



Sobek's Dual Nature in the New Kingdom Underworld Books

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Abstract

The Crocodile is a prominent symbol in ancient Egyptian culture, representing power and danger. This paper explores the multifaceted role of the Crocodile in the New Kingdom society and its symbolic significance in the Ancient Egyptian royal books of the afterlife. Revered as a symbol of fertility and protection, the Crocodile was associated with the God Sobek and featured prominently in religious rituals and ceremonies. However, its formidable presence in the Nile also posed a significant threat to human life, necessitating the development of hunting techniques and protective measures.

Through an analysis of religious texts and artistic representations, this paper elucidates the complex relationship between humans and crocodiles in ancient Egypt, highlighting the enduring legacy of this enigmatic creature in the collective imagination of one of the world's most fascinating civilizations.

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Introduction

The Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*), a dominant force in ancient Egypt's waterways, shaped survival and symbolism.¹ Its stealthy ambushes and lethal jaws inspired dread,² However, its nurturing of offspring and link to the Nile's fertility commanded reverence.³ This duality permeates Egyptian texts, where crocodiles oscillate between chaotic threats and metaphors for vice, such as demons like Khenty.⁴—and divine allies, embodied by Sobek, protector of kings and souls.⁵

In Ancient Egypt, the Nile was both a life-giving force and a realm of danger, with the Crocodile as its most ambivalent inhabitant.⁶ This duality—as a guardian of order (ma'at) and an embodiment of chaos (isfet)—is vividly expressed in texts, archaeological evidence, and iconography.⁷ As the God Sobek, the Crocodile symbolized fertility, kingship, and divine protection.⁸

This article examines the Crocodile's dual nature in New Kingdom textual sources, including the Book of the Dead, Book of the Earth, and the Amduat, arguing that its representations illuminate the Egyptian dialectic between order and chaos.⁹

¹ Pooley, A. C., & Gans, C. (1976). The Nile crocodile. *Scientific American*, 234(4), 114; Wilkinson, R. H. (2003). *The complete gods and goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson, 218.

² Cott, H. B. (1961). Scientific results of an inquiry into the ecology and economic status of the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) in Uganda and Northern Rhodesia. *Transactions of the Zoological Society of London*, 29(4), 222; Ritner, R. K. (1993). *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Oriental Institute, 119.

³ Cott, H. B. (1961). Scientific results, 237; Wilkinson, R. H. (2003). *The complete gods and goddesses*, 219.

⁴ Faulkner, R. O. (1973). *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, Volume I*. Aris & Phillips, 134; Lichtheim, M. (1976). *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume II: The New Kingdom*. University of California Press, 201.

⁵ Faulkner, R. O. (1969). *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. Oxford University Press, 103; Bresciani, E. (1975). *The Temple of Kom Ombo: Hymns and Inscriptions*. Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente., 45. Faulkner, R. O. (1985). *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*. British Museum Publications, 87.

⁶ Pooley, A. C., & Gans, C. (1976). The Nile crocodile, 114; Foster, J. L. (1995). *Hymns, prayers, and songs: An Anthology of Ancient Egyptian lyric poetry*. Scholars Press, 67;

⁷ Assmann, J. (2001). *The search for God in Ancient Egypt*. Cornell University Press, 17; Wilkinson, R. H. (2003). *The complete gods and goddesses*, 218. Ikram, S. (2005). *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*. American University in Cairo Press, 87;

⁸ Faulkner, R. O. (1969). *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. Oxford University Press, 103; Bresciani, E. (1975). *The Temple of Kom Ombo*, 45

⁹ Breasted, J. H. (1906). *Ancient Records of Egypt: Volume III*. University of Chicago Press, 133. Faulkner, R. O (1969). *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. Oxford University Press, 103; Bresciani, E. (1975). *The Temple of Kom Ombo*, 45, Faulkner, R. O. (1973). *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, Volume I*. Aris & Phillips, 134; Faulkner, R. O. (1985). *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 87,

Methodology

This study employs a textual analysis, iconographic interpretation, and Theological and Symbolic Analysis to examine the Crocodile's dual nature in Ancient Egypt. Primary sources include the New Kingdom religious and funerary texts such as the Book of the Dead, Book of the Earth, the Amduat, these texts were selected for their explicit references to crocodiles and Sobek, providing a diachronic perspective across religious, literary, and symbolic contexts.

Importance of the study:

The dual nature of Sobek and the Nile crocodile, as perceived by the Egyptians, is reflected in the treatment of the Crocodile in different parts of Egypt and various religious texts. As a predator, the Crocodile posed a danger to the lives and livelihoods of the locals, as well as the dead. Parts of Egypt were where the Crocodile was considered a threat and hunted and killed.

It is essential to illuminate the Dual nature of the Crocodile God Sobek by examining its role in the underworld books of the New Kingdom, thereby understanding the religious, Environmental, and cultural impact on the Lives of Ancient Egyptians.

