

THE SO-CALLED PANTHEOS

ON POLYMORPHIC DEITIES IN LATE EGYPTIAN RELIGION

Among the topics dear to László Kákosy was the question of the iconography of a specific type of deities which among egyptologists are normally called "pantheistic".¹ It seems a fitting tribute to him to discuss some problems connected with these deities.

The images in question are characterised by the addition of particular elements, mostly heads of different animals,² but also other body parts, to the basic anthropomorphic structure of a deity. They are typical for the Late Period and are not found in the archaeological record before the first millennium BC.³ The appellation as "pantheos" is common among most scholars working on the material. Still, some have expressed reservations, mainly because they are not sure whether the concept of identifying the whole of creation with God is really applicable to Ancient Egypt.⁴ I will not enter into the intricacies of that debate,⁵ but there are several reasons not to use the term "pantheos" with respect to the figures discussed here. The first is that the term "pantheism" is so loaded with implications from the European philosophical and theological debate that it is difficult to remain neutral with regard to its existence in Egypt.⁶ Secondly, even if there is such a concept as pantheism in Egyptian religion, the texts claimed as an expression of this are not specifically and exclusively connected with the image type in question.⁷ On the contrary, most of them are either purely textual without any image, or they

1 KÁKOSY 1998, 619-624; KÁKOSY 1999; KÁKOSY 2000, 45-49; KÁKOSY 2002, 273-284.

2 I would propose to differentiate between the true polymorphic deities, where heads of different types of animals are concerned, and the special image of four heads of the same type, especially the four ram heads on one neck, typical of certain manifestations of the sun-god.

3 The last thorough discussion is by KAPER 2003, 79-104.

4 See the references in KAPER 2003, 85.

5 To do so would entail a discussion of ASSMANN 1983; ASSMANN 1993.

6 See the review by ASSMANN 1994, especially 102-103.

7 DELATTE-DERCHAIN 1964, 130-131. have already stressed that there is nothing specifically pantheistic in the Late Period Egyptian representations. Their effort to claim pantheism for the magical gems with similar depictions is based exclusively on PUECH 1930, whose proposal (p. 422), that the deity depicted is pantheistic, however, is only based on a short and superficial analysis of the images – but the accumulation of several originally distinct pictorial elements (even if Puech's hypotheses on their origin in the depiction of deities were true) is hardly sufficient for conferring a truly pantheistic status to the deity depicted.

apply to more conventional depictions of gods. Thus, regardless of whether or not we accept the existence of a pantheism for Ancient Egypt, it has no privileged connection with those images which are normally called "pantheistic".

I would propose replacing the term "pantheos" with the more neutral expression "polymorphic deity". It has the advantage of avoiding an *a priori* decision about the meaning and function of the deities depicted. Instead, it expresses that fact which is the most visually obvious: the addition of supplementary elements to the basic form. The most frequent ones are animal heads put in smaller scale either on the sides or on top of the main head which is mostly human or specifically in the shape of Bes.⁸ Wings in a varying amount are also common. One very typical element is that such deities tend to be ithyphallic – this is such a dominant thread that it is even applied when the basic form is, in principle, a female deity, e.g. the ithyphallic polymorphic Mut depicted in a vignette of the Book of the Dead, chapter 164.⁹ It should be stressed that this attribute is more likely to express aggression, power and potency, not sexuality and fertility.¹⁰

We should also consider to what extent deities with only one head, but otherwise similar in posture, should also be classified as polymorphic: for example the ithyphallic figures attested on the shrine of Saft el-Henne which bear wings and hold knives in their hands, but have only a single Bes-head.¹¹ Regardless of whether we actually include them, they do represent an important intermediary stage. During the New Kingdom, we have winged Bes-figures which are otherwise still very much within the frame of the traditional Bes-image.¹² The Saft el-Henne examples (labelled '*Sopdu who strikes the Asiatics*') bear a closer resemblance to the late type, and the further addition of the animal heads and the was-sceptres would give us the classical form normally called Pantheos. Equally to be understood as an intermediary stage is the Sopdu figure with four wings, the additional body of a bird, sceptre and *flagellum* on the Naples torso.¹³ It has already begun developing towards the schema of a classical polymorphic figure,

8 KAPÉR 2003, 97 has restricted the term "pantheos" to forms having at least four additional animal heads, or other extraneous body parts; a critique of that position is given by VON LIEVEN 2005, 32. I fail to see how there can be any taxonomic division in the amount of heads present which could justify classifying examples with few heads as "composite" whereas pieces with more heads are understood as "pantheistic" and thus representing an essentially different conception.

9 A good depiction in CENIVAL 1992, 107. The image is probably already attested in the Late-Saitic Book of the Dead of Iahmesnakht, see VERHOEVEN 1993, 71, Beilage 32. However, the details are difficult to make out.

10 OGDON 1985/86; see also NAGUIB 1990, 40 and 82-83.

11 NAVILLE 1888, pl. 2, 3, 5.

12 See ROMANO 1998, especially 98 fig. 6 and p. 104 note 53; KÁKOSY 2002, 276.

13 KÁKOSY 2000, 47-48, fig. 3; KÁKOSY 1999, 137-139.

but still lacks the distinctive trait of the additional heads.

