Ontology and Iconography in Egyptian Religious Compositions

Composite Figures in the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and Apotropaic Wands c. 2000–1400 BCE

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人希見生象也，而得死象之骨，案其圖以想其生也，
故諸人之所以意想者，皆謂之象也。
《韓非子集釋．解老》

People rarely see living elephants (*xiàng*), but when they find the bones of a dead elephant, they base themselves on the structure of the bones in order to imagine it as a living elephant. Therefore the means by which people are able to have ideas and imagination are called images (*xiàng*).
—Han Feizi, commentary on Laozi (§6.368; after Sterckx 2002: 213–14)

Ma propre mère, chaque fois qu'elle désirait me parler,
faisait tout d'abord venir ma femme ou ma soeur et leur disait:
J'ai le désir de parler à mon fils Amadou, mais je voudrais, auparavant,
savoir lequel des Amadou qui l'habitent est là en ce moment.
—Amadou Hampaté Bâ (1973: 182)

CONTENTS

Abstract i
Acknowledgements ii
Conventions iii
List of figures v

INTRODUCTION 1

1 THE LIMITS OF MEANING 6
1.1 Composite figures between art history and anthropology 6
1.1.1 Composite figures and cultural evolution 6
1.1.2 Composite figures as hieroglyphic metalanguage 9
1.1.3 Iconography in context 13
1.2 Choice of material for analysis 16
1.2.1 Categories 16
1.2.2 Ophidian composites 21

2 THE ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION 23
2.1 Framing ontology 24
2.2 Agency and the Amduat 28
2.3 Egyptian terms and modern concepts 35
2.3.1 Research on terminology and ontology 36
2.3.2 *sšmw* 41
2.3.3 *jrw* 48
2.3.4 Conclusions 53
2.4 Composite figures in a visual language 56

3 AMDUAT 59
3.1 An ancient Egyptian comic 60
3.2 Nos 755 and 756 65
3.3 No. 458 78
3.4 No. 279 82
3.5 No. 325, with an excursus on red images 91
3.6 No. 394 98
3.7 No. 391 109
3.8 No. 210 114
3.9 No. 472 117

3.10 Barques with ophidian elements 123

4 BOOK OF TWO WAYS 134
4.1 Writing and picturing 136
4.2 CT 1062 and 1064 145
4.3 CT 1069 and 1176 149
4.4 CT 1045 and 1156 153
4.5 CT 1140 159
4.6 Excursus: CT 1155 with CT 649 165
4.7 CT 1181 170
4.8 CT 1098 176

5 APOTROPAIC WANDS 183
5.1 Writing and depiction 185
5.2 Ophidian body 193
5.3 Ophidian limbs 197
5.4 Ophidian head 200
5.5 Iconographic templates 201
5.5.1 Griffins 203
5.5.2 Serpopards 210

6 REFIGURING THE COMPOSITE 219
6.1 Classification by ontology 219
6.2 Design and distribution 224
6.2.1 Invention within contexts 225
6.2.2 Selection from repertoires 228
6.2.3 Formulation in parallel 229
6.2.4 Transfer between contexts 233
6.3 The graphic schema 237
6.4 Conclusions 243

7 CONCLUSION 245

REFERENCES 255

APPENDIX: PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED ARTICLES, NOT FOR EXAMINATION, ADDED FOR CONVENIENCE OF EXAMINERS

Abstract

This thesis investigates the patterns of occurrence of composite figural forms of divine beings in three categories of Egyptian pictorial–verbal religious compositions dating between 2000 and 1400 BCE: the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands. Analysis of the Amduat focuses on the burial chamber of Thutmose III (KV 34); study of the Book of Two Ways concentrates on the coffins B1C and B5C (Cairo CG 28083 and JE 37566); images on various wands are treated as selections from a repertoire. Most case studies are ophidian composites that incorporate elements of the bodies of serpents, whose cultural associations in Egypt are well-explored. The thesis argues that composite figures, which conjoin elements of human and animal bodies or parts of inanimate objects, display both ontological and semantic content, and that configurations were constrained by features of context, such as compositional format, multimodality, and decorum. Chapters 1 and 2 establish the theoretical basis of the thesis. Following the terminology of anthropologist Philippe Descola, composite figures are argued to balance interiority (subjectivity and vital force) and physicality (bodily constitution and means of action) in an analogist ontological regime, in which beings are defined and related through metaphor and symbolism. The concept of agency is treated as an aspect of interiority; its dynamics and loci are identified in the Egyptian terms *sšmw* and *jrw*. In Chapters 3 to 5, case studies from the three corpora are analysed within the frame of Neil Cohn's notion of visual language, developed out of research on comics. This concept accommodates varied relationships between beings, images, and hieroglyphic writing by taking account of contextual features while exploiting analytical approaches deriving from art history as well as comics studies. Chapter 6 presents a typology of conceptual structures and discusses sources and transmission between corpora. The composite figure is suggested to be an emic category whose conceptual implications distinguish it from other uses of conjoined elements as a graphic schema, enabling zoomorphic composites to be related to other schemas, notably personifications. A concluding chapter extends the central ideas of the thesis to other corpora, outlines relevant theoretical considerations, and suggests how the methods developed could be extended in their application.

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J. S. M.

January 2022

CONVENTIONS

All transliterations and translations of Egyptian are mine unless otherwise stated. Instances of red writing in the sources are rendered in red font. The following signs and abbreviations are used:

( )	Element omitted in original as common practice (in transliteration); editorial comment or addition (in translation)
(...)	Element extant in original text not included in transliteration or translation
(?)	Uncertain reading
[ ]	Element restored from lost or damaged original
[...]	Lacuna with no restoration provided
⟨ ⟩	Element erroneously omitted in original
{ }	Element erroneously included in original
⌜?⌝	Element visible but not readable

ÄM	Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin
BD	Book of the Dead spell (numbering after Lepsius 1842)
BM	The British Museum, London
BN	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
col.	column
CG	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Catalogue Général
CT	De Buck, Adriaan and James. P. Allen 1935–2006. *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (8 vols). Oriental Institute Publications 34, 49, 64, 67, 73, 81, 87, 132. Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.
CT	Coffin Text spell (numbering after *CT*)
JE	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée
KRI	Kitchen, Kenneth A. 1969–1990. *Ramesside inscriptions, historical and biographical* (8 vols). Oxford: Blackwell.
LGG	Leitz, Christian (ed.) 2002–2003. *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* (8 vols). Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 110–116, 129. Leuven: Peeters.
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
NN	Personal name
PT	Pyramid Text spell (numbering after Sethe 1908–1922)

Pyr.	Pyramid Text section (numbering after Sethe 1908–1922)
RITA	Kitchen, Kenneth A. 1993–2014. *Ramesside inscriptions, translated and annotated* (7 vols). Oxford: Blackwell.
rto	*recto*
SR	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Special Register
TT	Theban Tomb
UC	University College London/Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology
UPM	University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia
Urk.	Sethe, Kurt and Wolfgang Helck (eds) 1903–1961, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums* (8 vols). Berlin; Leipzig: Akademie-Verlag; J. C. Hinrichs.
vso	*verso*
WAM	The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore
Wb.	Erman, Adolf and Hermann Grapow (eds) 1926–1951. *Wörterbuch der aegyptischen Sprache im Auftrage der Deutschen Akademien* (7 vols). Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.

List of Figures

Fig.		*page*
1.1	'Map' section of the Book of Two Ways on B1C, 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: pl. 1a)	19
2.1	Detail from stela Leiden V1, 19th Dynasty (courtesy of Jason Livingstone Thomas)	45
2.2	Detail from P. Cairo SR VII.11496, featuring personifications of the West, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 135; [ii]: pl. 15)	45
2.3	Amduat nos 58–61, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 3)	46
2.4	Amduat no. 202, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 7)	46
2.5	Amduat nos 667–669, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 17)	47
3.1	Definitions and examples of subject-to-subject and scene-to-scene transitions (McCloud 1993: 71)	63
3.2	Definition and examples of aspect-to-aspect transitions (McCloud 1993: 72)	64
3.3	Amduat nos 754–758, tomb of Thutmose III; nos 755–756 are the central group (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 19)	65
3.4	Amduat nos 755–758 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 21)	67
3.5	P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37, scene 5, 21st Dynasty (Heerma van Voss 1974: pl. 93)	68
3.6	P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37, scene 10, 21st Dynasty (Heerma van Voss 1974: fig. 93)	68
3.7	Book of Caverns sunrise scene, schematic line drawing (Werning 2011 [i]: 461)	69
3.8	P. Cairo SR IV.655, variant presentation of Amduat nos 755 and 756, 21st Dynasty (Sadek 1985: 91, fig. 7)	70
3.9	P. Louvre N3109, variant presentation of Amduat no. 869, 21st Dynasty (Niwiński 1989: pl. 39a)	71
3.10	Book of Caverns, *štȝyt* motif, tomb of Ramesses VI (Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 27)	72
3.11	P. Louvre 3297, scene 3, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 126–7; [ii]: pl. 12)	73
3.12	P. MMA 25.3.31, part of scene 3, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 184; [ii]: pl. 24)	74
3.13	P. BM EA 10018,2, 'death, the great god', 21st Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)	75
3.14	P. Louvre 3297, scene 2, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 126–7; [ii]: pl. 12)	76
3.15	Amduat nos 458 and 459, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)	78
3.16	Amduat nos 278 and 279, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 9)	82
3.17	Scene 9, first side of the second shrine of Tutankhamun (Darnell 2004: 90–1, 95, pl. 8)	83

3.18 Books of the Earth, scene 28, tomb of Ramesses VI (Roberson 2012: 207; see also Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 120) 84
3.19 Book of Caverns, division 5, scene 51, schematic line drawing (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 403; see also Werning 2011 [ii]: 240–1) 84
3.20 Books of the Earth, *štȝyt* motif, tomb of Ramesses VI (Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 133) 85
3.21 P. BM EA 10470,27, vignette of BD 87, 19th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum) 88
3.22 Litany of Re opening scene, tomb of Seti I (Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 2; see also Hornung 1991: pls 3, 4) 89
3.23 Amduat nos 325–328, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 10) 91
3.24 Book of Gates, hour 4, scene 20, tomb of Ramesses IV (courtesy of kairoinfo4u, Flickr) 95
3.25 Amduat nos 327 and 328 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 17) 96
3.26 Oval of Sokar in the Amduat, with ophidian composite no. 394 at bottom centre, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile, photograph by Jordan Miller) 98
3.27 Chest of Khepri in the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 22) 100
3.28 Amduat no. 393 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 18) 102
3.29 Amduat no. 394 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 18) 102
3.30 P. BN Paris EG 153, figures labelled *ḥȝyt* and *ḏsyt* flanking the solar-Osirian corpse, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [ii]: pl. 30) 103
3.31 Books of the Earth, scene 14, tomb of Ramesses VI (Roberson 2012: 173, fig. 5.14, after Piankoff 1954 [i]: fig. 116) 104
3.32 Part of the interior of the coffin lid of Hornedjitef, BM EA 6678, early Ptolemaic period (© Trustees of the British Museum) 106
3.33 Nut in her role as the underworld, within a winged ophidian composite, on a coffin in Cairo, late New Kingdom or Third Intermediate Period (accession number unknown; Schmidt 1919: 151, fig. 780) 107
3.34 Amduat no. 391, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 109
3.35 Detail of *ḏsr-tp*, sarcophagus of Tjaihepimu, 30th Dynasty (Berlin ÄM 49: Dümichen 1884–1894 [iii]: pl. 12) 113
3.36 Amduat no. 210, tombs of Thutmose III and Seti I (left: Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 7; right: Lefébure 1886 [iv]: pl. 33) 114
3.37 Amduat no. 472, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 117
3.38 Book of Gates, hour 9, scene 60, schematic line drawing (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 221) 119
3.39 Amduat no. 472 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 18) 119

3.40 Book of Gates, hour 6, scene 35, schematic line drawing (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 155) 120
3.41 Barque with cobra heads at prow and stern in the 2nd hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 123
3.42 Solar barque in the 4th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 9) 124
3.43 Solar barque in the 5th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 125
3.44 Barque with serpent heads, belonging to CT 466 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 126
3.45 *wj3 ḫn nt* in the Amduat catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 15) 127
3.46 Solar barque, 4th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Ramesses VI (courtesy of kairoinfo4u, Flickr) 128
3.47 Amduat nos 424–429, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 24) 129
3.48 Stern of the solar barque in the 5th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Seti I (Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 26) 129
3.49 Solar barque of the 4th hour in the Amduat catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 16) 130
3.50 Solar barque of the 5th hour in the Amduat catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 17) 130
3.51 Amduat nos 477–485, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum KV 34 facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 131
3.52 Amduat nos 804–807, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 19) 133
4.1 Scene with CT 1044 and 1045 on B3C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 140
4.2 Scene with CT 1046 on B2Bo, late 11th or early 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: 257, fig. 199a) 140
4.3 Scene with CT 1046 on B3C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 141
4.4 Scene with CT 1046 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 141
4.5 Scene with CT 1072 on B3C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 142
4.6 Figures belonging to CT 1062 and 1064 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 145
4.7 Detail of figure belonging to CT 1064 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (Vandenbeusch 2020: 78, fig. 24d) 145
4.8 Scene with CT 1069 featuring double-headed serpent on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 149
4.9 Double-headed serpent belonging to CT 1176 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 149

4.10 ‘Double bull’ sign on P. Ramesseum E, probably 13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum) 151

4.11 Sun-god surrounded by the ‘roads of *mḥn*’ on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Werner Forman Archive) 151

4.12 ‘Double bull’ holding knives, on wand Cairo JE 56273, 12th–13th Dynasty (Quirke 2016: fig. 2.9) 152

4.13 Scene with CT 1044 and 1045 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: pl. 32a) 153

4.14 Scene with CT 1156 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 153

4.15 Scene with CT 1140 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 159

4.16 Upright serpent holding knife, part of CT 1175 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 161

4.17 Scene with CT 1155 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: 247, fig. 110) 165

4.18 Scene with CT 649 on G1T, probably 11th Dynasty (courtesy of Nicky van de Beek) 166

4.19 Figure with anthropomorphic body and turtle in position of head, tomb of Horemheb (BM EA 50704; © Trustees of the British Museum) 168

4.20 Part of CT 1181 on B5C, featuring ophidian composite, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 170

4.21 Part of CT 1181 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 171

4.22 Part of CT 1070 and 1071 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Werner Forman Archive) 171

4.23 Part of CT 1071 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 172

4.24 Part of CT 1076 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (*CT* VII, plan 1) 172

4.25 Scene with CT 1184 and 1185 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 173

4.26 Scene with CT 1098 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Werner Forman Archive) 176

4.27 Detail of Amduat sunrise scene, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 20) 179

4.28 Book of Gates sunrise scene, sarcophagus of Seti I (Sir John Soane’s Museum, London, SM M470: Sharpe 1864: pl. 15) 180

4.29 Scarab at the prow of the solar barque in the 12th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 20) 181

5.1 Reverse face of wand BM EA 18175, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum) 184

5.2 Ram-headed anthropomorphic figure and scarab in cells on wand BM EA 24425, 12th–13th Dynasty (Legge 1905: 133–4, pl. 2) 184

5.3 Decorated face of wand Philadelphia UPM E2914, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) 189

5.4 Jackal-headed figure grasping a lizard on a wand in a Swiss private collection, 12th–13th Dynasty (Altenmüller 1986: pl. 1) 189

5.5 Decorated face of wand fragment MMA 22.1.79a, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0) 191

5.6	Decorated face of wand fragment MMA 32.8.5, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)	191
5.7	Wand Munich ÄS 2952, 12th–13th Dynasty (Altenmüller 2017: fig. 1a)	192
5.8	Cobras with female human heads on wand MMA 15.3.197, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)	194
5.9	Winged cobra on wand Louvre AF 6447-AF 9 + Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet 1314, 12th–13th Dynasty (Legge 1905: pl. 9)	194
5.10	Wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, face with symmetrical winged cobras (courtesy of the Walters Art Museum)	195
5.11	Cobra with female human head and *šn*-cord in front of hood, on wand MMA 22.1.103, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)	196
5.12	Cobra with knife on standard, on wand BM EA 65439, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)	197
5.13	Wand Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391, with serpent-limbed figure at left end, probably 12th–13th Dynasty (redrawn by Jordan Miller after Loud 1948 [ii]: pl. 203)	198
5.14	Protective image, tomb of Ramesses VI (© Matterport)	198
5.15	Female anthropomorphic figure with two cobras in position of head, on wand Moscow Pushkin Museum 6736, 12th–13th Dynasty (Berlev and Hodjash 2004: 71)	200
5.16	Male anthropomorphic figure with serpent in position of head, on wand BM EA 18175, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)	201
5.17	Griffin on wand MMA 15.3.197, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)	204
5.18	Griffin with cobra as tail, on wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Walters Art Museum)	204
5.19	Griffin on magic rod Hannover, Kestner Museum 1949.350, 12th–13th Dynasty (Loeben 2008: fig. 9)	205
5.20	Griffin on wand fragment MMA 22.1.65, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)	207
5.21	Griffin on a wand in a Swiss private collection, 12th–13th Dynasty (Altenmüller 1986: pl. 1)	208
5.22	Griffin on wand Cairo CG E2007.04.58, 12th–13th Dynasty (Polz et al. 1999: 391, fig. 18)	208
5.23	Griffin on vessel Moscow, Pushkin Museum 3600, early New Kingdom (Gerke 2014: 177, cat. 187; see also Hodjash 1960: 242–60, pl. 12)	210
5.24	Serpopard on wand fragment Boston MFA 12.1519, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)	211
5.25	Amduat nos 728–731, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 17)	213

5.26 Book of Gates, hour 10, scene 68, central portion, schematic line drawing (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 314, after Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 240) 214
5.27 The *kjs* logogram in the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut (courtesy of Susanne Bickel and Jean-Luc Chappaz) 215
5.28 Serpopard with legged solar disc above it, on wand MMA 22.1.103, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0) 216
5.29 Serpopard with legged solar disc above it, on wand London UC 16381, 12th–13th Dynasty (© University College London/Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology) 216
5.30 Serpopard with *s*ꜣ-knot on back, on wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Walters Art Museum) 217
5.31 Emblematic group with long-necked creature on scarab MMA 26.7.560, 18th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0) 217
6.1 Composite figures of Type A structure 221
6.2 Composite figures of Type B structure 222
6.3 Felid without hind legs, part of CT 1063 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 227
6.4 Squatting zoomorphic figures holding serpents on wand MMA 30.8.218, 12th–13th Dynasty, and as part of CT 1142 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (left: courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0; right: © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford) 229
6.5 Divider in the bottom register of the Amduat 4th hour tableau, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 231
6.6 Double divider in the middle register of the Amduat 7th hour tableau, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller) 231
6.7 Griffin in tomb Beni Hassan BH 3, 12th Dynasty (Shedid 1994b: fig. 95) 234
6.8 Fragments of a painted box from Rifeh, probably 12th–13th Dynasty (Petrie 1907: pl. 24) 236
6.9 Wand London UC 15917, face depicting cobra with attached human heads, 12th–13th Dynasty (Quirke 2016: 14) 238
6.10 P. Cairo SR VII.10230, scene with double-headed goddess, 21st Dynasty (courtesy of Dik van Bommel) 242
7.1 Statue of Hathor in four forms, Deir el-Medina, 19th–20th Dynasty (Louvre E26023; courtesy of the Musée du Louvre/Christian Décamps) 247
7.2 P. BM EA 10010,3, vignette of BD 182, 21st Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum) 248
7.3 Fragments of painted plaster from Abusir South, with reconstructed image of a winged leopard, 18th Dynasty (Yoshimura 2007: 182, pl. 4) 251

INTRODUCTION

Images of divine beings are common across the range of ancient Egyptian art and hieroglyphic writing. Some of them can be interpreted as signifying concepts and elements of the cosmos, while others acquire meaning through various associations in myth and ritual. Genealogies, syncretisms, and other divine relationships reflect ways of ordering and structuring the world (Baines 1983; 1999a; Bonnet 1999 [1939]; Assmann 2001 [1984]: 119–25). The qualities, roles, and statuses of individual beings are encapsulated by a complex system of figural forms which includes anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms, as well as 'composite' configurations that conjoin elements of human and animal bodies or components of inanimate objects. Composites were not freely produced or loosely employed. Forms do not seem to be consistently interchangeable, some are restricted in context, and others are absent despite the theoretically vast range that could exist. The principles underlying these patterns have not yet been fully defined and placed in social and cultural context. Dominant scholarly approaches, which seek to distil increasingly fine nuances of symbolic 'meaning' in images, often stumble in this regard, perhaps because they do not pay sufficient attention to the reality of the gods as both fabric of the world and 'distinct persons' and actors within it (Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004: 5–7, 12).

Conceptual problems connect with terminological ones. Composite figures comprising two or more conjoined elements are typically analysed using Western taxonomies, revealed by the use of terms such as 'supernatural', 'hybrid', and 'monstrous'. Words such as 'god', 'demon', and 'genie' are used to categorize figures that are all termed *nṯr* in the ancient religious texts (e.g. Baines 1985: 30–2, 216; Kurth 2003), while multiple Egyptian terms are often all translated simply as 'image' (see discussions in Hornung 1967; Ockinga 1984). This is a general problem of translation between almost any language, but scholars have argued for more critical views that engage with emic concepts and may enhance comprehension of aspects of the originating cultures (e.g. Bahrani 2003; 2014; Nyord 2020).

Building on work in Egyptology and cognate fields, I seek to understand these interrelated phenomena by treating ontology as an essential aspect of many religious images, as well as of the

compositions of which they are part. Philippe Descola (2013a [2005]: xiii, 129–244; 2014: 273) proposes that every culture employs one of four 'ontological regimes'—systems for enumerating and relating 'the kinds of beings the world is made of'—that he defines as animism, totemism, naturalism, and analogism. Relations between beings are based in resemblances and differences between 'interiority' and 'physicality'. The former spans diverse conceptions such as the soul or mind, intentionality and subjectivity, vital energy or principle of action; the latter comprises 'the whole set of visible and tangible expressions of the dispositions peculiar to a particular entity when those dispositions are reputed to result from morphological and physiological characteristics that are intrinsic to it' (Descola 2013a [2005]: 107–11, 116–21, quote from p. 116). By treating visual images as 'bodies' (Belting 2011 [2001]), this thesis explores how the graphic schema of the 'composite figure' relates to agency as an aspect of interiority and manifests its dynamics through varied physicalities. Composite figures span several conceptual structures: their forms define the capacities of beings and establish appropriate relations between them within a context.

The ontological and semantic dimensions relate to the status, qualities, and functions of images. The dimensions operate alongside factors including: aspects of medium and of the spatial and material context of depiction, as well as the format of a composition, which may broaden or constrain the range and means of pictorial signification available; the multimodality of images, with linguistic and non-linguistic facets; and wider social and ideological structures, such as decorum, which is argued to be 'a set of rules and practices defining what may be represented pictorially with captions, displayed, and possibly written down, in which context and in what form' (Baines 2007: 15). Interplay between forces that guided image construction shaped the forms and distribution of figural representations, and it affects relationships on various levels: between components of a composite figure; between composite and non-composite figures; and between figures and their iconographic settings. Inquiry reveals differences between some visually similar images and enhances observers' understanding of how they were designed. Approaching composite figures in this way takes into account anthropologically-informed work on ancient Egypt and contributes additional perspectives to debates in the humanities and social sciences (compare Olabarria 2020: 3–7).

In exploring these topics, this thesis introduces relevant approaches, applies them to case studies, and connects them with research into other aspects of Egyptian religion and society. Chapter 1 reviews approaches to Egyptian composite figures from the 19th century through to the

present day, focusing on analyses from the past four decades. Influenced by earlier 20th-century developments in primarily Western art history, these works, which may be classified as 'iconographic' in their approach, have produced valuable models for understanding important domains of Egyptian visual representation. Major bodies of evidence have not yet been integrated with these frameworks. Underworld material in particular has great potential for refining these models and for developing a more extensive and holistic view of Egyptian practices. After the survey of existing research, the remainder of the chapter introduces three thematically and chronologically related corpora of material that may help to enhance the existing range of interpretations: the Amduat, the Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands. Most of my case studies are of zoomorphic composites that incorporate ophidian elements. The rich symbolism of snakes in Egypt offers the possibility to link ontological issues reliably with semantic ones.

Chapter 2 introduces ontology, in the sense of the dynamics between interiority and physicality, as an 'internal' dimension of Egyptian images. Ontology complements semantic content or 'meaning', which is approached through iconographic methods. The terms *sšmw* and *jrw* anchor the discussion. Through an exploration centred on the Amduat, these terms are shown to encapsulate different relations between ontology and meaning in the conceptual structures of visual images, demonstrating frequent overlaps between things and their images and consequently problematizing paradigms rooted in Western understandings of representation. The concept of agency bridges ontological and iconographic issues and has been employed productively in archaeological research, as well as in many other fields. Thinking in terms of agency helps in approximating and articulating Egyptian concepts with modern theoretical vocabulary, and thus in comparing them with practices in other cultures. I conclude the chapter by introducing various 'external' factors that structure the figural forms used in each category of sources and mediate their internal dimensions. The external factors considered are: compositional format and layout for the Amduat; graphic and conceptual homologies between 'writing' and 'picturing' as potentials of visual display in the Book of Two Ways; and ideological principles for apotropaic wands. I treat these factors as elements in a 'visual language' (Cohn 2013) and approach them through comics studies, art-historical work on the nature of images of various types, and decorum in other Egyptian contexts.

Chapters 3 to 5 analyse selected images from each category of sources, beginning with the Amduat and moving backward in time to the Book of Two Ways and apotropaic wands, which were

used by similar elite groups in the preceding period. The reverse chronological order corresponds to a movement from 'intra-pictorial' considerations—first the structure of entire compositions, then the construction of individual figures within them—to 'extra-pictorial' ones pertaining to the social contexts of visual compositions. My investigation has three objectives: to understand how external factors affect relationships between ontology and meaning; how conceptual structures may be articulated through the terms *sšmw* and *jrw*; and how differences in the figural forms of images with similar structures—and vice versa, structural distinctions between images with similar forms—result from the interplay of internal dimensions and external factors.

I base my analyses of the Amduat mainly on the copy of the 'long' version on the walls of the burial chamber of Thutmose III (KV 34), because it is the most complete example, is attested alongside the 'short' version and 'catalogue' in the same tomb, and features potentially significant details such as the use of red and black ink. Two lavishly illustrated examples of the Book of Two Ways on the Deir el-Bersha coffins B1C and B5C (Cairo CG 28083 and JE 37566) serve as my main case studies for that composition. I attempt to contextualize their exceptional pictorial content where possible. Images on apotropaic wands are approached mainly as examples of motifs occurring on a class of objects that spans a wide geographical and chronological range. The analysis of this material takes into account the institutional settings of wand production, which provide a basis for interpreting objects from dispersed findspots. Contextualizing wands in this way helps to establish connections with wider elite culture.

Chapter 6 attempts a synthesis on both conceptual and iconographic fronts. After presenting the structure and results of the case studies in a preliminary typology, I assess the figural repertoires of each category of material together with questions of their distribution and transmission between contexts, siting zoomorphic composites in their social and ideological milieux. Finally, composite figures are argued to be an emic category whose conceptual implications distinguish it from other uses of conjoined elements as a graphic schema, thus enabling zoomorphic composites to be related to other schemas such as personifications.

The concluding chapter summarizes the focus of the investigation and elaborates on key points through examples drawn from other corpora and periods. These illustrate ways of extending the approach of this thesis, and highlight additional issues relevant to Egyptian images in various contexts, in terms of their conceptual structures as well as the ontological regimes of which they

are part. Discussion closes with a brief consideration of how the study of ancient Egyptian religious imagery may fit into wider work on ontology.

1

THE LIMITS OF MEANING

The decipherment of hieroglyphs opened diverse routes for understanding ancient Egyptian culture. Many early Egyptologists, however, had backgrounds in theology and Classical philology that conditioned the range of approaches they took to Egyptian religious images. A longstanding focus on language and texts may underlie difficulties in appreciating the significance of composite figures in both art and writing. Most work on composite figures has focused on the relationships between them and their 'subjects' in religious iconography, with proposals spanning a range from visual resemblance to symbolism. This chapter outlines existing approaches and their value. I cite material from the comparable fields of Assyriology and Classics in order to situate Egyptological practice among broader scholarly trends.

1.1 BETWEEN ART HISTORY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

1.1.1 Composite figures and cultural evolution

Since many Egyptian composite figures incorporate zoomorphic elements, their interpretation came to be linked to understandings of animal cults and models of the relationship between the human, natural, and divine realms. In principle this approach is reasonable, but past ideological trends limited ways of exploring its ideas. Scholars in the late 19th and early 20th centuries propounded interpretations of ancient Egyptian religion that served to fit Egypt into macro-cultural regions corresponding to perceived racial or ethnic groups. Figural forms were understood to represent either fetishes or 'cosmic' divine agents that had no cult image. According to this framework, whose roots stretched back to the Renaissance, composite figures were markers of an intermediate stage in an 'evolutionary' trajectory of religious thought, signs of cultural intermixing in prehistory, or manifestations of geographically specific cults and their historical relationships

(summaries with references in Merz 1978: 6–18; Fitzenreiter 2005: 235–50, 255–8; see also Junker 1961: 101).

Approaches along these lines were described in a synthesizing overview by E. A. Wallis Budge (1934). Budge himself took images of uncertain origin or identification as clear evidence for fetishistic practices in Egypt, in some cases connecting them with other Orientalist views of the time. The logogram for the god Min, for example, was identified as an object representing 'the union of the male and female organs of generation', comparable to 'a fetish of the same form [that exists] in China and Japan at the present day', with festivals of Min being 'excuses for orgies and debauches and the gratification of unbridled lust' (Budge 1934: 62–4; on interpretations of the logogram, see Olette-Pelletier 2022). Budge treated forms that incorporate object or animal fetishes as heads or emblems atop anthropomorphic bodies as secondary developments, influenced by 'missionaries who carried into Egypt news of the civilizations of India, Elam, Sumer, and Babylonia and Syria, [with] the half-savage Egyptian [being] the gainer' (Budge 1934: 100–1). Ethno-geographic divisions and histories of this type are implicit, for example, in Flinders Petrie's earlier suggestion that archaeological evidence from burials attested to a conflict between 'native' Egyptians and an invading 'New Race' in the fourth millennium BCE (Petrie and Quibell 1896). Interpretations in this vein were part of wider studies in the history of religions. They often intersected with attempts to define Egyptian religion as polytheistic or monotheistic in debates concerning Egypt's position as a forerunner of Western civilization (summary: Hornung 1982 [1971]: 18–27).

Forms of visual representation were analysed in terms of these histories, within the framework of sociological models that were prevalent in the first half of the 20th century. They connect also with trends in the study of art history. In his *Primitive art in Egypt* (1905 [1903]), for example, Jean Capart framed his study of predynastic and Early Dynastic images as 'the science of art': just as work in advanced mathematics requires a mastery of basic arithmetic, 'a scientific comprehension of the art of civilized nations' can only be achieved by understanding its precursors in 'primitive' and 'semi-civilized' cultures (Capart 1905 [1903]: 11–16). Capart's work ran alongside primitivist movements in Western European art. Basing their work on ethnographic accounts and artefacts that were brought to Europe from colonies, artists portrayed African, Native American, and Pacific cultures as emblems of an original, in some cases utopian, state of social organization. Early Egyptian material was thus contrasted with more developed traditions of later cultures, including Western ones (Antliff and Leighten 2003: 217–18). Teleological views such as these persisted into

the 1940s: Gustave Jéquier suggested in his *Considérations sur les religions égyptiennes* (1946) that different regions of Egypt progressed from fetishism to zoolatry and finally to anthropomorphism in line with changes in social organization and means of production. The fact that, for millennia, 'primitive' forms coexisted with 'evolved' ones, rather than being supplanted by them, was a result of 'l'esprit conservateur (...) particulièrement développé chez les Égyptiens' (Jéquier 1946: 15).

Developments in ethnography and anthropological theory eventually sidelined interpretations that were based on the evolutionary assumptions of Victorian and Edwardian racial theory (Challis 2013). Composite figures came to be treated differently when the macroscopic modelling of religion and culture was complemented by an increasing number of works on specific religious beliefs and practices. As generally with work on Egyptian visual images, the analysis and interpretation of composite figures has a mainly iconographic slant (on iconography in Egyptology, see Müller 2015). Broadly speaking, 'iconographic' approaches treat images as visual expressions of pre-existing knowledge. In the Western art-historical context in which studies of iconography developed, and more specifically in the method exemplified by Erwin Panofsky, such knowledge was understood as being most commonly transmitted through texts. Scholars sought out texts that could help to elucidate the 'meanings' of images, either directly or indirectly. Methods vary, but they all aim to identify and trace variation and development in the 'conventional' meanings of images (Panofsky 1955: 26, 29; examples: Lavin 1993: 38–40).

An iconographic approach has been deployed effectively in the study of Classical Greek images, for example by Emma Aston, whose *Mixanthrôpoi* (2011) is 'the first book-length study of [mixed human–animal composite figures in] ancient Greek religion' (Kindt 2013: 211). Aston collates historical and geographical treatises, literary and mythological accounts, and inscriptions at cult sites, distilling major themes and ideas concerning a deity in order to consider their implications for the meaning of that being's composite figural form(s); she borrows the term *mixanthrôpoi* from the Late Antique writers Libanius and Themistius (Aston 2011: 12–16). Her goal is not to determine why particular figural forms were chosen, but to argue that 'mixanthropes' share characteristics of cult and theology (Aston 2011: 148).

Prioritizing text over image risks placing pre-existing knowledge before the actual object and in the process skewing interpretations (Lorenz 2016: 33), but it is often the only viable approach for Aston, since many of the images themselves—particularly cult images—are lost or undiscovered, so that written accounts provide the only available data. The dearth of similar kinds of discourse in

ancient Egypt means that Egyptologists rely more heavily on evidence from religious texts, filtered through the lens of symbolism. Hartwig Altenmüller's study of apotropaic wands (1965), for example, considered the iconography of these objects as expressions of solar theology that drew upon beliefs and cults specific to various regions of Egypt. The meanings of the images derived ultimately from texts concerning the gods and their relationships; Altenmüller did not consider whether the texts and the images could have had common sources in conceptions of such beings. He did not explicitly engage with the anthropological frameworks mentioned above, but the two modes of investigation complement each other. They align with efforts in the mid-20th century to synthesize broad histories of Egypt, drawing on archaeological publications of preceding decades.

1.1.2 Composite figures as hieroglyphic metalanguage

The approaches mentioned above treat composite figures as reflections of an underlying cultural system which was made to fit into contemporary models from anthropology and the history of religions. Other scholars engaged more closely with the formal characteristics of the figures and the means by which they express meanings. Their treatments vary in depth and scope, positioning composite figures at various points on a continuum between symbolism and what a being was believed to look like. The predominance of symbolic approaches to composite figures in Egyptology is strengthened by the close visual relationship between Egyptian images and the hieroglyphic script, which share many elements. Similar methods have not seen comparable traction in Assyriology or Classics, probably because the written and pictorial spheres do not overlap graphically in the ancient Near Eastern and Classical traditions to the same extent or in the same ways as in Egypt (for Mesopotamia, see, e.g., Bahrani 2003: 106–11).

Assyriologists and Classicists often assume that the natures of some beings are fixed and can be reliably revealed through analysis of texts. In some cases, beings with composite forms lent themselves to allegory, providing 'models of behaviour' for human social life (Bianchi 2004: 19); in other instances, a single composite form could possess different functions or symbolic values across time and space (Boardman 1987: 84). Scholars of ancient Mesopotamian material suggest that composite figures in those traditions were understood in diverse ways. For example, the text accompanying the 'Babylonian map of the world' on a tablet of the first millennium BCE, perhaps from Borsippa or Sippar, locates fabulous beasts alongside real animals in the midst of the sea that was believed to encircle the known world (BM 92687: Horowitz 1998: 22–3, 29–30). The relevant

section of the text alludes heavily to the creation epic *Enūma eliš,* while the real animals included in the list are predominantly exotic creatures brought back to Babylonia from distant lands during military campaigns (Horowitz 1998: 33–6), suggesting that composite figures represented 'real' entities that could be encountered in the physical world if one travelled far enough away. This idea has a long history and versions can be found in many cultures (e.g. Cunningham 1997: 89; Durrant et al. 2020: 249); Egyptian parallels are known principally from texts of the Graeco-Roman period (e.g. Drioton 1927: 27–8; Ryholt 2004; Quack 2009: 348). Similarly, forms such as the 'goat-fish' (Sumerian SUḪUR.MAŠ$_2^{KU6}$, Akkadian *suḫurmāšu*) have been treated as visual interpretations of a pre-existing verbal description, perhaps of an animal believed to be real (Westenholz 2004: 13, 21). The composite depicted forms of such beings may or may not indicate what they were believed to look like; their position on the conceptual spectrum varied across time and between contexts.

Conversely, other Mesopotamian images may be considered to be visual metaphors. Attested in several fragmentary copies dating to the first millennium BCE, the composition termed the *Göttertypentext* describes representations of deities (Köcher 1953). Possibly a manual for the accurate design of sacred images (Machinist 2014: 75–6), its descriptions are of the images (Sumerian ALAM, Akkadian *ṣalmu*; see further §2.1) rather than of the 'true' appearance of the beings in question. Such images of divine beings were nevertheless 'understood to possess something of the divine life-force of the deity or monster' (Machinist 2014: 79). The opposite formulation, where deities are described in terms of a physical image, is also attested (Jacobsen 1976: 7, 245 n. 3). Similar issues arise from the text termed the 'underworld vision of an Assyrian prince', known from the first millennium BCE (Livingstone 1989: 68–76). In it, a prince beholds demons, some of whom behave and move about by means of their composite anatomies. Johannes Bach (2018: 69–70) notes that the composition is formatted similarly to the *Göttertypentext* and deals with similar content, so that the text, although framed as a first-hand observation of an otherworldly reality, may be based on descriptions of physical objects, examples of which have been studied by Frans Wiggermann (1992, especially pp. 224, 233). Such interpretations align more closely with Egyptian material, where gods appear not to have basic or essential forms (for possible Egyptian connections in the *Göttertypentext*, see Loktionov 2016, especially pp. 46–7).

Even if one assumes that the images described by the *Göttertypentext* and the 'underworld vision' were never used in visual art, such texts are valuable for the study of iconography because they indicate that the groups who produced and transmitted texts and images, as well as their genres

and conventions, were actively thinking about relevant ideas and in some cases experimenting with them.[1] Moreover, 'the composite' was probably an actors' category in Mesopotamia: the physiognomic omen compendium *Šumma izbu* (Leichty 1970), which lists human and animal birth defects as well as their significance, shows that extra limbs, misplaced or unusually formed body parts, and divergent appearances were objects of attention and speculation, serving as portents that reversed ordinary pathways of signification (Van De Mieroop 2016: 124–5). Composite figures were part of a wider, culturally specific way of understanding the world. They were used to make sense of phenomena that lay outside the range of ordinary human experience.[2] The focus on cult images in the *Göttertypentext* highlights how material forms allowed the awe-inspiring, terrifying power and traits of divine beings to be articulated (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 126–7). In a similar vein, Peter Machinist (2014: 72) argues that subjects can be overdetermined in visual representation, and that the relationships between images and beings could vary: the canine icon of the goddess Gula could represent the deity, signify her relationship with dogs, or symbolize her qualities.

Classicists have treated textual evidence as the primary reference of images, symbolic values being one step further removed. The two types of 'mixanthropy' defined by Aston (2011: 133) are formally rather than conceptually distinguished. The first is 'integral', when animal elements replace components of the human body, as with the part-avian Sirens and part-caprine Pan. The second is 'superficial', when animal elements '[augment] but [do] not substantially compromise' the human body. Examples include horned or winged figures such as Eos 'Dawn'. Aston's classification elaborates on approaches to other ancient Aegean visual cultures, such as the 'homosomatic' and 'heterosomatic' distinction proposed in a study of Minoan images by Anna Simandiraki-Grimshaw (2010). Aston subsumes figural types into text-based interpretations. She views some mixanthropic forms as capturing transitional moments in myth, such as a metamorphosis that is in progress, in addition to expressing something of a divine being's character and cultic status.[3] Symbolism is discerned by considering how figural form is affected by certain narrative motifs or instances of

[1] The fact that physical examples of such images have not been identified may not mean that they never existed. Moreover, if the descriptions refer to cult images, these were likely to have been made of valuable materials and hence dismantled and reused.

[2] See also moralistic interpretations of 'demons' and 'monsters', beings not considered to be gods (e.g. Black 1988: 20; Westenholz 2004: 11, after Porada 1987: 1).

[3] Aston 2011: 262, after Snodgrass 1982: 7; compare Almeida 2016. The relationship between image and narrative in Classical and Renaissance art has been extensively debated. See, e.g., Lessing 1984 [1766]; Dempsey 1992; Elsner 1995; Damisch 2009 [1975]; Giuliani 2013.

character development. Thus the centaur Cheiron, whose equine parts are 'rather awkwardly attached', epitomizes civility, whereas destructive and savage centaurs are depicted with more fluid connections between their human and animal elements (Aston 2011: 97–8, 147–8, 188). Texts do not always prescribe specific configurations for beings, however, attesting instead to conceptions and values that may be presented differently across contexts, so that human and animal parts do not relate to one another in fixed ways (Lorenz 2016: 9, 239–40). Such issues emerge particularly strongly in texts such as the *Periegesis* of Pausanias, which describes beings with composite forms, such as the Stymphalian birds, alongside many other representational forms, including the aniconic, drawing together diverse material to construct a pan-Hellenic vision of geographical diversity and historical continuity (Aston 2011: 75; Gaifman 2012: 55).

The approaches just described contrast with many studies in Egyptology that are based on the conception that texts and terminology in language, as well as pictures, reveal hidden ideas and beings through symbols (Assmann 1977: 760–2). Composite figural representations of gods are thus commonly interpreted as groupings of symbolic elements. The approach was articulated explicitly in Henri Frankfort in his *Ancient Egyptian religion* (1948: 11–12). Frankfort saw composite figures as 'quite unorganic and mechanical' conglomerations of 'pictograms' and 'ideograms'. Erik Hornung shares this perspective, stating in his *Conceptions of god in ancient Egypt* (1982 [1971]: 117) that such figures 'should probably not be understood as beings that were imagined to exist, but rather as "ideograms" (...) that convey meaning in a metalanguage' (see further Hornung 2000: 20). These contributions exemplify a valuable shift in outlook. In contrast to the cultural–evolutionary paradigm of earlier decades (Frankfort 1948: v–x), scholars working in this vein apply suitable conceptual frameworks in attempts to understand ancient Egypt on its own terms.

Treatments of Egyptian deities have tended to follow this notion of a 'metalanguage'. Dimitri Meeks (1986: 182–3), for example, suggests that in mixed human–animal forms the animal elements reveal aspects of a god's nature, while human elements signify the god's individuality. Just as an image of Hathor as a cow-headed woman imbues her persona with the cultural associations of cows, so does an image of Tutu as a striding sphinx with human head and leonine body indicate his strength and vigour (Kaper 2003: 34–5). As for composite figures that combine multiple animal elements, Meeks suggests that the head functions as the identifying feature of the being, while the rest of the body conveys symbolic meanings. Such interpretations take up earlier strands of scholarship on Egyptian images, which are understood to present essences rather than

appearances, so that observers may comprehend the nature of the thing represented (e.g. Laboury 1998: 146–7; 2010). Studies in this vein resume the iconographic approach described earlier, however, circling back to support etic, macroscopic models of the character of Egyptian religion. They attempt to define a unified 'ancient Egyptian' worldview and 'natures' for specific deities (summary of selected treatments: Müller 2015: 87–8). Composite figures play also crucial roles in the debate over 'pantheism' in Egyptian religious history, for example (Assmann 1979; 2001 [1984]: 237–9; Hornung 1982 [1971]: 127–8; Ritner 2017, with references). Interpretation in terms of a metalanguage cannot, however, easily address multi-headed and multi-limbed forms, for which it is difficult to pinpoint a principal identifying feature (e.g. Quack 2006c; First 2014).

1.1.3 Iconography in context

In reflecting on method and conceptual frameworks, Hornung (1982 [1971]: 252) clarifies that he approaches the evidence of text and images in terms of their content, rather than of the means by which they are structured and function as domains of representation. Interpretations may be enhanced by treating the latter aspects in greater detail. Later work has contributed to such discussions but has not superseded Hornung's general framework, so that a metalinguistic conceptualization of images remains the most important point of reference. The application of semiotics to Egyptian visual material provides a useful case study of how the implications of Hornung's approach may augment research into iconography (Müller 2015: 78). Semiotics, which was developed primarily in Euro-American linguistic frameworks, grew in popularity during the mid-20th century as a means of approaching the potential of pictures to condense complex and culturally-specific messages (e.g. Barthes 1977 [1964]). In Egyptology the method has proven productive for the analysis of larger pictorial compositions (e.g. Tefnin 1991). It has also been applied fruitfully to graphic systems such as enigmatic writing (Werning 2020). The approach encounters difficulties, however, when applied to individual figures. While accounting for the multimodality of images in certain contexts, as well as the potential ambiguity between Egyptian writing and pictures to modern scholars in other contexts, it understates qualities, functions, and constraints that may not be relevant to much written material (see further §4.1 and §5.1).

Semiotic analyses emphasize the potentially 'logographic' character of figural images, enabling them to be 'read' as descriptive statements. Groups of figures, or indeed entire decorated temple and tomb walls comprising numerous scenes, each featuring their own groupings, could function as

coherent wholes to express certain meanings. Individual elements in these iconographic complexes perform 'syntactic' functions within the visual programmes, being to some extent analogous to logograms and taxograms in the hieroglyphic script (Angenot 2015: 107–8). Such density of meaning stems from the iconicity of hieroglyphs, distinguishing Egyptian (and Classic Maya) material from that of many other cultures (Tefnin 1984: 56). Here, Egypt differs from cultures in which elements such as straight lines and zigzag ones are treated as units that could be combined to constitute 'phrases' such as 'poisonous snake' by analogy with verbal language (e.g. Faris 1972: 103).

Meaning-oriented methods work within broader models of whole iconographic systems. Their adoption shifts focus away from symbolic content as such toward the contextually bound relationships between formal configurations and modes of signification. Temples are at the heart of such research. Maxence de Rochemonteix (1887) was the first to propose that temples should be viewed as representations of the cosmos. Philippe Derchain (1962) and Erich Winter (1968; 1969; 1987) built on this insight by introducing and developing the concept of the 'grammaire du temple'—the former to a scene-type, the latter to temple decoration as a whole. According to their models, temple decoration is ideologically structured. Scenes do not show the realities of cultic performance and other phenomena, but consist of carefully organized elements that together reflect the proper cosmic order celebrated and perpetuated through cult. Several other scholars have made contributions to this area of study (e.g. Cauville 1983; Kurth 1994; Kockelmann 2011). Building on schemes of 'temple grammar', John Baines (1976: 14; 1985) argues that different elements of iconography could hold similar meanings, and that this plurality arises from the influence of external factors such as decorum. He adapted the concept of decorum from studies of Renaissance art and has claimed that it was 'probably based ultimately on rules or practices of conduct and etiquette, of spatial separation and religious avoidance' (Baines 1990: 20; in press). Decorum is evident in the hierarchy of modes of presentation and their patterning in temples and other monuments. Composite figures can occur within the full range of modes, depending on content and context. This approach opens up the possibility of identifying greater depth in Egyptian images within the general domain of symbolic representation.[4]

[4] A comparable approach is taken by Tallay Ornan (2004), who adopts a diachronic perspective by comparing early Neo-Assyrian reliefs from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud with later reliefs from the Southwest and North Palaces at Nineveh. She focuses not on elucidating the meaning(s) of individual motifs but on analysing their patterned distribution in the visual record and proposing explanations for those patterns.

Difficulties emerge when methods such as semiotics are applied on smaller scales, as when the components of an individual figure, from head and body to garments and skin colour, are treated as 'une véritable "phrase" dont, à l'instar de ce qui se passe dans le langage, le remplacement d'un mot suffit à modifier le sens' (Tefnin 1984: 60). Such treatments go beyond identifying sets of symbols to presume a structural equivalence of images with verbal language. They falter when divine beings are the objects of analysis, because they cannot account for the patterns of occurrence of the many forms in which such beings could be represented. Predominantly zoomorphic forms raise additional issues. Models and categories of analysis have been devised for mainly anthropomorphic 'personifications' within the system of temple relief (Baines 1985: 19–63). Although certain zoomorphic forms, including composites with animal head and human body, may be classified as personifications, analysis in terms of iconography suggests that they do not 'afford any special insight into broader aspects of personification, and their infrequency is an indication of their marginal importance for the phenomenon' (Baines 1985: 65). Quite distinct from mainly anthropomorphic personifications that incorporate zoomorphic elements are figures with partly or wholly zoomorphic forms, the latter either composite or non-composite, that do not fit into similar conceptual and iconographic categories (see further §6.3). In general, zoomorphic figures are more strongly symbolic, and their forms more flexible: they could be extended, compressed, or rotated, and their components could be interchanged and variably positioned. Their capacity for meaning allowed them to serve functions unavailable to anthropomorphic types,[5] especially in schematic and highly decorative compositions (compare Rawson 1987: 28; Wengrow 2014: 83–6). Lastly, the hierarchical iconographic systems of temples and other monuments do not seem to apply in all contexts, making it difficult to anchor interpretations of figures.

From the perspective of a modern iconographer, these characteristics impede tidy classification because figures' identities and associated values are underdetermined. Difficulty lies in developing interpretive schemes that can account for a wide range of forms and contexts without slipping into over-generalization. The structuring of complex 'figurative systems' is very likely to have differed along temporal and social axes (Tefnin 1984: 59). Moreover, Egyptian practices developed alongside, and interacted with, diverse phenomena in the broader eastern Mediterranean world. Integration and entanglement coexisted with contrast and counterpoint, the latter exemplified by systems of

[5] A variation on the gendered dimension of divine roles in temple and tomb iconography, for which see, e.g., Scrivens 2019.

'aniconic' representation in Greece (Gaifman 2012) that are yet to be related to practices such as mixanthropy. But the frequent coexistence, in heterarchy, of forms with similar 'meanings' suggests that a fuller understanding of images may be acquired by considering other dimensions in addition to semantic content. In characterizing images as passive carriers of meaning, iconographic approaches may obscure other potentials. Particularly relevant among these for the present thesis is the possible conceptualization of images as active beings.

Since forms are rarely stable over time, space, or contexts of use, focusing on specific contexts or categories of material increases the reliability of interpretations by making it possible to elucidate not only what composite figures mean, but why they look the way they do (Bagley 2015: 80). The level of detail required by such an approach has the consequence that this thesis is only an initial venture into the material. Parallel investigation of other categories is required to develop a fuller understanding of this dimension of Egyptian religious images.

1.2 Choice of Material for Analysis

Images of the underworld and thematically related categories provide a suitable test ground for extending research on iconography while supplementing it with new concepts. The importance of modelling systems for underworld material and integrating it into the wider study of Egyptian art has long been recognized (e.g. Hornung 1973: 37). The dataset may be narrowed further by focusing on material that serves ritual purposes, linking iconography to the active functions of images. Ritual efficacy is often discussed under the label of 'magic'. This term is broader than the Egyptian term *ḥkꜣ*, which is often translated as 'magic' but more precisely designates a force underpinning ritual. I thus avoid the term 'magic' where possible (Nyord 2019a: 7–14; for a cross-cultural perspective, see, e.g., Gosden 2020). Selecting for analysis categories that possess strong historical, structural, and thematic links increases the reliability of interpretations by allowing several factors that influence the forms and conceptual structures of images to be addressed and balanced.

1.2.1 Categories

It is useful to begin from the pictorial–verbal compositions known as underworld books. These describe the sun-god's nightly journey through the underworld and his interactions with its various inhabitants. Like temple decoration, the underworld books were part of elite society and culture.

Similar scribal communities, based in institutions such as temples and the royal court, were presumably involved in their production and transmission, and their content speaks to questions at the heart of Egyptian cosmology. The unusual forms of the beings depicted in underworld books, as well as on coffins and mortuary papyri, have been explained as markers of liminal, dangerous, and fearsome 'Otherness' (Meeks 1986: 185–6; Lucarelli 2010a: 5–6; Bennett 2020). Yet figures in these forms coexist with many that are either mainly anthropomorphic, or forms attested in other contexts, including temples. Moreover, some spaces in temples represented the underworld and feature composite figures more commonly found on mortuary papyri. An example is the occurrence of serpent-headed anthropomorphic figures in Passage B–C of East Crypt 2 at Dendara (Chassinat 1952: pls 371, 392, 398), which are closely comparable with guardians of gateways and mounds in mortuary papyri (e.g. Niwiński 1989: pl. 20a; Lucarelli 2010b: 87–90, fig. 1). Multiple images of the same beings could occur in a given context, juxtaposing unusual forms with more widespread ones. This patterning cannot be explained solely in terms of meaning. Additional factors, both internal and external, should be taken into account.

Within the corpus of underworld books, I have chosen to focus my analysis on the Amduat, which is attested from the 15th century BCE onward. It is a pictorial–verbal composition that describes the nocturnal voyage of the sun-god and his entourage through the subterranean underworld, where he unites with Osiris and is rejuvenated before being reborn from the eastern horizon at dawn. New Kingdom sources have the title 'Writing/Drawing of the Hidden Space' (*sḫ n ʿt jmnt*; Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 100; Schott 1990: 333–4); the common designation 'Amduat' is taken from later copies that term it 'the book of that which is in the underworld' (*tȝ mḏȝt jmy-dwȝt*; Hornung 1961: 104, n. 1): a non-specific term that is also used for underworld compositions of other styles (Grapow 1936b: 30 n. 33; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 3). Another suggestion, made by Karl Jansen-Winkeln (2004: 225–6), is that 'writing/drawing of the hidden space' is a generic term for a wider category of compositions 'die in der verborgenen Kammer, im Grab bzw. ursprünglich vielleicht in einem (unterirdischen?) Tempelraum angebracht war', and that the lines following that designation should be understood as the title of the Amduat as a specific composition. Jansen-Winkeln considers the title to begin from the word *ḥȝt*, but one could include the preceding line as well, because it also contributes to summarizing the content and setting of the composition:

ʿḥʿw bȝw nṯrw šwwt ȝḫw jrw(w)
ḥȝt wpt jmnt sbȝ n ȝḫt jmntt

pḥwy kkw smꜣw sbꜣ n ꜣḫt jmntt
Positions of *bꜣw*, *nṯrw*, shadows, *ꜣḫ*-spirits, and *jrww*.[6]
Beginning: frontier of the West, portal of the western horizon.
End: total darkness, portal of the western horizon.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 100–2)

Three versions of the Amduat are attested. The first is a 'long' version consisting of 12 tableaux that combine descriptive text with images of entities inhabiting the underworld. Images are prioritized, with writing mainly in the form of labels to individual figures (Jansen-Winkeln 2004: 205–10). Longer passages of continuous text are sometimes associated with specific figures, while demarcated rows and columns of text surround each tableau and comment on the activities occurring within it as a whole. The second, or 'short', version summarizes the events of each hour and does not include images. The third version is a tabular 'catalogue' of most of the figures from the long version, each with one or more identifying captions. The three versions provide a basis for approaching the material in various ways, not least in terms of the relationship between individual figures and format. Furthermore, the Amduat refers to its images with a range of terms that can be analysed in order to investigate emic conceptualizations (§2.3). These features facilitate applying new methods in research on composite figures, so that the Amduat lies at the heart of my study.

The second category I examine consists of pictorial–verbal formulations of the Coffin Text spells 1029–1185, collectively known to Egyptologists as the Book of Two Ways. These formulations differ in content and organization but are ultimately linked by their shared solar and Osirian themes and their 'topographic' layout. This combination of image and text is known only on coffins from Deir el-Bersha. Coffins and tombs which feature sections known from the Deir el-Bersha coffins but do not combine them within the same framework are not generally considered to be examples of the Book of Two Ways (Sherbiny 2017: 16; examples in Silverman 1988; 1989; Backes 2005: 483; Meyer-Dietrich 2006a: 499). The category thus exemplifies broader methodological issues with the classification of Pyramid and Coffin Texts, whose spells could be fitted into varying sequences and groups and thus contrast with the more strongly fixed structures of underworld books such as the Amduat (e.g. von Lieven 2016a; similar issues arise with the later Books of the Earth as well: Roberson 2012). I retain the established designation for the Book of Two Ways,

[6] On *nṯr* as a type of being that encompasses a range of material and visual forms, see §3.1. For *jrw*, see §2.3.3.

because my case studies are drawn only from Deir el-Bersha coffins and concentrate on the positions of the composite figures in those contexts.



Fig. 1.1: 'Map' section of the Book of Two Ways on B1C, 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: pl. 1a)

Hans Schack-Schackenburg (1903) coined the term 'Book of Two Ways' (*Zweiwegebuch*) in reference to its famous 'map' section, which consists of two large registers, separated by a red or white band (Fig. 1.1; Sherbiny 2017: 47). A meandering blue band runs across the upper register, while an undulating black band spans the lower register, forming angular compartments in its central area. Written elements in both registers identify features such as fields, marshes, and mounds (Sherbiny 2017: 185–90). Thus Schack-Schackenburg interpreted the section as a plan of an underworld landscape with two winding paths. Schack-Schackenburg's view, which was shaped by comparison with the underworld books and parts of the Book of the Dead, has dominated work on the spells (e.g. Lesko 1972: 4). My treatment is based on more recent research by Wael Sherbiny (2017: 594–604), who considers the Book of Two Ways to amalgamate descriptive, interlocutory, and liturgical elements that are grounded in several mythic traditions. Although the composition employs topographic features to accentuate its general theme of passage, it is not a 'map' in the sense of a visual representation of spatially ordered data (Bauer 2012: 198).

The forms and ontologies of composite figures in the Book of Two Ways result from the interaction of its thematic and structural features, justifying comparison with those in the Amduat. I emphasize that the Book of Two Ways belongs to the wider corpus of Pyramid and Coffin Texts, which treat visual images, including hieroglyphs, in distinctive ways, including the suppression and truncation of certain forms. The Book of Two Ways should not be seen as a precursor to the Amduat and other underworld books (Quack 2006b: 595; on Amduat precursors, see further §6.2.3).

Apotropaic wands constitute the third category of material that I consider. Alternatively termed magical knives, apotropaia, and birth tusks (e.g. Altenmüller 1965; Quirke 2016), wands are curved implements, usually of hippopotamus ivory, often with incised decoration on one or both faces depicting rows of animals and divine beings. They are peculiar to the early second millennium BCE and have been found at sites in Upper and Lower Egypt, the Levant, and Nubia. Many wands were produced for elite individuals, perhaps with links to the royal court (Quirke 2016: 573). Most wands with Egyptian provenance were deposited during the late Middle Kingdom, from the reign of Senwosret III onwards (c. 1850–1700 BCE); unprovenanced examples have similar visual and written content, suggesting a similar date. Specimens from the Levant and Nubia may have been in use as late as the New Kingdom/Late Bronze Age, but these probably represent reuse in exceptional contexts (e.g. Miller in review). Wands are sometimes found with items of early Middle Kingdom date, but in these instances they were probably secondary deposits during the late Middle Kingdom (Quirke 2016: 93–176, 229–32).

Many wands are inscribed with speech of the protective beings depicted on them, often introduced by variations on the phrase: 'We have come so that we may set protection over NN'.[7] The named beneficiaries are often women. These inscriptions, as well as the iconography of related objects (e.g. Allen 2005: 30; Wegner 2009a), indicate that wands were often used to confer protection upon mothers and babies during and after childbirth. However, all wands with known Egyptian provenance come from burial contexts, and many feature 'reworked ends and holes for repair cords [which] demonstrate extensive use and reuse' in several settings (Quirke 2017: 363).

Wands may manifest two concurrent and complementary mortuary traditions of the time, one centring on the notion of (re)birth, and the other focusing on the transfiguration and identification of individuals with both Re and Osiris (Miniaci and Quirke 2009: 357–70). These themes connect wands with the Amduat and Book of Two Ways. Janine Bourriau (1991: 15, after Willems 1988: 151–6) has suggested that the broad thematic scope of wands in burials may stem from having had a role during the late Middle Kingdom as substitutes for inscriptions of Coffin Texts, which include many spells 'referring to the myth of the sun-god travelling through the caverns of the night' and declined in use during the same period; this interpretation has not gained general acceptance. The deposition of wands in burials, as well as their depiction as part of greeting ceremonies and their

[7] *jy.n=n stp=n sꜣ ḥr NN*; Altenmüller 1965 [i]: 67–9; for *stp-sꜣ*, see Quirke 2017: 367–8. Peter Hubai (2008; 2017) has identified inscriptions or traces thereof on 37 wands: https://doi.org/ct7h [Accessed 8 April 2022].

inclusion in temple inventories in conjunction with other ritual implements such as serpent-shaped staves, indicate that they were used in a range of contexts (Newberry 1893–1894: pl. 30; Wreszinski 1927: pl. 36; Davies 1943: pl. 38). Solar and Osirian themes are best known from mortuary settings but are very likely to have been applied to transitional events in various contexts.

Just as the Amduat and Book of Two Ways sometimes overlap thematically and structurally despite employing different figural forms, so do the motifs on wands differ from both of those categories even though it shares thematic content and probably sociocultural remit with them. The motifs are highly consistent across wands, justifying their treatment as a repertoire. The connections and disjunctures between the three categories highlight that analyses which focus solely on semantic content cannot address all issues arising from the material. Moreover, the parallels between the different categories suggest that new approaches to the design of religious images may have developed alongside one another.

1.2.2 Ophidian composites

The amount of data available for studying composite figures is immense and impossible to incorporate into an initial study. Of prime importance is to bring the categories together on the basis of a dataset that is small yet as productive as possible and adequate to the questions asked. Composite figures with snakes or serpents as elements are common across the three categories and encompass many figural forms, with overlaps and divergences between the categories. Such 'ophidian composites' constitute an ideal dataset for exploring relationships between the various dimensions of images. The umbrella term 'ophidian' accommodates snakes and serpents both real and fabulous; I avoid the adjectives 'snaky' and 'serpentine' because they are less precise designations which may describe a long, undulating shape.

The rich associations of snakes and serpents in Egypt have been extensively explored on the basis of chronologically and contextually wide-ranging material. The existence of this body of scholarship enables my method to be integrated with work on iconography and to investigate 'meaning' as an essential aspect of images. Fieriness and regeneration are the principal values of snakes and serpents in underworld contexts, and they connect with the functions of the beings displayed with ophidian parts. Both values stem from observations and experiences of snakes and their behaviour, which were recorded by the early first millennium BCE at the latest. Sources include the narrative text known from P. BM EA 9997 (col. 2.10) and the 22nd Dynasty cippus base of

Nakhtefmut (Leitz 1999: 4–6; Berlandini 2002: 97–104; Stegbauer 2015: 227–8), as well as the handbook of snakes and snakebite prescriptions on P. Brooklyn 47.218.48+85 (Sauneron 1989; Aufrère 2012).

The burning venom of snakes, or perhaps their association with the rocky desert landscapes in which they were often encountered (compare Cipolla 2019: 620–1), may have led to their conceptualization as fiery beings. In some cases, this contributed to their characterization as enemies to be overcome (e.g. Leitz 1996; Meurer 2002; Steiner 2011; Lapp 2017). Elsewhere, their fire was viewed as a defensive force, so that protective beings could assume ophidian attributes and forms (e.g. Meeks 2006: 6, 41–6, 173–5; Mougenot 2014: 147–8; Allen 2015: 243, 249). The regenerative qualities of snakes derived instead from their entry and exit from liminal spaces such as caverns and burrows:

> *jnk sꜣ-tꜣ ꜣw rnpwt sḏr msw rʿ nb jnk sꜣ-tꜣ jmy ḏrw tꜣ sḏrꜣj ms.kw mꜣ.kw rnpy.kw rʿ nb*
> I am the *sꜣ-tꜣ*-snake, long of years, who sleeps and is born every day. I am the *sꜣ-tꜣ*-snake who is in the limits of the earth. I sleep, having been born, being new, being young, every day.
> (BD 87 on P. BM EA 10477,11: Lapp 1997: pl. 31)

Their dual associations with cyclicality and fieriness established a link with the solar creator-god, who in one realization swam as a water snake in the primeval ocean at the beginning and end of time (e.g. BD 175: Allen 1974: 184). This web of associations in mortuary contexts—centred on renewal and regeneration and situated in liminal cosmic regions—may have contributed to the use of wholly or partly ophidian forms as symbols in the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands. Engaging with ophidian composites allows the semantic dimension of images to be focused upon and nuanced. Integrating this aspect of images with ontological concerns is the first step towards modelling larger systems, whose iconographic, cultural, and historical relationships may then be compared. Some of the images I examine are not ophidian composites, but have been chosen for their potential to be integrated with my analysis of ophidian composites in order to develop typologies that can also contribute toward syntheses.

2

THE ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The transformative potential of representation ties the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands together. It also raises the issue of the metaphysical foundations of earlier approaches to this material. Interpretations of composite figures as instances of a hieroglyphic metalanguage are part of more general characterizations of Egyptian images as 'conceptual'. According to this understanding, images combine 'facets of the depicted entity that would not all be visible at the same time', informed by 'knowledge about the way the depicted object really is' (Nyord 2013: 146, 150). Conceptual images have been contrasted with 'perceptual' ones that depict how something would appear to the eye from a specific vantage point, particularly images in Euro-American art that employ foreshortening and visual perspective (Schäfer 1986: 80–93).

Although useful for formal analysis of pictorial representation, this dichotomy may limit other ways of investigating understandings and uses of images. It is rooted in a Platonian concept of mimesis, which presumes an ontological gulf between a transcendent reality and imperfect representations of it in the world (e.g. Kraut 2022). According to hierarchical paradigms of this sort, the reality of divine beings can be grasped only indirectly, through a system of symbols that may be paraphrased as verbal statements. The conceptual–perceptual distinction thus applies a more or less explicit scale of value to 'levels of correspondence between the mimetic image and what it represents or the proximity of resemblance between sign and referent' (Bahrani 2003: 87–8). This approach does not seem wholly congruent with many Egyptian religious practices. Geraldine Pinch's study of votives (1993: 349), for example, considers anthropomorphic forms to be 'more sacred and awesome' than zoomorphic ones, which are more common and thus reflect a 'preference for worshipping divinity at one remove'. Yet the latter do not diminish the reality or effectiveness of such encounters with the divine, and they coexist with instances of beings that are also words in ordinary language, such as *mꜣꜥt* 'truth, order, justice'.

Possible reasons for the range and distribution of figural forms may be explored by considering a reverse process, in which the thing is delimited by the image (compare Holbraad 2011: 12). From such a perspective the image is not subordinate to reality, but defines and specifies it. This chapter examines this process by which figural forms may constitute beings, partially dissolving the division between image and reality in certain contexts. Descola's (2013a [2005]) categories of interiority and physicality make it possible to engage with such emic conceptualizations in ways that illuminate ontological continuities between humans, deities, and their various representations or realizations. Ontological considerations therefore enhance understanding of how images in Egyptian religious compositions fulfilled their functions, with different forms instantiating different conceptual structures for certain beings between contexts of manifestation and action. Just as temples were microcosms whose order was enacted and sustained through ritual performances, so did compositions such as the Amduat and Book of Two Ways transform tomb and coffin spaces into underworlds. They defined their occupants' new relationships with the realms and things whose images enclosed them, establishing new identities and modes of being for the deceased (Nyord 2014: 40–2). As for apotropaic wands, their inscriptions describe the arrival of the protective beings carved upon their surfaces. Thus, wands brought ritual beneficiaries into contact with these beings and forces.

A study along the lines just sketched dovetails with investigations into the image ontologies of other cultures, while a focus on composite figures offers the possibility of a greater depth of analysis by suggesting ways in which specific ontological statuses were constructed from flexible groupings of meaningful and functional parts. Assorted elements of the cosmos were put to work through images—a capacity dependent on form, with all its potential and limitations. These variables should be taken into account alongside more specifically semantic concerns.

2.1 Framing Ontology

Concepts and frameworks in fields such as anthropology are often developed on the basis of evidence from multiple social and cultural traditions. By combining their respective advantages, such frameworks promote finer analysis of specific categories, catalyse syntheses, and in the ideal case enable Egyptian material to contribute to cross-cultural comparisons (Weeks 1979; Descola 2005; Baines 2011). Hornung was right to advocate a 'multiplicity of approaches' to the Egyptian

evidence (1982 [1971]: 252–3)—if not to the whole of Egyptian religion, then at least to its components.

Existing work on Egyptian religion recognizes aspects of beings' interiority. Jan Assmann, for example, considers divine forces to crystallize into discrete, apprehensible personae in order to participate in the world: 'reality is interpreted as act, and action always presupposes partners, roles, and a division of labour and power' (Assmann 2001 [1984]: 12). The 'personality' of gods was 'a function of the linguistic dimension of divine presence, and their essence extended beyond it. Personality was an aspect of their accessibility and the ability to communicate with them' (Assmann 2001 [1984]: 102). Such understandings may be enriched by exploring how forms of divine presence mediate such aspects of interiority through features of physicality; work in this vein helps to integrate Egyptian material with Descola's quadripartite scheme of ontological regimes (see Introduction). Much iconography works to establish relations between beings of various orders. Egyptian images not only express relationships between them, but enact them in a process that Descola (2013b: 47) calls 'figuration' but that I paraphrase 'enactive imaging' to reduce confusion with graphic 'figures'. Enactive imaging makes further engagement with the beings in question possible through the related processes of image alteration and destruction. Enactive imaging and ritual speech were analogous, and human individuals were often part of the network of relations so created. In temples, for instance, geographical units and even individual buildings could be brought into relationships with cultic officiants, necessitating fully anthropomorphic forms. Hence the city of Memphis (*mn-nfr*) and a crenellated tower within it (*ṯsmt*) are represented as anthropomorphic goddesses in a chapel of Seti I, where they flank a statue of the major deity Ptah; the form enabled the king's relationship with the city and tower to be allegorized by portraying him as a child under their care (Berlandini 1984). In temples of the Graeco-Roman period, fecundity figures and estate personifications proceed with the king into temples, where they interact with deities (Baines 1985: 217). The materiality of such reliefs, and occasionally statuary, is integral to real or implied action, for which their figural forms must be suitable.

In Descola's terms, the capacities and attributes that make up the interiority of a being are indexed by its physicality: the physiology of a biotic body, or the form of a drawn or carved one, coordinated and stabilized aspects necessary 'for the exercise of faculties and dispositions, and for the development of a mode of being in conformity with its "nature"' (Descola 2013a [2005]: 212). Extending the potential of fully anthropomorphic forms, composite figures may enable more

distinctive, context-specific interiorities to be articulated within the parameters of religious discourse. Such discourse is visual: seldom do texts or individual hieroglyphs express the ideas in so thoroughgoing a fashion, even though they may be strongly pictorial themselves. The elements of composite figures worked through metaphor and symbolism, exploiting 'multiple hidden interconnections of homology and contrast' characteristic of an 'analogist' ontological regime (Nyord 2020: 4–5; see also Meskell and Joyce 2003: 81, 88–9). Assessing the distribution of forms across contexts may reveal detailed dynamics between interiority and physicality within such a regime.

To explore these dynamics, I draw upon research conducted by Zainab Bahrani (2003) and Marc Van De Mieroop (2016) into Assyro-Babylonian understandings of figural images as well as the cuneiform script. These two scholars borrow ideas from postmodern theory and diverge from Platonian conceptions of representation. Their analytical framework is shaped by *différance*, a 'neographism' coined by Jacques Derrida (2016 [1976]) which articulates how conventional approaches cannot capture important dimensions of words or images. Derrida pointed out that the French words *différence* and *différance* cannot be distinguished in speech; only when the word is received in context within written discourse can it be correctly understood. *Différance* hinges on 'the continuous play of absence and presence' between multiple possible senses or identities, which are alternately foregrounded and backgrounded, differed and deferred from one another (Bahrani 2003: 202). Bahrani and Van De Mieroop concentrate on visual and written evidence respectively, deploying the approach along distinct lines of inquiry. Integration of their approach helps with addressing Egyptian material that often straddles the categories of (hieroglyphic) writing and image.

The concept of *différance* provides a useful route into understanding how composite figures in Egypt balanced ontological and iconographic concerns. On the ontological front, *différance* encapsulates the relations between a being's interiority and its physicality. Bahrani applies it to the Akkadian term *ṣalmu*, which is generally rendered 'image' and is used to designate various genres of material (e.g. Lambert 1985: 197; Winter 1997: 365). She undercuts prevailing understandings of representation, in which the being is distinct from its image: 'what we imagine as two entirely opposite realms are actually interdependent' (Bahrani 2003: 94). Representations worked through participation rather than mimesis, the 'real' being and its representations interacting on the same ontic plane (Bahrani 2003: 148; 2014: 40). Her formulation elaborates upon earlier work on

representation, such as the notion of 'ontological communion' (*ontologische Teilhabe*) or the 'ontological indissolubility of the image from what is "represented"' (*ontologische Unlösbarkeit des Bildes von dem 'Dargestellten'*) espoused by the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960: 133, 146). A narrower interpretation, by which a being has no independent existence beyond an image, aligns with some but not all Egyptian evidence. It is preferable to begin from a less restrictive standpoint and to identify exceptions where appropriate.[8] Such variation is a general characteristic of images across many cultures (Freedberg 1989).

Participatory representation produces 'presence' in space, '[putting] things into reach so that they can be touched' or otherwise interacted with (Gumbrecht 1999: 355). Such concerns have been synthesized by Beate Pongratz-Leisten and Karen Sonik in their edited volume *The materiality of divine agency* (2015a), which concentrates on ancient Near Eastern evidence. The spatial aspect is salient to Egyptian material, whose functions and conceptualizations should not be separated from their materiality as elements of architectural programmes and as ritual implements used with and placed near to human bodies (compare Den Doncker and Tavier 2018). Nor can temporal aspects be disregarded: many images were part of monumental constructions or were otherwise intended to create permanent tableaux alongside bodies of the dead. Such representations enabled things and the environments to which they contributed to persist perpetually (Bahrani 2014). Temporality also raises the question of how images that do not work through visual resemblance capture transient processes (compare §1.1.2 on Greek mixanthropes)—how they, 'though apparently solidified and unmoving, contained the sets of relations from which they emerged' as 'congealed', 'reified', or 'made-into' things (Coupaye 2018: 236, with references). I explore these topics, through case studies from the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands, in Chapters 3 to 5.

From an iconographic standpoint, *différance* suggests that figural forms were 'chosen from a set of options' in order to accentuate certain sets of semantic, graphic, and conceptual relations (Van De Mieroop 2016: 79–82). Laden with cultural associations, they establish 'several possible avenues or chains of correspondences that link two entities. Relations, like the things that they bring together, are thus extremely varied although several may be applied to the very same existing beings' (Descola 2013a [2005]: 238). If forms were selected with an awareness of alternatives, the

[8] Examples that may fit that narrower interpretation include hieroglyphic signs depicting dangerous or impure beings that were intentionally truncated or rendered incompletely (e.g. Roth 2017). In such cases the specific being exists only in the image. See further §3.3, §3.6, §4.5.

seeming absence of some configurations and the uneven distribution of others may result from affordances or limitations of context (compare Van De Mieroop 2016: 74, 101). Some forms were unsuitable as 'physical envelopes' (Descola 2013a [2005]: 225), while others were unnecessary for generating appropriate interiorities.

