

**THE CONCEPTION OF THE *COSMIC EGG* (*Swht*)  
IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN  
AND IN THE ORPHIC COSMOVISION\***

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In this paper we examine comparatively from an egyptological, a philosophical and a cosmovisional point of view the role of the *cosmic egg* in the funerary texts of ancient Egypt (mainly *PT*, *CT* and *BD*) and in the *Orphic Hymns* and cosmovision. The egg, being an archetype and symbol for new life and regeneration in many cultures, was of a paramount importance in both ancient Egypt and ancient Hellas. In the former we meet at least 67 instances of occurrence of the term *egg* (*swht*) in the main funerary texts of the Pharaonic Period (3 in the *PT*, 48 in the *CT* and 16 in the *BD*), as well as the archetype of the Great Cackler (*Ngng-Wr*), alluding to the notions of light, new life, air, wind and breathing. In the latter the cosmogonic egg, together with the solar and creator deity Phanēs (*Φάνης*), is also met in the Orphic literature and mainly in the *Orphic Hymn* dedicated to this amphisexual deity. We discuss the above and present interesting comparisons, not only between Hellenic and Egyptian divinities, but also between Hellenic and Egyptian parallel notions concerned with Cosmogony. We shed also some more light on *BD* Chapter 56, concerned with the cosmic egg, as well as on the approximation of the Orphic metaphysical doctrines, proposing in a few cases comparisons (*mutatis mutandis*) with important notions of modern Cosmology.

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**Keywords:** Ancient Egyptian religion & cosmovision, funerary texts (*PT*, *CT*, *BD*), Heliopolitan & Hermopolitan traditions, creator-gods, (cosmic) egg (*swht*), Great Cackler (*Ngng-Wr*), birds, nest, heron (*bnw*), Orphic religion, Orphic Hymns, Phanēs, Relief of Modena, cosmographic metaphors, light, air, creation myths, modern Cosmology

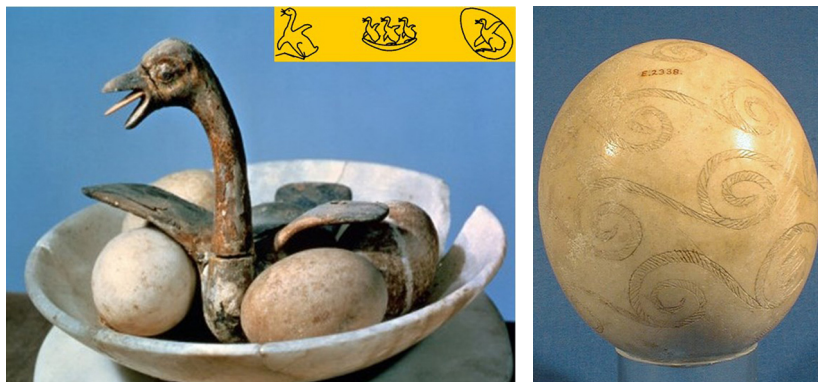
## I. Introduction

Eggs<sup>1</sup> could be considered as tiny virtual universes, wherefrom new life springs (**Fig. 4 [R]**), exactly as the sarcophagi were considered in ancient Egypt (the bodies being *confined/περικλειεῖστα* in them, in the hope for everlasting life), bearing inside their lids – face to face with the mummy – the image of the celestial goddess Nūt, the union with her being an important factor for the regeneration of the deceased. Viewed as amniotic cocoons, wherefrom new life, warmth and light can be re-created and repeated again unceasingly<sup>2</sup>, we do think that they might be paralleled to virtual eggs for the rebirth of new life. Eggs are the offspring of birds, admirable (and sometimes formidable) creatures that can fly, reaching the edges of the sky, thus theoretically considered as closer than humans to the realm of the gods, even to the stellar multitude of the firmament<sup>3</sup>. Many significant divinities of the Egyptians were bird-headed and/or winged (Thoth, Horus, Rē<sup>c</sup>, Mūt, Nekhbet, Isis, Nephthys, *et al.*), while Gēb had as sacred animal the goose (**Fig. 2 [B]**), hinting to the importance that

<sup>1</sup> For a concise introduction to the symbolism of eggs in various traditions worldwide, see: [Symbols 1996, 337–341: art. “egg”; cf. Toporov 1982, 681]. On birds as symbols see: [Symbols 1996, 86–91: art. “bird”]. On the significance of birds in ancient Egypt see: [LÄ VI, 1046–1051: art. “Vogel”; 1051–1054: art. “Vogelfang, & c.”; Houlihan 1988].

<sup>2</sup> See: [Maravelia 2003, 58; cf. *Table I: № 29–30, 37–38, 40, 45, infra*]. On the analogies between eggs and sarcophagi, as well as on the later meaning of the hieroglyphic egg-sign as *offspring*, see: [LÄ I, 1186, 1187 & n. 5].

<sup>3</sup> In *PT* 519, §§ 1216a–1216e, 430: *šm.n N pn ir iw ʕ3, ḥr-ib Šht-Ḥtpw, šhn nw ntrw-wrw ḥr.f; wrw pw ḥmw-skiw*, we notify the paronomastic assonance between the words for *swallows* (*wrw*) and *great-ones* (*wrw*); this symbolizes the passage of the deceased into the nocturnal astral world. Swallows symbolize the upcoming dawn [te Velde 1972, 26–30] and at the same time these deified birds are hereby considered as the imperishable stars (*ḥmw-sk*) abiding in the northern celestial islet of the Field of Offerings (*Šht-Ḥtpw*); cf. also: [Maravelia 2006b, 292, n. 341; 293, n. 342].



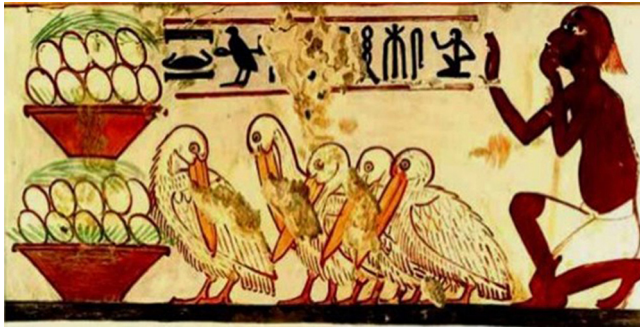
**Fig. 1 [Left]:** Detail from the lid of an alabaster jar, decorated with a bird [most possibly a fledgling duckling (cf. Gardiner's G47, G48 and H34); Wilkinson 1992, 96–97)] between four unhatched eggs in the nest (perhaps alluding to the four couples of infinite creator-deities, following the Hermopolitan tradition; and to the *Ngng-Wr*), with intense rebirth and life-continuation undertones. From the Tomb of Tut'ankhamūn [№ 620(1)], New Kingdom, 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 62072 / CG 1300). See e.g.: [Desroches-Noblecourt 1978, 227, Pl. XLVII].

