



HAL
open science

The Image of the Foreigner in the Magical Texts

Yvan Koenig

► **To cite this version:**

Yvan Koenig. The Image of the Foreigner in the Magical Texts. International Conference on the Foreign Relations and Diplomacy in the Ancient World: Egypt, Greece, Near East, (Rhodes, 3 au 5 décembre 2004)., Dec 2004, Rhodes, Greece. pp.223-238. halshs-00689857

HAL Id: halshs-00689857

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00689857>

Submitted on 20 Apr 2012

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Article publié dans OLA 159, 2007, p. 223-238 :

« The Image of the Foreigner in the Magical Texts », in : « Moving across the Borders : Foreign Relations and Cultural Interactions in the Ancient Mediterranean World ». Acts of the International Conference on the Foreign World and Diplomacy (Rhodes 2004), ed. P. Kousoulis and K. Magliveras, OLA 159, Peeters 2007, p. 223 -238.

Foreigner's image in ancient egyptian magicals texts.

Often cultures affirm themselves by confronting with others. During this process, ideology plays a basic role. The other's image is linked with an ideology which induce it as J. Baines stated¹. In ancient Egypt, history is ritual or better festive, as it is an extension or a renewal of creation². The numerous images of the ennemy overthrown by the King, which were studied by R.K. Ritner³, would mean that the foreigner express the disorder's forces of the unorganised world.

This frequent interpretation was expressed recently by J. Baines, according to whom : « Those who were not included within the normative of the cosmos – that is, those who were not ethnic Egyptians or were excluded on some grounds – would belong with the uncreated world⁴».

But, as far as magical texts are concerned, they reveal that the egyptian conception is more complicated. In fact, as soon as the execrations texts of the Ancient Kingdom, as the Giza's texts⁵, there is no doubt that the execrations figures do concern Egyptians as well as

¹ J. Baines, « Contextualising Egyptian representations of Society and Ethnicity », in : J. S. Cooper and G. M. Schwartz (ed.), *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Dynasty*. The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1996, p. 339-384 and in particular, p. 391 : « *The Over-Defined Nation State and its Culture* » : « The creation of a state and culture involves forging an ideology or an identity that will underpin its unity, creating a collective « self » that implies a collective « other », where the other is axiomatically diverse and the self unitary. » And also the important article of Janet H. Johnson, « Ethnic Considerations in the Persian Period » in : « *Gold of Praise : Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*, SAOC 58, Chicago 1999, p. 211-222

² Cf. E. Hornung, *Geschichte als Fest : Zwei Vorträge zum Geschichtsbild der frühen Menschheit*, Libelli 246. Darmstadt : Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966.

³ R. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54, 1993, Chap. 4 : « Images and intermediaries » and in particular « The Bound Prisoner Motif », p. 115-136 and the execration figures p. 159 sq.

⁴ J. Baines, art. quoted, p. 360 : « Nation and Ethnicity ».

⁵ J. Osing, *Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich*, MDAIK 29, 1974 and id. *Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich II*, MDAIK 32, 1976, p. 133-185 and pl. 40-49. These figures are of the sixth dynasty, put in vases, they are constituted by little figures and two bigger. Similar wood figures were found in Abusir, they are of the fifth dynasty (see Verner, RdE 36, 145-152), also in Giza (Junker, Giza VIII, 36), Reisner, *BMFA* 11, 62 and Smith, *A history of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (2°, 58, 90 and pl. 23 e-f.

foreigners, and a formula of the great figure found by Abu Bakr⁶ also prove that the execration becomes effective only, and only if, there is actual rebellion against pharaoh's authority. It's the « rebellion formula » which is usually used in such texts. A prospective grammatical form activates the execration only if there is a concrete act of rebellion. This is J. Osing translation of it : « [Jeder Rebell dieses Landes, (und zwar) alle Menschen, alle p`wt], alle [rhwt], alle [Männer] alle Kastraten, alle Frauen ; jeder Fürst, [jeder Nubier, jeder 'Starke', jeder Bote,]...von einem jedem Fremdland, die rebellieren sollten, in den (Ländern) follows a list of Nubian districts, die jemals gegen Ober und Unterägypten rebellieren oder aufgrund von Propagierung der Subversion ader aufgrund irgendwelcher böser Äusserungen Subversion begehen sollten. »

As G. Posener noticed : « Conçu ainsi, l'envoûtement ne combat pas des ennemis effectifs, il empêche les gens de le devenir. Ceux-ci ne sont pas des victimes, mais des sujets amenés à demeurer soumis⁷. » The execration texts of the Middle Kingdom reveal the same pattern⁸.

