



THE SUNGOD'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE NETHERWORLD

Reading the Ancient Egyptian Amduat



ANDREAS SCHWEIZER

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EDITED BY DAVID LORTON

FOREWORD BY ERIK HORNUNG

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FOREWORD TO THE GERMAN EDITION

BY ERIK HORNUNG

Around the year 1500 BC, an ancient Egyptian created an illustrated vision of the hereafter, the *Amduat*, that ranks among the great achievements of humankind. In Egypt its impact endured for more than a millennium: it served as the model for a whole literary genre, today known as the Books of the Afterlife or Books of the Netherworld, whose tradition endured well into the Graeco-Roman era. Scholars believe it even left its mark in certain Gnostic texts, in the Hermetic tractates, and in early Christian visions of the beyond.

As Egyptian art and literature are usually anonymous, the name of the *Amduat*'s author is lost forever. But even after thousands of years, his work still speaks to us. It is a "multimedia" presentation, using both illustrations and texts to describe the subterranean realm of the "Hidden Chamber" of the hereafter. We have, however, had to learn anew how to respect these messages. Only after many generations did Egyptologists become conscious of what a treasure had been entrusted to them. Concerning the *Amduat*, certain highly respected scholars once expressed scorn regarding "fantasies" and "grotesque faces" incubated in the witch's cauldron of priestly sorcerers. Other pioneers, though, such as Champollion and later Maspero and Piankoff, realized the value of the Books of the Netherworld and made early attempts to decipher them. Since then, research into the texts and images has made huge progress, attracting attention far beyond Egyptology. In particular, there has been great interest among modern psychologists, since the *Amduat* offers material comparable to that found in modern dreams, especially with its talk about the phenomenon of re-generation, which concerns not only the Sungod and the dead but also the living human soul, even that of people today.

Dr. Andreas Schweizer has made the most successful attempt so far at a psychological decipherment of the *Amduat*. In his treatment, the ancient Egyptian sources come alive, speaking to us without seeming

alien to our modern ways of thinking. He invites us to join the nocturnal voyage of the solar barque and to immerse ourselves, with the “Great Soul”—that is, with the sun—in the darkness surrounding us. Here in the illustrations and texts of the *Amduat*, threats hidden in the depths of our soul become visible as concrete images, an analysis of which remains ever worthwhile: even in the guise of the evil, ominous, or dark side of godhead with which Andreas Schweizer concerns himself. The netherworld into which we descend underlies our own world. Creative energies of dreadful intensity are active there, and only death, to which all must surrender, makes us truly alive by offering us regeneration from the depths.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

More than ten years have passed since this book was published in German—*Seelenführer durch den verborgenen Raum: Das ägyptische Unterweltbuch Amduat* (Munich, 1994)—and this edition has long been out of print. It is therefore a great pleasure to me that Cornell University Press has been willing to publish this revised edition in English.

In the meantime, I have become increasingly cognizant of the fact that ancient Egypt is not only the source of many basic Judeo-Christian ideas but also the actual origin of the underlying beliefs of alchemy, that is, the thought of those ancient Greek and medieval philosophers who, more than any other scholars, were deeply aware of the richness of the human psyche and its capacity to regenerate, again and again, from stagnation and depression. Especially as we encounter it in the New Kingdom, ancient Egyptian belief in the continuous regeneration of the Sungod in the netherworld—and, with him, of all beings and creation—found beautiful expression in the writings of the medieval alchemists, and from there, these beliefs gradually transformed into the seedbed of modern depth psychology. It was C. G. Jung who discovered these treasures of alchemy, which are deeply rooted in the history of humankind. In his time, however, the principal Egyptian sources had yet to be published. Thanks mainly to Erik Hornung and his assistant, Elisabeth Staehelin in Basel, and to their tremendous achievements in decipherment and translation, we today have access to all the major Books of the Netherworld and their incredibly rich symbolism. The intent of the present book is to illuminate some of this symbolism for the reader.

I am greatly indebted to David Lorton, who corrected my translation in a most sensitive and excellent manner. I enjoyed every moment of our collaboration. I am also grateful to the staff of Cornell University Press, and especially to Peter Potter, for their willingness to include this book in their publishing program. Many thanks go to my dear friend

Tony Woolfson, who encouraged me in this project from the moment of its inception and who read the final manuscript with great care. Finally, I give my heartfelt thanks to my wife, Regine Schweizer-Vüllers, who, throughout these past years, has supported me with her deep understanding of the psychological implications of my work.

ANDREAS SCHWEIZER

Zollikon, May 1, 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE

In this book, the following conventions have been followed in citations from ancient texts:

Parentheses () enclose words or brief explanations that have been added for clarity.

Square brackets [] enclose words that have been restored in a lacuna.

An ellipsis...indicates that a word or words in the original text have been omitted in the citation.

An ellipsis in square brackets [...] indicates the presence of a lacuna for which no restoration has been attempted.

A question mark in parentheses (?) indicates that the translation of a word or phrase is uncertain.

English-speaking Egyptologists have no single set of conventions for the rendering of ancient Egyptian and modern Arabic personal and place names. Most of the names mentioned in this book occur in a standard reference work, John Baines and Jaromir Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000), and the renderings here follow those in that volume. The principal exception is the omission of the typographical sign for *ayin*; this consonant does not exist in English, and it was felt that its inclusion would serve only as a distraction to the reader.

In what follows, passages from the Bible are cited from the New Revised Standard Version.

D. L.

THE SUNGOD'S JOURNEY
THROUGH THE NETHERWORLD

IMMERSION INTO DARKNESS

At the end of a long, hot day, as the African sun approaches the west, the life of all creatures unfolds itself anew. Now sheltered by the cool evening breeze, the fields are plowed, hoed, planted, and watered. Everywhere in the villages, fires are lit to cook the evening meal. In the gathering twilight, people grow happier and louder. It is as though with their chatting, joking, and laughter, their music and dance, they want to ward off the approaching spirits of the night. But once the light of the very last fire disappears, its dim glow resisting in vain the growing darkness, night has definitively fallen. Happy are those who have found the redemption of sleep, thus escaping the loneliness of night.

The ancient Egyptians always knew it: darkness cannot be warded off, once *he*, the great Sungod, having completed his daily work, has become old and weary. Then he descends into the depths of the night and the netherworld. Here, another law reigns, the law of the night, of silence and death.

And yet, it is just this law that mysteriously resurrects the glorious light of the sun to new life. How else could it be that at the beginning of every new day, all life awakes, full of new energy and youthful freshness? An Egyptian sun hymn puts it into simple words:

They awake to see your (Re's) beauty,
when you appear, they gaze amazed,
recognizing each other,
when you send them your beams (of light).¹

Many Egyptian texts are pervaded with the idea of sunlight regenerating in the depths of the netherworld. When the sun sets at the western

¹J. Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete* (Zurich: Artemis, 1975), p. 223, hymn no. 94, verses 17–19. English translation by A.S.

horizon and night suddenly falls, a mysterious process of transformation begins in the interior of the earth, finding its completion in the miracle of the birth of the sun in the morning. Just as the sun renews and regenerates day by day, the same might happen to everyone exhausted from the strains of daily life, and to every deceased. Together with the Sungod, his soul might descend to the realm of the dead to be protected by the god against the dangerous and meandering paths of the netherworld, since he lives from the god's light.

The ancients were fascinated by the adventurous journey to the other world. As early as the Middle Kingdom, in the bizarre, labyrinthine sketches of the so-called Book of the Two Ways depicted on the bottom of certain coffins in the Middle Egyptian necropolis of el-Bersha, we find an early description of this journey to the hereafter. Probably no other people have reflected so much on death and life in the beyond, or expended such great effort on behalf of the deceased, as did the Egyptians. In the New Kingdom, around 1500 BC, this reflection led to the Books of the Netherworld, in which the hereafter is described in a nearly scientific manner. These compositions reveal an astonishing richness of thought and an amazing abundance of deep insights into the nature of humans and of the world.

Psychologically speaking, the Egyptian descriptions of the netherworld are an attempt to comprehend what C. G. Jung has hypothetically called the “collective unconscious.” The collective unconscious, including its archetypes, is one of Jung’s most significant discoveries. It refers to a psychic stratum that developed in the course of thousands of years, and it includes those layers of the psyche that transcend the personal unconscious, that is, the emotional experiences and reminiscences of one’s personal life. The collective unconscious “consists of the sum of the instincts and their correlates, the archetypes. Just as everybody possesses instincts, so he also possesses a stock of archetypal images.”² Whereas the instincts are typical modes of action, the archetypes are typical modes

²C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, vol. 8 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), §§ 280–281. For the following, see also Marie-Louise von Franz, *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), p. 6.

of apprehension. In their totality, the archetypal images, which take a similar form in all human beings, represent the entire treasure of the spiritual experiences of humankind. This treasure finds its expression in the religious images, “mythical” primal ideas, and texts of all ages and cultures, but also in any numinous experience of an individual in the present. Anyone who is touched by such an experience or vision in his or her innermost being has the potential to become a religious leader in his or her time. This is true for all charismatic personalities.

In what the ancient Egyptians expressed through religious—partly mythical, partly magical—images and texts, we today, using psychological language, can easily recognize a surprising, almost scientific precision. But whether it is expressed in religious or in scientific terms, the underlying idea remains the same. The ancient Egyptians found amazing truths not so much in a conscious and psychological manner, as we do, but rather intuitively. It had taken thousands of years, from the very beginning of human reflections, via the first attempts to formulate or incorporate numinous power in a symbol, to achieve the almost incredible spiritual maturity and richness that we encounter in the Books of the Netherworld from the New Kingdom. One of the oldest symbols of divine presence was a pole with a cloth wrapped around it, which became the *ntr*-hieroglyph, the character for “god,” around 3000 BC. For millions of years, the human spirit lay dormant until it began to leave visible traces. At some point, man erected a divine pole between heaven and earth, so that in its fabric, woven by human hands, the wind might play. In such a way, within the confusing and infinite extent of the cosmic realm, archaic man established an orientation point in which he recognized the center of the world. In the lowlands of Mesopotamia, the same spiritual intent inspired the construction of ziggurat-temples. It was not, as the Hebrew Bible claims, the hubris of man that caused these temples to tower into the heights but the yearning for a sense of place—of home—in the boundlessness of the cosmos.

Thus awoke a playful, creative mind that henceforth relentlessly surrounded the mystery of the divine and of the human soul with ever-new signs and symbols. Though the ancient *ntr*-pole has long since lost its numinous magic, even now, it retains some effect in the form of the national flag flying on its flagpole.

From a psychological perspective, the New Kingdom Books of the Netherworld reflect the gradually increasing realization of an underlying stream of archetypal images continuously accompanying the events of the day and daily affairs and thus giving meaning and direction to them. The destiny of the individual, like that of nations and cultures, is always embedded in a hidden stream of slow but continuous transformation within the basic archetypal constellations. Throughout the long history of Egypt, there were many critical instances of political and cultural transition. In these transitional periods, a change in the hitherto valid principle of the dominant archetypal image took place, causing a collapse of the old value system and followed by a regeneration; that is, these were periods of chaos and renewal. Often, after the ravages wrought by wars and catastrophes, a new god image arose on the horizon. As we shall see later, in Egypt, after the catastrophic breakdown of the Old Kingdom, it was Osiris, god of the dead, who came into the foreground during the Middle Kingdom, generating a spiritual renewal such as the land of the Nile had never before seen.

A spiritual development as expressed by the Books of the Netherworld always occurs in connection with major political and social reorganizations. Egyptian history gives us the unique opportunity to observe the hidden stream of unconscious archetypal factors that “flows beneath the surface of what can be grasped as history.”³ It is very likely that the archetypal factors causing the mental transformations of this people were also responsible for radical political changes. Let us have a look, therefore, at the great historical and intellectual developments that transpired in ancient Egypt.

Toward the end of the third millennium, a long, flourishing period, the Old Kingdom abruptly came to an end, and with it a tremendously fruitful, stable, reliable, and well-established order, personified in the goddess Maat. Politically, socially, and spiritually, the land fell into chaos and disaster. For centuries, its inhabitants had lived in peace under the patronage of the god-pharaoh, and now they suddenly had to fight for

³ von Franz, *Archetypal Dimensions*, pp. 263–264.

their bare survival. But in the midst of this turmoil, in which every hitherto stable and reliable order fell apart, as though the rule of law no longer prevailed, there grew a spiritual force mirrored in a new genre of texts, the so-called Instructions or Wisdom Literature.⁴ These doctrines radiate a newly strengthened consciousness of the individual. In the Complaints of the Eloquent Peasant, for instance, an ordinary oasis dweller, a man of the people, stands up before a royal administrator and makes eloquent speeches demanding the restoration of Maat, that is, a just social order and an elemental human solidarity. Such self-assured behavior on the part of an individual toward even a high civil servant, much less the king or a god, would have been unthinkable in the Old Kingdom.

At the outset of the Middle Kingdom, when this injustice had become patently clear to all, attention turned, more than ever before, to the hereafter and to the Judgment of the Dead by Osiris. In the Instruction for Merikare, we read of Osiris and his court:

Don't trust in length of years,
They view a lifetime in an hour!⁵

Earthly life was still appreciated and highly valued, but after the injustice the people had suffered, their deepest yearning turned more and more toward the beyond and to Osiris, who ruled over the realm of the dead.

What contemporaries might have viewed as a chaotic, meaningless decline “in reality may be ruled by an unfathomable destiny, law, or meaning.”⁶ This becomes especially clear when we consider the changes in the concept of the hereafter that occurred from time to time in the course of the long history of Egypt.

The royal monuments of the Old Kingdom and early Middle Kingdom were the pyramids. At the edge of the desert, they still rise majestically to the sky as if to protect the inhabitants of Egypt from the boundless

⁴H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Weisheit: Lehren für das Leben* (Zurich: Artemis, 1988), pp. 358ff.

⁵M. Lichtheim, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, vol. 1 of *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 101.

⁶von Franz, *Archetypal Dimensions*, p. 264.

emptiness of the no-man's-land. The pyramid was not, as we might believe, a demonstration of royal power but rather a symbol of the primeval creation of the world in honor of the deities, a structure comparable to the Christian cathedrals of the Middle Ages. Just as the "primeval hill" of solid land once emerged from the dark waters to establish earth and sky firmly against dissolution and chaos, so this reproduction of the primeval hill made in stone—namely, the pyramid—was supposed to oppose the powers of chaos and death. May the buried king and the life of the people entrusted to him be protected, and may he share in the world's created order forever! Even more: the king was buried in the desert, symbolically at the edge of this world, close to the dangerous abyss, since only here, so near to chaos, could life be renewed. In ancient Egypt, the monuments constructed according to cultural values were in the service of the miraculous regeneration of life at the edge of dissolution and death.

The Egyptian pharaoh was buried in the dark interior of the monumental hill, that is, the pyramid. Here, in the symbolic center of the world, he could rest. Here began his journey to the hereafter—namely, his journey over the celestial ocean, for which huge boats buried next to his pyramid were placed at his disposal. Beginning with King Wenis (end of Dynasty 5, around 2350 BC), the heretofore plain walls of the chambers within the pyramid were decorated with magical spells, both incantations and utterances, the so-called Pyramid Texts. For the first time in history, the deceased was surrounded by spells of wisdom, that is, by the traditional knowledge of his ancestors. Even in death, the king did not want to be without this knowledge, which protected him from the threatening "unconsciousness" of the night and the darkness of the tomb, or, as the Egyptians would rather have put it, from falling prey to nonbeing. The spells and images decorating the tomb can be understood as a form of magical knowledge whose apotropaic power protected the deceased from the life-threatening forces of darkness. Embedded in the spiritual tradition of his ancestors, the deceased was assured of the continuity of life, since archaic man feared nothing more than to fall out of the continuous flow of time.

Since this continuity tended to be associated with the course of the sun, the Pyramid Texts often equate the pharaoh with the Sungod. Like

Re, the king could emerge from the womb of the sky-goddess Nut in the morning:

because you are Re who came forth from Nut,
who bears Re daily,
and like Re you are born daily.⁷

The motif of the birth of life from the maternal womb continued into Christian times, as a prayer to Mary, which goes back at least to the Middle Ages, shows:

Blessed are you,
for out of your womb a radiance emerged,
shining all over the world announcing your praise...
Be greeted, you, dawn of Salvation,
you, origin of joy...

In the dark burial chamber within the pyramid, the deceased began his journey to the sky. In the Old Kingdom, the netherworld was still considered a dark abyss, a place to be avoided. And so, to gain sovereignty over the celestial beyond, and even to become the highest god of the sky himself, the pharaoh directed all his hope toward the brightness of the circumpolar stars in the northern sky.

I clearly remember, as if it happened yesterday, standing as a youth under the starry sky, in the midst of a grandiose world in the Swiss mountains. I was filled with astonishment and awe, deeply moved by the dim and tender light of the stars illuminating the darkness around me. This was a decisive emotion, a numinous experience creating a longing for love hardly to be described. A consciousness that is still weak needs the protection of night to be thus moved by its light. As we shall later see, in Egypt, it was always the night, or the faint light of the netherworld, that bred new consciousness in the form of a romantic longing for light. All tender life seeks the dawn.

⁷R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), vol. 1, p. 250, § 1688.

That the miraculous transformation from death to life originates in the darkness of the tomb is an archetypal motif. The Egyptians believed that the freely moving *ba*-soul of the king ascended from the corpse to the sky and to the gods, so as to become “one of them.” The Spanish mystic Teresa of Avila seems to have had a similar experience, for she wrote, “In the very centre of the castle lies a dwelling place on which everything is dependent and where highly mysterious things happen between God and the soul.”⁸

In several of his books, Erik Hornung has drawn attention to the fact that around 1890 BC, beginning with Senwosret II, there was a conceptual shift in beliefs regarding the hereafter.⁹ For the first time, this king did not orient his burial chamber toward the north, and in the interior of his pyramid we find labyrinthine underground corridors. This construction mirrors a shift to the concept of a *subterranean* afterlife. From now on, the layout of the tomb would be intended to represent the structure of the netherworld as concretely as possible. Toward the end of the Middle Kingdom, this shift led to the abandonment of the pyramid itself as a royal tomb. From Tuthmosis I (ca. 1500 BC) on, the pyramids were replaced by rock-cut tombs, with their amazingly rich decoration, in the Valley of the Kings in Upper Egypt. Again, a radical political change of catastrophic dimensions preceded this conceptual change.

Around 1800 BC, the unity of the land again began to disintegrate. Foreign peoples from western Asia penetrated the land. With their horses, they were superior to the Egyptian infantry, and they overwhelmed the might of the pharaohs. Finally, foreigners called Hyksos established their sovereignty, dealing a severe blow to the land of the Nile. Nearly a hundred years later, however, Egyptians succeeded in casting off this foreign yoke and reuniting the land under their own leadership. The period that followed was Egypt’s Golden Age, an era that witnessed an unprecedented flourishing of intellectual endeavor. It was as though a development in religion and culture had long lain dormant in the unconscious, quietly

⁸Cited according to E. Lorenz, *Der nahe Gott: Im Wort der spanischen Mystik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1985), p. 142. English translation by A. S.

⁹See, for instance, E. Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings, Horizon of Eternity*, trans. David Warburton (New York: Timken, 1990), p. 26.

maturing until it burst through into the daylight, as it were, in an explosion. After the imperialistic policies of Tuthmosis I took him and his army, for the first time in history, across the Euphrates river (ca. 1500 BC), the consciousness of Egyptian culture attained a universal dimension. Previously, it would have been unthinkable to view foreigners as equals of the Egyptians. Yet now, in a Book of the Netherworld called the Book of Gates (fifth hour, lower register), we see foreigners depicted among the blessed dead and thus treated on a par with their Egyptian counterparts.

There arose an enthusiastic *joie de vivre*, embracing the whole world and centering on the Sungod, to whom alone gratitude was owed for all the beauty of life in this world.¹⁰ Thus we read in a famous hymn to Amun:

Thou art the sole one, who made [all] that is,
[The] solitary sole [one], who made what exists,
From whose eyes mankind came forth,
And upon whose mouth the gods came into being.
He who made herbage [for] the cattle,
And the fruit tree for mankind,
Who made that (on which) the fish in the river may live,
And the birds soaring in the sky.
He who gives breath to that which is in the egg,
Gives life to the son of the slug.
....
Hail to thee, who did all this!
Solitary sole one with many hands,
Who spends the night wakeful, while all men are asleep,
Seeking benefit for his creatures.
Amon, enduring in all things, Atum and Har-akhti.¹¹

This unprecedented affirmation of the world and its creatures indicates an increasingly sophisticated awareness of the sun and its effects,

¹⁰On this development, see A. Schweizer, “Echnatons Sonnenglauben: Die religiöse Dimension der Bewusstwerdung,” *Analytische Psychologie* 22, no. 3 (1991), pp. 209–228.

¹¹Trans. J. A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Text Related to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, 2d ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 366.



Foreigners, Book of Gates

that is, of a solar consciousness, a phenomenon that went hand in hand with contemplation of the descent into the netherworld and an increasingly detailed description of Osiris's realm of the dead. As their attention turned more and more to the various manifestations of the Sungod traveling by day in the sky above and filling the world with his life-giving sunshine, the more urgently Egyptians of the New Kingdom demanded to know what happened to his light during the night. How was it possible that the Sungod, obviously exhausted in the evening and, as the texts state, an old man, rose with youthful vigor in the eastern horizon in the morning? The Books of the Netherworld trace this phenomenon of the regeneration of all life in the depths of the night and the netherworld: they dare to peer down into these depths that had previously been so terrifying. Interest turned to the hidden realm of the netherworld, for, as Erik Hornung has stated, "regeneration is impossible in the ordered and defined world. It can happen only if what is old and worn becomes immersed in the boundless regions that surround creation—in the healing and dissolving powers of the primeval ocean Nun."¹² Accordingly, the

¹² Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 161.

Amduat, the oldest Book of the Netherworld, was called the Book of the Hidden Chamber.

From a psychological point of view, we may speak of a tendency to introversion that asserts itself in cultural and intellectual history. Seclusion and isolation are recurring phases in the renewal of consciousness. Again and again, it is in the encounter with the Great Unknown that new archetypal images are constellated. Even today, the path of the psychic development of the individual leads to the seclusion and darkness of the soul, and the soul's encounter with figures and images emerging from the inner realm of the psyche leads slowly to the growth of a new consciousness. On this individual level, too, each fundamental expansion of consciousness is linked to the dissolution of a previously attained totality.

With its texts and images, the Amduat impressively depicts this process of renewal. Two especially beautiful copies of this book are to be found on the walls of the burial chambers of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II. The royal tombs of the New Kingdom were excavated deep into the rock of the Valley of the Kings in the desert wilds of the Western Mountain of Thebes. In their physical layout and their decoration, these tombs concretely realized both the theme of penetration into the darkness and this newly awakened interest in the netherworld. The grandiose mortuary temples in which the royal funerary ritual was celebrated were constructed separately, at the edge of the fertile land. In the innermost sacred room (the *naos*) of the temple, the priest performed the Daily Ritual, which the Books of the Netherworld decorating the walls of the royal tombs describe as the great mystery of the union between Re and Osiris. The message of the tomb illustrations and texts was thus brought into ritual reality by the temple cult.

Prior to the religious revolution of Akhenaten (ca. 1350 BC), the royal tombs were decorated only with the Amduat. In the following generations, however, new Books of the Netherworld were added, in particular, the Book of Gates, the Book of Caverns, and the Book of the Earth.¹³ Often, too, we encounter representations of the Litany of Re, with its invocations of the nocturnal Sungod, and spells from the Book of the

¹³ See the survey of the principal Egyptian texts in the bibliography at the end of this book, in the section Editions of Egyptian Texts.

Dead. The latter are derived mostly from those of the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom, and they continue to emphasize the threatening aspects of the realm of the dead, warning the deceased against all the dangers of the abyss. Not only the decoration but also the structural layout of the tombs changed continuously during the New Kingdom, with each tomb displaying a different arrangement of its corridors and chambers. These changes reflect an ongoing determination to depict the netherworld, as well as the great mystery of the transformation of life at the edge of the abyss, as precisely as possible in both architecture and decoration.

Whenever, as in these books, we deal with an investigation of the realm below—or, in psychological terms, with an attempt to become conscious of the underlying archetypal stream that accompanies and determines even the affairs of daily life—we must indeed confront archetypal material. Whenever we turn to these magnificent images of the soul, we are obliged to penetrate psychologically into the preconscious totality of the collective unconscious, leaving behind the domain of merely personal psychology. We are no longer dealing with the good or ill fortune of the individual, but—as always, when we investigate ancient culture and religion—with the entire cosmos and the human beings embedded in it.

The split between the individual and the objective world, which has brought so much isolation, even alienation and uprootedness, to modern man, was foreign to the Egyptians. When their hymns to the sun praised the beauty of “nature,” this nature was never the object of human action or intellectual curiosity but rather something vivid and real created by the Sungod, with no existence apart from his creative power. When the Egyptians spoke of nature, it was something created by the divine, something full of form (*qm3, irw*) and color (*iwn*), something through which divine will and the numinous creative energy of a godhead revealed itself. Archaic man always knew that he was part of a cosmic totality. The cosmos was his home, and more than anything else, it was his love for its gods and goddesses that aroused his feeling of being at home there. Obviously, he also knew the threat of alienation: again and again in the texts we encounter a deep fear of chaos.

This worldview agrees harmoniously with the psychological concept of the collective unconscious. In the depth of our being, we are connected

not only to family and friends in our immediate surroundings but to everything that exists, including inorganic nature. Thanks to the secret symmetry of all things, we find ourselves under the spell of the underlying archetypal stream whenever we confront psychic content. We may thus say that there can be no objective truth, for the individual is always connected with the totality. It is thus difficult to say anything definitive regarding these “last (netherworldly) things.” More so than with any other theme, we must rely on the testimony of tradition. In this regard, the speculations of alchemy have proved to be a rich source of information. C. G. Jung concerned himself with them for decades, and we can say that, aside from his own inner experience, the dark, mercurial god of the alchemists enriched Jung’s psychology more than anything else. Today, thanks to developments in Egyptology, the material contained in the Books of the Netherworld and in other Egyptian texts concerned with the fate of the dead presents yet another possibility for investigating this underlying stream. We owe gratitude above all to the Egyptologist Erik Hornung, whose unwearying efforts have given us access to these inexhaustible New Kingdom sources via excellent editions and translations of nearly all the texts dealing with the netherworld.¹⁴

Ongoing research has made it clear that Egyptian beliefs regarding the netherworld were fundamental precursors of many Christian and alchemical concepts. There was a lively exchange between East and West, at first, in ancient times, via the spiritual center of Alexandria—where some of the most important Early Christian Fathers, such as Clement and Origen, lived and worked—and later, mainly via Spain, where Arab wisdom left deep roots and penetrated into the European continent.

But we must take care not to draw parallels between Egyptian religion and the psychology of the unconscious too hastily. The gods have laws of their own, as do the archetypal powers they represent, for which reason their ultimate being is unknown to the discerning consciousness. A religious image that attempts to express a dominant psychic content is only

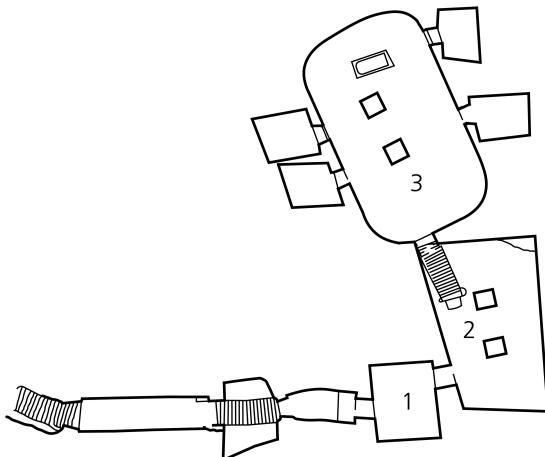
¹⁴ *The Egyptian Amduat: The Book of the Hidden Chamber*, trans. David Warburton, rev. and ed. Erik Hornung and Theodor Abt (Zurich: Daimon, 2007). See also Theodor Abt and Erik Hornung, *Knowledge of the Afterlife: The Egyptian Amduat—A Quest for Immortality* (Zurich: Living Human Heritage, 2003).

one side of that content. The other side is the accompanying emotion, the feeling—that is, the instinctive passion—triggered by the content of the image. A vision or an overwhelming dream image may evoke such an emotion spontaneously. A well-known example is the sudden inspiration of the shoemaker Jakob Böhme, who became a passionate mystic. A single vision of a sunbeam reflected in a tin plate changed his whole life, making such a tremendous impression on him that he spent the rest of his days attempting to capture this experience in his many writings. Even today, it happens that the entire course of a person's life is changed by a single dream or visionary image. When someone is touched by the numinous, it leaves deep traces. This is an age-old and, may we hope, an ever-new experience in human life.

THE AMDUAT—THE BOOK OF THE HIDDEN CHAMBER

At the very end of the Valley of the Kings, at the edge of the Theban Mountain that separates the endless desert from the fertile Nile valley, there is a tomb. Once carefully hidden, its entrance is not, as usual, at the base of the steep rock wall but rather some yards above the bottom of a deeply fissured gorge. Today, visitors who brave the heat and the dust use a flight of steps leading up to the entrance and the sloping corridor just beyond it. This is the tomb of Tuthmosis III, the mighty pharaoh who made Egypt into a great world power. Deep within the mountain, at the end of the tomb, is the burial chamber where the king once rested, surrounded by the simple yet gorgeous copy of the Amduat decorating its walls. Let us now trace the path that leads from the entrance to the burial chamber.

The walls of the first corridors we encounter are crudely chiseled and without decoration. Our downward journey continues with a flight



Plan of the tomb of Tuthmosis III

of steps that takes us into a first room (1), whose layout and decoration attract our attention. Here, a shaft some twenty feet deep interrupts our path, but a small bridge of modern construction enables us to continue. In this room the ancient stonemasons worked carefully, smoothing the walls and covering them with plaster. On the ceiling, white-painted stars shine down from a dark blue background, creating an atmosphere of cosmic dimensions. Scholars have long debated the mystery of this shaft. Some have suspected that it served to repel those who would violate the tomb, calling it a “robbers’ shaft.” In Egypt, however, architectural details had a symbolic meaning in addition to their functional aspects. Others have proposed, therefore, that the shaft marks a point of transition, a boundary hinting at the depths of the netherworldly abyss out of which all life regenerates. In any event, this room and its shaft serve as a threshold leading from this world to the realm beyond, the realm of transformation from death to life. Though it is modern, even the bridge is an age-old symbol of passage from one world into another.

Leaving this room, we enter an irregular, almost rectangular-shaped chamber containing two pillars (2). Again the blue ceiling is covered with countless stars. The names of the various deities and demons depicted on the walls, more than seven hundred in number, produce a mysterious effect on the visitor. Soon, as our eyes grow accustomed to the dim light, we make out, to our left, a small passage that leads down to the actual burial chamber (3). The oval shape of this room creates a fascinating effect, one that is increased by the imposing sarcophagus decorated in red with hieroglyphs and images. Precious burial gifts were once stored in four subsidiary chambers, but these objects long ago fell into the hands of robbers, who saw not its transcendent spiritual value but mere gold in this treasure intended for the afterlife.

Once more the ceiling is painted with a starry sky. The walls are covered with countless deities, along with the textual commentary of the Amduat, written in red and black cursive hieroglyphs. The fact that none of the twelve hours of the night are missing (though they are not in chronological order) is remarkable, for in many other tombs, this oldest Book of the Netherworld is represented only by individual hours. Working from a papyrus manuscript, the artisans of this tomb made a

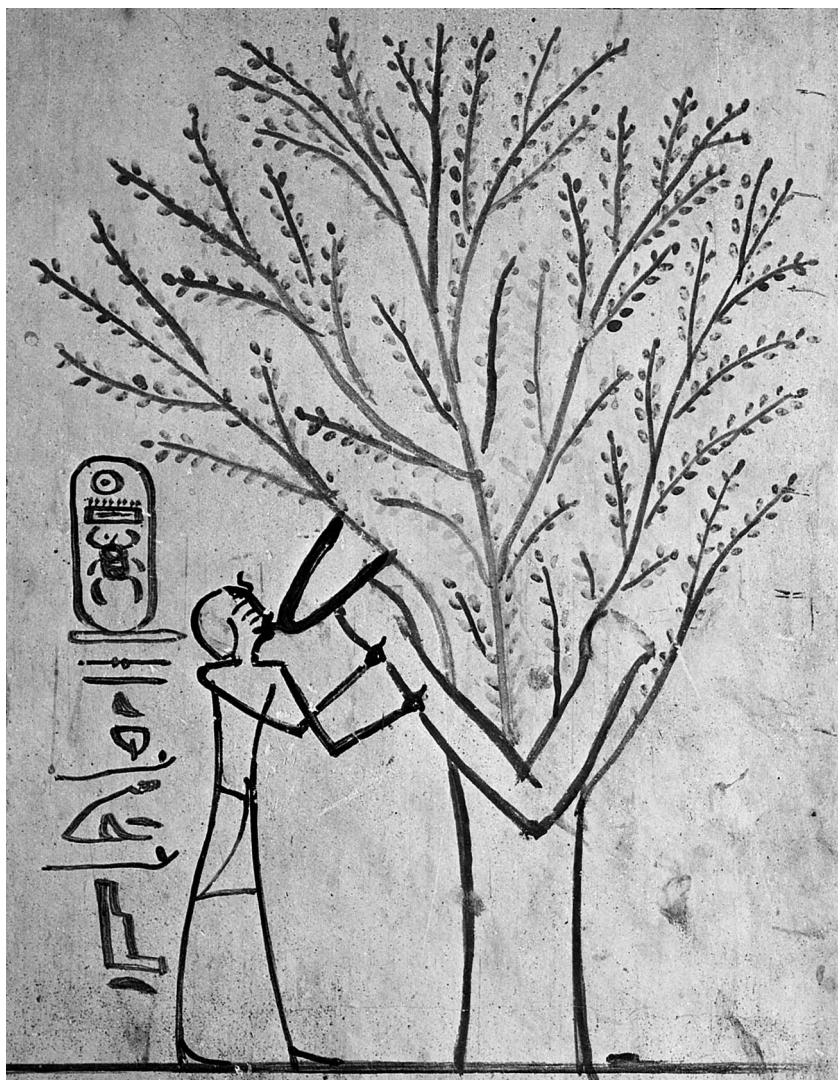
large-scale copy of it on the walls of this chamber. Occasional spelling errors betray their inability to read. The same mistakes occur in other tombs, showing that the same manuscript was used in these cases as well. The craft of the tomb artists consisted simply in copying the original text as precisely as possible.

We have to read the illustrations in the burial chamber as we would a book. Doing so, we accompany the Sungod Re and the crew of his barque on their eventful, often dangerous, journey through the twelve hours of the night. The middle register of the depiction of each hour begins with the Sungod traveling in his boat, from left to right, along the river of the netherworld. The scenes in this register represent, as we shall see later, the central topic of the respective hour. Many deities surround the Sungod, some escorting him in his barque, while others, whom we see in the upper and lower registers, dwell on the banks of the netherworldly stream. On these riverbanks, they come to life at Re's appearance, express their jubilation at the Great God whenever he passes, and then fall back into the sleep of death when he sails out of sight at the end of the hour.

On his journey through the netherworld, the Sungod experiences a profound process of physical and cognitive transformation, culminating in his rebirth at the dawn of a new day. The Egyptians were deeply convinced that whoever *knows* the details of this mysterious process—that is, the truths we find recorded in the decoration of this very tomb—will participate in the transfiguration from death to life that applies, first and foremost, to the Sungod and to the king who lies buried here.

Two pillars in this burial chamber depict Tuthmosis and his family and a tree goddess offering her nourishing breast to the king. In the beauty and simplicity of this scene, we can feel the intense, almost mystical atmosphere of the chamber. And here we shall linger, reflecting on the images and texts of the Amduat and their symbolism.

Of all the Books of the Netherworld, the Amduat (the name means “that which is in the netherworld”) is the oldest, and in its layout and content it is the clearest in its description of the voyage of the Sungod through the twelve nocturnal hours. Exhausted from his daily work, the god descends via the portal of the western horizon into the realm of the dead. During his journey, he is accompanied by an ever-changing array of deities and blessed dead who seek his proximity, to serve him in his



Tree goddess offering life to Thutmosis III

arduous journey, and to participate in the mystery of his regeneration. In the Amduat, we see more than nine hundred of them on the two banks of the river. Wherever the great god passes, they come alive to praise, adore, and honor him and also to protect him from his omnipresent enemies.

Everywhere there lurk demonic beings who threaten to destroy this nascent life. Again and again, the progress of the journey is endangered, above all by Apopis (or Apep), incarnation of evil per se, whose intent is to use his dark power to annihilate the whole of creation. In the sixth hour of the night, which is the deepest point of the netherworld and the mythical border of the world and where the Sungod encounters the most intense darkness and the direst danger, lies hidden the great mystery, the corpse of the Sungod, which is also the corpse of Osiris. It is here, in this absolute depth, that nonbeing, which is both life-threatening and salvational, comes into contact with Osiris's realm of the dead. And it is here that the ineffable mystery of the union of the Sungod Re and Osiris, the god of the netherworld, takes place.

This great mystery of the union between the freely moving *ba*-soul of the Sungod, longing for the bright and boundless sky, with Osiris's corpse, which is irrevocably bound to the subterranean realm of the dead, evokes the renewal of all life and the restoration of totality. Now the journey to the portal of the east can continue. Hardly has the Sungod regained a glimmer of new light in the depths when he is threatened once more, this time by Apopis, who blocks his voyage in the sun barque in the seventh hour. The united forces of the Sungod and his entourage repel Apopis and all the enemies of Re. The following hours depict the ascent of the barque and, along with it, the regeneration of all creation. In the twelfth hour, just before the long-awaited rebirth of the sun, the solar barque, with all the gods and all the "millions" of the dead, is once more plunged into darkness. The boat enters the body of a huge serpent via its tail and emerges from its mouth. As the images and the accompanying texts make clear, the passage of the boat through the body of the serpent leads to the transformation of the Sungod into Khepri and to the ultimate rejuvenation of all beings.

Now nothing opposes the rebirth of the rejuvenated god. His near-death weakness is shed, and darkness is conquered, illuminated by the

joy of all animate existence. The sky goddess Nut once again gives birth to the Sungod, while Shu, god of the air, receives the solar barque and elevates it into the eastern sky.

A sun hymn from the Late Period tomb of a state official expresses the motif of pregnancy through death as follows:

Greetings to you, Re, at your rising...
Great falcon with adorned breast...
May you awake well in the early morning....
Rejoicing rings out for you in the evening...
You, carried in pregnancy at night,
and awakening to your birth in the morning.
Your mother elevates you daily.¹

“Your mother elevates you daily”—this statement reveals an adequate and conscious approach to the psychic matrix of the collective unconscious, for our consciousness is daily reborn from the maternal womb of preconscious totality. From the deathlike state of sleep, we draw our energy as well as our sense of continuity and duration. Just as Re, the Sungod, descends to his corpse, we, too, return again and again to an ancestral world where our creative potential lies hidden. Here our consciousness regenerates, and with it our physical and mental skills—and, not least of all, our capacity to feel love for our fellow human beings and for all that exists.

The Amduat endeavors to fathom the mystery of regeneration. Its focus is on Re’s immersion into the darkness of the netherworld and his awakening, reborn, in the morning. But what does the Sungod represent psychologically? In general, a deity represents an archetypal power. Therefore, it is not quite correct to say that Re’s life-generating sunlight represents mere ego-consciousness. Rather, it points to an *ultimate principle of consciousness in the collective unconscious*, a principle that serves as the source of all consciousness. Already in the late third millennium and the second millennium BC, deep love for the awakening of the world

¹J. Assmann, *Sonnenhymnen in thebanischen Gräbern* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1983), text 1, p. 1. English translation by A.S.

illuminated by the sun spurred efforts to symbolize this awareness as thoroughly as possible through the richness of Egypt's solar theology.² In the Books of the Netherworld, and even more in the flourishing theology of the Ramesside era that followed, the Sungod was viewed as the spiritual father, creator, and driving force of everything that exists. In his reliable and reassuring way, he guaranteed the cosmic and even the political order, for which reason Maat, embodiment of cosmic order and justice, was rightly called Re's daughter.

When Re created the world on the "first occasion," and everything came into being, he "built himself" as the texts put it, taking on existence for no stated reason. Similarly, we cannot say why something in us desires an expansion of our consciousness, or, in other words, why it is that an ultimate principle of consciousness exists in the collective unconscious. Even less do we know why this yearning for consciousness emerged so forcefully into the foreground of cultural expression in the second millennium BC. In the meantime, humankind has experienced an increasing development of consciousness, though I would not dare to assert that this process has been only for the good. Quite the contrary, we are increasingly aware of the doubtful, even dangerous, aspect of cultural development. We cannot turn back the history of evolution, but we are well advised, at least, to turn our backs on any optimistic, naive belief in progress, which is more a matter of wishful thinking than of reality. Our duty is not to progress, but rather to *serve* ongoing change, for all life, all existence, is longing for transformation.

The Egyptians expressed this point in a beautiful way. Humans could not make demands on the Sungod, for any sort of healing and transformation is granted only by divine grace; but the theologians knew that each of them could, as one of "the blessed dead," with a birdlike and thus freely moving *ba*-soul, take his or her place in the solar barque and thus participate in the destiny of the Sungod, in his journey over the celestial ocean and through the regions of the netherworldly hereafter. Participating

²A similar development took place in Mesopotamia during the late third and the second millennia, as demonstrated most beautifully in the Gilgamesh epic. See A. Schweizer, *Gilgamesch: Von der Bewusstwerdung des Mannes. Eine religionspsychologische Deutung* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991), and *Das Gilgamesch-Epos: Die Suche nach dem Sinn* (Munich: Kösel, 1997).

thus in the Sungod's renewal, each of the blessed dead was embedded in his unending, creative process of transformation.

The psychological meaning is this: I can share in the ultimate, archetypal power of consciousness, which belongs to the objective psyche, but I can never summon it forth by my own deeds or efforts. Rather, true consciousness originates in an *illuminatio*, an illumination, that comes to me through intimacy with the divine or with archetypal content. This is the psychological truth of Jesus's words:

I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness
but will have the light of life. (John 8:12)

THE TITLE OF THE AMDUAT

Treatise of the hidden region,
the positions of the *Ba*-souls, the gods,
the shadows, the *Akh*-spirits (the blessed dead), and what is done.
The beginning is the horn of the West,
the gate of the western horizon;
the end is the Unified Darkness,
the gate of the western horizon.
To know the *ba*-souls of the Netherworld,
to know what is done,
to know their transfigurations for Re,
to know the secret *ba*-souls,
to know what is in the hours and their gods,
to know what he calls to them,
to know the gates
and the ways upon which the great god passes,
to know the courses of the hours and their gods,
to know the flourishing and the annihilated.¹

The many repetitions in this lengthy title betray the intense emotional involvement of its author. For him, it was existentially important to *know* the dramatic transfigurations that take place in the netherworld. The Egyptian verb *rḥ*, “to know,” also means “to be familiar with” or “have knowledge of” for the purpose of having power over something. In this case, it is to have knowledge of the nature of a god and of secret things in general, or, as we would say today, to be *conscious* of the archetypal

¹ *The Egyptian Amduat, The Book of the Hidden Chamber*, trans. David Warburton, rev. and ed. by Erik Hornung and Theodor Abt (Zurich: Living Human Heritage Publications, 2007). Unless otherwise noted, all our citations from the Amduat are taken from this edition.

dimension of life. The infinite horizon of this knowledge is emphasized by the ninefold repetition of the verb *rh*. In ancient Egypt, the number nine (the plural of the plural, for three indicates the plural) symbolized infinite variety; we encounter it above all in the Ennead of Heliopolis, a group of nine deities representing all of creation. Knowledge of the secret paths of the netherworld was supposed to protect the deceased from the dangers that everywhere threatened his journey through the hereafter, from the obstacles and demons obstructing his safe passage.

In Egyptian belief, death was no end, no termination of life, but rather a transition to be overcome, albeit with difficulty. The state of death, however, was not just a matter of physical death. Thus someone suffering from illness or forced to live abroad (“in misery,” an expression current in the Middle Ages) might complain of his destiny and declare that he was dead and thus no longer among the living. Knowledge of the hidden things of the netherworld, as imparted by the Amduat, was therefore invaluable not just for the dead but also for those still alive. In the final verses of a short version of the Amduat (an abstract or summary of the whole text, attested in certain tombs and papyri), the importance of this knowledge is described in these words:

The beginning is light,
the end is the Unified Darkness...
Whoever knows this mysterious image will be a
well-provided *Akh*-spirit.
Always will he leave and enter again the Netherworld,
and speak to the living.
A true remedy, (proven) a million times.

For a person who knew these images, death was neither an end nor a standstill but a “going forth to life,” as the Egyptians put it, a transition leading to an entirely new orientation of his or her existence.

In the lives of many people, there are critical periods of transition in which they oscillate, in a sense, between life and death, as though it is not yet decided to which side the scale of fate will tilt. Such periods of closeness to death can be marked by depression, illness, and other severe afflictions. On these occasions, motifs of death occur in their dreams, and

it is often not easy to tell whether they presage real death or whether they indicate a difficult transitional stage in the dreamer's life. In any case, the symbolic material points to a death that—according to the *Chymical Wedding*, an alchemical text we shall discuss later—"makes (the supposedly dead person) even much more alive"; that is, it marks a transition to a new phase of life, one characterized by a heightened state of consciousness. I consider it possible that, through knowledge of netherworldly matters—or images from the collective unconscious—we may survive such periods of closeness to death without being obliged to pay with our own lives. If so, then there is such a thing as an early, untimely death, a death that results from too vast an unconsciousness. It is to the death that makes one more alive and to the new life that follows it that the apostle Paul refers in his letter to the Galatians: "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (2:19–20).

From a psychological point of view, this passage in Galatians points to an orientation and even devotion of the ego-consciousness to the realm of the objective-psychic, that is, the collective unconscious. It implies a shift of attention from the ego as the center of the conscious personality to the self (Christ), that is, a psychic totality that by definition transcends the ego-personality: this shift of attention entails by no means a dissolution of the ego but rather a transition from ego-centeredness with all its blather to a hitherto-unattained steadfastness of the ego, as it now cooperates with the Self. Thus we can say that the Self embraces the totality of the conscious and the unconscious human psyche. Consequently it is indescribable and, by definition, far greater than the merely ego-conscious personality. This psychic totality includes both the empirical ego and its transconscious foundation.²

Meister Eckhart, as always, formulates this matter succinctly, yet beautifully: "I have a power in my soul which is ever receptive to God. I am as certain as that I am a man, that nothing is so close to me as God. God is closer to me than I am to myself: my being depends on God's being near

²C. G. Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), §§ 145 and 181.

me and present to me.” This statement should not be understood in a simplistically psychological manner, however, for soon thereafter, the *theologian* Eckhart adds,

Sometimes I say, if the soul is to know God, she must forget herself and lose herself: for if she were aware of herself, she would not be aware of God: but she finds herself in God. By the act of knowing God, she knows herself and in Him all things from which she has severed herself. To the extent that she has abandoned them, she knows herself totally....God is at home (in us), we are abroad.³

The Egyptians believed, as we have seen, in a continuity of consciousness that survives physical death. Psychologically this means that our relationship with the Self (Meister Eckhart’s “ground of being, *Seinsgrund*, in God”), the relationship through which we are intimately connected with the psychic images of preconscious totality, can overcome, both now and in the future, the bondage of time to which ego-consciousness is subject. This phenomenon often finds confirmation in the dreams of those who are dying. In psychotherapeutic work, we sometimes observe that the dream images of a person who can accept his or her imminent death no longer display anxiety regarding this event, decisive for the ego though it may be. Instead, they deal with entirely ordinary psychic matters, as though nothing special were happening. In the course of our lives, “something” in our soul compels us to consciousness, and it seems as though each expansion of our consciousness aids us even beyond death.

But let us now return to the Amduat, the Book of the Hidden Chamber. A later work, the Book of Caverns, speaks of the secret, dark, or sacred region. The leitmotif is always the same: the mystery in the depths of the earth must be carefully and securely shielded and protected from the everyday world. Renewal and regeneration take place in the shelter of the netherworld, far from all disturbing earthly influences. But the sacred region has to be protected not only from this world but also from the baleful effects of the abyss, the chaotic and deadly realm of nonbeing.

³ Meister Eckhart, *Sermons and Treatises*, vol. 2, trans. and ed. M. O’C. Walshe (Shaftesbury, U.K.: Element Books, 1996), pp. 165 and 169 (Sermon 69 (Q 36)).

Descending into the abysmal depths, the Sungod finds himself in a dangerous situation, for here he faces the threat of utter dissolution.

What the ancient Egyptian projected into the sacred region of the netherworld, the medieval alchemist saw in the mysterious events taking place in his Hermetic vessel (*vas Hermetis*) or furnace. In both cases, psychic images were projected into the interior realm of the netherworld or the vessel, images that could unfold only in the protection of a “sealed space.” Many alchemists were well aware that their experiments also had a cosmic dimension. The vessel had to be round, for it was supposed to represent or mirror the cosmos as accurately as possible. The *vas rotundum* stressed not only the cosmic but also the protective function of the vessel, for in it, the chaos of the unleashed opposites was to be tamed by the harmonious influence of the roundness of the vessel.

