



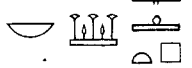




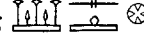
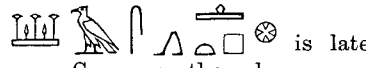



The Cult-animal of Set.









By P. E. Newberry.


The animal of Set  is named  in a hunting scene at Beni Hasan (*BH* II pl. IV), and in a religious text of the Old Kingdom recently found by Quibell at Saqqara (*Saqqara*, 1906—7, p. 50). Upon the  it forms the ensign of the XIth or Hypselite nome of Upper Egypt¹). At Dêr Rîfeh (Griffith, *Siût and Dêr Rîfeh* pl. 18) where lies the cemetery of the Hypselite nome, there is mentioned a deity  who is described as  ²) „Lord of the City *Sha-s-htp*“. *Sha-s-htp* ($\Psi\omega\tau\eta$ شطن) was the Capital of the Hypselite nome and *Sha* or *Shau*³) being the god of the city, suggests that the place-name should be interpreted as meaning „Sha is contented“, or „pacified“. *Sha-s-htp* we may therefore take to have been the early seat of the  cult.













1) In the Nome Lists of Sesostris I (Licht) and Thotmes III (Dêr el Bahari) the animal is represented lying down : in the List of Thotmes III (Luxor) it is seen sitting on its haunches : in that of Nectanebo (Medinet Habu) the *sha*-animal is figured lying with a knife fixed in its forehead: in that of Alexander (Karnak) the creature has its head cut off. In the Lists of Sety I and Ramses II (both Abydos) the animal ensign is replaced by .

2) On a XIIth Dynasty coffin from Rîfeh we have the spelling  (Petrie, *Gizeh & Rîfeh*, pl. XIII). The reading  is late and probably due to a mistaken etymology. Compare the place-name  (Brugsch, *Dict. geogr.* 792) in Nubia where Horus overtook the Set worshippers in the Horus legend (Schäfer, *Klio* IV, p. 122).

3) *Sha* is named as a Libyan god on a monument of the IVth Dynasty at Cairo. Compare also the New Kingdom stela, Cairo No. 34009.

The name¹⁾ of this deity is found as early as the IInd Dynasty. It was then written   or   and occurs on seal impressions of Per-âb-sen (Petrie, *RT* II, 178 etc.), and Khâ-sekhemui (*ibid.*, 200 etc.). It appears to have been about this time that the *Sha*-worship was at its zenith, for Per-âb-sen places the cult-animal above his *s-rkh*-name (*ibid.*, pls. XXII, XXXI.) which would indicate that he was a Chieftain of the Hypselite district²⁾. Khâ-sekhemui, who followed him on the throne, places the Falcon as well as the *Sha*-animal above his *s-rkh*-name (*ibid.*, pls. XXII, XXIV) suggesting that an alliance had been formed between the two opposing clans. A reminiscence of this alliance is found in the Old Kingdom title of the Queens of Egypt     (*LD* II 14 a. Mariette *MD* 5. 14. 18).

What was the actual animal represented by ? Champollion, Rosellini, Wilkinson and Lepsius all held that it was a purely imaginary creature³⁾. Pleyte⁴⁾ thought that it was a degenerated form of the figure of an ass; Brugsch⁵⁾ of an oryx. Maspero⁶⁾ considered it to be either the fennec or the jerboa; Breasted⁷⁾ and Wiedemann⁸⁾, the okapi; Lefébure⁹⁾ says „a dog and more specially a greyhound“; Loret¹⁰⁾ imagined „un lévrier d'un genre tout spécial“; Lortet has suggested the tapir; and

1) Other names of this deity were, of course,   and   and    . Can these names have originated from a dislike on the part of the Egyptians to utter the real name of this most hated god?   „it“;   „he“. These might easily be names of opprobrium. Frazer (*Totemism and Exogamy* I, p. 16) says, „as some totem clans avoid looking at their totems, so others are careful not to speak of it by its proper name but use descriptive epithets instead“. See further on this subject, Frazer, *Golden Bough*² vol. I, pp. 453, 457, 462. In the light of my identification (see below) of the *Sha*-animal it is interesting to note that the Rabbis will not defile their lips with the word „pig“ but say *dabhar akhir* „another thing“. (Burton, *Arabian Nights* vol. 1 p. 173, note on Night 19). Compare p. 399 note 4 below.

