


Could the Kontomble be the Netchers of the Ancient Egyptians?

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(This essay was originally written in August of 2008 and has been updated in March 2009)



Ancient Ta-Merrian sign for Ntr (Nchora, Netcher) 

In my studies of ancient mythologies, I often come across reoccurring themes across great expanses of space and time. It is because of these repeated similarities of signs, symbols, spiritual concepts and rituals, that I have coined the term *philosophical cognancy* as a conceptual framework that can best articulate the relationships between these expressions across cultures.

A *cognate* in linguistics deals with words that share the same origin. Cognate comes from the Latin *cognatus* – *co* (with) + *gnatus, natus*, past participle of *nasci* "to be born". Literally it means "related by blood, having a common ancestor, or related by an analogous nature, character, or function." I apply this same spirit in the concept of *philosophical cognancy*. What I argue with *philosophical cognancy* is that a certain philosophy, expressed through symbols, can be found to match across different cultures as a result of interactions between the cultures, primarily due to an organized priesthood system (The Super Highway of Wisdom in the words of Kykosa Kajangu).


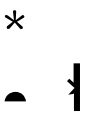

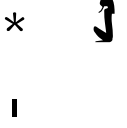
In my studies of ancient iKami (Egyptian) mythology, I have begun to wonder just how much of the "myths" are rooted in reality? A lot of the features of the iKami religious culture seem out of the bounds of reality in the modern sense. But when you come across concepts that repeat themselves across ancient cultures, that are so integral to the make-up of their cosmologies, you begin to question if these concepts are not rooted in some basis of truth.


This seems to be the case in my most recent contemplations about the *Ntrw* of ancient Egyptian mythology and science. The "netchers" are usually translated into English as "gods." A comparative study of African cultures leads us to believe that there is more to the netchers (niombo, orishas, abosom, etc.) than what is conceptualized through western cultural lenses as gods. Without going into detail in this paper, I believe the *Ntrw* represent parallel concepts that work together simultaneously. I believe that the *Ntrw* are representations of:

- Forces that cause matter to change from one state to another
- Symbols for abstract concepts that do not have an obvious representation in nature, so they describe a process, on one level, more so than a “thing”
- A living high ranking priest in a priesthood system, and
- The spirit of ancestors who have completed their various life cycles and have realized their full potential.

In basically all of the African oral histories I have been able to study, they all talk about these spirits of nature (or ancestor teachers) who actually taught them civilization and high science. In the Dogon, Egyptian and Zulu traditions, they all claim these teachers came from the star *Sirius* system. A matter of fact, the same word for teacher or instructor in the Mdw Ntr written script is the same word for the star Sirius – SBA (Seba, ka-suba in Kiswahili). Among the Fulani and Bambara of West Africa, this lexical fossil survives in the term **SUBAA** which means an *initiated* teacher AND student.

Sba in Egyptian

To teach, to bring up, to educate, to instruct, to learn, to train	
Teaching, training, instruction, education, student/pupil	
	
A star deity (teacher from the star Sirius system) Budge 655b	

This led me to contemplate further about whether or not these “teachers” have ever been seen and what do they look like? Where did the ancient iKami get the idea for their design for the symbol of a Netcher (Nchora, Njora among the Bantu)  ? Was this something the first architects of the language witnessed firsthand? Or was this the result of a healthy imagination? We may find clues in the oral stories of the Dagara of Burkino Faso and among the Bantu of Central Africa.

Malidoma Some in his works *Of Water and the Spirit* and *Healing Wisdom of Africa*, describe a spirit being, whom in his culture, they call the *Kontomble*. Some recalls an experience he had as a young boy in the field with his mother in which he stepped on a rabbit and gave chase following the rabbit in the bushes of a savannah. At the end of his chase, he states that he met a small man which the Dagara call the *Kontomble*. He goes on to describe the situation and the *Kontomble* as so (Some 1999:39):

I moved the last clump of grass, and I wasn't prepared for what I saw. Instead of the rabbit, there was something extraordinary, like a doll, **a doll about a foot tall of a human being**, except that the doll was alive, sitting on something like a tiny chair. (emphasis mine).

He further illustrates his experience on pg. 40 and states:

What was captivating to me was the fact that I was dealing with a person smaller than me, yet older than me, **with a long white beard**, sitting in the wrong place at the wrong time, talking to me.

In *Of Water and the Spirit* he is a little bit more descriptive. He states (Some 1994:18):

His head was covered with hair so white and so shiny that it seemed unnatural. **His beard was so long and white too, reaching almost to his chest**, and he wore a **traditional Dagara mantle, also white**.

