



Ennead: 9 Gods of Egyptian Mythology

A Project Report

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Introduction

The recorded history of Egyptian civilization dates back to 3100 B.C.E. about 5000 years ago with the palette of Narmer. The civilization lasted for around 3000 years, during which it made such paramount and unbelievable developments that it still leaves the best archeologists in awe today. Commonly referred to as the Nile Valley Civilization, the ancient Egyptians were also rich in culture and religion. In fact, all of Egypt followed a common religion, “Kemet”, modernly referred to as Kemetism or Kemeticism. Over 1,400 different gods and goddesses were worshiped in their shrines, temples and homes. Many of the Egyptians gods and goddesses were anthropomorphic, which means that they were usually depicted as part of human and animal. Out of these, there are nine deities, who are commonly referred to as the “Ennead”. It is the group of the main nine great gods of Egypt, who were referred to as “Pesedjet” in the Egyptian language. [1]

2. Objectives

This project was conducted in order to:

- To study Egyptian myths and the beliefs of Kemeticism.
- To study the genealogy and the relation of the nine gods of Ennead in detail.

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3. Methodologies

For conducting the projects, different materials were used from the internet. Many websites and reports done by professionals were used for valid information. Also, some information was taken from some articles of different researchers.

4. Findings

The Ennead, sometimes known as the Great Ennead, was a pantheon of nine Egyptian gods worshiped at Heliopolis, including the sun god Atum, his offspring Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, and their offspring Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. [1] Horus, the child of Osiris and Isis, appears on occasion in the Ennead. There were other similar clusters of nine deities in ancient Egypt, including the Great Ennead. All of Egypt did not respect its Heliopolitan priests' assertions of superiority. [2] The priests of Ptah hailed him as superior to the Nine as near as Memphis (also inside contemporary Cairo). The Ogdoad (the city of Hermopolis), which focused on physical creation and eight primordial gods, was another creation myth that existed at the same time as Memphis' own creation myth.

4.1 Mythology

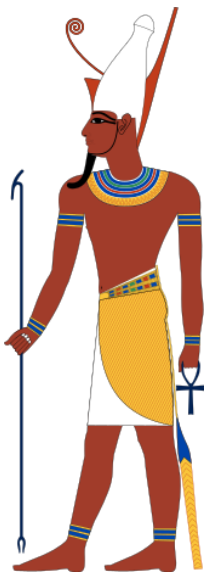
The earth was first made up of the primordial waters of precreation personified as Nun, according to the priests of Heliopolis. On the First Occasion, a mound emerged from it. [3] The self-created god Atum, who was compared to the solar god Ra, was seated atop the mound. Nun was transformed into Atum by self-creation. [4] Atum either spat or masturbated, spawning Tefnut, who represents wetness, and Shu, who represents air. The ground is personified as Geb, and the night sky is personified as Nut, thanks to the union of the Shu and Tefnut brothers. Osiris and Isis as well as Set and Nephthys, who later became their respective spouses, were both children of Geb and Nut. Set and Nephthys serve as a counterbalance to Osiris and Isis by representing chaos, while Osiris and Isis stand for fertility and order. This creation narrative frequently mentions Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis. This is just one of many creation myths found in Ancient Egyptian mythology. The Egyptians thought that a composite of these myths, rather than any one of them specifically, was true. [5] The Heliopolitan tradition's account of creation is one of physiological creation. The Memphite Theology and the Hermopolitan Ogdoad creation myth are the two other important creation beliefs.

4.2 Main Deities

As prior mentioned, the nine deities of Ennead were Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys and Horus.

