

Magic and Religion in Ancient Egypt

Part II: 81 gods

“An ennead of enneads”

by

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Second Preview:

Amentet, Andjety & Anubis



Ancient Egypt, by Sjef Willockx

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Introduction

In June 2005, Part I of the series “Magic and Religion in Ancient Egypt” was published on www.egyptology.nl, under the title “The Roots”. The following comes from the Preface to that paper:

The title of this series: “Magic and Religion in Ancient Egypt” is a description of its content – but also a statement of its perspective. The position of this series is, that the magic and religion of ancient Egypt both have their roots in the same mental background, and that, for the ancient Egyptians themselves, a distinction between magic and religion was meaningless. That is why both will be treated here on an equal footing. The first part of the series will be devoted to this common background of magic and religion.

Part II is to be a cycle of descriptions of 81 gods. It will be published in nine groups of nine gods each. For the ancient Egyptians, the number nine had a special significance. Their language knew three “numbers”: the singular, the dual and the plural. The dual was a specialized format for any pair of objects, such as a person’s two lips, two hands or two eyes. The plural included anything from the number of three upwards. In writing, this was expressed by indicating the plural of a noun with three strokes or dots, or by simply repeating an ideogram three times. Now when “three” equals “plural”, “three times three” equals “a host”. That is why for the Egyptians a “circle” or “body” of gods counted nine members: an Ennead.

Part II is meant as an introduction to the most important gods of ancient Egypt, but it is also designed to further clarify the principles of god-forming, as laid out in Part I. For this reason, also some less important, but particularly illustrative gods and goddesses will be included. For the same reason, several chapters will include a more elaborate treatment of certain general themes. As an example, the chapter of Amentet includes a discussion of the type of gods that is referred to as “Personifications”.

With respect to sources, I have concentrated on the older material. Only rarely will anything be used from the period after the New Kingdom. Starting with the Third Intermediate Period, the so-called “syncretic” aspect of ancient Egyptian religion turns it into a cacophony of multiple gods and crossed-over epithets, that to me has little appeal.

Drawings and photographs are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

Hieroglyphic texts are by WinGlyph Basic. Some more elaborate signs are from the extensive sign-list “Hieroglyphica”, PIREI I².

Signs and sign groups from the Pyramid Texts are from Sethe’s publication, as available on the Internet: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/eos/html/page.form.html>.

Signs and sign groups from the Coffin Texts are from De Buck’s publication, as published in PIREI VI (*Coffin Texts Word Index*).

A first Preview to the 1st Ennead, comprising the gods Aah and Aker, has been published on www.egyptology.nl in February 2007.

December 2007.

Literature

<i>AEL</i>	Miriam Lichtheim: <i>Ancient Egyptian Literature, Part I–II–III</i> (1973-76-80)
<i>AER</i>	Henri Frankfort: <i>Ancient Egyptian Religion</i> (1948)
<i>Arnold</i>	Dieter Arnold: <i>Die Tempel Ägyptens</i> (1992)
<i>Bonnet</i>	Hans Bonnet: <i>Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte</i> (2000: reprint from the original of 1952)
<i>Conc. Dict.</i>	R.O. Faulkner: <i>A concise dictionary of Middle Egyptian</i> (1961)
<i>CTWI</i>	Dirk van der Plas and J.F. Borghouts: <i>Coffin Texts Word Index</i> (2000, <i>PIREI VI</i>)
<i>DZA</i>	Das Digitalisierte Zettelarchiv (http://aaew.bbaw.de)
<i>Eine</i>	Erik Hornung: <i>Der Eine und die Vielen: Ägyptische Gottesvorstellungen</i> (1971)
<i>FBD</i>	R.O Faulkner: <i>The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead</i> (1972-1985)
<i>FCT</i>	R.O Faulkner: <i>The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts</i> (1973-1978)
<i>FPT</i>	R.O Faulkner: <i>The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts</i> (1969)
<i>Götterglaube</i>	Hermann Kees: <i>Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten</i> (1941)
<i>Gr.</i>	Alan Gardiner: <i>Egyptian Grammar, third edition</i> (1957)
<i>Hieroglyphica</i>	Nicolas Grimal, Jochen Hallof, Dirk van der Plas: <i>Hieroglyphica, second edition</i> (2000, <i>PIREI I</i> ²)
<i>IÄF</i>	Peter Kaplony: <i>Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit, Part I-II-III</i> (1963).
<i>KWA</i>	W. Helck and Eberhard Otto: <i>Kleines Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie</i> (1970).
<i>LÄ</i>	W. Helck et al.: <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie: Band 1 – 6</i> (1975-1986).
<i>Magic I</i>	Sjef Willockx: <i>Magic and Religion in Ancient Egypt. Part I: The Roots</i> (2005: http://www.egyptology.nl).
<i>Rite</i>	Eberhard Otto: <i>Das Verhältnis von Rite und Mythos im Ägyptischen</i> (1958)
<i>TLA</i>	Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae (http://aaew.bbaw.de)
<i>Wb.</i>	Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache (http://aaew.bbaw.de)
<i>Wilkinson</i>	Toby A.H. Wilkinson: <i>Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt. The Palermo Stone and its associated fragments</i> (2000)

<i>BD</i>	Book of the Dead (quoted by Spell).	Texts from individual pyramids are marked as follows: W = Unas T = Teti P = Pepi I M = Merenre N = Pepi II
<i>CT</i>	Coffin Texts (quoted by volume and page in De Buck's publication).	
<i>Pyr. / PT</i>	Pyramid Texts (quoted by paragraph, as in Sethe's publication).	

Quotations from these texts were - sometimes with minor adaptations - taken from the translations by R.O. Faulkner (see above).

1. Amentet (Imentet)

The name of this goddess simply means: “The West”. She was the goddess of the West, and since the West was the region where the dead would go,¹ her character was primarily that of a funerary deity.



There were two different words for “west” - and hence two names for the goddess Amentet: *imn.t* and *imn.tt*.²

Some variants of the former:



And of the latter:

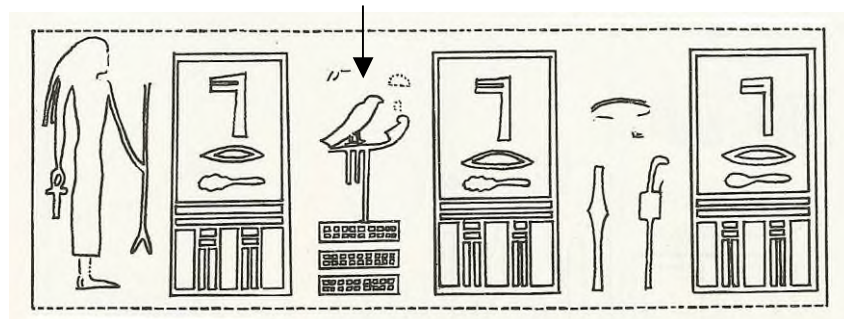


The sign  or  in these writings is actually the symbol for “the West”. In depictions of the goddess, she wears it on her head as a means to identify her.

Another god whose name was compounded with the word for “west” (and who also was primarily a funerary god) is Khentimentiu. His name means “Foremost of the Westerners”, i.e. “He in charge of the dead”. He was the necropolis deity of Abydos. Although both his name and his function are clearly related to those of Amentet, they never act in conjunction.

Meaning and development of the symbol for the West

One very early example of the symbol for the West comes from a cylinder seal from the time of king Djoser (3rd dynasty):



IÄF III, fig. 319. Reproduced with permission.




It is basically one of the general emblems of divinity or godhead (a falcon on a standard) with a feather added in front. It is here standing on a series of three times the sign for a nome, so this group means: “the western nomes”. The person to the left is a goddess: we can tell by the Ankh-sign in her hand. Which goddess it is can not be determined though, because there is nothing distinctive in her depiction.

When somewhat later the shape of hieroglyphs becomes more formalized, we find the following further evolution of the sign:

¹ For more on the West as location for the Afterlife, see *Magic I*, especially chapter 2.5.


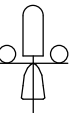
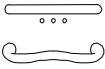
² The word *imn.tt* is derived from the adjective *imn.ty*: see *Wb. I*, 87.

³ The last of these is mostly confined to the Am Duat, where it is also used for the occasional mention of the goddess Amentet. For the period of the New Kingdom, one might assume to see here an influence of the name of Amun, but a comparable spelling is already found in the Pyramid Texts of P as the preferred writing for the name of the god Khentimentiu.

		
R13 ⁴	Abbreviated form (starting in the PT) ⁵	R14 (starting 6 th dyn.)

R13 is the oldest one: virtually identical to the one on the cylinder seal. The second form is slightly abbreviated: the standard has been simplified. It has been in use as early as the Pyramid Texts of Unas (last king of the 5th dynasty), where it alternates with R13. R14 is even further abbreviated. The falcon is now left out - which is a great thing, as anyone can testify who ever tried to accurately draw a falcon. This version starts appearing in the 6th dynasty.

What does this symbol mean? It will be helpful to examine two related writings: the words for “East”, and for “Nubia”.

		
<i>imn.t</i>	<i>ib.t</i>	<i>ḥ sty</i>
“West” R13	“East” R15	“Nubia”

According to Gardiner, R15 represents a spear, “decked out as standard”.⁶ In a more primitive form, it is already depicted on an ivory label from the period of king Den (1st dynasty), commemorating a victory over “the East”. The spear probably stands for the inhabitants of the East, representing them by their characteristic weapon: the spear. Likewise, the symbol for Nubia is the sign for “land” over a depiction of a bow: the traditional weapon of Nubians.

By analogy, R13 could then perhaps represent the inhabitants of the West. In ancient Egypt, the falcon on a standard was a generic symbol for a god. The feather here depicted is the feather of Maat: the concept of Order and Truth. So this symbol may designate the West as a region where the gods live, with Maat “standing before them”.

Uses of *imn.t* - *imn.tt*

The form *imn.t* is the oldest one: known from the 4th dynasty on. The first attestation of *imn.tt* is from the 6th dynasty.⁷ Hereafter, both remain in use.

Both can have the following meanings:

- Right (as opposed to left).⁸

⁴ The sign number in Gardiner’s sign list.

⁵ Perhaps the most beautiful example of this variant is in the Book of the Dead of Anhay, 20th dynasty, now in the British Museum, in the vignette that has been dubbed “Spell 16”.

⁶ *Gr.* 502.

⁷ Several examples in *TLA*, lemma 26180: *jmn.tt* “Westen (Totenreich)”.

Depictions of the goddess

Depictions of Amentet are confined to a funerary context: vignettes in funerary papyri, sarcophagi, and the walls of tombs. She is portrayed as a woman with the symbol of the West on her head, or more rarely with a scepter in her hand that is crowned with that symbol.



(Figure from Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, page 22. Reproduced with permission.)

The beginnings of Amentet

It is not before the 4th dynasty, that Egyptian tombs begin to yield some texts, other than the name and titles of the deceased, but right from that moment on, we can follow the gradual emergence of “The West” as region where the dead will go.

Dyn.	Text	Source
4 th	May he be buried in the west of the necropolis (..)	Mastaba of Mer-ib, Gizeh 2100 1-annexe. <i>TLA</i> , jmn.t “der Westen”.
4 th -5 th	May she be buried in the western necropolis in great old age.	Mastaba of Ni-Sedjer-Kai, Gizeh 2101. <i>AEL-I</i> , 15.
5 th - 6 th	May he be buried in the West, in great old age (..)	Mastaba of Sedauch, Gizeh. <i>TLA</i> , jmn.t “der Westen”.
6 th	May the West give her arm to him.	Mastaba of Mereruka, Gizeh. <i>TLA</i> , jmn.t “der Westen”.
6 th ?	May the West give her hands to you.	Stela of <i>ḥwi-nḥsy</i> , Kairo 1695. <i>DZA</i> 20.773.920.

We see a most orderly progression:

- “west” as location *on* the necropolis;
- “western” as location *of* the necropolis;
- “The West” as the necropolis, or the realm of the dead;
- “The West” as goddess of the dead.

These texts are all from the tombs of commoners. In a royal mortuary context, Amentet makes a slightly earlier appearance in the Pyramid Texts of Unas (last king of the 5th dynasty). This is in keeping with the usual avant-gardism of royal funerary texts in general. The relatively late development of an independent use of “The West” as a term for the Realm of the Dead is remarkable - all the more so because a close association of the west with death already existed in the Predynastic Period.¹² The even later development of the goddess of The West however allows us to glean some insights as to how she came into being...

¹² In the Predynastic, the usual orientation of the dead in his tomb was with his face turned west. So e.g. M.A. Hoffman in *Egypt before the pharaohs*, page 110, describing the Naqada tombs: “With very few exceptions, the head lay at the southern end of the tomb while the face looked west (..)”.

The category of “Personifications”

Amentet is an example of the category of gods that is usually referred to as personifications.

Some other personifications are the following:

- Djefa: god of Abundance.
- Heka: god of Magic.
- Maat: goddess of Truth and cosmic Order.
- Sekhet: the Fen-goddess.
- Shai: god of Fate.
- Sia: god of Intelligence.

Gods of this type share the following three characteristics:

- Their name is a noun which denotes their domain.
- Their gender is that of said noun.
- They are always depicted in human form, with as sole attribute their name or an object that refers to their domain, on their head - or without any attribute at all, in which case they are simply identified by their name, written above or beside them.

The word “heka” means “magic”, so a god Heka of magic is magic personified. The word “sia” means “intelligence”, so a god Sia of intelligence is Intelligence personified. The word “amentet” means “the west”, so a goddess Amentet is The West personified.

There are also some gods that are personifications, but that do not (completely) adhere to the three characteristics given - especially with regard to their name. Some of these are:

- Meskhenet: a birth goddess (the personification of the birth tile).
- Shesmu: the god of the wine- and oil-press.
- Tayt: the goddess of weaving.

On the other hand, there is also a group of gods that, although strictly adhering to the set of three characteristics given above, need to be carefully distinguished from the personifications mentioned so far. Examples are:

- Hapy: the Nile god.
- Nepri: the grain god.
- Aah: a moon god (already discussed).

Analogous to our examples of Heka and Sia, one could say about Hapy: The word “hapy” means Nile, so a god Hapy of the Nile is the Nile personified. And about Nepri: The word “neper” means “grain”, so a god Nep(e)ri of grain is grain personified. But this would not be accurate: Nepri is not the personification of grain, but of the divine power that resides in grain, the power to sustain life that man perceived to be immanent in grain. Likewise, the god Hapy is the personification of the power that man recognized in the river Nile. In this sense however, every immanent god is a personification: Geb is a personification of the power in the earth, and Re is a personification of the power in the sun.

To understand the differences between Geb and Re on the one hand, and Heka and Sia on the other, we need to look at matters from a more fundamental perspective.

What *is* a Personification?

More generally, we speak of a personification when an impersonal matter is treated as a person. In this very broad sense, it covers a variety of phenomena, ranging from art till religion.

When Sinuhe says “Land gave me to land”,¹³ it is obvious that these lands are not really thought of as persons, passing poor Sinuhe along. Here, the personification is just a figure

¹³ AEL I, 224.

of speech, and nothing more. Poetry also makes extensive use of personifications: “Her legs parade her beauty”; “My heart, you are very foolish”.¹⁴

A well-known pictorial element in many Old Kingdom tombs is a procession of estates. These estates were set aside by the wealthy, to supply offerings for their funerary cult. They are often represented as a row of servants, bringing all sorts of offerings, and each identified by her name. This too is just a representational device: the procession is a graceful, elegant alternative to a dreary list of facts and figures.

In the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead, the deceased has to go through a series of interviews with architectural elements such as gates and doorjambs, and ship tackle like mast and rudder. These objects are endowed with the power of speech, and thereby promoted to the status of a person, as a means to intensify their presence.

In New Kingdom temples, processions are depicted of “Nile gods”: portly fecundity figures with heavy, pendulous breasts, carrying offering plates, stacked high with all sorts of food. Usually these figures wear on their heads the emblem of a nome: they are in significance comparable to the Old Kingdom depictions of estates. But sometimes they don’t, and then they may be depictions of Abundance itself - and Abundance is in hymns and the like referred to as a god.

As you can see, we have here a whole series of concepts, only the last of which actually touches on the idea of divinity. They all have in common however, that *the reason for their emergence* has nothing to do with a perception of divinity - even if the last mentioned one finally touches on it.

So we can distinguish between two fundamentally different types of personifications.

In the first type, a status of divinity *precedes* the process of personification. Man begins with seeing a divine power in the sun, and only then gives that power a name, subsequently endowing it with more aspects of a personality. As a result, the power becomes a god that can be viewed separate from his original domain, the sun.¹⁵ In a variant to this process, the power can still be addressed with the same name as the phenomenon itself. Examples are the already mentioned gods Aah, Hapy and Nepri.

In the second type, a matter that is not a person is represented in human form, as a convenient means of referring to it. Estates or nomes can be itemized by their names, but that just makes dreary lists. Representing them as women or men makes for much more lively and attractive pictures. A concept such as magic or intelligence is hard to paint, but drawing a person, and labeling it with the name “Magic” or “Intelligence”, can help us out.¹⁶

In the first type, the personification is always (a priori) a god. In the second type, it is not necessarily so. Whether or not a “Type II” personification is a god, is in the final analysis dependent on the thoughts of the ancient Egyptians in the matter. Unfortunately, their ideas on the subject are not always totally clear.

In the table below, Type II is further subdivided in IIa and IIb, dependent on whether the matter to be depicted is an abstract (IIa) or not (IIb).

¹⁴ AEL II, 1182-183.

¹⁵ For more on this gradual process of release from a material background, thereby losing immanence and acquiring (some) transcendence, see *Magic I*, especially chapter 3.1.

¹⁶ To some extent, these figures are comparable with characters such as Knowledge, Beauty, Strength, and Death in the medieval morality play of “Everyman” - although the latter are much more complex and articulate.

Nature of a personification	Origin of a personification		
	Type I	Type IIa	Type IIb
	The perception of a divine power in a matter, with the subsequent desire to separately identify / depict that power.	A desire to depict something abstract, sometimes with the subsequent recognition of a divine power in it.	A desire to intensify an object or an activity to the status of a person, sometimes with the subsequent recognition of a divine power in it.
Not divine	n.a.	Estates in OK tombs. Nomes, represented as fecundity figures, in NK temples.	Architectural elements and ship tackle in CT / BD.
Divine	Predominantly immanent gods (without a separate name): Aah, Hapy, Nepri. Transcendent / immanent gods (with separate names): Geb, Nut, Re.	Abstract personifications: Djefa, Heka, Maat, Sekhet, Shai, Sia.	Concrete personifications: Meskhenet, Shesmu, Tayt.

(Such tables always have a degree of artificiality. In reality, matters are never so discrete as suggested by the rigorous lines between the cells. Still, drawing up these tables in my opinion helps in structuring knowledge - as well as exposing any gaps in it.)

Amentet as a Personification

So of which type was Amentet?

It really comes down to the question of which came first:

- the perception of a power, immanent in the West, subsequently depicted as a goddess,
- or a depiction of the West in the shape of a personification, which subsequently evolved into a “real” person: a goddess.

Because of the incompleteness of our sources, this is a question that can not decisively be answered. What we do know however, is the following:

- In the tombs of the commoners of the Old Kingdom, “the West” as region precedes “the West” as goddess.
- The first mention of Amentet as funerary goddess that we are aware of, is from the end of the 5th dynasty (PT of Unas).
- The first mention of a goddess Amentet in any context comes from the pyramid complex of Sahure (2nd king of the 5th dynasty), where she brings, as titulary goddess of the west, the peoples of the western countries with their tribute before the king.¹⁷

This is one of those cases, where we dearly miss the pictorial evidence from the 4th and 5th dynasty royal pyramid complexes. From all the fine limestone reliefs that once adorned the valley temples, causeways and mortuary temples from that period, just fragments survive.¹⁸

¹⁷ Bonnet 22.

¹⁸ The Metropolitan Museum of New York has a fine piece on display in its collection of fifty highlights: see

As the accidental example of Sahure shows, that material would almost certainly have provided us with a definitive answer to our question. Based on the material enumerated, I would say that it seems that originally the West was depicted as a personification, in the same way as the estates in the tombs of the commoners: type IIa from the table above. With the rising importance of the West as habitat of the dead, the already existing personification of the West received more attention. Bestowed with the hopes and cravings of man, she finally became a true goddess.

Another, more indirect approach to the matter is, trying to determine what type of power the Egyptians might have seen in the West as realm of the dead, as preliminary to her becoming a goddess, from whence she subsequently could be depicted as a personification. Perhaps the power of resurrecting the dead? That was not required: life after death came about automatically.¹⁹ The power to sustain the dead? Not really necessary, either: the West is a land, just like Egypt: one can grow crops there, just like home. The power of providing for the dead in a superior, enhanced way? Hmm, perhaps. Crops in the West are of enormous size:

I know that Field of Rushes which belongs to Re, the walls of which are of iron: the height of the barley [there] is five cubits, its ear is two cubits and its stalk three cubits; its emmer is seven cubits, its ear is of three cubits and its stalk of four cubits.²⁰

Still, it is not all that convincing - which makes the case for the alternative stronger.

