



---

The Names “Nanferkaptah,” “Ihweret,” and “Tabubue” in the “First Tale of Setne Khaemwas”

Author(s): Steve Vinson

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2009), pp. 283-304

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](http://www.uchicago.edu)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/649612>

Accessed: 02/04/2012 13:53

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



The University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.

THE NAMES “NANEFERKAPTAH,” “IHWERET,” AND “TABUBUE”  
IN THE “FIRST TALE OF SETNE KHAEMWAS”\*

STEVE VINSON, *Indiana University—Bloomington*

It has often been observed that personal names in ancient Egyptian fiction can convey or suggest important information about the characters who bear them—their identities, their roles, and even their destinies.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the creation or use of such significant names (sometimes referred to as “characteronyms”) is not unique to Egyptian *belles lettres*, but is rather an obvious and common technique that has been adopted by many authors working in many literatures.<sup>2</sup> In Egypt, however, the name (*rn*) of an individual was conceived of as an integral part of the personality, closely connected to both social identity and to survival in the next world;<sup>3</sup> similarly, the name(s) and epithets of a king or divinity expressed crucial aspects of such an entity’s fundamental nature and cosmic significance.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in an Egyptian story—as also in poems, hymns, and ritual texts, which frequently contain puns on, or glosses to, names<sup>5</sup>—the exploitation of the name for literary effect had the potential to create and reveal meaning in an especially powerful way.

\* I would like to thank Karl-Theodor Zauzich, Kim Ryholt, Mark Depauw, Edmund Meltzer, Jacquelyn Jay, Sara Goldbrunner, and Lothar Goldbrunner for reading all or parts of this article and offering a number of helpful comments. This article is adapted from my essay “Through a Woman’s Eyes and in a Woman’s Voice: Ihweret as Focalizer in the *First Tale of Setne Khaemwas*,” in P. McKechnie and P. Guillaume, eds., *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, *Memosyne Supplements* 300 (Leiden and Boston, 2008), pp. 303–51. I would like to express my gratitude to Paul McKechnie for permission to reproduce and further develop part of my contribution to that volume here.

<sup>1</sup> E.g., A. Loprieno, “Defining Egyptian Literature,” in Loprieno, ed., *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, *Probleme der Ägyptologie* 10 (Leiden and New York, 1996), p. 44; R. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, *Athlone Publications in Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* (New York and London, 2002), pp. 154, 163–65, 187, 194, 197–98, 200, 202, 256.

<sup>2</sup> See S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York, 1989), pp. 68–69.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton (Ithaca, NY, 2006), often, but esp. pp. 41–42, 111–12.

<sup>4</sup> The importance of a divine name is exceptionally clear in the New Kingdom historiola “Isis and the Secret Name of Re<sup>c</sup>,” in which Isis contrives to have a poisonous snake bite Re<sup>c</sup> so as to force him to reveal his secret name; see in P Turin 1993 vs. 6.11–9.5 = J. F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, *Religious Texts Translation Series*, Nisaba 9 (Leiden, 1978), pp. 51–55 (Text 84).

<sup>5</sup> A particularly striking example is the use of the imperative “Come!” as a name for “Death” in Egyptian “Harper’s Songs” that appear in some New Kingdom tombs; see Assmann, *Death and Salvation*, 119 ff. This plays on the alliteration (and probably also the assonance, certainly present in the Coptic forms of the words) of the Egyptian imperative “come” (hieroglyphic/hieratic *mi*, Demotic *im*, Coptic ⲙⲓⲟϣ) and the noun for “death” (hieroglyphic/hieratic/Demotic *mwt*, Coptic ⲙⲟϣ). Naming puns like this can also appear in narrative fiction, e.g., in the Middle Kingdom tales of P Westcar 10.9 ff., in which Isis puns on the names of each of the three future kings of the Fifth Dynasty, as she assists their mother in their births. See W. K. Simpson, “King Cheops and the Magicians,” in Simpson, ed., *The Literature of Ancient Egypt, An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry*, 3d ed. (New Haven and London, 2003) (Simpson, ed., *Literature*<sup>3</sup>), p. 22, with n. 19; M. Lichtheim, ed. and trans., *Ancient Egyptian Literature, A Book of Readings, Vol. 1: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1973) (Lichtheim, *AEL* 1), p. 220. Etiological and naming puns are ubiquitous in the New Kingdom “Myth of the

[JNES 68 no. 4 (2009)]  
© 2009 by The University of Chicago.  
All rights reserved.  
0022-2968-2009/6804-0004\$10.00.

With this in mind, it is surprising that the names of the principal antagonists of Setne Khaemwas in the early-Ptolemaic Demotic “First Tale of Setne Khaemwas”<sup>6</sup>—Naneferkaptah, Ihweret and Tabubue—have not been the subject of an extended study in over a century. Of the three, only the otherwise-unattested name of the temptress Tabubue has been often discussed—and that with no consensus yet emerging as to what her name refers to, or how the name may help us to understand her role in the story.<sup>7</sup> The names “Naneferkaptah” and “Ihweret,” for their part, have received little or no comment in dis-

Celestial Cow”; text, translation and extensive commentary in E. Hornung, *Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh, Eine Ätiologie des Unvollkommenen*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (OBO) 46 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1982), pp. 96 ff.; E. Wente, “The Book of the Heavenly Cow,” in Simpson, ed., *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 289–98; partial translation also in M. Lichtheim, ed. and trans., *Ancient Egyptian Literature, A Book of Readings, Vol. 2: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1976) (Lichtheim, *AEL* 2), pp. 197–99.

<sup>6</sup> The initial decipherment of the story was by H. Brugsch, “Le Roman de Setna contenu dans un papyrus démotique du Musée égyptien à Boulaq,” *Revue archéologique*, 3d series, 16 (1867), pp. 161–79. For photographs of the single known, extant manuscript, see now S. Goldbrunner, *Der verblendete Gelehrte, Der erste Setna-Roman (P. Kairo 30646), Umschrift, Übersetzung und Glossar*, Demotische Studien 13 (Sommerhausen, Germany, 2006); also W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Denkmäler 2, Die demotischen Papyrus*, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes (Strassburg, 1906), plates 44–47. Goldbrunner includes a modern transliteration, an annotated German translation and a glossary, but the fundamental philological study remains that of F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis, The Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas* (Oxford, 1900), pp. 13 ff. and 82 ff. The same year saw the publication of W. Groff, “Étude sur les personnages du roman Setné-Ptah Ha-m-us,” *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l’archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes (RT)* 30 (1900), pp. 41–50, which also discusses the names in the story. Accessible modern English translations include R. Ritner, “The Romance of Setna Khaemwas and the Mummies (Setna I),” in Simpson, ed., *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 453–69, and M. Lichtheim, ed. and trans., *Ancient Egyptian Literature, A Book of Readings, Vol. 3: The Late Period* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1980) (Lichtheim, *AEL* 3), pp. 127–38. Other important, recent translations are by G. Vittmann in the on-line *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, ([aaw2.bbaw.de/tla/index.html](http://aaw2.bbaw.de/tla/index.html)) (*TLA*), including a full transcription; and by F. Hoffmann, “Die erste Setnegeschichte,” in Hoffmann and J. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur, Einführung und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie 4* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 137–52 (translation); 343–45 (notes).

Stories of either the character Setne Khaemwas, or

other characters who bore the religious title Setne (with variants), appear to have been popular in Demotic-reading circles, but aside from “First Setne,” only the Roman-era “Second Tale of Setne Khaemwas” (P BM Demotic 10822 [formerly 604]) is essentially complete; see Griffith, *Stories*, pp. 41 ff. (translation), 142 ff. (transliteration and philological notes); Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, pp. 138–51; Ritner, “The Adventures of Setna and Si-Osire (Setna II),” in Simpson, *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 470–89; *idem*, “The Childhood of Si-Osire (Jug Strassburg),” in Simpson, *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 490–91. Two fragmentary stories appear to be closely related to “First Setne,” with both mentioning the character Naneferkaptah. The first of these is preserved in one column of a Ptolemaic-era manuscript in Cairo; see CGC 30692 in Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Denkmäler 2*, pp. 112–15 and plate 51; see now a transcription and German translation by Vittmann in the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*; important discussion also by K.-Th. Zauzich, “Die schlimme Geschichte von dem Mann der Gottesmutter, der ein Gespenst war,” *Enchoria* 6 (1976), pp. 79–82. A second tale, which comprises a number of fragments from Copenhagen and Florence (PSI inv. D 6 + P Carlsberg 423), will be published by R. Jasnow; see K. Ryholt, “On the Contents and Nature of the Tebtunis Temple Library: A Status Report,” in S. Lippert and M. Schentuleit, eds., *Tebtunis und Soknopaiu Nesos: Leben im römischen Fajum* (Wiesbaden, 2005), p. 155 (my thanks to Kim Ryholt for this information and reference).

The date of “First Setne” is not certain. Griffith’s impression was that the handwriting of the MS is late Ptolemaic or early Roman (*Stories*, p. 14); Spiegelberg, on the other hand, thought the handwriting would fit most comfortably in the reign of Ptolemy III (*Die demotischen Denkmäler 2*, p. 88). A date early in the Ptolemaic period continues to be the modern *opinio communis*; cf. recently Ritner, “Setna I,” p. 454. If the “year 15” in the text’s colophon does belong to Ptolemy III, the MS was produced in 232 B.C.E.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., however, an unpublished Yale University Ph.D. dissertation by P. Teyssie, *The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale* (New Haven, 1998), whose understanding of Tabubue’s character anticipates mine in a number of respects, although without venturing a detailed explanation of the significance of her name; see especially pp. 71–74, 151–59. See also Addendum.

cussions of "First Setne" since the first decade of the twentieth century. These two names do appear in other literary or in ritual/mythological texts, and were thus not invented outright by our author, like Richard Sheridan's "Mrs. Malaprop."<sup>8</sup> Much like the name "Tabubue," however, they are nearly (Ihweret) or completely (Naneferkaptah) absent from published inscriptions or documentary texts that refer to real persons. The rarity of all three names strongly suggests that in "First Setne," each was advisedly and deliberately chosen to help us understand our characters and situate them in their fictional world.<sup>9</sup>

In my view, the two principal female characters, Ihweret "Great Ihet" and Tabubue "She of the Shining One," should be understood as reflections of two different aspects of the goddess Isis: a beneficent and a threatening aspect, respectively. This duality can itself be understood as a function of Isis' complementary protective and punishing functions in the myth-complexes in which she is prominent: those of the Isis-Osiris-Horus triad, and of the Eye of the Sun, the circle of female divinities who are daughters of the Sun-god Re<sup>c</sup> and who are responsible for the destruction of his enemies.<sup>10</sup> Naneferkaptah's name, "Beautiful is the Bull of Ptah," appears (as already suggested by F. Ll. Griffith and W. Groff) to link him to the divine bull Apis,<sup>11</sup> and thereby to Osiris. This helps confirm the links of Tabubue and Ihweret to Isis, and suggests that in "First Setne," the embedded tale of Naneferkaptah and his theft of the Magic Book of Thoth can be best understood by considering it in relation to mythology surrounding Osiris and Isis, especially those aspects that forefront Isis as defender of her brother/spouse and of their son Horus. The framing story, on the other hand, appears to resonate in important ways with the Eye-of-the-Sun myth-complex, and its thematization of punishment of the rebel. The evocation of these two myth-complexes in a single, unified composition is possible because of the theology of the "passions" of Osiris and of Re<sup>c</sup>, and of their mystical union in the Underworld.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The verbally-challenged character in Sheridan's 1775 play "The Rivals."

<sup>9</sup> The character Setne Khaemwas, on the other hand, is based on a real person: a son of Ramses II named Khaemwas ("Appearance in Thebes," a relatively common name; see H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* [3 vols., Glückstadt, 1935–1977] 1, p. 263.19), who bore the religious title *sm* (later *stm* and then, in Demotic, also *stn* with variants like the *stne* that appears in our tale); see *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1926–1963) (*Wb.*) 4, 119, 3–9; W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen, 1954) (Erichsen, *DG*), p. 479. On the historic Khaemwas, see F. Gomaà, *Chaemwese: Sohn Ramses' II. und Hoherpriester von Memphis*, ÄA 27 (Wiesbaden, 1973); M. Fisher, *The Sons of Ramses II*, Ägypten und Altes Testament (ÄAT) 53 (Wiesbaden, 2001) 1, pp. 89–105; 2, pp. 89–143.

