 texts, reflecting the abundance of such sacred writings concerning the Egyptian solar religion. In a chapter entitled, “The Mysteries of the Sun Cult,” in describing the “tripartite form” of the New Kingdom solar cult, the professor remarks that the first part comprises “a closely guarded secret cosmology, depicted in royal tombs as ‘underworld books’ for the use of the king in the afterlife.”⁹ The second part constitutes a “set of hymns located in countless non-royal tombs, which praise the solar journey in its polytheistic form,” while the third form is a “sort of monotheism that regards the sun as the natural manifestation of the uniqueness of god...”¹⁰ Some of these mysteries were likely carried out in sacred areas such as crypts, an indication of a “secret cult.”¹¹ Despite the precautions to preserve them as secrets or mysteries, the hymns of

¹ Herodotus/de Selincourt, 149.

² Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 154.

³ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 56.

⁴ Faulkner, 126. See also chapters/spells 1, 78, 94, 101, 137A, 169, 180. (Faulkner, pls. 5, 26 and pp. 109, 112, 119, 128, 132.)

⁵ Hornung, *SLE*, 5.

⁶ Morenz, 21-22.

⁷ Assman, *ESR NK*, 7.

⁸ Assman, *ESR NK*, 8.

⁹ Assman, *ESR NK*, 16.

¹⁰ Assman, *ESR NK*, 16.

¹¹ Assman, *ESR NK*, 147.

the secret sun cult “did find their way out of this cult into the wider non-priestly circles of the population.”¹

One of the priestly commentators who may have passed along mysteries and secrets was an Egyptian priest of the sun god Re at Heliopolis named Manetho (3rd cent. BCE), who wrote in Greek about the Egyptian gods. Since his works have all been lost or destroyed, we must rely on the descriptions thereof by other ancient writers, including Plutarch (28, 362A) and the Jewish historian of the first century AD/CE, Josephus (*Apion* 1.16, et al.), the latter of whom informs us that Manetho claimed to have based his work on “Egyptian records,” such as oral traditions, “priestly writings” and other documents.² In his histories, Manetho styled the gods by their Greek names, also equating Horus with Apollo, for example.³ Over the centuries, it has been claimed that Manetho was an adept and expert in the Egyptian mysteries. Indeed, Manetho is called by the Christian monk George Syncellus (9th cent. AD/CE) the “High Priest and Scribe of the Mysteries of the Temple,”⁴ while Plutarch too related that the Egyptian was the high priest of the mysteries as Heliopolis. Hence, the destruction of his work may have been committed in order to hide these mysteries and their use in the later Christian effort. It may well be that Manetho’s work was utilized centuries later by the Assyrian philosopher Iamblichus (c. 245-c. 325 AD/CE), in his extensive discourse on *The Mysteries*,⁵ in which the mystic says about Osiris’s center of worship, “The mysteries in Abydos are never disclosed” (VI.7) ⁶

During the first century BCE, the Greek writer Diodorus Siculus likewise related that Osiris was the sun and Isis the moon, remarking that the god was called “many-eyed” because of his rays. In *The Antiquities of Egypt* (1.11), Diodorus further comments, “Some of the early Greek mythologists call Osiris ‘Dionysus’ and also, changing the word slightly, ‘Sirius’....”⁷ Diodorus (1.13) also addresses the five intercalary days added to the end of the old 360-day calendar and identified as the birthdays of the gods “Osiris and Isis, Typhon [Set], Apollo [Horus], and Aphrodite [Nephtys].”⁸ In the same book and chapter, the historian further associates Isis with the Greek goddess Demeter or Ceres, the virgin earth mother who gave birth to

¹ Assman, *ESRNC*, 17.

² Verbrugghe, 103; Josephus/Whiston, 612. The numbering system for Josephus used here includes both the English (book, chapter, paragraph) and the Greek (book, verse), depending on the length of the passage in question.

³ Verbrugghe, 99.

⁴ Bunsen/Birch, 224.

⁵ Iamblichus/Clarke, xxxviii.

⁶ Iamblichus/Clarke, 289.

⁷ Diodorus/Murphy, 14.

⁸ Diodorus/Murphy, 18.

Persephone or Kore.¹ Lending greater antiquity to Diodorus's assertions, Catholic Church historian Eusebius (c. 260-c. 341 AD/CE) indicated that in chapters 11-13 the Sicilian historian was essentially summarizing the work of Manetho.² Giving further credence to Herodotus's comments about Egyptian mysteries, Diodorus (1.20, 23) also refers several times to "sacred rites," "mysteries" and "mystical rites" in association with Egyptian gods, including and especially Osiris and Isis.³ In fact, after describing inscriptions on two ancient stelae in "Nysa of Arabia" that supposedly marked the deities' graves, Diodorus (1.27) comments:

They say that only this much of the writing on the columns is legible and that the rest, the larger part, has been effaced by time. Be that as it may, most writers disagree over the burial place of the two gods. This is because the real facts in the case were handed down in secret tradition by the Egyptian priests, who cared neither to share the truth with the populace, nor to incur the retribution threatened for any who should reveal the mysteries of these gods to the vulgar.⁴

In many locations, the penalty for divulging the mysteries was death, so it is obvious why the Egyptian priests and initiates would shy away from doing so. While these secret rites changed from place to place and era to era, some of the characteristics, myths, motifs, symbols and rituals discussed in this present work undoubtedly constituted *Egyptian* mysteries not to be revealed to the vulgar masses, which is one reason they are not tidily laid out in an ancient encyclopedia—a point that needs to be emphasized. Paradoxically, at times what are termed "mysteries" are nevertheless made public during festivals that reenacted myths, for instance.⁵ Throughout this book, however, it needs to be kept in mind that both phenomena occurred at once, as they do to this day within Christianity as well, which possesses both esoteric and exoteric mysteries.

In any event, the path to a unified myth leads to Greek historian Plutarch, who also refers to the "divine mysteries" (τα θεια) and "Mysteries" (τα οργια, οι μυστικοι) on a number of occasions (*Iside*, 3, 352A; *Obs. Or.*, 13, 417A; 14, 417B).⁶ In creating his famous treatise on "Isis and Osiris"—in which he recounted the composite myth of the most popular Egyptian gods of the time, stating that Osiris was the sun and Isis the moon—Plutarch was himself evidently compelled to pull together characteristics from numerous sources, including papyri and inscriptions, from a wide era. Thus, prior to Plutarch's time it appears there existed few comprehensive sources for the

¹ Diodorus/Murphy, 18. See *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (NSHERK), 212.

² Diodorus/Murphy, 18.

³ Diodorus/Murphy, 25, 28.

⁴ Diodorus/Murphy, 34.

⁵ Hornung, *SLE*, 13.

⁶ Plutarch/Babbitt, 11, 157,

various myths surrounding these deities. Because Christianity was unknown to Plutarch, he naturally would not have factored it into his analysis by couching his narrative of the myth in Christian terms. We, however, are very aware of the gospel story, as well as the assertion that it too was based largely on the Egyptian mythos and ritual. Hence, in our comparisons we will summarize the Egyptian influence on Christianity in terms of how its successor and borrower—the Christian myth—itself reworked the Egyptian myths and rituals into a composite tale.

Who Is Horus?

Many of the salient and fascinating parallels between the Christian and Egyptian religions revolve in particular around the highly important god Horus, son of the famed god Osiris and goddess Isis, who, again, were said by Herodotus (2.42) five centuries before the common era to be “worshipped by everyone throughout Egypt.”¹ The significance of Horus, or “Heru” in the Egyptian, cannot be overestimated, for a variety of reasons, including that he was the morning sun and often the speaker in the mortuary literature, as well as the priest conducting the afterlife rituals, along with the living pharaoh/king, as we shall see. As the great healer who himself is resurrected from the dead, Horus was likewise the patient him or herself in the Egyptian healing rituals, meaning that wherever the Isiac cult was present, so too was Horus, especially in times of healing. Moreover, Horus’s worship was not only widespread but also long-lived, spanning from the earliest times of Egyptian religion, well into the common era. As Egyptologist Dr. Edmund S. Meltzer remarks:

Horus is one of the earliest attested of the major ancient Egyptian deities, becoming known to us at least as early as the late Predynastic period (Naqada III/Dynasty 0); he was still prominent in the latest temples of the Greco-Roman period, especially at Philae and Edfu, as well as in the Old Coptic and Greco-Egyptian ritual-power, or magical, texts.²

The Predynastic period began prior to 5,000 years ago, and Horus’s reverence continued for centuries into the common era. Hence, the Egyptian god’s worship had been in existence at least 3,000 years before Christ purportedly lived. By the time Christianity was created, Horus’s cult was widespread around the Mediterranean, such as in Greece, and he was one of the most popular gods of the Roman Empire.

In reality, a number of the mythical motifs regarding Horus and other Egyptian deities startlingly resemble characteristics and events attributed to Jesus Christ, indicating that the gospel story is neither

¹ Herodotus/Waterfield, 112.

² Redford, 165.

original nor historical. As may have been expected, many of these correspondences are not widely and neatly found in encyclopedia entries and textbooks, so they have often been dismissed without adequate study and with extreme prejudice. In my previous work, *The Christ Conspiracy*, I presented various aspects of the Horus myth out of the hundreds brought to light by Gerald Massey and others. Some of these comparisons are as follows:

- Horus was born on “December 25th” (winter solstice) in a manger.
- He was of royal descent, and his mother was the “virgin Isis-Mery.”
- Horus’s birth was announced by a star in the East and attended by three “wise men.”
- At age 12, he was a child teacher in the Temple, and at 30, he was baptized.
- Horus was baptized by “Anup the Baptizer,” who was decapitated.
- The Egyptian god had 12 companions, helpers or disciples.
- Horus performed miracles, exorcised demons and raised Osiris from the dead.
- The god walked on water.
- Horus was “crucified” between two “thieves.”
- He (or Osiris) was buried for three days in a tomb and resurrected.
- Horus/Osiris was also the “Way, the Truth, the Life,” “Messiah,” the “Son of Man,” the “Good Shepherd,” the “Lamb of God,” the “Word made flesh,” the “Word of Truth,” etc.
- Horus’s personal epithet was “Iusa,” the “ever-becoming son” of the Father. He was called “Holy Child,” as well as “the Anointed One,” while Osiris was the *KRST*.
- Horus battled with the “evil one,” Set/Seth.
- Horus was to reign for one thousand years.¹

¹ See Acharya, *CC*, 115. Various of these parallels were popularized in the official version of the internet movie “ZEITGEIST,” released in 2007, the Companion Guide for which was the basis of this present work. The pertinent part of that movie by Peter Joseph is as follows: “This is Horus. He is the Sun God of Egypt of around 3000 BC. He is the sun anthropomorphized, and his life is a series of allegorical myths involving the sun’s movement in the sky. From the ancient hieroglyphs in Egypt, we know much about this solar messiah. For instance, Horus, being the sun, or the light, had an enemy known as Set, and Set was the personification of the darkness or night. And, metaphorically speaking, every morning Horus would win the battle against Set—while in the evening, Set would conquer Horus and send him into the underworld. It is important to note that ‘dark vs. light’ or ‘good vs. evil’ is one of the most ubiquitous mythological dualities ever known and is still expressed on many levels to this day.

“Broadly speaking, the story of Horus is as follows: Horus was born on December 25th of the virgin Isis-Meri. His birth was accompanied by a star in the east, which in turn, three kings followed to locate and adore the new-born savior. At the age of 12, he was a prodigal child teacher, and at the age of 30 he was baptized by a figure known as Anup and thus began his ministry. Horus had 12 disciples he traveled about with, performing miracles such as healing the sick and walking on water. Horus was known

As we can see, these features of the Horus myth are virtually identical to major elements in the story of Jesus Christ, as found in the New Testament and in Christian tradition. When reading this synopsis of the Horus myth, one needs to keep in mind that it is our contention that snippets of the myths of various gods—the “essential parts of the myth,” as Cooper puts it—were pulled out of context and woven together to create the gospel story. Again, one does not find the Horus myth as above outlined in an ancient Egyptian encyclopedia, such that the creators of the Jesus story merely scratched out the Egyptian names and inserted the Christian ones. Those who have been attempting to explain the creation of the Christ myth have been compelled to back-engineer the story in order to analyze its components and concepts. In other words, in explaining the various mythical motifs used in the gospel story, some have recounted the tale utilizing the original god or gods, in a gospel-like manner in order to express those components.

Hence, although the myth of Horus, for example, was not told in this condensed manner, such storytelling is useful to convey quickly and readily that the germane aspects of the Christian myth and ritual *were* found in Egypt, long predating the common era. Such is how mythmaking is accomplished, and those who created the *Christian myth* out of bits and pieces of pre-Christian writings and rituals engaged in the same process as well. As we have seen, this type of synopsis constitutes the same manner by which scholars create narratives of myths for encyclopedia entries and textbooks—another point that cannot be overemphasized. Also, as noted, this process of summarization did in fact occur to some extent with the Egyptian myths, as they were congealed and formalized over a period of centuries to millennia. In other words, the stories of Osiris, Isis and Horus, for example, were increasingly woven into a narrative over the centuries, as we have seen in the works of Plutarch, for example.

Since so many claims of Egyptian influence on Christianity thus involve the god Horus (and/or his father/brother, Osiris), investigating his identity becomes critical to our quest. Mainstream sources often list Horus only as a “sky god” with a hawk or falcon’s head, the eyes of whom are correctly related as representing the sun and moon. We have already seen, however, that Horus of the Horizon or Horakhty is a solar deity and the morning sun, part of the combined Re-Horakhty, whose name Egyptologist Dr. Rudolf Anthes renders, “Re, the heavenly Horus of the horizon in which he appears as the sun.”¹ Indeed, the fact of Horus himself symbolizing the sun was understood centuries prior to the common era by ancient writers

by many gestural names such as The Truth, The Light, God’s Anointed Son, The Good Shepherd, The Lamb of God, and many others. After being betrayed by Typhon [Set], Horus was ‘crucified,’ buried for 3 days, and thus, resurrected.”

¹ Anthes, 181.

such as Herodotus, Manetho and Diodorus, who equated him with the sun god Apollo. In the text *The Hieroglyphica*, attributed to the aptly named Horapollo (5th century AD/CE), one of the last priests of the Egyptian religion, the author equates Horus with the sun and states (1.17) that “the Sun is called Horus because he has power over the Hours.”¹ Like Homer in *The Odyssey* describing the bird as “Apollo’s swift messenger,” Horapollo too discusses the hawk as a symbol of the sun: “And since the sun is the lord of sight, they draw him sometimes in the shape of a hawk.”²

Also depicted in the shape of a hawk is the main sun god Re/Ra, with whom Horus is likewise identified. In this regard, there exist hieroglyphs not only for the combined solar god Horus-Ra but also that could represent either Horus *or* Ra, including one of a hawk inside a sun disc, demonstrating the interchangeability of these two gods, as well as Horus’s unquestionably solar nature. Adding to this solar identity is Horus’s epithet as “son of Ra” as well.³ Indeed, in many Coffin Texts, Horus is called “first-born of Re.”⁴

Discussing this sacred merger, in his opus, *History of Egypt*, renowned Egyptologist Sir Dr. Gaston Maspero (1846-1916), a head of the Antiquities Service at Cairo and the original developer and director of the Cairo Museum, remarks:

Horus the Sun, and Râ, the Sun-God of Heliopolis, had so permeated each other that none could say where the one began and the other ended. One by one all the functions of Râ had been usurped by Horus, and all the designations of Horus had been appropriated by Râ. The sun was styled Harmakhûiti [Harmakhis], the Horus of the two mountains—that is, the Horus who comes forth from the mountain of the east in the morning, and retires at evening into the mountain of the west; or Hartimâ, Horus the Pikeman, that Horus whose lance spears the hippopotamus or the serpent of the celestial river; or Harnûbi, the Golden Horus, the great golden sparrow-hawk with mottled plumage, who puts all other birds to flight; and these titles were indifferently applied to each of the feudal gods who represented the sun.⁵

And again Dr. Maspero states:

When the celestial Horus was confounded with Râ, and became the sun..., he naturally also became the sun of the two horizons, the sun by day, and the sun by night.⁶

Regarding Horus’s solar role, as well as the Egyptian custom of naming, personifying and deifying different aspects of the sun, along with rolling them together as one, James Allen remarks:

¹ Boas, 16.

² Boas, 46.

³ Brier, 60, 61.

⁴ See, e.g., CT Sp. 1104, 1105, 1110, 1114 and 1175. (Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 159, 161, 162, 187.)

⁵ Maspero, *DC*, 100.

⁶ Maspero, *HE*, I, 197.

The sun...can be seen not only as the physical source of heat and light (Re) but also as the governing force of nature (Horus), whose appearance at dawn from the Akhet makes all life possible—a perception embodied in the combined god Re-Harakhti (Re, Horus of the Akhet). The tendency to syncretism is visible in all periods of Egyptian history.¹

Horus therefore represents the sun as the governor of nature, the “Lord of lords,” as it were. The “Akhet” is the “region between the day and night skies,” or the horizons, into which the sun sets and rises, before and after entering the *Duat*, *Djat*, *Dat* or *Tuat*, the nightly “netherworld.”² As can be seen, Horus at the dawn is so important as to make “all life possible,” much like Jesus, who is the source of eternal life. Indeed, Horus himself is “universal and eternal.”³

In ancient Egyptian writings such as the Pyramid Texts, in which he is called the “Lord of the Sky,”⁴ along with other solar epithets such as “He Whose Face is Seen,” “He Whose Hair is Parted,” and “He Whose Two Plumes are Long,”⁵ Horus’s function as a sun god or aspect of the sun is repeatedly emphasized, although this singularly pertinent fact is seldom found in encyclopedias and textbooks, leaving us to wonder why he would be thus diminished.

In the Coffin Texts as well is Horus’s role as (morning) sun god made clear, such as in the following elegantly rendered scripture from CT Sp. 255:

...I will appear as Horus who ascends in gold from upon the lips
of the horizon...⁶

In CT Sp. 326, Horus is even called “Lord of the sunlight.”⁷ Concerning Horus’s solar nature, James Allen also relates:

Horus was the power of kingship. To the Egyptians this was as much a force of nature as those embodied in the other gods. It was manifest in two natural phenomena: the sun, the most powerful force in nature; and the pharaoh, the most powerful force in human society. Horus’s role as the king of nature is probably the origin of his name: *hrw* seems to mean “the one above” or “the one far off”... This is apparently a reference to the sun, which is “above” and “far off” in the sky, like the falcon with which Horus is regularly associated...⁸

Thus, again, Horus symbolizes the ruling-power aspect of the sun, the “King of kings,” much like Jesus. Even Horus’s very name may signify the sun, and the hawk or falcon, by which he is

¹ Allen, J., *ME*, 44.

² Allen, J., *ME*, 21; Griffiths, *OOHC*, 9.

³ Anthes, 178.

⁴ Allen, T., *HPT*, 17.

⁵ Allen, J., *AEPT*, 432.

⁶ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 196.

⁷ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 253.

⁸ Allen, J., *ME*, 144.

identified, likewise represents a solar symbol by virtue of how high it flies. In summary, Dr. Meltzer remarks, "Horus the falcon was predominantly a sky god *and* a sun god."¹

Furthermore, regarding the Horus epithets in the Pyramid Texts from Saqqara/Sakkara, Allen states that the "solar element in Horus clearly predominates," while the "less common epithets of Horus are likewise largely celestial, as is his habitat."² Therefore, in his many epithets, attributes and deeds, Horus ranks as *astrotheological* overall.

The Many Horuses

Over the millennia during which the Egyptian religion was popular, there appeared a number of Horuses or *Horus epithets*, one of whom, Horus the Elder, also called Heru-Ur or Haroeris, was the *brother* of Osiris and Isis, and two of whom were named as the *son(s)* of Osiris and Isis. In addition, there are several other Horuses or Horus epithets. For example, we have already seen the epithets of "Horakhty" or "Harmakhis," i.e., Horus of the "rising and setting sun"³; and "Hartimâ," the latter being a sort of "fisher," as he spears the "serpent of the celestial river." In *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, Sir Dr. John G. Wilkinson (1797-1875), the "Father of British Egyptology," describes the various Horuses and demonstrates the solar nature of the epithet previously seen as "Harnûbi": "Her-Nub [*Hr nbw*], 'the Golden Horus,' is primarily the god of the morning sun, manifesting himself in the golden glory of the dawn."⁴

Understandably, these many Horuses have been confused in both ancient and modern times. As Budge relates:

Heru or Horus, the sun-god, was originally a totally distinct god from Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, but from the earliest times it seems that the two gods were confounded, and that the attributes of the one were ascribed to the other; the fight which Horus the sun-god waged against night and darkness was also at a very early period identified with the combat between Horus, the son of Isis, and his brother Set.⁵

Regarding the confounding of supposedly different Horuses, Dutch Egyptologist Dr. Henri Frankfort (1897-1954) adds:

It is therefore a mistake to separate "Horus, the Great God, Lord of Heaven," from "Horus, son of Osiris," or to explain their identity as due to syncretism in comparatively late times. The two gods "Horus"

¹ Redford, 166. (Emph. added.)

² Allen, T., *HPT*, 11-12.

