

G15 (week 4, Thursday)

Gender and the divine: Gods, goddesses and creation myths

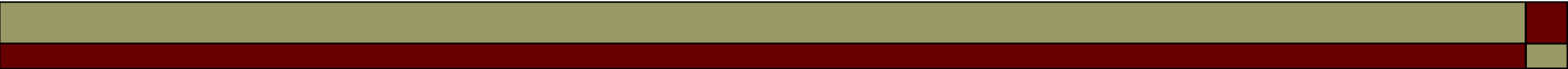
HPAH5013/6013 – Gendered Lives in Ancient Egypt

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Additional readings

- ❑ Robins 142-156.
- ❑ Fantechi, S.E. and A.P. Zingarelli (2002) 'Singers and Musicians in New Kingdom Egypt', GM 186: 27-35.
- ❑ Lesko, B. S. (2008) 'Household and Domestic Religion in Ancient Egypt', in Household and Family Religion in Antiquity. (eds., Bodel, J. and Olyan, S.), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: 197-209.
- ❑ Quirke, S. (1999) 'Women in Ancient Egypt: Temple titles and funerary papyri', in Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H.S. Smith. (eds., Leahy, A. and J. Tait), London: EES. 227-235.
- ❑ Stevens, A. (2009). Domestic religious practices. in UCLA Encyclopaedia of Egyptology. <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/7s07628w>
- ❑ Darnell, J. C. (1995) 'Hathor Returns to Medamûd', SAK 22: 47-94.
- ❑ Sweeney, D. (2001) 'Walking alone forever, following you: Gender and mourner's laments from Ancient Egypt', NIN 2: 27-48.

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- More than 2000 gods
 - some important, included in cosmogonies and cosmologies, state level
 - Some importance on local level
 - Some not much more than demons and genies, or living creatures chosen by ordinary Egyptians to be their personal gods

Representation

- ❑ animal parts = attributes/aspects
- ❑ Lioness = rage, destruction
- ❑ Cat = pacified, gentleness
- ❑ NOT worship of animals



Shared Iconography: queens and goddesses



Triads: Osiris, Isis, Horus (Louvre)

Divine families!

=grouping gods by 3: triad consists of a god, his spouse and one child

Theban triad: Amun-Re, wife Mut, son Khonsu

most popular: Osiris, Isis and their son Horus

Not always a son: triad of Elephantine – Khnum, Satet, Anuket.

Memphite triad: Ptah, Sekhmet and Nefertem



The royal couple, at left, in front of the divine family triad of Edfu (Horus, Hathor, Ihy)



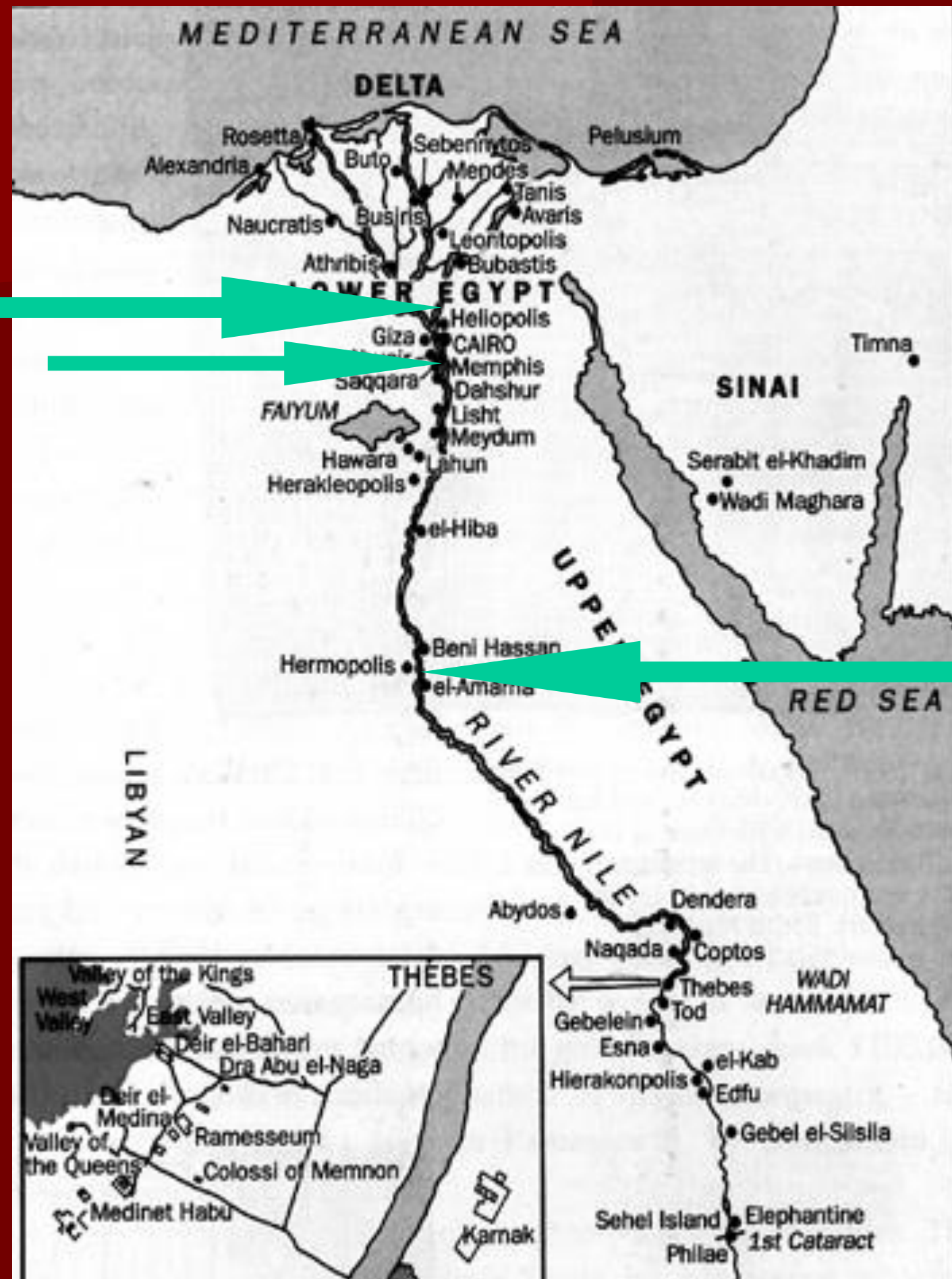
Cosmogonies

- Creation myths
- Pyramid Texts
 - Not narrative
- No birth of mankind myth
- Begin with Nun
 - Watery
 - Undifferentiated mass (darkness)
 - Source of creation

