Milk
in ancient Egyptian religion

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Abstract

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This paper deals with the many uses of milk in ancient Egyptian religious rituals and imagery, as well as its use as a medical and magical agent in healing a select number of ailments.

The paper presents the evidence for milk as a means of confirming the legitimacy of the king, particularly in relationship to the symbolic suckling of the king by various goddesses. The role of milk in various festivals is described, as well as its role in the coronation.

Milk is also part of the cult of the dead, whose resurrection is associated with the milk of various goddesses. The Daily Ritual performed for Osiris on the island of Bigge in the Late Period gives milk a special role as an offering to the dead god. The imagery found on the sarcophagi of the Deir el-Bahri priestesses of Hathor from the 11th dynasty illustrates the use of milk as an appropriate offering to the dead with the imagery of the cattle being milked.

Milk, identified as that of a female deity, can be used for treating eye disease and burns, citing mythic parallels. The White Eye of Horus is associated with milk and has similar healing capacities.

Milk is used for the protection of the temple, as well as for libation, occurring also as a ritual offering in the temple.

There are also a few examples where milk is cited as a forbidden substance. In Greco-Roman times there is evidence that milk was thought to be transformed blood.

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1 Introduction

Milk is the source of life and is significant in the religious life of the Egyptians. This paper investigates the use of milk as a substance and symbol in the texts and images of ancient Egypt.

In many species lactose intolerance develops after weaning, as the need for the sugar in the milk is no longer needed. Some human populations developed a mutation that made them lactose tolerant. The earliest mutation of this type in Africa is found as far back as 6800 years ago in the Nilo-Saharan population that includes the Beja population in Sudan (Wade 2006).

The Egyptians regarded milk as a delicacy. Milk was included as an offering to the dead. This is shown by its occurrence in the offering lists as well as as an example of a grave gift of milk in the tomb of Kha at Deir el-Medina (Manniche 1989: 40). Its role as vital nourishment for desert peoples is illustrated by the passage in the literary tale Simhe in which he is given boiled milk to revive him after a journey in the desert (B27, Lichtheim 1975: 224).

1.1 Aim and method

The aim of this paper is to investigate the significance of milk in different contexts, such as temple and funerary rituals. In order to accomplish this goal a corpus of pictorial and textual references to milk has been assembled. This corpus provides the basis for establishing a pattern of usage of milk as a medium for life. The analysis of this corpus has resulted in five distinct areas in which milk is found, beginning with milk for the living (Chapter 2) and the dead (Chapter 3). Milk is used in the temples (Chapter 4) and for healing (Chapter 5). Finally milk is found as a forbidden substance (Chapter 6). The various functions of milk, as stated in the texts, are discussed under each heading. The conclusion (Chapter 7) summarizes the findings described in its section.

1.2 Previous research

There has been little research that has focused on the religious aspects of milk in Ancient Egypt. Lefebvre (1960) in “Lait de Vache et Autres Laits en Égypte” writes about the milk of various animals in Ancient Egypt, without focusing on the religious perspective. The religious aspect is taken up in discussions of specific rituals involving milk. Junker (1913) in Das Götterdekreten über das Ahaton concentrates on a Graeco-Roman ritual on the island of Bigge where daily offerings of milk to Osiris occurred. Another early study is that of Schott (1937) “Das Löschen von Fackeln in Milch” that draws attention to a ritual involving putting out torches in basins filled with milk.

The most specific studies to deal with milk as mediums of resurrection are two articles by Leclant (1951, 1958), with one treating the use of milk in the coronation ceremonies and the other milk in the Pyramid Texts as a medium of resurrection. A more general study of the religious use of milk in the Ancient Near East is that of Keel (1980) entitled Das Böckelein in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes.
The association of milk and specific goddesses is discussed in monographs such as Münster (1968: 10-14) with regards to Isis and Nephys, Pinch (1993: 173-175, 178-181, 257, 278, 293, 312-315, 318), with regards to Hathor and Billing (2002: 360, 378) when treating Nut, particularly as a goddess providing milk. All of these studies emphasize the role of these goddesses as nursing mothers.

Brunner (1964) in his Die Geburt des Göttkönigs writes about the rituals and iconography involving the birth and legitimization of the king and includes suckling as a means by which the king received divinity from the gods. Feucht (1984: 404) considers the importance of milk as a means of resurrection in ancient Egyptian religion.

The use of milk in medicine, that also incorporates mythological allusions, is discussed in works such as Leca (1971: 339) La Médecine Égyptienne au Temps des pharaons where the anthropomorphic jars, in which the milk was placed, as well as the medical use of specifically Isis's milk, is treated. These jars had been previously described by Desroches-Noblecourt (1952) in “Pots Anthropomorphes et Recettes Magico-Médicales dans L’Égypte Ancienne”.

1.3 Sources
The sources used in this paper are both textual and pictorial. The earliest written sources dating to the Old Kingdom are the Pyramid Texts. The first images illustrating the divine nature of milk come from the reigns of the 5th dynasty kings Sahure and Unas (Borchhardt 1913: Pl 18; Robins 1997: 59, Fig. 52). The latest sources cited here date from the Ptolemaic (Fig 10; Fig 19; Leitz 2001: 200; Bell 1985: 272), and the Roman periods (Parlasca 1966 82, 157-158 Tafel 34, 2; Berlin Museum Äg. Inv. 13277).

The analysis is not diachronic, but thematic. Pictorial material, with textual commentaries, depicting rituals are of importance in the corpus, particularly for Section 2 that treats the significance of milk in ritual for the living. Section 3, which deals with the funerary use of milk, relies on the Pyramid Texts from the Old Kingdom, the Coffin Texts from the Middle Kingdom, as well as on texts and images from temples and tombs.

The medical text corpus (pBerlin 3027, pEbers 368, 384, 408, 500, pLondon 10059, pEdwin Smith), is the primary source for the discussion of the mytho-medicinal use of milk. Some magical texts have also been used, such as the Contendings of Horus and Seth, Papyrus Jumilac and the Pyramid Texts (PT 406).

1.4 Terminology
The basic word for milk is hr.t. It is easily identifiable by the use of the small milk jar ḫ as determinative that is found as W20 in Gardiner's Sign List (Gardiner 1957: 530). Faulkner (1999: 28) cites three variant writings ḫ .serialization (PT §32); ḫ .serialization (Urk. IV 188: 11) and ḫ .serialization (Siuhe B27). A Graeco-Roman form is written with one -t  serialization (Wb 1, 117). The term ḫ, written distinctively with ḫ and ḫ signs with the phonetic value wkh ("dominion", cf. Faulkner 1999: 54), with the meaning milk or cream is also found (serialization serialization) cf. Faulkner 1999:7; Wb 1: 27).

Other terms used for milk are descriptive. Faulkner (1999: 177) cites serialization serialization has, as a
word for milk found in CT I, 168), but in other sources with the meaning mucus and dough. A reference to the cow goddess is found in the term kərs kərs "the white thing of Hesat" (Faulkner 1999: 177 citing the MK inscription of Wepwawet, the Elder, Sethe 1924: 73, l. 15).

Ptolemaic terms for milk included nrb wss, "life and dominion" (Wb I: 204), reflecting the desired result of a milk offering, and bmr "sweet" (Wb I: 463), describing its taste.

The milk jar was used as a determinative for words meaning milk. There are three terms for this object. The most common is mhr nrb nrb nrb (Faulkner 1999: 113, cf. Wb II: 105), found in MK and NK texts. An earlier term nrb (Faulkner 1999: 111). There is also a verb mhr, with the meaning "to milk" (a cow), or "to suckle" (Wb II, 115), primarily documented for the Ptolemaic period.

Another area of meaning is found in words that refer to a woman that suckles. One of these terms, mmt (masculine mnr) may also be applied to a man who is responsible for the upbringing of a child.

ntr nurse (Faulkner 1999: 6; Wb I, 23)

mnr a nurse (Faulkner 1999: 108; Wb II: 78)

rmt (wet)-nurse (Faulkner 1999: 150; Wb II, 436-437).

snk – nurse (Faulkner 1999: 234; Wb IV, 174-175)

The verbs ntr mnr and nrb mnr are "to nurse", as well as the verbs ntr mnr "to bring up" (Faulkner 1999: 6, 108, 150; Wb I, 23, II 77 and II, 436) and nrb mnr (Faulkner 1999: 234; Wb IV, 174-175) also mean to suck and suckle and are related to these terms. There is also the verb ntr mnr "to suckle" (Faulkner 1999: 273; Wb IV:564-565). The terms for breast are ntr ntr bnty (Faulkner 1999: 83; Wb I, 457) and ntr bnty (Faulkner 1999: 110, Wb II, 92). Terms with the meaning "to milk" (a cow) include ntr mhr (Wb II, 115) clearly related to the word for milk jar, its shortened form ntr (Faulkner 1999: 159; Wb II, 498), as well as the related terms ntr snk (Faulkner 1999: 244; Wb IV, 270) and ntr snk (Wb IV, 295).

Certain deities also have a special relationship to milk, indicated by their name. The god and goddess ntr ntr and ntr ntr are often referred to simply as milk deities (Faulkner 1999: 7; Wb I, 26). The name of the goddess ntr means simply "she who nurses".

Rntr, possibly the same goddess given an alternative name, is, like Rntr, depicted as a cobra with breasts. She was also the protector of the harvest.
2 Milk for the Living

Images of goddesses nursing a child on religious monuments are restricted to the depiction of the king, mostly as a child, and later to the God’s Wife of Amun. These images represent the child as the divine heir and legitimize the king in that role. Milk also serves to rejuvenate the king during festivals such as the Sed and Opet. The scene in which the God’s Wife of Amun is nursed is restricted to coronation scenes and refers to the legitimization of her title.

The goddesses that give milk to the king during coronation and rejuvenation festival scenes are in most cases the same goddesses that give milk to the deceased in the afterlife. Goddesses which most often appear giving milk to the king are Hathor, Isis, Nekhbet, Nut and Wadjet.

2.1 Milk for the king

The milk of the goddess was given to the king both in life and death. Therefore, the two stages can be seen as parallel and sometimes objects or images that depict suckling could have served both in the temple cult and in a funerary context.

Suckling establishes a connection between the ruler and the gods: “The child is to be raised by the deities: Amon immediately sets it on his lap and recognizes his offspring, divine nurses suckle the child, and deities bestow blessings on it” (Assmann 2001: 117).

The scene of the suckling king occurs from the Old Kingdom and forwards. Two of the earliest images of the suckling king are from the 5th dynasty. The funerary temple of Sahure at Abusir (Borchardt 1913: PI 18), shows the king being suckled by Nekhbet, and a fragmentary piece from Unis’s pyramid temple depicts the king suckled by an unidentified goddess (Robins 1997: 59, Fig. 52).

Nekhbet, together with Wadjet, act as nurses for the infant king as the goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt, and provide the milk for the king in his legitimization as the ruler of the land (cf. chapter 2.1.1.1). The intimacy between the goddess and the infant king can be seen in various scenes on temple walls and in texts.

This motif is repeated throughout Egyptian history. For example, almost 1100 years later, in Ramses II’s temple at Beit el-Wali, two reliefs show him being suckled by two different goddesses. In the sanctuary of the temple, on the north wall, the goddess Isis suckles the king (Breasted 1905-07: Beit El-Wali, P 2731) Although shown as an adult, he is shorter than the goddess, indicating both subordination and his status as a symbolic child. He wears his emblems and crown, which indicates his legitimacy. The second relief (Breasted 1905-07: Beit El-Wali, P 2732), also on the north wall on the sanctuary, shows the goddess Amakis, the patron goddess of the first cataract, in the same scene although oriented in reverse to that on the opposing wall.

Through the suckling of the goddess, the king received power, victory and rejuvenation, and even though he is depicted as a child, he is already established as a ruler: "Aussi, dans la scène de l'allaitement, le roi, bien que représenté en enfant, est-il généralement à la main le sceptre hka, emblème de la domination, ou parfois une massue. Sa tête est partie de la couronne
bleue, la ḫpršt" (Leclant 1958:141).

The divine personification of milk is called Bt (cf. above). Iat is mentioned only briefly in the Pyramid Texts where she is referred to as the wet nurse of the king (ḫnum PT §131d). The male form of the milk deity, similar to ḫnty (cf. Wh I, 26), also appears in Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahri (Naville 1896: Pl. LII) among the king’s birth-scenes. A god presents what seem to be the king and her ka, while Iat stands behind them, identified by a milk jar ḫ on his head.

2.1.1 Milk for the suckling child

The image of the king as child is a fairly common one. Among the variations of these nursing-scenes, one represents the king as an adult, standing next to the goddess, commonly with a height that reaches the goddess’s chest (see Figs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 16 and 19) This representation was symbolical and did not represent an actual act of breast feeding (Leclant 1958:136), but rather an idealized image of the king’s bond with the world of gods, represented by divine nourishment. He can also be represented as a child, sometimes naked, sitting in the lap of the goddess (See Fig. 17; Bosse-Griffith 1973: Fig.1), or bending down, suckling from the udders of a cow-goddess (See Figs 13 and 14).

The life-giving nature of the milk is clearly expressed on a relief in the Dendera chapel of Mentuhotep II where Hathor utters:

reru[s] tw m ʾnh hrw nb

(Cairo Museum JE 46068, PM V1: 106, Habachi 1963: 25)

The chapel was built as a ka chapel, for the cult of the king (Habachi 1963: 21). The nursing of the ka together with the king can also be found in other sources like Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahri where the depiction of her divine birth and suckling is shown (Naville 1896: Pl. LIII). Two Hesats, depicted with cow heads, suckle her together with her ka in front of queen Ahmose (Breasted II 1906: 85). Under this are a series of repetitious scenes depicting the nursing of Hatshepsut and her ka. Twelve of the king’s ka’s stand beside them, according to Breasted (1906: 85), they have already been nursed by the goddess. Scenes of the coronation follow the birth scenes. Breasted notes that the coronation scenes are “in uninterrupted continuation of the birth scenes” (1906: 87), which indicates that the same or very similar images of the king nursing was used on more than one occasion and had more than one symbolic purpose. A scene from the temple of Luxor also provides a very similar image. Here it is a scene of Amenhotep III (Brunner 1964: Taf. 12). The similarity to that in Hatshepsut’s temple makes it likely that it was copied from her temple. Two goddesses sit and nurse the king, as in the Hatshepsut scene, the difference is that in Hatshepsut’s case the goddesses have cow-heads, while in the scenes from Amenhotep III’s sequence the goddesses have human heads.