The Main Objectives

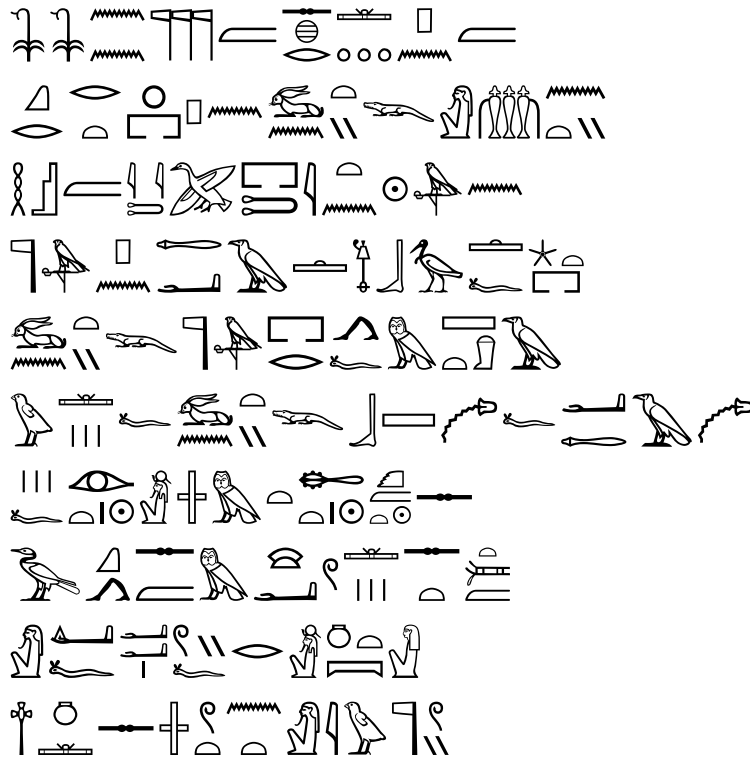
- 1- Aims to study, discuss, and analyze the texts of New Kingdom Underworld Books related to the Crocodile's Double nature
- 2- The Theological and Symbolic Analysis of the Texts according to the Egyptian theological principle of Ma'at and Isfet.
- 3-Highlighting the complex nature of the Crocodile God and its theological role in the Underworld Books

Text Analysis:

The birth of the sun from a Crocodile

In the seventh hour of the Book of Earth, the process of rebirth of the sun god from the body of a crocodile¹⁰:

¹⁰ Hornung, E., (1990). *Zwei ramessidische Königsgräber, Ramses IV. Und Ramses VII.* P. Von Zabern. 67 Darnell, J. C. & Manassa, C. (2018). *The ancient Egyptian Netherworld Books.* Sbl Press.506



1 nn n ntr.w m šhr pn m

2 qrr.t p(3)-n-Wntj hntj

3 htmj.t jtn n

4 ntr pn 3 wb3=f dw3.t

5 Wntj ntr pr=f m št3

6. w(t)=f Wntj bš=f 33

7 =f jr.t R^c jmj.t h.t=f km.t=s

8 3q=s m h^c.w=s tm(w)

9 dj=f 3.wj=f r R^c Nw.t ¹¹

10 nd=s jmj.wt=s

These gods in this form are in the cavern of Penwenti, which is before the Place of Annihilation:

*The disc of this Great God opens the Duat of Wenti
, and the God emerges from his mysteries.*

He vomits,

*expelling the Eye of Re from his body,
and its pupil enters its appearance.*

Atum offers his hands to Re

¹¹ Roberson, J. (2014). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*. Brown University, 384, plate 23, text 6.

and Nut, and she protects that which is in her.¹²

The scenes from the tombs of Ramesses VII and IX (Fig.1) depict the Crocodile Wenti standing on its tail with a ram's head emerging from its belly, accompanied by a solar disc positioned between the ram's head and the Crocodile. Behind Wenti, on the right, stand three female figures facing the center of the scene, three bearded gods walking toward the Crocodile with their arms raised in adoration.

Piankoff finds similarity with another scene from the tomb of Ramesses VI.¹³ However, Roberson disagrees with him. He comments, *"While both tableaux include a vertically balanced crocodile, the thematic content of the two representations is quite different. Whereas a scene from Ramesses VI depicts the Crocodile Penwenti guarding the solar corpse, the tableau is concerned with the sun's violent eruption from a less benevolent reptile."*¹⁴.

This event occurs in the "cavern of Penwenti before the Place of Annihilation." However, the Crocodile represented here is not the beneficent Penwenti but Wenti-Apep, which appears in the fifth division of the Book of Caverns¹⁵ The disc of the sun god opens the *Duat* of Wenti, thereby symbolizing the birth of the sun from the body of the Crocodile, and is equated with the birth of Osiris from Nut.

