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## Remarks on the Mythology of the Eyes of Horus

THE COMPLEXITY of the Egyptian eye-myths which concern the gods R̄c, Horus, Hathor, Onuris, Thoth and Mekhenty-ierty has long been apparent to Egyptologists. It is not surprising, perhaps, that to non-Egyptologists an attractive simplicity may radiate from one or other of them. A recent example is found in *The Eye Goddess* (London, 1957) by the late lamented O.G.S. Crawford. Looking for instances of the eye as a fertility symbol, Crawford very strangely finds one in the cult of Horus, regarded as a fertility cult and explained as follows :

The use of the eye as a religious and magical symbol, says Mallowan, is rare in Mesopotamia after the close of Early Dynastic III (about the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millenium). At about the same time it appears in Egypt (5<sup>th</sup> dynasty), where it is likewise associated with a fertility cult, that of Horus, the son and successor of Osiris ; Horus symbolized the renewal of growth and fertility celebrated at the Spring Festival.

(*op. cit.*, 27-28).

It will be seen that Crawford follows Mallowan ; and this is Mallowan's interpretation in *Iraq* 9 (1947), 207 :

In Egypt the magical powers of the Eyes of Horus are vividly described in the Pyramid Texts as early as the Fifth Dynasty... At the Spring festival of Osiris it would seem that his resurrection was consummated by the accession of his son and successor Horus who symbolized the renewal of growth and fertility of the coming year.

Mallowan then refers to Blackman's chapter (the second) in Hooke's *Myth and Ritual* ; and it is clear that Crawford, in suggesting that the Horus-cult was a fertility cult *per se*, has wrongly generalized from the role of Horus in a particular festival.

If it is clear that Horus was not primarily a god of fertility, yet many uncertainties remain. One of them concerns the original meaning of the *wedjat*-eye ; and the chief purpose of this paper is to suggest that this eye, whether used of Horus or R̄c, denotes the sound, uninjured eye — and not, as most writers explain it, the injured eye which was made

sound. The suggestion is perhaps not new, for the Berlin *Wörterbuch* (I, 401) defines the *wedjat*-eye as 'eigentlich das unbeschädigte Auge des Horus...'; but the definition has hitherto been allowed to stand in cold isolation; it is in sharp contrast to the view generally adopted, which maintains that this is the eye seized from Horus by Seth and restored to its owner by Thoth (1). When the *Wörterbuch* adds, 'd.h. der volle Mond', it appears itself to be following the traditional view; in that case what is here suggested will seem completely unorthodox.

The Pyramid Texts, of course, often refer to the eye which was seized by Seth, but they never call it the *wedjat*-eye. They sometimes allude to *the two eyes of Horus*. The King is addressed: *Take to thee the two eyes of Horus, the black and the white* (Pyr. 33a) (2). It is clear that only one of these eyes was supposed to have been injured by Seth. The other remained sound (*wḏj*) and came to be called the *wedjat*-eye, although it seems that this eye too was believed to have left its owner at one time (3). The King is asked to take it and adorn himself with it (4). Its properties are powerful and beneficial (5). It may be objected that it is not always clear whether the *sound eye* is not really the injured eye restored to health. That indeed is the commonly accepted view (6). But since there is mention of *the two eyes* it is natural to assume that the epithet *sound* should not refer proleptically to the mutilated eye which was to become sound, but rather, in contradistinction to the mutilated eye, to its partner which remained uninjured. A ceremony of presenting the *wedjat*-eye in the Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus (91 ff.) is linked with the use

(1) G. MÖLLER in *ZÄS* 48 (1910), 100; ERMAN, *Religion der Ägypter* (Berlin, 1934), 22; MERCER, *Horus Royal God of Egypt* (Grafton, Mass., 1942), 152; VANDIER, *La Religion Égyptienne* (2nd ed., Paris 1949), 41 (identified also with the eye of Rêr, 42); KEES, *Götterglaube im alten Ägypten* (2nd ed. Berlin, 1956), 242.