Images from the temple of Seti I at Abydos show several goddesses suckling the king Ramses II (PM VI: 5; Mariette 1869: Pl. 25), one of the images shows the king being suckled four times by Hathor and then held by Isis (Fig. 1). Another image from the same temple (PM VI: 9) shows a goddess suckling the king (Fig. 2). She is sitting on a throne and the king is
standing in front of her. Behind him stands his ka (cf. below 2.1.3).

2.1.1.1 Milk for legitimization of the king

The suckling of the king was a regular feature on the monuments of ancient Egypt: "On practically every Ancient Egyptian monument, this motherly function is raised to divine levels: young princes assert their descent from gods by depicting themselves as being suckled by goddesses" (Grivetti 1977: 760).

Through the suckling, the goddesses acknowledge the king as ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt (Heleek 1961: 131; Robins 1997: 89), thus receiving divine character and legitimize the king as Horus.

The step from being a prince to becoming a king is a step into a new life, and the new king goes through a transformation (Leclant 1958: 137). This, according to Leclant, is a passage to a new life and this new "birth" is therefore represented with scenes of a suckling king. Nursing goddesses acts like a "passage" to a new stage, and makes the king a part of the divine world (Leclant 1958: 142).

In a text from Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri, Amun commands that the goddesses Nekhbet, Selket, Wadjet, and the Hesat-cow shall nurse the king:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{wŠ.n [Imn]} & \text{ [n=l][n} \\
\text{mhn} & \text{ hnt=s} \\
\text{bn' ksw=s nbw} & \text{ together with all her kas} \\
\text{m 'nh wds nb dd nb} & \text{ with all life, dominion, all stability,} \\
\text{snb nb swt lb nb} & \text{ all health, all joy} \\
\text{hrt lh m râpm} & \text{ (in order) to make millions of years} \\
\text{hfr ft Hr n 'nhw nbw dî} & \text{ on the Horus-throne of all the living forever}
\end{align*}
\]

(Urk. IV, 230: 15-17)

This text is of interest both because it identifies the divine nurses of the king and because the command to suckle is given by Amun, thus emphasizing the suckling of the king as a sign of her legitimization.

Hathor is one of the goddesses most frequently found in the role of nurse, both in human form and as a cow. She is repeatedly depicted as the nurse of Hatshepsut in this king's Hathor chapel at Deir el-Bahri.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sît=f} & \text{ nt hfr=f ([Mst 'r K kr'R])} \\
\text{Hfr} & \text{[r]=l nt g'm} \\
\text{lnk mwr=f bnt lît} & \text{[My] daughter of [my] body (Maat-Ka-Ra)} \\
\text{sâk n=[f] hmt=f m mnd[f]=l} & \text{[My] Horus of white gold,} \\
\text{q=f sn n=f m 'nh wâs} & \text{I am your mother, sweet of milk.} \\
\text{hfr=f} & \text{It is with [my] breast that [I] have suckled Your} \\
\text{(Urk. IV 237, 13-237, 17)} & \text{Majesty} \\
\text{so that they (milk, here plural) may enter into you} & \text{as life and dominion.}
\end{align*}
\]

Another scene from the same temple (Naville 1901: Pl XCVI) depicts Hatshepsut with the
Hathor-cow. Hathor is standing in front of the king and is licking her hand. Hathor is described as the one who licked the infant Horus, referring to her to as a newborn calf.

$hmr=\text{i}$ hmnt $m \; \text{nh w3s}$

It is with life and dominion that [I] embrace Your Majesty

$m\; lrt\; \text{n}=\text{i} \; n \; hr \; m \; h\text{w} \; \text{n}=\text{i}n \; 3\text{ht} \; blt$

like that which [I] did for Horus within the nest of Chemnis

$snk\; n=\text{i} \; lmr=\text{i} \; m \; mn\text{jd}=\text{i}$

It is with my breast that [I] have suckled you

$m\; h\; n=\text{i} \; tm \; m \; 3\text{ht}=\text{i}$

It is with my $Aktu$ that [I] have filled (you)

$m \; mw=\text{i} \; lpm \; n \; \text{nh w3s}$

with this my water of life and dominion

(Urk. IV 239, 9-12)

Both of the citations above refer to milk as consisting of several attributes. In both texts it is referred to as $\text{nh}$ and $w3s$. The combined terms $\text{nh w3s}$ literally means life and dominion (or power). During the Graeco-Roman period it came to be used as a common epithet, referring to milk for example “$\text{mlt.n.m} \; \text{nh w3s} \; r \; \text{snjr dt (L)}$” (Leitz 2001: 200), “It is in order to rejuvenate me, that I have received the milk.” The close association of the two terms may be the result of a kind of “sign-play”. The word combination $\text{nh w3s}$ includes of the sign $\downarrow$ that could be used in spelling both the nouns $\text{lrt}$ and $\text{blt}$, both meaning milk. It is also used as a sign in the writing of name of the milk-goddess Iat (PT 89b, 131d). It is likely that the textual description of the king receiving $\text{nh}$ and $w3s$ with the divine milk was later simplified so that the milk itself was called $\text{nh w3s}$. From being a description of the attributes of the milk, the term, when describing which was given to the king, became a name for milk.

There are other texts that give descriptions of the qualities the king receives through milk. The following texts deal with the term $\text{sht}$, difficult to translate but generally referring to spiritualization (cf. Englund 1978).

$\text{d3y} \; r=\text{i} \; m \; lmr=\text{i}$

Your mouth reaches after my milk

you being alive and enduring though it (lit. “them”)

$\text{nh.t} \; t \; \text{d3.d}=\text{i} \; lm=\text{sn}$

you being $\text{akh}$ by it (lit. “them”)

$\text{sht} \; m=\text{sn}$

you being effective by it (lit. “them”)

$\text{sp.d.t} \; m=\text{sn}$

(Urk. IV, 240, 1-240, 4)

The texts emphasize the relationship between the goddess and the king, and between Horus and the king. The milk that the goddess gives is filled with divine powers (the $\text{sht}$ of the goddess) and, it further carries the property of effectiveness ($\text{sp.d}$). The function of milk in the coronation and renewal of the king stresses the idea of the king as the child Horus, suckled by a goddess whose milk endows him with divine power.

Hatshepsut’s obelisk at Karnak refers to additional nurses, the $\text{wrt nhk w}$ (Urk. IV, 361) the two great magicians, a reference to the dual crown goddesses. The coronation scene of Hatshepsut (Naville 1901: Pl. Cl) depicts the goddess Weret-Hekau stretching out a $\text{menat}$ to the king. The goddess also participates in the coronation of Horemheb where she was the one to fix the uraeus upon his head (Bell 1985: 273; Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 103).
2.1.2 Milk for the domination of the king

An offering of milk assured the king that he would succeed in battle and that his enemies would be slain before him. A scene from the ka-chapel of the 11th dynasty king Mentuhotep II (Figs 3, 4) originally at Dendera (PM VI: 106; Cairo JE 46068) depicts the king standing and suckling Hathor. She says to the king:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{tw.n=f} \ ssp[f=1] \ p\ wp\ wny[f=1] \\
&\text{bnn[f=1]} \ p\ w \\
&s\ R[m\ ntw\ htp] \ m\ 'nh\ r\ nb \\
&\text{snhr[n=1]} \ p\ w\ m\ ltt[f=1] \\
&\text{str.n[f=1]} \ lgw=kk \ hr=k
\end{align*}
\]

That I have filled your enemies is under you.

(Habachi 1963: 24, Fig. 8, here Figs 3 and 4)

The combination of the idea of suckling and military victory is also found in the private 18th dynasty tomb of Kenamun (TT 93; Fig. 5) where a scene depicts Amenhotep II sitting on the lap of his nurse, called mnu[t] wrt, "Great Nurse". The king has his feet on nine prisoners.

In a long narrative text from Karnak, telling of the military victory of the 23rd dynasty king Osorkon III, the culmination of that victory is described with the words: "His great name was upon his lips even as the milk [of] his [mother]" (Caminos 1958: 20). The return of Osorkon III to Thebes after the battle is described with the words: "He entered it [as] the child of the Lady, accepted her breasts of fine gold and sucked her milk; [it] entered [into him] with life and domination, while she gave to him [her might and] her victory" (translation in Caminos 1958: 20).

Leclant (1958: 141) noted that the king sometimes holds a bird in his hands in scenes of suckling, symbolizing domination over the rhyt-people. The divine milk gave the king this dominion through the legitimacy which occurs through the suckling of the goddess. The rhyt-bird was a symbol of captive foreign people or subjects of the king (Shaw 2000: 317).

In the inscription from the funerary temple of Amenhotep III it states that the king was nursed in order to dominate the people of the nine bows as well as the rhyt-people.

\[
\begin{align*}
&s=1 \ nhw=1 \ mr=1 \ nb \ m\ R^* \\
&\text{twt ki=t} \ 5\ hnh \ lw=1 \ lw=1 \\
 &\text{mus.n=n=k Mtw nb[3] Tew[m W3st} \\
&\text{bn[w]} \ nb \ w\ r\ ran[n=es]=sw \\
&m\ nb\ w\ n\ rhyt
\end{align*}
\]

My son of my body, my beloved Nebmaatre
You are my living image, created from my flesh
Mut, Mistress of Tew in Thebes bote you
The mistress of the nine bows has nursed you as the sole lord of the common people.

(Urk. IV 1655, 18-1656, 1)

The Persian king Darius of the 27th dynasty is depicted being nursed by the goddess Neith in the temple of Hibc (Fig. 6). The accompanying text states that she nurses him so that he may assemble the two lands and all rhyt-people (Leclant 1958: 141).

2.1.3 Milk for the king at rejuvenation festivals

The function of milk as means of rejuvenation is found in festivals for the king during his reign.
By following these rituals he not only revived himself, but also Egypt itself (Baines, Lesko and Silverman 1991: 59). The festivals included the annual Opet Festival at Luxor (Bell 1985: 251-294) and the Sed Festival, (Barta 1985: 1-3). The purposes of both the festivals were many but one of them was to rejuvenate the king’s divine power which resided in the king’s ka (Bell 1985: 256). The cult of Luxor was foremost the cult of the divinity of the king (Bell 1985: 252), but also had the function of the renewal of Amun, which was also made the result of the king’s renewal (Bell 1985: 254 note 5), which thus entailed a symbiosis between the king and the gods. The rituals use the same iconography as that found for the coronation.

The earliest recording of the Sed Festival is from the time of the 1st dynasty king Den (Shaw 2000: 78). It was a festival of renewal and rejuvenation of the king (Shaw 2000: 477), but the original function might have been for the king to claim his territory (Kemp 1991: 213).

Some three thousand years later, in the sanctuary at the Hathor temple at Dendera, Hathor is the provider of milk for the rejuvenation of the king. This is illustrated in the temple texts with phrases such as “...her child has been rejuvenated with her milk (lit. sweetness)” (snr pt nsw rs m bnrs=.; Leitz 2001: 200). This passage can be read in two ways: either as referring to rejuvenation for the grown, living king, in order to be young again, or as a reference to the rejuvenation of the dead king, making the function of milk in the world of the dead the same as that in the world of the living (cf. Chapter 3 below).

Another text from the Graeco-Roman period is somewhat unusual in that it is the king who speaks about his rejuvenation, as opposed to the more normal form in which it is the goddess that provides milk that makes the speech: “It is in order to rejuvenate myself, that I have received the milk. (spw=snrsf n wjs r snr dt=; Leitz 2001: 200, cf. above 2.1.1.1 for a discussion of ‘wjs n.)

The rejuvenating function of milk makes it a useful agent in festivals designed for the king’s renewal.

2.1.3.1 Milk in the Opet Festival

The culminating celebration of the annual Opet Festival took place in the temple of Luxor. Amenhotep III describes the temple of Luxor as his birth place and the place for rejuvenation:

\[
\begin{align*}
ir & msw m \textit{stp swt n ms nsw} \\
st & =f \textit{pw n m\textit{st hwr}=f \textit{lm}=s} \\
\text{(Urkh IV 1683, 1–1683, 2)}
\end{align*}
\]

Make the monument of Karnak for the king’s birth
This is his true place in which he is rejuvenated.

The Opet Festival was a celebration and renewal of the king’s ka (Bell 1985: 251-294), and on the occasion of this festival the public had the opportunity to view and pray before the king’s ka, in form of statues (Kemp 1991: 206).

In an offering formula, the ka of the god desired the milk: “milk, pure white bread, the great offerings that go forth before the Great God, by which his ka is content.” (Barta 1968: 46, 2h.). Hathor of Dendera offers her milk saying: Giving milk for your ka in order to strengthen your limbs (rdt ‘wjs n ka=; r srsd k=W=; Leitz 2001: 201). Objects, such as statuettes, that evoke the rejuvenation of the king were also used during such rejuvenation festivals (cf.
Cairo Museum JE 89613; Zayed 1962 Fig. 1 and 4), with that of Ramses II, very likely to have been used. The iconography of the suckling king and the background of the marshes of Chemmis are the usual representation of the rebirth of the king and the link to the birth of Horus and the rebirth of the sun god (see chapter 3.1.1.1 and 3.1.1.3). The statue was probably pulled in processions for the public to see. Pinch (1993: 174) has noted that a relief in the Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahri shows a statue being pulled in a procession, and suggests that these types of statues were used at displays during festivals. A painted relief in the temple of Ramses II in Abydos (PM VI: 36) also shows the king being suckled by the Hathor-cow while another image of the king shows him offering animals in front of her.