Amentet's religious significance: developments before the New Kingdom

As a funerary deity, Amentet's specific role is that of receiving and embracing the deceased. She is also portrayed as mother of the deceased, to whom he now returns.²¹

The first time that we encounter The West as a goddess of the dead is at the very end of the 5th dynasty: in the Pyramid Texts of Unas.

PT, spell 254, par. 282-284:

Behold, she comes to meet you (the king), does the Beautiful West, meeting you with her lovely tresses, and she says: "Here comes whom I have borne, whose horn is upstanding, the eye-painted Pillar, the Bull of the sky! Your shape is distinguished, pass in peace, for I have protected you - so says the Beautiful West to the king.

This is however not only her first, but also her last appearance in the PT. All in all, the West as region of the dead is not all that conspicuously present in the Pyramid Texts. The god Khentiamentiu ("Foremost of the Westerners") is mentioned several times, but only rarely is the West explicitly identified as the deceased's destination.

PT 1531: O Osiris the King, you shall not go into these eastern lands, you shall go into those western lands by the road of the followers of Re.

PT 1703: O King, your mother Nut has borne you in the West; go down to the West as a possessor of honor.

Once, the West is even vigorously denounced:

http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_Of_Art/department.asp?dep=10 .

¹⁹ See *Magic I*, chapter 2.5.

²⁰ Book of the Dead, Spell 109 (*FBD* 102). One cubit is approx. 52 cm.

²¹ It is tempting to see in this the remnant of an ancient belief in a "mother Earth", into which the deceased returns, but the Egyptian word for "earth" (*t3*) is masculine - as are the Egyptian earth gods (Aker, Geb, Ptah-Tatenen).

PT 2175: Do not travel on those western waterways, for those who travel thereon do not return, but travel on these eastern waterways among the followers of Re...

Compare this one with PT 1531 just quoted: like fish-mongers in the marketplace, calling the other one's merchandise foul.

More typically, the Pyramid Texts locate the abode of the dead in either the sky, or the Netherworld, without reference to any cardinal direction. This may have to do with the fact, that the Pyramid Texts were a royal prerogative. Perhaps the West was, in the Old Kingdom, the "commoner's Afterlife".

In the Coffin Texts, the West is more regularly presented as location for the Afterlife. The position of Amentet remains the same:

CT, Spell 628 (VI-247):

[Title:] To cause the West to give her hands to a man. It means being hale.
Hail to you, Beautiful West! See, I have come safely to you, you Great Lady (...)

CT, Spell 30 (I-88):

Welcome [to] the West, you young god, born of the Beautiful West.

Here we have two meanings for the word "West" in one sentence: first as the realm of the dead, then as goddess.

CT, Spell 33-35 (I-116-117):

Hail to you, O Beautiful West! See, N. has come to you that he may greet you daily as your son; your child whom you have borne to Osiris.

In this text, the Beautiful West is not only mother to the deceased, but also wife to Osiris. This identifies her with Isis (and the deceased with Horus, although that is probably unintentional).

On a stela from the same period (11th dynasty), now in the British Museum, we see another example of a wavering between meanings:

He arrives to every land in peace, [traveling] to the Beautiful West
The Desert opens her arm to him
The West gives her hands to him.²²

Here "the Beautiful West" is a region, whereas "The West" is an acting person. Note the use of "the Desert" with the same sense.

At the end of the Middle Kingdom, the elements that together constitute Amentet's position as a goddess can be summarized as follows.

- Although "the Beautiful West" is at times resolutely portrayed as a goddess, the expressions "The West" and "the Beautiful West" also remain in use in the sense of "realm of the dead".
- There is a tendency to also personify the realm of the dead under other names, such as "The Desert".²³
- There is a beginning of an association with Isis. For the rest, Amentet remains confined to the sphere of funerary belief from which she originally sprang.

²² BM 614, DZA 20.773.930.

²³ These personifications - we will meet a few more shortly - may have come into being in imitation of Amentet's example.


Religious significance: developments during and after the New Kingdom

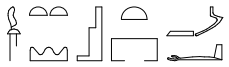
During the New Kingdom, we meet Amentet again on a new location: Thebes. As the nation’s capital, Thebes had by then become its focal point - very much like Memphis during the Old Kingdom. Initially, it lacked a funerary deity of its own - although Hathor already had a foothold at nearby Deir el Bahri.²⁴

The Theban necropolis was known under several names, two of which now started to appear as goddesses in their own right: “The Place of Truth”, and Khefthernebes: “She who is in the presence of her Lord”. These two most likely were personifications of type IIa (see the table on page 11 above).


The pyramid-shaped mountain that dominates the Valley of the Kings was believed to be the abode of a divine power. Her name was Meretseger: “She who loves silence”, also known as “(The Lady of) The Peak”. My guess would be, that she was a personification of the I-type.

In addition to these three of local stock, three more from elsewhere joined the scene: Amentet from Memphis, Hathor from nearby Dendera, and Isis. During all of the New Kingdom, these six contested for the position of Thebe’s primary necropolis goddess, moving back and forth, joining and parting again, like dancers on a complex choreography.

On a stela from the 19th dynasty, now in Florence, the caption above the picture of a goddess, who wears a scepter with , reads:

 Amentet, [who is also] The Place of Truth.

Below the goddess is an offering formula:

 A boon that the king gives [to] Amentet: may she give ...²⁵

Here, Amentet suddenly reaches the highest level of godhead possible in a funerary context: as the one apportioning sustenance, right on a par with Osiris and Anubis.²⁶

In a Theban tomb, period of Ramesses II (19th dynasty):



Hathor, mistress of the Sacred Land (= the necropolis) [who is also] Amentet-Khefthernebes.

Below this:



A boon that the king gives [to] Hathor, mistress of the West.²⁷

In the tomb of Khaemhat in western Thebes (18th dynasty, time of Amenhotep III) we see a goddess, wearing the symbol of the West, standing behind Osiris, embracing him. There is

²⁴ Arnold 138.

²⁵ DZA 20.790.940.

²⁶ According to Hornung, Amentet occasionally features in the offering formula during of the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period (18th-22nd dynasty) (LÄ I, 223).

²⁷ DZA 20.791.030.

no caption, but because of her position behind Osiris this can be no other than Isis - with the symbol of the West on her head.²⁸

A stela from Saqqara, now in Berlin, 19th dynasty. The deceased worships Osiris and Isis. Caption above Isis:



Isis the Great, mother of [a] god, mistress of the West, lady of the sky, mistress of the Two Lands.²⁹

In a Theban tomb, period of Merneptah (19th dynasty):



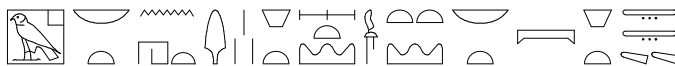
Words spoken by Khefthernebes, [Foremost of the] Westerners, [who is also] The Place of Truth.³⁰

A wooden statuette from the New Kingdom, now in the Turin museum, has the following prayer for offerings:



A boon that the king gives [to] Meretseger, the great one of the West.³¹

A relief from a New Kingdom tomb, now in Cairo. Depicted is a tree, from which a woman emerges to pour water for the deceased and his wife (a theme, known as “the lady of the sycamore”, identified with Hathor). The caption reads:



Hathor, lady of the sycamore, mistress of the necropolis, [who is also] Amentet, lady of the sky, mistress of the Two Lands.³²

The tomb of Paser, western Thebes (19th dynasty):



A boon that the king gives [to] Hathor, who has authority over the necropolis, [and to] Amentet-Khefthernebes.³³

In the tomb of Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II, we see several times a goddess, wearing the symbol of the West on her head, who is in the accompanying texts identified as the goddess Hathor:

²⁸ Hornung mentions a series of Ramesside stelae from Saqqara with the same motif (LÄ I, 223).

²⁹ DZA 20.792.660.

³⁰ DZA 20.791.020.

³¹ DZA 20.788.640.

³² DZA 20.791.470. Tomb of Harmin.

³³ DZA 27.818.960.



Hathor, who has authority over Thebes, mistress of all the gods.

In the meantime, in the Book of the Dead, the West is continued to be mentioned frequently as abode of the dead.

Some examples:

Rubric to Spell 8: “Spell for opening up the West by day.”

Spell 122: “To me belongs everything, and the whole of it has been given to me. I have gone in as a falcon, I have come out as a phoenix; the Morning Star has made a path for me, and I enter in peace into the beautiful West.”

Spell 133: “(..) may you reckon up your bones, may you gather your members together, may you turn your face to the beautiful West (..)”

The goddess Amentet however makes only one appearance in the Book of the Dead, in a vignette to Spell 148 (already mentioned on page 7):



The Beautiful West³⁴

Then, in the vignette to Spell 189 (right at the end of many manuscripts of the Book of the Dead), we see the goddess Hathor, in the shape of a cow, stepping forward out of a papyrus bush. She is here called:



Hathor, lady of the West.

Taken together, these two vignettes more or less epitomize Amentet’s “career”: starting out as an independent goddess, ending as an epithet of Hathor. For that is the final outcome: in the Late Period temples of Dendera and Deir el-Bahri, Hathor is “the Lady of the West”. Amentet, as a separate goddess, has all but vanished. With the increasing emphasis on myth, she just couldn’t keep up. It is only on the inside bottom of Late Period coffins, that we still encounter her: a goddess with the symbol of the West on her head. In this position, she is the opposite number of Nut, who is on the inside of the lid of many of these coffins. Amentet has now become a symbol herself: an icon, an oversized hieroglyph.

Evaluation of a career

The West was where the dead went to live a new, and happier life. But no matter how sincerely a person believes in this, no-one wants to die. So it would surely be a soothing, comforting idea to know that one would be welcomed there by a fair and friendly lady. Amentet filled a need.

As we have seen, the development of the goddess took place in the course of the Old Kingdom, and she was as a typical product of that era. In those days, when the world was young and the people confident, the positive, reassuring charisma of Amentet was appreciated as a great help. Over time, through every next period of downfall, some of the Egyptian’s self-confidence and sense of security was eroding away. In the critical area of the funerary domain, this resulted in an increased reliance on both magic and myth. The

³⁴ DZA 20.790.900.

friendly, welcoming lady just didn't have much to offer in these area's, so especially after the New Kingdom, her position weakened.

Already during the Old Kingdom, she had started out with a handicap: she lacked a name of her own, to distinguish from her from her domain, the West. This made it more difficult for her to further detach herself - which was a prerequisite for a role in myth. (Except for a tentative association with Isis, Amentet never developed any mythical connections.)

In New Kingdom Thebes, she faced a lot of competition, and what's more: part of that competition had extremely potent roots in myth (Isis) or a particularly rich and appealing personality (Hathor). After the New Kingdom, Osiris, with his compelling and manifold mythical connections, was by far the most important funerary deity - if not the most important deity of any kind. And although Isis remained forever Osiris' partner in myth, Hathor emerged right alongside her as goddess of the dead.

Still, Amentet did better than the three Theban locals: The Place of Truth, Khefthernebes and Meretseger. By the Late Period, those were all long gone, while Amentet still existed - even if that existence was limited to that of an icon, and another goddesses' epithet.

The relative importance of Personifications

We are used to the word "IMPORTANT" being flashed at us with great regularity. Our world and our lives have become so full of everything, that we can only spare some time for the really IMPORTANT - such as what other people would think of us when we would use brand X.

So we don't want to waste our valuable time on insignificant little gods - and identifying those is not all that difficult. Anyone can understand, that gods such as Heka, Sia or Amentet cannot possibly have been important gods: that is just so obvious! Even the Egyptians themselves considered them less important, for they had neither temples, statues nor priests,³⁵ and until a relatively late date,³⁶ they did not appear in myths.

We should realize though, that in the primitive mind, there is far less room for skepticism than in ours. With age, doubts and skepticism grow, and for cultures, this is as much true as it is for individuals. The primitive is much deeper involved in, and more committed to his way of life than we to ours. In the final analysis, he takes himself and his way of thinking - such as the categories into which he splits up the world - much more serious than we do. In his mind, a man is a man, and a god is a god.³⁷ And all members of the category "god" share that one basic characteristic, namely that they are much more powerful than man.

In the early days of Egyptology, the extent to which modern man may be culturally biased in his judgment of other cultures was not yet sufficiently recognized. Today we even have an official term for it: ethnocentrism . But being aware of the phenomenon does not automatically safeguard us against its pitfalls.

We find it relatively easy to appreciate that primitive man could discover a divine power in impressive natural phenomena such as the earth, the moon and the sun. But personifications like Sia, Maat and Amentet could not have been born from that same helpless awe for nature's greatest wonders. They had therefore to be creations of priests: "mere constructs", not rooted in man's psyche, and therefore infinitely less important than other gods.

Actually, there are no indications that these personifications are all products of priestly ingenuity. On the contrary: some - like Amentet - are unmistakably the product of genuine

³⁵ Those who refer to themselves as "priests of Maat" (literally: servants of Maat) probably just wanted to indicate their activity as judges.

³⁶ When Sia and Heka become regular crew-members in Re's bark in the Netherworld.

³⁷ See also the rigidity with which primitive societies can enforce a taboo, or maintain the separation of castes.

piety and devotion. But even if some are not, it does not matter what we consider to be important: if our goal is to learn about the ancient Egyptians to the point where we can look through their eyes, to see their world as they saw it, then what matters is, how *they* regarded the matter.

Greater and lesser gods: the ideas of the Egyptians themselves

We can e.g. consider, how much devotion a god attracted from the ancient Egyptians themselves. Featuring in myths, in prayers and hymns, having temples, priests and festivals are all unmistakable signs of attention and devotion. See also the host of theophorous names that even the humblest of people gave to their children, and the reverent, sometimes downright touching prayers on the stelae of small folk like artisans and soldiers.

So we might consider a god like Amun, for whom so many magnificent temples were build, and who figures in so many profoundly moving hymns and prayers, to be more important in a religious sense than either of the three gods we have discussed so far: Aah, Aker and Amentet. The Egyptians themselves acknowledged this explicitly in the designation “King of the gods” that they often assigned to Amun.

But did this also mean that Amun was more holy, more divine? That he was further removed from the human plane than the other three?

The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor offers a most interesting insight into the views of the Egyptians regarding gods in general.³⁸ It is about the sole survivor of a shipwreck (actually not a sailor, but a palace official who was on an expedition), who washes ashore on an unknown island. At first he thinks it uninhabited, but:

Then I heard a thundering noise and thought: “It is a wave of the sea”. Trees splintered, the ground trembled. Uncovering my face, I found it was a snake that was coming. He was of thirty cubits;³⁹ his beard was over two cubits long. His body was overlaid with gold; his eyebrows were of real lapis lazuli.

For an Egyptian audience, this description immediately designates the creature as a god. Snakes do not have a beard, but gods do, and gods are always said to have gold for flesh, and “real lapis lazuli” for hair. As snakes do not have hair, the mandatory mention of lapis had to be redirected a bit.

Our hero fears for his life, but the god is well-disposed towards him, and treats him kind. He foretells his future for him, and in the end provides him in abundance with all sorts of gifts. What he asks in return is simple:

Make me a good name in your town; that is what I ask of you.

Even this unknown god, who lives on an island no one knows, is a glorious being, a wonder to behold, and meeting him deeply moves the “sailor”.

Nevertheless, the ancient Egyptians could waver between positions just as well as we can. They sometimes spoke of a Greater and a Smaller Ennead. And in the Cannibal Hymn of the Pyramid Texts, the gods are even sorted by size:

Their big ones are for his [the king's] morning meal,
Their middle-sized ones are for his evening meal,
Their little ones are for his night meal.⁴⁰

³⁸ AEL-I, 211-215.

³⁹ One cubit is approx. 52 cm.

⁴⁰ AEL-I, 81.

But in the majority of cases, they treated all gods as equal. Every god was just that: a god - nothing more, nothing less. For the primitive, every god exemplifies that concept of divinity that he so readily can recognize all around him.

In Miriam Lichtheim's anthology, two hymns are represented from the same man: Neferabu, a draftsman from Deir el-Medina.⁴¹ The man must have been quite a sinner: he affronted two different gods to the point where he felt compelled to dedicate a votive stela for them. On these stelae are penitential hymns, in which he expresses both his sincere regrets, and his grateful relief after being forgiven for his "transgressions". One of the hymns is for Ptah, the other is for Meretseger. Ptah was without a doubt one of Egypt's most important of gods: held in the highest regard throughout the land, in all periods. Meretseger on the other hand was only known in the area of Thebes during the New Kingdom - if not in fact only in Deir el-Medina, by the community of workers there. But there is no distinction whatsoever discernable in the mood of these hymns: they are both equally devout and reverent in tone. According to one theory, the goddess Isis originally was a personification: of the power that is in the royal throne.⁴² If this is true, then there can be little doubt that a personification could become a major deity. But goddesses as Maat and Amentet, although personifications, were by no means insignificant gods. Some of the highest officials of the state called themselves "servant of Maat", thereby expressing their commitment to dispensing fair justice. And for Amentet, the many depictions of her on the inside bottom of Late Period coffins eloquently testify of her popularity in that era.

Postscript: a subdivision of gods

Cosmic gods such as Re, Geb and Nut came into being as the result of an immediate and powerful experience. Man was overwhelmed, stunned, by a forceful impression of might and splendor.⁴³ That is why we can call these gods "immediate gods", or "instant gods". Their birth was instantaneous, right from the heart of an intense emotional experience.

Once this had happened, the way was open for other, less violent god-forming processes. Now that man had become tuned to the notion of divinity, he could find it in other, less conspicuous places too. In matters that struck him, that caught his attention, he now felt encouraged to ponder, and out of the combination of committed perception and deliberate contemplation (in other words: speculation) a host of new gods was born.

Somewhat later still, a third type of god emerged: that of the purely speculative gods. We will meet the first of those, when we get to Atum.

⁴¹ *AEL-II*, 107-110.

⁴² Frankfort in *AER* 6-7.

⁴³ See *Magic I*, 2.8.

Class	Immediate, or instant gods	Intermediate, or transitional gods			Speculative gods
Derivation	Straight from the awe and admiration for nature.	From a combination of perception and reflection.			Purely from speculation.
Domain / Seat of immanence	Major natural phenomena: the earth, the sky, the powers of fertility.	Lesser natural phenomena: certain animals, plants, or specific localities.	Ideas, concepts (abstracts).	Activities, tools, objects (non-abstracts).	No original immanence, sometimes a secondary immanence. ⁴⁴
Developers	Anyone with enough sensitivity.	Committed individuals, and priests.			Priests and philosophers.
(Non-divine personifications)			Estates in OK tombs. Nomes, represented as fecundity figures, in NK temples.	Architectural elements and ship tackle in CT / BD.	
Predominantly immanent gods	Aah Hapy	Lady of the sycamore Meretseger Nepri Locality gods	Amentet Djefa Heka Maat Sekhet Sia	Meskhenet Shesmu Tayt	Nun The Ogdoad
Partly transcendent gods	Aker Geb Nut Re The king ⁴⁵	Anubis Hathor Horus Pakhet Sakhmet			Atum Kematef
Type of personification (see table on page 11)	Type I		Type IIa	Type IIb	Type I

The shaded row in the middle is not really about gods: it comes from the table on page 11. It is inserted to provide a fuller context with respect to the personifications.

⁴⁴ Speculation first produced the concept of primeval waters, after which the power in those waters could become a god, immanent in them, and called Nun.

⁴⁵ At the beginning of the 1st dynasty, the power and glory that man experienced when he looked upon his august king must have been truly overwhelming: otherwise, the natural barrier between his categories (those of “men” and “gods”) would not have collapsed.

Drawing up such a table is one thing, allocating individual gods to the various categories is another altogether. The classification is based on the psychological processes from which the gods sprang, and for all our educated guesses, we just can't be completely sure about these. For the examples chosen, I made an effort of selecting only gods and goddesses that I felt could be allocated with some confidence, but even these are not all that clear-cut.

Although the speculative gods, as meant in this table, are the most transcendent of this religion, they are still immanent in the sense that they firmly belong to the same reality that man and all of creation belongs to - for primitive man knows but one reality. Ultimately, the speculative gods - through a process of ever more speculation - evolve into the One God, who then inherits all religious feelings associated with both the immediate and the intermediate gods, becoming the grand total of all religious feelings and concepts - under the elimination of those that are by then deemed objectionable. At the same time, a separate reality emerges, allowing this One God a truly transcendent existence - thereby solving some problems, but creating others.⁴⁶

Lit.: *Bonnet* 22-23; *LÄ* I, 223 (Erik Hornung: Amentet); *LÄ* IV, 978-987 (Waltraud Guglielmi: Personifikation)

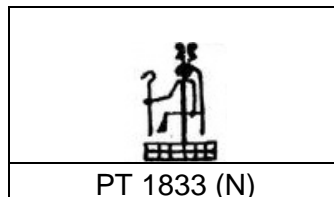
⁴⁶ For the mechanisms that led to the development of a separate reality, and for an appraisal of its ramifications, see *Magic I*, Chapter 4 ("The development of valuation").

