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The Pharaoh's Placenta and the Moon-God Khons

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






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

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THE PHARAOH'S PLACENTA AND THE MOON-GOD KHONS

BY AYLWARD M. BLACKMAN, M.A.




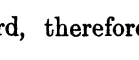


IN the last number of the *J.E.A.*, pp. 199—206, when pointing out the resemblance between the object on the head of a goddess in the famous birth-scene at Deir el-Bahri, and the *Mulongo* of the king of Uganda, I referred several times to an article by Miss MURRAY and Dr SELIGMAN (*Man*, 1911, No. 97), in which they show that the beliefs and practices of the Baganda with regard to their king's placenta are remarkably paralleled among the Ancient Egyptians. I hope that this article of mine, which was suggested by certain statements of Professor SETHE in his contribution to BÖRCHARDT's *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahu-re*, II, p. 77, will still further confirm Miss MURRAY and Dr SELIGMAN's theory.

While SETHE accepts their conclusions with regard to what the emblem  represents, *viz.* the Pharaoh's placenta, he differs from them entirely in his transliteration and translation of the oft-accompanying name. This name (see MURRAY-SELIGMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 167—169, 171), which one would expect to mean "placenta of the king" or the like, is variously written α , β , γ , δ , ϵ , and ζ . MURRAY-SELIGMAN transliterate α , β and γ *h_nw-stn*, δ and ϵ *h_nw-n-stn*, and render them by "the *khenu* (or 'inside thing'¹) of the king"—*i.e.* "the placenta of the king." They do not transliterate ζ , but translate it "the Royal Child."

Though, as we shall see, *h_nw-stn* and *h_nw-n-stn* are incorrect transliterations, Miss MURRAY and Dr SELIGMAN are clearly right in recognising that forms α — ϵ are mere variations in the spelling of one and the same name. Their article was written before SETHE published his article *Das Wort für König von Oberägypten* in *Ä.Z.*, 49, pp. 15—34, in which he proves, almost beyond a doubt, that  reads *n-sw-t* (*ny-sw-t*) not *stn*, and that  (var. ) *nsu* is an abbreviated form of the same word². Our difficulties, caused by the apparent discrepancies in the writings of the name of the -emblem, are thus completely removed. We recognise at once in

¹ Why "inside thing of the king" should mean "the king's placenta" they do not attempt to explain






² For further and conclusive evidence see LACAU, *Rec. Trav.*, xxxv, p. 228, SPIEGELBERG, *Ä.Z.*, 50, pp. 124—5, BLACKMAN-GARDINER, *Rec. Trav.*, xxxviii, liv. 1—2.

the forms $\alpha-\epsilon$ the word $n\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$ or nsw ¹ "king," while it seems pretty clear from γ that the first element in the name is not hnw or $hnw\text{-}n$, but merely $\ominus h$,— and ² being debased (or perhaps semi-sportive) writings of the simple \ominus . \ominus  \downarrow , \ominus , $h\text{-}n\text{-}\acute{s}(w)t$, $h\text{-}n\acute{s}w$, hns ³. The name for the -standard, therefore, is "the h of the King."



Can it be that in $\ominus h$ we possess the ancient Egyptian word for placenta (in the construct form)?




GRIFFITH (*Hieroglyphs*, p. 46–7; see also DAVIES-GRIFFITH, *Ptahhetep*, I, p. 32) inclines to the view that \ominus represents a ball. But there is no known word for ball from which, on the principle of acrophony, \ominus could get its alphabetic value h . GRIFFITH can only suggest that there may be some connection between the postulated word for "ball"⁴ and $h\acute{i}h\acute{i}$ "toss up," hh "run swiftly."

According to SETHE (*ap. BORCHARDT, op. cit.*, p. 77) the sign represents, not a ball, but a placenta "Mutterkuchen"; he accordingly translates $h\text{-}n\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$, $h\text{-}nsw$, "Königsnachgeburt," "king's afterbirth."

In view of the belief of the Baganda that the afterbirth is a second child born dead, whose ghost is intimately connected with the welfare of the actual, or living, child, this theory of SETHE's admirably suits the strange writing of form ζ . It, like all the other variants, must read $h\text{-}n\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$ or $h\text{-}nsw$.  Δ , which reads hn (the Δ at this time is valueless), fulfils the same function as  and  in forms δ , ϵ , while the child  \downarrow , seeing that it wears the crown of Upper Egypt, must read $n\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$ or nsw ⁵. Thus  acts the part of a word-sign ($n\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$, nsw), and at the same time serves as a determinative of the general sense of the compound,—the afterbirth, as we have just remarked, being conceived of as a second child.


