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DEATH AS SLEEP AND AWAKENING FROM DEATH IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Éva Liptay

PhD (History)

Chief Curator

Department of Egyptian Antiquities

Museum of Fine Arts Budapest

41, Dózsa György út, Budapest, 1146, Hungary

eva.liptay@szepmuveszeti.hu

The metaphor of ‘death as sleep’ is a basic concept of ancient Egyptian afterlife beliefs. The sleeping person, similarly to the deceased, was thought to be staying in a dangerous liminal zone between life and death. In harmony with this, in some archaeological contexts the body of the deceased is positioned as if he or she was sleeping. In this vulnerable state, both the sleeper and the deceased had to be magically protected against demons and other malevolent forces lurking in the darkness of the night. In close connection with this, two important pieces of furniture for sleep; i.e. the lion-headed bed and the headrest played a key role in ancient Egyptian passage rites during life as well as after death. This symbolic role of the bed and the headrest can be well observed in the variants of the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’ appearing in the decoration programmes of Old and Middle Kingdom elite private tombs. The symbolism of this particular scene can be linked to two additional passage rituals in which a lion-shaped bed plays an equally central role: i.e., the myth of the royal birth and Osirian mortuary rituals. The key figure of the latter; i.e. Osiris, whose rebirth after death was described by some funerary texts as an awakening from sleep, provides the

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most important divine archetype of the deceased lying on the lion-headed funerary bier. The study discusses a frequently appearing 21st Dynasty scene depicting Osiris awakening from death. Among the first signs of his rebirth/awakening from death were the loosening of the mummy bandages and the lifting of the head from the lying position. The study mentions some rare examples where these important stages of transformation after death are represented in pictorial form.

Keywords: ancient Egypt, funerary beliefs, death, sleep, concepts, iconography, Osiris

1. Death as sleep

According to ancient Egyptian belief, a person in sleep at night, similarly to the sun-god and the dead, submerged in the primeval waters of Nun. Nun as a chaotic sphere outside the universe and the divine world order, a passage between yesterday and today, was thought to provide perpetual renewal for the gods, the dead and the living [de Buck 1939, 12–13; Hellinckx 2001, 68]. Staying in this liminal zone, however, was not without danger, due to the malicious activity of harmful netherworldly demons and ghosts lurking there in the darkness of the night [Szapkowska 2003, 111–116; Szpakowska 2010, 26, 33]. Demons were more powerful at night and each sleep was considered as a temporary descent into the realm of the dead [Pinch 1994, 107].

During sleep borders among the divine sphere, the realm of the dead and the world of the living became permeable, and their dwellers became mutually visible to each other [Szapkowska 2003, 114–115]. For the sleeping person, however, transit between spheres was one-way only. Exposed in a rather vulnerable state, lying powerless and helpless against benevolent or malevolent beings in the liminal zone, the sleeper was condemned to passivity.

The metaphor of ‘death as sleep’ is a basic and ever-present topos in ancient Egyptian afterlife beliefs [de Buck 1939; Zandee 1960, 81–85; Schlichting 1984; Assmann 2002, 366–369]. There were two central divine figures whose myths of rebirth provided examples to this metaphor. One of them was the sun god Re who was thought to pass through the underworld at night, submerge in the Nun, only to be reborn at dawn on the eastern horizon. The other was Osiris, who – after his death – was reanimated and ‘awakened’ through magical rites performed by his divine circle.

The following study explores some iconographic patterns and pictorial symbols depicting the dead as ‘sleeping’ and being reborn from death as ‘awakening’.

1.1. Representations of the deceased as a sleeper

A predynastic terracotta statuette of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden¹ represents a sleeping naked human figure lying in a flexed or fetal position on his right side in a boat (?), with both palms on his face (**Fig. 1**)². The piece comes from a burial in Middle Egypt, probably from Asyut. It is not only the figure lying in a boat that makes the representation unique, the shape of the boat is just as unusual. The rounded ends of the prow and stern of the oval-shaped boat model the head and hind of a frog. The body of the boat with the human figure lying in a foetal position, consequently, represents the inside of the body of a female frog.



