

Hathor, the *psychopompos*

Barbara Egedi

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the apparently unusual literary representation of a religious motif, namely the mediator role of the goddess Hathor, in the narrative story found on Papyrus Vandier. This work of fiction is an extremely important source from the first millennium BC, not only for its position and significance in the Egyptian literary tradition, but also for several remarkable features in the story that are far from being conventional and may shed light on some less evident popular concepts of death and the afterlife. In section 2, the manuscript hosting this remarkable narrative will be described and set in context. At the same time, a short synopsis of the story will also be provided for convenience. Section 3 deals with the motif of visiting the Netherworld by a living person; while the last part of the paper, section 4, will be devoted to Hathor's special status and functions in the story, and attempts will also be made to position this motif in the developments of religious views of the period.¹

2. About Papyrus Vandier

The narrative story about Merire and his adventures in the Netherworld can be found on the *recto* of Papyrus Vandier, which is kept in the *Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de l'Université de Lille III* (P. Lille 139). The Hieratic text itself cannot be dated with certainty. According to the editor, it most probably came into being between the Twenty-sixth and Thirtieth Dynasties. This time interval may be constricted to the 6th century or a bit later, to the 5th century. Recently, Ursula Verhoeven suggested dating the manuscript to 600±25 BC on paleographical grounds.² The story itself might originate from the period beginning with the end of the Ramesside era to the Saite period inclusive. On the *verso* there are parts of a standard version of the Book of the Dead, which served as a great help in fitting the fragments together and the reconstruction of the papyrus, but, being a model copy, it does not help in dating the text on the *recto*.³

¹ Many of the topics discussed here have already been published in a paper written in Hungarian: Egedi, B. 2009. Meriré a túlvilágon. A Vandier papirusz. [Merire in the Afterlife – The Papyrus Vandier] *Ókor* 8/3-4, 16-23. This study, however, has a different focus and has been complemented with some additional data.

² Verhoeven, U. 2001. *Untersuchungen zur späthieratischen Buchschrift*. Leuven, Peeters, 336.

³ Quack, J. F. 1995. Notes en marge du Papyrus Vandier. *RdE* 46, 163-170, 168-169.

The protagonist of the story, Merire, is a talented scribe and lector priest, whose excellence has been concealed from the king by his jealous colleagues, the court-magicians.⁴ The opening conflict of the story is provided by the king's disease, diagnosed to be fatal. The so far neglected Merire turns out to be the only competent magician in prolonging the life of the pharaoh. After he is summoned to the court, a long negotiation begins, since the young magician can only save the king by substituting him in the Netherworld.⁵ The bargain is made after all, and Merire, whose title is general from this point of the story, descends to the Netherworld, where he gets received by Hathor. The goddess leads him in the presence of the Great Living God, where Merire explains his mission and successfully achieves the king's lifetime to be reestablished in 100 years.

As Hathor has the monthly habit of going to the world of the living in order to take her offerings on the festival of the sixth day (*snwt*), Merire, stuck in the Duat, asks her to get information about his earthly affairs. Thanks to the report of the goddess, he gets informed that the oath-breaker pharaoh took his wife, his properties, and killed his son. Merire fashions a man out of clay (*rmṯ n s3ṯw*) and gives him orders so that the clay man can act on behalf of him. The pharaoh, frightened by the ghost-like figure, obeys the instructions and executes the other court-magicians, who were considered responsible by the hero for all his misery. After the clay man's return with a bouquet of living flowers, to be offered to the Great Living God, the text becomes too fragmentary to reconstruct the story with any certainty.

Apparently, the story has no parallels.⁶ There is, however, a papyrus fragment from Deir el-Medine, dated to the Nineteenth Dynasty, whose protagonist is a certain general Merire. He

⁴ The Late Egyptian and Demotic word for 'magician' is *hrj-tp*, which is an abbreviated form of the title *hry hbt hrj tp* 'chief lector priest'. Lector priests with a proficiency in magical practices figure in several literary works, e.g. in P. Westcar, in the Famine Stela, or in Setna II. For further examples and general literature on magicians / lector priests, see *inter alia*: Borghouts J. F. 1980. Magie. In *LÄ* III. cols. 1137-1151, 1146; Gardiner A. H. 1917. Professional magicians in Ancient Egypt. *PSBA* 39, 31-44; Kákosy, L. 1985. La magia nell'antico Egitto. In *La Magia in Egitto ai Tempi dei Faraoni*. Modena, Edizioni Panini, 25-26; Kees, H. 1962. Der sogenannte oberste Vorlesepriester. *ZÄS* 87, 119-139; Otto E. 1975. Chériché. In *LÄ* I. cols. 940-943; Ritner, R. K. 1993. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Chicago, The Oriental Institute, 220-233.

