



Trabajos de Egiptología

Dos falsificaciones ramésidas y una propuesta de clasificación...

Miguel JARAMAGO

Ofrendas en el Inframundo: el Libro de las Doce Cavernas...

Daniel M. MÉNDEZ-RODRÍGUEZ

Cleómenes de Náucratis: realidad, fuentes e historiografía

Marc MENDOZA

Violencia física contra el infante... una realidad o una mala interpretación

Ugaitz MUÑOA HOYOS

El acto sexual como agente del (re)nacimiento de Osiris

Marc ORRIOLS-LLONCH

Of Creator and Creation... (BM EA826)... Papyrus Leiden I 350... (BM EA9999, 44)

Guilherme Borges PIRES

As serpentes vindas do Médio Oriente nos *Textos das Pirâmides*...

Joanna POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA

Apelaciones, deseos y mensajes para la eternidad... en las estelas abideanas...

Pablo M. ROSELL

A iconografía de Petosiris no túmulo de Tuna el-Guebel

José das Candeias SALES

Las estacas de madera de Haraga y la pesca en el-Fayum...

María Teresa SORIA-TRASTOY

Parámetros de clasificación... la familia *Anatidae* en egipto y sumerio

Alfonso VIVES CUESTA, Silvia NICOLÁS ALONSO

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Trabajos de Egiptología



Trabajos de Egiptología

Papers on Ancient Egypt

Representaciones de deidades ofídicas... Renenutet y Meretseger

Marta ARRANZ CÁRCAMO

Las mujeres de la elite en el Reino Antiguo, ¿un grupo social incapaz de actuar?

Romane BETBEZE

La representación de la danza en las tumbas tebanas privadas...

Miriam BUENO GUARDIA

Choosing the Location of a 'House for Eternity'... Hatshepsut's Officials...

Juan CANDELAS FISAC

El *hrw nfr* en la literatura ramésida...

María Belén CASTRO

Los himnos Esna II, 17 y 31: interpretación teológica...

Abraham I. FERNÁNDEZ PICHEL

Retorno a lo múltiple... la segunda sala hipóstila del templo de Seti I en Abidos

María Cruz FERNANZ YAGÜE

Más allá de la narrativa... la Segunda Estela de Kamose

Roxana FLAMMINI

El despertar de la "Bella Durmiente"... Museo Provincial Emilio Bacardí Moreau...

Mercedes GONZÁLEZ, Anna María BEGEROCK, Yusmary LEONARD, Dina FALTINGS

Realignments of Memory... the *Prophecies of Neferty*

Victor Braga GURGEL



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Of Creator and Creation: Some Observations on the Cosmogonical Conceptions in the Stela of Suty and Hor (BM EA826), Papyrus Leiden I 350, and the Hymn to Ptah of the “Great Harris Papyrus” (BM EA9999, 44)

Guilherme Borges PIRES

The present paper constitutes a brief preliminary approach to the cosmogonical conceptions suggested by three New Kingdom texts: the stela of Suty and Hor (BM EA826), Papyrus Leiden I 350 and the Hymn to Ptah of the “Great Harris Papyrus” (BM EA9999, 44). Taking into account and discussing the phraseological repertoire attested in these sources, an attempt is made to understand two fundamental aspects: who is the Creator and what does he create. Thus, the first part deals with the identity of the Creator, namely, his names, attributes, and core features. The second considers the different beings and cosmic elements brought into existence by the demiurgic action. Throughout the paper, some commentaries are provided on the different methods performed by the Creator to succeed in his task, in the context of the New Kingdom religion as a whole.

Do Criador e da Criação: Apontamentos sobre Concepções Cosmogónicas na Estela de Suty e Hor (BM EA826), Papiro Leiden I 350 e no Hino a Ptah do “Grande Papiro Harris” (BM EA9999, 44)

O presente artigo constitui uma breve abordagem preliminar às concepções cosmogónicas sugeridas em três textos do Império Novo: a estela de Suty e Hor (BM EA826), Papiro Leiden I 350 e o Hino a Ptah patente no “Grande Papiro Harris” (BM EA9999, 44). Tomando em consideração e discutindo o repertório fraseológico atestado nestas fontes, ensaia-se aqui uma tentativa de compreensão de dois aspectos fundamentais: quem é o Criador e o que é por este criado. Deste modo, a primeira parte trata da identidade do Criador, nomeadamente, os seus nomes, atributos e características principais. Num segundo momento do texto, consideram-se os diferentes seres e entidades cósmicos convocados à existência por intermédio da acção demiúrgica. No decorrer do artigo, apresentam-se alguns comentários e reflexões a respeito dos diferentes métodos adoptados pelo Criador para levar a cabo a sua tarefa, inscrevendo esta análise no contexto mais lato das crenças religiosas do Império Novo.

Keywords: New Kingdom, laudatory texts, self-creation, anthropogeny, theogony.

Palavras-chave: Império Novo, textos laudatórios, auto-criação, antropogonia, teogonia.

The primary goal of my on-going PhD research is to gather and consider the phraseology attested in the religious hymns of the New Kingdom (*ca.* 1539–1077 BC)¹ which refers explicitly to the creative process, that is, that sheds some light on the way the world came into existence. I intend to consider the complex identity of the Creator deity who not only

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all dates are rendered according to Hornung, Krauss and Warburton 2006: 490–495.

reunites several names, roles, and attributes but also sets the different Cosmos's components into being through the performance of distinct tasks. Thus, my research can be structured around three short core questions:

- 1) Who creates? (The identity of the Creator)
- 2) What is created? (The creation's outcomes)
- 3) How is it created? (The processes, mechanisms, and devices used by the Creator to achieve creation)

This paper aims to apply this methodology to three particular texts:

- 1) The stela of Suty and Hor, dated from Amenhotep III's reign (Eighteenth Dynasty, ca. 1390-1353 BC);²
- 2) Papyrus Leiden I 350, most probably composed during the second half of Rameses II's reign (Nineteenth Dynasty, ca. 1279-1213 BC);³
- 3) The hymn to Ptah from the "Great Harris Papyrus", most probably written towards the end of Rameses' III reign (Twentieth Dynasty, ca. 1187-1157 BC).⁴

Therefore, I shall briefly consider the cosmogonical conceptions conveyed in these sources.

Given the preliminary nature of the present work, the analysis will be mainly focused on the first two questions, that is, the Creator's identity and the outcomes of the creative task.

1 | The identity of the Creator

1.1 | Stela of Suty and Hor

The hymnological text is attested in the first 14 lines of the monument. According to some scholars, the stela contains two distinct hymns, addressed by the brothers Suty and Hor, overseers of the architectural works by the time of Amenhotep III, to the solar deity. Should we accept this train of thought, the first hymn would praise Amun, despite the current lack of the deity's name, which was obliterated in the context of the Amun's "persecution" during Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten's reign (ca. 1353-1336 BC).⁵ The clear identification of Amun as a solar deity is indicated by his association to Horakhty, from the very beginning of the laudatory inscription, which intends to praise the rising sun:

² BM EA826. The bibliography dealing with this document is a quite extensive one. The hieroglyphic text can be found in Edwards 1939: 24-25, pl. 21; Varille 1942: 25-30; and *Urk* IV: 1943-1946. Further translations and commentaries on this source include but are not limited to: Breasted 1934: 275-277; Sainte Fare Garnot 1949: 63-68; Wilson 1950: 367-368; Stewart 1957: 3-5; Stewart 1966: 53-55; Fecht 1967: 25-50; Barucq and Daumas 1980: 187-191; Foster 1995: 56-58; Murnane 1995: 27-28; Assmann 1999: 210-213; Shubert 2004: 143-165; Lichtheim 2006: 86-89; Baines and McNamara 2007: 63-79; Guylas 2009: 113-131.

³ After Gardiner's (1905: 12-60) publication of the hymn, the text was edited by Zandee (1947), remaining, until present, the main publication regarding this composition, which has been largely translated and discussed. See, among others: Erman 1923: 363-373; Wilson 1950: 368-369; Roeder 1959-1961: 282-301; Oswalt 1968: 196-219; Barucq and Daumas 1980: 206-229; Assmann 1995: 159; Foster 1995: 68-79; Mathieu 1997: 109-152; Assmann 1999: 132-142.

⁴ Papyrus Harris I = Papyrus BM EA9999, 44. The two fundamental editions are Erichsen 1933: 49, pl. 44, 2-8 and Grandet 1994: II, pl. 44. Further translations can be verified at: Roeder 1959-1961: 49-50; Barucq and Daumas 1980: 388-389; Foster 1995: 198-110; Assmann 1999: 447-448; Breasted 2001: 162-163.

