‘Demons’ and Divine Intervention in Ancient Egypt

Hamada Hussein Mohamed1, Maher Hammam Mohamed2

1, 2 Tourism Guidance Department- Faculty of Tourism and Hotels- University of Sadat City

ABSTRACT:
Recently, there has been a tendency among Egyptologists to use the term ‘demon’ to identify supernatural beings, minor deities, and personifications in ancient Egypt. Some of these, including h3tyw, were thought to harm the living. h3tyw, and other supernatural beings were designated in this way by some scholars as demons. Therefore, this paper, on one hand, investigates the validity of the term demon and attempts at finding out to what extent it might fit into Egyptian thought. On the other, the in terms of divine intervention, instead of using ‘demon’, genuine Egyptian conceptions should be considered. Gods, of any rank, took forms. Among these were the baw, akh. Sticking to what ancient Egyptians’ texts say in inevitable for a reasonable interpretation of their culture. The application of the term demon to Egyptian entities results in establishing a category that does not fit into Egyptian thought.

KEYWORDS: Demons, Demonology, Egyptian divinities, Divine intervention, baw, akh, Fiend.

INTRODUCTION:
A plethora of articles were devoted to the concept of demons in ancient Egypt. A wide range of papers were presented in the 2016 conference at the University of Swansea. Specifically, Egyptian entities including the h3tyw, w3y and the dead were thought to be demons and to cause harm to the living.1 A collection of ‘demonic’ beings is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather a selection of demons thought to intervene in people’s lives will suffice to clarify the researchers’ viewpoint.

This paper, on one hand, investigates to what extent the term demon applies to ancient Egyptian entities of any kind. On the other, attention is drawn to Egyptian ways of divine intervention. This is exemplified in the baw,2 and akh.3 Understanding the concept of divine intervention as it is provided by the Egyptians narrows the room for any foreign concepts and help better understand Egyptian culture.

DEMONS IN EGYPTIAN THOUGHT

In the ‘Demon Things’ conference, held at the University of Swansea in 2016, a host of scholars have presented articles on a range of ancient Egyptian entities which they identified as demons. A sample might be sufficient to clarify the point and how the authors justified it. For example, in her article, Bennet surveyed 100 coffins dated to the Middle Kingdom. She made about 18 different types of typologies (serpentine, reversed

1 See the full discussion of these entities below under ‘Demons in Egyptian thought’.
2 R. Faulkner, Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, Oxford, 1962, 77. (Abbreviated below as CDME)
3 Faulkner, CDME, 4.
anatomy, humanoid, multiple form, bovine…. etc). The primary role of these ‘demonic’ entities was to maintain Maat. Bennet justifies the adoption of each of the anatomy types and elaborates on how it relates to the function of the being.\(^4\)

Another group of ancient Egyptian entities envisaged by some scholars as demons were the door-guardians. These are seen in the Book of the Dead and who were depicted on the temples walls in the Late Period.\(^5\) Bareš interpreted the door guardians in the tombs of the priest Nekau and the general Menekhibnekau as demons.\(^6\) Earlier in 2010, Lucarelli identified the door guardians in chapters 144-147 of the Book of the Dead as being ontologically ‘demons’. Quoting her: “I would define these guardian figures as ‘demons,’ namely supernatural beings which mediate between gods and mankind.”\(^7\)

Categories of demons are also suggested. Lucarelli distinguishes two sub-categories of ‘demonic beings’ which, according to their locations, are either stationary or wandering.\(^8\) She admits, however, that it is not possible to fit all the ‘demonic’ beings in these two groups. This is obvious in the case of the beings represented on the amuletic objects including the ancient Egyptian ivory wands.\(^9\) Most importantly, demons could be categorised into benevolent and malevolent.\(^10\)

In terms of the content of the name and iconography, figures as “Swallower-of-shadows”,\(^11\) “Big-and-fiery”, and “He-whose-face-is-hot”,\(^12\) either animals or hybrid of animals brandishing knives,\(^13\) are identified by Szpakowska as demons.\(^14\)