Fig. 1. Model boat with a sleeping figure
(Leiden, RMO, inv. no. F 1962/12.1)

Stages of amphibian development were considered mysterious by ancient Egyptians, the animal (as well as the frog-shaped or frog-headed goddess Heqet) became therefore one of the symbols of divine self-creation, rebirth and renewal³. Highly probably, the early

¹ Inv. no. F 1962/12.1 [Brunner-Traut 1975, 41–46; Seipel 1989, 43 (No. 8); Raven 2010, 152–153; but. cf. Merriman 2011, 422; Vanhulle 2018, 308].

² © Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (after: <https://bit.ly/3dIfJPn>).

³ Early Christian frog-shaped lamps retained this pagan symbolism, in some cases supplemented with a Greek inscription ‘(I am the) resurrection’ (John 11:25) [Jacoby, Spiegelberg 1903, 215; Cooney 1976, 206; Dunand, Zivie-Coche 2004, 336].

frog-shaped model boat conveys the same rebirth symbolism in an obviously funerary context, where the human figure lying in the boat (i.e. in the womb of the goddess) represents death as sleep.

This surprisingly complex early Egyptian representation has already absorbed several later topoi related to death:

1. The deceased behaves after death like a living human being (e.g., he sleeps).
2. The deceased is in a powerless and helpless state after death.
3. The deceased is reborn from the womb of a goddess.
4. The deceased travels to the afterlife in a boat⁴.

Circa 1500 years later, in the late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period tombs of the cemetery of Elephantine, the bodies found by S. J. Seidlmayer were laid usually in a loosely contracted position on their left side, with left arm stretched along the body, while the right arm was often bent on the chest [Seidlmayer 2001, 224–226]. This positioning was most likely intended to display a special iconography of the deceased, i.e. to model them as if they were sleeping in a comfortable posture. This assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that the head was in all cases supported by a wooden headrest (characteristically in burials of old male individuals) or by a mud brick [Seidlmayer 2001, 227–230]. It is obvious here that according to local afterlife concepts of the period a next life similar to the earthly existence was expected after death. The same is indicated by the fact that the headrests placed below the heads are often heavily worn pieces which were previously used during life⁵ and made available for the tomb owner also in a new dimension after death. Accordingly, the body resting in the tomb is supposed to be in a sleeping position – thus the body of the deceased itself becomes the image of the sleeping person.

⁴ Later variants of this statuette type represent the deceased as a mummy (or inside a mummy-shaped coffin) transported in a boat. A similar model funerary boat from the Roman period, for example, has the shape of a duck, with a mummy placed in the hollow on the body of the bird: University of Swansea, inv. no. W 925 [Brunner-Traut 1975, 46–49].

⁵ Among other pieces of burial equipment of similar origin [Seidlmayer 2001, 232–233].

1.2. The passage symbolism of the bed

1.2.1. The ritual of ‘the installation of the bed’

In the context of the above, it is not surprising that the place of sleeping; i.e. the bed also had an important role in passage and rebirth symbolism. A not frequently recurring scene of Old Kingdom tomb walls depicts wardrobe officials preparing the bed for the tomb owner. The scene is usually labelled as *wdt 3tt* (‘the installation of the bed’). In the centre of the representation is a (usually) lion-legged bed under a baldachin. Two or three persons prepare the bed: one of them smooths the mattress or lays a sheet on it, while another figure places a headrest on the head end of the bed [Vasiljević 1995, 97–108; *Abb.* 20–26; Altenmüller 1997, 2–3].