⁵ However, it is interesting to notice that the name of Amun is only damaged when it is alluding to a praised deity, having been kept intact in the presentation of the titles held by the worshippers. It looks as if the deity's name, the word *Jmn*, would only menace the Amarna order when being explicitly rendered as a god. This fact seems even more relevant should we consider that none of the attestations of the word *Jmn* in the below quoted passage bears a divine classifier. Nevertheless, one should not extrapolate this as a general rule, as instances where *Jmn* is erased in titles have been attested. The stela of

Text 1:

dw3 [Jmn] h[f]<f wb[n]=f m hr-3h.ty jn jmy-r3 k3.wt n Jmn sw.ty jmy-r3 k3.wt n Jmn hr dd=sn jnd hr=k R^c nfr n r^c nb wbn [dw]3w n(n) jr=f3bw hprj wrd m k3.wt

Adoring [Amun] when he rises as Horakhty by the overseer of the works of Amun, Suty, and by the overseer of the works of Amun, Hor. They say: "Greetings (to you), Ra, beauty of every day. You rise at dawn endlessly. Khepri, who tires (himself) with labours!"⁶

Indeed, the stela addresses the sun-god in his various forms.⁷ If in the first hymn, the deity is labelled as Amun, Horakhty, Ra and Khepri, the second one praises him in solar terms as well, namely, by addressing him as Aten:

Text 2:

jnd hr=k jtn n hrw

Greetings (to you), sun-disk (*jtn*) of the day⁸

The above-given translation corresponds to the way some scholars tend to translate it, that is, interpreting the word *jtn* as the Egyptian word for "(sun) disk" and not as the Amarna paramount deity's name.⁹ This option may be based

on the absence of a divine classifier in the writing of the name. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this is not exclusive to the word *jtn* as every deity name in this textual composition lacks it as well and scholars still tend to translate them as the various Gods' names (Amun, Horakhty, Ra, Khepri, etc.). Thus, from a linguistic point of view, it seems also possible to translate *jtn* as "Aten" in this passage. One might even wonder on which grounds this apparent lack of a definite and solid criterion lies.¹⁰ However, the deity's further characterization as a hawk (*hjk*) and a scarab (*hpr*) distances us from an all-solar disk imagery through which the Amarna god is depicted, bearing in mind that this text antedates Akhenaten's reign. Therefore, a more neutral and less-Amarna charged translation, given by "sun-disk", seems to be more advisable. This aspect displays an affinity with religious conceptions and practices that started to emerge in the decades prior to Akhenaten's reign, linked to the sun movement and light, a theological trend labeled by Assmann as "New Solar Theology".¹¹ One of the first and most iconic attestations of this new religious feature would be precisely the stela of Suty and Hor.¹²

Nakht, found at TT 52 and probably dated to the reign of Thutmose IV, presented the title of its owner without the word *Jmn* (Davies 1917: pl. 28, 36-38, fig. 6, l. 2. This information is referent to the moment of the finding and the subsequent report produced by Davies in the context of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's expedition given that the object, which was assigned to that institution, was lost when the steam-ship "Arabic" that transported it to New York "was sunk by a submarine off the Irish coast in the summer of 1915" (Davies 1917: 35, n. 2)). Thus, whereas it is possible that a selected deletion took place in the damages caused to the Suty and Hor's monument, conclusions on this regard remain tentative, as a broader scope of texts should be taken into consideration. Moreover, since the Nakht's inscription is no longer available, it is impossible to ascertain whether the worshipper's title originally bore a divine classifier or not.

⁶ BM EA826, 1-2.

⁷ Lichtheim 2006: 86.

⁸ BM EA826, 8.

⁹ Barucq and Daumas 1980: 189- "Salut à toi, disque du jour"; Assmann 1999: 21- "Gegrüsstest siest du, Sonne des Tages".

¹⁰ This was the option picked by Lichtheim (2006: 87): "Hail to you, Aten of daytime". Foster (1995: 57) opts for a certain textual ambiguity, presenting both solutions in his translation: "Hail to you, Aton, Sun-disk of day".

¹¹ Assmann 1999: 102-132.

¹² Assmann 1999: 9.

The solar presentation of the adored deity is also endorsed by the reference to sun-related animals, such as the falcon or the scarab:

Text 3:

bjk ʕ3 s3b-šw.t
hpr̄r st̄s sw ds=f
Great falcon, dapple-plumed
Scarab who himself raises himself!¹³

The lack of a divine classifier and the duplication of the consonant “r” might point out into an animal understanding of the Demiurge, here envisaged as a “scarab/beetle” (*hpr̄r*),¹⁴ and not to the name of the god Khepri, although it would also fit in this context.¹⁵ One might also consider the hypothesis of an ambiguity deliberately sought by the scribe, as this feature overarches the entire composition. The persistent absence of divine classifiers in this text raises further translational and interpretative problems when essaying the Demiurge’s nature. In the second hymn, the god is described as:

Text 4:

nbj n qm3 s3tw
hnmw Jmn (hn)mm.wt

jtj t3.wy m ʕ3 r nds
mw.t 3h.t ntr.w rmt.w
hmw w3h-jb

Modeler of what the soil produces
Khnum and Amun of the Humanity
Who seizes the Two Lands from great to small
Glorious mother of gods and humans
Craftsman with a patient heart¹⁶

Despite the translation previously rendered, one should consider an alternative one, where *mw.t* would not be understood as the Egyptian term for “mother” but instead as the name of Mut, the Amun’s spouse in the Theban triad. Indeed the lack of divine classifier should not prevent us from such a translation, given that that two male gods’ names mentioned right before do not display it neither¹⁷ and they still tend to be translated as the deities’ names and not as verbal forms or nouns relating to “protecting/protection” or “concealment/concealing”.¹⁸ Simultaneously, one might wonder whether this passage serves to point out a simultaneity of maternal and paternal features, performed by an all-encompassing creator deity.

The “New Solar Theology” would also focus its attention on the unitary nature of the divine,

the most fundamental theological issue of the New Kingdom, which most radical resolution attempt would be observed in the Amarna Period, according to Assmann.¹⁹ Indeed, epithets connected to divine uniqueness are present in the hymns of Suty and Hor:

Text 5:

wʕ hr hw=f sbb nhh
Unique in this kind, who traverses the *nhh*-time
[= eternity]²⁰

This oneness is also connected to another fundamental attribute of the Creator that starts emerging in the hymnology of this period—his primordality:

Text 6:

p3wty t3.wy
Primeval one of the Two Lands!²¹

These aspects of uniqueness, oneness, and primordality were deeply developed and explored in Ramesside times, as attested by Papyrus Leiden I 350.

1.2 | Papyrus Leiden I 350

The first striking aspect of this textual composition is its non-conformity to the traditional structure of the hymns, that is, a title provided by an infinite verbal form (*dw3 X jn Y*, “Adoring X

by Y”) followed by a second part introduced by the formula *jnd hr=k*, “Greetings (to you)”.²² Instead it is subdivided in distinct chapters (literally, “dwellings”, *hw.t-mh.t*) which numbers establish a phonetic alliteration with the first and last words of each of the subsections, creating interesting puns between numbers and words/meanings. It is a rather complex textual production, form and content-wise, that presents the Creator through a broad set of names, titles and epithets whose global perception is often difficult to trace and fully apprehend.

The Creator’s oneness, uniqueness, and supremacy over the other deities attested in the stela of Suti and Hor are here clearly mentioned as well:

Text 7:

p3 ntr wsr b3.w r ntr.wʕ
mj ntfpw p3 wʕ wʕwʕ
ntry jmn rn=f jmy ntr 8/hmn

The god of more powerful *b3*’s than those of the (other) gods^o
Because he is the one who remains unique^o
Divine, whose name is hidden among the Eight Gods (Ogdoad?)^{o23}

Further expressions are brought to emphasize the god’s ontological superiority and power over the other beings, including the divine ones, namely, “Lord of the lords” (*nb nb.w*) (text 25), “great god” (*ntr ʕ3*),²⁴ “Lord of All” (*nb r dr*) (text 29) and “beautiful power” (*sh̄m nfr*).²⁵ This feature is

¹³ BM EA826, 8–9.

¹⁴ *Wb* III, 267.5–6.9.

