

# Horus “*hry w3d.f*” as a Protector God

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## 1 Introduction

The god “Horus” was a falcon deity, worshiped in many cult centers under different forms according to different and numerous mythical and geographical events<sup>1</sup>. “Buto” was his original cult center where he was raised in the Delta marshes and was closely in Lower Egypt associated with the papyrus plant that was grown there.

One of his forms connecting him with the (*w3d*) plant or papyrus is “Horus *hry w3d.f*” (Horus who is upon his papyrus stalk/column). In this form Horus is shown as a falcon perched upon a column in the form of a papyrus plant<sup>2</sup>. This form of Horus (*hry w3d.f*) was first mentioned in the Coffin Text<sup>3</sup>, later in the Book of the Dead<sup>4</sup> and continued to be known until the Greco-Roman period<sup>5</sup>.

Horus was raised in the papyrus marshes and when he became old enough to face Seth, he flew to the top of a papyrus stalk to announce that he was ready to rule<sup>6</sup>. This development in his growth can be noticed in the scenes from the Mammisis of the Ptolemaic temples (Fig. 1 a-b-c).

We may go back with this aspect of Horus to the king Narmer’s Palette, where he is seen standing upon some papyrus plants representing the topographical feature of the Delta. In the scene Horus is

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[Note] Dr. Salwa Kamel talked under the title of “The Temple of Abydos” on the Seminar and she gave us this new paper instead of her lecture.

1 RÄRG, 307-314; W. Schenkel, “Horus,” in: *LÄ III*, 14-26; E. S. Meltzer, “Horus,” in: *Oxford Encyclopedia II*, 2001, 119-122; *LGG V*, 230-237.

2 S. Morenz and J. Schubert, *Der Gott auf der Blume*, 1954, 64; H. Schlögl, *Der Sonnengott auf der Blüte: Eine Ägyptische Kosmogonie des Neuen Reiches*, in: *AH 5*, Genève, 1977, 15.

3 *CT II*, 348 a.

4 *BD*, 112.

“Spell for knowing the Souls of Pe by the deceased.”

“*hpr.n.f n hr hry w3d.f*

*iw.i rh.kwi b3w p hr pw imsty pw hpy pw.*”

“It happened for Horus who is upon his papyrus-column, I know the powers of Pe; it is Horus, it is Imsety, it is Hapy.”

5 *Edfou I*, 273, (16), 249 (2), 258 (18), 265 (11-12), 55 (12), 182 (44), 538 (5), I, 563 (11), *Edfou II*, 23 (105), *Edfou VI*, 334 (2), Wilson, *PTL*, 204; *LGG V*, 275-276.

6 Wilson, *PTL*, 206.

helping the king in controlling the people of north<sup>7</sup>.

As victorious god he became a very prominent god and he had his own priesthood. His name was registered on a kneeling statue of his priest (*Wsr-nht*) from the Ptolemaic Period (Chicago 10243)<sup>8</sup>.

This form of Horus upon his papyrus column may be related to the 17th day in the third season “*pṛt*,” in which the plants give their flowers; Horus looked like the flower that came out from the papyrus<sup>9</sup>. In some scenes the symbol of the god is held up as an emblem in the hands of the priest’s especially in harvest ceremonies and festivals. So we are wondering here if Horus *hry w3d.f* is a god or just an emblem. Horus *hry w3d.f* seems to have a very prominent role as a separate deity and he had a very important position in reliefs among other important deities.

In the chapel of Sokar in the temple of Abydos, he appears among 51 gods such as Ptah, Shu, Isis, Satet and others. The accompanied text says that:

“*di.f 3wt ib nb*” “He grants all happiness<sup>10</sup>” (Fig. 2).

In Edfu, he appears on a long list citing the gods of the temple<sup>11</sup>. He is mentioned also among the Ennead in the chapel of Khons<sup>12</sup>. In Philae, he appears among different gods attending the creation of mankind by the god Khnum<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 3). In Chentayet chapel in Dendera, he is mentioned as a member among the Ennead of the temple in the same time he appears as an emblem in the hands of the priests. In the temples of Edfu and Dendera, he is seen in the hands of the priests in the New Year Festival. The priests hold the symbol while ascending and descending the stairs of these temples<sup>14</sup> (Figs. 5-8).