<sup>10</sup> Extensive references at C. Leitz, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 1, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* (OLA) 110 (Leuven and Paris, 2002), pp. 426b–432b; for Isis specifically as the Eye of the Sun, see p. 427a, A.a). On the myth-complex, see in general Hornung, *Himmelskuh*; D. Inconnu-Bocquillon, *Le mythe de la Déesse Lointaine à Philae*, *Bibliothèque d'Étude* (BdÉ) 132 (Cairo, 2001); W.

Spiegelberg, *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonnenauge, nach dem Leidener demotischen Papyrus I. 384*, (Strassburg, 1917); F. de Cenival, *Le mythe de l'oeil du soleil: Translittération et traduction avec commentaire philologique*, *Demotische Studien* 9 (Sommerhausen, Germany, 1988); Quack, introduction to "Die Heimkehr der Göttin," in Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie*, pp. 195–98.

<sup>11</sup> See n. 22 below.

<sup>12</sup> In general, Assmann, *Death and Salvation*, pp. 188–89; 446, nn. 4, 5 and 11; E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, J. Baines, trans. (Ithaca, NY, 1982), pp. 93–96; M. Smith, "P. Carlsberg 462: A Fragmentary Account of a Rebellion Against the Sun God," in P. J. Frandsen and K. Ryholt, eds., *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, CNI Publications 22, The Carlsberg Papyri 3 (Copenhagen, 2000), pp. 95–112. Cf. also the solar associations of Osiris-Apis/Sarapis specifically; see L. Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis in Her Temple at Philae* (Hannover and London, 1988), pp. 142, 185, n. 60; Y. Grandjean, *Une nouvelle aréologie d'Isis à Maronée*, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* 49 (Leiden, 1975), pp. 57–60; R. Vos, *The Apis Embalming Ritual, P. Vindob. 3873*, OLA 50 (Leuven, 1993), pp. 159–61.

## SYNOPSIS

“First Setne” concerns a magic book produced by Thoth, Egypt’s god of writing; it comprises a primary narrative, an embedded story, and a unifying ending. In the lost beginning of the primary narrative, Setne will have learned of the Book and will have entered the Memphite tomb of Naneferkaptah, a long-dead magician and prince, in search of it. The preserved text begins with Setne already in the tomb, where the ghost of Naneferkaptah’s sister/wife Ihweret has begun to narrate the story of Naneferkaptah’s own theft of the Book from Thoth. She has already described how she and her brother had fallen in love, and now goes on to recount how she had persuaded their father the Pharaoh to permit their marriage. She next describes how Naneferkaptah had learned of the Book, and how—over her strong objections—he had undertaken an expedition to the distant town of Koptos to recover it, bringing Ihweret and the couple’s son Meribptah<sup>13</sup> along. Ihweret then describes how the gods had decreed death for her and for Meribptah, driving Naneferkaptah to drown himself. But even worse than this, the family is now separated in eternity—Naneferkaptah is buried in the royal necropolis at Memphis, while Ihweret and Meribptah are interred in Koptos, near the site of their deaths.

But as Ihweret’s narrative concludes and the framing narrative recommences, the unimpressed Setne employs the “craft of a good scribe”—magic—to seize the Book. Subsequently, a horrifying but ultimately slapstick sexual encounter with the mysterious Tabubue, in which Setne agrees (or so it seems) to the murder of his own children in exchange for Tabubue’s favors, convinces him of the folly of the theft. In the conclusion, Setne returns the Book, then fetches the mummies of Ihweret and Meribptah from Koptos for reburial with Naneferkaptah. All outstanding conflicts are thus resolved, and all, including the dead, live happily ever after.

## NANEFERKAPTAH

In published Demotic material, the name  *N3-nfr-k3-Pth* “Naneferkaptah”<sup>14</sup> is attested only in “First Setne” and in one other papyrus in the Cairo Museum, CGC 30692, also a Setne text.<sup>15</sup> The name also appears in the unpublished Setne tale PSI inv. D 6 + P Carlsberg 423.<sup>16</sup> The name does not appear in Ranke, *Personennamen*.<sup>17</sup> In the *Demotisches Namenbuch*, the name is translated “Schön ist der Ka des Ptah”—that is, the *k3*-element is interpreted as the old word for “soul” or “life-force.”<sup>18</sup> However, *k3* in this

<sup>13</sup> For the name of the son of Naneferkaptah and Ihweret as “Meribptah,” rather than the more commonly-given “Merib,” see E. Lüdeckens, et al., *Demotisches Namenbuch* (Wiesbaden, 1980–2000) (*DNb*) 1.13, p. 600, esp. exs. 10 and 11, in which the *Pth*-element is written phonetically. So also Goldbrunner in *Verbl. Gelehrte*, and also Vittmann in *TLA*, although with question mark. Discussion also in Hoffmann, “Erste Setnegeschichte,” pp. 343–44, note a, retaining the reading “Merib.”

<sup>14</sup> The hand-copies of the names “Naneferkaptah,” “Ihweret,” and “Tabubue” used in this article are taken from Goldbrunner, *verbl. Gelehrte*, pp. 91–92. My

thanks to Sara Goldbrunner and to *Demotische Studien* series editor Karl-Th. Zauzich for permission to use them here.

<sup>15</sup> *DNb* 1.14, p. 619, citing only “First Setne”; the name also appears in CGC 30692, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Kim Ryholt, personal communication.

<sup>17</sup> The expected hieroglyphic/hieratic equivalent would be \**Nfr-k3-Pth*; the initial *n3* in the Demotic form is a prefix that allows the adjective *nfr* to be predicated as an adjective-verb. For other names on this pattern, mainly from the Old Kingdom, cf. Ranke, *Personennamen* 1, p. 200b.

<sup>18</sup> *Wb.* 5, 86, 10 ff.

meaning appears to have been very uncommon, if not yet obsolete, in Demotic,<sup>19</sup> and in "First Setne," the writing of the element *kʒ* with its phallus determinative is graphically identical to the common writing of the word *kʒ* "bull." Some or possibly many Egyptian readers of the tale may have recognized that the name was constructed on an earlier pattern in which the old word for "soul" (still used in Ptolemaic hieroglyphic<sup>20</sup>) was evoked, and this will, perhaps, have helped the author convey to readers the idea that Naneferkaptah was a figure from the remote past. Nevertheless, the actual orthography of the name in our tale would have inevitably created (additional?) associations with the word "bull." Accordingly, Erichsen in the *Demotisches Glossar* quoted the name under his entry for *kʒ* "bull,"<sup>21</sup> and Griffith likewise translated the name "Beautiful is the bull of Ptah." Although I have been unable to locate any other instance of the phrase "bull of Ptah," I presume that Griffith's conjecture of an evocation of Apis is correct.<sup>22</sup>

Apis, in turn, is linked not only to Ptah (of whom he is most often referred to as the *wḥm*, "herald"? or "avatar"?<sup>23</sup> and also the *bʒ*, "manifestation"<sup>24</sup>), but also to Osiris, most especially in the syncretic forms Apis-Osiris, Osiris-Apis or Sarapis.<sup>25</sup> Bull-imagery generally is common in reference to Osiris (as cow-imagery is in reference to Isis) throughout Late-period religious texts dealing with Osiris-Isis mythology,<sup>26</sup> but an Apis connection would especially complement the many other Osirian aspects of Naneferkaptah's character, which include: (1) marriage to his sister (3.5–6); (2) death by drowning (4.20), especially prominent as a motif in Osirian ritual texts, also alleged by some Roman-era sources to be

<sup>19</sup> There is no entry for the word in Erichsen, *DG*. The *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* (on-line) cites the word only in an undated ostrakon, from the "Myth of the Eye of the Sun," in the personal name "Naneferkasokar" (a name that, like "Naneferkaptah," exists in published Demotic only as the name of a literary character; cf. also *DNb* 1.14, p. 620; the *kʒ*-element is here spelled *ky*), and in the geographic name *Hw.t-kʒ-Pth* "House of the Soul of Ptah," i.e., Memphis; see [www.oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/CDD\\_K.pdf](http://www.oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/CDD_K.pdf) (version of 29 June 2001), pp. 4–5. The Demotic text corpus in the on-line *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (as of 17 December 2007) adds citations from a magical papyrus in the Louvre and a funerary stela in Cairo. In bilingual inscriptions, hieroglyphic *kʒ* "soul" can be rendered in Demotic with *rn* "name" or *šy* "fate/daimon"; cf. *Wb.* 5, 86, 12–13. Cf. also J. Gee, abstract for a presentation "Four Notes on the Ka – 3. The Disappearance of the Ka," in the conference program *The 57th Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt*, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> P. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon: A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu*, OLA 78 (Leuven, 1997), pp. 1073–75.

<sup>21</sup> Erichsen, *DG*, p. 556.

<sup>22</sup> Griffith, *Stories*, p. 16, n. 1; similarly Groff, "Étude," pp. 41–42. Griffith also notes that this is a reinterpretation of an earlier name pattern in which the element *kʒ* does mean "soul" or "life-force." The writing of the name "Naneferkaptah" in the Setne texts CGC 30692 and PSI inv. D 6 + P Carlsberg 423 in fact uses the *kʒ*-arms  $\text{𓀀}$ , not the Demotic *kʒ* "bull" group. Even in these cases, however, it may be that the mean-

ing "bull" is intended; cf. the remarks of G. Burkard, *Spätzeitliche Osiris-Liturgien im Corpus der Asasif-Papyri*, ÄAT 31 (Wiesbaden, 1995), p. 24, n. 16 to the *ʾIri-ʾiri* papyrus, x+1.12, citing *Wb.* 5, 94. As Kim Ryholt informs me, in the Carlsberg/Florence papyrus, the *kʒ*-sign in the name *Nʒ-nfr-kʒ-Pth*—like the *kʒ* "bull" group in the name as written in "First Setne"—is accompanied by a divine determinative.

<sup>23</sup> See M. S. Holmberg, *The God Ptah* (Lund, 1946), pp. 196–98.

<sup>24</sup> J. G. Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff, 1970), p. 364, with n. 1.

<sup>25</sup> In this connection, it is at least interesting to note that, as high priest of Ptah, the historic Khaemwas was intimately connected to the Apis bull and was likely largely responsible for major enlargements of the Memphite Sarapieion in the reign of Ramses II. His own burial—or perhaps a secondary or pseudo-burial—took place in or near the Sarapieion itself. See in general Gomaà, *Chaemwese*, pp. 39–54. Taken together, this constellation of circumstances might hint at a possible origin for tales or legends connecting Setne Khaemwas with the Memphite tomb of a figure who appears to resonate with Osiris and with Apis.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., "Songs of Isis and Nephthys," 2.6 (Osiris is the *kʒ n sn.ty*, "bull of the two sisters"); or 3.6 (Osiris is *pʒ kʒ sty m ḥm.wt*, "the bull who ejaculates in cows"). For the Ptolemaic "Songs," see R. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 3 (Brussels, 1933) (text); *idem* "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus – I," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (JEA)* 22 (1936), pp. 121–40 (translation and commentary).

the fate of the living Apis bull if it lived to a certain ritually-prescribed age;<sup>27</sup> (3) underwater return to Memphis, holding on to the steering oars of the bark of Pharaoh (4.23), which might be taken to evoke the *ḥbdw*-fish, a fish associated with the protection of the bark of Re<sup>c</sup>, with the rebirth of Re<sup>c</sup> and, in funerary contexts, with the rebirth of the Osirian deceased;<sup>28</sup> (4) recovery from the Nile in Memphis (4.23), again like Osiris; (5) burial in Memphis (4.24–25), like both the Apis bull<sup>29</sup> and—according to a tradition preserved in the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty “Memphite Theology” and alluded to in Plutarch’s *Isis and Osiris*—like Osiris himself;<sup>30</sup> (6) rulership in the (or an) Underworld.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. F. Ll. Griffith, “Apotheosis by Drowning,” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache (ZÄS)* 46 (1909/1910), pp. 132–34. On Osiris drowned, see also J. G. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, Studies in the History of Religions (Supplements to *Numen*) (Leiden, 1980), pp. 9, 75, 108 ff., 160, 196; on Osiris’ disappearance in the Nile, see pp. 25 ff. On the Roman-era tradition that the Apis bull might be ritually drowned, reported unambiguously only in Pliny the Elder (first century C.E.), Solinus (third-fourth centuries C.E.?) and Ammianus Marcellinus (fourth century C.E.), see Griffiths, *De Iside et Osiride*, pp. 273 and 511. Ammianus Marcellinus further reports that in this ritual, a heifer was similarly dispatched—which, with considerable caution, might be compared to the fate of Ihweret in “First Setne.” See W. Hamilton, trans., *Ammianus Marcellinus, The Later Roman Empire: A.D. 354–378* (London, 1986), p. 211. For the text: W. Seyfarth, ed., *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum Gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Scriptorum Romani, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1978), chap. 14 for the description of Apis rituals. The notion that Apis was ever ritually drowned in reality was strongly disputed by J. Vercouter, in “Apisumlauf/Apisperiode,” W. Helck and E. Otto, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), cols. 346–48. In Vercouter’s view, the claim reflects confusion caused by the fact that some rituals carried out on the Apis’ cadaver took place next to and/or on a “Royal Lake.” Even if Vercouter is right, however, there remains the probability that these rituals will have been intended at least in part to recapitulate and resonate with the myth of Osiris’ drowning and recovery from the Nile; cf. again Vos, *Apis Embalming Ritual*, pp. 159–61.