³ Maspero, *GCM*, 4. Other transliterations of Harmakhis are Harmachis, Hormachis and Hor-m-akhu. Horakty/Harakhte and Harmakhis/Harmachis are essentially the same epithet, both meaning "Horus of the Akhet." (Bleeker, *HR*, 59.)

⁴ Wilkinson, J., *MCAE*, III, 29.

⁵ Budge, *TBD*, cxiv-cxv.

whose titles we have set side by side are, in reality, one and the same. Their identity is also confirmed by an important pyramid text which addresses the king as follows: "Thou art Horus, son of Osiris, the eldest god, son of Hathor."¹

Adding to these opinions as to the many Horuses, Meltzer states:

Egyptologists...often speak of distinct, sometimes originally distinct, Horuses or Horus-gods. Combinations, identifications, and differentiations were, however, possible for Horus, and they are complementary rather than antithetical. A judicious examination of the various Horuses and the sources relating to them supports the possibility that the roles in question are closely interrelated, and so they may be understood as different aspects, or facets, of the same divine persona.²

Hence, the different Horuses could be considered "facets of the same divine persona." In his dissertation on *Horus in the Pyramid Texts*, Egyptologist Dr. Thomas George Allen of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago therefore discusses the "group of Horuses" as one entity.³ As we can see, in constructing a composite myth about Horus, we have many entities, qualities, characteristics and aspects from which to choose.

The Horus-King: "Son of the Sun"

In addition his other "facets," Horus as the living king is another important aspect within the Egyptian religion, and the god's solar role was also expressed in the adoption of the important "Horus names" by kings and pharaohs. In this regard, Cooper remarks:

The Egyptian kings, who by a magnificently conceived political fiction were themselves incarnations of the Deity, generally assumed also the name and offices of Horus the Sun in one of their two cartouches, which was called the Horus title, and which was, in fact, their proper name. This cartouche was always preceded by the hieroglyphics signifying Son of the Sun...⁴

In the same vein and demonstrating the connection again between Horus and Re, Egyptologist Dr. Robert Brier (b. 1943), a senior research fellow at Long Island University, states: "Six of the Fifth Dynasty's nine pharaohs incorporate Ra in their names, and all follow them with, the phrase 'Son of the Sun.'"⁵ As we have seen, Horus too was called the "son of Re," i.e., the "son of the sun." This epithet is important to remember, as it is claimed that throughout the ages numerous luminaries belonged to a group or groups by the same title, "Sons of the Sun."

¹ Frankfort, 41.

² Redford 165.

³ Allen, T., *HPT*, 10.

⁴ Cooper, *HM*, 8.

⁵ Brier, 10.

During a long period of Egyptian history—in fact, “throughout the existence of Pharaonic Egypt”¹—the king or pharaoh, the son of the sun, was thus identified as Horus and was given a “Horus name.” In this regard, Dr. Rudolf Anthes (1896-1985), a curator of the Egyptian Section at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, says that “the denotation ‘Horus’ introduced the name of virtually every king since the beginning of the First Dynasty.”² And Dr. Frankfort remarks:

Each king, at death, becomes Osiris..., just as each king, in life, appears “on the throne of Horus”; each king *is* Horus...³

Indeed, as related by Dr. Murnane, Horus is “the primary divine identity of the pharaoh.”⁴ The solid connection between Horus and the Egyptian king is explained further by Frankfort:

It is well in keeping with the theory of kingship, which is set forth in the Memphite Theology and which remained valid throughout the existence of Pharaonic Egypt, that the king is commonly referred to as Horus. Sometimes the name is qualified—“Horus who is in the castle”—but *there is no doubt that the divinity of Pharaoh was specifically conceived as sharing of essentials with the god Horus...*⁵

Frankfort also states: “Pharaoh, then, is an incarnation of Horus the Great(est) God, Lord of Heaven.”⁶ Hornung likewise describes the close relationship between the king/pharaoh, Horus and Osiris: “The extensive textual evidence of the Middle and New kingdoms suggests that at his accession Pharaoh took on the role of Horus, and at his death he took on the role of Osiris, adopting the attributes of these gods without being identical with them.”⁷ As separate entities, the three are obviously not identical or even necessarily equal; however, the king certainly shares in Osiris’s and Horus’s attributes and epithets.

Moreover, like the deceased as Osiris, the king is called in the texts the “Horus NN,”⁸ the “NN,” of course, standing for the pharaoh’s name. The *deceased* king is likened to Horus in the Coffin Texts as well, as at CT Sp. 53, in which the Osiris is exhorted to “see your beauty, having appeared as Horus...”⁹ Despite any distinctions, so sound is this identification of the king with Horus that, when the ruler died an official would declare, “The Falcon has flown up to heaven,” reflecting “the role of the king as a manifestation of Horus.”¹⁰

¹ Frankfort, 36.

² Anthes, 185.

³ Frankfort, 32.

⁴ Murnane, 280.

⁵ Frankfort, 36. (Emph. added.)

⁶ Frankfort, 40.

⁷ Hornung, *CGAE*, 192.

⁸ Morenz, 34.

⁹ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 52.

¹⁰ Hornung, *VK*, 40.

The equation of Horus with the king in Egypt is extremely old, dating to some 5,000 years ago, based on its appearance on a famous artifact called the Narmer Palette, from the dawn of Egypt as a political entity.¹ Also, in a later hymn to Osiris in the temple of Isis at site of Philae, “the king is Horus himself,”² demonstrating that this tradition continued well into the Ptolemaic period. This long-lived association is so complete that the term “Horus-king” has been utilized to describe the pharaohs.³

In addition, because of his role as father of Horus, Osiris could likewise be deemed the father of the pharaoh or king as well: “Osiris [is] the father of the mythical son Horus...at the same time, he is also father of the living king, the living Horus...”⁴

Horus—and Osiris—as the king represents one of the main purposes of the Egyptian religion: “...it was the king’s transition from Horus into Osiris which confirmed his existence as an eternal being.”⁵ In reality, as Dr. Anthes says, “The deceased king, according to the Pyramid Texts, is sometimes Osiris...and sometimes Horus...”⁶

As an example of how the king may be endowed with Horus’s attributes, Dr. Louis V. Žabkar (1914-1994), a professor of Egyptology at Brandeis University, mentions “Ptolemy II, who, as a living Horus, is associated with ‘his mother’ Isis and participates in her triumph over Seth.”⁷

These germane facts need to be kept in mind throughout this exploration in order for us to maintain a clear picture of the importance of this god, as well as to understand how characteristics and experiences of the king/pharaoh could be perceived as those of “Horus,” possibly used in the later Christian mythmaking effort.

Priest as Horus

As noted, the officiating priest at a funeral would likewise impersonate Horus, a fact that adds to the “confounding” of Horuses. As Griffiths remarks, “One of the officiating priests, probably the *sem*-priest, assumes the role of Horus, the Beloved Son of Osiris...”⁸ To reiterate, per T. George Allen, “*The king is here regularly called Osiris,*”⁹ and the priest’s services for the deceased “symbolized those of Horus for his father Osiris.”¹⁰ In other words, Horus is the priest resurrecting the deceased as his father, Osiris; hence, the speaker in

¹ Hare, 20.

² Žabkar, 25, 63. See also Žabkar for a hymn to Isis in which she addresses Ptolemy as “my son, Horus, my beloved...” (Žabkar, 42.)

³ Luckert, 64, et al.

⁴ Žabkar, 37.

⁵ Anthes, 180.

⁶ Anthes, 192.

⁷ Žabkar, 60.

⁸ Griffiths, *OOHC*, 26.

⁹ Allen, T., *HPT*, 13. (Emph. added.)

¹⁰ Allen, T., *HPT*, 13.

the Pyramid Texts is frequently Horus as well. In the Coffin Texts too, at CT Sp. 45, for example, the priest speaks as Horus, while the speaker at CT Sp. 46 referring to “Followers of the Lord of the Horizon” is also the *deceased* as Horus.¹ Again, we find in CT Sp. 62 that the speaker is the Horus-priest,² and so on, through almost 1,200 spells, in many of which Horus serves as priest.

Regarding the role of Horus (or the priest) in various Pyramid Texts, Allen further remarks:

... Horus is...called upon to aid the dead king, not only by such offices as the myth assigned him on behalf of Osiris, but in many purely solar connections, especially noticeable in the sections on purification, ascent, deification, and rule.³

Thus, Horus serves a godly and priestly role in assisting the deceased to become the risen Osiris, providing *purification*, for example, which is a *solar* attribute. It is important to note that the term “purify” can also connote “baptize,”⁴ meaning that, like Jesus, who at Matthew 3:11 is said to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, Horus not only purifies also *baptizes*, a subject explored in detail later.

In yet another aspect of the merging of entities, such as gods with each other or, here, gods with humans, Allen states that “the deceased king’s own person” was “often identified with Horus” and “became identified likewise with the magic Horus-eye.”⁵ The Horus eye “was further identified with the sun, and, like Horus himself, endowed with human form.”⁶ *The fact of the king and priest both being identified with and as Horus constitutes yet another extremely germane fact that needs to be kept in mind, as do the solar attributes of Horus.* These facts of syncretism represent another reason we do not find various attributes of “Horus” in encyclopedia entries, as they may be ascribed to “different” Horuses. Nonetheless, these attributes are relevant to the investigation of what was influential upon Christianity, because they were held to be “sacred” and part of Egyptian religion to be copied and emulated.

“Amen-Ra-Osiris-Horus”

Adding to this mythical *mélange*, we have seen that Horus is essentially solar in nature, having even been identified with the main Egyptian sun god Re/Ra, as well as the Greek sun god Apollo, along with possessing many solar attributes, including as the morning and rising sun, born again each day. In his *Guide* to the Egyptian rooms

¹ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 39, 41, 42.

² Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 58.

³ Allen, T., *HPT*, 13. For “purification” by Horus, see Pyramid Texts PT 268:372a-d/W 175, PT 323:519a-b/T 8, PT 606:168-1685/M 336, etc.

⁴ See, e.g., *American Heritage Dictionary* (4th ed.), “baptize,” no. 2.

⁵ Allen, T., *HPT*, 13.

⁶ Allen, T., *HPT*, 13.

at the British Museum, Budge summarizes the Egyptian solar mythology, revealing that the many separate personas are all aspects of the one sun:

The Sun has countless names, Ptah, Tmu, Ra, Horus, Khnemu, Sebek, Amen, etc.; and some of them, such as Osiris and Seker, are names of the Sun after he has set, or, in mythological language, has died and been buried.... All gods, as such, were absolutely equal in their might and in their divinity; but, mythologically, Osiris might be said to be slain by his brother Set, the personification of Night, who, in his turn, was overthrown by Horus (the rising sun), the heir of Osiris.¹

Confirming this observation, Hornung states that “in the New Kingdom, Amun, Ptah, Osiris, Khnum, and most of the other great gods and even goddesses of Egypt can be understood as solar deities.”² In discussing the multiple faces of the sun god, Griffiths notes a comparison to Christianity:

A text of the Ramesside era...refers to the triple positions of these gods during the course of day: “I am Khepri in the morning, Re in the afternoon, Atum in the evening.” Three forms or modes of the sun god are implied—an example, thus of a modalistic trinity, comparable to the later Christian concept.³

This “trinity” or triad is one of a number with Egyptian deities, as we will continue to see here. Another such Egyptian triad/trinity appears on a papyrus from the 19th Dynasty (1292-1182 BCE) called the “Leiden Hymn to Amun”:

All gods are three:

Amun, Re, and Ptah, who have no equal.
He who hides his *names* as Amun,
he is Re in *appearance*,
his *body* is Ptah.⁴

Regarding the Egyptian and Christian trinities and scriptural parallels, Morenz is prompted to conclude, “The multifarious links between Egypt and Judaeo-Christian scriptures and trinitarian theology can already be traced with some degree of plausibility.”⁵ In his discussion of “Egyptian trinities,” as he terms them, Morenz includes a section addressing the idea of “unity in plurality.”⁶ The German scholar also points out that a “trinity” can likewise be created out of the “primordial One” and “the first pair of gods to be begotten.”⁷ Regarding the motif of the trinity, Morenz further states:

¹ Budge, *AGFSR*, 2-3.

² Hornung, *CGAE*, 55.

³ Redford, 256. See also Morenz, 145.

⁴ Assman, *SGAE*, 8; Johnson, P., 86; Kamil, 148.

⁵ Morenz, 257.

⁶ Morenz, 142ff.

⁷ Morenz, 145.

...thus three gods are combined and treated as a single being, addressed in the singular. In this way the spiritual force of Egyptian religion shows a direct link with Christian theology.¹

Various of these “triplets” or other groupings often symbolize aspects of the one sun, as likewise described by Hornung in his definition of “Sun god”:

Many Egyptian gods can be the sun god, especially *Re*, *Atum*, *Amun*, and manifestations of *Horus*. Even *Osiris* appears as the night form of the sun god in the New Kingdom. It is often not defined which particular sun god is meant in a given instance.²

Hornung also cites the text the “Litany of Re, first inscribed in tombs around 1500 B.C., which invokes the sun god, as in a litany, in ‘all his forms.’”³ He further explains that, while these forms are specific to the underworld, “part of the pantheon...is thus turned into a set of differentiated manifestations of a single sun god.”⁴ Hornung next describes this “Great Litany” as a text “wherein the sun god is invoked seventy-five times in various names and forms...”⁵ The various forms of Re in this text include the deities Atum, Tefnut, Geb/Seb, Nut, Isis, Nephthys, Horus, Nun and many others.⁶ So fused are these manifestations of the sun god—these individual gods, as they were—that “Litany of Ra” translator Dr. Naville was led to declare:

The importance of this text consists in this, that it gives us an idea of the esoteric doctrine of the Egyptian priests, which was clearly pantheistic, and which certainly differed from the polytheistic worship of the common people.⁷

While Hornung evinces that the Egyptian religion could never be pantheistic, as it did not view the entirety of creation as divine,⁸ Naville is undoubtedly correct that the Egyptian priesthood explored concepts within its esoteric mysteries that differed from what was taught exoterically, as Hornung himself addresses in *The Secret Lore of Egypt*. Moreover, the pantheism evident in Egypt is expressed by Morenz thus: “...Egyptian society, and the individuals who comprise it, cannot escape from God, but encounter him everywhere.”⁹ Here Morenz is compelled to speak of God in “Christian” terminology, giving the concept a monotheistic interpretation as well.¹⁰

¹ Morenz, 255.

² Hornung, *CGAE*, 283.

³ Hornung, *CGAE*, 283.

⁴ Hornung, *CGAE*, 56.

⁵ Hornung, *AEBB*, 137.

⁶ *Records of the Past*, VIII, 368ff.

⁷ *ROTP*, VIII, 104.

⁸ Hornung, *CGAE*, 128.

⁹ Morenz, 5.

¹⁰ Various arguments can be dismissed with the apology that we are “reading Christian theology” into something, succumbing to what is termed *interpretatio christiana*. The distinctions made by theologians suffer the opposite, as they attempt to drive whatever

Regarding the confusion between gods within Egyptian mythology in general, Brigham Young University professor Dr. Hugh W. Nibley (1910-2005) states:

Over a century ago Edouard Naville observed “that there is nothing harder than to recognize the distinctive marks of each individual deity” in an Egyptian picture, for while “every divinity has specific emblems which are like ideograms of his particular qualities,” these are swapped around with a total indifference toward the individual gods, the distinctions between them having become almost expunged by the process of equating, equalizing, interpenetrating, as names, forms, powers all become confused in a common basic nature which is the mark of the Egyptian gods.¹

In discussing the Book of the Dead, the same phenomenon is explained by Renouf:

In reading this and almost every chapter of the Book of the Dead, it is absolutely necessary to bear in mind that different divine names do not necessarily imply different personalities. A name expresses but one attribute of a person or thing, and one person having several attributes may have several names. It is not implied in this chapter that the Sun is the Nile or the Inundation, but that the same invisible force which is manifested in the solar phenomena is that which produces the inundation; He is the Inundator. But he has many other names and titles.

In this chapter [64], as in others before it, the speaker at one time talks in terms identifying him with some divinity, and at another as a simple mortal petitioning some favour.²

In the Book of the Dead, the deceased is made to take a variety of roles, demonstrating the interchangeability of the characters in these recitations, utterances or spells. For example, in BD 69, the dead king is made to say, “...I am Horus the Elder on the Day of Accession, I am Anubis of Sepa, I am the Lord of All, I am Osiris.”³ The unity of divine and mortal personalities is also recognizable in the Coffin Texts, as at CT Sp. 485, in which the deceased says, “...I am Horus and Thoth, I am Osiris and Atum.”⁴ In this regard, the fusion of the deceased and the many deities—not a few of whom possess solar

wedge they can between Pagan and Christian religious concepts. These efforts are at times disingenuous, however, as apologists perceive Pagan myths through their own Christian minds, consistently interpreting the myths as if the ancients had viewed them as one-time “historical” events, for example, when in fact they are cyclical, revolving around nature, and thus change over time. Moreover, one could make the argument in the reverse for the early Christian effort constituting the result of Judaism manifested through an *interpretatio pagana*.

¹ Nibley, “All the Court’s a Stage.”

² Renouf, *EBD*, 122.

³ Faulkner, *EBD*, 107; Allen, T., *BD*, 63; Bunsen/Birch, 212; Budge, *BD* (1899), cxxxiv. Birch renders this part regarding Horus as, “The Osiris is the elder Horus, the rising Sun.”

⁴ Faulkner, *AECT*, II, 130.

attributes—also needs to be kept in mind as we attempt to outline the Egyptian mythos and ritual.

As another example of the tendency towards syncretism, in addition to Horus-Ra is the sun god Amen—"the hidden god"—combined with the sun god Re/Ra as "Amen-Ra," etc., reflecting their interchangeability. "Osiris-Ra" or "Ra-Osiris" is yet another dual god addressed in the texts.¹ So interchangeable are Osiris and Horus that there is even a hybrid god Osiris-Horus or Asar-Heru.² Indeed, the two are so close that one sees discussion of the "Horus-Osiris king," referring to the pharaoh, who is both Osiris and his son, such as by Anthes, who repeatedly refers to "Horus-Osiris" as a single entity.³

In any event, as the sun progresses through the day and night, "he" becomes a number of characters—or changes his epithets and characteristics, as it were, as he merges with other gods—beginning with the rising sun, Horus, who at noon becomes Re, who at sunset becomes Tmu or Atum, who at midnight becomes Osiris, who becomes Horus at sunrise, and so on. As Hornung says, "...in his role as the sun god Re, Horus is 'tomorrow,' whereas Osiris is 'yesterday'..."⁴ Archaeologist and Egyptologist Dr. Karol Myśliwiec, director of the Polish Academy of Science, also describes Atum's role as a sun god: "Atum's solar associations are with the sunset and the nightly journey of the sun, when he appears with a ram's head or, sometimes, as a tired old man walking with a stick."⁵ At some point, these gods are in effect all one, as are their adversaries.

Polytheistic Monotheism/Monism?

Many of the gods in the Egyptian pantheon fuse together in the syncretism previously discussed, for the reason, it has been averred, that the Egyptian mysteries long ago taught monotheism, with one overarching god whose numerous "members"—assorted gods and goddesses—expanded and merged with each other. Concerning this development, Assman remarks that "most polytheisms known to the history of religion are complex in the sense that they reckon—or better, live—with a divine realm beyond which there is a 'god' or 'highest being' who created the world and its deities."⁶ Although it is widely believed that monotheism was essentially introduced by the pharaoh Akhenaten/Amenhotep IV (d. c. 1334 BCE), the consensus of earlier Egyptologists was that monotheism and polytheism existed "side by side" at least as early as the 5th Dynasty, around 2500 BCE.⁷ We would venture that such concepts may have been devised much

¹ Budge, *BD* (1899), 91.

² Budge, *HVBD*, 60. See also Campbell, *IAHN*, 142.

³ Anthes, 177, 178, 182, 192.

⁴ Hornung, *CGAE*, 154.

⁵ Redford, 25.

⁶ Assman, *SGAE*, 11.

⁷ Budge, *EBD* (1967), xciii.

earlier in humankind's long history, possibly tens of thousands of years previously. In any case, regarding the confusion and confounding of gods, following his famous brother, Champollion-Figeac was prompted to write, "The Egyptian religion is a pure monotheism, which manifested itself externally by a symbolic polytheism."¹ Yet, whether or not Egyptian religion was essentially monotheistic has been the subject of much debate.

Concerning the sacred fusion of Egyptian gods, James Allen comments:

Although the Egyptians recognized most natural and social phenomena as separate divine forces, they also realized that many of these were interrelated and could also be understood as *different aspects of a single divine force*. That realization is expressed in the practice known as "syncretism," the combining of several gods into one.²

As is the case in other religions and mythologies, such as the Indian, the Egyptian faith at times has appeared to represent a sort of "polytheistic monotheism" or "polytheistic monism" that ascribes divinity to a vast proportion of creation, while maintaining the cosmos to be one. Hence, in the Egyptian texts we find prayers to one god or goddess that include the names or epithets of many other gods or goddesses.