## 2 Functions

Horus “*hrj-w3d.f*” was raised in the Delta marshes, which is known as a place full of all kinds of danger that he overcame by the help of some protector gods and goddesses. He had the nature of a protector god against all kinds of evil. In some offerings it is said to Horus:

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7 S. Seidlmayer, “Les dynasties thinites: La naissance de l’histoire,” in: *L’Égypte sur les traces de la civilisation pharaonique*, 2001, 29.

8 P. Vernus, *Athribis textes et documents relatifs à la géographie, aux cultes, et à l’histoire d’une ville du Delta Égyptien à l’époque pharaonique*, Dok. 158, 192; B. Von Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period, the Brooklyn Museum*, 1960, Nr. 91; A. R. Schulman, *List of Egyptian, Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1961, Nr. 25; H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten*, 1956, 90.

9 *D Mammisis*, pl. XLVI.

10 *Abydos*, pl. 39; KRI I, 175, 8.

11 E I, 182(44), pl. XXIVa.; E II, 23 (105).

12 E I, 265, 12.

13 G. Bénédite, Le temple de Philæ, *MMF XIII* (1893), 123, pl. XXXIX.

14 E IX, pl. XXXVII, XXXVIII, D VIII, pl. 773, 741.

“Take this papyrus to protect you from every evil!”

“The papyrus will give you strength<sup>15</sup>.”

### 2.1 As a Protector of *T3 Wr*

In Hibis temple, he is a falcon with tall plumes and the “*menjt*” collar attached to his papyrus column, “Horus set over the town of *w3d*. The texts say that he is the protector of *T3-wr*” (in the Thinite Nome<sup>16</sup>) (Fig. 9).

### 2.2 As a Protector of Some Gods

He appeared in the tomb of “*P3 di Wsir*” in Dakhla Oasis upon his column behind Osiris in chapter 125 from the Book of the Dead standing upon the tail of a winged snake in the judgment scene<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 10).

In the Naos of Saft el Henneh, Horus is represented behind the lion god “Mahes” who is shown attacking an enemy in front of the king<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 11).

### 2.3 As a Protector of the Deceased

Horus *hry w3d.f* protects the deceased from falling into the net that is stretched between the earth and the sky. The net may delay his soul from reaching the sky. If the parts of the net catches the souls of the dead on their way from earth to the sky or who fly to the west of the sky, then he would have the strength to avoid all kind of danger<sup>19</sup>.

It is mentioned in the Coffin Texts:

“Its rope (the net) is the navel-string of Horus who is on his papyrus-column<sup>20</sup>.”

“Its reeds, two-rope, mast-head, finials, and cable are the hair of the sky, which fashioned the earth and the fillet of Horus who is on his papyrus-column<sup>21</sup>.”

The deceased must know the different parts of the net as well as the different parts of the deities’ bodies to avoid falling into the net.

15 Silfī, Kofil, *Qarābinu l-ālihati fi misra l-qadīmati*, al-qāhira, 2010, 78.

16 *Hibis III*, pl. 4, III, 18.

17 M. Moursi, *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry*, in: AV 28, Mainz, 1982, p. 85, Taf. 25b, 33a.

18 E. Naville, *The Shrine of Saft el Henneh and the Land of Goshen* (1885), The Egypt Exploration Society Excavation Memoirs V, 1887, pl. 7.

19 W. Guglielmi, “Netz,” in: *LÄ IV*, 465.

20 *CT VI*, 36a and 38s.

21 *CT VI*, 38y.

## 2.4 As a Protector Lunar God

His birth was accompanied by a star in the east, “Horus as Orion” and “Orion was the soul of Horus.” Horus succeeded his father Osiris. When Orion rises, he is born on the eastern horizon. When Osiris disappears, he dies below the western horizon, where the underworld and the world of death (the West) assumedly began<sup>22</sup> (Fig. 12).