**[Right]:** Decorated real ostrich-egg with engraved spiral motifs, dating from the NK (H = 14 cm), a rather rare object. Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, Belgium (MRAH Inv. № 2338). The ostrich-feather (Gardiner's H6; [Wilkinson 1992, 102–103]) was one of the two principal symbols of *M3ʿt*. See: [Hendrickx 1995, 78–79, № 1.37]

particular winged creatures exercised on the minds and the collective unconscious of the Egyptians. The sacred heron (*bnw*-bird) was of an outstanding significance in the ancient Egyptian metaphysics (**Fig. 3**), both as an Osirian and as a solar (and time/eternity/creation) symbol<sup>4</sup>. Finally, eggs (**Fig. 1 [R]**), as *par excellence* means of useful and protein-containing food were considered very important (although not eaten by the priests and rarely offered to the dead<sup>5</sup>). Similarly, the

<sup>4</sup> On the heron see: [LÄ IV, 1030–1039: art. “Phönix”; Tolmacheva 2003, 522–526; Tolmacheva 2004, 93–98].

<sup>5</sup> See: [de Garis Davies 1917, pl. XXII]. In both offering tables of Nakht (TT 52: Northern Side, Eastern Section) there are a nest with eggs and another nest with fledglings, comparable to that of **Fig. 1 [L]**; cf. also [Guilhou 2019, *in press*]. See, lastly, **Fig. 6, infra**. Erroneously in LÄ I, 1186, it is stated that eggs were never offered to the deceased!



**Fig. 2 [Top]:** Characteristic scene with an adorer in front of birds (pelicans/*hnwt*; *Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and two containers (actually four are depicted but not visible on this picture) with their eggs and herbs. The adorer was the person who was breeding them, a chief-fisherman and *w<sup>c</sup>b*-priest, whose name is obliterated (see inscription). From the Tomb of Horemheb (TT 78), New Kingdom, 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (contemp. Tuthmosis II and later) (after [Vandier 1969, 382, 388; fig. 170, 428; Posener 1992, 118 and bottom figure; Schneider, Voisin 1991, 63–64]).

**[Bottom]:** Detail from a painting, depicting divinities, between whom Gēb is shown with the (wild?) goose-hieroglyph on his head, hinting perhaps to the Great Cackler (*Ngng-Wr*). The bird probably belongs to the species *Anser albifrons* [Gardiner's G38; van der Plas *et al.* 2000, 1G-1-1G-4 (full list of birds)]. Tomb of Pashedū (TT 3) at Deir 'el-Medinah, Southern Side, 8<sup>th</sup> Section, New Kingdom, 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. See: [PM I<sup>1</sup>, 9–11; cf. also Vernus, Yoyotte 2005, 398]

Egyptians were also breeding several kinds of birds, even pelicans<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 2 [T]), for various purposes.

The archetype of the egg (one of the most important ones) is common in various ancient cultures. We must not forget that similar concepts in different ancient nations, not necessarily communicated between them, or transported from one to the other, are met several times, a fact that is evident and expectable. The same is possibly true for the case between Egyptians and Hellenes, although we do not know to which extend there were any *de facto* influences from one to the other and with what direction, if not an amphidromous one, and how much they were assimilated.

This is why the egg (and also various birds) is met in both the ancient Egyptian and the Hellenic (Orphic) cosmovisions. In ancient Egypt, for instance, one of the principal creation myths, stated that a miraculous egg on a hill that was surrounded by the primeval waters of chaos hatched, giving birth to a divine bird that restored order and begot light starting the beginning of the World. There are several mentions of this myth in the funerary texts and even down to the Ptolemaic Period and Early Christian Era. Similar conceptions are found in the Orphic cosmovision, as we are going to see, where the primeval egg begets Phanēs, the light-creator god who somehow also comes out of chaos, to put order in the Cosmos. A Late Antiquity relief, depicting Phanēs is the renowned-one of Modena<sup>7</sup> (Fig. 4 [L]). The depiction of radiating Phanēs on this extraordinary object is characteristic of many cosmographic allegories and is shown between the two halves of the cosmic egg and inside an ovoid zodiac (symbolizing the primeval egg, wherefrom the Universe was born, as well as the Cosmos itself at the time of the relief's making), with many intriguing

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<sup>6</sup> See e.g.: [Schneider, Voisin 1991, 63–64; Schneider, Voisin 1996, 65–66]. The hieroglyphic sign is Gardiner's G207. For various scenes depicting eggs in baskets of herbs and bird-breeding see: [Vernus, Yoyotte 2005, 403–405].

<sup>7</sup> For a good introduction and an astronomical explanation see: [Papathanasiou 1991, S1–S13 and references therein]; see also: [Merkelbach 1984, 324–325; Eisler 1910, 400 ff]. The relief of Modena has not only Orphic, but also Mithraic and Helleno-Roman traits and an astronomical texture. On the Orphism see also: [Guthrie 1952; Kerényi 1949–1950, 53–78; Mead 1965; Linforth 1973; Maravelia 2006a, 41–65]; on Hellenic “cosmologies” see: [Lloyd 1975, 198–224].



symbols, alluding to creation and rebirth, the egg-archetype being of course the principal-one, reflecting rather syncretic metaphysics and immanent astronomical undertones.



**Fig. 3:** The species *Ardea cinerea* (blue-grey-silver heron), the so-called *bnw*-bird of the Egyptians, was not only connected to Osiris, but also to the solar god Rē<sup>c</sup> and the myths of Cosmogony, according to the Heliopolitan tradition. On this photo of the blue (*tfr-r/hsbd* [Hannig 2009, 1025/668]) egg of a heron (cf. CT II, 148: §§ 214b–215a (S<sup>1</sup>C<sup>a</sup>)), we have superposed a detail of the roof-paintings from the Tomb of Sonnedjem at Deir 'el-Medinah (TT 1, New Kingdom, early 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), depicting the sacred heron with Osirian crown at the prow of the solar barque of R<sup>c</sup>(-Hr-3hty-Tmw) with the Great Ennead of Gods (see inscriptions). On this tomb, see: [PM I<sup>1</sup>, 1–5; cf. also Shedid, Shedid 1999]

## II. The Cosmic Egg in Ancient Egypt and in the Orphic Religion

The conception of the cosmic egg, a very ancient cosmogonical symbol, is not uniquely Egyptian or Hellenic<sup>8</sup>. It is not our purpose here to fully analyse this symbol in these two contexts – something that has already been done, but to discuss some interesting points,

<sup>8</sup> Cf.: [Symbols 1996, 337–341: art. “egg”]. For the (cosmic) egg in Egypt see: [LÄ I, 1185–1188: art. “Ei”]. On Gēb, as creator-god and the creator-bird in an African tribe see: [Ndigi 1996, 49–70].

which have not been touched upon, certainly emphasizing the astro-nomic and cosmovisional hints. The Table I, which follows, shows all the references to the sacred egg (*swḥt*), that one meets in the funerary texts of ancient Egypt, many of which have not been presented by Morenz in his classical study<sup>9</sup>. There are only three references to the primeval egg in the *PT*, sixteen in the *BD*, while most of them (48) are found in the *CT*. This might be indicative of a certain predilection for the mythology of the egg during the Middle Kingdom that continued however even into the Late Period. Was this just a merely random fact or has it any other (crucial) significance? Could it be interrelated to the priesthoods of Egypt and their religious politics?