As the sun disc splits the Crocodile's body, Wenti "vomits and expels the eye of Re, which is in his body." Assmann¹⁶ Notes a similar passage from a solar hymn, which appears to draw upon the same myth, Te Velde¹⁷ Agrees with Assmann and describes in similarity In this birth of Seth, it may be significant that the Crocodile held particular significance as an animal of Seth; it appears that the violent ejection of the sun from the body of a crocodile, which was associated with a destructive entity like Wenti-Apep, was seen as one way in which the primordial and potentially chaotic forces played a necessary role in the ongoing renewal of the universe.

¹² Piankoff, A. (1953). *La création du disque solaire*. Bibliothèque d'étude 19. IFAO, Le Caire. 68–69.
Roberson, J. (2012). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, 211

¹³ Piankoff, A. (1953) *La création*, 67-69.

¹⁴ Roberson, J. A. (2012). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*. Brown University, 211.

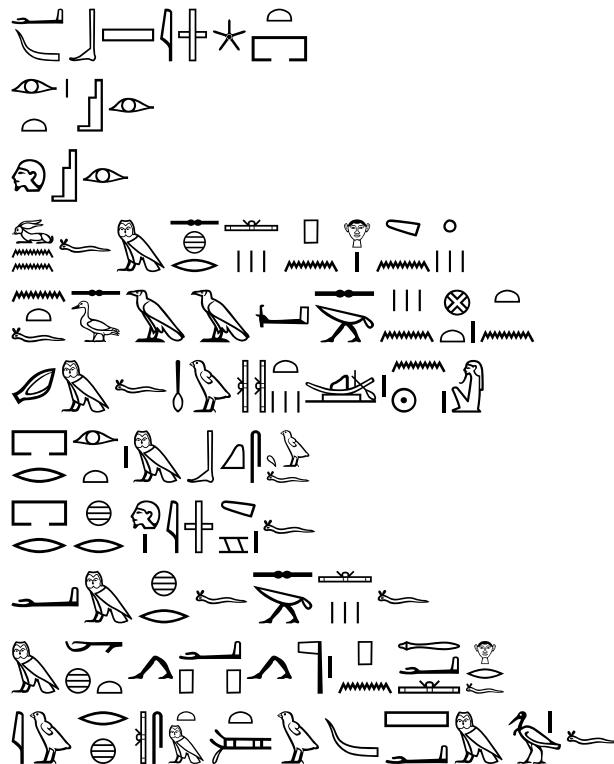
¹⁵ Piankoff, A. (1944). *Le Livre des Quérerts*, Seconde Division ; Troisième Division ; Quatrième Division ; Cinquième Division. *BIFAO* 42. plate 63, 1–2.

¹⁶ Assmann, J (1969). *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*. The library of Egyptologist Charles Van Siclen III. 198–99.

¹⁷ Velde, T. (1967). *Seth, God of confusion: A study of his role in Egyptian mythology and religion*. Brill. 27.

The Crocodile helps Osiris.

The text of the lower register of the seventh hour of the Amduat reads¹⁸:



ᵇš imy dw3t

irt wsir

tp wsir

wnn.f m shr pn hr idb ni šꜥy

ntf z33w ššmw ni niwt tn

sdm.f hrw izt wi3 ni rꜥw

pri irt m bksw.f

prihr tp imy idb.f

ᵇmhr.f ssmw.f

m-ht ᵇpp ntr pn 3 hr.f

*iw rhw.st m tmw ᵇš ᵇm b3.f*¹⁹

Crocodile in the Netherworld

Eye of Osiris

Head of Osiris

He is like this on the sandy shore:

It is he who guards the image of this place

¹⁸ E., Hornung, (2007). *The Egyptian Amduat: the book of the hidden chamber*. Living Human Heritage Publications, 241.

¹⁹ Hornung, E. (2007). *The Egyptian Amduat*, 241.

*When he hears the voice of the crew of the bark of Re,
 The Eye goes forth from his spine
 And then the head, which is on the riverbank, appears, too
 Then he swallows his images again,
 After this great God has passed him
 He who knows it is Ba-soul, the Crocodile, cannot swallow²⁰*

In the seventh hour of the Amduat, when the battle between Apophis in the form of a serpent and the sun god, protected by Isis, Seth, Selket, and Mehen-serpent, Apophis lies on his sandbank in front of the bark, trying to bring the course of the rejuvenation to a stop.

