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Milk
in ancient Egyptian religion



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Abstract

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This paper deals with the many uses of milk in ancient Egyptian religious rituals and imagery, as well as its use as a medical and magical agent in healing a select number of ailments.

The paper presents the evidence for milk as a means of confirming the legitimacy of the king, particularly in relationship to the symbolic suckling of the king by various goddesses. The role of milk in various festivals is described, as well as its role in the coronation.

Milk is also part of the cult of the dead, whose resurrection is associated with the milk of various goddesses. The Daily Ritual performed for Osiris on the island of Bigge in the Late Period gives milk a special role as an offering to the dead god. The imagery found on the sarcophagi of the Deir el-Bahri priestesses of Hathor from the 11th dynasty illustrates the use of milk as an appropriate offering to the dead with the imagery of the cattle being milked.

Milk, identified as that of a female deity, can be used for treating eye disease and burns, citing mythic parallels. The White Eye of Horus is associated with milk and has similar healing capacities.

Milk is used for the protection of the temple, as well as for libation, occurring also as a ritual offering in the temple.

There are also a few examples where milk is cited as a forbidden substance. In Greco-Roman times there is evidence that milk was thought to be transformed blood.

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1 Introduction

Milk is the source of life and is significant in the religious life of the Egyptians. This paper investigates the use of milk as a substance and symbol in the texts and images of ancient Egypt.

In many species lactose intolerance develops after weaning, as the need for the sugar in the milk is no longer needed. Some human populations developed a mutation that made them lactose tolerant. The earliest mutation of this type in Africa is found as far back as 6800 years ago in the Nilo-Saharan population that includes the Beja population in Sudan (Wade 2006).

The Egyptians regarded milk as a delicacy. Milk was included as an offering to the dead. This is shown by its occurrence in the offering lists as well as as an example of a grave gift of milk in the tomb of Kha at Deir el-Medina (Manniche 1989: 40). Its role as vital nourishment for desert peoples is illustrated by the passage in the literary tale *Sinuhe* in which he is given boiled milk to revive him after a journey in the desert (B27, Lichtheim 1975: 224).

1.1 Aim and method

The aim of this paper is to investigate the significance of milk in different contexts, such as temple and funerary rituals. In order to accomplish this goal a corpus of pictorial and textual references to milk has been assembled. This corpus provides the basis for establishing a pattern of usage of milk as a medium for life. The analysis of this corpus has resulted in five distinct areas in which milk is found, beginning with milk for the living (Chapter 2) and the dead (Chapter 3). Milk is used in the temples (Chapter 4) and for healing (Chapter 5). Finally milk is found as a forbidden substance (Chapter 6). The various functions of milk, as stated in the texts, are discussed under each heading. The conclusion (Chapter 7) summarizes the findings described in its section.

1.2 Previous research

There has been little research that has focused on the religious aspects of milk in Ancient Egypt. Lefebvre (1960) in "Lait de Vache et Autres Laites en Égypte" writes about the milk of various animals in Ancient Egypt, without focusing on the religious perspective. The religious aspect is taken up in discussions of specific rituals involving milk. Junker (1913) in *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton* concentrates on a Graeco-Roman ritual on the island of Bigge where daily offerings of milk to Osiris occurred. Another early study is that of Schott (1937) "Das Löschen von Fackeln in Milch" that draws attention to a ritual involving putting out torches in basins filled with milk.

The most specific studies to deal with milk as mediums of resurrection are two articles by Leclant (1951, 1958), with one treating the use of milk in the coronation ceremonies and the other milk in the Pyramid Texts as a medium of resurrection. A more general study of the religious use of milk in the Ancient Near East is that of Keel (1980) entitled *Das Bockelien in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes*.

The association of milk and specific goddesses is discussed in monographs such as Münster (1968: 10-14) with regards to Isis and Nephtys, Pinch (1993: 173-175, 178- 181, 257, 278, 293, 312-315, 318), with regards to Hathor and Billing (2002: 360, 378) when treating Nut, particularly as a goddess providing milk. All of these studies emphasize the role of these goddesses as nursing mothers.

Brunner (1964) in his *Die Geburt des Göttekönigs* writes about the rituals and iconography involving the birth and legitimization of the king and includes suckling as a means by which the king received divinity from the gods. Feucht (1984: 404) considers the importance of milk as a means of resurrection in ancient Egyptian religion.

The use of milk in medicine, that also incorporates mythological allusions, is discussed in works such as Leca (1971: 339) *La Médecine Égyptienne au Temps des pharaons* where the anthropomorphic jars, in which the milk was placed, as well as the medical use of specifically Isis's milk, is treated. These jars had been previously described by Desroches-Noblecourt (1952) in "Pots Anthropomorphes et Recettes Magico-Médicales dans L'Égypte Ancienne".

1.3 Sources

The sources used in this paper are both textual and pictorial. The earliest written sources dating to the Old Kingdom are the Pyramid Texts. The first images illustrating the divine nature of milk come from the reigns of the 5th dynasty kings Sahure and Unas (Borchardt 1913: Pl 18; Robins 1997: 59, Fig. 52). The latest sources cited here date from the Ptolemaic (Fig 10; Fig 19; Leitz 2001: 200; Bell 1985: 272), and the Roman periods (Parlasca 1966 82, 157- 158 *Tafel* 34, 2; Berlin Museum Äg. Inv. 13277).

The analysis is not diachronic, but thematic. Pictorial material, with textual commentaries, depicting rituals are of importance in the corpus, particularly for Section 2 that treats the significance of milk in ritual for the living. Section 3, which deals with the funerary use of milk, relies on the Pyramid Texts from the Old Kingdom, the Coffin Texts from the Middle Kingdom, as well as on texts and images from temples and tombs.

The medical text corpus (pBerlin 3027, pEbers 368, 384, 408, 500, pLondon 10059, pEdwin Smith), is the primary source for the discussion of the mytho-medicinal use of milk. Some magical texts have also been used, such as the Contendings of Horus and Seth, Papyrus Jumilac and the Pyramid Texts (PT 406).

1.4 Terminology

The basic word for milk is *irtt*. It is easily identifiable by the use of the small milk jar 𓆓 as determinative that is found as W20 in Gardiner's Sign List (Gardiner 1957: 530). Faulkner (1999: 28) cites three variant writings 𓆓 (PT §32); 𓆓 (Urk. IV 188: 11) and 𓆓 (Sinuhe B27). A Graeco-Roman form is written with one -t 𓆓 (*Wb* I, 117). The term *irtt*, written distinctively with 𓆓 and 𓆓 signs with the phonetic value *w3s* ("dominion", cf. Faulkner 1999: 54), with the meaning milk or cream is also found (𓆓 ; 𓆓 cf. Faulkner 1999:7; *Wb* I: 27).

Other terms used for milk are descriptive. Faulkner (1999: 177) cites 𓆓 𓆓 𓆓 *hs3*, as a

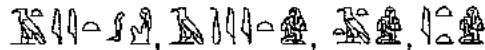
word for milk found in CT (I, 168), but in other sources with the meaning mucus and dough. A reference to the cow goddess is found in the term $\text{𐎎𐎗𐎗𐎗𐎗𐎗} = \text{ḥdt ḥs3t}$ "the white thing of Hesaf" (Faulkner 1999: 177 citing the MK inscription of Wepwaut, the Elder, Sethe 1924: 73, l. 15).

Ptolemaic terms for milk included $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{nh w3s}$, "life and dominion" ($\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{nh}$; *Wb* I; 204), reflecting the desired result of a milk offering, and $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{bnr}$ "sweet" ($\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{bnr}$; *Wb* I: 463), describing its taste.

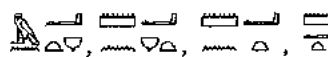
The milk jar was used as a determinative for words meaning milk. There are three terms for this object. The most common is $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mhr}$ 𐎎𐎗 , 𐎎𐎗 , with the related term $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mhn}$ 𐎎𐎗 (Faulkner 1999: 113, cf. *Wb* II: 105), found in MK and NK texts. An earlier term $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mr}$ is found in the same context in the PT citation above (PT 32; Faulkner 1999: 111). There is also a verb $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mhr}$, with the meaning "to milk" (a cow), or "to suckle" (*Wb* II, 115), primarily documented for the Ptolemaic period.

Another area of meaning is found in words that refer to a woman that suckles. One of these terms, $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mn}^r$ (masculine mn^r) may also be applied to a man who is responsible for the upbringing of a child.

$\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{3ty}^r$ nurse (Faulkner 1999: 6; *Wb* I, 23)



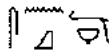
$\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mn}^r$ a nurse. (Faulkner 1999: 108; *Wb* II: 78)



$\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{rnt}$ (wet)- nurse (Faulkner 1999: 150; *Wb* II, 436-437).



$\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{snk}$ -nurse (Faulkner 1999: 234; *Wb* IV, 174-175)



The verbs $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mn}^r$ and $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{3t}$ "to nurse", as well as the verbs $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{rnt}$ "to bring up" (Faulkner 1999: 6, 108, 150; *Wb* I, 23, II 77 and II, 436) and $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{snk}$ (Faulkner 1999: 234; *Wb* IV, 174-175) also mean to suck and suckle and are related to these terms. There is also the verb $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{sd}$ "to suckle" (Faulkner 1999: 273; *Wb* IV:564-565). The terms for breast are $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{bnwy}$ (Faulkner 1999: 83; *Wb* I, 457) and $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mnd}$ (Faulkner 1999: 110, *Wb* II, 92). Terms with the meaning "to milk" (a cow) include $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{mhr}$ (*Wb* II, 115) clearly related to the word for milk jar, its shortened form $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{hr}$ (Faulkner 1999: 159; *Wb* II, 498), as well as the related terms $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{shr}$ (Faulkner 1999: 244; *Wb* IV, 270) and $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{str}$ (*Wb* IV, 295).

Certain deities also have a special relationship to milk, indicated by their name. The god and goddess $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{3ty}$ and $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{3t}$ are often referred to simply as milk deities (Faulkner 1999: 7; *Wb* I, 26). The name of the goddess $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{Rnt}$ means simply "she who nurses". $\text{𐎎𐎗} = \text{Rnwt}$, possibly the same goddess given an alternative name, is, like *Rnt*, depicted as a cobra with breasts. She was also the protector of the harvest.

2 Milk for the Living

Images of goddesses nursing a child on religious monuments are restricted to the depiction of the king, mostly as a child, and later to the God's Wife of Amun. These images represent the child as the divine heir and legitimize the king in that role. Milk also serves to rejuvenate the king during festivals such as the Sed and Opet. The scene in which the God's Wife of Amun is nursed is restricted to coronation scenes and refers to the legitimization of her title.

The goddesses that give milk to the king during coronation and rejuvenation festival scenes are in most cases the same goddesses that give milk to the deceased in the afterlife. Goddesses which most often appear giving milk to the king are Hathor, Isis, Nekhbet, Nut and Wadjet.

2.1 Milk for the king

The milk of the goddess was given to the king both in life and death. Therefore, the two stages can be seen as parallel and sometimes objects or images that depict suckling could have served both in the temple cult and in a funerary context.

Suckling establishes a connection between the ruler and the gods: "The child is to be raised by the deities: Amon immediately sets it on his lap and recognizes his offspring, divine nurses suckle the child, and deities bestow blessings on it" (Assmann 2001: 117).

The scene of the suckling king occurs from the Old Kingdom and forwards. Two of the earliest images of the suckling king are from the 5th dynasty. The funerary temple of Sahure at Abusir (Borchardt 1913: Pl 18), shows the king being suckled by Nekhbet, and a fragmentary piece from Unis's pyramid temple depicts the king suckled by an unidentified goddess (Robins 1997: 59, Fig. 52).

Nekhbet, together with Wadjet, act as nurses for the infant king as the goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt, and provide the milk for the king in his legitimization as the ruler of the land (cf. chapter 2.1.1.1). The intimacy between the goddess and the infant king can be seen in various scenes on temple walls and in texts.

This motif is repeated throughout Egyptian history. For example, almost 1100 years later, in Ramses II's temple at Beit el-Wali, two reliefs show him being suckled by two different goddesses. In the sanctuary of the temple, on the north wall, the goddess Isis suckles the king (Breasted 1905-07: Beit El-Wali, P 2731) Although shown as an adult, he is shorter than the goddess, indicating both subordination and his status as a symbolic child. He wears his emblems and crown, which indicates his legitimacy. The second relief (Breasted 1905-07: Beit El-Wali, P 2732), also on the north wall on the sanctuary, shows the goddess Anukis, the patron goddess of the first cataract, in the same scene although oriented in reverse to that on the opposing wall.

Through the suckling of the goddess, the king received power, victory and rejuvenation, and even though he is depicted as a child, he is already established as a ruler: "Aussi, dans la scène de l'allaitement, le roi, bien que représenté en enfant, est-il généralement à la main le sceptre *hka*, emblème de la domination, ou parfois une massue. Sa tête est parée de la couronne

bleue, la *hprš*' (Leclant 1958:141).

The divine personification of milk is called *Tšt* (cf. above). *Iat* is mentioned only briefly in the Pyramid Texts where she is referred to as the wet nurse of the king (*hnmwt* PT §131d). The male form of the milk deity, similar to *Tšty* (cf. *Wb* I, 26), also appears in Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri (Neville 1896: Pl. LIII) among the king's birth-scenes. A god presents what seem to be the king and her *ka*, while *Iat* stands behind them, identified by a milk jar [♁] on his head.

2.1.1 Milk for the suckling child

The image of the king as child is a fairly common one. Among the variations of these nursing-scenes, one represents the king as an adult, standing next to the goddess, commonly with a height that reaches the goddess's chest (see Figs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 16 and 19) This representation was symbolical and did not represent an actual act of breast feeding (Leclant 1958:136), but rather an idealized image of the king's bond with the world of gods, represented by divine nourishment. He can also be represented as a child, sometimes naked, sitting in the lap of the goddess (See Fig. 17; Bosse-Griffith 1973: Fig.1), or bending down, suckling from the udders of a cow-goddess (See Figs 13 and 14).

The life-giving nature of the milk is clearly expressed on a relief in the Dendera chapel of Mentuhotep II where Hathor utters:

<i>mn[=i] tw m 'njb hrw nb</i>	It is with life that I nurse you every day
(Cairo Museum JE 46068, PM VI: 106, Habachi 1963: 25)	

The chapel was built as a *ka* chapel, for the cult of the king (Habachi 1963: 21). The nursing of the *ka* together with the king can also be found in other sources like Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri where the depiction of her divine birth and suckling is shown (Neville 1896: Pl. LIII). Two Hesats, depicted with cow heads, suckle her together with her *ka* in front of queen Ahmose (Breasted II 1906: 85). Under this are a series of repetitious scenes depicting the nursing of Hatshepsut and her *ka*. Twelve of the king's *ka*'s stand beside them, according to Breasted (1906: 85), they have already been nursed by the goddess. Scenes of the coronation follow the birth scenes. Breasted notes that the coronation scenes are "in uninterrupted continuation of the birth scenes" (1906: 87), which indicates that the same or very similar images of the king nursing was used on more than one occasion and had more than one symbolic purpose. A scene from the temple of Luxor also provides a very similar image. Here it is a scene of Amenhotep III (Brunner 1964: Taf. 12). The similarity to that in Hatshepsut's temple makes it likely that it was copied from her temple. Two goddesses sit and nurse the king, as in the Hatshepsut scene, the difference is that in Hatshepsut's case the goddesses have cow-heads, while in the scenes from Amenhotep III's sequence the goddesses have human heads.