This show clearly that far from being considered as « elements of the uncreated world », foreigners are exactly on the same level than Egyptians. There is no hostility against them as far as they d'ont rebel against the authority of the King. This is also confirmed by the famous representation of the Book of the Gates in which all the ethnic groups are placed by the Egyptians on the same level, all being created by the same sun god. Also, the bound prisoner thema did represent a foreigner but also an Egyptian or a dangerous divinity⁹. There is no rejection of the foreigner in egyptian ideology and the foreigners go to the egyptian paradise, even if they need interpreters to be understood¹⁰, traditionnaly Egypt consider itself as an empire which borders exceed the border of the moment and extend as far as the limits of the universe.

But it's a religious duty for the king to destroy or subdue what is contrary to the order wanted by the creator, and the whole humanity is liable to revolt. Therefore an execration's ritual is performed to « immobilise the humanity ¹¹» (*rth p't*). The word *pat* had first an aristocratic flavour, but finally applied to the whole humanity, which must be bewitched so there is no rebellion.

⁶ See J. Osing, MDAIK 32, 1976, p. 153-154.

⁷ G. Posener, *Annuaire du Collège de France* 74, 1974, p. 401

⁸ See G. Posener, « Nouvelles listes de proscription (Ächtungstexte) datant du Moyen Empire », CdE 27, 1939, p. 39-46. Originally the rekhyts were not a class of egyptian population, but an ethnic group precisely located living in the Nile's Delta as stated by J.J. Clère, « Fragments d'une nouvelle représentation égyptienne du monde », MDAIK 16, 1958, p. 44 and note 5.

⁹ See G. Posener, *Les empreintes magiques de Gizeh et les morts dangereux*, MDAIK 16, 1958, p. 256.

¹⁰ D. Meeks, « La notion de 'dieu' », RHR CCV, 1998, p. 443-444 and notes 77-78.

¹¹ See G. Posener, *Annuaire du Collège de France* 75, 1975, p. 409-410.

With the Edfu's text, we possess a good description of this ritual ; we know that some figures were put into a net to be burnt, after a simulacre of fishing has been accomplished.

In the same perspective, the traditional representation of the nine bows which were to be subdued by the King, concern the whole humanity, including upper and lower Egypt. Of course we are in the level of ideological representations, which don't imply that the practice was such. And in fact representations of rebelling foreigners are far more frequent than Egyptians. The fact that foreigner didn't belong to uncreated world is consistent with Egyptians beliefs. The world was created by the god, who also created the ethnic groups. This aspect of the Egyptian thought being more apparent after the Amarna period. Once he rebels, the enemies were assimilated to « human beasts », the descendants of which would revolt against the gods, then becoming the criminals and asocials of Egyptian society¹². In this way people who would revolt against the authority of the king participate congenitally to the nature of primordial beings who did revolt against Re. That is why during the New Kingdom, the usual expression « rebels children » (*msw bstw*) was assimilated with another one, the « downfall children » (*msw bdst*), the word *bdst* being the expression of 'chaos' forces¹³.

Every rebel being is assimilated with the cosmic enemy. By the execrations rituals of rebels had a precise intend : to hinder the expression of chaos in the organised world ruled by the King, and for the Egyptians, what is meant by the end of the world is precisely a return to the original chaos¹⁴.

Rebels do express Chaos as Apopis, and in the Bremner-Rhind papyrus the officiating priest declares to Re : « Go to Pharaoh, so that you repel for him all his enemies, as he overthrewed for you Apopis, may he destroys you the wretched one¹⁵ ».

With the New Kingdom numerous foreign influences exerted on Egypt, and it was a real fashion to use Semitic words. The magical texts followed the general trend, as for example the Leiden's papyrus published by A. Massart¹⁶. This Ramesside papyrus show some interesting features. First, its language is New Egyptian, which is quite rare for magical texts, and second it's main concern is to cure a disease named whether *akhou* or *samana*. The word *akhou* (« burning substance ») being the Egyptian equivalent for the Mesopotamian demon *samana*.

¹² See J. Yoyotte, « Héra d'Héliopolis et le sacrifice humain », *AEPHE* Vth section 89, 1980-81, p. 97 and Y. Koenig, « À propos de la Conspiration du Harem », *BIFAO* 101, 2001, p. 301.

¹³ See Pyr. 1080 and preceding note.

¹⁴ See D. Meeks, « Notion de 'dieu' », *RHR CCV*, 1988, p. 438.

¹⁵ P. Bremner Rhind 22, 4. On this point see also G. Posener, *Annuaire du Collège de France* 74, 1974, p. 403.