The *wdt 3tt* scenes usually occur on tomb chapel walls close to a door or passage, or, moreover, in some versions a door is even represented in the scene [Vasiljević 1995, 107]. In some cases the door (or the entire scene) is framed by an upper *hkr*-frieze (Fig. 2)⁶ [Moussa, Junge 1975, *pl.* 2]; i.e. a motif that is an obvious reference to the place of embalming in ancient Egyptian funerary iconography⁷. Sometimes

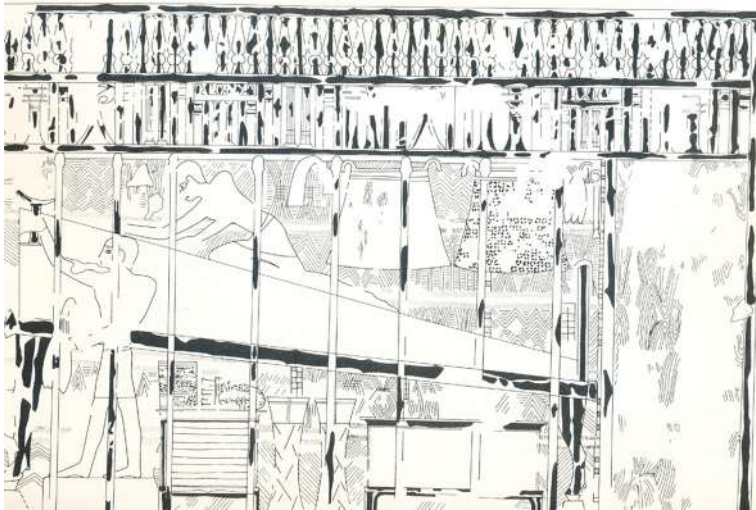


Fig. 2. A version of the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’

⁶ Saqqara, end of Fifth Dynasty.

⁷ Later, in the New Kingdom, the representations of the netherworldly gates or the judgement hall are also decorated with the same upper frieze.

the frieze is more complex in composition, combining additional motifs (e.g., palace façade motif, *djed* columns, stylized pair of papyrus plants), that are, in turn, characteristic decorative elements of false doors represented on contemporary tomb walls or coffin sides. The door with a characteristic upper *hkr*-frieze therefore places the scene, which at first sight represents an activity of daily routine, in a funerary context and associates it with the events that take place after death, e.g. in the judgment hall of Osiris.

The pronounced passage/door symbolism along with the inclusion of characteristic friezes of false doors (i.e. focal points of the communication between the dead and the living) suggests that the represented events may be in connection with a funerary ritual which was believed to provide a smooth passage to the afterlife and transition to rebirth.

These symbolic associations are more strong and obvious in some atypical versions of the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’ where the deceased is also represented on the bed⁸, or in an exceptional version where the events take place in the cabin of a ship proceeding to the ‘Beautiful West’⁹. In the latter case the passage from this world to the Beyond takes place during a ritual voyage.

In the decoration programmes of some tombs, the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’ seems to be strongly linked with other scenes representing musicians (e.g., harpists), dancers and players of board games (e.g., the *senet* game). These figures are the participants of a ritual celebration associated with Hathor, in the course of which the gates between the realm of the dead and the world of the living were believed to be opened to allow communication between the two spheres [Altenmüller 1978; Fitzenreiter 2001a, 431–436; Fitzenreiter 2001b, 75–78, 81–83; Liptay 2014, 68–71]. The moments of passage are represented as an ‘alternate reality’ when the dead and the living – although well separated – are equally present in the same space and time.

⁸ E.g. in the Theban tomb of Djari (Eleventh Dynasty) where the usual servant figures of the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’ are also present around the mummy lying on the bed [Galán 1994, *pl. IX*; Vasiljević 2001, 354–355].

⁹ See in the tomb of Mereruka in Saqqara (early Sixth Dynasty) [Duell 1938, I, *pl. 141*; Altenmüller 1996a, 15]. See also a version of the scene in the tomb of vizier Mehu (Saqqara, early Sixth Dynasty) where the deceased himself is lying on the bed [Altenmüller 1997, 2].

Consequently, the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’ seems to share a common symbolism with the feast of Hathor; i.e. with the opening (and passage) of the borders between the living and the dead. Furthermore, it cannot be excluded that a ritual of ‘the installation of the bed’ itself was considered as part of these rites.

