

Egyptian Serpent Power, by Joan Ann Lansberry

*(The impetus for this research began after an event belonging to the realm of Runa. After an evening studying the two volume Budge dictionary, examining the meanings of various Egyptian words, perhaps my subconscious was seeded. A 'voice' whispered itself into my mind's ear, "**Weret-Hekau**". Having no idea what it meant, other than that it was Egyptian, I was keen to know its meaning and looked it up. The discovery of this name as both an epithet and a snake shaped goddess in her own right inspired the following research into snake mythology. **Not merely a curiosity of long bygone days, this mythology has important implications for those on an initiatory path of empowerment today.**)*

The serpent has not fared well in Christian mythology, as I was again reminded when I viewed religious artwork at the Metropolitan museum:



Detail of Vermeer's "Allegory of the Catholic Faith" - MMA 32.100.18

From gallery label:
"the serpent (Satan) crushed by a stone (Christ, the "cornerstone" of the church)"

What caused the Christians to fear the snake so much? Why do they associate their Devil with the serpent? It was not so in pagan religions. Greeks honored the Agathodaimon as a good genie, protecting the individual. Furthermore, snake metaphor in Egyptian mythology is rich and varied, serving both the kingly and the common perspectives. Even today, the Hindus regard the inner kundalini serpent as that in us which ascends to the immortal divine. I find similar concepts in the esoteric applications of Egyptian thought. But first I will deal with the less esoteric aspects.

There are four snake goddesses and one snake god. *(The snake entity known as Apep is not a subject of this paper.)*

The snake makes its earliest appearance in depictions of the uraeus - the rearing cobra on the king's (and the queen's) brow – no later than the reign of Den, from the first Dynasty. The British Museum has a small ivory label for Den's sandal (EA 55586) showing him in the 'smiting pose', and displaying the uraeus.

Also Petrie in his History of Egypt shows a fragment from Den's lid of a seal box which features a cobra. The cobra hasn't got the expanded hood, but the basic coiled shape is there.

Our term 'uraeus' comes from a Greek word that likely derived from the Egyptian word 'iaret', "She who rears up". The cobra can make itself appear more imposing by raising its head and spreading its neck into a hood, *(the way it is depicted in the imagery and statuary)*. It makes a fitting symbol for the power of the pharaoh, for the Egyptian cobra has the third most toxic venom of any cobra. However, it's considered deadlier than the Northern Philippine Cobra or Cape cobra because it is much larger, more aggressive, and can inject more venom in a single

bite. But contrary to myth, cobras will rarely attack unless provoked. However if provoked, it will make full use of its deadly force.






























British Museum EA 55586 - Ivory Label

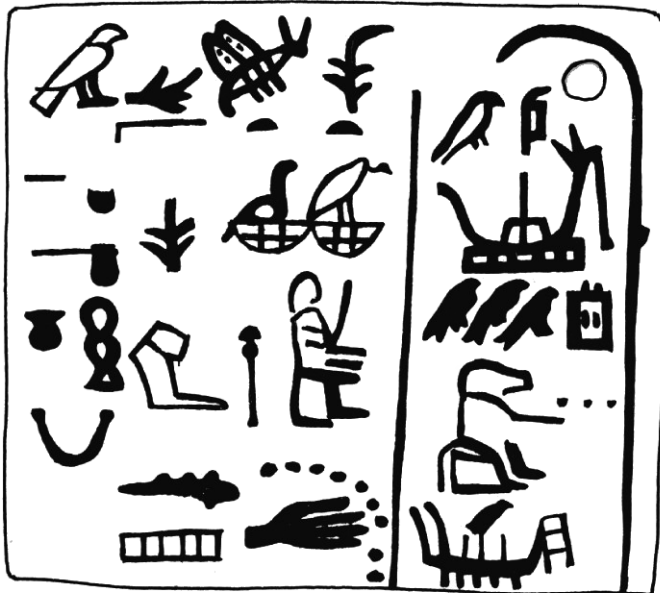


Lid of seal box, History of Egypt

The most frequently seen snake deity is the cobra goddess Wadjet, (*Wadjyt, Uadjjet, Edjo, Uto*), whose principal cult center was at Buto in the Nile Delta region of Lower Egypt. Wadjet had a shrine, attested even from pre-dynastic times called the '*per-nu*', or 'house of flame'. She had her own priesthood, as well, attested to in a Ramesside inscription on a block statue, "High Priest of Wadjet". Wadjet's name may mean '*the green or fresh one*,' or '*she of the papyrus*.' According to one of the Pyramid Texts, she was responsible for creating the papyrus swamps. Wadjet can also appear in leonine form suggesting her role as 'Eye of Ra'. The first hieroglyph below is the 'Udjat' eye (*eye of Horus*), and the second is 'the goddess of the eye of Horus', (*Horus being 'Ra-Horakhty*), the same as Wadjet? The 'flame' (**wDja** per Gardiner's list) and the cobra are both there: (Also, see Udjat with Uraeus, pg 3 illustration)

utcha-t     **Utchait**     B.D. 14, 6,
 = hale (wDjA), healthy the goddess of the eye of Horus.
    = **Wadjet**              

Wadjet was closely linked to the king, both in the protective uraeus at his brow and also in the 'two ladies' title of his formal nomenclature. Wadjet of Lower Egypt joined with Nekhbet of Upper Egypt to become 'the two ladies', thereby suggesting the union of the two regions over which the king ruled. The earliest depiction of 'the two ladies' is on an ivory label of king Aha. However it isn't known if this was part of his formal titulary. Den is the first king likely to have used a Nebti-name, and certainly Semerkhet did. Again it is an ivory label, this one found in his tomb, that shows Wadjet and Nekhbet (*British Museum EA 32668*):



