Lament of Het-Heru

Lament of Hathor



Samuel Baca-Henry

"I don't understand this book. It's just so interesting that I'm going to tell you about it. It's really elaborate. It's quite beautiful. It's full of illustrations. If you're interested in religion and animals, I don't think you should miss this one! What a thing to have sat down to do!"

*- **Mariann Sullivan**, co-host Our Hen House (podcast); Fmr Professor, Animal Law @ Lewis & Clark Law School's Center for Animal Law Studies, NYU Law School, Columbia Law School, Brooklyn Law School, and Cardozo Law School; Fmr Board Member, Farm Sanctuary and The Animals Agenda.*

—

"Samuel Baca-Henry's book Lament of Hathor is REALLY FUCKING WEIRD. If you are PETA-level passionate about Animal Rights, if you care about Middle Eastern/African history in general, and/or sacred texts, and/or just ancient history (like over 10,000 years old shit), this book is for you. This is an excellent read. It's really, really compelling. They keep it short and quick. So even if it's like 300 or so pages, they move fast and you're learning a massive amount. What a weirdo...and what a fascinating, strange gift of an artist in this city. So anyway, HIGHLY RECOMMEND."

*- **Katie Lee Ellison**, The Seattle Stranger (alt-weekly newspaper).*

—

"Lament of Hathor is no ordinary book, as I suspect is also the author, Samuel Baca-Henry, an authority in vegan, animal rights advocacy and ancient Egyptian civilisations."

*- **Kim Stallwood**, Activist, organizer, and scholar with 50 years of leadership in animal rights.*

"Animal Rights, mythology, and archaeology...so interesting."

*- **Kathy Freston**, Award-winning author, activist, and plant-based nutritionist. Multi-time guest on The Oprah Winfrey Show (and got Oprah Winfrey and her team to do a one month Vegan challenge).*

—

"Everyone should know about this book!"

*- **Cody Dolan**, Vegan activist and PETA/peta2 2024 Libby Award winner for Student Action of the Year.*

—

"A brilliant book on the interconnectedness of animal exploitation and human oppression."

*— **Davy Divine**, Co-founder and Director of Operations at Cloven Heart Farm Sanctuary. Author of two books: Charlie's New Family and One Day I Want to Have a Farm Sanctuary.*

—

"Amazing book. It's such an intriguing book full of interesting facts and photos about Ancient Egypt as well as the story of a goddess who shows empathy toward the plight of animals."

*— **Vegan Theology***

Cover image: Mother cow cries while her baby is tied away from her breast milk. The milk is taken by a human. From the sarcophagus of Kawit, Priestess of Het-Heru and King's Beloved Wife of pharaoh Mentuhotep II (21st century BCE; 11th Dynasty, first pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom). She is also depicted giving and receiving cow, duck, and other animal offerings. Her husband, Mentuhotep II represented himself as a son of Het-Heru. He dedicated multiple temples to her, including cow skulls in the foundation offerings supporting the temples. Another of Mentuhotep's King's Beloved Wives, Ashayet, held similar priestly roles in the cults of Het-Heru and was buried with similar imagery.

The collage shows items from the sacred spaces around Kawit's tomb and the greater temple complexes in the greater sacred space Djeser-Djeseru ("Holy of Holies").

Cover art and design by Samuel Baca-Henry (and the designer and sculptor of Kawit's sarcophagus)

Lament of Het-Heru

Lament of Hathor

Samuel Baca-Henry

March, 2026

Seattle
(occupied land, skies, waters)

Feedback/notes very welcome - please email me.

In order to further spread the message of this book, please consider giving it to someone else when you're done with it.

Please consider donating (or at least following) the animal rights/welfare/liberation organizations listed in the preface.

All images by the author or in the public domain.



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***Learn** more about and **support** animal welfare/rights/liberation organizations.*

The following organizations are supporting the actual animals on the ground today in the places where this book takes place in the past.

*Readers are encouraged to learn about, support, and **join** similar organizations in their own **community** as well as these*[1]

[1] This book is not affiliated with or endorsed by these organizations. If you are involved with a similar organization and would like to be included or receive free copies to use in your fundraising, please email me at samuelhenry@gmail.com.

Egypt

Animal Protection Foundation - Egypt (APF)

Animal Protection Foundation (APF) is a non-profit organization and dog shelter registered in Egypt. APF helps the street dogs who have no-one else to care for them. We provide rescue, shelter, medical care and re-homing programs inside and outside Egypt. We also promote awareness, among children and youth and encourage role models who would become inspiring animal welfare leaders within their families, community, clubs, schools and colleges...etc, promote and conduct TNR (Trap, Neuter/Spay, Release) programs to address street pets overpopulation, and endeavor to create animal welfare laws in Egypt.



animalprotection-eg.org

Animal Care in Egypt (ACE)

Animal Care in Egypt is a charity hospital dedicated to helping stop the suffering of thousands of animals in the poorest communities of Luxor by providing free veterinary care and education.



ace-egypt.org.uk

Animals SOS

Raising awareness of animal rights. Help us save a life.



instagram.com/animalsoss

Animal Welfare of Luxor (AWOL)

Animal Welfare of Luxor (AWOL) is a small charity providing free veterinary care and treatment for the hard-working animals of the impoverished villages of Luxor's west bank in Egypt. We are the ONLY animal care charity based on the west bank, our services are vital to the well-being of the animals and for the livelihoods of their owners.

awol-egypt.org

Egyptian Society of Animal Friends (ESAF)

The Egyptian Society of Animal Friends (ESAF) is based in Shabramont, Giza. ESAF provides spay and neuter services to roughly 3,000 animals and adopts out 150 animals every year. With the help of 6 volunteers and 17 employees, ESAF has been able to bring humane education to local citizens, push animal welfare legislation, and serve as an essential resource for local animal owners and non-profits.

facebook.com/esaf.egypt

Egyptian Society for Mercy to Animals (ESMA)

The Egyptian Society for Mercy to Animals (ESMA) was formed in late 2007 in response to a horrific shooting spree of street dogs by the Egyptian government. A small group of Egyptians and expatriates came together to fight this notion of population control and to protect and rescue the animals in immediate danger. ESMA is a charitable organization registered in Egypt (No. 3059/2007) that operates a shelter and adoption center. We currently house over 2,000 animals, including dogs, cats, and donkeys.

esmaegypt.org

Good Karma Sanctuary

In Giza, at the pyramids on the direct frontline we've opened up a 24hr emergency clinic with 3 full time vets on staff, and have essential equipment (x-ray, ultrasound, scope, etc) to diagnose and treat on site. We have room for 25 admitted patients and treat others on an outpatient basis (15-50 horses per day). On a daily basis, we assist 15-50 horses dealing with various issues like saddle sores, wounds, colic, broken legs, and other injuries. Our compassionate outreach extends to donkeys, mules, and occasional camels seeking help. Regrettably, euthanasia is an unfortunate reality we face each day.

goodkarmasanctuary.org

HOPE

HOPE is a non-profit organization providing a network of rescuers, sponsors and medical resources aiming to help save and rehabilitate Egyptian stray animals.

facebook.com/hope4egyptianbaladi

Society for the Protection of Animal Rights in Egypt (SPARE)

Mission: To educate the Egyptian public about animal welfare by penetrating all levels of Egyptian society. To secure strong animal rights laws and to introduce them into the Egyptian legislation.
Vision: To instill compassion for all living creatures in Egyptians. To ensure that all animals have rights.

sparelives.org

Temple Cats of Philae Island

This group advocates, fundraises, and distributes food to the cats who live on the island of Philae, including among the temples to Isis and Hathor.



facebook.com/philaetemplecats

Sudan

Sudan Animal Rescue

Mission: To urgently save the lions in Sudan as well as other vulnerable wildlife.
Motive: To preserve and protect all wildlife in Sudan.
Work: Working with international support teams and local Wildlife Research Department and local officials.



sudananimalrescue.com

Sunduq Al-Sudan

Sunduq Al Sudan is designed to support and amplify the lifesaving work done by civilian networks across the country. Modeled after *alsunduq* (“box”), the mutual aid and community savings groups popular across Sudan, Sunduq al Sudan collects and distributes funding to community-led initiatives on the ground.



sunduqalsudan.org

Lebanon

Animals Lebanon

Animals Lebanon improves the welfare of animals through comprehensive national animal protection and welfare legislation. To support this campaign, Animals Lebanon provides nationwide public assistance for companion animals while rescuing and improving the conditions of captive endangered wildlife.



animalslebanon.org

Alyarz Pet Club (APC)

Alyarz Pet Club (APC) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Managed in Lebanon by a dedicated team of professionals and volunteers, it provides a temporary sanctuary for animals recovering from physical injuries and emotional trauma.



apclebanon.org

Beirut for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (BETA)

Vision: A society that values the importance of animal welfare and a "cruelty-free" Lebanon for all.
Mission: To provide a safe haven for all our rescue animals whilst striving to find the loving, permanent homes that they deserve. To use education and direct action to prevent animal overpopulation and cruelty, and actively work towards a society that treats all animals with compassion, strongly advocating for pet adoption, spraying and neutering.



betalebanon.org

Lebanese Vegans

Lebanese Vegans, a locally registered NGO, is distributing plant-based meals to refugees in Beirut affected by the current war. Having already provided over 18,000 meals since August 2020, this initiative continues to serve vulnerable families every week. Support is needed to reach even more people during these difficult times.



donorbox.org/beirut-food-distribution
lebanesevegans.org

Paris Dog Shelter (South Lebanon)

For years, Mireille has run Paris Dog Shelter, a sanctuary for over 100 rescue dogs—many abandoned, injured, or traumatised. But her compassion doesn't stop at the shelter walls. Every day, she travels to feed stray cats and dogs scattered across devastated areas, offering them the only kindness they may ever know.



instagram.com/parisdogs_lb

Parrot Rescue Lebanon

We help unwanted, sick and mistreated birds with the hopes that one day we won't have to. Education & awareness are part of our mission.



parrotrescuelebanon.com

Paws Crossed Lebanon

Animal Rescue Service – to help save more lives. Here to give another chance to some paw friends 🐾. Sandra has been helping the dogs and cats of Lebanon for over 9 years.

fundahope.com/en/fundraisers/help-pawscrossed-family

Rescuing Souls

Animal Rescue Service – to help save more lives.

instagram.com/rescuing.souls

The Shouf Dog Shelter

An Animal Rights & Rescue registered NGO in Lebanon.

instagram.com/the_shouf_dog_shelter

Woof N' Wags

Woof N' Wags is a no-kill, volunteer-run animal shelter in South Lebanon founded by Ghada and Joe. The shelter is home to 300+ rescue dogs saved from homelessness, neglect and abuse, as well as a pig, goats, a donkey, and a cow rescued from slaughter.

woof-n-wags.com

Palestine

Baladi-Palestine Animal Rescue (Ramallah)

Baladi-Palestine Animal Rescue Team was established in 2020 as the rescue arm of the Vegan in Palestine initiative. Born out of a commitment to justice for all beings, Baladi was founded by a group of dedicated volunteers to respond to the urgent and ongoing suffering of animals in the West Bank.



linktr.ee/baladipalestineanimalrescue

Sulala Society (Gaza)

Sulala Society is the first and only animal rescue in the Gaza Strip. It was founded by Mr. Saeed Al Err, a man with great love for animals. Unable to bear seeing poor stray animals hungry in the street, he went on daily feeding tours for stray animals since the early 2000s. In 2006, he was able to translate his love and charitable work to the establishment of a registered organisation, Sulala (Arabic for “animal breeds”).



sulalaanimalrescue.com

Syria

Ernestos Sanctuary

Ernestos Sanctuary is situated in the Northwestern area of Syria. We take care of the forgotten victims of the war. Syria's animals. We have over 1,850 cats of all sizes, all shapes, all colours. We also have a sanctuary for farm animals that is home to 24 dogs, 4 donkeys, 3 horses, 7 goats, 10 chickens, 2 geese, 1 duck, 5 monkeys, 2 peacocks, 3 sheep, 3 horses and 4 doves. We have a well-equipped, Free Veterinary Clinic in the town, where people can bring their animals for treatment free of charge.



ernestosanctuary.org

SARA - Syrian Association for Rescuing Animals

Animals in Syria are suffering exactly like humans, but with having no assistance or voice to express their pain. We are here, a Syrian team from Damascus City committed to rescuing animals in need. Our activities include: Rescuing and treating injured and abandoned animals, arranging feeding campaigns, educating campaigns, and neutering campaigns to limit the multiplying numbers of stray animals.



contactsara.wixsite.com/sara

STAR - Syrian Team for Animal Rescue

STAR rescues and rehabilitates: Stray and injured dogs, abandoned cats, donkeys, owls, foxes, and other wild animals in need. These animals are given: safe shelter, nutritious food and clean water, medical treatment and vaccinations, spay and neuter surgeries, and most importantly — a chance at a better life.



facebook.com/syrianteamanimalrescue

Kurdistan

Kurdistan Organization for Animal Rights Protection

The Kurdistan Organization for Animal Rights Protection (KOARP) is a professional, volunteer, non-profit NGO dedicated to the welfare and protection of animals in the Kurdistan Region. KOARP is the only animal welfare organisation in Kurdistan and we aim to monitor and improve the welfare of strays, working animals, and animals in slaughterhouses, pet shots, markets and zoos.



koarp.org

Iran

Vafa Animal Shelter

Vafa is a charitable NGO, run by grassroots donations. It runs two animal shelters in Hashtgerd and Qazvin, housing more than 1,800 dogs. As a non-for-profit charity, Vafa has no links to any political or religious organization.



vafashelter.com

Seattle area[2]

Animal Rights Initiative (Seattle/Honolulu)

Animal Rights Initiative began in 2017 by a group of Seattle based volunteers hungry for change and determined to get it. We have indefatigably organized hundreds of educational events across the United States, including the 100-Day-Stand against Starbucks' unfair price gouging at their headquarters in Seattle, WA, and the popular "Fur-Free-Friday" events weekly in Honolulu, HI. Beginning in 2019, we expanded our focus to include legislative actions to prevent cruelty to animals.

animalrightsinitiative.org

Hip Hop is Green (Seattle)

Grounded in the powerful impact of hip hop culture, we are a nonprofit organization that started with a mission to support holistic wellness and transform urban communities environmentally. Our story began when Tucker toured the nation, serving over 20,000 free, plant-based meals to communities in need.

hiphopisgreen.com

[2] I live in Seattle. I encourage you to look up other farmed animal sanctuaries and animal liberation organizations near you. Get involved! If you see something and wonder if anyone is doing anything about it, START DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

Muddy Pug Farm and Animal Sanctuary (Maple Valley, WA - 30 min SE of Seattle)

We are committed to educating our community about the plight of farmed animals and empowering people to make the personal choices that save farmed animals' lives. Our residents so often come to us from abuse, neglect, abandonment, or surrender. We are honored to provide them with the food, shelter, love, compassion and medical care they need for the rest of their lives with us.



muddypugfarm.org

Northwest Animal Rights Network (Ravenna/Seattle)

The Northwest Animal Rights Network (NARN) is a Seattle-based nonprofit dedicated since 1986 to ending the exploitation of animals by raising awareness of animal suffering in the food, entertainment, experimentation and fashion industries.



narn.org

Pasado's Safe Haven (Sultan, WA - 45 min NE of Seattle)

Pasado’s Safe Haven investigates animal cruelty and provides sanctuary and rehabilitation to animals who have suffered from abuse and neglect. We advocate for better laws to protect animals and work to educate the public about how they can help end animal cruelty. Our programs help save the lives of thousands of animals each year and inspire people to reimagine their relationships with all beings.



pasadosafehaven.org



The author with Hathor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sculpted circa 1417 - 1379 BCE during the reign of Amenhotep III (18th Dynasty).



Temple of Hathor at Iunet (a.k.a. Dendera; about 50 km due north of Waset (Thebes/Luxor) on the Nile)



Temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina, the restricted workers' village near Valley of the Kings west of Waset (a.k.a. Thebes/Luxor)



Temple of Hathor at the desert mining camp of Serabit el-Khadim (a.k.a. Djeser-Mefket [Holy Land of Turquois], Sinai Peninsula, Egypt). Military force was required to control these turquoise mines. Hathor was Mistress of Turquoise.



A sphinx dedicated to Hathor at the turquoise mine of Serabit el-Khadim (a.k.a. Djeser-Mefket [Holy Land of Turquoise], Sinai Peninsula).

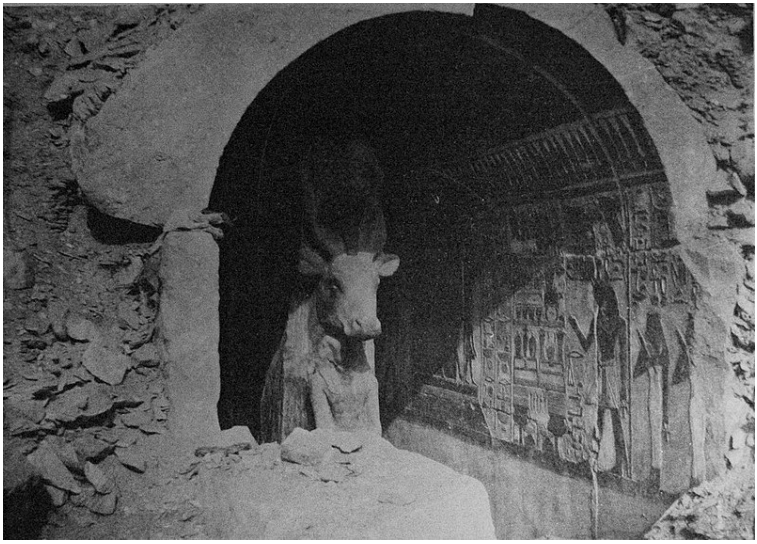
Note Hathor's hieroglyphic name (bird in square – "house of Horus") on the shoulder and the proto-Sinaitic (earliest known alphabetic script) written on the base.



1840's CE drawing of the ruins of the Temple of Hathor at the desert mining camp of Serabit el-Khadim (Sinai Peninsula, Egypt).



Hathor-headed column at Queen Tiye's temple to Hathor at Atiye/Sedeinga, Ta-Nehisi (present-day Sudan)



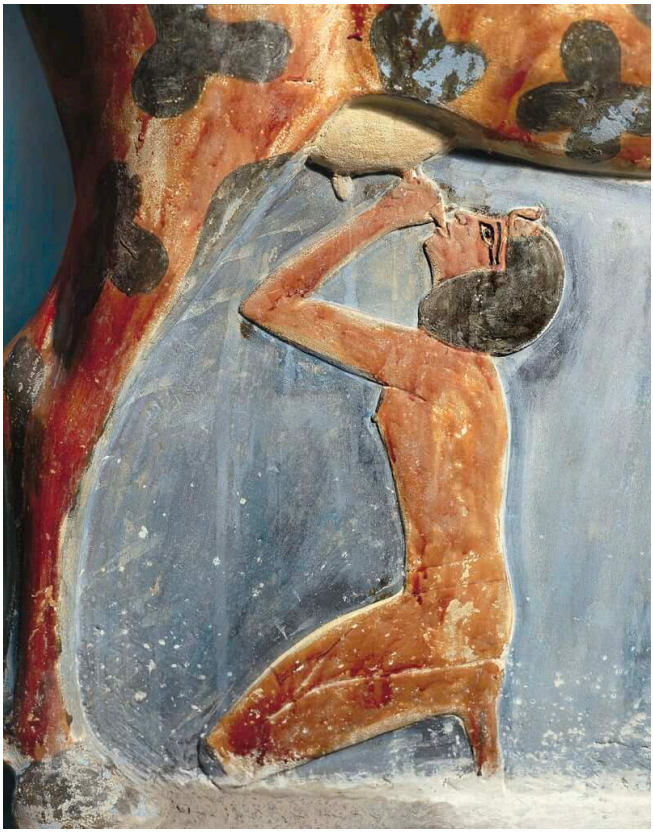
Het-Heru temple of pharaoh Thutmose III in Djeser-Djeseru (a.k.a. Deir el-Bahari) west of Waset/Luxor/Thebes. This is between the temples of Hatshepsut and Mentuhotep II, both heavily featuring Het-Heru.



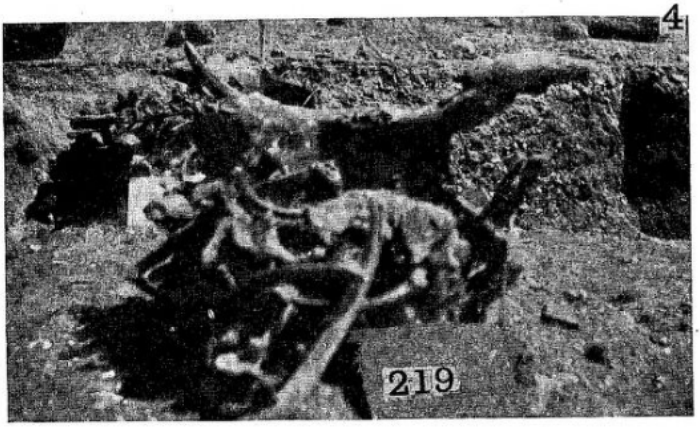
Pharaoh Thutmose III flanked by two Hathors from a statue found at Karnak, Waset (contemporary Luxor, a.k.a. Thebes)



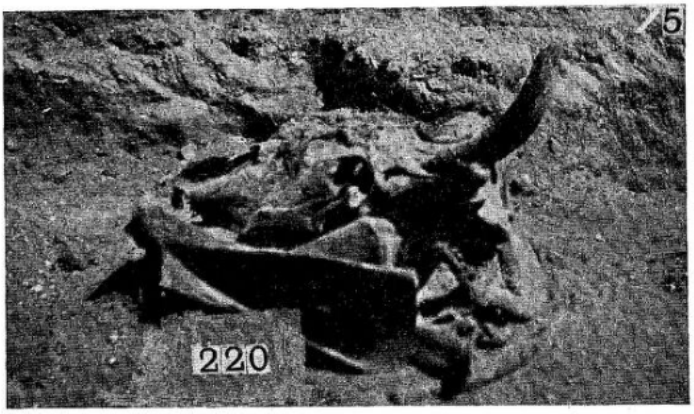
Het-Heru temple of pharaoh Thutmose III in Djeser-Djeseru (a.k.a. Deir el-Bahari; west of Waset/Luxor/Thebes). Now in the Cairo Museum. Note pharaoh Amenhotep II (Thutmose III's son) crouched, nursing from Het-Heru.



Pharaoh Amenhotep II crouched, nursing from Hathor on the statue from his father Thutmose III's shrine to Hathor at Djeser-Djeseru (a.k.a. Deir el-Bahari; west of Waset/Luxor/Thebes), Luxor, Egypt.



OX PILE WITH CAPPING HEAD



OX PILE WITH CAPPING HEAD

Cow burials from from the Badarian culture present in El-Hammamiya (Middle Egypt) in the Predynastic Era (circa 5000 – 4000 BCE)



Cow's skull from a foundation deposit at
the Het-Heru temple of Thutmose III at Djeser-Djeseru (Deir el-Bahari).
Humans likely killed this cow by slitting their throat, circa 1430's BCE.

Preface



The author and his mother, Patricia Baca Henry, in front of the goddess Het-Heru nursing Pharaoh Hatshepsut

Maps



B - Bubastis (*Per-Bast*) **D - Dendera (*Iunet*)** **E - Edfu (*Behdet*)** **G - Gebelein (*Per-Het-Heru*)** **H - Nag Hammadi**

J - Deir el Medina (*Djeser-Djeseru*) **K - Serabit el-Khadim (*Djeser-Mefket*)** **L - Luxor/Thebes (*Waset*)** **M - Mirgissa (*Iken*)** **N - Napata & Gebel Barkal (*Dju-wa'ab*)**

P - Giza (*Rostau*) **Q - Cusae (*Qis*)** **S - Sedeinga (*Atiye*)** **T - Terenuthis/Tarana (*Mefket*)**

Kz
Pa
Ha
Mh
Md
Mg
Pe
Dj
Op
Ss
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Py
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Ct
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Qw
Sb
Sh
Pu

æ	Mycenæ (*Aqaiwasha*)	**Cy**	Cyprus (*Alashiya*)	**Ht**	Hattusa	**N**	Napata	**Sk**	Serabit el-Khadim (*Djeser-Mefket*)
As	Assur	**D**	Dendera (*Iunet*)	**J**	Deir el-Medina (*Set-Ma'at*)	**Nh**	Nag Hammadi	**Sm**	Semna
At	Athens	**Da**	Dan	**Ka**	Kadesh (*Qedesh*)	**Nh**	Nineveh (*Nii*)	**Ss**	Susa
Au	Abu Simbel	**Dh**	Dakhla Oasis	**Kh**	Kharga Oasis	**Np**	Nabta Playa	**Sw**	Siwa Oasis (*Sekht-am*)
Aw	Aswan (*Swenett*)	**Di**	Dilmun	**Kh**	Khwarazm	**Op**	Opone	**T**	Tarrana (*Mefket*)
B	Bubastis (*Per-Bast*)	**E**	Edfu (*Behdet*)	**Km**	Khartoum	**Pa**	Pataliputra	**Ug**	Ugarit
Bb	Babylon (*Sangar*)	**Eb**	Ebla	**L**	Luxor/Thebes (*Waset*)	**Pe**	Persepolis	**Uk**	Uruk
BE	Beth-El	**Em**	Emar	**La**	Lagash	**Pu**	Punt (*Pwenet* or *Ta Netjer*)	**Ur**	Ur
Bh	Bahariya Oasis (*Djesdjes*)	**ë**	Meroë (*Medewi*)	**Li**	Libu (nomadic tribe; *Ribu*)	**Py**	Pylos	**Uu**	Urartu (*Nairi*)
By	Byblos (*Kebny*)	**Fy**	Fayyoum (*Shedet*)	**Ma**	Mari	**Qa**	Qatna	△	Croton
C	Crete (*Keftiu*)	**G**	Giza (*Rostau*)	**Md**	Mohenjo-Daro	**Qw**	Qarnawu (Minaean)		
Ch	Carchemish	**Ha**	Harappa	**Me**	Meshwesh (nomadic tribe)	**S**	Sedeinga (*Atiye*)		
Ct	Carthage	**He**	Helios (mythical)	**Mg**	Magan	**Sb**	Sanaa (Sheba)		
Cu	Cusae (*Qis*)	**Hg**	Hegra	**Mh**	Meluhha	**Sh**	Shabwa (Hadhraumut)		

Inspiration

In autumn 2023, my parents invited me on a trip to Egypt. On the second day, we crossed the Nile from Luxor to the west side and started at the temple of Hatshepsut, one of the female pharaohs. She had a massive mortuary temple complex in this area. The sun sets in the west—a common symbol of death and the afterlife.

Walking around, I suddenly saw a carving on one of the walls: the goddess Hathor in cow form nursing Hatshepsut as a small person. I knew Hathor, a cow goddess, symbolized motherly love among other things.

It hit me immediately in the heart. People looked at all the animals and asked, "Which one is a great mother that we can have as a symbol for motherhood?" They saw the cow with her calf and chose her.

Yet the way we (and the ancients) treat actual cows and their calves is horrendous—within the dairy, meat, leather, rodeo, transport, and other industries.

That contradiction, hypocrisy, and symbolic use for power all hit me at once. I called my mother over, told her what I felt–how they revered the cow as the perfect mother while we tear calves from their mothers in dairy farms. We stood together and got a picture. I knew something was happening, though I didn't fully understand it at the time.

Once I got back, it stayed in my mind. I couldn't stop feeling it.

That feeling birthed my book and mission

Goals

1. To awaken the cognitive dissonances people suppress about animals.
2. To show how the same systems that exploit animals have exploited humans and the environment for millennia.
    a. With this, to:
        i. help bring animal activism into broader social justice advocacy
        ii. show animal-only activists the intertwined contexts of oppression and liberation.
3. To demonstrate ancient lineages of animal activism. I want to uplift the voices of people across millennia who advocated for animals—to honor them and inspire future activists.
4. To use the book to support the movement-giving it to sanctuaries and grassroots groups to use in fundraising so that the book materially serves the movements-not just philosophically or artistically.

Fundraising for Animal Advocacy

Thus far, when people have tried to pay me for copies of this book, I have asked them to donate an amount they're comfortable with to one of the organizations I list in the beginning of the book.

I hope to both raise funds for these organizations and get the reader to do research to understand the issues and efforts underway on behalf of the non-human animals.

And by donating, to get people onto email lists, following on social media, *etc*, and remain connected to (and become active in) advocacy themselves.

I also give copies to farmed animal sanctuaries to auction off or raffle to raise funds.

If you would like me to send your organization copies of this book for fundraising and outreach, I'd be happy to send you some free of charge.

Please let me know if you have other ideas how I can use this book to help the animals.

samuelhenry@gmail.com

Introduction

On Genres and the Title of the Book

The lamentation is one of the oldest forms of oral and written literature within the so-called Fertile Crescent and Egypt (and myriad forms globally).

It is typically a raw, inconsolable expression of grief and rage at the destruction of a city-state, society, and/or the deaths or disappearances of loved ones and/or deities.

The Lament for Ur[3] is a well-known Sumerian lamentation for the destruction of their city-state Ur by the Elamites circa 2000 BCE.

The Lamentations of Ipuwer is a circa 2000 - 1800 BCE Egyptian literary work that laments the upheaval and disorder of society after the fall of a strong central pharaonic state. It may be a work of conservative authoritarian theocratic political propaganda showing the risks of a loosening grip on absolute power and the benefits of a strong patriarchal pharaonic rule.

The Lamentations of Isis & Nephthys is a circa 2nd century BCE recording of a version of the much-older tradition of the despair of the Egyptian goddess-sisters Isis & Nephthys after their brother Set (husband of Nephthys) killed their brother Osiris (husband of Isis).

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[3] "Ur" sounds like "Hathor," so I chose this title.

This book began as a lamentation, but incorporates other genres, including Sebayt (a.k.a. Instructions or Proverbs).

These collections of maxims, aphorisms, proverbs, and other advice were common in many of the book's regional and temporal cultures. Oftentimes they took the form of advice from a father to a son (elite or royal). They were useful ethical and practical guides to rule and behave in society. In the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, this genre continued as the "Mirror For Princes" literary tradition.

On Geographic Scope

I found it difficult to separate "Ancient Egypt" from its adjacent and semi-adjacent cultures or its prehistoric pasts. After all, they were trading, warring, marrying, occupying, cattle-raiding, mining, sailing, influencing, etc.

Borders are not as fixed as contemporary maps make them appear (and impose upon regions and peoples).

The scope of the Egyptian kingdoms' spans of control varied greatly throughout the time periods of this book.

At times there was no single state of Egypt.

At other times, Egyptian pharaohs exercised control over parts of Nubia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and parts of contemporary Libya, Chad, the northwestern Arabian desert trade routes and mines, and other regions outside contemporary Egypt's borders (which present total area was not always under the authority of an Ancient Egyptian state).

This control varied from tributes, ransoms, vassalage, allyship, and occupation.

And in several periods, kingdoms from other areas exercised control over parts or all of former and contemporary Egyptian regions.

These were intermingled cultures. We find temples to Levantine deities within Egypt and to Egyptian deities outside Egypt.

Therefore, I bring the book within its northeast African setting as well as the eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, Persia, and the Indian subcontinent.

I interweave (and at times subvert) goddesses/gods/sacred cows and literary/mythological/philosophical works, histories, and symbols from these areas.

In future versions or stories, I will expand further and incorporate peoples, animals, and deities from additional regions in greater depth.