¹⁵ Despite its appropriateness, *hpr̄r(j)* would be a more suitable spelling to convey the god’s name, rather than *hpr̄r*. Lichtheim (2006: 87), Foster (1995: 57) and Assmann (1999: 211) seem to corroborate this view, translating this particular word as “Beetle”, “Scarab”, and “Käfer”, respectively. Barucq and Daumas (1980: 189), on the contrary, render it as a participial form – “venu à l’existence”. However, given that the previous verse presents the god via an animal metaphor (*bjk*, “falcon”), it makes sense contextually to allude to another animal in the following one.

¹⁶ BM EA826, 10–11.

¹⁷ It is important to bear in mind that classifiers alone do not unequivocally suffice to support one meaning of a given word over another. In fact, the same word might be written with or without these elements in the same text, without necessarily pointing to a shift in meaning. In that sense, Egyptian classifiers cannot be envisaged as a clear-cut classifying or ordering system (Meeks 2012: 517–518). That is not to say, however, that they should not be taken into consideration when approaching a word within a sentence or a phraseological context. This issue is here evoked to point out the inconsistency when translating the words *mw.t*, *hnmw* and *jmn*, as the first is systematically interpreted as the word “mother” and the following two are generally understood as gods’ names, despite the fact that none of them bears a divine classifier, which ultimately could indicate that other translations are possible as well.

¹⁸ For an overview on how different scholars have been rendering this particular passage see Shubert 2004: 156–157.

¹⁹ Assmann 1995: 2. On the unicity of the Creator in the New Kingdom see, namely, Assmann 2015: 137–163.

²⁰ BM EA826, 3.

²¹ BM EA826, 12.

²² Allen 2001: 147–148. On the typical patterned structure of the religious hymns see Barucq 1962: 24–37 and Meeks 2000: 9–23.

²³ pLeiden I 350, II, 1–2.

²⁴ pLeiden I 350 II, 10. On this particular epithet – *ntr ʕ3*, “great/greatest god” – see Baines 1983: 13–28.

²⁵ pLeiden I 350 II, 27. In pLeiden I 350 IV, 11, the god’s beauty and power are once again linked: “Powerful one whose birth is secret, who created his beauty” (*sh̄m št3 msw.t qm3 nfrw=f*).

strengthened by allusions to the god's cosmical anteriority and ancestry. He is depicted as a “Primeval/Primordial” (*pꜣwtj*)²⁶ or an “Old/Aged” entity (text 11), who “inaugurated existence”:

Text 8:

ḥw.t-mḥ.t 100/š.t°
š3ꜥ ḥprw m sp tpy°

Chapter 100°

The one who inaugurated the existence on the First Time²⁷

The beginning of the hundredth chapter at-tests thus the aforementioned number/world gameplay, here displayed through the phonetic alliteration between the number 100 (*š.t*) and the verb “to begin, to inaugurate, to start” (*š3ꜥ*),²⁸ in order to render the Creator as the one who was present at the First Time (*sp tpy*), that is, the moment when the creative motion was set into action.²⁹

According to some scholars, the identification of the god as the Creator immediately connotes

a solar nature.³⁰ Indeed, the deity is identified with distinct solar deities such as Horakhty,³¹ Ra (texts 11 and 13), Atum (text 29), or even the Aten/sun disk.³² Notwithstanding these evident and immanent features, the Creator is able to remain concealed. The notorious wordplay between Amun (*Jmn*) as a deity's name and the adjective/verb for “hidden/to hide” (*jmn*) given by a homonymous word,³³ enables the god's presentation as a mysterious entity:

Text 9:

sšt3 ḏ.t=k m-m wr.w°
jmn.n[=k] tw m Jmn m-ḥ3t ntr:w°

Mysterious was your body among the Great ones [= the gods?]³⁴
(You) have hidden yourself as Amun,³⁴ ahead of the gods³⁵

The god is the one whose “shape/nature may not be known” (*nn rḥ.tw qjw=f*) (text 26). This mysterious existence is once again suggested in the beginning of “chapter 200”:

Text 10:

ḥw.t-mḥ.t 200°
št3.w ḥpr:w thn jr:w°
ntr bj3yt ʕš3.w ḥpr:w°

Chapter 200°

The one of mysterious manifestations, of sparkling forms°

Miraculous god, of numerous existences³⁶

The deity is a manifold cosmic entity, congregating in his own corporeality and identity, various divine entities:

Text 11:

psḏ.t dmd=tj ḥꜥw=k°
tj.t=k ntr nb sm3.w m ḏ.t=k°
bsy=k tpy š3ꜥ=k ḏr-ꜥ°
Jmn jmn rn=f r ntr:w°
j3w tnj r nn°
t3-tnn nbj.w [sw] ḏs=f m Pth°
s3ḥ.w ḥꜥ.w=f ḥmnyw°
ḥꜥw m Rꜥ m Nnw whm=f r npy°

The Ennead is united in your body°

Every god is an image of you, united with your body [= essence]°

You revealed yourself first, you inaugurated the beginning°

Amun, whose name is hidden from the gods°

The Old one, older than these°

Tatenen who fashioned himself by himself in Ptah°

The toenails of his body are the Ogdoad°

Who has appeared as Ra in the Nun in order to rejuvenate³⁷

The author of the text seems to have attempted a synthesis of this complex demiurgic identity, summarizing it in a very well-known passage:

Text 12:

ḥw.t-mḥ.t 300°
3/ḥmt pw ntr:w nb.w°
Jmn Rꜥ Pth nn snnw=sn°
jmn rn=f m Jmn°
ntf Rꜥ m ḥr ḏ.t=f Pth°

Chapter 300°

Three is every god³⁸

Amun, Ra and Ptah, with no-one equal to them°

Who hides his name as Amun°

He is Ra in the face, and his body is Ptah³⁹

The presence of the male singular third person suffix pronoun (*f*) and the individuation of the being's features points into a mono-unity rather than a three-god reality. The utmost god is identified with the three principal deities of the New Kingdom's pantheon, which serves to exalt him as the supreme god, the “unique”⁴⁰ one despite his plurality of manifestations and existences. His identity, whilst remaining singular, is composite, which integrates various human, animal,⁴¹ and divine aspects, attributes, and figures.

26 The god is qualified as “Primordial” (*pꜣwtj*) at least twice in this text: pLeiden I 350, III,1; IV, 14 (text 29).

27 pLeiden I 350, IV, 9. The same idea is conveyed elsewhere: *ntf nb r ḏr š3ꜥ wnn.t*, “He is the Lord of Totality, who inaugurated existence” (pLeiden I 350, IV, 15).

28 *Wb* 4, 406.4–9.

29 On the origins of this expression, which seems absent from both the Pyramid and the Coffin Texts see Bickel 1994: 56–59.

30 Vernus 1995: 69; Bickel 1998: 167.

31 pLeiden I 350, II, 16.

32 pLeiden I 350, III, 1. The writing of the word *jtn* with a divine classifier (G7) may point into a translation where the deity's name—Aten—is rendered rather than a mere mention to the sun disk. However, the reference to the sun rays and the fact that we are dealing with a post-Amarna text might indicate a divinized sun disk that is not necessarily pinpointed as Aten, the main god of the Amarna theology. That is possibly the reason that motivated some scholars to translate *jtn* as “sun disk” in this particular instance (Barucq and Daumas 1980: 217; Foster 1995: 72). One should bear in mind that a possible ambiguity might have been intended.

33 Which seems to be the matter in the above quoted passage from pLeiden I 350, II, 1–2 (text 7).

34 A clear distinction between the name of the god and the verbal form was intended here, as the latter is written with the “hide” classifier (A5) whereas the former includes the divine classifier (G7). For this reason, we opted for a capitalization of the god's name (*Jmn*) in the transliteration.

35 pLeiden I 350, III, 23–24.

36 pLeiden I 350, IV, 12.

37 pLeiden I 350, IV, 1–3.

38 As noted by Pascal Vernus (1994: 325–326) this sentence is an instance of a “prédication de classe” that indicates that every god is a triad, that is, that every god is subsumed in one group of three gods, which is not the equivalent to say that the mathematical sum of all existing gods equates three: “Une telle phrase ne signifie pas littéralement que la somme algébrique de tous les dieux est égale à trois, mais, plus exactement, que tous les dieux sont identifiés par renvoi à la classe constitué par les groupes de trois”.

39 pLeiden I 350, IV, 21–22.

40 The adjective *wꜥ(w)*, “one/unique” may be verified in distinct sections of this text, for instance, pLeiden I 350, II, 2 (text 7); and III, 2.