2. Andjety (Anezti, Anedjti)

The god Andjety (also known as Anezti or Anedjti) is one of Egypt's oldest gods, with roots that can be traced back, perhaps even into the Predynastic Period. Although there is precious little material available for him, it can still reveal his outlines.

The god's portrait

Not many depictions of Andjety have survived. The majority of those that did, are hieroglyphs used as determinative for his name. The following is a typical example from the Pyramid Texts (reproduced from Sethe's publication):¹



He is shown as a standing man, with in one hand a crook, and in the other a flail (or perhaps a fly whisk, or a whip: opinions vary). His undifferentiated body lends an air of archaism to the representation.

His attributes are immediately reminiscent of the crook and flail of Osiris, also regularly carried by the king. There is a difference though: Andjety's crook is still the original full-sized one, not the abbreviated form that we are so familiar with from Tutankhamun's coffins. On his head, the god has two feathers in a headband, of the same type² as the feathers of the goddesses Maat and Amentet, and the god Shu. They stand back-to-back like this:



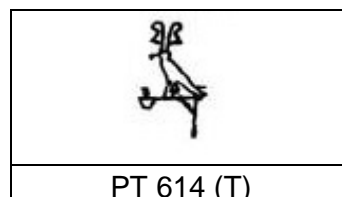
Perhaps we see here a premonition of the Atef-crown, later used by both the king, and several gods - most frequently by Osiris:



A long strip or ribbon hangs from the headband, behind the god. (The headband itself is not recognizable in this tiny drawing, but we will see other depictions later where it clearly stands out). A close parallel to this is offered by the headband with feathers and ribbon of the god Min, later also worn by Amun. There is a difference though: Min and Amun wear "straight" plumes like these:



Egyptologists have generally paid more attention to the crook and flail, than to the feathers. A determinative for Andjety in the Pyramid Texts in Teti's pyramid, could be an indication though, that for the Egyptians themselves, the feathers mattered more:



¹ Available online at http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/eos/html/page_form.html .

² Believed to be ostrich feathers: see Irene Grumach-Stirum, "Federn und Federkrone", *LÄ* II, 142-145.

Here, we see one of the traditional determinatives for “a god in general”: the falcon on a standard. To emphasize that in this case, Andjety is meant, and not just *any* god, the falcon³ is donned with Andjety’s two feathers. It seems then, that for the Egyptians these feathers were *the* distinguishing characteristic of the god.

(From the New Kingdom, some different depictions of Andjety are known. We will discuss those when we get to his relationship with Osiris).

The writing of the god’s name in the Pyramid Texts

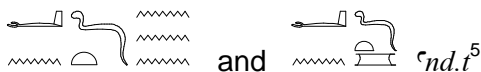
The following writing of Andjety’s name is also from Teti’s pyramid (paragraph 220):



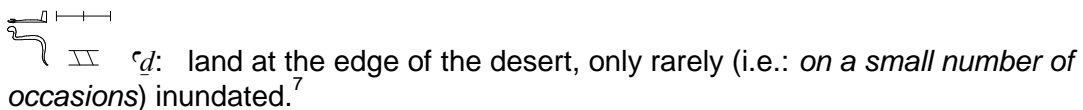
It lacks a determinative - as is in the Pyramid Texts by no means unusual. Other writings in the Pyramid Texts mostly lack final *-i*. Later writings from the Coffin Texts show, that the full phonetic value of the name was ϵ_{nd}.ty: Andjety.

The meaning of this name is: “He of Andjet”, where Andjet is the name of a locality.

A toponym “Andjet” is known from some texts from the Ptolemaic Period. The following are typical writings:



The determinatives show that it refers to a water(way) of sorts: a lake, river or canal. The word ϵ_{nd} means: “few”, or rather: “a small number”.⁶ In combination with a waterway this could perhaps mean, that said waterway was only filled - or empty - during “just a few days per year”. The following related word lends some support to this hypothesis:



For ϵ_{nd}.t, the *DZA* gives as meaning: “name of a waterway in the Delta”.⁸ A series of texts are quoted from a nome list in the Ptolemaic temple of Dendera. A waterway called ϵ_{nd}.t is mentioned there in connection with three Lower Egyptian nomes: the 2nd (of Letopolis), the 9th (of Busiris) and the 15th (of Hermopolis).⁹ These three are nomes that lie more or less on a straight line, running from south to north in the central part of the Delta. They could very well have been served by one Nile branch.

In a parallel text of PT 220, this time from Unas’ pyramid, the name of Andjety is written as follows:



(This is one of the writings without final *-i* or *-y*. In these cases, we depend on the context or parallel texts to distinguish between Andjet (the waterway) and Andjety (the god.))

³ The use of this determinative with a falcon is in itself not enough ground for assuming an original appearance of Andjety as a falcon. The same determinative is in the Pyramid Texts regularly used for various gods - and sometimes even goddesses: see par. 553 of Pepy II for an example with Tefnut.

⁴ This one also in the *Wb.*: I, 207-12.

⁵ *DZA* 21.888.940.


⁶ *Wb.* I, 207-7.

⁷ See *DZA* 21.893.460 and *Wb.* I, 239. See *Wb.* I, 208 for a probable original reading of this word as ϵ_{nd}.

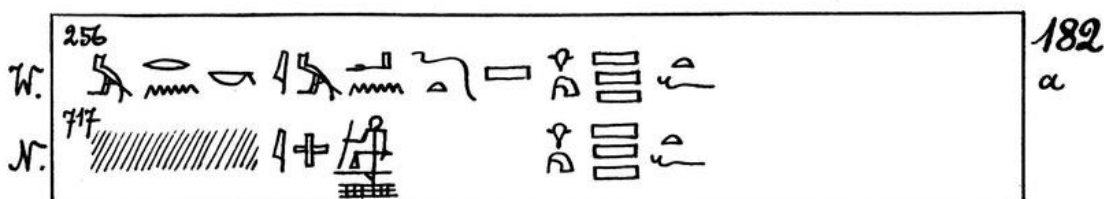
⁸ *DZA* 21.888.940.

⁹ *DZA* 21.888.950 - 980.

This time, the writing *does* have a determinative, but surprisingly, it is again one that signals a waterway. This suggests a particularly strong connection between the god and such a waterway. From this then it is assumed that the original locality to which the god Andjety belonged was in fact a waterway - and most likely the waterway in the Delta, mentioned by the Ptolemaic texts.

Now let's go back for a minute to the picture of the god, shown on page 22 above, for it has yet something more to reveal about Andjety's nature. It is standing on the sign  (N 24). N 24 is a sign that is a/o known as determinative for a nome (i.e. a district, or province). So this appears to allude to a connection of the god with a nome.

A key text to this issue is PT 182a. Below is Sethe's rendering of that section, which occurs in parallel in two pyramids: that of Unas (W) and that of Pepi II (N).



The translation of the upper line (from Unas) is:

In your name of "The one who is in Andjet", headman of his nomes.


"The one who is in Andjet" must be Andjety, for "Andjety" literally means: "He of Andjet". If we substitute accordingly, we get:

In your name of Andjety, headman of his nomes.

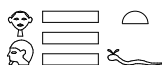
Which actually makes sense.


The word "Andjet" is here written with a simple rectangle (N 37) as determinative:



This sign does occasionally replace the sign , meaning "water(way)".¹⁰ So the word Andjet may here again refer to the waterway already alluded to.

At the end of this line of text though, we see the title "Headman of his nomes" also written with the same rectangle, now used as ideogram:




Although this is an unusual writing (it should normally have been written with three times the sign N 24: ) , it does occur more often,¹¹ and right here its meaning is from the context beyond doubt. Returning then again to the word "Andjet":



we now find that we actually have two options for interpreting it: it could either refer to a waterway, or to a nome (depending on how we interpret the determinative).

¹⁰ See Gardiner's comment at N 37: *Gr.* 491.

¹¹ See *DZA* 29.128.760-770

Going then to the parallel text (the one from Pepy II's pyramid), we see that all of the word "Andjet", including the determinative, is here replaced by just one sign, consisting of three elements:¹² the god Andjety, on a falcon's standard, and that on the sign N 24: . Countless parallels from nome-lists make it clear, that this is a writing for the name of a nome. In fact, later nome-lists consistently show this sign as the name of the 9th nome of Lower Egypt, located right at the heart of the Delta. And in parallel to e.g. the "nome of the Hare" (from Upper Egypt) and the "nome of the Ibis" (in Lower Egypt), we should call this one the "nome of Andjety".

The translation of the N-line now becomes:

[In your name of] "The one who is in the nome of Andjety", headman of his nomes.

The meaning of the W-line remains ambiguous. It could either be:

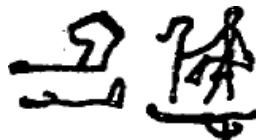
In your name of "The one who is in the Andjet-waterway", headman of his nomes.

Or it could be the same as the N-line. Given the fact that approx. 75 years separate the beginning of Pepy II's reign from that of Unas, we could be looking at a shift in meaning. Both underlined expressions however carry the same significance: Andjety.

About a century before the Pyramid Texts were for the first time carved in stone, the Palermo Stone was made. In the part that deals with the annals of Sahure, (2nd king of the 5th dynasty), donations to several gods are enumerated, a/o to "Mesen" and "Sem", of whom is added that their temples were located in Andjety's nome. This is the sign used for writing the name of the nome, in Sethe's rendering:¹³



But even in the 3rd dynasty there is an official who calls himself "provincial governor of Andjety's nome".¹⁴



We can therefore conclude that the god of a waterway had become the god of a nome at least as early as the 3rd dynasty, with the Pyramid Texts still retaining traces of a preceding evolution (notably the W-text of 182a). And the Ptolemaic texts show, that even in that late period, the god's original habitat - a waterway - had not been forgotten.

The writing of the god's name in the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead

The Coffin Texts also have several mentions of Andjet / Andjety. Because the Coffin Texts are written in either cursive hieroglyphs or an early type of hieratic, some of the finer distinctions of certain signs get lost. We should therefore always consult the more detailed signs from the Pyramid Texts for the god's exact features, such as type of staff and scepter in his hand (crook and flail) and number and type of feathers on his head.

In three spells, the word Andjet/Andjety is used in the sense of a locality. The god Andjety is only mentioned in one spell. We will start with the references to a locality.

¹² The two signs immediately before this one are slightly different from the parallel two in the upper line, but they have exactly the same meaning: "[the one] who is in".

¹³ Urk. I, I-244.

¹⁴ See DZA 11.097.150, giving the titles of *ph-r-nfr*.

CT I-255: "O Horus, Lord of life, fare downstream and upstream from *the nome of Andjety*, make inspection of those who are in Djedu (= Busiris, capital of the 9th nome of Lower Egypt), come and go in Rosetau (= the Memphite necropolis), clear the vision of those who are in the Netherworld. Fare upstream from it (from Rosetau) to Abydos, the primeval place of the Lord of All."

Contrary to Faulkner, but following on my earlier observations, I have added the words: *the nome of*. De Buck gives six different variants of this text. These are the writings of the word Andjety in those variants (I-255a):



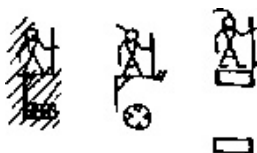
As you can see, the 2nd and the 4th (from the left) are written out with in phonetic signs as well - which is very nice indeed because it confirms that we can actually interpret the other writings to really mean Andjety, too. Those writings just consist of the sign of the "puppet", supplemented with one or more signs indicating a locality:



In all other writings of Andjety in the CT, we only find the "puppet" with the locality-determinatives.

CT IV-331: "O Thoth, vindicate Osiris against his foes in: (...) the Great Tribunal which is in the Two Banks of the Kite on that night of the drowning of the great god in *the nome of Andjety*."

(The "great god" must be Osiris, who according to one strand of the myth was drowned.) Again, from the context it is clear that we are dealing with a locality. These are the variant writings, as De Buck gives them (in IV-331g):



All three are conveying the sense of a locality, and all three can be rendered as "Andjety's nome".¹⁵

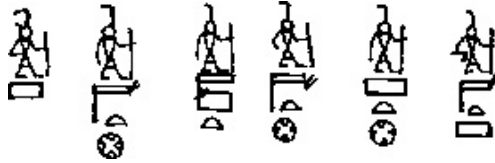
This is the last one from this series of texts:

CT VI-248: "I have come so that I may receive the two fields, and what belongs to me is made for me. The windings of [the waterway of] Andjet have been put in order for me, so that I may give accuracy and set the plumb-line in order."

A bit further on in the same spell (Spell 629) the expression "windings of [the waterway of] Andjet" returns three more times.¹⁶ In total, there are - variants included - six writings. Five of these have an ending in .t, which strongly suggest a reading of *ʕnd.t*, not *ʕnd.ty*:

¹⁵ Faulkner translates: "...on that night of the drowning of the great god in Andjet."

¹⁶ On pages VI-249 and VI-250. Faulkner translates: "The windings of Andjet", and adds as comment to the word "windings": "...presumably of the Andjetian waterways".



(The sources are: VI-248h (2x), VI-249f (2x), VI-249k and VI-250v.)

Here is the only line in the CT where Andjety is referred to as a god:

CT V-385: "I immerse the waterways as Osiris, Lord of corruption, as Andjety, Bull of vultures".

The writing of Andjety's name (in V-385o) brings no surprises:



There is still one more possible mention of Andjety in the CT (VII-87) but from the sign-group in question, only the standard is actually legible.

In the Book of the Dead, mentions of Andjety are limited to the following one, from Spell 125 (in the Declaration of Innocence):

O Doubly Evil One, who came forth from [the nome of] Andjety, I have not disputed except as concerned my own property.

In *FBD*, the relevant part of the papyrus of Nakht (BM 10471) is shown.¹⁷ This passage is in the 18th column from the right. The word "[the nome of] Andjety" is written with the "puppet" on a standard, without any additional determinative.

So far, we don't know too much about the nature of this god, but of one thing we can be certain: he was intensely connected with a geographical area. In fact, Andjety is our first example of a god with his roots so deep in a locality, that we can call him a "territorial god" or a "locality god".¹⁸

The content of the texts mentioning the god Andjety

Texts of any substance, in which Andjety is mentioned as a separate god (i.e. separate from Osiris) are very few indeed. Andjety is mentioned or referred to four times in the Pyramid Texts, only once in the Coffin Texts, and not at all in the Book of the Dead.

PT 182: "In your name of "The one who is in Andjet", headman of his nomes."

PT 220: "May your staff be at the head of the spirits, as Anubis who presides over the Westerners, as Andjety who presides over the eastern nomes."

PT 614, in a speech directed to Osiris: "Horus has revived you in this your name of Andjety".

¹⁷ *FBD*, 29.



¹⁸ In German texts, this is referred to as an "Ortsgott". This should not be translated as "local god", but as "locality god".

PT 1833: “This king is Osiris, whom [Nut] bore, and [she has caused] him [to appear] as King of Upper and Lower Egypt (....), as Anubis foremost of the Westerners, as Osiris the son of Geb, (...) as Andjety who presides over the eastern nomes.”

CT V-385: “I immerse the waterways as Osiris, Lord of corruption, as Andjety, Bull of vultures”.

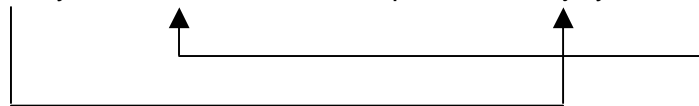
The latter expression does give us some hope of seeing yet another glimpse of Andjety revealed, but alas: it is a most dark expression. From the translation, we might expect it to refer to a relationship with certain goddesses that appear in the form of vultures, such as Nekhbet or Mut, but this is the actual writing:



The vulture in this case is  (G1) instead of  (G14): the sign with which the names of Nekhbet and Mut are written. In any case, the reference to a bull is much more likely to pertain to Osiris in this case, for Osiris is regularly portrayed as one with unusual sexual powers.¹⁹

An interesting element in this phrase is, that it uses crossed-over elements:

I immerse the waterways as Osiris, Lord of corruption, as Andjety, Bull of vultures.



Perhaps it was not intentional, but the waterways could refer to Andjety, whereas the Bull of vultures could point to Osiris. If it *is* intentional, it is a poetic way of equating one with the other.

When we scrutinize these texts for meaning, we come up with the following key elements:

- PT 182: “headman of his nomes”.
- PT 220: “who presides over the eastern nomes”.
- PT 1883: “who presides over the eastern nomes”.
- PT 614: Andjety is a name of Osiris.
- CT V-385: Andjety is equated with Osiris.

The first three have - in combination with some other elements - given rise to the assumption that Andjety was originally a deified local chief. The latter two refer to Andjety's connection to Osiris. We will take a look at both, in turn.

A deified local chief?

The god Andjety is regularly described as a deified local (predynastic) chief. So too by Eberhart Otto in the *Lexikon* (I, 269-270). The idea that in the figure of Andjety, we might actually be looking at the “picture” of a predynastic ruler (no matter how dim or stylized), is immensely attractive. But alas, even the most attractive idea can be false.

As evidence for this position, the following elements are usually enumerated:

- Andjety is called “Headman of his nomes”, or “Who presides over the eastern nomes”.
These are in historic times typically titles of provincial governors.

¹⁹ And not without reason: to beget a son after death is quite an feat...

- Two of his attributes are the crook and flail: generally believed to have been ancient emblems of dominion.
- He is always portrayed as a man. Taken together with the epithets and emblems, this adds up to the portrait of a ruler.

The observations are all correct, but none points in the right direction.

- Several gods and goddesses are called “Lord of the Two Lands”, or “Mistress of the Two Lands” - and “Lord of the Two Lands” is typically a title for the king. Epithets like these simply express the power of a god - a power that (also) extends over a certain geographical area.
- Both crook and flail are symbols of dominion, but so are crowns. Crowns are regularly worn by several gods: see e.g. Atum with the Double Crown, or Neith with the Red Crown. The fact that these are symbols from the realm of human rulership, used by gods, can not be taken as indication that the gods in question originally were human rulers. Like the epithets, they just stress the god’s power.
- The flail is in regular use by other gods, too: especially when they are depicted as birds,²⁰ but also by Min, and by Amun when he assumes the guise of Min. None of these make plausible predynastic rulers.
- Andjety has always been depicted as a human, but this too is not unique to this god. Atum is again the perfect example of another god of whom no other depictions are known.²¹

Moreover, the deifying of human beings was extremely rare in ancient Egypt - which is entirely in keeping with primitive thinking. Primitive man is much more rigorous in the application of his categories than modern man,²² and in fact quite reluctant to allow for any drastic new developments.²³ The deification of the king depended on very specific circumstances, and may well have been a one-time event.²⁴

(The deification that in later days sometimes occurs with famous people from the past (such as Imhotep) is an entirely different matter. Of gods in that category, their former existence as a human being is never forgotten, let alone ignored. On the contrary: their earthly activities very much stay the focal point of their later, divine status. In fact, they share more characteristics with Roman Catholic saints than with polytheistic gods.²⁵)

My conclusion is then, that Andjety may have been, rather than a deified local ruler, the main god of a political unit that existed in the eastern Delta, some time during the Pre- or Early Dynastic Period.²⁶ Perceived as the force behind the successes of the region, he received the honorary titles of “Headman of his nomes”, and “Foremost of the Eastern Nomes” - like Geb could be called “Lord of the Two Lands”. And just like Atum later received

²⁰ See e.g. Mut, as a vulture: *Gr. G15*.

²¹ At least not before the last stages of Egyptian religion, when the boundaries of old all but dissipate.

²² See also page 17, with note 37.

²³ Modern man has gone through so many changes in so many areas, that he now has come to expect the impossible, and accept the ridiculous: pop stars turning demigod, movie actors ruling the world, and fantasy novels heading the bestseller lists. Modern man is more inclined to indulge in miracles, magic and the supernatural than the primitive ever was.

²⁴ For a reconstruction, see *Magic I*, 3.2: “The kings that became gods”.

²⁵ Although Luther would probably have reversed the argument.

²⁶ There are some doubts concerning the degree of incorporation of the Delta into the Egyptian state during the earlier phases of its history. So e.g. Jaromir Malek in *In the shadow of the Pyramids*: “.. and much of the north-eastern Delta did not form part of the Egyptian provincial system even during the Old Kingdom, probably because it was not thought to be economically viable” (p. 29).

the Double Crown, he was equipped with feathers, crook & flail - trappings that may have been typical for a ruler from the Delta region.