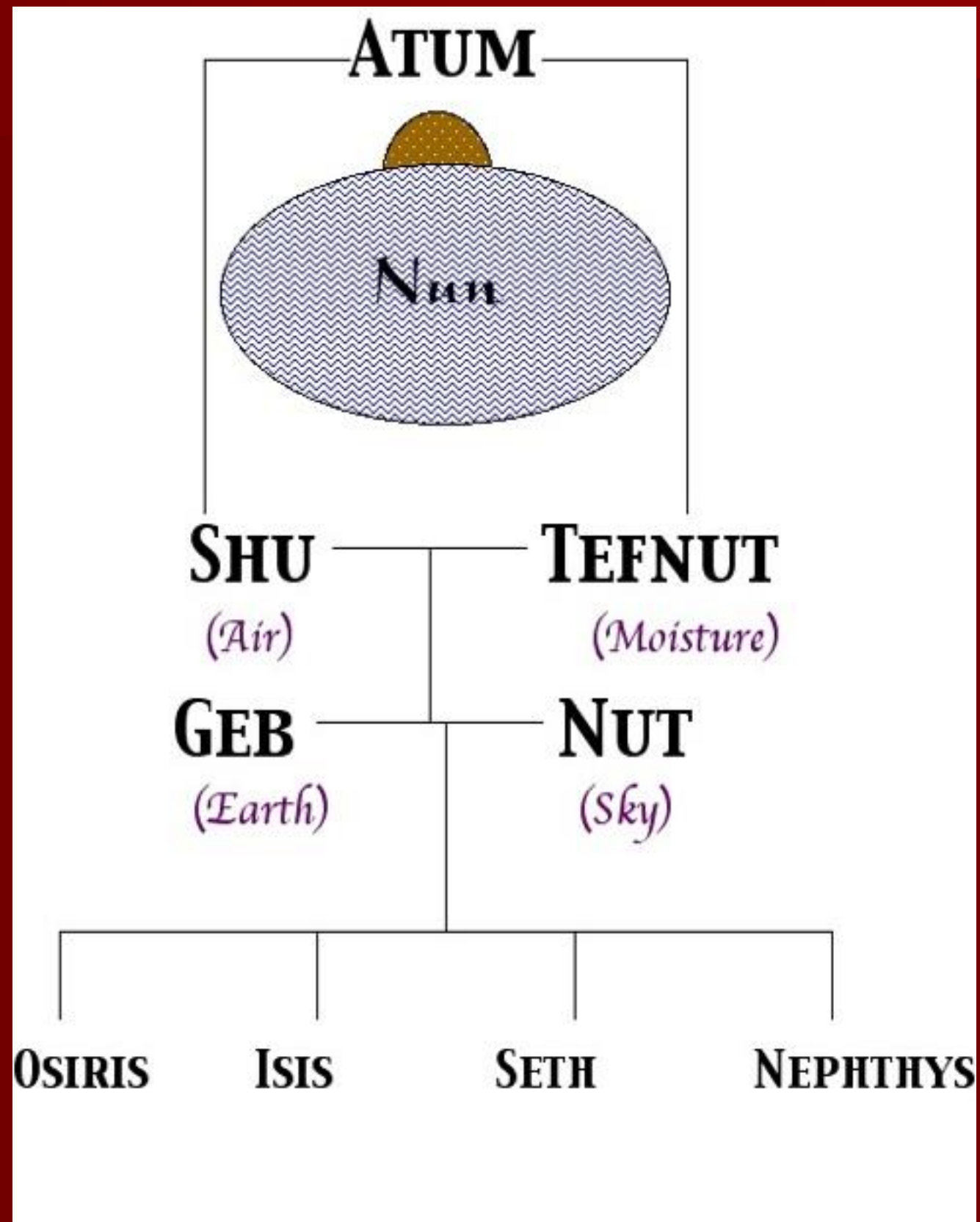


Main Centres

- Heliopolis (Ennead)
- Hermopolis (Ogdoad)
- Memphis



Ennead



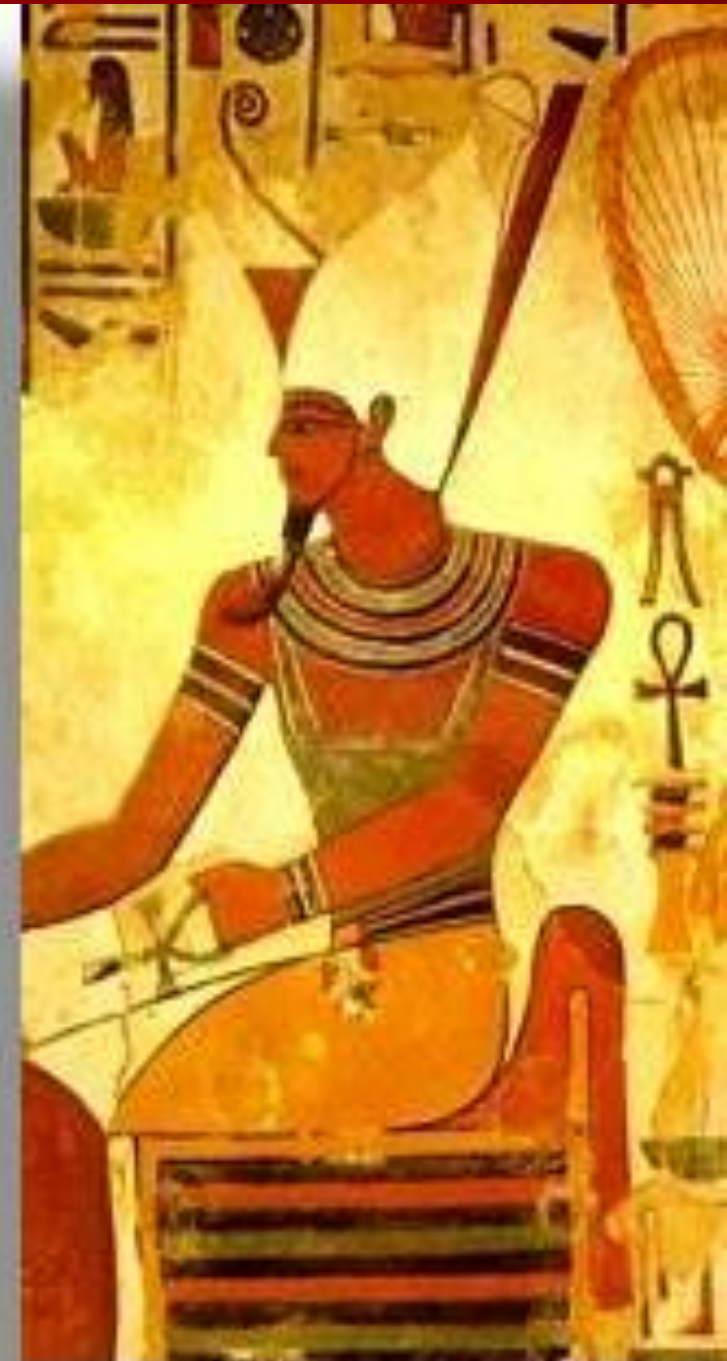


Creation – Iunu (Heliopolis)

- ❑ from the primeval waters represented by Nun mound appeared with self-begotten deity Atum
- ❑ Bored and alone, Atum spat or masturbated, producing Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture)
- ❑ Shu and Tefnut mated: Geb (earth) and Nut (sky)
- ❑ Geb and Nut engaged in continuous copulation until Shu separated them: lifting Nut into her place in the sky
- ❑ children of Geb and Nut: Osiris and Set, Isis and Nephthys, which in turn formed couples.

Atum

- 'tm' =
 - Everything, completion, perfection
 - Nothingness
- Form
 - Human
 - Ram



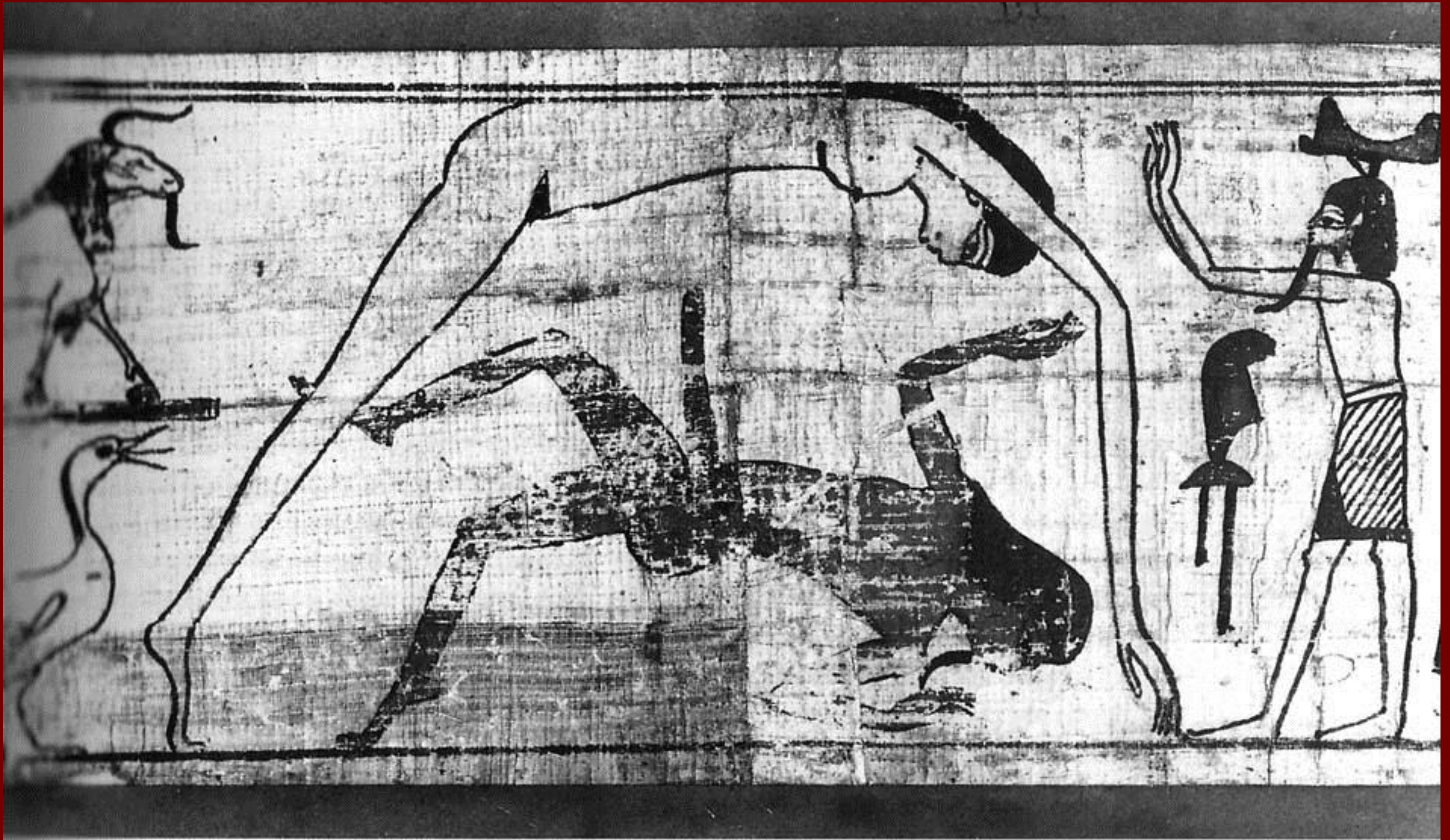
Shu (air)



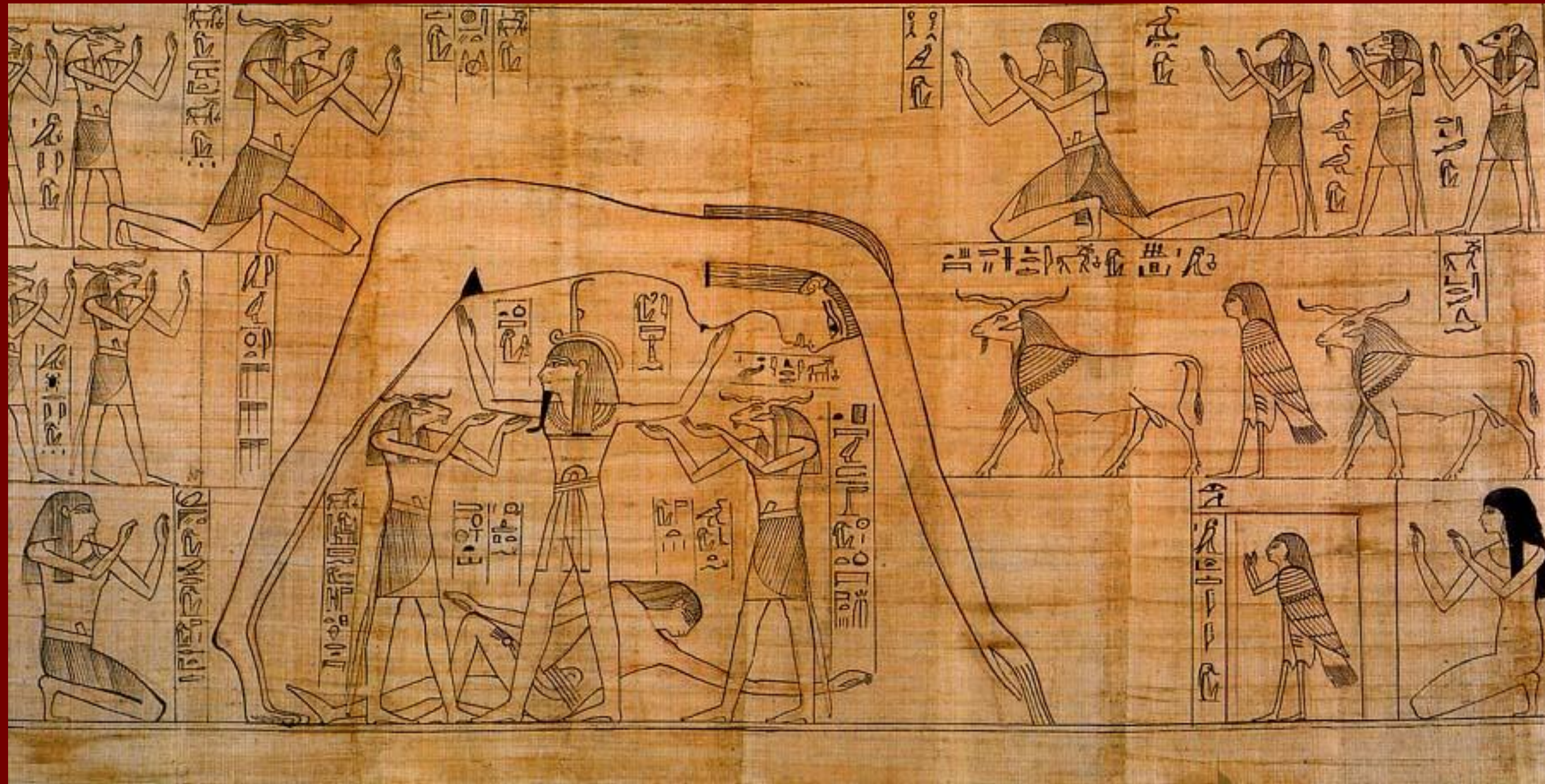
Tefnut (moisture)



