

The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, R.O. Faulkner

Utterance 303, Paragraph 466

Are you Horus, son of Osiris? Are you the god, the eldest one, the son of Hathor? Are you the seed of Geb?

Utterance 335, Paragraph 546

How happy are those who see me [act the ascending one] adorned with my fillet from the brow of Re! My kilt which is on me is Hathor, my plume is a falcon's plume, and indeed I will ascend to the sky among my brethren the gods.

Utterance 405, Paragraph 705

... for I am that eye of yours which is on the horns of Hathor, which turns back the years from me; I spend the night and am conceived and born every day.

Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, Erik Hornung, 1971

P 103. Finally, the goddess in cow form, who is found on the Narmer palette, and about three centuries earlier on a palette from Girza (W. Kaiser, ZAS 91, 1964, 119.

P 110. A slim woman who wears a wig covering her head and on top of it a pair of cow horns with a sun disk between them.

As a cow from whose udder the king drinks.

As a cow stepping forth from the western mountains of Thebes and taking the deceased into her protection.

A cow head with human face, whose ears are animal and whose eyes, nose and mouth are human.

Less commonly shown as a woman with a cow's head than in other forms.

Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt, R.T. Rundle Clark, 1959

P 87. Hathor's son is Ihy, the child who emerges from his mother every day at dawn as the new sun – in which case his mother is the sky – but who is also the Primeval Ocean as the all-mother, whether as Hathor, Nut or Isis.

A creation myth has been preserved in a text from Gebelien:

'My majesty precedes me as Ihy, the son of Hathor.

I am the male of masculinity,

I skid forth from the outflow between her thighs.

in this my name of Jackal of the Light.

I broke forth from the egg, I oozed out of her essence,

I escaped in her blood. I am the master of the redness.

I am the Bull of the Confusion, my mother Isis generated me

though she was ignorant of herself beneath the fingers of the Lord of the gods.

I broke free from her on that day that the deep was uplifted as the ...

for the Lord of the gods on the day of confusion;

[this happened] before necks has been fixed, before the heads of the gods had been severed, before the disk has been fastened on the horns, before the face of the Sistrum has been moulded –

I took shape, I grew, I crawled about, I crept around, I grew big,

I became tall like my father when he rose to his full height ...

The flood it was that raised me up while the waters gave me ...

My mother Isis suckled me, I tasted of her sweetness...

I am the babe in the Primeval waters...

I sought an abiding place in this my name of Hahu

and I found it in Punt. I built a house there on the hillside

where my mother resides beneath her sycamores.

The Wisdom of Ancient Egypt, Joseph Kaster, 1968

And the Majesty of Ra answered:

"Lo, they are fled to the desert, since their hearts are fearful because of what I may say to them."

And they all said unto His Majesty:

"Let thine Eye go forth to smite for thee those who plan with evil. However, the Eye has not sufficient power within itself to smite them for thee. Let it go forth as Hathor!"

And so, then, this goddess arrived, and she slew mankind upon the desert. And then the Majesty of this god said: "Welcome, O Hathor, for thou hast done that for which I sent thee!"

Then this goddess said: "As thou livest for me, I have prevailed over mankind, and it is delightful in my heart!"

And the Majesty of Ra said: "In diminishing them, I have prevailed over them as king." This was how Sekhmet came into being, the Drunken One [mixture] of the Night, for to wade in their blood, beginning from Herakleopolis.

Then Ra said: "Come call to me swiftly running messengers who fly like the shadow of a body!" And so these messengers were brought straightway.

And the Majesty of this god said: "Go down to Elephantine and bring me very much red ochre."

And so this quantity of red ochre was brought to him. And the Majesty of this great god caused Him-of-the-Sidelock-Who-Is-in-Heliopolis to grind up this red ochre. And then slave girls bruised barley for beer, and they added this red ochre to the mash, and it became like human blood. Thus seven thousand jars of beer were prepared. And then the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Ra, came with these gods to see this beer.

And now when the land brightened at dawn, and time came for the goddess to continue the slaughter of mankind, the Majesty of Ra said: "How fine they are![the jars] With it I shall protect mankind from her!" Then Ra said: "Come, carry it to the place where she intends to slay mankind!"