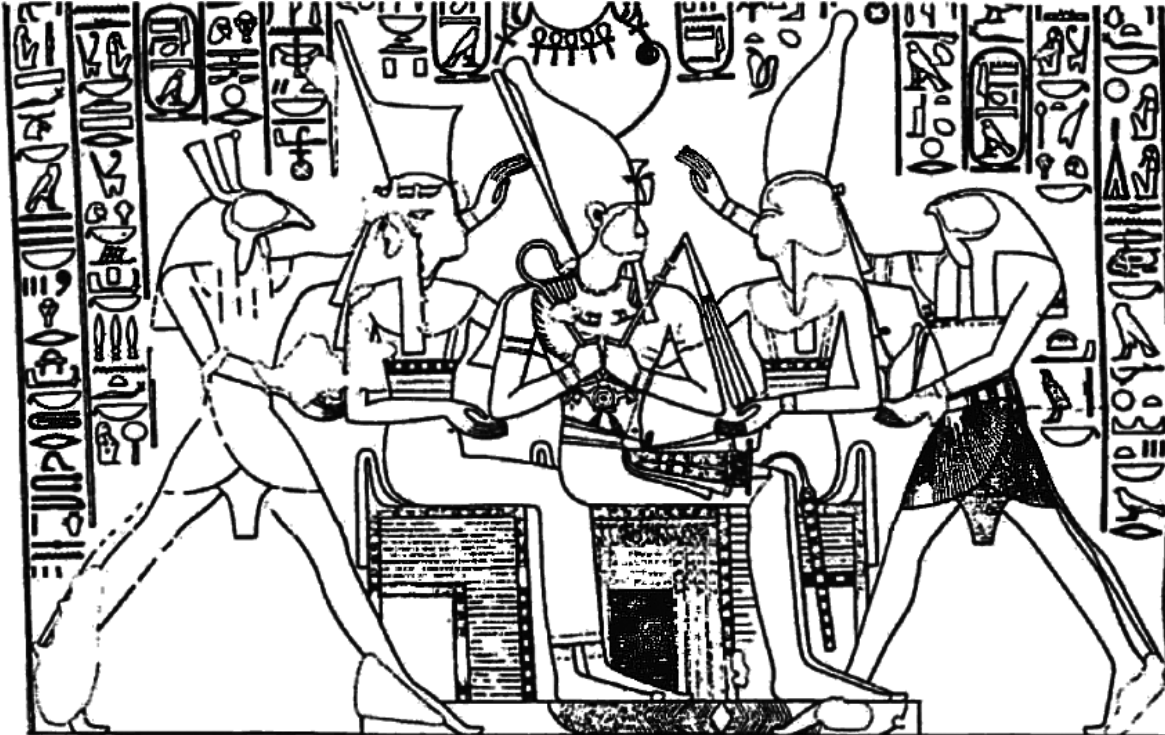
British Museum EA 32668
Ivory oil label
From tomb of Semerkhet
First Dynasty
Image © Trustees
of the British Museum



Udjat eye with Wadjet uraeus at Metropolitan Museum

Above Wadjet and Nekhbet, we can see 'the sedge and the bee', as well, further speaking of the king's rule over the two lands. The bee represents Lower Egypt, while the sedge represents Upper Egypt, (*which is south of lower Egypt, which earns the title by being higher in elevation*). Nekhbet is a vulture goddess whose name means 'she of Nekheb'. Nekheb (*el Kab*), was close to Nekhen, an early capital of all Upper Egypt, thereby earning her the titulary association. Only traces of her originally impressive sanctuary remains at el Kab, but there's plenty of other evidence to show her importance. Sometimes the 'two ladies' are both depicted as vultures or as serpents, this more for decorative balance of a heraldic device, rather than mythological reasons. In this case, and in others, their headwear usually identifies them, Nekhbet with the white crown of Upper Egypt, and Wadjet with the Red crown of Lower Egypt.

"At his accession, each king was given the title 'He of the Two Ladies'. In coronation scenes, the goddesses were often shown in human form on either side of the king. Wadjet often appeared as the uraeus cobra on the king's forehead, and Nekhbet hovered above the king, shading and fanning him with her wings. The male equivalent was the Two Lords, Horus and Seth, who could also represent north and south," as Geraldine Pinch explains in *Handbook of Egyptian mythology*, page 211.



"Figure 46. A king protected by the Two Ladies (Wadjet and Nekhbet) and the Two Lords (Seth and Horus).
Line drawing of a late New Kingdom relief in the temple of Khonsu at Karnak. (Art Resource)"

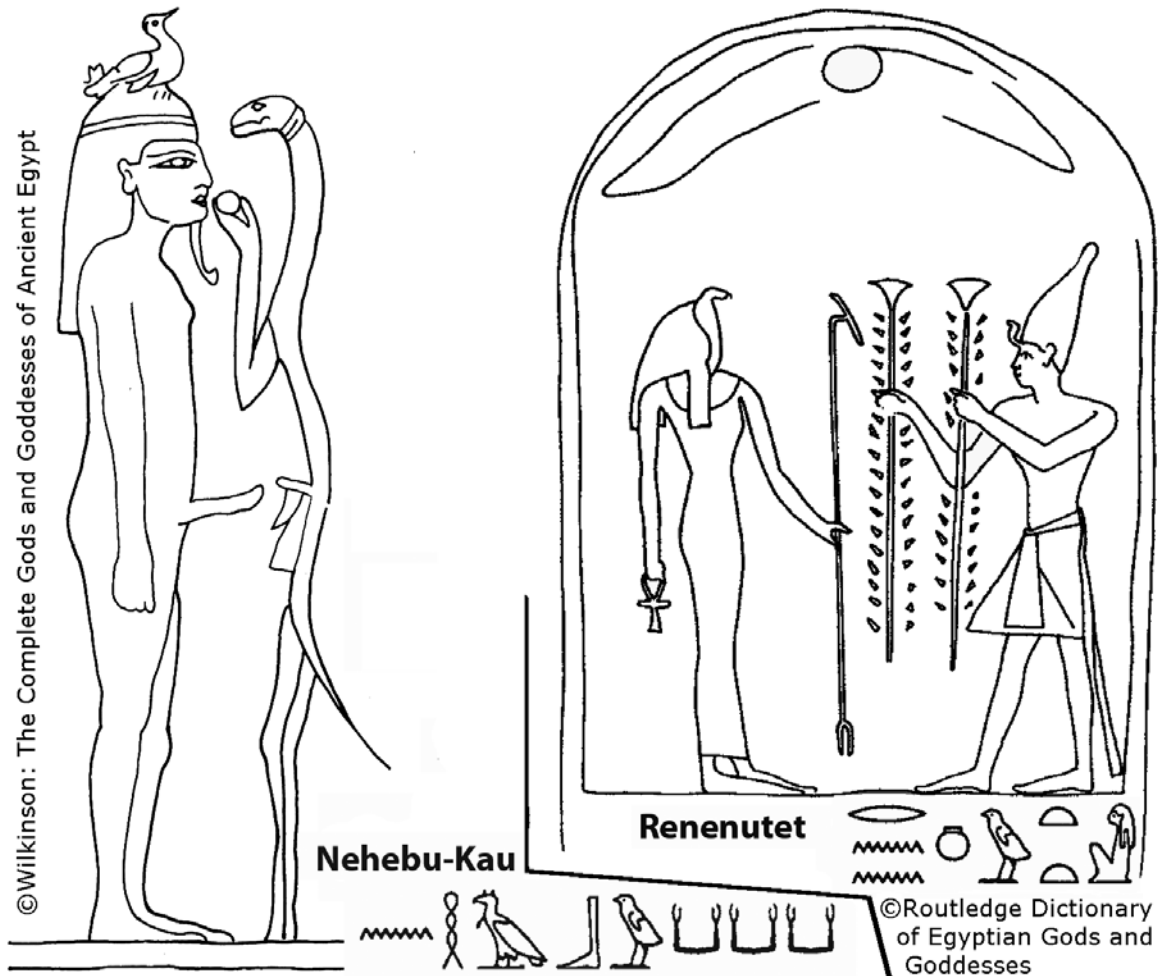
© HANDBOOK OF EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY, by Geraldine Pinch