¹⁶ A. Massart, *The Leiden Magical Papyrus I 343+ I 345*, Leiden 1954.

Both words refer to skin diseases which, without being the same, display some common features¹⁷.

During this period magicians don't hesitate to use formulas written in foreign languages. By invoking a god in a foreign language¹⁸, the magician wanted to hinder malignant forces of exotic origin. Renown for its magic, Nubia benefits of a real fame, and alluding to it increase the efficacy of formulas. The more so since, a well attested tradition during the New Kingdom, located the birth place of Amon in Nubia, this also explains the frequent use of Nubians names of the god. The magician try to seize the nature of the god under all its aspects, all its forms or names, according to the egyptian belief, the name expresses the essence of the thing. If to write a formula into a foreign language is by no way an offense, all the languages are not on the same level. For the Egyptians, only the egyptian language do really express the reality, because the creator used this language to create the realia of the universe, in the begining. The foreigners are the « others », the « ignorants »; but the Egyptians are the « hearts », those who are aware of the will of the god. This also means that a god is really named only by egyptian language, and that the foreign gods are just aspects of egyptians gods¹⁹. So language is also considered as an important criterium of distinctions between the different ethnics groups, as Janet H. Johnson stated²⁰.

In a way, such invocations of the god Amon are exceptions founded on the nubian origin of this god. We find in a limited group of texts : the magical papyrus Boulaq 6, and the supplementaries chapters of the Book of the Dead²¹, which are magicals texts. All this is linked with the expansion of Egypt into Nubia and the assimilation of the ram god Saka from Kerma with Amon at the begining of the XVIIIth dynasty which led to the cult of Amon in the temple of Gebel Barkal²². The egyptianised Nubia is not felt as a foreign country, and the Pharaos of the XXVth dynasty will pretend to be the best defenders of egyptians traditions. King Piankhi will forbid the access of his palace to princes who were not circumcised and ate

¹⁷ See T. Bardinnet, « Remarques sur les maladies de la peau », RdE 39, p. 14 and somme extracts of this text in his book *Les papyrus médicaux de l'ancienne Égypte*, Fayard 1995, p. 475-477.

¹⁸ See for example T. Schneider, « Mag pHarris XII, 1-5 : Eine kanaanäische Beschwörung für die Löwenjagd » *GM* 112, 1989, 53-63 and C. Leitz, *Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom*, HPBM VII, London 1999, p. 49-50.

¹⁹ See D. Meeks « Notion de Dieu », RHR CCV, 1968, p. 442-443.

²⁰ Janet H. Johnson, « Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt », in : *Gold of Praise : Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward Wente*, SAOC 58, Chicago 1999, p. 212-213 and notes 7-10.

²¹ These formulas were composed in a theban milieu, and used a magical amulets during the XXIth dynasty or included in little compositions.

²² See recently the study of C. Bonnet, *Lr temple principal de la ville de Kerma et son quartier religieux*, Errance (ed), Paris 2004, p. 158-159 and references. The Gebel Barkal became a southern Heliopolis and the original mound on which the creator created the world. See also Mark L. Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptians Myths and History*, Uppsala 1986, p. 15-16.

fish « which is an abomination for the king's palace. » Foreign gods are generally assimilated with Seth or to Hathor, according to their mythological settings. By consequence, there is a large tolerancy for foreign gods and their cults. A good example of a successful acculturation is given by the egyptian version of the struggle between Baal-Seth and the Sea, and during the same period, the canaanite god Baal became the warlike model of egyptian kingship²³. The Leiden's papyrus shows how this myth could be used in a magical context²⁴:

« Other formula, the rage of Seth is directed against the *akhu* disease ! The fury of Seth is directed against you ! The rage of the tempest as it is greedy of water from the sky, is directed against you ! Then he will end the violence, having layed his arms on you. Then you will endure what the sea did endure by his hand. »

This is to be compared with a passage of Medical Papyrus Hearst²⁵, of the beginning of the XVIIIth, before the Leiden papyrus : « Just as Seth subdued the Sea, Seth will subdue you, the Asiatic, and then you will certainly not enter the body of so born of so ». In this text, the Sea and the disease are subdued by Seth, and for the sea, the medical papyrus has « the great green », while in the Leiden's tex the neologism *ym*²⁶ is used. In another text of the XIXth dynasty, the magician stresses the efficacy of the magical formulas which are compared with the voice of Seth on the sea²⁷.