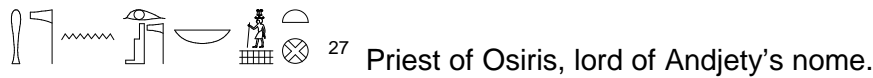
The Osiris-connection

So far, we have seen the following signs of a possible connection between Andjety and Osiris:

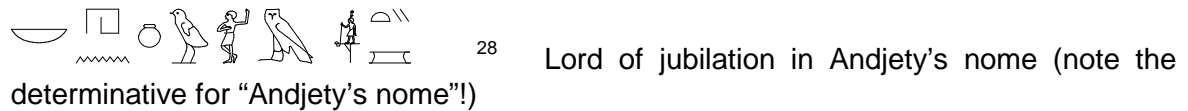
- In PT 614, Andjety is a name of Osiris (see the text on page 27 above).
- In CT V-385, Andjety is equated with Osiris (see the text on page 28 above).

We will now add a few more of these.

In the Late Period, a priest calls himself:



And in the Great Hymn for Osiris, Osiris is called:





These two examples express again a connection between Osiris and Andjety, this time by mentioning "the nome of Andjety" as Osiris' home.²⁹

In the tomb of Aba in Thebes (26th dynasty), the following inscription adorns a doorpost:

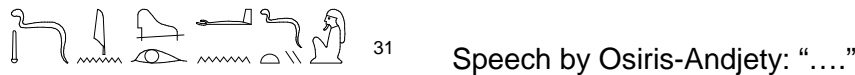


In your name of Andjety, foremost of the western desert, unique lord, king of eternity..

The name of Andjety is written thus: . If it were not for the context ("in your name of"), one would have assumed it to be the writing for the name of a region: Andjety's nome. (The 2nd sign  is an unusual writing of *smyt: desert*. See DZA 28.643.840).

The epithets "foremost of the western desert, unique lord, king of eternity" make it clear that Osiris is meant, so again (like in PT 614), Andjety is a name of Osiris. (It is somewhat amusing to see how Andjety, as a result of this equating with Osiris, is here relocated from the East ("at the head of the eastern nomes") to the West ("foremost of the western desert")).

Starting with the New Kingdom, we occasionally even meet a compound god Osiris-Andjety:



But what really is the most remarkable about all this, is the relative scarcity of these occurrences. Khentiamentiu and Wennefer are much, much more often used as names for Osiris than Andjety. And both Abydos and Busiris are much more frequently referred to as Osiris' home, than "Andjety's nome".

²⁷ DZA 11.096.980.

²⁸ DZA 11.096.990.

²⁹ This is not so apparent from most modern translations, for these usually speak of "the nome of Busiris". We will address that matter shortly in the paragraph about the Busiris-connection.

³⁰ DZA 21.889.160, slightly modified.

³¹ DZA 21.889.150. From Seti I's mortuary temple at Abydos.

Still, there is enough material available to warrant an inquiry into the nature of this connection between the two gods.

Back to The Crook & Flail³²

Bonnet and several other Egyptologists have drawn attention to the fact that both Andjety and Osiris carry the crook and flail, insisting that the latter must have inherited these from the first.

If we only look at evidence from the gods, the case seems an easy one. The oldest known reference to Andjety is from the 3rd dynasty, and right here, we already see the crook & flail (see page 25 above). Osiris' first definite attestations are in the Pyramid Texts, the oldest extant version of which dates from the end of the 5th dynasty. It takes a while longer however, before depictions of him appear. It is therefore not certain, that he carried the crook & flail right from the start. But even if he didn't, a derivation from Andjety would still seem plausible - for no other god is known in between who carries this combination.

If however, we also take the domain of kingship into account, matters become a bit more complex. The flail is already in evidence on the Narmer Palette, right at the beginning of the 1st dynasty. Narmer wears it, together with the Red Crown, when he inspects the decapitated bodies of his enemies.³³ Furthermore, in depictions of the Sed festival, both Djoser (3rd dynasty) and Sneferu (first king of the 4th dynasty) carry the flail.³⁴ It takes however until the reign of Niuserre (5th dynasty, half a century before Unas) before we see the combination of crook and flail in the royal domain. This occurs in the Sed-scenes in his solar temple at Abu Gorab. (Here the crook is again the longer variant - as remains the custom in a Sed context).

If we plot these facts in a table (with the references to gods in the upper half, and those to kings in the lower half), this is the picture that we get:

	Andjety crook & flail	----->----->----->	Osiris crook & flail?
1 st & 2 nd dynasty	3 rd dynasty	4 th dynasty	5 th dynasty
Narmer flail ----->	Djoser flail ----->	Sneferu flail ----->	Niuserre crook & flail

Assuming that Osiris already made use of the crook and flail at his first appearance in the 5th dynasty, these attributes may then have passed from him into the royal domain.

Based on indirect evidence, I concluded on page 29/30 above, that Andjety's emblems of rulership may have been borrowings from the outfit of a predynastic Lower Egyptian ruler. If we include this in our table, we get the following picture:

³² Great name for a pub!

³³ It may in fact well be a meaningful coincidence, that Narmer wears the flail together with the Red Crown. It could be, that originally both were emblems from Lower Egypt. This would in turn fit well with the Lower Egyptian origin of both Andjety and Osiris.

³⁴ Djoser: on the reliefs from the subterranean corridors of the Step Pyramid complex. Sneferu: on a stela from the Bent Pyramid.

Andjety crook & flail	----->	Andjety crook & flail	----->	Osiris crook & flail?
Predyn. period	1 st & 2 nd dynasty	3 rd dynasty	4 th dynasty	5 th dynasty
L.E. regalia: crook & flail	Narmer flail	Djoser flail	Sneferu flail	Niuserre crook & flail

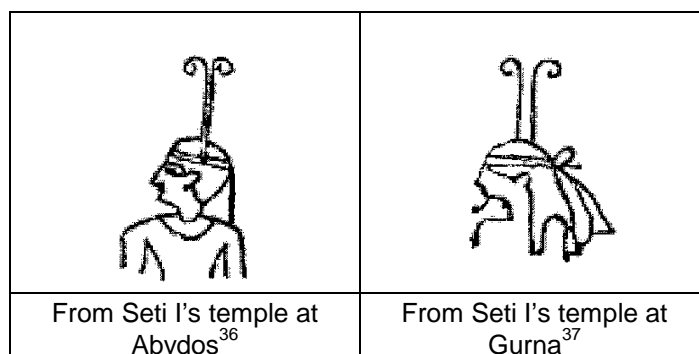
Perhaps the Upper Egyptian kings of a united Egypt were at first not too excited about the crook as a royal emblem, and therefore only included the flail as one of the Lower Egyptian regalia into their attire - along with the Red Crown. In the meantime, crook & flail as a combination remained in use by Andjety, later to be used by his neighbor Osiris, too. When in the 5th dynasty Osiris became closely associated with the king, the crook could yet pass over into the royal regalia. Until such time, the crook by itself is not in use as honorary symbol: neither with gods, nor king.

We should keep in mind however, that here again the scarcity of pictorial (royal) materials from the 4th and 5th dynasty makes the drawing of conclusions hazardous. Both the rise of Osiris, and the crossing over of the crook into the royal domain, may have occurred earlier than can now be established.

The compound god Osiris-Andjety

The compound god Osiris-Andjety is a relatively late development: it is not attested before the New Kingdom.³⁵

In most cases, a compound god is worshipped in the shape of the first-mentioned god. So Amun-Re looks like Amun, and Khnum-Re looks like Khnum. But Osiris-Andjety looks like Andjety - sort of, anyway. The few depictions we have of Osiris-Andjety show a rather peculiar piece of headgear:



It seems that the draftsmen of later days did not know anymore how to interpret the small signs on old papyri, and therefore came up with this rather fantastic design.³⁸

³⁵ LÄ I-270.

³⁶ Adapted from DZA 21.889.150. I added the ribbon at the back of the head, which is clearly visible in the original. (A photograph can be found in *Götterglaube*, Tafel II.)

³⁷ Adapted from DZA 21.889.230.

³⁸ More fantastic still is the occasional explanation as uterus. Although the idea of a uterus as hieroglyph was not

Another unusual element in this compound god has to do with the order in which the two names stand. In most cases,³⁹ the second-mentioned element in a compound god is the name of the god who - at the time of coining the compound - had the highest prestige of the two. The priesthood of the first-mentioned god seeks association with the second-mentioned one to profit from the latter's higher standing. In the Old Kingdom, Re was a newcomer who needed to associate himself with Atum, in the form of Re-Atum. In the Middle Kingdom, upstart Amun joined Re as Amun-Re. But when Osiris-Andjety was first mentioned in the New Kingdom, there can be little doubt that Osiris was by far the most prestigious of the two.

So we now have two reasons to expect the name next to these depictions to read *Andjety-Osiris. How come it doesn't?

By the New Kingdom, the expression "Osiris-NN", as designation for the deceased, was for all intents and purposes a completely fixed and rigid formula. As a result, any construction in which Osiris would have been a second name was totally unimaginable. Therefore the *writing* of this name had to be Osiris-Andjety. But as both the depiction of the god, *and* the matter of the gods' relative prestige both point in the other direction, it might well be that the name was pronounced as Andjety-Osiris. Putting the name of Osiris in front may then have been a case of "transposition with honorific intent".⁴⁰

The Busiris-connection

A common fallacy with respect to Andjety's geographical roots is, that he originally was the city-god of Busiris: in historic times the capital of the 9th nome of Lower Egypt. One example is in the *Wb.*: "Der Gott von Busiris, dann Beiname des Osiris"⁴¹ (I, 207-12).

Busiris is the later Greek name of a town, that in Egyptian was called Djedu. It was the capital of the 9th nome of Lower Egypt. It was also the town of Osiris. One of Osiris' most regular epithets was "Lord of Djedu". In the Late Period, when it became *usance* to refer to a given town as "House of [name of a god]", Djedu became Per-Osiris: "House of Osiris". Per-Osiris was in Greek corrupted to Busiris, and its nome became known in Greek texts as "the Busiritis": the area around Busiris.

From the earliest material that we have about Osiris, this god was "Lord of Busiris". The fact that Andjety was then already connected with Osiris (as we saw in the PT) and that he originated in the same nome, does not necessarily imply that Andjety had prior rights to the same city. As we have seen, Andjety has at first links with a waterway, and later with the 9th Lower Egyptian nome as a whole. He simply skips the stage of city god.

Still, some circumstantial evidence in favor of Andjety's alleged position as god of Busiris can be gathered real easy. The 9th nome of Lower Egypt was named after Andjety: this strongly suggests that Andjety was its principal god. When Amun was Egypt's major god, he was also the god of Egypt's capital for that period: Thebes. So by analogy, we might assume that Andjety, principal god of his nome, was also the god of its capital, Busiris.

However:

- We do not know for sure, that Busiris was the capital of this nome in the time that Andjety was its principal god. Nomes are known to have had more than one capital over time.

a problem for the ancient Egyptians (see *Gr. F 45*), displaying it on the head of a *male* god certainly would have been.

³⁹ See Hermann Junker in *Die Geisteshaltung der Ägypter in der Frühzeit*, chapter IV, for some rare and early exceptions.

⁴⁰ *Gr. 51*.

⁴¹ "The god of Busiris, later epithet of Osiris". The same position by Bonnet: p. 38 of his *Reallexikon*.

- During the 5th and 6th dynasty, Re was undoubtedly Egypt's most important god. He was however the god of Heliopolis, not of Memphis, then the state capital.
- There are no instances known where Andjety is called "Lord of Busiris", "He of Busiris", or the like;
- and the name of the city of Busiris is never written with the sign of the god Andjety - as is the name of the nome.

The confusion about the position of Busiris has been reinforced by the later Greek designation for the nome: Busiritis.⁴² This means: "the region of Busiris". So although the name of the 9th nome of Lower Egypt is in the hieroglyphic script invariably written with the sign of the "puppet", (a sign that should be rendered as "Andjety's nome"), it is mostly translated as "the nome of Busiris".

What *is* the nature of the connection between Andjety and Osiris?

The connections we have seen relate to the following:

- The name of Andjety can be used as a name for Osiris.
- Andjety can at times be equated with Osiris.
- And there are several mentions of a compound god Osiris-Andjety.

Elements that both gods have in common are:

- Both are consistently depicted as a ruler, and as a man.
- Both carry the crook and flail.
- Both come from the same nome: the 9th of Lower Egypt.
- Andjety wears two feathers of the "Maat-type" on his head, back-to-back. Osiris is often depicted with the Atef-crown, which includes the same two feathers, in the same position.

But there are differences too:

- Osiris is always depicted shrouded, Andjety is not.
- Osiris' character is that of a funerary god. Andjety's nature is unknown; for a funerary disposition no signs are in evidence.

In the end, we can point at surprisingly little common ground for the two. In fact, it seems that originally they only had *one* important thing in common: they were neighbors, originating from the same nome.⁴³ Somewhere during the Old Kingdom, Andjety probably lend the crook and flail to Osiris, which was just a neighborly thing to do. Soon after this, Osiris started his irrepressible rise to ever higher prominence, while Andjety all but sank into oblivion. That Andjety was spared that bitter faith had two reasons: his image survived in the nome sign for the 9th Lower Egyptian nome, and he had once gone through a brief period of association with Osiris. When later authors sought to elaborate on Osiris' many names, that of old Andjety would at times be remembered, and added to the long, long list.

The attention that Egyptologists have given to this relationship between Osiris and Andjety might well have surprised an ancient Egyptian. It probably didn't mean all that much to him: amidst all the references to Osiris, those that (also) refer to Andjety are conspicuously rare. What makes matters different for us today is, that there is little known about Andjety, other than these enigmatic ties with Osiris. Therefore any study of Andjety almost immediately focuses on this aspect.

⁴² KWA 114.

⁴³ Geographical proximity was also the main ground for coining triads: see note 22 in the chapter about Anubis, on page 41 below.

The nature of Andjety's name

"Andjety" is more of a descriptive label, or even an epithet, than a name. It merely points out a connection between the god and a locality. There were more divine names like this in Egyptian religion:

- Behdety: "He of Behdet".
- Djebuty: "He of Djeba".
- Nekh(e)bet: "She of Nekheb".

A related phenomenon is the type of name that in some way describes the god:

- Khons: "the Wanderer" (a moon-god).
- Pakhet: "she who scratches" (a lioness).
- Sakhmet: "the powerful one" (also a lioness).

A name as Behdety is even less informative than a name like Pakhet. After all, the name Pakhet tells us at least what she does: she scratches. "Behdety" just tells us where this god is at home - nothing more. But perhaps this is not a distinction at all. Perhaps the names of gods and goddesses that "just" refer to a locality, are nonetheless describing the god's character. Many ancient Egyptian gods are so closely connected to an area or region, that it seems to be their abode, their domain. Perhaps we should see these as little Geb-gods, or little Aker-gods: earth-gods, gods of a particular piece of land, gods that belong to a certain area or region - or, in the case of Andjety: a certain waterway.

Will the real Andjety please reveal himself?

So what do we know now about the real, the original Andjety? Well, here it is:

- We can be fairly confident that his place of origin was within the 9th nome of Lower Egypt, where he came into being as the god of a waterway.
- He was at some point the most important god of the region. In that capacity, he was portrayed as a local ruler, decked out with the associated regalia: crook and flail, headband with ribbon and feathers.

And that's about it. The available texts do no more than *mention* him: we never see him actually *do* something.

In the chapter about Amentet, we recognized three possible origins for ancient Egyptian gods. These were the following:

- Immediate or instant gods, directly derived from a forceful emotional experience.
- Intermediate gods, stemming from a combination of perception and reflection.
- And purely speculative gods.

For Andjety, we cannot with confidence decide for any of these, simply because his image remains too hazy.

Postscript: an imaginary reconstruction

Maybe this is how things went, once upon a time in Egypt, in the Predynastic Period.

The communities that lived along this waterway in the central Delta, did not have a particularly troublesome life. On the contrary: they had a lot to be grateful for. Vegetation was lush and varied: a true Garden of Eden.⁴⁴ Fruits, vegetables, nuts, edible roots and

⁴⁴ For the unlikelihood of older depictions of the Nile Valley as a steaming swamp area, see Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt*, 12.

cereals: all ready for the pick. One needed but to stretch out one's hand to harvest heaven's bounty. In marshes and bushes, fish, water-fowl, birds and other game were plentiful: no able person had to suffer from want.⁴⁵ And right in the midst of paradise was this majestic, cool, life-bringing river: source of all food & drink, means of transport & communication, linking the communities together into a realm of happiness and prosperity. Small wonder that one came to see a divine force in this waterway...

Under conditions like these, such a force or power could over time develop into a god of distinctive character: river god or fertility god, a god of vegetation, hunting or eternal rebirth - or a bit of all. But as far as we can tell, this one was not granted enough time for that.

At some point, the communities along this waterway became united into a political entity with territorial ambitions. When these ambitions were realized, the gratitude of the people was naturally directed towards the source of all their good fortune: the power in the waterway. To express this, they styled their god as Lord of their land, who took care of their needs, and who led them to success. They even depicted him in the traditional outfit of their rulers: wearing the crook and flail of a shepherd (as symbols of a benevolent, protective authority), and with two ostrich feathers in a headband (to express agility and prowess, and success in the hunt).

Soon after this, their region was conquered by a more aggressive, more militant South - and the independent development of their main god came to a sudden standstill. Why? We don't know. Other Lower Egyptian gods and goddesses, such as Neith of Sais, or Wadjet of Buto, stayed very much alive and kicking: continuing on their separate paths of development as if nothing had happened. Still, Andjety did not disappear - as some others probably did. But the image of him that has survived, has all the characteristics of a specimen: pinned up in a box like a butterfly.

Lit.: *Bonnet* 38; *Eine* 63, 271; *Götterglaube* 110-111, 175, 336; *KWA* 73 (Busiris), 114 (9. u.ä Gau), 262-263 (Osiris); *LÄ* I, 269-270 (Eberhard Otto: Anedjti); *LÄ* II, 142-145 (Irene Grumach-Stirum: Federn und Federkrone); *LÄ* IV, 623-633 (John G. Griffiths: Osiris).

⁴⁵ The over-abundance of food-sources in this environment is even believed to have considerably delayed the advent of agriculture: see Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt*, 9.

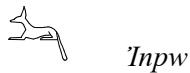
3. Anubis (Anoubis, Anoebis)

With Anubis, we finally hit a really “big fella”. After all these lesser known gods, it will be interesting to see what (more) we can say about this one.

Anubis is almost exclusively a funerary deity. He is depicted either as a recumbent jackal, or - starting in the New Kingdom - as a man with a jackal’s head. Larger sculptures in the round are mostly in the form of the recumbent jackal, but there are also a few of a man with a jackal’s head. The Cairo Museum e.g. has one of granite, from the 19th dynasty.¹ Smaller figurines and statuettes of a man with a jackal’s head are rather common - particularly from the Late Period.

Spelling

In the Old Kingdom, Anubis’ name is mostly written ideographically. In the offering formulae of the 4th and 5th dynasty, the most common ideogram used is that of a recumbent jackal, plain and simple:



The Pyramid Texts, being a more or less defined corpus, provide good material for a statistical analysis. In the Pyramid Texts, Anubis’ name is mentioned 52 times (not counting three in the Supplement²). Including the variant texts, this amounts to a grand total of 87 writings. These are distributed as follows:³

Writing	W	T	P	M	N	Total	Remarks
	5	4	21	16	26	72	A recumbent jackal.
					9	9	The same, but with a feather on the back. These are all in texts of N (perhaps as a deliberate archaism?)
			3			3	A recumbent jackal on a cup-like pedestal - the meaning of which is unknown. ⁴
			1			1	P-1364 A recumbent jackal on a standard
			1			1	P-1537 These are among the first phonetic writings of Anubis’ name ever. They both lack final <i>w</i> . ⁵
			1			1	P-1549
Total	5	4	27	16	35	87	

¹ Cairo CG 38517.

² As the Supplement does not give all variants of a text, it is not usable for this type of analysis.


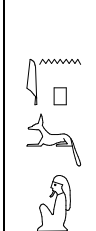
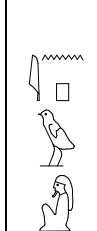
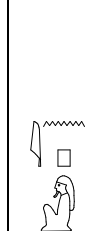
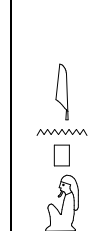
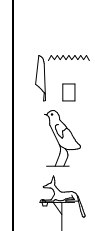
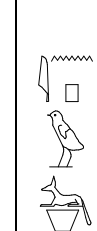
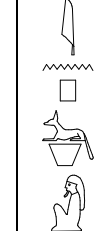


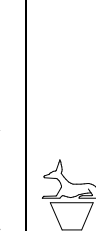
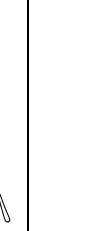
³ For the meaning of W, T etc: see page 4 above.

⁴ Perhaps it was no more than a device to fill the awkward gap between the body and the drooping tail.

⁵ A missing final *w* is by no means rare, whether this *w* is a grammatical ending or not. For another example in a god’s name, see Khons / Khonsu. The *Wb.* transliterates as *jnp.w*, suggesting that the *w* is in fact an ending. I would say that there are not enough grounds for such an assumption.