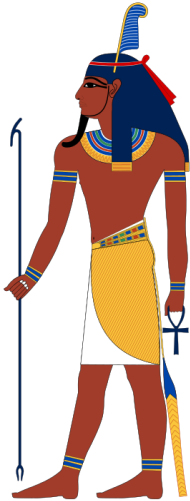
4.2.1 Atum

It is believed that Atum's name comes from the word "tm", which means "to complete" or "to finish." The world, which he finishes and returns to watery chaos at the end of the creative cycle, has thus been seen as both the "complete one" and the finisher. He was viewed as the originator of the world because the gods and the universe inherited his life power, or ka. Atum was a self-created deity and the first creature to emerge from the primordial abyss of water and darkness. He produced his children—the first deities—out of the energy and matter found in this chaos. He did this out of loneliness.[4] He created Tefnut, the goddess of wetness, and Shu, the god of air, from his own sneeze, or in some stories, semen. Curious about the ancient waters that were all around them, the brother and sister went to investigate them and vanished into the night. Atum, who was unable to accept his loss, despatched the Eye of Ra, a flaming messenger, in search of his offspring. The first humans were the ones that caused him to cry with excitement when they returned.



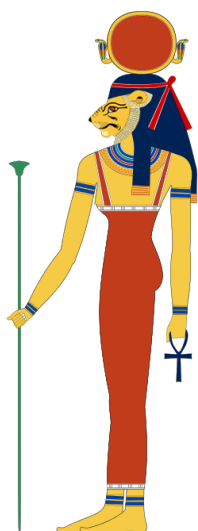
4.2.2 Shu

According to Heliopolitan religion, Atum formed Shu and Tefnut, the first pair of the Ennead, by spitting or masturbating. Shu was the grandfather of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys as well as the father of Nut and Geb. Horus and Anubis are his great-grandsons. Shu was seen as the air and was thought to offer a pacifying and cooling influence. After the First Occasion, Shu was portrayed as the dry air/atmosphere between the earth and sky, dividing the two realms, because of the association with calm, dry air, and hence Ma'at[7] (truth, justice, order, and balance). Additionally, ostrich feathers were worn by Shu in the artwork. Shu was observed wearing one to four feathers. The ostrich feather represented nothingness and lightness. Shu's elements included fog and clouds, which are sometimes referred to as his bones. He was also referred to as the wind because of his location between the heavens and the earth. [8]



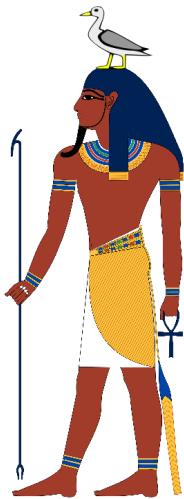
4.2.3 Tefnut

The sun deity Ra-daughter Atum's is known as Tefnut. She is the mother of Nut, the sky, and Geb, the ground, and she is married to her twin brother Shu. Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, and, in some interpretations, Horus the Elder were among Tefnut's grandchildren. She was Horus the Younger's great-grandmother as well. She is one of the Ennead of Heliopolis, together with her father, brother, children, grandkids, and great-grandchild. Tefnut was known as the Eye of Ra and was associated with other leonine goddesses. Jealous of her grandchildren's higher worship, she is supposed to have fled to Nubia in a rage while still a lioness, displaying a wrathful aspect. She didn't come back until she was given the label "honorable" by Thoth. She is claimed to produce pure waters from her vagina in previous Pyramid Texts. [9] Geb pushed his father Shu, who had violently removed his son Geb from his sister-wife Nut, and this caused Shu to retire from society. Geb adopts Tefnut as his primary queen-consort because he was in love with her. [10]