Of course, when I use the term "classical", that should not create the impression that any canonical form exists. As a matter of fact, in the actual attestations, we have a bewildering variety of different images, many of which have only one preserved example. A collection of the different types, mostly attested in small-scale figures in bronze or faience, would be quite useful. Besides, one source rarely mentioned deserves more attention, namely the attestations on Phoenician and Punic metal amulets.¹⁴ There also, like in the Saft el-Henne depictions, we have forms which seem to reflect intermediary stages developing into the later forms. Given the chronological position of those amulets in the 6th-5th century BC, deriving probably from Egyptian archetypes of the early first millennium BC, they are of some interest for the historical development of the iconography. They even seem to attest some canonical and recurrent sequence which should represent a larger system of conceptions (similar to the sequence of the decans of the Seti IB-family, which forms the first part of those amulets).

It has been debated whether the animal heads so characteristic for these figures are to be understood as representations of minor gods, especially the seven demons.¹⁵ Given the recent discussion by Olaf Kaper, however, such a position does not seem appropriate.¹⁶ I will leave that question and only state that they are likely to convey to the eye of the beholder the idea that the deity possesses the specific prowess of those animals – like the swiftness and aggressiveness of the falcon, the strength of a lion, the snake-fighting abilities of the cat etc.¹⁷

Equally hotly debated is whether the animals depicted in the uroboros at the feet of the god are to be considered as his vanquished foes or as his helpers.¹⁸ Perhaps some heat could be taken from the discussion by pointing out that the two positions are less irreconcilable than they seem at first. In an intercultural comparison, it is not uncommon that defeated enemies are employed

14 The relationship of those images to the ones present on magical stelae was already noticed by VER-COUTTER 1945, 316-317; see further HÖBL 1986, 349-351.

15 Thus SAUNERON 1960, 284-285.

16 KAPER 2003, 97-99.

17 See also MICHEL 2002, 11-12, whose proposal to identify the animals with the shapes of the sun-god in the dodecaoros does not seem very plausible, given that for the dodecaoros as a system, 12 animals are characteristic, but such a number is not typical for the polymorphic deities. For the dodecaoros, see, especially BOLL 1968, 295-346; BOLL 1912 (= BOLL 1950, 99-114 with additions on p. 421-422.); GUNDEL 1936, 229-235; WEINSTOCK 1949, 60-65; HÜBNER 1990, 73-103.

18 The main proponent for the theory of helpers was QUAEGBEUR 1985. The contrary position was reaffirmed by RITNER 1993, 127-128. Last discussion by KAPER 2003, 83-85.

afterwards in subaltern serving positions as protectors. An interesting case are inscriptions of Assyrian kings, who describe how they have made subjected kings into their door-guardians.¹⁹ Corresponding to this on a mythological level are the protecting *genii* at the gates of Assyrian palaces, who really seem to represent original enemies of the god who have been subdued in battle.²⁰ So also for Egypt it would be a feasible interpretation that the dangerous animals were on the one hand crushed and overpowered by the hero god, but afterwards made to serve his ends by being employed as helping and protecting agents.

Discussions of the meaning and function of the polymorphic figures generally focus on iconography for the simple reason that textual evidence which can be specifically related to any of their actual forms is quite rare. Of course, in many cases they are depicted on magical stelae or statues side by side with elaborate magical recitations,²¹ but normally it is not possible to link any of the spells with a specific form. Still, there is one single text, or more specifically, one single passage which seems to play a very considerable role in modern interpretation, often overriding all other analyses. This comes from the illustrated Late Period magical papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.156.²² Palaeographically, the hand is datable to around the last dynasties of Egypt, and linguistically, there are so many late or even proto-demotic features as to exclude a substantial earlier date for the archetype of the text as preserved today.²³ Basically the papyrus contains two texts, each with an elaborate vignette.²⁴ I will take this up in detail for two reasons. First of all, I have discovered a parallel text to the first composition – although unfortunately without the vignette – in the Copenhagen collection.²⁵ Secondly, I have grave misgivings about the interpretation of the crucial passage.²⁶

Nowadays, it is generally assumed that the deity depicted is not the

19 MAUL 2000. For an egyptologist, the story of blinding the truth would provide a close parallel where the vanquished adversary is blinded and put as a guardian at the door of the victorious one.

20 MAUL 2000, 25–40.

21 Good examples can be found e.g. in KÁKOSY 1999; see also JELÍNKOVÁ-REYMOND 1956 where unfortunately the treatment of the images is too short; even more symptomatic for the neglect of iconography by earlier scholars is SANDER-HANSEN 1956 where the title is already a program for disregarding the images forming part of the whole of the stela.

22 Edition SAUNERON 1970.

23 This does not rule out the possibility that some phrases might have been derived from earlier models – the text seems fairly uneven in its expressions.

24 An interesting discussion paying more attention to the images in the papyrus is given by UEHLINGER 2004, especially 158–165.