And the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Ra, betook himself very early, while it was still deep night, to have this sleeping-drink poured out. Then were the fields filled three palms deep with the liquor through the power of the Majesty of this god.

And when this goddess went forth at dawn, she found the place flooded with the liquor. Her countenance was beautiful in it. And then she drank, and it was good upon her heart. She came back drunk, without having even perceived mankind. Then the Majesty of Ra said to this goddess: "Twice welcome in peace, O Charming One!" Thus came into being the Beautiful Ones in Iamu.

Then the Majesty of Ra said to this goddess: "Make for them intoxicating drinks on the yearly feasts and entrust it to the slave girls." This is how it came to pass that the making of intoxicating drinks was entrusted to the slave girls by all mankind since that first day?

Hathor Rising: The Power of the Goddess in Ancient Egypt, by Alison Roberts, 1997

8. (footnote 2) For a survey of the cobra goddess in the Old Kingdom see Sally B Johnson, *The Cobra Goddess of Ancient Egypt: Predynastic, Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Periods*. London and New York, 1990. She cites the earliest known example of the cobra on the king's brow on a First Dynasty ivory label showing King Den smiting enemies. Ref PT §1108, 'I have laid down for myself this sunshine of yours as a stairway under my feet on which I will ascend to that mother of mine, the living uraeus which should be upon me, O Re.'

10. This beneficent-destructive polarity is reflected in the pairing of Hathor with Sekhmet. As a savage lioness stalking the land, Sekhmet - whose name means 'the powerful one' - is a terrifying manifestation of the fiery, double-sided goddess. Cobra with the head of a lioness, or lioness crowned with a cobra, she too is 'the Eye of Re', incarnating the burning dangers of the sun.

The Myth of the Destruction of Humanity, as inscribed near the celestial cow in the tomb of Seti I, tells how the subjects of Re are in rebellion on earth.

16. (footnotes 24-25) Word-play based on the number of each stanza is very important throughout the cycle of the poems. So, for example, here in the seventh stanza, with its theme of releasing the lovesick youth from his suffering, there is an obvious link between the number seven (zfh) of the stanza and the word for 'to remove even', to 'release' or 'loosen' (sfh).

See Germond, *Sekhmet*, 75-81 for the seven stanzas at the end of the litany associated with Sekhmet's seven arrows. As well as these seven arrows, there were also the seven Hathors who were closely linked the individual fate, as in the story of *The Doomed Prince* Lichtheim, *Literature*, 2, 200.

21. (Image of Hathor cow head as part of fig. 25) Maternal arms protectively holding the young sun child within a womb-like sun-disk ...

22. The king must do everything within his means to harness and channel her irascible power, if he is to be reborn, thrive again, and reach the zenith of the sky.

27-28. The song above the dancers in the upper register is difficult to understand. Translated by Edward Wente in the publication of Kheruef's tomb, it compares the night-time sojourn of 'the high one' with the roasting and grinding of seeds, which the granary-keeper has provided. And this roasting is, in turn, linked to the coming forth of a new, exalted body.

30. He [Ihy] is invoked as a 'Bull of Confusion'; or as a new-born child who breaks out of the primeval egg. To 'become Ihy', a person must be prepared to experience the raw materiality of existence ...

*My awesomeness precedes me As Ihy, son of Hathor,
I am he who begets a begetting,
I flowed out from between her thighs in this my name Jackal of the Light,
I broke forth from the egg, I escaped in her blood.
I am the Lord of blood, I am a turbulent bull.
I came into being, I crept, I travelled around, I grew, I became tall like my father¹⁰
(Spell 334, CT 4, 181c ff.)*

31. And he describes this wondrous new body given to him by Hathor.¹³ (as above CT 4, 183 c-h) (footnote 14) CT4, 161b-e. The Egyptians referred to death as 'taking possession of' or 'capturing' a person during the journey into the afterlife, see J Zandee, *Death as an Enemy according to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions*. Leiden 1960, 85-6. To use these same words, therefore, in connection with Ihy highlights his opposition to death.