Another object with dual function was a pendent (Cairo Museum JE 61952) found in the tomb of Tutankhamun (see chapter 3.1.1.2). The pendent represented the coronation of the king, suckled by the throne-goddess Wt.bhw. As noted above she played an important role in the suckling of the king in coronation ceremonies (Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 103). Judging from the wearable size of this pendent (14 cm long, 7.3 cm wide) and from the motif, this object was very likely to have been used by the king during his lifetime. It could have been used in everyday life, but more likely, during festivals of renewal, for example the Opet Festival. This piece of jewelry was therefore not only a decorative object, but also a representation of the rejuvenation and rebirth of the king, and therefore could very likely been worn by the king in afterlife, buried with him in death.

The Opet and Sed Festivals both evoked and used the coronation-scenes. In the Luxor temple, the Birth Room in the south of the temple is of interest for the study of the rituals at the Opet Festival (Bell 1985: 253). The rituals of Opet Festival include the myth of Horus and there are references to the king being conceived, born and nursed by goddesses who coronated and celebrated his jubilees (Bell 1985: 255). The function of the Opet Festival was to celebrate and renew the king (Strudwick 1999: 69) and his ka (Bell 1985: 256, Robins 1997: 135) and renew him as the offspring of Amun-Ra (Strudwick 1999: 68).

The images used in performing the rituals were the same as when the king is coronated. One scene shows Amenhotep III, with the lock of youth and holding the hkw-emblem, suckled by a goddess (Bell 1985: 265 Fig. 3). Bell (1985: 266) believes that this scene depicted an actual ceremony that took place for the purpose of rejuvenating the king's ka. In the Roman Vestibule in the Luxor Temple, a scene and text describes how the king is being suckled (Bell 1985: 272). He is called Horus and nurtured in the presence of his father Amun. This is similar to the coronation scene where the king is suckled by a goddess and then presented to Amun. The suckling took place in hwt swr.w "Chamber of the Magistracy" (Bell 1985: 272). Amenhotep III describes himself as the offspring of Amun, and is suckled by a goddess in front of his father.

2.1.3.2 Milk in the Sed Festival
The function of the Sed Festival was to rejuvenate the king and his power as a king (Assmann 2001: 19). Images of the king raising a dd pillar, a symbol of stability are found in the time of the 18th dynasty king Amenhotep III to be part of the Sed Festival as a symbol of resurrection (Kemp 1991: 216).

On a stela of Ramses III (Fig. 7) from the chapel dedicated to Ptah and Meret-Seger in
Valley of the Queens (PM I: 2, 707), the king stands between Meret-Seger and Ra-Horakhty. His left hand grasps the arm of Meret-Seger. She is holding her right hand behind the king’s head, while suckling the king. From the tops of the branches, signs of the Sed Festivals are depicted. Meret-Seger is also shown in a 19th dynasty tomb at Deir el-Medina (Tomb 336), where Ptah stands before Meret-Seger suckling a child (PM I: 1 405).

Both Shesonq and his son Osorkon II have scenes in Karnak where they receive Sed Festivals from Amun-Ra and then are suckled by a goddess (Robins 1997: 198, Fig. 238). This scene represents the function of milk in the king’s rejuvenation rituals at the Sed Festival. As with the coronation ceremony and the Opet Festival, the king receives powers of rejuvenation and thus becomes a child. The festivals and the coronation were parallel ideologically and the images that they shared were therefore nearly impossible to distinguish (Leclant 1958: 138).

A fragment of a bowl (Fig. 8), possibly used during rituals, also depicts the king’s rejuvenation and according to Tait (1963: 116) it was a representation of the king’s Sed Festival celebration. The bowl (Fig. 8), here a reconstruction, depicts the king being purified and rejuvenated. The god Hapy gives him life with the ankh-sign, while the god Bes presents him with the Wadjet eye. Below the sitting king, a cow stands in the marshes, suckling her calf, surrounded by tilapia fish. The tilapia fish and the cow in the marshes are popular representations found in the Nun bowls (see chapter 3.1.1.3). The cow suckling her young in the marshes is a symbol of rebirth and the rejuvenated king is here depicted as the sun god reborn. Tait (1963: 116) suggests this to be a representation of a ritual in the coronation or Sed Festival, and since the Sed Festival is mainly a repetition of the coronation ritual (Bosse-Grieffhins 1973: 105). This also gives this bowl a double function. It could have been used in rituals of rejuvenation during the king’s lifetime as well as after his death, when it would evoke the rebirth of the deceased king.

The menat necklace in the Sed Festival
The menat necklace is a common attribute of Hathor from the New Kingdom and onwards (Barquet 1953: 106). The iconography two examples of the menat counterpoise, one from the New Kingdom (EA 20760) and one from the Ptolemaic period (EA 41515), show representations of the face of Hathor and the sistrum. On the lower register of both a Hathor cow, with the sun disk between her horns, is standing in the marshes. The cow on the New Kingdom example has marks of stars on her body. This detail of the depiction of a celestial cow could be due to the fact that during the New Kingdom, Hathor became connected with the celestial cow Mehet-Weret (see chapter 3.1.1.3). The menat necklace is featured in scenes of suckling of the king (Barquet 1953: 108), and evoked the suckling of Horus in the marshes (Barquet 1953: 104). The menat necklace also occurs as a feature in the king’s celebration of his Sed-festival, where Hathor wishes him millions of Sed-festivals: “...Hathor, tendant au roi son collier-menat, lui donne <<des millions de jubilées>>...” (Barquet 1953: 109).

The god Ptah-Tatenen wore the menat necklace with counterpoise (Barquet 1953: 110-111), and is associated with the Sed Festival by his epithets wr ḫb “great of jubilee” and nb sd “lord of jubilee”, and the king identified himself with Ptah-Tatenen during Sed Festivals (Barquet 1953: 111).
2.1.4 Milk in purification of festivals

Scenes from the celebration of the Opet Festival are depicted in detail in the temple of Luxor from the 18th dynasty. In one of the images (Fig. 9) a priest walks in front of the sacred bark. In his left hand, he holds what appears to be a milk jar (Epigraphic Survey 1994: 5, 37) and what might be grass or reeds. In his right hand he is holding up a stick from which a liquid sprinkles down on the road behind him. The liquid, being milk (Wolf 1931: 28), is described in the text above him: \textit{swrb wst pr h3t nfr wrb sp} 2 "Purifying the road in front of the god. Be pure! Be pure!!". It is possible that it is indeed milk depicted in this instance as it is used for cleansing the way before a coffin to its burial place in a 18th dynasty tomb (see chapter 3.3.4). Milk was also used for the purification of the king (see chapter 3.1.3).

2.1.5 Milk for the coronation of God’s Wife of Amun

In her coronation and its rituals, the God’s Wife of Amun received the divine milk of the goddess. The God’s Wife adapted the iconography of the king during the Late Period, and so she and the king were the only ones represented receiving the divine milk by suckling the goddess during their lifetime.

Depicted on the walls of the Osiris chapel \textit{h3t qt} in Karnak (Fazzini 1988: 32, Pl XVIII), the God’s Wife Shepenwepet I is suckled by Hathor and thereafter crowned by Amun (PM II 1972: 205). This is the usual way in which the king’s own coronation was represented. The goddess gives life and divine power to her: "She was sucked by goddess, crowned and thereby elevated to the status of the god’s wife by her divine husband..." (Redford 1973: 21).

3. Milk for the Dead

Milk was given to gods, kings and the non-royal dead. The use of milk identified the dead with a child and thus with rejuvenation after death. It is commonly the milk of a goddess. This goddess can be anthropomorphic or take the form of a cow, a cobra or a tree.

Milk can be incorporated into the funerary offering, and thus compared with the libation offering. Libation, commonly performed with water, had a purifying function. Milk is used for purification, and compared with water, natron and incense.

When commoners received the milk of a goddess, they were treated the same as a king, and like for a king, milk was instrumental in the process of regeneration.

3.1 Milk for the king

Texts describing the reborn king come mainly from the Pyramid Texts. However, other sources, such as the Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead, deal with milk as a means of new life. The most useful sources however come from temples, tombs, and grave goods materials. The scenes found in the royal funerary temples often depict the king as an infant, suckling a goddess. Sometimes images in tombs provides us with texts, to further emphasize the meaning behind the scenes, but most often, texts are not found, or perhaps was not needed.
3.1.1 Milk for the suckling child

3.1.1.1 The milk of Isis and Nephthys

The Pyramid Texts (PT) contain several references to the milk of Isis and Nephthys in his rejuvenation, and for his protection.

Isis and Nephthys were both part of the family of Osiris, and they were the ones who assembled the parts of Osiris' body (Baines, Lesko and Silverman 1991: 44), making them the protectors of the dead who acted on his behalf in rejuvenating his body.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{it N ml n=k m n= k l pn} & \quad \text{Father N, take to you this your water,} \\
\text{hrw} & \quad \text{which is protected,} \\
\text{lnw n m naf n m w= k 3 st} & \quad \text{which is in the breast of your mother Isis} \\
\text{Nbt hrw dl. n= f dr t=s} & \quad \text{Nephthys, she has given him her hand} \\
\text{(PT 1873a-1873c)} & 
\end{align*}
\]

The Graeco-Roman depiction of Isis and Horus in Philae (Fig. 10) is set in the marshes of Chemmis, a common feature in the suckling of Horus-King by Hathor. These settings are often seen in scenes dealing with Hathor and the king or Hathor or Isis with Horus.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Il 3 st n dr n= s m mdj= s} & \quad \text{Isis comes. She grasps her breast} \\
\text{n st= s h r m s q h rw} & \quad \text{for her son Horus, the triumphant} \\
\text{(PT 2089a)} & 
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nf N pn wrtt} & \quad \text{This N grasps the white crown} \\
\text{m (w) pgt} & \quad \text{from the head(s) of the Neahd} \\
\text{3 st sw 3 at sn k sw Nbt hrw} & \quad \text{Isis nurses him, Nephthys suckles him} \\
\text{(PT 371b-371c)} & 
\end{align*}
\]

The two texts cited above describe two different gestures, associated with providing milk for the king. PT 2089a describes how Isis grasps (n dr) her breasts when the dead king reaches the afterworld, and PT 371b-371c associates the two nursing goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, with the king grasping his crown. This text relates the act of nursing the goddess with receiving the insignia of office, and thus with coronation.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{r d l Nbt hrw wry=s hr N pn} & \quad \text{Nephthys has given her arm to this N} \\
\text{gh s n m naf s r n N pn} & \quad \text{She has extended her breast to the mouth of this N} \\
\text{(PT 1427c-1427d)} & 
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mwt m t N st} & \quad \text{Mother of this N is Isis} \\
\text{m t= f Nbt hrw} & \quad \text{His nurse is Nephthys} \\
\text{sn k N S bi t hr} & \quad \text{She who suckles N is S bi t hr} \\
\text{(PT 1374b-1375c)} & 
\end{align*}
\]

As a variation, the verb nursing sn k (Faulkner 1999: 234) is used. The verb does not only mean to suckle, but also to raise the child. This can be related to the idea of the goddesses suckling and bringing up the deceased king, just as the nurses of the royal families took over
that role for the royal child. What is notable in PT 371b-371c above and 1374b-1375c is that in both texts, Isis is considered the mother but not the one who provides him with milk.

According to Münster (1964: 10-14), Nephthys took over some of the functions of Isis as the nurse of the Horus-King. She was the companion and sister of Isis and a part of the cult of Osiris. The milk is given to the king when he reaches heaven and the milk of Isis had the power to rejuvenate Osiris (see 3.2). In one myth, she brought Horus back to life after he had been murdered and dumped in the Nile (Hopkins 1997: 30-31). The dead king desires the milk of Isis, as it links him to the newborn Horus (Münster 1968: 10) and identifies him with Osiris, the dead who came back to life.

The milk is also compared with water. It is described as protective, a quality which Isis possesses as the great magician who saves her son Horus with her healing milk (see 4.1.1.1).

\( \text{ls tw lr(y)} \)
\( \text{mrw=k n=k} \)
\( \text{bf=k n=k} \)
\( \text{mr=k n=k} \)
\( \text{lny mnd mwt=}=k \text{ jst} \)
\( \text{PT 734a-734b} \)
\( \text{lt N ml n=k mwr=k lpr bs}=w \)
\( \text{lny w mnd mwt=}=k \text{ jst} \)
\( \text{PT 1873a-1873c} \)

Rise yourself sovereign
your water for you
your abundance for you
your milk for you,
which is in the breast of your mother Isis

Father N, take to you this your protected water,
which is in the breast of your mother Isis

In PT 734 and PT 1873 the milk is used as a parallel to water as an offering for the dead. Both water and the milk are connected with the efflux of the dead Osiris, the r前往 (Winkler 2005: 25-28) and are essential for the dead body in order to be reborn. A vessel in the Petrie Museum (UC 16128; Engelbach 1923: 30, Pl I.XXVIII), a red pot with inscriptions on it, further gives indication of the attraction of milk and water for the deceased: the inscription on the pot is a spell intended to provide water, milk, garment, daylight and food for dead.

3.1.1.2 The two goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt
The goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt provided the king with milk during his coronation (see 2.1.1.1, 2.1.3.1). The Pyramid Texts are the main source for this role of Neith and Wadjjet and the suckling of the king in the afterlife.

