



Significances of Regeneration through Upraised Arms Gestures in Cosmic and Funerary Contexts

دلالات التجدد من خلال إيماءات الأذرع المرفوعة في السياقات الكونية والجنائزية

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Abstract

الملخص

Raising up arms was one of significant gestures known by the Egyptians. One method of expressing regeneration was through lifting up arms. Different elevated arms gestures were employed in regenerative purposes in cosmic and funerary contexts. This research analyzes iconographic evidences demonstrating the revivification function of upraised

arms gestures inspired from the archetype $k3$ -glyph . Egyptians knew such a regenerative role as early as the Predynastic Period. Meanwhile, they buried in their tombs fertile female figurines with elevated arms indicating the regeneration of their owners. In statuary,

$k3$ -symbol  was elevated over heads to assist in enlivening the dead. Embracing the sun-disc with

upraised arms in $k3$  form is another remarkable iconographic proof of rebirth conception. Conveying regeneration idea through upraised arms gestures is also emphasized through practicing purification rituals in both royal and private sectors. It is also through supporting the sky on upraised arms of Egyptians kings that state of balancing the opposing forces of heaven and earth is acquired. Moreover, elevating the heavenly water on arms of creator gods gives a direct reference to the continuation of the universe existence. Not only gods and kings but also individuals raising up their arms to indicate their revivification after death.

Keywords: Upraised arms; gesture; rebirth; regeneration; hereafter

كان رفع الأذرع يعتبر إحدى الإيماءات المميزة التي عرفت في مصر القديمة. ولقد اعتبر المصريون رفع الذراعين إحدى طرق التعبير عن مفهوم التجدد، ولذلك تم توظيف العديد من إيماءات الأذرع المرتفعة لتحقيق أغراض تجديدية في الحياة الأبدية. يحل هذا البحث الأدلة الأيقونية التي توضح وظيفة التنشيط والتجدد من خلال إيماءات الأذرع المرتفعة المستوحاة من النموذج الأصلي للصورة الرمزية $k3$. عرف مثل هذا الدور التجديدي في مصر القديمة منذ عصر ما قبل الأسرات. في هذا الوقت المبكر، دفن المصريون في مقابرهم تماثيل نسائية خصبة بأذرع مرتفعة تشير إلى تجديد أصحابها في العالم الآخر. في التماثيل، تم رفع علامة $k3$ فوق الرؤوس للمساعدة في إحياء الموتى. كما أن تطويق قرص الشمس بالأذرع المرتفعة لل $k3$ يعتبر دليل أيقوني آخر على مفهوم إعادة الميلاد. ولقد تم التأكيد على فكرة التجديد من خلال إيماءة رفع الأذرع أثناء ممارسة طقس التطهير في كل من القطاعين الملكي والخاص. وكان من خلال رفع السماء على الأذرع المرتفعة للملوك المصريين أنه تم تحقيق التوازن بين السماء والأرض. علاوة على ذلك، فإن رفع الماء السماوي على أيدي الآلهة الخالقة قد أعطى إشارة مباشرة إلى إستمرار وجود الكون. لم يقتصر الأمر على الآلهة والملوك فحسب، بل رفع أيضا الأفراد أذرعهم في إيماءة مميزة تشير إلى إحيائهم بعد الموت.

الكلمات الدالة: أذرع مرتفعة؛ إيماءات؛ ولادة جديدة؛ تجديد؛ العالم


الأخر



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1. Introduction:

Amputation in Ancient Egypt meant the destruction of the body, which was considered as a unique physical and vital element required for the resurrection in the hereafter (D'Auria, Lacovara and Roehrig, 1992, p. 43). Consequently, counting severed hands of the Libyans in Medinet Habu Temple **Fig. (1)** helped the Egyptians knowing to what extent reached the enemy losses and how many foe would be able neither to obtain immortality nor to revive in the afterlife (Nelson, 1930, pl. 23; Matic, 2021, fig. 5: 5).


Due to the importance of the arms in expressing different body gestures, the use of several arms gestures of various significances is considered one of the most important aspects in the ancient Egyptian culture. Raising up arms was one of the distinctive gestures associated with regeneration conception throughout the ancient Egyptian history (Adams, 1988, p. 55). Egyptians recognized the significance of lifting up their arms in ensuring their resurrection in very earlier time. During the Predynastic Period, they elaborated special figures of women with fertile bodies and elevated arms and buried them beside their mummies to recall them of the motherhood functions in nourishing the dead and keeping them alive. Several gestures of upraised arms were made by deities, kings, and even individuals to indicate their revival. Thus, such gestures played a crucial regenerative role to all the dead and contributed in their survival in the next world. Textual evidences indicated the procreative


ability of the *k3*-vital force  in giving birth (Erman & Grapow, 1971c, pp. 86: 10-89: 11; Gardiner, 1927, p. 453 Sign-list: D 28; Wilson, 1997, pp. 1073-1074; Faulkner, 1962, p. 283; Hannig, 2003, pp. 1346-1350; Hannig, 2006, pp. 2543-2554). In iconography, the sun shines over the upraised arms


of the *k3*  as a kind of personifying the *3ht*-sign  for the horizon (Erman & Grapow, 1971a, p. 17: 12-23; Gardiner, 1927, p. 489 Sign-list: N 27; Wilson, 1997, pp. 17-18; Faulkner, 1962, p. 5;










Hannig, 2003, pp. 16-17; Hannig, 2006, pp. 37-41). In the two elevated arms of the *k3*-glyph  that lift the sun aloft one can find a kind of personifying the raising up of the sun-disc to shine between the two hills of the horizon glyph. On the other hand, the elevated arms of the king that support heaven was regarded as a sort of re-bringing law into effect on earth. Most probably, it was a symbolic act equivalent to lifting up the arms of the justified dead with the feather of Maat to indicate the vindication and the immortal triumph of order over the chaos. Raising up arms of either the divine or the human purifiers was also one of the procedures that should have been followed to purify the person after death and enable the dead to enjoy the same desirable fate of the sun-god. Upraised arms gestures employed in regenerative purposes continued as long as the Late Period.



2. Regenerative significances of the typical upraised arm gesture in the religious context:



The *k3*-sign  in its form as a pair of upraised arms, bent at the elbows, contributed in keeping the justified alive in the otherworld. As a glyph, it has been generally tackled in several previous studies. However, the topic, in which this research is digging through discussion and studying, did

not widely dealt in details before. Gordon and Gordon (1996, p. 31) stated that *k3*-symbol  signifies a life-producing element in all living things and it was received through the will of the sun-god Re at birth. Assmann (2005, pp. 44, 100) added that it had procreative abilities and could be inherited and transferred from fathers to sons since it was equated to the lifetime of the individual.

