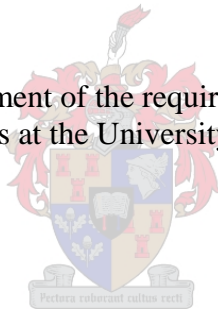


**Beneath the raptor's wings:**  
the avian composition grasping the symbol for eternity in Egypt

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this research assignment/thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:.....

Date:.....28 February 2008

## Abstract

A particular motif in Egyptian art is that of avians. This is frequently depicted in a significant number and variety of visual sources from the tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62) (1336-1327 BC) and other find contexts throughout Egyptian history from c. 3000 BC, but is little understood. The motif mostly depicts an avian creature with wings outstretched, talons grasping the Egyptian hieroglyph symbol for eternity (*shen*). In some instances the avian's falcon or vulture body or parts of the body is/are replaced with parts of another creature, namely that of a snake, cobra, ram, human, duck, or a hieroglyph sign. A study was undertaken to assess how and why this avian motif was composed and what the function in Egyptian culture was.

A manual search of published material for relevant visual sources depicting specific versions of the avian motif was undertaken and selected sources were indexed into a representative graphical database including one hundred and ninety-one items. Textual sources (academic literature and literature from ancient Egypt) were then consulted to support and/or expand on the iconographic, symbolic, and functional aspects of the motif:

- At the iconographic level, the historical development and 'structural dynamics' of the motif are investigated to deduce the artistic rules that applied to its creation.
- At the symbolic level, the symbolic meaning of the artwork is ascertained by theorizing on the meaning of the motif and its parts in an Egyptian context.
- At the functional level, the function of the artwork is ascertained by investigating how the motif's symbolism was intended to be applied to benefit the individual.

The results of this research is that the avian motif developed over time according to strict artistic rules; that it symbolized the king, eternity and protection; and that its function was to protect the king in all phases of his existence in a political and mythological context in order to ensure that he would attain an eternal life in the afterlife. In the mind of the ancient Egyptian this was achieved through the transference of the avian motif's magical qualities to the user.

The intended outcome of this study is to highlight the avian motif's importance in the context of the ancient Egyptian culture.

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***Howard Carter (1873-1932) – a man ahead of his time.***

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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All that remains of Egypt's once mighty civilisation are its cultural artefacts, literature and works of art. Despite repeated looting of ancient Egypt's treasures by tomb raiders and invaders, its culture lives on through its surviving art.

On 25 November 1922 Lord Carnavon and Howard Carter entered the tomb of Tutankhamun and marvelled at the richest source of Egyptian art and treasure ever discovered in Egypt (Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:15). Of the thousands of objects discovered in the tomb, one particular avian motif (a motif being defined by Ocvirk (1963:17) as a specific combination of elements or a design within a design) is often overlooked and unappreciated.

Avians are frequently used in the modern world as symbols of a nation [Fig. 179-191]. What is interesting is the manner in which they are often depicted - wings outstretched in an almost circular fashion, chest fully frontal, head in profile, and talons grasping various symbolic objects. This is reminiscent of a particular Egyptian avian art composition – a composition being defined as an image composed of various smaller images or building blocks called elements, arranged in a predetermined manner to create a unified whole (Composition, 1968:1126). The composition in question [Fig. 32] (referred as ‘the composition’) is made up of elements – a component part of a complex whole (Simpson & Weiner, 1989:131) – that, when used together, form a striking image, namely an avian or composite avian creature with outstretched wings and talons grasping *shen*-rings – the Egyptian symbol of eternity.

### 1.1 Research Problem

The research problem involves the investigation into how and why this *composition* and its elements were chosen and composed in this manner, and for what purpose. Is it just a pretty picture or do the elements collectively communicate a message and fulfil a function? If this is so, then what does each element symbolise and how and why did they gain and fulfil their symbolic meaning and functions? Davis (1989:63)

states that the first step in understanding any artwork is to uncover and recognise that an individual image made sense to an original viewer in terms of some overall understanding already in his possession. Thus, we must try and uncover what the composition meant to the ancient Egyptian.

## **1.2 Research aim and hypothesis**

Aldred (1980:18) points out that Egyptian art acts as a tool that functions to make a statement. In light of this fact, the academic aim is to understand what statement the composition is trying to make. I contend that the composition symbolises protection of the king or individual in all phases of existence (life, death, and rebirth) and that the composition ensures that what is depicted actually comes into being, so that through the use of magic, the king would attain an eternal life in the afterlife. The aim of this research is to make this familiar, but seldom acknowledged image better understood so that academia and the public will realise that it is not simply a pretty image from a dead civilisation, but a surviving message that broadcasts ancient Egyptian ideas and culture.

## **1.3 Research method and design**

The research method used to solve the research problem and shed light on the meaning of the subject matter involves an iconographical and theoretical approach with emphasis on iconographic *composition*. The research design primarily focuses on three areas: iconography, symbolism and functionalism and is comprised of four steps.

The first step involves searching iconographic publications for visual materials relating to the composition. The thematic scope of the corpus is limited to include only the iconographic material that depicts the following: an avian-like composition that is *both* (the rule for exclusion) winged *and* grasping *shen*-ring(s); and/or elements relating to the composition. This was done to narrow the perimeters to more manageable proportions. Apart from two non-Egyptian examples originating from Syria and Italy respectively, the geographic scope of iconographical sources is largely limited to examples excavated in Egypt.

Once all the relevant images had been collected, they were analysed and assembled into a representative corpus of one hundred and ninety-one images featuring one hundred and eighty-eight objects featuring the composition. The graphical database is classified into various groupings:

- Primary and secondary source images based on whether they feature the composition (primary) or non-composition objects related to the composition (secondary):

Total amount of primary source objects	126 (69.95%)
Total amount of secondary source objects	62 (30.05%)
Total amount of objects	188

- Primary source objects classified into Tutankhamun and non-Tutankhamun objects:

Total amount of Tutankhamun objects	41 (32.54%)
Total amount of non-Tutankhamun objects	85 (67.46%)
Total amount of primary source objects	126

- Tutankhamun and non-Tutankhamun objects grouped according to type (eg. jewellery):

Total amount of coffin type objects	24 (19.05%)
Total amount of funerary papyri type objects	6 (4.76%)
Total amount of furniture type objects	5 (3.97%)
Total amount of jewellery type objects	35 (27.78%)
Total amount of mummy type objects	1 (0.79%)
Total amount of painting type objects	12 (9.52%)
Total amount of relief work type objects	27 (21.43%)
Total amount of religious type objects	5 (3.97%)
Total amount of statue type objects	4 (3.17%)
Total amount of weaponry type objects	5 (3.97%)
Total amount of export type objects	2 (1.59%)
Total amount of primary source group based objects	126

- Types grouped into sub-type (eg. bracelet).

Each object in the Graphical Database is listed chronologically from oldest to youngest according to the following criteria (when applicable):

- animal featured in the composition
- source of the image
- museum number
- material (from which the object is made)
- dimensions (length, width, height, depth)
- provenance (in which general area it was found)
- find context (where it was found)
- mummy (where on Tutankhamun's mummy the composition was placed)
- date of the object according to its year of manufacture, reign of king, dynastic period, and historical period

The chronological scope of the study spans a period of nearly three thousand years of ancient Egyptian civilisation from c.3000 BC to 200 AD. The main focus is on one find context and period of time – the New Kingdom tomb of Tutankhamen (KV 62) (1336-1327 BC) – in which period Howard Carter found the composition frequently duplicated on various objects. This was done to limit and narrow the scope of research and the chronological period studied. Composition sources that pre- and post-date Tutankhamen will be compared to trace the historical development of the iconographic and symbolic meanings of the composition and its elements. The dates relevant to the composition are, for the most part, those of Shaw and Nicholson (1995:310-312) whose chronology is based on the lower chronology.

The research is structured as follows:

- Chapter one gives an introduction to how the composition will be analysed and the structure of the research and graphical database.
- Chapter two gives a general description of the composition that informs the reader of the composition and its primary and secondary elements.

- Chapter three gives a description of objects in the tomb of Tutankhamun that feature the composition.
- Chapter four investigates the iconographical structural dynamics of the composition. This involves looking into the historical development of the composition and deducing the iconographical aspects and rules of the art canon that dictate the arrangement of the composition's elements.
- Chapter five investigates the symbolic meaning of the composition by theorising on the meaning and function of the composition as a symbol – a symbol being defined as something that represents something other than what it actually depicts that is based on conventionally agreed-on meanings (Wilkinson, 2001:329). This involves deducing what each element of the composition symbolises (often through the use of iconographical principles), how it garnered this symbolism, and how they interact to collectively convey a particular message and function.
- Chapter six provides some concluding remarks.
- An excursion looks at how the composition relates to modern avian compositions.

Following the excursion is the bibliography, then lastly, the graphical database. The intended outcome of this study is to inform and educate the reader about the composition and its importance in the context of ancient Egypt.

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## CHAPTER 2: GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPOSITION

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The composition takes on the form – defined by Ocvirk (1962:5, 11) as the final and total appearance of an artwork composed through the organisation of its elements – of a central primary element consisting of an avian form (a) with outstretched wings (b) grasping *shen*-rings (c) and surrounded by secondary elements (d).

(a) There were eight versions of the composition: two fully avian creatures (i) and six composite creatures (ii).

(i) The fully avian creatures include the falcon [Fig. 32] and vulture [Fig. 19] versions of the composition.

(ii) The composite creature retained the wings and/or body of a falcon or vulture and replaced the head or body of the falcon or vulture with that of a snake [Fig. 12]; beetle [Fig. 30]; ram [Fig. 49]; duck [Fig. 21]; human [Fig. 31]; or *wedjat*-eye hieroglyph [Fig. 59].

(b) The wings of the composition could be depicted up-curved [Fig. 18], outstretched to the side [Fig. 9], or sated (drooping) [Fig. 23].

(c) The avian creature grasped a *shen*-ring in each of its talons [Fig. 25], or one *shen*-ring grasped by both talons [Fig. 26], or one *shen*-ring in both wings [Fig. 28].

(d) Finally, the secondary elements consisted of various non-permanent elements (expanded on later) attached to the head, wings and *shen*-rings.

The composition was generally found in one of two contexts: in a temple or tomb – due to its connection to religion. It is also likely to have been featured in palaces and government buildings, where it would have served as a symbol of king and state, or possibly even in private houses due to the composition's protective qualities.

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### CHAPTER 3: THE COMPOSITION IN THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMUN

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Tutankhamun's tomb is the richest source of Egyptian art and the chief source of examples relating to the composition. To my knowledge the tomb of Tutankhamun contained forty-four objects featuring the composition. These can be divided into six chief types: coffins, furniture, jewellery, religious objects, statues and weaponry.

The composition is featured on twelve coffins: two coffins [Figs. 1-2] encasing Tutankhamun's mummy were discovered in the burial chamber; four canopic coffins [Fig. 3] containing the viscera of the king (Reeves, 1990:121) were found in a canopic chest discovered in the treasury; four coffins containing Tutankhamun's unborn children [Fig. 4] were discovered in the treasury; and two miniature heirloom coffins [Fig. 5] were discovered in the treasury.

Five sub-types of furniture feature the composition, namely a casket [Figs. 6-8] and throne [Fig. 12] discovered in the antechamber, and a chair [Fig. 9] and two fans [Figs. 10-11] discovered in the annexe.

The composition is featured on twenty-two items of amuletic jewellery discovered on the mummy (a) [Fig. 134] and apart from the mummy of Tutankhamun (b).

(a) The composition features on thirteen items of amuletic jewellery discovered on Tutankhamun's mummy in the burial chamber.

On the crown of the head was a head-band [Fig. 22] once sewn onto a *khat* head-dress (Carter, 1972:144). Covering the neck was the collar of Horus [Fig. 17] (Carter, 1972:146).

The thorax (the area from the neck down to and including the abdomen) had ten objects featuring the composition. Covering the shoulders and clavicles were two collars. Uppermost on the right shoulder was the collar of Nekhebet [Fig. 14] while over the left shoulder was the Nebti collar [Fig. 15] (Carter, 1963b:120).



The chest had three items featuring the composition. On the upper chest was the sated vulture pectoral [Figs. 23-24] (Carter, 1972:149-150); on the central lower chest was the *wedjat*-eye pectoral [Fig. 26]; while on the left-hand side of the lower chest was the solar-falcon pectoral [Fig. 25] (Carter, 1963b:124-126).

The abdomen had five objects featuring the composition. Placed above all the layers was a *ba*-bird pendant [Fig. 31]. Covering the entire abdomen was a large pectoral falcon collar called the collar of Horus [Fig. 16] whose wings extended upwards under the armpits (Carter, 1972:148). Directly below this was the flexible collar of Horus [Fig. 18] (Carter, 1972:148) and under it, two more collars: the flexible collar of Nekhebet [Fig. 19] and the flexible breast-collar of Nebti [Fig. 20] (Carter, 1972:148).

The arms had one object featuring the composition – a vulture bracelet [Fig. 13] placed over the upper left arm (Carter, 1963b:267).

(b) Nine items of amuletic jewellery featuring the composition were discovered apart from the mummy – in the treasury, namely: one pair of earrings [Fig. 21], four pectorals [Figs. 27-30], and three pendants [Figs. 32-34].

One religious object features the composition, namely a small golden shrine discovered in the antechamber [Figs. 35-37].

One wooden statuette in the form of a *shabti* [Fig. 38] discovered in the treasury features the composition.

Three weaponry objects feature the composition, namely one chariot [Fig. 39] discovered in the antechamber, and two shields [Figs. 40-41] found in the annexe.

In the context of representativeness, the tomb of Tutankhamun and its objects featuring the composition is generally representative of other non-Tutankhamun objects that feature the composition.

Objects featuring the composition – and limited to the tomb of Tutankhamun – include the furniture items of the casket, chair, fan and throne and the amuletic jewellery items of the earrings and headband. It should be noted that although the throne of Tutankhamun is the only surviving throne that features the composition, a scene from a tomb painting of Ramses III [Fig. 88] depicts a throne decorated with a falcon composition. In light of this, the composition could have been a common feature on thrones.

Non-Tutankhamun objects featuring the composition found in the tomb of Tutankhamun include coffins [Figs. 42-58]; the amuletic jewellery items of the bracelet [Figs. 65-66], collar [Fig. 67], pectoral [Figs. 68-73] and pendant [Figs. 74-76]; the religious object of the shrine [Fig. 92]; the statuette of the *shabti* [Figs. 123-124]; and the weaponry of the chariot [Fig. 125-126] and shield [Fig. 127]

Non-Tutankhamun objects featuring the composition not found in the tomb of Tutankhamun include: funerary papyri [Figs. 59-64]; the jewellery item of the scarab amulet [Fig. 77]; the mummy [Fig. 78]; paintings [Figs. 79-87]; relief works [Figs. 95-121], the religious objects of the naos [Fig. 91] and stela [Figs. 93-94]; and statues [Fig. 122-124].

A question that arises is ‘why the tomb of Tutankhamun contains so many examples of the composition?’ The most likely answer is that due to Tutankhamun’s tomb being the only pharaonic tomb discovered in a largely intact and untouched state, the large number of objects depicting the composition is not unusual because it was a popular and traditional royal motif. Another contributing factor increasing the number of objects featuring the composition (compared to earlier periods) is that due to Egypt’s religion adopting new deities and beliefs over time, by the time of Tutankhamun, artists created additional versions of the composition to cater and incorporate them. If the tomb held unusually high numbers of objects featuring the composition, perhaps the wealth of the late New Kingdom period, the post-Amarna period’s rigorous reintroduction of traditional and classical Egyptian beliefs and art motifs (of which the composition was one), and the king’s and artists’ love of the composition; might have led to the mass production of the composition.

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## CHAPTER 4: ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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We now look at the iconography of the composition with regard to the composition's technical details and the influence of Egypt's art canon on the general appearance and arrangement of the composition and its elements.

The creation of the composition, like most works of art, involved the use of an artistic canon, the artistic guidelines and rules of which dictated how it should be rendered. It is crucial to understand the iconographic principles of this artistic canon in order to determine why the composition was arranged in the way that it was. This must be done before attempting to decode the composition's symbolic message, so we can understand its symbolic message more fully.

### 4.1 Historical development as evidence for an artistic canon

Evidence for the use of an artistic canon in the creation of the composition can be seen in its historical development. The one hundred and twenty-eight objects featuring the composition in the graphical database can be divided into the following chronological periods and numbers:

Total number of Early-dynastic objects:	1	(0.78%)
Total number of Old Kingdom objects:	3	(2.34%)
Total number of First Intermediate period objects:	0	(0.00%)
Total number of Middle Kingdom period objects:	4	(3.13%)
Total number of Second Intermediate period objects:	2	(1.60%)
Total number of New Kingdom period objects:	90	(70.31%)
Total number of Third Intermediate period objects:	13	(10.16%)
Total number of Late Period objects:	3	(2.34%)
Total number of Ptolemaic Period objects:	11	(8.60%)
Total number of Roman Period objects:	1	(0.78%)
Total number of objects:	128	(100.00%)

The historical development of the composition can be traced over a span of approximately 3300 years from the beginning of ancient Egypt's dynastic period (c.3100 BC) to near the end of the Roman period (first to second centuries AD).

The genesis of the composition began in the first half of the early Dynastic period when its basic form (minus *shen*-rings) as a falcon or vulture with outstretched wings makes its first known appearance in the reign of the First Dynasty's King Narmer (c.3100 BC). The winged falcon is depicted on Narmer's cylinder seal [Fig. 130] hovering above the king's name while the winged vulture is depicted on Narmer's mace-head [Fig. 131] hovering above Narmer while he is seated on his high throne.

The later half of the early Dynastic Period witnessed the creation of the completed composition when the *shen*-ring elements were added to the vulture (a) and falcon (b).

(a) The first known example of the vulture composition appeared on a stone vase [Fig. 95] belonging to the Second Dynasty's King Khasekhemwy (c.2686 BC) where a vulture in relief is depicted grasping a *shen*-ring and offering it to the king's name (in the form of a Horus falcon) (Wilkinson, 1992:81, 85).

(b) The first known example of the falcon composition appeared on an Old Kingdom wall relief [Fig. 96] belonging to King Djoser (2667-2648 BC) and on a now destroyed stone marker [Fig. 97] belonging to the Fourth Dynasty's King Khufu (c.2589-2566 BC). Although damaged and unclear the falcon on Khufu's stone marker grasps a *shen*-ring – as indicated by the artist's use of a circle.

The fact that *shen*-rings (a hieroglyph) are added to these birds and that the falcon and vulture direct them at individuals such as kings Khasekhemwy (in the form of his name in the form of a Horus falcon), Djoser, Khufu, and Tutankhamun [Fig. 6] is significant in itself. According to Kemp (2005:140) only the gods could offer hieroglyphs to an individual (generally the king). Thus, because the composition in the three prior examples direct (offer) their *shen*-ring hieroglyphs at the king; this means that the composition was no ordinary bird – rather it is a deity in zoomorphic form. This is supported by the fact that the first appearance of the composition as a

vulture on Khasekhemwy's vase coincides with the first known appearance of the goddess Nekhbe in the form of a vulture (Hassan, 2001:17).

The composition in the form of a falcon and vulture remained unchanged throughout the Old Kingdom and continued through the Middle Kingdom [Fig. 68], 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period [Fig. 42], and much of the first half of the New Kingdom's Eighteenth Dynasty [Figs. 43-46].

Although the falcon or vulture in the composition remained unchanged, change was introduced to the composition in the Middle Kingdom through the use of 'variation through expansion around an invariant core.' Davis (1989:64) describes 'variation through expansion and contraction around an invariant core' as an artistic technique in which a work of art changes over time through the addition of new elements but retaining the 'core' motif that is generally the original and most archaic element. This can be seen in the vulture composition featured on a Twelfth Dynasty barque shrine of Senusret I (1965-1920 BC) [Fig. 92]. Here, the former composition in the form of a vulture becomes the primary element (the original and oldest unchanging 'core' motif) of a larger composition when a secondary element in the form of a *was*-sceptre hieroglyph (expanded on later) is added to the *shen*-ring.

The New Kingdom saw the composition reach its pinnacle in quality, craftsmanship and material. Surviving examples show incredible devotion to detail and the heavy use of gold, silver and jewels that reflect Egypt's powerful status and the riches and military strength characterised by this period. The second half of the New Kingdom (late Eighteenth to end of the Twentieth Dynasty) saw several changes in the design of the composition with regard to its primary and secondary elements.

The primary element of the composition had several changes to its design through the use of 'variation through expansion and contraction around an invariant core' (a), 'variation by equivalent' (b), and pairing (c).

(a) 'Variation through expansion around an invariant core' continued through the addition of new secondary elements (dealt with later in greater hieroglyphic detail) namely:

- the *djed-pillar-was-sceptre-ankh* composition [Fig. 93] by the Eighteenth Dynasty's reign of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC).
- the solar disc [Fig. 25], lunar disc [Fig. 30], *ankh* [Fig. 32], short-handled *khu* fan [Fig. 9], sedge plant [Fig. 12], lotus plant [Fig. 30], papyrus plant [Fig. 30], bee [Fig. 12] cartouche [Figs. 12, 29], and *wedjat-eye* [Fig. 26] by the Eighteenth Dynasty's reign of Tutankhamun (1336-1327 BC).
- the *neb-was-sceptre-ankh* composition [Fig. 99] by the Nineteenth Dynasty's reign of Seti I (1294-1279 BC).
- The alabaster bowl-*was-sceptre-ankh* composition [Fig. 109-110] and *kheb-sed* composition [Fig.112] by the Twentieth Dynasty's reign of Ramses III (1184-1153 BC).

(b) Davis (1989:77) described 'variation by equivalent' as an artistic technique in which one element of the core motif was replaced with another. According to Davis (1989:64) the modification of a core element was the most common source of iconographic variability allowed by Egypt's art canon.

There were three techniques of implementing full-scale variation by equivalent.

(1) Replacing the falcon or vulture head of the primary element with that of another animal or a hieroglyph:

- By the late Eighteenth Dynasty reign of Tutankhamun the primary element's falcon or vulture head was replaced with the head of a snake [Fig. 12], duck [Fig. 21], or human [Figs. 31, 38]. According to Andrews (1994:68) the human-headed composition known as the *ba-bird* does not occur before the burial of Tutankhamun – thus the *ba-bird* composition is an innovation of Tutankhamun's reign.
- By the early Nineteenth Dynasty's lifetime of Hunefer (c.1310 BC) the falcon's head had been replaced with that of the *wedjat-eye* hieroglyph (which is explained in greater detail later) [Fig. 59].
- By the early nineteenth reign of Ramses II (1295-1186 BC) the falcon's head was replaced with that of a ram [Figs. 71, 75].

(2) Replacing the head and torso of the falcon or vulture with that of another animal but retaining the wings, tail and legs of the falcon or vulture – as seen in Tutankhamun's lunar and solar pectoral [Fig. 30] where the body is replaced with that of a beetle.

(3) Replacing the head, torso, legs and tail of the falcon or vulture with that of a snake, but retaining the wings of the falcon or vulture. This can be seen in Tutankhamun's annexe fan [Fig. 10], golden throne [Fig. 12], Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27], and the chain of Ptah and Sekhmet's pectoral [Fig. 28] where the body of the avian (but not the wings) is replaced with that of a snake.

(c) The New Kingdom saw the pairing of two identical (i) or different (ii) versions of the composition.

(i) Tutankhamun's reign saw two identical versions of the composition paired horizontally in a single artwork – namely two vulture compositions as shown on the painted wooden box [Figs. 6, 8].

(ii) Three different versions of the composition were paired together in a single artwork in the New Kingdom, namely:

- the falcon and vulture compositions of Amose's reign (1550-1525 BC) as shown on a relief work of King Amose [Fig. 98].
- the vulture and snake compositions of Tutankhamun's reign as shown on the Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27].
- the vulture and ram compositions of Ramses II's reign (1279-1213 BC) as shown on a pectoral of Ramses II [Fig. 71].

The reign of Tutankhamun brought an end to a period of religious and artistic upheaval in Egypt called the 'Amarna period' which was ushered in by the reign of Akhenaten (1352-1336 BC) and which brought about a religious and artistic revolution in which many new motifs were included and many old ones were destroyed. Interestingly, despite the iconoclasm of the Amarna period, various objects

from the tomb of Tutankhamun indicated that the composition not only survived Akhenaten's iconoclastic reign but thrived during the Amarna period. This can be deduced from four items featuring the composition:

- According to Reeves (1990:186), the ceremonial chair [Fig. 9] that features a vulture composition was depicted in the Amarna style.
- According to Reeves (1990:184), the golden throne [Fig. 12] that features a cobra composition was depicted in a relaxed Amarna style (Reeves, 1990:184).
- According to Fox (1951: plate 11) the vulture composition on the small golden shrine [Fig. 35-37] was depicted in Amarna style.
- Finally (and mostly conclusively), the vulture composition depicted in the vulture pectoral [Fig. 29] has the epithet 'the good ruler', which – according to Reeves (1990:151) – could indicate that this pectoral was personally prepared for Akhenaten himself. If this is true then the composition was used as an art motif during the Amarna period.

The historical periods (Third Intermediate Period, Late Period, Ptolemaic Period, and Roman Period) following the New Kingdom saw deterioration in the composition's quality of production, craftsmanship and choice of material. The increased use of less costly materials (semi- or non-precious stones) and the decrease in the use of gold and silver mirrored the downturn in Egypt's power, riches and military strength at a time in which foreign invasions and foreign control became the norm.

The Third Intermediate Period saw additional modifications to the composition in 'full-scale variation by equivalent' (a); in the use of trinities (b); and in the use of an overarching solar theme usually depicted in vertical pairs (c).

(a) 'Full-scale variation by equivalent' continued in the Twenty-first Dynasty where the head, torso and legs of the falcon – but not the wings – were replaced by those of a beetle. This can be deduced by the coffin of an unknown lady (c.1075-945 BC) [Fig. 47] and the bracelet of Psusenes I (1039-991 BC) [Fig. 66].



(b) Three identical versions of the composition could form a trinity in a work of art – as deduced from the Twenty-first Dynasty’s coffins of Maatkare (c.1065-1045 BC) and Psusennes I (1039-991 BC).

- The coffin of Maatkare [Fig. 48] features two sets of trinities: three different compositions in the form of a ram-headed beetle on the arms, vulture on the abdomen and a falcon on the feet; and three identical compositions in the form of three ram-headed beetle compositions (Tiradritti, 1999:298).
- Although not featured in the graphical database, the silver coffin of Psusennes I features a trinity composed of a vulture, ram and falcon compositions – as stated by Tiradritti (1999:313): “On the deceased’s chest and abdomen are depicted three birds with outspread wings that continue on the sides of the casket. The three birds – with the heads of a vulture, a ram and a falcon respectively – are gripping *shen* rings in their talons ...”

(c) Taylor (1989:49) notes that during the Third Intermediate Period coffins displayed a noticeable increase in the prominence of solar symbolism. This can be seen in the New Kingdom’s overtly political themed single or paired versions of the composition giving way to the Third Intermediate Period’s overtly solar themed single [Figs. 49, 50, 55] or paired versions (beetles [Fig. 47], or ram-headed falcon with falcon [Fig. 51] of the composition being crowned with solar discs (Taylor; 1989:47-51).

From the Late Period onwards the composition stagnates and no discernible modifications occur. The composition, however, retained its popularity through the Late Period [Figs. 57, 90, 129], the Greek Ptolemaic Period [Figs. 58, 64, 77, 94, 115-121] and the Roman Period [Fig. 91] – periods during which Egypt and its art came under foreign influence and control.

The historical development of the composition was not limited to Egypt alone as its popularity spread to surrounding regions (usually in the form of diplomatic gifts and international trade) – namely Syria (i) and Italy (ii).

i) The composition featured on a Syrian seal [Fig. 128] is dated to the Hyksos period (c. 1650-1550 BC) of the Second Intermediate Period (Frankfort, 1939:256).

Frankfort identifies the avian composition as coming from Egypt: “The large bird evidently imitates the great vulture or falcon which often forms the upper part of Egyptian designs and occurs, in fact, in this function in the pectorals which successive Pharaohs gave to the princes of Byblos” (Frankfort, 1939:256) and “The Mut-vulture spreading its protecting wings over Pharaoh was also well known and frequently appears as a filling motif on Syrian seals of the early Second Millennium B.C” (Frankfort, 1939:208).

ii) A vase found in an Etruscan tomb in Tarquinia, Italy [Fig. 129], depicted a paired vulture and falcon composition hovering above the Egyptian King Bocchoris (Kanenrenef) (c. 727-715 BC). It is unknown if it came originally from Egypt or if it was reproduced in Italy.

What is gained from an overview of the composition’s historical development is that although the composition was altered over time (the head of the primary element being interchanged with other creatures and new secondary elements added) and spread to surrounding regions, there was no dramatic change to the look of the composition’s historically oldest primary element (a falcon or vulture grasping a *shen*-ring) over a period of nearly three thousand three hundred years. This fact is important because Davis (1989:2, 64) uses the lack of dramatic change in an Egyptian artwork to be indicative of the artist’s use of an art canon that standardised and governed the production of that artwork over time through the adherence to iconographic principles. Thus, the composition's lack of dramatic change over a time span of three thousand years points to the composition being composed to the dictates of a canon that did not value large-scale change (Freed, 2001:128; Onians, 2004:39; Johnson, 2003:1). As a result, the composition – as with Egyptian art in general – experienced very little dramatic change over time.

One should not, however, reach the conclusion that Egyptian art did not fundamentally change at all because the development of the composition shows that it did. In fact, development occurred around an unchanging core set of rules and principles that changed little over time (Freed, 2001:128). This is echoed in the composition’s three thousand year history where (by keeping the core motif essentially the same) the composition's basic character remained essentially the same

– whether seen by an Egyptian living during the unification and formation of dynastic Egypt in 3000 BC or an Egyptian living under foreign Roman rule. While new elements were added, it was still essentially the same old falcon or vulture grasping the *shen*-rings – old things done in a new way, or conversely, new things done in an old way.

Why the composition became a popular motif in the canon in the first place is not clear. Perhaps it is due to Davis's (1989:25) belief that certain original and “exemplary” works of art in the distant past became extremely popular for some reason (possibly through their connection to the gods or king – as will be deliberated on further) or because they somehow struck viewers as being especially well formed.

## **4.2 Egypt's art canon**

Egypt's art canon dictated the way that art was supposed to be produced in the early Old Kingdom (Davis, 1989:111). Along with its dislike of dramatic change, the canon was characterised by its use of nature, view, placement, size, shape, balance, symmetry, hieroglyphs, colour and number which imparted a specific look that is characteristically Egyptian.

Davis (1989:82-83) asserts that we have to first understand Egypt's art canon before we can understand the image: “Knowledge of the canonical formal and iconographic principles, core motifs, and systems of equivalences was the fundamental condition of the viewer's understanding of the image.” With this in mind, one must attempt to understand how the canon and its iconographic principles were applied to the composition with regard to the canon's use of nature, view, scale and size, shape and pose, balance and symmetry, hieroglyphs, colour, and numbers.

### 4.2.1 Use of nature

Nature had a fundamental impact on Egyptian art. That nature had a close connection to Egyptian art should come as no surprise as the Egyptians' lives – primarily as agriculturalists – were intricately linked to the environment and the workings of nature. Nature heavily influenced and shaped Egyptian art. Egyptians used nature as a

text to read from and from which to extract answers to their questions pertaining to life, death and the realities of the human soul (Clark, 1959:12). As a result of this (and the aesthetic beauty of nature) elements from nature were frequently depicted in Egyptian art (Silverman, 2001:370). The influence of nature on Egyptian art should not be overlooked as according to Schäfer (1974:345): “Anybody who wishes to understand Egyptian art must attempt to gain a clear comprehension of the method of rendering art and nature ...”

Therefore, the first step taken to understand the composition is to look at the influence that nature had on it. Nature had an obvious role to play in the composition as the initial reaction of the viewer to the composition is that it comes in the form of an animal – a part of nature. Animals were extensively used in Egyptian art because animals were experienced in three realms of experience: the biological where Egyptians interacted with animals; the psychological where Egyptians experienced animals in their personal and cultural psyche or imagination; and the conceptual, where animals were used as symbolic and textual devices in Egyptian art and literature (Collins, 2002:xix). As a result, animals provide the Egyptian artist with the greatest means of self-expression because animals were an intricate part of all Egyptians’ lives and therefore, as symbols, they could be used effectively to communicate commonly held ideas (Collins, 2002:xxi).

Before looking at the iconographical and symbolic use of animals in the composition, the starting point must be the identification of the biological animals featured and their placement in their natural, geographical and behavioural setting. Excluding the *wedjat*-eye composition, the composition depicts seven animals or parts of animals, namely a falcon (a), vulture (b), snake (c), beetle (d), ram (e), duck (f), and human (g).

(a) Six objects in Tutankhamun’s tomb depict a falcon composition: figures 16-18, 25, 32, 40. The falcon (*bik*) made its first known appearance in Egyptian art in the late pre-Dynastic Period and it became the most popular creature featured in Egyptian art (Houlihan, 1986:46-48; Wilkinson, 1992:83). The falcon in the composition is a composite falcon known as the Horus falcon (Houlihan, 1986:46-48). This is based on its customary upright stance [Fig. 143] which conflicts with the falcon’s natural bent

over stance, its black ‘toothed’ and hooked upper bill, the diagnostic broad black moustachial streak which stands out against the white cheek, the dark back and wing, the still darker cap and nape, and the white underside (Houlihan, 1986:46).

The artist did not base the Horus falcon on one particular falcon but rather on features common to four of the local falcon species of falcon that occurred in Egypt, namely: Eleonora’s Falcon (*Falco eleonora*), the Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), the Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*) but chiefly, the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) (Houlihan, 1986:46).

(b) Twenty-eight objects in Tutankhamun’s tomb depict a vulture composition: figures 1-2, 3, 4, 5, 6-8, 9, 11, 13, 14-15, 19-20, 22, 23-24, 26-27, 29, 33-34-37, 39 and 41]. In Egyptian art the vulture (*neret*) was almost as prominent as the falcon (Wilkinson, 1992:85). Although the vulture in the composition was heavily conventionalised to fit artistic conventions, it is possible to identify the two species of large vulture that served as the artist’s primary inspiration (Houlihan, 1986:41).

The vulture in Tutankhamun’s flexible collar of Nekhbet [Fig. 19] depicts a Griffin vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) (Houlihan, 1986:41). This type of vulture first appeared in Egyptian art from at least as late as the pre-Dynastic Period and served as the primary inspiration for depictions of vultures in art (Houlihan, 1986:41). The Griffin vulture is characterised by its white head, neck and collar, short tail, and contrasting light-coloured wing coverts and dark flight feathers (Houlihan, 1986:40-41).

Another vulture used in Tutankhamun’s sated vulture pectoral [Figs. 23-24] depicts the Lappet-faced vulture (*Aegyptius tracheliotus*) (Houlihan, 1986:42). This vulture first appeared in Egyptian art in the Fifth Dynasty and was frequently featured in Egyptian art from the Twelfth Dynasty onwards (Houlihan, 1986:42). It is characterised by its large wings, enormous dark, hooked bill, featherless head and neck, and the easily distinguishable folds of skin (lappets) hanging from the sides of the head and neck (Houlihan, 1986:41).

The composition could feature either the Griffin vulture or Lappet-faced Vulture independently; or it could depict a composition vulture with the body and wings of the

Griffin Vulture and the head (although painted white) and lappets of a Lappet-faced Vulture (Houlihan, 1986:41).

(c) Eleven objects in Tutankhamun's tomb depict a snake-headed composition [Figs. 1-2, 3, 5, 27] or a snake-bodied composition [Figs. 10, 12, 28]. The snake was called the *iaret* by the Egyptians and *ureaus* by the Greeks. Egyptian artists based it on the Egyptian Cobra (*Naja annulifera*) and the Black-necked Spitting Cobra (*Naja mossambica pallida* or *Naja nigricollis*) based on their shared features and actions, namely: puffing out their hoods and coiling their heads and 'necks' backwards threatening to strike (Wilkinson, 1992:109; Houlihan, 1996:173; Marais, 2004:102). The depiction of the cobra spitting 'flame' at its enemy possibly identifies it as the Black-necked Spitting Cobra because it (and not the Egyptian Cobra) spat venom at its enemies (Houlihan, 1996:173).

(d) Figure 30 is an example of the composition in Tutankhamun's tomb that depicts a beetle (Egyptian *Kheper*) with the wings and tail of a vulture and the legs of a falcon (Tiradritti, 1999:236). Due to its large, thick and bulbous body, it can be identified as the dung-beetle or Sacred Scarab Beetle (*Scarabaeus sacer*) that inhabits North Africa and Egypt (Houlihan, 1996:187). The scarab beetle made a late appearance in Egyptian art in the Old Kingdom's Sixth Dynasty but over time it became one of the most popular and numerous motifs in Egyptian art (Houlihan, 1996:187).

(e) There are no examples of the composition in Tutankhamun's tomb that depict a ram-headed falcon, but from the Nineteenth Dynasty of the New Kingdom, a ram-headed composition [Figs. 71, 75] frequently appeared. The ram (*ba*) in the composition can be identified by its long, horizontally undulating horns as *Ovis longipes palaeoaegypticus*, the first species reared in Egypt (Watterson, 1984:183).

(f) There is one example of the composition in Tutankhamun's tomb that depicts a duck (*set*) – namely a pair of earrings [Fig. 21] (Wilkinson, 1992:95). The duck head of the composition is painted blue and according to Ray (1999:111) it can be identified as a Pintail duck (*Dafila acuta*) based on the colour and shape of its beak; while Carter (1963b:75) identifies it as a Mallard duck (*Anas boscas*).

(g) Two examples of the composition in Tutankhamun's tomb depict a human-headed *ba*-bird. A *shabti* [Fig. 38] depicts a *ba*-bird with the body of a falcon while a *ba*-bird pendant [Fig. 31] depicts a *ba*-bird with the body of a vulture.

At the time, these animals could be depicted in great detail that realistically portrayed the anatomical features of the respective animal (Johnson, 2003:30-31) – an example being the paintings of a falcon [Fig. 79] and vulture [Fig. 80] composition at the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri. Here the artist correctly depicted the feathering and colour of the falcon and vulture to the finest detail. But generally, depictions of the composition focused on its symbolic and decorative qualities and not to its adherence to nature (Houlihan (1986:48).

The choice of animals depicted in the composition was not the only thing that showed the composition's use of nature. The composition made use of cosmic elements (a) and vegetation elements (b) in its various secondary elements.

(a) The cosmic elements include the solar disc of the sun [Fig. 32] and the lunar disc of the moon [Fig. 30] that travelled in the sky (Wilkinson, 1992:129; Gardiner, 1988:486).

(b) The vegetative elements include plants that flourished in marshes and the Nile River, namely the sedge or lily plant (*nesu*); lotus plant (*seshen*) identified as the blue lotus (*Nymphaea cerulean*); and the papyrus plant (*mehyt*) identified as *Cyperus papyrus* (Wilkinson, 1992:10, 121-123).

#### 4.2.2 Use of view

In Egyptian art, the canon dictated the view used by the artist to portray objects on a two-dimensional surface by insisting that objects and the element that made up an object be depicted from its most characteristic angle in order to show as much of the particular part of the body as possible (Davis, 1989:13; Schäfer, 1974:104). As a result, a combination of frontal and profile views were used (Johnson, 2003:31-32). In humans, the head, arms, hands, one of the breasts, hips, bottom, legs and feet are depicted in profile while the eye, shoulders, parts of the chest and abdomen are shown frontally (Davis, 1989:27).

Although drawing an animal was not regulated by precisely the same rules applicable to humans, many of the rules applying to the mixed views used to depict humans were applied to the composition (Davis, 1989:39-40; Johnson, 2003:27).

In overtly frontal versions of the composition, a mixture of frontal and profile views occurred. This can best be seen in the scarab composition of Tutankhamun's solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32]. The eye, wings, torso, tail and *shen*-rings are depicted frontally from above or below while the head, legs and talons are depicted in profile (Wilkinson, 2003:214; Houlihan, 1986:46). This rule was not always followed. The head could be shown frontally as in Tutankhamun's solar falcon pectoral [Fig. 25] and annexe fan [Fig. 10]; while the composition could be depicted as seen from above, as in Tutankhamun's lunar and solar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30] and vulture pendants [Figs. 33-34].

In overtly profile versions of the composition, a mixture of profile and frontal views occur. This can best be seen in the vulture composition on Tutankhamun's ebony fan [Fig. 11]. The head, frontal wing, leg, talon, and the one *shen*-ring are seen in profile; while the eye, background wing (indicating to the viewer that the vulture has a second wing), and tail are depicted from a frontal view (Schäfer, 1974:98; Wilkinson, 2003:214).

The rationale behind the choice of a frontal, profile and mixed view is three-fold:

(1) If the composition was the primary object and the main theme in a work of art, then it invariably used a frontal view; while if it was the secondary object and not the main theme, then it was invariably depicted in a profile view.

(2) The view used was meant to be the characteristic view that humans generally viewed it from. Humans generally viewed the scarab beetle from above. Therefore, the scarab beetle was depicted from above in the lunar solar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30] as was the bee on the golden throne [Figs. 12]. The same applied to the fly in Egyptian art, which was generally depicted from above, as this was the most characteristic view humans had of it (Schäfer, 1974:150).



(3) The view was dictated by the position from which the viewer observed it (Schäfer, 1974:224).

When the object bearing the composition was intended to be viewed from the front, a frontal view was logically chosen. Two examples suffice. Jewellery items such as collars, pectorals and pedants were usually worn on the front of the body; thus the majority of jewellery items depicted the composition frontally. Where the composition was approached head-on, such as the wall relief in queen Nefertari's tomb [Fig. 84] in which the vulture composition was positioned above the door, a frontal view was also chosen.

When objects bearing the composition were viewed side-on (as the viewer approached the next object) a profile view was logically chosen. For example, on temple side walls flanking a hallway, such as Seti I's wall relief on his temple at Abydos [Fig. 99], the composition would be depicted in profile because the viewer would view it side-on whilst approaching the inner sanctuary head-on.