25 Edition QUACK 2006b.

26 Already briefly expressed in QUACK 2004, 66–67.

supreme god Amun-Re himself, but actually stands for his Ba's, the visual manifestations of power of the hidden one.²⁷ This idea is crucial for all recent discussions of the "pantheos". It is actually based on a rendering of a section of the texts as "*The seven-headed Bes [...] He (represents) the Ba's of Amun-Re.*"²⁸ The true wording of the papyrus, however, is considerably different. It begins with a title "*the [writing]s²⁹ of the seven-headed Bes.*" The seven-headed Bes is clearly subordinated in the indirect genitive. Then follows an explanation concerning the use of the composition: "*it is done to drive away a male or female dead person ...*", and only afterwards do we reach the actual recitation introduced by *çt mṯw* "*words to be spoken*". This opens with a direct admonition: "*stop you, oh male and female adversary, sow, vixen(?),³⁰ devourer of the west ... which will come against Pharaoh by night, by day, in every moment of any day*". Immediately afterwards comes the crucial point, and there are two objections to the current interpretation. Firstly, the word "*Pharaoh*" present in the papyrus is generally rejected as an erroneous later addition.³¹ Secondly, the personal pronoun "*he*", without any discussion, is assumed to be referring back to the Bes of the first line. But that word is fairly distant from the actual passage, and it does not even occur in the recited part of the spell at all.

Given these problems associated with this prevalent opinion, I propose a simple revision. By taking the text at face value, I leave the word "*Pharaoh*" in the text, and I assume that the pronoun refers to him. By applying these points, we get the translation "*he, Pharaoh, is the Ba's of Amun-Re*".³² Such a rendering seriously changes the meaning of the whole text. It no longer defines the deity depicted as Ba's of Amun-Re, and it no longer can be used to establish a separation between the polymorphic deity depicted in the vignette and a hidden supreme god. Instead, it is a piece of royal theology aiming at establishing a close link between the king on earth and the king of the gods.

I intend to further strengthen this interpretation by inner-textual analysis, by a comparison with the first spell in the text and by general considerations. First

27 ASSMANN 1984, 282; ASSMANN 2004, 61-62; KAPER 2003, 93-94 and 99-100.

28 Thus ASSMANN 2004, 61. In ASSMANN 1984, 282, not even the omission between "*Bes*" and "*he*" is indicated.

29 The reading *shj.w*, already proposed by SAUNERON 1970, pl. IVa, note a) is practically certain from the traces on the papyrus as well as the similar phraseology in other texts assembled in QUACK 2006a, 49-50.

30 Thus the proposal of HOCH 1994, 274 which, however, is only possible if this is a late (first millennium) loan

– in the second millennium the original semitic *š* would have been rendered by Egyptian *s*.



31 Thus since SAUNERON 1970, 25 note j.

32 Grammatically, it would be possibly to understand "*Pharaoh – his are the Ba's of Amun-Re*", as proposed during the discussion of my lecture. Such an interpretation, however, does not seem to make much sense, and it would neglect the parallels with phrases of the first incantation pointed out below.

of all, the line of reasoning of the text itself is important, and we should follow it. After the passage in question, several attributes of Amun-Re are enumerated.³³ The most important one for the following argumentation is the designation "*the hero of a million cubits*" (4, 3f.). Then follows a long invocation addressed to a male deity who shall not let any bad person or negative influence act against the Pharaoh, because the king is protected by Amun. It is stated explicitly "*If you shall let them raise their arms against Pharaoh, then it is against the man of a million cubits who has seven heads on one neck that they will raise their arms*" (4, 8f.) – the description of the deity is given in considerable detail which corresponds closely but not exactly to the drawing.³⁴

A new invocation follows, and this time, Amun is explicitly named as the one who is addressed and should protect Pharaoh. This is again joined with a menace: "*If they raise their arms against him, it is against the man of a million cubits that they raise the arms*" (5, 4f.) – with some additional epithets divergent from the first ones. An affirmation that the speaker knows the secret and mysterious adorations of the deity invoked closes the recitation.

First of all, it should be obvious on close inspection that the text has thematic doublets. It gives the impression of being, in its present state, created by the fusion of at least two thematically similar spells, both of which could be self-sufficient. I cannot pursue this in all its ramifications. Instead, I will focus on what is most important for the actual question. In both individual segments, there are menaces where the destiny of the Pharaoh is intertwined with that of the man of a million cubits, and the latter is known explicitly from the papyrus to be an epithet of Amun-Re. Now if, as previous research has suggested, the seven-headed Bes was stated to be the Ba's of Amun-Re, there would be no real point in the menaces. If, however, Pharaoh himself is the Ba's of Amun-Re, an attack on him would most obviously be of immediate consequence also for Amun-Re. So from the inner logic of the text, understanding the phrase in question as "*he, Pharaoh, is the Ba's of Amun-Re*" makes better sense than interpreting it as a statement about the Bes-figure.

33 Some of them are amenable to a pantheistic interpretation, but others like "*who has fixed the sky on his head*" (4,4; by the way to be read , not  as given in Sauneron's edition) show, strictly speaking, a difference between the god and the world.

34 In the text, a million horns are said to be on top of the deity. That is not rendered pictorially whereas the flames surrounding the deity of the picture are not included in the textual description (although their presence is implied in the next sentence which speaks of the burning of those who see the god).