4.2.4 Geb

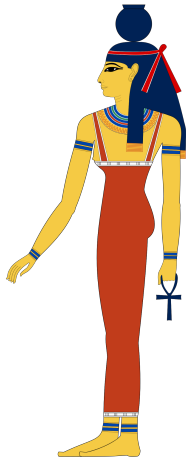
The god was first depicted in a partial relief in Heliopolis as an anthropomorphic bearded person with his name, probably from the reign of king Djoser in the third Dynasty. The god, however, never had his own temple. Later, he could also be shown as a crocodile, bull, or ram. Feared for being the father of snakes, Geb was referred to as the progenitor of the mythical snake Nehebkau in a Coffin Texts incantation. In further mythology, Geb also frequently appears as an ancient heavenly monarch of Egypt from whom his son Osiris and his grandson Horus inherited the territory following numerous battles with the disruptive deity Set, who was Osiris's brother and murderer. Geb may alternatively be seen as a personification of the fertile land and the arid desert, the latter of which is symbolically represented as "Geb opening his jaws" and is said to confine people who are unworthy of entering the fertile northern heavenly Field of Reeds. In the latter instance, one of his otherworldly characteristics was a menacing jackal-headed staff known as the "wsr.t Mighty One" that sprang from the earth and could be used to bind foes.[11]



4.2.5 Nut

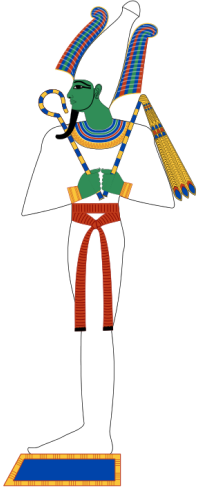
Nut was the sky goddess, but she served a variety of other roles as well. She went by the names Nuit, Newet, and Nueth as well. Because she gave birth to Ra (her grandpa) every morning after swallowing him up at night, Nut was regarded as the mother of all gods, including Ra. She was also the mother of celestial bodies, whose cries were rain and whose laughter was thunder. The sun was regularly transported across the sky by her. She contributed to burial customs and occasionally appeared on the tops of sarcophagi. One of the nine main gods was called Nut. She represented the skies and the heavens in human form. She was known in Egypt as "the mother of the sky". Nut, the sky goddess, was seen arching over Geb, the soil god, with her toes by his feet and her fingertips by his head. Although some Egyptians thought Nut had a rainbow-colored robe with stars all over her body, she was typically depicted as dark blue and without garments. Large murals of her were frequently discovered on the chamber ceilings of tombs. She may be portrayed wearing a vase on her head or having little vulture wings. When

bearing the sun across the sky, she was frequently depicted as a cow. The cow had a very maternal presence.[12]



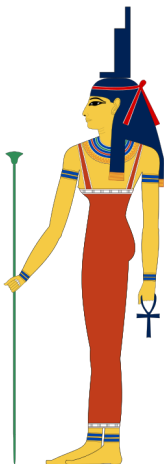
4.2.6 Osiris

Osiris was also the brother and spouse of Isis, as well as the brother of Set, Nephthys, and Horus the Elder, with Horus the Younger being regarded as his posthumously conceived son and the eldest son of the soil deity Geb and the sky goddess Nut. He was a god of the Moon through syncretism with Iah. Osiris, also known as Khenti-Amentiu, or "Foremost of the Westerners," was the judge, lord of the dead, and the underworld. He was also known as the "Lord of Silence". The pharaoh was regarded as the son of the sun god Ra during the Old Kingdom (2686–2181 BC), who ascended to join Ra in the sky after his death. The kings of Egypt, however, came to be identified with Osiris in death after the Osiris cult spread, believing that when he rose from the dead, they would combine with him and gain eternal life by imitation magic. Osiris became associated with the cycles of nature, particularly the emergence of vegetation and the annual flooding of the Nile River, as well as the heliacal rising of Orion and Sirius at the beginning of the new year, thanks to the hope of new life after death. [13] He became "He Who is Permanently Benign and Youthful," the supreme being who bestowed life upon all beings.