When objects bearing the composition were viewed from below, a frontal view showing the underside of the wings, torso and legs was chosen (Wilkinson, 1992:85). This was commonly found on temple ceilings where vulture and cobra compositions were extremely popular. Surviving examples are to be found on temple ceilings at Abu Simbel [Figs. 82-83], Philae [Fig. 115], Kom Ombo [Fig. 119] and Edfu [Fig. 118]. Another example features a scarab composition viewed uncharacteristically from below (it is generally depicted from above) featured on the underside of a doorway at Philae [Fig. 116].

Schäfer (1974:224) comments that a particular view of the composition could face the deceased owner: "... we find that when the picture is on the outside of the coffin the bird is shown from above ... But inside it is shown from below ... from the point of view of the dead man." Two examples of the composition featured in the tomb of Tutankhamun are designed to face the owner:

- According to Wilkinson (1971:124) the duck-headed earrings [Fig. 21] were designed so that when worn the duck-headed falcon would face the same direction as the wearer.

- An example of this is Tutankhamun's sated vulture pectoral [Figs. 23-24]. According to Carter's drawings [Fig. 134] of the placement of jewellery on Tutankhamun's mummy, the bottom view of the sated vulture pectoral [Fig. 24] faced the deceased owner while the top view [Fig. 23] faced away from the deceased. Other examples, however, do not follow this example.

Finally, although Egyptian art did not depict depth or space as we do today, it did have techniques that tried to mimic this. According to Ocvirk (1962:114) a technique to suggest space was to overlap objects so that if one object covers part of the visible surface of another, the first object would be assumed to be nearer. This can be seen on Tutankhamun's second [Fig. 1] and third coffin [Fig. 2] where a sense of space was created by having one of the vulture composition's wings overlap one of the cobra composition's wings.

#### 4.2.3 Use of hieroglyphs

Wilkinson (1992:10) states that Egyptian art frequently used hieroglyphs in its artworks: "All Egyptian hieroglyphic writing is made up of pictures, yet it is seldom realized that a great deal of Egyptian art is in turn heavily influenced by, and on many occasions made up of, hieroglyphic words and written signs."

Although this might create problems in today's world, in ancient Egypt this was not a problem because the literate Egyptian did not distinguish between words and art. Both were seen as a process of communication and as a result individual hieroglyphic signs were often used as either a part of a work of art, or as whole works of art (Johnson, 2003:22; Onians, 2004:39; Wilkinson, 1992:10). This is clearly shown in the composition, as it combines its image with hieroglyphs. The purpose of using hieroglyphs in the composition – and Egyptian art in general – was to offer a narrative explanation of what was happening in the artwork and to clarify what its purpose was (Johnson, 2003:22; Onians, 2004:39).

The hieroglyphs listed are based on the standard hieroglyphic index or 'sign list' of Wilkinson (1992) and the 'classic' of Gardiner (1988). The composition utilises hieroglyphs at two levels.

At the primary level, hieroglyphs were incorporated directly into the composition in their normal written forms (Wilkinson, 1994:151).

The hieroglyphs that form the primary elements of the composition include the falcon (a), vulture (b), cobra (c), scarab (d), ram head (e), *ba*-bird (f), duck head (g), *wedjat*-eye (h), wing (i), and *shen*-ring (j).

(a) The falcon hieroglyph (G5-G6 *bik*) [Fig. 143] was used as a determinative for 'falcon' that took on the form of the Horus falcon (Gardiner, 1988:467-468; Wilkinson, 1992:83). It featured in the falcon composition [Fig. 32].

(b) The vulture hieroglyph (G14 *neret*) [Fig. 144] was used as a determinative for 'vulture' and as a phonogram for 'mother' that took on the form of a griffin vulture and lappet-faced vulture (Gardiner, 1988:469; Wilkinson, 1992:85). It featured in the vulture composition [Fig. 11].

(c) The cobra hieroglyph (I12 *iaret*) [Fig. 148] was used as a determinative for 'uraeus' or 'snake' that took on the form of a rearing spitting cobra with spreading hood (Gardiner, 1988:476; Wilkinson, 1992:109). It featured in the cobra composition, be it as a winged cobra [Fig. 27] or as a cobra-headed vulture [Fig. 119].

(d) The scarab hieroglyph (L1 *kheper*) [Fig. 149] was used as an ideogram for 'dung-beetle' and a phonogram for 'to become' that took on the form of the large sacred scarab (*Scarabaeus sacer*) (Gardiner, 1988:477; Wilkinson, 1992:113). It featured in the scarab composition [Fig. 30].

(e) The ram-head hieroglyph (F7 *ba*) [Fig. 141] was used as a determinative for 'ram's head' that took on the form of the head of a ram with long undulating horns (*Ovis longipes palaeoegypticus*) (Gardiner, 1988:462; Wilkinson, 1992:61). It featured in the ram-headed falcon composition [Fig. 49].

(f) The human-headed *ba*-bird hieroglyph (G53 *ba*) [Fig. 145] was used as an ideogram for 'soul' that took on the form of one element of a human's soul (Gardiner, 1988:473; Wilkinson, 1992:99). It featured in the *ba*-bird composition [Fig. 31].

(g) The duck-head hieroglyph (H1 *set*) [Fig. 146] was used as an ideogram for 'bird' that took the form of the head of a pintail duck (*Anas acuta*) (Wilkinson, 1992:95). It featured in the duck-headed composition with the body of a falcon [Fig. 21].

(h) The *wedjat*-eye hieroglyph (D10 *wedjat*) [Fig. 139] is used as an ideogram or determinative for 'the *wedjat* eye', 'healthy', or 'whole' and took on the form of Horus and Ra's human or falcon eye placed above the distinctive cheek marking of the falcon (Wilkinson, 1992:43; Gardiner, 1988:451; Tiradritti, 1999: 240). It featured in the *wedjat*-eye-headed composition with the body of a falcon [Figs. 59, 62. 86].

(i) The wing hieroglyph (H5 *djenekh*) [Fig. 147] was used as a determinative for 'wing' that took on the form of a bird's wing (Gardiner, 1988:474; Wilkinson, 1992:101). As the wing of a falcon or vulture, it featured in every version of the composition.

(j)The *shen*-ring hieroglyph (V9 *shen*) [Fig. 166] was used as a determinative for 'eternity' that took on the form of a circle or ring of papyrus rope looped around into a circle and knotted at the bottom (Gardiner, 1988:522; Shaw & Nicholson, 1995:267; Andrews, 1994:76). It was depicted being grasped by either the talons of a falcon [Fig. 32] or vulture composition [Fig. 23], the wings of a vulture or cobra composition [Fig. 27], or the back legs of the scarab composition [Fig. 66].

The hieroglyphs that form the secondary elements of the composition include the: solar disc (a), lunar crescent (b), *ankh* (c), short-handled *khu*-feather fan (d), *was*-sceptre (e) white crown (f), red crown (g), double crown (h), *atef*-crown (i), sedge plant (j), lotus plant (k), papyrus plant (l) bee (m), cartouche (n), *neb*-basket (o), alabaster bowl (p), *sed* (q), *djed*-pillar (r) *wedjat*-eye (s), union (t) and *kheh* hieroglyph (u). Certain of these hieroglyphs were combined to form a composition – namely the: *neb*-basket-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition (v), alabaster bowl-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition (w), *kheb*-*sed* composition (x) and *djed*-pillar-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition (y).

(a) The solar disc hieroglyph (N5-6 *ra*) [Fig. 155] was used as an ideogram or determinative for 'sun' or 'Ra' and took on the form of the sun or the sun encircled by a cobra (Gardiner, 1988:485; Wilkinson, 1992:10, 129). It featured on the head of the

falcon [Figs. 25, 32, 52-53, 57, 69, 91], cobra [Fig. 10], scarab [Figs. 30, 47-48, 55, 58, 66, 120], and ram-headed falcon [Figs. 49, 51, 57, 78] compositions and in the *shen*-ring [Fig. 23].

(b) The lunar crescent hieroglyph (N11 *i'kh*) [Fig. 156] is used as an ideogram or determinative for 'moon' that took on the form of the crescent moon (Gardiner, 1988:486; Schumann-Antelme & Rossini, 2002:40). It featured on the head of the scarab composition [Fig. 30].

(c) The *ankh* hieroglyph (S34 *ankh*) [Fig. 163] is used as a phonogram for 'life' that took on the form of a knotted rope or sandal strap (Gardiner, 1988:508; Wilkinson, 1992:177). It was depicted connected to the *shen*-ring of the composition [Figs. 32, 37, 56].

(d) The short-handled *khu*-feather fan hieroglyph (S37 *hw*) [Fig. 164]; is used as an ideogram or determinative for 'fan', 'life', 'order', 'law', 'justice' and 'truth' (Gardiner, 1988:508; Wilkinson, 1992:37, 179). It took on the form of a short handle fan holding the single ostrich feather of Ma'at – the goddess of truth and order (Wilkinson, 1992:37, 179; Armour, 2001:179). It was depicted connected to the *shen*-ring [Fig. 9, 54, 59, 62, 78, 83, 91, 94, 104, 106, 111, 113, 115, 118, 119]. At times, three short-handled *khu*-feather fans are grouped together [Fig. 106].

(e) The *was*-sceptre hieroglyph (S40 *was*) [Fig. 165] is used as an ideogram or determinative for '*was*-sceptre', 'power', and 'dominion', took on the form of a shepherd's staff (Gardiner, 1988:509; Wilkinson, 1992:181). It was depicted grasped in the composition's wings [Fig. 11] and *shen*-ring [Figs. 87, 92, 120].

(f) The white crown hieroglyph (S1 *khedjet*) [Fig. 159] is used as an ideogram or determinative for 'the white crown' or 'the white, bright one' that took on the form of a tall conical hat (Gardiner, 1988:504; Goebis, 2001:232). It was depicted worn on the head of the composition [Figs. 11, 33, 41, 70, 118, 120].

(g) The red crown hieroglyph (S3 *deshret*) [Fig. 160] is used as an ideogram or determinative for 'red crown' that took on the form of a flat-topped hat with a high protection at the back and a long 'wire' that ended in a spiral (Gardiner, 1988:504;

Goebis, 2001:323) It was depicted worn on the head of the composition [Figs. 11, 27, 70, 115, 118-120].

(h) The double crown hieroglyph (S5 *pschent*, *shmty*) [Fig. 161] was used as the determinative for 'the double crown' or 'the two powerful ones' that took on the form of a combined white and red crown (Gardiner, 1988:504; Goebis, 2001:323; Shaw & Nicholson, 1995:74). It was depicted worn on the head of the composition [Fig. 12].

(i) The *atef* crown hieroglyph (S8 *3tf*) [Fig. 162] is used as an ideogram or determinative for 'the *atef*-crown' and was associated with universal power and dominion (Gardiner, 1988:504; Rossiter, 1979:21) It took on the form of a white crown with two ostrich feather plumes (Gardiner, 1988:504). It was depicted worn on the head of the composition [Figs. 13, 26-27, 34, 83, 87, 115, 119].

(j) The sedge hieroglyph (M23-26 *nesu*) [Fig. 153] is used as an ideogram for 'the sedge plant' that took on the form of the sedge or lily plant that grew in the Nile (Gardiner, 1988:482; Wilkinson, 1992:10). It was depicted grasped in or above the wings of the cobra composition [Figs. 12, 70] or accompanying the cobra composition [Fig. 92].

(k) The lotus hieroglyph (M9 *seshen*), [Fig. 151] was used as an ideogram or determinative for 'lotus' that took on the form of the lotus plant that grew in the Nile (Gardiner, 1988:480; Wilkinson, 1992:121). It was depicted grasped in the talons of the scarab composition [Fig. 30].

(l) The papyrus hieroglyph (M16 *mehyt*) [Fig. 152], was used as an ideogram for 'papyrus' that took on the form of the papyrus plant that grew in the Nile River and marshes (Gardiner, 1988:480; Wilkinson, 1992:123). It was depicted grasped in the talons of the scarab composition [Fig. 30] or above the wings of the cobra composition [Fig. 70].

(m) The bee hieroglyph (L2 *bit*) [Fig. 150] was used as an ideogram for 'bee' that took on the form of a bee (Gardiner, 1988:477; Wilkinson, 1992:123). It is depicted grasped by the wings of the cobra composition [Fig. 12] or accompanying the vulture composition [Fig. 92].

(n) The cartouche hieroglyph (V10 *shennu*) [Fig. 167] was used as a determinative for 'encircle' that took on the form of a lengthened *shen*-ring that encircled the king's name (Gardiner, 1988:522; Wilkinson, 1992:195). It is depicted grasped in the wings of the composition [Figs. 10, 12, 71-72, 85], connected to the *shen*-ring of the composition [Fig. 76], or accompanying the composition [Figs. 11, 29, 35, 68-69].

(o) The *neb*-basket hieroglyph (V30 *nebet*) [Fig. 168] was used as an ideogram for 'basket' and a phonogram for 'all' when presented by a god to an individual, or 'lord' or 'master' when not presented to an individual (Gardiner, 1988:525; Wilkinson, 1992:199). It took on the form of a woven wicker basket (Wilkinson, 1992:199). It is depicted as part of the *neb*-basket-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition connected to the *shen*-ring of the composition [Fig. 111].

(p) The alabaster bowl hieroglyph (W3 *shes*, *kheb*) [Fig. 169] was used as a determinative for 'alabaster bowl', 'feast', 'festival', 'lord', or 'all' (Gardiner, 1988:527; Wilkinson, 1992:203). It took on the form of a bowl of alabaster (distinguished from the similar *neb*-basket by a triangular marking) (Wilkinson, 1992:203). It is depicted as part of the alabaster bowl-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition connected to the *shen*-ring of the composition [Fig. 110].

(q) The *sed* hieroglyph also known as the 'jubilee pavilion' (O23 *sed*) [Fig. 157] was used as an ideogram for 'jubilee' or 'Sed-festival' that took on the form of two opposing pavilions each having a throne (Gardiner, 1988:495; Wilkinson, 1992:145). The hieroglyph represents the climax of the *kheb-sed* festival when the king's rule and power over Upper and Lower Egypt is renewed and rejuvenated, traditionally on the thirtieth year of the king's reign, however, several rulers celebrated it repeatedly at much shorter intervals, in a ritual activity in which the king ran around a prescribed course symbolising his taking control over the whole land of Egypt and the reaffirmation and renewal of his rule (Wilkinson, 1992:145; Wilkinson, 1994:184; Frankfort, 1978:79). This hieroglyph is depicted as part of the *kheb-seb* composition connected to the *shen*-ring of the composition [Fig. 112].

(r) The *djed*-pillar hieroglyph (R11 *djed*) [Fig. 158] was used as an ideogram for '*djed*-pillar' and a phonogram for 'stability', 'health' and 'rebirth' that possibly took on the form of a pole around which sheaves of grain were tied or perhaps a rendering of

the human backbone (Gardiner, 1988:502; Wilkinson, 1992:165; Schumann-Antelme & Rossini, 2002:92). It was depicted as part of the *djed-pillar-was-sceptre-ankh* composition connected to the *shen*-ring of the composition [Fig. 93].

(s) The previously mentioned *wedjat*-eye hieroglyph (D10 *wedjat*) [Fig. 139] also featured as a secondary element when it was placed above the head [Fig. 30, 52] or wings of the composition [Fig. 13]; or grasped by the wings [Fig. 25] of the composition.

(t) The union hieroglyph (F36) (*sema*) [Fig. 142] was used as a phonogram for 'lung' and a phonogram and determinative for 'unity' and 'union' that depicts two lungs attached to the trachea, (Gardiner, 1988:465; Wilkinson, 1992:81, 85). It is featured on the stone vase of Khasekhemwy [Fig. 95] where the vulture composition has it grasped in one of its talons.

(u) The *kheh* hieroglyph (C11) (*kheh*) [Fig. 138] was used as an ideogram for 'the god Kheh' and as a phonogram for 'a million or very great number' that was written often showing the god Kheh holding two notched palm branches in his upheld hands which was the sign for a 'year' (Gardiner, 1988:449; Wilkinson, 1992:39). It is featured on the first pectoral of Princess Sit-Hathor-Yunet [Fig. 69] where the falcon composition grasps the *Kheh* hieroglyph in one of its talons.

(v) The *neb-basket-was-sceptre-ankh* composition [Figs. 99, 103, 108, 111-112] takes the form of a grouping of an *ankh* with a *was*-sceptre on either side, resting on top of a *neb*-basket. It combines the meanings of the three hieroglyphs to state “all life and power to ...” (Wilkinson, 1992:181). At times two of these compositions are strung together [Fig. 108].

(w) The alabaster bowl-*was-sceptre-ankh* composition [Fig. 109-110] takes the form of a grouping of an *ankh* with a *was*-sceptre on either side, resting on top of an alabaster bowl. It combines the meanings of the three hieroglyphs to state “all life, power and dominion to ...” (Wilkinson, 1992:203). At times three of these compositions are strung together [Fig.110].



(x) The *kheb-sed* composition [Fig. 105, 112] combines the *sed* jubilee pavilion hieroglyph with the *shes / kheh* alabaster bowl hieroglyph to state “jubilee feast or festival” which represents the kind of alabaster bowl used in rites of purification in the festival. Sometimes the *kheb-seb* composition is combined with a *neb*-basket composition [Fig. 112] to state “I give you festivals with all life, power and dominion” (Wilkinson, 1992:145).

(y) The *djed-pillar-was-sceptre-ankh* composition [Fig. 93] takes the form of a grouping of *was*-sceptre, *djed*-pillar and *ankh*. It combines the meanings of the three hieroglyphs to state “power, dominion, stability, health and life to ...” (Wilkinson, 1992:165).

According to Wilkinson (1992:11) objects, people or even gestures may be represented in such a manner to indirectly suggest the form of hieroglyphic signs in order to spell out a symbolic message. With this in mind, the composition’s use of form, gesture and pose functioned as non-verbal communications by indirectly suggesting six hieroglyphs: the *shen*-ring, sun disc, sky hieroglyph, *kheh* hieroglyph, embrace hieroglyph, and rejoice hieroglyphs – dealt with later at the symbolic level.

#### 4.2.4 Use of placement

According to Wilkinson (2001:332) the placement of an artwork or elements within an artwork could be determined by absolute and relative placement – referring on the one hand to the specific location of a representation, object, building, or place; and on the other to the positioning or alignment of something in relation to some other representation, object, building, or place. Absolute and relative placement is evident in placement of the composition and / or elements within it.

##### 4.2.4.1 *Absolute placement*

Absolute placement of the composition is evident on objects where the composition’s central placement is not determined by any external factors, only by it being the main theme – stressed by its central placement and it being the largest element so to direct all attention to itself as the central attention marker. This sentiment is shared by van Walsem (1997a:66) pertaining to the central placement and large size of the falcon

and vulture compositions on the coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh [Figs. 52-54]: "... these features are always centrally placed in such a way that they attract attention to themselves. The most obvious ones are the ... falcons and vultures with outstretched wings across (almost) the total width of the lid." In Tutankhamun's context, the composition's absolute placement is evident on the miniature coffins of the stillborn children [Fig. 4] and the vulture bracelet [Fig. 13] where it was centrally placed because it functioned as the main theme.

#### *4.2.4.2 Relative placement*

According to Wilkinson (1994:63) relative placement occurs at a very specific, local, or 'micro level', relative to nearby objects or other figures within or around the same composition; or at times the alignment is apparent on a larger scale at a 'macro' or geographic level. This was often applied to the composition where its relative placement is determined by external factors at the micro and macro level.

##### *4.2.4.2.1 Micro level relative placement*

At the micro level relative placement of an element relative to another within a larger work of art occurred in order to attract attention to its placement and relationship relative to the other elements rather than to just itself (Wilkinson, 1994:60; Schäfer, 1974:166).

At the *micro level* the composition could be placed relative to another element within a larger work of art (a) or the secondary elements within the composition could be placed relative to composition(s) featured in a work of art (b).

(a) According to Wilkinson (1994:64) and Schäfer (1974:166) secondary elements within a larger work of art were generally placed relative to the primary element (usually the king) that served as the central attention marker in order to show a specific above-below relationship between the two. Wilkinson (2001:332) links relative placement to the composition (in the form of the falcon composition placed above the king) when he states: "... relative placement may be seen, for example in the 'prepositional' placement of representations of kings before the figures of

protective deities such as the overshadowing Horus falcon.” This can be seen in the composition when it served as a secondary element in a larger work of art – the composition taking on an above-below relationship to the king, god or individual by being placed above and / or slightly behind the individual. This above-below relationship can be seen in a Tutankhamun [Figs. 6-8, 36-37, 39-41] and non-Tutankhamun context [Figs. 59-63, 68, 81, 86, 89-90, 93-94, 96-114, 117, 121-122, 125-129].

(b) Micro level relative placement of secondary elements related to the composition is evident in certain secondary hieroglyphic elements being placed relative to the viewer’s left and right-hand sides of the composition and relative to the vulture and cobra versions of the composition – namely the white crown and red crown (i), sedge plant and papyrus plant (ii), sedge plant and bee (iii), and lotus plant and papyrus plant (iv).

(i) According to Wilkinson (1994:71) the white and red crowns were relatively placed on the respective viewer’s left and right-hand sides of objects: “Other emblems and symbols were also aligned in this way as time progressed. The Red and White Crowns appear, for example, on sacred cobras depicted on the left (north) and right (south) sides of a number of decorated coffins and mummy covers ....”

The placement of the white crown or *atef* crown and red crown relative to the respective viewer’s left and right-hand sides of an artwork, and relative to the vulture and / or cobra compositions, is evident in Tutankhamun’s ebony fan [Fig. 11], *wedjat*-eye pectoral [Fig. 26] (although the cobra does not have wings or *shen*-rings, it nevertheless wears the red crown) and Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27]. Here, the white and red crowns are not only placed relative to the viewer’s left and right-hand sides, but also relative to the vulture and cobra compositions. In non-Tutankhamun examples it can be seen on the pectoral of Amenemhet Surero [Fig. 70] where the white crown and red crown are respectively placed on cobra compositions on the viewer’s left and right-hand sides.

The relative placement of the white or *atef* crowns on the vulture composition and the red crown on the cobra composition can be seen on Tutankhamun [Figs. 26-27] and non-Tutankhamun examples [Figs. 115, 118-120].

This micro relative placement of the white and red crowns was not always obeyed – an example being a Ptolemaic wall relief featuring the cobra-headed goddess Wadjet and the vulture-headed goddess Nekhbet [Fig. 120]. Here, the cobra composition (in the form of the goddess Wadjet wearing the red crown) is placed on the viewer's left-hand side while the vulture composition (in the form of the goddess Nekhbet wearing the white crown) is placed on the viewer's right-hand side. Perhaps this was due to the foreign influence of the Greeks in the Ptolemaic period; the relaxation of canonical laws; an error on the artist's part; artistic freedom; or perhaps the photo was inverted. But this example still retains the link between the vulture composition with the white crown and the cobra composition with the red crown.

(ii) The placement of the sedge plant and papyrus plant relative to the respective viewer's left and right-hand sides of the composition and the vulture and / or cobra compositions is evident on Amenemhet Surero's pectoral [Fig. 70]. Here the sedge plant and papyrus plant are placed relative to the viewer's left and right-hand sides of the artwork featuring the two cobra compositions.

(iii) The placement of the sedge plant and bee relative to the respective viewer's left and right-hand sides of the composition is evident on Tutankhamun's golden throne [Fig. 12] which depicts a cobra composition grasping a papyrus plant and a bee in its wings. The sedge plant hieroglyph is placed to the left of the bee hieroglyph and the bee hieroglyph is placed to the right of the papyrus hieroglyph.

(iv) The placement of the lotus plant and papyrus plant relative to the respective viewer's left and right-hand sides of the composition is evident on Tutankhamun's lunar solar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30] which according to Aldred (1978:123) depicts the viewer's left-hand side talon grasping the lotus hieroglyph and the viewer's right-hand side talon grasping the papyrus plant hieroglyph in the form of a flowering rush (papyrus plant). Tiradritti (1999:236) disputes this though as he states that the plants symbolize Upper Egypt and not Lower Egypt as the left talon grasps the lotus plant

while the right talon grasps not a papyrus plant but a sedge plant – both emblems of Upper Egypt.

#### *4.2.4.2.2 Macro level relative placement*

According to Wilkinson (1994:65): “At the larger level, the four cardinal points were extremely important in the orientation of buildings .... And tombs, as well as the individual features within these structures ...The constant awareness of the great axes of north-south and east-west already mentioned had no small impact on art and architecture ...”

The Egyptians’ geographic awareness of the cardinal points could be seen in macro level relative placement where the composition could be placed by geographical factors outside the work of art – namely the north-south axis (Wilkinson, 1994:63). In the composition’s context, the placement of the vulture, cobra and falcon versions of the composition on the viewer’s respective left and right-hand sides of an artwork, could be relative to these sides being placed relative to the north-south geographic axis.

This is most evident on Tutankhamun’s third coffin [Fig. 2]. According to Wilkinson (1994:81) Tutankhamun’s coffins were placed on the west-east and north-south axes [Fig.135]. On the west-east axis the head of the coffin was placed at the west and its feet at the east; while the north-south axis split the body into a northern half (the viewer’s right half) and a southern half (the viewer’s left half) (Wilkinson, 1994:81). Each northern and southern half of the second [Fig. 1] and third coffin [Fig. 2] depict a specific version of the composition, namely the vulture composition on the southern half and the cobra composition on the northern half.

The connection of the vulture composition with south and the viewer’s left-hand side, and the cobra composition with north and the viewer’s right-hand side led to the respective compositions (when placed in pairs) generally being depicted on their respective sides or halves. This holds true in Tutankhamun [Figs. 1, 2, 5, 26-27] and non-Tutankhamun examples [Figs. 71, 92, 102]. When the vulture and falcon compositions are paired [Figs. 101, 107, 129] then the vulture composition generally

retains its position on the viewer's left-hand side, while the falcon composition is placed on the viewer's right-hand side.

#### 4.2.5 Use of orientation

Egypt's art canon had strict rules governing the orientation of elements within art. Orientation could be determined by absolute and relative orientation in which absolute orientation was dictated by a general rule pertaining to orientation, while relative orientation was dictated by some external factor such as an external feature or direction.

In the context of the composition, orientation can be seen in the direction that the head faced. In respect to orientation and the composition, only one-sided (coffins, relief works and paintings) and double-sided (e.g. jewellery) works of art featuring the composition will be referred to as they are clearly intended to be viewed from a particular side. The reason for the exclusion of most double-sided objects featuring the composition is that double-sided objects (often in the case of jewellery) are problematic because turning the object around changes the placement and orientation of the composition.

##### 4.2.5.1 Absolute orientation

Absolute orientation of the composition is evident in the fact that the composition's head generally faced the viewer's *right*. The graphical database reflects this as the majority of single compositions (thirty-three objects) placed absolutely as the main theme on one sided works of art (coffins and one-sided jewellery items only) generally face the viewer's right:

<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Figures</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Left	29, 31, 38, 71, 76	5/39	12.82
Right	4, 5, 9, 13, 26, 35, 42-46, 48-49, 51-54, 57, 65, 68, 74, 78, 83-84, 89, 91, 115, 118, 119, 123-124	31/39	79.49
Forward	10, 25, 75	3/39	7.69

This is noted by van Walsem (1997a:271) when he states the following about the falcon composition depicted in the interior of the head of Djedmonthuiufankh's coffin [Fig. 53]: "The Falcon with outstretched wings and crowned by a sun disc, is always facing left (the viewer's right)." The reason behind this orientation is generally not due to any external factors, rather it faces the viewer's right because Egyptian art generally faced the viewer's right-hand side (Malek, 1999:64). According to Wilkinson (1994:64) this reflects most ancient and modern cultures deeming that the right side was/is more auspicious than the left (often considered as sinister) due to humans generally being right-handed.

#### 4.2.5.2 *Relative orientation*

According to Malek (1999:64) relative orientation could overrule the rightwards rule due to external factors and the demands of symmetry and orientation. Relative orientation occurred at two levels: at a micro level when orientation was dictated by another element within the same artwork; and at a macro level when orientation was dictated by another artwork or architectural feature external to the artwork (Wilkinson, 1994:60).

Relative orientation of the composition and / or its head can be seen at the micro level (a) and macro level (b).

(a) At the *micro level*, the composition's orientation was dictated relative to another element within the artwork (i) or the orientation of the hieroglyphs in the artwork (ii).

(i) When the composition was a secondary element in a larger artwork, then the direction that the primary element (usually the king) faced dictated the direction that the composition faced. This can be ascertained from the following two facts:

- When occurring on its own, the composition generally faced the direction that the primary element faced (usually the king or god) – as can be seen in the following figures: 7, 36-37, 39, 40-41, 61, 81, 86, 94, 96-98, 104, 106, 108-113, 125 and 127.

- When occurring with more than one primary element, the composition generally faced the direction of the king. This can be ascertained from figures 87, 99, 105, 114 and 117 where it is the direction faced by the king and not the gods that determined the direction that the composition faced. The best example of this is the wall relief depicting the king netting wildfowl with the gods [Fig. 117]. The king is surrounded by two gods orientated in opposite directions. The king's body faces the viewer's right but his head faces the viewer's left. It is the direction that the king's head faced – not the god's or the king's body – that dictates the direction that the composition faced.

(ii) When hieroglyphic inscriptions accompanied the composition two factors could determine the direction that the composition and inscription faced:

(1) The direction that inscriptions were meant to be read could dictate the direction that the composition faced. As Egyptian inscriptions were generally intended to be read from right to left, and accompanying figures generally look towards the beginning of the inscription - this produced rightward facing figures (Wilkinson, 1994:64; Collier & Manley, 1998:7; Allen, 2000:4).

In the context of the composition, the general rightwards rule of inscriptions dictated that the composition (when accompanying inscriptions) faced the viewer's right-hand side. This can be seen on Ramses III's mummy [Fig. 78], because the demotic text faced the viewer's right-hand side it was therefore meant to be read from right to left. This resulted in the composition facing the viewer's right-hand side because this was the direction that the inscription was meant to be read from.

Conversely, at times the rightwards rule was disobeyed and hieroglyphs were meant to be read from left to right – producing leftward facing figures (Allen, 2000:4). In the context of the composition, this resulted in the composition facing the viewer's left-hand side – as can be seen in Tutankhamun's vulture pectoral [Fig. 29] where the hieroglyph in the form of a bird in the right-hand side cartouche facing the viewer's left indicated that the text (and therefore the composition) should face the viewer's left-hand side.



(2) The direction that the human or gods faced could dictate the direction that the inscription was meant to be read from because when hieroglyphs accompany pictures of human beings or the god, they normally face in the same direction as the individual they refer to (Allen, 2000:4). Thus, if the composition faced the viewer's left-hand side then this dictated that the inscription (and not the composition) should face the viewer's left and therefore be read from right to left – as can possibly be seen in Tutankhamun's vulture pectoral [Fig. 29].

(b) At the *macro level*, the orientation of an element in an artwork could be determined by an architectural work outside the artwork (Wilkinson, 1994:63). Often this involved figures on the walls of temples facing the direction where the god's sanctuary lay or towards the temple's central processional path (Wilkinson (1994:68).

This type of orientation at the macro level is evident in examples of the composition featured on temple ceilings and walls along the central hall leading to the inner sanctuary.

As a primary element on temple ceilings, the composition was orientated to point to the inner sanctuary. This can be seen on the ceiling of the central hallway that led to the inner sanctuary of Ramses II's Great Temple at Abu Simbel [Fig. 82]. Here, lines of vulture compositions collectively point the way – seemingly flying away from the entrance and down the central hall towards the inner sanctuary.

As a secondary object on temple walls, the composition's orientation was dictated by the orientation of the primary object (the king) being dictated to face the direction where the inner sanctuary lay.

#### 4.2.6 Use of scale and size

Ocvirk (1962:30) states the following regarding art and size: "Ratio implies comparison; it is expressed in size ... In a picture, the relation of one size to another is always important." In Egypt's art canon, size indicates relative importance and power (Johnson, 2003:1). In the context of the composition, the artist indicates its importance through the use of size relative to that of other elements within an artwork

When the composition is the primary element and the central attention marker within an artwork, such as the Tutankhamun's vulture bracelet [Fig. 13] and vulture pectoral [Fig. 29], then it is depicted as the largest figure to because its size indicates that it is the main theme within a work (Malek, 1999:64).

When the composition is a secondary element within a work of art, such as Tutankhamun's painted wooden box [Figs. 6-8] and Ramses III's wall relief [Fig. 109] (where importance is indicated from largest to smallest); its importance is depicted relative to its size in comparison to the size of other elements. Although its size in comparison to the primary element indicates its lesser importance, it still retains its overall importance in light of the fact that it is still one of the largest elements.

#### 4.2.7 Use of shape and pose

Ocvirk (1962:50) describes a technique called 'controlled vision' in which the artist used shape to guide the attention of the observer along certain pre-determined paths from one area to another. 'Controlled vision' is evident in frontal versions of the composition where its shape forces the viewer's eye to travel a pre-determined journey from a starting point to an ending point over one vertical axis and two horizontal axes.

The starting point is the central vertical axis composed of the head, torso and tail. The eye is drawn down the first half of the vertical axis from the head down the neck where it pauses when it encounters the first and greater horizontal axis – the wings. The up-curved wings naturally draw the eye from the wing tips down the wings to the vertical axis of the torso. The eyes are then drawn down the vertical axis of the torso to the tail where it pauses once again when it encounters the second and lesser horizontal axis – the legs, talons and *shen*-rings. The eye then moves along these final elements before the journey is terminated at the *shen*-rings. The journey of the eyes was thus pre-determined to be: head, neck, wings, torso, tail, legs, talons and *shen*-rings.

The aim of this journey was therefore to emphasise the importance of the final element that the viewer encountered – namely the *shen*-rings.

#### 4.2.8 Use of balance and symmetry

A sense of balance is often visualised in art through the use of symmetry – repeating the elements of one half in reverse on the other side of a central axis (Schäfer, 1974:226). According to Ocvirk (1962:17) the purpose of this balancing act was to create a sense of unity by bringing all elements of a work of art into equilibrium.

The Egyptians' psyche showed a strong desire for balance, symmetry and geometry. The basis for this desire arose from their observations of their topographical environment. Egypt had a uniform and balanced landscape: down the centre of the land lay the Nile River flanked on either side by the respective western and eastern river banks, deserts and mountain ranges. A sense of balance was created by balancing each symmetrical counterpart of the landscape against each other on either side of the central Nile River (Wilson, 1971a:48-50). This comes out strongly in Egyptian art which shows a faithful commitment to proportion and a careful counterpoising of elements in order to secure a harmonious balance (Wilson, 1971a:49-50).

In the context of the composition, it communicates a sense of balance and symmetry as if it was a weighing scale – a technique used by Ocvirk (1962:21) to illustrate the use of balance in art: “Perhaps the balancing of pairs can be best illustrated by a weighing scale. Visually, this scale is associated with an apparatus for weighing which has a beam poised on a central pivot (the fulcrum) so as to move freely, with a pan on each end. In using such a scale, balance is achieved not through an actual physical weighing process, but through a visual judgement on the part of the observer based upon his past experiences and his knowledge of certain principles of physics.”

The composition utilises two forms of balance identified by Ocvirk (1962:23): horizontal balance (a) and vertical balance (b).

(a) Horizontal balance involves a weighing scale where the forces are balanced left and right or horizontally with respect to the supporting cross-line (Ocvirk, 1962:23). Horizontal balance is evident in single (i) and double depictions (ii) of the composition.

(i) Single frontal compositions such as the solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32] imitate a weighing scale to create a sense of balance. The horizontal beam and pans of a weighing scale are imitated by having elements of each half of the two horizontal axes (wings; legs and *shen*-rings) counterpoised and reversed on either side of the central pivot formed by the central vertical axis (head, torso and tail).

(ii) A pair of compositions depicted in profile imitates a weighing scale to create a sense of balance by counterpoising and reversing the compositions and balancing them on either side of an imaginary or literal central axis (Ocvirk, 1962:17; Schäfer, 1974:226).

- The central axis can be imaginary as on the long side of Tutankhamun's painted wooden box [Fig. 6] where a sense of balance is created by counterpoising the vulture compositions on either side of the imaginary vertical central axis in the form of King Tutankhamun.
- The central axis can be literal as on Ahmose's battle relief [Fig. 98] where a sense of balance is created by counterpoising two identical pairs (the king at war with a respective vulture or falcon composition hovering above) on either side of a vertical bar.

(b) Vertical balance involves a weighing scale where forces are balanced vertically (Ocvirk, 1962:23) – as depicted on the coffin of Nekhthefmut [Fig. 51]. Here, the ram and falcon compositions are not paired horizontally but vertically, creating a sense of balance through the placement of the ram and falcon compositions on a single vertical axis with their wings curving in opposite directions.

According to Ocvirk (1962:17-22) the purpose of this balancing act was to create a sense of gravitational equilibrium (both halves appearing to weigh the same) that

imparted a sense of unity and harmony among all elements of an artwork – in our case, the composition.

#### 4.2.9 Use of colour

Egyptian artists used six basic colours in their art: black (a), white (b), red (c), yellow (d), green (e) and blue (f) (Wilkinson, 1994:105-106). The composition utilised all of these colours in varying degrees.

(a) Black (*kem*) (Wilkinson, 1994:109) – feathers [Fig. 50] and the scarab beetle [Fig. 50].

(b) White (*hedj, shesep*) (Wilkinson, 1994:109) – feathers [Fig. 21].

(c) Red (*deshet*) (Wilkinson, 1994:106) – the solar disc mounted on the head [Fig. 32] and surrounded by the *shen*-ring [Fig. 23]; and feathers [Figs. 21, 23, 30, 32].

(d) Yellow (*khenet, kenit*) (Wilkinson, 1994:108) – the composition generally obeys Wilkinson's (1994: 118) observation that birds in Egyptian art were often depicted as being yellow. This can be seen in the composition's vulture [Fig. 46], feather outline [Figs. 21, 23, 32] and legs [Figs. 21, 23, 30, 32]. The *shen*-ring [Fig. 23] and sun disc [Fig. 51] were also often depicted in yellow.

(e) Green (*wadj*) (Wilkinson, 1994:108) – plants [Fig. 30], feathers [Figs. 21, 30, 32] and scarabs [Fig. 30].

(f) Blue (*irtiu, khesbedj*) (Wilkinson, 1994:107) – plants [Fig.30], feathers [Figs. 23, 30 and 32] and the *shen*-ring [Figs. 21, 30 and 32].

Egyptian art generally used colours that conformed to those found in nature. Likewise, the composition also conformed to nature by using black and white for the feathers and green for the lily and lotus plants. However, Robins (2001:291) states that some Egyptian art also used non-realistic colours (red, yellow, blue and green) in the composition's feathers).

#### 4.2.10 Use of numbers

The composition is associated with the numbers one (a), two (b) and three (c).

(a) The number one is associated with the composition's one head, torso, tail, and the one time it features on objects.

(b) The number two is associated with the composition's two wings, legs and *shen*-rings; and the pairing of the composition (falcon and vulture, vulture and cobra, ram and falcon) as well as its secondary elements (white / *atef* crowns and red crown, sedge and papyrus, sedge and bee, lotus and papyrus) (Wilkinson, 1994:130-131).

(c) The number three is seen in the two sets of triad compositions featured on the coffin of Maatkare [Fig. 48], namely: (1) three scarabs; (2) ram-headed scarab, vulture and falcon.

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## CHAPTER 5: SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS

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Although an understanding of the iconographic principles behind the composition highlights how the composition and its various elements were put together, it does not answer the question as to *why* the composition was made in the first place. The composition was made to communicate its meaning through symbolism (a) and to function so that what is symbolised actually occurs (b).

(a) Egyptian art is heavily symbolic (Clark, 1959:29). The reason for this is that the artist could use symbols as a vehicle to communicate large amounts of information pertaining to their society into a limited space that could be understood by the literate and illiterate alike (Wilkinson, 2001:39, 329; Johnson, 2003:11).

In context of the composition, it frequently used the symbolic value attached to animals, plants and cosmic elements in the form of metaphors and similes to communicate many of the Egyptians' cultural, political and religious beliefs, and, by combining the various elements and their meanings to create an overarching message greater than the sum of its parts (Wilkinson, 2001:39; Collins, 2002:xix). It did so by copying Egyptian art's symbolic use of nature, religion, myth, form, hieroglyphs, relative size, location and orientation, material, colour, number and gesture to communicate its symbolic meaning (Wilkinson, 2001:330). Thus, to truly understand the underlying symbolic message, one must gain an understanding of Egyptian symbolism and how it uses iconographic principles (Johnson, 2003:22).

(b) Contemporary art is generally meant to be aesthetically pleasing. Egyptian art, however, was not only meant to be aesthetically pleasing, but primarily it also had to fulfil a practical function (Schäfer, 1974:38). This also applied to the composition where its function was not just to visually symbolise ideas, but also to ensure that it performed whatever it was depicted to be doing, so that whatever was symbolised, actually took place.

Thus, by understanding that the composition acted as a communication device that had a definite function to perform, the viewer will hopefully be able to read the composition as the Egyptians did – that it symbolised the protection of the king or individual through its connection to eternity; and that it functioned to protect the king or individual in life and death to ensure that the owner gained eternal life.

### **5.1 The composition symbolising protection**

According to various authors, the falcon (a), vulture (b), cobra (c), scarab (d), and *wedjat*-eye (e) versions of the composition, along with the *shen*-ring (f), symbolised protection.

(a) According to Tiradritti (1999:73) the falcon composition in the statuette of Raneferef [Fig. 122] symbolises protection: “... Raneferef is protected by a falcon perched behind him, its wings enfolding the king’s head and neck below the ears.”

(b) According to Watterson (1984:136), the vulture composition as Nekhbet symbolises protection: “In dynastic times, Nekhbet was elevated to the role of protectress of the King of Upper Egypt.”

(c) According to Johnson (1990:6) the cobra composition symbolised protection. He states: “The cobra goddess remained an effective symbol of royal-divine protection throughout pharaonic times.”

(d) According to Tiradritti (1999:322) the scarab composition featured in Psusennes I’s scarab pectoral [Fig. 72] symbolises protection: “This was a particularly important amulet in tombs due to the protective...value that was attributed to it.”