Secondly, it is useful to compare the strategy of argumentation to that of the first spell on the papyrus. That one also has a prayer of intercession on behalf of the Pharaoh who is to be protected. As arguments for why the deity invoked should be interested in his well-being, we get several statements attempting to bring his nature as near as possible to the supreme god.³⁵ We hear phrases like “He is the [heir(?)] of your heir” (2,7), “he is your hpr.w-form, he is [your] ka” (2, 8) “he is your sšm-image which is on earth” (2,8). In a similar vein appears “His flesh is your flesh – and vice-versa. His bones are your bones – and vice-versa, His l[imbs are your limbs – and vice-versa]. He is the form, and the f[orm is him]” (3,5). With the only difference that in this text the deity invoked is directly spoken to in the second person, and not designated indirectly in the third person as Amun-Re, the pattern is fairly similar. The similarity goes even so far as to include a noteworthy formal feature. In both cases, the identity is expressed by means of a personal pronoun ntf with following noun,³⁶ not by the grammatically much more normal pattern of a pw-construction.³⁷ The close relation between Pharaoh and the god is expressed, and to have Pharaoh designated as the Ba’s of the god in the second spell would be exactly in the same line of argumentation.

Finally, some general considerations about the king as Ba’s³⁸ of the supreme god seem appropriate.³⁹ The best text to begin with is the treatise on the ten Ba’s of Amun attested in numerous copies.⁴⁰ Of the ten different Ba’s, the sixth one is the Ka of the king.⁴¹ Furthermore, in the long inscription preserved on the “chapelle rouge” at Karnak, we have a designation of the king as “*living Ba of the majesty of Re*”.⁴² Perhaps the best case is the Litany of the Sun which says a great deal about the Ba of Re.⁴³ This text has several statements identifying the speaker with Re himself or his Ba. The most obvious case is the statement *īw*

35 It is likely that there was originally a menace against the god based on such an argumentation, but of this passage only the very end in pBrooklyn 47.218.156 1,1 is still extant.

36 This parallel between the two spells speaks against the option of interpreting the passage as “*Pharaoh – to him belong the ba’s of Amun*”.

37 According to SCHENKEL 1984, 157-174, this construction is only used when there is a special focus on the subject. This makes good sense in the sentence in question.

38 The plural bī.w “souls” should be clearly separated from the singular word bī.w “powerful manifestation of a god” with which KAPER 2003, 100 has confused it.

39 VITTMANN 1995, 13-14, n. 64 explicitly declares that the king is not visualised here as a manifestation of the divine powers of Amun-Re.

40 An up-to-date bibliography by QUACK 2004b, 65 n. 5.

41 DAVIES 1953, pl. 51, middle register.

42 LACAU 1977, 130 (l. 5) and 132 note g (the further reference Urk. IV 1540, 8 given there seems to be a misquotation).

43 Edition HORNUNG 1975-1976; for the questions discussed here s. ABITZ 1995, 51-72.

wsīr nsw NN m b3 n R^c ʕs phr “*Osiris the king NN is the Ba of Re – and vice-versa*”.⁴⁴ Designating the king as Ba of Re is obviously within the parameters of Egyptian royal theology. The plural chosen in the Brooklyn papyrus is probably due to the fact that in some conceptions, Re is supposed to have not only one Ba but a plurality (sometimes seven, sometimes ten); and if the king still wants to claim exclusivity in his relation with the sun-god, he has to arrogate all of them to himself.

There are two important magical names attested in Late Period religious and magical texts which come into consideration for the Brooklyn papyrus, namely srpt-m3³-sr.t and ʕh-hpr-wr.⁴⁵ The second one of these is actually inscribed as a caption to the figure of the seven-headed Bes in the Brooklyn papyrus. For the nine-headed Bes, the papyrus does not give any caption, but it is not unlikely that it should have been labeled with the first formula, given that on a magical gem which evolved from this image, the formula σερφουδ μουισρω is actually written.⁴⁶

Of the two texts in the Brooklyn Museum papyrus, the first one is likely to have been the more important one. It was certainly the longer one, with a minimum of four pages⁴⁷ versus only two for the second one. Besides, the image type shown with it, the nine-headed Bes, is quite well-represented in the archaeological record, whereas I do not know of any actual amulet using the iconography of the seven-headed Bes.⁴⁸ To some degree, that might be a question of the actual usage. According to the postscripts in the papyrus, the nine-headed Bes serves as a protection for a woman and a child, the seven-headed one serves as a protection for a man. It would not be surprising if charms for women and children were in higher demand, given the rather high risk for women of dying of childbirth-complications and the equally high mortality rate of children in antiquity.

Forms clearly derived from the image type of the nine-headed Bes are

44 HORNING 1975-1976, vol. I, 255; vol. 2, 94.

45 Both discussed in RYHNER 1977. Contrary to most modern scholars, I doubt that those formulae can be understood as acrophonic cryptograms for Atum – the phonetic renderings in the Greek magical papyri and on gems show at least for srpt m3³ sr.t that it was pronounced as ‘*lotus-flower – lion – sheep*’, and not read as a cryptogram.

