

How would you Resurrect? Pattern of Rebirth on the Hands of the Goddesses in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract

In ancient Egyptian theology, the hands of the divinities played a remarkable role in the creation and continuity of the universe. The masturbation of god Atum was the prototype source of employing the divine hand in creating the first couple in the world. Textual and iconographic evidences confirm the similarity in personifying the resurrection of the dead on the hands of a number of Egyptian anthropoid goddesses. Moreover, the hands of several goddesses in human bodies were commonly involved in raising the sun aloft to announce its rebirth at dawn. The oldest of the goddesses, whose hands contributed to granting new life to the sun and the dead alike, was goddess Nut. She was of great importance in elevating the sky and the dead and ensuring the equilibrium of the universe. In addition, the responsibility of her hands was to upraise the sun out of the primordial water to move it from death to vitality. Likewise, the hands of the twin-goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, functioned as supporters of the solar-disc during its daily rejuvenation. Goddess Menkeret, who was strongly associated with immortality, also participated in uplifting the deceased king on her hands to emphasize his resurrection in the next world.

Keywords

Hand; Rebirth; Nut; Isis; Nephthys; Menkeret.

كيف ستبعث من الموت؟ نمط إعادة الميلاد على أيدي الآلهات في مصر القديمة

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المخلص

لعبت أيدي الآلهات دورًا رائعًا في خلق الكون واستمراره في اللاهوت المصري القديم. كانت عملية الاستمناة الإله أتوم باليد هي المصدر النموذجي لاستخدام اليد الإلهية في خلق أول زوجين في العالم. وتؤكد الأدلة النصية والأيقونية التشابه في تجسيد قيامة الموتى على أيدي عدد من الآلهات المصريات اللاتي تم تجسيدهم. علاوة على ذلك، فإن أيادي العديد من هؤلاء الآلهات عادة ما قامت بالمشاركة في رفع الشمس عاليًا لإعلان ولادتها من جديد كل صباح. ولقد كانت أقدم هؤلاء الآلهات اللاتي ساهمت أيديهن في منح حياة جديدة للشمس وللأموات على حد سواء هي إلهة السماء نوت، والتي كان لها أهمية كبيرة في رفع السماء والأموات لضمان تحقيق واستمرارية توازن الكون. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كانت مسؤولية يديها هي رفع الشمس من المياه الأزلية وذلك لنقلها من الموت إلى الحياة. وبالمثل، فإن يدي الإلهتين التوأم، إيزيس ونفتيس، كانتا بمثابة داعمين لقرص الشمس أثناء تجديده اليومي كل صباح. كما شاركت الإلهة منكيرت التي ارتبطت بقوة بالخلود في رفع الملك المتوفي على يديها للتأكيد على قيامته في العالم الآخر.

الكلمات الدالة

يد؛ ولادة جديدة؛ نوت؛ إيزيس؛ نفتيس؛ منكيريت.

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Evidence 4

Source: Pyramid Texts, Utterance 702 (Spell §2200a-c).

Occurrence: Pyramid of King Pepi II, Saqqara.

Date: Sixth Dynasty, Old Kingdom.

Text:



iwꜣi.n N hr tny rhty wrty ꜣty nnty m-gs izb(y) n pt fꜣi tny N di.tn sw m-gs izb(y) n pt
 “N came to you the pair of great (and) superior goddesses (i.e. Isis and Nephthys),¹ who are on the eastern side of the sky, (that) you (will) raise N (and) you (will) set him on the eastern side of the sky”.

(Sethe, 1910, p. 534; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 318; Faulkner, 1969, p. 306; Shmakov, 2012, p. 378; Allen, 2013, [VI]: PT 702, nos. 1-3).

Evidence 5

Source: Coffin Texts, spell 803.

Occurrence: Interior Coffin of Sesnebef, Lisht.

Date: Thirteenth Dynasty, Middle Kingdom.

Text:



dd-mdw in Nwt hnmt (w)r di.(i) ꜥ hꜣ Wsir N imꜣhy m ꜥnh n m(w)t N

“Words spoken by Nut, (who) glades the great (one: I will) put the hand around Osiris N, the justified one, with life, (thus), N (will) not die”.

(De Buck, 1961, [7]: p. 90-q; Faulkner, 1978, [3]: p. 4; Billing, 2002, p. 100).

Evidence 6

Fig. no.: (Figure 1).

Source: Group statue.


Occurrence: Group statue of King Tutankhamun and Goddess Menkeret,² Egyptian Museum (JdE 60716).


Date: Eighteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom.

Description: Goddess Menkeret stands in a complete human form with long hair, protruding breasts and fitted dress. She carries King Tutankhamun on her hands. The king appears in the form of a mummy crowned with the red crown. The left hand of the goddess is uplifted before her body under the legs of the elevated king and her right hand is upraised behind her to support

¹ For this identification, see: (Bleeker, 1958, p. 11).

² The identity of Menkert seems to be confused and is still a matter of debate to some extent. Generally, scholars considered the femininity of Menkert (Erman & Grapow, 1971, [2], p. 91: 7-8; Leitz, 2002, [3]: pp. 318-319). However, Radwan believed in the dual nature of the deity, particularly as a guarantor of the resurrection, since the Middle Kingdom. He also stated that Menkeret was originally a female lion-headed deity but was sometimes depicted as a male god. In this respect, dos Santos (2015, p. 175) has regarded Menkert as close as possible to the

male gods. At any rate, the name, *Mn-kꜣrt*  (Beinlich & Saleh, 1989, pp. 31: 74, 134: 296a), which

was occasionally determined with the sign of a seated woman with long hair and no beard  (Gardiner, 1927: p. 448, Sign-list B 1), definitely indicated her feminine role played in the ancient Egyptian pantheon. Furthermore, on the upper register of the tenth hour of the night in the Amduat, she was portrayed as a goddess in a human body and the head of a lion standing together with three similar lion-headed goddesses (Hornung, 1963, pp. 164-165; Hornung, 1994, p. 712, no. 702; Hornung, 1999, p. 51; Wiebach-Koepke, 2003, pp. 154-155, no. 702, tafel. Amduat, Zehnte Stunde, no. 702). During the Græco-Roman Period, she was also assimilated to goddess Hathor in the temples of Edfu and Dendera (Mariette, 1870, [1]: pl. 25, no. 9; Chassinat, 1930, [5]: 379: 9).

his back (Carter, 1933, p. 54, pl. LVII; Capart, 1944, p. 209; Radwan, 2003, p. 344; El-Shahawy & Atiya, 2005, p. 239, fig. 151; Santos, 2015, pp. 177-179).

Evidence 7

Figs. no.: (Figure 2).

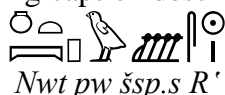
Source: The Book of Gates, closing scene.

Occurrence: Sarcophagus of King Seti I, Soane Museum (SM M470); Southern Chamber, Osireion, Abydos.

Date: Nineteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom.

Description: This scene includes two figures of the twin-goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, extending their hands forward to raise a scarab, pushing up a sun-disc. Moreover, it includes a detailed representation of the sky-goddess Nut standing gently in a complete human form on the head of god Osiris. She stretches out her arms towards the sun-disc to receive it on her hands (Sharpe, 1864, p. 32, pl. 15; Brugsch, 1885-90, p. 216; Budge, 1908, pp. 126-127; Hassan, 1946, [6/ 1]: p. 174, fig. 72; Piankoff, 1962, [3]: p. 163; Hornung, 1972, pp. 307-308, abb. 75; Hornung, 1980, [2]: p. 290; Niwiński, 1983, p. 80; Hornung, 1999, pp. 65, 77, fig. 41; Hornung, 2014, p. 452).¹

Accompanying Text: The accompanying caption describes the event as follows:



“This (is) Nut, she receives Re”.

(Piankoff, 1962, [3]: p. 178; Hornung, 1972, p. 308; Hornung, 1979, [1]: p. 410; Hornung, 1998, pp. 198-200; Hornung, 2014, p. 453).

Evidence 8

Source: Text accompanying the figure of goddess Nut.

Occurrence: Sarcophagus of King Seti I, Soane Museum (SM M470).

Date: Nineteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom.

Text:



“Your mother Nut added her magical protections to yours. You are existed within (her) feminine arms, and you will never die”.

(Sharpe, 1864, pl. 16; Budge, 1908, pp. 13-15).

Evidence 9

Fig. no.: (Figure 3).

Source: The Book of Caverns, fifth underworld cavern, scene of goddess Nut.

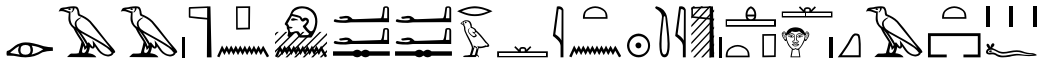
Occurrence: Entrance corridor, Osireion, Abydos; Tomb of King Ramesses VI (KV 9), Valley of the Kings, Thebes.

Date: Nineteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom; Twentieth Dynasty, New Kingdom.

Description: At the entrance of the fifth cave in the netherworld, a gigantic anthropoid figure of goddess Nut is depicted in a standing position. She uplifts a miniature figure of the ram-headed sun-god and a sun-disc on her two upraised left and right hands, respectively (Piankoff, 1944, pl. LI; Piankoff, 1954, pp. 32, 38, 88, 93-94, figs. 14, 34; Hornung, 1972, pp. 372-73, abb. 79; Abitz, 1995, pp. 147, 161HB. V; Hornung, 1999, pp. 88, 94, fig. 51; Werning, 2011, [1]: p. 234, tafel XI).

Accompanying Text: The inscription is only written in the Osireion version and it says:

¹ For a similar motif, see: (Loprieno, 2005, p. 324).



m33 ntr-pn tp (n) 'wy.s 'wy.s r-w(ts) itn ti (ntr) htp hr k3wt.f

“Seeing this god on her (i.e. Nut) two hands. Her two hands up(lift) the disc. Then (the god) rests on his hills”.