\( \text{pr N hr=s hr mwt=}=f \)
\( \text{Trt 'nty tp (n) R} \)
\( \text{nfr lb=s n=f} \)
\( \text{dl=s n=f mnd=s} \)
\( \text{snk=f sw} \)
\( \text{st=}=i \text{ t} \)
\( \text{mn=k mnd}=i \text{ pn} \)
\( \text{snk=k sw} \text{ t} \)
\( \text{PT 1108c-1109b} \)

May N go to his mother
Uraeus, she who lives on the head of Ra
Her heart mourns for him
She gives her breast to him
that he may suckle it
saying, my son
take to you this my breast
saying, that you may suckle it
The two goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nekhbet and Wadjet nurse the king in the afterlife. According to Leclant (1951: 154) this suckling ensures that the king maintains royal qualities in the after-life. The goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt appear in the Pyramid Texts in the role of nurses of the king to confirm his divinity, just as they established the king’s office in his lifetime. The texts also refer to the everlasting state of the king as a child. The goddesses will never wean him, and he will forever be protected and young.

In the tomb of Tutankhamun, a golden pendant was found, depicting the king being suckled by Wrt ḫkbw (Eaton-Krauss and Graefe 1985: 6-7, Pl. VII; Cairo Museum JE 61952). Bosse-Griffiths (1973: 100-108) has identified this Wrt ḫkbw to be Wadjet of Buto. The goddess is nursing the king; he is standing up and dressed as a ruler, not as a child. Bosse-Griffiths identifies this object as belonging to the coronation ceremony: “it seems therefore that the Wrt ḫkbw named so often on the outside of the little golden shrine is the Uraeus goddess Wadjjoyet of Buto, the crown goddess who with her divine milk prepares the King for his office” (Bosse-Griffiths 1973: 102). However, the representation and the placement of this object suggest that it could have served more than one purpose, since it was found in a funerary context. Such a pendant could have served both the purpose of being used as a depiction in a coronation-ceremony in life, and as a symbol of resurrection in death, hence its presence in the tomb.
n tw n nwt=k m rmg mst tw
n tw n ls=k m rmg ms tw
mwt=k sm3t wrt hr(y) lb nbh
htt 'fnt
3w.t(l) 3wl
nhnbht.l(l) mnd
snk=s tw
n wdb=s tw
(PT 728b-729c)

(For) there is no mother among mankind who has
given birth to you
(For) there is no father among mankind who has
given birth (conceived) you
your mother is the great wild cow that is in El-Kab
the white 'fnt-crown
being long of feathers
pendulous of breasts,
she will nurse you
she will not wean you

These texts state the king's heritage and divinity. It also tells about the king's new state, that of
the child, and reassures him that he will remain in that state, as the goddess claims she will not
wean him. The nurse here is Bastet and the mother of the king is named as the Wild Cow from
El-Kab.

3.1.1.3 The milk of the cow and rebirth in Nun

Texts referring to the birth and suckling by Nut show the desire of the king of being reborn as
Ra: ms wI mi R`k hrw nb "May I be born like Ra every day" (CT II, 82b). Nut is described as a
cow, suckling the newborn Ra/King, swallowing the sun at night and giving birth to him in the
morning.

ptw ls lb
mew Nwt
lnkw Nht lwt
(PT 623a)

You are a spirit
the one who is born by Nut
the one who is suckled by Nephtys

di Nwt wrt 'awy=s r=f
3w.t(l) 'bw
nhnbht.l(l) mnd
snk=s N pn
n wdb=s sw
3d=s3n (sk) sw r pt
tp=s sw lb t3
(PT 1344c-1345b)

The great Nut have given her arms to him
She who is long of horns
she with the pendulous breasts
she nurses this N
she will not wean him
she will take him to the sky
she will not thrown him down on earth

She repeats the same phrase as the goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt: that she will never
wean him, so that he forever will be under her protection and supplied with the life that milk
gives to a newborn. Nut was the provider of libations to the deceased in the afterlife, thus
providing life for the ha of the dead. An image of her (Fig. 11; Altenmüller 1999: 444 fig. 41)
stretching over what is probably the temple of Dendera (Altenmüller 1999: 445, Billing 2002:
219) with the sun at her mouth and between her thighs and fluid floating out of her breasts
depicts her functions as protector, birth-giver and provider of libation.
The image of a cow in a lotus thicket has been characterized by Pinch as the "cow and lotus"-motif. This motif evoked the connection between Mehet-Weret, the celestial cow and the birth of Ra. She was associated with the Nun-waters, identified as the mother of Ra-Atum and gave birth to him every morning (Pinch 1993: 175-77). Mehet-Weret and Hathor were both identified as the mother and nurse of the sun god and Horus, which resulted in that during the New Kingdom Hathor became identified with Mehet-Weret (Pinch 1993: 175), and the two goddesses became connected to each other (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112-114). Mehet-Weret gave birth to the deceased in the form of Ra (el-Sayed 1980: 373), and she was closely associated with the Nile (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112).

The king was reborn as Ra in the waters of Nun, or as Horus in Chemmis, which also came to be a place of evoking birth and rebirth for the king (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 110-118).

Another goddess connected with the waters of Nun and with nursing was Taweret. An image of Taweret in human shape suckling Horemheb can be found at his temple in Gebel el-Silsila (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 209, Fig. 33, Fig. 12). On the right side of the king is a plant similar to the $\phi$ which is most usually seen as the headpiece of Hapy and representation of the Lower Egypt. Two uraei are depicted, one on this plant, and the other on the back of Taweret’s crown. She wears the sun disk with the horns. The king is depicted as a ruling king, with his crown and clothes, but without the flail and hook. The texts above them consists of a recitation of Amun-Ra,

\[\begin{align*}
  d\d = l & \ n-k \ n^h \ \dd \ w^2 s \\
  s\d = l & \ m\mathfrak{r}y \\
  h\d \ n^h n^b \ h^w \\
  m\mathfrak{r}y \ n^m \ m^r \ m^h b \\
  m\mathfrak{m} t = k & T \ \mathfrak{r}w t \\
  s^1 \ h^w = k \\
  \text{[I]} & \text{give to you life, endurance and dominion} \\
  \text{[my]} & \text{beloved son} \\
  \text{ruler of life, lord of appearances} \\
  \text{Beloved of Amun, Horemheb} \\
  \text{Your mother Taweret} \\
  \text{(for) protection of your body}
\end{align*}\]

(cf. Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968:209, Fig. 33; Fig. 12).

Taweret is described as "Grande génératrice" (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 111), especially for the dead who shall be reborn. She also acts as the protector of Horus. She provides nutrition for the deceased through the Nile (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112). Taweret is depicted in royal birth scenes (Pinch 1993: 293) and is associated in some aspects with nursing goddesses such as Isis-Weret, Weret-Hekaw, the celestial cow and Hathor (Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 112). Pregnant women may have worn amulets bearing her image during childbirth and nursing (Pinch 1993: 293).

Her figure, her stomach and her hanging breasts can be seen on other fecundity figures like Hapy. This form is not, according to Baines (1982: 118), a sign of pregnancy. Her breasts have on occasion been found pierced through on vessels that been filled with milk (Pinch 1993: 293, Browarski 1982: 293), thus creating a possible magical inundation with milk pouring out of her breasts. Baines (1985: 115) however refers to motifs relating to Hapy from the Late Period, where Hapy is seen pouring a liquid from his breasts. The liquid, according to Baines
(1985: 118-120) is the liquid of the primeval waters.

The inundation of the Nile was seen as bringing of life and resurrection (Wallin 2002: 31). The goddess Sothis evoked the qualities of giving birth and nursing the deceased (Wallin 2002: 35).

\[ n \text{ is } 'nḫ } \\
\text{ For } N \text{ is the one who lives,} \\
\text{ son of Sothis} \\
\text{(PT 458a)}

\[ snk=k \text{ mwt=k } 5pdt \] \\
May you suckle your mother Sothis \\
Your nurse who is in the horizon \\
(CI I, 17a-17b)

The inundation is occasionally connected to milk. Such a connection can be found in Abydos. The king offering milk to Atum says: “Atum is inundated with milk, [......], the sweet milk which is in the breasts of [......], on account of what he has done. I give (thee) bulls and cows, together with their milk, that thou mayest be inundated (with them) in this thy name of Inundation Flood” (translation given in David 1973: 56).

Another object that evokes Nun and birth/rebirth of Ra is the so-called “Nun bowls”. Strauss (1974: 89) describes the Nun bowls as evoking the birth of the sun god with Hathor as the mother. Pinch (1993: 313) says that no definite evidence is present on the Nun bowls to “represent the emergence of Re from the Nun”, but she points to the Nun bowls as evoking the nursing of Horus rather than that of Ra (Pinch 1993: 312-313).

One motif of the Nun bowls is that of a gazelle suckling her young (Strauss 1974 Fig.20), another is that of the Hathor cow in the marshes (Strauss 1974 Fig.17; Browarski 1982: Nr 141). A bronze bowl from the 18th dynasty tomb of Rekhmire (Strauss 1974 Pl.14; Hayes 1959: 206, Fig. 121) depicts Hathor standing in the marshes. Flowers have been placed in the bowl. Another bronze bowl depicts Hathor standing in the middle of the bowl (Browarski 1982: 121 Fig.108). These bowls evoke Hathor in Chemmis, where, as the mother of the god, she nursed the infant Horus (Browarski 1982: 122). The bowls were intended to contain liquids, such as water, wine and milk (Bruyère 1937: 89-90; Strauss 1974: 66; Pinch 1993: 314). A bowl in Deir el-Medina was found with traces of milk and Strauss (1974: 67) made a parallel with the milk offered to the dead, as means for their rebirth.

Pinch (1993: 175) describes the “cow and lotus” motif related to the “suckling and protection” of Horus in the marshes at Chemmis. The sanctuary in Hatshepsut’s Deir el-Bahri Hathor chapel (Naville 1901: pl XCVI) evokes the mythological place where the young Horus was brought up (Assmann 2001: 133). The Hathor cow, emerging from the thicket of papyrus, nurses Hatshepsut, with the text reading:

\[ hmn=|l hnt=| m 'nḫ ḫtst \] \\
It is with life and dominion that I have embraced \\
Your Majesty \\
\text{ like that which [I] have done for Horus within} \\
\text{ the nest of Chemmis} \\
\text{ It is with my breast that I have suckled you.}
A piece of a necklace from the 3rd Intermediate Period (Robins 1997: 199, Fig. 239), shows a goddess suckling the Horus king, identified by the crown of Lower Egypt, in a thicket of papyrus, evoking the place of Chemmis.

Drinking vessels, formed as lotuses (Tait 1963: 93-138), have decoration of cows and calves in marsh settings. The calves and cows are sitting or standing in boats and can possibly be identified with the Ra calf: “At the dawn, the god abandons his form of mummy and is reborn in the sanctuary as in the eastern sky as a young son, a child rising from the lotus, or a milking calf” (Tait 1963: 117). The king is also described as a golden calf in two passages from the Pyramid Texts (PT §485a and §729a).

3.1.1.4 The milk of Hathor

The image of Hathor in the shape of a cow, suckling the king, was a popular image in the funerary cult. The rejuvenation of the king is shown in a statuette showing Ramses II suckling the Hathor cow (Zayed 1962: 137-142, Fig. 1 and 4; Cairo Museum JE 89613). He is kneeling and drinking from the udder. The background is the setting of the marshes of Chemmis. Zayed (1962: 141) compares the texts of the statuette and the image of the nursing Hathor with a vignette in the Book of the Dead Chapter 186 where “…the child suckling from the cow represents the dead king renewing his life and vitality by means of the divine milk, and the standing figure under the chin of the Goddess represents the king, re-born in the Other-World, and under her protection” (1962: 141). Pinch (1993: 181) also notes that the king drinks from the udders in order to be rejuvenated into the king under Hathor’s chin, and that the black colour represents the rejuvenated king. Now, the section where the king should be standing, under Hathor’s chin, is lost on this statuette, but one can compare it with a very similar figure of Hathor and the king (BDE no 38574-5; PM II 1972: 380), which was found in the Hathor-shrine at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 13). Here, the papyrus plants stretch up at the front part of Hathor. The king under Hathor’s chin is painted black, while the suckling king is painted red.

A votive cloth from Deir el-Bahari (Pinch 1993: 177, Pl. 25b; Huntington, Long Island, HM 59.294) depicts a similar representation of Hathor and the suckling king. Hathor is standing on a bark in a papyrus-thicket. Two figures of Mentuhotep are represented, one under Hathor’s chin and the other suckling her (Keel 1980 Fig. 38). In the Hathor chapel in Deir el-Bahari two similar depictions of the cow and king can be found, however without the papyrus thicket (Keel 1980 Fig. 40 and 41). An image of Amenhotep III suckling the divine cow is depicted in his temple in Luxor (Keel 1980 Fig. 43; Brunner 1964: Tafel 12), and another of Horemheb suckling the divine cow on a relief in Turin (Brunner 1964: 125, Tafel 24b).

The Hathor cow is also depicted emerging from a mountain, as the protector of the west. A stela from the 11th dynasty, found at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 14) shows one figure of the king suckling from their udders, while the second figure of the king is standing under her chin, a similar depiction of the cow and king in the marshes. This stela shows the west, the realm of
the dead, which further stresses the point of rejuvenation.

The Hathor cow is sometimes depicted emerging from the mountains of the west, standing in front of some papyrus, sometimes in clump or just one or a couple of straws (Pinch 1993:180). On coffins, the Hathor and mountain motif is depicted standing behind a bowl of lotus (Pinch 1993: 180). These marsh settings represented the dwelling place of the dead such as Chemmis, Nun and ‘Field of Rushes’ (1993: 180). Pinch also connects this motif of the cow and the mountain as with the rebirth of the sun (1993: 181).

Pinch concludes that the function of the Hathor cow was to be the “transition from life, through death, to the afterlife...” (1993: 180-181). She functioned as a link between the living and the dead and offered protection and rejuvenation.