More directly to the point, the authors would like to turn to specific ‘demonic’ groups, namely those who were thought to intervene in people’s lives. A collection of all demonic groups of this kind is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to refer to certain groups of different sources. The first of these are the ḫȝtyw “Slaughterers”, “executioners”, or “disease-bringers.”\(^15\) The ḫȝtyw were mentioned in both the Pyramid

---

\(^{5}\) S. Beck, “Disease Demons in Mesopotamia and Egypt: Sāmānu As a Case Study”, \textit{JAEI} 25 (2020), 23.
\(^{8}\) R. Lucarelli, “Towards a Comparative Approach to Demonology in Antiquity: The Case of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia”, \textit{Archiv für Religionsgeschichte} 2013 (14) 1,17.
\(^{9}\) R. Lucarelli, \textit{Archiv für Religionsgeschichte} 2013 (14) 1, 18.
\(^{10}\) K. Szpakowska, “Demons in Ancient Egypt”, \textit{Religion Compass} 3/5 (2009), 799.
\(^{15}\) \textit{Wb} III, 326, 6-7; D. Sass, “The Slaughterers: A Study of the ḫȝtyw as Liminal Beings in Ancient Egyptian Thought”, \textit{JAEI} 25 (2020), 181-200.
Texts and the Coffin Texts. They were also mentioned in Chapter 149 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased desires that $h\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw, a variant of the h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw, do not chase him:

\[
\begin{align*}
nn \text{sh}m \text{shr} \text{c}'\text{d im}=\text{i} & \quad \text{He-who-overthrows-the-catfish shall have no power over me}, \\
nn \text{iwt} \text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}yw \text{m-}\text{s}\text{h}=\text{i} & \quad \text{the h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}yw \text{will not come after me}, \\
nn \text{iwt} \theta\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}yw \text{m-}\text{s}\text{h}=\text{i} & \quad \text{the fiends will not pursue me}.^{17}
\end{align*}
\]

In the Book of Caverns, the h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw are represented as four knife-brandishing figures who slaughter the enemies of Osiris (Fig. 1). In Book of Caverns, they do massacre to the enemies of Osiris:

\[
\begin{align*}
h\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}yw \text{imyw} \text{nmwt} \text{nt wsir} & \quad \text{The Slaughterers who are in the slaughterhouse} \\
'\text{d}tt \text{(sic) tn} \text{irt} \text{z<s>n mi} & \quad \text{of Osiris slaughter(?) you and do as …} \\
\{\ldots\} & \\
'\text{d}t \text{shpr…ztn} & \quad \text{The massacre create (d) … you}.^{18}
\end{align*}
\]

Fig. 1: h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw-slaughterers in the Book of Caverns. (After Piankoff, Tomb of Ramesses VI, fig. 11)

Outside of the funerary literature, h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw also occur in the Edwin Smith medical papyrus. This scientifically oriented papyrus focuses on the performance of surgery and the magical perspective. Here, h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw are linked to Sekhmet: $s\text{m}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw shmt “disease-agents(?) of Sekhmet.”^{20} The threat of the h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw is to be averted as the incantation reads: “Withdraw O h$\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}\text{h}$yw. The wind shall not reach me that those who pass by may pass by to

---

16 R. Faulkner, *Pyramid Texts*, 234; *CT* III 366a (Spell 256).
18 A. Piankoff, *Le livre des Quererets’, BIFAO* 42 (1944), pls. XXV.
work disaster against me. I am Horus who passes by the diseased ones of Sekhmet, (even) Horus, Horus, healthy despite Sekhmet. I am the unique one, son of Bastet. I die not through you (fem).”

The mention of ḫḥtywy also recurs in the Oracular Amulet Decrees. These were concerned with the supernatural protection of people from diseases, saving them from injuries while traveling, and providing protection against all evil kinds. The principal groups mentioned in the Oracular Amulet Decrees are various ghosts, minor deities including the dead, the ẖrw, and the wḥt. Besides, there are other minor groups such as ḫḥtywy “slaughterers”, ẖmtywy “disease-demons”, and wpwtywy “messengers.”

The medical papyri also indicate to a being called wpjy, perhaps the “distant one”. In Berlin Medical Papyrus, a spell is recited to expel wpjy from one’s limbs: kpw nh dr wpjy m ḫw’t n s. Also, in the Book of Overthrowing Apophis, wpjy is Apophis himself. The related text reads: ḫ/x wpjy “Apophis, the fallen one, wpjy.”