(Piankoff, 1944, p. 52, pl. LIX; Billing, 2006, p. 57; Werning, 2011, [1]: pp. 234-235).

Evidence 10

Fig. no.: (Figure 4).

Source: The Book of the Night, closing scene.

Occurrence: Sarcophagus chamber, Osireion, Abydos; Tomb of King Ramesses VI (KV 9), Valley of the Kings, Thebes; Tomb of Ramose (TT 132), Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Thebes.

Date: Nineteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom; Twentieth Dynasty, New Kingdom; Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, Third Intermediate Period.

Description: The twin-goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, stand above the prows of the two solar barks of day and night, close to the legs of the sky-goddess Nut. They appear in a complete human form and elevate the solar-disc on their hands (Piankoff, 1941, pl. VIII; Roulin, 1996, [2]: pl. XX).

Evidence 11

Fig. no.: (Figure 5).

Source: The Book of the Earth, scene of goddess Nut.

Occurrence: Tomb of King Ramesses III (KV 11), Valley of the Kings, Thebes; Tomb of King Ramesses VI (KV 9), Valley of the Kings, Thebes.

Date: Twentieth Dynasty, New Kingdom.

Description: The sky-goddess Nut stands in a complete human form. She raises on her right and left hands a sun-disc and a ram-headed bird soul of the dead sun, respectively (Lefébure, 1889, [1]: pl. 58; Piankoff, 1953, pl. D; Piankoff, 1954, p. 361, fig. 112; Hornung, 1972, p. 464, abb. 99; Abitz, 1995, p. 161 (BvE); Hornung, 1999, p. 98; Billing, 2006, p. 55; Roberson, 2007, pp. 273-274).

Accompanying Text: The accompanying inscription says:



'pp ntr pn '3 hr drty.s

“This great god (i.e. sun-god) passes over her (i.e. Nut) two hands”.

(Piankoff, 1953, p. 45, pl. XXV; Leitz, 1989, p. 57; Roberson, 2007, pp. 672-673).

Evidence 12

Fig. no.: (Figure 6).

Source: Scene accompanying a hymn heralding the sun-god Re at his rising.

Occurrence: Chapel of Re, Side room (18), Medinet Habu Temple, Thebes.

Date: Twentieth Dynasty, New Kingdom.

Description: The anthropoid figures of the twin-goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, depict them upraising the sun-disc on their hands (The Epigraphic Survey, 1963, [6/ 2]: pl. 420B upper middle; Porter & Moss, 1972, [2]: p. 509: 142).

Accompanying Text: The accompanying text describes the event as follows:



h' ntr-'3 pn m irty rhyt hnmmt

“This great god appears before (literally in) the two eyes of the humankind and the sun-folk”.

Evidence 13

Fig. no.: (Figure 7).

Source: The Book of the Day, prologue.

Occurrence: Tomb of King Ramesses VI (KV 9), Valley of the Kings, Thebes; Tomb of King Osorkon II (NRT-1), Tanis.

Date: Twentieth Dynasty, New Kingdom; Twenty-Second Dynasty, Third Intermediate Period.

Description: The two goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, are shown in complete human form. They elevate the solar-disc just beneath the vulva of the sky-goddess Nut (Piankoff, 1942, pl. I; Hornung, 1999, p. 134, fig. 84; Müller-Roth, 2008, p. 81 (12-13), tafeln I-II).

Accompanying Text: The text, which accompanies the present birth scene, is only written in the tomb of King Ramesses VI (KV 9) and it says:



“(To) come out (of) the lips (of the vulva) of Nut (when the sun-god) appears at the entry of the horizon”.

(Piankoff, 1942, p. 5; Piankoff, 1954, p. 390; Müller-Roth, 2008, pp. 165-166).

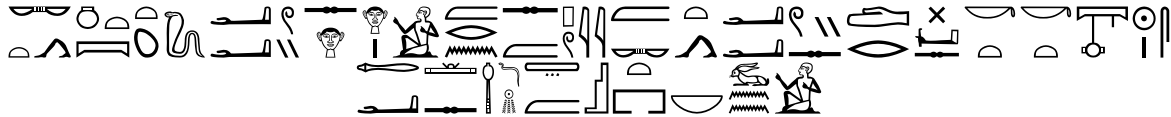
Evidence 14

Source: Coffin lid.

Occurrence: Lid of coffin of Masaharta, Egyptian Museum (CG 61027).

Date: Twenty-First Dynasty, Third Intermediate Period.

Text:



“Nut stretches out her two hands over me in this her name of She who outstretch her Two Hands. She expels darkness (and) she makes the dawn rise in every place (where) I am”.

(Daessy, 1909, p. 67, pl. XXXVI).

Evidence 15

Fig. no.: (Figures 8-14).

Source: Coffin lids.

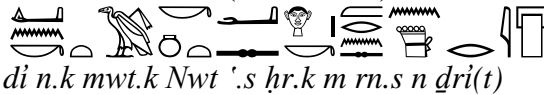
Occurrence: (Examples) Lid of sarcophagus of King Psusennes I, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JdE 87297); Lid of coffin of Hetepamun, University of Heidelberg, Berlin (no. 1015); Lid of wooden sarcophagus of the Lady of the House, Tareres, Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Turin (inv. Cat. 2220/02); Lid of Coffin of Inamunnefnebu, Royal Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (M. 30/ Inv. AMM 1); Lid of wooden coffin of the Amon priest, Bakenren, Egyptian Museum in Stockholm (NME 816); Coffin of Peftjauneith, Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (AMM 5-e); Sarcophagus lid of the priest Djedhor, Louvre Museum (D 9/ N 345).

Date: Twenty-First Dynasty, Third Intermediate Period; Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, Third Intermediate Period; Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, Late Period; Thirtieth Dynasty, Late Period.

Description: The interior lids of this number of coffins and sarcophagi include depictions related to the resurrection in the otherworld (Wildung, 1977; p. 57). They represent goddess Nut standing in a complete human fertile form over the dead body that lies beneath her. She appears with an exciting and extended body, long hair, bare ponderous breasts, and elevated hands (De Rougé, 1849, pp. 81-82; Budge, 1885, Frontispiece (upper); Budge, 1904, [2]: p. 103; Boreux, 1938, pl. XLI; James, 1979, p. 167, pl. 59; Feucht, 1986, pp. 121-123, no 277; Roveri, 1988, p. 219, abb. 303-304; Taylor, 1989, p. 60, pl. 50; Bari, 1990, p. 198; Ziegler et al.1997, p. 84; Relke, 2001, p. 317, fig. 6: 4; Assmann, 2003, figs. 17-18; Barbotin &

Devauchelle, 2005, p. 97, no. 53; Jansen-Winkel, 2009, pp. 527–528, no 323; Relke, 2011, pp. 404, 410, fig. 3; Krudop & Weiss, 2017, p. 24). Sometimes she upraises her both hands and elevates the sun-disc aloft.

Accompanying Text: The following inscription describes goddess Nut on the sarcophagus lid of the priest Djedhor in the Louvre Museum (D 9/ N 345) as follows:








“Your mother Nut gives to you her hand above you in her name of Coffin”.
(Barbotin & Devauchelle, 2005, p. 97).


Analysis

The Pyramid Texts were the oldest religious composition that intended to ensure the resurrection of the Osirid king and his raising up to the sky on the hands of the goddesses in order to become a star and join the heavenly realm of the gods (Assmann, 2002, pp. 126, 131). By the reign of King Pepi I of the Sixth Dynasty, the earliest evidence of resurrecting the deceased king on the hands of the creator-goddess was revealed in the Pyramid Texts. This earliest attestation alluded to the function of the hands of three major goddesses, including Nut, Isis, and Nephthys, in elevating and supporting the deceased king during his ascension to the sky. The same role of goddess Nut also extended during the Middle Kingdom, particularly in the Coffin Texts. Owing to her association with the conception of immortality, goddess Menkeret also participated in carrying the deceased king as an announcement of his rebirth on her hands during the New Kingdom. Meanwhile, and later on, the hands of the three goddesses Nut, Isis, and Nephthys retrieved their eldest roles in the revival of the dead sun.

Goddess Nut

In addition to deriving the name of the primeval god *Nwn*  from the  *n*-glyph for water (Gardiner, 1927, p. 490, Sign-list N 35), the Egyptians conceived him as a source of the annual flooding and the origin of all life beings (Erman, 1927, p. 301; Barta, 1973, pp. 83-84; Allen, 1989, pp. 11-12). His name was written with the determinative, of the sky .


Thus, he and the sky-goddess  *Nwt* (Gardiner, 1927, p. 573; Faulkner, 1962, p. 127; Erman & Grapow, 1971, [2]: p. 214: 3-14; Kurth, 1982, pp. 535-541; Wilson, 1997, p. 499; Hannig, 2003, pp. 600-601; Hannig, 2006, pp. 1208-1209), shared the same root of the identification 

“*Nw*” (Gardiner, 1927, pp. 530-531 Sign-list W 24), to which the  *t*-glyph was added to feminize her name. In this regard, she could be regarded as a divine embodiment of the female, who housed within her body the primeval water of Nun, from which the dead rise to enjoy eternal life, as has been noticed by Grieshammer (1982, pp. 534-535).