The principles just outlined and the factors that structure them are not unique to Egypt and Mesopotamia. They have been recognized in other pre-modern cultures, notably the Classic Maya, for whom materiality, modes of visual signification, and ritualized processes of creation influenced relationships between meaning and being (e.g. Houston 2014). However, Bahrani and Van De Mieroop's coupling of theoretically informed terminology with close analysis of primary evidence, including rich textual sources, makes their work a productive foundation on which to model the conceptual fields of Egyptian images.

2.2 Agency and the Amduat

I now discuss agency as a parameter in the ontology of composite figures. The term 'agency', which is frequently deployed in anthropology and archaeology, as well as in the social sciences more generally, helps to articulate facets of the Egyptian material within a theoretical framework. It brings together internal dimensions and external factors that may broaden or constrain the range and means of visual representation available. The specific factors that may be involved differ between contexts, and I do not address them here. Instead, I focus my outline on how they pertain to the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands in §3.1, §4.1, and §5.1. Alfred Gell's *Art and agency* (1998) was a seminal, if at times strongly criticized, articulation of the relevance of the concept of agency to visual works.[9] Aspects of his theory, notably its philosophical foundations, run contrary to the Egyptian evidence, so I do not adopt it wholesale. The ritual functions of the material I consider have implications for the ontology of figural images, however, matching some of Gell's arguments. His approach is a valuable sounding board for the ideas presented in this thesis.

In anthropology, images are often discussed for how they pertain to 'art' as a cultural form and institution, with a focus on 'the social context of art production, circulation, and reception' (Gell 1998: 2–3) and on the social relationships that are both represented and produced by art (Geertz

[9] Gell built on existing anthropological scholarship (see, e.g., Layton 2003: 449), but some have criticized his approach as over-generalizing, 'ethnographically uninformed or simply incorrect' (Bowden 2004: 309).

1983: 109). To accommodate many 'cultural systems' (in the sense of Geertz), traditions, and forms under the same theoretical and methodological umbrella, anthropologists develop etic approaches, viewing art as networks of signs, not as codes requiring decipherment but modes of expression (Geertz 1983: 119–20). Artworks mediate social relations in many societies (see, e.g., Layton 1991: 47–92), as is very probably true of the Amduat in ancient Egypt. Such approaches, together with theoretical work on material culture, have not, however, seen very much traction in art-historical methodology and discourse (Rampley 2005: 529; exceptions include van Eck 2010; 2015). Michael Yonan (2011: 237–42) ascribes this lack of focus to a desire to protect the 'intellectual cachet' of art history, which 'has tricked itself into believing that it is a discipline of images, when really it has always been a discipline of objects'. Something like the attitude he describes may have favoured the narrowly iconographic approach of much work on Egyptian religious material, despite widespread recognition in Egyptology that images and the architectural spaces containing them had transformative potential. It is opportune to revisit the Amduat in order to explore how its content relates to its material and sociocultural position. It is to be hoped that the method attempted here can be applied to other categories of material.

Processes of producing works of art, learning about them, and discussing them belong within a social fabric (Morphy 2009: 17). The self-presentation inscription of Userhat on his stela, which dates to the era of restoration after the Amarna period, reveals how access to, and knowledge of, images and the means of their creation constituted social capital (stela Leiden V1: Boeser 1913: 1–2, pl. 1; Frood 2007: 117, 123–9; see also von Lieven 2007b):

> *bs.kw r ḥwt-nbw r ms(t) sšmw ꜥḫmw nw nṯrw nbw n(n) jmnw jm≠sn r≠j*
> *jnk ḥry sšṯ3 m33 rꜥ m ḫprw≠f tm m mswt≠f*
> I was initiated into the House of Gold to fashion the *sšmw*- and *ꜥḫm*-images[10] of all the gods, none among them being hidden from me. I was a master of secrets, who saw Re in his realizations and Atum in his manifestations.[11]
>
> (*KRI* VII, 27.13–15; see also Kruchten 1992: 110)

[10] *ꜥḫm*-images (here written *ꜥḫm*) have been interpreted as concrete objects, most frequently three-dimensional cult images but also reliefs and paintings (Hornung 1967: 128; Wilson 1997: 178; Parkinson 1997: 52, with n. 80; Eaton 2007: 17), that are incarnations of divine forces (McDonald 2002: 362).

[11] For *ḫprw* as 'realization', see §2.3.3. For *mswt* as 'manifestation', see Baines 1986.

Kings frequently deployed the same topos (Wente 1982; Baines 1990), often in relation to solar religion. The year 3 building inscription of Ramesses II in Luxor temple describes how the king commanded the temple's construction on the basis of his religious knowledge:[12]

> *ʿḥʿ.n ḏʿr ḥm≠f js n sḫw pgȝ.n≠f sḫw pr-ʿnḫ rḫ.n≠f jmnwt nw pt sštȝ nb nw tȝ*
> *gm.n≠f wȝst jrt rʿ m ḳȝȝ ḫpr st(?) ḏr wn tȝ pn [...]*
> *jmn-rʿ m nswt n ḥȝy≠f ḥrt psḏ{t}≠f šnw ḥr mȝȝ st sḫnt≠f*
> *jrt≠f jmnt≠f wȝst m njwt jwnw rsy jȝbt≠f m ḥḳȝ-ʿnḏ spȝt jwnw mḥy*
> Then his Person sought the chamber of writings. He opened the scroll-cases[13] of the House of Life; he came to know the arcana of the sky and every secret of the earth.
> He discovered that Thebes, the Eye of Re, was the (primeval) mound—the seat(?) came into being since this land was [...]
> Amun-Re was king on account of his brightening the sky. He illumined the (celestial) circuit, spotting his alighting-place.
> His right eye was Thebes as the city of southern Heliopolis; his left eye was *ḥḳȝ-ʿnḏ*,[14] the district of northern Heliopolis.
>
> (*KRI* II, 346.5–8; see also Redford 1971: 113; Darnell 2020: 21–4)

A passage in an encomium of an unspecified Ramessid king on P. Turin 1882 may use the motif for a different purpose (rto 2.7–8; Pleyte and Rossi 1869–1876: pl. 17; Gardiner 1955a; 1956). In enumerating his virtues and good deeds to the gods, the king may be claiming that he was so focused on the performance of his ritual duties that he did not get distracted mid-performance by the ancient scrolls and their content:

> *bw wȝḥ≠j nt-ʿ ḏr wnnt (m) ʿwt pȝwt tpy(t) r tm ʿḳ jm≠w r ptr r nḏnḏ ḥr sšmw≠k*
> I never laid down (i.e. abandoned) a ritual because of what was (in) the scrolls of the first primeval time, in order not to study them to see or to consult about your *sšmw*-image.
>
> (Gardiner 1955a: pl. 8)[15]

These concerns are reflected in the 'royal sunrise caption'[16] that refers to the king knowing 'the great *sšmw*-image that is in the night-barque' (*sšmw ʿȝ nty m (m)sktt*; Betrò 1989: 46), and in the

[12] The 13th Dynasty Abydos stela of Neferhotep I provides an earlier example of the topos, there with an Osirian focus (Neale 2016, with references to earlier studies).

[13] My translation as 'scroll-cases' takes account of the 'house' determinative of *sḫw*. On containers for documents, see, e.g., Eyre 2013: 298–303; Ryholt 2021: 24–46.

[14] The 13th nome of Lower Egypt (Gauthier 1925–1931 [iv]: 43).

[15] The translations by Gardiner (1956: 10) and Kenneth Kitchen (*RITA* VI, 68) encounter difficulties matching grammatical structure with the sense of the passage in relation to its co-text. Christopher Eyre's (2013: 281) translation, 'I do not put aside customary rituals nor (any) documents of primeval time, so as to fail to enter into them', contrasts with mine, but it omits the phrase *ḏr wnnt (m)*.

[16] Also known as the 'cult-theological treatise' or 'king as sun-priest' text (Assmann 1970; Baines 2021: 81).

introduction to the long version of the Amduat, which identifies the composition as a compendium of knowledge about the underworld and its inhabitants in relation to the solar cycle:

> *rḫ bꜣw dwꜣtyw*
> *rḫ jrw*
> *rḫ sꜣḫw=sn n rʿ*
> *rḫ bꜣw štꜣw*
> *rḫ jmt wnwt nṯrw=sn*
> *rḫ ḏwj=f n=sn*
> *rḫ sbꜣw wꜣwt ʿpp nṯr ʿꜣ ḥr=sn*
> *rḫ šmwt wnwt nṯrw=sn*
> *rḫ wꜣšyw ḥtmyw*
> To know[17] the *bꜣw* of those of the underworld; to know *jrw*-images; to know their *sꜣḫw*-spells for Re; to know the secret *bꜣw*; to know what is in the hours and their *nṯrw*; to know his calling out to them; to know the portals of the ways through which the great god traverses; to know the courses of the hours and their *nṯrw*; to know those to be extolled and those to be annihilated.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 102–9)

Enigmatic passages in the underworld books may have tested religious knowledge and scholarly engagement with the practice of enigmatic writing, which was restricted to a very limited group (Darnell 2004: 272; 2020: 11–12; Stauder 2020; Werning 2020: 237–8). The Ramessid royal texts reflect on these key cultural institutions and speak to the centrality of pictorial forms within them. Understanding how images functioned in the Amduat requires an appreciation of the ways in which they related to actors including the king and the gods.

The ritual functions of the Amduat were integral to these institutions. Surrounding the deceased king in his tomb with underworld books reinforced his status as one inducted into restricted religious knowledge. More importantly, it emphasizes that its circle of participants includes the gods themselves, with whom the king shares some of his status (Baines 2021). The Amduat integrates the king corporeally with the solar cycle, emphasizing and realizing ontological continuity between divine and human beings whose proper relations sustain cosmic order (compare Descola 2013b: 45). This function connects with Gell's central claim that artworks are socially equivalent to human persons, which is valid in the sense that pictorial representations could function as equivalent to animate actors. Divine beings in the Amduat, most of them in mainly anthropomorphic forms, were 'metapersons' granted agency comparable with, and perhaps

[17] Alternatively, 'list of' (*rḫ(t)*; Lapčić 2014: 177, with n. 57). Omission of final *t* here would be unusual, so reading the word as an infinitive is preferable.

more powerful than, that of humans (Graeber and Sahlins 2017: 35–7; Strathern 2019; see also Descola 2013b; for the opposite phenomenon, see, e.g., Cauville 1997 [ii]: 53). Thus, not all objects are different from people (*contra* Hunter and Lucchini 2013: 490–1), and analysing them in terms of agency can be profitable.

The conceptual processes by which this result was achieved in the Amduat and much other ritual material differ from Gell's model, in that they extend the scope of agency beyond the realm of social relations and their object-mediated transactions, encompassing independent action in the world (Descola 2013b: 43). Versions of the Amduat on the walls of New Kingdom royal tombs include textual insertions describing the actions of the king in relation to the solar entourage and the deities featured in the composition (Abitz 1995: 23–5). Moreover, starting after the sacralizing process of mummification, the performance of burial within the milieu of the ritualized tomb space, which was further structured by 'visual experience and habit' (Baxandall 1988 [1972]: 40), assimilated the king with the ontic plane represented by the images at the same time as the depicted realm was made present (Riggs 2014: 99–108; see also Rößler-Köhler 1999; Richter 2008). Deities may have been present not in but as their images (*contra* Assmann 2005 [2001]: 251), even as the design of the composition, which evoked a manuscript in some versions, 'destroys any sense of pictorial illusion [and] re-establishes the materiality of the medium', underscoring its status as an image (compare Wu Hung 1996: 45). This enactive function is shared by many other compositions known primarily from mortuary settings, including the Book of Two Ways (von Lieven 2019), confirming that aspects of Gell's theory of agency fit into an overarching ontological framework and may be productively applied to other material, even though the lexical data central to devising the framework is supplied mainly by the Amduat.

The phenomenon under study is, however, not wholly congruent with the philosophical assumptions of Gell's theory, as well as most Western theories of representation (e.g. Freedberg 1989: 98; Hyman 2015, with references). Gell intended to re-evaluate Western concepts but he retained several of their core assumptions (Rampley 2005: 549). In seeking to expand the formal and material scope of 'art', he articulated his theory through four main terms—index, prototype, artist, and recipient—which in any given instance can be applied to various entities in agent–patient relationships. He defined them as follows:

1. Indexes: material entities which motivate abductive[18] inferences, cognitive interpretations, etc.
2. Artists (or other 'originators'): to whom are ascribed, by abduction, causal responsibility for the existence and characteristics of the index;
3. Recipients: those in relation to whom, by abduction, indexes are considered to exert agency, or who exert agency via the index;
4. Prototypes: entities held, by abduction, to be represented in the index, often by virtue of visual resemblance, but not necessarily.

(Gell 1998: 27)

Together these terms constitute the 'art nexus'. Gell's terminology is complex, layered, and at times problematic. His focus on the material 'index' and its ontologically removed 'prototype'—terms he borrowed from semiotics, specifically the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, though with modified meanings—perpetuates a Platonian metaphysics founded on a disjuncture between reality and representation. Even though it isolates and extends the agency of the prototype into further social relations, the index does not share or constitute any ontological substance of the prototype (Belting 2011 [2001]: 109–14). This disjuncture between agentive human beings and 'mere things'—seats and conduits of agency respectively (Gell 1998: 19)—poses difficulties when set against evidence from several cultures (Meskell 2004: 50–3).

The notion of the 'artist' is also problematic for much material, including that which I treat here. Despite the extensive social networks involved in creating coffins and tombs, the religious conceptualization of such things and the images they contained divorced them from human agency upon ritual activation. The 'artist' becomes irrelevant because the activated image is a metaperson in itself rather than a manufactured thing (Cooney 2021: 9; see also Belting 2011 [2001]: 108–9). The process of divesting the 'artist' from the 'art nexus' may not be explicit in Egyptian sources, but it has plentiful parallels in other cultures (Ellenbogen and Tugendhaft 2011: 1–10).

The concepts of 'index' and 'prototype' additionally presuppose the anteriority and primacy of being over image. This ontological hierarchy seems valid in relation to some Egyptian images, but it does not account for how others had 'the potential of becoming an entity in [their] own right, a being rather than a copy of a being' (Bahrani 2003: 125). Such representations not only depict

[18] 'Abduction', as employed by Gell, refers to 'a particular kind of cognitive operation, a probabilistic mode of inference, for example that a smile suggests a friendly person' (Osborne and Tanner 2006: 10). Smiling and friendliness are linked by 'neither "semiotic conventions" [nor] "laws of nature" but something in between' (Gell 1998: 14–15).

beings, but constitute them. Regardless of whether the being had any visible existence beyond the image, what was important was that the image possessed such a presence and potential agency (Assmann 2001: 46). The Egyptian practice of suppressing or truncating hieroglyphs depicting a range of beings including impure or dangerous animals that were brought into being through the act of inscription also speaks to this point (see n. 8 above). The interdependence of being and representation proposed by Bahrani and others accords more closely than the index–prototype relation with the idea that individual representations cannot encompass the totality of the being, which is a 'pluridimensional chain of possible appearances' in which each representation 'is a partial presence of the [thing] represented and indicates the absence of that [thing] at some level although at the same time that absence is only a temporal deferment, never a total absence' (Bahrani 2003: 128, 205). Images hold the ontological potential for relationality that is shared with gods and human beings (Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015b: 12–13; compare Baines 1985: 30–1).

Incompatible with much Egyptian material is Gell's second main claim, that art should be distanced from aesthetics because 'the desire to see the art of other cultures aesthetically tells us more about our own ideology and its quasi-religious veneration of art objects as aesthetic talismans, than it does about other cultures' (Gell 1998: 3). As critics have noted, Gell himself did not hold fast to this principle, affording aesthetics a degree of influence in certain social contexts (Osborne and Tanner 2006: 6–8). In the Egyptian case, ritual objects in both two and three dimensions were intrinsically efficacious but had to be 'made to specification' (Eschweiler 1994: 187, 196; Pierce 1998: 231)—a concern spelled out clearly in the text of the Amduat itself (§2.3.2). The aesthetic impact of perfectly executed images was essential to the 'enchanting' quality that made them suitable as forms of divine manifestation (Gell 1992; for Western parallels, see, e.g., Wittkower 1962). Aesthetic concerns of visual consistency, complexity, and propriety connect with iconography and suggest that the ontological and semantic dimensions were negotiated through the design of figural images.

I deploy concepts selectively to characterize the conceptual profile of the Egyptian material. To avoid presuming hierarchical relations, I do not employ Gell's theoretical terminology. My usage of 'image' and 'being' occasionally maps onto his 'index' and 'prototype' respectively, but it is not bound to his model. These terms allow Gell's relevant ontological claims to be retained, while permitting both hierarchical (mimetic) and heterarchical (participatory) conceptualizations of representation to be taken into account. I occasionally substitute 'being' with 'subject'. The latter

term has hermeneutic potential by virtue of implying an 'object', such as other divine or human beings, with whom a subject may interrelate. Additionally, it takes account of examples where abstractions or complex sets of processes are treated as beings in a given context; employing two terms may therefore promote finer analysis. I avoid terms such as 'referent' and 'prototype' because the former overemphasizes a mimetic paradigm while the latter may carry the inappropriate Platonian sense of a representation's being an imperfect copy of an unattainable truth (Belting 2011 [2001]: 110). This framework also underlies my use of 'composite figure' rather than the more common 'composite image'. Concentrating on figural form frees the concept of 'image' for use in analysis in terms of its relationships with 'writing' and material objects.

2.3 Egyptian Terms and Modern Concepts

In order to approach salient aspects of visual representation in the absence of evidence for explicit ancient Egyptian critical discourse on images (compare Baines 2007: 309–10), I examine two terms frequently employed in the Amduat—*sšmw* and *jrw*—and their conceptual implications for the images they designate. The focus on terminology is intended as a way to approach image ontologies and how their parameters relate to the design of composite figures in the work. The findings may assist in comparison with other categories of material and ultimately with assessing the distribution of composite figures between those categories.

The first stage of investigation is aimed at extending work on Egyptian terminology by concentrating on the Amduat. Both *sšmw* and *jrw* are used less frequently in the often more obscure Coffin Texts (e.g. CT 472 on B2L = BM EA 30810: Nyord 2017: 342, after *CT* VI, 2i–k). Neither term occurs on apotropaic wands, which therefore are not discussed in this section. However, concepts that prove valuable for interpreting the terms in the Amduat and Book of Two Ways are also relevant to wands as well, and I use the same terms for analysing and classifying images on wands. Many other terms, including *twt* and *ḫprw,* can shed light on Egyptian concepts of representation (e.g. Buchberger 1993; Nyord 2020: 9–12). They are less frequent in the Amduat, so I do not explore them in detail, instead introducing them when they are helpful for understanding *sšmw* and *jrw*.

Use of the terms '*sšmw*-image' and '*jrw*-image' in this thesis does not necessarily reflect emic designations but is intended to approximate the characteristics of certain images and their elements, as a heuristic approach to key conceptual fields in the absence of relevant modern terms

(Alberti et al. 2011: 901–3; Holbraad 2011: 17). This method is at the heart of anthropological research into ontology. In contrast to the lexicographic approach more commonly employed in Egyptology, which attempts to outline similarities and differences between types of 'images' that go by various words in the Egyptian language, it 'holds at abeyance or in continuous suspension [one's] assumptions about what the world is, and what could be in it' (Holbraad and Petersen 2017: 5–6). Juxtaposing emic and etic terms in this way 'allows the alien concepts to deform and subvert the translator's conceptual toolbox so that the *intentio* of the original language can be expressed within the new one' (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 5), illuminating conceptual linkages and divergences between the overlaid categories.

2.3.1 Research on terminology and ontology

The self-referential quality of the Amduat, many of whose written elements describe its content with terms that intersect with modern categories of 'image' and 'representation', makes the composition an excellent springboard for studying these topics. The Amduat has not had a major role in previous work on Egyptian terminology, while existing studies of such terms rarely address them from the perspective of ontological issues. Treatments of individual terms are scattered through text editions and commentaries that gather attestations and offer translations. These works contribute much to lexicography (e.g. Eaton-Krauss 1984: ch. 4; Fischer-Elfert 1998: 8–39; Laboury 2016) and to outlining the content of texts (e.g. Darnell 2004; Manassa 2007)—a tendency that some scholars attribute to reticence to challenge interpretive frameworks (Wengrow 2010: 109–10; Riggs 2014: 94–5). Moreover, such studies often propose semantic ranges for individual terms that are based on the contexts considered in a particular study. Evaluation of multiple groups of evidence together makes it possible to distil nuances of meaning, reducing the likelihood that interpretations developed for specific groups of material will not fit the evidence of others.

Among synthesizing studies, Hornung's short article 'Der Mensch als "Bild Gottes" in Ägypten' (1967) is the only work that extensively cites material from the New Kingdom underworld books, as well as some from earlier mortuary compositions. Hornung's numerous hypotheses need review because he aimed to construct a broad framework at a time when detailed treatments were unavailable, and in a brief article he could not contextualize his citations in depth. His work served as a point of departure for several other studies of terminology relating to images, each of which was based on different datasets, addressed different questions, and reached different conclusions.

Hornung recognized that emic Egyptian concepts were unlike the Platonian metaphysical paradigm from which scholars traditionally approached the concept of representation, specifically that 'für den Ägypter war das Bild nicht Schein und Ersatz, sondern hatte vollen Anteil an der Wirklichkeit' (Hornung 1967: 154). After more than 50 years his understanding of how individual terms function within this paradigm is worth re-evaluating.

Successors to Hornung's article include Boyo Ockinga's *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit im Alten Ägypten und im Alten Testament* (1984)—to date the most comprehensive published study of relevant Egyptian terms—and Friedhelm Hoffmann's unpublished *Wort und Bild* (2001), the results of which are summarized in a brief article (2021). Hoffmann employs philological methods to examine the semantic fields of terms and their chronological development, focusing on formal aspects such as pose, gender, and whether the image is two- or three-dimensional. While comprehensive, his lexicographic study assumes that the Egyptian words were indeed terms for 'images' of various material and formal genres, rather than relating more broadly to aspects of representation through images.

Ockinga's work has an ideological slant. It seeks to explore the relationship between humankind and the divine, with the king occupying a unique position within human society as the 'image of god'. Ockinga (1984: 1–2) aims to draw parallels between Egyptian concepts and the Biblical one termed in the Western tradition the *imago dei*. At its heart, the work attempts to construct a history of royal ideology and its relationship with religious developments. Like Hornung, Ockinga appreciates fundamental differences in the conceptualization of representation, as seen in his use of the Latin *imago*, 'which for Romans was not equivalent to the Greek *ikon* but was (...) directly linked to [the] physical body' (Bahrani 2003: 138). However, Ockinga examines only texts relating to the king in temples and on other monuments, literary teachings, hymns and prayers, and non-royal self-presentation texts. He excludes 'otherworldly' material, remarking that it requires separate treatment. Material such as the Amduat was, however, likely used in conjunction with compositions like the 'royal sunrise caption' to propagate kings' position in the cosmos and their relationship with the gods (Assmann 1970: 57 nn. 2–3; Wente 1982; Assmann 1995: 26). One would consequently expect there to be some commonality in terminology between Ockinga's material and the Amduat; such overlaps could be illuminating.

Lexicographic and philological work also benefits from scholarship on magic and ritual, which is relevant for understanding the ontological dimension of the Amduat. The forms and iconography

of genres such as amulets, figurines, and illustrations accompanying ritual texts are often discussed as a general facet of Egyptian culture (e.g. Ritner 2008 [1993]; Pinch 2006) or relating to specific aspects of religion (e.g. Pinch 1993; Sternberg-el-Hotabi 1999; Waraksa 2009). Nonetheless, larger-scale compositions, as well as less narrowly amuletic or talismanic—but no less ritually effective—types such as the Amduat have been little addressed, despite the thematic and temporal relationships of underworld books with material such as apotropaic wands and decorated coffins. Furthermore, terms such as *sšmw* and *twt* are central to these categories; they also occur designating temple statuary and processional images (Eaton 2007). A combined iconographic and ontological approach to the Amduat and related material seems thus to be a desirable step in developing more holistic views on Egyptian images in their many forms and contexts.

Several relevant studies have been published. First is Peter Eschweiler's *Bildzauber im alten Ägypten* (1994). Eschweiler explores different types of images, helping to bridge the gap between descriptive approaches of Egyptology and the conceptual approaches of theorists such as anthropologists. His brief discussion of the ontology of Egyptian images borrows an alternative understanding of representation from anthropologists and philosophers: 'die Tat oder das Vorgehen, durch das ein der unsichtbaren Welt angehörendes Wesen in der sichtbaren Welt der Menschen präsent wird' (Eschweiler 1994: 291–7, quote from p. 294). Second is Annette Kjølby's article 'Material agency, attribution and experience of agency in ancient Egypt: the case of New Kingdom private temple statues' (2009). Outlining relevant theoretical parameters, including the concept of agency, she applies them productively to a well-defined category of material in ways that are often congruent with Bahrani's interpretations of Assyro-Babylonian material (e.g. Kjølby 2009: 34–7).

A few studies combine several categories of material and contextualize them in broader ways. Thus, Lynn Meskell and Rosemary Joyce's anthropologically-informed *Embodied lives: figuring ancient Maya and Egyptian experience* (2003) compares Egyptian and Maya conceptions of the body. Their focus on the body's social and religious significance narrows the range of their interpretations, concentrating discussion on biotic bodies, their material and immaterial components, and their conceptual relations, while exploring topics such as metaphor and symbolism, the partibility of bodies and beings, and enactive imaging. Meskell and Joyce engage with ontological approaches including that of Tim Ingold (1994), but their project antedates major syntheses such as that of Descola (2013a [2005]). Their concepts need to be adjusted for integration with theoretical

frameworks that were developed later. For example, composite figures are treated as examples of 'hybrid' bodies that 'cross borders' between the human and 'natural' worlds (Meskell and Joyce 2003: ch. 5), a distinction which Descola undercuts in his discussions of ontological regimes. As Meskell and Joyce (2003: 88–9) acknowledge, difficulty lies in recognizing and reconciling differences between emic and etic categories and taxonomies.

Meskell expands on her joint approach with Joyce in her single-authored monograph, *Object worlds in ancient Egypt* (2004), which engages with theoretical issues by evaluating anthropological conceptions of agency in relation to Egyptian evidence. She considers how objects like cult statues and ancestor busts extend and multiply beings in order for them to play varied roles in social life, collapsing the dichotomy of subject and object in the process. Her arguments parallel those of Bahrani (2003), but in her case the ultimate focus is on the this-wordly social sphere. She devotes little space to the significance of form and iconography, while subsuming a range of Egyptian terms into the broad category of 'image' and assessing them in parallel. While Meskell's understandings of embodiment, transformation, and agency are relatively generalized, her approach valuably highlights the potential for integrating the concept of agency with broader ontological frameworks and raises issues of method which may be further explored through philological and visual analysis.

Rune Nyord's *Seeing perfection* (2020) is the most recent exploration of these topics, building on ideas he has set out in earlier articles (2017; 2019b). Nyord situates philological and historical research within the ontological implications of Egyptian uses of visual images and the terms designating them. Particularly pertinent to this thesis is his brief study of the term *sšmw*. Like Eschweiler, Nyord stresses the 'ontological ligature between depiction and depicted', underscoring many Egyptian images as means of enacting the presence of beings (Nyord 2020: 4–5, 68, after Descola 2013a [2005]: 201–31). He conceptualizes images as nodes in the complex networks that constitute beings (Nyord 2017: 353; see also Robins 2005: 2), sharpening Eschweiler's formulation of *sšmw*-images as '"Bilder", die gegenüber den "dargestellten" Personen bzw. Gegenständen selbst keinen Wesensverlust aufweisen' (1994: 196). Nyord's attempt to establish a coherent interpretive framework spanning many contexts and genres is a valuable advance. For him, things made present bear a certain ontic force that goes beyond characterizations of 'presence' in purely iconographic terms as a semantic attribute opposed to 'action' (e.g. Baines 1985: 17, 66). His understanding integrates two-dimensional images with previous work on Egyptian body concepts (Meskell and Joyce 2003; Kjølby 2009; Nyord 2009). Both Eschweiler and Nyord term this ontological phenomenon

'presentification', borrowing the word from Jean-Pierre Vernant's (1991: 151–63) study of ancient Greek images. In order to avoid implying the temporal dimension of the 'present', and to stress the materiality of the images and processes under discussion, I find the term 'presencing' more convenient (Gumbrecht 1999; Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015b: 10–11; Coupaye 2017).

Two points in this discussion require further exploration and nuancing. First, the concept of presencing, as adopted by Eschweiler, Kjølby, and Nyord, is relatively general in its application. Detailed dynamics may emerge through a study of the interrelationships of concepts such as *sšmw* and *jrw* in different contexts. Second, neither Eschweiler nor Nyord address potential ontological distinctions between registers or modes of presentation. Following Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2015: 109), Nyord characterizes the human body as:

> 'a bundle of affects', emphasizing the capacity of such affects to enter or leave the 'bundle'; for example, as the body changes from one shape to another. (...) What is conventionally regarded as iconography used to send a message, on this view, becomes ways of eliciting specific affects in the material. (...) The precise material, posture, and features of an image thus had to be adequate, not merely for the depicted entity, but also for the context in which the image was to effect its presence.
>
> (Nyord 2020: 51–2)

That analysis builds on existing treatments of composite forms as instantiations of a 'hieroglyphic metalanguage' (§1.1.2) by recognizing that iconographic attributes can 'do' as much as they 'mean'. Yet it does not account for the seeming absence of certain combinations and the restricted contextual range of others, especially if different figural forms meant and did similar things. A more detailed study can profitably address such variations.

I attempt to elaborate on the general perspectives adopted by Nyord, and to consider how the results of my analyses may contribute to understanding the design of composite figures across contexts. I consider how components of images work to manifest beings and potentially make them active in given contexts, and how various elements—such as body parts, insignia, and even poses—may relate to one another within the conceptual structure of an image as a whole. In addition, my focus on two-dimensional genres complements the predominantly three-dimensional types addressed by Eschweiler, Kjølby, and Nyord. Understanding the structuring of both categories is essential for developing more holistic perspectives on their interrelationships in complex settings of image creation and use.

2.3.2 *sšmw*

In the New Kingdom Amduat, a common term used in relation to visual images is *sšmw*. It refers both to the tableaux of each hour and to the individual figures within them. An image termed *sšmw* is an interface between a given being and others: the term is frequent in the Amduat, which both depicts the underworld and transforms the burial chamber into one. Relationships between beings in such contexts are predicated on agency and their scope is delimited by the material and visual characteristics of the *sšmw*-image.

Outside the Amduat, *sšmw* most commonly refers to the cult image of a god and to the barque carrying it during processions (*Wb.* IV, 291.6–16; Nelson 1942: 141). *sšmw* has been understood as a participle of a verb meaning 'to guide, lead' (*sšm*; Assmann 1969: 398; *Wb.* IV, 285.7–287.20). This interpretation fits with usage in the Amduat, where the journey of the solar entourage is presented as a divine procession and celebrated by the inhabitants of the underworld. The designation of processional images as *sšmw* was, however, likely secondary, since the full range of images for which the term was used is broader (Hornung 1967: 140; Nyord 2020: 12–13).

In the Ramessid royal encomium on P. Turin 1882 (§2.2), the statement that scrolls are said to contain *sšmw*-images (with the divine 'hawk on perch' determinative ) fits with the labelling of images in the underworld books as *sšmw* (see, e.g., the Litany of Re: Hornung 1975 [i]: 1–2). The term encompasses a range of material genres, from three-dimensional cult images that were kept obscured from view, through pictures copied onto tomb walls, even to mummified bodies and *shabti* figurines (Ockinga 1984: 45; Desroches Noblecourt 1995: 157–67; Nyord 2017: 341–2). Such images expressed the qualities of a given being visually, and manifested them materially. These images enabled the being to interact with other beings in certain ways in the context. The hymn to Amun on P. Leiden I 350 (IV.18) subverts these expectations by extolling the god's inaccessibility:

> *bw rḫ nṯr nb ḳj≠f mꜣʿ nn sšmw≠f prḫ.w m sḫꜣw*
> No god knows his true character. There is no *sšmw*-image of him that has developed (lit. blossomed) in writings/drawings.
>
> (Zandee 1947: 75–86; Assmann 1999: 332–3)

The passage also ties in with other texts in clarifying that a single being could have multiple *sšmw*-images. The sign of a composite deity with human body and four ram heads is used as a determinative of *sšmw* in the Book of Day (Müller-Roth 2008: 131; Roberson 2020: 41, sign C38.1), while the sun-god says in the 3rd hour of the long Amduat:

jy.n=j ꜣ r mꜣꜣ ḫꜣwt=j sjp=j sšmw=j jm(w) dwꜣt
I have come here to see my corpses[19] and to inspect my *sšmw*-images which are in the underworld.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 332–3)

Of the many components a being could possess—of which corpses and *sšmw*-images were types—often only one was deployed in a given depiction. The deities to the right of the zigzag path in the middle register of the 4th hour of the long Amduat are described as follows:

wnn=sn m sḫrw pn m sšmw=sn ḏt=sn jmn.n ḥr ḥr mṯn dšrt nt jmn-š(tꜣ)w (...)
They are like this, as their *sšmw*-images, their bodies, which Horus has hidden upon the way of the One Hidden of Mysteries (...)

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 368–9)

The deities are presented as being deployed as particular *sšmw*-images in particular contexts. The form selected for depiction depends on context; no single form, or indeed range of forms, can encapsulate the entirety of a deity (compare the definition provided in *Wb.* IV, 290.14: 'Erscheinungsform der Götter (...) im Gegs. zu ihrer eigentlichen Gestalt die *ḏt(=f) ḏs=f* u.ä heisst'). Composite figures sometimes reveal a drive toward more comprehensive representation, for example by stacking heads and attaching many limbs to single figures to create a self-standing conglomeration of images. This was a common practice in the first millennium BCE (First 2014). Presence was not the sole defining feature of *sšmw*-images; it should be seen rather as a pre-requisite for the principal criterion of agency.

Despite multiplicity of forms and the fact that a being's ultimate form, if any, was not depicted, *sšmw*-images were ontologically coextensive with beings. To explore this idea, it is helpful to consider earlier understandings of the term *sšmw*. Hornung (1967: 141) argued that *sšmw* derives from the root for 'direction, order, condition, behaviour'. From this perspective, the word may imply a degree of precision and accuracy, and Hornung suggested that it refers more specifically to a 'schema'. Assmann (1990: 10) and Friedhelm Hoffmann (2021: 25), who render it 'archetype' (*Vorlage*) and 'archetype, model' (*Vorlage*, *Vorbild*) respectively, concur with him. That general sense fits with the later use of *sšmw* to designate written instructions for the creation of images (Scalf 2016: 71, with n. 9; compare *Wb.* IV, 289.13). Such translations accord with the label '*sšmw* of a

[19] An act perhaps referring to the identification of the sun-god as the *bꜣ* and Osiris as the corpse (e.g. Smith 2017: 302, with n. 189).

mansion' that is associated, for example, with an architectural plan in the Book of Two Ways (*sšmw ḥwt*; CT 1146: *CT* VII, 496a).

Nyord (2020: 7) suggests a more idiomatic reading, arguing that the root *sšm* indicates that *sšmw*-images are 'thought to "lead" that which they depict in the sense of enacting the configurations and processes depicted'. Ursula Rößler-Köhler (1999: 86) reached a similar conclusion in her rendering of *sšmw* as 'lastingly effective archetype' (*dauerhaft wirksame Vorlage*). Their views are supported by the closing texts to each hour of the Amduat, in which *sšmw* refers to the overall tableau of the hour. Thus the closing text of the 1st hour states:

> *jw jr.tw nn mj sšmw pn m jmnt nt dwꜣt*
> *nw n sntyw mjty nṯr ꜥ ḏs=f*
> *jw ꜣḫ n=f tp tꜣ šs mꜣꜥ wrt mj sšmw=sn štꜣw m sḫw*
> This is made, according to this *sšmw*-image, in the hidden part of the/an underworld.
> These reproductions (*sntyw*) are the equivalent (*mjty*) of the great god himself.
> It is effective for him on earth—a very true thing!—like their mysterious *sšmw*-images in writing/drawing.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 170–1)

The use of both *sntyw* and *sšmw* here is significant. Since the Amduat was sometimes presented on a tomb wall on the model of a spread-out papyrus, *sntyw* could refer to the individual elements of the composition, painted upon the wall. Accurately reproduced within a space ritually charged to function as an underworld, the picture becomes a suitable means of enacting the presence of beings within the underworld setting so created. Images serve as bodies, reversing the familiar process by which bodies could become images. Interred individuals do not physically enter these places; rather, the places are brought to them as images (Belting 2011 [2001]: 22–5, 42). Yet 'presence' is not the main function of *sšmw*-images, which was to enable interaction between beings of various types through particular material manifestations. The act of picturing partially bridged the ontological chasm between being and image—'partially' because the being continued to exist independently of the image, and vice versa (compare Descola 2013a [2005]: 225). An injunction in the Instruction for Merikare provides further evidence for this notion:

> *tr=tw nṯr ḥr wꜣt=f jr.w m ꜥꜣt ms.w m ḥmt*
> One should show respect to a god on his path, whether he is made of precious stone or fashioned from metal.
>
> (Helck 1977: 77–8; Quack 1992: 74–6)

It was not that involvement in religious processions made an image a *sšmw*, but that ontological transformations made an image suitable for use in such contexts. The image is the god, even if the god is 'hidden' and inaccessible, 'in need of a picture in order to become visible' (Belting 2016: 235). Relevant transmutations could be effected, for example, through the 'opening of the mouth' ceremony (Robins 2005: 1), or by a 'glorification' performed by the sun-god, as described in CT 1040, part of the Book of Two Ways (as well as elsewhere by priests: Hays 2011: 127):

NN tn msy m r-sṯ3w p
rd 3ḫ n NN tn jn nb rˁ-ḥr-3ḫty
sˁḥ n NN tn m p m wˁb NN tn wsjr
šsp.n NN tn kjw m r-sṯ3w m sšmt nṯrw ḥr j3wt≠sn
NN tn wˁ m sšmw≠sn
This NN was born in Rasetjau and Pe.
Glory/*3ḫ*-status was given to this NN by the lord Re-Horakhty.
The mummy (*sˁḥ*) of this NN is in Pe when this NN purifies Osiris.[20]
This NN receives acclamation in Rasetjau during the guiding of the gods upon their mounds.[21]
This NN is one of their *sšmw*.

(*CT* VII, 289a–291a)

Commentators have understood *sšmw* here as 'guides' or 'leaders' (Lesko 1972: 44; Faulkner 1973–1978 [iii]: 133; Sherbiny 2017: 191), but the  determinative in several manuscripts suggests that a translation '*sšmw*-images' is more appropriate.[22] The deceased is acclaimed not only for leading a procession of images, but by being one of them and hence also divine. *sšmw*-images enabled beings to exercise their agency by ramifying interiority across various 'physical envelopes' (Descola 2013a [2005]: 116–21, 215–16). Such ontological coextensiveness is expressed in the stela of Userhat, discussed above, through the use of the  determinative in its writing of *sšmw*, paralleling

[20] Alternatively, 'just as Osiris is pure' (*mj wˁb wsjr*; *CT* VII, 290a, on B1L, B2L, B1C, B2P). B9C conflates this and the preceding phrase: 'in Pe when Osiris purifies (my) mummy' (*m p wˁb wsjr sˁḥ(≠j)*; *CT* VII, 289c–290a). The references to purification suggest that *sˁḥ* is better translated as 'mummy' rather than 'dignity, rank'.
[21] Alternatively, 'when the gods guide upon the horizon in the entourage surrounding Osiris' (*sšm nṯrw m 3ḫt m šnwt ḥ3t wsjr*; *CT* VII, 290b, on B1L, B1C, B2P). B9C combines both formulations: 'during the guiding of the god[s] upon the horizon in the entourage surrounding Osiris' (*m sšmt nṯr[w] ḥr 3ḫt m šnwt ḥ3t wsjr*; *CT* VII 290b). B2L is the only manuscript to write 'when I guide the gods' (*m sšm≠j nṯrw*), which could support a rendering of *sšmw* at the end of the spell as 'leader' rather than '*sšmw*-image'; it is equally possible to interpret it as a play on the dual sense of the root *sšm*, or as a scribal error due to the earlier phrase 'I receive acclamation' (*šsp≠j kjw*).
[22] The determinative occurs in B4L, B1L, B2L, B1C, and B12C. On the last, it follows the suffix pronoun *≠sn*. On B2Bo, it is written after *wˁ*. Compare the orthographies of *sšmw* in *Wb*. IV, 288, 290–1.

the oversized  determinative of the following word *ʿḥmw* (Fig. 2.1; Boeser 1913: pl. 1, line 9; *Wb.* IV, 290–1).

Formal multiplicity and ontological coextensiveness were mediated by materiality, frequently a corollary of *sšmw*-images' status as 'potential epiphanies' and 'self-sufficient modes of being' (Eschweiler 1994: 192, 196). As with Akkadian *ṣalmu*, *sšmw* does not correspond to any single genre such as painting or statuary, the forms of which are motivated by function and constrained by decorum. Predicated on an agency that extends beyond the material object, such an ontological status is more specific than symbolic or metaphoric expressions of relationality in other contexts, as when 'the West' (*jmntt*) is shown as a goddess who physically supports the deceased and is venerated by them (Fig. 2.2).



Fig. 2.1: Detail from stela Leiden V1, 19th Dynasty (courtesy of Jason Livingstone Thomas)

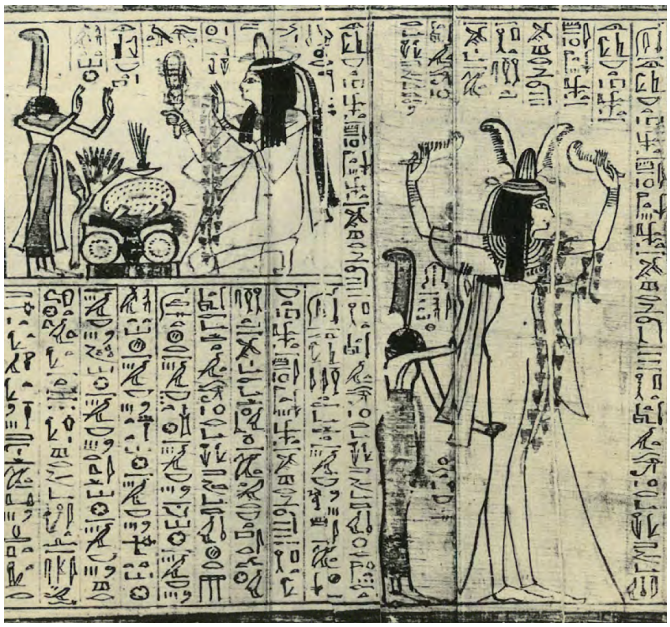

Fig. 2.2: Detail from P. Cairo SR VII.11496, featuring personifications of the West, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 135; [ii]: pl. 15)

The Amduat features figures of primarily anthropomorphic and mixed form. The vast majority stand upright, either at rest or engaging in action, some with one another. However, some images have the form of shrouded or wrapped figures that are seated—on actual seats, thrones (e.g. nos 254–257), large 'cloth' signs (e.g. nos 556–570; Riggs 2014: 178–80), or in a sitting position without a depicted support (e.g. nos 401–409). Yet others are depicted emblematically as cult images or objects with added human elements (Figs 2.3–2.5; on emblematic forms, see further §5.1). The emblematic types can be compared, for example, with depictions of cult images on the 30th Dynasty naos of Nectanebo I from Saft el-Henna (Roeder 1914: pls 18–33). The principles guiding the selection of iconographic types in this much later source are more easily accessible. As a large shrine, it would have contained a smaller wooden shrine holding a three-dimensional image of a god, either the principal deity of the temple or secondary deities surrounding it (Karlshausen 2009: 293–6; Minas-Nerpel 2018: 129–30). Both its inner and outer walls are decorated with images of objects that would have been present elsewhere in the temple, including in the naoi themselves, thus substituting for three-dimensional objects and compensating for the invisibility of some of them (Roeder 1914: pls 26, 27, 29, 30; Spencer 2006: 19, 26; Karlshausen 2009: 304). Other examples include images in the 27th Dynasty temple of Amun at Hibis (Davies 1953: 15, 17, pls 9, 13, and *passim*; Zivie-Coche 2008: 7). Such strategies are present in many cultures and are complemented by 'aniconic' forms which imply presence rather than display absence (Mettinger 1995: 19–20; Gaifman 2012: 163–9).

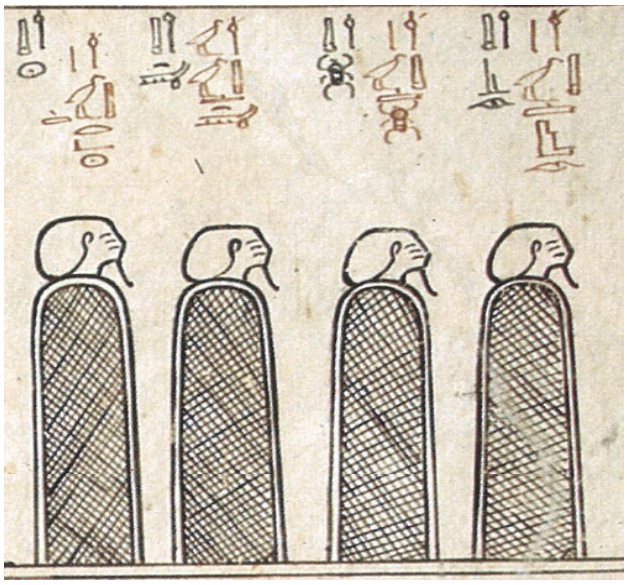

Fig. 2.3: Amduat nos 58–61, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 3)



Fig. 2.4: Amduat no. 202, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 7)

The occurrence of images in the Amduat, labelled *sšmw* and visually similar to those on naoi, makes it likely that similar principles were at work. The three-dimensional cult images in naoi may be interpreted as *sšmw*-images, but two-dimensional images of such objects are *sšmw*-images too.

Naoi and burial chambers operated according to the same logic: three-dimensional images of deities are surrounded by equally efficacious two-dimensional images of the same deities, themselves often rendering the forms of those three-dimensional images. In contexts such as naoi and temples, each type of image may take different figural forms due to constraints including those of decorum, but they refer to one another and to the same beings, 'sliding the signifier under the signified' in 'a constant circulation of presence and deferment' (Bahrani 2003: 111, 116, 202–3, 206). Neal Spencer (2006: ch. 3) cautions against interpreting similar imagery on other naoi and Late Period temples in the same way, arguing that they depict not statuary but the gods themselves. Yet the potentially enactive, not merely illustrative, character of images renders this distinction invalid. Both the 'book-roll' 𓏛 and 'seated god' 𓀀 determinatives are attested in writings of *sšmw*; they highlight overlaps between drawn images, abstractions, and beings (compare Spiegelberg 1930; see further §3.1).

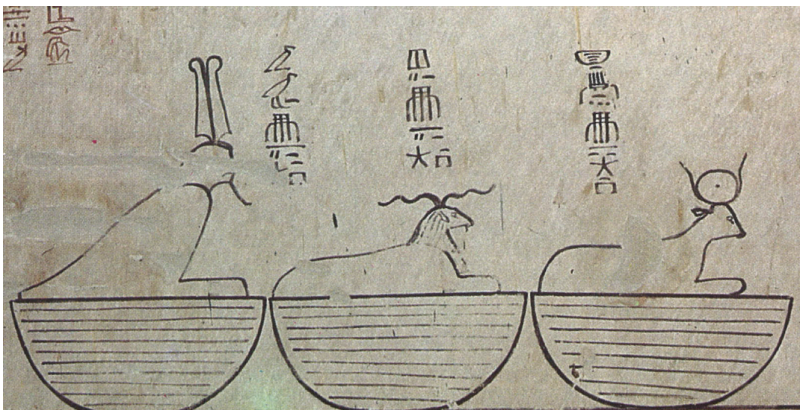

Fig. 2.5: Amduat nos 667–669, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 17)

Images enabled encounters with deities in particular contexts, but the being of deities was not constrained by their images; they were 'always in the process of becoming' (Bahrani 2003: 132). This condition can be compared in part with the Egyptian concept of the *kꜣ* as 'the undifferentiated potential of which the person is a manifestation, not necessarily as a realization once and for all, but rather through a continuous process of actualization' (Nyord 2019b: 164). The range of *sšmw*-images available for any given being suggests that 'presence' is too broad a way to understand them. Formal multiplicity speaks to the ability of a *sšmw*-image to establish specific modes of being in the world, each defined by particular capacities for action in relation to others (Kjølby 2009: 37–42). Diverse configurations could produce similar results. Effects were manifested in many ways, catalysing the development and usage of composite figures as *sšmw*-images. Conceptual approaches cannot be disentangled from iconographic ones, but should complement and build on them. Investigating definitions for the term *jrw* helps to link these dimensions of analysis.

2.3.3 *jrw*

In the Amduat, the term *jrw* is frequently attested in conjunction with *sšmw*. Examining the relationship between the two may help to disclose layers of the image ontology operating in the Amduat as a composition and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of its character. There are conflicting interpretations of the meaning of *jrw*. Assmann (1969: 66) suggested that it relates to the verb meaning 'to do, act, make' (*jrj*), and posited a translation as 'function'. Central to his interpretation is the idea that the *jrw*-image expresses something specific to a particular deity. This approach was also adopted by Winfried Barta (1986a: 88), who combined it with the additional sense of 'activity' that was proposed by Rudolf Anthes (1969: 33). In contrast, Hornung (1967: 126–8) suggested a more general translation as 'shape, form' (*Gestalt*), claiming that it refers to the 'visible image' of an entity, whether human or divine. Hornung's interpretation is followed by Erika Meyer-Dietrich (2006b: 199–201) and John and Colleen Darnell (2018). Another possibility is raised by Baines (1985: 143), who claims that *jrw* refers to a single, ultimate, '"real" form of a deity' which 'is not identical with any depicted form'. None of these interpretations, however, can be reconciled with the full range of the evidence.

It may be profitable to view function and form as partly intersecting categories. In its broadest sense, I argue that the term *jrw* refers to qualities (or 'affects', in the sense of Nyord discussed in §2.3.1) possessed or exercised by beings in particular contexts. Thus, in the 7th hour of the Amduat the sun-god 'makes another *jrw* at this cave so that he may divert the path from Apophis through the magic of Isis and the eldest magician' (*jr=f ky jrw r ṯpḥt tn stnm=f wꜣt r ꜥpp m ḥkꜣ st ḥkꜣw smsw*; Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 524–5). In a narrower sense, images designated *jrw* are indexes of such qualities, implying agency without possessing it intrinsically (*Rollengestalt*: Buchberger 1993: 176, 261, 506; see also Layton 2003: 460; Nyord 2020: 51–4). They often work through metaphor and symbolism, which are facilitated by the pictoriality of the hieroglyphic script (see further in Chapters 4 and 5).

jrw-mages are characterized by multiplicity and need not be ontologically coextensive with beings. They could be combined and concatenated as elements in written and visual representations of multifaceted beings. Modern concepts do not characterize well the potentialities of Egyptian image ontologies and are often over-rigid. The spread of usage of *jrw*, *sšmw*, and other terms indicates that the precise relationship between a being and its *jrw* varies with the context.

Darnell (2004: 247) has argued that *jrw* is 'essential and unchanging', but the sun-god's *jrw* is said to change over the course of his journey (Baines 1985: 143), so this cannot be completely correct. The sun-god has several *jrww* because he has many forms and identities, each of which could also have multiple *jrww* of its own. One may cite the concluding passage of the 'royal sunrise caption':

> *jw ꜥnḫ=f m ỉw(t)-jb mj rꜥ-ḥr-ỉḫty*
> *ḥꜥ pꜥt n mỉ=sn sw jr n=f rḫyt ḥnw m jrw=f n nḫnw*
> *prt rꜥ m ḫprj*
> He lives in gladness like Re-Horakhty.
> The patricians rejoice at seeing him, while the subjects make jubilation for him, in his *jrw* of 'youth'.
> The emergence of Re as Khepri.
>
> (Betrò 1989: 49–50)

The king is cast in a particular role, acting to bring life to the land, but what the *pꜥt* and *rḫyt* are said to do is shown also in vignettes to BD 15, where it relates to the sun-god, indicating an overlap in roles between god and king (e.g. Taylor 2010: 235, 239, 246–7). *jrw*-images relate to individual contexts in which deities are experienced or represented. Erika Meyer-Dietrich has advanced the following interpretation of *jrw*:

> Sie wird mit dessen Aufgaben betraut und übernimmt damit quasi die Funktion eines Stellvertreters bis der Gott selbst fertig entwickelt ist. (...) Das Lexem *ỉrw* markiert als verborgene, ausgeatmete, vereinigte und sich vereinigende Gestalt unterschiedliche Phasen bei der Entstehung des Gottes.
>
> (Meyer-Dietrich 2006b: 199–201)

However, it is more parsimonious to understand *jrw* as referring to components that manifest certain capacities or impart them to the being. Their combination in certain ways may crystallize a specific being in ways a little comparable with more familiar syncretisms of 'whole' deities: 'some persons gather in a single body, (while) others spread out, to pool in separate things and beings' (Houston 2014: 80; compare Quirke 2015: 33–4).

The morning scarab beetle form of the sun-god, Khepri (*ḫprj*), is particularly instructive in relation to the visual reference of the term *jrw*. Martina Minas-Nerpel (2006: 477) argues that Khepri should be understood as 'eine Erscheinungsform des metatranszendenten Sonnengottes Re auf götterweltlicher Ebene' and '[ein] Teil eines Gesamtkonzeptes, keine unabhängige, selbständig verehrte Gottheit'. The scarab form of Khepri embodies the concept of 'becoming' (*ḫpr*), mobilizing

the pictorial potential of the hieroglyphic script as well as the cultural associations of scarabs. The *jrw* identifies the process of self-manifestation as the key aspect of the sun-god's cosmic role within the context of sunrise (Betrò 1989: 35–6). At the same time, the scarab could be incorporated into or deployed as a *sšmw* of Khepri (Minas-Nerpel 2006: 471–3), manifesting the agency referenced by the *jrw*.

Support for this interpretation comes from several passages in CT 312, supplemented by content from the related CT 313. The two spells are found on coffins from Deir el-Bersha which also feature the Book of Two Ways (B6C and B5C), and it is likely that their conceptual worlds are congruent. The spells are dialogues between Osiris and Horus, negotiating Horus's entry to the sky and accession to the throne of Osiris. They identify the deceased with both gods (Goebs 2019: 81). In CT 312, Osiris asks Horus to grant him powers associated with the hawk form. Horus's response includes the following commands:

> *mꜣ jrw=k ḏs=k*
> *ḳd bꜣ=k ḏj=k pr=f sḫm=f m rdwy=f jꜣ=f nk=f mm rmṯw*
> *wnn=k jm m nb r-ḏr*
> Behold your own *jrw*!
> Fashion your *bꜣ*, that you may let it go forth and that it may have power over its legs, to stride and copulate among humankind!
> You will be there as the Lord of All.
>
> (*CT* IV, 71e–72c)

Later in the spell is a statement of the deceased's successful transformation:

> *jr.n NN pn jrw=f m jrw=f šmt=f m šmt=f pr(=f) šm(=f) jwt=f r ḏdw sʿḥ [NN] m bꜣ=f*
> This NN has made his (Horus's) *jrw* as his (NN's) *jrw*, his goings as his goings, so that he may come forth and go to and from Busiris, [NN] being ennobled with his (Horus's) *bꜣ*.[23]
>
> (*CT* IV, 74a–b)

The deceased then proclaims his transformation, including the following statement: 'I have appeared as a divine hawk, Horus having ennobled me with his *bꜣ*' (*jw=j ḫʿ.kw m bjk nṯr(y) sʿḥ.n wj ḥrw m bꜣ=f*; *CT* IV, 76h–i). The transformation is effected by Horus upon the deceased. Such a 'personality transfer' (*Persönlichkeitsübertragung*: Eschweiler 1994: 290) may be best understood as the replication or diffusion of characterizing qualities across beings (compare Gulyás 2004: 163–9), rather than the one being absorbing the other (for the former understanding, see Nyord 2017: 353; for the latter,

[23] The two manuscripts present the passage differently: B6C reads as a statement about the deceased, whereas D1C is direct speech by Horus.

see Goebs 2008). The *jrw*-image is the visual form which points toward certain types of agency. Finally, the status of the deceased is vaunted following his entry to the sky: 'Horus is (upon) his seats and thrones, this NN being the one who is in his (Horus's) *jrw*; the [arm]s of this NN are a divine hawk' (*jw ḥr (ḥr) swt≠f nswt≠f NN pn jmy jrw≠f jw [ʿ]wy NN pn m bjk nṯr(y)*; *CT* IV, 82h–i). Transformation effects change in powers; *jrw*-images are symbols which often work through metaphor (Baines 1985: 143), but could be realized materially in relation to pictures and bodies. Consider the closing text of the 1st hour of the Amduat, in which the sun-god speaks of his revivification of Osiris, first with the semantic reference of *jrw* I propose in this section:

> *dj≠j srḳt m sfg-jrw (n) wsjr ḫnty jmntyw*
> I give breath as the one concealed of *jrw*[24] (to) Osiris, foremost of Westerners.[25]
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 155)

Although the resulting rejuvenated form of the sun-god as well as the temporary union of Re and Osiris are represented (e.g. Hornung 1990: 98–9), the nature of the event—the central mystery of the solar cycle—is not specified. Since it is impossible to depict beings, actions, and modes of agency whose natures are unknown, the *jrww* adopted by its actors are necessarily obscure. Visible images could be designated *jrw*, but *jrw* could also be unknown and thus concealed, hence such descriptions as 'hidden', 'mysterious', 'big', or 'brilliant' (Hornung 1967: 126–8). Analogous to determinatives in the script, *jrw*-images are indexes which anchor understanding of beings.

This function of *jrw*-images distinguishes them from things that are designated *ḫprw*, a term that is used in similar contexts. CT 313, which is related to CT 312 discussed above, exemplifies how the combination of symbolic elements such as insignia allows the protagonist—here the deceased,

[24] I disagree with Reinhard Grieshammer's (1970: 83) translation of *sfg* as 'entblößt' (followed by Roulin 1996 [i]: 213–14). Extensive use of epithets such as *štꜣ-jrw* 'secret of *jrw*-image(s)' (Hornung 1967: 126) in the underworld books suggest that *sfg* in the Amduat should have a similar meaning such as 'concealed'. Grieshammer's intends his translation to reconcile the term with his reconstruction of religious concepts in the Coffin Texts by treating *sfg* as a writing of *sfḫ*. This may not fit with orthographies in other contexts, is not supported by current phonological models (e.g. Allen 2020: 84), and ignores its usage alongside *štꜣ* 'secret' in the related corpus of the Pyramid Texts, where *sfg-jrw* is also found (PT 378, 493 = Pyr. 665a, 1061c: Sethe 1908–1922 [i]: 365; [ii]: 88).

[25] *sfg-jrw* is used as an epithet of Shu in the Coffin Texts, particularly when he is characterized by luminosity and fieriness (Willems 1996: 298, 322 and *passim*), enriching the theological significance of this passage in the Amduat, which is concerned with the sun-god 'giving breath' to Osiris in the darkness of the underworld.

identified with Horus—to appear in a certain capacity. *ḫprw* refers to the resulting assemblage of elements.[26] Similarly, an inscription in Hatshepsut's mortuary temple describes her as follows:

> *ḫpr.ḫr ḥmt=s ʿ3.tj r ḫt nbt nfr m33 n=s r ḫt nb*
> *jm=s m nṯr ḳd=s m nṯr jrr=s ḫt nbt m nṯr 3ḫ=s m nṯr ḫpr(w) ḥmt=s m ḥn(w)t nfrt*
> Then her Person came to be, she being exceedingly great. She was utterly perfect to behold. Her profile[27] was as a god, her character was as a god, all that she did was as a god, her efficacy was as a god; the *ḫprw* of her Person was as a perfect lady.
>
> (Naville 1898 [iii]: pl. 57, second and third columns from left)

The visual attributes (*jm*), personality (*ḳd*), actions (*jrr*), and 'efficacy' (*3ḫ*) of the king are akin to those of deities, and those qualities are manifested in a distinctly feminine form: *ḥnwt*, a term also used of goddesses. The text clarifies that the concept of *ḫprw* perhaps refers specifically to a perceptible 'realization'; it may unite various *jrww*, which are more closely tied to innate potentialities and manners of being.

Since *jrw*-images could be a *ḫprw*, or be part of one, metaphor and manifestation were not always distinct. References to the *jrw* of a human person exemplify this phenomenon, where something comes to embody context-specific qualities. A biographical text of the 19th Dynasty priest Wenennefer of Abydos describes his initiation into priestly office, when a goddess orders that his *jrw* be 'revealed' (*bs*; Kruchten 1989: 180–1; Frood 2007: 106, with n. 98)—perhaps an expression for the particular impression conjured by Wenennefer with the garb, standing, and aura of his new role. Such an experience would have been intensely visual. The phenomenon may be compared with the distribution of an individual's persona across multiple two- or three-dimensional images, each representing him in a different role: a scribe, a mature official, a servant (e.g. Frood forthcoming). The individual embodies a type; he achieves the status of an icon, his body becoming an image (Belting 2011 [2001]: 22–5). Three-dimensional images of this sort could be termed *twt* or *ḫnty* (e.g. Frood 2019: 9–14), but these terms need not preclude a concurrent designation as *jrw*. Similarly in the Litany of Re, forms explicating the capacities or actions of the sun-god are actualized as *ḫprw*, 'realizations' which are bodies in themselves (Meskell and Joyce 2003: 70), as revealed by the wordplay in the following line from the composition:

---

[26] Goebs 2019: 81; *CT* IV, 87m: 'I have appeared as ruler [of the sky]' (*ḫ[.k(w)] m ḥḳ3 [n? pt]*); 93k–l: 'I have come forth as Horus, justified, in the *ḫprw* (pl.) of Horus. My name is like his name; my *ḫprw* are like his *ḫprw*' (*pr.k(w) m ḥr m3ʿ-ḫrw m ḫprw nw ḥr jw rn=j mj rn=f ḫprw=j mj ḫprw=f*).

[27] My definition of *jm* as 'profile' in this context builds on Kurt Sethe's (1929: 9–12) suggestion that it refers to the 'side' of an object.

pn nty jrw=f ḫprw=f jr=f ḫprw=f m jtn ꜥ
This one whose *jrw* is his *ḫprw* when he makes (*jr*) his *ḫprw* as the great solar disc.
(Hornung 1975 [i]: 8–9)

For an agentive *ḫprw*, terms such as *sšmw* or for example *ḥm* in Hatshepsut's inscription introduce specific ontological dimensions to its description, adding another conceptual layer in characterizing the visual form.[28]

Understanding *jrw* in terms of qualities, as well as their display through metaphoric and symbolic images, helps to reconcile existing interpretations of the term as 'function', as *Gestalt* or 'visible image', and as a reference to some kind of ultimate reality or substance. In the Book of Caverns the *jrw* of the blessed and transfigured deceased spirits (*ꜣḫw*) are made to endure (*mn*). By contrast, those of the damned dead (*mwt*) are consigned to nonexistence (*tm-wnnw*; Hornung 1982 [1971]: 172–85): their corpses, *bꜣw*, and heads are separated, unable to form coherent beings.[29] These processes ensure membership of or exclusion from a world defined by transactions between beings of various orders. I suggest that *jrw* is only 'ultimate' in that it is the ontological scaffolding required for meaningful participation in the world through forms of manifestation, ranging from statues to the biotic body and captured by terms such as *ḥm*, *ḫprw*, *sšmw*, and *twt*.

2.3.4 Conclusions

The terms *sšmw* and *jrw* encapsulate conceptual fields that are part of a wider vocabulary defining and differentiating discrete beings and their manifold capacities through analogy and metaphor. Neither term necessarily refers to 'images': they are applied to them because images are involved in enactive practices (Descola 2013a [2005]: 112–15; compare Holbraad 2011: 19–23). They are symptomatic of the complexity of Egyptian conceptions of images. The agency of an image, its functions within specific contexts, and the visual conventions structuring them are interrelated. Egyptian images encompassed diverse ontologies, as is the case in many cultures (compare

[28] For an overview of interpretations of the word *ḥm*, see Shaw 2010: 175–9, 189–90.
[29] Hornung 1967: 127; Werning 2011 [i]: 38–9; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 344–5. An inscription on a statue of the 19th Dynasty vizier Paser, which describes the statue's effectiveness as manifestation and as intermediary, contains a contrasting usage of biological metaphors: it enjoins the gods to 'place its head (*tp=f*) upon its skeleton (*ḳsw=f*) (...) so that when they integrate its *ḥꜥw*-body before them, its *ḏt*-body will always be before the great Ennead in Heliopolis' (Cairo CG 630: Sayed 1980: 216, in Frood 2019: 14–15).

Hallowell 1964; Freedberg 1989: 98; see also Harris and Robb 2012); to pursue such parallels, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The main distinction between *sšmw* and *jrw* lies in their respective loci of agency. *sšmw* denotes material things that exercise agency as manifestations of particular beings, guiding and limiting these capacities through the aspects of interiority granted by its visual form. By contrast, a figure termed *jrw* is not intrinsically agentive but displays through metaphor or symbolism the qualities that a being impresses upon its environment. The valuable ontological schemes of Kjølby (2009) and Nyord (2020) may risk over-generalization. In particular, existing treatment of qualities or 'affects' may be too broad, seemingly conflating the conceptual field of *jrw* with that of *sšmw* even though the latter is more closely tied to notions of 'presence' together with terms such as *twt* (Nyord 2020: 9–12). An approach through agency refines understanding of the significance of 'presence' in certain contexts of representation, as well as bridging the notions of presence and affect by highlighting the intersection of relatively passive, mimetic relationships with more active, participatory ones. Not all *jrw*-images served to enact presence, and images that are only 'made present' should be distinguished from those both that are present and engaged in active relations with other actors in the context, including interred persons and ritual participants. Lastly, a *sšmw*-image could be an *jrw*-image, or incorporate *jrw*-images as elements of itself, dependent on context-specific conventions (e.g. Kaper 2003: 80–1 on a composite figure of Amun-Re). The conceptual structures of images are fluid, so that a given term may encapsulate only part of them.

That complexity of image terminology may be elucidated by briefly considering the term *sḫr* in the underworld books, where it is part of the formula 'this god is like this' (*wnn nṯr pn m sḫr pn*; lit. 'this god exists in this *sḫr*') and its variants. An example is a papyrus in the Cairo Museum, on which a caption runs 'this god comes forth as a *sšmw*-image in the *sḫrw* of Atum' (*nṯr pn pr m sšmw m sḫrw tm*).[30] Also relevant is the account of Thutmose IV's discovery of a stone 'in the *sḫr* of a divine hawk' (*jnr pn m sḫr bjk nṯ[rj]*), for which a naos was then made to house it so that it could be venerated (von Lieven 2016b). Here, *sḫr* may refer to a shape or form that can incorporate symbolic elements, such as *jrw*-images. The closing text to the short version of the Amduat shows how the *sḫr*-shapes of *sšmw*-images enable their appropriate functions:

[30] I have not been able to verify the date and inventory number of the papyrus; see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C3%84gyptisches_Museum_Kairo_2016-03-29_Papyrus_02.jpg [Accessed 8 April 2022]. See further §3.2.

ḥꜣt ḥḏwt pḥwy kkw smꜣw
šmt rˁ m jmnt
sḫrw štꜣ(w) jrrw nṯr pn jm=s
Beginning light; end total darkness.
Travelling of Re in the West.
The mysterious *sḫrw* which this god makes in it.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 94–5)

Here, translators have rendered *sḫrw* 'plans' or 'manner(s)', in accord with other usages.[31] Both senses may be equally valid and complement an understanding of *sḫr* as 'shape' or 'form'. In the tale of Sinuhe, for example, the protagonist claims that his flight from Egypt was impelled by forces beyond his control (Baines 1982: 39; analysis: Parkinson 2006, especially pp. 153–66). In the version of P. Berlin 3022, the explanation goes: 'It was like a plan of god' (*jw mj sḫr nṯr*; col. 43; Koch 1990: 29). The king instead alleges that Sinuhe himself is responsible: 'This idea carried off your heart' (*sḫr pn jn.n=f jb=k*; col. 185; Koch 1990: 60; translation: Parkinson 1997: 36). As with figural images, plans and ideas are 'designs' which affect the actions of gods and humans alike, compelling them to unfold 'like the *sšmw* of a dream' (*jw mj sšmw rswt*: P. Berlin 3022, col. 225; Szpakowska 2003: 28, with references).

Ontological shifts could be effected through ritual action performed by humans as well as, in the next world, by other metapersons (on CT 1040 see §2.3.2). In the Amduat, it is through their relationships with the sun-god, whether as part of his entourage or as recipients of his invigorating light, that the deities inhabiting the underworld 'receive' (*šsp*) or 'swallow' (*ˁm*) their respective *jrw*-images which are 'impressed' (*mtn*) in the sacred space (e.g. Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 461; [iii]: 839–40). These are metaphors for their absorption of the qualities denoted by the images into their agentive selves (Goebs 2008: 303–34; see further §3.2). As symbolic images, *jrw*-images could serve as elements of larger figures, or they could be detached and made autonomous (see further §6.3). Composite figures elucidate these levels, offering insights into ancient Egyptian understandings of the depth of being.

[31] For the former, see, e.g., Jansen-Winkeln 2004: 224. For the latter, see, e.g., Darnell and Darnell 2018: 248; their translation 'in which this god acts' overlooks the resumptive singular feminine pronoun, which must refer to the singular feminine noun *jmnt* 'West'.

2.4 Composite Figures in a Visual Language

When ontological considerations are connected to the functions of images, the 'culturally mediated and conventionally coded' character of visual representations (Bahrani 2003: 123) should be taken into account. Such factors are tied both to the expression of meaning and to the negotiation of material contexts. They range from the 'total social fact' of decorum (Baines 2007: 30), to more context-specific considerations such as compositional format, treatments of pictoriality, and spatial placement (Nyord 2017: 355). Approaches through iconography and ontology offer two pathways to analysing the design and distribution of composite figures. 'Hieroglyphic' understandings of such figures (§1.1.2) should not be dismissed but integrated into an ontological framework by treating each category of material as examples of 'visual language'.

Neil Cohn (2013; summary in Cohn 2021: 4–7) proposes that visual languages are analogous to verbal languages, manifesting a general human capacity for expression. All possess 'grammars' and 'lexicons', which may be analysed on several levels from the syntactic to the morphological (see also Kulvicki 2010). The notion of visual language offers an intermediate level of analysis that assimilates context-specific external factors, from technology and media to social conventions (McCloud 2000; Abel and Klein 2016: 58–60, 63), in the Egyptian case guarding against assumptions of equivalences or derivational relationships between composite figures and hieroglyphs.

Each of the corpora of the Amduat, the Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands organizes and structures figural images in distinctive ways. Differences between them do not mark out independent visual languages but rather 'dialects' that bring together common elements differently to balance semantic and ontological functions, of which the latter are relatively stable across chronologically and contextually proximate categories (Cohn 2013: 137–51; compare Robb 2012). Unusual figural forms often result when common configurations are incompatible with conventions, or when a being is in some way complex. Cohn deals mainly with modern, Western material, and he suggests from his data that, on a cognitive level, visual language is 'unconnected from associations with verbal language (as in writing)' (Cohn 2013: 195). His claim relates to criticisms of earlier attempts to draw analogies between visual material and verbal language, notably Gell's argument against structuralist semiotic approaches to art forms such as body painting and tattooing (§1.1.2):

> Cubes, cylinders, cones, etc. stand for, or represent, *physical parts* of objects, reduced to their geometrical bare bones, whereas phonemes do not represent parts of what morphemes—

> combinations of phonemes—represent. Morphemes represent *concepts* within the linguistic code, but phonemes do not represent parts of these concepts.
>
> (Gell 1998: 165, emphasis in original)

Such claims are untenable for much Egyptian material because of the iconicity of hieroglyphs. The multimodality of hieroglyphic scripts opens up avenues for refining approaches like Cohn's through additional concepts which help to frame the culturally specific 'ontological regime' of images as a variable in their visual language.

Chapter 3 treats the Amduat and suggests that the forms of some of its composite figures were designed with their 'syntactic' role in the composition in mind. I consider relations between figures within the frame of the composition, as well as between figures and the frame itself. Understanding of the constraints and opportunities of format can be improved through use of elements of research into comics (e.g. McCloud 1993). Moreover, Cohn's theory of visual language was developed on the basis of comics, highlighting the value of such material and approaches to it for interpreting Egyptian material.

Chapter 4 examines case studies from the Book of Two Ways, the composite figures in which attract a 'morphological' level of analysis, contrasting with the syntactic focus of the Amduat. They are integral elements in the former composition's structure and layout, but were often designed according to different principles. Their forms exemplify how 'writing' and 'picturing' may be understood as potentials of visual display. Composite figures reveal interaction between writing and picturing. Their design amplified existing semantic or ontological potentialities or created new ones. In this context, James Elkins's (1998) work on graphic marking practices is valuable in highlighting conceptual homologies between writing and picturing and articulating the interplay of visual and verbal language.

Chapter 5 deals with apotropaic wands. The decoration of these is best approached by bridging syntactic and morphological levels of analysis. The forms of composite figures on wands accommodated concerns surrounding the representation of powerful divine beings. I address these topics through the lens of decorum, which is associated with hierarchical modes and orderings of visual representation that are perhaps analogous to tone and register in verbal language, involving expressive strategies such as circumlocution and motivated by conventions of etiquette.

By using a multi-pronged approach in Chapters 3 to 5 I attempt to account for both internal dimensions and external factors, considering the relative weight of each in the design of a figure.

My aim is to deepen understanding of individual composite forms and of the relationships between their components, as well as to facilitate the modelling of visual conventions and underlying principles for each category of material, which will be done in Chapter 6.

3

Amduat

The long version of the Amduat is divided into 12 tableaux, each depicting the region traversed during a particular hour of the night between sunset and sunrise. Its layout is standard across all attestations. Typically, three registers are present, with scenes reading from left to right with retrograde writing. In these cases, the solar barque is the left-most image in the middle register. Occasionally, the placement of tableaux in context reverses the orientation, for instance in the corridors of Ramessid tombs. This general arrangement is frequently overlaid with other features (Barta 1990: 15), such as the zigzagging path that crisscrosses the 4th and 5th hours. The catalogue is organized as a series of rectangular cells, each with an upper and lower register (Bucher 1932: pls 14–22). In most cases, the name of the entity is written in the upper register, while the lower register depicts a seated god and an incense burner.