As concerns the debate as to whether or not the structure could be deemed "monotheistic," Hornung asserts that "one must note that Egyptian religion, which retained its plurality of gods to the end, never became a monotheistic faith, even in its most 'philosophically' tinged utterances."³ In recounting this debate, in *The Gods of Egypt*, Dr. Claude Traunecker of Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg remarks:

In 1971, Erik Hornung published a definitive work on the divine world of Egypt, and it has enjoyed a rather large consensus. Since 1975, Jan Assman, a specialist in solar hymns, has published a series of studies in which he has relaunched the debate concerning the apparent contradiction between a largely polytheistic divine realm and the concept of a single deity...⁴

The cases for the varying perspectives will not be rehashed here.⁵ Despite any finer points of understanding, the Egyptian religion was no more monolithic than is the Indian, in which basically anything goes, from monotheism to polytheism.⁶ The determination of which

¹ Budge, *EBD* (1967), xcii. See also Budge, *FFGAE*, 52.

² Allen, J., *ME*, 44. (Emph. added.)

³ Hornung, *CGAE*, 53.

⁴ Traunecker, 11.

⁵ For an extensive discussion of this debate as to the status of monotheism in Egypt, see Hornung's *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, 17ff. See also Traunecker's *The Gods of Egypt*.

⁶ From the earliest Pyramid Texts, the Egyptian religion at that point would seem to be decidedly polytheistic. See Hornung, *CGAE*, 24.

came first, polytheism or monotheism, does not concern us here, although it is wise to keep in mind that the multiplicity of deities frequently resolve to the One, especially as concerns an original creator. For example, the Coffin Texts repeatedly refer to the “primeval god” or the “Primeval One,” who is “superior to the primeval gods” (CT Sp. 39)¹ and who is “older than the gods” (CT Sp. 317).²

This spiritual oneness is also exemplified in CT Sp. 858, in which Osiris is invoked to “take your son” and “put him within yourself.”³ And at CT Sp. 949, the speaker says, “I know you, I know your names, I live as you, I come into being as you....”⁴ Concerning the concept of oneness within the Egyptian faith, Assman remarks, “Time and again the Egyptian sources predicate the oneness/singleness/uniqueness of a god.”⁵ Indeed, the great God Sun is “the One Alone with many arms.”⁶

As Dr. Traunecker also states, “Rare are deities who make do with having a single function, and many are those who declare themselves to have been the Sole One at the first moment of creation.”⁷ This contention for the multiplicity of function and interchangeability of roles will be understood more so for the Egyptian religion than for, say, the Greek or the Roman, with their distinct deities and well developed myths.

In *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, Hornung discusses Egyptian syncretism, remarking:

...The natures of the individual gods are not clearly demarcated, so that aspects of one god can be identical with those of another. Here we encounter a phenomenon that is of the greatest importance for Egyptian religion and its deities: “syncretism.”⁸

Hornung continues with a thorough attempt to establish a distinction between the Egyptian religion and syncretism, by delineating “identification” and “inhabitation” of gods, with a hybrid god such as Amun-Re indicating not that they are one but that Amun is “inhabiting” Re or vice versa: “the degree of intimacy and the duration of the combination vary from case to case.”⁹ For all the laborious distinctions, however, we are left with important instances of identification and syncretism to the point where disentanglement is futile, and undesirable. As Hornung further comments:

...in his daily descent into the realm of the dead the sun god Re must also become “Osiris,” for he dies and appears in the underworld as a

¹ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 31.

² Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 241.

³ Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 37.

⁴ Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 86.

⁵ Assman, *ESRNC*, 134.

⁶ Assman, *ESRNC*, 153.

⁷ Traunecker, ix.

⁸ Hornung, *CGAE*, 91.

⁹ Hornung, *CGAE*, 91.

“corpse.” But in this case the Egyptians imagine that there is a true union. Unlike the rest of the deceased, Re does not assume the title “Osiris”; instead he incorporates the ruler of the dead into his own being so profoundly that both have one body and can “speak with one mouth.” Osiris does indeed seem to be absorbed into Re, and becomes the night sun, which awakens the underworld dwellers from the sleep of death.¹

The remark concerning “the Egyptians” imagining a “true union” is salient, in that despite all the theological banter, what the *average* Egyptian perceived of his or her religion is significant in regard to what any creators of a *new religion* would wish to incorporate to gain adherents. In the long run, the simpler understanding would win out among the masses, as it does also with Hornung, as in his definition of “Sun god” previously provided. Thus, the average Egyptian would see true union and believe that Osiris was “absorbed” into Re and had *become the night sun*, to be born again or resurrected as his son, Horus, the morning sun. Moreover, in his definition of “Re,” Hornung himself must fall back on syncretism to explain the sun god’s pervasive and all-encompassing role by declaring that Re “is combined syncretistically with many other gods...”²

Thus, in discussing the myths and characteristics of Osiris or Horus, for example, we could reasonably ascribe to one qualities of the other. The same can be said of the attributes of other gods, as well as those of the Horus-king and Horus-priest, all of which could be attached to the god himself in a description of his mythical “life.”

A Fluid Faith

When analyzing Egyptian myths, in addition to knowing about the syncretism of deities, it is important to realize that, because they *are* myths, there will often be different versions of any particular story or motif. Such is the case with the myths surrounding Osiris, Isis and Horus, as well as many other Egyptian gods going back thousands of years, as is to be expected in consideration of all the interchangeability.

The lack of uniformity in myths is remarked upon by Dr. Robert A. Armour, a professor emeritus at Virginia Commonwealth University:

We cannot expect to find unity in a mythology that spanned over three thousand years. Moreover, there were many cult-centers, each with its own gods, such as Heliopolis, Memphis, Elephantine, Thebes. As each of these centers enjoyed its period of political ascendancy, it assimilated its own theology with some of the others in order to achieve dominance. This process brought many of the myths into general accord but left others in a state of conflict which was never resolved.³

¹ Hornung, *CGAE*, 96.

² Hornung, *CGAE*, 281.

³ Armour, 14.

Concerning the fluid state of the Egyptian religion, G.D. Hornblower asserts:

To clear the ground, it must be understood that Egyptian religion does not consist of one connected logical system but is composed of a series of cults which have been roughly synthesized to fit, more or less harmoniously, into a general national system; the synthesis was incomplete and led to endless contradictions and anomalies, some of them quite startlingly, as all Egyptologists know.¹

Anthes concurs with this assessment:

It is in accordance with the prominent feature of Egyptian religion that mythological concepts are very often contradictory.²

As one important example of how myths change over the centuries, regarding Plutarch's identification of Isis with the moon, Dr. Diana Delia White, a professor of History at Rhode Island College, remarks, "As Isis' associations in the pharaonic period were purely solar, her metamorphosis into a preeminent lunar deity among Greeks and Romans is quite extraordinary."³ Indeed, in addition to her many other roles, including her later characterization as the moon, Isis was considered a sun goddess as well.⁴ This example ranks as another of many demonstrating how myths change to incorporate cultural exchange as well as further observations of natural phenomena.

It can thus be stated that the Egyptian concepts of God and divinity were not set in stone but changed and mutated over the thousands of years. Even today our own concepts of God and religion are fractured into as many pieces as there are people, and the Egyptian faith over a period of thousands of years was also perceived and conceived by many millions of minds. It is a fact that there was a great deal of evolution and change in Egyptian religion, particularly as it came into contact with other cultures. It is equally true that Christianity has altered and transmuted as it has come under numerous influences from around the known world. Indeed, it can be asserted to a large degree of certainty that Christianity is a remake of earlier religions, mythologies and spiritual traditions, especially the Egyptian.

The Moon and Morning Star

When studying Egyptian religion and mythology, it should be noted that its deities are not "simply" sun gods but symbolize a wide variety of elements, qualities or aspects of life as well. These various gods or epithets represent not only the physical sun but also its disk, light and heat, as well as the cosmic power behind it. Although

¹ Hornblower, *Man*, vol. 37, 153.

² Anthes, 174.

³ Clarysse, 540.

⁴ Zabkar, 63.

Osiris, for example, is largely a sun god, the ancients also recognized that the sun's light is reflected in the moon, a symbol of Isis, who gives birth to Horus, the "reincarnation" of his father, as the "light of the world." As another example, regarding the lunar nature of the Egyptian god Thoth or Tehuti, as well as the soli-lunar characteristics of Egyptian myth in general, Renouf remarks:

It must be sufficient here to say that Thoth is a personification of the moon, and that the relations of solar and lunar phenomena are the sources of a great deal of Egyptian mythology.¹

Thoth's soli-lunar nature is also made clear in the Coffin Texts, as at CT Sp. 1092, in which the god is said to be "chosen as Lord of the Morning,"² along with CT Sp. 1096, which says, "This is Thoth who is the sky; the Eye of Horus is on his hands in the Mansion of the Moon,"³ and in which a variant names the god "Moon-Thoth."⁴

In this regard, Osiris was both solar and lunar, as related by Anthes: "...later texts assure a close connection between Osiris and the moon..."⁵ Osiris is also the god of the star Sirius, of the river Nile, of water in general, of fertility, and of the resurrection and afterlife, these latter two precisely as was said of the later, Jewish rendition, Jesus Christ. In addition, like Jesus, who is identified in the biblical book of Revelation (22:16) as the "morning star"—one of many astrotheological themes in Christianity—so too is the Osiris equated in the Coffin Texts with the Morning Star, as at CT Sp. 722: "...for N is the Morning Star, N is the beautiful w³-star of gold which went up alone from the horizon..."⁶ Also, in the Pyramid Texts (PT 519:1207a) appears "Horus of the Duat" called the "morning star."⁷ In the Book of the Dead (BD 109), the speaker says: "I know the Powers of the East: Horus of the Solar Mount, the Calf in presence of the God, and the Star of Dawn."⁸ Here Renouf translates the hieroglyph for "Horakhty" as "Horus of the Solar Mount," who is the "sun-calf," as well as the "Star of Dawn" or *morning star*. These "powers of the east" constitute the "Souls of the Easterners."⁹ The "morning star" identity of Horus is remarked upon by Egyptologist Dr. László Kákosy (d. 2003) in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years*:

The astral associations of Horus are of ancient origin. The composite celestial deity in the Pyramid Texts who is addressed as "god of the morning, Horus of the netherworld" and has "four contented faces"

¹ Renouf, *EBD*, 18.

² Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 151.

³ Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 152.

⁴ Faulkner, *AECT*, III, 153.

⁵ Anthes, 187.

⁶ Faulkner, *AECT*, II, 274.

⁷ Allen, T., *HPT*, 37; Mercer, 200; Faulkner, *AEPT*, 192. James Allen (P 467) renders the phrase "Morning god, Horus of the Duat..." (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 160.)

⁸ Renouf, *EBD*, 182.

⁹ Faulkner, *EBD*, 113. Dr. T. George Allen calls the "powers of the east" the "eastern souls," which are "Re-Harakhte." (Allen, T., *BD*, 86.)

can perhaps be identified with Venus. The cosmic character of Horus was again emphasized in the New Kingdom and the Late Period, when he was associated with more planets.¹

Regarding Horus's multifold nature, Anthes concludes, "The heavenly Horus was a star as well as the sun, and perhaps also the moon."²

Horus thus represents a multiplicity of gods and possesses a wide variety of attributes, including various astrotheological characteristics. Moreover, we may recognize here a seed for the strange imagery found elsewhere in the bizarre biblical book of Revelation, in which we find not only the morning star or Venus but also the four "beasts," who at one point all say, "Amen."³ (Rev 5:14)

Horus is Osiris Reborn

The "confounding" of deities so abundant within Egyptian religion constitutes not an error but may be deliberate since, as stated, the myths and characteristics of gods and goddesses frequently blend into and overlap each other. The interchangeability of Osiris and Horus, for example, becomes evident on a daily basis, as the night sun Osiris at dawn *becomes* Horus, as we have already seen. Regarding Osiris's transformation into Horus, James Allen states:

Within Nut's womb, he embodied the force through which the Sun received the power of new life, to appear at dawn as *Osiris reborn in his own son*, the god Horus.⁴

Indeed, Horus is the living god, the earthly incarnation of the father, precisely as was said of Christ and God the Father. Adding to this understanding of Osiris's renewal as Horus, as well as their relationship to the king/pharaoh, Griffiths states:

Horus as the living Pharaoh and his father Osiris as the dead Pharaoh: these are the basic elements in the royal funerary cult. Osiris *per se* is the king of the domain of the dead, so the dead Pharaoh is naturally regarded as aspiring to sovereignty in the afterworld in the form of Osiris. At the same time the royal burial rites adumbrate [foreshadow] the birth of a new Horus in the son who succeeds the deceased...⁵

Concerning this interchangeability, Anthes remarks:

Since Horus was the living king and Osiris the deceased one, the slaying of Osiris was strictly speaking the slaying of Horus, who in consequence of his being slain, became Osiris.⁶

Once again, we have the king identified as both Osiris and Horus, as well as Horus and Osiris identified with each other, leading to a

¹ Clarysse, 134.

² Anthes, 171, 185-186.

³ For the astrotheological meaning of Revelation, see *The Christ Conspiracy*, 265-273.

⁴ Allen, J., *AEPT*, 9. (Emph. added.)

⁵ Griffiths, *OOHC*, 3.

⁶ Anthes, 200.

blending of personas and attributes. In such a climate, for the purpose of easily and quickly describing important aspects of the Egyptian religion—especially as they concern correspondences with Christianity—certain sources have therefore combined at times the various Horuses with each other and with Osiris, along with other appropriate entities, such as other deities, as well as kings/pharaohs, priests and patients, relating the data in a composite and comprehensive narrative.

We further contend that this very same confounding was done by the creators of Christianity when they took over elements of the Egyptian religion and rolled them into one encompassing myth called the gospel story. In essence, when studying this situation, the scenario that reveals itself is that the creators of the gospel story in large part appear to have been scouring the vast Library of Alexandria in Egypt, as well as collections elsewhere, such as at Antioch and Rome, and picking out various aspects of pre-Christian religions to combine with Jewish scriptures in their creation of a cohesive Christian mythical tale that was set fallaciously into history and presented as a “true story.”

As is abundantly clear, the sun in the Egyptian religion symbolized life, purification, salvation, resurrection and immortality, among many other important qualities, such as omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence. Indeed, in Egypt over a period of thousands of years, the sun in all its permutations constituted a symbol of the *divine*, and was beseeched as such in countless prayers and invocations, directed at not just the solar disk or orb itself but also as the unseen power behind it, as well as its heat, light and all its various aspects and movements through the heavens.

Many of the major and most beloved deities in the Egyptian pantheon symbolized aspects or epithets of the life-giving, sacred sun, including the very important god Horus, who represents the renewal of the nightly “solar life force,” Osiris, as the solar orb passes through the treacherous darkness of the underworldly Duat. If the parallels between Horus and Jesus are real and accurate to a sufficient extent, meaning the claims are true that there is significant Egyptian influence on Christianity, it is reasonable and scientific to suggest that the story of Jesus Christ—which is *highly implausible* as “history”—ranks largely as a rehash of the mythos of the ancient, exceedingly revered sun god.

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“Figures praying, accompanied by a star,” reflecting the
astrotheological Egyptian religion.
 (Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Egyptians*, III, 48)

Copyrighted image

**“Pe, or the heaven, with the sun and stars. The figure beneath is
 Seb.”**
 (Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, III,
 206)

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"The Twelve Stages in the Life of the Sun and Its Twelve Forms
Throughout the Day."
(Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization*, 89)

"The Sun Springing from an Opening Lotus Flower in the Form of
the Child Horus."
(Maspero, *History of Egypt*, I, 193)



Horus or Rā in his disk.

Hieroglyph representing either Horus or Ra in his Sun Disk.
 (Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, cxiv)

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Isis and Nephthys attending the composite god Re-Osiris.
 (Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings*, 129)

Ásár Heru



Osiris-Horus.

Hieroglyph for hybrid god Osiris-Horus
 (Budge, *A Hieroglyphic Vocabulary to the Book of the Dead*, 60)

Horus versus Set

“The Christian Trinity ousted the old triads of gods, Osiris and Horus were represented by our Lord Jesus Christ, Isis by the Virgin Mary, Set the god of evil by Diabolus [Satan]...and the various Companies of the Gods by the Archangels, and so on.”

Sir Dr. E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Tales and Romances* (12)

“The god Seth, called Typhon by the Greek writers, was the Satan of later Egyptian mythology. He was the personification of the evil in the world, just as Osiris was the personification of the good.”

Dr. Philip Van Ness Myers, *Ancient History* (38)

“Horus is presented in manifold aspects in Egyptian mythology. Mainly as the vindicator of the principle of Good; as the avenger of his father, Osiris, who succumbed temporarily in his struggle against Evil embodied in the god Set, who corresponds to our Satan. Set was represented as a beast with long pointed ears and erect tail, and may perhaps be the origin of the popular representations of Satan, the ears having come to be regarded as horns.”

Rev. Henry Windsor Villiers Stuart, *Egypt After the War* (191)

Despite the common misconception that the ancients as a whole were primitive, many cultures of old were in reality highly sophisticated, as evidenced not only by their impressive architectural accomplishments such as the massive ruins around the world, but also by other artifacts such as political organization, language development and philosophical achievement. One of these advanced cultures was that of Egypt, which created along with its magnificent edifices such as the Great Pyramid and the Temple complex at Luxor/Karnak both a sophisticated cosmology and an elegant writing system in which to express it. When we examine the religious and mythological beliefs of the Egyptians, in fact, we discover there is little theological they did not consider and incorporate into their faith that we possess in modern religions today. In other words, the Egyptians in particular not only were highly spiritual but also either originated or developed many of the cosmological and theological concepts found in current popular religions, such as the afterlife, immortality, heaven, deity, soul and so on. As has been seen, one of the main religions in which we find much Egyptian influence is Christianity, in both its myths and rituals. Like many other faiths, the Egyptian and Christian religions share a strong overall theme of good versus evil and light versus dark. In the case of the Egyptian religion, good and evil were manifested in several gods, including and especially Horus and Set, while their Christian counterparts are Jesus and Satan.

As we explore the original Egyptian mythos and ritual upon which much of Christianity was evidently founded, it needs to be kept in mind that the gods Osiris and Horus in particular were frequently

interchangeable and combined, as in "I and the Father are one." (Jn 10:30) In fact, as part of the mythos, Osiris was "re-born under the form of Horus," as previously noted. This particular development exists in significant part because these figures are largely sun gods, and when one sun god "dies," as occurred with Osiris daily, monthly and annually, another replaces and *becomes* him, as happens with Horus taking the place of his father. Like Osiris's many followers, whose prayers included a request to *become* "the Osiris" in the afterlife, so too does Horus *become* his father after Osiris's demise, which is caused by the sun god's enemy, the serpent of the night and Prince of Darkness, Set. Concerning Horus battling Set, Dr. Badrya Serry, director of the Antiquities Museum at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt, says:

It is known that the child Harpocrates struggled with his uncle Seth to revenge his father...and attain victory upon him. Since he overcame the powers of darkness (Seth) [he was] likened to the Greek hero Heracles who battled the powers of evilness.¹

To reiterate, as is the case with myths around the world, the story of Osiris was not neatly laid out in an entry in an ancient encyclopedia, but, rather, appears in bits and pieces in primary sources such as the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead, which were compiled and altered over a period of centuries, beginning possibly up to 7,000 years ago. Nevertheless, nearly 2,000 years ago Plutarch did tell the myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus in some detail and in a fairly cohesive manner as a story, as we have seen.

In the commonly known depiction of his death, the good god Osiris is killed by his evil brother Set, who first encloses the god in a container or "ark" and later dismembers him into 14 pieces, scattering the parts around Egypt.² In the version by Plutarch, Osiris's wife-sister, Isis, finds most of the pieces, except the god's phallus, and eventually Osiris is resurrected and emerges from the "other world" to instruct his son Horus to battle and defeat "Typhon" (19, 358B), the Greek name for the god Set or *Seth*.³

Concerning the conflict between Osiris and Set, Budge remarks, "Details of the engagement are wanting, but the Pyramid Texts state that the body of Osiris was hurled to the ground by Set at a place called Netat, which seems to have been near Abydos."⁴ The Pyramid Texts, in fact, contain another, *older* version of Osiris's death, in

¹ Goyon, 121.

² Diodorus relates that the pieces numbered 26. However, Murphy notes that, as the god became more popular, so too did his parts, eventually numbering 42 for each of the Egyptian nomes. This increase occurred as each priesthood wished to claim a relic for its own "tomb of Osiris," reflecting the enormous relics industry that continues to this day with countless bogus artifacts of the Christian faith. (For more, see *The Christ Conspiracy, Suns of God and Who Was Jesus?*)

³ Plutarch/Babbitt, 47.

