

**WHY ARE CATS ASSOCIATED WITH OLD MAIDS?****Excerpt from*****The Book of Cats*****by Charles H. Ross (1868)**

In Egypt Cats were considered sacred to the Goddess Bubastis, the Egyptian Diana. Her priestesses were vowed to celibacy: they passed a great portion of their time attending on the Cats of the temple. Mrs. Loudon suggests that hence, perhaps, may have arisen the idea that a fondness for cats is a sign of old maidism.

Apollo created the lion to terrify his sister Diana, and she turned his fearful beast into ridicule by mimicking it in the form of a cat. Cats were dedicated to Diana, not only when she bore her proper name, but when she was called "Hecate." Witches who worshipped Hecate had always a favourite cat.

A very great number of cats' mummies, discovered in Egypt, afford ample proof of the esteem in which pussy was held in "Thebes' Streets Three Thousand Years Ago." If one died a natural death, it was mourned for with many ceremonies; among others the entire household, where the death took place, shaved off their eyebrows. If killed, the murderer was given up to the mob to buffet him to death. Cats were held sacred when alive, and when they died were embalmed and deposited in the niches of the catacombs. An insult offered by a Roman to a Cat caused an insurrection among the Egyptians when nothing else could excite them. Cambyses gained Pelusis, which had previously successfully resisted all attacks, by the following stratagem. He gave to each of his soldiers employed in the attack a live cat, instead of a buckler, and the Egyptians, rather than hurt the objects of their veneration, suffered themselves to be vanquished without striking a blow.