'Full' copies presenting all 12 tableaux are attested in the tombs of Thutmose III (KV 34) and Amenhotep II (KV 35).[32] KV 34 contains the most complete copy known: the long and short versions, which are inscribed in the oval burial chamber, as well as the only example of the catalogue, which is found on the walls of the pillared hall or antechamber immediately preceding the burial chamber. The forms of images, layout of each hour, and general iconographic framework remained largely consistent, from the fragmentary decorated blocks of Thutmose I/Hatshepsut (Mauric-Barberio 2001: 334; Warburton 2012: 205) to the full-figure painted reliefs of Ramesses IX (Abitz 1990: 16–28). The only known non-royal attestation of the Amduat in the New Kingdom is in one of the two tombs of Useramun, vizier to Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (TT 61; Dziobek 1994). The

[32] Partial copies are known from the following tombs: Thutmose I/Hatshepsut (KV 20); the second tomb of Thutmose I (KV 38); Thutmose IV (KV 43); Amenhotep III (WV 22; originally a full copy but now mostly lost: Piankoff 1954 [i]: 227); Tutankhamun (KV 62); Ay (WV 23); Seti I (KV 17); Ramesses II (KV 7); Merenptah (KV 8); Seti II (KV 15); Siptah (KV 47); Ramesses III (KV 11); Ramesses V/VI (KV 9); and Ramesses IX (KV 6). It has also been suggested that remains of lining slabs in Hatshepsut's cliff tomb in the Wadi el-Sikkat el-Taqa el-Zeide may have featured the Amduat (Carter 1917: 114–115)

relationship of his copy to that of Thutmose III has been debated: Hornung (1994) thought that Useramun's copy may have derived from the same template as the copy of Thutmose III, but subsequent studies suggest that a template was shared between the copies of Useramun and Thutmose I/Hatshepsut, and that the copy of Thutmose III was based on a different template (Jürgens 1999: fig. 1; Werning 2007: fig. 1). In the Third Intermediate Period, images from the Amduat were included on certain types of mortuary papyri placed with the interred bodies of Theban priests and their family members (e.g. Piankoff 1957; Niwiński 1989; Manassa 2007 [i]: 438–40), while sections from the composition are deployed in non-royal tombs and on sarcophagi during the Late Period (Régen 2007; Manassa 2007).

The figures in the long version were assigned numbers by Hornung (1963–1967) following the collation of Alexandre Piankoff (1954). The numbering system sometimes creates false distinctions between elements that are better understood as part of a single semantic or ontological complex. I highlight these where necessary, but retain Hornung's numbering system throughout this thesis for ease of reference to the secondary literature.

3.1 An Ancient Egyptian Comic

Comics studies provides a useful model for understanding interrelationships between elements of the Amduat, including its composite figures. Scott McCloud (1993: 16–23) defines comics as a medium consisting of 'juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer'. McCloud's definition is formal and leaves social and experiential variables open-ended, so that it can encompass a range of genres, subject matter, and styles from different periods. All are culturally and materially specific examples of a visual language. Despite its potential to build upon more well-known studies of Egyptian pictorial representation, such as Heinrich Schäfer's *Principles of Egyptian art* (1986), comics studies has not seen much traction within Egyptology. Assmann (1994: 24; 2003a: 81) briefly compared the interrelationship of Egyptian script and image with the expressive potential of 'modernen Bildnarrativik (Comics)', which he viewed as inferior in scope and richness. Few articles have applied principles from comics studies to specific Egyptian compositions (e.g. Werning 2018; Kutscher 2020). Adopting a similar approach to the Amduat can deepen understanding of the way individual images, including composite figures, were designed.

The long version of the Amduat represents spatial and temporal relationships both within and between its 12 defined tableaux. The tableaux constitute a coherent spatio-temporal sequence, but such an organization does not always apply within individual tableaux, which are 'graphic' rather than 'natural' spaces (Peterson 2018: 287). They may be discussed as the panels of a comic. Comics conflate space and time within the two-dimensional pictorial frame (McCloud 1993: 94–105); elements and phenomena depicted within a given panel sometimes do not occur either contemporaneously or in a temporal sequence that accords with the linear (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) spatial orientation of the panel itself. In contrast to compositions such as the Book of Caverns and Books of the Earth, as well as with modern comic strips (Abel and Klein 2016: 65, 84), the tableaux of the Amduat largely lack the structure of discrete, bordered panels separated by negative space termed 'gutters'.[33] Instead, tableaux typically juxtapose independent figures and groups of figures within a seemingly contiguous 'topographic' framework. There is a general progression in the direction of the solar procession, but this does not necessarily mean that individual figures were believed to be encountered in the same sequence, or even to exist in the same moment.[34]

Three features of the Amduat compound the matter. First, written elements accompanying the figures often do not have clear relationships between figures or groups either by their content or their layout within the tableau, unlike the context-heavy and sequentially organized speech bubbles and other written elements of modern comics.

Second, analysis of individual composite figures points to degrees of schematization. Some composite figures are 'simplexes', which represent subjects that are constituted by only one actor. Others are 'complexes', which condense phenomena involving multiple actors, or assemblages of ideas, into single figures that may be understood as diagrams. Diagrams juxtapose individual 'graphic objects', potentially embedding them in one another (Bateman et al. 2017: 283; compare Robins 1994: 13). In the Egyptian context, graphic objects are figures rather than geometric elements such as bars and lines; each represents a component or actor involved in the phenomenon

[33] Exceptions in the Amduat include the top and bottom registers of the 1st and 8th hours, as well as the divisions between groups of figures in the 4th hour in the copy of Useramun (TT 61; Dziobek 1994: pl. 12; see further §6.2.3).

[34] General discussions of the issue, not specific to Egyptian material: Giuliani 2013: 6; Cohn 2021: 92–8.

presented. The forms of figural complexes impart to them agency similar to that of simplexes: all function as individual, autonomous entities which interact with the sun-god during his journey.

Third, figures and groups in the Amduat sometimes juxtapose several levels of reference, whose meanings were constructed using shared formal elements of the composition. The format of the Amduat largely precludes scenes that occupied more than one register (Werning 2018: 216). When the three-register format is broken in the Amduat, it is by representations of underworld topography, as in the 4th, 5th, and 12th hours. In the 4th and 5th hours, for example, the zigzag path may be viewed as a form of gutter, which structured each of those hours differently. Laying out the zigzag path in the 4th hour in order that it transect all three registers encouraged dividing the tableau into several sections while reinforcing the artificial form of the path itself. Bordered by narrow, speckled bands representing reddish sand, the path is integrated with the thicker bands of sand that divide the three registers, despite its demarcation with a black outline. As a gutter, it separates sections of the tableau while stressing their overall unity and coherence. Its positioning and stylization with narrow borders provide the space needed for its extensive written description, which could not be otherwise accommodated. An analogous form is evident in the 5th hour, where the description of the fiery lake in the bottom register is written in a blank space in the middle of a stylized band representing water ripples. In contrast to the zigzag path in the 4th hour, however, the path in the 5th hour is confined to the bottom register, where it circumscribes the pyramidal mound. Lacking a sandy border, it does not bridge the registers, which are unified along a vertical rather than diagonal axis (see further §3.6).

Format afforded play with the ontological dimension of representation. On one level, the path and its flanking areas express the idea of travel through distinctive topography. Analysis of figures suggests, however, that the flanking areas do not exist in a spatial relationship with the path itself, but perhaps depict different 'aspects' of the hour (see further §3.5). This is a common mode of organizing pictorial compositions (e.g. Baines 2007: 218, on pictorial programmes in Old Kingdom non-royal tombs), but is by no means universal.

Figures in the Amduat could play the roles of panels in a comic even independent of 'topographic' gutters. Spatial and temporal relations are often discernible between figures, as well as between elements of figures. The act of moving between figural simplexes and complexes makes 'subject-to-subject' transitions out of 'scene-to-scene' and 'aspect-to-aspect' transitions (Figs 3.1, 3.2; compare Peterson 2018: 284; on types of transitions, see McCloud 1993: 70–89). Agency, as a

structuring dynamic, enables this merging of transitional types and bridges the internal dimensions of a figural image with context-specific factors. By enabling individual figures or sets of figures to be situated in the wider formal scheme of their respective hour tableaux, concepts drawn from comics studies can help to explain why specific figural forms were used in the Amduat, particularly in cases where the ontological and semantic dimensions appear insufficient.



Fig. 3.1: Definitions and examples of subject-to-subject and scene-to-scene transitions (McCloud 1993: 71)

Understanding the relationship between the composition and its elements sheds further light on two lines of the long Amduat's introductory text, quoted in §2.2: 'to know what is in the hours, and their *nṯrw*; (...) to know the courses of the hours, and their *nṯrw*' (*rḫ jmt wnwt nṯrw≠sn (...) rḫ šmwt*

wnwt nṯrwꜥsn; Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 104–8). If the typical translation ‘gods’ is employed for *nṯrw*, the first of those lines would imply that the depicted deities had ‘gods’ of their own, or that the hour tableaux are ‘gods’. Resolving this issue requires a broader definition of *nṯr* as a type of being that can encompass a range of material and visual forms, and which is analysed on an ontological level above terms such as *sšmw*. Baines (1985: 30–3) has discussed this in relation to personifications, which are iconographic constructs of primarily anthropomorphic form. The interpretation accords with the mainly anthropomorphic figures of the Amduat, and with the participatory ontology that operated in tombs: a deity (*nṯr*) was present as its image, therefore that image was also a *nṯr*. Other figures in the composition may consequently be understood as *nṯrw* of ‘the courses of the hours’. They schematically represent the underworld realm and perhaps the process of traversing its routes, phenomena that could involve several actors. Their presence does not detract from the ‘topographic’ features of the composition, which represent the ‘courses of the hours’ in a mimetic rather than, or in addition to, a participatory way.



Fig. 3.2: Definition and examples of aspect-to-aspect transitions (McCloud 1993: 72)

Scenes and aspects were reformulated as subjects through diagrammatic representations, not only balancing semantic and ontological requirements with the formal constraints of the overarching compositional frame, but clarifying and elaborating on the relations of beings. Since the Amduat served to instil knowledge not only of beings but of the realm they inhabited, equal importance was attached to understanding relationships within and between individual figures, and between figures and the compositional frame. Composite figures often helped to achieve these goals.

3.2 NOS 755 AND 756

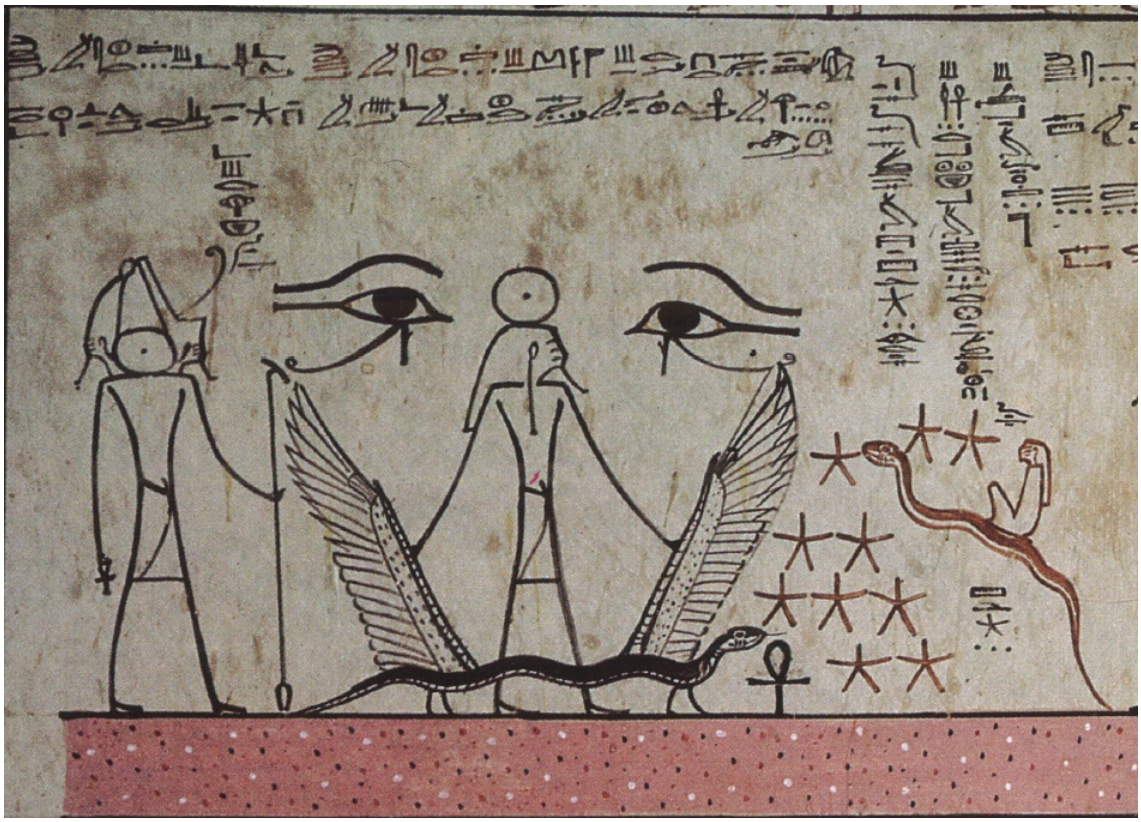

Fig. 3.3: Amduat nos 754–758, tomb of Thutmose III; nos 755–756 are the central group (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 19)

My first case study for the Amduat is a group consisting of a male anthropomorphic figure and an ophidian composite: nos 755 and 756 respectively (Fig. 3.3). Analysis suggests that they should be considered together as a complex figure serving as a diagram. The ophidian composite has two pairs of legs and a pair of unfurled wings. Its tongue protrudes and an *ꜥnḫ*-sign stands on the baseline in front of its mouth. The anthropomorphic figure has a sun-disc atop his head, and stands at the midpoint of the serpent, grasping its wings; two *wḏꜣt*-eyes flank his head. The following label is located above the centre of the figure; the rendering of its second half is uncertain:

> *wnn=f m sḫrw pn ḏwj nṯr pn r=f pr sšmw tm m ꜣt=f ꜥm.ḫr=f sšmw=f m-ḫt ꜥnḫ=f m šwwt ḥꜣt=f tp=f*
> It is like this: this god calls to it and/so that the *sšmw* of Atum emerges from its back. It then swallows[35] his *sšmw* after he lives on the shadows, his corpse, and his head.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: 751–2)

[35] The *sḏm.ḫr=f* form indicates that the act of swallowing marks an inevitable return to the state of being prior to the emergence of the *sšmw* of Atum (Vernus 1990: 74–7; Roberson 2012: 124).

The label describes the image of the serpent rather than the whole group or the image of the anthropomorphic figure, which is identified as the *sšmw* of Atum. The image does not depict what the ophidian composite 'looks like' all of the time, but rather crystallizes the moment when the sun-god 'calls out' to it. The *sšmw* of Atum is understood to be otherwise 'contained' within the serpent (compare Hoffmann 1996: 37, on nos 822–833 in the 12th hour). Representing containment by means of juxtaposition is common (Schäfer 1986: 166–70, especially figs 154a–b, 161a–b, 162). In this case the spatial relationship also has a temporal dimension, representing 'several stages of an action in one picture' but 'without the repetition of any figures' (Schäfer 1986: 227–30; Peterson 2018: 284). I compare this image with related ones in different contexts in order to understand why the form of a winged and legged serpent was used, and to suggest that it is both a *sšmw*-image and *jrw*-image.

As a group, nos 754–758 may crystallize more than one aspect of the course of the sun: its daily passage through the sky, as well as the cyclical destruction and renewal of time that occurs with the passing of each day (Manassa 2007 [i]: 352–4; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 70, 227). Siegfried Schott (1965: 193–4) interpreted nos 755 and 756 as representing the moment of creation, when the ophidian sun-god first rose from the primeval flood-waters. This fits with the Egyptian belief that each sunrise re-enacted the original moment of creation. Additional support may come from the references to swallowing and devouring in the label: these have parallels in religious texts relating to rebirth and sunrise, and may refer to the sun-god absorbing aspects of being in order to gain certain powers in preparation for his re-emergence at dawn (Goebs 2008: 303–34). The adjacent group consists of a serpent surrounded by a number of stars and with a goddess seated atop it. These images, numbered 757 and 758, are drawn in red, which may mark them out as a 'superordinate' group that places the content of nos 754–756, which are concerned with daily phenomena, within a broader, cosmic frame (for additional discussion of nos 757 and 758, and red images in general, see §3.5). The wings attached to no. 756 may represent how Atum illuminates and 'occupies the under-sky' (*ḥtp nnt*; Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 417), echoing the common motif of a winged solar disc, identified as Khepri in the 4th hour.[36] In the context of solar renewal, unfurled

[36] See further §3.5. The metaphoric use of images such as wings to convey qualities such as light may arise from webs of associations grounded in lived experience; the topic has been extensively discussed in anthropology (see, e.g., Mattson and Jones 2020: 426, with references). The sky observable from earth (*ḥrt*) has an inverted counterpart in the underworld, called the 'under-sky' (*nnt*; Allen 1988: 4; Zago 2018: 208).

wings grasped by the rejuvenated god may also allude to the loosening of wrappings as part of the regenerative process, these wrappings being radiant and frequently stylized on coffins and shrines as enfolding wings.[37]



Fig. 3.4: Amduat nos 755–758 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 21)

In the Amduat, the arrangement of nos 754–758 in a row, within a register that itself contains unrelated images, may incline observers to treat them as separate, independent deities. This is the case insofar as the sun-god in his barque 'calls out' to the serpent when passing through the 11th hour so that the *sšmw* of Atum emerges from its back. The Amduat catalogue also treats nos 755 and 756 as an individual entity alongside other deities, placing them in a cell together with an incense burner (Fig. 3.4). As I now argue, this may be interpreted as a secondary development influenced by the function of the long Amduat and its compositional format.

Variant presentations of the complex are scenes 5 and 10 on the 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37 (Figs 3.5, 3.6). In scene 5, the serpent wears the White Crown and bears a recumbent mummy on its tail. The anthropomorphic figure is uncaptioned and has a scarab, unusually depicted in profile, atop his head (Heerma van Voss 1985–1986: 73; see also Niwiński 1988: 101–2), which may mean that the image is a *sšmw* of Atum in the role of Khepri. In scene 10 are two four-legged serpents without wings and with human heads; the upper serpent is upside-down. Between their heads is a scarab, and between their bodies is an image of the solar disc containing a ram-headed seated deity and a dwarf,[38] as well as four representations of underworld caverns, each of which contains a horizontally oriented anthropomorphic figure. The figures in the Amduat and on P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37 may represent the totality of the solar cycle—that is, Re (*rʿ*; Baines 1985: 78), better known as an autonomous and mainly anthropomorphic deity—the version of the Amduat and scene 10 placing focus on Atum, and that of scene 5 foregrounding Khepri.

[37] Miniaci 2010: 54–6; Riggs 2014: 180. Note also the image of a *wt*-fetish within a solar disc, symbolizing regeneration (Schott 1965: pl. 4), and see n. 41 below.

[38] The absence of front legs and the unusual proportioning of the other limbs militate against identifying the figure as a scarab. On the solar associations of dwarfs, connecting with the symbolism of child deities, see Koenig 1992; Gasse and Grenier 2012.

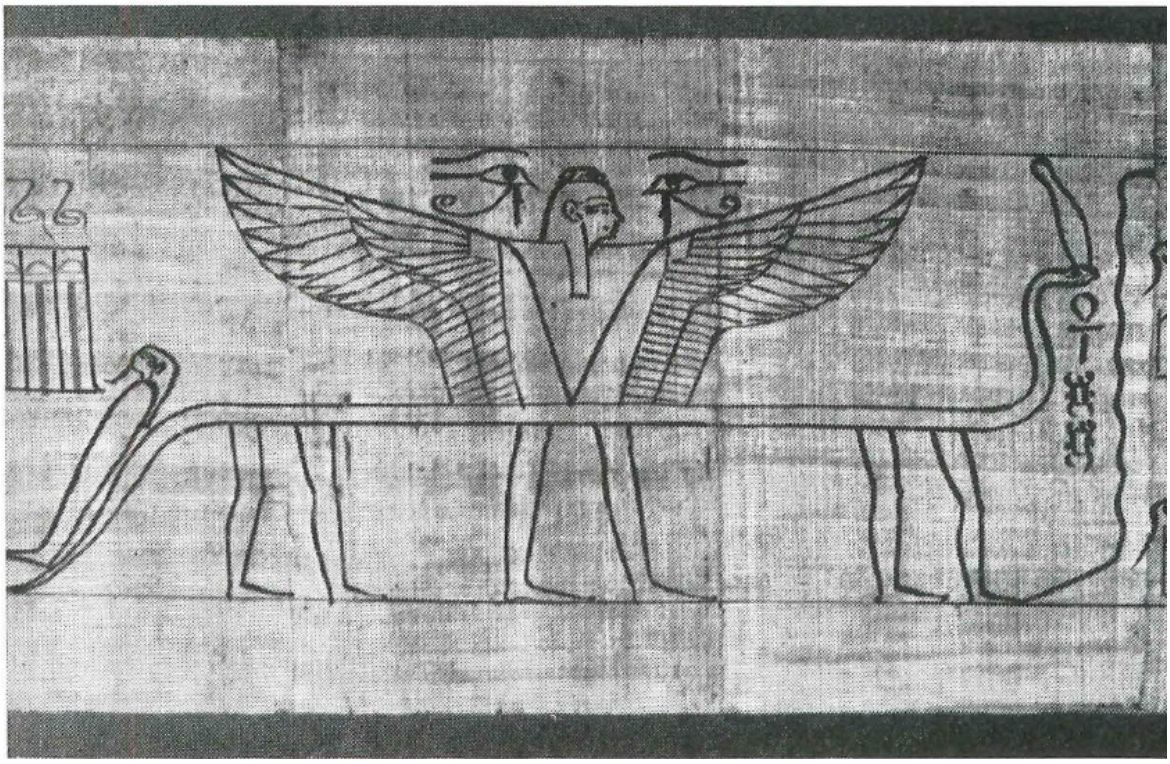

Fig. 3.5: P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37, scene 5, 21st Dynasty (Heerma van Voss 1974: pl. 93)

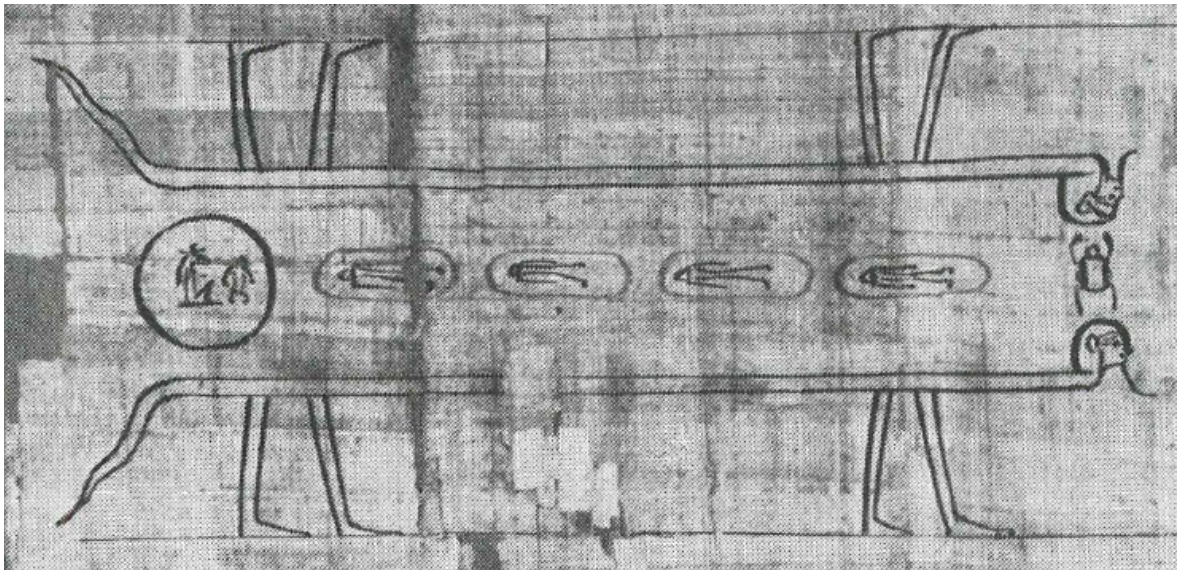

Fig. 3.6: P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37, scene 10, 21st Dynasty (Heerma van Voss 1974: fig. 93)

The differences between the versions may arise from their respective compositional settings. Fig. 3.6 may render Fig. 3.5, and by extension Amduat nos 755 and 756, in a top-down, semi-exploded view enabling the depiction of 'internal' components divided along a horizontal line of

symmetry (compare Schäfer 1986: 139, figs 119–121). I employ the prefix ‘semi’ because modern usage of ‘exploded-view’ typically refers to planar graphical projections of three-dimensional subjects, which the Egyptian material is not. The treatment is furthermore to be distinguished from the ‘overlooked’ scenes discussed by Heinrich Schäfer (1986: 189, 196). It is called a ‘perspectivized ground plan scheme’ by Daniel Werning (2018: 219). His use of the term ‘perspectivized’ refers to the implied three-dimensional rotation of the pictorial plane from the standpoint of the human observer, rather than implying depth of field within the scene, but is problematic because it is difficult to speak of a single viewpoint for a scene that is not proportionally scaled.

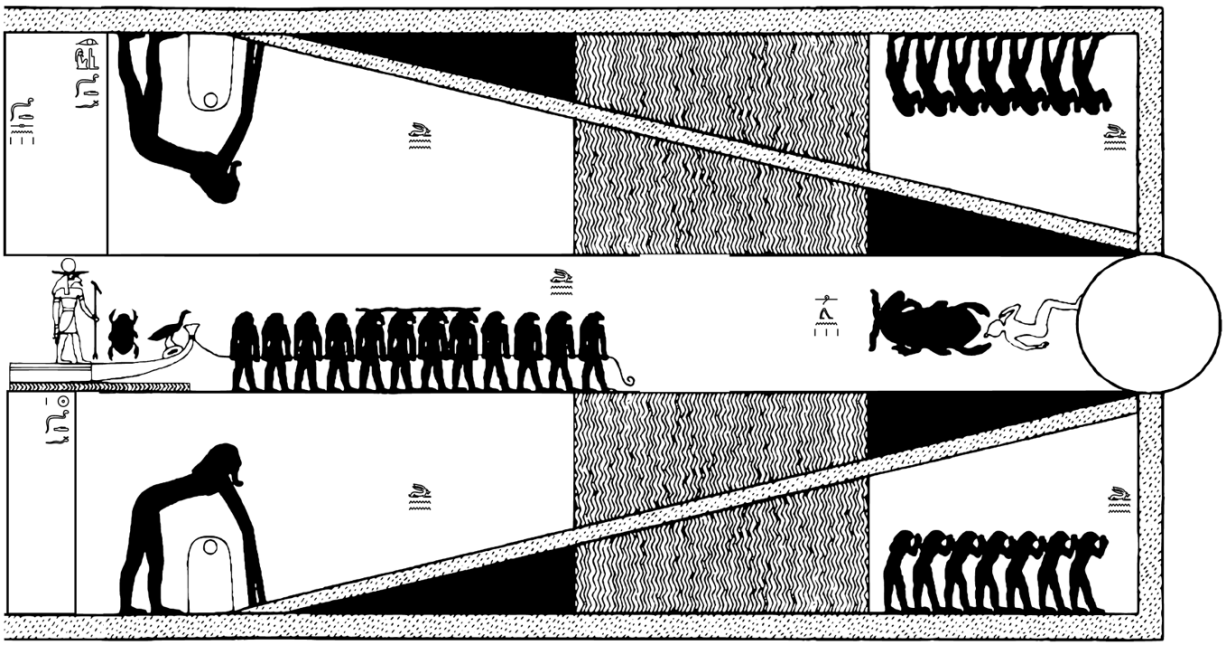

Fig. 3.7: Book of Caverns sunrise scene, schematic line drawing (Werning 2011 [i]: 461)

The arrangement of the ophidian composites in Fig. 3.6 can be compared with the sunrise scene in the Book of Caverns (Fig. 3.7). Apart from lacking an ophidian element, the main difference between the Book of Caverns scene and those from P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37 is the fact that the former encapsulates a three-register composition whereas the latter are part of a single-register composition. In the case of scene 5 on the papyrus, this allows the ophidian element to double as a symbol of regeneration and a representation of the horizon, contrasting with the three-register Amduat. In the latter, no. 869 in the 12th hour—a giant snake labelled ‘*kꜣ* of the one who causes the gods to live’ (*kꜣ n dj ꜥnḫ nṯrw*; Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: 829), and through which the sun-

god is pulled—is a comparable symbol of regeneration, but does not itself represent the eastern horizon.[39] It is instead located within a 'topographic' frame spanning all three registers of the tableau, and upon which the mummified body of Osiris lies.



Fig. 3.8: P. Cairo SR IV.655, variant presentation of Amduat nos 755 and 756, 21st Dynasty (Sadek 1985: 91, fig. 7)

The 'winged and legged serpent' form of no. 756 is a schematic representation that works with the three-register format of the Amduat's 11th hour, showing how the relationship between a composite figure and its parts is subject to wider iconographic and compositional factors. In the three-register frame of the 11th hour of the Amduat, the grouping represented elsewhere by semi-exploded compositions is compressed into the single group of nos 755 and 756. Although the wings are attached to the serpent, their symbolism suggests that they relate more closely to the figure of Atum, perhaps because wings are rarely attached to male anthropomorphic figures as a matter of convention.[40] A rare exception occurs on the late 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus P. Cairo SR IV.655 (Fig. 3.8). The figure on this papyrus may be an extension of the form in which the wings connect directly to the shoulders of the anthropomorphic figure and delineate his torso, as in Fig. 3.5.[41]

Several associations, from the luminosity of wings to the regenerative symbolism of snakes, were condensed into nos 755 and 756, each indicated by an element of the group. From this perspective, the ophidian figure no. 756 may be understood as an *jrw*-image that expresses certain qualities of the underworld during the sun-god's nocturnal journey, as well as a *sšmw*-image that manifests that cosmic realm within the pictorial context of the 11th hour tableau and situates it in

[39] Snakes, particularly cobras, are often associated with the horizon in the underworld books (e.g. Roberson 2012: figs 5.1, 5.16, 5.26).

[40] This would fit with the common 26th Dynasty representation of Atum as a bearded serpent, often with legs but never with wings (Leithy 2018).

[41] Abdel-Aziz Fahmy Sadek (1985: 215) interprets the latter form as representing the anthropomorphic figure wearing a loose garment, which may accord with my earlier interpretation that the unfurling of wings is symbolically and iconographically related to the loosening of wrappings as part of the regenerative process. Meeks (1986: 187, with n. 59) has proposed a similar explanation for figures that appear to be wrapped, with no limbs or other attributes shown, resembling early anthropomorphic representations of gods: 'Enfermés encore dans leur gangue, ne sont-ils pas le symbole de ce qui prend forme, de l'individualité en cours de réalisation?'

relation to other depicted beings. The Amduat catalogue suggests that a conceptual transformation was effected too: in nos 755 and 756 a diagram of cosmic processes interweaves many image–being relations into a single complex, which is treated as an autonomous agent. Since the representation was designed for use within the pictorial context of the Amduat, its schematization as an ophidian composite was made necessary. Neither of its two ontological statuses, as *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image, was primary; they should be seen as interdependent, emerging from the context which required a set of processes and relations involving multiple actors to be formulated as a complex figure of composite form. However, the layering of the two statuses of *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image highlights the distinction between symbolic and schematic: symbolic values probably influenced the form taken by a schematic image, but they are not central to its efficacy.



Fig. 3.9: P. Louvre N3109, variant presentation of Amduat no. 869, 21st Dynasty (Niwiński 1989: pl. 39a)

The status of nos 755 and 756 as both *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image has further implications for understanding the formal and ontological characteristics of the Amduat. The visual strategies outlined so far amplify the ontological resonance of images. A point of comparison is the variant form of the serpent no. 869 on the late 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus P. Louvre N3109, where it has wings and crowns in the manner of no. 756 (Fig. 3.9). It is a schematic representation of the underworld, within a larger compositional frame. In this respect it is conceptually similar to nos 755–756. Both create a concentric layering of images, of underworld within underworld (compare Bahrani 2014: 124–32).

When inscribed in a tomb, these layers were nested within a space that was itself a three-dimensional underworld. This fractal structure of *sšmw*-images widened the range of possible relations between the beings present, maximizing ritual potency. Schematization implies an

ontological hierarchy between being and image, but the ritual function of the Amduat collapses that, making image and being ontologically coextensive. Transplanting images from a mimetic paradigm to a participatory one involved balancing interrelated considerations of meaning, ontology, and format (see further §3.6).



Fig. 3.10: Book of Caverns, *štȝyt* motif, tomb of Ramesses VI (Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 27)

The assemblage of ideas, actors, and processes represented by nos 755 and 756 from the Amduat could be modified based on the semantic and iconographic requirements of other contexts of depiction. A motif labelled 'the secret one' (*štȝyt*), attested from the Book of Caverns and Books of the Earth (Fig. 3.10), exemplifies a formal transformation. The motif '[expresses] the idea of the netherworld in terms of a female body within which life is regenerated', overlapping with a role of the goddess Nut (Billing 2006: 55, 70; Zago 2021). As in the Amduat, the underworld is treated as an active regenerator of the sun-god (Werning 2011 [ii]: 234–5). The dual aspects of the sun-god's day and night forms are retained in the form of the solar disc and ram-headed figure held in the hands of the female figure, while the human-headed serpents flanking the female figure, as well as the figures located between the serpents and the female figure, recall the ophidian composites in Fig. 3.6; versions which show the serpents with added arms, adoring the two aspects of the sun-god, bring to mind vignettes in other underworld books (see n. 39 above). This line of argument militates against the suggestion that the *štȝyt* motif derives from the image of a female figure grasping two serpents, such as depicted on apotropaic wands (Billing 2006: 52; Zago 2021), but retains the underlying principle which guides that analysis, that 'core' motifs, in the sense of configurations of elements, could be reformulated (after Davis 1989: 64). Lastly, the label to the entire picture states: 'then these snakes go upside-down, their faces in the lower underworld of the gods; then this goddess goes to rest upon her great *sšmw*, without knowing [...] the one secret of appearances' (*sḫd.ḫr nn ḥfȝw ḥr≠sn m dwȝt ḫry(t) nṯrw ḥtp.ḫr*

nṯr(t) tn ḥr sšmw=s ꜥ.ỉ jwt rḏ [...] štỉyt nt ḫprw; Werning 2011 [ii]: 238–9). The withdrawal and inversion of the picture's elements parallels the 'swallowing' of the *sšmw* referenced in the label to nos 755 and 756 in the Amduat. The *štỉyt* motif, similar to Fig. 3.6, is thus another semi-exploded variant of nos 755 and 756. It remains diagrammatic, but has been rotated to vertical and linked to additional beings by assimilating further mythical and theological content. Its vertical orientation may have encouraged its reformulation as an anthropomorphic figure, which predominate in the underworld books. These changes allow it to operate as an agent in a specific thematic and material context. Thus its underlying structure is similar to Amduat nos 755 and 756 despite differences in form.

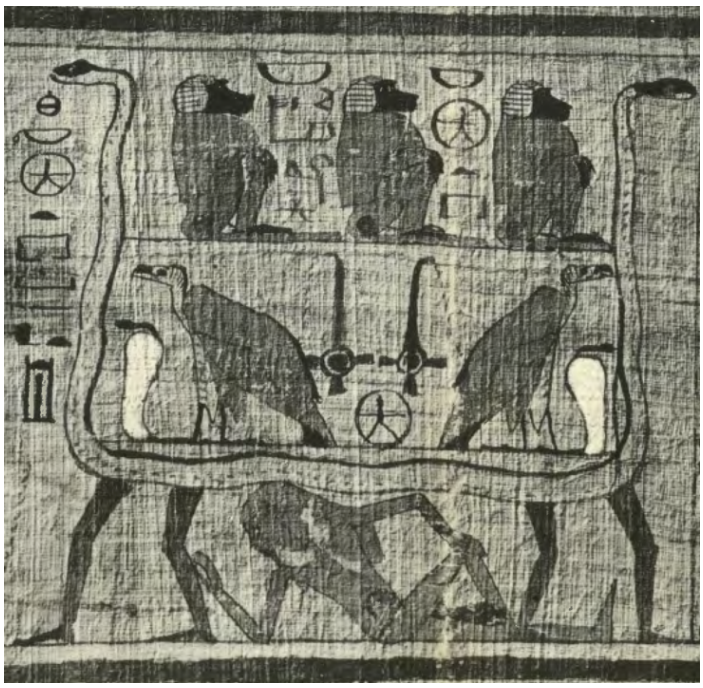

Fig. 3.11: P. Louvre 3297, scene 3, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 126–7; [ii]: pl. 12)

The second kind of transformation is elaborative. It involves adding visual elements to a picture to amplify the ontic force of the image by depicting elements otherwise implicit to the complex figure. It is exemplified by a group of mortuary papyri dating to the late 21st Dynasty (Niwiński 1989: 204), which depict the deceased worshipping a variety of figures drawn from the Book of the Dead, the Amduat, and other underworld books. The papyri are termed 'Book of what is in the underworld' (*mḏỉt jmy dwỉt*), and were therefore understood to depict the underworld, its aspects, and its elements. The first papyrus I consider is P. Louvre 3297, which includes a depiction of the underworld as a double-headed serpent with two pairs of legs (Fig. 3.11). The figure is captioned 'I

am the mysterious underworld' (*jnk dwꜣt štꜣt*). Geb lies between the legs of the ophidian composite, identifying the latter with Nut, the sky. Between the upraised ends of the serpent is the logogram reading *dwꜣt*, surmounted by two braziers flanked symmetrically by vultures and cobras. Above this scene are three baboons, labelled 'lord of the underworld' (*nb dwꜣt*) and 'lord of the necropolis, ruler of the underworld' (*nb ḫrt-nṯr ḥḳꜣ dwꜣt*).

This grouping of figures may be compared with P. MMA 25.3.31 (Fig. 3.12), which transforms Amduat no. 756 into a double-headed serpent similar to that in Fig. 3.11, and grants each half of its body a pair of wings, which are grasped by the anthropomorphic male figure who emerges from its midpoint and is flanked by two cobras, recalling other representations of the rising sun (single-headed variant: P. Cleveland Museum of Art 14.725; Niwiński 1989: pl. 37b, top-left of top register). In both Figs 3.11 and 3.12, multiple relations between being and image were established and existed in parallel. Contrasting with the division of the New Kingdom Amduat into registers, within which are diagrammatic figures, here the diagram occupies the height of the single-register composition and encloses sub-registers, effectively establishing a frame within a frame, image within image (Bateman et al. 2017: 283).



Fig. 3.12: P. MMA 25.3.31, part of scene 3, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 184; [ii]: pl. 24)

A third kind of transformation occurs on the conceptual level, and involves establishing a hierarchy for the various relations encompassed by an image. P. BM EA 10018 (Fig. 3.13; Schott 1965: 195, pl. 4) contains a picture of a serpent that terminates with a human head at one end and a jackal

head at the other. A leash is looped just beneath the former, and hangs downward. The serpent has two pairs of legs, between which is an undetailed circle. A pair of unfurled wings rises from the midpoint of the serpent; between them is a sun-disc containing a scarab. Stars occupy the space around this complex figure, and the whole picture is labelled 'death, the great god who acts for gods and men' (*mwt pꜣ nṯr ꜥꜣ jrr n nṯrw rmṯ*). Here, the sun-god is present simply as a sun-disc, as in the Book of Caverns and Books of the Earth, and the phenomenon of the nightly solar journey is schematized as an ophidian composite (see further §3.8). The significance of the ophidian composite in Fig. 3.13 lies in how it emphasizes the integration of the *sšmw*-image of the sun-god and that of the ophidian composite. These are distinct in the 11th hour of the Amduat, but in Fig. 3.13 they are together treated as a single *sšmw*-image of the agent 'death, the great god'. The sun-god and the cosmos are together subordinated in the pictorial complex, both in formal terms since they relate specifically to the components of the sun-disc and serpent body, and in ontological terms because they are treated as epiphenomena of the overarching subject 'death'. The composite figures possess distinct conceptual structures.[42]



Fig. 3.13: P. BM EA 10018,2, 'death, the great god', 21st Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

[42] The representation of 'death, the great god' may also encapsulate additional subjects, represented in the 11th hour of the Amduat by nos 757 and 758. See further §3.5.

The form of this ophidian composite is comparable to another representation of the underworld on P. Louvre 3297 (Fig. 3.14), which depicts a serpent with a snake's head on one end and a jackal head on the other, a leash looped around the former and held by a hawk-headed deity. The entire grouping, excluding the hawk-headed deity,[43] is labelled 'the mysterious underworld' (*dwꜣt štꜣt*). Below it are two bound and decapitated captives, while above it sit eight guardian-demons wielding knives.

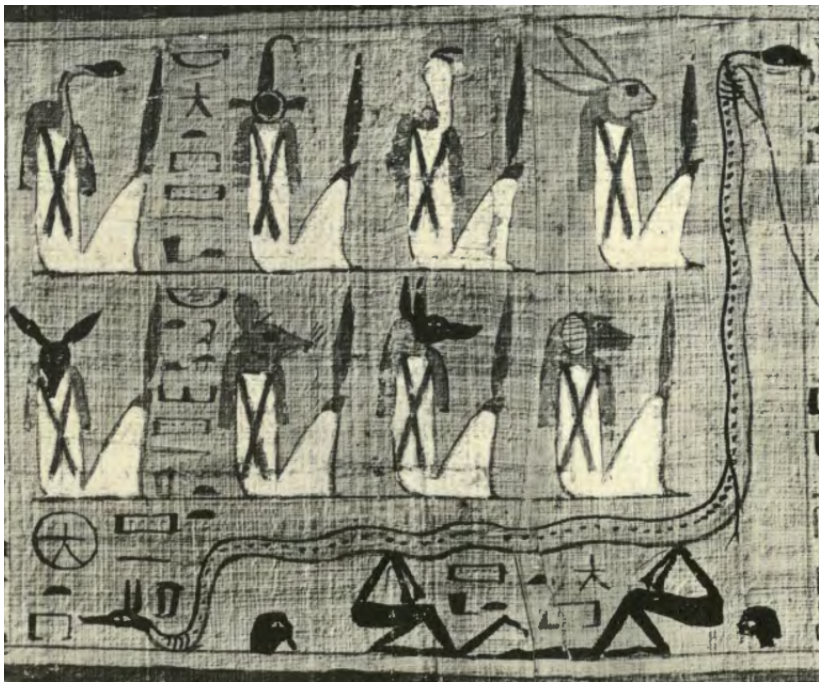

Fig. 3.14: P. Louvre 3297, scene 2, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 126–7; [ii]: pl. 12)

It is unsurprising that schematic images were used like this in the 21st Dynasty papyri. In Fig. 3.14, for example, the schematic representation of the underworld is part of a series of scenes showing the deceased being introduced into the underworld. As discussed earlier, nos 755 and 756 functioned as a single *sšmw*-image in the Amduat. This may have influenced the decision to include them in compositions which present the deceased individual interacting with the underworld and its inhabitants. Modifications, such as the omission of the anthropomorphic figure of Amun and the inclusion of braziers, baboons, and other elements of the underworld in sub-registers between the

[43] Four columns of text surrounding the hawk-headed deity read: 'I am the great god who gives orders in the mysterious underworld (...) who receives the hearts of [those who come](?)' (*jnk nṯr ꜥꜣ m dwꜣt (...) šsp jbw n* ⌜*?*⌝; translation by Piankoff 1957 [i]: 126).

heads of the ophidian composite, may be explained by the more flexible and cramped compositional format of the papyri, which encouraged retaining and exploiting the schematic nature of the image. These arrangements of figures would not have been possible in the Amduat as depicted on the walls of New Kingdom tombs. A related phenomenon on some 21st Dynasty *mḏꜣt jmy dwꜣt* papyri is the attribution of agency to Book of the Dead vignettes which occur as illustrations to spells on largely text-primary New Kingdom manuscripts. On such papyri, the deceased can be shown worshipping them (Niwiński 1989: 192–6). Their status has been transformed: they are not treated as illustrations accompanying ritual utterances that enable individuals to 'come forth by day' (*prt m hrw*), but as autonomous beings with whom others may engage. This understanding provides a counterargument to Niwiński's (1989: 196) suggestion that the *mḏꜣt jmy dwꜣt* title of such compositions resulted from the Egyptians being confused by an 'embarras de richesse, when many different types of the illustrated funerary papyri were produced in a number of Theban workshops at the same time'. The issue lies rather with how modern classifications have largely been based on descriptive iconographic work instead of conceptual analysis of images.

3.3 No. 458



Fig. 3.15: Amduat nos 458 and 459, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

The next Amduat case study is the multi-headed serpent no. 458 (Fig. 3.15). The number of heads varies between tombs, from three to five; its undulating body surrounds a male anthropomorphic figure (no. 459). No. 459 is oriented horizontally as if lying down, although he is in a 'striding' pose with his hand raised beside his face, perhaps representing his 'awakening' (Manassa 2007 [i]: 38, 238). A scarab is atop the head of the male figure; the Amduat catalogue (Bucher 1932: pl. 18), as well as later versions of the long Amduat, depict his hand nearly touching the scarab, similar to the sign .

No. 458 does not have its own label in the long Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, but the label to the entire scene identifies it as 'many-faced one' (*ꜥšꜣ-ḥrw*). This is the same epithet that is used in the Amduat catalogue, and in the long Amduat in the tomb of Ramesses VI. No. 459 is labelled 'flesh' (*jwf*) in Thutmose III's copy of the long Amduat.[44]

[44] The Amduat catalogue (Bucher 1932: pl. 18) and later examples of the long Amduat—such as that in the tomb of Seti I—show no. 459 standing atop three 'flesh' signs .

The label to the entire scene, placed above and below the anthropomorphic figure, reads:

ḥꜣt ḫpr(j) pw m jwf ḏs=f ʿšꜣ-ḥrw m sꜣꜣ{n}〈=s〉
wnn=f m sḫrw pn sd=f m r=f
jrt=f pw dwn=f ḫr sšmw pn wꜣ.ḫr=f jmntt mj-ḳd jwty šm=f r st nb nt dwꜣt
ḫrw rʿ pw jw sšmw jm=f
It is the corpse of Khepri in his own flesh,[45] with the many-faced one as 〈its〉 protector.
It (i.e. the multi-headed snake) is like this: its tail is in its mouth.
What he does is stretch out under this *sšmw*-image. Then he comes close to the entire West, without going to any (other) place of the underworld.[46]
It is the voice of Re from which the *sšmw*-image comes.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 502–4)

In the label to the entire scene, the determinative of *ʿšꜣ-ḥrw* is a five-headed serpent with a long tail, matching the pictorial image (although the tail coils beneath it in the determinative and upward in the picture). The rubricized section of the label does not seem to be paratext. The different colours were probably meant to indicate that the first part of the label refers to the scene as a whole, while the second part refers to the ophidian composite; such use of colours is known from other contexts (Posener 1951: 79).

The epithet *ʿšꜣ-ḥrw* is used in the Book of Two Ways to refer to Seth as guardian of the sun-god (CT 1179: *CT* VI, 517a–j; Lesko 1972: 62–3), and is elsewhere attested as an epithet of multi-headed deities, where at least one head, or the body, is of ophidian character (*LGG* II, 218–19). The description of the ophidian composite as having its tail in its mouth identifies it as an encircling serpent, which acts as a protective figure in other forms and contexts (Reemes 2015). In this section, I suggest that no. 458 can be viewed as a reformulation of the motif, which enabled the common symbol of an encircling serpent to serve as an *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image of a specific being within the compositional framework of the Amduat.

Dana Reemes (2015) has convincingly argued against the existence of the *ouroboros* as a motif with fixed visual form in ancient Egypt. Attempts to investigate iconological and ontological differences between pictures of 'true' *ouroboroi* and no. 458 in the Amduat are probably misguided—Darnell and Darnell (2018: 192 n. 97), for example, claim that no. 458 is 'not a true [*ouroboros*]', since

[45] Alternatively, 'the corpse of the one who comes into being from his own flesh', with *ḫpr* treated as a participle, thereby identifying no. 459 as Osiris (Gestermann 1999: 106). The two interpretations are not mutually exclusive.
[46] Analysis of the unusual *jwty sḏm=f* form: Barta 1986b.

its tail is near but not in its mouth. Ritner (1984: 219) comes closest to Reemes's view, suggesting that the *ouroboros* form is 'merely a logical variation of the standard coiled image of the guardian serpent whose name derives from the verb "to encircle or surround"' (*mḥn*). By this view, no. 458 should not be treated as an *ouroboros*, but rather a member of the general category of 'guardian serpent', along with 'true' *ouroboroi*, despite its label explicitly saying that its tail is in its mouth.

The group comprising nos 458 and 459 depicts the recumbent anthropomorphic figure of Khepri or Osiris surrounded by the ophidian composite. It is significant that the deity is not shown reclining next to the ophidian composite—an arrangement that would be possible within the general conventions used by the Amduat and underworld books to represent groups of figures on a horizontal plane. The figure of Khepri/Osiris is instead depicted within the coils of the ophidian composite, creating a vertical composition. Reconfiguring horizontal space as vertical space makes the group as a whole consistent with the majority of figures in the Amduat: vertical, mostly standing figures, arranged atop register lines which double as representations of sandy ground. Such reconfigurations are well-attested elsewhere (Schäfer 1986: 111, 187–95, 247–50, especially figs 66, 187–9, 262–4, 267).

The horizontal configuration of the entire group further resulted in the lateral layering of the multiple heads of no. 458, even though a modern viewer accustomed to the use of perspective and depth of field might think that their spatial relationship is better expressed by vertical layering. Layering the heads laterally allows their relationship with the body—now oriented horizontally—to be expressed more clearly. No. 458 was designed to negotiate formal constraints on pictorial representation within the Amduat as a composition. The point is significant for understanding pictures of non-composite snakes in the Amduat and elsewhere: serpents such as *mḥn*, which are shown going 'over' the body and head of figures, are vertical formulations of horizontal configurations, where the snake coils 'around' an object (comparable explanation: Reemes 2015: 123–4).

The preceding analysis impacts the interpretation of the label to the scene, and has implications for understanding the formal and ontological characteristics of the Amduat. The label describes the ophidian composite as stretching out 'under' (*ḫr*) the figure of Khepri/Osiris, fitting its appearance. Reemes (2015: 31 n. 72) suggests that *ḫr* should be understood to mean 'around'—a reading otherwise unattested (*Wb.* III, 386.1–388.15). While his idiomatic translation is plausible, the relationship between image and label speaks against it. Jansen-Winkeln (2004: 210) raised the

possibility, following analysis of the Amduat's grammatical features, that the written elements of the long version were secondary to its pictorial elements; examination of no. 458 seems to confirm this: the overall compositional scheme of the Amduat took precedence, followed by the design of individual figures within it, and finally the organization and redaction of associated written elements. The determinative to the epithet *ʿšʾ-ḥrw* in the label is not a generic serpent determinative, but is similar to the form of no. 458 itself. Translating the preposition *ḫr* as 'under' or 'bearing, carrying' reflects that relationship: as an agentive representation ontologically equivalent to a being, no. 458 interacts with its environment in its position 'under' no. 459 only because external factors led to that configuration being used. The ontological equivalence of the *sšmw* with a being does not imply the prior existence of the being in that particular visual form, but indicates that being and *sšmw* were mutually constitutive, their relationship dialogically constructed, in opposition to theories which subordinate the form and ontology of the image to that of the being (compare Bahrani 2003: chs 3–4, and 133–4, 146–7; Meskell 2004: 104).

3.4 No. 279

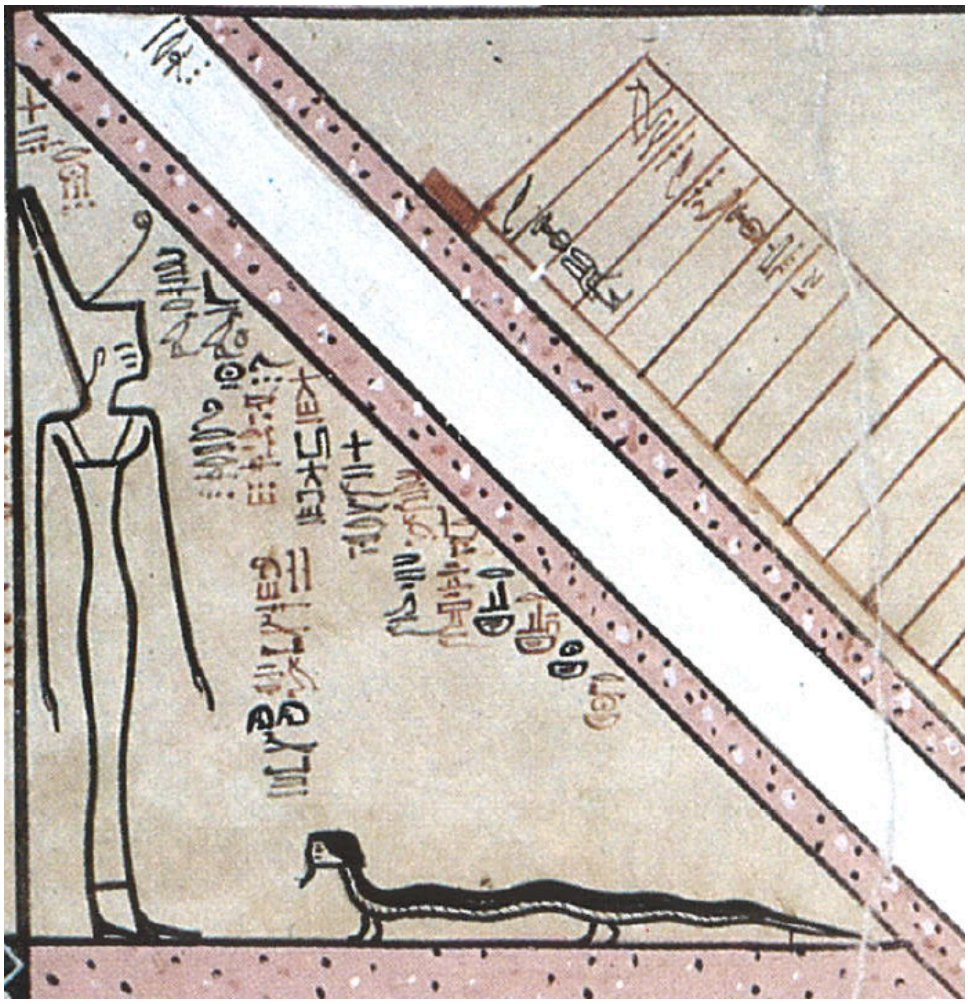

Fig. 3.16: Amduat nos 278 and 279, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 9)

No. 279 is a horizontal serpent at the left end of the top register in the 4th hour tableau. It has two pairs of legs and a male human head with a short wig and divine beard (Fig. 3.16). It faces a female anthropomorphic figure who wears a sheath dress and Red Crown (no. 278). Both figures stand next to the zigzag path that descends into the underworld. No. 279 is labelled as follows:

> *tpy sꜣw mṯn wnn=f m jr(y) wꜣt tn jwt(y) šm.n=f r st nb rˁ nb*
> *tpy*,[47] who guards the way. He exists as the guardian of this road, without ever going elsewhere.[48]
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 355–6)

[47] I discuss possible translations of *tpy* below.

[48] For the translation of *rˁ nb* as 'ever', see Winter 2003: 206.

The female anthropomorphic figure (no. 278) is unnamed in the long Amduat, but is designated 'the lamenting one' (*ḥ3t*) in the Amduat catalogue. In the long Amduat, her label reads: 'she exists at the sunrise' (*wnn=s r wbnw*). The zigzag path is labelled 'that of Rasetjau' (*n(y) r-st3w*).

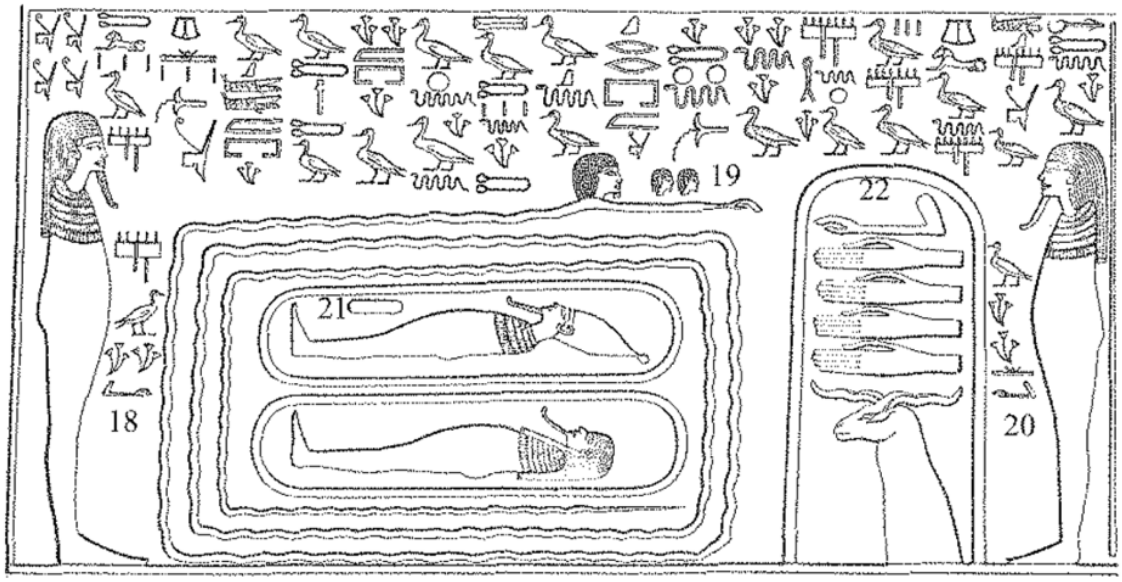

Fig. 3.17: Scene 9, first side of the second shrine of Tutankhamun (Darnell 2004: 90–1, 95, pl. 8)

There are other examples of human-headed serpents being called *tpy* in the underworld books. These suggest that the epithet *tpy* refers to the specific form of a human-headed serpent, and that this form is associated with protective roles in a solar context, being thus classifiable as an *jrw*-image conveying these qualities through symbolism. In this section, I describe these examples in turn, focusing on the role played by the human-headed serpent form in each context. I argue that no. 279 in the Amduat is a variant of figures known from other underworld books. Modification to the base *jrw*-image enables the ideas common to these motifs to be crystallized as a being, made manifest as a *sšmw*-image, within the pictorial context of the Amduat's 4th hour tableau.

The first example occurs in Scene 9 on the first side of the second shrine of Tutankhamun, which features an enigmatic composition relating to the 'solar-Osirian unity'. The ophidian composite surrounds the corpses of Re and Osiris in an undulating spiral (Fig. 3.17). The front end of the serpent is modelled as a human arm, a human head located behind it. The scene is labelled:

nn n nṯrw m sḫr pn m ḳrrt jmt ḥtmyt
jw b3 rˁ ḏwj=f ḥ3wt=f jm ˁḳ=f m ḳrrt tn ḥ3ty tpy jm
sḥḏ rˁ jmyw=s m ḫrw=f srḳ=sn m-ḫt ḏwj

These gods are like this in the cavern which is in the place of destruction.
The *bꜣ* of Re calls out to his corpses there when he enters this cavern, the light of *tpy* being there.
Re illumines those who are in it with his voice; they breathe after the call.

(Darnell 2004: 94)

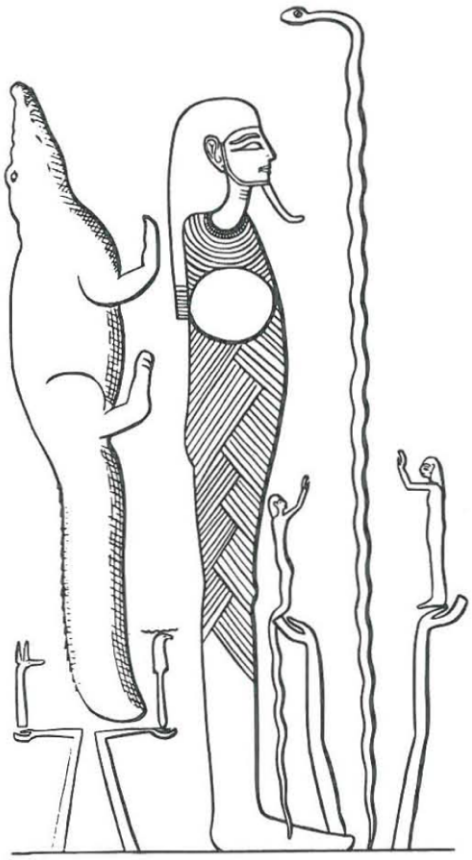

Fig. 3.18: Books of the Earth, scene 28, tomb of Ramesses VI (Roberson 2012: 207; see also Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 120)

Another example occurs in scene 28 of the Books of the Earth, where it is held on one of a pair of arms emerging from the ground in front of the mummiform solar corpse, and raises its human arms in a gesture of adoration; no legs are present (Fig. 3.18). Its label reads: 'the one who is in the bank throughout the West: *tpy*' (*jmy jdb ḫt jmntt tpy*; Roberson 2012: 207).

The third example is from the Book of Caverns (division 5, scene 51). The scene depicts four upright serpents with bearded human heads but no legs. These are labelled *dpy* (equivalent to *tpy*: Roberson 2018), 'teary one' (*rmywt*), 'one who emerges from Re' (*pr m rꜥ*)', and 'limb which is in Re' (*ḥꜥ jmy rꜥ*; Fig. 3.19). The accompanying label reads:

wnn≠sn m sḫr pn
ꜥp nṯr pn ꜣ ḥr≠sn jw≠sn ꜥḥꜥ≠sn ḫns≠f jw≠f ꜥp≠f ḥr≠sn tj≠sn m kkw
They are like this:
This great god passes them by; they stand up when he travels past; he passes them by while they are in darkness.

(Werning 2011 [ii]: 240)

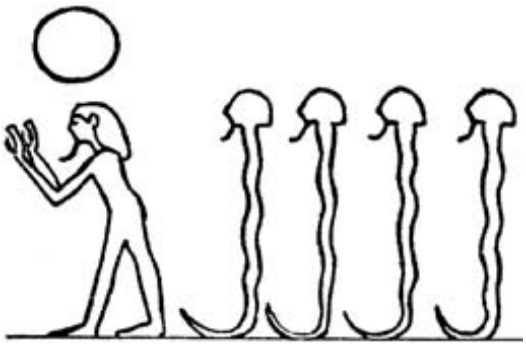

Fig. 3.19: Book of Caverns, division 5, scene 51, schematic line drawing (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 403; see also Werning 2011 [ii]: 240–1)

The group of four human-headed serpents is preceded by a standing male anthropomorphic figure with a beard, his hands extended in a gesture of adoration, a disc above his head. This figure is identified as Osiris, and its label reads: 'this god is like this: he gives his arms to this great god when he traverses the mysterious underworld' (*wnn nṯr pn m sḫr pn dj≠f ꜥwy≠f r nṯr pn ꜣ snj≠f dwꜣt štꜣt*;

Werning 2011 [ii]: 240–1). Roberson (2012: 196) suggests that the human-headed serpents are comparable to the processions of deities in the various closing scenes of the underworld books.

Two further examples occur in variants of the *štꜣyt* motif (Billing 2006). Two upright serpents with bearded human heads (but no legs) flank a female figure, identifiable as the goddess Nut. The motif is attested as scene 56 in the Books of the Earth (Fig. 3.20) and scene 50 in the 5th division of the Book of Caverns (Fig. 3.10). Additional variants occur on the sarcophagus lids of Siptah, Tawosret/Setnakht, Ramesses III, and Ramesses IV. In the Books of the Earth, Nut is flanked by a crocodile on the right and a snake on the left, both upright on their tails (Roberson 2012: figs 5.56a–b). The ophidian composite on the left is labelled 'terrible of face' (*nḥꜣ-ḥr*), while that on the right is labelled *tpy*. Text accompanies the scene:



Fig. 3.20: Books of the Earth, *štꜣyt* motif, tomb of Ramesses VI (Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 133)

> *nṯrt tn m sḫr pn*
> *ʿpp nṯr pn ʿꜣ ḥr ḏrty=sy tpy (r) jmnt štꜣ(y)t ḥkn=f n nṯr ʿꜣ*
> *tp štꜣ(y)t m dwꜣt ḥrt rdwy=sy m dwꜣt ḫrt bꜣwy ʿp=f ḫꜣt=s*
> This goddess is like this:
> This great god flies over her hands; *tpy* is to the right of the Secret One (*štꜣyt*) when he makes praise for the great god.
> The head of the Secret One is in the upper Duat; her legs are in the lower Duat; the dual *bꜣ* traverses her corpse.
>
> (Roberson 2012: 321–2)

The label shows that both of the ophidian composites serve protective roles. The first, *tpy*, is described as being 'on the right side of the Secret One when he praises the great god' (*tpy (r) jmnty štꜣ(y)t ḥkn=f n nṯr ʿꜣ*; Roberson 2012: 321). The other ophidian composite, labelled *nḥꜣ-ḥr*, is described

as ‘the encircling serpent who is in the secret land, the hidden realm of darkness’ (*mḥn jmy tꜣ šṯ(ꜣ) jmnt kk(w)*; Roberson 2012: 322).

The Book of Caverns replaces the crocodile and snake flanking the central female figure with a series of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and composite human–animal figures, representing the transformations of the sun-god over the course of day and night (Billing 2006: 56, 59–60). The labels to the two ophidian composites identify them, unusually, as inimical entities. The one on the left is identified as ‘he of the umbilical cord, the enemy of Re (...) who exists in their darkness as a flame, without the gods approaching them’ (*npꜣy ḫfty rˁ (...) wnn m kkw≠sn m sḏt jwt(y) ˁr nṯrw ḥr≠sn*; Werning 2011 [ii]: 236–7), the one on the right as ‘he of the navel (...) their darkness exists as a flame, without the gods approaching them’ (*ḫpꜣy (...) wnn kkw≠sn m sḏt jwt(y) rˁ nṯrw ḥr≠sn*; Werning 2011 [ii]: 238–9). Apophis is identified as the umbilical cord of Re in later sources (Quack 2006a), so it may be possible to interpret the human-headed serpents in this version of the *šṯꜣyt* motif as evoking the protected solar cycle and its antithesis Apophis, who is cut off and discarded at (re)birth. This understanding would run parallel to the pairing of *tpy* and *nḥꜣ-ḥr* in scene 56 of the Books of the Earth.

The characterizations of the human-headed serpents in the underworld books suggest that the form was used primarily to represent a protective force, represented as a serpent, that encircled the sun-god and guarded him against his enemies during his nightly journey. Just as *tpy* in the Books of the Earth acclaims Re, so does *tpy* in the Amduat guard the path of Re, and *tpy* on the second shrine of Tutankhamun encircle the corpses of Re and Osiris. The unusual, inimical connotations of the human-headed serpents in Fig. 3.10 may arise from their associations with the ambiguous epithet *nḥꜣ-ḥr*, which designates a human-headed serpent in Fig. 3.20. Beings termed *nḥꜣ-ḥr* are alternatively helpers and enemies of the sun-god. Although elsewhere used with reference to the enemies of Osiris and Re, and as an epithet of Apophis specifically, it is also used to describe serpents which protectively encircle the sun-god (Darnell 2004: 287; Roberson 2012: 254 n. 803; Reemes 2015: 149–53). This ambivalence fits with the contrasting characterizations of the symmetrical human-headed serpents in the *šṯꜣyt* motif.

These associations fit well with two possible translations of *tpy*. The first of these is a nisbe meaning ‘human-headed one’, referring to the appearance of the motif itself. The second translation is also a nisbe, but meaning ‘the first one’ or ‘primal one’: a reference to the creative force *mḥn*—often represented as a serpent—which spiralled outward from the sun-god at the moment of creation and which continually protects him from the forces of chaos surrounding the

cosmos (Reemes 2015: 143–5, with references). The translations are not mutually exclusive, and indeed this ambiguity may have been exploited. Both fit well with the position of no. 279 in the Amduat: the human-headed serpent 'guards the way' to the regenerative depths of the underworld and is associated with the figure no. 278 who 'exists at the sunrise', the defining moment of cosmic (re-)creation, perhaps referencing the 'roads of *mḥn*' as the circuit of the sun itself—an idea known from an earlier composition which itself alludes to the union of Re and Osiris (CT 758–760; see further §4.3).

Distinctive features of no. 279 in the Amduat are the absence of arms and the presence of two pairs of legs, as well as its horizontal orientation with no elaborate undulations or coils. No. 279 is not said to praise the sun-god in the Amduat, so the arms through which acclamation was expressed may not have been included. The lack of space in the scene may also have precluded their depiction, unlike *tpy* on the second shrine of Tutankhamun. The presence of legs, on the other hand, may be explored from a different perspective. Hornung (1999 [1997]: 36) understood them to indicate the 'uncanny movement' of no. 279 within the sandy environment of the 4th hour—although the label to no. 279 says that it does not move to any (other) place, it could plausibly move within its assigned location. Context is provided by the labels to scenes 50 and 51 in the 5th division of the Book of Caverns. The label to the former (the *štꜣyt* motif) reads:

> *jsṯ m-ḫt ꜥpp nṯr pn ꜥꜣ ḳrrt štꜣyt sḫd.ḫr nn ḥfꜣw ḥr=sn m dwꜣt ḫrt nṯrw*
> Now, after this great god has traversed the secret cavern, these serpents go upside-down, their face(s) in the lower Duat of the gods.
>
> (Werning 2011 [ii]: 238–9)

The label to scene 51 (see above) also refers to the moment the sun-god passes by them. The forms of these other ophidian composites reflect a similar, transient moment in the course of the solar journey, recalling how nos 755 and 756 in the Amduat represent the forms of beings at the moment the sun-god calls out to them before they are 'swallowed' again (§3.2). No. 279 in the Amduat lacks a more elaborate accompanying text which describes the episode more fully, so legs may have been added to express this dynamism in another way. Its legs index the transience and movement inherent to the implied transformations of the being. Their function, however, extends beyond that of the 'walking legs' sign  when used as a determinative. In those cases, 'movement' or 'displacement' is marked only as a quality of the referent (Gracia Zamacona 2001: 36–9; Goldwasser 2002: 14). Since the logic of the *sšmw*-image '[slides] the signified under the signifier' in

a ‘concretization of metaphor’, partially closing the ontological gap between them (Bahrani 2003: 111; Goldwasser 1995: 21–2), the legs of no. 279 become part of the being itself. It may be better compared with instances of ‘walking legs’ used as part of composite hieroglyphs such as . Although ‘movement’ is inherent to the meaning of the word written by that sign (*jnj*, ‘to bring’), employing a composite hieroglyph imbues the image of the sign itself with the idea of movement as well: ‘a pot which moves’.[49] With no. 279, movement is similarly manifest on the level of both image and being. The legs are isolated *jrw*-images which are integrated as elements of a larger *jrw*-image that itself serves as a *sšmw*-image; similar conclusions may be drawn for other examples of legged serpents, such as no. 756 (§3.2). Analogous features in modern comics are ‘motion lines’, which solve problems of temporal representation in static images but are not merely markers of ‘movement’ as an abstract quality. As traces of the object itself, they extend its presence through space and time, and could therefore be understood as being imbued with some ontic substance of it (McCloud 1993: 108–14; Cohn 2013: 37–40).



Fig. 3.21: P. BM EA 10470,27, vignette of BD 87, 19th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

Attaching legs to the human-headed serpent fits with related representations of *mḥn*, specifically in BD 87, where the deceased assumes the form of a cosmic serpent (§1.2.2). The serpent is depicted with a pair of legs on the papyrus of Ani (Fig. 3.21; P. BM EA 10470,27: Von Dassow 2015: pl. 27a), perhaps referencing the movement intrinsic to the circuit of the sun (Reemes 2015: 189–92, with n. 159). The version on the papyrus of Nu (P. BM EA 10477,11: Lapp 1997: pl. 31; Taylor 2010: 183) instead has the undulating body of the serpent descend into the region of the manuscript’s

[49] The quality is arguably lacking in signs such as , which reads *sšm*, commonly in the verb ‘to guide/lead’. Conjoining the two linguistic signifiers ‘knife’ and ‘walking legs’ does not make the resulting composite sign a pictorial representation of the word’s meaning. For other examples of composite hieroglyphs, see Fischer 1977b, although his discussion focuses on types of formal combinations and their historical patterning, rather than the resulting conceptual structures of the hieroglyphs. I resist comparison with emblematic personifications (for which see §5.1), because figures such as Amduat no. 279 are not ‘signs’ to be ‘read’, while hieroglyphs such as  do not seem to be treated as ‘iconographic’ elements.

text columns—a form shared with the similarly protective, vertically oriented ophidian composites in Figs 3.10 and 3.18–3.20. This contrast between horizontal and vertical orientation, and the relationship of each with ideas of movement, may similarly explain why the horizontally oriented no. 279 has legs while the vertically oriented forms in Figs 3.10 and 3.18–3.20 do not. This configuration works well with the format of the 4th hour tableau. Without the need for complex coils, no. 279 could be rendered at a relatively small scale and made to fit within the limited area at the top-left section of the tableau.

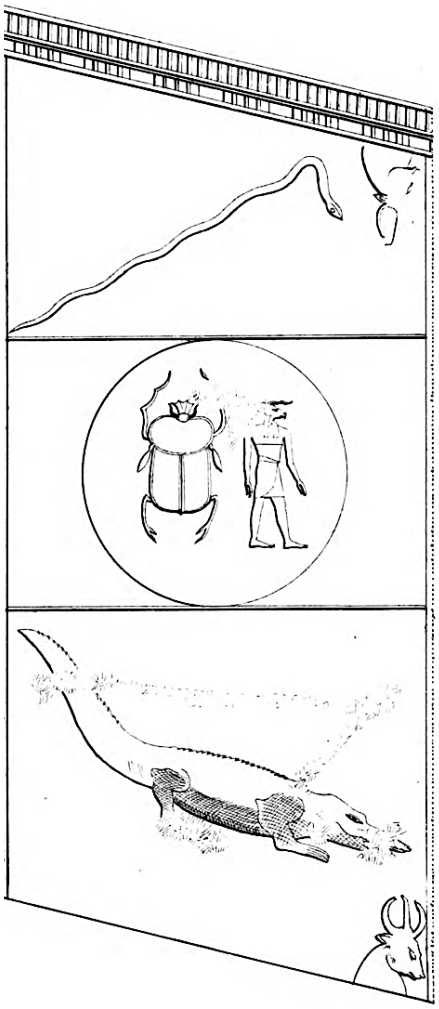

Fig. 3.22: Litany of Re opening scene, tomb of Seti I (Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 2; see also Hornung 1991: pls 3, 4)

The above analysis does not imply the *a priori* existence of a divine ophidian composite called *tpy* that appears in multiple contexts in the various underworld books, or that *tpy* as an epithet maps solely onto *mḥn*. Rather, the occurrence of similar forms in comparable thematic contexts suggests that the form itself held symbolism relevant to each context and may be designated an *jrw*-image. Each example considered is one of many possible representations of their respective being(s). The labels to all of these images indicate that they were ontologically coextensive with such beings and capable of interacting with the sun-god, making them *sšmw*-images too. As with no. 458 in the 6th hour (§3.3), being and image are mutually constitutive, so the figure's status as an *jrw*-image may be said to be primary.