41 Throughout this textual composition, the Creator is identified with several animals, such as the falcon, the lion, the crocodile or the bull. The latter is particularly relevant in the expression “Bull of His Mother” (*k3 mwt.=f*) which appears at least three times in the text (pLeiden I 350, III, 25; IV, 27; IV, 15). On the importance and meaning of this expression see Roth 1999: 193–197.

The above-quoted excerpt may thus be regarded through the lens of what Erik Hornung has famously coined as the “One” and the “Many” when referring to the complexity of the Egyptian religious system.⁴²

In spite of a multi-faced Creator’s identity in this text, he always remains male in grammatical gender. Nevertheless, he is displayed in both paternal and maternal terms in a less ambiguous way than the Suty and Hor’s text:

Text 13:

jr jd.t shprw mtm°
š3°=f ndmy.t r nfrj.t°
hj=f3mm=f nn wn jd.t°
h°w m R° m Nnw ms ntt jwtt°
jt jt.w mw.t mw.wt°

(He) who has made the vulva/uterus, bringing life to the phallus°

He inaugurated the mating with young women°

He behaved like a husband with his fist when there was no vulva yet°

He who has appeared as Ra in the Nun and gives birth to what it is and to what it is not°

Father of the fathers (and) mother of the mothers⁴³

Even if this passage might at first lead into a non-binary gender understanding of the deity, that perspective shall be questioned and nuanced. This excerpt credits Amun with a sexual act that enabled his existence, in what is a plausible allusion to the demiurgic masturbation that might be traced back to the Pyramid Texts,⁴⁴ as well as with the settlement of the procreative act that allows human beings to reproduce themselves. Existence is thus perpetuated through biological processes handled under the god’s sphere. Amun is regarded as an all-encompassing figure whose creative intervention extends up to the limits of the non-existent itself, being located at a liminal place.⁴⁵ Simultaneously, there is no gender ambiguity in the divine portrait: he is a male (“husband”) who allegedly grasps his phallus in order to achieve orgasm and therefore procreate, without the intervention of a female reproductive organ. It might be argued that the use of the verb *msj* connotes the deity with a female task and thus suggests a certain androgyny which would be reinforced or clarified with the expression “Father of the fathers (and) mother of the mothers”, which is not exclusive from this text.⁴⁶

⁴² Hornung 2005.

⁴³ pLeiden I 350, V, 1–4.

⁴⁴ Namely, PT 527: *dd mdj tm pw hpr m jwsšw jr=f m Jwnw wd.n=f hnn=f m hf=f jr=f ndmmt jm=f ms(w) sšty snty šw hn° tfrwt* - “Recitation: Atum is the one who came into being as one who came (with penis) extended in Heliopolis. He put his penis in his fist so that he might make orgasm with it, and the two twins were born, Shu and Tefnut” (See Allen 2005: 164). For other sources covering the masturbatory motif, attested from the Old Kingdom until the Ptolemaic Period, see Orriols-Llonch 2012: 31.

⁴⁵ This might be linked to what Pascal Vernus (2011: 175–197) has coined as “les jachères du Demiurge”. In fact, although the genesis was performed by the Demiurge, he did not complete the creation. There remains a latent space of virtualities and potentialities left to develop, waiting for their accomplishment, but in which the supreme deity is already present. According to the same scholar, that constitutes an argument for the openness and non-canonically that characterizes the Egyptian civilization as whole (Vernus 2016: 318–319).

⁴⁶ Further attestations of the “mother/father” (and vice-versa) motif in the religious hymns of the New Kingdom, which seems to have started around the time of Thutmose III (ca. 1479–1425 BC), include: Chicago E14053, 8–10 (Assmann 1983, 228); TT 192 (3), 10 (The Epigraphic Survey 1980: 35–37, pl. 14–15); Short Hymn to Aten, col. 4 (Davies 1903, pl. XXXVII; Davies 1906, 27–30, pl. XVI, XXIII, XXIX, XXXII–XXXIII, XL, XLIII; Sandman 1938: 10–16; Grandet 1995: 121–133, 153–159); TT 106 (3), 16–17 (Assmann 1983: 152); TT 387 (1), 6 (Assmann 1983: 362); Papyrus Leiden I 344 verso, II, 1–5 (Zandee 1992: 65–77); and Ostrakon Cairo 25209 (Erman 1900: 30–33; Daressy 1901: 41, pl. XXXVIII). The author is currently preparing a paper where this phraseology shall be discussed.

However, we should bear in mind the polysemy covered by this word, which also comprehends more general creative notions such as “to fashion” or merely “to create”.⁴⁷ Apparently, a translation like “He who appears as Re in the Nun and creates/fashions what it is and what it is not” is still possible. This is even more relevant if we take into consideration that the verb *msj* is here graphed without the woman giving birth hieroglyph (B3/B4),⁴⁸ which is often employed as classifier to that verb when a sense of “giving birth” is intended. Hence, I would argue that the “mother/father” metaphor is here applied in order to portray the ancestral and primordial nature of the Creator deity,⁴⁹ and not necessarily to cover an androgynous imagery per se, as it has been posited.⁵⁰

Simultaneously, the “father/mother” motif might also be used to present the Creator as a caretaker and a provider, who sustains what he has generated,⁵¹ who keeps alive every being, providing the air to the nose;⁵² he is the very “life of the Ennead”.⁵³ The Creator is thus a sustainer who has authority over the Cosmos:

Text 14:

h°w hr nst=f r dd jb=f°
hqš.n=f ntt nb.t pšy=f[...]
š.n=f nsy.t nhh nfrjt-r d.t smn m nb w°

Who has appeared in his throne according to the wish of his heart°

He governed over everything with his [power?]°

He knotted (himself to?) the kingship, from the *nhh*-time to the *d.t*-time [= forever and ever] established as the sole Lord⁵⁴

Despite his soleness in ruling over the world, the Creator delegates this task in a human figure to govern over the terrestrial domain in his name: the pharaoh. In a reciprocal relationship, the latter may as well take the role of the worshipper who praises the Creator for everything he has performed, which is the case with the text we are about to consider.

1.3 | Hymn to Ptah from the “Great Harris Papyrus”

This textual composition is the least extensive of the three considered in this paper. It serves as an introduction to the list of accomplishments performed by Rameses III, the narrator of the text, in the Memphite sanctuary dedicated to Ptah. According to Grandet, the papyrus would have been displayed at Medinet Habu at the time of the deceased monarch’s burial, so that clergy and administration individuals could read it.⁵⁵

In accordance with Ptah’s theology, the god is here identified with Tatenen, being presented as the tutelary deity of Memphis. In that regard, he

⁴⁷ *Wb* 2, 137.4–138.17. In the latter sense, the verb could be used as a synonym of other generic creative ones such as *jjj* or *qmš*.

⁴⁸ Although one should keep in mind the possibility that is connected to the script in which the text was written, hieratic, where some classifiers are sometimes replaced by a single stroke, as seems to be here the case.

⁴⁹ Barucq 1962: 178.

⁵⁰ Mathieu 1997: 180.

⁵¹ *msy=f ntt rdj=f nh°=sn* (pLeiden I 350, IV, 7–8).

⁵² *s°nh wn.t hh=f šw r find nb* (pLeiden I 350, V, 22–23).

⁵³ *ntr°š nh n psd.t* (pLeiden I 350, II, 10).

⁵⁴ pLeiden I 350, IV, 4–5.