In ancient Egyptian theology, the sun and all the dead were reborn on the hands of the sky-goddess Nut. Several textual and iconographic attestations confirm this belief in both the royal and private sectors and can be analyzed as follows:


- *The role of the hands of goddess Nut in resurrecting the dead people*


In the Old Kingdom theology, the idea of rejuvenating the deceased king is only completed by his ascension to heaven on the hands of goddess Nut (Speleers, 1938, p. 39). The oldest textual reference to the rising of the deceased king and his ascension to the sky on the hands of goddess Nut was recorded in Utterance 485 (Spell §1036b) of the Pyramid Texts of King Pepi


I (Evidence 1). This utterance talks about the fecund role of her  ‘-hand (Gardiner, 1927, p. 556; Faulkner, 1962, p. 36; Erman & Grapow, 1971, [1]: pp. 156: 1-157: 10; Wilson, 1997,

p. 131; Hannig, 2003, pp. 247-250; Hannig, 2006, pp. 459-466) in giving a new eternal life to the deceased king.

The most remarkable evidence of the fertile role of goddess Nut in raising the deceased king up to the sky on her hands can also be traced in Utterances 548 (Spells §1344a-45a) (**Evidence 2**) and 697 (Spells §2171a-72a) of the Pyramid Texts (**Evidence 3**). The latter two utterances

described her with long hair and pendulous breasts and pointed to the role of her  'wy-hands in elevating the deceased king to heaven in order to ensure his rebirth in the heavenly realm. They also give direct evidence to the fertile aspect of goddess Nut in addition to emphasizing the role of her hands in uplifting the deceased to the sky, where she would grant him a new eternal life. During the New Kingdom, King Seti I recorded a text describing his

resurrection on the  'wy-hands of goddess Nut. This caption ensures his existence in the eternity on her hands and it is written in the company of the scene of goddess Nut on the bottom of his sarcophagus in the Soane Museum (SM M470) (**Evidence 8**). This text is probably an extension of spell written in Utterances 247 (Spell §258d) of the Pyramid Texts and alluded to the role of the divine mother, who is commonly Nut, in embracing the deceased

king on her  'w-hands in order to come into being and says:



hṭp nṯrw iḏbt(y)w imnt(y)w hr wrt ḥprt m-ḥnw 'w mswt nṯr


“The Eastern (and) Western gods (are) pleased with the Great One, who arose in the arms of the one who gave birth to the god”.

(Sethe, 1908, p. 142; Speleers, 1938, p. 51; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 75; Faulkner, 1969, p. 60; Shmakov, 2012, p. 26; Allen, 2013, [III]: PT 247, no. 6).

In the private sector, the archetype of the function of the generative hands of goddess Nut in granting a new life to the deceased was attested during the Middle Kingdom. An example was found in a praise of the goddess written in spell 803 of the Coffin Texts, discussing her

role in endowing a new life to the deceased on her  'hand (**Evidence 5**).

The previously mentioned Utterances 548 (Spells §1344a-45a) and 697 (Spells §2171a-72a) of the Pyramid Texts (**Evidences 2-3**), find their pictorial counterparts on the lids of a number of royal and private coffins and sarcophagi dating to a period spanning from the Third Intermediate Period to the Late Period (Figures 8-14). Throughout this long time, the interiors of the lids often represent goddess Nut standing over the dead body that lies beneath her in a complete human fertile form with an exciting extended body, long hair, bare ponderous breasts, and elevated hands (**Evidence 15**). It was through the reproductive potency of goddess Nut that the Egyptians believed in her ability to give birth to the deceased and viewed her as a typical mother of all the dead.¹ In addition, she was once identified as a personified “*coffin*” that

cuddles the dead bodies and extends her  'hand to them with life (Barbotin & Devauchelle, 2005, p. 97). In this respect, Clark (1959, pp. 48, 50) noticed that the Egyptians were more specific and conceived the body of the sarcophagus as an indication of the earth-god Geb and its lid as a symbol of the sky-goddess Nut. Thus, one might view setting the lid down on the body of the sarcophagus as a kind of sexual union between the divine couple Geb and Nut, which resulted in giving birth to the deceased, who lies inside it. This process also

¹ In this respect, Utterance 431 (Spell §781b) of the Pyramid Texts is one of several spells talking about the womb of goddess Nut that gestates the deceased before giving birth to him, just like her divine son, god Osiris, to whom all the dead were equated (Sethe, 1908, p. 429; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 147; Faulkner, 1969, p. 142; Allen, 2013, [IV]: PT 431, no. 2).

recalls the Heliopolitan myth of creation.¹ Schroer (2018, [4]: pp. 516-517: 1515) has observed that sometimes the coffins included two representations of god Osiris, lying on the ground, and of goddess Nut with upraised hands, floating on the lid. The placement of Osiris under the mummy and Nut above it indicates that the deceased preferred to lay with his back on the figure of god Osiris at night while being carried away from the underworld to the sky by goddess Nut in the next morning. In this case, there is a reference to the leaving of the dead to the Osirian underworld to enjoy the rebirth and feel the eternity on the divine hands of goddess Nut.

- *The role of the hands of goddess Nut in the rebirth of the dead sun*

The fifth underworld cave in the Book of Caverns provides remarkable evidence of the solar revivification on the hands of the sky-goddess Nut during the New Kingdom (**Evidence 9**). The gigantic anthropoid figure of goddess Nut that stands at the entrance of the cave


represents her upraising the figure of the ram-headed sun-god and a sun-disc on her two 'wy-hands (Figure 3). The latter two diminutive solar figures represent the old age and the rebirth of the sun-god respectively, thus, symbolizing two extremes in his life, as Meeks and Favard-Meeks (1996: p. 159) have observed. There are also four figures before the goddess representing a scarab, a ram, a ram-headed god, and a child, and each of them is preceded by a sun-disc. Other figures, representing four crocodiles, are also shown behind the goddess as personifications of the primeval forces of the underworld. They point their snouts towards four different manifestations of the sun, representing the sun-disc, the eye, the scarab, and the head of the ram as symbols of the caducity, the coming back into being, the re-composition, and the rebirth of the sun-god (Billing, 2006, p. 56). The accompanying text gives an indication of the lifting of the sun-god and his disc on the hands of goddess Nut in the moment of his rising along the eastern mountains. According to this caption, the raised hands of goddess Nut serve as an abdomen, where the daily transformation and motion of the sun take place.

Meeks and Favard-Meeks (1996, p. 159) have demonstrated that the scene of goddess Nut in the Book of Caverns alludes to the sailing of the sun-god Re across the arms of goddess Nut. Furthermore, they have noticed that the human area on her uplifted hands symbolizes the riverbed, across which the dead sun passes from the western to the eastern mountains of heaven, where it shines as a disc in the next morning (Meeks & Favard-Meeks, 1996, 159). Hornung (1972, p. 373; 1999, p. 88) explained the four figures before the goddess as personifications of the transformations of the sun-god Re that leads him from his re-composition to his rebirth in the form of a newly-born child raised by two outstretched primeval arms emerging from the feet of goddess Nut. Meeks and Favard-Meeks (1996, p. 159) have seen in the two lower arms the arms of the earth that are opening to permit the sun to come out through them in the early morning. Hornung (1999, p. 88) and Billing (2006, p. 56) stated that the two motifs surrounding the figure of the sky-goddess Nut in this tableau represent the various stages of the regeneration of the sun, symbolize the sun-path, and form a circular motion related to the solar cycle, in

¹ The pictorial myth of the union between two creator gods of two genders was portrayed in the fifth underworld cave in the Book of Caverns. This mythical representation is marked by two gigantic figures facing each other and representing the sky-goddess Nut and an ithyphallic god, probably representing a combination of Geb-Osiris (Guilmant, 1907, pl. LXXXIX; Abitz, 1989, p. 35). In fact, the identification of the ithyphallic god in the Book of Caverns was a matter of debate. He was assimilated with god Geb by Piankoff (1944, p. 71) and designated as Osiris by Hornung (1972, pp. 380-381), Barguet (1976, p. 33), Maurice-Barberio (2010, p. 193), Werning (2011, p. 264), and Otto (1968, pp. 99-105). On the other hand, Meeks and Favard-Meeks (1996, p. 159) identified him as both Geb and Osiris. In any case, the latter ithyphallic figure, whether representing god Geb, god Osiris, or god Geb in an Osirian form, together with goddess Nut, symbolizes the combination between the sky, earth, and resurrection. Moreover, they emphasize the recovery of the bodily integrity of the creator god and the stimulation of his sex and fertile power. Thus, the events in the fifth subterranean cave in the Book of Caverns seem to take place between the earth and the sky, or, more specifically, at the meeting point between the earth and the sky, which is situated on the horizon (Meeks & Favard-Meeks, 1996, pp. 159-161).

which those behind her ascend and the others before her descend. As a conclusion, the whole composition symbolizes an abridged representation of the solar cycle and refers to the stages, through which the sun-god passes in order to come out of death and realize his revival as a sun-disc in the morning sky on the regenerative hands of goddess Nut (Billing, 2006, p. 59).

Another variant of the previous scene of the sky-goddess Nut standing in the same manner was portrayed in the Book of the Earth (**Evidence 11**). In the latter composition, the goddess elevates on her hands a sun-disc and a ram-headed bird soul of the dead sun (Figure 5). The

accompanying text alludes to the passing of the two solar images on her two  *drty*-hands. According to Maurice-Barberio (2010, p. 193), the core motif of this scene represents the idea that the sun-god enters the underworld as a soul and crosses it between the raised hands of goddess Nut in order to unite with his corpse and ensure his revivification. At the feet of the goddess, a crocodile and another smaller serpent are depicted rearing upward on their tails (Hornung, 1999, 98). Since the crocodile used to be turned into a solar friend during the twilight, Brunner-Traut (1980, p. 796) mentioned that the function of the crocodile and serpent here was to watch over the process of giving birth to the sun by the sky-goddess Nut, on whose two raised hands the ram-headed soul used to be transformed into a rejuvenated sun-disc.¹ Furthermore, Billing (2006, pp. 55-57) has concluded that this scene quotes from its similar version in the Book of Caverns the main theme of giving birth to the sun-disc on the hands of goddess Nut as a personification of the Egyptian sky.