⁴ Budge, *LEG*, xlix.

which he was said to have been *drowned* by Set.¹ According to a later magical papyrus, this drowning took place in the “water of the underworld.”² This aspect of the myth is interesting in light of the fact that in Greek mythology the sun god Helios was said to have been drowned in the river Eridanus or “*Jordan*,” in which Jesus was likewise said to have been baptized or dunked.³

The earliest versions of Osiris’s passion⁴ depict Set simply as slaying the god, without the ark and the dismemberment, while later sources attach 72 villainous helpers to assist in Set’s murderous crime against Osiris.⁵ The story of Osiris being entombed in a tree and found by Isis at the city of Byblos in Phoenicia, also related by Plutarch (15, 357A), is later than the one in which his parts are simply tossed around Egypt.⁶ The Byblos tale may have been added by the Egyptians after 1500 BCE in order to explain the similar myth of the god Adonis-Tammuz in that part of the Near East.⁷ In any event, the different versions of Osiris’s death illustrate how myths vary and are not set in stone, an important point that needs to be kept in mind.

The Astrotheology of the Passion

Although appearing bizarre and incomprehensible, the story of Osiris’s death possesses, like so many other myths, underlying *astrotheological* meaning that makes sense and teaches some of the important workings of the natural world. As Plutarch (13, 356E-D) relates, Osiris was entombed in the ark on the 17th day of the month of Athyr, “when the sun passes through Scorpion [sic],” and in the 28th year of either his reign or his life.⁸ Coincidentally, the 17th of Athyr is equivalent to the same day that the equally mythical biblical character Noah was said to have been shut up in *his* ark, the Hebrew patriarch too having been identified as a sun god or solar hero.⁹ The

¹ Griffiths, *OOHC*, 9. The drowning is alluded to in PT 33:24d/N 125, PT 364:615d/T 196, PT 423:766d/P 7. (Mercer, 25, 124, 145; Allen, J., *AEPT*, 255, 80, 101.)

² Griffiths, *OOHC*, 9.

³ According to Cooper, in Egyptian the Jordan was called “Iu-Ru-Ta-Na.” (Cooper, *AAD*, 259.) This name is evidently the same term—*Iurutana*, *Iarutana* or *Eri-tana*—for the constellation of the river Eridanus. (Massey, *BB*, 1, 192; *AEW*, I, 293.)

⁴ The term “passion” refers to the sufferings of the god and does not belong exclusively to the Christian faith, despite the biases and oversights of dictionaries, as well as the claims of Christian apologists. Osiris’s sufferings have been referred to as a “passion” by numerous writers for a century or more, including by Dr. Franz Cumont, who related: “Since the time of the twelfth dynasty, and probably much earlier, there had been held at Abydos and elsewhere a sacred performance similar to the mysteries of our Middle Ages, in which the events of Osiris’s passion and resurrection were reproduced.” (Cumont, *OORP*, 98.)

⁵ Gray, 114.

⁶ Plutarch/Babbitt, 39; Gray, 114.

⁷ Gray, 120.

⁸ Plutarch/Babbitt, 37.

⁹ See my book *The Christ Conspiracy*, 238.

notion that Osiris was 28 when he suffered his passion is also interesting, in light of the fact that Jesus was likewise said to have been around 28-30 when he began his ministry, depending on the source. Indeed, one early Christian tradition also places Christ's *passion* at when he was "only twenty eight, and one-quarter years of life,"¹ quite possibly in imitation of the Osiris myth.

In the solar myth, the enclosure in the ark during the zodiacal sign of Scorpio (October 24-November 22) symbolizes the weakening of the sun as it approaches the winter solstice. The number 28 is likewise astrotheological and represents the days of an average or mean monthly lunation, after which the soli-lunar god Osiris is torn into 14 pieces—the number 14 signifying the days of the moon's waning per month—and then resurrected, as the moon waxes again. As Plutarch (42, 367E) remarks, "The Egyptians have a legend that the end of Osiris's life came on the seventeenth of the month, on which day it is quite evident to the eye that the period of the full moon is over."²

Again in chapter 42 (368A), Plutarch further explains the astrotheological meaning of the Osiris myth:

Some say that the years of Osiris's life, others that the years of his reign, were twenty-eight; for that is the number of the moon's illuminations, and in that number of days does she complete her cycle. The wood which they cut on the occasions called the "burials of Osiris" they fashion into a crescent-shaped coffer because of the fact that the moon, when it comes near the sun, becomes crescent-shaped and disappears from our sight. The dismemberment of Osiris into fourteen parts they refer allegorically to the days of the waning of that satellite from the time of the full moon to the new moon....³

Regarding this tale, astronomer Dr. Edwin C. Krupp, the director of the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, remarks:

The numbers are significant. Although the moon completes its phases in 29½ days, the number 28 was used symbolically for this interval....

The 14 pieces of the body of Osiris sound like the 14 days of the waning, or "dying" moon, and on the main ceiling of the Dendera temple are inscriptions and pictorial reliefs that leave no doubt. In one panel, an eye, installed in a disk, is transported in a boat. The eye, we know, was a symbol of the sun or moon. Thoth, the ibis-headed scribe god of wisdom and knowledge, pilots the barge. Thoth was closely associated with the moon and counted the days and seasons. The text for this panel refers to the period after the full moon, and 14 gods accompany the eye in the disk.⁴

¹ CE, "Christmas,," III, 726.

² Plutarch/Babbitt, 103.

³ Plutarch/Babbitt, 103.

⁴ Krupp, 18.

The “age” when Osiris dies thus symbolizes the “lunar mansions,” as “celebrated” in the Book of the Dead as “twenty-eight.”¹

In addition, the 72 “co-conspirators” in the later version of the Osiris myth likewise possess astrotheological meaning, representing the 72 *dodecans*, or divisions of the circle of the zodiac into 5 degrees each. Interestingly, in the gospel story (Lk 10:1) Jesus is depicted with either 70 or 72 “disciples,” the number 70 often symbolizing the dodecans as well. Modern translations of Luke 10:1 such as the NLT, NIV and ESV prefer the number as 72, as do modern apologists, referring to them as “the Seventy Two.”

Furthermore, the drowning of Osiris in the “river” Eridanus evidently signifies the god’s passage through the well-known *constellation* of the same name. The subsequent avenging of Osiris’s murder by his son(s) Horus also constitutes an astrotheological motif. In the myth as presented by Plutarch (18, 358A), Horus the first son of Osiris and Isis is already alive before Typhon/Set tears Osiris’s body into 14 pieces.² Indeed, Osiris is depicted by Plutarch as later coming from “the other world” to train this Horus to battle Set. At a certain point, the other, newborn Horus becomes the avenger of his father’s death by killing Set, the god of catastrophe, pestilence and darkness.

The battle between Horus and Set is mentioned in many places in Egyptian texts, in which the dynamic duo is called, among other things, the “Two Combatants” or “Two Contestants,” as well as the “Divine Pair.”³ The story of this conflict includes various details such as Horus’s association with Re, his sometime father, in attempting to destroy Set, as well as numerous other characters such as the blacksmiths on Horus’s side and the vast army of “bad guys” with Set. Some of these particulars signify astrotheological elements added as the science of astronomy became more sophisticated. In addition to the example of the 72 dodecans, Horus’s battle with Set as depicted in the inscriptions at the relatively late site of Edfu includes him slaying Set’s monsters, the crocodile and hippopotamus, which symbolize two of the “circumpolar stars” that are “washed out” or removed from sight when the sun’s rays appear on the horizon.⁴ With or without the details, of course, the contention between Horus and Set ultimately represents the battle of good versus evil and light versus dark, once more displaying astrotheological meaning.

Who is Set?

One of the five children of Geb or Seb, the earth-god, and Nut, the sky-goddess, the notorious Egyptian god Set is described in BD 17 as

¹ Bonwick, 175.

² Plutarch/Babbitt, 45.


³ Allen, J., *AEPT*, 42; Mercer, 76; Renouf, *EBD*, 140.

⁴ Lockyer, *DA*, 151.

“that god who steals souls, who laps up corruption, who lives on what is putrid, who is in charge of darkness, who is immersed in gloom, of whom those who are among the languid ones are afraid.”¹ As the one “who is in charge of darkness,” Set “comes to carry off the light.”² In this regard, the life-destroying adversary in the Coffin Texts (CT Sp. 49), for example, is named as the “Evil One who is in darkness.”³

Regarding Set’s role, James Lewis Spence (1874-1955) remarks, “As the days began to shorten and the nights to lengthen it was thought that he stole the light from the sun-god.”⁴ Hence, Set is a *thief in the night* who robs Osiris/Horus of his strength and life. As the monster that prevents the sun from shining, Set also symbolizes storm clouds:

This battle may likewise be found in the sky by day when storm-clouds darken the face of the sun, so that the myth of the serpent and the solar deity Re merges into the old story of the conflict between Horus and Seth. Thus the serpent becomes more and more identical with Seth, as being an additional manifestation of the wicked god who later is said to have fought against Horus in the form of other water monsters as well, such as the hippopotamus and the crocodile. This confusion of ‘Apop and Seth, however, does not take place until after the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁵

In the papyrus of the scribe Nesi-Amsu (c. 305 BCE) from Thebes, in a section entitled “The Book of Overthrowing of Apepi” appear the “enemies of Ra” called *Sebau*, *Qettu* and *Sheta*, written with some variant of  and translated also as “devils,” “enemies,” “fiends,” “foes,” “rebels” and “sinners.”⁶ About these characters, Renouf remarks: “The *sebau* are the enemies of the sun, either as Ra or Osiris. I believe that under this mythological name the dark clouds are personified.”⁷ Thus, we discover yet more personified entities with astrotheological meaning. These *Sebau* are also equivalent to the conspirators or “Sami” of the Set myth, which, we have seen, represent the 72 dodekans. The *sebau/sami*, et al., are equatable with “sinners” in the Christian mythos.⁸

Set/Seth’s identification with Re/Ra’s enemy Apepi/Apophis can be further seen in the depiction of the Judgment Hall in the tomb of Ramesses VI, in which Osiris’s adversary is portrayed as a pig, representing “both Seth and Apophis.”⁹ Prior to his identification with the monster Apophis, enemy of the sun god Re, Set was not always

¹ Faulkner, *EBD*, pl 10; Allen, T., *BD*, 31.

² Bonwick, 133.

³ Faulkner, *AECT*, I, 46.

⁴ Spence, *AEML*, 100.

⁵ Gray, 107.

⁶ Gardiner’s A14A, Z3; Budge, *OHPNA*, 425, 522, etc.; Faulkner, *EBD*, pl. 5.

⁷ Renouf, *EBD*, 6.

⁸ Massey, *EBD*, 110.

⁹ Hornung, *VK*, 159.

considered "evil" but was worshipped as a divine being, evidenced by the pharaonic choice of the name "Seti" or "Sety." In this regard, Griffiths remarks:

Only in the Greco-Roman period does [Seth] achieve in Seth-Typhon a kind of satanic persona in the Greek papyri; and even then it is not Satanism in the full Iranian sense of a creator of evil beings.¹

At a certain point, Set or *Seth* thus became demonized and was abandoned as a king-name:

The last king bearing Seth's name belongs to the Twentieth Dynasty, about 1200 B.C. The interesting evolution of this god into a Satan is due to the influence of the Babylonian myth of Tiamat.²

It has also been claimed that, like the mythical Babylonian monster Tiamat, Set himself was originally a *Semitic* god imported into Egypt,³ an interesting assertion in light of the contention that Set is equivalent to *Satan*, the word "Satan" being related to the Hebrew or Semitic term *shaytan*, meaning "adversary" and later adopted into Christianity. Regarding Set/Seth, James Bonwick, a member of Dr. Birch's prestigious Society of Biblical Archaeology ("SBA"), states:

[French Egyptologist and SBA member] Pleyte has no doubt about Set being the *El* or *Elohim* of the East, and the same as Baal. Finding that curious passage in the book of Numbers about the destruction of the sons of Seth, he says, "It is probable that the Septuagint meant by the 'Sons of Seth,' the people who rendered homage to the god Seth (Set), the same divinity who was adored in Egypt by the Palestino-Asiatic tribes."⁴

Concerning the "children of Seth" at Numbers 24:17, Dr. Samuel Sharpe (1799-1881), an Egyptologist and translator of the Bible, relates, "Seth is an Egyptian name for Satan, and by the children of Seth, the Samaritans seem meant."⁵ Moreover, mythologist Dr. Louis Herbert Gray (1875-1955), a professor at the University of Nebraska, calls Seth "the general patron of Asiatics and of warriors,"⁶ and Rev. Dr. Sayce writes:

Set or Sut became for the later Egyptians the impersonation of evil. He was identified with Apophis, the serpent of wickedness, against whom the sun-god wages perpetual war; and his name was erased from the monuments on which it was engraved. But all this was because Set was the god and the representative of the Asiatic invaders who had conquered Egypt, and aroused in the Egyptian mind a feeling of bitter animosity towards themselves.⁷

¹ Redford, 253.

² Gray, 392.

³ Bonwick, 130.

⁴ Bonwick, 135.

⁵ Sharpe, 28.

⁶ Gray, 155.

⁷ Sayce, 162.

Therefore, it would appear that the Egyptian god Set was originally one of the Semitic Elohim, the plural gods worshipped by the Israelites.¹

Set as Satan

As we have seen, the villain in the myth revolving around the sun god Re is named Apophis, Apop, Apap, Apep or Apepi, all variants of the same word. Like the myth of Horus versus Set, Re battles on a daily basis the “great serpent” of the night sky, Apophis, defeating him at dawn. Indeed, Apophis is the “devourer” and the “fiend of darkness.”² Regarding the serpent motif, SBA member Rev. Henry Windsor Villiers Stuart states:

...It is remarkable that Satan—our evil principle—is spoken of also as the Great Serpent, and like Apop is represented as chained in the bottomless pit.³

Another transliterated *Egyptian* title for the destructive and fiendish serpent is “Sata,” as found in Budge’s translation of the Papyrus of Nu, which reads:

I am the serpent Sata whose years are many. I die and I am born again each day. I am the serpent Sata which dwelleth in the uttermost parts of the earth. I die, and I am born again, and I renew myself, and I grow young each day.⁴

Thus, even Set/Sata dies and is resurrected on a regular basis.

In his *Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, using the same transliteration Budge calls Sata the “serpent-fiend in the Tuat.”⁵ The Tuat or Duat is defined as “a very ancient name for the land of the dead, and of the Other World.”⁶ The “land of the dead” and “other world” also signify the “cave,” “tomb” or “underworld” of the nightly terrain through which Osiris (or Re) must pass daily, to be born again at sunrise as his son, Horus.⁷ This journey is described in the ancient Egyptian book “Amduat” or “Am Tuat,” as summarized by Budge:

When the Sun-god set in the west in the evening he was obliged to travel through the Tuat to the eastern sky, in order to rise again on this earth the following day.⁸

¹ See “The Myth of Hebrew Monotheism” in *The Christ Conspiracy*.

² Spence, 13.

³ Stuart, 345.

⁴ Budge, *BD* (1899), 278.

⁵ Budge, *EHD*, I, 640.

⁶ Budge, *EHD*, II, 871-872.

⁷ See Murray, *LAE*, 50-51: “Great and mighty is the river of the sky, flowing across the heavens and through the Duat, the world of night and of thick darkness, and on that river floats the Boat of Ra.... Slowly goes the Boat of Ra, passing through the Duat, to regions of thick darkness, of horror and dismay, where the dead have their habitations, and Apep lies in wait for the coming of Ra.”

⁸ Budge, *AIAEL*, 245.

Thus, Apophis/Sata is the same as the monster Typhon/Set battled every day by Horus. In other words, all of these names—*Apap*, *Apep*, *Apepi*, *Apop*, *Apophis*, *Seth*, *Set*, *Sut*, *Sutu*, *Sata*—represent epithets for the same god or phenomenon: Both “the Arch-Enemy of Osiris, and the personification of Evil,”¹ as well as “the Arch-fiend and great Enemy of Ra.”² Hence, it can be truthfully stated that Set is *Satan*, and the battle between Jesus and Satan—Light versus Darkness—represents a formulaic rehash of the far more ancient contention between Horus and Set. Indeed, if Set is Satan, then Osiris/Horus is Jesus, as has been maintained for centuries for this and many other reasons.

Naturally, this identification of Set/Seth with Satan was made by early Christians, including and especially the Egyptians or Copts. In a similar vein, Dr. Claas Jouco Bleeker (1898-1983), a professor of Religious History at the University of Amsterdam, states: “It can be proved that a number of Gnostic conceptions go back to ancient Egyptian religious thoughts....”³

Adding to this assertion, Dr. Wilson B. Bishai (d. 2008), a professor emeritus of Arabic for the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, remarks:

A very plausible story of ancient Egypt that fitted very well into the Biblical record of creation was the legend of the rebellion of *Seth* against *Horus*. *Seth*, a synonym of hatred and disobedience in Egyptian mythology, caused all sorts of troubles to befall man in revenge for his banishment by *Horus* and the rest of the Egyptian Ennead. In the minds of the early Egyptian Christians, Satan, as a parallel to *Seth*, became the rebel and the enemy of man, who began to lurk in ambush in order to drag him (man) into disobedience.⁴

In discussing the perception of Seth in Egyptian texts, Dr. Bleeker further relates:

It is true that Seth is condemned and punished, but his evil power is not broken forever. That is the theme of another number of well-known texts which paint Seth as a sort of Satan figure.⁵

We also learn from Griffiths that eventually Set/Seth is “treated as a kind of Satan, especially in the Greek magical papyri.”⁶ So close is this correlation that the editors of *Mythology: Myths, Legends and Fantasies* comment, “The Egyptian name for Seth, *Sutekh*, may have evolved into the word Satan.”⁷

¹ Budge, *LOLM*, liii.

² Budge, *LEG*, xlii.

³ Bishai, 128.

⁴ Bishai, 128.

⁵ Bleeker, *HT*, 136.

⁶ Plutarch/Griffiths, 389.

⁷ Parker, Janet, 297.

Like Satan, Set rebels against his divine birth. Also like Satan, who in the Old Testament/Tanakh is merely “the Adversary,” rather than the personification of Absolute Evil that he became in the New Testament, Set/Seth was not always considered absolutely evil. Like Yahweh, God of the Old Testament, who was the orchestrator of both good *and* evil, Set is represented as the “twin” of Horus, half of the dual god who is a single being: Horus-Set.¹ Yet, Set is also a separate entity who becomes locked in an eternal struggle with his alter ego and enemy, Horus, and, again, at a certain point the “old thunder-god” Set became “the representative of all evil” and “a real Satan.”²

Like Satan, Set/Seth too had his devoted followers, possibly equivalent to the “sons of Seth” recorded in the Old Testament and generally thought to refer to the descendants of Adam’s third son Seth. Like Adam’s other son Cain, who kills his brother Abel, Seth/Set is depicted as murdering *his* brother Osiris. And like other characters in the Old Testament, such as Abraham and Moses, in the “patriarch” Seth we seem to have yet another instance of an ancient tribal god demoted to human status.³

In addition, as does Satan with Jesus (Rev 12:1-5), Set attempts to kill Horus,⁴ with Set representing the “god of the desert,” while Jesus is tempted in the desert by Satan. Furthermore, like Satan, who has a forked tail, Set too is depicted with a forked tail. In fact, Set’s portrayal with bizarre ears and an anteater-like snout makes him appear creepy and demonic:

Seth was identified with an animal that had the body of an elongated jackal or greyhound; a long neck; a thin, curved snout; rectangular, upraised ears; and a stiff, forked tale. Seth was often portrayed with a human body and the head of this beast.⁵

Set is the serpent of the night, the Prince of Darkness and other qualities in line with Satan, while Horus is the “sun of righteousness” and the Prince of Light, much like Christ. As we have seen and will continue to see, there are many such correspondences between the myth of Osiris/Horus and that of Jesus. In the end, the tale of Jesus versus Satan, we contend, is equally astrotheological and mythical as the prototypical epic drama of Osiris/Horus versus Set. This readily

¹ Budge, *FFGAE*, 375. In the Pyramid Texts and elsewhere, as another one of the gods born on the five intercalary or epagomenal days completing the 365-day year, Horus the Elder is also said to be, like Set, the son of Geb or *Seb*—the earth god and “father of the gods”—just as Jesus was the son of *Jo-seph*, the earthly father of God.

² Gray, 109.

³ Adding to this contention of Egyptian culture influencing that of Judea, Israel and Palestine, the name “Moses” is “probably of Egyptian origin.” (*NSHERK*, VIII, 24.)

⁴ The scriptures in the biblical book of Revelation (12:1-5) discuss the “male child” or “man-child” who will “rule all the nations with a rod of iron...” (RSV). Although there has been some debate as to the identity of this “male child,” as Pastor Chuck Smith says, “Most scholars agree that the ‘man child’ is Jesus Christ.” (*Blue Letter Bible*, “Commentaries.”)

⁵ *WBE*, 321.

discerned Egyptian precedent for a “Christian” concept is noteworthy, as it easily demonstrates the apparent influence of Egyptian religion upon Christianity.



“Horus and Seth united in a single being, the god ‘with the two faces,’ from the Amduat.”

(Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings*, 115)



“Horus spearing Apap, or Apôphis.”

(Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, III, 155)

Born on December 25th

“As the annual rebirth of the sun’s light, the winter solstice was important in most parts of the world. In fact, the Romans already had an ancient winter festival whose seven days bracketed the solstice.... Choosing the birth of Christ as December 25 successfully integrated long-standing popular traditions with the imagery of a new religion, and the theme of renewal is still part of Christmas.”