This approach to no. 279 corroborates my interpretation of the *štȝyt* motif as an anthropomorphic, agentive version of schematic renderings of the cosmic realm traversed by the sun-god (§3.2). Conversely, the opening scene to the Litany of Re in the tomb of Seti I represents a non-agentive formulation. The middle register of the three-register scene is occupied by a sun-disc containing the scarab and ram-headed forms of the sun-god. The top and bottom registers depict a snake and a crocodile respectively, both oriented diagonally towards antelope heads with flames between their horns in the top- and bottom-right corners of the scene. The snake and crocodile face

into the tomb (Fig. 3.22), possibly as 'emissaries' of the sun-god going forth to destroy evildoers (Darnell 2004: 274). Alternatively, one may treat the entire opening scene as a horizontally oriented, non-anthropomorphic presentation of the idea represented by the *štȝyt* motif. The space occupied by the solar disc in this scene may be analogous to the central female figure in the *štȝyt* motif, representing the cosmic realm traversed by the sun-god, while the snake and crocodile are comparable to those depicted in the version of the motif attested in the Books of the Earth. The entrance to the tomb is identified as the entrance to an underworld, through which the sun-god—and by extension the deceased king—travels before being reborn. In all formulations of the motif, guardian figures surround the route and protect the traveller.

In summary, the appearance of the ophidian composite no. 279 was shaped by a combination of semantic and formal requirements placed upon the depiction of the being in the Amduat. Moreover, it extends the suggestion made in my analysis of no. 458 (§3.3), that designers of the long Amduat prioritized the overall compositional scheme, then the design of individual figures within the scheme, and finally its written elements. More broadly, no. 279 attests to the relationships between meaning, format, and function which guided the design of religious compositions. Similar to nos 755 and 756 (§3.2), no. 279 shows how composite forms helped to solve problems of representation arising from specific material and ideological contexts.

3.5 No. 325, with an Excursus on Red Images

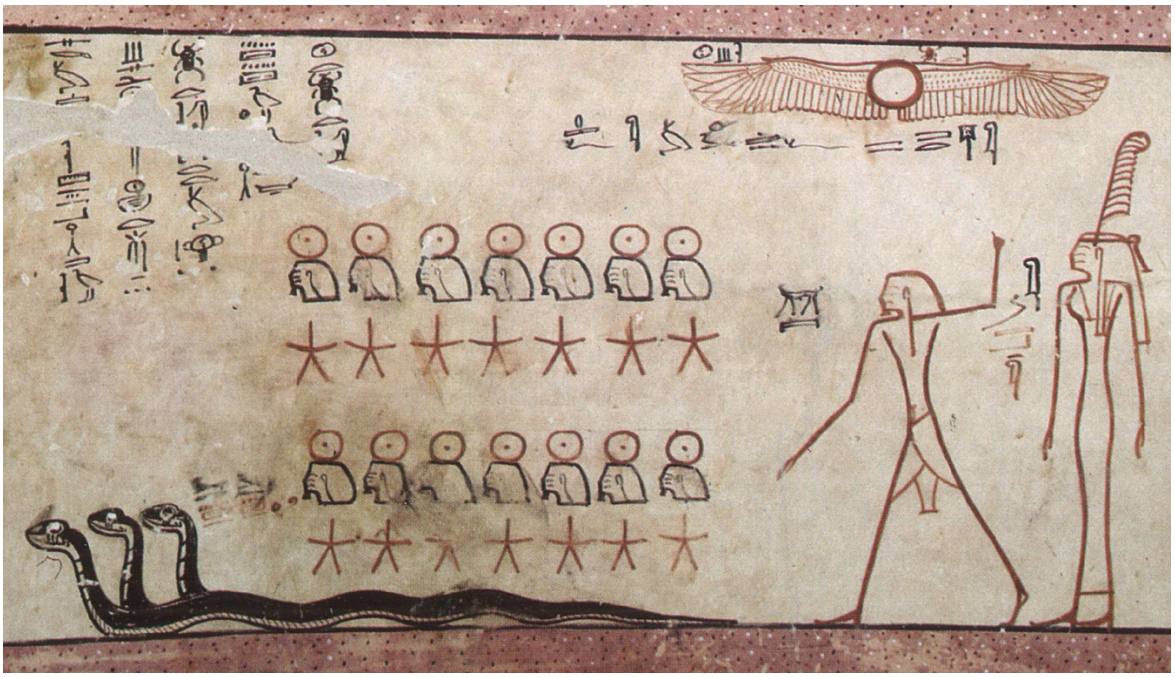

Fig. 3.23: Amduat nos 325–328, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 10)

The ophidian composite no. 325 has a horizontal body and three upraised heads (Fig. 3.23). Above its body are 14 male human heads with short beards, each with a sun-disc atop it and a star beneath it; the sun-discs and stars are drawn in red. Behind this group is a standing male anthropomorphic figure in what appears to be a smiting pose (no. 327). A female anthropomorphic figure wearing a fillet and ostrich feather (no. 328) stands behind the male figure, while a winged sun-disc (no. 326) is above him. Nos 326–328 are all drawn in red in the tomb of Thutmose III.

No. 325 is labelled 'the one who quakes' (*mnmnw*), the male figure in a smiting pose 'the one in the (upper) sky' (*jmy-ḥrt*), the female figure *mꜣꜥt*, and the winged sun-disc Khepri (*ḫprj*). In the copy of Thutmose III, each of these labels, except for *jmy-ḥrt*, is written twice—once in black enigmatic script, and again in red non-enigmatic script. *jmy-ḥrt* is in enigmatic script only. The use of enigmatic writing aligns with the scene's focus on the regeneration of the sun-god and Osiris, and the process of 'passing between the upper and lower worlds' (Darnell 2004: 481). The winged sun-disc has an additional enigmatic label in black: 'he rests, being as he ought,[50] in his *jrw* of "the god of

[50] More literally, 'truly' (e.g. Darnell and Darnell 2018: 174).

variegated plumage"' (*ḥtp=f mꜣꜥ(.w) m jrw=f n nṯr sꜣb šwt*). The entire scene features an extended non-enigmatic label in black ink:

> *sšmw pw štꜣ n jmḥt*
> *jw psḏ jm=s rꜥ nb r.mswt ḫprj prr m ḥrw mnmnw ḥr.ḫr ḫprj*
> This is a mysterious *sšmw* of the deepest underworld.[51]
> Light is in it[52] every day until Khepri, who comes forth from the faces of *mnmnw*, becomes manifest.[53] Then Khepri grows distant.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 380–2)

I suggested in §3.2 that nos 755 and 756 should be understood as a complex figure serving as a schematic representation of the underworld and its processes, to which agency was secondarily imparted. Here, I suggest that no. 325 can be similarly analysed because the label to the entire scene indicates that all the figures together constitute an image of the underworld. This conclusion has further implications for understanding the conceptualization of the associated figures nos 326–328, for the significance of red images in the copy of Thutmose III, and for the relationship between the structuring principles of decorum and compositional format in the long version of the Amduat.

First, the common representation of the underworld in ophidian form could suggest that no. 325 is a schematic representation of the underworld, similar to no. 756. The label to the scene describes how the reborn sun-god emerges 'from the faces' (*m ḥrw*) of no. 325, matching the description of the sun-god traversing the length of a giant serpent (no. 869) from tail to mouth in the 12th hour. The plural noun *ḥrw* is used in all New Kingdom copies, reducing the probability that the phrase should be read as the compound preposition 'in front of' or 'before' (*m-ḥr*). Second, the

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[51] *jmḥt*. Originally meaning 'cave', *jmḥt* referred to the Lower Egyptian source of the Nile, near Heliopolis (Egberts 1995: 123–4). This likely explains its association in the Amduat with Rasetjau, which originally referred to the Memphite necropoleis. It occurs in a parallel construction with the 'town of Hapy' (*njwt nt ḥꜥpy*) in the tomb inscription of Paheri at el-Kab (*Urk.* IV, 116.11–12). Compare the description of a divine serpent whose 'earthly form' (*ḥry-tꜣ*) resides in a gigantic chamber of meteoric iron in Heliopolis, filled with light such that 'nights are in it like days' (*jw gr grḥw jm=s mj hrww*), known from the 27th Dynasty tomb of Iufaa at Abusir (Landgráfová and Janák 2021: 184–6). The association of caves and other landforms with the divine and particularly chthonic realm is common across Egyptian history (Kemp 2006: 116–21). See further §3.6.

[52] Referring to the underworld. Alternatively: *jw ꜣḫ jm=s* 'It shines in it', with the image of the ophidian composite as subject.

[53] For the passive *r.sḏmt=f* form, see Zonhoven 1998: 86–9. Alternatively, the phrase could be translated as a temporal adjunct 'until the birth of Khepri, who comes forth from the faces of *mnmnw*', treating *r* as a preposition and *mswt* as an infinitive (Zonhoven 1997). Both analyses bring out the *irrealis* sense of the clause (Uljas 2007: 331), but the first allows the secondary sense of *mswt* as a 'divine manifestation' (Baines 1986) to be foregrounded in English translation.

epithet *mnmnw* accords with known descriptions of cosmic tumult accompanying appearances of the divine. Examples abound in the Pyramid Texts (e.g. Spiegel 1971: 439 n. 1; Goebs 2008: 213), and trees are said to 'quake' when the divine serpent, who evokes the solar creator-god, appears in the Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor (P. St Petersburg 1115, col. 60: Blackman 1932: 43).

The significance of the composite form is nevertheless uncertain. I propose understanding the three heads as combining multiple temporal instances into a single static figure. The 'quaking' of the being is shown by 'layering the reduplicated forms on top of each other' (Cohn 2013: 47–8). Formulating this representation as a set of three heads accommodated the ophidian form that was central to the symbolic requirements of the context. Yet its three heads go beyond this illustrative function to become part of the underworld itself, so that the reborn sun-god is said to emerge from them, as with Atum (no. 755) from the serpent no. 756 in the 11th hour (§3.2; see also Fig. 3.9). As discussed in relation to no. 458 (§3.3), image and being are mutually constitutive. No. 325 is furthermore comparable to no. 756: it is a schematic representation which reformulates a complex subject as a single *jrw*-image, which is simultaneously granted agency as a *sšmw*-image within the framework of the hour tableau. Neither ontological status is primary, because external factors necessitated the use of a semantically dense *jrw*-image as a *sšmw*-image.

The reliability of the above interpretation is strengthened when considering how it improves understanding of other figures in two scenes: nos 326–328 in the 4th hour, and nos 757 and 758 in the 11th hour. I suggest viewing them as 'glosses' to their surrounding figures. Two types of 'secondary' image may be discerned: elaborative images that add information to the 'primary' image to which they relate; and repetition of the content of 'primary' images in alternative visual forms (compare Camille 1992: 20–6). Colour distinctions serve to distinguish primary from secondary images. Red images could serve as 'glosses' to a 'primary' image drawn in black, elaborating on its meaning and characteristics, just as texts written in black possessed red glosses and paratext.[54] However, pictorial glosses in the Amduat could still be made into autonomous

[54] The idea may also apply to other red pictures in the 4th hour. These include the door-leaves depicted along the length of the zigzag path and behind no. 328, as well as the sun-discs and stars located above and below the pictures of the 14 human heads. The door-leaves may elaborate on the obstructed nature of the route and the difficulty faced by the sun-god in traversing it. The heads are more challenging to interpret. Parallels with other cosmographic compositions suggest that they mark 'the limits of the luminous area traversed by the sun' during the night (Goebs 1998: 453 n. 23). Alternatively they may be lunar symbols relating to the reconstitution of the *wḏꜣt*-eye and the justification of both Re and Osiris against their enemies, fitting with the

beings equivalent to that of primary images. I suggest that nos 326 and 328 relate to no. 325 as elaborative images that add information to the representation, while no. 327 is an alternative presentation of no. 326. In the 11th hour, nos 757 and 758 as a group elaborate upon nos 755 and 756. The results of this analysis have further implications for understanding Amduat iconography more generally.

In the copy of Thutmose III, nos 326–328 are drawn in red ink, which could mean that they were conceptually differentiated from figures drawn in black. They may be understood as elaborations on no. 325, illustrating aspects of the processes occurring in the underworld. The label to the winged sun-disc no. 326 identifies it as an *jrw*-image: a symbol for the role played by the sun-god as ruler and luminous cosmic entity (Kenning 2002: 44, 47). The winged sun-disc was also associated with the destruction of enemies, and the sun-god was believed to defeat his foes in the eastern horizon at dawn (Spiegel 1971: 444 n. 30). The personification of *mꜣꜥt* (no. 328) could likewise relate to the state of 'being as one ought' in the label to the winged sun-disc, indicating that the processes represented by these images, and the divine constellations involved in them (Goebs 2002), reflect the right cosmic order. Since these images elaborate on no. 325, they may be pictorial analogues of 'marginal glosses' known from texts in many cultures (e.g. Camille 2002: fig. 5).

The male anthropomorphic figure no. 327 does not have a similar extended label, but *jmy-ḥrt* is attested in other New Kingdom sources as an epithet of the sun-god (*LGG* I, 246). No. 327 may therefore be another *sšmw*-image of the sun-god, his pose perhaps clarifying or elaborating on the *jrw*-image that is the winged sun-disc. No. 327 does not elaborate on the meaning or content of no. 326 so much as replicate its content in a different form.[55]

The concept of linear eternity (*ḏt*) is represented by nos 757 and 758 in the 11th hour—a group also drawn in red (Fig. 3.3). A goddess sits on the back of a diagonally oriented snake, at whose mouth are depicted several stars. The seated goddess—male in some later copies (e.g. Seti I: Lefébure 1886 [ii]: pl. 23; compare Baines 1985: 55, fig. 30)—is labelled *ḏt*, and the snake 'he who takes away the hours'.[56] The goddess is said to exist 'atop' the snake (*wnn=s m-ḥrt šd-wnwt*)—a

symbolism of nos 326 and 327 (Leitz 1989: 52; Manassa 2007 [i]: 107–8, 116–18; compare Landgráfová and Janák 2021: 183, where groups of seven rather than 14 beings are discussed).

[55] Compare the use of *ky ḏd* 'otherwise said' to introduce theological and mythological variants on the same content, in texts such as BD 17 (Rößler-Köhler 1979).

[56] *šd-wnwt*; *LGG* VII, 150. Alternative translations of *šd* include 'eat' (*LGG* VII, 150) and 'supply' (Manassa 2007 [i]: 354, without accepting her reasoning based on the snake's pose—see n. 57 below), but 'to take (away)' fits

description referring to the visual appearance of the form—and an extended label to the group reads:

> *jrt=s pw ʿnḫ (m) mdw rʿ rʿ nb ʿm=s sšmw=s r njwt tn*
> *wnwt 11 p(w) wʿt m-ḫt nṯr*
> What she does is to live on the words of Re every day, swallowing her *sšmw* at this location.
> It is the 11th hour, one in the following of the god.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: 753–4)

Scene 20 in the 4th hour of the Book of Gates uses similar imagery (Fig. 3.24; Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 118–23; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 42–3, 274). There, a serpent with 24 coils, located between two sloping platforms, is labelled 'That-which-makes-distant, who bears 12 serpents which are destroyed by swallowing by the hours' (*sḫrrt ms ḫfꜣw 12 ḥtm(w) ḫr sʿm ḫr wnwt*). On each platform stand six anthropomorphic goddesses identified as the hours (*wnwt*), presumably of the night (Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 184), who 'guide Re upon their banks' (*mꜣʿ=sn rʿ ḥr jdbw=sn*). The sun-god speaks to the goddesses, telling them to 'live on what comes forth from it (i.e. the serpent)' (*ʿnḫ=ṯn m prt jm=s*) and to 'swallow the children of That-which-makes-distant' (*ʿm=ṯn msw (s)ḫrrt*).



Fig. 3.24: Book of Gates, hour 4, scene 20, tomb of Ramesses IV (courtesy of kairoinfo4u, Flickr)

The coiled serpent in the Book of Gates thus symbolizes the 24-hour day, which continually reproduces itself while remaining unchanged (see also Servajean 2007: 65, 141). Since Amduat nos 757 and 758 are adjacent to a schematic representation of the underworld and its processes (nos 755 and 756), they may mobilize this idea to expound on the meaning and characteristics of that representation. The processes occurring within the underworld, which are bound to the solar cycle

timekeeping systems better. Differences in the number of stars between copies could relate to changes in timekeeping systems, discussed by Anthony Spalinger (2012), but this is difficult to verify, and the stars could simply represent the night sky.

and the passage of time as measured by hours, and which are thus part of the concept of cyclical eternity (*nḥḥ*), are simultaneously part of a greater notion of linear eternity (*ḏt*).[57] By elaborating on nos 755 and 756, nos 757 and 758 are analogous to a 'marginal gloss'. Together, the two pairs of figures encapsulate ideas similar to that expressed in the single complex scene of 'death, the great god' on P. BM EA 10018 (Fig. 3.13). Yet that scene combined many image–being relations into a complex figure, whereas the two pairs in the 11th hour of the Amduat—nos 755 and 756, and nos 757 and 758—distribute these relations across several figures and use colour to elucidate a hierarchical structure within this network.

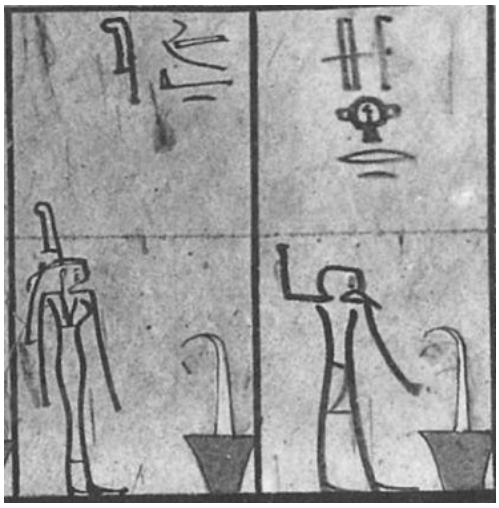

Fig. 3.25: Amduat nos 327 and 328 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 17)

All these images in the Amduat were made agentive as part of the general conceptual scheme of the composition: nos 327 and 328, and nos 755 and 756, are depicted in their own cells in the Amduat catalogue (Figs 3.4, 3.25). By rendering them in red, multiple *sšmw*-images of a given being could be juxtaposed within the compositional frame while delineating ontological hierarchies between them. Primary, secondary, and even tertiary forms are detectable. However, the cases of nos 327 and 328 suggests that copyists did not revert to black ink for any tertiary forms derived from a red secondary image. In such cases, a gloss to a primary image was not visually distinguished from a tertiary 'gloss of a gloss'. Both were drawn in red, perhaps because black ink may have misleadingly implied the ontology of a primary image. Different systems for the use of red and black ink applied in religious compositions that were structured by considerations other than ontology, for example the inauspiciousness of red, the availability of pigment or the skills of the scribe, and for aesthetic ornament (e.g. Posener 1949; 1951; Lapp 2004: 57; Dorman 2019: 22).

Later sources, such as post-Amarna copies of the Amduat executed in full relief, and adaptations of Amduat motifs in mortuary papyri of the Third Intermediate Period, do not differentiate between primary and secondary forms in the same way. The different possibilities and constraints

[57] Note also P. Berlin 3005 (Niwiński 1989: pl. 33d; Massiera 2019: fig. 5), where the serpent no. 758 is modelled as the *ḏ*-snake , identical to that used in the writing of *ḏt*.

on format, layout, and content offered by the new contexts in which the Amduat was used (§3.2) may have negated the means of displaying these conceptual distinctions, or even eliminated the distinctions entirely, although neither hypothesis is easy to prove. What is clear is that the interplay and balancing of conceptual, formal, and semantic concerns guided the selection of images from earlier sources and the adjustments made to their forms.

Finally, the usage of red images in the pre-Amarna copies of the Amduat implies that hierarchies of modes of presentation, which operated in contexts like temples, were flattened in the iconography of the Amduat. Forms such as the winged sun-disc, which can be classified as emblematic and occur in marginal areas of other monumental decoration as substitutes for anthropomorphic or composite human–animal ones, can occur alongside the latter types without issue in the Amduat.

3.6 No. 394



Fig. 3.26: Oval of Sokar in the Amduat, with ophidian composite no. 394 at bottom centre, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

No. 394 is part of a scene with several other figures (Fig. 3.26). Its ophidian body terminates at its left end with a male human head that has a short beard, and at its right end with three serpent heads. An *ꜥnḫ*-sign is below the mouth of the rightmost serpent head. Two unfurled wings emerge from the midsection of no. 394, and are grasped by a hawk-headed, male anthropomorphic figure (no. 393). Nos 393 and 394 are located within an oval demarcated by a red sandy boundary and flanked by symmetrical halves of Aker shown as a double human-headed sphinx. Above the scene is a pyramidal mound whose summit is modelled as a female human head with a broad collar. The label to the scene reads:

wnn sšmw pn m sḫrw pn m kkw smꜣw
ḥḏ nwt jrt nṯr pn m jrty tpw nṯr ꜥ
ḥꜣy rdwy m-ḳꜣb nṯr ꜥ sꜣ=f sšmw=f
jw sḏm.tw ḫrw ḫrt m nwt tn m-ḫt ꜥpp nṯr pn ꜥ ḥr=sn mj ḫrw hmhmwt nt ḥrt nšn=s
jwf skr-ḥry-šꜥy=f

This *sšmw* is like this in the total darkness:
The oval pertaining to this god is brightened by the pair of eyes atop the great god.
The legs shine in the midst of the great god while he guards his *sšmw*.
The sound of something is heard in this oval after this great god passes by them, like the sound of the roar of the sky when it storms.
The flesh of Sokar who is upon his sand.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 443–6)

The labels to the figures within and around the oval are in black enigmatic writing, with non-enigmatic glosses in red. The label within the oval reads:

ꜥnḫ=f m ṯ3w tpy r=f rꜥ nb
jrt=f p(w) s3(w)t sšmw=f
nṯr ꜥ3 wp ḏnḥwy s3b šwt
He lives on the air at the tip of his mouth perpetually.[58]
What he does is guard his *sšmw*.
The great god, unfurled of the two wings of variegated plumage.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 448)

This label presumably refers to no. 394, since an *ꜥnḫ*-sign is located adjacent to one of its ophidian heads. My rendering of *wp* as a passive participle is discussed in the analysis below. The labels within the sandy border of the oval read 'land of Sokar' (*t3 skr*). One half of the representation of Aker is labelled 'he breathes from the voice of the great god; what he does is guard his *sšmw*' (*srḳ=f m ḫrw nṯr ꜥ3 jrt=f pw s3 sšmw=f*); the other, 'flesh' (*jwf*). Aker as a whole is labelled 'Aker who guards the secret flesh' (*3kr s3w jwf št3*; Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 442–3, 446–7).

The form of no. 394 foregrounds its protective function in the context of the union between the sun-god and Osiris, drawing on elements shared by other ophidian composites in the Amduat. Like nos 755 and 756, no. 394 may be understood as both *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image. As I shall argue, its form as an *jrw*-image was necessitated by the context of the *sšmw*-image's use within the composition, so no hierarchy between the two statuses is present. No. 394 works together with other aspects of the oval of Sokar to express the complex relationships between the oval with other images in the 5th hour, with tableaux depicting other hours of the Amduat, and with the burial chamber as a whole. It illuminates the interactivity of form, function, ontology, and materiality in

[58] See n. 48 above.

the construction of composite figures. Since the ophidian composite no. 394 is part of the oval of Sokar scene, I first examine the meaning and conceptual structure of the scene as a whole before attempting to approach that of no. 394. The oval is termed a *sšmw*, perhaps one of the underworld as a site of regeneration. No. 394 also relates to other images in the Amduat and to the burial chamber itself, insofar as all are *sšmw*-images of the underworld and its processes.

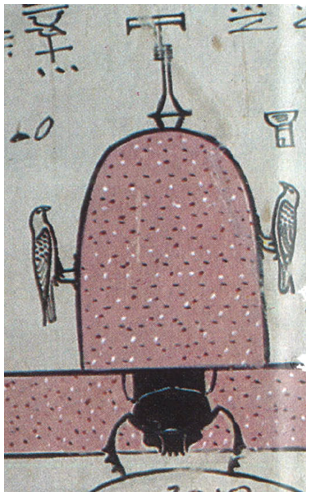

Fig. 3.27: Chest of Khepri in the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 22)

The oval's associations with Sokar and noise mark it as a site of regeneration and divine manifestation. Sokar was originally a god of the Memphite necropolis (Gaballa and Kitchen 1969: 20–1; Graindorge 2001), and the location of the oval inside the pyramidal mound suggests that it may represent the subterranean apartments of a tomb; the oval burial chamber of Thutmose III reinforces this symbolism (Rößler-Köhler 1999). The thunderous roar emanating from the oval is the overwhelming sound of cosmic creation, particularly in solar contexts (Manassa 2008; other types of sound include laughter and crying: see, e.g., Guglielmi 1980: 84–5; von Lieven 2014: 20 with n. 5).

The oval of Sokar thus combines solar and Osirian references, associations which are reinforced by considering relationships between the oval and other elements of the 5th hour tableau. The bottom register of the 5th hour, the semi-oval mound labelled 'chest of Khepri' (*h(nw) ḫprj*) in the top register (Fig. 3.27), and the pyramidal peak in the middle register, may be 'aspects' of the underworld depicted in parallel (§3.1). The oval is flanked by Aker, indicating that it represents a subterranean space, as is suggested by the introductory text to the 5th hour in the long version:

> *sṯ3w nṯr pn ʿ3 ḥr w3wt m3ʿwt nt dw3t m-gs ḥry ḳrrt št3t nt skr-ḥry-šʿy≠f jwty m33 jwty ptr sšmw pn št3 n t3 ḫr(y) jwf nṯr pn*
> *jw jmw nṯr pn sḏm≠sn ḫrw rʿ ḏwj≠f r-h3w ⟨nṯr pn⟩*
> Hauling this great god over the true roads of the underworld beside the upper part of the secret cavern of Sokar who is upon his sand, without seeing or perceiving this secret *sšmw* of the land which bears the flesh of this god.
> Those amongst whom this god is hear the voice of Re when he calls out in the vicinity ⟨of this god⟩.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 384–6)

The solar entourage travels past the mound on the surface, in the middle register, without glimpsing its subterranean interior. The tableau is structured by a series of images that correspond

to different parts and aspects of the tableau. Together they construct a diagram of a 'natural space' within the 'topographic' layout of the tableau while enabling the representation of various beings and their complex relations (Cohn 2014; Peterson 2018: 287). The middle and bottom registers constitute a cutaway view of the chest of Khepri which is depicted in the top register. Isis and Nephthys, in the form of kites, perch on the sides of the chest, and the sign for 'night' (*grḥ*) is atop the mound, suggesting that the chest was located in the spatio-temporal night, shrouded in darkness like the 5th hour as a whole. *ḥnw* generally refers to rectangular or shrine-shaped boxes, often sealed with a rope-tie, but it came eventually to refer to any kind of box (Brovarski 1999: 32–8). In the Middle Kingdom it was used of coffins (Willems 1988: 46–7), so the mound may represent the coffin of Osiris, from which the rejuvenated sun-god emerges following their mutually regenerative union. The emergence of Khepri from the mound represents the sunrise to come, but the scarab helps to haul the solar barque through the middle register; here, a point in the future influences the activities in the middle and bottom registers, which are set in the relative 'present' (compare McCloud 1993: 105, bottom-right panel; see also Giuliani 2013: 13–14; Cohn 2021: 11). Their positioning within the tableau and their interrelationships across registers exemplify the 'redundancy' of comics, in which one panel may repeat part of the information contained in another; they 'are not necessarily disposed to follow one after the other, but can alternate with panels participating in one, or even several other, series' (Groensteen 2007: 98–100; Cohn 2013: 12; compare Hoffmann 1996: 29), here to express temporal and ontological relations between aspects of the sun-god and the solar journey.[59]

Since a subject could have multiple *sšmw*-images, the figures in each of these scenes, which are spatially and temporally distributed representations of the same subject of the underworld, could be treated as autonomous agents. The chest of Khepri in the top register and the oval of Sokar and pyramidal peak are formal and conceptual variants of each other. Form, function, iconography, and

[59] See also P. Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna 3859 (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 144; [ii]: pl. 16), which shows three views of the mound of Kheraha (*ḫry-ʿḥ*) near Heliopolis (Drioton 1953; *Wb.* III, 394.7; *LÄ* I, 592), the first , the second an oval plan, the third a sarcophagus containing the Osirian corpse. This parallel strengthens the link between no. 325 in the 4th hour and the oval of Sokar in the 5th hour: the former is a representation of *jmḥt* (see n. 51 above), while the oval may show Kheraha, which incorporated *jmḥt* and was the symbolic source of the inundation in Lower Egypt (Gardiner 1947 [ii]: 142; Egberts 1995: 123–4).

ontology differ in each scene, emphasizing various dimensions of the underworld as subject while permitting the individual elements to interact within the overarching 'topographic' frame of the 5th hour. Adding to this intricacy is the status of the 5th hour as a *sšmw*-image of part of the underworld. The burial chamber of Thutmose III exemplifies this concentric structure, where representations 'resonate into an infinite recursive specularity of image within image' (Bahrani 2014: 124–32): it not only displays all these *sšmw*-images as drawings on the walls, but contains the king's semi-oval sarcophagus—a three-dimensional *sšmw*-image of the oval and/or chest—and, being itself an oval chamber beneath el-Qurn, is a three-dimensional *sšmw*-image of the complex comprising the chest of Khepri, pyramidal peak, and oval of Sokar (see also Hoffmann 1996: 31).



Fig. 3.28: Amduat no. 393 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 18)

The Amduat catalogue places the hawk-headed figure of Sokar (no. 393) and the ophidian composite (no. 394) in different cells with their own seated god determinatives (Figs 3.28, 3.29). This implies an ontological distinction from nos 755 and 756, which are depicted in two halves of the same cell, even though both pairs are diagrams of the underworld and the processes occurring within it. Furthermore, the wings which seemingly extend from the midsection of no. 394 are absent in the catalogue, yet no. 393 is shown with arms outstretched as if holding them. This has implications for understanding the conceptual structure of the ophidian composite and the overall scene.



Fig. 3.29: Amduat no. 394 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 18)

The ophidian body and multiple heads of no. 394 were fundamental to its conceptualization as an *jrw*-image expressing qualities of the underworld in the thematic context of the 5th hour. The meanings of these elements were mobilized in similar figural forms elsewhere in the Amduat: no. 279 in the 4th hour and no. 458 in the 6th hour (§3.3 and §3.4; Figs 3.15, 3.16). In the copy painted on the walls of Thutmose III's burial chamber, no. 394 has a human head on its left end and three ophidian heads on its right end. Since the entire oval of Sokar relates to the process of creation occurring in the depths of the underworld, one may compare the inclusion of a human head with the ophidian composite no. 279 in the 4th hour, while the three ophidian heads parallel no. 458 in the 6th hour.

My analysis of no. 279 suggested that the form of a 'human-headed serpent' in the underworld books, with examples frequently labelled *tpy*, serve protective functions in contexts of solar regeneration (§3.4). The legs of no. 279 are specific to its depiction in the 4th hour; thus, their absence in no. 394 does not need to be explained. Finally, the relationship of the spatio-temporal setting of the 4th hour with that of the 5th hour is suggested by the many references to 'Rasetjau' and the 'land of Sokar' in the labels to the zigzag path, as well as by the female anthropomorphic figure at the top-left of the hour (no. 278), next to no. 279. Labelled 'the lamenting one' (*ḥꜣt*) in the Amduat catalogue (Bucher 1932: pl. 17), and captioned 'she exists at the sunrise' (*wnn=s r wbnw*) in the long Amduat (§3.4, Fig. 3.16), no. 278 may be compared with a scene in the 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus P. Bibliothèque Nationale Paris EG 153 and scene 14 in the Books of the Earth (Figs 3.30, 3.31). In the former, two figures labelled *ḥꜣyt* (one male and one female) and another two each labelled 'the keening one' (*ḏsyt*; also a male and a female) flank the mound upon which the solar-Osirian corpse rests. Two arms which emerge from the base of the mound support the corpse (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 212; [ii]: pl. 30; *LGG* V, 8–9; VII, 651–2; compare Roberson 2012: 142–5, fig. 5.4, right end). In the latter, Isis and Nephthys attend to an oval containing the curled corpse of Osiris, from which the hawk-headed Horus and a solar disc emerge. Fitting with the description of the sun's 'rising' in the label to no. 278, the scenes highlight the thematic parallels between nos 278 and 279 in the 4th hour and the process of re-creation effected in the 5th hour.

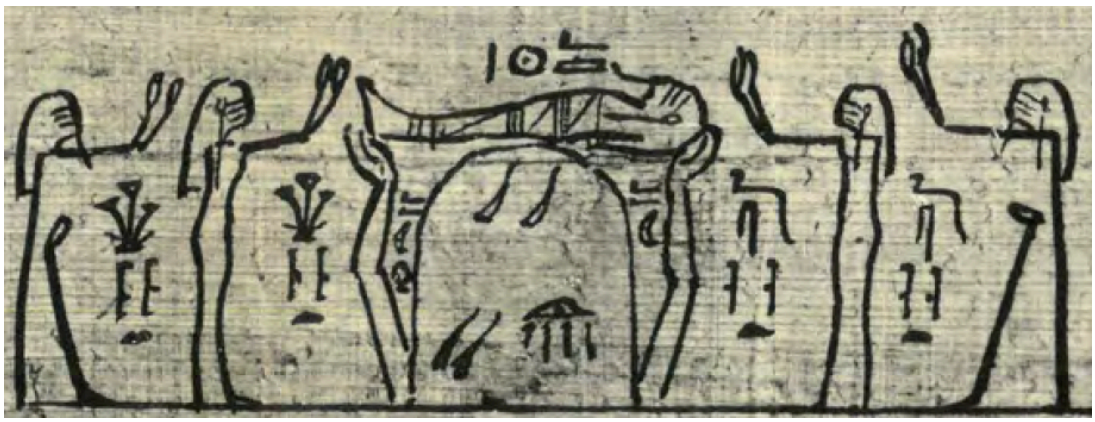

Fig. 3.30: P. BN Paris EG 153, figures labelled *ḥꜣyt* and *ḏsyt* flanking the solar-Osirian corpse, 21st Dynasty (Piankoff 1957 [ii]: pl. 30)

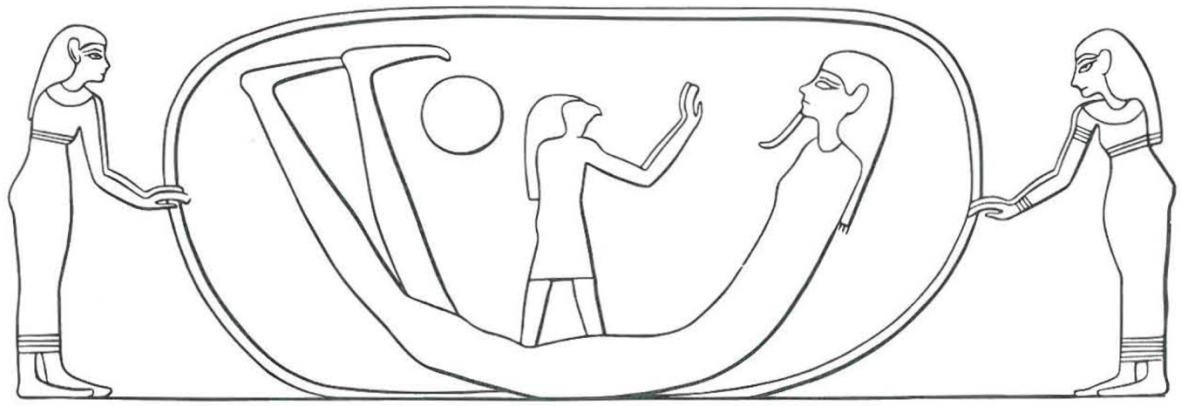

Fig. 3.31: Books of the Earth, scene 14, tomb of Ramesses VI (Roberson 2012: 173, fig. 5.14, after Piankoff 1954 [i]: fig. 116)

In the middle register of the 6th hour the multi-headed protective serpent no. 458 encircles the solar corpse (no. 459), individual parts of which are depicted in the top register (§3.3, Fig. 3.15). Colleen Manassa (2007 [i]: 238–9) argues that the 'solarization' of body parts, 'by their nature Osirian', represents 'the complete, albeit momentary syncretism' of Re and Osiris. The union both regenerates the two deities and effects cosmic renewal, the qualities of which are described in the label to the oval of Sokar. These Osirian connotations recall the relationship between the three registers of the 5th hour, which may connect two aspects of Osirian theology central to renewal and cyclicality: Osiris's relationship with Horus and Isis on the one hand and with the sun-god on the other hand. Furthermore, no. 459 is depicted in the coils (*ḳꜣbw*) of no. 458, again recalling the label to the oval of Sokar, where light shines forth 'in the midst' (*m-ḳꜣb*) of the ophidian composite. Both contexts combine the motif of a protective encircling serpent with the threatening qualities of a multi-headed serpent, underscoring its status as a guardian who 'protects his *sšmw*', as mentioned in the label within the oval of Sokar.

No. 394 combines the two forms of human-headed serpent and multi-headed serpent. The comparable nos 279 and 458 overlap with no. 394 in terms of meaning and, as part of the same overall compositional scheme, were governed by the same pictorial conventions, so it is not surprising that the three figures share basic figural forms.[60] Since the elements were constructed

[60] It is less probable that no. 394 derived from the specific figures nos 279 and 458 (§3.3, §3.4). Such a model may well account for their shared meanings, but it does not follow that designers of the composition worked that way. Iconographic relationships are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

according to primarily semantic concerns, no. 394 may be classified as an *jrw*-image: a symbol for the protected quality of the underworld region within which the sun-god regenerates, here more specifically through iconic reference to motifs incidentally present elsewhere in the Amduat.

As an *jrw*-image, no. 394 elaborates on the semantic content of the hawk-headed figure no. 393 and the oval as a whole, and may be interpreted as a schematic representation, as with no. 756. Like that group, and many other figures in the Amduat, no. 394 was subsequently imbued with agency and thus functions as an autonomous being, as is clear from its accompanying label and its depiction in the catalogue. No. 394 is ultimately both an *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image; comparable formal and conceptual transformations of Amduat images are discussed above in relation to Third Intermediate Period mortuary papyri (§3.2). There is furthermore no hierarchy between these two conceptual statuses: the form of no. 394 emerged from its immediate context in the 5th hour tableau, so that the *sšmw*-image necessarily adopted the form of that specific *jrw*-image.

This interpretation is complicated by analysis of the wings attached to the body of no. 394. The wings may be interpreted as symbolic elements enriching the semantic content of no. 394 as an *jrw*-image. I suggested above that the wings in nos 755 and 756 represent the sun-god's luminosity as he encompassed the underworld sky during his journey. If the wings adjacent to no. 394 are interpreted similarly, they would be closely related to the figure of Sokar (no. 393). Sokar was commonly related to both Osiris and Horus, possessing celestial, solar, and chthonic associations (Gaballa and Kitchen 1969: 25–8). Only Late Period copies make these connections explicit in the Amduat (Manassa 2007 [i]: 130), but they were probably present in the New Kingdom, since the pyramidal peak in the middle register is identified as the 'flesh of Isis which is upon the sand of the land of Sokar' (*jwf st ḥrt šʿy tȝ skr*; Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 424), and the Osirian family triad is evoked by the image of Isis and Nephthys flanking the chest of Khepri in the top register.[61]

Manassa (2007 [i]: 353–4) connects the oval of Sokar with the solar group of nos 755 and 756 in the 11th hour; the two groups are juxtaposed on the interior of the Ptolemaic coffin lid of Hornedjitef (Fig. 3.32; BM EA 6678: Strudwick 2006: 294–5). Solar and Osirian regeneration was precipitated by the momentary union of the two gods, which may explain why the solar-oriented

[61] See also no. 402 in the 6th hour: a seated female anthropomorphic figure labelled 'Isis of *jmḥt*' (*st jmḥt*). On the 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus P. Cairo S.R. VII.10266, the regenerative space is personified as a goddess with wings, Isis and Nephthys flanking the scene (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 172, fig. 66; [ii]: pl. 22). This composition may be interpreted as a variant of the subject represented by the chest of Khepri, pyramidal peak, and oval of Sokar.

11th hour and the Osirian setting of the 5th hour shared the motif of an anthropomorphic god unfurling a pair of wings within a representation of the underworld. Another variant occurs on a late New Kingdom or Third Intermediate Period coffin floorboard (Fig. 3.33; Cairo, accession number unknown), where Nut is shown in her role as the underworld, the 𓇳 logogram for 'underworld' (*dwꜣt*) atop her head. Her arms outstretched, she squats atop a pair of unfurled wings attached to a coiled ophidian composite, its left end modelled as a male human head with fillet and short beard, its right end as the head of a goose. The latter evokes the hieroglyphic writing for Geb—earth god and brother of Nut—so the enclosed space is conceptualized as both celestial and chthonic. Unlike the similarly chthonic oval of Sokar in the Amduat, however, here the regenerative space is located within the coils of the ophidian composite, which form a shape reminiscent of an anthropoid coffin—a design made possible by the lack of an overarching 'topographic' scheme, such as that of the Amduat, in its context of depiction.



Fig. 3.32: Part of the interior of the coffin lid of Hornedjitef, early Ptolemaic period (BM EA 6678; © Trustees of the British Museum)

Interpretation of the wings attached to no. 394 in the Amduat is complicated by the label within the oval of Sokar, which presumably describes the ophidian composite. The third sentence of the label, written in black, is usually translated as an active participle: 'the great god who unfurls the two wings of variegated plumage' (e.g. Darnell and Darnell 2018: 184). Reading *wp* as passive connects the act of unfurling with no. 393 instead of no. 394: 'the great god, unfurled of the two wings of variegated plumage'. It accommodates the depiction of no. 393 in the catalogue with arms

outstretched as if unfurling the wings, and fits with the interpretation of the wings as a symbol of luminous regeneration.

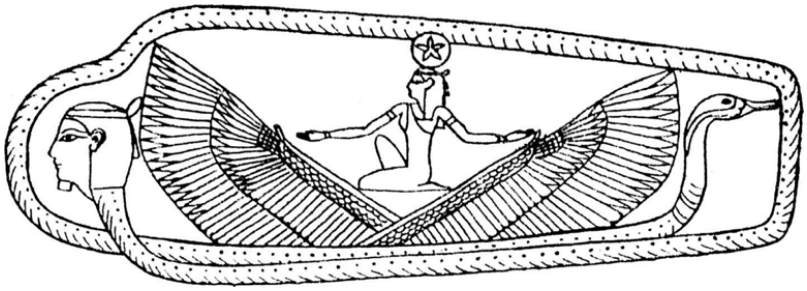

Fig. 3.33: Nut in her role as the underworld, within a winged ophidian composite, on a coffin in Cairo, late New Kingdom or Third Intermediate Period (accession number unknown; Schmidt 1919: 151, fig. 780)

Examining the use of red and black writing lends further support to this interpretation. The first sentence of the label within the oval is written in red and describes the actions of no. 394. A similar pattern is seen in the label to the entire scene: red is used to describe the actions of no. 393 and black to identify no. 393 as the 'flesh of Sokar who is upon his sand'. The statements written in black operate on the level of the image, referring to it as a material object, hence the ophidian composite 'unfurled of the two wings'. Those written in red describe the being and do not necessarily match the appearance of the image, whose form was influenced by a combination of external factors. The being is superordinate in a sense, and descriptions of it are secondary to the immediate scene. However, the being cannot be disconnected from its specific, agentive image(s). The use of red writing here serves similar functions to the use of red images, which are discussed above in relation to nos 325–328 in the 4th hour (§3.5).

The absence of the wings in the Amduat catalogue may tie their function primarily to the *sšmw*-image of the oval of Sokar as a whole, where they contribute to the meaning of the scene. The label to the scene describes how 'the legs shine in the midst of the great god' (*ḥ3y rdwy m-ḳ3b nṯr ʿ3*), likely referring to the legs of the figure of Sokar, who stands within the ophidian composite; the wings here may symbolize light radiating from this point. The description further suggests that no. 394 should be understood to be curled around the circumference of the oval (itself rendered vertically on the pictorial plane), but that this design was not possible given the configuration of figures within the oval—particularly with the standing figure of Sokar—and the topographic scheme that the oval itself was part of. The design was possible in other compositional contexts, however: no. 458 in the 6th hour is shown protectively curled around no. 459 while the latter undergoes a process of regeneration (§3.3, Fig. 3.15).

The label to the entire scene describes how the oval is brightened by the 'pair of eyes atop the great god'.[62] This presumably refers to Sokar, whose hawk-headed form alludes to Horus (compare Fig. 3.31), so that the eyes may be identified with the luminous sun and moon. The cosmic resonance of these associations are amplified by Sokar's position in the oval, grasping the wings of the ophidian composite no. 394. Thus the relations and capacities of the figures in the scene are not to be found in any inherent qualities of the beings, but depends on the form of the scene, which was shaped by a combination of semantic and contextual factors. Similar to no. 458 (§3.3), being and *sšmw* were mutually constitutive.

As with nos 755 and 756 in the 11th hour (§3.2), the wings of no. 394 are attached to the image of the ophidian composite as a matter of visual convention. Because the depiction of wings depended on the juxtaposition of nos 393 and 394 within the specific context of the oval of Sokar and the 5th hour, disassembling the two figures for separate depiction in the catalogue resulted in the wings' omission, since they were associated with the male anthropomorphic figure no. 393—a figural type to which wings were seldom attached. As a *sšmw*-image, no. 394 exercises its agency as an ontological extension of a being, but its agency is not affected by the non-agentive, symbolic elements added to it, thus the wings were dispensed with when the image was transposed into a new context of depiction.

[62] For the luminosity of eyes, see also scene 40 in the 6th hour of the Book of Gates: 'radiance be to your eyes, that you may see the light by them' (*ḥ3y n nṯrywt=tn m3=tn ḥḏwt jm=sn*; Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 238–9). Such luminosity connects with the fiery associations of eyes in the underworld books (e.g. Roberson 2012: 363). The speech of the sun-god to nos 701–708 in the 10th hour of the Amduat terms the eye of Horus *tpt* ('that which is atop'; Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: 710), 'which is foremost a description of the uraeus who sits upon the brow of Re, the goddess of the eye of the sun' (Manassa 2007 [i]: 346).

3.7 No. 391

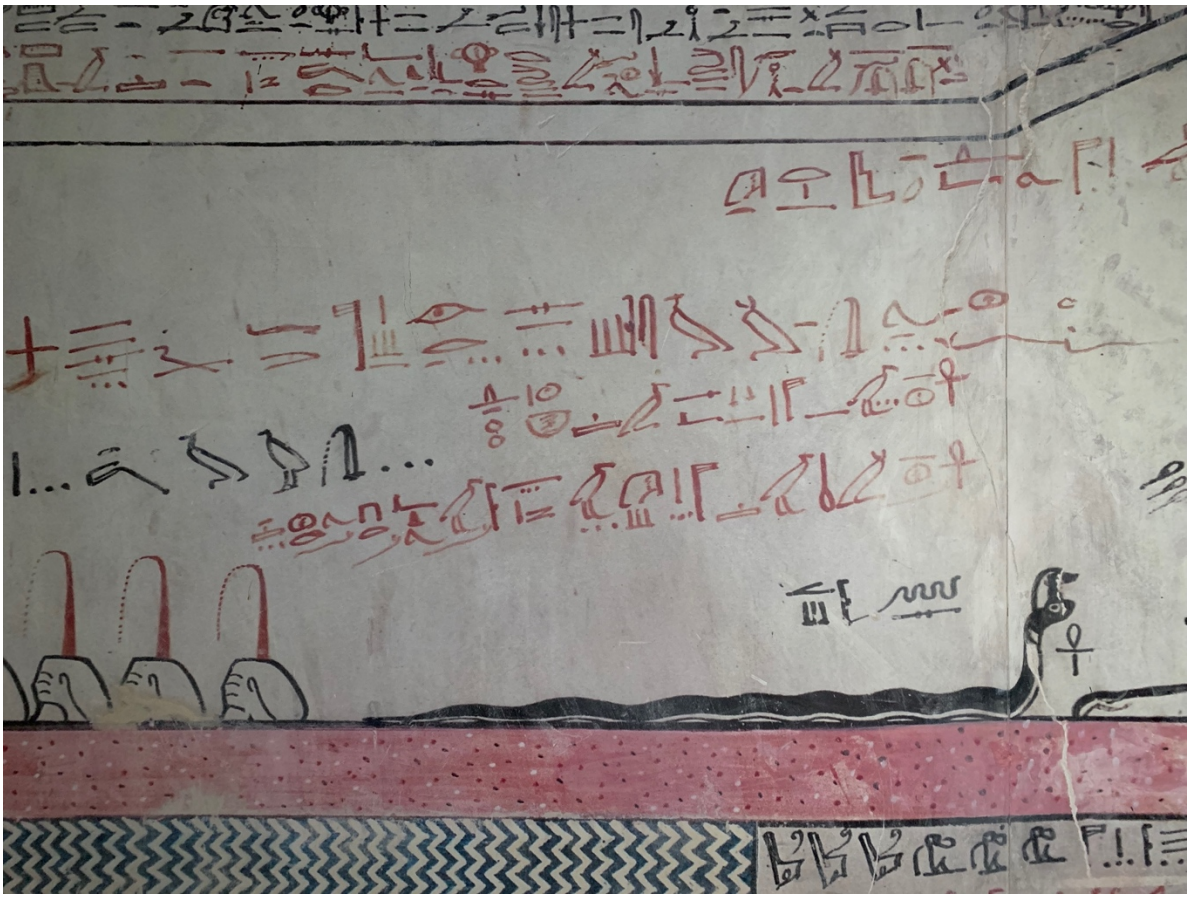

Fig. 3.34: Amduat no. 391, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

To the left of the oval of Sokar in the 5th hour of the Amduat is no. 391, a horizontal serpent with an upraised head and an *ꜥnḫ*-sign below its mouth. A baboon's head is atop the head of the serpent (Fig. 3.34). The figure faces the oval of Sokar. Its enigmatic label reads 'upraised of head'.[63] An extended label reads:

> *ꜥnḫ=f m ḫrw nṯrw tpw tꜣ*
> *jw=f ꜥḳ=f pr=f sꜥr=f ḫrt ꜥnḫw n nṯr pn ꜣ rꜥ nb jwty mꜣꜣ*
> He lives on the voices of the gods upon earth.
> He comes and goes, causing the provisions of the living to ascend[64] to this great god every day, unseen.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 441–2)

[63] *ḏsr-tp*. Katja Goebs (2008: 243) argues that *ḏsr* should be translated as 'holy' rather than 'upraised', at least within the Pyramid Texts. The upraised head of no. 391 suggests that the latter translation may be valid in the context of the Amduat; the two translations are not mutually exclusive.

[64] The verb *sꜥr* is written as 𓋴 in the copy of Thutmose III, perhaps due to lack of space.

The extended label is written entirely in red in the copy of Thutmose III, and is unusually written in two horizontal lines, beginning with the lower line. The signs become increasingly small and cramped towards the end of the lower line, in order to avoid encroaching on the space occupied by the adjacent figures, four human heads surmounted by flames (nos 387–390).

Hornung (1987–1994 [ii]: 442) suggests that an image of a non-composite snake, with no baboon head and labelled 'living one' (*ꜥnḫ*), represents *ḏsr-tp* in the Amduat catalogue (Bucher 1932: pl. 18). However, it is possible that this image in the catalogue refers to the upright snake, drawn in red and labelled 'living god' (*nṯr ꜥnḫ*) in the long version (no. 400), and that the catalogue omits *ḏsr-tp*.

No. 391 exemplifies another major conceptual structure for composite figures: *sšmw*-images which are not also *jrw*-images. Moreover, it displays a subsidiary structure in which the *sšmw*-image is supplemented by an *jrw*-image, here the adjoined baboon head, whose symbolism clarifies the nature of the figure's implicit agency. The label to no. 391 in the long Amduat suggests that the entity acts as an intermediary between the worlds of the living and the dead. The latter is conceptualized as being above the world of the living, whose possessions 'ascend' to the great god. *ḏsr-tp* is attested from the Pyramid Texts of the late Old Kingdom (PT 273, Pyr. 401b), so perhaps the celestial setting to which the Amduat label alludes, which contrasts with the subterranean setting of the 5th hour, derives from celestial conceptions of the afterlife central to that earlier corpus. The overall scheme of the 5th hour further supports this hypothesis: its central feature is a pyramidal mound in the land of Rasetjau—originally the Memphite necropolis—and the process of creation and regeneration takes place in the 'oval of Sokar' located beneath the mound (see also Rößler-Köhler 1999).

The connection between *ḏsr-tp* and the conveyance of provisions is clarified by several other texts. On the one hand, PT 273 reinforces the connection of *ḏsr-tp* to the provisions of the gods, particularly the solar creator with whom the deceased is identified:

NN pw wnm rmṯ ꜥnḫ m nṯrw nb jnw ḫꜣꜥ wpwt
jn jḥm-wpwt-jmy-kḥꜣw spḥ sn n NN
jn ḏsr-tp sꜣ n=f sn ḫsf n=f sn
jn ḥr(y)-ṯrwt ḳꜣs n=f sn
jn ḫnsw mds nbw wḏꜣd=f sn n NN šd=f n=f jmt ḫt=sn wpt pw hꜣbw NN r ḫsf
NN is one who eats people and lives on the gods, a lord of messengers who dispatches envoys.
It is Grasper-of-Forelocks-who-is-in-the-Cauldrons who lassoes them for NN.
It is *ḏsr-tp* who guards them for him and subdues them for him.
It is One-upon-the-Blood who binds them for him.

> It is Khonsu, sharp one of the lords, who slits their throat for NN and removes for him that which is in their bellies—he is the messenger whom NN sends to subdue.
>
> (Pyr. 400a–402c; Sethe 1908–1922 [i]: 209–10)

On the other hand, *ḏsr-tp* is associated with the provisions of the living in CT 84 and BD 125. The former identifies the deceased with the ophidian deity Nehebkau, 'worshipped as the provider of *kꜣ*s and provisions' (Goebs 2008: 322). As part of this, the deceased declares: 'I have come forth from her (Hathor's) thighs as *ḏsr-tp*' (*jr.n=j ḥꜣt jmt mnty=s m ḏsr-tp*; *CT* II, 50c–e). In BD 125, *ḏsr-tp* occurs in a list of underworld judges to whom the deceased recites the 'negative confession' (e.g. Von Dassow 2015: pl. 31b).

Attestations of *ḏsr-tp* outside the Amduat strongly suggest that it was conceptualized as a serpent. One of the determinatives of *ḏsr-tp* in CT 84 is the horned viper (*CT* II, 50e; coffin S1C), while both attestations of Pyr. 401b use the coiled and rearing cobra determinative  . In the Book of the Dead, *ḏsr-tp* could be depicted as a seated human figure with a snake as its head (*LGG* VII, 665–6). Finally, the connection between *ḏsr-tp* and Nehebkau appears again in an enigmatic composition in the tomb of Ramesses IX, where Nehebkau, in the form of a *nʿw*-serpent, '[draws] the deceased up to heaven' (Darnell 2004: 322, 451), further elaborating on the idea of a divine serpent as traveller and intermediary. The evidence suggests that *ḏsr-tp* was considered to be a kind of serpent in the third and second millennia BCE; it was not understood to 'hypostasize a particular aspect of another entity' (Baines 1985: 26). Its ophidian character fits with the general iconography of the 5th hour and provides a symmetrical arrangement with the *wꜣmmty*-serpent (no. 395) which is depicted on the opposite side of the oval of Sokar and is also a member of the tribunal in BD 125 (e.g. Von Dassow 2015: pl. 31a).

By contrast, the baboon head atop the serpent's head may be a symbolic element indicating the function or character of *ḏsr-tp* in context. Thoth, a prominent messenger deity, could be depicted either entirely zoomorphically as a baboon, or in mixed human-animal form with a baboon head and human body. A liturgical papyrus of the early Ptolemaic period describes him as '[giving] divine offerings to the gods and invocation-offerings to the transfigured spirits' (*dj=j ḥtpw nṯr n nꜣ nṯrw prw-ḫrw n nꜣ ꜣḫw*; P. MMA 35.9.21, cols 9–10: Goyon 1975: 376–7). As archetypal divine baboon, Thoth shares this characterization with the solar baboons, whose language is said to be understood by cultic officiants in the 'royal sunrise caption': 'this NN knows this mysterious speech spoken by the

bꜣw of the east when they sing shrieks to Re' (*NN rx.w mdw pw štꜣ ḏd bꜣw jꜣbtt ḥs=sn ṯjw n rʿ*; Betrò 1989: 40–1). The baboons are also invoked in BD 126:

> O you four baboons who sit at the prow of the barque of Re, who cause *mꜣʿt* to ascend to the Lord of All (...) who gladden the gods with the scorching breath of their mouths, who give divine offerings to the gods and invocation-offerings to the transfigured dead (...)
>
> (after Allen 1974: 102; see also te Velde 1988: 129)

The solar baboons raise *mꜣʿt* itself to the solar creator-god, just as *ḏsr-tp* 'causes the provisions of the living to ascend'; they also have 'scorching breath', connecting with the dangerous ophidian characterization of *ḏsr-tp*. The passage from PT 273 cited above, in which Khonsu acts as a messenger, further supports a relationship between Thoth and *ḏsr-tp*: Khonsu and Thoth, both moon-gods, were associated with slaughter because of the knife-like shape of the crescent moon (Goebs 2008: 244; Allen 2015: 352). This constellation of mythical associations fits the context of the Amduat and particularly the tempestuous oval of Sokar (§3.6).

In view of the above, no. 391 may be conceptualized as a *sšmw*-image supplemented by an *jrw*-image. By using a picture of a serpent, the representation could be made to fit the general iconographic and subterranean cosmic context of the 5th hour, as well as the fiery and potentially destructive character of the subject. The baboon head, which was symbolic, clarifies the function of the serpent in the context of the Amduat. The image of the ophidian composite—its *sšmw*—is ontologically equivalent with the being it represents, exercising its agency in its interactions with other beings such as the sun-god. However, this *sšmw* includes the *jrw*-image of a baboon in order to explicate the role of *ḏsr-tp* as intermediary in this context, as opposed to a judge or a punisher as known from other sources.[65] No. 391 in the New Kingdom Amduat exemplifies a conceptual structure that is more commonly articulated by the positioning of insignia, emblems, or symbols atop the head of an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic deity.[66]

The form of no. 391 could be reconfigured in the Late Period, losing its 'composite' appearance and reflecting different image–being relations. On the 30th Dynasty sarcophagus of Tjaihepimu, no. 391 is depicted as a snake with upraised head, facing away from the oval of Sokar (Fig. 3.35; Berlin

[65] For a parallel form used as a determinative in the script, see *CT* VI, 406j (CT 772 on coffin S10C; McDonald 2002: 61–2, fig. 2.12).

[66] Baines 1985: 39. The practice is more frequent with otherwise fully anthropomorphic goddesses, and is uncommon with anthropomorphic male deities; three-dimensional examples are also known (e.g. Piankoff 1955: pl. 12). See further §3.8, §4.5, and §4.7, as well as synthesizing discussion in §6.1.

ÄM 49: Manassa 2007 [i]: 68–9; [ii]: pls 89, 90). A baboon sits on the end of its tail and faces the opposite direction, towards the oval. An *ꜥnḫ*-sign is directly beneath the baboon, below the tail of the snake. The four human heads surmounted by flames (nos 387–390), which are depicted as a separate group in the New Kingdom copies of the Amduat, are here positioned atop the body of *ḏsr-tp*. The label that reads '*ḏsr-tp*' is located next to the baboon, with the hieroglyphs facing the same direction as the baboon, rather than the snake. The position and orientation of the hieroglyphic label and the *ꜥnḫ*-sign seem to place greater focus on the baboon, emphasizing its centrality to the function and meaning of *ḏsr-tp* in the context of the Amduat. The 'decomposed' form may emphasize the ophidian characterization of a messenger deity, reversing the structure of the New Kingdom version which foregrounds the intermediary role of a kind of serpent.[67] The two versions demonstrate how variant configurations of elements enabled semantic nuances to be negotiated within the Amduat. They provide Egyptian evidence for the idea that beings could be conceived as 'a pluridimensional chain of possible appearances', each of which distributed the weight of representation differently across such diverse signifiers as written names and epithets, depictions in two or three dimensions, and the 'organic body' where applicable (Bahrani 2003: 128–9).

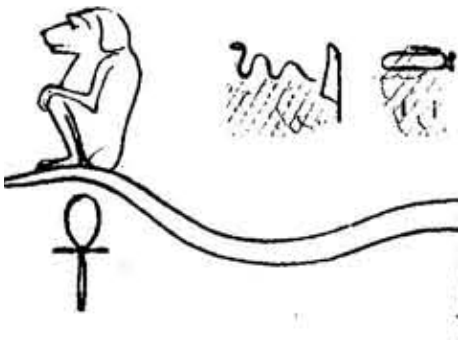

Fig. 3.35: Detail of *ḏsr-tp*, sarcophagus of Tjaihepimu, 30th Dynasty (Berlin ÄM 49: Dümichen 1884–1894 [iii]: pl. 12)

[67] Perhaps comparable to how the added human limbs of emblematic personifications enable them to act in certain ways, represented by 'human' actions, in their pictorial contexts (Baines 1985: 41–2). For graphic 'decomposition', see further §4.6.

3.8 No. 210



Fig. 3.36a, b: Amduat no. 210, tombs of Thutmose III and Seti I (left: Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 7; right: Lefébure 1886 [iv]: pl. 33)

No. 210 is an upright, wrapped figure with a male human head in the top register of the 3rd hour of the Amduat (Fig. 3.36). The head has a long beard in the copy of Thutmose III, and a short square-ended beard in the copy of Seti I. A rearing serpent with a pair of unfurled wings is atop the head of the figure. The figure is labelled 'robber' (*ʿwȝy*; label not shown in Fig. 3.36b); the copy of Thutmose III employs black enigmatic script as well as red non-enigmatic script.

The configuration of no. 210 is similar to that of no. 391, particularly in the version from the 30th Dynasty sarcophagus of Tjaihepimu (Fig. 3.35). It is also structured similarly, as a *sšmw*-image adjoined by an *jrw*-image that serves to clarify the qualities of its implicit agency. In contrast to no. 391, where the *sšmw*-image is an ophidian composite, here the ophidian composite is the supplementary *jrw*-image which does not contribute to the agency of the overall representation. Apart from contributing to an understanding of the forms and conceptual structures of ophidian composites in the Amduat, analysis of no. 210 helps to elucidate the ontological significance of figures with objects atop their heads, a common configuration in Egyptian representations of divine beings.

No. 210 is part of a row of four wrapped figures (nos 209–212), three of which have objects atop their heads. Its identification as 'robber', together with the distinctive figure of a winged serpent atop its head, may establish it as a variant of the composite ophidian image labelled 'death, the great god' from the 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus P. BM EA 10018 (§3.2, Fig. 3.13; on death as a robber, see Grapow 1936a; Lichtheim 2006 [iii]: 63). That figure features an anthropomorphic head, ophidian body, a large pair of wings, and two pairs of human legs. The elements are configured differently in no. 210, where the ophidian body and wings are separated from and subordinated to the anthropomorphic elements. This difference may arise from the context of each composition.

Placing something atop the head of something else is an iconographic device that carves out a specific conceptual space for no. 210 and similar forms. Drawing an analogy with affixes in verbal language, Cohn (2013: 42–6) describes images such as hearts, light bulbs, and punctuation marks above the heads of figures in modern comics as 'upfixes', which elucidate 'emotional or cognitive states'. They may be understood as abbreviated, pictorial labels of sorts, assigning the symbolic meanings of the images to their associated figures. Things atop the heads of ancient Egyptian figures are likewise symbolic, but their scope for meaning is rather larger and derives from less rigid distinctions between 'writing' and 'image' than those modelled by scholars working on modern, mainly Western contexts (Tefnin 1984: 60). No. 210 is formally and conceptually equivalent to deities who are shown with insignia, emblems, or hieroglyphs atop their heads, and broadly comparable to royalty with their assorted crowns. Such symbolic elements were conceived as being metaphorically 'contained' within the head, imparting their qualities to the being at large (Nyord 2009: 150). For purposes of interpretation they may be read as 'iconographic statements' concerning the role of the being (Goebs 2015: 150–75). Potentially animate things such as the winged serpent of no. 210 are non-agentive when used in this way.

The symbolic values of the winged serpent work together with the meanings of other pictorial elements, such as the wrapped anthropomorphic form, to explicate the identity and qualities of no. 210. In the 3rd hour of the Amduat, the subject 'death' was thematically or functionally associated with three other figures (nos 209, 211, 212). The central qualities of this group of four—one of several groups within the hour tableau—were expressed through their depiction as wrapped anthropomorphic figures. Establishing visual consistency across the four figures may explain why the winged serpent was only placed atop an anthropomorphic head, instead of being used as a head, another common practice in Egyptian representations and analogous to the 'eye-umlaut' strategy

of modern comics by which symbols such as hearts and stars serve as eyes on faces (Cohn 2013: 45–6; see further §4.7). No. 209 is identified only as 'covered/coffined one' (*ḏbꜣ(w)*; Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 287) and thus has no need for clarifying insignia beyond its wrapped body, thus nos 210–212 are supplied with symbols as accessory elements that build on the basic template for the group. Death's secondary role as 'robber' was explicated by the symbolic winged serpent, which is subordinated in the formal and conceptual structure of the figure, losing its ontological weight. Comparing no. 210 with the representation of death on P. BM EA 10018 exemplifies how figural forms may occupy positions in different layers of complex image ontologies (see further §6.3).

3.9 No. 472

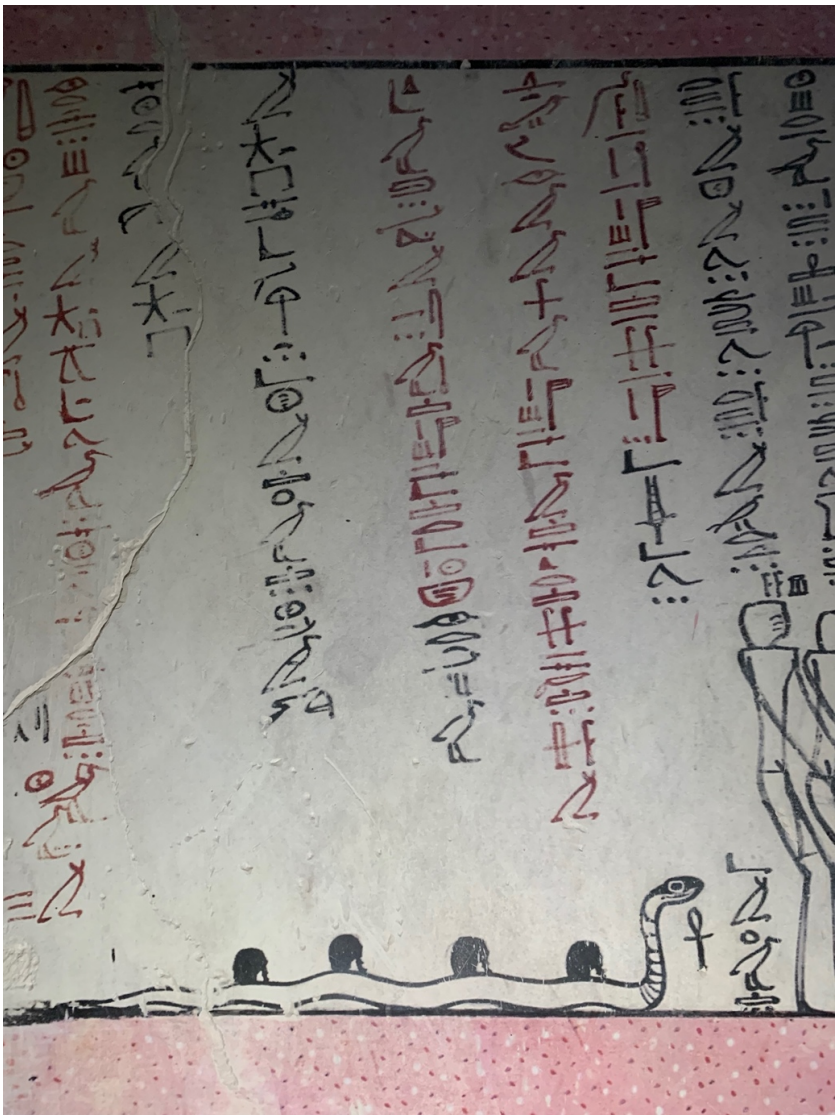

Fig. 3.37: Amduat no. 472, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

No. 472 in the bottom register of the 6th hour[68] is a horizontal serpent with an upraised head and an *ꜥnḫ*-sign below its mouth. Four male human heads, coloured black and with short beards, are located atop its undulating body (Fig. 3.37). The figure is labelled 'swallower of *jrw*-images' (*ꜥm(w)-jrw*; for the enigmatic writing of *jrw*, see Darnell 2004: 301). Above it is an extended label:

jwt(y) mꜣꜣ sw nṯr pn ꜥꜣ srḳ nn n sšmw jm(w) ḳ(ꜣ)bw≠f sḏm≠sn ḫrw nṯr pn ꜥꜣ rꜥ nb
jrt≠f pw m dwꜣt sḫb šwwt ꜥḫm jrw ḫftyw sḫr.w m dwꜣt

[68] This is its usual position in the composition (Hornung 1963–1967 [i]: pl. 6). In the tomb of Thutmose III, a doorway to a side-chamber is located where no. 472 would have been (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 24). Thus the tableau was modified, with the affected section moved up to the middle register instead.

> The one who does not see him, (that is), this great god. These *sšmw*-images which are in his coils breathe when they hear the voice of this great god every day.
> What he does in the underworld is swallow the shadows, *ʿḫm*-images,[69] and *jrw*-images of the enemies overthrown in the underworld.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 513–14)

Labels to the four human heads in other copies of the long Amduat, and in the Amduat catalogue, identify each head as one of the four sons of Horus: Imsety, Duamutef, Hapy, and Qebehsenuef (Bucher 1932: pls 18, 33; Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 515).

No. 472 exemplifies a subsidiary structure in which a *sšmw*-image integrates one or more *jrw*-images into its figural form. In the case of no. 472, the ophidian element of the figure is the *jrw*-image. It ties several interdependent figures together as a single *sšmw*-image, illustrating their shared qualities and participating in their collective action. No. 472 is positioned in front of nos 458 and 459, which depict the corpse of the sun-god encircled by a multi-headed protective serpent (§3.3, Fig. 3.15). This position of no. 472, coupled with its caption, may suggest that it also served to guard the corpse of the sun-god. The 'enemies who are overthrown in the underworld' are not depicted in the Amduat, but are known from the Book of Caverns and Books of the Earth. Allusions to them occur in the Litany of Re, where two *ḫprw*-forms of the sun-god are a bound prisoner and a mummiform figure with fetters as its head (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 98).

Scene 60 in the 9th hour of the Books of Gates features an image similar in form and content to Amduat no. 472 (Fig. 3.38). An undulating serpent, termed 'the fiery one' (*ḫty*), is shown spitting fire at bound enemy figures, the entire group overseen by a figure of Horus. Seven standing, shrouded, male anthropomorphic figures stand within the coils of the serpent's body. The accompanying label describes them as 'the gods atop the fiery one' (*nṯrw ḥryw ḫty*), and identifies them as the sons of Horus, who destroy the enemies of Osiris on behalf of Horus (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 221–3). This scene underlies my translation of *ʿḫm* in the caption to no. 472 as '*ʿḫm*-images', rather than the verb 'to extinguish'. The latter translation, which is proposed by Darnell and Darnell (2018: 308), does not fit with the idea of fiery destruction central to the motif. A translation as '*ʿḫm*-images' would also fit with 'shadows' and '*jrw*-images', both of which refer to forms of divine manifestation and aspects of the agentive being. Lastly, the verb *ʿḫm* 'to extinguish' is not attested with a 'book-roll' determinative elsewhere (*Wb.* I, 224.15–19), whereas use of the determinative for '*ʿḫm*-images' may

[69] See n. 10 above.

parallel its occurrence in writings of *sšmw* and *jrw* in the Amduat, reinforcing how two- and three-dimensional images could refer to one another and function in the same ways (§2.3.2).

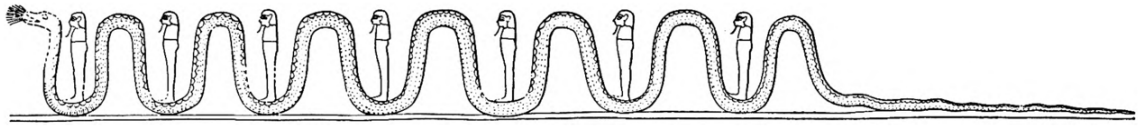

Fig. 3.38: Book of Gates, hour 9, scene 60, schematic line drawing (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 221)



Fig. 3.39: Amduat no. 472 in the catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 18)

Analysis suggests that no. 472 is a group of several *sšmw*-images that were combined into a composite figure—a conclusion supported by several sources of evidence and cross-reference with other figures in the Amduat. First, the Amduat catalogue depicts the serpent with attached heads in the upper register of the cell, with four seated gods and four incense burners in the lower register (Fig. 3.39). *Prima facie,* this may suggest that the picture as a whole represents not one entity, but four, and that this group does not include the serpent itself. The serpent may originally symbolize the fiery destruction inflicted by the sons of Horus, rather than representing an entity inhabiting the underworld. Although the term is not used, one could argue from this perspective that the serpent is an *jrw*-image of the sons of Horus, indicating their function. It was combined with their *sšmw*-images to produce a composite figure fitting the iconography of the Amduat.

The matter is more complex, however. The label to the ophidian composite in the long version of the Amduat clarifies that the ophidian element possesses agency and is able to interact with the sun-god and the sons of Horus. The figure may be classed both as *jrw*-image and as *sšmw*-image, paralleling no. 756 in the 11th hour (§3.2). Similarly, Scene 60 in the 9th hour of the Book of Gates imparts agency to the fire-breathing snake *ḫty*, since Horus addresses it as the protector of his children. The serpent is not merely a symbol of fiery destruction, but is an agent dispensing it:

j.n ḥr (n) ḫty
j ḫty ꜥ.ỉ wꜣwꜣt pn nty jrt≠j tp r≠f msw≠j sꜣw ḳꜣbw≠f
wn r≠k snš ꜥrty≠ky nsr≠k m ḫftyw jt≠j
wbd≠k ḫꜣwt≠sn snws bꜣw≠sn m hh pwy n tp r≠k m wꜣwꜣt jmt ḫt≠k

msw=j r=sn ḥtm=sn
ꜣḫw prw jm r=sn n wnn=sn
pr ḫt jmt ḥfꜣw pn wbd.ḫr nn n ḫftyw m-ḫt ḏwj ḥr r=f
Horus says (to) the fiery one:
'O fiery one, great of flame, this one at the tip of whose mouth is my eye, my children being those guarded by his coils:
Open your mouth, part your jaws, so that you may burn up the enemies of my father!
May you incinerate their corpses and cook their *bꜣw* in this fire-blast of your mouth, with the flame which is in your belly!
My children are against them (as) their destruction.
The *ꜣḫ*-spirits which come forth there are against them, so they do not exist.'
The fire which is in this serpent comes forth, then it incinerates these enemies, after Horus calls out to it.

(Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 323–6)

The agency of the ophidian element of no. 472 is secondarily imparted. In analysing no. 391 in the 5th hour and no. 210 in the 3rd hour (§3.7 and §3.8), I consider how the 'head' (or elements of it) of a composite figure was often used as a symbol for a quality or qualities of a being's agency, while the figure as a whole bore the ontic weight of the representation. No. 472 inverts this pattern, since here it is the attached heads which carry ontic weight as *sšmw*-images, the ophidian component being an *jrw*-image. It is only within the framework of the long version of the Amduat, which focuses on the sun-god's relations and interactions with inhabitants of the underworld, that agency was imparted to the composite figure as a whole, integrating these four *sšmw*-images and one *jrw*-image as a single *sšmw*-image. The discrepancy between the catalogue and the long version may instead reflect this presentation of four distinct beings as one collective, *ꜥm(w)-jrw*. It has no independent existence as an entity beyond the context in which it is depicted. Being and image are here mutually constituted, explaining why the overarching *sšmw*-image of an ophidian composite was not treated as an additional autonomous being in the catalogue.

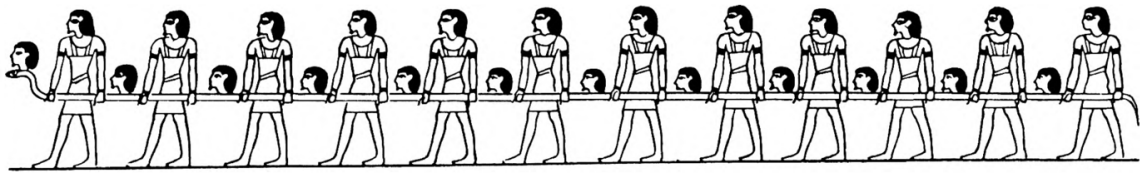

Fig. 3.40: Book of Gates, hour 6, scene 35, schematic line drawing (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 155)

As mentioned earlier, the ophidian element of no. 472 can be considered an *jrw*-image to which agency was subsequently imparted as an element of a *sšmw*-image. It parallels no. 756 in the 11th hour in this respect (§3.2), but comparison of these groups helps to illustrate different ways of conceptualizing relationships between beings and images. The label to no. 472 describes the *sšmw*-images of the sons of Horus as being 'in' the coils of the serpent, and the shrouded figures of Fig. 3.38 are similarly said to be 'atop' the serpent. Both descriptions match the visual appearance of the images. With no. 472, only the heads are visible, suggesting that the rest of the figures are contained within the serpent—an idea paralleled in scene 35 in the 6th hour of the Book of Gates, where Apophis is held by 12 male anthropomorphic deities while 12 male human heads emerge from his head and body (Fig. 3.40). The label to the scene includes the following passage:

> *j.n n≠sn rˁ*
> *ḥm n≠ṯn sbj ḫt n≠ṯn ˁ3pp pr tpw jmw≠f sk≠f ḏwj n≠sn ḥtm(w)≠f*
> *j tpw ˁm n≠ṯn ˁm(w) ṯn wnm≠ṯn pr.n≠ṯn jm≠f*
> *ḏwj rˁ r≠sn pr≠sn ˁm.ḫr≠sn ḳ3bw≠sn r.ˁpp≠f ḥr≠sn ˁḳ.ḫr tpw m ḳ3bw≠sn m-ḫt*
> Re says to them (i.e. the 12 anthropomorphic deities):
> 'Turn the rebel back, repel Apophis for yourselves, in order that the heads within him emerge when he perishes! Call to them when he has been destroyed!
> O heads: swallow for yourselves the one who swallowed you; may you eat the one from whom you have come forth!'
> Re calls to them in order that they come forth. Then they swallow their coils until he passes by them. Afterwards, the heads then enter their coils.
>
> (Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 211–13)

The beings represented by the heads are contained within the body of Apophis, matching the description of the sons of Horus being 'in' the ophidian element of no. 472. It also indicates that the composite appearance of no. 472 reflects widespread visual convention (compare Schäfer 1986: 123, 169, figs 93b, 161). Returning to the Amduat groups under consideration, no. 472 may now be distinguished from nos 755 and 756 (§3.2). No. 472 represents the simple juxtaposition of several *sšmw*-images (the sons of Horus) and an *jrw*-image (the serpent), resulting in a single *sšmw*-image with a composite appearance. By contrast, nos 755 and 756 visually adjoin and conceptually integrate two *sšmw*-images (Atum and the underworld, the latter as an ophidian *jrw*-image) to create a single, schematic *sšmw*-image which functions as an agentive representation of the underworld and its processes. No. 472 is a multiplicity treated as a collective, whereas nos 755 and

756 are conceptually singular. It is only by addressing ontological facets that these conceptual nuances can emerge, and their relationships with figural forms be discerned.

3.10 Barques with Ophidian Elements

My final set of case studies from the Amduat comprise three barques, each of which displays ophidian heads at its prow and stern. The first of these vessels is in the middle register of the 2nd hour, where it is last in a series of four barques and is located just in front of the solar barque. It was not numbered by Hornung and is labelled 'barque which ferries on the waterway' (*wjꜣ ḫn nt*). Its prow and stern are inward-facing cobra foreparts. Two sheaves of grain, each sprouting from a mound of earth, are in the barque. In all New Kingdom copies except those of Amenhotep II and Tutankhamun, three anthropomorphic figures—a central female figure flanked by two inward-facing male figures—are depicted between the sheaves (Fig. 3.41).



Fig. 3.41: Barque with cobra heads at prow and stern in the 2nd hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

The label to the scene of the boat procession in the middle register is fragmentary in all New Kingdom copies. Versions from later periods add royal epithets, leave blank spaces, and use plene writings of words to fill the space (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 150–1). The text has been reconstructed as follows:

> This great god voyages through this locale like this: He is rowed in the barques that are in the earth. Those in Wernes[70] come as he steers towards this field. He issues commands to them and calls out to them from his barque as he moors. The steering [...] these barques go around greatly in Wernes, bearing Osiris. Then they mourn in their barques. This great god and Nepri issue commands to them from their barques, so that they have power over the fields. The one who knows (this) is one who descends as a great one to the necropolis and the barque.
>
> (after Darnell and Darnell 2018: 151; adjusted based on Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 197–200)

The other barques I consider are the solar barque as it is depicted in the 4th and 5th hours. In both hours it is in the form of a double-headed serpent. In the version of Thutmose III, the barque is shown atop a thin rectangular section decorated with zigzag lines beneath the rear half of the barque, perhaps representing the wake of a boat, although the content of the surrounding texts and pictures indicate that the barque was dragged over ground in these sections of the underworld. The solar entourage stands atop the barque, with the ram-headed sun-god standing within a shrine, wielding a straight serpent staff.

In the 4th hour, the serpent head at the prow of the barque curves back to face the solar entourage (Fig. 3.42); in the copy of Thutmose III, both serpent heads have their tongues out. In the 5th hour, the head at the prow extends at a low angle and faces forward; neither head has its tongue out (Fig. 3.43).

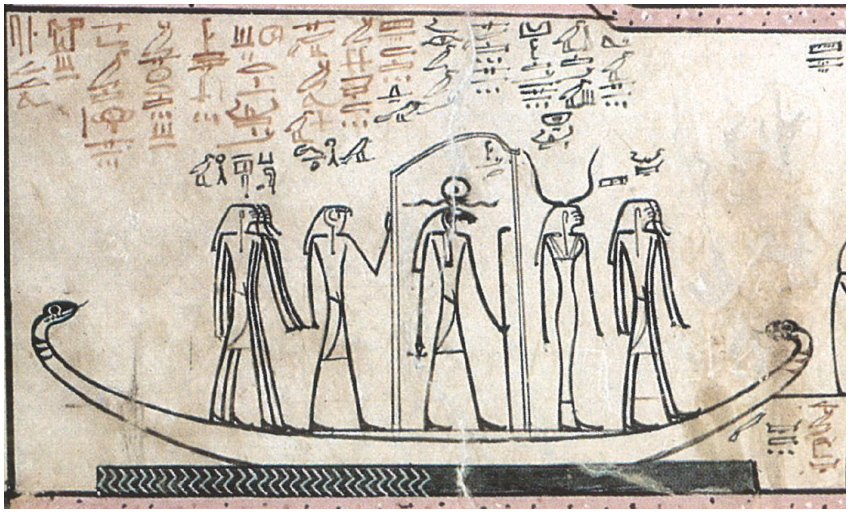

Fig. 3.42: Solar barque in the 4th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 9)

[70] Thomas Schneider (2010: 9–11) suggests that the toponym 'Wernes' (*wrns*) derives from the Nilo-Saharan Tubu/Teda language, meaning 'waterway of Re'. This would make it equivalent to the Egyptian term *nt rʿ* that is used in the short version of the Amduat to describe the waterways along which the solar entourage sails (Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 3).

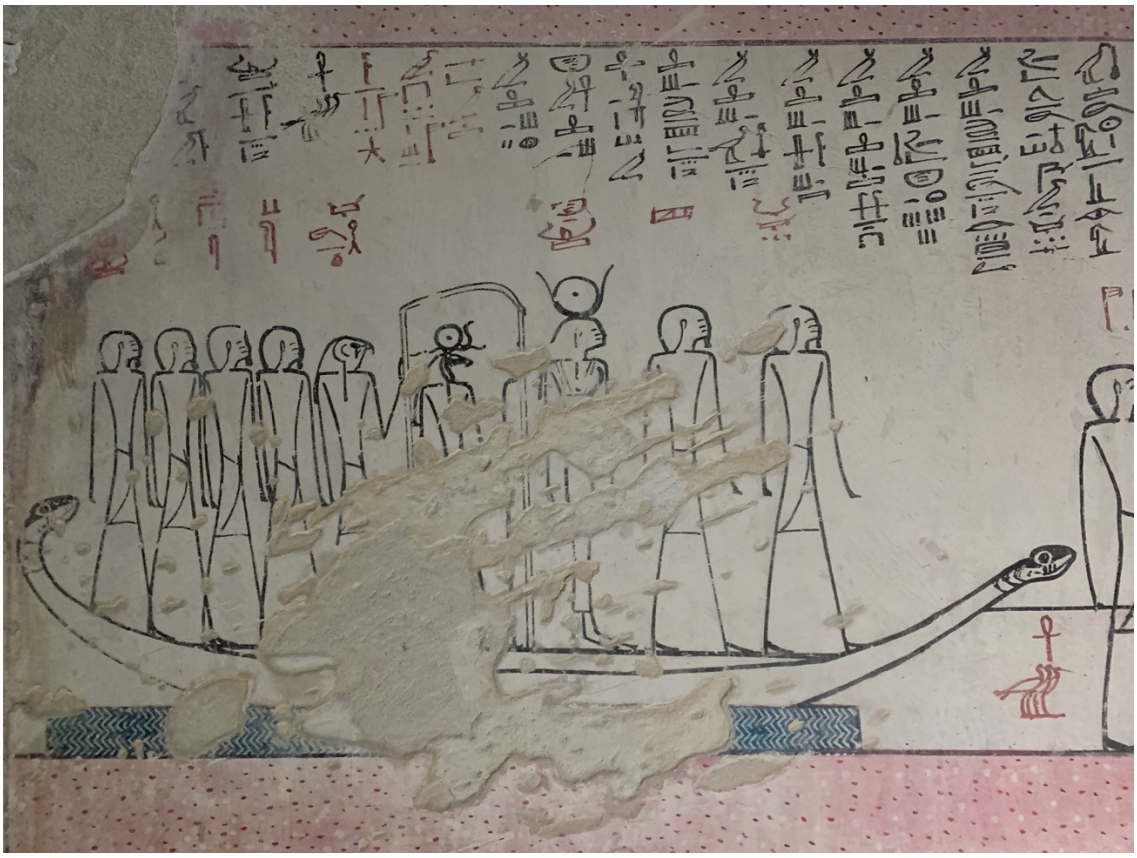

Fig. 3.43: Solar barque in the 5th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

The label to the barque in the 4th hour reads:

sḳdd nṯr pn ꜥ ḥr=sn m sḫrw pn jn nsw tpy r n wjꜣ=f sšm sw m nn mṯnw štꜣw jwt(y) mꜣꜣ=f sšmw=sn ḏwj=f n=sn ⟨r-hꜣw=sn⟩ ḫrw=f pw sḏm=sn
This great god voyages past them like this: It is the flames at the tip of the mouth of his barque which guide him on these secret paths, without him seeing their *sšmw*-images, while he calls out to them ⟨in their vicinity⟩. It is his voice that they hear.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 363–5)

In the 5th hour, the barque is termed *ꜥnḫ-bꜣw*, which may be translated 'Living of *bꜣw*', 'Life of the *bꜣw*', or 'Living of powers'. In the version of Thutmose III, it is written in red ink, matching the labels to the anthropomorphic deities in the barque. The entire scene is described as follows:

⟨sḳdd nṯr pn ꜥ m sṯꜣw ḥr ḳ⟩rrt tn m wjꜣ=f jmy tꜣ ꜥnḫ-bꜣw
⟨It is by dragging that this great god voyages through⟩ this cavern in his barque which is in the earth, 'living of powers'.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 415)

The three barques demonstrate how visually similar forms can be conceptualized in markedly different ways. Boats with one or more human or animal heads are common in Egyptian religious compositions. Examples include those with hedgehog prows in Old Kingdom tombs (e.g. Altenmüller 2000; 2005; 2007) and boats with snake heads at their prows and sterns elsewhere in the Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead (Fig. 3.44; Lesko 1971–1972). However, most studies of composite figures focus on representations of deities, primarily in zoomorphic or mixed human–animal form, largely omitting 'inanimate objects' with 'added' elements. This neglect may stem from the assumption that they are non-agentive representations of objects used by agents such as humans and deities. Their composite appearances are mined for symbolic meanings, but because they are not treated as agents themselves, they are not incorporated into frameworks concerning the representation of agentive beings in Egyptian iconography. While this may be true of many objects of composite appearance, it should not be seen as universal.



Fig. 3.44: Barque with serpent heads, belonging to CT 466 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

I suggest that the cobra-headed barque in the 2nd hour is a *sšmw*-image supplemented by *jrw*-images; the cobra heads which serve as the barque's prow and stern are symbols which elaborate on the meaning of the barque as a whole, reinforcing the function of the solar entourage in the realm of Wernes. By contrast, the snake-headed solar barque of the 4th and 5th hours should instead be viewed as a *sšmw*-image which is also an *jrw*-image. The latter interpretation may apply to other 'inanimate objects' depicted in the Amduat, such as the serpent staves in the bottom register of the 6th hour (nos 477–485), and matches the conceptualization of ophidian composites more commonly classed as deities.[71] These findings suggest that finer distinctions should be drawn between the concepts of being, function, and image, with agency and decorum acting as structuring principles. Understanding how these factors relate to each other supports the modelling of Amduat iconography, and ultimately aids comparisons on this level with other categories of material, including the Book of Two Ways and apotropaic wands.

[71] The barques were not given index numbers by Hornung, presumably because they were not treated as ontologically equivalent to the figures of 'deities' around and within them.

The cobra heads of the barque in the 2nd hour may be viewed as non-agentive symbols that enrich the meaning of the picture. The closing text of the 2nd hour describes the sun-god caring for the inhabitants of this region of the underworld by commanding that their fields be productive, while the label to the middle register clarifies that both the sun-god and Nepri issue these commands. Ina Hegenbarth (2002: 183) identifies the cobra-headed barque as the 'Schiff von Korngöttern (im regenerativen Kontext), was sehr gut zur Thematik der zweiten Stunde paßt', not least because of the figures within it. It may be possible to interpret the labels '(divine) standard of barley' (*jꜣt k(ꜣ)m(w)tt*) and 'Nepri' (*nprj*) as referring simultaneously to the grain sheaves and the male anthropomorphic figures beside them. *jꜣt kꜣmwtt* is not attested elsewhere; *kꜣmwtt* means 'ear of barley' (*Wb.* V, 106.12–13), and the addition of *jꜣt* suggests its divinization in this context. This fits with Nepri's usual characterization as a personification of grain, usually as a fecundity figure.[72] An iconographic common ground could be reached by depicting both these beings, Nepri and *jꜣt kꜣmwtt*, as simple anthropomorphic figures in front of the grain sheaves they represent. This contrasts both with fecundity figures, and with nos 187 and 191 in the bottom register, who are also labelled 'Nepri' (Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 216–17). No. 187 holds sheaves, while no. 191 has sheaves atop his head; the label to the register identifies them as two of several gods to whom Re 'presents their plants which are in their fields' (*mꜣꜥ=f n=sn smw=sn jmw sḫwt=sn*; Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 207–8). Such alternation of forms is attested for other personifications (see, e.g., Baines 1985: 49–59, especially figs 31–33, 35). Adding cobra heads to the barque could conceivably establish a connection with Renenutet—a goddess commonly depicted in ophidian form or with ophidian elements, and who was closely associated with Nepri, the harvest, and storage of grain (Leibovitch 1953: 74–5; Evans 2013: 42; Marini 2015; Mougenot 2015)—or with ophidian representations of cereals (and foodstuff more generally) as divine agents, as attested in the tomb of Ramesses III (Guilhou 1999: 351–2).

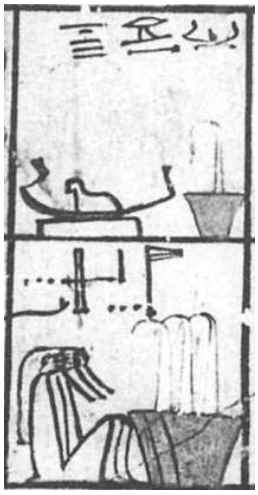

Fig. 3.45: *wjꜣ ḫn nt* in the Amduat catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 15)

The barque as a whole, styled as a reed skiff commonly attested in agricultural scenes (e.g. Bruyère 1959: pl. 27), therefore relates to fecundity and provides a pictorial parallel to the written

[72] E.g. Borchardt 1910–1913 [ii]: pl. 30; other examples in Baines 1985. Nepri may alternatively personify the process of vegetal growth more specifically, if *nprj* is analysed as the root *prj* 'to come forth' with the medial/intransitive prefix *n* (Allen 2013: 94).

label to the middle register. Its inclusion in the Amduat catalogue identifies it as an autonomous being (Fig. 3.45; Bucher 1932: pl. 15), so that it may be classified as a *sšmw*-image, but its ophidian heads in the 'long' Amduat do not serve to manifest Renenutet or any other being, but mobilize symbolic values through their evocation of such beings. By depicting all the barques of the 2nd hour as generic watercraft without distinctive prows and sterns, the Amduat catalogue supports this interpretation by implying that the ophidian elements were not central to the conceptualization of the cobra-headed barque. They elaborated on the meaning of the scene by drawing on symbolic networks understood by viewers, but were neither ontologically significant nor iconographically necessary. The overall form of the 'cobra-headed barque' may therefore be classified as a *sšmw*-image supplemented by *jrw*-images.



Fig. 3.46: Solar barque in the 4th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Ramesses VI (courtesy of kairoinfo4u, Flickr)

The solar barque assumes a similar composite form in the 4th and 5th hours of the Amduat, but these two pictures may have been conceptualized differently from the cobra-headed barque in the 2nd hour. Similar to the cobra-headed barque in the 2nd hour, aspects of the solar barque's form in the 4th and 5th hours enrich the semantic content of the images by drawing on wider bodies of cultural knowledge. The barque in the 4th and 5th hours is also styled as a reed skiff. Funerary barques were often modelled as skiffs: many pictures of dragged funerary barques feature inward-turned papyriform finials on prow and stern, while others include representations of reed bindings (Creasman and Doyle 2010: figs 7, 8, 10, 11, 22). The latter details are present on the solar barque in the 4th hour in the tomb of Ramesses VI (Fig. 3.46). The modelling of funerary barques as skiffs may derive from the custom of ferrying the corpse across the Nile to the tomb (Wilson 1944: 210; Hays

2010: 3–6), which perhaps connects with the ascension of the deceased to the sky on 'double reed-floats' (*sḫnwy*; Černý 1955: 78–9). This connection is pertinent for the 4th and 5th hours, which are set in Rasetjau and the land of 'Sokar-upon-his-sand' (*skr-ḥry-šʿy=f*), toponyms originally denoting regions of the Memphite necropolis.



Fig. 3.47: Amduat nos 424–429, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 24)

Unlike the cobra-headed barque in the 2nd hour, the composite ophidian forms of the solar barque in the 4th and 5th hours are not only symbolic. They enabled the barque to act in particular ways, establishing relations with the solar entourage and the environment of the 4th and 5th hours. The label to the solar entourage in the 4th hour describes how the sun-god is guided by 'the flames which are at the tip of the mouth of his barque' (*nsw tpy r wjȝ=f*). Tongues which may represent these flames extend from the mouths of both serpent heads (Fig. 3.42) in the copies of Thutmose III, Seti I, and Ramesses VI (Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 23), drawing on a common symbolism of serpents in Egyptian culture (§1.2.2). This may be compared with the depiction of no. 426 in the upper register of the 6th hour. The second of three serpents that guard the chests containing parts of the solar-Osirian corpse, it is captioned 'one who shoots with his tongue' (*st m ns=f*) and in the tomb of Thutmose III is the only one of the three that features a protruding tongue (Fig. 3.47).[73]

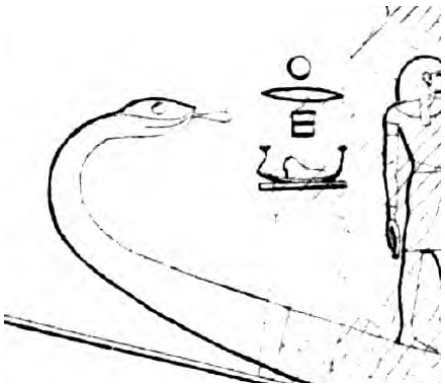

Fig. 3.48: Stern of the solar barque in the 5th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Seti I (Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 26)

[73] It is uncertain if the tomb of Seti I includes this detail too. A small protrusion is visible at the snake's mouth, but the stream of fire that follows is not connected to it. Close examination suggests that the snake was initially carved at a position which would have allowed its mouth to connect directly with the flames, but was subsequently recarved at a higher position. The protrusion from its mouth may thus represent a tongue or the beginning of the stream of fire. Photograph: https://www.flickr.com/photos/manna4u/36088681790/in/album-72157687439529835/ [Accessed 8 April 2022]. Eugène Lefébure's publication of the tomb (1886 [iv]: pl. xli) omits these details.

No reference to fire is made in the text of the 5th hour, and corresponding images of the serpent heads can lack tongues. Exceptions include the head at the stern in the tomb of Seti I (Fig. 3.48; Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 26). However, the label to the barque, 'living of powers' (*ꜥnḫ-bꜣw*), suggests that the fiery power made manifest in the ophidian form applied in this context too.[74] The form of the solar barque in these hours probably does not indicate what the barque was believed to 'look like'. It instead incorporates, as elements of itself, two instances of an *jrw*-image symbolizing the role it plays at these points of the solar journey. The form also occurs in the catalogue (Figs 3.49, 3.50; Bucher 1932: pls 16, 17), which suggests that the ophidian elements were central to the conceptualization of the barque as an agent in these contexts, in contrast to the more generic boat  sign in Fig. 3.45. This establishes the composite ophidian forms of the solar barque as *sšmw*-images, because they are 'potential epiphanies' of it (Eschweiler 1994: 192). The connection between agency and composite form distinguishes the depictions of the solar barque in the 4th and 5th hour from that of the cobra-headed barque in the 2nd hour.



Fig. 3.49: Solar barque of the 4th hour in the Amduat catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 16)

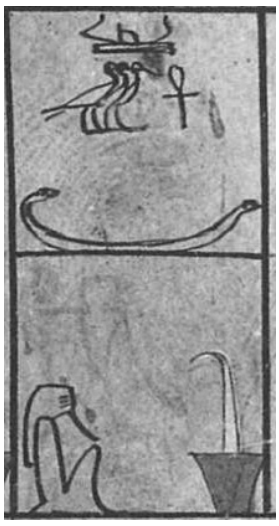

Fig. 3.50: Solar barque of the 5th hour in the Amduat catalogue, tomb of Thutmose III (Bucher 1932: pl. 17)

Comparison with how images of other 'inanimate objects' are used in the Amduat reinforces the status of the solar barque's composite ophidian forms as *sšmw*-images that incorporate ophidian heads as *jrw*-images, and that the heads are not also autonomous *sšmw*-images. The serpent staves in the bottom register of the 6th hour, nos 477–485, serve as a useful case study (Fig. 3.51). Their label reads:

ḏd mdw jn ḥm n nṯr pn ꜥ n mdw nṯrw ṯꜣyw ḫntyw njwt tn
j mdw psḏt {n}⟨ꜥ⟩t sšmw n jrw nṯrw=f
tkꜣ n ḥrw=tn spd n sfw=tn ꜣm=tn ḫftyw ḫprj d{s}⟨n⟩=tn šwwt=sn
nṯṯn jrw ḥꜥw štꜣ jr.n nwn stw=sn nṯṯn jm(w) mw tꜣ-ṯnn ḫpryw mkw ḫprj
srḳ=sn m ḫrw rꜥ rꜥ nb
jrt=sn p(w) m dwꜣt jrt mꜥḳ m mwtyw rdt bꜣw ⟨r⟩ ḥtmyt

[74] For the meaning of *bꜣ* and *bꜣw* as 'manifestation of power', see Žabkar 1968: 161–2. Compare the interpretation of desert fulgurites as traces of the power of the god Min, who was associated with storms and mineral deposits in the eastern desert (Olette-Pelletier 2022: 41–5).

Words spoken by the Person of this great god to the staves, the male gods,[75] foremost of this location:
O staves, great ennead,[76] *sšmw*-images of the *jrw*-images of its gods:
Burning belongs to your faces, sharpness belongs to your knives, so that you may burn up the enemies of Khepri and cut their shadows!
It is you who guard the secret limbs whose places Nun made. You are the ones within the water of Tatenen—manifested ones, protectors of Khepri!
They breathe from the voice of Re every day.
What they do in the underworld is to make a roast out of the condemned dead and deliver *bꜣw* to the place of destruction.

(Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 518–22)



Fig. 3.51: Amduat nos 477–485, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

Treating *mdw nṯrw tꜣyw* and *mdw psḏt ꜥꜣ* as pairs of apposed nouns followed by an adjective would identify the staves as Tatenen,[77] Atum, Khepri, Shu, Geb, Osiris, Horus, Horned One (*wpw*), and One

[75] Or a direct genitive construction: 'the staves of the male gods'.
[76] Or a direct genitive construction: 'O staves of the great ennead'.
[77] The nomen of Thutmose III replaces 'Tatenen' in the Amduat catalogue (Bucher 1932: pl. 18).

of the Offerings (*ḥtpy*). If treated as genitive constructions, the labels would refer to the gods existing 'behind' the staves, presumably as their wielders, but who are not depicted. Explanation in terms of metonymy (e.g. Goldwasser 1995: 66–70) is insufficient, because such models do not account for the reality manifested through images.

It may not be necessary to pick one translation over the other; the two possibilities for the beings represented by the pictures may have coexisted. The label to the scene goes on to describe the staves as the *sšmw*-images of the *jrw*-images of the gods. Based on the analysis set out in the preceding chapter, which identifies *sšmw*-images as material forms and *jrw*-images as symbols expressing qualities impressed by a being on its environment, the staves may refer to actual objects believed to surround and protect the corpse of Khepri in the underworld—presumably no. 459 in the middle register. In context the registers of the tableau may be understood as a semi-'exploded' view representing a spatially complex scene (§3.2), comparable with the combined pictorial–verbal 'tableau' of BD 151 (Lüscher 1998: 305–14, and plates; on protective serpents that surround vulnerable individuals, see further §5.2). As protectors of Khepri, the gods are represented by the *jrw*-images of serpent staves. This reflects an index–prototype relation in the sense of Gell: the gods are the 'primary' agents, the staves the 'secondary' agents 'through which primary agents distribute their agency in the causal milieu, and thus render their agency effective' (Gell 1998: 20). For two reasons, however, the staves are simultaneously *sšmw*-images. First, they are both material objects in the underworld, and material images in the tomb which was an underworld. Second, they were ontologically coextensive with their non-depicted wielders, exercising their agency or 'distributing their personhood' within the given pictorial context, as suggested by the fact that the staves are labelled with the names of the gods. The staves' relationship with the gods named in the label is homologous with the relationship between the ophidian composite no. 472 and the sons of Horus (§3.9), and its conceptual structure is similar to that of the solar barque in the 4th and 5th hours.

Drawing these examples together is a scene depicting the punishment of the damned in the bottom register of the 11th hour of the Amduat (nos 804–816), which arguably mobilizes images both as carriers of symbolic meanings, and as agents. In the scene, Horus wields a short, serpent-shaped stick or wand as he leans on a staff towards a series of pits containing the damned and aspects of their beings (nos 804–816). Just in front of Horus, an upright serpent (no. 805) labelled 'burner of millions' (*st ḥḥ(w)*) is shown spitting fire towards the pits (Fig. 3.52). Several other

depictions of punishment in the underworld feature gods leaning on staves while commanding punishment,[78] but this scene in the Amduat is the only instance in which the punishing god wields an additional object. No. 805 could be interpreted as an *jrw*-image of Horus himself in this context as punisher of the damned and avenger of Osiris, perhaps comparable to the sheaves of grain adjacent to the personifications of Nepri and *jꜣt kꜣmwtt*, described above; it may alternatively manifest the serpent-shaped stick or wand as an autonomous being, through the logic of a *sšmw*-image. The same thing and function are represented twice, with one image, no. 805, being agentive. The stick grasped by Horus is conceptually comparable with the cobra-headed barque of the 2nd hour, while the stick reformulated as an autonomous being is comparable with the ophidian heads of the solar barque in the 4th and 5th hours, as well as with other agentive ophidian composites.



Fig. 3.52: Amduat nos 804–807, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 19)

[78] E.g. Book of Gates, hour 2, register 3, scene 8; hour 3, register 3, scene 13; hour 7, register 2, scene 45; hour 9, register 3, scene 59 (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 64–71, 92–4, 181–5, 219–21). The motif of a god leaning on a staff and presiding over a group of figures is used when the former is punishing, resurrecting, or providing sustenance to the latter.

4

Book of Two Ways

The Book of Two Ways is known from 27 coffins and associated fragments from Deir el-Bersha in Middle Egypt, dating from the late 11th Dynasty to the second half of the 12th Dynasty.[79] The site was the necropolis for elite officials of the 15th nome of Upper Egypt, whose capital was Hermopolis. The fact that all examples come from this site has led Ursula Rößler-Köhler (2003) to term the compositions the 'Bersha complex'. I do not follow her designation, in order not to make assumptions about its origins and transmission history, which remain uncertain. Prior to the mid-12th Dynasty, coffins known to depict the Book of Two Ways belonged to nomarchs and their family members; later coffins which feature it belonged to high officials who were not part of the nomarchal family. The implications of this apparent social distinction are unclear (Sherbiny 2017: 20), but it does not seem to affect the usage of composite figures.

Most coffins position the Book of Two Ways on interior floorboards, the exception being B2Bo, which places it on the coffin back (Boston MFA 21.962–3; Terrace 1968: pl. 15). Positioning compositions on floorboards accords with interpretations of the coffin as a microcosm, where landscape representations on the bottom complement celestial ones on the lid (Nyord 2014: 34–5). Images of objects and animate beings, as well as 'topographic' or 'architectural' images, are known from the earliest examples (Willems 2018: fig. 7). However, two examples dating to the end of the 11th Dynasty or beginning of the 12th Dynasty are unillustrated (B1Bo and B4Bo: Boston MFA 20.1822–27 and Boston MFA 21.966–67).

The Book of Two Ways comprises ritual texts that were originally employed by the living to understand and navigate religious landscapes (Quack 2006b: 595–6). These were subsequently adapted for use in coffins to help assimilate deceased, transfigured individuals with the gods. Paul Barguet (1969) recognized solar themes in the composition, and it is worth considering his

[79] All but the most recently discovered example (Willems 2018) are listed in Sherbiny 2017: 19.

suggestion that the bands of the 'map' section represent the diurnal and nocturnal journeys of the sun-god, and by extension the deceased.[80] The black, terrestrial route may be associated with journeys taken in the darkness of night, when the sun-god is dragged through subterranean desert realms. This interpretation gains support from analysis of the horizontal strip that separates the two bands. Identified as the 'lake of fire of the knife-wielders' (*š n sḏt ꜥꜣtyw*: CT 1054; *CT* VII, 306d), it is more closely associated with the black band. The text within the lake describes how 'no one knows how to enter the fire' (*n wnt s nb rḫ ꜥḳ m sḏt*; *CT* VII, 306e), calling to mind part of the label to the fiery lake below the oval of Sokar in the 5th hour of the Amduat (§3.6), in which the damned are punished in the middle of the night:

> *ntw jꜣkbyw nṯrw jmw jmḥt*
> *n ꜥpp.n wjꜣ ḥr≠sn*
> *n sḫm.n dwꜣtyw mw≠sn wnn m-ḫr nṯr pn*
> *mw≠sn r ntyw jm≠s m sḏt*
> Waters of the mourning ones, the gods who are in *jmḥt*:[81]
> The (solar) barque cannot pass over them.
> The underworld-dwellers do not have power over their water which is under this god.[82]
> Their water is fire against those who are in it.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [ii]: 452–3)

By contrast, the blue band may evoke celestial voyages across the watery expanse of the morning sky, which is elsewhere described as blue:

> *ḥꜥ r≠k ḥry-jb wjꜣ{≠f}〈≠k〉 jswt≠k m ḥtp ḫnm.n tw (m)ꜥ(n)ḏt jb≠k ꜣw*
> *nb nṯrw ḳmꜣ.n≠k dj≠sn n≠k jꜣw nwt ḫsbd.tj ḥr-gs≠k*
> Rejoice in the midst of your barque, your crew being content, the day-barque having united with you, your heart being glad.
> Lord of the gods, whom you have created so that they might give you praise, Nut is blue beside you.
>
> (BD 15A2a, after P. Leiden T2, belonging to Qenna: Naville 1886: pl. 25, cols 6–8)

Together, the two coloured bands of the 'map' section summarize the daily solar cycle so central to beliefs concerning the sun-god and Osiris.

[80] Barguet's broader interpretation of the Book of Two Ways in terms of temple ritual remains disputed, however (Sherbiny 2017: 592). For a description of the 'map' section, see §1.2.1.
[81] For *jmḥt*, see n. 51 above.
[82] 'This god' may refer to the oval as a whole (see §3.1).

I draw my case studies from the coffins B1C and B5C, which feature the most extensive figural representations. Dating between the reigns of Senwosret II and III, the coffins are likely contemporaneous with precursors of the Amduat.[83] Furthermore, B1C and B5C exemplify two formulations of the Book of Two Ways, being distinguished by a different layout of the overall composition as well as of the 'map' section.[84]

4.1 Writing and Picturing

The forms of images range more widely in the Book of Two Ways than in the Amduat. They were influenced primarily by the fluid relationship between 'writing' and 'picturing', which are grounded in a shared repertoire of visual elements and relate to the oral-derived character of many Coffin Text spells. Existing work on relationships between 'writing' and 'image' often frames them as potentially overlapping semiotic categories. Overviews of the hieroglyphic script stress how 'the original link between hieroglyph and image always remains present and is susceptible to be reactivated' (Vernus 2020: 24). Emblematic personifications, 'ornamental cryptography', and the double function of elements of 'pictorial' scenes as hieroglyphic determinatives exemplify this phenomenon (Baines 1985: 41–63; Parkinson 1999: 80; Darnell 2004: 14; Houston and Stauder 2020). Such fluidity implies a counter-phenomenon in which images might be recalibrated as writing. Between the two poles lies an arena for complex interplay and multimodality, as has been sketched by Nadette Hoffmann (1996: 28) and Alexandra Lapčić (2014) in relation to the Amduat's long version and catalogue, and which has parallels in other pre-modern cultures (e.g. Houston 2014: 102–23; Bodel and Houston 2021).

That approach can address only part of the range of functions and expressive capacities of Egyptian images. It presupposes a conceptual distinction between 'writing' and 'image' that Egyptian material often disrupts. Attempts to accommodate Egyptian evidence through minor adjustments to existing frameworks are insufficient; a more radical reformulation is needed.

[83] For the archaeological context of B1C, see Daressy 1900: 25–42; Willems 1988: 75–7. For precursors to the Amduat, see §6.2.3.

[84] Sherbiny 2017: 93–4. For alternative typological schemes for the Book of Two Ways, see *CT* VII, xvi (de Buck's classification) and Lesko 1972; summary in Sherbiny 2017: 581–3. The variants are different layouts for the pictorial–verbal composition. They do not seem to correspond to different sets of conceptual structures for the constituent figures, so I do not discuss them further.

Interpretation should account for dimensions other than the semantic, as well as the possibility that certain aspects cannot be accommodated by the linguistically-bound notion of 'semiosis'. In *On pictures and the words that fail them* (1998), Elkins argues that semiotics is not 'an optimal, transparent, or transtheoretical approach to visual artefacts' because often the 'linguistic or semiotic model stops making sense, becomes counterintuitive, or begins to contradict what is actually happening' in images (Elkins 1998: xi). The sense of order imposed by frameworks such as semiotics exists 'only as a hope, as a recurring unfulfilled desire for order' in a fundamentally 'incoherent' and 'inconsistent' class of objects constituted by underdetermined graphic markings (Elkins 1998: 162 and *passim*).

Relevant to the Book of Two Ways is Elkins's focus on the conceptual homologies between writing and picturing, both of which involve visual images. Art historians were Elkins's target audience. He attempted to site the tradition of Western art within much longer histories of imaging practices in order to critique and dismantle conceptual frameworks in art history that are based predominantly on studies of Euro-American drawings and easel paintings. His exploration of the relationships between images of various sorts proceeds chronologically, based first in analysis of inscribed marks from the Vinča culture of southeast Europe and subsequently in early Mesopotamian tokens and sealings (Elkins 1998: 129–87).

The Book of Two Ways provides a valuable case study that can supplement Elkins's diachronic approach with a synchronic perspective. The composition shows how the ontological dimension is relevant to understanding certain images. Features of the composition are better understood when the hieroglyphic nature of Egyptian writing is taken into account. Visual forms that function elsewhere as script elements, or parts of them, could represent animate beings, enacting them in ways encapsulated by the term *sšmw* (§2.3.2; Pries 2016). Writing and figural representations are more than just semantically 'complementary' in that 'the text refers to what is not seen in the picture, while the picture depicts what the text does not mention' (Sherbiny 2017: 605–6). That interpretation presupposes that 'writing' and 'depiction' are distinct categories, but it does not account for the enactive power of images themselves, which underpins the deeper ontological rationale for the use of shared graphic principles and syntaxes. That enactive potential is why I follow Elkins in relating 'writing' to 'picturing' instead of 'depiction' in this chapter. The term 'depiction' is laden with assumptions based in Western pre-theoretical discourse and concentrates incorrectly or too narrowly on a relationship of mimetic correspondence between the image and its

'referent'. By contrast, 'picturing' clarifies that in some contexts 'writing' and 'images' are neither a binary pair, nor poles on a spectrum, nor partially overlapping sectors that could be plotted on a Venn diagram of semiotic modes. Such understandings are over-rigid. Images in the Book of Two Ways flow between those categories to different extents, often involving more than one level of figural form or conceptual structure. It is perhaps better to understand them as potentials of display that are not mutually exclusive. Designers of decorated coffins recognized and harnessed them to varying degrees, selectively combining traits of the one with those of the other in various permutations.

Designers of the Book of Two Ways capitalized on homologies between 'writing' and 'picturing' in order to specify ontological statuses for images and enable a composition to fulfil its intended function. Picturing may embed agentive beings strongly in their environments and amplify their interactions with other beings such as the transfigured deceased, especially when differentiated in size and detail from writing in 'texts'. Yet in several instances the pictured forms are analogous to arrangements of elements in hieroglyphic writing that materializes and eternalizes ritually effective oral utterances within the microcosm of the decorated coffin. In such cases, 'non-linguistic' images enrich or supplant texts. Sharing the graphic style of hieroglyphs, they also establish connections with the spoken word. Such treatments balance concerns of ontology and medium in a specific way that runs opposite to the practice of 'ornamental cryptography', extending the phenomenon of emblematic personification (compare Belting 2011 [2001]: 75, with n. 31).

This framework does not necessarily displace existing ones. In corpora such as apotropaic wands, a contrast may indeed be drawn between the phenomena of 'writing' and 'depiction', rather than 'writing' and 'picturing' (see further §5.1). The complexity of the Egyptian material and the distribution of composite figures across diverse categories open the prospect of devising a metatheoretical framework that can account for this breadth of possibilities in second millennium BCE Egypt, whether or not such a framework might apply in other cultural or chronological settings. A review of the visual principles and syntaxes that lie behind writing and picturing, and of how they contribute to the compositional structure and ritual function of the Book of Two Ways, provides a context for the analyses of individual composite figures in the subsections that follow. The complexity and flexibility of the figures make them particularly amenable to visual manipulation for ontological and semantic ends. Study of how this is done facilitates more detailed

treatment of the phenomenon within the Book of Two Ways, as well as enabling comparison with the Amduat and apotropaic wands.

The written elements of the 'map' section of the Book of Two Ways comprise mostly 'labels and titles accompanying the drawings' (Sherbiny 2017: 233). Using the more fully pictorial–verbal formulations of the composition as a basis for interpretation may, however, cloud understanding of the ways in which writing and picturing functioned together and individually. Terms such as 'labels' and 'titles', although fitting for many written elements in the Amduat, are less appropriate for the Book of Two Ways, where such elements often occur in contexts separate from, or devoid of, the images to which they are presumed to refer, both within sections of the composition and as a means of structuring the whole. In the less pictorial linear hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts, individual script elements have diminished ontic weight, while passages of writing acquire such weight as units in themselves. Understanding this phenomenon in conjunction with the use of composite figures elsewhere in the Book of Two Ways brings into focus ontological distinctions between instances of writing and picturing in the same composition and on the same media.

In some cases, figural images take precedence while writing fills the space in or around them, acting as labels in the sense of written content that identifies a (usually adjacent) image or describes its appearance and content, often giving additional details. In other cases, writing substitutes for figural images by taking up the space elsewhere occupied by them. For example, CT 1044 and 1045 relate to zoomorphic figures and a serpent that descends from the blue band (see further §4.4). Both figural images and writing are present on B1C, but B3C (Cairo CG 28085) omits the figures and places the writing where they would be (Fig. 4.1). Similarly, CT 1046 is a label to a location in the underworld: 'the granter of effectiveness/*ꜣḫ*-status, lord of reversion-offerings, is in it' (*dd ꜣḫ nb ḏbw jmꜥs*; *CT* VII, 298a). This is grouped with descriptions of other places in the underworld (*CT* VII, 304e–j). On B2Bo and B6C (Boston MFA 21.962–3 and Cairo CG 28094), the list is contained within a mound beneath the blue band (Fig. 4.2), while B3C and B4C (Cairo CG 28086) place the text in the space between the mound and the band (Fig. 4.3). B1C offers another interpretation (Fig. 4.4): a cavity in the wood beneath the blue band may have functioned as a three-dimensional mound, so the text is a label in a true sense. The cleft was later circled in black and enlarged for patching (compare Willems 1996: 40–1), erasing part of the text but producing a textured and elevated surface that could also be considered a mound.

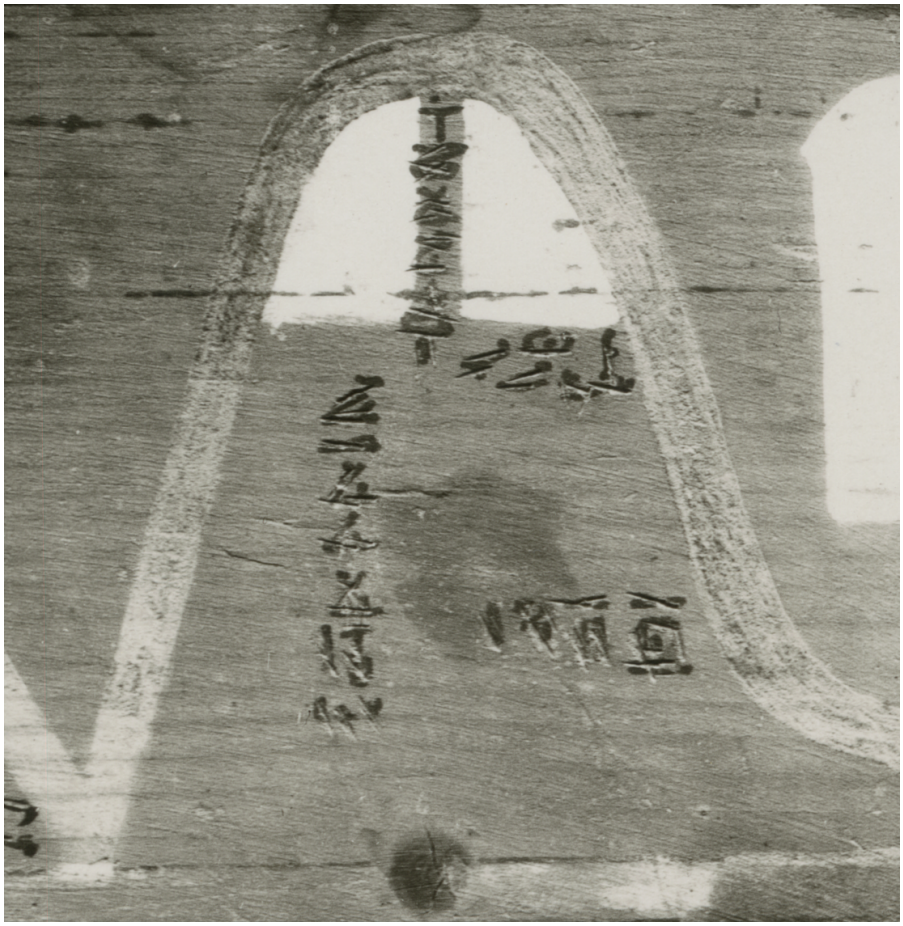

Fig. 4.1: Scene with CT 1044 and 1045 on B3C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 4.2: Scene with CT 1046 on B2Bo, late 11th or early 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: 257, fig. 199a)

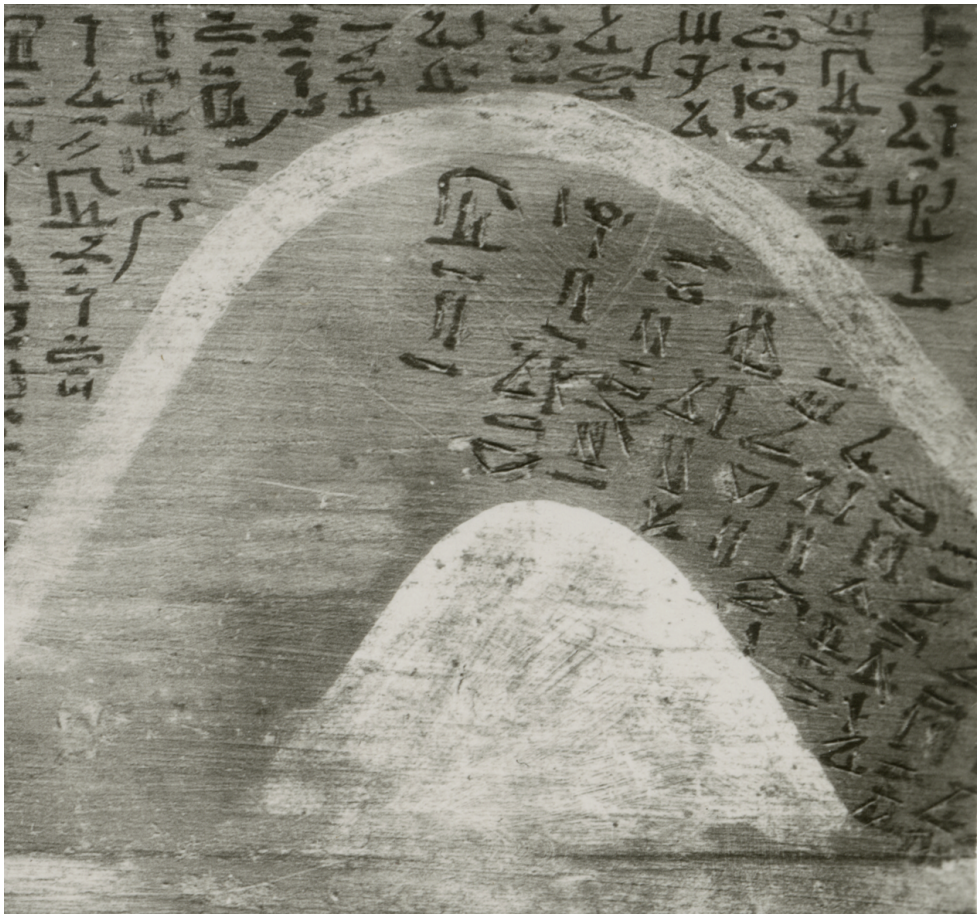

Fig. 4.3: Scene with CT 1046 on B3C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

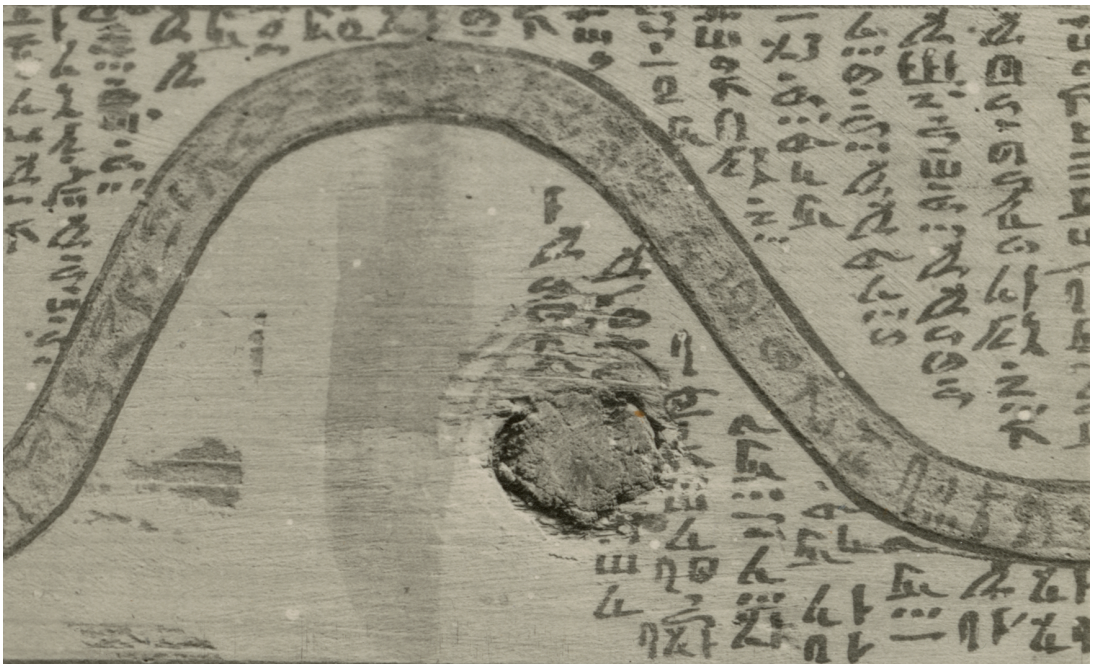

Fig. 4.4: Scene with CT 1046 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

By employing a relatively cursive script and adhering to formal constraints of size, arrangement, and orientation that govern units of writing (Elkins 1998: 135–56; Vernus 2020: 20–3), such formulations retain a distinction between writing and picturing within figural units. Yet, they shape the space allotted to them as if they were figural images: texts run in bands parallel to the 'two ways' of the 'map', and they fit within roughly triangular areas to form 'mounds'. Images are formed out of text blocks, so that texts represent in two ways at once, collapsing the dichotomies of 'script' and 'image' and of 'writing' and 'depiction'.[85]

The reverse phenomenon is exemplified by CT 1072, which consists of a narrow vertical compartment containing two crisscrossing strips. On most coffins, these descend from a semicircle labelled 'fire' (*sḏt*; Sherbiny 2017: 54–6). Text occupies the spaces above, between, and below the strips, describing them as terrestrial and aquatic routes. The text is unusually arranged on B3C, however (Fig. 4.5):

(At compartment top) *r n wꜣwt r-sṯꜣw jw wꜣwt jptw mj (n)n m stnm wʿt ḫsft m snwt≠s m stnm jn rḫ sn gmm wꜣwt≠sn jw≠sn ḳꜣ m jnbw nw ds*
(At compartment bottom) *nt r-sṯꜣw pn ḥrt mw tꜣ*
(At compartment top) Utterance for the ways of Rasetjau. These ways wind like this, one winding counter to the other.[86] It is the one who knows them who can find their ways. They are high with walls of flint.
(At compartment bottom) (The ways) of this Rasetjau which are over water and land.

(*CT* VII, 339e–341b)

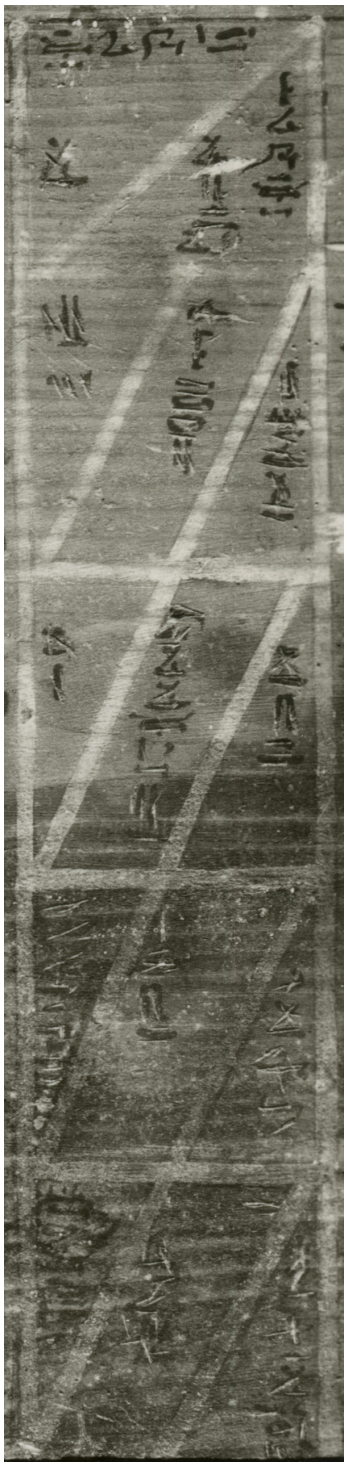

Fig. 4.5: Scene with CT 1072 on B3C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

In other copies, the passage at the bottom of the compartment follows the introductory phrase 'utterance for the ways of Rasetjau'.

[85] For an Islamic example of a different character, in which the contours of script elements constitute those of the picture, see Elkins 1998: 196–7, fig. 36. Egyptian analogues are typically architectural, as when temple pylons represent the horizon (*ꜣḫt*).
[86] Lit. 'These ways are like this in winding, the one opposing its counterpart in winding'.

On B3C, its transposition may enable the images of the strips to function as an additional, oversize 'determinative' of the word *wꜣwt* 'ways'; the feminine gender of the following genitive marker *nt* does not agree with any other words in context. This elaborate 'determinative' incorporates the intervening text, becoming a hyper-image. Additional support comes from the variant passage on B9C (Cairo CG 28091): 'these ways are like these (which are) in writing/drawing' (*jw wꜣwt jp[t]w mj nn m sẖ*; *CT* VII, 339f–340a). The compartment is identified as a schematic image of an underworld realm (§2.3.2). In alternative formulations of the composition, the strips and semicircle are absent, and the variant spell CT 1182 is written in columns:

> *r n wꜣt pw*
> *wꜣwt pw jptw mj nw wˁ jm ḫsft m snwꜥs m stnm*
> *jr rḫ sn gmm sn wꜣwtꜥsn jw ḳꜣ n jnbw nw ds m r-stꜣw*
> This is an utterance for the way:
> It is the case that these ways are like this, the one there counter to the other in winding.
> As for the one who knows them, (he is) one who finds them and their ways. They are high of walls of flint in Rasetjau.
>
> (*CT* VII, 519c–g)

The potential ontological equivalence of writing and images is more strongly present on the unillustrated coffin B4Bo. This example shows how their interchangeability may structure the form of a composition as a whole. A label 'its keeper is the sad-voiced one' (*ꜣḫw-ḫrw jr(y)ꜥs pw*; *CT* VII, 287d) is followed on this coffin by the phrase 'what is beneath him is the utterance for passing by him' (*r n swꜣ ḥrꜥf nw nt(y) ẖrꜥf*), perhaps suggesting that the source was illustrated, with the utterance written beneath a figure of the keeper. Alternatively, it could refer to the fact that the utterance was inscribed beneath the name of the keeper (Sherbiny 2017: 240), so that the name substitutes for a figure. Here the written unit is not shaped as a figure, in contrast to the examples cited previously. Their ontological equivalence emerges from their shared status as graphic marks. In other formulations of the Book of Two Ways, such practices mainly occur outside the 'map' section. Spells are inscribed in long rows and columns of hieroglyphs, accompanied by relatively sparse illustration.

The mechanics of visual representation in the Book of Two Ways are different from those in the Amduat, and the differences may extend to the conceptual structures of images themselves. The fluidity between writing and picturing in the Book of Two Ways calls to mind Bahrani's discussion of the innate linkage between 'the realms of word and image, the name and thing' in Assyro-

Babylonian contexts. Just as ancient Mesopotamians recognized 'the possibility of encountering the same concept, thing, or referent through different substances or signifiers', so did ancient Egyptians acknowledge that beings 'can only be retroactively produced through signification, through the symbolic' (Bahrani 2003: 111–14). The analyses that follow explore how methods of display as seen from composite figures exemplify ways in which shared sets of graphic principles can play on perceptions of images as 'linguistic' or 'non-linguistic' objects. The analyses study the amalgamation of parts, the amalgamation of whole figures, and the elaboration of conventionalized forms. The last of these may or may not be 'script-primary', a term that I use for unusual cases where a non-linguistic signifier is given a form seemingly drawn directly from a grapheme in the hieroglyphic script, in order to allude to words or statements while not spelling them out (see, e.g., §4.2, on CT 1062). Such figures should be distinguished formally and conceptually from emblematic personifications, which are another type of compact pictorial formulation of verbal expressions that function in different ways (see further §5.1). The boundary between linguistic and non-linguistic perceptions could be disrupted on more than one level simultaneously: from single images to clusters of them, as well as within the constituent elements of individual images. For example, an image could assume a form more commonly attested in the script, while its accompanying label calibrates its hieroglyphic signs in ways that amplify 'non-linguistic' iconicity. Such analyses connect well with the ontological approach outlined in Chapter 2.

Treating the relationship between writing and picturing as the main external factor that governs the Book of Two Ways contributes to modelling its system of visual conventions by establishing a typology of conceptual structures for some of its composite figures. These may then be compared with those of the Amduat and apotropaic wands. The terms *jrw* and *sšmw* remain useful heuristics because the structures of the images that I explore match the definitions earlier set out for the terms. Most of the images may be identified as being both *jrw*-images and *sšmw*-images, with the status as *jrw* being primary. This structure arises from the enactive function of the Book of Two Ways, through which the coffin itself manifested, through heavily symbolic means, an underworld realm and the mortuary rites that enabled the transfiguration of the deceased (Willems 1988: 238–44).

4.2 CT 1062 AND 1064



Fig. 4.6: Figures belonging to CT 1062 and 1064 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 4.7: Detail of figure belonging to CT 1064 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (Vandenbeusch 2020: 78, fig. 24d)

My first two case studies for the Book of Two Ways do not incorporate ophidian elements, but they exemplify specific ways of connecting writing and picturing on the level of individual figures in the

composition. Associated with CT 1062 and 1064 on B1C, the figures enrich the semantic and ontological qualities of a 'non-linguistic' image via the 'linguistic' dimension implicit in certain graphic strategies (Figs 4.6, 4.7). The figure adjacent to text from CT 1062 has a red bull's head and a long, tapering body. The midsection of the body has a bulbous, segmented outline, and is coloured white with black dots within each segment; the tapered end of the body is red. The figure adjacent to text from CT 1064 has a black donkey head and a red quadrupedal mammalian body—possibly combining the large phallus of a donkey with canine or feline limbs—with a long tail (for colours, see Fig. 1.1).

The label from CT 1062 reads: '"Hippopotamus-face(d), raging of attack" is his name; this is his creek' (*dby-ḥr khꜣ ꜣt rn≠f pw šꜣsw≠f pw*; *CT* VII, 320a–b).[87] The label from CT 1064 on B1C reads: '"Great of face, great of *jrw*-image" is his name' (*ꜥꜣ-ḥr ꜥꜣ-jrw rn≠f pw*; *CT* VII, 322; Vandenbeusch 2020: 79). A variant attested on four coffins is: '"Hound-face(d), great of *jrw*-image" is his name' (*ṯsm-ḥr ꜥꜣ-jrw rn≠f pw*; *CT* VII, 322c).

The figures enrich the semantic and ontological qualities of a 'non-linguistic' image via the 'linguistic' dimension implicit in certain graphic strategies. The two images differ in the mechanisms that they exploit. The first, associated with CT 1062, borrows conventionalized forms from the hieroglyphic script in order to display a metaphorical relation. The other, associated with CT 1064, works through paronomasia that is grounded in a visual form that functions at once as 'writing' and 'picture'.

The figure with a bull's head, associated with CT 1062, has a label that describes it as dangerous and destructive. The identification of the figure as 'Hippopotamus-face(d)' is a persuasive metaphor: hippopotami, which live in inlets, are also dangerous animals; their swift movement and gaping jaws are easily connected with the idea of a 'raging attack'.[88] The form of the composite figure may build on this metaphor, since the bull's head is common in writings of *ḏnd* 'to rage; to burn' (*Wb.* V, 579.1–7), and is thus associated with fire—another destructive force frequently mobilized in the Coffin Texts (Abbas 2010). Zuzanna Bennett (2020: 39) identifies the bulbous element extending downward from the head as a carob or moringa seed-pod , perhaps connoting regeneration, but it is unclear how such an identification may connect with the ontology or

[87] The word for 'creek' is alternately written *ḫꜣsw* or *ḫꜣsw* (*Wb.* III, 233.19; Sherbiny 2017: 225–7, 272–4).

[88] The word *ꜣt* 'moment; instant' often has a hippopotamus head  as determinative (*Wb.* I, 1.12–2.2).

function of the image as a whole. Another possibility is that the seed-pod symbolizes the fragrance of the being, a well-known marker of divine presence (e.g. Iannarilli 2018). A more probable identification for the element, however, is that of a scorpion's tail and stinger. These body parts are similarly modelled and shown oversize in elaborate scorpion determinatives in CT 531 (*CT* VI, 124g), and the swift and deadly attack of scorpions connect well with the dangerous qualities of the being associated with CT 1062.

Regardless of how the bulbous element is identified, the configuration of components may have enabled visual play centred on the hieroglyphic sign that depicts a bovine head with an extended neck (, with the Old Kingdom variant ). That sign occurs in writings of *ꜥm* 'to swallow', the long neck perhaps emphasizing the physicality of swallowing. The word occurs in relation to dangerous underworld beings, including 'the devourer' (*ꜥmmt*) in the Book of the Dead, and in the designation of a 'devouring flame' in the Coffin Texts (Goebs 2008: 335). The figure in the Book of Two Ways may be an agentive representation of this semantic constellation: raging, burning, swallowing, and destruction converge on the symbol of the bull. If this line of argument is accepted, the figure would be an *jrw*-image constructed from script elements, elaborating on their conventionalized forms and using them to display metaphoric and symbolic relations. This very unusual 'script-primary' character contrasts with the case studies to follow (see also §2.3.3 on Khepri).

The figure associated with CT 1064 has a black donkey head and red donkey body. I suggest that it is a visual representation of a pun in the language, facilitated by the hieroglyphic script's potential for ambiguity. *ꜣ* 'great' plays on *ꜣ* 'donkey', while the qualifying phrase uses *ꜣ* to refer to the *jrw*-image of the being. The figure may exploit this wordplay: on B1C, neither writing of *ꜣ* has a determinative, so that both 'great of face' and 'donkey-face(d)' are valid readings. Further support for reading 'donkey-face(d)' comes from the animal reference in the variant label: 'hound-face(d)'. At the same time, the possibility of reading *ꜣ* 'great' fits with the labelling of other composite figures in the Book of Two Ways as *ꜣ-ḥr*, in contexts and with forms devoid of donkey associations and elements (CT 1056: *CT* VII, 309a; CT 1069 and 1176—see §4.3: *CT* VII, 331c–e, 515d–g). Since donkeys are frequent guardians in the underworld (Vandenbeusch 2020: 124), this figure may be understood as the *jrw*-image, as cited in its label, symbolizing the qualities of the being. The paronomasia of *ꜣ* in the label meant that the figure was rendered iconically as a donkey; perhaps the different colours of its head and body show that it groups two distinct visual elements, whose combination produced an otherwise non-composite form. There is insufficient evidence to suggest

that this borrowed forms directly from the hieroglyphic script. It is better viewed as a graph that functioned as both 'picture' and 'writing'.

Both figures anchored the visual form of their respective beings within a ritual composition, acquiring the status of *sšmw*-images. Alternative figural forms would have been possible, but were perhaps not as favourable within the parameters of the Book of Two Ways. Through pictorial forms, semantic networks in the script could influence the construction of 'non-linguistic' images: 'the name creates a being, and by the same logic of the dialectic system the external shape of the being could also affect its destiny in the world in a *real* way' (Bahrani 2003: 118–19, emphasis in original). Composite figures could easily be categorized as unusual determinatives or logograms should they occur in running 'text' as 'linguistic' signifiers, because both linguistic and non-linguistic systems drew on a shared visual repertoire and graphic principles. Although the two figures just discussed were constructed through different pathways, they possess similar hierarchies for their dual statuses as *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image. Status as an *jrw*-image was primary, serving to anchor the qualities of a being when it was manifested as a *sšmw*-image.

4.3 CT 1069 AND 1176

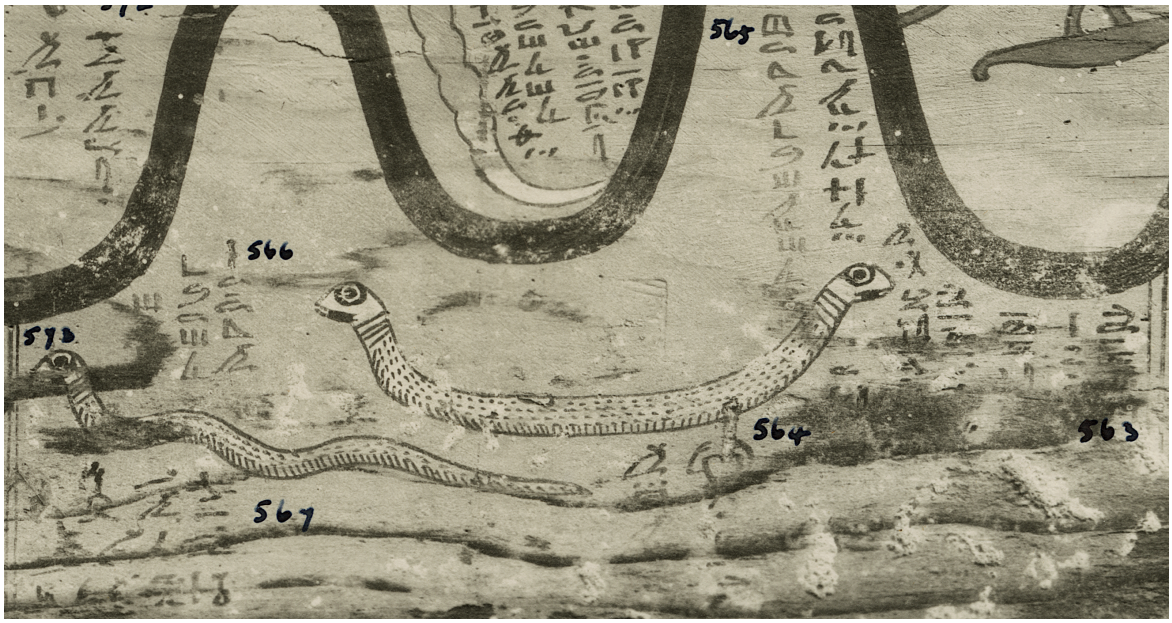

Fig. 4.8: Scene with CT 1069 featuring double-headed serpent on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 4.9: Double-headed serpent belonging to CT 1176 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

My second case study for the Book of Two Ways comprises two images from parallel spells.[89] Both are in the form of horizontal serpents with an upraised head at each end; the heads are not those of cobras. On B1C, the figure is coloured white, with red speckled detailing; the mouth and eyes are

[89] The short spells CT 1176–1179 are sections of the longer spell CT 1069 divided into shorter elements on coffins of de Buck's Group II (*CT* VII, xvi).

marked out in black (Fig. 4.8; for colours, Fig. 1.1). On B5C, the figure features black cross-hatched detailing; I have not been able to verify colours (Fig. 4.9).

The figure on B1C is accompanied by the following text:

ꜥ-ḥr ḫsf ꜥ3wt s33 st m pr=f
[ꜥḳ] ḫr ḳ3b pw pw
srḳt w[nn=j] m 3w[t ḏt]
Great-faced one, who repels aggressors and protects them in his house.
He is [the one who enters] beneath this bend.
O Selqet, [I shall exist] for the length [of everlasting].

(*CT* VII, 331c–e)

The figure on B5C is accompanied by the following text:

ꜥḳ ḫr ḳ3b n š pw pw
srḳt wnn=j m 3wt ḏt
jnk sbb mdw nṯrw n rꜥ jy[.n=j] sḏb=j wpt [n] nb=s
He is the one who enters beneath the bend of this pool.
O Selqet, I shall exist for the length of everlasting.
I am one who dispatches the matters of the gods to Re; [I have] come to restore a matter [to] its lord.

(*CT* VII, 515d–g)

Since they are from parallel spells, the images are of the same being. They were probably conceived as illustrations to the 'map' as a whole: their labels refer to a 'bend' in the black band, and unlike other figures whose labels mention such features, the double-headed serpents are located directly beneath meanders in the black way. Since B1C and B5C exemplify different layouts for the Book of Two Ways, including the 'map' section, the fact that both include the ophidian composites suggests that these figures were devised as part of a unit whose position varied between specific compositional schemes. Moreover, the relevant section of the label on B1C is written in red, which is characteristic of paratext in the Coffin Texts (Posener 1951). The texts adjacent to the figures are part of this scheme and serve comparable functions. They manifest the first-person speech of the deceased in a durable material form, rendering it perpetually effective as an extension of the self, parallel to the name and image (compare Bahrani 2003: ch. 4).

The form of conjoined symmetrical, outward-facing zoomorphic elements is frequent, notably as a representation of the deity Aker (e.g. CT 1142: *CT* VII, 488f), the two lions of the eastern and western horizons in the vignettes to BD 17, and the ophidian prows and sterns of boats in the underworld. The motif appears to be a formulaic symbol of bidirectionality, and by extension of

being all-encompassing, with varying associations in different contexts. It may thus be considered an *jrw*-image, expressing specific qualities of its various subjects in context. These ophidian composites connect with a usage of the form as part of 'writing' in other religious material of the late Middle Kingdom, but this association need not imply that the designers of the Book of Two Ways adopted the form directly from the script. As with §4.2 above, it is instead preferable to see 'writing' and 'picturing' as sharing what one might term a graph.



Fig. 4.10: 'Double bull' sign on P. Ramesseum E, probably 13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

The form of the double-headed serpent fits with the being's function as a protector of the bend, marking its ability to 'repel aggressors' approaching from either direction or side. The label to the figure on B5C includes the passage: 'I am one who dispatches the matters of the gods to Re; [I have] come in order to restore a matter [to] its lord' (quoted above). The first person of the utterance places the deceased in the role of messenger or intermediary. Its context recalls that of the ophidian composite no. 391 in the 5th hour of the Amduat, although there the ophidian composite is the messenger (§3.7). Perhaps the label on B5C works with the double-headed serpent form to express the deceased's experience of the being it represents, insofar as the deceased would have encountered it from both directions during his travels as messenger. Similar ideas may underlie the figure on B1C, which is likely identifiable with that on B5C.



Fig. 4.11: Sun-god surrounded by the 'roads of *mḥn*' on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Werner Forman Archive)

They resonate with a writing of the word *ḫns*, meaning 'to move in two directions simultaneously', in a Middle Kingdom ritual manuscript (Fig. 4.10), where it has a determinative of two outward-

facing bulls joined at the rump .[90] The graphic syntax occurs in 'linguistic' contexts as well, notably phonetic writings of the name of Aker ( and : Roberson 2019: 163). Representing the encountered entity in this way is the opposite of what occurs on the Book of the Dead papyrus of Hunefer, where two images of the deceased flank a representation of the West and face away from it, expressing the deceased's movement in opposite directions, entering and exiting the necropolis (P. BM EA 9901,5; Parkinson 2010). The choice of configuration may have resulted from both the pictorial context and the nature of the subject, since a human being could not be presented as a composite figure.



Fig. 4.12: 'Double bull' holding knives, on wand Cairo JE 56273, 12th–13th Dynasty (Quirke 2016: 105, fig. 2.9)

Similar double-headed serpents occur elsewhere on B1C and inform an alternative iconographic explanation. On the exterior of the head end of the coffin, a double-headed serpent coloured white with red cross-hatched detailing is part of the modified *ỉtf*-crown of the sun-god (Fig. 4.11). The figure is part of a composition (CT 758–760) which describes the circuit of the sun-god—termed the 'roads of *mḥn*'—and alludes to the union of Re and Osiris.[91] Fig. 4.12 shows a variant employing bovine elements, as above, on an apotropaic wand, there perhaps connoting the vigilance of the being represented by the conjoined, knife-wielding bulls.

The form of a double-headed serpent accommodated the iconographic and conceptual requirements of the contexts in which it was used. Its status as an *jrw*-image was primary: it adopted a conventionalized form with strong symbolic associations, and specified additional dimensions of meaning using ophidian elements. By anchoring the being in such a form, the *jrw*-image guaranteed the efficacy of the representation as an ontologically coextensive *sšmw*-image. At the same time, it ensured that the principles guiding the design of its form(s) matched those used elsewhere in the composition, which was itself a part of Middle Kingdom mortuary culture and was therefore embedded in wider conventions of writing and picturing (see further §6.2.1).

[90] P. Ramesseum E = P. BM EA 10753.4, col. 48 (Gardiner 1955b: 13; Díaz Hernández 2014: 25). A less explicit reference may be the positioning of the baboon element of no. 391 in the Amduat at the tail-end of the serpent so that the two heads of the figure face opposite directions, as on the sarcophagus of Tjaihepimu (Fig. 3.35).