⁵ Aspiration for a long life is a natural and widespread topic in the Egyptian sources – an issue in which intervention of gods was especially hoped for. The prolongation of lifetime by means of a personal replacement, however, seems to be an uncommon feature. The only remarkable passage in which allusion is made to a similar exchange can be found on a funerary text from the 21st dynasty of a certain Isetemakhebit (PM I² II 664). The text is about Khonsu's ability to "save the one he loves who is in the underworld and place someone else (there) in exchange for him" (Edwards, I. E. S. 1960. *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom*. Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum 4th Series, London, Vol. I., 5 n. 34; after Posener, G. 1985. *Le Papyrus Vandier*. Le Caire, IFAO, 25 n. 2).

⁶ Frank Kammerzell (1992. Ein demotisches Fragment der Merire-Erzählung? pTebtunis Tait Nr. 9 und pLille 139. *GM* 127, 53-61) claims to have found a parallel text, but Joachim Quack denies this assumption to be correct (1995, 169-170).

appears to help the god Arsaphes in his fight against a divine falcon.⁷ The possibility that the two stories are the same (in which case the Deir el-Medine fragments would correspond to some of the damaged parts of P. Vandier) is quite hypothetical. Nevertheless, the figure of the hero might as well originate from the same folk tradition, as it is the case with the stories about Setna in later, Demotic tradition.

Since the publication of the papyrus,⁸ the story of Merire has been translated into several modern languages⁹ and the source itself analyzed from various respects.¹⁰ Among others, much attention has been devoted to the question of the identity of the apparently fictional king Sisobek, as well as to the proper reading of the other Egyptian rulers mentioned in the story,¹¹ since these data could provide a *terminus post quem* for the original composition. Moreover, the language of the text is also challenging. Despite the fact that the text is written in Hieratic, its language seems to be closer to early Demotic.¹²

3. Alive in the Netherworld?

Many interesting motifs of the Merire-story have precedents in earlier literary and religious tradition, or have parallels in later Demotic sources. One of them, for instance, is the famous *golem*-motif (5,1-17),¹³ which will also be mentioned below, in relation to the problem of Merire's state in the Netherworld: is he dead or alive?

⁷ Published by: Koenig, Y. – Sauneron S. 1980. Deux pages d'un text littéraire inédit. Papyrus Deir el-Médineh 39. In *IFAO Livre du Centenaire*. MIFAO 104. Le Caire, IFAO. 135-141.

⁸ Posener, G. 1985. *Le Papyrus Vandier*. Bibliothèque générale 7. Le Caire, IFAO.

⁹ Translations into French, German, and Italian: Posener 1985, 39-97; Fischer-Elfert, H.-W. 1987. Der Pharao, die Magier und der General – Die Erzählung des Papyrus Vandier. *BiOr* 44, 5-21; Bresciani, E. 1999. *Letteratura e poesia dell'antico Egitto. Cultura e società attraverso i testi*. 3rd. ed. Torino, Einaudi, 611-616; Kammerzell, F. 1995. Mi'jare in der Unterwelt (Papyrus Vandier). In Elke Blumenthal et al. *Mythen und Epen III*. TUAT III/5. Gütersloh, 973-990. As far as I know, no English translation is available.

¹⁰ Cf. Bresciani, E. 1987. Nuove pagine di letteratura egiziana: il «Pap. Vandier». *Studi classici e orientali* 37, 21-28; Fischer-Elfert 1987; see also Quack, J. F. 2005. *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte III. Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*. Münster, Lit Verlag, 65-69.