(e) According to Wilkinson (1992:43) the *wedjat*-eye composition symbolises protection: “the sacred eye is often depicted with wings, hovering behind kings and gods as an emblem of overshadowing protective force.”



(f) According to Tiradritti (1999:376) the *shen*-ring grasped by the winged scarab [Fig. 77] symbolised protection: “The *shen* gripped between the insect’s rear legs, symbolizes protection ...”

The composition came to symbolise protection through its use of nature (a), pose (b) and deities (c).

(a) The composition mimicked the protective behaviour displayed by the falcon and vulture towards their chicks *in nature*, and the cobra’s defensive behaviour in nature when confronted with danger.

The falcon and vulture protect their chicks from danger by either shielding their chicks with their wings or else by threatening to peck their aggressors. In this context, the vulture was very effective in its protective behaviour by drooping its wings [Figs. 23-24] to protect its chicks, or by scaring even the largest animals (elephants, hippopotami and rhinoceros) away with its formidable beak which is capable of ripping through even the toughest hide (Houlihan, 1986:42). The vulture was particularly associated with motherly protection because it became a symbol of maternal nature – as deduced from the fact that the Egyptian word for ‘mother’ (G14 *mwt*) was depicted with a vulture hieroglyph [Fig. 170] (Wilkinson, 1992:85; Wilkinson, 2003:215; Gardiner, 1988:618).

The cobra displayed protective behaviour by rearing its head up and spreading its hood and (if needed) spitting toxic and blinding venom at a distance of up to three metres to protect itself against an aggressor (Houlihan, 1996:173). The cobra’s protective connection was further strengthened by the cobra’s lidless, apparently unblinking eyes – therefore making it appear to be vigilant at all times (Houlihan, 1996:175).

(b) The composition’s *pose* symbolised protection through its wings (i) and embrace (ii) suggesting protection through an emotional winged embrace; while the cobra’s rearing pose suggested the idea of protection in defence.

(i) The composition's winged pose symbolised protection because Egyptian art used wings in the context of a mother-bird protecting her chicks as a general motif of protection – as stated by Watterson (1984:146): "... the universal symbolism of the mother-bird with wings outspread protectively over her fledglings: since, in Egypt, vultures are the birds with the largest wing-span, vulture goddesses such as Mut and Nekhbet became symbols of maternal love and protection."

(ii) The composition's winged embrace directly symbolised protection because Egyptians equated the protective behaviour of the falcon and vulture mother-bird by spreading her wings over her chicks, with the protective behaviour exhibited by humans when spreading their arms around their children and loved ones in the form of an embrace or hug (Watterson, 1984:146). Thus, embrace in Egyptian art came to directly symbolise protection.

In light of Wilkinson's (1992:51) statement: "In New Kingdom works the 'embrace' sign also seems to have been occasionally used at a secondary [indirect] level of association" – the composition's winged embrace could have symbolised protection indirectly. This can be seen in its frontal [Fig. 1] or profile [Fig. 41] pose suggesting the shape of the embrace hieroglyph (D32 *khepet* or *ieneq*) [Fig. 140] that was used as a determinative for 'embrace' or 'enclose / envelop' respectively – that took on the form of two arms reaching out in an embrace (Gardiner, 1988:453; Wilkinson, 1992:51).

(iii) In the context of the cobra, its reared up pose was used to convey protection and defence and not offence – unless provoked (Johnson, 1990:11, 17; Wilkinson, 2003:227). It is interesting to note that there is *not one* known depiction of the cobra in pre-Dynastic, early Dynastic or Old Kingdom art showing the snake with its mouth aggressively open at the moment of striking.

(c) According to Neubert (1957:238) *deities* are often depicted with wings to emphasise their protection: "... the ever-repeated motif of spreading wings conveyed the notion of protection. The guardian goddesses were winged, just as the guardian angel in the Christian religion is represented as winged."

Depictions of winged deities usually occur in a funerary context in paintings, relief works and on coffins – particularly on *rishi* coffins, which were anthropoid coffins popular in Thebes in the Second Intermediate and New Kingdom. These coffins derived their name from the Arabic word for ‘feather’ as the deities are shown embracing the deceased with their wings.

The composition symbolised protection through winged embrace [Figs. 1-2; 27, 45, 51, 122], mimicking the protective winged embrace of the gods and goddesses in Egyptian art – namely the god Monthu [Fig. 126] and the goddesses Nekhbet [Fig.1], Wadjet [Fig. 1], Isis [Fig. 2], Nephthys [Fig. 2], Nut [Fig.45] and Ma‘at [Fig. 174] (Wilkinson, 1994:26). The connection of the composition’s wings and embrace to protection is further supported by Tiradritti's (1999:237) statement that the solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32] “... depicts a falcon with its large wings outspread curving upwards as if to protect the dead pharaoh.”

The composition’s winged protection is usually depicted in one of two contexts: hovering above the king and sheltering him under its wings (a) or embracing the king in its wings in a manner similar to other deities (b).

(a) The composition (though minus the *shen*-rings at this time) was first shown hovering protectively above the king and sheltering him beneath its wings on the Early Dynastic cylinder seal [Fig. 130] and mace-head [Fig. 131] of Narmer (c. 3100 BC) where the falcon respectively sheltered the king’s name – indicated by a catfish (*n ‘r*) and a chisel (*mr*) – and the seated king (Schäfer, 1974:150-151; Hall, 1986:9). By the Old Kingdom reign of the Third Dynasty’s King Djoser, the falcon composition (now with *shen*-rings) was depicted [Fig. 96] hovering above the king and sheltering him under its protective wings while he participated in the *kheb-sed* festival. From then onwards the composition was frequently depicted protecting the king [Figs: 1-8, 27, 36-37, 39-41, 68, 81, 86, 93, 96-114, 117, 122, 125-127, 129], gods [Figs. 59, 62, 94, 120-121], and individuals [Figs. 56, 60-61, 63, 90, 123-124] in a similar manner.

(b) The composition’s embrace of the king was usually depicted from the front (i), behind (ii), or from both sides (iii).

(i) The composition embraced the king from the front – as seen on Tutankhamun’s second and third coffins [Figs. 1-2] and the solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32] worn on the front of Tutankhamun. That the composition’s embrace on Tutankhamun’s coffins conveyed the idea of protection is made clear by a prayer to the goddess Nut (also symbolised by a vulture) inscribed on two parallel strips on the lower part of Tutankhamun’s first coffin. The inscription states: “Oh mother Nut! Spread thy wings over me as the imperishable stars” (Carter, 1963b:53). This inscription refers to Spell 644 of the *Coffin Texts* that states: “Oh Nut, spread yourself over me when you enfold me with the life that belongs to you” (Faulkner, 1977:220).

(ii) The composition embraced the king from behind – as seen on the statuette of Ranefref [Fig. 122]. According to Wilkinson (1994:63-64) this was a common motif of protection that reflected the hieroglyphic formula *s3 h3.f* (‘protection behind him’) that often appeared behind the king in royal depictions.

The composition symbolising protection from behind can be traced back in time. By the Old Kingdom’s Fourth Dynasty’s reign of King Khafre, the non-composition falcon (minus *shen*-rings) took on the ‘protection from behind’ stance with the statue of Khafre [Fig. 172] when the Horus falcon offers his protection by enfolding his wings around the head and neck of the king from behind (Wilkinson, 1994:63-64). Malek (1999:104) states that this gesture in Egyptian art came to be associated with the protection of the weak by the strong. By the Fifth Dynasty’s reign of Ranefref (2448-2445 BC), the statuette of Ranefref [Fig. 122] depicts the composition (now with *shen*-rings) embracing the king from behind and this continued throughout Egypt’s history with the falcon still depicted embracing the king from behind – as in Ramses II’s (c.1279-1213 BC) colossal statue [Fig. 173] where the god Horon protects the young Ramses II from behind.

(iii) Lastly, the composition embraced the king from the front and the back – as on Tutankhamun’s Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27]. This conveyed the idea of protection from all sides.

## 5.2 Who the composition meant to protect

Now that it is understood that the composition symbolised protection, who was it that the composition was meant to protect? As was generally the case with Egyptian art, the composition as an artwork along with its protection was not accessible to the masses (Freed, 2001:128). In a funerary context, the composition and its protection was not meant to be seen or accessed by anyone but the deceased or the gods as it was sealed away in their tombs. In a non-funerary context, the composition and its protection was limited to a tiny elite made up of the king, royal family, priests, government officials and some lesser important individuals.

### 5.2.1 Kingship

According to Aldred (1978:121, 145) (when referring to the composition featured on the gold collar of King Nefernefruaten [Fig. 67]) and Tiradritti (1999:327) (when referring to composition featured on the falcon pendant of Psusennes I [Fig. 76]) – the composition seemed to have been solely intended for use by the king as all surviving examples have been found in the possession of kings.

The composition was closely connected to the king because the falcon, vulture and cobra versions of the composition served as political symbols of the king, the institution of kingship, the political and geographical notion of the kingdom, and the unity of Egypt. The symbolic association of the political versions of the composition with the king is based on the use of nature, pose, mythology, religion, the king's title, politics, placement and numbers.

#### 5.2.1.1 *Use of nature*

In order to understand much of the composition's symbolism, it is vital to understand nature's influence on Egyptian art's use of symbolism. Schäfer (1974:6) states: "A man who also knows the nature of the land can hope to throw a footbridge over that chasm, and to look at the ancient works in something approaching the total context from which they emerged." The composition demonstrates the Egyptian artists' use of animal metaphors to symbolise and communicate their ideas and concepts of reality

by taking a complex concept and connecting it to a simple one by weaving flesh and bone around it in the form of an animal whose aspects, characteristics or roles somehow connected with it. By doing so, this makes the mystical, enigmatic and indefinable recognisable, approachable and understandable (Silverman, 2001:370).

The Egyptians used certain animals as political symbols for the king, kingship and the state (Houlihan, 2002:97; Teeter, 2002b:341).

In the context of the composition, the reason for the falcon (a), vulture (b) and cobra (c) versions of the composition being used as political symbols for the king was that their display of power, size and behaviour in nature made them fitting symbols for the power of the king.

(a) The falcon's characteristics and behaviour in nature made it a fitting symbol for the king in Egyptian art as animal metaphors and similes were often employed to refer to the king (Teeter, 2002a:265). The intimate connection of the king with the falcon is illustrated by the ceremony at the Horus temple at Edfu where a falcon was selected from a flock of falcons and crowned as an incarnation of the king (Teeter, 2002b:356-357).

The initial basis for equating the falcon with the king came from the association of the falcon's power in nature with the power of the king. Both the king and the falcon were the masters of their domain – the falcon the master of the sky and the king the master of the political realm. The Peregrine falcon's (the chief model for the Horus falcon) association as the king of birds and the master of the sky is acknowledged by bird expert Gooders (1975:106) in his statement: "The king of the falcons ... The Peregrine is a superb bird, the master of the air, incapable of being out-flown. It can dive, turn, break and jink in a way that no other species can equal. Other falcons are larger and more powerful, but none are so masterful."

The ancient Egyptians shared Gooders' sentiments regarding the falcon and made it a symbol of the king.

The falcon's size and strength in comparison with other birds directly equated it with the king – whose power and strength was suggested in Egyptian art by depicting him as the largest human. At the time physical size was directly equated with physical strength (Schäfer, 1974:231; Wilkinson, 1994:38). This can be seen in Spell 245 of the *Pyramid Texts* where King Unas compares his strength to that of the falcon: “My wings grow strong like the wings of a falcon ...” (Teeter, 2002a:266).

Furthermore, the falcon's destruction of its prey was equated with the powers of the king. The king's function was to defend his fellow Egyptians by maintaining order (*ma'at*) by repelling chaos (*isfet*) – often symbolised by his foreign enemies who threatened the order of Egypt (Frankfort, 1978:51; Menu, 2001:424). While hunting, the falcon hovered motionlessly in the sky and when spotting its prey (usually a smaller bird or a rodent) it swooped down on it, killing it instantly with a 160km/h strike to the base of the neck, before carrying it away in its talons (Watterson, 1984:98; Gooders, 1975:106). In the minds of agricultural Egyptians, the falcon became a beneficent maintainer of order as it destroyed vermin – and especially their traditional enemy, the rat, which threatened their livelihoods. Like the king, the falcon also maintained order by ridding Egypt of the rat, which symbolised destruction and chaos and was believed to be the enemy of the sun (Bonwick, 1956:228, 235).

According to Teeter (2002a:266) – who quotes Edgerton & Wilson<sup>1</sup> – the association of the falcon with the king can be found in the texts featured at Medinet Habu dating to Ramses III's reign where the narrator compares the fierceness of the king with that of the falcon:

- “Like a divine falcon when he sighted small birds at a [hole]...”
- “... like a falcon, furious when he sees small birds”
- “... like a falcon among little birds and small fowl”
- As claimed by the enemy: “He [the king] is after us like a divine falcon”
- “... like a falcon among small birds, for he crushes millions.”

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<sup>1</sup> Edgerton, W; Wilson, J. 1936. *Historical records of Ramses III: the texts in Medinet Habu*, Volumes 1-2, pp. 16, 61, 77, 83, 117. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Thus, because of its natural characteristics, the falcon (like the eagle that became the standard of Caesar and all future Roman emperors) became a symbol for the king and the concept of kingship in both Upper and Lower Egypt by Narmer's reign (c. 3100 BC) – evident on the Narmer palette [Fig. 133] where the falcon dominates the head of the king's defeated enemy.

(b) The vulture's characteristics and behaviour in nature made it a fitting symbol for the king in Egyptian art, because both were masters of their domain. Gooders (1975:92) confirms this with his statement about the vulture: "They are master in the air."

The vulture's huge size (i), strength, display of power (ii), ability to frighten off even the largest animals and birds (iii) and its feasting on the king's enemies (iv) were associated with the strength and power of the king.

(i) The Egyptian vulture and the Lappet-faced vulture – with a wing span of up to 290cm – were the largest birds capable of flight in Africa and the ancient near east, and were the most powerful, dominant and aggressive of all carrion birds (Houlihan, 1986:42).

(ii) When the Lappet-faced vulture swooped down to feed at a kill site, it would display its power to other carrion birds by partially outstretching its wings and dropping its primary feathers to force other birds to give way. It is interesting to note that among their own kind, vultures have a pecking order based on the size and power of their beaks (Houlihan, 1986:42; Gooders, 1975:92). According to Houlihan (1986:42) the aggressive and dominant display of power exhibited by the vulture with its drooped feather display did not go unnoticed by the Egyptians and can be seen in Tutankhamun's sated vulture pectoral [Figs. 23-24]. Houlihan comments: "This impressive posture was not accidental, but suggests the attitude that several of the large vulture species adopt when they are either threatened or showing their dominance over other birds."



(iii) When attacking or defending itself, the Lappet-faced vulture could be extremely dangerous. It could frighten off and victimise even the largest animal and bird on earth as its powerful beak could tear open elephant, hippopotamus and rhinoceros hide or feast on the eggs of ostriches by either picking them up and smashing them on the ground, or else picking up stones and using them to smash the egg open (Houlihan, 1986:42; Gooders, 1975:92).

(iv) The carrion-eating vulture appeared in large flocks from all directions whenever a carcass was spotted at a kill sight (Gooders, 1975:92). The association between vulture and king was evident as the sight of vultures feasting on the bodies of the king's defeated enemies after a battle linked the king's success in war with the appearance of vultures, and it even created a sense that the vulture approved of the king's success in war. The Egyptians' equation of vultures with the king's success in war can be deduced from the following text quoted by Teeter (2002a:268) from the *Vienna Demotic Papyrus 6165* which compares the Egyptian soldiers' destruction of their enemy to that of a vulture: "They [the troops] rushed to the [slaughter] like vultures, they attacked like panthers" (Lichtheim, 1980:155). The earliest visual depiction of this relationship can be found on the battlefield palette of Narmer [Fig. 132] where vultures swoop down to devour Narmer's defeated enemies.

(c) The cobra's size (i), display of power and behaviour (ii) in nature made it a fitting symbol for the king and kingship in Egyptian art.

(i) In terms of size, the *ureaus* as the Egyptian cobra and the Black-necked spitting cobra were the largest snakes in Egypt and the largest cobras in Africa (Marais, 2004:102, 110).

(ii) In terms of power, the Egyptian cobra and Black-necked spitting cobra were the deadliest and most powerful snakes in Egypt and in deed the world. In terms of deadliness, their potent deadly neurotoxic venom can quickly bring about paralysis and death (Marais, 2004:103, 111). In terms of power, when provoked by rearing up its head, spreading its hood, making a hissing sound, and (in the case of the Black-necked spitting cobra) spitting a blinding spray of venom into the eyes of its victims that can cause permanent blindness (Houlihan, 1996:173; Marais, 2004:111).

### 5.2.1.2 *Use of pose*

In Egyptian art, the king was traditionally depicted in an idealized upright or seated posture noted for its rigid and impersonal pose in order to express the king's strength, royalty, majesty, priestliness, and culture (Mysliwiec, 2001b:235; Tiradritti, 2002:25). In a similar manner, the falcon (a) and cobra's (b) natural poses were altered to mimic the traditional pose of the king and to enhance their parallel symbolism with the king.

(a) According to Schäfer (1974:10-11), up till the First Dynasty's reign of Djer (c. 3100), the falcon was depicted leaning forward in a natural posture based on keen observation of the natural stance of the bird. However, during Djer's reign it was depicted standing upright in the pose of a ruler.

(b) The posture of the cobra was also altered in pre-Dynastic times to make it more regal and king-like (Schäfer, 1974:11). Previously, the cobra was depicted as slithering along the ground – the way it generally does in nature. However, during this period, the lowly posture of the cobra was abandoned in favour of the upright posture that the cobra takes when it is provoked and preparing to attack – as seen in the cobra composition in Tutankhamun's Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27].

### 5.2.1.3 *Use of religion and mythology*

In ancient Egypt, animals had an important role to play in religion, myth and magic. Houlihan (2002:102) comments: "The ancient Egyptians invested certain members of the animal world with divine attributes; moreover, gods and goddesses could manifest themselves in animal guise." Three versions of the composition symbolised the composition's close association with the king and kingship by serving as the zoomorphic (animal form) and therianthrope (mixed animal-human form) symbols of gods and goddesses closely associated with the king and kingship; namely the falcon (a), vulture (b), and cobra (c).

(a) The falcon as the zoomorphic and therianthrope form for the gods Ra (i) and Horus (ii) served as the main symbol of the king and the institution of kingship.

(i) The falcon composition as the god, Ra was a symbol of divinely ordained kingship due to his role in mythology and history. In Egyptian mythology Ra initiated the institution of kingship as he was the first king of the gods to reign on earth in primordial times before departing earth for the heavens to rule as king of the universe – in so doing initiating the solar cycle of the sun (Watterson, 1984:60; Quirke, 1992:3; Wilson, 1971a:58). In Egyptian history, Ra was closely linked with the king and the institution of kingship. As from the Fourth Dynasty, the king claimed to be descended from the sun god, Ra and referred to himself as the “son of Ra” (Müller, 2001:123).

(ii) The falcon composition as the god Horus was a symbol of the king and the institution of earthly kingship due to Horus’s role in mythology – as stated by Allen (2000:64: “The falcon is emblematic of Horus, the god of kingship.” In the Egyptian Osiris myth Horus became a symbol of the royal heir succession and legitimate kingship Meltzer, 2001:119-120). Osiris, the first king of humans, was murdered by his brother, Seth so that he could become king. As the son of Osiris, Horus defended legitimate kingship by defeating his father’s murderer and contesting his right to be king at the court of Geb (the Ennead). Eventually, Ra, as the king of the gods, determined that Horus (as the son of Osiris) was the rightful king of Egypt (Foster, 2001:145; Armour, 2001: 80-85). Furthermore, it was Horus who appointed the first human king of Egypt as his terrestrial incarnation (Tiradritti, 1999:327; Watterson, 1984:102).

(b) The vulture as the zoomorphic and therianthrope form of the goddesses Nekhbet (i), Nut (ii), and Mut (iii) had strong symbolic connections with the king and kingship (Houlihan, 1986:42).

(i) In mythology the vulture goddess Nekhbet (*nhbt*) was closely connected to the king and the institution of kingship (Allen, 2000:65). Due to the vulture’s connection with motherhood, the vulture goddess Nekhbet became the divine protector and mythical mother of the king of Upper Egypt, attending the future king’s birth (and all royal births in general), breast-feeding the baby king, and attending his coronation (Watterson, 1984:136-137; Johnson, 1990:101; Vassilika, 1995:7).

(ii) In mythology, the vulture goddess (as the sky goddess Nut) was closely connected to the king. In the *Pyramid Texts* the king hoped to ascend to the stars after his death and be reborn into the afterlife through the birth canal of Nut. More about this later.

(iii) In mythology the goddess Mut (worshipped in pre-dynastic times in the form of a griffon vulture) was connected to the king due to Mut being the queen of the gods and the wife of Amun – the king of the gods (Watterson, 1984:146; Armour, 2001:180).

(c) The cobra as the zoomorphic and therianthrope form of the goddess Wadjet (*w3dt*) was closely connected to kingship in mythology as she (along with Nekhbet) was a nurse to the future king, breast-fed him, and attended his coronation (Johnson, 1990:101; Allen, 2000:65).

#### 5.2.1.4 Use of the king's title

The close connection between the composition and the king can be seen in the king's title. Like that of all kings from the Fifth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom period onwards, Tutankhamun's official title was made up of five names – the first four he received at his coronation while the fifth was given to him at birth (Leprohon, 2001:409; Allen, 2000:64).

(1) The first name *Ka-nakht tut-mesut* ('strong bull, fitting of created forms') is known as the 'Horus name' because the name is written within a *serekh* (a schematic rendering of the palace) with the Horus falcon perched above it (Frankfort, 1978:46; Reeves, 1990:25; Allen, 2000:64).

(2) The second name *Nefer-khepu segereh-tawy sekhetep-netjeru nebu* ('dynamic of laws, who calms the Two Lands, who propitiates all the gods') is called the 'Two Ladies name' and is written next to the Nekhbet vulture and the Wadjet cobra of Upper and Lower Egypt (Leprohon, 2001:409-410; Reeves, 1990:25; Allen, 2000:65).

(3) The third name *Wetjes-khau sekhetep-netjeru* ('who displays the regalia, who propitiates the gods') is called the 'Golden Horus name' and is written with a falcon

and the hieroglyph for gold (Leprohon, 2001:409-410; Reeves, 1990:25; Allen, 2000:65).

(4) The fourth name *nesu-bity Nebkheprurer* ('dual king, the lordly manifestation of Ra') is called the *nesu-bit* or 'He who belongs to the sedge and the bee' name that precedes the king's prenomen (throne name) and is encircled in a cartouche (Leprohon, 2001:409-410; Reeves, 1990:25; Allen, 2000:65)

(5) The fifth name *sa-Ra Tutankhamun kheqa-Iunu-shema* ('Son of Ra, living image of Amun, ruler of Upper Egyptian Heliopolis') is called the 'Son of Ra name' that precedes the king's nomen (birth name) and is encircled in a cartouche (Leprohon, 2001:409-410; Reeves, 1990:25; Allen, 2000:65)

The falcon composition as Horus is linked to the king's title because the falcon is employed in the 'Horus name' and the 'Golden Horus name' to indicate that the king is the human incarnation of Horus; while as Ra, the falcon is linked to the 'Son of Ra name' to establish a connection between the earthly king and the heavenly king (Allen, 2000:65). The vulture and cobra compositions are linked to the king's title in the 'Two Ladies name' to indicate that the king was the ruler over both Upper and Lower Egypt (Allen, 2000:64-65). Finally, the composition's secondary elements of the sedge and bee hieroglyphs are connected to the king's title in his 'He who belongs to the sedge and the bee' name.

#### *5.2.1.5 Use of Egypt's political boundaries*

Politically, pre-dynastic Egypt was chiefly divided into two independent kingdoms: a southern kingdom known as Upper Egypt with its ancient capital of Hierakonpolis (Nekhen) that stretched from Memphis to the first cataract; and a northern kingdom known as Lower Egypt with its ancient capital of Buto that stretched from Memphis, through the Nile delta to the Mediterranean coast (Ancient Egypt: Myth and History, 2001:392). By the First Dynasty, and in subsequent periods characterised by unity, stability, prosperity and strong leadership (the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom) Upper and Lower Egypt were united under a single king ruling from a single capital – generally Memphis or Thebes (Allen, 2000:22). In times of

disunity, foreign invasion, droughts and weak leadership (the intermediate periods) Upper and Lower Egypt reasserted their independence, each half being ruled by a king based at his respective capital (Hawkes, 1967:27-28).

In the context of the composition, Egyptian religion and politics were inseparable. This resulted in the falcon, vulture and cobra compositions' religious and mythological properties spilling over into politico-historical iconography. Each of the three previously mentioned versions of the composition came to symbolise the geographical area ruled over by the king. The vulture composition thus symbolised Upper Egypt (a), the cobra composition symbolised Lower Egypt (b), and the falcon composition symbolised Lower Egypt (c).

(a) The vulture composition was connected to Upper Egypt and its king, because they shared the same seat of power (i), and wore the same crown (ii), and colour (iii).

(i) Both the vulture goddess, Nekhbet and the king of Upper Egypt had their seats of power at Hierakonpolis (Nekhbet at her cult centre and the king at his palace) – one of the earliest capitals of Upper Egypt (Wilkinson 1999:48-50; Wilkinson, 2003:213-214). As religion influenced politics and vice versa, the goddess Nekhbet became closely connected with the king of Upper Egypt and the geographic area under his control (Wilkinson, 2003:214).

(ii) The vulture composition symbolised Upper Egypt and its king as it was depicted wearing the king's white crown [Figs. 11, 33 and 41 pertaining to Tutankhamun; and figs. 118 and 120 pertaining to non-Tutankhamun examples] or alternatively the *atef* crown that was also worn by the king [Figs. 13, 26 and 34 pertaining to Tutankhamun; and figs. 87, 115 and 119 pertaining to non-Tutankhamun examples].

(iii) The use of the colour white in Nekhbet's title 'the white one of Nekhen' symbolised its connection with Upper Egypt and its king, as white was the royal colour of Upper Egypt and its royal treasury was called 'The White House' (Watterson, 1984:137; Baikie, 1929:57; Weigall, 1925:86).

(b) The cobra composition symbolised Lower Egypt. Like the vulture composition, the cobra composition was connected to Lower Egypt as it shared the same seat of power (i) and crown (ii) associated with the king of Lower Egypt.

(i) Both the cobra goddess, Wadjet and the king of Lower Egypt had their seats of power at Buto (Wadjet at her cult centre and the king at his palace). Buto was one of the earliest capitals of Lower Egypt (Johnson, 1990:3). As religion influenced politics and vice versa, the goddess Wadjet became closely connected with the king of Lower Egypt and the geographic area under his control.

(ii) The cobra composition symbolised Lower Egypt and its king as it was depicted wearing the king's red crown (Fig. 27 pertaining to Tutankhamun and figs. 115 and 118-120 pertaining to non-Tutankhamun examples) while the colour red related to Lower Egypt because red was its royal colour and its royal treasury was called 'The Red House' (Weigall, 1925:85; Baikie, 1929:56).

(c) In ancient politics and mythology, the falcon composition could at times symbolise Lower Egypt because pre-dynastic Upper and Lower Egypt were originally not symbolised by the vulture and cobra, but rather by the falcon of Horus and the Seth animal of Seth. In pre-dynastic Egypt the Upper Egyptian confederation had its first capital at Naqada where the seat of power was presided over by the storm god Seth (symbolised by a long-snouted animal, perhaps a wild pig); while the Lower Egyptian coalition had its capital at Behdet where the falcon god Horus had his cult centre. These two gods soon came to be regarded as personifications of the Two Lands, even when the southern and northern capitals moved to Hierakonpolis and Buto respectively and their respective vulture goddess Nekhbet and cobra goddess Wadjet became the dominant political symbols; the Seth animals and Horus falcon remained part of Egyptian political tradition as symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt (Aldred, 1984:78; Griffiths, 1960:142).

Finally, the *shen*-ring held by the political compositions also served to symbolise the king's rule over all of existence because the *shen*-ring signified the entire circuit of the sun over which the king ruled (Aldred, 1978:117). This is due to the *shen*-ring's circular form which symbolised everything that the sun encircled in its twenty-four

hour journey across the sky and is thus an indication of the king's rule and mastery over everything – including the universe (Wilkinson, 1992:193; Andrews, 1994:76-77). Thus, when the political versions of the composition offer the *shen*-ring to the king – such as the vulture and cobra compositions offering the *shen*-ring to Merenptah [Fig. 102]; and the vulture and falcon composition offering the *shen*-ring to Seti I [Fig. 101] – it symbolises Nekhbet of Upper Egypt and Wadjet or Horus of Lower Egypt offering the king dominion over their respective halves of Egypt and the entire world. This sentiment is supported by Watterson (1984:137): “Whenever Nekhbet was used as a motif in jewellery, she held in her claws the hieroglyphic sign which means *shen* ‘to encircle’, and denotes that Nekhbet offers the King sovereignty over all that the sun encircles. Even the cobra-goddess, [Wadjet], could sometimes be equipped with claws in which to hold a *shen*-sign so that she, too, might offer the King mastery over the world.”

#### 5.2.1.6 Use of unity

The unification of both halves of Egypt under a single king by the First Dynasty was an important part of Egyptian history and stood behind much of the ritual and ideology of Egyptian kingship (Wilkinson, 1992:81). Through unity the king brought order (*ma'at*) to Egypt in the form of prosperity, good leadership, success in war, and stability typified in the periods when Egypt was united under a single king (Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom period). This was an important part of the king's god-given role as the maintainer of order, victory, prosperity, equilibrium, truth and justice by his repelling of chaos (*isfet*) – which in a political and historical context took on the form of the disunity, weak leadership, internal strife, poverty and foreign invasions typified by the intermediate periods when Egypt reverted to two independent halves ruled by two competing kings (Menu, 2001:424; Malek, 1999:61).

To visually communicate and symbolise the unity of Egypt under a single king who ruled over both Upper and Lower Egypt, the Egyptian artist often made use of emblematic animal pairs representing the separate parts of Egypt (Houlihan, 2002:97; Aldred, 1984:78).



The symbolism of unity can be seen in the composition by the pairing of the composition (a) or by depicting a single composition (b).

(a) The *pairing* of the political versions of the composition symbolised a united Egypt. This involved the pairing of the vulture composition of Upper Egypt with the cobra composition of Lower Egypt (i) or the falcon composition of Lower Egypt (ii); or the pairing of the same composition but with elements referring to both halves of Egypt (iii).

(i) The pairing of the vulture and cobra versions of the composition – symbols of the southern goddess Nekhbet and the northern goddess Wadjet – symbolised the united rule of a single king over both Upper and Lower Egypt (Wilkinson, 1994:66).

Unity was symbolised by the vulture and cobra composition pair of Upper and Lower Egypt wearing their respective regions' white and red crowns (as shown on Tutankhamun [Fig. 27] and non-Tutankhamun examples [Figs. 115, 118-120]; or they could be paired without crowns (as shown in Tutankhamun [Figs. 1-2] and non-Tutankhamun examples [Fig. 102]. Figure 102 in particular, effectively symbolised the unity of Egypt under one king by its depiction of the vulture composition of Upper Egypt and the cobra composition of Lower Egypt hovering above King Merenptah.

(ii) The pairing of the vulture and falcon versions of the composition expressed a united Upper and Lower Egypt under one king – as shown in the Non-Tutankhamun items [Figs. 101, 129] that feature the vulture composition of Upper Egypt and the falcon composition of Lower Egypt hovering above the king that ruled over both halves.

(iii) The final form of pairing involved the pairing of two identical versions of the composition that refer to both halves of Egypt by depicting them wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt. This can be seen on Tutankhamun's ebony fan [Fig. 11] and the non-Tutankhamun pectoral of Amenemhet Surero [Fig. 70] where the respective vulture and cobra pairs of the composition wear the white and red crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The pairing of political versions of the composition served to create a sense of unity by not focussing on their differences (which would have been expressed if the versions of the composition had been depicted with their backs to each other) but on their complementary nature and their need for co-operation. This was achieved by depicting the political versions of the composition facing each other – as on Tutankhamun’s second and third coffins [Figs. 1-2] – or having each half of the political pairing offering the *was*-sceptre hieroglyph denoting 'power' to the other half’s heraldic plant emblem – as seen on the barque shrine of Senusret I [Fig. 92]. Here the vulture composition of Upper Egypt offers its *was*-sceptre to Lower Egypt’s heraldic emblem of the bee while the cobra composition of Lower Egypt offers its *was*-sceptre to Upper Egypt’s heraldic emblem of the sedge plant. Rather than focusing on the essential differences between the two halves of the pair, through the alignment of opposites this symbolism intended to stress their complementary nature and to express unity and co-operation in which each half of Egypt supported each other (Wilkinson, 1994:129).

An interesting observation is that at times when the cobra is paired with a vulture composition to make a statement of unity, the cobra is not depicted grasping a *shen*-ring – as seen in Tutankhamun [Figs. 15, 20, 22, 26] and non-Tutankhamun items [Fig. 71]. Although it is winged, the absence of the *shen*-ring means that the cobra in this context cannot be classified as the composition. No explanation for this dilemma has been offered by any sources.

(b) The symbolism of unity can be seen in the depictions of a *single* composition that symbolised the unity of both halves of Egypt under a single king in the form of the falcon (i), a composition wearing the double crown (ii), a single composition grasping the heraldic emblems of Upper and Lower Egypt in its talons (iii), or a composition grasping the hieroglyph for unity (iv).

(i) The falcon composition could symbolise a united Egypt under a single king as the falcon was a symbol of religious and political unity – long before the unification of Egypt, Horus had achieved the status of royal god par excellence that made the pharaoh the king of all Egypt (Wilson, 1971b:84). This was due to the fact that Horus had important sanctuaries in both halves of the country in cities that were seats of

power for the native rulers – by virtue of which he became the patron deity of both lines of kings (Watterson (1984:100).

The falcon was a symbol of religious unity because falcons were numerous across Egypt, and thus falcons were universally worshipped at many places and under many different names as the zoomorphic form of various gods in both Upper and Lower Egypt (Watterson, 1984:98). In Upper Egypt the falcon was worshipped in: Hierakonpolis as Horus the Elder or Nekheny (the earliest falcon god); in Kom Ombo as Horus; in Hermonthis as Monthu; and in Edfu as Bekhedet and Horus (Watterson, 1984:98-108; Tiradritti, 1999:376; Meltzer, 2001:119-120). In Lower Egypt the falcon was worshiped in Memphis as Sokar; in Letopolis as Khentykhem, Heliopolis as Horakhty; and Behdet as Horus of Behdet (Meltzer, 2001:120; Watterson, 1984:98-108; Tiradritti, 1999:376; Meltzer, 2001:119-120). Due to having various kings in each half of Egypt ruling from capitals that had cult centres devoted to worshipping falcon gods, the falcon was adopted as the patron god of both lines of kings, becoming a symbol of political and religious unity par excellence – a fact supported by one of Horus' compound names being *Hr-sm3-t3wy* ('Horus Uniter of the Two Lands') (Meltzer, 2001:119).

(ii) The composition symbolised a united Egypt when depicted wearing the double crown of Egypt that symbolised the union of Upper and Lower Egypt under a single king (Rossiter, 1979:21). This can be seen on Tutankhamun's golden throne [Fig. 12] where the snake composition wears the double crown.

(iii) The composition symbolised a united Egypt when depicted grasping the heraldic emblems of Upper (sedge and lotus plants) and Lower Egypt (papyrus plant and bee) in its wings or talons.

Tutankhamun's golden throne [Fig. 12] depicts the cobra composition grasping the sedge plant and bee hieroglyphs in its wings. The sedge plant hieroglyph symbolised Upper Egypt as the plant thrived in the upper Nile valley of Upper Egypt while the bee hieroglyph symbolised Lower Egypt as it was used in one of the titles of the king of Lower Egypt – namely, the 'Bee Man' or 'Honey Man' (Wilkinson, 1992:10, 101, 123; Baikie, 1929:56).

Tutankhamun's lunar and solar pectoral [Fig. 30] depicts the scarab composition grasping the lotus plant and papyrus plant hieroglyphs in its respective viewer's left-hand and right-hand talons. The lotus plant hieroglyph symbolised Upper Egypt from the New Kingdom as it thrived in the Nile of Upper Egypt (Wilkinson, 1992:10, 121; Bierbrier, 1999:92). The papyrus plant hieroglyph symbolised Lower Egypt as it thrived in the Nile delta of Lower Egypt and served as one of the titles of the king of Lower Egypt – namely, the 'Reed Man' (Wilkinson, 1992:101, 123; Baikie, 1929:56).

(iv) The composition symbolised unity when it was depicted grasping the union hieroglyphic sign that underscored the king's uniting rule (Wilkinson, 1992:81). This can be seen on a stone vase of Khasekhemwy [Fig. 95]. The Nekhbet vulture composition grasps a *shen*-ring in one talon; while the other talon grasps the *sema* hieroglyph (a hieroglyph in the form of two lungs attached to the trachea) for 'unity' and 'union' and ties around it a knot of the heraldic sedge and papyrus plants together. Through the action of the Nekhbet vulture offering the *sema* hieroglyph to the king's Horus name (depicted to the left-hand side of the *sema* hieroglyph) while the figure of a defeated rebel is depicted to the composition's right-hand side; this symbolically spelt the concept of *sema-tawy* ('Union of the Two Lands') (Wilkinson, 1992:81, 85).

#### 5.2.1.7 Use of direction and orientation in placement

It is not often understood why the political pairings of the composition (vulture, cobra and falcon compositions) and certain secondary elements (sedge, lotus, papyrus and bee) were assigned specific areas in artworks (as described in the previous chapter). The answer lies in the fact that they held cardinal symbolic value based on their geographic and political symbolism and this dictated that they must be placed on the specific area that corresponds to their cardinal value.

The Egyptians understood the concept of direction in much the same way as we do. The Egyptian visualised direction as if he were lying on his back with his head pointing downstream of the Nile (North) and his feet pointing upstream (South). He experienced two great axes, namely:

- The east-west axis of the sun's journey across the sky where his left-side (the viewer's right-hand side) was associated with east and his right-side (the viewer's left-hand side) was associated with west (Wilkinson, 1994:60; Wilson, 1971a:51-52) – a fact supported by the fact that in Egyptian, the words for 'left' and 'east' (*j3bt*) are the same while the word for 'west' (*jmnt*) can also mean 'right' (Allen, 2000:21).
- The south-north axis of the flow of the Nile River where the head was associated with north and the feet with south (Wilkinson, 1994:60; Wilson, 1971a:51-52).

As regards the political versions of the composition – the vulture composition as the vulture goddess Nekhbet of Upper Egypt (the southern half of Egypt) would be associated with his feet and the southern cardinal point; while the cobra composition as the cobra goddess Wadjet of Lower Egypt (the northern half of Egypt) would be associated with his head and the northern cardinal point (Vassilika, 1995:7, 9)

Cardinal alignment of the composition can be seen in one of two contexts – literal alignment where the composition was placed according to the actual north-south axis (a) and figurative alignment where the composition was placed on the viewer's left or right-hand side of an artwork that symbolised south and north respectively (b).

(a) Literal cardinal alignment can be seen on Tutankhamun's second and third coffins [Figs. 1-2] – as the excavator Carter (1963b:100) states: "The mummy itself was carefully orientated east and west and ... the insignia were so placed on it as to agree in position with the Two Kingdoms, Upper and Lower Egypt."

The genesis of literal cardinal alignment began in the Old and Middle Kingdom periods where the coffin would generally be placed on the north-south axis with the mummy's head at the north, feet at the south and the body placed on its side so that the head would face east (the direction from which the sun rises) symbolising the area to look to in the hope of rebirth and resurrection (Wilkinson, 1994:65; Davis, 1989:7-8). Conversely, from the New Kingdom period the coffin and mummy were placed on the west-east axis with the head at the west and the feet at the east so that the mummy's head pointed towards the west – the direction that symbolised the area

where the sun died every night and where the deceased went upon death in the hope of resurrection (Wilkinson, 1994:80).

In the case of Tutankhamun's second and third coffins [Figs. 1-2], they were laid east-west with the head towards the west and bisected vertically into two halves [Fig. 135]: a northern half (the viewer's right-hand side of the coffin) and a southern half (the viewer's left-hand side of the coffin) (Wilkinson, 1994:81; Neubert, 1957:243).

Because of their cardinal symbolism with north and south, the vulture composition of Upper Egypt and the cobra composition of Lower Egypt were placed respectively on the southern half (viewer's left-hand side) and northern half (viewer's right-hand side) of the coffins to correspond with their regions. Neubert (1957:243) explains: "The serpent, Buto, stood for Upper Egypt and the vulture, Nechbet, for Lower Egypt. The king's mummy was laid east-west with the head towards the west, while Buto was placed to the right and the vulture to the left so that each could face its own region."

This fact is further supported by the other insignia placed on the southern and northern halves of the coffins. The vulture and cobra diadem (i), *kheka* crook and *nekhekh* flail (ii) and the goddesses Isis and Nephthys (iii) were cardinally aligned according to their symbolic associations with south and north. .

(i) The vulture and cobra diadem on the king's brow, as symbols of southern Upper Egypt and northern Lower Egypt, were correctly placed on the respective southern (viewer's left-hand side) and northern (viewer's right-hand side) halves of the coffins.

(ii) Although they are crossed at the chest, the *kheka* crook and *nekhekh* flail as symbols of south and north are correctly aligned to their cardinal points as the *kheka* crook is held by the right hand placed on the southern half of the coffin (viewer's left-hand side) while the *nekhekh* flail is held by the left hand placed on the northern half of the coffin (viewer's right-hand side) (Wilkinson, 1994:81).