33. 'in the following of the king, like Maat in the following of Re'. 'making Egypt flourish like the first time through the precepts of Maat'.¹⁷ *Urk. 4. 1725,5*

34. [Maat and Hathor] Both goddesses are 'daughters of Re'.

40. (footnote 2) In a scene on Hatshepsut's red quartzite shrine at Karnak, Hathor acclaiming Hatshepsut as being 'like the one in the horizon'. *Urk 4.19, 3-6*

41. And it is the connection with this magical power which concerns Haremhab in his coronation inscription. We are told that Amun-Re leads the king to the Per-Wer or 'Great House', the ancient shrine of Upper Egypt originally associated with the vulture goddess, Nekhbet. Here 'the-Great-of-Magic' waits to greet him, making the ritual nini-gesture of welcome by holding the palms of her hands outwards to the approaching king. Then she embraces him, before settling herself upon his brow, marking him with the indubitable sign of solar rulership.³

Only after the palace snake has coiled herself around Haremhab's brow does he make his 'glorious rising', acclaimed by the lords of the Per-Neser – the 'House of Flame', which is the Lower Egyptian counterpart to the Per-Wer shrine. Only then is he empowered to go forth for the zenithal proclamation of his 'great name' and royal titulary, enacted in an embrace with Amun-Re, who bestows on him 'everything which the sun encircles'.
...

But there is another important clue that needs to be followed up – the reference to 'the-Great-of-Magic' in the Per-Wer shrine.

This shrine was known from archaic times as the sanctuary of the vulture Goddess, Nekhbet, 'the White One of Hierakonpolis (Nekhen)', who, as the ancient crown goddess of Upper Egypt, was paired with the cobra goddess, Wadjet, 'the Green One' of Lower Egypt. Stylized representations of Nekhbet's shrine appear as early as 3100 BC ...

42. The Apis, according to his inscription here, is the virile bull 'who impregnates the vital cows'.

43. That cow and cobra are indeed bound up with each other is shown in the clearest possible way by the uraeus snakes, eyes and suckling cow motifs of a gold pectoral dating from the reign of the Middle Kingdom ruler, Amenemhet III (pl 53). From this pectoral alone it is evident that the uraeus snake, serpent eye and Hathor cow are all manifestations of the same solar life energy with the cow form emphasizing the nurturing, vitalizing aspect. Moreover, these motifs indicate that this fiery life energy is inseparable from the Pharaoh's rule. ...⁵

47. ... she tells the Pharaoh: I have placed the two cobras on your head, so that they appear between your eyebrows. My merit belongs to you, providing protection for you whilst you appear on the throne of Horus.⁸
Urk 4.286, 14-16

55. (fig. 65) The text beneath their linked hands says that the king has come for initiation in the temple, and to see his divine father, the lord of the gods, in order to receive 'eternity in life and power'.

In the inscription above her head, Isis refers to the seeing of the father god, reminding Amun-Re, in no uncertain terms, that he has 'seen' his son, Horus, acknowledging him to be the ruling hawk king of Thebes:

*You have seen your son, Horus,
Appearing in Thebes
May you imbue him
With life and stability
As a son, glorious and complete.*

55. (footnote 2) Describing the complexities of Egyptian religion, Erman wrote: 'Every epoch accordingly increased the disarray of the general conceptions.. and enlarged the mass of religious details which so delighted the Egyptian theologians, and is a horror for us'. *A Erman, Die agyptische Religion. Berlin 1905, 3.*

57. The powers of the Egyptian sistrum were remarked on by a number of classical authors in late antiquity. Juvenal tells us that Isis was able to cause blindness with her sistrum; and Plutarch describes how it was used to repel and ward off Typhon, being the instrument which keeps creation in perpetual motion ...

The sistrum also indicates that the things which exist should be shaken and should never stop moving ... For they say that with the sistrum they repel and ward off Typhon, meaning that when decay confines and restricts nature, the power of creation sets her free, and restores her by means of movement.⁴ *Plutarch's de Iside et Osiride*.

In the face resides the kind of power called sekhem, which is also one of the names of the sistrum and is obviously also linked with the name of Sekhmet 'the Powerful One'.⁷

60. ... without her there simply would not be a sunrise.