<sup>28</sup> For the Osirian and Solar associations of the *ḥbdw*-fish, see C. Sander-Hansen, *Die Texte der Metternichstele*, *Analecta Aegyptiaca* 7 (Copenhagen, 1956), p. 10, note *ad Spruch V*; C. Desroches-Noblecourt, “Un ‘lac de turquoise’: Godets à onguents et destinées d’outre-tombe dans l’Égypte ancienne,” *Monuments et mémoires publiés par l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (Fondation Eugène Piot)* 47 (Paris, 1953), pp. 10 ff.; I. Gamer-Wallert, *Fische und Fischkulte im alten Ägypten*, *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen (ÄA)* 21 (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 113–15; 131–32. This interpretation of Nanferkaptah’s submarine voyage to Memphis might strike the reader as fishy, but perhaps

less so once it is noted that the tale also punningly equates Ihweret and Meribptah with fish. As Setne had presumably been told in the lost beginning of the tale (cf. 3.37; 4.3), the Magic Book of Thoth had the power to enable a user to see fish in the Nile—i.e., Demotic *rym.w*, cf. Coptic *ⲣⲁⲙⲉ* (W. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* [Oxford, 1939]) [Crum, *CD*], p. 294a)—even at a depth of twenty-one divine cubits, or more than ten meters. Initially, the Book does not appear to work for Setne as advertised, but Setne does (among other curious happenings) encounter the spirits and eventually the mummies of Ihweret and Meribptah—i.e., human beings, Demotic *rm.t.w*, cf. Coptic *ⲣⲟⲙⲉ* (Crum, *CD*, pp. 294b–96a)—who had been drowned in the Nile and had indeed sunk to the predicted depth of twenty-one divine cubits (4.10; 4.14). This implicit pun appears to adapt or parody the well-known word-play that underlies the Egyptian theological equation of human beings with the tears (*rm.w*; cf. Coptic *ⲣⲓⲙⲉ* “to weep,” *ⲣⲟⲙⲉⲓⲏ* and variants, “tear,” Crum, *CD*, p. 294a–b) of the gods; compare the passage from the “Esna Cosmology” to be discussed below. For such “indirect” puns, cf. S. Lippert, “Komplexe Wortspiele in der Demotischen Chronik und im Mythos vom Sonnenaug,” *Enchoria* 27 (2001), pp. 88–100. As I will argue more fully in my forthcoming *The Craft of a Good Scribe: Narrative and Meaning in the ‘First Tale of Setne Khaemwas’* (to appear in the series *Ancient Narrative Supplementum* [Groningen]), word-plays in “First Setne” are consistently used by Setne’s interlocutors to mislead him while actually hinting at the truth of what is happening, or is about to happen.

<sup>29</sup> See in general D. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König, Teil I: Beiträge zu Organisation, Kult und Theologie der spätzeitlichen Tierfriedhöfe*, *ÄAT* 16 (Wiesbaden, 1989), pp. 57–104.

<sup>30</sup> “Memphite Theology” 20b–22; see in K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altaegyptischen Mysterienspielen*, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Aegyptens 10 (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 40–41, with n. d) on pp. 41–42; “Memphite Theology” pp. 63–64, *Dramatische Texte*, pp. 73–77, with n. c) on p. 74; Lichtheim, *AEL* 1, pp. 53–56; Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, pp. 109–10. On the Late-period date of the Memphite Theology, see Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, p. 5 and literature cited there. Many localities in Egypt, of course, claimed to be the site of Osiris’ tomb, a state of affairs explained mythologically by Isis’ burial of the fragments of Osiris’

## IHWERET

Each of the Osirian features of Naneferkaptah’s character just enumerated implies that Ihweret for her part can be interpreted in light of the corresponding Isis-related aspects of the myth-complex. I discuss this extensively in “Through a Woman’s Eyes”; here, I would especially point to the following: (1) Ihweret’s appearance by the initially-inert mummy of Naneferkaptah, which she defends and beside which she recounts her sad story, as Isis mourns by the mummy of Osiris;<sup>31</sup> (2) Ihweret’s highly-unusual role as narrator of Naneferkaptah’s tale, which resonates with Isis’ frequent and characteristic appearance in Egyptian texts of many genres as a speaker and narrator;<sup>32</sup> (3) her status as mother of Meribptah—a colorless character whose principal, perhaps only, apparent function is to draw attention to Ihweret’s maternal side and to complete the expected triadic structure of the family; (4) related to this, Ihweret’s burial, along with Meribptah, in Koptos (4.11; 4.15–16)—a site with important connections to Isis and the location, as the tale itself repeatedly stresses, of a temple to Isis and her son Horus-the-Child (Harpokrates).<sup>33</sup>

The name  $\text{𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒}$  *’Ih-wre.t* “Ihweret” is well chosen in this respect. As a personal name, “Ihweret” is all but unattested outside of “First Setne.” Aside from our Ihweret, the *Demotisches Namenbuch* quotes only one other example (non-literary),<sup>34</sup> and the name does not appear at all in Ranke, *Personennamen*. *’Ih-wre.t* was left untranslated by both Griffith and the *Namenbuch*; but it is more than tempting to connect the initial element *’Ih-*, spelled in “First Setne” with the reed-leaf and the first *h*, with  $\text{𓆎𓆏}$  *’Ih.t* “Ihet,” a manifestation of the Celestial Cow who appears frequently as *’Ih.t-wr.t* “Ihet-weret” or “Great Ihet.” The name’s goddess-determinative, which also appears in the one other example quoted in the *Demotisches Namenbuch*, strengthens this conclusion.<sup>35</sup>

mutilated body throughout the land. See Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, chap. 20, where Plutarch (mid-first, early-second century C.E.) reports a tradition according to which the name of Memphis means τᾶρος Ὀσίριδος “tomb of Osiris”; see Griffiths, *De Iside et Osiride*, pp. 147–48 (text and translation), pp. 365 ff. (comments); Griffiths assumes a genuine folk-etymology along the lines of *\*mnw (Wnn)-nfr*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. J. Quack, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte 3: Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*, Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie 3 (Münster, 2005), p. 18, on Ihweret as “mourner”; cf. also Assmann, *Death and Salvation*, p. 115.

<sup>32</sup> Isis’ frequent appearance as speaker-narrator is instrumentally connected to her role as mourner of Osiris, and to her role as his defender and as defender of their son Horus, especially with her magic, actualized by speech. For the Greco-Roman period specifically, compare also the Greek-language Isis “aretalogies” that present long, first-person discourses by the goddess, and the alchemical text “Isis the Prophetess to her Son Horus,” also in Greek, discussed below. See Vinson, “Through a Woman’s Eyes” for fuller discussion and references; also J. Quack, “Ich bin Isis, Herrin der beiden Länder,” in S. Meyer, ed., *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World/Ägypten – Tempel der gesamten Welt*,

*Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 319–65; T. Dousa, “Imagining Isis: On Some Continuities and Discontinuities in the Image of Isis in Greek Isis Hymns and Demotic Texts,” in K. Ryholt, ed., *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23–27 August 1999*, CNI Publications 27 (Copenhagen, 2002), pp. 149–84.

<sup>33</sup> Feasting with the priests of Isis and Harpokrates on Naneferkaptah’s and Ihweret’s arrival in Koptos: “First Setne” 3.25; Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, pp. 129–30; Ritner, “Setna I,” p. 457. On Setne’s arrival in Koptos: “First Setne” 6.7–8; Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, p. 136; Ritner, “Setna I,” p. 468. On Koptos as a location sacred to Isis, see M. Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin Isis vom alten Reich bis zum Ende des neuen Reiches*, Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 11 (Berlin, 1968), pp. 171–73; Griffith, *Stories*, p. 23, n. to “First Setne” 3.25–26; J. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites, The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300 CE)*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 153 (Leiden and Boston, 2005), p. 243, with n. 143.

<sup>34</sup> *DNb* 1.2, p. 74, spelled *3h-wre(.t)*.

<sup>35</sup> As apparently already Groff, “Étude,” p. 42, who translated “Ihweret” as “la grande vache”—although it is somewhat unclear whether he differentiated between *ih.t* as the common word for “cow” and *’Ih.t* as a name

It would obviously not be unexpected to find an Isis-like character with a name suggestive of cow theology. Largely because of her close connection with Hathor (grounded above all in their parallel mythological functions of reviving the sexual faculties of the resurrected Osiris and of the reborn Sun), Isis begins to take on cow attributes as early as the Middle Kingdom, when she first appears with cow horns in a determinative in one version (B17C) of Spell 49 of the Coffin Texts.<sup>36</sup> Literary references to Isis in cow-form become common from the New Kingdom forward, and by the Late Period, images of Isis in visual arts as fully cow-headed or completely in cow-form become common as well.<sup>37</sup> As mentioned above, this occurs also in the more generalized context of bull-and-cow as metaphor for Osiris and Isis.

Direct equations of Isis and Ihet are not common—none is recorded in Leitz, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*—but neither are they entirely absent, and implicit or indirect equations are not rare. The explicit or implicit equivalence of Isis and Ihet in temple texts, reliefs or elsewhere reflects the basic mythological equation, especially common in the Late and Greco-Roman periods, of Isis as the mother and defender of Horus with the various goddesses—including not only Ihet, but also her sister Celestial Cow Methyer, as well as cosmic goddesses Neith and Nut—who appear as the mother of Re<sup>c</sup>.<sup>38</sup> One example appears in some Ptolemaic versions of Chapter 142 of the Book of the Dead, which include a passage that identifies Isis with a number of other goddesses, including Neith, Selqet, Ma<sup>c</sup>at, and Ihet.<sup>39</sup> For our purposes, a more telling example appears in column 15.1 of the Ptolemaic “Songs of Isis and Nephthys.” Here, Ihet<sup>40</sup> and the Sky-goddess Nut are presented in the context of a first-person discourse by Isis as mourners for Osiris. These two Sky-goddesses appear to be metaphorical references to Isis herself, an equation that can also go the other way, especially in the Greco-Roman period, when “Isis” appears as a metonymy for heaven.<sup>41</sup>

for the Celestial Cow; note that *h* and *ḥ* were inconsistently distinguished by scholars trained in the late nineteenth century (cf. R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen: Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch - Deutsch [2800–950 v. Chr.]*, Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt 64 [Mainz, 1995], pp. xxxvii–xxxviii). Similarly E. Revillout, “Notes philologiques 1° Setna,” *Revue Égyptologique* 12 (1907), p. 165, who offered both  $\text{𓆎𓆏}$  and  $\text{𓆎𓆏}$  as hieroglyphic transcriptions of Demotic *’Ih-*, and who also pointed to the name’s implications for a relationship between our character Iheret and Isis: “La grande vache et un des noms d’Isis. Aussi ajoute-t-on le déterminatif de la déesse. . . .” For Ihet, see Leitz, *Lexikon* 1, pp. 537a–38b; on Ihet-weret, pp. 538b–39b. On the Celestial Cow(s) generally, including Ihet, see Hornung, *Himmelskuh*, pp. 96 ff. The graphic omission of the feminine *-t* ending in the first member of a compound expression, the second member of which is also feminine, is not problematic in Ptolemaic Demotic; see J. Johnson, *Thus Wrote ‘Onchsheshonqy, An Introductory Grammar of Demotic*, 3d edition, *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* (SAOC) 45 (Chicago, 2001), p. 9, n. 4, *rmṯ(.t)-rḥ.t*, “wise woman” (here as a compound adjective), quoting *‘Onchsheshonqy* 18.9; p. 10, ex. 11, *mt(.t)-nfr.t*,

“good thing, favor,” quoting *‘Onchsheshonqy* 4.10.