Kairin Kleiman in her work *The Pygmies Were Our Compass*, recalls the stories of the Bantu with these same beings. These beings, however, are called *mimbo* (*niombo* in the Kongo) and according to the tradition were introduced to the Bantu by the Batwa. She goes on to state (2003:82-3):

The key among these are the “*mimbo*,” or “spirits of the trap.” The Ngbaka Ma'bo consider *mimbo* to be the spirits of deceased Batwa individuals, in contradistinction to the spirits of their own ancestors, the *kulu-se*. They say that the Batwa ancestors were ‘given’ to them by the Batwa themselves, although no Aka individuals participate in the *mimbo* rituals that the Ngbaka Ma'bo perform today. **One of four different miniature humanoid spirits ventured by the Ngbaka, the *mimbo* are described as 30 cm in height and covered in fur, with long hair that falls to their knees. *They live exclusively in the forest inhabiting trees and termite hills and moving about only at night.***

This is a very telling account of these ancestors. In both accounts they are very short spirit beings who are found in the bush or forest. Keep in mind as well that Malidoma Some says the *kontomble* are about 1 foot in length. The Ngbaka Ma'bo (a Bantu people of the Republic of Congo) state that the *mimbo* are 30 cm in height. (For the record, 30.48 centimeters = 1 foot).

Kleiman seems to be of the opinion that the Ngbaka Ma'bo people are actually referring to a mythalized representation of the Batwa (pygmies) of the forest (2003:84):

The fantastic descriptions of *mimbo* spirits suggest that the deculturalization process has been complete; rather than acknowledge any kind of connection between ancient or modern first-comers, the *mimbo* are rendered entirely nonhuman, a class of supernatural beings whose behavior is dependent on the actions of the Ngbaka Ma'bo alone.

I wonder if she had been introduced to the *kontomble* of the Dagara people, would she still hold this opinion as fantastical? This is because there is little to no evidence to support that the Batwa and the modern Dagara interact with each other like the *Ngbaka Ma'bo* and the *Aka* of the Republic of Congo to share similar stories. For those familiar with ancient Ta-Merrian mythology, the Netcher PTAH is also a "dwarf" or Twa. I wonder if he could actually be a *mimbo*?

What we can gather from the two descriptive accounts by the Dagara and the Ngbaka, is that these beings are **1**) very short (a foot tall), **2**) has long hair and **3**) has a long beard extending to the chest (or knees). Malidoma even goes so far as to describe the mantle (clothing) in which the *kontomble* was wearing in his encounter as *white* (see image below).



Men from Senegal

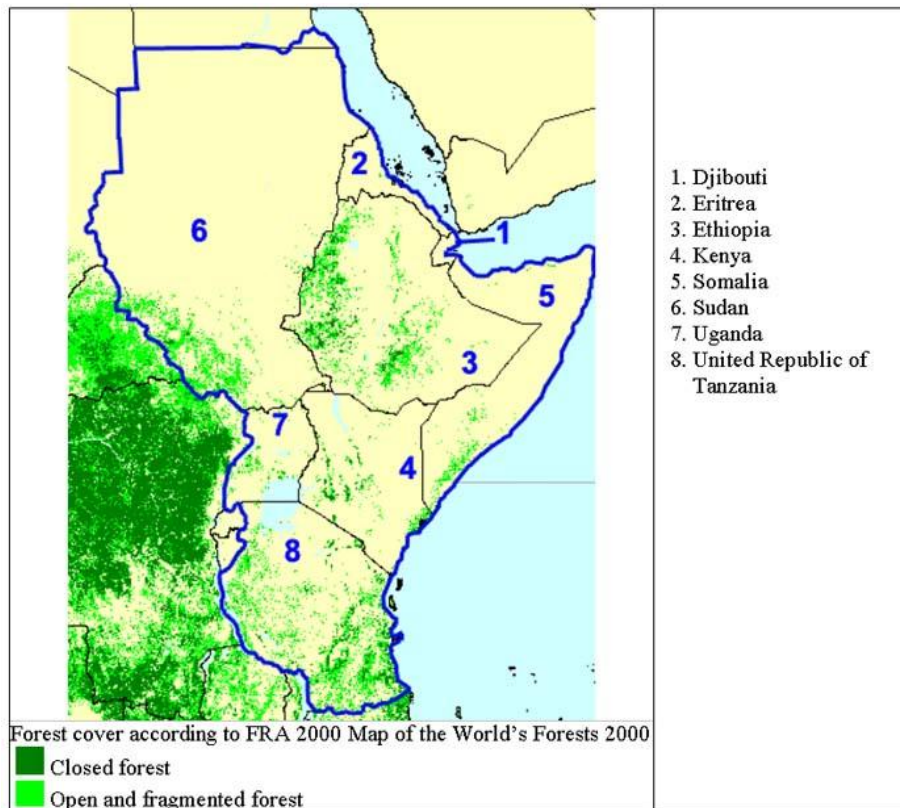
Malidoma Some describes somewhere in *Of Water and the Spirit* the *kontomble* having long hair, but I cannot find the page as of now. When I find it I can update this essay (again).