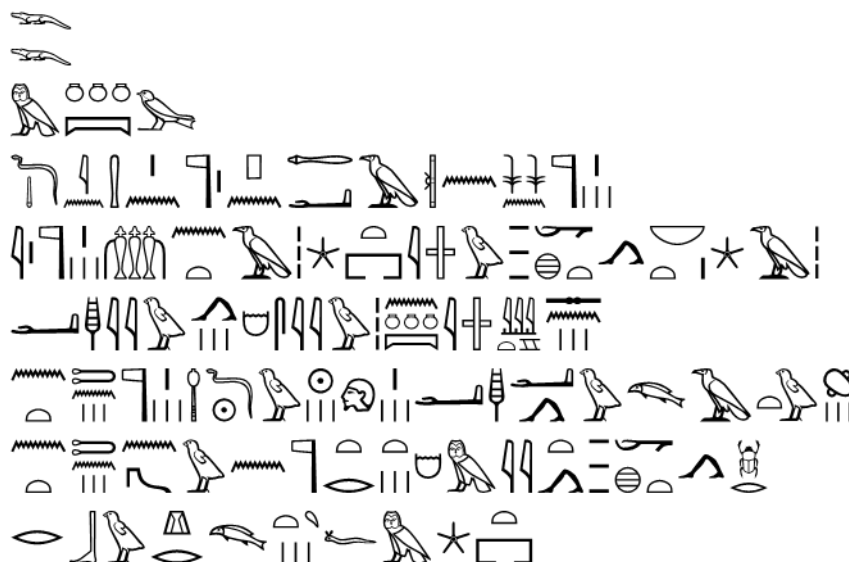
In the upper register of the hour, Osiris triumphs over his bound enemies, who are beheaded by an avenging demon with a cat's head. A Mehen-serpent protects Osiris himself.

The final scene of the hour depicts a crocodile on a mound of sand from which the head of Osiris emerges (fig. 2); it is assisting in the search for the lost limbs of the gods, whose limbs were rescued from the water and are now guarded by the Crocodile.

The primeval water and the Crocodile

In the sixth hour of the Amduat

The lower register reads:



hnty

²⁰ Hornung, E. (2007). *The Egyptian* 241.

’Imy(t)-nww-wr

ḏd-mdw in ḥm nī ntr pn ʿ3 n nn nī ntrw

I ntrw ḥntyw dw3t imyw-ḥt nbt dw3tyw

ʿhʿyw ḥmsyw n nww imy šht.sn

nttn ntrw ḥdw tpw ʿhʿk ḥ3wt

nttn nw nī ntrwt ḥmywt m-ḥt ḥpri

r bw ḥr ḥ3t.f m dw3t ²¹

Crocodile

She who is in the great Nun

Words spoken by the person of this great God to these gods:

«Oh! Gods in the Netherworld, followers of the «waterhole of those of the Netherworld,

You are the gods whose heads shine and whose corpses stand!

You are those goddesses who set back behind Khepri,

to the place which contains his corpse in the Netherworld.

Standing ones and seated ones of Nun, who is in their field!

In the sixth hour, at the very depths of the Netherworld, the sun reaches the water hole filled with Nun, the primeval water. Here lies Ba of the sun god, he will unite with it. The sun's corpse is depicted twice at the ends of the upper and lower registers—the sun god is shown as the solar beetle, thus already connected with the God's rejuvenated morning form. The corpse is also the image of Osiris.

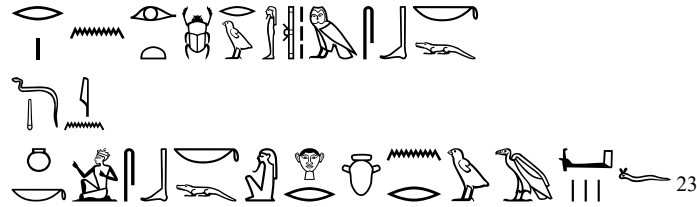
In the upper register. Re and Osiris unite at the deepest point in the nocturnal journey as Ba and the corpse. At the same time, the notion of resurrection is underscored by the semi-upright position of deities in the upper and lower registers. Thoth is seated in front of the barque, healing the Eye and thus helping to ignite the new light.

The crocodile-headed, half-sitting God frames the Lower Register (fig.3). Who can be identified with Sobek, master of all waters, and with Nun as guardian of this hour, the God of water, Nile flood, and the primeval ocean, and thus of the world before creation in which the Sun god is daily regenerated? Together with Sobek, the crocodile-headed goddess, Imy(t)-nww-wr’ She who is in the great Nun, forms a couple

²¹ Hornung, E, (2007). *Amduat* 203; Darnell, & Manassa, (2018). *Netherworld Books*. 244

representing the fertile and rejuvenating power of the primeval water that fills the depth of the Netherworld.²²

The terrifying Crocodile



r3 n(y) jr-t hprw m sbk

dd mdw jn

jnk šbk hr(y)-jb nrw=f

Formula for transforming into a crocodile-sobek

Words to be said

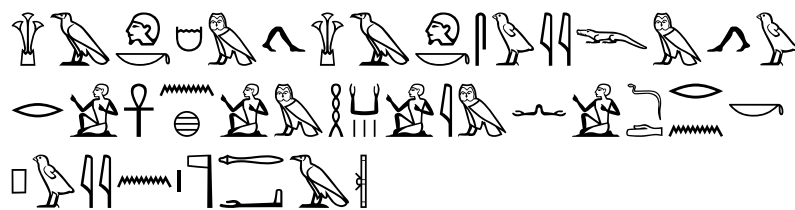
I am Sobek, who is at the heart of the terror he inspires (lit. his terror)²⁴