<sup>36</sup> A. de Buck and A. H. Gardiner, eds., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications (OIP) 34 (Chicago, 1935), p. 215; Münster, *Göttin Isis*, p. 119, n. 1310.

<sup>37</sup> Münster, *Göttin Isis*, p. 202.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, “P. Carlsberg 462,” pp. 105–6; cf. H. Sternberg, *Mythische Motive und Mythenbildung in den Ägyptischen Tempeln und Papyri der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, Göttinger Orientforschungen 4. Reihe: Ägypten 14 (Wiesbaden, 1985), pp. 221–24. For Ihet as mother of Re<sup>c</sup>, see also Hornung, *Himmelskuh*, p. 97. For the specifically-maternal connotations of cow imagery, see also J. Berlandini, “La déesse bucéphale: une iconographie particulière de l’Hathor memphite,” *BIFAO* 83 (1983), pp. 33–50.

<sup>39</sup> See 142 §S, Var. 4; T. G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter As Expressed in Their Own Terms*, SAOC 37 (Chicago, 1974), p. 120.

<sup>40</sup> Spelled, as often,  $\text{𓆎𓆏}$   $\text{𓆎𓆏}$  *ḥhḥ(.t)*; cf. again the spelling *ḥh-wre(.t)* in *DNb* 1.2, p. 74.

<sup>41</sup> D. Kurth, “ $\text{𓆎𓆏}$   $\text{𓆎𓆏}$  (Isis): Eine Bezeichnung des Himmels in Texten griech.-röm. Zeit,” *Göttinger Mitteilungen (GM)* 19 (1976), pp. 35–36.

Moreover, Ihet is freely identified directly with Hathor and with Neith, each of whom in turn appears both in association and assimilation with Isis at all times, but especially prominently in the Greco-Roman period, both in Egyptian sources<sup>42</sup> and in *interpretationes Graecae*.<sup>43</sup> It is particularly interesting to consider Ihet in her capacity as a manifestation of the creatrix Neith at Esna, where her role as defender of her son Re<sup>c</sup> against rebellious humanity strongly resonates with Isis’ role as defender—both of her brother/spouse Osiris and, most especially in this maternal context, of their son Horus, whom she must protect from the confederates of Seth (and note in this connection that Ihweret invokes Neith in a curse at “First Setne” 3.21–22). In direct speech in the mythological narrative called the “Esna Cosmology,” Ihet predicts the imminent birth of the Sun and her role in protecting him:

A noble god will come into existence today. When he opens his eye, Light will come into existence; when he closes it, it produces Darkness. Humans (*rm.t.w*) come about from the tears (*rm.w*) of his eye; the gods (*ntr.w*) from the saliva (*ntt*) of his lips. I will strengthen him with my strength; I will make him effective with my efficacy; I will make him powerful with my power. His children will rebel against him, but <I?> will overthrow them for him; <I?> will repress them for him. For he is the child who comes forth from my flesh. He will be the lord of this land, eternally. I will enfold him within my arms, and no evil will reach him, eternally.<sup>44</sup>

From the late Ptolemaic period, moreover, Ihet is the theological mother of the Theban Buchis bull, and here again, we find a substantial, if partial, parallel with Isis, who is the theological mother of the living Apis.<sup>45</sup> It seems that Ihet-weret’s role in west Thebes may represent a conscious attempt to create a theology of eternal regeneration for the Buchis bull that closely parallels that of the Apis bull in Memphis and his regeneration through Isis.<sup>46</sup> This is evident in the numerous Theban stelae commemorating burials of the Buchis bull, and in other sources, e.g., in the small Roman-period temple of Isis at Deir esh-Shelwit on the Theban west bank, in which Ihet appears closely associated with Osiris-Buchis and with a second Osiris manifestation, Osiris of Djeme.<sup>47</sup>

One material difference between the systems, however, is the apparent fact that Ihet-weret was not seen as the sexual consort of the deceased Buchis.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, the Ptolemaic stelae dedicated to Isis, the mother of Apis, in the Memphite Sarapieion make it clear that Osiris-Apis was characteristically viewed as Isis’ consort, and was in this sense distinct from the living Apis of whom Isis was the mother.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Greek-language sources make Sarapis

<sup>42</sup> Leitz, *Lexikon* 1, pp. 538b–39b.

<sup>43</sup> On Isis as both Hathor and Methyer, or *Mh.t-wr.t*, an alternative Celestial Cow, see Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, chap. 56, in Griffiths, *De Iside et Osiride*, pp. 206–7 (text and translation), p. 512 (comments). On Isis as Neith, see *Isis and Osiris*, chap. 9; in Griffiths, pp. 130–31 (text and translation), pp. 283–84 (comments).

<sup>44</sup> Text: S. Sauneron, *Le temple d’Esna*, Esna 3 (Cairo, 1968), pp. 30–31 (§10); comments and translation, *idem*, *Les fêtes religieuses d’Esna aux derniers siècles du paganisme*, Esna 5 (Cairo, 1962), pp. 261–62. The inscription of the “Esna Cosmology” is dated to the reign of Trajan.

<sup>45</sup> H. S. Smith, “The Death and Life of the Mother of Apis,” in A. B. Lloyd, ed., *Studies in Pharaonic*

*Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, Egypt Exploration Society Occasional Publications 8 (London, 1992), p. 217; also P Vienna D6920–22 x+2.5–6, in F. Hoffmann, “Der literarische demotische Papyrus Wien D6920–22,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur (SAK)* 23 (1996), pp. 173–74; Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere*, pp. 96 ff.

<sup>46</sup> L. Goldbrunner, *Buchis: Eine Untersuchung zur Theologie des heiligen Stieres in Theben zur griechisch-römischen Zeit*, Monographes Reine Élisabeth 11 (Brepols, 2004), pp. 169 ff.

<sup>47</sup> C. Zivie, “Trois campagnes épigraphiques au temple de Deir Chellouit,” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale (BIFAO)* 77 (1977), p. 160.

<sup>48</sup> Lothar Goldbrunner, personal communication.

<sup>49</sup> See, in general, Smith, “Death and Life.”

assume the position of Osiris in the Isis-Sarapis-Harpokrates triad.<sup>50</sup> In “First Setne,” then, if it is correct to see in Naneferkaptah’s name a reference to the Apis bull, then Naneferkaptah—being dead, and being Ihweret’s spouse—is far more likely to resonate with Osiris-Apis/Sarapis than with the living Apis.<sup>51</sup> But that aside, Ihweret’s name appears to have been chosen for both its implications of a link to Isis, and specifically to complement the obvious bovine connotations and the religious implications of the name “Naneferkaptah.”<sup>52</sup> And the name complements in an interesting way that of the other major female character in the tale, Tabubue.

#### TABUBUE

Ihweret’s benign role in “First Setne” may resonate with Isis as mother/sister/spouse, but Isis is a complex figure, especially in Late- and Greco-Roman-period theology, and she has other aspects as well: as seductress/object of desire, and as punisher of the forces inimical to Osiris and to their son Horus, and—related to this—as defender of the Sun-god Re<sup>c</sup> and the cosmic order against the forces of evil and chaos. The name *Tabubue* (𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒) *Ta-Bwbwe* “Tabubue,” which is not certainly attested outside of “First Setne,”<sup>53</sup> appears to me to be an evocation of precisely these simultaneously seductive and sexual, as well as threatening and punishing, aspects of Isis—aspects she shares with other manifestations of the Eye of the Sun.

The name “Tabubue” is formed on a very common Late- and Greco-Roman-period feminine pattern, which consists of an initial element *Ta-*, from earlier Egyptian *T3-n.t.*, meaning “She of . . .,” conjoined with, typically, a divine name. An equation of the *Bwbwe*-element of “Tabubue” with the god *B3by* “Bebon,” who is connected to raucous sexuality, has been suggested more than once.<sup>54</sup> Alternatively, Griffith was attracted to the idea that *Bwbwe* might be a Demotic rendering of “Baubo,” the name of an old woman who figures in some versions of the Greek myth of Demeter, and who exposes her vulva to the goddess Demeter to “cheer her up” after Demeter has lost her daughter Persephone to the Underworld-god

<sup>50</sup> R. Merkelbach, *Isis Regina – Zeus Sarapis: Die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1995), pp. 71–86 (on Osiris and Sarapis); pp. 87–93 (on Harpokrates). See also J.-Ph. Lauer and Ch. Picard, *Les statues ptolémaïques du Serapieion de Memphis*, Publications de l’Institut d’art et d’archéologie de l’Université de Paris 3 (Paris, 1955), pp. 246 ff. (“Dionysos et Sarapis”).

<sup>51</sup> On the parameters of the problem, see, in general, J. E. Stambaugh, *Sarapis under the Early Ptolemies*, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’empire romain 25 (Leiden, 1972); Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere*, pp. 65–88; J. Assmann *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*, A. Jenkins, trans. (New York, 2002), pp. 374–75.

<sup>52</sup> An observation anticipated by Groff in “Étude,” p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> The *Demotisches Namenbuch* cites the name only from “First Setne” (*DNb* 1.26, p. 1175), and Ranke, *Personennamen*, records no hieroglyphic/hieratic equivalent such as, e.g., \**T3-n.t-t3-Bwbw.t*. A claimed, pos-

sible variant of the name is probably to be understood as a statement of filiation, i.e., *ta Bbwy*, “daughter of *Bbwy*,” rather than as a complete name *Ta-Bbwy*. See G. Mattha, *Demotic Ostraca from the Collections at Oxford, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Cairo*, Publications de la Société Fouad I de papyrologie, textes et documents 6 (Cairo, 1945), pp. 178–79 (240.1); Griffith, *Stories*, p. 33, n. to l. 3, citing H. Brugsch, *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacorum* (Leipzig, 1884), p. 1055; *DNb* 1.3, p. 141 (s.v. *bbwj*). Beyond this, there is no compelling argument that the name *Bbwy*, attested since the Middle Kingdom (Ranke, *Personennamen* 1, p. 96.7), is a variant of *bwbw* (on which, see further below).

<sup>54</sup> See Groff, “Étude,” p. 42; more recently R. Jasnow, “‘And Pharaoh laughed . . .’ Reflections on Humor in Setne I and Late Period Egyptian Literature,” *Enchoria* 27 (2001), p. 80, although he acknowledges the orthographic difficulties. On *B3by*, see Leitz, *Lexikon* 2, OLA 11 (Leuven and Paris, 2002), pp. 736c–38b.

Hades.<sup>55</sup> It is worth noting in this respect that “Tabubue” in “First Setne” is spelled with a personal determinative, not a divine determinative such as appears in our writings of the names “Ihweret” and “Naneferkaptah.” But Griffith also noted that *Bwbwe* might be taken to mean the “Shining One,”<sup>56</sup> and the most common approach—which I adopt here—has been to take the *Bwbwe*-element as this epithet, rather than as the proper name of a specific divinity.

The “Shining One” evoked in our name is presumably female, if the final *e* in most writings of “Tabubue” is a phonetic reflex of the feminine *-t* ending,<sup>57</sup> and R. Ritner suggests that the reference is to either the goddess Bastet or the goddess Hathor.<sup>58</sup> In favor of a Hathoric connection, one might compare the numerous epithets of Hathor that involve connections to gold or light.<sup>59</sup> Tabubue is indeed said to be wearing a large amount of gold jewelry when Setne first sees her (4.39), which certainly suggests Hathoric resonances, as does her entourage of young women (4.39),<sup>60</sup> and the gold, lapis-lazuli and turquoise that

<sup>55</sup> Griffith, *Stories*, p. 33, note to l. 3. On Baubo and parallels in Egypt and elsewhere, see now E. Morris, “Sacred and Obscene Laughter in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, in Egyptian Inversions of Everyday Life, and in the Context of Cultic Competition,” in T. Schneider and K. Szpakowska, eds., *Egyptian Stories: A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of his Retirement*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 347 (Münster, 2007), pp. 197–224, esp. 200 ff.; my thanks to Ellen Morris and to Kasia Szpakowska for the opportunity to consult this article prior to its publication.