(iii) The goddesses Isis and Nephthys as symbols of south and north are correctly aligned to their cardinal points with Isis placed on the southern half of the coffin (viewer's left-hand side) and Nephthys placed on the northern half of the coffin

(viewer's right-hand side). Isis and Nephthys' cardinal symbolism began at the end of the Old Kingdom and continued through the Middle Kingdom when they were generally placed at the foot and head of the coffin (Wilkinson, 1994:70-71). Because the head of the coffin was placed at the north and the foot of the coffin at the south, Isis and Nephthys took on the cardinal symbolism of south and north respectively (Wilkinson, 1994:70-71; Taylor, 1989:9). Although Isis and Nephthys were not placed on the head and foot of Tutankhamun's coffins but rather on the viewer's left and right-hand side of the coffin, they retained their geographic symbolism as the north-south axis orientation of the Middle Kingdom had been given up in favour of the west-east axis orientation of the New Kingdom. This resulted in the viewer's left and right-hand sides of the coffin taking on the cardinal directions of south and north and thus, Isis and Nephthys were still placed on their correct cardinal points (Taylor, 1989:9; Wilkinson, 1994:78).

Furthermore, in addition to symbolising the cardinal points of the earth, the coffin also took on the significance of a model of the cosmos as the floor of the coffin was symbolised by the earth god Geb and the roof of the coffin was symbolised by the sky goddess Nut (Wilkinson, 1994:71). Because the lid of the coffin (as Nut) was associated with the sky, this could help explain why the composition with its overarching avian form – a creature of the sky – was often depicted on coffin lids and not on some other area of the coffin.

(b) Over time, the association of the viewer's left and right-hand side of the coffin with the cardinal points of south and north created a symbolic association between left and south, and right with north. As a result, this cardinal symbolism of left with south and right with north carried over into artworks not aligned along the literal axes of north-south and east-west.

Figurative cardinal alignment is evident in political versions of the composition, namely the vulture and cobra compositions (i), the vulture and falcon compositions (ii), and the political secondary elements (iii).

(i) The pair of vulture and cobra compositions symbolising Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt were correctly placed on the respective viewer's left and right-hand sides of an

artwork to match their cardinal directions of south and north. This can be seen on Tutankhamun [Figs. 1-2, 5, 27] and non-Tutankhamun examples [Figs. 92, 102]; while the vulture composition, when in the company of a non-composition cobra [Figs. 26, 71], was also correctly placed on the viewer's left-hand side.

(ii) The pair of vulture and falcon compositions symbolising Upper and Lower Egypt were correctly placed on the respective viewer's left and right-hand sides of an artwork to match their cardinal directions of south and north. This can be seen on non-Tutankhamun examples [Figs. 101, 107, 129].

(iii) The pairs of heraldic secondary elements symbolizing Upper Egypt (the sedge, lotus and white crown) and Lower Egypt (the papyrus plant, bee, and red crown) were correctly placed on the respective viewer's left and right-hand sides of an artwork to match their cardinal direction of south and north (Wilkinson, 1994:66).

This can be seen in examples from Tutankhamun's tomb. In the solar and lunar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30] the scarab composition grasps the lotus plant of Upper Egypt (south) in the viewer's left-hand talon (south) and the papyrus plant of Lower Egypt (north) in the viewer's right-hand talon. On the golden throne [Fig. 12], the cobra composition holds the sedge and bee image in its wings. The sedge of Upper Egypt was placed to the left (symbolic south) of the bee while the bee (Lower Egypt) was placed to the right (symbolic north) of the sedge. On the ebony fan [Fig. 11] the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt were placed on the viewer's left (south) and right-hand (north) side respectively.

#### *5.2.1.8 Use of numbers*

Wilkinson, (1994:127) states that in Egyptian art "... quite a few numbers were regarded as sacred or 'holy' by the Egyptians, but this element of sanctity and significance were allocated numbers only inasmuch as abstract principles had become associated with them." The 'abstract principle' that the Egyptians associated with the number two was duality.



In his world, the Egyptian saw duality expressed in the repeating of pairs in the environment, cosmos, humans and politics. In Egypt's environment there were two deserts (east and west), two mountain ranges (east and west) and two river banks (east and west). In the cosmos there were pairs in the heaven and earth, night and day, sun and moon. In humans, pairs could be seen in two sexes (male and female), two halves of the brain, two arms, two legs, and in the physical and spiritual realms of human existence (Wilson, 1971a:48-50; Wilkinson, 1994:129). In politics there were political pairs in Upper and Lower Egypt.

The concept of duality found expression in Egyptian art where it influenced the way in which artists arranged elements within their composition (Wilkinson, 1994:130). In the context of the composition, political duality is emphasised by the use of the number two in the pairs that symbolise the duality of Egyptian politics and the regions that the king ruled over; namely the political pairing of the composition (featuring the vulture and cobra [Fig. 27] or vulture and falcon [Fig.101]) and its secondary elements (sedge and papyrus [Fig. 70], sedge and bee [Figs. 12, 92], lotus and papyrus [Fig. 30] (Wilkinson, 2003:333).

### 5.2.2 Protection of others

As the king was not an average individual, he required above average protection to ensure that he would be protected in life and death. As a result, certain artworks were specially produced for the king with incredible magical potency that only the king had knowledge of so that he would be assured of protection. According to Quirke (1992:158) artworks reserved for the king were highly sought after due to their magical potency. Over time, powerful and wealthy individuals adopted these artworks in the hope that they, too, might access the king's secret knowledge of magic for their own benefit.

In the context of the composition, although its protection was initially meant for the king alone, over time it was adopted by other individuals including the royal family (i), priests (ii), government officials and other individual (iii) in the hope that they could access the king's secret knowledge of the solar cycle for their benefit after death.

(i) The composition was used by various members of the royal family, including queens (the bracelet of Queen Ahhotep [Fig. 65] and princesses (the pectoral of Princess Sit-Hathor-Yunet [Fig. 69]. The composition's protection of the queen can be seen in the tomb of Ramses II's queen Nefertari [Figs. 84-85] where the cobra composition's winged embrace of Nefertari's cartouche symbolised its protection of the queen (McDonald, 1996:88).

(ii) The priests who created much of the symbolism behind the composition adopted the composition's protective symbolism on items belonging to them – as seen on items belonging to Espaneterenpere (the Priest of Amun) [Fig. 49], Nekhtefmut (the Fourth Prophet of Amun) [Fig. 51], and Maatkare (the god's Wife of Amun) [Fig. 48] (Tiradritti, 1999:298; Malek, 1999:342).

(iii) Government officials such as the royal scribes Huy [Fig. 124], Hunefer [Fig. 59] and Ani [Fig. 61] adopted the composition while individuals who were not government officials, but who performed important duties, also adopted the composition. One such case was the singer, Panesy [Fig. 55].

### **5.3 The context of the composition's protection of the individual**

The composition's protection was symbolised in two contexts: a political context connected to the king's life and death as the ruler of Egypt; and a mythological context that utilized the Ra and Osiris myths connected to the various phases of the king's life, death and rebirth.

#### **5.3.1 Political protection**

The Egyptians looked to their government and its head – the divine king – for political protection against danger; but who did the king look to for protection? In a political context, the king as the political head of Egypt, was depicted as being protected by the three versions of the composition that (by symbolising the political realm over which the king ruled) had an overt political character. These included the falcon (united Egypt and sometimes Lower Egypt), vulture (Upper Egypt), and cobra

(Lower Egypt). As guardians of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Nekhbet vulture composition and Wadjet cobra composition functioned as the main deities that protect the king in life and death (Malek, 1999:28).

#### *5.3.1.1 Political protection in life*

In life, the composition was depicted protecting the king in one of two political scenarios: non-dangerous (a) and dangerous (b).

(a) In non-dangerous scenarios the composition protects the king in his running of the government (i) and his interaction with others (ii).

(i) In his running of the government, the composition was depicted protecting the king on his throne [Fig. 81] and in the *kheb*-sed festival [Figs. 96, 105].

(ii) In the king's interaction with others, the composition was depicted protecting the king in his interaction with his queen – as in figure 37 where Ankhesenamun presents unguents and flowers to Tutankhamun (Carter, 1963a:46); and in the king's interaction with the gods – as in figure 99 where the composition protects Seti I while he offers a libation to the god Soker.

(b) In dangerous scenarios the political composition protects the king under its wings when his life is in danger in war (i) and in hunts (ii).

(i) The composition protects the king in his battles with his enemies. In war scenes the composition protects the king in the form of a single falcon [Fig. 108] or vulture composition [Fig. 106]; or a pair made up of either two vultures [Fig. 103], a falcon and vulture [Fig. 101, 107], or a vulture and cobra composition [Fig. 102]. In the context of protection, Tiradritti (1999:213) writes that the composition's protection of Tutankhamun on the long and short sides of the painted wooden box [Figs. 6-7] while he defeats his Nubian, Libyan and Asiatic enemies symbolises its approval and protection of the king's role as the guarantor of order by defeating the chaos symbolised by his enemies.

(ii) In hunting scenes featured on Tutankhamun's little golden shrine [Fig. 36] and the lid of the painted wooden box [Fig. 8] the vulture composition protects the king while he hunts. These scenes are not to be taken literally but rather symbolically as Tiradritti (1999:213-215) asserts that figure 36 which shows the king hunting swamp birds symbolised the king's role in maintaining cosmic order over chaos and disorder symbolised by the swamp birds. Figure 8 shows the king hunting and killing a pride of lions which symbolised the king's power over his political enemies (wild animals) and his role as the destroyer of the chaotic (emphasised by the chaotic order of the lions) forces that may harm the country.

In relief works depicting the king's life, the political versions of the composition were depicted protecting the king's cartouches – as seen with Ramses III during his 'baptism' [Fig. 114] and in war [Figs. 106-108, 110-111]. This symbolised their protection of the king and confirms the king's control over his territory.

The purpose of depicting the composition protecting the king in his executive role was to symbolise that in whatever context the king fulfilled his divinely ordained political mandate to defend the order of Egypt, the political versions of the composition that symbolised the geographic areas that he ruled over would protect him – thus confirming his rule over these territories.

#### *5.3.1.2 Political protection in death*

In death, the political versions of the composition were depicted protecting the king (a) or his cartouche (b) under its wings on funerary items used in death.

(a) Tutankhamun was embraced and protected in death by the Nekhbet vulture and Wadjet cobra compositions of Upper and Lower Egypt – as seen on Tutankhamun's second and third coffins [Figs. 1-2] and the Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27].

(b) Tutankhamun's cartouche containing his names are protected politically in death by the Nekhbet vulture composition of Upper Egypt [Figs. 9, 11, 24, 35] and the Wadjet cobra composition of Lower Egypt [Figs. 10, 11, 12]. The sated vulture

pectoral [Fig. 24] is of special interest because the vulture is depicted wearing a pectoral bearing a cartouche displaying Tutankhamun's name (Fox, 1951:plate 36).

In a political context, it is made clear that Tutankhamun – whether in images of him or in his names – was protected by those compositions symbolising the political realms under his control as the *shen*-ring encircling his name symbolised his territorial realm, as it represented everything encircled by the sun as being under his control (Wilkinson, 1992:195; Andrews, 1994:77).

This imagery is continued throughout Egyptian history with the various political versions of the composition protecting the cartouche containing the name of the king – as in the cases of Senusret III [Figs. 68], Ramses II [Fig. 71], Psusennes I [Fig. 72], and Amenemope [Fig. 76].

### 5.3.2 Mythological protection

Through its use of the Ra and Osiris myths (a), the composition extended its protection to all phases of human existence (life, death, and rebirth) (b).

(a) Van Walsem (1997a:274) argues that the composition makes symbolic use of certain mortuary texts. He states that the scarab, *ba*-bird, falcon composition and vulture compositions (which feature a solar disc above their heads in the interior of the head of the coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh) show a predilection for a solar main theme with strong Osirian connotations is dominant. This observation is important because the use of both the sun (“solar main theme”) and Osiris (“Osirian connotations”) motifs entails that it made symbolic use of the Ra and Osiris myths. The Ra and Osiris myths were two independent mortuary texts that formed the basis of the mortuary texts collectively termed *Books of the Underworld*. The latter comprised The Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts*, the Middle Kingdom *Coffin Texts*, and the New Kingdom *Book of the Dead*, which, in turn, was composed of various texts (*Book of Gates* and the *Book of Caverns*) (Griffiths, 2001:477; Quirke, 2001:47; Taylor, 2001:198; Lesko, 1995:1768). In context of the composition's use of the Ra and Osiris myths, emphasis will be placed on the *Book of the Dead* because it was the dominant religious mortuary text from the New Kingdom period onwards – a period

where the composition under discussion reached its pinnacle during the reign of Tutankhamun.

(b) The use of the Ra and Osiris myths indicates that the composition symbolised its protection of an individual through every phase of his or her existence – namely, life, death, and rebirth. Mortuary texts such as the Ra and Osiris myths were used to explain the workings of life and death through spells designed to assist the deceased reach the afterlife (Armour, 2001:163). The cosmic environment installed by Ra and the mythic cycle of Osiris and Horus created the framework of space and time for human existence (Quirke, 1992:105)

In order to understand how the composition's use of the Ra and Osiris myth symbolised its protection of an individual's life, death and rebirth, two steps must be followed. Firstly, we need to have a basic overview of these myths in order to understand that the daytime journey of Ra explained human life; the night-time journey of Ra explained human death; and the sun's rebirth in the morning (as told by the Ra and Osiris myths) explained the individual's rebirth into the afterlife. Secondly, these myths need to be applied to the composition under discussion in order to highlight these utilised them in their symbolism.

#### *5.3.2.1 Daytime journey of Ra*

According to Brewer & Teeter (1999:16, 84) the Egyptians drew their beliefs about life, death and the afterlife from the workings of nature – which they used as a 'text' from which to extract answers. The Ra myth used the natural cycles observed in the heavenly realm – namely the daily solar cycle of the sun and the astral movement of the stars across the sky – to explain the journey of the human through life, death and rebirth (Bonwick, 1956:70).

The first section of the Ra myth tells of the sun god Ra's journey through life in the daytime sky in the context of birth, life, and death where the sun's daily movement through the sky was viewed as a journey from birth to death (Allen, 2005:8).

During the twelve hours of the day, Ra travelled in three phases (from east to west) across the sky in a day boat called a barque (Muller, 2001:123; Lesko, 1995:1768-1769). Ra was born in the morning and rose above the eastern horizon as the morning sun god Khepri; by noontime the sun had travelled to its apex in the sky as the noon sun god Ra; and then in the evening sank below the western horizon and died as the evening sun god Atum (Allen 2005:8; Watterson, 1984:44; Hall, 1994:109).

We can deduce that Khepri, Ra and Atum symbolised the morning, noon, and evening sun from the following texts:

- The twenty-first dynasty *Papyrus Louvre 3292* reads: “He has seen Re in the three forms which he takes ... He has adored him in the morning. In this his name of ‘Khepri’; He has praised him at midday, In this his name of ‘Re’; He has propitiated him in the evening, In this his name of ‘Atum’ for ever.” (Roberts, 1995:21).
- Chapter 13, verse 10 of the Ramesside era *Turin Papyrus* reads: “I am Khepri in the morning, Ra in the afternoon, and Atum in the evening.” (Griffiths, 2001:477).

We can deduce that Khepri and Atum symbolised the rising and setting sun as in the following spells:

- Spell 317 of the *Coffin Texts* entitled 'Becoming the Nile', Khepri states: “Behold me, I shine in the sunrise.” (Faulkner, 1973:243).
- Spell 15 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nu entitled 'Spell for removing anger from the heart of the god': “Hail to you, O ... Atum when you set.” (Faulkner, 1993:40).

#### 5.3.2.1.1 *The composition symbolises life*

Through its symbolic representation of the three phases of Ra’s journey through the daytime sky, the composition symbolised its protection of the human during the different phases of his life. This conclusion is reached by understanding the following two facts:

Firstly, the composition took on the role of the sun in the Ra myth by symbolising the sun. The initial connection linking the composition to its role of Ra in the Ra myth is evident in the composition's symbolic use of: form (a), hieroglyphs (b), deities (c), the number three (d), and colour (e).

(a) The basic form of the composition as a winged falcon or vulture directly linked it to the sun as the sun was symbolised as either a falcon or a sun-disc with the outstretched wings of a falcon (Quirke, 1992:23; Wilson, 1971a:52)

The connection of the falcon and vulture to the sun was logical to the mind of the ancient Egyptian who drew parallels between the three. As the sun flew across the sky in the domain of birds (falcon and vulture) and birds flew with the help of wings, then logically the sun also flew in the sky with the aid of birds' wings. Logically the wings were those of the falcon or vulture as the falcon flew higher than any other bird and appeared to merge with the sun, while the vulture could soar on thermals high in the sky for hours on end (Silverman, 2001:370; Gooders, 1975:92; Wilson, 1971a:52).

At an indirect level, it is possible that the avian form of the composition echoed that of the sun in eclipse. Suhr (1964:103) postulates the theory that the bird-like appearance of the sun during a solar eclipse helped influence the choice of an avian form for the sun in his statement:

“There was perhaps no astronomical phenomenon more startling to primitive and early civilised man than the total solar eclipse. Without any warning he noticed an eerie and untimely darkness settling over the land, and when he looked at the sun, he saw a menacing dark orb eating into the solar disc until the blackness covered the whole central area of light; from the edge of the dark circle a desperate flare of light, which in a partial eclipse took on the form of a ring, darted out with a feathery texture for some distance, so much more spectacular in contrast to the dark centre. This effect Assyrian and Egyptian pictured as the wings of a great bird, since the flare tends to jut out farther on two opposite sides. The Chinese also developed the bird with outstretched wings in their image of the sun ... During the total eclipse the light of the sun grows weak ... and birds sing their evening song ... Around the edge of the dark



disc appear rosy-coloured protuberances – and all this is visible to the naked eye! ... All in all, this must have been a spectacle to kindle the imagination of early man to fantastic lengths ...”

What Suhr refers to is the bird-like pattern manifested by the sun during a total solar eclipse when the sun projects a white hot, million degree Celsius corona of burning gas composed of electrons, protons and some heavier ions into space with the equatorial coronal streamers resembling the outspread wings of a bird while the polar coronal plumes resemble the head and fanned-out tail of a bird [Fig. 175-176] (Zirin, 1988:217-223). Suhr thus purports that the ancient Egyptian priesthood would have observed this repeating phenomena of the sun and equated it with the form of a radiant solar bird during a total solar eclipse – resulting in the creation of the Egyptian solar bird in the form of the Ra, Horus and Ra-Horakhty falcon. At the very least, it would have cemented the already strong connection between the two.

Could the composition’s avian form and solar theme be the product of the observation of a total solar eclipse or could the similarity in form simply be a coincidence? If not, the connection of the falcon composition with the sun would already have to have been strong in the first place.

(b) The composition’s connection to the sun is depicted through the direct and indirect use of hieroglyphs. The composition depicts its connection to the sun directly through the placement of the solar disc hieroglyph (n5-6) [Fig. 155] above the heads of the scarab [Figs. 30, 47-48, 50, 55, 66, 77, 126; falcon [Figs. 25, 32, 51-53, 57, 69, 91]; ram [Figs. 49, 51, 57, 78, 89] and cobra [Fig. 10] versions of the composition. This strengthened the connection between the composition and the sun because it indicates that the composition has an underlying solar theme. Without the solar disc it would not be possible to firmly make a positive identification between these versions of the composition and the sun.

The composition could depict its connection to the sun indirectly in frontal versions of the composition’s generally circular form, thus mimicking the solar disc hieroglyph [Fig.155]. This is evident in the composition [Figs. 25, 32] from its attempt to form a

circle with its wings, while the circle in the centre of the hieroglyph is suggested by either the head of the composition or the sun disc placed above the head.

(c) The scarab, falcon, and ram-headed compositions symbolised the three deified phases of the sun in the Ra myth; namely Khepri (i), Ra (ii), and Atum (iii).

The concept linking the scarab, falcon, and ram-headed composition with Khepri, Ra, and Atum was derived from two examples:

- From the New Kingdom's nineteenth dynasty onwards the tripartite sun god of the Ra myth was depicted above a tomb's entrance [Fig. 86] with the central axis in the form of a solar disc signifying Ra as the noon sun; a scarab beetle to the left signifying Khepri as the morning sun and the ram-headed god Atum – to right of the solar disc – signifying the evening and night sun (Wilkinson, 1994:69; van Walsem, 1997a:302).
- In Spell 168 of the *Book of the Dead* of Muthetepti [Fig. 177] entitled 'A litany of the god' (c.1050 BC, twenty-first dynasty) the tripartite sun gods of the Ra myth were depicted in the form of a scarab, falcon and ram-headed man signifying the morning, noon, and evening sun gods Khepri, Ra, and Atum respectively.

Having established a definite link between the scarab, falcon and ram-headed compositions and the gods Khepri, Ra, and Atum; the connection between them has to be discussed in greater detail.

(i) The scarab composition symbolised the sun as the scarab beetle served as the zoomorphic and therianthropic forms of the morning sun god Khepri.

The link between the scarab composition and Khepri is strengthened by the placement of a solar disc above its head (showing its solar theme) and serves as the zoomorphic and therianthropic form of the morning rising sun god Khepri who was depicted as a beetle or beetle-headed man (Caygill, 1999:286; Brewer & Teeter, 1999:84). That the scarab composition symbolised Khepri is confirmed by Aldred (1978:123) when he states that the scarab composition in Tutankhamun's solar lunar pectoral [Fig. 30] "...

represents Khepri the sun-god at dawn ... It symbolizes the birth of the sun and moon.”

The initial connection between the morning sun god Khepri and the scarab beetle can be found in Khepri's name. The name *Kheprer* ('He who is coming into being') – which points to the new rising sun – had the same sound as the Egyptian word for the scarab beetle. As the Egyptians loved the use of puns this cemented the connection between Khepri the god and the scarab beetle (Te Velde, 1995:1737; Watterson, 1984:69). The use of the scarab as a symbol of the morning sun god arose because of the behaviour of the female scarab beetle. The female scarab beetle's habit of pushing balls of dung containing its eggs across the ground to an underground nest was identified with the rising sun and its solar cycle. The dung ball was connected with the sun as it was believed that a giant black scarab beetle pushed the sun over the eastern horizon each morning and across the sky from east to west until it dipped below the western horizon and disappeared (like the dung ball into the nest) (Caygill, 1999:286; Tiradritti, 1999:147; Bianchi, 2001:179).

(ii) The falcon composition symbolised the sun as the falcon served as the zoomorphic and therianthropic forms of the noon sun god Ra and other sun gods.

The symbolism is based on the fact that the falcon featured in the falcon composition had a solar theme based on its solar disc and that it served as the zoomorphic and therianthropic form of the noon sun god Ra – the deified sun personified in its most general sense in the form of a falcon or falcon-headed man often crowned with a sun disc (Muller, 2001:124-125; Quirke, 2001:25). That the falcon composition symbolised Ra is confirmed by Tiradritti (1992:237) in his statement regarding Tutankhamun's solar falcon-pendant [Fig. 32]: "... the falcon represents the composite solar deity, Re-Horakhty." The initial connection of the noon sun god Ra and the falcon arose because the falcon soared above all other birds, appearing to be closer to the sun than anything else, and it hunted chiefly during noon time and the afternoon (Rhys Bram, 1987:135).

The falcon composition's connection to the sun is further strengthened by the falcon serving as the zoomorphic or therianthropic forms of various sun gods or sky gods

connected with the sun, namely Ra, Ra-Horakhty, Horus, Behdet and Montu (Bunson, 1995:46; Watterson, 1984:98-108).

(iii) The ram-headed composition symbolised the sun as the ram served as the zoomorphic and therianthropic forms of the evening sun god Atum.

The symbolism is based on the fact that the ram featured in the ram-headed composition had a solar disc above its head (showing its solar theme) and it served as the zoomorphic and therianthropic form of the evening sun god Atum who was depicted as a ram or ram-headed man (Hall, 1994:109). That the ram-headed composition symbolised Atum is confirmed by Élizabeth (2007) when he states the following regarding the ram-headed falcon pendant [Fig. 75]: “This is a composite figure of a deity, almost certainly a form of the sun god ... In the tomb of Twosre (late Nineteenth Dynasty, 1188-1186 BCE), the sun, at the end of its transformation, takes precisely the shape of a ram-headed falcon, with wings and legs outstretched.”

The identification of the ram-headed composition as Atum is not at first clear-cut, as more than one god could be symbolised by the ram, namely Atum, Khnum and Amun. So which god is symbolised in the composition, as only the Atum ram had a clear solar theme? The ram in the composition can be identified as *Ovis longipes palaeoegypticus*, the first species reared in Egypt identified by its heavy build and long horizontally undulating horns (Wilkinson, 1992:61; Watterson, 1984:183). This eliminates the god Atum as the ram used to symbolise him can be identified as the *Ovis platyra aegyptiaca* due to its characteristic down-curved horns (Wilkinson, 1992:61; Wilkinson, 2003:95). This leaves Atum and Khnum who were both symbolised by the *Ovis longipes palaeoegypticus* ram. So which one is it? The key to identifying the ram in the composition as Atum is that it is frequently depicted with a solar disc placed above its head [Figs. 51, 57, 78 and 89]. This identifies the ram-headed composition as Atum as it indicates that the ram had a solar theme while Khnum did not. The evening sun god Atum is not present in the tomb of Tutankhamun. The reason for this is that although a solar theme was present in the versions of the composition in the tomb of Tutankhamun and in the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, it was not yet the main theme. Instead the composition in the tomb of Tutankhamun had an overwhelmingly political context, as depicted by the heraldic animals of Upper and

Lower Egypt and a united Egypt in the forms of the vulture, cobra and falcon versions of the composition. The ram-headed composition would only be added in the nineteenth dynasty, from which period, the solar theme would become the overarching theme in the composition.

Although the solar versions of the composition appear in single forms in the tomb of Tutankhamun and in other locations, from the late New Kingdom period onwards the solar versions of the composition began to be depicted together in pairs and triads on coffins to emphasise the solar cycle and the Ra myth.

A solar pair can be seen on the coffins of Nekhtefmut [Fig. 51] and Takhebkhennem [Fig. 57] where the falcon and ram compositions signified the noon sun god Ra and the evening sun god Atum.

A solar triad can be seen on the coffin of Maatkare [Fig. 48] that depicts all three solar versions of the composition, namely the scarab composition of Khepri, the falcon composition of Ra and the ram of Atum which can be found in the scarab composition having the head of a ram.

(d) According to Wilkinson (1994:133) "... the number three may have distinctly cyclical connotations. This undoubtedly resulted from the use of the number in the reckoning of time, for the Egyptian year was divided into three seasons, and each of the twelve months was divided into three ten-day periods. Within the day itself ... this cyclical aspect of the number is seen in depictions of the three forms of the solar deity Khepri, Ra, and Atum reigning over the morning, noon, and evening of the day ...". The use of the number three in the three scarabs on Maatkare's coffin [Fig. 48] and the three solar crowned versions of the composition referring to the previously mentioned solar gods Khepri, Ra, and Atum, served to symbolise its connection to the sun and its solar cycle.

(e) Colour in art can be used to symbolise ideas, to serve as a vehicle for the expression of personal emotions and feelings, and to attract and direct attention as a means of giving organization to a composition (Ocvirk, 1962:95). In the

composition's context, the use of colour was meant to symbolise its connection with the idea of eternity.

Ocvirk believes (1962:93) that all colours are related to one of two colours – warm colours and cool colours. The composition used the warm colours of red and yellow to symbolise the sun as red, orange, and yellow colors are usually associated with the sun or fire and are considered warm (Ocvirk, 1962:93).

The use of red in the composition symbolised its connection with the sun, as red was used to symbolise the sun (Tiradritti, 1999:376). This can be seen in the previously mentioned use of red in feathers and the solar disc placed above the head and encircled by the *shen*-rings.

The general use of yellow in the composition to symbolise its connection with the sun can be seen in the previously mentioned use of yellow in the solar disc, *shen*-ring and outline of feathers. As yellow symbolised the sun, the *shen*-rings were depicted in yellow in Egyptian art to symbolise its connection to the sun (Wilkinson, 1994: 108, 116). That the composition as a bird be largely depicted in yellow with regard to its feathers and legs, can be symbolically explained by the fact that because birds fly in the sun's domain and close to the sun – they came to share in the sun's symbolism and connection with solar colours.

Finally, by making a link between the composition as a symbol of the sun and various sun gods through its solar theme, its use of colour and the number three – we can confidently reach the conclusion that the solar versions of the composition take on the role of the sun in the Ra myth.

Secondly, by symbolising the sun gods Khepri, Ra, and Atum – the scarab, falcon, and ram-headed versions of the composition symbolised its protection over the human in childhood (a), adulthood (b), and old age (c), as these respective gods of the voyage of Ra symbolised these respective phases of a human's life – Sauneron (1962:241): "He (Ra) was said by some to be a child at his rising (= Khepri), a full-grown man at midday (= Ra), and a doddering old man at evening (= Atum)."

The composition as the sun Ra was connected to life because Ra was the original and daily source of all life. His appearance at the creation and at every sunrise as a source of light and warmth, made life possible in the world as it enabled vegetation to grow and animals and humans to awake and to do their work in daylight (Allen, 2005:7-8).

(a) The scarab composition as the morning sun god Khepri symbolised its protection of the human in *childhood*.

The connection between the scarab composition's protection of a human in childhood comes from the fact that the Egyptians equated the morning sun-god Khepri with a human's childhood, because the rising of the sun above the eastern horizon was reminiscent of a human's birth and childhood.

That the rising of the morning sun-god Khepri was equated with birth can be deduced from the name Khepri being derived from the word *kheprer*, meaning 'to come into existence' or 'He who is coming into being' (Watterson, 1984:69), and from Spell 15 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nu entitled 'Worship of Ra' where it describes the rising of Khepri in the morning as a birth: "Praise to you who rise in gold and who illumine the Two Lands by day at your birth!" (Faulkner, 1993:43). That the morning sun-god Khepri was equated with childhood can be seen in the fact that at times the morning sun was depicted as a child [Fig. 178] (Sauneron, 1962:241).

The use of the scarab composition as protection during childhood can be seen in the context of Tutankhamun's lunar and solar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30]. According to Aldred (1978:123) this piece was worn by Tutankhamun when he was a young child at his coronation. The connection of the scarab composition with childhood protection and the morning sun was fitting in the context of Tutankhamun and this piece because he was a child when he became king. While the start of a king's reign (even an old king) was seen as a birth, as the new king he was seen as the son of the sun god reborn anew to rule Egypt (Aldred, 1978:123).

(b) The falcon composition as the noon sun god Ra, symbolised its protection of the human in *adulthood*. The connection between the falcon composition's protection of a human in adulthood is derived from the fact that the Egyptians equated the noon sun-

god Ra with a human's adulthood because the noon sun and the adult human were both at their peak of existence as regards strength and health (Sauneron, 1962:241). That the noon sun-god Ra was equated with adulthood can be deduced from the fact that at times the noon sun was depicted as an adult man (Sauneron, 1962:241).

(c) The ram-headed composition as the evening sun god Atum, symbolised its protection of the human in *old age*. The connection between the ram-headed composition's protection of a human in old age comes from the fact that the Egyptians equated the ram evening sun-god Atum with a human's old age because the setting sun sinking below the western horizon was reminiscent of the weakening condition of old age that ends in death. This can be deduced from the fact that according to Mysliwiec (2001:159) "Atum's solar associations are with the sunset and the nightly journey of the sun, when he appears with a ram's head or, sometimes, as a tired old man walking with a stick." This connects Atum with old age because the hieroglyph used an ideogram or determinative for 'old age' or 'old' (A19 *i3w*) [Fig. 136] which is written in the form of a tired old man leaning on a stick (Gardiner, 1984:444).

#### 5.3.2.2 *Night-time journey of Ra*

In the Old Kingdom's *Pyramid Texts*, the sun died in the evening when it sank below the western horizon as Ra was swallowed by the sky goddess Nut (depicted as a woman or cow arching over the earth) in the west and Ra proceeded to sail along her star-spangled body – a heavenly companion to the Nile (Lesko, 1995:1769; Rhys Bram, 1987:135; Woldering, 1963:49). By the New Kingdom's *Book of the Dead*, the astral voyage of Ra through the night sky had given way to a perilous underground journey as Ra died after sinking below the western horizon and entered the gloomy and dark underworld – a treacherous place that presented many dangers and tests. The night sun Ra then proceeded to sail along an underground river (an underground companion to the Nile) that ran from west to east through twelve caverns and gates – which refer to the twelve hours of night (Taylor, 2001:28, 198-199; Quirke, 2001:47; Wells, 2001:146; Grof, 1994:68).

The Egyptians used Ra's twelve-hour journey through night and the Nile River as a model and metaphor to explain the journey of the deceased through death. Grof



(1994:68) states: “The posthumous journey of the soul was closely associated with the diurnal-nocturnal journey of the sun god Ra.” Night was equated with death because the sun’s life-giving energy was absent at night and every night humans appeared to die when they slept (Watterson, 1984:44).

In a human context, the Egyptians believed that the living human being consisted of three basic parts: the physical body and two non-material elements known as the *ka* (the individual’s life force that came from the creator and returned to the gods at death) and the *ba* (comparable to the western idea of the soul or personality that made each person unique) (Allen, 2005:7). At death, the *ka* and *ba* separated from the physical body. The *ka* remained with the mummy while the *ba* joined the sun in its voyage through the underworld (Bunson, 1991:130). In the context of the *Pyramid Texts*, only the king and his *ba* could ascend after death to the starry heavens to join Ra on his barque to journey through the night-sky (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12). But from the Middle Kingdom *Coffin Texts* onwards every individual’s *ba* could join Ra on his barque and in the later New Kingdom *Book of the Dead* the deceased joined Ra on his barque while he sailed through the underworld (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12; Taylor, 1989:8-9).

#### 5.3.2.2.1 *The composition symbolises death*

The symbolic solar protection of the king during death in his journey through the underworld is based on the composition's use of versions that symbolise the phase of death (a) and its use of colour (b).

(a) The composition symbolised death and the protection of the deceased in death through various versions of the composition symbolising either death or aspects of the deceased, namely the ram (i), vulture (ii), and *ba*-bird (iii).

(i) The ram-headed composition symbolised death as it served as the zoomorphic form of the deceased night-time sun while as a ram-headed man it also symbolised the deceased soul (*ba*) of the nocturnal sun-god Ra (Hornung, 1995:1719; Wilkinson, 1992:61).

(ii) The vulture composition symbolised death, the journey of the deceased through death, and the protection of the deceased in death.

- The vulture composition symbolised death because vultures eat dead creatures and where there was a dead creature, there generally was a vulture nearby.
- The vulture composition symbolised the journey of the deceased through death because the vulture symbolised the ascension of the deceased to heaven (Ray, 1990:90). This can be seen in Roberts (1995:76) statement: “Vivid descriptions of Nekhbet as a wild untamed sky mother are preserved in the Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts*. To this enormous bird mother with outstretched wings the king ascends, seeking her breasts to nourish him and take him to new life in the sky.”
- The vulture composition was depicted protecting the deceased in death under its wings. This can be deduced from Spell 89 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nesitanebtasheru [Fig. 63] entitled 'Spell for letting a soul rejoin its corpse in the realm of the dead'. The vulture as the zoomorphic form of the goddess Nut also symbolised death and protection in death through Nut's role in the Ra myth and her function as the protector of gods and the souls of the dead while in the solar boat (Armour, 2001:180). This imagery was depicted in the protective pose of the vulture composition symbolising Nut (and not Nekhbet) that was featured on Tutankhamun's vulture pectoral [Fig. 29] and on the coffin of Yuya [Fig. 45] (Aldred, 1978:121; Houlihan, 1986:42).

(iii) The *ba*-bird composition symbolised the deceased human in a solar context. It symbolised the deceased human because the *ba*-bird symbolised the main aspect of the deceased's soul, while its head represented the actual facial appearance of the deceased as it accompanied the deceased on his journey through the underworld (van Walsem, 1997a:271; Wilkinson, 1992:99; Hawkes, 1967:150). The *ba*-bird composition's protection of the deceased under its wings can be seen in the form of the *ba*-bird pendant amulet placed on Tutankhamun's mummy [Fig. 31], in tomb paintings [Fig. 90] and on funerary papyri [Figs. 60-61]. The *ba*-bird has a solar theme, as according to Wilkinson (1992:99), *ba* birds greet the sun and accompany the sun on its barque on its nightly journey through the underworld.

(b) The use of the colour black in the scarab composition connected it to death as black symbolised night and death in Egyptian art (Wilkinson, 1994:109).

### 5.3.2.3 *Ra's rebirth in the morning*

The Egyptian belief in an afterlife was based on the concept of eternity that came from their observation of nature where they noticed the clockwork nature of natural cycles – particularly the natural cycles seen in the profane earthly sphere (annual flooding of the Nile and the seasonal growth and death of plants) and the sacred heavenly sphere (daily cycle of the sun, monthly cycle of the moon, and the yearly motion of the stars) (Silverman, 2001:370; Tobin, 2001b:467; Taylor, 2001:12; Griffiths, 2001:476). It was noticed that when the cycles came to an end, they would start anew as if they were reborn again – thus everything that had an ending would have a new beginning. This left a lasting impression on the minds of the Egyptians and they came to believe that everything in the universe was run according to perpetual cycles. They believed that these cycles were regulated and controlled by a divinely ordained order called *ma'at*, which regulated and controlled the universe through creative forces such as regeneration – the end product of which was eternity (Taylor, 2001:12; Tobin, 2001a:463).

The Egyptian priesthood called their ideological concept of eternity *nukheh* or *shenu* – meaning 'round', 'encircle', 'everlasting' or 'unending' because of the unending cyclical nature of nature's cycles (Wilkinson, 1992:193; Bunson, 1995:86). *Eternity* became the ideological keystone of Egyptian culture, religion, politics and society. In the context of religion, the concept of eternity and rebirth had a far-reaching impact on the Egyptian religion as it offered them a mechanism to survive death (Bunson, 1995:86; Kadish, 2001:408). The Egyptians used the cyclical nature of the rising morning sun, the movement of the stars, the growth of vegetation, and the Nile inundation; as a model and metaphor to justify their belief in an assured afterlife achieved through rebirth (Taylor, 2004:471; Frankfort, 1978:170; Wilson, 1971a:44).

In the Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts*, after travelling through the body of Nut, the sun was reborn between Nut's thighs above the eastern horizon as the morning sun Khepri (Woldering, 1963:49). The king hoped to attain a celestial afterlife after death by

joining Ra on his barque and witnessing the sun's rebirth after its night of 'death' and then being transformed into a star and spending eternity with Ra on his eternal cosmic cycle (Clark, 1959:71; Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12). According to Wells (2001:145-146), the imagery of the heavens eating the sun only to give birth to it anew was based on observing the interaction between the sun and the stars in two contexts:

- Every evening the sun sank below the horizon in the vicinity of a starry expanse near the constellation of Gemini (which formed the head of the starry goddess) then travelled through her body (the greater Milky Way) and in the morning exited through her birth canal and genitalia (the bright star Deneb and cross-shaped Cygnus constellation that also formed her legs) (Wells, 2001:145-146).
- Once a year at the vernal (spring) equinox the starry 'head' of Nut (mentioned earlier on) dipped below the horizon and appeared to swallow the setting sun while at sunrise on the morning of the winter solstice two hundred and seventy-two days later (almost exactly the nine months of a human pregnancy) the sun appeared to be born from Nut's birth canal formed by the star Deneb that hovered above the eastern horizon (Wells, 2001:145-146).

By the Middle Kingdom's *Coffin Texts*, the deceased no longer hoped to be reborn into a starry afterlife but rather into an agricultural afterlife ruled over by the god of the underworld, Osiris (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12). The introduction of the god Osiris into the Ra myth in the Old Kingdom's *Pyramid Texts* and his being made into the god of the underworld in the Middle Kingdom's *Coffin Texts* – is evidence of a merging between the two independent Ra and Osiris myths (Taylor, 1989:9; Allen, 2005:7).

The Osiris myth tells the story of Osiris – an ancient divine king of Egypt. Consumed with jealousy, Seth – the brother of Osiris who wanted to reign in his place – murdered Osiris. Through the magic of his wife, Isis and the help of Seth's wife, Nephthys, Osiris became the first individual to defeat death through resurrection – and in doing so, became the god of the underworld (Frankfort, 1978:197; Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12). Osiris's power of regeneration was derived from the observation of the terrestrial cycles of vegetation and the Nile. This should be seen in the light of the fact that Osiris was a god of vegetation (in which a seemingly dead seed re-

germinated) and the Nile's inundation (in which the silt deposited caused new life to grow from the formerly parched agricultural fields) (Frankfort, 1978:190, 195; Allen, 2005:8).

The merging of the two myths can be seen in the New Kingdom's *Book of the Dead*, in which Osiris's power of regeneration through the vegetation cycle (enabling the rebirth of the sun in the morning through its solar cycle after a night of 'death') was used as a model to explain the rebirth of a human into the afterlife. This was based on the belief that because humans were also a part of nature, their lives also followed a natural cycle (Bunson, 1995:86; Taylor, 2004:472).

After successfully travelling through the underworld, the dead Ra encounters Osiris's dead body. The two gods merge and transfer their creative powers in order to regenerate both gods and ensure the return of the sun in the morning (Taylor, 2001:29, 198; Hornung, 1996:96). Ra's power of life and creation (in the form of Khepri, Ra and Atum) resurrects the dead Osiris, while Osiris's power of rebirth and rejuvenation resurrects Ra. Ra's night-time journey comes to an end in the twelfth and last hour of night. He enters a snake called the time-serpent from the tail – reversing time – and exits its mouth in the form of the morning sun god Khepri rising on the eastern horizon (Hornung, 1995:1722; Müller, 2001:125).

In a human context, after successfully travelling through the underworld, the deceased encountered Osiris in the Hall of Judgement – a court overseen by a tribunal headed by Osiris (Shaw & Nicholson, 1995:104). Here, the deceased's heart was weighed by Anubis against the feather of *Ma'at* according to his past deeds, and, following this, the deceased would have to pass forty-two tests (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12; Taylor, 2004:472). If unsuccessful, the deceased would be eaten by the monster Ammit ('the Devourer') and suffer eternal annihilation in the 'second death' because the *ba* could not reunite with its *ka* (Lacovara, 2001:14; Allen, 2005:7; Taylor, 2004:472). If successful, the individual would imitate Ra's merging with Osiris by merging the *ba* and *ka* with its mummified body to form an *akh* – a transfigured and reborn spiritual entity that was capable of living eternally (Allen, 2005:7-8; Lacovara & Trope, 2001:12). It was then by gaining Osiris's power of resurrection that the reborn deceased was allowed to enter the afterlife for eternity – an agricultural world called

the *Field of Reeds* (well-irrigated fields, lakes and gardens) or 'the Beautiful West in the Domain of Eternity' according to Spell 27 of the *Book of the Dead* of Ani entitled 'Spell for not permitting a man's heart to be taken from him in the realm of the dead' (Taylor, 2001:205; Taylor, 2004:472; Faulkner, 1993:53).