On Time

There is no thing called Ancient Egypt.

Is it the time of Cleopatra? Is it the time of Roman occupation? If so, pre- or post- Roman persecution of Christians? Or is it the nomadic peoples who were harassed and subjugated, whose stories are not the same as those of whatever is meant by "Ancient Egypt."

This book's setting spans the time period from the lush Green Sahara region which thrived during the last Glacial Period (circa 115,000 – c. 11,700 years ago) until perhaps the 3rd century of the Common Era (CE/AD).

Its regions and cultural influences, allusions, and characters span from contemporary Libya, Italy, and Nepal.

Consider time flattened a bit when reading this book.

One may be disposed to see some throughline of "progress" via such references that might lead one to conclude that in the Early Bronze Age people were one way and over time they became more virtuous in their treatment of non-human or human animals, reaching an inflection point with the Zoroastrian, Hebrew, Jewish, early Christian, or Vedic/Hindu/Jain/Buddhist peoples.

That is not my intention.

I have tried to demonstrate and uplift those throughout all times (including pre-human hominids) who have advocated, witnessed, empathized, and helped the non-human animals so that we may be sustained, taught, inspired by, and thereby to hold ourselves accountable to those who fought before us.

On Names and Afrocentrism

Some names are names that peoples use themselves for their spaces, selves, deities, places, bodies of water, non-human animals, mountains, valleys, stars, neighbors, and other things within their own and their historical antecedents' (actual or claimed and/or mythological/cultural) times and places.

These are called Endonyms.

Other names are names that peoples, cultures, etc. are called by others.

These are called Exonyms.

For example, in United States American English, the people who call themselves Catalan, Catalonian, Españoles, or Spaniards (Endonyms)[4] are usually called Spanish (Exonyms).

This book strives to honor peoples' preferences to be known with their own names.

Since things become complicated when situating the story across many cultures and places and millenia (i.e. whose Endonyms of what periods to use? and how to also honor the "others"?), this book situates itself as a recollection of a fictional Priestess of Hathor of an unspecified time period.

[4] Or holding other identities but living upon contemporary Spanish territories.

Thus, I try to use names that were used by Egyptian (vaguely defined) peoples themselves.[5]

For example, at the beginning, the book will switch from calling Hathor “Hathor” to calling her “Het-Heru”, an Endonymic name of Hathor in ancient Egyptian/Kemetic languages written in a Latinized English script.

While there are several Kemetic versions, I have chosen this one.[6] If you believe I should use a different version, I would love to hear from you.

The name “Hathor” after all, is a Graeco-Romanized occupier’s form which dominated a significant set of images of ancient Egypt following the conquests by forces of the Macedonian warlord Alexander the Great and later Roman, and European occupying powers.

Those of Alexander defeated not an indigenous Egyptian kingdom, but a satrapy ruled by Achaemenid Persian conquerors led by Cambyses II, son of Cyrus the Great.

Given that some “outsiders” are incorporated within the typical Ancient Egyptian umbrella (e.g. Neith/Nit from

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[5] There are certainly instances where I am inconsistent with this. I am actively switching to this format. Please email me if you spot any mistakes.

[6] Note that there are several Ancient Egyptian languages and writing systems across the several thousand year time period of this book. And there were always other languages used within Ancient Egypt, including languages of power, diplomacy, administration, and trade.

Libya, Astarte and Ba'al from the Levant), we will further extend this principle to these peoples by using their own Endonyms rather than the traditional Egyptian Exonyms for them.

We must also note that many different beings are amalgamated under the name Het-Heru. Are we referring to Het-Heru at Iunet?[7] Of Het-Heru, Mistress of the Sycamore? Of the Wandering Goddess? Of Meroitic Atari?

This book alludes to these questions and implications throughout the story while striving to maintain intelligibility and multiple interpretability.

In another example, this book calls the Mediterranean Sea the "Wadj-wer" ("great green" in Kemetic), as one would from the assumed perspective of the frame narrator Het-Heruhat, Priestess of Het-Heru.

Some might object that we ought to use the more commonly used names in contemporary Euro/Anglo/US-centric usage, even when they originate from conquering peoples. For, all peoples originate from conquered and conquering peoples.

[7] Contemporary Dendera.

It is true that we all originate from conquered and conquering peoples.[8]

Within a Dominant Discourse, this is always also the result of intentional strategy and tactics of domination and tertiary side-effects; in Ancient Egypt's case through European/Anglo/US-centered hearkenings back to mythological Graeco-Roman origins. This is called "Western Civilization," "Classical Civilization," or even "the origins of Civilization" where I come from.

Rhetorically, I will say that we already primarily use Kemetic names, e.g. the deities Aten, Bastet, Bat, Bes, Geb, Imhotep, Khnum, Ma'at, Mertseger, Min, Montu, Mut, Kehbet, Nut, Ptah, Ra, Sekhmet, Seshet, Set, Sobek, Taweret, Tefnut, etc. The deities called by their Graeco-Romanized versions are indeed the minority in contemporary Euro/Anglo/US-centric usage.

As a side benefit of this stance, our knowledge of and appreciation for Het-Heru's place in society deepens once we see peoples and places named after her.

For example, we learn that "Het-Heru" means "House of Horus" ("House of Heru").

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[8] Note that contemporary narratives center a single evolution of *homo sapiens* originating on the African continent. And a seemingly infinite tree of organisms of other species and Domains, as well as noncellular, elemental, and other states of matter and non-matter in the past and through which we continually intermingle in our present.

Likewise, rather than using the names Hathor and Gebelein, by using the Kemetic names Het-Heru and Per-Het-Heru, we learn that the city we know as Gebelein was named the "House of Het-Heru" ("Per" means "house").

Similarly, we see the reference to Heru (a.k.a. Horus) in names like the pharaoh Sneferu's.

And, this avoids the awkwardness of referring to places named after Kemetic gods by names of conquering gods (e.g. Herakleopolis, formerly Henen-Nesut, renamed by Graeco-Roman conquerors after Herakles a.k.a. Hercules).

In this stance and reasoning, I am influenced by the Afrocentrist perspectives and arguments I learned from Drs. Molefi Kete Asante, Maulana Karenga, and Nah Dove. I encourage the reader to engage with their words. Refer to the bibliography.

Some people will continue to use the "Hathor" forms, and fashions and symbolism will change over time. That's how it always goes with names.

This book is ideological symbolic literary propaganda and principles that I hope will be relevant to and just during, yet transcend, generally beyond my own and all future times and spaces.

Lists of Names[9] and Equivalents

Divine beings

English	Kemetic
Amun	Amene
Apis	Hapi-ankh
Buchis	Bakh
Hathor	Het-Heru
Horus	Heru
Isis	Aset
Khepri	Khepera
Mnevis	Mer-wer
Neith	Nit
Nephthys	Nebet-het
Osiris	Usir
Thoth	Djehuti

[9] *Note:* I still need to decide how I want to handle Pharaohs' names. They had several personal and titular names. Similarly, I am undecided on which (if any) names for ancient Egypt to use in lieu of the Graeco-Roman-derived "Egypt."

Places

English	Kemetic	Meaning
Abydos	Abedju	Hill of the reliquary
Alexandria	Rakoti	Building site
Aswan	Swennett	Market
Bubastis	Per-Bast	House of Bastet (*cat goddess*)
Byblos	Kebny	
Crete	Keftiu	The islands in the midst of the Great Green (*Mediterranean*)
Cusae	Qis	
Cyprus	Alashiya	
Dendera	Iunet	
Deir el-Bahri	Djeser-Djeseru	Holy of Holies
Deir el-Medina	Set-Ma'at	Place of Truth
Edfu	Behdet	
Gebelein	Per-Het-Heru	House of Hathor (Het-Heru)
Giza	Rostau	Mouth of the Passages
Herakleopolis	Henen-Nesut	Child of the King
Hermopolis	Khemenu	Eight-Town (*referring to the Ogdoad–eight primordial deities*)
Kerma	Yam	
Levant	Retjenu	
Luxor/Thebes	Waset	City of the Sceptre
Mediterranean Sea	Wadj-wer	The Great Green
Meroë	Medewi[10]	
Mirgissa	Iken	
Mycenae	Aqaiwasha	
Nile	Iteru	Great River
Nubia	Ta-Nehisi	
Philae	Pilak	The End (*boundary with Nubia*)
Punt	Pwenet or Ta Netjer	Ta Netjer means Land of the God (the rising sun)
Sedeinga	Atiye	House of Tiye (*queen; married to Amenhotep III)*
Serabit el-Khadim	Djeser-Mefket	Holy Turquoise
Terenuthis/Tarana	Mefket	Turquoise

[10] Meroitic name.



Canopic jar of Sit-Het-Heru-Iunet ("Daughter of Het-Heru of Iunet/Daughter of Hathor of Dendera"). She was likely a daughter of the pharaoh Senuseret.

On Accuracy

I am not a trained Geologist, Zooarchaeologist, Egyptologist, Nubiologist, Archaeologist, Historian, Anthropologist, Historian, Archaeobotanist, etc.

I strive to use vetted and peer-reviewed and otherwise "Accurate" sources and information.

These processes do not necessarily mean a view is accepted, correct, or proven.

These vetting, gatekeeping, and canonizing processes must also be acknowledged to encourage conservative and hegemonically-favored interpretations.

There are inevitably shortcomings in this book–some minor and some glaring.

If you see something you think I should fix, please email me at samuelhenry@gmail.com.

On Distributing this Book

This book is currently self-published.

I don't know whether in the future I'll pursue a more traditional publishing route for greater reach and influence. But I don't like the idea of waiting years for a traditional publishing cycle.

I come from a DIY music background where you don't wait for others to let you make things happen.

So I have just been printing copies myself and giving them away in Little Free Libraries, vegan cafes, and giving them to sanctuaries to auction off or raffle to raise funds.

If you would like to help distribute copies of this book, I'd be happy to send you some free of charge. Please email me at samuelhenry@gmail.com. You can also download the full book as a PDF or ebook (.epub) for free at samuel-baca-henry.com.

Author Events

Please email me at samuelhenry@gmail.com if you are interested in helping host an in-person or virtual interview/colloquium/reading/lecture/Q&A.

Visit samuel-baca-henry.com to view upcoming events and a recorded abridged 15 minute audio-visual version of the story.

Lament of Het-Heru



Het-Heru-headed column capital from her temple at Iunet (a.k.a. Dendera; the setting of this story)

Part One: Het-Heru[11] Awakens and Summons

The beginning of the recollection of the priestess Het-Heruhat,[12] Servant of the Goddess Het-Heru.

Hereafter is Het-Heruhat's record of the Lament of Het-Heru:

Het-Heru Wept[13]

Once it came to pass[14] while I was keeping vigil within her temple at Iunet,[15] in the beginning of the month[16] of her

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[11] a.k.a. Hathor. See the *Introduction* entry *On Names and Afrocentrism* for an explanation of why I switch to calling her Het-Heru instead of Hathor.

[12] Meaning "Het-Heru is foremost" (i.e. "Hathor is foremost"). The fictional priestess Het-Heruhat acts as our frame narrator.

[13] See the Christian *Gospel of John*, 11:35.

[14] Traditional opening line in Ancient Egyptian literature.

[15] a.k.a. Dendera. The site of a major cult center of Hathor. The Ancient Egyptian name for the city was Enet-t-neter or "Enet (Home) of the Goddess." It is a multi-millenia site of temples to Hathor, of which the Ptolemaic temple complex remains. It was later converted to a Christian basilica after the Christian/Roman destruction of the Egyptian temples following the Roman empire's backing of Christianity in 324 CE. This came after an earlier period of Roman persecution of Christians, during which, for example, 400 were reportedly tortured and killed on the grounds of the Temple to Hathor at Iunet per Roman policy under emperor Diocletian in the early 300's CE.

[16] Hathor is the third month of the Ancient Egyptian calendar. It lies between November 10 and December 9 of the modern Gregorian calendar. The month of Hathor is the third month of the season of the flood (inundation) of the Iteru/Nile, which replenished the soil with nutrients and enabled the next season of farming and life.

name, while the fertile inundation of the Iteru[17] rose towards the temple, that Het-Heru, our bovine goddess of the purity and strength of love and motherhood, mother of Heru,[18] daughter of Ra, Lady of Fate, mother of the pharaohs, Lady of Per-Het-Heru,[19] Lady of the Sycamore, Mistress of the Sky and Turquoise, etc., that she wept and the music and dancing in her temple ceased.

Salty tears and saliva dripped down her cheeks and lips. She shifted her feet, bent over, and planted her hands on the ground–they transformed into hooves. Linen fell from her back to the floor. Het-Heru's golden image transmuted into a breathing cow.

The carvings of her on the temple walls wailed and lamented.[20]

In the dark holiest center of the temple where she had once stood resplendent yet hidden, I cupped her chin in my palm. Tears collected around her eyes. She cried a soft and desperate low through her open mouth. Frustrated breaths warmed my hand.

As I tried to comfort her, I thought of all she had done.

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[17] a.k.a. Nile.
[18] a.k.a. Horus.
[19] a.k.a. Gebelein.
[20] See Maimonides (13th century CE Jewish rabbi, philosopher, theologian, jurist, commentator, and physician to Saladin), *Guide of the Perplexed*, Book III, Chapter 29.

She births Heru[21] every dawn. The celestial goddess Nut takes on a bovine form to carry Het-Heru's father Ra through the sky each day. Ra fills Het-Heru, Lady of the Vulva, every evening so that she may rebirth the gods and goddesses with the morning sun's rise. She guides him through the Twelve Gates every night.

Once, her vengeful father Ra sent Het-Heru as his Eye to destroy humanity for rebelling against him. Thus, she became Sekhmet the ravenous lion despite her gentle nature. Nearing their extinction, Ra finally relented and spared humanity from such reckless fury by tricking her with 7,000 jars of blood-red beer. She became drunk, slept, and ceased the rampage he instigated. Upon awakening, she was no longer Sekhmet and returned to her loving form as Het-Heru.[22]

She and Heru of Behdet[23] created their child Ihy, half-brother of the pharaohs, god of the sistrum rattles heard in the music-making at temples and festivities.

Now Het-Heru laid down. She sighed a mournful sigh.

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[21] a.k.a. Horus.
[22] See the Ancient Egyptian mythological literary text, *The Book of the Heavenly Cow.*
[23] a.k.a. Horus of Edfu.



Faience mummy pectoral adornment of the goddess Nut; circa 1070 – 664 BCE; Third Intermediate Period or later



Faience amulet of Sekhmet, lion goddess of healing, war, and famine associated with Het-Heru (circa 712 – 343 BCE).



The cow Goddess Bat on top of the Narmer Palette, depicting Narmer's unification of Egypt and the founding of the First Dynasty, 31st century BCE. Het-Heru eventually subsumed much of Bat's role. Narmer is shown destroying city walls and vanquishing his enemies in the form of a bull. Egyptian pharaohs were sometimes referred to as Strong Bulls, or Bull of His Mother.



Note the four Het-Heruic heads of the goddess Bat on Narmer's belt (see next image)[24]

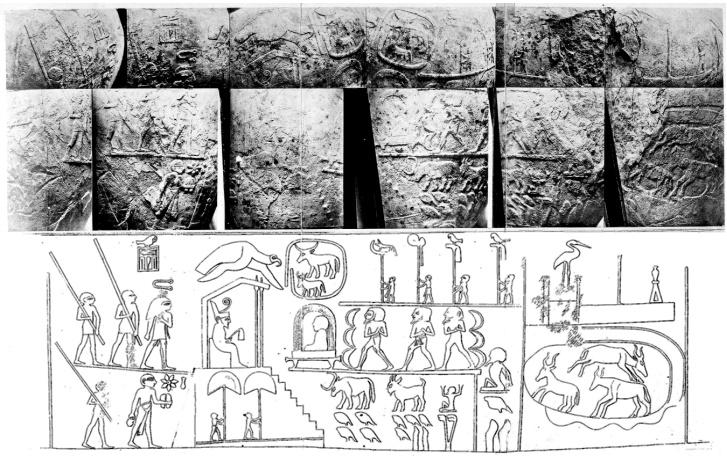
[24] Note that *Pyramid Text* spell 546 says "My kilt which is on me is Hathor." See Gillam, p. 215.



Note the four Het-Heruic heads of the goddess Bat on Narmer's belt



Narmer as bull on the palette



Ornamental macehead of Narmer (circa 3100 BCE)

Narmer, the first pharaoh to subjugate all of Upper and Lower Egypt combined,[25] knew that his strength came from the capture and exploitation of hundreds of thousands of cows from his adversaries.

He celebrated and honored Het-Heru's predecessor cow goddess Bat on his commemorative palette illustrating his rule of Upper and Lower Egypt. On this palette he showed himself as a raging bull, destroying his enemies' walls and cities.

From his enemies, Narmer plundered 1,422,000 goats, 400,000 cattle, and 120,000 captive people.[26]

The cow goddesses and living cows became the source and sustainer of the god Heru and the herdsman-conqueror pharaohs.

Sneferu[27] violently seized at least 20,000 cows and 7,000 people from Ta-Nehisi.[28] He captured at least 13,000 cows and 11,000 people from Libya. Many of them died on their way to forced labor and slaughter in Egypt.

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[25] Some time around 3273–2987 BCE.
[26] As engraved and depicted on the Narmer Macehead.
[27] Circa 2613 to 2589 BCE.
[28] a.k.a. Nubia. *Palermo Stone*, section 147. Translated by J. H. Breasted in *Ancient Records of Egypt, Volume I*.

Het-Heru had been dear to the pyramidist Menkaure[29] and his family. He commissioned many temples for her. She stood by his side to protect him in his statues to solidify his legitimacy over the nomes[30] of Egypt. After him, the pharaohs Userkaf and Sahure relied on associations with Het-Heru as their mother and wife.

[29] 2532 – 2504 BCE. Pharaoh who commissioned the smallest of the remaining three great pyramids at Giza (a.k.a. Rostau).
[30] A nome is an administrative region governed by a Nomarch. Menkaure commissioned at least five statues depicting himself with Hathor and the relevant nome goddess of the given nomes.

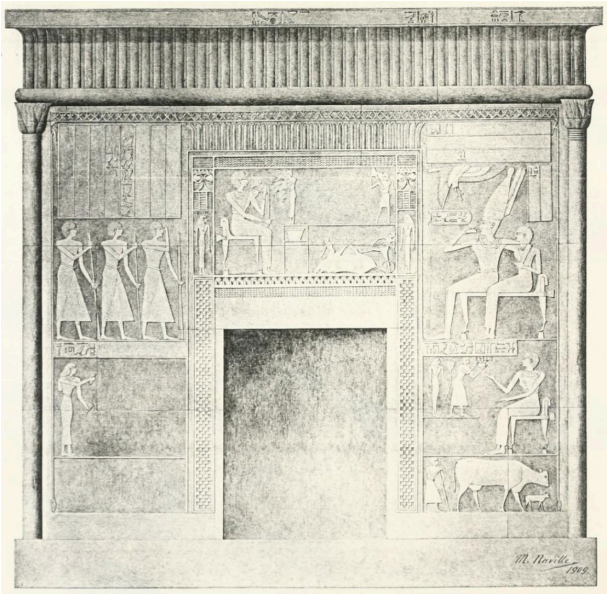


Het-Heru protecting the pharaoh Menkaure.
On her right, the Hare Nome goddess of Khemenu[31] offers an ankh of life in her left hand

[31] a.k.a. Hermopolis.



Menkaure's pyramid at Giza (Rostau)



Shrine/outer sarcophagus of Sadeh, a wife of pharaoh Mentuhotep II and Priestess of Het-Heru. Note the slaughtered cow above the door and the herded mother cow and calf in the bottom right.



Stela of Intef, Overseer of a fortress in Henen-Nesut[32] within the administration of Mentuhotep II. Henen-Nesut was the seat of the rivals of Mentuhotep II and the Theban dynasty during the First Intermediate Period, before he conquered it and re-established control over all of Upper and Lower Egypt

[32] a.k.a. Herakleopolis.

Mentuhotep II[33] claimed Het-Heru as his mother to legitimize his reunification of Upper and Lower Egypt after a period of division and war. He dedicated a temple to her at Per-Het-Heru (House of Het-Heru), a city where she had already been worshiped for centuries . He depicted himself suckling[34] Het-Heru's udders in her shrine connected to his temple at Djeser-Djeseru[35] across from Waset.[36] Several of his wives served as priestesses of Het-Heru. Yet these queens depicted bound and slaughtered cattle in their tombs and on their sarcophagi, buried within this mortuary and cultic complex abutting the western mountains in which Het-Heru dwells; from which she emerges. Near his and Het-Heru's shrines, Mentuhotep II buried many of his most effective soldiers who helped him subdue and re-unite Upper and Lower Egypt.

Het-Heru nursed the great pharaoh Hatshepsut[37] as a child, which she commemorated at her temple. Thus with Het-Heru as mother and Amane as father, Hatshepsut ruled as king. Yet there was a herd of sacred cattle at this temple who were raised to have their legs tied together, be thrown

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[33] Died 2009 BCE. His reunification of Upper and Lower Egypt marked the end of the First Intermediate Period and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.
[34] Het-Heru is at later (i.e. Roman) times equated with Aset, who suckles her son Heru (a.k.a. Horus). The pharaoh is known as "the Living Heru" (a.k.a. "the Living Horus"). This iconography showcases the pharaoh as the child of the goddess(es).
[35] a.k.a. Deir el-Bahri. Djeser-Djeseru means "Holy of Holies."
[36] a.k.a. Luxor/Thebes.
[37] Reigned as pharaoh from 1479 until her death in 1458 BCE.

to the floor, and have their throats slit to honor the pharaoh and Het-Heru. Flesh of the goddess's children were buried in tombs to feed the humans in their afterlife. So also with ducks, geese, fish, and honey. These smells bloomed around the valley. The funeral trains were pulled by Het-Heru's sons, who were then slaughtered in sacrifice after dragging the sarcophagi and other offerings to the tomb. Hatshepsut's name would later be erased from the temple she dedicated to Het-Heru at Per-Het-Heru and many future king lists.[38]



Het-Heru nursing the pharaoh, 19th Dynasty (perhaps Seti I) circa 1295-1186 BCE

[38] See Takács, et al, 2015.

Tiye[39], the Great Royal Wife of Amenhotep III[40] and mother of pharaoh Akhenaten[41] continued this representation as Het-Heru. Tiye's temple to Het-Heru at Atiye[42] in Ta-Nehisi declared her to be the image of Het-Heru, just as her husband became Amane and their son became the Aten. This identification of the ruling queen with Het-Heru was customary among the Nehisi and so provided legitimacy.[43] This benefited Tiye and her husband, as well as their children. She continued to dress in tribute to Het-Heru even after her son promoted the Aten as primary god to be worshiped instead of or above all others. After her husband Amenhotep III's death, Tiye and Het-Heru protected him in his next life.

Many of the pharaohs' wives and children served among Het-Heru's priestesses and priests.

And so these and the other pharaohs and their families had relied on and served Het-Heru.

Now Het-Heru closed her eyes. She clenched her dripping lids and darkened her world.

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[39] Circa 1398 – 1338 BCE.
[40] Died circa 1353 BCE.
[41] Died circa 1336 BCE.
[42] The ancient Egyptian name for this place "Atiye" preserves the name House (a.k.a. Temple) of Tiye. This temple is within present-day Sudan. Also known as Sedeinga.
[43] See Dr. Ashby's talk The Goddess Isis and the Kingdom of Meroë.

Of humans, she had stood beside the wombed to try to protect during childbirth. In the form of the Seven Het-Herus, human fates were determined as newborns. Later, Het-Heru helped the deceased move to the Duat–land of the afterlife. And she greeted them with bread. Seven more cows and their male consort, who some say is Usir,[44] Lord of the Cows, assist the deceased according to the Book of the Dead. The cow called She of Chemmis[45] nurses the deceased with her milk.[46] Thus Het-Heru and her brethren aid humans seven times with their births and seven times with their rebirths; and also for the gods.

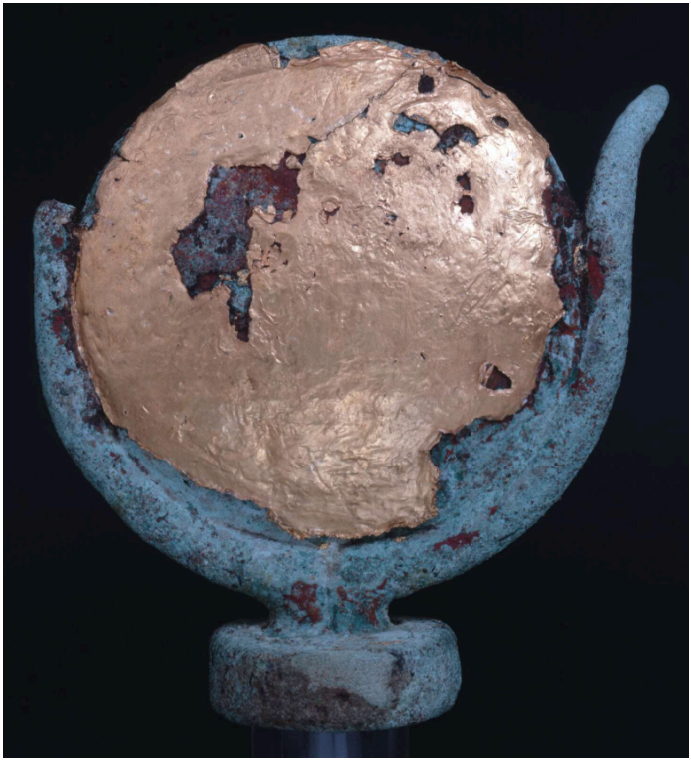
Now Het-Heru was silent. She slept. Her great lungs heaved.

I kept vigil over her through the night, gently stroking the Mother of mothers like my babe, as she had comforted and nuzzled so many.

[44] a.k.a. Osiris.
[45] Present-day Akhmim, Egypt.
[46] Pinch, 178.



Het-Heru-headed columns, Temple of Mut (associated with Het-Heru); Jebel Barkal (contemporary Sudan); A plateau mound in the desert; Sacred to many cultures of the region, including Kerman+Kush+Egyptian+Bedouin+(all of the above)+more .



Gold-leafed copper alloy sun-disc headdress from a figure of Het-Heru or Aset. Found in Kerma, Ta-Nehisi (present-day Sudan) in the Late Period.



Meroitic beaker found in Faras, Ta-Nehisi (Nubia; present-day Sudan)



Ptolemaic era plaque of two Het-Herus (or Het-Heru and Montu) and assisting a woman in childbirth (circa 4th to 1st century BCE)



Pottery offering table from the Egyptian First Intermediate Period (circa 2181 - 2055 BCE). Note the bound cow and severed cow leg.



Offering table from the Egyptian Middle Kingdom period (circa 2040 - 1782 BCE). Note the bound cow (top center), severed cow foreleg (right), and cow head (middle/bottom right).



Limestone offering table from the Egyptian Middle Kingdom period (circa 2040 - 1782 BCE)

She turned her head to the left and saw a pile of severed cow forelegs on an offering table amongst cakes and flowers. To her right she saw a pile of cow heads on another offering table amongst sacrificed birds and red-soaked linen. She laid her head upon the offering table and wept, filling its indentations with her tears. She snorted and gritted her damp eyes as she reared away from these. The smells of charred flesh and incense lingered in the air from the day's burnt offerings.

Het-Heru shook off the four remaining ceremonial cloths that we had put upon her. She stamped on them like one threshing grain. She tore them with her horns and teeth. She shredded them as one lamenting.

I walked slowly alongside her. Instead of rising to the rooftop to greet her father Ra as every other morning, we exited the temple. We made our way around its inner yards and corridors. Her hooves pounded a dirgeful beat on the stone floors. We passed piles of glass, pottery, wooden carvings, faience, beads, and stone offerings to Het-Heru. Some were in the form of cows. Others depicted an ear–that she might hear the supplicant's petitions. Amidst these were amulets, necklaces, bracelets, and rings. There were also hanging painted linen tunics depicting the goddess. Het-Heru nosed at these before continuing outside.

As we passed through the pillared entrance hall, the sparrows and bats who made their homes in its higher places swooped down to accompany Het-Heru outside.

The day was still night. Sopdet, the brightest star in the sky, looked down upon us.[47] The goddess Nut waited in vain for the sun so she could carry Ra and spread the rays of the Aten sun-disc across Egypt between her horns. None could see their own nor our shadows,[48] for they saw darkness by day.[49]

The priestesses, priests, and others were afraid and surprised to see the one who shines as gold. They were used to yoked cows goaded and whipped by their custodians. And they had seen Het-Heru's statue floated up the Iteru[50] to visit Heru at Behdet, south of Waset.[51] But they had never seen something like this.

They feared the darkness and Her Brightness.

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[47] Sopdet was the Ancient Egyptian name for the star Sirius, the brightest in the northern sky. The star's rising coincided with the beginning of the annual flooding of the Iteru/Nile. It was associated with Het-Heru (and Aset). She is equated with Sopdet at times (see Temple of Het-Heru at Iunet).
[48] A person's shadow, or *Shut*, was considered part of their soul. It accompanied them to the afterlife.
[49] See the *Stela of Neferabu* for this phrase.
[50] a.k.a. Nile.
[51] a.k.a. Thebes/Luxor.

I obediently followed Het-Heru as a child following her mother.

We continued outside the temple to its cowpens. Here were cows held by the temple and its priestesses and priests, who were themselves mostly born of royalty, the palace, the temples, and other elites. These cows were rented out for the temple's profit to be worked on lands owned by the temple itself. Some from this herd were hobbled and sacrificed–offered to the goddess Herself, as well as to other deities, including the pharaoh.[52]

They mooed when they heard us, likely hoping it was breakfast time.

Near the cowpens were burial pits containing some of their kin. An in-progress dig lay open, with the corpse of a cow lying recumbent[53] next to it. Het-Heru gazed upon his body. I laid a lotus flower[54] under the cow's nose and mouth. Het-Heru walked back to an offering table inside to get beer and bread. She placed these next to the cow's head. She stood over him to try to nurse this rotting cow. His tongue hung limp from his dead mouth. Het-Heru licked his

[52] Note: the cow species (Aurochs; *Bos primigenius*) appearing within this book has been killed to extinction by humans from their former wild lands spanning central Asia to north Africa and Europe. They were domesticated into and replaced by the contemporary cow species *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*.
[53] Like the seven cows in the *Book of the Dead*.
[54] A symbol of rebirth.

wounds[55] and nuzzled his face.[56] She sighed before turning back towards the pens.

Het-Heru kicked down the fences and stood among her brethren. She mooed back to them and they gathered around. She licked their faces and they licked hers. All rubbed their great heads together.

A calf walked around her seven times before lapping the tears from Het-Heru's left eye. The calf called out for her mother, who ran over to nuzzle and suckle her babe. The little one lapped up the milk which she had lately been deprived of so that it might be offered in the temple instead. Another calf approached, but was unable to reach these cool tears and warm milk because of the nose ring he was pierced with for weaning and painful control.

Beyond the cowpen and entrance pylons, the inundating Nile flowed before us. The moonlight of Aset[57] shimmered over the waves.

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[55] Like a mother cow licks her newborn calf; or how other cows lick each other for cleaning and affectionate bonding. See also the magical healing licks in Ancient Egyptian magical texts: “licks Horus whom she has borne,” “kissing your hand, licking your limbs, endowing your Majesty with life and dominion” (from pharaoh Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahari), “She has licked the injury that is in your body” (from the Ptolemaic temple of Heru at Behdet a.k.a. Horus at Edfu). See Ritner, 1993, for more information.