2) A tradition survived as late as the 14th century A. D. of the kings of Schuteb (Dümichen, *Geschichte*, p. 177).

3) See Maspero, *Dawn*, p. 103.

4) *La Religion des Pré-Israélites* p. 187. — 5) *Religion* 703, 716.

6) *Dawn*, p. 103 and Lange in Chantipie de la Saussaye's *Lehrbuch der Religionsgesch.*² p. 204.

7) *History of Egypt*, p. 30.

8) *OLZ* 5 p. 220 having abandoned his theory of the camel (*Religion*, p. 117).

9) *L'animal typhonien* in the *Sphinx* II (1898), pp. 63—74.

10) *PSBA* XXVIII p. 131.

Thilenius¹⁾ considers the animal to be a long-snouted mouse (*macroseelides*). Erman²⁾ remarks that „the animal by which Set is represented or whose head he wears was considered in later times to be a donkey, although at least he could only have been a caricature of one. Probably it was intended for some animal with which the Egyptians were unfamiliar in historic times“. A comparison of the earliest figure of the animal (see fig. 1) with the ass, oryx, fennec and okapi at once forbids any such identification. It is true that the later examples of the sign show some resemblance to the greyhound, but these late examples are all highly conventionalised, and the tail is, as Borchardt has recently shown³⁾, invariably represented as an arrow! The head in all examples resembles somewhat that of a tapir but that animal has a characteristically short and stumpy tail, and moreover, tapirs are not known in Africa, being, now at all events, confined to Central and South America or the Malay Archipelago; they are also dwellers in dense forests where water is abundant. The question as to the identification of the Set-animal is therefore still an open one.

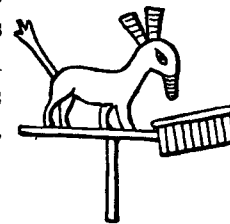


Fig. 1.


The earliest known figure occurs on the mace-head of the Scorpion king in the Ashmolean Museum (see above fig. 1); it shows the animal with longish body, short legs, a long snoutish head, curiously erect ears and an erect tail. The stereotyped form of later times is very different to this, for it is characterised by a long slender body with slender legs⁴⁾.

A hint as to the actual animal, is, I think, to be obtained from a mythological text. In Chapter CXII of the *Book of the Dead*, Set is said to transform himself into a black hog — *Swti pw ir-nf khprw-f m Šaà km*. In the same chapter we read of the sacrifice of swine, and of swine being an abomination of Horus, the traditional enemy of Set. In a late text (Piehl, *Inscr. Hierogl. Nouvelle série*, pl. 104. 9) the pig or wild boar is named as the Typhonian animal. Herodotus (II, 45, 47) also tells us that swine were offered in sacrifice by the Egyptians, and Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride* VIII) says that a sow was offered to Typho

1) *Rec. de travaux* XXII, p. 214.

2) *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* p. 20. — 3) *ÄZ* 46, 90.

4) Just as the Egyptians avoided using the name of this animal, so they avoided figuring it in its true character. Naville (*Études archéologiques . . . dédiées à Mr. le Dr. Leemans* p. 75) has noted that when the Egyptians had to represent a pig a certain superstition made them give this animal a conventional form and they often substituted the hippopotamus (cp. Lanzone *Dit. Mit.* pl. 380). That swine were well known in Egypt from an early date is certain. Methen (Sethe, *Urkunden* I, p. 3) possessed a herd; the peasant in the tale of the Peasant (Vogelsang und Gardiner, *Die Klagen des Bauern*, pl. 24, l. 138) also had pigs. Renni

(Set) „once a year“¹). These facts are sure evidence of three things: first, that swine were at one time worshipped in Egypt; second that there was some connection between the cult-animal of Set and swine; and third that swine were particularly abominated by Horus worshippers. Now the name of the hog was , which as we have seen, was the name of the Set animal.