**Table I.** Textual context of occurrence of the term *egg (swḥt)* in the most important funerary texts of ancient Egypt (*PT, CT, BD*) and the frequency of its occurrence (after [Maravelia 2006b, 367–368, Tab. IV.5]). For additional texts of later periods, mentioning the *cosm(ogon)ic egg* see: [Morenz 1950, 104–111].

<b>№</b>	<b>Text (<i>PT, CT &amp; BD</i>)</b>	<b>Source (<i>PT, CT &amp; BD</i>)</b>
1	<i>ms.tn sw imy swḥt(f)</i>	<i>PT</i> 408, § 714b: 221 [P]
2	<i>sd n ir swḥt.f iš st in.sn ntrw</i>	<i>PT</i> 669, § 1967: 757 [N]
3	<i>mk N sd.n.f swḥt</i>	<i>PT</i> 669, § 1969c: 758 [N]
4	<i>n snḥt.i swḥt.i</i>	<i>CT</i> I, 39: § 167f [B <sub>16</sub> C]
5	<i>n šdt.i swḥwt.i</i>	<i>CT</i> I, 40: § 176k [B <sub>13</sub> C]
6	<i>swḥt km3t tw</i>	<i>CT</i> I, 44: § 182g [B <sub>12</sub> C]
7	<i>n ts.i m swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 76: § 3f [B <sub>1</sub> C]
8	<i>rh.n.f s<sup>c</sup>nh imy m swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 80: § 33c [B <sub>1</sub> C]
9	<i>wbn.f r<sup>c</sup>-nb, pr.f m swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 80: § 36c [B <sub>1</sub> C]
10	<i>pzd.f, wbn.f, pr.f m swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 81: § 44d [B <sub>1</sub> C]
11	<i>ts n irw ntr m swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 148: § 212b [S <sub>1</sub> C]
12	<i>nb.tn is-pw ntr pn imy swḥt.f</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 148: § 214b [S <sub>1</sub> C]
13	<i>ir.tn r.f m-hnw swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 148: § 216b [S <sub>1</sub> C]
14	<i>sd.f swḥt m-hnw nhn.s</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 148: § 217g [S <sub>1</sub> C]
15	<i>mkt.f m-hnw swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 148: § 225b [S <sub>1</sub> C]
16	<i>bikw m-hnw ht swḥwt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 150: § 254c [B <sub>9</sub> C]
17	<i>ink pw ink Hr m-hnw swḥt</i>	<i>CT</i> II, 150: § 254e [B <sub>9</sub> C]

<sup>9</sup> Cf.: [Morenz 1950, 64–111 (especially 104ff); Bickel 1994, 233–241; Zhitomirsky 2003, 79].

18	<i>ink nw pr m swħt ntr ʕ3</i>	CT III, 165: § 13a [S <sub>1</sub> C]
19	<i>ms tn wi imy swħt</i>	CT III, 207: § 156b [S <sub>1</sub> C]
20	<i>h3y.i im.sn m swħwt</i>	CT III, 219: § 200a [B <sub>1</sub> L]
21	<i>iw wđ.n [ntr šps] imy s&lt;w&gt;ħt.f</i>	CT III, 222: § 207c [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
22	<i>i N [...] swħt tn m Ngng-Wr</i>	CT III, 222: § 207h [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
23	<i>ink swħt tw imyt Ngng-Wr</i>	CT III, 223: § 208e [B <sub>2</sub> Bo]
24	<i>pħr.i r-h3w swħt.f</i>	CT III, 223: § 210c [B <sub>2</sub> Bo]
25	<i>ink bik ʕ3 ħpr m swħt</i>	CT IV 302: §§ 53h–53i [B <sub>3</sub> L]
26	<i>(n) sd.tw swħt</i>	CT IV, 307: § 63r [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
27	<i>sd.n.i m swħt</i>	CT IV, 334: § 181g [G <sub>1</sub> T]
28	<i>i R<sup>c</sup> imy swħt.f, wbn m itn.f, psđ m 3ħt.f, nbb ħr bi3.f</i>	CT IV, 335 <sup>ii</sup> : §§ 292b-292c & §§ 294a–294b [T <sub>1</sub> C]
29	<i>s<sup>c</sup>nħ.f &lt;m&gt;-ħnw swħt</i>	CT V, 464: § 337d [B <sub>9</sub> C]
30	<i>srwd, w3đ.i m-ħnw swħt.i</i>	CT VI, 540: § 135g [M <sub>22</sub> C]
31	<i>sd.i m swħt in.n.i</i>	CT VI, 584: § 200j [S <sub>2</sub> C]
32	<i>wđ swħt.i ħr tst Mħyt-Wrt</i>	CT VI, 647: § 267g [G <sub>1</sub> T]
33	<i>ts.n.&lt;f&gt; ħbb swħt.f</i>	CT VI, 648: § 270n [G <sub>1</sub> T]
34	<i>in k3 swħt ts m-ħnw ʕwy.s</i>	CT VI, 682: § 309l [B <sub>1</sub> Bo]
35	<i>N pn bi3 m imy swħt</i>	CT VI, 686: § 315g [B <sub>1</sub> Bo]
36	<i>ind ħr.k ntr pw imy swħt.f</i>	CT VI, 690: § 321j [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
37	<i>ntr pw šps imy [swħt.f]</i>	CT VI, 690: § 321p [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
38	<i>[ntr] pw šps imy [swħt.f]</i>	CT VI, 690: § 321u [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
39	<i>i Dbn(y) imy swħt.f</i>	CT VI, 691: § 323g [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
40	<i>wđ n ntr šps imy swħt.f</i>	CT VI, 697: § 331p [L <sub>1</sub> Li]
41	<i>imy swħt.f</i>	CT VI, 714: § 343n [B <sub>3</sub> L]
42	<i>[m-ħnw] swħt</i>	CT VI, 748: § 378h [B <sub>4</sub> C]
43	<i>s3 Nw ħ3 swħt pr im.f</i>	CT VII, 820: § 21m [T <sub>3</sub> C]
44	<i>N pn pr m swħt ntr</i>	CT VII, 906: § 111o [Sq <sub>10</sub> C]
45	<i>ts ntr m-ħnw swħt</i>	CT VII, 938: § 147a [pGardiner IV]
46	<i>in-m rf sd swħt ntr</i>	CT VII, 989: § 198c [pGardiner II]
47	<i>sd.f swħt pšn.f bi3</i>	CT VII, 989: §§ 198f–198g [pGardiner II]
48	<i>iw st.n.i swħt, iw wnm.i m3<sup>c</sup>t</i>	CT VII, 1017: § 238c-d [pGardiner II]
49	<i>iw ħr swħt</i>	CT VII, 1058: § 310b [B <sub>3</sub> C]
50	<i>n sbħt tn N tn m-ħ3w swħt tn</i>	CT VII, 1129: § 460e [B <sub>3</sub> C]
51	<i>iw.i ħr swħt R<sup>c</sup></i>	CT VII, 1168: § 510f [B <sub>1</sub> P]