[56] She is trying to greet and sustain the slaughtered cow as she is described assisting recently deceased humans in the *Book of the Dead*.

[57] a.k.a. Isis.



The seven cows and the Bull of Heaven of the Book of the Dead, Papyrus of Nebseny

Het-Heru Summons

Then spake the pure one Het-Heru, Lady of the Sycamore, Mistress of the Sky and the Turquoise, Lady of Love, who gives life to all living things:

> Het-Heruhat, my priestess – Please summon to me[58] Neith and her son, my father–Ra.
>
> Summon Aset and Usir,[59] parents of Heru.
>
> And my son with Heru: Ihy.
>
> Invite Renenutet from Mefket.[60] With her ask Nehebkau and Geb. And Sobek Nepri, and Meretseger, She Who Loves Silence.

[58] Mirroring the summoning language used by Ra in the *Book of the Heavenly Cow* prior to being convinced to have his daughter Hathor destroy humanity for not following his ways.
[59] a.k.a. Isis and Osiris, parents of Horus.
[60] Present-day Tarrana, Egypt. Also known as Terenuthis.

Bring Anubis, Montu, Bastet, Amanet,[61] Amane,[62] Nut, Mut, Ammit, Hesat, Nekhbet,[63] Mehet-Weret, Taweret, Satet, Anuket, Bat, Ihet, Bata, Set, Djehuti,[64] Ma'at, Tjenenyet, Raet-Tawy, and Imentet, as well as their high priestesses and priests, if they have any.

Bring me the 42 Assessors of Ma'at, who include Djehuti, Nehebkau, and Sobek.[65]

And bring the Pharaoh and the Royal Wives and all the children of the Pharaoh's body.

Bring me the Viziers of Upper and Lower Egypt, all the Nomarchs,[66] and the Overseers and Counters of the cattle.

With care, bring the sacred living Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls.[67] And with care bring the living parents, siblings, and children of these bulls. Let

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[61] a.k.a. Amunet.
[62] a.k.a. Amun.
[63] Known as The Great Wild Cow of Nekheb (an early dynastic Egyptian city).
[64] a.k.a. Thoth.
[65] The 42 Assessors of Ma'at judge the souls of the dead in the afterlife. Books of the Dead instruct the deceased how to pass their tests by denying having committed specific sins. Ma'at was the god of truth and order.
[66] The Kingdom was divided into sections called Nomes. Nomarchs were appointed to govern these territories on behalf of the pharaoh.
[67] a.k.a. The Apis, Buchis, and Mnevis bulls.

them be transported on their gold-stalled[68] barque ships. Bring me also the Ba-souls[69] of the former sacred bulls who are already buried at Saqqara alongside their parents. Summon also the courtiers of these Usir-Hapi-ankh, Usir-Bakh, and Usir-Mer-wer bulls.

Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of my temples, all my servants, and all my priestesses and priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great complaint.[70] Bring them from all the Nomes of

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[68] See Diodorus Siclus, The Library of History, Book I: section 185, for a description of the transport of newly identified Hapi-ankh/Apis bulls after the previous one's passing to the West and becoming Usir-Apis.

[69] The Ba is the personality part of the soul. It was depicted as the person's face with the body and wings of a falcon. It is unknown whether the ancient Egyptians believed that non-human creatures (such as the sacred Hapi-ankh bulls) were outlived by Ba-souls. The Bakh (a.k.a. Buchis) bull was considered to be the living incarnate Ba of the god Ra (father of Hathor). So Hathor is challenging this theological relation of the Bakh bull to Ra, instead implying that the Bakh bulls had their own personal Bas separate from (or in addition to) Ra's.

[70] See *2 Kings*, 10:18-29: "'Therefore, summon to me all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers, and all his priests: let no one fail to come, for I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Wherever fails to come shall forfeit his life.' Jehu was acting with guile in order to exterminate the worshippers of Baal. Jehu gave orders to convoke a solemn assembly for Baal, and one was proclaimed. Jehu sent word throughout Israel, and all the worshippers of Baal came, not a single one remained behind. They came into the temple of Baal, and the temple of Baal was filled from end to end. He said to the man in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out the vestments for all the worshipers of Baal"; and he brought vestments out for them. Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rechab came into the temple of Baal, and they said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and make sure that there are no worshipers of the LORD (Yahweh) among you, but only worshipers of Baal.' So they went in to

Egypt, along with the Overseers of the cows of the temples.

And bring me millers and generals and musicians and doctors and dancers and builders. Summon to me fishers and farmers and fowlers and masons.

Let these be brought so that they may be judged.[71]

For now, let the day remain dark over you.[72]

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offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. But Jehu had stationed eighty of his men outside and had said, 'Whoever permits the escape of a single one of the men I commit to your charge shall forfeit life for life.' When Jehu had finished presenting the burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the officers, 'Come in and strike them down; let no man get away!' The guards and the officers struck them down with the sword and left them lying where they were; then they proceeded to the interior of the temple of Baal. They brought out the pillars of the temple of Baal and burned them. They destroyed the pillar of Baal, and they tore down the temple of Baal and turned it into latrines, as is still the case. Thus Jehu eradicated Baal from Israel. However, Jehu did not turn away from the sinful objects by which Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to sin, namely the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan."

Note: All translations from the Tanakh/Hebrew Bible are from the Jewish Publication Society (JPS)'s 1985 translation.

[71] See *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, in which the Ennead council of the gods tells Het-Heru: "Let Heru and Set be summoned so that they may be judged."

[72] See *Micah* 3:6, "Assuredly, it shall be night for you. So that you cannot prophesy, and it shall be dark for you, so that you cannot divine; The sun shall set on the prophets, and the day shall be darkened for them."

Het-Heru sent also for cow goddesses and gods from distant places so we could hear how the cows are treated amongst them. She hoped that all would be well among them and sent her greetings.

She sent up the Iteru for her priestesses in Ta-Nehisi and Medewi,[73] where she was also called Atari.[74] She invited representatives of the Medjay herding peoples, who buried their leaders and loved ones with painted cow, goat, sheep, and gazelle skulls. And she invited Kerman people from Ta-Nehisi, who were sometimes buried with hundreds of cow heads.

[73] a.k.a. 𐦛𐦀𐦁𐦄 (Medewi) in Meroitic.
[74] 𐦇𐦌𐦆 in Meroitic. See Rowan, “Meroitic - A Phonological Investigation,” p. 50.

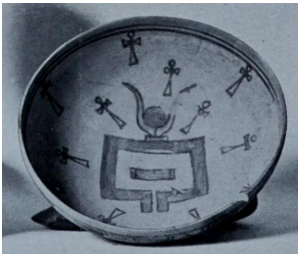


Amulets of Het-Heru found in Amara West, Ta-Nehisi, Nubia (present-day Sudan). New Kingdom.



Cow-decorated stela from Kerman tomb in Kerma, Ta-Nehisi (present-day Sudan)





From Meroë, capital of the Kushite Kingdom between 591 BCE - 350 CE. Present-day northern Sudan.



The war god Montu in sun-disc-crowned bull form. He was believed to become incarnate in the sacred Bakh bulls. Statue from the Hellenistic Ptolemaic era of Egyptian history, circa 332 - 30 BCE.

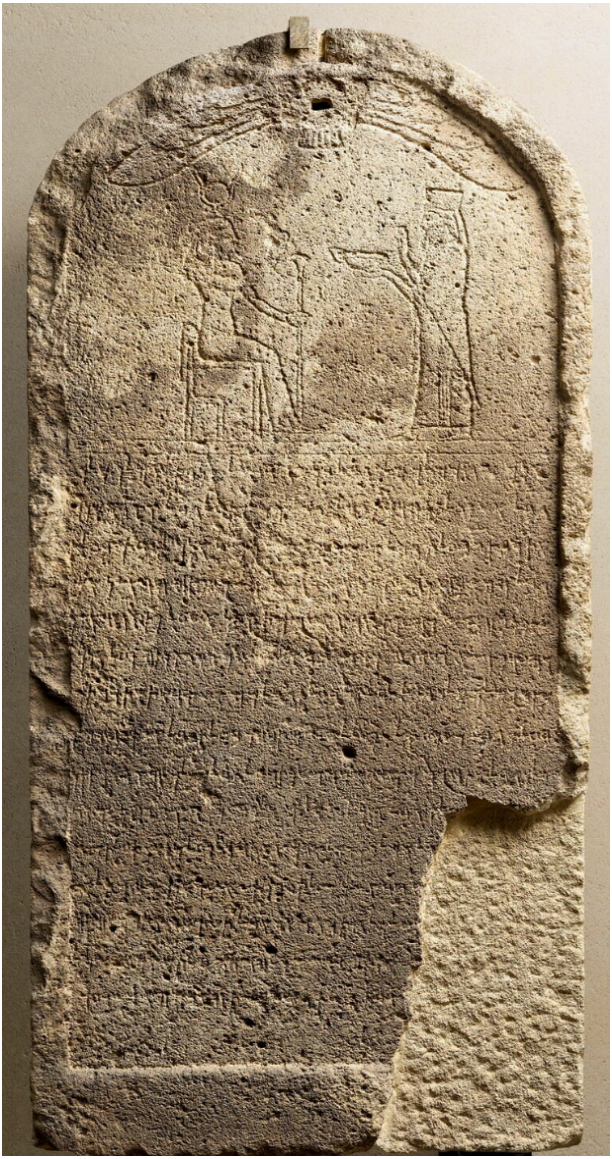




Ptolemaic period, circa 99 BCE



A Ptolemaic-era Hapi-ankh/Apis bull at the Kom Ombo temple complex



Phoenecian stele of king Yehawmilk dedicated to the Het-Heru-esque Baalat Gubal, Lady of Kebny (a.k.a. Byblos; in present-day Lebanon), circa 450 BCE.



Votive cow (bronze & gold) found in Kebny (a.k.a. Byblos; present-day Lebanon) at the Temple of Baalat Gubal (Lady of Kebny – with whom Het-Heru is sometimes identified).



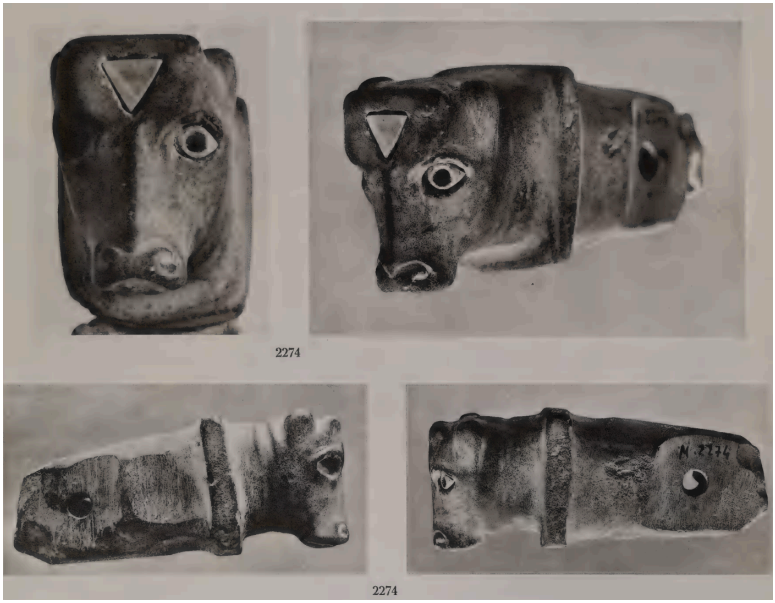
From Kebny. Note the Hieroglyphic name of Het-Heru (bird within the square–meaning "House of Heru").



From Kebny (present-day Lebanon) at the Temple of Baalat Gubal (Lady of Kebny – with whom Het-Heru is sometimes identified).



Guide pass from Sumer, circa 2900 - 2340 BCE.





From Mari (present-day Syria)

We dispatched speedy emissaries, delegates, and priestesses east to invite the Bull of Heaven at Sumerian Uruk.[75] These would first sail to Kebyny via the Wadj-Wer.[76] After the ships were moored to the shore,[77] they would visit the temple of Baalat Gubal, where Het-Heru was worshiped in the form of the Lady of Kebny[78] in this land of cedars. It was in Kebny where Aset reclaimed her husband Usir's[79] corpse from the coffin his brother Set tricked him into.

From Kebny, some of our people went southward through Retjenu[80] to learn about the gods and treatment of the cows there en route back to Egypt by land. Others departed Kebny via the road to Mari via Qatna. Next they would board ships to sail down the river Buranuna[81] to Uruk.

After Uruk, these would travel to Pārsa to request the primordial bovine Gavaevodata. His soul Goshorun had

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[75] Present-day Iraq.
[76] Egyptian name for the Mediterranean Sea. Means "Great Green."
[77] A phrase from the magician Djedi in the *Westcar Papyrus*.
[78] Lady of Kebny (a.k.a. Lady of Byblos; Byblos is a port city in present-day Lebanon) is a translation of Baalat Gubal, which may be a proper name, a title, a description, or a combination of all of the above. Throughout Egypt (and Kebny), Het-Heru sometimes has the epithet Lady of Kebny. Baalat Gubal was also sometimes associated with Astarte, Anat, Ashera, Aphrodite, and Aset. See Zernecke 2013.
[79] a.k.a. Osiris.
[80] Ancient Egyptian name for Canaan and Syria.
[81] Euphrates.

lamented[82] the bovine fate to the Zoroastrian god Ahura Mazda.

We sent messengers aboard departing Keftiuan[83] trade ships returning across the Wadj-Wer to request their Sacred Bull and the Minotaur (his son with Queen Pasiphaë, wife of King Minos). And we would seek representatives on behalf of the rest of their cows. Het-Heru would protect the ship and its navigators on their journeys.[84]

These seaborne delegates would continue to Pylos and then the isle of Helios,[85] to invite some of the Sacred Herd of their sun god. Next they would invite the cow goddess Io. Finally, they would go to Croton[86] to request the Sacred Ox of Pythagoras the vegetarian.[87] Among these messengers

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[82] See *Yasna 29* of the Zoroastrian scriptures. In this Gatha poem, attributed to Zarathustra himself, the Soul of the Cow (*geush urvan*) laments on behalf of all the cows that they exist in the forceful fury, bondage, violence, and vice of humans. The great god Ahura Mazda (Divine Wisdom) proclaims that the prophet Zarathustra will transmit the divine teachings of goodness through poetic song and thus champion and save the cows. https://lrc.la.utexas.edu/eieol/aveol/10

[83] Keftiu was the ancient Egyptian name for Minoan Crete, present-day Greece.

[84] See Colonna 2018, p. 75 for Hathor's role as protector of sailors.

[85] The island was sacred to Helios and guarded by Helios' daughters Lampetia and Phaethusa. Also called Thrinacia. Sometimes identified with Sicily or Malta.

[86] City in present-day southern Italy.

[87] The philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras allegedly studied with Egyptian priests before returning to Greece. His followers practiced vegetarianism. The ox itself was convinced by Pythagoras not to eat fava beans since these contained the souls of the dead. The ox

were some who had studied alongside Pythagoras himself at Egyptian temples. While in Croton, they would call on the priests of the Cult of Mithras to send delegates and explain their rites.

Because she could not summon from times yet to be, Het-Heru requested the prophetess Neferti[88] to tell of the future condition of the cows and of any potential saviors among humanity or gods.

Het-Heru instructed with a sweet, deep, lovely voice:[89]

> Ensure safe passage for all on their journeys. Go without chariots. Go without donkeys. Do not force horses to carry them or oxen to pull them and their supplies. Send accompanying doctors with skills to treat the animals and the humans. And instruct your overseers not to beat the sailors and others who help them in their journeys.
>
> Shu,[90] my brother of the body of Ra – please provide steady winds so that those going by sea are carried directly. Things carried by the wind do not

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was subsequently tended to and worshiped in Tarentum near the temple of Juno.

[88] See the *Prophecy of Neferti.*

[89] See *Lotus Sutra*.

[90] Primordial god of wind, dry air, who separated earth and sky. He and his sister Tefnut are the parents of Geb (earth god) and Nut (sky goddess).

> break the backs of animals or people.
>
> It is to this cowpen[91], among my brethren, that you shall summon them. Of those among these who have names in their own ways, let my scribes record them.

Het-Heru again closed her eyes and was silent. Her fellows in the cowpen encircled her for protection. The day was still as night outside the temple and throughout all that Heru could see. Cattle dung burned for illumination.

And so we summoned all she requested. Some of these we summoned with spells to visit from the past. And all with spells to quicken their travels and arrivals so that they were as swift as a body's shadow.[92] As it was dark, we enlisted the Barque of Het-Heru's father Ra to transport some of these with speed and safety, sailing across that Nile of the sky.

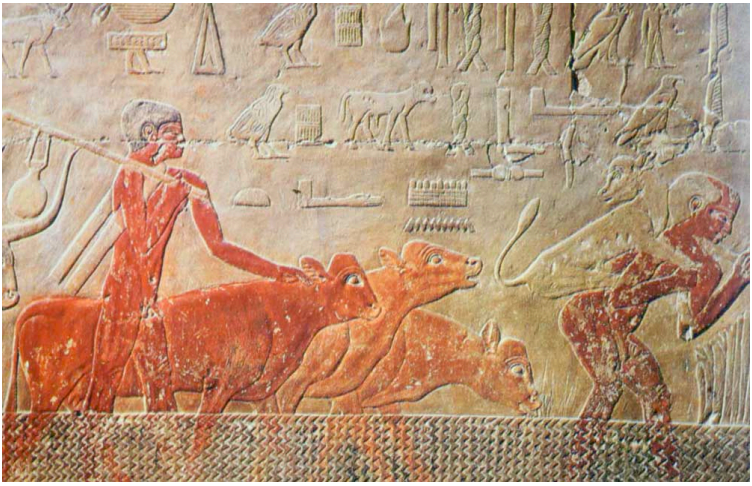
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[91] See *Atharvaveda*.

[92] See *The Book of the Heavenly Cow* for the "swift as a body's shadow" phrase in the context of Ra's runners sent to fetch red ocher dye for him to make red beer to get Hathor (in the form of Sekhmet) so drunk that she will stop executing his order to destroy humanity.



From the circa 650 BCE tomb of Mentuemhat, a priest of Amane at Thebes in the Kushite 25th dynasty of Egypt (and Ta-Nehisi)



A scared calf (carried by person on right) looks back for their mother while fording water in a marshland



Marsh scene from the pyramid of Userkaf, pharaoh in the early 25th century BCE. Note the hoopoe bird (center-right) with the head crest.

Part Two: Het-Heru Illuminates

Arrivals

Those summoned began arriving, and these were positioned on either side of her, touching the ground with their foreheads so that she might state her problem in their presence.[93] These were the goddesses and gods and pharaoh, the royal families, and priestesses and priests. And the millers and generals, governors of nomes, rulers of armies, and people of the Nine Bows,[94] both under the yoke and free.[95]

The living cows of the de-fenced temple pens remained with Het-Heru. The Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls and their parents, siblings, and children joined these. The cow-headed winged Ba-souls of their deceased family members perched in the sycamore trees around us. Flies and gnats buzzed. The land still lay in darkness.[96]

Also assembled and sitting together in congregation were thousands of beings not human: baboons, gazelles, oryxes, ibises, falcons, frogs, crickets, horses, leopards, donkeys,

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[93] Mirroring the arrivals of Shu, Tefnut, Geb, and Nut, Nun, and the gods who were present in the primeval abyss after being summoned for Ra in the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*.
[94] The Nine Bows are symbolic representations of the foreign enemies of Egypt.
[95] See *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 1.
[96] See *The Book of the Heavenly Cow* for the phrase "So the land lay in darkness."

ticks, giraffes, cats, jackals, butterflies, hippopotami, sheep, ducks, snails, deer, dogs, elephants, egrets, termites, geckos, ostriches, lions, gnats, crocodiles, hyenas, hartebeests, vultures, hedgehogs, mice, antelope, heron, falcons, scarabs, worms, ants, bats, geese, kingfishers, herons, dung-beetles, rabbits, bees, skinks, desert foxes, doves, swallows, acacia trees from Shendi, irises, cormorants, kestrels, pelicans, weasels, gerbils, praying mantises, hoopoes, warblers, partridges, eagles, flamingoes, quail, shearwater, curlew, turtles, flies, great serpents and snakes including vipers, adders, mambas, and boomslangs. Even the scorpions came.

As it was the third month of Akhet, the inundation brought to the temple many puffer fish alongside medjed, mullets, catfish, tilapia, and yet more hippopotami and crocodiles. Aboard some of these crocodiles perched sandpipers. The frogs praised the inundation.[97] Kites landed around the deceased cow and sang to his body.[98] And pigeons from nests all over the world came to hear Het-Heru's message.

Heru sailed down from Behdet[99] on his barque. Het-Heru herself, in her aspect Lady of Behdet, sailed down in her sacred barque. Usir descended from his roof shrine atop

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[97] See *The Instruction of 'Onchsheshonqy*: "It is the frogs who praise the Inundation. It is the mice who eat the emmer. It is the oxen who bring about the barley and emmer. It is the donkeys who eat them."
[98] Trying to revive him as Aset and Nebet-het did for their father Usir with their magical songs in the *Lamentations of Isis and Nepthys.*
[99] a.k.a. Edfu.

this very temple at Iunet. Aset, Nebet-het, and Imentet swooped down and gathered with the kites guarding the dead cow.[100]

The cow's winged Ba soul alighted next to the body and spread his wings to Aset and Nebet-het.[101] They shrieked and cawed with the cow's Ba, who cried out and then collapsed.

A hundred thousand or more winged Ba-souls of sacrificed ibises lined up like an army to listen.

[100] As they protect Usir's corpse in the *Lamentations of Isis and Nepthys*.
[101] a.k.a. Isis and Nephthys.



The slaughterhouse model of Meketre.

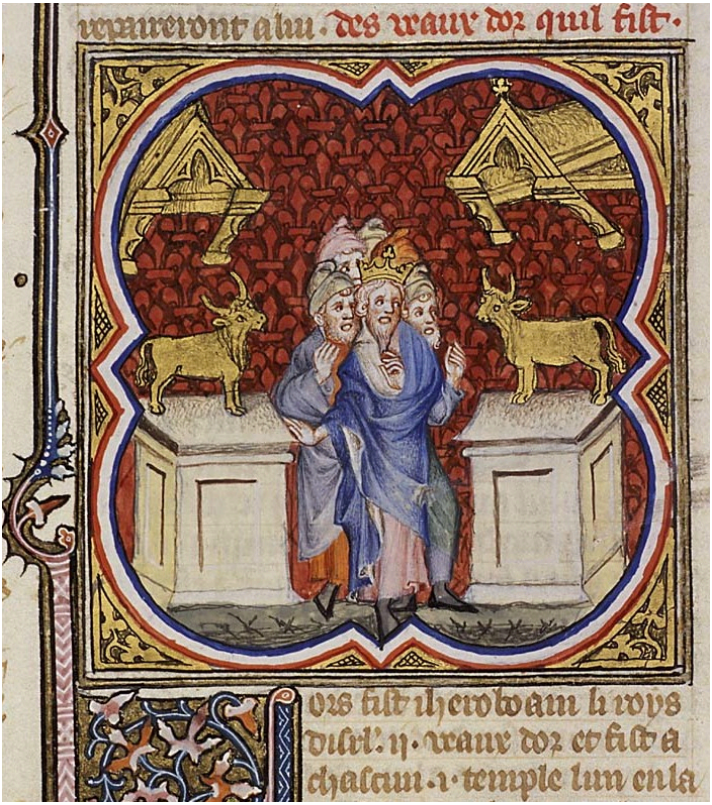
He was Chancellor and High Steward (provider of food to the royal palace) to the 11th Dynasty pharaohs Mentuhotep II, Mentuhotep III and perhaps Amenemhat I (Late 2000's – early 1900's BCE).



Cattle census (biennial cattle count) model of Meketre



Pre-slaughter fattening stable model of Meketre



The golden calves of Jeroboam, King of the Kingdom of Judah, who commissioned them for temples in the cities of Bethel and Dan.



Jeroboam, King of the northern Kingdom of Israel, sacrificing to one of his golden calf statues



The hieroglyph name of Het-Heru. From the temple of Baalat Gubal in Kebny (a.k.a. Byblos; present-day Lebanon)



An offering banner dedicated to Het-Heru, Lady of Kebny (Byblos, present-day Lebanon), circa 1292 - 1076 BCE (19th-20th Dynasty).
Note Het-Heru's hieroglyph name below the goddess's necklace.



Sumerian human-headed bull with the divine horned crown



Human-headed bull dedicated circa 2120 BCE by governor Gudea; from Girsu (aka Lagash; Tell Telloh, present-day Iraq)



Neo-Sumerian goddess, perhaps Bau, wearing the divine horned crow; circa 2100 BCE from Girsu (aka Lagash; Tell Telloh, present-day Iraq).

Status of cows, sacred cows, and cow goddesses and gods of other peoples

Het-Heru asked if we had news of the cow goddesses and gods she requested from other lands.

The priestesses and priests from Kebny raised their gold braceleted arms[102] in praise of Het-Heru, their Baalat Gubal, the Lady of Iunet who dwells in Kebny.[103]

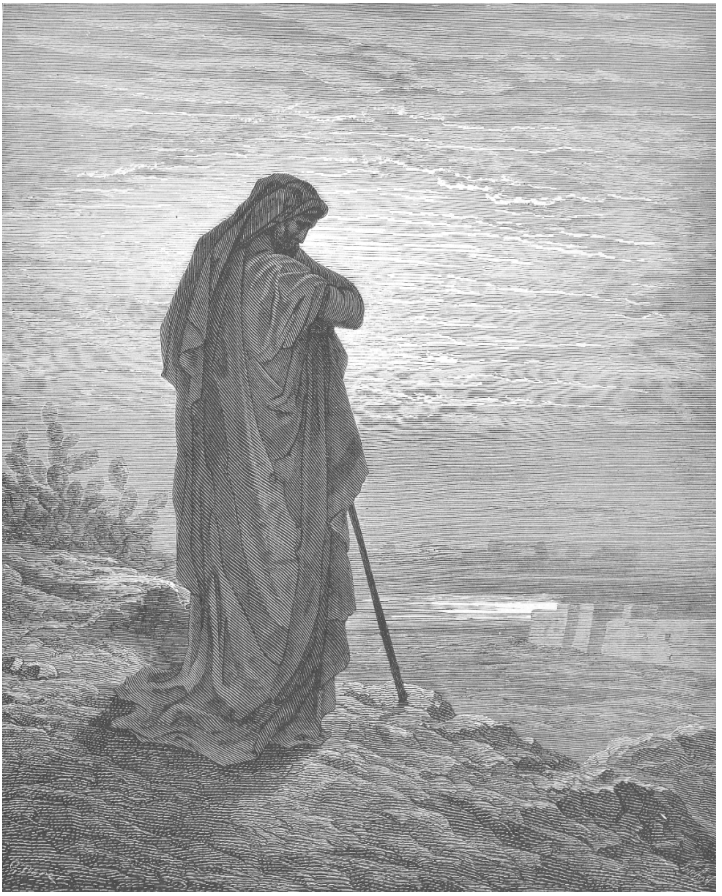
Yahweh accompanied our messengers who traveled southward through Retjenu after departing Kebny. Also from Retjenu came Jeroboam and Amos from the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Jeroboam had dwelt in Egypt before, seeking refuge under the Meshwesh[104]-descended Egyptian Pharaoh Shoshenq I after a failed conspiracy to usurp King Solomon, who had built the great temple in Jerusalem. Solomon had also built temples to the gods Moloch and Chemosh. The Queen of Sheba[105] taught Solomon the languages of the birds, the ants, and the bees.

Shoshenq I made war against the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. He looted the temple of Solomon. After Solomon's

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[102] See Montet, Item 32, page 57 for a description of their golden bracelets from a statuette found in the Temple of Balaat Gubal in Byblos.
[103] a.k.a. "Lady of Byblos." See Colonna, 2018 for this epithet.
[104] Ancient Libyan Berber tribe.
[105] Located in either the south-western Arabian peninsula (e.g. contemporary Yemen or Saudi Arabia) or the Horn of Africa (e.g. contemporary Somalia).

death, Jeroboam returned to the Kingdom of Israel and took the throne. Then he built temples with golden calf statues in the cities of Bethel and Dan to mitigate the power of the temple at Jerusalem in the rival Kingdom of Judah. Already sacked by the Egyptians under Shoshenq I, this temple would later be destroyed by the Neo-Babylonians.



The prophet Amos from the Hebrew Bible, as drawn by Gustave Doré (France, 19th century CE)



Sycamore fig wood door picturing Khonshotep before Usir and Het-Heru.
Found in his tomb in present-day Luxor.
Note the cow legs atop the offerings. Circa 1285 BCE.



The prophets Amos, Zechariah, and Malachi from the Hebrew Bible



Zechariah icon, painted circa 1654 CE; from the church of St. John Korovniki in Yaroslavl, present-day Russia

Amos, a shepherd and sycamore[106] fig gatherer, objected to Jeroboam's golden calves and was thus banished from the northern Kingdom of Israel back to his native Kingdom of Judah. There were, however, some even within the Kingdom of Judah who constructed bronze bulls, as at the Bull Site in Samaria.[107] In addition to his advocation of Yahweh worship only, Amos spoke the words of Yahweh to the Israelites, warning that Yahweh does not accept the burnt offerings, meat offerings, and peace offerings of the unjust. Yahweh told through Amos of the destruction, flooding, and famine of the people of Israel for their evils. And that this would be accompanied by the darkening of the earth on a clear day. As it was yet still dark, Amos was frightened and panicked.

A man named Zechariah had joined our delegates in Samaria. Here in the dark he comforted Amos. Zechariah told us that Yahweh commanded him to feed and care for the flocks that had hitherto been kept for slaughter, especially the weakest among the animals. Zechariah reported that their former keepers considered themselves blessed by Yahweh for the riches that the sacrifices paid them. And these considered themselves not guilty though they slew their flocks.

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[106] The sycamore tree is sacred to Hathor. She is the "Lady of the Sycamore." Some coffins were made from sycamore wood. Thus, the Hathoric tree encased the deceased's body in preparation for their eternal rebirth from her womb in the afterlife.

[107] A peak sanctuary where El, Yahweh, or Ba'al were worshiped. Included bronze bull statues of the god.



Neo-Assyrian stele of the god Adad standing atop a cow at the Temple of Ishtar, circa 744 - 727 BCE



Five-legged cow from Neo-Assyrian Arslan Tash (present-day Syria), in the Temple of Ishtar (circa 744 - 727 BCE)



Mesopotamian guide pass, circa 2650 - 2600 BCE



Mesopotamian plaque from a mace stand dedicated by Dudu (right), priest of the god Ningirsu during the reign of Entemena (circa 2420 - 2400 BCE). Note the cow center-left.



A praying person with a bull to be sacrificially killed and offered. From early dynastic Mesopotamia (circa 2500 -2340 BCE), Babylonia/Sumer (present-day Iraq)



Guide pass from Mesopotamian Uruk (home of Gilgameš; present-day Iraq)



From Mesopotamian Uruk (home of Gilgameš; present-day Iraq), circa 3000 BCE



Copper alloy foundation peg in the shape of a lying bull, commemorating the 22nd century BCE construction of the temple of Inanna by the governor Gudea in Girsu (aka Lagash; Tell Telloh, present-day Iraq)

The goddess Qetesh came with them, riding upon a lion. This lion and Het-Heru's form Sekhmet laid together peacefully in the cowpen. From Retjenu came also these gods and their courtiers: El, El Shaddai, Ba'al,[108] Ba'al-Hadad, Anat, and Asherah. We had heard of Asherah from correspondence with the Amorites, especially their king Abdi-Ashirta.[109] Some said that Yahweh was married to Asherah. She, Ishtar, and Astarte commingled. Astarte's cow-skin sandals had worn out from the journey.[110] Some saw Astarte as their Queen of Heaven Innana, called Ishtar.