¹ In form γ the final w in nsw is wanting, as in $htp\text{-}d\text{-}ns$, the demotic version of $htp\text{-}dy\text{-}ny\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$ (GRIFFITH *ap. PETRIE, Denderah*, p. 54).



²  reads hn and represents the \ominus  hn in forms α , β , γ . A substitution of h for h is not surprising in the late period (see JUNKER, *Grammatik der Denderatexte*, § 30), to which this example of the word belongs. Instances of this interchange are, indeed, found as early as the XIIth Dynasty (see BLACKMAN, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, II, p. 24, n. 6, p. 34, n. 3).


³ With the form \ominus  hns , which is very late (see DE MORGAN, *Kom Ombo*, p. 342), compare the Coptic $\chi\omega\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ and Greek $\chi\omega\nu\varsigma$. As we shall see, \ominus   $hn\acute{s}w$, the Moon-god Khons, is apparently the Pharaoh's placenta in the guise of a young prince.

⁴ Something like $h\acute{s}\text{-}t$ (?); cf. $\acute{d}t$ "snake," ht "body," producing \acute{d} , h .







⁵ It is worth pointing out that the beliefs and customs of the Ancient Egyptians with regard to the Pharaoh's placenta, dealt with in this and my previous article, evidently originated in Upper, not Lower, Egypt, for $n\text{-}\acute{s}w\text{-}t$, nsw (king of Upper Egypt), not $bt\acute{y}$ (king of Lower Egypt), is used in this compound. It is significant that the Proto-Egyptians of the *Sa'id* were connected both racially and commercially with the Hamitic peoples in the south (see for example ELLIOT-SMITH, *The Ancient Egyptians*, p. 63 ff.).


What can be adduced in support of SETHE's view, which is also my own, that  represents a placenta?

The sign as given in DAVIES-GRIFFITH, *Ptahhetep*, I, Pl. XIV, is not very unlike the drawings of fresh placentae reproduced on p. 170 of Miss MURRAY and Dr SELIGMAN's article. In the earliest examples (PETRIE, *Medum*, Pls. XI, XIII, XXIII, *et passim*) the colour is yellow. We might compare, perhaps, the brown colouring of  in the papyrus of Nesinekht-tawi (MURRAY-SELIGMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 170)? Upon the yellow ground are frequently black or red horizontal lines, as in the printed type (). Do these lines represent veins?

From the point of view of shape (and perhaps also colour)  might well be a conventional representation of a placenta.

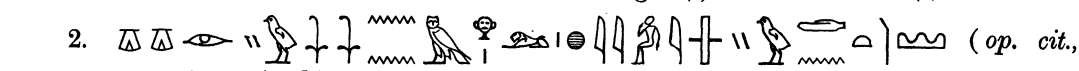
Now for the philological side of the question.

As we have already seen, there appears to be no word meaning "ball" from which  could derive its alphabetic value *h*. But there is a word , which, as its determinative shows, must either be a word for "child," "babe," or for some object, person, or action, that has to do with "child." In certain late texts (Ptolemaic and Graeco-Roman) , which, in view of the variant , is to be read *hy*, unquestionably means "child." Thus, for example, in MÖLLER, *Die beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind*, I, 7h, 4, Osiris is called  "The noble child of the Divine Pair," where, in the parallel demotic version, *hrd*, the ordinary word for "child," is substituted.  also occurs several times with this meaning in *The Festival Song of Isis and Nephthys* (see BUDGE, *Egyptian Reading-Book*, pp. 51, 53, 57, 58, 62, 63).

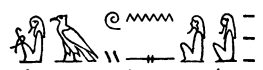
Despite a long search I have discovered no instances of  = "child," "babe" occurring outside Ptolemaic and Graeco-Roman texts, except two very doubtful ones² in the *Book of the Dead*. They are:—


1.  N. N. 
 (NAVILLE, *Tdb.*, Ch. 42, l. 1)

"Repelling the knife in Herakleopolis Magna (*Nn-ny-sw-t*, *Ἡρακλῆς*) by so and so. O land of the tree, white crown of the statue, O standard-god (?), I am the child (?): 4 times."





2.  (op. cit., Ch. 64, l. 46 (var. *Aa bis*)).








This passage seems to be hopelessly corrupt, but the last words might be translated "the child(?) who is in *Wdn-t*."

