**Ihy**

Ihy (Ahy) was known as the "sistrum-player" and was a god of music and musicians.The sistrum was closely associated with the goddess Hathor who was his mother. He did not have any temples specifically dedicated to him, but was worshipped in the temple of Hathor in the Denderah temple complex as the son of Hathor and Horus. Although he is rarely referred to outside dendera, he does make an appearance in the spells of the Coffin texts and the Book of the Dead as the "lord of bread" in charge of beer (probably because of Hathor's association with beer and intoxication). He was depicted as a young boy wearing the sidelock of youth with his finger held to his mouth and a sistrum in his right hand.

**Aken**

In ancient Egyptian mythology Aken was the patron and custodian of the boat named "Meseket" that carried the souls of the dead into the underworld. Apparently he remained in a deep sleep when he was not needed, and had to be woken by the

Ferryman, Mahaf, when the dead required his services. He was generally depicted as a sailor standing in the stern of a papyrus boat. He was not the focus of worship, and had no cult centre but is referred to a number of times in the Book of the Dead. Aken is often associated with Kherty (or Cherti) a more ambiguous deity who was considered to be a god of the underworld and the ferryman of the dead. This god was worshipped in Esna (Latopolis) and may be the origin of the Greek ferryman Charon.

**Aker**  
Aker (also known as Akeru) was an ancient Egyptian earth god and the deification of the horizon. He guarded the eastern and western borders of the netherworld and protected the sun god Ra when he first entered the netherworld at sunset and again when he returned to the world of the living at sunrise and bore the sun on his back through the underworld. He also welcomed the dead Pharaoh into the underworld. He defended the sun god from the serpent Apep (Apophis) and was considered to be able to neutralize a snake bite. In his role as a protective deity, twin lion statues representing Aker were placed at the doors of palaces and tombs to protect against evil spirits, a practice adopted by both the Greeks and Romans. However, Aker in his plural form (Akeru) was more aggressive and dangerous. The Akeru are very ancient, possibly even older than Geb. The Pyramid Texts express the wish that each person will escape the clutches of the earth gods and specifically state that the Akeru will not attack the king (strongly implying that they could attack others). The name Aker means "(one) who bends" but he was also known as "Ruti" ("two lions"). During the late period the two lions were given specific names - Tuau (today) and Sef (yesterday). Initially Aker was depicted as a narrow strip of land with a human or lion head at each end, but later the strip of land was replaced by the

hieroglyphic sign meaning "horizon". The lions are

often covered with leopard-like spots, possibly echoing the now extinct Barbary lion.

**Am-heh**

The ancient Egyptian God Am-heh was a terrifying god of the netherworld whose name translates as "the devourer of millions". He was depicted as a man with the head of a ferocious hunting dog. Am-Heh lived on a lake of fire, and only Atum was able to repel him.He is sometimes seen as an aspect of Ammit, the personification of divine retribution, as she had his name as an epithet. He has also been linked to the baboon god Babi (or Baba) because of their common interest in human flesh. Am-heh was not worshipped, he was feared.

**Amun**

Amun was one of the eight ancient Egyptian gods who formed the Ogdoad of Hermopolis. He was the god of the air and his consort was Ament (Amaunet). However, during the Twelfth dynasty (Middle Kingdom) Amun was adopted in Thebes as the King of the gods with Mut as his consort. Amun and Mut had one child, the moon god Khonsu. He was promoted to national god by Ahmose I, the first pharaoh of the New Kingdom because the king believed that Amun had helped him drive the Hyksos from Egypt. He was also adopted into the Ennead of Heliopolis when he merged with the ancient sun god (Ra) to become Amun-Ra. It is possible that there were once two separate gods with the same name, but equally likely that Amun of Heliopolis merely took on the attributes of the Theban god Montu (Montju) when he replaced him as the principle god of the nome in the later period. His name is generally translated as "the hidden one" or "the secret one" and it was thought that he created himself and then created everything else while remaining distanced and separate from the world. In that sense he was the original inscrutable and indivisible creator. When he merged with Ra he became both a visible and invisible deity. This duality (the hidden god and the visible sun)

appealed to the Egyptian concept of balance and duality leading to an association between Amun-Ra and Ma´at. Amun was also identified with Montu (who he pretty much absorbed) and the hybrid gods Amun-Ra-Atum, Amun-Re-Montu, Amun-Re-Horakhty and Amun-Min. Amun was associated with a number of animals, whose form he sometimes took in inscriptions. Originally he was depicted as a goose and given the epithet the "Great Cackler" (like Geb). It was also thought that he could regenerate himself by becoming a snake and shedding his skin. However, he was most frequently depicted as a Ram, a symbol of fertility. He is also depicted as a man with the head of a ram, a frog, an Uraeus (royal cobra), a crocodile, or as an ape. Finally, he is depicted as a king sitting on his throne wearing the double plumed crown (also associated with Min). During the Ptolemaic period images of Amun were cast in bronze in which he was depicted as bearded man with four arms the body of a beetle, the wings of a hawk, the legs of a man and the paws and claws of a lion. Amun is described as the primeval creator in the Pyramid Texts which depict him as a primeval deity and a symbol of creative force. However, he rose to prominence during the Eleventh dynasty when he replaced the Theban war god, Montu, as the principle deity of the city. From that point, the fortunes of the God were closely linked to the prominence of Thebes itself. When the Theban Ahmose I successfully expelled the Hyksos from Egypt, he was quick to show his gratitude to Amun and throughout the Middle Kingdom the Royal family established temples to Amun, most notably the Luxor Temple and the Great Temple at Karnak. During the New Kingdom he gained such power that it is almost possible to argue that Egypt had become a monotheistic state. Amun-Ra was considered to be the father and protector of the pharaoh. The Theban royal women wielded great power, and influence and were closely involved with the cult of

Amun. Queen Ahmose Nefertari (the Great Wife of the Pharaoh Ahmose I) was granted the title "God's Wife of Amun" with reference to the myth that Amun created the world by masturbation. This title was then granted to the Great Wife of every Pharaoh in recognition of her role in the state religion of Amun. The female Pharaoh Hatshepsut went one stage further and specifically stated that Amun had impregnated her mother (in the guise of the Pharaoh Thuthmoses II, her father). Thus she established her right to rule on the basis that she was his daughter. However, the god could also reveal his will through the oracles, who were in the control of the priests and they had been granted so much land that they even rivalled the power of the Pharaoh. Amenhotep III instituted some reforms when he became concerned that the Theban clergy had become too powerful, but his son (Akhenaten) went one further and actually replaced Amun with the Aten and constructed a new capital city named Akhetaten. However, the experiment was short-lived and both Amen and Thebes were reinstated under the rule of Tutankhamun. The worship of Amun even spread into neighbouring countries, particularly Nubia. By the Twenty-fifth dynasty Amen-Ra was the principle god of the Kingdom of Napata (Nubia) who believed he came from Gebel Barkal (in northern Sudan) and the Greeks considered him to be the equivalent of Zeus. His main celebration was the Opet festival, in which the statue of Amun traveled down the Nile from the temple of Karnak to the temple of Luxor to celebrate Amun's marriage to Mut (or Taweret). In this festival he had a procreative function epitomised in his title "Ka-mut-ef" ("bull of his mother")

**Andjety**

. Andjety (Anezti, Anedjti) simply means "he who is of Andjet" - the place of the djed (Busiris in the ninth nome of Lower Egypt). It is thought that he was a historical ruler of the ancient Egyptian city of

Djedu (Busiris) who became the god of domestic and farm animals, and probably introduced the use of the shepherds crook as an emblem of kingship (an interesting precursor to the Christian notion; "the lord is my shepherd"). Sneferu was depicted wearing the double plumed crown and the Pyramid texts refer to Andjety as the embodiment of Pharonic power.After the old kingdom, he was merged with Osiris who adopted many of his emblems and took over his role as a god of agriculture, although he was occasionally recognised as the god Osiris-Andjety. In his temple at Abydos, Seti I offers incense to this hybrid god, who holds a 'crook' scepter, wears the double plumed crown and is accompanied by Isis .Andjety was depicted as an old man bearing all of the emblems of kingship and wearing a crown with two feathers, echoing the Atef crown worn by Osiris who replaced and absorbed both Andjety and the Djed pillar as the focus of worship in Djedu. In the Pyramid Texts, the power of the pharaoh is linked to Andjety who is described as "presiding over the eastern districts". He is also given the epithet "bull of vultures" in the coffin texts, confirming his role as a virile consort to the ancient goddesses. As the lord of the dead, he was sometimes described as a god of re-birth, and considered to be the husband of Meskhenet, an ancient goddess of birth. However, the Hebrew workers who settled in Egypt during the eighteenth dynasty considered him to be the husband of Anat, a war goddess.

**Anhur**

Anhur (Han-her, Inhert) is often known by his Greek name, Onuris. He was an ancient Egyptian god of war and hunting from This (in the Thinite region near Abydos) who defended his father (the sun god Ra) from his enemies (giving him the epithet "slayer of enemies"). He was one of the gods who stood at the front of the sun god's barque and defended him from Apep. He was the patron of the ancient Egyptian army, and the personification of royal

warriors but also represented the creativity of man and so was not always a violent deity. During his festival the Egyptians held playful mock battles between the priests and the people in which they hit each other with sticks!His name translates as "he who leads back the distant one" (although another possible translation is "Sky Bearer"). This name seems to refer to the legend that the "Eye of Ra" (his daughter who may be Hathor, Sekhmet, Tefnut, Mut, or Bast) abandoned Egypt and traveled to Nubia in the form of a ferocious lioness. But Ra missed her, and so he sent an envoy to bring her back. This legend is told about the great hunter and the leonine goddess Menhet. When the hunter caught her and persuaded her to return he was given the name Anhur and allowed to marry the Goddess. However, in one version of the story it was Shu who traveled to Nubia with Thoth and persuaded Tefnut to return. Anhur is generally depicted as a striding king wearing a long kilt decorated with a feather-like pattern, a short wig topped by the uraeus (serpent) and a crown of four tall feathers. In some depcitions he holds his spear or lance (leading to the epithet "the lord of lances") above his head (imitating the determinative for words such as "strike") and in his left hand he holds a length of rope that probably relates to his role in bringing the "Eye of Ra" back to Egypt. Occasionally he is depicted without the spear or rope, but often his hands are in the position they would be in if he were carrying them. He was a son of Ra, but was also considered to be the son of Hathor. As a war god, he was closely associated with Montu (Montju) (of Thebes) and Sopdu, and was associated with Ares (the Greek god of War) by both the Greeks and the Romans. Emperor Tiberius was depicted wearing the crown of Anhur on the walls of the temple of Kom Ombo (dedicated to Sobek and Horus). Although Anhur originated in This, his main center of worship was in the town of Sebennytos (modern Samannud) in the Delta, where he

considered to be an aspect of the air god, Shu. As Anhur was a more popular god, he largely absorbed the attributes of the less favoured wind god.He grew in popularity during the New Kingdom when he became more closely associated with Horus as the composite deity Horus-Anhur, the model warrior and the "saviour" of those in battle. The Nubians renamed Horus-Anhur as Ary-hes-nefer (also given as Arensnuphis, Arsnuphis, Harensnuphis) possibly meaning "Horus of the beautiful house". This deity was thought to be married to Isis, linking him to Osiris. The Pharaohs Nectanebo I and II (of the Thirtieth Dynasty, Late Period) built a temple to Onuris-Shu named Per-shu, the "house of Shu" (known as Peros), but it is thought that there may have been an earlier shrine in the area. Ptolemy IV Philopator and Ptolemy V Epiphanes built the temple of Ary-hes-nefer on the island of Philae (beside the temple of Isis. Silver and bronze amulets of the god have been discovered throughout Egypt.

**Anubis**

Anubis is one of the most iconic gods of ancient Egypt. Anubis is the Greek version of his name, the ancient Egyptians knew him as Anpu (or Inpu). Anubis was an extremely ancient deity whose name appears in the oldest mastabas of the Old Kingdom and the Pyramid Texts as a guardian and protector of the dead. He was originally a god of the underworld, but became associated specifically with the embalming process and funeral rites. His name is from the same root as the word for a royal child, "inpu". However, it is also closely related to the word "inp" which means "to decay", and one versions of his name (Inp or Anp) more closely resembles that word. As a result it is possible that his name changed slightly once he was adopted as the son of the King, Osiris. He was known as "Imy-ut" ("He Who is In the Place of Embalming"), "nub-tA-djser" ("lord of the scared land"). He was initially related to the Ogdoad of Hermopolis, as the god of

the underworld. In the Pyramid Texts of Unas, Anubis is associated with the Eye of Horus who acted as a guide to the dead and helped them find Osiris. In other myths Anubis and Wepwawet (Upuaut) led the deceased to the halls of Ma´at where they would be judged. Anubis watched over the whole process and ensured that the weighing of the heart was conducted correctly. He then led the innocent on to a heavenly existence and abandoned the guilty to Ammit. The ancient Egyptians believed that the preservation of the body and the use of sweet-smelling herbs and plants would help the deceased because Anubis would sniff the mummy and only let the pure move on to paradise. According to early myths, Anubis took on and defeated the nine bows (the collective name for the traditional enemies of Egypt) gaining a further epithet "Jackal ruler of the bows".The growing power of the Ennead of Heliopolis resulted in the merging of the two religious systems. However, Osiris was the King of the Underworld in the Ennead and he was more popular (and powerful) than Anubis. So Anubis was relegated to a god of mummification. To save face it was stated that Anubis had voluntarily given up his position when Osiris died as a mark of respect. Some myths even stated that Anubis was the son of Osiris and Nephthys (who was herself associated with the funeral rites). Anubis was still closely involved in the weighing of the heart, but was more a guardian than a ruler. He became the patron of lost souls, including orphans, and the patron of the funeral rites. In this respect he overlapped with (and eventually absorbed) the Jackal God Wepwawet of Upper Egypt. During the Ptolemaic Period Anubis became associated with the Greek god Hermes as the composite god Hermanubis. Hermes was messenger of the gods, while Anubis was principally guide of the dead. Hermanubis was sometimes given attributes of Harpokrates. He was worshipped in Rome until the second century and was popular

with Rennaisance alchemists and philosophers. Priests wore Anubis masks during mummification. However, it is not clear whether the Anubis mask was a later development influenced by the Osirian myth or whether this practice was commonplace in the earlier periods too. Anubis was also closely associated with the imiut fetish used during the embalming ritual. Anubis was credited with a high level of anatomical knowledge as a result of embalming, and so he was the patron of anaesthesiology and his priests were apparently skilled herbal healers. Tombs in the Valley of the Kings were often sealed with an image of Anubis subduing the "nine bows" (enemies of Egypt) as "Jackal Ruler of the Bows" and it was thought that the god would protect the burial physically and spiritually. One of his epithets, "tpy-djuf" ("he who is on his mountain") refers to him guarding the necropolis and keeping watch from the hill above the Theban necropolis. He was also given the epithet "khentyamentiu" ("foremost of the westerners" i.e. the dead) because he guarded the entrance to the Underworld.He was originally thought to be the son of Ra and Hesat, Ra's wife (who was identified with Hathor), but later myths held that he was the child of Osiris and Nephthys, or Set and Nephthys. He was sometimes described as the son of Bast because of her link to the perfumed oils used in embalming. His wife, Anput (his female aspect) was only really referred to in association with the seventeenth nome of Upper Egypt. It is thought that they were the parents of Kebechet, the goddess of the purification. Dogs and jackals often patrolled the edges of the desert, near the cemeteries where the dead were buried, and it is thought that the first tombs were constructed to protect the dead from them. Anubis was usually thought of as a jackal (sAb), but may equally have been a wild dog (iwiw) He was usually depicted as a man with the head of a jackal and alert ears, often wearing a red ribbon, and wielding a flail. He was

sometimes depicted as a jackal (such as in the beautiful examples from the tomb of Tutankhamun) but only rarely appears as a man (one example is in the cenotaph temple of Rameses II at Abydos). His fur was generally black (not the brown associated with real jackals) because black was associated with fertility, and was closely linked to rebirth in the afterlife. In the catacombs of Alexandria he was depicted wearing Roman dress and the sun disk flanked by two cobras. Anubis was worshipped throughout Egypt, but the center of his cult was in Hardai (Cynopolis) in the the seventeenth nome of Upper Egypt. To the east of Saqqara there was a place known as Anubeion, where a shrine and a cemetery of mummified dogs and jackals was discovered. He was also worshipped at cult centers in Abt (the the eighth nome of Upper Egypt) and Saut (Asyut, in the thirteenth nome of Upper Egypt).