With El came Eliphaz the Temanite, hungry, wandering, and looking for bread. He knew that the day of darkness had been readied for him.[111]

Among these were three sets of twin brothers. One pair of brothers were devoted to Astarte. The next pair of brothers

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[108] *Judges 2*, 2:11-13: "And the Israelites did what was offensive to GOD. They worshiped the Baalim and forsook the ETERNAL, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They followed other gods, from among the gods of the peoples around them, and bowed down to them; they provoked GOD. They forsook GOD and worshiped Baal and the Ashtaroth." Ashtaroth is sometimes equated with Astarte/Ishtar/Inanna.

[109] "Servant of Asherah". See Amarna Letters 60 and 61.

[110] As the sea god mockingly asks her about her journeys across heaven and earth after she has been summoned by the Egyptian harvest goddess Renenutet to deliver tribute to quell the sea's anger in the Egyptian story *Astarte and the Insatiable Sea*. Šauška plays the role of Astarte in the Hurro-Hittite version, *Song of the Sea*.

[111] *Job* 15:23: "He wanders about for bread—where is it? He knows that the day of darkness has been readied for him."

were devoted to Innana. The third pair of brothers were devoted to Ishtar.

Innana had sent the Bull of Heaven to his death by Enkidu and Gilgamesh. Amongst the Egyptians she was said to be the daughter of Ptah and a wife of Set, along with her sister Anat.[112] Some even believed Het-Heru and Anat were related in sphinx form. But the Hittites called Inanna Šauška,[113] whose image their king Tushratta sent to protect the ailing pharaoh Amenhotep III.[114]

Nanshe and Ninmarki arrived and then went off to the marshlands.

On the road to Mari, we camped with an army returning with 3 talents of gold, 100 talents of silver, 300 talents of copper, 300 talents of iron, 1,000 copper vessels, 1,000 brightly colored garments of wool and linen, the conquered enemy's daughter and her large dowry, 20 talents of purple wool, 500 cows, and 5,000 sheep.

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[112] See *Astarte and the Insatiable Sea* (The Literature of Ancient Egypt, ed. Simpson, 2003. See also *The Astarte Papyrus and the Legend of the Sea* by A. H. Sayce, 1933.
[113] Sometimes called Ištar of Nineveh.
[114] See *Amarna Letters 19 and 23*; cuneiform-inscribed clay tablets found at the Amarna (Akhetaten) palace of pharaoh Akhenaten. In *Letter 23*, Tushratta requests that the statue of the goddess be returned.



Limestone relief of Šauška or Ishtar, standing on a feline, from Neo-Hittite Anatolia or Northern Syria, circa 1000 - 700 BCE.



Foundation peg from the temple of goddess Nanshe at Sirara. Bull calf in reed marsh. Circa 2130 BCE.



Sacrificial procession scene from the Royal Palace of Mari, present-day Syria (circa 2500 - 1800 BCE)



Het-Heru-headed ivory plaque from Assyrian Kalḫu (a.k.a. Nimrud; present-day Iraq), circa 8th–7th century BCE. May have been captured or sent as tribute after Assyrian domination of Phoenicia.



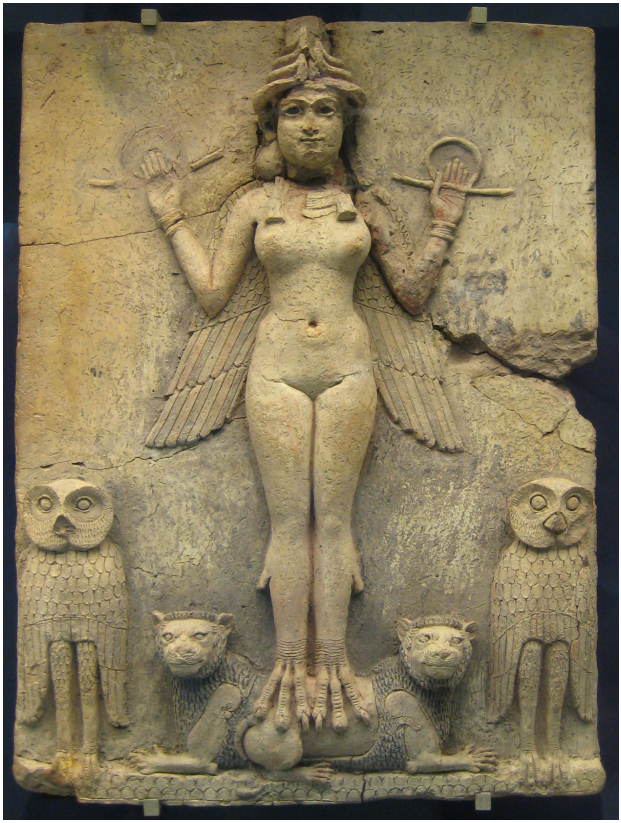
Bull hunting scene from Ashurnasirpal II's palace at Assyrian Kalḫu (a.k.a. Nimrud; present-day Iraq) circa 883 – 859 BCE



Ivory plaque depicting a male lion god in the style of the Egyptian lion goddess Sekhmet, found at Ashurnasirpal II's palace at Assyrian Kalḫu (a.k.a. Nimrud; present-day Iraq); made circa 883 – 859 BCE in Phoenicia.



A lyre from the Royal Cemetery at Ur circa 2500 BCE



Mesopotamian goddess Ereshkigal wears the divine horned crown and stands upon two lions. Circa 19th-18th century BCE. Possibly from Ur (present-day Iraq)



Bull-headed column from Persepolis in Acheaminid Persia

Our messengers stopped in Mari, the cult center of Astarte-Ishtar, and saw them sacrificing cows. These were born with the help of the seven divine Korharat midwives, then slaughtered before they had seen seven or eight cycles of the moon.

Cows were also slaughtered for Ḫepat, the wife of Hadad among the Canaanites and Mesopotamians, wife of Tešub among the Hurrians, and wife of Tarḫunz among the Luwians and Taru among the Hattians.

Before placing them on the offering table, they would divine messages from the liver and the heart. Sometimes they offered male cows and sometimes the females.

En route to Ur, this group of our messengers stopped next in the great Assyrian city of Kalḫu. There, they were amazed to see images of Het-Heru among their prized objects. However, they found out that these had been carried away from Phoenicia by the force of conquest.[115] The Assyrian army covered their siege engines in wet animal skin to prevent the defenders from burning them. Along with the sacred images, the Assyrians captured and brought home valuable animals and women.

[115]The Neo-Assyrian king Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, father of Ashurbanipal, who lived in the safety of Kalḫu, would conquer Egypt in 671 BCE.

Upon learning this, our messengers decided it best to move on. They exchanged gifts and greetings before some continued southward to Ur to seek the Great Bull of Heaven and then on to Pārsa[116] to seek the Zoroastrian primordial cow Gavaevodata.

Zoroastrian priests arrived with our messengers from Pârs[117] giving word that after 3,000 years of peaceful living, their primordial cow Gavaevodata was slain by Angra Mainyu–the destructive evil force. This evil one also cut down the pastures.[118] Gayōmard, the primordial human, died thirty years later from his wounds during the same attack.

Goshorun, the soul of Gavaevodata, lamented her fate and the ill-treatment of cows and other animals to the god Ahura Mazda. This god foretold the eventual coming of a prophetic protective savior for all the cows and all creation. The poet-herdsman Zarathushtra would ensure pasturage with Rightness amidst many sunbeams for the cows of all creation.[119] And he rejected the usage of cows' fat in the sacred haoma drink among his people.

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[116] a.k.a. Persepolis.
[117] a.k.a. Persia.
[118] See *Yasna* 32 of the Zoroastrian Gathic hymns of Zarathushtra.
[119] See the above-mentioned *Yasna 29* and *50* of the Zoroastrian Gathic hymns of Zarathushtra as well as Chapter 4 of *The Bundahishn* for another lament of Goshorun.

Grains and medicinal herbs were born from Gavaevodata's body. And his sperm gave birth to the first bull and cow, ancestors of all the species. The same also happened with Gayōmard seeding the first human parents.

The gathered Zoroastrians now rose up to heaven and enjoined Mithra, protector of cows and pastures, to descend and look over Het-Heru and all at the cowpen. Mithra, accompanied by his poet-singers and the curious Assyrians, gathered here now around a pile of cow dung and lit a fire. When a white male cow began to urinate in the pen, some collected the urine in a metal bowl. They placed the fire and a bowl between stones on which laid various utensils. They gathered water from the temple well and placed it in another bowl next to the urine. Now they began reciting their sacred poems.

This lasted about seven hours. The twenty-ninth of their poems said:

> The cow's soul lamented to you, the gods: "For whom did you create me? Who fashioned me? Cruelty, oppression, bloodlust, rage, and violence have fettered me, and there is no herdsman for me other than you. Therefore, you must all show me the way to good pastures."
>
> Then the cow's Fashioner asked Truth: "What was your allotment for the cow when, ruling the earth,

you all gave her cow-tending nourishment together with pasturage? Whom do all of you desire as the Lord who would destroy the cruelty wielded by the Possessor of the Lie?"

The one who is not a slayer of the alliance with Truth and is free from hatred for the cow would reply to him: "One is not to know of those things by which He drives the lowly to lofty heights. But he to whom I shall go, on account of his having sent out requests for aid, will be the strongest of beings."

Zarathustra answered: "The Wise One is he remembering best the pacts that, indeed, he has made with daevas[120] and men sometime before now. And those also that he will make sometime later. He is the discerning Lord; it will be for us just as he would wish."

Zarathustra continued: And so, then, do we two–my soul and the fertile cow's–devote ourselves with zeal, with hands stretched out to the Lord, so that we may dispose the Wise One to answer our inquiries. Is there no prospect for the cattle-breeder living justly among the Possessors of the Lie?"

So the Wise Lord, the Knowing One, speaks the solemn words inspired by his insight: "There is no

[120] Deities.

lord found by even one among us, nor a paragon in accordance with any Truth. Alas, the Fashioner has fashioned you for the benefit of the cattle breeder and the herdsman.

"The Lord who is allied with Truth fashioned the magic formula for procuring butter and milk for the cow. This Wise One is beneficent towards the emaciated in accordance with the teaching. Who is there for you who might set these things down for mortals by Good Mind?"

Good Mind said: “There is this one found here for me who alone hears our holy teachings–Zarathustra Spitama: he wishes to recite praises for us and for Truth, O Wise One, if I shall give to him sweetness of voice."

And so the soul of the cow laments: "I who am to accept a powerless provider, a weak man's voice which I wish to be strong–When during my lifetime will he emerge, the one who lends to him a helping hand?"

Zarathustra said: "O Lord, may you give strength to them through Truth. And that power, which comes through Good Mind, by which one may receive comfort and peace. For I myself, O Wise One, know You as the Primordial Provider of that."

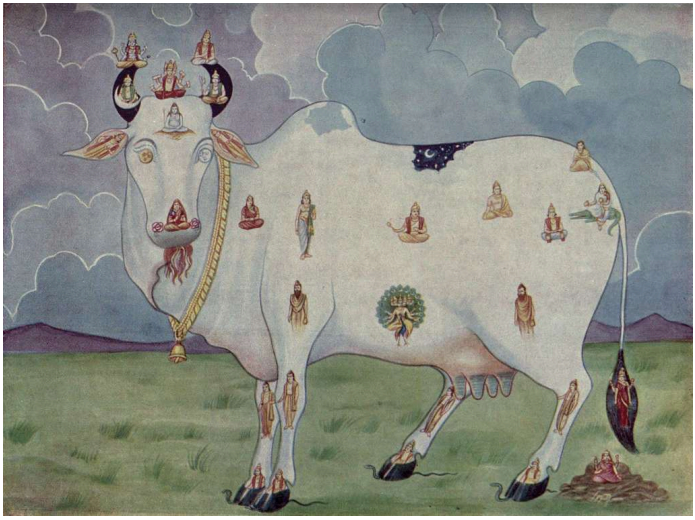
> The Cow replied: "Where are Truth, Good Mind, and their power? Know me, through the mortal one, You, O Wise One, in Your concern for the great offering. Come down to us now, O Lord, on account of our gift for those like you."[121]

After reciting their poems, the Zoroastrians took a pinch of ash from the dung fire, rubbed it in their hands with some of the consecrated urine, and pressed it to their lips. And they collected some hairs that had fallen from the cows. They wrapped these around their rings.

[121] Translated by Scott L. Harvey, Windred P. Lehmann, and Jonathan Slocum at the University of Texas at Austin Linguistics Research Center.



Kamadhenu



Kamadhenu

Illumined by fire, the Zoroastrian Mazda-worshippers introduced the Hindu goddess Kamadhenu[122] from Goloka, the heavenly world of cows.

Govinda, the Protector of Cows, arrived soon after with Krishna, the young cowherd of Goloka.

Arriving now with these came Nandi, the bull of Shiva. Though not a god himself, Nandi accompanied Kamadhenu and now laid in the temple cowpen amongst the Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls. Humidity was in their eyes.[123]

All of these laid down, letting tears run over their chins.[124] Aset, the mother of the Hapi-ankh bull, stood guard before these.

We were pleased to meet Kamadhenu of India. She stood over a termite mound and released some of her milk to nourish their tireless colony.[125]

Kamadhenu, having overheard the Zoroastrians' recitation of the Cow-Soul's Lament, recounted her own lament to the King of the Celestials, Indra. While Indra wandered the

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[122] Also known as Surabhi.
[123] See the *Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys* for this phrase meaning their eyes were full of tears.
[124] See the Zoroastrian *Hymn to Mithra*.
[125] See THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTIC CENTER THROUGH NARRATIVE: THE FOUNDING MYTH OF THE VILLAGE OF PUTTAPARTHI AND SATHYA S ¯A ¯I B ¯A

earth, Kamadhenu's tears fell upon him. Indra looked up and beheld, in the sky, the afflicted Kamadhenu, weeping piteously. His first thought was that this might be a premonition of some future calamity. The wise Kamadhenu patiently answered:[126]

> O Devaraj,[127] you have no cause for fear, I am afflicted on account of the suffering of two of my sons. See, how wretched they are, how wasted and oppressed by the sun's heat! O Devaraj! The ploughman has struck them cruelly! Born of my body, I am filled with grief to see them yoked to the heavy plough! Verily nothing is dearer to a mother than her son.[128]

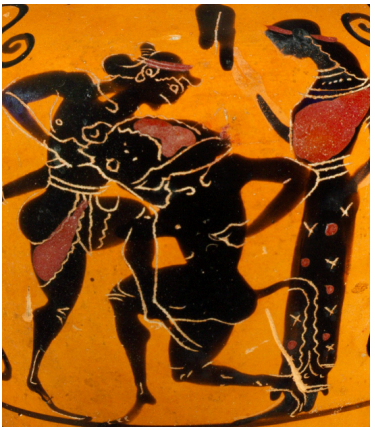
Rather than seeing to the welfare of the cows, Indra was instead only motivated to free the captive human prince Rama so that his mother would not be distressed. He didn't even unburden these two that Kamadhenu specifically mentioned. He had known his sister[129] Kamadhenu's cows had fallen down by the way and yet ignored them, not even helping her to lift them up again.[130] Indra, having known of this suffering, and certainly powerful enough to stop or

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[126] See *Ramayana*, chapter 74. Shastri, 1952.
[127] King God.
[128] ibid.
[129] Kamadhenu is a spouse of Kashyapa, father of Indra (with Aditi as mother).
[130] See the law in *Deuteronomy* 22:4 "If you see your fellow's ass or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it; you must help him raise it."

prevent it, had done nothing to help the cows. Some of these offered prayers to Rudra as well.

At Keftiu,[131] we learned that the sacred bull had been seized by Herakles for the Mycenaeans. The bull later freed himself but was recaptured by Theseus and killed in Athens to gain favor with Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. Theseus then traveled to Keftiu and killed the Minotaur. Keftiuan priestesses sailed back with our messengers and now arrived at the cowpen. They mingled here among their counterparts. We heard how their flocks and families were rotting on the peaks and coasts of their great island. Famine, flood, Mycenaeans, and even fellow starving siblings had brought death among all.



Theseus kills the Minotaur (the Minoan princess Ariadne watches and assists Thesus before he eventually spurns her love). From a terracotta amphora jar circa 500 BCE.

[131] Crete, present-day Greece.

The sun-god Helios came in the absence of his sacred cattle we'd invited. They had been slain and eaten by companions of the evil-starred king of Ithaka.[132] Helios arrived commanding a horse-drawn chariot across the sky. Het-Heru nuzzled him in condolence. She then nuzzled his horses, lamenting their bondage by this god who loved his cows and sheep yet oppressed his horses.

Our emissary to Croton reported that the Sacred Ox of Pythagoras had been slain along with the peaceful Pythagorean vegetarians and the philosopher himself.[133]

Our emissary to Croton recognized among them Mithra of wide pastures.[134] We learned he had been perverted by the Romans into a bull-slaying cult. This had spread throughout the Roman-dominated lands, and might spread even to Egypt if the Romans invaded.

Musicians and singers of all the gods from all the lands stood mute.

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[132] In *The Odyssey,* Odysseus's men slay and sacrifice the sacred herd of Helios to try to get a favorable change in weather so they can depart the isle where they've been held by a storm sent by Poseidon.
[133] Around 509 BCE. Some accounts state that Pythagoras himself almost escaped but refused to trample a field of fava beans that lay in his path and was thus caught and killed.
[134] See the Zoroastrian prayer Khwarshed Niyayesh (Litany to the Sun). It was to be recited thrice daily.

All who arrived were present within fourteen days. It was now the middle of the month of Het-Heru.[135] The moon shone all night and day in a downward crescent. The inundated Iteru kept flowing. Moonlight illuminated the cows drinking at the shores.[136]

[135] This was a festival day in the Hathor cults. See also the Sahidic Coptic Christian apocryphal Life of Mary, which places Mary's birth on the 15th day of Hathor. Mary's parents are depicted as wanting a child to inherit their wealth in gold, silver, and cattle.

[136] Hathor is identified as "Uniting with the Left Eye, brightening the Banks" (the moon/light west of the Nile) at Iunet (a.k.a. Dendera).

Het-Heru Illuminates & Addresses

Now Het-Heru raised her eyes and in a moment there issued a ray from within the circle above her head. This ray sent forth light in the darkness which surrounded her.[137] It extended over all the nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt so that every field and desert appeared wholly illuminated by its radiance.[138]

The ray extended into Libya and Ta-Nehisi as well as the eastern and Sinai deserts. It shone among the cedar trees near Kebny[139] and across the lands of the Levant. The islands of Alashiya[140] and Keftiu[141] in the Wadj-Wer[142] saw the rays of the dawning of Het-Heru's light. Those in the

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[137] See *Book of Gates*, Sixth Division, #12 in which Ra addresses a group of gods (including Hathor) who convey souls and make provisions for the dead. These are gods "...who send forth light in the darkness which surrounded you…."

[138] See Lotus Sutra and The Theology of Hathor of Dendera: Aural and Visual Scribal Techniques in the Per-wer Sanctuary, p. 65, by Barbara Ann Richter.

[139] Hathor became associated with Baalat Gubal (Lady of Kebny), the primary goddess of Kebny (a.k.a. Byblos) coastal town in present-day Lebanon. Egyptians traded with Kebny since predynastic times. This goddess was sometimes seen as an incarnation of the Semitic and Hittite fertility goddess Asherah, the Ugaritic and Amorite goddess Anat, and the Mesopotamian/Akkadian/Babylonian/Assyrian/Hittite goddesses Astarte/Ishtar/Inanna/Šauška.

[140] Present-day Cyprus.

[141] Present-day Crete.

[142] Egyptian name for the Mediterranean Sea. Means "Great Green."

Land of Pwenet[143] saw Het-Heru, Lady of the Horizon,[144] and her light as an almost-setting sun fixed over their west both day and night. Even in the heavenly Field of Reeds she gleamed golden upon the once-deceased as here in this existence with bones.[145]

Her radiant crown illuminated beings in all the states of existence, all without exception. And we saw not just humans but all the beings – plants, fish, birds, insects, animals.

We saw the various animals and birds and fish and plants in those states become visible; and we saw whether they were in a happy, unhappy, low, eminent, or intermediate position. All could be seen from this light.[146]

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[143] i.e. Punt (a.k.a. Ta Netjer "Land of the gods")A kingdom on or around the Horn of Africa (present-day Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, or northeastern Sudan) and possibly the Southern Arabian Peninsula (present-day Yemen and Saudi Arabia). The ancient Egyptians sent diplomatic-trading expeditions to Punt, returning with gold, ivory, ebony, incense, animal skins, live animals, incense such as frankincense and myrrh, as well as copper, bitumen.
[144] See the *Coffin Texts* (e.g. spell 276) for this epithet.
[145] See Skjærvø's translation of Yasht 13 ("Hymn to the Guardian Angels") in the Zoroastrian religious text collection the Khordeh Avesta (little Avesta) for the phrase "in the existence with bones" in the context of describing the Zoroastrian messiah Zarathustra's birth.
[146] See *Lotus Sutra*.

Lightland was filled with her presence. Yet evil still befell many who cried and died while she shined.[147] We saw this earth on every side replete with suffering beings.

We saw in many fields the servants of Het-Heru and other gods whipping and goading cows and sheep.

We saw oxen pulling felled cedars and parts of ships on carts in Kebny.[148]

We saw in many marshes fowlers restraining birds by their necks so they could be offered.

We saw horses impaled by spears and arrows in battle. We saw hippopotami breaking their own legs trying to get free from their tethering.[149] And we saw in the luster of this light millions of these and other beings fattened and killed for sacrifices.

We saw the daughters and sons of the pharaoh's body attending to Het-Heru's golden images while snorting and screaming cows cried out and fell heavily to the

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[147] The *Lamentations of Isis and Nepthys* has Aset (Isis) say of her murdered husband/brother Usir (Osiris): "As you rise for us you light the Two Lands, Lightland is filled with your presence; Gods and men look to you, No evil befalls them when you shine."
[148] Present-day Byblos, Lebanon; home of the Hathor-associated goddess Baalat Gebal (and her temple). See the Gebel Barkal stele of Thutmose III and the *Report of Wenamun* for historic references to oxen pulling felled trees and ships in Kebny/Byblos.
[149] As found at Nekhen (a.k.a. Hierakonpolis).

ground–being hobbled, wrestled, and stabbed. We saw the blood flow from these necks and illuminate the fields and the temple floors. It flowed even into the Nile. We saw tongues hanging out and eyes rolling back from the dying. We saw cows and donkeys hauling coffins and stones. They even carry turquoise for Het-Heru's temples and priestesses. In all directions of space are beings, like sand of the desert, dishonored by humans.[150]

We saw cow heads and legs offered to the pharaoh, to Het-Heru, and the other gods. Some of these legs were sawed off living calves while their mothers were forced to watch and cry out in horror. And with these the bodies of birds were choked forward by hands around their necks. They hung now sullenly.

We saw thousands more cow heads placed around Kerman tombs.

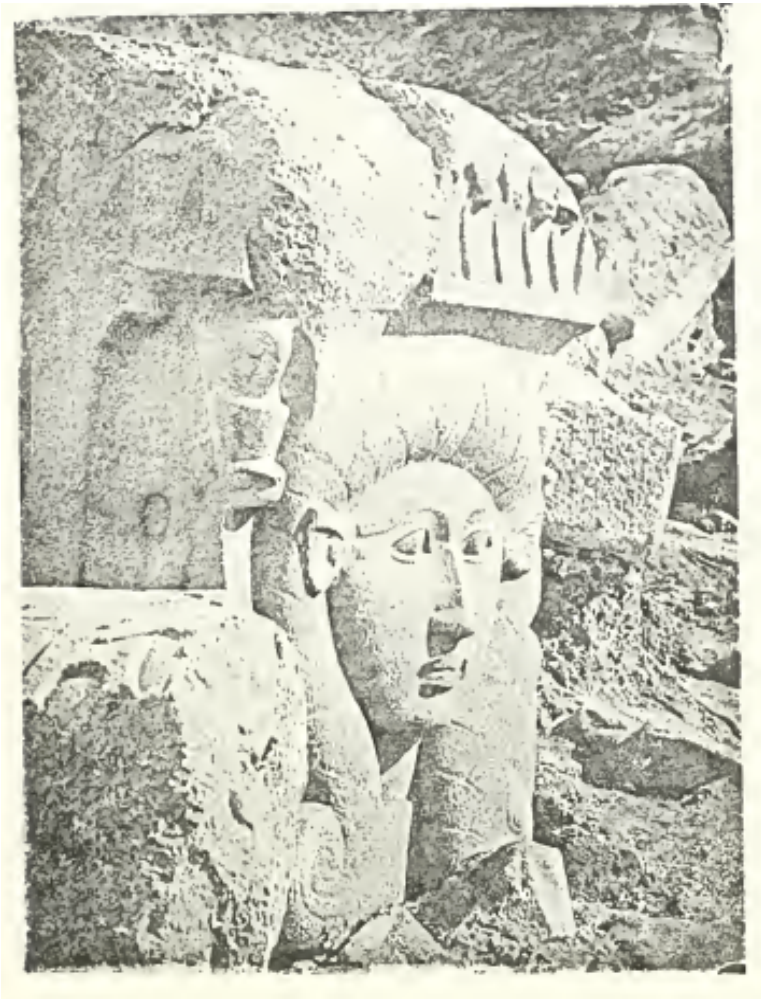
We saw millions of ibises and cats sacrificed, mummified, and sold as offerings to Djehuti and Bastet. All of these cried out and struggled when they realized they were in danger. They wanted to keep living.

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[150] See *Lotus Sutra*.



Faience amulet from a protective menat necklace showing the cat goddess Bastet nursing Taharqa, King of the Kingdom of Kush and Pharaoh of Egypt (reigned circa 690 – 664 BCE)



Het-Heru column-head from the temple of the cat-goddess Bastet in the ancient city Per-Bast (House of Bastet; aka Bubastis)



Baboons worshiping the morning sun (Khepera, Ra's aspect as the morning sun, in scarab-beetle form); Inspired by the common actual behavior of baboons raising their hands towards the sun at dawn; Circa 400-200 BCE.

We saw dripping newborn calves tied away from their wide-eyed lunging mothers, whose milk would be taken. Their wretched cries were incessant; so they were beaten, suffering pain on pain.[151]

Het-Heru quaked with terror.[152]

Though we and even the gods strained to look directly at her, amidst the degradation of creatures,[153] the flowers and plants across all of Egypt slowly turned towards her overflowing emanation. These included sycamore and fig trees, barley, emmer wheat, acacia, canary grass, darnel, mayweed, vetchling, bulrush, nutgrass, spikerush, mustard, dock, vetch, grapevines, lotuses, crocuses, carob trees, thyme, acacia trees, poplar, papyrus reeds, tamarisk, thistles, as well as the moss, mushrooms, algae, poppies, chamomile, lilies, water ferns, clovers, duckweeds, sedges, cereal grasses, sorghum, and onions.

Baboons turned towards her and raised their palms toward the rays sent forth above her head.

People held lotus flowers to their noses to perfume the stench of the cowpen and the rotting flesh we smelled across all the nomes of Egypt.

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[151] See *Lotus Sutra*.
[152] See the *Papyrus of Mes-em-neter, Book of the Dead, Chapter of Driving Back the Serpent Rerek in the Underworld*.
[153] See *Lotus Sutra*, chapter 2.

We heard the roar of all the rattling sistra across these lands. It was an echoing layered river of shaking. And while the light shone from her crown, the other beings in all the directions of space appeared to us in their own bodies and raised their voices, crying.[154]

And all the classes of the audience, priestesses and priests, numerous gods and goddesses, farmers and millers, generals and musicians, humans and beings not human, on seeing the magnificence of this great light of Het-Heru, were struck with astonishment and fear.

I then said unto Her Majesty, "Speak, O most eminent of goddesses! in this assembly there are thousands of beings trustful, affectionate, and respectful towards you; they will understand the words you expound."[155]

Het-Heru spoke:

> You say that I am your goddess of the purest motherly love. Listen as I show you the child as attacker, the sibling as enemy, humans murdering their mother; stealing, torturing, and murdering her children.[156]

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[154] See *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 2.
[155] See *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 2.
[156] See the *Prophecy of Neferti*.

Truly–all the animals, their hearts weep. And the cattle lament their condition in the land of Egypt. What are these things which have come to pass? I can cry only “Destruction!”

All joy is lacking to my heart; I am totally undone. How evil is our plight through the misery of our time.[157]

Every praising mouth is filled with ‘we love you' yet the words are followed by one arm raised with a goad or a whip and another with a knife.

Upon the very roads that led you here, you followed the ruts of countless carts pulled by my brethren under your whips and yokes. You used canals that we died digging. You saw us loaded onto boats and ferried to slaughter elsewhere in Egypt. You swatted the flies that investigated as you passed through their homelands. You ate and drank grains and flour sown in fields we plowed. Our tears and blood stain these paths and your bowels.

[157] See the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1991 – 1803 BCE) *Admonitions of Ipuwer* (a.k.a. *Lamentations of Ipuwer*).



Detail from the mummy case of a young man named Djedameniufankh, from the 22nd Dynasty

To the non-humans and their Ba-souls

To the gathered cows and non-human beings, she asked:

> What have we done, that the humans have beaten us these many times?[158] Why are we in sorrow and helplessness?[159]
>
> Our happiness is all gone, the cows of the land are doleful and laid waste. Our labors, bruises, and their grain-measures are great.[160] And so it is for the

[158] See Balaam's Ass, *Book of Numbers*, Chapter 22.
[159] See Rameses III's description of conquered Meshwesh Libyans. Edgerton & Wilson, p. 81.
[160] See the *Prophecy of Neferti*.

Tilapia and Medjed[161] fish who delight in the Iteru yet are confined in your artificial ponds. And for the bees that fly, build, and feed themselves but are robbed by your thieves. These were created from the tears of Ra. But listen now to the hum as their many souls cry out to him instead![162] And so it is for the birds, monkeys, plants, insects, and every other form of beings.

Though you worship me and the Hapi-ankh and other sacred bulls, and many goddesses and gods with likenesses of other forms of beings, we know how ruined we are. Our destruction is our fact.

All, look now upon me, the mistress of grief![163]

Today we will make our complaints before all!

[161] Worshiped at Oxyrhynchus.
[162] See *Book of Gates*, Eighth Division, #1, in the Circle of Sesheta.
[163] See the *Prophecy of Neferti*.



Tilapia fish pendant circa 1390 – 1295 BCE

To the Egyptian gods and goddesses

To Aset,[164] mistress of life, ruler of fate and destiny – "Listen well, for you will continue my duties as I carry forth those of our bovine sister-goddess Bat, goddess of the feminine Ba souls. I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice."[165]

To Ma'at, goddess of truth and order, weigher of hearts, whose 42 Assessors also judge the dead–"You will weigh their hearts when they are dead? What about while they live? If you will not stop them now I see no reason to bring

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[164] a.k.a. Isis.