(2) Cf. *Pyr.* 69a-b; 103a; 583a-b; 1240a; one reads too of the *small eye* (61a, 88c), the *green eye* (96c, 107c) and the *white eye* (48a, 96a), but these may be epithets of the same eye. The Ramesseum Dramatic P. 74 speaks of *the two eyes: the carnelian beads* and in 82 of *the two eyes: the two falcon standards*. According to *Bk. Dead* 110, 4 ed. Naville (Aa; Ad; Ba) *Horus has been seized by Seth who beholds the two eyes (Ad: I have beheld... I have loosened Horus and Seth. This is the opening of the ways of the two eyes in heaven by Seth.*

(3) *Pyr.* 450c-451c: *The King has come to thee, O Horus of the east; lo, the King has brought to thee thy great left eye as a healer (?); take it to thee from the King, it being sound. Its water is in it, it being sound; its blood (?) is in it, it being sound; air is in it, it being sound.*

(4) *Pyr.* 54c; 55a-c; 1642, It is called *irt Hr wḏjt*.

(5) *Pyr.* 21a; 900a-b; 2050a.

(6) E.g. GARDINER, *Egn. Gr.*, § 266, and the refs. given above.

of eye paint which perhaps originated, as Rudnitzky (1) suggests, as a secular practice intended to protect the eyes against sunlight. It is noteworthy that Rudnitzky here, in adhering to the traditional view, describes the *sound eye* as one which is (*wieder*) *heil*. The addition of the adverb is not required by the text in question, which refers to no suffering or injury of the eye.

This is fully borne out by the two most important passages relating to the mythology of the eyes in the Book of the Dead. In Spell 112 Rē is said to examine the injured eye :

*The fact was that Rē said to Horus. Let me see thine eye, since this (injury) has been done to it. Then he saw it and said, Look at that stroke. Thy hand covering the wedjat-eye which is there (?).*

There is some difficulty as to the translation of the last sentence, but it is quite clear, as Sethe (2) admits, that *wedjat* refers here to the uninjured eye in contrast to the injured one. The other passage occurs in Spell 17, where there is also mention of the injured eye in the same context :

*I have filled the eye when it was injured on this day of the conflict of the Two Rival Gods. What is that, the conflict of the Two Rival Gods? That is the day on which Horus fought with Seth, when he (Seth) wounded the face of Horus, when Horus seized the testicles of Seth. It was Thoth who did this with his fingers. I raised the hair (3) from the wedjat-eye when it raged. This is the eye of Rē when it raged, when he had sent it forth. It was Thoth who raised this hair from it.*  
(Urk. V, 32 ff., Abschnitt 16) (4).

Some of the later variants are fuller in detail :

*This is the right eye of Rē, when it raged against him, after he had sent it out. It was Thoth, however, who caused the hair to be lifted from it, when it was brought to him alive, safe, and sound, without*

(1) *Auge des Horus*, 34.

(2) *Sprüche für das Kennen*, 60.

(3) Perhaps *I raised the eye-lashes in the wedjat-eye*, the meaning at any rate being some act of pacification. For *šny* 'eye-lashes' see *Wb.* IV, 500. Grapow's translation, *I lifted the hair with the eye* is difficult. He says (*Über das 17 Kapitel*, 32) that it is a ref. to the sun-god's hair, which is lifted upwards and sideways in order to make room for the new eye, the serpent. Junker's suggestion (*Onurislegende*, 158) that there is an allusion to a legend of seizing the eye with a net (*šnw*) seems unlikely.

(4) The variants from the tombs of Hor and others (Abschnitt 17) do not appear significant.