Geb (earth) & Nut (sky)



Geb, Nut, & Shu - 'Book of the Dead' of Nestanebtasheru BM EA10554,87

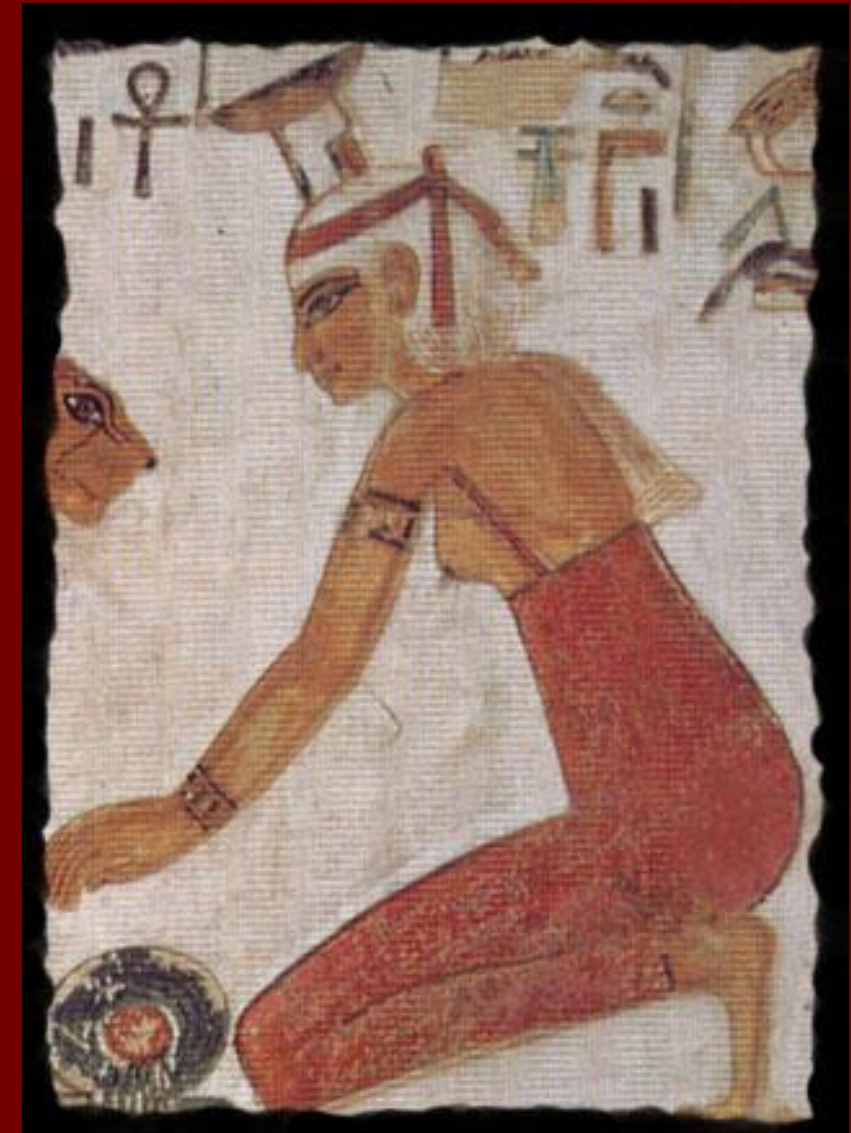


Osiris

- member of the Great Ennead
- god and chief judge of the Underworld
- god of resurrection, the Inundation and vegetation
- Represented mummified (Osiris myth)



Isis and Nephtys



Isis

- ❑ one of the great goddesses, most popular member of the Egyptian pantheon: magical powers, devotion to her husband, Osiris, and to their son, Horus
- ❑ Isis and sister, Nephthys, acted as divine mourners of the dead
- ❑ together with Neith and Selket: protected coffins and Canopic jars (Isis protecting the jar containing liver)
- ❑ Late Period: chief cult centre - Philae, but universally revered
- ❑ cult of this divine mother: eventually superseded only by that of the Virgin Mary

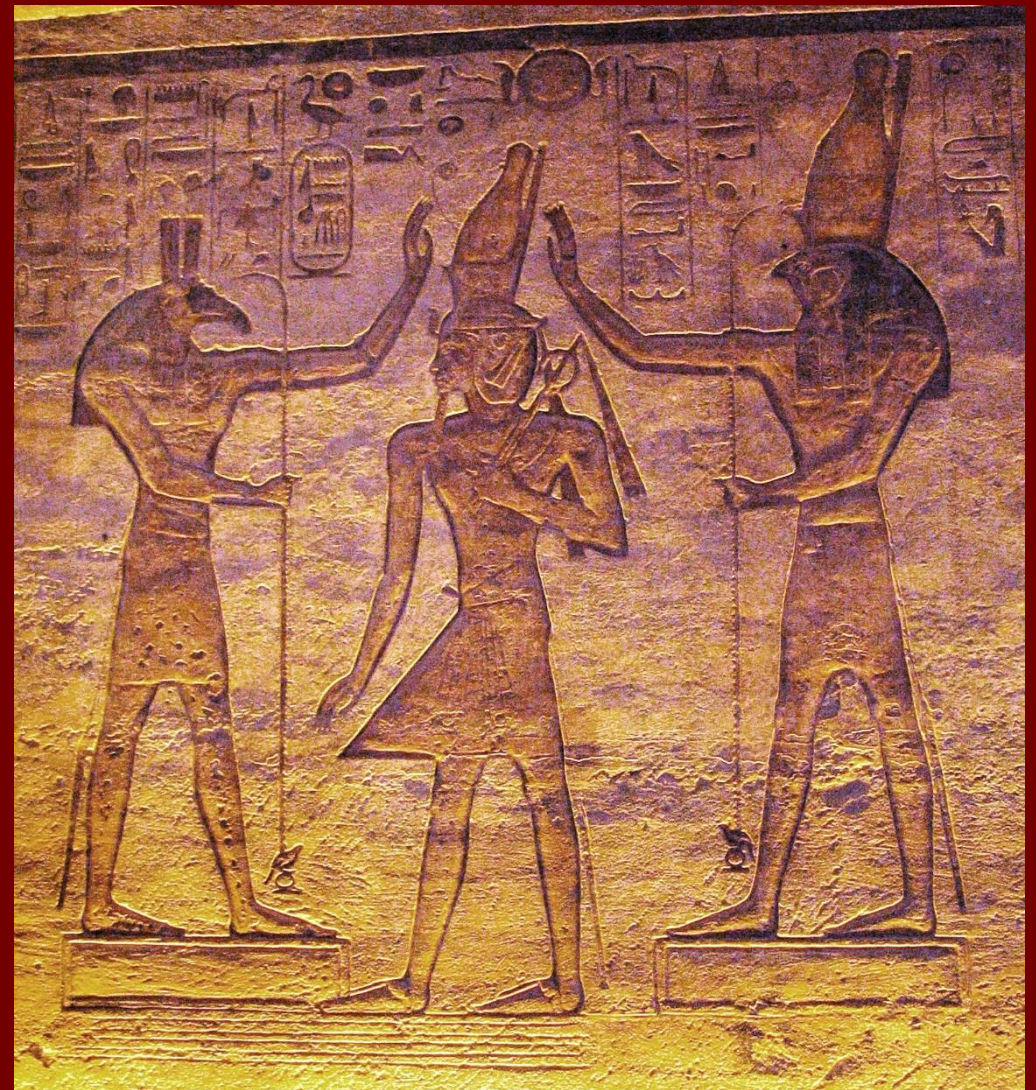
Isis, Nephthys, Osiris (deceased)

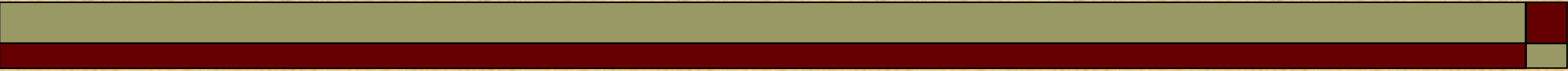


Seth



- Contendings of Horus and Seth:
- mythological story (20th dyn), Pap. Chester Beatty: battles between Horus and Seth to determine who will succeed Osiris as king
 - Fought as sexual encounter





Contendings of Horus and Seth

Seth said to Horus: 'Come let us spend a pleasant hour at my house.' Horus answered, 'With pleasure, with pleasure.' When it was evening a bed was spread for them and they lay down. During the night Seth made his penis stiff and he placed it between the loins of Horus. Horus put his hands between his loins and caught the sperm of Seth.

Then Horus went to his mother, Isis [and said]: 'Help me...! Come, see what Seth has done to me.' And he opened his hand and let her see Seth's semen. With a scream she took her weapon and cut off his hand and threw it in the water, and conjured up for him a hand to make up for it.