The accultured myth of the struggle between Baal and the Sea, becomes the struggle of Seth against the disease²⁸. Seth, as a god of thunderstorm, did correspond with an aspect of the god Baal, and Seth-Baal did play an important role in the royal ideology of the New Kingdom. So this acculturation of asiatics features did rely on a forehand theme in egyptian mythology. Not only Seth was a god who was able to create or to apease a thunderstorm, but also in egyptian culture an old mythological theme describes the « avidity » of water. In the Teaching of Merikare²⁹, the creator's merits are praised : « Men, god's cattle, are well provided ; he created sky and earth for them ; he repressed water's avidity, he created air so that their noses could live. » Here the god Re assumes the function of Seth³⁰. This is not to surprise us, since precisely the positive aspect of Seth as a fighter, make him able to protect the sun god in his

²³ See T. Schneider, « Foreign Egypt : Egyptology and the Concept of cultural appropriation », *ÄgLev* XIII, 2003, p. 160-161 and references.

²⁴ See note 24.

²⁵ P. Hearst 11, 1 3-14.

²⁶ See G. Posener, « La légende égyptienne de la mer insatiable », *AIPHO* 13, 1953, p. 469.

²⁷ Medical papyrus of Berlin 21, 2-3. The voice of Seth is an image for the thunderstorm.

²⁸ P. Leiden I 343 + I 345, R° IV, 9 – V, 2. This passage was studied by P. Collombert and L. Coulon, « Les dieux contre la mer », *BIFAO* 100, 2000, p. 207 and note 33.

²⁹ P. Ermitage 116 A R°, 130-132.

³⁰ See G. Posener, art. cit., p. 471 and followings with references.

boat and to repel Apopis who symbolise the unorganised chaos' forces. This is a very old and important mythological theme ; the Nun as primordial ocean has a double aspect, it is a place where the gods and the deads regenerate themselves, but being unorganised it is also dangerous for the organised world and the god must fight constantly against its perpetual agressions : « Cette convoitise, cette avidité, fureur résiduelle de l'Océan Primordial, est vaincue chaque matin dans la personne du serpent ; elle est maintenue à la périphérie du monde par l'action bénéfique du soleil³¹. »

The question is : how far is there a borrowing ? Could the story of the fight against the water be purely egyptian as G. Posener supposed ? The answer is complicated. According to T. Schneider, the general trend of the New Kingdom is an opening to foreign influences³². But for A. Caquot, who was a good specialist of western semitic culture, there is a discrepancy between the themes of the semitic culture and what is actually attested in the egyptian culture³³. This fact would lessen the part of borrowings, also G. Posener and A. Roccati minimize the influence of semitic culture, for them the influence is indirect and the produce of a free adaptation by the Egyptians. For A. Roccati the legend of Seth and Anat, which origin lie in the eastern Delta, is an egyptian product which was influenced by the multicultural culture of the ramesside period and the exotics themes were freely adapted by cultivated Egyptians³⁴. In this framework, the borrowing of mythological themes is assumed during the New Kingdom, only if it does fit with a beforehand theme in the egyptian culture. This point seems to be confirmed by what T. Bardinnet explains about the medical texts and the relation between semitic diseases and egyptian diseases : « Il n'y a jamais de véritable correspondance entre les nosologies médicales et, surtout, les contextes magiques ne sont pas superposables³⁵. »

Nevertheless, it does not exclude the fact that the two diseases (*akhou* and *samana* for example), must have something in common. The borrowing does not imply adequacy, but there must be something in common. A certain « cultural adequation » is a necessary requisite which allow the borrowing. For example, a foreign god is only assumed if he corresponds to an aspect of an egyptian god, this aspect may in turn become an independent divinity. This problematic seems to differ from the Late Period's one, when the assimilation between egyptian gods and greek gods led to the creation of new gods with their specific

³¹ D. and C. F. Meeks, « La vie quotidienne des dieux égyptiens », Hachette 1995, p. 28.

³² See T. Schneider, art. cit., p. 161.

³³ A. Caquot, *Problèmes d'histoire religieuse* in : *La Siria nel tardo Bronzo* p. 64, quoted by T. Bardinnet, RdE 39, 1988, p. 13 noter 15.