<sup>56</sup> Griffith, *Stories*, p. 33, n. ad loc., and 122, with n. ad loc., comparing Coptic **BOYBOY** “shine, glitter” (Crum, *CD*, p. 29a). The etymology of the verb/verbal noun *bwbw*/**BOYBOY**, which is first certainly attested in Demotic (Erichsen, *DG*, p. 115, cites *bwbw* “Glanz” only from the Demotic “Myth of the Eye of the Sun”), is uncertain. A derivation from *bʿbʿ* “glitter” (a metathesis of *bʿbʿ* [Wb. 1, 178, 4] attested at Philae) has been proposed more than once; see D. Meeks, “Étymologies coptes, notes et remarques,” in S. Giversen, et al., eds., *Coptology: Past, Present and Future, Studies in Honour of Rodolphe Kasser*, OLA 61 (Leuven, 1994), pp. 197–98, and further literature cited there. A change *ʿ* > *w* would be unusual, however; further doubts expressed by W. Vycichl, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue Copte* (Leuven, 1983), p. 25b. I would think that *bwbw* may have its origin in a reduplication of the root *bʿw* (Wb. 1, 413, 12–17) which refers in the most general sense to a visible manifestation of divine power, and which can appear in Demotic as *bw*; see the *Chicago Demotic Dictionary*, [http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/CDD\\_B.pdf](http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/CDD_B.pdf) (version of 23 August 2002), p. 37, with extensive further literature cited there. Cf. also S. Vinson, “Through a Woman’s Eyes,” p. 342, with n. 161, on the name *Ta-bwy* (?), which may appear in “Demotic Chronicle” 3.5, glossed as the “uraeus,” the protecting serpent that is also a manifestation of the Eye of the Sun.

<sup>57</sup> On the final weak vowel *e* that often appears at the end of feminine words (preceding or replacing a

written *-t*), see Johnson, *ʿOnchsheshonqy*, p. 9, §13, and the personal name *ʿh-wre(t)* cited above. Of course, the final feminine *-t* ending is always written out in “First Setne” in the case of *ʿh-wre.t*. Could one argue, however, that the fact that *wr.t* is a relatively common adjective, especially in feminine divine names or titles (or in personal names that include such), might push a scribe towards a more conventional orthography, while the rarity of the verb *bwbw* and any derivatives might increase the likelihood that the phonetic writing *bwbwe* would be chosen in preference to a more “correct” *\*bwbw.t*?

<sup>58</sup> Ritner, “Setna I,” p. 463, n. 27.

<sup>59</sup> Leitz, *Lexikon* 4, OLA 113 (Leuven and Paris, 2002), p. 181a, A.i). On Hathor and solar or light imagery in the Greco-Roman period, cf. among her titles at Dendara, e.g.: “Brilliant, Uraeus, the Feminine Sun, the Mistress of Life, the Feminine Solar Disk, Replica of the Male Solar Disk” (*hʿy.t hr.t-tp Rʿy.t nb[.t] ʿnh ʿItn[.t] snw n ʿItn*); É. Chassinat and F. Daumas, *Le Temple de Dendara* 6 (Cairo, 1965), p. 23 (text); S. Cauville, *Dendara 5–6, Traduction, Les cryptes du temple d’Hathor*, OLA 131 (Leuven, 2004), pp. 290–91 (transcription and translation). Cf. also Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis*, p. 80 (Hymn 6) and nn. 11 and 12 on p. 174; P. Derchain, *Hathor Quadrifrons, Recherches sur la syntaxe d’un mythe égyptien*, Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 28 (Istanbul, 1972), p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> See W. Guglielmi, *Die Göttin Mr.t: Entstehung und Verehrung einer Personifikation*, Probleme der Ägyptologie 7 (Leiden, 1991), pp. 92 ff. on Hathor’s divine entourage, manifested in this world as the priestesses who perform musically for her in cult festivals; cf. also J. Darnell, “Hathor Returns to Medamûd,” *SAK* 22 (1995), pp. 55–57. From this perspective, it would be tempting to interpret the “two staff-members belonging to the household” (*rm[.t]-h[.t] na pr s 2*) assigned (*ip*) to Tabubue as allusions to Shu (or Onuris) and Thoth, the two gods dispatched by Re<sup>c</sup> to accompany the “Distant Goddess” in her return to Memphis. In this case, the persistence of the final *r* in

characterize the decor of her home (5.15–16).<sup>61</sup> And Tabubue is closely connected to Bastet; her father is said to be a priest of Bastet, Mistress of ‘Ankh-Tawy (i.e., the western area of Memphis, including the Memphite necropolis) (5.3, 5.14),<sup>62</sup> and her villa is precisely situated in the Bubastieion (*Pr-Bḥst.t*) (5.9, 5.11), i.e., the precincts of the temple of Bastet herself, on the edge of the Memphite escarpment, near the pyramid of Tety.<sup>63</sup> Of course this connection to Bastet also suggests—along with Tabubue’s initial appearance along the dromos of the Memphite temple of Ptah—an affinity with Sakhmet, the divine consort of Ptah and the threatening aspect of Bastet.<sup>64</sup>

Incidentally, the tale may contain a few elements of unexpected verisimilitude at this point that could hint at a desire on the part of the “First Setne” author to appeal to and exploit the topographical knowledge of a hypothetical, implied reader who has actual familiarity with the Memphite Bubastieion. At 5.11, we learn that Setne reaches Tabubue’s home by boat, and then as now, the Memphite necropolis was separated from the main urban/ceremonial center of Memphis by a canal.<sup>65</sup> We also learn that Setne was impressed by the height—or the elevation—of Tabubue’s house (*iw=fṯs m-šs*, “it being high indeed”). Such an impression might be taken to reflect the actual perspective of a person entering the Bubastieion complex along the foot-path (now a paved road) that rises up along the front of the desert escarpment from the Unas valley temple—particularly if one could indulge the inviting speculation that the author has imagined Tabubue’s villa on the bluff overlooking the current French Bubastieion excavations. This high ground, where the main Bastet temple was also evidently located, commands a peerless view of the Nile Valley below, and structures situated on it would have been directly in view of a person entering the Bubastieion complex at its southern gate.<sup>66</sup> This bluff is also not-implausibly connected to the temple of the “Peak of ‘Ankh-Tawy” (*thny.t ‘nh-Tḥ.wy*), a temple evidently on high ground, known from textual evidence to have existed somewhere in the vicinity of

*pr* (confirmed in multiple Coptic compounds in which the root appears; cf. **ΠΕΡ-**, Crum, *CD*, p. 267a; **-ΠΩΡ**, Yvichl, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, p. 162a) might suggest the possibility that *na pr* “belonging to the household” here puns on \**na Pḥ-R’* “belonging to Pre’.”

<sup>61</sup> On Hathor as *nb.t ḥsbḏ*, “Mistress of Lapis-Lazuli” and variants, see Leitz, *Lexikon* 4, p. 121a; on lapis-lazuli in divine epithets generally, also *Lexikon* 5, OLA 114 (Leuven and Paris, 2002), pp. 951b–54a, where just over half of the entries relate to epithets of Hathor. For Hathor as *nb.t mfkḥ.t*, “Mistress of Turquoise” and variants, see Leitz, *Lexikon* 4, pp. 62c–63b; see also *Lexikon* 3, OLA 112 (Leuven and Paris, 2002), pp. 275c–78b for turquoise in divine epithets generally, where again, the majority of entries report epithets of Hathor.

<sup>62</sup> On the location of ‘Ankh-Tawy, see K. Kitchen, “Towards a Reconstruction of Ramesside Memphis,” in E. Bleiberg, and R. Freed, eds., *Fragments of a Shattered Visage, The Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ramesses the Great*, Monographs of the Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology 1 (Memphis, 1991), p. 93.

<sup>63</sup> I.e., not, as sometimes understood, the Bubastis of the Delta (e.g., Goldbrunner, *verbl. Gelehrte*, p. 21; Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, p. 134).

<sup>64</sup> Griffith himself suggested that Sakhmet is implied in the reference to Bastet here (*Stories*, p. 33, n. to l. 3); also S.-E. Hoesnes, *Untersuchungen zu Wesen und Kult der Göttin Sachmet* (Bonn, 1976), pp. 168–71, on the complementarity of Bastet and Sakhmet.

<sup>65</sup> See D. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton, 1988) pp. 21–24; J. Darnell, “Articular *Km.t/Kmy* and Partitive **KHME** (Including an Isis of Memphis and Syria, and the *Kmy* of Setne I 5,11 West of Which Lived Ta-Bubu),” *Enchoria* 17 (1990), pp. 69–81. Travel to ‘Ankh-Tawy by boat for a sexual encounter is an attested literary motif; cf. the Ramesside love poem collection P Harris 500, recto 2.5–7 (male voice): “I am sailing downstream on the ferry/ (Guided) by the hand of the helmsman/ With my bundle of reeds on my shoulder./ I am bound for ‘Ankh-Tawy./ And I shall say to Ptah, the Lord of Ma’at./ ‘Grant me my beloved this night.’” This translation (with minor orthographic alterations) by V. Tobin in Simpson, *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, p. 310. For the text, see B. Mathieu, *La poésie amoureuse de l’Égypte ancienne: Recherches sur un genre littéraire au Nouvel Empire*, BdÉ 115 (Cairo, 1996), pl. 9.

<sup>66</sup> For a map of the area, see S. Davies and H. S. Smith, “Sacred Animal Temples at Saqqara,” in S. Quirk, ed., *The Temple in Ancient Egypt: New discoveries and Recent Research* (London, 1997), p. 113, fig. 1.

the Bubastieion and/or the adjacent Anubieion, and which Demotic documentation indeed shows to have had houses in its vicinity.<sup>67</sup>

In any event, all of these indications of connections to Hathor, Bastet, and Sakhmet are obviously relevant to Tabubue as a character—but how do they explain, or how are they complemented by, her name? I would argue that the key to the name is the fact that the rare verb *bwbw* “to shine,” on which Tabubue’s name is evidently based, is closely and specifically connected to the threatening manifestations of Eye-of-the-Sun divinities in its few (i.e., two) other occurrences in published Demotic. It is used of Tefnut in the Demotic “Myth of the Eye of the Sun,” immediately following her transformation from the more pacific “Ethiopian cat”; the word here is closely connected to images of fire and power.<sup>68</sup> More recently, the word has been identified by M. Depauw and M. Smith in the second of a pair of Ptolemaic ostraca bearing hymns to a relatively obscure goddess, variously called *Nhm-ʿny.t* and *ʿy(.t)*, a patroness of the *hrw nfr*, the “good day, festival.”<sup>69</sup> This term can characterize a time spent in feasting and song, and not seldom also drunkenness and love-making—much of which characterizes Setne’s *hrw nfr* with Tabubue (certainly the intention, if not the final outcome).<sup>70</sup> The hymn to *ʿy(.t)* begins (lines 1–14):

They say, ecstatically: May she shine forth (*bwbw=s*)! When *ʿy(.t)* plunges them into a state of desire,<sup>71</sup> (and) when they are beside themselves<sup>72</sup> because of her body<sup>73</sup> on a festival day; (then) may it be

<sup>67</sup> On the “Peak” temple, see J. Ray, *The Archive of Hor*, Texts from Excavations 2 (London, 1976), pp. 150–53; Thompson, *Memphis*, pp. 22–24; Davies and Smith, “Sacred Animal Temples,” p. 125, n. 16. For a Ptolemaic-era priest associated with the “Peak” temple who (for what it may be worth) bore the same title as that given for the father of Tabubue—Priest of Bastet, Mistress of Ankh-Tawy—see a certain Ahmose, known from his statue in Berlin, 14765; discussed in H. de Meulenaere, “Les monuments du culte des rois Nectanébo,” *Chronique d’Égypte* 35 (1960), p. 104 (ε); A. Erman, “Geschichtliche Inschriften aus dem Berlin Museum,” *ZÄS* 38 (1900), pp. 112 ff. For a house close to the “Peak” temple, see the Demotic contract P Louvre 2412, 4 = K.-Th. Zauzich, *Die ägyptische Schreibertradition in Aufbau, Sprache und Schrift der demotischen Kaufverträge aus ptolemäischer Zeit*, ÄA 19 (Wiesbaden, 1968), Urk. 94, pp. 69–71.

<sup>68</sup> P Leiden I 384 12.13–19; the expression *ir=s bwbw*, “she shone, gleamed,” occurs at 12.19. Discussion in M. Depauw and M. Smith, “Visions of Ecstasy: Cultic Revelry before the Goddess Ai/Naheminit: Ostraca Faculteit Letteren (K. U. Leuven) dem. 1–2,” in F. Hoffmann and H.-J. Thissen, eds., *Res Severa Verum Gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*, *Studia Demotica* 6 (Leuven, 2004) (*Fs. Zauzich*), p. 76; see also Spiegelberg, *Sonnenauge*, pp. 34–35 and pl. 11; Cenival, *Le mythe de l’oeil du soleil*, pp. 36–37, 97, n. ad loc.; pl. 11.