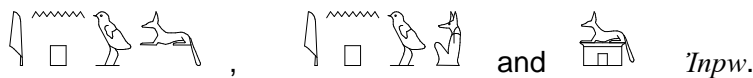
After the Old Kingdom, the jackal with a feather on his back only remains in use as emblem of the 17th Upper Egyptian nome, which is assumed to have been Anubis' place of origin. It was located in Middle Egypt, about halfway between Memphis to the north, and Hermopolis in the south. The other ideograms all stay in use.

In the Coffin Texts, more phonetic writings start appearing, and orthographic variation increases, as the following examples show:

											
I, 74h			I, 195g			II, 141b	III, 107b	VII, 24l	VII, 112h	VII, 138r	

Again, several examples lack final *w*.

During the New Kingdom, the following are the most common writings:



The last of these three shows the jackal on a kind of chest or shrine.⁶ Somewhat surprisingly, exactly the same ideogram is used to represent a common official's title: *hry-sšB* ("Hery-Seshta"). This is usually translated as "He who is over the secrets", although "He who is privy to confidential matters" would be more appropriate.⁷

This brings us to an entirely different use of the jackal in the hieroglyphic script, i.e. to denote a certain class of official. The word for this type of official is *z3b* ("Zab") - a word that also means "jackal".⁸ It is written with the sign of a standing jackal. When prefixed to another title, it means something like "senior", like in "Senior warden of Nekhen".

My guess would be, that originally, the sign of a jackal on a chest referred to the official with access to confidential information. That information would - for reasons of safety - be stored in a chest, and the official in charge of that chest was shown lying on it, as a watchful, alert jackal. When later Anubis became more and more involved in the process of mummification (a process full of mysteries or "secrets"), the sign was re-interpreted as Anubis, lying on a chest (perhaps the canopic chest): see dotted arrow #1 in the table below. From there, the usual sign for Anubis - the recumbent jackal by itself - could now in turn be used as a













⁶ Chests were often fashioned in the form of a shrine. As a result, we can not tell for certain which of the two was meant.


⁷ See e.g. the autobiography of Weni (6th dynasty), who extensively vents his pride of hearing confidential matters: "I heard cases alone with the chief judge and vizier, concerning all kinds of secrets." And a bit further on: "When there was a secret charge in the royal harem against queen Weret-yamtes, his majesty made me go in to hear it alone. No chief judge and vizier, no official was there, only I alone (...)" (*AEL-I*, 19).


⁸ It may for us be rather tempting to see a relationship between the jackal and the official, in the sense that officials are like jackals, but the Egyptians had very different, very positive associations with jackals. For them, the jackal epitomized swiftness and sensitivity (*Götterglaube* 28). (We should of course keep in mind, that those who first selected this (and every other) sign of the hieroglyphic script were officials.)

“sportive” writing for “He who is privy to confidential matters”⁹ (dotted arrow #2 in the table below). Finally, the depicted chest became a real chest, fitted with carrying rods to carry it along in the burial procession. The one found in Tutankhamun’s tomb had one larger and four smaller compartments, which held an array of small objects of uncertain meaning, believed to have had some bearing on the mummification or burial rites.¹⁰ To complicate matters just a little bit more, the sign of the jackal could also refer to a number of other gods. Khentiamentiu is portrayed as a recumbent jackal, Wepwawet as a standing jackal on a standard.


The following table sums it all up:

	Standing	Recumbent	With feather	On chest
Jackal	 z3b	 z3b ¹¹		
Official	 z3b			
As a prefix: Senior ... a)	 z3b-.....			
He who is privy to confidential matters b)		 hry-sšt3		 hry-sšt3 #1
Anubis		 #2 Inpw	 Inpw	 Inpw
17 th nome of Upper Egypt: “Anubis’ nome”			 Inpw.t ¹²	
Khentiamentiu c)		 hnt.y-immn.tiw		
Wepwawet d)	 Wp-w3.wt			

a) An example of a title in which z3b is a prefix:  z3b-sš : Senior scribe.

b) A phonetic writing of hry-sšt3 is: 

c) A phonetic writing of Khentiamentiu:  . Literally: “Foremost of the Westerners”.

d) A phonetic writing of Wepwawet:  . Literally: “Opener of the ways”.

⁹ Gr. 459, E15.

¹⁰ See the description in *The Complete Tutankhamun* by Nicholas Reeves. In my Dutch translation, it is on pages 133-4.

¹¹ Rarely, but it happens. See *Wb.* III-420.5.

¹² Transliteration based on the *TLA* lemma no. 400974 (*Jnp.wt*), with references from the 4th till 6th dynasty.

Attempts at an etymology

The name Anubis has been the subject of several scholarly attempts for an etymological inference. Some have, with Sethe, speculated that the name means something like “doggy”. Others have pointed to a word *inpw* meaning “royal child”, or “young prince” - although the implications for such a connection are obscure. In the Coffin Texts, a verb *inp* occurs with the meaning “to decay” - but Anubis’ primary task was of course to prevent decay. Finally, the suggestion has been made that a verb *inp* may have had the meaning “to lie down (on the stomach)”.¹³ If this were true, the name Anubis could mean “the crouching one” - which would actually fit very nicely.

The Anubis-animal

So far, we have referred to the Anubis-animal as a jackal. But was it? Not everyone agrees. There were three major canine divinities in ancient Egypt: Anubis, Khentiamentiu (from Abydos) and Wepwawet (from Assyut).¹⁴ Candidates for the position of divine animal for these gods are: wild dogs, jackals, wolves and foxes. According to the Greek, who from about the 7th century BC regularly visited Egypt, Anubis was a dog, and Wepwawet was a wolf.¹⁵ They never formulated an opinion about Khentiamentiu: by the time the Greek reached Egypt, Khentiamentiu had virtually ceased to exist as a separate god, having become an epithet of Osiris instead.

The renderings that the Egyptians themselves used are in this case not really helpful. The animals used to portray Anubis, Khentiamentiu or Wepwawet, are totally indistinguishable from one another. They all show the same profile, and the same color: they are all black. Wepwawet can be identified because he is always depicted upright on a standard with a characteristic - although unidentified - object in front of him. Anubis and Khentiamentiu however are always depicted recumbent. This means that the only way to tell them apart is by their name, if and when added to the picture.

Identifying the correct species will however most likely remain an unsolved problem, simply because there probably was no definite species connected to each god. With wolves, jackals, wild dogs and foxes all happily interbreeding on the desert’s fringes, telling their varied offspring apart would have been a hard task for anyone. The Egyptian word *z3b* “jackal” appears therefore to have been used rather indiscriminately for all sorts of canines.¹⁶

Still, when I look at the many detailed depictions - even sculptures in the round - that we have of the Anubis-animal, I see two elements that to me are highly evocative of the jackal: the pointed ears, and the long, furry tail. Because of these similarities between Anubis and

¹³ Andreu/Cauville, RdE 30, 1978, 11.

¹⁴ Some lesser canine gods were Wepiw and Sed (not to be confused with either Shed or Seth). Wepiw resembled Anubis (both in function as in appearance), while Sed came close to Wepwawet. To these come several gods in human form jackal heads: the “Souls of Hieraconpolis,” and Duamutef, one of the four Sons of Horus.

¹⁵ Recognizable in the Greek names for the towns of these gods: Lycopolis (“wolf-town”) for Assyut, home of Wepwawet, and Kynopolis (“dog-town”) for the (unidentified) capital of the 17th Upper Egyptian nome, home of Anubis.

¹⁶ *LÄ* I, 327, and *Bonnet* 41. (I refer in this work throughout to the *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* as *Bonnet*, because nearly all of it was written by the eminent scholar Hans Bonnet - but the article about Anubis was actually written by Hermann Kees.)

the jackal, my guess would be that originally a jackal fathered, if not the god,¹⁷ then at least his later image.

Geographical roots

As mentioned, the emblem of the 17th Upper Egyptian nome was a jackal with a feather on his back. On the kiosk of Sesostris I (now in the Open Air Museum at Karnak), “Anubis, Lord of Henu” is mentioned as the main god of the 17th Upper Egyptian nome. This means that Henu should have been that nome’s capital, but it has not yet been identified. Taken together, this points to the 17th U.E. nome as the cradle of Anubis. The Ptolemaic papyrus Jumilhac mentions several more towns in connection with Anubis, ranging from the 16th till the 18th Upper Egyptian nome. This particular region has so far not attracted too many archeological expeditions, so the location of several of these towns is unknown. It is not even certain, which one was the Greek “Kynopolis”, after which the 17th nome was called “the Kynopolites”.¹⁸

Anubis as a relative

At least as early as the 5th dynasty, Anubis had a cult-center at the town of Sepa, near modern Tura, close to Memphis on the eastern bank of the Nile. In the nearby 22nd Upper Egyptian nome (which was just south of Memphis), a cow-goddess was worshipped under the name of Hesat. She was regularly considered to be Anubis’ mother. Already in the Pyramid Texts (PT 2080), a possible reference to this occurs.¹⁹ And in the mortuary temple of Seti I in Abydos, we read:



Your (the king's) purification is the purification of Anubis, born²¹ of Hesat.

In the Late Period, a “triad”²² is constructed in the 22nd nome, consisting of “the White Cow Hesat”, with “the Black Bull Mnevis” (from nearby Heliopolis), and “the Black Anubis of Sepa” as her sons. Anubis is then regularly called “Lord of cattle”.²³ The following text comes from a Ptolemaic mammisi at Edfu:



He (the king) is as the living image of Anubis,



son of Hesat,

¹⁷ See the section about the Predynastic dog-palettes on page 64 below, for an indication that a wild dog may perhaps have been father to the god.

¹⁸ For more details, see *LÄ I*, 329-330, and *KWA* 122.

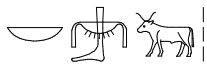
¹⁹ For more on this, see the chapter about the god Imy-wet.

²⁰ *DZA* 27.326.250.

²¹ The actual wording is: “created by Hesat”. The sense however is “born of Hesat”.

²² A triad is an artificial group of three gods. The best-known triads consist of a “father”, a “mother” and their “son”: Osiris-Isis-Horus in Heliopolis, Amun-Mut-Khons in Thebes, and Ptah-Sakhmet-Nefertem in Memphis. Other combinations occur also, such as a mother with two sons, or combinations without any family relationship, such as Khnum-Satet-Anukis at Elephantine. Triads are priestly constructs, and the majority is of late origin. It seems that in most cases the proximity of the various cult-centers spurred the formation of these relationships. Apparently, priesthoods invented these ties between their gods as a means of organizing their own relationships on the ground. (See also *Götterglaube* 149-150.)

²³ *LÄ I*, 327, *Götterglaube* 136 and 152.



Lord of cattle,



rich in herds.²⁴

Statements like these, about cattle and herds, do not reveal anything additional about the nature of Anubis. He became “Son of Hesat” simply because of the nearness of their places of worship - and these titles just came with that position.

In the same mortuary temple of Seti I at Abydos, where in one room Anubis is called “Born of Hesat”, he is in another room called “son of Bastet”. Such ambivalence is exceedingly common in ancient Egyptian religion. (To explain it, we may of course resort to Frankfort’s concept of the “Multiplicity of Approaches”,²⁵ but in cases like this, things might actually be a lot more simple. The Egyptians had an innate reverence for anything connected to their gods, *and* for all sorts of traditions. So whenever different traditions concerning a god would meet, the Egyptian exhibited a remarkable ability to simply accept them next to one another.)

This is the actual wording from the Abydos temple:



*Inpw z3 B3st.t*²⁶

The same expression also appears on the already mentioned Ptolemaic mammisi at Edfu:



²⁷

Hermann Kees has an ingenious theory about this connection between Bastet and Anubis.²⁸ Bastet’s name means: “She from Bast”, a town in the Delta. The name of Bast is written as follows:



B3s.t

The first sign in this name depicts an alabaster container for unguent. The word *b3s*:



b3s

means: “container for unguent” (*Wb.* I, 423, 4). So according to some, we should interpret the name of Bast as “town of unguent”, and therefore Bastet as “goddess of (the town of) unguent” - although there is actually no direct supporting evidence for this theory. But *if* Bastet can be linked with unguent, *then* calling Anubis a son of Bastet would make sense. One explicit goal of the mummification process was to bring about that the corpse would be sweet-smelling - and with Anubis in charge of mummification, that was his domain. See e.g. the following from the Coffin Texts:

CT I, 195-6: Anubis makes your odor (*st*)²⁹ sweet in front of your seat in the Divine Booth, he gives you incense at all seasons.

²⁴ DZA 1.011.880.

²⁵ See e.g. his “*Ancient Egyptian Religion*” (1948).

²⁶ DZA 1.022.920.

²⁷ DZA 1.011.879.

²⁸ *Götterglaube* 83.

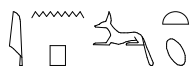
²⁹ Faulkner translates: “makes your savour sweet”. In this particular context, there is however no reason for the use of the more ambivalent “savour”.


Still another tradition, come to us (a/o³⁰) through the Greek author Plutarch,³¹ is that Anubis was an illegitimate son of Osiris with his sister(-in-law) Nephthys. This is the most familiar filiation for Anubis, and in fact also the most meaningful one - as we will see shortly. Furthermore, Anubis has (already in the PT) a daughter: Kebhut. She has a function in the purification rites that are part of the mummification procedures.³²

Other relationships

Another god of the 17th U.E. nome was Bata: a god in the shape of a bull. There appears to have been a marked rivalry between the priesthoods of these two gods, a rivalry extending over the centuries. It found a literary expression in the "Story of the Two Brothers", known from the New Kingdom Papyrus d'Orbiney.

In the Ptolemaic Period, a goddess by the name of Input makes her appearance in the Hathor temple of Dendera. She is there associated (in nome lists and the like) with the 17th nome of Upper Egypt: Anubis' nome. Her name is that of Anubis with a feminine ending. Next to Anubis' Graecized name this is not readily apparent, but in glyphs, the picture is clear though:

 *Inp(w).t* Input.

Behind the sign of the recumbent jackal comes the group . (*t* + an egg) which in Ptolemaic times is the customary ending for names of goddesses (and still makes a good breakfast). This type of goddess is called a "female complement" or "female counterpart". They could either emerge together with a male partner, as a pair, or later as a means of supplementing a male god. The four pairs that together made up the Ogdoad are an example of the first procedure, Anubis and Input of the second.³³ Most of the goddesses of the first type never acquired an independent existence. Those of the second type however emerge as a result of prolonged and intense reverence for their male models; they are an expression of genuine devotion. That's why they generally have more flesh to the bones.

Anubis outside the realm of funerary customs

As already stated in the introduction to this chapter, Anubis was "almost exclusively" a funerary deity. The obvious question is then, what other activities he was involved in.

These were actually both sparse, and secondary. As already mentioned, there were several more gods in canine-form: some with funerary roots (Khentiamentiou and Wipew), others of a more martial nature (Wepwawet and Sed). Apparently for no other reason than their outward similarities, these gods over time acquired some of each others characteristics. Wepwawet became involved in funerary practices (notably in his home-town of Assyut), and Anubis developed some martial traits. The Ptolemaic papyrus Jumilhac gives an account of

³⁰ On page 54 below is a specimen of Anubis' epithet "son of Osiris" from a 19th dynasty stela.

³¹ Greek biographer from the 1st century AD. He wrote (among many other works) "On Isis and Osiris", which contains the most comprehensive (though not necessarily the most authentic) version of the myth of Osiris.

³² Mentions of Kebhut (called "the Celestial Serpent" by Faulkner) in the PT: 1180, 1285, 1348, 1564, 1749, 1995, 2103, 2128.

³³ Other examples of the second process are a female Re (Ret-tawy: "Ret of the Two Lands"), a female Bes (Besset) and a female Sokar (Sokaret). Ret-tawy was the first of these to emerge: in the early 18th dynasty (*Eine* 214). A very late example is Nepyt: as corn goddess a female counterpart of Nepri (*Wb.* II, 248-4).

several myths from the 18th Upper Egyptian nome in which Horus and Anubis are together portrayed as warring gods.³⁴

Probably unrelated to any of this, Anubis also figures a few times in representations of royal or divine births, where he presents the newborn with the moon-disk.³⁵ How to interpret these, is still uncertain.

Anubis as a funerary deity

In real life, jackals, wolves and wild dogs look upon corpses as a source of food. So how come that one from their rank became the first of the great funerary deities of ancient Egypt?

It must have been an everyday experience, to see wild dogs and jackals sneaking around the tombs at the desert's edge, no doubt attracted by the faint smell of not-so-fresh meat. Perhaps the image of an attentive, recumbent jackal, watchfully waiting for an opportunity - *any* opportunity - to get to the burials, was - in the words of Brigitte Altenmüller³⁶ - "umgedeutet" ("re-interpreted") as the image of a guardian of the dead. Such self-delusion could well have served to relieve the tension, resulting from seeing jackals creeping around in the necropolis. "Now don't you worry, don't be afraid: it's only Anubis, checking if all is well!..."

In any event, Anubis was the first of the great mortuary gods of ancient Egypt. (In Egypt, mortuary gods were gods of the dead: not gods of Death. The faithful were hoping for their help and support *after* death.)

We can trace Anubis' footsteps back into the 1st dynasty, and his roots even into the predynastic. For centuries, all prayers for offerings were directed to "the king and Anubis". In the textual evidence of the 4th and 5th dynasty private tombs, Anubis was not the primary funerary god, but (in the area around the capital Memphis) the *only* funerary god. After the gradual introduction of Osiris as mortuary god in the later part of the Old Kingdom, Anubis' position lost some of its splendor, but he remained forever the divine undertaker, in charge of all mummification procedures.

With the rise of Osiris as funerary god, it became (for Osiris' priesthood) essential to embed Anubis into the cycle of myths around Osiris - to define Anubis' relationship to him as a subordinate one. This was achieved in a most ingenious way: Anubis was declared a son of Osiris and Nephthys. In this way, it was only natural for him to perform the burial rites for Osiris, as this was normally the task of a son. On the other hand, being an illegitimate son, he could not become a serious threat to Horus' claim on his father's heritage: the throne of Egypt.

For such a clever idea, it is surprisingly seldom expressed - and when it is, then usually in a veiled way. In the texts quoted later in this chapter, three of these instances occur: one from the Pyramid Texts, one from the Coffin Texts, and one from the Book of the Dead.³⁷ But for a really explicit statement, we have to go to much later texts, such as this one from the "Book of Breathings":

³⁴ LÄ I, 330.

³⁵ See the references by B. Altenmüller in LÄ I, 332.

³⁶ LÄ I, 328.

³⁷ PT 1122 on page 45, CT I 223-225 on page 59, and BD Spell 17 on page 60.

Anubis, Foremost of the Divine Booth, who takes care of the divine members of his father, give to N a funeral, as you did for your father Osiris.³⁸

Joining Osiris' successful bandwagon allowed Anubis to live well beyond his time: he still enjoyed a position of fame in the Roman Empire. A statue of him, dressed as a young Roman official with a jackal's head, testifies to this.³⁹

Male gods of the dead all shared some general characteristics. Like all his colleagues, Anubis was totally in charge of the realm of the dead, in every respect. He would determine who was allowed in, and he would then supply all the necessary provisions: food and drink, clothing and building materials. In the offering formulae of the Old Kingdom - especially those of the 4th and 5th dynasties - he is the one who is looked upon as supplier of all sustenance in the Afterlife. And in the vignettes of the Book of the Dead, he reads the verdict of the scales, in which the heart of the deceased is weighed against the feather of Truth.

In addition to this, Anubis was however also in charge of a specific area of the funeral business: that of preparing the body of the deceased for burial. As early as the beginning of the 1st dynasty, this included wrapping the body in bandages,⁴⁰ and no later than the beginning of the 4th dynasty, the first attempts were made to mummify the body - before wrapping it.⁴¹ And it was Anubis under whose auspices these tasks were performed:

PT 1122: My entrails have been washed by Anubis, and the going round by Horus and the mummification of Osiris have been carried out at Abydos.⁴²

PT 574: ...and I am your *wt-Inpw* priest.

The *wt-Inpw* ("Wet-Inpu") was a priest, involved in the wrapping and mummification procedures. His name means: "Bandager of Anubis".

Anubis remained forever closely connected to these practices. Several of his most regular epithets were concerned with this area. He is the one who is "in charge of the Divine Booth": a pavilion in which part of the mummification-process took place. He is "he who belongs to the wrappings",⁴³ later re-interpreted as "he who is in the place of mummification". And one of his best known depictions is that of a jackal-headed god, bent over the mummy he has just prepared.

In the Pelizaeus Museum at Hildesheim, there is a life-size mask of a jackal head, complete with peek holes, that is generally assumed to have been used during the enactment of certain rituals. A mummification priest may have worn a comparable mask,⁴⁴ while waiting on the mummy, to enhance the effectiveness of his actions.

³⁸ From Berlin p3154. See *DZA* 1.011.011 for the Ptolemaic glyphs.