³⁴ A. Roccati, « Une légende égyptienne d'Anat », RdE 24, 1972, p. 151.

characteristics. The degree of acculturation seems greater in the Leiden papyrus of the ramesside period than in the Medical papyrus and finally the Astarte's papyrus might reveal a still greater level of acculturation although founded on egyptian features. So in fact, we have an evolution towards a greater acculturation even if it was made possible by the beforehand presence of egyptian mythological themes. And the more we proceed in time, the less the egyptian reference appears, this movement must be appreciated in correlation with the ramesside infatuation for semitic culture. The replacement of the term « great green », by the semitic terms like « *ym* » for the sea, or the semitic word for armour³⁶, do testify of this cultural process which display of a real opening to foreign cultures as stated by T. Schneider, On the contrary, during the Third Intermediate Period, the situation of the foreigner in the egyptian culture seems to reveal a drastic change. The Assyrians' invasions have been considered as a turning point, which reflect itself « in the worship and execration of Seth »³⁷. This invasion preluded to waves of invaders till the end of egyptian civilisation and they affected deeply the country creating a paranoiac feeling of insecurity, this was also the background which allow the development of an apocalyptic literature³⁸ in which the invasions were considered as the expression of a divine punishment. Here also, it seems necessary to distinguish between two levels : the official level of priestly ideology and reality. If we consider for example the persians invasions, there are in the Demotic Chronicle some features clearly hostiles to persians ; the persian ruler is qualified of « ennemy », and the term for foreigner is negatively connoted. But in the same time, an important part of the demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden was written for the persian king Darios³⁹, this interpenetration of cultures seem to be confirmed by a funerary stela discovered in Saqqara (1994), belonging to a man born from a persian father and an egyptian mother, in which an

³⁵ T. Bardinnet, « Remarques sur les maladies de peau », RdE 39, 1988, p. 13.

³⁶ « tryn », see also P. Collombert, L. Coulon, art. cit., BIFAO 100, 2000, p. 80-82.

³⁷ H. Te Velde, Seth, p. 145 and note 1. The « diabolisation » of Seth increase with invasions, see also R. Meyer, « Collective Guilt and National Suffering », in J. Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Transformations of the inner Self in ancient Religions*, Brill 1999, p. 246. Also new kind of names appear with an imprecatory function, perhaps against foreigners, see M. Guentch-Olgoueff, « Noms propres imprécatoires », BIFAO 40, 1941, p. 133.

³⁸ See : *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism (Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979). More particularly the communications of J. Assmann, J. Bergman and also of J. Gwyn Griffiths and the « Prediction of the Lamb », p. 285 which relates catastrophics events in connection with the Assyrian conquest.

³⁹ See G. L. Griffiths and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, Oxford 1921, p. 86-87 and note of line 26 = col. XII, 26. Darius was reputed to be a magician, see Porphyry, *De Abst.*, IV, 16. It's not impossible also that in fact the magical papyrus of London and Leyden was in fact, at least partly, a traduction from greek.

egyptian scene alternate with a persian one⁴⁰. This flexibility is characteristic of Persian Empire, which was far less closed to Achemenids influences as what affirms traditionnal historiography or some egyptologists : « Le problème n'est donc plus de se demander si la création et le fonctionnement de l'empire ont eu des effets sur les pays et les populations. Il est de comprendre comment les innovations impériales se sont greffées sur les traditions locales⁴¹. » This new approche of the period is confirmed by recent studies, for example an important article of Janet H. Johnson shows that according to their fluidity ethnical considerations were of little importance in Persian Egypt.

Some opposing arguments developed by J. Yoyotte in a communcation⁴² reveal to be quite weak. For exemple, it is not certain that Seth received the nickname of « Median » since the word could also mean the « Medja⁴³ », and a famous representation of Seth on a magical stela from Hanovre⁴⁴ is not obviously directed against the great Persian king, this is only a free interpretation. The allusion might be more general as in the Demotic Chronicle, the allusion to the « great god », supposed to be Alexander the Great. Both allusions could refer to general enemy as in the apocalyptic literature, also its origin lie in historical events, these are treated in a general way according to a conception of history, and the representation of Seth could be emblematic or symbolic⁴⁵. Even the famous execration of Seth shows its limits, since if well attested in the valley and above all in the theban area, it's not at all the case in the Oasis which are a traditionnal places of worship for the god Seth, the positive representation of Seth in the Hibis temple is famous and this positive character of the god survived in magical texts of imperial period⁴⁶. As a confirmation of this interpenetration, we may underline the discovery in the Wadi Hammammat of a magical formula against scorpions written in archaic demotic and in aramaic, which implies to masterise both writings⁴⁷. This use of aramaic can be compared with the use of foreign languages in magical texts of the New Kingdom, and in the same way as there was a special consideration for Nubia, there may be in this period also a

⁴⁰ See I. Mathieson, E. Bettles, S. Davies, H.S. Smith, « A stela of the Persian period from Saqqara », *JEA* 81, 1995, p. 23-41, and P. Briant, « Inscriptions multilingues d'époque achéménide », in D. Valbelle and J. Leclant (ed.), *Le décret de Memphis*, Colloque de la Fondation Singer-Polignac, Paris 1999, p. 101-105.