This terrifying "quality" attributed to the Crocodile manifests the terrifying character; thus, the Crocodile evokes ferocity and inspires terror; in Ch. 88 of the Dead, to destroy this force of evil, in the magical texts with the formulas of: "shut the mouth of any reptile as an enemy."²⁵

Spells to ward off the dangerous crocodiles

In spell 31 of the Book of the Dead, A spell wards off crocodiles away from the deceased:

Spell for warding off a crocodile which has come to steal (N's) magic.



h3(w)=k hm h3(w)=k swy m jw

r - j ^cnh=j m hk3.w=j jm - j dd(w) rn -k

²² Hornung, E. (1999). *Books of the afterlife*. 37-38; Hornung, (2007). *The Egyptian Amduat* 203; Darnell & Manassa (2018). *Netherworld Books*. 244.

²³ Budge, E. A. W. (2022). *The Book of the Dead. The Papyrus of Ani*. 188

²⁴ El-Sayed, R., (1981). *Nehaher. BIFAO 81*, 120; Carrier, C. (2010). *Série des papyrus du Livre des morts de l'Égypte ancienne*. Cybele. 315.

²⁵ Barguet, P. (1969) *Le Livre des Morts*, 125 : Budge E. A. W. (2022). *The Book of the Dead. The Papyrus of Ani*.188.

pwꜣ n ntr ꜥ3

"Back! Back off! Back, Crocodile! Do not come against me, for I live by my magic! I do not want to mention your name, which is yours to the great God.

The spell is directed against crocodiles, which have come to steal the magic of the deceased. Four crocodiles are targeted, and each is identified with a cardinal point. Thus, danger is warded off from all four directions (Fig. 4). The vignette shows four figures of the deceased warding off each Crocodile by holding out his hand in an apotropaic gesture attested in fording scenes.²⁶

The Theological and Symbolic Analysis of the Texts

Sobek's dual nature in the New Kingdom Underworld Books is a profound reflection of the Egyptian theological principle of *Ma'at*, the cosmic order that underpinned existence and required the harmonization of opposing forces.²⁷ As Te Velde²⁸ articulates, "The crocodile god embodies the paradox of creation and destruction, essential for the cyclical renewal of the cosmos."²⁹ This paradox is central to Sobek's role in the Duat, where his protective and destructive actions are not in opposition but are complementary facets of his divine agency. His guardianship of Re is evident in the *Amduat*'s depiction of him as "He who is in the water, who guards the path of Re."³⁰ Mirrors his terrestrial role as a Nile deity, nurturing life through the river's inundation. Conversely, his destructive acts, such as devouring the shadows of the damned in the *Book of Caverns*³¹ or wielding a knife against Re's enemies in the *Book of Gates*,³² neutralize threats to cosmic order, echoing the Crocodile's predatory instincts. This interplay of creation and destruction positions Sobek as a mediator of *Ma'at*, ensuring the balance necessary for the universe's perpetuation.

Sobek's association with the solar cycle further amplifies his theological significance. In Egyptian cosmology, the nightly journey of the sun god Ra (also known as Re) through the Duat symbolized the eternal cycle of death and rebirth. This process

²⁶ McDonald, A. (2002). *Animal metaphor in the Egyptian determinative system: three case studies*. 397.

²⁷ Assmann, J. (2001). *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. 17.

²⁸ Velde, T. (1967). *Seth, God of confusion*, 101–115.

²⁹ Velde, T. (1967). *Seth, God of confusion*, 112.

³⁰ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, 78.

³¹ Piankoff, A. (1944). *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*. New York: Pantheon Books, 89.

³² Piankoff, A. (1954). *The Book of Gates*. New York: Pantheon Books, 156.

depended on overcoming chaotic forces, such as Apep.³³ Sobek's role in facilitating Re's passage—whether by guarding his path or eliminating obstacles—aligns him with the regenerative process. His water-bound nature, emphasized in epithets like “He who is in the water,” links him to the primordial waters of Nun, the chaotic yet generative source of creation in Egyptian myth.³⁴ This connection imbues Sobek with a liminal quality, positioning him at the threshold between chaos and order, destruction and renewal. In the *Book of Caverns*, his devouring of shadows is particularly symbolic, as it parallels the Osirian myth of dismemberment and reconstitution, where destruction paves the way for regeneration.³⁵ By clearing the Duat of malevolent forces, Sobek enables Re's rebirth at dawn, embodying the transformative power of *Ma'at*.