#### 5.3.2.3.1 *The composition symbolises eternity*

By symbolising eternity and rebirth, the composition symbolised its protection of the deceased during rebirth. This was achieved through the composition's use of hieroglyphs (a), deities (b), material and colour (c), and placement (d).

(a) The composition symbolised eternity directly through its use of hieroglyphs that referred to eternity directly and indirectly.

The composition symbolised eternity directly through the depiction of the *shen*-ring (i) and *kheh* (ii) hieroglyphs.

(i) The composition's connection to eternity and rebirth was depicted primarily by having the composition grasp the *shen*-ring hieroglyph (V9 *shen*) [Fig. 166] – a determinative for 'eternity' – in its talons or wings (Gardiner, 1988:522). The *shen*-ring symbolised eternity through its circular form which represented the natural cycles that had no beginning or end; while the red solar disc frequently encircled by the *shen*-ring [Figs. 23, 30, 32] represented the sun and its solar cycle (Shaw & Nicholson, 1995:267). The connection between the composition grasping the *shen*-ring and eternity is supported by Tiradritti's (1999:23) statement with regard to the *shen*-rings grasped by the vulture in the vulture composition on Tutankhamun's third coffin [Fig. 2]: "... in their gold talons are *shen* signs, symbolizing eternity."

(ii) The composition's connection with eternity was depicted by having it grasp the *kheh* hieroglyph (C11 *kheh*) [Fig. 138] – a hieroglyph used as an ideogram for 'the god Kheh' which depicted the god of eternity in the form of a god holding two notched palm branches in his upheld hands (Gardiner, 1988:449; Wilkinson, 1992:39). This can be seen on the first pectoral of Princess Sit-Hathor-Yunet [Fig. 69] where the composition falcons grasp the *kheh* hieroglyph in one of their talons.

Wilkinson (1994:192-193) contends that gesture – defined as specific prescribed movements and poses involving the positioning or movement of a figure’s body, head, arms or hands – was frequently used in Egyptian art: “The symbolic use of gestures is among the most fascinating and important aspects of the symbolism inherent in ancient Egyptian art ... Egyptian artists can be seen to have incorporated gesture symbolism into their compositions in a conscious manner from very early times. In fact, a large part of formal Egyptian art was built up around this kind of representation, and a specific vocabulary of stances and gestures was utilized throughout the greater part of pharaonic history ...” The symbolic value of gestures and poses lay in the form of an object being dictated in order to communicate ideas and emotions that could replace the spoken or written word (Wilkinson, 1994:192).

In the context of gesture, the composition symbolised *eternity* indirectly through the pose and gesture of the frontal composition which suggested the shape of the *shen* (i), solar disc (ii) sky (iii) and *kheh* (iv) hieroglyphs.

(i) The pose of the composition suggested that the form of the *shen*-ring hieroglyph [Fig. 166] highlighted its ability to symbolise eternity. This is best seen in Tutankhamun’s duck-headed earrings and the solar falcon pendant.

According to Wilkinson (1992:193) the duck-headed earring [Fig. 21] indirectly symbolises the *shen*-ring: “In the duck-headed earrings also found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, the secondary association is even clearer ... These hybrid birds not only hold *shen* signs in their outstretched claws, in the traditional manner, but also closely mirror the shape of the *shen* sign ...” This is achieved by the wings curving upwards and inwards so that the feathers meet at the top to form the circle of the *shen* hieroglyph while the outstretched legs, talons and *shen*-rings suggested the horizontal bar of the knotted rope (Wilkinson, 1992:193).

According to Wilkinson (1992:193) the solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32] also indirectly symbolised the *shen*-ring. He states: “Here, the upcurving wings of the bird itself certainly suggest the shape of the *shen*, and the solar disc on the falcon’s head – the center of this part of the composition – heightens this effect.”

This was repeated in other Tutankhamun objects, namely the jewellery items of the collar [Figs. 14-20], pectoral [Fig. 25], pendant [Figs. 32, 34] and the *shabti* statuette [Fig. 38]. Non-Tutankhamun objects that suggest the form of a *shen*-ring include the coffin [Figs. 49, 51] and the jewellery items of the collar [Fig. 67] and pectoral [Figs. 71, 73] and the design on the mummy of Ramses III [Fig. 78].

(ii) As previously mentioned the pose of the composition could mimic the form of the sun disc hieroglyph [Fig. 155] – in the context of eternity the cycle of the sun became a central tenet in the concept of eternity.

(iii) The sky hieroglyph (*pet*) (N1) [Fig. 154] was used as an ideogram of determinative for 'sky' and depicts the heavens as a physical ceiling that drops at the edges just as the sky appears to reach down to the earth's horizon (Gardiner, 1988:485; Wilkinson, 1992:127). Wilkinson (1992:127) notes that the sky goddess Nut was often depicted imitating the form of the sky hieroglyph: "The vault of the heavens was personified by the sky goddess Nut who is often depicted in a pose resembling the sky glyph."

In a similar manner, the composition's pose could mimic the form of the sky hieroglyph as stated by Wilkinson (1994:152): "... the wings of a number of vulture pendants and winged sun disks are formed to suggest the hieroglyph "sky" or "heaven" ..."

In the context of the solar falcon composition suggesting the sky hieroglyph – this is evident in figure 91 where the down-curved wings of the bird seem to imitate the hieroglyph for 'sky.' The connection of the falcon with the sky came about because the falcon was a sky god and the wings of the falcon symbolised the sky in early depictions (Hall, 1994:52).

In the context of the vulture composition suggesting the sky hieroglyph – this is evident in examples where the vulture composition served as the zoomorphic form of Nut, Nekhbet, or where it had strong connotations with the sky when it was depicted on temple ceilings.



- The vulture composition as the zoomorphic form of Nut is evident in examples where the vulture composition specifically symbolised Nut and not Nekhbet [Figs. 29 and 45]. The fourth coffin of Yuya [Fig. 45] shows the composition's obvious use of the sky hieroglyph in the vulture composition as the zoomorphic form of Nut mimicking the pose of the anthropomorphic figure of Nut below it.
- The vulture composition as the zoomorphic form of Nekhbet [Figs. 13, 23-24, 33, 83-84, 114] also suggested the form of the sky hieroglyph as Nekhbet herself was a sky goddess.
- Wilkinson (1992:127) confirms that the sky hieroglyph often featured on temple ceilings (the physical ceiling of the temple); and helps to explain why the vulture composition featured on shrine roofs [Fig. 35], above doorways [Fig. 84] and on temple ceilings [Figs. 82-83, 115, 118-119] and also strongly suggested the sky hieroglyph.

(iv) The pose of the composition with its up-curved wings [Fig. 32] could suggest the form of the *kheh* hieroglyph [Fig. 138]. The high raised arms (holding up two notched palm branches) of the hieroglyph and the god suggest that they were holding up the sky in a mythical sense (Wilkinson, 1992:39).

(b) By serving as the zoomorphic and therianthrope forms of the gods Khepri (i), Ra (ii) and Atum (iii) with their strong connotations with eternity and also by being depicted with Kheh (iv) the god of eternity – the connection between the composition and eternity is strongly suggested.

(i) Khepri's association with eternity is shown by Spell 17 of the *Book of the Dead* of Hunefer: “Oh Khepri in the midst of your Sacred Bark, primeval one whose body is eternity ...” (Faulkner, 1993:49)

(ii) Ra's association with eternity is shown by Spell 42 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nakht entitled 'Spell for preventing the slaughter which is carried out in Heracleopolis'. In it Ra states: “... I am Re ... I am the Lord of Eternity ...” (Faulkner, 1993:62).

(iii) Atum's association with eternity can be found in Spell 15 of the *Book of the Dead* of Hunefer entitled 'Worship of Ra when he rises in the horizon until the occurrence of his setting in life'. In it Osiris is referred to as the ram-headed god Atum: "Hail to you, Ram of Eternity" (Faulkner, 1993:40).

(iv) In being depicted with the god Kheh (the god of eternity) [Fig. 69], the falcon composition shows a link between itself and eternity (Wilkinson, 1992:39).

(c) The use of material (i) and colour (ii) in the composition symbolised its connection with eternity.

(i) Egyptians were aware of the inherent physical qualities of certain materials. This often determined which materials an artwork would be made from. The reason for this was that there was a connection between the symbolic and physical qualities of certain materials and the intended symbolic message of the artwork (Wilkinson, 1994:82).

In the context of the composition, it was generally made of gold or gold cloisonné surrounded by stones or coloured glass because gold and its qualities symbolised eternity. Gold, like eternity, never tarnishes or rusts; while gold, like eternity, is also connected to and reminiscent of the sun due to its bright shining colour (Wilkinson, 1994:98; Aldred, 1978:15).

(ii) The general use of yellow in the composition symbolised its connection with the sun as the colour yellow symbolised the sun (Wilkinson, 1994:98).

(d) The strength of the symbolic connection between the composition and eternity was emphasised through placement.

Through the shape of the composition and the use of 'controlled vision', the last thing that the eye was supposed to see were the *shen*-rings. This indicates that the concept of eternity was a key theme in the composition's overall message.

Another detail that indicates the composition's emphasis on eternity was the placement of the avian creature on top of the *shen*-rings and its grasping of them which shows the composition's control and sense of possession and subjugation over the *shen*-ring's power of eternity. This indicates possession because by placing something on top of an object affirms possession while to be beneath another figure connotes inferiority or subjugation (Schäfer, 1974:171; Wilkinson, 1994:64). This clearly reminds one of nature where birds-of-prey subjugate and gain control over their prey by catching them in their talons. Thus, in the mind of the Egyptian, the composition appears to be the 'master' or 'lord of eternity' as it possesses and controls eternity.

#### 5.3.2.3.2 *The composition symbolises rebirth*

The composition symbolised much of the Ra and Osiris myth in its protection of the deceased during rebirth. The composition symbolised its protection of the deceased during rebirth through its *shen*-ring (a), various versions (b), secondary elements (c), pose and gesture (d), orientation (e), and use of material and colour (f).

(a) By grasping the *shen*-ring hieroglyph, the composition not only symbolised eternity, but also symbolised rebirth – Rossiter (1979:20): “The *shen*-ring symbolized man's hope for life after death.”

(b) Certain versions of the composition symbolised the phase of rebirth, namely the falcon (i), scarab (ii), ram-headed falcon (iii), duck-headed composition (iv) and the *wedjat*-eye composition (v).

(i) According to van Walsem (1997a:271), the falcon composition featured on Djedmonthuiufankh's coffin [Fig. 52-53] is connected to rebirth due to its regenerative qualities: “It undoubtedly represents Re-Horakhty, the reborn sun-god – with whom the deceased is identified.”

(ii) The scarab as the sun god Khepri was a beautiful symbol of the resurrection or rebirth of man (Bonwick, 1956:237). This connection of the scarab to regeneration, resurrection and birth was directly related to the Egyptians observing the development

cycle of the scarab beetle in nature. The scarab beetle rolled its dung ball and deposited it into its nest to serve as a food source for the future baby beetle, the eggs then developed into worm-like larvae, then into pupae, before finally emerging from the nest as a young adult beetle (Bianchi, 2001:179; Caygill, 1999:286). To the Egyptian observer, the adult male beetle appeared to exclude female participation in creation by depositing its semen into the dung ball. The scarab beetle then entered the nest, where its offspring developed into a pupa that looked like a mummified corpse, only to hatch reborn as a young scarab beetle. The Egyptian priests used the scarab beetle's developmental cycle as a model upon which to base what happened to a deceased human after death. They believed that a human would die and become mummified in a form similar to the scarab in pupa form, then travel through an underworld (similar to the scarab's underground lair), and finally become reborn into a new life in the afterlife in a similar manner to that of the young scarab beetle's exit from the nest (Bianchi, 2001:179; Caygill, 1999:286). Thus, the scarab beetle – by excluding female participation in creation and appearing to die while in pupa form only to be reborn later – was invested by the Egyptian priesthood with the powers of self-procreation and resurrection (Bianchi, 2001:179; Te Velde, 1995:1737; Watterson, 1984:69). This symbolism was mirrored in Spell 15 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nu entitled 'Worship of Ra when he rises in the horizon until the occurrence of this setting in life': "Hail to you ... Khepri the self-created" (Faulkner, 1993:41).

(iii) The ram-headed composition (through Atum's death and continual rebirth) symbolised rebirth. Élizabeth (2007) states the following regarding the ram-headed falcon pendant [Fig. 75]: "A jewel depicting this image and placed in a tomb would signify a guarantee of rebirth for the deceased."

(iv) The duck-headed composition symbolised rebirth - Wilkinson (1992:95): "The duck could also be a symbol of rebirth ... Earrings from the tomb of Tutankhamun which fuse the head of a duck with the body of a falcon may possibly symbolise this same concept."

(v) The *wedjat*-eye composition symbolised rebirth as it served as an ideogram for 'regeneration' - van Walsem (1997a:119) on the *wedjat*-eye placed above the falcon composition's head on Djedmonthuiufankh's coffin [Fig. 52]: "The falcon crowned

with sun-disc and [*wedjat*-eye] is a clear reference to the sun god and his regenerating power.” Its protection is depicted in a mortuary context by having the *wedjat*-eye protecting the king [Fig. 86], the god of the sun Ra [Fig. 62] and the god of resurrection Osiris [Fig. 59] under its wings from the New Kingdom period onwards.

(c) The secondary elements of the lotus plant (i) and *djed*-pillar (ii) and hieroglyphs could symbolise rebirth.

(i) The lotus plant symbolised rebirth based on the fact that the lotus (apart from symbolising Upper Egypt) also symbolised sunrise and rebirth because of its habit of submerging itself at night because of the lack of sunlight and re-emerging and opening once the sun returned at dawn (Wilkinson, 1992:101; Kemp, 2005:27). By appearing to return to life every morning (just like the morning sun did in the Ra myth) the lotus plant served as an effective symbol of human rebirth.

(ii) The *djed*-pillar hieroglyph symbolised a hope for rebirth, redress, and stability (Schumann-Antelme & Rossini, 2002:92).

(d) Frontal versions of the composition, showing it with wings up-curved [Fig. 14-20, 25, 32 etc.], could possibly use gesture and pose to symbolise rebirth by indirectly suggesting the form of the hieroglyph for ‘rejoice’ (*hai*) (A28) [Fig. 137], which, along with several other related words, was used as a determinative for ‘joy’ and ‘rejoice’ in the form of a man with both arms raised high above shoulder level with the palms held outward in jubilation (Gardiner, 1988:445; Wilkinson, 1992:27; Wilkinson, 1994:195). The connection of the hieroglyph *hai* with rebirth comes from the fact that, according to Wilkinson (1992:27), joy was associated with the heart (believed to be the seat of emotion). In Egyptian art the deceased was allowed to be reborn and enter the afterlife after having his heart weighed and found innocent in the Hall of Judgment. He was subsequently depicted in a triumphant pose [Fig. 171] which imitated the *hai* hieroglyph for joy.

(e) The composition possibly used orientation to symbolise rebirth. The viewer’s right was associated with east, the rising sun and rebirth; while the viewer’s left was associated with west, the sinking sun and death (Wilkinson, 1994:65). Thus, the

composition as a funerary amulet, might face the viewer's right (east) to echo the hope of the deceased of being reborn in the east after dying in the manner of the morning sun. When facing the viewer's left, the composition could also symbolise facing eternity, because according to Wilson (1971c:131) the west was the region of eternal life.

(f) The composition used materials based on their colour to symbolise rebirth – pertaining to the scarab composition featured on the winged scarab [Fig. 77]: “The stones and the colours used in the design reflect the religious and magical symbolism of the piece and the concept of rebirth” (Tiradritti 1999:376).

This was achieved through the symbolic use of warm (i) and cool colours (ii).

(i) The use of warm colours (red and yellow) and materials (gold) in the composition symbolised rebirth as red symbolised life and regeneration while yellow symbolised immortality (Wilkinson, 1994:106; van Walsem, 1997a:110). The colours red and yellow symbolised rebirth through their association with the sun and its rebirth every morning after a night of death; while gold symbolised rebirth through its solar (its brightness symbolised the sun), eternal (it does not rust) and transformational (it can be melted and re-used in other forms) qualities (Wilkinson, 1994:83; Ocvirk, 1962:93).

The use of gold and colour to symbolise rebirth in the face of death can be seen on the lid of a mummiform coffin [Fig. 46]. Here the body of the coffin was coloured black to symbolise the realm of the underworld while the vulture was coloured in a reddish gold, not only to symbolise rebirth, but ultimately also to invoke rebirth (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:46). The common use of gold on coffins symbolised the deceased's anticipated transformation and rebirth into an *akh* that lived in the afterlife (Robins, 2001:291).

(ii) The use of the cool colours (green and blue) in materials used in the composition, symbolised rebirth (Ocvirk, 1962:93).

Green was a potent sign of resurrection because it symbolised the regenerative power of plants – as a result, Osiris the god of the underworld and the first individual to be resurrected from death was often depicted with green skin (Wilkinson, 1994:108). In the context of the composition, the colour green and green materials (green feldspar, carnelian, malachite, turquoise, paste and faience) were used to communicate its symbolism of rebirth – the scarab’s body depicted on Tutankhamun’s lunar and solar scarab pectorals [Fig. 30] was made of green carnelian while some of its feathers were made from green obsidian and green paste. The use of green in the composition’s wings could refer to Spell 77 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nu entitled 'Spell for being transformed into a falcon of gold' where the deceased desired to be reborn as a great falcon: “I have appeared as a great falcon, having come forth from the Egg; I have flown up and alighted as a falcon of four cubits along its back, whose wings are of green-stone ...” (Faulkner, 1993:73).

Blue functioned as a symbol of life and rebirth because it not only symbolised the heavens (where the deceased would be reborn to spend eternity) but it also symbolised the Nile River and the cyclical nature of its seasonal crops (which were 'reborn' as the previously dead fields were revived by the inundation of the Nile) (Wilkinson, 1994:107; Wilkinson, 2003:231). The colour blue and blue materials (blue carnelian, lapis lazuli, paste and faience) were consequently used in the composition to symbolise rebirth. The use of lapis lazuli (its star-like speckles suggesting the heavenly realm and the night sky) in Tutankhamun's sated vulture pectorals [Fig 23], and blue carnelian in its feathers, symbolise its connection with rebirth. The use of blue material in the composition to symbolise its connection with rebirth is evident in Tutankhamun’s sated vulture pectorals [Fig. 23] while the *shen-ring*’s connection with rebirth through eternity is clearly shown by the choice of the colour blue for Tutankhamun’s solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32] (Wilkinson, 1994:101; Robins, 2001:291).

Paradoxically, the use of black material in the composition, usually for the scarab body [Figs 47-48, 50, 66 and 72] also symbolised rebirth, as not only did black symbolise the colour of night, death, and the underworld; but it also symbolised rebirth through the black, fertile silt deposited after the inundation of the Nile (Wilkinson, 1994:109; Robins, 2001:291).

## 5.4 How the composition functioned to protect

According to Freed (2001:127) “... the Egyptians created what the modern world admires as art for practical purposes... to serve for eternity.” This statement is important in the context of the composition as it was likewise meant to carry out its function of protection; but in order for it to do so, it had to guarantee that the owner had a safe journey through life, death, and rebirth in order to ensure that the individual partook of eternity in the afterlife (Taylor, 2001:115; Johnson, 2003:28).

### 5.4.1 Protection by wearing the composition

In Egypt protection generally came in the form of an amulet – a personal ornament which was believed to endow its wearer with certain magical powers or capabilities. When worn in the context of the composition, its protection was generally depicted in the form of such an amulet (Andrews, 1994:6). The use of the composition as an amulet was a ‘match made in heaven’ because both the composition and the amulet symbolised protection. As previously mentioned, the composition strongly symbolised protection while the amulet had strong protective connotations. Three of the four Egyptian words translated as ‘amulet’ (*meket*, *nekhbet*, and *sa*) come primarily from verbs meaning ‘to guard’ or ‘to protect’ while the fourth (*wedja*) has the same sound as the word meaning ‘well-being’ (Andrews, 1994:6).

Although the majority of amulets discovered were used in a funerary context, according to Quirke (1992:122) amulets were also worn in *life* for protection against premature death and evil. In the context of the composition featured in the tomb of Tutankhamun, eight examples (based on their use as a personal adornment) were worn by Tutankhamun during his life-time; namely the:

- lunar and solar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30] worn by Tutankhamun at his coronation (Aldred, 1978:123)
- *wedjat*-eye pectoral [Fig. 26] (Carter, 1963a:124)
- vulture bracelet [Fig. 13], flexible collar of Horus [Fig. 18], flexible collar of Nekhbet [Fig. 19], flexible-breast collar of Nebti [Fig. 20], sated vulture



pectoral [Figs. 23-24], and the solar falcon pectoral [Fig. 25] (Carter, 1963b:138; Houlihan, 1986:42).

Generally, the composition (as an amulet) was meant to be worn by Tutankhamun in death. This can be ascertained in Spell 157 of the *Book of Dead* entitled 'Spell for a golden vulture to be placed on the neck of the deceased'. It states that the vulture composition was to be worn upon death: "... a golden vulture with this spell inscribed on it; it is to be set as a protection for this worthy spirit on the day of internment ..." (Faulkner, 1993:155). Of the one hundred and forty-three amulets placed in more than one hundred different locations on Tutankhamun's corpse to protect him on his journey through the underworld and in the afterlife – thirteen featured the composition under discussion (Desroches-Noblecourt, 1967:74; Reeves, 1990:208).

Amulets were not haphazardly placed on the mummy, but were assigned specific prescribed positions to impart magical powers to the user (Wilkinson 1994:72; Andrews, 1994:7; El Mahdy, 1991:151). The same applied to the composition as an amulet. It was assigned specific positions so that as a bracelet, collar, pectoral or pendant it would impart its protection by embracing the body parts traditionally embraced by humans in life – namely the head (a), neck (b), the upper and lower chest of the torso (c), and the arms (d).

(a) According to Desroches-Noblecourt (1964:224), the headband [Fig. 22] placed on the *head* was designed to be wider at the temples in order to protect it. The head required the special protection of the composition because it was vital in ensuring the king's survival in the afterlife as the head signified the whole being (because it held a human's appearance) and it was considered to be the seat of re-animation (Wilkinson, 1992:41; Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:226).

(b) According to Wilkinson (1994:81), the vulture composition was generally placed around the king's *neck*. The reason being that it was demanded by the funerary texts – Spell 157 of the *Book of the Dead* [Fig. 64] entitled 'Spell for a golden vulture to be placed on the neck of the deceased': "His (Horus) great mother (Isis) protects him and erases those who come against Horus. To be spoken over a golden vulture with this spell inscribed on it; it is to be set as a protection for this worthy spirit on the day of

interment ...” (Faulkner, 1993:155). The neck required the special protection of the composition because the neck held and supported the head (Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:226; Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:44).

(c) The upper and lower chest of the *torso* required the protection of the composition because the Egyptians thought of this area as being strongly connected with protection and strength (Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:44). The composition was placed on the upper and lower chest of the torso because it was required by funerary texts (i) and because a certain version was meant to protect the heart (ii).

(i) The *ba*-bird composition was placed on the chest of Tutankhamun [Fig. 31] because it was demanded by Spell 89 of the *Book of the Dead* of Nakht entitled ‘Spell for letting a soul rejoin its corpse in the realm of the dead’: “To be spoken over a human-headed bird of gold inlaid with semi-precious stones and laid on the breast of the deceased” (Faulkner, 1993:85).

(ii) The scarab composition was generally placed in the vicinity of the heart (Wilkinson, 1994:81). This can be seen in Tutankhamun’s lunar and solar scarab pectoral [Fig. 30] and Psusennes I’s winged scarab pectoral [Fig. 72]; which are designed to be worn on the area surrounding the king’s heart. The heart required special protection because the Egyptians believed that the heart was the location of the human intellect and contained a record of its owner’s deeds and behaviour in life. This information would be critical for the future of the soul because when the deceased soul reached the judgement hall, the heart would be weighed against the feather of truth (representing *ma‘at*) and, based on the testimony of the heart, the soul would merit either eternal life in the afterlife or eternal destruction (Taylor, 2001:205).

The scarab composition’s protection of the heart in order to ensure rebirth is evident on the reverse side of Psusennes I’s winged scarab pectoral that had Spell 30B of the *Book of the Dead* inscribed on it:

“O my heart ... Do not stand up as a witness against me, do not be opposed to me in the tribunal, do not be hostile to me in the presence of the Keeper of the

Balance, for you are my ka which was in my body, the protector who made my members hale...do not make my name stink to the Entourage who make men. Do not tell lies about me in the presence of the god ...” (Faulkner, 1993:27-28).

As was common with heart scarabs, the inscription of Spell 30B on the scarab composition and its location over the heart was meant to magically ensure that the heart of the deceased would not testify against its owner in the final judgement – thus, ensuring rebirth (Tiradritti, 1999:322; Bianchi, 2001:180).

(d) The *arm* required the protection of the composition in the form of the vulture bracelet [Fig. 13]. Aldred (1978:10) states that vulnerable points of the body, such as the upper arm, required special protection. However, this fails to explain the absence of the composition on the lower limbs. Perhaps the composition was not required to embrace the lower limbs because in the context of human embrace, the lower limbs are generally not embraced – therefore excluding the winged embrace of the composition.

#### 5.4.2 Protection through the transference of magical qualities

The composition as an amulet provided its protection through the transference of its magical qualities to the user so that he could access and use them to obtain a safe, eternal life in the afterlife. This is based on the Egyptians' belief that certain images, objects, poses, materials and colours had inherent magical and divine properties (Andrews, 1994:6; Carter, 1963c:36; Egyptian art and architecture, 1967:1451).

The composition as an amulet provided its protection at more than one level. According to Andrews (1994:12, 36) (who used Flinders Petrie's categorisation of amulets) the amulet functioned at six levels: phylactic, homopoeic, dynatic, ktematic, apotropaic, and theophoric. The composition as an amulet and non-amulet was a particularly effective magical device because it functioned at all six levels.

Although the composition in many cases was not an amulet, non-amulet versions of the composition came to function as amulets over time. According to Saleh (1987 : plate 237) and El Mahdy (1991:157), from the Third Intermediate Period onwards

(after 1000 BC), the use of amulets and funerary equipment declined and the magical function of amulets was transferred to coffin lids instead. According to Saleh (1987: plate 237) this transfer of magic from amulets to coffin lids is evident on the coffin of Maatkare [Fig. 48]. This helps to explain why the various versions of the composition (in the context of the composition) used to be placed individually on single objects in Tutankhamun's New Kingdom tomb. However, from the Third Intermediate Period onwards, the various versions of the composition were depicted together in various pairings and trinities on coffin lids – as occurs on the coffin of Maatkare [Fig. 48].

#### *5.4.2.1 The composition as a phylactic amulet*

Phylactic amulets functioned to give protection to the user (Andrews, 1994:36). In the context of the composition, it was primarily a phylactic amulet that provided its protection in a homopoeic, dynatic, ktematic, apotropaic, and theophoric context.

#### *5.4.2.2 The composition's protection at the homopoeic level*

Protection at the homopoeic level involves protection in the form of a living creature or part of a living creature that is thought to transfer its characteristics or capabilities to the living or deceased individual (Andrews, 1994:12; El Mahdy, 1991:150). The composition provides protection in life and death at the homopoeic level by transferring the magical qualities of the animals (or parts of animals) associated with the composition, to the user – namely the scarab (i), ram (ii), birds (iii), and bird talons (iv).

(i) The individual hoped to access the *scarab's* qualities of regeneration to ensure his rebirth in the afterlife (van Walsem, 1997a:302; Tiradritti, 1999:76). In the context of the composition as a heart scarab – it was meant to act as a substitute for the deceased's heart, preventing the heart from giving false witness against the owner and thus, guaranteeing that the soul would enter the afterlife (Bianchi, 2001:180; Romano, 1995:1610).

(ii) The individual hoped to access the *ram's* perceived powers of strength and virility (hence its creative powers) to aid him in life while in death the deceased hoped to use

the creative power of virility to aid him in the process of rebirth so that he could enter the afterlife (Andrews, 1994:30).

(iii) The individual hoped to access the symbolic connotation of *birds* and their wings. According to Goldsmith (1924:121) birds and their wings symbolised life because birds flew in the air (the spirit of life) and the flapping of a bird's wing became a symbol of life. This was evident in the Osiris myth where the winged Isis and Nephthys flapped their wings over the deceased Osiris to give him the 'breath of life' required to bring him back to life (van Walsem, 1997a:145-146). Thus, by depicting the composition flapping its wings in the direction of the king, the king hoped that the composition would direct the 'breath of life' to himself in life and death.

(iv) According to Aldred (1978:10) the *talons* of birds-of-prey held great magical qualities and were used from prehistoric times as amulets. Over time the use of actual talons died out by the Middle Kingdom but their symbolic and magical properties remained in art. Aldred fails to mention what exact magical properties they contained (perhaps they held great power because the bird of prey caught and killed its prey with its talons) but the user probably hoped to access whatever magical properties they contained and use them to his advantage.

#### 5.4.2.3 *The composition's protection at the dynastic level*

Protection at the dynastic level involves protection in the shape of inanimate objects invested with particular powers that could be accessed and transferred to the user (Andrews, 1994:12). The composition was able to transfer its qualities to the user because in Egyptian art, by combining an animate object (the animal of the composition) with an inanimate object (the hieroglyphs), the animal form (the falcon, vulture, cobra, scarab, ram, duck) of the composition would be able to actively use the hieroglyphs at its disposal to perform actions (Baines, 1985:41).

In the context of the composition, dynastic protection involves transferring the magical qualities of its primary and secondary hieroglyphic elements (a), certain versions of the composition (b), and colours (c) to the user in order to improve the individual's existence.

(a) The individual hoped to gain the magical and protective qualities of the primary and secondary hieroglyphic elements offered to him or his cartouche by the composition, namely the *shen*-ring (i), *ankh* (ii), short-handled *khu*-feather fan (iii), *was*-sceptre (iv), *neb*-basket-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition (v), alabaster bowl-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition (vi), *kheb*-*sed* composition (vii), and *djed*-pillar-*was*-sceptre-*ankh* composition (viii).

In order to understand the transfer process, the viewer must understand that many Egyptian works of art were designed to be ‘read’ – Wilkinson (1994:152): “Egyptian paintings and sculptures may thus contain, or even be wholly composed of, hieroglyphic forms, and the interaction between writing and pictorial representation was one of major symbolic importance...concerned with the function of making specific symbolic statements through pictorial rather than written means.” Thus, the viewer of the composition must be able to read the interaction between the composition, the hieroglyphic elements at its disposal, and the individual (Wilkinson, 1994:152). In doing so, the viewer would be able to decipher the symbolic statement that the composition was trying to make.

(i) The primary hieroglyph element that the composition offered to the king was the *shen*-ring [Fig. 41]. By pointing it in the direction of the king, three meanings were conveyed:

(1) Watterson (1984:137) asserts that by offering the *shen*-ring to the king in life, the composition offered the king sovereignty over all that the sun encircled and ultimately, mastery over the world.

(2) Shaw & Nicholson (1995:267) assert that by offering the *shen*-ring to the king, the composition offered the king eternal protection: “ [The *shen*-ring] is frequently found as a decorative element in designs, and is particularly associated with Horus the falcon or Nekhbet the vulture who hold the sign in their claws above the king, offering him eternal protection.”

(3) By pointing the *shen*-ring in the direction of the king in death, the composition transferred the *shen*-ring's quality of eternity to the king so that he, by acquiring the power of eternity, could also acquire an eternal life or eternal protection (Andrews, 1994:77; Wilkinson, 1992:193).

(ii) Other than the *shen*-ring, the most common hieroglyph offered to the king was the *ankh*. By pointing the ankh at the king [Fig. 37], the composition states: "The gods grant life (*ankh*) to the king."

In his life, this ensured the king continued life in the prospect of losing it during war; whilst in death, this ensured the king a continued life through rebirth (Wilkinson, 1992:177; Aldred, 1978:10-11) – as stated by Tiradritti (1999:237) in regard to the solar falcon pendant [Fig.32]: "In its gold talons it grasps *shen* rings (eternity) and the *ankh* (life) with which the god promises the deceased king an eternal life." The composition's offering of the *ankh* to the deceased in order to bring about resurrection can be seen on the inside of the lid of the sarcophagus of Amenemnet [Fig. 56]. Here, the life offered by the composition reawakens the deceased, indicated by the erect phallus pointing in the direction of the *ankh* – a sign of new life through fertility associated with Osiris.

(iii) By pointing the short-handled *Khu*-feather fan at the king [Fig. 104], the composition is stating: "The gods grant life and justice to the king."

The granting of life is symbolised by the fan as it represents the air (life) that it moves and also functions as an active and functional symbol of breathing – therefore by pointing it in the direction of the king, it gives life to the king (Wilkinson, 1992:177). The granting of justice is symbolised because the ostrich feather that formed part of the fan was the symbol of Ma'at – the goddess of truth, order, law and justice (Wilkinson, 1992:37, 179). The granting of justice to the king is fitting because it symbolises the composition's protection of the king whose role included maintaining order (*ma'at*) over chaos (*isfet*) (Wilkinson, 1992:37).

(iv) By pointing the *was*-sceptre at the king or his cartouche, the composition states: “The gods grant power and dominion to the king.” This confirms the king’s political mandate to rule over Egypt on behalf of the gods.

(v) Pointing the *neb-basket-was-sceptre-ankh* composition at the king in life, the composition states: “all life, stability and power” to the king; while in death it states “ensured divine life” to the king (Wilkinson, 1992:181; Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:235).

(vi) According to Wilkinson (1992:203), by pointing the alabaster bowl-*was-sceptre-ankh* composition at the king [Fig. 110] the composition states: “all life and dominion to the king.” This is particularly fitting in war scenes where by offering it to the king, the composition promises the king life in the face of potential death and his continued rule over Egypt and even the territory of his defeated enemy.

(vii) By pointing the *kheb-sed* composition at the king [Fig. 105], Wilkinson (1992:145) asserts that the composition states: “I will give you, the king, festivals with all life, power and dominion.” This promises the king a long and prosperous reign over Egypt.

(viii) By pointing the *djed-pillar-was-sceptre-ankh* composition at the king [Fig. 93] this states: “The gods give power, dominion, stability, health and life to the king.” This ensured the king an untroubled and healthy reign that brought with it prosperity and peace to Egypt.

(b) The individual hoped to access and use the regenerative powers of the *ba*-bird (i), and the *wedjat*-eye and duck-headed compositions (ii).

(i) In the context of the *ba*-bird composition – by wearing the *ba*-bird composition (whose head identified it as belonging to Tutankhamun), Tutankhamun desired to gain its protection of his soul during his journey through the underworld (Schäfer, 1974:224). In addition, the depiction of the *ba*-bird grasping *shen*-rings gave him the assurance that he would gain an eternal life because it implied that the soul of the king (the *ba*-bird) possessed and controlled eternity.



(ii) In the context of the *wedjat*-eye and duck-headed compositions – by wearing the respective compositions, the deceased hoped to acquire their powers of regeneration to influence his chances of being reborn.

(c) Robins (2001:291) argues that the user of a work of art hoped to harness the powers of colour for his own protection and benefit. In the context of the composition, Tutankhamun hoped to access the regenerative qualities of green connected to the vegetative cycle of plants (i), the regenerative qualities of red connected to the solar cycle of the sun (ii), and the regenerative qualities of blue connected to the Nile's cycle of inundation (iii).

(i) Green was meant to ensure rebirth because it carried connotations of fresh vegetation, vigor, and regeneration while green in the form of turquoise was associated with the rebirth of the sun, it promised rebirth in a funerary context (Robins, 2001:291).

(ii) Red was strongly connected to rebirth and the continuation of life as the colour red in red carnelian was valued for its life-giving potential and for its apotropaic properties (Robins, 2001:292). Wearers of red therefore expected to harness the potentially dangerous powers of red for their own protection and benefit.

(iii) According to Robins (2001:292) items of funerary equipment made of blue faience were to harness the regenerative properties of the color.

#### *5.4.2.4 The composition's protection at the ktematic level*

Protection at the ktematic level involves protection by representing the possession of the living that is taken to the tomb for use in the afterlife where it magically acts as a substitute (Andrews, 1994:12).

In the context of the composition, ktematic protection is evident in the composition featured on funerary objects in Tutankhamun's tomb. Objects such as the *shabti* statuette [Fig. 38] were meant to be used as a substitute servant for Tutankhamun in

the afterlife should he be called on to do any task (Andrews, 1994:99). By protecting the *shabti* – the composition ensured that the *shabti* would perform its function for eternity and that Tutankhamun would have an eternal existence devoid of labour.

#### 5.4.2.5 *The composition's protection at the apotropaic level*

Protection at the apotropaic level involves using something harmful and turning it into something beneficial by using 'like' to ward off the dangers of 'like' (Andrews, 1994:36). In the context of the composition, this can be seen in the vulture (i) and cobra (ii) compositions.

(i) According to Andrews (1994:37), the *vulture* composition in the form of amulets and collars had an underlying apotropaic function. Tutankhamun hoped to use the vulture's qualities connected to death to protect him from a premature death in life and to ensure an eternal life after death. It may seem paradoxical to seek help from a bird so intimately associated with death and the destruction of corpses (which the Egyptians tried to avoid through mummification to preserve the body for eternity) and in fact, one could say that it was a self-defeating exercise (Andrews, 1994:37). However, this contradictory type of reasoning was an ingenious Egyptian tactic to defeat eternal death by using and controlling a creature connected to death and the eternal destruction of the flesh. So, instead of fearing its destructive powers, Tutankhamun used them as a powerful weapon to protect himself from the dangers of death.

(ii) The use of the *cobra* also exemplified the use of 'like' to defeat 'like'. Snakes were feared both in life and in death. In life, snakebites claimed the lives of many Egyptians, while in death, a giant mythological snake named Apophis tried to devour both the sun and the deceased during their voyage through the underworld (Taylor, 2001:28-29; Muller, 2001:125). Although the cobra was a snake, it was a beneficial snake as, despite its size and deadly venom, the Egyptian and Black-necked Spitting Cobras is not as troublesome to humans as they seldom attack, while death from a cobra bite is much less painful and frequent than from bites from the most common venomous snake in Egypt – the feared asp (Johnson, 1990:13). Tutankhamun

therefore hoped to harness the protection offered by the cobra composition (in the form of Wadjet) to defend himself against the snake Apophis.

#### 5.4.2.6 *The composition's protection at the theophoric level*

Protection at the theophoric level involved taking the shape of deities or their animal manifestations in order to access the protection or particular powers of the deity (Andrews, 1994:13).

In the context of the composition, the king hoped to access the powers and protection of the divinities in a political (a) and mythological context (b).

(a) In a political context, the king hoped that he (as the king of Egypt) would access the protection of the deities, symbolised by the political versions of the composition connected to the king, the institution of kingship and the geographic notion of the kingdom over which the king ruled – namely the falcon composition as Ra and Horus, the vulture composition as Nekhbet and the cobra composition as Wadjet.

(b) In a mythological context, the king hoped to access the protection of: Isis and Nephthys by associating himself with Horus and Osiris in the Osiris myth (i); and with the protection of Khepri, Ra, Atum and Nut by associating himself with Ra in the Ra myth (ii).

(i) The vulture and cobra compositions were associated with the *Osiris myth* because Isis as the goddess of the south was associated with the Nekhbet vulture composition that symbolised the southern Egyptian kingdom of Upper Egypt, while Nephthys as the goddess of the north was associated with the Wadjet cobra composition that symbolised the northern Egyptian kingdom of Lower Egypt (Andrews, 1984:31). That these deities and compositions were linked according to the respective cardinal points can be ascertained by Tutankhamun's Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27]. According to Aldred (1978:122) the labels accompanying the Nekhbet vulture of Upper Egypt to her left and the Wadjet cobra composition of Lower Egypt to her right, identify them as the goddesses Isis and Nephthys respectively.

In the context of the Osiris myth applying to Tutankhamun in life; as the human incarnation of Horus Tutankhamun hoped to take on the role of Horus in the Osiris myth to acquire the protection of Isis, who in the myth kept Horus safe from the deadly intentions of Seth (the force of chaos whom the king had to destroy) and healed Horus from the deadly venom of a scorpion through her protective winged embrace and her use of magic (Andrews, 1984:31; Andrews, 1994:31).

In the context of the Osiris myth (as it applied to Tutankhamun in death), Tutankhamun hoped to take on the role of Osiris to acquire the protection of Isis and Nephthys so that they could do for him what they did for Osiris in the myth – namely use their magical protection and regenerative powers to bring him back to life by flapping their wings so that he could also become a king in the afterlife (Taylor, 1989:9-11; Wilkinson, 1994:35; Aldred, 1978:122). In the context of the vulture and cobra compositions, this was to be achieved in the following manner:

(1) By wearing the golden vulture composition collars [Figs. 14-15] Tutankhamun hoped to receive the protection of Nekhbet and Isis – as stated by van Walsem (1997a:272): “There is also a connection with vulture collars which, as amulets, should give the protection of Isis to the deceased.” The connection of golden vulture collars with Isis, as opposed to the non-gold flexible vulture collars [Figs. 19-20], was that Isis was associated with gold while Nekhbet was not (Wilkinson, 1994:83). This can be deduced from Spell 157 of the *Book of the Dead* entitled ‘Spell for a golden vulture to be placed on the neck of the deceased’ which states “His (Horus) great mother (Isis) protects him and erases those who come against Horus. To be spoken over a golden vulture with this spell inscribed on it; it is to be set as a protection for this worthy spirit on the day of interment ...” (Faulkner, 1993:155).