Images from the temple of Seti I at Abydos show several goddesses suckling the king Ramses II (PM VI: 5; Mariette 1869: Pl. 25), one of the images shows the king being suckled four times by Hathor and then held by Isis (Fig. 1). Another image from the same temple (PM VI: 9) shows a goddess suckling the king (Fig. 2). She is sitting on a throne and the king is

standing in front of her. Behind him stands his *ka* (cf. below 2.1.3).

2.1.1.1 Milk for legitimization of the king

The suckling of the king was a regular feature on the monuments of ancient Egypt: "On practically every Ancient Egyptian monument, this motherly function is raised to divine levels: young princes assert their descent from gods by depicting themselves as being suckled by goddesses" (Grivetti 1977: 760).

Through the suckling, the goddesses acknowledge the king as ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt (Helck 1961: 131; Robins 1997: 89), thus receiving divine character and legitimize the king as Horus.

The step from being a prince to becoming a king is a step into a new life, and the new king goes through a transformation (Leclant 1958: 137). This, according to Leclant, is a passage to a new life and this new "birth" is therefore represented with scenes of a suckling king. Nursing goddesses acts like a "passage" to a new stage, and makes the king a part of the divine world (Leclant 1958: 142).

In a text from Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri, Amun commands that the goddesses Nekhbet, Selket, Wadjet, and the Hesat-cow shall nurse the king:

<i>wꜥ.n</i> [<i>Imn</i>] [<i>n=ꜥ</i>] <i>n</i>	Amun has commanded you:
<i>mnꜥ</i> <i>hmt=s</i>	Suckle Her Majesty
<i>hnꜥ</i> <i>kꜣw=s</i> <i>nbw</i>	together with all her <i>kas</i>
<i>m</i> <i>ꜥnh</i> <i>wꜣs</i> <i>nb</i> <i>ꜥꜥ</i> <i>nb</i>	with all life, dominion, all stability,
<i>snb</i> <i>nb</i> <i>ꜣwt</i> <i>ib</i> <i>nb</i>	all health, all joy
<i>trt</i> <i>hh</i> <i>m</i> <i>ꜥꜥꜣwt</i>	(in order) to make millions of years
<i>hr</i> <i>st</i> <i>ꜥHr</i> <i>n</i> <i>ꜥnhw</i> <i>nbw</i> <i>ꜥꜥ</i>	on the Horus-throne of all the living forever
(Urk. IV, 230: 15-17)	

This text is of interest both because it identifies the divine nurses of the king and because the command to suckle is given by Amun, thus emphasizing the suckling of the king as a sign of her legitimization.

Hathor is one of the goddesses most frequently found in the role of nurse, both in human form and as a cow. She is repeatedly depicted as the nurse of Hatshepsut in this king's Hathor chapel at Deir el-Bahri.

<i>sꜣ</i> [<i>=ꜥ</i>] <i>nt</i> <i>hn</i> [<i>=ꜥ</i>] (<i>Mꜣꜥꜥ</i> <i>kꜣ</i> <i>Rꜥ</i>)	[My] daughter of [my] body (Maat-Ka-Ra)
<i>Hr</i> [<i>ꜥ</i>] <i>=ꜥ</i> <i>nt</i> <i>ꜥꜥ</i> <i>m</i>	[My] Horus of white gold,
<i>ink</i> <i>mwt=ꜥ</i> <i>hnrt</i> <i>trꜥꜥ</i>	I am your mother, sweet of milk.
<i>snk</i> <i>n</i> [<i>=ꜥ</i>] <i>hmt=ꜥ</i> <i>m</i> <i>mnꜥ</i> [<i>=ꜥ</i>]	It is with [my] breast that [I] have suckled Your Majesty
<i>ꜥk=sn</i> <i>n=ꜥ</i> <i>m</i> <i>ꜥnh</i> <i>wꜣs</i>	so that they (milk, here plural) may enter into you as life and dominion.
(Urk. IV 237, 13- 237, 17)	

Another scene from the same temple (Neville 1901: Pl XCVI) depicts Hatshepsut with the

Hathor-cow. Hathor is standing in front of the king and is licking her hand. Hathor is described as the one who licked the infant Horus, referring her to as a newborn calf.

<i>hnm[=i] hmt=i m 'nh w3s</i>	It is with life and dominion that [I] embrace Your Majesty
<i>md trt.n[=i] n Hr m hmw 'ss n 3ht bit</i>	like that which [I] did for Horus within the nest of Chemmis
<i>snk.n[=i] hmt=i m mnd=i</i>	It is with my breast that [I] have suckled you
<i>mh.n[=i] tn m 3hw=i</i>	It is with my <i>Akhu</i> that [I] have filled (you)
<i>m mw=i tpn n 'nh w3s</i>	with this my water of life and dominion
(Urk. IV 239, 9-12)	

Both of the citations above refer to milk as consisting of several attributes. In both texts it is referred to as *'nh* and *w3s*. The combined terms *'nh w3s* literally means life and dominion (or power). During the Graeco-Roman period it came to be used as a common epithet, referring to milk for example "*ssp.n.i 'nh w3s r srnp dt(.t)*" (Leitz 2001: 200), "It is in order to rejuvenate me, that I have received the milk." The close association of the two terms may be the result of a kind of "sign-play". The word combination *'nh w3s* includes of the sign \uparrow that could be used in spelling both the nouns *trt* $\uparrow_{\Delta}^{\circ}$ and *bit* $\uparrow_{\Delta}^{\circ}$, both meaning milk. It is also used as a sign in the writing of name of the milk-goddess *Iat* (PT 89b, 131d). It is likely that the textual description of the king receiving *'nh* and *w3s* with the divine milk was later simplified so that the milk itself was called *'nh w3s*. From being a description of the attributes of the milk, the term, when describing that which was given to the king, became a name for milk.

There are other texts that give descriptions of the qualities the king receives through milk. The following texts deal with the term *3h*, difficult to translate but generally referring to spiritualization (cf. e.g. Englund 1978).

<i>dsy r=i m trt=i</i>	Your mouth reaches after my milk
<i>'nh.t[\uparrow] dd.t[\uparrow] lm=sn</i>	you being alive and enduring though it (lit. "them")
<i>3h.ti m=sn</i>	you being <i>akh</i> by it (lit. "them")
<i>spd.ti m=sn</i>	you being effective by it (lit. "them")
(Urk. IV, 240, 1- 240, 4)	

The texts emphasize the relationship between the goddess and the king, and between Horus and the king. The milk that the goddess gives is filled with divine powers (the *3h* of the goddess) and, it further carries the property of effectiveness (*spd*). The function of milk in the coronation and renewal of the king stresses the idea of the king as the child Horus, suckled by a goddess whose milk endows him with divine power.

Hatshepsut's obelisk at Karnak refers to additional nurses, the *wrty hk3w* (Urk. IV, 361) the two great magicians, a reference to the dual crown goddesses. The coronation scene of Hatshepsut (Naville 1901: Pl. CI) depicts the goddess Weret-Hekau stretching out a *menat* to the king. The goddess also participates in the coronation of Horemheb where she was the one to fix the uraeus upon his head (Bell 1985: 273; Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 103).

2.1.2 Milk for the domination of the king

An offering of milk assured the king that he would succeed in battle and that his enemies would be slain before him. A scene from the *ka*-chapel of the 11th dynasty king Mentuhotep II (Figs 3, 4) originally at Dendera (PM VI: 106; Cairo JE 46068) depicts the king standing and suckling Hathor. She says to the king:

<i>hw.n=i sšp[=i] fw ʿwy[=i]</i>	I have come that [I] may take you in [my] arms,
<i>hnm[=i] fw</i>	that [I] may enfold you.
<i>sš Rʿ [Mntw htp] m ʿnh rʿ nb</i>	Son of Ra [Mentuhotep] with life every day
<i>snhn[=i] fw m ttt[=i]</i>	so [I] may rejuvenate you with [my] milk
<i>špr.n[=i] hftwy=k hr=k</i>	That I have felled your enemies is under you.

(Habachi 1963: 24, Fig. 8, here Figs 3 and 4)

The combination of the idea of suckling and military victory is also found in the private 18th dynasty tomb of Kenamun (TT 93; Fig. 5) where a scene depicts Amenhotep II sitting on the lap of his nurse, called *mnʿt wrt*, "Great Nurse". The king has his feet on nine prisoners.

In a long narrative text from Karnak, telling of the military victory of the 23rd dynasty king Osorkon III, the culmination of that victory is described with the words: "His great name was upon his lips even as the milk [of] his [mother]" (Caminos 1958: 20). The return of Osorkon III to Thebes after the battle is described with the words: "He entered it [as] the child of the Lady, accepted her breasts of fine gold and sucked her milk; [it] entered [into him] with life and domination, while she gave to him [her might and] her victory" (translation in Caminos 1958: 20).

Leclant (1958: 141) noted that the king sometimes holds a bird in his hands in scenes of suckling, symbolizing domination over the *rhyt*-people. The divine milk gave the king this dominion through the legitimacy which occurs through the suckling of the goddess. The *rhyt*-bird was a symbol of captive foreign people or subjects of the king (Shaw 2000: 317).

In the inscription from the funerary temple of Amenhotep III it states that the king was nursed in order to dominate the people of the nine bows as well as the *rhyt*-people.

<i>sš=i n ht=i mr=i nb mʿt Rʿ</i>	My son of my body, my beloved Nebmaatre
<i>rw ki=i ʿnh kmš hʿw=i</i>	You are my living image, created from my flesh
<i>ms.n n=k Mwt nb[ti] Išrw m Wʿst</i>	Mut, Mistress of Išrw in Thebes bore you
<i>hn[w]t ni pdt mm.n[=s] tw</i>	The mistress of the nine bows has nursed you
<i>m nb wʿ n rhyt</i>	as the sole lord of the common people.

(Urk. IV 1655, 18-1656, 1)

The Persian king Darius of the 27th dynasty is depicted being nursed by the goddess Neith in the temple of Hibe (Fig. 6). The accompanying text states that she nurses him so that he may assemble the two lands and all *rhyt*-people (Leclant 1958: 141).

2.1.3 Milk for the king at rejuvenation festivals

The function of milk as means of rejuvenation is found in festivals for the king during his reign.

By following these rituals he not only revived himself, but also Egypt itself (Baines, Lesko and Silverman 1991: 59). The festivals included the annual Opet Festival at Luxor (Bell 1985: 251-294) and the Sed Festival, (Barta 1985: 1-3). The purposes of both the festivals were many but one of them was to rejuvenate the king's divine power which resided in the king's *ka* (Bell 1985: 256). The cult of Luxor was foremost the cult of the divinity of the king (Bell 1985: 252), but also had the function of the renewal of Amun, which was also made the result of the king's renewal (Bell 1985: 254 note 5), which thus entailed a symbiosis between the king and the gods. The rituals use the same iconography as that found for the coronation.

The earliest recording of the Sed Festival is from the time of the 1st dynasty king Den (Shaw 2000: 78). It was a festival of renewal and rejuvenation of the king (Shaw 2000: 477), but the original function might have been for the king to claim his territory (Kemp 1991: 213).

Some three thousand years later, in the sanctuary at the Hathor temple at Dendera, Hathor is the provider of milk for the rejuvenation of the king. This is illustrated in the temple texts with phrases such as "...her child has been rejuvenated with her milk (lit. sweetness)" (*srnpt mwn=s m bnr=s*; Leitz 2001: 200). This passage can be read in two ways: either as referring to rejuvenation for the grown, living king, in order to be young again, or as a reference to the rejuvenation of the dead king, making the function of milk in the world of the dead the same as that in the world of the living (cf. Chapter 3 below).

Another text from the Graeco-Roman period is somewhat unusual in that it is the king who speaks about his rejuvenation, as opposed to the more normal form in which it is the goddess that provides milk that makes the speech: "It is in order to rejuvenate myself, that I have received the milk. (*šsp.n=i ḥḥ w3s r srnp dt(=i)*; Leitz 2001: 200, cf. above 2.1.1.1 for a discussion of *ḥḥ w3s*).

The rejuvenating function of milk makes it a useful agent in festivals designed for the king's renewal.

2.1.3.1 Milk in the Opet Festival

The culminating celebration of the annual Opet Festival took place in the temple of Luxor. Amenhotep III describes the temple of Luxor as his birth place and the place for rejuvenation:

<i>lr mnw m Ipt swt n ms nsw</i>	Make the monument of Karnak for the king's birth
<i>st=f pw nt m3't ḥwn=f tm=s</i>	This his true place in which he is rejuvenated.
(Uck. IV 1683, 1-1683, 2)	

The Opet Festival was a celebration and renewal of the king's *ka* (Bell 1985: 251-294), and on the occasion of this festival the public had the opportunity to view and pray before the king's *ka*, in form of statues (Kemp 1991: 206).

In an offering formula, the *ka* of the god desired the milk: "milk, pure white bread, the great offerings that go forth before the Great God, by which his *ka* is content." (Barta 1968: 46, 2h.). Hathor of Dendera offers her milk saying: Giving milk for your *ka* in order to strengthen your limbs (*rdit ḥḥ w3s n k3=s r srwd ḥw=s*) (Leitz 2001: 201). Objects, such as statuettes, that evoke the rejuvenation of the king were also used during such rejuvenation festivals (cf.

Cairo Museum JE 89613; Zayed 1962 Fig. 1 and 4), with that of Ramses II, very likely to have been used. The iconography of the suckling king and the background of the marshes of Chemmis are the usual representation of the rebirth of the king and the link to the birth of Horus and the rebirth of the sun god (see chapter 3.1.1.1 and 3.1.1.3). The statue was probably pulled in processions for the public to see. Pinch (1993: 174) has noted that a relief in the Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri shows a statue being pulled in a procession, and suggests that these types of statues were used at displays during festivals. A painted relief in the temple of Ramses II in Abydos (PM VI: 36) also shows the king being suckled by the Hathor-cow while another image of the king shows him offering animals in front of her.

Another object with dual function was a pendent (Cairo Museum JE 61952) found in the tomb of Tutankhamun (see chapter 3.1.1.2). The pendent represented the coronation of the king, suckled by the throne-goddess *Wrt ḥkꜣw*. As noted above she played an important role in the suckling of the king in coronation ceremonies (Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 103). Judging from the wearable size of this pendent (14 cm long, 7.3 cm wide) and from the motif, this object was very likely to have been used by the king during his lifetime. It could have been used in everyday life, but more likely, during festivals of renewal, for example the Opet Festival. This piece of jewelry was therefore not only a decorative object, but also a representation of the rejuvenation and rebirth of the king, and therefore could very likely been worn by the king in life and after, buried with him in death.

The Opet and Sed Festivals both evoked and used the coronation-scenes. In the Luxor temple, the Birth Room in the south of the temple is of interest for the study of the rituals at the Opet Festival (Bell 1985: 253). The rituals of Opet Festival include the myth of Horus and there are references to the king being conceived, born and nursed by goddesses who coronated and celebrated his jubilees (Bell 1985: 255). The function of the Opet Festival was to celebrate and renew the king (Strudwick 1999: 69) and his *ka* (Bell 1985: 256, Robins 1997: 135) and renew him as the offspring of Amun-Ra (Strudwick 1999: 68).