Moreover, Sobek's crocodilian form enhances his symbolic potency through its association with *heka* (magic). The Crocodile's stealth, strength, and ability to navigate the liminal space between land and water were seen as supernatural attributes, making Sobek a conduit for divine power in the Duat.³⁶ His fearsome jaws, depicted in the *Book of Gates* as “open to the enemies of Re”,³⁷ Evoke both the destructive force of chaos and the controlled power of divine judgment. This duality is visually reinforced in iconography, where Sobek's green skin and *was*-scepter signify fertility and authority, respectively.³⁸ The Crocodile's natural behavior—nurturing its young yet annihilating prey—serves as a microcosm of the Egyptian worldview, where opposing forces are reconciled to maintain cosmic equilibrium.

The variations in Sobek's portrayal across the Underworld Books further illuminate his theological flexibility. In the *Amduat*, his protective role aligns with the text's emphasis on Re's journey through the Duat's twelve hours, a narrative of cosmic renewal.³⁹ The *Book of Gates* casts him as a judicial figure, his knife-wielding presence at the fifth gate underscoring the Duat's role as a space of judgment.⁴⁰ In the *Book of Caverns*, his destructive act of devouring shadows reflects the text's punitive tone,

³³ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*. 30.

³⁴ Assmann, J. (2001). *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. 19.

³⁵ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, 95.

³⁶ Velde, T. (1967). *Seth, God of confusion*, 105.

³⁷ Hornung, E., & Abt, T. (2014). *The Egyptian book of gates*. Living Human Heritage Publications, 156.

³⁸ Abt, T., & Hornung, E., (2003). *The Egyptian Amduat: The Book of the Hidden Chamber*. Zurich: Living Human Heritage Publications, 145.

³⁹ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, 34.

⁴⁰ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*. 55.

where the annihilation of the damned is a prerequisite for cosmic order.⁴¹ These differences highlight the adaptability of Sobek's dual nature, tailored to each text's theological priorities while consistently reinforcing his role as a guardian of *Ma'at*. This adaptability underscores the Egyptian capacity to integrate natural and divine paradoxes, positioning Sobek as a key figure in the intricate theology of the afterlife.

The Crocodile's Dual Nature in the Cultural and Environmental Context

The Crocodile's dual perception in ancient Egyptian culture—simultaneously revered as a symbol of fertility and feared as a formidable predator—profoundly shaped Sobek's depiction in the New Kingdom Underworld Books. The Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*), native to Egypt's waterways, was both a vital component of the ecosystem and a source of existential danger.⁴² In regions like the Faiyum, a major center of Sobek's cult, the Crocodile was celebrated for its association with the Nile's annual inundation, which fertilized the land and sustained agriculture.⁴³ Temples such as those at Kom Ombo and Crocodilopolis housed living crocodiles, revered as incarnations of Sobek and adorned with jewelry, reflecting their divine status.⁴⁴ However, the same creature's unpredictable aggression and lethal power instilled fear, as crocodiles could attack humans and livestock without warning, embodying the chaotic force of *isfet*.⁴⁵

This environmental duality directly informed Sobek's theological role in the Underworld Books. The Nile, central to Egyptian life, was both a life-giving artery and a perilous domain, mirroring the Duat's role as a realm of both regeneration and danger.⁴⁶ Sobek's presence in the underworld, navigating the waters of the Duat, parallels his terrestrial association with the Nile, where he was seen as a controller of its dual potential to nurture and destroy. The Crocodile's behavior—protective of its young, carrying them in its jaws to safety, yet merciless in hunting—provided a natural archetype for Sobek's dual roles as guardian and destroyer in the Underworld Books.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*. 83.

⁴² Velde, T. (1967). *Seth, God of confusion*, 103.

⁴³ Shafer, B. E., Baines, J., Lesko, L. H., Silverman, D. P. (1991). *Religion in ancient Egypt: Gods, myths, and personal practice*. Cornell University Press, 146.

⁴⁴ Zecchi, M. (2010). Sobek of Shedet. *The Crocodile God in the Fayyum in the Dynastic Period*, 104.

⁴⁵ Shafer, B. E., Baines, J., Lesko, L. H., Silverman, D. P. (1991). *Religion in ancient Egypt*, 147.

⁴⁶ Hornung, E. (1999). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, 28.

⁴⁷ Zecchi, M. (2010). Sobek of Shedet, 103.

This duality was not merely symbolic but deeply rooted in the daily lived experience of Egyptians, who navigated the Nile's bounty and dangers.

Moreover, the cultural reverence for crocodiles extended to their perceived supernatural qualities. The Crocodile's stealth, strength, and ability to thrive in the liminal space between land and water imbued it with an aura of *heka* (magic), making Sobek a potent figure in the Duat's cosmic narrative.⁴⁸ In the New Kingdom, a period characterized by religious innovation and the elaboration of afterlife texts, Sobek's cult gained prominence, particularly under rulers such as Amenhotep III, who associated themselves with Sobek to emphasize their divine authority.⁴⁹ The Underworld Books, as products of this era, leveraged the Crocodile's cultural and environmental significance to articulate the complexities of the afterlife, where Sobek's dual nature served as a microcosm of the eternal struggle between order and chaos, essential for maintaining *Ma'at*.