Both of these traditions view the *Kontomble* and the *Mimbo* as ancestor teachers. Now I want you to compare the visuals given by Some and Kleiman, to the following picture of the Netcher glyph:



Netcher

Another feature we must pay attention to is that both of these beings are primarily encountered in the forest according to Some and Kleiman. If we recall our previous discussion on the land of Ta-Netcher, we should recall that the root word TCHER means ANCESTRESS in the Mdw Ntr language (see Budge 909b). We assume that Ta-Netcher is located in the lower Ethiopia/Uganda/Rwanda area of East Africa. This area is heavily populated by FORESTS (see image below).



With these descriptions, we can possibly further narrow down exactly where Ta-Netcher is located. We can assume that the land of the “gods,” better translated as ancestor teachers, are located in central east Africa among the heavily forested areas.

I need to see if I can find some other accounts of these small beings from the *other world* that brought the tools of civilization to these Africans in the forests. A quick note, both Some and Kleiman acknowledge that a person is supposed to be initiated before one can start interacting with these beings. The word KONGO means “place of initiation.” What could the names of our African countries and towns really be telling us? Could the ancient Egyptian writings really be maps to sacred sites and initiation spots?

ADDENDUM

This discussion asked the question, “Is the *Kontembla* of the Dagara and the *Niombo/Mimbo* of Central Africa among many Bantu and Twa, actually the *Ntrw* of ancient Egypt?” We also discussed where one could possibly find these spirit beings, primarily in the forests.

I am updating this essay to suggest that the forest or bush is not the only location where one could find these beings according to various African traditions. Recently on a *Blog Talk* radio program, Malidoma Some’s wife, Sobonfu Some, was conducting an interview. I called into the show and asked her about the *Kontembla* and where could one find them. She indicated to me that they primarily live in caves. This is supported by Malidoma Some in his work *The Healing Wisdom of Africa* pg 76. In this chapter Malidoma discusses a healing experience he witnessed with his niece. His niece had a strange illness which translated into visions and nightmares. He went to see a diviner who told him he must take his 12 year-old niece to the “cave” so that she may be healed. Caves in African tradition are gateways to the spirit world (so are rivers and lakes). He describes the situation as such:

A gateway to the Spirit World located in a cave was the technology that provided healing for one of my nieces...When we arrived there [the cave], it was dark. The healer was the gatekeeper, came and disappeared into the dark mouth of the grotto without any flashlight. He remained there for quite some time before coming out. Standing in front of the cave, he made a long prayer, which was punctuated by noises coming out of the cave. It was as if people were talking back at him, and things were moving very fast just inside the opening. Eventually a faint light came out of the cave and settled there. He turned around and said, “They are here, just get in one at a time.” Almost half of the people declined the offer. My niece’s jaws were clacking with fear and her knees were knocking against each other. I encouraged her to enter the cave because nothing bad was going to happen to her. Meanwhile people entered the cave and came out with little packages in their hands. My turn came and I went in. I was met by a tiny female *kontombla* with rolling eyes.