¹  = *Σύνναοι θεοί*; see BRUGSCH, *Wörterb.*, Suppl., pp. 993-4 and also MÖLLER's own note, *op. cit.*, p. 87 (121).

² A word  occurs in Ch. 85, l. 15 (Ed. NAVILLE) but it certainly does not seem to mean "babe."



If *h* (*hy*) means "child," the name of our standard must be "Child of the King." It is true that the placenta was regarded by the Baganda as a child, but it was the real child's twin (*Mulongo*). If the Ancient Egyptians held beliefs similar to the Baganda on this point,—and we have good reasons for believing this to be the case—then we should expect the name of this standard to be not "Child of the King," but "Twin" or "Brother of the King."


But is "child" the original meaning of ? If so we are no nearer to discovering how , which must originally have been a pictogram, or word-sign, like  or , got its alphabetic value *h*¹.

As a matter of fact the word , of which , , , , ,  are variant forms, occurs not only in late texts, but in those of the Middle and New Kingdom also, in combinations which make, as we shall see, the translation "child" impossible.

As was shown in my previous article (*J. E. A.*, III, p. 205), the Baganda believed that the ghost of his placenta or "twin" (*Mulongo*) was so closely linked with the living individual that, if an unauthorised person partook of the fruit of the plantain beneath which a placenta was buried, its ghost was taken from the clan to which it and its living twin belonged, and the latter would die in order to follow his twin ghost. Again to enable the dead king to become a perfect and complete divinity able to give oracles, it was necessary that the two ghosts, his own (attached to his jaw-bone), and that of his placenta (attached to the stump of his umbilical cord), should be brought together. Thus the ghost of the king's placenta, though external to his physical being, formed practically a part of his personality. The taking away of this ghost during a man's lifetime meant death to him, and the absence of it after death meant an incomplete existence, if not absolute non-existence.

The ruling caste in Uganda that held these beliefs is, as I pointed out in my last article (*J. E. A.*, III, p. 206), of Hamitic origin, and therefore akin to the Egyptians, and I suggested at the same time that these beliefs form part of the stock of religious conceptions common to all the North African Hamites. It is held by some authorities that there are certain racial as well as cultural affinities between the Proto-Egyptians and the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia². The idea of a spirit, or protecting genius, attached to each individual and at the same time inextricably bound up with his personality, existed in a highly developed form among the Sumerians and Babylonians. To illustrate this, I here reproduce a very interesting statement on the subject most kindly furnished me by Dr LANGDON.

¹ The writing , which occurs in a *Totentext* belonging to the first half of the XVIIIth Dynasty (*Papyrus of Nu*, Ch. 64, l. 19), suggests that  is here used as a word-sign (see ERMAN, *Gramm.*³, § 53).

²  *hw* is the writing of the word in the earliest Middle Kingdom example I know of (BLACKMAN, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, II, Pl. XV). For the change of *w* to *y* see ERMAN, *op. cit.* §§ 99, 100, 180, JUNKER, *Grammatik der Denderatexte*, § 13, 5.

³ See ELLIOT-SMITH, *The Ancient Egyptians*, p. 138 ff.; EDUARD MEYER, *Geschichte des Altertums*, § 200.

“The fundamental concept of personality in Sumerian and Babylonian religion is a sort of dualism, a person and a super-person. ‘A man and his god’ form a unity which under normal conditions always exists.

Thus in passage I, an incantation against the seven devils, the text runs:—

I. ‘The god of a man is a shepherd who seeks pasture for the man.

But from his god they (the devils) seized him away for food.’ *C.T.* 16, 12, 44–6.

Another passage identifies the ‘god of a man’ with the man’s soul.

II. ‘The suffering man they rushed upon like a storm, filling him with sickness.

That man was torn from his soul.’ *C.T.* 16, 24, 10—13.

One of the seven devils is addressed as follows:—

III. ‘O wicked *Utukku* that dwellest in the house, in thy sparing not the god of the man.’ *C.T.* 16, 32, 167.

In later times a man was supposed to have a double super-soul, *i.e.* a male and a female deity. Thus we have repeatedly in the prayers of the magic cults:—

IV. ‘I some one the son of his god, whose god is some one, whose goddess is some one, stand before thy divinity.’

A very remarkable incantation is:—

V. ‘When they (the devils) came into the house for evil, the god of the house and the goddess of the house were humiliated. The protecting genius (an animal-image of some deity) of the house fled into secrecy.’ K. 5179 in *C.T.* 16, 39.