The evasive nature of the Hermetic spirit made the taming of the chaotic powers all the more difficult. This spirit was a *cervus fugitus*, a fugitive stag, always about to flee. The alchemist therefore admonished caution: “Remember that your door be well and firmly shut, so that he who is within does not escape and thus, by the grace of God, you shall obtain the wished effect” (i.e., succeed in your work).⁴ Because of the spirit’s fugitive nature, the *Opus alchemicum* required great concentration, accompanied, if it was to succeed, by meditation. The alchemists, knowing of (or suspecting) the miraculous transformation of the psychic content projected into their vessel, also called it a *vas mirabile*, a “miraculous vessel,” the uterus that gave birth to the *filius philosophorum* (son of the philosophers), the future Redeemer.

This idea of transformation in an interior space, be it the netherworld or the alchemical vessel, also includes the image of a cave as the birthplace of Christ, an image that goes back to early Christianity and is still current in the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Messiah is born not in a manger or a house but in a cavern. This tradition seems to have its origin in the apocryphal Infancy Gospel of James.⁵ In chapter 18 of this story,

⁴ *Rosarium philosophorum, Ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalters, Faksimile der illustrierten Erstausgabe* (Frankfurt, 1550), facsimile edition, ed. J. Telle (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992), vol. 2, p. 19. English translation at <http://www.alchemywebsite.com/rosaryo.html> part 1.

⁵ See M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).

Joseph leads the virgin (in this gospel, this is an important detail) Mary to a cave to give birth to her infant. In heaven and on earth, the entire cosmos comes to a standstill until, finally, an unbearably bright light appears in the cave. Gradually the light dims, and then the baby is born. In an article on the Holy Cave, Ernst Benz writes,

Here, already, a sort of theology of the cave is developed. Conceived from on high by the Holy Spirit, the Son is born in the depths of the earth, the highest is present in the lowest, the light of heaven in the darkness of the cave. It is not in the night of the sky, but in the night of the womb of the earth, where the birth takes place. At the moment of birth, the cosmos stops in its course, the world stands still, in awe of the miracle.⁶

This motif of the cave has a privileged place in the Christmas liturgy of the Greek Orthodox Church, where it finds its most beautiful expression:

Hidden by the cave you were born,
but Heaven announced you to all,
like a mouth,
and set a star above it, o Savior!
Abundance we find in obscurity:
come, let us receive the world of Paradise
(from) within the cave!
Here, in Bethlehem, you have appeared,
in the cave, you have dwelled.

The Savior descends into the cave, rescuing all who went astray in the “robber’s den.” He banishes the demons so that angels may enter and replace them.

In amazement and awe, every thinking person recognizes
how the Rich One, full of mercy, now comes,

⁶E. Benz, “Die Heilige Höhle in der alten Christenheit und in der östlich-orthodoxen Kirche,” *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 22 (1953): 369. The following citations from the Christmas liturgy are to be found in the same article. English translation by A.S.

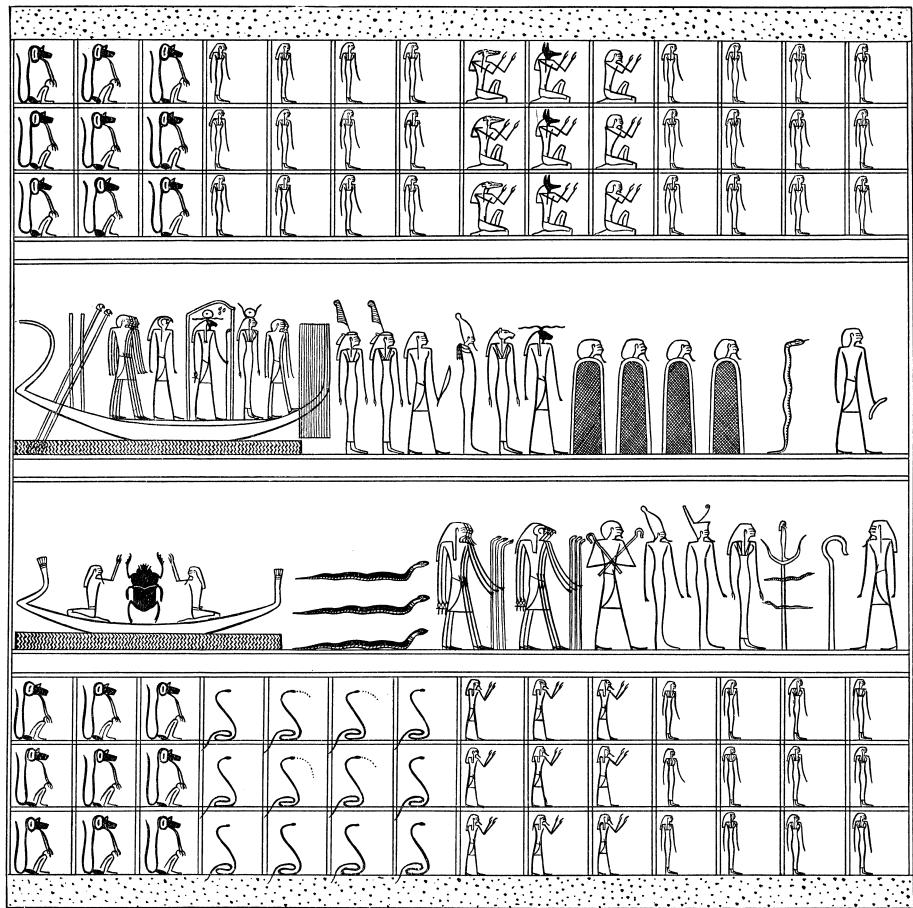
making himself poor and descending into the cave
to make us rich through his loving kindness,
we, who fell into fearful poverty through theft....
O Lord, born in the cave,
make me, who became as a robber's den,
into your dwelling, and into the dwelling of the Father,
and of the Holy Spirit,
that I may praise you from aeon to aeon.

In this Christian tradition, the cave becomes the place where God reveals himself to those who truly seek him. Similarly, the apostle John, banished to the Greek island of Patmos, supposedly wrote his Book of Revelation in a cave that can be visited even today, in the form of a small chapel integrated into a monastery. Again, the cavern becomes a sacred space where numinous powers are to be encountered, an idea so ancient that we observe it already in the painted caves of prehistoric times, such as those at Lascaux.

Compared with these Christian traditions, the symbolism of the cave in the Egyptian Books of the Netherworld is far more elaborate and mythical but, seen from a psychological standpoint, less conscious. Still, it is highly likely that Egyptian tradition strongly influenced Christian belief, with the sacred cavern in which the light of the Sungod regenerates and renews the order of the cosmos becoming the Christian image of the cave as the birthplace of Christ, the Sun of justice, the Savior and Redeemer.

In Egypt, we encounter not only the motif of the dark realm of the cave but also that of the vessel. It is the protection of his mysterious barque that enables the Sungod, along with the deceased who accompany him on his journey, to pass safely through the dangers of the netherworld. And it is for this very protection that, in the Book of the Dead (chapter 19), those who have died appeal to the divine ferryman, for only with his help can they safely cross the threatening depths that bar their way to the afterlife. And finally, in the Amduat, it is only in the proximity of the Sungod—that is, in the shelter of his barque (vessel)—that the deceased will remain safe on the perilous journey through the netherworld.

This symbolism reflects a basic psychological truth. In order to pass safely through certain critical phases in our development, we need to be connected to the inner images of our soul and to their healing and preserving power. True psychic healing comes always from within, or, to be more precise, from contact with archetypal images. Egyptian texts call the blessed dead a well-provided *akh*-spirit, a term that has an etymological connection with the notion of shining light. Psychologically, this connection points to a luminosity that originates in the collective unconscious (the archetypal image of the Sungod) and generates a light of consciousness that can never be extinguished, whether by darkness or by death.



FIRST HOUR

THE JUBILATION OF THE BABOONS

Getting in Touch with the Animal Soul

The magnificence of sunset now ended, the Sungod and his entourage descend in the night barque to an intermediate realm separating this world from the actual netherworld. This interstitial space embodies an interval of time after which the god will enter Osiris's realm of the dead through the gate at the end of the first nocturnal hour. Once again, there is a clear distinction between this world and the next, between the world of the day and that of the night, between above and below. Here we observe the Egyptians' dread of the netherworld, this Land of Silence and Place of Truth where no enemy of the Sungod, or even the unauthorized, may set foot. No wonder, then, that the god we see depicted at the end of the lower middle register is named "He-who-seals-the-earth." And the gate at the end of the first hour is called "He-who-devours-all," again stressing the importance of preventing the Sungod's enemies from entering the fields of the beyond. (The Amduat, unlike the Book of Gates, depicts neither the gate itself nor its guardian.)

This natural fear of entering the netherworld—that is, of setting foot in the realm of archetypal images reflecting the collective unconscious—is entirely understandable. It is a well-known fact that if we try too eagerly to penetrate into the realm of the collective unconscious, or if we approach the healing images of the soul, let us say, with some sort of ulterior, ego-centered motive, striving for power or profit, it can be as though we are trying (as indicated by the imagery of the Amduat) to enter this "other world" in the company of the "enemies," or, to put it in psychological terms, contaminated by the "shadow." The shadow incorporates all those dark and inferior aspects of our personality that, despite the fact that they are repressed into the unconscious, prove to be real in the form of uncontrolled affects, moods, and emotions emerging from the depths of our psyche (in Jungian psychology the shadow is also a technical term for the parts in us that we don't recognize). If we approach the archetypal world without awe and humility, the unconscious will most likely be hostile toward us.

C. G. Jung refers to this danger in a major work entitled *Mysterium coniunctionis*.¹ In the chapter "Allegoria Alchymica"—a pearl of Jung's

¹ *Mysterium coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), §§ 189–213.

writings—he offers an interpretation of a text called “Philaletha” (“lover of truth,” the alchemist’s name), in which the alchemical opus is threatened by the intrusion of a thief. “Worthless is this thief,” the text runs, “armed with the malignity of arsenic, from whom the winged youth (that is, the spirit of inner truth) flees, shuddering.” Jung interprets this intruder as “a kind of self-robbery...not easily shaken off, as it comes from a habit of thinking supported by tradition and milieu alike: anything that cannot be exploited in some way is uninteresting—hence the devaluation of the psyche.”² The Bhagavadgita (chapter 3, verse 12) also knows this greedy thief: “The Gods, nourished by the sacrifice, will give you the desired objects. Indeed he who enjoys the gifts given by them without offering to them is verily a thief.”³

Comparing the structure of the Amduat to the psychology of common human experience, we may say that this unequivocal separation of the hereafter from the transitory world of the living symbolizes protection: on the psychological level, it is protection of the realm of the unconscious from infringements and abuses by the ego, which can lead to misuse of the objective psyche and its numinous images for a mere ego-purpose. If Egyptians hoped to be accepted among the blessed dead and even to be identified with the Great God after death, they were expected to devote their lives totally to the service of this god, who was also called the Great *Ba*-soul. In the Amduat, all the deities and blessed dead who dwell on the banks of the subterranean stream live through this god and for him.

In the introduction to this first hour of the night, we read:

This god enters through the western gateway of the horizon.
Seth stands on the riverbank.
120 miles is the journey through this gateway,
before the barque reaches those in the netherworld.

These few lines are unambiguous: in the darkness of the night, danger reigns. Seth, the murderer of his brother Osiris, is there, allied with

²Ibid., §§ 193–194.

³*Bhagavadgita*, chap. 3, verse 12. See Swami Chinmayananda, *The Bhagavad Geeta*, 5th ed. (Madras: Central Chinmaya Trust, 1979), p. 23.

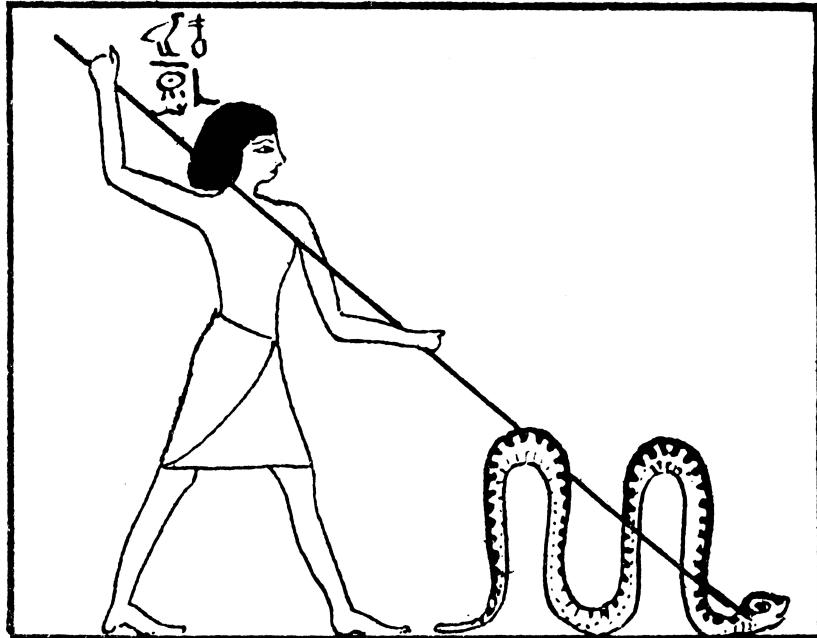
Apopis, the most terrifying demon of the netherworld. Thus, from the very beginning, two principles collide: the preservation and continuous renewal of creation by the Sungod, on the one hand, and, on the other, the threat of standstill and death. The equilibrium of forces is delicate. Again and again, Apopis must be repelled, as we otherwise read in the magical spells 39 and 40 of the Book of the Dead:

Get back! Crawl away! Get away from me, you snake!...
Be far removed from that abode of Re
wherein you trembled, for I (the dead) am Re
at whom men tremble....
Get back, you Male whom Osiris detests,⁴
whose head Thoth has cut off!
I have done everything in respect of you
which was said about you in the Ennead
in order to carry out your destruction.⁵

These words refer not just to Apopis but to all the enemies of Re, for they are nothing more than manifestations of that one great enemy of the Sungod. Nevertheless, we see enemies in every one of the nocturnal hours, for paradoxically, nothing can be created without the existence, even the support, of darkness and evil, and there is no regeneration of life without the presence of these enemies and the constant need to repel them. For the ancient Egyptian, every intellectual effort, every new insight or creative deed, touched on the mythical edge of the cosmos, beyond which there was nothing but chaos and primeval darkness. Queen Hatshepsut, so well known for the high esteem in which she held herself, declares proudly in one of her texts, “I rule as far as the realm of the primeval darkness.” And in just such a place, at the border of the Theban desert, she erected her grandiose funerary temple; even today, known as Deir el-Bahari, this spot evokes the impression of a place where heaven and earth

⁴E. Hornung translates this sentence as “Zurück du, Hurenbock, Abscheu des Osiris!” (“Get back, you male slut, whom Osiris detests!”); see *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter* (Zurich: Artemis, 1979), p. 111.

⁵R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 4th ed. (London: British Museum Publications, 1993), p. 61.



Repelling of Apopis, Book of the Dead spell 39

meet. Where the dragon Apopis dwells, all royal power ceases, and, above all, even the power of the deities ends. Here *he* alone reigns, that great Evildoer, the Terrible One, and whatever else he might be called. The texts leave no doubt that all creation, including the realm of the gods, will one day vanish. Thus, the primeval god Atum declares in spell 175 of the Book of the Dead, a text often quoted in works on Egyptian religion:

You shall be for millions on millions of years,
a lifetime of millions of years.
I will dispatch the Elders
and destroy all that I have made;
the earth shall return to the Abyss,
to the surging flood,
as in its original state.
But I will remain with Osiris,

I will transform myself into something else
namely a serpent,
without men knowing or the gods seeing.⁶

From a psychological perspective, these sources imply the existence of a dark abyss of psychic reality that we can no longer handle and where all wisdom, even that of the gods, comes to an end. We can only remain silent in the face of this great unknown, with which we can no longer contend. It is, in fact, a paradox: on the one hand, Apopis must be repelled from the “abode of Re,” that is, he must be warded off from the place where the act of creation has its beginning; while on the other hand, it seems to be precisely here, in dangerous yet almost intimate proximity to primeval darkness and the primordial reality of chaos, that the regenerative power of creation experiences its rejuvenation.

The clear structure of the first hour, with its precise information regarding the dimensions of the area, might have an apotropaic function. Its ordered structure could be intended to ward off the chaotic power of Apopis, thus demonstrating the stability of the venerable order of creation even here, at the threshold of Osiris’s realm of the dead. The upper and lower registers are ordered symmetrically: groups of nine gods alternate with groups of twelve goddesses. Here again, the number 9 implies an infinite number of gods, while the number 12 probably alludes to the twelve hours of the night, during which the regenerative process takes place.

The two figures of Maat in front of the upper sun barque, each of them carrying a Maat feather on her head, reflect the ultimately harmonious structure of the netherworld, though chaotic regions are also to be found there. In the tomb of Queen Nofretari, there is a famous depiction of Maat protecting Nofretari with her two outstretched arms. As the embodiment of cosmic order, the goddess Maat is also the guarantor of social justice, that is, the wisdom of the ordered creation that exists in the immanent world and that extends, in the Amduat, into the netherworld. This double depiction of Maat, which is also reflected in the accompanying text by the

⁶Ibid., p. 175.

dual form of her name (*maaty*, “the Two Truths”), is a typically Egyptian phenomenon. This tendency to think in dual entities will be the topic of a later discussion. Here the doubling of Maat, like the doubling of the sun barque in the two middle registers, could have a significance on the psychological level. It is a well-known phenomenon in psychology that the doubling of a dream motif often occurs when a new unconscious content is pushing toward the conscious level, though not yet strongly enough to be perceived by the consciousness of the individual. We may thus say that this emerging content belongs, as it were, to two different worlds, to this one and the next, with the two different parts representing a new level of the preconscious totality that is still in the process of development.

In the first nocturnal hour, as renewal and regeneration become more and more urgent, the doubling of the Sungod and his daughter Maat is significant. Together, they created the world in the infinitely remote past, on what the Egyptians called the First Occasion, and now they can do so again. We may thus say that in general, the doubling of a given motif points to the imminence of a creative or regenerative moment or process.

But let us return to the clear structure of the first hour. The presence of Maat, both here and in the second hour, where she is the dominating figure, indicates that the order of creation does not cease, not even in the netherworld. Psychologically, this means that in the collective unconscious, we may reckon with an underlying creative order, even when it presents itself to us in the chaotic form of seemingly unfettered opposites.



Winged Maat, tomb of Nofretari

If we have the opportunity to observe the images of the unconscious that emerge from a person's dreams and fantasies over the course of many years, we may recognize a repetition and a meaningful pattern of certain motifs. C. G. Jung calls this psychic development the "process of individuation."

In his article "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," Jung goes a step further and speaks of the existence of an absolute knowledge of the preconscious psyche, which, as we shall see below when we discuss the baboons, does not exclude the instinctive knowledge of animals. Jung states that "as soon as we begin seriously to reflect on the teleological processes in biology or to investigate the compensatory functions of the unconscious," we have, because of the goal-oriented nature of these phenomena, to "postulate a *foreknowledge of some kind*."⁷ When Jung defines the archetype as "the introspectively recognizable form of a priori psychic orderedness,"⁸ he accepts the basis of a creative order within the unconscious, an order within which we must reckon with "*creative acts*, as the continuous creation,"⁹ that is, a spontaneous, continuous, creative activity of the psyche that is completely independent of ego-consciousness.

The Amduat (ca. 1500 BC) originated at a time when Egyptian consciousness, or awareness, was expanding tremendously. Historically, this phenomenon was concurrent with the expansionist policies of the pharaohs of Dynasty 18, a period when imperialism brought Egyptians into intimate contact with other cultures. It is in no way an exaggeration to call the content of this Book of the Netherworld one of the most important "initial dreams" of humankind. In personal psychology, the first, or initial, dream that the analysand brings into his or her analysis often has a prognostic significance, insofar as it may contain the major traits of the analysand's future development. Likewise, in the history of humankind, time and again we find a visionary cultural document, such as the Amduat, that initiates or anticipates a future intellectual development, even by hundreds of years, with the result that we should not hesitate to call it a prophetic document. Thus it seems that, beginning with Dynasty 18,

⁷C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, vol. 8 of *The Collected Works*, § 931.

⁸Ibid., § 965.

⁹Ibid., § 967: the *creatio continua* (i.e., continuous, ongoing creation).

a significant broadening of consciousness could stimulate archaic man to reflect once more on creation and its basic order. These New Kingdom Books of the Netherworld had their origin in just this sort of culture shock in the face of new insights, and in just this sort of reflection.

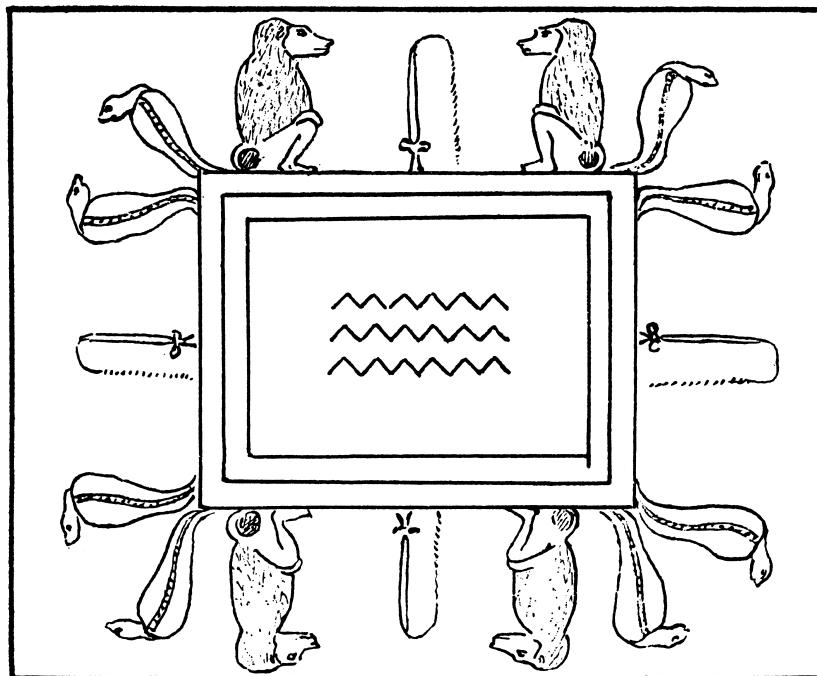
But let us return to the Amduat. What fascinates me again and again are the baboons, who are often referred to by Egyptologists as the solar baboons. In their typical crouching position, they await the arrival of the Great *Ba*-soul (i.e., Re). In the closing text of the first hour, Re calls on them to open the gates of the horizon for him:

Baboons, open for me your arms!
Spread wide your gates for me, baboons!
My goddesses who came into being from my *ba*-soul,
My gods, ye who came into existence [from my body],
ye came into existence for Khepri who heads the Netherworld.

And they respond, full of jubilation:

Opened for you is the hidden, which contains the secret images,
wide open for you are the doors of the Greatest City.
Illuminated for you is the darkened,
that you let breathe the place of destruction,
that you approach, in your name of Re,
the place where Osiris is, Foremost of the Westerners.

The baboons are the first to await and acknowledge the entrance of the Great God into the netherworld. Traditionally, they belong to the entourage of the Sungod, accompanying him with music and dance. Some years ago, a veterinarian told me that in the early morning, he observed baboons in Africa raising their arms at the first sunbeams, as though they wanted to greet and praise the rejuvenated sun. But even if the motif of the baboons greeting and venerating the sunlight stems from their behavior in nature, there is also a psychic and spiritual truth to be observed. It is neither the brilliance of our mind nor the clear light of ego-consciousness that is capable of grasping the arrival of the Great God but the animal in us—namely, an instinctual awareness that senses



Baboons of the Sungod, Book of the Dead spell 126

or scents the presence of the divine. This fact indicates a physical awareness on the part of the instincts and of the sense organs, in which bodily sensation plays a major role, a phenomenon that reaches down into a psychic-instinctive realm that originates in our "animal soul."

In their symbolism, many animal dreams indicate closeness to the self, that is, to that psychic totality which embraces even the most diametrical opposites of the spiritual world and the latter's representation and manifestation in subhuman, theriomorphic form. Whenever an animal occurs in a dream, therefore, as the baboons do in our text, we must be particularly attentive, for such an image, although pointing to an instinctual physical force, might easily herald the presence of a divine being or a numinous content. I believe, however, that our animal soul can be truly nourished and truly alive only when we connect ourselves with the elements of nature: by walking in the mountains, by confronting the natural

force of the sea or a storm, by standing in the tender light of dawn at the beginning of a day, or by enjoying the satisfaction of a long, refreshing sleep. Our soul is nurtured by such elemental experiences: after all, it is from just such experiences that, for thousands of years, the human soul has drawn the most grandiose of its archetypal images. The more we are disconnected from such experiences—and most people today, including children, are very much disconnected from them—the more we are separated from the creative powers of the unconscious and the less capable we are of understanding the images that come from our soul.

As to the other deities in the upper register—twelve standing goddesses, nine crouching gods adoring the Sungod, and again twelve goddesses at the end of the register representing the twelve hours of the night—they adore or pray to him, or they simply accompany him. All of them participate in the continuing process of regeneration. They lend their support to the Great *Ba*-soul as he nourishes those who dwell on the riverbanks by providing them with the resources that sustain life. Interpreting this iconography from a psychological point of view, we may say that even the slightest increase of consciousness or awareness, as it occurs to even a single one of the countless dwellers on the riverbanks of the netherworld, is an infinitesimal yet precious contribution to the continuous process of creation and regeneration (*creatio continua*), all in the service of the *one* who is called, in the Amduat, the Great *Ba*-soul. In medieval terminology, this “one” can be equated with the *unus mundus* (one world), which is identical to the *Sapientia Dei* (Wisdom of God).¹⁰ The *unus mundus* indicates, as Jung states, a “potential world, the eternal Ground of all empirical being, just as the self is the ground and origin of the individual personality, past, present, and future.”¹¹ In all such concepts, we find the idea of an original cosmic-spiritual order that has to be renewed, ever and again, in the created world.

In the upper middle register, we see the Sungod in the night barque, surrounded by his crew. Again, this group of nine deities represents an unfathomable multiplicity of divine powers. Assisted by them and protected

¹⁰See M.-L. von Franz, *Patterns of Creativity Mirrored in Creation Myths* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1972), p. 241.

¹¹Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis*, § 760.

by a shrine, Re sails along the netherworldly river, traversing the realm of the first nocturnal hour. He is ram-headed (the ram's head is a hieroglyph that can be read as *ba*), an evident allusion to his manifestation as a *ba*-soul, which is itself written with the hieroglyph of a *ba*-bird. In his psychic or soul (*ba*) form, the Sungod descends into the depths of the netherworld, where he will be renewed by the union of *ba*-soul and corpse. The *ba* (in the Egyptian language, the noun *ba* is masculine in gender) is the freely moving part of the soul, the part that loves, for instance, the distant expanse of the sky. But the *ba* also has a physical, corporeal existence. This is why, here and elsewhere, we read of the "flesh of Re," and this is why the *ba* is in need of nourishment. To the Egyptians, our own clear separation of body, spirit, and soul was an alien concept.

The *ba* includes the psychic factor that longs for the celestial, the spiritual, and the distant and that desires to wander and travel; it is the *ba* that makes psychic flights into the distance and the heights. It seems that for the Egyptians, this psychic quality had to be renewed periodically in the depths of the earth. For this reason, the Sungod descended into the netherworld as a *ba*-soul, for only here, and only through the enduring power of the earth, could the renewal and regeneration of the *ba*-soul take place.

Even in this first hour, this idea of regeneration is central, as is made clear by the second representation of the Sungod, this time in the form of Khepri, the scarab-beetle. Here, in the lower barque, we find him accompanied and adored by two Osiris figures. The beetle is the hieroglyph for



Sungod in his form of Khepri,
detail from first hour

the Egyptian verb *hpr*, which has a range of related meanings: to become, to come into existence, to be born, to exist, to appear, or to be transformed. Here, in the very first nocturnal hour, this illustration leaves no

doubt regarding the goal of the entire journey: the rebirth and renewal of life in the depths of the netherworld.

What is the psychological meaning of the presence of the idea of "becoming" and of this allusion to the anticipated birth of the Sungod

even here, in this very first hour of the night? As already indicated, the god's regeneration in the depths alludes to the transformation of an already-ancient conscious attitude, that is, to a change in the collective mind-set of a specific historical epoch. Psychologists know that new psychic content—a new spirit, as it were—can be intimated in the form of anticipatory images that point to this new content long before it penetrates into the conscious awareness of the individual. And history shows that in human society, it is a single outstanding personality—a visionary, a prophet, or the founder of a new religion—who will conceive of such new content, and only after the “new doctrine” has been “revealed” to their master will his initial followers transmit it to the community at large. It can take time, even centuries, before the new ideas revealed to a single individual make their way to an entire community, or even to a whole nation.

Just when, in his or her conscious reality, an individual begins to descend into the darkness of depression, dreams often herald a forthcoming liberation. Often, such prognostic dream images of the soul offer considerable support to the therapeutic process, and I am tempted to ask, how else could we bear the strains of life? *Habendibus symbolum facilis est transitus* (the transition is easy for those who have a symbol): so runs an old maxim from alchemy. In life or in death, transition is easy for the one who has such a symbol or inner truth. The Khepri-beetle in the second sun barque is such a symbol of forthcoming transformation, a symbol intended to be effective for all who accompany the Sungod on his voyage.

The number of deities and blessed dead accompanying the Sungod on his netherworldly journey is beyond calculation. For this reason, religious texts often call the vessel the Barque of Millions, though in the Amduat, this expression occurs only once, in the name of the last goddess depicted in the upper register of the twelfth hour: “Lady of the Uraeus-serpents in the Barque of Millions.” These “millions” refer not to years but to the blessed dead assembled in the barque. Spell 99 of the Book of the Dead, which we have cited above, speaks of this wish to partake in Re’s journey through the netherworld at some point in the future and thus to reach the beyond under his protection:

O You who are in charge of the mysterious ferry-boat,
who wards off Apopis,

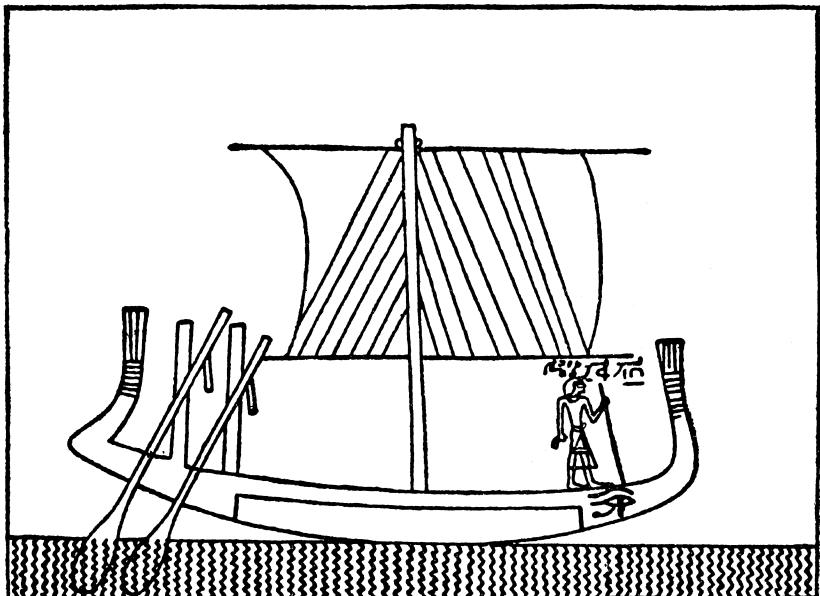
bring me the ferry-boat, knot the warp for me,
in order to escape from that evil land
in which the stars fall upside down upon their faces
and are unable to raise themselves up ...
O Power who reveals the solar disc,
who is in charge of the redness (the sunrise),
fetch me, do not let me be boatless!
(The ferryman answers reassuringly:)
Come, you spirit, my brother,
and travel to the place you know.¹²

This is the great request: not to be boatless. Only in the protection of the barque can the deceased pass safely through this dark and terrifying realm where everything is topsy-turvy, and only with the help of the ferryman will he safely reach that peaceful land where the blessed dead dwell.

But what does the Barque of Millions mean psychologically? As already noted, C. G. Jung understood that, in a way analogous to the formation of instincts in the physical world, there is also a continuous development of archetypal images, that is, of modes of apprehension, and that this development yields a *spiritual* treasure of humankind, a treasure that has grown and developed over millions of years. In its capacity as a “vessel,” the sun barque protecting the blessed dead symbolically represents a shelter for all the experiences of uncountable generations, that is, a shelter that contains and even assimilates this continuously transforming spiritual treasure of the archetypal world. Those sheltered in the vessel partake of the protective knowledge of the ancestors. They are not excluded, as are the condemned dead; rather, they belong to the blessed dead, to those who participate in the eternally regenerating life of all creation. Renewal of life is granted to them by their proximity to the archetypal powers.

Jung’s hypothesis of a totality that exists preconsciously in the human psyche incorporates this ancient point of view. It is reconnection with

¹²Faulkner, *Book of the Dead*, p. 95. The translation of the last two verses, however, follows that of E. Hornung, *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter*, p. 195. English translation by A. S.



Ferryman of the dead, Book of the Dead spell 99A

this psychic matrix that triggers the regeneration of life, that is, a creative process through which all life is transformed from out of the depths. Individual creativity depends on participation in this hidden stream of unconscious archetypal material (in Egyptian terms, in Re's nocturnal journey) and in its creative energy. Such a dynamic concept of life and of cultural and religious wisdom excludes any assumption of "eternal truth."

Precisely this point is vehemently affirmed by Hans Georg Gadamer in his principal work, *Truth and Method*, in which he speaks of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history). There is, Gadamer maintains, no static truth. Rather, there must be a different approach to, and interpretation of, the mythological, religious, and literary documents of any given era, since the respective texts and images are subject to *Wirkungsgeschichte*. Gadamer's position corresponds to a large extent with Jung's hypothesis of the collective unconscious and its implication of a continuous transformation and dynamic within the history of thought. In both systems of

thought, nothing is rigid and firm, since everything is subject to an ongoing process of historical (Gadamer) or psychic (Jung) transformation. In the Amduat, we find references to this continuous change of all that exists not only in the symbol of the barque of Khepri but also in that of the four human-headed stelae in the upper middle register of the first hour. According to the accompanying text, the stelae represent the four major aspects of the creator god's transformations and thus a cosmic totality: Re as the daytime sky, Atum as the western horizon, Khepri as the eastern horizon, and Osiris as the embodiment of the netherworldly, nocturnal sun. Re is the active ruler of the sky and the daytime world; Osiris is the passive, albeit beloved, god of the realm of the dead; Atum is the aged god who descends into the depths, worn and weary from his day's labors; and Khepri is the newborn solar child who is greeted with jubilation at daybreak. All of these are aspects of one and the same truth, of the unique Great Soul whose totality can best be described as a fourfold process of transformation.

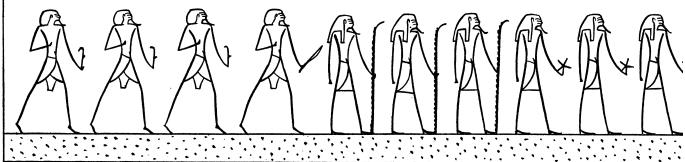
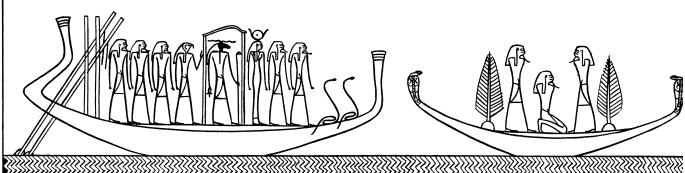
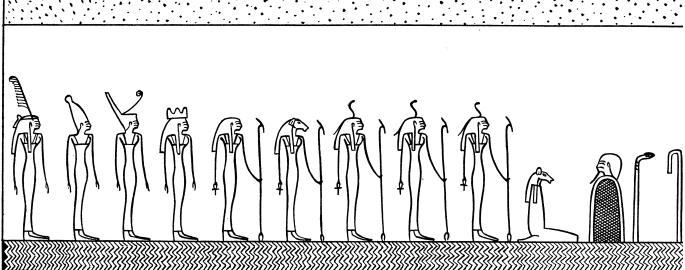
This quaternity is a stunning symbol of the creative dynamic of all life and all being, which in Egypt was always connected with the Sungod. His course across the sky and through the nocturnal hours of the netherworld reveals a psychic dynamic—and, as it happens, this very dynamic was always of utmost importance to alchemists in their tireless researches. Over and over, they tried to describe it with fresh, innovative images. According to the famous dictum of the Jewish female alchemist Maria Prophetissa, which became a major axiom, the quintessence of alchemical studies can be expressed thus: “One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the one as the fourth. In the two there is one.”¹³ Of necessity, each unity splits into opposites. Thus is created a conflict, and the longer it lasts, the greater the yearning for a redeeming symbol that can unite the opposites. Finally, when the mounting tension becomes unbearable, things come to a head, and a unifying symbol emerges as the Third. And with that, a Fourth is attained, representing a new unity on a higher level of consciousness.

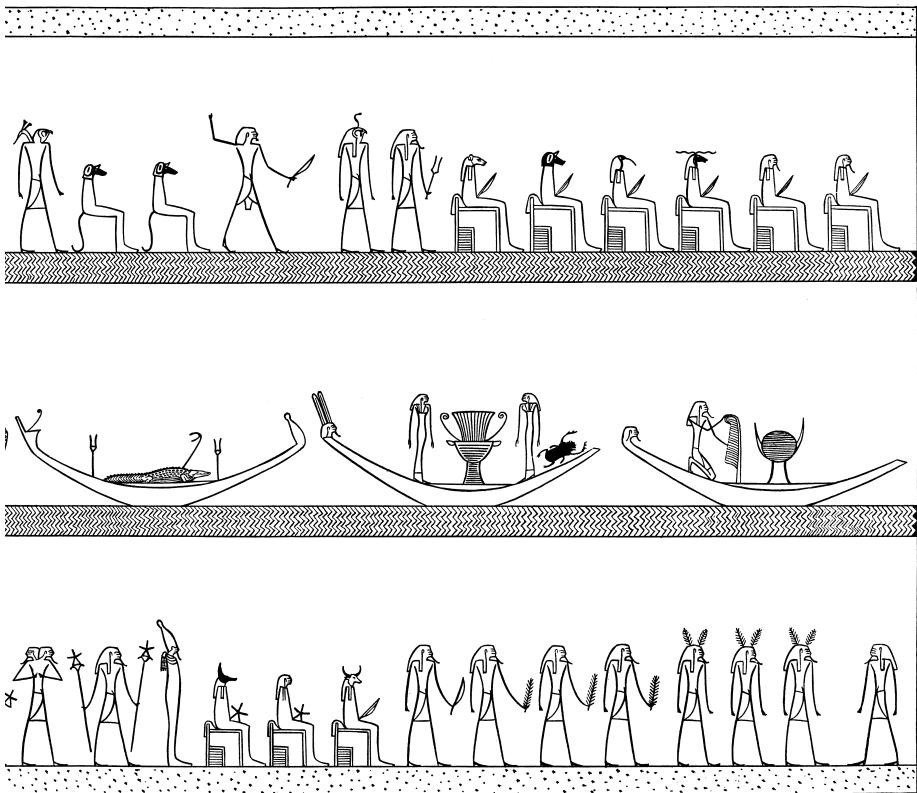
¹³ M. Berthelot, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs: Texte grec* (1888; repr. Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967), p. 404. See also C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, vol. 12 of *The Collected Works*, § 26.

Let us now consider those who dwell on the riverbank in the lower register. They, too, are in the service of the nocturnal journey of the Sungod. At the beginning of the register, nine solar baboons entertain Re and his crew with music and dance. They are followed by twelve fire-spitting cobras that offer him light. Next, nine gods raise their hands in adoration. And finally, twelve goddesses praise the Great God and accompany him in his passage into the next hour of the night.

Here, where darkness intensifies, there is joyous celebration, reminding us of the African villagers mentioned at the beginning of this book. From primeval times on, cultic ceremony in Egypt proclaimed a central cosmic event taking place between heaven and earth. Whenever a god or goddess descended from sky to earth, whenever a deity left his or her home in a procession arranged by the priests and priestesses, passing through the successive gateways of the temple and emerging into the world outdoors, jubilation would erupt among those of the public who were present, taking part in the festival. These divine appearances hallow the world: such was the hope of all who participated, not only those in antiquity but those who participate in our own time as well.

And hope is precisely why celebration occurs in this intermediate realm of the first nocturnal hour, just before the Great *Ba*-soul enters the actual netherworld. In this no-man's-land, where neither the laws of heaven nor those of earth are in force, and where chaos could erupt at any time, this festive joy is intended to ward off the powers of dark magic. The celebration is intended to invoke divine mercy and benevolence and to induce the powers of heaven and earth to unite in a new and creative relationship.





SECOND HOUR

THE FERTILE REGION OF WERNES

*First Encounter with the Psychic Totality:
Creation and Destruction*

The Sungod and his crew have reached the end of the intermediate realm of the first hour. Sailing through the gate called “He-who-devours-all,” they enter the waters of a truly fertile region of paradisiacal beauty. Those who dwell on the riverbanks greet them warmly with jubilation and rejoicing. Everywhere in the depiction of this second hour we see symbols of lush vegetation. One example is the two grain gods in the second barque of the middle register: two ears of wheat, a sign of their fertility, serve as their attribute. Another is the depiction of the six grain gods at the end of the lower register and the text that accompanies them:

They are those who present the green plants which are in Wernes
to the gods in the following of Re.

They are those who offer water to the *Akh*-spirits (the blessed dead)
as this great god commands.

It is they who heat the embers to burn up the enemies of Re,
they are those who throw the hearts into the fire.

Then they wail and they mourn
after this great god has passed by them.

The fields of grain ripen in the warmth of the sun’s rays. But as Africans and others who dwell in extreme heat know from bitter experience, too much of that same heat can burn and destroy the entire abundance. The Sungod has two faces, and these are mirrored in the blessing and the curse just quoted, coming from the mouths of dwellers in the netherworld. In the fertile field of Wernes, the dead are provided with an abundance of the food needed for life’s satisfaction. It would have been contrary to the inherent sensibilities of the Egyptians, however, not to mention the dark and destructive aspect of life as well.

In this hour and in the one that follows, the images and symbols openly proclaim the beauty of earthly existence. May the joys of life not cease in death! What the deceased wished for and expected during their sojourn in the Field of Reeds (another name for Wernes) is expressed in spell 110 of the Book of the Dead:

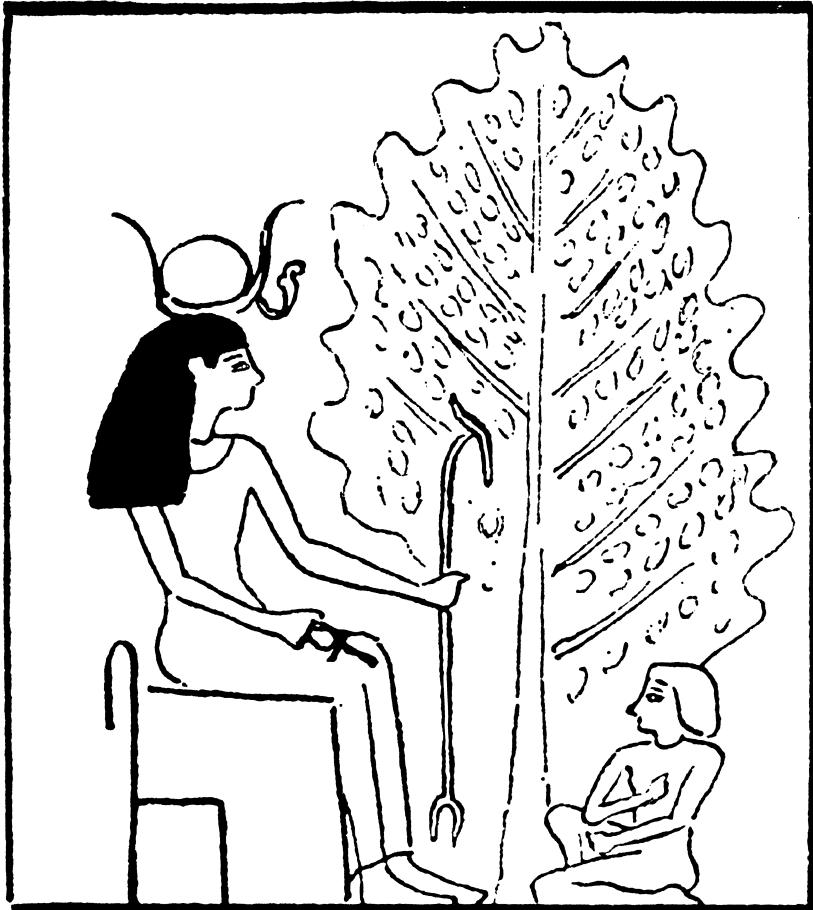
I have come to the Great God
in order that I may receive the provisions

which his goodwill grants of bread and beer, oxen and fowl...
having strength thereby, having power thereby,
plowing therein, reaping and eating therein,
drinking therein, copulating therein,
and doing everything that used to be done on earth.¹

There, in the distant fields of the beyond, the zest for life will continue. Four wishes are expressed: to have power, to share in the blessings of the gods (plowing and reaping), to be provided with food and water, and to participate in the continuity of life (having intercourse). These very wishes are illustrated by the four boats we see depicted in front of the sun barque (though they are, of course, in the Sungod's entourage). In the first boat are the grain gods we have already mentioned. Erik Hornung has suggested that the crocodile in the next boat refers to the ruler of the watery region of Wernes; if so, it would symbolize the power and domain of the Sungod, which extend to the subterranean realm of the nether-world. Each one of the deceased wishes to participate in this power and not to be powerless, like the condemned dead.

The symbolism of the third boat refers to the goddess Hathor, who is flanked by two other goddesses, probably Isis and Nephthys. Hathor is the goddess of love, of the playful liveliness of games and dance, and even of drunken ecstasy. Her characteristics are both positive and negative: they include not only maternal care, leniency, and graciousness but also destructive, wrathful, bloodthirsty rage. With these traits, she is a typical example of the divine figure known as the Great Goddess, the most famous example perhaps being the Babylonian Ishtar. Ishtar is enamored of life and liveliness, and she hates standstill; thus, though it might seem paradoxical, she sows the seeds of discord and hate in the service of the renewal of love. For love, after all, bears everything but that which is motionless and without change. That Hathor represents plenitude of life and its continuous renewal is made clear by the symbolism of the scarab at the prow of her boat: as an image of self-creation, it points to the re-generation of all living beings. With its creative power and its urge to be

¹R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 4th ed. (London: British Museum Publications, 1993), p. 103.



The deceased in front of Hathor and a tree, Book of the Dead spell 68

reborn, the scarab is well suited to be a companion for Hathor. In the fourth and final boat, we see a hieroglyph that stands for the moon, that primordial symbol of rejuvenation and regeneration through love.

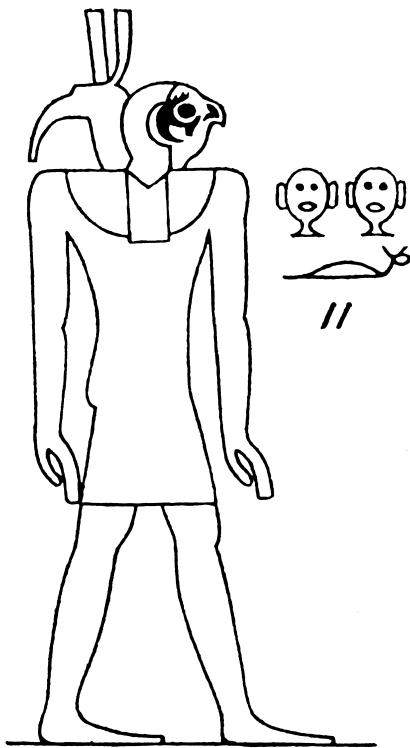
In these representations, we see the fourfold effect of individuation and the development of consciousness: it provides human beings with what nourishes the body and the spirit; it makes them strong and powerful; it increases their sense of fulfillment; and it grants them the blessing

of regeneration. Every attempt to overcome lack of consciousness is a contribution, however small, to this psychospiritual growth. For archaic man, such as the Egyptians, it is obvious that this service was dedicated and directed to one alone: to the Great *Ba*-soul. All life originates in it, and to it all life will return. Every concrete expansion of the horizon of our life (buying or building a new house, beginning a new profession, etc.) is meaningful only when it is accompanied by an increase of consciousness, that is, by new insight. By the same token, for the ancient Egyptians, there was truth and meaning in life only through closeness to the Sungod, that is, when inner psychic images awakened to consciousness; and this is why, in the *Amduat*, those who dwell on the riverbanks awaken to life whenever the Great God passes by. What is important is not superficial change but the secret things of the netherworld, for it is in its depth that real life lies hidden and where new energy and power are bestowed on those who follow the Sungod.

We have already mentioned the two faces of the Sungod with their beneficent and punishing functions. Before turning to the dark aspect of the Great Soul, we must take note of the two double-headed figures in this hour, one in the upper register and, precisely below it, one in the lower register. The upper figure depicts a deity whose two heads are those of Horus (falcon) and Seth (canine), the two antagonists in the Osiris myth; after the death of Osiris, they enter into a conflict over the rulership, a conflict that continues until they are finally reconciled and allied with each other, each one gaining rights. Horus becomes sole heir to the united realm of Upper and Lower Egypt, while Seth gains his rights, at least partially, by being assigned the areas of the world beyond the borders of Egypt, including the deserts and the lands occupied by foreigners. We shall return to this myth later.