We have Set, Wadjet, king, Nekhbet and Horus, perhaps they felt it more balanced to place the deities, 'Upper, Lower, (king), Upper, Lower'.

Not only is location of a region important, environment is also a cue to identity of three important cobra goddesses, as in where they were likely to be encountered: marshes (*Wadjet*), cornfields (*Renenutet*), and desert hills (*Meretseger*). However, not all snake deities are female, there is one exception, Nehebu-Kau, who is an extremely powerful deity. In contrast to the other snake deities, Nehebu-kau (*Nehebkaui*) is male. In early depictions, he is fully serpentine, while later on he appears with a human body and a snake head.

Early in mythological history, in the Pyramid Texts he is given the role of aiding the deceased king, and offering him food. But there's confusion over his parentage. One version has him as son of Selkis (*Serket*), a scorpion goddess, which emphasizes his later role of restoring the health of those who have been bitten by scorpions and other venomous creatures. However another version renders him as son of Geb and the snake goddess Renenutet. Perhaps this is the earlier one, for he would have inherited the nourishing aspects of his mother, who was known as "She who nourishes".

He's a powerful god, not subject to magic, nor can he be harmed by water or fire. When the reciter of the Book of the Dead spell declares, "I pass eternity like Nehebkaui", no doubt he is referring to his eternal invulnerable nature.



Left: Detail of a cartonnage mummy case, Louvre; Right: Stela from Deir el-Medina, Dyn. XIX. – “Renenutet receives papyrus plants from Thutmose IV”

One of his titles is ‘he who harnesses the spirits’ and Nehebu-kau is known for the ‘seven cobras’ he swallowed. Jeremy Naydler in “Temple of the Cosmos” also gives “Provider of Life-Energies ” as meaning of Nehebu-kau's name, (page 36). Frankfort and Cramer in “Kingship and the Gods” say his name can be translated as “Bestower of Dignities” or as “Uniter of the Ka's”, all to empower the sovereign.

Nehebu-kau’s most likely mother Renenutet (*Renenet, Ernutet, Hermouthis, Thermouthis*), can appear either as a human with a snake head or as a snake with a women’s head. Early on, Renenutet is one of the names given to the uraeus. In those ‘pyramid’ ages, her most vital role concerned protection of the king in this life and beyond, *everyone else waiting their turn after the king*. As the centuries went by, she became more a ‘goddess of the people’, however. While she was involved with continuing nourishment for the *kas* of the dead, her more immediate role was insuring a bountiful harvest for the living.

Renenutet was goddess of the fields, granaries, and kitchens. As such, she was very popular with agricultural workers in the Faiyum, from the Middle Kingdom onwards. She might not

have had temples of her own, but many village shrines were installed in her honor and some temples included a shrine to Renenutet.



"Fig 4.19. Offerings are made to Renenutet in the form of a cobra with a woman's head. New Kingdom stele"
This image also in *Serpent Myths of Ancient Egypt*, (1873) Author W.R. Cooper claims it is in British Museum 'Belmore Collection', but further search did not locate it there.

Festivals marked the harvest, with first fruits being offered to the goddess at the new moon, and another larger festival at the full moon.

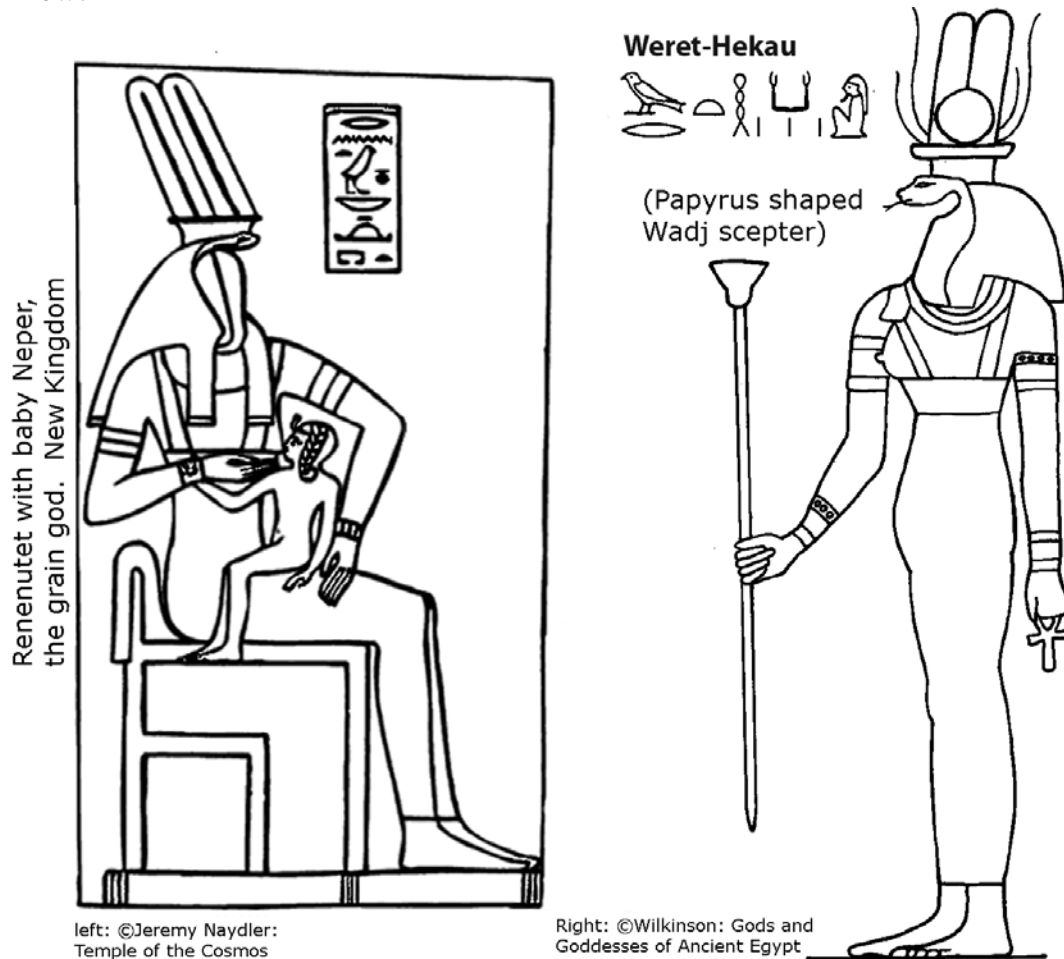
In scenes reminiscent of Isis with Horus the younger as a child, Renenutet is shown with Neper, the god of the grain, as a child, whom she nurses to maturity. In later times within the state religion, her roles were assimilated within Isis' large domain, and Neper became an aspect of Osiris. Within the common people's religion, she also underwent a metamorphosis. Renetutet was then thought to control fate and destiny, apportioning the length of one's life, becoming either associated or amalgamated with the Greco-Roman goddess Bona Fortuna, the 'goddess of good luck'. Her popularity as a goddess was so strong that not only did she survive well into Greek religion, by then called Thermouthis (*Terenouthis*), she survived beyond that, becoming a Christian saint, Thermuthis. The Metropolitan museum has a bracelet showing Isis and Renenutet in their later forms:



Gold Bracelet, Egyptian,
Probably 1st century BCE -
1st century A.D.
Metropolitan Museum #23.2.1

"The bodies of two snakes intertwine to form a Herakles knot, the centerpiece of this bracelet. The snake on the left represents Agathodaimon, and the cobra on the right Terenouthis, two agrarian/fertility deities associated with Serapis and Isis, respectively. On the platform between them stand two goddesses, Isis-Tyche (or Isis-Fortuna),..., and the nude Aphrodite." (from gallery label)

"Who today knows that the holy Mary the Egyptian of the church of Saint-Genes of Flavigny is none other than an avatar of the goodly, nurturing Renenutet-Thermuthis?" Claude Traunecker asks in his *The Gods of Egypt*, translated by David Lorton. Few know, but we know!



Returning back to Egyptian mythology, Weret-Hekau's name means 'Great of Magic', a title given to many goddesses, such as Isis, Mut Pakhet or Sekhmet, (*the 'great of magic' title is 'wer-hekau' for gods*). Pakhet-Weret-Hekau in lioness form presents Seti I with the symbol of the jubilee festival at the Great Hypostyle Hall in Karnak. A stele of Thutmose III is inscribed with epithets referring to his coronation ceremony. "The king is referred to as 'the one who took the Beautiful (white crown), who joined the Two (double crown) with ankh and was'. Also he was known as 'son of the White Crown whom Red Crown bore, whom Weret-Hekau nursed.'" (*Cline and O'Connor in Thutmose III, page 212*)

Nursing the King is one of her roles, and one of Tutankhamun's amulets illustrates that exquisitely. This lovely piece was found inside the small golden shrine discovered in Tutankhamun's tomb. "The main figure is made of gilded wood strung on a necklace of simple beads of gold, carnelian, feldspar and glass. Further strings of tiny beads surround the necks of the goddess and the king, and the feet of the king. The text on the base describes Tutankhamun as 'beloved of Weret-Hekau'" (*Tutankhamun, text T.J.H. James*)



FIGURE OF
WERET-HEKAU

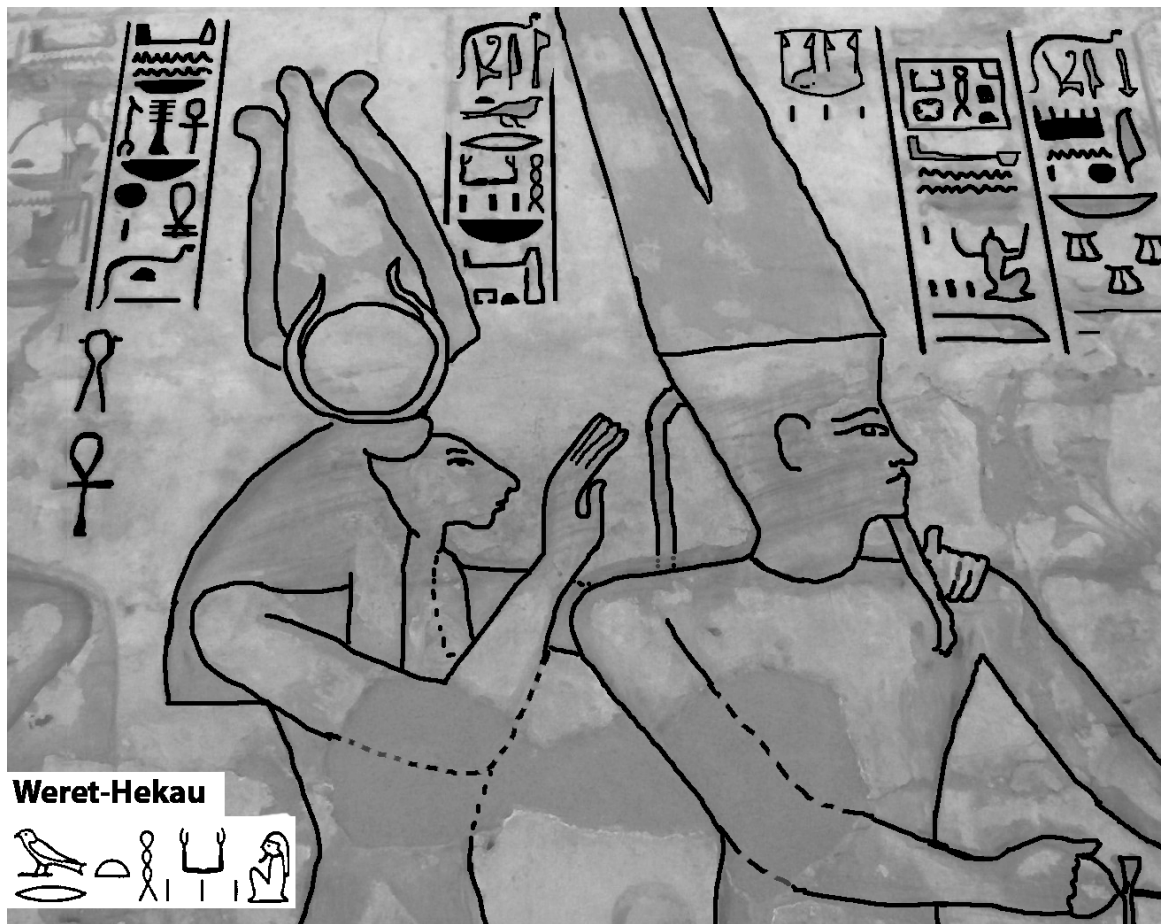
(CARTER 108C, J.D'E. 61952;
HEIGHT OF FIGURE 14 CM)