Ptah: God of Craftsmen, Rebirth and Creation

Cairo JdE 60739



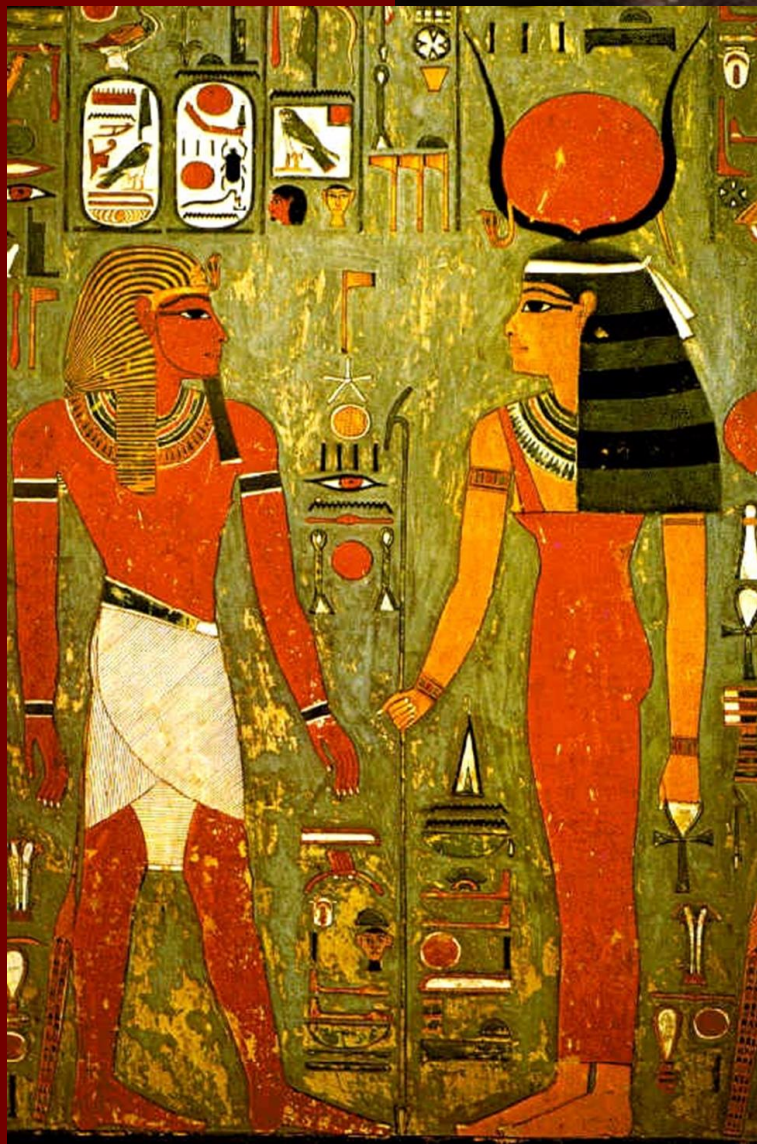
Ptah within Mennefer
(Memphis) Triad (Ptah,
Sekhmet, Nefertem)



Meret-Neith stela connection goddess- royalty



Hathor



votives to Hathor



votives to
Hathor (NK
temple)



The conception of **Horus** by **Isis** in the form of a hawk flying above the deceased **Osiris**. Isis is attended by the birth goddess **Heket** in the form of a frog at the foot of the funerary bier. Roman Period.
Western roof chapel, temple of Hathor, Dendera.



Isis - Ptolemaic & Roman



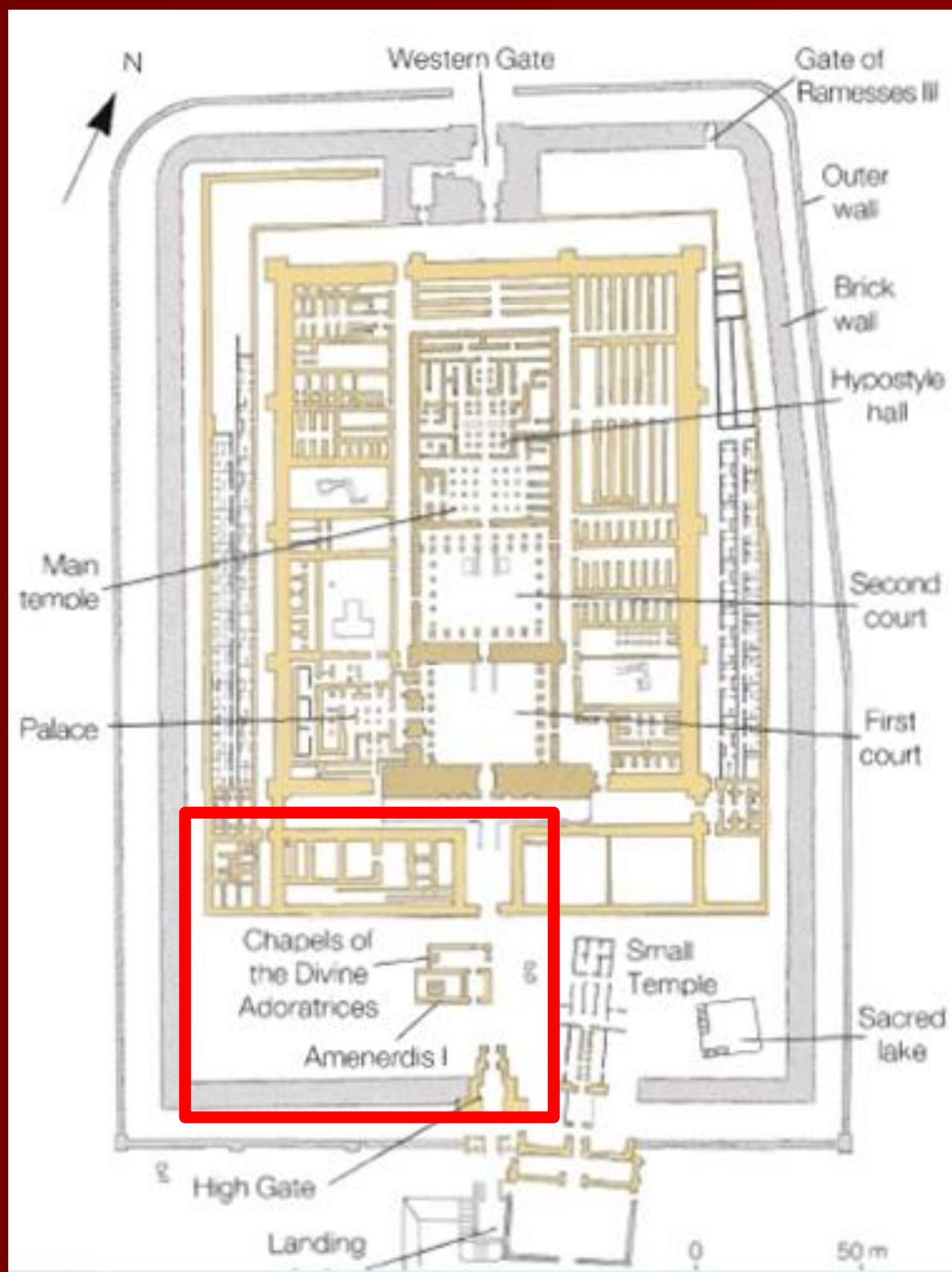
God's Wife of Amun

- ❑ 'God's wife' = head of the 'domain of the Divine Adoratrice' – substantial personnel worked under administration of a 'high steward'
- ❑ 'high stewards' of the domain became at end of the 25th dyn. very powerful, (as seen from their huge tombs at Thebes)
- ❑ god's wife also bears the title 'Divine Adoratrice of Amun' (*dw3t-ntr n imn*)

Statue of Amenirdis from Karnak, now in the Cairo Museum (CM CG565)

Daughter of Kashta and Queen
Pebatjma, Sister of Shabaka and
likely sister of Piye
installed in Thebes as heiress to
Shepenwepet I by either Kashta
(her father) or Piye





GENDER AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Additional readings

- ❑ Robins: Women in Ancient Egypt 142-156.
- ❑ Fantechi, S.E. and A.P. Zingarelli (2002) 'Singers and Musicians in New Kingdom Egypt', GM 186: 27-35.
- ❑ Lesko, B. S. (2008) 'Household and Domestic Religion in Ancient Egypt', in Household and Family Religion in Antiquity. (eds., Bodel, J. and Olyan, S.), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: 197-209.
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Priest of Hapy

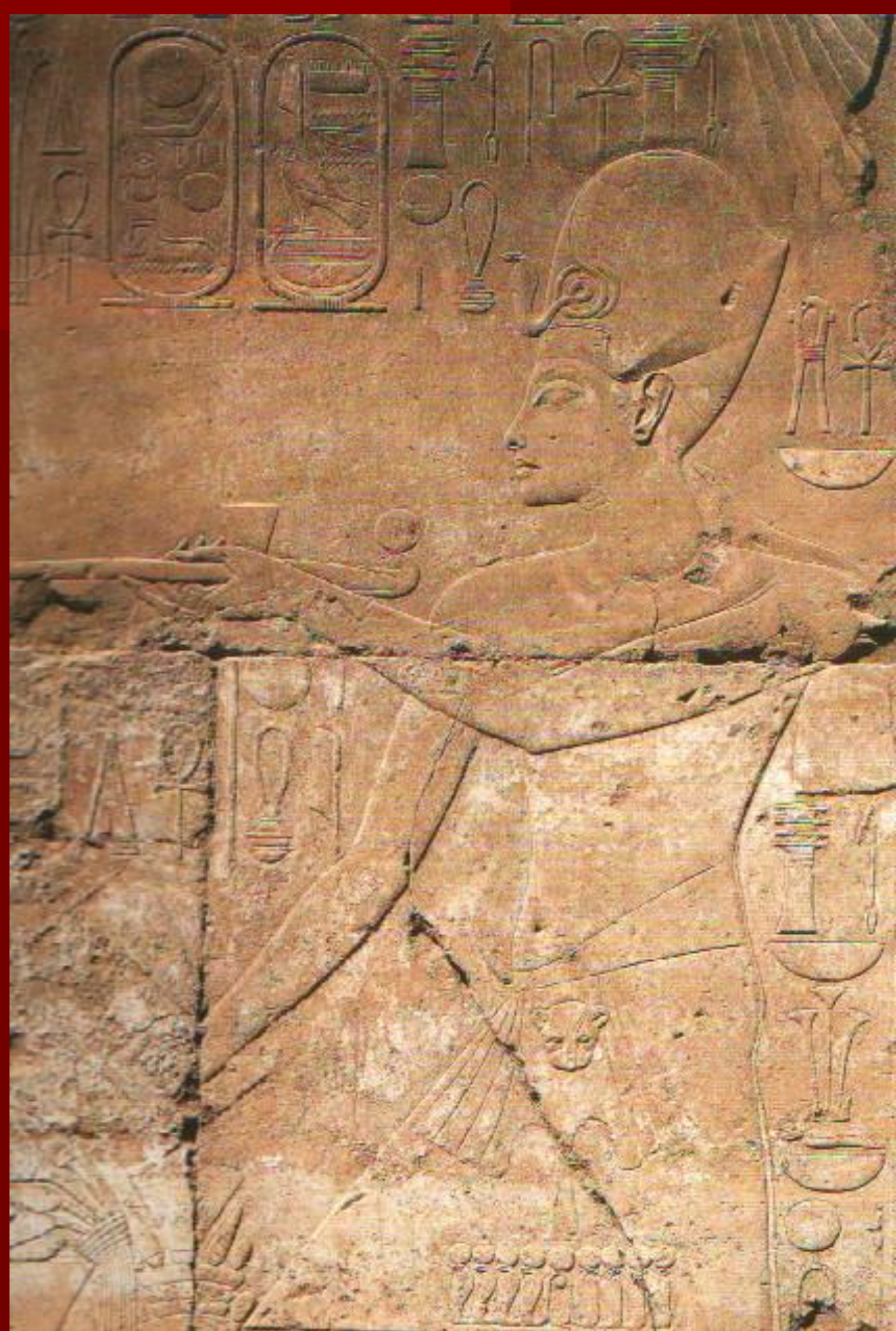
This bronze statuette represents the priest of Hapy, the god of the annual Nile inundation. This work probably belonged to the temple of Hapy in Aswan. Dynasty 20, (1200-1085 BC).