52	<i>n hfty, pr m sw&lt;h&gt;t</i>	BD 15: 56 [Shorter 1938, 76]
53	<i>i imy swḥt.f pzd m itn.f, wbn.f m 3ḥt.f, nwb ḥr bi3</i>	BD 17: 22–23 [omitted in pLondon BM EA 10470]
54	<i>iw.i wbn.kwi m swḥt imyt t3 št 3</i>	BD 22: 1–2 [pLondon BM EA 10470]
55	<i>ink imy wd3t swḥty, zp 2</i>	BD 42: 13–14 [Neville 1886, I, 56]
56	<i>swḥt zp 2 ink Ḥr ḥnty ḥhw</i>	BD 42: 26 [Neville 1886, I, 56]
57	<i>ink swḥt imyt Ngng-Wr</i>	BD 54: 1 [pLondon BM EA 10470]
58	<i>phr.i n-h3 n swḥt.f</i>	BD 54: 3 [pLondon BM EA 10470]
59	<i>iw s3.n.i swḥt twy nt Ngng-Wr</i>	BD 56: 3 [pLondon BM EA 10477]
60	<i>iw s3w.n.i swḥt twy nt Ngng-Wr</i>	BD 59: 2–3 [pLondon BM EA 10470]
61	<i>i Nḥny imy swḥt.f, nb Mḥyt-Wrt</i>	BD 71: 12–13 [Neville 1886, I, 83]
62	<i>m bik n nwb, pr m swḥt.f</i>	BD 77: 2 [Neville 1886: I, 88]
63	<i>n m33 zš.i n sd.tw swḥt.i</i>	BD 85: 13 [Neville 1886, I, 97]
64	<i>dnity.f m swḥt hn<sup>c</sup> 3bdw</i>	BD 100: 7 [Neville 1886, I, 113]
65	<i>imy swḥt.f</i>	BD 149: 57 [Neville 1886, I, 170]
66	<i>iw ḥdp.k swḥtwy m ḥrst</i>	BD 172: 20–21 [Neville 1886, I, 193]
67	<i>mndtwy&lt;.ky&gt; swḥtwy m ḥrst</i>	BD 172: 23 [Neville 1886, I, 193]

The fact that this egg is connected to the air and to (human) respiration, so indispensable for life (**Fig. 1 [L]**), becomes evident in the textual context where we meet this concept (**Table I**). In one of the Chapters of the *Book of the Dead*, for instance, witnessed on the Papyrus of Nū (**Table I: № 59**), a dignitary of the New Kingdom, there is an explicit reference to this notion<sup>10</sup>:



<sup>10</sup> See BD 56 (pLondon BM EA 10477, papyrus of Nū, c. 1400 BC; cf.: [Budge 1898, I, 127]).

The translation of this Spell is as follows<sup>11</sup>:

“Incantation to breathe the air among the waters,  
in the Necropolis:

*Words to be recited by the Overseer of the House  
of the Overseer of the Treasury, Nū, (the) justified:*

– *O Atūm, give to me the sweet breath,  
which is in thy nostrils (lit.: thy nose)!*

*I am the one who is searching for this place at  
the centre of Hermopolis;*

*I have guarded this Egg of the Great Cackler:*

*(If) I flourish, it flourishes; (if) I live, it lives;*

*(and) if I breathe the breeze, it (also) breathes the breeze!”.*

There are very ancient and interesting ideas from a cosmovisional (or cosmographic) point of view in the previous verses, as well as in the passages presented in **Table I**. The divine egg of Hermopolis<sup>12</sup> is connected to the conception of the air, as a basic Element of Nature and the indispensable gift for human respiration (alluding to life) and its continuation *post mortem*<sup>13</sup>. The fledgling inside the egg starts actually to breathe the air as soon as the egg is hatched (**Fig. 1 [L], 6**), and by means of sympathetic magic so would do the deceased after being hatched in his/her virtual “egg” of the sarcophagus. This reminds us of some similar Orphic ideas, concerning the primordial cosmic egg.

<sup>11</sup> For an alternative translation see: [Barguet 1967, 92]. The transliteration of this passage is the following: *R(3) n ssn t3w m-m mw, m Hrt-Ntr. | Dd-mdw in imy-r pr n imy-r sd3wty, Nw, m3c-hrw: | T Tm(w) di.k n.i t3w ndm imy šrt.k! | Ink shn st twy hr-ibt Wnw; | iw s3.n.i swht twy nt Ngng-Wr; | rwd.i, rwd.z; nḥ.i, nḥ.z; ssn t3w.i, ssn t3w.[z]!*

<sup>12</sup> On the Hermopolitan egg see: [Lefebvre 1923, 65–67; cf. also Mead 1992, I, 2704; Bauks 1997, 5–8]. For more references on the Great Cackler (*Ngng-Wr*) and related mythological concepts, e.g.: from *BD* 54, 56 & 59 (**Table I**: № 57, 59–60), see also: [LGG IV, 367: art. “Ngg”, “Ngng-ᜆ”, “Ngng-Wr” (with additional bibliography and some references to the meaning of the egg in the *BD*).

<sup>13</sup> Many scenes (especially from the *BD*) depict the deceased with a wind-blown micrographic sail (*t3w/ht3w*: Gardiner’s P5; [Wilkinson 1992, 154–155]), symbolizing the existence of air in the hereafter, used not only for breathing, but for riverine upstream transportations and pilgrimage-sailing too (see e.g.: [Wilkinson 1992, 154, fig. 1, 4]).

