MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE, DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE

BULLETIN
DE L'INSTITUT FRANÇAIS
D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ORIENTALE

en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne

BIFAO 68 (1969), p. 47-51

Dia' Abou-Ghazi

The First Appearance of Re' and his Continuous Being as Depicted in the Pyramid Texts.

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THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF RE^{c} AND HIS CONTINUOUS BEING AS DEPICTED IN THE PYRAMID TEXTS

BY

DIA' ABOU-GHAZI

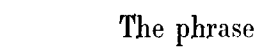
Several Pyramid texts dealt with the origin of Re^{c}. I prefer to begin with text 542, as it treats his first appearance on earth.

It says : —

542 *a* : To, say : *N*- purified himself upon that appearing (mound) of the earth, (*ḫ*^{c})[1] on which Re^{c} purified himself.

542 *b* : He placed *hi'b*[2] stand and he set a ladder.

542 *c* : Those who are in heaven[3], they will take the arm of *N*.

The phrase of  in 542 *a* denotes that the earth was the place on which this primordial hill appeared. The purification on it refers to being surrounded by water[4] i.e. the water of Nun. Thus we can consider this *ḫ*^{c} as an insel that merged up from water. In 542 *b-c* the text mentions the means of ascending to sky and the ascendance of the king. This action, I think is in parallelism to what Re^{c} has performed after his first appearance. Thus we can state that the first appearance of Re^{c} was on an isle that appeared in the primordial ocean on which the god was purified and took his way to the sky.

[1] In the case of Atum it is called *K*; (cf. 1652 *a*).

[2] Hib () var.  here refers to erecting a pedestal for the stairs as a mean for ascending the sky (cf. Sethe, *Kommentar,* III, 542 *b* and Mercer, *Pyramid texts,* II, 542 *b*).

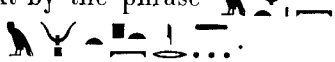
[3] The sky is called here  (cf. Sethe, *Komm.,* III, 542 *c* and Mercer, *Pyramid texts,* II, 542 *c*).

[4] Sethe, *ibid.,* 542 *a;* Mercer, *ibid.,* II, 542 *a* (p. 259-260).

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Another text 854 *c-d* refers to Re^{c} as taking his place in sky after its separation from earth :

854 *c* : Who took his place, as the sky was separated (from the earth), at the place where thy heart was satisfied.
854 *d* : That thou mayest stride over the sky according to thy stride.

This separation is referred to in this text by the phrase  [1]. But mentioned in its full expression in 1208 *c* .

The place in which his heart is satisfied refers here to the east. The next line expresses the wish of the eternal shining of the god.

Then after taking his abode in the sky what kind of relation could be between this single god and the sky as divinity and place necessary for his being, even the theatre of his shining power. The Egyptian mind expressed this in many ways that go round one single idea : The sky could be nothing but the mother of the god which he created and from her he draws his continuous being.

This was expressed simply in line 1479 *c* :
Father of *N*-Re^{c} take this king with thee, for life [2], to thy mother Nut.
Here Nut is the mother of the god, in her domain life is searched.

Another line (1688 *b*) says, in speaking to the king :
For thou art indeed Re^{c}, who comes forth from Nut who gives birth to Re^{c} daily [3].

This birth was explained in two ways :
Nut swallows [4] him at night and gives him birth in the morning (1417 *b*). Such an idea was depicted afterwards in the Oseiron at Abydos [5].

[1] Sethe, *op. cit.,* IV/2, 854 *c;* Mercer, *op. cit.,* II, 854 *c* (p. 436). Speleers considers that this means that the sun-god has taken his place in { *devant le* / *en front du* } *Ciel* (traduction, 854). But this seems to be against the meaning which the text aimed to.

[2]  in order to live see Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar,* § 305. It can be also as translated by Mercer «for Life» (*Pyramid texts,* III, 1479 *c*).

[3] Cf. 1835 *c.*

[4] Piankoff, *JEA,* XX, 1934, p. 58; Mercer, *op. cit.,* III, 1417 *b.*

[5] Frankfort, *The cenotaph of Seti I,* pl. 81, this is represented in a similar way in the temple of Dendara. Chassinat, *Temple de Dendara,* IV, pl. CCCXV; Daumas, *ASAE,* LI, p. 375-378.

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Line 990 *a* reveals the second way, it says :

Reᶜ, impregnate the body of Nut with the divine seed (the seed of the spirit) [1] which is in her».

Here Reᶜ is the one who causes birth and in the same time the new-born as refers  «which is in her» a phrase that reveals the causes of the daily birth of the sun or in another way refers to the eternal existence of Reᶜ in Nut.