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Adapted from color photos in _Tutankhamun_, text T.J.H. James,
photos A DeLuca

Weret-Hekau had her own priesthood, as reliefs and statues show. The second register on a relief of Tja-wy has scenes of measuring grain and of a storehouse with a shrine of the cobra goddess. "Also unusual is the circumstance that Tja-wy bears several titles connecting him with what appears to be a formal cult of Weret-Hekau: 'chief of the weeb-priests of Weret-Hekau', in the two reliefs and the British Museum statue, and 'custodian of Weret-Hekau' and 'overseer of the storehouse of Weret-Hekau' in the Cairo statue", (from *"A Relief of the Royal Cup-Bearer Tja-wy"*, by William Kelly Simpson, *Boston Museum Bulletin*, Vol. LXXI 1973 No. 360). Furthermore a statue of Amenhotep-Huy, a busy chief steward of Memphis, has a long biographical text which includes his titles, among them "Priest of Weret-Hekau ", (from *"Neb-Maat-Ra-United-with-Ptah"*, by Robert G. Morkot, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol 49, No. 4. (Oct. 1990), pp. 323-324)

You have to read the hieroglyphs to know who is being depicted:















The goddess Weret-Hekau behind Amun-Re, at Medinet Habu, Rameses III's temple. (Original color photo found at {<http://maatkara.extra.hu/werethekau.htm>})

The following image doesn't look much different than the one earlier of Renenutet, but the hieroglyph reveals it is Meretseger:

Gordon and Schwabe speak of the "Egyptian association of 'back' and 'spine' with magical powers", and notes "the Egyptian word *psd* for 'spine'...with a different determinative also means 'to give light', 'to gleam', 'to shine'. (*The Quick and the Dead*, pages 88-89)

I found the hieroglyphs in Budge's two volume dictionary:













<p>pest (pest-t)             </p>
--

The Egyptians understood the vivifying nature of the spine, endowed “with life-giving properties. Texts from the Old Kingdom on mention the back (spine) or the bones which comprise it (i.e. the neck, trunk and tail vertebrae) in contexts that suggest they were all believed to fulfill magic or physiological functions in reproduction and revivification of the dead. Thus, in PT Utterance 336, the king says to the sun god ‘Hail to you, Bull of bulls, when you rise, I grasp you by your tail, I grip you by the root of your tail (?) ... As for my corpse, it is rejuvenated.’ And similarly, in PT Utterance 539, ‘I will ascend and rise up to the sky. My spine is the Wild Bull;...[my vertebrae (?) are the two Enneads; I will ascend and rise up to the sky.’” (*TQatD*, page 95)

The Egyptian word for ‘Bull’ is the same word for the vital life force, ‘KA’, possibly the sameness due to their belief that bulls were especially “high in this energy or life force.” (*Ibid*, page 82)

Interestingly, the bull also enjoys a special role in Hindu mythology, as Nandi is the bull which Shiva rides and is the gate keeper of Shiva and Parvati. The yogic notion of ‘*prana*’, the vital breath, is most similar to the Egyptian ‘ka’. However, the the Oriental ‘*Ch’i*’, ‘*qi*’ or ‘*ki*’, the vital force which flows, even has a similar sound.

As one Egyptian word for ‘spine’ has associations with ‘to shine’, so does the Egyptian glyph for ‘Ka’, the two hands outstretched; if it is combined with other glyphs, also means ‘to shine’ or ‘to be radiant’:

KA	beka	  ,   , to shine, to
	illumine, to be bright ; compare Heb.  .	
ka	bekau	   ,    ,
D 28	light, radiance, splendour.	

To return back to the Pyramid Texts”, one passage “tells us that the King 'absorbed the seven frontal cobras [*uraei*] which then became the seven frontal vertebrai which commanded the entire dorsal spine””. (*Lucie Lamy in _Egyptian Mysteries_*, page 170)

In Utterance 478, the king exclaims:

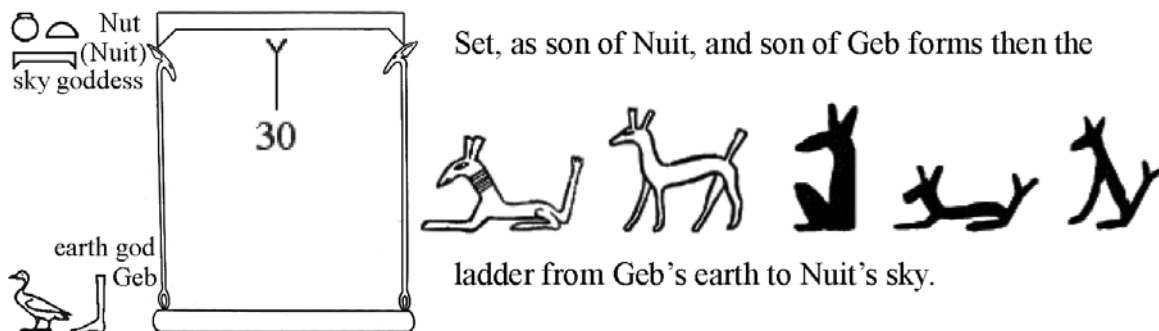
I am the Eye of Horus...I ascend to the sky upon the ladder of the god [Seth].

I appear as the uraeus which is on the vertex of Seth."