It is obvious that the super-soul of man was not regarded as one of the great gods, although each person was attached to the local cult of one of these great deities, and in his prayers addresses them as ‘my god.’ The incantations and prayers usually end with the appeal to be restored to the ‘kindly hands of my god.’ This means that the man’s divine genius may return to his body.

Thus one of the great incantations ends with a command to the god Marduk:—

VI. ‘Into the hands of Shamash (the sun-god), chieftain of the gods, give him (the sinner).

And may Shamash restore him to the kind hands of his god in security.’ *C.T.* 16, 11, 38—42.

A sinner is always called ‘the son of his god.’ This, whatever its origin may be, means in practice ‘the *protégé* of his genius.’

VII. When a man is in the power of witches, etc., the texts say:—

‘His god is filled with woe.’ *C.T.* 17, 10, 70.

Or we read:—

VIII. ‘They have caused my god and my goddess to wail for me.’ *Maḫlu*, I, 6.

Hence a man in the power of the devils is deserted by his god.

IX. ‘His god from him is far away.

His goddess is absent from his body.’ *C.T.* 17, 29, 25–8.

Finally the classic passage is:—

X. 'His god has departed from his body,

His sympathetic goddess has retreated aside.' *Shurpu*, v, 9—14.

I know of no references to the actual conquest of a genius by a devil. The situation is rather the retreat and flight of a genius who returns after the ritual of atonement."









These passages from Babylonian and Sumerian texts plainly show that the existence of a man and his "god," or protecting spirit¹, were inextricably bound together. The god, Dr LANGDON tells me (we see this also in passages IX, X), was supposed to be actually resident in the person's body. If the god (or god and goddess) was chased out of a man, the devils (of sickness) had no difficulty in entering into, and taking possession of, him. Sickness meant that the protecting god (or god and goddess) had been driven out and was far from the invalid's (his son's) body. The "god," Dr LANGDON also informs me, was, it would appear, the element in the human being that survived death and continued to exist in Hades—in other words a man's "god" was what we should call his "soul."

Thus in two extremes of culture, the one (that of the Sumerians and Babylonians) highly developed, the other (that of the Baganda) semi-savage, the idea prevailed of a spirit closely linked with the existence of every person whether alive or dead. Though conceived of in Babylonia as actually dwelling in the body of the living person, who was the "god's" son, it was yet spoken of as something apart from him. Similarly an Egyptian literary composition of the XIIth Dynasty represents a man as holding a conversation with his *bai*² (*bī*), as though it were an entity distinct from himself; and yet at death a man was supposed to become a *bai* or *ikh* (*īḥ*), and, from the earliest times, ceremonies were performed and formulae repeated to ensure the deceased becoming one³.

Dr LANGDON is inclined to think with me that in the beliefs of the Baganda, and the postulated beliefs of the Proto-Egyptians, concerning the placenta, we have the origin perhaps of the protecting genius or in-dwelling "god" of the Sumerians and Babylonians; but he believes that no trace survives in the Sumero-Babylonian literature of the very primitive notion that the placenta is a second child (the first stage, one would imagine, in the development of the belief in a *Schutzgeist*). The Tigris-valley dwellers had reached such a high level of culture at the time from which even the oldest surviving religious literature dates, and their theory about the protecting god was by then so far developed, that its fantastic origin had probably long ago passed into oblivion.

¹ From passages IV, V, VIII—X, we see that the protecting genius had a female counterpart; cf. the *kt* and *hms-t* of the Egyptians (see GARDINER, *P.S.B.A.*, xxxvii, p. 259). In a subsequent paper I hope to show that the Egyptian conception of a *kt* (or *Schutzgeist*) originated in the belief that the placenta was a second child.

² See ERMAN, *Gesprach eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele*, pp. 17–8 ff. Dr A. H. GARDINER has pointed out to me that *bī* is the reading here, not *īḥ* (as ERMAN, *loc. cit.*, suggests), and refers to MÖLLER, *Paläographie*, I, 209.

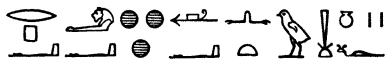
³ See for example BREASTED, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 59—61, L., D., II, 5, and especially L., D., II, 71 c, where the action of the officiating lector (  ) is labelled      "Spiritualizing (*i.e.* reciting the formulae prescribed for the ceremony) in order that he (the deceased) may become a spirit." See also BLACKMAN, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, III, p. 29.

