Ptah Encyclopedia Article

Ptah

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Ptah Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Ptah.....3

Ptah

PTAH was the creator god of Memphis who conceived a thought in his mind (heart) and brought it forth by speaking it with his tongue. Because the founding of Memphis and the erection of a temple to Ptah at that site were accomplishments of the first king of a united Egypt, Menes, the cult of Ptah must date at least to the beginning of Egyptian history. The text that best describes the Memphite theology, however, is preserved in a very late copy dating from the twenty-fifth dynasty (c. 700 BCE). The original text may not have been much older, but it is a very interesting document, not only for its description of the creation, but also for its handling of the other two major creation myths. In this text Ptah is identified with the last pair of the Hermopolitan ogdoad—that is, Nun and Naunet, who represent the watery abyss from which the creator god comes forth. The creator god who is thus created by Ptah is Atum, who proceeds to create the other gods of the Heliopolitan ennead and all else. In this way the theologies are all connected, and Ptah as an anthropomorphic creator god is given precedence by being placed between the chthonic, precreation cosmic aspects known as the ogdoad and the old creator god, Atum.

Almost nothing remains of the temple of Ptah at Memphis, even though it was one of the three largest and best endowed of ancient Egypt. Smaller temples (such as those at Gerf Hussein and Karnak) were dedicated to Ptah in many locations, and statues of him are plentiful. His image is that of a tightly cloaked man holding a composite scepter before him. Ptah became identified, at least to some extent, with the local mortuary god of Memphis, Sokar, and also with Osiris. His consort was Sekhmet, the powerful lioness, who was the mother of his son, Nefertem, the lotus god.

Bibliography

The most extensive study available is *The God Ptah* (Lund, 1946) by Maj Sandman-Holmberg.