The images used in performing the rituals were the same as when the king is coronated. One scene shows Amenhotep III, with the lock of youth and holding the *ḥkꜣ*-emblem, suckled by a goddess (Bell 1985: 265 Fig. 3). Bell (1985: 266) believes that this scene depicted an actual ceremony that took place for the purpose of rejuvenating the king's *ka*. In the Roman Vestibule in the Luxor Temple, a scene and text describes how the king is being suckled (Bell 1985: 272). He is called Horus and nurtured in the presence of his father Amun. This is similar to the coronation scene where the king is suckled by a goddess and then presented to Amun. The suckling took place in *ḥwt sr(w)* "Chamber of the Magistracy" (Bell 1985: 272). Amenhotep III describes himself as the offspring of Amun, and is suckled by a goddess in front of his father.

2.1.3.2 Milk in the Sed Festival

The function of the Sed Festival was to rejuvenate the king and his power as a king (Assmann 2001: 19). Images of the king raising a *dd* pillar, a symbol of stability are found in the time of the 18th dynasty king Amenhotep III to be part of the Sed Festival as a symbol of resurrection (Kemp 1991: 216).

On a stela of Ramses III (Fig. 7) from the chapel dedicated to Ptah and Meret-Seger in

Valley of the Queens (PM I: 2, 707), the king stands between Meret-Seger and Ra-Horakhty. His left hand grasps the arm of Meret-Seger. She is holding her right hand behind the king's head, while suckling the king. From the tops of the branches, signs of the Sed Festivals are depicted. Meret-Seger is also shown in a 19th dynasty tomb at Deir el-Medina (Tomb 336), where Ptah stands before Meret-Seger suckling a child (PM I: 1 405).

Both Shesonq and his son Osorkon II have scenes in Karnak where they receive Sed Festivals from Amun-Ra and then are suckled by a goddess (Robins 1997: 198, Fig. 238). This scene represents the function of milk in the king's rejuvenation rituals at the Sed Festival. As with the coronation ceremony and the Opet Festival, the king receives powers of rejuvenation and thus becomes a child. The festivals and the coronation were parallel ideologically and the images that they shared were therefore nearly impossible to distinguish (Leclant 1958: 138).

A fragment of a bowl (Fig. 8), possibly used during rituals, also depicts the king's rejuvenation and according to Tait (1963: 116) it was a representation of the king's Sed Festival celebration. The bowl (Fig. 8), here a reconstruction, depicts the king being purified and rejuvenated. The god Hapy gives him life with the ankh-sign, while the god Bes presents him with the Wadjet eye. Below the sitting king, a cow stands in the marshes, suckling her calf, surrounded by tilapia fish. The tilapia fish and the cow in the marshes are popular representations found in the Nun bowls (see chapter 3.1.1.3). The cow suckling her young in the marshes is a symbol of rebirth and the rejuvenated king is here depicted as the sun god reborn. Tait (1963: 116) suggests this to be a representation of a ritual in the coronation or Sed Festival, and since the Sed Festival is mainly a repetition of the coronation ritual (Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 105). This also gives this bowl a double function. It could have been used in rituals of rejuvenation during the king's lifetime as well as after his death, when it would evoke the rebirth of the deceased king.

The menat necklace in the Sed Festival

The *menat* necklace is a common attribute of Hathor from the New Kingdom and onwards (Barquet 1953: 106). The iconography two examples of the *menat* counterpoise, one from the New Kingdom (EA 20760) and one from the Ptolemaic period (EA 41515), show representations of the face of Hathor and the *sistrum*. On the lower register of both a Hathor cow, with the sun disk between her horns, is standing in the marshes. The cow on the New Kingdom example has marks of stars on her body. This detail of the depiction of a celestial cow could be due to the fact that during the New Kingdom, Hathor became connected with the celestial cow Mehet-Weret (see chapter 3.1.1.3). The *menat* necklace is featured in scenes of suckling of the king (Barquet 1953: 108), and evoked the suckling of Horus in the marshes (Barquet 1953: 104). The *menat* necklace also occurs as a feature in the king's celebration of his Sed-festival, where Hathor wishes him millions of Sed-festivals: "...Hathor, tendant au roi son collier-menat, lui donne <<des millions de jubilees>>..." (Barguet 1953: 109).

The god Ptah-Tatenen wore the *menat* necklace with counterpoise (Barguet 1953: 110-111), and is associated with the Sed Festival by his epithets *wr ḥb* "great of jubilee" and *nḥ sd* "lord of jubilee", and the king identified himself with Ptah-Tatenen during Sed Festivals (Barguet 1953: 111).

2.1.4 Milk in purification of festivals

Scenes from the celebration of the Opet Festival are depicted in detail in the temple of Luxor from the 18th dynasty. In one of the images (Fig. 9) a priest walks in front of the sacred bark. In his left hand, he holds what appears to be a milk jar (Epigraphic Survey 1994: 5, 37) and what might be grass or reeds. In his right hand he is holding up a stick from which a liquid sprinkles down on the road behind him. The liquid, being milk (Wolf 1931: 28), is described in the text above him; *swꜥb wꜣt hr ꜥꜣt nꜥr wꜥb sp 2* "Purifying the road in front of the god. Be pure! Be pure!". It is possible that it is indeed milk depicted in this instance as it is used for cleansing the way before a coffin to its burial place in a 18th dynasty tomb (see chapter 3.3.4). Milk was also used for the purification of the king (see chapter 3.1.3).

2.1.5 Milk for the coronation of God's Wife of Amun

In her coronation and its rituals, the God's Wife of Amun received the divine milk of the goddess. The God's Wife adapted the iconography of the king during the Late Period, and so she and the king were the only ones represented receiving the divine milk by suckling the goddess during their lifetime.

Depicted on the walls of the Osiris chapel *ꜥꜣt ꜥꜣt* in Karnak (Fazzini 1988: 32, Pl XVIII), the God's Wife Shepenwepet I is suckled by Hathor and thereafter crowned by Amun (PM II 1972: 205). This is the usual way in which the king's own coronation was represented. The goddess gives life and divine power to her: "She was suckled by goddess, crowned and thereby elevated to the status of the god's wife by her divine husband..." (Redford 1973: 21).

3. Milk for the Dead

Milk was given to gods, kings and the non-royal dead. The use of milk identified the dead with a child and thus with rejuvenation after death. It is commonly the milk of a goddess. This goddess can be anthropomorphic or take the form of a cow, a cobra or a tree.

Milk can be incorporated into the funerary offering, and thus compared with the libation offering. Libation, commonly performed with water, had a purifying function. Milk is used for purification, and compared with water, natron and incense.

When commoners received the milk of a goddess, they were treated the same as a king, and like for a king, milk was instrumental in the process of regeneration.

3.1 Milk for the king

Texts describing the reborn king come mainly from the Pyramid Texts. However, other sources, such as the Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead, deal with milk as a means of new life. The most useful sources however come from temples, tombs, and grave goods materials. The scenes found in the royal funerary temples often depict the king as an infant, suckling a goddess. Sometimes images in tombs provides us with texts, to further emphasize the meaning behind the scenes, but most often, texts are not found, or perhaps was not needed.

3.1.1 Milk for the suckling child

3.1.1.1 The milk of Isis and Nephthys

The Pyramid Texts (PT) contain several references to the milk of Isis and Nephthys in his rejuvenation, and for his protection.

Isis and Nephthys were both part of the family of Osiris, and they were the ones who assembled the parts of Osiris body (Baines, Lesko and Silverman 1991: 44), making them the protectors of the dead who acted on his behalf in rejuvenating his body.

<i>It N mt n=k mw=k tpn</i>	Father N, take to you this your water,
<i>bsšw</i>	which is protected,
<i>imyw mnd mwt=k 3st</i>	which is in the breast of your mother Isis
<i>Nbt hwt dl.n=f drt=s</i>	Nephthys, she has given him her hand
(PT 1873a- 1873c)	

The Graeco-Roman depiction of Isis and Horus in Philae (Fig. 10) is set in the marshes of Chemmis, a common feature in the suckling of Horus-King by Hathor. These settings are often seen in scenes dealing with Hathor and the king or Hathor or Isis with Horus.

<i>It 3st ndr.n=s mnd=s</i>	Isis comes. She grasps her breast
<i>n s3=s Hr mš hrw</i>	for her son Horus, the triumphant
(PT 2089a)	

<i>nf N pn wrt</i>	This N grasps the white crown
<i>m (w) psdt</i>	from the hand(s) of the Ennead
<i>3t sw 3st snk sw Nbt hwt</i>	Isis nurses him, Nephthys suckles him
(PT 371b-371c)	

The two texts cited above describe two different gestures, associated with providing milk for the king. PT 2089a describes how Isis grasps (*ndr*) her breasts when the dead king reaches the afterworld, and PT 371b- 371c associates the two nursing goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, with the king grasping his crown. This text relates the act of nursing the goddess with receiving the insignia of office, and thus with coronation.

<i>rdl.n Nbt hwt wy=s tr N pn</i>	Nephthys has given her arm to this N
<i>q3.n=s mnd=s tp r n N pn</i>	She has extended her breast to the mouth of this N
(PT 1427c- 1427d)	

<i>mwt mt N 3st</i>	Mother of this N is Isis
<i>mt'f Nbt hwt</i>	His nurse is Nephthys
<i>snk N Sh3t hr</i>	She who suckles N is <i>Sh3t hr</i>
(PT 1374b- 1375 c)	

As a variation, the verb nursing *snk* (Faulkner 1999: 234) is used. The verb does not only mean to suckle, but also to raise the child. This can be related to the idea of the goddesses suckling and bringing up the deceased king, just as the nurses of the royal families took over

that role for the royal child. What is notable in PT 371b- 371c above and 1374b-1375c is that in both texts, Isis is considered the mother but not the one who provides him with milk.

According to Münster (1964: 10-14), Nephthys took over some of the functions of Isis as the nurse of the Horus-King. She was the companion and sister of Isis and a part of the cult of Osiris. The milk is given to the king when he reaches heaven and the milk of Isis had the power to rejuvenate Osiris (see 3.2). In one myth, she brought Horus back to life after he had been murdered and dumped in the Nile (Hopkins 1997: 30-31). The dead king desires the milk of Isis, as it links him to the newborn Horus (Münster 1968: 10) and identifies him with Osiris, the dead who came back to life.

The milk is also compared with water. It is described as protective, a quality which Isis possesses as the great magician who saves her son Horus with her healing milk (see 4.1.1.1).

<i>gs tw it(y)</i>	Rise yourself sovereign
<i>mw=k n=k</i>	your water for you
<i>b^h=k n=k</i>	your abundance for you
<i>irt=k n=k</i>	your milk for you,
<i>imy mnd mwt(=k) 3st</i> (PT 734a- 734b)	which is in the breast of your mother Isis
<i>tt N mt n=k mw=k ipn bs³w</i>	Father N, take to you this your protected water,
<i>imyw mnd mwt=k 3st</i> (PT 1873a- 1873c)	which is in the breast of your mother Isis

In PT 734 and PT 1873 the milk is used as a parallel to water as an offering for the dead. Both water and the milk are connected with the efflux of the dead Osiris, the *rdw* (Winkler 2005: 25-28) and are essential for the dead body in order to be reborn. A vessel in the Petrie Museum (UC 16128; Engelbach 1923: 30, Pl LXXVIII), a red pot with inscriptions on it, further gives indication of the attraction of milk and water for the deceased: the inscription on the pot is a spell intended to provide water, milk, garment, daylight and food for dead.

3.1.1.2 The two goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt

The goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt provided the king with milk during his coronation (see 2.1.1.1, 2.1.3.1). The Pyramid Texts are the main source for this role of Nekhbet and Wadjet and the suckling of the king in the afterlife.

<i>pr N hr=s hr mwt=f</i>	May N go to his mother
<i>T^rt nht tp (n) R^r</i>	Uraeus, she who lives on the head of Ra
<i>mr ib=s n=f</i>	Her heart mourns for him
<i>dt=s n=f mnd=s</i>	She gives her breast to him
<i>snk=f sw</i>	that he may suckle it
<i>s³=i it</i>	saying, my son
<i>m n=k mnd=t pn</i>	take to you this my breast
<i>snk=k sw it</i>	saying, that you may suckle it
(PT 1108c- 1109b)	

<i>iw n=f hr mwtj=f iptwt(y) nrtj</i>	He has come to his two mothers, these two vultures
<i>i3w.ti 3mw dhdt.ti mng</i>	Being long of hair and being pendulous of breasts
<i>tp.ti qw shsh</i>	Being on the top of the <i>shsh</i> -mountain
<i>q3=sn mnd=sn tp r nN</i>	They pass their breasts over the mouth of N
<i>n lon wdj=sn sw dt</i>	they will not wean him forever
(PT 1118b- 1118d)	

The two goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nekhbet and Wadjet nurse the king in the afterlife. According to Leclant (1951: 154) this suckling ensures that the king maintains royal qualities in the after-life. The goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt appear in the Pyramid Texts in the role of nurses of the king to confirm his divinity, just as they established the king's office in his lifetime. The texts also refer to the everlasting state of the king as a child. The goddesses will never wean him, and he will forever be protected and young.

In the tomb of Tutankhamun, a golden pendent was found, depicting the king being suckled by *Wrt hk3w* (Eaton-Krauss and Graefe 1985: 6-7, Pl. VII; Cairo Museum JE 61952). Bosse-Griffiths (1973: 100-108) has identified this *Wrt hk3w* to be Wadjet of Buto. The goddess is nursing the king; he is standing up and dressed as a ruler, not as a child. Bosse-Griffiths identifies this object as belonging to the coronation ceremony: "it seems therefore that the *Wrt hk3w* named so often on the outside of the little golden shrine is the Uraeus goddess Wedjoyet of Buto, the crown goddess who with her divine milk prepares the King for his office" (Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 102). However, the representation and the placement of this object suggest that it could have served more than one purpose, since it was found in a funerary context. Such a pendant could have served both the purpose of being used as a depiction in a coronation-ceremony in life, and as a symbol of resurrection in death, hence its presence in the tomb.