⁵⁵ Grandet 1994: 147.

is the father of both the pharaoh himself and the (other) deities:

Text 15:

dd jn nswt (wr-m3^ct-R^c mry-Imm)| p3 ntr^c3 hr jt=f ntr pn špsy Pth-^c3 rsy-jnb=f nb^c nḥ-t3.wy t3-tnn jt ntr:w q3-šw.ty spd^c b.wy nfr-hr hry s.t wr.t

Said by the king (Usermaatra-Meryamun)|, the great god, to his father, this noble god, Ptah-the-Great, the one who is at the south of his wall, lord of Ankhtawy, Tatenen, father of the gods, with the elevated twin plumes, with sharp horns, handsome of face, who is upon his Great Throne⁵⁶

In this laudatory text, Ptah is depicted through attributes and epithets that portray a link to the solar creator gods we have been referring to, namely, his oldness and greatness. In that sense, he is a Primeval god, responsible for existence's beginning:

Text 16:

jnd hr=k wr=tw tnj<.t>=tw t3-tnn jt=f ntr:w ntr wr n sp tpy qd rmt.w jr ntr:w š3^c hprw m P3wty tpy hprw n jy.t nb hr-s3=f jr p.t m qm3.n jb=f

Greetings (to you), you are great, you are elder! Tatenen, father of the gods! The great god of the First Time, who has built the human beings, who has made the gods, who inaugurated existence as a primordial god! The first one to have come into existence in regard to everything that came after him. (He is the one) who made the sky as a creation of his heart!⁵⁷

It is worth noting that the phraseology used in this hymn is extremely similar to the one attested

in the sun god's praising texts. Ptah is, just like Amun(-Ra), depicted in terms of greatness, oldness, ancestry, and primordially, having acted at the genesis and set the world into being. He superintends over both individual and cosmic time, destiny, and life:

Text 17:

nb^c nḥ srq ḥty (r)dj3 t3w r fnd nb s^cnḥ hr-nb(.w) m k3.w=f^c ḥ^c š3y rnn.t r-ḥ.t=f^c nḥ=tw m pry.t n r[3]=f jr ḥtp.w n n3 ntr:w nb.w m hprj=f n Nwn-wr nb nḥḥ d.t r-ḥt=f t3w n^c nḥ n hr-nb

Lord of life, who makes the throats breathe, who provides every nose with air, who makes everyone live from his food,⁵⁸ on whose dependence are lifetime, destiny, and fortune. One lives from what comes out of his mouth! He makes the offerings for every god in his manifestation as Nun, the Great, lord of the *nḥḥ*-time, on whose dependence is the *d.t*-time Breath of life for everyone!⁵⁹

The accumulation of the caretaking and life-providing attributes would immediately connote a solar nature for Ptah. As previously stated, some scholars argue that a solar character is a *sine qua non* condition for the attestation of a creative deity.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, in the above-quoted passage there seems to be a clear distinction between Ptah and the solar deity, Ra, who traverses the Duat, that is, the underworld, created by Ptah. The spheres of action seem to be differentiated and individualized. In the rest of the text, there seems to be no explicit rendering of the Memphite deity as a solar one. He is never said to be Ra, Atum, Khepri or Amun or any other

⁵⁶ BM EA9999, 44, 2–3.

⁵⁷ pBM EA9999, 44, 3–4.

⁵⁸ This epithet is attested in relation to Happy in the Gebel el-Silsila steles (Barguet 1952, 51, 1.2; 58–59), reenforcing the intimate connection between Ptah and the flood/Nun that seems to be in question in this text.

⁵⁹ pBM EA9999, 44, 6–7.

⁶⁰ Vernus 1995: 69; Bickel 1998: 167.

sun-related god. In that sense, one might wonder whether the assertion that describes a cosmogonical deity being necessarily interconnected to the depiction of a solar god corresponds more to an Egyptological assumption rather than an intrinsic Egyptian conception.

In any case, regardless of one's acceptance or not of the idea that the Creator is undoubtedly and unquestionably solar, he is always responsible for the origin of the different cosmos' elements. Various are the outcomes of the demiurgic task.

2 | The Outcomes of Creation

2.1 | Stela of Suty and Hor

In many New Kingdom religious hymns, the first result of the genesis act is the own self-created Demiurge: the Creator is the first creature. In the stela of Suty and Hor, the mention to the god's self-creation follows the initial addressing to the adored deity in the first hymn:

Text 18:

pḥ.t.w nbj=k ḥ^c.w=k mss jwty ms.tw=f

You are a sculptor, you fashion your (own) body (out of gold)

Childbearer/Modeler who is not born/modeled⁶¹

Once more, the consistent lack of classifiers hampers the translation of this text. Firstly, the word *pḥ* with no further classifier induces a possible premeditated ambiguity between the god Ptah and the noun “sculptor”.⁶² This persistent absence also channels the way into diverse interpretations regarding the second element of the above-quoted passage, as *msj* and related words may refer to both a biological process —“to give birth, to bear”— or a more artisanal one —“to model”.⁶³ Whilst the latter would fit in a manual and crafted conception of the self-genesis, the former would serve to amplify and diversify the utilized narratives and devices in order to convey that paramount cosmogonical moment. Both solutions seem to be possible, linguistically and subject wise.

The verb *msj* is again used in reference to the Demiurge's self-creation in the second hymn. However, in this instance this cosmogonical action is rendered through the verb *hpr*, “to assume/taking a shape; to come into existence”.⁶⁴

Text 19:

hprr st3 sw ds=f hpr ds=f jwty ms.tw=f

Scarab who has raised himself up by himself, who comes into existence by himself, without having been born⁶⁵

The verb *st3* articulated with the pronoun *sw* evokes the self-elevation of the Demiurge from

⁶¹ BM EA826, 3.

⁶² Barucq and Daumas (1980: 188) interpret *pḥ* as “le Sculpteur”. Foster (1995: 56) harmonizes with this perspective: “Fashioner of yourself”. Assmann (1999: 210), on the contrary, prefers to translate this passage as “Du bist ein Ptah”. Barucq and Daumas (1990: 188, [b]) argue against this option, as that should be covered by *ntk Pḥ*. The scholars suggest instead that *pḥ* is a past participle of the verb *pḥ*, “to mold/to sculpture”. However, further problems arise as this verb is only known from later sources (Wb 1, 565). Lichtheim (2006: 87) presents a more neutral option: “Self-made”.

⁶³ Foster (1995: 56) and Assmann (1999: 210) opt for the former, whereas Barucq and Daumas (1980: 188) prefer the latter. Lichtheim (2006: 87) seems to circumvent the problem by simply translating as “Creator uncreated”.

⁶⁴ Wb 3, 260.7–264.15; Vernus and Yoyotte 2005: 442.

⁶⁵ BM EA826, 9.

the primeval Ocean, where all the matter was already present in a latent state.⁶⁶ Simultaneously, it is not necessarily clear whether this excerpt refers to a *creatio prima*—the actual genesis—or a *creatio continua*, that is, the continuing (re-)creation and reenacting of the Cosmos via the daily emergence of the sun deity.⁶⁷ Choosing the former or the latter has implications for the translations. While some scholars, such as Assmann,⁶⁸ translate the above-quoted passage using present verbal forms, which suggests a *creatio continua* understanding, others opt for past or participial ones,⁶⁹ tending thus to a *creatio prima* interpretation. Assmann’s view harmonizes with the statement that hymns coming from the New Solar Theology, including the one we are dealing with, do not make a distinction between these two creation realities.⁷⁰ The picture is even more complex provided that *sp tpy*, the “First Time”, may occasionally designate the repetition of the creation given by the daily appearance of the sun in the New Kingdom.⁷¹

Whether referring to a single occasion or a repetitive process, the demiurgical self-genesis is addressed a third time in the text, now with the more general verb *jrj*, “to make; to create”:⁷²

Text 20:

p3wty t3.wy jrj sw ds=f

The Primordial of the Two Lands who made himself (by himself)⁷³

This self-generated being is the author of the diverse elements that constitute the Cosmos, as stated by the following verse:

Text 21:

m33jry=f nb w^c

Who sees everything he has made, (being) alone⁷⁴

Specifications and individuations of this “everything” are attested in the text. Anthropogeny, that is, the creation of the human beings, is mentioned twice in the text, both in the second hymn. Firstly, at the very beginning of the text, the Demiurge is presented not only as the humankind generator but also as the one who provides what is required for their subsistence:

Text 22:

*jnd hr=k jtn n hrw
qm3 tm.w jr n^ch^c=sn*

Hail to you, sun disk of the day
Who creates those who do not exist/human beings/everything and makes them live!⁷⁵

66 Vernus and Yoyotte 2005: 442.

67 On the distinction between these two concepts see, among others: Knigge 2006: 67–70.

68 Assmann 1999: 211.

69 Barucq and Daumas 1980: 189; Foster 1995: 57; Lichtheim 2006: 87.

70 Assmann 1995: 80.

71 Bickel 1994: 59, 79.

72 *Wb* 1, 108.5–112.11.

73 BM EA826, 12.

74 BM EA826, 13. Assmann (1999: 212) renders this particular passage in the past: “der alles sieht, was er geschaffen hat, als er allein war”. This option indicates that the Creator performed his deeds while being alone, which seem to be under the sphere of a *creatio prima* rather than a *creatio continua* one.

75 BM EA826, 8.

The polysemy of the term *tm.w*, which might indicate “humankind” but also expressions of totality - “everything”,⁷⁶ has led to different understandings of this passage by scholars.⁷⁷ However, the expression “makes them live” clearly remits to living beings, which argues in favor of a human-related translation.