In the columns hall of Dendera, Edfu and also in a chapel of Khons in Karnak, Horus appears among 30 gods staffed in two rows, each row has 15 gods in front of a *W3d* column surmounting the *Wd3t* eye inside the crescent of the moon. Every god protects one day of the month and Horus is the protector god of the 17th day of the lunar circle<sup>23</sup> (Fig. 13). The god Thoth as the principle lunar deity appears worshipping the eye on the *w3d* column. The *Wd3t* eye is the 15th day of the lunar cycle. The Ennead of Karnak is represented on a ladder from fourteen steps, every step represents a lunar day<sup>24</sup> (Figs. 14-16). It is probably in that day the column *W3d* is being raised and that is seen on a wall relief from the temple of Seti I in Abydos. We can see the emblem of Horus held up by a priest and the king making offering to the emblem of the god (Fig. 17).

The erection of the *W3d* pillar has a similar conception of the erection of the *dd* pillar of Osiris. The yearly ceremony of ‘Raising the Djed Pillar’ took place on the last day of the month of *Khoiak*, the eve of the agricultural New Year. The next day marked the beginning of the four month long season of *Peret*, or “Going Forth” during which the lands rose out of the flood waters allowing the fields to be sown.

His annual resurrection ensured the stability and the abundance of the next season’s crops. The word for pillar, *w3d*, also means “raw,” “make flourish,” and “to be young and new,” “youthful” and therefore fits in a general sense with the Four Sons as they are the young children of Horus who aid in the rejuvenation of the King. They are sometimes represented as sprouting from the top of a lotus, which symbolized new life as in the vignette from the chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead:

And a similar scene can be seen in the temple of Hibis. We can see the erection of the symbol of Abydos by the priests behind that of Horus *hry w3d.f*, while the king presents the *m3t* sign to Horus of *w3d.i*<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 18). The raising up of the column symbolizes the renewal of life and this rite may go back to the act of some farmers of the Delta in the harvest season.

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22 *LÄ IV*, 609; *EAT III*, 201 R.

23 F. Laroche and C. Traunecker, “La chapelle adossée au temple de Khonsou,” in: *Karnak VI*, 1973-1977, 1980, 184, 187, pl. L, fig. 9; A. Spalinger, “The Lunar System in Festival Calendars: From the New Kingdom Onwards,” in: *BSEG 19*, 1995, 25-40; F. Labrique, “Les escortes de la lune dans le complexe lunaire de Khonsou à Karnak,” in: *BSEF 140*, 1997, 13-26; F. Labrique, “Les escortes de la lune sur la porte d’Evergète à Karnak,” in: *RdE 49*, 1998, 107-142.

24 Anne-Sophie von Bomhard, *Le calendrier Égyptien, une œuvre d’éternité*, 1999, 79, Fig. 55.

25 *Hibis III*, pl. 25.

## 2.5 As a Protector God of Hours

In the Osirian Chapels in the temple of Dendera, Horus *hry w3d.f* is mentioned as the protector god of the fifth hour of the night called “Lady of life”: “*sbht 5 nbt ʿnh Hr hry w3d.f*”<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 19).

## 2.6 As a Protector against Evils

On the base of a statue of “Khons,” he is seen in the upper register behind a representation of the goddess *T3-wrt*. He is Horus upon the deer (symbol of the god Seth<sup>27</sup>), of course, to show that he is a victorious and a protector god. He is connected with the Menat collar which appears attached to his papyrus column.

He is shown on the magic stela. He appears there on the right hand of Harpocrate while on the left appears the symbol of the god Nefertum<sup>28</sup>. The two emblems of the two gods appear on almost all these kind of stela and they sometimes exchange their positions<sup>29</sup> (Figs. 20, 21).

Horus and Nefertum are associated together; Horus “*hrj-w3d.f*” represents South, while Nefertum represents North<sup>30</sup>. Papyrus and Lotus are offered to Horus as symbols of Lower and Upper Egypt:

“Take the South united with the North, you unite the land of your father Osiris and receive the crown of Re<sup>31</sup>.”

The relation between these two gods can be noticed in other cases; Horus is mentioned in a list of the Memphite gods from the chamber of Nefertum in the temple of Abydos<sup>32</sup>.

26 *DX*, 317, 11 and pl. 182.

27 G. Roeder, *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren, Mitteilungen aus der ägyptischen Sammlung VI*, 1956, 152b, pl. 16, Berlin, 7652.