(From *_The Midnight Sun_*, by Alan F. Alford, page 266)

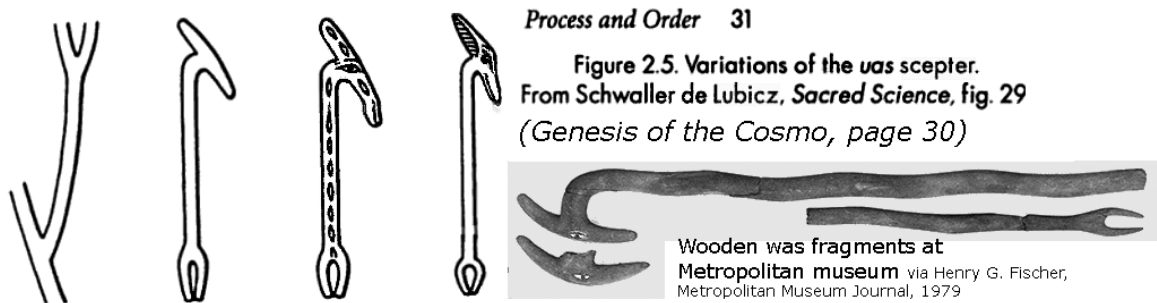
This concept of Set being as a **ladder** is born out elsewhere, for Alford in *_Midnight Sun_* declares "the Seth-animal was drawn with its ears and tail in the shape of the hieroglyph for the prop of the sky" (*Ibid*, 294). Most scholars agree the Was scepter bears the head of Set. Also, Wilkinson in *_Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art_* shows Was scepters shown standing on the

hieroglyph denoting earth (ta) and holding up the sky (pet hieroglyph), Set, as son of Nut, the sky goddess, and son of Geb, the earth god, forms then the ladder from earth to heaven (page 139):



Perhaps then we can better understand the image of the Was scepter supporting an uraeus (page 11) from a 12th dynasty North Pyramid of Lisht. Not only is the was scepter an emblem of Set's power, Alan F. Alford reveals "according to G.A. Wainwright the djed-pillar at Busiris (Djedu) belonged originally to Seth prior to its reassignment to Osiris." (*Alford, Midnight Sun, page 294*) The djed pillar represents the spine. The spine gives support to the chakras via the nerve ganglia. Note, too, the serpent in that relief is carrying the 'shen' glyph (=eternity), meaning it carries the way to immortality of the spirit.

DeLubicz via Paul LaViolette speaks of the Was (uas) as "a living branch that conducts nourishing, vivifying sap, fluid that ascends..." and even found some Was scepters that were "made from the living branch of a tree that had been cut so as to include a section of the lower source branch as well as two offshoots coming from its upper end (figure 2.5)."



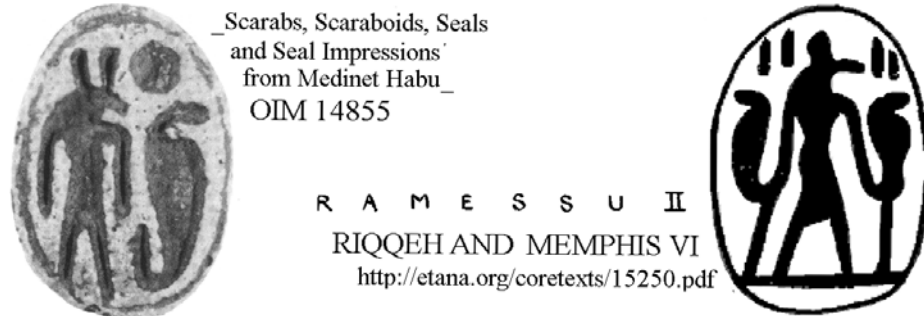
The Met museum has examples of wooden Was fragments.

This is the concept of the sap coming up from the earthly root. Although the Taoist internal yogic tradition only speaks of three energy centers (or 'Tan Tien'), they do speak of the root area and endeavor to build Chi pressure in the lower Tan Tien through 'contraction of the anus and perineum'. Through the breath and this drawing inwards and upwards, they increase their Ch'i.

Another Egyptian scepter, the Wadj, a stylized depiction of the papyrus plant, also conveys the idea of sap ascending from the root. "Wadj-amulets were worn by the living as well as the dead," and the glyph of a stylized papyrus stem meant "green' and 'flourishing" (*From*

Papyrus, by R. B. Parkinson, Stephen Quirke, Ute Wartenberg, and Bridget Leach, page 11).
Here we are back to Wadj and 'Wadjet/Uatchit', and 'the seven companions of Uatchit', noted by Budge, and the cobra goddess's shrine, the '*per-nu*', or 'house of flame'.

'House of flame', the spine with its radiating centers is a house of the kundalini flame which rises up. Here are two scarabs showing the god Set with a rising uraeus:



The small faience scarab (*above, left*) is from 19th to 21st Dynasty, and shows the god Set with an uraeus. The other one with Set and two uraei is from Ramses II's time. As we have seen before, the uraeus has associations with kingship:

"Pepi is the one who has grasped the White Crown,
The one upon whom is the curl of the Red Crown;
Pepi is the uraeus which proceeded from Seth,
The uraeus which moves back and forth, acquiring and fetching:
Restore Pepi to health, restore him to life..."

Adapted from two different translations of utterance 570 of the Pyramid Texts, Pepi I: Vestibule, West and East Walls:

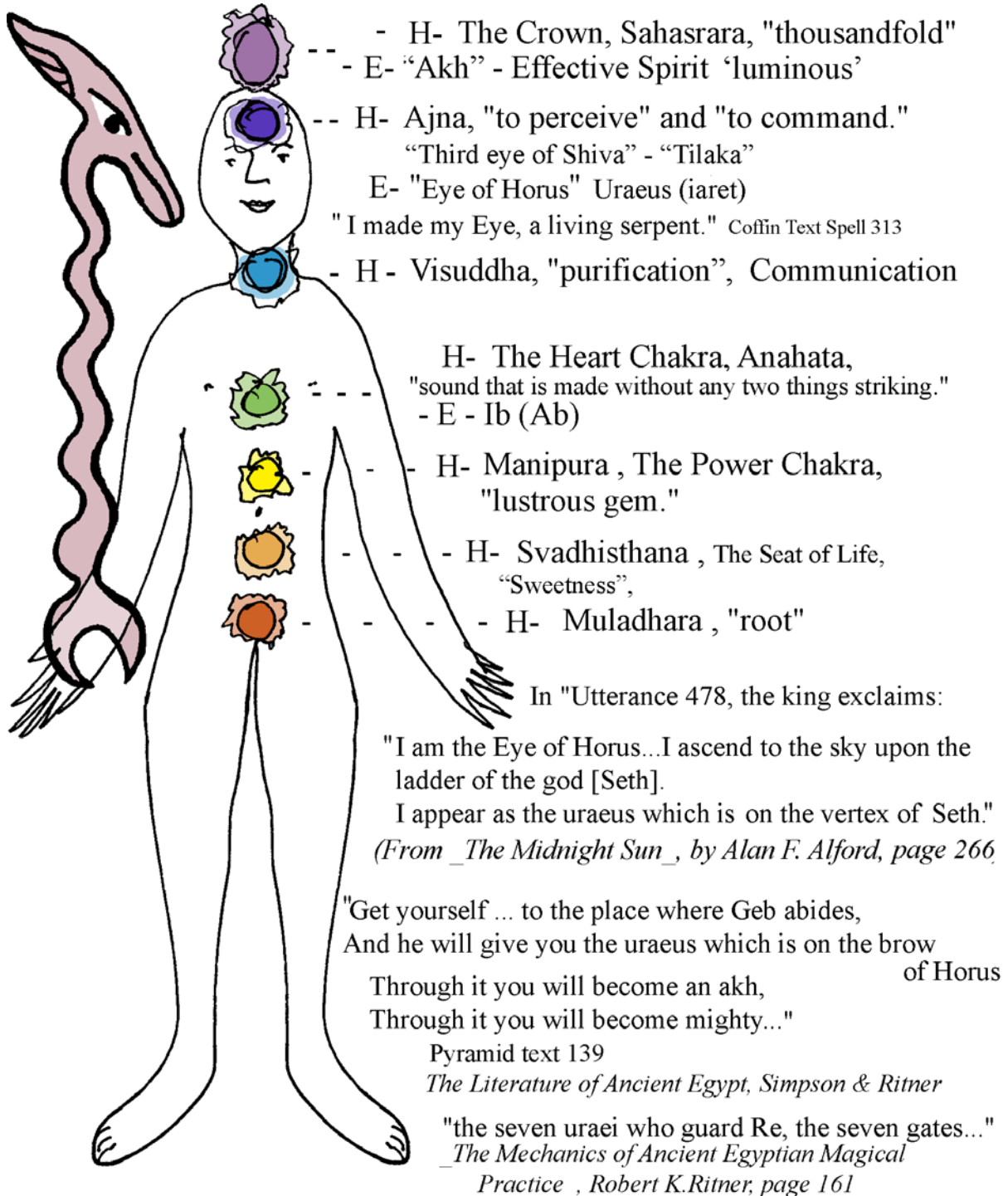
The Literature of Ancient Egypt, edited by William K. Simpson, pages 260-261

The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, James P. Allen and Peter Der Manuelian, page 178

The Egyptians weren't the only ones to be concerned with the soul's immortality, the Oriental yogic system also was/is. "The **nei tan** or 'inner alchemical' school was concerned with the development of the **nei qi**, or inner **qi**... Few martial artists today realize that the concept of the **tan tien** (**tanden** in Japanese) derives from the Taoist internal yogic tradition; the term **tan** (or **dan**) refers to the secret drug of immortality that participants in the yogic tradition believed could be developed in the area of the lower belly (the **tien**, literally, 'field'). Thus, **tan tien** translates as the 'field of the elixir of immortality.'" (*_Ba Gua: Hidden Knowledge in the Taoist Internal Martial Art_, by John Bracy, page 11*)

There are three of these **tan tiens**, a lower tan tien which correlates either to the solar plexus or lower back chakra, a middle tan tien which correlates to the heart chakra, and an upper tan tien which correlates to the third eye/ uraeus chakra. It's interesting that while the **nei qi** school doesn't count seven fields, they do speak of the importance of the root area, as mentioned earlier. They endeavor to build Chi pressure in the lower Tan Tien through 'contraction of the anus and perineum'. (*_Tan Tien Chi Kung: Foundational Exercises for Empty Force and Perineum Power_, by Mantak Chia, page 69*)

In Coffin text, spell 612 the reciter declares "I have swallowed the seven uraei", (*Ritner, _The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice_, page 104*). 'Swallowing' has magical implications, not necessarily with physical consumption (*although a spell may include such*), but it is to facilitate the intake of heka, the magical energy-force. Here are some correspondences between the chakras and Egyptian concepts:



In the Pyramid text, Unis 'eats' the magic of men and gods. "Unis's privileges will not be taken from him, for he has swallowed the Perception of every god." The 'belly' is understood to be the repository of heka, as the Pyramid text speaks of "their belly filled with magic". Can this be aligned to the Manipura chakra, known as the 'Power chakra'? So equipped, Unis is very powerful indeed:

"For Unis's kas are about him, his guardian forces under his feet,
his gods atop him, his uraei on his brow;
for Unis's lead uraeus is on his forehead,
ba when seen and akh for shooting fire;
for Unis's powers are on his torso."

Unis: Antechamber, East Gable and Wall page 51

The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, translated by Allen and Der Manuelian

"Unis's lead uraeus is on his forehead", like the "Ajna" chakra, which leads by 'perceiving and commanding':

"I ascend to the sky upon the ladder of the god Seth", says the king in the Pyramid texts, how interesting that even the chakra site uses the word "ladder":

"Together, the seven chakras form a connecting ladder between matter and consciousness, body and mind, Earth and Heaven." {llewellynencyclopedia.com/article/249} by: Anodea Judith) The ladder begins with the Muladhara chakra, which has its roots in matter and proceeds upwards to the crown chakra, which **"is the place where we study consciousness itself."** {llewellynencyclopedia.com/article/258} by: Anodea Judith.)

Kundalini is the "force" of consciousness", which Setians call the '**gift of Set**', that enables the entire process.

Another website on Kundalini Yoga says "The Kundalini is the internal fire that ignites our Soul" {kundaliniyoga.org/kyt08.html}. Likewise, this seems a fair definition of another Setian term, the 'Black Flame'. Kundalini is also described as a flame which rises up. (Remember the Egyptian word 'Iaret', 'she who rises up'?) Although it is usually fairly quiet, resting about the lower back chakra, I have felt the little energy ball (*aka 'Ch'i ball'*) shoot upwards incandescent, blazing all the way up the spine. Ever since this experience, the Setian term "Black Flame" has had this additional meaning for me.