3.1.1.5 The milk of the Ihet-cow

Various cow-deities can be found acting as mothers and nurses for Horus, the sun god and the king. One of them is the Ihet-cow. A scene from a papyrus, written in hieratic and demotic, from Fayum (Fig. 15) (Beinlich 1991: Abb. 45) depicts a celestial cow with Ra sitting under her udders.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{snb} &= s \text{ sw m irr= s} \\
\text{hpr s hpr R}^* \\
\text{hpr Mt(t) wrt} \\
\text{hpr Sdt} \\
(\text{Beinlich.1991: 137})
\end{align*}
\]

She made his life by her milk
Creation of the lake, creation of Ra
Creation of Mehet-Weret
Creation of Sdet

The text expresses in a clear way the creation of Ra with milk: “Die Belebung mit Milch versetzt Re zurück in das Säuglingsalter, ist also ein Motiv der Regeneration. Die Darstellung ist hier sicher als eine Parallel zu jenen Bildern zu sehen, wo der ägyptische König vom Euter der Hathorkuh trinkt” (Beinlich 1991: 108-109).

The “creator” in this text is the Ihet-cow, a cow deity who was on occasion identified with Hathor, especially during the New Kingdom (Pinch 1992: 175), and suckled and protected the infant Horus in the marshes (1992: 175). She is also a provider of milk for Osiris in Bigge.

In the papyrus from Fayum, Ra has three mothers: Ihet, Mehet-Weret and “The Great White”. He drinks the milk of the celestial cow to become a newborn, in the circle of birth, life and rebirth (Beinlich 1991: 316).

On the island of Bt wght the island Bigge, Osiris received his daily libation of milk from the Ihet-cow.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Iht wrgt} & \phantom{[\ldots]} \beta=s \text{ r bnt wfbt} \\
[\ldots] \text{ r rd}=s \text{ nh nht wrgt} \\
\text{im irr} \text{ Tht km(t)} \\
(\text{Junker 1913: 14 cited as Phot. 1192})
\end{align*}
\]

Ihet, great […] she has ferried to Bigge
For giving life to the great sycamore
With milk of the black Ihet-cow

This text shares a phrase with Papyrus Rhind (cf. above 3.13). While the Fayum text reads 4 According to Beinlich (1991: 151) this is the goddess Schedet.
"with the milk of the ibet cow" (im ḫrt ḫḥ), Papyrus Rhind has "with the milk of Egypt" (m ḫrt m khn(i)). It would appear therefore likely that khn(i), as written in pRhind (see 3.1.3), could in fact imply the lhet-cow, who is described as black (kntr) in the texts from Bigge. A black cow-goddess is documented in the Wb (V: 125).

Other cow deities that relate the death to life transition are a group of seven cows and one bull, found on stelae, coffins, tomb paintings and temple relief (Pinch 1994: 174). They are found in both private and royal context, most often in Theban tombs (Sayed 1980: 357-358). They were protectors of the deceased, and gave their milk to the dead to resurrect them (Sayed 1980: 373).

3.1.1.6 The milk of the tree goddess
An image of the king suckling a tree goddess can be found in the New Kingdom (Billing 2002: 278), from the tomb of Thutmosis III (Billing 2002: 357 Fig. C.1) and on a stela of Ramses II (Fig. 16). The goddess suckling Thutmosis III is Isis, while Nut suckles Ramses II. According to Refai "Function der Isis betont, die den König als Horus im Jenseits vor Gefahren behüttet" (Refai 2000: 384).

The characteristics of the milk of the tree-goddess are found in the following: "I give you this cool water (kḥkw) that is in the breasts of your mother Nut, that you may live by means of it, be prosperous (wḏḥ) by means of it, have power (šmn) by means of it." (Billing 2002: 378).

3.1.1.7 The milk of Renenutet
The goddess of suckling, Renenutet (Rnnt) probably merged with the goddess of granary Renwet. Other examples of the merging of goddesses include Isis and Hathor and Hathor and Mehet-Weret. Renenutet became the goddess of suckling and protecting the child, in her form of a snake.

Images and texts including Renenutet can be found in private tombs at Thebes. One being in the tomb of Userhet, Overseer of the royal harem (TT 48; PM I: 1: 88). In a scene on the walls (Fig. 17), there is a depiction of the goddess Renenutet, with serpent-head and human body, holding the nude king Amenhotep III in her lap, while suckling him.

A similar scene can be found in the private tomb (TT 57; PM I: 1: 114) of Khaemhet, overseer of the granaries and royal scribe, temporary with Amenhotep III. The scene depicts the deceased tomb owner offering to the serpent-headed Renenutet who suckles the king as a child. This image is found in the Theban tombs of the later 18th dynasty, pointing its popularity during the reign of Amenhotep III. Khaemhet may have included this image of the goddess and king for two reasons, one being that he was an Overseer of the granaries, and the second might be to shown his connection to the king.

3.1.2 Milk as offering - The Sixth Day Festival
The Sixth Day Festival was a celebration of the rebirth of the dead king (Wallin 2002: 70). The offerings on this day connected the deceased with Horus (2002: 86). The milk offered was perhaps seen as an offering to the king/Horus as a mean of rebirth.
May you drink the bowl of milk which comes forth on the offering tables of the Sixth Day Festival

A list of festival offering, from Medinet Habu, the temple of Ramses III describes an offering of milk for this specific festival:

"The festival of the 6th day which shall happen; offerings for Amon-Re and the portable image of Wosermait Meriamon, in this day of festival... The offering should consist of "jars 1 milk, nbn jars 1" and "milk, bowls 4" (el-Saban 2000: 78, 79, List 12, line 391).

3.1.3 Milk for the purification of the king
In ancient Egypt, the water of the Nile and milk were both considered as fluids with purification properties (Brunner 1964: 144).

We purify you with water that come forth from Elephantine
With ntrn which comes forth from El Kab with milk from The Black (het-cow)

From Bigge, a text describes the purification of Osiris, in which milk is used as a mean of removing "sin" (bwt).

The sweet which is in the cows of Hathor Your sweet milk
Take to you in order to purify from sins

The Coffin Text describes milk as a means of purifying the mouth of the dead king:

Osiris has washed my mouth with the milk of the red cow who comes forth from the sunrays she who gives birth to Ra every day

You are pure You are pure as Ra lives You are pure Your front in pureness Your back in pureness Your pureness by ntrn, with incense with milk (of the mother of) Apis
The funerary sources describe milk as being both the means of resurrection and purification of the dead. The texts describe the milk of a cow, possible the Hesat cow, the celestial cow that is described as the mother of the sun god andApis (Griffiths 1977: 1170). The king is further described as Ra and the suckling calf: “The mouth of the son of Re, Sety Merenptah, like Re, is the mouth of a calf (suckling) on the day on which its mother gave birth to it” (David 1973: 155). The title of the spell is for purification with incense and provides a connection between the mouth of the suckling calf and pureness.

A spell from the temple of Seti I at Abydos describes the suckling calf: “Spell for the calf at milk on the day on which its mother gave birth to it” (r n bhs r itt hrw nsw mwt=f lm, cf. David 1973: 155, 343).

3.2 Milk for Osiris

In offer formulas libations are frequently mentioned and milk was compared with the milk which was given to Osiris: “…den Speisen des Herrn von Abydos, der weißen Milch der hst Kuh, dem, wovon die Verklärten zu essen lieben in der Nekropole” (ddf n w nb 3bw yrt hst hst mwrt 3pw wum lm m bsr nm, Barta 1968: 46 Bitte 2 g.). A ceremony devoted to Osiris is written down in Papyrus Schmitt (23, 23-28, 21), but it is possibly an oral ceremony that was written down much later. It is sung by Nut, who addresses to Osiris.

3.2.1 The Daily Ritual for Osiris on the island of Bigge

According to Fazzini, the cult of Osiris increased in popularity during the Graeco-Roman Period due to the increasing status of Isis as the ultimate mother: “Indeed, a major aspect of Egyptian religion of the LP was the rise in importance of the cults of Osiris…” (Fazzini 1988: 11). The popularity of Osiris in the Late Period and later resulted in the construction of the temple of Osiris on Bigge. Tt wBt, the island of Bigge, literary “the pure mound”, contained the Abaton of Osiris was considered to be the place of embalming and burial during the Greco-Roman Period. The island is to the west of Philae (Junker 1913: 32, 33, 34-35), making it ideally placed because of its closeness to the Isis-temple. Tt wBt was described as a popular temple for pilgrims in the Graeco-Roman Period (Hopkins 1997: 64). Milk was a part of a daily ritual of the temple of Osiris in Abaton:”der die Milch für das Opfer des Osiris darbringt…um seine Majestät alle Tage (oder immerdar) zu stärken” (Junker 1913: 14). This offering consisted of 365 jars of milk placed in the nms Grove of Abaton (Junker 1913: 12), where the ba of Osiris dwelt.

The milk of Isis offered to Osiris is mentioned in several decrees. Apart from the daily offerings, there was a ten-day festival when Isis sailed from Philae to give her milk to Osiris. The word kibhw, normally used for water libations, is here used for Isis’s milk libations.
li[...] k'hbw d d mwh
h Wst r·3 nfr (nh) r t w·hbt
m n=k k'hbw ln snt=k 3st
ir=r pw n mwh n myw=sn
st=k n=sn r dr tnh=k
(Junker 1913: 20, cited as Phot. 672)

pr hw hi m pr=s
tr r·10 nb r·f nb
hr d·t (m) r t w·hbt
hr snm t nh=fn k'hbw n jm(w)
ir=n hnw=s n hnw=f
(Junker 1913: 24, cited as Phot. 341-342)

This text described Isis going out of her temple at Philae to travel to Bigge for the ten day festival in order to give her milk to him as libation. Osiris is described in Phot. 338 as: "Erbe des Geh, treffliches Kind mit gutem Wesen dessen Majestät die nhfy der Hathor ihre Brüste zur Nahrung geben und der iwyj-Baum sprosset aus seinen Ausflüssen seine Schwester Isis lässt seinen Leib jung werden alle 10 Tage" (Junker 1913: 13).

At Bigge, decrees describe the milk of the Hesat-cow, Hathor-cow, Itet-cow and their cattle, which perhaps were sacred cows of the temple, and provided the milk for the temple.

1 hdt lmy m·w phw rwn w wt hr
1 bnr lmy mnty n mwt
Mnw
"k=s htw f n Wst r·3 nfr nb r t w·hbt
wrn Wst Wsn nfr r·3 nfr nb r t w·hbt
m mny hst
r hdt hst r t n Wst
r·3 nfr nb r t w·hbt
r bnr [...] Hwt hr r swnw=f
(Junker 1913: 11, cited as Phot. 373/374)

hft n= d m hr=k
shf n phw n 1 st
bnr nty rwnw(?) Hwt hr hrt t=h=k

\(\hat{s}p\ r=k\ swb\ r\ bw\)
\(k'hbw\ n\ sn=s\ nmyw=sn\)
\(skb\ lnh=fr\ nhfr\ h^n=f\)
\(snh\ d=g\ m\ m^f\)
\(rsl sp\ hr\ s=\ n\ hnw=f\)
\(bw\ k'\ m\ r=fn\)
(Junker 1913: 13, cited as Phot. 672)

O, milk which is in your udders, cows of Hathor
O, sweetness which is in the breasts of the mother of
Min,
it enters the body of Osiris, great god, lord of Bigge
may Osiris Wmp nfr, great god, lord of Bigge, eat
from the udders of Hesat
milk of Hesat for the body of Osiris
great god, lord of Bigge
the sweet (the milk) of Hathor for his rejuvenation

This milk, which is given to you
milking of the udders of Hesat
the sweet which is in the cattle of Hathor, your sweet
milk
take to you in order to be cleaned from sins
Libations to her brother which is in them
for cooling his heart and rejuvenating his limbs
growing of his body to new
giving medicine by out loading to his majesty
The hw-tree being high in his name
The island of Bigge probably housed sacred cows belonging to the temple, for the king is seen offering three cows to Osiris (Junker 1913: 11-12, Abb.3). They were probably kept there to provide the milk which the temple needed for the daily milk offerings. The record of a milk offering to the gods can be found in a text from the 18th dynasty. In it, Amun asks for milk cows from various regions (cf. 5.2.1 for the full text).

The king was also a provider of milk offers on the island of Bigge. A depiction of the king offering milk in jars to Osiris is seen in an offer scene (Junker 1913 Fig.1) and in another the king is pouring milk into an offering bowl (Junker 1913: 20 Fig.6).

The king offered milk to Osiris in other temples as well. For example in a scene from Edfu milk is offered to Osiris by the king with the text reading: “König N ist auf seiner Matte, der jedermann beleibt mit seinen Speisen, der die süße Milch gibt, der die mn-Kräge durreicht, der die Milch ihrem Herrn (Harsomtus) gibt” (Otto 1964:64). On Bigge Emperor Augustus utters an offering to Osiris: - Milk and wine, (there is) no water is in it. (IRT TRP N MW R INNY=S, Phot. 672 Junker 1913: 16).

In the birth house of Philae the king offers milk in jars (Junker and Winter 1965: 65, Phot. 937) to Osiris saying:

\[ \text{hdt nn dl(=f) m hr=k} \]
\[ \text{str ph(w) n lsis} \]

This milk which I give to you
milked of the udders of Hesat

The king, in this instance, acting as a substitute of a goddess, provides the god with milk in jars.

3.2.2 The “Song of Nut”

The “Song of Nut” was originally sung or chanted during religious festivals by a woman, in the role of Nut, for the dead Osiris. “The lyrical song sung by Nut who beweeps Osiris depicts the goddess as the mother suckling her child; she calls Osiris to come to his mother in order to drink his sweet milk” (Dembska 1992: 113).

\[ \text{nh}_1 \text{ lln Nwt} \]
\[ \text{ml n=l iit=k bnr tt} \]
\[ n(n) \text{ wts} \]
\[ \text{mr=k wr} \]
\[ n sb r=k im=f \]
\[ \text{tnk mw}=k Nwt \]

Endure (?) child so says Nut
Come to me, your milk is sweet,
there is no souness
you want abundance
Your mouth did not cease with it.
I am your mother Nut

(p$chmitt 24,2- 24,6; Dembska 1992: 113-114)

Milk as sweet can be further seen in the Graeco-Roman texts on the island Bigge (see 3.2.1).
3.3 Milk for the dead
This section deals with milk offerings for individuals that were neither kings, nor Wives of the God. From that milk was described as given to the king in the funerary tests of the PT, it slowly came to be incorporated into the afterlife of the commoners. Pinch (1993: 179) concludes: “the king’s privilege of being suckled and licked by the divine cow was gradually extended to the non-royal dead” who was then identified with the Horus-King and rejuvenated by divine milk.