**Apep**

Apep (Aapep, Apepi or Apophis) was the ancient Egyptian spirit of evil, darkness and destruction who threatened to destroy the sun god Ra as he travelled though the underworld (or sky) at night. Originally Set and Mehen (the serpent headed man) were given the job of defending Ra and his solar barge. They would cut a hole in the belly of the snake to allow Ra to escape his clutches. If they failed, the world would be plunged into darkness. However, in later periods Apep was sometimes equated with Set who was after all a god of chaos. The dead themselves (in the form of the god Shu) could also fight Apep to help maintain Ma´at (order). Like Set, Apep was also associated with various frightening natural events such as unexplained darkness such as solar eclipse, storms and earthquakes. They were both linked to the northern sky (a place that the Egyptians considered to be cold, dark and dangerous) and they were both at times associated with Taweret, the demon-goddess. However, unlike Set he was always a force

for evil and could not be reasoned with. Apep is not mentioned by name until the Middle Kingdom, but depictions of large serpents on Predynastic pottery may relate to him or to any of the variety of serpent gods or demons who appear in early texts (such as the Pyramid Texts) as representatives of evil or chaos. However, the mythology surrounding him largely developed during the New Kingdom in funerary texts such as the Duat (or Amduat). During the Roman Period, he was called "he who was spat out" and considered to have been born of the saliva of the goddess Neith. He was depicted as a huge serpent often with tightly compressed coils to emphasis his huge size. In funerary texts he is usually shown in the process of being dismembered in various ways. In a detailed depiction in the tomb of Ramesses VI twelve heads are painted above the head of the snake representing the souls he has swallowed who are briefly freed when his is destroyed, only to be imprisoned again the following night. In an alternative depiction inscribed in a number of tombs of private individuals Hathor or Ra is transformed into a cat who slices the huge serpent with a knife. The serpent was also represented by a circular ball, the "evil eye" of Apep, in numerous temple scenes. Apep was known by many epithets, such as "the evil lizard", "the encircler of the world", "the enemy" and "the serpent of rebirth". He was not worshipped, he was feared, but was possibly the only god (other than The Aten during the Amarna period) who was considered to be all powerful. He did not require any nourishment and could never be completely destroyed, only temporarily defeated. Apep led an army of demons that preyed on the living and the dead. To defeat this malevolent force a ritual known as "Banishing Apep" was conducted annually by the priests of Ra. An effigy of Apep was taken into the temple and imbued with all of the evil of the land. The effigy was then beaten, crushed smeared with mud and burned. Other rituals involved the creation

of a wax model of the serpent which was ritually dismembered and the burning of a papyrus bearing an image of the snake. The "Book of Apophis" is a collection of magical spells from the New Kingdom which were supposed to repel or contain the evil of the serpent. Apep was hated and feared by the Egyptians, but two of the Hyksos rulers chose his name as their coronation names (although they used a slightly different spelling).

**Aten**

During the reign of Akhenaten the Aten was installed as the principle god of ancient Egypt, and the worship of many of the traditional gods of ancient Egypt was rejected. The Aten was not a new god but an obscure aspect of the sun god worshipped as early as the Old Kingdom. "Aten" was the traditional name for the sun-disk itself and so the name of the god is often translated as "the Aten" (for example, in the coffin texts of the Middle Kingdom) the word "Aten" represents the sun disc, and in the 'Story of Sinuhe' (also from the Middle Kingdom) Amenemhat I is described as soaring into the sky and uniting with Aten, his creator. During the New Kingdom, the Aten was considered to be an aspect of the composite deity Ra-Amun-Horus. (Ra represented the daytime sun, Amun represented the sun in the underworld and Horus represented the sunrise). Akhenaten proclaimed "the Aten" (the visible sun itself) to be the sole deity, taking sun worship a stage further. Because of the naturalistic qualities of some of the art works of the time, some have suggested that his religion was based on the scientific observation that the sun's energy is the ultimate source of all life. In its early stages Atenism is best described as a henotheistic religion (a religion devoted to a single god while accepting the existence of other gods) but it developed into a proto-monotheistic system. The full extents of his religious reforms were not apparent until the ninth year of his reign. As well as proclaiming the Aten the only god, he banned the

use of idols with the exception of a rayed solar disc. He also made it clear that the image of the Aten only represented the god, but that the god transcended creation and so could not be fully understood or represented. This aspect of his faith bears a notable resemblance to the religion of Moses, prompting Freud to suggest that Akhenaten was the first Monotheist. A number of hymns to the Aten were composed during Akhenaten's reign, some apparently by the king himself. They describe the wonders of nature and hail the sun as the absolute and universal lord of all things. In particular, the Hymn to the Aten (recorded in the tomb of Ay, the vizier Akhenaten who became pharaoh after Tutankhamun) has become famous as many commentators have argued that it closely echoes Psalm 104 which describes the wonders of nature and ascribes ultimate power to Yahweh, the Hebrew God. There is indeed a certain similarity in the type of language and the content matter, but those who argue the two texts are the same are perhaps exaggerating slightly. The Aten was worshipped in the open sunlight, rather than in dark temple enclosures, as the old gods had been. However, far from being open to the people, only Akhenaten (and his family) could connect with the god. In the Hymn to the Aten, Akhenaten states "there is none who knows thee save thy son Akhenaten". Perhaps unsurprisingly, excavations at Akhetaten (Armarna) have indicated that the ordinary people did not take to the new religion but continued to worship the old gods in private.

**Atum**

Atum (also known as Tem or Temu) was the first and most important Ancient Egyptian god to be worshiped in Iunu (Heliopolis, Lower Egypt), although in later times [Ra](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/ra.html) rose in importance in the city, and eclipsed him to some extent. He was the main deity of Per-Tem ("house of Atum") in Pithom in the eastern Delta. Although he was at his most popular in the Old Kingdom in Lower Egypt, he is

often closely associated with the Pharaoh all over Egypt. During the New Kingdom, Atum and the Theban god Montu (Montju) are depicted with the king in the Temple of [Amun](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/amun.html) at Karnak. In the Late Period, amulets of lizards were worn as a token of the god. Atum was the creator god in the Heliopolitan [Ennead](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/ennead.html). The earliest record of Atum is the Pyramid Texts (inscribed in some of the Pyramids of the Pharaohs of dynasty five and six) and the Coffin Texts (created soon after for the tombs of nobles). In the beginning there was nothing (Nun). A mound of earth rose from Nun and upon it Atum created himself. He spat Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture) from his mouth. Atum's two offspring became separated from him and lost in the dark nothingness, so Atum sent his "Eye" to look for them (a precursor to the "Eye of Ra", an epithet given to many deities at different times). When they were found, he named Shu as "life" and Tefnut as "order" and entwined them together. Atum became tired and wanted a place to rest, so he kissed his daugther Tefnut, and created the first mound (Iunu) to rise from the waters of Nun. Shu and Tefnut gave birth to the earth (Geb) and the sky (Nut) who in turn give birth to Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys and Horus the elder. In later versions of the myth, Atum produces Shu and Tefnut by masturbation and splits up Geb and Nut because he is jealous of their constant copulation. However, his creative nature has two sides. In the Book of the Dead, Atum tells Osiris that he will eventually destroy the world, submerging everything back into the primal waters (Nun), which were all that existed at the beginning of time. In this nonexistence, Atum and Osiris will survive in the form of serpents. Atum, [Ra](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/ra.html), [Horakhty](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/horakhty.html) and [Khepri](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/khepre.html) made up the different aspects of the sun. Atum was the setting sun which travelled through the underworld every night. He was also linked with solar theology, as the self-developing scarab that represented the newly created sun. As a

result he is combined with Ra (the rising sun) in both the Pyramid and Coffin Texts as Re-Atum he who "emerges from the eastern horizon" and "rests in the western horizon". In other words as Re-Atum he died every night at dusk before resurrecting himself at dawn. Atum also symbolized the setting sun and its journey through the underworld to its rising in the east. Atum was the father of the gods, creating the first divine couple, Shu and Tefnut, from whom all the other gods are descended. He was also considered to be the father of the Pharaohs. Many Pharaohs used the title "Son of Atum" long after the power base moved from Iunu. Atum's close relationship to the king is seen in many cultic rituals, and in the coronation rites. A papyrus dating to the Late period shows that the god was of central importance to the New Year's festival in which the king's role was reconfirmed. From New Kingdom onwards, he often made an appearance inscribing royal names on the leaves of the sacred ished tree, and in some Lower Egyptian inscriptions Atum is shown crowning the Pharaoh (for example the shrine of Ramesses II in Pithom).Texts in the New Kingdom tombs of the Valley of the Kings near Thebes depict Atum as an aged, ram-headed man who supervises the punishment of evildoers and the enemies of the sun god. He also repels some of the evil forces in the netherworld such as the serpents Nehebu-Kau and [Apep](http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/apep.html) (Apophis). He also provided protection to all good people, ensuring their safe passage past the Lake of Fire where there lurks a deadly dog-headed god who lives by swallowing souls and snatching hearts. Atum is most usually depicted in anthropomorphic form and is typically shown wearing the dual crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. One of the only details that distinguish him from a Pharaoh is

the shape of his beard. He is also depicted with

a solar disk and a long tripartite wig. In his netherworld role, as well as his solar aspect, he is also often presented with the head of a ram. He may be seated on a throne but may also be shown standing erect, or even leaning on a staff when his old age is stressed. Atum was also represented by the image of the primeval hill. During the the First Intermediate period "Atum and his Hand" even appear as a divine couple on some coffins. He was represented by the black bull Mnewer, who bore the sun disk and uraeus between its horns. The snake, bull, lion, lizard and ichneumon (Egyptian mongoose) are his sacred animals. As an ape, he was sometimes armed with a bow with which to shoot his enemies. In his aspect as a solar deity, he was also depicted as a scarab and the giant scarab statue which now stands by the sacred lake at Karnak was dedicated to Atum. Also, numerous small bronze coffins containing mummified eels, bearing a figure of the fish on the top of the box and an inscription incised on it, attest to yet another zoomorphic incarnation of Atum. Representations of Atum are surprisingly rare, but some of the depictions of the Pharaoh as "Lord of the Two Lands" may have also been viewed as incarnations of Atum. The largest of the rare statues of Atum is a group depicting King Horemheb of the 18th Dynasty kneeling in front of Atum.

**Banebdjed**

As Osiris was the ancient Egyptian lord of the dead, his "Ba" was worshipped in its own right in Ancient Egypt (especially in the city of Djedet in the Delta) and name Banebdjed (sometimes the feminine form Banebdjedet was also used as he absorbed the position of his sometime consort Hatmehyt). This name is translated as "the ba (essence or power) of the lord of the Djed" and refers to the notion that

the Djed pillar (which represented stability) was thought to be the backbone of Osiris. This gives us an interesting insight into the ancient Egyptian view of death. Although they feared death, they recognised the stability and balance inherent in the cycle of decay and rebirth. A person's Ba was not their soul, but their essence (it can be translated as power, effectiveness, reputation or charisma), and the Ba was represented by the hieroglyph for a "ram". As a result, Banebdjed was depicted as a ram or ram-headed man and a living "sacred ram" (thought to embody the god's essence) was worshipped in the city of Djedet (close to Osiris' cult center at Djedu). The rams were mummified and buried with all of the pomp and ceremony of a Pharaoh in their own necropolis. During the late period, Banebdjed was referred to as "the goat of Mendes" by the Greeks who mispronunced the phrase Ba-neb-Djetet ('Ram lord of Djedet') and named the city Mendes. "The goat of Mendes" has been linked by some esoteric scholars to Baphomet (the "false god" the Templars were accused of worshipping) and transformed into a satanic stereotype by others. The only slight problem with this is that Banebdjedt was not a goat, but a ram, and he (or she) was not considered to be evil or even agressive. Banebdjed was given the epithets "lord of the Sky" and "lord of life" echoing the titles of the sun god Ra. Over time Atum became associated with Re, who amongst other things was an important god of kingship. Osiris was, therefore, considered to be a descendent of Ra and the first Pharaoh. As Banebdjed, he was married to a local fish-goddess Hatmehyt ("Foremost of fish") who was associated with Isis, and was considered to have fathered Horus (the child).