[91] Lacau 1904–1906 [i]: pl. 25; Piccione 1990: 44–6; Reemes 2015: 98–116. See also §3.4 and §4.8.

4.4 CT 1045 AND 1156

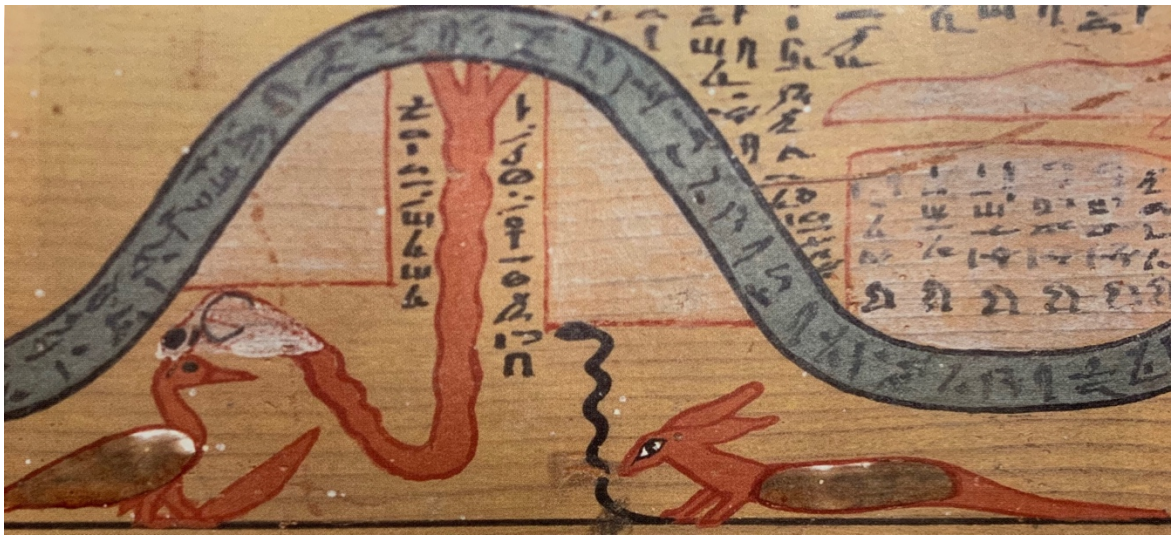

Fig. 4.13: Scene with CT 1044 and 1045 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: pl. 32a)



Fig. 4.14: Scene with CT 1156 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

Next are two images from another pair of parallel spells. On B1C, the figure under discussion has the head and forequarters of a donkey, both coloured red, and an undulating body, also red but with a grey-green oval at its midsection (Fig. 4.13). I suggest that this is meant to evoke the form of

a serpent (see also Miller in press). A small, black, undulating ophidian object—probably a serpent-shaped staff—rises from its front foreleg. Two other figures are part of the same scene. The first figure is a red, undulating cobra whose head is white with red and black detailing. The body of the cobra joins to three diverging branches that connect to the peak of a bend in the blue band. The second figure is a bird with a red head and legs, and a grey-green body; it wields a red knife. The cobra's mouth makes contact with the bird's head.

On B5C, surface damage makes the figure under discussion difficult to discern, but it seems to have the form of a serpent with a donkey's head (Fig. 4.14). The head is coloured black, while the ophidian body is pale (colour uncertain based on the monochrome photograph in Gardiner's collection). The front of the body has two short extensions, possibly arms. There are no associated figures.

The group of figures on B1C is accompanied by the label 'This is the flesh of the enemy, his name being "he who lives beside the fledgling of the lake"' (*jwf ḫfty ꜥnḫ-m-gs-ṯꜣ-š rn≠f pw pw*). Variants include 'he who lives on the fledgling of the lake' (*ꜥnḫ-m-ṯꜣ-š*; only on B3C and B4C). Sherbiny (2017: 208–9) discusses alternative interpretations.

The label to the figure on B5C reads: 'Dreadful of Flame is (his) name' (*nhd-ns rn(≠f) pw*). Marie Vandenbeusch (2020: 79) cites a passage from CT 1168 in her catalogue of Coffin Text figures that incorporate donkey elements: 'he is the keeper of this bend of the waterway; "knife-like/sharp of face" is his name; fire is that which is on him' (*jry ḳꜣb pw n š pw mds-ḥr rn≠f pw sḏt nw ntt ḥr≠f*). Examination of de Buck's plans in *CT* VII suggests that this is a mistaken attribution and that this label belongs to a different area of the composition.

The donkey–serpent composites on B1C and B5C likely represent the same being, and may be interpreted as *sšmw*-images made up of conjoined *jrw*-images. They represent a variation on the conceptual category studied in this chapter. The figures signify through metaphor and symbolism but do not derive from, borrow, or elaborate upon hieroglyphic script elements. Rather, they combine elements of images that could be used as determinatives when writing was the mode of representation. The composite figure fits with the iconographic conventions of the Book of Two Ways, just as the ophidian formulation of the 'double-headed animal' template achieves the same purpose in association with CT 1069 and 1176 (§4.3).

The figures on B1C and B5C are similar in form; analysis of the labels and context suggests that they can be considered representations of the same being, which has the epithet 'dreadful of flame'

(*nhd-ns*). On B1C, *jwf ḫfty* and *ꜥnḫ-m-gs-ṯ-š* may designate the serpent which appears to be devouring the bird, since the label is written in columns flanking the serpent. The epithet *nhd-ns* is attested as part of CT 1045 on other coffins (*CT* VII, 297c), however; its association with the donkey–serpent composite on B5C suggests that the similar figure on B1C may be identified as a representation of the being called *nhd-ns*, despite the absence of the epithet on B1C. 'Dreadful of flame and face' (*nhd-ns-ḥr*; *CT* VII, 297c; *LGG* IV, 270) may be an extended formulation on B3C and B4C, which do not feature figures.

Viewing the figures as assemblages of symbolic elements configured as 'body parts' clarifies the structure of the donkey–serpent composites. Analysis suggests that the figures represent a dangerous entity termed *ḥjw* to which the Pyramid and Coffin Texts refer (Ward 1978: 31; Vandenbeusch 2019: 141–3; 2020: 79–80). The *ḥjw* was alternately identified with donkeys and snakes, or at least associated with them through hieroglyphic determinatives of those animals. Since donkeys were connected with the violent god Seth (e.g. Vandenbeusch 2020: 233–5, 239–40) and serpents were often considered inimical, the composite donkey–serpent form fits the role of a dangerous guardian in the Book of Two Ways.

No other depiction of the *ḥjw* is known. William Ward (1978: 28–9) noted additionally that it is almost always characterized as either a donkey or serpent, but not both. Most written sources referring to *ḥjw* do not use both the donkey and the serpent determinative, nor do the spells that employ a donkey determinative occur together with spells featuring a serpent determinative. CT 266 on coffin S1C (Cairo CG 28118) is an exception, writing *ḥjw* with a donkey determinative but following it with the qualifier 'which is upon its belly' (*ḥry ḫt=f*; *CT* III, 396e–f), which typically describes serpents. Perhaps the two conceptualizations were sometimes conflated in the area of Asyut, where the coffin was found. Moreover, Asyut is not too distant from Deir el-Bersha, from which the donkey–serpent composites are attested (Ward 1978: 30–1).

The upright serpent held by the figure on B1C elaborates on the symbolism of *ḥjw* by expressing its potential for inflicting fiery destruction (compare Amduat nos 804 and 805: §3.10, Fig. 3.52). The 'upright serpent' motif occurs in a range of sources of the Middle and New Kingdoms, and it is salient in several images in the Book of Two Ways and on apotropaic wands. For many centuries, staves that served protective functions in rituals, often mortuary ones, frequently took the form of upright, undulating serpents. Coffins B1C, B5C, and T3C (Cairo JE 47355) depict them in contexts relating to the mummification of Osiris, 'which apparently is under the protection of the serpent

carriers. They quite clearly perform this task in the vignette to [BD 182]' (Willems 1996: 128). On the floorboard of B5C, a squatting hippopotamus associated with CT 1142 wields a serpent or serpent-shaped staff, a motif also found on the roughly contemporaneous apotropaic wand MMA 30.8.218 (see further §6.2.2, Fig. 6.4; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 106; Quirke 2016: 273–4). Such figures find later parallels in the gatekeepers of BD 144 and in the *Stundenwachengötter* of the Third Intermediate Period. Protective serpents in such contexts may be related to the 'snake charming' scenes attested on Middle Kingdom coffins (Willems 1996: 128, 137, after Waitkus 1987: 68–80).

A scene in the 16th Dynasty tomb of Bebi at Elkab, where nurses (*ḫnmtt*) and wet-nurses (*mnʿt*) gesture with apotropaic wands and serpent-shaped staves towards representations of the tomb-owner and his wife (Willems 1996: 131, with n. 568), is also relevant here. The Bebi scene is part of a group of post-Middle Kingdom sources important for understanding the relationships between upright serpents, serpent-shaped staves, and other ritual objects. A late Middle Kingdom burial cache in the Ramesseum included a serpent-shaped staff and a Bes-headed female figure holding serpents (Quibell 1898: 3–4, pls 1–3; Miniaci 2020b), while a scene depicting temple furniture in the 18th Dynasty tomb of Rekhmire includes two upright serpent-shaped staves along with a pair of curved apotropaic wands (TT 100; Davies 1943: 36–9, pl. 36). Since wands frequently depict figures grasping serpents, probably as part of protective rituals (Willems 1996: 129, n. 546), these categories of objects probably complement one another in function and symbolism.

The row of nine serpent-shaped staves in the bottom register of the Amduat's 6th hour (nos 477–485), each equipped with a knife at its base, may be 'secondary agents' representing gods who protect the solar-Osirian corpse (§3.10). The association between staves and knives is clear here. In addition, Amduat no. 63 in the 1st hour, a male anthropomorphic figure labelled 'traverser of the hours' (*ḏȝ-wnwt*), carries what appears to be an apotropaic wand (Hornung 1987–1994 [i]: 133; copies of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II: Bucher 1932: pls 2, 27). The object is replaced in post-Amarna royal tombs with either a knife (e.g. Seti I: Lefébure 1886 [iv]: pl. 26) or a serpent-shaped staff (e.g. Ramesses VI: Piankoff 1954 [ii]: pl. 75). Upright serpent, serpent-shaped staff, knife, and apotropaic wand were interchangeable motifs (see also Régen 2017: 503), perhaps because all of these objects exercised protection through potential violence, either directly or by realizing the power of aggressive animals.

The donkey–serpent composite exploits metaphoric and symbolic networks to represent a being defined by those qualities in a way that fits with other figures in the Book of Two Ways.

Elsewhere the same strategies are mobilized by donkey and serpent determinatives in writings of *ḥjw*. Thus, linguistic and non-linguistic modes of presentation drew on the same fount of graphic elements. In contrast to Marie Vandenbeusch (2019: 143), I see the use of donkey and serpent determinatives as expressing the qualities of *ḥjw* rather than implying its conceptualization as 'half-donkey and half-snake, or at least an entity that can morph between donkey- and snake-shapes'. The geographic variation in the use of the determinatives noted by Ward (1978: 28) is semantically but not conceptually informative; the same applies to the choices made by the designers and patrons of coffins B1C and B5C, who were probably influenced by their regional environment (for this background, compare Kahl 1999).

The donkey and ophidian elements of the figure in the Book of Two Ways may be categorized as *jrw*-images. Their combination to form a single body exemplifies a graphic practice that is frequent in composite groups of hieroglyphic signs (e.g. Fischer 1977b: 13, fig. 9). The content of the compositions could be developed as writing, image, or a combination of the two, or could be realized alternately in one mode or the other. The phenomenon is evident also in a composite bull–serpent figure and the 'decomposed' figures of a turtle and snake on B5C (§4.5 and §4.6), which employ different practices from those exploited here.

On B1C, the donkey–serpent composite is supplemented by an undulating, upright serpent-shaped staff which clarifies its function in the underworld realm of the Book of Two Ways. Further support for this interpretation comes from a passage from CT 993, in which the deceased addresses a being encountered as its *jrw*-image, whose powers are curtailed for lack of appropriate symbolic elements:

> *jrw n(n) ds≠k n(n) sḏt≠k*
> *ḫddw n ḫr≠j ḥr≠k*
> O *jrw*-image,[92] your knife does not exist, your flame does not exist!
> O clapnet, I have not fallen because of you!
>
> (*CT* VII, 207c–e)

[92] The sign used to write *jrw* is transcribed by de Buck as a standing anthropomorphic effigy with a protrusion at its hip (*CT* VII, 207c, n. 1). Faulkner (1973–1978 [iii]: 102 n. 14) proposed *jrw* and *twt* as possible translations. The sign occurs also in CT 937, where it is part of an epithet following *št*ȝ 'mysterious, secret' (*CT* VII, 145h, n. 6). The epithet *št*ȝ*-jrw* is common in later sources (*LGG* VII, 130–1, with variants), whereas *št*ȝ*-twt* is unknown, so a reading as *jrw* is more probable.

The ritual function of the Book of Two Ways imparted agency to the donkey–serpent composites, which were thus also *sšmw*-images. Their status as *jrw*-images was, however, primary. As with the figure associated with CT 1064 on B1C, the character of the *hjw* was displayed by amalgamating metaphoric and symbolic elements. This composite figure anchored the being's presence and qualities within the setting of a coffin.

4.5 CT 1140

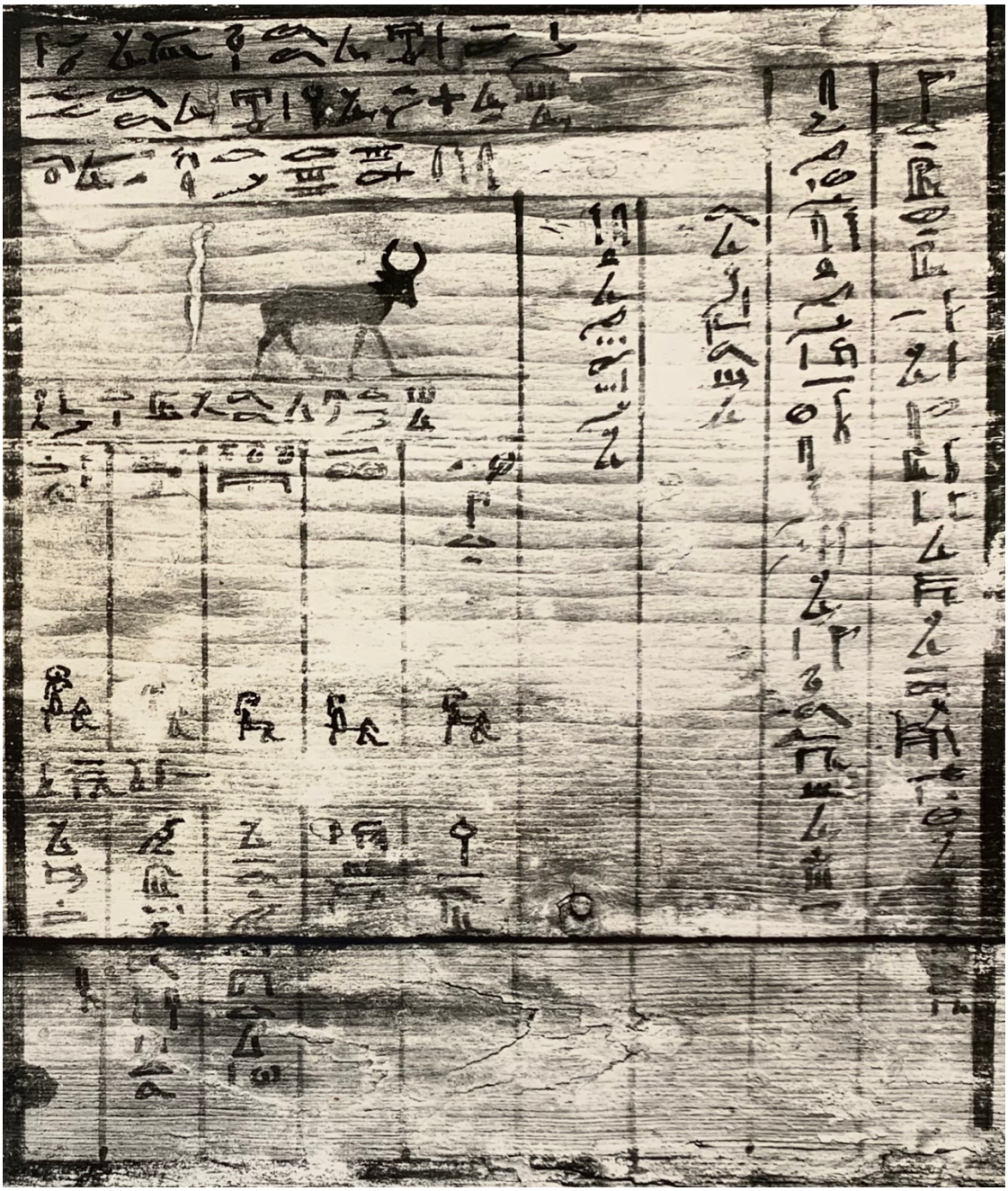

Fig. 4.15: Scene with CT 1140 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

Another example of the conceptual structure under discussion is this bull–serpent composite associated with CT 1140 on B5C (see context in Fig. 4.15). The bull has a black head and a red, horizontally extended tail with a tapering, descending, flag-like end. An upright, undulating white serpent faces the same direction as the bull. Its outline thickens in the lowest part, so I interpret it as being superimposed onto the descending segment of the bull's tail. The photograph in Gardiner's

collection is monochrome; de Buck did not give information about colour in *CT* VII; Sherbiny (2017) does not discuss this image.

Surrounding the figure is a label in four horizontal lines reading retrograde, the first three above the compartment containing the picture, and the last one beneath it:

jw≠f m-ḫnw kkw
jn ʿb≠f dd kkw mr mwt
swt pw nw nt(y) tp srf r ʿ3w ʿ3(w) st≠s(n?)
ḥbḏ-r-m-kkw rn≠f pw
He is in the midst of darkness.
It is his horn which spreads darkness, pain, and death.
He is this one[93] who is upon the heat, at the doors great of their flame.
He-with-Mouth-Agape-in-the-Darkness is his name.

(*CT* VII, 486a–d)

The bull–serpent composite is the product of a different process of figural construction from the donkey–serpent composite of CT 1045 and 1156 (§4.4, Figs 4.13, 4.14), with its form created through the amalgamation not of 'body parts' but of whole figures. It may represent a dangerous inhabitant of the underworld who bears the epithet *ḥbḏ-r-m-kkw*. The layout of CT 1140 on B5C is instructive (Fig. 4.15). The label's four horizontal lines envelop the compartment containing the figure. CT 1140 continues with a speech by the deceased, invoking five deities—Re, Atum, Nu, 'the old one' (*nḥḥ*; *LGG* IV, 309–10), and 'Isis the divine' (*st nṯr(y)t*)—whose names are written in columns beneath the single horizontal line below the figure. Their determinatives (seated anthropomorphic deities, hawk-headed with a sun-disc in the case of Re) are at the bottom of each column, an arrangement employed also in the Book of the Dead, and for the Amduat catalogue (e.g. Hoffmann 2015: 93–9; Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2018). The speech of the deceased, which is also retrograde as well, continues in a single horizontal line below these columns, five short columns below this line, and finally a series of four long columns to the right of the entire preceding group:

jy.n≠j mjn m snḏ ḫtyw
jnk sḫm pr m nrwt hrw tp≠j ḥḏn ḥsḳw ʿbw≠f m ⟨k⟩kw
I have come today in fear of the fiery ones.

[93] The sedge sign  used to write *swt* here resembles the interchangeable flower  or crossed planks sign  used elsewhere on B5C (e.g. CT 1137: *CT* VII, 482h), which would suggest a reading *jmywt*. The lack of plural markers for the following *nt(y)* and *tp*, however, suggest that *swt* is more likely, the sedge sign perhaps miswritten or mistakenly emended.

> I am the powerful one who emerged from (the place of?) terror on the day I surpassed the wrathful one—his horns were cut off in the darkness.
>
> (*CT* VII, 486f–h)



Fig. 4.16: Upright serpent holding knife, part of CT 1175 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

The label to the bull–serpent composite and this speech of the deceased refer to the 'horns' of a hostile being that inhabits the underworld. 'Wrathful one' (*ḥḏn*) here has a seated god determinative  but is sometimes attested with a bull's-head determinative  (*Wb.* III, 214.4–6), so it may refer to the bovine element of the bull–serpent composite, which is the next element in the composition. To the left of CT 1140 is a series of gateways, each labelled 'fire' (*sḏt*; CT 1135–1139), matching the reference to the 'great doors' in the horizontal lines of text surrounding the bull–serpent composite. Reading the scheme of this section from right to left—which is plausible despite the overall left-to-right scheme posited for the composition as a whole (Sherbiny 2017: 45)—produces a sequence of speeches and annotations detailing the deceased's encounter with *ḥbḏ-r-m-kkw* and subsequent passage towards the fiery gateways. This contextual information suggests that the bovine element of the bull–serpent composite expressed some qualities that the being imposed on its environment, manifesting them through an image.

The ophidian element of the figure may be understood by first considering a non-composite ophidian image elsewhere on B5C. An upright serpent with two arms extending from its body to hold a knife is depicted next to a section of CT 1175 (Fig. 4.16). This figure may be understood as a *sšmw*-image, presencing a being in the form of a dangerous serpent, with its qualities displayed by the knife—a 'secondary agent' in Gell's terms, as discussed above in relation to Amduat nos 477–485 (§3.10, Fig. 3.51). Immediately to the left of CT 1140 is CT 1139, which includes the passage: 'I am the knife which is in the hand of He-with-Mouth-Agape-in-the-Darkness' (*jnk sꜣḫt jmy-ʿ ḥbḏ-r-m-kkw*; *CT* VII, 485l; Nyord 2009: 250). The bull–serpent composite of CT 1140 does not hold a knife, unlike several other figures in the Book of Two Ways, but the ophidian element belongs to the iconographic group of upright serpents, serpent-shaped staves, knives, and apotropaic wands. Serpents and knives were part of a repertoire of protective elements, so they may substitute for one

another or imply, by association, its presence and possession by the being displayed in composite form. The serpent may be identified as an *jrw*-image that clarifies the agency of the bull, which bears most of the representation's ontological weight. Unlike the non-composite, knife-holding serpent of CT 1175 on the same coffin (§4.4, Fig. 4.16), the serpent here should not be considered an agentive image.

The bull–serpent composite form is striking, however. A serpent could have surmounted the head of the bull, or the bull's tail could have been modelled as a serpent. The former option is used with a Horus-hawk to the left of the series of gateways (not shown), the latter with the donkey–serpent composite discussed above (§4.4). Figures on apotropaic wands of the same period are frequently shown grasping serpents in their mouths or hands, so this should have been possible for the bull–serpent composite here. One might even ask why the ophidian element was included, since the bull could easily be shown holding a knife, as with other zoomorphic figures on B1C and B5C (compare Fig. 4.12). The choice may be understood by considering the close relationship between bulls and serpents in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts. 'Bull' (*kꜣ*) is a common designation of inimical serpents in the Pyramid Texts (Allen 2015: 351), while CT 374 begins: 'to manifest as a bull-serpent and *nʿw*-serpent:[94] I am a *nʿw*-serpent,[95] a bull-serpent,[96] a leader/*sšmw*-image which swallows its uraei' (*ḫprw m kꜣ nʿw jnk nʿw kꜣ sšmw ʿm jʿrwt=f*; *CT* V, 36f–h). Both occurrences of *kꜣ* in this spell have a snake determinative on all examples except coffin Sq1Sq (no museum inventory number), which uses a bull determinative for the second occurrence of *kꜣ*, thus 'I am a *nʿw*-serpent, a bull[97] who leads its uraei'.[98] The treatment in this spell suggests that the ophidian and bovine elements bore

94 

95 

96 

97 

98 Sq1Sq omits the verb *ʿm*.

comparable ontic weight and were interchangeable. The two potential meanings of the word *sšmw* in the versions of B2L and B2P, first as a participle of *sšm* 'to lead' (*Wb.* IV, 285.7–287.20), second as '*sšmw*-image', may help with interpretation of the CT 1140 bull–serpent composite. The first sense fits with how the bull element is in front of the serpent element, their rightward movement perhaps suggested by the retrograde reading of the text above the figure (Fig. 4.15), while the second sense fits with the 'swallowing' metaphor common in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts, and which is used to describe the actions of *sšmw*-images in the underworld books (§2.3.4 and §3.2). Even stronger evidence for a bull–serpent composite is in CT 379, which includes the phrase 'your tail is a bull-*nʿw*(-serpent)' (*sdȝk m kȝ-nʿw*; *CT* V, 43c), with the compound *kȝ-nʿw* employing a snake determinative.[99]

Together with the wordplay on the bull-like qualities of the word *ḥḏn*, the Coffin Text spells suggest that the bull–serpent composite on B5C reformulated verbal characterizations through graphic syntax specific to 'non-linguistic' visual representation. The conjoined bull and serpent figures are a visual formulation of their sequential arrangement as discrete images when they are used semantically as determinatives in the script. Juxtaposing serpent and bull may display the non-hierarchical relationship between those elements and their interdependence in context.

The complete image displays a complex structure. It is a *sšmw*-image that is also an *jrw*-image, and it is composed of the conjoined *jrw*-images of bull and serpent, the first of which is also a *sšmw*-image. The composite figure incorporates the iconographic implications of its ontology, drawing on networks of metaphor and symbolism which the hieroglyphic script likewise exploited, while manipulating its visual elements in ways that the texts cited above did not. As with the donkey–serpent composite associated with CT 1045 and 1156, these graphic homologies allude to the character of the Book of Two Ways as a text-primary, oral-derived composition. There is no conceptual hierarchy between the figure's dual status as *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image. The accompanying text describes the being in terms of its figural representation, yet this representation draws upon metaphoric and symbolic qualities implied by the description. The dialogical relationship between meaning and form suggests that the being and its image were



conceptualized together and were linked by the accompanying text. Similarly, in CT 1069 and 1176 the ophidian composites and their associated text appear to have been designed with their position in the wider pictorial–verbal composition in mind (§4.3). The Book of Two Ways was variable but each copy was coherent. The being and image of the bull–serpent composite are mutually constitutive; the image's ontological statuses of *jrw* and *sšmw* are interdependent and exist in heterarchy (compare §3.3 and §3.6).

4.6 Excursus: CT 1155 with CT 649



Fig. 4.17: Scene with CT 1155 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (Sherbiny 2017: 247, fig. 110)

It is opportune to present a pair of images which provides a counterpoint to the figures previously discussed and which typifies visual 'decomposition', the opposite phenomenon to that exemplified by the bull–serpent composite associated with CT 1140 (§4.5, Fig. 4.15). The images are a left-facing turtle, located above but not adjacent to a left-facing, non-composite serpent (Fig. 4.17).

On coffins belonging to de Buck's 'Group II', including B5C, the label next to the turtle and serpent reads 'Two-Turtle-Face: to pass over him' (*šṯwy-ḥr r swꜣ ḥr=f*; *CT* VII, 503a–b), against the translation of Raymond Faulkner (1973–1978 [iii]: 182): 'the two whose faces are covered in order to pass by him'. Faulkner's translation may have resulted from misinterpretation of the word *šṯw*—particularly since B5C is the only coffin featuring an illustration of the turtle and serpent—followed by changing of *r* 'utterance' to the preposition *r*. The label is a variant of those on de Buck's 'Group I' coffins, for which he numbered the spell CT 1043. Those coffins read: 'Turtle-Face is its guardian; this is its path. This is an utterance for passing over it' (*šṯw-ḥr jr(w)=s pw wꜣt=s nw r n swꜣ ḥr=s pw pw*; *CT* VII, 295d–296a), with a variant that omits reference to the utterance, instead writing: 'you should not pass in it' (*jm=k swꜣ jm=s*).

The labels associated with CT 1155 and its parallel spell CT 1043 clarify that the turtle and serpent are not representations of two different beings. *šṯw-ḥr* or *šṯwy-ḥr* is identified as the guardian of a path in the serpent-infested underworld, while turtles eventually came to be

associated with the *rrk*-serpent that is frequently presented as an enemy of the deceased (Gutbub 1979: 408). Turtles, with their shells, are quintessentially 'covered' (*šṯ*: *Wb.* IV, 558.3–4) while inimical serpents are elsewhere said to wear 'red headcloths and red coats' in a reference to the patterns on their bodies and perhaps hoods, if they are cobras (*ʿfnwt dšrw jnsw*; P. Ramesseum IX.2, line 3: Gardiner 1955c: pl. 41; see also Landgráfová and Janák 2021: 188). A much later pictorial–verbal composition from the 27th Dynasty tomb of Iufaa at Abusir describes and depicts a selection of divine beings in ophidian form, including one labelled 'he is with two heads, his face(s) like (that of) a turtle' (*jw≠f m ḏ3ḏ3wy ḥr(wy)≠f mj šṯ*; Landgráfová and Janák 2021: 184–5, fig. 3), demonstrating the enduring associations between the creatures in Egyptian religion. These connections encourage treating the turtle and serpent on B5C as *jrw*-images that together serve as a single *sšmw*-image expressing the qualities of the being *šṯw-ḥr*.

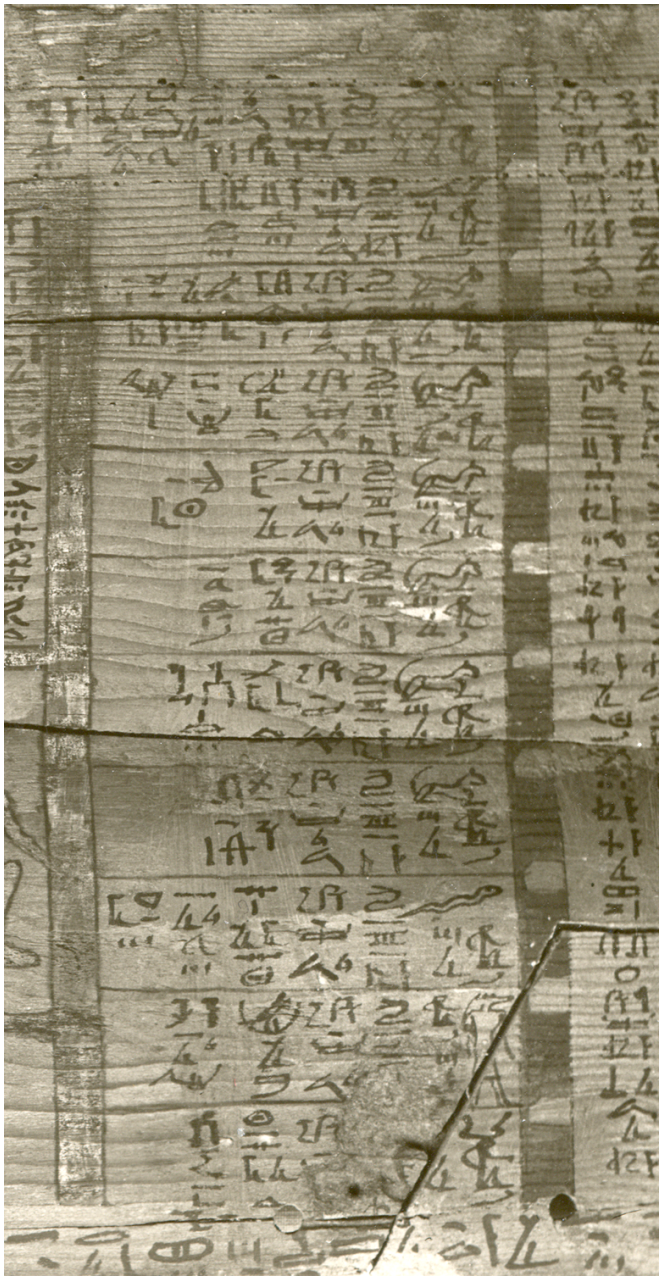

Fig. 4.18: Scene with CT 649 on G1T, probably 11th Dynasty (courtesy of Nicky van de Beek)

These associations are brought out more strongly by considering how the hieroglyphic script may separate elements as much as it combines them. CT 649, which is known from a single manuscript on the 11th Dynasty coffin G1T from Gebelein (Turin 15.774), provides an example of visual 'composition' and 'decomposition' used within the same context. The spell comprises a series of commands issued to various doorkeepers in the underworld (Fig. 4.18):

b3 pw pw wn n≠j w3t jnk ḫrd rnpw dj≠k sw3(≠j) wḏ3.kw
msḥ≠f pw wn n≠j w3t jnk ḥk3w wʿb rnw

mỉj=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk ḏḥwty jrt ḥr m-ḫnw ḫt=j
mỉj=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk stš r nʿt wjỉ
mỉj=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk mỉʿt m šrt rʿ
mỉj=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk ḥr m sḫn jrt=f
mỉj=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk gb r wḏʿ
mỉj=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk sḏt ḥỉt tỉrt
ḥfỉw=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk mnw sḫnw ḥmwt
sỉb=f pw wn n=j wỉt jnk ʿnty m pḫr ḥnw
wpw=f [p]w [wn n=j] wỉt [jnk] ḫnsw r sḫ mỉʿt
O this ram-being, open a way for me! I am a young child! Let me pass soundly!
O crocodile-being of it (i.e. the door guarded by the being), open a way for me! I am a magician, pure of names!
O lion-being of it, open a way for me! I am Thoth; the eye of Horus is in my belly!
O lion-being of it, open a way for me! I am Seth, about to navigate the barque!
O lion-being of it, open a way for me! I am Maat at the nostril of Re!
O lion-being of it, open a way for me! I am Horus in seeking out his eye!
O lion-being of it, open a way for me! I am Geb, about to cast judgement!
O lion-being of it, open a way for me! I am the flame surrounding the cabin!
O serpent-being of it, open a way for me! I am Min in pursuit of women!
O jackal-being of it, open a way for me! I am Anty in perambulating of the *ḥnw*-barque!
O horned being of it, [open] a way [for me]! [I am] Khonsu, about to inscribe justice!

(*CT* VI, 271a–272c)

The logograms for these guardians are oversize, notated with different forms, and bear complex associations with further graphs. In Fig. 4.18 they may be seen immediately to the left of the thick black column at right, next to pale semi-oval sections that presumably indicate the gateways guarded by them. The logogram for the 'jackal-being', for example, has the head of a jackal and an anthropomorphic body, while that of the 'horned being' is a seated man with attached horns. The anthropomorphic elements are necessary parts of the representations, serving as ontological armatures defining the beings as possessing qualities or capacities for human-like interaction. An additional seated man beside the 'jackal-being' logogram reinforces these; a similar element does not follow the logogram for the 'horned being', presumably because the seated man graph was part of its composite form. The two logograms concentrate ontological weight into single composite figures. 'Decomposed' figures in the same spell exemplify the converse phenomenon. The 'ram-being', 'crocodile-being', 'serpent-being', and various 'lion-beings' feature large animal logograms that are each followed by a seated man rendered at the smaller scale of the surrounding 'text'. Parallelism with the 'jackal-being' and 'horned being', and the presumed interaction between these

figures and the deceased individual, indicate that these entities possessed human-like attributes. The ontological weight of enactive imaging was consequently spread out across the animal and human graphs.



Fig. 4.19: Figure with anthropomorphic body and turtle in position of head, tomb of Horemheb (BM EA 50704; © Trustees of the British Museum)

Separating individual visual elements is common in hieroglyphic inscriptions, which the viewer expects to interpret in primarily linguistic terms. Hieroglyphic signs are read sequentially and their meanings assimilated in clusters as well as individual graphemes. In CT 649, the logograms for the guardians are slightly larger than the surrounding signs, intensifying their non-linguistic status, but the signs are in groups typical of hieroglyphic inscriptions and thus blend linguistic and non-linguistic modes of presentation (Houston and Stauder 2020: 28; Vernus 2020: 25). Similar strategies occur in pictorial–verbal formulations of BD 42 and 125B, which list deified body parts and underworld judges, these divine beings shown larger and often with polychrome detail (e.g. Taylor 2010: 218; Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2018: figs 1–4). From Cohn's (2013) perspective this practice crosses verbal with visual 'languages'. The composite 'jackal-being' and 'horned being' logograms in CT 649 exploit the pictoriality of graphic marks and are complementary to 'figurative' writing or 'ornamental cryptography', known from objects such as the 11th Dynasty stela of Abihu/Abkau (Louvre C15: Drioton 1933; Oppenheim et al. 2015: 257–8; Morenz 2020), on which the scale and arrangement of the images in relation to one another sportively foreground non-linguistic conventions. The potential for 'reading' these images as text is communicated through recognition of the figures' unusual iconography, which subverts expectations of non-linguistic conventions in images at a smaller scale and encourages reassessment of how the images work. Such play probably enhanced the stela's power to engage viewers, enhancing its social functions (compare Gell 1996).

When such contextual evidence is absent or less prominent, as with the turtle and serpent images on B5C, it can be misleading to 'decompose' complex figures. They are unlikely to be perceived as linguistic, because they occur alongside graphs that are unambiguously 'text' and they are drawn at a larger scale. This calibration encourages the viewer to process them as non-

linguistic and furthermore to treat them as two distinct representations. But reading the adjacent label and understanding that the turtle and serpent together represent a single being, like those enumerated in CT 649, encourages the viewer to reconsider the images. Turtles are rarely placed atop, or rendered as, the heads of figures (for an exception, see Fig. 4.19; BM EA 50704: Taylor 2010: cat. 96). In two-dimensional images, this strategy is only attested with anthropomorphic bodies, and the turtle is shown in top-down view—perhaps its 'most characteristic form', similar to lizards and scarabs, in contrast to the profile view of creatures such as snakes and crocodiles (Schäfer 1986: 96–7; e.g. Taylor 2010: cat. 101, top right; compare §3.2, Figs 3.5 and 3.6). In the case of *šṯw-ḥr*, the ophidian form may not have provided a suitable base on which to attach the turtle as a head: the result would resemble a turtle with a long tail, not an ophidian composite. Separating the elements may have been the best solution, fulfilling semantic requirements while employing graphic strategies common in the Coffin Texts.

The turtle and serpent images worked together to enact the presence of the agentive being *šṯw-ḥr*. This implies ontological and perceptual shifts pivoting on dynamics of agency. On the one hand, the turtle and serpent each constitute a single *jrw*-image. On the other hand, the two together constitute an ontological armature in the context of a ritually transformed coffin whose decoration would enact the mortuary rites performed for the deceased and manifest the underworld realm he was believed to traverse.

Considering the turtle and serpent together with the figures associated with CT 1045, 1062, 1064, and 1156 (§4.2 and §4.4, Figs 4.6, 4.7, 4.13, 4.14) illustrates the 'semantic competition' present in the Book of Two Ways, by which 'distinct syntactic features'—here the graphic strategies of 'composition' and 'decomposition'—represent ontologically similar content (Kulvicki 2010: 34). Many pictorial representations in the Book of Two Ways were *jrw*-images, but as *jrw*-images they were always susceptible to substitution by, or transmutation into, writing. De Buck's treatment of the large turtle figure on B5C as a logogram (*CT* VII, 503a with n. 2) speaks to the permeability of writing and picturing. Such fluidity is indicative of how writing and picturing may be parallel results of materializing ritually effective utterances in ways that connect them with the deceased through proximity to, and interaction with, visual images.

4.7 CT 1181



Fig. 4.20: Part of CT 1181 on B5C, featuring ophidian composite, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

The figures associated with CT 1181 include one with a male anthropomorphic body, who wears a short kilt and holds an over-large battle axe (compare Needler 1952). Two outward-facing, non-conjoined, rearing serpent foreparts occupy the position of the head of the figure. The figure is unlabelled on B5C (Fig. 4.20). The parallel spell CT 1071 includes the label 'he whose (two) faces are flaming' (*sḏ(ty)-ḥrw(y)*), with some coffins using the plural rather than dual.[100] The fiery symbolism of snakes renders this label comparable with the image on B5C (for further discussion, see Sherbiny 2017: 295).

This ophidian composite belongs to a type of conceptual structure in which a *sšmw*-image is not also an *jrw*-image but incorporates *jrw*-images as 'body parts'. The integrated elements contribute to the figure's agency but are not autonomously agentive. The figure is second from the left in a row of ten in the middle register of Fig. 4.21 (which does not include this figure), and is associated with CT 1181. The other figures are pale donkey heads, perhaps grey, each surmounting a knife. All

[100] *CT* VII, 336b. Faces are not a naturally occurring pair, so this variation is understandable. See also the double-headed figures labelled 'his two faces' (*ḥrwy≠fy*) in the Amduat and Book of Gates (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 149, 154, 310, 322).

the figures face right. On B1C, the parallel spell CT 1071 shows a comparable row of right-facing figures (Figs 4.22, 4.23; Vandenbeusch 2020: 78, fig. 24d). From right to left, these are the head and torso of a red, male human figure atop a black undulating line and holding an unidentified long, black, curved object; a red, male human figure holding a red knife, his legs bent in a semi-seated position, perhaps a profile view of the frontal Bes-image pose that may represent a fearsome battle dance (Szpakowska 2016); and 12 donkey heads coloured white, each surmounting an undulating staff crossed with two knives (black above red). The anthropomorphic figures are labelled '"flaming one" is his name' (*bsy rn=f pw*) and '"flaming of faces" is his name' (*sḏt-ḥrw rn=f pw*); the others are collectively termed 'lords of staves' (*nbw wsrwt*; *CT* VII, 335d, 336b–c).

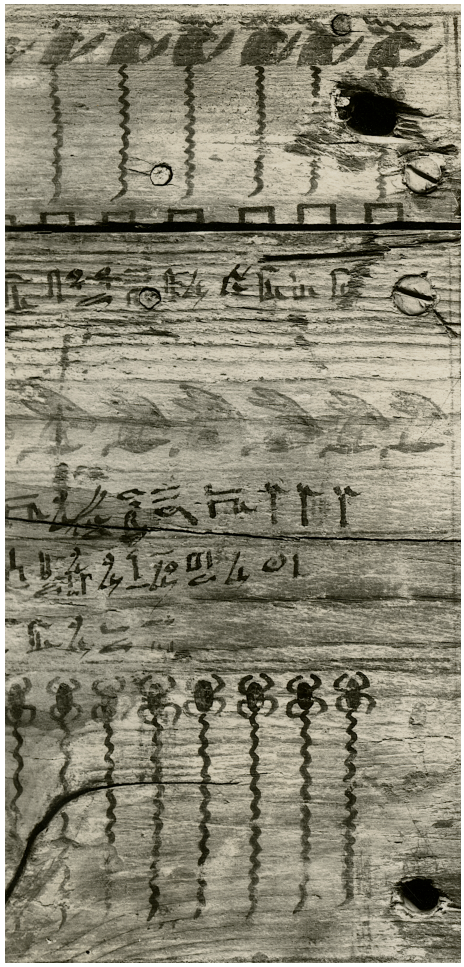

Fig. 4.21: Part of CT 1181 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

The structure of the ophidian composite under discussion may be approached by analysing formal and conceptual variation in the figures with which it is associated, supplemented by comparisons with the ontological status of serpent-shaped staves elsewhere in the Book of Two Ways, as well as in the Amduat. Wolfgang Waitkus (1996: 667, nn. 7–8) argues that the undulating staves may be interpreted as upright ophidian bodies, matching the upright serpent held by the donkey–serpent composite associated with CT 1045 and 1156. This identification is compatible with the term *wsrwt* in the associated text, because there are iconographic and symbolic connections between these motifs and objects.

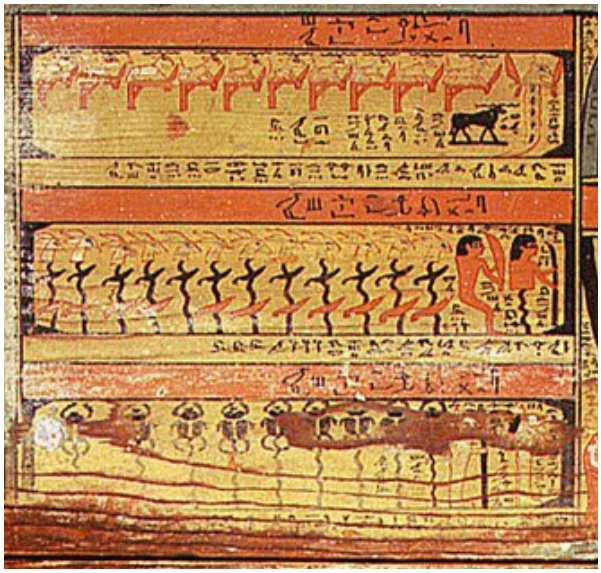

Fig. 4.22: Part of CT 1070 and 1071 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Werner Forman Archive)

Other images of semi-seated figures with anthropomorphic bodies and zoomorphic heads,

associated with CT 1076 on B1C, show them wielding cobras and lizards with long wavy tails (Fig. 4.24; Sherbiny 2017: 72, fig. 58); in Figs 4.22 and 4.23, the wavy staves and the body of the rightmost figure in the middle register may be schematized versions of these forms.[101]

CT 1184 and 1185, which are attested on B5C (Fig. 4.25; Sherbiny 2017: 73, fig. 59), are parallel spells to CT 1076 and feature formal and conceptual variants of the figures known from that spell. Seven figures are present on Fig. 4.24. The three in the upper register have anthropomorphic bodies and scarabs as their heads; they are semi-seated; each holds a cobra in one hand and a lizard in the other. In the lower register, the rightmost figure has a ram's head and faces left. To its left are three right-facing figures; from right to left they are two with feline heads (the first with a lappet-like feature curling up and back from its head), and one with a canine head. The ram-headed figure holds two large cobras and the feline-headed figure with a lappet holds a lizard. In Fig. 4.25, the figures in the upper register are entirely anthropomorphic, stand with legs bent, and wield in each hand an undulating staff topped with a scarab. In the lower register, the feline- and canine-headed composite figures shown in Fig. 4.24 are replaced by three non-composite, upright animals of unclear species. The leftmost of these wields an undulating scarab-topped staff, while



Fig. 4.23: Part of CT 1071 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 4.24: Part of CT 1076 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (*CT* VII, plan 1)

[101] Sherbiny's (2017: 240) counterargument that 'these wavy lines in B1C and B5C do not show clearly heads of snakes' and so cannot represent serpent bodies is unconvincing. A body can be present without its head, as is clear from the donkey–serpent composite associated with CT 1045 and 1156 (§4.4, Fig. 4.13), and several ophidian composites from the Amduat, such as no. 279 in the 4th hour (§3.4, Fig. 3.16). See also discussion of the 'serpopard' motif on apotropaic wands (§5.5.2).

the other two wield undulating staves with a spiral top. These figures, as well as a non-composite anthropomorphic figure wielding an undulating scarab-topped staff in each hand, process towards a seated ram-headed anthropomorphic figure holding a similar element.

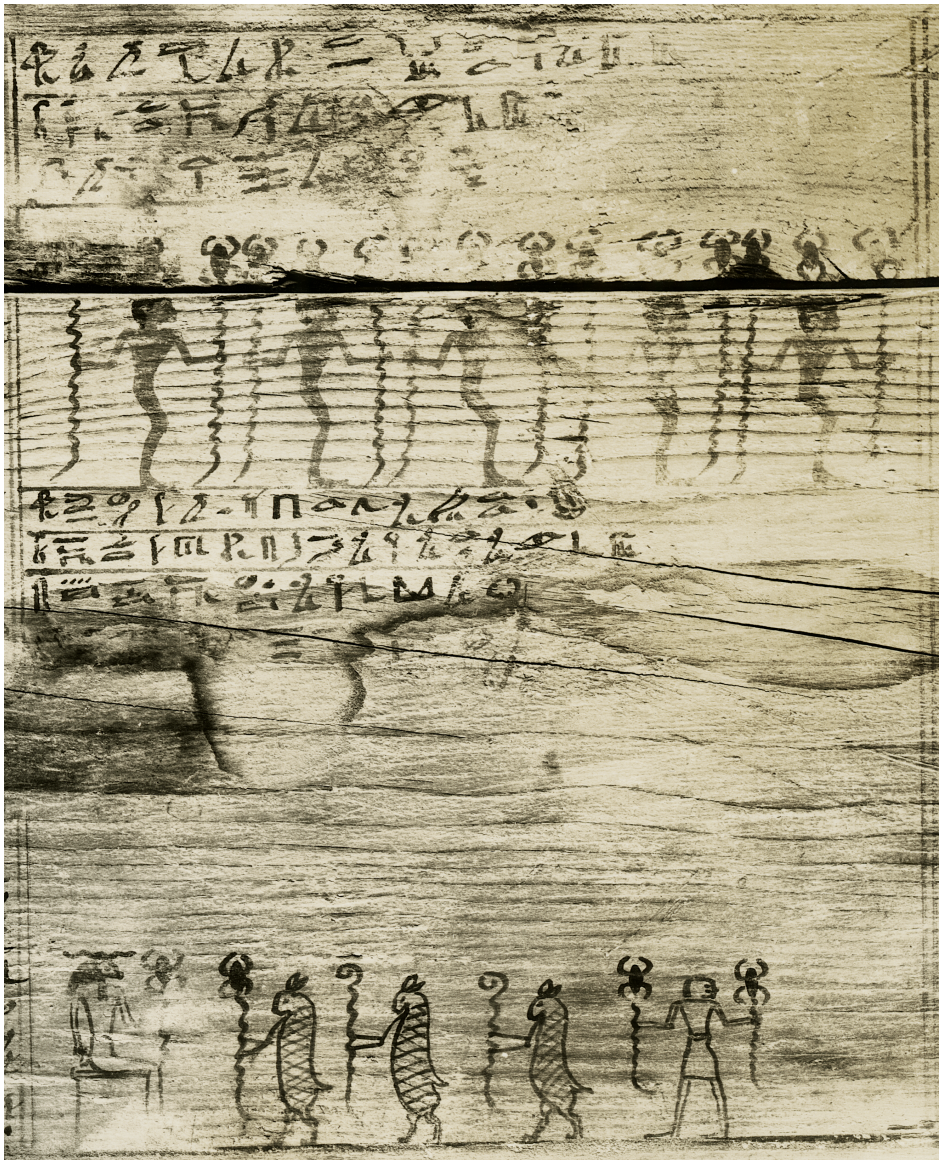

Fig. 4.25: Scene with CT 1184 and 1185 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

These patterns may be compared with representations of deities as serpent-shaped staves in the Amduat (§3.10, Fig. 3.51), 'secondary agents' through which the destructive power of deities was exercised, and whose depiction in the ritualized tomb space manifested the deities' presence. Implement, emblem, and being could be ontologically parallel (Bahrani 2003: 128) and iconographically interchangeable, as is expressed in various Pyramid and Coffin Text spells (Goebs

2008: 175–203, 236–7; Almansa-Villatoro 2020: 10) as well as the ritual function of decorated coffins. Figs 4.21–4.23 provide further evidence for this interchangeability between modes of displaying the presence of a being: the top register of Fig. 4.21 depicts ram heads with attached knives, surmounting undulating staves, below which are small rectangular blocks, while the variant form in Figs 4.22 and 4.23 depicts knife-wielding rams, each atop the upper portion of a divine standard.[102]

The ophidian composite associated with CT 1181 belongs to this type of image. Its two rearing ophidian foreparts deploy the same pictorial element, but they are not autonomous agents. Instead, they are incorporated into a complete figure as *jrw*-images, clarifying the nature of the agency exercised by the human–serpent composite as a whole. The figure's structure differs from that of the knife-wielding snake associated with CT 1175 (§4.4, Fig. 4.16), and from the double-headed serpent of CT 1069 and 1176 (§4.3, Figs 4.8, 4.9): those use the composite or non-composite ophidian form as a *sšmw*-image in itself. The structure of the CT 1181 figure is instead analogous to that of the reptile- or staff-wielding figures of Figs 4.21–4.25. The designation 'he whose (two) faces are flaming' (*sḏ(ty)-ḥrw(y)*) in the label to the parallel spell CT 1071 points to formal and symbolic requirements of the composition. Two rearing serpents may have been an apt way to depict a dangerous, double-faced entity in an underworld context, within the design of the Book of Two Ways. Furthermore, the ophidian element was shown as part of the figure's 'body', not neglecting its symbolism but reinforcing its message through the over-large implement, in contrast with Figs 4.21–4.25, in which the implements themselves are of ophidian form. The composite of CT 1181 draws on the same iconographic and symbolic networks as those associated with CT 1045 and 1156, distributing their content across its components differently. This strategy can be compared with that used for some figures on apotropaic wands (§5.5.1).

Integration of the ophidian foreparts as *jrw*-images with the figure's core 'body' may suggest that the foreparts were strongly connected to its role as a manifestation of a being. This contrasts with the over-large weapon, which is perhaps a more dispensable element. The latter exemplifies a different subsidiary conceptual structure, in which an *jrw*-image supplements the *sšmw*-image of which it is part. Observing these nuances may enrich understanding of the ontological differences

[102] Compare the knife-wielding cobra atop a standard, on the obverse of the apotropaic wand BM EA 65439 (§5.2, Fig. 5.12).

between a figure with an element as its head and one with that element atop the head (see further §6.3).

4.8 CT 1098



Fig. 4.26: Scene with CT 1098 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Werner Forman Archive)

The complex scene associated with CT 1098 on B1C rounds off my study of composite figures in the Book of Two Ways (Fig. 4.26). It incorporates several sets of double-headed serpents, outlined in red with white fill and black detailing. Each register is surmounted by a representation of the sky, coloured blue; the upper of the two angles widely downwards at both ends, while the lower one descends at right angles at its ends. In the upper register, a scarab surmounted by a solar disc is

depicted atop the midsection of an ophidian composite with a rearing, outward-facing cobra forepart at each end. The lower register shows an anthropomorphic body, coloured red and semi-seated, with no arms visible. In the position of a head is a group similar to that in the upper register, with an additional ophidian head extending from each of the cobras' hoods, turning inward to face the anthropomorphic body.[103] The solar disc atop the scarab is within the sky band that divides the two registers and adjoins the bottom edge of the midsection of the ophidian composite in the upper register. The anthropomorphic figure is atop the midsection of an ophidian composite with two rearing, outward-facing cobra foreparts at each end. The entire group is within a white barque with blue and white tassels at prow and stern; the barque is bordered by two narrow strips, the first blue, the second red.

The text of CT 1098 is written in columns, surrounding the figures in both registers:

jr mḥn pw n{t} tp≠f jn [st] jnt n≠f sw ḫr ḥr smsw jrr n≠f r≠f hrw pw n s[tp] n≠sn sꜣ jm≠f m ꜣḫt m psš šnwt m ꜣḫt [m] jnt≠sn ꜥꜣ⟨w≠sn⟩ m ḏd jt≠f jmy nṯrw jr n≠ṯ šnwt≠ṯ m rḫywt[≠ṯ] dj≠j sb≠s[n ḥr≠ṯ]
rꜥ pw [psḏ m grḥ wr ḫpr n≠f pt nw]
jr [s nb wnn m šmsw≠f jw]≠f [ꜥnḫ] ḏt mm šmsw n ḏḥwty dd≠t(w) ḥꜥ≠f [m] grḥ sꜣw≠t(w) jb n wsjr ḏr-nt[t]≠f [m wꜥ] nwḏ r≠f dy mm šmsw≠f m šnwt≠f

'As for this *mḥn*[104] of his head, it is [Isis] who brought it to him', so said Horus the Elder, who acts for him concerning it on this day of [placing] protection for them in it, in the horizon, when dividing the entourage in the horizon, [when] bringing them and ⟨their⟩ great ⟨ones⟩,[105] when his father among the gods says, 'Make your entourage for yourself out of your subjects! I shall make them follow you!'

It is Re [who shines in the night; he is the great one for whom the sky came into being].[106]

As for [any man who is in his following]: he [is alive] forever among the following of Thoth. One shall cause that he appear [in] the night; one will gladden the heart of Osiris,[107] since he [is the one] who moves along from him, being placed among his followers in his entourage.

(*CT* VII, 381a–385d; following B1C except where noted)

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[103] This is an early example of the use of complex motifs as the head of a figure; the practice is better known from the New Kingdom onwards, proliferating in the first millennium BCE (e.g. Lanzone 1881–1886 [ii]: pl. 246, left).

[104] *mḥn* features and determinatives on B1C.

[105] *ꜥꜣw≠sn* emended based on other versions of the spell. The phrase appears to be corrupt in several versions.

[106] The clause *wr ḫpr n≠f pt nw* is absent on B1C and several other coffins. I understand *nw* to be an Old Egyptian third-person masculine singular demonstrative pronoun (Edel 1955–1964: §§172, 196).

[107] B1C writes the *t* of *sꜣwt* before the book-roll determinative. Some coffins show *sꜣw≠t(w)* without determinative, thus *sꜣw≠t(w) jb n wsjr* 'one will gladden the heart of Osiris', while others write *m ꜣwt-jb n wsjr* 'in/with the gladness of Osiris'. I have chosen the former on the basis of grammatical parallelism with the preceding clause.

The ophidian composites in this scene display an additional feature, showing how formally similar figural motifs can exhibit a range of conceptual structures not only within the same composition, but also within the same pictorial group. This finding exemplifies the importance of integrating iconographic approaches with ontological considerations when analysing composite figures.

The text and the images are complementary. The beginning of the text seems to refer to the seated figure of the sun-god in the scene, whose head consists of a scarab surrounded by an ophidian composite. The composite is presumably the text's '*mḥn* of his head', and the identification fits with the characterization of double-headed serpents depicted elsewhere on B1C (e.g. §4.3, Figs 4.8, 4.9). The second half of the spell seems to identify the deceased as a member of the solar entourage, accompanying Re as he enters the underworld at night and momentarily unites with Osiris in regeneration before moving along through the underworld to emerge from the eastern horizon at dawn.[108] These ideas inform the scene's two images of the sun-god in his barque, which may be the 'lotus-barque' mentioned in CT 1030:[109]

ḥꜣ=j ḥnʿ=sn r sšnt r wsḫt nṯrw
šdy=j wjꜣ jm ḫꜣwy r tpwy=f
pry=j jm=f r pt
sḳd=j jm=f r nwt
sḳd=j jm=f ḥnʿ rʿ
I shall board the lotus-barque with them (i.e. the gods) at the broad-hall of the gods.
I shall take up the barque there with two lotuses at its heads.
I shall go forth in it to the sky.
I shall sail in it to Nut.
I shall sail in it with Re.

(*CT* VII, 259a–260b)

Four rearing cobra foreparts forming a single ophidian composite surround the figure of the sun-god in the lower register of the CT 1098 scene.[110] The ophidian composite may be treated as an

[108] A long serpent termed 'the slithering one' (*nwḏy*), who impedes the sun-god's progress, is depicted in scene 27 of the 5th hour of the Book of Gates (Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 165; [ii]: 129–31; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 280 with n. 71). Use of the verb *nwḏ* in CT 1098 fits with the frequent ophidian forms of the sun-god and the solar barque, particularly in the depths of the underworld.
[109] For alternative interpretations of the barque's form in CT 1098, see Sherbiny 2017: 121–2. Identifying the knotted tassels at prow and stern as lotiform is not necessary for the interpretation to hold.
[110] The configuration may alternatively represent two ophidian composites, each with one head at each end, layered atop each other. De Buck's publication is schematized and does not show whether layering is present.

jrw-image, manifesting the fiery and luminous qualities of the reborn sun-god through a suitable form to which agency was imparted through the ritual activation of the coffin, so that it is also a *sšmw*-image.

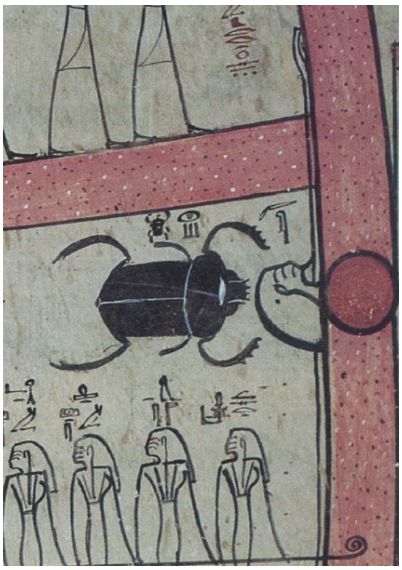


Fig. 4.27: Detail of Amduat sunrise scene, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 20)

The double-headed serpent in the upper register possesses the same conceptual structure, while potentially modifying the image's network of ontological relations. In contrast to the lower register, which depicts the sun-god surrounded by ophidian composites in his barque, the upper register models the barque itself as a double-headed serpent, similar to its representations in the 4th and 5th hours of the Amduat, where the solar barque is fiery and luminous (§3.10). The image in the upper register of the group under discussion may reproduce this idea, or it may elaborate upon it by metonymically condensing the protective solar entourage into the representation of the barque itself. Deciding between these interpretations is probably unnecessary, because the double-headed serpent may in any case be classified as both *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image, with its status as *jrw* being primary.

This approach to these two images facilitates interpretation of the other ophidian composite in this scene: the complex group which is similar in form to that in the upper register and forms the head of the sun-god in the lower register. Extending the argument made for CT 1181 (§4.7), I suggest that the double-headed serpent is reformulated ontologically. As with the figure in the upper register, the composite here, originally an *jrw*-image, is part of a *sšmw*-image. This *sšmw*-image was then used as the head of a composite figure, reformulating it as a non-agentive *jrw*-image in parallel to the figure's body, another highly symbolic image. The composite figure as a whole is a *sšmw*-image whose component *jrw*-images are essential to its presence and agency; they do not merely adjoin it in order to clarify semantic content.

Alternatively, no layering may be present: compare the depictions of Amduat nos 771–774 in the tomb of Thutmose III, where the serpents appear to be double-headed (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 19), with the same figures in the tomb of Seti I, which instead show two vertically layered non-composite serpents (Hornung 1991: pl. 87).

The meaning and ontological significance of this final composite may be approached by examining parallel examples of the motif. A scarab surmounted by a solar disc, the latter located within a topographic representation of the horizon or firmament, is depicted in the sunrise scenes of the Amduat (Fig. 4.27) and the Book of Gates (Fig. 4.28), the latter also including the solar barque. Whereas the Book of Gates scene represents many cosmic events, locales, and processes at once—creation, sunrise, sunset, the primeval waters, and the underworld (Reemes 2015: 132–7)—the configuration of the Book of Two Ways scene clarifies qualities of the sun-god specific to the moment of sunrise. He is not defined only by his qualities of transformation and 'becoming', indicated by the *jrw*-image of the scarab (§2.3.3), but also by his fiery luminosity as he emerges from the eastern horizon. Here, the encircling protection provided by *mḥn* is symbolized by the pair of inward-curling snakes extending from the cobra foreparts of the barque.

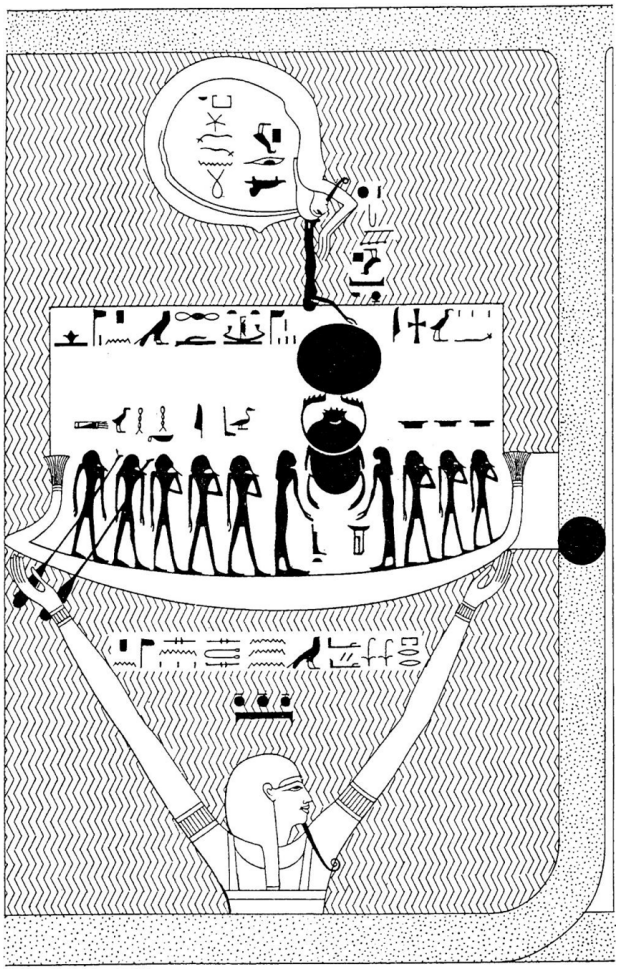


Fig. 4.28: Book of Gates sunrise scene, sarcophagus of Seti I (Sir John Soane's Museum, London, SM M470: Sharpe 1864: pl. 15)

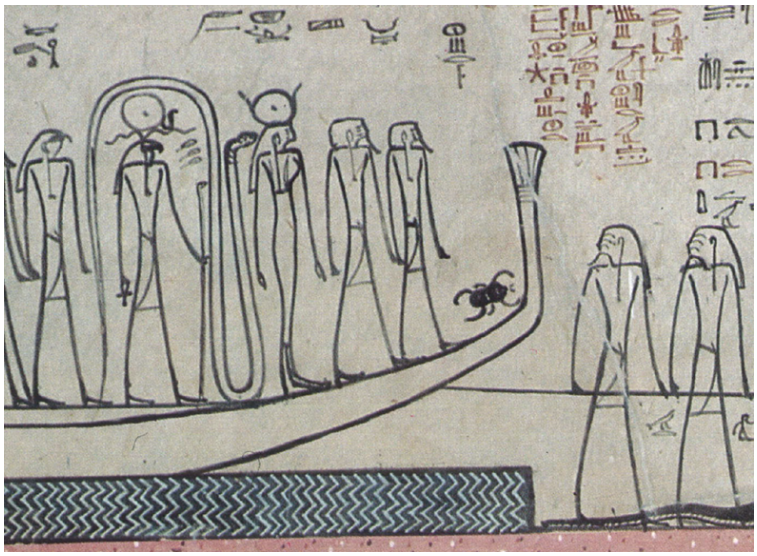


Fig. 4.29: Scarab at the prow of the solar barque in the 12th hour of the Amduat, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 20)

The duplication of the scene across registers, as an independent image in the upper register and as part of an image in the lower register, is an instance of the semantic potential of composite figures. Together they display how Khepri the 'transformer' or 'becomer' is both an autonomous being and an indissoluble aspect of a solar deity. The two images abut the central solar disc. Integrated with the band that divides the two registers, the group that functions as the head of the deity in the lower register represents sunrise, the instant at which transformation takes place. Sunrise is the sun-god's rebirth, involving his transfer from the barque that bears him through the underworld to the one that will carry him across the daytime sky, whose blue colour is present in the scene. The unification of the sun-god and Osiris, which precipitates sunrise, is here crystallized in an image of the sun-god that combines his limbless, possibly wrapped form with his morning form of Khepri.[111] One may compare the presence of a scarab labelled *ḫprj* (no. 856) in the solar barque in the 12th hour of the Amduat (Fig. 4.29), perhaps indicating the process of transformation undergone by the sun-god—depicted alongside the scarab in his ram-headed 'night' form—in this spatio-temporal region.

The ophidian composite's dual statuses as *jrw*-image and *sšmw*-image do not form a hierarchy in the complex grouping of CT 1098. It defines a network of interlocking qualities and cannot be encapsulated by individual examples of them, and its representation as a *sšmw*-image necessarily consists of several *jrw*-images. The figure's ontological statuses of *jrw* and *sšmw* are mutually constitutive and it is structurally analogous to the bull–serpent composite associated with CT 1140 (§4.5, Fig. 4.15). When ontology is used as a category of analysis that accommodates aspects of emic

[111] Compare the range of sunrise scenes known as BD 16: Taylor 2010: 247–8. On the Osirian and regenerative symbolism of wrappings, see §3.2, with nn. 38, 42. For Third Intermediate Period parallels for the combination, see, e.g., P. Louvre E17401 with P. Vienna 3859 (Piankoff 1957 [i]: 106, 145; [ii]: pls 9, 16).

notions such as *jrw* and *sšmw*, conceptual differences between examples of figural forms can be recognized and hierarchies between conceptual statuses revealed. Meaning-oriented, iconographic approaches might classify both as generic ‘symbolic representations’. Such designations do not capture all the levels of significance of the construction and use of figural images.

5

Apotropaic Wands

Analysis of images on apotropaic wands proceeds along different lines from that for the Amduat and Book of Two Ways because individual wands are not copies or exemplars of a fixed composition. The images are selections from a repertoire tailored to the function of wands as ritual objects. Of significance is the object class, not single specimens, so composite figures on wands should be approached as motifs, individual instances of which may differ in form from one another. Analysis proceeds from three angles: relationships between meaning, form, and conceptual structure for a given motif; relationships between different motifs; and relationships between groups of motifs and the functional context of wands.

Thematic links between wands and other religious compositions highlight key differences in their ranges and types of figural forms. Joshua Roberson (2009) has suggested that the exceptional shape and iconography of BM EA 18175 (Fig. 5.1; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 56; Quirke 2016: 258–9) is a forerunner of the underworld books, representing the eastern horizon and its denizens. Unlike most wands, which have one rounded and one pointed end, both ends of BM EA 18175 are rounded. Recumbent lions are depicted at both ends and a symmetrical double-sphinx is shown at its midpoint. A connection between the earth- and horizon-deities Aker and Ruti, who are often shown in leonine form, seems plausible here (compare §4.3). The shape of the wand may be compared with that of double-headed guardian beings, such as the ophidian composites associated with CT 1069 and 1176 (§4.3, figs 4.8, 4.9), perhaps reinforcing the protective function of the object. The scheme may be an unusual elaboration of a more common configuration, in which a panther head is modelled on the rounded end and a fox head on the pointed end. The latter may symbolize female fertility: the hieroglyphic sign , which depicts a bundle of fox pelts, often writes the verb *msj* ‘to give birth’ (possible modern ethnographic parallel: Blackman 1909). The sign , which depicts a

woman giving birth, could even be altered to , substituting the emerging infant with a bundle of pelts (Fischer 1977b: fig. 4d).



Fig. 5.1: Reverse face of wand BM EA 18175, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

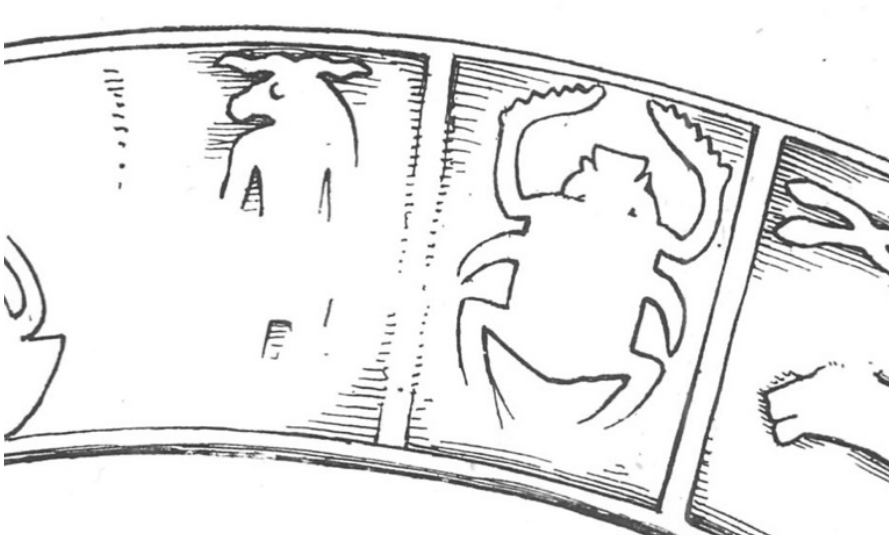


Fig. 5.2: Ram-headed anthropomorphic figure and scarab in cells on wand BM EA 24425, 12th–13th Dynasty (Legge 1905: 133–4, pl. 2)

Zoomorphic, often non-composite forms predominate on wands, expressing the qualities of beings through metaphor and symbolism. Anthropomorphic forms are mostly avoided except when depicting enemies, while mixed human–animal forms are uncommon. Furthermore, individual hieroglyphs are interspersed among the figures. The pattern contrasts with the underworld books,

which mainly feature anthropomorphic figures. Exceptions to the pattern are rare. One of the most direct overlaps occurs on the wand BM EA 24425 (Fig. 5.2; Quirke 2016: 268–9), which features two 'cells'. In the left cell is a figure with a ram's head and male human body; in the right cell is a scarab. These are common representations of the night and day forms of the sun-god in New Kingdom royal tombs (compare Fig. 3.22).

5.1 Writing and Depiction

Wands present preconceived subjects in specific visual forms that were chosen from many possibilities.[112] Here the distinction lies between 'writing' and 'depiction', whose porous boundary corresponds with differences in figural form. Composite figures on wands occur alongside 'written' hieroglyphs which are often rendered at similar scales. Figures occasionally substitute for hieroglyphs as well. However, these morphological parallels work within a single visual syntax that accommodates the sociocultural factor of ontology. The 'grammar' of wand iconography therefore contrasts with that of the Book of Two Ways, which uses shared graphic principles to bridge multiple syntaxes and consequently distinguishes 'writing' not from 'depiction' but from 'picturing' (§4.1).

The patterns of wand iconography may arise from historically specific conventions of decorum concerning the direct depiction of powerful, animate beings. Gods were rarely represented in non-royal contexts during the Middle Kingdom. When they were, emblems or enlarged script elements—mainly determinatives—were used, and even then only in marginal areas (e.g. Baines 2009: 5–7; later developments: Baines 2007: 20–3). Such manoeuvres 'recalibrated' pictorial signs, intensifying their non-linguistic dimension (Vernus 2020: 25; Stauder-Porchet 2021: 444–5). In this way they could interact with other elements in the composition, and potentially with beings external to the material object. Wands were part of a visual milieu in which decorum constrained the representation of divine beings in non-monumental contexts, especially those displayed on or close to human bodies. This may have applied particularly strongly to non-royal individuals, for whom contact with gods or the king was potentially dangerous (e.g. Baines 1997). Several wand motifs are attested in the mid- to late First Intermediate Period as amulets that were probably strung in series and worn on the body (Dubiel 2008: 21–2, 84; Bussmann 2019: 82), so an early

[112] §5.1 is adapted from Miller 2021 (see Appendix).

translation of the word *sꜣw* as ‘amulets’ (Erman 1909: 147) may be just as valid as the more common rendering ‘protectors’.

Wands mobilized divine beings on behalf of ritualists and their beneficiaries. Appropriate distance needed to be maintained between human agents and their divine counterparts, while ensuring that the qualities and powers of beings were clearly defined and contextualized. Analysing certain motifs as emblematic forms is a fruitful way of approaching their significance and modelling the iconographic system of wands in historical and cultural context. Two types of emblematic form may be distinguished on wands. The first encompasses figures in an iconographic register that has been termed the ‘emblematic mode of depiction’. It is ‘a compromise between direct pictorial representation and the writing of a text’, in which ‘pictures of deities are replaced by pictures of cult images, which have a logographic rather than a pictorial value and are subject to restrictions of scale, or by simple hieroglyphs, which otherwise function mostly as taxograms’ (Baines 1985: 280). ‘Emblematic personifications’ constitute the second type of emblematic form. These are ‘hieroglyphs and related symbols, or groups of symbols, which are given human or animal limbs and sometimes a human body, in order to make them capable of action’ (Baines 1985: 41), thus marking an ontological intervention. Such iconographic devices enabled figures to be anthropomorphized as little as possible. With mixed human–animal forms, human elements such as added limbs are not ontologically foregrounded but rather enhance meanings and relate the iconographic register of their core non-anthropomorphic elements.