<i>3d.n sw mwt=f B3st</i>	His mother Bastet has nursed him
<i>l3n.n sw hr(y) lb nhb</i>	The one who is in El-Kab has brought him up
<i>rdl.n hr(y) lb dp 3w=s tr=f</i>	The one who is in Buto has given her arm to him
(PT 1111a- 1111c)	
<i>mwt=k hwt t3rt wrt</i>	Your mother is the great <i>hwt</i> Uraeus
<i>hdt 3nt hr(y) lb nhb</i>	The white <i>3nt</i> -crown, who is in El-Kab
<i>b3 s3bt 3wt nh3nh3t mnd</i>	she who is tall of plums and pendulous breasts
(PT 2204a- 2204b)	
<i>n mwt=k ms tw m rmj</i>	Your mother did not give birth to you among mankind
<i>mwt=k sm3t wrt hr(y) lb nhb</i>	Your mother is the great wild cow, who is in El-Kab
<i>hdt 3nt</i>	the white <i>3nt</i> -crown
<i>3w.t(i) 3mw</i>	being long of hair
<i>nh3.t(i) mnd</i>	pendulous of breasts,
<i>smk=s tw</i>	she will nurse you
<i>n wdj=s tw</i>	she will not wean you
(PT 2002c- 2003c)	

<i>n iw n mwt=k m rmj mst iw</i>	(For) there is no mother among mankind who has given birth to you
<i>n iw n it=k m rmj ms iw</i>	(For) there is no father among mankind who has given birth (conceived) you
<i>mwt=k sm3t wrt hr(y) ib nhb</i>	your mother is the great wild cow that is in El-Kab
<i>hdt fnt</i>	the white fnt-crown
<i>3w.t(f) 3wt</i>	being long of feathers
<i>nh3nh3.t(f) mndj</i>	pendulous of breasts,
<i>snk=s iw</i>	she will nurse you
<i>n wdj=s iw</i>	she will not wean you
(PT 728b- 729c)	

These texts state the king's heritage and divinity. It also tells about the king's new state, that of the child, and reassures him that he will remain in that state, as the goddess claims she will not wean him. The nurse here is Bastet and the mother of the king is named as the Wild Cow from El-Kab.

3.1.1.3 The milk of the cow and rebirth in Nun

Texts referring to the birth and suckling by Nut show the desire of the king of being reborn as Ra: *ms wt ml R^c hrw nb* "May I be born like Ra every day" (CT II, 82b). Nut is described as a cow, suckling the newborn Ra/King, swallowing the sun at night and giving birth to him in the morning.


<i>twt is 3h</i>	You are a spirit
<i>msw Nwt</i>	the one who is born by Nut
<i>3nkw Nbr hwt</i>	the one who is suckled by Nephtys
(PT 623a)	
<i>di Nwt wrt wy=s r=f</i>	The great Nut have given her arms to him
<i>3w.t(f) 3bw</i>	She who is long of horns
<i>nh3nh3.t(f) mndj</i>	she with the pendulous breasts
<i>snk=s N pn</i>	she nurses this N
<i>n wdj=s sw</i>	she will not wean him
<i>3d=sn (sic) sw r pt</i>	she will take him to the sky
<i>n pth=s sw ir t3</i>	she will not thrown him down on earth
(PT 1344c- 1345b)	

She repeats the same phrase as the goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt: that she will never wean him, so that he forever will be under her protection and supplied with the life that milk gives to a newborn. Nut was the provider of libations to the deceased in the afterlife, thus providing life for the *ba* of the dead. An image of her (Fig. 11; Altenmüller 1999: 444 fig. 41) stretching over what is probably the temple of Dendera (Altenmüller 1999: 445, Billing 2002: 219) with the sun at her mouth and between her thighs and fluid floating out of her breasts depicts her functions as protector, birth-giver and provider of libation.

The image of a cow in a lotus thicket has been characterized by Pinch as the "cow and lotus"-motif. This motif evoked the connection between Mehet-Weret, the celestial cow and the birth of Ra. She was associated with the Nun-waters, identified as the mother of Ra-Atum and gave birth to him every morning (Pinch 1993: 175-77). Mehet-Weret and Hathor were both identified as the mother and nurse of the sun god and Horus, which resulted in that during the New Kingdom Hathor became identified with Mehet-Weret (Pinch 1993: 175), and the two goddesses became connected to each other (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112-114).

Mehet-Weret gave birth to the deceased in the form of Ra (el-Sayed 1980: 373), and she was closely associated with the Nile (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112).

The king was reborn as Ra in the waters of Nun, or as Horus in Chemmis, which also came to be a place of evoking birth and rebirth for the king (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 110-118).

Another goddess connected with the waters of Nun and with nursing was Taweret. An image of Taweret in human shape suckling Horemheb can be found at his temple in Gebel el-Silsila (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968:209, Fig. 33; Fig. 12). On the right side of the king is a plant similar to the  which is most usually seen as the headpiece of Hapy and representation of the Lower Egypt. Two uraei are depicted, one on this plant, and the other on the back of Taweret's crown. She wears the sun disk with the horns. The king is depicted as a ruling king, with his crown and clothes, but without the flail and hook. The texts above them consists of a recitation of Amun-Ra,

<i>dl[=f] n=k ḥnh ḡd wšs</i>	[f] give to you life, endurance and dominion
<i>sš[=f] mry</i>	[my] beloved son
<i>ḥkš ḥnh nb ḥw</i>	ruler of life, lord of appearances
<i>mry n Imn Hr m ḥb</i>	Beloved of Amun, Horemheb
<i>mw=k T? wrt</i>	Your mother Taweret
<i>sš ḥw=k</i>	(for) protection of your body

(cf. Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968:209, Fig. 33; Fig. 12).

Taweret is described as "Grande génératrice" (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 111), especially for the dead who shall be reborn. She also acts as the protector of Horus. She provides nutrition for the deceased through the Nile (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112). Taweret is depicted in royal birth scenes (Pinch 1993: 293) and is associated in some aspects with nursing goddesses such as Isis-Weret, Weret-Hekaw, the celestial cow and Hathor (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112). Pregnant women may have worn amulets bearing her image during childbirth and nursing (Pinch 1993: 293).

Her figure, her stomach and her hanging breasts can be seen on other fecundity figures like Hapy. This form is not, according to Baines (1982: 118), a sign of pregnancy. Her breasts have on occasion been found pierced through on vessels that been filled with milk (Pinch 1993: 293, Browarski 1982: 293), thus creating a possible magical inundation with milk pouring out of her breasts. Baines (1985: 115) however refers to motifs relating to Hapy from the Late Period, where Hapy is seen pouring a liquid from his breasts. The liquid, according to Baines

(1985: 118-120) is the liquid of the primeval waters.

The inundation of the Nile was seen as bringing of life and resurrection (Wallin 2002: 31). The goddess Sothis evoked the qualities of giving birth and nursing the deceased (Wallin 2002: 35).

<i>n N ts ʿnh</i>	For N is the one who lives,
<i>s3 5pdt</i>	son of Sothis
(PT 458a)	
<i>snk=k mwt=k 5pdt</i>	May you suckle your mother Sothis
<i>mwt=k ts lnyt 3ht</i>	Your nurse who is in the horizon
(CT I, 17a-17b)	

The inundation is occasionally connected to milk. Such a connection can be found in Abydos. The king offering milk to Atum says: “Atum is inundated with milk, [...], the sweet milk which is in the breasts of [...], on account of what he has done. I give (thee) bulls and cows, together with their milk, that thou mayest be inundated (with them) in this thy name of Inundation Flood” (translation given in David 1973: 56).

Another object that evokes Nun and birth/rebirth of Ra is the so-called “Nun bowls”. Strauss (1974: 89) describes the Nun bowls as evoking the birth of the sun god with Hathor as the mother. Pinch (1993: 313) says that no definite evidence is present on the Nun bowls to “represent the emergence of Re^c from the Nun”, but she points to the Nun bowls as evoking the nursing of Horus rather than that of Ra (Pinch 1993: 312-313).

One motif of the Nun bowls is that of a gazelle suckling her young (Strauss 1974 Fig.20), another is that of the Hathor cow in the marshes (Strauss 1974 Fig.17; Browarski 1982: Nr 141). A bronze bowl from the 18th dynasty tomb of Rekhmire (Strauss 1974 Pl.14; Hayes 1959: 206, Fig. 121) depicts Hathor standing in the marshes. Flowers have been placed in the bowl. Another bronze bowl depicts Hathor standing in the middle of the bowl (Browarski 1982: 121 Fig.108). These bowls evoke Hathor in Chemmis, where, as the mother of the god, she nursed the infant Horus (Browarski 1982: 122). The bowls were intended to contain liquids, such as water, wine and milk (Bruyère 1937: 89-90; Strauss 1974: 66; Pinch 1993: 314). A bowl in Deir el-Medina was found with traces of milk and Strauss (1974: 67) made a parallel with the milk offered to the dead, as means for their rebirth.

Pinch (1993: 175) describes the “cow and lotus” motif related to the “suckling and protection” of Horus in the marshes at Chemmis. The sanctuary in Hatshepsut’s Deir el-Bahri Hathor chapel (Naville 1901: pl XCVI) evokes the mythological place where the young Horus was brought up (Assmann 2001: 133). The Hathor cow, emerging from the thicket of papyrus, nurses Hatshepsut, with the text reading:

<i>hnm[=i] hmt=i m ʿnh w3s</i>	It is with life and dominion that I have embraced
	Your Majesty
<i>ml trt.n[=i] m lr m hmw ʿ 3s n 3ht blt</i>	like that which [I] have done for Horus within
	the nest of Chemmis
<i>snk.n[=i] hmt=i m mnd=i</i>	It is with my breast that I have suckled you.

mḥ.n[=i] ḫn m ʒḥw=l

m mw=l ḫn n ḥw ʒs

(Urk. IV, 239, 9- 239, 12)

It is with my ʒḥw that [I] have filled you
and with my this water of life and dominion.

A piece of a necklace from the 3rd Intermediate Period (Robins 1997: 199, Fig. 239), shows a goddess suckling the Horus king, identified by the crown of Lower Egypt, in a thicket of papyrus, evoking the place of Chemmis.

Drinking vessels, formed as lotuses (Tait 1963: 93-138), have decoration of cows and calves in marsh settings. The calves and cows are sitting or standing in boats and can possibly be identified with the Ra calf: "At the dawn, the god abandons his form of mummy and is reborn in the sanctuary as in the eastern sky as a young son, a child rising from the lotus, or a milking calf" (Tait 1963: 117). The king is also described as a golden calf in two passages from the Pyramid Texts (PT §485a and §729a).

3.1.1.4 The milk of Hathor

The image of Hathor in the shape of a cow, suckling the king, was a popular image in the funerary cult. The rejuvenation of the king is shown in a statuette showing Ramses II suckling the Hathor cow (Zayed 1962: 137-142, Fig. 1 and 4; Cairo Museum JE 89613). He is kneeling and drinking from the udder. The background is the setting of the marshes of Chemmis. Zayed (1962: 141) compares the texts of the statuette and the image of the nursing Hathor with a vignette in the Book of the Dead Chapter 186 where "...the child suckling from the cow represents the dead king renewing his life and vitality by means of the divine milk, and the standing figure under the chin of the Goddess represents the king, re-born in the Other-World, and under her protection" (1962: 141). Pinch (1993: 181) also notes that the king drinks from the udders in order to be rejuvenated into the king under Hathor's chin, and that the black colour represents the rejuvenated king. Now, the section where the king should be standing, under Hathor's chin, is lost on this statuette, but one can compare it with a very similar figure of Hathor and the king (BdE no 38574-5; PM II 1972: 380), which was found in the Hathor-shrine at Deir el-Bahri (Fig. 13). Here, the papyrus plants stretch up at the front part of Hathor. The king under Hathor's chin is painted black, while the suckling king is painted red.

A votive cloth from Deir el-Bahri (Pinch 1993: 177, Pl. 25b; Huntington, Long Island, HM 59.294) depicts a similar representation of Hathor and the suckling king. Hathor is standing on a bark in a papyrus-thicket. Two figures of Mentuhotep are represented, one under Hathor's chin and the other suckling her (Keel 1980 Fig. 38). In the Hathor chapel in Deir el-Bahri two similar depictions of the cow and king can be found, however without the papyrus thicket (Keel 1980 Fig. 40 and 41). An image of Amenhotep III suckling the divine cow is depicted in his temple in Luxor (Keel 1980 Fig. 43; Brunner 1964: *Tafel* 12), and another of Horemheb suckling the divine cow on a relief in Turin (Brunner 1964: 125, *Tafel* 24b).

The Hathor cow is also depicted emerging from a mountain, as the protector of the west. A stela from the 11th dynasty, found at Deir el-Bahri (Fig. 14) shows one figure of the king suckling from their udders, while the second figure of the king is standing under her chin, a similar depiction of the cow and king in the marshes. This stela shows the west, the realm of

the dead, which further stresses the point of rejuvenation.

The Hathor cow is sometimes depicted emerging from the mountains of the west, standing in front of some papyrus, sometimes in clump or just one or a couple of straws (Pinch 1993:180). On coffins, the Hathor and mountain motif is depicted standing behind a bowl of lous (Pinch 1993: 180). These marsh settings represented the dwelling place of the dead such as Chemmis, Nun and 'Field of Rushes' (1993: 180). Pinch also connects this motif of the cow and the mountain as with the rebirth of the sun (1993: 181).

Pinch concludes that the function of the Hathor cow was to be the "transition from life, through death, to the afterlife..." (1993: 180-181). She functioned as a link between the living and the dead and offered the deceased protection and rejuvenation.

3.1.1.5 The milk of the Ihet-cow

Various cow-deities can be found acting as mothers and nurses for Horus, the sun god and the king. One of them is the *Ihet*-cow. A scene from a papyrus, written in hieratic and demotic, from Fayum (Fig. 15) (Beinlich 1991: Abb. 45) depicts a celestial cow with Ra sitting under her udders.

<i>s'nh=s sw m irtt=s</i>	She made his life by her milk
<i>hpr š hpr R'</i>	Creation of the lake, creation of Ra
<i>hpr Mh(t) wrt</i>	Creation of Mehet-Weret
<i>hpr Šdt</i>	Creation of Šdt ¹
(Beinlich.1991: 137)	

The texts expresses in a clear way the creation of Ra with milk: "Die Belebung mit Milch versetzt Re zurück in das Säuglingsalter, ist also ein Motiv der Regeneration. Die Darstellung ist hier sicher als eine Paralleles zu jenen Bildern zu sehen, wo der ägyptische König vom Euter der Hathorkuh trinkt" (Beinlich 1991: 108-109).

The "creator" in this text is the *Ihet*-cow, a cow deity who was on occasion identified with Hathor, especially during the New Kingdom (Pinch 1992: 175), and suckled and protected the infant Horus in the marshes (1992: 175). She is also a provider of milk for Osiris in Bigge.

In the papyrus from Fayum, Ra has three mothers: *Ihet*, Mehet-Weret and "The Great White". He drinks the milk of the celestial cow to become a newborn, in the circle of birth, life and rebirth (Beinlich 1991: 316).

On the island of *Ḥt wḥt* the island Bigge, Osiris received his daily libation of milk from the *Ihet*-cow.

<i>Iht wrt [...] ḡs=s r Ḥt wḥt</i>	<i>Ihet</i> , great [...], she has ferried to Bigge
<i>[...] r rdt=s 'nh nht wrt</i>	For giving life to the great sycamore
<i>bn irtt Iht km(t)</i>	With milk of the black <i>Ihet</i> -cow
(Junker 1913: 14 cited as Phot. 1192)	

This text shares a phrase with Papyrus Rhind (cf. below 3.13). While the Fayum text reads

¹ According to Beinlich (1991: 151) this is the goddess Schedet.

“with the milk of the Ihet cow” (*im iryt Iht*), Papyrus Rhind has “with the milk of Egypt” (*m iryt m km(t)*). It would appear therefore likely that *km(t)*, as written in pRhind (see 3.1.3), could in fact imply the *Ihet*-cow, who is described as black (*km*) in the texts from Bigge. A black cow-goddess is documented in the *Wb* (V: 125).

Other cow deities that relate the death to life transition are a group of seven cows and one bull, found on stelae, coffins, tomb paintings and temple relief (Pinch 1994: 174). They are found in both private and royal context, most often in Theban tombs (Sayed 1980: 357-358). They were protectors of the deceased, and gave their milk to the dead to resurrect them (Sayed 1980: 373).