It is now clear that the hands of goddess Nut contributed in one way or another to the occurrence of the daily cycle of the sun needed for the resurrection of the deceased king in turn (Zeman, 2009, pp. 49-50). It is through her ability to stretch her hands and lift the solar-disc above her head that the shining of the sun takes place every morning in the celestial world, as was also indicated in the closing scene of the Book of Gates (**Evidence 7**). The closing scene in the latter funerary composition represents goddess Nut stretching out her hands towards the sun-disc to receive it and make it visible in the morning sky (Figure 2). This concept is strengthened

¹ It is well known that the crocodile and serpent were generally known for their ambivalent dual-nature in both textual and iconographic evidences (Brunner-Traut, 1968, p. 36). However, their protective and procreative forces were of great interest to the ancient Egyptians in the religious context. They were symbols of fecundity (Piankoff, 1953, pp. 67-69; Wente, 1969, p. 88, no. 39; Doetsch-Amberger, 1987, p. 61, no. 130; Hornung, 1990, pp. 66-67; Abitz, 1995, pp. 34-35). The crocodile god Sobek, for example, was a symbol of regeneration and appeared on the amulets as a protector of the children (Hornung and Staehelin, 1976, pp. 123-125). The crocodile was also closely associated with the primordial water from which emerges the regenerated sun and this association motivated the choice of crocodile-headed guides for the last three hours of the night in the Book of the Night (Hornung, 1990, pp. 66-67). The mythological Mehen-serpent was also one of the many protectors of the sun-god Re during his nocturnal journey in the subterranean realm of the dead. He seems to have been known since the Archaic Period, when he was dedicated to a particular board game, assisting its players to travel along his coils and reach the symbolical area, where the sun-god lived and the dead would be able to join his eternal cycle of rebirth. The sun-god Re and the dead were usually guarded by him and encircled within his coils. During the most critical hour in the solar journey at midnight, when the sun-god had to fight his mythological archenemy Apophis, the protective role of the Mehen-serpent was clearly practiced in the Amduat. Furthermore, the Mehen-serpent was praised for his protection in the eleventh nocturnal hour, a few minutes before the raising of the sun-god Re in the eastern horizon at dawn (Hornung, 1998, p. 113; Teeter, 2003, p. 13). The role of the crocodile and serpent in the above-mentioned scene is considered a reflection of the positive relationship between the primordial forces of chaos and the regeneration of the sun-god. Their participation in the solar rejuvenation appears again in other scenes in the Books of the Amduat and the Earth. In the Book of the Earth, the crocodile Wenty appears to be giving birth to the sun and vomiting a ram-headed disc from his stomach (Piankoff, 1953, p. 69, no. 1; Roberson, 2007, pp. 226-227). At the end of the Amduat, the real miracle of rejuvenation takes place within the giant Nawserpent, which represents the primeval creative forces that swallow the already existing world every night in order to vomit it at dawn as a kind of rejuvenation of creation (Hornung, 1963, [2]: p. 190; Wiebach-Koepke, 2003, p. 186).

through the caption, which accompanies the scene and refers to the event of receiving the sun-god Re by goddess Nut.

- *The composite role of the hands of goddess Nut in resurrecting the dead humans and rebirthing the dead sun simultaneously*

It becomes clear that the early Old Kingdom fecund character of goddess Nut with long hair and droopy breasts that had been firstly prescribed in Utterances 548 and 697 of the Pyramid Texts was lately portrayed in iconography on the lids of several coffins and sarcophagi of late periods. In such representations, the upraised hands of the goddess considerably elevate the sun-disc above her head in reference to its rebirth (Figures 8-12). In this case, the figure of the sky-goddess Nut also embodies the concept of the sun-god Re coming out of her fecund body that was firstly described in Utterance 606 (Spell §1688b) of the Pyramid Texts and says:





“You are indeed Re, who comes out of Nut, (who) begets Re every day”.


(Sethe, 1910, p. 391; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 258; Faulkner, 1969, p. 250; Allen, 2013, [V]: PT 606, no. 16).

Noteworthy is also that the persistent depicting of the fecund figures of goddess Nut on the lids of the late coffins permitted not only the dead sun but also the deceased person to cross the underworld through her body in order to be renewed in the next world (Hawass, 2006, p. 83). Just like the sun, which rejuvenated every morning on the hands of the sky-goddess Nut, the deceased would also be able to brighten in heaven because he was indeed considered a loyal follower of the sun-god, and both have the same eternal fate in the next world.¹

It is worthy of attention that the Egyptians considered the figure of goddess Nut with

upraised hands elevating the sun-disc above her head as a personification of the  *zht*-sign for the horizon (Gardiner, 1927, pp. 489 Sign-list N 27, 550; Faulkner, 1962, p. 5; Erman & Grapow, 1971, [1]: p. 17: 12-23; Wilson, 1997, pp. 17-18; Hannig, 2003, pp. 16-17; Hannig, 2006, pp. 37-41). They probably compared elevating the sun on the two hands of the goddess and shining the sun between the two mountains of the horizon (Bonnet, 1952, p. 306; Wilkinson, 1992, pp. 133-35). In this case, the state of the radiating sun on the two upraised hands of the goddess might be conceived as a mimic of the two mountains of the horizon, between which the sun rises every morning. Consequently, such late iconographic figures of the fertile goddess Nut demonstrate the close relation between her two raised hands and the

zht-sign  for the horizon and both could be viewed as symbols of the birthplace of the sun at the time of sunrise. This connection was also clearly emphasized during the Third Intermediate Period, when a text inscribed on the lid of the coffin of Masaharta in the Egyptian


Museum (CG 61027) indicated his resurrection on the extended  ‘wy-hands of goddess Nut wherever he went (**Evidence 14**) in reference to embodying his horizon on her hands.


Twin-Goddesses Isis and Nephthys


The resurrection of the dead people on the hands of the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys could only be understood metaphorically through several textual attestations. For example, in Utterance 702 (Spell §2200a-c) of the Pyramid Texts, they were responsible for upraising the deceased king to the eastern sky, where he would be able to join the heavenly realm of the gods (**Evidence 4**). Although the latter utterance did not include a direct reference to his lifting to the sky on the hands of the twin-goddesses Isis and Nephthys, it gives a hint to that. In this

¹ See for examples: Utterances 467 (Spell §888a) and 650 (Spell §1835a-b) of the Pyramid Texts (Sethe, 1908, p. 495; Sethe, 2010, p. 449; Mercer, 1952, [1]: pp. 162, 276; Faulkner, 1969, pp. 156, 268; Allen, 2013, [IV]: PT 467, no. 1, [V]: PT 650, nos. 8-9).

case, the indirect allusion is emphasized through tracing the traditional way of writing the verb

 *fzi* (Gardiner, 1927, pp. 443, 566; Faulkner, 1962, p. 97; Erman & Grapow, 1971, [1]: p. 572: 6-14; Wilson, 1997, p. 387; Hannig, 2003, pp. 486-487; Hannig, 2006, pp. 961-963), which is written in the utterance to determine the act of uplifting the deceased king to heaven. The verb is usually written with the sign of a man lifting one hand to

stead a basket on his head  (Gardiner, 1927, p. 443, Sign-list A 9), as an indication of

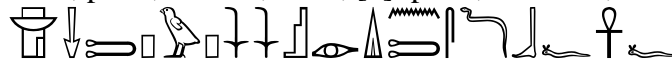
employing the hand in the elevation act. Furthermore, the derivative  *fzi*, in reference to the one who carries or elevates something or someone (Erman & Grapow, 1971, [1]: p. 574: 5), is often accompanied by a determinative of a man upraising his both hands to indicate the role of the hand in practicing the elevation process.

Rising the dead with the help of the twin-goddesses Isis and Nephthys could also be imagined through their participation in bringing god Osiris to life after his death. In Egyptian Mythology, they were categorized among the life-giving deities. Moreover, they were able to treat the death of god Osiris and bring not only him but also all the justified dead into healing transfigured spirits. This concept finds its echo in the funerary and religious texts, as, for example, in Utterance 219 (Spells §172a, 174a), which refers to their function in giving life to the deceased king and reads:


(3)st sn.t pw p(w)-nn Wsir di.n.t sdb.f 'nh.f

“Isis, this your brother (is) this one here, Osiris, whom you brought to life and made alive”.

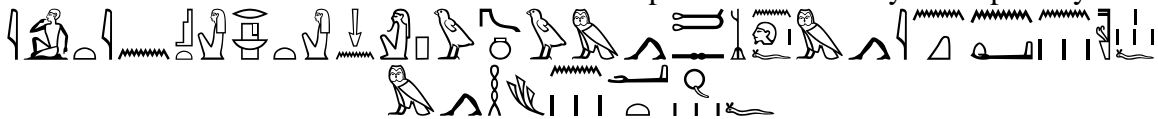
(Sethe, 1908, p. 97; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 64; Faulkner, 1969, p. 47).


Nb(t)-hwt sn.t pw p(w)-nn Wsir di.n.t sdb.f 'nh.f

“Nephthys, this your brother (is) this one here, Osiris, whom you brought to life and made alive”.

(Sethe, 1908, p. 98; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 64; Faulkner, 1969, p. 47).

The role of the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys in the resurrection of god Osiris also continued during the Middle Kingdom, as was attested in Spell 74 of the Coffin Texts, which discusses their role in the elevation of his head and the re-composition of his body. The spell says:

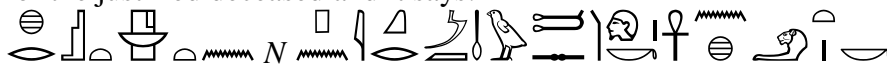


it in 3st r Nbt-hwt sn pw nw mi ts.n tp.f mi ink.n ksw.f mi hn.n 'wt.f

“Isis tells to Nephthys: This (is) our brother. Come! (that) we (may) upraise his head. Come! (that) we (may) unite his bones. Come! (that) we (may) reset his limbs”.