28 E. Jelínková-Reymond, “Les inscriptions de la statue guérissante de Djed-Her- le sauveur,” in: *BdE* 23, (1956), 24, 68; L. Kákosy, “Horusstele,” in: *LÄ III*, 60-62; J. Berlandini, “Une Stèle d’Horus sur les crocodiles du supérieur des prêtres de Sekhmet Padiimennebnesouttaouy,” in: *Cahiers de Karnak* 6, 1980, 235-245; H. S. El Hotabi, *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Horusstelen: Ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte Ägyptens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. 2 Teile*, ÄA 62, 1999.

29 R. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia IV*, Da un manoscritto inedito conservato nel Museo Archeologico di Fire. Ordinato, illustrato e dotato di indici per l’intera opera da Mario Tosi, 1881, Tav. 218 f; G. Hart, “Isis,” in: *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 2005, 79; M. Görg, “Les dieux et les divinités,” in: *L’Égypte sur les traces de la civilisation pharaonique*, 2001, 437.

30 Medinet Habou, in the temple of Ramses III signs room is that is associated Wepwawet South, while that Horus is associated with the North Wepwawet; P. Barguet, “Un groupe d’enseignes en rapport avec les noms du roi,” *RdE* 8, (1951), 13, n. 5.

31 Silfi, Kofil, *Qarābinu l-ālihati fi misra l-qadīmati*, al-qāhira, 2010, 78.

32 *Abydos I*, 39b.

From the Ptolemaic Period, in the temple of Atfieh, the two gods (Horus and Nefertum) are symbols of being held up by the hands of two signs of life behind Horus and in front of the Nefertum and goddess Hesat<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 22).

In the chapel of king Amasis in Ain el Muftela in Baharia Oasis<sup>34</sup> (Fig. 23), Horus is the flower that emerged from the papyrus plant while Nefertom is the Lotus flower that emerged from the Lotus plant.

### 3 Conclusion

Horus “*hrj-w3d.f*” is a prominent deity who appears as a falcon standing on a papyrus column. He appears with the tall plumes, the double crown and the sun disc on his head.

Horus seems to have a very prominent role as a separate deity and he had a very important position in reliefs among other important deities. Horus “*hrj-w3d.f*” is a protector god of the deceased and a defender against all kinds of evil.

We relate this form of Horus upon the papyrus to his form upon the Narmer’s Palette where he is seen standing upon some papyrus plants which represent the people of the Delta. In the scene Horus is helping the king in his fight against the North.

In some scenes the god is held up as an emblem in the hands of the priests especially in some ceremonies and in festivals.

The form of Horus “upon his papyrus column” is related to the 17th day of the third season “*Prt*,” in which the plants give their flowers, and it happened with Horus when he came out from the papyrus flower. Horus protects one day of the month, he is the protector god of the 17th day of the lunar cycle.

The papyrus column is offered to the god Horus as a symbol of giving the authority over the North as the Lotus is the symbol of the South.

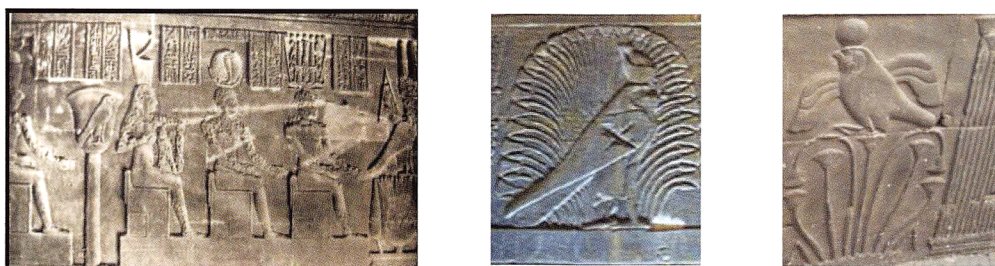


Fig. 1, a-c D Mammisis, 142, 114, pl. XLVI

33 G. Roeder, *Kulte, Orakel und Naturverehrung im alten Ägypten*, 352, Abb. 53; H. Bloesch, *Das Tier in der Antike*, 1974, Nr. 47, Taf. 11; *CG 22180; Urk. II*, 160, 1.

34 *PM*, 7; A. Fakhry, *The Egyptian Deserts, Baharia Oasis*, Cairo, 1942, pl. LVII, b; LVIII, a; LXIII, a.