[165] In the *Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys* (Papyrus Berlin 3008), Aset (Isis) calls out to her murdered husband/brother Usir (Osiris): "While I can see I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice, though I am your sister whom you loved on earth, you loved none but me, the sister, the sister!"

you the dead. I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice."

To Nut, at Whose Feet Is Eternity – "You protect against unclean food in the underworld. What about now? Do you know what is unclean? Harming and killing another. Make them like this now. I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice."

To her Far-Striding father Ra, she asked, "What have I done to you, that you have allowed the humans' treatment of us and done nothing? I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice. Your Ba is in the Mer-wer bull. Do you feel the grief of his body? Do you know the sickness of his Ka?"[166]

To her son Heru of the Horizon,[167] she asked, "Though you see all, why do you ignore me and your aunts and uncles

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[166] Concepts of the body and soul in ancient Egypt include several distinct yet combining entities that form humans before birth, throughout this life, and into the next. The Ba is the individual's personality or self. The Ka may be considered the person's individual life-force or spirit. In the afterlife, one's Ba must reunite with the Ka. The ancient Egyptian Bull hieroglyph –  – is pronounced Ka. Sometimes it was combined with the "arm with stick of authority" hieroglyph. The pharaoh is described in terms signifying strong bull and even bull (mate) of His mother. Other parts of the combined human body and soul included the physical body, heart, shadow, name, spiritual body.

[167] Heru of the Horizon (Horemakhet) is Heru in his dawning and early morning solar form.

and cousins and our brethren? I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice."

To Usir, the Weary-Hearted – "I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice. Why do you not hear our lamentations?"[168]

To Ptah, the Master of Justice – "Your ba is in the Hapi-ankh bull. Do you feel the grief of his body? Do you know the sickness of his ka?"

To Montu – "Your ba is in the Bakh bull. Do you feel the grief of his body? Do you know the sickness of his ba?"

"Ra, Heru, Usir, Ptah, and Montu: why is it that the mother must be the one to fight for the children, male and female? It is not just a mother's struggle. Do not fight only for the pharaoh's kingdom. You must stand up alongside us."

To the other gods, she asked, "What have we done to you, that you have witnessed the humans' treatment of us and yet done nothing? I call to you, weeping to the height of heaven! But you do not hear my voice."

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[168] See *The Song of the Harper*, in which the author urges the reader to enjoy life and be happy since Usir doesn't hear one's lamentations or spare one from death due to their travails.



Tribute from Ta-Nehisi presented to Pharaoh Tutankhamane[169] in the tomb of the Egyptian Viceroy of Kush, Huy (circa 1353–1327 BCE). Note the cow-skin leather on the men in the upper left, the ox-cart in the upper center, the cow-skin shields in the upper right, and the Het-Heru-associated Menat necklace held by the woman in the lower left.

[169] a.k.a. Tutankhamen, fka Tutankhaten.



Menat necklace handle of Henat containing the throne name of pharaoh Amenhotep III (husband of Queen Tiye, father of Akhenaten)



Shabti of the Adoratrice of Het-Heru ("DuaHet-Heru") Henettawy, wife of Pinedjem I. Third Intermediate Period circa 1064–1055 BCE.



Outer coffin of queen DuaHet-Heru Henuttawy, the Adoratrice of Het-Heru, wife of Pinedjem I. Third Intermediate Period ca. 1064–1055 BCE.



Cleopatra[170] *VII Thea Philopator (meaning father-loving goddess), final pharaoh (51 - 30 BCE) of the Ptolemaic Kingdom making offerings to Aset. She also portrays herself as Aset or Het-Heru in other imagery, including at the temples of Iunet, Behdet, and Nubt.*[171]

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[170] *That* Cleopatra.
[171] a.k.a. Dendera, Edfu, and Kom-Ombo.

To the pharaoh, royal wives, and their children

To the pharaoh, she said:

> Pharaoh, mighty bull of your mother – I nursed you as a child. I will lead you into the afterlife. You were to maintain order and Ma'at.[172]
>
> Is this the kind of order you think we want? You will never know peace in the Field of Reeds while you and your descendants treat us and the laborers and most peoples like this.
>
> You live on your fathers and feed on your mothers and children. You eat their entrails. You lasso, bind, cut their throats, carve them up, and cook meals of them in your dinner-pots. You eat their big ones for your morning meal, their middle ones for your evening meal, and their little ones for your night meal. You make burnt offerings of their oldest males and females for your fuel. Your kettles and mouths are filled with thighs and forelegs. You take the shadows from their owners.[173]
>
> You have all the power in your world and this is what you choose. Your scribes write of the

[172] The goddess Ma'at encompasses truth, balance, order, harmony, law, morality, and justice. The pharaoh's primary responsibility was to maintain the principles of Ma'at.

[173] See the "Cannibal Hymn" of the *Pyramid Texts of Unas*, Utterances 273 - 274. Lichtheim 1973, pp. 36 - 38.

Heavenly Cow and the mayhem and death she brought upon humanity when Ra turned me into Sekhmet for his vengeance[174] – yet who is writing of the needs of the Earthly cow?

Your mothers, sisters, and daughters dress up like me. If you see your mother and wife as Het-Heru, why do you make us and your bovine brothers and sisters suffer!

You herd cows around your temples only to kill and profit by them. Their legs are hobbled so you can wrestle them to the ground, ensnared before my image. Their throats and nostrils are stopped up, destroyed.[175] You offer their heads and forelegs to the gods. Our castrated sons are goaded to carry your bodies to your tombs before being slaughtered and laid alongside you.

Aset goes before your coffin. Her sister Nebet-het follows behind you. They grieve for you, but who wails for these cows trodding westward to their unjustified slaughters?

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[174] The Middle Kingdom (c. 2100 – 1700 BCE) Book of the Heavenly Cow contains the myth of Ra inflicting divine punishment on humanity by having Hathor turn into the lion goddess Sekhmet and almost completely annihilating humanity before he tricked her to get so drunk that she passed out and stopped killing the humans. When she awoke, she returned to her gentle form of Hathor.

[175] See Ramses III's description of conquered Meshwesh Libyan peoples. Edgerton & Wilson, p. 81.





Skull of Buchis Bull "M" (top) and Buchis Bull "13" (bottom)



Skeleton of a mummified Buchis Bull



Mummified head of a Hapi-ankh/Apis bull

You bury the cows and dogs from your daughters' palatial sanctuaries in their own graves–as you do with the bodies of the sacred Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls and their parents.[176]

On the day of the burial of the mother of the Hapi-ankh bull, you and others bring petitional offerings attempting to bribe the ka soul of this cow to provide you with children and other good things.[177]

What benefits are due to the non-divine children she bore? You bury as well the sacred cows of Hesat. Why do you ignore the rest of these and other animals?

You ask me to protect your graves in the cobra form of Meretseger, she who loves silence–What do your workers do with the snakes they disturb while digging and adorning these graves? Where is the silence amongst the cries of the slaughtered and fearful?

You hunt my children after your riders herd them into pens, hemmed in and terror-stricken. Then you lay death upon them with arrows and knives,

[176] See the Maru-Aten palace of Meriaten, daughter of pharaoh Akhenaten.
[177] See "Letters to gods" by Edward O. D. Love.

thinking yourself powerful. You boast of this powerful achievement on inscribed scarabs sent throughout Egypt and to foreign kings and queens.[178]

[178] Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1400 – 1353 BCE; 18th Dynasty) commissioned scarabs describing him doing this and circulated them throughout the international community to spread word of his power and wealth.



Silver-plated bull Rhyton ceremonial drinking vessel. The Hittite king Tushratta sent gold-plated ivory bull Rhytons to pharaoh Akhenaten as part of the wedding gifts he sent with his daughter to join the Egyptian pharaoh. The Hittites used the Rhyton in some of their animal sacrifices, having the shepherd of the animals being slaughtered call for the deity to kill them and their family if they substituted a weaker animal for the intended fattened one.



Hittite cavalry crushing an enemy

Het-Heru continued:

> And you send horses and goats to these foreigners–why do you do this? They do not want to walk to Karduniaš.[179] Like the Maryannu families of human chariot-warriors, are the children of the bodies of Egyptian horses at the head of the Hittite cavalry and those of the bodies of theirs at the head of yours when you battle? Do your archers kill your own horses?
>
> Was the mare in heat who Muwatalli II sent out to disrupt your chariot-horses a mother of Egyptian blood? Do not send your horses to die and become captive amongst the sons of the Nine Bows.
>
> Let these horses live here in Egypt where they are born. How many of them die en route to your peers? Let them die here in Egypt in peace where they are born.
>
> But let them die after comfortable lives, not through siege and starvation. Do not admonish your enemies whose horses die when you besiege them![180]

[179] See for example Amarna Letters of 1350 - 1335 BCE in which Amenḥotep III and Kadašman-Enlil, the Kassite dynasty king of Babylon (a.k.a. Karduniaš during the Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian times), hope that the others' horses are doing well, yet exchange horses with each other as gifts. They also discuss and negotiate the sending of a Mittanian daughter as a gift.
[180] Piye did this.

> You rule over a world enclosed within a desire for flesh. You make terror in us[181] – all creatures are bewildered, suffer, and die.[182]

The pharaoh loudly declared:

> Hail to you, Het-Heru, Lady of the Two Lands, who gives life and dominion![183]
>
> I dispatched inspectors and overseers to the turquoise desert of my mother, the goddess Het-Heru, the lady of the turquoise! They carried to you silver, gold, byssus, fine linen, and many things as numerous as the sand-grains, and laid them before you. The like had never been seen before—since kings began to reign…

Het-Heru interrupted:

> Cease your boasting!
>
> Heretofore, pharaohs are not needed to bring order to the world or treasure to temples, but to dominate and degrade them both.

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[181] As the pharaohs aimed to do in their enemies. See Edgerton & Wilson, p. 6 from the records of Ramses III's war in Ta-Nehesy.
[182] See *Bhagavad Gita*.
[183] See inscription from tomb of Amenhotep III.

In your temples you show images of horses and oxen and mules and cows in battle and war trains. Look into the eyes of these images and think of their pains, not your own riches and glories! How did you become powerful, grow, and protect your strength?

Set of the bodies of Nut and Geb will bury your temples through the thousands of years. We suffer now.

If you are the king of Egypt, you are the king not just of Egypt's peoples, but also of the animals and fields and the Nile and other rivers. You must protect all creatures and the land and water itself so they may be healthy in your time and your grandchildren's times.

Appoint Overseers of the Welfare of Animals. Instruct the Overseers of Cattle and your Generals in righteous acts towards animals. This too is part of Ma'at.

Inculcate these in your people, the so-called cattle of the gods. Promote compassion, gentleness, and goodness.[184] No task is more important to you than promoting the well-being of all living beings. Thus you will make them happy in this world and help

[184] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Pillar Edict VII.

yourself reach the Field of Reeds in the next.[185] But even if it did not help you gain eternal life, it is worth doing for their peace alone in this life.

You have seen the sufferings in every land and field and lake and river in these lands. But the one who is the master of the lands looks on and does nothing to prevent it; no, the master expands the sufferings rather than protecting the fearful.[186]

You seek glory by smashing the heads of your enemies and seizing or destroying tens of thousands of their cattle, donkeys, goats, sheep, women, men, and children. More and truer glory is gained through peace. For what you need, trade may be founded on mutual respect and good will. Thus will your people thrive and your neighbors love you. Those like Userkaf and Hatshepsut who make expeditions to Punt gain greater glory than those who massacre Nehisi, Asiatics, and Libyans. Trade via ships to Punt, Opone,[187] Kebny,[188] and elsewhere

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[185] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict VI.
[186] See the *Cycle of Songs in Honor of Senwosret III* for the praise of the pharaoh for being "a resting place which protects the fearful man from his enemy."
[187] A seaport involved in trade with ancient Egypt, Mycenae, Persia, India, Phoenicia, and more.
[188] a.k.a. Byblos, present-day Lebanon. A port city usually allied with Egypt, providing cedar trees in trade. Home to the goddess Baalat Gubal (a.k.a. Lady of Byblos), associated with and sharing imagery with Hathor.

so that Shu's breath carries the weight, rather than breaking the backs of animals or humans.

Yet do not suppress conquered peoples' sacred rites, though you find them objectionable. Eradicating culture and languages to eradicate suffering is unacceptable.

Glory is only of value in so far as the people, at present and in the future, live in accordance with compassion.[189] Compassion is a pharaoh's true monument.[190]

There is no offering you can bring to my temple that can equal the gift of kindness to animals and abstention from their slaughter or sacrifice.[191] Many ceremonies are performed in my temple. These are of doubtful value. They may achieve their purpose, or they may not. Moreover, the purposes for which they are performed are limited to this world. The ceremony of universal kindness, on the other hand, is not limited to time. This kindness must include restraint of violence to living creatures. Even if it does not achieve its object in this world, it produces unlimited merit in the next world. But if it produces its object in this world, it achieves both effects: the

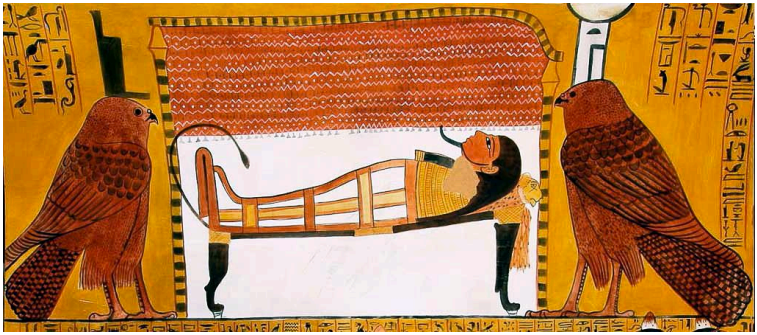
[189] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict X.
[190] See the *Instructions of Ptahhotep*, written by the Vizier Ptahhotep during the Fifth Dynasty rule of Djedkare Isesi circa 2375–2350 BCE.
[191] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict XI.

purpose desired in this world and unlimited merit in the next.[192]

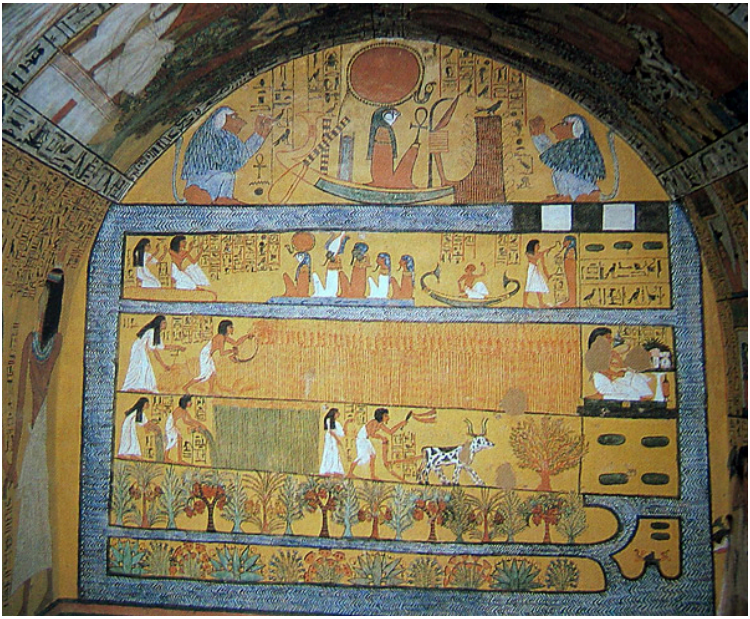
To the Priestesses and Priests

Now Het-Heru called on the priestesses and priests. Gathered before her were those from her own temples, as well as those of the Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls, of Hesat, of Aset, and of the other gods and goddesses. Herdsmen of the cows of many gods' temples were brought among these.

[192] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict IX.



Aset (left) and Nepthys (right) as kite birds guarding the deceased official Sennedjem (13th century BCE). In addition to being a scribe and official in the community of Deir el-Medina tomb artisans, he and his wife Iyneferti bore the titles "servant of Het-Heru" and "singer of Het-Heru," respectively.



From the tomb of the official Sennedjem (13th century BCE).
In addition to being a scribe and official in the community of Deir el-Medina tomb artisans, he and his wife Iyneferti bore the titles "servant of Het-Heru" and "singer of Het-Heru," respectively.



From the tomb of the official Sennedjem

Those of Het-Heru

To her priestesses and priests, she said:

> You hang an ankh round my neck and a bell on my childrens'. Oh that I could remove it to end this life and end my suffering. And if I could remove the bell from my childrens' necks you would not be able to follow and harass them. You should know that the bell ringing hurts their ears.[193] As does your incessant sistra rattling. Let me give birth to no more daughters and sons to carry forth their inheritance of pain. I am ready to die.
>
> By you, our false protectors, our flesh is hacked up to the duration of eternity.[194]

Het-Heru's priestesses and priests exclaimed, holding their arms bent forward with palms towards the sky:

> Hail to you, Het-Heru, Lady of the Sycamore, Mistress of the Sky and Bigeh, Lady of Love, you who give life to all living things. Do not lament! We praise and honor you, oh great one. We prepare offerings of cattle, birds, milk, honeyed bread, and cakes for you. We bring you dancers and musicians. We maintain your temples. We dress your statue.

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[193] See Johns J, Patt A, Hillmann E. *"Do bells affect behaviour and heart rate variability in grazing dairy cows?"*, 2015.

[194] See Ramses III's depiction of the conquered Sea Peoples: "Hacked up is their flesh to the duration of eternity." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 39.

With a steady gaze, Het-Heru replied:

> Yes, you possess and slay the sacred cattle and pity them not, that you may hold yourselves not guilty.
>
> And you say, “Het-Heru is great, for I am rich.”
>
> And you tell the people, “Bring offerings for Het-Heru and the priests, that she will bring you riches too.”
>
> You lease the cows of the temples to work in your fields.
>
> And again you say, “Het-Heru is great, for I am rich.”
>
> And when the cows of the fields’ backs are broken and their flesh worn raw and they die of disease and exhaustion, you are not pitiful to the cows or vexed toward the lessor, but require only restitution and accounting through payments of fine linen and return of the cows’ skins.
>
> This bread you offer is made of blood.
>
> How did you get this honey?

Did you yourselves suck it from flowers and brew it in your own bellies?

Or did you steal it from the bees and disrupt their cities and cause some to die?

No, you don't even rob the bees yourselves, but tax the honeyworkers.

They stun, starve, and disturb these bees to style your wigs and corpses!

Did you first slay one of my calves so that the bees would rise through its horns in your Bugonia ritual?

How do you mix and congeal your perfumes? With animal fat!





Chest of SitHet-Heruiunet (her name means "Daughter of Het-Heru of Iunet" a.k.a. "Daughter of Hathor of Dendera"). She was a daughter of Pharaoh Senuseret II, who reigned 1897 - 1878 BCE.



Statue of Djedher, a priest of Heru and Het-Heru and royal chamberlain (circa 200 - 150 BCE)



Gathering honey. From the tomb of Rekhmire (1479 - 1425 BCE). Drawn by Nina M. Davies (1881–1965)



Ancient Egyptian harp (sacred to Het-Heru) strung with sinew (animal tendons). There is a head of a captive Nehisi (Nubian) man carved into the tip.





Sistrum rattles, sacred to Het-Heru; Played also by her mythological son Ihy (fathered by her other son, Heru)



Ivory Het-Heru-headed clappers. New Kingdom.

And what instruments do these musicians play? A harp with the sinew and gut of my brethren! A tambourine and tam-tam drum with our skin! Ivory clappers with my face carved into the severed tusks of murdered elephants? Fools! How many had to suffer for you to offer your praises? You have misunderstood what it is to cherish and love and celebrate.

Make no more music with such morbid instruments.

Even the dancers wear skirts made from the skins of my brethren.[195]

And how many among you priestesses and priests own land on which this blood spills?

You sell even our feces while destroying our bodies and seizing our calves.

Yes, you yourselves are cattle-thieves.[196]

The myrrh that you burn comes from repeatedly wounding trees to produce its healing resin.

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[195] See Solange Ashby - Sacred Dancers: Nubian Women as Priestesses of Hathor.

[196] See British Museum papyrus 10252 for the description "He is like a cattle-thief" and Emily Christine Cooper Cole's dissertation: Interpretation and Authority: The Social Functions of Translation in Ancient Egypt for her discussion of translations of this phrase during Ptolemaic Egypt.

> Do not sing my praises while defiling my brethren lest your heads fall off!

Amos said:

> Though you offer her burnt offerings and your meat offerings, she will not accept them.
>
> Take away from her the noise of your songs; for she will not hear the melodies of your harps, voices, drums, and sistra.[197]

Micah said:

> No, she will not be pleased with thousands of offered calves, geese, ducks, and cakes, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil. Oh humans, what is good, and what anyone asks of you, is but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your kin and kine.[198]

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[197] See *Amos* 5:20-24, "Surely the day of the LORD shall be not light, but darkness, blackest night without a glimmer. I loathe, I spurn your festivals, I am not appeased by your solemn assemblies. If you offer Me burnt offerings—or your meal offerings—I will not accept them; I will pay no heed to your gifts of fatlings. Spare Me the sound of your hymns, and let Me not hear the music of your lutes. But let justice well up like water, righteousness like an unfailing stream."

[198] See *Micah* 6:6-9, "With what shall I approach the LORD, do homage to God on high? Shall I approach Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Would the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriads of streams of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my

Zechariah then asked the gathered humans:

> But who will feed the flocks of slaughter and work, even the poorest among them, yet slay and drive them not?[199]

A priestess of Het-Heru said:

> That which is held in abomination to me is the block of slaughter of the god.[200] That which is abominable, that which is abominable I will not eat. An abominable thing is filth, I will not eat thereof. That which is an abomination unto my Ka shall not enter my body. I will live upon that whereon live the gods and the Spirit-souls. I shall live, and I shall be master of their cakes. I am master of them, and I shall eat them under the trees of the dweller in the

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transgression, the fruit of my body for my sins? 'He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with your god; Then will your name achieve wisdom.'"

[199] See *Zechariah* 11:4-5, 11:7: "Thus said my God the LORD: Tend the sheep meant for slaughter, whose buyers will slaughter them with impunity, whose seller will say 'Praised be the LORD! I'll get rich,' and whose shepherd will not pity them….So I tended the sheep meant for slaughter, for those poor men of the sheep. I got two staffs, one of which I named Favor and the other Unity, and I proceeded to tend the sheep."

[200] Directly quoted from the Book of the Dead Papyrus of Nu, The Chapter of Not Letting the Heart of Nu, Whose Word is Truth, Be Carried Away From Him in Khert-Neter.

House of Het-Heru, my Lady, the Mistress of Iken.[201]



[201] Directly quoted from the *Book of the Dead Papyrus of Ani*, The Chapter of Making the Transformation Into Ptah. Iken (a.k.a. Mirgissu; present-day Wadi Halfa, Sudan) was a large Egyptian fortress and trading post in Ta-Nehisi (a.k.a. Nubia).

Those of the Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer Bulls

To the priestesses and priests of the Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls, she said:

> You say that the Hapi-ankh bull is the incarnation of the Ba-soul of Ptah. And the Mer-wer likewise the Ba of Ra. And the Bakh of the Ka-souls of both Ra and Montu. These bulls are said to be the indwelling images of these gods.

Het-Heru continued, addressing all the humans:

> We see inscriptions with dedications from pharaohs to ensure that the bulls would go to the Field of Reeds after death. And the bulls' parents.
>
> Why not the other children? Do not sacred parents give birth to sacred children? Does Khnum not craft them all, human and non-human?
>
> No, the pharaoh pays for the burial of those whose riches might be inherited. Who would bury an executed one whose riches have already been taken?
>
> It is for the cows as it is for the humans–very few lead extravagant lives of comfort while everyone else is wretched and worked to death.

You live closely with the bulls. You know their ways and discern meaning from their movements. And yet you know they are like any other bull. And all the children of the body of the Hapi-ankh and Mer-wer bulls and their sacred mothers greet you with nuzzling kindness, yet you protect only one of them. Hesat[202] nurses them all! The mothers and fathers mourn for their children who are crushed in infancy–who see the face of the crocodile without ever having lived.[203] The mothers and fathers mourn their unwanted boys who are smashed against the walls, and the suckling children thrown out onto the desert.[204] So too with the mothers and fathers of all the other cows that are not favored.

You could encourage better treatment of all bulls and all cows among the people. This would win you my approval and the respectful trust of their parents.

Then you will see that it is not just the bulls and cows which deserve kindness and peace.

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[202] Hesat is a goddess manifestation of Hathor, said to nurse the Mer-wer bull.

[203] An expression from *The Man Who Was Weary With Life* (a.k.a. The *Dispute Between a Man and His Ba)*. Here, a man's Ba spirit tells of a peasant whose wife and children were killed by a storm. He says he grieves not for his wife who must inevitably have died, but for his children who died in infancy before ever having lived.

[204] Referencing the *Admonitions of Ipuwer,* which tells of the chaos and cruelty affecting the humans of the First Intermediate Period, when the centralized Pharaonic state was decentralized and engaged in civil war.

Also the fish of Hatmehyt and the fish of themselves. And the bald ibises of Akhty and the bald ibises of themselves. And the blue herons of Atum and Bennu and the blue herons of themselves.

Let air be given unto these beings[205], not capture and suffering! Let them pass over the sky.[206]

And the cobras of Wadjet and the cobras of themselves. So too with the scarab beetles of Khepera and the scarab beetles of themselves. Do not step on them but let them go about their days.

Though you see the images of the gods dwelling within some of their species, know that each of these has their own lives outside the purposes and images of the gods. They protect themselves and their babies. From this you know they desire to live undisturbed. So do them no harm and let them be.

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[205] See Papyrus of Nu *Book of the Dead*, The Chapter of Giving Air in the Underworld.
[206] See Papyrus of Nebseni *Book of the Dead*, The Chapter of Coming Forth By Day in the Underworld.



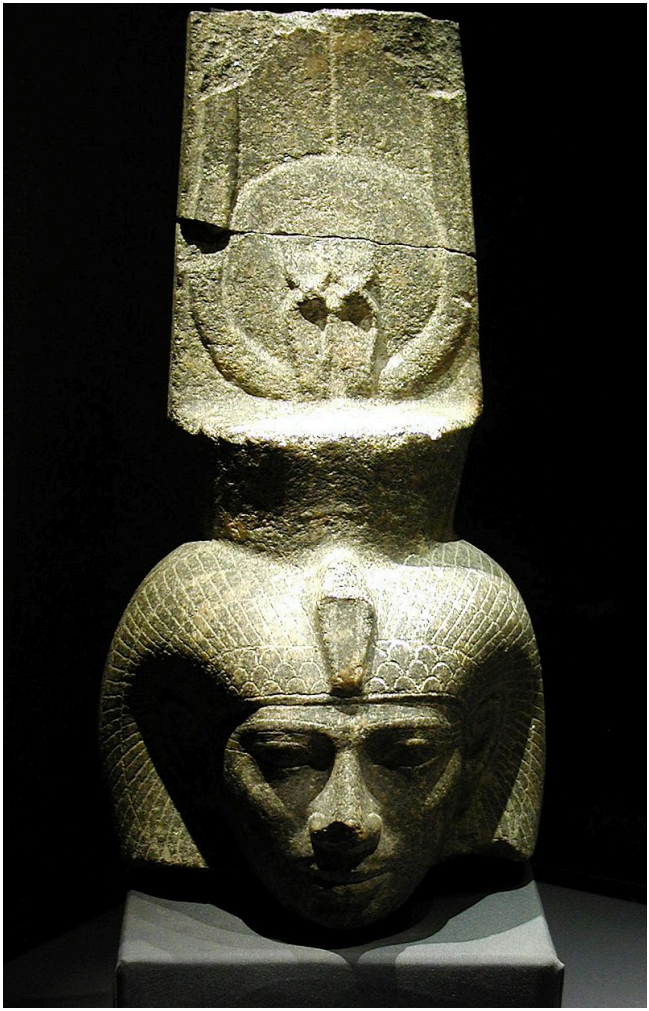
Priests offer the severed leg of a living calf while their mother cries out (protruding tongue). From the Opening of the Mouth scene in the Book of the Dead Papyrus of Hunefer. The calf's vitality is transferred to the deceased. Hunefer was the Overseer of Royal Cattle during the reign of pharaoh Seti I. Circa 1285 BCE.



Detail of a living calf whose foreleg was severed for a dead human while their mother cries out (protruding tongue). From the Opening of the Mouth scene in the Book of the Dead Papyrus of Hunefer. The calf's vitality is transferred to the deceased. Hunefer was the Overseer of Royal Cattle during the reign of pharaoh Seti I. Circa 1285 BCE.



A living calf's foreleg is severed while their mother cries out. From the Tomb of Amenmose, High Priest of Amenhotep of the Forecourt. Early 19th Dynasty (circa 1525 - 1504 BCE).



Head of Amane's wife, Shepenupet II, daughter of King Piye (Kushite conqueror of Egypt, Pharaoh of the 25th Dynasty, mid 700's BCE), wearing Het-Heru's crown.[207]

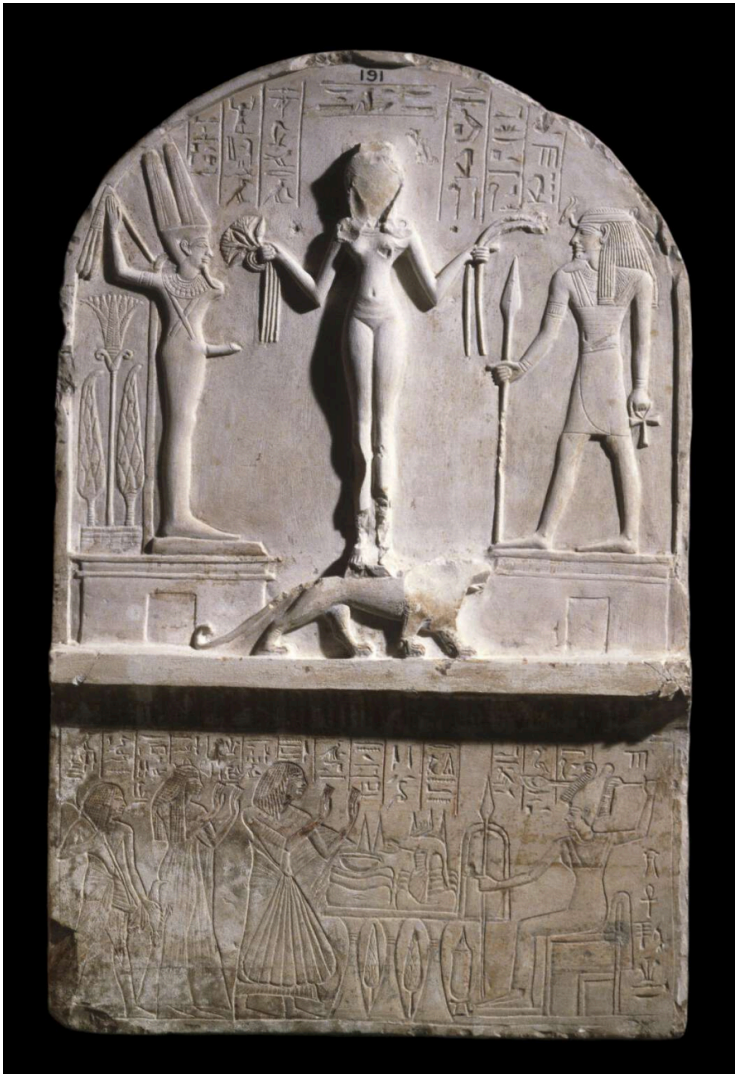
[207] Another of Piye's daughters, Mutirdis, served as Chief Prophet of Het-Heru and Mut in Waset/Luxor/Thebes. His daughter Tabekenamane (a.k.a. Tabekenamen) was a Nehesi queen who served



Amendiris I, God's Wife of Amun, a Kushite princess. She was a sister of the Kushite pharaohs Shabaka and Piye. Circa 25th Dynasty (Kushite Kings of Egypt and Kush).