Priests

- ❑ Servant of god – hem netjer
- ❑ Worked full- (NEW from NK onwards), part-time or as lay person in temple
- ❑ Were not always well versed in religious doctrine
- ❑ Most priests did not come into contact with cult image of god or goddess
- ❑ In theory: only king had privilege to attend god (as high priest)
- ❑ In praxis: kings authority was delegated to chief priest (First Prophet) of each temple: **Delegation of Royal Power**
→ had therefore significant power and even influence in secular matters

Opet festival: Tutankhamun



The different roles of the priests

<i>Hem-Netjer</i> <i>servant of god</i>	The "Hem-Netjer" prepared and carried forward offerings to the god and assisted at ceremonies and processions. They had access to the sanctuary where the divine image was kept, and controlled the entrance to the temple.
<i>Hem-Netjer Tepey</i> <i>high priest</i>	The position of "Hem-Netjer Tepey" or "overseer" was used at cult centres where there were a large number of hem-netjer (servants of god). They would often work on their land or tend to their jobs in the state administration when they weren't doing their temple service. Generally this role was performed by high ranking individuals, often the sons or sons-in-law of the pharaoh, and on occasions even the viziers.
<i>Wa'eb</i> <i>pure one</i>	The "Wa'eb" would assist the hem-netjer by carrying out lesser tasks in the maintainance of the temple and its rituals. He assured the purity of the ceremonial rooms, the people, instruments and tools. A basic but important role, all priests would have been trained as a wa'eb, and as such, could always act as a wa'eb if necessary.
<i>Kheri-Heb</i> <i>lector priest</i>	The "Kheri-Heb" would recite, sing or chant rites directly from the sacred books at ceremonies and processions. They also recited formulae and prayers to appeal to the gods, and functioned as oracles for people who sought out advice of the deities. Distinguished by a broad band worn diagonally across their chests, several kheri-heb could be based at each greater temple, taking turns to perform their functions.
<i>Sem</i> <i>priest</i>	The "Sem" priests performed the elaborate rituals at mummifications and burials. They are particularly associated with the "opening of the mouth" ritual, and are shown distinctively dressed in a panther or leopard skin.

Medinat Habu:

The details of the Sokar and Min festivals are supplemented by information on the exterior of the south wall in a list of festivals



Priests/priestesses

- ❑ **Servants of God**
- ❑ Female title of *Hmt-nTr* only OK & MK
- ❑ Priestess of Hathor (sometimes Neith): title on statues → elite role - high on social scale - though functions unclear → mostly shown with sistrum & menat
- ❑ *Kheneru*
 - entertainment troops
 - upper class women performing in temples & in banquet scenes of their fathers (image)

Wab-priests

- ❑ Perform lesser tasks requisite to maintaining temples and rituals, taking part in processions
- ❑ Leader: Great Wab – handles instruments and cultic objects
- ❑ → therefore they had to be pure – wab
- ❑ Not allowed to enter sanctuary or feed themselves in offering hall, had rations in tertiary sacred zone between enclosure wall and temple proper
- ❑ Could be promoted to hem-netjer (from NK onwards)
- ❑ Few wabet known (MK), but OK already women known who “performed the wab service for Hathor”

Lector Priest: *kheri-heb*

- ❑ Kheri-heb: 'He Who Is Over the Festive Scroll': recited, sang or chanted rites directly out of the sacred books at ceremonies and processions, responsible for correct performance.
- ❑ recited formulae and prayers to appeal to the gods, and functioned as oracles for people who sought out advice of the deities
- ❑ Recognised by the broad band worn diagonally across their chests
- ❑ Ptolemaic Period: wore a band with two tall ostrich feathers on their head and was therefore called 'Wing-wearers' (Gr: Pterophoroi)
- ❑ Only male version known



Red Chapel, Karnak:

Upper register: Female acrobats perform and harpists play for Maat-Ka-Re.

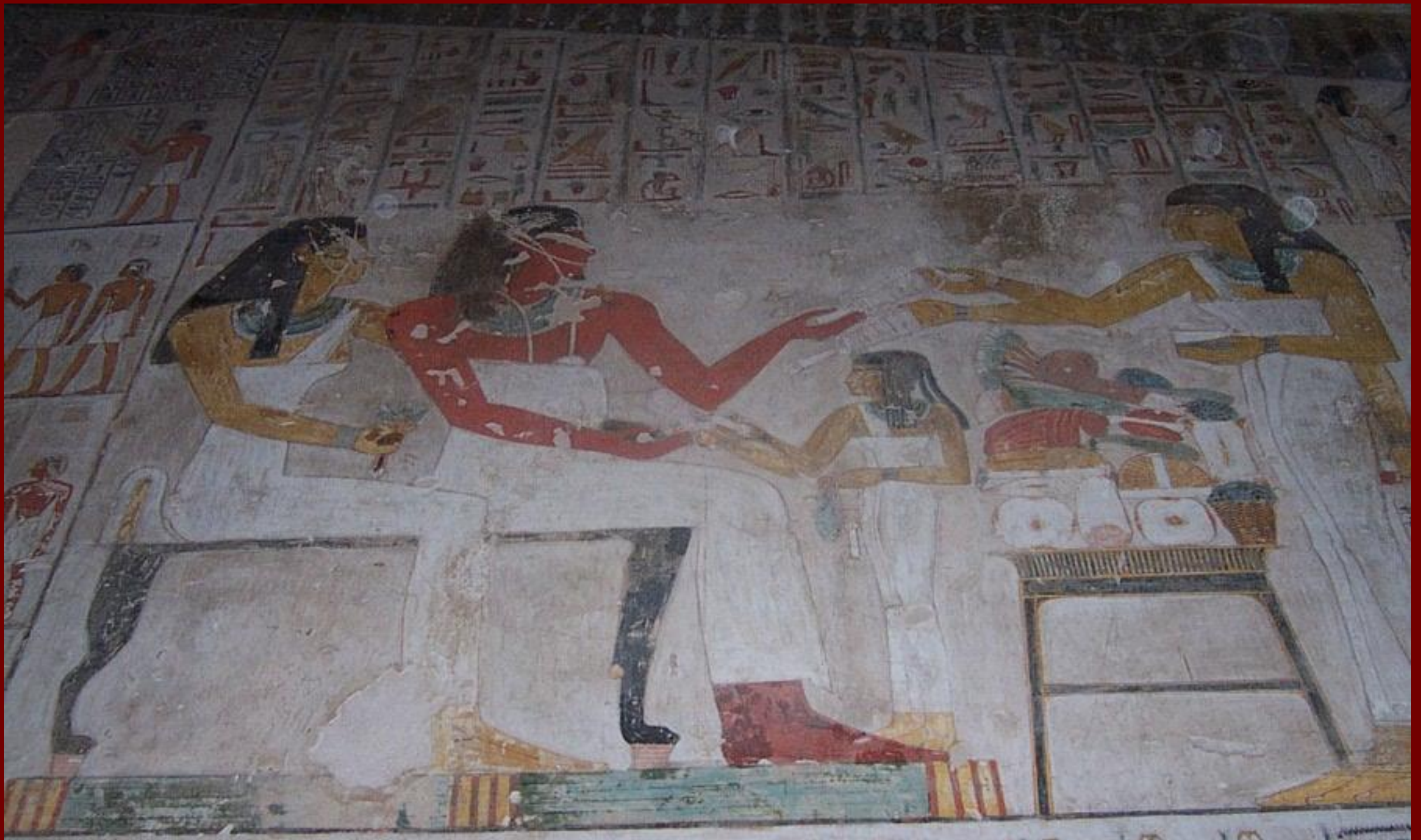
Lower register: Male dancers(?) pay homage and women play sistra for Maat-Ka-Re.







TT100: Rekhmire: offering servant
(as priestly rank – funerary priestess
– henutet, men = henuty)



Priests/priestesses

- *kheneru* (when related to Hathor *khenywt*) could subsume singers
- Titles important (found in admin & legal docs), chiefs often very high status, wives of high priest, princesses

Magic

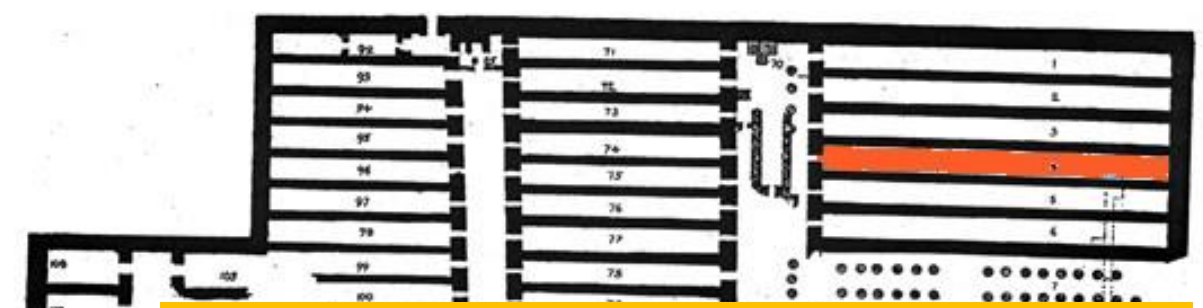
- ❑ Magic was inherent to overall Egyptian thinking and a regular part of religion at all levels of Egyptian society
- ❑ Magic played the primary role in countering ANY kind of threats from outside; various evil spirits needed to be warned off, and deities invoked to protect the vulnerable
- ❑ Described by the term *heka*, personified as *Heka*

Heka, God of magic (far left), stands with the goddess Maat behind the throne of Osiris.
Funerary papyrus of the priestess Nesitanebetisheru, c. 950 BC. BM EA 10554/88



Ramesseum Statuette

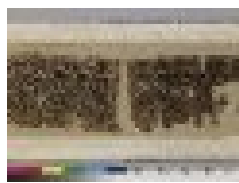




Found here

- Found in tomb 5 (MK, 12th dyn.?) with a box full of papyri, reeds, magical equipment





1.1 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame A. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



1.2 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame B. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



1.3 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame C. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



1.4 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame D. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



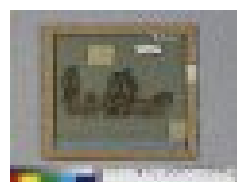
1.5 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame E. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



1.6 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame F. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



1.7 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame G. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



1.8 - Papyrus Ramesseum A
papyrus; P. Ramesseum A (P. Berlin 10499), Frame H. Papyrus written on the recto and verso in hieroglyphic script.



