

Chapter 1 : Bast: The Cat Goddess of Egypt | The Broom Closet

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If you sit back and think about it, this means She has existed " in name " just under five millennia. This is an awesomely vast amount of time, making Her one of the oldest Goddesses in existence. Bast is most commonly depicted as a woman with the head of either a cat, a lion, or a large desert cat. Most importantly, Bast was not depicted with the domesticated cat imagery that has now become synonymous with Her until BCE " nearly two thousand years after Her worship began. In the Litany of the Sun, seventy-five names of Ra are mentioned, along with His seventy-five corresponding forms. While Bast is perhaps better known as a domesticated, Her representation as a lion or desert cat did not cease with the advent of Bast as a house cat. Additionally, there is not reason to believe that the lion device on the aegis wielded by the cat-headed Bast is not in fact a second representation of Her a concept known to Kemetic art and symbology. Bast is often shown holding the ankh or the papyrus wand, and sometimes the was-scepter usually only in connection to Bubastis, which was the home of Her cult. Both of these books have long been out of print, and are now outdated by the more recent mid excavation information but forth by the late Dr. Other cities where Bast was venerated with approximate time of establishment of custom when possible were: Sais Late Period , the city of Nit, where a statue of Bast existed. It should be noted that the contrary to some modern-day claims, there was no festival of Sekhmet-Bast-Ra to coincide with the modern-day Halloween. A Bast shrine on display is located in the Field Museum of Chicago; benches flank a small enclosure thin which stands a statue of the seated cat and the cat-headed woman both behind glass. This is perhaps as close as we can currently get in the modern-day to a public shrine unto Her. Since the earliest of times She has been associated with the king. As a regional name associated with Per-Bast, Bast was strongly connected to the delta region of Kemet referred to as Lower Egypt. The jar and two loaves of bread are the hieroglyphs for Bastet, the one of the name She is given when in the full cat form. As well, just as images of Bast have been found in Memphis the city of Sekhmet, Ptah, and Nefertem , images of Sekhmet have been found in Bubastis. This approach may not even be appropriate for the cat-goddess She became with the arrival of Hellenistic influence on Her society, and even if it was, it is fairly appropriate to say that this Hellenized version is no more Bast than processed Velveeta is really cheese. Defining the Egyptian Bast by the Greek and Roman worldview does not leave Her empowered to do the job She was originally allotted in the Kemetic theology. In this union, the two compliment each other suitably as in Egyptian theology Ptah occupies a position of industrious craftsmanship and even creation of the world. However, the fact remains that Bast and Sekhmet were paired. Bast was primarily a Northern god since Her main place of worship was in Lower Egypt , while Sekhmet as a form of Het-hert was a Southern god. Rarely do you see one without the other in funerary scenes, and there are numerous paired statues of the two as well as extant mythology relating them as born of the same parents. The same is not true in antiquity with Bast and Sekhmet, aside from references of Ra as their father " a reference that rings true for nearly every ancient Egyptian goddess. It is our duty, as responsible historians, to preserve and respect the wishes of those from whom we have inherited.

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