

## CHAPTER I

### KHEPRI IN EGYPTIAN RELIGION

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter will deal with Khepri and his position in religion which will be discussed as follows:-

- a) The meaning of the name "Khepri".
- b) The four main cosmogonies with special attention to the Heliopolitan cosmogony in which Khepri features as creator.
- c) Egyptian mythology wherein Khepri appears from Pre-dynastic times as protector.
- d) Khepri as manifestation of the sun-god.
- e) The role Khepri plays in afterlife pointing out his importance as god of resurrection and protection.

The four main functions of Khepri ( creator, protector, sun-god and god of resurrection ) overlap. It is difficult to separate these functions. These functions are also fulfilled by other gods, e.g. as creator Atum of Heliopolis ( Saleh, 1987:250 ); as protector Nekhbet ( Lurker, 1980:85 ); as sun-god Ra ( Lurker, 1980:100 ) and as god of resurrection the hippo-headed Taweret ( Toeris ) ( Kischkewitz, 1989:pl46 ), who offered the flame and life to the deceased ( Faulkner, 1989:185 ).

The aim of this chapter will be to determine the appearance of Khepri in religion and to establish his religious functions.

The entomology of the scarab as well as a glossary of

entomological terms are included at the end of this chapter.

### THE NAME KHEPRI ( KHEPERA )<sup>13</sup>

The scientific name of the Egyptian scarab is *Scarabaeus sacer* L. ( Winkler, 1964:33 ).

The scarab was a hieroglyphic sign [ fig.3 ], initially represented as a long thin beetle, the "nh"-beetle of the Pyramid Text, but from the Middle Kingdom ( 2035-1668 B.C.) as the scarab or "hpr"-beetle ( Davies, 1988:32 ). The sign represented a word designating the insect itself and the metamorphoses or transformations of which it is the symbol ( Gardiner, 1982:477 ), as well as the idea of "becoming" or "to come into being" ( Zauzich, 1980:31 ). The name Kheper also means "to grow" and "to change oneself" ( Jacq, 1985:141 ).

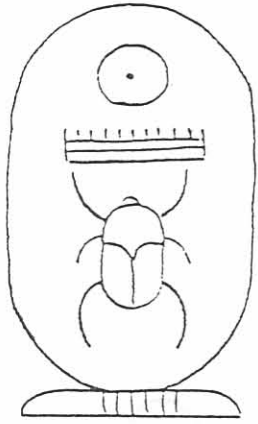
The scarab as single sign also stands for the name of the god Khepri, who is the representation of the sun as it rises in the morning. Khepri as god is linked with resurrection ( Lurker, 1980:74 ) [ Fig.4 ]. The Egyptian understanding of the word "god" ( ntr ) is not very clear. It may be the Only, without the existence of any other god or the one or the Highest of gods ( Hornung, 1982:60 ).

### KHEPRI IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN COSMOGONY

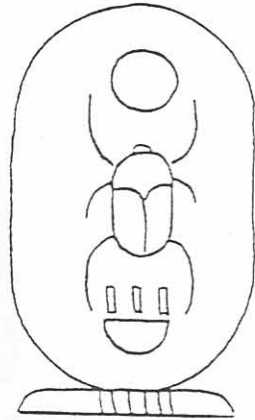
Several cosmogonies existed in ancient Egyptian religion. The four main cosmogonies developed in the main centres, Memphis, Hermopolis, Heliopolis and Thebes. They were basically concerned

---

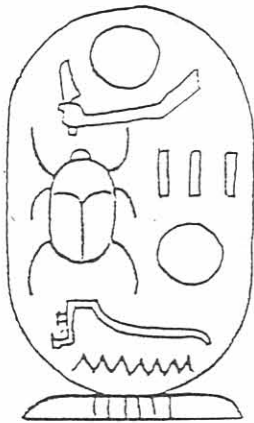
13. Khepri is also referred to as Khepera ( Budge, 1988:36 ).



TUTHMOSIS III



TUTANKHAMEN *hpr w-R*  
NEBCHEPERURE.



HOREMHEB



SETI I

FIG.3. ROYAL NAMES FROM THE NEW KINGDOM WHICH INCORPORATE THE SCARAB.

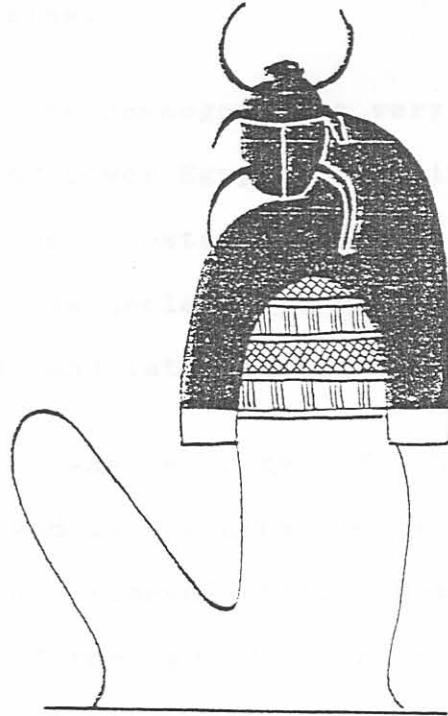


FIG.4. KHEPRI.

with creator gods who all had solar attributes and epithets ( Hornung, 1982:55 ). Several of these legends are concerned with a supreme god who was self-creative ( Lurker, 1980:42 ). The existence of a primeval hill or mound was included in all these cosmogonies.

The Memphite cosmogony is very old. Memphis became capital after Upper and Lower Egypt united in 3100 B.C.( Hamlyn,1965:32). According to the priests of Memphis, Ptah<sup>14</sup> [ fig.5 ] was their creator. Ptah was declared to be Nun<sup>15</sup>. Ptah was worshipped as fertility god, and later became chief god of this cosmogony.

Hermopolis was a city of Upper Egypt. Its cosmogony probably evolved in Pre-dynastic times. This city was declared to be built on a primeval hill. Hermopolis had two traditions. Firstly that of the Ogdoad ( Hamlyn, 1965:35 ) which consisted of four male deities and their consorts, who ensured the flow of the Nile. Secondly the rising of the sun ( David, 1982:49 ), and that

---

14. Ptah of Memphis was always represented as a human, wrapped like a mummy with tight fitting skull cap. As local god of Memphis he started off as god of craftsmanship and arts. From the Pyramid age Ptah became creator god ( Lurker, 1980:96f. ).