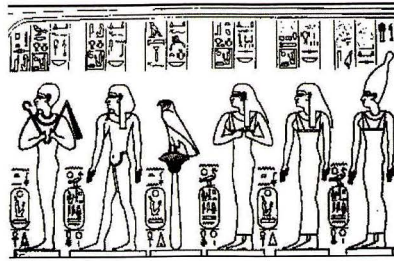


Fig. 2 Abydos, pl. 39

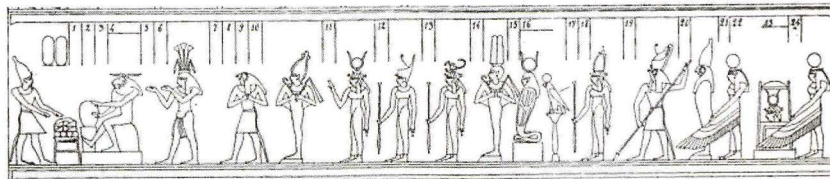


Fig. 3 G. Bénédite, Philæ, pl. XXXIX

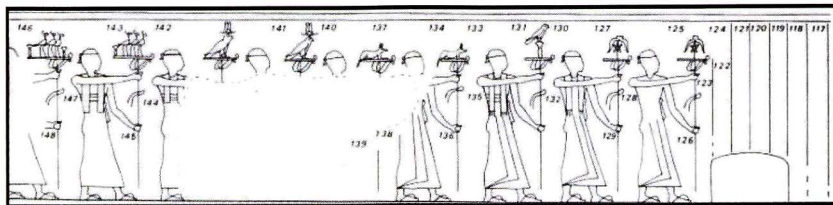


Fig. 4 D X, 32, 7

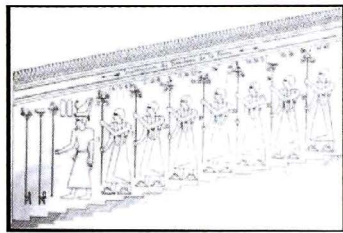


Fig. 5 E IX, pl. XXXVII

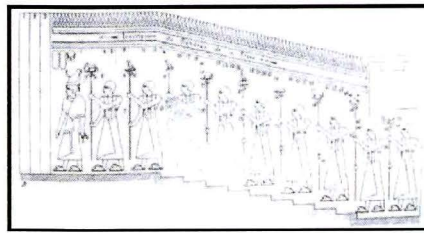


Fig. 6 E IX, pl. XXXVIII

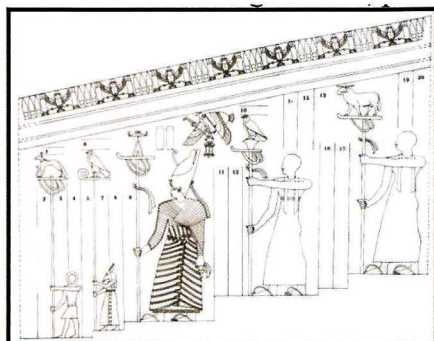


Fig. 7 D VIII, pl. 773

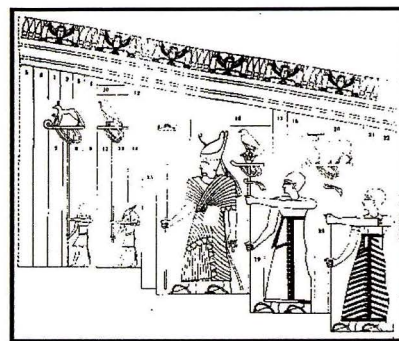


Fig. 8 D VIII, pl. 741

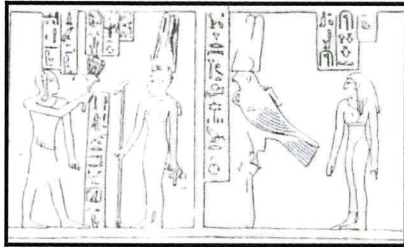


Fig. 9 Hibis, pl. 4, III, 18

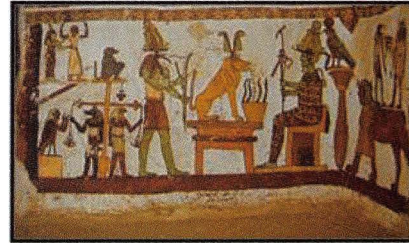


Fig. 10 Moursi, in: AV 28, Taf. 25b

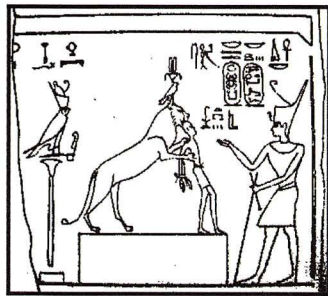


Fig. 11 Saft el Henneh, pl. 7