³⁹ Shown in *Egyptian Mythology* by Veronica Ions, 1968, page 70. Its ill-proportioned small head indirectly testifies for the skill of the Egyptian designers.

⁴⁰ As is testified by the arm, wrapped in strips of linen, that was found in the tomb of king Den. The bracelets on the arm prove, that it was contemporary with the burial - if not in fact Den's own arm.

⁴¹ Canopic chest of Hetepheres, mother of king Cheops.

⁴² Faulkner's translation is: "...and the encircling of Horus and the embalming of Osiris..." In his note 3 (*FPT*, 185), he says: "The "encircling" of Horus may refer to his walking round and round his father's body affixing the funeral wrappings". This meaning is accentuated by the repetition of the verb "encircle, go around". It literally says: "the going round and round". For the difference between embalming and mummification, see page 54 below.

⁴³ For more on the expression "*imy-wt*", see page 52 below.

⁴⁴ The mask at Hildesheim is made of clay, weighs 8 kilograms, and has shoulder openings of no more than 8.5 centimeters (Christine Seeber in *LÄ* III, 1196-1199). Anyone trying to bend over while wearing this mask would certainly topple. Scores of beautiful cartonnage mummy masks eloquently testify to the Egyptians expertise in making lightweight masks that would have served such purposes infinitely better.

An image that in this context immediately comes to mind is the one just described (which also features as centerpiece in the vignette of Spell 151 of the Book of the Dead): Anubis, preparing the mummy. In the “skeptical approach” that today is fashionable in the study of ancient Egyptian religion, it has become customary to describe this image as a depiction of a priest, wearing an Anubis mask. The vignette is thereby promoted to the status of a photograph, reproducing faithfully for us an event that transpired more than three thousand years ago.

The intention of the *draftsman* was, to show Anubis, bending over the mummy. Seeing anything other than that in it, is unscientific.

In the Pyramid Texts, Anubis shows up one more “specialization”: he is there in charge of the transformation process that turned the deceased into a “spirit”, or Akh (*3h*). We read several times that the deceased has become an Akh because Anubis “has commanded this”.⁴⁵

Although Anubis was different from other funerary deities because of these specializations in undertaking and transforming, his personality did not differ noticeably from that of his rivals / colleagues - which is to say that he hardly had one. Amidst all that veneration and reverence, the funerary gods were met with an unmistakable undertone of anxiety. In the hymns for Osiris, this becomes particularly evident from the choice of qualifications for the god: he is noble, holy, powerful, mighty and awe inspiring; he is much revered, praised, obeyed, adored and hailed. Occasionally, he is also gracious, lovely to behold, and even “happy”⁴⁶ - but nowhere is he understanding, helpful, sympathetic, warm or friendly. No matter how intensely one is convinced of the existence of a blissful Afterlife: death frightens us instinctively - and that fright reflects on the god of the dead.⁴⁷

The rather scarce use of theophorous names compounded with the name of Anubis also confirms this. The *Wb.* gives these three:

- Anubis-Hetep (“Anubis is satisfied”)
- Anubis-Nacht (“Anubis is strong”)
- and Anubis-Sheshi (a nickname, probably from an original Anubis-Sekhem: “Anubis is mighty”).

All attestations given belong to mortuary priests from the 5th and 6th dynasty - people with every reason to be grateful to this god, to whom they owed their livelihood.

Anubis’ epithets

The substance of belief can not be deduced from material remains only: we depend on texts. In the ancient Egyptian record, texts of any length start to appear in the tombs of the courtiers of the 4th and 5th dynasties. With respect to Anubis, these texts - stereotyped as they are - allow us to reconstruct his nature and workings as a funerary god with surprising accuracy and detail, thanks to his many and varied epithets.

Most Egyptian gods had some standardized epithets - and some had more than others. Anubis had quite a few, and a study of these epithets is in effect a study of the god.

⁴⁵ Par. 797, 1364 and 2012.

⁴⁶ In the epithet Wennefer. This is usually translated as “he who is continuously happy”. It may however also mean “he who is continuously beautiful”. Given that to overcome death is (a/o) to overcome putrefaction and decay, such an explanation would also be appropriate. But see also note 93 on page 59 below.

⁴⁷ This is where goddesses of the dead were different. Hathor (particularly as Lady of the Sycamore) and Amentet actually welcomed the dead in the Afterlife. See e.g. PT 282-284, quoted on page 12 in the chapter about Amentet.

Anubis' epithets are here split into the following categories:

- Those related to the funerary domain in general.
- Those related to mummification.
- Those expressing a family relationship.
- And those referring to a locality.

We will start with his most regular epithets, most of which are already in evidence in the 4th dynasty. In passing, there will be ample opportunity to focus on some related matters such as the offering formula, and mummification practices.

Epithets of Anubis, relating to the funerary domain in general

 <i>tpy dw.f</i>	<p>“Who is on his mountain”.</p> <p>Picture the jackal, lying on top of a hillock, overlooking the necropolis...</p>
 <i>nb ʔ dsr.t</i>	<p>“Lord of the Holy Land”.</p> <p>The Holy Land can refer to the necropolis, but also to the West: abode of the dead.</p>
 <i>hnty imn.tyw</i>	<p>“Foremost of the Westerners”.</p> <p>The Westerners are the dead. (<i>See the comment below</i>).</p>
 <i>hnty imn.t</i>	<p>“Who presides over the West”: territory of the dead.</p>
 <i>nb kꜣꜣꜣ</i>	<p>“Lord of the coffin”.</p>
 <i>nb zmꜣ ʔ</i>	<p>“Lord of interment”.</p> <p>Literally: Lord of Joining to the Earth.</p>
 <i>nb zmy.t</i>	<p>“Lord of the Desert” (or: “Lord of the Necropolis”).</p>
 <i>nb prt-hrw</i>	<p>Literally: “Lord of offerings”⁴⁸. What is meant is: “He who decides who will receive offerings.”</p>
 <i>nb dwꜣ.t</i> ⁴⁹	<p>“Lord of the Duat (the Netherworld)”. (<i>See the comment below</i>.)</p>

“Foremost of the Westerners”

The expression “Foremost of the Westerners” was also the name of the funerary god of the town of Abydos, Khentimentiu. Anubis carries it as an epithet long before Osiris does. In the case of Anubis, it actually seems to be just an epithet (“Anubis, Foremost of the Westerners”), and not a compound god (“Anubis-Khentimentiu”). As the land’s most prominent funerary god, Anubis had no need for any union with another god. For Osiris, this was at first very different. As a Lower Egyptian god, he (or rather: his priesthood) actually

⁴⁸ When the word for offerings is written thus, a translation as “invocation offerings” is grammatically correct (see Gr. 172), but not always optimal. The invocation-bit refers to the fact, that these offerings could also be magically supplied, but whenever the term is used in a more general way, such as here, it is best translated simply with “offerings”.

⁴⁹ CT VII, 112h.

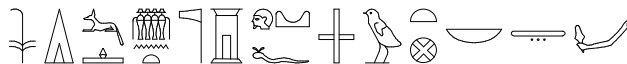
had something to gain from an alliance with Khentiamentiu, who was after-all the mortuary god of prestigious Abydos. It was only later, when Osiris had become the uncontested King of the Netherworld, that he (or again rather: his priesthood) could afford to use the name of Khentiamentiu as a simple epithet.

“Lord of the Duat”

This is originally not an epithet of Anubis, but of Osiris. Unlike Osiris, Anubis is not a “chthonic” god. On the contrary: in the PT, Anubis “commands” that the king be made a spirit: an Akh (3h: see page 46, and footnote 45). By means of magic, a man’s life-force/personality/essence was after death transformed into a being with special powers: the Akh. It could travel at will to the stars, or change into whatever being it desired.

The offering formula

These various epithets of Anubis were frequently used in the offering formula. Here is a typical example from the Old Kingdom:⁵⁰



A boon that the king gives [to] Anubis, Foremost of the Divine Booth, who is on his mountain, who is in the place of mummification, Lord of the Holy Land,



[namely] offerings for her⁵¹ of bread and beer, on every feast, on every day.

The offering formula is normally supplemented with a depiction of the deceased, seated before a dinner table. Somewhere in the immediate vicinity of that table will be something like this:



”A thousand of bread, a thousand of beer, a thousand of beef, a thousand of poultry, a thousand of clothing, a thousand of alabaster.”

The offering formula usually consists of the following elements:

- The part that we traditionally translate as “A boon that the king gives”.
- A conjunction or preposition, determining the relationship between the king, and the god (or gods) named hereafter. In the Old Kingdom, this word is almost always left out.
- The name of a god (or gods), usually donned with an array of epithets.
- The contents of the “boon”. In the very simple example above, this is limited to the obligatory “bread and beer”. It may be concluded with a phrase such as the following: “...and all things good and pure for the Ka of N.”
- Especially in the Old Kingdom, a list of festive occasions at which these boons are requested - here abbreviated to “every feast, every day”.

⁵⁰ DZA 27.458.550 (Mar. Mast .D18).

⁵¹ The deceased was a queen.

If we want to understand Anubis' role and position, we can't ignore the meaning of the offering formula. That meaning is not so easy to ascertain, though. The most obvious way in is that of grammatical analysis - but as we will see, that approach falters at a certain point. The thought or concept expressed by the offering formula must have been a most familiar one, literally known to all, so that even the sketchiest hint to it was enough to bring it fully to mind. It therefore needed not to be written out in full - which was a great thing, considering the cost of stone & labor. This furthermore allowed for the use of an attractive graphic array of the glyphs: always considered a bonus. But all of this is of course devastating for the grammarian's analysis. On the other hand, the many different outcomes of that analysis all fall within a fairly limited range of meanings: the gist of the offering formula is quite clear.

For a better understanding of the offering formula, we can make use of two additional approaches: that of economics, and that of the customs of daily life.

Let us begin with the latter. Of kings, we know that they started building their tomb almost - if not actually - on day 1 of their reign. First things first, and better safe than sorry. From this, we may assume that private people also started to build their "house for eternity" as soon as they possibly could. After all, no-one knows when the day will come.

Now what do we do, when we are having a new house build? We invite our family and friends to come visit the construction site with us. And when the work is done, we organize a house-warming party. We want to show what we have accomplished, and celebrate our success together with our dear ones. So the Egyptians probably did the same. On holidays, they would have a pick nick at the construction site of their tomb, for which they invited their relatives, friends and colleagues. And while being there, they would of course take a stroll around the necropolis, to see what else was happening. At the same time, others would be visiting the tombs of deceased relatives, presenting offerings, and keeping the place tidy. All of this must have accounted for a lot of living, visiting the city of the dead on a regular basis. This explains why (notably during the Old Kingdom) the deceased expressed in the offering formula his desire to reach "a great old age", after "a good and successful career"⁵², and to receive "a good burial in the West": when these words were carved in stone, the deceased was still a deceased-to-be, so part of what he craved for still pertained to *this* life. His wishes would be read both by himself and his dear ones, and they could share their sentiments over these matters.

The economic side of giving entails both a giver and a receiver. The final receiver is the deceased(-to-be): so much is quite apparent. Equally clear is the primary spender: the king. But what about the god, or gods, in between? What was the routing of the goods?

It is precisely at this point, that grammatical analysis falls short. Here are three variants of the offering formula, each with two possible translations. (Words between [] are words, left out by the scribe. Words between () are clarifications of meaning).⁵³



"A boon that the king gives [to] Anubis, namely..."

"A boon that the king gives [and] Anubis, namely..."

⁵² Or, in the words of the Egyptians: "being honored in front of one's lord".

⁵³ See for some of the considerations for these translations *Gr.* 171, and W. Barta's article "Opferformel" in the *LÄ*.



“A boon that the king gives, [and] a boon that Anubis gives, namely...”
 “A boon that the king gives, a boon given [to] Anubis, namely...”



“A boon that the king gives [to] Anubis. May he (the king) give...”
 “A boon that the king gives [to] Anubis, [so that] he (Anubis) may give ...”

Let us compare these options with a list of the relevant types of giving that we are aware of in ancient Egypt.

- The king provided for his retainers by granting them “boons” of all sorts: food and drink, clothing and building materials, a seat on his banquets, a place to construct a tomb, etcetera. These “boons” were a reward for services rendered: part salary, part bonus scheme.
- The king gave offerings to the gods. These were gifts: tokens of friendship, gratitude, admiration, and reverence.
- Relatives gave offerings to the deceased. These were partly presents to dear relatives, partly a form of income support. We know that the deceased were not totally dependent on these offerings for their livelihood: they could support themselves in the Beautiful West, growing their own crops as they did in life.⁵⁵
- Through the practice of circulation offerings, offerings that originally were meant for a god could later be diverted to a tomb for the benefit of the deceased - before finally satiating the mortuary priests.⁵⁶

To these earthly ongoings, we may add a few more that would transpire in the Afterlife:

- In the conception of Anubis as king of the Afterlife, that god would assume the role of king in providing for his “subjects”: the dead.
- In the view that the deceased earthly king would continue to rule over his deceased subjects in the Afterlife, he would continue to grant boons to them as he did in life.

Both of these notions existed side by side.⁵⁷

When I compare this list of give-and-receive-transactions with the possible translations given above, it seems to me that both have about the same reach and scope - which may actually have suited the Egyptians just fine. For the deceased(-to-be), the main thing was to receive the goods that he would need to sustain himself. It would be entirely in keeping with the Egyptian mentality at large, if such a goal were sought after through multiple channels at the same time.

In fact, there was even one more channel available, although on an entirely different level. Next to expressing a wish, the offering formula was also a magic spell. It could provide the deceased with the listed goods, just being pronounced by passers-by. For this, it even

⁵⁴ DZA 27.456.150.

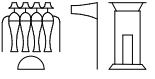
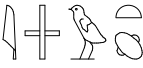

⁵⁵ See e.g. the vignette of chapter 110 of the Book of the Dead, where we see the deceased - all dressed up in his best garments! - sowing and reaping.

⁵⁶ For more on this most practical custom of “circulation offerings”, see *LÄ IV*, 596-597 (Hartwig Altenmüller, *Opferumlauf*).

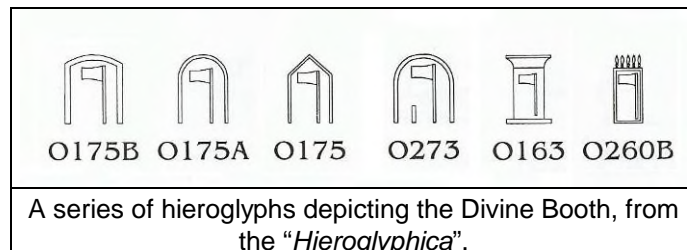
⁵⁷ Again (see page 42 above) we may resort to Frankfort’s idea of the Multiplicity of Approaches - but do we really need to? Ask five modern-day Christians how they conceive of the Afterlife, and you are certainly going to hear more than one answer. All in all, the internal coherence and consistency of the primitive’s mind might well be superior to that of modern man.

sufficed to utter the most abbreviated version of the formula: “A thousand of bread and beer for the owner of this tomb”.⁵⁸

Epithets of Anubis, specifically related to mummification

 <p><i>hnty zh-ntr</i></p>	<p>“Who presides over the Divine Booth”.</p>
 <p><i>imy-wt</i></p>	<p>“Who belongs to the wrappings”.</p>
 <p><i>imy-wt</i>⁵⁹</p>	<p>A later re-interpretation of the former: “Who is in the place of mummification”.</p>

These three epithets refer to Anubis’ specialization as divine mortician. The first one deals with the Divine Booth, also referred to as the God’s Booth, Divine Hall, or Hall of the Gods.⁶⁰ Other, more concise writings of the term include the following:



They all show us a room, with in it the sign for “god”. This sign resembles an axe, but detailed depictions from the Old Kingdom show, that it was a long object, like a staff, wrapped in textile, with a loose flap of cloth at the top. Since this is the most regularly used sign for “god” or “godly”, it must in some way capture the essence of the divine.⁶¹ Perhaps sacred objects were wrapped in cloth to protect them from profane eyes, and / or to allow handling them without either “burning” oneself, or “defiling” the object. But whatever the reason: sacred objects were - in some context - wrapped in cloth. So inversely, wrapping an object in cloth could - provided one used the right rituals - turn an ordinary object into a sacred one. Such a procedure is a reverse-type of magic: mimicking a result, to bring about the cause.⁶²

The Divine Booth was a room in which part of the mummification rituals took place. Considering the signs depicted above, it was the room where the body of the deceased was

⁵⁸ For examples and background, see *Magic-I*, 11.

⁵⁹ *DZA* 1.011.018

⁶⁰ I would not recommend “God’s Booth”, for this gives the false impression of a residence for a god - presumably that of Anubis himself. The meaning of the phrase is not “residence of a god”, but “place where one is transformed into a god”.

⁶¹ See especially *Eine*, 20-26.

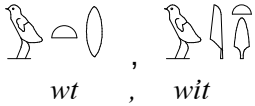

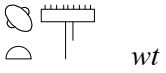


⁶² For more about this, see *Magic I*, 2.10: “Further consequences”.

turned into something divine - if not actually into a god. Wrapping the body in bands of linen was essential to this. I therefore assume that the Divine Booth was the place, where this wrapping took place.

Anubis is called "He who presides over the Divine Booth". So Anubis was the one who was in charge of it, and of what transpired there.

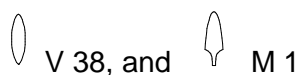
This brings us to the next epithet: *imy-wt* ("Imy-wet"): "He who belongs to the wrappings". A more common translation of this expression is: "He who is in the wrappings". Although this is grammatically an equally correct translation, it does not make much sense. After all, it is not Anubis who is being wrapped.

The word *wt* occurs in several meanings. The following is a (partial) excerpt of the *Wb.*:⁶³

 <p><i>wt</i> , <i>wit</i></p>	<p>To wrap, to bandage: both in mummification, as in medicine. (Spellings from the PT.)</p>
 <p><i>wt</i></p>	<p>The same word, in the usual later writing, and with a new meaning: to mummify.</p>
 <p><i>wt</i></p>	<p>Wrapping, bandaging cloth (noun). Both for mummification and for medicine.</p>
 <p><i>wt</i></p>	<p>He who bandages (in a medical context).</p>
 <p><i>wt</i></p>	<p>He who mummifies.</p>

What this series of words first of all makes clear is, that the word *wt* was used in the realm of medicine as well as in that of mummification. In the medical context, its meaning as bandage / to bandage / bandager is completely lucid. This allows us to interpret it with more confidence in the mortuary context.

The three different determinatives for the word *wt* = to wrap, to bandage, are most enlightening. In the PT, we only see these two:



V 38 is a piece of cloth. This clearly refers to the bandages themselves. When the verb *wt* is thus determined, we may assume that it just refers to the act of wrapping, plain and simple. Which is in fact the oldest form of "mummification", or rather: of preparing the body for burial.

M 1 depicts a tree, but I presume that in this case, it refers to a tree's product: resin. After an initial phase in which the body was just wrapped in strips of linen, one started to use resin, too. It was heated to liquefy it, and then poured over the linen bandages - presumably

⁶³ The *Wb.* has also 2 supposed meanings of the word *wt* that have later been shown by Faulkner (see his translations in *FPT*) to be misreadings: "Tongue? mouth?", and "To be old? To be great?"

because of the pleasant odor it would give to the corpse. The gods were supposed to smell pleasantly, so this again involved a backwards (result-to-cause) type of magic.

Although the PT are carved in stone for the first time at the end of the 5th dynasty, they exhibit orthographical peculiarities which are in all likelihood remnants of earlier days, when (part of) these texts were put in writing (on papyrus) for the first time. The use of V 38 and M 1 just described is among those peculiarities. In later texts - some of which date from the 4th and 5th dynasties, therefore giving a false appearance of *predating* the PT - another determinative comes in use for the word *wt*:

○ Aa 2.

It refers to “bodily growths or conditions, especially of a morbid kind”.⁶⁴ It determines words like “wound”, “disease” and “to suffer”. The introduction of this sign indicates that the process now involved more than just wrapping. Opening up the body, and removing the softer organs, had brought it into the realm of the surgeon. As a result, the meaning of the word *wt* had shifted, too. It now encompassed not just wrapping, but the whole process of preparing the body for the funeral. We might therefore best change our translation from “to wrap” into “to mummify”.



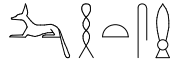
Priests, involved in mummification

The last entry in the previous table “He who mummifies” is usually referred to as the *wt*-priest: *Wet*-priest or *Ut*-priest. The original meaning of *wt* was bandager, wrapper, but by the time that we actually meet people thus referred to (5th dynasty), the meaning was already shifting to “he who mummifies”, or “mummification priest”.

We already encountered a colleague of his: the *wt-Inpw* or “mummification priest of Anubis” (see page 45 above). He seems to have had a higher position than the ordinary mummification priest.