What is important here is the symbolism of a double-faced being. Such a figure personifies the union of opposites, the two faces of everything that exists. Where there is light, there is also darkness. By the same token, where Horus vaunts his majestic regal power, Seth exercises his own rights to the fringe areas of the world, ever striving to ensure that chaos invades and dissolves a structure of sovereignty that has grown all too rigid.

This truth we have just observed on the divine level also deeply touches every human being. For that reason, we see this ambivalence depicted



"He with two faces"

symbolically in the lower register by a figure with two *human* heads. It is as though a divine truth is mirrored in this deeply painful experience of human life. There are people who tend to a calculated optimism, overemphasizing the bright side of the divine. But whatever we do has both its light and its dark side, and we can never know with certainty which one will outweigh the other. The apostle Paul puts the matter concisely: "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Romans 7:18–19). C. G. Jung often quoted this passage, for the moral ambivalence it expresses is an essential characteristic of the psychology of the unconscious. The most we can hope for is that the good

will predominate over the evil, even if slightly, as we read in the myth about the conflict between Horus and Seth. At the very end of his biography, which was recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffé, Jung states, "The world into which we are born is brutal and cruel, and at the same time of divine beauty. Which element we think outweighs the other, whether meaninglessness or meaning, is a matter of temperament.... Probably, as in all metaphysical questions, both are true. Life is—or has—meaning and meaninglessness. I cherish the anxious hope that meaning will preponderate and win the battle."²

²C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (London: Fontana, 1995), pp. 392–393.

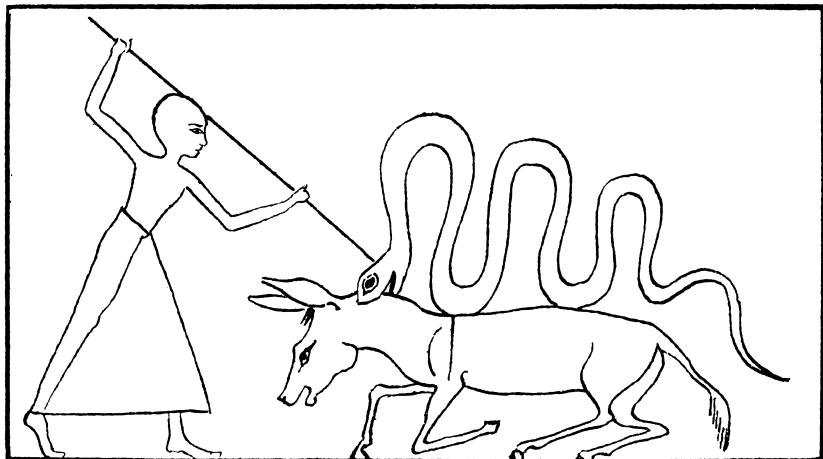
At the right end of the upper register, there is a tribunal consisting of a total of six judges, both male and female, seated on thrones. They constitute a conspicuous contrast to the life-giving deities of the middle register. Each of them holds a knife in his or her lap, clearly demonstrating their function as punishers. This group of seated judges is complemented by another divine figure, this one standing behind them, depicted in the upper register. His name is “He-who-fells-and-beheads-shadows” (i.e., the damned). With an upraised arm and a knife in the other hand, he is always at the ready to vanquish the enemies of the Sungod.

In this context we must also consider the bull-headed god in the lower register. He, too, has a knife in his hand, and he bears the striking name Donkey-swallower. With reference to spell 40 of the Book of the Dead, Erik Hornung sees this bull-headed figure as a demon who swallows the sinners personified by the donkey. This spell, which is entitled “Spell for repelling him who swallowed an ass,” is accompanied by a vignette depicting a donkey attacked by a spear-wielding man while its neck is bitten by a snake. This image can be interpreted as indicating that it is the wisdom and instinctive aggression of the snake, along with the goal-oriented (the image of the spear) effort of a god, that conquer evil. Whereas the blessed dead contend successfully with this demon and pass by him unharmed, the condemned inevitably fall victim to him. Barbara Hannah, a contemporary of Jung, once stated in a lecture:

We have lost direct touch with our sympathetic nervous system and thus lost the ability to see the way in certain situations where a serpent would know exactly how to react. When a serpent appears in a dream, it is often reminding us that a seemingly hopeless situation might be solved could we descend into—and be guided by—the sympathetic nervous system [i.e., our instincts, A.S.], which can replace all functions and where the serpent knows the way we have lost.³

Descent into the netherworld requires overcoming the impulsiveness of Seth. It matters not whether this impulsiveness is physical or whether it

³B. Hannah, “The Archetypal Symbolism of the Serpent,” in *The Archetypal Symbolism of Animals*, ed. David Eldred (Wilmette, Ill.: Chiron, 2006), p. 155.



Donkey-swallower, Book of the Dead spell 40

is a spiritual obsession. Each can lead to a state in which the ego is obsessively attached to the external, material world or, alternatively, to a state in which the ego is overwhelmed by fantasies and transpersonal psychic contents. Either state will result in an inappropriate and unreal sense of self-importance or in an inflation in which intimacy with the instinctive wisdom of the snake gets lost. Once again, we may turn to the alchemists, who clearly understood the danger of detachment from the reality of the world. “Whoever wishes to be introduced into the secret art,” wrote an old master, “has to be honest and of a deep mind, humane toward humans, of a joyful countenance and cheerful, always willing to give a friendly greeting, an observer of the enduring mysteries revealed to him alone.”⁴ It is not by mere chance that in this hour of the Amduat, we find Donkey-swallower in such close proximity to so many symbols of paradisiacal fulfillment and *joie de vivre*. There he stands guard, simultaneously warning and protecting the just lest any of them go astray in this abundance.

But the numinous power of the snake does not, of itself, suffice to ward off the enemies of the Sungod. Equally indispensable are the knives

⁴ *Rosarium philosophorum, Ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalters, Faksimile der illustrierten Erstausgabe (Frankfurt, 1550)*, facsimile edition ed. J. Telle (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992), vol. 2, p. 19. English translation by A. S.

wielded by the punishing deities. Wherever we are confronted with evil, we need a razor-sharp intellect (the Egyptians had a name for this quality, *fnḥ-ib*, “acuteness of heart”; they regarded the heart as the seat of the mind as well as the emotions). When we find ourselves driven to fantasies or actions by the unconscious, we can overcome the situation only by taking a clear and courageous step toward consciousness. We cannot ignore the reality of evil. It exists in us and our immediate surroundings and in the brutality and wars that plague the world at large; it is of no help to close our eyes in the face of it. Ignorance and naiveté can neither avoid nor mitigate human guilt. On the contrary, darkness and evil can be dealt with only by clarity of consciousness. There is no room for half-measures, compromises, or naiveté. We can descend into the depths of our own nature only with open eyes and a “sharp knife.”

After confronting the Devil in the wilderness, Jesus was well aware of just this point. The widespread opinion that evil could be conquered forever was foreign to him, and that is why he said, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). This is the sword of love, and a Zen master once wrote that it is “a sword that can both kill and endow with life.” The person who uses this weapon on himself to recognize the impulses of his shadow can attain liberation from the burden of the “donkey,” that is, from the dark and unconscious drives of egocentrism. And this is the beginning of a new love, as symbolized by the barque of Hathor.

In the Book of Gates, the distinction between blessed and condemned dead is drawn even more clearly than in the Amduat. In the Book of Gates, the blessed dead receive offerings and the favor of renewed life in the upper register, while the lower register is dedicated entirely to the punishment of the enemies of the Sungod. Four figures lying on their backs are called the Inert (or tired) Ones. Standing next to them are twenty naked and bound condemned men. They are

The desert dwellers of the Hall of Re,
who made an uproar on earth against Re,
who shouted evil things against He-who-is-in-the-egg.⁵

⁵According to Piankoff, this is the first division, while according to Hornung, it is the second hour. See A. Piankoff, “The Book of the Gates,” in *The Tomb of Ramesses VI: Texts*,

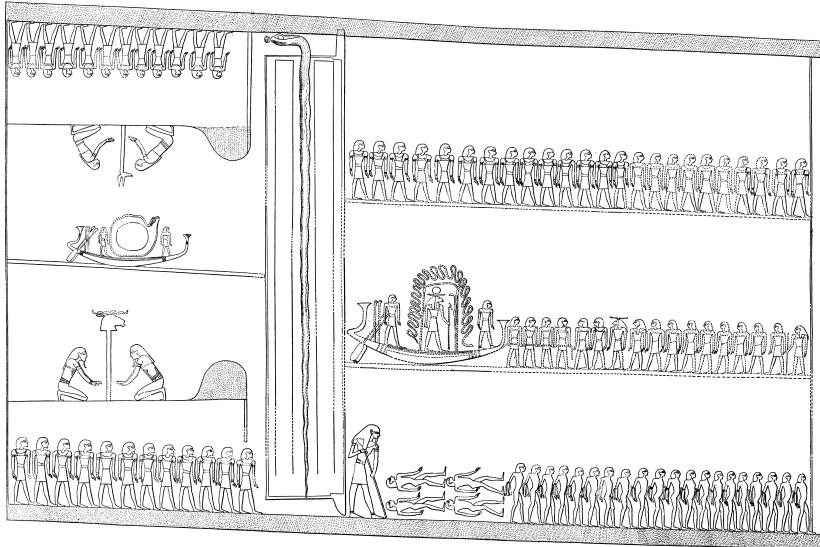
“He-who-is-in-the-egg” alludes to the Sungod, who, in the beginning, mysteriously emerged from the primeval egg and immediately began to create the world and the human race. This egg seems to be a near-universal image. In Latvian cosmology, for instance, there was a primeval eagle that laid the cosmic egg, and the god of creation cut it into two pieces, creating heaven and earth out of the halves. Psychologically speaking, the egg is a symbol of the self *in statu nascendi* (in the state of being born), that is, of the psychic totality in its initial state; it represents something that existed from the very beginning but had not yet found its form. In the Book of Gates, the damned ones have opposed this potential totality and with it the living spirit who created the world. They “shouted evil things” at this emerging life, thus allying themselves with Apopis, the one intent on destroying all life.

Let us look further at the lower register of the second hour of the Book of Gates. The very first figure depicts the Sungod in his form of the creator god Atum. As the “old one who lies in the primeval waters of Nun,” he represents the aged Sungod, though in cosmogonic texts, he tends to be identified as the creative world spirit. This ambivalence is an appropriate image for the state of suspense in the second hour of the night, when everything still longs for the renewal that has yet to occur. In any event, this god reprimands the condemned dead:

You are those who have done evil,
who have caused a slaughter
in the Great Hall (i.e., the hall of judgment).
Your bodies are destined to be decapitated,
your *ba*-souls to be annihilated.
You shall not see Re in his appearances
when he traverses the netherworld.⁶

Translated with Introductions, ed. N. Rambova, Bollingen Series, vol. 40, pt. 1 (New York: Pantheon, 1954), p. 147, and Hornung, *Ägyptische Unterweltbücher* (Zurich: Artemis, 1984), pp. 205–206. The passage cited here is from Hornung, *Unterweltbücher*, p. 206. English translation by A. S.

⁶ Piankoff, “The Book of the Gates,” p. 207 (second hour, lower register). English translation by A. S.



Book of Gates, prologue and first hour

The nakedness of Re's enemies is a clear sign of their defenselessness. By way of contrast, we read in the text that the provision of new clothing is one of the great favors the Sungod grants to the blessed dead, a theme we shall encounter in the eighth hour of the Amduat. In their nakedness, the condemned, who are doomed to nonbeing, will not behold the Sungod. There they lie, decapitated, miserable, and helpless.

The four inert ones also belong to this group of enemies. They indicate a remote and threatening region where there is no orientation, neither north nor south, neither east nor west, and thus the number 4. The Sungod himself avoids this region, notwithstanding its deep connection with the mystery of his regeneration:

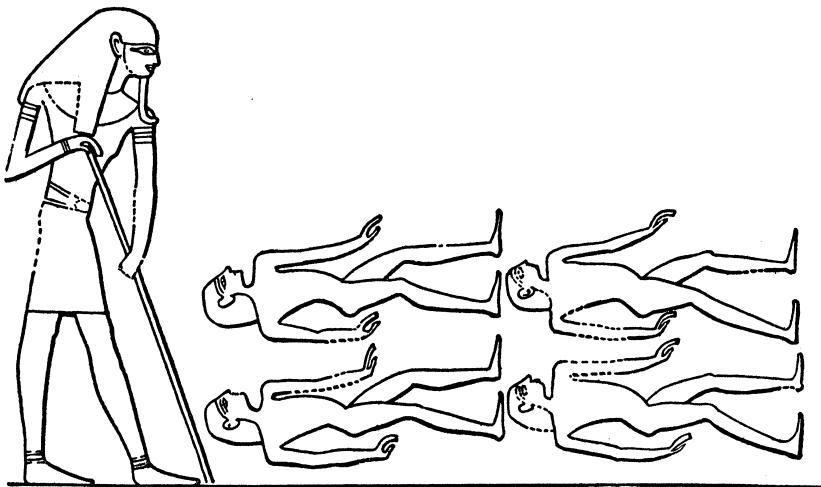
They (i.e., the four "tired ones") are dissolved in the "inertia" of the primeval waters, and it is only logical that the course of the sun does not touch on this region. The primeval waters and the primeval darkness constitute the cosmos before its creation, when the sun had yet to rise for the very first time.

These four exhausted figures are a first indication that, beyond the intermediate region of the desert, and beyond the netherworld through which the sun barque passes on its nightly journey, there is a bottomless, murky depth into which the enemies of the Sungod are cast. In this unfathomable depth, all the order of the created cosmos is abolished. The sun never reaches this depth, not even at night—and yet, the arms that support the sun and save it from falling into the depths emerge from this invisible abyss. Texts referring to it call it a “place of annihilation,” where not only the powers of destruction and dissolution are to be found but also those of regeneration.⁷

The origin of the creative principle is paradox. In the psychology of the individual, we can never say with certainty whether the “place of annihilation” and dissolution is a purely destructive one or whether a new creative order will emerge from these chaotic powers. We must thus take care when we analyze depressing dreams filled with dark, chaotic, and often dismal images. It is quite possible that precisely here, so close to all the filth and disgust, to all the destruction and death, a new “god” will awaken to life, just as, in Egyptian belief, the Sungod rises from the chaotic depths of the primal ocean and primal darkness of Nun, the personification of the primeval watery abyss.

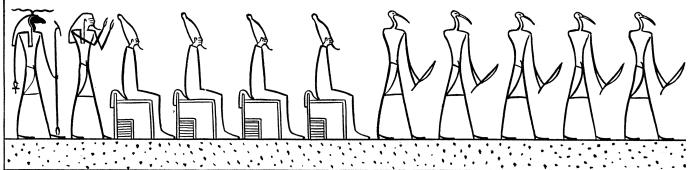
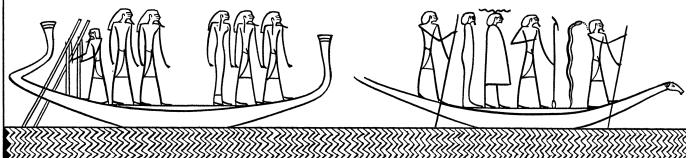
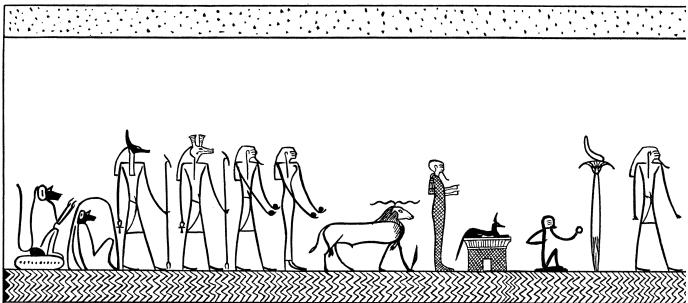
This clear and conscious separation into positive and hostile powers, as we see it so expressly depicted in the Book of Gates, is part and parcel of the nature of the creative. Creation is often understood as a violent act, in which a previously peaceful unity is split asunder. Thus, one of the most familiar Egyptian images of creation is the separation of the primeval parental couple, the earth god Geb and the sky goddess Nut, as they lie in the act of coitus, by their father Shu, the god of air. With his powerful arms, he raises the celestial vault on high, thus creating, in the midst of nonbeing, a realm between sky and earth, a place where all lives, both divine and human, can unfold. In this way, the created world is carefully sealed off from the abysmal depths of nonbeing. In the Amarna Period, a beautiful image of this phenomenon was created: the *ouroborus*

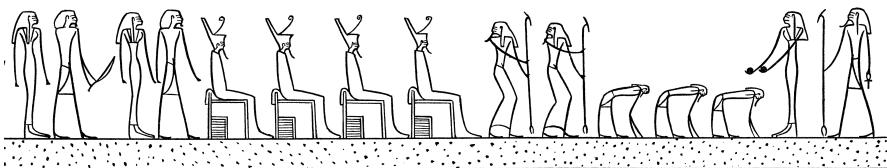
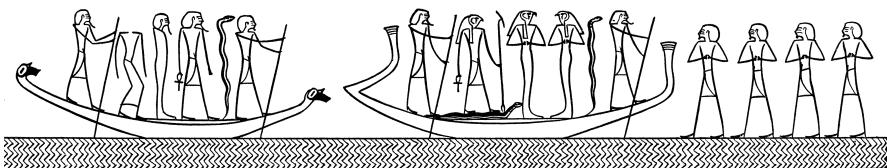
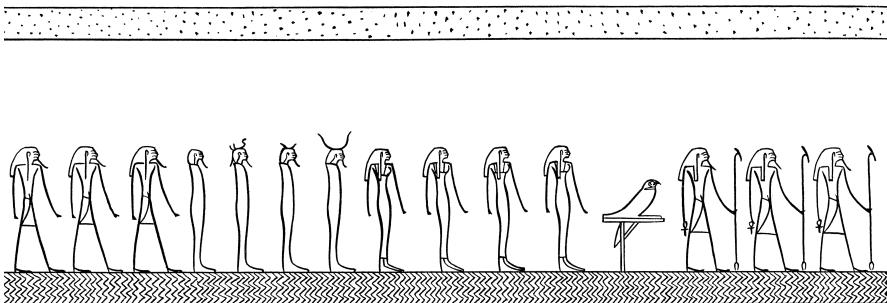
⁷E. Hornung, *Die Nachtfahrt der Sonne: Eine altägyptische Beschreibung des Jenseits* (Zurich: Artemis, 1991), p. 44. English translation by A. S.



Atum and the four weary ones, Book of Gates, first hour

snake that encircles the entirety of the created cosmos. And yet, notwithstanding all the powers of creation, it remains forever necessary to repel the destructive forces that never cease in their efforts to break through into the realm of creation. Wherever a creative process has started and the rebirth of the Sungod begins, his enemies—that is, the enemies of creation—must be repelled.





THIRD HOUR

ROWING ON THE WATER OF OSIRIS

*The Experience of Love through the
World of Psychic Images*

The third hour is dominated by the presence of Osiris. What we behold here is not his flesh or corpse as in the dark depths of the sixth and seventh hours but the lively and inspiring presence that made him so popular in the New Kingdom.

Outwitted, killed, and dismembered by his brother Seth, Osiris suffered a death like no one else's. Isis, his sister and beloved, collected his body parts, which were scattered throughout the land, reassembled them, and conceived a child by him, though he was dead. One of the Coffin Texts provides an impressive description of this auspicious pregnancy:

The lightning flash strikes, the gods are afraid,
Isis wakes pregnant with the seed of her brother Osiris.
She is uplifted (even she) the widow, and her heart is glad
with the seed of her brother Osiris.
She says: "O you gods, I am Isis, the sister of Osiris,
who wept for the father of the gods,
who judged the slaughterings of the Two Lands.
His seed is within my womb,
I have moulded the shape of the god within the egg as my son
who is at the head of the Ennead....
Come, you gods, protect him within my womb,
for he is known in your hearts.
He is your lord, this god who is in his egg,
blue-haired of form, lord of the gods,
and great and beautiful are the vanes of the two plumes."
"Oh!" says Atum, "guard your heart, O woman!"
(Isis:) "How do you know? He is the god, lord, and heir
of the Ennead, who made you within the egg.
I am Isis, one more spirit-like and august than the gods;
the god is within this womb of mine and he is the seed of Osiris."¹

Even in death, Osiris remains procreative. This is the reassuring message of the myth; and since this reassurance is nowhere more visible than

¹R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chippenham: Aris & Phillips, 2004), p. 125 (spell 148).

in the annual death and resurrection of plant life, Osiris became the god of the agricultural yield of fertile land, in particular the god of grain. The Osiris myth thus supplies a clear response to the experience of death. In the Old Kingdom, deification and continuation of life after death were privileges of the pharaoh alone, but gradually everyone could hope to become an Osiris and thus to embark on the journey through the netherworld. Whatever the dead desire for themselves in the spells of the Book of the Dead—"to drink water in the realm of the dead" (spell 62), "to be transformed into a lotus flower" (spell 81A), "to breathe air" (spell 58), "to open the tomb" (spell 67), and so forth—is a triumph of Osiris over his enemies, a victory of life over death.

The blessed dead have all the abundance they desire, and they can even share it with the minstrels and the dancers of Hathor. In Book of the Dead spell 189, one of the deceased beautifully expresses his satisfaction:

I will eat under that sycamore of Hathor,
for I have placed my portions there for her minstrels.
My fields have been assigned to me in Busiris (a city sacred to Osiris),
my green plants are in Heliopolis,
and I will live on bread of white emmer and beer of red barley;
there shall be given to me my father's and my mother's families,
and my door-keeper in respect of my land.²

In the decoration of tombs, there are texts and illustrations emphasizing the continuity of life, which persists even in death. But this is a paradoxical truth. In spell 110 of the Book of the Dead, for instance, the deceased says, "I have been immersed in the waterways as Osiris, Lord of Putrefaction, Lord of the Swamp-land." His readiness to submit, his willingness to face death, and his ability to bear that which cannot be otherwise all make Osiris the god of death. Being so intimately connected with death, Osiris remains in the netherworld, but his son Horus, with whom Isis is pregnant, will assume the royal office on earth.

²R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: British Museum Publications, 1993), p. 185.

In Osiris's *son* new life will sprout and blossom, and in him death is definitively conquered.

The image of putrefaction was also familiar to the alchemists, who did not hesitate to call their art a gift of the Holy Spirit. As Christians, they viewed the "suffering" of the substance in their vessel, that is, in the alchemical transformation process, as an allegory of the suffering of Christ. While staring at their vial and observing their chemical experiments, they projected their unconscious fantasies into the vessel. Some of them were quite aware of the psychological aspect of their activities. Thus, in a passage from the *Aquarium Sapientum* (aquarium of the sages) a treatise published in a book entitled *Museum Hermeticum* (Hermetic Museum, 1678), we read that

the Sages have called this decomposed product, on account of its blackness, the raven's head. In the same way, Christ (Isaiah 53) had no form nor comeliness, was the vilest of all men, full of griefs and sickness, and so despised that men even hid their faces from him, and he was esteemed as nothing....indeed, it [i.e., the raven's head, A.S.] is not unsuitably compared with Christ when the petrified body of Sol [i.e., the sun, A.S.] lies dead, inactive, like ashes, in the bottom of the phial, until, as a result of greater heat, its soul by degrees and little by little descends to it again, and once more infuses, moistens, and saturates the decaying and all but dead body, and preserves it from total destruction. So also did it happen to Christ himself, when at the Mount of Olives, and on the cross, he was roasted by the fire of the divine wrath (Matthew 26–27), and complained that he was utterly deserted by his heavenly Father, "yet none the less was always...comforted and strengthened" (Matthew 4, Luke 22) and, so to speak, imbued, nourished, and supported with divine nectar.³

In this alchemical imagery, the dead is abandoned to decay and dissolution, and in this very fact lies the mystery of renewal. The soul returning to the decayed body of Sol is an amazing parallel to the union of the

³C. G. Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 485.

ba-soul of the Sungod with his corpse, as described in the sixth hour of the Amduat. The Osiris myth expands these ideas into the story of the loving sister-spouse whose grieving laments resuscitate the dead god, her brother, just enough that he can impregnate her. The resulting birth of a new god, Horus, brings about a decisive turn of events. How can the renewal resulting from these events be better explained than through those Egyptian images of fertile land, a beautiful landscape flooded with sunlight, and flourishing vegetation, with all the peace and calm they evoke? Such images heal the soul, and it is for this reason that we encounter them here, in the netherworld, where the soul is exposed to the powers of death.

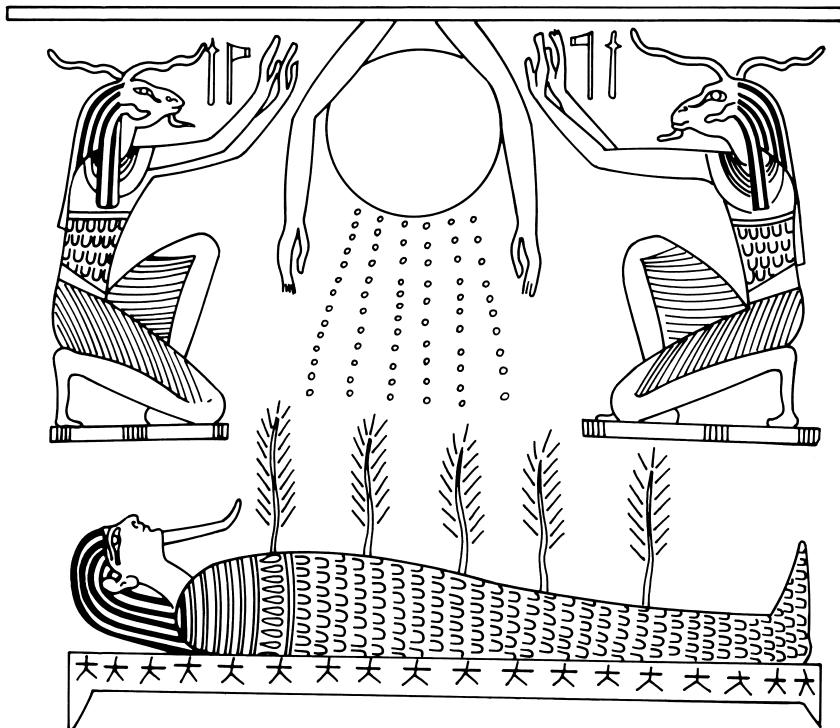
In the Amduat, the triumph of life over death is intimately connected with the symbolism of vegetation. The blessed dead are more than amply provided with everything they need, as we have seen, in the fertile fields of Wernes. Similarly, in the third nocturnal hour, those who dwell on the riverbanks receive acres of land from the Great God. It is thus appropriate that this region is also called the “Water of the Unique Lord, which brings forth nourishment.” Some of the private tombs at Thebes contain scenes of moving beauty, depicting the lush vegetation in Osiris’s realm of the dead. An example is the little tomb of Sennedjem in the Theban locale called Deir el-Medina, where we see the deceased and his wife plowing and harvesting in the midst of an exceedingly fertile landscape.

In her book *On Dreams and Death*, Marie-Louise von Franz comments on the symbolism of vegetation: “Vegetation represents the psychic mystery of death and resurrection. Moreover, one should bear in mind that in reality all vegetation is characterized by the fact that it draws its life directly from so-called dead, inorganic matter, from light, air, earth, and water.”⁴ That is why, in the Osiris myth, it is the *dead* god who is connected with the symbolism of life. The most striking image for this is the so-called grain Osiris, out of whose corpse the new grain sprouts. The Egyptian priests would model the typical shape of the mummified Osiris out of earth, plant seeds in it, and then water it. When new plants started to sprout, this was viewed as a manifestation

⁴M.-L. von Franz, *On Dreams and Death: A Jungian Interpretation*. New edition, with a Foreword by E. Kennedy-Xipolitas, trans. E. Kennedy-Xipolitas and V. Brooks (Peru, Ill.: Carus, 1998), p. 37.

of the blossoming of life out of death. The grain Osiris thus symbolizes revival from death, including the revival of all the blessed dead in the beyond. The contemporary European custom of planting evergreens on the graves of the deceased expresses the very same idea of a life that survives death.

Somehow our dreams also know of this motif of life overgrowing death with new vegetation. For instance, I remember a woman who came into my practice just before learning that she had a terminal illness. Shortly after receiving her diagnosis, she dreamed, "I am together with my friend in a marvelous, sunny landscape. There are fields of wheat, sun, blue sky, grass. We stand in front of a field with very tender ears, which were silently moved to and fro by the wind. My friend says: How nice is this! Everything



Grain Osiris

is completely silent. We speak with very low voices. I wake up. The image was very beautiful." This dream had a very consoling effect on the dreamer. The tenderness of it seemed to annihilate the brutality of her approaching death. Two years later, exactly one year before her death, another dream had a similar impact on the patient: "I was standing somewhere in the open field, looking up at some sort of a hill. It was a graveyard. I saw many crosses, and they were all covered by plants and bushes....It was a very calming image, totally peaceful and good." It is as though earthly life had been gradually dissolving, as though woven into plants that survived death, so that even the dreamer herself became a plant. It is as though the cross, symbol of being torn asunder between the opposites that sometimes make life so unbearable, could be overgrown in death, with the result that the wound of earthly life would gradually be healed.

This healing from death is the central issue of the myth of Osiris and his resurrection by Isis, with its symbolism of vegetation, a symbolism intimately connected with the realm of death. The creative aspect of Osiris is, paradoxically enough, his passivity. In the lower register of the third hour of the Amduat, which is again concerned with the renewal of the life of the blessed dead and the destruction of the damned, the god of death is depicted several times. We see him in the group of eight gods seated on their thrones: on the left, he is depicted four times wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt, and on the right, four times wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt; and we see him again just in front of the latter group, depicted twice, standing and looking backwards. The text accompanying all the deities in the lower register tells us what they receive from the Sungod and what their duty is:

This great god gives orders to them,
they live when he calls to them.
He assigns them their water,
and they receive their heads through the breath of his mouth.
What they have to do in the West is:
Doing the roasting and cutting up of the *ba*-souls.

Through the creative word of the Sungod, the dead regain their totality: body and head are guaranteed to remain joined together, the life

damaged by death is restored, and the wounds of the deceased are healed. In the midst of the enemies, whose souls are roasted and cut up—that is, in the midst of the inferno, the life-giving word creates and establishes a new order of things. Osiris, too, participates in this creative process. To him are attributed the two powers of creation that were traditional in Egyptian thought, *Hu* (utterance, authority) and *Sia* (insight, intelligence); in the Book of Gates, figures personifying these powers accompany the Sungod during the entirety of his journey through the netherworld. Psychologically speaking, creation through the word and new insight can be interpreted as an awakening of a new and higher consciousness. Or we may say that the descent into Osiris's realm of the dead—that is, in terms of psychology, total commitment to an archetypal passivity—leads to the renewal and regeneration of one's former attitude of consciousness. Behind this archetypal idea lies the motif of the sleep of death, which, as a sleep that heals, transcends all dimensions of time. We encounter it, for instance, in Goethe's *Faust*, in the transition from part 1 to part 2 of the work. In the dismal scene that concludes part 1, a scene filled with panic and death, Faust falls into a deathlike unconsciousness. And then, at the beginning of part 2, he awakens as a new being, completely transformed. The first thing we hear from him is the magnificent hymn in which Faust praises the overwhelming beauty of nature. It bears quoting here, at least in part:

The throb of life returns, with pulses beating
Soft to ethereal dawn, O steadfast earth,
True through the night, you waited for my greeting,
Breathing beneath my feet in glad new birth,
And, clothing me afresh in joy of living,
In high resolve that banishes misgiving,
You stir my soul to prove life's utmost worth.⁵

“The throb of life returns, with pulses beating / Soft to ethereal dawn”: that is how Faust beautifully praises the creative powers of what we want

⁵J. W. von Goethe, *Faust*, pt. 2, trans. Philip Wayne (London: Penguin, 1959), verses 4679–4686.

to call here the Osirian realm of the dead. Whoever wants to experience this regenerative power must first descend into the depths; it is only after a deathlike state of introversion, which might give others the impression of a complete paralysis and passivity to the external world, that he or she will resurge.

Some persons must remain lethargic for days, weeks, or even years, as though they had no strength at all, before they can become truly creative. Then one day they awaken from their daze, bestir themselves with a hitherto unsurpassed energy, and begin to labor harder than ever before, until their work is accomplished. Behind such behavior lies a reminiscence of archaic psychology. Archaic man could sit around doing nothing, just chatting or dozing in the sun for long stretches of time. Then suddenly he bestirred himself and went out hunting, exerting almost superhuman effort. This is the creative power of Osiris, which develops in close proximity to an individual's instinctive disposition and thus is relatively separate from one's external surroundings and one's fellow human beings.

In the realm of Osiris, intimate relatedness to the instincts is illustrated by the three boats accompanying the sun barque in the middle register of the third hour of the Amduat. Here, the sun god appears in various forms, all clearly connected with animal symbolism. On the first boat in front of the sun barque, the prow displays the head of a lioness, representing the goddess Pakhet, whose name means "she who tears (her prey) asunder." On the second, which is called the Baboon-barque, prow and stern end in a baboon's head. In the last boat, we see three representations of the falcon-headed Sungod. Each barque is protected by a snake god, rearing up and standing on its tail, warding off the evil forces threatening the Sungod on his journey. As we penetrate into the deeper regions of the netherworld, we shall learn more about this apotropaic aspect of the snake. Animal symbolism in general points to a process of psychic development occurring in a deep, even animal layer of the unconscious, meaning that this psychic process has yet to reach a higher layer of consciousness. With their animal symbolism, these images connected with the Sungod may refer to the common, archetypal origin of an aspect of a biological-instinctive development, on the one hand, and a spiritual development or transformation, on the other.

We may even say that the instincts are like dim luminosities.⁶ In any event, there can be no real progress of consciousness without this instinctual basis. Thus, with their animal symbolism, the three boats make it clear that in this hour, the Sungod is definitely in the grip of the process of transformation.

When we look at the right end of the lower register, where there are three male figures bending over, the healing and regenerating effect of Osiris once again becomes clear. Their names reveal that they are old and infirm: Bent, Creeping, and Disabled. Yet despite these names, the accompanying text assures that whoever knows them “is an *akh*-spirit (i.e., one of the blessed dead), who masters his two feet,” that is, someone who has overcome the strains of old age—or, to put the matter psychologically, who is once again in possession of a firm and solid standpoint.

The sheer abundance of images and motifs we find in the Amduat can be confusing, especially at first. Even Hermann Kees, a highly respected scholar who authored a major work on Egyptian beliefs about the hereafter,⁷ expressed his utter bewilderment in the face of the Books of the Netherworld, going so far as to call them a “mental low of creation,” written “with no serious attempt at comprehensibility.” Regarding the Book of the Two Ways, a precursor of the Amduat, his appraisal was even more devastating. According to him, this text was almost totally “incubated in the witch’s cauldron of priestly sorcerers.” No wonder, then, that our preoccupation with the rich and often complex symbolism of the Books of the Netherworld demands so much patience. Even when we feel we can recognize some of their structures, we must remain aware that we are far from a thorough understanding of the intelligence and wisdom that inform these writings.

Similarly, in psychotherapeutic practice, we find ourselves struggling with the same difficulties when we attempt to elaborate certain characteristic traits in a series of dreams that occur over many years. At first,

⁶See B. Hannah, “The Archetypal Symbolism of the Serpent,” in *The Archetypal Symbolism of Animals*, ed. David Eldred (Wilmette, Ill.: Chiron, 2006), p. 11.

⁷H. Kees, *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Ägypter* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983), p. 300.

we see only a chaotic mixture of symbolic material. Gradually, however, we discover basic streams of recurring motifs, streams that seem to flow in a spiral course around certain principal foci. This initial uncertainty has its roots in the autonomy of the unconscious spirit and in its perpetually flowing dynamic. Though the preconscious psychic totality is a living and dynamic source, it is, paradoxically enough, at the same time completely consistent and immobile. Thus, on the one hand, it is continuously moving, dissolving, and transforming, for which reason it is extremely difficult to investigate the basic archetypal structures of a given individual's psyche, while on the other hand, we can find some sort of an ordering or self-regulating principle that seems to aim at the formation of a clear structure or personality.

When we concentrate on the Amduat and its illustrations of the hours of the night, we see a recurrence of these very same motifs: rejuvenation, the healing process, the destruction of enemies, and so forth. And because of these repetitions, we can see, from one hour to the next, the emergence of an underlying, thoroughly meaningful, and dynamic-progressive development, one that could unfold in this way only, and no other.

The second and third hour of the Amduat radiate a unique fascination. The paradisiacal region of Wernes and the waters of Osiris are filled with divine peace; through images of this sort, the Egyptians frankly acknowledged the beauty of the material world. The representations of these hours initiate the actual descent into the dark caverns of the netherworld. It is as though their author intended to tell us that no one should take the risk of descending into the depths without first beholding the beauty of life. A deep truth lies in this sentiment. Whoever has to deal with the dark content of the unconscious, or rather is forced to do so by fate, will stand a better chance of success if he or she has first experienced the good aspects of life as concretely as possible. Otherwise, all too easily, he or she might fall victim to the darkness. It is for this very reason that time and again, as we have already noted, the alchemists emphasized that those who do their opus, or work (that is, perform their experiments), must have a joyful and consistent disposition.

In psychoanalysis, the requirement of having experienced the real world in one's own life to the extent possible comes into play with the interpretation of a dream. If, for instance, an analysand dreams of the



Tree goddess

forest, it is far from sufficient to know that this is a symbol for the unconscious. Why does he or she dream of the forest and not of the sea, which would also symbolize the unconscious? The decisive question is which aspect of the unconscious a specific dream symbol addresses. The trees of the forest point to the archetypal law of passivity we mentioned above in connection with Osiris—that is, the psychological law of letting things develop and grow until they come into being by themselves. Their trunks overwhelm us, for they are mightier than we. In the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic, King Gilgamesh and his companion

Enkidu experience this stunning power of the trees when they first enter the cedar forest:

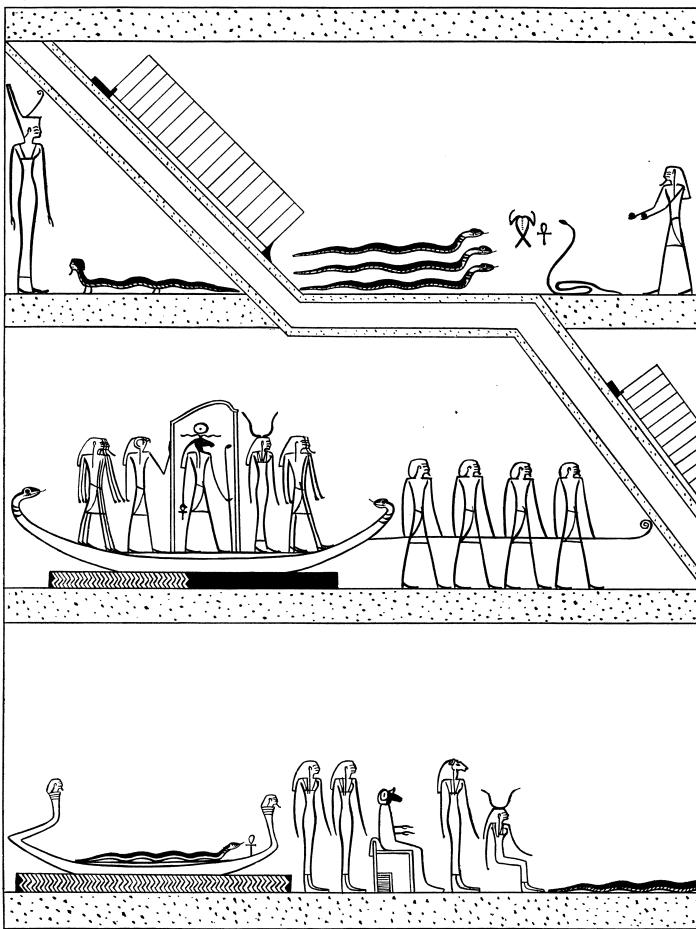
They stood still and gazed at the forest,
They looked at the height of the cedars.⁸

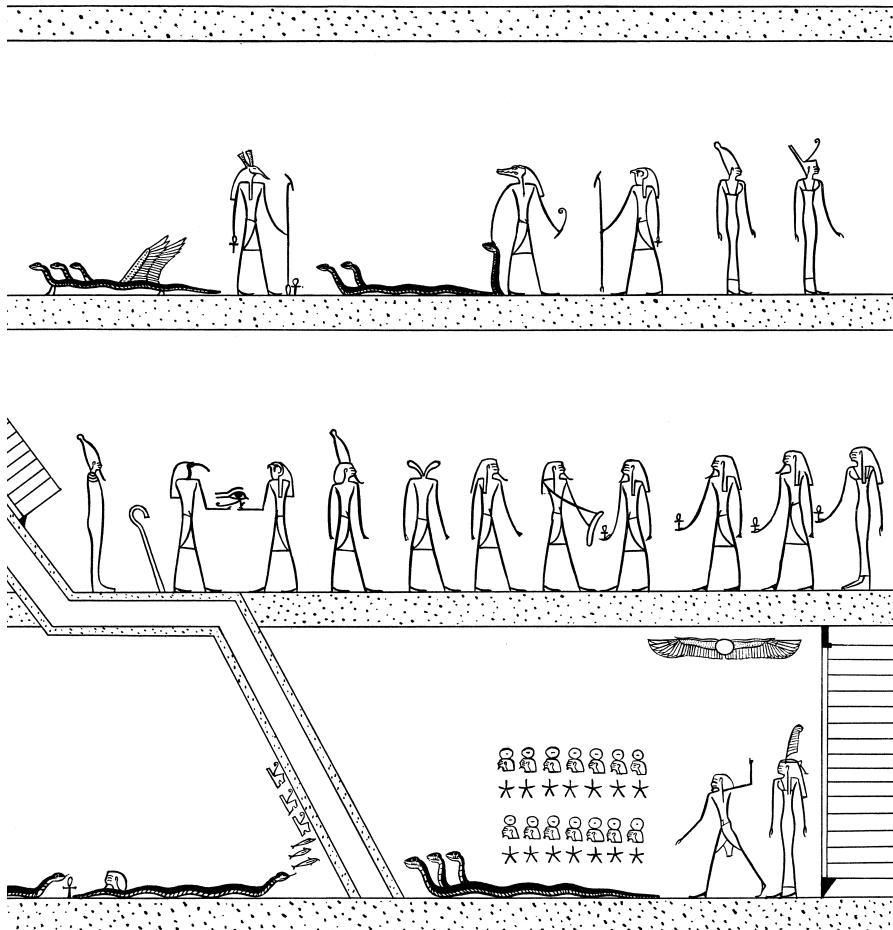
To dedicate oneself to tree consciousness means to trust the higher destiny that is there in the background and with us through all our life, a destiny that far surpasses the ego. The one who dreams of the forest must obey the laws of the forest. What is required is not so much struggle as the patience that will allow the dreamer to overgrow an obstacle or heal a wound. In such a situation, what remains supportive are not so much the plans and activities of the ego as the possibilities of development and growth that lie immanent in the soul. For this is how a tree grows: it develops the predisposition that has always been in it. An oak will become an oak, an apple tree an apple tree, an elder bush an elder bush, and so forth. The nature of human beings is no different; an individual can become only what and who he or she is. Therefore, we may say that the tree symbolizes the unconscious path of the spirit. Only the truth of the given individual can make sense to that person's life—the truth of the inner man or woman, the naked truth of one's own life, just as it is.

And this is precisely what the alchemists were always on the lookout for and what they sought in all their experiments: the *lapis philosophorum*, the stone of wisdom. For it is wise to have as few illusions about ourselves as possible and to be and become nothing other than what we are. "For the art," they said, "imitates nature, and improves her in some cases, and surpasses her: Thus also the nature of the patient is supported by the work of the physician."⁹ To accept one's own nature, that is, the just-so-ness of one's life, means to find the stone. And this was the secret and precious wisdom of Osiris, god of death and regeneration.

⁸E. A. Speiser, trans., *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament*, 2d ed., ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 82.

⁹*Rosarium philosophorum, Ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalters, Faksimile der illustrierten Erstausgabe (Frankfurt, 1550)*, facsimile edition ed. J. Telle (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992), vol. 2, p. 17. English translation by A. S.





FOURTH HOUR

THE SNAKE-LAND OF SOKAR

The Dark Night of the Soul

In the fourth hour of the night, we enter an entirely new region of the netherworld, one that is especially dark and dry. Its name is Rosetau, whose literal meaning in the ancient Egyptian language is “act of towing.” The sun barque has run aground in the shallows and can no longer be rowed along the flowing water. With arduous labor, the assisting deities must tow the barque through the sandy region of this nocturnal hour. Gone are the life-giving fertility of Wernes and the gentle light of the fields of Osiris, though the god is intimately present in this hour as well. In this Land of Silence, as it is also called, the darkness is so intense that even the Sungod himself can no longer see those who dwell on the banks. He can only hear their voices.

The barren desert teems with snakes whose fiery breath illuminates the impenetrable darkness with a pale and ghostly light. This is the sandy Land of Sokar, and the fifth hour of the night will be called the “Cavern of Sokar.” Sokar, originally the falcon-headed god of death in the Memphite area, is a god of the earth, and in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, he is already identified with Osiris.¹ In his realm, the stream of life runs dry, and there is not enough water to carry the sun barque over the shallows. Without the supportive presence of the four deities who tow it, and without their rope, the continuity of creation would be seriously challenged. Here the Sungod is most definitely in need of the help of his entourage. His barque has been transformed into a double-headed serpent, for only the serpent can successfully traverse this dangerous region of the snake-demons. Several times, the Sungod’s journey is blocked by doors that bar the way, and the line of the stream of the netherworld, which was previously clear, is broken up into a confusing, zigzag path.

In this imagery we see a psychological truth. There are times when obstacles bar the way to the further development of an individual, or even a whole nation, times when the dominant consciousness is in dire need of renewal, for it is morbid, no longer serves the flow of life, and is inadequate to the present situation and its requirements. In such times, the individual might easily fall into a severe depression. Nothing seems to move anymore. One can but wait for that moment when the “supportive

¹R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 119, § 620.

deities towing the sun barque”—that is, psychologically, some auxiliary inner figures within the unconscious—become active and manage to overcome the present stagnation on a conscious level. At a national level, moreover, this would mean that the ruling political or religious-dogmatic order becomes undermined to the point where it finally collapses. In such chaos, renewal will be successful only when it is nourished by the underlying archetypal stream of life, that is, by the vivid and enlivening spirit.

In the introduction to the fourth hour, we read that those who dwell in this mysterious region are well provided for. Despite the darkness that prevails, the blessed dead are not in want, for the necessities of life are available. Psychologically, this means that even when we suffer darkness—as, for example, in a state of depression—the energy needed for life can nevertheless be present, though the ego-consciousness may have only limited access to it. In such periods, the major part of our energy lies secluded in the collective unconscious, where a process of renewal is at work. In the area of religion, many myths contain the motif of pregnancy through death, and this motif will be discussed later. At the individual level, these periods leave us feeling somehow paralyzed, sad, depressed, and powerless. And yet, contrary to the peculiar stagnation we consciously experience, the psychic world of the unconscious is even more alive than usual, and this can cause a dangerous imbalance between the inner and the outer world.

In the *I Ching*, hexagram number 36 shows how to deal with such a fatal situation.² The basic theme of the hexagram is the darkening of light. The sun has sunk under the earth, and the earth has darkened. The name of the hexagram means literally “wounding of the bright.” This is precisely the situation in the land of Sokar, where the fire (i.e., the sun) has sunk under the earth and is now the sun of night. In such times, says the *I Ching*, one must “maintain his inner light; while remaining outwardly yielding and tractable,” for “perseverance must dwell in inmost consciousness and should not be discernible from without.” “In social intercourse one should not try to be all-knowing,” but rather, “let many

²*I Ching or Book of Changes*, The Richard Wilhelm Translation rendered into English by C. F. Baynes (London: Penguin, 1967), pp. 139–140.

things pass, without being duped.” Metaphorically speaking, these words beautifully describe the behavior adequate to the land of Sokar, that is, to a state in which psychic energy is hidden in the depths of the earth, or in the unconscious. Again, the very beginning of the introduction to the fourth hour states the matter clearly and simply:

Pausing in being towed by the person of this great god
in the mysterious cavern of the West “with protected forms.”
Taking care of those who are in it with his voice,
without his seeing them.

A transformation of consciousness rising from the depths to the surface from which it will emerge needs, more than anything else, stillness and persistence. It is much more a matter of being towed and carried along, like the Sungod here, than an active forward movement. Here, in the Amduat, even the great god Re has to dedicate himself entirely to a process of transformation, whose innermost structure stems from a fate to which not even his divine will has access.

An individual involved in such a transpersonal event needs most to live in his or her innermost consciousness and awareness, as indicated by the *I Ching*; only then can he or she gain the correct mental attitude, so as to be open to just that kind of transformation whose origin lies in the innermost part of the psyche, that is, in the collective unconscious. In this sort of life situation, any attempt to use all kinds of tricks and means to change the outer, perhaps painful, situation is in vain, for the transformation will begin on its own, and it will begin deep inside the individual and there alone.