2.1 - Papyrus Ramesseum B (the Drama...)
papyrus; P. Ramesseum B, Frame 1. Papyrus written on the recto in linear hieroglyphic script.

Ramesseum magical equipment



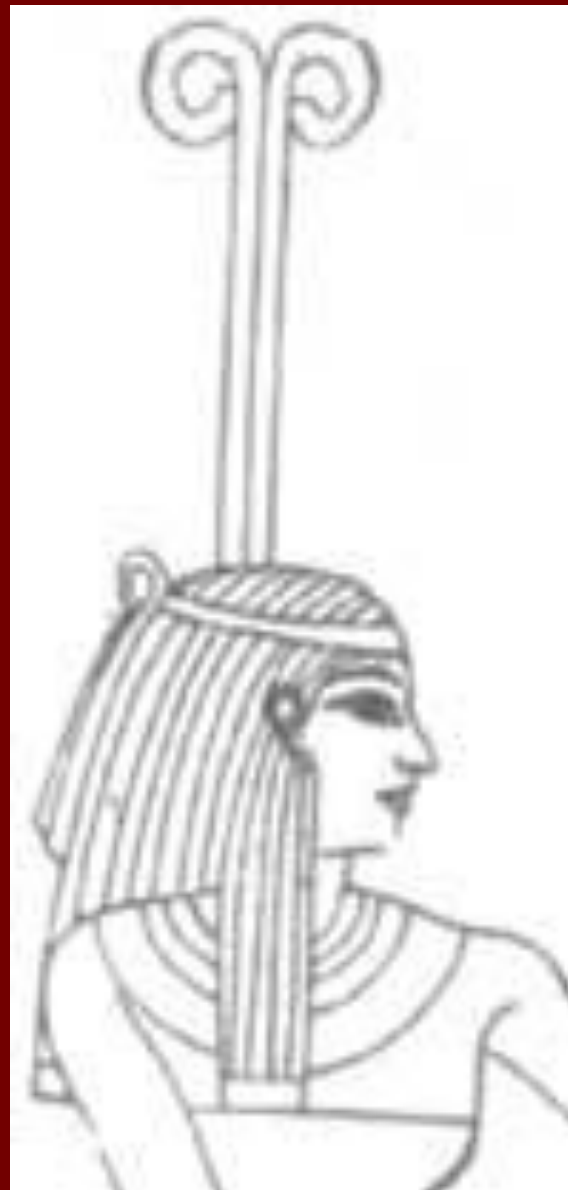
- Fitzwilliam E.63.1896
- Copper alloy cobra magical 'wand'

Magic and giving birth

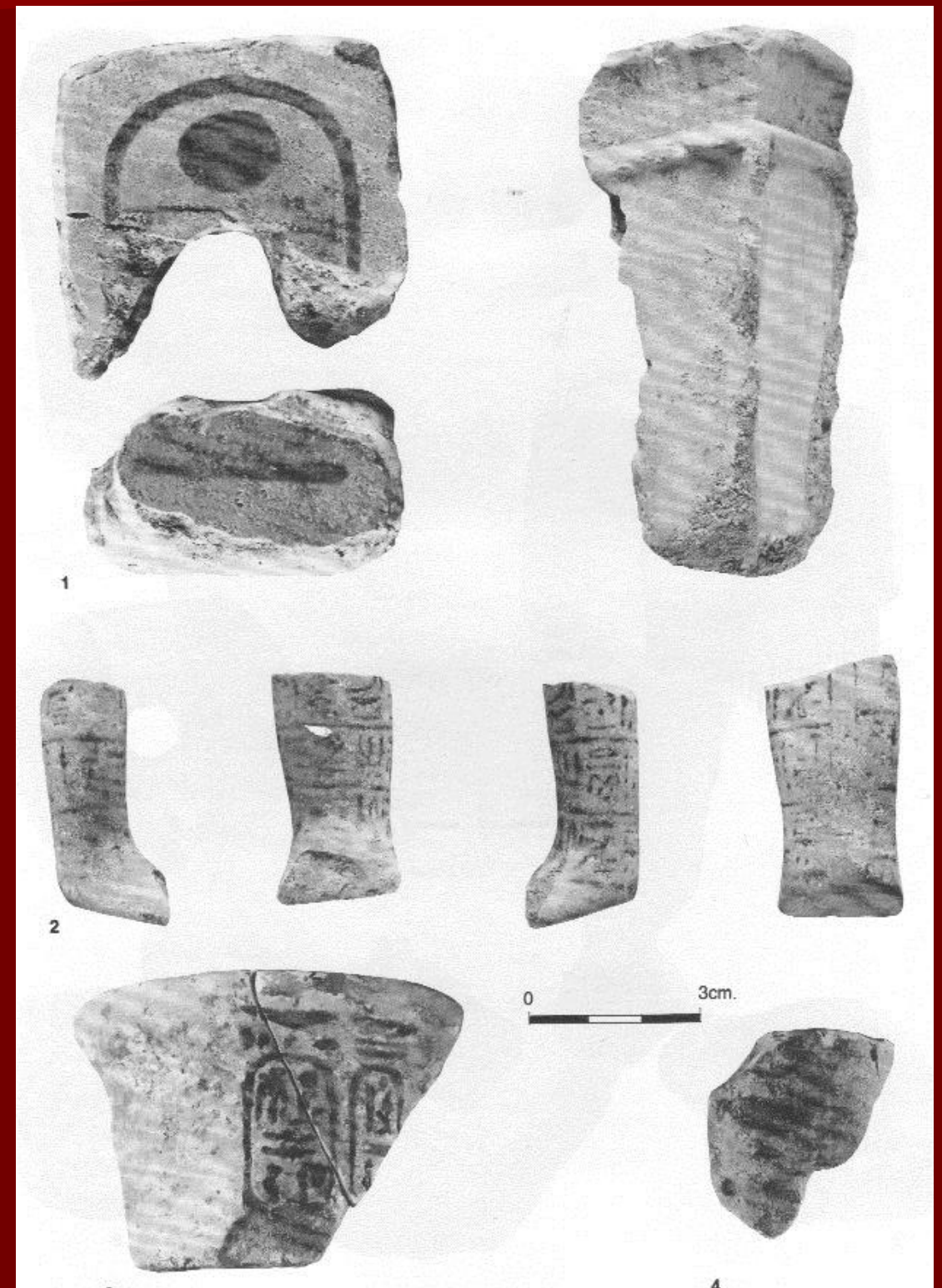
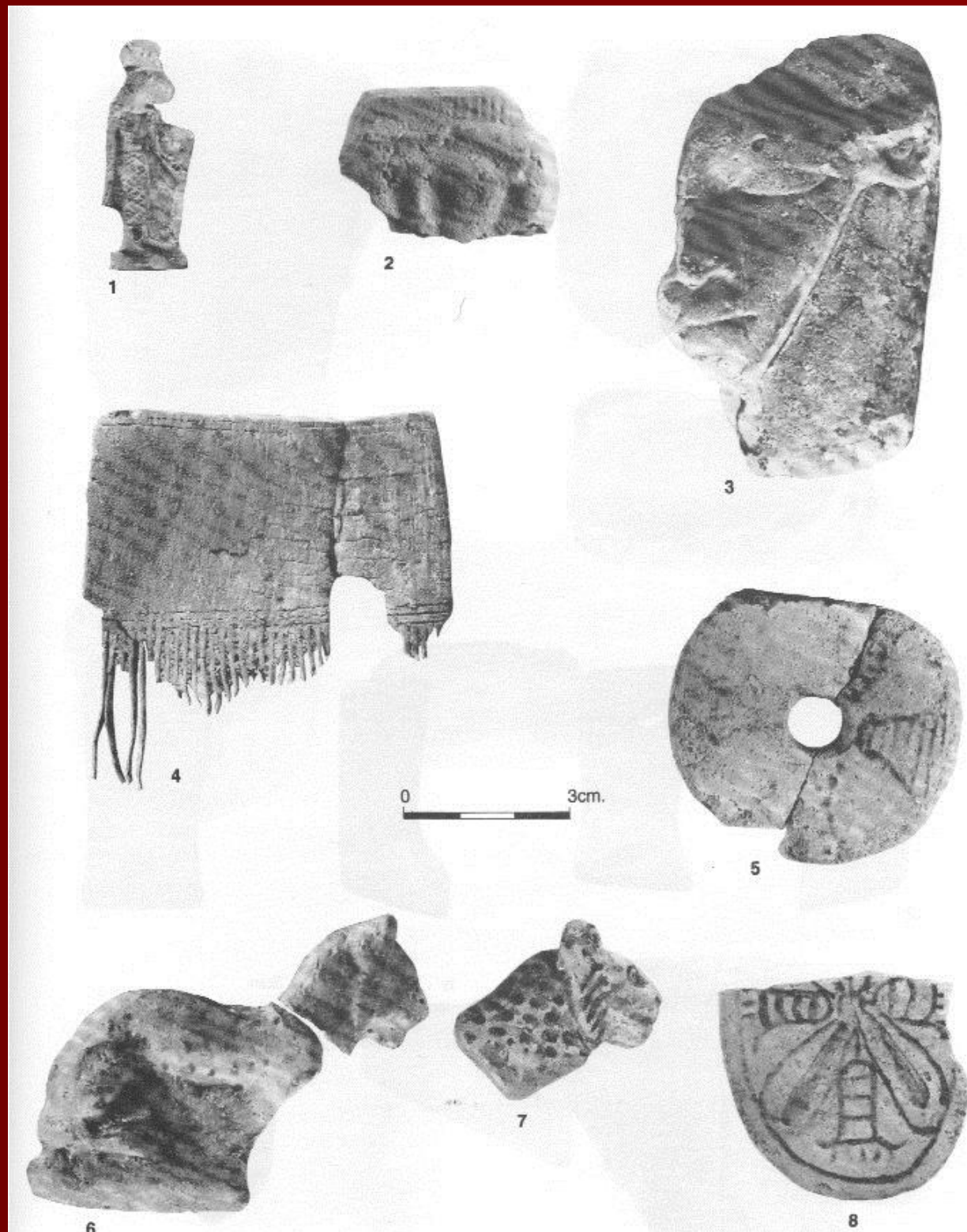
- ❑ Birth not just miraculous, but also dangerous, newly born was especially vulnerable.
- ❑ High child mortality: call upon the help of their gods through magical objects, like birth bricks, and special ritual practices during childbirth
- ❑ birth brick was associated with a specific goddess, Meskhenet, sometimes depicted in the form of a brick with a human head.