*being exhausted at all. Another saying. It is his eye. It was sick because it was bewailing its fellow. Then Thoth stood up to spit on it.*  
(*Ibid.*)

Now this passage shows that the *wedjat*-eye was also the name for the right eye of Rē, and it has sorely troubled commentators who take *wedjat* to refer to the injured (and healed) eye of Horus. Grapow<sup>(1)</sup> says that the object here mentioned is not really the eye of Horus, but that of the sun, in spite of the name *wedjat*<sup>(2)</sup>. There is here, he thinks, confusion between the two eye-myths — the eye of Horus which was mutilated by Seth and healed by Thoth, and the eye of the sun which was taken afar and raged against him, until it was eventually restored. He finds a further example of this confusion in the Pyramid Spell which speaks of the King seeking for the Horus-eye in Pe and finding it in Heliopolis (*Pyr.* 1242).

An examination of references to the eyes of Horus shows that a considerable number of them use expressions and relate incidents which can be connected only with the legend of the eye of the sun. In many cases this eye is clearly referred to as the *wedjat*-eye. The legend has been elaborately treated by Junker<sup>(3)</sup> and Sethe<sup>(4)</sup>, but they minimize its part in the material about the eyes of Horus, and are content to suggest that some of the references to 'the eye of Horus' show signs of confusion with the legend of the wandering 'eye of Rē'. In the later literature there is certainly such confusion; but allusions to the *wedjat*-eye from the beginning seem to be concerned with the wandering eye of the sun, and often set it clearly apart from the legend of the mutilated eye.

The presence of Thoth in both the legends is not helpful. It is he also who brings back the *wedjat*-eye<sup>(5)</sup>. There are frequent suggestions of the solar nature of this eye and of its identity with the eye of Rē, although it is at the same time the uninjured eye of Horus<sup>(6)</sup>. The eye

(1) *Über das 17 Kapitel*, 34.

(2) For the fusion of Rē and Horus, and the use of the *eyes of Rē* and the *eyes of Horus* to mean the same thing, see Sethe, *Zur Sage vom Sonnenauge*, 6.

(3) *Auszug der Hathor-Tejnut aus Nubien* (Anhang zu den *Abh. Berlin*, 1911) and *Die Onuristlegende* (*Abh. Wien*, 1917).

(4) *Op. cit.*

(5) DE BUCK, *Coffin Texts*, III, 343b ff. Cf. P. Berlin 3055, 8-9, quoted by Grapow, *Über das 17 Kapitel*, 34: *I am Thoth who wanders seeking the wedjat-eye for its lord. I have come, I have found it, I have assigned it to Horus.*

(6) Bk. Dead, 137 A. 6 ff. ed. NAVILLE: *O eye of Horus, the wedjat-eye, which shines like Rē in the horizon*; cf. *ibid.* 137 B, 1 ff.; LACAU, *Sarcophages Antérieurs*, 28089,

of Rêr rages against him in the well-known myth. The *wedjat*-eye is likewise described as a raging eye, as in Spell 17 of the Book of the Dead (1). The pacification of the *wedjat*-eye is often stressed (2). Protagonists of the accepted view are prepared, it is true, to make reservations by admitting the possibility both of early confusion and of later wholesale syncretism. Boylan (3) quotes phrases used of Thoth in connexion with the *wedjat*-eye and he adds: « In some cases, of course, Thoth brings back to Horus (or Re) the right eye, or the Sun ». He says that Thoth was eventually associated 'with several Egyptian legends of the Eye of Horus' including that of the angry eye of Horus which refused to be reconciled with its lord and also the legend of Onuris. A good example of the combination in one text of the two eye-myths in which Horus figures is provided by an early hymn used in conjunction with offering lists. Kees (4) has collected and published a number of versions of this hymn. The god to whom praise is offered is described thus :

*A great one is this who has come forth from the earth, who has separated the waters, who has come forth from Nut, great power born to Geb, who has repelled Seth in his storming, who is set over the foreign lands that they may surrender.* (Kees, *op. cit.*, 96-97.)