Let us take, by way of example, a hitherto harmonious and uncomplicated relationship between a man and a woman. One day, this relationship is thwarted by the love affair of one of them. Almost overnight, all sorts of seemingly insuperable obstacles arise between the two. At the beginning, they might discuss the problems, trying to provide a clarification, but soon they will realize, to their bitter disappointment, that nothing of that sort will help. The time to solve the problem might not yet have come. Still, they must bear the uncertainty regarding their future, for neither can really know how, or even if, their relationship will continue. This painful

situation must be endured, though not in a fatalistic way but rather with alertness on the part of that “innermost consciousness” that recognizes and follows the slightest psychic activities of the unconscious. In psychotherapeutic practice, we often see people who are too weak and agitated to persevere, patiently and successfully, through such a severe conflict in the matter of love. Instead, they desire to create facts and take destiny into their own hands. In most cases I have followed, such efforts change nothing, for merely altering the outer situation is usually of no use. In such cases, what really matters is a shift rooted in deep psychic layers, that is, a transformation process that originates in the collective unconscious, for only this can fundamentally change someone or something, or, as the *Amduat* puts it, can “pierce the (mysterious) way” of the future development.

In the fourth nocturnal hour, for the first time, the sun barque gets a name: “Piercing-the-way.” The Egyptian word for “piercing” has the determinative (a hieroglyph indicating the category of meaning of a word) of a knife, a cutting instrument used with words indicating the way a weapon or a serpent’s bite pierces. Though the Sungod is pausing while being towed, this does not exclude partial activity on his part. Psychologically, the image of the cutting knife points to an alertness that is the aforementioned innermost consciousness.

Just as the sun barque pierces its way through the darkness like a serpent, so in the midst of the dark clouds of a depression, the individual can find assistance in an alertness that renounces grandiose plans or ideas about his or her own future. The person who has come to a dead stop in his or her life will need to follow the “very long path,” for, as the *Rosarium philosophorum* tells us, “nature completes her work only gradually,”³ According to the alchemist Morienus, darkening of the mind and suffering belong necessarily to the initial stage of the opus. Its origin lies in an invasion by still totally foreign content of the unconscious into consciousness, content that the consciousness is unable to integrate at first. Such an initial stage is hard to bear because the unleashed opposites of the interior still need to be accepted as a part of one’s self. Redemption

³ *Rosarium philosophorum, Ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalters, Faksimile der illustrierten Erstausgabe* (Frankfurt, 1550), facsimile edition ed. J. Telle (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992), vol. 2, p. 19. English translation by A. S.

from such a conflict, be it ever so painful, must be left to the healing powers of the unconscious. Our task is merely to be as aware as possible of this process and to retain an open, sharp, and conscious mind (the image of the piercing knife) that is, paradoxically, possible only with the aid of a sane instinctive disposition (the image of the piercing serpent). Such an accepting and conscious awareness of psychic images, along with the active acceptance of their emotional and affective quality (depressive feelings), can strongly stimulate the healing powers of the unconscious, thus improving the transformation process. It is not up to us to determine the length of this journey through the dark regions of a depression, that is, the duration of this transitional stage: the unconscious obeys only the laws of its own making.

By depicting the sun barque of the fourth hour in the form of a double-headed serpent, the author of the *Amduat* has made it clear that in this wasteland, healing can come only from instinctive and archetypal forces (that is, from the snake demons and deities) that lie deep within us. What is required is not ego-consciousness and intellect, not the gleaming light of the daytime sun, but the mysterious spirit of the serpent and the earth. This spirit is the dim consciousness that remains instinctively connected to and focused on the enlivening images of the unconscious and the netherworld.

Timor Dei initium sapientiae—“the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (*Proverbs 1:7*). This famous biblical saying is the most apt motto for all who have embarked on the dangerous journey of the fourth and following nocturnal hours, or for all who are about to proceed into the realm of the collective unconscious, which normally does not happen by one’s own will but by fate. This transition cannot be accomplished on one’s own and certainly not with a heroic attitude. It rather requires the psychic forces of the inner self. From time immemorial, religious traditions have demanded that the initiand be accompanied and supported by one or more assistants. In the fourth hour, these assistants are personified by the gods towing the barque, who are connected with the Sungod in a particularly intimate manner by their towrope.

In our dreams, such supportive figures can appear, quite surprisingly, in the form of an unexpected visitor or visitors. Notwithstanding his or her often plain and modest appearance, such a figure can have a profound

and lasting effect on the dreamer. He or she perceives that the visitor, sometimes immediately and sometimes after a while, has a mysterious knowledge, for the visitor comes from another, transpersonal world. C. G. Jung developed a way to communicate with such figures, calling it “active imagination.” In it, the light of consciousness must be reduced to such an extent that it is nearly extinguished, with only a spark of consciousness remaining to receive messages from the unconscious. In this way, images may emerge from the realm of the collective unconscious, or a dialogue with a figure inside oneself may commence. If we use active imagination over a long period of time, certain inner figures will gradually become extremely helpful and supportive companions who time and again reveal their mysterious knowledge and wisdom to us.

What are the secret and the symbolism of the towrope? Since it connects the Sungod and his assistants, the towers, the rope incorporates some sort of eternal connection between various archetypal powers, thanks to fate. In dreams, such a rope may also indicate an inner relationship of consciousness with the collective unconscious. Twice in this hour of the night, the motif of the rope finds special emphasis: in the name of the region, Rosetau, “action of towing”, and in the four gods preceding the barque and towing it, each of whom has a name referring to the towrope. We shall encounter this motif of the rope again in the hours that follow, where it symbolizes an inner-divine connection between the Sungod and his surroundings. But the fact that it already occurs in the fourth hour shows that a new psychic relatedness is beginning to emerge now, well before the actual transformation of Re in the sixth hour. This relatedness will not cease; rather, it will persist until he is finally born at sunrise the next morning. In psychological terms this means that, although darkness, depression, and fear have greatly diminished our connection to the outer world, a new inner psychic connectedness within the archetypal realm is becoming real; henceforth, every true transformation and renewal of conscious attitude will come only from this revival of the unconscious.

In shamanic initiation rituals, the rope symbolizes the shaman’s relatedness to the transcendent spirits of the beyond; in terms of psychology, this means that he or she is aware of the eternal connection with the archetypal powers of the collective unconscious. If, as the *I Ching* describes it, a wounding of the bright (or light) has taken place, and if the conscious

mind no longer knows how to proceed, ego-consciousness must adopt precisely that attitude that the Sungod assumes at the beginning of the fourth hour: pausing while being towed. One must rest and wait until supporting forces are constellated in the deeper layers of the unconscious, for only with the help of these forces will regeneration become possible.

Considering the increasing darkness of this hour, we should not be astonished that this wasteland of Sokar is teeming with snakes. In dreams, a multitude of snakes can indicate an initial stage of dissociation. The same condition may be expressed by a swarm of bugs, insects, worms, or other vermin. In the fourth hour, the gradual descent to the deepest point of midnight is threatened by a complete blackout of the sunlight, which would in fact cause a cosmic catastrophe. Psychologically, this indicates a dissolution of the field of consciousness, as we can observe it in a psychotic reaction. As dangerous and destructive as such a dissolution of the dominant consciousness can be, it is nevertheless the indispensable precondition of renewal.

In alchemy, we find this idea everywhere. At the end of the bloody celebration in the seventeenth-century treatise *Chymical Wedding*, for instance, all the participants are decapitated. Despite this bloody ritual, the virgin consoles the initiand, telling him, “such a death makes [one] even more alive.” And in a manner comparable to the pausing Sungod in the Amduat, she advises the adept just to go to sleep and no longer bother himself with such events: “We better go to sleep and do not worry anymore, then they [i.e., the decapitated ones, A. S.] will be treated quite well.” And truly, soon after, the initiand finds an egg from which a little bird hatches. At the beginning, still small and inconspicuous, it gradually grows, thanks to the food it is given. It changes color several times, until finally it has grown into an extremely beautiful bird. At this point, it loses all its feathers as it bathes, is decapitated, just like the guests at the wedding, and is burned into ashes. But from these ashes, the alchemist forms a little boy and girl “such as one has never seen before.” With the blood of the bird administered to them orally, the two are resurrected to new life, and soon after, they become a royal couple of celestial beauty.⁴

⁴Joh. Valentin Andreae, *Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz*, ed. R. von Dülmen (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1981), pp. 96 and 109–114. English translation by A. S.

The divine couple in the treatise symbolizes that form of love that C. G. Jung has called “the eternal connection through fate.”⁵ It is the highest stage of love, representing the transpersonal archetypal source of every true and vivid love. But this source reveals itself only *after* the dissolution of an individual’s former attitude; and since this is often a painful and lengthy procedure, the alchemical images do not lack a certain cruelty and strangeness. The certainty with which the virgin declares that such death will “make [one] even more alive” should not be accepted without reservation, for we can never really know for certain whether new life will emerge out of *nigredo* and chaos, or whether, in the end, the destructive aspect will be stronger.

Despite the threat of the darkness in the wasteland of Rosetau, there is, as we read in the Book of the Dead, hope for the deceased:

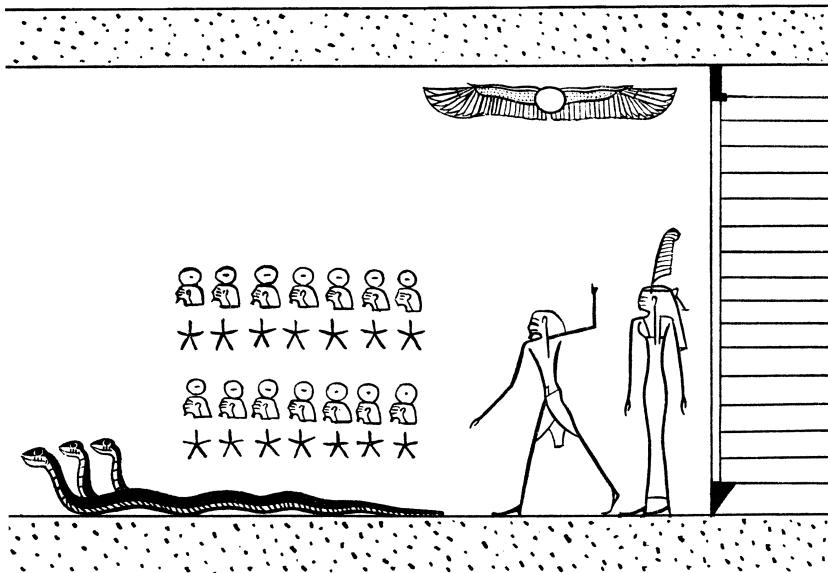
I have opened the ways in Rosetau,
for I have assuaged the pains of Osiris.⁶

Where does this confidence that *the suffering of the Sungod will be healed* come from? In this fourth hour of the Amduat, we find various answers.

Let us consider the final scene at the right of the lower register. Its conspicuous symbol is a winged sun disk called Khepri. In sharp contrast to the threat posed by the sun barque’s standstill on the sandbank, the winged Khepri beetle points ahead in time to the agility and liveliness of the Sungod in his juvenile form. In the desperate depths of this desert, his renewal has already commenced. Still, this renewal of consciousness cannot yet reach the clarity of daylight. It is in the firmament of the nocturnal sky that the winged god appears for the time being. The fourteen heads, each with a sun disk above it and a star below it, may have an astronomical significance that remains unknown to us, but they certainly also express the consolation afforded by the sparkle of the nocturnal sky,

⁵ C. G. Jung, Letter of April 18, 1941, in *Letters*, ed. G. Adler and A. Jaffe, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), Vol. 1, p. 298.

⁶ Book of the Dead, spell 17; R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 4th ed. (London: British Museum, 1993), p. 103.



Brilliance of the night sky, detail from fourth hour

with its mild radiation of light, even in this gloomy region of the netherworld. The preceding figure called “He-who-is-in-heaven” belongs to the nocturnal sky, as does the goddess Maat at the end of the register. Her presence unambiguously demonstrates that the divine order of creation does not cease in this dark region, however unpleasant it might be.

In psychological terms, this depiction of Re’s morning form of the Khepri beetle in the nocturnal sky symbolizes a new content of consciousness emerging from the darkness of the unconscious, a content that for the present can be recognized only intuitively. One might also say that in this figure, the principle of individuation is represented *in statu nascendi*. The precondition of such an intuitive recognition—I am tempted to call it a mystical experience—is an *abaissement du niveau mental* (lowering of the level of consciousness), as is needed in the aforementioned active imagination; for only if the light of ego-consciousness does not shine too brightly will the gleam of the psychic contents, which are initially still weak, be recognized as they gradually ascend from the unconscious.

The mystics and alchemists also knew these sparkling nocturnal lights of the soul, and they called them *scintillae* (little sparks) of the soul. Out of such as-yet isolated and disconnected contents of consciousness, a new conscious attitude can gradually develop, a new psychic content as symbolized by the image of the Khepri beetle or the winged youth of the alchemists. At present, however, it is constellated only in the unconscious, that is, in its latent form; and one day, the content will be clear enough that it can be fully integrated in the ego-consciousness, as we shall see in the twelfth hour of the Amduat.

The ambivalence that prevails between the threatening standstill of the sun barque and the psychic experience of aliveness emerging from the light of the night sky mirrors an experience well known to many people. In the midst of a dark period in our lives, when everything we do and are becomes meaningless, for the Great Doubter beclouds our senses and minds, in the midst of melancholy and fear, suddenly and most thoroughly unexpected, a vivid source can open up, a source whose healing power will not miss the mark in its effect on us. At first, we may not trust the newly flowing water of life, for the Doubter might spoil it again, but the longer it continues, the more freely it will flow, until one day we will realize, "This is me!" A new, hitherto-unknown side, or an ancient part of the human soul that long ago sank into the unconscious, awakens to new life. But with this observation, I anticipate the actual course that Re's journey will take; here we are still in the fourth hour, far from the deepest point of midnight and farther still from all the jubilation that will occur in the twelfth hour of the night.

Whenever the winged sun disk illuminates the inner nocturnal sky of the psyche, we may predict a future psychic development in someone's life. A dream, for instance, can reveal such a purposeful image to us, though we can never know how long this state of "pregnancy" will last, nor can we know whether this child of our soul will be healthy and capable of life. Unconscious processes are part of nature, and that is why, despite all of nature's "laws," they always remain somehow unpredictable.

In the *I Ching*, we find a second hexagram whose content corresponds to what is in the fourth nocturnal hour of the Amduat. Hexagram 47, "Oppression, Exhaustion," speaks of a lake that is empty, for its water has

flowed into deeper regions: the lake is above, the water below, making it an image of oppression and exhaustion. A strong man, says the accompanying commentary, remains cheerful despite all danger. Such stability is stronger than fate. “He who lets his spirit be broken by exhaustion certainly has no success. But if adversity only bends a man, it creates in him a power to react that is bound in time to manifest itself.” There is no water in the lake: an image of exhaustion. This, continues the text, is an image for an adverse stroke of fate in human life: “In such times there is nothing a man can do but acquiesce in his fate and remain true to himself. This concerns *the deepest stratum of his being*, for this alone is superior to all external fate.” The patience and ability to endure difficult periods of life successfully, as suggested by the *I Ching*, form the real secret of Osiris. The Chinese *Book of Changes* expresses this point beautifully: unfavorable circumstances sometimes interrupt the flow of life, and it is precisely such circumstances that enable us to reach deeper layers of our own being, provided that in the midst of all our distress, we remain persistent and do not attempt to escape our fate. We must move forward step by step, as does the striding man we see in the abovementioned final scene of the fourth hour.⁷

This last point brings us back to the Amduat. The contending of Horus and Seth for the rule of Egypt included both episodes of physical combat and a lawsuit before a divine tribunal, and we find several allusions to this lawsuit in the images of the fourth hour. We see an example in the name of the god standing between the upright snake and the three-headed, winged serpent in the upper register: “He-who-separates-the-two gods.” This god can only be Thoth, the divine messenger and scribe, who became the Egyptian god of wisdom. This archetypal motif of the fraternal feud has come down to us in the records of various cultures, including the story of Cain and Abel in the Hebrew Bible.

Seth is a god of instinctive urges; he is aggressive, battle-tried, and impulsive.⁸ Whenever he finds the opportunity to cause confusion, he does so. We see his brute force, that is, the “law of the jungle,” embodied in

⁷ *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, pp. 181–185.

⁸ On Seth, see H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, Probleme der Ägyptologie 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967).

his depiction as a hippopotamus. Psychologically, he represents demonic energies, destructive autonomous affects, irresistible impulses to act, and uncontrollable emotions—in short, all those aspects of our life that Jung called “the shadow.” In a violent episode of the myth, Seth tears out the eye of Horus, thus metaphorically obstructing, with his blind instinctive drive, the development of higher insight and consciousness. And yet, the end of the myth suggests that the demonic nature of Seth also has a healing function. We shall encounter this rescuing aspect in the seventh hour of the Amduat, when Seth surrenders himself entirely to the service of the Sungod: with the assistance of Isis, he protects the Sungod and his entourage from the evil attack of Apopis.

Horus, the son and heir of Osiris (for Seth is Osiris’s brother and thus not his rightful heir), is Seth’s antagonist. Though his physical strength is inferior to Seth’s, he eventually prevails. In extreme contrast to Seth, Horus is patient, moderate, and just, but also—and in this respect, his real power becomes visible—of an astute and cunning nature. This is the quality that makes it possible to attract the benevolence of many of the other deities, above all Isis, who is herself called the “most cunning one.”

The Egyptians considered the complementary structures of life far too important to remain unseen. Thus, in one way or another, both of these mythological antagonists had to be recognized and accepted. The struggle between the two enemies could not end with the complete annihilation of the dark and evil forces as represented by Seth, nor was it possible to project the evil outwardly in some sort of scapegoat psychology. In the Egyptian view of things, there could be no attempt to find a way to make it seemingly nonexistent; rather, it had to remain a reality, always present with all the threat it posed. The richness of Egyptian thought is revealed in this acceptance of the fact that opposites are never resolved but instead endure, consistent in all their problematic and polarity. Let us recall the symbol of the double-headed one, which we met in the second hour!

The mythological tradition suggests various ways to resolve the feud between Horus and Seth, as well as the issue between Osiris and Seth that led Seth to assassinate his brother. Here we do not need to discuss the various versions of the myth that have been preserved for us, for however the respective solution may appear in these versions, what really matters is that in each case, each of the sides in the conflict does indeed end up

with rights of his own. These conflicts lead to a new world order in which Osiris gains sovereignty over the dead, Seth receives sovereignty over the realm of the desert and the foreign lands, and Horus assumes sovereignty over the united realm of Upper and Lower Egypt.

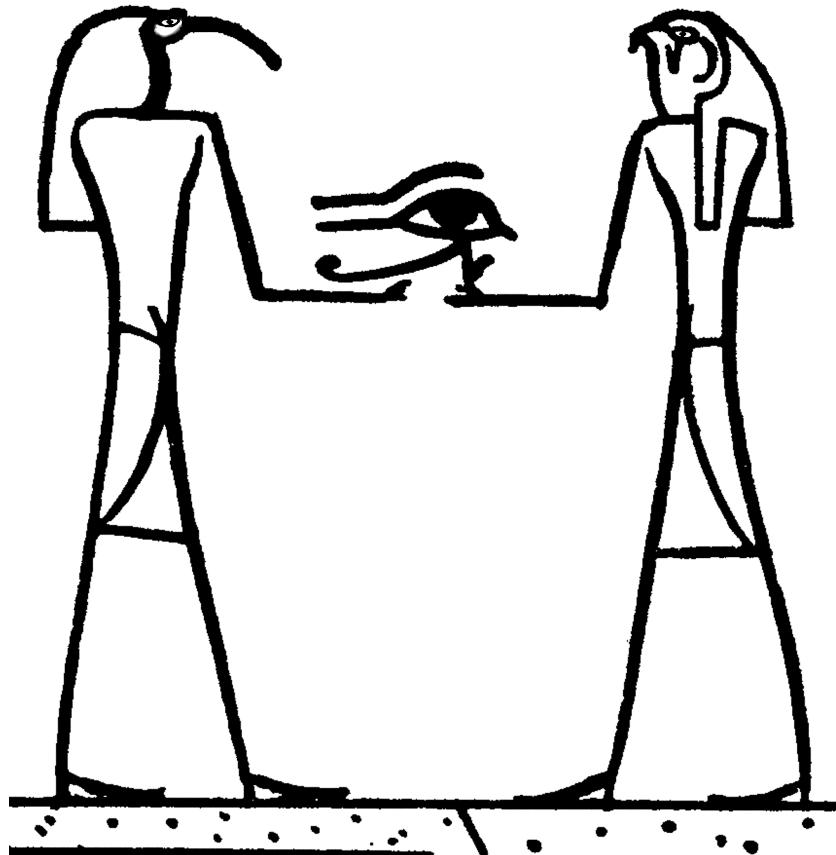
In her book *On Dreams and Death*, Marie-Louise von Franz describes this basic fact as “a transformation from egocentrism to ego-consciousness,” and she continues,

All of our shadow impulses lead to an egocentrism of desire, of affect, of the impulses of the will. One wants at all costs, and often in a childish manner, to have one’s own way. If the ego succeeds in making these impulses conscious and in subordinating them to the Self (to the “god” within), then its fiery energy is transformed into a realization of its identity. The ego then becomes conscious of its “just-so-ness”; the lead coffin, which is experienced as confining, transforms itself into a mystical vessel, into a feeling of being preserved and “contained” (also in the sense of no longer being able to lose one’s composure).⁹

This lead coffin is an allusion to one of the versions of the myth of Osiris. In this version, Seth locks his brother in a lead coffin and throws him into the waters of the Nile, thus sealing his fate of death. This imprisonment in the darkness of the grave or the netherworld will be the main topic of the next hour, the Cavern of Sokar. In regard to the “god within” (he who lies hidden in the coffin), we have already met his future in the symbol of the winged sun disk, the Khepri beetle.

The various allusions to the myth of Osiris in the fourth hour of the Amduat announce a new theme: the beginning of a transformation of consciousness. The central image of the middle register represents the god Thoth. Traditionally, in the versions of the myth, he appears in the role of the one who settles the quarrel. In this scene, he presents the sacred “Eye” (to Osiris-Sokar), the Eye that is always threatened by the powers of darkness. The image is thus an allusion to the injured eye of

⁹ M.-L. Franz, *On Dreams and Death: A Jungian Interpretation*, new edition with a Foreword by E. Kennedy-Xipolitas, trans. E. Kennedy-Xipolitas and V. Brooks (Peru, Ill.: Carus, 1998), p. 20.



The sacred Eye, detail from fourth hour

Horus, which is renewed with the help of Thoth. But apart from this, the Eye offered to Osiris-Sokar symbolizes light, which in Egyptian texts is often described as the “Eye of the god,” and which is safely protected by the earth god Sokar in the dark realm of this region of the night.

This motif of the loss of the Eye of Horus and its restoration reflects an important psychological dynamic. Each real transformation process and renewal of consciousness is anticipated by the loss and destruction of an old attitude. If this has happened, many things cannot be seen in

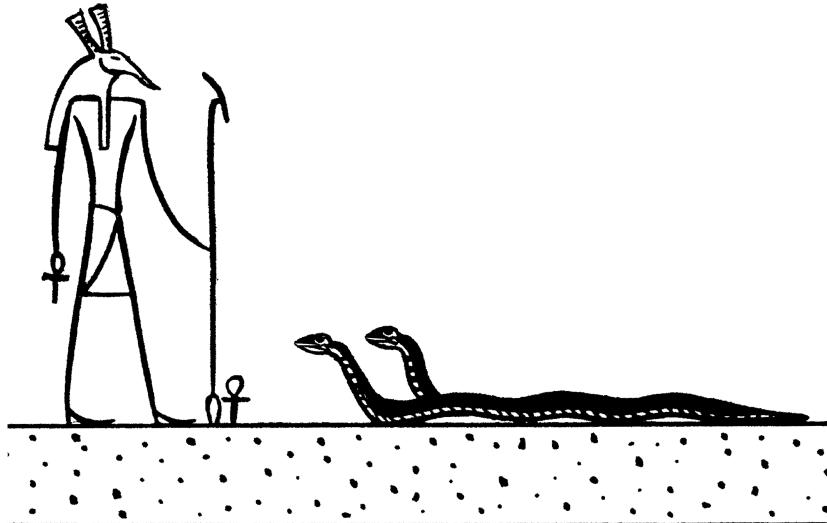
the same way as before and as they are still seen by many others. The loss of one's old *Weltanschauung* can be quite painful, since it may easily lead to the breaking up of old friendships. But a healing growth of consciousness (the healing Eye of Horus) can emerge from this loss after the separation and differentiation of ego-consciousness from the unconscious (that is, in the wake of the conflict of the antagonists in the myth). Each growth of consciousness leads to a clearer awareness of the objective psychic and the preconscious totality out of which, again and again, ego-consciousness regenerates and finds itself extended.

This regeneration in the midst of darkness is what is symbolized psychologically by the inner Eye of Osiris-Sokar, which is given to him by the divine messenger Thoth. It symbolizes that introverted attitude that the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke once called *Weltinnenschau* (the inner view of the world), a recognition and awareness of the inner life in the realm of the dark night of the soul. Unlike the active recognition of ego-consciousness, the *inner eye* incorporates an intuitive awareness whose origin is in the dark spirit of matter itself and is more of a spontaneous insight (in German, *Einfall*). It is not that *I* have recognized something but rather that *it* occurred to me. This inner light is the indispensable precondition of any creative work.

In the Egyptian view of man, it is the *ka*-soul that contains the insight, knowledge, and aliveness coming from the realm of Osiris. In the upper register of the fourth hour, we find a god in the shape of a two-headed serpent called Neheb-kau, a name that occurs as early as the Pyramid Texts (spell 340). According to Kurt Sethe's scholarly commentary on the Pyramid Texts, this god is to be interpreted as the one who gives back the eternal forces of the *ka*-soul to those who have successfully passed the Judgment of the Dead.¹⁰

In the ancient Egyptian view of the totality of an individual, there is a multiplicity of physical and psychic parts, all of them mutually related. This is true not only in this life but also for life in the hereafter. This fact is why, in the Amduat, it is of such great urgency that the *ba*-soul be united

¹⁰On Sethe's suggestion as applied to the context of the Amduat, see E. Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes*, pt. 2, *Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 7 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963), p. 85.



The snake god *Neheb-kau*, detail from fourth hour

with the body and the corpse as well as with the *ka*. Only this union guarantees that the deceased will recover his or her full and total life, his or her integrity. Personal wholeness consists not just of the *body*, which in the Books of the Netherworld is often called “flesh” (which is not at all soulless, for there exists no dead matter in ancient times), but also of the *ba*, the *ka*, the *heart* (as the seat of intellect and emotions), the *shadow*—which does not, of course, have anything to do with the term “shadow” in analytical psychology but rather designates a partial soul wandering around above and beneath the earth, that is, in the netherworld—and finally the *name*.

Unlike the freely moving and thus bird-shaped *ba*-soul, the *ka* is connected with the body of the deceased, which is lying at rest. At death, the *ka*, or life force, leaves the body of the deceased. Only the magically and ritually effected reuniting of the deceased’s body and his or her *ka*-soul will guarantee future protection of the deceased by this soul. Texts inform us that the offerings presented to the deceased, such as food and drink, are always intended for the *ka*. The energy of the *ka* is capable of

being renewed by these material offerings. In spell 105 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased declares,

Hail to you, my *ka* of my lifetime;
behold, I have come to you,
I have appeared in glory,
I am strong, besouled, and mighty....
this evil phrase which I have spoken,
this evil impurity which I have done,
nothing has been imputed to me.¹¹

What inspires these words is the fact that the life span granted by the divine and by the *ka* represents human destiny. Despite the evil thoughts toward others, despite the damage done to others' reputation, and despite the bad deeds that have accumulated during the deceased's lifetime, the deceased who prays the words just cited entertains the hope that he or she will be united with the *ka* in the afterlife. If only this is granted to him or her, and notwithstanding the unyielding nature of the verdict to be rendered in the Judgment of the Dead, the deceased will regain the vitality (i.e., the life force) of his or her *ka* so as to expend it once again in the afterlife.

The *ka* always remains attached to the earth above, and, therefore, Neheb-kau, the god who dispenses the *ka*-forces of individuals, is depicted as a double-headed serpent. The serpent is intimately connected with the spirit of the earth, and the doubling points to the beginning of a creative period of life. Creation becomes real only when the primeval oneness has been split into the opposites of the two—that is, a duality—which is to say that creation becomes real only when the primeval god is faced with his creation.

This last point brings us back to the motif of the sacred Eye of Osiris-Sokar in the fourth nocturnal hour of the Amduat. Considering these concepts regarding the *ka* and its being granted to the blessed dead by the snake god Neheb-kau, a central theme of this hour seems to be the

¹¹ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, p. 101.

renewal of the consciousness that, from time immemorial, has emerged out of the dark earth and the *prima materia* (prime matter). Accordingly, the text that accompanies a group of serpents in this hour assures us that they do not “go to any (other) place at any time.” The task of these snakes is to remain in place. As a spirit of continuity, as we can also define the *ka*, and unlike the birdlike *ba*-soul, the serpent is inseparably connected to the earth and in the service of the *ka*-soul, and it is therefore in the service of the concrete (physical) renewal of life in the beyond. The message of this hour is to remain, to endure, and to preserve continuity, to keep available all these precious gifts presented by the *ka*.

Being connected with the *ka*-soul can help one to bear even a bitter fate. In ancient Egypt, longing for the celestial heights of the *ba*-soul was complemented by longing for the *ka*-soul, the latter for the sake of the realization of life in the concrete material world. Only if both psychic movements were harmoniously united could there be a complete renewal of life.

If only we are not too much distracted by stimuli coming from the outer world, we can recognize the psychically and spiritually effective forces of the earth and of matter, which are connected with the *ka*-soul and which we can recognize only with the inner eye of Osiris-Sokar. From time to time, therefore, our soul needs the stillness and simplicity of the desert, the solitude of the mountains, or the calming peace of nature. Periodically, the inner eye must recover from the colorful variety of our daily life to become aware again of the inner spirit of all beings. To me, the intensity of life has never been stronger than in the barrenness of a desert landscape or of the mountains. In the desert, the soul comes alive as nowhere else; here, it is moved by the growth of a single blade of grass or by a little flower in the midst of the bare rocks, or by the visit of a little desert mouse that seems to come out of nowhere. Where the brilliance of the nocturnal sky is not blocked by the electric lights of cities and villages, the soul can reverberate, and the experience will generate in us a deep love for the cosmos and for all beings. At this happy moment, the freely moving, bird-shaped *ba*-soul always longing for the infinity of heaven can find itself in connection with the permanence of earth and matter. They both blend into a unity that radiates a deep peace. “O steadfast earth, true through the night, you waited for my greeting,” proclaims

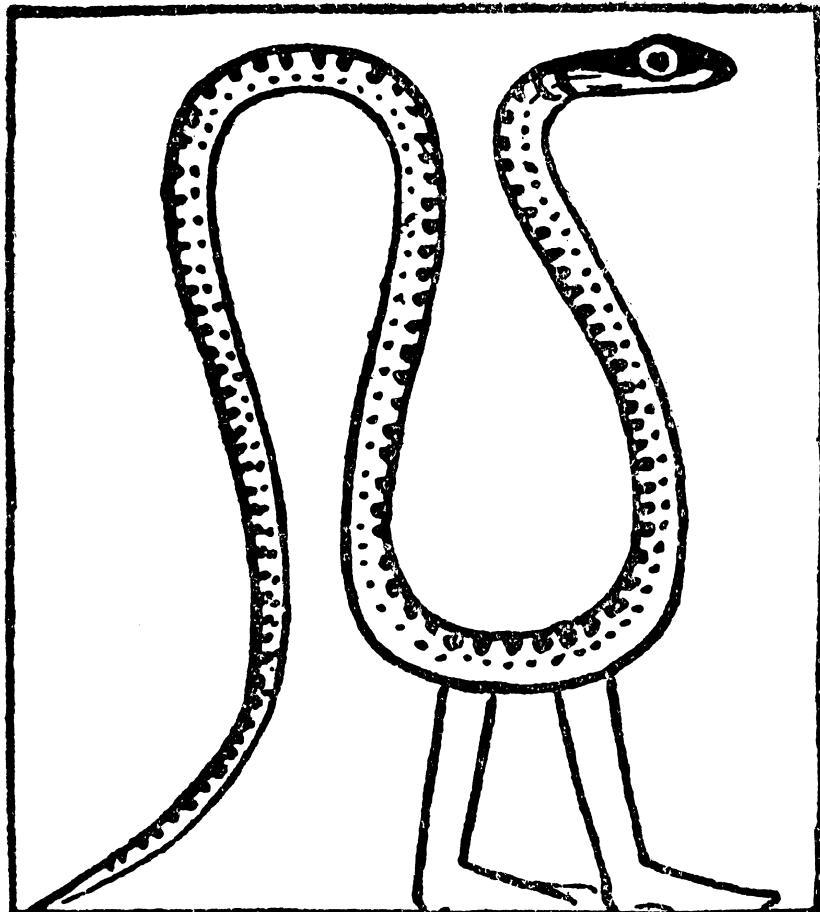
Faust after his incubation sleep, which finally redeemed him from his prior demonic, driven restlessness.¹² Close to danger, death, and stagnation, where the outer world is reduced to a minimum, the inner eye may become able once again to see.

In the desert land of Sokar, teeming with countless snakes, only the *snake-consciousness* can help the journey proceed. Therefore, the sun barque is transformed into a double-headed serpent. The boat as a vessel is like a “maternal womb,” a feminine symbol; it protects its passengers from drowning in the depths of the waters, that is, in the depths of the unconscious. To ensure safe passage through this land of the snakes, the vessel itself has to assume the form of a serpent. But what does this snake-consciousness mean? Snake dreams, as we have already seen, indicate that something in the depths of the soul has been touched. It is hardly possible to bring such psychic content to consciousness by force of will, for this content is more like a *numen* (a numinous event) that breaks into someone’s life as a matter of fate and is thus completely unexpected. Commenting on one of Peter Birkhäuser’s paintings, Marie-Louise von Franz says, “It [i.e., the snake, A. S.] is an incomprehensible, threatening, and annihilating spirit which also harbors a secret meaning. In its hands man is helpless, all his values are overthrown.”¹³

As a cold-blooded animal, the serpent is too far removed from the warmth of human blood to become a partner of man. Nevertheless, there seems to be a mysterious bond between the two, so that when a snake appears in a dream, it can indicate a decisive turning point in someone’s life. This may be a painful destiny for a person, but quite often this pain is only the hidden germ of new life. At such points, the poison of the snake turns into a remedy, and the serpent becomes a companion of Asclepius, the god of healing, who also assists women in labor. In the twelfth hour of the night, the serpent will reappear in this healing aspect.

¹² J. W. von Goethe, *Faust*, pt. 2, trans. Philip Wayne (London: Penguin, 1959), verses 4681–4682.

¹³ P. Birkhäuser, *Light from the Darkness: The Paintings of Peter Birkhäuser* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1980), p. 86.



Snake god, Book of the Dead spell 87

In spell 87 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased wishes to be transformed into a “son of the earth,” that is, into a snake. In this form, the deceased hopes to share in the regenerative force of the snake god:

I am the “son of the earth,”
I am the snake which is within the limits of the earth;
(that is, not in the abysmal realm of the primeval darkness).



Ouroboros and solar child

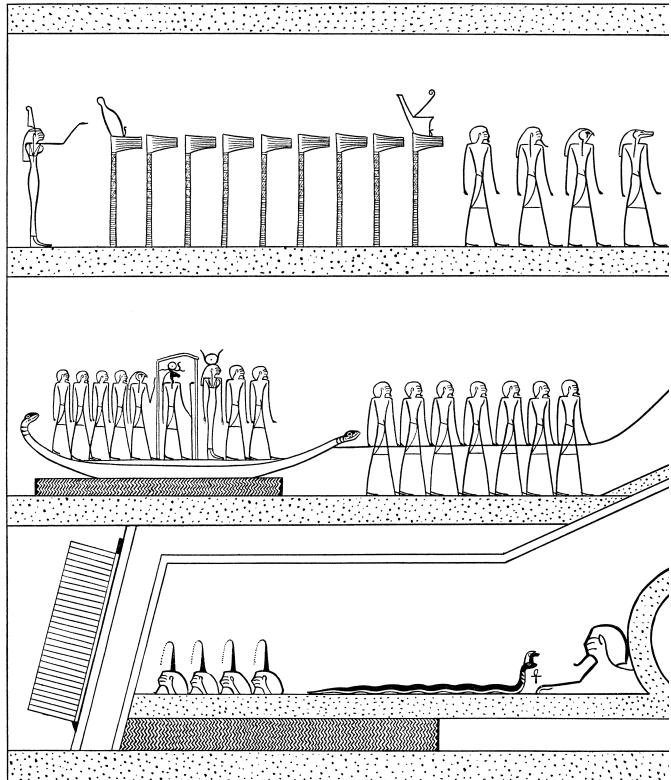
I pass the night and am reborn,
renewed and rejuvenated every day.¹⁴

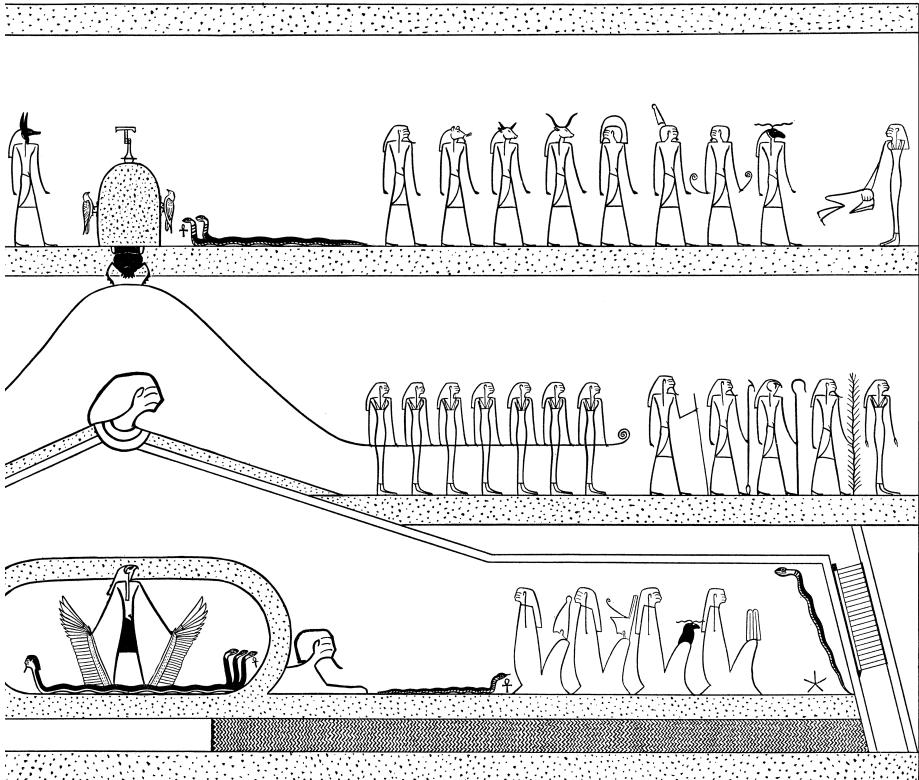
The serpent-shaped sun barque seems to indicate that all the deities and blessed dead accompanying the Sungod obey nature's fateful law.

¹⁴ R. O. Faulkner translates, "I am the long-lived snake," rather than the textual variant "I am the son of the earth," which has been substituted in the quotation in the text. On the variant "I am the son of the earth," see E. Hornung, *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter* (Zurich: Artemis, 1979), p. 177.

Honoring the world-spirit incorporated by the snake, they surrender to the cycle of nature. Whoever is touched by a process that takes place in the depths of the collective unconscious has to subordinate his or her own will and knowledge to an inner truth and law that far transcend ego-consciousness. It is the law of the night, the earth, and the snake, and whoever obeys it is indeed in possession of a great mystery.

The Egyptians created an ingenious image for the regenerative aspect of the snake: the image of the *ouroborus*-serpent whose body protectively circles the solar child of the new day. In some illustrations, such as the one in the Book of the Caverns alluded to above, where it is Osiris who is protected by the *ouroborus*, it is not clear whether the snake depicted represents Apopis or some other god: not wishing to consider anything to be entirely good or entirely evil, the Egyptian sages easily embraced all kinds of complementary categories. They were too realistic not to see that out of evil, an “ouroboric” protection can grow, a protection that brings forth new birth. Thus, even Apopis could play the role of the *ouroborus* that saves Osiris from his enemies.





FIFTH HOUR

THE MYSTERY OF THE CAVERNS OF SOKAR

The Regenerative Force of Depression

The fifth hour of the night continues, in far greater depth, the theme of the fourth hour. The water is still shallow; the sun barque continues its journey, though with difficulty. Re's boat must be towed by the two groups of deities, seven males and seven females, above the cavern of Sokar in the lower register. That the goddesses precede their male counterparts (as also in the twelfth hour) corresponds, as we shall see, to the fact that these images were created in a male-dominated culture that nevertheless highly honored the feminine element.

From the psychological point of view, this image of the towing deities is quite meaningful. For man, it is his anima that always intuitively looks ahead. "Both the man and the woman have, not only in their body but also in their mind, opposite-sex components... Jung called (them) *animus* (in a woman) and *anima* (in a man)"¹. The anima embodies the feminine characteristics in a man, "moodiness, subjective judgment, whininess...and sentimentality"² in her negative side, and his capacity for relationship, his feelings, the condition of his affects, empathy, eros, and so forth in her positive side. No wonder, then, that the feminine side knows how to proceed in this difficult moment of Re's journey. To maintain the balance, however, male deities must also participate in this process of movement, for a man who is deeply moved by his soul will need a strong ego-consciousness not to fall under the spell of his anima. If he allows her to gain possession of him, he will most likely lose his clarity of mind and, in his enthusiasm, take the greatest nonsense to be *the means* of renewing his life, and his true feelings will deteriorate into mere sentimentality. If this were to happen, the result would be a rather childish and egocentric behavior that could in fact ruin a man's life.

Psychologically, we can understand the towing deities as archetypal powers that temporarily assist the Sungod in his process of cognition. Beneath the surface of all historical and political events, and beyond the personal experience of the individual, there are inner-psychic factors at work, contents of the collective unconscious; they are of an archetypal

¹ M.-L. von Franz, "Nike and the Waters of the Styx," in *Archetypal Dimension of the Psyche* (London: Shambhala, 1999), p. 159.

² Ibid., pp. 169 and 364.

nature and in some way connected with the Great Soul, that is, with the central archetypal core (the self). From this core, the self, arises every real growth of consciousness and all renewal. “This ‘something,’” says Marie-Louise von Franz, “which by its nature at all times transcends and encompasses our consciousness, is scarcely directly knowable for us, but it definitely manifests itself repeatedly in the unconscious psyche in the form of symbols.”³ In the religious language of the *Amduat*, these symbols are embodied in all the assisting deities who support Re’s journey. We may say, therefore, that the rope of the towing deities symbolizes an intimate connectedness with the innermost depths of the psyche and with the hidden archetypal stream of the collective unconscious, that is, with the renewing spirit, or *Zeitgeist*.

The common task of the female and male deities and their connection to the Great Soul can be understood interpsychically as an image of totality or concretely as a symbol of interpersonal relatedness. Shared knowledge regarding the efficacy of the images of the unconscious, along with mutual acceptance of the dependence of the ego on archetypal powers, creates a psychic relatedness far beyond the subjective realm; this is because the individuals involved remain connected with the Great Soul—that is, with a profound creative process rooted in the self and not in the ego. The above-mentioned “eternal connection through fate” is reflected in this orientation toward connectedness with the self. The interpersonal relatedness originates in the fact that two persons partake of the one transcendent center (the Sungod). Thus, in the image of the towing goddesses and gods, we can recognize nothing less than an image of the creative dynamic of love, in which the two lovers do not live exclusively for themselves and for each other but, rather, are involved in a psychic process that extends far beyond the individual. Such love originates in the fact that both of them are deeply committed to a third that transcends the life of the individual.

The fifth hour is dominated by the head of Isis in the center. In traditional belief, when Horus was exposed to the persecution of Seth, Isis hid the helpless child in the marshes of the Nile delta, where, with her deep love, she protected, nurtured, and cared for him. And as the faithful

³Ibid., p. 117.

companion of Osiris, she preserves and renews all injured life. Thus she, more than any other deity, is responsible for the healing of body and soul. Indeed, as Isis-Hathor, it is she who confers the legitimate royal power on the pharaoh:⁴ with her abundance of milk, she nourishes the hungry child and turns him into a man and king.

Similarly, just as she did with the Horus child, here, at this dangerous turning point in Re's journey, Isis once more intervenes most helpfully. The mystery of both the Horus child and the cavern of Sokar lies in the healing of wounded life and in the renewal of life in general. Just as the sky goddess Nut, bending over the earth and touching the western and eastern horizons with her hands and her feet, protects the course of the Sungod in the daytime, here Isis seems to shelter the subterranean, nocturnal course of Re. In this task, she is assisted by the Khepri beetle, whose forefeet grasp the rope of the towing deities. In this way, the Khepri beetle is mysteriously connected with these deities, and through them with the Sungod himself.

On the riverbank of the netherworld, mysterious things happen. In the upper register, we see netherworldly deities and numinous powers who emphasize the *continuity* of creation. The world was not created just once; rather, it emerges anew daily, even hourly. The nine *ntr* flagpoles at the beginning of the register symbolize this creation and re-creation. They represent the Ennead of Heliopolis, the traditional image for the emanation of the cosmos from the primeval god Atum. The number 9, the plural of the plural, symbolizes an indeterminate multiplicity of divine powers and thus the whole incalculable abundance of creation. Atum, the traditional representative of the creative spirit of the world, is not mentioned here, however. Khepri, the juvenile form of the Sungod, takes his place (the first flagpole on the left), as the accompanying inscriptions tell us. And instead of Seth, who usually occupies the last position, we encounter Horus, the son of Osiris. With these two replacements, the emphasis is shifted away from the idea of the origin (once, "in the beginning") and toward that of the continuous renewal and regeneration of the cosmos. Even more than in the Heliopolitan concept, the emphasis

⁴J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 133–134.

here is on the *creatio continua* (continuous creation), or self-emanation in time. The focus is not on Atum, the “undifferentiated one,” nor on the ambiguous Seth, who is always located somewhere at the margin of creation, but on light and on the transforming power of those deities who embody the new *Zeitgeist*. Whoever follows the subterranean stream while remaining focused on *this* *Zeitgeist* does not look back to the origin, but ahead, into a not yet created, still to be shaped, future.

Here the motif of the Ennead of Heliopolis seems not only to remind us of the mystery of the act of creation, of that miraculous “first occasion,” but, even more, to remind us that it is far more important to open our eyes to the recurring dynamic of the new creation in the here and now. Not that which forever stays the same, which in fact destroys every dynamic of love, but the mysterious, continuing self-emanation of new consciousness in the cavern of the earth god Sokar, is the theme of this nocturnal hour. The image of this mystery lies concealed, buried in the darkness of the Land of Sokar. We shall return to this image below.

In dealing with dreams, this teleological, future-oriented approach to the inner-psychic flow of energy is tremendously important. The main concern, then, is just what development is meant to take place according to the unconscious or the self. Though we ourselves can never know in which direction someone’s development ought to go, that person’s dreams “know” it. One main difficulty we encounter in therapeutic work lies in the fact that when it comes to their psychic renewal, many people are extremely conservative. As it has always been, thus shall it always remain: such is their secret conviction, for they do not really trust that decisive change will ever occur in their lives. It is difficult to say whether it is fear of transformation in themselves or lack of self-confidence that causes them to shrink from the prospect of renewal. Whichever is the case, such a conservative mind-set is a malignant shadow that will, in the end, obstruct our creative energies. Of course, we must in no way impatiently attempt to force a transformation. What is of tremendous importance is to incubate the solar child (Horus) lying dormant in the unconscious—or, as the alchemists say, the little boy and girl, the noble empress, the winged youth, or whatever it may be called—until it is ready to be born. Thus protected by conscious awareness, almost as if

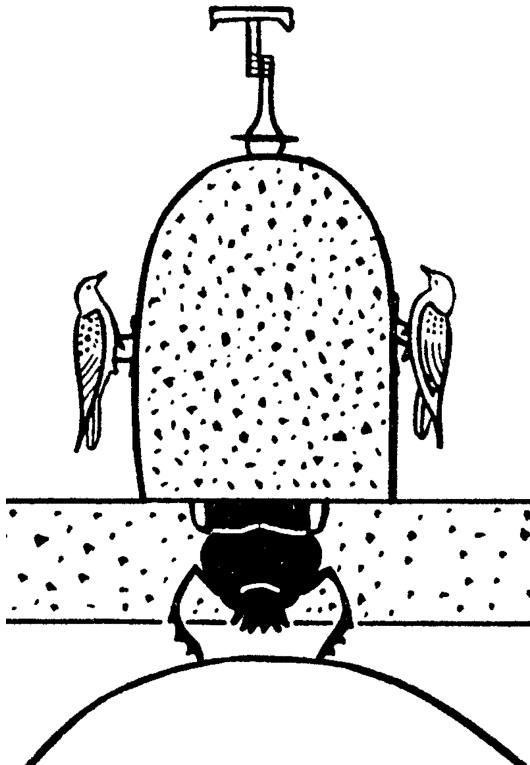
by a prayer, the brooding, or incubation, takes place so that the child can safely grow.