Meskhenet

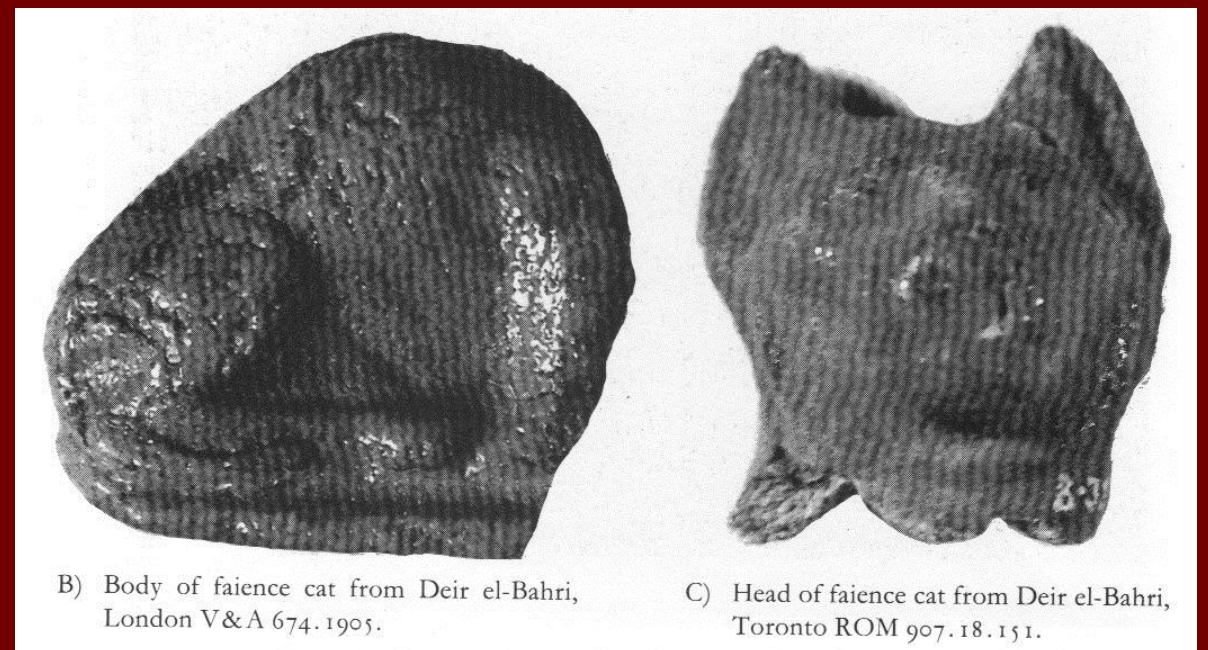
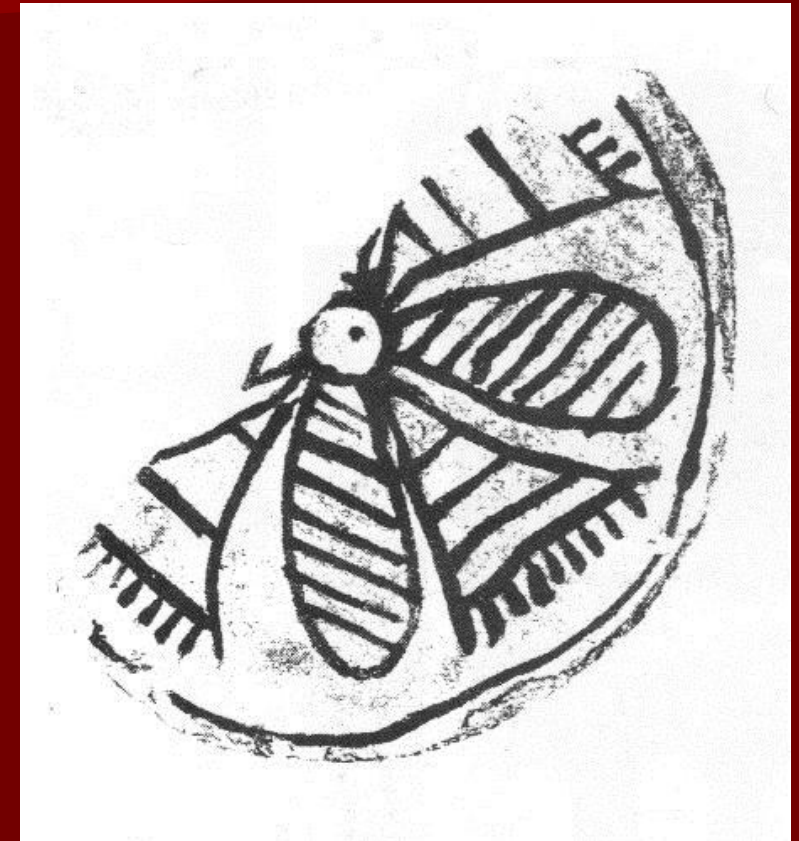
- personification of birth bricks upon which women squatted during childbirth → helps to protect the delivery, + predicts the future of the infant
- frequently occurs as human headed mud brick in Spell 125 of the Book of the Dead



Egyptian finds in personal piety (?) shrines (faience, bone, wood)



Similar finds from different Egyptian sites

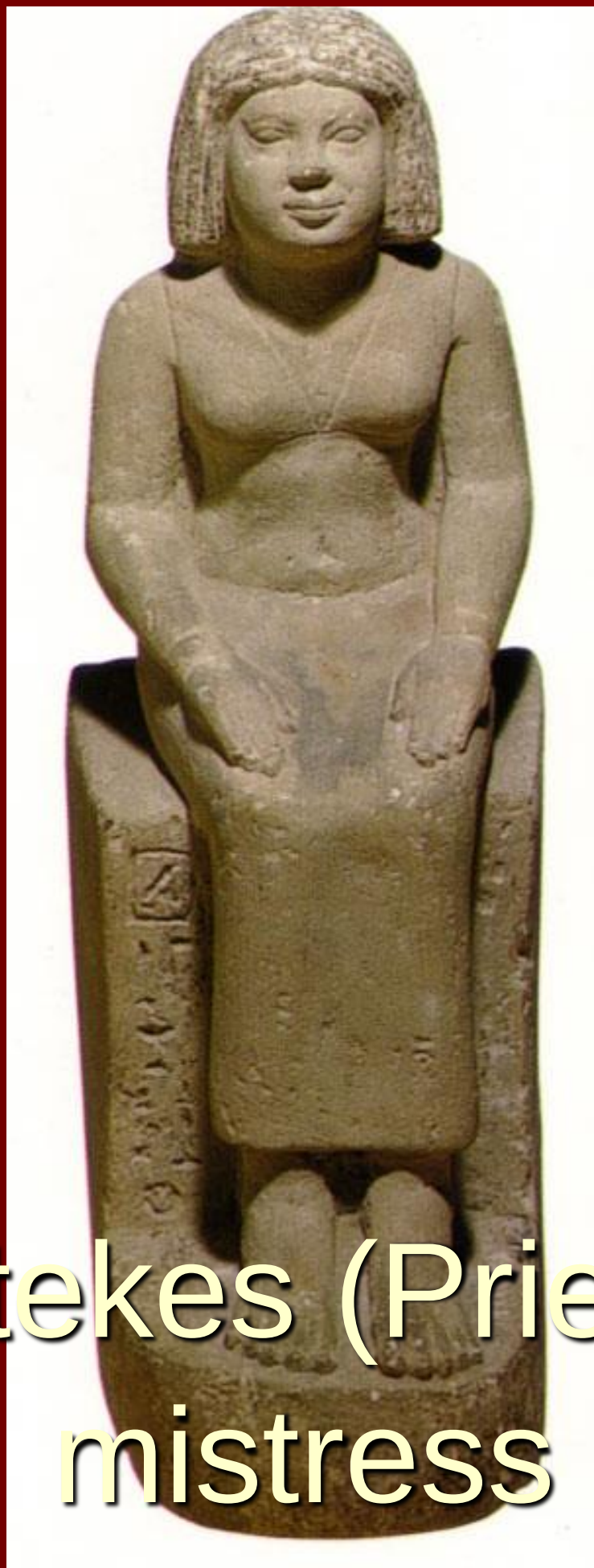


B) Body of faience cat from Deir el-Bahri,
London V&A 674.1905.

C) Head of faience cat from Deir el-Bahri,
Toronto ROM 907.18.151.