3.1.1.6 The milk of the tree goddess

An image of the king suckling a tree goddess can be found in the New Kingdom (Billing 2002: 278), from the tomb of Thutmosis III (Billing 2002: 357 Fig. C.1) and on a stela of Ramses II (Fig. 16). The goddess suckling Thutmosis III is Isis, while Nut suckles Ramses II. According to Refai “Function der Isis betont, die den König als Horus im Jenseits vor Gefahren behütet” (Refai 2000: 384).

The characteristics of the milk of the tree-goddess are found in the following: “I give you this cool water (*kbhw*) that is in the breasts of your mother Nut, that you may live by means of it, be prosperous (*wꜥꜥ*) by means of it, have power (*sbm*) by means of it.” (Billing 2002: 378).

3.1.1.7 The milk of Renenutet

The goddess of suckling, Renenutet (*Rnnt*) probably merged with the goddess of granary *Rnntwt*. Other examples of the merging of goddesses include Isis and Hathor and Hathor and Mehet-Weret. Renenutet became the goddess of suckling and protecting the child, in her form of a snake.

Images and texts including Renenutet can be found in private tombs at Thebes. One being in the tomb of Userhet, Overseer of the royal harem (TT 48; PM I: 1: 88). In a scene on the walls (Fig. 17), there is a depiction of the goddess Renenutet, with serpent-head and human body, holding the nude king Amenhotep III in her lap, while suckling him.

A similar scene can be found in the private tomb (TT 57; PM I: 1: 114) of Khaemhet, overseer of the granaries and royal scribe, temporary with Amenhotep III. The scene depicts the deceased tomb owner offering to the serpent-headed Renenutet who suckles the king as a child. This image is found in the Theban tombs of the later 18th dynasty, pointing its popularity during the reign of Amenhotep III. Khaemhat may have included this image of the goddess and king for two reasons, one being that he was an Overseer of the granaries, and the second might be to shown his connection to the king.

3.1.2 Milk as offering - The Sixth Day Festival

The Sixth Day Festival was a celebration of the rebirth of the dead king (Wallin 2002: 70). The offerings on this day connected the deceased with Horus (2002: 86). The milk offered was perhaps seen as an offering to the king/Horus as a mean of rebirth.

swr=k h3 n(t) irtt pr
hr wghw snt
 (CT I 263a-263c)

May you drink the bowl of milk which comes forth
 on the offering tables of the Sixth Day Festival

A list of festival offering, from Medinet Habu, the temple of Ramses III describes an offering of milk for this specific festival:

“The festival of the 6th day which shall happen; offerings for Amon-Re and the portable image of Wosermaatse Meriamon, in this day of festival... . The offering should consist of “jars 1 milk, *mhn* jars 1” and “milk, bowls 4” (el-Saabani 2000: 78, 79, List 12, line 391).

3.1.3 Milk for the purification of the king

In ancient Egypt, the water of the Nile and milk were both considered as fluids with purification properties (Brunner 1964: 144).

sw^cb=n tw.k
m mw pr m 3bw
m ht hr pr m nhb
m irtt m km(t)
 (pRhind: Spiegelberg 1902: 176)

We purify you
 with water that come forth from Elephantine
 With natron which comes forth from El Kab
 with milk from The Black (*lhet*-cow)

From Bigge, a text describes the purification of Osiris, in which milk is used as a mean of removing “sin” (*bwt*).

bnr nty rrw(t) lwt hr
bnrt irtt=k
šsp r=k sw^cb r bwt
 (Junker 1913: 13, cited as Phot. 338)

The sweet which is in the cows of Hathor
 Your sweet milk
 Take to you in order to purify from sins

The Coffin Text describes milk as a means of purifying the mouth of the dead king:

tw f^c.n Wstr r=l m
irtt nt hmt dšrt
prt m Bhw
mst R^c hrw nb
 (CT II, 81b)

Osiris has washed my mouth with
 the milk of the red cow
 who comes forth from the sunrays
 she who gives birth to Ra every day

tw=k w^cb sp 2
nh R^c
tw=k w^cb
h^ct=k m w^cb
ph=k m twr
m st sw^cbt=k
m hsmn m sntr
m irtt (nt mwt n) lpw
 (CT I, 61b-63a)

You are pure You are pure
 as Ra lives
 You are pure
 Your front in pureness
 Your back in pureness
 Your pureness
 by natron, with incense
 with milk (of the mother of) Apis

ink iw^c w^b r
ꜥrj m trt mwt ntr

(CT V 177e-177f)

I am a bull, pure of mouth
 The one who lives by the milk of the god's
 mother

The funerary sources describe milk as being both the means of resurrection and purification of the dead. The texts describe the milk of a cow, possibly the Hesat cow, the celestial cow that is described as the mother of the sun god and Apis (Griffiths 1977: 1170).

The king is further described as Ra and the suckling calf: "The mouth of the son of Re, Sety Merenptah, like Re, is the mouth of a calf (suckling) on the day on which its mother gave birth to it" (David 1973: 155). The title of the spell is for purification with incense and provides a connection between the mouth of the suckling calf and pureness.

A spell from the temple of Seti I at Abydos describes the suckling calf: "Spell for the calf at milk on the day on which its mother gave birth to it" (*r n bhs r trt hrw mss mwt=f tm*, cf. David 1973: 155, 343).

3.2 Milk for Osiris

In offer formulas libations are frequently mentioned and milk was compared with the milk which was given to Osiris: "...den Speisen des Herrn von Abydos, der weißen Milch der *hz3t* Kuh, dem, wovon die Verklärten zu essen lieben in der Nekropole" (*df3w nw nb 3bdw dsrt hqt h33t mrrt 3pw wnm tm m hrt ntr*, Barta 1968: 46 *Bitte* 2 g.). A ceremony devoted to Osiris is written down in Papyrus Schmitt (23, 23-28, 21), but it is possibly an oral ceremony that was written down much later. It is sung by Nut, who addresses to Osiris.

3.2.1 The Daily Ritual for Osiris on the island of Bigge

According to Fazzini, the cult of Osiris increased in popularity during the Graeco-Roman Period due to the increasing status of Isis as the ultimate mother: "Indeed, a major aspect of Egyptian religion of the LP was the rise in importance of the cults of Osiris..." (Fazzini 1988: 11). The popularity of Osiris in the Late Period and later resulted in the construction of the temple of Osiris on Bigge. *33t w^bt*, the island of Bigge, literary "the pure mound", contained the *Abaton* of Osiris was considered to be the place of embalming and burial during the Greco-Roman Period. The island is to the west of Philae (Junker 1913: 32, 33, 34-35), making it ideally placed because of its closeness to the Isis-temple. *33t w^bt* was described as a popular temple for pilgrims in the Graeco-Roman Period (Hopkins 1997: 64). Milk was a part of a daily ritual of the temple of Osiris in *Abaton*: "der die Milch für das Opfer des Osiris darbringt...um seine Majestät alle Tage (oder immerdar) zu stärken" (Junker 1913: 14). This offering consisted of 365 jars of milk placed in the *mnt3* grove of *Abaton* (Junker 1913: 12), where the ba of Osiris dwelt.

The milk of Isis offered to Osiris is mentioned in several decrees. Apart from the daily offerings, there was a ten-day festival when Isis sailed from Philae to give her milk to Osiris. The word *kbhw*, normally used for water libations, is here used for Isis's milk libations.

ir[...] kbhw dd mdw
h Wsir ʕ nfr (nb) ʕt wʕbt
m n=k kbhw in sm=k ʕst
irgt pw n mw imyw=sn
st=k n=sn r gr ʕb(=k)
 (Junker 1913: 20, cited as Phot. 672)

libations, recitation
 O, Osiris, great god, lord of Bigge
 take to you libations from your sister Isis
 It is milk making, no water is in them
 May you pour from them as (your) heart desire

pr iw h3 m pr=s
tp rʕ 10 nb rʕ nb
hr d3 (m) ʕt wʕbt
hr smhm ʕb=f m kbhw ndm(w)
ir.n hm=s n hm=f
 (Junker 1913: 24, cited as Phot. 341-342)

stepping outside from her house
 In the beginning of all the 10 days
 for ferrying over to Bigge
 for making his heart sweet with sweet libations
 which her majesty has done for his majesty

This text described Isis going out of her temple at Philae to travel to Bigge for the ten day festival in order to give her milk to him as libation. Osiris is described in Phot. 338 as: "Erbe des Geb, treffliches Kind mit gutem Wesen dessen Majestät die *nbty* der Hathor ihre Brüste zur Nahrung geben und der *iwj*-Baum sprosst aus seinen Ausflüssen seine Schwester Isis lässt seinen Leib jung werden alle 10 Tage" (Junker 1913: 13).

At Bigge, decrees describe the milk of the Hesat-cow, Hathor-cow, Ihet-cow and their cattle, which perhaps were sacred cows of the temple, and provided the milk for the temple.

i hdt imy m=w phw rrw t Iwt hr
i bnr imy muty n mwt
Mmw
ʕk=s ht=f n Wsir ʕ nfr nb ʕt wʕbt
wmm Wsir Wmm nfr ʕ nfr nb ʕt wʕbt
m muty Hstt
r hdt Hstt r ht n Wsir
ʕ nfr nb ʕt wʕbt
r bnr [...] Hwt hr r smw=f
 (Junker 1913: 11, cited as Phot. 373/374)

O, milk which is in your udders, cows of Hathor
 O, sweetness which is in the breasts of the mother of Min
 it enters the body of Osiris, great god, lord of Bigge
 may Osiris *Wmm nfr*, great god, lord of Bigge, eat
 from the udders of Hesat
 milk of Hesat for the body of Osiris
 great god, lord of Bigge
 the sweet (the milk) of Hathor for his rejuvenation

hdt nn dl m hr=k
stt n phw n ʕst
bnr nty rrw(t) Hwt hr bnr irgt=k

This milk, which is given to you
 milking of the udders of Hesat
 the sweet which is in the cattle of Hathor, your sweet
 milk

šsp r=k swʕb r bwt
kbhw n sm=s imyw=sn
skb ʕb=f srnpt twf=f hʕ=f
snh dt=f m mʕ
rdi sp hr st n hm=f
iw k3.w m rn=f
 (Junker 1913: 13, cited as Phot. 672)

take to you in order to be cleaned from sins
 Libations to her brother which is in them
 for cooling his heart and rejuvenating his limbs
 growing of his body to new
 giving medicine by out loading to his majesty
 The *iw*-tree being high in his name

<i>lht wrt [...]</i> <i>ḳḳ=s r iḳt w^ḳbt</i>	<i>lhet</i> , great [...], she has ferried to Bigge
<i>[...]</i> <i>r rdt=s ḥnh nht wrt</i>	For giving life to the great sycamore
<i>tm irḫt lht km(r)</i>	with milk of the black <i>lhet</i> -cow
(Junker 1913: 14, cited as Phot. 1192)	

The island of Bigge probably housed sacred cows belonging to the temple, for the king is seen offering three cows to Osiris (Junker 1913: 11-12, Abb.3). They were probably kept there to provide the milk which the temple needed for the daily milk offerings. The record of a milk offering to the gods can be found in a text from the 18th dynasty. In it, Amun asks for milk cows from various regions (cf. 5.2.1 for the full text).

The king was also a provider of milk offers on the island of Bigge. A depiction of the king offering milk in jars to Osiris is seen in an offer scene (Junker 1913 Fig.1) and in another the king is pouring milk into an offering bowl (Junker 1913: 20 Fig.6).

The king offered milk to Osiris in other temples as well. For example in a scene from Edfu milk is offered to Osiris by the king with the text reading: “König N ist auf seiner Matte, der jedermann belebt mit seinen Speisen, der die süße Milch gibt, der die *mn*-Krüge darreicht, der die Milch ihrem Herrn (Harsomtut) gibt” (Otto 1964:64). On Bigge Emperor Augustus utters an offering to Osiris: - Milk and wine, (there is) no water is in it. (*irḫt trp n mw r imy=s*, Phot. 672 Junker 1913: 16).

In the birth house of Philae the king offers milk in jars (Junker and Winter 1965: 65, Phot. 937) to Osiris saying:

<i>hḳt nn dt(=f) m hr=k</i>	This milk which I give to you
<i>sḥr ph(w) n lsḥt</i>	milked of the udders of Hesat

The king, in this instance, acting as a substitute of a goddess, provides the god with milk in jars.

3.2.2 The “Song of Nut”

The “Song of Nut” was originally sung or chanted during religious festivals by a woman, in the role of Nut, for the dead Osiris. “The lyrical song sang by Nut who beweeeps Osiris depicts the goddess as the mother suckling her child; she calls Osiris to come to his mother in order to drink his sweet milk” (Dembska 1992: 113).

<i>nḥi ḥ l.tn Nwt</i>	Endure (?) child so says Nut
<i>mt n=l ḥt=k bnr.ti</i>	Come to me, your milk is sweet,
<i>n(n) ḥwḥs</i>	there is no sourness
<i>mr=k wr</i>	you want abundance
<i>n ḥb r=k tm=f</i>	Your mouth did not cease with it.
<i>ink mwt=k Nwt</i>	I am your mother Nut
(pSchmitt 24,2- 24,6; Dembska 1992: 113-114)	

Milk as sweet can be further seen in the Graeco-Roman texts on the island Bigge (see 3.2.1).

3.3 Milk for the dead

This section deals with milk offerings for individuals that were neither kings, nor Wives of the God. From that milk was described as given to the king in the funerary texts of the PT, it slowly came to be incorporated into the afterlife of the commoners. Pinch (1993: 179) concludes: “the king’s privilege of being suckled and licked by the divine cow was gradually extended to the non-royal dead” who was then identified with the Horus-King and rejuvenated by divine milk.

3.3.1 Milk and the 11th dynasty priestesses of Hathor from Deir el-Bahri

A group of priestesses of Hathor, some of which also were wives of the king, were buried within the temple of Mentuhotep Nebhepetre (Robins 1997: 87). They received the milk of cows and provide an interesting view of the funerary drinking of milk for royal individuals other than the king.

Reliefs from the shrine of Kemsit (TT 308 Deir el-Bahri; PM I: 1: 385-386; Naville 1913: 9), a 11th dynasty priestess of Hathor, and possibly a royal wife (Robins 1997: 81), provide more information about the drinking of milk in the afterlife. In one scene on her sarcophagus (Naville 1907 Pl. XXII) a man is milking the cow and storing the milk in a yellow jar.

On the sarcophagus of Kawit (Naville 1907: Pl. XX; Cairo Museum JE 47397), also an 11th dynasty priestess of Hathor, more scenes evokes the Horus-King and the Hathor cow. In scene II a servant is pouring liquid into a bowl with the words: “For your *ka*, mistress, drink that which I give you” (*n k3=t hmw t swr dl=i n=t*). Naville (1907: 55) points out that this must refer to the milk taken from the cows of the priestess. In scene IV Kawit is seated and holding what seems to be a small jar to her mouth. Two cows with two calves stand in front of her. The colour of the jar is not however reproduced in the plate, so it is difficult to determine the degree of resemblance although a comparison can be made with a relief of the king Mentuhotep II from his chapel at Dendera (Fig. 18) (PM VI: 106; Cairo Museum JE 46068). The king is seated and is offered various provisions. A man, who is followed by a cow and a suckling calf presents a jar with the inscription: *shrt trt nik n ihwt* - Milking your own milk of the cows.