(2) Tutankhamun hoped to receive the protection of Isis and Nephthys as well as Nekhbet and Wadjet by depicting Tutankhamun in an Osiris manner on his coffins [Figs. 1-3] and Osiris pectoral [Fig. 27] (where the Osiris figure has a label to its right identifying him as Tutankhamun) by having him taking on Osiris’s pose (mummified pose with crossed arms) and regalia (*atef* crown, crook, and flail) (Wilkinson, 1994:35; Aldred, 1978:122).

(ii) The scarab, falcon, ram-headed and vulture compositions were associated with the *Ra myth*. By wearing the solar versions of the composition, the king hoped not only to acknowledge the composition's symbolism of the solar cycle, but also to participate in it (Frankfort, 1978:175). By wearing the versions of the compositions connected to the solar cycle, the king hoped that he would successfully re-enact the sun's journey as told by mythological texts and take part in the sun's resurrection in the form of a new life in the afterlife.

As stated previously, the scarab, falcon and ram-headed compositions symbolised the morning sun god Khepri, the noon sun god Ra and the evening sun god Atum. In life, by wearing or displaying these gods on objects, the king hoped to access Khepri, Ra and Atum's protection during his childhood, adulthood, and old age. In death, the king hoped to access these gods' power of solar regeneration and re-enact the complete solar cycle – van Walsem (1997a:119-120) on the solar falcon composition on Djedmonthuiufankh's coffin [Fig. 53]: “The falcon crowned with sun-disk and w[edjat]-eye is a clear reference to the sun god and his regenerating power ... The falcon has therefore a cosmic function ...”

The vulture composition was associated with the Ra myth because in certain examples [Figs. 29, 45] the vulture composition symbolised the sky goddess Nut. Thus, in the context of the Ra myth (as applied to Tutankhamun in death) he hoped to take on the role of Ra and the deceased king in the *Pyramid Texts* in order to be reborn between the thighs of Nut into the afterlife at sunrise. In non-Tutankamun coffins such as the coffin of Yuya [Fig. 45] that features the Nut vulture composition, Frankfort (1978:176) states that by identifying the coffin and other amulets with Nut, the deceased king was putting his soul at rest in the body of Nut that assured rebirth due to the *Pyramid Texts*.

### 5.4.3 Protection through increased magical potency through depiction

The magical potency of the composition's protection was strengthened by gaining whatever was depicted (a); and depicting the composition in great detail (b).

(a) Tutankhamun believed that whatever was depicted happening in the composition would occur in life and death – a notion that was derived from the Egyptian belief that the scenes, activities, situations and creatures depicted in art would become reality; thus creating the conditions necessary for a successful rebirth into the afterlife (Egyptian art and architecture, 1967:1451-1452). Thus, by depicting the composition protecting the king in life and death, or offering protective qualities to the king – the scenario depicted would actually take place.

(b) Tutankhamun believed that depicting the composition in great detail would increase the composition's magical potency and effectiveness. This notion was derived from the Egyptian belief that for magic to work properly in art, the scenes must be shown in as much detail as possible – using all the most characteristic angles – in order to provide as much information as possible for the magic to work (Johnson, 2003:28).

### 5.4.4 Conclusion

If the king successfully accessed the magical qualities and protection of the composition, then he could expect a number of benefits both in life and in death. In life, the king could expect to be protected and triumphant in his daily running of the government and in his battle against his enemies, thereby assuring him of success in his role as the maintainer of order over chaos. In death, the king could expect to experience his passing as a mere transitional phase between two lives – life on earth and an eternal and trouble-free life in the afterlife (Fox, 1951:10).

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## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

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The reader was introduced to the composition featured on items discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun and on the mummy of the king. The focus on the composition in the context of Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings was a logical one because his tomb was relatively undisturbed – allowing a study of the composition in its intended *context*. The composition in the context of Tutankhamun and non-Tutankhamun sources is more than just a pretty picture – it is a living, breathing image that communicates the ancient Egyptians' political, religious, mythological, and artistic worldview.

To come to this conclusion, the thesis analysed the composition at the iconographic, symbolic, and functional level by using primary iconographical sources that directly display the composition; sources that relate to the composition in the form of ancient Egyptian texts and secondary academic texts. It should be kept in mind that the graphical database is limited and incomplete in its scope and sources consulted. As a result, as more archaeological data and written evidence relevant to the composition is uncovered, consulted, and pieced together; a “truer” picture of the composition's iconographic, symbolic, and functional aspects in the context of ancient Egypt might emerge. This leaves the door open to others to pursue a greater investigation into the composition.

At the *iconographic* level, the composition was analysed to determine how it was composed. The composition's historical development traced its creation to the early-Dynastic period when *shen*-rings were first added to the falcon and vulture. Over time the composition took on new elements and new versions (e.g. xxxx); but it was determined that the lack of dramatic change in the composition evident in its three thousand year history indicate a use of a fixed artistic canon, determined by the divine principle of *maat*. The artistic rules of the Egypt's artistic canon were then applied to the composition and it was found that the artistic canon dictated the way that the composition's elements were arranged and depicted.

The focus of the thesis then shifted onto the *symbolic* analysis of the composition. Through the consultation of various ancient Egyptian mythological texts and contemporary academic opinion (as found in the Egyptological secondary literature), it was determined that the composition used its iconographic elements and Egypt's political history, religion and mythology to symbolise its protection of the king in life, death, and rebirth. This was achieved in one of two contexts: a political context in which the political versions of the composition protecting the king in life and death; and a mythological context whereby wearing the various versions associated with the Ra and Osiris myths, the king took on the role of Ra and Osiris – thereby obtaining the composition's protection in life, death and rebirth.

Finally, the composition was approached from a *functional* angle and it was determined that the king either wore the composition as an amulet or was depicted with it in order to benefit from accessing its magical protection and properties in his life (especially in time of war), death, and finally rebirth. By doing so the composition would fulfil its overarching protective function by ensuring that the king would be achieve an eternal life by being reborn into the afterlife.

The composition should not be thought of as simply a surviving relic of the dead Egyptian civilisation. Rather, it should be seen as a broadcaster that (through the correct insight and education) gives contemporary humans greater insight and appreciation into the ancient Egyptians' art, worldview, mindset, and culture. In doing so, the composition managed to achieve the Egyptian goal of eternity by surviving the death of the Egyptian civilisation that created it and continuing to communicate the Egyptian's obsession with *eternity* until today.



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## **APPENDIX: THE COMPOSITION AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN COAT OF ARMS**

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Houlihan (1984:48) compares the use of the Horus falcon featured in the composition to a heraldic bird that symbolised the nation state of Egypt: “If the Egyptians had a national bird, the ‘Horus Falcon’ would doubtless have been it.” This is an interesting comparison because the iconographic and symbolic aspects of the composition are remarkably similar to avian compositions that serve as the coat of arms of modern nation states across the world [Figs. 179-191].

The most relevant example is the coat of arms of the Republic of South Africa [Fig. 179] when compared to the Egyptian composition in the form of Tutankhamun’s solar falcon pendant [Fig. 32] in respect to their connection with: an avian creature (a), frontalism (b), the state and head of state (c), solar disc (d), symbolising protection (e), the divine sphere (f), plant emblems (g), its talons grasping objects (h), textual inscriptions (i), the circular form symbolizing eternity (j), unity (k). All relevant quotes come from the South African government.

(a) Both avian compositions have a bird-of-prey with up-curved wings as the central primary element – a falcon in the context of the Egyptian composition and a secretary bird in the context of the South African composition: “A central image of our new coat of arms is the legendary secretary bird with its uplifted wings” (Banhegyi, Dyer, Favis, Watson & Verlaque-Napper, 2006:17).

(b) Both utilize frontalism that depicts the composition in its most characteristic angles through the use of mixed frontal (wings, torso) and profile (head, talons) views.

(c) Both symbolise the geographical notion of the State and its head of state. The Egyptian composition symbolised the land of Egypt (Upper and Lower Egypt) and the king and the institution of kingship; while the South African composition symbolises the Republic of South Africa and its head of state (the president): “The Coat of Arms

is the highest visual symbol of the State”; “If South Africa were a person, the Coat of Arms would be its signature” (Banhegyi, Dyer, Favis, Watson & Verlaque-Napper, 2006:16-17).

(d) Both have a solar disc placed above them. The Egyptian composition frequently had a solar disc placed above its head to symbolise its connection with the sun, life and rebirth; while the South African composition had the sun placed above its head of the avian to symbolise its connection with the sun, life and rebirth: “The rising sun – an emblem of brightness and splendour. It symbolises the promise of rebirth ... It is the symbol of the source of life ...” (Becket, 2002:172).

(e) Both avian compositions symbolise protection by destroying the forces of chaos and evil (i), and by having their wings symbolise protection (ii).

(i) The falcon in the Egyptian composition symbolises protection through the destruction of chaos (*isfet*) by maintaining order (*ma'at*) by dive-bombing its enemies and carrying them away in its talons; while the secretary bird in the South African composition symbolised protection by killing its enemy by kicking it to death with its legs and talons: “The secretary bird – characterised in flight – the natural consequence of growth and speed. It is a powerful bird whose legs – depicted as the spear and knobkierrie – serve it well in its hunt for snakes symbolising protection of the nation against its enemies” (Beckett, 2002:172).

(ii) In the context of the Egyptian composition, the wings symbolise the deities’ protection of the individual while in the context of the South African coat of arms its wings also symbolised protection: “Its uplifted wings are an emblem of the ascendance of our nation, whilst simultaneously offering us their protection” (Beckett, 2002:172).

(f) Both avian compositions symbolise a divine entity connected to the heavenly realm. The Egyptian composition symbolised the gods Ra, Horus, Ra-Horakhty, Khepri and Atum; and the goddesses Nekhbet, Wadjet, Isis, Nephthys and Nut; while the secretary bird in the South African composition symbolised a heavenly diety: “It

is a messenger of the heavens and conducts its grace upon the earth, in this sense it is a symbol of divine majesty" (Beckett, 2002:172).

(g) Both avian compositions have connections to plants. The Egyptian composition is associated with the sedge, lotus, and papyrus plants; while the South Africa composition is associated with the protea (South Africa's national flower emblem) and ears of wheat (Beckett, 2002:172).

(h) Both avian compositions' legs and talons hold symbolic objects. The talons of the Egyptian composition grasp various hieroglyphic secondary elements that symbolise concepts; while the secretary bird's legs in the South African composition appear in the form of objects symbolise concept of peace: "The spear and knobkierrie – dual symbols of defence and authority – also represent the powerful legs of the secretary bird. The spear and knobkierrie are lying down, symbolising peace" (Beckett, 2002:172).

(i) Both avian compositions are associated with inscriptions. The Egyptian composition is associated with the an inscription in the form of a cartouche containing the name of the king; while the South African composition is associated with the textual inscription in the form of a motto: "The motto – *!ke e: /xarra //ke ...*" (Beckett, 2002: 172).

(j) Both avian compositions symbolise eternity and emphasise rebirth. The Egyptian composition directly symbolises eternity (in the context of an eternal life through rebirth) through the *shen*-ring and *kheh* hieroglyphs, and indirectly through the circular form of the composition suggesting the form of the *shen*-ring and solar disc. The South African composition symbolises eternity directly through the elephant tusks (i), and indirectly through the circular form of the composition suggesting eternity (ii-iii).

(i) "Elephant tusks – symbolise wisdom, strength, moderation and eternity" (Beckett, 2002:172).

(ii) "... the completed structure of the Coat of Arms combines the lower and higher circles in a symbol of infinity. The path that connects the lower edge of the scroll, through the lines of the tusks, with the horizon above which the sun rises at the top, forms the shape of the cosmic egg from which the secretary bird rises. In the symbolic sense this is the implied rebirth of the spirit of our great and heroic nation" (Beckett, 2002:172)

(iii) "The design carries within it images of the egg, symbolising the eternal reproduction of life" (Banhegyi, Dyer, Favis, Watson & Verlaque-Napper, 2006:21).

(k) Finally, both symbolise the concept of unity. The Egyptian composition symbolises the unity of both halves of Egypt (Upper and Lower Egypt) under a single king through the use of secondary emblems and symmetry; while the South African composition symbolises unity through the symmetry of the human figures (i) and the motto (ii).

(i) "The human figures ... are depicted in an attitude of greeting, symbolising unity. This also represents the beginning of the individual's transformation into the greater sense of belonging to the nation and by extension, collective Humanity" (Beckett, 2002:172).

(ii) "The motto – *!ke e: /xarra //ke*, written in the Khoisan language of the /Xam people, literally meaning: diverse people unite. It addresses each individual effort to harness the unity between thought and action. On a collective scale it calls for the nation to unite in a common sense of belonging and national pride" (Beckett, 2002:172).

With the iconographic similarities between the Egyptian composition and the South African composition in mind, one notices a universal similarity between the Egyptian composition and many modern avian coat of arms. Like the Egyptian composition, modern avian coat of arms are depicted:

- In a mixed frontal-profile view that faced a particular direction – namely the viewer’s left-hand side [Figs. 180-183, 184, 186-189, 191] whereas the Egyptian composition generally faced the viewer’s right-hand side.
- In a profile view [Fig. 180] in a manner similar to the first pectoral of Princess Sit-Hathor-Yunet [Fig. 69].
- Grasping heraldic objects [Figs. 180-181, 184-186], plants [Figs. 181-182], symbols of evil or chaos (usually snakes) [Fig. 182], and inscriptions [Figs. 180, 181, 187-191] in their talons or wings.
- Using or suggesting circular forms [Figs. 183, 189-190].

I contend that the similarities between the Egyptian composition and other non-Egyptian avian compositions is most likely not the result of importing foreign motifs or exporting the composition to other countries. These similarities are most likely the result of humans using certain universal elements at their disposal (the bird and sun in the sky; the sun’s connotation with birds; the plants on the ground; the bird of prey’s impressive hunting skills; and eternity captured in natural cycles) in all parts of the world after independently coming to the same conclusion. Ultimately, the same motif is independently repeated over time and in different parts of the world.

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## GRAPHICAL DATABASE

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### A. Primary sources

#### A.1. Tutankhamun objects

##### A.1.1 Coffins



**FIGURE 1**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MUSEUM #

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

DATE

#### **Second coffin of Tutankhamun**

Vulture and cobra

Carter 1963b: plate LXIX

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No JE 60670, Carter Cat. No. 254

Wood, gold foil, coloured glass and faience (Reeves, 1990:107)

Length: 203cm; breadth: 68.5cm; height: 78.7cm (Partridge, 1994:137)

Valley of the Kings, Thebes

Burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)

1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 2**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MUSEUM #

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

DATE

**Third coffin of Tutankhamun**

Vulture and cobra

Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:127; Carter, 1963b: plate LXXI;

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 60671, Carter Cat. No. 255

Gold, semi-precious stones, faience and coloured glass (Tiradritti, 1999:232)

Length: 187.5 cm; width: 51.3 cm; height: 51 cm (Tiradritti, 1999:232)

Valley of the Kings, Thebes

Burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)

1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 3**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Canopic coffin of Tutankhamun (one of four)**

Vulture and cobra  
Carter, 1963c: plate LIV  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 60688; Carter Cat. No. 266G  
Gold, glass paste, carnelian (Tiradritti, 1999:229)  
Length: 39cm; width: 11cm; depth: 12cm (Tiradritti, 1999:229)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 4**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Four miniature coffins containing Tutankhamun's stillborn children**

Vulture  
Partridge, 1994:144  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 60692, Carter Cat. No. 317A, 317A(1) - 317B, 317B(1)  
Wood  
Length: 49.5cm; width: 57.5 cm (Reeves, 1990:123)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom





**FIGURE 5**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MUSEUM #

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

DATE

**Miniature heirloom coffins**

Vulture and cobra

Reeves, 1990:168-169

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 60697-60698, Carter Cat. No. 320 – 320A

Gilded and resin coated wood (Reeves 1990:168)

Unknown

Valley of the Kings, Thebes

Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)

1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.1.2 Furniture

A.1.2.1 Casket



**FIGURE 6** Painted wooden box (long side): war scene  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:213  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61467, Carter Cat. No. 21  
MATERIAL Wood, gessoed and painted (Tiradritti, 1999:213)  
DIMENSIONS Length: 61cm; width: 43cm; height: 44cm (Tiradritti, 1999:213)  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 7** Painted wooden box (short side): Tutankhamun as a sphinx tramples on his Libyan (left) and Nubian (right) enemies  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:213  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61467, Carter Cat. No. 21  
MATERIAL Wood, gessoed and painted (Tiradritti, 1999:213)  
DIMENSIONS Length: 61cm; width: 43cm; height: 44cm (Tiradritti, 1999:213)  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 8** **Painted wooden box (lid): Tutankhamun hunting lions**  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Carter, 1963b: plate III  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61467, Carter Cat. No. 21  
**MATERIAL** Wood, gessoed and painted (Tiradritti, 1999:213)  
**DIMENSIONS** Length: 61cm; width: 43cm; height: 44cm (Tiradritti, 1999:213)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

*A 1.2.2 Chair*



**FIGURE 9** **Ceremonial chair**  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Tiradritti, 1999:218  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 62030, Carter Cat. No. 351  
**MATERIAL** Ebony, ivory, gold leaf, stone, faience (Tiradritti, 1999:218)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 102cm; width: 70cm; depth: 44cm (Tiradritti, 1999:218)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** Annexe, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A. 1.2.3 Fan



**FIGURE 10**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Annexe fan**

Cobra  
Carter, 1963c: plate XLIII B  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 62003, Carter Cat. No. 415  
Carved and stained ivory (Carter, 1963c:133)  
Unknown  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Annexe, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 11**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Ebony fan**

Vulture  
Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:125  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 62000, Carter Cat. No. 245  
Gold-foil, coloured glass and calcite (Reeves, 1990:179)  
Unknown  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Annexe, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.1.2.4 Throne



**FIGURE 12**  
**ANIMAL** Cobra  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Tiradritti, 1999:219  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 62030, Carter Cat. No. 91  
**MATERIAL** Wood, gold leaf, silver, glass paste, semiprecious stones (Tiradritti, 1999:218)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 102cm; length: 60cm; width: 54cm (Tiradritti, 1999:218)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

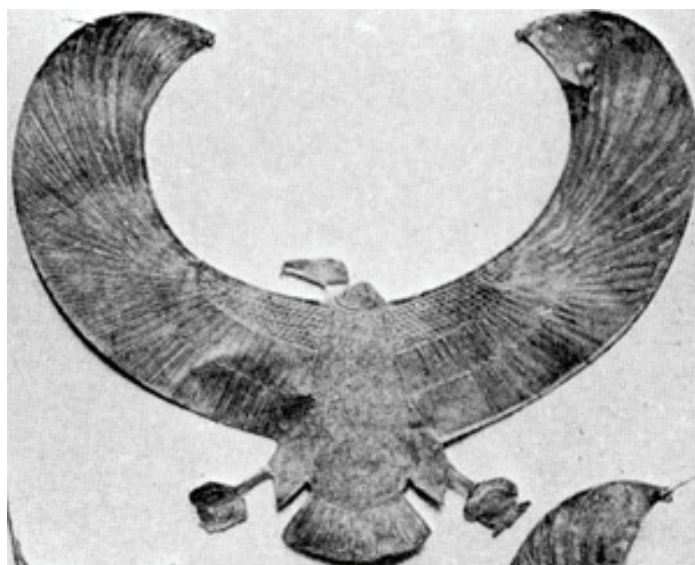
A.1.3 Jewellery

A.1.3.1 Bracelet



**FIGURE 13**  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Aldred, 1978:6  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 62367, Carter Cat. No. 256X  
**MATERIAL** Unknown  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, Tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Right forearm: nearest elbow  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.1.3.2 Collar



**FIGURE 14**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MUSEUM #

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

MUMMY

DATE

**Collar of Nekhebet**

Vulture

Carter, 1963b: plate LXXIX B (centre)

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 61915, Carter Cat. No. 256E

Sheet gold (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)

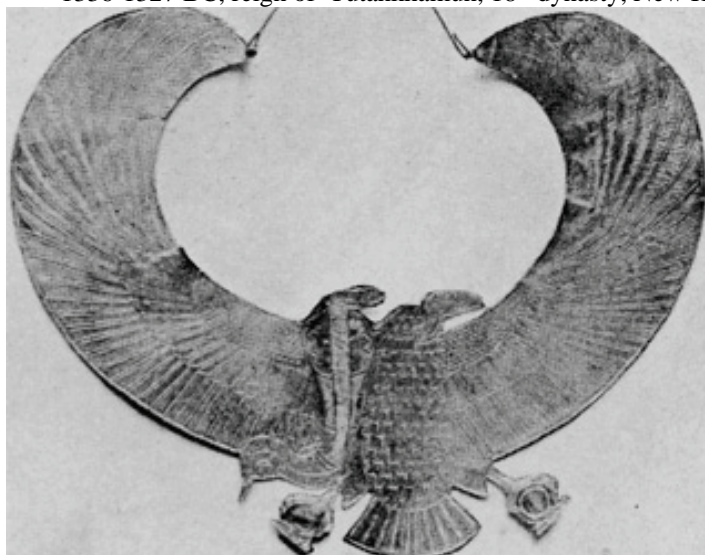
Diameter: 30cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)

Valley of the Kings, Thebes

King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)

Thorax: upper right side, partly covering pectoral muscle; left wing over right shoulder

1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 15**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MUSEUM #

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

MUMMY

DATE

**Collar of Nebti**

Vulture

Carter, 1963b: plate LXXIX A (right)

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. Unknown, Carter Cat. No. 256F

Sheet gold

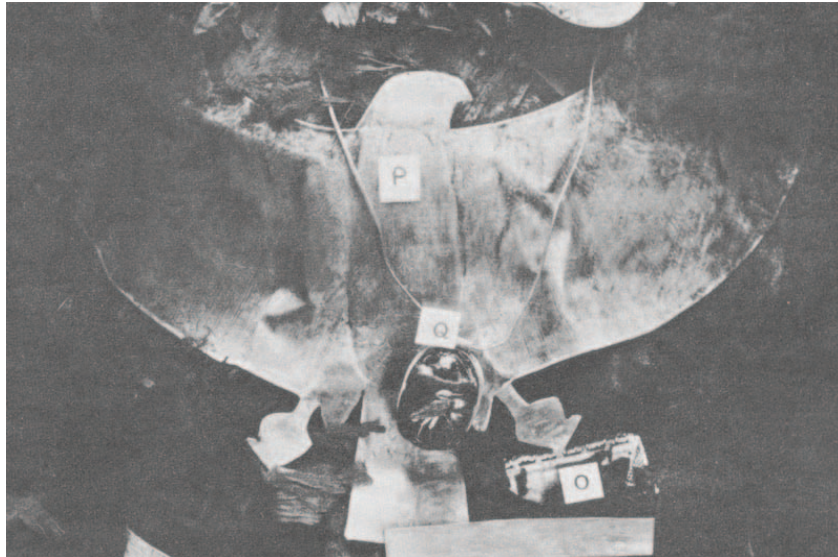
Unknown

Valley of the Kings, Thebes

King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)

Thorax: upper left side, high up over pectoral muscle

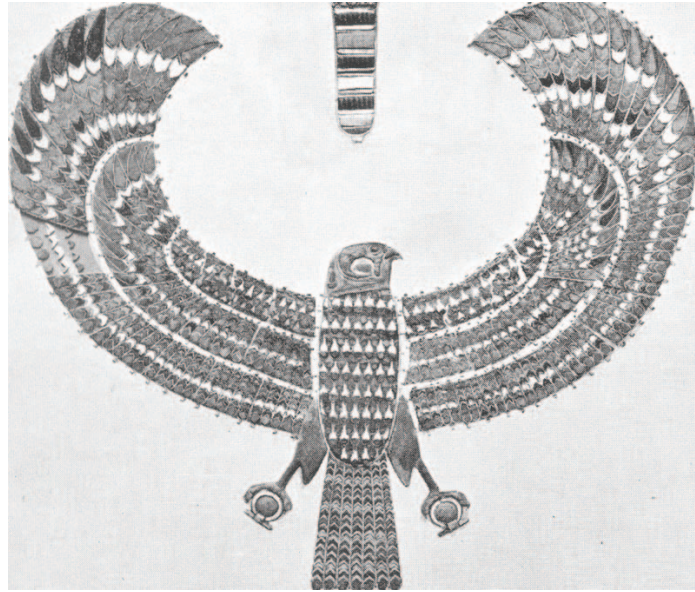
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 16**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Carter, 1972:148  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 61914, Carter Cat. No. 256P  
**MATERIAL** Sheet gold  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Thorax: lower centre, over sternum wings extending to arm-pits; tail reaching below umbilicus  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 17**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Carter, 1963b:plate LXXIX B (right)  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 61913, Carter Cat. No. 256T  
**MATERIAL** Sheet gold (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)  
**DIMENSIONS** Diameter: 30cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Neck: over right clavicle; tail towards right deltoid; wings enveloping neck  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 18**

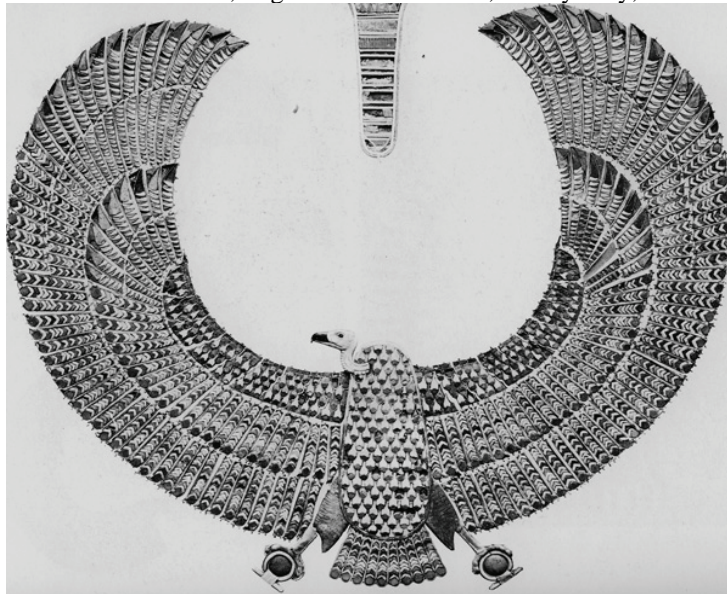
ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
MUMMY

**Flexible collar of Horus**

Falcon  
Carter, 1963b: plate LXXX A  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61877, Carter Cat. No. 256Z  
Gold inlaid with coloured glass (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)  
Height: 29.5 cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
Thorax: centre; tail reaching nearly down to umbilicus; head over centre of chest; wings extending up and over clavicles

DATE

1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



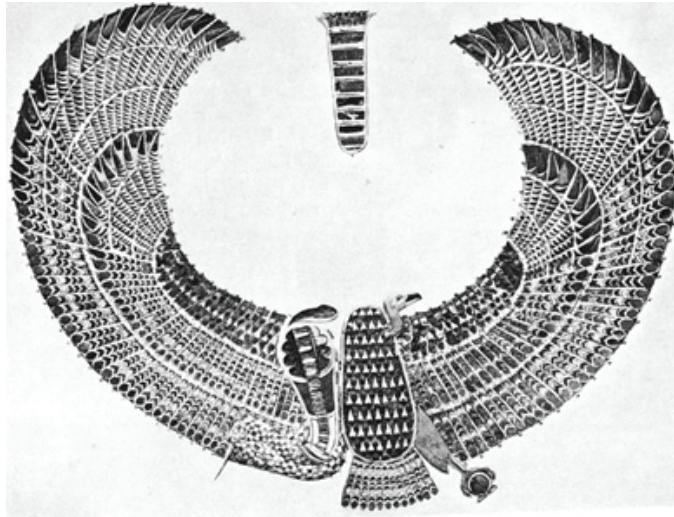
**FIGURE 19**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
MUMMY  
DATE

**Flexible collar of Nekhbet**

Vulture  
Wilkinson, 1971: plate XXXVI A  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 61876, Carter Cat. No.256MMM  
Gold inlaid with coloured glass (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)  
Width: 48cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvi)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
Thorax: covering whole of chest, the wings extending to shoulders  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom





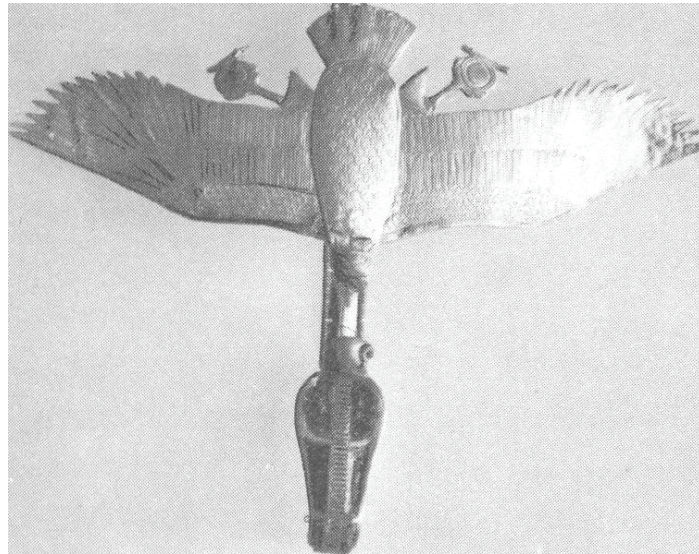
**FIGURE 20**  
**Flexible breast-collar of Nebti**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Carter, 1963b: plate LXXXI B  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61875, Carter Cat. No. 256NNN  
 MATERIAL Gold inlaid with coloured glass  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 MUMMY Thorax: covering the chest, wing extending over shoulders  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

*A.1.3.3 Earrings*



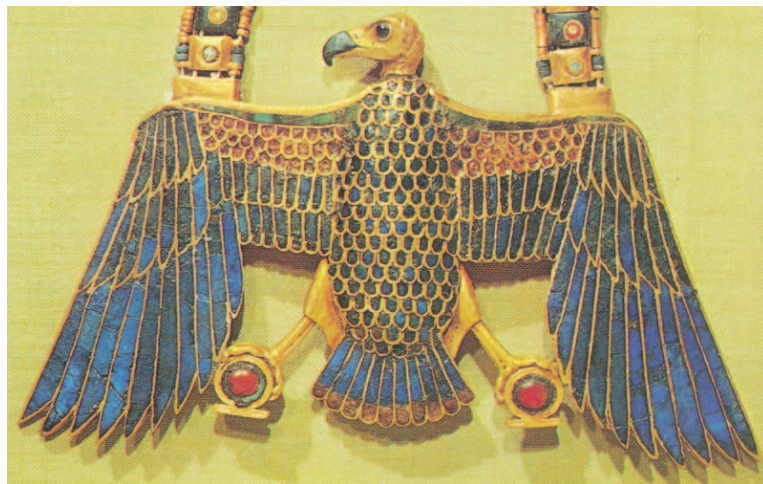
**FIGURE 21**  
**Duck-headed falcon earrings**  
 ANIMAL Duck-headed falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Carter, 1972:144  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 61961 A-B, Carter Cat. No.269A (1)  
 MATERIAL Gold and coloured glass (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvii)  
 DIMENSIONS Length: 10.9cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvii)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

*A.1.3.4 Headband*

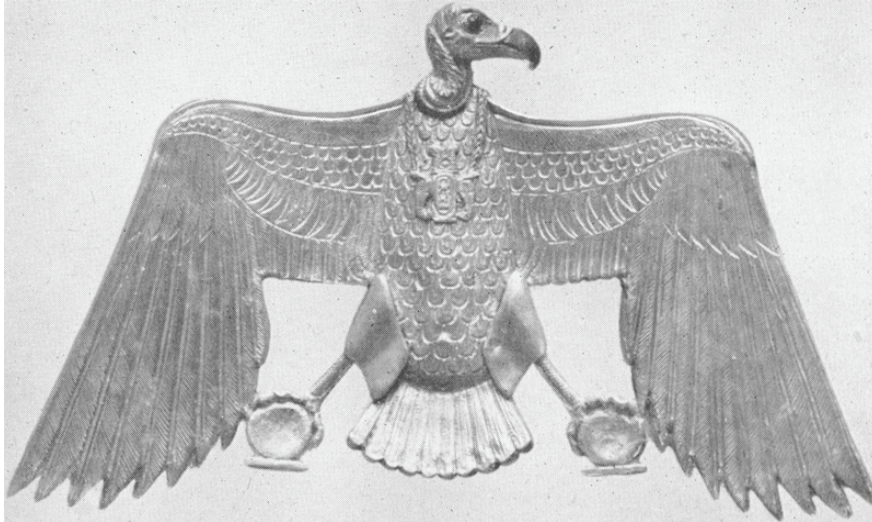


**FIGURE 22**  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:225  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61842, Carter Cat. No. 256, 4R  
**MATERIAL** Sheet gold (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvii).  
**DIMENSIONS** Width: 20cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxvii)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Head: over crown of head  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

*A.1.3.5 Pectoral*



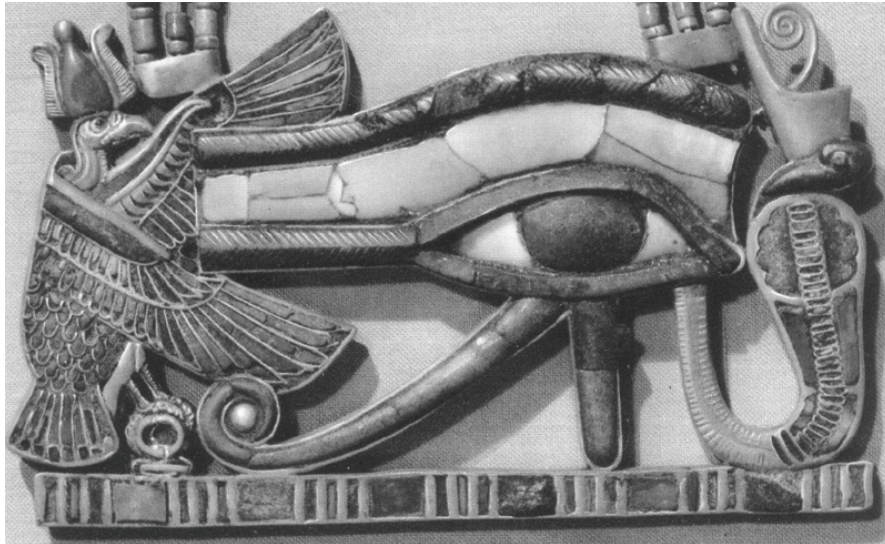
**FIGURE 23**  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Aldred, 1978:92 plate 78  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61892, Carter Cat. No. 256PPP  
**MATERIAL** Gold inlaid with glass, lapis lazuli and carnelian (Aldred, 1978:123)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 6.5cm; width:11cm (Aldred, 1978:123)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Pectoral: thorax, upper centre  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



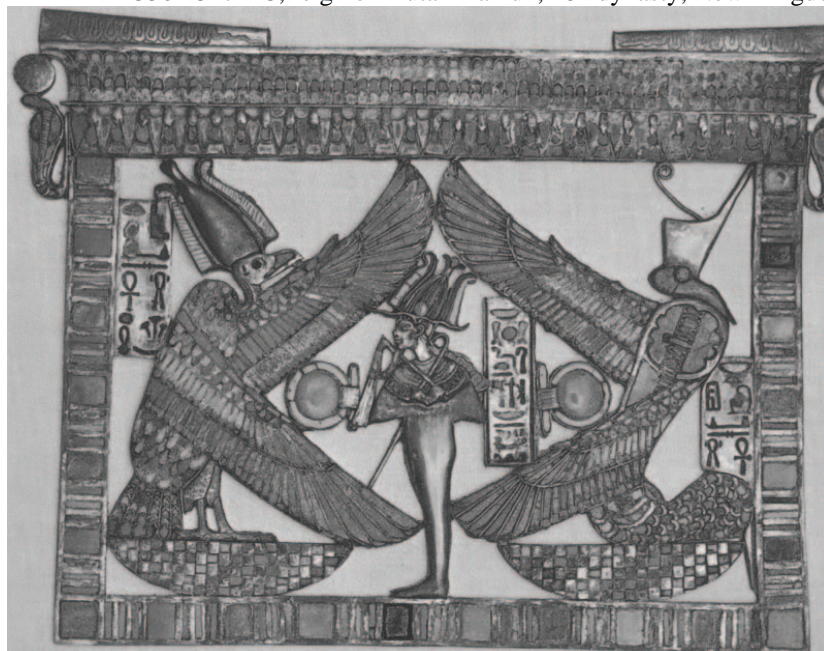
**FIGURE 24** **Sated vulture pectoral (bottom view)**  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Fox, 1951: plate 36  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61892, Carter Cat. No. 256PPP  
**MATERIAL** Gold inlaid with glass, lapis lazuli and carnelian (Aldred, 1978:123)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 6.5cm; width:11cm (Aldred, 1978:123)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Pectoral: thorax, upper centre  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



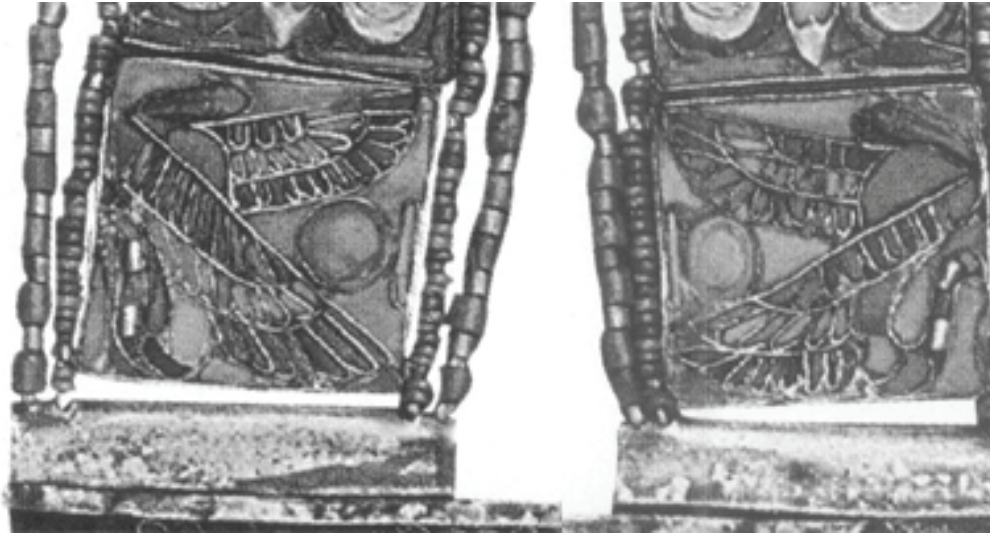
**FIGURE 25** **Solar falcon pectoral**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Leclant, 1980:228  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61891, Carter Cat. No. 256UUU  
**MATERIAL** Gold (Leclant, 1980:228)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 10cm (Leclant, 1980:228)  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
**MUMMY** Thorax: lower right side, suspended from neck  
**DATE** 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 26** **Wedjat-eye pectoral**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Desroches-Noblecourt. 1964:187  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61901, Carter Cat. No. 256VVV  
 MATERIAL Gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise, faience, glass paste (Tiradritti, 1999:240)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 5.7cm (Tiradritti, 1999:240)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 MUMMY Thorax: centre low, suspended from neck  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 27** **Osiris pectoral**  
 ANIMAL Vulture and cobra  
 IMAGE SOURCE Aldred, 1978:85 plate 65  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61946, Carter Cat. No. 261O  
 MATERIAL Gold inlaid with carnelian and coloured glass (Aldred, 1978:122)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 15.5cm; width: 20cm (Aldred, 1978:122)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 28** Chain of Ptah and Sekhmet's pectoral  
 ANIMAL Cobra  
 IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti. 1999:241  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61941, Carter Cat. No. 269J  
 MATERIAL Gold, silver, quartz, calcite, coloured glass and beads (Aldred, 1978:122)  
 DIMENSIONS Length: 34.4cm (straps) (Aldred, 1978:122)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 29** Vulture pectoral featuring the goddess Nut as a vulture  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:177  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61943, Carter Cat. No. 261P(3)  
 MATERIAL Gold inlaid with carnelian and coloured glass (Aldred, 1978:121)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 12.1cm; width: 17.2cm (Aldred, 1978:121)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 30**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL

**Lunar and solar scarab pectoral**

Scarab with the tail of a vulture  
Aldred, 1978:94 plate 80  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61884, Carter Cat. No. 267D  
Gold, silver, chalcedony, carnelian, calcite, lapis lazuli, turquoise, obsidian, glass paste (Tiradritti, 1999:236)

DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

Height: 14.9cm; width: 14.5cm (Tiradritti, 1999:236)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

*A.1.3.6 Pendant*



B

**FIGURE 31**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
MUMMY  
DATE

**Ba-bird pendant**

Ba-bird with wings and tail of a vulture  
Wilkinson, 1971: plate XXIII B; Carter, 1963b: plate XXV  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61903, Carter Cat. No. 256B(2)  
Gold and glass (Wilkinson, 1971:xxii)  
Width: 33cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxii)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
King's mummy, burial chamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
Sewn to outer wrapping of the mummy  
1336-1327 BC, New Kingdom, reign of Tutankhamun





**FIGURE 32**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Solar falcon pendant**

Falcon  
Tiradritti 1999:237  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61893, Carter Cat. No.267M(1)  
Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, turquoise and glass paste (Tiradritti, 1999:237)  
Height: 11.7cm; width: 12.6cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxx; Tiradritti, 1999:237)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 33**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Vulture pendant**

Vulture  
Aldred, 1978:90 plate 72  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61895, Carter Cat. No. 267O  
Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, coloured glass (Aldred, 1978:123)  
Height: 7.4cm; width: 11.7cm (Aldred, 1978:123)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 34**