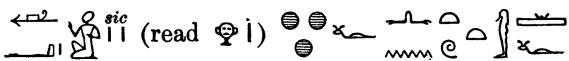
On the analogy of the beliefs entertained by the Hamitic ruling caste in Uganda, the placenta, or rather its ghost, would have been supposed by the Ancient Egyptians to be closely connected with the individual's personality, as we have seen was also the case with the "god" (or "god and goddess") of the Babylonians. Deprived of this ghost the individual was a sorry thing possessing no initiative or power to resist external influences. Without his "god" the Sumerian fell a prey to devils; similarly, if robbed of his "twin's" ghost, the Baganda baby died, and the Baganda king-god was imperfect and unable to give oracles¹.


Thus while in one aspect the placenta-ghost is a protecting genius, in the other it is the force that controls and suggests a man's thoughts and actions². In short, in this latter aspect it is his personality³.

If the original meaning of *hw*, *hy*, is "placenta," we now have (seeing that its ghost is in one aspect intimately connected with the welfare of its living twin and in the other is that twin's personality) the explanation for the various meanings, which, as the contexts show, must be assigned to that word in texts both of the Middle and New Kingdoms and of the late period.

These uses of *hw* and its variants (apart from the late value "child") are well illustrated by the following passages:—

1.  BLACKMAN, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, II, p. 2, Pl. XV; XIIIth Dynasty, *temp.* Sesostris I. "Baron, nomarch, unique personality⁴, without a rival." This and No. 4 are, so far as I am aware, the earliest known instances of *hw* occurring in inscriptions of the Middle Kingdom.

2.  *Pap. Leiden*, 344 verso, 3, 6. As SETHE (*ap.* BORCHARDT, *loc. cit.*; *A.Z.*, 45, p. 65) thinks, the meaning of *hr hw* must be something like "in (von) meiner (deiner, seiner) Art," "in (of) my (thy, his) nature (character)⁵." We can therefore translate this sentence, "Unique in his nature (or 'personality'), there exists not the like of him."

3.  *Urk.*, iv, 942; XVIIIth Dynasty, *temp.* Tethmosis III. "Re, lord of Eternity, unique in his nature, ruler of Everlastingness.....there exists not his peer."

¹ As I pointed out in my last article (*J.E.A.*, III, p. 205), it was probably owing to these beliefs about the placenta and its ghost that Horus fought Seth in order to recover the stolen umbilical cord of Osiris.

² This is well illustrated by the belief of the Baganda that, unless united with his "twin's" ghost, the dead king was an imperfect deity,—i.e. his directing intelligence was impaired or lacking.




³ So the *k'* (which, as I hope to show in another article, is intimately connected with the theory that the placenta is a second child) is on the one hand a protecting genius, distinct from its protégé (see BREASTED, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 52-5), and on the other means nothing more than "personality," "character," "nature" (see GARDINER, *P.S.B.A.*, xxxvii, p. 257, n. 3).

⁴ That *hw* "placenta" should stand for (a) "placenta-ghost," (β) "personality," presents no difficulty, for the primitive mind does not clearly distinguish between the spirit and the object in which the spirit manifests itself. Thus among the Baganda the word *Mulongo* "twin" seems to stand equally for the ghost of the "twin" and for the material object to which the ghost was attached.







⁵ See immediately above and footnote 3.











B

"Priest of Hike¹, Priest of the Red Crown, Servant of the Souls of Pe, Servant of the Souls of El-Kab, Priest of the Two H of Horus, Over the Mysteries of the Good God (i.e. the Pharaoh)."

In a string of titles, all of which are intimately connected with the kingship, Horus must mean the king, and  can only be the word *hw*, *hy*, we have been discussing. "Priest of the Two Personalities (or 'likenesses') of Horus" sounds most unlikely, and so does "Priest of the Two Children of Horus." We know nothing about a cult of the Pharaoh's two eldest(?) children, and the god Horus had four, not two, sons. Does  therefore mean "placenta," in the literal sense of the word? The objection to this interpretation is the duplication of . But this difficulty is not as serious as it appears at first sight, for, as stated in *J.E.A.*, III, p. 200, two models of a placenta were found in the tomb of Harmhab. There are two explanations for this duplication.

1. The Pharaoh was assigned ceremonially two placentae (one, of course, a model) because as ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt he impersonated two gods, Horus and Seth².