A scene from the shrine of Aashait (Naville 1910 Pl. XVII) shows her seated on a chair, smelling a lotus. Behind her, at a lower register stands a cow suckling her calf. Unfortunately the part which may have provided information about the offerings to her is missing. A similar scene is depicted in the shrine of Sadhe (Naville 1910 Pl. XI, XIII), where she is seated and being provided with a bowl by a servant. The register under her chair depicts a cow with a calf.

Pinch (1993: 173) writes that the cows are possibly *tjentet* cows - the sacred cows of Hathor. Pinch also includes a text from the CT (Spell 542) that expresses the wish of the dead to be identified with a *tjentet* cow, in order to reach the afterlife (1993: 173).

3.3.2 The milk of the goddess

3.3.2.1 The milk of Isis

The text on Louvre 213 (Münster 1968: 78), describes the dead receiving the milk of Isis.

<i>šps h3t=k</i>	Your corpse is noble
<i>ml h3t nhb</i>	like the corpse of the <i>nhb</i> god
<i>b3=k hnm=f d3w</i>	Your <i>ba</i> rejoices over the provisions
<i>m st n Wnn nfr</i>	in the place of <i>Wnn nfr</i>
<i>ir.n=f Tapw wt</i>	Anubis has performed the embalming
<i>nhf n=k 3st trt=s</i>	so that Isis may flow (with) her milk for you
<i>wpt r(=k)</i>	Opening of (your) mouth
<i>hr hⁿw n k3=k m bw nfr(w) nb</i>	and rejoicing because of your <i>ka</i> being in every good place

(Münster 1968: 78; Louvre 213)

The term for "to flow with" (*nhf*) (*Wb* II, 310:1, cf. Barta 1968: 158), is used in the New Kingdom, specifically for the flow of milk.

Just as with the king is described as being brought up by both Isis and Nephtys, the 18th dynasty papyrus of Nu describes the desire to be identified with the divine world by identifying with the king and his access to the two goddesses as wet nurses.

<i>Hr pw Wsir iny r sg3wt nw</i>	Horus is Osiris, Overseer of the Treasury Nu
<i>ms.n sw mwt=f 3st</i>	He who was born by his mother Isis
<i>rnn.(n) sw Nbt hwt</i>	He who was suckled by Nephtys
<i>ml tr.n=s n Ir</i>	Like that she did for Horus

(Book of the Dead 134, 9- 134, 11, Papyrus of Nu, Brit. Mus. No. 10477; Budge 1898: 293)

A similar text can be found in the Papyrus of Ani from the 19th dynasty.

<i>Wsir 3ny m3't hrw 'nh' lb</i>	Osiris Ani, true of voice, may his heart live
<i>ms.n sw mwt=f 3st</i>	He who was born by his mother Isis
<i>rnn.n sw Nbt hwt</i>	he who was nursed by Nephtys
<i>ml tr.n=sn Hr</i>	like that they did for Horus

(Book of the Dead 134, 11- 134, 13; Papyrus of Ani, BM10470; Budge 2003: 509-519)

The text above identifies the dead with the Horus-King and Osiris. It also establishes a link between the deceased, the provider of milk and the reborn.

3.3.2.2 The milk of Hathor

The image of the cow and calf is further represented in private tombs. The image of the cow licking her calf stresses the identification of the deceased with Horus (Pinch 1993: 278). An example of the king being licked by the Hathor-cow just like a cow would lick her newborn calf is found at Deir el Bahri, (Naville 1901: Pl. CI). Similarly, suckling a goddess gave the dead divine attributes. A coffin from the 21st dynasty shows Hathor suckling the *ba* of the dead, in a setting of the mountains of the west (Pinch 1993: 178).

Hathor, the provider of milk for Horus and the king, is also very much connected with the seven celestial cows (Sayed 1980: 383). The seven cows were also the nurses of Ra and connected with the union of Ra and Osiris (Sayed 1980: 384).

This group of seven cows was, according to Sayed (1980: 385), a multiple form of Hathor that was found primarily in private tomb paintings. They nourished the dead: “The name of the fourth cow ‘She of Chemmis’- suggests the idea of the deceased being suckled” (Pinch 1993: 278). “She of Chemmis” would have an epithet of the cow, which stressed her relationship with Horus in the marshes. Chapter 166 of Book of the Dead, from the papyrus Nebseni (Budge 2003: 622) compares the deceased to Horus.

ntk Hr s3 Hwt Hr

You are Horus, son of Hathor

(Book of the Dead 166, Papyrus of Nebseni BM 9900; Budge 2003: 622; Budge 1898: 421)

In Chapter 186 of the Book of the Dead papyrus of Ani (Zayed 1962: 141), an image shows Ani’s tomb against a mountain-side and surrounded by papyrus, with a Hathor head amongst it, representing the cow and marsh symbol (Wasserman 1998: 170, Plate 37; Budge 2003: 330).

In private tombs of both the Old and New Kingdoms, images can be found of suckling cows and gazelles. In the Giza mastaba of Kapi (dynasty 5) and his wife (Roth 1995: 101 Mastaba G 2091) bulls and cows are depicted. A cow suckles her calf, and another is milked with her calf beside her. A verb is written above (*s3[r]t*) - milking. Another cow stands in the marshes (Roth 1995: Pl. 156). In another part of the mastaba a gazelle nurses her offspring (Roth 1995: 109, Pl. 59b).

A scene from the Theban tomb TT 68, from the 20th dynasty, shows a man and a woman worshipping divine cows. The man, a priest of Amun (Davies 1944: 64) and his wife are facing three cows. They all have the menat necklace, uraeus and sun disk, and one of them wears the atef-crown. It is possible that these cows were three of the seven Hathor cows.

3.3.2.3 The milk of the tree goddess

In a few cases, the suckling goddess is in the form of a tree goddess. It is not a usual image, and three examples involving non-royal individuals can be cited. One comes from a private 18th dynasty Theban tomb (Wenig 1967: Pl.36; Berlin Museum Äg.Inv.18534), and two funerary shrouds date from the Graeco-Roman Period, the first being from the Ptolemaic period (Fig. 19; Parlasca 1966 157-158) and the second from the Roman Period (Parlasca 1966: 82, 184 *Tafel* 34, 2; Berlin Museum Äg. Inv.13277). The time gap between these two sources is wide, with, however, the Graeco-Roman iconography displaying great similarity to the royal images from the New Kingdom of the king suckling a tree goddess.

A private tomb from Thebes describes the milk of the goddess. The text has been preserved, the image below it has however been destroyed. The text suggests that it may have accompanied the image of a tree goddess suckling the deceased.

dt=i snk=k m irft=i

ˆn3=k

sdb=k

m bnty=i

I will grant that you may suckle my milk

so that you may live

so that you may be restored (to life)²

by my breasts

² Referred to as *sdb* in Faulkner 1999: 257-258

<i>3wt ib snb tm=sn</i>	joy and health are in them
<i>ʿk=sn n=k m ʿnh w3s</i>	they will enter you with life and dominion
<i>mi di.n=i s3=i wr</i>	like that which I gave my great son
(TT 93; Billing 2002: 360, Fig. C. 4 with references)	

These texts describe milk as giving life and health. It also connects the deceased with Horus, as the goddess is offering life and protection as she did for Horus.

3.3.3 Milk as offering for the dead

Milk was also included, in a limited fashion, as one of the offerings to the deceased in the funerary cult. A small statue (Maspero 1915 Pl. XXIII; Cairo JE 39590) found in a private tomb in Thebes, dating from the time of Akhenaton - Tutankhamun, is inscribed with a text that expresses the wish of the dead to receive milk in the afterlife:

<i>h3p di nsw</i>	An offering that the king gives
<i>p3 kn ʿnh sb3</i>	This living sun disc who illuminates
<i>3 nb m nfrw=f</i>	the entire land with his beauty
<i>di=f 3w ndm n mhyt</i>	May he give the sweet wind of the north
<i>ʿh k3 hr tmnt nfrt</i>	and a long lifetime in the beautiful west
<i>kbhw 3p 3rt hr h3p</i>	Cool water, wine, milk on the altar
<i>n is=f</i>	of his tomb
(JE 39590; Maspero 1915 Pl. XXIII, cf. Maspero 1915: 27 for a similar text)	

This text is a *h3p di nsw* offering text and is intended to provide various provisions. It documents the inclusion of milk as one of those provisions.

Inscriptions from two tombs of the Ramesside Period both have similar references to the libation of milk for the *ka* and *ba* of the deceased. The tomb of Anhurmosé at Nag el Mashayikh from the reign of Merenptah (Ockinga and al-Masri 1988) refers to the use of milk as libation from the gods for the dead.

<i>[rdl.t 3]w (n) Wsir hnty tmntyw</i>	[Giving praise (to) Osiris, the Foremost of the Westerners,
<i>Wnn [nfr sb h3] m ʿh3w=f</i>	Wen[nefer who spends millions (of years)] in his lifetime
<i>di=f pr[3 hrw] k3w</i>	that he might give invocation [offerings] of oxen,
<i>3pdw kbh 3p 3rt</i>	fowl, water libations, wine (and) milk
<i>n k3 n Wsir nbt pr sm3yt nt Tmn R3</i>	to the ka of the Osiris, the Lady of the House, songstress of Amon-Ra
<i>nb n.wt t.wy Shm.t Nfrit m33t hrw m h3p</i>	Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, Sekhmetnefret, justified in peace.
(Ockinga and al-Masri 1988: 57-58, Text 53 I a, lines 1-6).	

An additional reference to milk is found in Text 55 I c, in Anhurmosé's tomb.

Gods of Thisis, may you grant that Osiris the High Priest of Omiris, Anhurmosé, be at the head of the noble one(s) in your company, (2)... upon (3) his shoulder, bearing (4) the pure

drink requirements for your throats, (5) a jug (6) of faience in his hands (7) with milk which has come forth from the divine cow for your ka, for your ba and for the kas of all the noble ones. Osiris Greatest of the Seers of Shu, (8) the High Priest of Omris, (Anhur)mose, justified. (translation cited in Ockinga and al-Masri 1988: 60, Text 55 I c).

In the tomb of Imiseba, also this period, a *hṭp dī nsw* - offering tells of libations of milk along with bread, beer and wine:

"[A royal offering of] Osiris, Foremost of the [Westerners ... Lord of] Shetayet that he may give bread, beer, ... libations, w[ine], mi[lk],for] the ka (of) the [true] Royal Scribe [of the Two Lands, Imiseba, justified.]" (translation cited in Ockinga and al-Masri 1990: 40 Text 5).

The statue of Kheruef, steward of the king in the time of Amenhotep III, has inscriptions on both the front and the left of a statue, where he wishes to receive milk for his ka from 2 *hṭp dī nsw* formulas, the first one: "...a thousand of every good and pure thing to the ka of the noble, count, favorite of Horus the lord of the palace, and first herald of the king, Kheruef. May you receive the offerings that are issued upon the altar and the milk that is issued upon the offering table" (Epigraphic Survey 1980: 18). And the second: "...that pure food offerings may be given to you in the presence of Onnophoris, that you may eat cake and drink from the milk jug upon the offering table of the lords of Heliopolis..." (Epigraphic Survey 1980: 18).

The following citations from the Coffin Texts (CT) describe milk, provided to the dead in the afterlife with Anubis as the one who provides that milk.

<i>Wstr N mš* ḥrw</i>	Osiris N true of voice
<i>*ḥ* Inpw mh=f sw</i>	Anubis stands up after filling himself
<i>m ḥrt dlt(y)fy</i>	with milk which he will give
(CT VI, 412a)	
<i>tr=k tr r gn</i>	That you do is why?
<i>r dī.t(w)=i r rdt.t(w)=i</i>	To be ferried over to be placed
<i>m sšn</i>	in the lotus-bark
<i>Isst</i>	Why?
<i>r rdt.t(w) mhr n(t) ḥrt</i>	to be given the jug of milk
<i>šns pw n ḥwḥ</i>	šns bread that is the meat
<i>n N ḥwt ntr n Inpw</i>	to N in the temple of Anubis
<i>wn r=k n(m)=k</i>	open for him
<i>tw=f rḥ=n</i>	for he knows us
<i>tn s m ḥrt ntr</i>	to be said by a man in the necropolis
(CT V, 72f-73a)	

Another reference to a container of milk is found in Papyrus Pushkin 127 which is a private letter from the New Kingdom. The writer wishes his friend a long life and that he may be blessed in the afterlife, this includes

<i>w3w tr=k lbht n hry nt</i>	Meet those who are dead be far from you
<i>tw=k r s sin hr h3w</i>	May you go to the clay vessel holding milk

(p.Pushkin 127 pl. 4, column 1, 9-10; Caminos 1977: 11)

The reference to "the clay vessel that is holding milk" points to the provisions given to the dead. The text suggests that the vessel filled with milk is the mean for a long life.

3.3.4 Purification of the road in the funerary procession

The road to the tomb was purified with milk in connection with the funerary procession. A similar purification was performed on other events, such as the Opet Festival, when the road in front of the sacred bark was sprinkled with milk (see 2.1.4).

A description of the use of milk as purification in this burial rite is found in the 18th dynasty tomb of Dhouty at Thebes (TT 110).

<i>hrs nfr li=s m htp</i>	A good burial comes in peace
<i>70 hrw nb km m w'bt=k</i>	all 70 days have ended in your embalming house
<i>dl(=k) hr sfdyt</i>	you are placed on a bier
<i>st3=ti hr k3w w3gw</i>	being pulled by perfect bulls
<i>wps w3t m trtt r pht=k</i>	sprinkling the way with milk for your arrival
<i>r r ts=k</i>	to the door of your tomb

(TT 110; Davies and Gardiner 1915: 56)

Another text, which expresses the wish to purify the road to the tomb, is cited by Barta (1968: 92 *Bitte* 53b): "They have granted that the roads may open with milk in order that you may reach the opening of your tomb" (*dl=sn wp w3wt m trtt r pht=k r r3 ts=k*). Milk purified the path leading to the tomb, similar to the purification performed for the road on which the bark of the god travelled during the Opet Festival (Epigraphic Survey 1994: 5, 37). A scene from the tomb of Apy (Fig. 20) depicts this purification as a priest is shown holding a milk jar and sprinkling the milk before the coffin (Davies 1927: 49).

4 Milk for Healing

The milk that served as a remedy for the sick was identified as a divine fluid of Isis (Ritner 1982: 294, Desroches-Noblecourt 1952: 49). According to myth, Isis's milk healed gods like Horus and Osiris. When Horus was hiding in the marshes after his birth, he was vulnerable to all sorts of danger, like snake bites, scorpion bites and diseases. Isis healed him from these bites and diseases (Quirke and Spencer 1997: 67).

The power of milk demonstrated in myth was adapted in medical-magical texts, where the sick would identify himself with Horus the child (Assman 2001: 131; Pinch 1994: 140). This is seen in the Edwin Smith Papyrus.