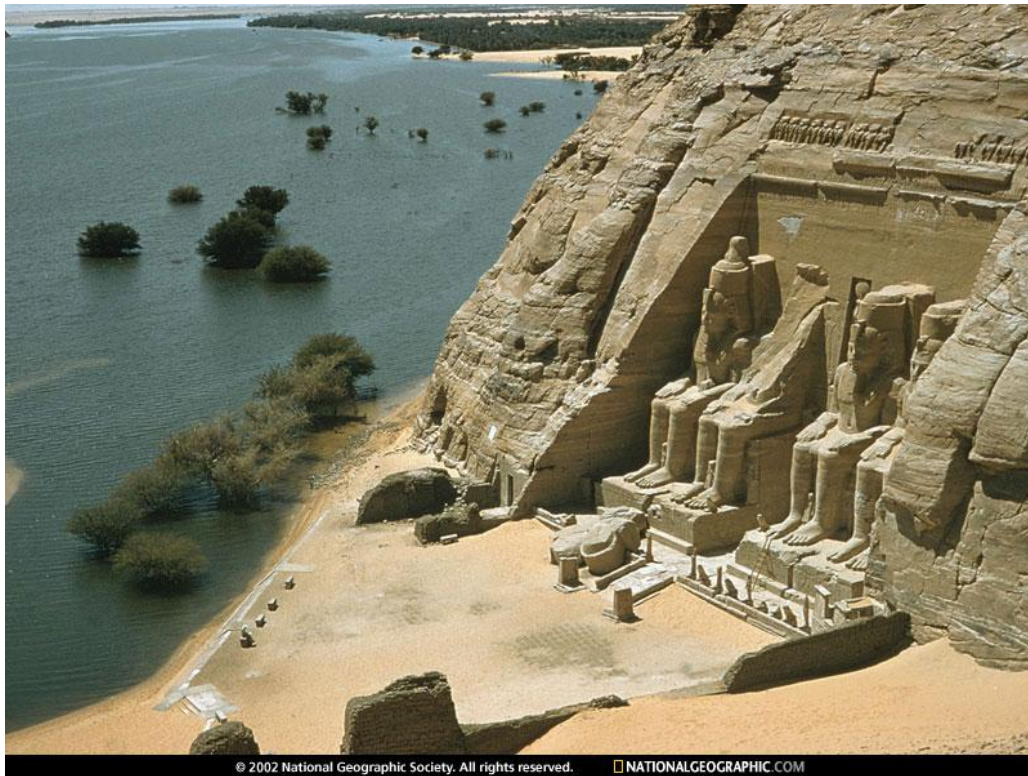
I began to wonder, given my connections above, what the real relationship is with the ancient Egyptians and the Nubians with mountains and caves? Are the mountains in which many temples were carved considered gateways to the spirit realm? Did they plan on meeting *Ntrw* (*Kontembla*) there? I began to look closely at the following temple monuments: Queen Hapshepsut’s temple at Luxor, Ramesis II temple at Abu Simbel, Jabel Barkel flat topped mountain in Nubia, and the Deffufa in Kerma Sudan.



(Deffufa mountain and temple complex located in Kerma (capital of Kush))



(Hatshepsut temple at Luxor)



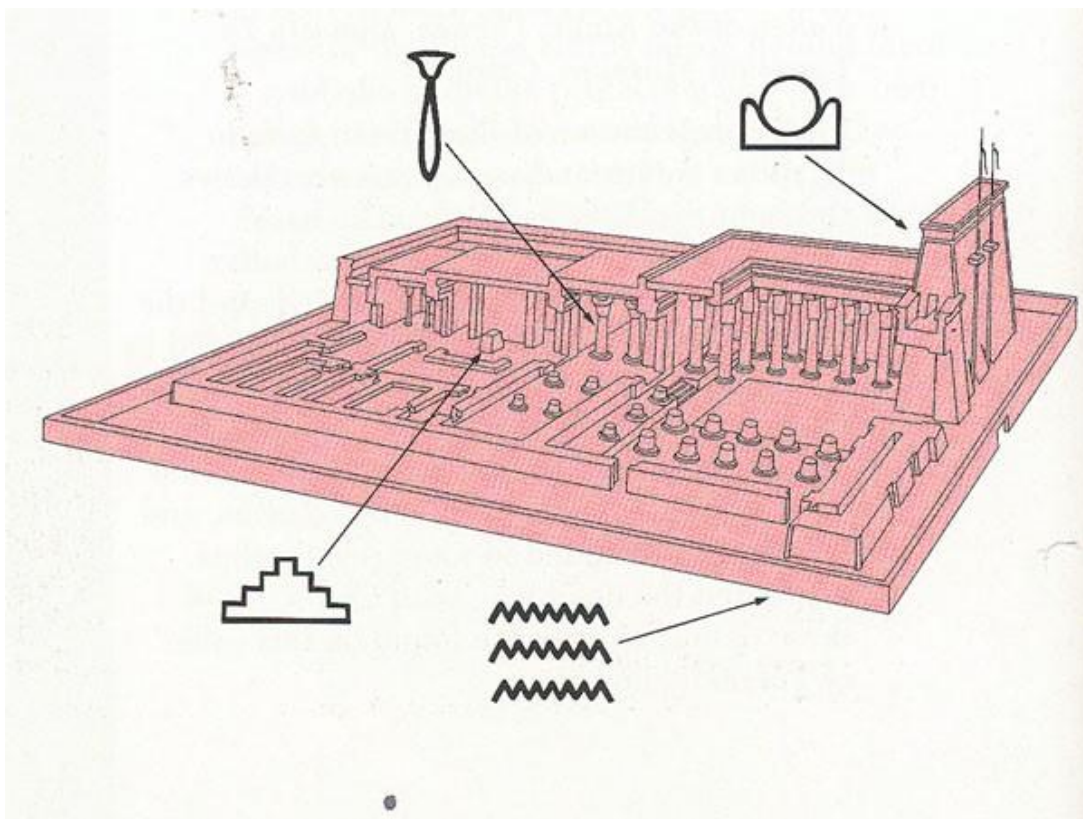
(Ramesis II Temple at Abu Simbel)