46 KAPER 2003, 90.

47 Three are actually preserved, and the beginning of line 1,1 in the middle of a sentence quite close to the end of a menace-formula guarantees the existence of at least one more in the original state of the papyrus.

48 For that reason, the reconstruction drawing of A. Brodbeck in MERKELBACH 1992, 10 (which is based mainly on the seven-headed Bes with changes only for the topmost heads) is unlikely to be essentially correct.

49 For the polymorphic deities on magical gems, see BONNER 1950, 156-160; DELATTE - DERCHAIN 1964, 126-141; PHILIPP 1986, 109-111; ZWIERLEIN-DIEHL 1991, 164-167; ZWIERLEIN-DIEHL 1992, 18-23; MICHEL 2001, 100-115; MICHEL 2002, 1-40; BAKOWSKA 2001, 11-14, pl. 1-3.

still attested on magical gems of Late Antiquity,⁴⁹ and they shall form the final part of my contribution. It should be noted that some gems brought into association with the "pantheos" rather portray different subjects, though sometimes of somewhat related content. A case in point is Walters Art Gallery 42.872,⁵⁰ which shows a snake-holding Pataikos.

Still, there are quite a number of examples, even if the polymorphic deities are certainly not among the most popular types of magical gems. The magical name most frequently associated with those depictions derived from the image-type of the nine-headed Bes is *βανχωωωχ* which derives from Egyptian *bꜣ n kk.w* 'soul of the primeval god of darkness'.⁵¹ According to the Book of the Heavenly Cow, the night is the Ba of the primeval god of darkness.⁵² If the testimony of this text (which after all is quite a bit older than the magical gems) still can be used, this would indicate that the polymorphic figure of the nine-headed Bes is mainly connected with the evening and the night-part of the solar cycle. But also names like *lao* and *Abrasax* can be found which are typical for those gems in general.

An important question rarely brought into the fore is, unfortunately, the question of early modern imitations of Late Antique motifs. Hardly any of the magical gems have an assured archaeological provenance, and it is likely that not a few of them were made in Renaissance or Baroque times when interest on those images was at a high – often without any intention of forgery.⁵³ For us, this can have grave consequences. It is a matter of some importance whether some developments of the figure are authentic reflections of Late Antique religion or simply appropriations of a time which looked for quite different values in them and supposedly found them. I will point out here only a few cases where I have particular misgivings; and I would like to add that often better photographs and more detailed technical descriptions would be needed to settle these questions.

Quite certainly early modern is a strange figure depicted on a gem in Paris (M 8150).⁵⁴ The general arrangement looks similar to the polymorphic deity, and it is even standing on a crocodile. However, the details look peculiarly dis-

50 BONNER 1950, 157 and 294-295, pl. XII no. 251; discussed as pantheos also by BĄKOWSKA 2001, 13.

51 Given the vocalisation, *kkw* (**kāk~w* > *kōk*), the designation of one of the eight gods of Hermopolis, should be kept separate from the normal word *kkīw* 'darkness', Coptic *KAKC*.

52 HORNING 1982, 26 and 47.

53 The most intensive discussion of modern imitations is to be found in MICHEL 2001; specifically for some modern cases of "pantheos" gems see MICHEL 2002, 29-32.

54 DELATTE-DERCHAIN 1964, 138 no. 178.

torted, and the planetary symbols with which both sides of the gem are decorated have modern forms, not those which could be reasonably expected in Late Antiquity.⁵⁵ My guess is that this object should be linked with early modern European alchemical traditions.⁵⁶

Less grave are cases where a modern imitator (or even a real forger) has closely followed a genuine model. I suspect, for example, that one gem acquired by the British Museum in the 1980's (Michel 176) has been copied from one in Michigan published by Bonner in 1950.⁵⁷

I would like to tackle one specific serious question in order to show some methodological implications. There are a few cases where a balance seems to be fixed on the phallus of the god in question. Derchain has devoted a special study to them and proposed that they contain a specific word-play: the Egyptian word *ḥwsw* "balance" is phonologically similar to *ḥwsʿw* "masturbator"⁵⁸ I am sceptical on both sides. The supposed Egyptian ***ḥwsʿw* is attested in one single passage, PT 1248 (spell 527). This spell is preserved in the pyramids of Merenre and Pepi II, but not in any later tradition.⁵⁹ This fact alone would make it be quite unlikely that it was known in Roman imperial times as an important expression concerning the creation of the first twin pair of divinities (Shu and Tefnut) by the masturbation of Atum. Even more, the existence of ***ḥwsʿw* as a real lexeme of the Egyptian language can be doubted. Allen has proposed to break it up as an expression containing the participle *ḥwḥ* 'one who comes' and the old perfective *š:ʿwi(.w)* 'being extended'.⁶⁰ So, the linguistic basis for Derchain's theory is weak. The semantic side is also in doubt, given that the nine-headed Bes is almost universally depicted as ithyphallic, but not grasping his phallus⁶¹ – so it would be difficult to see him as masturbating.