This incubation is strikingly illustrated in the middle of the first register. The sand hill depicts the burial mound, or the coffin, of Osiris. The hieroglyph for night atop it is a clear allusion to the darkness of this place. *Nigredo*, depression, fear, and death are present in this fifth hour of the night. And it is for this reason that the two birds are not absent. They represent Isis and Nephthys, the two sisters of Osiris, whose mournful wailing for their dead brother was believed, from the earliest periods of Egyptian history, to awaken him to new life:

Isis comes and Nephthys comes,
one of them from the west
and one of them from the east,
one of them as a “screecher,”
one of them as a kite;
they have found Osiris,
his brother Seth having laid him low in Nedit
[where Osiris has been killed]....
They prevent you from rotting in accordance
with this your name of Anubis;
they prevent your putrefaction from dripping to the ground....
O Osiris...Live, live and raise yourself!⁵

Isis is accompanied by her dark shadow sister, Nephthys. It is true that the latter cannot achieve her femininity as a spouse and a mother, as did her radiant sister Isis, who has already united herself with Osiris in the maternal womb. Nevertheless, it is precisely as the shadow sister that she plays a decisive role. She symbolizes an ultimately anonymous feminine power that is all the more effective just because of her anonymity. The Egyptians' habit of thinking in complementary structures was too strong for them to exclude the dark sister of Isis from their world. Erik Hornung has offered a beautiful commentary on this phenomenon:

⁵R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1969), pp. 199–200 (spell 532).



Tomb of Osiris, detail from fifth hour

Whereas the “two men,” Horus and Seth, do battle with each other for predominance and authority, the “two women” complement each other in a harmonious manner. Nephthys is far more than just a doublet and shadow of her sister, nor is she a mere abstraction of her; rather, she is full of worldly wisdom. She thus represents the Egyptian striving for a harmonious and well-balanced totality. In Nephthys, beneficent, self-less care for others is embodied in a divine form—in a goddess who is sister to all other deities.⁶

⁶E. Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” in *Studies in Pharaonic Religions and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, ed. A. B. Lloyd, Occasional Publications of the Egypt Exploration Society 8 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1992), p. 188. English translation by A. S.

The life renewed in the darkness of the tomb, and with the assistance of *both* sisters, assumes visible form in the figure of the scarab that seems to be emerging from the sand hill. The motif of the funerary lament by Isis and Nephthys, which contributes decisively to this new birth, will be discussed later (seventh hour). Here another aspect of this scene is important: the tomb, coffin, or “chest”—the god in front of it is called “Anubis of the chest”—that provides shelter to the mysterious process of regeneration. Addressing the two mourning birds, this Great God, the Sungod, says:

May you guard your chest!
May your voice be loud and your throats truthful!
May this image you guard be concealed.
May you spread your wings and do your duties,
that I may pass by you in peace.

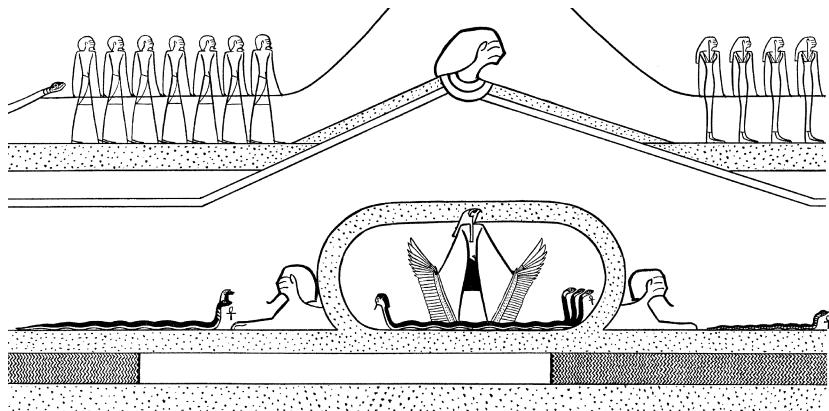
The protection afforded by the netherworld has already been discussed in connection with the concept of the Amduat as the “treatise of the hidden region.” This idea of protection is here differentiated, insofar as the *image of the god* resting in his tomb must remain concealed so that *the creator god himself* can pass by in peace. C. G. Jung has repeatedly noted that we can never say what an archetype *as such* really is, for this “as such” transcends all consciousness. It thus follows that we cannot recognize unconscious contents except in their projected form, that is, never directly. The image guarded by the wailing women and hidden in the burial mound or chest corresponds psychologically to the archetype as such, that is, to an unfathomable factor of the psychic renewal (Khepri) that is no longer accessible or perceptible to the human mind. The only form in which it can be expressed is by a symbol, which in this case is the scarab. The secret, as such, has to be kept; it may never be disclosed. Only under such conditions will the renewal of consciousness and life take place. Then, so says the Amduat, the Sungod may pass by in peace. The secret is confided only to the wailing women. We can say, therefore, that it is more our feeling function, our affects and emotions, through which we can approach the unknown and get an inkling of the mystery. The mystery belongs to a true relatedness to the inner world, whose autonomy we cannot touch;

rather, we must allow it a life of its own, whose liveliness belongs to the images and figures of our soul.

Whenever something truly new breaks into mundane reality through a creative act, this in fact entails diminution of an “eternal” truth. Thus, according to many creation myths, the creator, having completed his work, withdraws to a remote, inaccessible place, so that the mystery of the renewal of creation will be carefully hidden. We can see a practical example of this phenomenon in the behavior of people who fall in love. Their behavior is often quite inappropriate as, instead of keeping their secret to themselves and thus protecting it, they talk about it to everyone. For the most part, the result is that the tender flower just beginning to grow is attacked by all sorts of well-meaning advice, or even warnings, with the result that it soon starts to wither. As a rule, such advice is too superficial and general, and it does not embrace the uniqueness of the newly sprouting love. Thus it is far better to protect carefully the “sacred embryo,” as the Chinese book *The Secret of the Golden Flower* calls it. If even the soul of the Great God has to be concealed, how much more do we have to protect every new psychic content, the inner child that wants to live within us!

When we speak of a new order of creation, we must also mention all those threatening and disintegrating forces that are bent on destroying the new order. Their annihilation is the task of the eight deities in the last scene of the upper register: “They are those who stand punishing the damned in the netherworld.” The name of the goddess facing them makes it clear how she treats the enemies: “The demolishing one, who cuts the damned to pieces.” The accompanying text is no less illuminating: “She lives from the blood of the damned and from what these gods provide her. He who knows her passes by her in peace.” It can scarcely be more clearly stated how tremendously important it is to *have knowledge* of the existence of evil powers. Optimism or idealism would certainly be of no help, for only he who *knows* evil will pass safely and avoid the fate of destruction.

In the lower register, and extending slightly upward into the middle one, there is the Land of Sokar, with the cavern in its center. The falcon-headed god of the earth dominates the scene. He stands on a winged serpent with one human and three serpent heads. This serpent is the Great



Cavern of Sokar, detail from fifth hour

God (obviously, a theriomorphic form of the Sungod), who spreads (his) wings with multicolored plumes, as the texts say.

The wings are a primordial image for the heavenly protection of the divine child, who is threatened by satanic darkness. The Great God with multicolored plumes guards the “secret flesh,” that is, the corpse (of the Sungod). We shall return later to the meaning of the corpse, which is, as we shall see, in the center of the next nocturnal hour. The secret flesh represents a subterranean form of the Sungod, or, to be more precise, Osiris-Sokar as the corpse of the sun, which is the starting point of the actual renewal.

Sokar and the serpent god are surrounded by an oval of sand, the sand being denoted by tiny points. This oval incorporates the entirety of the netherworld, where the corpse of the deceased king rests. For this reason, the burial chamber of Tuthmosis III is oval in shape.

Aker, in his form of the double sphinx, represents the netherworld.⁷ His task is to guard the secret flesh, that is, the corpse of the Sungod. Aker is a very old earth god. He guards the entrance and exit gates of the netherworld, and for this reason, he can be depicted as a double sphinx with two human heads. He whose throat swallows everything that enters the western gate, only to give it over again to new life in the east, becomes a symbol

⁷On Aker, see C. de Wit, *Le Rôle et le sens du lion dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Leiden: Brill, 1951).

of potency and regeneration in general because it is through him that all the life force and vitality of the gods, and of humans as well, regenerates.

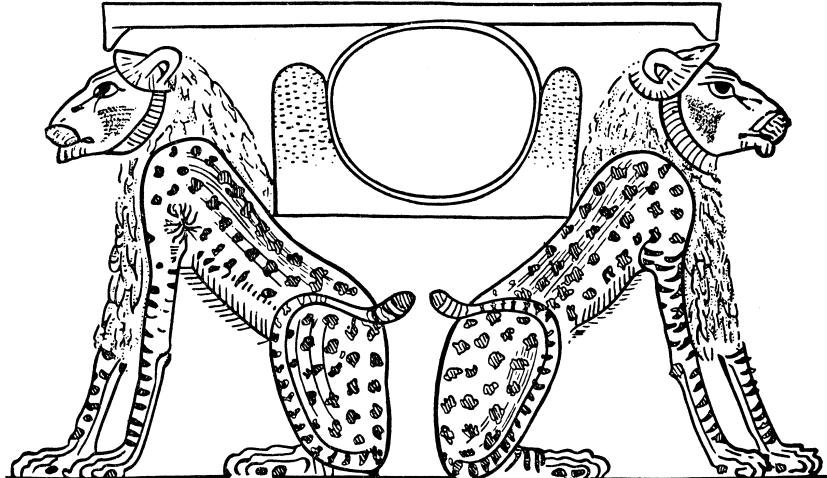
Moreover, there exists the idea that the secret corpse of every deceased person is hidden beneath the body of Aker. As the guardian of the secret flesh, it is this god, more than any other, who watches over the mystery of regeneration. Both ideas embrace the notion that the renewal of consciousness and the potency of life (the *ka*-soul) have their origin in Aker, who guards this mystery in the profoundest darkness of the earth.

There is a great psychological truth to this idea that a real and enduring renewal of life will take place only when we are courageous enough to confront the darkness of the unconscious as consciously as possible. Of course, it is true that we can consciously change some things in our lives through will power. A real regeneration, however, is possible only when *it* comes from the other side, from the creative energy that is hidden in the unconscious. So unless we are moved by archetypal images, no real healing will occur.

In the particularly rich vignette of spell 17 of the Book of the Dead, which is attested on papyri and also on the innermost of the nested shrines of Tutankhamun, we find the double lion. In a version of the spell on the papyrus of Ani, the lions are called “yesterday” and “tomorrow.” Here they symbolize the continuity of time: in the depths of the netherworld, yesterday and tomorrow blend into each other, guaranteeing this continuity. This symbol can also have a profound social significance. To feel solidarity with others requires what Jan Assmann has called a “social memory,” one which reaches back to the past and embraces the present and the future.⁸ And only the blessed one who has knowledge of the mystery of the regeneration in the netherworld can partake of the healing impact of this union.

The double nature of Aker symbolizes one of the most important and fundamental laws of psychology: the law of “enantiodromia.” Every energetic process requires the existence of a polarity and thus a duality or a conflict. It was Heraclitus who formulated this law for the first time, and it was he who used the term “enantiodromia,” which implies that one day everything will alternate into its opposite. What the Egyptian symbol

⁸J. Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten* (Munich: Beck, 1990), p. 62.



The Lions of Yesterday and Tomorrow

illustrates in the image of the double sphinx, the Greek philosopher expresses in words: “The way to and fro (literally, up and down) is one and the same”;⁹ in fact, this is his description of the path of the serpent meandering between opposites, as is so typical in any psychic development. Seen from an energetic standpoint, it may also be what Jung himself called the “law of the self-regulating function of opposites.”¹⁰

The danger of this law cannot be denied, for whenever someone falls victim to a particularly rigid one-sidedness, he or she will sooner or later fall into the opposite, which might even turn out to be deadly. Whoever wishes to escape this vicious circle must learn to live consciously with the law of enantiodromia. Every extreme provokes the opposite, since nature does not tolerate any one-sidedness. The more wholly we think and live and the more aware we are of the laws of day *and* night—taking into consideration the symbol of Aker, the double sphinx that unites the opposites—the more likely we are to partake of the regeneration emanating

⁹ Heraclitus, *Fragmente, griechisch und deutsch*, ed. Bruno Snell, 8th ed. (Munich: Artemis, 1983), p. 20 (fragment B60). English translation from the Greek by A. S.

¹⁰ C. G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, vol. 7 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), § 111.

from the innermost center. “The only person who escapes the grim law of enantiodromia is the man who knows how to separate himself from the unconscious, not by repressing it—for then it simply attacks him from the rear—but by putting it clearly before him as *that which he is not*.¹¹

The other side, namely, that which I am not—or the non-ego—is the world of the objective-psychic, a preconscious totality in which the individual is always contained, though it can never be ruled by the ego, since it by far surpasses the limited realm of consciousness. The mystery of resurrection, as the Egyptians already knew it, and its social implications correspond psychologically to the collective and objective character of the unconscious. The more we are familiar with the material of the collective unconscious, the less we are involved in a merely personal psychology. As soon as we enter the realm of the archetypal images, we find ourselves in contact with the collective stratum of the world of the ancestors, at the bottom of which lies a unitary concept of being (double sphinx, double lion), out of which all the polarities of life arise.

Beneath the cavern of Sokar, spreading over the whole lower register, is the “lake of fire,” indicated with waves. Its waters must not touch the barque. The Book of Gates (third hour, tenth scene) declares that this lake supplies refreshment and grain to the blessed dead, while the damned are burned in its blaze. This Egyptian concept survives in the Book of Revelation: “Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14–15; see also 19:20, where it is called “the lake of fire that burns with brimstone”). The same idea, transferred to the Red Sea, can be found in some of the early Christian-Gnostic circles. This sea, they say, “is a water of death for those that are ‘unconscious,’ but for those that are ‘conscious’ it is a baptismal water of rebirth and transcendence.”¹² In this Gnostic milieu, the unconscious ones are those to whom the *gnosis* (knowledge) is not given, that is, those who have no insight into man’s greater destiny in a cosmic sense. The Gnostics even considered

¹¹ Ibid., § 112.

¹² C. G. Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 257.

the great unconsciousness (*agnoia* or *agnosia*) as the truly worst primordial evil of human existence.¹³

From a psychological perspective, we can view the fire as a symbol for the highly psychic energy that is constellated in this place, thus explaining why the lake of fire belongs to the mystery of the cavern of Sokar. Fiery temper, the burning desire of love, excitable temperament, heightening tension—in brief, desires and wishes, emotions and affects—are to be examined in the lake of fire. Whoever knows how to handle these energies will not die a second death but will participate in the resurrection of the Sungod at the end of the twelfth hour, and thus in the renewal of spiritual life.

But what does it mean to handle our emotions properly? It means two things: first, to be aware of them, to make them conscious, and second, to understand them correctly. In an analytical session, it may happen that suddenly a huge emotional tension fills the room, one that cannot be explained by the conscious course of the conversation. Such an event may cause strong and mutual feelings in both the analysand and the therapist. Sexual or other fantasies may be involved. (In the unlovely terminology of psychology, this is called transference and countertransference.) It is of great importance not to repress such fantasies and the feelings that accompany them. In such moments, as I have quite often experienced them, something very deep is touched in the psyche of the analysand and the analyst, something evoked by an absolute, central psychic content that arises from the deep stratum of the unconscious but that has no possibility of crossing the threshold of consciousness. Thus the energy is stopped up for lack of an appropriate vessel to receive it, with the result that the new content cannot be understood and thus assimilated to consciousness. Whenever this happens, the blocked energy flows into the nearest available vessel, which is often a sexual fantasy. We may therefore say that the intensity of the emotional reaction and its accompanying fantasy points to a similarly powerful reality of the inner-psychic image that is constellated in the unconscious psychic field between the analysand and the analyst. To misunderstand such a fantasy in a literal manner would result in catastrophe, for it would most likely destroy the eternal, archetypal aspect that underlies it. But not to recognize such a

¹³ See Marie-Louise von Franz, "Nike and the Waters of the Styx," p. 116.

fantasy would also be a catastrophe, for this would completely dismiss the healing potential of the archetypal image.

As the fiery alchemical substance, which the alchemists often call the corpse, is protected by the alchemical vessel so that it does not dissolve but rather transforms, it is likewise contained by the “vessel” of the cavern of Sokar. We have already mentioned the winged serpent god, the sealed oval cavern of the netherworld, and Aker. The two serpents in front of the forelegs of the double sphinx, as well as the four heads with torches atop them at the beginning of the lower register, are all guardians of the great mystery; with their flames, the torches ward off the enemies who endanger the mysterious process of renewal in the interior of the cavern. The cavern itself, which is in fact well sealed on each side by a solid gate, has the same protective function. A living god in the form of a serpent rearing upright on its tail functions as gatekeeper. It is unclear whether the head of Isis in the center of this hour has this same protective meaning. Her presence could also be a sign of the extraordinarily high tension in the energy of this hour. Thus, the secret path of this land is, as the text says, “filled with flames of fire from the mouth of Isis.”

In the fifth hour, the Sungod and his entourage approach a particularly critical turning point in which life will be either completely renewed or annihilated. From a psychological point of view, this is a very delicate moment, in which either we courageously give up an old attitude of life in order to reach a higher level of consciousness, or we fail and remain stuck in, or even regress to, old patterns and structures. In order to pass by this fatal moment successfully, we indeed need the protection of the multicolored winged serpent god—a numinous and archetypal symbol.

The following dream of an analysand presents a modern image of such an archaic deity:

I heard of a bat sitting in a subterranean cave, its wings spanning 260 meters in breadth and beating rhythmically. I was deeply moved by this image. Half awake, I got the idea of the heart of the earth or of the world soul, which thus maintains life with its pulsation.

The rhythmic throb of the bat’s wings may have a creative meaning: through the rhythm of the movement, the chaotic power of the darkness

is banished. In Africa, I have often observed craftsmen who, during their work as carvers or quarrymen, created a most fascinating rhythmic music with their hammering. Thus they were able to continue their work with playful easiness for many hours, despite the burning African sun.

In this dream, it is not a multicolored winged serpent god but a pitch-black bat that guards the mystery in the depths of the earth. This image seems to compensate for our contemporary repression of all that is dark, evil, and sinister. We will have to deal with this dark spirit of the earth if we wish to raise the precious treasure of the depths. Not without reason did the alchemists emphasize the blackness of the *prima materia*, and not without reason did they affirm that the play of the colors of the *cauda pavonis* (the peacock's tail) rises from the *nigredo*, that is, from blackness and depression. Beneath the more or less well-organized modern world, there lurks a dangerous and most aggressive potential, and it is as if the pulsating strokes of the bat's wings were trying to appease the dark demon of the depths and thus avert an impending eruption of chaos.

For centuries, particularly since Augustine, there has been an over-emphasis on the light side of the Christian God of love, and this calls for a compensatory reaction: the recognition of God's dark side. It was this dark, somewhat "material" God to whom the alchemists devoted all their work and passion in their secret laboratories, apart from official theology and often in fear of the Inquisition. There are indeed traces of the dark side of God in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, which embrace the wrath of God and his fearful side, but during the history of the Church, there was a progressive tendency to burden humankind alone with all the dark and evil aspects of creation. It is of greatest importance, therefore, to acknowledge the dark side of God. My colleague Gotthilf Isler did so in the following words:

We live now in a world in which evil increasingly and overwhelmingly becomes a terrible reality. We are frightened, and we are so, as I believe, for good reasons. It might be that our confidence is in vain...we see the horror on television, and what we see and read makes us sleepless. The world has become small, the apocalypse is a daily possibility. The almighty God of love has become doubtful. Certainly, life has its wonderful sides. We may see the good, beautiful,

and wonderful side of this world and of our life, but we must also recognize the other side: the dreadful and evil. A God who really loves his creatures and who had the power to avoid it, would not allow such suffering; not war nor persecution, not hunger nor drought; not cancer nor the death of young drug-addicted people. Such a God is not a God of love, or not only a God of love. We have to realize that God has two faces.¹⁴

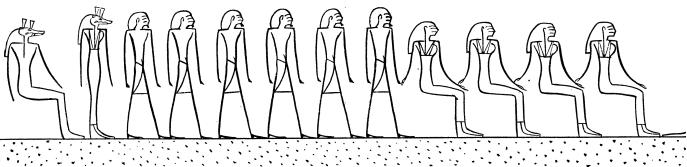
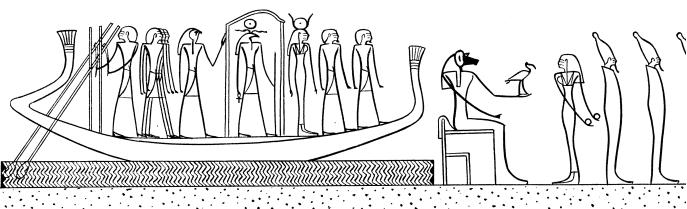
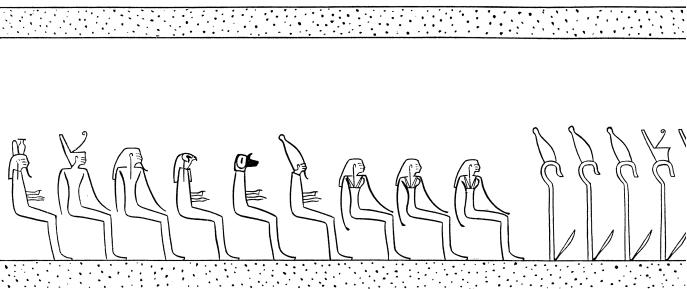
In the symbol of the multicolored winged serpent god, the ambivalence of the divine spirit is clearly demonstrated by his human- and serpent-headed form. In this symbol, the polarity of all creation is beautifully preserved. Whatever exists has two faces, even God himself.

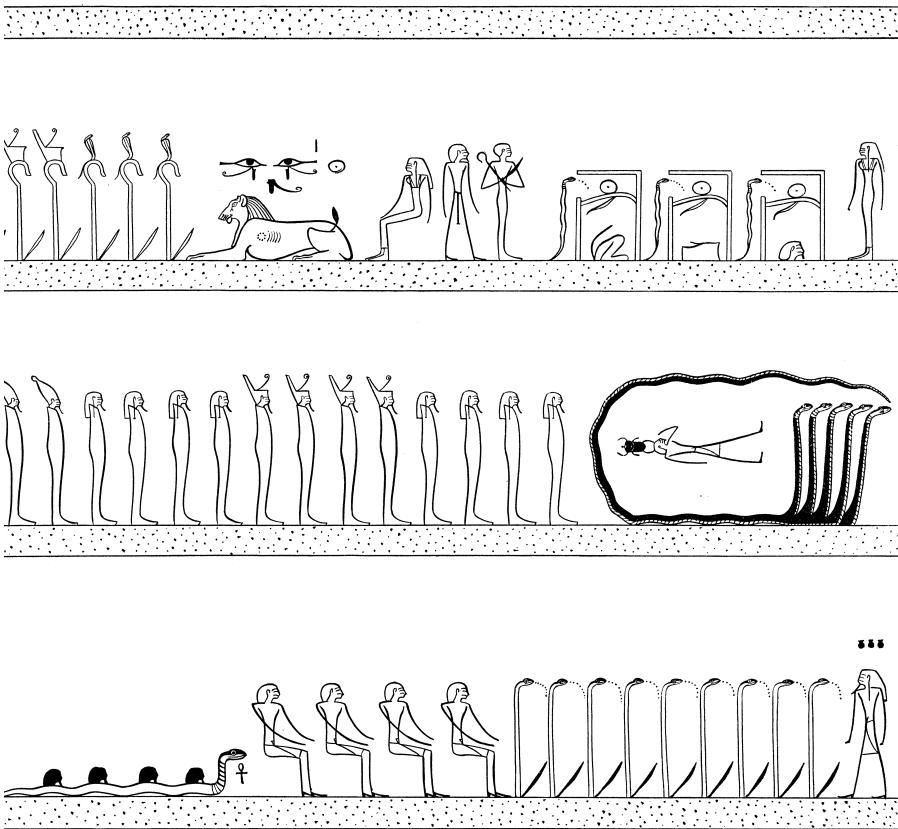
Though it holds true that we cannot disclose the mystery of regeneration, or, as the Egyptians would have said, of the Horus-child, to know about it is of great importance. The author of the *Amduat* stressed the value of consciousness and knowledge. In the introduction to the fifth hour, for instance, we read:

The secret paths of the West,
gates through which the hidden is entered,
the unapproachable place of the land of Sokar,
flesh and body as the first manifestation.
Knowledge of the *Ba*-souls which are in the Netherworld,...
Unknown, unseen, imperceptible is this image of Horus himself.
This is made like this image which is painted
in the secrecy of the Netherworld on the southern side
of the Hidden Chamber.
He who knows it, his *Ba*-soul is content,
and he is satisfied with the offerings of Sokar.

With this allusion to the secret connection between the corpse of the Sungod and the Horus-child, we have already entered the profoundest depths of the netherworld, the place where the corpse of the Sungod lies buried.

¹⁴ G. Isler, "Von der Notwendigkeit, mit dem Bösen umzugehen," *Jungiana*, Series A (Küschnacht: Fotorotar, 1991), vol. 3, p. 93. English translation by A. S.





SIXTH HOUR

THE CORPSE OF THE SUNGOD AND THE REBIRTH OF LIGHT

Re-Union of the Opposites

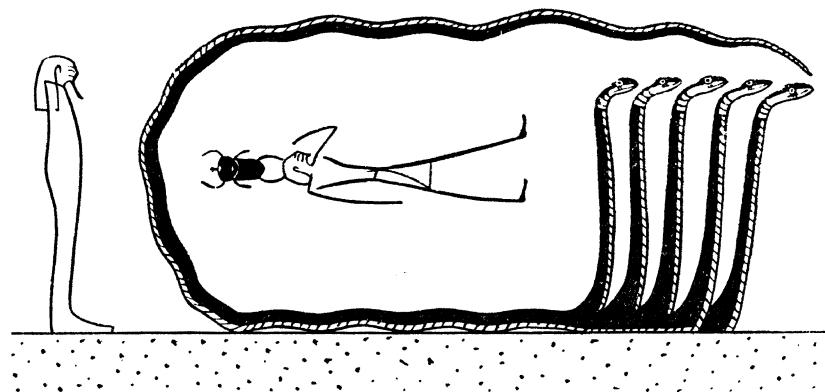
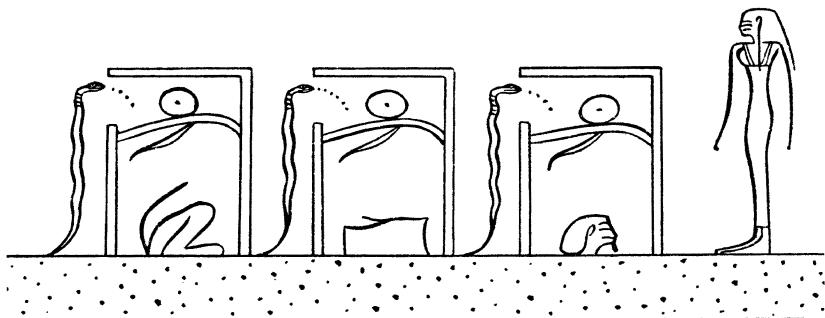
In the middle register, we encounter the central theme of this hour and, indeed, of this entire Book of the Netherworld. At the deepest point in the realm of the dead, the point where we reach the very edge of the primeval waters of Nun and their primordial darkness and where the domain of Apopis threatens creation with chaos and nonbeing, there lies a huge, ouroboric, multiheaded serpent with many faces, encircling the corpse of the Sungod in his form of Khepri. This image alludes in several ways to the mystery of the renewal of all life in the depths of the night. As a sign of its living power, the Sungod's body is often depicted as ithyphallic or (as here) with one hand pointing to its mouth, the latter iconography referring to the hieroglyphic sign for "child." On its head, we see a Khepri beetle, another common icon for regeneration. The recumbent body is called the "corpse of Khepri as his own flesh" or "corpse of Osiris."

The principal theme of this nocturnal hour is the union of the *ba*-soul of the Sungod with his corpse, or, as the Amduat also puts it, of Re with Osiris. This *coniunctio* results in two things that are, in fact, one and the same: the mystery of the awakening of the dead in the hereafter and the mystery of the renewal of light in the depths of the netherworld.

Beginning at midnight, all vital impulses and, indeed, the whole cosmos are renewed through a mysterious process of regeneration. Re's corpse proves to be the seedbed of renewal, for only when it is united with this body can the *ba*-soul awaken to new life. In a later Book of the Netherworld, the Book of the Earth, in which the corpse is equated with the corpse of Nun—that is, the primeval waters—the Sungod repeatedly addresses it, "O corpse from which I am risen."

All the blessed dead participate in the mysterious transformation of the Sungod. Re addresses them in the lower register of this hour of the Amduat:

May your faces live, may your hearts breathe,
and may your darkness be illuminated!
May you dispose of water for yourselves,
and may you be content with your offerings!
Going forth for your *ba*-souls, which pass behind me!
My *ba*-soul is with me, that I may alight on my corpse.



The corpse of the Sungod, detail from sixth hour

This is what the union promises to all who partake of it: life and peace, peace for the soul. I do not hesitate to call it the *mysterium coniunctionis*, the mysterious union of the opposites—namely, the same great mystery for which the alchemists searched over the centuries in their attempts to produce their philosophical gold. But what did the Egyptians have in mind with their image of the Sungod as a *ba*-soul approaching his corpse?

Let us first consider the upper register. Directly above the ouroboric serpent encircling the corpse of the Sungod, we see three chests. They

represent the “threefold burial of the Sungod.”¹ We can recognize the hind part of a lion, one of the scarab’s wings, and a human head. This dismemberment alludes to that of Osiris, as we see from the fact that the names of the tombs refer to the Osiris myth. The accompanying text, however, makes it clear that the grueling battle between the two antagonists has ended. Now, peace reigns:

Illuminated is the darkness in the earth!
The flesh roars with joy,
and the head speaks, after he has united his members.
These are the mysterious images of the Netherworld.

Painful though it might be, this dismemberment is inevitable, for it necessarily precedes the union and regeneration: complete dissolution precedes complete renewal. This idea is omnipresent in alchemy. Dissolution, dismemberment, fragmentation, incineration, and so forth are recurrent stages of the alchemical process. “In order to enter into God’s Kingdom,” says Jung in his *Mysterium coniunctionis*, “the king must transform himself into the prima materia in the body of his mother, and return to the dark initial state which the alchemist calls the ‘chaos.’ In this *massa confusa* the elements are in conflict and repel one another; all connections are dissolved. Dissolution is the prerequisite for redemption. The celebrant of the mystery cults had to suffer a figurative death in order to attain transformation.”²

The alchemists compared the suffering of men to that of Christ. After a painful descent into “the lowest and deepest parts below the earth,” they both lead to redemption. Referring to the suffering of Christ on the cross, the already-cited text from the *Aquarium sapientium* continues,

Yea, when at last, in his most sacred passion, and at the hour of death, his strength and his very spirit were completely withdrawn from him, and

¹E. Hornung and T. Abt, *The Egyptian Amduat: The Book of the Hidden Chamber*, trans. D. Warburton (Zurich: Living Human Heritage Publications, 2007), p. 190.

²C. G. Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 381.

he went down to the lowest and deepest parts below the earth (Acts 1, Ephesians 1, I Peter 3), yet even there he was preserved, refreshed, and by the power of the eternal Godhead raised up again, quickened, and glorified (Romans 14), when finally his spirit, with its body dead in its sepulcher, obtained a perfect and indissoluble union, through his most joyful resurrection and victorious ascension into heaven.³

These thoughts of a seventeenth-century alchemist are so strikingly similar to the Egyptian visions of the transformation in the depths of the netherworld that an influence of the one on the other can scarcely be denied; we shall return to this point at the end of the chapter. Thus we may say that the religious ideas of Egypt, particularly those of the New Kingdom, with their emphasis on the netherworld, strongly influenced not only Christianity but even more so, alchemy. Though the alchemical text just cited does not speak about the union of the soul (*anima*) and the corpse, it mentions the union of the corpse with the spirit (*pneuma, spiritus*). According to the Christian concept, as also to the Egyptian and the later alchemical concepts, descent into the profoundest depths precedes ascent to heaven. There is, however, a decisive difference between the Egyptian and the Christian concepts. In the course of his nocturnal journey, Re undergoes an important process of cognition, a fact illustrated in the Amduat by a rich and vivid imagery and symbolism that are underscored throughout by the accompanying texts. Christ, however, suffers his destiny in a much more passive way. In this sense, the latter far more resembles Osiris, the god of death, who is, as we shall see, characterized in particular by his passivity (quite effective though it might be). The difference between the more active encounter with darkness, as we see it in the Amduat and alchemy, on the one hand, and the more “Osirian” passivity of Christ, on the other hand, often created an insurmountable tension between the official, orthodox doctrine of the Church and the world of the alchemists and other “free spirits,” a tension that threatened to deliver the latter into the hands of the Inquisition. The focus on the regenerative power of the dark realm of the dead, the idea of the new

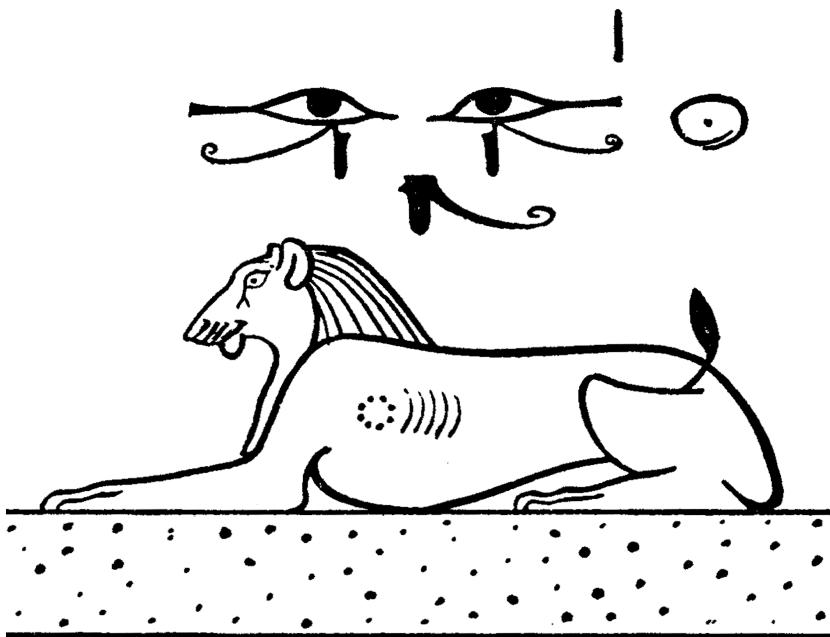
³Ibid., § 485.

light hidden in the densest night and the deepest blackness of matter (the corpse!) all ran contrary to the emphasis on the glorious side of Christ's resurrection within Church context and dogma.

Quite similar, however, to the Christian *and* the alchemical ideas of transformation, the motif of dismemberment in the Amduat points to a "death that makes alive," for, as the text says, "the flesh roars with joy!" Paradoxically enough, it is in the midnight hour that the darkness and threat of death are conquered. The sun has been healed and the spell of death is broken. This is made clear by the image of the baboon-headed god Thoth, who is enthroned just in front of the sun barque in the middle register of this hour. A goddess standing opposite him hides two pupils behind her back. They are the pupils of the Sungod's eyes, which are to be healed in the darkness of this hour of the night. Once more, the Egyptian author conceives the gleaming of the nocturnal sunlight in its newly awakened splendor as the mythological image of the healing of the injured solar eye.

The Book of Gates expresses this idea of the renewal of light in the depths of the night even more precisely. Here, in the lower register of the sixth hour, mummies carry brightly shining garments, as we know them from Greek mystery cults. The change of clothes, which will be the main theme of the eighth hour of the Amduat, symbolizes an inner psychic transformation, that is, a complete renewal of the old psychic attitude. The rebirth of light in the depths of the night, as illustrated by the white clothes, psychologically signifies an illuminating and broadening of consciousness and thus a decisive new attitude toward life, one that will definitely manifest itself in the world at the moment of sunrise.

We may say, therefore, that any decisive renewal of life, any expansion of consciousness in an individual or a whole people, is initiated by an awakening of consciousness in the dark abyss of the collective unconscious, which at first glimmers only in the form of dim sparks of luminosity. This awakening consciousness is what is symbolized by the two eyes whose pupils are being hidden by the goddess facing Thoth. In this respect, the Amduat anticipates the basic idea of the mystery cult. That this renewal of consciousness sometimes proves to be extremely powerful is demonstrated by the recumbent lion in the upper register. Above him are two Udjat eyes, the "divine eyes of Re." This lion (lions love the



The "Bull-with-roaring-voice," detail from sixth hour

sunlight!) is the great transformer of death into life, a royal animal and divine spirit whose presence announces that the royal life force has been regained. His ability to assert himself is stressed by his name, "Bull-with-roaring-voice"; both the bull and the lion symbolize royalty.

The nine royal scepters facing the lion have the same meaning as the sixteen standing mummies in the middle register. They incorporate all the deceased pharaohs and blessed dead who have become Osiris, that is, the totality of the ancestors. The *ba*-soul of the Sungod and that of every one of the deceased accompanying him desire to rest with these ancestors, for it is only in their presence that the mysterious renewal can take place. We must conceive the psychological meaning of the corpse of the Sungod along similar lines. The Sungod can be understood as the incorporation of luminosity—a principle of consciousness in the collective unconscious. His corpse represents, however, the sum of all that has ever been made conscious in the past, all the cultural achievements of

the human race in the course of millions of years that have sunk into oblivion, or into the realm of the unconscious.

The collective unconscious is not a chaotic muddle of all possible contents. Rather, we can observe in it the existence of a certain structure or a specific dynamic: on the one hand, the instinctive reactions, the so-called patterns of behavior, and on the other hand, the archetypes as primordial images, the “inherited possibilities of human imagination as it was from time immemorial.”⁴

Let us return to the clearly structured scene of the three chests that protect the dismembered solar scarab. The dismemberment is a clear hint at the dissolution of the old conscious attitude; but, as the accompanying text makes clear, this image also shows that in the midst of all decomposition and dissolution, there is a mysterious ordering principle: “Illuminated is the darkness in the earth! The flesh roars with joy.” Thus, in a manner typical of the Egyptian concept of the cosmos, these three chests, or tombs, reflect the paradoxical truth of an intimate connection between decay and the creation of a new order.

How can we understand the mysterious events that occur at the edge of the ordered cosmos, where the corpse of the Sungod rests in the depths of the night? In need of renewal, the psychic attitude (the *ba*-soul) of the preceding day or historical era plunges into the realm of the collective unconscious (the realm of the ancestors and of bygone cultures), where it disintegrates (the motif of dismemberment) and then unites itself with archetypal contents that are attempting to rise to the surface. Whenever we succeed in consciously recognizing even a small part of those archetypal images that—like the sunrise in the morning—break into consciousness, this recognition will bring about a creative revival and broadening of consciousness and thus a revival and renewal of a past religious orientation or worldview. Descent into the realm of the ancestors is an adequate image for the fact that every spontaneous renewal of life stems from an encounter with what has existed from time immemorial. A genuine act of creation can result only from an *a priori* preexisting

⁴C. G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, vol. 7 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), § 101.

psychic arrangement of archetypal images (the uncountable deities of the Amduat), from an inner structure and dynamic that has been established via the countless spiritual experiences of humankind, “a true remedy, (proven) a million times,” as the Amduat puts it.

Whenever cultural development threatens to stagnate, there is need of a reorientation rooted in the past in order to create the future. New life emerges from what was once alive and now is decayed. This is a law of nature valid for the inorganic world and no less for the world of the spirit.

If Christian dogma and ritual have devolved into empty formulas and mere formalities, then we are sure to encounter the religious conceptions of the so-called pagan world, for our living spirit has withdrawn into this stratum that flourished long ago. If we manage to raise this sunken treasure and place it into a new vessel, our spiritual and religious life will be renewed. Whenever an archetype emerges to the surface, provided that it is at least partially understood, it always brings with it a certain influence or power that has a numinous, fascinating, and healing effect. But if we fail to raise it into our consciousness, a most precious treasure of our forebears may be lost forever.

Descent into the depths where a once-living treasure lies hidden is the age-old theme of the Christian-Gnostic Hymn of the Soul (or Pearl), which the persecuted and captured apostle Thomas supposedly chanted in the midst of his fellow prisoners.⁵ It tells us the edifying story of a prince who is sent by his royal parents to search for the pearl in a foreign land. It lies buried under the Egyptian Sea, which is guarded by a fearsome dragon. The son sets off, but soon he forgets his mission and his royal (divine) origin, losing himself entirely in Egypt’s lust for worldly pleasures. Only when an eagle brings him a letter from his homeland does he suddenly remember his noble ancestry and his original task:

Rise up and awake out of sleep,
and hearken unto the words of the letter;
and remember that you are a son of kings;
lo, you have come under the yoke of bondage.

⁵“The Acts of Thomas,” in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, ed. and trans. M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), §§ 108–113.

Remember the pearl for which you were sent into Egypt.
Remember your garment spangled with gold.
Your name is named in the book of life.⁶

Heeding the message, he breaks free of his worldly bonds and dives down into the depths of the Egyptian Sea, where he soon finds the pearl. After taming the dragon that guards the treasure, he seizes the pearl and departs for his homeland in the East (sunrise!). Along the way, he recovers his shining gold garment, and soon after his return, he dedicates his most precious treasure to God on high.

But where does the highest value, namely, the pearl, lie hidden in our own day? The strong emphasis on the heavenly world of the spirit and the concomitant focus on the divine word (*logos*) and intellect in Christian theology provoke, in accordance with the law of enantiodromia, a revival of the divine spirit in nature, regardless of the latter's Christian or pagan background. If we do not valorize and accept this living spirit of nature and matter, this failure could easily lead us into catastrophe and destruction.

In Switzerland we have a saint who lived in the fifteenth century, Niklaus von Flüe. Farming in the mountains, he and his wife Dorothea had ten children, but as soon as his oldest son could take over the farm and support the large family, Niklaus left the farm to live as a hermit in a wild gorge near his family's house, supported by his family and the inhabitants of the village.

Many of his visions were deeply permeated by this spirit of nature. Some of the images were so shocking and "heretical" that they occasioned severe concern and even agitation in Brother Klaus, faithful Christian that he was. It was thanks to the consistent merit of this saint that he remained true to his visions despite their initial incompatibility with the Christian dogma of his day. As Marie-Louise von Franz has demonstrated in her interpretation of these visions, they clearly show traits of the Germanic god Wotan or Odin, and they forced Niklaus to accept and integrate his pagan roots into his Christian image of God; these traits had mainly to do with a profound connection with cosmic nature and

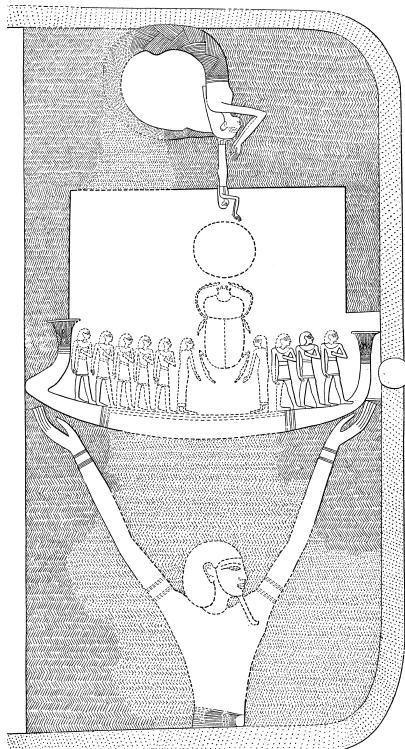
⁶Ibid., p. 413, verses 43–47.

with the principle of synchronicity.⁷ The latter, as we have already seen, assumes that the collective unconscious includes a *foreknowledge of some kind*. It is through such synchronicities that nature manifests itself in a meaningful sense to the individual. Only in this way is a truly individual and personal encounter with the divine possible, enabling an integration of the psychic sphere into the world of nature. This deep appreciation of the individual and his or her immediate contact with the divine distinguishes the visions of the Swiss saint from a great deal of traditional Christian belief.

The deep love and reverence bestowed upon Brother Klaus even today demonstrate the fruitfulness of such an expansion of the divine image. The life and work of the saint provide a particularly impressive example of the spontaneous devotion of the soul to the “corpse,” that is, to the heritage of our forebears and the whole assembly of our heathen ancestors.

From the fathomless depths “in the abyss (of the) waterhole of those in the netherworld,” as the introduction to the sixth hour puts it, life and new consciousness are reborn every night. The Egyptians had another accurate image for this idea. In the last scene of the Book of Gates, it is the god Nun, embodiment of the watery chaos, whose mighty arms lift the sun barque out of the primeval waters. In the barque, among other creative powers, we see Khepri, who, as we know, symbolizes new consciousness. Nut, the sky goddess and personification of the vault of the sky, welcomes the solar child, her maternal arms outstretched to receive him at the eastern horizon. She, for her part, stands on the head of Osiris, whose backward-bent body embraces the entirety of the netherworld. No era and no culture, however magnificent, can avoid the descent into the realm of the dead. The cycle closes with Osiris. “The beginning is light, the end is Unified Darkness,” says the closing text of the short version of the Amduat, but in fact, we do not know where the beginning starts and where the end is. When all is said and done, there might be only *one truth* that eludes our knowledge.

⁷ Marie-Louise von Franz, *Die Visionen des Niklaus von Flüe* (Zürich: Daimon Verlag, 1980), particularly pp. 72–90 and 126–130. An English version of this book will soon be published.



Book of Gates, final scene

Komarios and Kleopatra, a Greek alchemical text dating to the first century of our own era and clearly influenced by Egyptian thought, speaks of the metals in the alchemist's vessel as corpses lying "bound and oppressed in the gloom and darkness of the depths of Hades.... But when the grave is opened, then they come forth from Hades, like the child from the womb."⁸ Such is the sacred art of alchemy, the paradoxical union of spirit and soul with the body, the awakening of the corpses from their sleep. As the sages of the Hymn of the Soul call out to the royal son, reminding him of his origin, so, in this alchemical passage, the soul calls out to the body: "Wake up from Hades and stand up from the grave and awaken from the darkness. For you have

clothed yourself in spirituality and divinity, after the call of resurrection has spoken (to you) and the remedy (elixir) of life has reached you."⁹

Whether in the Hymn of the Soul, in the Komarios text, or in the Amduat, we always encounter the same motif of the confinement and suffering of the body, which is in need of redemption. In the lower register of the sixth hour of the Amduat, we see various standing or half-seated deities, who, as the accompanying text makes clear, owe their revival to the union of the Sungod with his corpse, which has just occurred. Thus

⁸ M. Berthelot and Ch.-Em. Ruelle, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs, Texte grec* (1888; repr., Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967), pp. 292–293. English translation from the Greek by A. S.

⁹ Ibid., p. 296. English translation from the Greek by A. S.

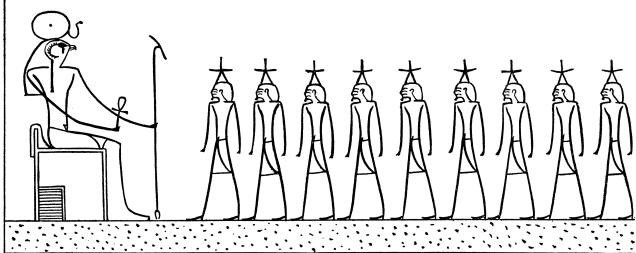
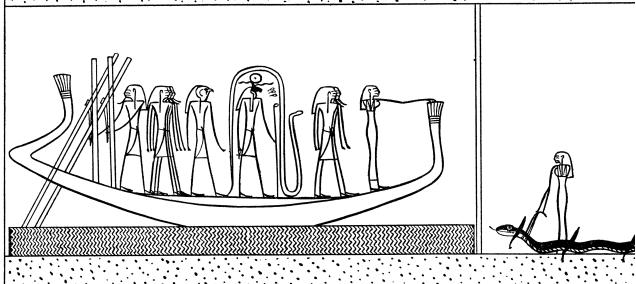
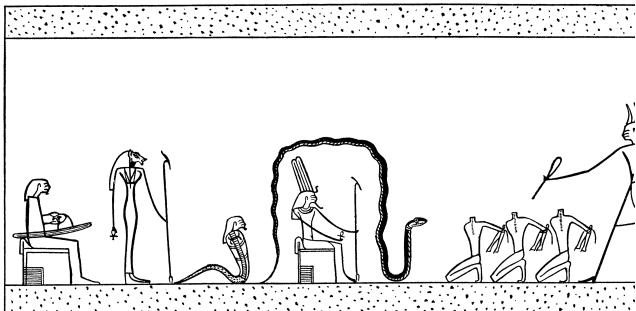
they are addressed, “You are the gods whose heads shine and whose corpses stand!” The dead now rise from their languor, and the Great God admonishes them,

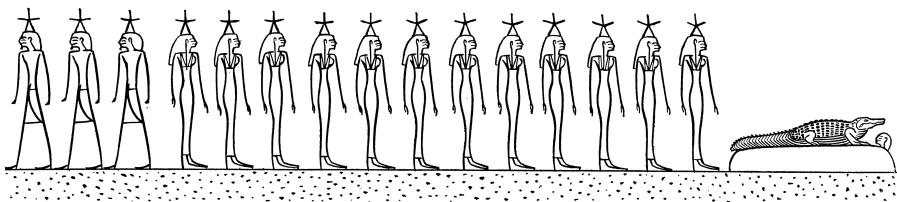
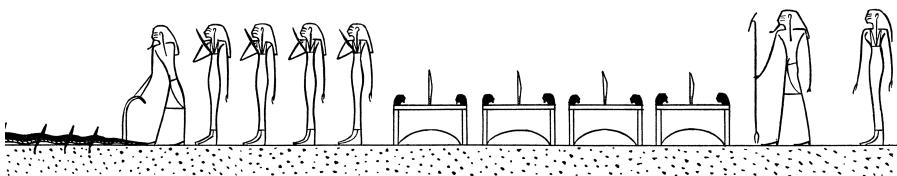
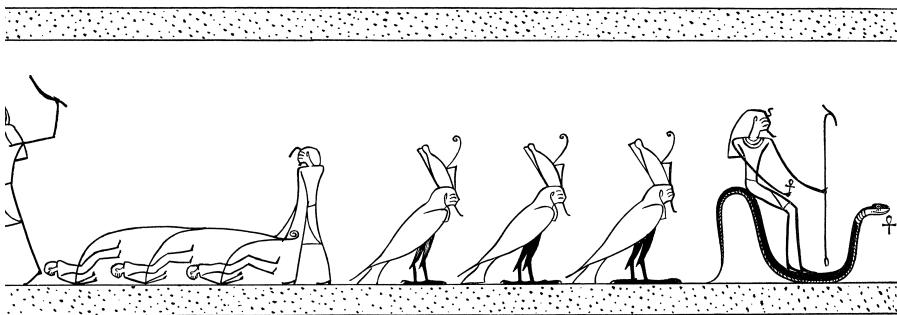
Stand up, indeed! Yield not!
Stretch out and be not weary!
May your *ba*-souls emerge, and may your shadows rest!
Stretching for your feet, and straightness for your knees!
May you indeed rest in your flesh, unbound are your wrappings!