Dr. Edwin C. Krupp, *Echoes of the Ancient Skies* (81)

“The well-known solar feast...of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date [for Christ’s Nativity].”

“Christmas,” *Catholic Encyclopedia* (III, 727)

“...every year the temples of Horus presented to worshipers, in mid-winter (or about December 25th), a scenic model of the birth of Horus. He was represented as a babe born in a stable, his mother Isis standing by. Just in the same way is the birth of Christ dramatized today in every Roman Catholic church in the world on December 25th. The Roman writer Macrobius makes the same statement about the representation of the birth of Horus in the temples...and adds that the young god was a symbol of the rebirth of the sun at that date. The fact is, at all events, beyond question. We are brought to the very threshold of Christianity. The whole world by the year 1 A.D. was familiar with the Egyptian statues or pictures of Isis with the divine babe Horus in her arms.”¹

Joseph McCabe, *The Story of Religious Controversy* (169)

“The symbol of the savior-child was the eye of the sun newly born every year at the winter solstice.”

Dr. Bojana Mojsov, *Osiris: Death and Afterlife of a God* (13)

Although many people remain unaware of the real meaning behind “Christmas,” one of the better-known correspondences between pre-Christian religion and Christianity has been the celebration of the god’s birth on the 25th of December.² Nevertheless, it has been argued that this comparison is erroneous because Jesus Christ was *not* born on December 25th, an assertion in itself that would come as a surprise to many, since up until just a few years ago only a miniscule percentage of people knew such a fact. Indeed, over

¹ McCabe says that this display is related in an “early Christian work, the ‘Paschal Chronicle’ (Migne ed. xcii, col. 385).” However, a close scrutiny of that text does not reveal this particular contention in certain details, such as the winter-solstice birthday or the specific name of Horus. Nevertheless and quite importantly, as addressed below, *the passage does discuss the Egyptian virgin-born savior in a manger centuries before the common era.*

² The use of the English phrase “December 25th” does not imply that this date was written as such in ancient times. Neither the name nor the calendar involved is relevant, as what is important is that this time of the year represented the *winter solstice*, however it may be called.

the many centuries since the holiday was implemented by Christian authorities, *hundreds of millions of people* have celebrated Jesus's birthday on December 25th, or *Christmas*, so named after *Christ*. Moreover, hundreds of millions continue to celebrate the 25th of December as the birth of Jesus Christ, completely oblivious to the notion that this date does not represent the "real" birthday of the Jewish son of God.¹ Lest "Christmas" eventually end up being acknowledged widely as the birthday not of the Jewish messiah but of the *sun*, it needs to be immortalized that for hundreds of years that day *was* celebrated as the birthday of Jesus Christ. In this regard, a century ago Dr. K.A. Heinrich Kellner, a professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn stated concerning "Christmas, or the feast of our Lord's birth," that the "whole Church, and all the sects, agree in observing the 25th December as this date."² This type of proclamation came in America only after a hard-fought battle for nearly a century in which certain fundamentalist Christian groups strenuously objected to December 25th for Christ's birthday, specifically because the date was too Pagan, before "Christmas" became an official federal holiday in 1870.³ Although it took a long time for "Christmas" to catch on, it was not particularly long before the real significance of the date—i.e., the winter solstice—had been completely severed to the point where very few people were aware of its existence. So it was for the bulk of humanity up until recently, largely because of the efforts to educate about the true meaning of "Christmas" as the winter solstice.

In actuality, it would be highly refreshing for the facts regarding the *true* meaning of Christmas to be known around the world: To wit, "Christmas"—or the *winter solstice*—represents the birth of the *sun god* dating back thousands of years. In other words, as Christian apologists who claim Christ was not born on December 25th must agree, Jesus is *not* the "reason for the season," which is precisely the point of this discussion. In addition, since it is our contention that the character in the gospels called "Jesus Christ" is mythical, it is quite futile to argue that December 25th is not the "real" date of his birthday, since *myths* do not have "real birthdays." The truth is that, as is typical of *myths*, Christ's birthday from the earliest times of his conception has been variously placed, on a myriad of dates such as: January 5th, January 6th, March 25th, March 28th, April 19th, April 20th, May 20th, August 21st, November 17th and November 19th.⁴ Many

¹ In 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 847, officially declaring December 25th to be the birthday of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "Whereas on December 25 of each calendar year, American Christians observe Christmas, the holiday celebrating the birth of their savior, Jesus Christ..."

² Kellner, 127.

³ See Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas*. See also Stathis, "CRS Report for Congress: Federal Holidays: Evolution and Application."

⁴ Acharya, SOG, 231.

said to have conceived six months before the Virgin Mary did likewise. The astrotheological nature of this tale is evidenced further at John 3:30, in which the Baptist is made to say mysteriously in reference to Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease." While this peculiar statement would make little sense if applied to human beings, it may provide a clue that the gospel writers in fact knew that they were discussing the winter and summer sun as it moved from solstice to solstice.

Prior to its celebration as the birthday of Jesus Christ, the 25th of December/winter solstice was claimed as the nativity for a number of other gods and godmen, including the Perso-Roman god Mithra. As another version of the solar hero, the Greek god Dionysus too was asserted to have been born at the winter solstice, when his followers held a wild celebration in his and the sun god Apollo's honor.¹ This winter-solstice birth may also have come with Dionysus's identification with the Egyptian god Osiris, since, as Plutarch states (35, 364E), "Osiris is identical with Dionysus."² Concerning winter-solstice "Feasts and Festivals," the *Encyclopedia Britannica* reports, "The common people in China have a similar custom on the arrival of the winter solstice..."³ The EB also names several other cultures as having winter celebrations, including the Mexicans and Peruvians. Even the lunar Jews had their winter holiday, or "Feast of the Dedication," as mentioned at John 10:22. The winter solstice in Latin is called *bruma*, serving as one source of the Roman celebration called "the Brumalia."⁴

Of course, the Romans were famed for their lengthy winter festival of Saturnalia, which ended on the first day of the solstice, after which another celebration was held. In this regard, in his analysis of the Egyptian zodiac, Dr. William Mure (1799-1860), a lord-rector of Glasgow University,⁵ provides a "curious passage" from the works of the Emperor Julian (331-363 AD/CE), who reinstated Pagan worship—and possibly paid for it with his life:

Immediately after the completion of the month of Saturn (December), we celebrate magnificent games to the sun, called the feast of the Invincible Sun, in which it is not permitted to introduce any of those unseemly though necessary rites, which belong to the previous month; but the Saturnalia being at an end, the feast of the Sun comes next in succession; nor was it the intention of the ancients, that this solemnity should be fixed to the very day on which the god

¹ Thomson, 481; Sophocles/D'Ooge, 136fn.

² Plutarch/Babbitt, 85.

³ *Enc. Brit.*, X, 220.

⁴ The dates of the Brumalia, a Bacchic or Dionysian festival, have been reckoned as March 12th and September 18th. However, Bell relates that "there are others who say that the Brumalia was a religious festival, celebrated on the day of the winter solstice." This confusion evidently comes from two different terms as the basis for "Brumalia," one referring to the "shortest day" and the other to Bacchus/Dionysus. (Bell, 141)

⁵ Anderson, W., 222.

passes the tropic, but to that on which his return from south to north first becomes perceptible to all; for they knew not yet the nice mode of observation, afterwards discovered by the Chaldees and Egyptians, and perfected by Hipparchus and Ptolemy.¹

In this passage, Julian discusses the festival of the winter solstice, not necessarily on the first day when the sun “passes the tropic,” in other words, December 21/22nd, but when the sun was visibly moving north again, i.e., the 25th. Julian’s remarks confirm that the winter solstice was observed in ancient times not only by the famed astrologers the Chaldeans, but also by the Egyptians. As we can see, the celebration at the winter solstice represents an ancient tradition in many parts of the world,² with the evidence revealing that Egypt possessed this annual celebration concerning the sun god as well.

There appears to be much confusion regarding the dates of December 21st, 22nd and 25th. The fact is that *all* of them represent the time of the winter solstice, which *begins* at midnight on the 21st—equivalent to the morning of the 22nd—and *ends* at midnight on the 24th, the morning of December 25th. To summarize, in the solar myth the “death” of the “old sun” occurs as the days decrease in length towards the winter solstice—the word “solstice” meaning “sun stands still”—as for three days the sun appears not to be moving south or north. Hence, it was considered “dead” in the “tomb” or “cave,” and did not “return to life” until three days later, at midnight on December 24th, when it began its northerly journey again. Therefore, the ancients said the sun was born, reborn or resurrected on December 25th.

Ancient and Modern Voices

It has been the frequent contention of writers since antiquity that, like many other cultures, the Egyptians too celebrated the birth of the sun at the winter solstice, a logical conclusion, considering the reverence with which the sun was held in Egypt. Concerning this cycle in Egypt, in “Isis and Osiris” (65, 378C), **Plutarch remarked that Horus the Child—or “Harpocrates,” his Greek name—was “born about the winter solstice, unfinished and infant-like...”**³ This term “Harpocrates” is a Greek word, which in the original Egyptian is “Her-pa-chruti” or “Heru-pa-Chrat,” etc., meaning “the

¹ Mure, 90-91, citing “Orat. iv. p. 156 Ed. Spannh.” The standard story of Julian’s death may have been a cover for an assassination by Christians, some of whom had previously attempted to murder the emperor. Following Julian’s death, Christian writers such as John Malalas (Chronicle 13.25) claimed that Christ himself had sent “St. Mercurius” (the god Mercury?) to slaughter the Emperor, thereby essentially taking responsibility for the murder. It is therefore possible that Julian was felled not by a Persian arrow but by one from his own soldiers.

² A more in-depth study of the subject is provided in my book *Suns of God*.

³ King, C.W., *PM*, 56. See Plutarch/Babbitt, 153.

morning sun.”¹ This fact of Plutarch stating that Horus was born on “December 25th” is vitally important to keep in mind, because there has been much denial and censorship of it.

Adding to this highly noteworthy assertion are some fascinating remarks by Church father Epiphanius (c. 310-403 AD/CE) in his *Panarion adversus Haereses* (51, 22.4-11):

“...Christ was born on the eighth before the Ides of January, thirteen days after the winter solstice and the increase of the light and the day.” Greeks, I mean the idolaters, celebrate this day on the eighth before the Kalends of January, which Romans call Saturnalia, Egyptians Cronia, and Alexandrians, Cicellia... For this division between the signs of the zodiac, which is a solstice, comes on the eighth before the Kalends of January, and the day begins to lengthen because the light is receiving its increase....²

The “Ides of January” occurred on the 13th of the month, counting back eight days from which, Epiphanius elucidates (51, 24.1), places Christ’s birthday on January 6th—which just happens also to be a “birthday” of Osiris centuries before Christianity was created.³ Epiphanius quotes the “Syrian sage Ephrem” as explaining (away) this date as the “beginning of the increase of the light” with the addition of the 13 days based on Christ and his 12 disciples, rather than for the reason of emulating Osiris’s birth. The “Kalends of January,” of course, is the first of that month, with the eighth day before falling on “Christmas Eve.”

In this intriguing passage from Epiphanius appear two names for Egyptian winter-solstice celebrations, “Cronia” and “Cicellia,” both Greek terms, the latter of which is mysterious but was found also on

¹ Budge, *Mummy* (1894), 271-272.

² Epiphanius/Williams, 50. Talley’s translation of the pertinent passage is as follows: “...Christ was born on 8 before the Ides of January, 13 days after the winter solstice and the increasing of the day and of the light. This day is celebrated by the Hellenes, i.e., by the idolaters, on 8 before the Kalends of January, called among the Romans ‘Saturnalia,’ among the Egyptians ‘Kronia,’ among the Alexandrians ‘Kikellia.’ This is the day on which the change takes place, i.e., the solstice, and the day begins to grow, the light receiving an increase.” (Talley, 104.) Dr. Rahner’s translation is thus: “...Christ was born on the eighth day before the Ides of January, thirteen days after the winter solstice from whence onward the light and the days begin to grow longer. On this day, i.e. on the eight day before the Kalends of January, the Greeks—I mean, the idolaters—celebrate a feast that the Romans call Saturnalia, the Egyptians Cronia and the Alexandrines Cicellia. The reason is that the eighth day before the Kalends of January forms a dividing-line, for on it occurs the solstice; the day begins to lengthen again and the sun shines longer and with increasing strength until the eight day before the Ides of January, viz., until the day of Christ’s nativity...” (Rahner, 137.) The fact that there are various editions demonstrates that they are translations of a real passage found in another language, in this case Greek. This point needs to be emphasized because of the massive tampering and literary fraud that has been committed over the centuries. In addition, Epiphanius’s works traditionally have not been made readily available in English or other languages, perhaps because his chronicle of Christian origins contradicts the received Church history. (See Mead, *DJL*, 389-391.)

³ Rahner, 139.

the tablet of Canopus.¹ The Cronia festival is named for the god Cronus or Kronos, who is called "Saturnus" in Latin. The association of Cronia or Kronia with Saturnalia is also verified by a papyrus fragment found at Oxyrhynchus (I 122.4), dating to the late third or early fourth century and constituting a portion of a letter from "one Gaianus to a legionary prefect," in which appears a brief mention of "the day of the Kronia," referring to the Saturnalia.²

Regarding the festival of Kronia, in "A New Greek Calendar and Festivals of the Sun," classicist Dr. Stefan Weinstock (1901-1971) states:

Accordingly, if we find that at the end of the year the period of 24th November-24th December is called Kronia and celebrated at night, this was not done because [the god] Kronos, banned by Zeus to the Underworld, lives in the dark, but because it was a celebration of the dark period of the year, Helios having descended to the Underworld and having assumed there the name of Kronos.³

Kronia thus ended with the sun's ascent from the underworld, representing its "birthday" on December 25th. Concerning the Kikellia and other such "Christmas" celebrations, Dr. Kellner remarks:

...the Kikellia was kept at Alexandria on the 25th December, in Bostra and Pella, a festival of local observance, and in Rome, the Saturnalia began on the 17th December and lasted until the 23rd. It was only natural that the winter solstice should give rise to a festival, and find its place marked in the Calendar of Feasts. Indeed, in the Roman Calendar of much later date—that of Philocalus—the 25th December is marked as the birth-day of the unconquerable Sun-God...⁴

Per Birch, the Egyptian term for Cicellia, Kykellia or Kikellia is *Kaaubek*,⁵ with this fact of possessing an Egyptian name obviously serving as an indication that the festival did indeed exist in Egypt. These Kikellia—Κικηλλια being a *plural* term in the Greek—are "celebrated in the month of Choiach before the procession (Periplus) of Osiris,"⁶ as written on the stela from Canopus. This famous tablet was discovered in the Eastern Delta in 1886 and contains a decree in both Egyptian hieroglyphs and demotic, as well as Greek, written in 239 BCE as a record of religious festivals created for the deceased "Queen of Virgins," Berenice, wife of Ptolemy III. The decree also established the most accurate calendar of the ancient world, which served as the basis of the Alexandrian calendar introduced by Caesar Augustus (63 BCE-14 AD/CE) in 25 BCE.⁷ The Greek word for

¹ Wilkinson, J., *MCAE*, III, 377.

² Haase, 3088.

³ Weinstock, 41.

⁴ Kellner, 150-151.

⁵ *ROTP*, VIII, 89.

⁶ Budge, *DMC*, 177; Mahaffy, 117.

⁷ Budge, *DMC*, 10-13. The wandering or "vague" Egyptian calendar was reformed by Augustus, producing the "Alexandrian calendar," meaning that the two calendars were

“procession,” περιπλους, can also be translated as “sailing round” or “second course,” a term indicative of a *rebirth* of sorts, when applied to an animate object such as Osiris. This nautical term is appropriate since Osiris is depicted as being shut up in his *ark*, and the sun’s journey is portrayed as taking place in a boat or “bark.” Thus, in the Kikellia we possess a winter-solstice festival representing the marking of the increase of the day and sun’s light, along with the “second course” or restoration/rebirth of Osiris.

Epiphanius’s discussion of the Kikellia or winter-solstice festival continues with him relating that the celebration took place at the large Egyptian city of Alexandria “at the so-called Virgin’s shrine.” Railing against “those who guilefully preside over the cult of idols” and who “in many places deceitfully celebrate a very great festival on the very night of the Epiphany” (51, 22.8), Epiphanius next describes this festival as follows (51, 22.9-10):

First, at Alexandria, in the Coreum, as they call it; it is a very large temple, the shrine of Core. They stay up all night singing hymns to the idol with a flute accompaniment. And when they have concluded their nightlong vigil torchbearers descend into an underground shrine after cockcrow...and bring up a wooden image which is seated naked <on> a litter. It has a sign of the cross inlaid with gold on its forehead, two other such signs, [one] on each hand, and two other signs, [one] actually [on each of] its two knees—altogether five signs with a gold impress. And they carry the image itself seven times round the innermost shrine with flutes, tambourines and hymns, hold a feast, and take it back down to its place underground. And when you ask them what this mystery means they reply that today at this hour Core—that is, the virgin—gave birth to Aeo.¹

Here we find a Pagan sacred icon with a *cross* on its forehead, like that made by Catholic priests on the heads of Christian worshippers. We also discover this sacred image constitutes the divine son of the holy virgin mother within *Paganism*! This Pagan *virgin mother* was styled Core or Kore, meaning “maiden,” as another name for the Greek nature goddess Persephone, who descended each year into the underworld, to return at springtime, bringing life back with her. This descent into the underworld and the resurrection to life are echoed in a number of myths, including that of Jesus, a subject treated more fully later in this present work. Kore’s son Aeo or Aion is called “the eternal,” whose birth from a virgin constitutes a *mystery*, presumably ages prior to the common era. The fact that the virgin-birth motif represents a mystery explains why it is currently not widely known to have existed long before the purported advent of Jesus Christ and his

in harmony that year, in terms of the same dates appearing for the same day. After that, they diverged one day for every four years. (Evans, 19) The new year of the Alexandrian calendar began when the sun was in Virgo; thus, it could justly be said that the year was “born of a virgin.”

¹ Epiphanius/Williams, 51.

alleged virgin birth, because evidently it was written down frequently, and where even rarely it *was* memorialized, many references may have been destroyed or hidden. In this regard, it is our contention that Christianity constitutes little more than the mysteries turned inside out and broadcast openly. Moreover, the fact that there was a “very large temple” at Alexandria devoted to the worship of the virgin mother, even named after her, is indication of her worship as both widespread and ancient.

This same event of the Pagan virgin-goddess giving birth to the divine son was celebrated also by Arabs at the ancient site of Petra in Jordan, as likewise recounted by Epiphanius (51, 22.11):

This also goes on in the city of Petra, in the idolatrous temple there. (Petra is the capital city of Arabia, the scriptural Edom.) They praise the virgin with hymns in the Arab language and call her Chaamu—that is, Core, or virgin—in Arabic. And the child who is born of her they call Dusares, that is, “only son of the Lord.” And this is also done that night in the city of Elusa, as it is there in Petra, and in Alexandria.¹

Regarding Epiphanius’s account, in a chapter entitled “The Virgin Birth,” Joseph Campbell writes:

We learn from the fourth-century saint and churchman Epiphanius (ca. 315-402), for example, of an annual festival observed in Alexandria on January 6, the date assigned to the Epiphany and (originally) the Nativity of Christ, and to his Baptism as well. The pagan occasion was in celebration of the birth of the year-god Aion to the virgin goddess Kore, a Hellenized transformation of Isis.²

As we have seen from Diodorus, in pre-Christian times Isis was also identified with the Greek goddess Demeter, Kore’s mother, who, like her daughter, was likewise perceived to be a virgin.

According to Rev. Dr. Hugo Rahner (1900-1968), a dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Innsbruck, by the time of Epiphanius this “year-god” Aion was “beginning to be regarded as identical with Helios and Helios with Dionysus...”³ Dr. Rahner also discusses the ages of the sun, as related by the Roman philosopher and writer Macrobius (395-423 AD/CE) concerning Dionysus. Thus, in Aion—the “only begotten son of God”—we possess a sun god born of a virgin who is in turn identified with the goddess Isis. Interestingly enough, as Griffiths relates, “Osiris was sometimes identified with Aion,”⁴ which is fitting since Osiris’s other alter ego, Dionysus, is likewise “identical” with Aion.

To summarize this very significant testimony: In Epiphanius’s writings appear important details about the Alexandrian festival celebrating the winter solstice, when the days and sun’s light begin to

¹ Epiphanius/Williams, 51.

² Campbell, *TMI*, 34.

³ Rahner, 139.

⁴ Redford, 307.

increase, and culminating with an image being carried forth of a child with a golden cross who was born at that time of a virgin! Nowhere does Epiphanius apparently attempt to claim that this widely celebrated non-Christian virgin birth at “Christmas” had been copied *from* Christianity, leaving us to conclude that any borrowing occurred in the opposite direction.