Finally, a look at the actual examples Derchain has invoked for his theory creates further problems. His main basis are two gems from the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁶² The first one (BN S 336) looks quite a bit like a caricature of the orig-

55 See the discussion by NEUGEBAUER 1943, especially 123-125 and 128 pl. 3.

56 Compare the early modern magical gems with astrological symbols in ZWIERLEIN-DIEHL 1991, 288-291, pl. 209-210. no. 2697 and 2698.

57 BONNER 1950, 264, no. 66, pl. III.

58 DERCHAIN 1969, 31-34.

59 See ALLEN 1950, 91.

60 ALLEN 1988, 78.

61 Three of the few cases of masturbating polymorphic deities are the figures on the magical statue of Djedher and the torso in Naples discussed by KÁKOSY 2000, 46 and 48 – and they are not of the type of the nine-headed Bes.

62 DELATTE-DERCHAIN 1964, 134-136 no. 172-173.

inal iconographic scheme: The *atef* crown with horns has degenerated into something looking more like a trident. The arms are at an angle which is quite un-Egyptian and gives a disarticulated impression. The upper and lower pairs of wings are separated by an unusually large distance (normally they are directly on top of each other). Of all polymorphic deities on gems, this is certainly one of the more un-Egyptian ones. The second one (BN Fr 2888) seems quite similar to the first one, but the published photograph is so badly recognisable that I would refrain from any more detailed comments on it. On both these stones, the balance on the phallus has two scales. Another image is not on a normal gem but on a neolithic flint celt.⁶³ In this case, the iconography has even more un-Egyptian features, and there is not so much a balance on the phallus but rather a one-scaled balance-like object in the hand of the god. Given the basic object used, that design was quite certainly made in Europe, not in Egypt where neolithic celts of this type are unattested. Equally similar is an object only known from a drawing published by the early modern antiquarian Bernard de Montfaucon.⁶⁴ This one is so disfigured that it is difficult to base any conclusions upon it.

My personal impression is that the objects are to be seen as reinterpretations of the original intention, namely the ordinary Egyptian *flagellum* in the hand of a divinity, in this case held with the bar horizontally and the strips dropping down at a right angle from it. Outside of Egypt, the symbolic value of the *flagellum* got lost, and it was iconographically reinterpreted first as a one-scaled element, and later as a balance with two scales. I will not pass a final judgement as to whether this reinterpretation⁶⁵ came about in Late Antique or Early Modern times, although the latter is certainly more probable.⁶⁶ In any case, it quite obviously was produced in a context which was considerably removed from the original Egyptian basis. For that reason, it seems unsound to seek an explanation for it in a recondite Egyptian phonetic pun, all the more so if that pun itself is based on dubious premises.

Finally, I would like to speak of the “*nine-shaped one*” (*ἐννεάμορφος*), a figure mentioned several times in a magical ritual written in the Greek language but with a strong Egyptian religious background. In a magical drawing, he should stand on top of a crocodile with a falcon's head, both being encircled by a snake (PGM XIII, 42; 51; 410f.; 469). Unfortunately, the ancient papyrus never describes

63 BONNER 1950, 238, pl. 25, fig. 8.

64 Reproduced by DERCHAIN 1969, pl. I, fig. 3.

65 I purposely use the term “reinterpretation” instead of the more pejoratively loaded “misunderstanding”.

66 Dr. Árpád Nagy, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, has kindly informed me that he takes all the images in question to be post-antique.

his appearance in detail. It is a matter of modern scholarly deduction to suppose that he is to be identified with an Egyptian polymorphic deity.⁶⁷ Still, it does not seem an unreasonable idea. On the one hand, the nine-headed polymorphic deity is quite prominent in Egypt in addition to its representations on magical gems. On the other hand, on a magical amulet from Byblos, a depiction of such a god is actually addressed as a "*nine-shaped one*" (ἐννεάμορφε).⁶⁸ Its text seems the most explicit one for the polymorphic deity in Graeco-Roman magic, so it merits a full citation: "*Lord of land and sea, who shakest the world, Ortimeus of nine forms, cloud-wrapped, cleaving the ether, put an end to every disease and to plotting by any man*". The jargon of this formula shows, of course, influences of Greek ways of formulation, but the concepts themselves are still reasonably close to what is said in the Brooklyn papyrus. The deity has cosmic dimensions, and it is invoked for a very general protection against diseases as well as human plots. Obviously, the basic ideas about this figure were preserved for a long time.