The second alleged instance of the anthropogenic act in this text is not exempted from issues either. As previously discussed, it is not clear if the word *hmnw* in Text 4 is to be understood in reference to the god Khnum, a verb or even a noun.⁷⁸ In any case, it seems that the Humankind is here said to be created out of a manual and artisanal process, by a craftsman who superintends over everything and never ceases to be vigilant towards his creation. He shapes the soil products, and his heart is a “patient” one. His eagerness to protect both “gods and humans”, a task here linked to a feminine profile, makes him a “shepherd” who leads his “flock”, being a refuge which vivifies the ones he takes care of.⁷⁹ Although the gods are also under the protective sphere of the supreme deity, even being mentioned before the humans, there is no explicit reference to theogony, that is, the creation of the gods, in the stela of Suty and Hor. Simultaneously, the text is also sparse in mentions to the origins of other world elements beings, namely, animals and plants, a relatively common feature in the New Kingdom’s hymnology.

Nevertheless, the Creator is appointed, if not to the creation *per se*, at least to the regulation of

cosmic realities, such as time, more specifically, its passing. Indeed, the solar deity’s daily voyage structures time:

Text 23:

*hrw kt hpt=k w3.t
jtrw m h^c.w hfn.w
3.t hrw nb hr=k
sbj=s htp=k
km n=k wnw.wt gr^ch mjtt
gsgs.n=k sw n(n) hpr 3bw m k3.wt=k*

(In) a short day you run a way
of millions and thousands of *jtr.w*⁸⁰
Each day is a moment to you,
passing as you set.
The hours of the night are accomplished for you as well
You have ordered it with no ceasing in your work⁸¹

Likewise, the seasons’ succession and their respective weather are a consequence of the sun’s movement, which decides on climate conditions according to his will:

Text 24:

*wbn m p.t hprw m R^c
jrj=f tr.w 3bd.w
hh mrj=f
qbb mrj=f*

Who rises in the sky, manifest in Ra
He makes the seasons into months
Heat as he wishes
Cold as he wishes⁸²

76 *Wb* 5, 307.7–16.

77 Barucq and Daumas (1980: 189) and Assmann (1999: 211) translate as “hommes” and “Menschheit”, respectively, whereas Foster (1995: 57) and Lichtheim (2006: 87) appoint this passage to the creation of totality (“all things” and “all”, respectively).

78 See the commentary on this passage in 1.1.

79 *mnjw qny h^cwj^c w.t=f j^cb=sn jry n^ch^c=sn* (BM EA826, 11–12).

80 A measure of distance (*Wb* 1, 147.2–4).

81 BM EA826, 5–6.

82 BM EA826, 13–14.

2.2 | Papyrus Leiden I 350

The demiurgic self-creation also occupies a prominent place in the hymnal collection of Leiden. To describe this cosmogonic reality, words linked to a manual and artisanal work, such as *nj*, *hmnw* or *qđ* are instrumental:

Text 25:

nb nb.w nj sw ds=f°

Lord of the lords, who fashioned himself by himself⁸³

Text 26:

hw.t-mh.t 40/hmnw°
hmnw sw nn rh qj.w=f°
jnw nfr(w) hpr.w m bs dsr°
qđ ssm.w=f qm3 sw ds=f°

Chapter 40°

(The one who) crafted himself, whose nature may not be known°

Perfect of appearance, which came into existence in a sacred image

Who built his statues/images/likeness⁸⁴ and created himself (by himself)⁸⁵

Text 27:

nj swħ.t=f ds=f°

The one who fashioned his egg himself⁸⁶

It should be noted that while the first two excerpts denote a pure craft context, with a possible

mention of the cultic statues when describing the god's self-genesis, the third one seems to combine this artisanal work with a biological process: the hatching of the egg,⁸⁷ sculpted by the god himself who is thus both Creator and creature.

Contrary to the hymns of Suty and Hor, theogony is attested in this text, with further specifications to the creation of individual and groups of gods, like the Ogdoad or the “primordial gods” (*p3wtj.w*):

Text 28:

hw.t-mh.t 80/hmn(yw)°
hmn(ny.w) hprw=k tpj°
r km=k nn jw=k w°tj°
sšt3 d.t=k m-m wr:wj3w(.w)°
jmn.n[=k] tw m Jmn m-h3t ntr:w°
jry=k hpr.w=k m 3-tnn°
r sms p3wtj.w m p3w.t=k tp.t°

Chapter 80°

The Ogdoad was your first manifestation°

So that you complete these things, being alone°

Mysterious was your body among the great/old (gods)°

(You) have hidden yourself as Amun at the head of the gods⁸⁸

(Then) you will make your coming into existence as Tatenen°

In order to bring to birth the primordial gods of your primordial time⁸⁹

However, this excerpt lies somehow in between self-creation and theogony. Indeed, the

Ogdoad, that is, the ensemble of Eight primordial gods often misunderstood as being automatically linked to Hermopolis,⁹⁰ are said to be the god's first existence and not a separate entity. Moreover, the mention of the Demiurge as being “alone” suggests that the Eight Gods are merely a manifestation of the single Creator and not a group of divine individuals generated by his action that would exist separately from him. The same seems true for Tatenen, which is said to be another incarnation of the god, whose name is “concealed” as Amun. The one deity is thus described as a plural and multifolded one.⁹¹ Therefore, it may be posited that this passage is not referring to the creation of the gods but rather to the emergence of the Creator himself. Nevertheless, the mention to the “primordial gods” who are “brought to birth” by Tatenen seems to assert a theogonic process, where individual divine beings came into existence under the sphere of action of the complex and composite Demiurge. This conception seems to be resumed further on in the text:

Text 29:

jw dd=tw t3-tnn r=f°
Jmn pr m Nnw ssmw=f hr.w°
ky hpr.w=f m hmnyw°
[p3wtj] wtt p3wtj.w sms R°
tm=f sw m tmw h° w° hn°=f°
ntf nb r dr s3° wnn.t°

One says “Tatenen” to him°

Amun who came forth from the Nun to lead the faces [= people]°

Another of his existences is the Ogdoad°

[Primordial one] who begets the primordial gods who bring Ra to birth°

He completed himself with Atum,⁹² being one body with him°

His is the Lord of All, who inaugurated existence⁹³

Here the deity, identified with Tatenen and Amun, is said to have come into existence via the form of the Ogdoad. Moreover, he is the Primordial who begets (*wtt*) the primordials who then bring Ra to birth. Once more, there seems to be a differentiation between the coming into existence of the Ogdoad, on the one hand—which here is said to be one of the god's forms—and the primordial gods and Ra, on the other, who only arise in a second moment. Thus, whereas the former may be envisaged in the demiurgic self-genesis framework, the latter seems to relate more to a theogonic moment *in stricto sensu*. Having created himself but also other divine characters, the god is complete (*tm*), both in his name (Atum, (*J*)*tm(w)*) and corporeal dimensions. His completion and achievement of the creation's beginning posit him as the “Lord of All” (*nb r dr*).

Regarding the theogonical process in this textual composition, one faces a textual excerpt, which possibly alludes to the creation of Shu and Tefnut through expectoration/spit:

Text 30:

jšš [...f...]
[...] šw tfnw.t dmd m b3w°

The one who spews [...] (?)°

[...] Shu and Tefnut united with his power⁹⁴

83 pLeiden I 350, II, 3. It is interesting to observe the phonetic and stylistic effect given by the repetition of the *nb* sound.

84 *Wb* 4, 291.6–16.

85 pLeiden I 350, II, 26. Notice the pun between the number 40 (*hmnw*) and the word *hmnw*, “to craft” (*Wb* 3, 83.5–84.8).

86 pLeiden I 350, IV, 10.

87 On the importance of the egg in the Egyptian cosmogonical speculation see Goedicke 1991: 63–70.

88 The word is written simply with the A19, that covers a vast range of phonetic values, including *wr* (great) or *j3w* (old). While Barucq and Daumas (1980: 221) prefer the former, Foster (1995: 74) and Assmann (1999: 329) opt for the latter. Anyhow, the presence of the divine classifier G7 points into a deity-related adjective, regardless of the chosen translation.

89 pLeiden I 350, III, 22–24. Pun established between the number 80 (*hmn(yw)*) and the word for “the Eight/Ogdoad” (*hmnw*).

90 On this topic see, among others: Bickel 1994, 27–29; Zivie-Coche 2009, 167–224.

91 It should be mentioned that, from a textual sequence point of view, this passage comes right after the one where the Creator is identified with three core gods of the New Kingdom's pantheon—Amun, Ra and Ptah—to which we have previously alluded (text 12).