15. Nun was referred to as a dark watery chaos. The ancient Egyptians believed that in the beginning the universe was filled with the ocean called the Nun ( Hamlyn, 1965:27 ). It was also referred to as "chaotic wastes" ( Hamlyn, 1965:28 ). The Nun was the only power of existence. From this power a mound emerged with Atum upon it. Atum created himself and then other gods, e.g. Shu ( air ) and Tefnut ( moisture ) ( Lurker, 1980:42 ).





FIG.5. PTAH

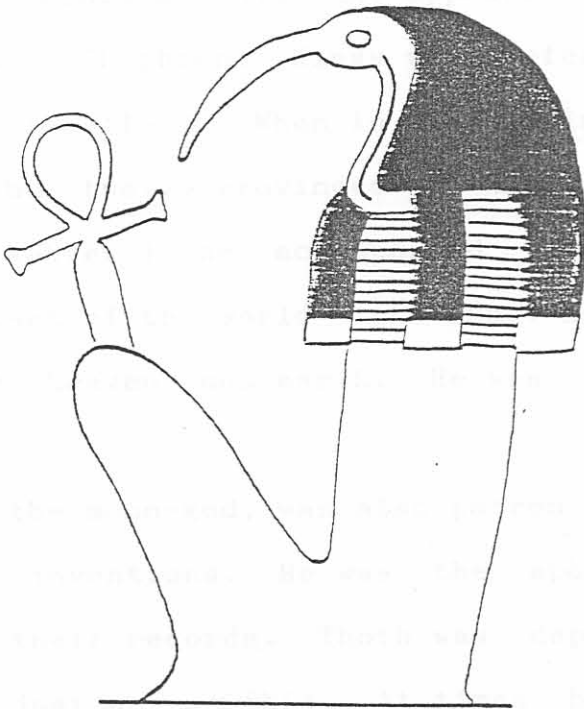


FIG.6. THOTH.

of the moon-god Thoth<sup>16</sup>( David, 1982:49 ) [ fig. 6 ].

Khepri was included in the formation of the cosmogony of Heliopolis. The first event that took place in this creative process, was the emergence of Atum from the chaos of Nun, after which he made his appearance on the primeval hill. The ben-ben stone ( obelisk ) was defined as Atum's first manifestation as primeval god ( Lurker, 1980:90 ). The obelisk represented a sunray ( Hamlyn, 1965:45 ). His appearance on the hill was interpreted as the coming of light after the darkness of Nun ( Hamlyn, 1965:29 ). By the time of the Pyramid Texts ( 2345 B.C.), Atum was already identified with Ra ( Re, Phra ) [ Fig. 7 ]. Ra was also supreme among gods and men. According to the Pyramid Texts he travelled in a morning-barque and a night-barque which made him supreme over the destinies of men. He acted as protector of kings and his name appeared in the names of kings of Gizeh, such as Chephren. Kings were referred to as "Sons of Ra" ( Breasted, 1959:15 ). When in his morning-barque ( Manjet ) he inspected the twelve provinces of his kingdom. In his evening barque ( Mesektet ) he accompanied the deceased through the invisible part of the world - the Duat. Ra was creator of all and ruler over heaven and earth. He was identified with Khepri

---

16. Thoth, the moon-god, was also patron of science, literature, wisdom and inventions. He was the spokesman of the gods and keeper of their records. Thoth was depicted as an ibis-headed human, or just as an ibis. At times he is also depicted as a dog-headed baboon. He is therefore seen as the vizier and sacred scribe in the kingdom of Osiris ( Hamlyn, 1965:82 ).



FIG.7. RA.



FIG.8. AMUN.



( David, 1982:46 ) and was depicted pushing the sun in front of him. The beetle's pushing of the dung ball, in which the Egyptians believed the beetle's egg had been laid, became the cycle of creation. Therefore his name was Khepri ( Hamlyn, 1965:30 ). Ra, just as Khepri, was regarded as bisexual<sup>17</sup>- an absolute creator who needed no partner ( Lurker, 1980:33 ). The scarab also became the symbol of metamorphosis and change ( Jacq, 1985:7 ).

As creator-god, Khepri came into being by himself. He rose from the Netherworld as the early morning sun ( Lurker, 1980:74 ). In chapter 83 from the Book of the Dead his creation is explained as follows:

"Text: [ The Chapter of making the transformation into a Bennu Bird.] The overseer of the house of the overseer of the seal, Nu, triumphant saith :-" I came into being from unformed matter. I came into existence like the god Khepera, I have germinated like the things which germinate ( i.e. plants ), and I have dressed myself like the tortoise. I am [ of ] the germ of every god. I am yesterday of the four [ quarters of the world ] and of those seven Uraei which came into existence in Amentet, that is to say [ Horus, who emitteth light from his divine body. He is ] the god [ who ] fought against Suti, but the god Thoth cometh between them through the judgement of him that dwelleth in Sekhem, and of the souls who are in Annu, and there is a stream between

---

17. Another god also regarded as bisexual was Hapy, the Nile-god, shown with beard and female breasts ( Hamlyn, 1965:106 ).

them. I have come by day, and I have risen in the footsteps of the gods. I am the god Khensu who driveth back all that oppose him"<sup>18</sup>.

The Theban cosmogony became important when Thebes became the seat of centralised government in the New Kingdom ( 1552-1070 B.C.). Its creator-god was Amun<sup>19</sup> ( Hamlyn, 1965:37 ) [ fig. 8 ]. The Theban cosmogony incorporated the above-mentioned three earlier cosmogonies ( David, 1982:122f.). Amun was also included in the cosmogony of Hermopolis. The priests declared Thebes as the site of the Nun and the primeval hill. Thebes was founded on this hill and was known as the eye of Ra. Amun created himself. His birth took place in secret without parents. Amun means "invisible". After his own creation, he created other gods. His eye lit the earth like Ra of Heliopolis.

In the four main cosmogonies of ancient Egypt a central theme can be found of self creation and the coming of light. The primeval mound is reflected in Egyptian architecture in the

---

18. Translation of the original text from the Papyrus of Nu, sheet 10. British Museum, London ( Budge, 1989:268f.). Another translation of Spell 83 under the heading: " Spell for being transformed into the phoenix" can be found in Faulkner ( 1989:80f.).

19. Amun ( Amon, Amen, Ammon ) became an important deity from the XIIth. Dynasty. He was called "King of the Gods". He appears as a human with a crown with two straight parallel plumes and his sacred animals are the ram and the goose. Thus he may also appear as a ram-headed human. He was a god of fertility and patron of the Pharaohs ( Hamlyn, 1965:89ff.).

slightly raised temple floors ( Lurker, 1980:42 ).