Joachim Friedrich Quack
University of Heidelberg

67 MERKELBACH 1992, 60-65.

68 BONNER 1950, 182-183.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABITZ 1995 = F. Abitz, Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltbüchern des Neuen Reiches, OBO 146. Freiburg/Göttingen 1995.
- ALLEN 1950 = Th. G. Allen, Occurrences of Pyramid Texts with Cross Indexes of these and other Egyptian Mortuary Texts, SAOC 27. Chicago 1950.
- ALLEN 1988 = J.P. Allen, Genesis in Egypt. The philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts. YES 2, New Haven 1988.
- ASSMANN 1983 = J. Assmann, Re und Amun. Die Krise des polytheistischen Weltbildes im Ägypten der 18.-20. Dynastie, OBO 51. Fribourg/Göttingen 1983.
- ASSMANN 1984 = J. Assmann, Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur. Stuttgart e.a. 1984.
- ASSMANN 1993 = J. Assmann, Monotheismus und Kosmotheismus. Ägyptische Formen eines Denkens des Einen und ihre europäische Rezeptionsgeschichte. SHAW 1993/2. Heideiberg 1993.
- ASSMANN 1994 = J. Assmann, Der Amunshymnus des Papyrus Leiden I 344, verso. *Orientalia* 63, 1994, 98-110.
- ASSMANN 2004 = J. Assmann, Theologie in Ägypten, in: M. Oeming, K. Schmid, A. Schüle (Hrsg.), Theologie in Israel und in den Nachbarkulturen. *Altes Testament und Moderne* 9. Münster 2004, 51-62.
- BAKOWSKA 2001 = G. Bakowska, Bes Pantheos. Some Remarks Concerning his Representation on Magical Gems. in: J. Popielska-Grzybowska (Ed.), *Proceedings of the First Central European Conference of Young Egyptologists. Egypt 1999: Perspectives of Research. Warsaw 7-9 June 1999, Warsaw Egyptological Studies* 3. Warsaw 2001, 11-14, pl. 1-3.
- BOLL 1968 = F. Boll, Sphaera. Neue griechische Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Sternbilder. Leipzig 1903; reprint Hildesheim 1968.
- BOLL 1912 = F. Boll, Der ostasiatische Tierzyklus im Hellenismus. *T'oung-Pao* 13, 1912, 3-22.
- BOLL 1950 = F. Boll, *Kleine Schriften zur Sternkunde des Altertums*. Leipzig 1950.
- BONNER 1950 = C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Mainly Greco-Egyptian*. Ann Arbor 1950.
- CÉNIVAL 1992 = J.-L. de Cénival, *Le livre pour sortir le jour. Le Livre des Morts des anciens Égyptiens*. Le Bouscat 1992.

- DAVIES 1953 = N. de G. Davies, The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis, part III. The decoration. New York 1953.
- DELATTE-DERCHAIN 1964 = A. Delatte, Ph. Derchain, Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes. Paris 1964.
- DERCHAIN 1969 = Ph. Derchain, Le démiurge et la balance. in: Religions en Égypte hellénistique et romaine. Colloque de Strasbourg 16-18 mai 1967. Paris 1969, 31-34.
- GUNDEL 1936 = W. Gundel, Neue astrologische Texte des Hermes Trismegistos. Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften NF 12. München 1936.
- HÖBL 1986 = G. Höbl, Ägyptisches Kulturgut im phönizischen und punischen Sardinien. EPRO 102. Leiden 1986.
- HOCH 1994 = J.E. Hoch, Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period. Princeton 1994.
- HORNUNG 1975-1976 = E. Hornung, Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei). Nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches. AH 3-4. Basel-Genf 1975-76.
- HORNUNG 1982 = E. Hornung, Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh. Eine Ätiologie des Unvollkommenen. OBO 46. Freiburg-Göttingen 1982.
- HÜBNER 1990 = W. Hübner, Zur neuplatonischen Deutung und astrologischen Verwendung der Dodekaoros. in: *Φιλοφρόνημα*, Fs Martin Sicherl, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur der Antike. NF 4. Paderborn 1990, 73-103.
- JELÍNKOVÁ-REYMOND 1956 = E. Jelínková-Reymond, Les inscriptions de la statue guérisseuse de Djed-Her le sauveur. BdÉ 23. Cairo 1956.
- KÁKOSY 1998 = L. Kákosity, A New Source of Egyptian Mythology and Iconography. in: C.J. Eyre (ed.), Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995. OLA 82. Leuven 1998, 619-624.
- KÁKOSY 1999 = L. Kákosity, Egyptian Healing Statues in three Museums in Italy (Turin, Florence, Naples). Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino, Serie prima – Monumenti e testi, volume IV. Turin 1999.
- KÁKOSY 2000 = L. Kákosity, Bemerkungen zur Ikonographie der magischen Heilstatuen. in: Chr. Uehlinger (ed.), Images as Media. Sources for the Cultural History of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st Millennium BCE). OBO 175. Fribourg/Göttingen 2000, 45-49.
- KÁKOSY 2002 = L. Kákosity, À propos des statues guérisseuses et d'une statue de Bès au musée du Louvre. in: Y. Koeng (ed.), La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d'une définition. Actes du colloque organisé par le musée du