**Bes**

Bes (Bisu, Aha) was an ancient Egyptian dwarf god. He was a complex being who was both a deity and a demonic fighter. He was a god of war, yet he was

also a patron of childbirth and the home, and was associated with sexuality, humour, music and dancing. Although he began as a protector of the pharaoh, he became very popular with every day Egyptian people because he protected women and children above all others. He had no temples and there were no priests ordained in his name. However, he was one of the most popular gods of ancient Egypt and was often depicted on household items such as furniture, mirrors and cosmetics containers and applicators as well as magical wands and knives. Over time he came to be seen as the champion of everything good and the enemy of everything evil. It seems that he was originally known as "Aha" ("fighter") because he could strangle bears, lions and snakes with his bare hands. He is described as a demon, but he was not considered to be evil. On the contrary, he was a supporter of Ra who protected him from his enemies. As a result, he was a god of war who protected the pharaoh and the people of Egypt from evil forces. He was often depicted on knives in the hope that this would extend his protection to the bearer of the blade. His image also appears on numerous "magic wands" and on an incredible number of amulets. He was particularly protective of women and children and was often depicted with the young Horus protecting him as he matured. As a result, he also became a god of childbirth. It was thought that he could scare off any evil spirits lurking around the birthing chamber by dancing, shouting and shaking his rattle. If the mother was experiencing a difficult birth, a statue of Bes was placed near her head and his assistance was invoked on her behalf. Rather sweetly, Bes remained at the child's side after birth to protect and entertain them. It was said that if a baby laughed or smiled for no reason, it was because Bes was pulling funny faces. By the New Kingdom he

was a regular feature of the illustrations on the walls of the mammisi ("birth house"). Bes also drove away the evil spirits who caused accidents and created mischief (just as mediaeval gargoyles were thought to scare evil spirits away from churches). Many ancient Egyptians placed a statue of Bes near the door of their house to protect them from mishap. His protection could also be invoked by tattooing his image directly onto the body. Performers often had tattoos of Bes because of his association with dancing and music. It is also thought that sacred prostitutes may have had a tattoo of Bes placed near their pubic area in order to prevent venereal diseases, but it is also possible that the tattoos related to fertility. It is often suggested that he was not a god of Egyptian origin, instead being imported from Africa during the Middle Kingdom. Certainly Bes was described in inscription as "Coming from the Divine Land" and was known as the "Lord of Punt". However, he is also mentioned in records found in Upper Egypt dating to the Old Kingdom suggesting that he may well be Egyptian, but that his worship was not widespread until the New Kingdom. At present there is insufficient evidence regarding his origins to be sure either way. Archeologists have recovered numerous Bes masks and costumes dating from the New Kingdom. It is thought that these saw regular use and so they may have been the property of professional entertainers. At this point in history he was often linked to Tawret (another demon-deity who offered protection during labour). In fact, he was thought to be her husband until the Ptolemaic Period.They were so popular with the common people that amulets of both Bes and Tawret's were found even at Akhetaten (the city of Akenaten) despite the replacement of many of the other gods by The Aten. However, it was during the Ptolemaic Period that the worship of Bes reached it height. He appears in numerous temple reliefs, thousands of amulets and charms were made in his image, and there were even oracles of Bes to allow people to

benefit from his wisdom. He was given a new wife, known as Beset, who was a female version of himself. “Incubation" or Bes chambers were constructed with images of Bes and a naked goddess (most likely Beset) painted on the walls. It is thought that these chambers were meant to promote healing, remedy certain fertility problems or promote erotic dreams. The Romans also loved Bes and depicted him dressed as a legionnaire. Bes also became popular with the Phoenicians and in Cyprus. Some scholars have suggested that the Ptolemaic version of Bes was in fact a composite god made up of ten fairly obscure gods; Aha, Amam, Bes, Hayet, Ihty, Mafdjet, Menew, Segeb, Sopdu and Tetenu. However, this theory is not widely supported and no evidence has been recovered to date which would clarify the situation. Bes was also associated with a number of the more powerful gods; including Amun, Min, Horus and Reshep. He was most often associated with Horus the child. Bes often appeared on amulets and stele depicting the young horus and inscriptions intended to protect against snake bites etc. (known as "cippi"). The two gods also formed the composite deity "Horbes", even although Beset (Bes' wife during the Ptolemaic Period) was also described as Horus' mother! Bes was also closely associated with Hathor, who was also described as the mother or wife of Horus. The goddess was known as the "Lady of Punt", and was also a goddess of childbirth, dancing and music who shared many iconographic symbols with Bes. Bes was generally depicted as a bearded dwarf, sticking out his tongue and shaking a rattle. He is always depicted facing forwards. This was very rare in Egyptian art and gave him a further link with Hathor who also faces the front. However, unlike the simple beauty of that goddess, Bes is a comical figure with pronounced bow legs, prominent genitals and a tail. He usually wears a plumed crown and the lion or panther skin associated with the "stm" priests. Occassionally he

wears the Atef crown and is depicted as a winged deity. There are also a number of amulets and depictions of Bes which only show his head (still facing the front), although most of these date from the Third Intermediate Period or later. Bes was sometimes depicted with feline or leonine features and often sports a long tail prompting the speculation that in earlier times, he was not in fact a dwarf but a lion or cat rearing up on his hind legs. If he did start out as a feline goddess this would give him a further link to Hathor who was herself very closely associated with Bast (a cat goddess) and Sekhmet (a lion goddess) and the "Eye of Ra" (the fearsome protector of Ra). Furthermore, his name may be derived from the Nubian word for cat ("besa") and is written using the determinative for a mammal rather than the determinative of a god or a man (the cow skin). It is equally likely that he was always seen as a dwarf with the strength and power of a cat.

**Geb**

In Ancient Egypt Geb (also known as Seb, Keb, Kebb or Gebb) was a god of the earth and one of the Ennead of Heliopolis. His grandfather was Atum (the self-created creator god), his father was Shu (the god of air) and his mother was Tefnut (the goddess of moisture). Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephthys were the children of Geb and his sister-wife Nut (the goddess of the sky). Geb was the third divine pharaoh, reigning after his father, Shu, and before Osiris. He also supported Horus' right to the throne following the death of Osiris. As the Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was the living image of Horus, the pharaoh was sometimes known as the "Heir of Geb". In the book of the dead, the Pharaoh says "I am decreed to be the Heir, the Lord of the Earth of Geb. I have union with women. Geb hath refreshed me, and he hath caused me to ascend his throne." One ceremony to mark the accession of a new pharaoh involved the release of four wild

geese, to the four corners of the sky, to bring luck to the new king. During the Ptolemaic period, Geb became identified with the Greek god Kronos (time). It is thought that his worship originated around Iunu (Heliopolis) during the pre-dynastic period but may postdate the worship of Aker (another earth god). It seems that Geb was largely worshiped as a goose, his sacred animal, during the pre-dynastic period. Edfu (Apollinopolis Magna) was called the "Aat of Geb," and Dendera was also known as "the home of the children of Geb". It may seem strange to have a male earth god (most cultures associating the earth with femal power) but Geb was sometimes considered to be bisexual. In his shrine in Bata in Iunu he laid the great Egg (symbolised rebirth and renewal) from which the Sun-god arose in the form of a phoenix or Benben. He was given the epithet "The great Cackler" because of the noise he made when the egg was laid. He was also called the "Rpt" (the hereditary, tribal chief of the gods), and the earth itself was referred to as "pr-gb-b" ("The House of Geb"). Earthquakes were thought to be his laughter and it was he who supplied the minerals and precious stones found in the earth, as a god of mines and caves. The sign used in his name became associated with vegetation and the lush farming land by the Nile. It was said that barley grew on his ribs and he was depicted with green patches of vegetation all over his body. As a god of the harvest, he was sometimes considered to be the spouse of Renenutet, the cobra godess. He had authority over the tombs buried in the earth, and assisted in the ritual of weighing the heart of the deceased in the Halls of Ma´at. The justified dead were given words of power which allowed them to ascend to the sky, while those whose hearts were weighed down with guilt were trapped in the earth by Geb. Thus, he could be a malevolent being as well as beneficial deity, imprisoning the dead in his body. His wife Nut was often depicted on the cover of a sarcophagus,

while Geb was represented by the base indicating that the justified dead were protected by both deities. According to another creation myth, Geb and Nut angered the sun god Ra, their grandfather, because they were locked in a perpetual embrace. On the orders of Ra, they were separated by Shu who stood on Geb and lifted Nut high up above him - creating our atmosphere by separating the sky from the earth. However, Nut was found to be pregnant and gave birth to Osiris, Horus the Elder, Set, Isis and Nephthys. Geb still longed for his sister, and was often depicted lying prone with his erect phallus pointing towards her body. He wept when he was separated from her, and so created the oceans of the world. However, it seems that his lust did not stop there. The Phakussa Stele (Ptolemaic period) tells of Geb´s infatuation with his mother, Tefnut. His father Shu fought with the followers of the serpent Apep, and was weakened by this battle. Shu ascended to the heavens to recuperate. When Shu was gone, Geb sought out his mother and raped her. Nine days of darkness and storms followed and then Geb went to take his father´s place as Pharaoh, but when he reached out to the cobra (ureas) on the crown of Re, it read his guilt and killed all of his companions and severely wounded him. It was only by the application of a lock of Ra´s hair that Geb was saved. Despite his heinous crime, Geb went on to be a good king who protected the land and its people. Geb was usually depicted as a man wearing a combination of the white crown and the Atef crown, although he was also depicted as a goose - his sacred animal. When he takes the form of a man he is generally prone (as a personification of the earth) and sometimes coloured green with vegetation growing from his body. As the Earth, he is often seen lying beneath the sky goddess Nut, leaning on one elbow, with one knee bent toward the sky, (echoing the shape of two mountains and a valley).

**Hapi**

Hapi (Hep, Hap, Hapy) was a water and fertility god who was popular throughout Ancient Egypt. It is thought that his name was originally the predynastic name for the Nile. however, by the Dynastic period the Nile was known as "iterw" ("the river") and the word was used to refer to the god of the Nile (the name "Nile" derives from the Greek word "Neilos" which was a corruption of the Egyptian word "nwy", meaning "water"). He was worshiped throughout Egypt, but was particularly popular around Aswan and Gebel El-Silisila. Hapi was the patron of Upper and Lower Egypt. In this capacity he was described as twin deities named Hap-Reset (Upper Egypt) and Hap-Meht (Lower Egypt). Therse deities were depicted either pouring water from a jug (representing the innundation) or tying together the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt (the papyrus and the lotus respectively) in a knot which resembled the hieroglyphic word "sema" ("joined"). This role, together with his connection with the Nile and the innundation, made him one of the most popular and powerful deities of Ancient Egypt and yet no temple has been discovered which was specifically dedicated to him. One of the oldest references to Hapi is in the Pyramid Texts of Unas. Hapi (here called Hep) is linked to the Nome of Kenset (including the First Cataract and the islands of Elephantine, Sahel, Philae, and others) and to (Wepwawet (the opener of the ways). The texts implore Hapi and Wepwawet send a good innundation. According to myth, the river flowed from Hapi´s home (near the First Cataract) through the heavens and the land of the dead before emerging from a cave somewhere in the mountains. The innundation was referred to as the "Arrival of Hapi" and during the flood the Egyptians would place statues of the god in the towns and cities so that they could implore his assistance at that time. They would throw offerings into the river at places sacred to the god in order to ensure the innundation was not too low (leaving insufficient

water for the crops) or too high (risking the destruction of their mud-brick homes). The gods Khnum, Anqet and Satet were the guardians of the source of the Nile who ensured that the correct amount of silt was left by the waters, but Hapi controlled the water itself. He was also associated with the Delta and given the epithet "Lord of the Fishes and Birds of the Marshes". As a god of water, he was often associated with Nun (the personification of the primeaval waters of chaos in the Ogdoad theology from Heliopolis) and was described as the husband of Naunet (Nun´s wife and female aspect). Because the sun god (Ra or Atum) emerged from the waters of Nun on the first day of creation, Hapi was sometimes considered to be the father of the sun god and therefore the father of all life forms. It is probably because of these solar connections that Akhenaten did not reject hapi along with Amun and the majority of the other gods, instead describing him as an incarnation of The Aten. He was also associated with Osiris because of his link to the Nile and fertility. As a result, Isis was sometimes considered to be his female counterpart or his wife. The Pyramid Texts make it clear that many of the ancient goddesses (for example Mut) were linked with Hapi as aspects of Isis. He was also the husband of Nekhebet in Upper Egypt and Wadjet in Lower Egypt, both goddesses were at times associated with Isis. Hapi was depicted as a plump man with large breasts and blue or green skin wearing the false beard of the pharaoh. The female breasts and his skin colour are a reminder that he is a fertility god, while the false beard reaffirms his link to the pharaoh. As the patron of Upper and Lower Egypt and so was often depicted as twin deities; Hap-Reset who wears the papyrus of Upper Egypt on his headdress and Hap-Meht who wears the lotus of Lower Egypt on his headdress. When he is depicted as a single god he often carries both the papyrus and lotus.

**Heka**

In Ancient Egypt Heka (Hike) was the patron of magic and therefore also of medicine. The Egyptian word for magic was "heka" (which literally means "using the Ka") and Heka was the personification of magic. His name (and the word magic) were depicted as a twist of flax and a pair of raised arms. The flax was often placed with the arms, and was thought to resembles two snakes. According to myth, Heka fought and conquered two serpents, and so two intertwined serpents became symbolic of his power. This symbol is still associated with medicine today.He was generally considered to be the son of Menhet and Khnum and the three formed the triad of Latopolis (Esna) in Upper Egypt. He was also popular in Heliopolis where he was described as the son of Atum because of the latter´s association with Khnum. The concept of Heka was central to the Egyptian way of life, and death. Ritual implements were used to help the deceased pass safely to the afterlife, but Heka was the means of accomplishing this task. Heka also helped Ra on his daily journey across the sky by warding off evil spirits and demons.Although Heka had no formal worship, doctors and other healers were called "priests of Heka" and often sought his assistance. He was generally depicted as a man carrying a magic staff and a knife, the tools of a healer. He occasionally appears as a man holding two entwined serpents.

**Heryshef**

Heryshef (Herishef, Heryshaf, Hershef) was an ancient creator and fertility god and god of the riverbanks whose name translates as "he who is on his lake". His cult was located at Hwt-nen-nesu (Hnes, Herakleopolis Magna) but he was also referred to as the ruler of Iunu (Heliopolis). The Palermo Stone records that his cult dated back to the first dynasty of Ancient Egypt (the Early period) but the earliest known temple dedicated to him at Hwt-nen-nesu is dated to the Middle Kingdom.

However, we know that he was fairly powerful during the First intermediate Period when Hwt-nen-nesu briefly became the capital of Lower Egypt. The Temple of Heryshef was expanded during the New Kingdom by Ramesses II who added a number of huge granite columns with palm leaf capitals and remained active until well into the Ptolemaic Period.In Ancient Egypt he was associated with Ra and Osiris and was sometimes described as the "Ba" (soul) of these gods. He was also associated with Atum because of his connections with the sacred naret tree of Hwt-nen-nesu. However, the Greeks called him Harsaphes or Arsaphes (which means "manliness") and identified him with Heracles, perhaps in part because his name could also mean "He who is over strength".He appears on a stele found in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii (but originally from his temple in Hwt-nen-nesu) in which Heryshef assures Somtutefnakht (a priest during the late Period) that he will not be harmed and advises him to return to his home town of Hwt-nen-nesu to serve in the temple. In this stele Heryshef is described as "king of the Two Lands" and "ruler of the riverbanks". He is also referred to in the "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant" in which the peasant goes to register his complaint in the Temple of Heryshef. Heryshef was often depicted on ivory wands from the Middle Kingdom and amulets from later periods.He took the form of a king with the head of a long-horned ram. He wore the Atef when he is associated with Osiris and the sun disc when he is associated with Ra.