(Gebel Barkel in Nubia. Home of Amen-Ra. Inspiration for the Uraeus head piece design)

Each of these temples were dedicated to a *Ntr: Amen-Ra* for Gebel Barkel, *Ra-Horakte (Ptah and Amen-Ra)* for Ramesis II temple at Abu Simbel, Hapshepsut's temple is dedicated to *Amen* and *Het-Heru*, and there are no markings indicating on the Deffufa "mountain" that it was dedicated to any deity. A note must be made here, the Deffufa (in which there are two) are not real mountains. They are simply very large mud brick structures. I include these for consideration because of their high resemblance to mountains and they are located near cemeteries (ancestral spirits).

In many traditional African societies, drawn or created images represent the actual *thing* being emulated. So if I draw or carve a tree, to the indigenous of Africa, it "is" a tree. This informs us of why the ancient Egyptians built "trees" in their temples; we call them *columns*. The ancient Egyptian's origins are rooted in forested areas of the continent. As mentioned earlier in our discussion, a forest (or the bush) is where initiations happen in Africa (Kongo – place of initiation). The temples were places for initiations. Since the *Kmtw* no longer lived in an area with forests, they simply drew inspiration from their ancestral memory and recreated the "forest" in their temple structures (See example below).



Representation of *Ipet-Isut* temple breaking down the natural elements being represented in the temple construction: water, primordial hill, forests and mountain with sun over the horizon.

We could assume here that the Deffufas were deliberate attempts at creating "mountains" or "caves." For evidence of this philosophy, we will examine an excerpt from Graule and Diertelen's *The Pale Fox* (1986:95),

The fourth series consists of the “drawings,” toymu (or toy), as realistically representative of the thing as possible. **It is also the thing itself.** When one has finished the building of a house, it is as if one had made a complete drawing, toymu, of the house. In speaking of the toy and of Amma, one says: “To make the drawing is to make the thing that he (Amma) has in mind. It is, therefore, to represent the thing created in its reality.” (emphasis mine)

With this evidence, and the already established connections between the Dogon and the ancient Egyptians [Diop (1981), Finch (1998) Mutwa (2003), Scranton (2006, 2007)], we can safely assume that this convention was common throughout Ta-Merrian (Egyptian) civilization. From here, we may speculate, with strong support that these small statured beings have appeared to many African people and are an integral part to their daily lives. It may also prove to be the origins of some other common “pygmies” from Ireland called [Leprechauns](#). The characteristics are striking similar to the *Kontembele* and the *Mimbos* of Africa. Maybe there are some truths to these stories?