3.3.1 Milk and the 11th dynasty priestesses of Hathor from Deir el-Bahri
A group of priestesses of Hathor, some of which also were wives of the king, were buried within the temple of Mentuhotep Nebhepetre (Robins 1997: 87). They received the milk of cows and provide an interesting view of the funerary drinking of milk for royal individuals other than the king.

Reliefs from the shrine of Kemsit (TT 308 Deir el-Bahri; PM I: 1: 385-386; Naville 1913: 9), a 11th dynasty priestess of Hathor, and possibly a royal wife (Robins 1997: 81), provide more information about the drinking of milk in the afterlife. In one scene on her sarcophagus (Naville 1907 Pl. XXII) a man is milking the cow and storing the milk in a yellow jar.

On the sarcophagus of Kawit (Naville 1907: PL XX; Cairo Museum JE 47397), also an 11th dynasty priestess of Hathor, more scenes evokes the Horus-King and the Hathor cow. In scene II a servant is pouring liquid into a bowl with the words: “For your ka, mistress, drink that which I give you” (n k3=t bsnt swr dl=t n=rt). Naville (1907: 55) points out that this must refer to the milk taken from the cows of the priestess. In scene IV Kawit is seated and holding what seems to be a small jar to her mouth. Two cows with two calves stand in front of her. The colour of the jar is not however reproduced in the plate, so it is difficult to determine the degree of resemblance although a comparison can be made with a relief of the king Mentuhotep II from his chapel at Dendera (Fig.18) (PM VI: 106; Cairo Museum JE 46068). The king is seated and is offered various provisions. A man, who is followed by a cow and a suckling calf presents a jar with the inscription: s3rt tr3t nkt n tswt - Milking your own milk of the cows.

A scene from the shrine of Aashait (Naville 1910 Pl. XVII) shows her seated on a chair, smelling a lotus. Behind her, at a lower register stands a cow suckling her calf. Unfortunately the part which may have provided information about the offerings to her is missing. A similar scene is depicted in the shrine of Sadhe (Naville 1910 Pl. XI, XIII), where she is seated and being provided with a bowl by a servant. The register under her chair depicts a cow with a calf.

Pinch (1993: 173) writes that the cows are possibly tjnet cows - the sacred cows of Hathor. Pinch also includes a text from the CT (Spell 542) that expresses the wish of the dead to be identified with a tjnet cow, in order to reach the afterlife (1993: 173).

3.3.2 The milk of the goddess
3.3.2.1 The milk of Isis
The text on Louvre 213 (Minster 1968: 78), describes the dead receiving the milk of Isis.
Your corpse is noble
like the corpse of the *nh* god
Your *ba* rejoices over the provisions
in the place of *Wmn* *nfr*
Amun has performed the embalming
so that Isis may flow (with) her milk for you
Opening of (your) mouth
and rejoicing because of your *ka* being in every
good place

(Münster 1968: 78; Louvre 213)

The term for "to flow with" (*nhf*) (*Wb* II, 310:1, cf. Barta 1968: 158), is used in the New Kingdom, specifically for the flow of milk.

Just as with the king is described as being brought up by both Isis and Nephthys, the 18th dynasty papyrus of Nu describes the desire to be identified with the divine world by identifying with the king and his access to the two goddesses as wet nurses.

\[
\begin{align*}
Hr \ p\ w\ Wslr \ lmy \ r \ sdw\ s\ tw \ m \ nfr(r) \ nfr(w) & \quad \text{Horus, Overseer of the Treasury Nu}
ms. n \ sw \ mwtr=\ f \ sst & \quad \text{He who was born by his mother Isis}
rmx. n \ sw \ Nht \ hwt & \quad \text{He who was suckled by Nephthys}
mtr x. n \ = \ n \ fr & \quad \text{Like that she did for Horus}
\end{align*}
\]

(Book of the Dead 134, 9-134, 11, Papyrus of Nu, Brit. Mus. No. 10477; Budge 1898: 293)

A similar text can be found in the Papyrus of Ani from the 19th dynasty.

\[
\begin{align*}
Wslr \ lmy \ mst \ htw \ "nh \ lb" & \quad \text{Osiris, true of voice, may his heart live}
ms. n \ sw \ mwtr=\ f \ sst & \quad \text{He who was born by his mother Isis}
rmx. n \ sw \ Nht \ hwt & \quad \text{He who was suckled by Nephthys}
mtr x. n \ = \ n \ htr & \quad \text{like that they did for Horus}
\end{align*}
\]

(Book of the Dead 134, 11-134, 13; Papyrus of Ani, BM10470; Budge 2003: 509-519)

The text above identifies the dead with the Horus-King and Osiris. It also establishes a link between the deceased, the provider of milk and the reborn.

3.3.2.2 The milk of Hathor

The image of the cow and calf is further represented in private tombs. The image of the cow licking her calf stresses the identification of the deceased with Horus (Pinch 1993: 278). An example of the king being licked by the Hathor-cow just like a cow would lick her newborn calf is found at Deir el Bahri, (Naville 1901: Pl. CI). Similarly, suckling a goddess gave the dead divine attributes. A coffin from the 21st dynasty shows Hathor suckling the *ba* of the dead, in a setting of the mountains of the west (Pinch 1993: 178).

Hathor, the provider of milk for Horus and the king, is also very much connected with the seven celestial cows (Sayed 1980: 383). The seven cows were also the nurses of Ra and connected with the union of Ra and Osiris (Sayed 1980: 384).
This group of seven cows was, according to Sayed (1980: 385), a multiple form of Hathor that was found primarily in private tomb paintings. They nourished the dead: “The name of the fourth cow ‘She of Chemnis’- suggests the idea of the deceased being suckled” (Pinch 1993: 278). “She of Chemnis” would have an epithet of the cow, which stressed her relationship with Horus in the marshes. Chapter 166 of Book of the Dead, from the papyrus Nebesi (Budge 2003: 622) compares the deceased to Horus.

mtk Hr st Hwt Hr
(Book of the Dead 166, Papyrus of Nebesi BM 9900; Budge 2003: 622; Budge 1898: 421)

You are Horus, son of Hathor

In Chapter 186 of the Book of the Dead papyrus of Ani (Zayed 1962: 141), an image shows Ani’s tomb against a mountain-side and surrounded by papyrus, with a Hathor head amongst it, representing the cow and marsh symbol (Wasserman 1998: 170, Plate 37; Budge 2003: 330).

In private tombs of both the Old and New Kingdoms, images can be found of suckling cows and gazelles. In the Giza mastaba of Kapi (dynasty 5) and his wife (Roth 1995: 101 Mastaba G 2091) bulls and cows are depicted. A cow suckles her calf, and another is milked with her calf beside her. A verb is written above (sfrj) - milking. Another cow stands in the marshes (Roth 1995: Pl. 156). In another part of the mastaba a gazelle nurses her offspring (Roth 1995: 109, Pl. 59h).

A scene from the Theban tomb TT 68, from the 20th dynasty, shows a man and a woman worshipping divine cows. The man, a priest of Amun (Davies 1944: 64) and his wife are facing three cows. They all have the menat necklace, uraeus and sun disk, and one of them wears the atef-crown. It is possible that these cows were three of the seven Hathor cows.

3.3.2.3 The milk of the tree goddess
In a few cases, the suckling goddess is in the form of a tree goddess. It is not a usual image, and three examples involving non-royal individuals can be cited. One comes from a private 18th dynasty Theban tomb (Wenig 1967: Pl.36; Berlin Museum Äg.Inv.18534), and two funerary shrouds date from the Graeco-Roman Period, the first being from the Ptolemaic period (Fig. 19; Parlasca 1966 157-158) and the second from the Roman Period (Parlasca 1966: 82, 184 Tafel 34, 2; Berlin Museum Äg. Inv.13277). The time gap between these two sources is wide, with, however, the Graeco-Roman iconography displaying great similarity to the royal images from the New Kingdom of the king suckling a tree goddess.

A private tomb from Thebes describes the milk of the goddess. The text has been preserved, the image below it has however been destroyed. The text suggests that it may have accompanied the image of a tree goddess suckling the deceased.

\[ dl=\text{I suckle k m trgt=I} \]
\[ \text{I will grant that you may suckle my milk} \]
\[ \text{so that you may live} \]
\[ nh=k \]
\[ \text{so that you may be restored (to life)²} \]
\[ ndb=k \]
\[ \text{by my breasts} \]
\[ m bnty=l \]

² Referred to as sgb in Faulkner 1999: 257-258
joy and health are in them
they will enter you with life and dominion
like that which I gave my great son

These texts describe milk as giving life and health. It also connects the deceased with Horus, as the goddess is offering life and protection as she did for Horus.

3.3.3 Milk as offering for the dead
Milk was also included, in a limited fashion, as one of the offerings to the deceased in the funerary cult. A small statue (Maspero 1915 Pl. XXIII; Cairo JE 39590) found in a private tomb in Thebes, dating from the time of Akhenaton - Tutankhamun, is inscribed with a text that expresses the wish of the dead to receive milk in the afterlife:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hsp dl nsw} & \quad \text{An offering that the king gives} \\
\text{p3 lm thb shd} & \quad \text{This living sun disc who illuminates} \\
\text{sb nb m nfrwef} & \quad \text{the entire land with his beauty} \\
\text{dl=f tsw ntm n mhyt} & \quad \text{May he give the sweet wind of the north} \\
\text{tr k3 hr brtmtt nfr} & \quad \text{and a long lifetime in the beautiful west} \\
\text{kbrw lrpr lnk hr hsp} & \quad \text{Cool water, wine, milk on the altar} \\
\text{n lz=f} & \quad \text{of his tomb} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(JE 39590; Maspero 1915 Pl. XXIII, cf. Maspero 1915: 27 for a similar text)

This text is a hsp dl nsw offering text and is intended to provide various provisions. It documents the inclusion of milk as one of those provisions.

Inscriptions from two tombs of the Ramesside Period both have similar references to the libation of milk for the ka and ba of the deceased. The tomb of Anhurmore at Nag el Mashayikh from the reign of Merenptah (Ockinga and al-Masri 1988) refers to the use of milk as libation from the gods for the dead.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{rsl.t Bw (n) Wsr hnty lmmntyw} & \quad \text{[Giving praise (to) Osiris, the Foremost of the Westerners,]} \\
\text{Wmt [nfr sb hh] m Hwef} & \quad \text{Wen[nef]er who spends millions (of years)]] in his} \\
\text{dl=f prt hryw ksw} & \quad \text{lifetime} \\
\text{spdw kbr lrp ltt} & \quad \text{that he might give invocation [offerings] of oxen,} \\
\text{n ks Wsr nbi pr smy mt nnn R} & \quad \text{fowl, water libations, wine (and) milk} \\
\text{nb n.wt twy Shm.t Nfrt m sff hryw m hsp} & \quad \text{to the ka of Osiris, the Lady of the House,} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Ockinga and al-Masri 1988: 57-58, Text 53 I a, lines 1-6).

An additional reference to milk is found in Text 55 I c, in Anhurmore’s tomb.

Gods of Thonis, may you grant that Osiris the High Priest of Onuris, Anhurmore, be at the head of the noble one(s) in your company, (2) upon (3) his shoulder, bearing (4) the pure
drink requirements for your throats, (5) a jug (6) of faience in his hands (7) with milk which has come forth from the divine cow for your ka, for your ba and for the ka of all the noble ones. Osiris Greatest of the Seers of Shu, (8) the High Priest of Omuris, (Anhur)mose, justified. (translation cited in Ockinga and al-Masri 1988: 60, Text 55 I c).

In the tomb of Imiseba, also this period, a *htp di nsw* - offering tells of libations of milk along with bread, beer and wine:

“[A royal offering of] Osiris, Foremost of the [Westemers ..., Lord of] Shetayet that he may give bread, beer, ..., libations, w[ine], mi[lk, ...for] the ka (of) the [true] Royal Scribe (of the Two Lands, Imiseba, justified].” (translation cited in Ockinga and al-Masri 1990: 40 Text 5).

The statue of Kheruef, steward of the king in the time of Amenhotep III, has inscriptions on both the front and the left of a statue, where he wishes to receive milk for his ka from 2 *htp di nsw* formulas, the first one: “...a thousand of every good and pure thing to the ka of the noble, count, favorite of Horus the lord of the palace, and first herald of the king, Kheruef. May you receive the offerings that are issued upon the altar and the milk that is issued upon the offering table” (Epigraphic Survey 1980: 18). And the second: “...that pure food offerings may be given to you in the presence of Onnoporis, that you may eat cake and drink from the milk jug upon the offering table of the lords of Heliopolis...” (Epigraphic Survey 1980: 18).

The following citations from the Coffin Texts (CT) describe milk, provided to the dead in the afterlife with Anubis as the one who provides that milk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English 1</th>
<th>English 2</th>
<th>English 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Wsr N ms³ hrw</em></td>
<td>Osiris N true of voice</td>
<td>Anubis stands up after filling himself with milk which he will give</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ýf</em> <em>Inpw mhsf sw</em></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m lrt d(t)ty.fy</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>(CT VI, 412a)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ir=k</em> <em>lr r fn</em></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>r dln(w)==l r rd2.l(w)==l</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m sflux</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>T'ns</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>r rd2.l(w) mhr n(t) lrgt</em></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>snu pw n lwf</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>n N hwt ntr n Ynpw</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>wn r=mk n(m)=w</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>lw=f rht=n</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>in s m lrs ntr</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>(CT V, 72E-73a)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Another reference to a container of milk is found in Papyrus Pushkin 127 which is a private letter from the New Kingdom. The writer wishes his friend a long life and that he may be blessed in the afterlife, this includes
Meet those who are dead be far from you
May you go to the clay vessel holding milk

The reference to "the clay vessel that is holding milk" points to the provisions given to the dead. The text suggests that the vessel filled with milk is the mean for a long life.