Conclusion:

The Nile crocodile was a powerful animal in ancient Egypt. Protector and giver of life, and a dangerous animal. Through the study of the Egyptian texts, indicates that it had a dual nature: it was a guardian of order (*ma'at*) and a representation of chaos (*isfet*). The god Sobek, who protected kings alive and, in the afterlife, stood for fertility, kingship, and divine protection. This article examined the crocodile's dual nature in New Kingdom texts, including the Book of the Dead, the Book of the Earth, and the Amduat. It argues that these representations show the Egyptian dialectic between order and chaos. The study examined the New Kingdom Underworld texts that discuss the crocodile's Dual nature. This endeavor will help us understand how religion, the environment, and culture affected the lives of ancient Egyptians.

The Amduat text shows the crocodile Sobek as a fearsome creature believed to ward off evil and unpleasant things. Spells in the Book of the Dead to ward off dangerous crocodiles that would harm the dead, thereby keeping them safe. The Crocodile in the text reminds us of God's power and the importance of protecting it.

The Egyptian god Sobek is also a symbol of the cosmic order *Ma'at*, which emphasizes the need for balance between creation and destruction. Sobek, as a Nile

⁴⁸ Zecchi, M. (2010). Sobek of Shedet, 105.

⁴⁹ Shafer, B. E., Baines, J., Lesko, L. H., Silverman, D. P. (1991). Religion in ancient Egypt, 148.

god, brings life to the river by flooding it. Sobek was viewed as a creator god, helping to create the world from the waters of chaos, Sobek's nature is deeply protective and nurturing. He was often invoked for his ability to ward off evil and to guard against danger

Sobek's dual nature represents a larger theme in Egyptian religion: the coexistence of opposites. Life and death, creation and destruction, fear and devotion—Sobek embodied all of these opposites. His worship enabled ancient Egyptians to navigate life's uncertainties, to appreciate both the blessings and dangers of nature, and to recognize that divine power could be both protective and terrifying.

Figures

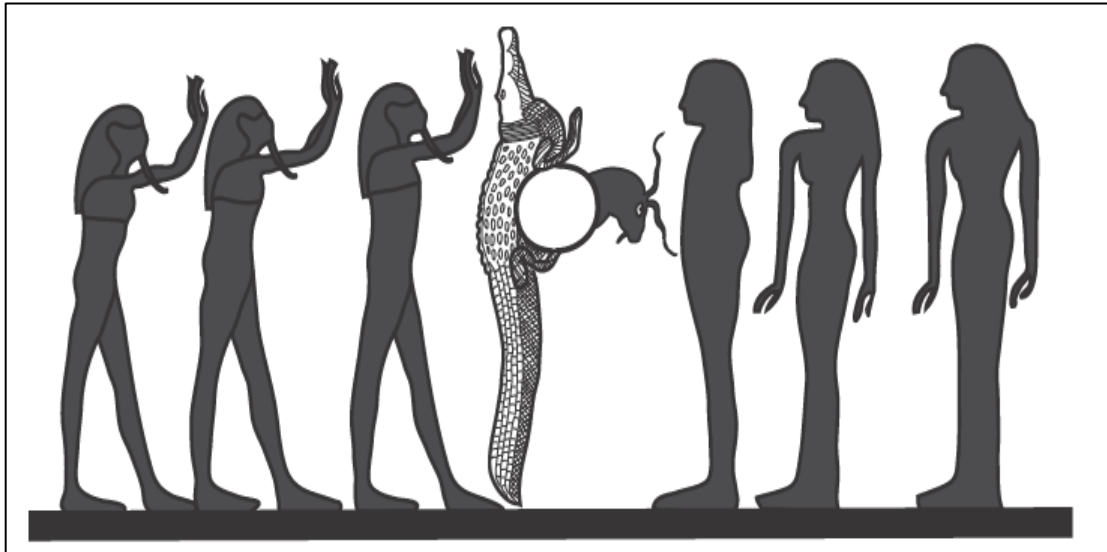


Figure 1. Book of Earth. The Crocodile that gives birth to the sun, tomb of Ramesses IX.

Roberson, J. A. (2014). *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*. Brown University.