The pertinent parts of Epiphanius concerning the winter solstice celebrations in Egypt, with the festival at that time of the virgin Kore giving birth to Aion, as well as the same virgin-birth celebration taking place among the Arabs at Petra, are cited in the Williams translation to be in Heresy 51 at section 22.3-11.¹ However—in a twist worthy of a mystery/thriller—in the Migne edition, which contains the “original” Greek alongside with a Latin translation, *these crucial sections are entirely missing*.² In fact, the Migne text does not resume until 22.19, with a discussion of Christ’s birth in the 42nd year of Augustus’s reign, completely lacking all mention of Egypt, the winter solstice and the Pagan virgin birth. The Williams translation uses Holl’s original Greek text found in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte*, the source of which is the Codex Marcianus, a manuscript (“MS”) from the 10th century. This passage in Epiphanius can also be found in the Dindorf edition (ii, p. 482), which likewise uses the Codex Marcianus. Previously published editions and translations lacking this critical passage were evidently based on a “severely censured and bowdlerized fourteenth century MS [manuscript].”³

Hence, in the Epiphanius passage we possess a case of deliberate and egregious censorship of an ancient author’s work apparently for the specific purpose of preventing information damaging to the Christian tradition from being known. We contend that there have occurred many such instances of censorship concerning numerous correspondences between Christianity and pre-Christian religion, which is another reason why, if some of these important “mysteries” were nonetheless well known in ancient times, they are not today. This particular example of textual tampering removed not only the reference to the Pagan winter-solstice celebrations in Egypt and Greece but also Epiphanius’s discussion of the Pagan *virgin birth* associated with it. Thus, in one fell swoop references to two highly important parallels between Christianity and Egyptian religion were obliterated from the historical record. We can only wonder what else has been suppressed in the same manner, and we can see from erroneous and fallacious commentaries in popular publications and

¹ Epiphanius/Williams, 50-51.

² Migne, 927-930.

³ Mead, *TGH*, 160. “To bowdlerize” means to expurgate or remove parts of, named after Thomas Bowdler, who notoriously edited Shakespeare’s work.

forums, as well as mainstream education, that the effect of such censorship has been thorough.

Fortunately, the earlier manuscript of Epiphanius survived, and we also possess the testimony of Plutarch, as well as that of the writer Macrobius in the fourth century, to verify the facts concerning the Egyptian winter-solstice festival. In his *Saturnalia* (1.18:10), Macrobius likewise reported on the annual Egyptian “Christmas” celebration:

...at the winter solstice the sun would seem to be a little child, like that which the Egyptians bring forth from a shrine on an appointed day, since the day is then at its shortest and the god is accordingly shown as a tiny infant.¹

In *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, Rev. Dr. Thomas Talley, a professor at the General Theological Seminary, discusses the Macrobius passage and remarks:

This similarity to Epiphanius’ description is heightened further by the scholion of Cosmas of Jerusalem [d. 760? AD/CE] on Gregory Nazianzen [329-389 AD/CE], which described the Hellenes [Greeks] as celebrating a festival on the winter solstice with the festal shout, “the virgin has brought forth, the light grows,” and the Calendar of Antiochus, which places beside the entry for December 25 the remark, “birth of the sun, the light increases,” although it notes the occurrence of the solstice itself on December 22.²

The “Calendar of Antiochus” refers to that of a resident of Athens about 200 AD/CE in which, as stated, December 25th is named as the “sun’s birthday” or the “birthday of Helios.”³ In this regard, Dr. Weinstock states:

...In Egypt and in Greece the terms of human life were applied to the Sun. It was thought to be a child at its rise in the morning, an adult at its culmination and an old man at its setting. The same view was applied to its annual course: child at the winter solstice, youth in the spring, adult in the summer, and old man in the autumn. Thus the course of the Sun in its lifetime, and we should expect that states of this “life” were marked in the calendars, from the time that they became solar calendars. Yet in Greek calendars, corresponding entries were missing until Boll published in 1910 the Calendar of Antiochus which contains the entry to 25th December Ἡλίου γενέθλιον· αυξει φως [Birth of the Sun: the light increases], and lends strong support to the famous entry of Philocalus...: “N(atalis) Invicti.” This emergence of the “birthday” of the Sun caused much sensation and some controversy because of its obvious relevance to the Christian tradition concerning Christmas and Epiphany.⁴

¹ Macrobius/Davies, 129. The original Latin of this paragraph in Macrobius is: “...ut parvulus videatur hiemali solstitio, qualem Aegyptii proferunt ex adyto die certa, quod tunc brevissimo die veluti parvus et infans videatur...” (Rahner, 140.)

² Talley, 107.

³ See Beck, 57.

⁴ Weinstock, 41.

Philocalus is the creator of a calendar or chronography, in the year 354 AD/CE of which appears a notation on "December 25th as the *Dies Natalis Invicti*."¹ Moreover, as we can see from Weinstock's remarks, the correspondence between the "birth of the sun" and Christmas was not lost on the various scholars who published and studied the Calendar of Antiochus. The increase of the light on December 25th makes sense, as that day represents the *end* of the solstice, which begins on the 21st/22nd. Concerning the "birthday of the Sun on 25th December," Weinstock continues:

In the preceding night the Egyptians carried from a sanctuary the image of a new-born child, the Sun, and shouted that "the Virgin has born," and that the light is increasing...²

Weinstock concludes, "The full calendar seems to have recorded, in addition to other festivals, phases in the 'life' of the Sun in a way similar to that in which the calendar of our days records the phases in the life of Christ."³

As we can see, the ancient winter-solstice festival is well attested, including by yet another fairly early *Christian* source (Cosmas of Jerusalem or Gregory Nazianzen), complete with *the virgin bringing forth*, independent of Christianity and representing *the birth of the sun*. Needless to say, this astrotheological point cannot be overemphasized.

As to the antiquity of the Egyptian winter-solstice, virgin- or solar-birth drama depicted by Plutarch, Epiphanius and Macrobius, Professor Orlando P. Schmidt makes some interesting contentions regarding the king Amenemhet or Amenemhat I (c. 1991/1985-c. 1962/1956 BCE), styled in Greek "Amenemes" or "Ammenemes," founder of the 12th Dynasty:

Now, as the sun of the Sothic year reached the winter solstice in the seventeenth year of the reign of King Amenemes I, he assumed the title of Nem-mestu, meaning "Re-born," in commemoration of his birth as Harpokrates.⁴

Thus, according to Schmidt the birth of "Harpocrates" at the winter solstice apparently dates back almost 2,000 years prior to the common era, a tradition evidently verified by Plutarch.

The epithet "Nem-mestu" represents the king's "Horus name" and means "repeater of births," "repetition of births" or "reborn." Regarding this title, Budge says:

...*"nem mestu,"* i.e., "repeater of births," the allusion being to the idea that the king was like the Sun-god Re who was reborn daily;

¹ Halsberghe, 144.

² Weinstock, 42.

³ Weinstock, 42.

⁴ Schmidt, 19. The Sothic or Sothic year is "the Egyptian year of 365 days and 6 hours, as distinguished from the Egyptian vague year, which contained 365 days."

this title became a great favorite with the kings of the XIIth [12th] Dynasty.¹

Budge thus verifies that this particular Horus name was indeed popular in the dynasty in question. Intriguingly, according to Budge the Egyptian word for winter solstice is *nen*, which would make a Horus name of “*Nen-mestu*” equivalent to “born of the winter solstice.” The Egyptian word for “birth” is also transliterated as *mesut*² and *mswt*,³ while Amenemhet’s full Horus name was “Horus, the born again.”⁴

In any case, the Horus name “repeaters of births” as a reflection of the sun god’s daily birth, apparently dates back thousands of years in Egypt, and the significance of the winter solstice in Egypt, as well as its perception as the birthday of the sun god, seems evident.

On the subject of Plutarch and Harpocrates, in his *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Budge remarks:

The curious legend which Plutarch relates concerning Harpocrates and the cause of his lameness is probably based upon the passage in the history of Osiris and Isis given in a hymn to Osiris of the XVIIIth [18th] Dynasty.⁵

Here we discover that Harpocrates or “Horus the Child” as the weak or lame sun evidently dates to an Osirian hymn written during the period of 1534-1292 BCE. Budge never seems to return to this “curious legend,” apparently coming from chapter 19 of Plutarch (358E), which mentions Horus as the weak and lame son of Isis but omits the pertinent part about him representing *the sun being born at the winter solstice*, as in chapter 65.⁶ In any event, we have confirmation of the antiquity of Horus being depicted as “lame,” as Plutarch relates, and of a *Horus* name reflecting the sun being born on a daily basis.

Concerning the Osirian myth presented in Plutarch, in *Egyptian Ideas of the Future*, Budge further comments: “When we examine this story by the light of the results of hieroglyphic decipherment, we find that a large portion of it is substantiated by Egyptian texts...”⁷ The British scholar proceeds to name many of the most significant details from Plutarch as having been verified by hieroglyphs, including in inscriptions, papyri and so on. In neither the *Book of the Dead* nor *Egyptian Ideas* does Budge describe the assertion in chapter 65 of Plutarch connecting Harpocrates to the winter solstice. Perhaps as a professed Christian, Budge did not wish to reproduce these

¹ Budge, *EUGPB*, 190.

² Budge, *AERBB*, 434.

³ Allen, J., *ME*, 103.

⁴ Renouf, *Life-Work*, 195.

⁵ Budge, *EBD* (1967), cxv-cxvi.

⁶ In chapter 19 (358E), Plutarch remarks of Isis that she “became the mother of Harpocrates, untimely born and weak in his lower limbs.” (Plutarch/Babbitt, 49.)

⁷ Budge, *EITFL*, 35.

noteworthy remarks concerning the “Christmas” birth of the Egyptian sun god. As can be seen from the debacle with Epiphanius’s work, censorship of this exact sort occurred in important instances. Furthermore, from comments by various writers of Budge’s era, it appears there was a debate as to whether or not to accept the “opinions of the Greek” (Plutarch) with regard to Harpocrates’s nature as the sun born at the winter solstice. Hence, he could hardly have been oblivious to the debate or its subject. In consideration of all factors, including the various ancient testimonies and all the evidence of the importance of the winter solstice in Egyptian culture, much more of which we shall soon see, one must ask whether or not this argument over the “correctness” of Plutarch in his assertions regarding this figure—a debate continued by apologists today—has been based on scientific reasoning or on *religious prejudice*, representing an intentional suppression and censorship of pertinent data. As a demonstration of how thorough has been this censorship and lack of common sense, when contacted about Horus’s birth at the winter solstice, an individual at Budge’s old haunt, the Egyptian Department at the British Museum, pronounced the assertion to be “a fantasy!” The facts, however, prove to the contrary.

If the bulk of Plutarch’s summary of the myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus is sustainable through Egyptian writings, as Budge himself states, can we not reasonably assume that this winter-solstice birth of Horus would be accurate as well? If Horus was not born at the winter solstice, why does Plutarch state that he was, in his form as Harpocrates or Horus the Child? In *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, the Christian editors remark, “Harpokrates was very popular in the Graeco-Roman period.”¹ Therefore, the myths and attributes of the “Horuses” in general would likely be well known. Indeed, *DDDB* further notes, “The birth of Horus is a well-known mythological theme...”² In such an environment, with a popular god whose birth was well known, Plutarch could hardly fabricate something so important and obvious without being caught in a noticeable lie! In reality, other than religious prejudice there is no reason whatsoever to cast such an aspersion on this respected historian’s account of Horus being born at the winter solstice or on December 25th. Indeed, if Harpocrates symbolizes the sun born again *every* morning—as we have seen abundantly—would he not also be the sun born in the morning of the winter solstice? To suggest otherwise would seem to be preposterous—yet another point that needs to be emphasized. **It is obvious that Horus, as the morning sun born every day, was also born on “December 25th” or the winter solstice.**

¹ van der Toorn, 427.

² van der Toorn, 354.

Moreover, why would Macrobius's account of an Egyptian *festival* of apparent antiquity that specifically celebrated the birth of the baby sun at the winter solstice likewise not be valid? Why would the Christian father Epiphanius actually give not one but *two* names for Egyptian winter-solstice celebrations also of apparent antiquity, as well as—testifying against Christian interest—providing an account of a *Pagan virgin birth*, if these contentions were not true? Why did the Christian writer Cosmas of Jerusalem repeat this claim concerning a virgin bringing forth at the winter solstice—was he lying? Would the Egyptians—who were so keenly aware of astronomy, solar mythology and astrotheology—truly be completely oblivious to, or deliberately unaffected by, the revered status of the sun at the winter solstice? Certainly the Egyptians were highly conscious of the all-important solstices, could they possibly fail to integrate them into their solar religion? The Egyptians were very devoted to marking the rebirth of the sun on a daily basis, as part of their religion in regard to the deceased being equivalent to “the Osiris.” In fact, they would have had to go out of their way *not* to celebrate the birth of the sun on the day of the winter solstice. As we shall see, therefore, the assertions of the ancient writers are well founded, as there exists a mountain of evidence that the Egyptians knew well and revered the winter solstice, as *the birth of the sun god*, thousands of years ago.

Hieroglyphic Evidence

In the same manner demonstrated by Budge regarding the bulk of Plutarch's important observations about the Egyptian religion, we can in fact find validation of the Greek historian's assertion regarding the winter solstice as the birth of the sun god in ancient hieroglyphs, as well as many other artifacts indicative of the importance to the Egyptians of that time of year, such as calendars, monuments, clocks, myths and festivals, which we will be exploring here in that order.

In consideration of the evident significance of the winter solstice in Egypt, it might be surprising that in all of Budge's voluminous works there appears to be only one mention of a hieroglyph for the winter solstice, were it not for the fact that the British Egyptologist seems to have been averse to discussing the solstice. In *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, Budge cites this one winter-solstice hieroglyph as appearing in the work of the German Egyptologist Dr. Heinrich (“Henry”) Brugsch-Bey (1827-1894), who studied Egyptian inscriptions for 30 years while sponsored by the Egyptian government, and who was a director of the Egyptian Museum at Berlin. The impression given by this scarcity of the winter solstice in the works of Budge, arguably the most prolific and famous Egyptologist, is that the subject was of little interest to the Egyptians themselves—and this attitude appears to have been carried into more

modern times, as there is a dearth of information on this subject in English.

Yet, in *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum*, which is composed of handdrawn hieroglyphs and difficult-to-read, handwritten German, we find that Dr. Brugsch spends considerable time on a fascinating discussion of the history of the winter solstice in Egypt from at least 1650 BCE, up to the Greco-Roman period concerning the sites of Edfu and Esne under the Ptolemies (325-30 BCE). In this opus, Brugsch provides a number of individual hieroglyphs symbolizing the winter solstice, as well as various *groups* of hieroglyphs that also describe that time of year. It is evident from Brugsch's extensive and absorbing discussion that, despite its minimization in popular publications in English, *the winter solstice was highly significant in ancient Egypt beginning thousands of years before and continuing into the common era.*

As Brugsch explains, the Egyptians not only abundantly recorded and revered the time of the winter solstice, they also created a number of hieroglyphs to depict it, including the image mentioned by Budge, which turns out to be the goddess-sisters Isis and Nephthys with the solar disc floating above their hands over a life-giving *ankh*—the looped Egyptian cross—as the sun's rays extend down to the cross symbol.¹ This image of the sun between Isis and Nephthys, which is sometimes depicted without the ankh, is described in an inscription at Edfu regarding Ptolemy VII (fl. 145 BCE?) and applied to the winter solstice, translated as: "The sun coming out of the sky-ocean into the hands of the siblings Isis and Nephthys."² This image very much looks like the *sun being born*, which is sensible, since, again, Harpocrates, the morning sun, was born *every* day, including at the winter solstice.

Another image depicting the winter solstice portrays a star next to the Horus hawk/falcon with a sun symbol on the right. Brugsch declares that the Horus falcon image is newer than the Isis-Nephthys glyph, which in fact dates back to the time of Ramses III (fl. c. 1186-1155 BCE) in the 20th Dynasty.³ Moreover, in a series of hieroglyphs in the Rhind Papyrus (c. 1650 BCE), the sun of the winter solstice is depicted as "the little sun in his boat in the sea" (in other words, the "sky-ocean").⁴ Brugsch names the date for the voyage of the little sun in his boat as "26. Choiak"—December 22nd, in the Alexandrian calendar.⁵

¹ Budge, *EHD*, 351.

² Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 427.

³ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 409.

⁴ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 409.

⁵ Brugsch also discusses the confusing state of calendars in ancient Egypt, including the Canopic (238 BCE), the Alexandrian/Coptic (c. 25 BCE), the Julian (45 BCE) and that of Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 395/390-342/337 BCE). (Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 442, 444, 445.)

In some inscriptions the single hieroglyphic symbols representing the winter solstice—which can also refer to *morning*—are further appended by hieroglyphs such as *neter* or “god” in order to emphasize that the winter solstice is meant.¹ Since “morning” was clearly considered in ancient Egypt to be the time of the new birth of the “little sun,” it is logical to conclude that using the same symbol for the winter solstice indicates it too represents *the birth of the little sun*, as has been the perception in other cultures and as was related of Egypt as well by ancient authors such as Plutarch, Epiphanius and Macrobius.

As another example of a sign for “winter solstice,” in his book on hieroglyphs (2.3), Horapollo depicts a symbol that represents two feet, “joined, and walking,” signifying “the path of the sun in the winter solstice.”² The fact that there are a number of hieroglyphs meaning “winter solstice” indicates both that the Egyptians were well aware of that time of the year and that they attached importance to it.

In any event, the facts that Horus is considered the sun born in the morning *every day* and that it is *Horus* who is depicted in the later winter-solstice glyph, signify that it was *Horus* who was born at the winter solstice, precisely as Plutarch relates. These winter-solstice hieroglyphs *unquestionably* pre-date the common era by centuries to millennia. All of these factors combined provide solid evidence that the winter solstice in Egypt was not only widely recognized but also viewed as *the birthday of the new sun*, which in turn was “Horus the Child” or Harpocrates, the very popular god during the Greco-Roman period whose birth was well known.

Calendrical Considerations

Further evidence of the importance of the winter solstice in Egypt can be found in the Egyptian calendar itself, emphasizing the various solar milestones, including the solstices, which were *personified as gods*.³ The personification of the winter solstice is the god “Ap-uat,”⁴ also transliterated as *Wepwawet*, who is “identical with Osiris.”⁵ Thus, Osiris too would represent the winter solstice, making this time of year evidently highly significant to the Egyptians. The personified solstices were deemed “Opener of the Ways,” a title apparently reflecting in part their role as the beginning of the Egyptian New Year.

¹ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 410. See also Assman: “...the sun child ‘on the arms of Isis and Nephthys’ is the typical morning icon, which appears in Ptolemaic epigraphy as a hieroglyph for *dw3w* ‘morning.’” (Assman, *ESRNC*, 45.) Zabkar also provides the text from a hymn to Isis from Philae in which appears the morning hieroglyph of Isis and Nephthys with the sun between them floating above an ankh. (Zabkar, 57.)

² Sharpe, 30.

³ The Egyptian calendar, it should be noted, is doubly important, because, as Morenz says, it “forms the basis for our own calendar.” (Morenz, 8.)

⁴ Budge, *GE*, 264.

⁵ Renouf, *EBD*, 99.

Indeed, in Egypt the summer solstice, which was personified by the god Anubis as “Opener of the Ways,” was “paramount, for it heralded the rise of the Nile.”¹ As Herodotus states, the Nile began to overflow around the *summer solstice*—specifically named as such by him (1.19). The Greek historian further remarks that the river continues to rise for about 100 days, at which point it levels off and then starts to drop again, remaining low throughout winter.² This life-giving time was so vital to the Egyptians that at periods over the millennia they opened the new year with the summer inundation of the Nile.

During other periods, the year may have begun at the *winter solstice*, which would provide further evidence that such a time was considered the “birth of the sun,” as in so many other cultures and indicated not only by Plutarch but also by hieroglyphs dating to at least 3,600 years ago.³ Adding weight to this contention of the Egyptian New Year beginning at the winter solstice is the fact that, at the alleged instigation of the legendary Roman king Numa Pompilius or Pompilio (8th cent. BCE), the Roman Civil Year too began at the winter solstice.⁴ As concerns the Egyptian winter-solstice new year, in *Horae Aegyptiacae: Or, the Chronology of Ancient Egypt, Discovered from Astronomical and Hieroglyphic Records Upon Its Monuments*, Egyptologist and professor of Archaeology Dr. Reginald Stuart Poole (1832-1895), another Keeper at the British Museum, states:

“The Season of the Waters,” in the ancient nomenclature, plainly shows that the Tropical Year to which that nomenclature was originally applied commenced at the winter solstice, and not at, nor near, either of the equinoxes, or the summer solstice...

Thus we find that the true period of the commencement of “the Season of the Inundation” was one month before the autumnal equinox; and the end, at the winter solstice; and, consequently, that the Tropical Year anciently in use among the Egyptians commenced at the winter solstice, when all things in Egypt begin anew.⁵

Confirming Dr. Poole’s assertions, Willem Zitman remarks:

¹ Lockyer, *DA*, 57.

² Herodotus/de Selincourt, 92-93.