According to the Orphics, whose main texts (*Orphic Hymns*) were initially written down by the Peisistratos' *doxographoi* during the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC, but their ideas have been securely dated as being at least 6 or 7 centuries earlier by the author<sup>14</sup>, a fact that is not only plausible but reasonable too, Time (*Χρόνος*), after creating Aether (*Αἰθήρ*), Chaos (*Χάος*) and Erebus/Abysmal Darkness (*Ἐρεβος*), he fashioned a cosmic silver egg that was born by the Night (*Νύξ*)<sup>15</sup>. The cosmic egg was the source of the light of creation, it was the product of the primordial inert mass containing in it both genders, the Four Elements and all the germs of creation, exactly as was the case with Atūm (*Tmw*) the divine amphisexual solar creator, when he was floating inert in the primordial, infinite, dark and hidden Abysmal Ocean of Nūn (*Nwn*)<sup>16</sup>. After the Orphic egg was hatched, its two halves created the Earth (*Γαῖα*) and the Sky (*Οὐρανός*), while Phanēs (*Φάνης*) was the personification of the primordial extremely brilliant light of creation, being actually a unique androgynous solar creator-deity [Παπαθανασίου 1978, 30 ff]<sup>17</sup> (**Fig. 4**), bearing golden wings

<sup>14</sup> For a complete archaeoastronomical discussion, see: [Maravelia 2006b, 71–74, 307–323]. We were based on a characteristic verse from the *Orphic Hymn* to Apollōn [Quandt 1973, 34], where the equality of duration between Winter and Summer is explicitly stated and praised, a fact that can only happen in certain times; hence, using special archaeoastronomical calculations and software we have shown that this could only acceptably happen at *c.* 1366 BC, when the difference was only about 2 hours ( $T_{\text{Winter}} \approx T_{\text{Summer}} \approx 102$  days). *Contra* e.g.: [Athanasakis 1977, VII, XII; West 1983, I, 7, *passim*]; *contra* the late dating, we have shown that during the Helleno-Roman Era the duration of the Seasons was unequal; actually, for e.g.: 200 BC,  $T_{\text{Winter}} \approx 98.0$  days  $\neq T_{\text{Spring}} \approx 85.3$  days  $\neq T_{\text{Summer}} \approx 101.0$  days  $\neq T_{\text{Autumn}} \approx 80.4$  days, thus  $\Delta T \equiv T_{\text{Summer}} - T_{\text{Winter}} \approx 3$  days, notwithstanding with *Orphic Hymn* 34: *l.* 21! On the Orphic Astronomy and religion see (respectively): [Veselovskiy 1982, 120–124; Harrison 1922; cf. also Leisegang 1939].

<sup>15</sup> See: [Kern 1972, 80, *Nr* 1 (= Aristophanēs, *Ὀρνιθεῖς*: 694 ff): “Ἐρέβους δ’ ἐν ἀπειροσι κόλποις τίκτει πρότιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νύξ ἢ μελανόπτερος ῥόν”. See also Proklos, *Εἰς Πλάτωνα Τίμαιον*: 30<sup>C-D</sup>; Damaskios, *Περὶ ἀρχῶν*: 55, 123<sup>B</sup>; & c.]. Cf. also: [Kern 1920; Burnet 1919; Chatzissomoy 1996].

<sup>16</sup> See e.g.: *CT* II, 76: §§ 4c–4d: *hrw hpr.n Tm(w) im, m hhw, m nww, m kkw, m tnmw* [B:C].

<sup>17</sup> On the (archaeo)astronomical explanation of the relief of Modena see: [Papathanasiou 1991, *S1–S13*]. Phanēs personifies the Primordial Sun and the continuous flow of time (*χρόνος*).

and replenishing the Cosmos with bright light, dissolving the mists of the abysmal darkness<sup>18</sup>.



**Fig. 4 [Left]:** The Modena Relief with Phanēs/Prōtoghonos, as a winged amphisexual creator-deity, between the two halves of the energetic hatched Cosmic Egg, encircled by a characteristically ovoid (elliptical) zodiac and various symbols [lunar crescent (also alluding to bull's horns and tauroctony), coiled dragon, sceptre and lightning-shaft] and the four principal winds. Modena, Galleria Estense, Inv. № 2676, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD (cf. [CIMRM, № 695, fig. 197]).

**[Right]:** Modern photo and artist's impression of an egg with the aura of life emerging from within, promising the sustenance and continuation of new life-forms. Compare with the energetic flames protruding from both halves of the Orphic Cosmic Egg, on the lower of which Phanēs stands (between heaven and earth, reminiscent of hieroglyphic signs A121C and B58), while being crowned by the other half

There exist interesting parallels and comparable notions in both mythological systems (Egyptian and Hellenic) which deserve to be

<sup>18</sup> See 6, 2, 6-8: *ὠιογενῆ, χρυσέαισιν ἀγαλλόμενον πετέρυγεσσι | [...] | ὄσσων ὃς σκοτόεσσαν ἀπημαύρωσας ὀμίχλην | πάντη δινηθεῖς πετέρυγων ῥιπαῖς κατὰ κόσμον | λαμπρὸν ἄγων φάος ἀγνόν, ἀφ' οὗ σε Φάνητα κυκλήσκω*. For a comparison, cf. also *BD 15* (e.g.: in [Faulkner, Goelet 1998, pl. 21, col. 5: *Shd-Wr, wbn m Nww*]).

further examined (**Fig. 5**). Water (and matter) correspond (*mutatis mutandis*) to Nūn; Time (~ *Rk*) corresponds to the immensurable eternity (*Hḥw*); Anagkē/Adrasteia corresponds to Ma<sup>c</sup>at (*Mʒʿt*); Aether corresponds to Shū (*šw*); Chaos corresponds to Amūn (*Imn*) or to the notion of *primordial disorder* (*tnmw*); Tartaros (*Τάρταρος*, and also the Night) correspond to the Tenebrous Darkness (*Kkw/Kkw-Zmʒw*); the Sky (male in Hellenic mythology, but female in Egyptian mythology) corresponds to Nūt; Phanēs corresponds either to Rē<sup>c</sup>-Atūm or/and to the Great Cackler (*Nngg-Wr / Gb?*), and both of them came out of the primeval egg and are winged. Of course, the egg is a common symbol and archetype in both these mythologies. It seems, however, more plausible to find correspondences between the Orphic and the Hermopolitan Cosmogony, than between the former and that of Heliopolis (see, though, **Fig. 3**).