2. One  is the placenta and the other the stump of the umbilical cord. If, as we have some reason for supposing, both these relics were preserved by the Egyptians, the ghost would be supposed to attach itself to either. Since the stump of the umbilical cord, as we learn from the beliefs of the Baganda, was the substitute for the placenta, both these relics might equally well have been called ; indeed the Baganda actually speak of the preserved umbilical cord-stump as though it were a placenta (see *J.E.A.*, III, p. 199). It is not improbable, therefore, that the title     means "Priest of the Two Placentae of Horus (i.e. the king)."

It is possible that  also occurs in its (postulated) original meaning "placenta" in a very common title. Instead of reading  , as *rh-ny-sw-t*, and translating it "King's Acquaintance," SETHE (ap. BORCHARDT, *Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahu-rē*, II, p. 77) would read it *iry h-ny-sw-t* and translate "Guardian of the King's Placenta³." In support of this view he quotes the writing  in the feminine form of the title, which occurs once in *Berlin Mus.* 7969 (SCHÄFER, I, 35). He compares this with   *imy-t-rʿ* (fem. form of   *imy-rʿ*), which occasionally replaces the usual  . Further support of SETHE's reading and rendering is supplied by DAVIES, *Deir el-Gebrāwi*, II, Pls. XVII, XVIII. In both instances *Hm-rʿ* the wife of *ʿIsi* is


¹ In his capacity of priest of the Red Crown Khu-en-ukh was naturally connected with magic. For the magical properties of the Pharaonic diadems see ERMAN, *Hymnen an das Diadem der Pharaonen*, pp. 24 (2, 1—2), 35 (9, 1), *Pyr.* 1832, SETHE, *Zur Sage vom Sonnenauge*, p. 12.



² He might have possessed these two placentae merely owing to his being two kings in one, the twofold character of the realm never being lost sight of at any period.

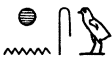

³ SETHE seems to think, however, that in comparatively early times it came to mean no more than "Belonging to the king's family," "Der zum Königsstamm oder zur Königssippe gehörige."


The determinative  is due to the belief that the placenta is a second child, the "twin" (*Mulongo*) of the real child. As I have pointed out, the only certain instances of  being used in the sense of child, are in texts of the Graeco-Roman age. The compilers of religious texts in that late period found great pleasure in the use of antiquated and rare words. By that time the primitive notion about the nature of the placenta had very possibly been lost sight of, anyhow somewhat obscured. Thus, misled by the determinative, the archaizing scribes took  to be merely an old and unusual word for "child."

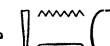

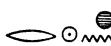
We now come to the subject from which this article partially derives its title,—the origin of the moon-god Khons.

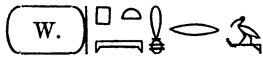
The commonest spelling of the god's name is  *hnsw*. That we recognise at once as being also a way of writing the name of the Pharaoh's placenta, and it was as this, I venture to suggest, that our moon-god commenced his career. The earliest forms of his name that I know of, are:—

1. , in the proper name  *Hsy-hnsw* Beloved of Khons (HOFFMANN, *Theophoren Personennamen des älteren Ägyptens*, p. 49 = SETHE, *Untersuchungen*, VII, 1); temp. Old Kingdom.

2.  in the proper name  "Ptah-and-Khons" (ID., *op. cit.*, p. 67); temp. Middle Kingdom.







3.  (ERMAN, *Gespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele*, p. 27); temp. Middle Kingdom.

It is improbable that we are to recognise the name of this god in *Pyr.* 402 *a* (see ERMAN, *Chrestomathie*, II, p. 28, s; ID., *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* [English Translation], p. 91; BREASTED, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 127), though, since Khons was identified with Thoth¹, we may possibly have a punning allusion to his name in *Pyr.* 130 *d*:— (W.)  

. From this word *hns* most authorities have held that the name Khons is derived, Khons, according to them, meaning the "Traveller" (ERMAN, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, p. 12; BRUGSCH, *Religion und Mythologie*, p. 359). This idea, though not very convincing, seemed to be supported by the spelling of the word

when thou journeyest to thy meadows, when thou farest within (the shadow of) thy *ksh*-grove, and thy nose smelleth the sweet savour of the Vintage-god, do thou cause the *ka* of Unas to mount up for him to his side, even as this thy *hnswt* did mount up for thee." *Hnswt* here, however, is feminine. It is difficult, despite its association with *kt*, to identify it with the word we are discussing. At such an early period it seems almost incredible that the original meaning of the two elements in the compound could have become so obscured that the whole was treated as a feminine owing to the ending *-swt*. But see my remarks on pp. 248–9.