One more title to be mentioned in this context is that of the *hst-Inpw*. The word *hst* can mean “to adorn”, but also “to make complete, to bring to an end”. This could refer to the last stage of the mummification procedures: to complete the work on the mummy. In the Old Kingdom, this title is carried by some of the highest state officials, among which the vizier.⁶⁵ In these cases, the person in question also carries the title *wt-Inpw*, which always precedes the title *hst-Inpw*. This would be consistent with the notion, that the *hst-Inpw* takes care of the last stage of the process.

This means that we can discern three ascending ranks of mummification priests:

 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>wt</i></p>	Mummification priest.
 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>wt-Inpw</i></p>	Mummification priest of Anubis.
 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>hst-Inpw</i></p>	“Adorner of Anubis”, or: “He who makes complete for Anubis”.

⁶⁴ Gr. 539.

⁶⁵ For examples, see TLA lemma 450748: Hts-Jnp.w.

Only the simple *wt*-priest probably actually touched the body: the higher echelons no doubt just supervised.⁶⁶

Mummification and embalming

In translations of Egyptian texts, the word embalm / to embalm / embalming is rather frequently used. Common examples are:

- *wt*: to embalm.
- *imy-wt*: who is in the place of embalment.

We should however carefully distinguish between the processes of mummification and embalming. The first was carried out by the ancient Egyptians, the second was not.




In the case of mummification - as practiced in ancient Egypt - preservation of the body was primarily achieved by dehydrating it. After removing the intestines, the body was covered with “natron” (a natural mixture of hygroscopic salts), by means of which water was drawn from the tissues. Side effects of this procedure are, that the skin turns a couple shades darker, and that the body starts looking really anorexic.

In embalming, the blood of the deceased is (as soon as possible after death) replaced by a mixture of water and formaldehyde. In this way, decomposition of the body is considerably delayed, without changing its outward appearance so much. (There are also important parallels between the two processes, such as the removing of the inner organs. As a result, the “modern” process of embalming is no less disgusting to read about than that of ancient mummification.)

So I prefer the word “to mummify” over “to embalm”. It is of course just a word, but when there are no overriding reasons to use the wrong word, then why should we?

Epithets, expressing a family relation

These epithets were already discussed in the section “Anubis as a relative”: see page 41 above.

 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>z3 b3s.tt</i></p>	<p>“Son of Bastet”.</p>
 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>z3 ḥs3.t</i></p>	<p>“Son of Hesat”. Spelling from a Ptolemaic temple at Edfu.⁶⁷</p>
 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>z3 wsir</i>⁶⁸</p>	<p>“Son of Osiris”. This epithet (here from a 19th dynasty stela) shows that the tradition of Anubis being a son of Nephthys and Osiris is considerably older than Plutarch’s time (see page 43 above).</p>





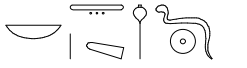


⁶⁶ The MK models of carpenter shops, storage facilities and the like show astonishing numbers of “chiefs”. They sometimes even outnumber the actual workers. The mummification hall or Divine Booth may well have presented a similar picture. (This high proportion of supervisors, controllers, chiefs etcetera should not be misinterpreted as the result of a bureaucratic inclination. It was probably more a means of distributing wealth: increasing economic growth allowed for ever more “indirect” staff. But although bureaucracy may not have been at the root of this system, it was certainly one of its fruits.)

⁶⁷ DZA 1.011.880.

⁶⁸ DZA 1.010.635 (time of Seti I).

Epithets, referring to a locality

Some of these localities are again closely connected to the funerary. They are listed roughly in order of appearance: only the first two date from the Old Kingdom.

 <p><i>nb sp³</i></p>	<p>“Lord of Sepa”. Known from the 5th dynasty on.⁶⁹ Sepa was a town near modern Tura, north-east of Cairo.</p>
 <p><i>nb z3wty⁷⁰</i></p>	<p>“Lord of Assyut”. Assyut (Lycopolis) really was the home town of Wepwawet, but as mentioned before,⁷¹ there was a tendency of cross-pollination between Anubis and Wepwawet. (From a granite sarcophagus of the 5th dynasty, now at Leiden).</p>
 <p><i>nb r-krrt⁷²</i></p>	<p>“Lord of Reqerert”. Reqerert was the name of the necropolis of Assyut, near modern Deir Rifeh. It means literally: “opening of the cave (that leads into the Netherworld)”. Since the Coffin Texts.</p>
 <p><i>Inpw hnw</i></p>	<p>“Anubis of Henu”. From the kiosk of Sesostris I (see the section about Anubis’ geographical roots on page 41 above).</p>
 <p><i>nb t3 hd⁷³</i></p>	<p>“Lord of the White Land”. The “White Land” is the region around Gebelein, in the 4th U.E. nome. Since the Middle Kingdom.⁷⁴</p>
 <p><i>nb r-st3w⁷⁵</i></p>	<p>“Lord of Rosetau”. (See the comment below.)</p>
 <p><i>m s.wt.f nb⁷⁶</i></p>	<p>“In all his places”... For those who could not afford a stela, big enough for a long list of epithets, this was a convenient alternative.</p>

“Lord of Rosetau”.

Originally, Rosetau is the name of a temple at the Gizeh necropolis for the mortuary god Sokar.⁷⁷ So e.g. in the Pyramid Texts:



This Unas is Sokar of Rosetau.⁷⁸

⁶⁹ LÄ I, 331.

⁷⁰ Leiden, AM 106: see DZA 1.011.249.

⁷¹ See page 43.

⁷² The “fashionable” way of transliterating this is *r3-krrt*, instead of *r-krrt*. Writing *r3* for *r* is “one of those things” that you have to do as an Egyptologist, just to show that you know what it’s all about - especially if you are not an expert in the language area. It is based on a very learned exposé by Gardiner in his *Grammar (Appendix A)*. Precisely because it is in that book, every student in Egyptology has to digest it. So, even if the word is never written as *r3*, it has to be transliterated as such, lest someone should think that one had not had a proper education. (Gardiner himself just transliterated as *r* - but *he* had nothing to prove, of course...)

⁷³ DZA 1.011.269.

⁷⁴ LÄ I, 331.

⁷⁵ See note 72.

⁷⁶ So on a NK stela at Leiden: see DZA 1.011.256.

⁷⁷ DZA 1.050.110.

⁷⁸ PT 445, DZA 1.050.110.

VII, 137:



A boon that the king gives [to] Anubis, Lord of the coffin, Lord of interment, Lord of offerings (..) ⁸³

Anubis in the Pyramid Texts

In passing, we have already touched on several aspects of Anubis' role and position in the Pyramid Texts. He is mostly presented as the one in charge of mummification, and as one who commands that the deceased be transformed into an Akh. But because of his involvement in mummification, his name can be mentioned in any relation to death and dying. The following short spell (Utt. 542) is an example that tells us little about Anubis, but that allows us a surprising peek into a palace in turmoil.

This is Horus: he has come, that he may recognize his father Osiris Pepy. ⁸⁴ It will be dangerous to him (to Horus) if the (old) king ⁸⁵ is transferred to the places of Anubis (i.e.: if the death of the king is made public). If anyone hears it, he (Horus) will not live! O Thoth, have no pity on anyone who hates the (new) king. ⁸⁶ O Thoth, go and see if the (old) king ⁸⁷ is transferred (to the places of Anubis), for it is dangerous to him (to Horus, the new king)! ⁸⁸

The old king has died (perhaps unexpectedly), and his heir is now in immediate and mortal danger. He must seize control at once. His first step must be to "recognize" his father as Osiris - which automatically makes him Horus: the new king. But apparently, this heir's position is not a strong one, so he has to make some preparations (inform allies?) before making the old king's death public. He has to watch his step, and move carefully, or he may not survive this day!

In spite of all those pictures, full of serenity and tranquility, on temple and tomb walls, ancient Egypt could at times be a dangerous place to live in. ⁸⁹

A subject of special interest in the Pyramid Texts is a group of archaic epithets of Anubis that is preserved there. We will examine those in detail shortly, when we get to a historical overview of Anubis' "career".

Anubis in the Coffin Texts

The Coffin Texts Word Index has 130 mentions of the name of Anubis. Of these, only about a dozen are worth repeating - and some of those not even for their content, but just because

⁸³ For my reasons for omitting the word "invocation", see note 48 on page 47.

⁸⁴ Because in this text the word for "king" is used in several meanings, it seemed better to translate here as "Osiris Pepy" instead of Faulkner's usual "Osiris the King".

⁸⁵ "King" is here written as *nsw*: a word regularly applied to the ruling king of Egypt.

⁸⁶ The word used here for "king" is *it*: That word has a more detached, theoretic meaning, and is therefore mostly translated as "sovereign". This indicates that it is here *not* the deceased king who is meant, but the king-to-be: his heir, who at this point is still only in theory a king.

⁸⁷ *It*. I would have expected again the use of *nsw* here, in reference to the old king. But I'd rather accept such an inconsistency in the text, than assume that the next verb (*nʿ*) suddenly has a completely different meaning here than in the beginning of the Utt.

⁸⁸ Faulkner interprets this text very differently. He assumes the word "him" (it is dangerous to *him*) to refer to the deceased king. After this, he finds himself in a lot of (unnecessary) trouble.

⁸⁹ For a vivid description of such a time, see the beginning of the story of Sinuhe.

of the occurrence of a particular epithet. I will start with a few examples of what I deem to be totally uninteresting spells, so that you can judge for yourself...

II, 120:

Anubis and Thoth guard me, Sha guards me in company with the Lord of Upper Egypt, the gates of Degneg are opened to me, the gates of the horizon are opened to me, to me belong the Vulture and the Lion which issued from my body, my flood-water is that of the celestial cattle, my movements are the movements of Anubis.

No, this is not a defective translation: it's a defective text.

III, 323:

O you four Horuses, the offspring of Osiris, who announce offerings to those who are in the evening, you have no power to take this face of mine to him who is in his shambles, who severs the necks of spirits for himself, for I am the companion of Anubis within the secret places of the Great Hall.

This type of text tells us nothing about nothing.

VII, 24.

Re rises, the mysterious one goes forth, my soul is a possessor of power in its primeval form. O Moon, the great ones and those who are in the Night bark are content, Geb and Anubis are in attendance at the great shrine, offerings are given to the great ones, and my soul is in the seal-ring. If Geb be content, this soul of mine will be content; if Anubis be content, this double of mine will be content, for I have directed foodstuffs to the shrine.

All right then, now for some that *do* convey a meaning.

I, 198:

The mummification priest speaks to the deceased during the mummification process:

Would that you were examined and made whole in this your mummy which is in my presence! May Anubis be glad with what is under his hands.

It is easy to miss what's happening here. In the first sentence, the priest speaks in the first person: "...in *my* presence." Then, in the twinkling of an eye, the perspective shifts: the speaker detaches himself from the actor who now becomes the god Anubis: "May Anubis be glad with what is under *his* hands." Who needs a mask?

Spells 49 and 50 offer a remarkable insight into the process of mythologizing. Point of departure for these spells is a vivid description of events in the palace: an eye-witness report of what transpired the night the old king died. This was then retouched with mythological accents - to the point where it ruins the story. But if we gently peel those away, the resulting view is spectacular!

I, 215-217:

Fall and tremble in the eastern horizon because of a sound of mourning in the Great Place⁹⁰: Isis moaning greatly and Nephthys weeping because of this god, Lord of gods (the deceased king).

⁹⁰ See the CTWI: *wr.y.t*. The place so referred to is apparently the mummification facility of the palace.

This introduction sets the scene: the old king has just died, and is being bewailed by the women of the palace - here transformed into Isis & Nephthys. After a jumbled section, the text continues:

Light a torch, you Wardens of the Chambers, (...),⁹¹ set your protection about your lord, divide up the hours for the Lord of the White Crown (the deceased king) until Horus (the heir) comes from On (Heliopolis), when the great crowns are given to him.⁹²

The palace officials set an hourly watch around the king's bier, waiting for the arrival of the new king ("Horus"). The palace is located at Memphis, the Old Kingdom's political capital. The heir to the throne has left for nearby Heliopolis, the country's religious capital, to be crowned there before the god Re-Atum. The events here described differ markedly from the one from Utt. 542 of the Pyramid Texts (quoted page 57 above). This time, our heir can move openly, with confidence.

The text continues:

The scepter of Him who is in the place of mummification appears, the Wardens of the Chambers are glad (...), for it is Anubis who comes in peace, having appeared as Vizier.

The Vizier, highest official of the court, has arrived to oversee the mummification rites for the deceased king, probably in his office of *ḥts-Ḳnpw* (Adorner of Anubis: see page 53 above).

The rest of this Spell is of little interest. The next Spell (# 50) however more or less continues as follows:

I, 223-5:

Anubis is within his castle in his service of the Divine Booth, he puts his hand on the Lord of the gods (the king), who is joyous of appearings on the thrones of Geb, and [to whom] is given praise in Djedu (Busiris).

In the veiled style characteristic for this thorny subject, this is an account of Anubis, performing the mummification of the king ("putting his hand on the god"). The king is now unequivocally presented to us as Osiris: one who is always glad ("joyous of appearings": almost the same expression as "Wennefer"⁹³), who is the heir of his father Geb ("on the thrones of Geb"), and who originates from Busiris ("[to whom] is given praise in Djedu").

The next line then jumps straightaway to the happy conclusion of Anubis' work:

Horus, pre-eminent in Khem, rejoices at Osiris Wennefer who has come safely to the West with all the gods in his train.

And all's well that ends well.

Anubis in the Book of the Dead

Anubis is of course mentioned in the Book of the Dead, too - but not all that often. Depending on the text, his name features in about a dozen Spells. Most of these instances are of the usual non-specific type: Anubis' name just being picked in a random manner from

⁹¹ The texts interjects: "you gods who are in darkness". Superfluous additions like these not seldom ruin the narrative.

⁹² Faulkner translates: "[even he] to whom the great crowns have been given." If I understand his reasons for this translation correctly, he has based it on one extra sign that appears in one (of six) variant texts. I would however expect the original text to have made a little more sense.

⁹³ See note 46 on page 45 above. This text actually supports the translation of Wennefer as "he who is continuously happy".

the list of available gods. One exception is in Spell 151, illustrated with a large vignette that depicts the burial chamber (or perhaps the Divine Booth?). In the middle of this vignette, Anubis is shown while tending to the mummy.

Words spoken by Anubis who presides over the Divine Booth, who is upon his mountain, Lord of the Holy Land: "I have come that I may spread my protection over N."

In Spell 17, there is this remark that catches the eye:

He is Anubis who is behind the chest which contains the entrails of Osiris.

This could refer to the chest on which Anubis is so regularly depicted: see page 38 above.

Archaic epithets of Anubis, retained in the Pyramid Texts

The Pyramid Texts, although known to us only from the end of the Old Kingdom, unmistakably contain passages that predate that period considerably. Take a look at the following examples:

1002: O my father N, raise yourself upon your left side, place yourself upon your right side⁹⁴ for this fresh water which I have given to you. O my father N, raise yourself upon your left side, place yourself upon your right side for this warm bread which I have made for you.

1046: O my father N, (...), rise up on your left side, put yourself on your right side, and receive this bread which I have given to you, for I am your son and heir.

1732: Gather together your bones, take your members, cast off the earth which is upon your flesh.

747: Arise, remove your earth, shake off your dust, raise yourself!

These texts evoke the picture of those simple burials of the Predynastic Period, in shallow pits on the edge of the desert, where the bodies were just laid in the sand without any preserving treatment.

A noteworthy aspect of these texts is, that they completely dispense with any references to gods. This too testifies of the predynastic origin of these texts.⁹⁵ Here, we just hear a son addressing his deceased father. Over time, the father was to become Osiris, and the son Horus - but those were later additions to already existing texts.

In theory, texts as the ones just quoted could also refer to the burials of simple people from any period - for simple peasants never could afford more than that shallow pit in the sand. The Pyramid Texts were however *royal* texts: at some points, the "plebs" (*rhy.t*) is even explicitly excluded from the benefits of these utterances.⁹⁶ We have to go back several centuries into the Predynastic, before arriving at a period when even magnates and chiefs were buried with the sand actually touching their flesh. These texts then have to come from that remote period, handed down orally for centuries, before finally being committed to papyrus - presumably somewhere in the beginning of the Old Kingdom. It is just our good

⁹⁴ In the Predynastic Period, the dead were usually buried with their head towards the south, lying on their left side (see note 12 in the chapter of Amentet). This means that they were looking west. Turning over to their right side would then mean: to look east, towards the rising sun of the new day. (In the Dynastic era, people were normally buried looking east.)

⁹⁵ See *Magic I* for the timing of the emergence of the gods, particularly chapter 3.

⁹⁶ PT 655, 876, 1726, 1934, 1945.

fortune that some of these texts actually made it into the corpus of the Pyramid Texts, to be immortalized on the inner walls of now so unassuming, eroded pyramids.

So when we see epithets of Anubis in the PT that are not known to us from other, later sources, the notion that these epithets might in fact be exceedingly old indeed (perhaps even from the Predynastic), lies close at hand.

One such epithet is "Claimer of hearts".

PT 1287: Seize them (the followers of Seth), remove their heads, cut off their limbs, disembowel them, cut out their hearts, drink of their blood, and claim their hearts in this your name of Anubis Claimer of hearts!

PT 157: O Thoth, go and proclaim to the western gods and their spirits: "This king comes indeed, an imperishable spirit, adorned with Anubis on the neck,⁹⁷ who presides over the Western Height. He claims hearts (like Anubis), he has power over hearts. Whom he wishes to live will live, whom he wishes to die will die".

If we take the context into account, this "claiming of hearts" may have to be taken literally. In the well-known "Cannibal hymn" (Utt. 273-274), it is said that king Unas "eats men":

Unas is he who eats men (*rmt*), feeds on gods.⁹⁸

The following vivid description of his hunting and eating the gods makes it easy to forget this clause, but it seems quite possible that the earliest Egyptian kings "claimed the hearts" of slain enemies for their cooking pots.

PT 1523: Anubis who claims hearts, he claims Osiris the king from the gods who are on earth for the gods who are in the sky.

Here the term "to claim" is used in a more composed way.

This section is also interesting for another reason. The original text must have been something like this:

* Anubis who claims hearts, he claims the king from the gods who are on earth for the gods who are in the sky.

This makes sense: it links Anubis with the "stellar belief", in which the king could travel to the stars - an association that occurs several times in the Pyramid Texts.⁹⁹ Traveling to the stars would rescue the king from "the fate of Osiris". See e.g. PT Utt. 245, where the sky-goddess Nut addresses the king as follows:

Open up your place in the sky among the stars of the sky, for you are the Lone Star, the companion of Hu. Look down upon Osiris (below, in the Netherworld), as he governs the spirits, for you stand far off from him: you are not among them (the spirits, ruled by Osiris) and you shall not be among them!

In PT 1523, by mechanically inserting the name of Osiris before that of the king, the scribe involuntarily turned the text into a travesty.

Of a completely different nature is the epithet: "Who is on his belly".

PT 727: ...as Anubis who is on his belly, as Wepiw who is pre-eminent in On.

PT 2026: O King, your shape is hidden like that of Anubis on his belly...

⁹⁷ This probably refers to the jackal-face that the king assumes in the Afterlife: see page 64 below.

⁹⁸ Par. 400.

⁹⁹ See page 46 above, and note 45.

PT 1281-2: Weep for your brother, O Isis; weep for your brother, O Nephthys; weep for your brother! Isis sits down with her hands on her head, Nephthys has grasped the tips of her breasts because of their brother the king, who crouches (as a jackal) on his belly, an Osiris in his danger (?), an Anubis, foremost of grip(?).

In PT 1281-2, the word for “to crouch” is *inp*: see also the section about Anubis’ name on page 40 above.

This emphasize on his crouching posture points towards Anubis being a jackal. In addition to this, the Pyramid Texts stipulate again and again that the king’s face is that of a jackal:

573: Your face is that of a jackal.

896: ..receive your jackal face.

1564: My face is that of a jackal (..)

1749: Your face is that of a jackal (..)

1995: Your face is that of a jackal (..)

2026-7: O King, your shape is hidden like that of Anubis on his belly; receive your jackal-face and raise yourself, stand up and sit down at your thousand of bread, your thousand of beer, your thousand (etc).

2098: Your face is that of a jackal, your flesh is that of Atum.

2108: O King, you are clad as a god, your face is that of a jackal.

2241: Your face is that of a jackal, as Anubis girded...

And finally one more, slightly different:

1380: Your feet are those of a jackal, so stand up! Your arms are those of a jackal, so stand up!

Of these ten examples, only two mention Anubis. The other eight just speak of “a jackal”. This Jackal may have been a pre-mythical predecessor of Anubis - like the Two Kites were pre-mythical predecessors of Isis and Nephthys in their role as mourners.¹⁰⁰

We have already paid attention to the remarkable position of, of all creatures, a jackal as mortuary god. As B. Altenmüller has it,¹⁰¹ this may have been a psychological trick, to relieve tensions from seeing jackals prowling around the necropolis. Perhaps an earlier attempt to overcome the same tensions involved “being a dog with the dogs”: put on a jackal-face, as a disguise, to be safe from the real jackals. Or perhaps it was a ploy, exclusively for the king: by disguising as a jackal, he could assume the position of the Jackal as ruler of the Afterlife.