Kees, following Naville, thinks the unnamed god is Nefertem (5). This

p. 29, 5 ff. : *Hail to thee Thoth, who art in the following of Rêr. I am he who brought the clear wedjat-eye. I am he who removed the sickness from the injured eye ; Chassinat, Edjou II, 16 : Thoth came and brought the wedjat-eye, he placed it in the forehead of him who made it, he traversed the two lands to fill its measure, he made it young... he removed its raging, he cooled its fire ; DE BUCK, Coffin Texts, I, 250a-e ; Bastet, the daughter of Atum, the eldest daughter of the lord of the universe, she is thy protection, until the earth becomes light and thou descendest to the necropolis. The Horus-eye shines for thee. It goes with thee to the necropolis.* The Horus-eye here is probably the uninjured eye : it is manifestly thought of as the sun.

(1) JUNKER, *Onurislegende*, 157 is at a loss to explain the reference. Cf. his remarks on p. 139 : originally, he argues, it must mean the restored eye of Horus ; « steht es für ein anderes Auge, so geschieht das nur infolge einer sekundären Übertragung ».

(2) MARIETTE, *Dendérah III*, 19 : *The eye is sound from raging ; Chassinat, Edjou, I, 145 : Place it on thy forehead, sound, safe in peace.* Cf. *Ombos, I, 101* quoted by Junker, *op. cit.*, 147.

(3) *Thoth*, 32-33.

(4) *ZÄS* 57 (1922), 92 ff. ; cf. KEES, *Lesebuch*, 13-15.

(5) According to Morenz in *Der Gott auf der Blume*, 21, Nefertem had not yet been equated with the 'Urlotos'.

may be so, but in one part of the hymn he is patently envisaged as Horus, and mention is made of Seth's seizure of his eye :

*O King, said thy mother Isis, I wish thou wouldst save thine eye from him who wrought against thee. Know through us a living power(?) (1) who will bring this one to Horus during (?) this year, who will bring to him the sky as cloud and the earth as mist (2), with fresh foot and hidden sandal, so that Nebed, the son of Nut, may not find the way to him.*  
(Op. cit., 103-104).

Kees (3) suggests that Nebed was a demon of darkness and of storm and that Seth took over his attributes. Blackman and Fairman (4) have pointed out that in the Ptolemaic Edfu texts Nebed is frequently used as a name of Seth. A later section, however, shows Horus in two roles : first in his original role as the enemy of Seth, then in his subsequent role as a sun-god, the equivalent of Rê. *The eye of Horus* in the first allusion refers to the mutilated eye ; *thy two eyes* in the second allusion are the two eyes of the sun-god, identified with the evening and morning boats of the sun, as well as with Shu and Tefenet :

*He who acted against thy father in his weakness, he is against thee, O eye of Horus, and thou art against him, O eye of Horus. Thy right eye is the evening boat, thy left eye is the morning boat, thy two eyes, O Horus, which have come forth from Atum, they are Shu and Tefenet.*  
(Kees, op. cit., 107-108).

It should be noted that Junker (5) regards the second aspect of Horus as his original one. According to him, Horus was identified with the 'Great God' of heaven, whose eyes are the sun and the moon. But it is mainly from late texts that Junker seeks to substantiate his claim. Although, as we have seen, the two eyes of Horus are mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, it is not clear that they are there regarded in this way.

In this connexion the thesis of a primitive monotheism in Egypt, as presented by Junker, has deservedly attracted much attention, for it is buttressed with formidable skill and scholarship. An initial weakness in the thesis would appear to be its readiness to ascribe the idea of uni-

(1) KEES translates : *Erforsche uns doch eine lebende Macht.*

(2) Cf. P. WESTCAR 11, 14 and Blackman's note in JEA 22 (1936), 43.

(3) ZÄS 59 (1924), 69-70.

(4) *Miscellanea Gregoriana* (Vatican, 1941), 421-422.