¹¹ Cf. Fischer-Elfert 1987, cols 15-16; Kammerzell, F. 1987. Die Nacht zum Tage machen: pVandier Rto. 1,2-7 und Herodot II 133. *GM* 96, 45-52; Jasnow, R. 1996. A Note on Pharao SA-Sbk in Papyrus Vandier. *Enchoria* 23, 179; Verhoeven, U. 1997. Erneut der Name des früheren Königs in der Erzählung des Papyrus Vandier (recto 1,6). *CdE* 72, 5-9; Loprieno, A. 1998. Le Pharaon reconstruit. La figure du roi dans la littérature égyptienne au I^{er} millénaire avant J.C. *BSFE* 142, 4-24, 16-17.

¹² Joachim Quack (1995, 163) suggests that the language might be classified as Proto-Demotic. Posener himself (1985, 12-13) considers it 'advanced Late Egyptian' ('néo-égyptien évolué', 'proche du demotique'), which occupies an intermediary position between Late Egyptian and Demotic. Ariel Shisha-Halevy proposes that the language is 'Early demotic, with a grammatical system close to that of P. Rylands IX' (Shisha-Halevy, A. 1989. Papyrus Vandier recto: An Early Demotic Literary text? *JAOs* 109, 421-435, 423). For a linguistic analysis, see also: Blöbaum, A. I. – Kahl, J. – Schweitzer S. D. 2001. r oder nicht r? Affirmatives Futur III im pVandier rto. *GM* 180, 29-38; Vernus, P. 1990. Entre néo-égyptien et démotique (Études sur la diglossie I) *RdE* 41, 153-208.

¹³ Fashioning and animating hand-made magical creatures from wax or other material is a popular motif in literary works, e.g. in P. Westcar, in the Myth of Isis and Re, in Setna I and II, in the story of Petese, son of

One of the central concepts of ancient Egyptian mortuary literature – besides ensuring the provisions for and the protection of the deceased – is the *freedom of movement* between the two worlds after death (Cf. spells 91-92 of the Book of the Dead). Even if the return from the Netherworld is believed to be possible, no doubt it happens in a special form. The deceased – who is ‘justified’ and saved from a ‘second death’ – turns into a transfigured or glorified spirit, the so called *akh*. Most of the sources suggest that the form in which the deceased was really capable of moving freely, leaving the tomb or visiting his/her family (i.e. ‘coming forth by day’) is the form of *ba*.

The return of the deceased to the living in a special form or as a ghost is not to be confused with the visit to the underworld by a living person at will, in which case a successful return to the earth where he belongs to is normally expected. Journeys of this kind are only known from the later Demotic literary tradition, presented most explicitly in the second tale of Setna (Setna II, P. BM 604). However, interestingly, there is another reference to an underworld visit the date of which is remarkably close to the date of our papyrus. In his second book, Herodotus relates an Egyptian legend according to which king Rhampsinitus visited the underworld (Hades), played dice with Demeter (Isis), and returned with a gift from the goddess (II. 122). Because of the late date of Setna II (1st c. AD), and the clearly recognizable adaptation of two Greek myths in its punishment scenes (the tortures of Oknos and Tantalos), some scholars ascribed the underworld visit motif itself to Greek influence as a kind of Orphic inspiration.¹⁴ Nevertheless, with P. Vandier the motif of the visit to the Netherworld by a living person gains a genuine Egyptian origin.

Is our hero, Merire, who decided to act as a substitute for the king in the Netherworld, alive? What clues does the text itself give to us in this respect? In lines 2,3-4, the king argues that Merire will not die in reality. Although this section is partly reconstructed, the main point of Merire’s answer is that it never happened before that someone requested an (additional) life-time for another person and he himself remained alive. In lines 3,7-11, there is another related conversation right before the mysterious passage. When the king and the court-magicians insist that Merire will be able to return, he repeats twice: ‘I am going *to die*’ (or ‘I am going *to death*’, as translated by Posener 1985, 61). Nevertheless, in the light of his repeated attempts to return to the earth at later points of the action, it can also be assumed that

Petetum. The golem-motif in P. Vandier is discussed by Brunner-Traut, E. 1989. Ein Golem in der ägyptischen Literatur. *SAK* 16, 21-26.