(De Buck, 1935, [1]: p. 306d-f; Faulkner, 1973, [1]: p. 69).

Similarly, Spell 230 of the Coffin Texts alludes to the same role of the two goddesses in the rejuvenation of the justified deceased and it says:


hr(w 3)st Nbt-hwt n N pn ikr m3'-hrw ts tp.k 'nh h3t(y).k

“Isis and Nephthys tell to this N, the virtuous and justified one. (May) your head be raised (and) your heart live”.

(De Buck, 1947, [3]: p. 298f-h; Faulkner, 1973, [1]: p. 183).

The roles of the two life-giving goddesses Isis and Nephthys were not only restricted to the elevation of god Osiris and the justified dead in the hereafter, but they were also in charge of rejuvenating the sun-disc on their hands in iconography. Handling the sun-disc between the

twin-goddesses, sometimes on the deck of the boats of night and day, was a very common motif in the celestial context (Schäfer, 1928, p. 112; Grapow & Schäfer, 1937, p. 100; Thomas, 1956, pp. 65-79; Parker, Goyon, & Leclant, 1979, pl. 21; Assmann, 1983, p. 95; Roulin, 1996, [1]: pp. 346-347; [2]: pl. XX; Cooney, 2000, p. 26, no. 82). This motif was firstly inscribed in Utterance 222 (Spells §210a-c) of the Pyramid Texts, which emphasizes the life cycle of the king and his daily transformation from the night bark of Nephthys to the diurnal boat of Isis as follows:



pri.k hzi.k hziw.k hn' Nb(t)-hw(t) snkw(i) hn' mskt pri.k hziw.k pri.k hn' (3)st wbnw.k hn' m'ndt

“You come forth, you fall, you set with Nephthys, in darkness with the night boat. You come forth, you fall, you rise with Isis, (so that) you shine with the diurnal boat”.

(Sethe, 1908, p. 121; Mercer, 1952, [1]: p. 68; Faulkner, 1969, p. 50; Allen, 2013, [II]: PT 222, nos. 35-36).

Transforming the sun-disc from death to vitality on the hands of the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys was distinctly attested in iconography, particularly during the New Kingdom. A remarkable example is attested in the closing scene of the Book of Gates (**Evidence 7**) and in a vignette portrayed in the company of a hymn announcing the sun-god Re at his rising in Medinet Habu Temple (**Evidence 12**). In the Book of Gates, they face each other and elevate the solar scarab on their hands to deliver him to the sky of goddess Nut in the form of a sun-disc (Figure 2). In the solar hymn at Medinet Habu, they again stand opposite each other in a

complete human form under the $\overline{\text{pt}}$ sign for the sky and raise their hands up with a solar-disc. In the latter example, they are also shown in the company of the fertility goddess of childbirth, Taweret, whose pendulous breasts and large belly emphasize her maternal aspects and ensure the daily birth of the sun (Figure 6) (The Epigraphic Survey, 1963, [6/ 2]: pl. 420B upper middle; Houser-Wegner, 2002, p. 352; Pinch, 2002, p. 142).

In the last hour of the night in the Book of the Night, there is another reference to the role of the elevation of the sun-disc on the hands of goddesses Isis and Nephthys (**Evidence 10**). In the latter religious composition, they stand in a complete human form above the prows of the two solar barks of day and night and adjacent to the legs of the sky-goddess Nut and they elevate the solar-disc on their hands (Figure 4). Most probably, this placement was an application to the myth of enabling the sun to travel from the west to the east, where it would shine after opening the thighs of the sky-goddess to give birth to the solar infant (Piankoff, 1934, p. 57; Westendorf, 1984, pp. 1100-1103). Scholars saw in the last nocturnal hour a witness to the transformation of god Atum into a regenerated being: the youthful Khepri on the hands of Isis and Nephthys, whose function centered on keeping the sun in a constant motion between the barks of day and night (Piankoff, 1942, p. 81; Roulin, 1996, [1]: p. 346; Hornung, 1999, pp. 125, 134, fig. 84). Thus, the whole composition points to the leaving of the sun to the nocturnal boat and its embarkation in the diurnal one. This situation was clearly emphasized in a text written at the end of the Book of the Night and runs as follows:



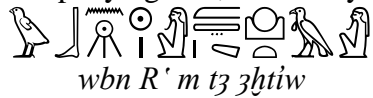
R' pri.f m dwzt

“Re, (when) he comes out of the Netherworld”.

(Roulin, 1996, [1]: pp. 156, 335).

Another scene of the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys uplifting the solar-disc aloft is depicted at the beginning of the Book of the Day, just beneath the vulva of the sky-goddess Nut (**Evidence 13**). This scene represents the motif of transforming the figure of a solar infant

enclosed within a sun-disc from the night bark to take his seat in the diurnal boat. (Figure 7) (Piankoff, 1942, Pl. I; Hornung, 1999, p. 134, Fig. 84; Müller-Roth, 2008, Tafeln I-II). According to Piankoff (1942, pp. 2-3) and Müller-Roth (2008, pp. 100-101, 467, 470), this spherical change takes place at sunrise, which is understood as the transition between the two separate areas of day and night and precipitated here in the form of a bark exchange on the hands of the twin-goddesses. This heavenly event, which resulted in the daily rising of the sun at dawn, was described in the accompanying text, which says:



“Ra shines in the land of the inhabitants of the horizon”.

Goddesses Menkeret

It seems that rising from the dead was a revival act equivalent to the elevation of the sun-disc aloft at the end of its night journey and both events had to take place at the same time. The motif of the rebirth of the sun on the hands of the goddesses was considerably portrayed in iconography since the time of the New Kingdom. However, the gesture of raising the dead on the divine hands was rarely applied in the three dimensional art of the New Kingdom, when carrying the dead aloft on the hands of the anthropoid deity became a remarkable theme supporting the concept of the rebirth of the dead in the next world. The evidence for this gesture in the sculpture is clearly determined in the group statue of goddess Menkeret carrying King Tutankhamun above her head (Figure 1) (**Evidence 6**). This group statue renders the rejuvenation concept and symbolizes the regeneration of the deceased king in the hereafter by uplifting him on the hand of a goddess related to the concept of resurrection in eternity (Abitz, 1979, p. 72; Abitz, 1982, p. 54). Radwan (2003, p. 334) conceived Menkert as the mother goddess who brings the dead king to new life by elevating him on her hand. He also viewed the red crown above the head of the deceased king as an indication of his rebirth and explained that the gesture of his elevation in this case probably guarantees his resurrection and at the same time confirms his divine nature (Radwan, 2003, p. 335). Abitz (1979, p.76) concluded that goddess Menkeret was probably a manifestation of goddess Sekhmet and both of them

were responsible for raising the \uparrow *sh*m-divine image/ statue of the deceased to heaven to ensure his resurrection (Erman & Grapow, 1971, [4]: p. 244: 13-17; Wilson, 1997, pp. 903-904). Abitz (1979, pp. 70-71) added that a large number of the carried figures of goddess Menkeret in the same regenerative context were also known from the depictions of the funeral processions, especially in the Theban private tombs of the Middle and New Kingdoms (Figure 15).¹ Thus, it is apparent that goddess Menkeret was closely associated with the dogma of the hands rising in the otherworld that was summoned in the funerals of both the royals and the individuals through carrying the statue of either the deceased or even the figure of the goddess. The caption on the group statue of Menkeret and Tutankamun identifies the deceased king and confirms his justification after death as follows:



ntr-nfr nb-hprw-R' m3'-hrw

“The Beautiful God, Lord of Appearances of Re (Tutankhamun), justified”.




(Abitz, 1979, p. 71; Beinlich & Saleh, 1989, p. 134: 296a).

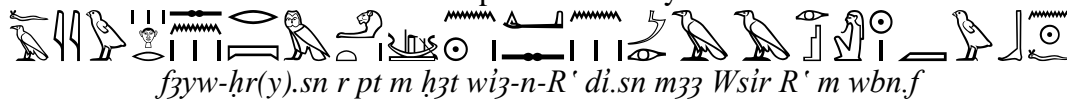
Generally, the title *ntr-nfr* \uparrow i.e. “Beautiful God” (Gardiner, 1927, p. 75; Faulkner, 1962, p. 142; Erman & Grapow, 1971, [2]: pp. 361: 10-362: 3; Wilson, 1997, p. 558; Leitz, 2002, [4]: pp. 428-429; Hannig, 2003, p. 682; Hannig, 2006, pp. 1405-1409; Mathieu, 2010, pp. 100-102;

¹ Stela of Abkaou in the Louvre Musuem C 15, Tomb of Amenmehat TT 82, and Tomb of Antefoker and Senet TT 60 (Abitz, 1979, pp. 70-71).

Hays, 2011, pp. 120-121; Hays, 2012, [1]: pp. 167-174; Smith, 2014, p. 91; Smith, 2017, p. 137) was employed as an epithet for the deified kings. In this regard, carrying the deceased king, Tutankhamun, on the hands of a goddess closely related to the resurrection of the dead, together with identifying him with a divine title, links his name with divinity and his eternal fate with the gods.