(5) *Onurislegende*, 134. He elaborates the idea in *Die Götterlehre von Memphis* (*Abh. Berlin*, 1939), 27 and in *Giza XII* (Vienna, 1955), 100ff.

versal sovereignty to a number of gods. The supreme god, he opines (1), was called Atum (god of 'All, Everything') at Heliopolis. When some of his epithets, such as 'Great God', 'Lord of Heaven', 'Sole One', are used of other gods, that can be explained as the result of a natural desire to exalt other gods to the same status. But deities apart from Atum were capable, according to Junker, of fulfilling the function of 'Great God'; the basic image of the cult was the idea that the god's face covered the heaven and that the sun and moon were his two eyes: This god of heaven he argues (2), bore a special name Mekhenty-irty, « He who has the two eyes in his face ». He must surely be regarded, however, as a separate god, as indeed his local origin at Letopolis shows, together with the related Mekhenty-en-irty, in whom the eyes, according to Junker, are absent. Junker regards Horus as yet another bearer of the primal concept, even though in him the originally anthropomorphic image is given animal form. It is the eyes of Horus that now symbolize sun and moon. But representation of the universal high god does not end with him. The epithet *wr*, 'great' is used of Ptah in the text of the Shabaka Stone, and Junker (3) regards Ptah also as an occasional recipient of the same status—not only in this instance but also in the title of the high priest of Memphis which he would translate « Chief of the Craftsmen of the Great One » (4) against the usual rendering « Chief of the Mastercraftsmen » (5). He further connects with the same idea the occurrence of the epithet when used of Nut; this is not so serious as the application to Ptah, for Nut is at least goddess of heaven. When used of Horus, the epithet is usually translated 'The Elder' and taken to distinguish that form of Horus from Horus the Child. Junker would render this too as 'Horus the Great one' (6), and he is apparently on strong ground since it is not easy to find the other meaning attested in early Egyptian sources.

One is driven, nevertheless, to the conclusion that the epithet *wr* does not imply anything like the sovereignty and universality which Junker assigns to it; it is manifestly applied without any distinctive or exclusive reference to a number of gods. Here is an embarrassment which he does not face up to. That a monotheism (or henotheism) could have

(1) JUNKER, *Pyramidenzeit*, 16-17.

(2) *Der sehende und blinde Gott* (Sitzb. Munich, 1942), 11.

(3) *Die Götterlehre von Memphis*, 25.

(4) *Op. cit.*, 29.

(5) E.g. Kate Bosse-GRIFFITHS in *JEA* 41 (1955), 57. *Wb.* III, 86 gives 'Oberster der Werkmeister'.

(6) *Ibid.*



existed in a polytheistic system is a defensible position (1). To find that monotheism applied to several gods comes near to a contradiction in terms. In such a matter evidence from other regions should doubtless be taken into account, and E.O. James (2) has concluded that, 'although the archaeological evidence is very meagre prior to the rise of civilization, the idea of the Sky-god as the universal spirit becomes such a basic assumption that it has every appearance of having been one of the fundamental religious concepts of mankind'. But he is clearly not completely happy about describing the belief as 'monotheistic' (3). One may also doubt whether in Egypt the quality of universality was ascribed to its object of worship.

The attributes of Horus as a sky-god certainly include the important functions of his two eyes. Whether they are interpreted as sun and moon from the beginning, as Junker maintains, is questionable. The two eyes of Horus are explained in the early Memphite hymn from which we have quoted (4) as the evening and morning boats of the sun. The significance of both eyes will here, therefore, be solar; and there is nothing in the Pyramid Texts to suggest a different interpretation. Pettazzoni (5) cites a spell where the *eye of Rē* is mentioned with *this left eye of Horus with which one hears the speech of the gods* (Pyr. 1231c-d); and Kees (6) explains this reference to the eye of Horus as being to the moon in its omniscient capacity. There is no evidence of such an idea in the context. Pettazzoni is interested to find it since 'the sun and moon, thought of as eyes, already present a first notion or divine omniscience, in its elementary form of the power to see everything (7)'. The idea of two eyes is clear in the other parallel deities, of whom *Hr mrty* 'Horus with the two eyes', is mentioned first and foremost by Pettazzoni although it is a form which is not attested until the Saite and Greek

(1) See his section entitled 'Einheit und Vielheit' in *Pyramidenzeit*, 11-15.