¹ The earliest instance, however, of this identification, so far as I can ascertain, is the one already quoted from the *Lebensmüder*.

in the oldest example quoted, *i.e.* , in which , not , forms the last syllable. But since we now know beyond a doubt¹ that even in the *Pyramid Texts*,  *ny-sw-t* can be written   *nsw* (*Pyr.* 814 c), what would have seemed a very formidable objection to my theory disappears.

Do the forms in which Khons is depicted in the temple reliefs also support this somewhat startling suggestion?

He is generally represented in one of the two following guises:

1. He has an ordinary human body, but a hawk's head, which is surmounted, as is often that of Thoth, by the moon's disk within a crescent (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.

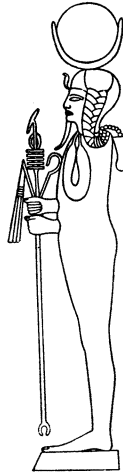


Fig. 2.



2. He is depicted as a young prince (Fig. 2), in which case he wears the side-lock of hair and carries the usual insignia of royalty, the whip and crook²; he is clothed in the antiquated royal apparel³, which was, however, still worn by the Pharaoh of the historic periods, in accordance with tradition, at the *sd*-festival⁴; round his neck is a *mn-t*-necklace, the weighted pendant of which hangs down his back⁵.

The latter is the god's most characteristic form, and thus he is figured in the earliest existing representations of him (*e.g.* L., D., III, 15, 18).

With regard to his position in the pantheon.

He is the son of Amon and Mut, and with them formed the Theban triad; Thebes indeed seems to have been his original home, and here a great temple, named

¹ See BLACKMAN-GARDINER, *Rec. Trav.*, XXXVIII, liv. 1—2.

² For the  and , see KEES, *Opfertanz*, p. 13.

³ See VON BISSING, *Die Reliefs vom Sonnenheiligtum des Rathures*, p. 15, who rightly points out that it is in his capacity of *king*, not of a *dead god*, that Osiris (and other gods as well) wears this attire and carries these emblems.

⁴ See, for example, L., D., III, 36 a, 49 a, 74 d.

⁵ Cf. the broad collar with pendant tassel worn by Osiris (*e.g.* MURRAY, *Osireion*, Pl. VIII), and by the king in *sd*-festival array (L., D., III, 36 a, 74 d).

“House of Khons-in-Thebes Nefer-hotp” (CHAMPOLLION, *Notices descriptives*, II, pp. 223, 226), was built for him by Ramesses III. Before the New Kingdom he seems to have been little known, anyhow outside Upper Egypt¹,—the earliest certain mention of him (except as an element in proper names) occurring in the above quoted passage in the *Gespräch eines Lebensmüden*, where he is closely associated with Thoth. Even in texts of the New Kingdom and late period² he seems to possess practically no features or attributes peculiar to himself, these being nearly all borrowed from the gods with whom he was identified, *viz.* Thoth³, Horus⁴, Shu⁵, and Re⁶.

His identification with these gods is quite explicable. As a moon-god he would of course be regarded as a form of Thoth. Since the moon moreover is the left eye of Horus (SETHE, *Zur Sage vom Sonnenauge*, pp. 4—7), he was closely associated, and finally identified with, that god. His identification with Re, which came late in his history, is explained by SETHE (*op. cit.*, p. 6, n. 2). Finally as son of Amon, whom the Theban priests identified with Re-Atum, he naturally assumed the role of Shu (BRUGSCH, *Religion und Mythologie*, p. 495).

It was in his capacity of Khons-Horus, Khons-Re, that this god was assigned a hawk's head. His real form, as we have seen, is that of a handsome young prince, with the attribute $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \circ \\ \triangle \\ \square \end{array} \frac{\alpha}{\square}$ *Nefer-hotp*,—the only attribute, it would seem, save one other⁷ that he bears in his own right. It is most significant that the inscriptions attached to Khons *quâ* Khons, contain no mythological allusions; in fact until the Ptolemaic period no stories seem to have been told about him. He has derived all his characteristics, except his royalty and his youth, from the gods with whom he was identified. His lack of individuality, his youth⁸, his princely attributes, and his name *Hnsw*, all agree with my theory that he is the Pharaoh's placenta, the royal “twin,” elevated to the position of a god. The fact that the placenta was never, like the majority of the Egyptian gods, conceived of as a person who had once actually *lived* on the earth, would account for the lack of stories about Khons. Moreover he is, as it were, the representative of all royal placentae, and would, one imagines, have come into existence as a god when the real significance of the name *h-nsw* had begun to fade. The time that this began to happen might well have been towards the end of the XIIth Dynasty, or the period between the XIIth and XVIIIth (cf. the remarks of KEES, *Opfertanz*, p. 8), the very time when the god Khons begins to come before our notice. The fact that the king could be said to have two placentae (see above pp. 243—4)

¹ See p. 236, footnote 5.