#### KHEPRI IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY

Khepri featured in Egyptian religion and mythology from Pre-dynastic times ( Petrie, 1987:2 ). Dried beetles and beetle amulets were found in Pre-dynastic graves ( Ward, 1978:43 ), and were the earliest evidence of the belief in Khepri. These beetles were often mummified in the same manner as humans, so that they could enjoy immortality by living in the Netherworld<sup>20</sup>.

Khepri was associated with the sun. According to Horapollo<sup>21</sup> ( Ward, 1978:87 ), the different associations are described as follows: the headplates represent the rays of the sun; the grooves on the elytra the days and nights of the orbit of the moon; the legs ( six - each divided into five segments ), the days of the month. The ball being rolled from sunrise to sunset, represented the earth - the insect itself the sun.

---

20. In the Agricultural museum at Dokki a small stone coffin was found with a beetle carved on top. Inside was found a mummified female *Scarabaeus sacer* L. This was a stone coffin with a rectangular opening and a lid on the bottom. Dimensions are as follows 105x70x20mm., with a cavity 58x42mm. The Agricultural Museum is located at Dokki, Giza. Today this coffin is housed in the Egyptian Museum, Keimar ( Ward, 1978:88 ).

21. Horapollo was an Egyptian philosopher ( Nilaus ) who lived in Alexandria during the 5th. century A.D. The Greek translation of his Hieroglyphica became very popular in the 15th century in Florence ( Albertyn, 1973:128 ).



According to Horapollo scarabs were supposed to be only males, or bisexual.

The Egyptians believed that the ball of food, pushed forward by the scarab, contained its egg, therefore the scarab became the symbol of the self-generative aspect of the sun-god. He created himself. He was associated with the rising sun or the morning sun - the creator of renewing life. Ra was associated with the sun at noon and Atum with the setting sun ( Hornung, 1982:97 ).

The Egyptians believed that the earth was flat. It was formed by the back of the god Geb<sup>22</sup> who lay in the centre of an ocean. The upper half of the ocean formed the sky and the lower part the Underworld. The sun-god followed a daily course travelling in his barque. During his night travel he passed below the horizon ( Nether or Underworld ). At dawn he emerged on the surface of the world again bringing with him the return of daylight, i.e. the new day. Khepri was associated with this morning sun. During the Old Kingdom ( 2705-2250 B.C.) this journey was closely associated with the afterlife ( David, 1982:47 ).

---

22. Geb was the earth-god. The priests of Heliopolis considered themselves to be the representatives on earth of Geb ( Hamlyn, 1965:26+31 ). Water sprang from Geb and plants grew on his back. According to ancient myth he produced the sun together with Nut. His sign was the goose, therefore he sometimes wore a goose on his head or else the crown of Lower Egypt ( Lurker, 1980:54 ).

## KHEPRI AS MANIFESTATION OF THE SUN-GOD

Atum, the sun-god of Heliopolis was identified with Khepri ( David, 1982:46 ). Early Pyramid Texts describe the beetle and the fact that he comes into existence by himself. He is therefore a form of the primeval god Atum ( Ward, 1978:44 ). Atum was a self-engendered creator. The beetle being hatched from the egg in the dung ball, was also thought to be self-engendered. Pyramid Text 1587 states:

"Hail to thee, O Atum; Hail to thee, O Khepri who came into existence by himself... May you come into existence in thy name of Khepri." ( Ward, 1978:44 ).

The land which Atum created was identified with the saliva with which the beetle forms the dung ball ( Ward, 1978:44 ).

The sun was also venerated under the name of Ra. As the sun at dawn, Ra was represented as a beetle or beetle-headed man. In representing him thus, his significance referred to the coming of a new day, therefore rebirth. "Ra-Khepri indicated both the rising sun and the sun as self existent creator of the universe" ( Encyclopedia of world mythology, 1975:87 ).

Atum and Ra syncretized ( Hamlyn, 1965:45ff.) to become Ra-Atum, creator of all ( David,1982:46 ). The declining sun was Ra-Atum. Therefore he had a place in his night-barque, on the journey of Ra. This journey symbolised the nightly meeting of the sun-god with his corpse and his resurrection in the afterlife ( Hornung, 1982:155 ).

## KHEPRI AND THE AFTERLIFE

It is in his role as god closely associated with the



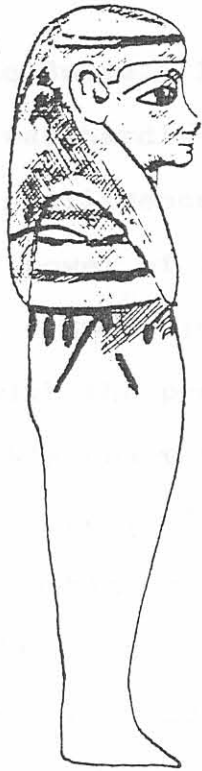
Afterlife, that the greatest significance of Khepri is to be found. "The body was needed for the ka to identify, and for the ba bird to perch on, and thus the eternal survival of both depended in the first instance on the preservation of the corpse" (Hobson, 1987:152). Mummification<sup>23</sup> was a method of preserving the corpse. Khepri as god of resurrection, was responsible for the renewed life in the Netherworld.

Mummification was a very important process in Egyptian religion, in which Khepri played a role in the form of a heart amulet. The mere uttering of his name during mummification had religious significance.

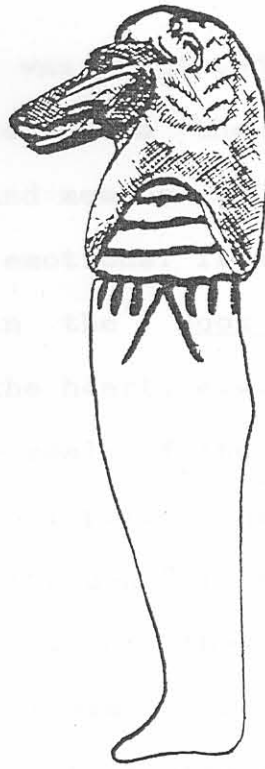
In the process of mummification the intestines were mummified separately and placed in canopic jars. The four jars represented the four sons of Horus. After the New Kingdom (1552-1070 B.C.), these four canopic jars each had their own stopper fashioned to represent the specific son. Each protected different organs: Imset, human-headed, protected the liver; Qebehsenuf, hawk-headed, the intestines; Duamutef, jackal-headed, the stomach. Hapy, the baboon-headed god, who protected the lungs, sometimes also protected the heart (Hamlyn, 1965:119) [ Fig. 9 ].