⁴¹ P. Briant, art. cit., p. 1131. This is confirmed also by the excavations of Ayn-Manawir in Khargah's Oasis.

⁴² J. Yoyotte, « L'Égypte ancienne et les origines de l'antijudaïsme », *Bulletin de la Société Ernest Renan* 11, 1962, p. 140.

⁴³ See D. Kurth, « Über Horus, Isis und Osiris », in *Fs. Kakosy, StudAeg XIV*, Budapest, 1992, p. 374 and note 12, also D. Meeks, « Dictionnaire et lexicographie », *BiOr* LVI 1999, col. 581 : *mdy* « Seth », with ref.

⁴⁴ On this stela see also Y. Koenig, *Magie et magiciens*, Pygmalion 1994, p. 129-130, with references.

⁴⁵ See note ... Also compare with : J.-P. Mahé, *Hermès en Haute Égypte II*, BCNH 7, Québec 1982, p. 70 and followings

⁴⁶ See D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, Princeton 1998, p. 112-115.

⁴⁷ G. Vittman, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, *Kulturgeschichte der Antike Welt* 97, Phillip von Zabern 2003, p. 119 and note 97 seq. And R. Steiner, *JNES* 60, 2001, p. 259 sq.

special consideration for aramaic writing, since G. Vittmann point out the existence in nowadays Egypt of a « Syrian language », which is not considered to be a human language, but the language of demons⁴⁸.

But it is sure that a ritual to overthrow Seth and his confederates, known by a papyrus of the XXXth dynasty⁴⁹, relates how the god once expelled by the sun god from Asia, came back to Egypt to destroy its temples and kill the sacred animals :« L'analogie avec les Perses est patente » as J. Yoyotte said. This is a good example of a text strongly connoted ideologically as the temples and their priests could produce, the text apply clearly to the second persian invasion and not to the first⁵⁰. This fact is attested by others texts of same priestly origin which underline the fact that foreigners were not pures, because they did not respect egyptians taboos. This leit-motiv is attested also in Herodot's description of Egypt. Also the occupation of the country by foreigners troops might contribute to develop an hostile feeling for foreigners. All this induced a « Verschärfung der kulturellen Grenzen ⁵¹» in the Late Period.

So, even if the hostility againt the Persians is far less important than what has been said, there is a clear evolution and even a rupture since the second Persian invasion. This rupture, nevertheless is consistent with the egyptian's conception of the foreigner. As we have seen, the foreigner is an ennemy only if he acts so, but with the invasions of invaders clearly felt as non egyptians there is an open revolt against the order of the gods, and Seth became the « prototype et patron des conquérants étrangers » et « l'Asiatique, impur par excellence, se verra donc interdire l'accès des temples de façon expresse. Parce que la pureté était ressentie comme essentielle à la bonne marche du monde, l'impur aura fini par devenir synonyme de non-égyptien, ou même d'anti-égyptien. » Of course the purity of the Egyptians was ritual, this fact corresponds with what M. Weber named « magical ascensis⁵² ». This hostility against the foreigner which may have been exasperated by the permanent presence of foreign troops in Egypt⁵³, did concern of course also the foreign ruler, this reactivated an old egyptian literay

⁴⁸ G. Vittmann, op. cit., p. 246 and note 49 also K. Henschel, *Geister Magier une Muslime*, München 1997, 178 sq.

⁴⁹ Urk. VI = S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts* (2), Leipzig 1939.

⁵⁰ This is confirmed by the favorable attitude of the Egyptians for Alexander considered as a liberator of the Persian occupation, see J. Gwyn Griffiths, « Apocalyptic in the Hellenic Era », in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Tübingen 1989, p. 279.

⁵¹ Expression of J. Assmann, *Ägypten. Eine Sinnesgeschichte*. Darmstadt 1996, p. 435.

⁵² See R. Meyer, « Magical Ascensis and Moral Purity in Ancient Egypt » in J. Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*, Brill 1999, p. 51 and notes 28-29. That is a formal ascensis accomplished for magical purposes.