Junker (1944, p. 70) noticed that only the gods possessing several *k3w*  . On the other hand,

Kaplony (1980, p. 276) was more specified and mentioned that among all the divinities, only the creator gods, including undoubtedly the sun-god Re, have possessed more than one k_3  motivated their creative forces. According to Meeks (1963, p. 35), it was believed that the personified sun, in its form as God Re, have fourteen k_3w . Lamy (1981, pp. 26, 71) viewed in the fourteen k_3w  of the sun-god Re a close relation to the rebirth of the sun. It was thought that life would be guaranteed on the upraised arms of the k_3 . The connection between the k_3  and the granting of life was clearly emphasized as early as the Dynastic Period. Great evidence of that could be traced in the pair of arms of the k_3  which offers 'nh-sign  for life on a libation vessel from the Early Dynastic Period in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Acc. no. 19.2.16). This archaic piece of art refers to the productive role of the upraised arms of the k_3  in giving life to dead people and in ensuring their resurrection **Fig. (2)** (Schweitzer, 1956, Tafel. I (a); Fischer, 1972, pp. 5-7, figs. 1-5). Thus, it was thought that the two raised arms of the k_3 -sign  evokes the fertile character of the creator gods and alludes to their power of creation.


The two raised arms of the k_3 -sign  also consciously recall the essence of offerings, through which the deceased could derive his renewal sustenance in the eternal life. It is clear that the ancient Egyptians recognized that hands had capable of a wide variety of functions including the receiving of offerings needed to nourish the departed. Thus, in the outstretched arms of the deceased Idu, whose unique arm gesture recalls the k_3 -symbol , one might expect the receiving of the required offerings and the deriving of his daily sustenance from them **Fig. (3)** (Forman & Quirke, 1996, pp. 30-31).

The generative ability of the k_3  of the creator gods was firstly attested in the textual context since the time of the Old Kingdom. For example, in Utterance 592 (Spells § 1623a-b) of the Pyramid Texts, the productive abilities of god Geb was conceived in the form of the vital power of his k_3 , which played a great role in enlivening the dead in the otherworld as follows:



twt k3 n ntrw nb(w) in̄.n.k sn šd.k sn s'nh.k sn

“You are the ka of all the gods; you have brought (i.e. created) them; you protect them; you causes them to live”
(Sethe, 1908b, p. 360; Mercer, 1952, p. 250; Faulkner, 1969, p. 243 §1623).




Similarly, in Utterance 600 (Spells § 1652c-1653a), the creator-god Atum was appealed to transfer his k_3  to his divine children as a symbol of vitalizing their new acquired procreative energy through absorbing his vital power of creation. The spells say:





išš.n.k m Šw tf.n.k m Tfnt (w)di.n.k 'wy.k h3.sn m ' k3 wn k3.k im.sn

of the ancient Egyptians to not only exist but also endure forever and ever in the afterlife. Lorna and Gahlin (2002, p. 162) saw in the hundreds of the *k3*-statues that came from Abydos, a kind of memorial statues that would compensate the death of their owners through participating in festivals memorializing the resurrection of god Osiris instead of them.


The most famous *k3*-statue is that of King Awibra/ Hor I from the Thirteenth Dynasty in the Egyptian Museum (CG 259/ JdE 30948) **Fig. (4)** (De Morgan, 1895, pp. 91-93, figs. 212, 215; Borchardt, 1936, p. 3). It is the best example of personifying the rejuvenation of the king in the form of his *k3*-vital


force . It represents the *k3*  of the king and it is clearly characterized by the *k3*-sign  with two upraised arms at the top of his head. Forman and Quirke identified this statue as an embodiment of the divine force of the immortal deity that endure forever and ever and never perished (Forman & Quirke, 1996, p. 28). The two upraised arms atop the king functioned as a guardian spirit and played an additional protective role in his revival. Thus, they had to survive at the top of the royal statue to enable the king to unite with the vital force needed for his resurrection and to be kept alive all eternity (Assmann, 2005, pp. 97-98, 100). This statue was found within a naos inscribed with a text says

 *nswt k3 'nh* i.e. “The living ka of the king” (Kusber, 2005, p. 80) in reference to

the function of the *k3*  with its two upraised arms in keeping alive after the death of its owner and in guaranteeing the life of the king after his death.

According to Andrews (1994, pp. 68-69, 71), amulets of upraised arms also embodied the vital life force and intended to confer the capability for any forceful activity and to endow their particular bodily functions to their owners. On the other hand, Budge (1930, pp. 149-150) categorized uplifting the arms in the amulets as a defensive posture of guardian spirits functioned as protective symbols to ward off the evil forces that might threaten the life of their owners. Steindorff (1910, p. 159) added


that the later mummies were given an amulet in the shape of the *k3*  , which was supposed to replace the large *k3*-statue that have the same privileges, especially in guarantee life after death. Thus,



it seems that *k3*  amulets and statues aimed to reinforce their intended purposes to ensure the continuity of the life cycle and maintain the vital power of their owners even after death.

3. Gestures of upraised arms with regenerative significances in Egyptian Iconography:






3.1. Cosmic context:

3.1.1. Lifting up arms to support the sky as a symbol of the renewal equilibrium of the universe:

On the western section of the north wall in the Chapel of Ptah at Abydos, four identical standing figures of the king with upraised arms are shown supporting the *pt*-glyph  for the sky (Erman & Grapow, 1971a, pp. 490: 10-492: 1; Gardiner, 1927, p. 485 Sign-list: N 1; Wilson, 1997, pp. 378-379; Faulkner, 1962, p. 87; Hannig, 2003, pp. 431-436; Hannig, 2006, pp. 831-846) **Fig. (5)** (Calverley, 1935, pls. 11, 23)⁽¹⁾. The four figures of the king in the present scene might personify the four cosmic pillars of the sky (Grapow, 1924, p. 28; Hassan, 1946, p. 186), that were certainly





described in the textual evidences as  *fdt-shn(w)t-nt-pt* i.e. “The four supporter(s) of the sky” (De Buck, 1935, p. 41 (h); Faulkner, 1977, p. 12) and  *shnwt-nt-pt* i.e. “The pillars of the sky” (Kitchen, 1979, p. 150: 8). In the ancient Egyptian language, the sign *shnt*

⁽¹⁾ For similar motifs in the Great Hypostyle Hall at karnak and the the Chapel of Rehorakhty at the Temple of Abydos, see: (Neslon & Murnane (Eds.), 1981, pl. 76; Calverley, 1935, pls. 15, 18).