The previous theme of carrying the child king aloft in reference to his rebirth in the next world has another iconographic parallel in the Books of the Dead and Night (Figures 16-17). The midnight in the Book of the Night witnessed the start of the rejuvenation process. The rebirth tableau in the middle of the composition includes a scene composed of three superimposed characters in complete human forms, symbolizing regeneration (Figure 16) (Piankoff, 1942, pl. VI; Hornung, 1972, p. 490, abb. 113; Roulin, 1996, [1]: fig. IX; Hornung, 1999, p. 130, fig. 77). The first character is a man standing and raising his hands before his face; the central personage is inclined on the back with bent legs and raised arms; and the third figure lies on his stomach with a lock of hair in front of his face, folded legs, and upraised hands. Roulin (1996, [1]: pp. 218, 221-222) compared this tableau with the vignette of Chapter 168 (A) in the Book of the Dead (Figure 17). In the vignette of this chapter, the hands of a standing figure are also shown lifting a child on his shoulder (Naville, 1886, [1]: pl. CLXXXV; Faulkner, 1985, p. 167; Taylor, 2010, p. 150, no. 68; Lucarelli, Müller-Roth, & Wüthrich, 2012, pp. 126-28). It seems that the identical portraits of the Books of the Dead and Night aimed to ensure the rising of the dead. The accompanying text to the rebirth scene in the Book of the Night describes the

creation process in one word saying    km3 i.e. “to create” (Roulin, 1996, [1]: p. 83).¹ Similarly, the caption in the Book of the Dead confirms that the position of carrying the dead on the shoulders evokes the creation process and says:



“The ones who carry (those who are) on them to the sky at the prow of the boat of Re; (may) they (enable) Osiris (N) to see Re at his rising”.

(Budge, 1910, [3]: p. 36II; Allen, 1960, pp. 162-163; Faulkner, 1972, p. 126; Piankoff, 1974, p. 54, pl. 19).




Seeing the sun-god Re while shining in the sky is a distinct sign of everlasting life and rejuvenation. Thus, the two captions in two religious compositions of the Dead and Night that were written in the company of the symbolic regeneration gestures of personages supporting the newborn figures on their hands emphasize the act of rising from the dead and the resurrecting of the departed ones.

Noteworthy is also that, the regenerative gesture of goddess Menkeret in the group statue (JdE 60716) with one upraised hand before her body might be inspired by the theme of the union between the soul of the sun and the body of god Osiris at midnight in the Book of the Amduat (Figure 18) (Piankoff, 1954, p. 269, fig. 79; Hornung, 1963, [2]: p. 119; Hornung, 1972, pp. 115, 117, abb. 6; Hornung, 1998, p. 86; Hornung, 1999, pp. 37, 47, fig. 19; Schweizer, 2010, pp. 119, 121). The critical moment of the Solar-Osirian unity that was depicted on the middle register of the sixth nocturnal hour in the Amduat witnessed the beginning of the revival of the dead sun. In this moment of unification, the corpse of god Osiris was not depicted as a mummy but as a normal body with one raised hand surmounted by a beetle, summoning a new rejuvenated life. The regenerative attitude of the Osirian body in the Amduat was discussed by Hornung (1998, p. 94), who viewed, in the one hand before the face, the awakening of the idea of rising the dead from the sleep of death. It seems that the same attitude was also represented

¹ For the meaning of this term, see: (Gardiner, 1927, p. 596; Faulkner, 1962, p. 278; Erman and Grapow, 1971, [5]: pp. 34: 3-36: 5; Wilson, 1997, p. 1056; Hannig, 2003, p. 1334; Hannig, 2006, pp. 2517-2520).

in the ancient Egyptian funerals, in which the women could raise their hands before their faces as if they were appealing to the gods for the return of their dead to life (Figure 19) (Naville, 1886, [1]: pls. II, III, IV). Even the twin-goddesses Isis and Nephthys are sometimes depicted on the coffins, raising their hands before their faces in a mourning attitude to assist the dead in the process of rebirth (Figure 20) (Roth, 1993, p. 66; Piankoff & Rambova, 1957, [1]: p. 57, fig. 42).

Results

In spite of referring to carrying the deceased king to the sky by goddesses Isis and Nephthys in the Pyramid Texts (**Evidence 4**), goddess Nut was the only anthropoid female deity who directly employed her hands in the rebirth of the dead in the textual context. The  'hand and its dual form as the two  'wy-hands were the common type of her divine hands, on which the resurrections of the dead kings (**Evidences 1-3, 8**), individuals (**Evidences 5, 14-15**), and sun (**Evidence 9**) were realized since the time of the Old Kingdom and up to the Late Period. On the other hand, the  *drty*-hands of goddess Nut were only involved in the rebirth of the sun (**Evidence 11**) during the New Kingdom.

The role of the divine hands of goddesses Nut, Isis, Nephthys, and Menkeret in realizing the rebirth of the dead could be deducted as follows:

1. During the Old Kingdom, the three goddesses Nut, Isis, and Nephthys were in charge of elevating the deceased king on their hands to reach the eastern sky, where he would be resurrected, as was indicated in the textual context of the Pyramid Texts (**Evidences 1-4**).
2. During the Middle and New Kingdoms as well as the Third Intermediate Period, goddess Nut maintained her role as the one who is responsible for the resurrection of the dead on her hands. Meanwhile, her divine hands were involved in ensuring the rebirth of the king (**Evidence 8**) and the individuals (**Evidences 5, 14**) in the afterlife.
3. A different atmosphere prevailed in the statuary during the time of King Tutankhamun, when goddess Menkeret crushed the exclusive resurrection of the kings on the hands of the creator-goddesses, Nut, Isis, and Nephthys that had been previously spread in the textual context. Thus, she became the first goddess to raise the deceased up to announce his resurrection on her hands in the ancient Egyptian statuary. (**Evidence 6**).
4. The New Kingdom also certified the rebirth of the sun on the hands of the three creator-goddesses Nut, Isis, and Nephthys in iconography (**Evidences 7, 9-13**). Meanwhile, the rebirth of the sun took place on the hands of the three goddesses Isis, Nephthys, and Nut in the same scene (**Evidence 7**).
5. The iconography of the New Kingdom in addition to the Third Intermediate and Late Periods also gave great reference to the function of the divine hands of goddess Nut in the rebirth of the sun (**Evidences 9, 11, 15**).

Conclusion

The return to life without the natural birth but on the hands of the goddesses was a common theme in the ancient Egyptian texts, iconography, and statuary. The revival of the sun, kings, and individuals on the divine hands of the major goddesses in the ancient Egyptian religion was one of the sacred patterns of rejuvenation extended throughout the Dynastic Period. Three major creator-goddesses functioned to ensure the rebirth of the dead on their hands, including goddesses Nut, Isis, and Nephthys. In addition, goddess Menkeret was the most prominent divine personification of the resurrection and granted the renewal of the dead on her divine hands.

In the royal context, the rebirth of the dead kings on the hands of goddess Nut attested for the first time in Utterances 485 and 548 (Spell §1036b and 1344a-1345a) of the Pyramid Texts during the reign of King Pepi I. The same role also extended during the reign of King Pepi II

in Utterance 697 (Spells §2171a-72a) of the Pyramid Texts. Moreover, the same role was also played by the same goddess on the sarcophagus of King Seti I (SM M470). Based on the kinship of the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys with their mother, goddesses Nut, it seems that she affected their work to achieve the rebirth of the deceased king on their hands. The role of the twin-goddesses was attested since the time of King Pepi II of the Old Kingdom, as was inscribed in Utterance 702 (Spell §2200a-c) of the Pyramid Texts, which indicates the delivery of the deceased king to the eastern sky with their assistance. In the New Kingdom, the situation slightly changed and the rebirth of the king on divine female hands started to occur in iconography. During the reign of King Tutankhamun, the hands of goddesses Nut, Isis, and Nephthys were replaced in the royal statuary by those of goddess Menkeret, whose responsibility was to raise the deceased king up to resurrect (JdE 60716).

In the private context, the revivification of the dead individuals on the divine female hand was ensured for the first time on that of goddess Nut in spell 803 of the Coffin Texts. She also played a significant role in ensuring their rebirth on her hands during the Third Intermediate Period, as indicated on the coffin lid of Masaharta (CG 61027).

In the solar context, the renewal of the dead sun was ensured in iconography on the hands of goddesses Isis, Nephthys, and Nut. Examples of their roles can be seen in the Valley of the Kings, particularly in the Books of Gates and Caverns of King Seti I (SM M470 and Osireion and KV 9). Another representation of the same context appeared in the Book of the Earth (KV 9 and KV 11) slightly later, particularly during the time of King Ramesses III. The same role was also extended as long as the Third Intermediate and Late Periods, particularly on the interior of several coffin/ sarcophagus lids (for example, JdE 87297, inv. Cat. 2220/02, M. 30/ Inv. AMM 1, NME 816, AMM 5-e, and D 9/ N 345). As in the case of the royal context, it seems that goddesses Isis and Nephthys inherited the same role of goddess Nut in elevating the dead sun on their hands in the Book of the Night during the Nineteenth, Twentieth, and Twenty-Fifth Dynasties (Osireion, KV 9, and TT 132). An identical function was repeated once again during the Twentieth Dynasty in a hymn heralding the sun-god Re at his rising (Side room (18) at Medinet Habu). The Book of the Day also witnessed the rebirth of the sun on their hands during the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Dynasties (KV 9 and NRT-1).

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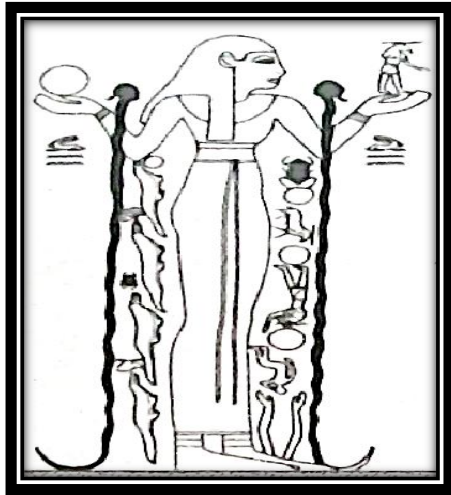
Figures



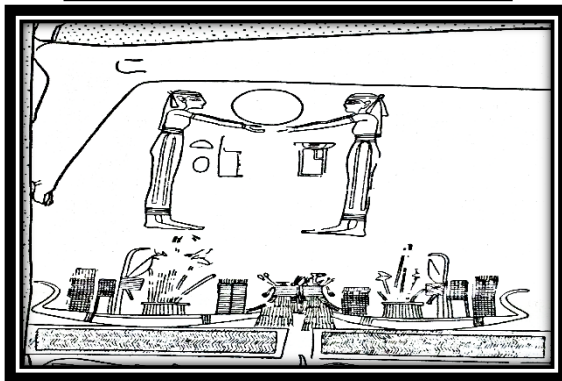
(Figure 1) A group statue representing the hands of goddess Menkeret elevating King Tutankhamun. The Egyptian Museum (JdE 60716.) After: (El-Shahawy & Atiya, 2005, p. 239, fig. 151).