62. (figure 71) The Pharaoh's journey of transformation ...

66. Firstly, like Shakti in Hindu religion, Hathor is the dynamic partner. To her belongs that fiery, volatile power which manifests both as beneficence and destruction; and these two sides of the dangerous goddess, encapsulated by her name Hathor-Sekhmet, are the key to her nature. ... One of the names of the uraeus is, in fact, Iaret, which is derived from the verb meaning 'to rise' (j^cr), itself suggestive of her upward movement.

As the life-cycle of king and goddess unfolds from birth to death, in harmony with the passage of the sun, so her influence is brought to bear during the different phases of ascent ...

Only then, after her elusive power has been kindled, can the horizon doors open ...

67. Without Hathor, quite simply, there would not be any movement of the sun; like Shiva without Shakti, the sun king simply would not stir.

(fig 75) Enclosed in the circular womb base is a solar cow within a papyrus marsh.

72. (footnote 1) The first known mention of Amun at Thebes is on an 11th Dynasty stela.

73. Karnak itself, so Hatshepsut declares, is 'the horizon on earth, the august hill of the beginning'.

Elsewhere it is said that Amun brings with him the breath of life 'that breath which remains in all things and through which one lives forever'⁴, the life which inwardly enters into bodies.

(footnote 7) Cf The Instructions for Merikare, a text which probably dates from the Middle Kingdom, where it is stated that the office of kingship has been instituted by the sun god for the benefit of humanity, and to guard against injustices: 'Well-tended are the people, the cattle of god ...'

76. Vivid descriptions of Nekhbet as a wild untamed sky mother are preserved in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts. To this enormous bird with wings outstretched the king ascends, seeking her breasts to nourish him and take him to new life in the sky. She too is associated with the cow, being hailed as:

*The Great Wild Cow living in Nekheb,
The White Crown, the royal headdress,
With the two tall plumes, with the two swollen breasts (PT §729)*

*You have no Father among the people, You have no mother among the people,
Your Mother is the Great Serpent, The White Crown,
The Royal Headdress who dwells in Nekheb. (PT §2203-4. Similarly PT §809, §2002-3)*

In another she is 'the Great Wild Cow who is in Nekheb ... with streaming hair and swollen breasts. She suckles you and never weans you' (PT §2003), a goddess from whom the king never separates, a goddess from whom he is never weaned.

She is the nourishing, intoxicating rapture, the life-giving inexhaustible archaic mother goddess, voraciously giving and taking back life on a cosmic scale or birth and rebirth. And perhaps it is the face of this wild cow mother which stares out above King Narmer on his palette, and not, as often suggested, Hathor's (or, at least, Hathor as she manifests in the later solar cults). 14

The Anatolian shrines, which date from around 6000 BC, are decorated with such images as vultures, bulls, a female figure with long streaming hair, as well as sculpted breasts with open nipples from which animal skulls protrude.¹⁵ *Cf the motifs in the shrines of Level VII. J Mellart Catal Huyuk: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia. London 1967, 105-17; 166-8.*

77. 'We are cared for. Happy are the people. Her city will exist for millions of years as the Per Wer', they exult joyously.'¹⁸ *From the New Kingdom Crossword Hymn to Mut, 103 (I.64, vertical text) with pl 26.* She is 'the Mistress of the Uraeus', the Palace Snake, 'whose dread and awe are in the palace ... there is no form escaping from her flame'.¹⁹ *Ibid. 91 (II.10,11, horizontal text) with pl 25.*

78. We find in the Mut Ritual, preserved on a papyrus dating from the Third Intermediate Period, that her cult incorporates the propitiation of Hathor-Sekhmet, the Sun Eye. Likewise, Late Period inscriptions at El Kab, Dendara, Philae and Edfu show that by this time Nekhbet had become completely solarized, an avatar of the fiery serpent Sun Eye.²¹ In a late hymn to the Heliopolitan Hathor with the four faces at El Kab, Nekhbet is hailed as the southern face of Hathor.

Regrettably, no one has yet made a detailed study of Khons.