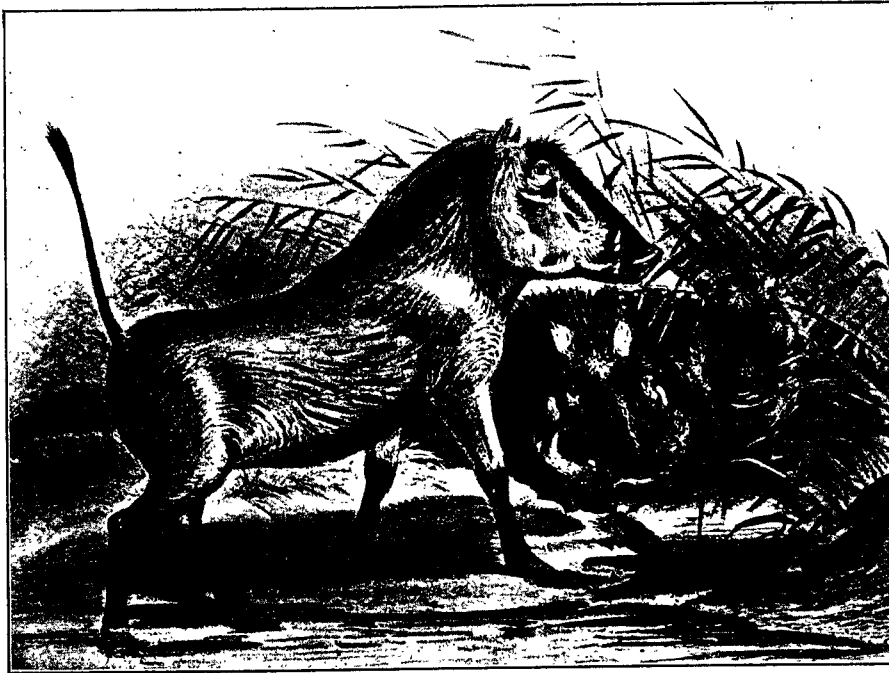


Fig. 2. *Phacochoerus africanus*.

On comparing the earliest known figure of the Set animal with the various species of African swine, distinct points of resemblance will be (El Kab) possessed no less than 1500. In two tombs in the Drah abu'l Negga at Thebes (date Thotmes III) swine are figured (Northampton, Spiegelberg, Newberry, *Theban Necropolis* pp. 13. 14. pl. XIII). From this evidence we cannot doubt that swine were extensively bred in Egypt, so it is all the more remarkable that they are so rarely found on the monuments. The domesticated pig when left to run wild apparently reverts to a slender type. The Rev^d. A. L. Cortie of Stonyhurst College writes to me thus of the descendants of the pigs left by Capt. Cook on Vavau Island: „they were long, lean and sharp-faced with long snout, giving the impression that they were like in agility, and somewhat in appearance, to greyhounds“.

1) Compare the sacrifice of the ram of Amon by the Thebans „once a year“ in Herodotus II, 42. J. G. Frazer (*Golden Bough*³ Part. V, vol. II, p. 25) also concludes that the pig has a sacred animal in Egypt.

at once remarked. I was at first inclined to compare the animal with the Red River Hog (*Potamocheirus porcus*), but Captain Stanley Flower, the Director of the Gizeh Zoological Gardens, pointed out to me that River Hogs are west, not east African. On walking round the Gardens with him, he showed me two specimens of Aelian's Wart Hog (*Phacochoerus africanus*, fig. 2) from the Egyptian Sudan and drew my attention to their curious habit of erecting ears and tail when startled¹⁾ exactly like the Set animal. In form these animals are very near to the early drawing of the Set animal as he appears on the Scorpion King's Macehead. Their bodies are long, the legs shortish, the tail is straight with a tuft of hair at the end, the snout is long and as with all swine very mobile.

Liverpool.

1) Lydekker, *Royal Natural History*, vol. II, p. 441 says, „If excited they carry their tails straight upright“.