⁵³ See G. Vittmann, op. cit., p. 245 : « Bis zu einem gewissen Grade dürfte die Präsenz fremder Söldner an den heiligen Stätten des Landes ähnliche Gefühle ausgelöst haben wie in unserer Zeit die Stationierung amerikanischer Soldaten in Saudi-Arabien une im Irak bei den Muslimen... »

theme⁵⁴ : the « messianic » expectation of the arrival of an egyptian king who will reestablish order, purity and temples. The purity became an obsession against the supposed impurity of the foreigners, and another religious theme will be stirred : the skin diseases. The fact that skin diseases were often considered to be connected with foreigners and more particularly with Asiatics is traditional, since skin diseases are felt as expressing a ritual uncleanness caused by the anger of the gods or by the execration of a magician⁵⁵. They are mentioned in a group of magical texts of the Ramesside and Third Intermediate Period⁵⁶, in which by the expression « canaanite disease » the lepra is probably meant, and in fact it began to spread into Egypt coming from western semitic area. In the Graeco Roman period an Esna's text published by Sauneron reveals that the entrance of temples of the area was forbidden to those who were afflicted by it : « Ne laisse pénétrer au temple aucun homme qui soit dans l'état d'un homme qui est sous l'influence de la colère (*baou*), d'un mort, ou d'un dieu, ou sous l'influence d'un sort (*hemet-sa*)⁵⁷. » But these words are determined by the pustule, and should probably refer to people sufferings of skins diseases which were considered to be the expressions of hidden influences.

In this context, Nubia did preserve a privileged status on account of the fact that this country was considered to be the birthplace of Amon as in the Brooklyn's magical papyrus which date can be situated between the saite and the ptolemaic period. In the same text, there are several mentions of a dangerous being which has a semitic name, still in use nowadays : « *Khenzirah* », which means the « sow »⁵⁸. Some others magical texts establish a relation between Osiris and Pnoub in Nubia (Doukki Gel)⁵⁹.

This difference between the semitic world and Nubia is important, although there is a mention of the « Napata's rebels » in an execration text from Edfu, this is probably an allusion to events which were linked with the end of the XXVth dynasty and the beginning of the

⁵⁴ See among others, J. Assmann, « Königsdogma und Heilserwartung », in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Tübingen 1989, p. 357 sq.

⁵⁵ See T. Bardinet, « Remarques sur les maladies de la peau », *RdE* 39, 1988, p. 3-36.

⁵⁶ Published by I. E. S. Edwards, HPBM 4th series, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the New Kingdom*, 1960, for example pl. I V^o, 40-41 (= vol I, p. 10 and 11).

⁵⁷ See S. Sauneron, « Les Possédés », *BIFAO* 60, 1960, p. 111-115

⁵⁸ On this question, see the publication of S. Sauneron quoted the following note, p. 7-9

⁵⁹ P. Brooklyn 47. 218. 156, 5,5 = S. Sauneron, *Le papyrus magique illustré de Brooklyn*, 1970, p. 24 and note (mm) p. 25.

XXVIth⁶⁰. A magical demotic text from the roman period which relates the story of Setne, testify that in this period Nubia had still the reputation of a country of magic and magicians⁶¹. Of course, execration rituals till occupied a great part of the ritual activity of the temples and while reading the rituals of this period « on en retire l'impression que les prêtres passaient une partie de leur temps à cracher sur des poupées figurant l'ennemi de leur dieu et à les fouler du pied gauche⁶² ». This activity is linked with a basic preoccupation of the Egyptians of this period : to protect the country against invaders, since for them there is an ontological relation between political disorder and mythological conflict ; this clearly expressed in the Jumilhac papyrus⁶³ : « Si on néglige toutes les cérémonies d'Osiris en leur temps dans le nome, ainsi que toutes les fêtes du calendrier civil, alors le pays sera privé de ses lois...Si on ne décapite pas l'ennemi qu'on a devant soi..., suivant toutes les prescriptions du rituel, les habitants du désert se révolteront contre l'Égypte... » The structure of this passage was studied by P. Derchain who showed its relationships with apocalyptic literature and the prediction of the hermetic Asclepius.

In fact, in perturbing the rites which were performed in the temples, the invasions threatened the very existence of the world, since the gods need the rites to exist, the lack of rites in a way « kill » the gods who are unable to actualise themselves and are reduced to their virtuality⁶⁴. This also explain why, during the Late Period, period of invasions, the priest past a great of their time to perform execrations rituals to maintain the very survival of the country and show a compulsive need of purity to lessen their anxiety. Robert Meyer who studied these texts is right in observing that this purity was correlated with the fact that Egypt was considered as the « templum totius mundi », the temple of the whole world, expression which we meet in the hermetic texts⁶⁵. Neglecting the cultual acts might endanger the country, weaken the gods and favorise the invasions. For example in the Nectanebo's dream, some fragments of which were recently found in demotic script, the king declares : « As I did neglect my (cultual) work, Egypt will be neglected by the gods...The (Persians) enemies will conquer the country⁶⁶. »

⁶⁰ Commentary to the ritual consisting in trampling fishes (= Edfu V, 134, 30-33) and P. Vernus, GM 29, 145 sq. and Y. Koenig, « La Nubie dans les textes magiques », RdE 38, 1987, p. 109 and note 34.