The painful constriction of the mummy wrappings is now successfully overcome. Freedom from old wrappings and bonds is an archetypal motif. For instance, in another alchemical text of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in which the soul is admonished to rescue itself from the flood of unconsciousness, we read, “First, you must rip into shreds the garment you are wearing, the cloth of unconsciousness, the solidification of wickedness, the fetters of corruption, the dark cloak, the living death, the visible corpse, the unburied tomb, the inner thief.”¹⁰ It is scarcely imaginable that such thoughts could have existed without knowledge of texts expressing Egyptian religious concepts. It seems that via the *Corpus Hermeticum*, there was a deep relationship between the basic concepts of alchemy and those we find in the Egyptian Books of the Netherworld, and it is mainly through alchemy that the wisdom of ancient Egypt has been transmitted to us. In our time, this wisdom is of unfathomable value for modern psychology, and, as I believe, indispensable for the understanding of C. G. Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious.

The admonition not to be inattentive at the decisive moment of revival from the depths is of great psychological importance. Whenever a new content emerges out of the unconscious and proceeds in the direction of consciousness, it is crucial that we devote our utmost awareness and attention to it in order to bring it into consciousness. Otherwise, it will easily slip back into the unconsciousness of the realm of the dead. The seventh hour of the night is dedicated to this danger.

¹⁰ Quoted from M.-L. von Franz, *Aurora consurgens*, trans. R. F. C. Hull and A. S. B. Glover (New York: Pantheon, 1966), § 181.





SEVENTH HOUR

APOPIS, ENEMY OF THE SUN

The Unstable Balance of the New

Scarcely has new light been kindled by the union of the *ba*-soul with the corpse—that is, by the *coniunctio* of Re and Osiris—when the powers of darkness threaten to extinguish it in this, the seventh hour of the night. No less an enemy than Apopis obstructs the sun barque and those it conveys. This scene would have struck terror in the hearts of the ancient Egyptians, for to them, a standstill in the sun's course would have threatened to put an end to the order of the cosmos.

This threat to ordered existence is an archetypal motif: just as newly awakened consciousness begins to radiate its first dim light, it is threatened by renewed—and this time final—darkness. New creation attracts the evildoer: this is an archetypal truth. A well-known example is the Massacre of the Innocents. When Christ's star heralded the coming of a new world order, King Herod sought to kill the newborn child. But an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, and the Holy Family escaped safely to Egypt (Matthew 2).

When a new era begins, death and chaos are close at hand. We must always bear in mind the threat that arises, especially at the outset, whenever there is a renewal of our consciousness and thus any change in our prior ordered regimen and attitudes. We may also state the matter the other way around. If we are sometimes filled with terror and beset by profound existential angst or afflicted with the torment of depression, such an experience can intimate that even now, beneath the threshold of consciousness, the germ of a psychic content is struggling to emerge from the collective unconscious to cause a decisive change in our lives. There is thus no reason to be ashamed of such anxiety or depression. Quite the contrary, someone who never knows such anxiety is most likely cut off from the deeper levels of his or her soul. It is only natural to fear the darker aspects of the self.

Many mystics have been touched by such fear in their innermost souls. By way of a single example, we may cite the shoemaker Jakob Böhme. As a young man, he was seized by a painful melancholy in the face of the “profound depths of this world.” In *The Four Complexions*, written in 1621, he makes a precise psychological distinction between a melancholic depression based on pathological self-torment, which can (better: should) be overcome, on the one hand, and on the other, the existential dread that

arises from “the terror of the soul in the face of the dark abyss.”¹ It was not until his decisive vision, which filled him with terror and which he could describe only as a divine birth, that he experienced a gradual transformation of his initial fear of the vast depths of this world. Only then could he confirm that “God alone is both the All and the profound depths,” meaning that the darkness had not been lifted away but rather integrated into the god-image itself.

Existential angst must be distinguished from merely human fear. The latter, which can be healed, arises from an ego that is too weak and thus easily discouraged. But terror in the face of absolute evil (as personified by Apopis) reaches down so deeply into the collective unconscious that it cannot be overcome by one’s own will power and effort. We must accept the fact that there are wounds that cannot be healed. As we shall see, in his encounter with Apopis, even the Sungod will need the assistance of other divine beings. This terror that makes even the Great God tremble can be banished or transformed only with the help of archetypal powers.

In the upper register of the seventh nocturnal hour, we see Osiris enthroned in his function as judge of the dead. Here, for the first time, he is encircled protectively by the serpent Mehen. There seems to be a close connection between this scene and the threat to all creation by Apopis in the middle register. In front of Osiris, three enemies kneel, decapitated and bound, and three others lie bound on their backs, while two punishing demons stand over them. The three *ba*-birds to the right of the condemned beautifully illustrate the blessed dead: they protect the Sungod in his form of Atum, whom we see to their immediate right, seated on the coils of a serpent. Here, immediately juxtaposed to the threat of the ultimate extinction of light by Apopis, we find Osiris safely distinguishing between the damned and the blessed, or, as the accompanying text puts it, between those who are endowed with “living *ba*-souls, on whom the mysteries live,” and the headless ones who “have rebelled against

¹J. Böhme, *Trostschrift für ein stets trauriges Herz: Sog. Trostschrift von 4 Complexionen (De quatuor complexionibus)* (Treatise of the four complexions, or, a consolatory instruction for a sad and assaulted heart), 1621. Cited here from H. Grunsky, *Jakob Boehme* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1984), pp. 18–19.

the Foremost of the Netherworld,” thus barring them from the grace of knowledge:

O you! Osiris, who presides over the netherworld,
Lord of Life, Ruler of the West!
Life is yours! You live and you are alive!
Ba-being is yours! You are *ba*-soul, and you remain
ba-soul in the earth!
May you be exalted over your followers,
and may your foes fall to you, beneath your feet!
You have power over those who acted against you.

The theme of these scenes in the upper register is moral differentiation. At a time when a new level of consciousness is about to be established in the world, be it in the life of an individual or in that of a whole people, ethical awareness is of utmost importance. The reference, of course, is not to a collective morality that has gradually developed over time into a commonly accepted code. This code is part of the old order that must be overcome. Quite the contrary, the ethical differentiation rooted in Osiris is intimately connected with his *ba*-being, that is, his life-giving quality. It is a psychically and emotionally differentiated consciousness that requires a dialogue with one’s inner voice (i.e., with the gods within), or the self. All the founders of new religions have, to one extent or another, ignored the traditional moral code, holding the divine, inner voice or message of their visions to be more worthy of respect and attention than the demands of collective, public institutions or authorities.

Erich Neumann has devoted a book entitled *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic* to this topic.² The incursion of the dark into Western consciousness has, according to Neumann, led to the destruction of the old value system, thus requiring a new ethical orientation for our modern age. This new ethic can be described as an ethic of individuation, in that it follows not so much a collective moral code as an inner voice rooted in the self, that is, in one’s own creative process (thus the term “individuation”). It

²E. Neumann, *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990).

would be a gross misunderstanding to see in this new ethic nothing more than an individual or personal affair. Rather, a principal characteristic of this ethic is a careful harkening to the messages of the *collective* unconscious or the self. In this orientation toward the objective-psychic, the individual is embedded in a superordinate totality.

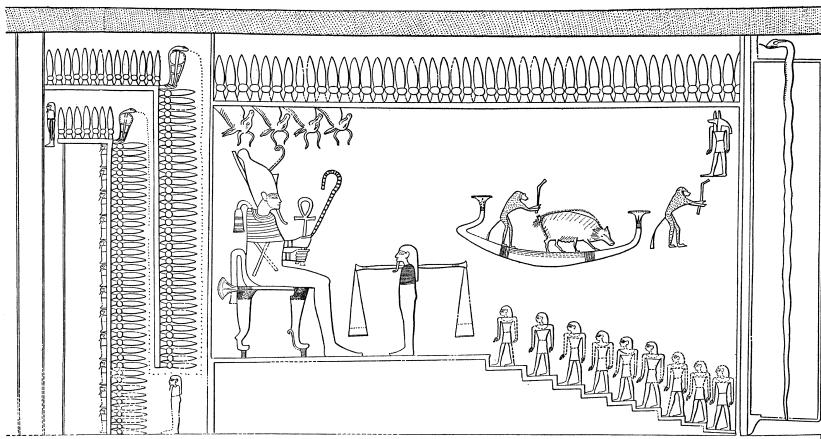
The healing of a neurotic orientation toward life is thus also an ethical problem. The overcoming of one's own unconsciousness necessarily requires a new ethical alignment. Not that an individual would thus become "better"; rather, he or she would deal with the dark and the light sides of life in a more conscious and nuanced manner.

Even Jesus, subjected to a threefold temptation by the devil in the wilderness, suffered an ethical ordeal. Just as the temptation of Jesus stands at the beginning of his mission in this world (Matthew 4), so the Judgment of the Dead by Osiris begins the transformation of the Sungod and his entourage, a transformation that will grow more visible from one nocturnal hour to the next, culminating in the Sungod's rebirth in the twelfth hour.

We may say, therefore, that once inner-psychic images and contents from the collective unconscious have broken through into consciousness, an ethical reorientation is a first sign of renewal and change. The Book of Gates, which is later in date than the Amduat, thus devotes an entire scene to the Judgment of the Dead by Osiris, which we find inserted between the fifth and sixth nocturnal hours.

In the history of ideas in ancient Egypt, the moral differentiation of the individual became more pronounced over time, with an emphatic increase on individual uniqueness appearing in the later New Kingdom, which we also call the Ramesside Period. This period was characterized by the appearance of the phenomenon of personal piety, and the fact that ordinary individuals could now address prayers and petitions to a god or goddess of their choice implies a major change in the concept of the divine. But the basis for this development is already to be found in the Amduat, to which we now return.

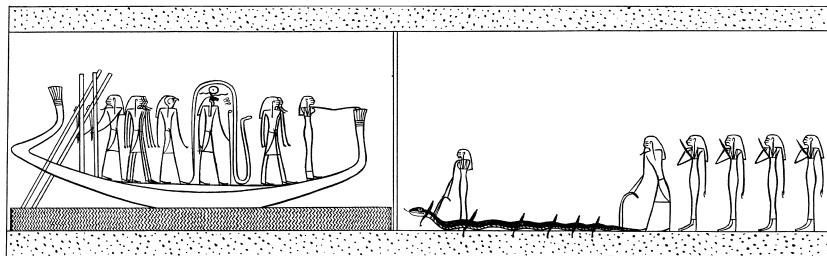
In the middle register of the hour, in front of the sun barque but safely separated from it by a wall, there lurks the serpent demon Apopis. The coils of his body are pierced by knives, and two deities, one at his neck and one at his tail, hold him bound for the slaughter. To the right, we see four goddesses, knives in hand, whose names reveal the wrathful side



The Hall of Osiris, Book of Gates

of the feminine: “She-who-binds-together,” “She-who-cuts,” “She-who-punishes,” and “She-who-annihilates.” So convinced were the Egyptians of the effectiveness of images that they would never have dared to depict this terrifying demon of the depths unbound. Analogously, tombs with an illustration of the Judgment of the Dead always show the scales weighing the ethical behavior of the deceased in perfect balance, for the lack of a harmonious equilibrium would have threatened the otherwise peaceful character of the scenes decorating the walls, and it could even have resulted in the condemnation of the deceased! Though the existence of evil was to be taken seriously, not even the Sungod could gaze upon absolute evil.

It is thus *just because* of his confrontation with absolute evil that Re must undergo a transformation. The introductory text to this hour states the matter simply: “The god assumes another form in this cavern.” This “form” can refer only to the depiction of the serpent Mehen protectively encircling the Sungod from now until the twelfth hour of the night. It is no longer a chest but a living serpent that protects the god from any and all evil forces. It is as though the transformation that occurred at the deepest point of the netherworld entailed a dissolution of former rigid perceptions (compartmentalized thinking, collective



The sun barque in front of Apopis, detail from seventh hour

morality, etc.), making way for the living, instinctive spirit of the serpent and the earth.

This serpent is a symbol of the regenerative energy of the Sungod. We made mention of snake-consciousness in our discussion of the fourth hour, where we saw the sun barque transformed into a serpent, a transformation we interpreted as symbolizing newly gained perception or insight. Here, however, the Mehen-serpent becomes a permanent escort of the Sungod, a fact that can be interpreted psychologically as symbolizing an increased integration of the creative spirit of nature embodied in the serpent. Though a serpent as earth- or world-spirit accompanied the Sungod temporarily in the fourth hour, here Mehen becomes a constant living presence. It makes a difference whether we merely acknowledge, be it ever so slightly, the inner, archetypal figures of the unconscious or whether they are so real to us that they become indispensable companions in our life, inner figures we cannot do without.

Almost as a rule, this creative snake-spirit has the ability to come awake precisely when we are afflicted by evil and destructive events, when we can no longer banish those dark and often inferior thoughts that constantly haunt us. At such times, only one thing can save us: to become active, even creative, by doing some sort of work patiently and with persistence. Though the destructive energy of Apopis—that is, the threat of one's own unconsciousness—cannot be completely conquered in this way, it can at least be warded off and thus gradually overcome. “He who knows it upon earth,” states the text immediately above Apopis, “is one whose water ‘Horrible-of-face’ (i.e., Apopis) cannot drink,” that is, so

to speak, one whose water of life or life energy will not cease but continue to flow. The underlying image is that of Apopis obstructing the journey of Re and his entourage by gulping down the water on which the sun barque must make its way. In his attempt to do this, Apopis threatens the regeneration of all the dead and even the continuity of the entire cosmos. His success would result in a deadly stagnation within the eternal creative process, a complete relapse into unconsciousness, or “dryness,” as the alchemists called it. When we are deprived of the life-giving water of the netherworld, the divine water of the alchemists, we cease to be connected with the hidden subterranean stream of archetypal images that has sustained and nurtured our souls since time immemorial.

Thus the spirit of the protective serpent can indeed keep us safe from the dark principle of Apopis, and once again those famous, oft-quoted lines from Hölderlin’s “Patmos” prove true:

Wo aber Gefahr ist,
wächst das Rettende auch.
[Yet where danger lies,
grows that which saves.]³

That we cannot gaze directly upon absolute evil is indicated, *inter alia*, by the image of the Sungod swallowing his eye, the sunlight, in order to pass safely by Apopis. Before Apopis, even the Sungod must close his eyes! There exists a darkness that cannot be penetrated by the light of perception or consciousness, and in the face of which all “enlightenment” must come to a halt, for this darkness is resistant to perception and consciousness. Perhaps our silence in the face of all the horrors of this world—in wars and torture chambers, in the grief of mothers and fathers over their dead children, and so forth—is not always a sign of mere cowardice or helplessness but rather, the only appropriate reaction to the dark aspect of the creator himself. And attempts at academic investigation and explanation of the Holocaust perhaps serve only to belittle this absolute horror that defies all understanding.

³R. Sieburth, *Hymns and Fragments by Friedrich Hölderlin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 88–89.

There are two figures in the prow of the sun barque who, thanks to their magical power, are especially qualified to help ward off Apopis “in the secrecy of the netherworld.” One is Isis, Lady of the Barque, well known for her magical skills. The other is a god called the Eldest Magician, in whom we can recognize a form of Seth, as Erik Hornung has shown.⁴

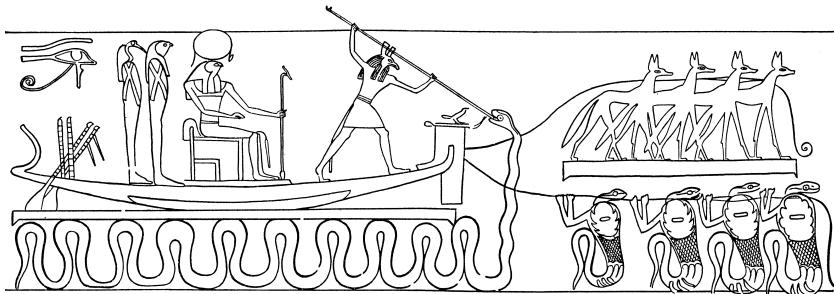
Seth, as the myth relates (and every Egyptian was well aware of this myth), murdered his brother Osiris: he was thus an antagonist of the order in creation. Here, however, he stands in the sun barque in order to ward off Apopis, with whom he is otherwise associated. Seth, representative of blind desire, a dark, emotional, primal power and energy, here becomes the first and most important of Re’s defenders. *Similia similibus curantur*, runs an old saying: “like heals like.” Thus, it is precisely Seth, the rebel, the foreigner, the thunderer, and the murderer of Osiris, who has been chosen to defeat Apopis and thereby ward off ultimate chaos and cosmic catastrophe.

In Book of the Dead spell 108, the serpent Apopis, called “He-who-is-in-his-burning,” has already gulped down the water of the netherworldly river, thus bringing the sun barque to a standstill and causing tremendous confusion among the crew of divine rowers. But now Seth stands at the prow of the barque. Like the Christian Saint George, he battles the demonic serpent with his iron lance, compelling him to vomit up all he has swallowed. Confronting Apopis, Seth speaks his words of magic power:

Get back at the sharp knife which is in my hand!
I stand before you, navigating aright and seeing afar.
Cover your face, for I ferry across;
get back because of me, for I am the Male!...
I am hale and I remain hale,
for I am the greatest magician, the son of Nut,
and power against you has been granted to me.⁵

⁴E. Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes*, pt. 2, *Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 7 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963), p. 131.

⁵R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: British Museum Publications, 1993), p. 101.



Seth defeating Apopis

What a wonderful passage! Bursting with masculine pride and self-confidence, its verses convince us that Seth is truly a faithful and indispensable defender of the Sungod.

Psychologically, Seth symbolizes an instinctive, sometimes even violent aspect of the self, that is, of any realization of one's own innermost truth; as such, he is indispensable for the process of individuation. He embodies shadow impulses, dark affects and emotions, as well as the rage and aggression that sometimes accompany the process of increasing consciousness. On both the individual and the collective level, the night side of this process of individuation has—and must have—these dark, dismal, even frightening qualities. At the outset of every new phase in the life of an individual or of every new era on the collective level—that is, whenever there is a change in the dominant archetypal symbol—the shadow side of renewal will not be absent. In no period has humankind been spared from conflict and wars. We have need of Seth's dark side, for it has the capacity to stand in the service of the continuing process of creative change.

Even the Egyptians, accustomed as they were to paradoxes, saw scandal in the notion that Seth, "the male whom Osiris detests," could be a defender of the Sungod. Time had to pass for this concept to gain gradual acceptance on the part of the collective. While the Amduat touches on the topic of Apopis and Seth only with reluctance, the later Books of the Netherworld deal with it in a manner that is much freer and less prejudiced. This development mirrors the above-mentioned moral-ethical

differentiation of the individual in the New Kingdom, a development that saw the individual endowed with an unprecedented degree of ethical responsibility. From this time on, every deceased person, not just the pharaoh and his entourage, had to face the Judgment of the Dead and justify his or her deeds before Osiris. And with that, everyone had the possibility of becoming one of the blessed dead who accompanied Re in his sun barque.

The integration of Seth into creative consciousness entails a humiliation that must be borne by everyone who encounters his or her shadow with unsparing candor. Confrontation with absolute evil (Apopis) can be survived only if one has experienced something of one's own shadow (Seth). The individual must have experienced a rage in which he or she felt prepared almost to kill someone, perhaps even a loved one—in other words, the primitiveness that can suddenly overcome a person, sweeping away any and all good intentions and ideals. It is necessary to know that powerful devil who, it seems, so often conceals himself behind a seemingly modest, polite demeanor. We must harbor no illusions: Seth lurks everywhere, but if we can accept him as an ever-present aspect of our life, then in all likelihood, he will at times be a helper and supporter. Even the figure of the shadow has two faces!

The feminine side of the divine pair magically warding off Apopis is represented by Isis. The magical skills of this great goddess of life and love are well known from the myth of Osiris. *She* rescues Osiris from death and repeatedly protects the child Horus from the persecution of Seth (!), for she is the great healer, protectress of all who are helpless and all who are afflicted with disease, pain, and sorrow. Small wonder, then, that she, above all others, stands in opposition to the terrifying Apopis serpent. As a typical representative of the Great Goddess, a figure we encountered earlier in the second nocturnal hour in the form of Hathor, Isis above all hates every form of standstill and stagnation. Where the dynamic of life is at stake, she does not shrink from confrontation. At such a time, she—like Hathor, the Mesopotamian Ishtar, and others—manifests herself as a fighting, militant, and aggressive goddess. Her aggressiveness and emotionality, not seldom combined with her great cunning, are often the only means of exorcising the paralyzing power of a deadly unconsciousness (Apopis).

Thanks to their power of magic, Isis and Seth are successful. Such magic *can* be effective, but it need not necessarily be. For example, archaic man, using his magical skills to cast a hunting or love spell, was well aware of the fact that there was only a possibility that his magic would succeed. And it is this reckoning with its possibility that seems to be the secret of success. Whenever we are obliged to confront the paralyzing power of Apopis, we cannot, as a rule, bring a creative act of any great magnitude to a successful completion. Overcoming so deeply rooted an unconsciousness requires playful creative activity, trying this and that possibility in the hope that, and reckoning with the possibility that, one of these “magical practices” will be able to evoke and inspire the creative spirit within the unconscious. Behind this phenomenon lies the principle of synchronicity, the probability that such playful, semiconscious activity will suddenly hit upon an archetypal content that is constellated in the unconscious. In the case of such an outcome, the associated energetic enrichment of the field of consciousness leads to a psychic revival and renewal. For this reason, in his article “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle” (1952), C. G. Jung speaks of synchronicity, which in fact breaks through the spell of the causality of all things in a mysterious and magical way, “as *creative acts*, as the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity, repeats itself sporadically, and is not derivable from any known antecedents.”⁶ It is this playful and creative magical power of the divine pair—or, as we would put it today, this attitude that reckons with the grace of synchronistic events—that puts an end to this threatening standstill of the sun barque.

We have already encountered the motif of the standstill in the fourth hour, in the realm of Sokar, where the Sungod was motionless before his renewal. Here, however, those in the sun barque must actively intervene in the struggle against Apopis, and even Re himself participates, casting magical spells. In psychological terms, we may say that a threatening stagnation must be endured until that moment when a new content of consciousness begins to arise from the depths of the collective unconscious.

⁶C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, vol. 8 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 967.

It is not until this first germ of renewal becomes apparent and the new archetypal image gradually penetrates into the consciousness that one can truly face the standstill. As a rule, we may say that to fight for something is rewarding only *after* an archetypal foundation has been laid in the psyche. Often it is a dream that announces the coming renewal and transformation. It is then that the individual must be attentive so as not to miss the crucial moment when it will be time to begin defending the new.

The same principle holds true on the collective level. It makes no sense to erect political, social, or economic systems or to create huge organizations if there is no true living spirit at work. Only what is intimately connected with the hidden archetypal stream will endure, for only that can move the soul of the individual.

Let us return once more to the motif of the two sisters at the tomb of Osiris. We have encountered them already, in the upper register of the fifth hour, depicted as two mourning birds guarding the burial mound of their brother. Here, too, the development is threatened by a standstill, and again it is Isis, this time accompanied by her sister Nephthys, who overcomes the death of her brother with her wailing. There is a beautiful symbolism in this imagery. Sometimes strong emotions—tears, outcries, even rage—are needed in order to restore psychic energy to the daylight of consciousness. As we have seen, the moral coloring of this emotionalism is of no consequence. In psychological practice, it is sometimes a strong emotional reaction on the part of the analyst that supplies the decisive impetus for the continuation of a psychic process that has come to a standstill. Though patience and concern for the analysand are the rule, there are moments when empathetic restraint of the analyst's emotions can be careless and unprofessional. The archetypal image of Isis and Seth standing in the prow of the sun barque, battling Apopis with their respective weapons, reminds us of the “sword of love,” of which Zen Buddhists and others say that it kills in order to make alive; at times, this sword is the only way to overcome the paralyzing power that, as a rule, accompanies every process of creation.

The encounter with Apopis, with the shadow in its darkest and most life-threatening aspect, is equivalent to the death of the old being. Thus it is not astonishing that we once again meet the corpse of the Sungod in

the following scene of the middle register. In four coffers, each of them with a sword on its lid, the Sungod lies buried in his four most important forms of manifestation: Atum, Khepri, Re, and Osiris.

This fourfold death of the Sungod finds its echo in a widespread idea in Greek alchemical texts that originated in the intellectual ferment of the multicultural capital city of Alexandria at the dawn of the Christian era; according to these texts, the substance in the alchemical vessel—the alchemists call it the corpse—has to undergo and suffer a fourfold transformation process. By this, the alchemists refer to the fourfold structure of everything that exists, which, in fact, mirrors the secret order of the whole universe. From a psychological perspective, the four stages of this transformation consist, as C. G. Jung puts it, in an unfolding of totality into four parts four times, which means nothing else than its becoming conscious. When psychic contents are split up into four aspects, it means that they have been subjected to differentiation by the four orienting functions of consciousness—namely, thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. A total description is possible only by elaborating on these four aspects.⁷

Through this differentiation, or, as we may also say, through careful analysis, the originally unconscious totality becomes conscious, a process through which the analysand gradually realizes *the self* as a central organizing factor of the psyche as opposed to mere ego psychology, which would expect the solution of a given psychic problem to come more from the ego than from the creative potential of the unconscious.

The fourfold structure of the psyche is illustrated by the dream of a woman in her forties. She dreamed that she was playing cards with three others. She shuffled the cards and wanted to select one for herself. But whenever she tried to do so, one card started to move by itself and flew directly toward the person sitting opposite her. It was the card No. 13. This reminded the dreamer of number 13 of the Tarot set, which indicates death. The realization of totality requires the differentiation of the four

⁷ C. G. Jung, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, vol. 9, pt. 2 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), § 410.

aspects of the personality. Thus there are four players in the dream (similar to the four representatives of the Sungod!). The dreamer still thinks that she can choose a card by herself—that she can handle her destiny by herself—but obviously this is not so. One of her cards flies, as though by magic, toward her partner, who sits opposite her. It reminds her of number 13 in the Tarot deck, the card that symbolizes the human fate of death and rebirth. The urge for a continuous renewal of life again and again compels us to give up old values and convictions (that is, to sacrifice the old king)—for instance, the illusion that I am free to live my life according to my will only. The dreamer's life is no longer in the hands of her ego alone. It is the person facing her—that is, on the opposite side, here probably representing the non-ego or the self—who seems to handle the card of destiny. Thus the dream indicates a shift from the ego to the self, and this is exactly what the awareness of the fourfold structure of the alchemical process implies.

The incipient renewal of life is beautifully illustrated in the lower register of the seventh nocturnal hour. It begins with an image of the falcon-headed Horus, who holds the *was*-scepter (symbolizing well-being and happiness) and the *ankh*-hieroglyph (symbolizing life) in his hands and bears a sun disk on his head. In this subterranean form, he watches over twelve male and twelve female deities, each of them carrying a star on his or her head. The accompanying texts reveal their meaning and function. Above Horus and the star gods, we read of their meaning:

What he (Horus) has to do in the netherworld:
To make the star gods move
and to set the positions of the hours in the netherworld.

And above the goddesses, we read of their function:

These are the gods and goddesses who guide this great god
to the mysterious path of this place.

Clearly, the gods represent the totality of all the stars wandering over the night sky; they are, so to speak, an ordering principle of the world

above. The goddesses, for their part, symbolize the twelve nocturnal hours and oversee the orderly continuation of the Sungod's journey through the netherworld. It is remarkable that, unlike their male companions, who look backward to Horus, the goddesses look ahead to future events, principally, we may assume, to Re's rebirth in the twelfth hour. We have seen this future-oriented character of the feminine before, in the middle register of the fifth hour. The luminosity of all these star deities in the lower register points to a numinosity and psychic animation that exists in this region so close to Apopis and his threat. This nocturnal light provides a comforting contradiction to the dismal darkness and terror spread by Re's principal antagonist.

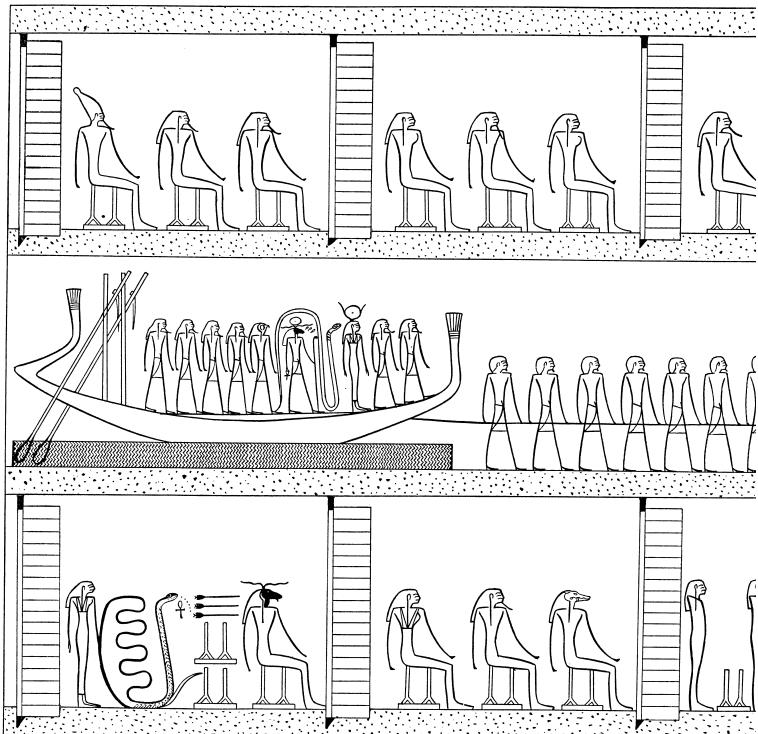
Every act of creation has both aspects imaged in this register, namely, a masculine and a feminine side. The emergence of a new consciousness and a new era rooted in a mysterious union in the depths refers, on the one hand, to a *cosmic* renewal (the night sky represented by the gods) and on the other hand, to a new, *individual* creation in time (the goddesses of the twelve nocturnal hours). Wherever new life comes into existence, this, too, has a cosmic dimension, for the individual is always embedded in the whole. "Out of all comes the One and from the One, All," says Heraclitus.⁸ To be creative means to overcome isolation, loneliness, and alienation, because through creativeness, the individual participates in the *creatio continua*, the continuing creation. This phenomenon explains why creative people so often radiate youth and life.

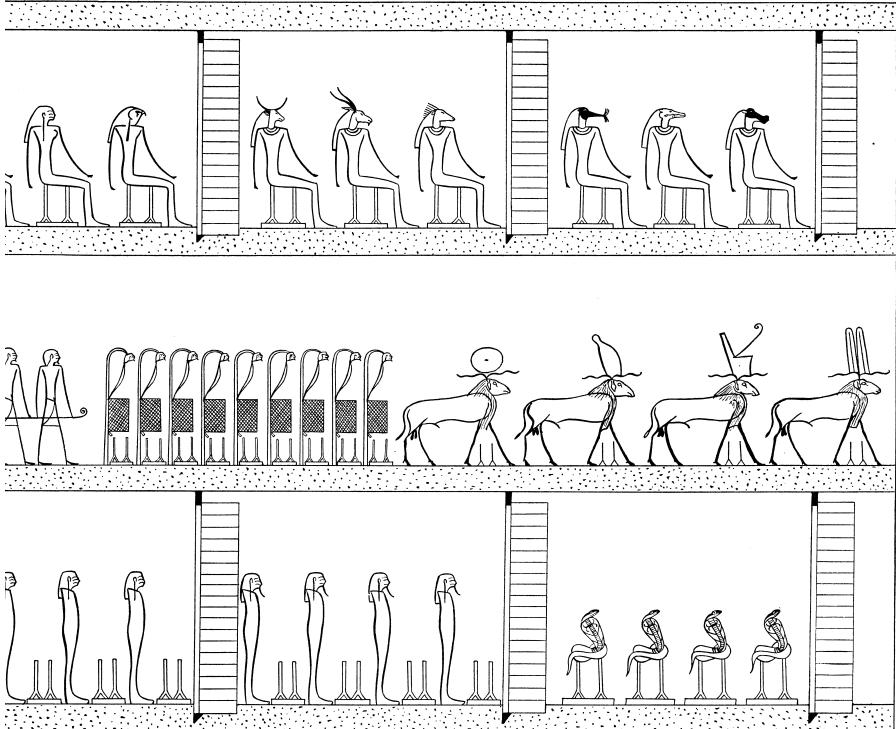
The crocodile god at the end of the register stands guard over Osiris, who is concealed in a mound of sand that covers all but his head. Additionally, the Eye of Osiris is safely hidden in the crocodile's spine. This crocodile is a somewhat ambiguous deity whose ugliness and vileness protect the new content arising from the depths. At a later period in Egyptian history, the entire rejuvenating journey of the Sungod could take place not within the body of the sky goddess (as we see it depicted in the tomb of Ramesses VI and often elsewhere) but in the body

⁸ Heraclitus, *Fragmente, griechisch und deutsch*, ed. Bruno Snell, 8th ed. (Munich: Artemis, 1983), p. 8 (fragment B10). English translation from the Greek by A. S.

of a gigantic crocodile,⁹ which serves as an image for the psychological fact that whenever we are confronted with frightening figures in our dreams, we should be especially wary, as they may point to a precreative state of the psyche.

⁹E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. J. Baines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 161.





EIGHTH HOUR

PROVISION WITH CLOTHES

Religious Renewal

The most difficult part of Re's journey is over. The sun barque has safely passed the deepest point of midnight, and thanks to the creative magical powers of Isis and Seth, Apopis is defeated. In the caverns, or vaults, of the eighth hour, five in the upper register and five in the lower register, the mysterious gods and the blessed dead are provided with new clothing. Most of the gods are seated upon the hieroglyph for clothing, while some stand directly behind it.

Here, for the first time since the first hour of the night, the upper and lower registers are arranged symmetrically. The order of creation has regained a concrete structure. Strange sounds can be heard coming from the caverns; the accompanying text describes them as being “like the humming of bees,” “like the banging of metal,” “like the wailing of mourning women,” “like the yowling of a tomcat,” and so forth.

The emphasis on the number 5—five caverns in the upper register, five in the lower—is meaningful. Its symbolism points to the realization and concretization of content that previously existed only in latent form or as an idea. It symbolizes, so to speak, the desire to “become flesh” and assume concrete shape. Now, the (ideal) unity and totality that have become manifest through a fourfold process (the four manifestations of the Sungod!) must be transformed into the *quinta essentia*, that is, into real life and existence. “The latter,” says Marie-Louise von Franz, “is not merely a fifth element added on to the four known ones, but represents their *realized unity of existence*.¹ The number 5, therefore, has to do with earth, *physis*, matter, and body. No alchemist could ever master the secret of his art unless he began his study with *prima materia*, that is, metal, stone, or whatever his substance was. Without this concrete basis, his work was surely doomed to failure. And no alchemist could ever complete his opus unless, at the end of a lengthy series of distillations and sublimations, he somehow returned to his *prima materia*. The quintessence, wrote an alchemist of the Middle Ages, is “the energy and the soul, which is steadfast and penetrates the depths,” namely, a “body

¹ M.-L. von Franz, *Number and Time: Reflections Leading towards a Unification of Psychology and Physics* (London: Rider, 1974), p. 65, emphasis added.

existing through itself,” not dependent on or related to anything other than what it is.²

The Egyptian concept of the afterlife was also quite concrete. It is surely not by chance that in Egyptian iconography, the star indicating the king’s postmortem psychic existence as early as the pyramid age (the Old Kingdom) always has *five* points. The soul also had a material side to its existence: despite its affinity with the sky, the *ba* also had to be provided with bread and water. Marie-Louise von Franz speaks in this connection of the “concreteness of ideas,” which is a typical feature of Egyptian culture and of alchemy as well. In the minds of the Egyptians, archetypal images and ideas—their deities—were so real that they were as concrete as anything that existed in a physical and material sense. This sense of material reality inspired tremendous efforts to assure a concrete existence in the afterlife, including not only the construction of tombs on a monumental scale but also the performance of the complex and time-consuming rituals of mummification. Through such efforts, the divine and the spiritual were, so to speak, materialized. We may view them in psychological terms as an attempt to render the archetypal ideas visible and palpable.

This deep urge to realize the psychic and the spiritual may explain why it is that in Egypt, in contradistinction to Western iconography, the feminine was related to the sky (the sky goddess Nut) and the masculine to the earth (earth gods such as Geb, Sokar, Tatenen, etc.). In the West, Christian doctrine places strong and conscious emphasis on the heavenly and spiritual world, while emotions and sentiments turn toward earth and matter: hence the feminine connotation of the latter. In Egyptian thought, however, that which had to do with the sky—the realm of ideas and intellectual concepts—was first and foremost an emotional experience and thus more connected with the feminine and iconographically represented as such.

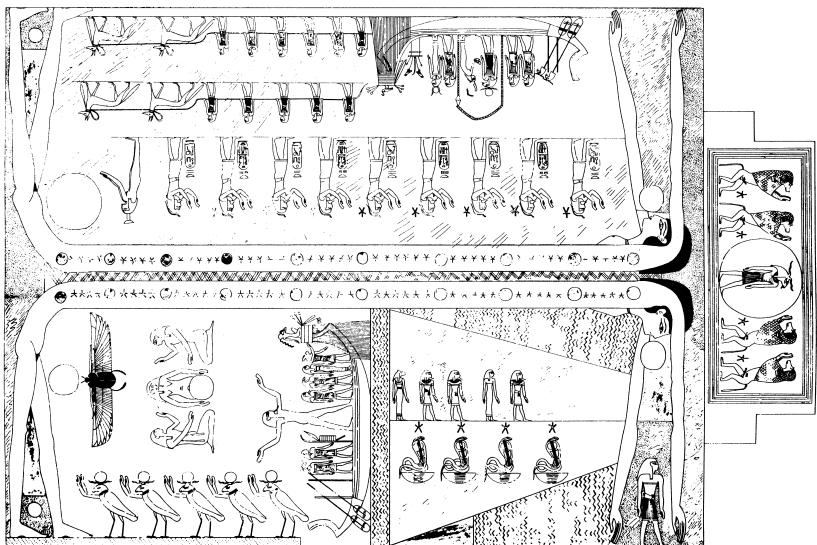
² *Rosarium philosophorum: Ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalters, Faksimile der illustrierten Erstausgabe, Frankfurt 1550*, facsimile edition, ed. J. Telle (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992), Vol. 2, pp. 48 and 50.

Especially beautiful and moving in this regard are the illustrations on the ceiling of the burial chamber of Ramesses IX. The body of the sky goddess Nut spans the entire sky. Framed by her body, her legs, and her arms are rich illustrations from other Books of the Netherworld. In the evening, the goddess devours the sun in the West, and she gives birth to the solar child in the eastern horizon at dawn. In her book, *The Archetypal Symbolism of Animals*, Barbara Hannah presents a plausible psychological interpretation of this mythological image of the eternal feminine connected with the sky. According to her, the devouring aspect is simply a part of the (dark) feminine that has to be redeemed by daily rebirth. When Shu, god of the air, separated the earth (Geb) from the sky (Nut) by elevating Nut, he thereby created a mythological image for the eros principle of the feminine. Psychologically, this means that the feminine is raised from within the unconscious to a position where it can be experienced consciously. And, continues Hannah, “when we allow the sun of our collective convictions and those of our egos to be swallowed every night and then be regenerated anew the next morning in the embrace of the cow (that is, the heavenly cow goddess), of eros, love, and nurturing acceptance, then we are close to the very heart of feminine wisdom.”³

Let us return to the eighth nocturnal hour of the Amduat. With the first nine deities of the upper register, we once again encounter, as in the fifth hour, the Ennead of Heliopolis. The renewal of consciousness has, above all, a cosmic dimension. But the regeneration that takes place in the depths of the night is also a concrete creative act, as shown by the provision with clothes. This motif recalls the change of clothing in the ancient Graeco-Roman mystery cults, where the so-called *solificatio* robe (like the garment spangled with gold in the Hymn of the Soul) is handed over to the neophyte. As the Latin term for the robe implies, the result of the ritual is that the initiand is “not only transformed and has attained illumination, but can manifest it on a higher level of activity.”⁴ Thus the new clothing is the visible sign of a new religious outlook on a

³ B. Hannah, “The Archetypal Symbolism of the Serpent,” in *The Archetypal Symbolism of Animals*, ed. David Eldred (Wilmette, Ill.: Chiron, 2006), p. 385.

⁴ M.-L. von Franz, *Aurora Consurgens* (New York: Pantheon, 1966), p. 374.



Sky goddess Nut, tomb of Ramesses IX

higher level of consciousness, an outlook that results from the mysterious union of opposites, either the *ba*-soul and the *ka* or the *ba* (the noun is of masculine grammatical gender in the Egyptian language) and the corpse (*hbt*, of feminine gender) as complementary entities.

It is as though the creative content, initially still vague, is gradually gaining substance. Strange, unidentifiable sounds, half animal, half human, issue from the caverns: what is already visible (symbolized by the clothing) cannot yet be put into words. In all this din—the humming, wailing, banging, bellowing, and the like—only the Sungod himself can recognize the jubilation of the blessed dead! The dramatic events of the sixth and seventh hours—the mysterious union of the Sungod with his corpse and the deadly threat and defeat of Apopis—and, finally, the provision of new clothing here, in the eighth hour: all these things have stirred up strong, even physical or instinctive, emotions. The inchoate sounds and voices may thus be seen as an initial attempt to master these emotions. People who have had a shocking experience, such as an accident or a severe illness, often display a strong urge to speak about it

again and again. It is, of course, an attempt to reduce an unbearably high psychic tension. Similarly, we can understand the sounds coming from the caverns of this nocturnal hour as a sign of the psychic tension that increases through this nocturnal hour and the next one and also as an attempt to articulate and thus alleviate the tension.

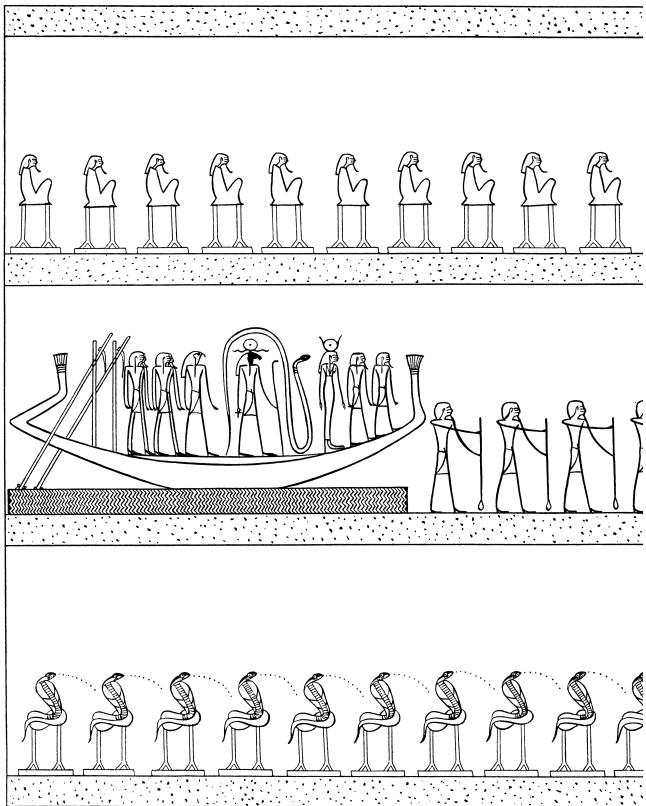
Like the number 5 and the clothing motif, the four netherworldly rams at the end of the middle register, who have the hieroglyphic sign for clothing depicted between their forelegs, point to the increasing realization of the new consciousness. They are, as the text states, “manifestations of Tatenen,” the old earth god whose name alludes to the emergence of the primeval mound of earth from the primal waters at the time of creation. The name Tatenen means “raised land.” Clearly, the *ba* of Re is here equated with that of the cosmogonic earth god Tatenen. This identification is important, for it shows that from the very beginning, the newly developing consciousness, that is, the renewal of sunlight in the depths of the netherworld, carries within itself a strong propensity and a deep longing to be realized or materialized. Just as the earth in the primeval mound willed itself to rise up from the waters of Nun, so the content of the collective unconscious wills itself to rise, via a process of creation, above the threshold of consciousness.

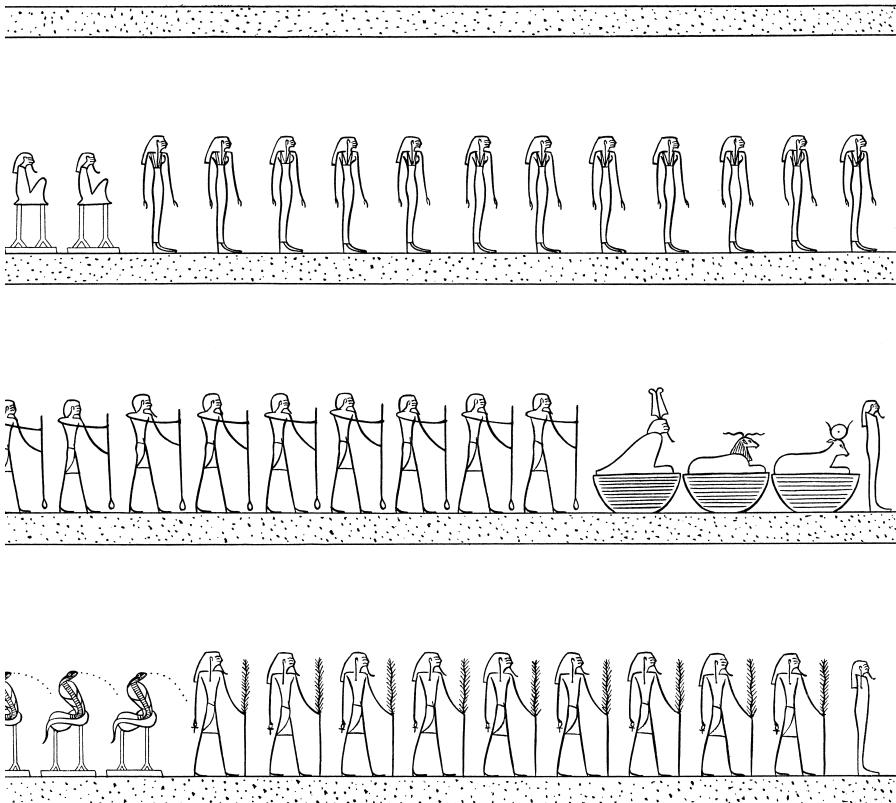
The need to renew an old attitude, once fruitful but no longer creative, requires, from time to time, an at least partial withdrawal from the world. As long as this withdrawal corresponds to an inner psychic law, it is legitimate. Nevertheless, it also entails a feeling of guilt, for we are withdrawing our creative and constructive energy from the world, perhaps for months, perhaps even for years. Later, in order to atone for this guilt, we feel obliged to give back to the world such new and concrete values as might have developed during our lengthy phase of introversion (analysis!), and which now must come to the fore. The process of individuation consists, at first, in becoming conscious of new contents emerging from the unconscious, in gaining new insights, and in adopting a new attitude toward life in general. But there comes a day when that which has been given to an individual, that which has deep sense and meaning and is in fact a very precious enrichment of his or her life, must be shared with others and given back to the world as though it were the contributing of a treasure given to us out of the depths of the inner world. This is the

decisive moment when we step out into the world provided, as it were, with new clothing. Serious difficulties may accompany this step, for the manifestation of the new, even after a successful defeat of Apopis, will, from experience, most probably meet all sorts of resistance.

Accordingly, despite the fact that the long-awaited event of the rebirth of the Sungod is drawing ever closer, Re's enemies are still present, both here and in the hours to come. In the eighth hour, for instance, we meet them near the center of the middle register, where we see them depicted as personified *šms*-signs, an allusion to the jurisdiction of the Sungod. Each of them carries a knife that, according to the accompanying text, is to be "planted into the enemies of Re." Once again, we see the archetypal motif of the threat to the life to come. The first manifestations of new consciousness and new world order are always endangered, and it is better not to lose too many words about it. In the realm of the dead, the law of silence rules; those who dwell on the riverbanks love silence, which is also a central idea in the Greek mysteries (the Greek word *myein*, which is the origin, via Latin, of our word "mystery," refers to pressing the lips together and thus to being mute or silent, and even to closing one's eyes).