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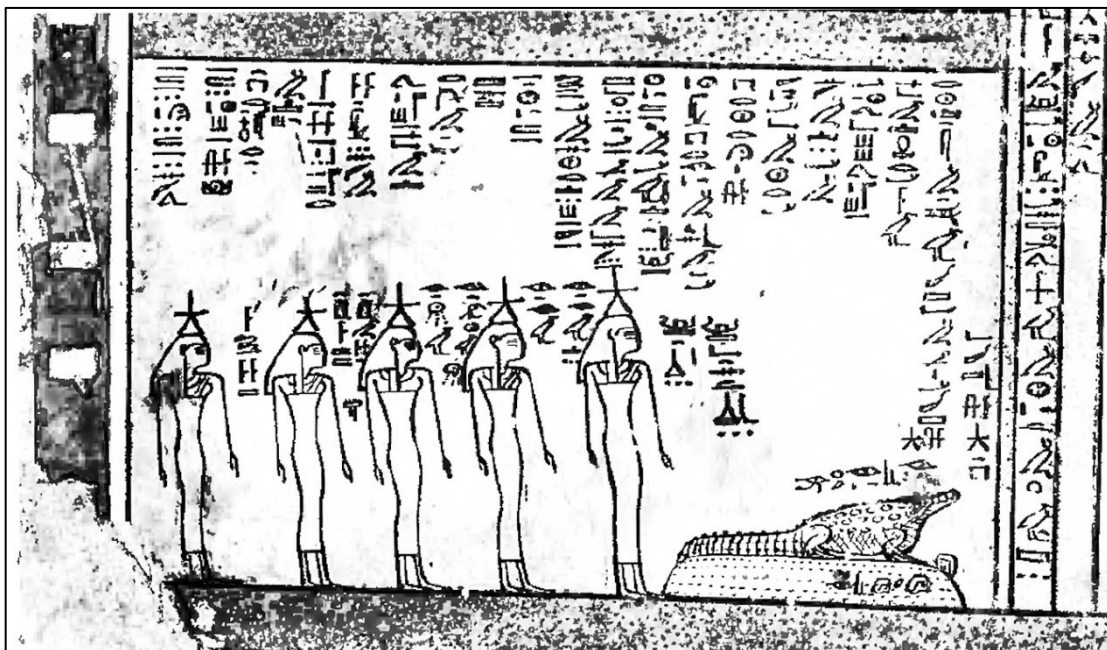


Figure 2, the seventh hour of the Amduat, depicts the final scene of the hour, showing a crocodile on a mound of sand from which the head of Osiris emerges.

Hornung, E. (2007). *The Egyptian Amduat: the book of the hidden chamber*. Living Human Heritage Publications, 241

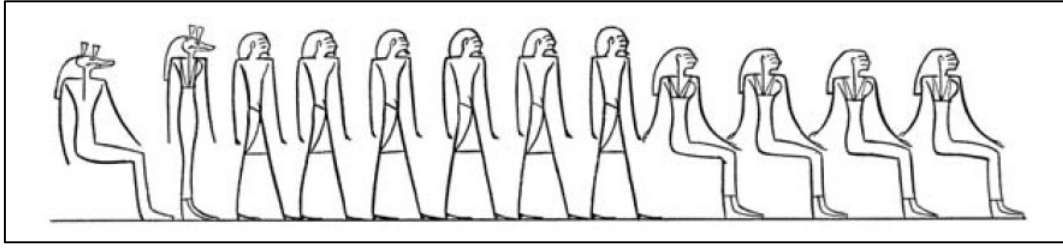


Figure 3, Sixth Hour of the Amduat, The crocodile-headed, half-sitting God frames the Lower Register.

Hornung, E. (2007). *The Egyptian Amduat: the book of the hidden chamber*. Hour of the Amduat



Figure 4, spell 31 of the Book of the Dead, shows four figures of the deceased warding off each Crocodile.

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مجلة المنيا لبحوث السياحة والضيافة



الطبيعة المزدوجة لسوبك في كتب العالم السفلي في فنره الدولة الحديثة

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المستخلص

الكلمات الدالة

يُعد التمساح رمزًا بارزًا في الثقافة المصرية القديمة، حيث يمثل القوة والخطر. تتناول هذه الورقة الدور المتعدد الأوجه للتمساح في المجتمع المصري القديم وأهميته الرمزية في كتب العالم الآخر الملكية المصرية القديمة. كان التمساح المقدس رمزًا للخصوبة والحماية، مرتبطًا بالإله سوبك وظهر بشكل بارز في الطقوس والمراسم الدينية. ومع ذلك، فقد شكل وجوده الهائل في نهر النيل تهديدًا كبيرًا لحياة الإنسان، مما استلزم تطوير تقنيات الصيد وتدابير الحماية. توضح هذه الورقة، من خلال تحليل النصوص الدينية وبعض التصويرات الفنية، العلاقة المعقدة بين البشر والتمساح في مصر القديمة، مسلطة الضوء على الإرث الخالد لهذا الكائن الغامض في الخيال الجماعي لإحدى أكثر الحضارات سحرًا في العالم.

تمساح – سوبك - مصر
القديمة - الطبيعة المزدوجة -
كتاب الموتى - كتاب الأرض
الأموات - الدولة الحديثة

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