<i>r n s pn hry db'w=i hnt r</i>	the mouth of this man under my fingers and so forth
----------------------------------	---

r n bhs ḥḥbw is the mouth of a calf (being hungry)³
pr=f m ḥt nt mwt=f coming forth from the womb of his mother
 (pEdwin Smith, 19, 14- 19, 17; Breasted 2006: 482-483)

4.1 Milk as remedy

The majority of the references come from the medical Papyrus Ebers, dated to the 18th dynasty reign of Amenhotep I (Nunn 1996: 34; Wreszinski 1913: IV) and the medical/magical papyrus Berlin 3027, also from the 18th dynasty (Nunn 1996: 37; Erman 1901: 6), a papyrus with spells for mother and child.

4.1.1 Milk of the goddess

4.1.1.1 The healing milk of Isis

In magical-medical spells, the milk of Isis was considered as a highly powerful remedy, and is used in various spells. The healing milk of Isis can be found in both myths (such as Horus and Seth) and in medical sources. The 'milk of a woman who had borne a male child' referred to the milk of Isis (Ritner 1982: 294, Desroches-Noblecourt 1952: 49), and was used as a treatment in medical papyrus (Browarski 1982: 294).

A treatment for eye diseases

A mixture of milk and grain was used as a remedy for bleeding eyes.

<i>kt nt ḏr snf ḥr irty</i>	Another (spell) for driving out blood from the eyes
<i>š 2 n 3 w^c ḥr ḏkr n mymy</i>	2 bowls of clay, one with flower of seed of corn,
<i>irrt nt mst fy</i>	milk of one who has borne a male (child)
<i>ky ḥr irrt sgr n ḥḏt=k r mh irty=k</i>	other with milk for filling your eyes
<i>m nn mymy ir r s^d nn</i>	with these seeds of corn after this
<i>f^w ḥr=k irty m nn irrt sp 4 r^c nb</i>	washing of you your eyes with this milk 4 times every day

(pEbers, 384:60,13- 60,17; Wreszinski 1913: 107-108)

In another prescription, milk is mixed with the minerals used for eye paint, for a case of inflammation of the eyes.

<i>kt nt ḏr šsmwt ḏsr m irty</i>	Another (spell) for driving out red inflammation in the eyes
<i>ḏ^rrt sdm n šndt wḏšt</i>	<i>ḏ^rrt</i> , eye paint of <i>šndt</i> , green eye paint
<i>irrt nt mst fy</i>	milk from one who has borne a male
<i>ir m ḥt w^c</i>	Make into one thing

³ Breasted 2006: 483 suggests this translation to be a (hungry) calf, or possibly a term of suckling

⁴ Wb IV :11

dt r s3 n irty Placing thereafter on the eyes
(pEbers 408: 62,9- 62,11; Wreszinski 1913: 112)

And further another eye disease referred to as *bid* comes from pEbers 368, which involves intricate ingredients such as black eye paint (*msdmt m3't*) fat of a duck (*mrht st*) and milk of a woman who has borne a (male) child (*irrt nt mst f3y*), among other ingredients, to be prepared for several days until applied on the eyes (pEbers 368: 59,6-59,11; Wreszinski 1913: 104).

The use of the milk of a woman who has borne a male child in the treatment of eye disease can be paralleled by the treatment of the eyes of Horus with milk, as found in the story The Contendings of Horus and Seth (see 4.2.1).

Treatment for burns

Another text refers to Horus suffering from burns in the desert. Here too the treatment consists of the milk of Isis: "da löscht Isis es mit der Milch und dem Wasser ihres Leibes".

m irrt=i With my milk,
m mw snb imytw mndwy=i with the healing water which is in my breasts
(pLondon 10059; Münster 1968: 12)

A prescription from Papyrus Ebers reads.

s3=i Hr wbd hr h3st My son Horus is burnt in the desert.
n mw im There is no water there
n wi im I am not there
int mw hr spt Bring water from the shore
nwy r hm ht and liquid to extinguish the fire
gd=ti hr irrt nt mst f3y To be recited over milk of a (woman) who has borne a male (child)
(pEbers 500 69,6- 69,8; Wreszinski 1913: 131)

Milk was used as water in this context. A comparison between water from the Nile and milk can be seen in a passage from the Pyramid Texts.

in n=k irrt 3st n Bring the milk of Isis and
tti 3gb nbt hwt the floodwater of Nephthys
(PT 707a)

There is a ritual that consists of putting out torches in a pool of milk (Schott 1937: 1-25). The ritual occurs in the sanctuary of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri (Schott 1937: 6). These basins were to be filled with the milk of the White Cow. A text from Book of the Dead, the Papyrus of Nu, chapter 137a, referred to as Chapter of the Four Touches (Budge 2003: 653) reads:

sw 4 n stn 4 basins of clay,
hw hr smr grind in incense
mh m irrt m idt hdt fill with milk of a white cow

about a misdeed in the sky and in the underworld (Erman 1901: 37). The goddess *T3yt*, the goddess of weaving (Erman 1901: 37) created an amulet for driving away enemies and placed it around the neck of Horus. Instructions are given to mothers how to make this protective amulet and place it around the neck of a child. The spell continues:

<i>ir[ti] r lgyt mt mtt</i>	acting against enemies, dead and (more) dead
<i>hmt r r irtt</i>	A woman with magic spells of milk
(pBerlin 3027, recto 1,2- 1,4; Erman 1901: 35-36)	

This text informs us that the milk can be used both for treatment and for protection against enemies. Protective amulets for nursing mothers made in the form of knots or wands were used to protect the mother's milk (Finch 1994: 130-131).

The milk of Sekhmet could also be used for protection of the temples (see 5.1).

4.1.1.2 The milk of Wadjet

The treatment for driving away the illness *ssmy* was the milk of the goddess Wadjet:

<i>dr ssmy</i>	Driving away <i>ssmy</i> ,
<i>i nty m mw</i>	O, you who are in the water
<i>is dd n=k knbt pw</i>	Go and say it is the judge
<i>imy k3r=f</i>	who is in his shrine
<i>Shmt ii=ti h3=f</i>	Sekhmet comes behind him
<i>2 [n](t) h^c=tt</i>	<i>2m⁶</i> appears
<i>W3dt nbt dpw</i>	Wadjet, mistress of Buto
<i>in n=s nw irtt</i>	bring to her this milk
(pBerlin 3027 7,6- 8,3; Erman 1901: 31)	

4.1.1.3 The milk of Hesat

The text from Papyrus Jumilac, dealing with the *imy wt* of Anubis (Vandier 1961: 124) tells of a crime against Osiris. In Papyrus Jumilhac (XII:22 – XIII:10) the gods of the Ennead, together with Ra describes flesh as having originated from milk.

<i>ir twf=f hn^c inn=f</i>	Regarding his flesh and his skin
<i>shpr.n(=sn) mwt=f m irtt=s</i>	they were created by his mother with her milk

Further, the milk of Hesat is here the source of healing his skin. She first milked her breasts, and then the milk was treated by beating it and then made into fat, that was placed on his skin;

<i>wmn Hstt mh ib=s hr=f</i>	Hesat was happy because of him
<i>shpr. N=s n=f irtt=s m whm</i>	she created for him her milk again
<i>hr whm ms.tw=f</i>	and again when he was born
<i>tw=s hr irtt m tp mndwy=s</i>	she milked her milk from the top of her breasts

⁶ A goddess (*Wb* III: 289)

<i>tw=s rdī r hm=f m st tn</i>	she places under his skin in this place
<i>hr hr.tw im=s</i>	by beating on it
<i>tw=s n tr skn m šdh=s im=s</i>	she made a jar of her fat from it
<i>srwh isn=f w=f im=w</i>	healing of his skin and his flesh by them

The text also describes the sacred cows that were held in the temples and they were the reincarnations of the cow deities, whose milk were used as remedies:

<i>hpr isn m hrw n ihy nb</i>	skin is becoming in every stable
<i>tw=tw hr trt im=s r mn hrw pn</i>	one is beating milk in it till this day
<i>tr pšy twš ntt tw(=s) s'hr.tw im=f</i>	regarding this support which is beated,
<i>šdh pw hnc ttt=f</i>	it is a pot with a staff
<i>hr tr phr im=w r swrh w=f</i>	with which medicine is made for healing his flesh

Osiris then becomes healthy again:

<i>wm=f hr snb m st tn</i>	he is healthy in this place
<i>twf=f rwg n=f m whm</i>	his flesh is strong for him again
<i>sms=s m whm kt=f</i>	his form is rejuvenated again

This is another example of the milk of Isis being used for healing and the protection of the child. Hesat, who also appears as the provider of milk for Osiris in Bigge⁷, is here the donor of milk when he ascends to the gods. The milk is described as being prepared in the stables, which might indicate that sacred cows of Hesat and Hathor were kept in the stables at the temples. The milk, prepared, was used as medicine. The body was healed (*swrh*) becoming that of a child.

4.2 The White Eye of Horus

4.2.1 The myth of the White Eye of Horus

The story of the White Eye of Horus comes from the text known as the Contendings of Horus and Seth, dated to the Ramesside period. In this story an argument between Horus and Seth is described. Seth found Horus in the mountains, resting under a tree; he then grabbed him and threw him on the ground. Thereafter, he cut out the Horus's eyes. The eyes landed on the ground and in the dawn they had grown into lotuses. Seth went to the Ennead and lied about having met Horus. Then Hathor found Horus while he was lying on the ground and she healed him:

<i>wn.in Hwt hr nb(i) nht rxy hr šmt</i>	Then Hathor came, mistress of the southern sycamore
<i>tw=s [hr] gm Hr</i>	and she found Horus
<i>tw=f [hr] sgr hr rm hr iš hšst</i>	and he was lying down, and crying in the desert.
<i>wn.in=s mh m w^c ghs</i>	Then she caught a gazelle
<i>iw=s [hr] hr=s</i>	and she milked it
<i>tw=s hr qd n Hr</i>	and she said to Horus

⁷ See chapter 3.2.1

<i>l.wn irf[y]=k</i>	Open your eye(s)!
<i>dt=i n3 irt im</i>	so that I may place the milk there
<i>wn.in=f hr wn irf[y]=f</i>	Then he opened his eye(s)
<i>iw=s [hr] dit n3 irt im</i>	and she placed the milk there
<i>iw=s [hr] dit r 13 imnty</i>	she placed in the right
<i>iw=s [hr] dit r 13 smhy</i>	she placed in the left
<i>tw=s hr qd n=f</i>	and she said to him
<i>l.wn irf[y]=k</i>	Open your eye(s)!
<i>iw=f [hr] wn irf[y]=f</i>	And he opened his eye(s)
<i>iw=s [hr] ptr=f</i>	and she saw them
<i>gm sw mns.i[f]</i>	and she found them being whole

(Condendings of Horus and Seth; p.Chester Beatty I, 10, 6- 10, 9; Gardiner 1932: 50-51)

The gazelle could be associated with deities such as Isis (Pinch 1993: 313, Hopkins 1997: 31) or Anukis (Peterson 1973: 77; Hart 1986: 27) who can be represented as one (Shaw and Nicholson 1995: 34). Anukis is seen nursing Ramses II in his temple at Beit el-Wali (See 2.1).

Hathor also plays a vital part here, as the one who heals Horus. Hathor came to be associated with curing blindness (Pinch 1993: 257) and the White Eye came to be a symbol for healing. In a passage from Abydos, there is a description of how Ptah fills his eyes with milk: "The gardens flourish, oh, Ptah, Lord of Truth.....the flood rejoices, those which are in him, the two eyes are filled with its milk..." (translation cited in David 1973: 56). The eye of Horus can be a substitute for various foods or other attributes like Osiris's fluid, as well as the milk of Isis (Ritner 1993: 103, note 500) that is consumed in order to restore the body (Ritner 1993: 103).

4.2.2. The White Eye of Horus for Osiris

In the temple of Bigge the White Eye of Horus is described as a healing remedy for the body of Osiris.

<i>nh twf=k m nh w3s</i>	May your limbs live through milk
<i>snb hh=k m trt hgt</i>	May your skeleton be healthy through the white Horus-eye
<i>hr b'q hprw n hm=f</i>	Abundance of offerings by His Majesty
<i>m trt hgt nn</i>	with this white Horus eye

(Junker 1912: 11 cited as Phot. 349)

5 Milk for the Temples

5.1 Milk as protection of the temple

During the Greco-Roman Period, deities like Best and Taweret were depicted just outside the temple as protection. Inside the temples a new tradition arose using amulets and figurines as protection (Pinch 1994: 162).

A text from the temple of Hathor at Dendera cites the use of milk for the protection of the House of the Sistrums, which was located in the southeastern part of the temple (Cauville 2004: 68–69, fig. 11). Here it is the milk of Sekhmet that is the protective force.

<i>st sḏg3(t) n(t) wsrt</i>	Hidden place of the strong ones
<i>m hnt hwt s3st</i>	in the House of Sistrums
<i>ḏr h3j hmjw r bw</i>	When enemies comes to the place
<i>n k s(j) sm</i>	The Asians do not enter it
<i>n thn s(j) 3sw</i>	The Bedouins do not damage it
<i>n nmt s(j) h3w nr s</i>	The paupers do not wander through it
<i>nb ḏḏj ḏ3r r=s</i>	Anyone who recites against it
<i>jr(t) -4hnt m h^r=sn</i>	Sekhmet-milk is in their body
(Waitkus 1997: 87 O2A-1)	

The determinative used after *iryt-shmt* is not the expected milk jar, instead of the usual determinative 𓆎 , the sign for flame has been used 𓆏 (Waitkus 1997: 90 note 9), associating the milk of Sekhmet with fire as a protective force.

5.2 Milk as libation in the temples

Some offering lists in temples include libations of milk. This category deals with libations for the gods performed by the king or priests, as well as offerings in festivals.

5.2.1 Milk in ritual offerings

From Thutmosis III's annals describing his military campaigns is a text where he describes cattle as gifts, namely milk-cows, so they might provide milk for the temple.

<i>iry 1 m mamut sm^w m^{hw}</i>	1 milk-cow of cattle from Upper and Lower Egypt
<i>iry 2 m mamut n ḏ3hy</i>	2 milk-cows of cattle from ḏ3hy
<i>iry 1 m nennut n kš</i>	1 milk-cow of cattle from Kush
<i>ḏmḏ iry 4</i>	total of 4 milk-cows
<i>r shr iryt iry</i>	so milk can be milked there of
<i>r mhrw ḏ^rmw</i>	in milk jars of fine gold
<i>m hrt hrw nt r^c nb</i>	daily
<i>r rdit m3^r m it=f [Imn]</i>	so it may be made as offering to his father [Amun]
(Urk. IV 743, 11– 743, 17, Breasted II 1906: 233 §556)	

Thutmosis III also gave instructions to his priests to fill the altars with milk.

<i>ḏḏw n=i h3w m iryt</i>	offerings for me altars with milk
(Urk. IV 753, 10)	

A text from the 25th dynasty king Piankhy's ritual offerings for the temple at Heliopolis consists of various offerings for Ra.