Y for the supporting pole was usually used in reference to the supporting of the heaven, or more likely, the cosmic pillar that raise the flat side of the firmament at each of the four cardinal points (Erman & Grapow, 1971b, pp. 471: 15-472: 7; Gardiner, 1927, p. 496 Sign-list: O 30; Wilson, 1997, p. 907; Faulkner, 1962, p. 241; Hannig, 2003, p. 1209; Hannig, 2006, p. 2318). Aspect of similarity could be noticed between the standing figures of the king with his slim body and two upraised arms under the *pt*-glyph  for the sky in Abydos Temple and the writing of the signs  / , which symbolize four cosmic pillars, each of which in the form of a forked pole Y supporting one of the four corners of the sky (Sethe, 1909, p. 1662: 11). In this case, the forked side of the pole V could be compared to the upper torso of the king with his raised arms  and its vertical shaft | might then recall his straight slim body . Thus, it seems that the four figures of the king in the tableau of Abydos might symbolize the supporting of the four heavenly corners and the ensuring of the cosmic stability on his upraised arms. Additionally, they probably considered as personifications of god Shu, who with his elevated arms, lifts the sky above the earth. According to Te Velde (1977, p. 161), it is through the raising of the sky, that the course along the heaven came into existence and enabled the sun-god to follow it to ensure his rejuvenation and fill the earth with the light needed to develop life. Not only the sun, but also the king and all the dead, who follow the sun, could reach the height of the sky and would be able to become part of the immortal recurrence in the eternal life.

Most probably, the scene of Abydos was the iconographic prototype of another mythological motif depicted in the Tomb of Bannentiu at Bahria Oasis from the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. The latter scene shows the raising of the celestial water on the arms of the air-god Shu together with four divine creatures symbolizing the supporters of the sky in the four corners of the universe **Fig. (6)**. Fakhry (1942, p. 75) concluded that the scene of the Bahria Oasis refers to the rebirth of the sun, the concept that was proved through depicting the Ogdod in the form of eight baboons welcoming the rising sun in the same scene. Consequently, the ritual theme of uplifting either the sky or the heavenly water symbolizes the victory of the order over the chaos through preventing the occurrence of a great cosmic catastrophe that would happen, if the sky fall upon earth and the creation stopped.

3.1.2. Lifting up arms to support the sun-disc as a symbol of the solar rebirth:

In iconography, there is a figurative scene symbolizing the rebirth of the sun on the arms of the *k3*  depicted on the Late Period coffin of princess Makere in the Egyptian Museum (CG 61028) **Fig. (7)** (Maspero, 1815, pp. 401-402; Daressy, 1909, p. 91, pl. XLI). This scene represents two raised arms of the *k3*-symbol  below a large radiant sun-disc topped with a winged scarab carrying two of the 'nh-sign  for life in the hind legs and pushing forward another solar-disc. On the both sides, there are two representations of the soul of the princess in the form of human-headed bird also with the sign of 'nh , passed in the arm. The birds perched in adoration on two trees before the winged beetle. The two captions that are written in the company of this mythological representation tell us that the soul of the princess worships the sun-god Re in the moment of his sunrise and say:





dw3t.s R' m h'.f






“She adores Re in his appearance (i.e. shining)”.



dw3t.s hft wbn.f

“She adores when he (i.e. Re) shines”.

The previous scene confirms that the elevated arms of the *k3*  of the deceased princess that was given to her through the will of the sun-god Re at her birth would embrace and support her rejuvenation in the form of a sun-disc in the early morning. It also gives a clear evidence to the creative power of the upraised arms in the eternal life. Thus, it was the responsibility of the upraised hands of the *k3*  of the deceased, who was generally considered as the son/daughter of the sun, to raise the sun-disc aloft in order to bring his/her father to life and to ensure his shine every day in the sky in the form of a solar-disc (Willems, 1996, pp. 202-203, 208).

In the point of view of Westendorf (1966, p. 539), the pair of upraised arms of the *k3*  could be interpreted as a personification of the lifting force, which contributed in preserving the equilibrium of the universe through lifting the sun-disc aloft. Westendorf (1966, p. 65, no. 8) also added that it was through this elevation that the upraised arms of the *k3*  would dispel the darkness of night and overcome the death of the justified to enliven them. Kusber (2005, pp. 56-57), On the other hand, stated that this explanation cannot be theoretically proven before the Thirtieth Dynasty, when the theme of elevating the solar-disc on the raised arms of the *k3*  started to be indicated in iconography. In this context, noteworthy is that since the sun-disc rises vertically from below upwards at the time of sunrise (Hornung, 1987, p. 220), only the elevated arms of the *k3* , have the ability to achieve such a vertical theory of sunrise and revivification in the hereafter, even though there is no accompanying inscriptions supporting this explanation. This suggestion could be supported through comparing the theme of elevating the sun-disc on the arms of the *k3*  in the present tableau and the typical figure of the primordial god Nun, who is usually depicted lifting up the sun on his upraised arms to apply the ancient Egyptian traditional belief of vertical sunrise **Fig. (8)** (Piankoff, 1953, pp. 41-43; Piankoff, 1954, pp. 359-361, fig. 111; Hornung, 1972, pp. 461-463; Hornung, 1990, pp. 93-94; Abitz, 1995, p. 151 D 2; Roberson, 2007, pp. 213-218).


3.2. Funerary context:


3.2.1. Lifting up arms to personify the concept of the cosmic “mother-goddess” needed for the rebirth of the dead:



There are multiple figurative images showing fertile women with upraised arms from the Predynastic Period and ranging from figures on pots and decorated pottery to statuettes **Figs. (9-13)** (Petrie & Quibell, 1896, pl. LIX (6); De Morgan, 1897, p. 52, pl. 101; Hornblower, 1929, pl. VI (1-2); Kantor, 1944, p. 117, fig. 6 B-E, L-M, O; Hendrickx, 2002, p. 283). Although they are depicted without specific face features, they show the represented women with very svelte, slim, and slender bodies in a way that is attractive and gives an indication to their fecund ability. Some of them are known as El-Ma’ mariya figurines since they are attributed to grave (no. 2) in El-Ma’ mariya Cemetery from the period of Naqada II. Now, they are exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum at New York **Fig. (13)** (De Morgan, 1912, p. 32; Hassan, 1998, p. 107, fig. 46; Ordynat, 2018, p. 86, fig. 72). They are painted red and shown with bird-like face, beak, tall neck, bare long hanging breasts, narrow waist, broad hips, large buttocks, and upraised arms with hands turned in above the head. Some of them are painted white from the waist down as an indication of wearing a skirt. El-Ma’ mariya feminine


representations with their upraised arms are of funerary nature and related to the afterlife. Moreover, they can be regarded as personifications of the concept of the rejuvenation during the Pre-dynastic Period (Graff, 2009, p. 124; Hendrickx & Eyckerman, 2012, p. 33).