---

23. The process of mummification will not be discussed here as it falls beyond the scope of this study. Cf. Budge (1988:182ff.) and Hobson (1957:152ff.). The word "mummy" comes from the Persian "mum" and the Arabic "mumiyah" both meaning "bitumen" (Stephenson Smith, 1966:836).



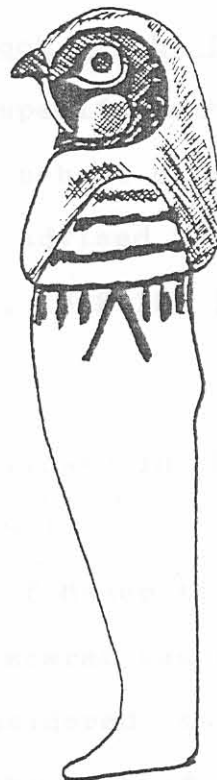
IMSET.



HAPY.



DUAMUTEF.



QEBEHSENUF.

FIG.9. THE FOUR SONS OF HORUS.

According to Budge ( 1988:29 ) it was protected by Duamutef<sup>24</sup>. The heart was hardly ever removed from the body. It was the centre of intelligence, thought and memory ( Lurker, 1980:61 ), the seat of power of life and all emotions. It also typified the conscience. Specific Spells in the Book of the Dead were concerned with the protection of the heart, e.g. Spell 26: "Spell for giving N's heart to him in the realm of the dead" ( Faulkner, 1989:52f.); Spell 27: "Spell for not permitting a man's heart to be taken from him in the realm of the dead" ( Faulkner, 1989:53 ) and Spell 29A: "Spell for not taking away the heart of one whose conduct has been vindicated in the realm of the dead" ( Faulkner, 1989:54 ). The deceased had to take the greatest care that his heart was not devoured by Amemait. Amemait was known as "the devourer", a monster, part lion, part hippopotamus and part crocodile ( Hamlyn, 1965:146 ). To further ensure the safety of the heart certain chapters of the Book of the Dead advised that the heart amulet was to be made of specific stones, e.g. Spell 29B "Spell for a heart amulet of sehret-stone" ( carnelian ) ( Faulkner, 1989:55 ). Spell 30B<sup>25</sup> advised the use of a hard green stone, e.g. nephrite ( Budge, 1988:151 ). The Rubric for Spell 30A and B states:

---

24. For this study Hamlyn will be followed in that Hapy sometimes protected the heart ( Hamlyn,1965:119 ).

25. Spell 30B dates from the time of Hesepti, IIIrd. Dynasty, 4300 B.C. - a time in which the scarab was not yet used as a heart amulet. This chapter is considered as one of the most important and one of the oldest of the Book of the Dead. It deals mainly with the heart not being removed from the body of the

"To be inscribed on a scarab made from nephrite, mounted in fine gold, with a ring of silver, and placed at the throat of the deceased" ( Faulkner, 1989:56 ).

The most important amulet<sup>26</sup> wrapped among the mummy wrappings, was the heart amulet ( Brunner-Traut, 1965:570 ). It is not possible to determine exactly when the custom of placing amulets on the dead began. The earliest Egyptian amulets are pieces of green schist of various shapes. These were found in large numbers in Pre-dynastic graves ( Ward, 1978:43 ). The early heart amulet, called the "ib" had the shape of an elongated globular pot with two handles ( Budge, 1988:29ff.). Its shape reminds of that of the heart. Rare examples of long, thin beetle-like amulets were found from the early First Intermediate

---

deceased, so that it may be opposed by no one in the judgement before the divine taskmasters ( Tchatcha ); that the chief gods of Osiris may not cause decay; that no false witness may be borne against the deceased and that a verdict of righteousness may be entered for him after the weighing of the heart. According to the old tradition of Hesepti, the chapter was carved on a stone slab by Thoth himself and found under the feet of the statue of Thoth. Thus it was believed that the chapter was of divine origin ( Budge, 1988:30ff.).

26. An amulet is an ornament or object worn by humans to protect the body. The word "amulet" is derived from the Arabic word meaning "to carry". It is generally believed that an amulet has supernatural powers. In Egypt they were worn by the living and by the dead ( Budge, 1988:25ff.).



Period ( 2250-2035 B.C.). From the late Old Kingdom ( 2705-2250 B.C.), scarab amulets became more popular than heart amulets. The Egyptian amulet was also inscribed with magical formulae and "Hekau" ( words of power ) were uttered when placing these amulets on the deceased ( Budge, 1988:25ff.). The heart amulet ( "ib" ) was placed either on the throat or the heart of the mummy where, according to the priests, the amulet would offer the greatest magical protection ( Hobson, 1987:155 ). If the heart amulet was placed on the breast of the deceased, it would also perform for him the "Opening of the Mouth Ceremony"<sup>27</sup>.

From the time of the Middle Kingdom ( 2035-1668 B.C.), the scarab appears more often in mummification. In most New Kingdom burials ( 1552-1070 B.C.) a carved stone in the shape of a scarab was placed over the heart and was called the "heart scarab". It had inscribed on it Spell 30B of the Book of the Dead ( Faulkner,

---

27. In this ceremony, the bandaged mummy was made to stand upright in its coffin. It was supported by priests representing the god Anubis. The mouth, eyes and ears of the mummy were then touched with a forked pesesh-kaf, the chisel, the adze and rod ending in the head of a snake ( Andrews, 1984:58 ). This act was performed to give the deceased the ability to eat, see, hear and move about in the Netherworld. This ceremony was the most important of all the ceremonies that were performed on the dead ( Budge, 1988:192 ). See also Hamlyn ( 1965:142 ).



1989:27 ), to help the dead at the weighing of the heart<sup>28</sup>. It was placed on the heart after the "Opening of the Mouth Ceremony" ( Jacq, 1985:141 ). An inscribed scarab also protected the physical heart of the dead and ensured new life ( Budge, 1988:33f. ).

The spell inscribed on the scarab was so powerful that safe access to the afterlife was guaranteed no matter how dissipated the former life of the deceased had been, if he had a scarab inscribed as instructed in Spell 30B of the Book of the Dead. The heart is addressed in no uncertain terms ( Andrews, 1984:35 ).

"O my heart which I had from my mother! O my heart which I had from my mother! O my heart from my different ages! Do not stand up as a witness against me, do not be opposed to me in the tribunal, do not be hostile to me in the presence of the Keeper of the Balance, for you are my ka which was in my body, the protector who made my members hale. Go forth to the happy place whereto we speed: do not make my name stink to the Entourage who make men. Do not tell lies about me in the presence of god; it is indeed well that you should hear!" ( Faulkner, 1989:27 ).