82. Yet Min was undoubtedly already known in archaic times. His symbol – which is commonly described as a thunderbolt, but in early representations looks more like a double-headed arrow – occurs already on predynastic vases dating from the fourth millennium BC.

The unusual epithet, 'Bull-of-his-Mother' (Kamutef) already associated with the ithyphallic Amun by the Middle Kingdom, also needs to be considered here...⁵ *Much of the evidence for the connection of Isis with 'Bull-of-his-Mother' dates from the New Kingdom and later, but her mother-son relationship with Min or Min-Horus dates back at least to the Middle Kingdom, see M Munster...* Much more explicit is an epithet of Min-Amun naming him as 'the fecundator of his mother'.⁶ *H Gauthier. Les fetes du dieu Min. [regenerator of/for/by Isis?]*

This lies in the male seed of the bull god, which she contains in her womb, seed which not only preserves the ever-recurring cycles of nature but also safeguards the generations of Egyptian kings.

(fig 88 Hathor and Min)

86. In the version of the festival shown in Ramesses II's funerary temple at Thebes (the Ramesseum), these statues include King Menes, honoured by tradition as the founder of the First Dynasty. And it means that the whole dynastic line of Egyptian kings reaching right back to 3000 BC is involved in this Harvest Ritual.

So too all these ancestral kings, who partake in his mystery as he sows and re-sows his seed in the mother goddess, are reborn again, reappearing as the reigning king of Egypt.⁸ *The importance of the ancestral statues in the Min festival, and their link with the dynastic succession through the mystery of Bull-of-his-Mother was emphasized by H Jacobsohn ...*

SOLAR RIGHT AND FEMALE MIGHT: TALE OF THE TWO BROTHERS [Or, how two incarnations of Horus can be living at the same time – a clue to the purpose of Egyptian Mythology in explaining the paradigm to the masses]

(footnote 11) There is an interesting comparison with the strange bull sacrifice carried out on the island of Atlantis, mentioned by Plato, Critias §119.

92. It is the Bull-of-his-Mother who forever gives birth to himself through the Mother, an act which also brings about an ever-repeating cycle of regeneration and continuity in the royal line of kings.

(fig 100) The ancestral souls of Pe (Buto) and Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) wearing hawk and jackal masks, carry Seti I in triumph. Through the mystery of Bull-of-his-Mother, the king here appears as the living reincarnation of his royal ancestors associated with these ancient cities. His is protected above by the serpent goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. (*Relief in the shrine of King Seti in the temple at Abydos*)

93. In short, they are initiating Seti into the secret customs of Egypt ... You are established on the throne like the Son of Isis, O Lord of the Two Lands, Menmaatre. You are the seed of Bull-of-his-Mother, who created you in the likeness of his body. The womb of Isis has made him to be the heir upon the throne of Atum. ¹⁴ *Calverley, Temple of King Sethos 2, pl 36. The text is above the procession of standards preceding the king.*

The preservation of the royal line involves many generations of kings, all of whom in their turn have been sons of the bull god and Isis; and all, too, have impregnated the Mother for self-regeneration. Now Seti, the reigning king, is counted among these mighty ones of the past, known as 'the living Kas' who live in him by virtue of the royal seed, carried in the womb of Isis, that courses through the generations. All have partaken in the mystery of Isis and the Bull (ka), through whom this perpetual cycle of reincarnation continues without ceasing.

94. Moreover, by virtue of being written with the same hieroglyph as the word for bull, the Ka is also associated with male generative power ... For example, the king is said to be a 'mighty bull' ... Furthermore, both the bull and the Ka are implicitly incorporated into the name of the Theban Bull/Ka-of-his-Mother ...

(fig 102) Across from them, Horus hands over the crook and flail of the masculine 'seed' deities who fertilize Isis. Below, on the left, Isis personifies the solar daughter, Hathor, as she gives serpent life and fiery energy to Ramesses. (*Reliefs in the temple of Seti I at Abydos*)

95. Receive the crook of your Father and the flail of Bull-of-his-Mother. You are the seed of the Lord of Abydos. May he give strength entirely.

97. (fig 105) A Middle Kingdom gold pectoral showing Horus and Seth flanking a Bat-symbol, a fetish associated with Hathor.