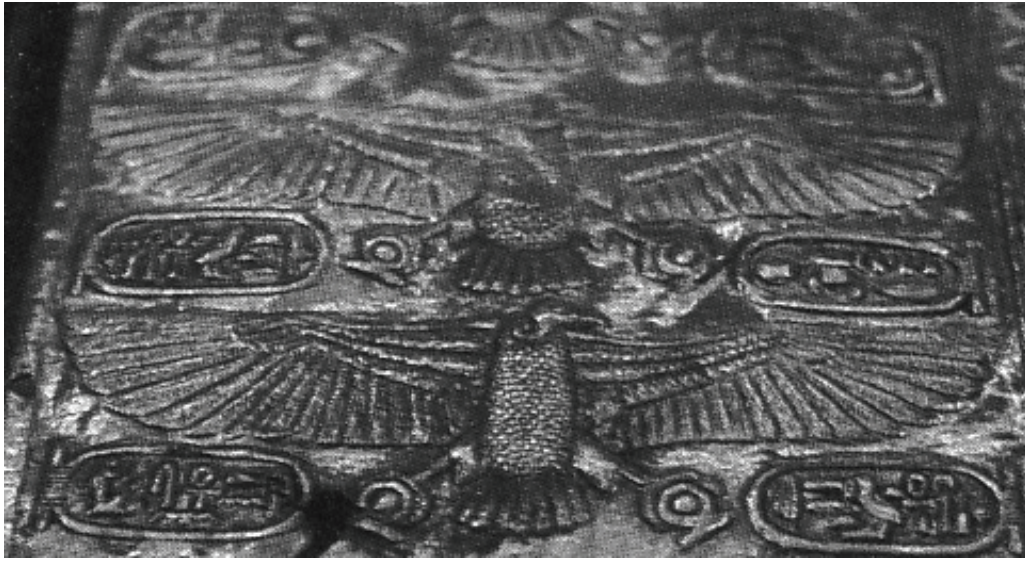
ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Vulture pendant**

Vulture  
Aldred, 1978:91 plate 73  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61894, Carter Cat. No. 267I  
Gold, electrum, lapis lazuli, carnelian, coloured glass (Aldred, 1978:123)  
Height: 14.1cm; width: 16.4cm (Aldred, 1978:123)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.1.4. Religious objects

A.1.4.1 Shrine



**FIGURE 35** Roof of the small golden shrine  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Reeves, 1990:141  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo ; JE 61481, Carter Cat. No. 108  
MATERIAL Wood overlaid with gold (Tiradritti, 1999:214)  
DIMENSIONS Height: 50.5cm; width: 30.7cm; depth: 48cm (Tiradritti, 1999:214)  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 36** Exterior right-hand side of the small golden shrine: ritual hunting scene  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:41  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61481, Carter Cat. No. 108  
MATERIAL Wood overlaid with gold (Tiradritti, 1999:214)  
DIMENSIONS Height: 50.5cm; width:30.7cm; depth: 48cm (Tiradritti, 1999:214)  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom





**FIGURE 37** Exterior of small golden shrine: Queen brings unguents and flowers to the king  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Ragghianti, 1970:125  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61481, Carter Cat. No. 108  
 MATERIAL Wood overlaid with gold (Tiradritti, 1999:214)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 50.5cm; width:30.7cm; depth: 48cm (Tiradritti, 1999:214)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

*A.1.5 Statues*  
*A.1.5.1 Shabti*



**FIGURE 38** *Shabti of Tutankhamun*  
 ANIMAL *Ba*-bird  
 IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:216  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 620828, Carter Cat. No. 330J  
 MATERIAL Wood, gold and bronze (Tiradritti, 1999:216)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 48cm (Tiradritti, 1999:216)  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Treasury, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
 DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.1.6 Weaponry

A.1.6.1 Chariot



**FIGURE 39** Detail from the right hand interior side of the first state chariot: Tutankhamun as a sphinx tramples on his enemies

ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Desroches-Noblecourt 1964:91  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61989, Carter Cat. No. 120  
MATERIAL Gold, wood, semi-precious stones and coloured glass (Desroches-Noblecourt, 1963:298)  
DIMENSIONS Unknown  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Antechamber, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.1.6.2 Shield



**FIGURE 40** Ceremonial Shield  
ANIMAL Falcon  
IMAGE SOURCE Carter, 1972:214  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61577, Carter Cat. No. 379A  
MATERIAL Unknown  
DIMENSIONS Unknown  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Annexe, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
DATE 1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 41**

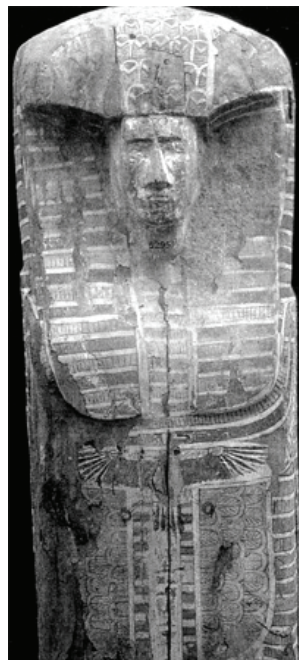
ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Votive shield**

Vulture  
Desroches-Noblecourt, 1964:79  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 61576, Carter Cat. No. 379B  
Unknown  
Height: 76.2cm; width: 54.6cm (Desroches-Noblecourt, 1963:297)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Annexe, tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62)  
1336-1327 BC, reign of Tutankhamun, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.2. Non-Tutankhamun objects

A.2.1 Coffins



**FIGURE 42**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Unknown rishi coffin**

Vulture  
Robins, 1997: 116  
British Museum, London; No. EA 52951  
Painted wood (Malek, 1999:208)  
Height: 191cm (Malek, 1999:208)  
Western Thebes (Malek, 1999:208)  
Unknown  
c.1550, late 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period (Malek, 1999:208)



**FIGURE 43**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Coffin of Amenhotep I**

Vulture  
Partridge, 1994:65  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; Cat. No. 61005 (Partridge, 1994:65)  
Cedar wood (Partridge, 1994:64)  
Length: 203cm; height:67cm; breadth: 203cm (Partridge, 1994:65)  
Deir el-Bahri, Thebes  
Deir el-Bahri cache TT320 (Partridge, 1994:63)  
1525-1504 BC, reign of Amenhotep I, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 44**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Coffin of Thutmose II**

Vulture  
Partridge, 1994:76  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; Cat. No. 61013  
Cedar wood and plaster (Partridge, 1994:76)  
Length: 195cm; breadth: 55cm; height: 62cm (Partridge, 1994:76)  
Deir el-Bahri, Thebes  
Deir el-Bahri cache TT320 (Partridge, 1994:76)  
1492-1479 BC, reign of Thutmose II, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 45**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MUSEUM #

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

DATE

**Fourth coffin of Yuya depicting the vulture and the goddess Nut below**

Vulture

Partridge, 1994:110

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. CG 51004

Wood, gold-and silver-leaf, glass paste, alabaster and carnelian (Tiradritti, 1999:176)

Height: 204cm; breath: 55cm; height: 59cm (Partridge, 1994:111)

Valley of the Kings, Thebes

Tomb of Yuya and Tuyu (KV 46)

1390-1352 BC, reign of Amenhotep III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 46**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Lid of a mummiform coffin**

Vulture  
Lacovara & Trope, 2001:46  
Michael C Carlos Museum, Atlanta; No. 1999.40  
Wood, gilt, pigment, linen (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:46)  
Length: 82cm; width: 44.5cm; depth: 19cm (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:46)  
Unknown  
Unknown  
c.1539-1075 B, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:46)



**FIGURE 47**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Coffin board of unknown lady**

Scarab  
Lacovara & Trope, 2001:47  
Michael C Carlos Museum, Atlanta; No. 1991.1.12  
Wood and pigment (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:47)  
Length: 162.5cm; width: 37cm; depth: 9cm (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:47)  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Unknown  
c1075-945 BC, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:47)



**FIGURE 48**

**Coffin of Maatkare**

ANIMAL

Ram-headed scarab, falcon and vulture

IMAGE SOURCE

Tiradritti, 1999:299

MUSEUM #

Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 26200

MATERIAL

Painted cedar wood and acacia wood and gold leaf (Tiradritti, 1999:298)

DIMENSIONS

Length: 223cm (Tiradritti, 1999:298)

PROVENANCE

Deir el-Bahri, Thebes

FIND CONTEXT

Deir el-Bahri cache TT320 (Tiradritti, 1999:298)

DATE

c.1065-1045 BC, reign of Pinudjem I, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period (Tiradritti, 1999:298)



**FIGURE 49**

ANIMAL  
 IMAGE SOURCE  
 MUSEUM #  
 MATERIAL  
 DIMENSIONS  
 PROVENANCE  
 FIND CONTEXT  
 DATE

**Coffin of Espaneterenpere**

Ram  
 Malek, 1999:343  
 Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York (Malek, 1999:342)  
 Painted cartonnage inlaid with glass and lapis lazuli (Malek, 1999:342)  
 Length: 177cm (Malek, 1999:342)  
 Thebes (Malek, 1999:342)  
 Unknown  
 c.970 BC, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period (Malek, 1999:342)



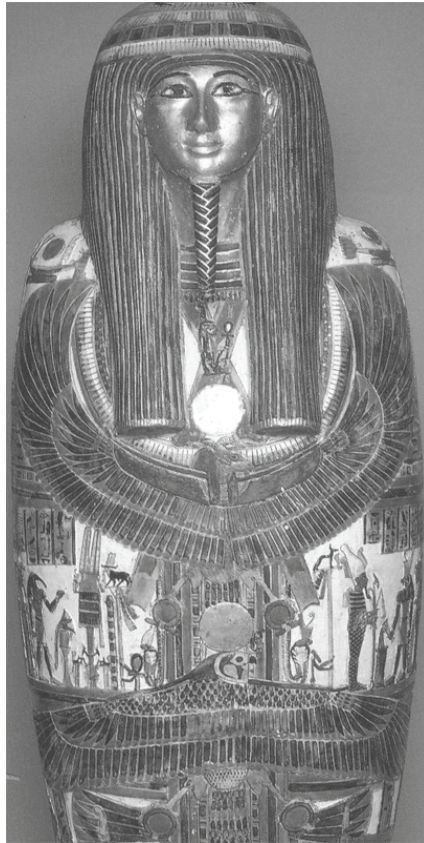
**FIGURE 50**

ANIMAL  
 IMAGE SOURCE  
 MUSEUM #  
 MATERIAL  
 DIMENSIONS  
 PROVENANCE  
 FIND CONTEXT  
 DATE

**Coffin of Tjentmutengeb**

Ram and falcon  
 Taylor, 1989:49  
 British Museum, London; No. EA 22939 (Taylor, 1989:49)  
 Plaster and linen (Taylor, 1989:49)  
 Unknown  
 Thebes (Taylor, 1989:49)  
 Unknown  
 c.945 BC, early 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period (Taylor, 1989:49)





**FIGURE 51** **Cartonnage coffin of Nekhtefmut**  
**ANIMAL** Ram and falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Vassilika, 1995:93  
**MUSEUM #** Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; No. E.64.1896  
**MATERIAL** Cartonnage, polychrome, gilded face, glass and faience (Vassilika, 1995:92)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 177.5cm; width: 44cm; depth: 33cm (Vassilika, 1995:92)  
**PROVENANCE** Thebes (Vassilika, 1995:92)  
**FIND CONTEXT** Ramesseum (Vassilika, 1995:92)  
**DATE** 924-889 BC, reign of Osorkon I, dynasty 22, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period



**FIGURE 52** **Exterior of the lid of the coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Van Walsem, 1997b: plate 159 fig. 489 Lei 1  
**MUSEUM #** National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden; No. AMM 18  
**MATERIAL** Sycamore wood, clay-plaster, linen, pigments, varnish  
**DIMENSIONS** Length: 187.5cm; width: 55.5cm; height: 61.5cm (IMAGE SOURCE)  
**PROVENANCE** Probably Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** Unknown  
**DATE** 924-889 BC, reign of Osorkon I, 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period



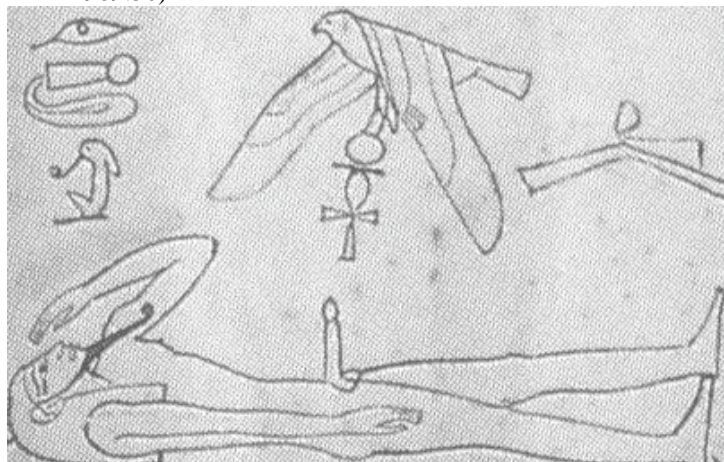
**FIGURE 53** Interior of the head of the coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Van Walsem, 1997b: plate 152, fig. 433 Lo. 3  
 MUSEUM # National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden; No. AMM 18  
 MATERIAL Sycamore wood, clay-plaster, linen, pigments, varnish  
 DIMENSIONS Length: 187.5cm; width: 55.5cm; height: 61.5cm (IMAGE SOURCE)  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE 924-889 BC, reign of Osorkon I, 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period



**FIGURE 54** Interior of the head of the coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE van Walsem, 1997b: plate 152 fig. 434 Cl 1  
 MUSEUM # National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden; Inv. No. AMM 18  
 MATERIAL Sycamore wood, clay-plaster, linen, pigments, varnish  
 DIMENSIONS Length: 187.5cm; width: 55.5cm; height: 61.5cm (IMAGE SOURCE)  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE 924-889 BC, reign of Osorkon I, 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period



**FIGURE 55** **Coffin of the singer Panesy**  
 ANIMAL Ram and Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Taylor, 1989:50  
 MUSEUM # National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden; No. M.35  
 MATERIAL Unknown  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Taylor, 1989:50)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.945-850 BC, early to middle 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate period (Taylor, 1989:50)



**FIGURE 56** **Inside detail of the sarcophagus of Amenemnet**  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Ziegler, 1990:73  
 MUSEUM # Louvre Museum, Paris; No. E5334  
 MATERIAL Cloth and plaster (Ziegler, 1990:73)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 187cm (Ziegler, 1990:73)  
 PROVENANCE Unknown  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c. 1069-747 BC, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate period



**FIGURE 57**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Inner coffin of Takhebkhennem**

Ram and falcon  
Taylor, 1989:55  
British Museum, London; No. 6691  
Linen and plaster (Taylor, 1989:53)  
Unknown  
Thebes (Taylor, 1989:55)  
Unknown  
747-656 BC, 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Late Period (Taylor, 1989:55)



**FIGURE 58**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Cartonnage trappings of unknown man**

Scarab  
Lacovara & Trope, 2001:57  
Michael C Carlos Museum, Atlanta; No. 1921.6  
Linen, plaster, pigment, gilt Lacovara & Trope, 2001:57)  
Length: 170cm; width: 43.5cm; depth: 21.5cm (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:57)  
Unknown  
Unknown  
167-30 BC, Ptolemaic Period (Lacovara & Trope, 2001:57)

A.2.2 Funerary papyri



**FIGURE 59** Spell 125 “What should be said when arriving at this Hall of Justice, purging N of all the evil which he has done, and beholding the faces of the gods” of the *Book of the Dead*: Osiris witnessing the weighing of Hunefer’s heart

ANIMAL Wedjat-eye falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:35  
 MUSEUM British Museum, London; EA 9901/3  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 39.5cm (Quirke & Spencer, 1992:171)  
 PROVENANCE Possibly Memphis (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.1310 BC, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom (Faulkner, 1993:9)



**FIGURE 60** Spell 89 “Spell for letting a soul rejoin its corpse in the realm of the dead” of the *Book of the Dead* of Ani: Ani’s ba hovers above his mummy

ANIMAL Ba-bird  
 IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:87  
 MUSEUM # British Museum, London; No. EA 10470/17  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.1250 BC, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom (Faulkner, 1993:9)



**FIGURE 61** **Spell 92 “For opening the tomb to N’s soul and shade” of the *Book of the Dead* of Ani: Ani’s *ba* hovers above him**

ANIMAL *Ba*-bird  
 IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:90  
 MUSEUM # British Museum, London; No. EA 10470/18  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.1250 BC, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom (Faulkner, 1993:9)



**FIGURE 62** **Incorrectly termed Spell 16 of the *Book of the Dead* of Anhai: Anhai worshipping Re while two *wedjat*-eye compositions hover overhead**

ANIMAL *Wedjat*-eye falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:43  
 MUSEUM # British Museum, London; No. EA 10472/1  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.1100 BC, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom (Faulkner, 1993:9)



**FIGURE 63** Spell 89 “Spell for letting a soul rejoin its corpse in the realm of the dead” of the *Book of the dead* of Nesitanebtasheru: a vulture hovers over the mummy of Nesitanebtasheru

ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:116  
 MUSEUM # British Museum, London; No. EA 10554/28  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.950 BC, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period (Faulkner, 1993:9)



**FIGURE 64** Spell 157 “Spell for a golden vulture to be placed on the neck of the deceased” of the *Book of the Dead* of an unknown individual

ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:154  
 MUSEUM # British Museum, London; No. EA 10098/11  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Possibly Memphis (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.317-32 BC, Ptolemaic Period (Faulkner, 1993:9)

A.2.3 Jewellery

A.2.3.1 Bracelet



**FIGURE 65**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Bracelet of Ahhotep**

Vulture  
Aldred, 1978:73 plate 43  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. CG 52068  
Gold inlaid with carnelian, lapis lazuli and turquoise (Aldred, 1978:118)  
Height: 7.3cm; depth: 6.6cm (Aldred, 1978:118)  
Thebes (Wilkinson, 1971:xxiii)  
Unknown  
c.1550-1525 BC, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, early New Kingdom



**FIGURE 66**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Bracelet of Psusennes I**

Scarab  
Tiradritti, 1999:306  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE86028  
Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, green feldspar (Tiradritti, 1999:306)  
Height: 7cm; maximum diameter: 8cm (Tiradritti, 1999:306)  
Tanis  
Tomb of Psusennes I (Tiradritti, 1999:306)  
1039-991 BC, reign of Psusennes I, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period



A.2.3.2 Collar

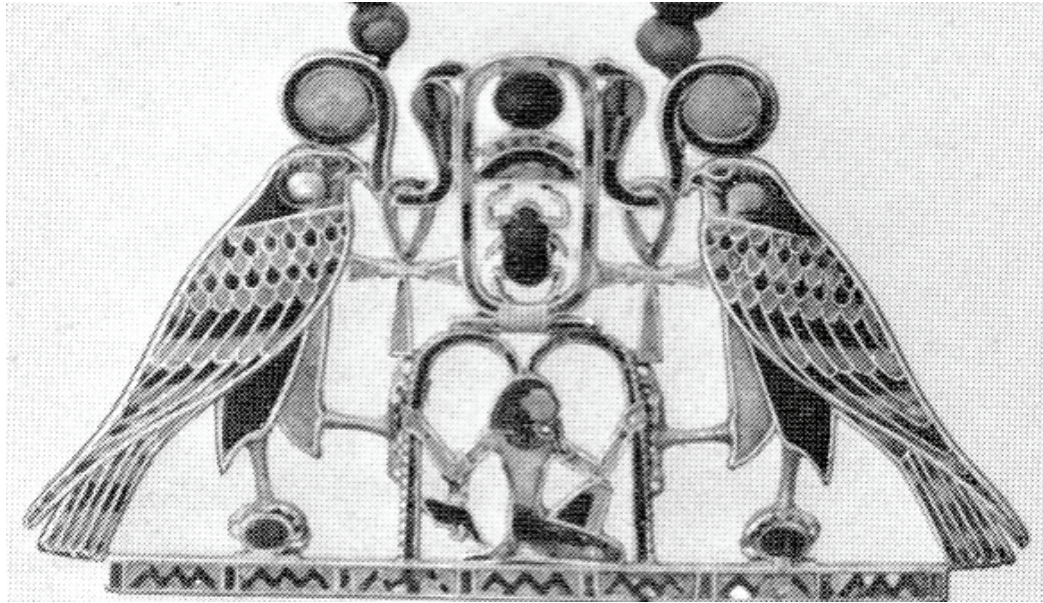


**FIGURE 67** **Gold vulture collar of King Nefernefruaten (Smenkhara)**  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Aldred, 1978:83 Plate 61  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 52.643  
MATERIAL Gold (Aldred, 1978:121)  
DIMENSIONS Height: 24cm; width: 21cm (Aldred, 1978:121)  
PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Smenkh-ha-re (KV 55) (Aldred, 1978:121)  
DATE 1338-1336 BC, reign of Nefernefruaten, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.2.3.3 Pectoral



**FIGURE 68** **First Pectoral of Queen Mereret**  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:139  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 30875, CG 52002  
MATERIAL Gold inlaid with carnelian, turquoise, lapis lazuli and amethyst (Tiradritti, 1999:138)  
DIMENSIONS Height: 6.1cm; width:8.6cm (Tiradritti, 1999:138)  
PROVENANCE Dashur  
FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Mereret, funerary complex of Senusret III (Tiradritti, 1999:138)  
DATE 1874-1855 BC, reign of Senusret III, 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Middle Kingdom



**FIGURE 69** **First pectoral of Princess Sit-Hathor-Yunet**  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1971: plate XVI  
 MUSEUM # Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Reg. No. MMA 16.1.3  
 MATERIAL Gold inlaid with carnelian and turquoise (Wilkinson, 1971:xxi)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 8.2cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxi)  
 PROVENANCE Lahun (Wilkinson, 1971:xxi)  
 FIND CONTEXT Treasury of Sit-Hathor-Yunet (Wilkinson, 1971:xxi)  
 DATE 1874-1855 BC, reign of Senusret III, 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Middle Kingdom



**FIGURE 70** **Drawing of a pectoral of Amenemhet Surero**  
 ANIMAL Cobra  
 IMAGE SOURCE Aldred, 1978:13  
 MUSEUM # Unknown  
 MATERIAL Unknown  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Assasif, Valley of the Nobles, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Surer (TT48)  
 DATE c.1390-1352 BC, reign of Amenhotep III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 71** **Pectoral bearing the name of Ramses II**  
 ANIMAL Vulture and Ram  
 IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1971: plate LXI A  
 MUSEUM # Louvre Museum, Paris; No. N 767  
 MATERIAL Gold inlaid with coloured glass (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 12.6cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 PROVENANCE Saqqara (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 FIND CONTEXT Serapeum (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 DATE 1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

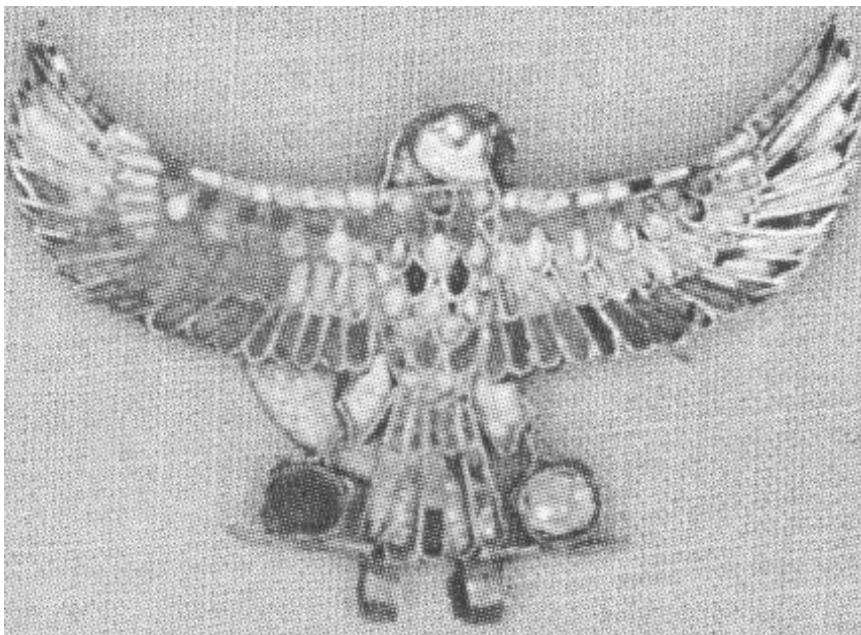


**FIGURE 72** **Winged scarab pectoral of Psusennes I**  
 ANIMAL Scarab  
 IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:322  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 85788-85799  
 MATERIAL Gold, red and green jasper, black, red and blue glass, green feldspar (Tiradritti, 1999:322)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 10.5cm; width: 12.5 cm (Tiradritti, 1999:322)  
 PROVENANCE Tanis (Tiradritti, 1999:322)  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Psusennes I, burial chamber of Psusennes I (Tiradritti, 1999:322)  
 DATE 1039-991 BC, reign of Psusennes I, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period



**FIGURE 73** **Pectoral of Sheshonq II**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Leclant, 1981:182  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Leclant, 1981:182)  
 MATERIAL Gold (Leclant, 1981:182)  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Tanis (Leclant, 1981:182)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.890 BC, reign of Sheshonq II, 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period

*A.2.3.4 Pendant*



**FIGURE 74** **Pendant of Queen Mereret**  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Aldred, 1978:66 plate 28  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 53078  
 MATERIAL Gold inlaid with carnelian and blue and green faience (Aldred, 1978:117)  
 DIMENSIONS Width: 3.3cm (Aldred, 1978:117)  
 PROVENANCE Dahshur (El Mahdy, 1991:142)  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Mereret, funerary complex of Senusret III (Tiradritti, 1999:138)  
 DATE 1874-1855 BC, reign of Senusret III, 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Middle Kingdom



**FIGURE 75** **Ram-headed falcon pendant**  
 ANIMAL Ram  
 IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1971: plate LXI B  
 MUSEUM # Louvre Museum, Paris; No. N 764  
 MATERIAL Gold, lapis lazuli and carnelian (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 DIMENSIONS Width: 13.7cm (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 PROVENANCE Saqqara (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 FIND CONTEXT Serapeum (Wilkinson, 1971:xxxii)  
 DATE 1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 76** **Falcon pendant of Amenemope**  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:326-327  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 86036  
 MATERIAL Gold and coloured glass paste (Tiradritti, 1999:327)  
 DIMENSIONS Width: 37.5cm (Tiradritti, 1999:327)  
 PROVENANCE Tanis  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Psusennes I, burial chamber of Amenemope (Tiradritti, 1999:327).  
 DATE 993-984 BC, reign of Amenemope, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period

A.2.3.5 Scarab



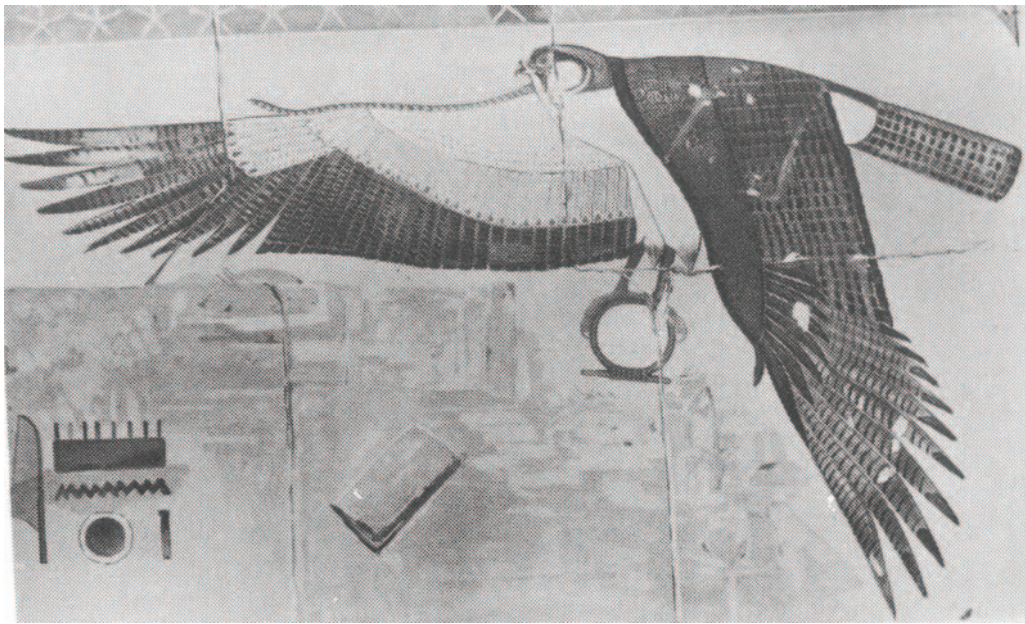
**FIGURE 77**  
**ANIMAL** Scarab  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Tiradritti, 1999:376  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 46356  
**MATERIAL** Lapis lazuli, gold, silver, semiprecious stones (Tiradritti, 1999:376)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 77cm (Tiradritti, 1999:376)  
**PROVENANCE** Dendera  
**FIND CONTEXT** Unknown  
**DATE** c.305-30 BC, Ptolemaic Period

A.2.4 Mummy



**FIGURE 78**  
**ANIMAL** Ram  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:203  
**MUSEUM #** Unknown  
**MATERIAL** Unknown  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Unknown  
**FIND CONTEXT** Unknown  
**DATE** 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

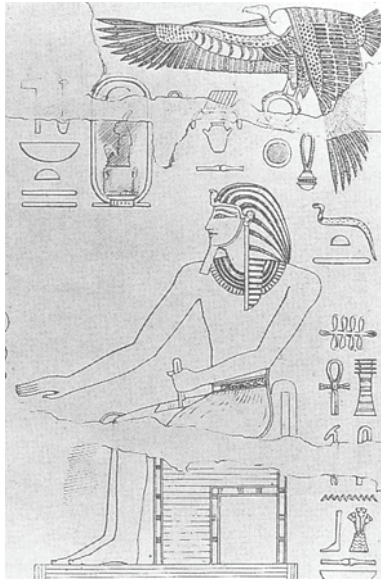
A.2.5 Paintings



**FIGURE 79 Falcon at Deir el-Bahri**  
ANIMAL Falcon  
IMAGE SOURCE Houlihan, 1986:47  
MATERIAL Painted stone  
DIMENSIONS Unknown  
PROVENANCE Deir el-Bahri, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut  
DATE 1473-1458 BC, reign of Hatshepsut, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 80 Painting: a vulture at Deir El Bahri – Griffin**  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Houlihan, 1986:40  
MATERIAL Painted Limestone  
DIMENSIONS Unknown  
PROVENANCE Deir el-Bahri, Thebes  
FIND CONTEXT Porch of the Abubis chapel, Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut  
DATE 1473-1458 BC, reign of Hatshepsut, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 81**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

DATE

**Painting: a vulture hovering above Hatshepsut**

Vulture

Reeves, 1990:41

Painted stone

Unknown

Deir el-Bahri, Thebes (Reeves, 1990:41)

Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut (Reeves, 1990:41)

1473-1458 BC, reign of Hatshepsut, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 82**

ANIMAL

IMAGE SOURCE

MATERIAL

DIMENSIONS

PROVENANCE

FIND CONTEXT

DATE

**Painting: vultures on ceiling of Great Temple at Abu Simbel**

Vulture

Steindorff, 1928:143

Painted stone

Unknown

Abu Simbel

Great temple

1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom





**FIGURE 83** **Painting: vultures on ceiling of Lesser Temple at Abu Simbel**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Photo by the author  
 MATERIAL Painted limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Abu Simbel  
 FIND CONTEXT Lesser temple  
 DATE 1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



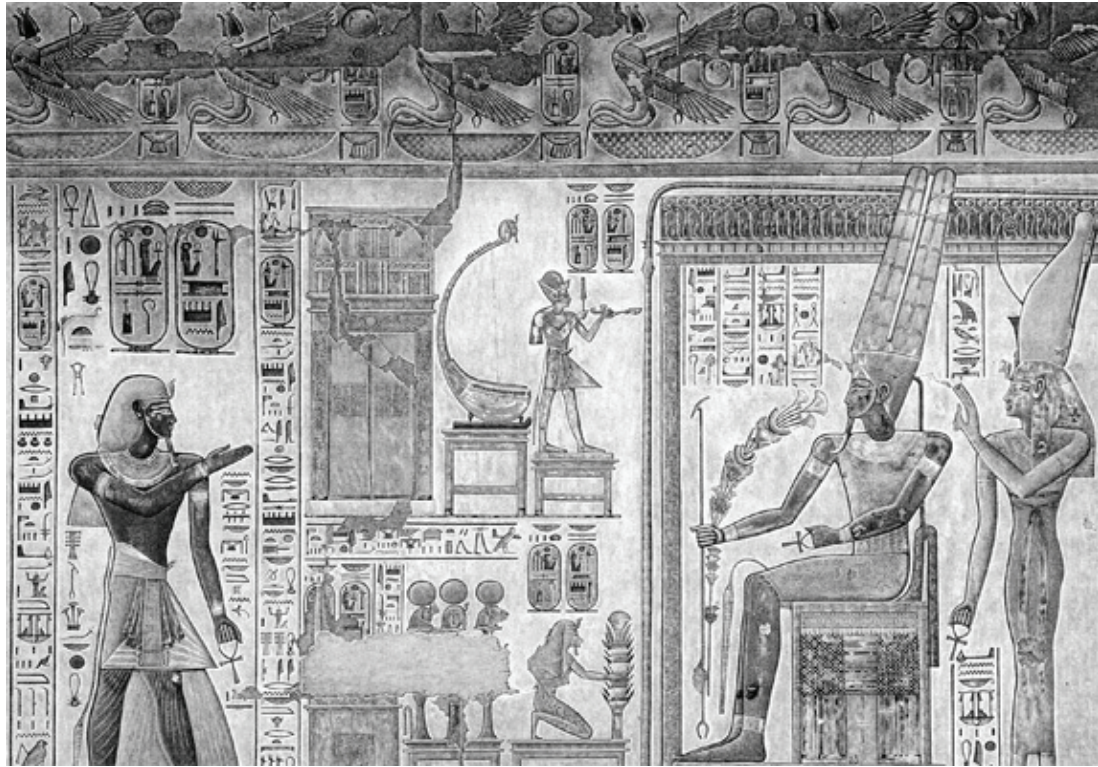
**FIGURE 84** **Painting: vulture above doorway in the tomb of Queen Nefertari**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Hawass, 2000:129  
 MATERIAL Painted limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Queens, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Nefertari, QV66  
 DATE 1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 85** A winged cobra protects the cartouche of Nefertari  
 IMAGE SOURCE McDonald, 1996:88  
 MATERIAL Painted limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Queens, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Descending corridor, Tomb of Nefertari, QV66  
 DATE 1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 86** Tripartite sun god in the tomb of Ramses X with a *wedjat*-eye composition grasping the *heb-sed* hieroglyph protecting the king  
 ANIMAL *Wedjat*-eye falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Schäfer, 1974:plate 59  
 MATERIAL Painted limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Ramses X (KV18)  
 DATE 1108-1099 BC, reign of Ramses X, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 87** **Ramses III before the gods Amun-Ra and Mut**  
 ANIMAL Cobra  
 IMAGE SOURCE Robins, 1997: 15  
 MATERIAL Painted limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Temple treasury, funerary temple, Medinet Habu  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 88** **Throne in a scene from a painting in the tomb of Ramses III**  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:61  
 MATERIAL Painted stone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Tomb of Ramses III (KV11)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 89**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT

**Solar ram-headed falcon sun god**

Ram-headed falcon  
Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:157  
Painted stone  
Unknown  
Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
Tomb of Tawosret and Sethnakhte (KV14) (Reeves & Wilkinson, 1996:157)  
DATE  
1186-1069 BC, reign of Sethnakhte, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 90**

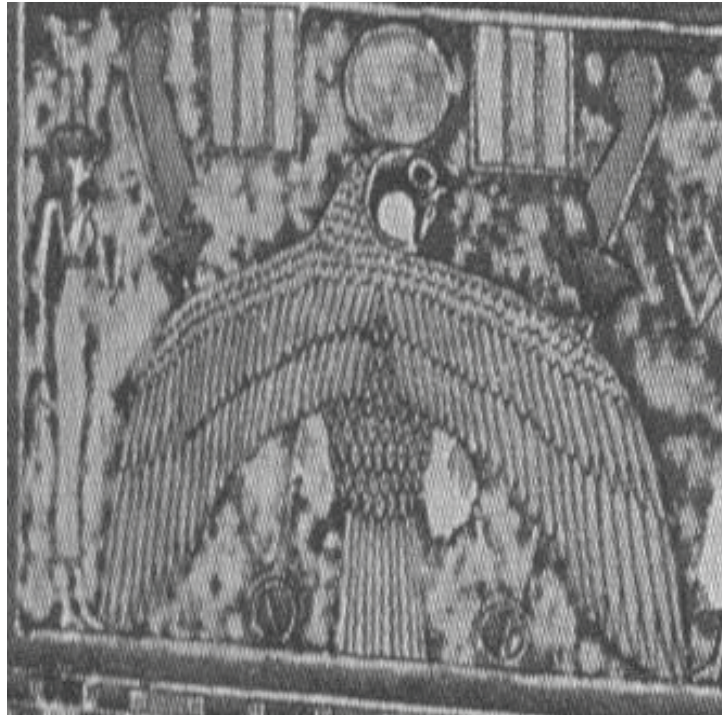
ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**A *ba*-bird hovers above the deceased Bannatu**

*Ba*-bird  
Hawass, 2000:136  
Painted stone  
Unknown  
Bahariya Oasis (Hawass, 2000:136)  
Tomb of Bannatu  
c.664-525 BC, 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Late Period (Hawass, 2000:135)

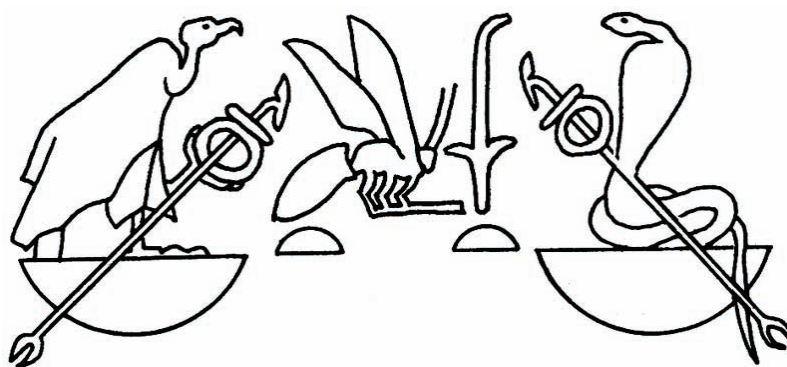
A.2.6 Religious objects

A.2.6.1 Naos



**FIGURE 91** Naos featuring the solar falcon  
ANIMAL Falcon  
IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:385  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. TR 18.11.24.46  
MATERIAL Stuccoed and painted wood (Tiradritti, 1999:385)  
DIMENSIONS Length: 27cm; width: 26.5cm (Tiradritti, 1999:385)  
PROVENANCE Unknown  
FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
DATE 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Roman Period (Tiradritti, 1999:385)

A.2.6.2 Shrine



**FIGURE 92** Drawing of a relief on the barque shrine of Senusret I  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1992:108  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 14724  
MATERIAL Unknown  
DIMENSIONS Unknown  
PROVENANCE Karnak (Wilkinson, 1992:108)  
FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
DATE 1965-1920 BC, reign of Senusret I, 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Middle Kingdom

A.2.6.3 Stela



**FIGURE 93** Amenhotep and a vulture on a stela of Amenhotep III  
ANIMAL Vulture  
IMAGE SOURCE Saleh, 1987: plate 143  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo, No. JE 31409, CG 34026  
MATERIAL Painted limestone (Saleh, 1987: plate 143)  
DIMENSIONS Height: 206.5cm; width: 110cm (Saleh, 1987: plate 143)  
PROVENANCE Thebes (Saleh, 1987: plate 143)  
FIND CONTEXT Mortuary Temple of Merenptha (Saleh, 1987: plate 143)  
DATE 1390-1352 BC, reign of Amenhotep III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 94** Stela of Ptolemy V Epiphanes depicting the falcon god Monty Horakhty protecting the Buchis bull  
ANIMAL Falcon  
IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:374  
MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo, No. JE 54313  
MATERIAL Painted and gilded limestone (Tiradritti, 1999:375)  
DIMENSIONS Height: 72cm; width: 50cm (Tiradritti, 1999:375)  
PROVENANCE Unknown  
FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
DATE 181 BC, reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, Ptolemaic Period (Saleh, 1987: plate 265)

A.2.7 Relief works

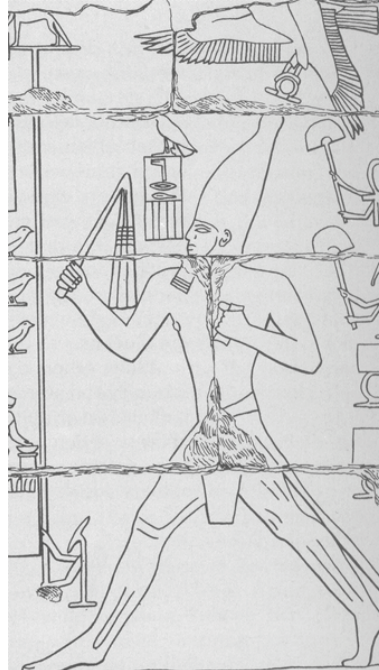


**FIGURE 95**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Relief on the stone vase of Khasekhemwy**

Vulture  
Wilkinson, 1992:84  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. 14724  
Stone  
Unknown  
Hierakonpolis (Wilkinson, 1992:84)  
Unknown  
c.2686 BC, reign of Khasekhemwy, 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, Early Dynastic Period

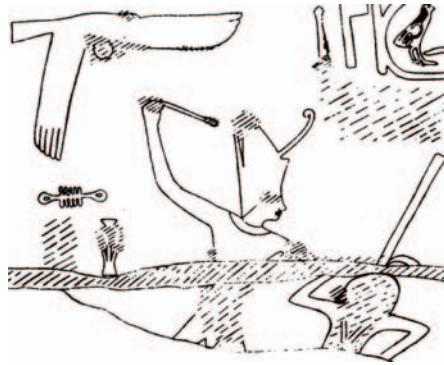


**FIGURE 96**

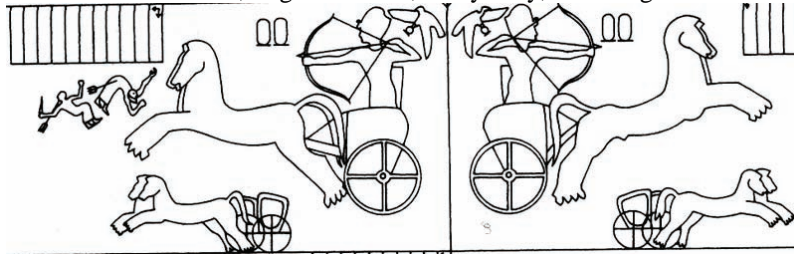
ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Relief of Djoser running the *heb-sed* festival**