In general, Lesko (1999, p. 11) viewed the early feminine figures as personifications of the fecundity goddesses, whose upraised arms confirmed facts of femininity with clear emphasis on youth and sexuality in them. Baumgartel (1960, pp. 70-71), Needler (1984, pp. 336-337) and Roth (2000, p. 198), viewed in such feminine figurines an abridged idea of the resurrection in the hereafter as well as the human sex and fertility both in actual life and hereafter. Hornblower (1929, p. 31) was the first to state that the breasts of generous size and broad hips of the depicted women leads to think about their fertility, particularly that the nourishment as an attribute of the mother embodied in these figurines to care for the dead in the afterlife. Hornblower (1929, pp. 31, 34-35) identified them as the “mother-goddess”, whose upstretched arms give an indication of embracing not only fertility and

nourishment, but also the *k3*-vital power , thus, they could be responsible for the eternity of their owners. Relke (2001, p. 309) and (2011, p. 409) stated that this upraised arm motif symbolizes and embodies the survival after death to the Predynastic Egyptians and at the same time it could be

considered as an early expression of the concept of the  *k3* in the Dynastic Period. She also added that the raised arms and the bird-like heads of these figurines, might symbolically personify the

combination of the  *k3* and  *b3*, who in their ability to leave the body after death and their needs for nourishment to maintain their existences, there is a comparison to some extent. In this context, Relke (2001, pp. 322-323) suggested that the cow-goddess Bat, whose name refers to the

feminine form of the  *b3*-soul (Fischer, 1962, p. 7), could be a plausible candidate for the identity of El-Ma'mariya figurines.


Griffiths (1996, p. 13) and Hassan (1998, p. 106) considered their upraised arms gesture as an imitation of the horns of the cow and they linked between them and the primitive cosmic cow-goddess of fertility, such as goddess Bat, or more likely goddess Hathor, who symbolized sexual fertility and played a great role in nourishing the bird-soul of the dead after raising to the sky. Likewise, Baumgartel (1955, p. 81) supported the association of the fertility imagery with the bovine symbolism through referring to the Sudanese women, who used to practice a dance called “cow-dance” with their raised arms to symbolize the horns of the cow through their body gesture. In this respect, most probably the upraised arms of the female figurines might also recall the horns of the heavenly cow that personifies the sky-goddess on the so-called Gerzeh Palette in the Egyptian Museum (JdE 43103) **Fig. (14)** (Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912, pl. VI lower right). Hassan and Smith (2002, p. 63) also viewed in the feminine figurines with upraised arms personifications of the concepts of transformation and birth. In his opinion, Hassan (1998, p. 105) considered both of the cow and the women depicted in the clay figurines of the Predynastic Period with pendulous breasts as givers of milk because they can practice breastfeeding, thus, they could be considered as guarantors of life. Hassan (1998, p. 314) also added that this resemblance interprets the reason of fashioning El-Ma'mariya figurines with bird-like heads and uplifted arms with hands turned in the form of the horns of the cow, particularly that there was a ritualistic connection between women and agriculture, cattle herding, and fertility since the time of the Predynastic Period. In this context, Hornblower (1929, pp. 39-40) also connected between the cult of the Predynastic mother-figures and the cow-goddess Hathor and he cited that the function of the Seven Hathors of the Celestial Herd in the child-births was to give oracles for the newly-born.

Another group of scholars (Hendrickx, 2002, p. 284, fig. 16: 3; Hendrickx, Riemer, Förster and Darnell, 2009, p. 215; Hendrickx & Eyckerman, 2012, p. 36), mentioned that the upraised arm pose of the Predynastic feminine figurines might personifies the amulets of the head of the bull **Fig. (15 right)** (Capart, 1905, p. 153, fig. 115: 32124). Hendrickx (2002, p. 283) also added that the head and

eyes of the bull can be compared in this case to the trunk and breasts of the female body **Fig. (15 left)**. Additionally, the cone-shape of the lower part of the head of the bull is also comparable to the taper-shaped legs of the female figurines of the Predynastic Period, which are generally depicted without indication of feet as if hovering without touching the ground **Figs. (12-13)**. The latter suggestion is also plausible particularly that the bull was a kind of cattle that closely connected to the concept of fertility in ancient Egypt (Helck, 1986, p. 15).

Relke (2001, p. 316) and (2011, p. 403) assumed that the female figurines with uplifted arms might be considered as Predynastic personification and prototype image of the outstretched sky-goddess Nut, in which their bare long breasts and the pose of the raised arms recalls the pendulous breast and outstretched arms of goddess Nut on the Late Period coffins **Figs. (16)** (Budge, 1904, p. 103; James, 1979, p. 167, pl. 59; Relke, 2001, p. 317, fig. 6 (4); Relke, 2011, pp. 404, 410, fig. 3; Dodson, 2015, p. 36 Cat.14.A right; Krudop & Weiss, 2017, p. 24). Relke (2011, p. 410-411) added that the female figurines of the Predynastic Period are also probably a “proto-Nut”, particularly that they share their feminine aspects and the hovering position altogether. Thus, just like the sky-goddess Nut, gives birth to the sun-god on her elevated arms every morning, such figurines with upraised arms could also give daily birth to the soul after the death of the body.


Relke (2001, pp. 324-325, 334) and (2011, p. 414) also suggested the association between the twin-goddesses Isis and Nephthys and the female figurines of the Predynastic Period. In her point of view, the bird imagery of the clay figures of El-Ma’ mariya and the mythical depicting of the twin-goddesses as kites in the Osirian Myth might strength the close connection between them. The twin-goddesses are not only of kite nature but they are also related to the bovine family, in which they are called the two cows in the chants of Isis (Dennis, 1910, p. 31). Moreover, as winged mourners, they bring about the resurrection of god Osiris in particular and all the dead in general (Bleeker, 1958, p. 17). In this context, Relke (2001, p. 339) concluded that the bird-like figurines with raised arms could be seen as a good personification of the peculiar features of goddess Isis, who may hover over the deceased and




engender a new life as the  *k3* in the afterworld. Relke (2011, p. 416) also noticed the similarity between the fingers of some figurines and the feathers of the winged goddesses **Fig. (17)**, the matter that led to see in the Predynastic female figurines a probable incarnation of “proto-Isis” or “proto-Nephthys” as well.