<sup>69</sup> See D. Lorton, “The Expression *ʿIri Hrw Nfr*,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt (JARCE)* 12 (1975), pp. 23–37.

<sup>70</sup> Depauw and Smith, “Visions of Ecstasy,” p. 76 with nn. 29 and 30, note the connection to Tabubue

suggested by the appearance here of the verb *bwbw*, but do not explore her meaning or her relationship to Ihweret from this perspective.

<sup>71</sup> *ir ʿy(.t) (r) hʿ=w r s(.t) whʿ*; Depauw and Smith begin their translation of this sentence with an indicative future: “Ai will put them . . .” (“Visions of Ecstasy,” pp. 74–75); I follow this in my discussion in Vinson, “Through a Woman’s Eyes,” p. 339. However, following a suggestion from Karl-Th. Zauzich, I now think this is more likely to be a second-tense sentence with conditional meaning (cf. J. Johnson, *The Demotic Verbal System*, SAOC 38, second corrected printing [Chicago, 2004], pp. 159–60). For *s(.t) whʿ*, Depauw and Smith translate concretely “a place of seeking”; see “Visions of Ecstasy,” pp. 74–75; discussion on pp. 88–89, with n. 87. I take the following *iw=w whʿ=w* etc. (see the next note) as an additional, coordinate conditional clause; cf. Johnson, *Verbal System*, pp. 149–50, on the formal identity of non-emphatic conditional clauses that have pronominal subjects, and circumstantial clauses. The overall analysis of one or more introductory conditionals here is attractive, since it resolves what might otherwise seem to be a meandering, unfocused sentence into a single syntactic and semantic unit. Further, the protasis of the conditional appropriately explains and expands on the preceding prospective *bwbw=s* “May she shine forth,” and the causative imperative apodosis maintains semantic parallelism (while providing a formal variation that might be experienced as pleasing) with both *bwbw=s* and the following prospectives, *swr=f wnm=f nq=f* “May he drink, may he eat, may he copulate. . . .”

<sup>72</sup> *iw=w whʿ=w*: apparently literally, “if they are (or: they being) in relation to themselves?” Erichsen, *DG*, pp. 84–85 does not record a spatial sense of *whʿ*,

granted (?)—the epiphany of  $\zeta y(.t)$ !<sup>74</sup> May he drink, may he eat, may he copulate in the presence of  $T\zeta y(.t)$ !

As Depauw and Smith point out,  $T\zeta y(.t)$  here is a Demotic writing of the noun  $\dot{t}l.t$ , “image,” an epithet of divinities like Hathor and Sakhmet, who are daughters of  $Re^c$ , and manifestations of the Eye of the Sun, a quality that has both benign and dangerous aspects:<sup>75</sup>

Goddesses who are identified with the eye of Re frequently have a double nature, at certain times displaying a dangerous, destructive aspect, and at others, a more benevolent or erotic one. These two aspects are often hypostasized as separate deities, each being given a distinct name, although in reality they are complementary parts of a single divine entity.<sup>76</sup>

Depauw and Smith here identify  $Nhm-\zeta ny.t$  as the benevolent side of the goddess, while  $\zeta y(.t)$ , like Sakhmet or Tefnut, is a violent, lion-headed divinity. This complementarity parallels the complementarity of Hathor and Sakhmet in the “Myth of the Celestial Cow,” or the ubiquitous complementarity of Bastet and Sakhmet. In both the Demotic “Eye-of-the-Sun” text and in the Leuven ostracon, we should interpret the verb  $bwbw$  “to shine” as a reflection of Tefnut’s and  $Nhm-\zeta ny.t/\zeta y(.t)$ ’s identities as projections of the power of  $Re^c$ . Of course Eye-of-the-Sun manifestations are constantly connected to light-imagery, and often this has neutral or even positive valence, as we saw above in reference to Hathoric epithets like  $R^c y.t$ , the “Female Sun,” or  $\zeta Itn.t$ , the “Female Solar Disk.” On the other hand, this imagery often has a specifically punishing or destructive aspect, as with, e.g., Tefnut

but the Demotic vocabulary of the on-line *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (as of 3 December 2007) records a number of instances in which  $wb\zeta$  has the force of “gegenüber”; cf. also Crum, *CD*, p. 476a, s.v.  $\text{OYBE}$ , where spatial uses including “along side of” are recorded; this is the basis of my suggested translation here. If this is the correct interpretation of the clause, the expression would seem to bear comparison with Greek ἐξίστημι “stand outside (sc., of oneself)” (nominal form ἔκστασις > “ecstasy”), and to correspond almost exactly to the English expression “to be beside oneself;” itself evidently a calque of ἐξίστημι. Depauw and Smith, “Visions of Ecstasy,” pp. 74–75, translate “since they take care of them,” but regard the expression as “obscure” (p. 77). They are apparently, but not explicitly, relying here on W. Clarysse and J. K. Winnicki in E. Van’t Dack, et al., *The Judean-Syrian-Egyptian Conflict of 103–101 B.C., A Multilingual Dossier Concerning a “War of Scepters,”* Collectanea Hellenistica 1 (Brussels, 1989), p. 56, comment to P BM 69008 + P Berlin 13381, line 13, with n. 47. In that passage, however, the preposition  $wb\zeta$  does not, by itself, have the force “take care of;” the meaning is conveyed by a compound verbal expression  $nw wb\zeta$ , “look after.”

<sup>73</sup>  $(n)-dr.t \underline{h}.t=s$ : Depauw and Smith translate “in the hand of her corporation.” I take  $\underline{h}.t=s$  to refer literally to the physical body of the goddess; Erichsen, *DG*, pp. 373–74 records a number of writings that lack the flesh determinative, as here. The use of the suffix pronoun is consistent with this interpretation. If so,  $(n)-dr.t$  is best taken in its instrumental sense of

“through, by means of” (Erichsen, *DG*, p. 644; also Crum, *CD*, p. 428a, s.v.  $\text{NTN-}$ , where the additional nuance “because of” is suggested); cf. J. Quack, review of *Fs. Zauzich* in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 51.1 (2005), p. 181, who suggests the partly-emended, alternative reading  $n-\zeta r.t\zeta=s$   $h^c=s$  ( $n-dr.t\zeta=s$   $h^c=s$ ), “durch <sie> selbst”; also Vittmann in *TLA*, who largely follows Depauw and Smith but who notes there that in this passage,  $(n)-dr.t$  “wohl das Agens ein(leitet) . . .”

<sup>74</sup>  $my \dot{t}=w s p\zeta \dot{s}m \zeta y(.t)$ : So Depauw and Smith, followed by Vittmann. This wish would appear to be in parallel with the previous  $bwbw=s$ , which would suggest in turn that the verb  $bwbw$  may have here not just the neutral, purely intransitive sense of “to shine,” but may carry a more dynamic conation, “shine forth, appear in splendor.” This gives good sense in the Demotic “Eye of the Sun” text as well, in which the verb  $bwbw$  is used at 12.19 in the context of a sudden epiphany of Tefnut’s fiery, violent aspect. Quack, review of *Fs. Zauzich*, p. 181, suggests reading Depauw and Smith’s  $s p\zeta$  as  $n=i h\zeta$  ( $n=y hd$ ), thus, “Möge man mir Silber geben.” This would be followed by an independent prospective  $\dot{s}m \zeta y(.t)$ , “May  $\zeta y(.t)$  come forth!” This is attractive paleographically as well as grammatically; but if correct, it is difficult to be sure of the significance of the reference to silver; perhaps a pun on  $hd$  in its senses of light and illumination (*Wb.* 3, 206, 14–208, 16; Erichsen, *DG*, p. 335)?

<sup>75</sup> Depauw and Smith, “Visions of Ecstasy,” pp. 83–84, with n. 64.

<sup>76</sup> Depauw and Smith, “Visions of Ecstasy,” p. 84.

as "Mistress of the *Nsr.t*-Flame" and "Mistress of the *Nbt.t*-Flame" at Philae;<sup>77</sup> or Sakhmet, whose power is closely connected with the image of fire from the late Eighteenth Dynasty onward.<sup>78</sup> The contexts in which the Demotic verb *bwbw* occurs suggest that we should consider our "First Setne" character in this basic light—at least, as a starting point.

Related to this is the common topos of Isis as "punisher," especially in Greco-Roman religious/mythological texts, which, as we might expect, is often realized with fire and light imagery, e.g., in the Ptolemaic P Jumilhac, in which Isis becomes Sakhmet and produces fire to incinerate the confederates of Seth.<sup>79</sup> And Isis' violent side appears vividly in the Ptolemaic "Triumph of Horus at Edfu," where Isis speaks in direct address to Horus, urging him to attack the Seth-hippopotamus with a harpoon (Fairman's translation):

I, yea, I am the lady of the shaft.  
I am the beautiful one, the mistress of the loud-screamer,  
When it comes forth upon the banks  
And gleams after the robber-beast,  
Which rips open his skin,  
And breaks open his ribs  
When the barbs enter his belly.  
I forget not the night of the flood,  
The hour of turmoil.<sup>80</sup>

And as a manifestation of the Eye of the Sun, Isis shares the erotic aspects of other Eye-of-the-Sun goddesses. Isis as "seductress" is perhaps best known in the New Kingdom "Contendings of Horus and Seth," in which she magically transforms herself into a young girl "beautiful in all of her members" so as to trick the sexually-voracious Seth into damning himself with his own words.<sup>81</sup> This aspect of Isis remains visible, and if anything increases in importance, as Egypt's religious tradition evolves in the Late and Greco-Roman periods, and as Isis ever more explicitly absorbs aspects of other female divinities, especially Hathor.<sup>82</sup> In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Isis' sexuality is a frequent subject in visual arts, especially the plastic arts, which include an entire genre-complex of images in which the goddess has raised her dress to expose her vulva ("Isis ἀνασυρμένη" or "who exposes herself"),<sup>83</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Inconnu-Bocquillon, *Déesse Lointaine*, pp. 238 ff.

<sup>78</sup> See Hoenes, *Göttin Sachmet*, pp. 70–71.

<sup>79</sup> See P Jumilhac lines 2.22–2.24 and 21.23–21.25; J. Vandier, *Le papyrus Jumilhac* (Paris, 1961), pp. 114, 132–33; Sternberg, *Mythische Motive*, pp. 145, 150 with n. o). For Isis as Sakhmet, see also Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis*, pp. 63 and 69 (my thanks to Edmund Meltzer for this reference).

<sup>80</sup> A. Blackman and H. W. Fairman, "Myth of Horus at Edfu – 2 (part 3)," *JEA* 30 (1944), p. 9; H. W. Fairman, *The Triumph of Horus: An Ancient Egyptian Sacred Drama* (London, 1974), p. 104 ("Act II.i." lines 85 ff.); text in É. Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou* 6, *Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* 23 (Cairo, 1931), p. 81.4–6. On Isis as an avenging/punishing goddess, see further at Leitz, *Lexikon* 8, OLA 129 (Leuven, 2003), pp. 38b–39a.

<sup>81</sup> Horus and Seth 6.4 ff. Lichtheim, *AEL* 2, p. 317; E. Wente, "The Contendings of Horus and Seth," in Simpson, *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, p. 96. Inevitably, cf. 2 Samuel

12:1 ff. (the prophet Nathan confronts King David over his affair with Bathsheba).

<sup>82</sup> See in general R. Schulz, "Warum Isis? Gedanken zum universellen Charakter einer ägyptischen Göttin im römischen Reich," in M. Görg and G. Hölbl, eds., *Ägypten und der östliche Mittelmeerraum im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr., Akten des interdisziplinären Symposiums am Institut für Ägyptologie der Universität München 25.–27.10.1996*, *ÄAT* 44 (Wiesbaden, 2000), pp. 251–80.