- Louvre les 29 et 30 septembre 2000. Paris 2002, 273-284.
- KAPER 2003 = O. Kaper, The Egyptian God Tutu. A Study of the Sphinx-God and Master of Demons with a Corpus of Monuments, OLA 119. Leuven-Paris-Dudley 2003.
- LACAU 1977 = P. Lacau, H. Chevrier, Une chapelle d'Hatshepsout à Karnak. Cairo 1977.
- VON LIEVEN 2005 = A. von Lieven, Review of KAPER 2003. OLZ 100, 30-33.
- MAUL 2000 = St. Maul, Der Sieg über die Mächte des Bösen. Götterkampf, Triumphritual und Torarchitektur in Assyrien, in: T. Hölscher (Hrsg.), Gegenwelten zu den Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms in der Antike. München-Leipzig 2000, 19-46.
- MERKELBACH 1992 = R. Merkelbach, Abrasax. Ausgewählte Papyri religiösen und magischen Inhalts, Band 3: Zwei griechisch-ägyptische Weihezereemonien (Die Leidener Welterschöpfung. Die Pshai-Aion-Liturgie), ARW Sonderreihe Papyrologica Coloniensia XVII. 3. Opladen 1992.
- MICHEL 2001 = S. Michel, Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum. London 2001.
- MICHEL 2002 = S. Michel, Der Pantheos auf Magischen Gemmen. Vorträge aus dem Warburg-Haus 6, 2002, 1-40.
- NAGUIB 1990 = S.-A. Naguib, Le clergé féminin d'Amon thébain à la 21^e dynastie. OLA 38. Leuven 1990.
- NAVILLE 1888 = E. Naville, The Shrine of Saft el-Henne and the Land of Goshen. London 1888.
- NEUGEBAUER 1943 = O. Neugebauer, Demotic Horoscopes. JAOS 63, 1943, 115-128.
- OGDON 1985/86 = J. Ogdon, Some Notes on the Iconography of Min. BES 7, 1985/86, 29-41.
- PHILIPP 1986 = H. Philipp, Mira et Magica. Mainz 1986.
- PÜECH 1930 = H.-Ch. Puech, Le dieu Bésa et la magie hellénistique, in: Documents: archéologie, beaux-arts, ethnographie, variétés 2/7, 1930, 415-425.
- QUACK 2004 = J.F. Quack, Perspektiven zur Theologie im Alten Ägypten: Antwort auf Jan Assmann, in: M. Oeming, K. Schmid, A. Schüle (Hrsg.), Theologie in Israel und in den Nachbarkulturen. Altes Testament und Moderne 9. Münster 2004, 63-74.
- QUACK 2006a = J.F. Quack, Eine Papyruskopie des Textes der Votivellen (Papyrus Carlsberg 419). in: K. Ryholt (Ed.), The Carlsberg Papyri 7. Hieratic Texts from the Collection. Kopenhagen 2006, 39-52.
- QUACK 2006b = J.F. Quack, Papyrus Carlsberg 475. Ein neuer Textzeuge für

- den neunköpfigen Bes. in: K. Ryholt (Ed.), *The Carlsberg Papyri 7. Hieratic Texts from the Collection*. Kopenhagen 2006, 53-64.
- QUAEGEBEUR 1985 = J. Quaegebeuer, *Divinités égyptiennes sur des animaux dangereux*, in: *Les cahiers du CEPOA 2. L'animal, l'homme, le dieu dans le Proche-Orient ancien*. Leuven 1985, 131-143.
- RYHINER 1977 = M.-L. Ryhiner, *A propos de trigrammes panthéistes*. RdÉ 29, 1977, 125-137.
- RITNER 1993 = R.K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. SAOC 54. Chicago 1993.
- ROMANO 1998 = J. F. Romano, *Notes on the Historiography and History of the Bes-Image in Ancient Egypt*. BACE 9, 1998, 89-105.
- SANDER-HANSEN 1956 = C.-E. Sander-Hansen, *Die Texte der Metternichstele*, AnAe 7. Copenhagen 1956.
- SAUNERON 1960 = S. Sauneron, *Le nouveau sphinx composite de Brooklyn Museum et le rôle de dieu Toutou-Tithoés*. JNES 19, 1960, 269-287.
- SAUNERON 1970 = S. Sauneron, *Le papyrus magique illustré de Brooklyn [Brooklyn Museum 47.218.156]*. Brooklyn 1970.
- SCHENKEL 1984 = W. Schenkel, *Fokussierung. Über die Reihenfolge von Subjekt und Prädikat im klassisch-ägyptischen Nominalsatz*, in: *Fs Westendorf*. Göttingen 1984, 157-174.
- UEHLINGER 2004 = Chr. Uehlinger, *Medien altorientalischer Theologien: Antwort an Karel van der Toorn*, in: M. Oeming, K. Schmid, A. Schüle (Hrsg.), *Theologie in Israel und in den Nachbarkulturen. Altes Testament und Moderne 9*. Münster 2004, 139-176.
- VERCOUTTER 1945 = J. Vercouttèr, *Les objets égyptiens et égyptisants du mobilier funéraire carthaginois*. Paris 1945.
- VERHOEVEN 1993 = U. Verhoeven, *Das saitische Totenbuch der lahtesnacht*. Bonn 1993.
- VITTMANN 1995 = G. Vittmann, *"Riesen" und riesenhafte Wesen in der Vorstellung der Ägypter*. VIAÄW 71. Wien 1995.
- WEINSTOCK 1949 = St. Weinstock, *Lunar Mansions and Early Calendar*. *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 69, 1949, 48-69.
- ZWIERLEIN-DIEHL 1991 = E. Zwielerin-Diehl, *Die antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien, Band III*. München 1991.
- ZWIERLEIN-DIEHL 1992 = E. Zwielerin-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln*. Opladen 1992.