Returning to yogic thought, Evola notes "Arthur Avalon remarked: 'As the diamond is hard and indestructible, and as the thunderbolt is powerful and irresistible, likewise the term **vajra** is used to describe that which is stable, permanent, indestructible, and powerful.' A special kind of scepter used during magical rituals and ceremonies symbolizes the **vajra** and is even called by the same word." (*_The Yoga of Power_, page 217*)

The Was scepter when it is spiraled is called **djam** (*tcham*), and "The spiral shaft of the djam-sceptre might be an imitation of lightning." (*TeVelde, SGoC, page 90*)

Lightning moves downwards, which Evola explains it is a sort of “command of those who have reached this supreme plane is like a thunderbolt that travels along the entire hierarchy, starting from the top until it reaches the vibrations at the very bottom, which shape matter. This is the so-called *vajra-vak*, the diamond-thunderbolt of the living word.” (*TYoP*, page 13) The cyclical nature then allows the initiate to ‘shape matter’. Then he begins again at the bottom, as Evola describes the process of upward moving chakras:

“Through the earth chakra one acquires an extraordinary material strength. Through the water chakra one may acquire youthful energies, thus neutralizing the processes of aging and of organic decay (“The Water of Life”). Through the fire chakra one acquires the power of transforming and of dissolving the elements (this corresponds to the Hermetic saying *solve et coagula*).” (*TyoP*, page 184)

The fire (*Manipura*) chakra is the HEKA chakra, the seat of magical force and its transmission. A frequent phrase concerning possessing magical powers is, “...I have filled my belly with magic...” (Coffin Text spell 239), “I have called to mind all the magic which is in my belly.” (Coffin Text spell 657), both via *Ancient Egyptian Magic* by Bob Brier, pages 124, 126) The earlier Pyramid texts declare “Unis’s powers are on his torso.” (*The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, translated by James P. Allen, page 51)

The first three chakras are enabling inner powers, as sacredcenters.com explains, “self-preservation, self-gratification, and self-definition”. What do the upper chakras enable? The fifth, sixth and seventh chakras are powers aiming outwards, the fifth towards communication, the sixth towards perception, and psychic faculties, and the seventh towards connection that goes beyond time or space. You may even meet there your ‘Self ahead of self’, and thereby receive wisdom from your future self.

And where is the heart, the center? “The heart is mentioned frequently throughout the rest of the BD [Book of the Dead] in a wide variety of contexts because, among other things, the heart was considered to be the seat of the emotions and the intellect.” (*The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*, by Faulkner and others, page 151)

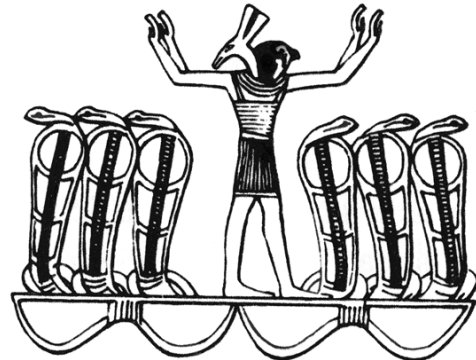
The heart chakra is the integrator of opposites in the psyche. Ritner makes reference to “heart of Hermes (=Thoth)” (*The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, page 40) Thoth, called “the son of the two lords” (*Seth, God of Confusion*, TeVelde, page 44) reconciles the two lords, so the heart can be seen as balancing (reconciling) the inner realm of Set with the outer realm of Horus.

There are images of Antewy, a combined form of Horus and Set, standing amidst a series of uraei. I think the following two images are illustrating the ‘chakras’, with the position of Set-Horus at the center, the heart chakra.

The heart is “the insubstantial centre of being... Everything comes from the heart and returns to it, it sends forth and it receives.” (*Magic and Mystery in Ancient Egypt*, by Christian Jacq, page 17) “It is the magician’s access to knowledge that entitles him to claim, ‘I am the master of life in whom life is eternally renewed...’” (*Ibid*, page 35)



From *_Serpent Myths of Ancient Egypt_*,
(1873) by W.R. Cooper



From *_Symbol and the Symbolic_*,
by R.A. Schwaller de Lubiez, pg. 37

“The magician goes out at night, in the darkness, with Horus in front of him and Seth at his right hand...” His message to anyone who would threaten him, “‘I am Horus-Seth,’ he proclaims, thus creating an extraordinary union, beyond duality, beyond ‘good’ or ‘evil’. (*Ibid*, page 115)

During Egypt’s Late Period, Setne Khamuast, (*aka Setem Khaemwaset*), Ramses II’s fourth son, known to be an extraordinary magician during his lifetime, makes an appearance in Demotic tales. John Ray, who wrote about “The First Egyptologist” declares “The Setne of these tales is sometimes recognisable as the scholarly priest...” who then goes through wild adventures as “here we find Setne in characteristic style, reading hieroglyphs on temple walls, when he receives a tip-off that a book containing the secrets of the universe is hidden in an ancient tomb.” (*_Reflections of Osiris: Lives from Ancient Egypt_*, page 95)

In “The Romance of Setna Khaemuas”, he seeks after the Scroll of Thoth. He did go into that tomb, and found the scroll, as well as having a long conversation with the ghost of the mummy in that tomb. Naneferkaptah, the ghost, predicts he will return this scroll bearing “a forked stick in his hand and a brazier of fire on his head.” (*The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, edited by William Kelly Simpson, page 463)

As we have seen, the was (*uas*) and spiraled djam (*tcham*) scepters all are forked, and some were even made of sticks. The ‘brazier of fire’ likely refers to what the Hindus call the ‘crown chakra’, brilliantly luminous.

The magician finds the secrets, and learns the methods.

The symbolism is abundantly clear how the ancient Egyptians saw the evolving human with evolving consciousness, rising upwards to become the akh, the immortal, luminous, effective spirit. Serpent imagery is used flexibly to illustrate this, which those of us on the quest for sovereignty seek. Meanwhile, in ancient times, those in the know would understand the subtle meanings which might pass the ordinary person by. The tomb worker, the farm worker might not know the subtlety, as he made his appeals to Meretseger and Renenutet for boons, feeling

much of his life not under his control. But I like to imagine that a few of the common workers had a clue of enticing mysteries drawing them forward, sensing “Ir Shti Shta-tu!”

For it is like that today, a fortunate few have a clue of these enticing mysteries. The past has left clues, and that which was suppressed for many centuries is coming to light. Fragments of ancient knowledge still exist for us to tease out clues. However, today literacy is not limited to only the nobility and the priesthood. Today, anyone with burning curiosity may seek the mysteries, possibly thereby returning from the search, as Setne of old, bearing “a forked stick in his hand and a brazier of fire on his head.”