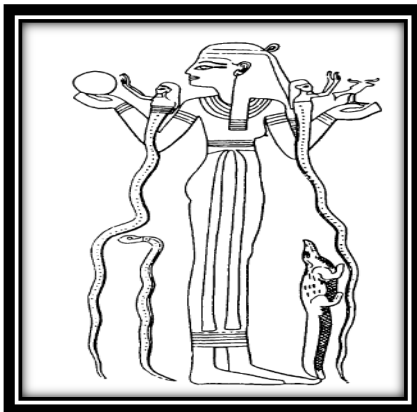
(Figure 2) A scarab pushing forward a sun-disc to be received by the sky-goddess Nut in the moment of creation. The closing scene of the Book of Gates/ Osireion and SM M470. After: (Brugsch, 1885-1890, p. 216).



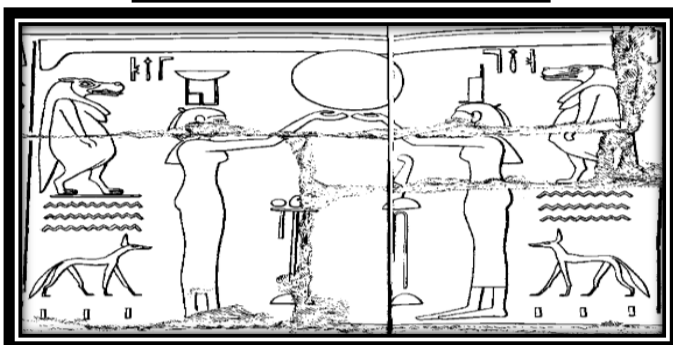
(Figure 3) The sky-goddess Nut standing with upraised arms in the fifth underworld cavern of the underworld.
The Book of Caverns/ Osireion and KV 9.
After: (Werning, 2011, [1]: tafel XI).



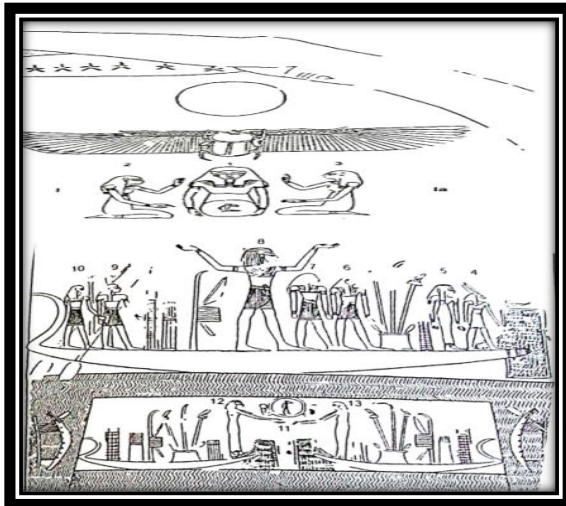
(Figure 4) The twin-goddesses Isis and Nephthys elevating the sun-disc at his rising.
The closing scene of the Book of the Night/ Osireion, KV 9 and TT 132.
After: (Roulin, 1996, [2]: pl. XX).



(Figure 5) The sky-goddess Nut standing with upraised arms.
The Book of the Earth/ KV 11 and KV 9.
After: (Piankoff, 1953, pl. D).



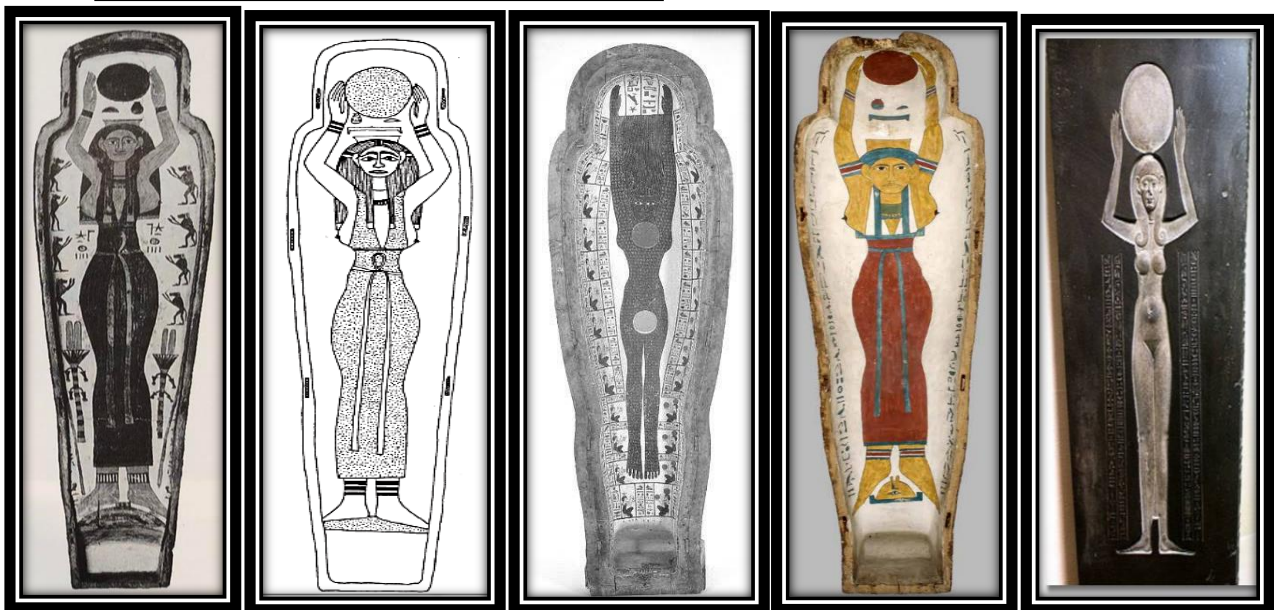
(Figure 6) The twin-goddesses Isis and Nephthys upraising the sun-disc at his rising.
Temple of Medinet Habu.
After: (The Epigraphic Survey, 1963, pl. 420B upper middle).



(Figure 7) The two goddesses Isis and Nephthys elevating the solar-disc beneath the vulva of the sky-goddess Nut.

The beginning of the Book of the Day/ KV 9 and NRT-1.

After: (Müller-Roth, 2008, tafeln I-II).



(Figures 8-12) The sky-goddess Nut standing with outstretched body, long hair, bare ponderous breasts, and arms raising the sun-disc.

Interior coffin lids of Hetepamun (left: no. 1015,) Tareres (middle left: inv. Cat. 2220/02,) Coffin of Inamunnefnebu, (middle: M. 30/ Inv. AMM 1,) the coffin of the Amon priest Bakenren (middle right: NME 816,) and the sarcophagus of Djedhor (right: D 9/ N 345.)

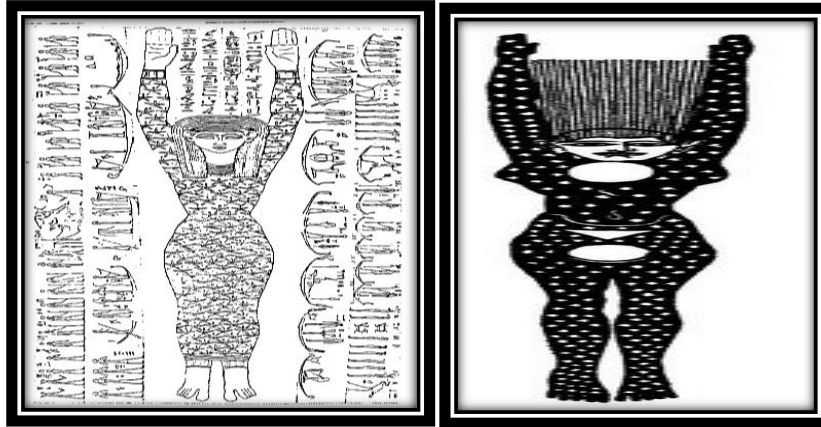
(Left) After: (Assmann, 2003, fig. 18).

(Middle Left) After: (Schroer, 2018, [4]: p. 517: 1515 right).

(Middle) After: (Taylor, 1989, p. 58, pl. 47).

(Middle Right) After: Dodson, 2015, p. 36: Cat.14A right).

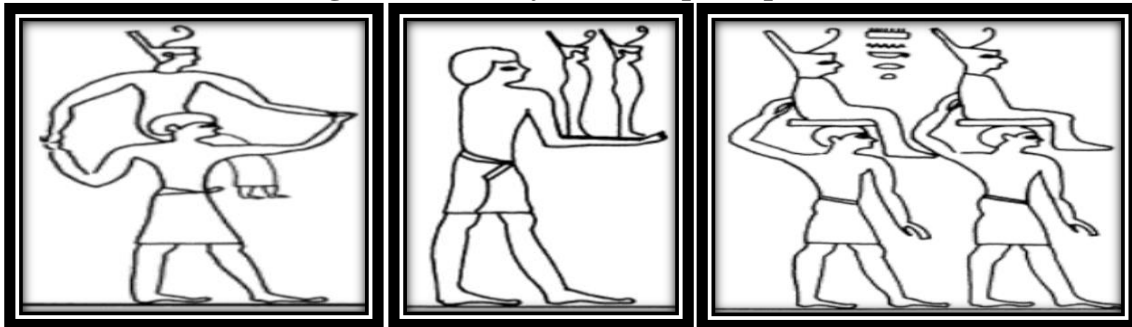
(Right) After: (Bari, 1990, p. 198).