⁶¹ Setne II and recently the translation of Robert K. Ritner in W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, AUC 2003, p. 470 sq.

⁶² G. Posener, « À propos de la pluie miraculeuse », Revue de Philologie XXV, 1951, p. 166 and note 7.

⁶³ P. Jumhilac XVIII, 5-11 = J. Vandier, *Le papyrus Jumilhac*, without date, p. 130.

⁶⁴ See the analysis of D. Meeks, « la notion de 'dieu' », RHR CCV, 1988, p. 438-439 and notes 49-50.

⁶⁵ See R. Meyer, « Magical Asceticism and Moral Purity in Ancient Egypt », in J. Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*, Brill 1999, p. 55.

⁶⁶ See L. Koenen, *The Dream of Nektanebos*, BASP 22, 1985, p. 132, with the analysis. According to this text the reestablishment of the country will be the accomplishment of Alexander, considered to be Nectanebo's son.

The Egyptian conception is consistent; and if now the foreigners are considered to be enemies, the reason of this is simple: the invaders by opposing themselves to the rule of the Egyptian King, acted as rebels to the authority and introduced disorder and impurity in the country, from the point of view of the Egyptians priests of course. The « story of Osarsiph », which was studied by T. Schneider⁶⁷ is relevant of this evolution, the core of the story refers to the Hyksos invasion, around this core some later additions and modifications were added and it is obvious that the theme of the impurity of foreigners did play an important role during the constitution of the story. So it's very naturally that, for historical reasons, the theme of the impurity of the foreigners did apply to the Jewish community of Alexandria⁶⁸. The introduction of the hypothesis of a collective unconscious through « repressed traumatic memories⁶⁹ », as does J. Assmann is useless. This impurity of the foreigners is still present in Herodotus's description when he tells us that the Egyptians considered the foreigners as impure, because they sacrificed and ate sacred animals « that is why, no Egyptian or Egyptian woman would kiss a Greek on his mouth, nor use a Greek's knife nor his spits nor his cauldron, nor eat the flesh of a steer free from signs⁷⁰, if it has been cut by a Greek knife⁷¹. » And this idea is still present in the Asclepius « O Egypt, Egypt, nothing will be left of your cults only fables and your children later will not believe them: nothing will survive except words engraved on stones which will relate your pious achievements. The Scythian, or the Indian, or the like, that is to say a barbarian neighbour will settle into Egypt⁷². »

If this conception of the impure foreigner is broadly attested during the Late Period, with the spreading of christianism the new converted will express the opposite conception. They will strongly reject their previous beliefs and consider them as demoniacs. This new conception of Egyptian culture will prevail in Christian Egypt, characterised by its lavish demonology. As D. Frankfurter stated: « When local cultures begin to understand themselves within a supralocal universe (such as Hellenism offered), they often find more value in gods capable of

⁶⁷ See T. Schneider, *Ausländer in ägypten während des Mittleren Reiches und der Hyksoszeit I*, Die ausländischen Könige, Ägypten und Altes Testament 42, 1998, p. 76-98: II, 3 Das Ende des 15. Dynastie – Eine Interpretation der Osaraphis-Erzählung.

⁶⁸ On this question see J. Yoyotte, « L'Égypte ancienne et les origines de l'antijudaïsme », Bulletin de la Société Ernest Renan 11, 1962, p. 133-43. For the historical events, that is the struggle between Ptolemy VI Philometor who did rely on Judean contingents and Ptolemy II Evergetos and then the anti-Jewish measures of Caligula, the pogroms which will follow and the revolt of the Jews of Alexandria (38-41), and then the events of the years 66-70; the second Alexandrian pogrom, the Zealots' insurrections and the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem.

⁶⁹ J. Assmann, *Moïse l'égyptien*, Aubier 2001. For example when he supposes the existency of repressed memories of a real pest at the end of the Amarnian period.

⁷⁰ That is the signs which characterise a sacred animal.

⁷¹ Hist. II, 41

⁷² Asclepius § 24.

embracing that larger cosmos and correspondingly less value and more threat from the gods and spirits of the local environment⁷³. »

⁷³ David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, Princeton 1998, p. 275 and note 28