Enactive imaging enabled script elements to possess power as ‘things’ in themselves (Houston and Stauder 2020: 19–25, 32) and for other figures to be modified by, or as if they were, script elements. The design and selection of forms negotiated the iconographic constraints to which wands were subject while enhancing—or at least not limiting—the capacity of images to manifest the beings and forces as required for the effective functioning of wands. Such strategies furthermore enabled designers to juxtapose conceptually diverse images in a visually consistent way, producing a distinctive decorative programme with few parallels in other media. Analysis in terms of this system should not be seen as identifying an ancient set of fixed rules, but rather as a heuristic for approaching representations on wands from a variety of perspectives. My model is developed from limited evidence, while flexibility is to be expected in a relatively widespread and versatile class of objects.

Figures in the emblematic mode of depiction may function as icons or symbols, expressing meaning through mechanisms such as metaphor. This grants them a relatively high degree of fluidity in terms of form. Hieroglyphic signs with a strong linguistic dimension of signification more closely approach the category of 'writing', while visual representations of subjects with a weaker linguistic aspect approach that of 'picture'. The less specific the subject of an image, the closer it is to a hieroglyphic sign.

Logographic hieroglyphs can denote both things and concepts. Enactive imaging means that figures such as *wḏ͗t*-eyes  and braziers  (Quirke 2016: 367–8, 397) manifest what they signify, here 'wholeness' and 'fire'. Theirs is a general presence; they do not perform specific actions, but they may clarify the nature of other beings or that of the wand as a whole. Such qualities or 'powers' (Nyord 2020: 51–2) were more frequently expressed through metaphoric or symbolic figures without a similarly strong linguistic dimension, such as non-specific, mostly unlabelled animals (Quirke 2016: 326–432). In other instances, hieroglyphs could be incorporated into figural images which refer to mythical episodes relating to healing (Goebs and Baines 2018: 646–7). Examples include the motif of a baboon carrying a *wḏ͗t*-eye (Goebs 2002: 54–8; Quirke 2016: 364–6), in which the eye may be symbolic but with reduced linguistic signification.[113]

Depictions of divine emblems similarly work through metaphor and symbolism. Examples on wands include a cobra with a knife on BM EA 65439, and a quail chick wearing the White Crown on Brussels E7065 (see further §5.2; compare Dubiel 2008: pl. 3), both shown atop divine standards. These images may or may not represent actual cult images; they parallel the generic 'hawk on perch' hieroglyph , which is used as a prototypical determinative marking 'divinity' (Shalomi-Hen 2006: 13–68). Their differentiated forms are more specific than the prototypical form, clarifying the qualities, and possibly identities, of the deities represented.

Ambiguity arises where an image may or may not signify as a word. Figures of scarab beetles are good examples (e.g. Louvre AF 6447-AF9 + Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet 1314: Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 128). They could manifest the notion of 'becoming' or 'transformation' (*ḫpr* ), or represent the sun-god in his morning scarab form Khepri (*ḫprj* ), which symbolizes his qualities of 'transformation'. In some cases, pictorial context is instructive: the scarab in Fig. 5.2, for

[113] See also the reverse face of the wand MMA 26.7.1288a,b + Louvre E3614 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 127; Oppenheim et al. 2015: 200).

example, may be identified as a representation of the sun-god since it is next to a ram-headed figure which depicts his evening form. Such possibilities are not mutually exclusive (see also §2.3.3 on Khepri).

Another example is the motif of a water scorpion with a knotted cord (*šn*) suspended from its body, known from only one wand (Moscow, Pushkin Museum 6736: Hodjash 1960: 247, fig. 3; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 84; Berlev and Hodjash 2004: 71; Quirke 2016: 272). It may be an emblematic representation of the goddess Selqet, who can be depicted anthropomorphically with the water scorpion atop her head (Egberts 1995: 65; Piankoff 1955: pl. 12). Selqet is said elsewhere to embrace the deceased during rebirth, so that attaching the *šn*, a symbol of protective encirclement, to the body of the water scorpion may have expressed this protective gesture (Spieser 2001: 258–61; Lightbody 2020). The water scorpion is shown carried by human attendants in a mid-third millennium relief depicting the *ḥb-sd*, confirming that it represents a cult image (von Bissing and Kees 1923: pl. 22, no. 54). However, it is more commonly part of a group of images of cultic insignia which offered protection in liminal and transitional settings (Leclant 1993: 236). The image as it is used on Moscow, Pushkin Museum 6736 may be a highly specific icon or a general symbol.

Some figures that could function logographically as hieroglyphs were on occasion configured as emblematic personifications for ontological and aesthetic purposes. Emblematic personifications retained their subjects' capacity for agency—often clarifying and elaborating on it—while increasing their visual consistency with the adjacent zoomorphic and mixed-form representations. Emblematic personifications consequently have a more limited formal range. They represent movement from 'writing' toward 'depiction'; they enable concepts to act autonomously, rather than absorbing them into the identity of a deity.

The 'jackal head with legs' is one of the most prominent motifs that may be analysed as an emblematic personification (Quirke 2016: 247–9). The limb(s) attached to the head are a single feline leg, two feline legs, or two human legs. There are no apparent semantic or conceptual differences between the forms, although the first two are more strongly zoomorphic.[114] The motif arguably represents the abstract concept of 'power' (*wsr* ), usually written with the sign of a jackal-headed staff which originally represented the head and neck of a canid. Supporting this interpretation is the occurrence of the single feline-legged form in the jewellery of the 12th Dynasty princess

[114] Note, however, Ramessid sources which use a lion's leg as a determinative for the verb *sḳr* 'to strike' and its derivatives, mobilizing the lion as a metaphor for power (McDonald forthcoming).

Khnumet alongside other hieroglyphs and emblems (de Morgan 1895–1903 [ii]: 63–5, pl. 5; Melandri 2012: 42), as well as cases of the double human-legged form  as a variant of the common *wsr*-staff hieroglyph in writings of kings' names (Ben-Tor 2007: 106 n. 524; Tufnell 1984: no. 3213).



Fig. 5.3: Decorated face of wand Philadelphia UPM E2914, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology)

Some scholars have claimed that the 'jackal head with legs' derives from a fully figural image of a deity with jackal head and human body, perhaps Anubis.[115] However, the forms more probably exemplify parallel iconographic means of imparting agency to the *wsr*-staff hieroglyph, the former avoiding fuller anthropomorphism. The motif could be shown striding alongside others, increasing visual consistency. The form also amplifies non-linguistic signification, bringing it closer to figures more heavily freighted with symbolism. The reappearance of the form in later periods to represent demons or the god Re-Atum may reflect the attribution of *wsr*-power to such beings (Liptay 2011: 149–52).



Fig. 5.4: Jackal-headed figure grasping a lizard on a wand in a Swiss private collection, 12th–13th Dynasty (Altenmüller 1986: pl. 1)

Other motifs may be interpreted similarly. One example is the image of a 'panther pelt with legs' on the wand Philadelphia UPM E2914 (Fig. 5.3, centre; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 130; Quirke 2016: 188). This is perhaps an agentive representation of 'strength' (*pḥty* ), a word that

[115] Berlev and Hodjash 2004: 70; Drioton 1940: 316. For the mixed-form figure, see Roberson 2020: 40, sign C25.

was often written with two 'panther pelt' hieroglyphs  (McDonald forthcoming). Another motif is that of the 'solar disc with legs' (Quirke 2016: 387–8), which is probably not a representation of the sun-god in the emblematic mode but an emblematic personification of the dynamic solar circuit.[116] Figures with anthropomorphic bodies and solar discs as heads, known from other contexts, reverse the configuration and highlight the iconographic constraints of wands (Amduat nos 733–736: Darnell and Darnell 2018: 223–4).

Interplay between 'writing' and 'depiction' meant that figures could move between modes of presentation, allowing negotiation of semantic content and agency while maintaining visual consistency within the decorative programmes of individual wands. This points toward a systematization of iconographic principles and procedures across the entire class of objects. Such transformations were often effected on the level of individual figures. Thus, one wand depicts a jackal-headed figure with a spotted canine or feline body, standing upright on its hind legs and grasping a lizard in one paw (Fig. 5.4). As a hieroglyph, the lizard writes *ꜥšꜣ*  'many, numerous', so that this jackal-headed figure may be viewed as a mixed-form variant of the more common 'jackal head with legs' motif, expressing the concept 'great of power' (*ꜥšꜣ-wsr*) with intensified agentive force. Such an effect could not be easily achieved otherwise, explaining the departure from 'the principle that only essential limbs are added to emblematic figures' (Baines 1985: 47). At the same time, the figure's zoomorphism does not depart too far from wand conventions and has parallels in other motifs: hippopotami touch *sꜣ*-knots  ('protection'), baboons hold *wḏꜣt*-eyes ('wholeness'), and many figures grasp serpents and knives. Such configurations may relate to the practice of 'ornamental' and 'thematic' cryptography: a practice attested as early as the mid-third millennium BCE, but which burgeoned in the early second millennium BCE and reached a peak in the mid-second millennium BCE (Darnell 2004: 14–17; 2020; Parkinson 1999: 80).

Another example is the 'feline hindquarter' motif attested on the wand fragments MMA 22.1.79a and MMA 32.8.5 (Figs 5.5, 5.6; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 99, 112). As a hieroglyphic sign , it occurs as a phonogram in writings of 'strength' (*pḥty*). This is probably how it was conceptualized on Fig. 5.5, complementing the 'panther pelt with legs' discussed earlier.[117] In Fig.

[116] Compare the 'hieroglyphic' image of a sun-disc with radiating light  on BM EA 18175 (Roberson 2009).

[117] In later periods, the hindquarter is incorporated in the emblem  for personified *ḥkꜣ* 'magic' (e.g. Guilmant 1907: pl. 79, top right; Baines 2012: 53), a typical hieroglyphic orthography being , but this usage builds upon the understanding of *pḥty* as a central aspect of *ḥkꜣ* (Ritner 2008 [1993]: 25, with n. 112).

5.6, however, its paw grasps a knife. The latter form, with the added symbolic knife, parallels how more fully figural variants of emblematic personifications may wield implements. Here the knife only elaborates on the function of 'strength' in the context of apotropaic ritual. It does not imbue the figure with capacity for action, so that the figure as a whole is not an emblematic personification despite its similar appearance but more probably a hieroglyph as a 'merograph' (Houston and Stauder 2020: 23): a *pars pro toto* realization of the more common motif of a lion, often shown brandishing serpents or a knife and attacking enemies (e.g. MMA 15.3.197; MMA 26.7.1288a,b + Louvre E3614: Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 93, 127; Quirke 2016: 335–46).



Fig. 5.5: Decorated face of wand fragment MMA 22.1.79a, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)



Fig. 5.6: Decorated face of wand fragment MMA 32.8.5, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)

Two wands illustrate how strategies could be combined to structure a wand's decorative programme. First is Fig. 5.3 which shows zoomorphic figures and emblematic personifications atop a row of baskets. The baskets, Egyptian *nb* , may elaborate on the common emblematic motif of goddesses atop baskets (e.g. §5.2 below, with fig. 5.8); they are likely to manifest 'all' or 'every' (*nb*) being that could be represented by those forms. Their implicit presence maximized the wand's efficacy. Such conceptual transformations are not unparalleled. The leonine 'Bes-image' (Romano 1989), is used 'non-linguistically' on a late Middle Kingdom headrest on which an inscription uses the same motif, as well as two of hippopotamus–lion composites touching *s*ꜣ-knots, as hieroglyphs possibly reading 'protectors' (*s*ꜣ*w* ), matching their identification in wand inscriptions (BM EA 35807; Perraud 2002: 315). Such double usage for the hippopotamus–lion composite continues into the New Kingdom and may relate to its liminal character (Roberson 2020: 73, sign E134a).

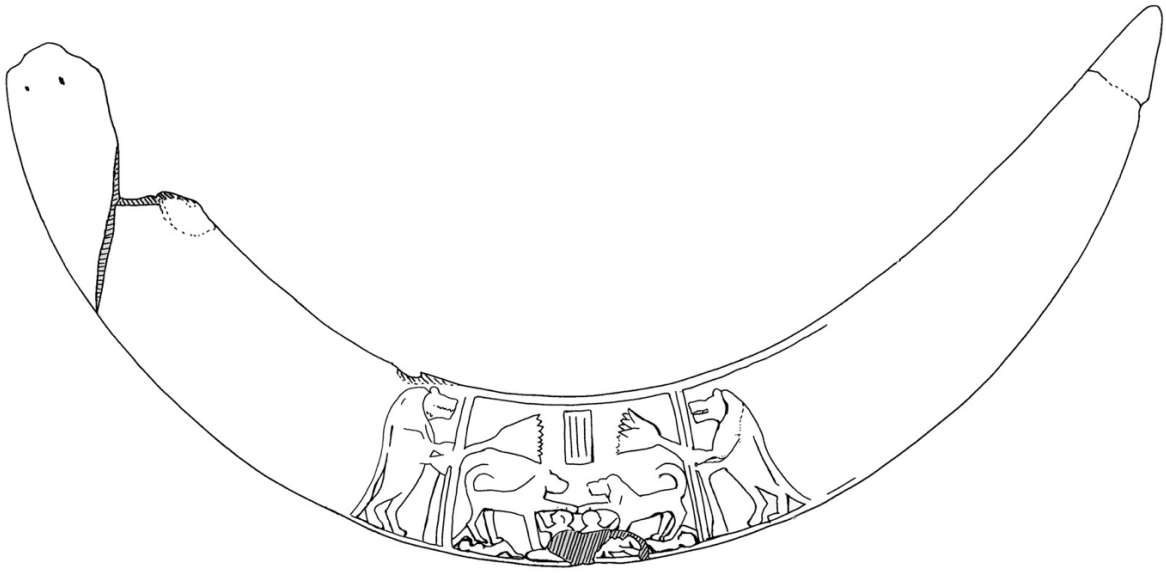


Fig. 5.7: Wand Munich ÄS 2952, 12th–13th Dynasty (Altenmüller 2017: fig. 1a)

Second is the wand Munich ÄS 2952, which is undecorated except for an emblematic scene depicting the destruction of enemies that is similar in form and structure to those on contemporary royal pectorals (Fig. 5.7; Oppenheim et al. 2015: 112–14; Quirke 2016: 288). However, major gods and royal sphinxes are replaced here by figures common to wands—lions and hippopotamus–lion composites—perhaps for reasons of decorum, paralleling the 'more absolute' separation of gods from humans other than the king (Baines 2007: 23).

The strategies examined above contributed to the use of ophidian composites on apotropaic wands, allowing their subjects to be represented and to act as beings within the thematic, functional, and formal bounds of the category. As with the motifs discussed earlier, function governed ontology, which in turn influenced form. Composite ophidian forms balanced aspects of meaning, ontology, and decorum when representing specific subjects. The examples I explore illustrate how the ontic weight of ophidian elements varies between figures, matching types of conceptual structure already proposed for figures in the Amduat and Book of Two Ways.

Different sets and weightings of factors between the categories mean that ophidian elements were incorporated into figural forms in diverse ways. Images on wands can often be connected with ones in the underworld books, including the Amduat, suggesting that the two groups drew on a shared fount of visual elements and graphic strategies when devising images. But the iconographic strategies employed by wand designers meant that wands generally lack the complex figures, often in composite form, that serve as schematic representations in compositions such as the Amduat. Instead, wand designers often divided such groups into their constituent elements, which are shown as discrete figures, perhaps arranged in series. Roberson's (2009) analysis of the decorative programme of the wand BM EA 18175 is a good example of the method. Exceptions include the 'griffin' and 'serpopard' forms, whose distinctive forms accord with broader visual patterns on wands and stress that the formal configurations used to express ontological and semantic aspects arose from the decorum governing the category (see further §5.5).

Apotropaic wands provide the iconographic and contextual overlaps necessary for synthesizing the three categories of the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and wands themselves. When subjects and themes circulate within similar contexts, images should not be viewed as independently developed products of an isolated system, but as realizing within the constraints of one system potentialities that are part of a wider network. Beings are, as mentioned in Chapter 2, 'always in the process of becoming' (Bahrani 2003: 132). Such phenomena raise questions about the historical relationships between the categories of material (see further in Chapter 6).

5.2 Ophidian Body

Several examples of ophidian composites on wands exemplify the conceptual structure in which a *sšmw*-image is simultaneously an *jrw*-image. First is the motif of a rearing cobra, sometimes winged

and possessing a human (usually female) head, and occasionally perched atop a basket. Goddesses were often depicted as cobras, frequently with wings outstretched in a gesture of protection. On the wand MMA 15.3.197, one such composite unfurls its wings, while another wields a knife (Fig. 5.8; Quirke 2016: 149–52). Together they mark aggression and nurture as dimensions of protection.



Fig. 5.8a, b: Cobras with female human heads on wand MMA 15.3.197, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)

The emblematic potential of the form is demonstrated by an example on the wand Louvre AF 6447-AF 9 + Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet 1314 (Fig. 5.9), where a winged cobra is flanked by the hieroglyphs , , and , reading *ḥꜣ* 'behind/around', *sꜣ* 'protection', and *ʿnḫ* 'life'—analogous to the formula on the right end of the wand, which reads: 'protection and life surround her perpetually' (*sꜣ ʿnḫ ḥꜣ=s rʿ nb*).

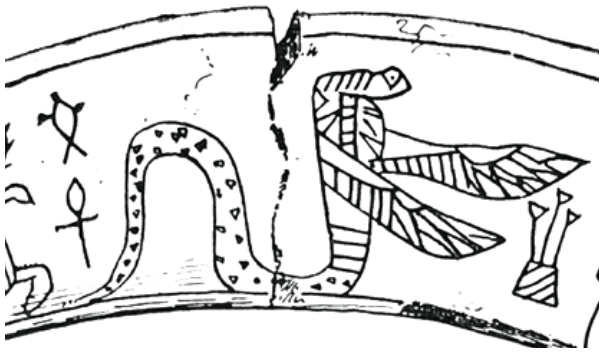


Fig. 5.9: Winged cobra on wand Louvre AF 6447-AF 9 + Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet 1314, 12th–13th Dynasty (Legge 1905: pl. 9)

The series of images may suggest that the ophidian composite crystallizes the meanings denoted by the hieroglyphs, comparable with the placement of apotropaic motifs on some three-dimensional objects such as the symmetrical hippopotamus–lion composites on the back of a statue of king

Sobekemsaf I, which are captioned 'all protection and life surround him' (*sꜣ ʿnḫ nb ḥꜣ=f*; BM EA 871: Davies 1981: 3–4, pls 4b, 6; see also a statue of Hatshepsut, MMA 29.3.3: Roehrig et al. 2005: cat. 95). These constitute an opposite phenomenon to representations of single hieroglyphs that stand for groups of figures, such as the solar entourage as a *šms*-sign  in the solar barque (e.g. Shedid 1994a: pl. 80).

The symmetrically opposed winged serpents on a face of the wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, which together span the length of the wand, add another layer to the phenomenon (Fig. 5.10). Between each of their undulating coils are *wḏꜣt*-eyes and a variety of composite and non-composite zoomorphic figures. Two of these are the 'jackal head with legs' motif. Such emblematic personifications function similarly to isolated hieroglyphs, but are perhaps ontologically weightier. They reveal creative play with structures of being while remaining within the bounds of convention.



Fig. 5.10: Wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, face with symmetrical winged cobras (courtesy of the Walters Art Museum)

By contrast, the human-headed cobra on the wand MMA 22.1.103 formulates such ideas differently, by attaching a 'hieroglyphic' sign to the human-headed cobra instead of positioning it in the space around the figure (Fig. 5.11; Quirke 2016: 167–71). The knotted *šn*-cord in front of the cobra hood may represent the being surrounding or enclosing the beneficiary.[118]

[118] Compare the serpent staves in the 6th hour of the Amduat (nos 477–485; §3.10, Fig. 3.51).

These motifs may connect with the use of sets of four clay cobra figurines in protective rituals. The earliest known examples of such material date to the Amarna period, and they are associated with protective goddesses from the later New Kingdom onwards. Many sat in 'an elongated bowl, rather resembling a miniature pottery vessel', and may have been positioned 'at the centre of a pool of oil that was then lit as a lamp', protecting the inhabitants of a room against forces believed to cause nightmares (Ritner 1990: 26, 32, 36; Kemp 1995: 31–2; Szpakowska 2011: 73; 2015). With this in mind, an additional layer may be proposed for the symbolism of the figures on Louvre AF 6447-AF 9 + Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet 1314 and MMA 22.1.103. Composite figures are often used as 'summaries of sets', allowing one figure to stand in for several (Baines 1985: 31–2, figs 2, 3). The motif of the human-headed cobra might be similarly analysed, as an *jrw*-image serving as a synecdochic *sšmw*-image, representing a group of beings acting as a collective. The figures on wands differ from Amduat no. 472 (§3.9, Fig. 3.37) in that the inherent multiplicity of the subject is implicit in them. With no. 472, four attached heads serve as markers of plurality that are tied together by the shared *jrw*-image of a serpent. This interpretation builds on my analysis of the wand Philadelphia UPM E2914 (Fig. 5.3), on which individual figures constitute emblems representing a multitude of beings, groups of which act collectively through single images. At this juncture it is worth noting that such 'summaries of sets' are not 'complexes' in the same way as schematized renderings such as Amduat nos 755 and 756, 325, and 394 (§3.2, §3.5, and §3.6). Those are characterized by multiplicity not only of actors, but of relations. By contrast, 'summaries of sets' only crystallize unities of presence and action.



Fig. 5.11: Cobra with female human head and *šn*-cord in front of hood, on wand MMA 22.1.103, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)

Primarily zoomorphic renderings in these examples accorded with the iconographic conventions on wands. At the same time, incorporating a human head into the figural form specified the status of the ophidian composite as a manifestation of a deity without flouting

decorum. An entirely zoomorphic, emblematic form is known from the jewellery of the 12th Dynasty princess Khnumet (de Morgan 1895–1903: 63–5, pl. 5), and a variant of the image in Fig. 5.8a occurs on the obverse of BM EA 65439 (Fig. 5.12; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 66; Pinch 2006: fig. 20, upper; Quirke 2016: 287–8), which depicts not a human-headed cobra, but a non-composite cobra with a knife atop a divine standard.[119] These provide further evidence that the form with human head is generally emblematic, conveying semantic and ontological information within iconographic constraints. Its strong emblematic associations, though not intrinsic to it, may underlie the image of a winged and bearded serpent on the wand London UC 16383 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 74; Quirke 2016: 32–5), even as texts describe that form in relation to corporeal manifestations of divine beings (Fischer 1977a: 155–8).



Fig. 5.12: Cobra with knife on standard, on wand BM EA 65439, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

5.3 Ophidian Limbs

Another ophidian composite exemplifies the conceptual structure in which a *sšmw*-image is not simultaneously an *jrw*-image. Known from the wand Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391, excavated at Megiddo in 1939 (Fig. 5.13; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 83; Quirke 2016: 183), the image shows a standing, male anthropomorphic figure wearing a kilt, its limbs shown as rearing cobras. The head of the figure is lost, but part of a long tripartite wig survives, extending over its shoulder. This figure shows how similar forms on wands and in underworld books could present the same beings through identical conceptual structures.

[119] Frog, vulture, and wrapped cow figures are depicted on several wands and in other emblematic configurations, for example atop baskets or shrines, e.g. Brussels E7064, Cairo CG 56273, London UC 16379, London UC 16382 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 23, 47, 70, 73).

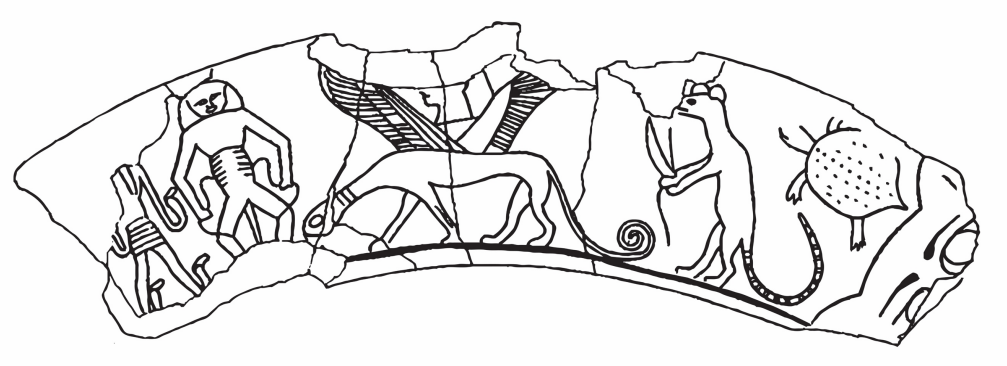


Fig. 5.13: Wand Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391, with serpent-limbed figure at left end, probably 12th–13th Dynasty (redrawn by Jordan Miller after Loud 1948 [ii]: pl. 203)

The form of the ophidian composite on Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391 may be compared with a description of the king's toes as uraei (*jʿrwt*) in the Litany of Re (Hornung 1975 [i]: 214; [ii]: 88; Darnell 2004: 234). The most closely comparable motif on wands is the 'solar disc with legs', which can be shown encircled by one or two uraei (e.g. Baltimore WAM 71.510, BM EA 24425, Munich 2826: Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 1, 59, 86). BM EA 24425 is particularly pertinent, since it also features two cells that depict forms of the sun-god (Fig. 5.2). These frequently occur at the entrances to Ramessid royal tombs, notably in the opening scene to the Litany of Re, which shows both the ram-headed and scarab forms of the sun-god within a disc, with his destructive ophidian and crocodilian 'emissaries' emanating from it (Lefébure 1886 [i]: pl. 4; Darnell 2004: 274). The location, protective function, and ophidian associations of the motif establish a connection with the ubiquitous Egyptian image of a solar disc with pendant uraei (Quirke 2016: 547).

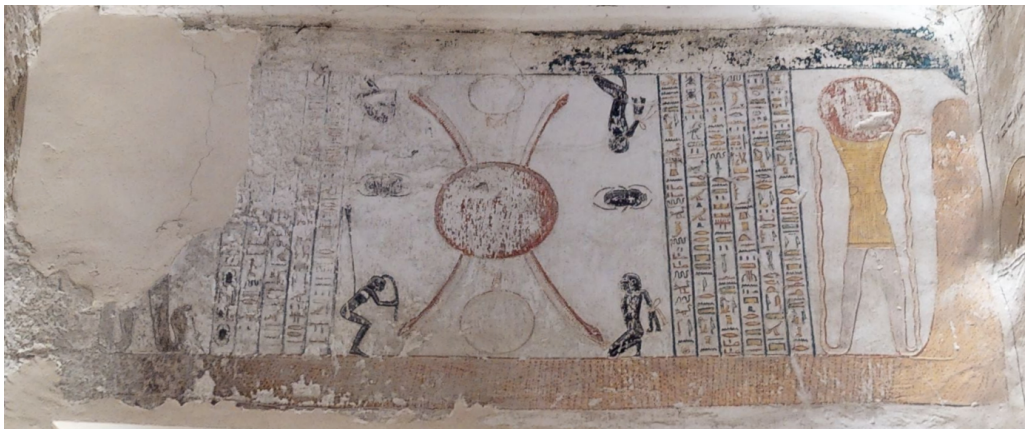


Fig. 5.14: Protective image, tomb of Ramesses VI (© Matterport)

The Litany of Re and Amduat thus provide variant presentations of the motif. Direct parallels are known from a similarly liminal location in the tomb of Ramesses VI (KV 9). A scene on the lintel of the doorway between Corridor G and Hall H has been termed the 'protective image' (Fig. 5.14; Hornung 1988; Quack 2005: 40 n. 31). Designed to reconceptualize a breach in the tomb's structure as an entry point for apotropaic sunlight (Darnell 2004: 268–9), the image is part of an enigmatic composition that Darnell terms a 'Book of the Solar–Osirian Unity'. Such compositions may have originated in the Middle Kingdom, the same period as hypothetical forerunners of the Amduat.[120] The figures in the right and left sections of the image are relevant here. They stand atop a representation of the eastern horizon beneath the sky, flanking an image of the solar disc radiating serpents to annihilate the damned (Hornung 1988: fig. 1; Darnell 2004: pl. 29; Quirke 2016: 547). Each section of the image may depict a different *sšmw* of the same being, stressing different aspects of his nature and relationships. Similar to many labels in the long Amduat, the one to the figure on the right begins: 'he, (namely) this god, is like this' (*wnn=f nṯr pn m sḫr pn*; Darnell 2004: 231; brief discussion: Miller in review).

The figure on the right has a male anthropomorphic body with a solar disc in place of its head and shoulders, with the straps of its corselet connecting directly to the disc. Its arms, said to 'remain in the disc' (*ʿwy=fy mn m jtn*; Darnell 2004: 231), are not shown. Its legs are modelled as long serpents rising vertically. The label to the figure includes the following phrases: 'he shoots at the one who is evil; the two sisters (are those whom) this god assigns to be his two arms' (*stt=f jr nty ḏw snty wḏ nṯr pn r ʿwy=fy*; Darnell 2004: 242). Thus Isis and Nephthys are identified as the hidden arms of the figure, building on their common identification with the legs and feet of divine beings (Darnell 2004: 243–4, with nn. 308–313). The connection with Isis and Nephthys links this with the damaged one on the left, whose legs are modelled as two rearing cobras identical to those of the ophidian composite on Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391.

In §5.1 I suggested that the motif of the 'solar disc with legs' is a variant of Amduat nos 733–736, who repulse the followers of Apophis at the eastern horizon. That characterization matches the content of the protective image in the tomb of Ramesses VI. The serpent-limbed figure on Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391, together with its parallels in the protective image, may therefore be treated as variant realizations of a being shared with wands, involving a composite but

[120] Darnell 2004: 469; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 523. Note, however, objections to the idea that the compositions originated from one template (Smith 2017: 306–8).

primarily anthropomorphic form. On the wand, the figure may be understood either as an elaborate emblematic personification or a reinterpretation of the 'solar disc with legs' as a specific deity in the emblematic mode of depiction (Miller in review; see further in Chapter 7). The semantically richer serpent legs of these figures elaborate upon the simple 'walking legs' element used in the 'solar disc with legs' motif.[121] The wand motif may therefore be analysed as a *sšmw*-image which incorporates ophidian elements as *jrw*-images. As elements of the figure's body, these *jrw*-images contribute to the agency of the *sšmw*-image. This conceptual structure accords with the images of winged cobras discussed above, as well as many composite figures in other categories of material. The form may have been amenable to being employed on wands despite being visually and iconographically unusual.



Fig. 5.15: Female anthropomorphic figure with two cobras in position of head, on wand Moscow, Pushkin Museum 6736, 12th–13th Dynasty (Berlev and Hodjash 2004: 71)

5.4 Ophidian Head

Composite figures with serpents as heads are further evidence for the conceptual structure just mentioned. Examples show the mobility of individual visual elements—here, serpents—within the iconographic and ontological framework of wands. On Moscow, Pushkin Museum 6736, a figure with a female anthropomorphic body and two outward-facing cobras in place of a head is shown grasping a serpent and a serpent-shaped staff in her hands (Fig. 5.15). A variant with a male anthropomorphic body and a single serpent as a head occurs on BM EA 18175 (Fig. 5.16). These may be compared with the ophidian composite associated with CT 1181 on B5C (§4.7, Fig. 4.20). All these

[121] Compare the knife-wielding cobra and quail chick atop divine standards as differentiated, more specific formulations of a 'prototypical' image (§5.1).

figures incorporate symbolic ophidian elements as body parts, while the implements they wield—from serpents to weapons, in mouths or hands—reproduce and reinforce this symbolism.[122]

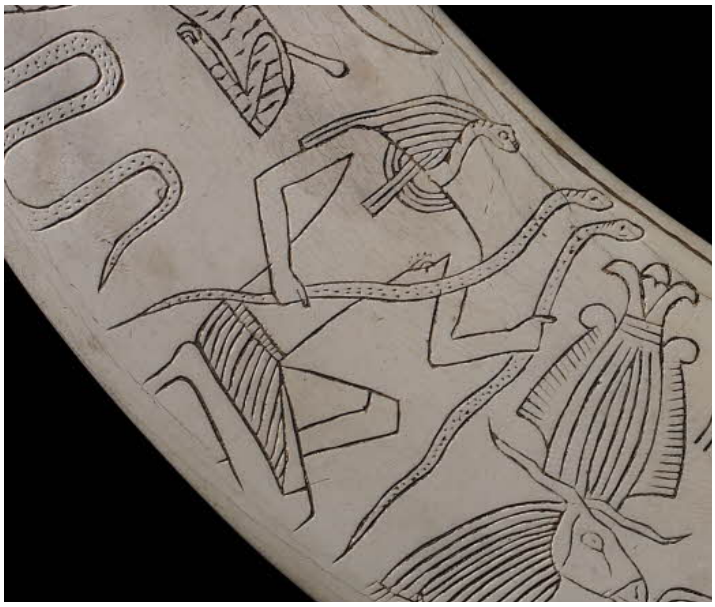


Fig. 5.16: Male anthropomorphic figure with serpent in position of head, on wand BM EA 18175, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

The rarity of this configuration may arise from the fact that its primarily anthropomorphic form may push the iconographic limits of apotropaic wands. The form is more strongly associated with more direct figural representations of deities, which are potentially inappropriate for depiction. However, their size and association on wands with more strongly emblematic forms, and with depictions of objects that may function as isolated logograms, may help to effect a conceptual or perceptual shift toward a status as enlarged hieroglyphs.[123] Their usage stems from awareness of the boundary between 'writing' and 'depiction', and how it may be exploited to employ perhaps more powerful forms (Miller in review).

5.5 Iconographic Templates

The final pair of motifs I consider consists of the hawk-headed felid or 'griffin' and the feline–serpent composite frequently termed the 'serpopard'. The griffin and serpopard are templates with long histories (Hornung 1979: 210); their precise components may vary and they have been applied as descriptors for several Egyptian composite forms (e.g. Eggebrecht 1977: 895; Barta 1973–1974: 336). The term 'griffin', for example, which I retain for ease of reference to the scholarly literature,

[122] Altenmüller (1965 [ii]: cat. 74) suggests that a damaged, serpent-wielding male figure on London UC 16383 has an ophidian head, but I exclude this due to the uncertainty of the identification.

[123] The frequently attested 'Bes-image', in both male and female forms, is of generally liminal and subordinate status. It and the hippopotamus–lion composite are more strongly associated with personifications and may 'mingle more freely with human beings than do deities' (Baines 1985: 127–31). The Bes-image should therefore be distinguished from part-anthropomorphic representations of 'major' deities (Baines 1983: 18–19).

was originally employed by Classical writers to describe fabulous beasts inhabiting remote lands. The term passed into the vocabulary of medieval and Renaissance writers (Rackham 1940: 379; Barney 2005: 252; Higgins 2011: 159–60) and thence into Egyptology. On wands, griffins and serpopards may be analysed as complex figures that function as schematic representations of phenomena occurring in the underworld, and which involve several actors. The innovative usage of these zoomorphic forms navigates webs of symbolic associations. In contrast to figures such as Amduat nos 755 and 756, 325, and 394 (§3.2, §3.5, and §3.6), griffin- and serpopard-type forms are not *jrw*-images, even though they may wholly or partially derive from *jrw*-images.

The earliest known examples of griffins and serpopards date to Naqada IID–III, c. 3300–3000 BCE. They occur on decorated, elite objects such as ceremonial palettes, knife handles, and blades, in scenes of desert hunts and in rows of composite and non-composite animals. Griffins with spread wings are unattested in the visual record between the 1st and 11th Dynasties. Forms with furled wings or without wings are known from the Old and Middle Kingdoms and relate to representations of the king in leonine, hawk, or sphinx form.[124] The griffin-type form that I study here was probably an independent, later development. As for serpopard-type forms, occurrences between the 1st and 11th Dynasties are limited to writings of the logogram for the town of *kjs* in Middle Egypt. Even then, the composite felid–serpent form is often substituted with non-composite serpents, a double-headed serpent, or undetailed curvilinear objects (Miller in press).

Reasons for this gap in the record are uncertain. Ellen Morris (2017: 323–30) argues that renovation and construction work at provincial temples and shrines during the Middle Kingdom may have brought forgotten late predynastic artefacts to light and catalysed the development of apotropaic wands decorated with zoomorphic motifs in comparable arrangements (see, e.g., Dreyer 1986: 37–8, 45–6, on early examples from Hierakonpolis). Additional possibilities include the circulation of 'pattern books' on perishable media, as well as long-lasting oral traditions (compare Sonik 2015: 177). However, the adoption of such images would have been constrained by the conventions of apotropaic wands, especially since wands do not feature many other composite and non-composite zoomorphic figures attested on predynastic objects (e.g. Huyge 2004; Miller forthcoming).

[124] Much work has been done on sphinxes. See, e.g., Hassan 1953; Gerke 2014: 21–4, 133–5. For later periods, see Hsu Shih-Wei 2011: 53–5. A frequently overlooked Old Kingdom example is a hawk-headed sphinx on a standard, used as an emblem in a 5th Dynasty papyrus: Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968: pl. 18.

Use of griffin- and serpopard-type figures on wands should be evaluated in terms of the conventions of wand iconography, particularly the balance between function and decorum, centring on the need to display complex ideas as agents while favouring a concentration of ontic weight into discrete, individual figures over distributing it between several figures. Implicated in these iconographic procedures are developments in religious belief and display. In the case of griffins, this could mean supplementing the basic template, which functioned as a *sšmw*-image, with an appended ophidian element serving as an *jrw*-image that elaborates upon the figure's agency. With serpopards, the fluidity and interchangeability of the template's ophidian and feline aspects—visible from late predynastic times to the Middle Kingdom—often resulted in ophidian features being downplayed in order to highlight feline symbolism, which was more salient on wands and may have stimulated further modifications of the motif on them. The two motifs demonstrate how beings could be shared between categories of material by using different figural forms as required by external factors. My analyses here treat these forms in parallel and do not assume any particular chronological or derivational relationships. I return to those aspects in Chapter 6, where I investigate issues of image transmission and the development of iconographies.

5.5.1 Griffins

In the context of wands, the term 'griffin' refers to a composite zoomorphic form comprising a feline body and the head of a hawk, identifiable on several examples by characteristic peri-ocular markings (Vernus and Yoyotte 2005: 370). The head features a long tripartite wig. Two wings unfurl over the body, whose hunched gait with a downward-pointing head and elongated neck in most images resembles that of a leopard (e.g. Fig. 5.17; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 93). Some examples feature an upward-extending neck (e.g. MMA 22.1.65, MMA 26.7.1288a,b + Louvre E3614: Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 98, 127). The figure is always shown with legs apart as if walking. On most figures a male human head, occasionally with shoulders and torso, is depicted between the wings. Griffins may brandish knives, and serpents may be held in their mouths or rise from their forepaws and tails. The tail of at least one example, on Baltimore WAM 71.510, has the form of a rearing cobra (Fig. 5.18). Their general form differs from predynastic images of 'griffins', which are hawk-headed felids with horizontally depicted, comb-like wings extending from their backs. These figures are not associated with serpents and do not incorporate human elements. Middle Kingdom items and tomb scenes depict comparable felid–hawk composite forms, also termed 'griffins' by Egyptologists

(Gerke 2014: 136–42). Examples in tombs most closely resemble those on wands, and may help to illuminate them.

Analysis of this griffin motif on wands suggests that it enabled a conceptually complex subject to be represented within the conventions of the object type. The example on Baltimore WAM 71.510 is unique among depictions of griffins on wands in that it has a cobra for a tail; the form is also used twice on the contemporary 'magic rod' Hannover, Kestner Museum 1949.350 (Fig. 5.19; for rods, see further Bourriau 1988: 115–16). The conceptual structure of this form, and the position of the ophidian element within it, may be approached by first considering the meaning and ontology of the griffin motif on wands more generally.



Fig. 5.17: Griffin on wand MMA 15.3.197, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)



Fig. 5.18: Griffin with cobra as tail, on wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, 12th–13th Dynasty (photograph courtesy of the Walters Art Museum)

I suggest that griffins on wands do not represent a single deity, contrary to previous interpretations (e.g. Altenmüller 1965: 33–6, 158–60; 2013: 18–22; Barta 1973–1974). The motif instead crystallizes a grouping of deities, landscapes, and processes into an autonomous being, represented as a zoomorphic *sšmw*-image. The form of a striding zoomorphic composite situates the subject within the conventions of wands, while the selection of constituent elements expresses specific roles, qualities, and symbolic associations. The treatment may be compared with the 'summarizing' function of certain zoomorphic forms discussed above (§5.2).

Hornung (1963–1967 [ii]: 106, 175) has compared the oval of Sokar in the 5th hour of the Amduat with nos 755 and 756 in the 11th hour (§3.2, §3.6, Figs 3.3, 3.26). Extending his comparison by building on Roberson's (2009) cosmic interpretation of wand iconography, I propose to interpret the griffin on wands as balancing ontological and semantic dimensions with external factors acting upon the Amduat and apotropaic wands as contexts of depiction. I earlier argued that both the oval of Sokar and nos 755–756 are schematic representations of the underworld, the unfurled wings rising from the ophidian composites in the groups symbolizing luminosity and protection. Wings contributed to the meaning of the scenes as a whole and were attached to serpent bodies as a matter of visual convention. Key components of the scenes are the figures of Atum and Sokar—the latter in a form with human body and hawk head—who stand between the wings. The wings, part-anthropomorphic deities, and sandy environment represented by the oval of Sokar suggest a connection with the griffin motif on wands.



Fig. 5.19: Griffin on magic rod Hannover, Kestner Museum 1949.350, 12th–13th Dynasty (Loeben 2008: fig. 9)

The tombs BH 15, BH 17, and BH 3 at Beni Hassan, which belonged to the nomarchs Baqet III, Khety, and Khnumhotep II respectively, depict griffins in desert hunt scenes.[125] Many non-composite animal motifs on wands are of desert species; these associations may help to connect griffins with desert settings in the Amduat, specifically the oval of Sokar. BH 15 and 17 probably date to the late 11th Dynasty (Kanawati and Evans 2018: 15–16), while BH 3 was built during the reign of Amenemhat II or Senwosret II in the 12th Dynasty (Kamrin 1999: 31; Kanawati and Evans 2014: 25). In BH 15 and 17, the griffins, labelled *sfr*, are depicted alongside a Seth-animal labelled *šꜣ* and a snake-headed felid labelled *sḏꜣ*. A fantastical rendering of an elephant (*ꜣbw*) is included in BH 15 but not BH 17. Texts sometimes use a standing Seth-animal as a determinative for *šꜣ*, and *šꜣ*-creatures are listed as inhabitants of the desert (*CT* I, 397b; II, 42b–c; VII, 57g), indicating that the fabulous creatures depicted in the tombs were seen as inhabiting liminal zones.

The griffins in BH 15 and 17 each possess an upraised avian head, feline body, and a pair of large, unfurled wings. Narrations of the myth of the distant goddess from the Graeco-Roman period apply similar terms to comparable forms. In one, the protagonist describes a *srrf*-creature, characterizing it as a ferocious beast which preys on lions, while a hymn in the temple at Medamud describes how, upon the goddess's return, '*sfrr*-creatures swathe themselves for you (the goddess) with its (sic) wings' (*wnḫ n=ṯ sfrrw m ḏnḥwy=f(y)*; Drioton 1927: 27–8; Quack 2009: 348). The griffin determinative of *sfrrw* resembles the *sfr* of BH 15 and 17. The siting of these creatures in the desert supports the idea that the term *sfr* is related to *srf* 'to heat', the forms *sfrr* and *srrf* produced by reduplicating a consonant (Sauneron 1962: 16; Altenmüller 1965 [i]: 159; Morenz and Schorch 1997: 372–6).

The desert associations of the *sfr* may have facilitated the use of a similar form on wands, whether or not the figures on wands represent the being termed the *sfr* or held the same symbolism or reality status. The oval of Sokar is set within and depicts a desert environment, while other texts liken the roads traversed by Re to desert tracks (Darnell 2004: 38, with n. 9). The oval of Sokar represents the underworld as the site of solar regeneration, complementing the birth symbolism structuring the iconography of wands and encouraging their use in a range of contexts, including peri-natal and funerary rituals. However, both the oval of Sokar and nos 755 and 756 are schematic representations unsuitable for inclusion on wands. Their subject matter may have been

[125] Several published images: Newberry 1894: pls 4, 13; Shedid 1994b: 57, fig. 95; Kanawati and Woods 2010: photos 205–7; Kanawati and Evans 2014: pls 29, 36b–c, 37a; Kanawati and Evans 2018: pl 13a.

reconfigured on the model of the zoomorphic motif of the *sfr* in order to harmonize with wand iconography. The similarity between the avian head of the *sfr* and that of Sokar in the oval, the quadrupedal form of the *sfr* and the four-legged serpent no. 756, and the glossiness of panther pelts, whose radiant qualities connect with the luminosity characteristic of the solar groups (McDonald 2002: 273; forthcoming), may be cited in support of that interpretation.



Fig. 5.20: Griffin on wand fragment MMA 22.1.65, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)

Thus, the griffin motif on wands may be classified as a *sšmw*-image which is not also an *jrw*-image. Its symbolic features did not indicate all the qualities of its subject. Schematic representations and autonomous agentive beings were commonly parallel formulations (§3.2). In the Amduat, the anthropomorphic sun-god no. 755 emerges between and grasps the wings of the ophidian composite no. 756. Similarly, on some wands the human head is attached to shoulders and

a torso which connect to the wings and body of the griffin (Fig. 5.20; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 98), in a configuration comparable with scene 5 on P. Meermanno-Westreenianum 37 (§3.2, Fig. 3.5). An even more elaborate example occurs on a wand in a Swiss private collection, where arms extend from the shoulders of the anthropomorphic figure to grasp the wings of the griffin (Fig. 5.21), most closely approaching the configuration of Amduat nos 755 and 756. The strategy of representing the sun-god as an isolated human head is not unique to the wands: a frontally depicted male human face in the 11th hour of the Book of Gates is labelled 'this is the face of the solar disc' (*ḥr p(w) n jtn*; Volokhine 2000: 75–6).



Fig. 5.21: Griffin on a wand in a Swiss private collection, 12th–13th Dynasty (Altenmüller 1986: pl. 1)



Fig. 5.22: Griffin on wand Cairo CG E2007.04.58, 12th–13th Dynasty (Polz et al. 1999: 391, fig. 18)

A final consideration is a difficult, damaged label next to the griffin on the wand Cairo CG E2007.04.58 (Fig. 5.22), which reads: 'Words spoken: I am ⌜?⌝ [I have] come [in order that I set]' (*ḏd mdw jnk ⌜?⌝ jw(?)[.n(=j) stp(=j)]*; Polz et al. 1999: 391–9, fig. 18; Altenmüller 2013: 16–22, 25, fig. 5; 2015: 27; Gerke 2014: 171, cat. 77). Several restorations have been proposed for the lacuna following *jnk* (Altenmüller 2017: 85, with references). Most plausible are 'first of the two banks' (masculine *tpy-jdbwy* or feminine *tpty-jdbwy*) and 'first of the two lands' (masculine *tpy-tꜣwy* or feminine *tpty-tꜣwy*), since wand iconography centres on the sun-god's regeneration and rebirth as a re-enactment of the sun's original rise from the primeval mound. If this interpretation is accepted, the identification can relate only to the human head between the wings, not to the entire figure, which is a visual construct that articulated specific spatial and conceptual relations in a way amenable to

the conventions of wands. Understanding the 'griffin' motif in this way shows that it is not necessary to identify the whole figure with a specific god, and provides explanations grounded in a combination of semantic and ontological factors for variation between representations in different contexts.

Unlike Sonja Gerke (2014: 46), I do not argue for a linear chronological progression from the wand motif, in which the Amduat images show 'dass das Wesen und die damit einhergehende Motivik in späterer Zeit vorhanden waren, jedoch teilweise uminterpretiert wurden'. Instead, I view the wand motif and the two Amduat images as parallel formulations that accommodate the functional and iconographic requirements of their contexts. Treating the griffin motif as a less schematic configuration of the same subject fits with Roberson's (2009) argument that wand iconography, in at least one instance, could represent the eastern horizon. Symbolic groupings could be mobilized on more than one level within the system as long as formal configurations were made to fit with overarching iconographic conventions. Understanding this bidirectional influence may also account for the griffin shown in tomb BH 3, which is of the type otherwise known only from wands and the magic rod Hannover, Kestner Museum 1949.350 (see further §6.3).

Most examples of griffins on wands do not include ophidian elements as 'body parts' because, unlike Amduat no. 394 in the oval of Sokar, which was designed to negotiate relevant formal constraints, wands were neither structured 'topographically' nor subject to the same external factors governing figural form. On wands, ophidian elements did not need to be incorporated in representations of that subject. The tail of the griffin on Baltimore WAM 71.510, formed as a cobra, relates to the being's function as manifesting a specific subject in apotropaic ritual. Its long tail extends diagonally downward to the baseline, before curling sharply upward in the form of a cobra with a flared hood with a single, long, vertical incision intersecting a shorter horizontal incision; the eye of the cobra is represented by a short horizontal incision. The form may be analysed as a *sšmw*-image that is not also an *jrw*-image but is supplemented by an ophidian *jrw*-image serving to clarify the nature of the *sšmw*-image's agency. Although the cobra is a 'body part', it is supplementary and dispensable. Substituting the usual feline tail with a cobra may have been an artistic choice stimulated by visual association rather than ontological or iconographic necessity.

Apart from the two serpent-headed figures on the wands Moscow, Pushkin Museum 6736 and BM EA 18175 (§5.4), the conceptual structure also underlies a range of forms: griffins and other

figures which hold serpents in their mouths or grasp them with human arms;[126] a griffin whose forelimbs are modelled as a rearing cobra on the early New Kingdom vessel Moscow, Pushkin Museum 3600 (Fig. 5.23); and serpent-tailed figures of a hippopotamus and a knife-wielding, hawk-headed baboon in the illustrations to BD 149 on a 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus (P. BM EA 10041,2: Niwiński 1989: pl. 20b; Lucarelli 2015: 289, fig. 1). All these serpent images may symbolize the fiery destruction that the figures inflict on hostile forces threatening the beneficiaries of apotropaic rituals, complementing the 'hieroglyphic' images of braziers that are common on wands. They relate to the interchangeability of serpents and knives as elements added to figures (§4.4). Despite visual similarities, the griffin with cobra as tail is conceptually distinct from the bull–serpent composite of CT 1140 on B5C (§4.5, Fig. 4.15).



Fig. 5.23: Griffin on vessel Moscow, Pushkin Museum 3600, early New Kingdom (Gerke 2014: 177, cat. 87; see also Hodjash 1960: 242–60, pl. 12)

5.5.2 Serpopards

The portmanteau term 'serpopard' refers to a zoomorphic composite with a long, snaking neck that in most cases terminates in a feline head with rounded ears. On wands, these figures, which frequently have spotted coats marked by etched stippling, always stand upright (Fig. 5.24). Originating in the Near East, the form was adopted in Egypt in the late predynastic period for display on ceremonial objects. Between its disappearance from elite art in the 1st Dynasty and its re-emergence in tomb decoration and on small objects in the 11th Dynasty, the form was used only in the logographic writing of the toponym *ḳjs*. Variability in the hieroglyphic form of the logogram

[126] It is difficult to categorize examples of the motif which show a serpent rising from the griffin's feline tail (e.g. Fig. 5.22), because the status of the serpent as body part or as implement is unclear. The former is perhaps more likely, based on comparison with Book of Gates, hour 10, scene 67, where the forepart of a snake rises from the tail of a crocodile labelled *šsšs*, a figure that symbolizes cosmic regions and the processes occurring within them (Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 237–40; Reemes 2015: 262–71; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 314).

suggests that the long-necked feline form was one variant of a template suited for use in many semantic and ontological configurations (Miller in press).



Fig. 5.24: Serpopard on wand fragment Boston MFA 12.1519, 12th–13th Dynasty (© Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

On wands, the necks of serpopards typically have wavy outlines, recalling the undulating necks they exhibit on late predynastic objects. Parallels among predynastic images show that the undulating necks and surface detailing of serpopards represent the scales or skeletal structure of snakes; designers distinguished 'not only individual body parts but also particular structural features and elements that correspond to an empirical reality below the skin' (Wengrow 2014: 54). The intertwined snakes on the obverse of the Gebel el-Tarif knife handle, for example, are divided lengthwise by long continuous incisions running parallel to their body outlines, with the halves being detailed with fine cross-hatching (Asselberghs 1961: 275; Delange 2009: 56). The necks of the serpopards on the Two Dog, Four Dog, and Minshat Ezzat palettes are detailed almost exactly as on

the knife handle, except that the hatching runs in a single direction, branching off from the central incision (Baghdadi 1999: figs 1, 2; Patch 2011: 139, 144). These features coexist with detailed renderings of feline musculature: several vertical incisions on the upper torso; one vertical incision along the length of each leg; and two horizontal incisions marking each ankle.

Flexibility characterized the template of which the long-necked felid was one formulation. Particularly salient is the interchangeability between feline and ophidian aspects. The Narmer palette, which is the latest predynastic artefact known to depict serpopards,[127] omits the hatched detailing on their necks—perhaps to fit its general style—while retaining their undulating shape. Old and Middle Kingdom examples of the *ḳjs* logogram often alternate serpopards with two non-composite serpents, or double-headed serpents with feline or ophidian heads (Miller in press), while the serpent-headed felid shown as part of the desert hunt scenes in BH 15 and 17 may be compared with a long-necked felid in a scene on a painted wood fragment in the Cairo Museum.[128] The fragment is said to come from Meir, Asyut, or Qurna (Malwina Brachmańska, personal communication, 2021), locations that fit with the distribution of the *ḳjs* logogram and the depiction of serpent-headed felids at Beni Hassan.

Formal flexibility may benefit modern interpretations, encouraging one to draw connections between seemingly disparate categories of material. As with griffins on wands, serpopards on wands may represent cosmic processes relating to solar regeneration. In conceptual structure, they are classifiable as *sšmw*-images that are not also *jrw*-images. I base this interpretation on details from three New Kingdom images, all of which can be linked to Middle Kingdom contexts: nos 729 and 730 in the 10th hour of the Amduat; Scene 68 in the 10th hour of the Book of Gates; and the *ḳjs* logogram in the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut.

In the 10th hour of the Amduat, the hawk no. 729 perches on the midpoint of ophidian composite no. 730 (Fig. 5.25). This composite figure has two outward-facing, upraised serpent heads—wearing the Red and White Crowns—with an *ꜥnḫ*-sign beneath the left head, and two pairs of outward-facing legs. No. 729 is labelled 'foremost of the sky' (*ḫnty-pt*) and no. 730 'conjoined of

[127] The Minshat Ezzat palette was found in a mid-1st Dynasty grave (Baghdadi 1999; 2003) but was probably an heirloom, perhaps originally a royal gift (Liam McNamara, personal communication, 2017).
[128] Unpublished, accession number unknown. The fragment may have been one of several panels making up a side or the lid of a box (compare §6.2.4, Fig. 6.8). The painted hunting scene could suggest that the box contained hunting equipment, perhaps as part of a burial assemblage (John Baines, personal communication, 2021).

faces' (*ṯsw-ḥr*; Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: 723). The pair is flanked by two goddesses (nos 728 and 731). The accompanying label reads:

> *wnn=sn m sḫr pn m rmnty ṯsw-ḥr*
> *bꜣ pw n skr ḫnty dwꜣt*
> *ʿpp sšmw pn mj-ḳd=f m-ḫt nṯr pn ʿꜣ r ꜣḫt ʿḳ=f ḫr=f m tꜣ rʿ nb*
> They are like this, being the supporters of the one conjoined of faces.
> It is the *bꜣ* of Sokar, foremost of the underworld.
> This entire *sšmw*-image travels after this great god to the horizon, and enters the earth in his presence every day.
>
> (Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: 721–2)

Significant here is the connection between a double-headed serpent with a solar figure perched above it, as well as the link to Sokar, whose luminous oval plays a central role in the sun-god's regeneration in the underworld.

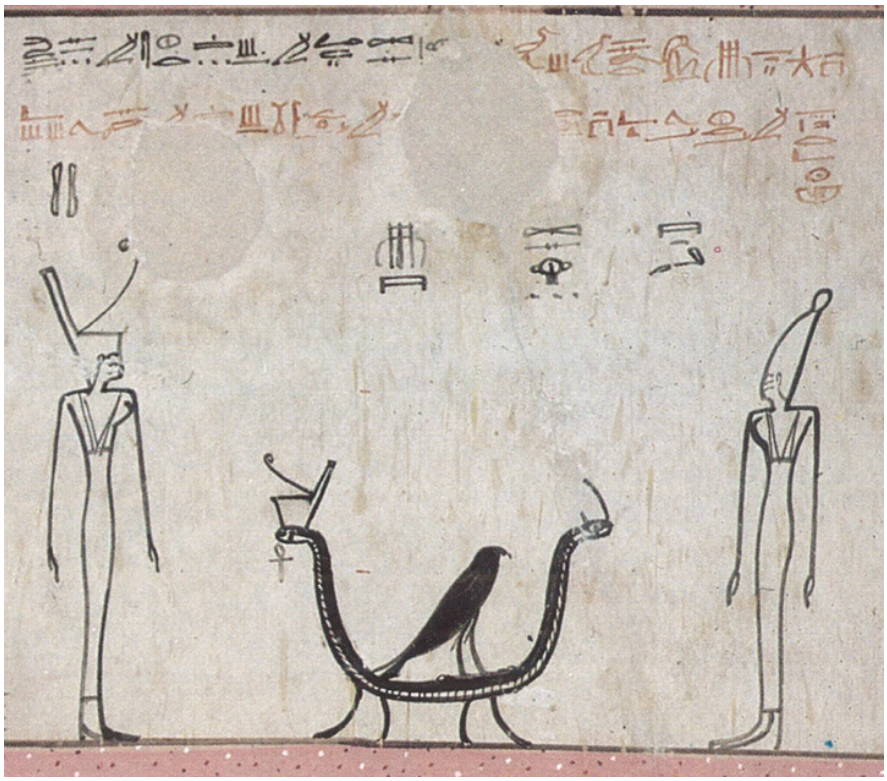


Fig. 5.25: Amduat nos 728–731, tomb of Thutmose III (Fornari and Tosi 1987: pl. 17)

The same configuration occurs in Book of Gates, hour 10, scene 68 (Fig. 5.26 shows a section of this large scene). Occupying the entire bottom register of the hour tableau, the central element of the schematic scene is labelled 'Horus of the underworld' (*ḥr-dwꜣty*; Hornung 1979–1980 [i]: 348),

and consists of a solar disc surmounted by a hawk who wears the double crown and emerges from the coils of a double-headed cobra. The group is positioned atop the midpoint of a double-headed serpent with a pair of human legs at each end. This ophidian composite is labelled 'Khepri' (Minas-Nerpel 2006: 194–7). Each pair of legs is lassoed by groups of deities with male anthropomorphic bodies, labelled: '*bꜣw* of the West' (*bꜣw jmntt*; human-headed); 'those in the following of Thoth' (*jmw-ḫt ḏḥwty*; ibis-headed); 'those in the following of Horus' (*jmw-ḫt ḥr*; hawk-headed); 'those in the following of Re' (*jmw-ḫt rʿ*; ram-headed); 'powerful ones' (*sḫmw*; frontally viewed human face). The combination of the aspects Khepri and Horus suggests that the scene represents the sun-god being dragged out of the underworld at the eastern horizon in his royal role.

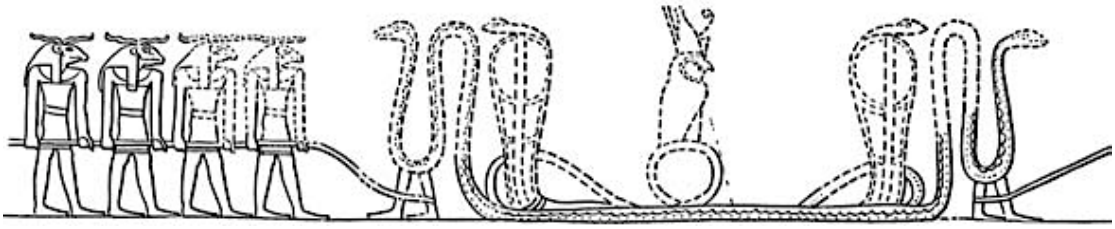


Fig. 5.26: Book of Gates, hour 10, scene 68, central portion, schematic line drawing (Darnell and Darnell 2018: 314, after Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 240)

The earliest known excerpts of the Book of Gates are depicted on the walls of the burial chamber of Horemheb (KV 57; Hornung and Abt 2014: 7). Its date of composition is debated. The written elements were probably assembled in the later 18th Dynasty, possibly during the reign of Amenhotep III (Hornung 1972: 17–18, 21; Zeidler 1999 [ii]: 248–9; Darnell 2004: 468; Werning 2013: 274; Geoga 2018; *contra* Quack 2000: 546–59). However, it is likely that individual elements, including images, originated much earlier, perhaps as far back as the Middle Kingdom (Assmann 1970: 57 nn. 2–3; Wente 1982: 176). The sharing of elements between different compositions is not surprising given the thematic overlaps between wands and the underworld books, as well as the common sociocultural sphere in which these categories of material developed (see further §6.2.3).

The *kjs* logogram may be a missing link between these ophidian composites in the underworld books and the serpopard motif on wands. Variation in the form of the logogram during the New Kingdom may be attributed to shifts in material culture, including the increasing rarity of wands (Miller in press). In the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut, which is contemporary with the earliest known copies of the Amduat, the logogram takes the unusual form of a man with a

disc atop his head, grasping the necks of a creature with two seemingly ophidian heads, and probably two pairs of legs (Fig. 5.27). Damage makes precise identification of the heads difficult, but the flexible configuration of serpopards' feline and ophidian aspects suggests that it is in any case irrelevant (Miller in press). In the underworld books, the divine grouping of Sokar, Khepri, and Horus, representing aspects of solar regeneration, power, and kingship, was articulated through motifs centred on ophidian composites.[129] As a temple text that served to legitimize a king's reign, the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription was steeped in tradition (Miller in press), so the distinctive form of the *kjs* logogram in the inscription may have served to imbue an ancient hieroglyph with royal, solar associations by evoking a configuration better known from contemporary religious compositions.[130]



Fig. 5.27a, b: The *kjs* logogram in the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut (courtesy of Susanne Bickel and Jean-Luc Chappaz)

London UC 35310 may provide the closest parallel to these configurations on a wand. On it, two serpopards with undulating serpents above them flank and face a Bes-image at the wand's midpoint (Legge 1905: figs 24, 25). Their inward-facing symmetry could be a variation on the outward-facing symmetry of the underworld book figures and the *kjs* logogram. This antithetical arrangement of wand figures is rare, however (Altenmüller 1965 [i]: 31); most wands do not afford this opportunity, so serpopards generally occur as isolated elements. They may be viewed as a condensed, non-schematic zoomorphic *sšmw*-image—not also an *jrw*-image—which articulated the same subjects that were schematically represented by the *kjs* logogram and Book of Gates scene. This

[129] Similar processes occurred in later periods, evident from the combination of Amduat nos 730 and 755 (the former perhaps substituting for no. 756) on a mortuary papyrus of the Third Intermediate Period (P. Turin 1778: Niwiński 1989: 187, fig. 63).

[130] The logogram is uniquely written as part of a list of deities' names on a writing board (Cairo JE 37734) found in Giza mastaba G1011 and possibly dating to the 5th Dynasty reign of Neferirkare (Reisner 1910; Brovarski 1987). This unique context may not have informed those responsible for the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription: it cannot be proven that the deity referenced in that Old Kingdom source was part of the same network of associations as Horus, Sokar, and Khepri, especially considering that those divine associations seem to have been lost by the Middle Kingdom elsewhere in Egypt (Miller in press).

interpretation matches that proposed for the griffin motif.[131] Unlike griffins, however, the serpopard form was synecdochic in nature. From this perspective, the serpopard motif may be compared with the ophidian composites in Figs 5.8 and 5.9, which I argue to be 'summarizing' representations of multiple beings acting collectively. The shared thematic scope and analogous ontologies of griffins and serpopards may explain their relatively frequent association, either in a sequence or more commonly on opposite ends of a wand.[132] Together, the two motifs reinforce important solar meanings and encompass two key moments of the solar cycle: regeneration in the middle of the night, and rebirth at dawn.



Fig. 5.28: Serpopard with legged solar disc above it, on wand MMA 22.1.103, 12th–13th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)



Fig. 5.29: Serpopard with legged solar disc above it, on wand fragment London UC 16381, 12th–13th Dynasty (© University College London/Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology)

A zoomorphic form facilitated flexible arrangements and combinations of images on wands: the agency of serpopards as *sšmw*-images could be clarified and intensified by placing symbols around them. Such symbols include serpents,[133] braziers,[134] the *s*ꜣ-knot ,[135] quasi-logographic images of the *ḥwt*-enclosure  containing a hippopotamus head, a donkey head,

[131] While Wolfhart Westendorf (1978: 217) also saw solar significance in serpopards, his argument was based on problematic analyses of predynastic and Graeco-Roman material that are too far removed in time and context to be reliably combined in interpretations of Middle and New Kingdom images.

[132] E.g. Baltimore WAM 71.510; Berlin ÄM 14284; Liverpool M11001; MMA 15.3.197; MMA 22.1.103; MMA 22.1.154a,b; MMA 26.7.1288a,b + Louvre E3614; MMA 32.8.3; unnumbered wand in a Swiss private collection (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 1, 11, 52, 93, 101, 104, 110, 127; 1986: pl. 1).

[133] E.g. BM EA 65439; Boston MFA 12.1519; MMA 15.3.197 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 14, 66, 93).

[134] E.g. Liverpool M11001; MMA 22.1.54a,b (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 52, 104).

[135] E.g. Baltimore WAM 71.510 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 1).

or a scarab,[136] and even the legged solar disc.[137] These groupings of elements demonstrate how wand images could undergo conceptual modifications. 'Ornamental' and 'thematic' cryptography were facilitated by the flexibility of emblematic forms and their suitability for wands. Although the symbols just mentioned may have been positioned above serpopards simply to use space, they may have also played on other semantic dimensions of the serpopard image, enabling it to function as writing. As in the Book of Two Ways, 'thick' images flowed between the categories of iconography and enigmatic writing (Stauder 2020: 2, with n. 5; see also §5.1 above on the headrest BM EA 35807). A key difference, however, is that such images in the Book of Two Ways may exploit ambiguity of mode in single contexts, whereas wand motifs typically belong clearly to one mode in a specific context, while functioning in the other mode elsewhere.



Fig. 5.30: Serpopard with *s*ꜣ-knot on back, on wand Baltimore WAM 71.510 (courtesy of the Walters Art Museum)



Fig. 5.31: Emblematic group with long-necked creature on scarab MMA 26.7.560, 18th Dynasty (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0)

Serpopards may have straddled image and writing as well. Their conceptual structure stands apart from the status of the form as a *sšmw*-image related to those in the underworld books and other categories, emerging instead from the figure's subsequent reconceptualization as an element of emblematic groups (see further §6.3). For example, the group consisting of a serpopard

[136] E.g. BM EA 24426; Brussels E7065; MMA 26.7.1288a,b + Louvre E3614 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 24, 60, 127). The significance of these images is uncertain (Quirke 2016: 334, 400, 402–3).

[137] E.g. MMA 22.1.103; London UC 16381 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cats 72, 101).

surmounted by a 'solar disc with legs' (Figs 5.28, 5.29) may be compared with the New Kingdom enigmatic writings of 'every day' (*rˁ nb*) and 'in the course of the day' (*m ḫrt hrw*), which use the image of a solar disc atop a walking or couchant lion (Roberson 2020: 70, signs E22+N5, E23+N5). If the New Kingdom enigmatic value is applied tentatively to the wand images, 'reading' the group in this way accords with the inscriptions 'protection by day' (*sꜣ hrw*) and 'protection by night' (*sꜣ grḥ*) commonly found on wands. More tentatively, the serpopard with a *sꜣ*-knot on its back on the wand Baltimore WAM 71.510 (Fig. 5.30) could likewise be viewed as an elaborate representation of the phrase 'all protection' (*sꜣ nb*), analogous to the positioning of all the 'protector' figures atop a row of *nb*-baskets on the wand Philadelphia UPM E2914 (Fig. 5.3). The practice might be compared with the emblematic group on a scarab from Thebes, dating to the 18th Dynasty (Fig. 5.31). Its central, long-necked figure may be a serpopard or a giraffe—the latter reading *sr* 'to prophesy'—with an *ˁnḫ*-sign atop its back and a *nfr*-sign in front of its neck, thus reading either 'all life and goodness' or 'prophesying life and goodness' (interpretation as giraffe: Roehrig 2005: 211). If images on wands were manipulated in this way, such procedures would have contributed to the ritual efficacy of wands through the logic of *sšmw*-images.

The serpopard as a figural form related thematically to other motifs on wands, contributed to the overall character of wand iconography, and exploited wands' integration of linguistic and non-linguistic signs. Such potential may have been restricted by the use of elements such as an ophidian head or body. Wavy outlines do not feature in images of non-composite felids or griffins with upraised necks on wands, so the undulating, elongated feline neck of serpopards may have alluded more subtly to their ophidian aspect, better balancing the conventions of the genre with the motif's symbolic values and links to other categories of material. The use of explicitly ophidian heads in contexts such as the wall decoration of tombs BH 15 and 17 may have been stimulated by the greater flexibility afforded by the lack, or at least reduced importance, of such semiotic thickness. The griffin and serpopard motifs enhance the functions of apotropaic wands while accommodating them within their conventions. Their forms were highly flexible, so their seeming disappearance from visual culture—with the exception of the fossilized *ḳjs* logogram (Miller in press)—together with wands and related objects is therefore not surprising.

6

REFIGURING THE COMPOSITE

The aim of this chapter is to place the status of composite figures as elements in a visual language in comparative perspective. In the first section the case studies are classified according to their conceptual structures. Following this, an art-historical account builds on the ontologically-informed analyses of Chapters 3 to 5 to consider how the figural repertoires of the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands arose from the histories and relationships of these three categories in Egyptian society. Four modes of image construction are presented: invention within contexts; selection from repertoires; formulation in parallel; and transfer between contexts. A final section suggests that the 'composite figure' was an emic category tied to Egyptian understandings of the body and its ontology. Zoomorphic composites can be framed as applications of broader graphic schemas and in the process related to other iconographic strategies.

6.1 CLASSIFICATION BY ONTOLOGY

Images in each of the three categories of material may be grouped by ontology, approximated to the Egyptian terms *sšmw* and *jrw* (Figs 6.1 and 6.2 present these structures as tree diagrams). The classifications do not encompass the full conceptual range of Egyptian images, but they facilitate comparison across the categories (Descola 2005: 71–2). They suggest that no fixed relationship exists between particular forms and conceptual structures, which were shaped to varying degrees by external factors.

Two broad types of structure are shared across the three categories: *sšmw*-images that are also *jrw*-images (Type A), and those that are not also *jrw*-images (Type B). Subsidiary structures may be identified within each type. In A1 *jrw* and *sšmw* are in a heterarchical relationship. By contrast, in A2 the status of *jrw* is primary. Images belonging to subsidiary structure B1 supplement a *sšmw*-image with one or more *jrw*-images, whereas *sšmw*-images that integrate *jrw*-images are defined

here as B2. In structure B3, which I address only in relation to wands, *sšmw*-images do not include any *jrw*-images. The turtle and serpent images associated with CT 1155 on B5C (§4.6, Fig. 4.17) are excluded from my classification because they are not visually composite.