<sup>83</sup> On the type, see F. Dunand, *Catalogue des terres cuites gréco-romaines d'Égypte* (Paris, 1990), pp. 136–38, cat. nos. 358–363; cf. *idem*, "Une 'pseudo-baubo' du Musée de Besançon," in H. Walter, ed., *Hommages à Lucien Lerat* (Paris, 1984), pp. 263–70. See also K. Myśliwiec, "Isis-Aphrodite 'anasyrméné' et le culte de la déesse nue à Athribis ptolémaïque," in C. Berger, et al., eds., *Hommages à Jean Leclant 3, Études isiaques*, BdÉ 106.3 (Cairo, 1994), pp. 385–89; Morris, "Sacred and Obscene Laughter," esp. pp. 215 ff.

or appears entirely naked,<sup>84</sup> or else appears in clothing so clinging and revealing as to be virtually invisible—an image that especially recalls Tabubue’s presentation of herself in a dress of fine linen, through which Setne “could see every part of her body.”<sup>85</sup>

Similarly, in the first-person narrative introduction to the Roman-period, Greek-language alchemical text “Isis the Prophetess to Her Son Horus,” Isis describes how she had repeatedly rebuffed the sexual advances of various angelic beings, yielding only when her suitors had agreed to reveal to her the secrets of the creation of gold and silver.<sup>86</sup> This sequence, in which Isis seeks magical knowledge, resonates with the New Kingdom historiola “Isis and the Secret Name of Re.”<sup>87</sup> But we also have here an episode that resembles more than a little Setne’s attempted seduction of Tabubue, and Tabubue’s escalating demands for Setne’s fortune and even the lives of his children (5.17ff.).

Tabubue’s punishing and erotic character, and her light-evoking name, therefore resonate clearly with significant aspects of the Late- and Greco-Roman-period Eye-of-the-Sun complex. It may be that the story is deliberately coy as to which, if any, specific Eye-of-the-Sun manifestation Tabubue’s name is intended to evoke, although the Tabubue episode’s Memphite locale, and the status of Tabubue’s father as a priest of Bastet, would probably point in the first place to the Bastet-Sakhmet complex. But the name “She of the Shining One,” expressed with a word that in Demotic is attested in (and only in) connection with two different Eye-of-the-Sun manifestations in their threatening aspects, would strongly suggest that Tabubue is intended to resonate with these goddesses as a group—a group which is, in any case, largely identified with, if not subsumed by, Isis in the Ptolemaic period.

The overall structure of the tale would thus appear to neatly balance the “earthly” and “cosmic” aspects of the basic Egyptian rebellion/punishment/resolution theological model, with the inner story (appropriately enough) resonating with the Osiris-Isis myth (earthly), and the framing story suggesting the Eye-of-the-Sun myth (cosmic).<sup>88</sup> If this basic interpretation is accepted, then this suggests that Tabubue’s complementarity with Ihweret is not simply symbolic. Rather, the mythological resonances of the tale make it extremely likely that Tabubue must be understood as an actual manifestation—or, to use Depauw and Smith’s term, an alternate hypostasis—of Ihweret. This finds its theological explanation in the dual nature of Eye-of-the-Sun manifestations, but it also has plot parallels in “Contendings,” in which Isis transforms herself at various points in the story, and indeed in “First Setne” itself, in which we see Naneferkaptah assume alternate forms when he

<sup>84</sup> A particularly fine example is the Isis-Hathor-Aphrodite statuette, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1991.76 ([www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/05/afe/hod\\_1991.76.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/05/afe/hod_1991.76.htm), version of April 2007), from the second or third century C.E. Cf. also Dunand, *Catalogue*, pp. 125–35, cat. nos. 327–58.

<sup>85</sup> Compare the Ptolemaic statue Hermitage Museum 3936, variously identified as Arsinoe II or Cleopatra VII, but in either case strongly partaking of Isis imagery; see S. Walker and P. Higgs, eds., *Cleopatra of Egypt from History to Myth* (London, 2001), p. 160. In this statue, the sheath-dress of the queen-goddess is indicated only by a hemline, a neckline, and lines at the wrists; breasts, belly and pubic area are strongly emphasized. An even more explicit image of a Ptolemaic queen as Isis-Hathor is to be found in a statue recovered from Alexandria Harbor, SCA 208. Here,

the sculptor has succeeded in indicating the complete transparency of the dress, so that the nude body of the queen-goddess is entirely visible. See B. Andreae, et al. *Kleopatra und die Caesaren* (Munich, 2006), p. 36, fig. 22. Cf. the description of Tabubue’s transparent linen dress at “First Setne” 5.21–22; Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, p. 135; Ritner, “Setna I,” p. 465.

<sup>86</sup> Text, French translation and commentary in M. Berthelot, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs* (Paris, 1887), Première livraison, texte grec, pp. 28–35; traduction, pp. 31–36; English translation in J. Lindsay, *The Origins of Alchemy in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (New York, 1970), pp. 194–95.

<sup>87</sup> Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, pp. 51–55 (Text 84).

<sup>88</sup> The terminology follows Sternberg, *Mythische Motive*, pp. 222–24.

appears outside of his tomb, implicitly or explicitly.<sup>89</sup> This also explains in a fundamental way why the female characters in "First Setne" are not merely prominent, but dramatically central to the action of the tale, a question which has puzzled some commentators.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, a link to the Eye-of-the-Sun myth-complex raises a number of additional questions on the specific relationship of the myth and the primary narrative of "First Setne," questions which would surely repay further investigation. These include: (1) how might we define Naneferkaptah's identity as a Solar, as well as an Osirian character?; (2) how far might Setne's theft of the Book of Thoth—itsself a manifestation of Re<sup>c91</sup>—be seen as an instance of the "rebellion" topos, which triggers punishment through the "destructive" aspect of the "Distant Goddess"?; (3) related to this, can Ihweret's return to Memphis from Koptos and her reunification with Naneferkaptah be read as an instance of the "Distant Goddess" topos?;<sup>92</sup> (4) can Setne's dream of having permitted the murder of his own children at Tabubue's (ultimately, at Naneferkaptah's) instigation be compared to the ruse employed by Re<sup>c</sup> in the "Myth of the Celestial Cow," in which he tricks Hathor into believing that she had destroyed mankind?

#### EROS AND PUNISHMENT; COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

But even if "First Setne" can be convincingly read in this way, this model cannot account for every aspect of the story, which makes "First Setne" more than simply an allegorical recapitulation of the Isis-Osiris and Solar myth-complexes, essentially comparable to, if substantially more complex than, e.g., "The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood" as an allegory of the Osiris-Seth myth. The themes or topoi of "eros" and of "suffering" or "punishment" are central to the tale, and treated in unique ways. I hope to deal with these themes extensively in the future; here, I would like to discuss them briefly insofar as they are directly relevant to understanding the characters of Naneferkaptah, Ihweret, and Tabubue.

In the first place, it is worth noting that the role of eros in "First Setne" does not precisely track the model suggested by Depauw and Smith in their discussion of the Leuven ostraca, in which sexuality is assigned to the benign end of the spectrum of attributes characteristic

<sup>89</sup> E.g., "First Setne" 6.10 ff., where Naneferkaptah appears as an old priest, so as to help Setne locate the tomb of Ihweret and Meribptah; at 6.17, the story tells us directly that this priest was in fact Naneferkaptah. See Lichtheim, *AEL* 3, p. 137; Ritner, "Setna I," p. 468. Although it is not said so explicitly, we should probably imagine Naneferkaptah to have assumed the guise of a priest of Isis, as the locale is Koptos, and Setne has just embarked on his search for the tomb in the company of priests from the temple of Isis. Cf. also the (presumed) reappearance of the wife of Anubis in the "Tale of Two Brothers" as the wife of Bata; e.g., J. Baines, "On *Wenamun* as a Literary Text," in J. Assmann and E. Blumenthal, eds., *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten*, BdÉ 127 (Cairo, 1999), p. 226.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. the comments of L. Lesko, "Women and Priests in Two Egyptian Stories," in J. Magness and S. Gitlin, eds., *Hesed ve-Emet, Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Freirichs*, Brown Judaic Studies 320 (Atlanta, 1999), pp. 217–24, esp. p. 223, on the prominence of

Ihweret and Tabubue in "First Setne," in comparison with the women characters in the P Westcar tales: "... it is interesting and perhaps surprising that women in the Greek period in Egypt would seem to have fared better (sc., as literary characters) than women in the Old Kingdom."

<sup>91</sup> See P. Piccione, "The Gaming Episode in the *Tale of Setne Khamwas* as Religious Metaphor," in D. P. Silverman, ed., *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, SAOC 55 (Chicago, 1994), pp. 197–204, on the Book of Thoth and its relationship to the ritual literature known collectively as the *b3.w R<sup>c</sup>*, "manifestations of Re<sup>c</sup>," as well as on solar symbolism in "First Setne" more generally.

<sup>92</sup> For Isis in the Koptite nome as the "Distant Goddess," see L. Pantalacci and C. Traunecker, *Le temple d'el-Qal'a. I: Relevés des scènes et des textes - Sanctuaire central - Sanctuaire nord - Salle des offrandes - 1 à 112* (Cairo, 1990), pp. 10–13. The small temple at el-Qal'a is early Roman, begun under Augustus and completed under Claudius.

of Eye-of-the-Sun manifestations. This is probably, in any case, too schematic.<sup>93</sup> Even in the Leuven ostracon discussed above, it is clear that the violent  $\gamma(.t)$  has a strongly erotic side, while in “First Setne,” the benign Ihweret’s sexuality appears to have been deliberately muted. Despite the frequent and strong sexual connotations of the bull-and-cow imagery that appears in texts dealing with the Isis and Osiris myth, “First Setne” largely avoids dwelling on the erotic aspects of the relationship between Naneferkaptah and Ihweret, pointing out only that on their wedding night (3.6–7):

He (sc., Naneferkaptah) lay with me on that very night; (and how) [very pleasing] it was that he found me! [He lay] with me again and again, and each of us loved the other.<sup>94</sup>

The story goes on to imply that Ihweret became pregnant almost immediately, and from now on there is no overt reference to the sexual dimension of Ihweret’s relationship with Naneferkaptah. This reticence would be for reasons intrinsic to the structure of story itself: the strongly sexual relationship between Setne and Tabubue is placed in contrast to Ihweret’s relationship with Naneferkaptah, in which Ihweret’s roles as sister, mother, and defender are forefronted. While Ihet can certainly be identified with Hathor, Ihet is nowhere (to my knowledge) directly connected with explicit sexual imagery in the way Hathor and Isis often are, in both literature and in visual arts. My view is that Ihweret is identified in the story with Ihet-weret precisely so as to present her Isis-ness in a way that avoids drawing attention to her sexuality and instead emphasizes her maternal and protective aspects.

In our tale, the more erotic character by far is the threatening Tabubue, and, like Isis in “Contendings of Horus and Seth,” it is her sexual power that Tabubue uses as an instrument of punishment, to bring Setne low. In the primary narrative of “First Setne,” the deliberate admixture of threat and randy sexuality has much to do with what I take to be the comic intent and structure of the tale; the same may probably be said of “Contendings.”<sup>95</sup> The comic tone of the “First Setne” framing narrative is unmistakable in the Punch-and-Judy-esque slapstick of Setne’s boardgame with Naneferkaptah (4.27–30). Pseudo- or attenuated violence is often typical of comic literature, and the deliberate attenuation of violence is notable elsewhere in “First Setne,” especially in the illusory death of Setne’s children, followed by their off-stage (and again illusory) consumption by dogs and cats, in the course of the Tabubue encounter (5.25–27; 5.34–35).<sup>96</sup>

More central to the comedy of the Tabubue encounter is Setne’s complete misapprehension of Tabubue’s true nature, and his blindness to his own impending doom. If an attentive reader understood the significance of Tabubue’s name—not to mention the numerous allusions to Sakhmet, Bastet, and Hathor attached to her as the narrative unfolds—then this disjuncture between what a knowledgeable priest and magician ought to have recognized

<sup>93</sup> Teyssie also underscores that the Hathoric—that is, the most sexual—element of the literary feminine constitutes the essential linkage between the topoi of the wife, sister and mother (most obviously embodied in Isis) and the topoi of the destructive female (most obviously embodied in Sakhmet). See *Portrayal of Women*, especially pp. 112–13. There is no easy separation of these aspects of the feminine.

<sup>94</sup> Probably restore along the lines of  $r-\dot{r}=fgm.t=y$  [ $\dot{i}w n\dot{s}-n=y m-\dot{s}s sdr=f$ ]  $\dot{i}rm=y$  etc.

<sup>95</sup> Teyssie, *Portrayal of Women*, pp. 72–73, also

notes the comic tone of the Tabubue episode; cf. also Jasnow, “Pharaoh Laughed,” pp. 73 ff. who notes humorous or ironic aspects of the encounter, but does not pronounce on the intended effect of the episode as a whole. On “Contendings” as parody, see S. Vinson, “The Accent’s on Evil: Ancient Egyptian ‘Melodrama’ and the Problem of Genre,” *JARCE* 41 (2004), p. 48, with n. 117.