Outside of the divine sphere, the dead (mwtw) ḫ/h could also be included in the category of demons, while the spirits (akhw) are controversial. Lucarelli differentiates these two groups from demons. She thinks that, despite their demonic tendencies, they are to be envisaged as ‘deceased human’ because they had no existence before death.

That said, the door guardians and other ‘demonic’ groups will be left aside. Rather, the focus will be on these entities which were believed to intervene in people’s lives, and which were described as demons. It is noteworthy that these denizens of entities could be easily differentiated through the determinatives used as follows:

A. Epithets ending with divine determinative (ḥḥtywy (ẖ)) “seated god”).

21 Breasted, Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus I, 477.
23 Wb IV, 471, 1-6.
26 For further studies on Apophis, see L. D. Morenz, “Apophis: on the Origin, Name, and Nature of an Ancient Egyptian Anti-God”, JNES 63 (2004), 201; Willems, JEA 76 (1990), 27-54.
27 R. Faulkner, The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum no. 10188), Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 3, Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1933, 90. Azzam elaborates on the possible stems from which the epithet wpjy was derived, see Azzam, “ḥḥr and wpjy: Two Ancient Egyptian Demons”, GM 227 (2010), 9-16.
29 A. Piankoff, BIFAO 41 (1942), pl.VIII. However, the orthography of the term changes from the ld Kingdom throughout the Graeco-Roman Period. Sass has collected the various forms in which the term
B. Epithets ending with non-divine determinative:

   B.A. Gardiner List Z6 (as in the case of wꜣy) ≃ “the hieratic substitute for ḫmn”
   B.B. Gardiner List A14 (as in the case of mwtw) ḫmn “man with blood streaming
from his head.”

The following discussion will address, on one hand, the possibility of applying the
term ‘demon’ to these Egyptian entities. On the other, the researchers will elaborate on
how the ancient Egyptians themselves understood the divine intervention and how it
worked and whether or not it was by means of demons.

“Demon” is derived from the ancient Greek word δαμαών which has several
meanings. It had neutral connotations since both positive and negative actions were
associated with it. Primarily, it means “god/goddess” or “the divine power.” It can also
describe “the power controlling the destiny of individuals” or a “spiritual” or “semi-
divine being.”

In his *Greek Philosophical Terms*, F. E. Peters defines *daimon* as “supernatural
presence or entity, somewhere between a god (*theos*) and a hero.”

In Christianity, demons were thought to be Satan’s followers. With the spread of Christianity
throughout Europe and the Mediterranean world, more negative connotations associated
with evil were linked to the term ‘demon’. Therefore, “Demon” and “demonology”,
are now based on the negative, Judaeo-Christian conceptualisation and practice.

The question that immediately arises is the place of demons and demonology in
Egyptian thought. This requires the exploration of the terms used to describe ‘divine’ by
the Egyptians themselves. The Egyptian textual record is full of theology, although it
forms only part of the evidence, and seemingly ritual rather than theological in their
conceptions. However, it makes clear the way the Egyptians defined entities inhabiting
the universe. In a Middle Kingdom text, for example, these are defined as: ≃ rmT

was written. These include, for example, ḫm, ≃, and ḫmn, see D. Sass, *JAEI* 25 (2020), 182-187; see
also P. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon: A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu* , OLA


34 And its cognates *dämon*, “démon”, “demone”, and “demonio.”


36 E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the many*, translated from German by

37 Eyre, “Belief and the Dead in Pharaonic Egypt”, in: M. Poo (ed.), *Rethinking Ghosts in World
Religions*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009, 35.

38 J. Baines, Presenting and Discussing Deities in New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period’, in B.
“people”, ntrw “gods”, 3hw “akh-spirits”, and mwtw “the dead.” The superhuman beings were also identified in the Onomasticon of Amenemopet as: ntr “god”, ntrt “goddess”, 3h “transfigured male spirit”, 3ht “transfigured female spirit” nswt “king” nsyt “goddess of the kingship.” It is obvious therefore that there is no room for ‘demons’ or ‘demonology’ in Egyptian thought.