From the XXIIIrd. Dynasty onwards, a winged scarab was also

---

28. In the Judgement Hall of Osiris the heart of the deceased was weighed in the balance against the feather of Maat ( Mayet ), the goddess of truth ( Budge, 1988:34 ). This ceremony took place to ensure that the deceased was truly pure and sinless before entering the Netherworld, or the kingdom of Osiris ( Hamlyn, 1965:144f. ).

included on the mummy-coverings. The wings ( Falcon - wings of Horus ) stressed the importance of protection. It was placed on the breast of the mummy together with amulets of the four sons of Horus [ fig. 9 ] as protectors of the intestines. Khepri was then seen as the Creator who would transform the dead to a living person in the Netherworld ( Petrie, 1978:2 ). But, portrayed as winged scarab Khepri also became the symbol of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Scarabs were also placed on other parts of the body, e.g. on the feet of Tjentmutengewtiu<sup>29</sup>.

The charms and spells needed to protect the soul of the deceased on his voyage to the Netherworld form the decorations in several tombs, e.g. that of Tuthmosis III<sup>30</sup> ( XVIIIth. Dynasty, 1490-1440 B.C. ) ( Bonnet, 1952:18 ). Since the beginning of the XVIIIth. Dynasty, up to the Amarna Period, this was conceived as a large papyrus unrolled upon the walls of royal sepulchres, known as the Am Duat ( Helck and Otto, 1948:184 ). The key aspect of this work was that the sun's setting in the West and reappearance in the East represented resurrection. Therefore it describes the night-voyage of the sun through the Netherworld ( Bonnet, 1952:18 ) [ fig.10 ].

---

29. Tjentmutengewtiu was a daughter of a Theban priest. X-rays indicate that this scarab is of metal with two sun-discs, one in front and one behind the scarab. This mummy dates from the XXIst Dynasty, 1000 B.C. British Museum, London.

30. A detail of the twelfth hour of the Am Duat from the tomb of Thuthmoses III, can be seen in Mallakh ( 1980:53 ).



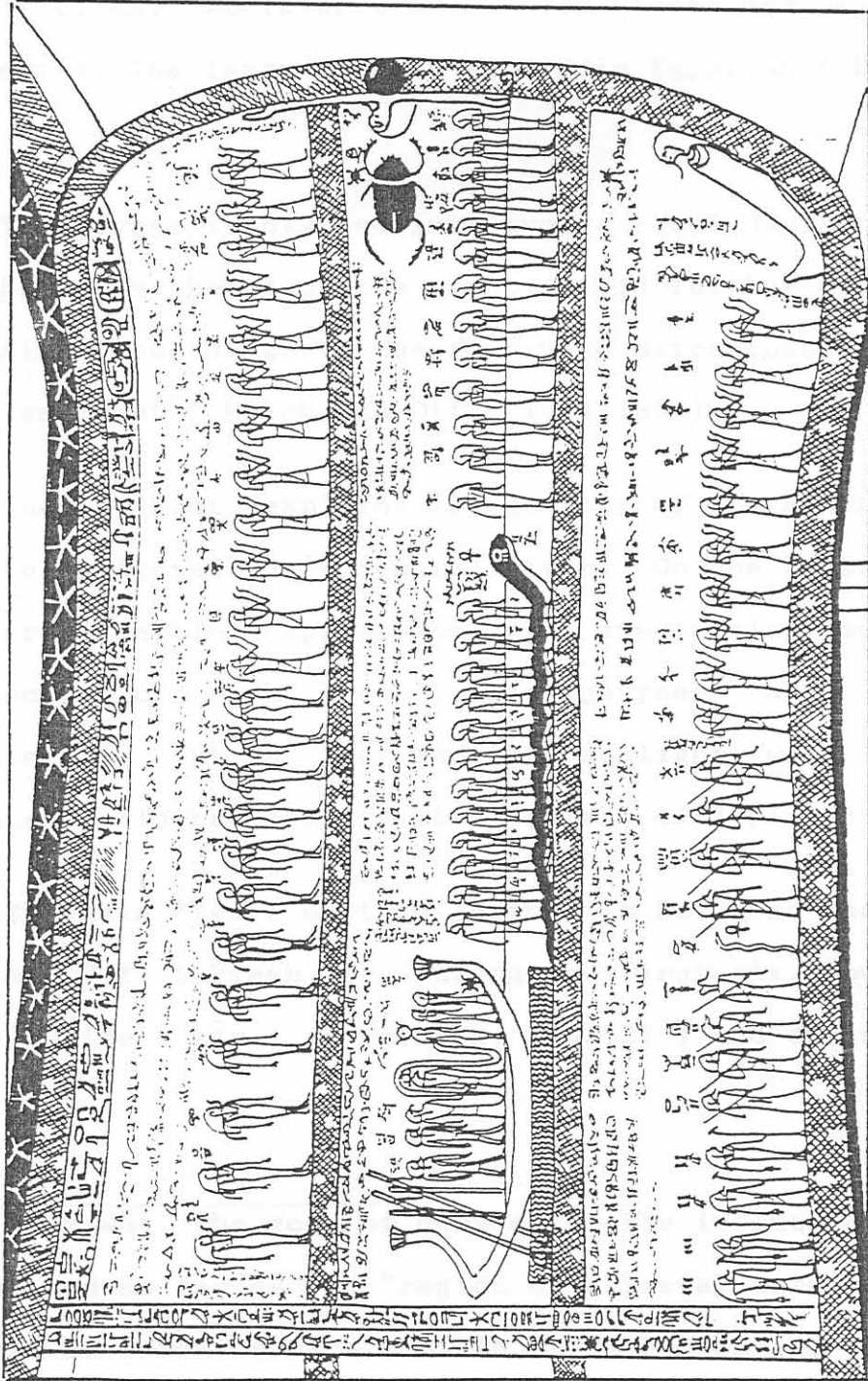


FIG.10. TWELFTH HOUR OF THE AM DUAT.

The Am Duat was written in three registers. In all depictions of the text of the Am Duat the middle register is used for the barque of Ra. It is written in 300 verses and illustrated with vignettes. The language used is Middle Egyptian ( Helck and Otto, 1984:185 ).

The voyage is divided into twelve equal divisions, according to the twelve hours of the night. It is further divided into four divisions according to the four wind directions: North, South, East and West ( Helck and Otto, 1984:185 ).