<sup>96</sup> See M. W. Roche, *Tragedy and Comedy, a Systematic Study and a Critique of Hegel* (Albany, NY, 1998) pp. 212–14, on comic violence.

immediately, and Setne's own besotted obliviousness, would surely have been a source of irony and humor. Related to this, Setne's obsession would also have evoked the specific stereotype of the lustful magician, an attested motif in Egyptian folklore.<sup>97</sup> Sexual escapades are generally characteristic of humor and comedy across cultures,<sup>98</sup> and in "First Setne" specifically, the lampooning of sexuality is of central importance, culminating in a (to us) somewhat inscrutable, but certainly off-color, joke involving Setne's penis (5.29–30):

Tabubue laid herself down next to Setne; he stretched out his hand to touch her; she opened her mouth widely with a great cry. (And thusly) it was that he awoke: in a state of heat, with his penis in a chamber pot (?), and with no clothes at all upon his back!<sup>99</sup>

This is not, however, to argue that any combination of sexuality and divine threat in Egyptian literature is intended as comic. On the contrary, it is clear in Egyptian wisdom

<sup>97</sup> Aside from Setne himself, cf. the fictionalized Nectanebo II in the Greek *Alexander Romance*, a powerful magician who flees Egypt for Macedonia ahead of the Persian invasion of 343 B.C.E., and then masquerades as the god Amun in order to seduce Olympias, the future mother of Alexander the Great (the chronology here, if nothing else, is impossible; Alexander was born in 356 B.C.E.). Text in L. Bergson, ed., *Der griechische Alexanderroman, Rezension β*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Graeca Stockholmiensia 3 (Stockholm, 1965), chaps. 4 ff. for the seduction episode. Convenient English translation by K. Dowden, "Alexander Romance," in B. P. Reardon, ed. *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1989), pp. 650–735 (for the seduction episode, pp. 656–59). On the connection of Egypt's Nectanebo legends with the *Alexander Romance*, see R. Jasnow, "The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian Literature," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 56 (1997), pp. 95–103; K. Ryholt, "Nectanebo's Dream or the Prophecy of Petesis," in A. Blasius and B.-U. Schipper, eds., *Apokalyptik und Ägypten: Eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*, OLA 107 (Leuven, 2002), pp. 221–42.

It is also worth recalling that the twinned desires for sex and forbidden magical knowledge are precisely what initiate the humiliation of the character Lucius in the comic "ass" tales of Apuleius and ps.-Lucian, which may have roots in Egypt. Cf. the remarks of J. G. Griffiths, *Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)*, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain 39 (Leiden, 1975), p. 22 ff. Of course in Apuleius (but not in ps.-Lucian), Lucius' salvation is found in the acknowledgment of Isis and initiation into her mysteries and into the mysteries of Osiris.

Finally, it is at least interesting to note that the girl for whom Apuleius' Lucius lusts, and who is responsible for his transformation into an ass, is named "Fotis," or (probably) "Light" (<? Greek φῶς; the spelling "Fotis" appears somewhat more frequently in the MSS than the Graecizing form "Photis," but this latter spelling is often preferred by modern editors and

translators; in ps.-Lucian, the corresponding character is named "Palaistra," or "Wrestling School"). Not only does the name "Fotis" appear semantically close to "Tabubue," Fotis clearly has a thematic and structural relationship to Isis; see D. van Mal-Maeder, *Apuleius Madaurensis, Metamorphoses livre 2, Texte, introduction et commentaire*, Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius (Groningen, 2001), pp. 409–11 ("Photis: Anti-Isis?"); also p. 138, s.v. *Fotis*, for discussion of the name itself. The (probable) etymology of her name, her moral ambiguity, the comic tone of her episode, and its thematizations of Isis, sex, magic and fatal curiosity, suggest that Fotis is a far more intriguing Classical parallel with Tabubue than are melodramatic villainesses like Heliodorus' Arsake and Rhadopis, with whom Tabubue has been compared in the past—e.g., Montserrat, *Sex and Society*, pp. 110, 114–15; Jasnow, "Pharaoh Laughed," p. 76, with n. 92; I. Rutherford, "Kalasiris and Setne Khamwas: A Greek Novel and some Egyptian Models," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 117 (1997), p. 205; further discussion in S. Vinson, "They-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed: Arsake, Rhadopis and Tabubue; Iherwet and Charkleia," *Comparative Literature Studies* 45.3 (2008), pp. 289–315.

<sup>98</sup> See Morris, "Sacred and Obscene Laughter," esp. pp. 201 ff. In modern cross-cultural studies of the psychology of humor, a common tool is the 3-WD, or "3 Witz-Dimensionen," test developed by W. Ruch, which measures subjects' reactions to jokes via the dimensions of incongruity resolution, nonsense and sexual content (the only specific content factor). See, e.g., Ruch, "Witzbeurteilung und Persönlichkeit: Eine trimodale Analyse," *Zeitschrift für differentielle und diagnostische Psychologie* 2 (1981), pp. 253–73.

<sup>99</sup> For the rendering "chamber pot" (?) for the rare word *štyꜣ(t)*, which denotes what Setne's penis is "in" at the conclusion of the Tabubue encounter, see Ritner, "Setna I," p. 466, with n. 38. In support of this conclusion, compare Horus' ejaculation into a pot, following manual stimulation by his mother Isis, in "Contendings" 11.7–18; see Lichtheim, *AEL* 2, p. 220; Wente, "Contendings," p. 99; A. H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 1 (Brussels, 1932), p. 52 (text).

literature and in many tales that in this world, a wanton woman may be both the “occasion of sin” and the instrument of a weak man’s punishment, and as such, might be explicitly or implicitly linked to Hathor and to Sakhmet.<sup>100</sup> Notably, however, Setne does not suffer seriously or permanently from his brush with Tabubue. And equally important, entirely-negative female characters in Egyptian tales, like the wives of Bata and Anubis in “The Tale of Two Brothers,”<sup>101</sup> or the lover and mistress of Truth in “The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood,”<sup>102</sup> or the wife of the lector-priest Weba’iner in the first of the P Westcar tales,<sup>103</sup> act contrary to the divine order of *ma’at*, and they too in principle suffer retribution. But quite unlike these trollops and true *femmes fatales*, Tabubue is conspicuously not the real cause of Setne’s fall from grace, and she is conspicuously left unscathed as her episode concludes.

All of this helps to confirm that, despite Setne’s own first impression—and despite the interpretation that seems dominant in much of her modern reception—Tabubue is fundamentally unlike the transgressive women condemned in Egypt’s fictional literature and in its wisdom texts.<sup>104</sup> As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this discussion, Tabubue is not at all opposed to the divine order. On the contrary, she appears to embody it; or, as we are now in a position to see more precisely, to reflect it—to present us at bottom with a comic reduction or parody of the threatening, destructive aspect of the Eye-of-the-Sun complex (she is, after all, the “daughter” of the Shining One, not the Shining One herself). Tabubue’s name may be evocative of Tefnut and Tefnut’s many dangerous sisters, but her purpose is not to obliterate Setne, as Tefnut, Sakhmet or Isis would obliterate the enemies of Re<sup>c</sup>. Rather, she acts to persuade him to give up his selfishness and return the Book. Therefore, the punishment that she inflicts is light—lighter by far than the punishment that the gods inflict on Naneferkaptah for what is essentially the same offense, and heavily spiced with Hathoric eros. And this points to the ultimate purpose and significance of the comedy of “First Setne”: its emphasis on, and thematization of, reconciliation—or, to frame it in Egyptian terms, *hṯp*.<sup>105</sup> Once Setne has endured his spanking, he returns the Book, makes amends, and all is once again well—not only between Setne and Naneferkaptah, but also between Naneferkaptah and Ihweret, whose physical separation and implicit estrangement are finally at an end.<sup>106</sup>

But if punishment and suffering are comically reduced in the primary narrative, they are very real in Ihweret’s embedded narration of Naneferkaptah’s tale (just as love is parodied in the Setne-Tabubue encounter—reduced to lust—but is evidently very real and sincere

<sup>100</sup> See Teysseire, *Portrayal of Women*, pp. 111 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Lichtheim, *AEL* 2, pp. 203–11; Wente, “The Tale of Two Brothers,” in Simpson, *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 80–90.

<sup>102</sup> Lichtheim, *AEL* 2, pp. 211–14; Wente, “The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood,” in Simpson, *Literature*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 104–7.

<sup>103</sup> (Apparently) burned alive for betraying her husband, after her lover has been devoured by a crocodile (3.20–4.10); see Simpson, “King Cheops and the Magicians,” pp. 15–16 (this portion of the tale is not translated in Lichtheim, *AEL* 1). See also Teysseire, *Portrayal of Women*, pp. 90–92.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. M. Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context, A Study of Demotic Instructions*, OBO 52 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1983), pp. 48–50, 161–62; L. Troy, “Good and Bad

Women: Maxim 18/284–288 of the Instructions of Ptahhotep” *GM* 80 (1984), pp. 77–81. Modern commentators, as well, often interpret Tabubue in this light; cf. Jasnow’s comment on the tale’s use of the word *hnš* “stink,” at “Pharaoh Laughed,” p. 76, with n. 92; similarly, D. Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (London and New York, 1996), pp. 110, 114–15.

<sup>105</sup> See J. Assmann, *Ma’at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1990), pp. 209–11.

<sup>106</sup> See Roche, *Tragedy and Comedy*, pp. 183–88 on reconciliation and on what Roche calls the “Comedy of Intersubjectivity,” which in my view describes the overall arc of “First Setne” quite well.

between Naneferkaptah and Ihweret). And here, despite all the resonances with the myth-complex of Isis and Osiris already discussed, we can note a significant difference between Naneferkaptah's tale in "First Setne" and the basic Osiris myth. In the myth, Osiris is the innocent victim of an unprovoked attack carried out by his evil brother Seth—which is to say that the myth is essentially melodramatic.<sup>107</sup> In "First Setne," Naneferkaptah brings destruction on himself and his family through his defiance of the gods. Even more important, Naneferkaptah's defiance is motivated by what is, ironically, an essentially-positive aspect of his character: his desire, as a priest and a scholar, for knowledge. Thus, Ihweret's narration of Naneferkaptah's tale—perhaps uniquely in published Egyptian *belles lettres*—meets a reasonable definition of tragedy.<sup>108</sup>

We cannot explore here all of the hermeneutic and technical-narratological implications that might be teased out of the tale with a full study of the contrast that the author has drawn between the "tragic" tone and structure of the embedded tale and the "comedy" of the primary narrative. And, it should go without saying that a complete understanding of the tale depends on far more than an analysis of the characters' names.<sup>109</sup> But I do wish to stress in this discussion that the names "Naneferkaptah," "Ihweret," and "Tabubue" help materially to illuminate for us the real roots that "First Setne" has in Egypt's literary and religious tradition; and that they also help illuminate the extent to which "First Setne" is a product of its own time—the Ptolemaic period—with that period's preoccupation with Isis and with the feminine.

Addendum: As this article was in proof, I learned of a recent article by Michel Chauveau, "Les richesses méconnues de la littérature démotique," *Bulletin de la société française d'égyptologie* 156 (2003), pp. 20–36. In comments to a summary of "First Setne," he anticipates me in relating the name "Tabubue" to the light imagery used of the Eye-of-the-Sun complex and in suggesting that Tabubue's villa is to be imagined atop the high ground overlooking the French Bubastieion excavations (see esp. pp. 27–28). See now also J. Quack, "Ein Setne-Fragment in Marburg (pMarburg Inv. 38)," *Enchoria* 30 (2006/7), pp. 71–74, for another attestation of the name "Naneferkaptah." Joachim Quack kindly informs me that the name is spelled with the *k3*-arms, a divine-determinative and a snake-determinative.

<sup>107</sup> See Vinson, "The Accent's on Evil," pp. 33–54.

<sup>108</sup> See Roche, *Tragedy and Comedy*, especially pp. 60–70 on what Roche calls the "Tragedy of Stubbornness," which to my mind defines Naneferkaptah's tale very well. Cf. W. Guglielmi, "Der Gebrauch

rhetorischer Stilmittel" (in Loprieno, ed., *Literature*, p. 497), for whom "tragische Ironie" in Egyptian literature is "bislang nicht nachgewiesen."

<sup>109</sup> But see further in Vinson, "Through a Woman's Eyes," and in *The Craft of a Good Scribe*, forthcoming.