¹⁴ Lichtheim, M. 1980. *Ancient Egyptian Literature III. The Late Period*. Berkeley – Los Angeles, 126.

in the earlier scenes he only palters to dramatize the situation¹⁵ in order to take a better position in the negotiation and, at the same time, he does hope to come back from the Netherworld at the end of his adventures. There are other clear indications that the magician considers his return as a realistic option: for example, in the scene of Heliopolis, he asks for a votive statue of Hathor of the Red Lake¹⁶ arguing that, in case he returns, the statue will come back with him.

The passage between the two worlds is not described at all. Merire seems not to leave behind a body, and, consequently, there is no corpse to be buried. This raises the question whether death in a physical sense occurs at all. In the scene of negotiation, the king promises Merire a large and worthy burial, but observing the text more accurately it becomes clear that there is no mention of a constructed tomb. What the king offers is that Merire will be established in Heliopolis, that the land will come to lament for him, flowers will be offered for him, and his name will be eternal in the temples (1,14-2,1). In the scenes of the story that already take place in the Netherworld, Merire's status is not specified: he is never referred to as one who is justified, glorified, or who acts as a transfigured spirit, an *akh* or a *ba*. Arriving in the presence of the Great Living God, Merire immediately declares that he has come because of the king and the discussion afterwards is about the king's activity and the king's lifetime, rather than about Merire's conduct of life or earthly behavior. The episode that looks like a judgment-scene is the one in which the Great Living God is inquiring into the state of affairs in Egypt, about the condition of the temples and the people (4,3-6). What makes this episode really particular is that the judgment is made over the earthly activity of the king but it is Merire who has to answer. The result of the measuring is the positive decision: the pharaoh's lifetime has been prolonged and Merire has been accepted as a substitute. From this point on, Merire attempts to leave the underworld several times but without success. The creation of the clay man is a key motif in judging the question whether Merire is dead or alive during his stay in the Netherworld. If Merire did not leave his body and did not transform into the necessary form in which one can survive and achieve its eternal existence in the hereafter, he has to appeal to magic to communicate with the living world. At this point, to traverse the border, it is him who needs a substitute.

¹⁵ Note that the cited sentence is formed grammatically as a second tense, rather than a simple future tense.

¹⁶ This form is only attested in P. Vandier, but reference to the 'Lady of the Red Lake' is much more frequent. Leitz, Ch. 2002. *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnung*. Leuven: Peeters, Vol. IV. 139 and Vol. V. 85.

4. Hathor as a *psychopompos*

Hathor has a distinctive role and special relationship with the main character throughout the story in P. Vandier. It is Hathor who accepts Merire when he enters the Duat. Apparently, she is the only god the hero encounters during his sojourn in the Netherworld, beyond the Great Living God, Osiris. Hathor's connection with the Afterlife and her related attributes, in both celestial and chthonic dimensions, are quite established in the first millennium BC, and, of course, these aspects of the goddess are the continuation of earlier traditions already present in the preceding periods. However, Hathor's function as a mediator, advisor and messenger in the Netherworld is not self-evident. Her acting as a *psychopompos*, a leader of the soul, definitely needs an explanation.

In lines 3,11-12, during the ritual preparations in Heliopolis, Merire declares before the king that it is (Hathor) the Mistress of the West (*hnwt jmntt*) who leads people to the Netherworld (*t3 ntj djt šm rmt r jmntt*), who arranges their affairs in front of the Great Living God (*ntj jrj n3y=f mdt m-b3h p3 ntr 3 3nh*). As mentioned above, when he enters the Duat, the first person he meets is Hathor indeed (line 3,15); she greets him and leads him in the presence of Osiris. Moreover, after it becomes obvious that Merire cannot leave the Netherworld, she is ready to collect information for him concerning his earthly affairs.

Hathor's association with the afterlife is well documented, especially in Thebes, where she was also called 'Mistress of the West' and was often represented in the form of a cow coming forth from the western mountains. The insightful study of Éva Liptay shows¹⁷ how this motif developed from Hathor's original protective and nourishing aspect and how it has been transferred from the royal sphere to the private votive and funerary contexts during the Eighteenth Dynasty. In this form, she was interpreted as the goddess who received the deceased at the entrance of the Netherworld. Although Hathor is often referred to as the feminine counterpart of Osiris in the Late period (see below), this latter aspect, her figure welcoming the deceased on the border of the two worlds, is the one that really concerns us here. The motif of the cow goddess coming out of the mountains also appears on the vignette of Spell 186 in the Book of the Dead and will continue to take form not only in the Ramesside tombs, but on the outer decoration of the Twenty-first Dynasty wooden coffins as well.¹⁸

¹⁷ Liptay, É. 2012. The Bull Coming out of the Mountain. The Changing Context and Connotations of an Iconographic Motif. In Kóthay K. A. (ed.) *Art and Society. Ancient and Modern Contexts of Egyptian Art*. Budapest, 169–184.