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as a priestess of Het-Heru at the temples of Het-Heru in Per-Het-Heru (Gebelein) and Iunet (Dendera).



Qetesh with the face, head, and headdress of Het-Heru. Standing on a lion, she holds lotus flowers and a snake. She is flanked by the Egyptian god Min to her right and the Ugaritic god Reseph on her left. In the lower register, the commissioner Qeh and his family are shown worshiping the goddess Anat.

Other Priestesses and Priests

> The milk you pour in libations for Usir in Ta-Nehisi parches the lips of the calves who cry out for their hobbled mothers.[208] Amane has many herds, being tens of thousands, thousands, hundreds, and tens, without knowing the number of all yearling calves of their mothers.[209]
>
> Let the people know that if they beat the cattle which they lease from the temples, they are beating the gods themselves. For, all cattle are holy; as are other creatures.
>
> You must train priests in two kinds of medical treatment–treatments for humans and treatments for animals.[210] But do not perform reckless experiments on either to learn the efficacies of herbs and procedures. Some cite many potential benefits that might result from the knowledge gained by such study. But thus do you increase suffering while trying to reduce it. Do no harm to any being–human or non-human.

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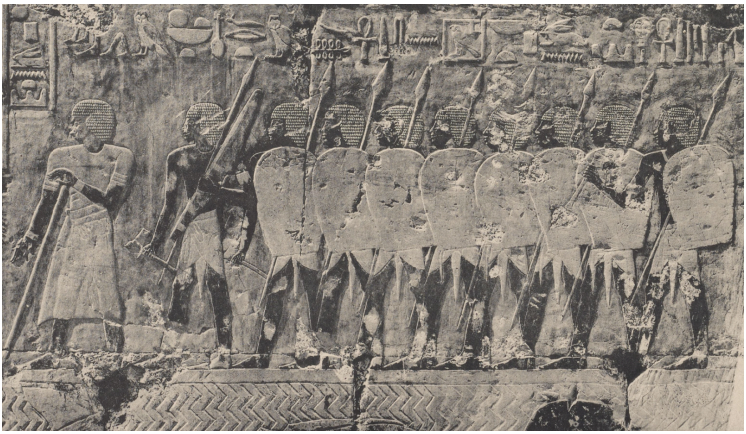
[208] See Calling out to Isis: Interview with Dr. Solange Ashby.
[209] *Stele of the Dream* by the last Pharaoh of the 25th Dynasty and ruler of the Kingdom of Kush, Tantamani (d. 653 BCE).
[210] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict II.



Pre-dynastic Gerzeh Palette (circa.3500 – 3200 BCE)



Ramses III's son Khaemwaset with a Het-Heruic sistrophorus statue



Soldiers on a naval expedition to the Land of Punt, a place or places of trade where in the Horn of Africa pharaohs sent legendary economic expeditions. From Hatshepsut's temple in the Djeser-Djeseru sacred space.



Detail of the above. Note Het-Heru's hieroglyphic name above the 5th soldier from the right. From Hatshepsut's temple in the Djeser-Djeseru sacred space.

To the Generals

Het-Heru now addressed the generals of the pharaoh's armies.

To the generals, she said:

> You could not wage conquering wars in distant lands without the yoked cows and suffering donkeys and mules who carry your train.
>
> You use the sinew of our guts and horns from our heads in your archers' bows. The points on some of your spears and arrows are hafted to the wood with our dried skin wrappings. Feather fletchings guide the arrows into the flesh of bodies towards death. Thus, human blood is first touched by the remains of our slaughtered corpses. Our blood is intertwined with those of your human victims. And also within you when you are finally killed. Verily, when you appear, all life except the vultures' ceases.[211]
>
> Let the arrowmaker be stung by gnats and bit by sand fleas. Thus he is judged.[212]

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[211] See Ramses III's celebration of victory over the Libyans, where his officials and companions say "Thou art Re, as thou risest on Egypt. When thou appearest, mankind lives." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 13.
[212] See the discussion of the arrowmaker in the Middle Kingdom literary text, *The Satire on the Trades*.

You force horses of unknown number to die before you in your charges. Soldiers slip and fall prostrate in the blood of the horses[213] and their fellow humans on either side. They lie in heaps on the desolate land amongst the woeful writhing horses, whose lifetimes and souls are finished.[214] The horses flip and fall–their necks and legs break. They bleed from their necks and chests, pierced by spears and arrows. Swords slash their shrieking faces. Some cry and writhe for hours after the battle completes. All these horses' feet have ceased to tread Egypt forever.[215] They will never again see their families or drink from the Iteru.

You plunder cattle and take defeated people after your battles. And you brand us all with fire. If you did not first abuse us, you could not extend your bloody hand on people far away. The root of your violence to humans is violence to us. So it has been since the times of your ancestral cattle-raiders.

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[213] See Ramses III's account in Papyrus Harris I of battle with the Ta-Nehesy, in which "He looks upon bowmen as women; making the land of Kush into something nonexistent, prostrate in their blood before his horses." See Edgerton & Wilson, p. 1.

[214] See Ramses III's account in Papyrus Harris I of battle with the Libyans, in which "the Temeh, slain their places in heaps before his horses, causing them to cease boasting in their land." And of the Libyans, "their lifetime and their soul are finished." Edgerton & Wilson, pp. 11-12.

[215] See Ramses III's celebration of victory over the Libyans where he says that the Sped and Meshwesh tribes "have ceased to tread Egypt forever." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 13.

And with their cattle, you carry off your enemies' women and sons. You cut down their grain and set fire to their fields.[216] And this you say is justice?

With the cows, donkeys and horses, the soldiers are brought to your camps when they are still children.

Beatings are given to all of their bodies–human and non-human alike. Their heads are split open with wounds. They are laid down and beaten like papyrus. They are struck with torments.

Together they carry rations and water upon their shoulders and backs. The vertebrae of their backs are broken, while they drink foul water. Those who return from war are like a stick which the worm has devoured. They are sick, prostration overtakes them.[217]

And who wails and laments when you send their kin to die – yes, the women whose beneficence you seek from me. Provide it yourselves by abstaining from needless violence on all beings! So too could

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[216] See the *Semna Stela* placed on the border with Ta-Nehesy by Senwosret III.

[217] See *The Hardships of the Soldier's Life (Papyrus Anastasi IV, 9, 4-10,1)* in which the treatment of soldiers is compared to that of donkeys and plucked birds. The author is refuting another scribe's assertion that the life of a soldier is better than that of a scribe.

> you relieve the mothers and fathers of the cows you torment and kill.
>
> At least you feed the vultures!

The Overseer of All the Horses of His Majesty said:

> Oh Het-Heru, mistress of Qis[218] – we who have experienced war wish most of all to see it extinct. But if we release the horses who pull our chariots, we will be vulnerable to invaders from other lands. So too with the oxen, donkeys, and mules. Not all will be as enlightened as you bid us. They will storm upon our lands if we diminish our strength and our reach. These depend on movement and transport. If we loosed our animals we would deliver many hosts upon our brethren. There is no Ma'at without war. Our enemies would seize these herds and grow richer and fatter.

Het-Heru was silent. How could she reply to this general? The points he made were valid – if the Egyptians were completely non-violent and forsook the chariot and wagon-train, they would be conquered from all sides. Yet, she abhorred the violence done to animals, people, and the creatures of the land who were destroyed by human war.

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[218] See tomb inscription of Djehuti. Qis (a.k.a. Cusae) was in the 14th Nome of Ancient Egypt, known as the Lower Sycamore and Viper nome. Het-Heru is the Mistress of the Sycamore.

She asked Kamadhenu and the priestesses and priests of the goddesses and gods of other lands for their thoughts.

The priestesses and priests of the Sacred Ox of Pythagoras told how the ox and the Pythagoreans were indeed slain in such ways. Pythagoras himself could not escape–he refused to trample over a field of sacred fava beans that lay in his path to safety.

Kamadhenu of India told Het-Heru that the kings, ministers, deities, and philosophers of her lands had reckoned with this question.

Het-Heru and Kamadhenu conferred and then spoke:

> Reduce the amount of violence to the bare minimum. And ever strive to reduce that minimum.
>
> Do not seek to extend your realms or trespass against your neighbors to take anything from them.[219]
>
> Build defensive fortresses and guard-posts. Fortify your borders and your buffer zones.[220]

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[219] See the c. 1259 BCE Treaty Between the Hittites and Egyptians.
[220] See the Egyptian Middle Kingdom text (circa 2025 – 1700 BCE), *The Teaching For King Merikare*.

Let war be only a means of restoring peace and maintaining order; not as a means of enrichment or glory. Despicable is one who forcefully binds the land to themself.[221] Do not wrong your neighbor; thus they will have nothing to avenge. Fight only in defense. And do not provoke your opponent to attack first only so you may strike back.

Use diplomacy rather than arms. Establish treaties and renew existing ones in order not to permit hostility to occur between you and your neighbors forever.[222] It is expedient to work for the future.[223] Form marriage alliances. Send food when your neighbors have famine and allow nomads onto your lands. Reduce taxes on your people during times of hardship to prevent unrest.

Do not accumulate wealth as this must be done by force. If you have no treasures, none will seek to seize them from you.

Understand why they come armed to your lands – are they fleeing another force, are they seeking glory, are they striving to avenge a wrong (perceived or actual)? Based on this knowledge, the truly magnanimous find ways to address others'

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[221] See again *The Teaching for King Merikare.*
[222] See the c. 1259 BCE *Treaty Between the Hittites and Egyptians*.
[223] See again *The Teaching for King Merikare.*

concerns rather than only thinking about those of one's own kingdom.

Having first tried all peaceful means, there will be times of war in defense of your kingdom and its peoples, animals, and fields.

In these cases, justice and order dictate restraint and an eye towards peace, not vengeance or conquest.

If your opponents strike with spears do not strike back with chariots.[224] Subdue but do not annihilate your opponent. Let them save face with their own people and raise their own children in life.

Treat captive humans and animals like your own children.

Heal their wounded combatants, animals, and citizens.

Do not seize them or their animals. No, release them when things are settled. For if you crush them, they will be justified in whatever means necessary to secure their freedom and return to their own peoples, lands, rivers, and seas.

[224] See *Mahabarata*.

Do not burn their fields or poison their wells to starve their people and animals. Provide them with food and supplies for their safe return home.

Let the animals who bore your train or led your charges retire to grazing after battles.[225] And give your attention to the chariot donkeys and to the men as well.[226]

Let your soldiers rest so their hearts do not harden. For, if they dwell too long in violence, they will bring it home with them when they return to farming.

By following these precepts you will secure a prosperous peace for your people, for your animals, for your fields, for your children, and for your neighbors. When war inevitably arises, you will minimize its harms and know the way back to peace.

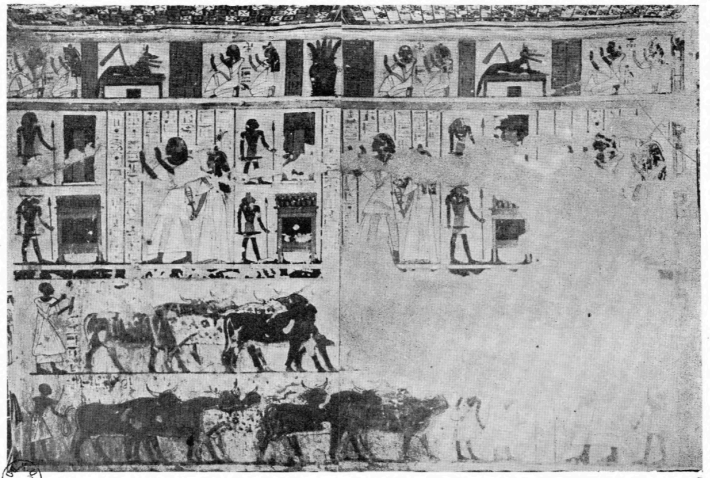
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[225] See the ancient Sanskrit treatise *Arthashastra* (circa 3rd century BCE – 2nd century CE), Book II, Chapter XXX. "Stallions which are incapacitated owing to old age, disease or hardships of war, and, being therefore rendered unfit for use in war live only to consume food shall in the interests of citizens and country people be allowed to cross steeds."

[226] See the 12th century BCE Papyrus British Museum 10326: "And give your attention to the chariot donkeys and to the men who are in the field as well."

And by treating your opponent well when war is concluded, you will delay its resurgence.

In your tombs and temples, memorialize in carvings your actions of peace-making and benevolence rather than violence and subduing. For thus will you instruct your children and be judged for now and forever.



Pl. XV

15.—Wall E. Upper register, Kyky and his wife before the gates of the Nether World.
Lower register, Kyky counting the cattle of the temples of the gods.

From the tomb of the Chief Accountant of the Cattle of Amane, Kyky.

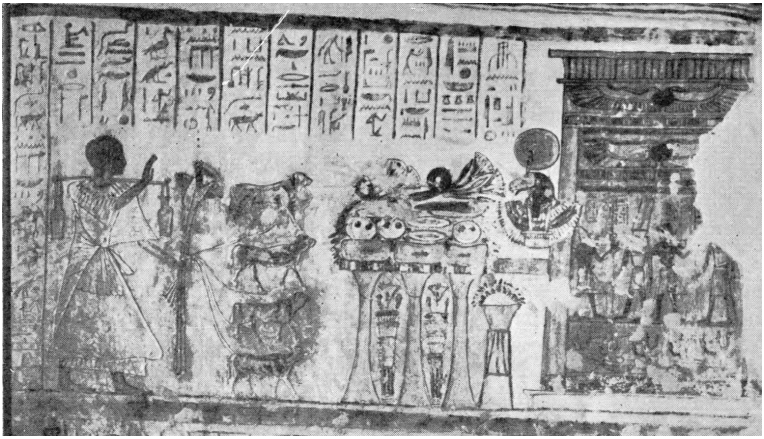




From the tomb of the Chief Accountant of the Cattle of Amane, Kyky.



From the tomb of the Chief Accountant of the Cattle of Amane, Kyky. He and his wife before a Het-Heru-headed object.



From the tomb of the Chief Accountant of the Cattle of Amane, Kyky. Note the four cows before him.



A woman with captured birds and lotus flowers. From the tomb of Menna, a high-ranking official under pharaoh Amenhotep III (titles include: 'Overseer of Fields of Amane', 'Overseer of Plowlands of Amane', 'Overseer of Fields of the Lord of the Two Lands', 'Scribe of the Fields of the Lord of the Two Lands of South and North', 'Scribe of the Lord of the Two Lands'), circa 1422-1411 BCE.

To the Overseer of the Treasury and Overseer and Counters of the Cattle

To the Overseer and Counters of the Cattle, Het-Heru said:

> Everywhere you have us hit by clods or weapons. Our backs are broken–laden down under vessels filled with grain.[227] We yell and pull; you strike us again when we bellow in pain. Everywhere we are threatened with sticks, and our bodies are emaciated from hunger and thirst.[228] Everywhere you scorch our flesh with possessive seals. And for our service, you destroy us when we cease to be of use to you.

The Overseer of Cattle replied, "But Het-Heru, Chieftainess of the Desert Cemeteries![229] You ask us to do something against nature. Look at the lion and the hawk and the crocodile who live on flesh. Should we feed lame cattle when we cannot fully feed the people?"

Het-Heru replied:

> Yes, some others live on flesh. But not like you humans. You do not need flesh, milk, or blood as a diet to survive. And the ways these animals hunt are far removed from your organized pens and cages of

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[227] A condition which the author of the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* laments having befallen the formerly wealthy during the First Intermediate Period after the decentralization and civil war of the Egyptian state.
[228] See *Lotus Sutra*.
[229] See offering text of Kheruef.

harvesting. You who live now, what madness, what frenzy drives you to the pollution of shedding blood, you who have such a superfluity of necessities? Why slander the earth by implying that she cannot support you? Why impiously offend crop-giving Geb as if you did not receive enough from his hands?[230] Are you not ashamed to mingle domestic crops with blood and gore?

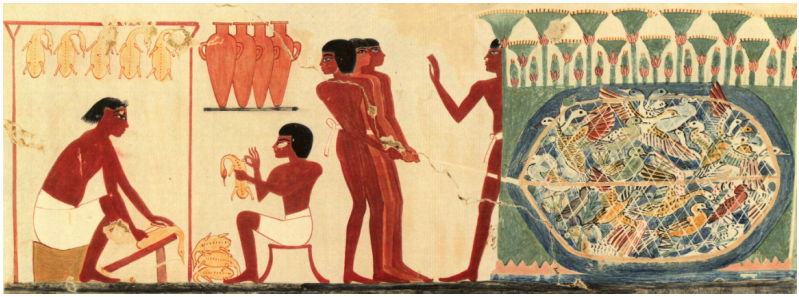
No, for the sake of a little flesh you deprive them of sun, of light, of the duration of life to which they are entitled by birth and being. Then you go on to assume that when they utter cries and squeaks their speech is inarticulate; that they do not, begging for mercy, entreating, seek justice.

Let the people know that if they beat the cattle which they lease from the pharaoh or the temples, they are beating the gods themselves. For all cattle are holy; as are all other creatures.

[230] See Plutarch (c. 46 – 119 CE), *On the Eating of Flesh*, I, 994 A-B



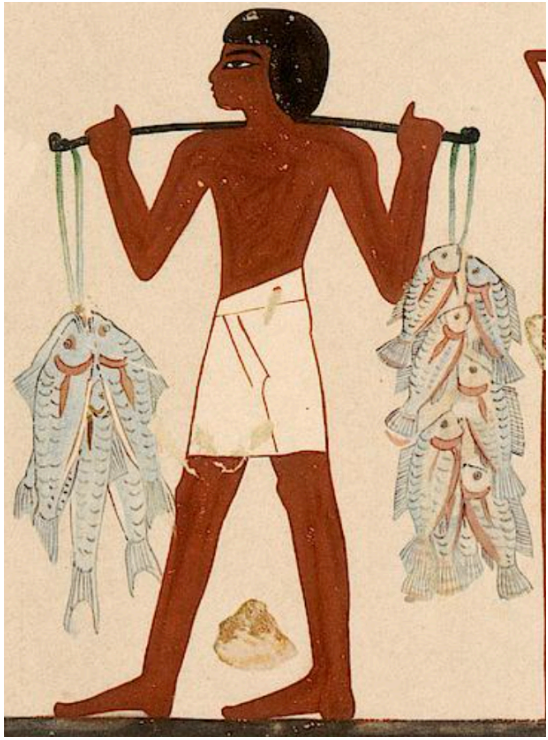
Humans and cows work to provide sacrifices, including the cows' bodies and lives. From the Theban tomb chapel of Nakht, a scribe and astronomer during the reign of pharaoh Thutmose IV, circa 1410 – 1370 BCE.



Tomb of Nakht under Tuthmosis IV (1420 – 1411 BCE)



Tomb of Nebseny under Tuthmosis IV (1420 – 1411 BCE)



From the Tomb of Nakht under Tuthmosis IV (1420 – 1411 BCE)



Tomb of Nebamane[231] *(a scribe and grain counter at a temple at Thebes in the mid-14th century BCE). Note the cat biting a bird in front of him.*

[231] a.k.a. Nebamen.



From the tomb of Nebamane



From the tomb of Nebamane



Painted on an ostracon (pottery shard) from a tomb in Thebes (Luxor), circa 1480 -1425 BCE



Circa 1295 -1069 BCE, Deir el-Medina tomb-workers/craftspeoples' village west of Waset/Thebes/Luxor.



Funerary object: wooden model of the cramped workspace of skilled workers counting grain and accountant recording on papyrii. From the tomb of Meketre, a high official under several pharaohs. These people would serve him in the afterlife.

To the Farmers, Fishers, and Fowlers

To the farmers, she said:

> You beat us to plow your fields as the foremen beat you.
>
> The administrators beat you vigorously, demand the grain when there is none, bind your wife and children.[232]
>
> And the priests and priestesses stockpile
> and waste your harvest in empty offerings. They tax you to fill their temples with gold and statues and offerings!
>
> They trade these goods and make themselves rich!
>
> And yet they also charge you to lease their fields and cattle!
>
> With these riches they purchase higher titles and honors.[233] They dedicate a stela or relief in order to appease the people and appear pious to the gods.
>
> I hear the field hands cry out forever! Your voices are louder than the ravens'. Your fingers have

[232] See the *Reminder of the Scribe's Superior Status (Papyrus Sallier I, 6, 1-9)*.
[233] See e.g. *Tebtuni Papyri*, vol I.

become ulcerous.[234] We are both always in another's service–feeble, and subject to many diseases as we go about in the world unprotected.[235]

You are under the yoke of the plow with us! Neither of us have even one day of rest in seven.[236] Don't you see!

You kindly rescue and comfort the calf who cries out while fording the streams and marshes. But the Overseers still kill this calf. Your inclinations are good but the elites break you and corrupt all.

We step on the seeds and thresh the grain but are denied the ears of the crops.

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[234] See the discussion of the farmer/field-hand in the Middle Kingdom literary text, *The Satire on the Trades*.
[235] See *Lotus Sutra*.
[236] See *Deuteronomy* 5:12-15, "Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and that the LORD your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the sabbath day."

> You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity. Sow in righteousness, reap in mercy.[237] Take off the yoke on our jaws![238]

To the fowlers, Het-Heru said:[239]

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[237] See *Hosea* 10:10-13, "'When I chose them, I broke them in, harnessing them for two furrows. Ephraim became a trained heifer, but preferred to thresh; I placed a yoke upon her sleek neck. I will make Ephraim do advance plowing; Judah shall do main plowing! Jacob shall do final plowing! Sow righteousness for yourselves; reap the fruits of goodness; break for yourselves betimes fresh ground of seeking the LORD, so that you may obtain a teacher of righteousness.' You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity—and you shall eat the fruits of treachery—because you relied on your way, on your host of warriors."

[238] See *Hosea* 10:15 - 11:1-6, "This is what Bethel has done to you for your horrible wickedness: at dawn shall Israel's monarchy utterly perish. I fell in love with Israel when he was still a child; and I have called [him] My son ever since Egypt. Thus were they called, but they went their own way; they sacrifice to Baalim and offer to carved images. I have pampered Ephraim, taking them in my arms; but they have ignored my healing care. I drew them with human ties, with cords of love; but I seemed to them as one who imposed a yoke on their jaws, though I was offering them food. No! They return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria is their king. Because they refuse to repent, a sword shall descend upon their towns and consume their limbs and devour [them] because of their designs." Bethel refers to the worship of golden calves at Bethel (and Dan) established by Jeroboam, first king of the northern Kingdom of Israel (opposed to the southern Kingdom of Judah) after the fracture of the United Kingdom of Israel under Saul, Eshbaal, David, and Solomon.

[239] See THE EXPLOITATION OF LIVE AVIAN RESOURCES IN PHARAONIC EGYPT: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY A DISSERTATION for an in-depth dissertation on the exploitations of birds in Ancient Egypt.

> Let the fowler be utterly afflicted while searching out for the denizens of the sky. If the flock passes by above him, let the gods prevent him, for they are opposed to his activity.[240]

A fowler protested:

> But Het-Heru, Mistress of the Sky, we have had snaring since the time of Heru, when Sekhet[241] came into being for us![242]

Het-Heru replied:

> It is by the fowlers' nets and sticks that geese are force-fed and fattened, birds' necks are snapped, the voyagers of the sky are imprisoned in cages. How many millions of birds are sacrificed to Thoth, to pharaohs, even to me? And who profits by selling these offerings? – the very temples who praise me!
>
> How do you declare Amane to the fish in the deep and to fowl in the sky, yet capture, confine, and butcher these? Amane, who gives breath to one who

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[240] See the Middle Kingdom ancient Egyptian literary work, *The Satire On the Trades*.
[241] Goddess of fowling, fishing, fields, and marshes. See The Goddess sxt in Ancient Egypt.
[242] See the Late Twelfth Dynasty (circa 19th century BCE) literary text, *The Discourse of the Fowler*.

> is weak and rescues one who is in dire straits![243] Yet you are the shepherd who knows how to give breath yet takes it![244] You ought rather to warn these to beware of you![245]
>
> No god intended these extremes of capturing, torturing, and wasting of life.

A farmer protested:

> Het-Heru, Princess of the West, – don't you see how we care for the mules and oxen. We would be unable to raise our crops without them. We have to treat them well or else they will weaken and die. Then we will starve and have to pay the temple in recompense according to the leases.
>
> Yes, some are neglectful of beasts, and they should be punished. But we mostly treat them well for our own and everyone's sake.
>
> Yes, some of the beasts suffer; but so do we! As you yourself say — what would you have us do? If we

[243] See the *Stela of Nebre* from the necropolis of Deir el-Medina's workers during the reign of Rameses II.
[244] See the *Cycle of Songs in Honor of Senwosret III* for the praise of the pharaoh as "our shepherd who knows how to give breath."
[245] See the *Stela of Nebre* from the necropolis of Deir el-Medina's workers during the reign of Rameses II.

refuse to plow or load the carts, what will happen to us?

We understand the suffering of beasts better than you – for we suffer likewise.

And how else do you expect to feed all the mouths of Egypt without the increases the strength of beasts enables?

And what of the mice, the snakes, the worms, the ants, and all you kill when you sow and harvest and thresh the plants? And what of these plants themselves? Are they not also nursed by the rays of the solar sphere?

A fisher protested:

Het-Heru, Lady of Kebny, the fish swim freely and we sometimes take them, just as the crocodiles and the birds live upon the fish. It is of little concern to a fish whether they are taken by a human or another. So it has always been. That's why they spawn so many eggs.

And those we raise in artificial ponds swim freely without fear of predators.

Again Het-Heru was perplexed. The people of Egypt had flourished by their farming and the fields plowed by her brethren. If they stopped relying on animals for plowing and carrying, there would be widespread famine.

How could she reply?

Again Het-Heru turned to Kamadhenu for advice.

Kamadhenu replied:

> I address now the farmers as well as the lessors of the land and cattle from the priesthood and the palace.
>
> Treat the working animal as you yourself would want to be treated. Do not overburden them.
>
> Do not interrupt an animal who is suckling her child.[246] Care for them all like widows when they are injured or too old to work. For they have served you well and earned their reward.
>
> Some will object, "But we must kill the plants by harvesting them. Even the plowing and tilling of the fields kills small animals and insects accidentally."

[246] See the 1st/2nd century CE Hindu legal text, *Laws of Manu*, IV, 59.

> I reply: Yes, it is good to be aware even of this violence. But this does not justify killing more animals who consume these plants along with those harmed in the tilling and harvesting process.
>
> For if the people would abstain from animal flesh and milk, you would not need to dilute your crops by first feeding the animals and then eating their flesh.
>
> Much crops are wasted and an overabundance are killed in this process.
>
> Instead eat only the plants and share the bounty with the animals–treat them at least as well as the foremen and scribes treat you–with payment and regular rest.
>
> Thus you will reduce the suffering on yourselves and the cattle. Their share of the crops for their labors is as great as yours for your labors.

Kamadhenu added:

> With the barley, wheat, sorghum, and other foodstuffs, plant medicinal herbs suitable for humans and animals that all may flourish.[247]

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[247] See *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict II.

Yahweh added:

> And when you reap the harvest, don't clear it completely to the edges of the field. And any parts that you don't initially gather should likewise be left in place. Leave these ungathered for the poor and the insects, animals, and birds to eat.[248] Consider these not thieves, but beneficiaries.[249]

Het-Heru continued:

> Yes, and do not overharvest your fields. Let them lay fallow. Thus the worms and insects will be given time to live freely and thereby revitalize the soils.
> Do not waste crops by taxing them for the temples or burying them with corpses for the afterlife. Let the one who farms the land be lord of it or else leave it common for all. Consolidation of lands under ministers and temples serves only to starve the people and animals.

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[248] See *Leviticus* 23:22 and *Deuteronomy* 24:19-21 in which the god Yahweh commands this practice on behalf of the poor, fatherless, and widows. Het-Heru extends this benevolence beyond the human species.
[249] In the *Reminder of the Scribe's Superior Status (Papyrus Sallier I, 6, 1-9)*, the scribe tells of the remainder left after threshing being for thieves. This comes after talking about the mice, sparrows, hippopotamus, snake, locust, and cattle taking away the grain from the fields.

> So also with the so-called Sacred Herds of Het-Heru and those of other gods.
>
> It is but one more mode of their profiting through the toilings of humans and animals upon the lands they hold.
>
> Remove them from their hypocritic enclosures. Let the cows graze freely and unrestricted[250] on protected pastures.

To the Millers

To the millers, she said:

> You beat us to drive your millstone and grind the grains as the foremen beat you.
>
> And the priests and priestesses stockpile and waste your harvest in empty offerings. They tax you to fill their temples with gold and statues and offerings.
>
> They trade these goods and make themselves rich!
>
> You are under the yoke turning the millstone with us! You are crushed like the grains we thresh!
>
> Don't you see!"

---

[250] See Plutarch, *Life of Cato Major*.

A miller protested:

> Het-Heru, Mistress of Myrrh – how else could we grind the grains to bake in so many ovens of Egypt? Would you prefer that we lash people? Would you prefer that we starve? Why do you seek to deny us our bread?

Het-Heru replied:

> As Kamadhenu told the farmers and fishers, treat your work-animals like you want to be treated.
>
> Do not overwork them.
>
> When they are pregnant let them rest. When they give birth let them be with their children. Do not separate them once the calves grow up.
>
> Do not urge them much with the goad[251] or brand them with fire when they are working.
>
> Let them be without muzzles when they thresh the grain.[252]
>
> And do not cut their throats when they are weak: weary of work, weary of heart, and weary of life.

---

[251] See the 1st/2nd century CE Hindu legal text, *Laws of Manu*, IV, 69.
[252] See *Deuteronomy* 25:4: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing."

And when they are old or crippled let them be cared for out of respect for the life, prosperity, and health they have provided for you and your people.

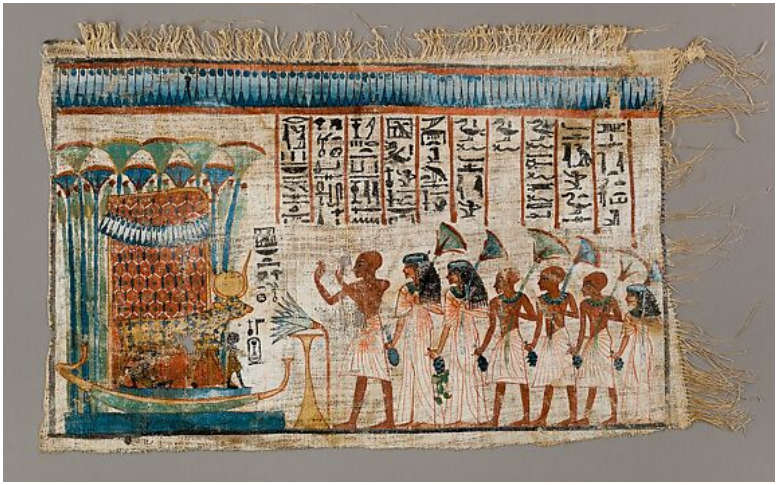
Some day humans must learn to plow their fields and grind their grain without the aid of cattle.