The discovering of other female figurines with upraised arms and tattoos of hunting scenes and Nilotic images on their bodies also gave a great indication to their fertile ability **Fig. (12)** (Petrie & Quibell, 1896, pl. LIX: 6; Hendrickx et al., 2009, p. 212). Hendrickx and Eyckerman (2011, p. 535) and (2012, p. 37) summarized the phenomenon of the fertile feminine figurines in considering that the artist of the Predynastic Period was far away from realism and preferred to create iconography through combining and overlapping imagery and ideas of different contexts rather than expressing individual creativity.



According to all the previous suggestions and as a final conclusion, it seems that the sharing of combined identity and common attributes among the cow-goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Hathor, Nut and Bat that overlap in the Dynastic Period probably resulted in considering the Predynastic female figurines with upraised arms as abridged mimic of the celestial bovine goddesses and comprehensive incarnation of the responsibilities of motherhood, at the same time they could be conceived as symbolic prototype feminine personification of the fertility aspect of the cosmic cow goddesses, who serve as rejuvenators of the dead during the dynastic Period.


3.2.2. Lifting up arms during the vindication of the dead as a symbol of his revival:



The Late Period coffin of Amenpermut in the Egyptian Museum (CG 6163), gives a good indication of the justification of the deceased and his worthy transformation to live as a divine soul in the world of the gods through uplifting his both arms in an embodiment of the  *k3*-position **Fig.**

(18) (Niwinski, 1999, p. 100, fig. 136). This coffin includes a symbolic scene depicted adjacent to the scene of the judgment of the dead. This theme intended to secure for the deceased a safe passage to the realm of the dead in addition to ensure his sojourn in the eternity. It also gives a representation of the kneeling goddess Khef(t)ethernebes (Leitz, 2002, p. 725; Wilkinson, 2003, p. 150), who is crowned with the *imntt*-sign  for the west and personifies the west, the necropolis, and the death at the same time. She is loaded with the *'nh*-sign  for life hanging from her raised arms. She raises her both arms in adoration before the justified deceased and grants him  *nb dd 'nh w3s* i.e. “all stability, life, and authority”. The arms of the deceased are raised in jubilation and as an incarnation of his justification and revival in the eternal life. His head is adorned with four feathers and he holds an additional feather in each of his upraised arms as a symbol of his worthiness to rejuvenate in the next life after assessing his earthly deeds and weighing his heart in the balance against the feather of goddess Maat.

3.2.3. Lifting up arms in purification rituals as a symbol of rejuvenation:

When speaking about the upraised arms gestures, it is significant to cite the ritual of purifying the king in the temple sphere that was completely attested starting from the Eighteenth Dynasty (Quack, 2013, pp. 130, 135). In this ritual, purifier gods raise their arms and pour sacred water originated from the primeval ocean on the body of the king (Assmann & Kucharek, 2011, pp. 54-64). The divine purifiers are often depicted elevating their arms with jars filled with water streaming out of it. The water is usually constituted by *'nh*-sign  for life and sometimes it is accompanied by the *w3s*-glyph  for dominion **Fig. (19 a-b)** as an indication of supplying the deceased king with the water of life needed to obtain a new controlled life originated on the elevated hands of the deities (Quack, 2013, p. 135).

In the private sector, the same rite of washing the deceased by the raised arms of his sons and officials was also a substantial ceremony illustrated on the walls of the individual tombs. Two similar scenes depicting this washing ceremony can be traced in the Middle Kingdom tomb of the nomarch Djehutyhotep at Deir El-Bersheh (No. 17L20/1) **Fig. (20)** and in the New Kingdom Theban tomb of the vizier Ramose (TT 55) **Fig. (21)** (Blackman, 1918, pl. XVIII; Davies, 1941, pl. XXI). In the two scenes, the tomb owner is represented standing uprightly. Above him, there are two filaments of sacred water on each side coming from libations elevated by men with upraised arms .





Scholars illustrated that the royal ritual of purification has links to the ideal of the sun-god in addition to its association with the conceptions of washing the face of the god and his renewal each morning out of the primordial ocean that was recorded on the Triumphal Stela of Piankhi in the Egyptian Museum (*JdE* 48862) (Grimal, 1981, p. 130). Thus, the purification ritual was mainly considered as a rite for the morning rebirth and functioned as a reminder of the primeval power of creation out of the primordial water (Blackman, 1918, p. 118; Fairman, 1958, p. 216; Lurker, 1980, p. 102; Quack, 2013, p. 136). It was also thought that it is through this ritual, that the king would be able to be purified and unified with his *k3*-vital essence  (Quack, 2013, pp. 132). Thus, purifying the king with the primordial water symbolizes his daily rejuvenation in the early morning on the upraised arms of the participant gods, whose gestures might personify the reunification of the king with the animated power of his  *k3*. Most probably, this rite of purification was an extension of the earlier event of purifying the sun-god Re and the deceased king in the Marsh of Reeds that was recorded in Utterance 253 (Spells § 275b-e) in the Pyramid Texts and resulted in taking the hand of deceased in the hand of

Re to endure together in the sky (Sethe, 1908a, p. 148; Mercer, 1952, p. 78; Faulkner, 1969, p. 63 §275; Hoffmeier, 1981, p. 175).

There was also another belief concerning that the Nile was filled with water that has been flowed from God Osiris at his death. In this respect, Blackman (1918, p. 118) cited that because of this flowing out, the Nile water became sacred and effective on the gathering of the body parts of the dead in the next world. So that, it was used in the purification rituals in order to gather all the bones and unit all the body parts together to ensure the resurrection of the dead in the eternal life on the upraised hands of the purifier characters.

It seems that the upraised arms of the purifiers in the both royal and private sectors have the same significant purpose. In fact, they did not only mean the act of lifting up the arms but also the state of holding the water up to purify the complete body of the deceased, from head to toes. By using a sacred water belonging to God Osiris and employed in the daily rejuvenation of the sun-God there is also a reference to the uniting of all the body parts of the dead together and the invoking of the solar rebirth as well.