Some [2] saw in the filiation of Reᶜ to Nut contradiction to the theology of Heliopolis where Nut in the ennead is a grand-daughter to the chief-god and not his mother. But if we put in consideration that in the Pyramid texts, Atum was the head of the ennead of Heliopolis and never it was Reᶜ [3]: In these texts Reᶜ carried the title of the chief of the ennead, only as a matter of venerating him as a creator god [4]. But in all texts that detailed the ennead Atum was its chief-god. If we consider this we find no contradiction at all. The god Reᶜ here is independant from the ennead and the mothership of Nut came from his being always in sky [5].

The Pyramid texts mention also «the father of Reᶜ» in several texts [6] without any specification. This was considered by Sethe as Ptah [7] according to the teaching of Memphis, or Geb according to an old popular story [8]. By this explanation, Sethe and also Mercer tried to explain text 486 *c-d* as referring to the fathership of Geb to Reᶜ [9] :

486 *c*. *N*- wild-bull of the grassland comes to thee.

486 *d*. Henceforth *N*- is he who has given birth to thee and who continues to give birth to thee.

[1] Cf. also 532 *a*, 1416 *c*. Sethe, *op. cit.*, IV/3, 990 *a*, and Mercer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 501 took the «seed of the spirit» as denoting the king. The whole utterance is concerned with the ascendance of the king and this line expresses a wish to Reᶜ to be always in sky.

[2] Garnot, *Hommage aux dieux*, p. 115 ; Sethe, *Zur Altägyptischen Sage*, p. 6 ; Kees, *Götterglaube*, p. 230.

[3] §§ 1248, 1521, 1652, 1655 and cf. 2057.

[4] This is treated in detail in my thesis upon Reᶜ, p. 115 (in Arabic) and will be treated in a future article.

[5] § 1835 *c*, Kees, *ibid.*

[6] §§ 852 *a*, 854 *b*.

[7] Sethe, *Komm.*, IV, 852 *a* (p. 113). Cf. also Mercer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 434 ; Junker, *Götterlehre*, p. 34-35.

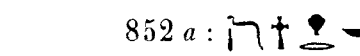
[8] Sethe, *op. cit.*, II, 486 (p. 320), *Urgeschichte*, § 71 ; Mercer, *op. cit.*, II, 486 *d* ; Piankoff, *JEA*, 20, p. 57 ; Maspero, *Études*, II, p. 218.

[9] Sethe, *Komm.*, II, 488 (p. 320) ; Mercer, *Pyramid texts*, II, 486 *d*.

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This text comes after several lines speaking about the advantages of the king. He is a true Egyptian as refers the phrase from Heliopolis, one without equal, who inherited his father Geb. — Then the text threatened any who tries to hinder the king in his adoration and ascent to Reᶜ. Then rests what could be the benefit of him to Reᶜ [1], this great able god? So he gave Unas the ability of Reᶜ in creating himself daily, through coming in the shape of a bull [2]. By this, the text assimilated the king with Reᶜ, a fact that was expressed in several different ways in the Pyramid texts and what this text meant from its beginning (482). Thus the king is playing here the part of Reᶜ not that of Geb.

In a hymn to Reᶜ in the Pyramid text «*wr*» was mentioned as Reᶜ father.

852 *a* : .

To say : Greeting to thee, primordial one, son of a primordial.

Sethe and also Mercer considered the second «*wr*» here referring to Geb or Ptah [3]. But I think that it refers to the primaevel abyss from which the sun-god came [4]. The text here meant the antiquity of the sun-god by the first «*wr*» [5] and his primordial nature by the second.

In the same way I would like to explain  in line 854 *b*. I think that it refers to Nun, and neither to Geb [6] nor to Ptah. This is sustained by the next line which refers to Reᶜ as taking his place in sky after its separation from earth [7].

What urges me to refuse the paternity of Ptah to Reᶜ is that this fatherhood meant an political aim. The priests of Ptah tried by this to make their god the origin of all divinities even Reᶜ. Such a purpose seems paradoxical in a hymn that extols Reᶜ and makes of him the first god and the creator of humanity. The same for taking «*it·f*» as referring to Geb. The fatherhood of Nun to Reᶜ in such a hymn gives it a pleasing meaning and expresses logically the mythological view to Reᶜ.

[1] A. Piankoff, *The Pyramid of Unas,* New York, 1966, p. 24.

[2] See Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods,* p. 169.

[3] Sethe, *Komm.,* IV, 852 *a* (p. 113); Mercer, II, 852 *a* (p. 434).

[4] Sethe, *Amun,* p. 74 and 119.

[5] Sethe, *Ibid.,* § 145.

[6] I think that the fathership of Geb to Reᶜ has appeared later as a consequent to the maternity of the sky to Reᶜ and to his first appearance after the separation of the earth and sky (cf. Rusch, *Die Stellung des Osiris,* p. 7).

[7] See p. 48 above.

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From this we can say that the Pyramid texts have pictured Reʿ as a single god that created himself from the primordial ocean and took his place in the sky from which he perpetuated his eternal being. The act of maternity is only an artificial explanation as a result of his existence in the sky. While that of paternity is a mere reference to his first appearance in the primordial abyss.

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