92 Wordplay between the verb “to complete” (*tm*) and Atum's name ((*J*)*tm(w)*). On the perception of Atum as “the complete one” and the resultant vocabulary and religious meanings see, among others: Popielska-Grzybowska 2013, 255–259.

93 pLeiden I 350, IV, 14–15.

94 pLeiden I 350, IV, 3–4.

The fragmentary nature of the passage prevents us from positing the presence of the biological metaphor through which the emergence of the first Heliopolitan divine couple is rendered since the Pyramid Texts.⁹⁵ However, the phonetic alliteration established between the verb “to spew” (*jšš*) and Shu’s name (*šw*) aligns with the lexical shaping of the text here considered.⁹⁶ Simultaneously, the god is assigned to other biological processes, namely, the setting of human reproduction itself, as previously mentioned (text 13).

Thus, even if, contrary to the stela of Suty and Hor, the anthropogenic reality is not attested per se in this hymn, the process that allows human perpetuation is itself enabled by the Creator, who creates the required organs and inaugurates the biological copulation that allows the human existence.

The Leiden hymnological collection stresses above all the self-creation of the primordial deity while presenting a few references to the coming into existence of the gods. However, it seems sparse in referring to Humanity and completely silent about the creation of other living beings, such as animals and/or plants, and cosmic elements, except for time.⁹⁷ Although much shorter in length, the Hymn to Ptah of the Great Harris Papyrus provides a broader array of creation’s outcomes.

2.3 | Hymn to Ptah from the “Great Harris Papyrus”

Through his identification with Tatanen, Ptah is praised as the cosmic author inasmuch as he is described with attributes that range from ancestry to venerability. Indeed, the hymn mentions both anthropogeny and theogony after having stated Ptah-Tatenen’s anteriority over the other beings, which only started to exist after the primordial deity’s accomplishment at the “First Time” (text 16).

As this text serves as an introduction to the enumeration of the royal deeds towards the god, the different creative outcomes of the demiurgic task are very briefly inventoried, taking a list-related form. Therefore, it is in a somewhat succinct way that the hymn mentions, at its very beginning, the creation of both humans and gods. It is worth noting that anthropogeny is mentioned before theogony and that the former is conveyed through an artisanal verb, *qd*,⁹⁸ whereas the latter is rendered via a more generic term, *jr(j)*. Hence, the cosmogonical sequence in this text seems to be autogenesis/anthropogeny/theogony, an order that is as well attested in other New Kingdom religious hymns.⁹⁹ The creation of these beings is accompanied by the emergence of the sky, which is said to be conceived in the

95 See, namely, PT 34 and PT 600. The same cosmogonical motif is attested in the Coffin Texts, for instance, in CT 77.

96 Some texts display a similar solution to refer to the creation of Tefnut, that is, the writing of a verb which phonetics (*tfn*) is integral to the deity’s name (*tfn*). In PT 600, for instance, one can read: *jšš.n=km šw tfn.(n)=km tfn.t*, “You have spewed Shu and spat out Tefnut”.

97 The creation of time, or its regulation, seems to be alluded to at least twice in the text. In the first one, the solar voyage divides the time into its distinctive periodization and units: day/night, hours, months and years (pLeiden I, 350, II, 16–17). The second instance refers to the Creator’s power to decide on an individual’s lifetime (pLeiden I 350, III, 17). The Creator is thus an entity who is able to operate and on both cosmic and individual temporal levels.

98 As noted by Grandet (1994, II, 163, note 657), the same verb is used to refer to the creation of Humanity in another section of the papyrus, which does not belong to the hymn: *qd rhy.t* (pBM EA9999, 49,9).

99 For example in TT 84 (1), 1–2: *rdj.t [j3.w n Jmn-Rc-Jtm] k3 [h.t psd.t 3.t] hpr ds=f jmj sw h.t qd rmt.w ts ntr.w*, “To give [praises to Amun-Ra-Atum], the bull [of the Great Ennead], who comes into existence by himself, in the midst of the egg, who builds the human beings and ties [= makes] the gods” (Assmann 1983: 140).

god’s heart.¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to notice that here Ptah-Tatenen is accredited with a creative device that would be further explored in the Late Period account of the so-called *Memphite Theology*, a text that details the way that god set the world into being through the utterance of the plan first designed in his heart.¹⁰¹

Besides the sky, the Demiurge is also responsible for the existence of the two other existential plans, that is, the earth and the netherworld:

Text 31:

snn.t t3 m jr:n=f ds=f phr sw m Nnw W3d-wr jr dw3.t shtp h3.wt

(The one) who founded the earth with what he himself made [= being himself] and that surrounded it with/as the Nun and the Great Green/the flood of the Ocean. (The one) who has made the Duat and makes the corpses rest (there)¹⁰²

In his identity as the “earth-that-arises”, the creation of the telluric element is simultaneously a reference to the coming into existence of Ptah-Tatenen himself, although the deity seems to have existed before the element. Ptah-Tatenen creates the land, which he himself is, surrounding it with waters. Regarding these, most scholars tend to translate the expression *Nnw W3d-wr* as above rendered, that is, stating that the

Creator surrounded the land with two different kinds of waters: the Nun-ocean and the Great Green.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Grandet rejects this interpretation, holding that these two words are to be understood as connected by a direct genitive: “le flot de l’Océan”.¹⁰⁴ In fact, despite being commonly translated as “the sea”, *w3d-wr*, which may indeed refer to actual seas, may as well be used in reference to the primeval Ocean that surrounds the world after its creation has been achieved.¹⁰⁵ Thus, according to that scholar, *Nnw* should be here understood as the word for “flood” of the “Great Green”, which should be here interpreted as the primeval ocean. This train of thought goes down well with the cosmogonical connotation of the hymn as a whole, which may lead us to support this second reading, even if, from a grammatical point of view, there is no reason to sustain one over the other. Regardless of these particular considerations, the excerpt connotes the Demiurge as the author of the sky, earth, waters, and netherworld, creating an all-ontological existence. The coming into existence of the distinct cosmic elements is thus here evoked, in a rather brief account that refers to the formula *pt t3 nwn dw3t*, elsewhere attested in New Kingdom texts.¹⁰⁶ The Creator is thus an all-encompassing deity who is not only responsible

100 For an introduction to the creation through the heart in the Egyptian complex religious system see, among others: Bilolo 1982: 7–14.

101 About this cosmogonical account see most recently El Hawary 2010.

102 pBM EA9999, 44, 5.

103 Barucq and Daumas 1980: 389 - “qui entoure (le monde) comme Noun et Très-Verte”; Foster 1995: 109 — “circled it about with Ocean and and the Great Green Sea”; Assmann 1999: 447 — “und sie um gibt als Urwasser und Grosses Grün”. As these translations illustrate, there are also different understandings of the use of the preposition *m* before the two nouns, which range from “with” to “as”. Should we accept the first, the Demiurge would make the land be enveloped by the waters; the second would identify the Demiurge himself with the waters that circle the terrestrial surface. A deliberate ambiguous rendering might have also been intended.

104 Grandet 1994, I, 264; II, 164, n. 660.

105 *Wb* 1, 269.16; 18.

106 The formula is also found in its shortened version: *pt t3 dw3t*. On this topic see Grandet 1994: II, 164, n. 659.

for the emergence of the different elements and beings but also their maintenance and survival. He is truly a “Lord of Life” (text 17).

The deity’s superintendence reaches out life and death, time and destiny. In a continuous zeal for his creatures, both human and divine, the Creator ensures their existence is assured through the products he himself generates in order to make them live, namely, air and food. In this regard, it is interesting to notice that Ptah-Tatenen is here identified with the Nun, the Great, that is, the primeval waters that contained in themselves all the required matter in order to set existence into being.¹⁰⁷ As Grandet points out, it is also plausible that we are here faced with an allusion to the Nilotic annual flood, precisely the natural phenomenon that enabled the Egyptians’ survival, and that was regarded as a reenactment of the initial inundation.¹⁰⁸ Simultaneously, the products that allow life to endure are said to be the product of the god’s mouth, a device that is explored in both biological and verbal creational processes. The latter is the one used by the same divine character, Ptah-Tatenen, in the above-mentioned *Memphite Theology*, a Late Period account where creation is the result of the god’s heartily conceived plan which is then uttered by his mouth. One can only wonder whether this fragment corresponds to an older suggestion of the demiurgic performance through that method.