As we showed in our PhD Thesis [Maravelia 2006b, 76–84, 392–409], we have here a description, virtually and *mutatis mutandis*, equivalent to the notions of modern Cosmology and Astrophysics: the vast but not infinite egg corresponds to the primordial *Sphere of Fire* that was produced just after the Big Bang<sup>19</sup>, bearing in itself the time, the matter and the energy of creation, that is all the pairs of elementary particles and anti-particles together with the cascade of light (Eg.: *iʒḥw/šw*) that brightened the newly-begotten Universe and was indeed born *in principio*<sup>20</sup>. Svetlana Marakhonova has well compared the Egyptian Cosmogony to those of the Hellenes and the Copts (in the context of Gnosticism), having also analyzed the significant role of the primordial cosmic egg<sup>21</sup>. In this paper our purpose is

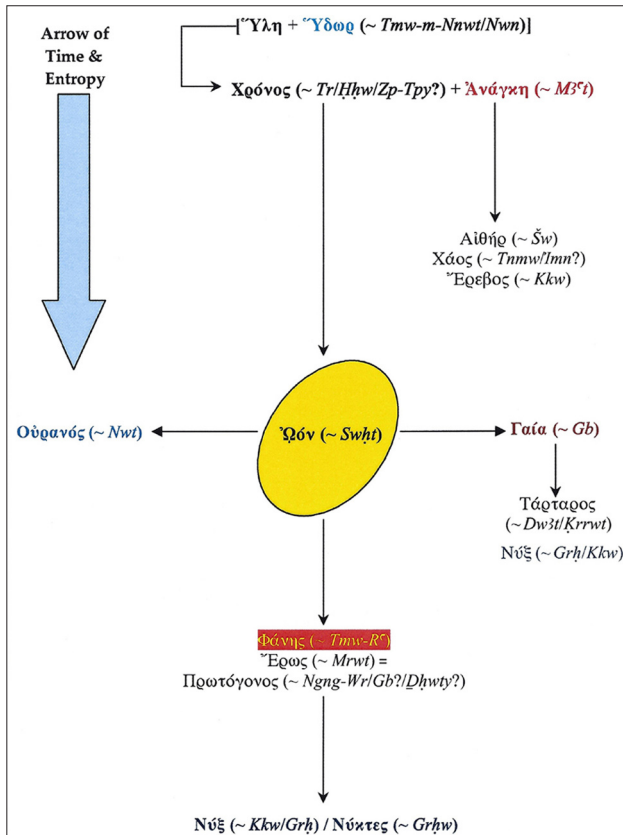
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<sup>19</sup> For a very good but simple introduction see: [Weinberg 1978].

<sup>20</sup> For a comparison to the *Holy Bible*, see *Genesis* I: 1–4; cf. e.g.: [Septuaginta 1979, I].

<sup>21</sup> See: [Marakhonova 1993, 277–289]. For a comparison between the Egyptian and Hebrew Cosmogonies, cf.: [Korostovtsev 1974, 29]; between the Hellenic and Biblical Cosmogonies, cf.: [Λώλη 1937]; between the Egyptian Cosmogony cf.: [RÄRG, 864–867: art. “Weltbeginn”; Brandon 1963, 14–65; James 1969, 15–20; Notter 1974; Derchain 1981, 224–228; Clagett 1989, 263–406; Castel Ronda 1992–1994, 3–38; Lacarrière *et al.* 1996, 2–19] and that of the *Bible*, see: [Bauks 1998, 165–178; Currid 1991, 18–40]. On the Orphic Cosmogonies see: [Martínez-Nieto 2000, 181–263; 139–180 (Mousaios); Brisson 1995; Brisson, Meyerstein 1991].

to comparatively highlight some characteristic passages of cosmological and cosmographic or astronomical symbolism.



**Fig. 5:** Proposed correspondences and parallels (*mutatis mutandis*) between the Hellenic and the Egyptian cosmic deities, after the comparative study of the Orphic texts (mainly of the *Orphic Hymns*) with the funerary texts of the ancient Egyptians (mainly *PT*, *CT* & *BD*)<sup>22</sup>. Slightly adapted and improved diagram, after [Maravelia 2006b, 369, fig. IV.14; cf. also Maravelia 2007, 1247, fig. 1]

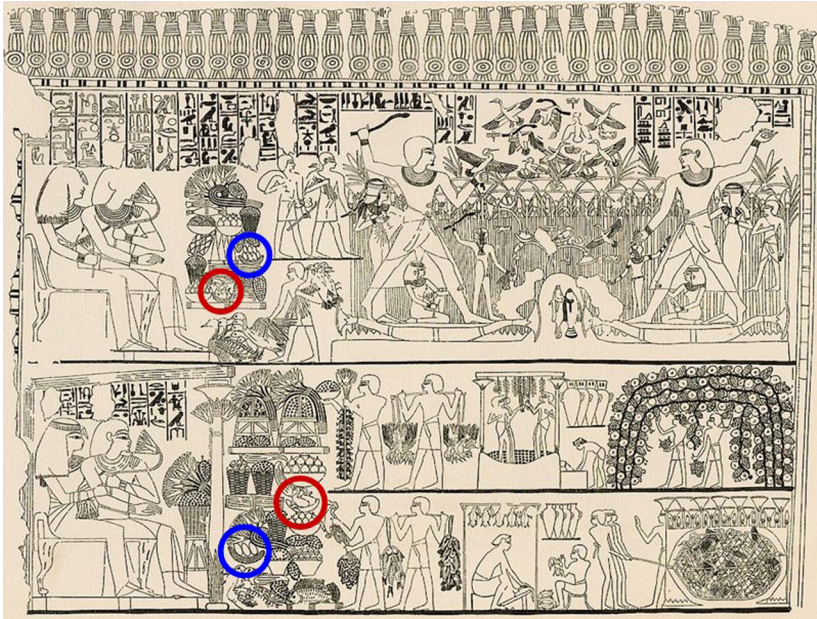
<sup>22</sup> Nota: +: divine couple; =: identity; ~: proposed correspondence; ?: not sure. Additional Hellenic Sources: Damaskios: *Περί ἀρχῶν*, 123<sup>B</sup>; Aristophanēs: *Ὀρνιθες*, 693–702; Hermeias: *Εἰς Πλάτωνα Φαῖδρον*, 247<sup>C</sup>; Proklos: *Εἰς Πλάτωνα Τίμαιον*, 31<sup>A</sup>; & c. Cf. aussi: [Brisson 1993, 174, 178].



We must point out that there are many references to the cosmogonic egg in the ancient Egyptian funerary texts (**Table I**), of which at least two are particularly interesting (**Table I: № 28 and 53**). The first (from the *CT*) denotes the concept of the (baby) solar god, coming out of his egg, shining in his disc, brightening his horizon and crossing his firmament. The second (from the *BD*) is of a quite similar context, glorifying the solar god in his egg, who brightens his disc, shines in his horizon and makes his firmament to radiate like gold. The similarity of both to the Orphic ideas is remarkable. Since the first passage comes from the older *Coffin Texts*, we consider it as the archetype and the one more expressive of the initial sense of this text (which could very well predate the Middle Kingdom, even though an analogous expression is not found in the *PT* (**Table I**). Both these excerpts consist of a mere invocation to Rē<sup>c</sup>, who is described as being in his egg (cf. also Gardiner's N91, N131, especially N136, in comparison to H34: although in the N-Group we have the solar disc and not an egg, like the one signs H8 and H34 depict, the temptation to compare it to a virtual egg, due to its sphericity and the latent recurrent rebirth symbolism, is irresistible (**Fig. 1, 3, 6**): appearing in glory in the solar disc, brightening the horizon and swimming into his firmament; while, through these periodical (~ astronomical) actions, the solar deity could save the deceased from the dangers of the hereafter and bestow him/her the bliss of eternal life and incorporation into the always returning (stellar and/or solar) epiphanies of the Cosmos.