The eighth hour begins with an admonition against weariness. The name of the first gate is "[the gate or the gatekeeper] that stands without getting tired." These words express the hope that the gate will always open for all those blessed dead who desire to pass through it in order to participate in the creative and regenerative forces of this hour. We must remain ever vigilant, so as to overcome the inertia, the tiredness, and the unconsciousness that lurk always and everywhere. Is there a creative person who would not know what is meant here?





NINTH HOUR

THE SUNGOD'S CREW

Manifestation of the New

The Sungod and his helpers rest in the peace of this ninth nocturnal hour. In anticipation of activity to come, the sun barque's crewmen hold their oars at the ready. The accompanying text speaks of their life-giving role, for their rowing is a source of life. Those who dwell on the river-banks drink the refreshing water that splashes up from the strokes of the oars as the barque passes by:

They (the rowers) are those who give water with their oars
to the *akh*-spirits (the living spirits of the blessed dead)
who are in this place,
and who praise the lord of the sun disk.

And in the first scene of the middle register of the tenth hour, in which the motif of rowing continues, we even learn that “the gods who are in this place rest in the water in which their (the crew's) oars are,” and that “they breathe through the (very) sound of the rowing of this crew of gods.”

In the accompanying texts of the ninth hour, we once again read of the provisioning of the dead. The blessed dead receive clothes, bread, and beer, and the fields provide them with trees and plants—in short, with everything necessary for active life. As usual, the slaughter of enemies is not omitted, for the twelve uraeus-serpents in the lower register, terrifying female deities that they are, live on the blood of those whom they behead day after day. The text also states, however, that he who knows them does not perish in the flames of these frightful goddesses.

As we have seen, the central motif is rowing. Though the rowers are depicted resting, the text speaks of their tireless activity. Their names show what is important at this stage of the transformation process: “Indefatigable,” “Who-knows-no-turning-back,” “Who-knows-no-hindrance,” and so forth. These names are telling: the deities accompanying the Sungod must act without hesitation or fear, for only with their assistance can the Sungod and his life-giving light safely advance toward the long-anticipated moment of birth in the morning. We observe here an archetypal law that was also well known to the alchemists. Successful completion of their opus required inexhaustible patience, steadfastness, and perseverance. Psychologically speaking, nothing less than these selfsame virtues are needed in order to

bring unconscious material above the threshold of consciousness, inertia notwithstanding. However deep the doubts—and they will be severe—there will be no turning back. However insurmountable the obstacles—and they will be formidable—they are of no concern to me. Once a creative process has begun in the unconscious and the requisite energy has been constellated, the time has come for the individual to join the crew and contribute to the rhythmic beating of the sun barque's oars.

But what does this mean? One of the rowers bears the name *ntr-ntrw*, which can be translated “Most divine,” or, “God of (all) gods,” and which is surely a reference to Re himself. The Sungod is rowing! Psychologically, this refers to a self-dynamic of the content that is rising upward from the unconscious and into consciousness, or, as we may also put it, to an urge within the unconscious to become conscious. Every archetypal image that breaks through from the collective unconscious to the threshold of consciousness manifests itself in two different ways: as a specific form or shape (in this nocturnal hour, clothing) and as an energetic or dynamic process (rowing): that is, it has both a formal and a dynamic aspect. For an individual who is creative, “acting” consists above all of giving in to the self-dynamic that lies within the unconscious, of adapting to the pulse of creation, of listening to the sounds of the hidden deities. As we have seen before, not “I am creating” but “it is creating,” and if I can be so humble as to submit myself to this dynamic, I may partake in the continuing process of creation. The main task is to concentrate, carefully and attentively, on that which is about to emerge from the unconscious; above all else, as noted, this concentration requires persistence, with no relaxation of effort, for this alone will prevent the emerging archetypal image from slipping back into the unconscious.

I propose that the act of provision with clothes, that is, with concrete form, in the eighth hour, and the act of rowing, that is, of self-dynamic, in the ninth hour, are two sides of every creative process. And I further propose that, paradoxically enough, they necessarily condition each other at the same time that they exclude each other. Thus we arrive at the very paradox of quantum mechanics posed by the mutual exclusivity of the description of light (whose renewal is the theme of the Amduat!): it can be located adequately only through two contradictory yet complementary

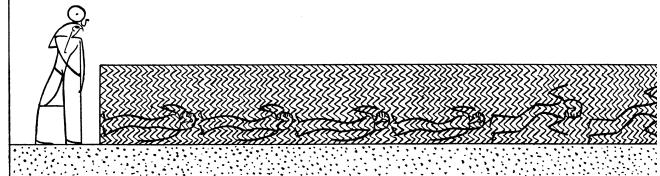
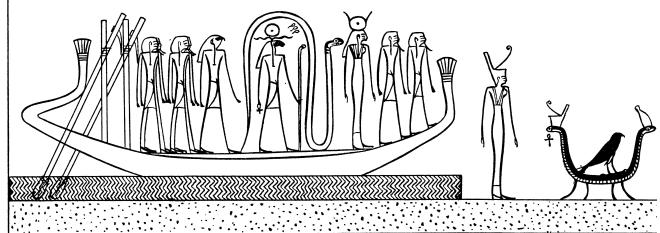
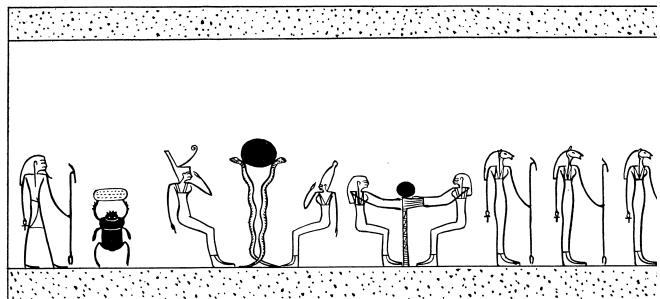
conceptions, either as a movement of waves or as particles. Waves and particles are two conceptions that exclude each other.

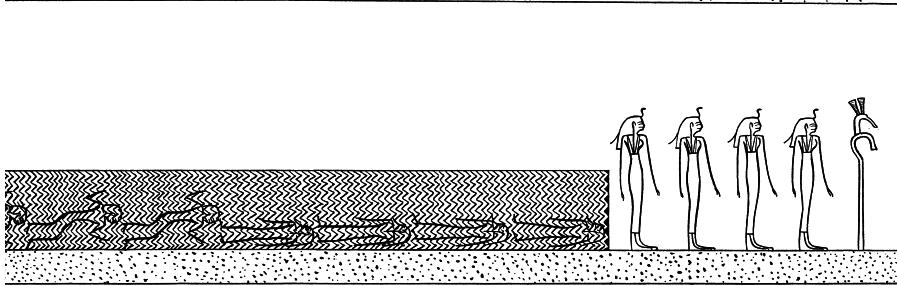
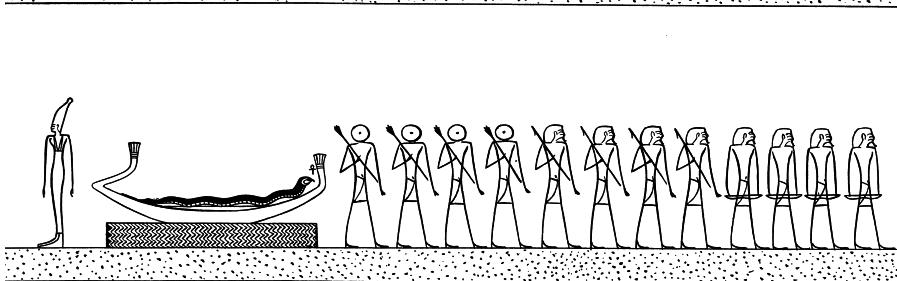
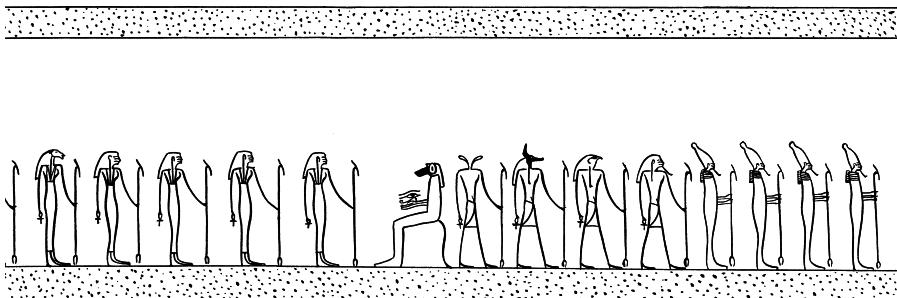
The principle of complementarity was introduced into modern physics by Niels Bohr and into depth psychology by C. G. Jung. It also constitutes a helpful approach to the contradictions and polarities we observe in Egyptian religious thought. Erik Hornung has discussed this problem thoroughly in the chapter “The Problem of Logic” in his book *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*.¹ In my view, this modern notion of the contradictory phenomena of this world helps explain why it is that Egyptian thought can speak so vividly to us and why we can approach it so well with the help of depth psychology.

We must not forget, however, that acceptance of such contradictions is in no way an easy matter. The ambivalence of all that exists can be irksome, even painful. Fascinating though it may be to take part in the process of creation, its ambivalence can leave us feeling lonely and sad. We shall return to this point in the discussion of the hours that follow.

One final point needs to be noted in this discussion of the ninth hour. Nowhere else do we find so many groups of twelve deities: two groups in the upper register, two in the lower register, and the twelve rowers who precede the sun barque in the middle register—five in all. This phenomenon is yet another means of emphasizing the clear and trustworthy structure and the cyclical dynamic of the transformation process that the Sungod and his crew undergo. I would say that this imagery refers to totality or wholeness as the main goal of individuation. The clear order of the ninth nocturnal hour produces a consoling effect that can inspire trust in all who participate in Re’s journey through the netherworld.

¹E. Hornung, “The Problem of Logic,” in *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Man*, trans. J. Baines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 237–243.





TENTH HOUR

THE BODYGUARD OF THE SUNGOD

Ready to Fight for the New

The upper register of the tenth nocturnal hour makes renewed reference to the ambivalence of every creative act. As in the Land of Sokar (fourth hour), we encounter the motif of the healing of the Sungod's injured eye. Though the Living Scarab depicted at the beginning of the upper register points to the coming birth, every birth brings vulnerability and death. The good of creation and damaged life belong inalienably together, and this is why the eight standing goddesses must not be absent. Like the baboon called "Flesh who carries his Eye," who is seated facing them, they are associated with the healing of the Eye of Horus. With their tremendous healing power, these goddesses are aspects of the mighty lion-headed Sakhmet (thus the name of the first goddess), and like her, they are full of magic power. More than any other goddess, Sakhmet embodies the ambivalence of all life. She causes diseases, but she also heals them. Such is the atmosphere in which the birth symbolized by the scarab takes place. Its forelegs hold an oval filled with dots, a symbol we encountered in the fifth hour. The oval represents the entirety of the netherworld, and here, as in the case of the oval at the bottom of the Cavern of Sokar, it symbolizes the renewal of the Sungod, that is, the regenerative power of the netherworld.

Between the scarab and the healing goddesses, there are two scenes in the center of which we see two red disks, the first disk carried by two snakes, "the double-coiled," and the second, smaller one by "the wrapped (staff?)," representing the hieroglyph for "god." As the accompanying text relates, they indicate the cure and healing of the two eyes of the Sungod. And as the two assisting goddesses make clear, the healing of Re's solar and lunar (small disk?) eyes is in the hands of the feminine. The psychological meaning is that the healing of the new consciousness (sunlight) needs the strong support of a feminine principle that is obviously quite different from the masculine forces of Re's bodyguard in the middle register. The two serpents carrying the first disk suggest that it is the archaic and ambiguous (two snakes, two goddesses, etc.) law of nature that supports this healing process. To surrender to this law is an indispensable precondition for every "fight for the new," as the subtitle of this chapter suggests.

The tenth hour is dominated, however, by the primeval waters of Nun in the lower register. In it rest the "drowned ones in the netherworld,"

that is, all who have lost their lives by drowning in the Nile. Since their bodies were carried off by the current, they could not be given a proper burial. The Egyptians, to whom tomb and burial rites were so important, could not help but wonder what would happen to a person whose corpse was missing. The Amduat supplies the earliest answer we know of. Before discussing it, however, we shall consider the central scene of the middle register.

The twelve figures representing Re's bodyguard are divided into three groups of four gods who are provided, respectively, with arrows, spears, and bows. Their names, Disk-head, Arrow-shooter, and so forth, make it unambiguously clear that these gods are sure of their aim, unerring, and intrepid. This is the attitude needed for attaining new consciousness and new insight. For this reason, many mythical heroes carry special weapons presented to them by the gods. The weapons carried by Re's bodyguard symbolize the accuracy and steadfastness with which the new content must be defended against all inimical forces.

"They are those," so the accompanying text says of the bodyguard, "who fend off 'Horrible-of-face' (Apopis) in the Unified Darkness (i.e., primeval darkness), so that this Great God may pass into the eastern gateway of the horizon." Though Apopis was successfully defeated in the seventh hour, he must now be repulsed yet one more time.

From a psychological point of view, the weapons symbolize the keenness, clarity, and vigilance of a new mental attitude whose differentiating ability and straightforward energy resist the ever-present threat of a relapse into the former unconsciousness (symbolized by Apopis). Though an archetypal image rising from the collective unconscious has an autonomous tendency to emerge into the world (the self-dynamic of the archetypes), it is also true that there is always a danger that this new content will sink back into the darkness of unconsciousness. Again and again, the author of the Amduat demonstrates a clear awareness of the fact that the inauguration of a new era is necessarily marked by conflict and destruction. He knew that there is no creative process without aggression, no renewal without the "slaughtering of enemies"—or, to put it less drastically, no renewal without suffering.

There are many creation myths in which a sometimes harmless, sometimes terrifying primeval being must be torn asunder in order to

create humans, animals, and plants. For example, in the *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian creation myth, we read of Marduk's terrible, pitiless struggle against Tiamat, the primeval mother. He fills her body with raging storms until she loses consciousness. Then he attacks her savagely, cutting through her insides, splitting her heart, and finally casting down her corpse and treading on it. From Tiamat's body, he creates sky and earth, and he builds dwelling places for his allies and the other gods. So begins creation! As this example shows, creation can entail tremendously aggressive and destructive impulses.

Between the sun barque and the members of Re's bodyguard, there are two interesting scenes of similar content. One depicts a falcon standing on a two-headed, four-legged serpent, and the other a falcon-headed serpent lying in a boat. The falcon and the falcon-headed serpent seem to represent the *ba*-soul of Osiris-Sokar, a god often portrayed with a falcon's head. By placing the falcon on a four-legged serpent or in a boat moving on the water without hindrance, the Egyptian artist symbolized the regained mobility and vigor of everyone and everything in the company of the Sungod. The threat of a standstill, as we encountered it in the seventh hour, is now definitively over. All creation confidently awaits the coming rebirth in the morning. The two-headed serpent has an appropriate name, "Uniting-faces," referring to the uniting of opposites, while the falcon's head of the second snake refers to the *ba*-soul of Sokar. These images thus herald that happy moment when all life's oppositions and ambivalences will be lifted, if only for an instant.

At the beginning of the lower register, we see the falcon-headed Horus presiding over the scene of "apotheosis by drowning," as Egyptologists call it. The corpses of the drowned are depicted floating in the primeval waters of Nun. The intent of the scene is to affirm that despite their unusual fate, these deceased individuals are among the blessed dead. The mythological model for death by drowning is Osiris, who was slain by Seth and cast into the waters of the Nile. The text accompanying the scene states:

Words spoken by Horus to the drowned,
to the upturned, to the outstretched

who are in Nun and belong to the netherworld:...
Rowing for your arms without your being held back!
You prepare the way in Nun with your legs,
without your knees being hindered.
You go forth to the flood and come near to the waves.
You float [to] the great inundation, that you moor (or: land)
at its shores.
Your body has not decayed, your flesh has not decomposed....
You are those who are in (the waters of) Nun,
floating in the following of my father,
so that your *ba*-soul may live!

The Egyptian word for “to moor”—that is, to go ashore—also has the meaning of “to die.” The deceased wished to “land,” to arrive safely, to be moored securely at the shore of the other world. Such was everyone’s wish, but it had special meaning for those whose bodies were in danger of vanishing in the endless expanse of the primeval waters.

These concepts show a keen sense of the danger of a so-called loss of soul, to put it in psychological terms. Known mainly from archaic psychology, it occurs even today, and it entails a sudden *abaissement du niveau mental*, that is, a sudden sinking of disposable psychic energy back into the unconscious (the image of the primeval waters). For no apparent reason, the individual suddenly feels heavy, dull, and overwhelmed by a leaden weariness. If such a condition of unconsciousness lasts for too long a time, the ego may become inflated by unconscious contents that can severely damage the personality, resulting in an egocentric and illusionary attitude completely disconnected from the instinctual and healing law of nature that we met in the image of the sun disk carried by the two snakes (first register).

Aware of the danger of drowning in the waters of unconsciousness, the Egyptians stressed the necessity of landing and once again setting foot on solid land. This is why the union of *ba*-soul and body was so crucial. As we have seen, the body or corpse was not just a material entity; it also had a psychic quality. Unlike the bird-shaped *ba*, the “material soul,” or soul of the corpse, was feminine in nature. The word *h3t*, “body,” which is written with a hieroglyph depicting a fish, suits the notion of a

regeneration of life out of the life-giving primeval waters of Nun, where the union of the masculine *ba*-soul with its feminine counterpart, the body or corpse, takes place.

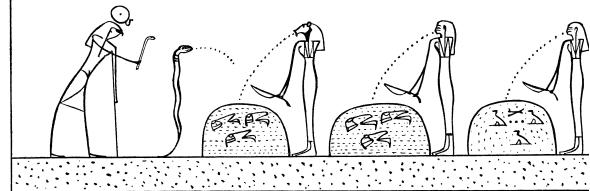
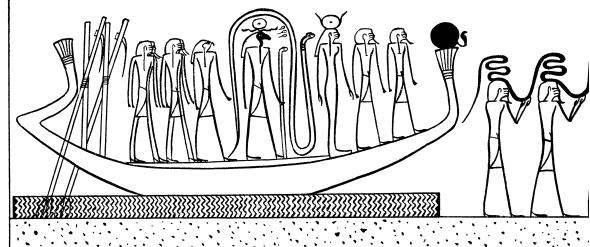
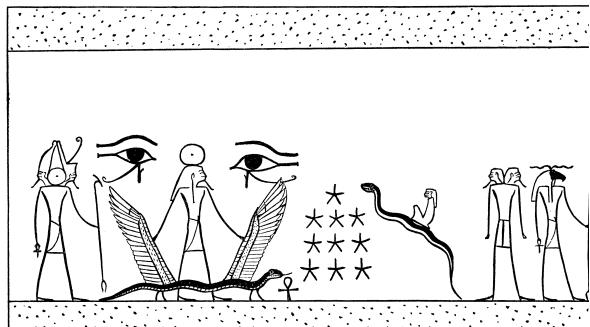
The Book of Gates lays even more stress on the importance of a safe landing for the *ba*-soul. Here, the primeval waters of Nun are depicted in the middle register of the ninth hour (so Hornung; the eleventh hour according to Piankoff). As in the Amduat, the text affirms that the bodies are hale and do not perish:

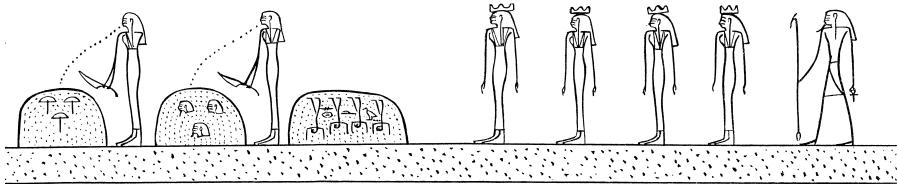
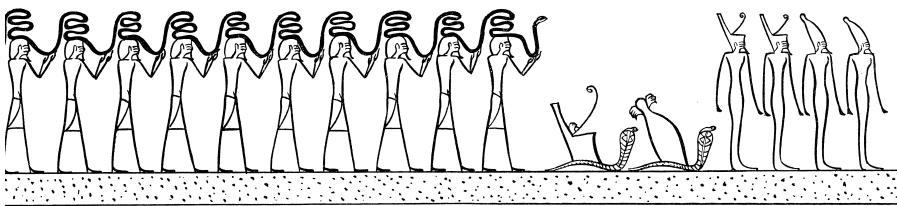
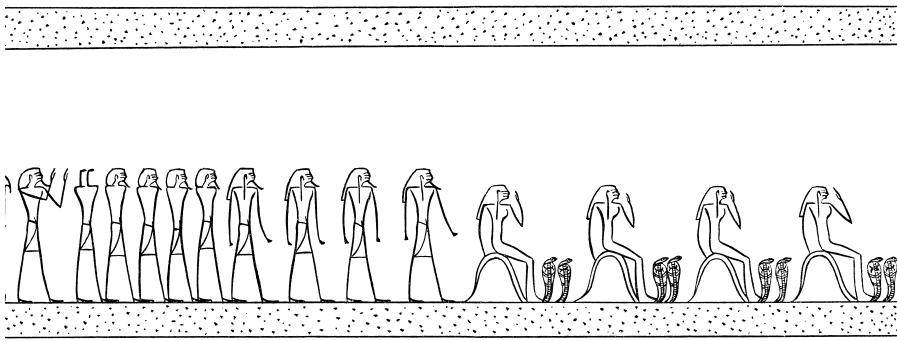
You shall move toward the primeval flood (Nun)—
your movement is toward the flood
while your *ba*-souls are upon earth.
They are content to breathe,
and they shall indeed not perish.¹

Obviously, the *ba*-soul can live on earth and in the sky only if its corporeal existence is secure in the netherworld. This means that psychically healthy life is possible only if personal integrity and identity remain safe in an underlying realm—that is, in the impersonal stratum of the collective unconscious. The Egyptian's fear of drowning gives evidence for a great wisdom, insofar as it reflected a fear of losing the identity and wholeness of the individual's personality, of the uniqueness rooted in the unconscious. It is no wonder that the Egyptians had no answer to this question of loss of identity prior to the New Kingdom, for only then did the individual, with his or her unique value, come into the foreground. It is in this period that stress was placed on the notion that the body must remain sound, without perishing.

¹E. Hornung and A. Piankoff differ in their divisions of the text. Here we follow Hornung, who places the scene in the ninth nocturnal hour; see *Ägyptische Unterweltsbücher* (Zurich: Artemis, 1984), p. 270. English translation by A. S. According to Piankoff, the scene is part of the eleventh division of the composition; see "The Book of the Gates," in *The Tomb of Ramesses VI: Texts, Translated with Introductions*, ed. N. Rambova, Bollingen Series, vol. 40, pt. 1 (New York: Pantheon, 1954), p. 194.

The tenth hour closes on a hopeful note. Four goddesses with serpents on their foreheads dispense light and inspiration to the Sungod and his entourage. “They are those,” says the text, “who illuminate the way for Re in the Unified Darkness, that he may go forth (through) the eastern gateway.” The dawn, with its sunrise expelling the darkness, is coming closer!





ELEVENTH HOUR
THE RENEWAL OF TIME

*The Religious Dimension of Time
and the New Consciousness*

All is filled with anticipation of the birth of the solar child in the morning. A new era will begin. The cosmos has once again been renewed in the depths of the night. The first god in the upper register, called “Lord of (*djet*-)time,” presides over this hour of the night. He has two heads, with a sun disk between them, and he holds the hieroglyphic signs for life and dominion in his hands. He embodies an aspect of the Sungod himself: Re as guarantor and creator of time. Here, just as everything is about to come into existence, to transform and experience a new beginning, we encounter this complementary aspect of time called *djet*, that is, the time characterized by the duration and dependability of the earth, by persistence and continuity. The netherworld and its power of renewal having proved reliable, this *djet* quality must be manifested and acknowledged here, just before the Sungod and his entourage depart from this realm of the dead.

Even time needs continuous renewal and regeneration. The Egyptian word for year (*rnp̄t*) literally means “that which rejuvenates.” This word is also used in connection with the gods, for they, too, like all that exists, are in need of renewal and rejuvenation.

Unlike, for example, the eschatological concept of time in the European Middle Ages, with its expectation of the Parousia of Christ in the near future, the Egyptians reckoned with millions of years.¹ The human life span on earth, by contrast, is brief, like a dream. The notion of movement from one eternity to the other led Egyptians to spare no effort to ensure for themselves, insofar as possible, continued existence in the afterlife.

Care to provide for the afterlife did not, however, preclude the need to provide for life in this world. A wisdom text called The Instruction of Ptahhotep states the matter clearly:

Follow your heart as long as you live,
Do no more than is required,
Do not shorten the time of “follow-the-heart,”
Trimming its moment offends the *ka*.

¹ For the Egyptian concept of time, see E. Hornung, “Zeitliches Jenseits im Alten Ägypten,” *Eranos Jahrbuch* 47 (1978): 269–307.

Don't waste time on daily cares
Beyond providing for your household.²

One must not, says the wise Ptahhotep, devote excessive amounts of time to the daily activities that assure the necessities of everyday life. Those who live in harmony with their heart and possess a living spirit will know how best to use the lifetime allotted by fate. They will not waste it on mere hustle and bustle, for their *ka* will detest such activity. Proper time is time spent and used in harmony with one's heart and soul. Proper time is inspired time.

In ancient Egypt, time had two qualities, each of them less linear and quantitatively measurable than in our own concept of time. Any energetic process requires the tension that results from the back-and-forth between two poles. The Egyptians envisaged the entirety of the cosmos as a continuous, ongoing drama in which gods and men take part, sharing a duty to safeguard creation from the constant threat of dissolution. For whatever happens within time must be kept entirely separate from the timelessness of the primal darkness and the threat from the primeval waters that surround the created cosmos. Although the "eternity" expressed in the Amduat might last for millions of years, it always refers to that which occurs within creation. In this sense, it is finite. Eventually, all life, even that of the gods and goddesses, will return to primal darkness and perish.

The ever-necessary and ceaseless renewal of time is the topic of the middle register of the eleventh hour. There we see a huge, coiled serpent borne on the heads of no fewer than twelve gods. This is the *mehen*-serpent, the ouroboric world-encircler, symbol of the *divine quality of time*. The temporal symbolism of the snake is a widespread archetypal concept. For many cultures, the serpent symbolizes all sorts of spontaneous—that is, unexpected—creative renewal, healing, and rebirth, perhaps because of its ability to shed its skin or perhaps because of the speed with which it suddenly and unexpectedly darts forth from behind a shrub or a stone. The multiple coils of its body, which can seem to unite everlasting

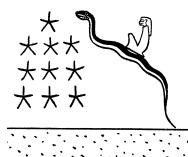
² M. Lichtheim, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, vol. 1 of *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 66.

opposites (the image of the zigzag, or serpentine path), make it an apt image for the double character of time in Egyptian thought. When the Egyptian sages refer to the eternal aspect of time, they usually employ the twin concepts of *neheh-* and *djet*-time: the totality of time necessarily embraces both dimensions.

Neheh describes the everlasting and continuous transformation at work in the cosmos, the ongoing process of death and revival in nature. *Panta rhei*: everything is in flux, as Heraclitus wrote.³ This is the time of eternal return, the circle of being.

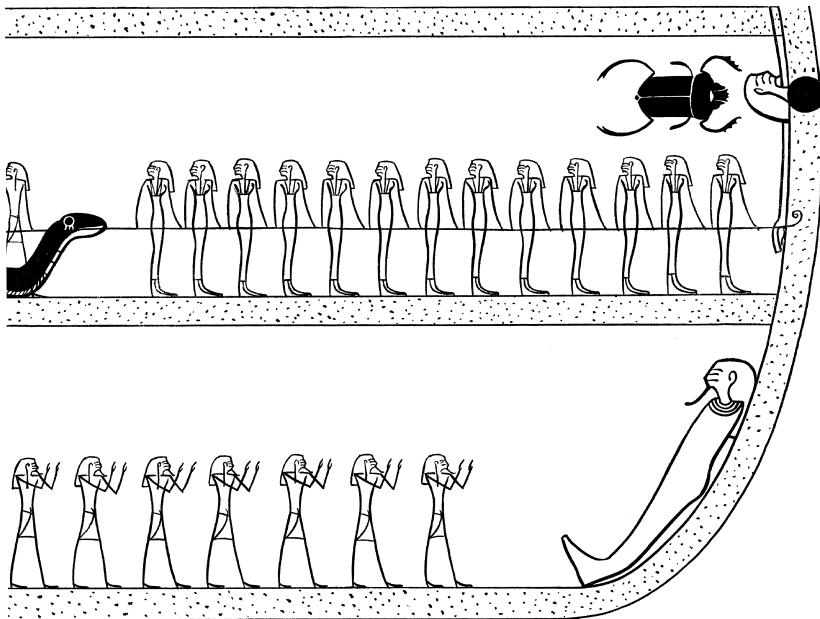
Djet-time, however, which is the theme of the eleventh nocturnal hour, refers to duration, the continuum of time. *Djet*-time remains, endures, and continues. Such a brief time before Re's rebirth, when everything is in a process of transformation, the dependability of earth and the netherworld, and their creative potential, must once more be emphasized. In the first part of the upper register, we see the goddess *Djet* (-time), mummified (duration!) and squatting on a serpent god that is rearing up in front of ten or eleven stars. The stars represent the nocturnal hours the Sungod has already passed. Thus, we may say that this goddess embodies unending *djet*-time, that is, the feminine, creative principle of the earth, with its reliability and its endurance. The name of the serpent god the time goddess squats on, "He-who-takes-away-the-hours," suggests that the individual hours are created by him and then swallowed again.

Here, for once, we shall anticipate. At the very end of the Amduat, in the lower register of the twelfth nocturnal hour, just beneath the solar beetle about to be born, we see Osiris, called "Image-of-the-flesh," in the form of a mummy reclining against the semicircular border that seals the netherworld. As god of death, Osiris does not participate in the rebirth of the Sungod at dawn. Rather, he must remain in the primeval darkness. Creation is an act of separation. The jubilation with which the Sungod is greeted



Time goddess, detail from eleventh hour

³Heraclitus, *Fragmente, griechisch und deutsch*, ed. Bruno Snell, 8th ed. (Munich: Artemis, 1983), p. 38 (fragment 65 A 3). English translation from the Greek by A. S.



The “flesh of Osiris,” detail from twelfth hour

cannot allay the sorrow of the one who remains behind in the darkness of the vault. Though death has been overcome, it remains a painful reality. Indeed, every creative act, every developmental step and its accompanying joy, is mixed with a grain of sadness and melancholy.

Spell 175 of the Book of the Dead lends impressive and, above all, human expression to this melancholy undertone that accompanies every renewal of life. In a dialogue with the primeval god Atum, whom we encountered in the first hour, and now again at the beginning of the eleventh hour, Osiris bewails his destiny:

O Atum, how comes it that I travel to a desert of the netherworld
which has no water and no air, and which is so deep, so dark
and so infinite?

(And Atum answers:) You live there in peace of your heart.
(But this cannot content, nor console Osiris:)

But there is no lovemaking there!
(And Atum appeasing him:)
I have given *Ba*-being instead of water, air, and lovemaking,
contentment in place of bread and beer.
(This seems to console Osiris at least partially:)
And see the face of the Lord of All?
(Atum:) Do not be sorry for yourself, for I will not suffer
you to lack.
(Osiris is still not completely satisfied:)
But every god has taken his place in the Barque of Millions
of Years.⁴

Who can fail to sympathize with Osiris, who, despite the promise of *ba*-being and blissful existence, nevertheless bemoans his loss of life's abundance and pleasures? But every life principle at some time draws to an end, even that of the *djet*-time embodied by Osiris and his realm. When birth, transformation, and renewal are so very much at stake as they are at Re's appearance on the eastern horizon, then Osiris, the enduring and remaining, must remain behind in his evident rigor mortis. And there he must wait until Re—and with him, the flow of time and life—is exhausted in the course of the day, and once again, in the evening, he returns to Osiris as an old man in need of rejuvenation.

From the point of view of daily consciousness, the union of Re and Osiris and the cosmic renewal that results from it can only be experienced and described as a complementary tension of continuity (Osiris) and discontinuity (Re), of duration and change, of stillness and motion, of rest and departure, and so forth.

Though the deceased lands safely at the shore, blessed with release from the eternal flow of time and resting in peace (Osiris), paradoxically, it is precisely here that time is renewed, with the result that the deceased, now healed, renewed, and rejuvenated, reenters the eternal cycle of time (Re). The miracle of creation takes place in an interstice where there is

⁴R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: British Museum Publications, 1993), p. 175, with some alterations adopted from E. Hornung, *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter* (Zurich: Artemis, 1979), p. 366.

neither time nor space. Totality embraces both aspects, that of Re and that of Osiris.

This slipping out of and back into the flow of time is an ordinary, even daily, experience. As the Egyptians conceived it, those who are asleep resemble the dead. Waking in the morning is a waking from death, and sleep is a healing process in the darkness of the night. A spell from the Pyramid Texts reduces the paradox to the briefest imaginable formulation:

O Osiris the King, you have gone, but you will return,
you have slept, [but you will awake],
you have died, but you will live.⁵

Though mutually exclusive, *djet*-time and *neheh*-time are intimately related. Such paradoxes pose no real problem for archaic man. For us, time is a continuous, measurable flow from yesterday to today and into tomorrow. For the Egyptians, however, this was but one aspect of time.

The more we integrate the unconscious into our thinking and perception, the less able we are to renounce such paradoxes. Since psychic material is rooted in archaic layers of the collective unconscious, we must accept the wisdom of archaic psychology in order to understand the nature of the unconscious. The Egyptian concept of time mirrors a way of thinking that has been rediscovered in modern physics. One major concept of the latter is, as we have seen, the principle of complementarity. To show the extent to which this principle fits in with the concept of the collective unconscious, I shall follow Marie-Louise von Franz's discussion of oracles and synchronicity in her book *On Divination and Synchronicity*.⁶

The French-Jewish physicist Albert Lautmann—killed by the Nazis at the age of thirty-two—proposed, like many other scientists, the existence of two temporal planes. In his only preserved book, on the principle of symmetry and asymmetry in nature, he develops a theory of two times:

⁵R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 285, § 1975.

⁶M.-L. von Franz, *On Divination and Synchronicity: The Psychology of Meaningful Change* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980). On the discussion of Lautmann, see pp. 104–105.

linear time, which is mathematically represented by a parameter—let us say, a linear scale—and another time, which he calls cosmogonic time. The latter he conceives of as a field in which, as he puts it, “topological accidents occur.” In this mathematical concept, Marie-Louise von Franz sees a clear parallel to the psychological hypothesis of the collective unconscious. “His field of topological accidents,” she says, “would, from my standpoint, be an intuitive hypothesis which approaches my idea of the unconscious conceived of as a continuum field ordered by the rhythms of the archetypes.” Here it is particularly important that all these modern concepts of mathematics, physics, and psychology assume the existence of *two complementary systems*, one bound to time and the other referring to an eternal order.

Now the problem is how to unify the two temporal systems, whether Lautmann’s cosmogonic time and linear time, on the one hand, or, on the other, the psychological world of the acausal orderedness of archetypal factors, which exists outside of time, and the world of time and space. “The only place where the two systems link,” Marie-Louise von Franz goes on to say, “is at the hole in the center, which means that they link in a nowhere, or in a hole or a point.” She adds an alchemical parallel mentioned by Jung.

At the end of his *Mysterium coniunctionis*, Jung quotes extensively from the work of an alchemist, Gerhard Dorn, in whose philosophy the window of eternity, or, the *spiraculum aeternitatis*, also plays an important role. *Spiraculum* is an airhole, through which eternity breathes into the temporal world of linear time. We see therefore that this meeting place, which is a vacuum, is a representation that in mythological and alchemical philosophy appears as the place where the personal realm of the psyche, including the personal unconscious, touches the collective unconscious. It is as though the collective unconscious were the eternal order and the personal unconscious and the personal conscious would form together the time-bound order, their connection being through the hole. Jung interprets this *spiraculum aeternitatis*, this airhole, or breathing hole into eternity, as the experience of the self.⁷

⁷Ibid., pp. 108–111.

These observations lead us back to the Amduat. The place of union where the two orders meet and where creation begins is the deepest point of the sixth nocturnal hour, where Re and Osiris unite and the ineffable occurs: the union of the *neheh*-time embodied in the *ba*-soul of the Sungod and the *djet*-time embodied in the corpse of Osiris. It is not an airhole of eternity where the birth takes place; rather, it is the air god Shu himself who assists, raising the new creation out of the eternity of the netherworldly realm and into the world of manifest creation (twelfth hour). This is the auspicious moment of birth at the point where the opposites meet and where sky and earth are united for one creative moment.

While the upper and middle registers of the eleventh nocturnal hour are dedicated to the problem of time and its renewal, the lower register once again deals with the dangerous, even deadly, aspect of regeneration. Delivered to their inescapable fate, the enemies of the Sungod are cast into six flame-filled pits that are guarded by five knife-wielding goddesses of death. Horus decrees “the slaughter of those who beat his father Osiris.” In front of him is a rearing snake demon named “He-who-burns-millions.” His fire will annihilate the damned:

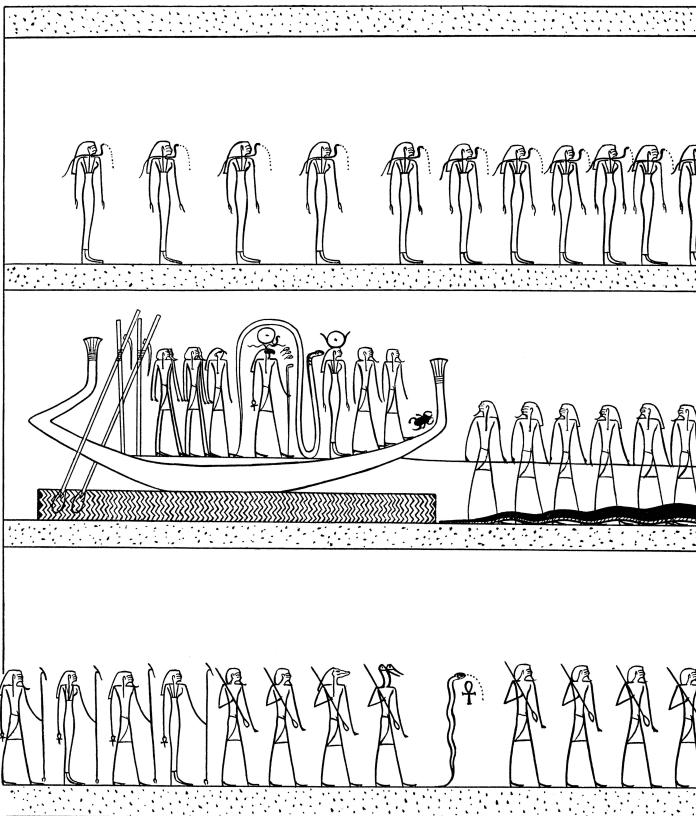
You cannot escape, you cannot evade!
The fire of “He-who-burns-millions” is against you,
the fiery glow of “She over her kettles” is against you,...
she severs you, she commits your slaughter,
and you will not see those living on earth, eternally!

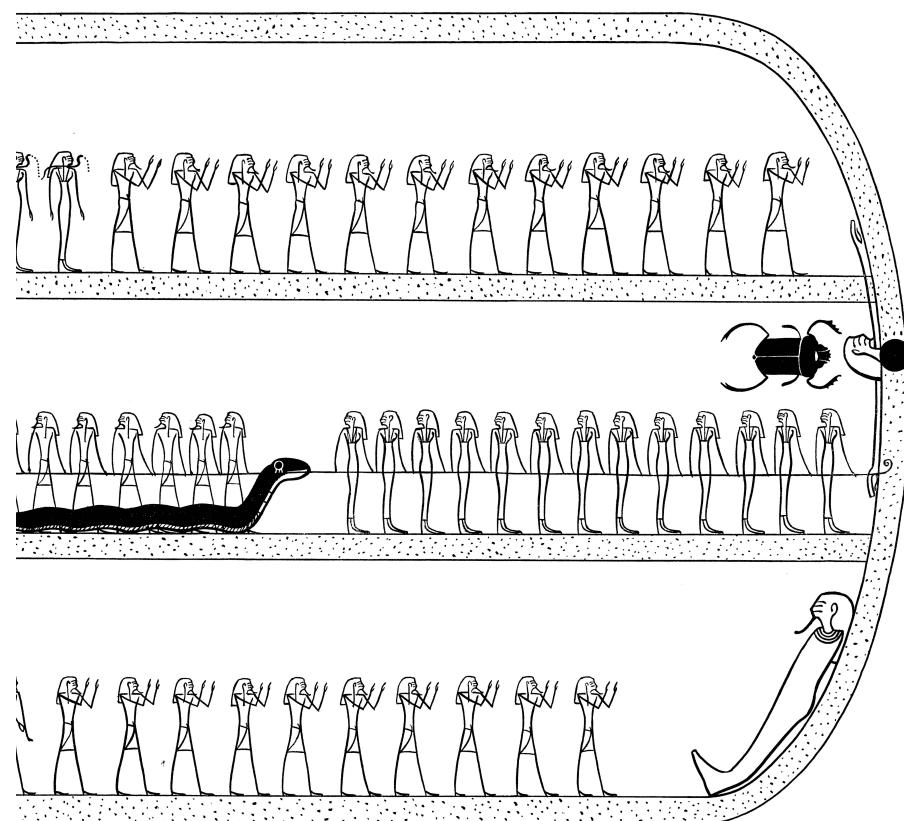
The damned are delivered over to the second, everlasting death, to the nonbeing beyond any renewal of time. For them, there is no revival and no regeneration. In this dimension of nonbeing and nonexistence, no creative moment is any longer possible. The horror of their entirely uncreative condition is evoked by images of torture, slaughter, and massacre, images reflecting the terror felt by the Egyptians in the face of unreality or, as we would say, total unconsciousness. The intent is not to portray the hellish tortures of the damned as never-ending punishment but rather to use these drastic images to capture the terrifying dimension of nonbeing. The Egyptian feared not death but rather the

second, final death, from which there was no renewal, no awakening, no escape.

This and the following hour portray an almost unbearable tension between the snake demon who burns millions on the one hand and the miraculous birth of the solar child on the other. What is essential is not an intellectual understanding of these things but rather to recognize and acknowledge them. In this sense, we may again cite the concluding text of the short version of the Amduat:

Whoever knows this mysterious image
will be a well-provided *Akh*-spirit (a blessed dead).
Always will he exit and (re-)enter the netherworld
and speak to the living.
A true remedy (proven) a million times!





TWELFTH HOUR

THE END OF THE PRIMEVAL DARKNESS

The Long-Awaited Birth

For one last time, the Sungod tarries in the netherworld. The name of the place heralds the end of the nocturnal journey: "Cavern of the end of the primeval darkness." Those who dwell on the riverbanks rejoice and acclaim Re; but despite this all-pervasive jubilation, there is no forgetting that here, too, even after the rebirth of the Great *Ba*-Soul, Apopis must be warded off. Once more, reverence is displayed toward Osiris, who must remain in the depths of the netherworld and endure its dim light. In the lower register, the ten gods standing in front of his mummy praise him:

Live, Living one, Foremost of his darkness!
Live, Great one, Foremost of his darkness,
Lord of life, Ruler of the West, Osiris, Foremost of the Westerners,
and live, Living one, Foremost of the Netherworld!
The breath of Re belongs to your nose,
the breathing of Khepri is with you,
so that you live and remain alive!
Hail to Osiris, Lord of life!

The separation from Osiris and his realm is inevitable. But these gods who offer praise know that all life will eventually return to him—hence their fervent wish for the continued life of the great god of the depths of the earth.

The opening lines of the text of the twelfth hour refer to the mystery of the rebirth of the sun:

This great god is born in his manifestations of Khepri at this cavern.
Nun and Naunet, Hehu and Hehut, emerge at this cavern
at the birth of this great god, that he goes forth from the netherworld,
places himself in the day-barque,
and appears from the thighs of Nut.

Three different images of creation are commingled in these few lines. The *first image* is that of the Khepri beetle that spontaneously emerges from the darkness of the netherworld and, as the morning sun, inaugurates a new era. This image is seemingly the simplest of the three, yet it is the most mysterious. Psychologically, the scarab emerging from the darkness

points to the possibility of a *spontaneous manifestation* of unconscious material, as happens, for instance, in a synchronistic event. By synchronistic event, we mean, as already noted, “the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningfully, but not causally, connected events.”¹ Somewhat paradoxically, we might say that synchronistic events are unique acts of creation, just-so stories, unpredictable yet *meaningful accidents*.

In a dream, for example, we may perceive an event that does not in fact occur until the next day. “As one cannot perceive a fact that does not exist, we must assume that it has some form of existence, so that it can be perceived nevertheless. To explain it,” says C. G. Jung in a letter to J. B. Rhine, “we must assume that the (future) objective fact is paralleled by a similar or identical subjective, i.e., psychic, already existing arrangement which cannot be explained as an anticipatory causal effect.”² Referring to these ideas, Jung later postulates a “*foreknowledge of some kind*,” which is certainly not connected with the ego, but “rather a self-subsistent ‘unconscious’ knowledge.” Jung suggests calling it an “absolute knowledge.”³

We have probably all had the experience of focusing our thoughts on someone, only to have the phone ring at that very moment, and it turns out to be that very person who is calling. And to those who are deeply in love, synchronistic events occur quite often.

Such events show there must be something like an underlying meaning or “knowledge” that gives direction to daily occurrences and daily consciousness. The principle of synchronicity offers an important and, I believe, elucidative explanation for such events, and it compels us to a kind of thinking that is diametrically opposed to our usual thinking in terms of causality.

The implication of quantum theory points in the same direction. Observations of the atomic and subatomic world have made it clear that

¹C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, vol. 8 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 849.

²C. G. Jung, Letter of C. G. Jung to J. B. Rhine, August 9, 1954, in *Letters*, ed. G. Adler and A. Jaffe, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), vol. 2, p. 181.

³C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, § 931. (I refer to this passage in the First Hour as well.)

the strict separation of the observer and the experiment, of subject and object—and thus the absolute separation introduced by Descartes of the physical-objective exterior world and the psychic-subjective interior world—is more than doubtful. In G. G. Jung's long dialogue with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli, they both agreed that there must exist something like a living, autonomous spirit in matter, which Jung suggested calling “absolute knowledge.”

With regard to meaningful synchronistic events, Jung did not hesitate to speak of an “*act of creation in time*.⁴ What this means is best expressed by the words of Marie-Louise von Franz. In her work on divination, she refers to Chinese thought, in which the paradoxical quality of everything that exists is omnipresent, not unlike what we find in Egyptian thought:

A synchronistic event is an acausal event and is therefore, one could say, an act of creation. Jung believed in a *creatio continua*, like certain modern physicists who believe that there is in the world in which we live a place where from time to time new things are created. The synchronistic event would be such an act of creation. That is naturally self-evident for the Chinese mind, because they think only in synchronic terms, and creative acts, which are synchronistic events, come from this hole where heaven and earth meet. Then comes this beautiful Chinese idea that man can actually get in contact with that—he can get to the place where heaven and earth create in an unfathomable way, without doubleness, through utmost sincerity. If somebody devoid of all illusions, and all that makes the world of the ordinary ego, goes into himself with utmost sincerity, then he comes to this central hole where creation, even in the cosmos, takes place. That is why the Chinese thought that certain sages or saints, very rare personalities, could reach that center and by having come to this contained innermost center of their personality could support heaven and earth, and be with creation in the universe.⁵

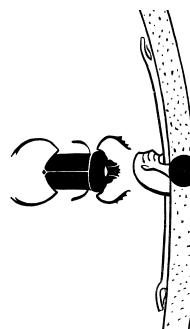
⁴Ibid., § 965.

⁵M.-L. von Franz, *On Divination and Synchronicity: The Psychology of Meaningful Change* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980), pp. 110–111.

What is especially beautiful in these lines is the experience that if an individual cares, honestly and with a clear and open mind, about the archetypal images of his soul or about the living religious ideas of his time, he or she can participate in the creative spirit that is imminent in the world. And this participation is a numinous experience, for here, if only for one brief moment, eternity shines into the temporality of our life. More than anything else, it is this intimate closeness to the eternal that constitutes the fascinating power of the *Amduat*'s imagery. Nowhere is this power more evident than in the last hour of the night, where sky and earth almost tenderly touch each other.

Precisely here, for one last time, we encounter the Sungod transformed into the scarab Khepri, symbol of the renewal of life in the netherworld. At the very end of the twelfth hour, Shu welcomes him with open arms in order to elevate him above the horizon as the morning sun of a new era. Of course, the actual locus of the mysterious regeneration is the deepest point of the netherworld, where being and nonbeing, creation and chaos, collide with one another in the sixth hour. But it is here, at the end of Re's journey, that the miracle is finally realized, and it is repeated each morning with the rising of the sun on the eastern horizon. It was the deep conviction of the Egyptians that by knowing about the secret things of the netherworld, and by not avoiding the encounter with darkness, it would be possible for them to participate in this miracle.