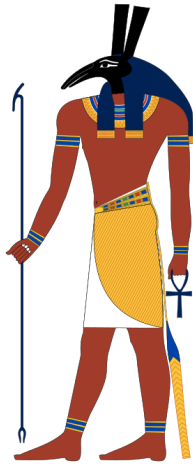
4.2.7 Isis

Osiris and Isis were the most commonly worshiped Egyptian gods during the first millennium BCE, while Isis incorporated characteristics from a variety of other goddesses. Isis was the primary deity to whom shrines were largely devoted by rulers of Egypt and its southern neighbor, Nubia; her temple at Philae served as a major religious site for both Egyptians and Nubians. She was claimed to have magical abilities greater than those of any other gods, to control fate itself, to rule the skies and the natural world, and to defend the realm from outside threats. She was revered as the divine mother of the pharaoh, who was compared to Horus, and was thought to aid the deceased in achieving the afterlife in the same way that she had aided Osiris. For the benefit of common people, healing spells sought her maternal assistance. She was more important in funerary rituals and magical literature at first, but she only had a minor part in royal and temple rites. She was typically shown in art as a human woman with a hieroglyphic throne on her head. Isis was depicted in the New Kingdom (c. 1550–c. 1070 BCE) wearing Hathor's headgear, which was a sun disk between a cow's horns, as she adopted characteristics that originally belonged to the dominant goddess of earlier periods, Hathor.



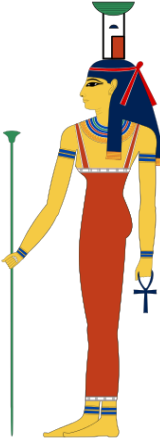
4.2.8 Set

The most significant Egyptian story, the Osiris myth, depicts Set as the usurper who murdered and dismembered his own brother, Osiris. With the aid of the goddess Nephthys, Osiris' sister-wife Isis put her deceased brother-corpse husband's back together and brought him back to life. Horus, his son and successor, was conceived during the lengthy resurrection. Numerous mythology from ancient Egypt detail Set's attempts to get revenge on Horus. Set was frequently equated in ancient Egyptian astronomy with the planet Mercury. [14] Since he is associated with the Sahara, which is located west of the Nile, he is occasionally compared to Ha, the god of the desert, who is represented as a man wearing a desert determinative on his head.



4.2.9 Nephthys

Nephthys makes an appearance in the Fifth Dynasty Pyramid Texts as a deity of the Heliopolitan Ennead. She is Set's consort and Isis' sister. Set is a god of battle. Nephthys is a guardian goddess who represents the dying experience, just as Isis did for the birth experience, as she is the sister of Isis and especially Osiris. Nephthys was referred to as the "Helpful Goddess" or the "Excellent Goddess" in some of the theologies and cosmologies found in ancient Egyptian temples. [15] The goddess described in these late ancient Egyptian temple writings stood for heavenly support and watchful supervision. In some tales, Nephthys is viewed as the mother of the cemetery deity Anubis (Inpu). Anubis can also be seen as the son of Isis or Bastet. [16] Nephthys was supposedly the wife of Nephthys in Nubia.



4.2.10 Horus.

The tutelary deity of Nekhen in Upper Egypt, who is the first national god known and is directly connected to the ruling pharaoh, who over time came to be viewed as a manifestation of Horus in life and Osiris in death, is the first version of Horus that has been recorded. Horus is described as the son of Isis and Osiris, which is the most prevalent family relationship. He plays a significant role in the Osiris myth as Osiris's successor and Set's rival as well as the killer and brother of Osiris. Hathor is recognized as his mother and occasionally as his wife in another legend. [17]According to Claudius Aelianus, the Egyptians referred to the god Apollo as "Horus" in their own tongue. Plutarch, on the other hand, expanded on the same tradition as the Greeks, specified that the one "Horus" whom the Egyptians equated with the Greek Apollo was in fact "Horus the Elder"[18].



5. Conclusion (what conclusion do you draw from this project)

The roots of myths of Ennead are deeply rooted in Egyptian mythology. Though conflicted, the nine deities of Ennead were Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys and Horus are counted among the pantheon. The gods of Ennead are mostly blood related and each some share family relation with the other. It was fascinating how the people of Egypt five thousand years ago had such religious beliefs and it was exciting to know how they thought of the world and their religious perspective of the world.

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