3.3.4 Purification of the road in the funerary procession
The road to the tomb was purified with milk in connection with the funerary procession. A similar purification was performed on other events, such as the Opet Festival, when the road in front of the sacred bark was sprinkled with milk (see 2.1.4).

A description of the use of milk as purification in this burial rite is found in the 18th dynasty tomb of Dhoty at Thebes (TT 110).

A good burial comes in peace
all 70 days have ended in your embalming house
you are placed on a bier
being pulled by perfect bulls
sprinkling the way with milk for your arrival
to the door of your tomb

Another text, which expresses the wish to purify the road to the tomb, is cited by Barta (1968: 92 Bitte 53b): "They have granted that the roads may open with milk in order that you may reach the opening of your tomb" (di=nw wp w:t m lirit r ph=k r s= k). Milk purified the path leading to the tomb, similar to the purification performed for the road on which the bark of the god travelled during the Opet Festival (Epigraphic Survey 1994: 5, 37). A scene from the tomb of Apy (Fig. 20) depicts this purification as a priest is shown holding a milk jar and sprinkling the milk before the coffin (Davies 1927: 49).

4 Milk for Healing
The milk that served as a remedy for the sick was identified as a divine fluid of Isis (Ritner 1982: 294, Desroches-Noblecourt 1952: 49). According to myth, Isis’s milk healed gods like Horus and Osiris. When Horus was hiding in the marshes after his birth, he was vulnerable to all sorts of danger, like snake bites, scorpion bites and diseases. Isis healed him from these bites and diseases (Quirke and Spencer 1997: 67).

The power of milk demonstrated in myth was adapted in medical-magical texts, where the sick would identify himself with Horus the child (Assman 2001: 131; Pinch 1994: 140). This is seen in the Edwin Smith Papyrus.

the mouth of this man under my fingers and so forth
rn bkn bknw
pr=f m hnt n mwṣ=f
(pEdwin Smith, 19, 14-19, 17; Breasted 2006: 482-483)

4.1 Milk as remedy
The majority of the references come from the medical Papyrus Ebers, dated to the 18th dynasty reign of Amenhotep I (Nunn 1996: 34; Wreszinski 1913: IV) and the medical/magical papyrus Berlin 3027, also from the 18th dynasty (Nunn 1996: 37; Erman 1901: 6), a papyrus with spells for mother and child.

4.1.1 Milk of the goddess

4.1.1.1 The healing milk of Isis
In magical-medical spells, the milk of Isis was considered as a highly powerful remedy, and is used in various spells. The healing milk of Isis can be found in both myths (such as Horus and Seth) and in medical sources. The 'milk of a woman who had borne a male child' referred to the milk of Isis (Ritner 1982: 294, Desroches-Noblecourt 1952: 49), and was used as a treatment in medical papyrus (Browarski 1982: 294).

A treatment for eye diseases
A mixture of milk and grain was used as a remedy for bleeding eyes.

kt nṣ ṣfr hbr lıty
š 2 n 3 w³ ḫr ḫn n mmṣy
lịt tnst ṣḥy
kfr ḫfr lịt ṣhr n sḏk=k ʾr mb lıty=k
mn mn mmṣy ḫn r n ʾr ʾn
kw ḫr=k lıty mn lịt šp 4 ʾr ʾnb

(pEbers, 384:60,13-60,17; Wreszinski 1913: 107-108)

In another prescription, milk is mixed with the minerals used for eye paint, for a case of inflammation of the eyes.

kt nṣ ṣmḥi ḫn lıty
ḏfr ṣḍm n ṣndt wḏk
lịt tnst ṣḥy
lr ḫn ḫn ṣḥ

Another (spell) for driving out blood from the eyes
2 bowls of clay, one with flower of seed of corn,
milk of one who has borne a male (child)
other with milk for filling your eyes
with these seeds of corn after this
washing of you your eyes with this milk 4 times every day

Another (spell) for driving out red inflammation in the eyes
dḏrt, eye paint of ṣndt, green eye paint
milk from one who has borne a male
Make into one thing

1 Breasted 2006: 483 suggests this translation to be a (hungry) calf, or possibly a term of suckling
4 Wb IV :11
Placing thereafter on the eyes
(pEbers 408: 62,9-62,11; Wreszinski 1913: 112)

And further another eye disease referred to as bḥḏ comes from pEbers 368, which involves intricate ingredients such as black eye paint (mṣḏmt mšʔ) fat of a duck (mṛḥt st) and milk of a woman who has borne a (male) child (lṛṯt nt mst ḫy), among other ingredients, to be prepared for several days until applied on the eyes (pEbers 368: 59,6-59,11; Wreszinski 1913: 104).

The use of the milk of a woman who has borne a male child in the treatment of eye disease can be paralleled by the treatment of the eyes of Horus with milk, as found in the story The Contendings of Horus and Seth (see 4.2.1).

Treatment for burns

Another text refers to Horus suffering from burns in the desert. Here too the treatment consists of the milk of Isis: “da löscht Isis es mit der Milch und dem Wasser ihres Leibes”.

\[
\begin{align*}
m \text{ lṛṯt-i} & \\
m \text{ mwn swb lmyw mngw} = i & \\
(\text{p.London} 10059; \text{Münster 1968: 12}) & \\
\end{align*}
\]

With my milk,
with the healing water which is in my breasts

A prescription from Papyrus Ebers reads.

\[
\begin{align*}
si=i \text{ ḫr wḥd bḥḥ st} & \\
\text{n mwn ltn} & \\
n \text{ wi ltn} & \\
\text{ int mwn bḥ ṣpt} & \\
\text{ nwḥ ℛ ṣm ṣt} & \\
\text{ dd}=i \text{ ḫr lṛṯt nt mst ḫy} & \\
(\text{pEbers 500 69,6-69,8; Wreszinski 1913: 131}) & \\
\end{align*}
\]

My son Horus is burnt in the desert.
There is no water there
I am not there
Bring water from the shore
and liquid to extinguish the fire
To be recited over milk of a woman who has borne a male (child)

Milk was used as water in this context. A comparison between water from the Nile and milk can be seen in a passage from the Pyramid Texts.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ltn m=k lṛṯt ṣt n} & \\
\text{ ṭṭ ḫṭb nḫt ḥwt} & \\
(\text{PT 707a}) & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Bring the milk of Isis and
the floodwater of Nephthys

There is a ritual that consists of putting out torches in a pool of milk (Schott 1937: 1-25). The ritual occurs in the sanctuary of Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahri (Schott 1937: 6). These basins were to be filled with the milk of the White Cow. A text from Book of the Dead, the Papyrus of Nu, chapter 137a, referred to as Chapter of the Four Torchges (Budge 2003: 653) reads:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ṣw 4 n ṣm} & \\
\text{ḥwt bḥḥ snṯḥ} & \\
\text{mḥ m lṛṯt m ḥḥt ḫti} & \\
4 \text{basins of clay,} & \\
\text{grind in incense} & \\
\text{fill with milk of a white cow} & \\
\end{align*}
\]
A text from Deir el Bahri provides further evidence of the use of basins of milk.

\[\text{sw wr ltr tr.n hm=s} \]
\[\text{r wn hr gsw rj pn} \]
\[\text{lt hj m Dw tr dw(w)} \]
\[\text{nh=tt dt} \]

That Her Majesty made the basins of milk was in order to exist in the presence of this god at the time of peace in Deir el-Bahri Living forever

(Schott 1937: 2)

The ritual of putting out burning torches in basins of milk can be seen in Deir el-Bahri (Schott 1937: Taf. 1 and 2), and was included in a ritual and originates from Book of the Dead 137a (Schott 1937: 6 note 3). A relationship is seen between the story of how Horus was treated for burns with milk and the use of milk for extinguishing torches.

**Treatment for b**

A similar use of milk as a treatment is seen in another story of Horus, who as a small child, was afflicted with a disease known as b (\(\text{Wb I: 446}\)). The cure for b is described in papyrus Berlin 3027.

\[\text{sw hr ltr} \]
\[\text{ms ft} \]

Ward off with the milk of a one who has borne a male.

(p\(\text{Berlin 3027 7,4; Erman 1901: 29}\))

**Milk in Anthropomorphic Jars**

Used as a remedy, milk was put in containers. These vessels depict a seated woman. The most common variants of this vessel include a child on the lap of the woman (Desroches-Noblecourt 1952: Fig. 3, Fig. 6; Louvpe no AF 1.660). An unusual jar has the woman holding a limp child on her lap (Fig. 21), with her right hand on her right breast. The posture of the child suggests that he is sick. This jar provides a visual expression of the function of a woman’s milk as vital for the health of the child.

The milk that was referred to as “the milk of a woman who has born a male child” in the medical texts (Browarski 1982: 294), represented the milk of Isis. “For this substance, by being placed into these jars, probably to the accompaniment of some incantations, was thereby identified with the milk that Isis fed her child; hence its miraculous virtues” (Grivetti 1977: 764).

These containers, filled with milk, strengthened the association with the milk of Isis, transforming it into a magical fluid and a powerful remedy. The ritual probably involved recitations over the milk prior to it being used in treatments, such as those described above.

A spell from the Berlin Papyrus 3027 has the title “Protective spell for a woman with milk” (\(\text{WdW}^5 \text{ st hr lrtt pBerlin 3027, verso 9,7; Erman 1901: 35}\)). A mythical tale then follows

\(^5\text{WdW} \) can mean both amulet and protective spell, so it is likely that wordplay has been used.
about a misdeed in the sky and in the underworld (Erman 1901: 37). The goddess Tity, the
goddess of weaving (Erman 1901: 37) created an amulet for driving away enemies and placed it
around the neck of Horus. Instructions are given to mothers how to make this protective amulet
and place it around the neck of a child. The spell continues:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lr} & \text{mty m mtt} \\
\text{br} & \text{r r irf}
\end{align*}
\]
acting against enemies, dead and (more) dead
A woman with magic spells of milk
(pBerlin 3027, recto 1a-1b, Erman 1901: 35-36)

This text informs us that the milk can be used both for treatment and for protection against
enemies. Protective amulets for nursing mothers made in the form of knots or wands were used to
protect the mother’s milk (Pinch 1994: 130-131).

The milk of Sekhmet could also be used for protection of the temples (see 5.1).

4.1.1.2 The milk of Wadjet
The treatment for driving away the illness ssmy was the milk of the goddess Wadjet:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dr ssmy} & \\
\text{i nym mw} & \text{Driving away ssmy,}
\end{align*}
\]
O, you who are in the water
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ls gd n=k khab pw} & \\
\text{imy kl=f} & \text{Go and say it is the judge}
\end{align*}
\]
who is in his shrine
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Shmt tt=fh f=f} & \\
\text{2 n(k)t(f) n=f} & \text{Sekhmet comes behind him}
\end{align*}
\]
2nd appears
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{W3dt ntw dpw} & \\
\text{ln n=f m irf} & \text{Wadjet, mistress of Buto}
\end{align*}
\]
bring to her this milk
(pBerlin 3027 7-8; Erman 1901: 31)

4.1.1.3 The milk of Hesat
The text from Papyrus Juniiac, dealing with the imy wt of Anubis (Vandier 1961: 124) tells of a
crime against Osiris. In Papyrus Juniiac (XII:22 – XIII:10) the gods of the Ennead, together
with Ra describes flesh as having originated from milk.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lr lnw=f hnn inn=f} & \\
\text{shpr. n=(sm) nwt=f m irf=f} & \text{Regarding his flesh and his skin}
\end{align*}
\]
they were created by his mother with her milk

Further, the milk of Hesat is here the source of healing his skin. She first milked her breasts, and
then the milk was treated by beating it and then made into fat, that was placed on his skin;

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{wnn Hesat mn lb=f hrf=f} & \\
\text{shpr. N=s n=frt=f m whm} & \text{Hesat was happy because of him}
\end{align*}
\]
she created for him her milk again
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hr whm n=s tw=f} & \\
\text{ln=s hr frt m nwh=m=r=s} & \text{and again when he was born}
\end{align*}
\]
she milked her milk from the top of her breasts

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{A goddess (Wb III: 289)}
\end{align*}
\]
iw=s rdj r lm=f m st in
hr tw lm=s
lw=s n lr skn m 3dh=s lm=s
srw=sw lm=f "w=f lm=w

she places under his skin in this place
by beating on it
she made a jar of her fat from it
healing of his skin and his flesh by them

The text also describes the sacred cows that were held in the temples and they were the reincarnations of the cow deities, whose milk were used as remedies:

hpr lsm m hnw n thy nb
lw=tw lw lw r fr lm=s r m n hwen pn
ir p'y nw3 ltw=st s'hr lw lm=f
3dh pw htr "tr=f
hr ir prw lm=wr swrw=sw f

skin is becoming in every stable
one is beating milk in it till this day
regarding this support which is beaten,
it is a pot with a staff
with which medicine is made for healing his flesh

Osiris then becomes healthy again:

wn=f hr snh m st in
lw=f rrd w=f m wb
sm=f m whm kw=f

he is healthy in this place
his flesh is strong for him again
his form is rejuvenated again

This is another example of the milk of Isis being used for healing and the protection of the child. Hesat, who also appears as the provider of milk for Osiris in Bigg's, is here the donor of milk when he ascends to the gods. The milk is described as being prepared in the stables, which might indicate that sacred cows of Hesat and Hathor were kept in the stables at the temples. The milk, prepared, was used as medicine. The body was healed (srw=sw) becoming that of a child.