The Am Duat explains the journey of the Ram-headed Ra in a barque navigated on a central river. On the banks of the river different deities appear who will enact roles according to the character of each hour. This journey takes place in the darkness<sup>31</sup>, but in the end the sunlight with the ordered, created world becomes visible ( Saleh, 1987:pl.236 ).

The main figure on this journey is Ra, who incarnates and is called "Jwf" ( Flesh )<sup>32</sup>. During the first six hours he stands in a shrine ( kꜣr. ) ( Hornung, 1963:21 ) and during the last six

---

31. Tek was the god of darkness. The influence of a pharaoh stretched as far as the "region of primeval darkness". The chaotic forces of darkness were hostile to the gods and to life and the ordered world had to battle against these forces ( Lurker 1980: 45 ).

32. "Jwf" ( Iwf ) is referred to as "Flesh" or "the soul of Ra" ( Hornung, 1963:21 ).

hours within the coils of Mehen<sup>33</sup>.

On this journey Khepri plays an important role. He can already be seen in the first hour. The surface of the inscription is divided into four registers<sup>34</sup>. The reason for this may be that both barques, that of Ra and Khepri must be included. The barque of Khepri is then placed on the lower register<sup>35</sup>. Khepri's barque, the "wj - ḥpr̄r" barque<sup>36</sup> is placed underneath that of Ra, and can also be found in the second and third hours. Khepri is placed in the centre of the barque between the two figures of Osiris<sup>37</sup> ( Hornung, 1963:26 ). In front of

---

33. Mehen was a spiral serpent, also known as the "coiled one" and was a helpful attendant to Ra on his journey through the realm of night. She was represented draped in many coils ( Lurker, 1980:108 ).

34. This can be seen in the Am Duat of Tuthmoses III ( Hornung, 1963:9 ).

35. This may also be seen as three registers of which the middle register is divided into two ( Hornung, 1963:8 ).

36. Prinz ( 1915:28 ) refers to the morning barque as the m'nd.t barque and the evening barque as the mskt-t barque.

37. The name Osiris means "place of the eye". He received earthly rule from his father. Later he was murdered by his jealous brother Seth ( Set ). His wife Isis and Nephthys together with Anubis performed the first mummification on the body of Osiris. He became ruler of the Netherworld. He is usually portrayed in a mummified fashion with a green skin-colour which has the symbolic meaning of rebirth ( Lurker, 1980:92f.).



the barque are three serpents: "skw-ri", representing the "Opening of the Mouth"-Ceremony, "zfej" and "spdu", the spitter. In front of them several gods are placed. The first hour starts in the West. The barque has just passed the horizon. Ra stands in the barque representing "Flesh" ( Jwf ). Three figures stand in front of him, namely: "Opener of the Ways", "Knowledge" and "Mistress of the Barque". In the back of the barque are five figures of which "Hw" ( the word ) is the most important. He stands just in front of the pilot, Horus ( Helck and Otto, 1984:186 ). Gods of this hour are also present starting with a group of baboons, serpents etc. The sun-god sees to it that the door of the horizon is closed to keep all evil out and starts to prepare for a peaceful death ( Hornung, 1963:40f.).

In the second hour, Khepri is found on the fourth barque of the row of barques, together with two female deities and a vase. The deities are Isis and Nephthys ( Hornung, 1963:51 ). The vase between them is the symbol of Hathor <sup>38</sup>.

The third hour marks the last stage of the first section of three hours of the journey. It finishes the watery area and prepares to enter the region of the fourth hour, the region of

---

38. Hathor was a sky-goddess called the daughter of Ra, the wife of Horus and also the mother of Horus. Her sacred animal was the cow. She was the protectress of women and goddess of joy, love, dance and music ( Hamlyn, 1965:76f.). Hathor was seen as mother of the sun-god in earlier times, but was later replaced by Isis ( Lurker, 1980:58 ).

Sokar<sup>39</sup>.

In the fourth hour the entering of the grave is depicted and described ( Hornung, 1963:80 ). The fourth and the fifth hours are the oldest part of the Am Duat ( Hornung, 1963:90 ). The death-god Sokar plays the leading role. The area they are moving through is sandy, necessitating the barque to be dragged through the sand. Serpents are on both sides of the sandy road. The barque is in a blaze of fire and movement is difficult.

A strange handling of the register marks the fifth hour. A slope in register - or base-line, combines the registers ( Hornung, 1963:92 ). The head of Isis and Khepri form the central action. The rope, with which the barque is pulled across the sand, is grabbed by the front claws of Khepri and pulled upwards, towards the upper register. With that the head of Isis also moves upwards. A new stream of water is flowing in - an underworld stream ( Hornung, 1963:108 ). This opens up the land of Sokar wherein the hidden roads of Imhet and that of the land of Sokar, including the roads to Isis and the West are depicted. During this hour Sokar dwells in a secret cavern called Imhet ( Hornung, 1963:93 ).

Khepri is found encircled by a five-headed serpent in the sixth hour. He is portrayed lying horizontally above the head of a prostate human figure which is described as "Flesh" ( Jwf ). It

---

39. Sokar was the deity of the desert edge at Memphis and may have begun as a fertility god, but was later hailed as god of the dead. He assumed the form of a falcon ( Lurker, 1980:113 ).

is notable that the figure is not depicted as a mummy ( Hornung, 1963:119 ). The inscription describes this figure as the body of Khepri - his own flesh. He is also seen as the body of Osiris ( Hornung, 1963:124 ). He lies down so that the soul can unite with him ( Hornung, 1963:123 ). Tait, the goddess of weaving and cloth ( Budge, 1989:266ff.), will now suggest that the moment of making the cocoon is near. This refers to the pupa of the insect which is reminiscent of a mummy enveloped in linen wrappings. Again the barque moves on water and the soul of the sun-god unites with his body ( Hornung, 1963:123 ). By this time half the journey is finished and this hour marks a climax of the journey - that of the sun-god's union with his body ( Helck and Otto, 1984:187 ).

The seventh hour portrays Isis and Seth together with Ra and the coiled serpent Mehen ( Helck and Otto, 1984:186 ). All evil elements or enemies of the barque are defeated and they are punished before Osiris.

During the eighth hour all entities are seated on strips of woven cloth and the barque is rowed through the water, but comes to a standstill, while Ra is in dialogue with the dead ( Hornung, 1963:160 ).

The ninth hour portrays Khepri in the upper register, before a god, holding a "was"-sceptre and "ankh". Khepri is portrayed as a beetle pushing in front of him an oval form ( Hornung, 1963:162 ). He is identified with the dead and resurrection.