¹⁸ Liptay 2012, 171.

Hathor's celestial and solar aspects are much more ancient than the above presented motif that probably developed in Thebes. She was associated with the nocturnal sky as early as in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts,¹⁹ sheltering Re in her body so that he could be safely reborn in the morning. Hathor's overall protective role and her care for the deceased are clearly evidenced not only in her cow-goddess form but also as 'Mistress of the sycamore' (*nbt nht*), the tree-goddess, whose branches offer shade, food and drink to the dead.²⁰

The close relationship between the goddess and the human hero who visited the Netherworld alive is a characteristic feature in the story of P. Vandier. Textual representation of such an intimate human-divine communication is extremely rare, at least for non-royal individuals, and these are mainly confined to the literary sphere.²¹ It is to be mentioned, however, that the Ramesside period, which can be clearly characterized by a more emphasized personal religious activity, gave a few sources in which *Gottesnähe* ('closeness to a deity')²² is unambiguously expressed. The tomb biography of Djehutyemheb is a significant text in this respect: the tomb owner's hymn to Hathor is followed by the narration of a dream in which the goddess foretells the location of his tomb. These two interrelated texts constitute a kind of conversation between the individual and the deity. The goddess' persistent protection and intercession for Djehutyemheb in the afterlife is clearly expressed in the text: 'I will announce you to the great god / that he may say to you "Welcome" / I will commend you to Horakhty / that he may place you among his adorers'.²³ Interestingly, in one of the Nineteenth Dynasty versions of Spell 186 of the Book of the Dead, Hathor, the 'lady of the West', also answers the hymn addressed to her and welcomes the deceased.²⁴

¹⁹ For the various associations between the deceased and the cow-goddess/Hathor, see Liptay, É. 2003. Between Heaven and Hell. The Motif of the Cow Coming out of the Mountain. *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux Arts* 99, 11-30, with quotations of the relevant places.

²⁰ The literature on Hathor is, of course, enormous. The reader is referred to *inter alia*: Allam, S. 1963. *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)*, Berlin, Bruno Hessling; Bleeker, C. J. 1973. *Hathor and Thoth: Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion*, Leiden, Brill; Pinch, G. 1993. *Votive Offerings to Hathor*. Oxford, Griffith Institute. Various lexicon entries are also to be consulted for further references, e.g.: Daumas, F. 1977. Hathor. In *LÄ II*, cols. 1024-1033., Vischak, D. 2001. Hathor. In *OEAE Vol II.*, 82-85.

²¹ The most evident example that comes to one's mind is *The Story of a Herdsman (Hirtengeschichte)*. In actual religious practices, there were several indirect ways common people could communicate with their gods (for instance, in the form of votive offerings or oracles). At the same time, meeting the deity in a dream remains a royal privilege till the Ramesside era and only becomes 'ordinary' in the Late Period.

²² Assmann, J. 1984. *Ägypten: Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 9-26.

²³ Frood, E. 2004. *Biographical texts from Ramessid Egypt*. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 91-94, texts 12A-B. Original publication and analysis of the text: Assmann, J. 1978. Eine Traumoffenbarung der Göttin Hathor: Zeugnisse 'Persönliche Frömmigkeit' in thebanische Privatgräbern der Ramessidenzeit. *RdE* 30, 22-50.

²⁴ Cf. Allen, G. T. 1974. *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day. Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in their Own Terms*. Chicago, The Oriental Institute, 210.