4. Conclusion:

In any events, Egyptians believed that even after death, the spirit of the deceased would live on and function as a life force under the name of the  *k3*. In the upraised arms of the divinities, kings, and individuals one might see personifications of the  *k3* that was a separate entity and could detach itself from the body after death to ensure the rejuvenation of its owner. In this context, divine, royal, and private figures with elevated arms should be put into mind as immortal souls and source of the life force in the hereafter. It also seems that ancient Egyptian artist used the two upraised arms of the *k3*  as a symbol of the regeneration of the dead on one hand and as mimic of the *3ht*-sign  for the horizon with its two hills, between which the sun shines every day on the other hand.

Deities, kings, and individuals appeared with upraised arms for regenerative purposes in the ancient Egyptian statuary and iconography since the time of the Predynastic Period. Their upraised arms gestures were utilized to reveal their revival abilities. Although, there are many reasons of lifting up the arms of the female figures in early Egypt, the equalization between the fertile female figurines and the mother goddess as proto-Nut and the other cow goddesses is a very plausible explanation of their upraised arm gesture during the Predynastic Period. During the New Kingdom, gods with upraised arms participated in washing the deceased king with the primordial water to let him come out of it just like the sun at sunrise. Upraised arms of sons and attendants was also employed in raising the sacred water to purify and reanimate the body of the dead from head to toes since the time of the Middle Kingdom. During the Late Period, creator gods employed their raised arm gesture in upraising the primordial watery abyss at the time of sun-birth. Kings also raised their arms in order to maintain the stability of the sky and preserve the continuity of the life cycle of the universe since the time of the New Kingdom. Meanwhile, even the individuals indicated their justification and revival in the hereafter through elevating their arms and grasping the feather of Maat.

Figures:

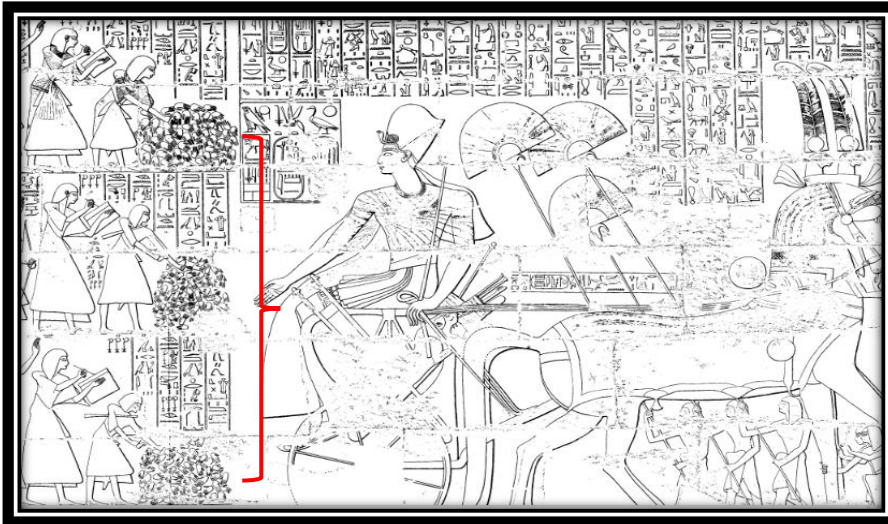




Fig. (1). Piles of mutilated hands of Libyan captives.

Medinet Habu Temple,
second court, south wall.

After: (Nelson, 1930, pl.
23).



Fig. (2). Two upraised arms of *k3*-sign 
presenting 'nh-symbol  for life.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
(Acc. no. 19.2.16).
After: (Fischer, 1972, fig. 1).

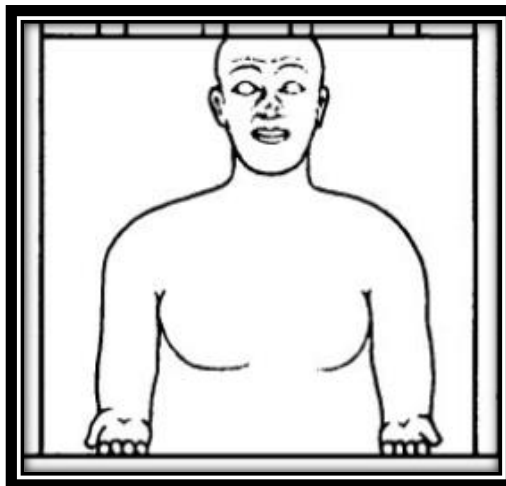



Fig. (3). Statue of Idu with outstretched arms inspired from the  *K3*-glyph.
Tomb of Idu, Giza (no. 7102).

After: (Forman & Quirke, 1996, p. 30; Simpson, 1976, fig. 12 upper).

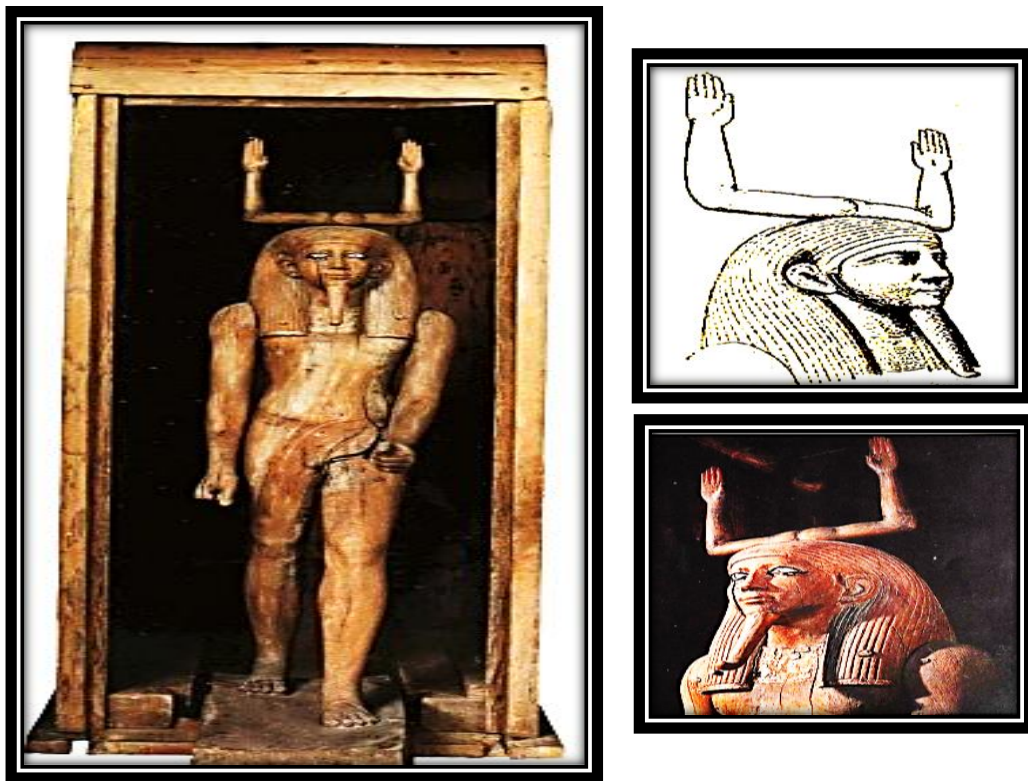



Fig. (4). *K3*-statue of King Awibra/ Hor I from the Middle Kingdom.
The Egyptian Museum (CG 259/ JdE 30948).