**Horus**

The name Horus is Greek. In Ancient Egypt he was known as "Heru" (sometimes Hor or Har), which is translated as "the distant one" or "the one on high"(from the preposition "hr" meaning "upon" or "above"). He was considered to be a celestial falcon, and so his name could be a specific reference to the flight of the falcon, but could also be seen as a more general solar reference. It is thought that the

worship of Horus was brought into Egypt during the predynastic period. He seems to have begun as a god of war and a sky god who was married to Hathor, but soon became considered as the opponent of Set, the son of Ra, and later the son of Osiris. However, the situation is confused by the fact that there were many Hawk gods in ancient Egypt and a number of them shared the name Horus (or more specifically Har, Heru or Hor). Furthermore, the gods Ra, Montu and Sokar could all take the form of a falcon. Each "Horus" had his own cult center and mythology, but over time they merged and were absorbed by the most popular Horus, Horus Behedet (Horus of Edfu). He was the protector and patron of the pharaoh. As Horus was associated with Upper Egypt (as Heru-ur in Nekhen) and Lower Egypt (as Horus Behedet or Horus of Edfu) he was the perfect choice for a unified country and it seems that he was considered to be the royal god even before unification took place. The Pharaoh was often considered to be the embodiment of Horus while alive (and Osiris once he was deceased). The Turin Canon, describes the Predynastic rulers of Egypt as "the Followers of Horus", and the majority of Pharaohs had an image of Horus at the top of their serekh (a stylised palace facade in which one of the king´s names was written). However, Sekhemhib (Seth Peribsen) chose to place Horus´ opposite and enemy Set on his serekh while Khasekhemwy placed both Set and Horus above his serekh. As a result, some scholars argue that the mythical battle between Horus and Set was once a real battle between the followers of Set and the followers of Horus. If this was the case, it would seem that the followers of Horus won as Horus remained a popular emblem of kingship while Set was gradually transformed into a symbol of evil. The Pharaoh also had a name (known as the "Golden Horus" name) which was preceded by an image of a sacred hawk on the symbol for gold which specifically linked the Pharaoh to the god. However, it is interesting to note that Set was also

known as he of Nubt (gold town), so the symbol for gold could in fact relate to him.Horus and Set were always placed in opposition to each other. However, the exact nature of their relationship changed somewhat over time. Set was the embodiment of disorder and chaos while Horus was the embodiment of order. Similarly, Horus represented the daytime sky while Set represented the night time sky. However, in early times the two were also seen as existing in a state of balance in which Horus and Set represented Upper and Lower Egypt respectively. They were often depicted together to indicate the union of Upper and Lower Egypt and there is even a composite deity named Horus-Set, who was depicted as a man with two heads (one of the hawk of Horus, the other of the Set animal). At this stage Horus was often considered to be Set´s brother and equal and the fight between them was thought to be eternal. However, the rise in importance of the Ennead resulted in Horus being cast as the son of Osiris and thus the nephew of Set. This changed the nature of the conflict between them, as it was now possible for Set to be defeated and for Horus to claim the throne of Egypt as his own. The "Eye of Horus" was a powerful protective amulet and when it was broken into pieces (in reference to the time Set ripped out Horus' eye), the pieces were used to represent the six senses (including thought) and a series of fractions. Horus was also the patron of young men and was often described as the perfect example of the dutiful son who grows up to become a just man. However, this is perhaps debatable in the light of one of the stories concerning his fight with Set. The mother of Horus (Isis) was a great magician who most certainly had the power to destroy Set. However, when her chance came she could not take it. Set was, after all, her brother. This angered Horus so much that he chopped off his mother's head in a fit of rage! Thankfully, Isis was more than able to handle this insult and

immediately caused a cow's head to grow from her neck to replace her head. Luckily for Horus, Isis was a compassionate and sympathetic goddess and she forgave her vengeful son his aggressive act. The Egyptian God Horus was usually depicted as a falcon, or a falcon-headed man. He often wore the Double Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. In anthropomorphic form Horus appears as both an adult man and a child, wearing the sidelock of youth (as the son of Isis). There are also numerous depictions of a Horus the child hunting crocodiles and serpents and amulets known as "cippi" were inscribed with his image to ward off dangerous animals.

**Imiut**

Imiut was an ancient god of mummification. His name means "He Who is in His Wrappings". He was not generally depicted in art, instead being represented by the Imuit fetish which was used during the mummification process and may have been linked with his mummy wrappings. He was never a particularly famous god and was pretty much absorbed by Anubis (who took his name as an epithet) and Osiris (who was often depicted with the Imiut fetish).

**Khentiamentiu**

Khentiamentiu (or Khentyamentw) was an ancient god of the necropolis at Abydos. It is thought that his temple at Abydos, founded in the late Predynastic period, was the first to be built there. The sun set (died) in the west and rose (was reborn) in the east so the name, which means "foremost of the westerners", refers to the dead, not a geographical location. He was depicted as a man swathed in bandages (like the mumiform Osiris) wearing the crown of upper (southern) Egypt. He is referred to in the necropolis seals of Den, and was often mentioned during the Old Kingdom. However, as time progressed his position as the guardian of the Abydos necropolis and his role as the deity representing the dead king was absorbed by Osiris,

and his funerary role was to some degree absorbed by Anubis. His later appearances are largely as the combined deity Asir-Khentyamentiu. Khentyamentiu may have himself replaced an older god, Wepwawet ("the opener of the ways") who was also syncretised with Osiris.

**Khepri**

Khepri (Kheper, Khepera, Chepri, Khephir) was associated with the scarab or dung beetle (Scarabaeus sacer), making him one of the most famous insect gods. The Egyptians watched the scarab beetle rolling dung into a ball and pushing it along the ground to its burrow. The Egyptians made a connection between the movement of the sun across the sky and the movement of the ball of dung pushed by the beetle. The solar connection was enhanced by the fact that the scarab has antenna on its head and when the scarab pushed a ball of dung along the ground, the ball would sit between the antenna in a way that was reminiscent of the solar disc flanked by a pair of horns which was worn by many deities. One myth suggested that Khepri pushed the sun across the sky (rather than the sun travelling on the back of a bovine goddess like Nut or Hathor or travelling on a boat). Khepri was often depicted pushing the sun ahead of him and it was thought that this movement was constant. Every night, Khepri would push the sun down into the underworld, and every morning the sun would again emerge and travel across the sky. The word "kheper" means "to emerge" or "to come into being". The female scarab would lay her eggs in the burrow with the dung and her young would feed on the dung until they were ready to emerge. The Egyptians, however, believed that the young scarab emerged spontaneously from the burrow as if created from nothing. Thus, like Atum, he was a self-created god.The scarab beetle also lays its eggs in carrion, leading the ancient Egyptians to speculate that those scarab beetles were created from dead matter. As a result, Khepri was strongly

associated with rebirth, renewal, and resurrection.He was given a central role in the "book of the dead" ("the book of coming forth by day") and the "amduat" ("the book of that which is in the underworld" or "the book of the secret chamber") and scarab amulets were placed over the heart of the deceased during the mummification ritual. These "heart scarabs" were meant to be weighed against the feather of Ma´at (truth) during the final judgement. Scarabs were often inscribed with a spell from the Book of the Dead which instructed their heart... "Do not stand as a witness against me."Khepri was soon seen as an aspect of the sun itself, in particular the sun at day break - when it "emerged" from the underworld. He was closely associated with Atum (the creator god), Nefertum (literally "young Atum" or "beautiful Atum") and Ra (who absorbed many of Atum's attributes). Khepri was the emerging sun, Nefertum was the new born sun, Ra was the sun during the day, and Atum was the setting sun. in later funerary texts, Atum and Khepri merged into a ram-headed beetle who was the ultimate expression of the power of life over death. He is first mentioned in the Pyramid Texts but may well have been well known for some time before that because crude scarabs have been recovered which date from the Neolithic period (7000-5000 BC). Khepri´s popularity was at its height during the New Kingdom .No temple or cult has been discovered which was specifically dedicated to Khepri, but it is thought that the majority of Egyptian temples (possibly all temples) had a statue of Khepri inside them. The scarab amulet was one of the most popular symbols and scarabs were inscribed for all occasions, not just for use in mummification, confirming that he was popular with the common people. He was also popular with royalty, and many pharaohs incorporated his name into their own. Khepri was usually depicted as a scarab beetle but occasionally appears as a man with the head of a scarab. There

are numerous depictions of Khepri pushing the sun before him and he also appears regularly in a funerary setting riding on a sun barque as he travels through the underworld. Because of his connection with rebirth and the underworld, he occasionally wears the atef crown of Osiris.

**Kherty**

Kherty (or Cherti meaning "Lower one") was an ancient Egyptian earth god and a god of the underworld who sailed the boat which carried the decased on their last journey. He was associated with Aken, and may have been seen as an aspect of that god at one time. However, he was also an ambiguous god who both guarded the pharaoh´s tomb and threatened the Pharaoh on his journey into the underworld. It was thought that Ra, the sun god, himself had to intervene to ensure the king´s safety. Kherty was depicted as a ram or a man with the head of a ram (representing the "Ba" or soul). His cult center was in Leotopolis, and he may have been the source of tale of other mythological ferrymen - in particular Charon from Greek mythology. He was particultarly prominent during the Old Kingdom when he was thought to share the rule of the underworld with Osiris. He ruled over the entrance to the underworld and the chambers leading to the Halls of Ma´at while Osiris ruled over the lands of the blessed dead who passed the trials and were prooved to be worthy. He was also linked with Khnum, largely because he took the form of a Ram.

**Khonsu**

Khonsu (Khons, Chons, Khensu) was a god of the moon and time. His cult center was at Thebes where he was part of a triad with Amun and Mut. He was one of the companions of Thoth (who was also associated with the moon and the measurement of time). It was thought that he could influence the fertility of both the people and their livestock and one myth (recorded on the walls of the Ptolemaic temple of Khonsu at Karnak) gives

him a prominent role in the creation of the universe. He was also revered as a god of healing, as is recorded in the story of the "Princess of Bekheten". It was said that he personally healed the pharaoh Ptolemy IV (who took the epithet "beloved of Khonsu who protects the king and drives away evil spirits" in thanks for the gods help) and he was also thought to extend his protection to the common people. As a result, many Egyptians were named after him. However, he also had a darker side. During the early part of Egyptian history, Khonsu seems to have been considered to be a violent and dangerous god. He appears in the "Cannibal hymn" (part of the Pyramid Texts) as a blood-thirsty deity who helps the deceased king to catch and eat the other gods and the Coffin Texts describe him as "Khonsu who lives on hearts". Yet, by the New Kingdom he was worshipped primarily as the gentle and compassionate son of Amun and Mut. There has been some dispute regarding the meaning of his name. Some scholars have suggested that it represented the royal placenta (transliterated as h-nisw), but it is now generally held that it was derived from the word "khenes" (hns) meaning "to cross" or "to travel" (referring to his journey across the sky). However, he was also known by the more specific names; "Khonsu nefer hotep" (in Thebes) was described as the "lord of Ma´at", an epithet he shared with Ptah. When there was a new moon he was known as the "mighty bull" and during the full moon he was associated with a neutered bull. This god not only ruled the month, but he also supposed to possess absolute power over the evil spirits which infested earth, air, sea, and sky, and which made themselves hostile to man and attacked his body under the forms of pains, sickness, and diseases, and produced decay, and madness, and death. He it was, moreover, who made plants to grow, and fruit to ripen, and animals to conceive, and to men and women he was the god of love. As "Khensu-pa-khart" he was the

personification of the light of the crescent moon. He was also thought to help women conceive children and help the livestock to breed successfully. This aspect of the god also has an association with fresh air, and hence the god Shu. "Khonsu pa-khered" ("Khonsu the Child") was described as the "first great son of Amun", the son of the goddess Nubt, and an aspect of the god Ra. Like Ra-Horakhty he was thought to be a child in the morning and an old man in the evening. He was also characterised as, a youth at the beginning of the year, who cometh as a child after he had become infirm, and who reneweth his births like Disk. Thus Khensu-pa-khart was both the spring sun, and the spring moon, and also the moon at the beginning of each month, in fact, the symbol of the renewed light of the sun and moon, and the source of generation and reproduction. In these aspects he could be linked to Horus, Ra, or Min. He was also known as "Khonsu pa-ir-sekher" ("Khonsu the provider" -Chespisichis to the Greeks) and "Khonsu heseb-ahau" ("Khonsu, decider of the life span"). The Great Temple of Khonsu was built in the precinct of the temple of Karnak. It was begun by Ramesses III, in the New Kingdom but expanded by a number of later rulers. There were three shrines dedicated to specific aspects of the god; "The Temple of Khensu", "The Temple of Kenshu in Thebes, Nefer-hetep" and "The Temple of Khensu, who works his plans in Thebes". Other forms of the god were probably worshipped in the main portion of the temple as aspects of the moon god. Different aspects of this god could actually converse with each other! For example, the Bentresh Stela (created in the 4th century BC but claiming to record a statement of Ramesses II) describes how a Khonsu approaches Khonsu pa-ir-sekher, a manifestation of himself in order to free a foreign princess from a hostile spirit. Khonsu was also associated with a number of other gods. In Khumnu (Hermopolis) he was called "Khonsu-Djehuti" associating him with Thoth. While in

Thebes, Khonsu was associated with Ra, Shu, Min and Horus. During the later period Osiris and Khonsu were known as the two bull and represented the sun and the moon respectively. Although firmly associated with Amun and Mut at Thebes at Kom Ombo Khonsu was considered to be the son of Sobek and Hathor (again linking him to Horus) and in Edfu he was considered to be the son of Osiris and known as "the son of the leg" (the leg being the part of the dead king's body which was thought to have been found in that nome). He was usually depicted as a young mummiform man in the posture of a mummy. In his role as the young son of Amun he generally wears the sidelock of youth and the curved beard of the gods. He often wears a full lunar disc resting in a crescent moon as a headdress and carries a crook and flail in his hands (linking him with the pharaoh and Osiris). Ocassionaly he bears a staff topped by the way (representing power) or the Djed (representing stability). He generally wears a loose necklace with a crescent-shaped pectoral and a counterpoise in the shape of an inverted key-hole. In his mummiform aspect he looks so similar to Ptah that the only way to tell them apart is to check his necklace as the counterpoise worn by Ptah is a different shape. Khonsu could also be depicted as a falcon-headed man, but unlike Horus or Re his headdress is sometimes topped by a lunar, not solar symbol. Like Thoth he was associated with the baboon, but was only rarely depicted in this form. During the later period he may be depicted on plaques as fully human or in his falcon-headed form, together with his parents Amun and Mut, He may also be depicted standing on the back of a crocodile, like Horus. As "Khensu, the chronographer" he wears the solar disk on his head and holds a stylus in his right hand. Khonsu was also a great lover of games, especially senet. He was also frequently recorded playing a game of Senet against Thoth.