The scene of introducing the dead to the judgment hall by a deity is a well-known episode in visual representations, but usually this function is attributed to Horus, Anubis, Thot, Maat, or Imentet, the Western Goddess.²⁵ As was shown above, Hathor in her cow-goddess form was rather depicted as receiving the deceased at the moment of his/her passing over the border between the world of the living and the realm of the dead. However, there are a few scenes on Twenty-first Dynasty coffins where the cow-goddess appears *carrying* the deceased (and/or the *ba* bird) on her back.²⁶ Moreover, the already mentioned solar aspect of Hathor's nature may also be recalled at this point. She is the Eye of Re and this aspect is often represented in the form of a winged uraeus above the figure of the cow. The eye of the sun not only protects the deceased in the necropolis, but also 'shines for him' along the way in the darkness like a torch, and accompanies him in the netherworld.²⁷ The sun-eye can also be interchanged with the eye of Horus: for instance, in Spell 331 of the Coffin Texts (entitled 'Becoming Hathor'), the goddess identifies herself as the eye of Horus (CT IV. 173f); while in Spell 60 (CT I. 250a-e) it is pronounced that 'the Eye of Horus is she who sheds light for you, she comes with you into the necropolis'.²⁸ Returning to our story in P. Vandier, 'the eye of the sun' aspect is clearly evoked by the reference to the *snwt*-feast, for the sake of which Hathor leaves the Netherworld on a regular basis. The *snwt*-feast, celebrated on the 6th day of the lunar month, was essentially connected with the return of the distant goddess, the Eye of Re, to Heliopolis.²⁹

Even though the motif of the cow coming out of the mountain gradually disappeared from the Theban funerary decoration program during the Twenty-second Dynasty, or was partly reinterpreted in the motif of the Apis bull carrying the mummy, the figure of the Hathor-cow reemerged in Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasty tombs and on various objects of the Late period.³⁰ Additionally, although in a much later period, in the Graeco-Roman era, Hathor acquired a very interesting representation, again in funerary contexts. The goddess was often depicted as holding a key, probably the key of the afterlife, while she led the deceased with the other hand.³¹ The same notion also appears textually, most remarkably in Papyrus

²⁵ Seeber, Ch. 1976. *Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts im Alten Ägypten*. München – Berlin: Deutsches Kunstverlag, 116-120.

²⁶ Liptay 2012, 172.

²⁷ For this association and for further details on the variations of the scene with the hippopotamus goddess and torches, see Liptay 2003, 17 with references.

²⁸ After Darnell, J. C. 1997. The Apotropaic Goddess in the Eye. *SAK* 24, 35-48, 37-42.

²⁹ Barta, W. 1969. 'Zur Bedeutung des *snwt*-Festes.' *ZÄS* 95, 73-80.

³⁰ Liptay 2012, 173-176.

³¹ Kurth, D. 1990. *Der Sarg der Teüris. Eine Studie zum Totenglauben im römerzeitlichen Ägypten*. Mainz, 11-12; see also Riggs 2005, 127-128, esp. Fig. 54 with the representation of Hathor on a cartonnage mask from Meir. Besides Hathor, this role was also attributed to Anubis.

Harkness, a demotic funerary text from AD 61, in which Hathor is the mistress of the West, 'in whose hand are the keys to the West' (P. Harkness V, 21). The motif of Hathor holding a key seems to appear on objects related to women.³² This latter fact is in accordance with and can be related to the appearance of the prefix 'Hathor' before the name of female persons (accompanying or replacing Osiris), which can be attested from the 4th century onward.³³

In view of these funerary traditions, present both in the first half of the 1st millennium BC and in the Graeco-Roman period, the central role Hathor fulfills in the story of P. Vandier might be less surprising and can be interpreted in a more natural way. Hathor's role as mediator and a leader of the soul in the Netherworld is not among the most characteristic features of her official cult, but might have had its roots in popular religion, which is explicitly reflected in this literary work from the Saite period. Hathor unites two worlds in her nature: she is connected with the realm of the dead, but she is also strongly connected with the world of the living, since she is associated with love and joy, sexuality and fertility, conception and birth. She can freely move between her two homes and seems to be much more friendly and approachable than most of the gods. The hero of P. Vandier, Merire, is balancing between life and death, and he could not have found a better divine helper in this dangerous endeavor.

³² Smith, M. 2005. *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* Oxford, Griffith Institute, 230.

³³ Riggs 2005, 45 with further references. Consult the whole chapter for the discussion about how dead women were likened artistically to Hathor from the Late Period onwards.