After: (De Morgan, 1895, pp. 91-93, figs. 212; Forman & Quirke, 1996, p. 29; Bongioanni & Croce (Eds.), 2001, p. 125).



Fig. (5). Four figures of king Seti I supporting  the *pt*-sign for the sky.

Temple of Abydos, Chapel of Ptah, north wall, western section.

After: (Calverley, 1935, pl. 23).



Fig. (6). Representation of god Shu and four divine supporters of the sky raising up heavenly water.
Tomb of Bannentiu, Bahria Oasis.

After: (Fakhry, 1942, p. 75).

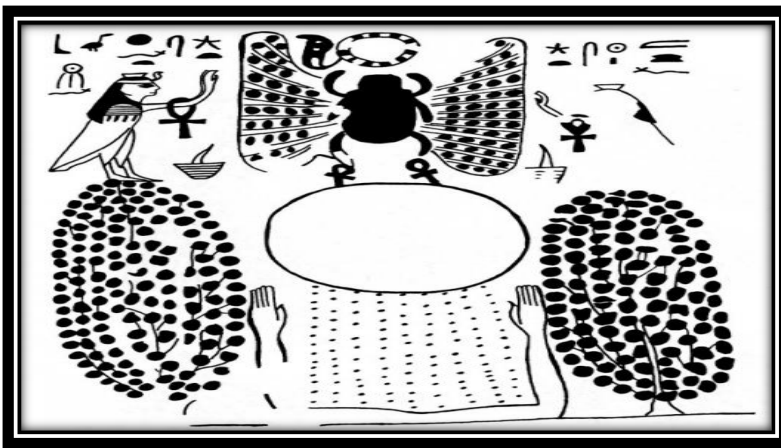



Fig. (7). Upraised arms of the  K₃-symbol embracing a sun-disc topped with a beetle. Coffin of princess Makeire, Late Period, The Egyptian Museum (CG 61028). After: (Billing, 2002, p. 342, fig. A: 20).

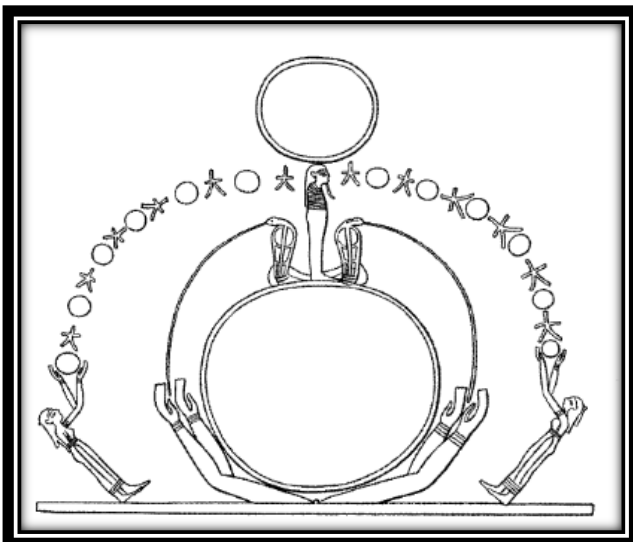


Fig. (8). Upraised arms of god Nun uplifting the sun-disc. After: (Piankoff, 1954, fig. 111).

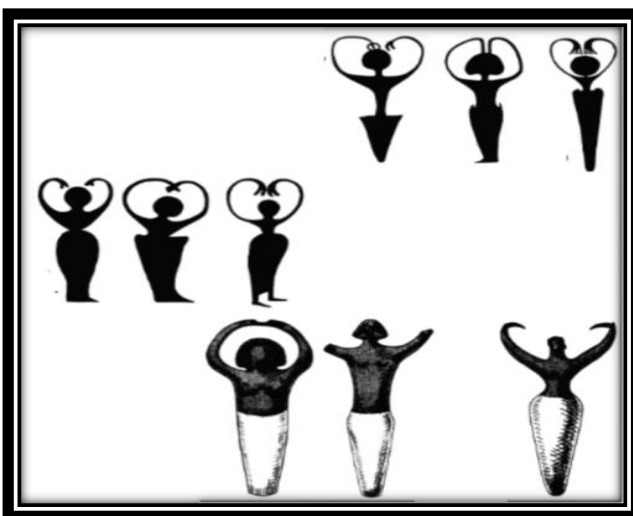


Fig. (9). Figurative images showing standing women with upraised hands from the Predynastic Period

After: (Kantor, 1944, fig. 6 (B-E, L-M, O)).



Fig. (10). Decorated ware jar showing figurative images of standing women with upraised hands from the Predynastic Period. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Acc. No. 20.2.10)

After: (Griffiths, 1996p. 12, fig. 1).

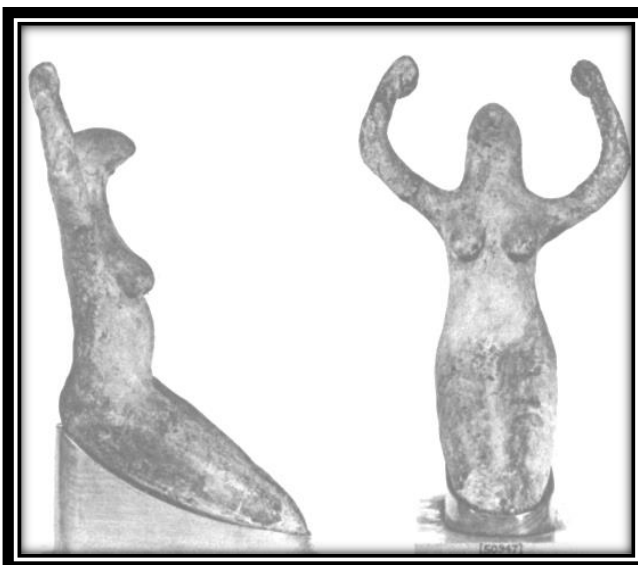


Fig. (11). Female figurine showing a woman leaning backward with upraised hands from the Predynastic Period.

