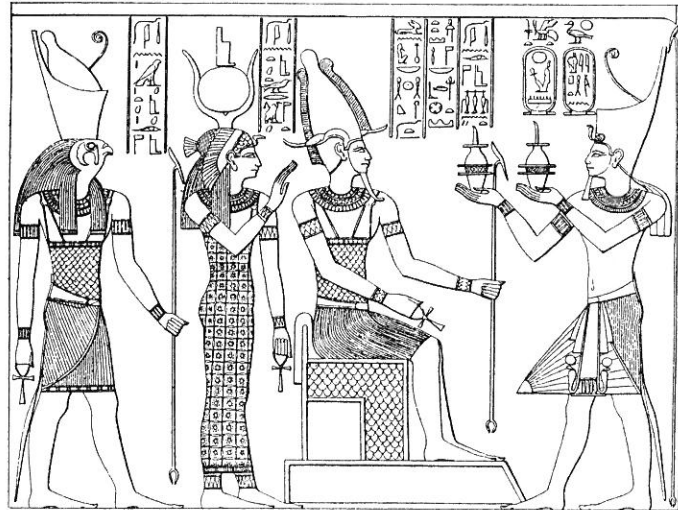


## 2. THE GODS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

### The Osiris legend

The Ancient Egyptians used to recount the following legend: the gods Osiris, Seth, Isis, and Nephthys were sisters and brothers. Osiris was married to his sister Isis, Seth to Nephthys. Osiris had inherited the kingship in Egypt from his father Geb. The people were content with his reign as Osiris gave them good laws. But his jealous brother Seth rose up against him. He killed his brother, cut up his body and threw the pieces into the Nile. Isis, Osiris' grieving widow, searched for the remains of her husband together with her sister Nephthys. According to the legend, they found his body parts scattered across the whole of Egypt and put them together again with the help of Anubis, the god of embalming. This was the first mummy in Egypt. The reconstructed Osiris was then able to conceive a child with his wife Isis. Fearing Seth's anger, Isis hid in the marshes of the Nile delta while she was pregnant. There, she gave birth to the god Horus. When he grew up, Horus left his hiding place in order to avenge his father's murder. He defeated his uncle Seth in a terrible battle but lost an eye in the fight. The god Thoth healed his damaged eye, however, and ever since the Eye of Horus (Egyptian: Udjat – 'whole', 'undamaged') was known



King Sethos I. is sacrificing to the gods Osiris, Isis and Horus

for its healing and protective powers. While Horus became the new ruler on earth, his father Osiris became the King of Eternity, ruling over the realm of the dead. It was he who decided the fate of the deceased at the final judgement. The legend of Osiris soon came to represent the destiny of all people. Every person had to experience death, just as Osiris had, but could also attain eternal life in the hereafter. The Egyptians of old believed that everyone who died became Osiris.



### Suggested Activity

1. Write an exciting play which tells the legend of Osiris.
2. Perform part of the Osiris story in a short scene from your play.