The king, both reigning and late, was also designated ntr. Senefru, for example, was designated ntr- 3 “Great-God” at Wadi Maghara. Also, the deceased king is addressed in the Pyramid Texts as: “Raise yourself, they say, in your name of god (ntr), you shall become the Atum of every god (ntr nb).”

Even non-divine beings or objects could have been identified as ntri. In the tomb of Itet at Meidum (Fig. 2), Nefermaat, her husband, is said to have “made his ntrw in a writing that cannot be rubbed out” (swt ir ntrw=f m s$ nn sin=f) No deity is represented but human figures. Therefore, Baines opines that while ntrw could identify the tomb representations. The only group of beings which was not designated as ntri.

Fig. 1: Scene from the tomb of Itet where ntrw designate non-divine entities
(After: Petrie, Medium, pl.XXIV)

43 Pyr. 147b.
44 Hornung, Conceptions of God, 53; Wb II, 363-364.
45 Urk. I, 7.11.
47 Hornung, Conceptions of God, 53; Wb II, 363-364.
To wrap up, it is obvious that demon does not apply to an Egyptian ntr “god.” ntr was equal to the Greek theos “god” as in, for example, the Rosetta stone. In Coptic, ntr, perhaps in monotheistic sense, was equal to noyte. There is also a lack of consensus among scholars regarding the position of ‘demons’ in Egyptian pantheon. Hutter classifies demons as lesser gods or anti-gods who, though different from human beings, are less powerful than major gods. He also highlights their ‘otherness’ in ancient Near Eastern texts where they have non-human elements. In case of ancient Egyptian demons, Lucarelli opines that they rank between gods and humans and do not exactly belong to the gods’ category. Meeks, however, places these supernatural beings as ‘sub-category’ of the ‘divine beings’. Kurth has proposed an ‘alternative’ interpretation of the divine and the demonic in Egypt. He understands magic and religion, two opposite poles of one scale, as acting and examining respectively. He thinks that although the demonic beings’ power superseded that of the humans, the power of the major deities was mysterious and infinite. Also, he stresses, as Beck does, the fact that ‘demons’ were subordinate to major deities and concludes his discussion stating: “Dämonen bzw. Götter entspringen entgegengesetzten Ausrichtungen des menschlichen Denkens.”

In most cultures, perhaps drawing on the Judaeo-Christian conceptions, demons are bothersome rather than beneficial. However, Meeks argues that demons are intrinsically neither malevolent nor benevolent. Instead, they have a protective aggressive role that means that they behave in a malevolent manner towards some entities and in a benevolent manner towards other entities. In contrast to this, te Velde believes demons are to be at least mortal, if not evil, entities, which fits with his definition of demons as representatives of chaos.

---

48 Hornung, Conceptions of God, 42.
54 Bennet, in: Miniaci, Betrò and Quirke (eds.), Company of Images, 21, especially fn. 32.
55 Bennet, in: Miniaci, Betrò and Quirke (eds.), Company of Images, 21, fn.33.
Frandsen observes that a ‘demon’, as a representative of chaos or evil, is characterised with aggression even when acting as a protective agent.\(^{56}\) Also, as representatives of chaos, Szpakowska argues that demons did not belong to the ordered world.\(^{57}\) Therefore, she is inclined to use the term *genii* to identify the guardian beings.\(^{58}\)

On representational level, ‘demons’, with a few exceptions, lack a typical description in Egyptian tradition. For example, the *šḥḥk*-being, originally non-Egyptian,\(^{59}\) was described as: “*šḥḥk* (…) whose both eyes are in his head, whose tongue is in his hinder parts.”\(^{60}\)

Also, Lucarelli draws the attention to the fact that the epithets of ‘demons’ were written in red ink.\(^{61}\) This, however, should be considered in the context in which these names appear and what determinatives are used: evil or slain enemy.\(^{62}\) Meeks differentiates demons from ‘genii’ and assistants.\(^{63}\)

**DIVINE INTERVENTION:**

Divine intervention in ancient Egypt is problematic although it is documented in textual record.\(^{64}\) A sample of relevant text will suffice. In the autobiography of Samut-kyky from the New Kingdom we read: “Now his god has instructed him, he taught him according to his teaching. He placed him upon the path of life.”\(^{65}\)