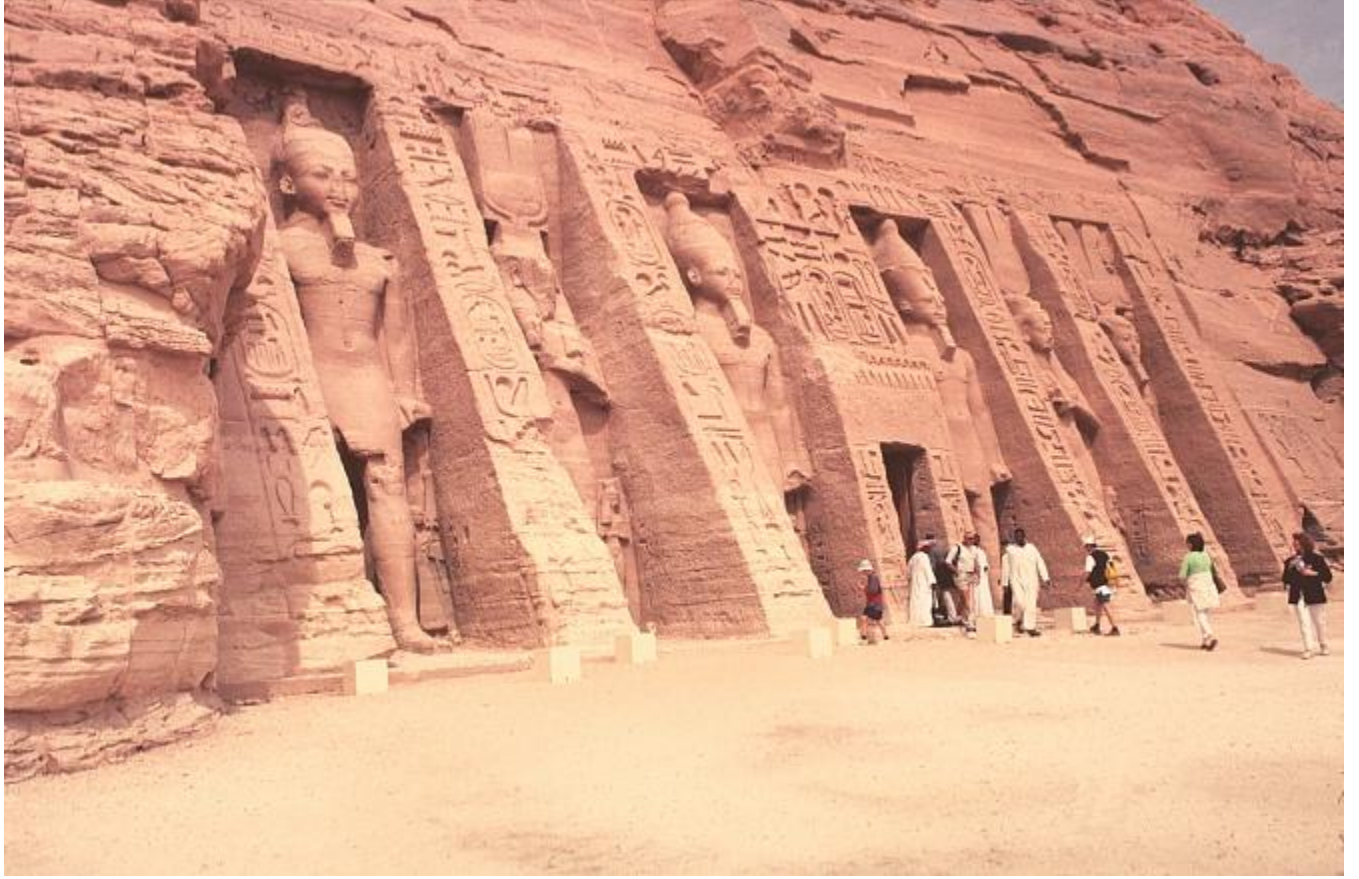
This is just some food for thought. I would love to hear your opinions and the results of your own research for comparison. This may be something outside the realm of objective scholarship, but one thing I’ve come to realize concerning Africa and that is, “things aren’t always as they seem.’ It makes you wonder if there really was a period when “gods” ruled and this may give us a clue as to why the Nsw Bity (Pharaohs) wore the “false beard:” they were trying to emulate the Ntrw, or they actually were Ntrw. This discussion, I would hope, should make us look at Usr Maa.t Ra’s (Ramesis II) tomb interior a little differently. These temples could simply be the major gateway in which the Ntrw actually appeared in ancient Nile Valley civilization. Who knows? Could be possible.



(Interior to Usr Maa.t Ra's temple at Abu Simbel)



The main sanctuary of the Rameses' temple. The four statues include Rameses himself sitting along with Gods Amun, Horus and Ptah. The temple was precisely oriented so that the sun's rays illuminated the central sanctuary on exactly two days of the year: Ramesis' birthday (Feb 21) and his coronation day (Oct 21). The sun's rays illuminated three of the four central statues: the statue of Ptah, the God of expansion, always remaining in the shadow. The relocation of the temple has messed up the precision and the sanctuary currently is illuminated on the days after his birthday and coronation day. The illumination seen in the picture is provided by a light bulb.



(Directly above and to follow: Temple of Nefertari, right next to Ramesis II's temple)



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8/30/2008 (Updated March 1, 2009)

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