Hathor

- Symbol of continuity of belief between all levels of society
 - Pivotal position between popular and state religion
 - Fertility aspect = important folk religion
 - Goddess “who listen to prayers” → focus of personal piety
 - Prominent deity in state cult
 - Major role in royal and private funerary religion



Intekes (Priestess of Hathor-
mistress of the house)

Amenemhat (TT82 D18): Khenru singer and dancer of Hathor







35800

Priests/priestesses - singers

- *shemayit*
- Amun, Hathor, others as well (both male & female) → upper class, officials, wives of DeM workmen
- aside from *nbt-pr* most popular title in Theban tombs
- chief could be royal woman *wrt xnr*
- had own funerary equipment, named stele, funerary papyri

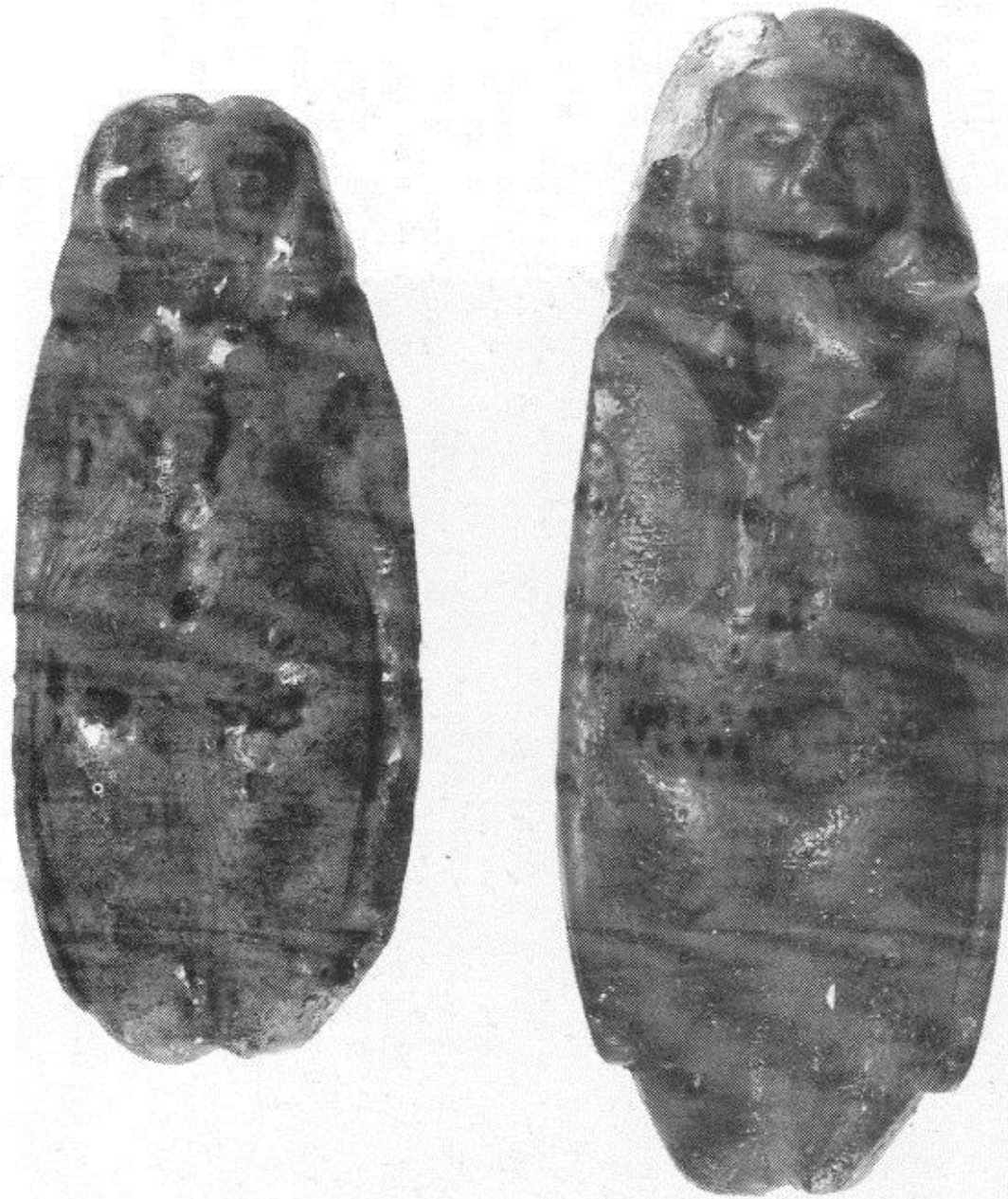
Priests/priestesses - singers

- *Hesyt (Hathor)*
- possibly referred to people with musical education?
- became an increasingly important title in from mid 18th dynasty
- upper class
- Menat

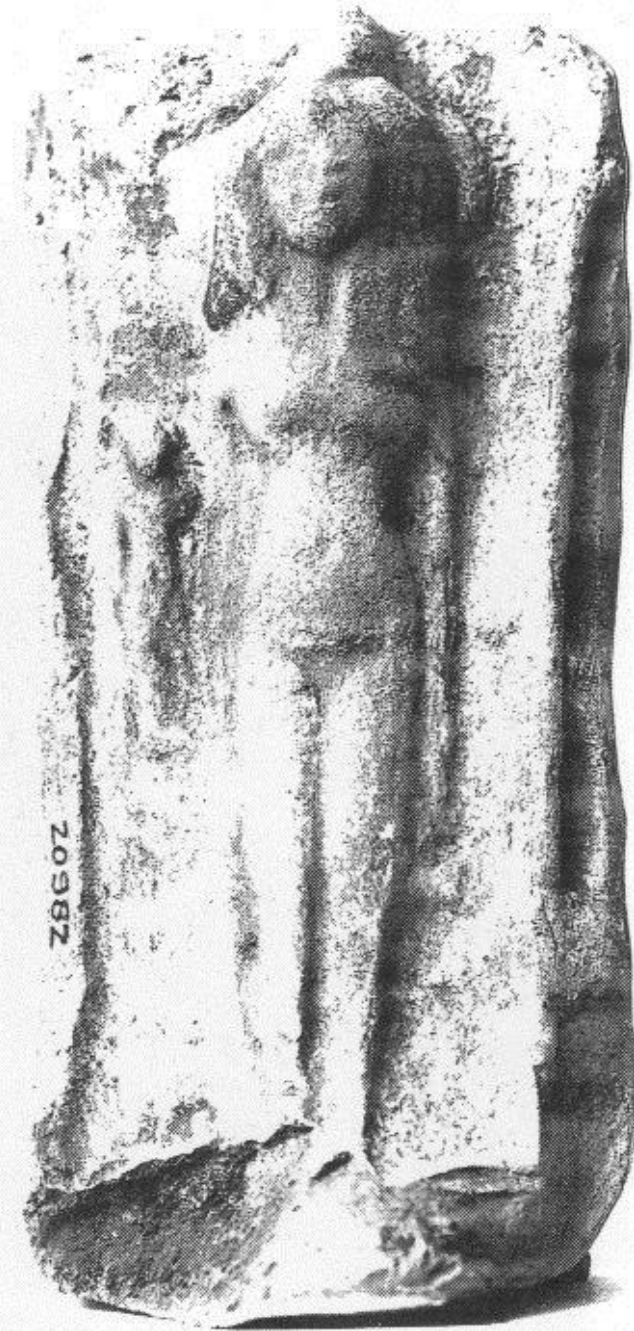




Fertility Figurines



A) Type 1 faience fertility figurines from Kahun, London UC 16723-4



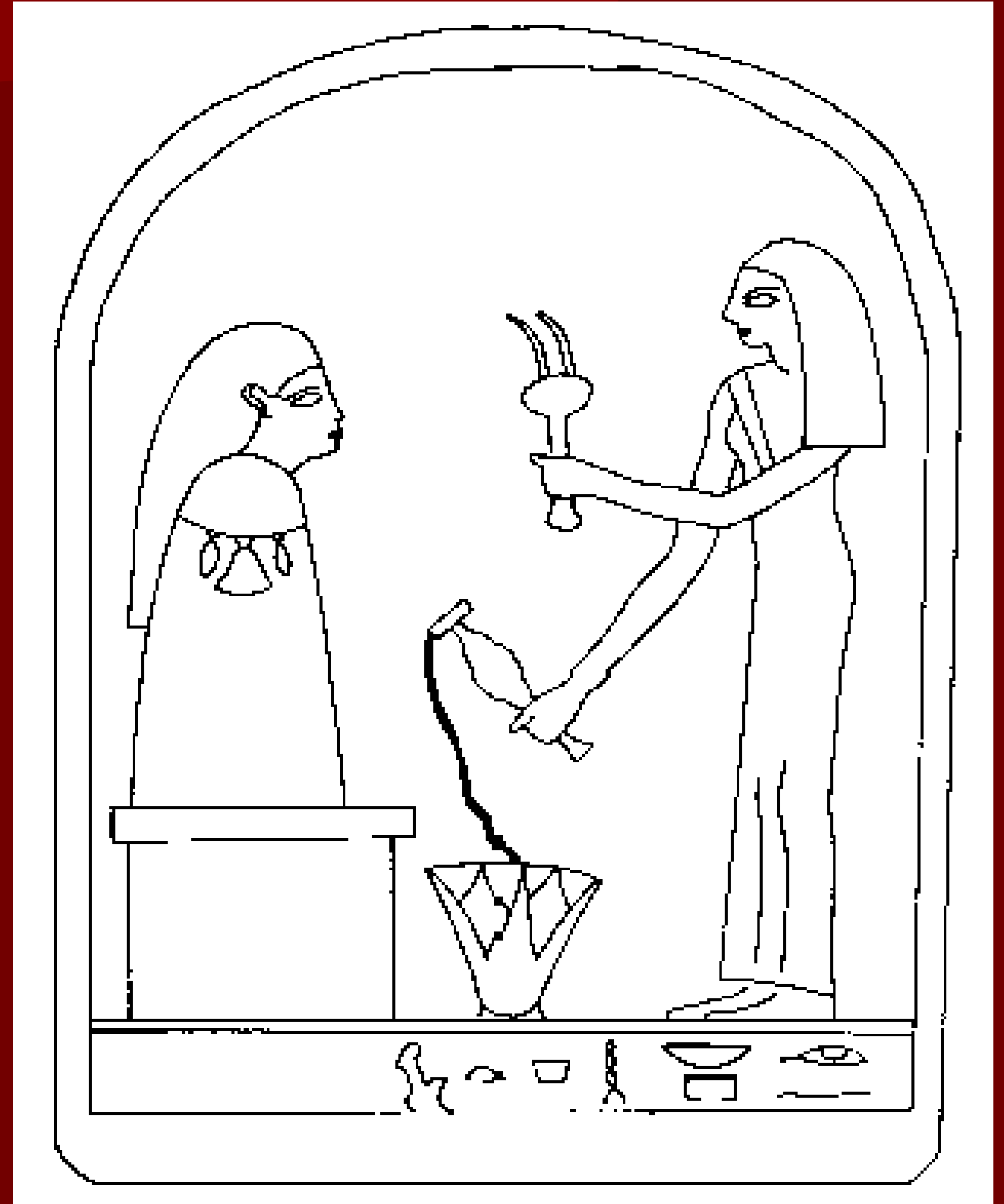
B) Type 6c pottery fertility figurine, London BM 20982

Phalli



) Wooden phallus from Deir el-Bahri, Oxford Ash. 1926.401

Ancestor busts



Akh ikr n Ra





16550



16549



16552



Chantress of Aten