(2) *Prehistoric Religion*, 256.

(3) He says of the celestial deity: 'Looked at from one angle he could be regarded as "monotheistic" in the sense of being wholly supreme and transcendent in his own domain and in respect of his divine attributes and functions. Conversely, the system could be described as polytheistic and animistic inasmuch as gods many and lords many unquestionably existed and played their allotted roles in the pantheon...' In the case of Egypt one must add the difficulty of plurality in relation to the supreme being himself.

(4) KEES in *ZÄS* 57 (1922), 107-108 = KEES, *Lesebuch*, 13.

(5) *The All-Knowing God* (tr. H.J. Rose. London, 1956), 52 and 68, n. 38.

(6) *Totenglauben*, 69, n. 22. (2nd. ed., Berlin, 1956).

(7) *Op. cit.*, 54.

eras <sup>(1)</sup>. In any case none of the early forms either includes a suggestion of the sun and moon, a fact which has been emphasized by Jéquier <sup>(2)</sup>.

Divine omniscience is associated with Rē̄ rather than Horus; and if the eyes of the sun are regarded as operating alternately the one by day and the other by night, the idea of continuous awareness is manifestly present. Jéquier <sup>(3)</sup> may not be right in relating the four colours of the eye of Horus to the four daily phases of the sun — the colours may be related to the crowns or other objects <sup>(4)</sup>; but his suggestion that the two eyes of Horus may sometimes represent the rising and setting sun is attractive. He applies the same explanation to the two *wedjat*-eyes depicted on coffins and stelae <sup>(5)</sup>. Two *wedjat*-eyes occur sometimes in offering ceremonies <sup>(6)</sup>. It may be assumed that they are solar in meaning and that neither of them is regarded as the eye of Horus which was injured in the conflict with Seth. In the late period they are explained as the sun and moon <sup>(7)</sup>, but it is significant that when the singular *wedjat* is mentioned in the Ptolemaic texts, the reference is often clearly to the solar eye of Rē̄ <sup>(8)</sup>. In the Old Kingdom it seems that the term was used only in the singular <sup>(9)</sup>, a fact which concurs with the interpretation suggested here that a deliberate contrast is intended in the name: in the case of Horus it is opposed to the eye which was seized and injured. The sense is borne out by Grapow's <sup>(10)</sup> comparison of the word's connotation with that of related words: 'unversehrt, wohlbehalten sein'. There is no trace of the idea of healing or curing.

That the Egyptians did not maintain consistently in later times the original meaning of the *wedjat*-eye is not surprising. If the term was used first of all of Horus' uninjured eye and considered the same as the

(1) *Wb.* II, 107 (14).

(2) *Considérations sur les religions égyptiennes* (Neuchâtel, 1946,) 43.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) E.g. the freshness of vegetation and the brilliance of faience influence ideas about the green eye, see Rudnitzky, *Auge des Horus*, 31.

(5) Jéquier, *Considérations*, 44 ff.

(6) An ex. of the ceremony of 'presenting the two *wedjat*-eyes' occurs in Berlin Philae Photos N<sup>o</sup>. 112. Cf. Ramesseum Dramatic P. 74, although they are not called *wedjat*-eyes there.

(7) Cf. Pettazzoni, *The All-knowing God*, 52 with refs.

(8) Junker in *ZÄS* 48 (1910), 103, after quoting several allusions to the 'filling' of the *wedjat*-eye, says 'Diese Auffüllung muss sich auf das Sonnenaugē beziehen...'

(9) For what is possibly the earliest ex. of the *wedjat*-eye as an amulet see Brunton, *Qau and Badari*, II, Pl. 98 and p. 13.