**Kuk**

Kuk (Kek or Keku) was one of the eight primordial elements in the Ogdoad creation myth. He represented darkness in combination with his female aspect Kuaket (which is simply the female form of his name). As with the other three male elements, Kuk was depicted as a frog, or as a frog-headed man. Kuk represented darkness, obscurity and night. This darkness was the chaotic darkness which existed before the creation of the world. However, although he was a god of the darkness, he was also associated with the dawn and given the epithet, the "bringer-in of the light". It is sometimes suggested that Kuk and Kauket were associated with Khnum, Satet and Hapi of Abu (Elephantine). It is also suggested that he was also associated with Sobek.

**Maahes**

Maahes (Mahes, Mihos, Miysis, Mysis) was a solar war god who took the form of a lion. He was first referred to as a specific god in the Middle Kingdom but he remained fairly obscure until the New Kingdom. He seems to have been of foreign origin, and may have been an Egyptian version of Apedemak, the lion-god worshipped in Nubia. His name can be translated directly as "(one who can) see in front". However, the first part of his name is also the first part of the word "ma" (lion) as well as the verb "maa" (to see) and it is spelled with the symbol of a sickle for the sound "m", linking it with the word Ma´at (truth or balance). As a result, another possible translation is "True Before Her" (referring to Ma´at). However, Maahes was rarely referred to by name. Rather he was usually referred to by his most common epithet, "The Lord of the Massacre". He was given a number of other bloodcurdling epithets including; "Wielder of the Knife", "The Scarlet Lord" (referring to the blood of his victims) and "Lord of Slaughter". Yet, he was not

seen as a force of evil. He punished those who violated the rules of Ma´at and so promoted order and justice. Thus he was also known as the "Avenger of Wrongs" and "Helper of the Wise Ones". The Greeks associated him with the Furies (who were also potentially dangerous but not specifically evil) and gave him their epithet "The Kindly One," Lions were closely linked to royalty in Egyptian mythology and Maahes was considered to be the patron of the pharaoh. As such, he was described as the son of Bast (who could take the form of a lion or sand cat and was a patron of Lower Egypt) and the son of Sekhmet (who was usually depicted as a lioness and was a patron of Upper Egypt). His father was thought to be either Ptah or Ra (whichever was the chief god at that time). Maahes was so closely associated with Nefertum (also a son of Bast or Sekhmet) that it is sometimes suggested that he was only an aspect of this god, who did occasionally take leonine form. This connection gives Maahes an association with perfumed oils which was sometimes indicated by the depiction of a bouquet of lotus flowers near to his image. He was also linked to Shemsu (also a lion headed god), Anhur (Onuris) (who was a god of war) and Shu (who could take the form of a lion). His cult centre was Leontopolis (Nay-ta-hut, "city of lions") in Lower Egypt, where tame lions were lovingly cared for in his temple. He was also venerated in Djeba (Utes-Hor, Behde, Edfu), Iunet (Dendera), Per-Bast (Bubastis) and Nubia(particularly in Meroe). as a son of the triad in Memphis alongside Nefertum and occasionally Imhotep. He was considered to be the personification of the burning heat of the sun, linking him to the goddesses who were given the title the "Eye of Ra" (including his mother, Sekhmet or Bast). By Greek times, he was described as a god of storms. Yet desipte his agressive aspect, Maahes was also thought of as a protective deity. He helped protect Ra from Apep as he travelled into the underworld night and defended the pharaoh in

battle. He was also considered to be the guardian of sacred places and a protector of the innocent. Maahes was often depicted as a lion-headed man carrying a knife and wearing the Double Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, the atef crown or a solar disk and Ureas (royal serpent). Less often, he was depicted as a lion devouring a victim.

**Mahaf**

Maahaf was the ferryman who captained the boat of Aken as it carried the deceased into the underworld. He also acted as a herald who announced the arrival of the Pharaoh to the sun god, Ra.

**Min**

Min (Menew, Menu, Amsu) was an ancient Egyptian god whose worship dates back to the predynastic times. His early images are the oldest examples of large scale statuary found in Egypt so far. He was worshipped by King Scorpion of the Early Dynastic Period and his symbol appears on the El Amrah palette (which is also known as the min palette). His cult may have developed from the worship of his fetish, which was thought to be a barbed arrow, a thunderbolt or a fossililised belemnite (an ancient relative of the cuttlefish). As time progressed, he was given a human form and represented by the Min standard which resembles a double-headed arrow on a hook. Alternatively, Min initially represented the constelation Orion and was thought to control thunder and rain (linking him to Set). This connection with Orion also liked Min with Horus because the three were depicted with their arms raised above their head (a pose linked to the "smiting" pose of the pharaoh) and later provided a connection with Osiris. Min continued to be associated with Horus until the Middle Kingdom when Min became more closely associated with fertility and the solar aspects of Horus became more emphasised. Min was associated with Amun during the New Kingdom, partly because both were linked to the ram and the bull, both of which were

seen as a symbols of virility. The composite god Amun-Min was known as Kamutef ("Bull of his mother"). In later periods he was linked to Reshep, the Semitic god of war and thunder. Both gods were thought to be married to Qadesh the Semitic love goddess, although Min was often considered to be the child of Reshep and Qadesh. It is perhaps unsurprising that the Greeks linked Min to their fertility god, Pan. Because of this association, they renamed named Akhmim, Panopolis (city of Pan). He was a god of the Eastern Desert, and a god and patron of traveling caravans. A reference in the Pyramid Texts to "the one who raises his arm in the east" is thought to relate to Min. He offered protection to travellers and traders and was also worshiped by the miners and masons who worked around the Wadi Hammamat. In this area, he was known as "Min, the (foremost) Man of the Mountain". His association with the desert led to an association with foreign lands and with the god Set. Although he was associated with the desert, he was a god of fertility and sexuality. He was associated with the Egyptian long-leaf lettuce (also a favourite food of Set) which was considered to be an aphrodisiac as it secreted a milky substance which was likened to semen. Min was often shown standing before offering tables, covered with heads of lettuce. At the beginning of the harvest season, Min statue was carried through the fields in a festival known as "the departure of Min". Min blessed the harvest and the people held games in his honour, the most of which involved the menfolk climbing a huge pole (which had a connection with fertility not unlike the maypole). It is thought that this related to the construction of a huge festival pavillion where the festivities were held. Min was closely associated with fertility and agriculture, and so with Osiris. In depictions of one of Min's festivals, the pharaoh hoes and waters the ground while Min watches. In another, the Pharaoh ceremonially

reaps the grain. However, Min was not just a fertility god, but a patron of male sexuality who could help men to father children. When the pharaoh successfully fathered an heir he was identified with the god, and a virginal girl was sometimes called an "unploughed field". As he represented male virility, it is not surprising that it was he who presided over the Heb Sed festival, in which the pharaoh ran a course carrying ritual objects to rejuvenate him and to prove his virility. During the New Kingdom the Pharaoh was expected to sow his seed metaphorically using plant seeds to prove that he was fertile, although some scholars suggest that the Pharaoh was also expected to prove that he was still sexually potent by ejaculating. He was also a lunar god (relating him to moisture and fertility) and was given the epithet, "Protector of the Moon". The last day of the lunar month was sacred to Min and by the Ptolemaic period, he was patron of the fifth month of the Egyptian calendar (called Tybi by the Greeks). Min was generally thought to be the son and husband of the goddess of the east, Iabet. However, in Gebtu (which was the cult site of both Min and Isis) Min was considered to be the husband of Isis and the father of Horus (again associating him with Osiris). In Memphis he was associated with Ptah as the composite god Ptah-Min. He was also linked to a number of leonine warlike goddesses (particularly Sekhmet). As a result the body of Min is sometimes given the head of a lioness. He was also associated with the composite deity Mut-Isis-Nekhbet, known as "the Great Mother and Lady". This deity was depicted as a winged goddess with leonine feet, an erect penis and three heads (the head of a lion head wearing Min's headdress, a woman's head wearing the double crown of Egypt and a vulture's head wearing the red crown of Lower Egypt). Min was generally depicted as a mummiform human man with an ithyphallic (erect and uncovered) penis wearing a crown with two large feathers (like that

of Amun). In his left hand he holds his penis (although this is usually only apparent in statues because of the perspective applied to two dimensional images in Egyptian Art) and in his right hand he holds a flail up above his shoulder. The flail represents Pharonic power and fertility (it was used to thresh corn and remove the husk) and it is suggested that the position of his arm replicates the stance associated with Orion and that the position of his arm in relation to the flail represents sexual intercourse (with the flail representing a vagina and his arm representing his penis). His skin is black (linking him to fertile black soil). Occasionaly he wears a red ribbon which may represent sexual power. When he takes the form of Amun-Min, he sometimes wears a sun disk between the two feathers on his headdress. In both Akhmin and Coptos he was worshipped in the form of a white bull (representing virility) known as "Bull of the Great Phallus" and in Heliopolis he was associated with the Mnevis bull cult. When he is represented as the constellation Orion he can be distinguished from Osiris because the three bright stars of Orion's belt are made to represent his erect penis.Because of his rather noticble genetalia, images of Min were subject to a great deal of damage at the hands of more prudish Christians immigrants and during the Victorian period egyptoligists regularly ommited the lower part of his body in photographs and drawings. In a final insult to the god, ninteenth century scholars mistranslated his name as Khem (or Chem meaning "black" in egyptian). This was in fact one of his epithets which related to his fertility ascpect because black was associated with the fertile soil of the nile. This black soil was so central to the egyptian way of life that the word also became a common term for the land of Egypt itself. His cult center was Gebtu (Koptos), the capital of the fifth Nome of Upper Egypt but in later times he was also associated with Khent-Min (Panopolis, Akhmim) the capital of the ninth Nome of Upper Egypt.

**Montu**

Montu (Mentu, Monthu, Mentju, Montju, Menthu, Ment, Month, Mont, Minuthi) was a solar hawk god and a god of war. His name is thought to derive from the term for a nomad. He was primarily worshipped in the Theban nome in Armant (Hermonthis), Madu, Tod (Tuphium), and Karnak. It seems that Montu was originally a local form of the sun god worshipped in Hermonthis, the capital of the Theban nome. He was said to be the destructive power of the sun. His worship was established in Thebes during the Eleventh Dynasty and he was given the epithet "Lord of Thebes". Thebes was the location of the royal court at that time and so Montu became a powerful state god associated with the pharaoh. Three kings took the throne name "Montuhotep" ("Montu is satisfied"), but the most notable was Montuhotep I who reunited Upper and Lower Egypt after the turmoil of the First Intermediate Period. However, during the Twelth Dynasty his position as state god was taken by Amun and Montu came to be seen more as a war god than an aspect of the sun. This theological shift was recorded in "the Story of Sinuhe", in which the hero praises Montu after a successful battle but also calls him the "Lord of Thebes". The martial pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty favoured Montu. Tuthmosis III ("the Napoleon of Egypt") is described as "a valiant Montu on the battlefield" on the Gebel Barkal Stele and Ramesses II was so fond of the god that worship of a cult statue bearing the king's throne name ("Usermaatre Setepenre" - "strong is the justice of Ra, Chosen by Ra") and the epithet, "Montu in the Two Lands" was established during his lifetime. These kings were often described as "strong bulls" in reference to Montu as the god was associated with the Buchis bull cult. He was also associated with an obscure bull cult in Medamud. Montu was also thought to act as a guardian of happy family life. He is referred to in

marriage documents to ensure that each party lived up to their commitment. Infidelity is described as "the abomination of Montu" and was definitely frowned upon. He was one of the deities who protected Ra on his nightly journey through the underworld and battled the serpent of chaos (Apep). Montu was often depicted as a man with the head of a falcon wearing a headdress of two long plumes, a solar disk and the double uraeus (like that of Amun). He is generally armed, but uses a variety of weapons. Because of his links to the bull cults he was also depicted with the head of a bull (wearing the same headdress). Montu was closely associated with Ra as a solar god and often appears as Montu-Ra. He was also merged with Atum and even associated with Set (possibly because of his martial aspect or because he could counteract the negative side of Set). The Greeks considered Montu to be a form of Ares, the god of war.He was thought to be married to Tjenenet, Iunyt and Rettawy. It was sometimes suggested that the child of Montu and Rettawy (who like Iunyt was a female aspect of Ra) was Horus the child, linking Montu with Horus and therefore the pharaoh. When Amun became the national god, he and his wife Mut were sometimes described as the (adoptive) parents of Montu.

**Nefertum**

Nefertum (Nefertem, Nefertemu) was originally considered to be an aspect of Atum. According to one version of the creation story of the Ennead in Heliopolis, Nefertum (translated as beautiful Atum, or perfect Atum) was born from a blue lotus bud which emerged from the waters of Nun at the beginning of creation. Atum represented the sun and so Nefertum represented the sunrise. He cried because he was alone and his tears created humanity. It was thought that he was born with every sunrise, matured into Atum during the day before passing into the world of the dead every sunset. The cycle of birth in the morning and death every evening (as the sun travelled through the underworld) represented the daily struggle

between Chaos and Order (Ma'at). When Atum was absorbed by Ra (Atum-Ra), Nefertum came to be considered as a seperate deity, still closely associated with the newborn sun. Then Ptah was promoted to the chief national god and proclaimed the ultimate creator, and Nefertum was described as his son by either Sekhmet or Bast (both "Daughters of Ra"). However, as the son of Ptah, he also became patron of the cosmetic and healing arts derived from flowers. Thus, Nefertum was seen as both an aspect of the sun god, and also his grandson. He was most closely associated with the blue lotus, a flower with narcotic properties. According to one legend, he brought a bouquet of beautiful lotuses to the aging Ra to ease his suffering. As a result, he was described in the Pyramid Texts as "the lotus blossom which is before the nose of Re". Nefertem was linked both to the pleasant scent of the lotus flower and to its medical properties (which were well known to the ancient Egyptians). He was also associated with a number of the Egyptians favourite flowers, such as rose, geranium and cornflower. In fact, he could be described as the archetypal aromatherapist. He was also linked to rebirth, both as a personification of the newborn sun and as the patron of many of the necessary ingredients of the mummification process. A passage of the Book of the Dead says the blessed dead will "Rise like Nefertum from the lotus, to the nostrils of Ra, and come forth upon the horizon each day". Nefertum was usually depicted as a beautiful young man wearing a lotus headdress, sometimes standing on the back of a lion. He occasionally wears a headdress with two plumes and two necklace counterpoises which were symbols of fertility associated with Hathor (who in turn was closely associated with both of the goddesses described as his mother - Sekhmet and Bast). He was sometimes depicted as a man with the head of a lion or as a reclining lion or cat. In this form he was associated with the lion god Maahes

who may have been his brother, but may also have been an aspect of Nefertum. As the newborn sun he was generally depicted as a beautiful baby sitting in or on a lotus bud. He was known as "He Who is Beautiful" and "Water Lily of the Sun" and he was held in great affection. Egyptians often carried small statuettes of him as good-luck charms.