The *second image* of creation mentions two of the four pairs of primeval deities who constitute the Ogdoad, that is, the cosmic totality: Nun and Naunet (primeval waters) and Hehu and Hehut (infinity of space, endlessness). Missing are Kuk and Kauket (darkness) and Amun and Amaunet (invisibility, concealment). This Ogdoad represents the primeval forces of chaos that mysteriously created either the primeval egg (according to another tradition, it was the Great Cackler who laid it) or the lotus plant out of which the solar child came into existence. Thus was the world created. Primeval egg or lotus, they both symbolize



Shu receiving the Sungod with open arms, detail
from twelfth hour

an inner psychic, creative principle within the collective unconscious. Hoping to participate in this creative principle, the deceased can say of himself, in a typical reordering of priorities,

If I be strong, it will be strong;
if I live, it will live;
if I breathe the air, it will breathe the air.⁶

This concept of creation does not refer to a spontaneous breakthrough of unconscious content but rather to a lengthy process of brooding (egg) or cultivation (lotus). The Ogdoad symbolizes a preconscious totality containing the germ of the new consciousness and world order. The names of the primeval deities show how concealed, invisible, and unknown the totality is and always will be.

Whoever has the numinous experience of an encounter with the great Unknown, provided only that he or she does not reject it, or, to put it another way, that he or she accepts the deep feelings accompanying it, will be remarkably transformed by it. A germ is planted, a creative beginning, which can grow and wants to grow. This germ, or blossoming, can be rooted, for example, in a great and deep love. But the real goal is not necessarily the personal aspect of the amorous relationship, any more than it is the egg or the lotus. What really matters is the divine solar child contained in it, that is, a third factor, through which the hidden, germinating impulse of creation reveals itself. Out of every deep love, there is something that wants to grow and be realized in the world, which might have little to do with personal love.

This brings us to the *third image* of creation, the sky goddess Nut giving birth to the solar child from between her thighs. This image emphasizes more the “feeling” quality of transformation and thus the emotional side of renewal. Any increase of consciousness has two aspects: an expansion of the horizon of consciousness through increasing knowledge and wisdom, on the one hand, and, on the other, a deepened instinctive relatedness, through the feelings, to both the inner world and

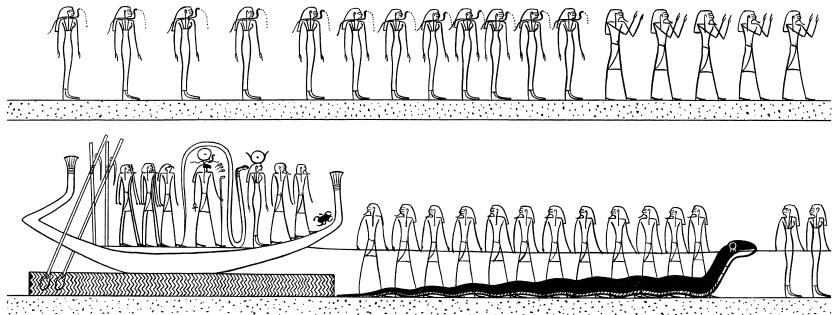
⁶R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), p. 66 (spell 56).

the environment. And for this relatedness, the Egyptian artists created a stunning and wonderful image: according to their imagination, the sun barque emerges daily from the vulva of the sky goddess Nut and then travels along her body during the course of the day. Constant contact with the great goddess and the feminine is thus maintained!

Once again, it is the middle register where the central topic of the hour is depicted. Thanks to the active participation of twelve gods and thirteen (!) goddesses, the Sungod and all the blessed dead traveling with him are pulled through the length of a giant serpent, entering it via its tail and coming out through its mouth. Thus they are rejuvenated, as the text above the snake emphasizes:

The venerated (deceased) of Re,
who are behind him and in front of him:
They are born in the earth, day after day,
after the birth of this great god in the east of the sky.
They enter into the mysterious image
of (the serpent) “Life of the gods” as venerated ones,
and they come out as the rejuvenated of Re, day after day.

The miracle of rejuvenation takes place inside this serpent god. This point is also made clear by the names of the deities towing the barque. The gods, who have yet to enter the serpent, have names like “Old man,” “Immense-of-time,” “Gray-haired,” and so forth. They obviously represent the old, worn-out, male principle of consciousness. Quite the contrary is true of the goddesses, who have already passed through the mysterious process of “snake-birth”: their names include “Lady-of-time,” “She-who-beholds-the-perfection-of-Re,” “Eternal-one,” “She-who-beholds-Khepri,” “Lady-of-the-rejuvenated,” and the like. The deities in the upper and lower registers participate in the joy and join in the jubilation. Those in the upper register have names like “He-who-rejoices-because-of Re,” “Lord-of-jubilation,” and “He-who-praises-Khepri,” while the names of those in the lower register include “He-who-praises-the-*akh*-spirit” and “He-with-brave-mouth.” All of them raise their arms in adoration either of the Sungod and his rebirth in the morning or of Osiris, who will protect the bodies of all the deceased during Re’s daily journey across the sky.



Serpent god of the twelfth hour, detail from twelfth hour

And they all have knowledge of the great moment of birth, that miracle, when the Sungod, rejuvenated and endowed with new creative energy, rises on the eastern horizon to saturate and fill the world with his life-giving light.

Who or what makes this miracle possible? The answer is simple: the serpent god, whose full name is “The-Ka-energy-of-him-who-makes-the-gods-live.” Just before the final renewal, all those in the sun barque must once more plunge into the murky depths, not knowing whether there will be an escape from this darkness. Once more, all sorts of ego-centric impulses, greed, desire for autonomy, and willfulness must be sacrificed to the snake god. Profound despair may overcome anyone who must make this sacrifice, for all efforts (rowers, ninth hour), all goal-oriented activity (bodyguard, tenth hour), even all hope for the dawn of a new era (coiled serpent, eleventh hour), might prove to be in vain! Was the whole undertaking futile? Have I struggled against all these obstacles to no avail? Such doubts may now befall us. Mercilessly, we are delivered over to the serpent god, and—fortunately—there is no way back. The darkness within the serpent resembles the death of ideals and good intentions.

As his name states, the serpent bestows *ka*-force on humans and deities. We have already made mention of the *ka*-soul in the realm of Sokar, in the fourth nocturnal hour. There, too, it was a serpent god (Neheb-kau in the upper register) who endowed the blessed dead with *ka*-force. The

ka-soul designates a form of destiny that is beyond all concrete human behavior, that is, beyond all merit and good works. It reflects an underlying meaning of life that persists, no matter what happens, even beyond death. In view of the coming birth, it is necessary to trust in this meaning, which is entirely independent of ego-consciousness. But to state the matter this way is not entirely adequate, for the regaining of this vital force seems possible only for those who deliver themselves completely and unconditionally into the serpent's maw, which is necessarily an experience of powerlessness and of the inability to act.

This experience is a deep humiliation, and there is probably nothing that makes the humiliation deeper than our awareness of our shadow impulses. We shall overcome the darkness inside the serpent only when we stop blaming others for what is wrong in our life and projecting what is evil solely outward into the world. There will be no real change of consciousness, and thus no genuine renewal, until we have recognized the evil *from within*. It is not enough to know that I *should* not do this or that—I *do* it! It is not enough to know that this or that is bad and evil—I *am* bad and evil! A human being has murderous and terrifying sides, and I am no exception. This is the humiliation of the dark serpent god, and it cannot be avoided by anyone who wishes to participate in the new creation. This god guards the exit from the netherworld and keeps watch over the mystery of the renewal of life: he is the living spirit of earth and matter. New consciousness will manifest itself in our life only when we have given ourselves over without reservation to the humiliation of the dark, subterranean, unfathomable law of the serpent god.

I shall close with the dream of a workingman in his forties. With its horrifying imagery, the dream demonstrates how a newborn child—representing new meaning in life—can sometimes be found in the midst of chaotic, vile, repulsive circumstances: "My children bring home cases full of pieces of meat. All of a sudden, I discover an infant in the raw meat. Frightened, I remove it and take it upstairs. There, I wash it and look for something it can eat." The dream refers to the birth, the emerging, of a higher level of consciousness (upper floor) out of chaos. Just where we do *not* expect it, the infant is found. An old and everlasting truth!

Reversing two lines of spell 115 of the Book of the Dead, we might therefore say:

I have opened up the circle of darkness,
I have become Khepri,
I have cleared the vision of the Sole Eye!⁷

⁷ Ibid., p. 113.

CLOSURE: THE FIVE STAGES OF RENEWAL

We have tarried long over these often mysterious and always fascinating images of the netherworld. We have stood astounded before the cultural testimony of the Theban royal tombs, which speak to us, even after millennia. In many who visit these tombs, there grows a true and abiding love for the divine world of the Egyptians. Though the foreignness of this world might daunt us at first, it is pervaded by a deeply human quality, and we soon can perceive the cares, the needs, the hopes, and the fears of our ancestors. The images bear witness to an intense longing for life and an overwhelming joy in the world of the gods and goddesses. Even in the burial chamber, with the reality of darkness and death all around us, these images are harbingers of life, a life that will be miraculously renewed at the very brink of the abyss, of despair, and of chaos.

Every deceased person wished to take part in Re's journey, and I believe that everyone, modern visitors to the tombs included, desires to join him. For even in life, there is a "death" that sometimes oppresses us, when we no longer feel the creative power of God at work in our soul. The Egyptians, too, knew such conditions of the soul, and to them it was always clear that the comforting message of the Books of the Netherworld was not just for the dead but also for the living.

We have tarried long, indeed, over the images of the Amduat, not unlike the Sungod himself: excepting only the first and the fifth hour, all the rest begin with the statement that he, the Great God, is *pausing*. The Egyptian verb is *htp*, which means "to rest," "to pause," "to settle down," but also, "to be content," in the sense of being grateful for a merciful destiny granted by the gods. To be able to rest or pause is a divine gift, granted only to those toward whom the deities are favorable. Only those blessed with such a destiny can pause, reconciled with themselves and with the gods. As we have seen, in his transformation process, the Sungod himself is dependent on the help of those who surround him. Whenever

he pauses, they revive to serve and support him. Though they are entirely dependent on the Sungod, it is also true that the god himself, weary from his day's work, cannot regenerate without their assistance.

Although the pausing is a state of grace, paradoxically enough, it requires a sort of activity. This paradox is an important trait of the mystic. Meister Eckhart, for instance, comes close to the basic ideas of the Books of the Netherworld when he states the matter thus: "I am not blessed because God is in me and is near to me and because I possess him, but because I am aware of how close He is to me, and that I *know* God....We should *know* God and be aware that God's kingdom is near to hand" (Luke 21:31).¹ That the individual must *strive* for knowledge about the things of the afterlife is a central idea of Egyptian thought, and it was this knowledge that inspired their magnificent images of the hereafter. The same striving for consciousness, though in our case on a psychological level, has motivated us to study and understand the images anew.

However much we are able to understand, we shall never attain to what is, in the end, ineffable, unapproachable, and mute. The Egyptians themselves were fully aware of this point. When we observe the decoration of the royal tombs of the Ramesside Period, we encounter a remarkable phenomenon. The first eleven hours of the Amduat are depicted, but the most important hour of all, that dealing with the birth of the sun, is missing! Why so? I suppose that it is because of humankind's age-old awe of what is most sacred. It was awe of the unfathomable wonder of the divine birth as portrayed in the twelfth nocturnal hour that must have caused this hesitation to depict it. Where the sacred is so intensely present, it is best to keep silent and not to depict or name it. The same is true of numinous power in its darkest form—thus the reluctance of the Egyptian artists in the face of the unfathomable in the case of Apopis. Only with great caution did they bear witness to this archenemy of creation or even depict the monster unfettered.

If we attempt a synopsis of the Amduat in the pages to follow, we must bear in mind that every summary is fragmentary, for, in the last analysis, it can never match the whole. Concealed behind everything

¹M. O'C. Walshe, *Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Treatises* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1996), vol. 2, p. 166.

specifiable, there is a “last thing,” or meaning, that we cannot understand. The Chinese call this last thing, which is also the origin of all, *Tao*, and they say:

The ways that can be walked are not the eternal way;
The names that can be named are not the eternal name.
The nameless is the origin of the myriad creatures;
The named is the mother of the myriad creatures,

Therefore,

Always be without desire
in order to observe its wondrous subtleties;
Always have desire
so that you may observe its manifestations.
Both of these derive from the same source;
They have different names but the same designation.
Mystery of mysteries,
The gate of all wonders.²

The Sungod’s transformation process can be divided into five stages.

First Stage: Vision of Paradise (First to Third Hour)

The *first stage* embraces the first three hours of the night. Re and his entourage enter an auspicious world of beauty and *joie de vivre*. The trees give shade and produce an abundance of fruits. The fields thrive, promising a fine harvest. Wherever the Sungod passes by, there is an outburst of jubilation on the banks of the netherworldly river. Everything and everyone are filled with anticipation of what is to come. As in one of the most famous alchemical axioms, the so-called maxim of pseudo-Democritus,

²Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching, The Classic Book of Integrity and the Way: An Entirely New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-Wang-Tui manuscripts*, translated, annotated, and with an afterword by Victor H. Mair (New York: Bantam 1990), p. 59 [45 (1)].

the divine drama begins with joy: “[N]ature rejoices in nature, nature subdues nature, nature rules over nature,” the truth of which, as C. G. Jung once stated, “receives remarkable confirmation in the psychology of the individuation process.”³ It is a recurring experience that the emergence of a numinous content into consciousness can release a tremendous, though sometimes silent, joy and gratitude.

The vision of paradise that we find in so many religions is the symbolic equivalent of the archetypal image of totality or the self, especially when this image emerges at the beginning of the process of psychic development. Such a vision leaves its marks on the individual, in the form of the image of a goal, so to speak, or in the form of a purposefulness that may remain for the rest of his or her life. A person’s first experiences of and insights into the inner world of the psyche can exert a unique, almost magical fascination. For example, some analysands begin their analysis because a single dream they experienced was so fascinating and overwhelming that they instinctively felt they must search for the hidden treasure. This is a fortunate, “paradisiacal” initial state, in which nature (still) rejoices in nature. And when such a numinous, transcendent vision manages to gain acceptance and take hold of a whole nation, a new religious movement will arise, as has so often happened in the past, and as will surely happen in the future.

A day will come, however, when the joy of the beginning will be mixed with indications that the coming transition will be more difficult and painful than expected. The other side of the initial joy is thus problematic: when, as Democritus put it, nature subdues, or conquers, nature, this process necessarily results in a situation in which we are obliged to endure all sorts of conflicts. At this point, two opposing impulses are constellated: on the one hand, the wish to sustain the old values, which in fact can be truly in accordance with the instincts, for they are as a rule of a conservative nature—and on the other hand, the desire to leave them behind, which is all the more difficult the longer the old condition has lasted, for the old values have rendered such precious service for so many years, decades, or even centuries. But despite this conservative nature of

³C. G. Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 354 n. 23.

the psyche, there is, at the same time, a deep longing and urge for the achievement and realization of new values.

This more or less anticipated state of conflict may trigger a sadness that can dampen the previous joy and even create a depression. The Amduat knows of this matter. In the upper register of the third nocturnal hour, four wailing women are depicted, including “She-who-weeps,” “She-who-mourns,” and “She-who-wails.” In the midst of the calm and peaceful waters of Osiris, these goddesses represent the melancholy that is an indispensable part of the psychic-spiritual process of renewal, despite all the associated joy and jubilation (twelfth hour). It is now that conflicting emotions can arise. Joy is mixed with pain, feelings of bliss with melancholic moods, as always happens when we are deeply moved by *love!* The wailing women, the loving ones, must not be absent from the auspicious realm of Osiris.

The first two hours indicate a growing, conscious awareness of the fruitful abundance of the psychic images of the netherworld, that is, of the collective unconscious; the calm waters of Osiris in the third hour, however, point more to the *emotional* side of the process of renewal that is under way. Love has now awakened, and it has created an instinctive connection with the inner-psychic event. The rational and the emotional side of every psychic development belong intimately together. In the realm of the psyche, there is no real insight and cognition without love. It is for this reason that Paul says, in his wonderful hymn of love addressed to the Corinthians, “And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, *but do not have love, I am nothing*” (I Corinthians 13:2). If I have correctly understood the essential nature of Osiris, then he embodies, as god of death (!), this principle of love that is the most reliable basis of a true and lasting transformation.

Second Stage: The Healing Quality of the Dark (Fourth and Fifth Hours)

The initial stage now over, the third and fourth nocturnal hours confront us with an entirely new situation: the existence of evil. The condition they

portray was, for the alchemists, the departure point for their opus: “the beginning in darkness, in the melancholy, fear, wickedness, and wretchedness of ordinary human life,”⁴ as Jung once put it. In this chaotic initial stage of the alchemical transformation process, all orientation is lost. The authors of the Amduat, however, did not see this condition as the departure point, but rather, a second stage. Similar to the concept of the *nigredo*, the Sungod is here surrounded by a frightful darkness. Because of the obstacles that obstruct the way, his journey comes to a standstill. More than ever before, the Great God is now dependent on deities who seem better acquainted than he with the regenerative forces of the earth and the netherworld. These are, for the most part, serpent gods, who are capable of protecting the mystery hidden here.

Psychologically, this powerlessness of the Sungod reflects a painful human condition. Here begins the “dark night of the soul,” which for many alchemists and mystics was the initial and crucial stage of their deep experience of God. It is in the fire of this night alone, and not through any personal effort, says St. John of the Cross, that the soul can be purified. This is the moment of letting go, which requires much in the way of patience, perseverance, and steadfastness. The introductory text of the fourth hour reduces matters to the lowest common denominator: “*Pausing*, in being towed, by the person of this Great God.” What this means psychologically is best described by Meister Eckhart at the beginning of “The Talks of Instruction,” written between 1294 and 1298, where he says:

Therefore start first with yourself, and resign yourself. In truth, unless you flee first from yourself, then wherever you flee to, you will find obstacles and restlessness no matter where it is. If people seek peace in outward things, whether in places or in methods or in people or in deeds or in banishment (*in der Fremde*) or in poverty or in humiliation, however great or whatever kind all this may be, this is all in vain and brings them no peace. Those who seek thus seek wrongly; the further they go the less they find what they are seeking. They are like a man who has taken a wrong turning: the further he goes, the more he

⁴Ibid., § 306.

goes astray. But what should he do? He should resign *himself* to begin with, and then he has abandoned all things. In truth, if a man gave up a kingdom or the whole world and did not give up (him)self, he would have given up nothing. But if a man gives up himself, then whatever he keeps, wealth, honour or whatever it may be, still he has given up everything.⁵

Start first with yourself, therefore, and resign yourself! This, however, should not be misunderstood as a recommendation of asceticism at the expense of worldly life. Meister Eckhart's commitment to life was too strong for him to flee it.

Meister Eckhart continues, recommending that man should not look for outward isolation but rather for inner solitude, wherever and with whomever he might be. With this inner solitude, he associates an intimate closeness to God that is possible even in the midst of daily affairs. Above all, this solitude requires harkening to the inner voice of the soul, to a central healing point that Jung has suggested calling the self. Yet at the same time, paradoxically, the self spans the whole cosmos. This last point is a well-known fact in Indian spirituality, where the sages affirm the identity of the individual soul *Atman* and the cosmic spirit or soul *Brahman*. According to this concept—and similar to the Amduat and the ideas of Meister Eckhart—rebirth and redemption mean abandoning the well-known and familiar things and moving on to the *unknown*. This is the true adventure of life promised to all who have joined the journey of the Sungod, despite the increasing darkness here!

The fifth hour of the Amduat deals with closeness to the dark mystery of the divine. The corpse of the Sungod is mentioned for the first time here. Aker, an old earth god, guards the “secret flesh,” as the corpse is called, in a carefully protected place in the cavern of Sokar. It is not yet time for the union of the *ba*-soul and the corpse. But another earth god, who seems to represent the corpse of the Sungod, reveals himself in the person of Sokar. More than any other deity, he has knowledge of the creative mystery of the depths of the earth. His presence suggests that

⁵Walshe, *Meister Eckhart*, vol. 3, p. 53 (Talks of Instruction, No. 23).

a divine, creative, and potential force is hidden in the corpse. The Sungod is slowly towed through the cavern by many deities. It is still too early for him to be united with his dark counterpart, his corpse. For this encounter, he will need further divine assistants. These will appear in the next hour of the night, in the form of all those ancestors who will be present to help at the union of the *ba* with the corpse.

The second stage is thus characterized by its darkness. On the psychological level, this darkness, though it is experienced mainly as a depressive mood, proves to be a healing factor here, amid all the danger to the soul, for it is precisely this darkness that bestows the protection necessary for the process of regeneration in the depths. We could even say that Sokar as he appears in the fifth hour of the Amduat is the god of a healing depression, or, psychologically speaking, an archetypal, healing, and creative energy that is activated only when the ego has lost its orientation. It is as though the entire energy, which at first expressed itself in highly divergent moods, including joy, zest for life, and melancholy, had withdrawn into a cavern of the psyche to prepare for the upcoming event of transformation.

Third Stage: The Reconciliation of the Opposites (Sixth and Seventh Hours)

The *third stage* contains the greatest oppositions imaginable. In the midnight darkness of the sixth hour, at the edge of the abyss and on the brink of chaos and nonbeing, the union takes place between the *ba*-soul and the corpse, that is, between Re and Osiris. With this event, the seed of the new day, or era, is planted. "Illuminated is the darkness of the earth," says the accompanying text, a miracle that touches off great jubilation among the deities who are close by. But even before these cries of joy die down, a new danger threatens the journey of the Sungod. In the seventh hour, Apopis, archenemy of creation and embodiment of all evil and hostile forces, threatens the process of renewal.

The forces of generation and annihilation are locked in battle. They seem equally powerful, and nothing and no one can confidently predict the outcome of the struggle. How could they, when even the Sungod himself, confronted with such a danger as in the seventh hour, devours

his own “eye,” that is, the sun disk, in the face of his archenemy? At this moment of utmost danger, every attempt at attaining consciousness must come to a halt.

The hidden images of the third stage of Re’s journey through the netherworld give the impression that the union of the supreme opposites is itself the main goal of the nocturnal journey. But we must bear in mind that the *inner* transformation process and its endangerment first occur in the realm of the collective unconscious, that is, with no lasting influence, as yet, on the standpoint of consciousness. The nascent creative impulse, however, occasions a transformation of the gods: they live, they breathe, and their darkness is illuminated! Psychologically, this indicates a shift in the underlying archetypal structure, with new archetypal images coming into the foreground, while others disappear. Simply put, the concepts of an old worldview, whether of an individual or a people, decline, making way for new ideas and values. But such a shift is necessarily accompanied by severe turmoil, and the dissolution of old structures can have a catastrophic effect (*Apopis!*). Paradoxically, it is precisely this sort of breakdown that sets loose the mightiest forces of religious and cultural renewal. A survey of the ups and downs that occurred during the three millennia of ancient Egyptian history testifies impressively to this point.

The inspired teachers and creators of the *Amduat* seem to have been aware of the danger of the tendency to dissolution at the moment of the engendering of the new light. They insistently emphasize, therefore, the supportive presence of the whole assembly of the deceased kings and ancestors. In the midst of the threat of disintegration—or, in psychological terms, of dissociation—these ancestors guarantee a continuity that resists dissolution. What seems to be the collective world of the ancestors is, in reality, the most personal and intimate thing one can own, namely, the hidden treasure of one’s soul. It is the subterranean stream that from time immemorial has fertilized the soul, the stream of the collective unconscious that contains the wisdom of millennia. “The true history of the mind is not preserved in learned volumes, but in the living psychic organism of every individual.”⁶ It is this history of ideas that the creative

⁶C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, vol. 11 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans. G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), § 56.

individual relies on. And without it, there is no escape from the collective *Zeitgeist*. In the soul is hidden the treasure that has to be raised. This point does not mean that we can renounce the images and writings, the religious ideas and cultural heritage of our forebears, for that is possible only for certain outstanding personalities, great individuals who are considered saints by Christians and other religious groups. Rather, it means that we have not understood the timeless documents of the psyche unless they have provoked a movement in our soul, a movement that will not cease. As the deities who bear witness to the union of Re and Osiris return to life, so anyone who has had a numinous, archetypal experience will never again be the same.

All the “blessed dead”—including those still on earth who are released from their deathlike languor—participate in the miracle of the self-procreation of the Sungod, who comes to his corpse. A seed is planted in all of them, the divine embryo, as the alchemists call it, a spark of light announcing the dawn of a new day or era, and their vital energy is restored to them, so that they can actively participate in the upcoming fourth stage of transformation.

Let us now return to that god who refrains from any and all activity, but who is so deeply loved: Osiris. He, too, has a part in the mysterious process of renewal. His presence is so palpable that the accompanying texts speak of the union of the *ba* of the Sungod and the corpse of Osiris. For one moment, all conflict is abolished in this union of opposites, and peace reigns over this state of indescribable divine beauty and timeless calm. It is “an experience of the Self, inner wholeness and God which cannot be understood intellectually but only through love,”⁷ a numinous moment in which we feel one with ourselves and with everything that exists.

A dream of a woman in the middle of her life lends beautiful expression to such a moment: “It is deep in the night, in Palestine. I am in the field among the shepherds, we sit close to one another. A golden edge of the rising sun can be seen on the horizon. I know that every shrub and every tree will love me.” A wonderful, almost biblical scene! The dawn

⁷M.-L. von Franz, *Muhammad ibn Umail's Hall ar-Rumuz (Clearing of Enigmas)* (Egg, Switzerland: Fotorotar, 1999), p. 44.

of a new day is erupting into the blackness of the night. The still faint sunlight announces the end of a long, dark, and probably cold night. The dreamer is obliged to wait patiently (Osiris!), just like the shepherds' flocks. Deeply moved, she focuses on the mystery of the sunrise. An intense, cosmic love overwhelms her: "I know that every shrub and every tree will love me." In her solitude under the endless expanse of the night sky, she feels cared for and protected by the surrounding vegetation (grain Osiris), by every shrub and tree. She is deeply rooted in her vegetative soul; she is experiencing a state of bliss. The dream describes the condition in which love is one with the sense of the transitoriness of all things, in which the ego is freed from the compulsion to individuality. This is one of those archetypal dreams that, from time immemorial, have protected humankind from the primeval cosmic night.

For countless generations, probably since the very beginning, the human soul has been filled with longing for light and love. Like the dream, the Amduat and its fascinating imagery testify to this numinous event in which the birth of light out of deepest darkness is experienced as an overwhelming sense of the divine. Longing for light corresponds psychologically to longing for consciousness. And despite the passage of millennia, the images capable of satisfying this longing have remained the same.

Fourth Stage: The Realization of the New (Eighth to Eleventh Hours)

Every light seeks its object, through which it can be realized. For what would light be without the world of things and creatures? Accordingly, the next, *fourth stage*, which spans the eighth to the eleventh hour, deals with the inner dynamic of the growth and development of the seed that was planted in the deepest hour of the night. Now everything wants to become real.

The motif of new clothing, the theme that dominates the eighth hour and continues into the beginning of the ninth, makes it clear what the union in the depths set in motion: a physical, psychic, and spiritual renewal. Provision with a new garment symbolizes the receiving of a new

life, or, according to the Hermeticists of late classical antiquity, a new destiny. Many today do not believe in *any* change in their life: it is as it is, and thus it will always be. No longer is there any expectation of change, of spontaneous experience, of the feeling of new love. There are things in our life, however, which do move us in the depths of our soul. Afterwards, we go to sleep and wake up again in the morning. Everything seems to continue as if nothing had happened, but sooner or later, it becomes clear that something *has* changed within us. We feel it in our innermost heart, and henceforth, we carry it with us as a secret. And one day, we meet someone, and we know immediately: he or she knows the secret, too. This may be the beginning of a friendship or even of love, which started with hardly any exchange of words. And this is how spiritual communions arise, in which each member serves the same goal despite all individual differences: the realization of what wants to emerge from the realm of the collective unconscious.

The Amduat tells us there *is* change, a continuous change that even sustains not only our individual life but the whole cosmos. As early as the first hour, we are immersed in a world of transformation, and even the baboons, the very first deities we encounter, are filled with joy in anticipation of this change. And finally, with the new clothing, the change becomes manifest in the eighth hour. I have no doubt that there are many occasions when we have the possibility of “changing clothes,” that is, when a new archetypal image is poised to enter our life, inspiring and healing us. But there must be a certain readiness to receive it, a conscious attitude that is willing to play its part in the inner drama. If this readiness is lacking, everything can be lost, and we might fall back, as the Egyptians would have put it, into the unconsciousness of the condemned.

For this reason, it is crucial to be part of the crew who rows the solar barque (ninth hour) and to invest as much energy as possible in the continuation of the adventurous journey toward the birth of the solar child at dawn. It is now time to have a clear mind (Re’s well-armed bodyguard, tenth hour), for only an alert spirit possesses the needed stamina. Now begins a new period of time (eleventh hour), which does not necessarily mean for the Egyptians what it means to us. In their religious understanding, time has a specific *quality*, depending on the activity of the deity concerned. If there were no ruling deity, there would be a condition of non-time, that is, a realm beyond creation under the sovereignty of

Apopis! Thus, each specific moment or time period entails a certain margin that is consistent with the specific traits of the deity who rules over it and in which man is free to act according to the law of the respective deity. *Created* time always has a cosmic dimension, and it is subject to the eternal changes of the cosmic drama. This drama does not exclude the return of all the gods to the primeval waters at that time when the creator god will destroy all that he has created: “I will destroy all that I have made; the earth shall return to the Abyss, to the surging flood, as in its original state.”⁸ Indeed, the created cosmos will endure for millions and millions of years, but, like everything temporal, it has its limit.

Fifth Stage: Sadness and Joy at the Rebirth of the Sungod (Twelfth Hour)

Knowledge of the ultimate limitation of all that exists increases the longing and suspense with which the Sungod’s birth is anticipated. The *fifth and last stage* of the nocturnal journey brings the climax and completion of the transformation process. Once more the dramatic abundance of images and events increases to a nearly unsurpassable degree, and once more the Sungod must experience a period of high drama. The initial jubilation is followed by the grateful “worship of this Great God at dawn.” And what a relief it is when those who accompany him can exclaim, “Born is he who is born, who has emerged, has emerged!” (twelfth hour, upper register). But mixed with this joy of life, there is also a feeling of sadness for the one who must be left behind in the dark vault of the netherworld, Osiris. The prayers offered to him emphasize his vitality in a typically euphemistic manner. Now, at the time of departure from his netherworldly realm, it must not be forgotten that *he* is and will be the “lord of life,” and that the regeneration of all life will always be dependent on his vital force, which is rooted in the darkness of the earth.

Any act of creation, wherever and whenever it occurs, is linked to a painful sacrifice. With creation and its becoming manifest, there is the necessity of separation from the living, creative spirit at work in it.

⁸ R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), p. 175 (spell 175).

Everything created must be separated from its creator, engendering a painful distance between creator and creature. Many creation myths emphasize this distance by relating how the primeval god, after completing his work, withdrew to the farthest limit of the sky, where he rests in concealment. The most familiar Egyptian example of this withdrawal is the creator god Amun. His name means “the invisible one,” “the hidden one,” a concept that inspired those who composed hymns to this god:

Unique is Amun, who is hidden before them,
who veils himself before the gods, so that his essence is not known.
He is more distant than the sky,
he is deeper than the netherworld.
No god knows his true form,
his image is not unfolded in the writings,
one learns nothing certain about him.
He is too mysterious for his majesty to be revealed,
he is too great to be discovered,
too mighty to be known.
One falls down immediately out of terror,
if one speaks his secret name, wittingly or unwittingly.
There is no god who can call him by it,
the *ba* who hides his name according to his mysteriousness.⁹

The mystery of creation cannot be revealed or known or explained by any writing. Thus, in the very last scene of the Amduat, the gods in front of Osiris mourn over the “image of the flesh,” that is, Osiris, and they *must* mourn, for painful separation and loss are the inevitable consequences of every act of creation. The presence of Osiris assures that the joy of this hour will not be unbounded but rather accompanied by gratitude and by reverence for the great unknown. Once more, as already in the sixth hour, Re and Osiris are intimately linked. This is the moment of birth!

But first, the Sungod and his entourage must endure an experience of great danger and high intensity. Suddenly all seems lost. The sun barque,

⁹J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 237–238.

and with it all the countless blessed dead, find themselves inside the body of a gigantic, primeval serpent god. In a typically euphemistic manner, the accompanying text plays down what is in fact monstrous: “They (i.e., the gods) enter into the mysterious image of (the serpent) ‘Life-of-the-gods’ as venerated ones, and they emerge as the rejuvenated ones of Re, day after day.” As we could already observe in the descriptions of Apopis, in ancient Egypt, the faithful hesitated to express the dangerous aspect of the numinous.

In reality, the snake god associated with the mystery of regeneration is anything but harmless. Who, then, guarantees us that the “death” demanded here will lead to new life? Who would dare to predict how the unconditional encounter with the content of one’s unconscious will turn out? There is no guarantee whatsoever, particularly when the birth of the new is at hand. There is absolutely no assurance that transformation and healing will really occur.

It was the deep belief of the Egyptians that life is renewed precisely at its farthest edge. It is for that reason that the serpent god, as a dark and uncanny spirit of the depths, in fact embodies a comforting mystery associated with creation and birth. Wherever this miracle is manifest, creation is repeated as on the “First Occasion.” And in this final hour of the Amduat, as in the original creation, it is Shu, god of air, who is present to separate sky and earth once more, thus clearing the way for the unfolding of creation in an interstitial realm carefully protected by the gods and goddesses.

With this birth, a long night comes to an end. In the villages of the African continent, life awakens even before the first faint rays of the sun appear above the horizon. Humans and animals gather around the watering holes. The fields are hoed and plowed. All make use of the cool morning hours, for they well know that as the sun climbs in the sky, their work will become ever harder. Thus, for millennia, the people of Africa have lived with the course of the sun. And always, when I recall my own time in Africa, a quiet longing awakens in me, a longing to be close to the mystery of this magnificent continent. The people of ancient Egypt perished millennia ago, but the mystery of Africa and the ancient Egyptians is fully alive and will never perish.

CHRONOLOGY

Early Dynastic Period	c. 2900–2628 BC
Old Kingdom	c. 2628–2134
First pyramid, of King Djoser, at Saqqara	
Pyramid Texts from 2350	
First Intermediate Period	c. 2134–2040
The collapse of the old worldview had a catastrophic effect, causing great social turmoil. In compensation for this, a new style of literature arose and flourished.	
Individual, intellectually outstanding personalities broke free of the hitherto dominant ideology of the pharaohs and created a new, independent way of thinking.	
Coffin Texts from 2100	
Middle Kingdom	c. 2040–1650
Coffin Texts. Beginning with Senwosret II (1897–1878), a profound change in the concept of the hereafter took place, with an increasing emphasis on the netherworld and the realm of Osiris, god of death.	
Second Intermediate Period	c. 1650–1551
For the first time in its history, Egypt was ruled by foreigners, called Hyksos.	
New Kingdom (Dynasties 17–20)	c. 1551–1070
Tombs of the Valley of the Kings. Zenith of Egyptian religion and culture.	
Books of the Netherworld and Book of the Dead	
Dynasty 18	c. 1527–1306
Ramesside Period (Dynasties 19 and 20)	c. 1306–1070
Third Intermediate Period	c. 1070–664
Late Period	c. 664–332

Chronology according to Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. J. Baines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 261.

GLOSSARY

AKER: As living personification of earth and the netherworld, Aker is one of the earth gods. He acts as guardian over the entrance and exit gates of the netherworld—hence his form of double lion, double sphinx, or double bull. In the fifth hour of the Amduat, he guards the “secret flesh,” that is, the corpse of the Sungod or of Osiris, and thus he sustains the mystery of the renewal of life at the utmost border of chaos. Symbolically, he indicates the rebirth of consciousness after a period of depression, deepest introversion, and darkness. In this sense, he represents not only the deepest point of the netherworld but also the doorway and access to the beyond.

AKH: A blessed, imperishable dead person whose physical and spiritual vitality does not cease. As early as the Pyramid Texts, the king is called an *akh*-spirit “who is in charge of the Nile” (Pyramid Texts § 155). Literally, *akh* refers to something shining or illuminating, the light of which braves the darkness of death. In psychological terms, the *akh*-spirit indicates a luminosity that has its origin in the collective unconscious (the Sungod and his regenerative power) and generates a fluent (Nile) light of consciousness that cannot be extinguished by any darkness, not even that of death. Accordingly, the Amduat says that the *akh*-spirit is someone “who masters his two feet.”

ANUBIS: Anubis, who is responsible for the embalming process, is mostly depicted with the head of a black canine (jackal). He watches over the mysteries connected with the coffin and escorts the deceased on their way to the afterlife.

APOPIS: A frightful serpent and archenemy of the Sungod who has to be defeated again and again. He is the personification of chaos, evil, and nonbeing. Deprived of all his sense organs, he does not belong to this world. His roar resounds throughout the netherworld. From a psychological perspective, he incarnates a threatening dimension of the collective unconscious that in Christian tradition was either rejected as the devil or understood as *Deus absconditus*, the dark, unfathomable side of the divine itself.

ATUM: In Atum, the Lord of all, the original oneness of the universe is manifested. As a primeval being, he becomes *the creator* par excellence. As the oldest of the Ennead of Heliopolis, he is “alone in the Abyss” (Book of the Dead spell 17), the self-created great god from whom all other deities emanate. Later he becomes the evening manifestation of the Sungod. As such, he is the old one who descends into the depths, exhausted from his day’s work, and thus the opposite of Khepri, the newborn solar child who is greeted with jubilation in the morning. In fact, these are but two different aspects of one and the same great soul. These solar aspects of Atum refer to the experience of the self, inner wholeness, and the divine, which cannot be understood intellectually but only through love.

BABOONS: The baboons belong to the traditional entourage of the Sungod. They greet him at his arrival, adoring and venerating him. In the first hour of the Amduat, they welcome him with great joy and open the way for his *ba*. The baboons are also a manifestation of Thoth. In the form in which they appear in the Amduat, they represent the enlivening wisdom and foreknowledge of the animal soul.

BA-SOUL: A manifestation of a psychic-spiritual entity that, in connection with the Sungod, is called the Great *Ba*-soul. Through him, all living beings, all blessed dead, and all deities regularly receive new life. In the pyramid age, the deceased pharaoh wished that his freely moving, birdlike *ba*-soul might ascend from his corpse to the sky and to the gods so that he might become “one of them.” In later times, however, after Senwosret II (c. 1890 BC), the great mystery of the union between the freely moving *ba*-soul of the Sungod and his (or Osiris’s) corpse was believed to take place in the deepest part of the netherworld (Amduat, sixth hour). All the blessed dead and all the deities wished to take part in this mysterious union of the Sungod’s *ba*-soul with his corpse. The *ba* represents a part of the psyche related to that spiritual and heavenly realm that causes our wanderlust. The *ba* thus differs from the *ka*, which is connected with the realization of life through one’s descendants.

CORPSE OF THE SUNGOD: In the profoundest depths of the netherworld, in the sixth nocturnal hour of the Amduat, lies the corpse of the Sungod. Re’s *ba*-soul unites with it, and this *mysterium coniunctionis*, union of opposites, causes the renewal of all life and creation. In psychological terms, the corpse of the Sungod represents all the experience and knowledge that has ever existed under the life-giving light of the sun and is now buried in oblivion, that is, everything that was once conscious before it sank back to the unconscious. For this reason, the ancestors and their wisdom are intimately

connected with Re's corpse. The return of the *ba*-soul to the corpse and its need for renewal refer to the immersion of the old consciousness in that stratum of the collective unconscious where the knowledge of the past is buried. From this encounter with the corpse, an auspicious regenerative and healing process can result.

DEATH: In ancient Egypt, there was a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, death as transition to the afterlife, as wished for by everyone through union with the deity, and on the other, the so-called second death that the damned had to suffer. The second death was dreadfully feared, as it meant a final condemnation with no possibility of escape.

ENNEAD OF HELIOPOLIS: The Greek word *Ennead* means “group of nine.” The triple triad indicates the totality of all deities, which, according to the cosmology of Heliopolis, is subdivided into four generations of deities. As a group, they symbolize the emanation of the divine world, and thus of the entire cosmos, from the one primeval god Atum. Atum “begat himself,” as the texts say, and then created the god Shu (air) and the goddess Tefnut (moisture). They in turn gave birth to the earth god Geb and his sister, the sky goddess Nut. Shu separated them by elevating Nut into her place in the sky. Thus was the next generation created: Osiris and Isis, Seth and Nephthys. From a psychological perspective, this creation myth beautifully mirrors the fourfold structure of the self—namely, a continuous unfolding of totality into four parts four times, which means nothing else than its becoming conscious. When psychic contents are split up into four aspects, it means that they have been subjected to discrimination by the four orienting functions of consciousness.

GEB: The personification of the earth and the father of Osiris. He passed his authority on to Osiris, to Horus, and finally, to the king. Shu, the god of air, created the cosmos by separating the primeval couple Geb and Nut, the sky goddess.

GRAIN OSIRIS: Egyptian priests modeled the typical shape of the mummified Osiris from earth and seeds of grain and then watered it. When new plants started to sprout, this was considered the blossoming of life out of death. Thus, the grain Osiris symbolized revival from death, specifically, the revival of all the blessed dead in the beyond.

HATHOR: Hathor, whose name means “house of Horus,” is one of the old cosmic mother goddesses. Her protective role was often illustrated by her form as a cow goddess. Depicted as a woman with the horns of a cow, she carries the sun disk on her head. She is the goddess of love, of the playful liveliness

of games and dance, and even of ecstasy. But she is also a goddess of death. Thus, maternal care and mild grace are qualities of Hathor, but this is also true of rampant, bloodthirsty, destructive rage. As the “Eye of Re,” she turns into a furious, raging lioness. These opposite qualities mirror the typical ambivalence of all great goddesses: feminine power in its protecting and caring, as well as in its wrathful and destroying, aspect.

Isis: The sister-spouse of Osiris and the mother of Horus. She is the most cunning deity—“more than a million gods,” as a text tells us—and she is famous for her magic, which at times could be used to trick other gods. She has also a tremendous healing power. In the New Kingdom, she became the most important female deity, and in the Late Period and especially in the Hellenistic era, she even became the almighty one. Her depictions as mother with the Horus child in her lap were the prototype for the Christian iconography of *Madonna lactans*.

KA: In contrast to the freely moving, bird-like *ba*, the *ka* is associated with the body of the deceased resting in the earth. The *ka* represents a sort of life power that is lost at death. Thus the wholeness of the deceased person has to be restored by reconnecting the *ka* with the individual by means of various magical funerary rituals. The offerings for the deceased are meant for the *ka*, that is, for his or her individual destiny (another meaning of *ka*) granted by the godhead. Inasmuch as the *ka* is transmitted from a deity to a human being, or from one human generation to the next, it symbolizes a part of the psyche that is achieved through the community of concrete life in this world.

KHEPRI BEETLE: The name Khepri is derived from the verb *kheper*, “to come into being,” “to become,” “to transform.” As the nascent one, the one who comes to life, the morning manifestation of the Sungod is often depicted as a scarab, or sacred beetle, which serves as an image of self-creation. This image is based on the Egyptian belief that the dung beetle comes into being of itself from a ball of dung that it rolls forward between its legs. Thus, the scarab is a symbol for the renewed and regenerated form of the Sungod. This sacred beetle symbolizes a self-recreating, self-regulating, and self-healing factor within the collective unconscious.

LAKE OF FIRE: The Lake of Fire is depicted in the lower register of the fifth hour of the Amduat. Beginning in the Middle Kingdom, with the Book of the Two Ways, the Lake of Fire was part of the topography of the netherworld. Its water annihilates the damned but also provides the blessed dead with life and food, and in the Book of Gates, it is even said that Osiris breathes through its holy water. According to the Revelation of John (Revelation

20:10 and 15), the devil was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur and with him anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life.

MAAT: The personification of social justice and of the cosmic order established at creation. As Re's daughter, Maat helpfully supported his work of creation from the very beginning, and she cares for the appropriate order even in the netherworld. Her presence in the Amduat is consoling, as it shows that the creative work of the Sungod continues even in the dark realm of the night and of death.

MEHEN: The name of the multicoiled serpent god who encircles and protects the Sungod from the seventh to the twelfth hour of the Amduat. In the eleventh hour, he has the form of the ouroboric world encircler, symbol of the divine quality of time and its renewal.

NEPHTHYS: The name Nephthys means "mistress of the house." She is the dark sister of Isis, with whom she mourns the death of their brother Osiris. Psychologically, she embodies the dark, feminine principle.

NUN: The personification of the watery chaos from which the primeval mound emerged. At sunrise, this world-creative act is repeated daily, an act of creation in which all the blessed dead participate. Nun is said to be the father of all the gods. In the tenth hour of the Amduat, we find a depiction of those deceased who have drowned in the waters of the Nile. For the Egyptians, death by drowning was a matter of particular concern, for the corpses of the drowned could not be buried. It was believed that these bodies plunged directly into the primeval waters of Nun, whence they were reborn.

NUT: The personification of the vault of the sky. She was depicted with her body arching over the earth god Geb, touching the western and eastern horizons with her hands and her feet, respectively. The Sungod, and with him all his entourage, the blessed dead, enter her body through her mouth in the evening and appear again from between her thighs in the morning. Depicted naked with arms widespread, lying recumbent on the bottom of many coffins, she was believed to protect the deceased and enable them to participate in her reliable daily cycle.

OSIRIS: God of death and ruler of the netherworld. Murdered by his brother Seth, he, though dead, remained generative and impregnated his sister-wife Isis. From the Middle Kingdom on, Egyptians associated their hope for new life after death with this god. He was a much beloved, universal deity who, together with the sun god Re, constituted a typical Egyptian "dual unity": the unified Re-Osiris.

OUROBOROS (ADJ., OUROBORIC): The *ourobos*, the snake that bites its own tail, was understood as a world encircler (see *Mehen*) who protectively encircled the created world against chaos and nonbeing. In papyri of the Late Period, we see the solar child surrounded by the *ourobos*, which is a beautiful image of the rejuvenation of the creator god. The *ourobos* is thus connected with the mystery of the renewal of time and life, and as a rule, it is a symbol of regeneration from the depths of the earth. From a psychological perspective, the *ourobos* points to the fact that transformation of consciousness in its individual and collective aspects is possible only when the opposites (tail and mouth) are united. This is the tremendous creative moment when the old gives way to the new and the solar child emerges from the depths of the abyss protected by an ouroboric, mysterious power that has supported the process of regeneration since time immemorial.

RE: The most important name of the Sungod, the creator and sustainer of the cosmos. In his barque, he travels along the firmament in the daytime and descends into the netherworld at night. At the deepest point of the night, his *ba*-soul unites with his corpse, or with Osiris. This event is a *mysterium coniunctionis*, a mystery, the union of the opposites out of which all creation and all living beings are revived and regenerated. From a psychological perspective, the Sungod represents an archetypal factor of consciousness within the collective unconscious, that is, the origin, source, and impetus of all consciousness.

ROSETAU: A name of the dark, sandy region of Sokar, the Memphite god of death, in the fourth and fifth nocturnal hours of the Amduat. Erik Hornung has suggested that Rosetau is to be translated as “action of towing,” which makes sense, as in this region, the sun barque has to be towed by several assisting deities. From a psychological perspective, Rosetau mirrors one of those moments in life when the water of life no longer flows, so that we can only proceed through hard labor and with the assistance of the creative powers of the collective unconscious.

SETH: The murderer of his brother Osiris. He is a violent and compulsive god who is likely to create confusion, chaos, and disorder wherever he appears. But in the seventh hour of the Amduat, he effectively supports the Sungod and his entourage by defending them against Apopis. In this role, he is the prototype of St. George. There is a great archetypal truth in the figure of Seth—namely, that only he who knows about chaos, disorder, and evil from his own experience (Seth) is able to defeat absolute evil (Apopis).

SHADOW: The Egyptian concept of the shadow has nothing in common with its meaning as a term in psychology. In ancient Egypt, it refers to a constituent

part of a human being; the others were the corpse, *akh*, *ka*, heart, name, and *ba*. Like the *ba*, the shadow is a freely moving aspect of the individual, but it is related not so much to the daily world as to the dark realm of the netherworld. In the phenomenology of religion, one would call it the “excursion soul.”

SHU: The god of the space between earth and sky. Shu separates the primeval parental couple Geb (earth) and Nut (sky). He is considered a god who procreates life not so much as in the sense of birth but rather, in the sense of a creator who “awakens that which is in the egg to life,” as it is once stated in the Coffin Texts. It is he who receives the Sungod with open arms as the latter emerges from the netherworld (twelfth nocturnal hour), delivering him over to his creative work in the course of the day.

SOKAR: The Memphite god of death. Sokar is mentioned as early as the Pyramid Texts (spell 364, § 620c; spell 532, § 1256c; spell 645, § 1824b), where he is already equated with Osiris. As a falcon-headed god of the earth, he rules over the fourth and fifth nocturnal hour of the Amduat. In the cavern of Sokar, protected by a winged serpent god with three snake heads and one human head, Sokar represents the subterranean form of the Sungod and thus the secret concealed in the depths of the earth and its regenerative power.

TATENEN: The name Tatenen means literally “risen land,” an allusion to the emerging of the primeval mound from the watery chaos and thus to the creation of the world. Among others, such as Sokar, Aker, and Geb, Tatenen is an old earth god.

THOTH: Lord of the moon and lord of time. As the god who invented writing, he is the protector of scribes. As such, he is the guarantor of rightfulness and correctness, and in particular, he keeps watch over the funerary rituals. He is the wise reconciler of the conflict between Horus and Seth. In the fourth hour of the Amduat, he hands the sacred eye over to Osiris-Sokar. In this function, he psychologically represents the healing power of consciousness that stems particularly from the darkness of the night.

WERNES: Another name for the “Fields of Rushes.” In the Amduat, Wernes is the watery region of the second nocturnal hour, where it is surrounded by fertile fields of paradisiacal beauty. In Wernes, the deceased are provided in abundance with everything that is necessary for the fulfillment of life. Psychologically speaking, we could say that Wernes represents the beauty of the corporeal world.

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