(10) *Kranker, Krankheiten und Arzt* (Grundriss der Medizin der alten Ägypter, III, Berlin 1956), 3.

eye of Rêc, from the New Kingdom onwards it was used also of the eye mutilated by Seth. One of the literary fragments edited by Caminos and dated by him to the Eighteenth Dynasty refers to *the days of the bandages of the wedjat-eye* (1). The mention of bandages in the treatment of the injured eye does not seem to be paralleled elsewhere, as Caminos remarks; nor could the allusion suit very well the raging eye of Rêc. In a Leiden stela dated by Boeser to the Eighteenth Dynasty, Thoth is described as *he who placated the two lords and brothers and gave the wedjat-eye to its owner* (2).

A question which naturally arises, in view of the application of *wedjat* to the eye of Rêc, is whether the term belongs originally to Rêc or to Horus. Fortunately, this question is put beyond any doubt by the evidence of the Pyramid Texts (3): whereas the term is used several times there as an epithet of an eye of Horus, it is never so used of an eye of Rêc (4). Even so, it seems likely that the elaboration of a doctrine about the two eyes of Horus was the work of the Heliopolitan priests. The primitive myth told of the seizure of an eye of Horus by Seth; the mutilation of Seth's testicles by Horus was a part of the same story, and it seems that the bodily parts seized were regarded in each case as a symbol of power and sovereignty. No astral explanation is present at this stage; but with the Heliopolitan presentation of the legend in the Pyramid Texts astral ideas begin to creep in, and a second eye is mentioned, the antithetic *sound eye* which is said to be *in Heliopolis* (Pyr. 2050a). In one case (Pyr. 698d) the 'eye of Rêc' clearly denotes the sun:

*This eye of Rêc is the King, which sleeps and is conceived and is born every day.*

That is the reading of T and P; the text of N has *this eye of Horus* — a manifest instance of an attribute of Rêc as sun-god being ascribed to Horus, since the earlier texts mention Rêc (5). It is this solar eye which apparently is the same as the *wedjat* in Heliopolitan thought, although the term *wedjat* arises first in a Horian context.

(1) *Literary Fragments in the Hieratic Script* (Oxford, 1956), Pl. 12, Section C, p. 2, 1.3 and pp. 34-35.

(2) *Beschreibung der aegyptischen Sammlung*. Leiden, Bd. 6, Abt. 3, Pl. 1 and cf. the translation in Gardiner, *Onomastica*, I, 51 where the stela is dated to the early Nineteenth Dynasty. Cf. too Chassinat, *Dendara*, I, 64, 11 ff.


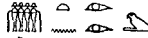
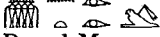
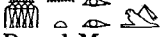

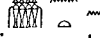
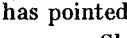
(3) It may be of interest to note that already in these texts the phrase *ꜥnḥ, wꜥꜥ, snb* is used (Pyr., 707 c); also the phrase *wꜥꜥ ḥb* (548b). In 683b-d Horus, Seth, and the King are said to be *sound of body*.

(4) In Pyr. 893b it is applied to the 'son of Rêc', but with no mention of an eye.

(5) Cf. Speleers, *Comment faut-il lire les Textes des Pyramides Égyptiennes?*, 49.

## A Postscript on Khenty-ierty.

The related falcon-god Khenty-ierty bears a name in which his two eyes are referred to, although there is some doubt as to the form and meaning of the whole compound.

Among sixteen occurrences of this god's name in the Pyramid Texts<sup>(1)</sup> (17c; 148b; 601e; 771a; 826b; 832b; 1211a; 1265b; 1270a; 1367c; 1431a; 1547b; 1670a; 1864b; 2015c; 2086c) there are only two apparent cases of (Me)khenty-en-ierty. In one of these (771a) the following are the variants: P: ; M: ; N: . Here there is a strong suggestion that the signs  in P and M are simply a graphic transposition of the  found in N and also in 1211 a (N) and 1864b (N), the reading in all these cases being (M)hnty-irty. The only indubitable instance of (M)hnty-n-irty, as Weill<sup>(2)</sup> has pointed out, is in 601e (T):  where P reads . Clearly the same god is meant, and the solitary n in view of the other Pyr. readings, is perhaps best regarded as a dittography. It follows that Junker's ingenious thesis in *Der sehende und blinde Gott* (Sitzb. München, 1942)<sup>(3)</sup> whereby two forms of the god are implied, the one equipped with eyes and the other blind (the n being explained as a negative) cannot be accepted in relation to the early phase of the god's development.