The British Museum (BM EA 50947)

After: (Hornblower, 1929, pl. VI (1-2)).

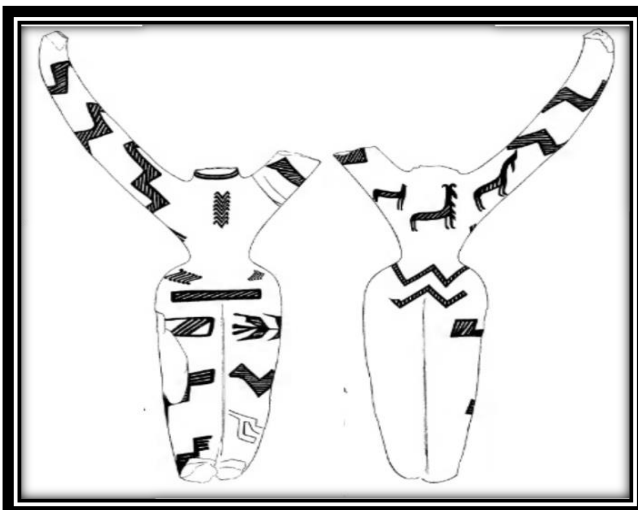


Fig. (12). Female figurine showing a standing woman with upraised hands and tattoos of hunting scenes and Nilotic images from the Predynastic Period

After: (Petrie & Quibell, pl. LIX: 6).



Fig. (13). One of El-Ma'mariya figurines with two upraised hands from the Predynastic Period. The Brooklyn Museum at New York (No. 07.447.505)

After: (Ordynat, 2018, fig. 72).



Fig. (14). The so-called Cow-headed Palette or Gerzeh Palette from the Predynastic Period. The Egyptian Museum (JdE 43103)

After: (Petrie, Wainwright & Mackay, 1912, pl. VI lower right).

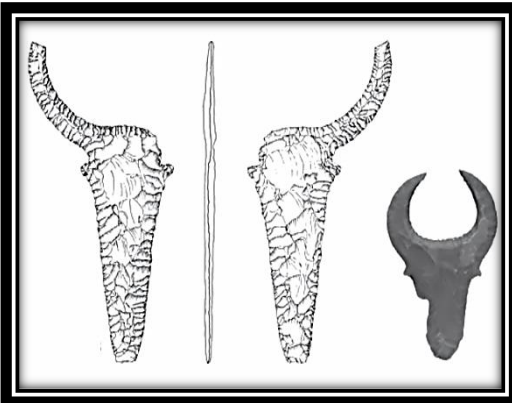


Fig. (15). (Left) Flint object with upwards turned curves from the Predynastic Period. The Museum of Brussels (E.6185a)

(Right) Flint head of a bull from the Predynastic Period. The British Museum (BM EA.32124)

After: (Hendrickx & Eyckerman, 2012, p. 36, figs. (8-9)).

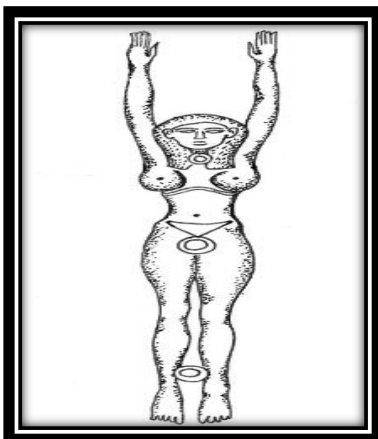


Fig. (16). Sky-goddess Nut standing with outstretched body, long hair, bare ponderous breasts, and upraised arms on coffin lids.

After: (Relke, 2011, p. 404, fig. 3).

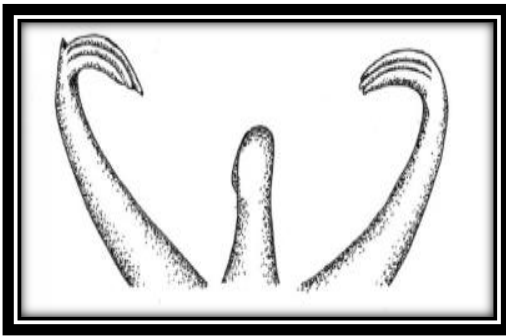


Fig. (17). Detail of feathers-like fingers of one of El-Ma'mariya figurines.

After: (Relke, 2011, p. 401, fig. 1 c).



Fig. (18). Justified deceased raising his both hands and grasping two feathers.

After: (Niwinski, 1999, p. 100, fig. 136).



Fig. (19 a)



Fig. (19 b)

Fig. (19 a). Purification of King Ramesses II by god Horus and god Thoth, Temple of Amun-Re at Karnak, Great Hypostyle Hall, east wall, south half, lower register, south end.

Fig. (19 b). Purification of King Seti I by god Horus and god Seth, Temple of Amun-Re at Karnak, Great Hypostyle Hall, west wall, north half, second register.

After: (Neslon & Murnane (Eds.), 1981, pls. 105, 148).

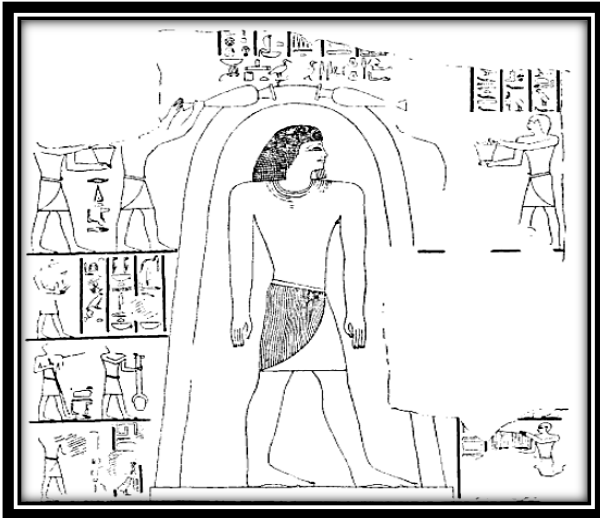


Fig. (20). Purification of Djehutihotep during the Middle Kingdom.

Deir El-Bersheh, Tomb of Djehutihotep (No. 17L20/1), inner chamber, entrance wall, on right-hand side.

After: (Blackman, 1918, pl. XVIII).



Fig. (21). Purification of Ramose during the New Kingdom.

Thebes, Tomb of Ramose (TT 55), east wall, north side.

After: (Davies, 1941, pl. XXI).

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