Ways in which Egyptian gods manifested themselves or interacted with the living are also evident in Egyptian thought. The variety of forms (*irw*) and manifestations (*ḥprw*) are both crucial characteristics of Egyptian religion. Every god could take manifestations. In polytheism, a god is not Monophysite. A major god’s omnipotence does not imply that other gods’ omnipotence is restricted. A god is naturally distinguished, but not restricted, by his unique iconography and mythology. Therefore, man might encounter the manifestations of the greatest god in the same way as any lower group of the spiritual

---


\(^{61}\) R. Lucarelli, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* (14) 1, 12 and fn. 7.

\(^{62}\) As, for example, the *ḥḥtyw* beings mentioned above, see D. Sass, *JAEI* 25 (2020), 181-200.

\(^{63}\) Z. Bennett, in: Miniaci, Betrò and Quirke (eds.), *Company of Images*, 18-19 with footnotes; D. Meeks, “Génies, anges, demons en Égypte”, 19-84.


world. Major gods can also demonstrate themselves in specific manifestations, those of the spiritual world: the \textit{ba}, the \textit{ka} and the \textit{akh}.\textsuperscript{66}

The supernatural’s malicious manifestations appear clearly in the form of divine retribution. The gods’ \textit{baw}, singular \textit{ba}, were said to befall the offender.\textsuperscript{67} The \textit{ba} is conceptualised as a bird or a human-headed bird (Fig. 3).\textsuperscript{68} However, the \textit{ba} is not the principal form of interaction with the living but, alternatively, it is how the manifestations of the divine appear: sacred animals are the \textit{baw} of gods.

Fig. 2: Human-headed \textit{ba} from the Cairo Museum (Authors)

Sending and summoning the \textit{ba} is a crucial part of Egyptian religion which was attested as early as the Old Kingdom. Texts show that the \textit{ba} is a general category which is subcategorised by \textit{ntr}, the \textit{3h} and the \textit{mwt}.\textsuperscript{69} However, on their interaction with the living, the dead did appear in the form of \textit{akh} which can be translated into ‘ghost’, and which came into Coptic as \textit{ih} ‘demon’. \textit{Akh} was what lurked among tombs and appeared to people in the necropolis. Though helpful, \textit{akh} would haunt one personally and threaten him.\textsuperscript{70}

Gee draws the attention to the relationship between the terms \textit{b3}, \textit{3h} and \textit{ntr} in Egyptian thought. In the Coffin Texts spell 165, however, this hierarchical relationship is expressed differently where \textit{mwt}, with the evil determinative, replaces \textit{ba}. The related text reads: \textit{wd3.kwi swd3.kwi m3 sdh nb pri m r n ntr nb 3h nb mwt nb} “I am hale, having been made hale from every obstacle that has come forth from the mouth of every god (\textit{ntr}), every akh-spirit (\textit{3h}) and every dead (\textit{mwt})”.\textsuperscript{71} Gee interprets this replacement of the \textit{ba} with \textit{mwt} that the former was a general category that was divided into gods (\textit{ntrw}), akhs (\textit{3hw}), the dead (\textit{mwt}).\textsuperscript{72}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Eyre66} Eyre, in: Poo (ed.), \textit{Rethinking}, 37.
\bibitem{Eyre67} Eyre, in: Poo (ed.), \textit{Rethinking}, 37-38.
\bibitem{Zabkar68} L. V. Zabkar, \textit{A Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts}, Chicago, 1968.
\bibitem{Eyre70} Eyre, in: Poo (ed.), \textit{Rethinking}, 41.
\bibitem{CT71} \textit{CT} III, 7-8a (spell 165).
\bibitem{Gee72} Gee, in Hawass and Pinch Brock (eds.), \textit{Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century}, 230-237.
\end{thebibliography}
To put in a cruder way, the following two examples underline the role played by the akh. In the Bentresh Stela, a ritual expert who was dispatched to (bḥtn) by the Pharaoh reports: “when the priest (rḥ-hḥt) arrived at Bakhtan, he found Bentresh like one afflicted by an akh (m šḥr ḥr-t=ḥḥt).” This spirit was then purified by a ritual offering. Another interesting example, quoted by Eyre, is the Middle Kingdom statue of a priest of Senwosert II. The statue, set up in a public temple, demonstrates the belief and faith of the owner, and how he played a role in intermediating with the divine world. On the right side of the statue, there is a distinctive address to the living which specifically addresses the priests of this temple (pr pn) who wish to secure an employment for their children in the temple. The text reads:

I am an akh (ḥḥt) equipped with his magic-powers (ḥḥw); I have been initiated (bs) with the great god; I know everything effective, by which one is akh (ḥt nb ḥḥt ḥḥt<γ>.n(y)); I know every initiated secret (bs nb ṣṭ); I am in the following of the great god. I will carry out your petition in the necropolis, in the exchange for your saying, “Welcome, hpr-srqt-priest Tjermet, son of ?? into this chapel (ḥwt-ntr) of Hut-Ra-wʾtli.”

CONCLUSIONS:

The room for a ‘demon’, as an emic category in Egyptian thought, is practically difficult. The modern attempt to add to the Egyptian thought a divine category would be simply peculiar to the Egyptians. Besides, historically, demonology does not have a beginning in ancient Egypt. It is not prior to the Graeco-Roman Period that ‘demonisation’ in the divine realm is tangible. Thus, In the Greek Magical Papyri, the spirit that appeared in the one’s dreams was thought to derive from either gods (theoi), angels (angeloi), or demons (daimon).

Ways in which Egyptian gods manifested themselves varied. These included the ba, plural baw, which was thought to inflect punishment on adversaries. The akh was another form of manifestation through which gods interacted with people. Akh could haunt one and hurt him. It is inevitable, therefore, to interpret Egyptian thought in terms of the Egyptian texts rather than adopting non-Egyptian conceptions.

To wrap up, on one hand, Egyptian divinities, of any rank, differ from demons. On the other, divine intervention in ancient Egypt should be approached from an Egyptian perspective, starting with their own terms and concepts.

73 Gee, in Hawass and Pinch Brock (eds.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century*, 231.
74 Eyre, in: Poo (ed.), *Rethinking Ghosts*, 42.
75 Frandsen, in: Kousoulis (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology*, 56.
76 Frandsen, in: Kousoulis (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology*, 56.
77 Kurth, in: Lange, Lichtenberger and Römheld (eds.), *Die Dämonen*, 34.
BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- ------------------ The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum no. 10188), Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 3, Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1933.
- ----------------------------, ‘Le livre des Quererets’, *BIFAO* 41 (1942), 1-11, 42 (1944), 1-62, 43 (1945), 1-50, 45 (1947), 1-42.

**الملخص العربي**

العفاريت والتدخل الإلهي في مصر القديمة

يميل بعض دارسي المصريات مؤخرا لاستخدام مصطلح العفاريت لتمثيل قوى فوق طبيعية ومعبدات صغيرة وتجسيدات في مصر القديمة. من بين هذه الكائنات الخايف وكائنات أخرى التي كان يعتقد في قدرتهم على الحاق الأدي من الأحياء ووصف هذه الكائنات بأنها عفاريت/شياطين. لذلك، فإن هذه الدراسة، من ناحية، تفحص مدى صلاحية استخدام مصطلح العفاريت لإشارة للكائنات المصرية قديمة وبين إذا ما كانت هكذا كائنات تتساهم مع الفكر المصري القديم. ومن ناحية أخرى، فيما يتعلق بالتدخل الإلهي توجه الدراسة إلى أهمية تبني أفكار مصرية أصلية للمعبدات، على اختلاف درجاتهم، كانوا يتخذون أشكالاً من بينها الباو والإله. إن الإلتزام بما تخبرنا به النصوص المصرية القديمة أمر لا بد منه لفهم الثقافة المصرية. بينما يؤدي تبني أفكار عربية عن الفكر المصري إلى تأسيس فهم لا تناسب هذا الفكر.

الكلمات الدالة: الشياطين ، علم الشياطين ، الآلهة المصرية ، التدخل الإلهي ، باو ، آخ ، شير.