It should be noted further that Hnty-irty occurs more frequently than Mhnty-irty: it appears in Pyr. 17c; 601e (T); 771a (MN): 826b; 832b; 1211a; 1270a; 1367c; 1547b; 1670a; 2015c; 2086c. The reading in 148b (W) is doubtful, as the m there may be the m of equivalence as in 148a, although 148c does not use this m. Paronomasia, however, makes Mhnty- the more likely reading. Apart from this, the readings in the pyramids of Wenis and Teti are Hnty-, there being only two instances - 17c and 601e. Khenty-ierty, then, demands primacy as the original form.

Its meaning has been explained by Edel<sup>(4)</sup> as 'der vorne zwei Augen hat'. This is grammatically impeccable, but there is a serious semantic

(1) Cf. the indexes by Allen, Speleers and Mercer.

(2) In *BIFAO* 47 (1948), 102.

(3) Capart gives a detailed discussion in *Chronique d'Égypte* 18 (1943), 253-258.

(4) *Allägyptische Grammatik*, I, § 370. He adds 'Name eines Himmelgottes, dessen Augen Sonne und Mond sind': presumably he is here referring to the later interpretation of the eyes.

obstacle to taking *hnty* thus literally. That the Egyptians could have named a god as 'the one who has two eyes in front' seems highly unlikely. Was there any god, one feels tempted to ask, who was imagined as having his eyes in his posterior (1)? Since all men, animal, birds and fishes have their eyes in front, such a name would be completely lacking in distinctiveness.

*Hnty* must have here, I submit, a metaphorical meaning: 'he whose eyes are to the fore, i.e. who is keen-sighted above all others'. The metaphorical meaning is, of course, common with names or epithets like *Hnty-imntyw*, 'foremost of the westerners', (2) where the syntactical relation is different.

As for the form *Mhnty-irty*, it is obviously intended to be closely affiliated. Weill (3) understands it as 'Face des deux yeux', supporting this with *Pyr.* 148b which he translated « Ta Face est la Face des deux yeux ». The paronomasia, however, does not require *mhnt* to be used in the sense of 'face' in the god's name: indeed paronomasia usually implies different meanings attaching to similar sounds. Edel (4) translates the name as « der Augengesichtige » = « der ein Gesicht mit zwei Augen hat ». A similar objection may be raised here from the semantic point of view. Further, a closer relationship seems desirable between the two nisbe's *hnty* and *mhnty* in the light of their use as apparently synonymous variants in the Pyramid Texts. As a noun, *hnt* means 'front' or 'forehead' (5); so does *mhnt*, which probably means simply '(the part) in front'. There is no reason why a metaphorical meaning 'to the fore (in excellence)' should not be applied also to *Mhnty-irty* if we wish to avoid assigning to the name an insipid statement of a general biological truism. Keen-sightedness, on the other hand, is very properly assigned to a falcon.

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(1) Admittedly the ferryman in *Pyr.* 1227a is called *Mj h.f.* 'he who sees behind him' and *Hr.f.h.f.*, « His face behind him ».

(2) See *Wb.* III, 305 (9-12) for other exs.; cf. also III, 308 (13-15).

(3) In *BIFAO* 47 (1948), 102.

(4) *Op. cit.*, § 370, n. 1.

(5) The word *hnt*, however, is used for 'forehead' in *Pyr.* 83c and 84a of the eye of Horus being in his forehead and being taken from the forehead of Seth; cf. 54a; 453a; 742b; 1795a; where the same word is used. In 1242c the eye of Horus is said to be seized from the 'head' (*tp*) of Seth.