² In the very late Bentresh stele (see BREASTED, *Records*, III, § 429 ff.) which describes him as a god who cures those who are possessed with evil spirits, he is entitled “Khons-the-Plan-Maker-in Thebes” $\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{⦿} \\ \text{⦿} \\ \text{⦿} \\ \text{⦿} \end{array} \right)$.

³ CHAMP., *Not. descr.*, I, p. 724, II, pp. 84, 724, 206, 208; LANZONE, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, Pl. CCCXV.

⁴ CHAMP., *op. cit.*, II, pp. 84, 206, 213; LANZONE, *loc. cit.*

⁵ CHAMP., *op. cit.*, II, pp. 206, 811; PIEHL, *Inscr. hiérog.*, p. 188, 4; MÖLLER, *Die beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind*, p. 85 (107).

⁶ CHAMP., *op. cit.*, II, pp. 219, 225.

⁷ See above, footnote 2.

⁸ Cf. the determinative in $\begin{array}{c} \text{⦿} \\ \text{⦿} \\ \text{⦿} \\ \text{⦿} \end{array}$ etc.

as early as the VIth Dynasty, is a hint that the purely *physical* basis of the belief in the Pharaoh's twin had even then begun to be lost sight of.


But it might well be asked what possible connection there could be between the Pharaoh's placenta and the moon. On this point, so far as I can ascertain, Egyptian records have nothing to say. In ROSCOE, *The Baganda*, p. 236, however, we learn that the King of Uganda's umbilical cord-stump (= his placenta) was closely associated with the moon. "Once a month he (the *Kimbugwe*) carried the 'Twin' into the royal presence, and placed it before the king, who took it out of its wrappings of bark cloth and after inspecting it returned it to the *Kimbugwe*, who wrapped it up and restored it to the temple. This was done at each new moon; after the 'Twin' had been taken to the King, *it had to be exposed in the doorway of the temple for the moon to shine upon it* (the italics are mine), and it was also anointed with butter."

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

After this article had been printed, it was brought to my notice by a physician that uniovular twins have only one placenta¹, and are always of the same sex (see for example EDEN, *Manual of Midwifery*, pp. 86-8, 3rd edition, 1908). Moreover it is these uniovular twins, I was informed, that bear such a close, often indistinguishable, likeness to one another.

The Egyptians may well have noticed that in the case of twins the single placenta coincided with identity in sex and appearance. This natural phenomenon, therefore, possibly accounts for such expressions as *wꜥ hr ḥw-f*, *nn wn hr ḥw-f*, *nn ky hr ḥw-f*, *wꜥ hr ḥw n imy-ḥ* (see pp. 241-3). If so they are to be rendered (literally) "sole one upon his placenta," "there is not one (*sc.* beside himself) who is upon his placenta," "there is not another upon his placenta," "sole one upon the placenta to him who is in the palace,"—the idiom originating in the fact that when a person is not one of uniovular twins (in which case there would be two children of the same sex and appearance upon a single placenta), his exact (*living*)² counterpart does not exist, *i.e.* he is a unique person (*nn twt-f*, *nn snw-f*). Eventually, by a natural enough process, *hr ḥw-* came to mean little more than "like," "as well as," "besides," as is shown by examples nos. 11, 12, and 13.

If this suggestion is correct, it does not, I think, invalidate the explanation, given in the preceding pages of this article, of the use of *ḥw* in such connections as examples nos. 1 and 14, or what has been said about the twofold aspect of the placenta-ghost (pp. 235-41).

The very close resemblance of the hieroglyph  to a placenta, it might be noted, is well illustrated by figs. 25, 47, on pp. 39, 87 of EDEN's above-quoted *Manual of Midwifery*.

¹ Usually the umbilical cords are separate, but they are sometimes fused at the insertion into the placenta.

² But the ghost of the placenta would have been regarded as his exact *spiritual* counterpart (see above, p. 242, n. 2).