The tenth hour marks the beginning of the final phase. The

scarab pushes its cocoon while the birth of the left and right eyes are announced. From the tenth hour to the end of the journey the basic idea of the Heliopolitan cosmogony - the creation, or the emergence from Nun - can be found ( Bonnet, 1952:19 ). The punishment and destruction of the enemy is also portrayed.

In the eleventh hour the enemies of Osiris are still being punished and destroyed ( Bonnet, 1952:20 ). The sun-god moves through an area of tremendous pain and the barque is pulled forward by a serpent. This hour shows very little detail ( Hornung, 1963:174 ). It is a very difficult hour to describe ( Hornung, 1963:183 ).

In the twelfth hour Khepri is found twice in the vignette. Firstly together with Ra in his barque with the inscription "ḥpr̄r Khepri" which refers to the sun-god ( Hornung, 1963:188 ). Secondly, at the end of the register, a large scarab is found with the same inscription over the head and the outstretched arms of Shu<sup>40</sup>. A red sun-disk is also seen ( Hornung, 1963:191 ). The great theme here is the renewed youth and resurrection of the deceased. Ra arrives at the cavern at the end of the darkness and takes birth in the form of Khepri.

For twelve hours the Underworld with all its dangers have been faced. At the end of this difficult voyage resurrection can take place - a triumph over death. The triumph of rebirth is a

---

40. Shu issued as breath from the nose of the primeval god. Shu, god of the air embodied life-giving forces. He was also identified with the sun ( Lurker, 1980:112 ).



triumph of light over darkness as well as eternal life in the Netherworld. The soul and body of the deceased is safe. The king will live forever and his father Ra, is forever in the heavens ( Hornung, 1963:195 ).

The Am Duat describes what happens to the deceased after death until re-appearance before Osiris. The duration of this period is twelve hours. This time-span of twelve hours is concerned with the process of resurrection.

The Am Duat was used as royal funerary text, but found its way into coffins and papyri of private individuals, e.g. the tomb of the Visier User from the time of Tuthmosis III, 1490-1440 B.C. ( Bonnet, 1952:18 ), as a result of "democratizing tendencies" ( Lurker, 1980:15 ).

Khepri's most important religious significance was that of god of resurrection ( Am Duat ). The Egyptians believed in a general resurrection or a punishment by the devourer Amemait. Resurrection to the Egyptians meant to live after death in the Netherworld, as a young, vital, mature person. The salvation and well-being of the Ba was therefore important as well as the preservation of the body, as the soul and body reunited for life after death. This reunion can be seen in the sixth hour of the Am Duat. The important theme in the process of regeneration is the eternal cycle based on the coming of day after night. The new day was associated with the new life after death. The light of day was associated with good and the darkness with evil. During the journey of the night, the Am Duat, the deceased is confronted by evil elements who must be defeated and punished, e.g. in the

seventh hour. Resurrection then was not only life triumphing over death, but also good conquering evil. This cycle also appeared in the four cosmogonies which centred around creation from the darkness of Nun and the coming of light. According to the Theban cosmogony the Eye of Amun lit the earth like Ra ( from the Heliopolitan cosmogony ). Spell 83 from the Book of the Dead refers to Horus who "makes brightness with his person" ( Faulkner, 1989:80 ). This spell also states that Horus was the god who was against Seth - therefore good ( Horus - light ) against evil ( Seth - darkness ).

## CONCLUSION

Khepri was included in Egyptian religion and mythology as early as Pre-dynastic times. As he was a god of resurrection his name, derived from the word "Kheper" ( "to become" ), explained his function as god. He is identified with the scarab or dung beetle.

Khepri was included in Egyptian cosmogony. He played a prominent role in the Heliopolitan cosmogony as creator. Later the Theban cosmogony incorporated Khepri.

In mythology he was described as a god of single sex, or a bisexual god, who was self engendered. He is also included in Egyptian funerary literature, e.g. the Book of the Dead and the Am Duat.

In the Book of the Dead his creation is explained in Spell 83. According to this book, Khepri also played an important role in connection with the protection of the heart. As heart amulet,

inscribed with Spell 30B, he helped the dead at the "Weighing of the Heart" and the "Opening of the Mouth" ceremonies.

In the Am Duat he travels with Ra in the night barque to a renewed youth and life in the Netherworld. He plays an important role as god of resurrection as he triumphs over death. He syncretized with the sun-god Ra. The sun is Khepri in the morning, Ra at noon and Atum in the evening.

When syncretized with Horus forming the winged scarab he acted as protector but also became the symbol of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Khepri was included in Egyptian religion and his significance was that of:- creator, protector, god of resurrection and symbol of Upper and Lower Egypt.

## EXCURSUS

### ENTOMOLOGY

Beetles belong to a group of insects known as Endopterygota - those having a complete metamorphosis. The Greek philosopher Aristotle ( 384 - 322 B.C.) ( Albertyn, 1971:415ff.) classified the beetles as Coleoptera, a classification still in use ( Holm, 1988:25 ). Coleoptera include 276,700 described species ( Winkler, 1964:33 ) and constitute the largest order of insects ( Holm, 1988:25 ). They are to be found in virtually every terrestrial ecosystem.

The evolutionary success of Coleoptera seems to stem from the protection from physical trauma that is provided by the high degree of sclerotization and body compaction ( Stephenson Smith, 1966:1128 ). The most obviously affected structures are the elytra, which are moulded to the shape of the abdomen. When the insect is at rest, they interlock with one another along the suture. The movement of the elytra is limited to opening and closing during flight. Except during flight, the membranous wings are protected and concealed beneath the elytra. Wing venation is specialized to allow necessary folding under the closed elytra.

The head of the beetle is deeply retracted into the thorax.

Eggs are usually simple and ovoid with relatively thin, unsculptured chorion ( nutritive membrane ) with oviposition on or close by the larval food. Two types of balls are constructed:



a feeding ball, round of shape, and an egg - laying ball which is pear shaped. The female lays only one egg in it [ fig.11 a ].