One more archaic notion concerning Anubis in the PT is that of the “Baldachin”.

¹⁰⁰ See also *Rite 10*, where Otto also assumes (although in a different context) a connection between a pre-mythical kite and Isis. In funerary papyri of the New Kingdom and later, Isis and Nephthys are sometimes depicted as two kites, with the signs that spell their names on their heads. See also the Postscript at the end of this chapter.

¹⁰¹ See note 36 on page 44 above.





744: Isis has grasped your hand and she inducts you into the interior of the baldachin.¹⁰²

793: You arise as Anubis of (*hr*) the baldachin.¹⁰³

1380: ...my father Osiris the king, and Anubis of¹⁰⁴ the baldachin raises him.

1867: You have descended as a jackal of Upper Egypt., as Anubis of (*hr*) the baldachin.¹⁰⁵

The word here translated as baldachin is only attested in the PT. Its phonetic value is known from full writings to have been *mniw*. The *Wb.* translates as: “art Räumlichkeit” (“type of room / space”). It is usually determined with three pieces of knotted cloth (see the first column in the table below). This gives the impression of a plural, but it is treated as a singular. It may mean that the baldachin was made of a series of pieces of cloth.

1	2	3	4
			
Baldachin	Herdsman	Herdsman ("he who uses this type of booth"?)	Baldachin ("a herdsman's booth"?)
PT 744	Wb. 2-74	PT 2094	PT 1867

A related word, with the same phonetic value, is well attested - in all periods - with the meaning of “herdsman” (column 2). In the PT, this word is sometimes written with an ideogram: a type of lightweight booth or cabin (column 3).¹⁰⁶ This suggests that such a type of cabin typified the profession of a herdsman.

Occasionally, the word “baldachin” is written with two signs: a man in front of the same type of booth or cabin (column 4).

Based on this material, already the *Wb.* suggests that the baldachin may originally have been a herdsman’s tent.

For a herding people, living in an open, grassy savanna - such as one would expect some 6 or 7.000 years ago on either side of the Nile Valley - a tent would provide a rare opportunity for some privacy and seclusion. Particularly enlightening in this context is the following paragraph from the Pyramid Texts:

2100: O King, Horus has woven his booth on your behalf, Seth has spread out your awnings. Be covered my father, by the Divine Booth, that you may be conveyed therein to your places which you desire.

¹⁰² Faulkner translates simply as: into the Baldachin. The wording “into the interior of” that the original has, emphasizes the probable essence of the act: to hide the body of the king from view for the performance of secret rites.

¹⁰³ Faulkner translates: “who is on the baldachin”. Grammatically not impossible, but makes little sense. For *hr* with the meaning “of, belonging to”, see *Gr.* par. 165.

¹⁰⁴ A direct genitive, which supports my interpretation of *hr* as meaning “of, belonging to”.

¹⁰⁵ Faulkner translates: “as Anubis upon the baldachin”. See the previous footnotes.

¹⁰⁶ So PT 860, 896, 1260, 1711, 2069, 2094.

This is an address to the king, who has just died, and is now going through the post-mortem rituals. Part of those rituals was to transform the spirit of the deceased into an Akh: a being that could travel at will to the stars, or to any other place where it wanted to be. Such mysterious rites were obviously not meant to be seen by profane eyes, so performing them in an enclosed room would have been called for.

In a pre-mythical period, when there were not yet gods, only rituals and magic,¹⁰⁷ the rites for the deceased may have taken place in a herdsman's tent. Perhaps these rites stood under the auspices of a spirit or proto-god called "The Jackal". When this Jackal evolved into the god Anubis, the tent or baldachin evolved into the Divine Booth. (For more about the concept of proto-gods, see the Postscript at the end of this chapter).

On page 60 above, I already pointed at the occurrence in the Pyramid Texts of myth-free funerary texts that, from internal evidence, can be dated to the Predynastic Period. But there are more reasons, why pre-mythical texts necessarily belong to the Predynastic. We know that the first kings of the 1st dynasty were already considering themselves incarnations of the god Horus. Furthermore, the texts of the Early Dynastic Period (1st and 2nd dynasty) show unmistakable evidence of several more gods: the emblems, names or depictions of Ash, Min, Neith, Wepwawet and Mafdet are easily recognizable. So in ancient Egypt, the gods arrived on the scene no later than the first kings. Therefore, any god's pre-mythical roots must at least predate Narmer and Hor-Aha. So the allusions to pre-mythical beings like The Jackal must belong to the Predynastic, even if we only know about them from the 5th dynasty Pyramid Texts.

(The occasional addition of a god or two to essentially pre-mythical texts should not be taken as evidence, that such texts are *not* of pre-mythical origin. The often mechanical adaptations of older texts, to bring them in line with new ideas is well attested. See e.g. the example of the addition of the name of Osiris to an essentially un-Osirian text in PT 1523, quoted on page 61 above. Another example is the frequent re-editing of Pyramid Texts from an original 1st or 2nd person to the 3rd person).

Predynastic palettes

An interesting related phenomenon is that of the so-called dog-palettes from the Predynastic Period. The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford has one, and so does the Louvre in Paris.¹⁰⁸ The one from Oxford has two standing dogs framing the palette (the head of one is missing), the palette in Paris has four dogs: two at the top, and two on the bottom of the palette. One element in the depiction of these dogs is very different from the usual Anubis depictions: the ears. Those on the palettes are rounded instead of pointed, which is more reminiscent of the wild dog than of the jackal (see also the paragraph about the Anubis-animal on page 40 above.) Such an early deviation from later canonized forms would however not be out of character.

If these dogs represent the proto-god just referred to as "the Jackal", then the representations on these palettes might refer to the Afterlife. So what *do* we see on the palettes?

- Paris palette, front side: an ibis, a lion and a creature of myth: a dog with a long, snake-like neck.
- Paris palette, backside: a palm tree, with on either side a giraffe. (The back side of the "Battlefield palette", in Oxford, holds a similar scene).

¹⁰⁷ For the precedence of ritual and magic over gods and religion, see *Rite*, and *Magic I*.

¹⁰⁸ Oxford: E. 3924. Paris: E. 11052. The Brussels Royal Museum of Art and History also has a fragment of such a palette: E. 6196.

- Oxford palette, front side: an ibis, wild and domesticated dogs attacking animals of prey such as gazelles, and creatures of myth with extremely long necks.
- Oxford palette, back side: lions and various types of creatures of myth attacking animals of prey, with a figure that appears to be a man with a dog's mask playing a flute - usually described as "the magician".¹⁰⁹

There is no way we can definitively interpret these representations, but I would say that they make passable depictions of the Afterlife as a land of exotic vista's, with enough wild game to hunt for everyone.

Another palette from the same period also worth mentioning in this context is the "hunting palette" (partly in the British Museum, London, partly in the Louvre, Paris). This shows a long row (of originally almost 20) hunters, hunting lions. Enigmatic about these hunters is, that they all wear an animal's tail on their belt - as later the Egyptian kings do. If this were a depiction of the Afterlife, the presence of so many kings at the same time would suddenly no longer be disturbing.

Anubis in the Early Dynastic Period

It may seem paradoxical, but thanks to the Pyramid Texts, we actually know more about Anubis' roots in the Predynastic (as explored in the previous paragraphs), than about his first days as a god in the Early Dynastic Period (1st and 2nd dynasties).

The "texts" of the Early Dynastic are, for several reasons, among the most difficult to interpret in the ancient Egyptian language. One of these reasons is, that they almost never take the form of a true sentence. They deal mostly with the names and titles of persons, the content of bags, boxes and jugs ("a pair of sandals", "wine from Lower Egypt"), or happenings of the kind that are also known from the Palermo Stone ("birth of Min", "appearance of the king of Upper Egypt"). So the subject matter is extremely limited, too.

Peter Kaplony has done a tremendous job in collecting and publishing the textual material from this period.¹¹⁰ He offers his interpretations of that material from an optimistic's viewpoint, treating it as "a glass half-full". His implicit position is, that if we can learn just a little bit more about this, we can read and understand it all.

In the view of so much optimism, I can't help but take the position of the pessimist. To me, the glass is half-empty at best. The number of question marks is still impressive. Because of the limited material - both in an absolute sense, as with respect to contextual variation - we could never even have begun to decipher it if we would not have been able to compare it with the texts from the Old Kingdom. The heart of the matter is, that we can understand little more than that, what we can recognize from later materials.

As I find Kaplony's interpretations at times a bit strained, I did my own analysis for the occurrences of the jackal-signs. My objective in this analysis was a very limited one: just to see whether some of these signs could be shown to be depictions of the god Anubis.

In Band III of *IÄF*, there are 34 items with one or more (possible) jackal signs. Of these, 9 show standing jackals, on a standard.¹¹¹ As depictions of the god Wepwawet, they are not relevant to our quest for Anubis. One more should be discarded as uncertain,¹¹² and one as

¹⁰⁹ Or would this perhaps be (by far) the earliest depiction of an anthropomorphic god with an animal's head? The earliest certain attestation of that phenomenon so far is a depiction of Horus as a man with a falcon's head, on a relief of an otherwise unknown king Qa-Hedjet (Louvre E. 25982). It is generally believed to date from the 3rd dynasty.

¹¹⁰ Peter Kaplony: *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit*, 1963.

¹¹¹ 175 A and B, 186, 195, 237, 280, 369, 473 and 583.

¹¹² 452 is most likely not a jackal, perhaps a crocodile.

not relevant.¹¹³ This leaves us with 23 items. Of these, 13 show recumbent jackals, and 10 standing jackals.

From the table on page 39, we can see that all pictures of Anubis are recumbent - but that not all recumbent jackals are Anubis. We should however be prepared to consider, that during the Predynastic Period, there was not yet that degree of standardization in the hieroglyphic script - as indeed in any aspect of Egyptian culture. In the Pyramid Texts however, several times the epithet "who is on his belly" occurs (see page 61 above). This epithet stresses the recumbent position of the jackal. The majority of mentions of the Jackal in the Pyramid Texts is however without reference to the god Anubis (see page 64), and therefore probably predates the 1st dynasty. Taken together, this suggests a canonized crouching position for the Jackal already being established before the appearance of Anubis. This would then in turn suggest, that Anubis inherited that crouching position right from the start. I have therefore discarded all standing jackals as possible depictions of Anubis. Which leaves us with 13 items to check.

As the table on page 39 shows, there was another jackal god that was also always depicted recumbent: Khentimentiu. From other, contemporary sources¹¹⁴ we know, that this god was held in the highest regard during the 1st dynasty. So before we can feel confident that we are actually looking at Anubis, we need additional clues to support such an identification.

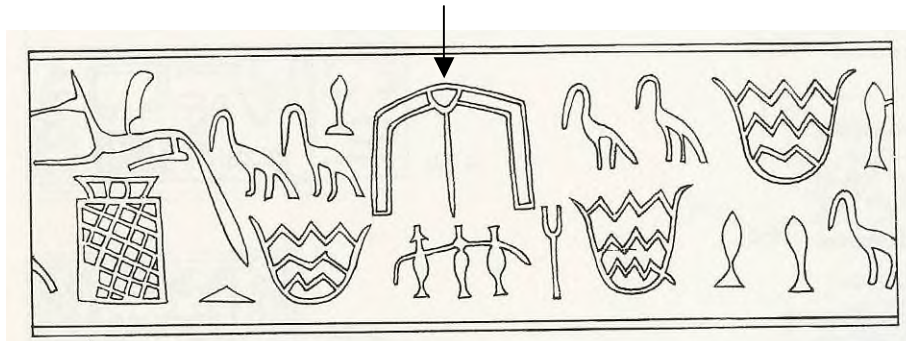
Fortunately, some such clues present themselves. Several of these jackals show a feather on their back. As the tables on pages 37 and 39 show, the sign of a jackal with a feather on his back is later consistently reserved for the god Anubis: in the Old Kingdom still for all purposes, later only as emblem-deity of the 17th U.E. nome. I therefore assume all of these in the Predynastic record to actually depict Anubis.

Some items show a wickerwork booth or shrine below the jackal. Kaplony explains these as representing the title *hry-sšb*:¹¹⁵ "He who is privy to confidential matters". The depicted shrine has however proportions that do not match those of the chest in the later title (see again the table on page 39). In that title, the chest is wider than high, whereas in these examples, the shrine is more high than wide. Still, one could point to the fact that the recumbent jackal is in all these cases depicted *above* the shrine, which is still evocative of the title - and to the fact, that the script was still going through a phase of experimenting. A point to be noted however is, that these particular texts are all written in columns. Rearranging the signs from columns into rows, we may put the jackal *in front of* the booth. Then both the spatial order *and* the proportions of jackal and booth point in the same direction: towards the phrase "who presides over the Divine Booth". In one case (fig. 482, reproduced below), this expression is even added in hieroglyphs - although without the word "divine" - and with the signs are in the wrong order.

¹¹³ 71 is certain, but not relevant, as it is a seal with only the depictions of various animals.

¹¹⁴ Notably several kinglists on clay sealings, uncovered at Abydos.

¹¹⁵ See e.g. his comments for figs. 335 and 337.



IÄF, Band III, fig. 482. The arrow points at a possible title “Who presides over the Booth”.
(Reproduced with permission).

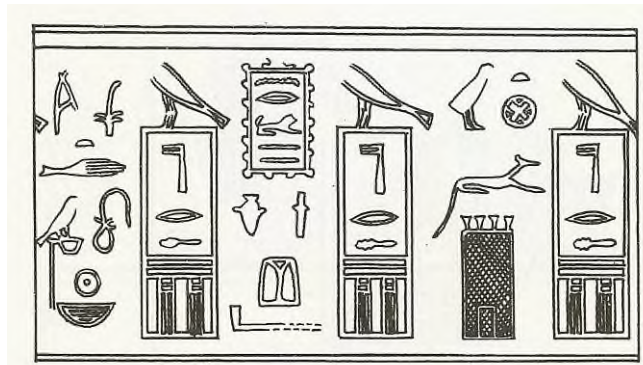
Two instances of a recumbent jackal in this material are in fact unlikely to represent Anubis (figs. 545 and 637). These combine the jackal with a sign of uncertain meaning, somewhat resembling an elephant’s tusk. This combination of jackal + tusk probably represents an official’s title,¹¹⁶ which means that in these instances, the sign of the jackal (although recumbent) is more likely to stand for “official”.

The following table gives the details:

Occurrences of the recumbent jackal in IÄF, Band III.

Fig.	Feather	Booth	Epithet	“Tusk”	Anubis?
42	X				Yes
315		X	<i>wt</i>		Yes
335	X	X			Yes
337	X	X			Yes
362	X				Yes
482	X	X	<i>hnty zh-(ntr)</i>		Yes
702	X				Yes
258					Maybe
562					Maybe
610					Maybe
809		?			Maybe
545				X	Probably not
637				X	Probably not

¹¹⁶ See IÄF I, 392-3: “sqr”.



*IÄF, Band III, fig. 315. (The name in the serekh is that of Djoser: Netjerykhet).
(Reproduced with permission).*

The first seven records have at least one characteristic (in addition to the jackal being depicted recumbent) that supports an identification as Anubis. Four of these even have 2 or 3 of these extra features.

There are four depictions of a recumbent jackal, in which nothing of the context either corroborates or weakens the likelihood that we are looking at Anubis. These are marked in the table with “maybe”.

The conclusion then is, that the presence of Anubis in the record of the Early Dynastic Period is established beyond reasonable doubt.

A jackal-god in the 5th dynasty Annals

On the Palermo Stone and its associated fragments, which come from a set of Annals that was carved in stone during the 5th dynasty, there are also several mentions of a jackal-god. These take the following format:



Birth of “a jackal-god” - or: Creating (an image of) “a jackal-god”.

Several parallels in the Annals, with the names of other gods such as Min, Mafdet and Seshat, make the interpretation of the jackal-sign as the name of a god certain. However, in the absence of any additional clues as to which god is actually meant, these qualify no better than the “maybe” from the table above. Again, the god Khentimentiu is a likely alternative.

The Annals yield a total of 7 instances of this record with a jackal-god.¹¹⁷ The first two of these come from - no matter how one reconstructs the Palermo Stone - the first half of the 1st dynasty. It should be remembered though, that there is no proof that the actual texts preserved in these Annals were verbatim copies from originals, contemporary with the reigns they cover. In fact, the Pyramid Texts, with their many additions and alterations to older texts, should prepare us for the worst!

Anubis’ ties with the king

The first traces of Osiris date from the end of the 5th dynasty. In the Pyramid Texts, he is the royal funerary god “par excellence”. We then see him gradually making his first appearances in the tombs of the courtiers. There can be little doubt then, that Osiris was at

¹¹⁷ See Wilkinson 91.

first a god whose workings were an exclusive privilege to the king, before his cult spread. Can we demonstrate something like this for Anubis, too?

Although Anubis' cradle stood in Middle Egypt, he shows a formidable presence on the Old Kingdom cemeteries around the capital Memphis, especially those of the 4th dynasty at Gizeh. Here, his name is mentioned again and again in the tombs of the high state officials that so neatly surround the king's own tomb. Every prayer for offerings is addressed to "the King and Anubis".

No less remarkable is, to what extent the god Sokar is *absent* from these tombs. Sokar is of Memphite origin, and in the Pyramid Texts, he features as a mortuary deity - but the rare mention of his name in the Gizeh mastaba's is mostly limited to connections with crafts such as that of goldsmith. It takes until the Middle Kingdom before Sokar makes his appearance as a mortuary god in the tombs of commoners.

Anubis' presence, so prominent, and so close to the royal tomb, would have been unthinkable without the royal patronage. But if we look for evidence of direct connections between the king and Anubis, we see an altogether different picture. In the two earliest editions of the Pyramid Texts (those of Unas and Teti), Anubis' name is mentioned only 4 or 5 times (see the table on page 37). In the later editions, he appears to be on the rise, but it is really Osiris who throughout the Pyramid Texts conspicuously fulfills the role of royal funerary god.

One way of explaining this state of affairs would be the following. There may have been a period of royal exclusivity to the workings of Anubis, let's say: somewhere during the first three dynasties. Then, in the (early?) 4th dynasty, the kings may gradually have come under the influence of Osiris. At the same time (and probably as an outcome of this), the courtiers acquired the right to address Anubis in their offering formulae. Although the Pyramid Texts still testify of pre-Osirian (and even anti-Osirian) beliefs, they unequivocally demonstrate the victory of the Osirian creed, no later than the end of the 5th dynasty.

The immense popularity of Anubis among the courtiers may then have prompted his comeback in the royal domain - reflected in the increased number of mentions of his name in the later editions of the Pyramid Texts. Such a spill over of imagery from the civil into the royal domain is not without parallel. The decoration of the royal tombs of the 20th dynasty exhibits some themes that are direct borrowings from private tombs. In the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, a vignette from the Book of the Dead (Spell 110) is reproduced. It shows His Majesty, all dressed up in his royal regalia, up to and including his crown, personally plowing the fields. It's a sight to behold!

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I posed the question what more we could say about Anubis, being truly a "Great God", in comparison to the "lesser" gods discussed so far.

It is true, that this chapter is up till now by far the longest one. It could easily have been twice as long, too, if I had not left out most of the further developments during the Late Period, with its new mythological entanglements, new cult centers, and vast dog cemeteries. All this material however, doesn't bring us any closer to understanding the personal relationship one had with this god.

It is in this lacking though, that an answer is hidden. For no matter what one expects of the Afterlife: death stays a ghastly prospect. So the faithful keeps his true feelings for the Great Gods of the Dead behind a veil of formal reverence. Since we today can only reach these gods through the testimony of their followers, that same veil forever shields them from us.

Postscript: the Proto-gods

In the Postscript to the chapter of Amentet, I have defined a series of three possible origins (in the psychological sense) for the gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt: immediate, intermediate and speculative gods. So where does Anubis fit in?

We have seen, that a precursor of the god Anubis appears to have been a spirit, or a spiritual being, called “the Jackal”. The Pyramid Texts, with its rich legacy of pre-mythical elements, holds evidence of several more of this type of characters, such as the Kite, the Herdsman, the Bull of the Sky, and the Maiden. In addition to this, Otto has pointed out some pre-mythical or half-mythical creatures, that appear to have been the forerunners of later gods.¹¹⁸ The forceful suddenness of revelation that is the hallmark of the immediate god-forming process pre-empts any possibility for such a transitional stage. As both the intermediate and the speculative gods have a degree of deliberation in their genesis, some of them may have known such a stage.

Concerning Anubis, I would say that he represents the type of an intermediate god, with a fair degree of speculative overtones.

Lit.: *Bonnet* 40-45 (this article written by Hermann Kees); *KWA* 43-44; *LÄ* I, 327-333 (Brigitte Altenmüller: Anubis). Slips in the *DZA*: 1.010.628 - 1.011.890

¹¹⁸ See *Rite* 10-11.