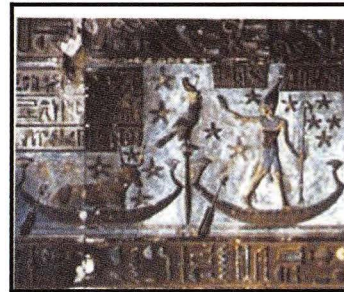


Fig. 12 Bomhard, Calendrier, Fig. 17b

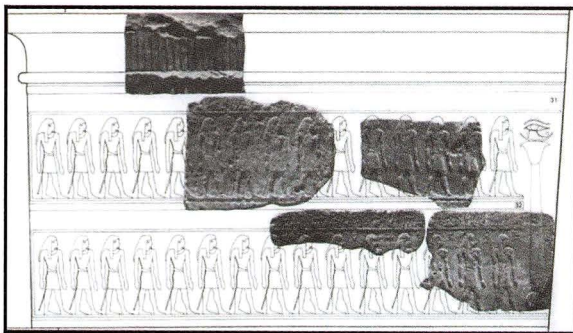


Fig. 13 Karnak VI, 1980, pl. L, Fig. 9

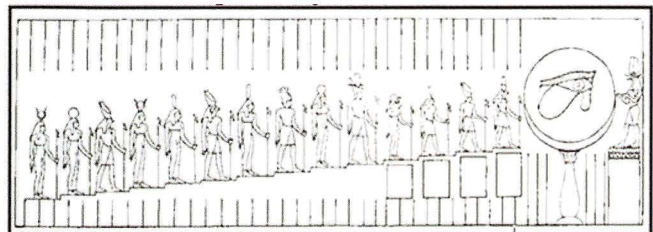


Fig. 14 Bomhard, Calendrier, Fig. 55

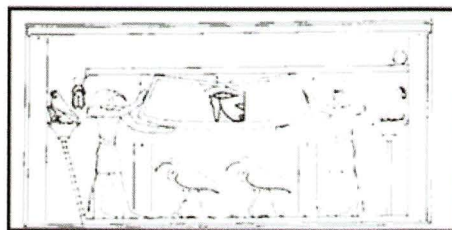


Fig. 15 D II, pl. CXXVII

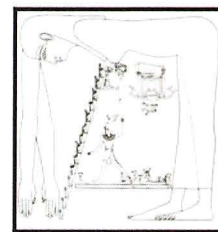


Fig. 16 D X, pl. 260





Fig. 17 Abydos, pl. 26

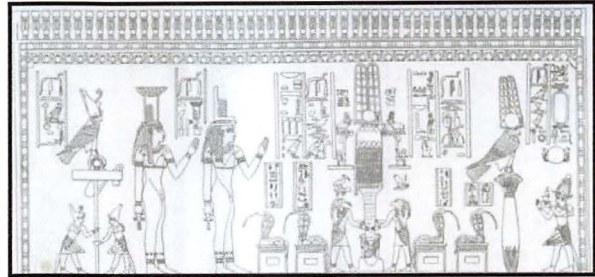


Fig. 18 Hibis III, pl. 25

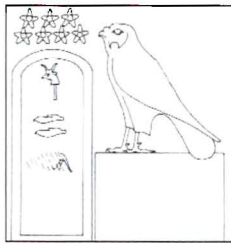


Fig. 19 D X, pl. 182



Figs. 20, 21 Magic stele

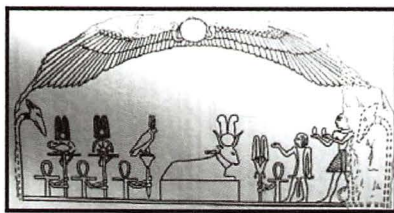


Fig. 22 Roeder, Kulte, Abb. 53



Fig. 23 Fakhry, Baharia, pl. LVII, b