Final Remarks

The three hymns that constitute the object of the present paper pertain all to the New Kingdom, having been composed in different moments of this chronological period, as previously stated. Apart from their differences in extent (Leiden papyrus being the longest and the hymn to Ptah the shortest), it is important to note their distinct materiality and writing systems: whereas the text of Suty and Hor is attested in a hieroglyphic stela, the two other hymnological compositions here considered come from hieratic papyri.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, all of them display important features of the New Kingdom religion in its different phases, namely, the “New Solar Theology” and the “Ramesside theology”, alluding to the cosmogonical moment, through a set of different motifs that constitute a rich phraseological repertoire. Through different degrees of expression and depth, they all emphasize the Creator’s primordially, something that is strengthened in the hymns of Suty and Hor and Leiden by recurrent mentions to the Creator’s oneness. Another common feature is the paternal nature of the deity, to which the maternal one is associated clearly in the Leiden papyrus and perhaps in the stela of Suty and Hor as well. Furthermore, the common assumption according to which the Creator deity is immediately connoted with a solar nature might be challenged in

¹⁰⁷ Sauneron and Yoyotte 1959: 22.

¹⁰⁸ Grandet 1994: II, 163, n.163.

¹⁰⁹ As to whether or not this has implications on their plausible functions and contexts of use is still up to debate. Moreover, the “literary” quality, as opposed to “funerary” and/or “liturgical”, of Egyptian hymns seems to be an unresolved issue within Egyptology. Whereas criteria such as “form”, “function”, “content”, “intentionality” and “reception” have been used to define “literature” in ancient Egypt, and consequently to frame the hymnal texts within this term, the risks and excesses of a European/Western-based definition, based on criteria alien to the ancient Egyptians themselves have been pointed out. Ultimately, the distinction between “literary”, “funerary”, and/or “liturgical” might not have been perceived or even intended by the ancient scribes. For an overview of these and related issues see: Quirke 2004: 25–28 and Vernus 2010–2011: 19–145.

what concerns the hymn to Ptah, as previously discussed. As for the creation’s outcomes, it should be noted, first of all, the stressing on the Demiurge’s self-genesis, clearly stated in the three texts. On the contrary, the mentions of anthropogeny and theogony in the first two texts are questionable, despite being undoubtedly present in the hymn to Ptah. Simultaneously, it is worth noticing the importance of the temporal creation/regulation and the apparent absence of allusions to the creation of animals and plants in all three compositions.

One final word should be said about the creative procedures alluded to in these sources. In fact, they contain references to distinct creative procedures when referring to the “First Time” (*sp tpy*) that may be summarized in three axes -physical/biological emanation, verbal utterance/plan, and manual/artisanal work¹¹⁰ — which have been mentioned *en passant* in the different sections of this article. The first one seems to be absent both from the stela of Suty and Hor and the Hymn to Ptah but is suggested in Papyrus Leiden I 350 by means of an evocation to the egg or to the seed,¹¹¹ as well as by the use of verbs such as *wtt* or *msj*¹¹² or even to an allusion to the god’s masturbatory act.¹¹³ As for the second, it is lacking in the hymn of Suty and Hor, being portrayed in Papyrus Leiden I 350 through the imagery of the demiurgical cry that ceased the initial silence and originated life,¹¹⁴ but also through a mention to the god’s orders¹¹⁵ and the

binomial perception (*sj3*)/creative word (*hw*);¹¹⁶ it is not clear whether the intervention of the mouth in the Hymn to Ptah (text 17) configures a hint of this creative procedure or not. Finally, the third one seems to be the most profusely attested in these sources, which display words connected to this conception, such as *pth* (text 18), *nbsj*,¹¹⁷ *hmnw* (texts 4 and 26), and *qd* (texts 16 and 26).

As the consideration of the three sources has shown, we are not referring to a linear or straightforward reality but rather to a complex one, where overlapping and continuity are developed. A deity can be addressed and praised through different names, attributes and identities in the same hymn, performing different but perhaps simultaneous activities to achieve creation. The creation in the New Kingdom religious hymns is depicted in multiple narratives, where different agencies convey, requiring further synchronic and diachronic analysis in order to achieve a more nuanced, accurate and broader picture of this matter, a fundamental one in the context of the New Kingdom religion as a whole.

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¹¹⁰ Sauneron and Yoyotte 1959: 40.

¹¹¹ pLeiden I 350, II, 26–27; V, 24–25.

¹¹² pLeiden I 350, IV, 15; V, 22–24.

¹¹³ pLeiden I 350, V, 2–3.

¹¹⁴ pLeiden I 350, IV, 5–10.

¹¹⁵ pLeiden I 350, IV, 24–25.

¹¹⁶ pLeiden I 350, V, 16–17.

¹¹⁷ For instance: BM EA 826, 3; 10 (texts 4 and 18); pLeiden I 350, II, 2; IV, 10–11 (text 27); IV, 26.

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Índice | Contents

Representaciones de deidades ofídicas en los enterramientos privados de las necrópolis tebanas durante el Reino Nuevo: evidencia gráfica de las diosas Renenutet y Meretseger	7
Marta ARRANZ CÁRCAMO	
Las mujeres de la elite en el Reino Antiguo, ¿un grupo social incapaz de actuar?	29
Romane BETBEZE	
La representación de la danza en las tumbas tebanas privadas del Reino Nuevo egipcio	43
Miriam BUENO GUARDIA	
Choosing the Location of a ‘House for Eternity’. A Survey on the Relationship between the Rank of the Hatshepsut’s Officials and the Location of their Burials in the Theban Necropolis	63
Juan CANDELAS FISAC	
El <i>hrw nfr</i> en la literatura ramésida: algunas notas para su interpretación	81
María Belén CASTRO	
Los himnos Esna II, 17 y 31: interpretación teológica e integración en el programa decorativo de la fachada ptolemaica del templo de Esna	93
Abraham I. FERNÁNDEZ PICHEL	
Retorno a lo múltiple. Metodología y análisis del programa iconográfico de la segunda sala hipóstila del templo de Seti I en Abidos	103
María Cruz FERNANZ YAGÜE	
Más allá de la narrativa: aportes para una aproximación integral a la Segunda Estela de Kamose	125
Roxana FLAMMINI	
El despertar de la “Bella Durmiente”: pasado, presente y futuro de la Sala Egipcia del Museo Provincial Emilio Bacardí Moreau, Santiago de Cuba	141
Mercedes GONZÁLEZ, Anna María BEGEROCK, Yusmary LEONARD, Dina FALTINGS	
Realignments of Memory: Legitimacy of The Egyptian Past In The <i>Prophecies of Neferty</i>	151
Victor Braga GURGEL	
Dos falsificaciones ramésidas y una propuesta de clasificación tipológica de las piezas dudosas	167
Miguel JARAMAGO	

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Ofrendas en el Inframundo: el Libro de las Doce Cavernas en el Osireion de Abidos Daniel M. MÉNDEZ-RODRÍGUEZ	189
Cleómenes de Náucratis: realidad, fuentes e historiografía Marc MENDOZA	215
Violencia física contra el infante en el antiguo Egipto: una realidad o una mala interpretación Ugaitz MUÑOA HOYOS	225
El acto sexual como agente del (re)nacimiento de Osiris Marc ORRIOLS-LLONCH	241
Of Creator and Creation: Some Observations on the Cosmogonical Conceptions in the Stela of Suty and Hor (BM EA826), Papyrus Leiden I 350, and the Hymn to Ptah of the “Great Harris Papyrus” (BM EA9999, 44) Guilherme Borges PIRES	263
As serpentes vindas do Médio Oriente nos <i>Textos das Pirâmides</i>. Reflexão sobre as relações egípcias-orientais nos textos religiosos mais antigos Joanna POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA	285
Apelaciones, deseos y mensajes para la eternidad. El llamado a los vivos en las estelas abideanas del Reino Medio Pablo M. ROSELL	297
A iconografía de Petosiris no túmulo de Tuna el-Guebel José das Candeias SALES	313
Las estacas de madera de Haraga y la pesca en el-Fayum durante el Reino Medio María Teresa SORIA-TRASTOY	331
Parámetros de clasificación zoológica comparados: la familia <i>Anatidae</i> en egipcio y sumerio Alfonso VIVES CUESTA, Silvia NICOLÁS ALONSO	369
Crónica Contemplar siglos y cumplir veinte años José Ramón PÉREZ-ACCINO	391
Submission Guidelines	403