100-112. (The Contendings of Horus and Seth)

For it is Hathor in her manifestation as 'Lady of the Southern Sycamore', who now comes to his aid ...

'I found Horus had lost his eyes because of Seth, but I restored them.' ...

for it is said that Thoth gives Isis a cow's head in place of her own: Horus cut off the head of Isis. But Thoth transformed it through magic and restored it to her again, so that she was 'first of the cows' [ie like Hathor, Lady of Atfih] ...

The king is now hailed as Ihy, the child of Hathor.

112. Now two sacred Eyes illumine the sky of Egypt: the left eye – the waxing moon and Eye of Horus – and the right eye associated with the raging goddess Hathor-Sekhmet (pls 120, 121)

150. The famous Great Hymn to the Aten – a hymn which has often been compared to the Biblical Psalm 104.

Great Hymn to the Aten	Psalm 104
<p>How manifold are your deeds, Though hidden from sight, O Sole God, Beside whom there is no other. You have created the earth As you desired, being alone, With people, herds and flocks, All upon earth that walk on legs, All on high that fly with wings, The lands of Khor and Kush, The land of Egypt, You set all in their places, You supply their needs, Everyone has food, His lifetime is counted. Their tongues differ in speech, Their characters likewise, Their skins are distinct, For you differentiated The foreign people ¹¹ <i>Lichtheim, Literature 2.</i></p>	<p>1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. 2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: 3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: 4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: 5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. 6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. 7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. 8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. 9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. 10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. 11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. 12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. 13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. 14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; 15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. 16 The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; 17 Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. 18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies. 19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. 20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. 21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. 22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. 23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. 24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. 25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. 26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. 27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. 28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. 30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. 31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works. 32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. 33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. 34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. 35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.</p>

156. From the standpoint of our goddess Hathor, who after all is also the 'Sun Eye', it is of interest that the same affective qualities she radiates also emanate from the Aten.

158. (fig 170) On the left both queen and Akhenaten hold a sekhem-sceptre as an authoritative symbol of their power in the cult of the celestial Aten.

161. And, in turn, the king together with Nefertiti embodies all the bounty of Egypt for his people on earth. He is their Ka.

164. It is possible that Akhenaten reached back to the very earliest period of Egyptian history for inspiration when formulating this divine name. For example three aspects of the hawk god, Horus, are portrayed on a First Dynasty ivory comb found at Abydos (c 3000 BC). At the bottom of the comb, a hawk perches on the palace facade (the serekh), which contains the name of Wadj [Djer], on eof the First Dynasty kings (pl 176). He is the ruler inhabiting the palace on earth. Above is another compelling image of Horus, this time as a gigantic bird hovering in the air with outstretched wings, which curve towards was sceptres of dominion at each side, symbolizing rulership and great might. At the top of the comb is yet another image of the hawk, this time sailing in a boat across the sky like the New Kingdom zenithal sun god. Right at the very beginning of Egyptian dynastic history, then, there is a triple hawk god identified with the Egyptian king, whose rule encompasses the three realms of earth, air and sky.

As we have already seen the three-fold Amun-Re appears as an Image King, a Life Deity and Primordial God (chapter ten). Akhenaten must have been well acquainted with this tradition, to the extent that this triplicity reappears, drastically re-worked, in his own solar threefold formulation some 150 years later.

Now, however, the 'Image' aspect no longer applies to an earthly god who rules Egypt and appears with all the regalia of the Theban cult image, but rather to the great orb of the sun which is the focus of cult worship at el-Amarna. Now too the 'Life' aspect of Amun-Re becomes a radiant 'eye of light' beaming through the air in sun-rays, which are represented in reliefs holding 'life' signs.

The primordial aspect no longer relates to the Osirian realm, but rather to the 'Name' of the deity rising in the eastern lightland. To name means to call into existence, to know the essence of a deity or a person, and in Akhenaten's formulation the solar divinity, the great cosmic spirit, is named as the celestial Re-Horus-of-the-Horizon, who rejoices in the eastern horizon, the primordial realm from whence creation is brought into existence anew each day.