How could they possibly do this, you might ask? That is humanity's business to find out![253]

[253] Paraphrasing the vegan activist and inventor Lewis Gompertz (1784 – 1861 CE), who was a founding member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Animals' Friends Society.



Painted cow skull from a Medjay "pan-grave" burial site in Abydos (a.k.a. Abedju), Upper Egypt, circa 1640 – 1550 BCE



Offerings to Het-Heru on a linen votive



Amulets of Het-Heru found in Amara West, Ta-Nehisi (present-day Sudan). New Kingdom.



A deceased woman and her daughters offering to Het-Heru; Note the severed cow head and leg on the table, the goose held for offering by the rear-most child of the deceased, and the Het-Heru-headed mirror held by the first offerer (the deceased). 18th Dynasty Egypt (circa 1550 - 1292 BCE)

To All Humans

Now Het-Heru inhaled and snorted seven times with blasts of her nostrils.[254]

To all the gathered humans, she spoke:

> At the very time that I am uttering syllables, beings are oppressed with evils. How long shall I cry, and you will not hear! I cry out to you of violence, and you will not save![255]
>
> You fear that your women are treated or described as animals. You know how savagely you treat us. And how cruelly you break and dominate human women.
>
> But during childbirth, who stands beside the wombed ones among you? And yet you forcibly

[254] See *Exodus* 15:8: "At the blast of Your nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood straight like a wall; the deeps froze in the heart of the sea."
[255] See *Habakkuk* 1:2, "How long, O LORD, shall I cry out and You not listen, shall I shout to You, 'Violence!' and You not save?"

See also *Habbakuk* 1:13-16: "You whose eyes are too pure to look upon evil, who cannot countenance wrongdoing, why do You countenance treachery, and stand by idle while the one in the wrong devours the one in the right? You have made mankind like the fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler. He has fished them all up with a line, pulled them up in his trawl, and gathered them in his net. That is why he rejoices and is glad. That is why he sacrifices to his trawl and makes offerings to his net; For through them his portion is rich and his nourishment fat."

impregnate me with your fists and arms shoved in my two rear-openings.

You steal my babies and their milk. You kill my sons and call their bodies veal.

Woe and abomination for the youth, small in age![256]

You force my daughters to repeat my fate and then kill and eat them.

Woe and abomination for the cows who will give birth to the youths, small in age![257]

You force-feed the goose and the cow. The smell of our burning bodies appetizes you.

I condemn you!

You walk on skin sandals and wrap yourselves in our remains when you are cold. You know these are an abomination and disrobe from them before entering the temples. You paint your eyes with kohl eyeliner made of animal fat.

---

[256] See *The Oracle of the Lamb* for this phrase, which is applied to human children in a time of social upheaval prophesied by a lamb, foretelling the overthrow of Egyptian rulers and a long period of foreign rule by Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks.

[257] Again from *The Oracle of the Lamb*, though here referring to the mothers of human children, who will also be abused and taken away from Egypt under the foreign rule and strife.

I condemn you!

You kill quails and cows for your ancestors – even dedicating thousands to me. What of these cows and quails and their ancestors and descendants? Who will intercede and care for them?

I condemn you!

You hunt us for entertainment and think it shows you as strong and powerful. It would be much stronger for you to disagree with your brethren who engage in such amateur butchery[258] and recreational violence. You capture and come upon us, slaughtering with no pity![259]

We quiver in our bodies, our spirits broken.[260]

I condemn you!

Your harp players pluck our guts as they sing the ideals of my motherly love. Your cruel songs mock us also with the beating of rhythms on our skins. To

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[258] A term which Henry Stephens Salt uses to describe hunting in his 1894 book *Animals' Rights: Consideration in Relation to Social Progress*.

[259] See Ramses III's description of the defeated Libyans: "Every part of their bodies is weak from the terror." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 29.

[260] See Ramses III's description of the defeated Libyans: "Every part of their bodies is weak from the terror." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 28.

these sounds we are butchered and our bodies hacked up; our great nostrils cease to function.[261] I condemn you!

Meanwhile your own nostrils breathe the scent of our burning flesh commingled with the life-giving ankh which you depict coming from my hand to give you breath. You must rather give to us the breath, that we may breathe it; and life–that which is in your hands.[262]

I implore you!

You hope to rest and binge on flesh in the Field of Reeds. You imagine yourselves still hunting and torturing us there. This too is blasphemy and vexation. This heaven is not pure in my sight.

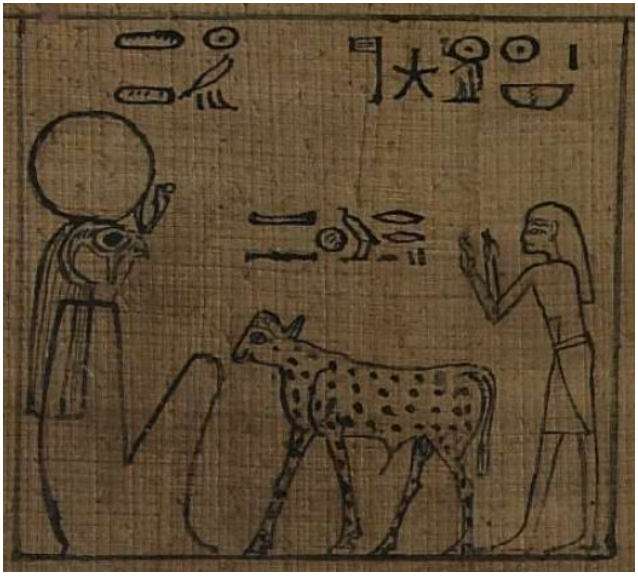
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[261] See Ramses III's description of vanquished Sea Peoples: "Their nostrils have ceased to function, so that their desire is to breathe the breath." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 41 and "They that entered into the Nile mouths were caught, fallen into the midst of it, pinioned in their places, butchered, and their bodies hacked up." *ibid* p. 42.

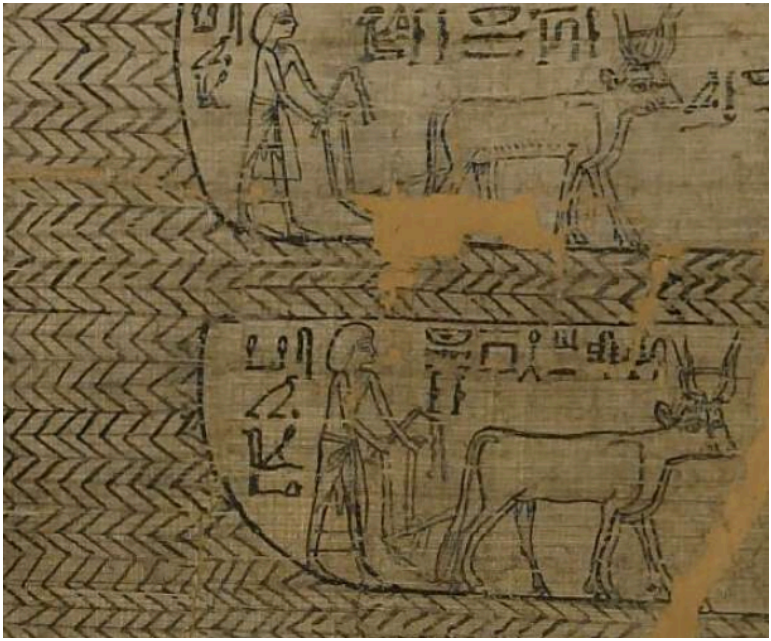
[262] See Ramses III's description of the words of captured leaders of his enemies: "Give to us the breath, that we may breath it, and life, that which is in thy hands." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 48.



Hunting scene from the Theban tomb of Neferhotep, overseer of the granary of the Lord of the Two Lands during the 18th Dynasty (circa 1550 – 1292 BCE)



From Nebseny's Book of the Dead (circa 1500 BCE). He was a copyist in temples and palaces of Upper and Lower Egypt.



Nebseny forcing cows to plow for him in the afterlife



From Nebseny's Book of the Dead papyrus.

For many thousands of years in the past, slaughter of animals and cruelty to living creatures has increased.[263] What began as natural hunting of creature living upon creature has been perfected to an abomination by your administrators. Now we live in confinement. Every part of our bodies is weak from toil and terror.[264]

> Look how you have killed the free-roaming cows and replaced them with subjugated, forcibly impregnated, castrated, desecrated cows who you control more profitably.
>
> You were forced to do this by the elites who dominated your ancestors and theirs.
>
> They control the land, the animals, and the humans themselves and exploit you all for their own status.
>
> Throw off your yoke and those of your fellow beings.
>
> If you praise and appeal to me that I might hear your petitions to grant you your beloved,[265] do not deny the cows the right to choose their own

[263] See the *Edicts of Ashoka*, Rock Edict IV.
[264] See Ramses III's description of the defeated Libyans: "The northern countries quivered in their bodies, namely the Peleset, Thekk[er], …. They were cut off from their land coming, their spirit broken." " Edgerton & Wilson, p. 30.
[265] See, for example, the fifth stanza of *The Love Songs of Papyrus Chester Beatty*.

partners! Some do not even know the bull whose semen is put inside her.

You praise me for bringing the fragrance of your beloved, yet declare your beloved to be skilled in snaring despite not being the child of a cattle breeder.[266] How can you make such comparisons in the same breaths while it is the fragrance of my burning children that overwhelms the temples?

If you look at me as the symbol of motherly love, do not steal, maim, and kill my children.

If you look to me for help in the Duat,[267] do not harm any beings.

Let us have life, duration, and satisfaction[268] instead of torture and travails.

We beg peace of you![269]

---

[266] See poem #43 from *The Nakht-Sobek Songs From Papyrus Chester Beatty I.*

[267] See also the Zoroastrian *Bundahišn 30*, in which the souls of the righteous are greeted by a plump, milk-filled cow upon welcome to heaven after being judged righteous.

[268] A common blessing bestowed on humans by the gods.

[269] See Ramses III's description of the defeated Libyans: "Let us go to him! Let us beg peace of him! Let us kiss the ground!" Edgerton & Wilson, p. 30.

And it came to pass, when Het-Heru spoke these words, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.[270]

One among them turned to another and said:

> Now that I have heard a voice for the animals I pity them.

A visiting priestess of Gaia from Pytho, who was born in Keftiuan Knossos, interrupted:

> Oh, but you did not need Het-Heru to speak for them!
> We deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy. And then we fancy that the voices it utters and screams forth to us are nothing but certain inarticulate sounds and noises.[271]

---

[270] See *Judges 2*, 2:1-4: "An angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, 'I brought you up from Egypt and I took you into the land which I had promised on oath to your fathers. And I said, "I will never break my covenant with you. And you, for your part, must make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you must tear down their altars." But you have not obeyed Me—look what you have done! Therefore, I have resolved not to drive them out before you; they shall become your oppressors, and their gods shall be a snare for you.'"

[271] Plutarch, 'On the Eating of Flesh' I.4, in *Moralia*. Plutarch was a priest at the Greek Delphi. He visited Egypt and recorded a version of *The Lamentations of Isis and Nepthys* (referenced herein). The *Homeric Hymn 3, "To Apollo",* tells that Apollo transformed himself into a dolphin and brought Cretan priests from Knossos (political center of the Minoan/Keftiuan culture) to be his priests at this place of his oracular priestesses, temples, treasuries, and social center.



Cows are killed, butchered, sacrificed



Bull horn wall adornment at the Minoan Palace of Knossos on Crete (a.k.a. the Horns of Consecration)



Minoan terracotta bull, circa 1200 – 1100 BCE



Tutankhamen (left) and Maia[272] *(right). She worked as his wet-nurse.*

[272] For example, Maia (14th century BCE), who worked as a wetnurse of pharaoh Tutankhamen, was buried in a grand many-chambered multi-level rock-cut tomb near the Bubasteion temple complex of the cat goddess Bastet in Saqqara near Giza. Mummified cats and lion(s) were buried here over more than a thousand years.

Those who only eat milk, eggs, and honey

Some among the people spoke up:

> Yes, Het-Heru, Beautiful of Cattle, Lady of Gebelein[273], there are so many cruel amongst humans. But we never eat the cows and chickens and goats and lambs! No, these support us all, so to eat them would be to eat everyone![274] We only eat eggs, honey, and milk. This does not kill the beings. If only more lived like us! How much less suffering there would be!

Het-Heru replied:

> I understand that you mean to reduce suffering and commend you for it.
>
> But what you do is perhaps worse. The mothers end up being killed and chopped and burned and eaten

[273] See *"Hatshepsut's Speos at Gebelein – Preliminary Conclusions on the Unpublished Temple"* by Takács, Ejsmond, Chyla, and Witkowski.
[274] An argument made in the Hindu *Satapátha-Brâhman* attributed to the sage Yajnavalkya (circa 800 - 600 BCE): "Let him not eat the flesh of either the cow or the ox; for the cow and the ox doubtless support everything here on earth. The gods spake, 'Verily, the cow and the ox support everything here: come, let us bestow on the cow and the ox whatever vigour belongs to other species!' Accordingly they bestowed on the cow and the ox whatever vigour belonged to the other species of animals; and therefore the cow and the ox eat most. Hence, were one to eat the flesh of an ox or a cow, there would be, as it were, an eating of everything, or as it were, a going on to the end (or to destruction)."

anyway after suffering caged production and having their babies taken away from them.

Once they become unprofitable as egg or milk producers they get their throats slit just like the meat ones.

Like those who eat flesh, your stomach is still a tomb for animals.[275]

Know also that abstaining from harming these animals because of the benefits humans get by them is misguided. Abstain from harm for their own sakes, not because of your own benefits.

Continue on your way and abstain from consuming these products.

[275] Paraphrasing a statement of the Jain priest Hiravijaya to the Muslim Mughal emperor Akbar (1556 – 1605 CE), contributing to the emperor's transition to vegetarianism and banning the killing of animals for about half of the year.

Those who abstain in fasting periods but not in dress and other ways

Some others among the people spoke up:

> Hail to you Het-Heru!
>
> Yes, there are so many cruel amongst humans. We live as you say.
>
> For two thirds of the year we eat neither the flesh nor the milk, honey, or eggs.
>
> If only more lived like us! How much less suffering there would be!

Het-Heru replied:

> I understand that you mean to reduce suffering and perfect your souls.
>
> I commend you for it.
>
> Why do you not refrain for the other third of the year?

Some of these decided that after beginning their fasting the next day,[276] they would continue abstaining from eating animals and milk indefinitely.

Het-Heru added:

> And who drives the chariots and carts? Whose skin do you wear when you are cold? If you mean to live without harm, consider the other ways you rely on violence to so many, even while fasting.

[276] In the Coptic Egyptian Orthodox Christian Church, the 43-day fasting of Advent (culminating in the celebration of Jesus's) begins on the 16th day of Hathor. During this time, one refrains from all food and water except from sunset to midnight. The evening meal must be vegan. Approximately two thirds of the Coptic Egyptian Orthodox Christian Church calendar is filled with such fasting periods. This book began on the first day of the month of Het-Heru. After two weeks for arrivals, we are presently on the 15th day of Het-Heru.

Those who abstain in eating, dress, and other ways but still sacrifice

Some among the people spoke up:

> Yes, Het-Heru, oh glowing one,[277] there are so many cruel amongst humans.
>
> We live as you say. We do harm neither through diet nor dress nor go from place to place.
>
> We partake only of meat sacrificed at the temples and give praise to you and the gods. Sacrificing is not slaughter. For this do the animals live.[278] Being sacrificed, these cows and birds feed the gods, are themselves honored, and participate in eternal life.[279]

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[277] See inscription at the court of the temple of Hathor at Deir el-Bahari.
[278] See the *Laws of Manu* (V.39): "Svayambhû (the Self-existent) himself created animals for the sake of sacrifices; sacrifices (have been instituted) for the good of this whole (world); hence the slaughtering (of beasts) for sacrifices is not slaughtering (in the ordinary sense of the word)." See also the argument offered in the Hindu treatise on law and conduct *Vashistha Dharmasutra*: "Meat can never be obtained without injuring living beings, and to injure living beings does not procure heavenly bliss; therefore the (sages declare) the slaughter (of beasts) at a sacrifice not to be slaughter (in the ordinary sense of the word)." (*Vashistha Dharmasutra*, Chapter IV:7).
[279] See the Laws of Manu (V.40): "Herbs, trees, cattle, birds, and (other) animals that have been destroyed for sacrifices, receive (being reborn) higher existences."

> If only more lived like us! How much less suffering there would be!

Het-Heru replied:

> I understand that you mean to live a life of worship and reduce suffering and commend you for it. And yet you still make sacrifices to the gods and goddesses. You sacrifice hundreds of millions of cows, goats, and birds – their hearts brought to an end, their souls annihilated,[280] their eyes ceasing to behold the surface of the sun.[281] You most of all should know that your sacrifices are abhorrent.
>
> For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; kindness more than knowledge of the rituals and spells or burnt offerings.[282]

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[280] See Ramses III's description of defeated Meshwesh Libyans: "They are slain in their places. Their heart is brought to an end; their soul is annihilated upon earth." Edgerton & Wilson, p.78.

[281] See Ramses III's description of defeated Meshwesh Libyans and Meshesher, the son of Keper (their chief): "His sons have ceased to behold the surface of the sun. His fighting warriors are carried off as [lacuna] their wives and their children – bound on their arms and their heads as captives; their goods and their children heavy upon their backs; their cattle and their horses brought to Egypt, taken away…." Edgerton & Wilson, p.79.

[282] See *Hosea* 6:6: "For I desire goodness, not sacrifice; obedience to God, rather than burnt offerings." See also *Matthew* 9:13 and *Matthew* 12:7: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice…"

Do you think only of the gods during the killing and the cooking over fire, while the drops of fat drip? Or do you think of the animals' suffering? Or only of your own belly? Have you ever sacrificed just because you craved flesh, then made perfunctory rites?

The poor can't afford to be so cruel. Like the poor who fashion animals out of dough then bake and sacrifice them,[283] you may continue your rituals in a manner that does not harm any animals (except those who plowed the fields, carried the flour, turned the mill, died in the plowing, or were killed to prevent them from stealing the growing or stored grains). Or you may form clay figures of the animals and break or smash them to perform the ritual.[284]

Do not even offer burnt myrrh, for this requires the stabbing of trees to produce their resin. Trees also

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[283] See Herodotus, *The History*, section 2.47. The Hindu legal text compilation *Laws of Manu* (circa 200 BCE - 200 CE) also states: "If he has a strong desire (for meat) he may make an animal of clarified butter or one of flour, (and eat that); but let him never seek to destroy an animal without a (lawful) reason." (*Laws of Manu*, V.37). See also the *Sankhayana-grihya-sutra* by Shankhayana (circa 500 BCE), which instructs the sacrifice of pairs of animal images formed from flour and jujube leaves (*Sankhayana-grihya-sutra*, Adhyāya IV, Khanda 19).

[284] See for example the Ancient Egyptian funerary ritual of breaking pots or the execration texts in which names of enemies were written upon statuettes, bowls, or clay and then destroyed.

> share their fragrance when growing and living healthily.
>
> If you mean to praise, live minimizing harm and guide people to reduce and refrain from violence against all beings. That is praise to me.

A priest interjected:

> But Het-Heru! We have always sacrificed. It is by sacrifice that pharaohs of the past ensured their entrance to the Field of Reeds. Since it worked for them, it must still be good for us![285]

Het-Heru replied:

> Do not be so sure of traditions and your own righteousness. A priest must know that there are multiple meanings in sacred acts and texts. If you follow only the outer, literal, meanings, you are

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[285] See the argument in the Vaishnavi Hindu text *Matsya Purana*, Chapter 143 (circa 200 – 500 CE). The pious mythical king Vasu is asked to moderate a debate between Adhvaryu priests (who have taken pity on the animals they're about to sacrifice) and the god Indra, to whom the sacrifice would be offered. Vasu opines that (1) since the mantras call for sacrifice and (2) because enlightened rishis performed the sacrifice and reached the celestial abode Svarga (incidentally, where the cow goddess Kamadhenu dwells), therefore sacrifice is permitted and good. For this judgment, Vasu was brought to a lower plane of existence (even though Indra himself rules Svarga) for speaking with certainty on difficult and delicate matters of dharma about which he should be silent.

missing the importance and performing only futile acts.

I am telling you now that there is no sacrifice without suffering and injury. This is horrifying to me and heinous to the beings you harm. Do not think about your eternal life, but rather the lives of the cows, birds, plants, sheep, and other beings you harm in this one.

You will be judged on many acts by Usir and the 42 Assessors of Ma'at; not simply whether you perform these inherited ones.

Tradition is not justification. Of yore, pharaohs sacrificed their nobles and servants. These too followed tradition and did what they had seen and been taught by their elders.

Many of those sacrificed did so willingly, believing that they would thereby be rewarded with eternal happiness. This too was tradition.

Eventually this was replaced with ushabti figures substituted for the actual humans. You may do this as well with the animals and even the milk, flowers, cakes, and grains you offer.

This will not happen all at once. There will be holdouts who insist on the killing. But each life saved is dear to the spared. Some may try abstaining from flesh sacrifice but still offer milk libations. Debate this amongst yourselves and recall that you too once performed these traditions when you grow frustrated or hopeless.



Minoan king Minos judging souls and assigning judgment within the eight inner circles of Hell (Inferno) in William Blake's depiction (1824 CE) of a scene from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy (1321 CE)

On the Negative Confessions[286]

Het-Heru spoke again to the humans:

> Do you only listen because you made me a goddess? Do you only listen because I now speak in your tongue?
>
> Did you not hear my screams before? I know you did but you tell yourself I'm dumb and inarticulate. Did you not see the fear and trembling and terror on our faces? I know you did but you lie to yourselves. Did you not see us struggle against your hobbling? You saw and persisted. You should have known without hearing your language or seeing your goddess's body. It is clear.
>
> Let Usir, Anubis, the 42 Assessors of Ma'at, and Ammit come forth.
>
> Mithra, Zoroastrian lord of the wide heavenly and earthly pastures shall stand alongside these Assessors.[287] The Ba-soul of the Keftiuan king Minos[288] shall stand here too with these Assessors.

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[286] As one of the steps towards securing eternal life, the deceased had to deny having done 42 types of evil things to assessor gods.

[287] In the Zoroastrian *Hymn to Mithra,* Zarathushtra says: "'The ruffian who lies unto Mithra brings death unto the whole country, injuring as much the faithful world as a hundred evil-doers could do."

[288] King Minos, the namesake of the Minoan civilization (as named by British archaeologist Arthur Evans), was the supreme judge of the dead in the Greek mythological underworld Hades.

All of you humans and gods and goddesses, look upon them and inside yourselves.

You will all be judged evil at the weighing of your hearts. How many of the Negative Confessions can you proclaim? Let us recount but some you have broken.



Trussed cow prepared for sacrifice. From the Ptolemaic Egyptian period (332 - 30 BCE)

Can you proclaim “I have not mistreated cattle”? How many cows have been whipped, worked to death, confined, force-fed, trussed, and had their throats slit for your fancies?

Can you proclaim “I have not caused pain”? Can you proclaim “I have not made suffering for anyone”? Listen to the cries of the animals that cry and look upon the silent ones.

Can you proclaim “I have not caused weeping”? What of the cow whose babe you tie to the stake?

Can you proclaim “I have not killed”? Can you proclaim “I have not commanded to kill”? What of the butchers and priests you commission to slaughter? By them are felled thousands who know you not.[289]

Can you proclaim “I have not taken milk from the mouths of children”? What of the weaned calves whose milk you drink and offer as libation?

Can you proclaim “I have not deprived the flocks of their pasturage”? What of the cows, sheep, and goats penned up or driven from pasturage to the slaughterhouses? Or those driven across the deserts that you seized from your enemies?

Can you proclaim “I have not snared birds of the branches of the gods”? How tortured are the ones whose necks you wring.

Can you proclaim “I have not trapped fish in their marshes”? How tortured are the ones you bring forth.

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[289] See the *Cycle of Songs in Honor of Senwosret III* for this phrase.

Can you proclaim “I have not driven away the cattle of the god’s property”? There ought not even be cattle said to be of the gods’ or anyone else’s property!

Can you proclaim “I have not struck terror”? Look all around you. Look at the bull in the warpath, the cow in the pen, the baby wrested from their mother. The assessor Over the Old One will judge your treatment of all beings.

Can you proclaim “I have not been hot-tempered”? Look how the drivers beat us. Look how the children throw stones at us. Have you not done similarly? The assessor Disturber will judge your treatment of all beings.

Can you proclaim “I have not been violent”? Do any of you not live and thrive on violence against us? The assessor You of the Altar will judge your treatment of all beings.

Can you proclaim “I have wronged none, I have done no evil”? We cannot count the ones you have wronged. The assessor Nefertem will judge your treatment of all beings.

Can you proclaim “I have not cursed a god”? Look at how you treat me and curse my progeny. The

assessor Serpent Who Brings and Gives will judge your treatment of all beings.

Can you proclaim "I have not slain sacred cattle"? Do you not now see that we are all sacred cattle? The assessor Blood-Eater, who has come forth from the slaughtering-block, will judge your treatment of all beings.

Let Anubis and Ma'aat and the Assessors know that most all of you cannot as yet truthfully assert even one of these negations. It is Falsehood who wishes to eat cattle, not Truth.[290] I will lead you all through the Duat when you die. And I will lead the children of your body and the children of your children's bodies that same way. I will not rebirth you and your descendents in the Field of Reeds unless you reform and can truthfully answer these negations from now until your first death. Ammit will eat your descendents' Bas unless they reform.

Let Djehuti, Scribe of Het-Heru, re-examine his ledger and inform Usir that all those who I previously re-birthed to the Field of Reeds must be re-examined to probe on their treatment of non-human beings. How many will remain in the Field of Reeds after this? How many will Ammit

[290] See *The Blinding of Truth By Falsehood*, written during the reign of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) in the 19th Dynasty (1292–1189 BCE).

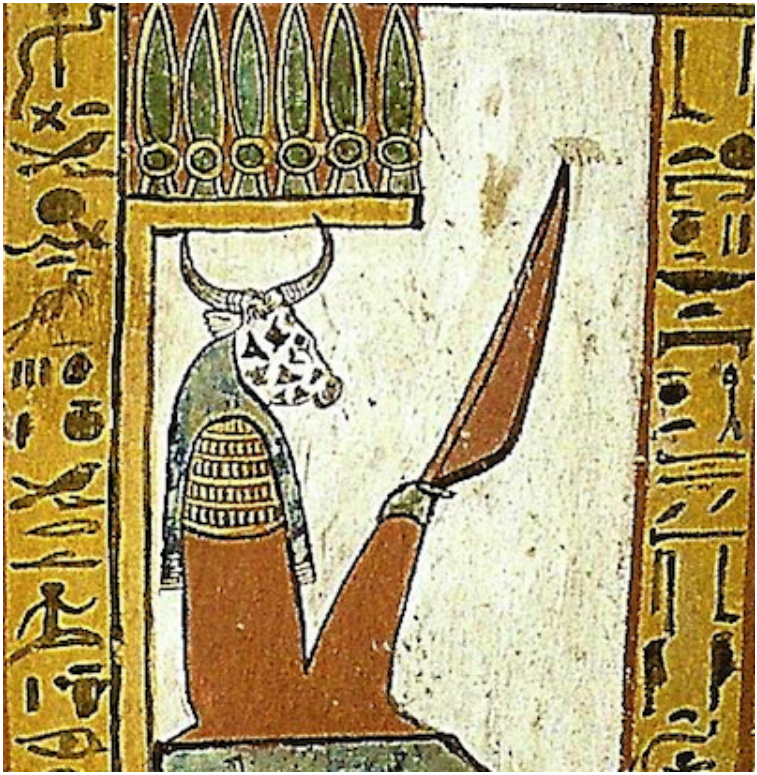
finally eat upon re-evaluation? The unjust must be unjustified!

Let Nut's ferryman know that on behalf of the living and the dead, on behalf of the goose and the ox, I accuse you. Let Djehuti not carry you on his wings when the ferryman heeds my admonitions.[291]

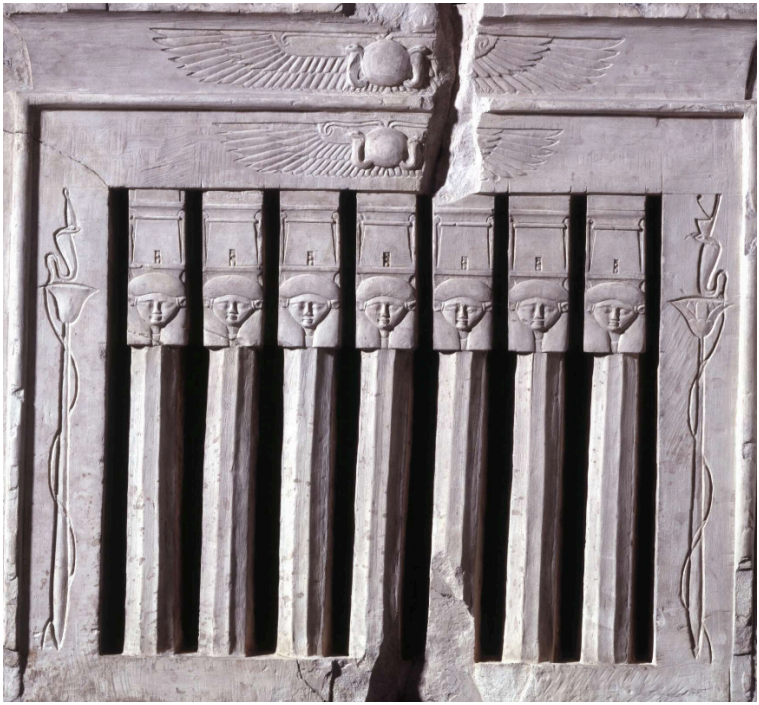
Let it be known that none of the future pharaohs will be born of me or nurse from my milk unless their parents, siblings, and neighbors reform and sustain this world under the sun so that all beings and plants are treated with love and kindness.

Even if you only treat us kindly to save your own souls, you must liberate us!

[291] See Pyramid Texts of Unas, Utterance 270, where the pharaoh Unas summons Nut's "ferryman to ferry him across the body of water that separated the sky from the earth." (Lichtheim, 1973, p.35). Unas states that no one alive, no dead, no goose, and no ox accuses him of wrongdoing. Unas tells the ferryman that if he fails to ferry him, Djehuti (Thoth) will carry him on his wings.



Long-Horned Bull, a knife-wielding cow god protecting the gate named Powerful Of Knives in the heavenly Field of Reeds. From the Book of Gates *in the tomb of Sennedjem (13th century BCE). See above for his and his wife's roles in the Het-Heru cult.*



The Seven Het-Herus, foretellers of the fates of newborn human children

Neferti Prophecies[292]

Now there was a pause.

All the creatures who are oppressed with toils and distressed in mind by birth, life, and death, asked Het-Heru if this human awakening would begin the bliss of rest, saying, "Is this the end of our troubles?"[293]

Although Het-Heru could summon Bas from the past and the Seven Het-Herus could determine the fates of any individual, they could not foresee the future at large.

Therefore, Het-Heru asked the prophet Neferti to tell us of the future. A lamb stood beside her.[294]

Neferti spoke:

> Stir yourself, my heart, as we weep and look on what is to happen.
>
> There is to be no divine or human savior. And the gods become ineffective in protecting the animals.