(Figures 13-14) Representations of the sky-goddess Nut standing with outstretched body, long hair, bare ponderous breasts, and upraised arms. Interior of sarcophagus lid of King Psusennes I (left: JdE 87297) and coffin lid of Peftjauneith (right: AMM 5-e.)

(Left) After: (Relke, 2001, p. 317, fig. 6: 4).

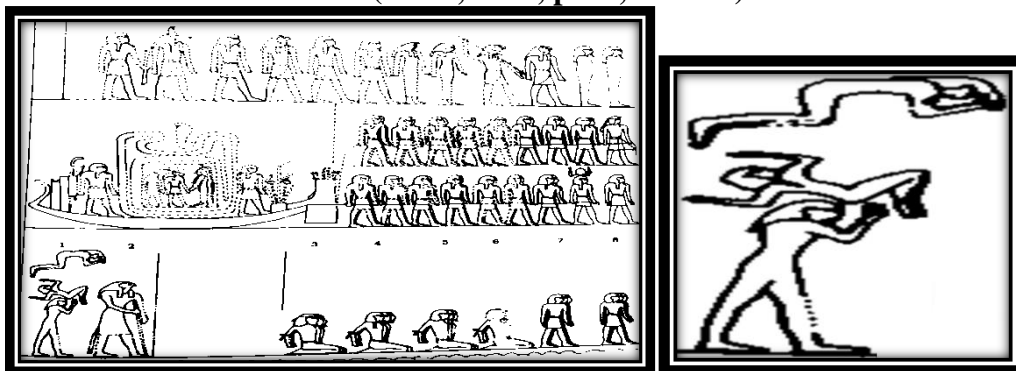
(Right) After: (Taylor, 1989, p. 60, pl. 50).



(Figure 15) Carrying goddess Menkeret in the funerals of the dead.

Louvre C 15 (left,) TT 82 (middle,) and TT 60 (right.)

After: (Abitz, 1979, p. 70, abb. 12).



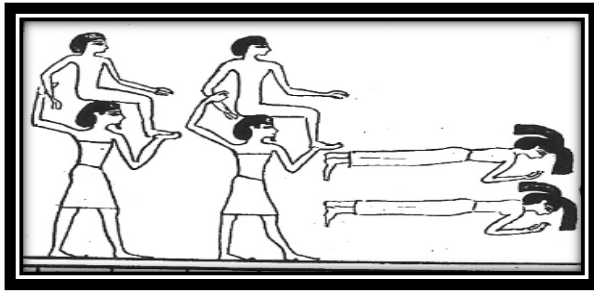
(Figure 16) (Left) Diagram of the seventh hour of the night.

The Book of the Night/ KV 9.

(Right) Detail of the regeneration process at midnight.

The Book of the Night/ KV 9.

After: (Roulin, 1996, [1]: fig. IX).



(Figure 17) The regeneration of the raised dead.

The Book of the Dead/ Chapter 168

A.

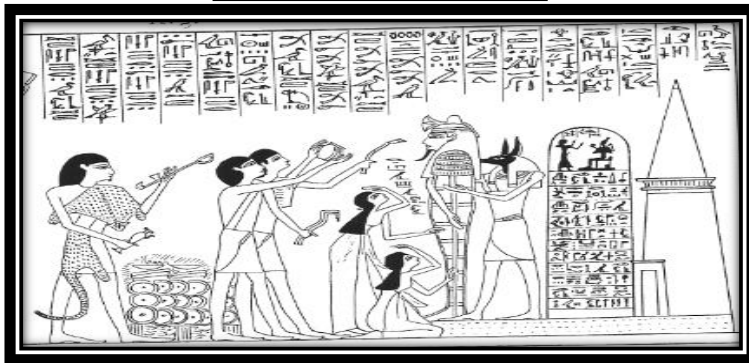
After: (Navelle, 1886, [1]: pl. CLXXXV).



(Figure 18) The union between the soul of the sun and the body of god Osiris the sixth nocturnal hour.

The Book of the Amduat

After: (Hornung, 1999, p. 47, fig. 19).

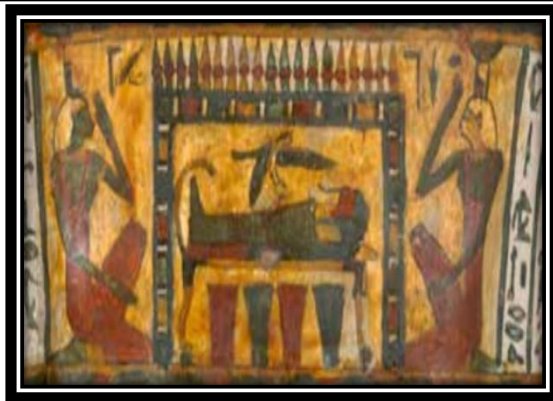


(Figure 19) Raising the hands of the relatives of the deceased before their faces in the funeral.

The Book of the Dead/ Chapter 168

A.

After: (Navelle, 1886, pl. II).


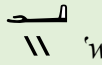
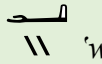



(Figure 20) Goddesses Isis and Nephthys raising one hand before their faces in an attitude of mourning the dead.

Egyptian Museum in Stockholm (NME 816.)

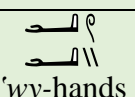
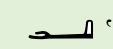
After: (Dodson, 2015, p. 34: Cat.14.A upper right).

Table 1: Chronological summary of the goddesses, who were involved in ensuring the resurrection of the dead king, individual, or the sun on their hands in the textual and iconographic context.

Evidence no.	Source	Date	Context	Involved Goddesses	Hand Type	Depicted Hand Gesture	Deceased Identification
1	Utterance 485 (Spell §1036b)/ Pyramid Texts	Sixth Dynasty	Textual	Nut	 'hand	–	King Pepi I
2	Utterance 548 (Spells §1344a-45a)/ Pyramid Texts	Sixth Dynasty	Textual	Nut	 'wy-hands	–	King Pepi I
3	Utterance 697 (Spells §2171a-72a)/ Pyramid Texts	Sixth Dynasty	Textual	Nut	 'wy-hands	–	King Pepi II
4	Utterance 702 (Spell §2200a-c)/ Pyramid Texts	Sixth Dynasty	Textual	Isis and Nephthys	–	–	King Pepi II
5	Spell 803/ Coffin Texts/ Interior Coffin of Sesnebef	Thirteenth Dynasty	Textual	Nut	 'hand	–	Sesnebef
6	Group statue of King Tutankhamun and Goddess Menkeret/ Egyptian Museum (JdE 60716)	Eighteenth Dynasty	Iconographic	Menkeret	–	The left hand is upraised before the body under the legs of the elevated king and the right hand is elevated behind the body to support his back	King Tutankhamun
7	Closing scene/ The Book of Gates	Nineteenth Dynasty	Iconographic	Isis, Nephthys, and Nut	–	Two hands stretched before	Dead Sun

How would you Resurrect? Pattern of Rebirth on the Hands of the Goddesses in Ancient Egypt

Evidence no.	Source	Date	Context	Involved Goddesses	Hand Type	Depicted Hand Gesture	Deceased Identification
						the body to receive the sun	
8	Text accompanying the figure of goddess Nut	Nineteenth Dynasty	Textual	Nut	'wy-hands	–	King Seti I
9	Scene of goddess Nut	Nineteenth & Twentieth Dynasties	Textual & Iconographic	Nut	'wy-hands	Two hands stretched beside the body and upraised a miniature figure of the ram-headed sun-god and a solar-disc	Dead Sun
10	Closing scene/ the Book of the Night	Nineteenth, Twentieth & Twenty-Fifth Dynasties	Iconographic	Isis and Nephthys	–	Two hands stretched before the body and transferred the solar-disc from the nocturnal to the diurnal barges	Dead Sun
11	Scene of goddess Nut/ The Book of the Earth	Twentieth Dynasty	Textual & Iconographic	Nut	'drty-hands	Two hands stretched beside the body and uplifted a sun-disc and a ram-headed bird soul of the dead sun	Dead Sun
12	Scene accompanying a hymn heralding the sun-god Re at his rising/	Twentieth Dynasty	Iconographic	Isis and Nephthys	–	Two hands elevated before the body and	Dead Sun

Evidence no.	Source	Date	Context	Involved Goddesses	Hand Type	Depicted Hand Gesture	Deceased Identification
	Chapel of Re/ Medinet Habu Temple					upraised a sun-disc	
13	Prologue/ the Book of the Day	Twentieth & Twenty-Second Dynasties	Iconographic	Isis and Nephthys	–	Two hands stretched before the body and transferred the solar-disc from the nocturnal to the diurnal barges	Dead Sun
14	Coffin lid/ Egyptian Museum (CG 61027)	Twenty-First Dynasty	Textual	Nut	 'wy-hands	–	Masaharta
15	Lids of coffins and sarcophagi/ Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JdE 87297) & University of Heidelberg in Berlin (no. 1015) & Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Turin (inv. Cat. 2220/02) & Royal Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (M. 30/ Inv. AMM 1) & Egyptian Museum in Stockholm (NME 816) & Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (AMM 5-e) & Louvre Museum (D 9/ N 345)	Twenty-First, Twenty-Fifth, Twenty-Sixth & Thirtieth Dynasties	Textual (seldom) & Iconographic	Nut	 -hand (Louvre. D 9/ N 345)	Two hands upraised above the head and elevated a sun-disc aloft	Dead Sun