**Nun**

According to the theology of the Ogdoad the universe was formed from the interaction of eight elements (instigated by one of a number of possible gods including Thoth, Amun, Horus and Ra); water, nothingness or invisibility, darkness and infinity. Water was represented by Nun and Naunet (the female form). Although the Egyptians had many different creation myths, they all agreed that the universe came from the primordeal waters of Nun, and many legends suggested that everything would slip back under these waters at the end of the world. There were no priests or temples devoted specifically to Nun, but he was represented by the sacred lake of each temple and was frequently referred to in religious inscriptions. Nun existed in every particle of water and formed the source of the river Nile and the yearly innundation. The god was also associated with the laying of foundations for all temples, possibly because the Egyptians used simple and effective technique which took advantage of the fact that water will always form a horizontal level in order to ensure that the foundation layers of structures were flat. Nun is often associated with the forces of chaos. When Ra decided that the people were not giving him the respect he was due, it was Nun who suggested that Re should send out his 'eye' to destroy mankind and end the world. However, unlike the water serpent Apep (who was the enemy of Ra and a purely destructive force) Nun had a positive aspect. Nun protected Shu and Tefnut from the forces of chaos, as represented by demonic snakes. According to one myth it was Nun who told Nut to transform herself into a solar cow and carry Ra across the sky

because he had become old and weary. Nun was represented as a frog or a frog-headed man (as a member of the Ogdoad) but could also be depicted as a bearded man with blue or green skin (reflecting his link with the river Nile and fertility). In thie latter form he can look fairly similar to Hapi, the god of the Nile, and often appears either standing on a solar boat or rising from the waters holding a palm frond (a symbol of long life) Occassionaly he appears as a hemaphrodite with pronounced breasts. In Memphis, Nun was associated with the creator god, Ptah in the form of the composite deity Ptah-Nun. Both gods were described as the father of the sun god (Ra or Atum), However, rival priests claimed that Thebes was the place where the primeval mound first rose above the waters of Nun. As Amun was both the creator god of Thebes and a member of the Ogdoad they suggested that Nun had been a powerful, but inert force until Amun turned himself into the primeval mound and thereafter created the other gods.Osiris (Asir) was the first son of Geb and Nut and the brother of Set, Horus (the elder), Isis and Nephthys. He was one of the most prominent gods of the Heliopolitan Ennead, but his worship pre-dated the development of this fairly complex philosophy. Although Atum was installed as the head of the Ennead by the priests of Heliopolis, Osiris was considered to be the king of the underworld, and is the only deity who is referred to simply as "god". This gives us some indication of his prominence and popularity. The oldest religious texts known to us refer to him as the great god of the dead, who once possessed human form and lived upon earth. After his murder by Set he became the king of the underworld and presided over the judgment of dead souls. In order to enter his kingdom, the deceased had to undertake a perilous journey (aided by spells and amulets) to the hall of judgment where their heart was balanced against the feather of Ma'at (justice or balance). It is important to distinguish this from

the Christian view of judgment. The ancient Egyptians were a pragmatic people. A person was not expected to be perfect, just balanced. An example of this is the "negative confession" (in which the deceased listed all of the evil things he had not done during his lifetime, i.e. "I never murdered anyone") which indicates that it was more a case of convincing Osiris that you deserved admission rather than passively awaiting judgment.

As Osiris had been a good and beneficent ruler during his lifetime, his presence in the underworld no doubt gave the people great comfort. Furthermore, the only barriers to entrance were those relating to the journey to the hall of judgment and the preservation of the body (in which the Ba resided) and your name. The spells needed to pass through Duat (the underworld) were described in great detail in the pyramid and coffin texts, "the book of coming forth by day" (also known as "the book of the dead") and the "book of gates". A decent burial combined with these spells pretty much guaranteed you would be welcomed into a blissful existence which bore a striking similarity to the ancient Egyptian's everyday life (shorn of any problems such as illness). Osiris was also a god of agriculture. This may seem rather strange as he was dead, and technically infertile. However, it actually makes a lot of sense when you consider the death and rebirth inherent in the agricultural cycle of planting and harvesting grain. Every harvest, the god was symbolically killed and his body broken on the threshing room floor, but after the inundation life would return to the land and the crops would grow again. Legend held that the ancient Egyptians had been cannibals until Osiris developed agriculture and he and Isis persuaded them to cease that unpleasant habit. There is no evidence that the ancient peoples were in fact cannibals, but the myth underlined the notion that Osiris brought order from chaos and established the culture which formed the basis of their successful and durable civilisation.

**Osiris**

Osiris was usually depicted as a mummified king, complete with the ceremonial (curved) beard, crown, flail, and crozier. His skin is generally green or black, to represent the fact that he is dead. He usually wears the white crown of Upper Egypt (the south) or the Atef crown (the white crown with a plume of feathers on each side and a disc at the top). The feathers on the Atef crown are thought to represent Djedu (Busiris), the cult center of Osiris. His kind smile confirms that he is not a deity to be feared. In fact, Osiris represented the Egyptian belief in rebirth and their feeling that order and justice persevered beyond the grave. "Corn mummies" made of seeded dirt were molded to represent Osiris and interred with the deceased. They would germinate in the darkness of the tomb and illustrate the concept of life from death. Some fine examples made of barley and emmer, were found in Tutankhamen's tomb. During the fourth month of the season of Akhet (emergence) a number of festivals were celebrated at all the chief sanctuaries of Osiris in Egypt, to commemorate the events of Osiris' life, death, and rebirth. Spectators took part in the "passion plays" and everyone seems to have had a great time. The many festivals are recorded on a stele established by Ikhernofret (a prince who acted as Senusert III's chief treasurer).

**Ptah**

Ptah (Pteh, Peteh) was one of the triad of Memphis along with Sekhmet (or Bast) and Nefertum. When Memphis became the capital of Egypt, Ptah became the ultimate creator who made everything including the gods of the Ogdoad of Hermopolis and the Ennead of Heliopolis and was given the epithet "He who set all the gods in their places and gave all things the breath of life". Ptah was worshipped throughout all of Egypt, but his primary cult centres were in Memphis and Heliopolis. He was so popular in Egypt that it is said that the name "Egypt" itself

derives from a Greek spelling of the name of a temple in Memphis; "Hwt-kA-ptH", which means "the temple of the Ka of Ptah".

He is often described as an abstract form of the "Self-Created One", who made the universe either by the wish of his heart (sometimes associated with Hathor or Horus) and by his tongue (or speech, identified with Thoth and Tefnut). Alternatively, you could argue that he was more directly in control of creation than either Ra or Atum). He was the patron of sculptors, painters, builders and carpenters, and other craftsmen and was thought to have invented masonry. In fact, he may have formed the template for the idea of god as the great architect which is so popular in Masonic mythology and some branches of Christian theology, or as the Book of the Dead puts it, "a master architect, and framer of everything in the universe". However, it is also worthy of note that some versions of the legend stated that Ptah created the heavens and the earth while Khnum fashioned the people and animals on his potter's wheel, although it is still implied that Ptah created Khnum. He was also a god of rebirth who was sometimes credited with creating Opening of the Mouth ceremony which restored life to the deceased (although it is also associated with Anubis and Wepwaet). He was also the patron of the second month of the Egyptian calendar, called Paopi by the Greeks. Ptah was a great protector of Egypt. According to myth, he saved the town of Pelusium from the Assyrian invaders. He ordered all of the vermin in the fields to chew through the bowstrings and shield handles of the enemy, destroying their weapons and sending them home in a panic. The Shabaka stone records that Ptah helped settle the fight between Horus and Set by making Set the lord of Upper Egypt while Geb made Horus the lord of Lower Egypt. Thus he was instrumental in maintaining the duality of Upper and Lower Egypt. The Apis bull was regarded as the

"Ba" (one of the parts of the soul) of Ptah. However, in later times, the Apis was associated with him only while it was living and associated with Osiris after death. Herodotus wrote that the Apis bull was conceived from a bolt of lightning, it was black with a while diamond on his forehead, the image of a vulture on his back, double hairs on his tail and a scarab mark under his tongue. In Memphis he was thought to be married to Bast or Sekhmet. However, he was also described as the husband of Wadjet and numerous smaller local deities. He was the father of Nefertum and Maahes( by either Bast or Sekhmet). He also adopted Imhotep (the deified architect of Djoser´s Step Pyramid as his son. He was linked to Ta-tenen (meaning "risen land) or Tanen (meaning "submerged land"), an earth god connected with the primeval mound from which creation sprang. In this form he was sometimes associated with Nepthys in representing Lower Egypt. He merged with Sokar (a god of the necropolis) as Ptah-Sokar, the personification of the sun during the night. Ptah-Sokar was associated with Osiris as Ptah-Sokar-Osiris. He was also linked to Min, the fertility god. He was depicted as a mummified man with unbound arms holding a staff incorporating the ankh (representing life), (representing power) and the djed (representing stability). He usually stands on a plinth which was also one of the hieroglyphic symbols used to write the name of Ma´at (who represented order or justice) and was the same shape as a tool used by stonemasons and architects to form a straight edge. When he is depicted as Ptah-Sokar-Osiris he wears a sun disk with twisted rams horns and long plumes or the "atef crown". Statues of him in this form often included a copy of spells from The Book of the Dead. The origin of Ptah´s name is unclear, but it is often suggested that the correct translation is either "opener" (because of his link with the ceremony of the Opening of the Mouth) or "sculptor" (because he was a god of craftsmen and creation).

**Ra**

Ra (Re) was the primary name of the sun god of Ancient Egypt. He was often considered to be the King of the Gods and thus the patron of the pharaoh and one of the central gods of the Egyptian pantheon. He was also described as the creator of everything. Ra was so powerful and popular and his worship was so enduring that some modern commentators have argued that the Egyptian religion was in fact a form of veiled monotheism with Ra as the one god. This seems to be somewhat of an overstatement, but underlines his primary position within religious texts throughout Egyptian history. It is sometimes proposed that the pyramids represent the rays of light extending from the sun and thus these great monuments connected the king with Ra. The Egyptians also built solar temples in honour of Ra. Unlike the standard type of Egyptian temple, these temples were open to the sunlight and did not feature a statue of the god because he was represented by the sunlight itself. Instead the temple centred on an obelisk and altar. The most significant early solar temple is thought to be the one erected in Heliopolis, sometimes known as "Benu-Phoenix". Its location was thought to be the spot where Ra first emerged at the beginning of creation, and the city took its name ("Iwn") from the word for a pillar.

**Reshep**

Reshep (Rahshaf, Rasap, Rashap, Resep, Reshef, Reshpu) was a Syrian plague and war god whose worship in Egypt dates from around the Eighteenth Dynasty. Because of his martial skills, he was closely associated with the pharaoh in battle. Amenhotep II established a stelae near the Sphinx at Giza depicting Reshep and Astarte watch over him as he prepares his horses for war. However, he could also use his skills to protect the common people from disease. In particular, he was thought to be able to repell the "akha" demon who was thought to cause stomach pains. Resheph was often considered to be

the husband of Qadesh (another goddess imported from Syria) and the father of Min. However, he is also described as the husband of Itum in connection with his power to control disease. He was linked to Set because they were both associated with the antelope, but he was also associated with the Theban war god Montu. The Greeks associated him with Apollo and to the Vedic Rudra. He was also associated with the Babylonian death god Nergal and ocassionally with Mars (again because of the military connection). He was known thoughout the ancient near east and Egypt as Reshep-Shulman. However, he also had specific epithets in different locations. The Phoenicians referred to him as "Reshep gen" (Resheph of the Garden) and "bal chtz"('lord of the arrow') while the Hittites described him as a "deer god" or "gazelle god". In Egypt he was known as "Lord of the Sky" or "Lord of Eternity" and an area of the Nile valley was renamed the "Valley of Reshep". It is thought that his name originally derived from the hebrew for "flame" or "plague". Reshep was depicted as a man with a Syrian style beard brandishing a mace or axe above his head. He generally wears the crown of Upper Egypt with the addition of a gazelle skull at the front and a ribbon at the back.

**Sahu**

In ancient Egyptian religion the "sahu" was the incorruptible soul, but the god Sahu ("the hidden one") was also the personification of the constellation Orion. His consort Sopdet (or Sothis), represented the star Sirius (the "dog star") and his son, Sopdu represented Venus. According to ancient Egyptian myths, Sahu (Orion) was swallowed by the underworld at dawn, but arose again every night. Clearly, he was a stellar not solar god. Sahu was associated with the god Osiris because every year Sopdet (Sirius) appeared again after a seventy day absence just before the inundation which was associated with the resurrection of Osiris. This association was

strengthened by the association of Sopdet with the goddess Isis, the wife of Osiris. However, the pyramids texts suggest that Sahu was the father of the gods, (including Osiris) yet state that his wife Sopdet was the daughter of Osiris.

**Serapis**

Serapis was introduced by Ptolemy I Sotar (Ptolemaic dynasty) so he combines Osiris with the Apis (the sacred bull of Memphis). The new deity absorbed attributes from the Greek gods Zeus (the king of the gods), Dionysus (also known as Bacchus, the god of wine) and Asklepios (god of medcine). Ptolemy built the Serapeum in Alexandria as the cult center of the new god and it remained the focus of pilgrimage until it was destroyed by the Emperor Theodosius in AD 389. The Serapeum in Saqqara (the home of the Apis bull) gained wider appeal with the Greeks thanks to the connection with Serapis, but the native Egyptians never really took to this Hellenized version of Osiris.

**Sepa**

The ancient Egyptians could see that insects attacked dead bodies, but centipedes fed on the insects. They concluded that the centipedes protected the dead as they were an aspect of Osiris. In this form, he was known as Sepa or Sep (meaning centipede) and was depicted either as a centipede or as a mummified figure with two horns. As centipedes are venomous, Sepa was considered to have power over other venomous animals and could be invoked for protection against snake bites and scorpion stings. Centipedes also follow the earthworms which improve the fertility of soil, leading to their association with fertility. Sepa was sometimes given the head of a donkey (to reflect the fact that donkey manure was used to improve the fertility of soil).