The context is indeed cosmovisional and clearly shows the astronomical elements of the continuous and periodical rising of the Sun, the brightening of the horizon and the movement of the solar disc on the celestial sphere, which were interpreted by the ancient Egyptians as cosmographic and metaphysical allegories. The Egyptian solar god could be considered here as analogous to the Orphic Phanēs. The use of archetypes and symbols from the world of birds, which are celestial beings and progenitors of eggs (since they have the virtually “divine” property of flying in the sky and creating life from their initially lifeless eggs), is characteristic in both the ancient Egyptian and the Hellenic cultures. The *μυθολογούμενον* is expressed in metaphysical images and metaphors of a solar (and in general of a cosmic) symbolism. In the passage from the *Book of the Dead*, for instance, the symbolism of gold (divine and solar colour *par excellence*) was indirectly

introduced, by the observation that  $R\bar{e}^{\circ}$  is shining like gold in the firmament. The cosmic egg is also met in the later periods of ancient Egypt; this characteristically happens towards the end of the Late Period and the Ptolemaic Period, where in Esna the local Cosmogony speaks of the egg begotten by Neith and creating the Sun<sup>23</sup>, however this is lying far in time of the era we examine in our present paper.



**Fig. 6:** Marsh-hunting, fishing, agricultural and offering scenes from the Tomb of Nakht (TT 52), coinciding with the *3ht*-Season. Between the offerings, note the characteristic double presence of a nest with eggs (highlighted in blue colour) and a nest with fledglings (highlighted in red colour), after [de Garis Davies 1917, *pl. XXII*]. Cf. also **Fig. 1 [L]**

The symbolism of birds is equally met in some of the passages (**Table I**) that refer to the transformation of *b3*-soul of the deceased

<sup>23</sup> For the text see: [Esna III, 1968, 28–34 (№ 206)]; for a translation see: [Esna V, 1962, 247–276 (mainly 262–263, on the hatching of the egg)]; cf. also: [Guilhou 2007, 22–23; Sauneron 1961, 43–48].

into a (golden) falcon (**Table I:** № 16, 25, and 62). The radiant Sun, was the echo of a very distant cosmic past, full of the energy of creation, the luminiferous reflections of which were virtually still felt extending into the present of the Egyptians of Antiquity. On the other hand, the Egyptian solar god, as a hieracocephalous deity illuminating the sky every day, was corresponding to the masculine hypostasis of Phanēs. The latter appears on the Modena relief, albeit together with the female symbol of the Moon's crescent (**Fig. 4 [L]**).

The ancient Nile-Dwellers were more inclined to abide on the metaphorical quintessence of their myths, without formulating proto-scientific conclusions, which was the case for the Orphic Hellenes, however a certain pre-scientific aura can be traced through the Egyptian cosmographic allegories. If we, then, compare *Orphic Hymn 6*, dedicated to Phanēs [Quandt 1973, 6] with the related ancient Egyptian funerary texts, we can perceive the advanced proto-scientific Hellenic cosmovision, using theological concepts and cosmic metaphors too, though in a more reasonable way, exegetic of the world structure and genesis.

### III. Conclusions

We have examined comparatively from an egyptological, a philological and a cosmovisional point of view the role of the *cosmic egg* in the funerary texts of ancient Egypt (mainly *PT*, *CT* and *BD*) and in the *Orphic Hymns*, religion and cosmovision (**Table I** and **Fig. 5**). The egg, being an archetype and symbol for new life and regeneration in many cultures, was of a paramount importance in both ancient Egypt and ancient Hellas. In the former we meet at least 67 instances of occurrence of the term *egg (swḥt)* in the main funerary texts of the Pharaonic Period (3 in the *PT*, 48 in the *CT* and 16 in the *BD*), as well as the archetype of the Great Cackler (*Ngng-Wr*), alluding to the notions of light, new life, air, wind and breathing, shedding some more light on *BD* Chapter 56, concerned with the cosmic egg. In the latter the cosmogonic egg, together with the solar – and creator – deity Phanēs (*Φάνης*), is also met in the Orphic literature and mainly in the *Orphic Hymn* dedicated to this amphisexual god. We discussed the above and presented interesting comparisons, not only between Hellenic and Egyptian divinities, but also between Hellenic and Egyptian parallel notions concerned with Cosmogony.

Finally, we presented a few comparisons (*mutatis mutandis*) with important notions of modern Cosmology.

Astronomy was cultivated by the Orphics in the proto-scientific level, being also used practically in the domain of maritime navigation, the (quite advanced for that era) observation of the sky, as well as of various meteorological, atmospheric and other indirectly related (e.g.: terrestrial or geological phenomena) [Maravelia 2006b, 374–376]<sup>24</sup>. The Orphics apparently had pure hearts, an enlightened spirit and lived in a part of the globe privileged with nice climatic conditions (clear skies). A long and very ancient tradition of astronomical experience was incorporated into their hymns, which demonstrate a descriptive character and an observational keenness, imprinted in a comprehensible and precise way, based on an archetypal celestial and cosmographic symbolism. Even though both metaphysical systems (Egyptian and Hellenic) use myths as a virtual vehicle of transportation of cosmo-visions, philosophical notions and natural reality, the Orphics managed to liberate themselves more from myths and from their literal implications, remaining faithful to an extraordinary henotheism. As in the case of the ancient Egyptian texts (where henotheism<sup>25</sup> hides itself in several instances), this fact gives a superficial religious appearance to the *Orphic Hymns* (as is also the case for the Egyptian funerary texts), which however succeeded in including a lot of precious and exact information related to astronomical phenomena. The virtual fermentation of these concepts, during the passage of many centuries, has led towards their incorporation in the Orphic texts, the ideas of which date from a more ancient past (c. 14<sup>th</sup> Century BC) than their first taxonomy and official grouping (6<sup>th</sup> Century BC). These very ideas were conceived as the result of a long astronomical tradition, which probably was partially influenced by various Oriental cultures<sup>26</sup>, either Indo-Iranian or (to a lesser extent) Egyptian, and they were crystallized during the period of the 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> Centuries BC. One of these ideas was the notion of the

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<sup>24</sup> Our PhD Thesis was concerned mainly with the Astronomy of the Orphics. A new PhD Thesis is currently needed in the domains of the Meteorology and Geology of the Orphics.

<sup>25</sup> For an in depth discussion, see: [Maravelia 2014, 42–117].