³ Concerning the solstices and the calendar, Depuydt remarks, “Two other astronomical phenomena have been postulated as the beginnings of a calendar. Again, no indisputable evidence exists and it is not clear how the corresponding calendars would be organized. These phenomena are the winter solstice (cf. Seth 1919-20: 39) and the summer solstice (cf. Leitz 1989: 24-25). In fact, there is no unambiguous evidence that these two phenomena were at all recorded before the Late Period, when such sophistication could be due to Greek or Babylonian influence....” (Depuydt, 16.) While the solstices may not have been unambiguously recorded in writing until the Late Period (664-323 BCE), as we see here there is plenty of evidence that they *were* noted and incorporated into many other aspects of Egyptian life long before then.

⁴ *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, 407.

⁵ Poole, 4-5.

An ancient Egypt source informs us that the Egyptian year originally commenced around the winter solstice. According to the “adjustable calendar,” the beginning of the First Dynasty should consequently be set at around 3518 BCE. Between 3518 and 3514 BCE, their New Year’s Day—known to the Egyptians as I Achet 1—fell on January 16th or 17th (Julian calendar), the day of the winter solstice....

During the reign of Thutmose III [fl. 1479-1425 BCE], this winter solstice from times beyond recall was apparently still observed as a commemorative day on which festivities were held—and considered a cause for rejoicing. Even during the Graeco-Roman period, this commemorative festival was still celebrated in the temples at Edfu and Esna.¹

Zitman also asserts that the “birth and installation of Kingship” occurred on the winter solstice and that this event is mentioned in texts in the temples at Edfu and Esna.² His thesis emphasizes the winter solstice as the marker for the very beginning of the institution of Kingship in Egypt, in other words, the First Dynasty (c. 3100-2890 BCE).³ In this regard, the commemoration of the winter solstice in Egypt would date to at least 5,000 years ago. The winter-solstice year-opening is likewise verified by Brugsch, as the time of the “little sun,”⁴ a logical period for the beginning of a year. Brugsch further explains that in Dendera the new year was celebrated as the “day of the birth of the sun disc” and the reappearance or “rising up” of Isis-Sothis,⁵ the latter epithet representing the star Sirius. In discussing the day of the sun disc’s birthday, *Brugsch is actually translating a group of hieroglyphs*, demonstrating once more that this concept very much existed in pre-Christian Egypt.

Because it was lacking the additional quarter day of the true solar year, the ancient Egyptian calendar was “adjustable,” also called “wandering” and “vague,” such that it differed one day for every four (4) years. If the “New Year” was celebrated on the same day and month, say, 1 Akhet/Thoth, over a span of at least 1,460 years (365 days x 4 years)—the time it takes for the wandering calendar to make its way back to the beginning—during that period the New Year would eventually fall on *every* day of the year, including *both* solstices and equinoxes.

As a result of the wandering calendar, the opening of the year at the winter solstice occurred again just decades before the common era, at which time, as another example of Egyptian astronomical

¹ Zitman, 28-30; citing Brugsch’s *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum*, II, 525. (This citation refers to the reprint in 1968; the original of 1883 is contained in one volume.)

² Zitman, 30.

³ Zitman, 95. It is generally agreed that the First Dynasty began around 3100 BCE, with the period prior to that representing the Pre- and Proto-Dynastic eras. Zitman appears to be proposing an alternative dating for the First Dynasty.

⁴ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 408.

⁵ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 417: “Tag der Geburt der Sonnenscheibe.”

knowledge and the particular importance of the winter solstice, in 46 BCE famed Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes created a new solar calendar for Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE), called the Julian Calendar: "The new system, depending wholly on the sun, would naturally have commenced with the winter solstice."¹ This new system was followed by the creation of the Alexandrian calendar by Augustus around 25 BCE.

Regarding the calendrical confusion, in his extensive study *Civil Calendar and Lunar Calendar in Ancient Egypt*, Dr. Leo Depuydt (b. 1957), associate professor of Egyptology at Brown University, remarks:

Some sense of the level of controversy can be derived from the fact that, on the basis of the same evidence, eminent authorities have postulated, in addition to the civil calendar, calendars based on the star Sirius, the brightest in the sky, on the star Canopus, the second brightest, on the winter solstice, and on the summer solstice. This proliferation of postulated calendars is characteristic of the study of ancient Egypt as compared to that of other ancient Mediterranean civilizations.²

In any event, as is becoming obvious, the Egyptians were well aware of the winter solstice, which they evidently identified with various gods at some point and which during certain eras and in various places opened the Egyptian year.

Monumental Alignments

In our quest, we have examined ancient testimony and hieroglyphic evidence that the winter solstice in Egypt represented the "birth of the little sun," as well as the beginning of the new calendar year, as is sensible in a solar culture. Much evidence for the reverence of the winter solstice in Egypt may also be found in the construction of ancient monuments and edifices. Concerning the annual landmarks of the solstices and equinoxes as recorded in monuments, astronomer Lockyer remarks:

Did the ancients know anything about these solstices and these equinoxes? That is one of the questions which we have to discuss. Dealing with the monumental evidence in Egypt alone, the answer is absolutely overwhelming.³

As we have seen over the past several decades, there are in fact many Egyptian sites that possess astronomical alignments, dating back to the earliest times, as at the site of Nabta (c. 7,000-3,000 BCE) and extending into the common era, including, among others, temples in the Upper Nile valley with "some astronomical alignments," especially "upon the winter solstice sun."⁴

¹ Froude, 425.

² Depuydt, 10.

³ *Nature*, XLIV, 10.

⁴ Ruggles, AA, 146.

Lockyer was one of the earliest to describe the astronomical alignments of various monuments and buildings in Egypt, beginning with the temple enclosure at Karnak near Luxor. Calling the temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak the “finest Egyptian solar temple” and “the most majestic ruin in the world,”¹ the royal astronomer dated its foundation to 3700 BCE, using astronomical measurements, a date that has been rejected because of a lack of archaeological or textual confirmation.² Encompassing twice the area covered by St. Peter’s in Rome, the complex at Karnak comprised “two temples in the same line back to back, the chief one facing the sunset at the summer solstice, the other probably the sunrise at the winter solstice.”³ Concerning the smaller temple of Re-Horakhty, Lockyer states:

The amplitude of the point to which the axis of the small temple points is 26° S. of E., exactly the position of sunrise at the winter solstice.

There is more evidence of this kind....⁴

Although some of Lockyer’s conclusions were in error, including the alignment at the summer solstice by the main temple, other of his assertions were validated by archaeoastronomer Dr. Gerald S. Hawkins (1928-2003), a chairman of the Astronomy Department at Boston University, “whose studies indicated that the solar chamber of Ra-Hor-Akhty, high in the major temple, had a window looking toward the winter solstice sunrise.”⁵ As further related by Dr. David H. Kelley, a professor emeritus of Archaeology at the University of Calgary, a “smaller temple of Ra-Hor-Akhty to the southeast was also aligned to the winter solstice sunrise (noted by Lockyer and confirmed by Hawkins).”⁶ As Kelley also says, Amun-Re’s temple was clearly “oriented to the winter solstice sunrise.”⁷

These contentions are confirmed by Dr. Clive L.N. Ruggles, professor emeritus of Archaeoastronomy at the University of Leicester:

The central axis of the Great Temple of Amun-Ra is aligned toward winter solstice sunrise. The main enclosure at Karnak also contains several other temples with solstitial orientations.⁸

This fact is also verified by Krupp, who clarifies that “the main axis of the great temple of Amun-Re coincided with the direction of

¹ Lockyer, *DA*, 99.

² Lockyer, *DA*, 119. The negative reaction to Lockyer discussed earlier was based both on his status as an “outsider” and on his “extravagant dates and fast-and-loose mythology,” again preventing serious study of archaeoastronomy until decades later with Drs. Gerald Hawkins and Alexander Thom. (Ruggles, *RS*, 477.)

³ Lockyer, *DA*, 102.

⁴ *Nature*, XLIV, 57. See also Ruggles, *RS*, 476.

⁵ Kelley, 268.

⁶ Kelley, 268; Ruggles, *RS*, 479.

⁷ Kelley, 268.

⁸ Ruggles, *AA*, 145.

winter solstice sunrise during the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties.”¹

As more evidence of the winter-solstice alignments, the colossal statues of the pharaoh Amenhotep/Amenophis III (c. 1390-c. 1352 BCE) on the plain of Thebes were oriented to watch “for the rising of the sun at the winter solstice,”² while Amenhotep’s now-lost temple nearby possessed “a series of Sed festival reliefs, and opened to the winter solstice sunrise.”³

While the main temple at Abu Simbel is not aligned with the winter solstice, a small “chapel” of Re-Horakhty at the complex, built by Ramesses II from around 1284 to 1264 BCE, “faces the winter solstice sunrise.”⁴

Adding to this list is the female pharaoh Hatshepsut’s famous temple, as related by Krupp:

Winter solstice sunrise alignment was also found at the solar sanctuary in Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, and these sanctuaries were linked with the Egyptian beliefs about the passage of Re through the netherworld and the transformation of the soul of the deceased pharaoh.⁵

In the *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (“EAAE”) appears a discussion of the small temple at Aghurmi in the Siwa Oasis. This building possesses a window in the west wall of the sanctuary that connects with an opposite window, producing a light-shaft which illuminates the “god’s barge naos in the center of the sanctuary.” EAAE then states:

The fact that Onuris and Tefnut are represented right next to this window and the mythology connected with these two gods suggest that occurrence of this event to have coincided with the winter solstice.⁶

The myth of the god Onuris, *Ini hri-t* or Anhur, an epithet meaning, “He who brings the one that was far away”⁷ or “he who brings back the Eye of the Sun,” and the goddess Tefnut, identified with Mekhit and Sekhmet, all daughters of Re, apparently symbolizes the northerly return of the sun after the winter solstice. Onuris is identified with the god Shu, “the uplifter,” who along with his sister Tefnut represent the two eyes of Horus. Tefnut’s disappearance “caused the absence of light,” while her “return indicated the victory

¹ Ruggles, *RS*, 479.

² *Nature*, Suppl. (1891), 57; Lockyer, *DA*, 79; Ruggles, *RS*, 483.

³ Ruggles, *RS*, 482.

⁴ Ruggles, 483, 484. The temple complex at Abu Simbel was moved in 1968 by UNESCO in order to preserve it from the flooding caused by the Aswan Dam. The monuments were, however, reconstructed at a higher attitude with the “exact same relationship to each other and to the sun.”

⁵ Krupp, xii.

⁶ EAAE, 742.

⁷ Boylan, 35.

of light over darkness and was a signal for rejoicing.”¹ This myth further demonstrates the importance of the winter solstice within Egyptian religion.

The idea of the winter solstice representing resurrection, rebirth and renewal is conveyed largely by these monumental alignments as well. Concerning the “High Room of the Sun and Sokar chapel” of Thutmose/Tuthmosis III’s “Festival Hall,” Krupp remarks:

Hawkins embraced Barguet’s interpretation of the High Room of the Sun and saw in its orientation an allusion to the annual renewal of the sun at the winter solstice—another kind of defeat for darkness and chaos. This idea of cosmic restoration is a central theme in Egyptian religion and belief.²

The fact that at least two temples of Re-Horakhty, those at the important sites of Karnak and Abu Simbel,³ were aligned to the winter solstice provides evidence for the contention that the Egyptians celebrated *Horus* as being born at that time thousands of years ago.⁴

In any event, the various aligned temples were thus logically used to keep time:

We may conclude that there was some purpose of utility to be served, and the solar temples could have been used undoubtedly, among other things, for determining the exact length of the solar year.⁵

These alignments provided for a very dramatic experience as well, especially at the moment when the sun’s rays penetrate the temple during this time of the year:

We should have a “manifestation of Ra” with a vengeance during the brief time the white flood of sunlight fell on it...⁶

Hence, we find not only testimony, hieroglyphs and calendars but also multiple astronomical alignments in monuments, as well as myths, proving that the ancient Egyptians highly valued the winter solstice. In reality, according to Brugsch the winter solstice was so important to the Egyptians, as a period of *rebirth* and *renewal*, that they timed the restoration of their temples (as at Esne) to coincide with it.⁷ In fact, when discussing the rebuilding and restoration of the temple at Esne planned according to the period of the winter solstice, Brugsch specifically calls this time “the rebirth of the sun at the time of the winter solstice.” The language could not be clearer: The Egyptians celebrated the birth of the “little sun” at the winter solstice,

¹ Armour, 34.

² Ruggles, *RS*, 483.

³ See Ruggles, *RS*, 476, 484.

⁴ See Krupp: “Similar open-air sanctuaries dedicated to Re-Horakhty are known at other New Kingdom mortuary temples. In general they face south-east, but they have not been examined in detail.” (Ruggles, *RS*, 492.)

⁵ Lockyer, *DA*, 110.

⁶ Lockyer, *DA*, 111.

⁷ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 419.

so much so, in fact, that, again, they planned their all-important temple restorations around this day.¹

Clockworks

In addition to monumental alignments, we discover a number of ancient Egyptian water clocks, such as at Karnak, designed to measure the winter and summer solstices.² Indeed, that the Egyptians were keen measurers of time may be seen in an inscription from the tomb of the Karnak clock's creator, a "certain official" named Amenemhet who was buried "near the top of the hill of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna in Western Thebes." This very ancient inscription describes the measurements of the "longest night of wintertime" and the "shortest night of summertime," i.e., the winter and summer solstices respectively. This inscription also refers to Egyptian sacred literature as "the books of the divine word,"³ demonstrating the reverence with which these texts were held, no less than the holy books of today.⁴ The official in question dedicated his clock to Amenhotep I (fl. c. 1526-c. 1506 BCE), who reigned in the 18th Dynasty, revealing once again how far back in Egypt stretched this knowledge of and esteem for the solstices. We would wager that such knowledge and reverence in fact goes back much farther.

In *Ancient Egyptian Science*, professor of Historical Studies Dr. Marshall Clagett (1916-2005) depicts another ancient Egyptian clock used to measure the equinoxes and solstices:

The first (and indeed only) Egyptian technical description of an ancient Egyptian shadow clock is found in an inscription in the cenotaph of Seti I (ca. 1306-1290 [BCE])...⁵

Dr. Clagett also describes an Egyptian sundial from Luxor that apparently dates to the Greco-Roman period and that possesses marks to measure, among other things, the winter solstice.⁶

Thus, in Egyptian time keeping we find artifacts measuring the winter solstice dating back over three thousand years, until shortly before the common era.

Winter Solstice Celebrations

Associated with the hieroglyphs, calendars, buildings, myths and clocks were celebrations and festivals, not a few of which in Egypt

¹ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 419: "Die Wiedengeburt der Sonne zur Zeit der Winterwende..."

² So closely have the Egyptian gods been associated with time that it has been repeatedly claimed that the name Horus has been brought forth into English in the word "hours." In his translation of Diodorus, Edwin Murphy—who is not prone to fantasy—remarks, "Horus was also said to have first divided the day into *hours*, which still reflect his name." (Diodorus/Murphy, 32, footnote 51.)

³ Clagett, 69-70.

⁴ In CT Sp. 405 also appears reference to the "Book of the Divine Words." (Faulkner, *AECT*, II, 56.)

⁵ Clagett, 84, 86-87.

⁶ Clagett, 96-97.

revolved around the winter solstice, as we have seen from Plutarch, Epiphanius and Macrobius, among others. In addition to the Kronia and Kikellia festivals already discussed, we find another example of an Egyptian winter-solstice celebration in the inscription from Khnumhotep II's tomb at Beni Hassan (12th Dynasty, c. 1820 BCE), in which the winter solstice is referred to as "the feast of little heat."¹ Such would be an appropriate designation, especially in Egypt, which does not suffer the severe winters of northern Europe, for instance, where the winter solstice could be called "the time of intense cold!" From this inscription we know for a fact that there existed a winter-solstice festival in Egypt almost 4,000 years ago, in addition to the commemoration that evidently occurred at the beginning of the First Dynasty, some 5,000 years ago. In CT Sp. 623, the Osiris remarks upon "those happy monthly festivals of yours of the summer, of the inundation season and of the winter."² As have seen, the Egyptian winter-solstice festivals apparently occurred well into the common era as well.

Festivals of Osiris

According to a lengthy inscription at the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, which was created during the Ptolemaic era (325-30 BCE), a "festival of Osiris" was celebrated from the 12th to the 30th of the Egyptian month of Choiach/Choiak/Coiak/Khoiak/Koiak, ending with Osiris being laid in the "holy sepulchre." Osiris is next shown being resurrected in an image, about which Frazer remarks, "The resurrection of the god could hardly be portrayed more graphically."³ While Frazer, abiding by his "vegetation-god" thesis, sees in this scenario an occasion for sowing grain, with Osiris the "lord of the resurrections" of the grain, it could not have escaped the notice of those who carried out the festival or portrayed it in the inscription that it coincided with the winter solstice, which is when the second half of the month of Koiak fell during this period. Indeed, regarding the "Osiris rites commonly called 'mysteries' and the Festival of Khoiakh which immediately followed them," renowned Egyptologist Sir Dr. Alan H. Gardiner (1879-1963) remarks that "they are intimately connected in the first place with the death and burial of Osiris and the rising up of Horus in his stead..."⁴

The month of Koiak corresponding to December also can be found in the later Alexandrian and Coptic calendars, which are essentially the same. In *Calendrical Calculations* by professors of Computer Science at Tel Aviv University and University of Illinois, respectively, Drs Nachum Dershowitz and Edward M. Reingold state: "The

¹ Brugsch, *AHUEP*, 171.

² Faulkner, *AECT*, II, 207.

³ Frazer, *AAO*, 261.

⁴ Hornblower, *Man*, vol. 37, 153.

Christian Copts, modern descendants of the Pharaonic Egyptians, use a calendar based on the ancient Egyptian solar calendar...but with leap years.”¹ Drs. Dershowitz and Reingold further remark that “the Copts celebrate Christmas on Koiak 29 (which is always either December 25 or 26 on the Julian calendar)...”² Adding to this observation, the 15th of Koiak in the wandering calendar was calculated by scientist Dr. Otto E. Neugebauer (1899-1990), a professor of Mathematics at Brown University, to have fallen on the winter solstice around 70 BCE,³ fitting in with the decades in the latter part of the Ptolemaic era and meaning that the month of Koiak during the first century before the common era also fell in December according to the old Egyptian calendar as well.

The celebration of Osiris’s restoration, resurrection or rebirth in the Dendera inscription resembles the Kikellia from the Canopus stela and as mentioned by Epiphanius, representing the *periplus* or “second course” of the god. We also saw that the Kikellia were said to be celebrating the god’s *birth* from the *virgin mother*, the former identified as the sun god and the latter as Kore, who in Egypt was equivalent with Isis.

In *The Sacred Tradition in Ancient Egypt*, Rosemary Clark describes what is apparently the same festival of Osiris during the time of the winter solstice:

As the winter solstice denotes the literal decline of solar light, festivals celebrated at this time are connected with the renewal of the life force. One of these festivals was the annual raising of the Djed pillar of Asar [Osiris] at his great temple at Busiris in Lower Egypt. This was a symbolic restoration of the Neter’s [God’s] life, an event which followed a ritual reenactment of an episode in the great Osirian mythos, The Contendings of Heru [Horus] and Set. It took place, according to ancient records, on the 30th of Choiach, a time coinciding with the end of the Nile’s inundation over the land. In our calendar the festival begins on December 10 and culminates at the winter solstice (December 22).⁴

The djed pillar—also called a “Tet,” “Tat” or “Tau”—is a very ancient “cult icon of Osiris” that was “erected in a rite symbolizing Osiris’s revivification after death.”⁵ The raising of the djed pillar at the sacred city of Busiris is mentioned in BD 18 and elsewhere.⁶

Adding to the idea of the restoration or *rebirth* of Osiris at the winter solstice, according to Nibley the winter solstice in Egypt was

¹ Dershowitz, 73.

² Dershowitz, 77.

³ Evans, 21.

⁴ Clark, 131.

⁵ Allen, J., *AEPT*, 428.

⁶ Allen, T., *BD*, 32; Faulkner, *EBD*, pl. 12; Bunsen/Birch, 180. Birch translates the pertinent part as “setting up the Tat in Tattu,” the latter being the Egyptian name for Busiris.

called the “Day of the Great Coming Forth,” as found in the Leiden Papyrus (T32, 4/22), which addresses Osiris thus:

“You establish yourself in the land at the feast of the Fixing of Times, on the Day of the Great Coming Forth [*tr.t*, the first day of the winter, the solstice].”¹

Furthermore, the “restoration of Osiris” at the winter solstice—which would essentially constitute *his rebirth in Horus*—is also related by Plutarch (52, 372C):

Moreover, at the time of the winter solstice they lead the cow seven times around the temple of the Sun and this circumambulation is called the Seeking for Osiris, since the Goddess in the winter-time yearns for water; so many times do they go around, because in the seventh month the Sun completes the transition from the winter solstice to the summer solstice. It is said also that Horus, the son of Isis, offered sacrifice to the Sun first of all on the fourth day of the month, as is written in the records entitled the Birthdays of Horus.²

Although here Plutarch discusses Osiris’s water aspect, logic would indicate that the god’s *solar* nature was also being sought at the winter solstice, when the sun is viewed as “weakening,” “dying” or otherwise diminishing, in line with the shortest day of the year. Elsewhere, in fact, Plutarch (39, 366D-E) specifically states that one of the reasons for mourning Osiris was “the day’s growing shorter than the night.”³

In addition, this “Seeking for Osiris” at the winter solstice is deemed by the conservative *Encyclopedia Britannica* as one of the Egyptians’ “most characteristic celebrations”:

Among those most characteristic celebrations of the Egyptians were those which took place at the αφανισμος [aphanismos] or disappearance of Osiris in October or November, at the search for his remains, and their discovery about the winter solstice...⁴

The discovery of Osiris’s remains at the winter solstice essentially means that he was “born again” at that time, since he was thereafter resuscitated.