<i>hft hr r^c m wbn=f</i>	before the face of Ra when he rose
-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

m iḥw ḥḏ irrt ʿntyw consisting of white oxen, milk, myrrh
(Urk. III, lines 102-103, cf. Lichtheim 1980: 77)

Two lists from Karnak dated to Tutmosis IV and Akhenaten, include milk (el-Saabán 2000: 143-145). For rites and offerings in the temples, an offer list of Thutmosis IV consists of “milk, *mḥn* jars, 1, from divine offerings, offering-meat: flesh of the ribs” (el-Saabán 2000: 143), and the offer list of Akhenaten from Karnak says: “1. Milk... (el-Saabán 2000: 144). From Medinet Habu, an offering list of Ramses III reads: “Milk in milk jars 2 daily, from the herds of the House of Wosermaatre Meriamon in the estate of Amon.” (el-Saabán 2000: 66, List 1, section 5: 118).

5.2.1.1 Milk offerings for the temple

Milk was also included as a ritual offering in the lists found as part of the Festival Calendar. For the Ra-temple in Heliopolis the records gives an account of the number of jars of milk:

8600 (*irrt*, Erichsen 1933: 42)
12040 (*irrt nmst*, Erichsen 1933: 44)
198 (*irrt m ʿ hny*, Erichsen 1933: 45)

And for the temple of Ptah at Memphis:

2396 (*i irrt nmst*, Erichsen 1933: 63)

The number of the milk jars mentioned in the text above seems rather large considering that milk in itself could not be produced on the same scale as for example wine or beer. This amount of milk must have required a large number of cows.

Other lists that deal with temple offerings seem to have a more reasonable request of milk For the Sokar Festival of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (el-Saabán 2000: 105) only a single jar of milk was required (el-Saabán 2000: 105, List 43). On the 6th day of the Festival of Sokar the offerings were for Ptah-Sokar, Osiris and Nefertem (el-Saabán 2000: 108).

1068. milk in jars 15”
1098. thin clothes as rags for milk-jars [...]”
1099. vessels on altars for milk-jars [...]”
(el-Saabán 2000: 110)

Other festivals dedicated to Amun required milk as well:

Processional Feast of Amon.	1451
New Moon Festival of Amon-Re	1468 ...milk, bowls 4
(el-Saabán 2000: 129, List 67).	

Medinet Habu, the temple of Ramses III where for the Sokar Festival is depicted (el-Saabán 2000: 66, 105) is described as having herds (of cattles), which might suggest that herds were indeed kept close to the temple areas for the providing of milk.

6 The Forbidden Milk

6.1 The 25th day of *Peret*

Examples of the milk as forbidden are noted in the Cairo Calendar. On the 25th day of the month of *Peret* consuming milk was forbidden:

<i>ꜥꜣd 1 ꜣrt hrw 25</i>	1 st Month of <i>Peret</i> , day 25
<i>hnt=k wnm hrꜥ m rꜥ ꜣn</i>	You should not consume milk on this day
<i>smn n 1sꜥt wrt</i>	of establishing of Hesat, the Great,
<i>m bꜥh hm n Rꜥ</i>	in front of Majesty of Ra
(Cairo Calendar no. 86637; Leitz 1994: 218-219)	

Leitz (1994: 220) writes that the 25th day of 1st month of *Peret* was the day of the beginning of offering festivals to Ra. The establishment of Hesat in front of Ra is very likely a part of the festival taking place on this special day, where a cow (probably a statue but could also have been a real cow, perhaps one of the *tjentet*-cows), is placed in front of Ra so that she may give her milk as libation to him.

6.2 Milk as parallel to blood

Chaeremon, a Stoic philosopher who lived in Egypt during the 1st century AD, wrote about the ancient Egyptian priests that they should "...abstain from egg, as if it is meat, and from milk. They said that the former (*sc.* an egg) was liquid meat, the latter (*sc.* milk) blood with a changed colour" (Horst 1984: 23 Fragment 11). This idea is likely to have originated with the Greeks. Hippocrates (King 1998: 34) wrote that the Greeks saw the milk of a nursing woman as excess menstrual blood which had been stored in the body throughout the nine months of pregnancy. They saw the blood as converted into breastmilk.

7 Summary and Conclusions

This essay has examined the functions and symbolism of milk in religious, mythological and medical contexts, and its role in legitimization, rejuvenation, purification and healing. Various goddesses provided the king with milk, acted as his nurses and adopted the king, sometimes by the order of Amun.

This situation provided the king with divine power and a connection to the gods. Various goddesses interacted with him, calling him their son, paralleling the king to Horus. The divine suckling was part of the transition that culminated in the coronation, as the king went from being a prince to a king, with dominion over the people and the foreign countries. Further, periodic renewal was provided by the Opet and Sed Festivals. The only person, other than the king, that had this interaction was the God's Wife of Amun. She was given the divine milk in connection with her coronation during the Late Period.

Milk functioned as a means of resurrection for the dead. For the resurrection of the dead, both the king and the public were provided with milk in the afterlife, and it was frequently requested as an offering by the dead. The dead would compare themselves either to the

resurrected Osiris, the newborn Horus or the reborn Ra. The Osirian temple of Bigge came to incorporate all these ideas in its period of activity during the Graeco-Roman Period. Here all the ideas of resurrection were embodied in its daily rituals for Osiris, such as providing daily milk offerings for Osiris, in order for him to be reborn daily.

Milk representing that of a goddess was used in medical instances. The sick would identify himself with the sick Horus, and be provided with the milk of a woman that had born a male child. This milk was symbolical, and in order for it to become the divine milk of Isis, it was placed in jars with the shape of a woman and recited over. The White Eye of Horus, associated with the healing powers of milk functioned as a parallel healing force and was given to Osiris in order to "heal" him from death.

Milk could be used as a protective force, for the child and for the temples. It was also used for purification of the king and Osiris, and for the road in the Opet Festival and that was used to carry the coffin to the tomb.

The temples requested milk for various festivals and rituals, in some cases thousands of jars. According to the Cairo Calendar, milk was forbidden for at least one day a year. This appears to be related to the fact that it was on this day that Ra was provided with milk from the Hesat-cow. The Greek philosopher Chaeremon records a belief that Egyptian priest were forbidden to drink milk. This may have originated in the Greek belief that milk was a form of blood.

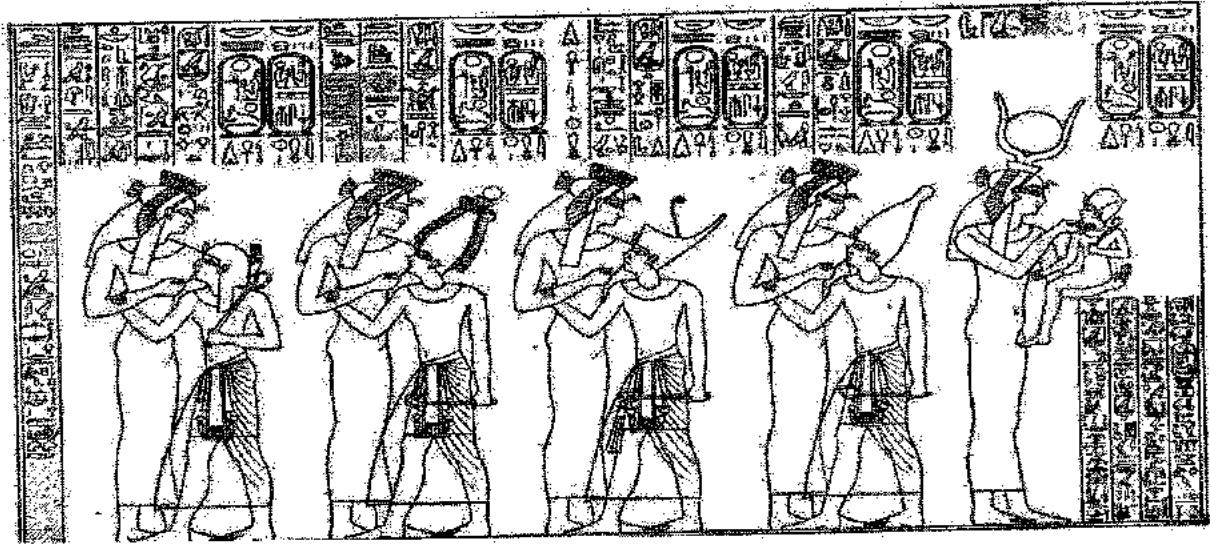


Fig. 1: From Mariette 1869: Pl. 25. Temple of Seti I, Abydos

Fig. 2: David 1981: 38, Temple of Seti I, Abydos. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 3: Habachi 1963: 24, Fig. 8. Ka-chapel of Mentuhotep II, Dendera. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 4: Detail of Figure 2
Removed because of copyright

Fig. 5: Davies 1973: Pl. IX
TT 93, Tomb of Kenamun
Removed because of copyright



Fig. 6: Davies 1953; Pl. 13. Temple of Hibe.
Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 7: From Bruyère 1930: Fig. 18. Valley of the Queens, Sanctuary of Ptah, Chapel of Ptah and Meretseger.

Fig. 8: From Tait 1963: 116, Fig. 5. Removed because of copyright.



Fig. 9: From Epigraphic Survey 1994: Pl. 99
Karnak. Removed because of Copyright

Fig. 10: From Moret 1926: 116, Fig. 24
Philae.

Fig. 11: From Billing 2002: 354, Fig. A.27
Dendera. Removed because of copyright

Fig. 12: From Desrouches-Noblecourt and
Kuentz 1968: 209, Fig. 33. Gebel el-Silsila
Removed because of copyright

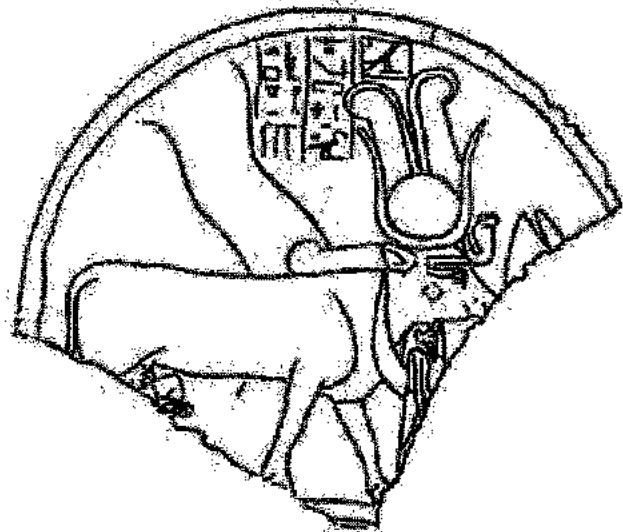


Fig 13: From Keel 1980:81, Fig. 42. Deir el-
Bahri. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 14: Drawn by author from Pinch 1993:
Pl. 9, Deir el-Bahri

Fig. 15: From Beinlich 1991: 109, Fig. 45.
Fayum. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 16: From Billing 2002: 399; Fig. D.12
(with references). Removed because of
copyright.



Fig 17: From Säve-Söderbergh 1957: 42, Pl. XLII, Thebes

Fig 18: From Habachi 1963: 24, Fig. 7, Dendera. Removed because of copyright.

Fig 19: From Parlasca 1966: 158, Fig. 8. Removed because of copyright.

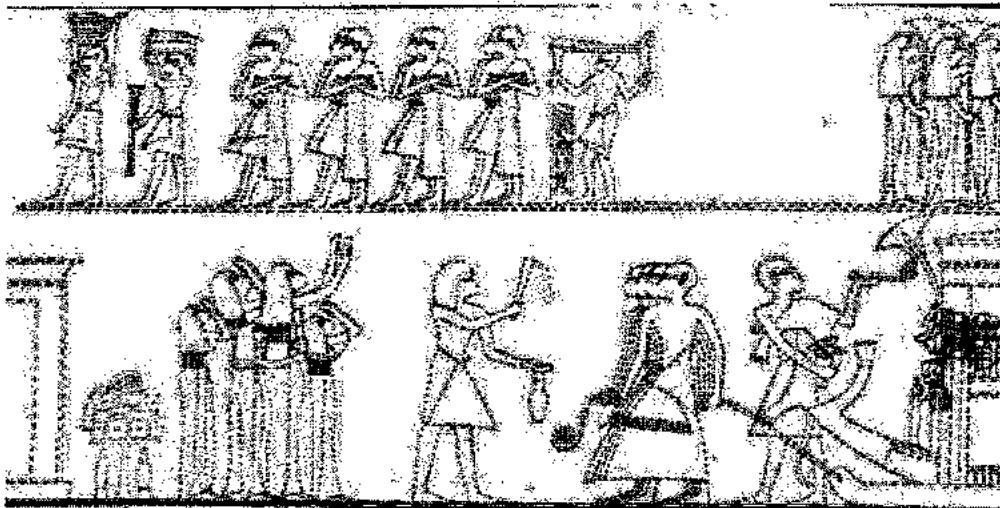


Fig 20: From Davies 1927: Pl. XXVIII, Tomb of Apy, Amarna.

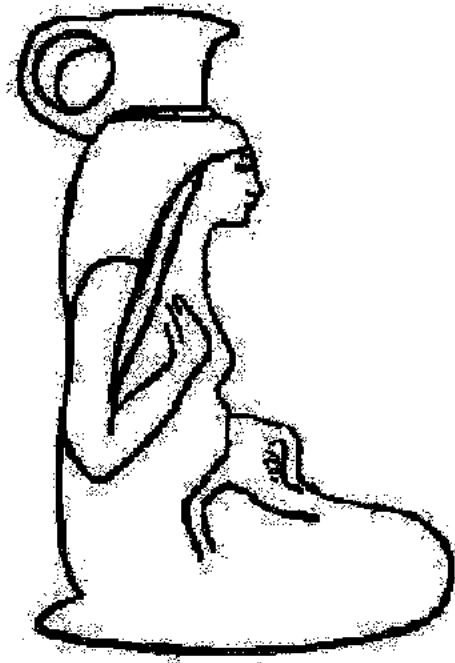


Fig 21: Drawn by author from Desrouches-Noblecourt 1952: 59, Fig. 2.

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Abbreviations

AHAW	Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Heidelberg.
AO	Analecta Orientalia, Rome.
ASAE	<i>Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i> , Cairo.
ÄA	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, Wiesbaden.
Bae	Bibliotheca Aegyptica, Bruxelles.
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, Cairo.
BSAE	British School of Archeology in Egypt, London.
EEF Mem	Egypt Exploration Fund/Society Excavation Memoires.
IFAO	<i>Institut Français D'Archeologie Orientale</i> , Cairo.
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archeology</i> , London.
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> , Chicago.
LÄ	Lexicon der Ägyptologie, Wiesbaden.
MÄS	Münchner ägyptologische Studien, Munich.
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, Cairo.
MDAIK	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo</i> , Mainz am Rhein.
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications, The University of Chicago, Chicago.
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, Leuven: Peeters.
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis: Göttingen/Freiburg.
PM I:1	Porter and Moss 1960.
PM I:2	Porter and Moss 1964.
PM II	Porter and Moss 1972.
PM III:1	Porter and Moss 1974.
PM IV	Porter and Moss 1934.
PM VI	Porter and Moss 1939.
PT	Sethe 1908-10.
RecTrav	<i>Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes</i> , Paris.
RdÉ	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i> , Paris.
SAK	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i> , Hamburg.
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, Chicago.
Urk. III	Schäfer 1905.
Urk. IV.	Sethe, K. 1906-1909 and Helck, W. 1984
USE	Uppsala Studies in Egyptology, Uppsala.
Wb	Erman, A. and Grapow, H. 1926-1963, 1971.
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i> , Berlin-Leipzig.

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