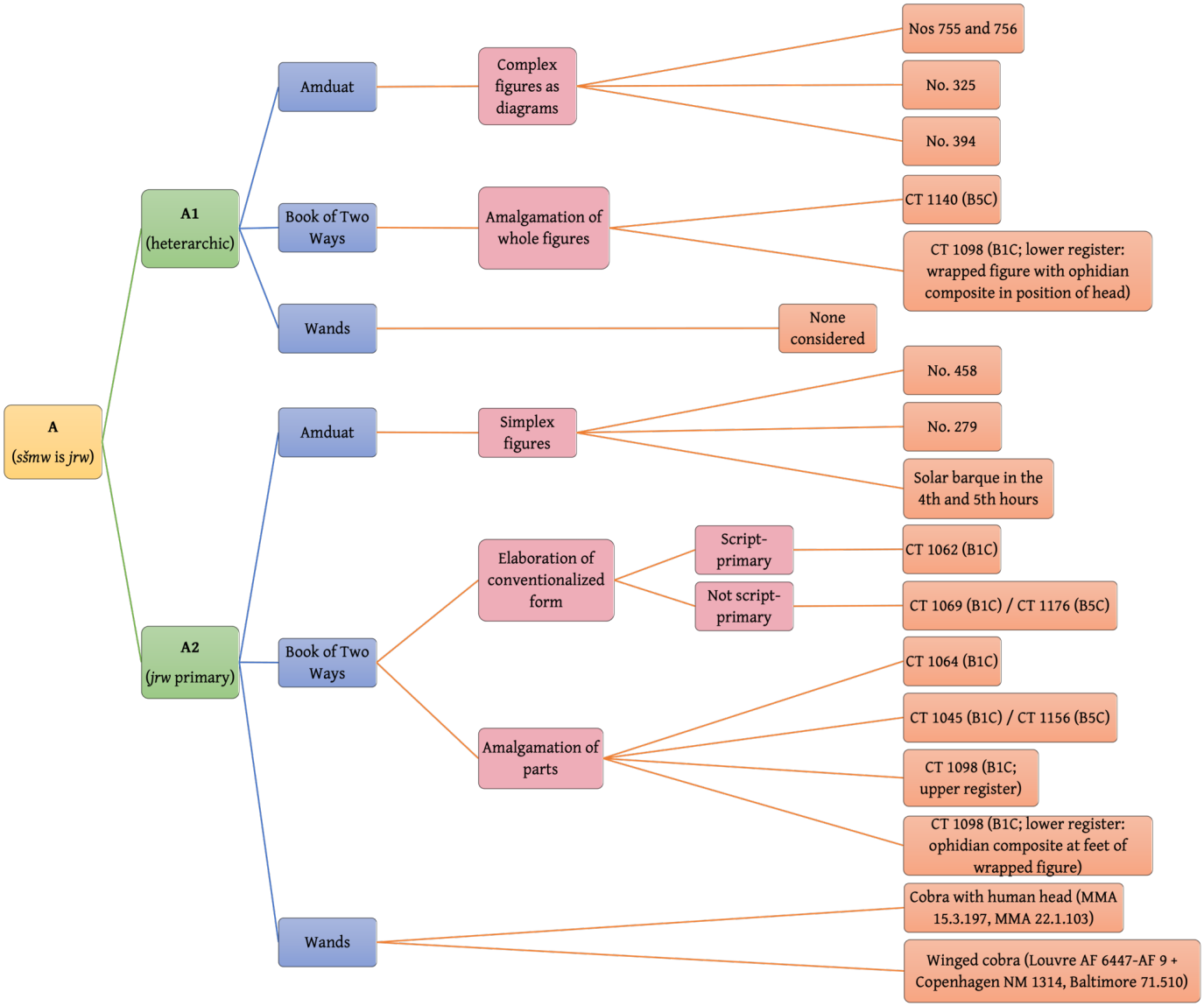


Fig. 6.1: Composite figures of Type A structure

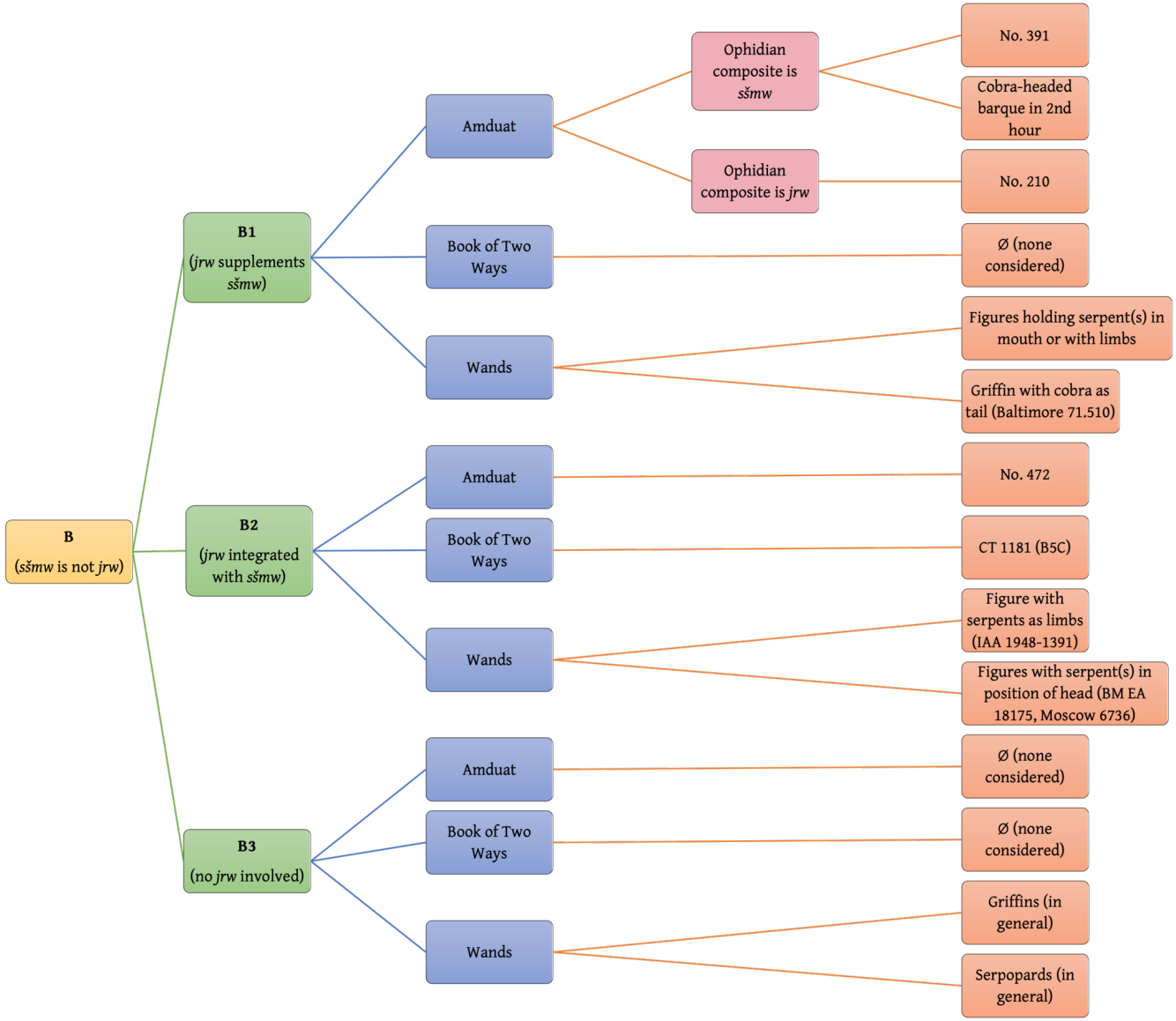


Fig. 6.2: Composite figures of Type B structure

The difference between the subsidiary structures B1 and B2 lies in the role and importance of the *jrw*-image(s). 'Supplementary' *jrw*-images only clarify semantic or ontological content. They are not implicated in the images' exercise of agency. 'Integrated' *jrw*-images are essential for imparting those qualities to the *sšmw*-images of which they are part, and are thus central to the function of the *sšmw*-images. Such *jrw*-images are not independently agentive; their point of reference is the overall *sšmw*-image (compare Campbell 2020: 380–2) and they serve as something like ontological armatures, giving the *sšmw*-image coherence as a representation (§2.3.2). My choice of terminology is intended to reflect how the distinction between structures B1 and B2 largely corresponds to formal differences: supplementary *jrw*-images are typically implements or insignia, while integrated ones are generally 'body parts'. Exceptions to this pattern include the cobra in the position of the tail of the griffin on wand Baltimore WAM 71.510, where an *jrw*-image as 'body part' is supplementary (§5.5.1, Fig. 5.18). By linking formal and conceptual aspects, my distinction between integrated and supplementary elements contrasts with Aston's purely formal categories of integral and superficial mixanthropy in Greek culture (§1.1.2).

jrw-images are more closely tied to figural form than *sšmw*-images because they work through metaphor and symbolism. Their usage results from external factors influencing the suitability of particular forms in each category of material. Thus, several figures in the Amduat and on apotropaic wands may be viewed as parallel presentations of their respective subjects. Especially susceptible to formal variation are figures I designate as 'complex', which display sets of relations and dynamic processes that involve multiple entities (e.g. §3.1, §3.6, and §5.5.1). Such variation is strongly connected with external factors such as format and decorum, rather than semantic ones. By contrast, manipulation of composite figures for semantic, more specifically symbolic, ends is more common with 'simplex' figures representing single subjects that are unlikely to be hypostases of, or substitutes for, higher-order beings (e.g. §3.7 and §5.1, Figs 3.34, 3.35, 5.4; for simplexes and complexes, see §3.1). The boundary between simplexes and complexes is fluid and dependent on context: composite—and indeed non-composite—figural forms could belong to both categories. In this case as in others, form, ontology, and function are interdependent.

Ophidian composites such as Amduat no. 391 and serpopards on wands, which are (part-)ophidian in nature (§3.7 and §5.5.2), do not hold the status of *jrw*-images. Their forms may have incorporated symbolic values but they were not symbolic constructs. In the case of the serpopards on wands and related objects, which are synecdochic and allude to complex,

diagrammatic figures, this status marks a reconceptualization of the already ancient form and a redistribution of ontological and semantic weight.

6.2 Design and Distribution

Ontologies of the figures shown tie the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands together. Designers of the Amduat used anthropomorphic forms as their basic lexicon (§2.4) and strove for consistency and regularity across hundreds of figures, whereas diversity and flexibility characterize the Book of Two Ways. Apotropaic wands occupy an intermediate position. The Book of Two Ways and apotropaic wands mobilize different facets of the relationship between types of visual representation. The Book of Two Ways often capitalizes on the visual elements shared between 'writing' and 'picturing' in order to express meanings grounded in metaphoric and symbolic networks that are common to both potentials of display. By contrast, figures on wands play on the continuum between 'writing' and 'depiction' as modes of presentation; their emblematic forms work together with the hieroglyphic signs that are present alongside them and often at similar scales. The same distinction structures the Amduat, where 'pictorial' images are distinct from the written elements that surround and describe them, especially in pre-Amarna copies where writing is in linear hieroglyphs. Wands consequently exhibit a visual consistency comparable or greater to that of the Amduat, but one achieved through strategies that favour zoomorphism over anthropomorphism.

The uneven distribution of composite figures was affected by variation in the external factors influencing each of the three categories along temporal, social, and material axes. Exploration of these dynamics in shifting religious environments illuminates issues of repertoire and transmission. I begin by siting the Book of Two Ways in a history of enactive imaging in mortuary settings; this elucidates the invention of certain forms with the Book of Two Ways and their restriction to that composition. In the second section, the relationship between the Book of Two Ways and apotropaic wands exemplifies how similar selections could be made from repertoires spanning more than one religious 'field of practice' (Bussmann 2019). The third section uses the Amduat and wands to consider how categories with overlapping themes could develop largely non-convergent iconographies. Finally, I treat the griffin motif in the tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni

Hassan (BH 3) as a case study for transfers between contexts, viewing the motif as a direct adoption from wands that may allude to hypothetical variants for ideological purposes.

6.2.1 Invention within contexts

Figural forms were affected by variation in the application of decorum and its interplay with writing and picturing or depiction. Some spell sequences in the Coffin Texts inducted individuals into restricted knowledge and associated experiences (e.g. Federn 1960; von Lieven 2019: 112–13), building on a tradition of inscribing 'entextualized' ritual recitations to enact them and their effects. Understanding of the forms and usage of composite figures in the Book of Two Ways may be enhanced by outlining that tradition, which has been extensively explored in relation to the older body of ritual material that includes the Pyramid Texts, which were probably not seen as a separate category but constituted an 'interlocking [corpus] in the same tradition' (Morales 2013 [ii]: 847–8, cited in Smith 2017: 194). The material is first attested from the reign of Sahure in the early 5th Dynasty, in the form of tabular offering lists depicted on the walls of the mortuary temples that were part of royal pyramid complexes (Baines 2004: 21–2). Its inscription on the walls of pyramids' subterranean burial apartments in sequences of continuous 'utterances' was a secondary application first attested in the reign of Unas at the end of the 5th Dynasty (Allen 2015: 17).

Writing on the interior walls of sealed tombs was not meant to be read in situ. The inscriptions served instead to 'create a proper environment for the king's presence in the burial chamber and passage into the next world' (Baines 2004: 21). This 'ritualization' of space (Hays 2009) is paralleled in other monumental contexts. Kneeling offering bearers depicted at the scale of hieroglyphs as part of expanded offering lists in the pyramid temples of Sahure and Neferirkare Kakai relate to the inscriptions' settings, which crystallized dynamic processes that involved relations and interactions between various beings (e.g. Borchardt 1909: 30, fig. 32; Sethe, in Borchardt 1910–1913: 126, pl. 63). Similar factors underlie images of fecundity figures in temples: 'they must obey the rules of decorum that govern the contexts in which they occur, and these, as much as anything, may be the reason for their being depicted as figures and not piles of food' (Baines 1985: 144). Biographical inscriptions in non-royal tombs constitute the other attested major context in which concise content was expanded into continuous texts displaying 'cohesion, integration, and hierarchies between clauses' (Stauder-Porchet 2021: 442–4, with n. 4). These inscriptions often exploit the

porous boundary of writing and picturing by employing retrograde or boustrophedon writing, or by extending a speaker's image into the text field.

The lack of 'pictures' in Old Kingdom examples of Pyramid Texts could seem to be at odds with those practices and with the general prestige of pictures over writing (Baines 1999b: 34–5), but it can be understood if the hieroglyphic inscriptions themselves are understood as functioning 'pictorially'. For example, Christelle Alvarez (2018: 130–3, 139, 144) has demonstrated that acts of suppressing and truncating hieroglyphs in the burial apartments took place when texts were copied from reference manuscripts to the walls; they mark a contextual shift in the conceptualization of the 'text' itself. Furthermore, in several pyramids the introductory formula *ḏd mdw* did not mark the start of individual utterances but was 'a generic frieze above the text (...) perhaps somewhat akin to modern speech marks' (Enmarch 2020: 50, with n. 67). Thus entire blocks of writing were symbols of perpetual utterance. The walls of royal burial apartments feature 'pictorial–verbal' compositions in the sense that 'writing' was 'picturing' even when its elements were distinctly 'textual'.

These practices were sustained on coffins, where texts were joined by images of environments that may be treated only occasionally as 'writing' (§4.1). Apart from the Book of Two Ways, the most elaborate examples of this type of pictorial–verbal composition are the 'field of offering' (*sḫt ḥtp*; *CT* V, 352–62; Lesko 1971–1972), and the ritual scenes on several Upper Egyptian coffins of the First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom.[138] The latter type of scenes expands on the offering lists and 'object friezes' of earlier periods, marking the coffin as a stage for eternalized ritual and a tableau of the relationships between the deceased and the gods (Jéquier 1921; Willems 1988: 200–9, 221–8; Nyord 2014). Other examples include the waterways accompanying 'ferryman' spells, as well as the underworld gateways associated with CT 901 on two other coffins (BH1Br, BH4C = Brussels E5037, Cairo JE 37565; Willems 1988: 234–6, fig. 30). Tighter restrictions of decorum may underlie differences in such practices in earlier periods, where cosmic symbolism was represented indirectly through the disposition of texts either in the architectural space, as in pyramids (Allen 1986; 1994), or on coffins and sarcophagi (e.g. Valloggia 1986: 74–6, pl. 62; Allen 2015: 69). Divisions 'between pyramids and any other type of burial, not least in the contrast between pyramid apartments and the decorated burial chambers of contemporaneous non-royal tombs' (Baines 2004: 39), may

[138] A1C, G1T, T3C (Cairo JE 36418, Turin 15.774, Cairo JE 47355; see Willems 1996). Tommaso Montonati (2018) provides arguments for the dating of G1T. For the G1T compositions, see §4.6, Fig. 4.18; *CT* V, 161; VI, 271.

explain why coffins rather than architecture bear witness to cosmographic developments in non-royal settings during the Old Kingdom; they may also have been present on lost royal coffins. Developments in the non-royal sphere may have been enabled by the political fragmentation of the First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom (Jiménez-Serrano and Morales 2021).



Fig. 6.3: Felid without hind legs, part of CT 1063 on B1C, 12th Dynasty (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

The Book of Two Ways occupies a unique position in the evolution of this tradition because it deepens interaction between writing and picturing. On the basis of textual criticism, Louise Gestermann (2004: 209–16) has argued for a distribution of manuscript materials for mortuary compositions from Memphite production centres to Deir el-Bersha, from where they would have been disseminated throughout Middle and Upper Egypt. Local traditions of mortuary composition should also be borne in mind (Sherbiny 2017: 608; compare Allen 1996; Hoffmeier 1996; Willems 1996): since all coffins featuring pictorial–verbal compositions come from those regions, images of powerful animate beings may have been favoured by local practices and perceptions of source material (Miller in press), resulting in the distinctive patterns in the use of figural images in the Book of Two Ways. Interplay between writing and picturing is limited to the 'map' section in most coffins (§4.1), perhaps for reasons of decorum. Such perceptions were, furthermore, not consistent. Hardly any animate beings, regardless of iconographic register or conceptual structure, are shown on B3C, B4C, and B1L, for example. Most images on these coffins are 'topographic' and 'architectural' features of the underworld. Omitting figural representation avoided the hazards of enactive imaging, especially when many Coffin Text spells imbued the deceased with power to overcome dangerous beings. Decorum also restricted the direct representation of gods, in line with wider Middle Kingdom practices (§5.1). Thus the only other pictorial representations on B3C, B4C, and B1L are sacred barques and sledges with shrines or seats that are left conspicuously empty (compare §2.3.2, on naoi).

The extensive figural images on B1C and B5C may have been possible at the late date of those coffins in the reigns of Senwosret II and III, by which time loosening conventions of decorum may have encouraged more intensive engagement with various graphic practices and their ontological potential. The coffins nevertheless display finer distinctions concerning the propriety of images. On B1C, a knife-wielding zoomorphic figure associated with CT 1063 has a red feline head and body, with forelegs but no hind legs (Fig. 6.3; for the colour, see Fig. 1.1)—perhaps a form truncated in line with contemporaneous practices in other contexts in Middle Egypt (Miller in press). Differences in conventions are also apparent in the coffins' inscriptions. B1C avoids signs that depict dangerous or disorderly beings, such as the Seth-animal, panther, and crocodile, whereas B5C uses them more freely (McDonald 2002: tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5a–b, 2.7b, 3.4, 3.5, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6b, 4.7). Writing and picturing redouble the power of recitation, contributing to its reality and depth. The composite figures on B1C and B5C, which display graphic homologies with the hieroglyphic script, are part of these practices. Linked to the organization and orthography of associated texts, which were bound to the layout of the Book of Two Ways, such composite figures were difficult to employ in other contexts.

6.2.2 Selection from repertoires

Related concerns affected apotropaic wands, but to differing extents and with different results. As with the Book of Two Ways, the available range of figural forms was tempered by concerns about proximity to powerful divine beings. Decorum constrained the use of anthropomorphic figures and drove designers toward predominantly zoomorphic figures, which could be figural complexes or zoomorphic alternatives to common anthropomorphic forms of simplexes. Instead of minimizing figural representation, as was done in most formulations of the Book of Two Ways, conventions of decorum were productive in wand iconography, stimulating creative use of figural forms to harness powerful beings for the benefit of ritual participants while respecting limits on how they might be manifested. Thus, the same basic impetus to optimize function, or at least not to compromise it, motivate the contrary impact of decorum on wands and the Book of Two Ways.

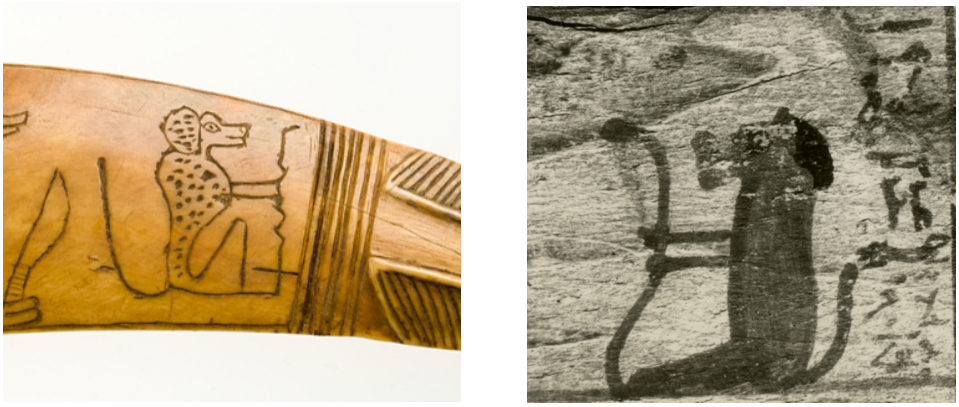


Fig. 6.4a, b: Squatting zoomorphic figures holding serpents on wand MMA 30.8.218, 12th–13th Dynasty, and as part of CT 1142 on B5C, 12th Dynasty (left: courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, licensed under CC0 1.0; right: © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

These different tensions help to account for the partial overlap in the repertoires of wands and the Book of Two Ways, examples of which include squatting zoomorphic figures who hold serpents (Fig. 6.4). These figures served positive, protective functions. Also known from toilette paraphernalia and jewellery (e.g. Garstang 1901: pls 4, 11, Bénédite 1911: pls 21, 22; Müller 1964: 69), they harmonize with varied fields of practice and their standards of decorum. Wands proliferated across Egypt and are attested from the areas of Thebes, Abydos, and the Fayyum (Quirke 2016: 81–214), around the same time that pictorial–verbal ritual compositions were being devised, including in Middle Egypt, while amulets in forms later attested on wands were produced in Middle Egypt during the mid- to late First Intermediate Period, an era that witnessed provincial engagement with older Memphite traditions (Gestermann 2004; Dubiel 2008: 21–2, 84). Collections of images organized into lists or tables may have been at the heart of such processes (Miller 2021: 129–31), with the forms that were employed being adapted to the conventions of their contexts. This model is more plausible than the idea that the categories developed partially intersecting iconographies independently, and it has analogies in Assyro-Babylonian divinatory traditions: 'while discrete omen series had different preoccupations and approaches, they could share entries' (Van De Mieroop 2016: 111).

6.2.3 Formulation in parallel

The relationship between wands and the Amduat provides a point of contrast, showing how categories of similar general period of origin, with similar structure, shared themes, and equal concern for the adequate expression of ontological and semantic content may display very different

iconographies. Implications of the contrast may be approached by considering the history and precursors of the Amduat.

Textual criticism suggests that the Amduat in 18th to 20th Dynasty tombs was composed in the Second Intermediate Period or early New Kingdom (Werning 2013: 271–4), but precursors, as well as the related 'royal sunrise caption', may have existed in the Middle Kingdom on manuscripts to which access was restricted and whose occasions of display and consultation are unknown. Such manuscripts may have been of great age by the New Kingdom: lacunae in the copies of the long Amduat in the tombs of Thutmose I/Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Amenhotep II cluster in the middle of columns and resurface in several mortuary papyri of the Third Intermediate Period, perhaps reflecting damage to the midsection of a manuscript by folding or a string-tie, exacerbated over centuries.[139]

Precursors of the Amduat may have consisted of shorter segments rather than entire hour tableaux. The copy of the long Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose I/Hatshepsut corresponds to the standard height of 18th Dynasty papyri, so whole tableaux 'might have been too long to consult across the lap in the normal manner of using papyrus' (Baines 2007: 162–3; von Lieven 2007a [i]: 205–7, with n. 1116). Vertical dividers between groups of figures in the copies of Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, and Useramun provide additional evidence for the forms of source documents and hint at processes of collation (Figs 6.5, 6.6; see also Bucher 1932: pls 30a, c, 32; Fornari and Tosi 1987: pls 11, 22; Dziobek 1994: pls 9, 12). They feature in copies of the Litany of Re in the same tombs, as well as individual spells and their associated vignettes in the Book of the Dead (Dorman 2019: 39–42). Moreover, the double dividers in the 6th and 7th hours in the copy of Amenhotep II frame major scenes and delineate sub-headings within the broader tableau, reproducing paratextual schemes well-attested in 18th Dynasty Book of the Dead manuscripts (Bucher 1932: pls 33, 34; compare Dorman 2019: 19–21, 37–9). The use of dividers is not consistent, however. In many instances they are absent, perhaps paralleling the practice on the Book of the Dead papyrus of Sobekmose (P. Brooklyn 37.1777E: O'Rourke 2016). Dating to the reigns of Thutmose III or Amenhotep II, its spells are 'run together, announced by the rubric "spell for", rather than being

[139] Wente 1982: 164, with n. 28; von Lieven 2016a: 58–9. On string-ties, see Ryholt 2021: 46–8. A plausible history of transmission is proposed in von Lieven 2007a [i]: 211–14. The spaces in Amenhotep II's copy of the short version arguably reflect verse structure as well as a process of transferring the text to a wall that allotted more space to each line than did its reference manuscript (Hornung 1987–1994 [iii]: xi; for similar practices in the long version, see Rößler-Köhler 1984–1985: 402–5).

compartmentalized separately' (Dorman 2019: 44). The usage of dividers in the Amduat thus relates to contemporary practices of creating coherent compositions from repertoires of pictorial and written elements.



Fig. 6.5: Divider in the bottom register of the Amduat 4th hour tableau, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

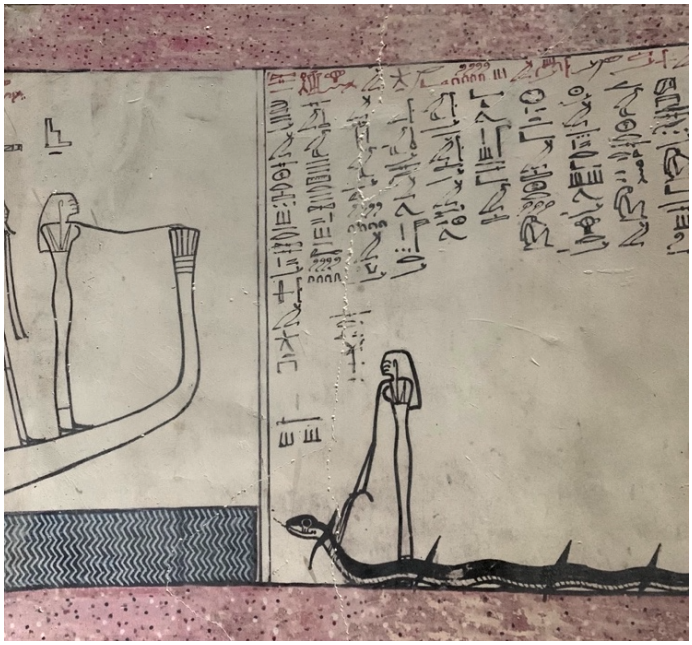


Fig. 6.6: Double divider in the middle register of the Amduat 7th hour tableau, tomb of Thutmose III (Bolton Museum facsimile; photograph by Jordan Miller)

The long Amduat's sequence of 12 tableaux may have been collated from several sources of varied character and diverse geographic origins, as was a common practice in Egypt.[140] The 4th and 5th hour tableaux, which evoke the Memphite necropolis, have been argued to be the core of the composition, even influencing other aspects of royal tomb structure and decoration in the Middle and early New Kingdoms (Gestermann 1999; Rößler-Köhler 1999: 85–8). By contrast, the 7th hour tableau may have been a relatively late addition of Theban origin: Peter Robinson (forthcoming) proposes to understand the confrontation between the solar entourage and Apophis in the 7th hour as an allegory of watercourse management near the Theban necropolis, transplanting physical features specific to the West Bank during the transition from the Second Intermediate Period to the early New Kingdom into the divine realm. Thus, the 'full', 12-hour sequence of the Amduat could have integrated several local landscapes and traditions into a cosmic unity that was being celebrated.

Wand iconography may have developed along similar lines and partly intersected with the development of the Amduat and other underworld books. The palace-linked manufacture of some wands and their connections with cults in Middle Egypt accords with purported early Middle Kingdom transfers of manuscript material from the Memphite region into Middle Egypt and thence southward (§6.2.1; Altenmüller 1965 [i]: 48–63; Quirke 2016: 215). Overlaps between repertoires specific to wands and those of the underworld books are discussed above in relation to the griffin and serpopard motifs (§5.5), whose distinctiveness makes them more reliable indicators than more widespread forms. I now address reasons for the marked difference in figural types and symbolic range between these categories despite their thematic commonalities.

While decorum no doubt constrained the forms available for use on wands, as a factor it cannot explain the preponderance of anthropomorphic figures in the Amduat. Several zoomorphic and emblematic forms of types common on wands were not designed with the format of the Amduat in mind (compare Fig. 2.5 with Figs 5.3 and 5.8). A different ideological concern, that of knowledge and its presentation, motivated the dominant anthropomorphism of the Amduat. Contexts such as stelae, temples, and tombs show that anthropomorphism was the most direct mode of pictorial representation throughout Egyptian history, perhaps in part because it implies specific communicative potentialities or equivalence of status (Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015b: 23–4).

[140] Grapow 1936b: 33. Compare Kahl 1999; for later periods, see, e.g., Schenkel 1977: 440; Kahl 2014: 170–1.

Designers of the Amduat may have favoured the anthropomorphic 'general personification' schema (Baines 1985: 38–41) when devising an encyclopaedic composition of initiatory character. Such a suggestion may appear counterintuitive to modern observers, for whom breadth and depth of knowledge might involve myriad types of figural forms, but it more closely approaches wider practices in ancient Egyptian and in other cultures: consistency, regularity, and schematization are often the hallmarks of longstanding methods for organizing information and indeed recounting it to others (e.g. Westenholz 1998; von Lieven 2007b: 153–4; Deicher and Maroko 2015). Rarer composite forms in the Amduat, several of them probably devised to suit the format of its long version, fulfilled the same functions as their mainly anthropomorphic counterparts, that is, to define and display qualities and roles for beings. When they do not feature anthropomorphic bodies, as with the ophidian composites nos 279, 394, 458, and 472 (§3.3, §3.4, §3.6, §3.9), the Amduat catalogue supplements them with hieroglyphs of seated anthropomorphic deities  which function multimodally as taxograms and pictures of their subjects (Bucher 1932: pls 16–18; Manassa 2013; Lapčić 2014). Assimilating diverse beings aids comprehensive enumeration and offers a counterpart to the disassembling of diagrammatic images to distribute their components across several cells (§3.6). Such graphic strategies may have complemented ontological functions, at least in mortuary contexts: Nadette Hoffmann (1996: 31–2) suggests that the employment of predominantly anthropomorphic figures may have facilitated the integration of the deceased with the 'society of gods' (see also §2.2).

It is only in the largely pictorial mortuary papyri of the Third Intermediate Period, so far attested only from Thebes, that the repertoires of wands, the Book of the Dead, and the underworld books regularly converge; an early example, from the Ramessid period, is the mortuary papyrus of Anhai, which combines Book of the Dead spells with the sunrise scene from the Book of Gates (P. BM EA 10472,7: Strudwick 2006: 236–7; compare Fig. 4.28). Assorted figures from these categories were brought together in compositions that could be titled 'Coming forth by day' (*prt m hrw*) or 'Book of what is in the underworld' (*mḏꜣt jmy dwꜣt*). The programmes of these papyri testify to the interlaced histories of the categories, while the joint display of their elements was the result of specific historical, material, and social circumstances (Niwiński 1989; Liptay 2011: 154).

6.2.4 Transfer between contexts

The image of a griffin in the tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan (BH 3) offers an opportunity for exploring such histories in an early second millennium context (Fig. 6.7). The decoration of the Middle Kingdom tombs at that site, which have been described as a 'series' (Kamrin 1999: 1), assembles large amounts of material that may have been drawn from older as well as contemporary tombs and objects (e.g. Harpur 1987: 21–31; Pieke 2016; Woods 2017: 18–20). The griffin in BH 3 is otherwise attested only on apotropaic wands and related objects. Thus, it speaks to the position of wands in a visual milieu characterized by transfers and adaptations between structured categories of material. It is unlikely that the form was independently devised for a tomb context in a process of 'translating a non-visual conception (whether precisely realized or not) into a visual one, respecting the appropriate rules' (Baines 1985: 71–2). Beyond applying the griffin template to a new context, the image transfers a motif from repertoires designed expressly for wands (compare Kahl 2021: 74–8).



Fig. 6.7: Griffin in tomb Beni Hassan BH 3, 12th Dynasty (Shedid 1994b: fig. 95)

BH 3 was built during the reigns of Amenemhat II or Senwosret II, so that it sits chronologically between the late 11th Dynasty tombs of Baqet III and Khety (BH 15 and 17) and the reign of Senwosret III, from which date the earliest securely dated wands as well as that king's 'Amduat tomb' at Abydos (Wegner 2009b; general architectural description: Arnold 2002: 44–5). In BH 3, the griffin is part of a desert hunt scene on the north wall (Newberry 1893: pl. 30; Kanawati and Woods 2010: photograph 31), like the *sfr*-griffins and *sḏ*-serpopards in BH 15 and 17 (§5.5). In her analysis

of the BH 3 hunting scene, Janice Kamrin (1999: 83–9) argues that its depiction of birthing desert animals speaks to the theme of renewal, while the unusual portrayal of Khnumhotep II as a hunter rather than a passive onlooker draws a parallel with royal scenes and identifies him with Horus and the sun-god, who travel through the underworld and defeat their foes. Her interpretation fits with the apotropaic function of wands as well as the themes of transition and (re)birth central to the contexts in which wands and the Amduat were employed. It accords with my interpretation in Chapters 3 and 5 of the griffin motif on wands as an alternate representation of the oval of Sokar in the Amduat: both formulations display divine relations and cosmic processes within an underworld space in ways suited to context (§3.6 and §5.5.1). In the ritualized context of a tomb chapel, interactions between the tomb owner and the depicted beings integrated him with the solar cycle, through iconography that was perhaps more oblique than the architecture and decorative programmes of royal tombs, but no less effective than them for enacting an underworld.

Display of certain aspects of solar knowledge was restricted, however, and this factor may have complicated use of motifs such as the griffin. Its appearance in BH 3 brings together its symbolism, its usual context on wands, and the broader function of tomb chapels. The hunting scene arranges animals in rows, which suggests that the desert environment is being presented in encyclopaedic fashion. Compendia of flora and fauna were likely drawn from lists and tables of high specificity. They include landscape and 'season' reliefs in Old Kingdom royal monumental complexes, the 'botanical garden' reliefs of Thutmose III at Karnak, and garden scenes in non-royal tombs (Baines 2013: 57, 63–4, 79–88; see also, e.g., Awady 2009; Seyfried 2019). Unusual and creative use of such content, as in the hunting scene in BH 3, conveyed status through display of knowledge in contextually apposite ways, marking a capacity for action independent of royal permission (Assmann 2003b [1996]: 68–70; Baines 2008: 97–8; Snape 2011: 150). A link between wands and tomb decoration may be furthermore suggested by the fact that BH 3 is roughly contemporaneous with the depiction of a wand in a ritual scene in the tomb of Djehutyhotep at Deir el-Bersha (Newberry 1893–1894: pl. 30). The visually similar *sfr*-griffins of BH 15 and 17, which were rooted in the target context and likewise exemplify the same 'griffin' template, may have helped to anchor a composite zoomorphic representation of solar and cosmic significance in a desert setting comparable to that of the oval of Sokar, smoothening its integration with the overall decorative programme.

Employment of zoomorphic iconography may have circumvented constraints on the depiction of esoteric and divine things in a private tomb while enabling their incorporation into well-

established scene types. Other motifs such as the hippopotamus–lion composite and Bes-image were not as heavily freighted with solar associations and so exhibit different patterns of occurrence. Their more general symbolism of protection enabled them to be used on wands and related objects, including fragments of a wooden box that were discovered in a 13th Dynasty grave at Rifeh and depict desert animals and a hunting dog (Fig. 6.8; Petrie 1907: 20–1, pl. 24; see also n. 128 above). Their forms were less variable, however, making it difficult to include these beings in settings such as tombs, where divine references in iconography were more allusive.

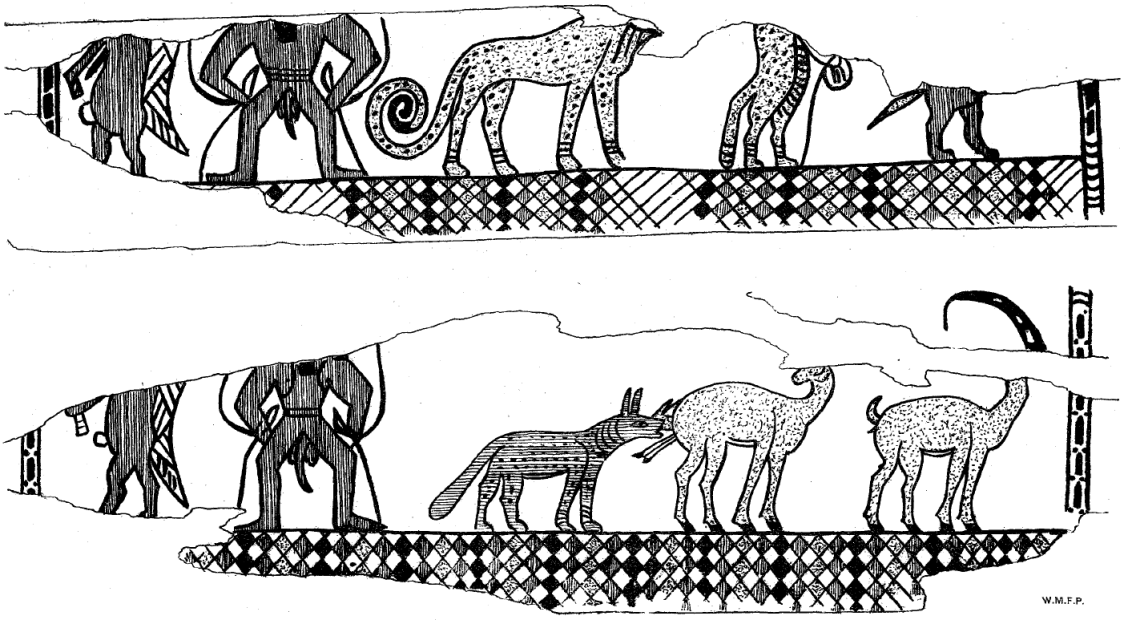


Fig. 6.8: Fragments of a painted box from Rifeh, probably 12th–13th Dynasty (Petrie 1907: pl. 24)

The griffin in BH 3 is high on the north wall, in a corner far from the chapel's entrance, a dim and inconspicuous location that rewards keen and knowledgeable observers. Working within established iconographic frameworks, tomb owners pushed boundaries when fashioning distinct selves and claiming an 'intellectual legacy'.[141] Allusive yet widespread enough for its significance to be recognized by peers, the griffin was an apt addition to a context where display of religious content was both prestigious and circumscribed. In this respect it contrasts with another scene in the chapel, which depicts Khnumhotep II fowling with a clapnet. The act was largely a royal

[141] Kahl 2021: 78. For later periods, see, e.g., Diego Espinel 2009; 2014: 329. Ludwig Morenz (2002: 20–1) terms the body of restricted knowledge a 'Sakralenzyklopädie'. Problematic, however, are his arguments that such knowledge—or at least, that element represented by the griffin motif—was restricted to kings, and that the zoomorphic composites in BH 15 and 17 represent chaotic forces from each of the cardinal directions.

prerogative, but in BH 3 the scene is placed above the doorway to the shrine on the well-lit east wall, the most prominent position in the chapel (Baines 2013: 203–5). Comparison of the griffin motif and the clapnet scene suggests that display of different domains of knowledge and action was restricted to varying degrees.

6.3 THE GRAPHIC SCHEMA

Although many pathways could lead to the use of a composite figure, similar results could often be achieved through spatially separated, 'decomposed' figures (§4.6, Figs 4.17 and 4.18). Such 'semantic competition', by which different combinations of morphological and syntactic features serve the same representational ends (Kulvicki 2010: 34), support the assumption that the 'composite figure' was a recognized graphic schema. Closer examination of composite forms points toward Egyptian designers having made a further distinction between figures in which elements were conjoined for solely semantic purposes, and those for which graphic choices were motivated by ontology. If this is correct, it suggests that the notion of the 'composite figure' encompasses more dimensions than has previously been proposed.

In §6.1 I proposed that most composite figures of Type A structure were of the subsidiary structure A2, where the status of *jrw* may be treated as primary. This is because *jrw*-images are more closely tied to semantic content. Instances of the subsidiary structure A1, where the dual statuses of *jrw* and *sšmw* have a mutually constitutive or interdependent relationship, as opposed to a hierarchical one, are limited to 'summarizing' figures and those serving as elements in figural 'complexes' (for which see §3.1, §3.2, and §5.2, Figs 3.3, 3.8, 5.3 and 5.9). Composite figures were products of ontological and iconographic necessity in such cases.

Summarizing and complex figures indicate that a definition of the 'composite' should be sited among wider uses of 'conjoining' as a graphic strategy (Cohn 2021: 12–14). Many figures that conjoin elements are structured by 'containment', whether in a more directly spatial sense or as a conceptual metaphor (Nyord 2009: 12–14). Disentangling these applications of the graphic schema can be difficult; study of prepositions such as *m*, *m-ḫnw*, *r*, *ḥr*, *ḥr-tp*, and *tp* points to the potential complexity of interpreting graphic strategies that emerge from culturally specific cognitive maps (Werning 2014).

‘Serpents with attached human heads’ offer one example of such ‘syntactic competition’, where the same graphic schema can serve different functions (Kulvicki 2010: 32–4). An image on the wand London UC 15917 exemplifies ‘containment’ in a spatial sense (Fig. 6.9; Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 77; Quirke 2016: 14–17). Depicting an undulating cobra with three human heads attached to its coils, the figure may be compared with several in the underworld books, notably Amduat no. 472 (§3.9, Fig. 3.37), but there are structural differences between the London UC 15917 figure, Amduat no. 472, and the ‘serpent-bodied figures’ discussed in relation to wands (§5.2, Figs 5.8–5.12). The London UC 15917 image is not a ‘composite figure’ in conceptual terms because its form serves to express spatial relations between several beings rather than elucidate the structure of a single simplex or complex subject.

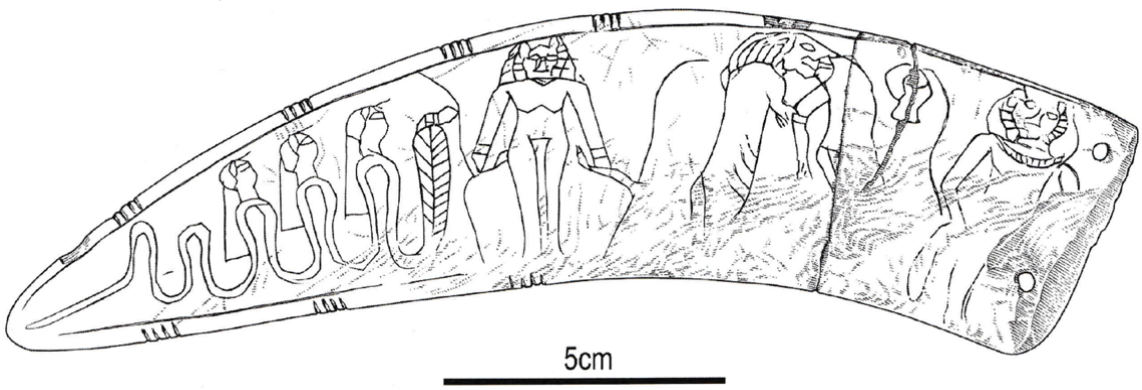


Fig. 6.9: Wand London UC 15917, face depicting cobra with attached human heads, 12th–13th Dynasty (Quirke 2016: 14)

The London UC 15917 image may be compared with the giant serpent in scene 35 of the 6th hour of the Book of Gates (Fig. 3.40; Hornung 1979–1980 [ii]: 155–8). That serpent is identified as Apophis, the 12 human heads emerging from its body representing his victims who are saved by the sun-god. On wands, zoomorphic protectors are sometimes shown attacking and decapitating human enemies, or they are simply positioned adjacent to their disembodied heads; an example is that of the lion and crocodile on the reverse face of the wand Berlin ÄM 14207 (Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 10; Quirke 2016: 263). Lines perhaps representing streams of blood extend from the foreheads of the human heads on London UC 15917, so they may be interpreted similarly (compare Quirke 2016: 355). In contrast to the scene in the Book of Gates, such beings were probably conceived as enemies whose destruction was desired. The figures on the wands and the Book of

Gates are based on the same schema, arranging the images to represent spatial containment. The pictorial strategy is widespread: thus, in Beni Hassan tomb BH 3, children's heads are shown emerging from bags atop a donkey (Newberry 1893: pl. 30).

By contrast, Amduat nos 391 and 210 (§3.7 and §3.8, Figs 3.34, 3.36) use that schema to display the metaphor of 'containment'. Images placed atop the head of a figure signify qualities intrinsic to the being because the head was often conceptualized as a 'container' for symbolic elements (Nyord 2009: 150). Related forms include goddesses with hieroglyphic writings of their names placed on their heads as identifying insignia, merging visual and verbal modalities. This category of image may be distinguished from cases where objects such as the *jmnt*-sign  are not added to the head, but are in its position. These not only identify the being but actualize it as an agent. That form parallels the strategy of emblematic personification but reconfigures the 'anatomical' arrangement of elements and occupies different positions in iconographic hierarchies. Other examples of this structure include the wrapped figures depicting *ḫprw* of the sun-god in the Litany of Re. Their various heads may be understood as *jrw*-images comparable to the winged serpent of Amduat no. 210. Unlike the winged serpent, however, they are vital parts of the figure's ontology, perhaps because the 'head', which in other contexts is said to be granted by the invigorating speech of the sun-god, was essential to life and agency (Darnell 2004: 112–17; Darnell and Darnell 2018: 163).

Scholars do not usually consider entities like Amduat no. 210, or goddesses with hieroglyphs atop their heads, to be 'composite figures' in the same vein as examples with hieroglyphs in the position of a head and with multi-headed 'pantheistic' forms (e.g. Hornung 2000: 14–19, with figs 8, 11, 12). A solely iconographic approach does not independently justify this choice, but the distinction may be upheld when the figures are assessed in conceptual terms as well. The winged serpent of no. 210 is visually composite, and I identified further layers of agency interwoven with the semantic aspects for which it was deployed in the Amduat, paralleling the iconographic processes that may have produced the ophidian composite no. 394 in the oval of Sokar (§3.6, Fig. 3.26). In contrast to no. 394, however, the winged serpent of no. 210 is not treated as an autonomous agent. In its context it does not independently stand for the being designated 'robber' (*ʿwẖy*). The ontological disjuncture between winged serpent and wrapped figure justifies the treatment of no. 210 and related forms as 'non-composite' images, even though they comprise conjoined elements, each of which could itself be composite. Amduat no. 472 has a more complex structure (§3.9, Fig. 3.37). Its ophidian element is a symbol that unites several beings who are represented as attached

human heads, metaphorically 'containing' their qualities so that they can act collectively through a single composite form. The caption to the figure glosses the graphic schema as expressing spatial containment, with the heads in the coils of the serpent.

Rather than categorically rejecting the etic term 'composite figure', it may be more profitable to consider 'the composite' from perspectives beyond the narrowly iconographic. Structures of individual images suggest that the 'body' and the configuration of its components have important roles in expressing and modifying ontologies and relations of agency, in addition to altering the symbolism of figures. Heads were more closely tied to the nature of the agentive being, while implements and insignia were primarily elaborative, as well as being more versatile and available across many contexts. The distinction between symbolic elements that are employed as body parts and those that are not so integrated may contribute to understanding why a dangerous, crocodilian guardian of a doorway in an early Middle Kingdom mortuary composition is designated 'he of the thirty, who collects the *jrww* of the one who cannot enter (the doorway) bodily (*tm ꜥḳ ḏt*)'.[142] While other guardians in the composition devour 'persons' (*rmṯ*, sportively written as a fish, Egyptian *rmw*) and 'realizations' (*ḫprw*), the crocodilian being—whose form may pun on the writing of *sꜣḳ* 'collect' with a 𓎛 logogram or determinative—deals with aspects of individual presence and agency, specifically those markers of qualities which may otherwise accrue to a being (§2.3.3). Joris Borghouts (1989: 137) noted that the forms of these guardian figures resemble the protective beings on apotropaic wands, and an inscription on one wand commands such beings to 'cut off the head of the male or female enemy who enters this chamber of the children born to Nebetsekhetre' (*jšꜥ tp ḫft(y) ḫ[ftt] ꜥḳ r ꜥt tn ḫrdw ms(w) n nbt-sḫt-rꜥ*; Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet 7795: Altenmüller 1965 [ii]: cat. 50; Quirke 2016: 238–9), so that these compositions may be compared with the interpretation of figures' heads in the Litany of Re.

This model revises the parameters by which the 'composite figure' is defined. It is intended as a refinement of existing iconographic interpretations of the role of the head in composite forms (e.g. Hornung 1982 [1971]: 109–25), and it suggests that the body-centred approach to composite figures is indeed valid. Moreover, the approach I am advocating here emphasizes once more that the design of images was structured by their conceptual, functional, and material contexts. The model furthermore distinguishes 'composite figures' from other uses of conjoined elements. It may be

[142] After Borghouts 1989: 137, fig. 2 (§110). I have not been able to verify this reading or provide a full transliteration because the facsimile in the publication is not legible.

possible to get nearer to Egyptian understandings of images and their construction by appreciating the interplay between the conceptual and the graphic.

Composite figures were not dead metaphors; their subjects and visual elements coalesced and separated in order for beings to be represented appropriately. They retained vitality and power as assemblages from 'a prodigious quantity of both material and immaterial components, a veritable world in miniature, with its own ecology and laws of compatibility and incompatibility' (Descola 2013a [2005]: 224). Their configurations defined assorted modes of being for their subjects. Enigmatic writing, too, worked through the primacy of visual images. By contrast, common 'composite hieroglyphs', which conjoin and layer elements, were fossilized and occur also in the less pictorial hieratic script (e.g.  and : Fischer 1977b). Embedded in potentially interlocking conceptual categories and alternately indexing and extending 'things in themselves', composite figures engage ontology more actively than graphically homologous script elements. Springing from the confluence of meaning and ontology, their forms cannot be dissolved without loss of meaning, while their function depends on context.

Accounting for iconography as well as ontology widens the view on zoomorphic composites and facilitates a review of their relationship with other graphic schemas that combine semantic and ontological aspects, notably personifications. The composite figures I have assessed may be divided into two subtypes. The first encompasses the majority of examples, which Baines (1985: 65) has termed 'the reverse of personifications' because they express the roles of beings through visual metaphor or analogy rather than give form to metaphorical verbal expressions. They include figures with a zoomorphic head atop an anthropomorphic body—a configuration that probably served as a model for forms where objects are in the position of the head—and those made up of several zoomorphic elements. This subtype is especially useful in visual compositions with spatio-temporal reference. Examples include certain multi-headed representations of deities, as on the 21st Dynasty mortuary papyrus of Amenhatmesha (Fig. 6.10; P. Cairo SR VII.10230: Niwiński 1989: pl. 27a). Here the deceased is escorted toward Re-Horakhty-Atum by a goddess with a right-facing crocodile head and a left-facing vulture head. The two heads of the goddess may characterize her roles in relation to different actors, one with the deceased on the right and another with the solar god on the left. Amenhatmesha turns his head back to face a hare-headed god. As a human being, Amenhatmesha cannot be shown in composite form, but his interactions with both gods are

presented through identical speeches written symmetrically beneath their clasped hands.[143] The double-headed form for the goddess not only compresses the composition, which might otherwise have required two figures of the deceased, each interacting with one deity (compare the judgement scene in P. Vienna 3859: Piankoff 1957 [i]: 147; [ii]: pl. 17). The fused treatment also establishes a chain of interdependent relations through the scene, from the hare-headed god, through the double-headed goddess, to Re-Horakhty-Atum. Thus, a contextual analysis of such representations distinguishes them from multi-headed figures whose qualities and capacities are not distributed across space and time, such as a threatening figure with crocodile, lion, and serpent heads who confronts the deceased at the entrance to the hall of judgement but is not actively engaged in any relations (P. Louvre E17401: Piankoff 1957 [i]: 104; [ii]: pl. 9).



Fig. 6.10: P. Cairo SR VII.10230, scene with double-headed goddess, 21st Dynasty (courtesy of Dik van Bommel)

The second subtype consists of composite figures with zoomorphic bodies and anthropomorphic head or limbs. The range of configurations attested for these is smaller than what might seem to be possible in theory, especially in contexts where constraints of decorum or format are not as strong as in temple relief, suggesting that iconographic hierarchies exerted less influence on their use. They are reversals of the 'attribute/emblem in position of head' device because their meanings are to be found in their highly symbolic bodies rather than their heads, but they may be

[143] General information on the papyrus: http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm133571 [Accessed 8 April 2022].

similarly defined 'roughly as analytic personifications' when they can be identified with deities (Baines 1985: 65–7). Their human elements are secondary, so they are homologous with emblematic personifications, but they are less transparent as statements in a 'hieroglyphic metalanguage' (§1.1.2) because their core elements are neither iconic divine emblems nor script elements that denote through verbal language, but metaphoric or symbolic images. Such zoomorphic composites, which include Amduat nos 279, 394, and 472 (§3.4, §3.6 and §3.9, Figs 3.16, 3.26, 3.37), may constitute an independent category that will fall between two types of anthropomorphic personification. These matters of iconography are on the margin of the topics I treat in this thesis, however, and they would need to be studied separately.

6.4 Conclusions

The iconographies of the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands display interlocking histories of development and transmission, exemplifying modes of image construction that also occur in other categories of material. The model presented in this chapter is not exhaustive. To increase the reliability of interpretation, I have focused on relationships between final contexts and hypothetical manuscript sources, developing arguments from fragmentary archaeological evidence and cross-reference to parallel material such as the Pyramid Texts and Book of the Dead. Other modes, such as oral tradition, surely existed, but their dynamics are probably impossible to recover. The model additionally assumes that the ancient authors and designers possessed high levels of knowledge of texts, iconography, and ontology, as well as access to relevant material that would have been housed in libraries and archives. It is therefore relevant to a small circle of actors at best. Executants, ritual participants, tomb owners, and others who produced and used visual compositions may have been less concerned with such issues or less experienced with factors of design (see also Miller 2021: 131–2; in review).

These methodological concerns are pertinent to classifying composite figures and relating them to other iconographic forms (§6.1 and §6.3). The absence of attestations of explicit Egyptian taxonomies and of written accounts of such figures' conceptualization and design is part of a general lack of abstract theorizing, at least in forms typical of Western discursive traditions, on matters that would have been self-evident to some actors, and perhaps unknown to others, in the originating culture. Such issues might have been present in oral discourse. Research into additional

datasets will help to test the suggestions given in this chapter and to assess the iconographic potential of zoomorphic forms more comprehensively.

If this account is deemed acceptable, it may offer a potential for integrating pictorial material with existing philological and text-critical research into the histories of material such as the Book of Two Ways and the underworld books. Material and social considerations connect these categories further with datasets such as apotropaic wands and related paraphernalia, which have hitherto been treated largely in isolation from studies of coffins, tombs, and the elaborate religious compositions found in them. Finally, the processes modelled for the three categories are suggestive for how they were structured in ways different from the iconographies of stelae, temples, and certain elements of tomb decoration (§1.1.3). Relations between such systems are difficult to define, but I hope that an ontologically-informed iconographic analysis will prove productive for approaching other sets of material and eventually raise the prospect of developing more integrated accounts of iconography.

7

Conclusion

Egyptian religious compositions are part of technologies of transformation and interaction. In this thesis I explore ways in which such works can occupy and exploit areas between being and representation, thing and image. In approaching the questions raised by the material I treat agency as an ontological parameter in the Amduat, Book of Two Ways, and apotropaic wands, suggesting that its dynamics can be identified in the Egyptian terms *sšmw* and *jrw* and their relationships with composite figures. An aim of this investigation is to approach ancient understandings of composite figures more closely by exploring their design and patterns of occurrence in iconography. Focusing on forms that incorporate ophidian elements facilitates study due to the well-explored symbolism of serpents in Egyptian culture. I also explore the positions of composite figures in graphic schemas that span visual and verbal language. In this concluding chapter, the results of the analyses are summarized through examples from the corpora under study, supplemented by relevant material from other categories of sources. Additional avenues of research are highlighted, and relevant theoretical considerations are reviewed.

The range of possible relations between the ontological and semantic dimensions can be crystallized in a triple grouping that encompasses modes of display (writing and images, which may be understood as potentials or as partially overlapping categories depending on context), treatments (emblematic or non-emblematic), and forms (composite or non-composite, with various subcategories). Figural forms balance relations between being and image with the constraints of structured visual compositions. Methods for presenting the intended content included combining and separating figures, adding or subtracting elements from them, and changing their orientation. These methods could be used singly or together, creating simplex figures and complex ones (definitions: §3.1) that range from assemblages of limbs with accoutrements and emblems, to diagrammatic groupings of figures, each of which could be constructed with such methods. Ontological and semantic weight was unevenly distributed between figures and their elements,

even between visually similar figures such as the barques with ophidian heads in the Amduat (§3.10, Figs 3.41–3.43). Symbolic elements could either serve supplementary roles that clarified semantic content, or they could have key functions as ontological armatures, becoming integrated components of beings (summary: §6.1, Fig. 6.2).

In Egyptian iconography, figures with similar form could designate different beings (often identifiable by their names, as in the Amduat), express different symbolic meanings, and possess different ontological statuses. Conversely, formally dissimilar figures could designate identical beings, express similar meanings, and share a particular ontological status. This 'possibility of encountering the same concept, thing, or referent through different substances or signifiers' (Bahrani 2003: 113) is visible not only within contexts, such as the hierarchical organization of temple relief (§1.1.3), but also between contexts including underworld books, mortuary papyri, apotropaic wands, and tomb walls, as I discuss in relation to numerous images relating to the solar cycle (e.g. §3.2, §3.6, §5.5, and §6.2.4). The many associations of animals in Egyptian culture made faunal elements particularly effective when designing such symbolic constructs. Zoomorphic composites linked contexts of activity through allusion and metaphor, so that, for example, a hunt in the desert could evoke and perhaps enact underworld processes (§6.2.4; Bahrani 2003: 114–20). Concepts drawn from different fields of study help to elucidate these phenomena by providing approaches to interpreting external factors influencing the forms of images, from compositional format to decorum. Condensing meaning and agency into composite figures, and partitioning and distributing them across multiple figural forms, were alternate visual syntaxes (Kulvicki 2010: 32–4) through which Egyptian religious imagery integrated an ever-growing number of conceptualizations, representations, and interpretations. Both strategies are employed in all the categories of sources considered in this thesis.

The replication of scenes and compositions across different media, as when underworld books are present both on sarcophagi and as wall decoration in tombs whose architectural forms manifest underworlds (§3.6), exemplify how the drive toward the comprehensive could be implemented by layering self-referential images concentrically through two- and three-dimensional examples (Bahrani 2014: 124–32). The replication of larger pictorial units complements instances where individual beings are multiplied through numerous figures of diverse forms. This could sometimes occur on single objects, such as a Ramessid statue from Deir el-Medina that depicts Hathor in four forms: a cow, a human-headed serpent, a lion-headed woman, and a woman with cow ears and the

probable sound box and loop of a sistrum atop her head (Fig. 7.1; Louvre E26023: Vandier 1969). 'Pantheistic' forms from the first millennium BCE, in both two and three dimensions, may extend that practice by integrating such elements into one body rather than distributing them between several bodies (consider also Hathor *quadrifrons*: Derchain 1972). These examples, which are generally late in date,[144] show how the ancient graphic schema of the composite figure became one of many ways to articulate evolving religious conceptions, as part of:

> [un] choix délibéré de ne rien abandonner en route, de ne rien oublier, car ce n'est que par le biais de cette pluralité que les Égyptiens ont pensé et espéré être susceptibles d'approcher incomplètement, mais au mieux, le monde des dieux qui leur échappait et dont ils étaient tributaires. Ainsi ils n'ont cessé d'adapter, d'ajuster, de bricoler pour bâtir des systèmes divins qui se superposaient les uns aux autres, toujours avec un léger décalage pour que chacun garde sa spécificité.
>
> (Zivie-Coche 2019: 36)



Fig. 7.1: Statue of Hathor in four forms, Deir el-Medina, 19th–20th Dynasty (Louvre E26023; courtesy of the Musée du Louvre/Christian Décamps)

In earlier periods and corpora, including those examined in this thesis, specific composite configurations were less freely transferable between contexts. Different forms were often used when replicating specific beings across several media within settings such as tombs. The range of forms depended on the functions of individual media and the format of pictorial compositions. Thus, three-dimensional figurines of 'demonic' guardian beings found in several New Kingdom royal tombs are similar in form to two-dimensional images of them in the Book of the Dead, on

[144] An early example of a multi-headed form is the 'seated god' determinative for Thoth in CT 531. In the version of M35C, an ibis head extends from the human head of the god, while the version of M36C excludes the human head and instead shows the neck and head of the ibis extending from the shoulder of the human body (*CT* VI, 123i).

sarcophagi and coffins, and on apotropaic wands and related objects such as magical bricks (e.g. Figs 4.19, 4.24, 4.25, 5.15, and 5.16; Lüscher 1998: pls 1–10; Roth and Roehrig 2002; Wegner 2009a; Taylor 2010: cats 94–101). By contrast, representations of the sons of Horus differ significantly between those contexts, ranging from 'general personifications' on coffins (Baines 1985: 38–41), through wrapped figures with human or animal heads on Book of the Dead manuscripts (Fig. 7.2), to the form of Amduat no. 472 which shows four human heads attached to a serpent (§3.9, Figs 3.37 and 3.38; Lüscher 1998: pls 20–1, 24–5). Context-specific graphic procedures, from colour distinctions to the size and spacing of individual images, could further enrich and elucidate ontological and semantic relations for figural forms, as I discuss in relation to Amduat nos 325–328 (§3.5, Fig. 3.23) and various figures on apotropaic wands (e.g. Figs 5.5–5.12). Beings are 'toujours au milieu, entre les choses, interêtre, intermezzo' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 36), and the potential of visual representation was taken as an invitation to multiply, combine, modify, and most importantly to interrelate, instantiations of being.



Fig. 7.2: P. BM EA 10010,3, vignette of BD 182, 21st Dynasty (© Trustees of the British Museum)

The examples just cited suggest that other areas of Egyptian mortuary provision may be fruitfully integrated with the approach of this thesis (for Third Intermediate Period mortuary papyri, see also §3.2). A desirable outcome would be to develop a foundation for considering how iconography and ontology were negotiated when such material was employed in other contexts, especially temple relief, from the New Kingdom onwards (e.g. von Lieven 2012; Manassa 2013: 64–6). It would be valuable also to supplement the study of such underworld-related corpora with research into celestial compositions from comparable contexts, notably the Books of Day and Night (Roulin 1996; Müller-Roth 2008), which can be connected with later sarcophagi that combine underworld and celestial scenes in complex ways (e.g. Fig. 3.32; Manassa 2007).

The work of this thesis could be pursued in many more directions. Many terms in the Egyptian language that pertain to topics of image and representation have not been studied in detail. Analysis of them will undoubtedly introduce more ontological parameters and enrich conceptual maps spanning various genres. Moreover, I have treated a chronologically and contextually restricted range of material. Meanings of terms may have shifted over time, additional contexts of depiction are likely to involve other factors, and images or forms may have been reconceptualized. Images could be activated through ritual (§2.3.2), deactivated through the alteration or destruction of inscriptions and figures (e.g. Bleiberg 2019), or linked to different beings through re-inscription or installation in new settings, as was frequently done with royal statuary, notably in the Ramessid period (e.g. Connor 2019). Such practices offer glimpses into ontological lives or afterlives of images (Meskell 2004: 3–6). One might consider, for example, whether destroyed objects are ever 'empty moulds for some form that has vanished' (Elkins 1998: 272), equivalent to blocks of unworked rock prior to sculpting (Fischer-Elfert 1998: 38–9), or if they always retain something of their past, as is implicit in studies of caches of discarded temple furniture (e.g. Coulon 2016; Charloux et al. 2017; Charloux and Mahmoud 2019; Charloux and Thiers 2019) and the remnants of pottery and figurines following execration and other rites (e.g. Vila 1963; Posener 1966; Waraksa 2009), for which identification with specific beings was essential to ritual efficacy (compare Gell 1998: 102).

Similar questions about the fluidity of the agency of objects are asked in relation to other cultures. Caroline van Eck (2010: 647–58), for instance, surveys different conceptualizations of the 'sublime' over the course of the 18th century CE to explore how European viewers responded to statues as if they were living beings. Her discussion of the sublime and its relation to agency highlights an issue of method, that concepts formulated in specific cultural settings are not always

straightforwardly applicable to new contexts. This is to a great extent a matter of ontological regimes. In this thesis I draw parallels between Egyptian images and Assyro-Babylonian material, which Bahrani interprets in view of Derrida's concept of *différance* (§2.1). These linkages are made possible by the analogist ontological regime exemplified by Egyptian and Mesopotamian culture (Descola 2013a [2005]: 201–31). By contrast, van Eck's discussion of 'living presence response' in European contexts assumes a strict boundary between inanimate, unformed matter and living creatures, which is characteristic of a naturalist ontological regime (Descola 2013a [2005]: 172–200). Such regimes, however, are not absolute: skillful techniques of illusion temporarily confuse the perception of viewers so that 'the representation dissolves into the living being who is represented' (van Eck 2010: 655). As Descola observes:

> Animism, totemism, analogism, and naturalism can each tolerate a discreet presence of other emerging modes, for each of them is a possible realization of a combination of elements that are universally present. Each one may thus introduce nuances and modifications into the expression of the locally dominant schema, thereby engendering many of the idiosyncratic variations that are customarily called cultural differences.
>
> (Descola 2013a [2005]: 167, see also pp. 232–44)

Thus, in the modern West, where politics and institutions are structured by naturalism, practitioners of astrology, alternative medicine, and New Age spirituality draw on 'incomplete fragments, nostalgic survivals from an enchanted epoch' of analogism, which was the dominant framework in Renaissance Europe (Descola 2013a [2005]: 205, 218; Gosden 2020: 367–78). It is reasonable to assume that such processes of ontological transformation have been accelerated by contemporary technologies of globalization and intercultural contact, but the phenomena are not exclusive to modern times. It would be desirable to consider precedents for such ontological shifts in the ancient world.

Visual culture may offer a way of pursuing that line of inquiry. Significant corpora of material, ranging from the fourth through the first millennium BCE, belong to a wider eastern Mediterranean context. Much of this material has been treated in terms of style, with a focus on how an 'international artistic koiné of hybrid imagery' was generated through economic exchange and social interaction (Feldman 2006: 25–58). A valuable synthesis is provided by David Wengrow (2014: 88–107), who defines three modes of image transfer. First is the transformative mode, in which unfamiliar images were used by elites to display status within their societies (e.g. Wengrow 2006: 191–3). Second is the integrative mode, in which 'inter-elite exchange' was fostered by an

intercultural style 'blending elements of diverse cultural origin'. Finally, the protective mode, which is exemplified by guardian figures in areas such as doorways, 'is a direct response to [external] threats against household and person'. Such models recognize the social agency of images and objects, and they may be enhanced by incorporating issues of ontology, which address how beings that were manifested through images were understood to interrelate with other actors in the world. Conceptualizations like these need not have been uniform across cultures (Bahrani 2013: 107), especially because many transfers and adaptations of images between Egypt and neighbouring societies would have occurred in sociocultural spaces outside elite institutions, and hence in contexts for which evidence is often very sparse.

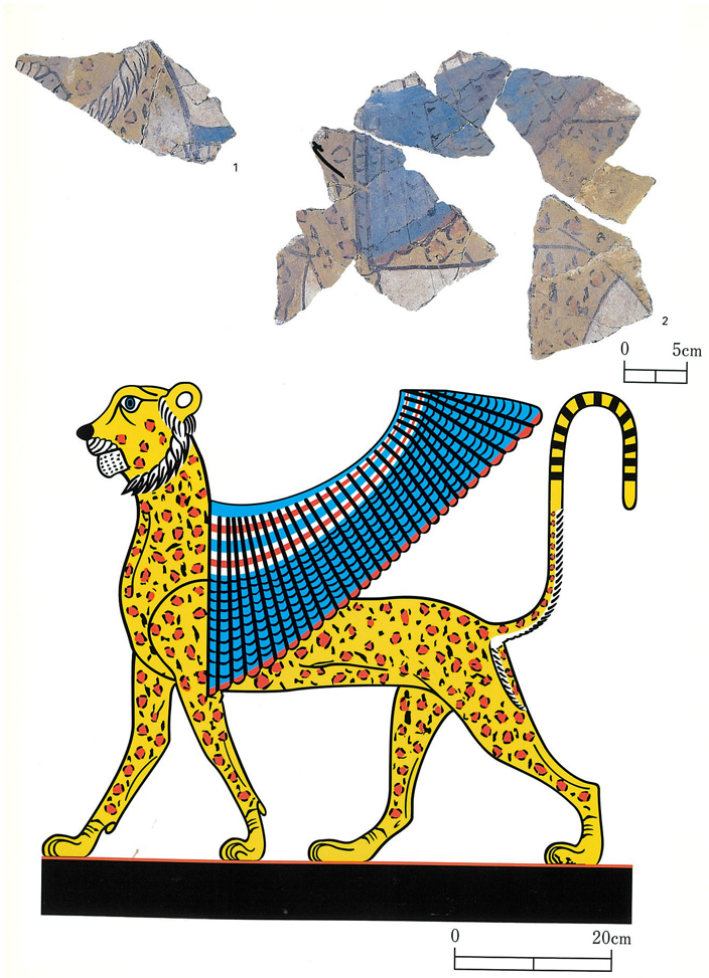
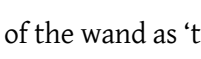


Fig. 7.3: Fragments of painted plaster from Abusir South, with reconstructed image of a winged leopard, 18th Dynasty (Yoshimura 2007: 182, pl. 4)

These issues may be elucidated through two brief case studies. First is a wall painting that has been tentatively identified as an image of a winged leopard, discovered in a mudbrick building at Abusir South that was reconstructed or repaired at least twice in the reign of Thutmose IV (Fig. 7.3). The use of a leopard's body and head is unparalleled, contrasting with the predominantly avian form of the Minoan griffin motif that was absorbed into Egyptian repertoires during this period (Yoshimura 2007: 103–4). Earlier I discussed how the griffin motif of apotropaic wands and related objects was creatively employed in the tomb chapel of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan for social display, as well as perhaps to establish a connection between the tomb owner and the solar cycle (§6.2.4, Fig. 6.7). Similarly, the winged leopard in the building at Abusir South could have resulted from a secondary merger of the symbolic fusions represented by the serpopard and griffin motifs of

wands that was part of similar adaptive processes and influenced by the intercultural style of the New Kingdom. Such a usage would fit with how a Bes-image—a common motif on apotropaic objects—was part of the building's decorative programme before its second reconstruction (Yoshimura 2007: 182). The winged leopard form may tie into contemporaneous variation in the forms of serpopards and griffins (Miller in press), as well as the gradual decline of wands and their iconography in the archaeological record. The latter process, in which old and new sets of zoomorphic motifs briefly coexisted, is exemplified by the distinct repertoires on two kohl pots from Abydos (Randall-MacIver and Mace 1902: pls 38, 46; Quirke 2017: 370–2, figs 5, 6). Both vessels may date to Hatshepsut/Thutmose III, but the images on one match the repertoires of apotropaic wands while those on the other juxtapose Hathoric imagery with scenes of dynamic movement, such as a running hare and grazing caprids, that are more closely paralleled by the burgeoning intercultural style.

Another example is the serpent-limbed figure on the wand fragment Jerusalem, Israel Museum IAA 1948-1391 (§5.3, Fig. 5.13).[145] The inscription on the fragment's reverse face names the beneficiary of the wand as 'the lady of the house *b-t-m*(?)' (*nbt pr b-t-m*(?) ). The reading and origin of her name are uncertain; probably it is non-Egyptian and written in syllabic orthography.[146] Nor is it clear when and where the wand was manufactured, or if the lady *b-t-m* was the original beneficiary. The fragment was excavated at Megiddo from a stratum dating to about 1479–1350 BCE, that is, contemporaneous with the reigns of Thutmose III to Akhenaten, but conceivably it was produced as early as the 12th Dynasty, perhaps being passed down over several generations as a ritual implement or heirloom (Miniaci 2020a: 10–13, with references; see also Ryholt 1997: 84–90). Given such circumstances, it may not be profitable to attempt a precise identification of the serpent-limbed figure on the wand as either an emblematic personification or an image in the emblematic mode of depiction. Egyptian religious imagery may have been absorbed into local traditions of belief and practice in settings outside the Nile valley and delta (compare

[145] A full version of the following discussion is Miller in review (see Appendix).

[146] Alternative transliteration: *b-ỉ-t-m* (Marwan Kilani, personal communication, 2021). John A. Wilson (1941: 235–6) proposed a Semitic origin, itself a broad category (Hoch 1994: 479–84; Kilani 2019: 8). Other possibilities include Anatolian, Hurrian, and Indo-Aryan (Hess 1993; 1999: 499–515). If the name is Semitic, it could be a patronym beginning with *bitta-* 'daughter (of)' or a compound beginning with *bētu* (< **baytu*) 'house' (Grøndahl 1967: 55). For the latter, compare the name *be-tam-mu* in an Akkadian census tablet from Alalakh, dated to the 15th century (BM 131514, line 47: Dietrich and Loretz 1969: 66). For general discussion, see Schneider 1992.

Walsh 2020: 306–13), where visual conventions were not so tightly integrated across contexts. Constraints on depicting powerful beings close to human bodies, which were a key concern in Egypt, may not have been relevant or important to actors in places far from central Egyptian religious and political institutions. In a different religious landscape the generally Egyptian character of a wand's imagery, including the tripartite wig, rearing cobras, and overall composite form of the serpent-limbed figure, may have been more important than close adherence to visual conventions or repertoires.

It would also be worth exploring the life of supposedly foreign motifs in Egyptian religious imagery. Examples include the 'hippocampi' that feature on a few coffins and sarcophagi from the 22nd Dynasty through the Ptolemaic period. They occur on the shoulders or beneath the collars of anthropoid coffins or sarcophagi; in other contexts they are often shown atop plinths. Often occurring as horse-headed serpents, images of variants with hippopotamus-like heads are part of a ritual handbook inscribed on the walls of the shaft tomb of the 27th Dynasty official Iufaa at Abusir (e.g. Landgráfová et al. 2017: 615–17; Landgráfová 2019). Inscriptions term this being *ḥꜣjšš* or *jꜣšš*. These are likely to be compounds of Semitic words for 'horse' and 'serpent', so the being may have been transmitted to Egypt from the Near East, although later examples may also have been influenced by comparable Greek motifs (Kákosy 1987: 11; Thomas 2013: 221–6). Similar to other Near Eastern descriptions of fabulous animals, the hippocampus may have been understood as a real creature (§1.1.2), perhaps a seahorse, to which relevant Egyptian symbolism was imparted: in Iufaa's tomb it is identified as a creator-god who swims in the sea (compare §1.2.2). Because it was not an assemblage of symbols, the form was more difficult to modify; similar patterns occur with beings such as sacred animals and trees (e.g. von Lieven 2004). John Taylor (2007: 416) suggests that the hippocampus was a 'graphic "sport", favoured by a particular funerary workshop or painter, which lacked a sufficiently strong religious significance to establish itself firmly in the iconographic repertoire'; issues of decorum may also have been relevant. Its ontological status as a creature to which certain divine attributes and identities could be ascribed, rather than as one manifestation among many for a divine being or beings, could have precluded display of it in contexts to which other figural forms were better suited.

Understanding how ontological dynamics relate to social ones helps to root Egyptian material in regional archaeologies of northern Africa and the Middle East, and in the ideal case integrate it with global discourse in anthropology. My discussion in this thesis has concentrated on the value of

ontological perspectives within a field of research. A final consideration is to ask how they may be of value across different fields. Anthropology offers possibilities for transcending existing approaches in Egyptology and enriching understanding of phenomena specific to ancient Egypt, such as the composite figures that are my subject here, while Egyptian material may stimulate reflection within anthropology. Scholars such as Descola developed their ideas of ontology principally through syntheses of ethnographic material. Non-ethnographic sources provide a different approach to comparable issues because the observer is completely exterior to the material, providing a detachment that is not possible in ethnography; it also offers temporal depth, which is unavailable to ethnography. By exploring how composite figures crystallize and dissolve individual beings, as part of a continual process of rearranging and re-relating elements of the world through analogy, metaphor, and symbolism, I attempt to show how iconography is a similarly valuable hermeneutic tool for understanding ontological conceptions (compare Watts 2020: 452). The approaches I employ capitalize on the complex relationships between images and writing in Egyptian contexts. They will not apply in many other settings, where alternative concepts may inform interpretation and consequently enrich theoretical debates in other ways. Ideally a middle ground would be found between theories that efface 'local difference' and ones that disproportionately concentrate on cultural divergences, 'disregarding similarities and continuities that bind worlds together' (Cipolla 2019: 623–4). The lines of inquiry proposed here have the potential to deepen investigation into the conceptual worlds of Egyptian religious images and consequently to help bring that goal into sight.

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Appendix

Published and Unpublished Articles, Not for Examination, Added for Convenience of Examiners

Copies of Miller 2021, Miller in press, Miller forthcoming, and Miller in review have been omitted from the ORA dissemination copy for copyright reasons.