**Set (Seth)**

Set (Seth, Setekh, Sut, Sutekh, Sety) was one of the most ancient of the Egyptian gods and the focus of

worship since the Predynastic Period. As part of the Ennead of Heliopolis he was the son of Nut and Geb and the brother of Osiris, Horus the elder, Isis and Nephthys. He was a storm god associated with strange and frightening events such as eclipses, thunderstorms and earthquakes. He also represented the desert and, by extension, the foreign lands beyond the desert. His glyph appears in the Egyptian words for "turmoil", "confusion", "illness", "storm" and "rage". He was considered to be very strong but dangerous, and strange. However, he was not always considered to be an evil being. Set was a friend of the dead, helping them to ascend to heaven on his ladder, and he protected the life giving oases of the desert, and was at times a powerful ally to the pharaoh and even the sun god Ra. The earliest representation of Set can be found on a carved ivory comb from the Amratian period (Naqada I, 4500BC - 35BC, orthodox dates) and he also appears on the famous Scorpion mace head. His worship seems to have originated in one of the most ancient settlements in the town of Nubt (Kom Ombo), in upper (southern) Egypt. Nubt (near modern Tukh) lies near the entrance to the Wadi Hammammat, the doorway to the eastern desert and its gold deposits, and the city took its name from the word for gold, Nbt (which also means ruler or lord). As a result Set was sometimes called "He of gold town". Nubt was the most important of the ancient settlements, and was located close to the site of the Naqqada settlement from which this early culture takes its name. Pre-dynastic worship of Set was also evident in the 19th and 19th Nomes of Upper Egypt. The standard for the 11th Nome is topped by a Set animal, and the name of the main town, Sha-shtp, means "The pig (Set) is pacified", and Set was worshipped in his form as a fish in the capital of the 19th Nome. At this point in history, Set was clearly associated with Upper Egypt and was a popular and esteemed god. However, by the Second Intermediate Period he

was associated with the Hyksos (who probably saw a similarity between Set and Baal) and so he became seen as a force for evil. He was then "rehabilitated" during the Nineteenth Dynasty pharaohs (notably Seti I whose name means "man of Set") only to be recast as an evil deity by Greek, Roman and Christian theologists. Set was the black boar who swallowed the moon each month, obscuring its light. He was also identified with the hippopotamus, crocodiles, scorpions, turtles, pigs and donkeys - all animals which were considered to be unclean or dangerous. Some fish were considered to be sacred to Set (most notably the Nile carp and the Oxyrynchus) as they had apparently eaten the penis of Osiris after Set had dismembered the dead king. However, he was most often depicted as a "Set animal" or a man with the head of a "Set animal". The Set animal (sometimes known as a"Typhonian animal" because of the Greek identification with Typhon) is a dog or jackal like creature, but it is not clear whether it exactly represented an extinct species, or was a mythological beast uniquely associated with Set himself. In the Osirian mythology he was married to Nephthys, but their marriage was not a happy one. However, Set had many other wives/concubines. According to one myth he lived in the Great Bear, a constellation in the northern sky - an area which symbolized darkness, and death. He was restrained with chains and guarded by his wife Taweret, the hippo goddess of childbirth. He was given the two foreign goddesses Anat and Astarte (war goddesses from the Syria-Palestine area and daughters of Ra) as wives in compensation for Ma´at's (or Neith's) ruling that Horus should rule Egypt. However, he had no children, despite being married to the goddess of childbirth and a Cannanite fertility goddess as well as Nephthys and Neith. This was considered to be very unconventional by the Egyptians. Not only was he infertile, but one of his testicles had been torn off by Horus when Set tore out Horus' eye. He only ate lettuce, which was

sacred to the fertility god Min because it secreted a white, milky substance that the Egyptians linked to semen and he was considered to have odd sexual habits. He was bisexual, and tried (and failed) to rape both Horus and Isis.

**Shai**

Shai (also written as Sai, or Shay, and Psais in Greek) was the personification of the concept of fate or destiny in ancient Egypt. His name means "that which is ordained" but is also related to the word "shay" meaning "extent" or "amount". Although genrally "fate" was deemed to be male, there was also a female version of this god known as "shait". The egyptians believed that Shai determined the length of each person’s life and was born with each person at their birth and remained at their side until they faced their final judgement before Osiris in the underworld (the duat). He was an ambivalent deity who could protect or damn a person as he offered a true account of each life in the Hall of Judgement. Even the gods and the pharaohs were in the hands of fate. Ramesses II called himself "Lord of Shai" and Akhenaten stated that "the Aten is the Shai who gives life".

In the instructions of Amenemope the scribe states:

*Do not set your heart upon seeking riches for there is no one who can ignore Shai*

*Do not set your thoughts on external matters: for every man there is his appointed time.*

In his male form Shai was often described as the husband of Renenutet (a goddess of fate and destiny who gave each person their secret name at birth) or Meskhenet (a goddess of childbirth) and the three are often depicted together. Ocassionally all three appear with Shepset, a hippopotamus goddess of childbirth. Shai was generally depicted as a man, a cobra or a man with the head of a snake. Ocassionally he was depicted as a birth brick with a human head. Although there was a specific cult devoted to Shai we know little about their

activities and no temple so far discovered is dedicated specifically to his worship. The Greeks associated Shai with their god Agathodaemon, the god of southsaying and fortune telling. They often depicted Shai as a pig with the head of a serpent because Shai is also the word for pig and Agathodaemon was a serpent god.

**Shu**

Shu (Su) was the god of light and air and as such personified the wind and the earth´s atmosphere. As the god of light he represented illuminated the primordial darkness and marked the separation between day and night and between the world of the living and the world of the dead. As the god of air, he represented the space between the earth and the heavens, and gave the breath of life to all living creatures. As a god of the wind, sailors invoked him to provide the good wind to power their boats. The clouds were considered to be his bones, and he supported the ladder by which the deceased souls could reach the heavens. Shu was one of the Ennead of Heliopolis, and the first to be created by the self-created god Atum who created him from his own spittle. He was the husband and brother of Tefnut (moisture), and father of the Nut (sky) and Geb (earth). It was thought that his children were infatuated with each other, and remained locked in a perpetual embrace. Shu intervened and held Nut (the sky) above him separating her from his son Geb (the earth). Thus Shu created the atmosphere which allowed life to flourish. Four pillars located at the cardinal points of the world helped Shu maintain the separation of earth and sky, and were known as the "Pillars of Shu".Although he embodied light, and so had a solar aspect, he was not strictly a solar deity. However, he was closely connected to the sun god, Ra (or Atum). He protected the sun god from the snake-demon Apep as he travelled through the underworld or the night sky, and brought the sun to life every morning. He was also thought to be the

second divine pharaoh, ruling after Ra. However, Apep´s followers plotted his downfall and launched a vicious attack against the divine Pharaoh. Although Shu defeated Apep and his minions, he became gravely ill from the contact with the corrupt entities. In his weakened state even his own son Geb turned against him, and so Shu abdicated the throne leaving Geb to rule in his place. He returned to the skies to protect the sun and to wage his daily battle with Apep. However, (in common with many of the protective deities) he had a darker side. He attended the judgement of each dead soul in the Halls of Ma´at (order or justice) and led the terrifying demons who punished the souls deemed to be corrupt.

His name is thought to be derived from the word for dryness "shu", the root of words such as "dry", "parched", "withered", "sunlight" and "empty". However, it is also proposed that his name means "He who rises up". He was generally depicted as a man wearing a headdress composed of ostrich feathers, carrying a sceptre (representing power) and an Ankh (representing the breath of life). Alternatively, he wore a headdress of a single ostrich feather (like that of Ma´at) which represented the breath of life. Occasionally, he wore a sun disk on his head due to his connection with the sun god. His skin was often painted black, possibly to represent his connection with Nubia or to emphasise his role in the rebirth of the sun god. He is commonly shown standing on the body of Geb with his arms raised to support Nut. When he is linked with his wife Tefnut, he often appears as a lion and the two were known as the "twin lion gods". Less often he is given the hind parts of a lion and the body and head of a man. In one myth, Shu and Tefnut went to explore the waters of Nun. Ra missed them dreadfully and believed that they were lost to him, so he sent his "Eye" to find them. When they returned, Ra wept, and created the first humans from his tears. Another myth states that the "Eye of Ra" (in this

case Tefnut) left for Nubia following a dispute with Ra. Thoth and Shu were sent to persuade her to return so that she could protect her father. When he successfully persuaded her to return, Shu was married to Tefnut. Because of this he was closely associated with the hunter god Anuhur (meaning "he who brings back the distant one") whose wife Menhet (who was also depicted as a lioness) also disappeared to Nubia and had to be brought home again. Shu was also identified with a fairly obscure Meroitic god named "Ari-hes-nefer" (or Arensnuphis to the Greeks) who also took the form of a lion. The Egyptian and Nubian kings often had themselves depicted as Shu, as the first born of the sun god and a divine ruler.There is no record of any temple specifically dedicated to Shu, but he was respected and revered all over Egypt. At Iunet (Dendera), though, there was a part of the city known as "The House of Shu" (shw-w-ntr) and at Djeba (Utes-Hor, Behde, Edfu) there was a place known as "The Seat of Shu" (shw-w) and he was worshiped in connection with the Ennead at Iunu. His main sanctuary was in Nay-ta-hut, (now known as tell el-Yahudiya, or the mound of the Jews) where he and his wife Tefnu, was worshipped in their leonine forms. The Greeks renamed the city Leontopolis because of their popularity in the area. A local creation myth stated that they first took form as a pair of lion cubs and grew into the two lions that guarded the eastern and western borders (linking Shu and Tefnut with Aker). In this form Shu and Tefnut often appeared on headrests to protect the owner as they slept (such as the ivory example from the tomb of Tutankhamun).During the "Aten heresy" led by Akhenaten, Shu and Tefnut remained popular with the apparently monotheistic Pharaoh. The Pharaoh and his queen (Nefertiti) were depicted as the personification of Shu and Tefnut emphasising their divinity. As the Aten represented

the sun disk, the solar aspect of Shu and his link with the Pharaoh apparently prevented Shu from being proscribed along with Amun and the other gods.

**Sobek**

Sobek (also known as Sebek, Sebek-Ra, Sobeq, Suchos, Sobki, and Soknopais) was the ancient god of crocodiles. He is first mentioned in the Pyramid Texts and his worship continued until the Roman period. Some sects believed that Sobek was the creator of the world who arose from the "Dark Water" and created the order in the universe. Sobek was a god of the Nile who brought fertility to the land. As the "Lord of the Waters" he was thought to have risen from the primeval waters of Nun to create the world and made the Nile from his sweat. One creation myth stated that Sobek laid eggs on the bank of the waters of Nun thus creating the world. However, as well as being a force for creation, he was seen as an unpredictable deity who sometimes allied himself with the forces of Chaos. Sobek first appeared in the Old Kingdom as the son of Neith with the epithet "The Rager". According to some myths his father was Set, the god of thunder and chaos, but he also had a close association with Horus. He was paired with a number of goddesses in different locations, most notably Hathor, Renenutet, Heqet and Taweret, and was sometimes referred to as the father of Khonsu, Horus or Khnum. In some areas, a tame crocodile was worshiped as the earthly embodiment of Sobek himself, while in other places crocodiles were reviled, hunted and killed. It seems likely that Sobek began as a dark god who had to be appeased, but that his protective qualities and his strength were valued when they were used in defence of the Pharaoh and the people. He could protect the justified dead in the netherworld, restoring their sight and reviving their senses. Because of his ferocity, he was considered to be the patron of the army. Sobek was sometimes considered to be an

aspect of Horus because Horus took the form of a crocodile to retrieve the parts of Osiris' body which were lost in the Nile. Yet Sobek was also thought to have assisted Isis when she gave birth to Horus. He also rescued the four mummiform sons of Horus (Imsety the human headed protector of the liver, Hapy the baboon headed protector of the lungs, Duamutef the jackal headed protector of the stomach and Qebehsenuef the falcon headed protector of the intestines) by gathering them in a net when they rose from the waters in a lotus bloom. However, he was also associated with Set, the enemy of Osiris. He was also worshiped as the manifestation of Amun-Re and was often depicted wearing either the headdress of Amun or the sun disk of Ra. The strength and speed of the crocodile was thought to be symbolic of the power of the Pharaoh, and the word "sovereign" was written with the hieroglyph of a crocodile. It was thought that Sobek could protect the Pharaoh from dark magic. During the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties, the cult of Sobek was given particular prominence and a number of rulers incorporated him in their coronation names. He was depicted as a crocodile, a mummified crocodile or a man with the head of a crocodile. He often wore a plumed headdress with a horned sun disk or the atef crown (associating him with Amon-Ra) and carried the Was sceptre (representing power) and the Ankh (representing the breath of life). Mummified crocodiles representing the god have been found in many ancient tombs. The Egyptians mummified both infant and mature crocodiles and even interred crocodile eggs and foetuses with the deceased in order to enlist the protection of Sobek in the afterlife. Sobek was known as the Lord of Faiyum, and it is thought that his worship originated in that area. In particular, he was very popular in the city of Arsinoe (known as Shedyet by the Egyptians) near the Faiyum, causing the Greeks to rename the city Crocodilopolis. There is a twelfth dynasty temple at

Medinet Madi dedicated to Sobek, his wife Renenutet (the snake goddess who was the protector of the harvest and granaries), and Horus. The temple was originally built by Amenemhet III and Amenemhet IV, but restored during the New Kingdom and expanded during the Ptolemaic period. Tame crocodiles were kept in a sacred pool and hand fed choice cuts of meat and honey cakes and adorned with precious jewels. However, worship of the god extended to Thebes and Kom Ombo where there was a dual temple dedicated to Sobek and Horus. The left (northern) side was dedicated to Horus the elder (as opposed to Horus son of Isis) while the right side (southern) was dedicated to Sobek. Each temple has its own entrance, chapels and its own dedicated priests. The temple was constructed during the Ptolemaic period, but there is evidence of an older structure at that location which may date from the New Kingdom. In the temple of Kom Ombo, Horus appears with his wife Tesentefert (the good sister) and his son Panebtawy (the child god) while Sobek appears with Hathor (who is more often considered to be the wife of Horus the elder) and his son Khonsu (usually considered to be the son of Amun and Mut).