Falcon  
Wilkinson, 1994:184  
Limestone  
Unknown  
Saqqare (Wilkinson, 1994:184)  
Step-Pyramid complex (Wilkinson, 1994:184).  
2667-2648 BC, reign of Djoser, 3rd dynasty, Old Kingdom



**FIGURE 97 Stone Marker of Khufu (Now destroyed)**  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Hall, 1986: fig 15  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Madi Maghara, Sinai (Hall, 1986: fig15)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE 2589-2566 BC, reign of Khufu, 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Old Kingdom



**FIGURE 98 Drawing of a wall relief featuring Ahmose in battle**  
 ANIMAL Falcon and vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Spalinger, 2005:22  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Abydos (Spalinger, 2005:22)  
 FIND CONTEXT Pyramid Temple of Ahmose (Spalinger, 2005:22)  
 DATE 1550-1525 BC, reign of Ahmose, 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 99 Seti I offering libations to the death god Soker**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1992:204  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Abydos (Wilkinson, 1992:204)  
 FIND CONTEXT Temple of King Seti I, Hall of Nefer-tem and Ptah-Soker (Wilkinson, 1992:204)  
 DATE 1294-1279 BC, reign of Seti I, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom





**FIGURE 100** **Seti I battles the Hittites**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:251  
 MUSEUM # Unknown  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Hypostyle Hall, north wall, west entrance, Amun-Ra Temple, Karnak (Heinz, 2001:251)  
 DATE 1294-1279 BC, reign of Seti I, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 101** **Seti I battles the Hittites**  
 ANIMAL Vulture and falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Spalinger, 2005:196  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT North wall of Hypostyle Hall, Karnak (Spalinger, 2005:196)  
 DATE 1294-1279 BC, reign of Seti I, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 102** **Wall relief with Merenptah smiting enemies**  
 ANIMAL Vulture and cobra  
 IMAGE SOURCE Hall, 1986: fig 63  
 MUSEUM # University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; No. E 13575  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Memphis (Hall, 1986:fig 63)  
 FIND CONTEXT South portal of Merenptah's palace (Hall, 1986:fig 63)  
 DATE 1213-1203 BC, reign of Merenptah, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 103** **Merenptah and bound Asiatic captives**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:295  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Cachette hall, outer western wall, south of the Hittite treaty, register 3, Karnak Temple (Heinz, 2001:295)  
 DATE 1213-1203 BC, reign of Merenptah, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 104**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Ramses II on his Libyan campaign**

Vulture  
Heinz, 2001:259  
Limestone  
Unknown  
Beit el Wali  
Front court, north wall, scene from east, Beit el Wali  
1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

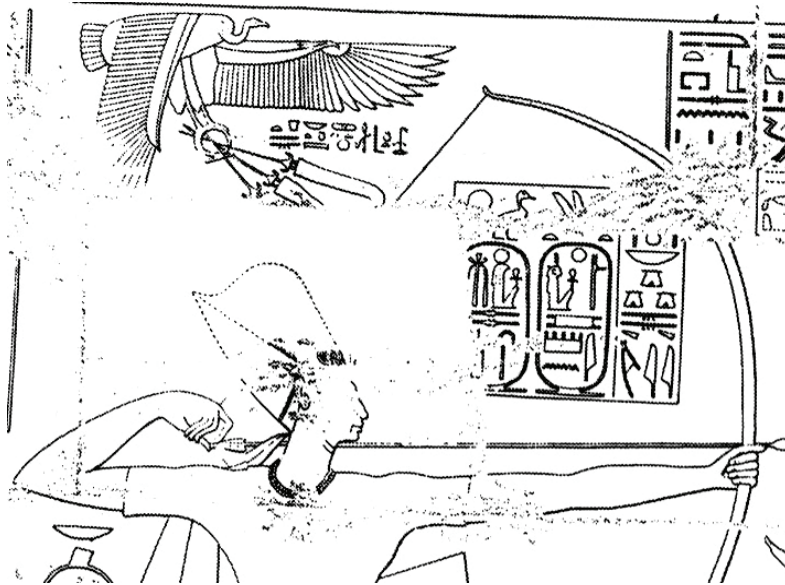


**FIGURE 105**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

***Heb-sed* festival of Ramses III**

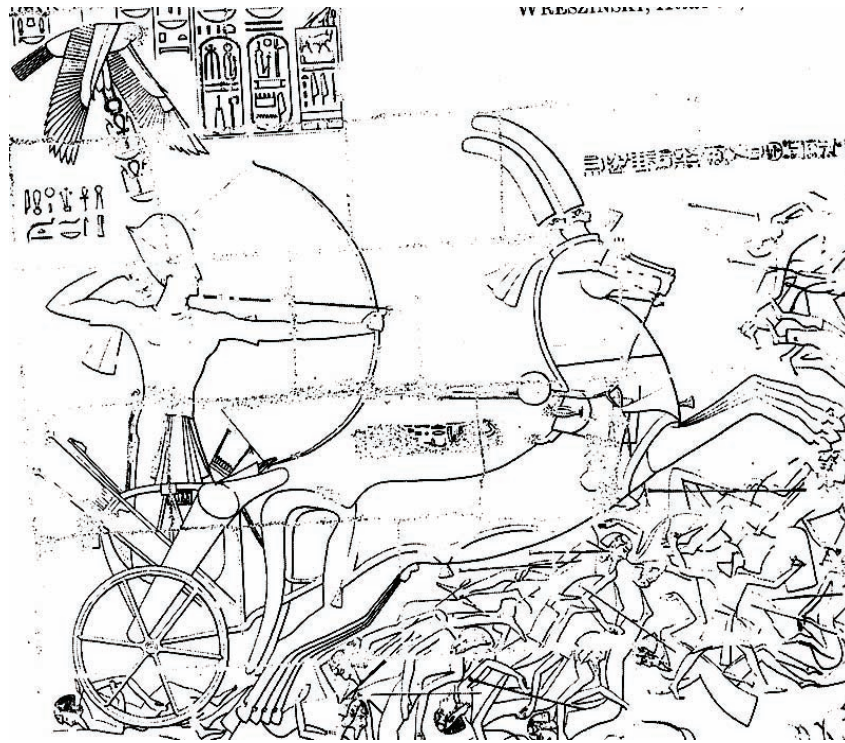
Vulture  
Wilkinson, 1992:202  
Limestone  
Unknown  
Unknown  
Unknown  
1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 106** Ramses III capturing a city in Amurru during his Asiatic campaign  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:316  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Court, north wall, lower register 2. Scene from east, Medinet Habu  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 107** Ramses III smiting his enemies  
 ANIMAL Falcon and Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Hall, 1986: fig. 65  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Pylon 1, Medinet Habu  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



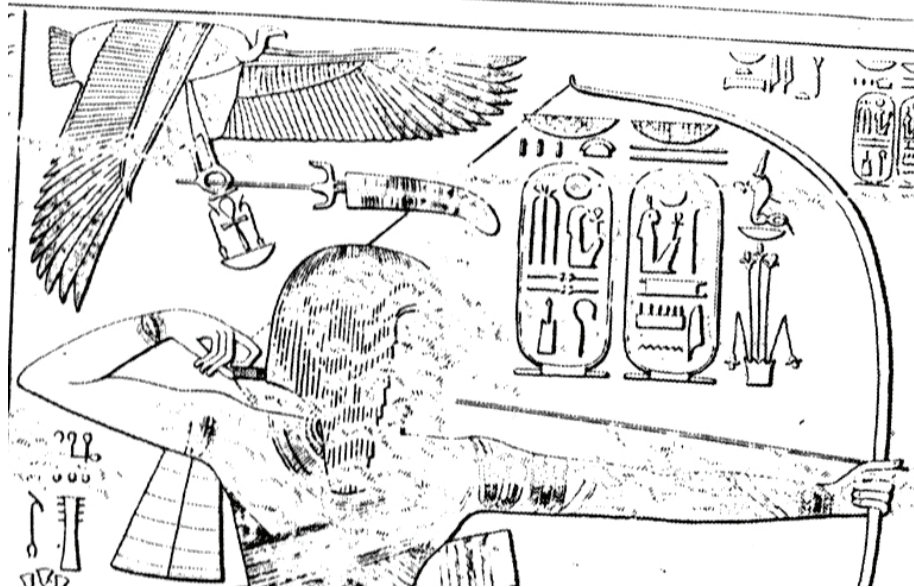
**FIGURE 108** Ramses III's Libyan campaign  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:312  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT South entrance; east wall, Medinet Habu (Heinz, 2001:312)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 109** Ramses III's Libyan campaign  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:312  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Hall, east wall, north of the entrance, Medinet Habu (Heinz, 2001:312)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 110** Ramses III's Asiatic campaign  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:317  
 MATERIAL Stone  
 DIMENSIONS Limestone  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Hall, north wall, lower register 4, scene from east, Medinet Habu (Heinz, 2001:317)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



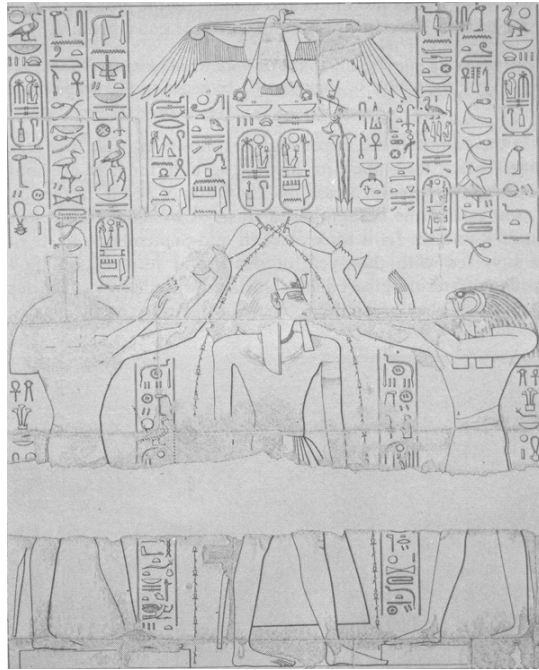
**FIGURE 111** Ramses III's Libyan campaign  
 ANIMAL Falcon  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:303  
 MATERIAL Stone  
 DIMENSIONS Limestone  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Hall, east wall, lower register 1, scene from south, Medinet Habu (Heinz, 2001:303)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 112** **Ramses III on his campaign against the Sea People**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Heinz, 2001:309  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Second Pylon, south pylon, east wall, Medinet Habu (Heinz, 2001:309)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 113** **Ramses III's naval battle against the Sea People**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Leclant, 1980:127  
 MATERIAL Sandstone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Leclant, 1980:127)  
 FIND CONTEXT North wall, Mortuary Temple, Medinet Habu (Leclant, 1980:127)  
 DATE 1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 114**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**The 'baptism' of Ramses III by Horus and Seth**

Vulture  
Murnane, 1980:27  
Limestone  
Unknown  
Thebes  
Great Temple of Ramses III, Second Court, Medinet Habu (Murnane, 1980:26)  
1184-1153 BC, reign of Ramses III, 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 115**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

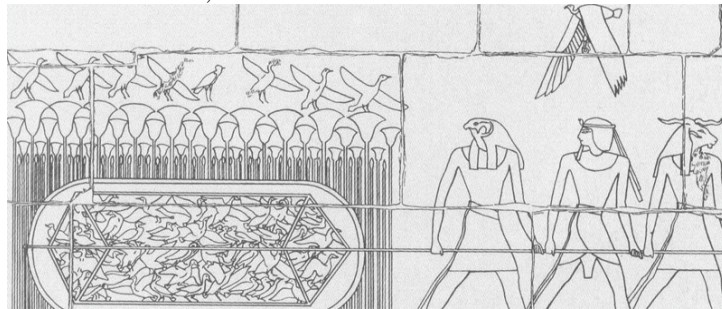
**Philae ceiling relief**

Vulture and cobra  
Photo by the author  
Limestone  
Unknown  
Philae (Agilkia Island), Aswan  
Isis temple  
c.332-32 BC, Ptolemaic Period

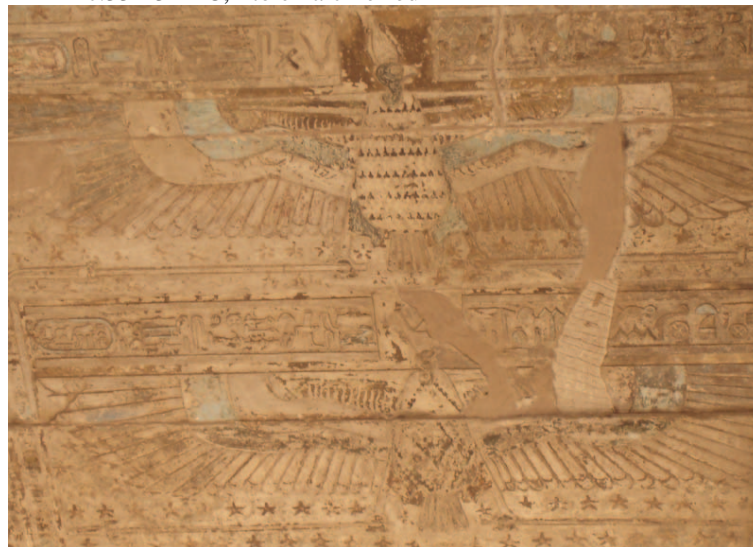




**FIGURE 116** **Scarab on the underside of a lintel above a gate at Philae**  
 ANIMAL Scarab  
 IMAGE SOURCE Schäfer, 1974:224  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Philae (Agilkia Island), Aswan  
 FIND CONTEXT Isis Temple  
 DATE c.332-32 BC, Ptolemaic Period



**FIGURE 117** **King netting wildfowl with the gods**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1994:189  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Esna (Wilkinson, 1994:189)  
 FIND CONTEXT Hypostyle hall, Temple of Khnum (Wilkinson, 1994:189)  
 DATE c.332-32 BC, Ptolemaic Period



**FIGURE 118** **Vulture and cobra on the ceiling at the Edfu Horus temple**  
 ANIMAL Vulture  
 IMAGE SOURCE Photo by the author  
 MATERIAL Limestone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Edfu  
 FIND CONTEXT Horus Temple  
 DATE 305-32BC, Ptolemaic Period



**FIGURE 119** Cobra and vulture on the ceiling at Kom Ombo

ANIMAL	Vulture
IMAGE SOURCE	Photo by the author
MATERIAL	Limestone
DIMENSIONS	Unknown
PROVENANCE	Kom Ombo
FIND CONTEXT	Temple of Horus and Sobek Temple
DATE	305-32BC, Ptolemaic Period



**FIGURE 120** Wall relief featuring Wadjet, Osiris-Khepri and Nekhbet

ANIMAL	Cobra and vulture
IMAGE SOURCE	Leclant, 1981:94
MATERIAL	Limestone
DIMENSIONS	Unknown
PROVENANCE	Tuna el-Gebel, Hermopolis (Leclant, 1981:94)
FIND CONTEXT	Chapel, tomb of Petosiris (Leclant, 1981:94)
DATE	c.330 BC, Ptolemaic Period (Leclant, 1981:94)



**FIGURE 121**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Otto, 1966:plate 20  
**MATERIAL** Limestone  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Denderah (Otto, 1966:plate 20)  
**FIND CONTEXT** Hathor Temple (Otto, 1966:plate 20)  
**DATE** 107-44 BC, Ptolemaic period (Otto, 1966:plate 20)

*A.2.8 Statues*



**Figure 122**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Tiradritti, 1999:73  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 98171  
**MATERIAL** Pink limestone, painted (Tiradritti, 1999:73)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 34cm (Tiradritti, 1999:73)  
**PROVENANCE** Abusir  
**FIND CONTEXT** Funerary temple of Raneferef (Tiradritti, 1999:73)  
**DATE** 2448-2445 BC, reign of Raneferef, 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Old Kingdom



**FIGURE 123**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Shabti of Ptahmose**

Vulture  
Tiradritti, 1999:157  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. CG 48406  
Polychrome faience (Tiradritti, 1999:157)  
Height: 20cm (Tiradritti, 1999:157)  
Abydos (Tiradritti, 1999:157)  
Unknown  
1390-1352 BC, reign of Amenhotep III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 124**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Shabti of royal scribe Amenhotep called Huy**

Vulture  
Saleh, 1987: plate 51  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 88902  
Faience (Saleh, 1987: plate 51)  
Height: 13.8cm (Saleh, 1987: plate 51)  
Abydos (Saleh, 1987: plate 51)  
Tomb of Huy  
c.1390-1352 BC, reign of Amenhotep III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.2.9 Weaponry

A.2.9.1 Chariot

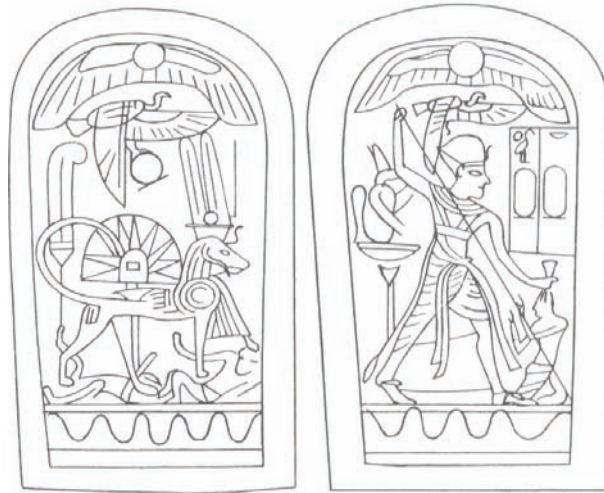


**OBJECT 125** Drawing of a decoration on Thutmose IV's chariot  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Reeves, 1990:41  
**MUSEUM** Egyptian Museum, Cairo  
**MATERIAL** Unknown  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** Tomb of Tuthmosis IV (KV43) (Reeves, 1990:41)  
**DATE** 1400-1390 BC, reign of Thutmose IV, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



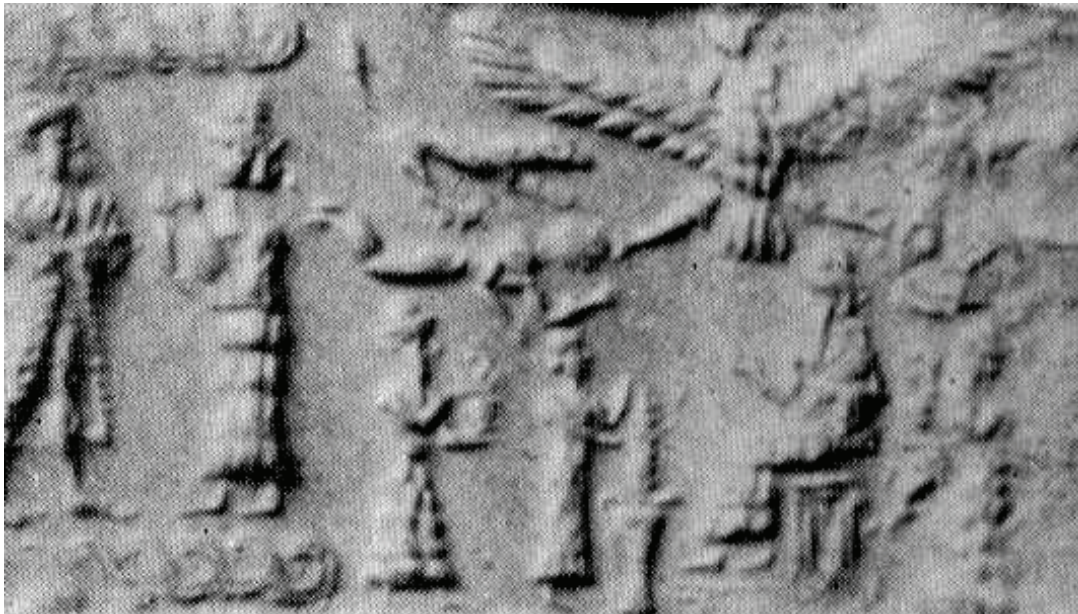
**FIGURE 126** The winged war god Monthu and scarab composition protect Thutmose IV on his chariot  
**ANIMAL** Scarab  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Frankfort, 1978: fig 15  
**MUSEUM #** Egyptian Museum, Cairo  
**MATERIAL** Unknown  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Valley of the Kings, Thebes  
**FIND CONTEXT** Tomb of Tuthmosis IV (KV43) (Reeves, 1990:41)  
**DATE** 1400-1390 BC, reign of Thutmose IV, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.2.9.2 Shield

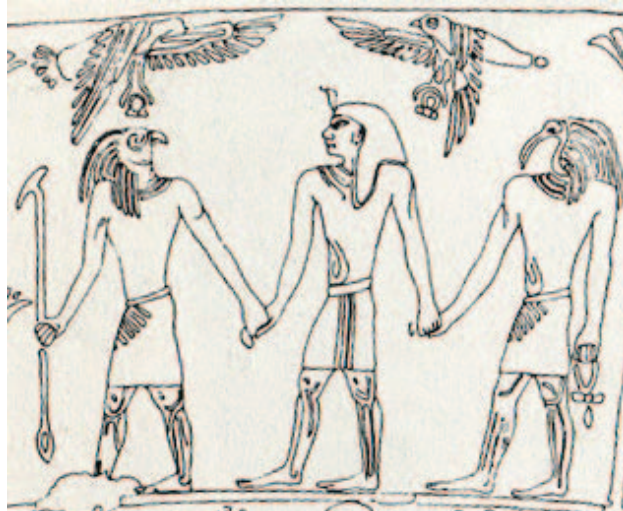


**FIGURE 127** Drawing of two ceremonial shields from Nubia  
**ANIMAL** Vulture  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Welsh, 1993:47  
**MUSEUM** Unknown  
**MATERIAL** Unknown  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Nubia (Welsh, 1993:47)  
**FIND CONTEXT** Tomb of Huy (Welsh, 1994:47)  
**DATE** c.1390-1352 BC, reign of Amenhotep III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

A.2.10 Foreign objects featuring the composition



**FIGURE 128** Syrian cylinder seal  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Frankfort, 1939: plate XLI i  
**MUSEUM #** Unknown  
**MATERIAL** Unknown  
**DIMENSIONS** Unknown  
**PROVENANCE** Syria (Frankfort, 1939:256)  
**FIND CONTEXT** Unknown  
**DATE** Probably Hyksos period, 1650-1550 BC, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> dynasties, 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period (Frankfort, 1939:256)

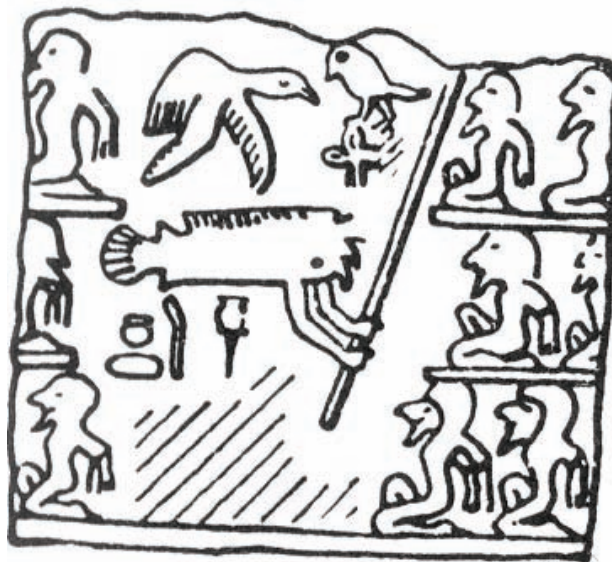


**FIGURE 129** A vase from Tarquinia featuring King Bocchoris (Kanenreuf) with gods and goddesses

ANIMAL	Vulture and falcon
IMAGE SOURCE	Smith, 1983:405
MUSEUM #	Unknown
MATERIAL	Unknown
DIMENSIONS	Unknown
PROVENANCE	Tarquinia, Italy (Smith, 1983:405)
FIND CONTEXT	Etruscan tomb (Smith, 1983:404)
DATE	727-715 BC, reign of Kanenreuf (Bocchoris), 25 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Late Period

**B. Secondary source**

B.1. Development of the composition



**FIGURE 130** Drawing of the Narmer cylinder seal

ANIMAL	Falcon (minus <i>shen</i> -ring)
IMAGE SOURCE	Schäfer, 1974:150
MUSEUM #	Unknown
MATERIAL	Unknown
DIMENSIONS	Unknown
PROVENANCE	Unknown
FIND CONTEXT	Unknown
DATE	c.3100 BC, reign of Narmer, 1 <sup>st</sup> dynasty, Early Dynastic Period



**FIGURE 131**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Drawing of the Narmer mace-head**

Vulture (minus *shen*-ring)  
Schäfer, 1974:105  
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; No. E 3632  
Unknown  
Unknown  
Hierakonpolis (Wilkinson, 1992:144)  
Unknown  
c.3100 BC, reign of Narmer, 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, Early Dynastic Period



**FIGURE 132**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Narmer battlefield palette**

Vulture (minus *shen*-ring)  
Quirke & Spencer, 1992:33  
British Museum, London; No. EA 65  
Grey schist (Quirke & Spencer, 1992:33)  
Height: 32.8cm (Quirke & Spencer, 1992:33)  
Unknown  
Unknown  
c.3100 BC, reign of Narmer, 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, Early Dynastic Period





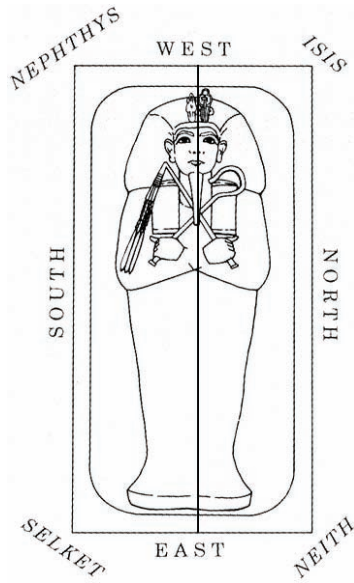
**FIGURE 133**  
**ANIMAL** Falcon (minus *shen*-ring)  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Tiradritti, 1999:41  
**MUSEUM#** Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 32169, CG 14716  
**MATERIAL** Green schist (Tiradritti, 1999:40)  
**DIMENSIONS** Height: 64cm; width: 42cm (Tiradritti, 1999:40)  
**PROVENANCE** Hierakonpolis (Tiradritti, 1999:40)  
**FIND CONTEXT** Unknown  
**DATE** c.3100 BC, reign of Narmer, 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, Early Dynastic Period

B.2. Placement and orientation of the composition

*Ornaments of the Mummy*  
(material: gold, unless otherwise stated)

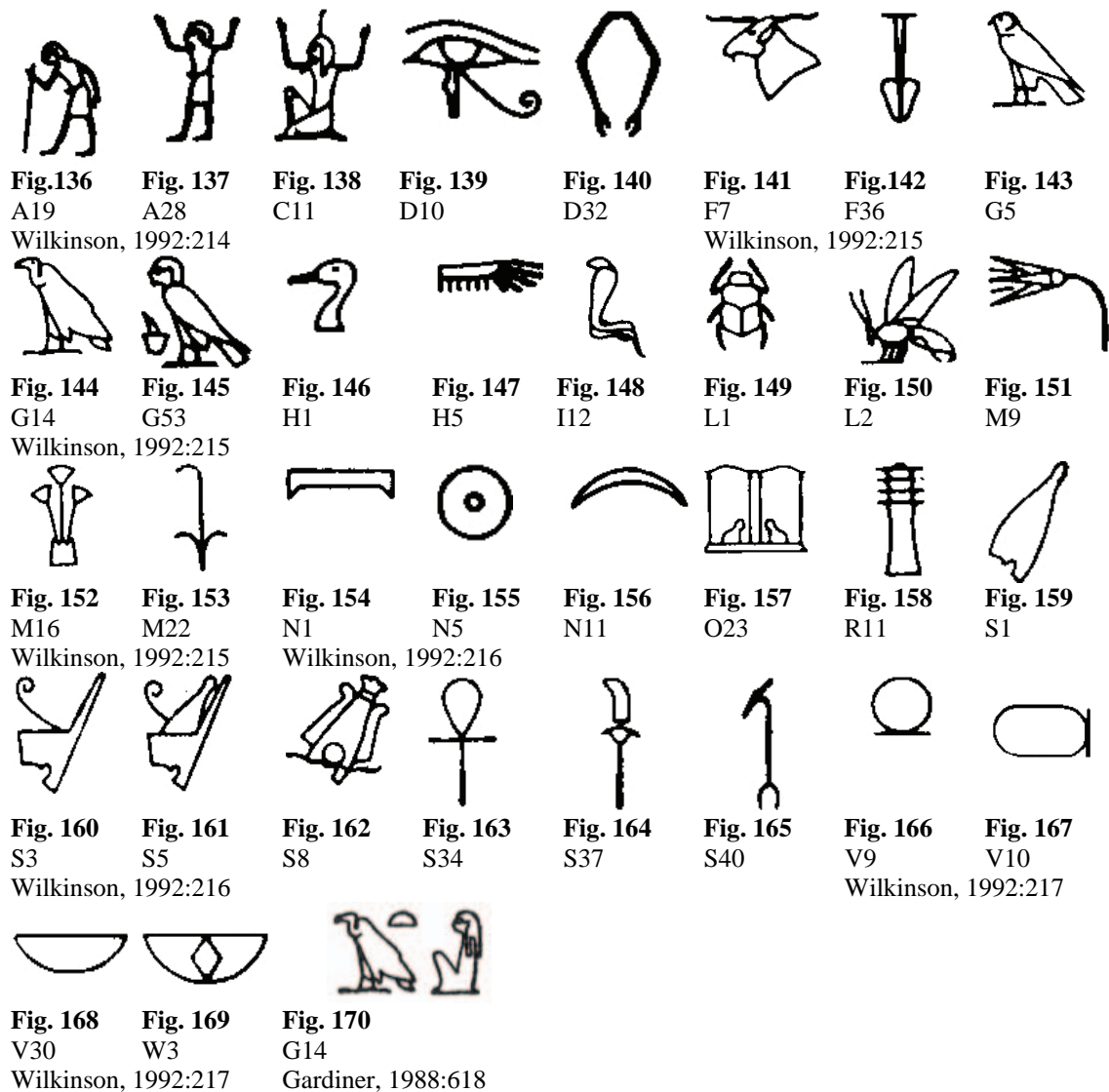
Object group no. 256	
a	gold mask
b	external trappings
c	Y-shaped amulet
d	oval plaque
e	vulture collar
f	vulture and uraeus collar
g	uraeus collar
h	falcon collar
i	two falcon collars
j	apron
k	dagger
l	girdle
m	T-shaped amulet
n	bracelet
o	faience broad collar
p	falcon collar
q	resin scarab
r	uraeus from 40
s	vulture head from 40
t	falcon collar
u	circle
v	circle
w	circle
x	vulture bracelet
y	beads
z	falcon collar
aa	two falcon collars
bb	beadwork
cc	circle
dd	iron dagger
ee	girdle
ff	five finger-rings
gg	falcon collar
hh(1)	bracelet with lapis barrel bead
hh(2)	bracelet with iron <i>sedjat</i> -eye amulet
hh(3)	bracelet with carnelian barrel bead
ii	funerary papyrus?
jj	four circlets
kk	<i>ajef</i> pillar amulet
ll	sandals, toe- and finger-stalls
mm	wire bracelet
nn	beadwork of <i>eee</i>
oo	<i>sedjat</i> -eye bracelet
pp	<i>sedjat</i> -eye bracelet
qq	scarab bracelet
rr	barrel-bead bracelet
ss	scarab bracelet
ss bis	disc bracelet
tt	amuletic knot
uu	bracelet with carnelian swallow
vv	three finger-rings
ww	barrel-bead bracelet
xx	beaded bracelet
yy	scarab bracelet
zz	<i>sedjat</i> -eye bracelet
aaa	<i>sedjat</i> -eye bracelet
bbb	finger-ring
ccc	finger-ring
ddd	disc bracelet
eee	tail
fff	<i>tyet</i> -knot amulet
ggg	<i>wasf</i> -sceptre amulet
hhh	<i>ajef</i> pillar amulet
iii	double-leaf amulet
iii bis	serpent amulet
jjj	leaf amulet
kkk	amuletic knot
lll	uraeus collar
mmm	vulture collar
mm	vulture and uraeus collar
ooo	scarab pectoral
ppp	vulture pectoral
qqq	scarab pectoral
rrr	faience <i>sedjat</i> -eye
sss	beads
ttt	falcon collar
uuu	falcon pectoral
vvv	<i>sedjat</i> -eye pectoral
www	bracelet
xxx	Anubis amulet
yyy	falcon-beaded amulet
zzz	serpent-head amulet
4a	Thoth amulet
4b	<i>wasf</i> -sceptre amulet
4c	bead
4d	chain
4e	five pectoral clasps and pendants
4f	human-headed winged uraeus amulet
4g	double uraeus amulet
4h	vulture amulet
4i	vulture amulet
4i bis	vulture amulet
4j	vulture amulet
4k	uraeus amulet
4l	vulture amulet
4m	bead collar
4n	two fibrous fillets
4o	diadem
4p	temple band
4p bis	linen headdress
4q	uraeus insignia of 4p bis
4r	vulture insignia of 4p bis
4s	temple band
4t	beaded linen skull-cap
4u	conical linen pad
4v	iron headdress amulet

**FIGURE 134**  
**IMAGE SOURCE** Carter's unpublished notes featuring the placement of the composition on Tutankhamun's mummy  
 Reeves, 1990: 112-113



**FIGURE 135** Orientation of Tutankhamun's coffins  
 IMAGE SOURCE Wilkinson, 1994:80

B.3. Hieroglyphs





**FIGURE 171** **Papyrus of vizier Nespakashuty: Nespakashuty rejoices after being found innocent at the weighing of the heart ceremony**  
 IMAGE SOURCE Ziegler, 1990:68  
 Silvie, 2007  
 MUSEUM # Louvre, Paris; No. E 17401  
 MATERIAL Painted Papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Height; 19.3cm; Length: 270cm (Ziegler, 1990:69)  
 PROVENANCE Thebes  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE 1060-945 BC, 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period BC (Sylvie, 2007)

B.4. Wings and protection



**FIGURE 172** **Statue of Khafre**  
 ANIMAL Falcon (minus *shen*)  
 IMAGE SOURCE Tiradritti, 1999:68  
 MUSEUM # Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 10062, CG 14  
 MATERIAL Diorite (Tiradritti, 1999:69)  
 DIMENSIONS Height: 168cm (Tiradritti, 1999:69)  
 PROVENANCE Giza (Tiradritti, 1999:69)  
 FIND CONTEXT Valley temple of Khafre (Tiradritti, 1999:69)  
 DATE 2558-2532 BC, reign of Khafre, 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Old Kingdom



**FIGURE 173**

ANIMAL  
IMAGE SOURCE  
MUSEUM #  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

**Colossal statue of Ramses II as a boy protected by Horon**

Falcon (minus *shen*)  
Tiradritti, 1999:259  
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; No. JE 64735  
Grey granite and limestone (Tiradritti, 1999:258)  
Height: 231cm (Tiradritti, 1999:258)  
Tanis  
Mud-brick building close to Great Temple of Amun (Tiradritti, 1999:258)  
1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom



**FIGURE 174**

IMAGE SOURCE  
MATERIAL  
DIMENSIONS  
PROVENANCE  
FIND CONTEXT  
DATE

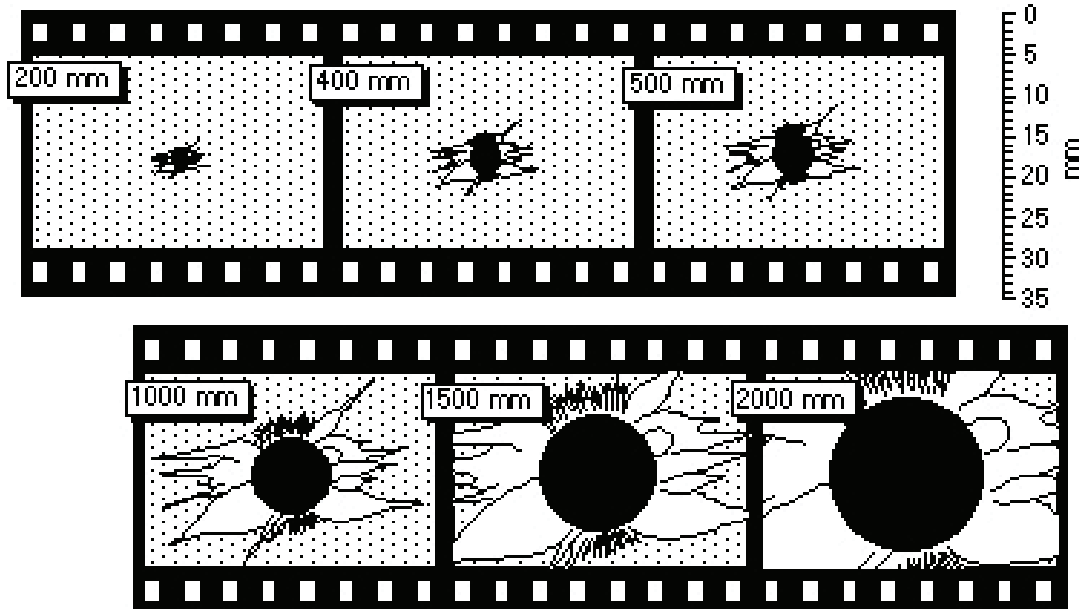
**Ma'at encircles Nefertari's cartouche with her outstretched wings**

McDonald, 1996:84  
Painted Limestone  
Unknown  
Valley of the Queen, Thebes  
Descending corridor, Tomb of Nefertari (QV66)  
1279-1213 BC, reign of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom

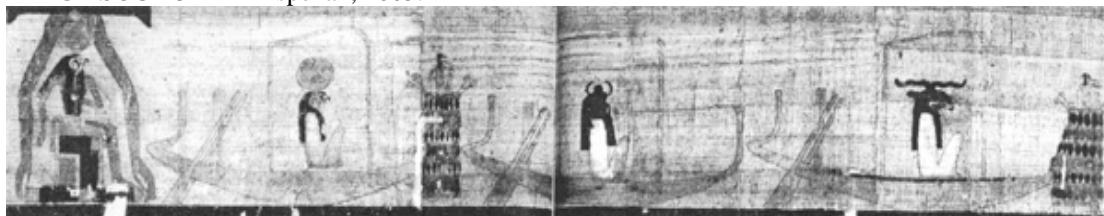
B.5. Solar imagery



**FIGURE 175** Total solar eclipse - July 11, 1991  
 IMAGE SOURCE Nemiroff & Bonnell, 1995

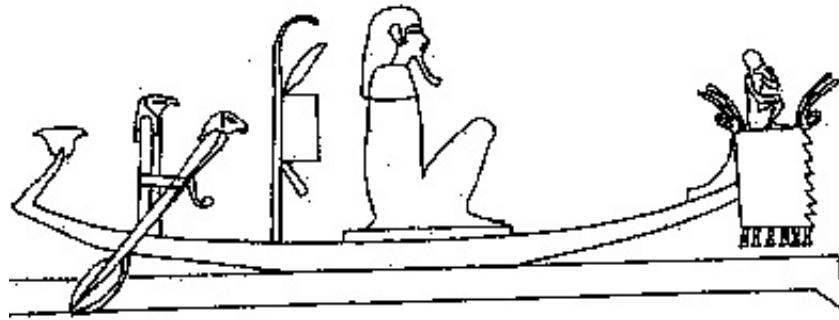


**FIGURE 176** Image scale of a 1996 total solar eclipse at various focal lengths  
 IMAGE SOURCE Espenak, 2005.



**FIGURE 177** Spell 168 'A litany of the god' of the *Book of the Dead* of Muthtetepti: three representations of the sun god

IMAGE SOURCE Faulkner, 1993:168-169  
 MUSEUM # British Museum, London; No. BM 10010/2  
 MATERIAL Painted papyrus  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Thebes (Faulkner, 1993:9)  
 FIND CONTEXT Unknown  
 DATE c.1050 BC, 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period (Faulkner, 1993:9)



**FIGURE 178** The morning sun god Khepri on the Morning Barque, with a child symbolizing the rising sun on the prow

IMAGE SOURCE Quirke, 2001:46  
 MATERIAL Painted stone  
 DIMENSIONS Unknown  
 PROVENANCE Heliopolis  
 FIND CONTEXT East wall, Tomb of Panehsy  
 DATE c. 664-525 BC, 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Late Period

B.6. Modern avian compositions



**FIGURE 179** Coat of arms of South Africa  
 IMAGE SOURCE Slater, 2002:229



**FIGURE 180** Coat of arms of Ghana  
 IMAGE SOURCE World civic heraldry guide...2007a



**FIGURE 181** Obverse side of the Great Seal of the United States of America  
IMAGE SOURCE World civic heraldry guide...2007b



**FIGURE 182** Coat of arms of Mexico  
IMAGE SOURCE World civic heraldry guide...2007c



**FIGURE 183** Coat of arms of Ecuador  
IMAGE SOURCE World civic heraldry guide...2007d



**FIGURE 184** Coat of arms of Austria  
IMAGE SOURCE World civic heraldry guide...2007e



**FIGURE 185**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Coat of arms of the Russian Federation**  
Slater, 2002:217



**FIGURE 186**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Coat of arms of Romania**  
World civic heraldry guide...2007f



**FIGURE 187**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Emblem of Egypt**  
World civic heraldry guide...2007g



**FIGURE 188**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Coat of arms of Iraq**  
World civic heraldry guide...2007h





**FIGURE 189**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Coat of arms of Kuwait**  
World civic heraldry guide...2007i



**FIGURE 190**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Coat of arms of Uzbekistan**  
World civic heraldry guide...2007j



**FIGURE 191**  
IMAGE SOURCE

**Coat of arms of Indonesia**  
World civic heraldry guide...2007k