<sup>26</sup> For an older discussion see: [Mansfield Haywood 1968].

cosm(ogon)ic egg, as a bearer of life and a begetter of a creator-god (Φάνης), that is met in both the ancient Egyptian and the ancient Hellenic cosmovision.

### ABBREVIATIONS

ÄA – Ägyptologische Abhandlungen. Wiesbaden.

AntOr – Antiquo Oriente. Buenos Aires.

ASAÉ – Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte. Le Caire.

BSÉG – Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie. Genève.

BD – *Book of the Dead*: Naville E. (1886), *Das Ägyptische Totenbuch der XVIII–XX Dynastie aus Verschiedenen Urkunden zusammengestellt*, Bd. I–II, Verlag von A. Asher & Co, Berlin.

CIMRM = Vermaseren M. J. (1956–1960), *Corpus Inscriptionum Monumentorum Religionis Mithraicae*, T. I–II, Hagæ Comitibus, M. Nijhoff.

CT – *Coffin Texts*: de Buck A. (1935–1961), *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Vol. I–VII, Oriental Institute Publications, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

FCD – Faulkner R.O. (1991), *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Griffith Institute and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

GM – Göttinger Miszellen. Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion. Göttingen.

EG – Gardiner A. H. (1988), *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., Griffith Institute and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Esna III – Sauneron S. (1968), *Le Temple d'Esna*, IFAO, Le Caire.

Esna V = Sauneron S. (1962), *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna, aux derniers siècles du paganisme*, IFAO, Le Caire.

LÄ – Helck W. and Otto E. (eds.) (1975–1989), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Bd. I–VII, Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden.

LAPO – Littératures Anciennes du Proche-Orient. Paris.

LGG – Leitz C. (ed.) (2002–2003), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, Bd. I–VIII, OLA, T. 111–116, 129, Uitgeverij Peeters Leuven, Paris and Dudley MA.

OBO – Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Freiburg (Schweiz); Göttingen.

OLA – Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica. Leuven.



PIREI – Publications Interuniversitaires de Recherches Égyptologiques Informatisées. Utrecht and Paris.

PM – Porter B. and Moss R. L. B. (with Burney, E.W.) (eds.) (1939–1988), *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, Vol. I–VIII, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

PT – *Pyramid Texts*: Sethe K. (1908–1910), *Die Altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Bd. I–II, J. Hinrichs, Leipzig.

Septuaginta – Rahlfs A. (ed.) (1979), *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft and Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλικὴ Ἐταιρεία, Stuttgart; Ἀθήναι.

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**КОНЦЕПЦІЯ КОСМІЧНОГО ЯЙЦЯ (*Swht*)  
У СТАРОДАВНЬОМУ ЄГИПТІ  
ТА В ОРФІЧНОМУ КОСМОБАЧЕННІ**

У пропонованій статті зіставляється з єгиптологічної, філософської та світоглядної точок зору роль космічного яйця в заупокійних текстах Стародавнього Єгипту (головним чином, Текстах пірамід, Текстах саркофагів і Книзі мертвих), а також у космобаченні орфічних гімнів. Яйце, що є архетипом і символом нового життя та відродження у багатьох культурах, мало першорядне значення як у Стародавньому Єгипті, так і в Стародавній Елладі. У першому випадку ми зустрічаємо щонайменше 67 випадків появи терміна “яйце” (*swht*) в основних заупокійних текстах періоду фараонів (3 у Текстах пірамід, 48 у Текстах саркофагів і 16 у Книзі мертвих), а також архетип Великого Гоготуна (*Ngng-Wr*), з посиленням на поняття світла, нового життя, повітря, вітру та дихання.



Надалі космогонічне яйце, разом із сонячним божеством і божеством-творцем Фанесом (Φάνης), також зустрічається в орфічній літературі та головним чином в орфічному гімні, присвяченому цьому божеству-амфісексуалу. Вищевикладене обговорюється, і надаються цікаві порівняння не тільки між еллінським і єгипетським божествами, але також між еллінським і єгипетським паралельними поняттями, що стосуються космогонії. Крім того, приділено увагу вислову 56 Книги мертвих, що стосується космічного яйця, а також близьким орфічним метафізичним доктринам, із наданням у деяких випадках порівнянь (*mutatis mutandis*) із важливими поняттями сучасної космології.

**Ключові слова:** давньоєгипетська релігія та космобачення, поховальні тексти (PT, CT, BD), геліопольська та гермопольська традиції, боги-творці, (космічне) яйце (*swht*), Великий Гоготун (*Ngng-Wr*), птахи, гніздо, чапля (*bnw*), орфічна релігія, орфічні гімни, Фанес, рельєф із Модени, космографічні метафори, світло, повітря, міфи творіння, сучасна космологія

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## **КОНЦЕПЦИЯ КОСМИЧЕСКОГО ЯЙЦА (*Swht*)**

### **В ДРЕВНЕМ ЕГИПТЕ**

### **И В ОРФИЧЕСКОМ КОСМОВИДЕНИИ**

В данной статье сопоставляется с египтологической, философской и мировоззренческой точек зрения роль космического яйца в заупокойных текстах Древнего Египта (главным образом, Текстах пирамид, Текстах саркофагов и Книге мертвых), а также в космовидении орфических гимнов. Яйцо, являющееся архетипом и символом новой жизни и возрождения во многих культурах, имело первостепенное значение как в древнем Египте, так и в древней Элладе. В первом случае мы встречаем как минимум 67 случаев появления термина “яйцо” (*swht*) в основных заупокойных текстах периода фараонов (3 в Текстах пирамид, 48 в Текстах саркофагов и 16 в Книге мертвых), а также архетип Великого Гоготуна (*Ngng-Wr*), со ссылкой на понятия света, новой жизни, воздуха, ветра и дыхания. В дальнейшем космогоническое яйцо, вместе с солнечным божеством и божеством-создателем Фанесом (Φάνης), также встречается в орфической литературе и главным образом в орфическом гимне, посвященном этому божеству-амфісексуалу. Вышеизложенное обсуждается, и представляются интересные сравнения не только между эллинским и египетским божествами, но также между эллинским и египетским паралельными понятиями, касающимися космогонии. Кроме того, уделено внимание главе 56 Книги мертвых,

касающейся космического яйца, а также близким орфическим метафизическим доктринам, с предложением в некоторых случаях сравнений (*mutatis mutandis*) с важными понятиями современной космологии.

**Ключевые слова:** древнеегипетская религия и космовидение, погребальные тексты (PT, CT, VD), гелиопольская и гермопольская традиции, боги-творцы, (космическое) яйцо (*swht*), Великий Гоготун (*Ngng-Wr*), птицы, гнездо, цапля (*bnw*), орфическая религия, орфические гимны, Фанес, рельеф из Модены, космографические метафоры, свет, воздух, мифы творения, современная космология

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