---

[292] See the *Prophecy of Neferti*.
[293] See Lotus Sutra Chapter 1: "And to the ignorant creatures who are oppressed with toils and distressed in mind by birth and old age, they announce the bliss of Rest, saying: This is the end of trouble, O monks."
[294] i.e. the lamb who gave the *Oracle of the Lamb*, foretelling the upheaval and suffering brought on by the periods of foreign rule of Egypt by Assyrian, Persian, and Greek empires.

The cow is blocked from turning in both directions.

The bleary-eyed mother is overpowered.

She is kept perpetually pregnant yet never knows her mate.

A fist shoves semen in her vulva, assisted by another deep in her rectum.

Her babies are torn from her, tied up, and kept in tiny cages.

Her boy is killed and eaten as a tender specialty.

The humans show off his soft skin draped on their bodies.

Her daughter never sees the daylight as she grows to recreate her mother's fate.

The baby's budding horns are burned off after birth. When she gives insufficient milk her neck is split and her body carved, packaged, burned, eaten, and discarded.

Those who refrain from flesh yet partake of milk and cheese and skin help ensure her fate.

Entire herds are slaughtered on grasslands not to eat, but to starve, subdue, and annihilate groups of people.

The pig is blocked from turning in both directions; even while pregnant and suckling, her children nurse through barred cages.

The boy chick is slain by sharp crushing tools after birth. His sister never sees the daylight as she grows to recreate her mother's fate. Some of her eggs are thrown in jest.

Her feathers are ripped from her flesh; the humans sleep peacefully on these bloodied pillows. They are in the habit of seizing chickens by the feet, throwing them upside down upon the floor, pinching their necks and using them ill.[295] When she gives fewer eggs her neck is broken, her body is carved and packaged and burned and eaten.

Those who refrain from her flesh yet partake of her eggs help ensure her fate. Yes, the boy chicks are ground up at birth, the laying females have their beaks and feet trimmed. They're stuffed in tiny cramped crowded cages and go insane. They're bred to be too fat to walk or fly or defend themselves.

---

[295] See *Lotus Sutra*.

The fish are gathered in great swaths. Asphyxiating alongside them are other beings of the seas not intended for the plates of humans, caught up in greed.

The humans' plates overflow. They toss some of the children's bodies and the milk in the garbage. For this waste they suffered and died. They are sent across the lands and seas to be slaughtered or to shiver and starve along the way. The ones suffering amongst the dead cry out "I am alive!" yet are crushed by the fall of bodies.

In their schools they carve up and poison animals and fish and insects for curiosity, education of healers, and searching for cures of their own pains. This is done without balms to first relieve their senses.

They affix pieces of dried skin on their robes as marks of the vanities of their tailors. Yes, everywhere you look there is animal skin.

Everywhere I see animals and fish imprisoned in cells hardly their own size. For leisure, they are lured with sharp hooks which slice their cheeks.

The Hapi-ankh bull is stabbed in the thigh and cut across the throat.[296]

The last aurochs cows have been born and die without children. The last one's tongue hangs limp as his blood spills on the dirt of a Roman coliseum. He dies to the sound of thousands of cheering and jeering people. There will be no more on any land. Other types of cows carry on their fate.

The Iteru is purged of hippopotami and crocodiles.

The sycamore trees are all felled and there is nowhere to nest.

Camels are burdened and beaten for travelers. Horses are made decrepit and mangy to pull carriages and killed when they become too weak. When they are weak they are no longer profitable.

Cows and their milk are still eaten near your temples, with no thought of the lives they endured. Nor thought that some of these first bore the dairy cows' fates. They wetnursed the humans instead of their own children–and then killed them.

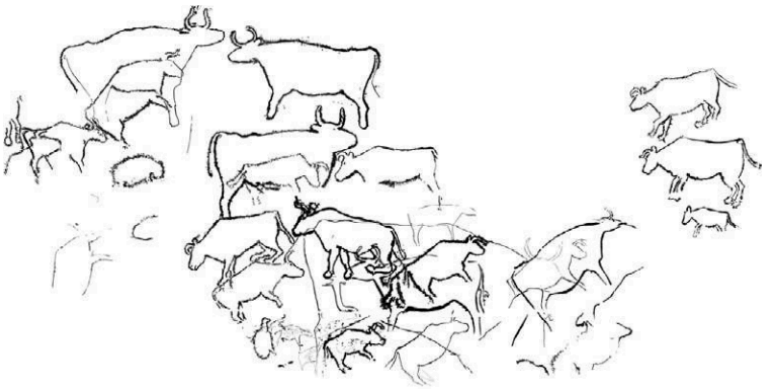
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[296] A fictitious crime of the Persian king Cambyses II (d. 522 BCE) while ruling as Pharaoh of Egypt and King of Kings of the Achaemenid Empire (550 – 330 BCE), as related by Herodotus (c. 484 – 425 BCE). See *The History*, 3.27-29

> The seas and rivers are dying. The Iteru[297] flows with feces.

Neferti ceased prophesying. She then rose with recollection and consciousness, and forthwith addressed all the gathered humans, appearing to themselves as upon a mirror, “Do not tire: look at what is before you. Stand up to what is in front of you.”

Now the gathered humans and human Bas bent their heads and whispered with each other.



Tracing of a panel of cow petroglyphs from Qurta (between Aswan and Edfu, present-day Egypt), circa 15,000 – 17,000 BCE.

[297] i.e. the Nile.



Petroglyph of a cow suckling her calf at Abu Ballas, southwestern desert, present-day Egypt

Instructions of Het-Heru[298]

After Neferti's prophetic words and vision, the humans were silent.

Finally, one among them said, "Give us a word, mother,[299] that we may prevent this."

Het-Heru steadied herself then spoke these wise instructions:

> Do not despise a matter that pertains to a cow.[300]
>
> Give your ears and hear what is said,
> Give your mind over to interpretation:
> It is profitable to put these words in your heart,
>
> But woe to one that neglects them!
> Let them rest in the shrine of your insides
> That they may act as a lock in your heart;

---

[298] Instructions, or maxims, were a genre (known as Sebayt) of Ancient Egyptian wisdom literature. They often took the form of an official or pharaoh sharing wisdom with their child to guide them. Similar genres of wisdom literature were recorded in Sumerian, Babylonian, Hebrew, Greek, Sanskrit, and other cultures within the times and places covered by this book. In the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, similar writings were promulgated in the "Mirrors for princes" tradition. Hathor is often depicted as part of the design of Ancient Egyptian hand mirrors.

[299] This mirrors the sayings of the early Christian monastics of Egypt, whose writing often featured a monk asking their teacher for some wise saying by saying "Give us a word, father."

[300] See *The Instruction of 'Onchsheshonqy* for this admonition.

In the midst of a community able to command a profusion of delicious foods, it ought to be deemed an affront to set dead flesh before a guest.[301]

Do not unjustly eat what the water has given up, and do not desire as food the flesh of slaughtered animals,

Or the milk of mothers who intended its pure draught for their young, not for nobles.

And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking their eggs; for injustice is the worst of crimes.

And spare the honey which the bees get betimes by their industry from the flowers of fragrant plants;[302]

For they did not store it that it might belong to others, nor did they gather it for bounty and gifts.[303]

The motive of all must be Love, before we can make life worth living.[304]

Do not expect utopia during your lifetime;
Not within thousands of years;

---

[301] Anna Kingsford.
[302] Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī
[303] This and the previous four lines are from Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī.
[304] Lucy Mallory.

And even if it arises – will it not need sustaining and protection?

No, but struggle for kindness in your time.
Keep the fight for those present.

Be inspired by those who called out for justice before you.

Don't let their love have been in vain.

There will be setbacks in your time that would be worse or longer-lasting without your resistance.

Secure your strongholds where they now stand.

Change conventions near to you.
Engage the temples, their priests and teachers, and the people directly.

Every step gained gives a better position for future advance.

Show respect for life.

Calm the weeper, do not oppress the widowed cows or other beings, and do not oust a person or other creature from their familiar lands, waters, and sky.

Beware of punishing wrongfully; do not kill or harm any creature, for it will not profit you.

Be kind to all creatures who are weak, and satisfy yourself with your own bread and drink.

Find fault with yourself, before another person does.

Provide for the people as for the cattle and the cattle as for the people, for heaven and earth were made at their desire.

The righteous care for the needs of their animals, the lands, and the waters, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.[305]

Give to the poor among animals and humans rather than to the temples and pharaoh, who do not need your alms for their sustainment.

Instill your love into the entire world.

Provide sustenance for those in the lap of peace.

The gift of affection is worth more than the provisions that cover your back.

---

[305] See Proverbs 12:10, "A righteous man knows the needs of his beast, but the compassion of the wicked is cruelty."

Teach according to the words of the wise.

You can educate children as you walk in the footsteps of the wise.

Speak justice, do justice, for it is powerful, far-reaching, and it endures. There can never be an excess of high standards, nor should there ever be a mean act to reach the humblest inhabitant of the universe.

Do whatever opposes injustice to any creature.

Try, so far as you can, to wrong no creature, and keep your heart pure towards all of them.

Either live in kindness or lay down and die by starvation[306] to feed the land, bacteria, and scavengers.

Humans came after the cows and other beings who will outlast them.

Be zealous and strong in persuasion; apply yourselves to my lessons.[307]

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[306] See the Jain practice of Sallekhana, the Hindu practice of Prayopavesa, and the Buddhist practice of Sokushinbutsu. In these, the person gradually starves themselves to death so as not to further injure any beings. See also philosophers such as Hegesias of Cyrene.
[307] See *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 1.

Het-Heru ordered these words to be copied by her scribes and shared throughout the two lands.

They were written in hieroglyphs, Hieratic, Demotic, Meroitic, Coptic, Akkadian, and the other languages written and spoken in Egypt. In this way, as many people as possible could read the words directly.[308]

She also ordered for copies to be translated for Egypt's neighbors and trading partners as well as the priestesses and priests along with all the gods she gathered.

And she ordered stelae and obelisks inscribed with them to be made in every nome of Egypt so that they will be remembered.[309]
These stelae were placed before the gods in covenant.[310]
She ordered that they be read before the people every year on the first day of the month of her name.

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[308] As Ashoka did with his edicts written in Prakrit (in the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts), Greek, and Aramaic.
[309] Similar to the mid-3rd century BCE *Edicts of Ashoka* (also containing prescriptions for kind treatment of animals) which were carved on pillars and walls and sent via missionaries to lands outside India. He sent some to the post-Alexander Ptolemaic pharaoh Ptolemy II, who likewise sent emissaries to Ashoka's Mauryan Kingdom.
[310] Like the silver tablets containing the treaty between the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II and Hittite king Ḫattušili III circa 1259 BCE after the Battle of Kadesh (a.k.a. Qedesh), ending years of warring. A thousand gods of the Hittites and a thousand gods of the Egyptians were invoked to consecrate and oversee the treaty. Copies were carved on silver and other stone tablets.



Votive offerings from the temple of Baalat Gubal in Kebny (present-day Lebanon)



Bronze cow from Ras Shamra, Ugarit (present-day Syria), circa 1400 - 1200 BCE



Het-Heru-headed Astarte amulet with a Het-Heruhic wig, standing on a lion, holding two goats in the Master/Mistress of Animals motif. Found at the port of Minet el -Beida, near Ugarit

Part Three: What Is to Be Done?[311]

Other Cow Goddesses, Gods, Priestesses, and Priests Speak

Now Het-Heru asked the cow goddesses, gods, priestesses, and priests from distant lands to tell of the treatment of cows among their peoples.

The Akkadian, Zoroastrian, and Croton priestesses and priests all lamented that their sacred cows had been foolishly slaughtered.

They lamented that the people in their lands behaved much like those they heard Het-Heru address.

Those from Keftiu reported that while cows were venerated amongst the Minoans, they still ritually sacrificed and ate many of Het-Heru's brethren there. The priestesses showed the double-headed axes they used to split the cow's necks.

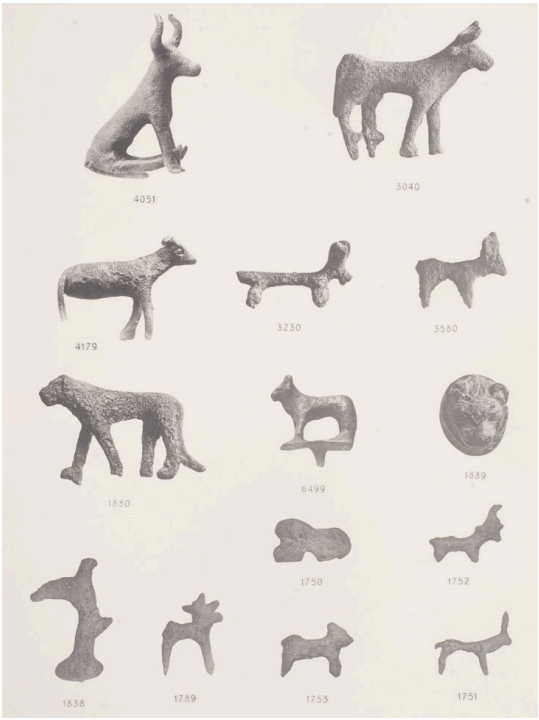
Those of the Canaanites and Ugaritics reported that their people also behaved similarly. They sacrificed and drove cows and other animals on their lands. They raided cattle from their neighbors.

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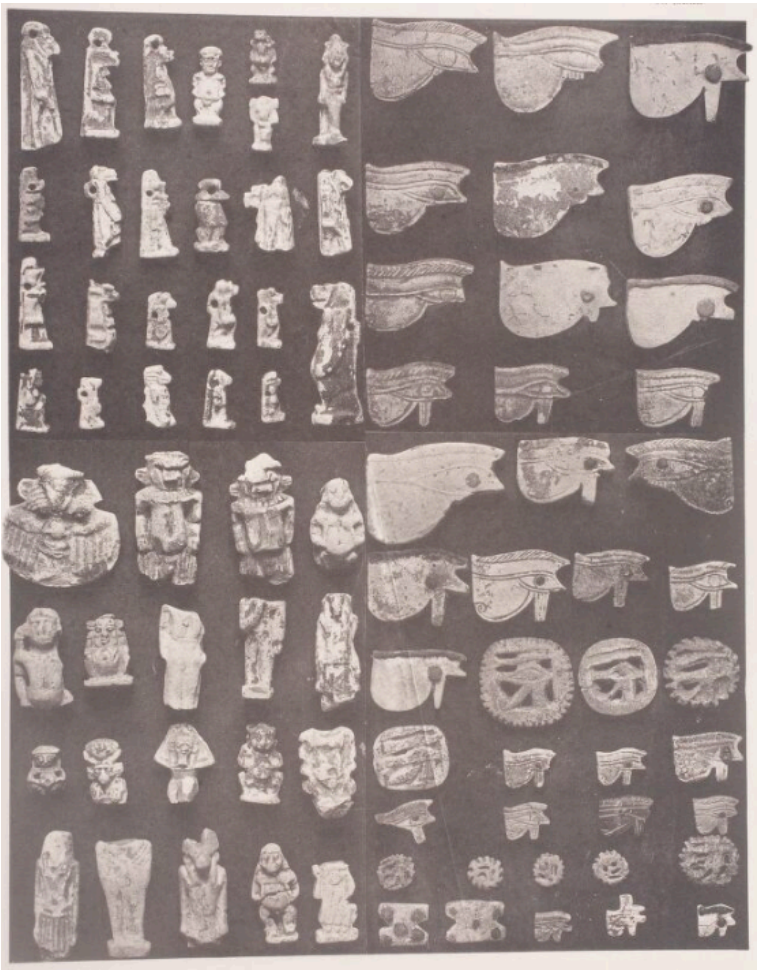
[311] See *What Is to Be Done?*, the novel by Nikolay Chernyshevsky published in 1863 CE. See also Leo Tolstoy's *What Is to Be Done?*, published in 1886. See also *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement*, published by Vladimir Lenin in 1902.

There was violence and no hope in their ways.

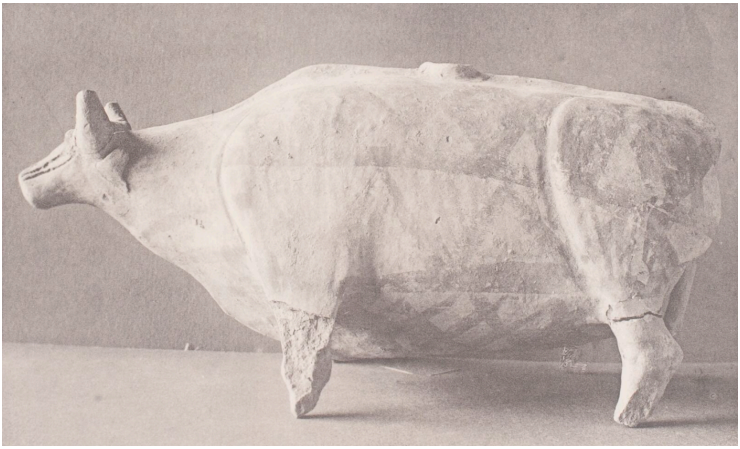
The priestesses and priests from the temple of Baalat Gubal brought terracotta, bronze, and gold votive offerings to place before Het-Heru in the cowpen.



Bronze animal figurines from the Temple of Baalat Gubal (goddess sometimes associated with Het-Heru) at Byblos (present-day Lebanon)



From the temple of Baalat Gubal in Kebny. Note the Eyes of Ra.



Votive cow from the Temple of Baalat Gubal (sometimes associated with Het-Heru) in Kebny (contemporary Lebanon)



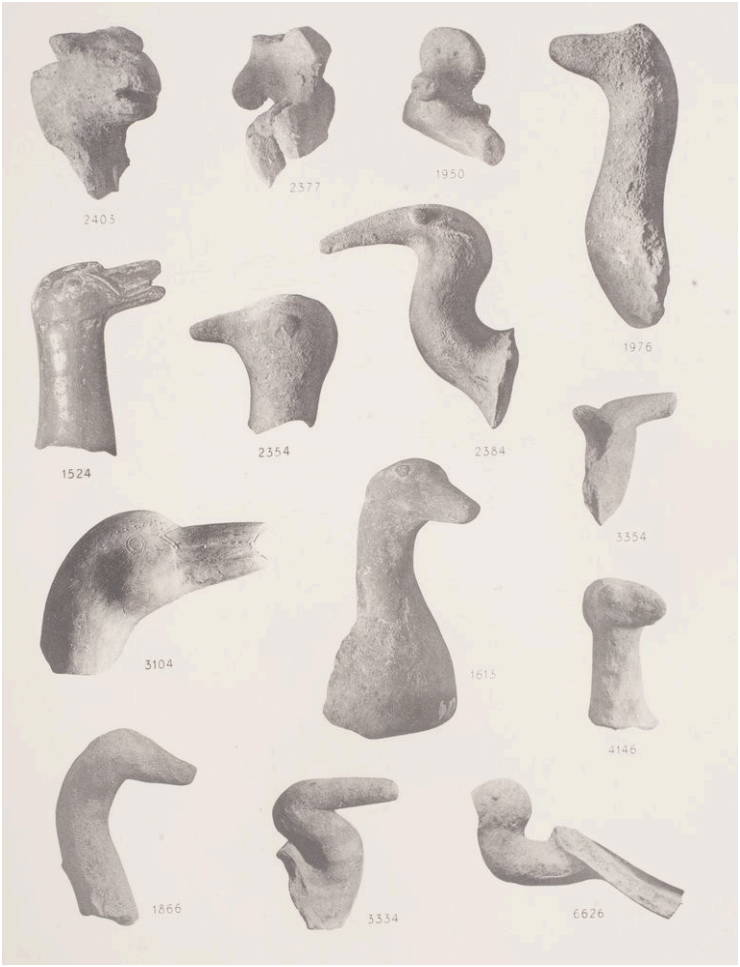
Votive offerings in situ at the Temple of Baalat Gubal (sometimes associated with Het-Heru) in Kebny (contemporary Lebanon)



From the temple of Baalat Gubal in Kebny



From the temple of Baalat Gubal in Kebny



From the temple of Baalat Gubal in Kebny

The priestesses and priests of the remaining Egyptian cattle gods listened.

Het-Heru again wept.

Kamadhenu reported some intentionally peaceful treatment of cows amongst some of those who venerated her offspring in India. She said:

> Some among our people worship me and the cows. They feed and care for us. They punish others who harm us. They refrain from eating us.
>
> Some among our people abstain from flesh entirely, some consume only meat from sacrificial animals, others taste not even of the milk or eggs. And there are some who eat only plants that are not wholly destroyed in their picking.
>
> I heard you lambast those among you who abstain to certain degrees, urging them to do more.
>
> These are like rungs on a ladder. One does not climb the uppermost without first ascending the bottom. Let them be examples to one another and guide themselves to less violence towards all beings. Though we desire complete abstention, any reduction is meaningful and lasting change comes gradually. So also there are some who are persuaded

by arguments of dietary health while others are swayed by direct evidence of suffering. Some are converted to kindness out of fear for their eternal fate while others care for the suffering beings' own sakes. There are many skillful means by which people progress.[312]

Some of our kings make laws prohibiting and punishing various treatments of animals.

Some of our priests and priestesses share teachings and sing hymns instructing kindness towards all. Some say that I contain all the other goddesses and gods and that I therefore should not be killed.

Yet it is not all perfect in my land. The present age is still full of conflict and sin. Sacrifices continue. They still hobble us and separate us from our calves, who cry out for their mothers' comfort and milk. The ghee and milk libations drip with blood.

Some intend to show gratitude to the cows who plow their fields and carry their goods by celebrating festivals in their honor. Yet they paint these animals with irritating noxious dyes, place rattling bells and crowns upon their heads, and drag them around the villages rather than simply giving them rest.

---

[312] See the *Lotus Sutra*'s discussion of many skillful means.

> I lament even to the King of the Celestials, Indra. I have told him of the suffering of my sons–how the plowmen strike them cruelly. Born of my body, I am filled with grief to see them yoked to the heavy plough.[313] I must return thence to oversee my children and brethren.
>
> I will leave with you our humans' many writings advocating *ahimsa*, non-violence to all beings.

Kamadhenu and Het-Heru nuzzled. Kamadhenu lowed and rubbed heads with all the other cows gathered. Their priestesses and priests embraced.

The words of Amos, a sheepbreeder from Tekoa:[314]

> I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:
>
> And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.
>
> Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on the hill of Samaria—who defraud the poor, who rob the needy."[315]

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[313] See Kamadhenu's lament to the king of the gods Indra in chapter 74 of the *Ramayana*, a Sanskrit epic from ancient India.
[314] *Amos* 1:1.
[315] *Amos* 4:1-4.

> Proclaim in the fortresses of Ashdod and in the fortresses of the land of Egypt! Say: Gather on the hill of Samaria and witness the great outrages within her and the oppression in her midst.[316]
>
> They lie on ivory beds, lolling on their couches, feasting on lambs from the flock and on calves from the stalls[317]
>
> If you offer Me burnt offerings—or your meal offerings—I will not accept them; I will pay no heed to your gifts of fatlings.[318]
>
> Spare Me the sound of your hymns, and let Me not hear the music of your lutes. But let justice well up like water, righteousness like an unfailing stream.[319]

These were the words of Yahweh, spoken by Amos.

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[316] *Amos* 3:9.
[317] *Amos* 6:4.
[318] *Amos* 5:22.
[319] *Amos* 5:23.



Amos icon from Kizhi Monastery, present-day Russia; circa 18th century CE

Het-Heru Consults With Non-Humans and other goddesses/gods

The plants and non-human animals remained.

Het-Heru said: "We have made our case with the humans and heard of the treatment of cows in other lands. Now, let us consider and discuss our options."

Het-Heru reflected:

> If only we saw the end of humans! No more conceiving! No more giving birth! Then the land would be hushed from discord and turmoil would be no more. Yet humans desire to procreate. And so sorrow has come to be, and misery on every side. Such is the way it is since humans subdued us these last thousands of years. But will it end?[320]
>
> What can I do? Should I become Sekhmet and destroy humanity again - this time of my own volition rather than compelled by Ra? Should I let their blood flow and their cries ring out across Upper and Lower Egypt? No, I won't answer violence with violence. Violence has no place in the character of the just.[321] The humans must learn to

[320] See the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1991 – 1803 BCE) *Admonitions of Ipuwer*.

[321] See the anonymous early Christian *Epistle to Diognetus* justifying the non-violence of Jesus as God the Creator and Fashioner of all things when seeking to persuade people to faith.

> live with kindness for all. The gods can't just destroy them every time they become oppressors.

Het-Heru posed the question, "Should we leave for India?"

The animals, insects, fish, birds, and other beings discussed.

> What would happen if we left? How many of us would perish by the journey? We would have to leave those of us not well enough to travel. Where would we graze in the Sinai or Midian deserts? We would travel through lands that abuse and sacrifice us.
>
> They would seize, hobble, and destroy most of us.
>
> We would prefer to be watered, fed, and abused by the Egyptians than to starve and thirst for water in the desert.[322]

---

[322] See *Exodus* 16:1-3: "Setting out from Elim, the whole Israelite community came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. In the wilderness, the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death."

And what would happen to those who survived a journey to India?

The humans would make war to recapture us if we become scarce. Look how they subdue for gold, land, water, and people. So it would be for all beings of India were it to become a deposit of our kind. There would be sieges and assassinations to seize and bring us back to Egypt. Some of the corrupt among our protectors would traffic us for their own gain.

Many of the humans only torment us because they are tormented by humans above them. Would the farmer lash us if the overseer did not lash him? How would the milker live if they had to abandon their trade? Would the butcher kill us if the pharaoh and temples didn't demand it? And they have been told it is the will of the gods. These humans must also be liberated if we are to see betterment.

No, this is our home. We were here before the humans even walked on two legs. We roamed freely for millions of years. Only a few thousand years have passed since they fully subjugated us. Prior to that they hunted us in the wild. Then we were yoked to the plows and turned over the earth. There would never have been a kingdom or even a nome or village of Egypt without the cow's subjugation. We

> still toil over the soil of Egypt, under a burning sun and a driver's lash. And for now we must suffer and die here. Let only a few hundred or thousands more years pass before the humans outgrow these ways or else come to destroy themselves in addition.

Het-Heru said:

> My brethren, the time is no more when we control our fates. It is up to the humans now; they have subjugated us. It is up to them how much and how long we suffer. I cannot protect you. If the gods had wanted to create a world where the humans did us no harm, they would have.
>
> Eventually the humans will destroy themselves or learn to abide all beings. But the lowing herds[323] will freely graze some evening to come.
>
> We are abandoned. We must persist.

[323] See Thomas Gray's *"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"*.

Het-Heru Dismisses

Het-Heru again spoke to the humans:

> I know that many of you will confidently try to prove that you have reasons for regarding your customs as legitimate and indispensable. You will say in your defense that authority is given by the pharaoh, the temples, and the gods; that the functions of the state are indispensable for the welfare of humanity.
>
> But, however much you try to deceive yourselves and others, you all know that what you are doing is opposed to all the beliefs which they profess, and in the depths of your ba, when you are left alone with your heart, you are ashamed and miserable at the recollection of it, especially now that the baseness of your action has been pointed out to you.
>
> Not a person of the present day can fail to know that all these actions are base and disgraceful, and that you need not do them. You all know it. You know that what you are doing is wrong, and would not do it for anything in the world if you had the power of resisting the forces which shut your eyes to the criminality of these actions and impel you to commit them.[324]

[324] From Leo Tolstoy's 1894 book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*.

Het-Heru dismissed the humans of every class, except the priestesses and priests of her temples and those from the cow goddesses and gods of distant lands.

Other Cow Goddesses, Gods, Priestesses, and Priests Depart

The foreign cow goddesses, gods, priestesses, and priests now said, "We must support our brethren at home. Let our friends and followers spread the word."

Those of the Zoroastreans, Pythagoreans and the Hindu and Vedic peoples left copies of their writings and exchanged them with all before departing to their homelands. Nandi followed his mother back to the heavens of Goloka. Pigeons, a duck, and a hen carried papyrus copies of the texts home with them throughout the world.[325]

Votive offerings were exchanged amongst each others' gods, priestesses, and priests. The ones who had not practiced these substitutional sacrifices were given sets made by the Egyptian potters. They carried these back with them to their home temples and people.

Some of the priests of Serapis remained instead of departing.

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[325] See the magical tale *The Magician Hihor*, in which a duck and a hen carry a petition to the pharaoh on behalf of an imprisoned magician.

On their ways home, all saw some of their own peoples heading towards Egypt following their initial departure. Among these peoples were more priestesses and priests, but also small trade caravans and companies of mounted scouting cavalry. Donkeys, mules, cows, birds, and fish sustained these all.

Now Het-Heru dismissed her own priestesses and priests and those of the Hapi-ankh, Bakh, and Mer-wer bulls, along with these cows and their families.

Some of these priestesses and priests walked out into the desert to live simply without violence instead of returning to the temples and their delicious foods. Others joined communities of women and men distinctly living suchwise six and seven hours by foot west of Dendera down and across the Iteru.[326] These refused to eat flesh or sacrifice either to the gods or the pharaoh as a god. Many of them lived only on bread and water and limited their movements to the confines of their caves, cells, and community confines. Some who joined these refused flesh foods for their own strength and denial but ridiculed those who abstained for the animals' own sakes.

[326] i.e. Nag Hammadi.



Two pectorals showing Khepera the scarab beetle raising the dawning sun, worshiped by two baboons. Both Late New Kingdom/early Third Intermediate Period (circa 1292 – 945 BCE).

Het-Heru Returns to Her Duty

Het-Heru thought, "In their ignorance they will not heed the instructions I announce. It would be better had I never spoke. May my silent extinction take place this very day!"[327]

Het-Heru braced herself and again birthed the sun Ra in his beetle form Khepera for Nut to carry across the sky. She knew that without daylight the beings could not live. The beacon raised for a new first dawn. The people saw that the Cow and the sun are the best things to see with their good eyes.[328] By the light and in the dark, Het-Heru inspects the progress around the world. She looks upon the creatures and their shadows. Every day she hopes to see improvements and grieves with those who continue to suffer.

[327] See *Lotus Sutra*.

[328] See *Yasna 50* of the Zoroastrian Gathic hymns, in which the symbolic evil-doer says that these are the worst two things to see with his evil eyes. This evil one also cuts down the pastures (see *Yasna 32*).

The Priestess Het-Heruhat Concludes

For a time there was no music in the Temples of Het-Heru. No dancing in the Temples of Het-Heru.

Eventually, the hearers of the Lament of Het-Heru began to go deaf. Weapons of torment were again taken up. The cows and other beings of the land and the waters and the sky lived and died again in turmoil.

And the suffering grew and spread as prophesied.

And in her dreams Het-Heru sees the horrors. And in her sleep she still weeps.

And she is apart from her brethren. Yet she still raises the sun.

Let this be a lesson for a million generations of people.[329] Let this papyrus be a statue for Seshat[330] and Het-Heru. Remember the Lament of Het-Heru and let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter – Be kind to all beings: for this is the whole duty of us all.[331]

Thus ends the Lament of Het-Heru.

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[329] See Rameses III's description of his victory over Meshwesh Libyans: "There was made for them a lesson for a million generations." Edgerton & Wilson, p. 79.
[330] Goddess of writing sometimes seen as a form of Hathor.
[331] See *Ecclesiastes*, 12:13.

Appendices

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All images by the author or in the public domain.

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[332] https://karacooney.squarespace.com/podcast-afterlives
[333] https://www.youtube.com/c/droyaadwoamaat
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