Regarding this important time of the year, Dr. Mure remarks:

Osiris dead is, as we have seen, Osiris at the winter solstice, when the Nile was nearly at the lowest, and when, as we have shown in our account of that season, Harpocrates was born.⁵

Because Horus and Osiris were one and interchangeable, the new sun replacing the old, it could be stated truthfully that the “restoration” of Osiris at the winter solstice represents the “new birth” of Horus, as does every other day of the year. Hence, again we find

¹ Nibley, 466-556. Citing Stricker, B.H., *De egyptische mysteriën* Pap. Leiden T 32 (vervolg), 21. (Note in brackets is Nibley’s.)

² Plutarch/Babbitt, 127.

³ Plutarch/Babbitt, 94.

⁴ *Enc. Brit.*, 221.

⁵ Mure, 137.

Horus being born on “December 25th,” the “Day of the Great Coming Forth.”¹ In this regard, Brugsch asserts that certain Gnostics claimed *the Egyptians actually called the winter solstice by the name of “Harpokrates,”* i.e., Horus the child,² which verifies once again the identification of Horus as the born-again sun at the winter solstice.

The winter-solstice motif is also indicated in the story related by Plutarch of Osiris being shut up in his ark *during the sign of Scorpio*, the “backbiter,” who robs the sun of its strength as the solar orb nears the death of winter. In one myth describing the death of *Horus*, the god is killed by Set as a *scorpion*, a motif that would likewise symbolize the same theme, indicating once more the interchangeability of the sun gods. In fact, the winter solstice was considered a time to drive away Set through a ritual in which “an ass was slain, and a model of the serpent-fiend was hewn in pieces.”³ Thus, we possess an Egyptian solar myth of the darkness being vanquished at the solstice.

Obviously, it would be fascinating to inspect the ancient “records entitled the Birthdays of Horus” to which Plutarch refers in his comments about the “Seeking for Osiris.” It is possible that any such records—if they were actually written down—could be found in the Library of Alexandria, which unfortunately was destroyed, taking with it a vast amount of human culture and knowledge, including many of these mysteries and secrets. Again, when we hear the clamor for “primary sources,” we are reminded of this massive destruction of ancient culture, often by religious fanatics trying to prevent the truth from becoming known.

Dual Birthdays of Horus

In the same vein as Plutarch, and quite possibly discussing the same text, in his treatise on the *dual birthdays of Horus*—one at the vernal equinox and the other at the winter solstice—Massey refers to “the Egyptian Book of the Divine Birth”:

The double birth of Horus at the two times, or the birth of the babe in the winter solstice and the rebirth as the adult in the Easter equinox is acknowledged in the Egyptian Book of the Divine Birth. The celebration of the Nativity at the solstice is referred to in the calendar of Edfu, and it is said that “everything is performed which is ordained” in the “Book of the Divine Birth.”⁴

The text that Massey cites was also evidently mentioned by Austrian professor Dr. J. Krall:

On the 6th of Pachons...the solstice is then celebrated. The Uza-eye is then filled, a mythical act which we have in another place referred to

¹ Again, December 25th represents the *end* of the three-day “sun stands still” period, thus still remaining a part of the winter solstice.

² Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 419.

³ Budge, *GE* (1904), 248.

⁴ Massey, *AE*, 572.

the celebration of the solstice, and “everything is performed which is ordained” in the book “on the Divine birth.”¹

The solstice celebrated on the 6th of Pachons is that of the summer, once again demonstrating the significance of that time of year. The “Uza-eye” being filled apparently refers to the Eye of the Sun (Re and/or Horus) approaching its culminating strength at the summer solstice.

Of course, the mere existence of a book “on the Divine Birth” discussing a celebration of the winter solstice is in itself a strong indication that this time of the year was indeed considered in Egypt to be the birth of the sun, as is logical and reasonable to assume in any event, since, again, *every day* was the birth of the sun!

Festival of Ptah

According to Lockyer, Dr. Krall also discusses an inscription discovered at both Edfu and Esne “which seems to have astronomical significance.” This inscription describes a feast day during the period of “1. Phamenoth” called the “Festival of the suspension of the sky by Ptah” or the “Feast of the suspension of the sky.”² Krall clarifies these festivals as being “connected with the celebration of the Winter Solstice, and the filling of the Uza-eye...” He then continues:

Perhaps the old year, which the Egyptians introduced into the Nile valley at the time of their immigration, and which had only 360 days, commenced at the Winter Solstice. Thus we should have in the “festival of the suspension of the sky” by the ancient god Ptah—venerated as creator of the world—a remnant of the time when the Winter Solstice...marked the beginning of the year, and also the creation.³

As we have seen on the good authority of Drs. Poole and Brugsch, the Egyptian year at one point did begin with the winter solstice, which makes sense because of the wandering calendar as well.

In addition, the god Ptah is the very ancient Father-Creator figure who, in “suspending the sky,” resembles other Egyptian deities such as Isis, Horus and Shu with arms outstretched in the “vault of heaven,” as well as the Greek god Atlas supporting the world on his shoulders, and various renderings of the Christian Father and Son holding up the heavens.

Feast of Sokar

The father-god Ptah represents one of a pre-Christian “trinity in unity” constituting the hybrid god Ptah-Sokar-Osiris. Sokar, also written as Sokaris and Seker, is perceived as a distinct god, but he is also a form of Osiris, said to represent the sun god in his

¹ Lockyer, *DA*, 284-285.

² Lockyer, *DA*, 284.

³ Lockyer, *DA*, 284.

“underworld” role, enabling the sun “to complete its course during the night and to be reborn in the morning.”¹ Concerning these gods, Maravelia remarks, “The syncretism of Sokar and Osiris, evident from the Middle Kingdom on, associated both deities as tutelary lords of the dead and dispensers of the resurrection in the Netherworld.”² The god Sokar as the “reborn sun” was conceived at least 3,400 years ago, as related by Dr. Hawkins:

In Kherouef’s tomb, circa 1400 B.C., it says, “The doors of the underworld are open, O Sokaris, sun in the sky. O reborn one, you are seen brilliant on the horizon and you give back Egypt her beauty each time the sky is pierced with rays...”³

Regarding the “feast of Sokar,” Maravelia also states, “The festival of Sokar was celebrated with considerable pomp, probably rivaling the festival of Opet; it was the continuity of the cult of the divine king connected with the resurrection of the god.”⁴ Furthermore, it was claimed that Osiris died during the feast of Sokar, in other words, around the winter solstice.⁵ Regarding this feast, Wilkinson remarks:

At the festival of the god his bark was borne in solemn procession round the walls of the temple of Sokaris.... The festival was connected with the winter solstice, with the “little sun,” as the Egyptians called it at that time. In the Ptolemaic period it fell on the morning of the 26th of Khoiak (22nd December), while in earlier times it would seem to have been held in the evening....⁶

In a papyrus fragment of a calendar from the Hibeh collection (27), evidently created at Sais and dating to circa 301-240 BCE, the 26th of Koiak is deemed the “Festival of Osiris.”⁷ This “festival of Osiris” was said to last four days, beginning on the 26th of Koiak and ending on the 29th of Koiak (Canopus Inscr. 1. 51). This four-day period evidently constitutes the same span in Plutarch when Isis is mourning for Osiris. Concerning this festival, Egyptologist Dr. Bernard P. Grenfell (1869-1926), a professor of Papyrology at Oxford, remarks, “At Esneh the feast of Sokar, the Memphite god of the dead,

¹ Redford, 338.

² Maravelia, *JNES*, 86.

³ Hawkins, 210.

⁴ Maravelia, *JNES*, 92.

⁵ Johnston, 247.

⁶ Wilkinson, J., *MCAE*, III, 135. See also Riel: “Und wie das Fest der Sonnenwende, so fällt auch das Fest der Winterwende im Festkalender von Esne auf denselben Tag, wie im Alexandrinischen Jahre. Dieses Winterwendefest hat Brugsch eingehend besprochen und bis zur Evidenz erwiesen, nicht nur, dass das Festkalender von Esne am 26. Choiak vorkommende Sokarfest das Fest der Winterwende ist, sondern auch, dass dasselbe Fest im Rhind-Papyrus (aus dem 21. Jahre des Augustus) ebenfalls auf den 26. Choiak gesetzt ist... Der 26. Choiak ist aber nach Ptoelmäus der Tag der Winterwende des Alexandrinischen Jahres, dessen Sommerwende auf den 1. Epiphi fällt. Sommer- und Winterwende treten hiermit als Zeugen ein, dass sich der Festkalender von Esne auf das Alexandrinische Jahr bezieht.” (Riel, 341.)

⁷ Grenfell, 144.

identified with Osiris in later times, also took place on Choiak 26.”¹ Brugsch likewise discusses the fest of Sokar, which was held on the 26th of Koiak, equivalent to December 22nd in the Julian calendar and December 25th in the calendar of Eudoxus (410/408-355/347 BCE).² In the temple of Dendera, Brugsch relates, we find a description of the 26th of Koiak—December 22nd also in the Alexandrian calendar—as representing the day of the winter solstice and of the “Rising of Osiris as the sun and moon.”³

Brugsch further states that the winter-solstice festival—along with the Sokar fest—on the 26th of Koiak was proved to have existed during the period of the Alexandrian calendar, i.e., just before the common era.⁴ This fact, of course, means that we possess mention of winter-solstice celebrations in Egyptian records dating from at least 20 centuries before the common era, right up to the time of Christ’s alleged advent and, in fact, well into the common era. In reality, the winter-solstice celebration was so important that King Ptolemy VII Neos Dionysos (81-55 BCE) is depicted as pulling a ceremonial sled as part of a solemn procession on that date.⁵ Brugsch describes the sled drawn by Ptolemy VII as representing the “Exodus of Sokar,” with an image on the sled—sitting on top of an *ark*, as in the “ark of the Covenant” and as in the boat or bark of the “little sun”—resembling a baby hawk or falcon, with the sun disc on his head.⁶ The image at Edfu being pulled by Ptolemy is unquestionably that of Sokar, whose “barque represents solar triumphs and is set on a sledge.”⁷

Moreover, this great festival of Sokar during Koiak, in which the falcon-headed sun god is carried out of the temple, was thought to help the pharaoh succeed in the annual restorative digging of the canals that had been destroyed by the Nile flooding. As such, the festival evidently occurred at least as early as the Old Kingdom (3rd millennium BCE).⁸ One thing is clear: The festival of Sokar was very popular, especially during the New Kingdom and into Ptolemaic times. Thus, many thousands of Egyptians over a period of millennia must have been aware of the sun’s birth at the winter solstice.

Could this image of the pharaoh bringing out the baby sun at the winter solstice reflect the ritual described by Macrobius? If so, we possess a clear pre-Christian validation that Macrobius was correct—and this image would tend to verify Plutarch’s description as well,

¹ Grenfell, 153.

² Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 442, 444, 445.

³ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 426: “...der Aufgang des Osiris...”

⁴ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 416.

⁵ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 416. See figs on pp. 378-379.

⁶ The use of an “ark” in which to carry the deity was quite common in ancient Egypt, rendering the similar Hebrew ark far from unusual and certainly not exceptional in purportedly possessing magical powers of any sort. See “Ark” in *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, 156.

⁷ Dunn, J., “Sokar, an Egyptian God of the Underworld.”

⁸ Dunn, J., “Sokar.”

although Plutarch names the god brought out as Harpocrates or "Horus the Child." In consideration of the fact that both Sokar and Horus are sun gods, both are identified with Osiris, both are represented as hawks or falcons as well as the "little sun" or "baby sun," and that the Egyptians associated Horus with Sokar,¹ it would seem again that Plutarch too is correct. Moreover, like Horus, one of Sokar's major roles is that of the *resurrected Osiris*; hence, the baby sun as a hawk/falcon emerges at the winter solstice as the resurrected Osiris. Thus, we can state once more that the Egyptian sun god dies and is reborn at the winter solstice, precisely as we find in other cultures.

Festivals of Isis

As further evidence of the importance of the winter solstice to the Egyptians, in a text from the fourth century BCE called "The Festival Songs of Isis and Nephthys," we find reference to the "Festival of the Two Terti," which is the term for Isis and Nephthys "in their character of protectors of the deceased..."² In a footnote by Budge, we discover that this festival took place from December 25th to the 29th.³ Again, the winter solstice is described in an inscription from King Ptolemy VII as "the sun disc coming out of the sky-ocean into the hands of the siblings Isis and Nephthys,"⁴ and this festival reminds one of the hieroglyph symbolizing the winter solstice with the two goddesses holding the sun above an ankh, apparently restoring the dead orb to life. Adding to this notion, in his description of Nephthys, Hornung mentions that she is "often depicted together with Isis, either mourning Osiris or keeping the sun disk in motion,"⁵ which seems to describe the winter-solstice hieroglyph and its evident life-giving meaning.

Another example of an Egyptian celebration associated with the winter solstice appears in the writings of the Greek astronomer and mathematician Geminus/Geminus (1st cent. BCE?), who claimed that the Greeks of his day had erroneously asserted the Festival of Isis, or "the *Isia*," to have occurred on the winter solstice, but that it had so happened at that time over 120 years prior to the change in the

¹ Pyramid text T 196 (PT 364:620b-c): "Horus has lifted you up in his identity of the Sokar-boat and will bear you in your identity of Sokar." (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 81.) At M 375 (PT 610:1712a, c), "Horus says he will akhify his father...as Sokar..." (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 232.) Thus, Sokar is identified with the "akhified" Osiris. The *akh* is the process whereby the deceased's *ba* (soul) is reunited with the *ka* (spiritual body) to produce eternal life. (Allen, J., *AEPT*, 425.) In describing the image of the birth of Horus in the Hall of Ptah (A.17) at Abydos, John Anthony West explains Sokar as "symbolizing Horus-immanent-in-Osiris..." (West, J., *TKAE*, 387.)

² Budge, *OHPN*, 398.

³ Budge, *OHPN*, 398.

⁴ Brugsch, *TIA*, II, 427.

⁵ Hornung, *AEBA*, 154.

calendar.¹ Adding to this assertion, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* evinces that during certain eras the festival of Isis was indeed celebrated at the winter solstice.² In any event, in Geminus we possess yet another testimony that at some point prior to the common era the Egyptians were indeed celebrating at the time of the winter solstice.

Knowing all these facts, it is logical and rational to assume that Geminus, Plutarch, Epiphanius and Macrobius were not in error in their reports about the Egyptian winter-solstice festivals. If Geminus and Epiphanius are right that such winter-solstice celebrations occurred, and if Macrobius is correct in his assertions that the Egyptians brought out an image of the baby sun at that time, we have no credible, scientific reason to dismiss Plutarch's statement regarding Harpocrates/Horus the Child being this baby sun born at the winter solstice, especially since many of his contentions can be verified by the hieroglyphs, as stated by Budge, as well as by the evidence provided by Brugsch. The fact that Harpocrates, the *morning sun*, was born *every day* constitutes proof that Horus was likewise born at the winter solstice. In addition, Egyptian festivities placed Osiris's death and rebirth as Sokar at the winter solstice as well, the newborn sun likewise symbolized as a baby hawk or falcon, as we would expect Horus the Child to be represented.

In *On Mankind: Their Origin and Destiny*, Arthur Thomson summarizes the story of the baby sun at the winter solstice, who was born of a *virgin mother*, specifically as applied to Horus and Isis:

The Egyptians did in fact celebrate at the winter solstice the birth of the son of Isis (Plut. De Iside), and the delivery of the goddess who had brought this young child into the world, feeble and weak, and in the midst of the darkest night. This child, according to Macrobius, was the god of light, Apollo, or the sun, painted with his head shorn of his beaming hair, his head shaved, and with only a single hair left. By this, says Macrobius, the dimness of the light at the winter solstice, and the shortness of the days as well as the darkness of the deep cave in which this god seemed to be born, and from which he issued forth to rise in the direction of the northern hemisphere and the summer solstice, in which he reassumed his dominion and his glory, was indicated...

It was this child of whom the virgin Isis called herself the mother in the inscription over her temple at Sais (Plut. De Iside) which contained the words, "The fruit which I have begotten is the sun." (Procl. in Tim. p. 30). This Isis of Sais has been correctly assumed by Plutarch to be the chaste Minerva, who, without fearing to lose her name of virgin, nevertheless says of herself that she is the mother of the sun.... She is the Virgin of the constellations, who is called by

¹ Mure, 88. Neugebauer placed Geminus in the first century AD/CE, while Jones argued for a date of the first century BCE, which currently constitutes scholarly consensus. (See Evans, 21-22.)

² *Encyc. Brit. Supp.*, 50.

Eratosthenes, a learned Alexandrian (Eratosthen. cap. vii.), Ceres or Isis; that Isis who opened the year, and presided over the birth of the new solar revolution, and of the god of day—in a word, of her in whose arms we shall soon see the symbolic child.¹

From all of the abundant evidence, it is apparent that the winter solstice was a highly important time and included the theme of the baby in a manger born on December 25th for centuries in Egypt long prior to the creation of Christianity and that, as we shall see further demonstrated, the solar babe's mother was deemed a "virgin," precisely as was said of Christ's mother.

As concerns the possible age of the Egyptian winter solstice celebration, continuing one very ancient tradition, modern Egyptians still observe a festival around the vernal equinox called "Sham el-Nessim," or "Shamo," which traditionally occurs in April and resembles the Western holiday of Easter. This festival may be reflected by Plutarch's remarks in chapter 43 of "Isis and Osiris" (368C), in which he discusses a celebration at the new moon in the month of Phamenoth called "Osiris's coming to the Moon," which the historian says "marks the beginning of spring."² Since this spring festival of Shamo is estimated to date to at least 4,500 years ago, it would be reasonable to assert that comparable winter-solstice celebrations may approach that age in Egypt as well. Indeed, the evidence indicates the winter solstice in Egypt was recognized at least 5,000 years ago, from the very beginning of Egyptian pharaonic history, extending well into the common era.

Christian Sun Worship?

The fact that the highly important winter-solstice solar festival was not added to the Christ myth until centuries after the purported advent of Jesus does not make the connection any less significant or him any less of a solar hero himself. Concerning this solar celebration and the obvious correlation to Jesus Christ, Kellner states:

Since on the 21st December the sun reaches its lowest point, and then begins once more to rise higher in the heavens, man, in his simplicity, marked the day on which this change in the sun became perceptible as the new birth or birth-day of the sun, the invincible Sun-God. What was more natural for the Christians of that age than to connect this obvious natural event with the thought of the nativity of Him who is the Light of the World! Even if the Holy Scriptures had not suggested this idea, it must have presented itself to the Christian mind. The comparison of Christ with the sun, and of His work with the victory of light over darkness, frequently appears in the writings of the Fathers. St. Cyprian spoke of Christ as the true sun (*sol verus*). St. Ambrose says precisely, "He is our new sun (*Hic sol novus*

¹ Thomson, 468-469.

² Plutarch/Babbitt, 105-106.

noster)." Similar figures are employed by Gregory of Nazianzus, Zeon of Verona, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, etc.¹

As we have seen from Luke 1:24-27 and John 3:30, it would appear that the "Holy Scriptures" in fact *may* have suggested this ideal

In reality, so common was the contention of *Christians worshipping the sun* that Church fathers such as Tertullian (c. 155-230 AD/CE) and Augustine (354-430 AD/CE) were compelled to compose refutations of the claim. In *Ad Nationes* (1.13), Tertullian writes:

The Charge of Worshipping the Sun Met by a Retort.

...Others, with greater regard to good manners, it must be confessed, suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray towards the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity. What then? Do you do less than this? Do not many among you, with an affectation of sometimes worshipping the heavenly bodies likewise, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise?

Once more, in his *Apology* (16), Tertullian addresses what appears to be a widespread insight that he surprisingly asserts comes from those with "more information" and "greater verisimilitude," or *truth*:

...Others, again, certainly with more information and greater verisimilitude, believe that the sun is our god. We shall be counted Persians perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you, also under pretence sometimes of worshipping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise.

In addition to turning to the east for prayer, early Christians oriented their churches to the sun, a practice that continued into more modern times in some places:

All our churches are more or less oriented, which is a remnant of old sun-worship. Any church that is properly built today will have its axis pointing to the rising of the sun on the Saint's Day, i.e., a church dedicated to St. John ought not to be parallel to a church dedicated to St. Peter.... Certainly in the early centuries the churches were all oriented to the sun, so the light fell on the altar through the eastern doors at sunrise.²

Adding to this knowledge, archaeoastronomer Dr. Ruggles remarks:

Christian churches generally point eastwards. Liturgical traditions dating from medieval times associate the direction east—the rising

¹ Kellner, 151.

² Lockyer, *DA*, 95-96.