**Sokar**

Sokar (also known as Seker and in Greek, Sokaris or Socharis) was the Memphite god of the dead, but he was also the patron of the workers who built the necropolis and the craftsmen who made tomb artefacts and of those who made ritual objects and substances used in mummification.The meaning of his name is unclear. It may be derived from the term "skr" (meaning "cleaning the mouth") mentioned in the Coffin Texts and in writings relating to the "Opening of the Mouth" ceremony (one of the funerary rituals). However, others suggest that it relates to the phrase "sy-k-ri" ("hurry to me") which was the cry for help uttered by Osiris to Isis, and others suggest it means "the adorned

one". He was known by the epithet "he of Rosetau". This refers to the area around the Giza pyramids, but also related more generally to any necropolis and to the entrance to the underworld. He is also known as the "lord of the mysterious region" (the underworld) and the "great god with his two wings opened" - referring to his origins as a hawk deity. Memphis was the primary cult centre of god. On the 26th day of 4th month of akhet (sowing), the festival of Sokar (Choiak) was held there. Egyptians performed the rituals of hoeing the earth and driving cattle, implying that Sokar was also an agricultural deity, and a huge statue of the god was carried around on a Henu barque (a boat with a high prow shaped like a horned oryx and a funerary chest). By the Middle Kingdom, the festival incorporated Osirian aspects of festivals in Abydos, and by the New Kingdom, the festival had expanded to Thebes, where it rivalled the great Opet Festival. It is thought that the festival celebrated the rebirth of Osiris and stressed the continuity of Pharonic power.He was initially worshiped as a totem, and then as a personified hawk or falcon. However, during the Old Kingdom he was generally depicted on a throne with Was (power) sceptre and an Ankh (life), and by the New Kingdom he was depicted hawk-headed mummy with Was sceptre (representing power), a flail and a crook. He usually stands on a funerary mound (which may represent the primeval mound) and wears a sun disc, cows horns and the regal cobras (similar to the Atef-crown), although in certain situations he wears the White Crown. As a falcon deity, he is often related to Horus, and wears the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. From the middle kingdom he was merged with Ptah. Ptah-Sokar represented the soil and its power to create life. As Ptah was considered to be the patron of artisans, Sokar became specifically the patron of goldsmiths. Soon after, Sokar became associated with Osiris as the composite deity, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris. This composite

deity represented the three aspects of the universe: creation, stability, and death. In the New Kingdom Period, in the Book of the Dead, Sokar unites the forms of Osiris and Ptah. Ptah-Sokar became Sokar-Osiris (the nocturnal sun during the fourth and fifth hours of the Amduat). The priests of Sokar retained the same titles as the Memphite priests of Ptah had used during the Old Kingdom, but now they almost always refer to the high priests of Heliopolis. Ptah-Sokar-Osiris is generally depicted as a mummiform hawk bearing the regalia of kingship. However, he was also represented as pygmy with a scarab beetle on his head (representing Kheper). It is thought that these images of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris were the source of the deity called Pataikos by Herodotus. Although Ptah-Sokar was married to Sekhmet, Sokar was sometimes linked to Nephthys. The Amduat ("that which is in the netherworld") describes the underworld in terms of the journey of Ra travels through twelve hours (or stages). Sokar inhabits hours four and five of the underworld. During the fourth hour, Ra enters the desert of Rostau. The river becomes a dry bed littered with dangerous snakes and the path is repeatedly blocked by huge doors. Ra´s barque is transformed into a fire breathing snake and Thoth and Sokar protect the sun god as he makes his slow progress through the desert. In the fifth hour, the sun must pass over the cave of Sokar. Inside the cave, Sokar restrains the winged serpent Apep, representing chaos. The cave of Sokar is guarded by Aker lions. These depictions have led some to speculate that Rostau was located near Gebel Gibli, close to the Great Pyramid, and that an actual Tomb of Sokar is yet to be found under the sand close to the mysterious gateway and enclosure wall known as the "Wall of the Crow". So far, no evidence has either proved or discounted this theory.

**Sopdu**

Sopdu (Soped, Sopedu) was a god of war associated with the eastern borders and the eastern Desert,

known as the "lord of the east". He was sometimes associated with the planet Venus, but was generally a solar god, closely associated with the sun, which rises in the east, and represented the scorching heat of the sun. He patrolled the border and protected the turquoise mines in the Sinai. He was also thought to protect the mouth of the deceased. His name was written with the hieroglyph of a thorn and can be translated as "skilled man" or "skilled ones". However, it could also mean "sharp ones". The sign itself was called "the tooth" by the Egyptians giving his name a possible third meaning of "the teeth". He was the son of Sopdet (Sirius) and Sahu (Orion) who in turn were associated with Isis and Osiris respectively. According to the Pyramid Texts, the composite deity known as Sopdu-Horus was the child of the Pharaoh (as Sahu/Osiris) and Isis (as Sopdet). As a war god he was closely associated with the Pharaoh (and Horus, the Patron god of the kings) during the Middle Kingdom. His association with Horus also related to the fact that both were hawk gods, and Sopdu was given the epithet "sharp of teeth" with reference to the bird of prey and to the hieroglyph used in his name. By the New Kingdom he was known as Hor-Sopdu (or Har-Septu), and considered to be an aspect of Horus rather than an individual god. He was generally depicted as a crouching falcon or as an Asiatic warrior wearing a shemset girdle, a crown with two tall plumes and carrying an axe. His primary cult centre was at Saft el-Henna in the north-eastern Nile delta, but he was also worshipped at the turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadim.

**Thoth**

Thoth (Tehuty, Djehuty, Tahuti, Tehuti, Zehuti, Techu, Tetu) was one of the earlier Egyptian gods. He was popular throughout Egypt, but was particularly venerated in Khnum (Hermopolis Magna) where he was worshipped as part of the Ogdoad. As the power of his cult grew, the myth was rewritten to make Thoth the creator god.

According to this variant, Thoth (in the form of an ibis, one of his sacred animals) laid an egg from which Ra (Atum, Nefertum, or khepri) was born. Other myths suggest that Thoth created himself through the power of language (in an interesting parallel to the phrase in the Gospel according to St John "in the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"). His song was thought to have created eight deities of the Ogdoad (the gods Nun, Heh, Kuk and Amun and the goddesses Nunet, Hauhet, Kuaket and Amaunet). The moon and the sun were initially thought of as the left and right eyes of Horus. According to legend, Horus' left eye (the moon) was injured in a fight with Set and was restored by Thoth ("the eye of Horus"). However, as time progressed the moon came to be associated with Thoth, possibly because the crescent moon resembled the beak of an Ibis. During the Late period Thoth gained prominence when Khnum (Hermopolis Magna) became the capital. Archeologists found thousands of mummified ibis who were buried with honour in his name. Although Osiris and Isis were generally credited with bringing civilisation to mankind, Thoth was also thought to have invented writing, medicine, magic, and the Egyptian´s civil and religious practices. He was even credited with the invention of music, which was more often associated with Hathor. Thoth was the patron of scribes and of the written word. He was scribe of the underworld who recorded the verdict on the deceased in the hall of Ma´at and was given the epithets "He who Balances", "God of the Equilibrium" and "Master of the Balance". Thoth maintained the library of the gods with the help of his wife, Seshat (the goddess of writing). He was the scribe of the gods, and was often described as the "Lord of the Divine Body", "Scribe of the Company of the Gods", the "voice of Ra" or the "counsellor of Ra" who (along with Ma'at) stood on the sun barge next to Ra on his nightly voyage across the sky. It

was also thought that Ra gave Thoth and area of the underworld to rule in the "Land of the Caves", He kept a register of those in his realm and decreed just punishments for their transgressions and acted as Ra´s representative in the afterlife. In this role, his wife was Ma´at. It was said that he was the author of the spells in the "Book of the Dead" and "Book of Breathings" (which was also attributed to Isis) and he was given the grand title, the "Author of Every Work on Every Branch of Knowledge, Both Human and Divine". Egyptian mythology speaks of the "Book of Thoth" in which the god inscribed all of the secrets of the universe. Anyone who read it would become the most powerful sorcerer in the world, but would be cursed by their knowledge. Needless to say, people have been searching for this text despite the warning, and some more "colourful" theories propose that it is hidden in a secret chamber in or near the Great Pyramid. This book is said by some to be the "emerald tablets of Thoth" a work of dubious authenticity which suggests that Thoth and the other gods were from Atlantis. Thoth was a great magician who knew "all that is hidden under the heavenly vault". He used his knowledge to help Isis after the murder of her husband Osiris by his brother Set. With the help of Anubis he created the first mummification ritual and helped resurrect Osiris (albeit in the land of the Dead). He also protected Isis´s son Horus by driving a magical poison from his body when he was very young and supported him in his fight to gain the throne which was rightfully his.Many of the Egyptians religious and civil rituals were organised according to a lunar calendar. As Thoth was associated with writing and with the moon it is perhaps unsurprising that he was also linked to the creation of the calendar. As his association with the moon waned, he developed into a god of wisdom, magic and the measurement of time. Similarly he was considered to measure and record time. He was known by the epithets; "the One who Made Calculations Concerning the Heavens, the Stars and

the Earth", "the Reckoner of Time and of Seasons" and "the one who Measured out the Heavens and Planned the Earth". Thoth was thought to be the inventor of the 365-day calendar (which replaced the inaccurate 360 day calendar). According to myth, he earned the extra days by gambling with the moon (Iabet or Khonsu) in a game of dice to help the goddess Nut. She was pregnant by her brother / husband Geb but Ra forbade her to give birth on any day of the Egyptian calendar. Thoth won a portion of light from the moon (1/72) which equated to five new days, and Nut gave birth to her five children on those days (Osiris, Horus the Elder, Set, Isis and Nephthys).He was also known as a good counsellor and persuasive speaker. In one version of an ancient myth Thoth and Shu were sent by Ra to persuade the "eye of Ra" (in this version usually in the form of Tefnut) to come home when she left Egypt for Nubia. According to the myth, all of the precious water left Egypt with her causing the land to become parched and dry. Meanwhile she was rampaging around Nubia killing animals and humans and drinking their blood. Thoth and Shu disguised themselves as baboons (an animal sacred to Thoth) and began their search for the wayward goddess. However, when they found her she refused to come home because she was perfectly happy where she was. Thoth told her that Egypt missed her terribly and that the whole land was suffering in her absence and he promised her great processions and celebrations if she would come home. Eventually she agreed, won round by his extravagant tales and the three returned to Egypt accompanied by Nubian musicians, dancers and baboons. They travelled up the Nile from city to city, bringing back the water, and there was much rejoicing. He was said to be the husband (or sometimes father) of Seshat, an ancient goddess of wisdom. As time passed he gradually absorbed most of Seshat´s roles, and she was seen largely as his female aspect. They had a child called Hornub.

At Khnum (Hermopolis) he was the husband of Nehmauit (Nahmauit, Nehmetaway), goddess of protection. Their child was the god Neferhor. He was also sometimes considered to be the husband of Ma´at. Because he could take the form of a baboon, he was sometimes described as the partner of Astennu (one of the male baboons who lived in the underworld), although it was also stated that Astennu was simply an aspect of Thoth. He was most often depicted as a man with the head of an ibis. He often holds a scribe's palette and stylus but could also be depicted with an ankh (representing life) and a sceptre (representing power). Thoth sometimes wore a crescent moon on his head, but was also depicted wearing the Atef crown, and the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. When he was acting as the "voice of Ra", he carried the "Eye of Ra" (a symbol of the power of the sun). Occasionally he was depicted as an ibis, or a baboon. It is thought that the bird was associated with the moon because of its crescent shaped beak, and the baboon is nocturnal animal which has the peculiar habit of chattering at the sun every day before going to sleep. The Greeks associated Thoth with the messenger god Hermes. The two deities were combined to form Hermes Trismegistus and Khmun was renamed Hermopolis ("city of Hermes"). This version of Thoth remains popular with occultists today.

**Wepwawet**

Wepwawet (Upuaut, Wep-wawet, and Ophois) was an ancient canine god whose worship originated in Upper Egypt. He was one of the earliest of the gods to be worshipped at Abydos, possibly predating (and absorbing) that of Khentyamentiu (another god of the Abydos necropolis). By the Old Kingdom he was popular throughout Egypt, but as Osiris grew in popularity (absorbing both Khentyamentiu and Wepwawet) Anubis took on his funerary role. However, he was not entirely absorbed. His standard was associated with Upper Egypt and was

given the honour of going before the king during many ritual processions. During the New Kingdom his standard even preceded that of Osiris and the "procession of Wepwawet" initiated the mysteries of Osiris as a god of the dead. His name means "the opener of the ways (roads)". This is thought to refer to the paths through the underworld, but may also refer to the choices or paths taken life as he also seems to have been linked to the power of the living pharaoh. In the "Book of the Dead" and the book of "That Which Is in the Underworld" (Amduat) he leads the deceased through the underworld and guards over them on their perilous journey, but he was also thought to act as a scout for the army, "opening a path" to allow them to proceed. According to some traditions, it was Wepwawet and not Anubis or Ptah who devised the "opening of the mouth" ceremony which ensured that the person would have the enjoyment of all his faculties in the afterlife. However, he also accompanied the king when he was hunting and was given the epithet, "the one with the sharp arrow who is more powerful than the gods." More recently, his name (Upuaut) was given highly appropriately to the tiny robot used to investigate the "air shafts" in the Great Pyramid. Wepwawet may also have symbolized the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. In royal processions his standard was paired with the Apis Bull (representing Lower Egypt). Yet in one inscription the location of his birth is claimed to be the temple of the goddess Wadjet in Buto (in the Delta). It seems that this was a political move as all other evidence suggests that he had Upper Egyptian origins. He was generally depicted as a canine or a man with the head of a canine. There is some debate as to whether he is in fact a wolf. Unlike Anubis, he is often depicted with a grey or white head, and the Greeks named Thirteenth nome of Upper Egypt Lycopolis (Wolf town) in his honour. Some scholars argue that he was a jackal and others that he was originally a wolf

but was merged with Anubis, and so became seen as a jackal-headed god. He was often depicted alongside the uraeus (royal cobra) and a "shedshed" standard. A good example of this can be seen on the Pre-Dynastic Narmer macehead. His relationships with the other gods were confused by the merging and shifting of roles throughout Egyptian history. He was closely associated with Anubis who was originally part of the Ogdoad of Hermopolis, and came to be seen as his son. However, he was also linked to the god Shu of the Ennead of Heliopolis by the epithet "he who has separated the sky from the earth". When the two theologies merged and Anubis made way for Osiris the idea developed that Osiris was the father of Anubis (although his mother was generally not described as Osiris´ wife Isis but rather her sister Nephythys). To complicate matters further, Wepwawet was sometimes called the "son of Isis" and identified as Horus (and therefore the pharaoh) although she was also seen as the grand-daughter of Shu and the step-mother of Anubis according to the Heliopolitan tradition.