4.2 The White Eye of Horus

4.2.1 The myth of the White Eye of Horus

The story of the White Eye of Horus comes from the text known as the Contendings of Horus and Seth, dated to the Ramesside period. In this story an argument between Horus and Seth is described. Seth found Horus in the mountains, resting under a tree; he then grabbed him and threw him on the ground. Thereafter, he cut out the Horus's eyes. The eyes landed on the ground and in the dawn they had grown into lotuses. Seth went to the Ennead and lied about having met Horus. Then Hathor found Horus while he was lying on the ground and she healed him:

wn.in [hwt hr nb]a nht ray hr smt
iw=s [hr] gmr Hr
lw=f [hr] sgr hr rm khr ts hst
wn.lw=s mnh m w^ w ghs
lw=s [hr] hr=s
lw=s hr gd n Hr

Then Hathor came, mistress of the southern sycamore
and she found Horus
and he was lying down, and crying in the desert.
Then she caught a gazelle
and she milked it
and she said to Horus

7 See chapter 3.2.1
Open your eye(s)!
so that I may place the milk there
Then he opened his eye(s)
and she placed the milk there
she placed in the right
she placed in the left
and she said to him
Open your eye(s)!
And he opened his eye(s)
and she saw them
and she found them being whole

(Condendings of Horus and Seth; p.Chester Beatty I, 10, 6- 10, 9; Gardner 1932: 50-51)

The gazelle could be associated with deities such as Isis (Pinch 1993: 313, Hopkins 1997: 31) or
Anukis (Peterson 1973: 77; Hart 1986: 27) who can be represented as one (Shaw and Nicholson
1995: 34). Anukis is seen nursing Ramses II in his temple at Beit el-Wali (See 2.1).

Hathor also plays a vital part here, as the one who heals Horus. Hathor came to be
associated with curing blindness (Pinch 1993: 257) and the White Eye came to be a symbol for
healing. In a passage from Abydos, there is a description of how Ptah fills his eyes with milk:
"The gardens flourish, oh, Pah, Lord of Truth.....the flood rejoices; those which are in him,
the two eyes are filled with its milk..." (translation cited in David 1973: 56). The eye of Horus
can be a substitute for various foods or other attributes like Osiris’s fluid, as well as the milk of
Isis (Ritner 1993: 103, note 500) that is consumed in order to restore the body (Ritner 1993:
103).

4.2.2. The White Eye of Horus for Osiris
In the temple of Bigge the White Eye of Horus is described as a healing remedy for the body of
Osiris.

May your limbs live through milk
May your skeleton be healthy through the white
Horus-eye
Abundance of offerings by His Majesty
with this white Horus eye

5 Milk for the Temples

5.1 Milk as protection of the temple
During the Greco-Roman Period, deities like Best and Taweret were depicted just outside
the temple as protection. Inside the temples a new tradition arose using amulets and figurines as
A text from the temple of Hathor at Dendara cites the use of milk for the protection of the House of the Sistrums, which was located in the southeastern part of the temple (Cauville 2004: 68-69, fig. 11). Here it is the milk of Sekhmet that is the protective force.

\[
\begin{align*}
stel3(t) & \ n(t) \ wart \\
munt \ hw \ s\=\=\=t & \text{Hidden place of the strong ones} \\
\text{dr} \ kj \ |j\=jw \ r \ hw & \text{in the House of Sistrums} \\
n \ \text{t}\(x\) \ s\(x\) \ sm & \text{When enemies comes to the place} \\
n \ \text{tjun} \ s\(x\) \ $sw & \text{The Asians do not enter it} \\
n \ \text{nmt} \ s\(x\), hsw \ mr \ s & \text{The Bedouins do not damage it} \\
\text{nb} \ k\(x\) \ ds \ r=s & \text{The paupers do not wander through it} \\
\text{jr} \(x\) \(-\) d\(x\)nt \ m \ h^2-asn & \text{Anyone who recites against it} \\
\text{(Waitkus 1997: 87 O2A-1)} & \text{Sekhmet-milk is in their body}
\end{align*}
\]

The determinative used after \text{irrt-\text{dymt}} is not the expected milk jar, instead of the usual determinative \(\text{\(\delta\)}\), the sign for flame has been used \(\text{\(\delta\)}\) (Waitkus 1997: 90 note 9), associating the milk of Sekhmet with fire as a protective force.

5.2 Milk as libation in the temples
Some offering lists in temples include libations of milk. This category deals with libations for the gods performed by the king or priests, as well as offerings in festivals.

5.2.1 Milk in ritual offerings
From Thutmose III's annals describing his military campaigns is a text where he describes cattle as gifts, namely milk-cows, so they might provide milk for the temple.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(Urk. IV 743, 11-743, 17, Breasted II 1906: 233 §556)}
\end{align*}
\]

Thutmose III also gave instructions to his priests to fill the altars with milk.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Sdwt \ n=i \ hsw \ m \ irxt} & \text{offerings for the altars with milk} \\
\text{(Urk. IV 753, 10)} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

A text from the 25th dynasty king Piankhy’s ritual offerings for the temple at Heliopolis consists of various offerings for Ra.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hfr \ hr \ r \ m \ whn=f} & \text{before the face of Ra when he rose}
\end{align*}
\]
Two lists from Karnak dated to Tuthmosis IV and Akhenaten, include milk (el-Saabon 2000: 143-145). For rites and offerings in the temples, an offer list of Thutmose IV consists of “milk, mhn jars, 1, from divine offerings, offering-meat: flesh of the ribs” (el-Saabon 2000: 143), and the offer list of Akhenaten from Karnak says: “1. Milk...” (el-Saabon 2000: 144). From Medinet Habu, an offering list of Ramses III reads: “Milk in milk jars 2 daily, from the herds of the House of Wosermaatre Meriamon in the estate of Amon.” (el-Saabon 2000: 66, List 1, section 5: 118).

5.2.1.1 Milk offerings for the temple
Milk was also included as a ritual offering in the lists found as part of the Festival Calendar. For the Ra-temple in Heliopolis the records gives an account of the number of jars of milk:

- 8600 (ltrt, Erichsen 1933: 42)
- 12040 (ltrt mnst, Erichsen 1933: 44)
- 198 (ltrt m ʿ kwy, Erichsen 1933: 45)

And for the temple of Ptah at Memphis:

- 2396 (l ltrt mnst, Erichsen 1933: 63)

The number of the milk jars mentioned in the text above seems rather large considering that milk in itself could not be produced on the same scale as for example wine or beer. This amount of milk must have required a large number of cows.

Other lists that deal with temple offerings seem to have a more reasonable request of milk. For the Sokar Festival of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (el-Saabon 2000: 105) only a single jar of milk was required (el-Saabon 2000: 105, List 43). On the 6th day of the Festival of Sokar the offerings were for Ptah-Sokar, Osiris and Nefertem (el-Saabon 2000: 108).

- 1068. milk in jars 15"
- 1098. thin clothes as rags for milk-jars […]"
- 1099. vessels on altars for milk-jars […]

(el-Saabon 2000: 110)

Other festivals dedicated to Amun required milk as well:

- Processional Feast of Amon 1451
- New Moon Festival of Amon-Re 1468 ...milk, bowls 4


Medinet Habu, the temple of Ramses III where for the Sokar Festival is depicted (el-Saabon 2000: 66, 105) is described as having herds (of cattle), which might suggest that herds were indeed kept close to the temple areas for the providing of milk.
6 The Forbidden Milk

6.1 The 25th day of Peret

Examples of the milk as forbidden are noted in the Cairo Calendar. On the 25th day of the month of Peret consuming milk was forbidden:

- **spd j prtw 25**
  - 1st Month of Peret, day 25
- **bmt=k wmm trt m r² pn**
  - You should not consume milk on this day
- **snn n lqst wrt**
  - of establishing of Hesat, the Great,
- **m bth hm n R²**
  - in front of Majesty of Ra

(Cairo Calendar no. 86637; Leitz 1994: 218-219)

Leitz (1994: 220) writes that the 25th day of 1st month of Peret was the day of the beginning of offering festivals to Ra. The establishment of Hesat in front of Ra is very likely a part of the festival taking place on this special day, where a cow (probably a statue but could also have been a real cow, perhaps one of the tjentet-cows), is placed in front of Ra so that she may give her milk as libation to him.

6.2 Milk as parallel to blood

Chaeasmon, a Stoic philosopher who lived in Egypt during the 1st century AD, wrote about the ancient Egyptian priests that they should “...abstain from egg, as if it is meat, and from milk. They said that the former (sc. an egg) was liquid meat, the latter (sc. milk) blood with a changed colour” (Horst 1984: 23 Fragment 11). This idea is likely to have originated with the Greeks. Hippocrates (King 1998: 34) wrote that the Greeks saw the milk of a nursing woman as excess menstrual blood which had been stored in the body throughout the nine months of pregnancy. They saw the blood as converted into breastmilk.

7 Summary and Conclusions

This essay has examined the functions and symbolism of milk in religious, mythological and medical contexts, and its role in legitimation, rejuvenation, purification and healing. Various goddesses provided the king with milk, acted as his nurses and adopted the king, sometimes by the order of Amon.

This situation provided the king with divine power and a connection to the gods. Various goddesses interacted with him, calling him their son, paralleling the king to Horus. The divine suckling was part of the transition the culminated in the coronation, as the king went from being a prince to a king, with dominion over the people and the foreign countries. Further, periodic renewal was provided by the Opet and Sed Festivals. The only person, other than the king, that had this interaction was the God’s Wife of Amon. She was given the divine milk in connection with her coronation during the Late Period.

Milk functioned as a means of resurrection for the dead. For the resurrection of the dead, both the king and the public were provided with milk in the afterlife, and it was frequently requested as an offering by the dead. The dead would compare themselves either to the
resurrected Osiris, the newborn Horus or the reborn Ra. The Osiran temple of Bigge came to incorporate all these ideas in its period of activity during the Graeco-Roman Period. Here all the ideas of resurrection were embodied in its daily rituals for Osiris, such as providing daily milk offerings for Osiris, in order for him to be reborn daily.

Milk representing that of a goddess was used in medical instances. The sick would identify himself with the sick Horus, and be provided with the milk of a woman that had born a male child. This milk was symbolical, and in order for it to become the divine milk of Isis, it was placed in jars with the shape of a woman and recited over. The White Eye of Horus, associated with the healing powers of milk functioned as a parallel healing force and was given to Osiris in order to "heal" him from death.

Milk could be used as a protective force, for the child and for the temples. It was also used for purification of the king and Osiris, and for the road in the Opet Festival and that was used to carry the coffin to the tomb.

The temples requested milk for various festivals and rituals, in some cases thousands of jars. According to the Cairo Calendar, milk was forbidden for at least one day a year. This appears to be related to the fact that it was on this day that Ra was provided with milk from the Hesat-cow. The Greek philosopher Chaeremon records a belief that Egyptian priest were forbidden to drink milk. This may have originated in the Greek belief that milk was a form of blood.
Fig. 1: From Mariette 1869: Pl. 25. Temple of Seti I, Abydos

Fig. 2: David 1981: 38, Temple of Seti I, Abydos. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 3: Habachi 1963: 24, Fig. 8. Ka-chapel of Mentuhotep II, Dendera. Removed because of copyright.
Fig. 4: Detail of Figure 2
Removed because of copyright

Fig. 5: Davies 1973: Pl. IX
TT 93, Tomb of Kenamun
Removed because of copyright

Fig. 6: Davies 1953; Pl. 13. Temple of Hibe.
Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 7: From Bruyère 1930: Fig. 18. Valley of
the Queens, Sanctuary of Ptah, Chapel of
Ptah and Meretseger.
Fig. 8: From Tait 1963: 116, Fig. 5. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 9: From Epigraphic Survey 1994: Pl. 99 Karnak. Removed because of Copyright

Fig. 10: From Moret 1926: 116, Fig. 24 Philae.
Fig. 11: From Billing 2002: 354, Fig. A.27 Dendera. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 12: From Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968: 209, Fig. 33. Gebel el-Silsila Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 13: From Keel 1980:81, Fig. 42. Deir el-Bahri. Removed because of copyright.

Fig. 14: Drawn by author from Pinch 1993: Pl. 9, Deir el-Bahri.
**Fig. 15:** From Beinlich 1991: 109, Fig. 45. Fayum. Removed because of copyright.

**Fig. 16:** From Billing 2002: 399; Fig. D.12 (with references). Removed because of copyright.

**Fig 17:** From Säve-Söderbergh 1957: 42, Pl. XLII, Thebes
Fig 18: From Habachi 1963: 24, Fig. 7, Dendera. Removed because of copyright.

Fig 19: From Parlasca 1966: 158, Fig. 8. Removed because of copyright.

Fig 20: From Davies 1927: Pl. XXVIII, Tomb of Apy, Amarna.
Fig 21: Drawn by author from Desrouches-Noblecourt 1952: 59, Fig. 2.
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Abbreviations

AHAW Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist.
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AO Analecta Orientalia, Rome.

ASAE Annales du service des antiquités de l’Égypte, Cairo.

ÄA Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, Wiesbaden.

Bae Bibliotheca Aegyptica, Bruxelles.

BIFAO Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, Cairo.

BSAE British School of Archeology in Egypt, London.

EEF Mem Egypt Exploration Fund/Society Excavation Memoires.

IFAO Institut Français D’Archeologie Orientale, Cairo.


LÄ Lexicon der Ägyptologie, Wiesbaden.

MÄS Münchner ägyptologische Studien, Munich.

MIFAO Mémoires publiés par les membres de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, Cairo.

MDAIK Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Cairo, Mainz am Rhein.


OBO Orbis Biblius et Orientalis: Göttingen/Freiburg.

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PM I:2 Porter and Moss 1964.

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PT Sehe 1908-10.

RecTrav Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l’archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes, Paris.


SAK Studien zur Alägyptischen Kultur, Hamburg.

SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, Chicago.

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USE Uppsala Studies in Egyptology, Uppsala.


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