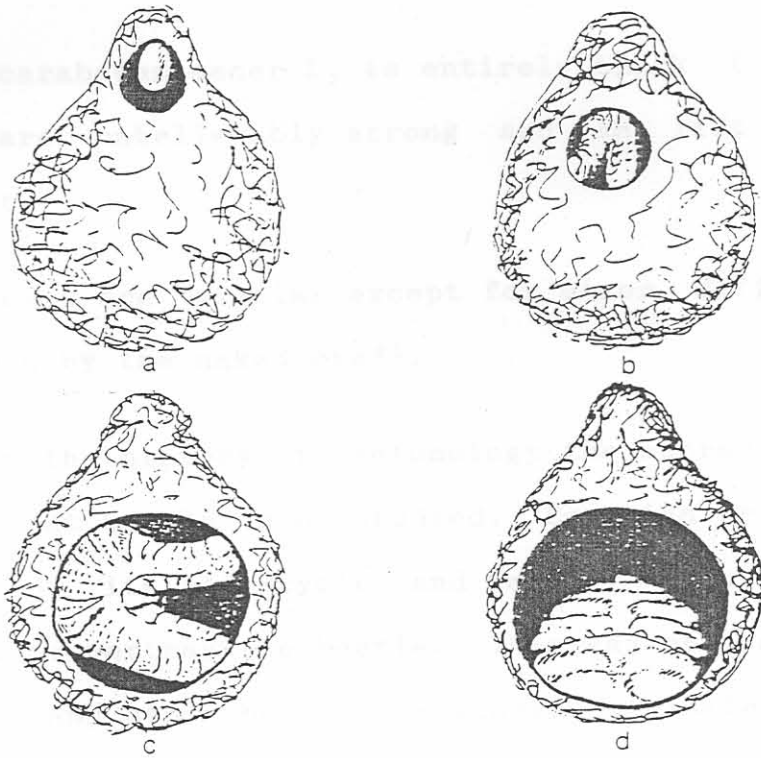
Larvae are of scarabaeidae form: obese, C - shaped body with moderate legs. The larval stage is often called the " grub ". The larva feeds on mammal dung and eats the ball from the inside. When it is outgrown and changes into a pupa, the dung ball is only a hollow shell [ fig.11 b+c ].

The pupa is creamy white with a semi-transparent skin. The way in which it is wrapped in thin wings reminds the observer of a mummified pharaoh [ fig.11 d ].

Totally different habits are found in the adult beetle [ fig.11 ].

The life cycle of Scarabaeidae vary according to the climate. In Egypt the eggs are laid in spring and reach the adult stage by the end of summer, i.e. six months ( Ward, 1978:94 ).

The Egyptian scarab, *Scarabaeus sacer* L. [ fig.11 ] is also classified under the large super-family Scarabaeus, and is distinguished from nearly all other Coleoptera by short antennae with a symmetrical lamellate club. They are stout-bodied, with the head sunk deeply into the pro-thorax and the anterior tibiae expanded and serocated for digging. This positioning gives the insect the most extraordinary appearance when walking. This formation is also particularly serviceable to its possessors in rolling the manure balls. The six legs are each composed of five joints: coxa, trochanter, femur, tibia and tarsus. The femur and tibia are provided with long teeth ( Ward, 1978:92 ).



a. egg chamber with ventilation flue.  
b + c. larva in their ground out hollow space.  
d. pupa seen from the front.

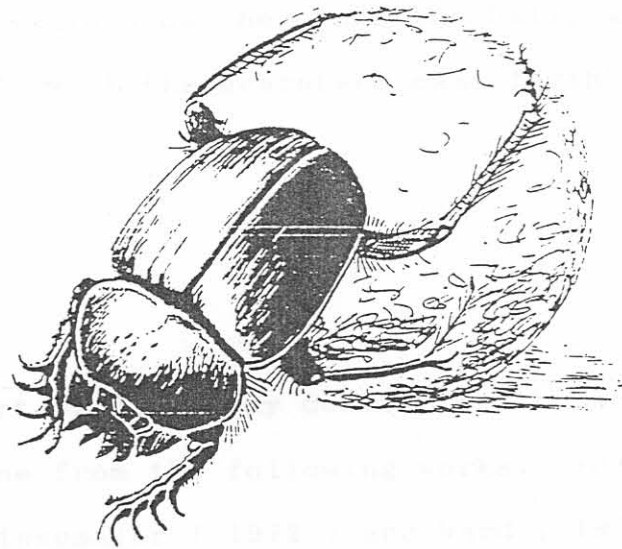


FIG.11. SCARABAEUS SACER L.

*Scarabaeus sacer* L. is entirely black ( Winkler, 1964:114 ). They are unbelievably strong and can lift more than their own weight.

Sexes are similar except for minor differences which cannot be seen by the naked eye<sup>41</sup>.

In the history of entomology the sacred scarab was probably the first beetle to be studied. Egyptian priests made a thorough study of its life-cycle and habits. Egyptian artists were the first to portray the beetle. This was done a full thousand years before any other beetle was studied ( Winkler, 1964:12 ).

The ancients held several curious views about the scarab ( Travis, 1985:8 ). Egyptian priests believed that there were no female scarabs and that the scarab was a parthenogenetic creature ( Stephenson Smith, 1966:920 ). Horapollo declares that "Having made a ball of dung, the beetle rolls it from east to west, and having dug a hole, he buries it in it for eight and twenty days; on the twenty ninth day he opens the ball, and throws it into the water, and from it the scarabaei came forth" ( Budge, 1988:38 ).

---

41. This part of the study describing the scarab is formulated on research done from the following works: Winkler ( 1964 ); Metcalf ( 1962 ); Linsemaier ( 1972 ) and Ward ( 1978 ). More can be read in these works about scarabs, as only relevant information has been selected for this study.

## APPENDIX B

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS<sup>42</sup>

Alae: Plural of ala. A wing or a winglike part, as one of the lateral projections of the nose.

Chorion: The outer case of an insect egg.

Clypeus: A shieldlike plate on the front part of the head of an insect.

Coleoptera: A large cosmopolitan order of insects including beetles.

Coxa: The first joint or body joint of the leg in arthropods.

Elytra: Plural for elytron. Elytron: One of the thickened forewings of certain insects as beetles.

Femur: the third, strongest and most prominent segment of the leg in insects, situated between the trochanter and the tibia.

Lamellate: Scalelike; composed of thin layers or scales.

Mandible: One of the upper or outer pair of jaws on an insect.

Metathoracic: Metathorax: The hindmost of the three segments of the thorax in insects, bearing the hind wings and the third pair of legs.

Parthenogenetic: parthenogenesis; production of a new individual from a virgin female without intervention of a male.

---

42. Glossary of terms according to: Stephenson Smith ( 1966 ).



Sclerotization: Thickening and hardening of a tissue.

Suture: Centre line dividing the forewings.

Tarsus: The distal part of the leg.

Thorax: The middle region of the body of an insect between the head and the abdomen.

Tibia: The fourth joint of the leg of an insect between the femur and the tarsus.

Trochanter: The small second segment of an insect's leg.