1.2.2. ‘The bed’ as a focal point of the passage rituals of rebirth

The symbolism of the scene of ‘the installation of the bed’ appearing in the decoration programmes of elite private tombs can be linked to three, in many respects interconnected passage rituals in which bed symbolism plays a central role [Vasiljević 2001, 356].

The first is the above discussed Old Kingdom Hathoric festival, in the course of which the borders between the living and the dead could temporarily be crossed and, according to beliefs, communication between the two spheres became possible.

According to Henry G. Fischer, beds used during life were also used as funerary bier as early as the Old Kingdom. From the Sixth Dynasty onwards, the head ends of these beds were carved in the shape of lion heads [Fischer 1975, 768]. It is obvious that their everyday use and ritual role merged with each other already at this time.

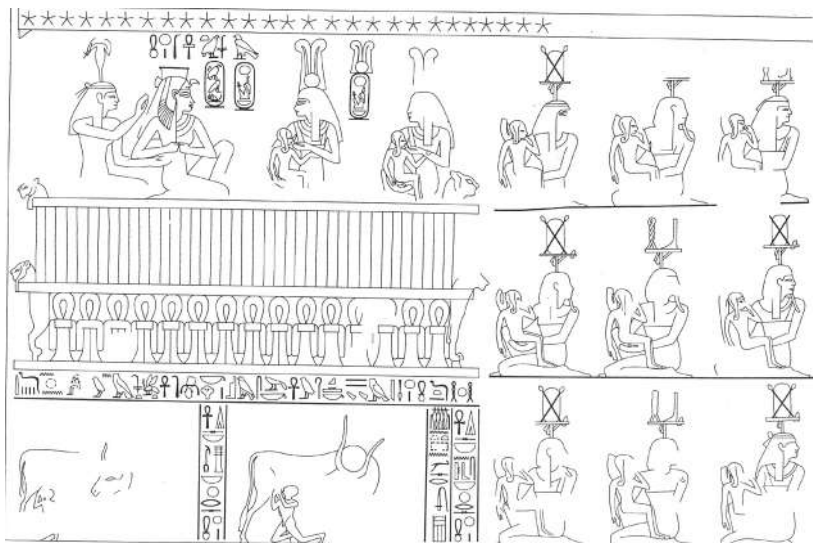


Fig. 3. The lion-headed bed in the myth of royal birth

There are two additional ritual events where lion-headed and lion-legged beds seem to play a key role. The one of them is the myth of royal birth. Although representations of the myth of royal birth first appeared in the temples of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri and of Amenhotep III at Luxor, the idea might be of an earlier origin [Brunner 1964, 187; Altenmüller 2013]. Here again, the focal point of the scenes is the lion-headed bed¹⁰ (**Fig. 3**) [Brunner 1964, *Taf. 12*]; i.e. a symbolic place of a series of passage rites including the conception and birth of the royal child and his reception into the divine sphere [Altenmüller 1996a, 3; Altenmüller 1996b]. The rites were not only intended to prove the new ruler's legitimacy to the throne, but they were also believed to ensure his rebirth after death. Consequently, bed symbolism appearing in a royal cultic context expresses a similar symbolism as scenes of 'the installation of the bed' in a private funerary context¹¹.

The same lion-headed funerary bier likewise plays a key role in Osirian funerary rites as a ritual place where the god is reborn from death through the rites of mummification and burial [Altenmüller 1996a, 8; Hellinckx 2001, 90]¹². H. Beinlich attempted to reconstruct the ritual roles of the three (hippopotamus-, lion- and cow-headed) funerary biers found in the antechamber of the tomb of Tutankhamun [Beinlich 2006, 29–31]. He suggested that the three beds were intended to symbolize three different aspects of the mother goddess who was believed to give birth to the ruler; i.e. each of them represents various phases of passage rituals. The hippopotamus-shaped aspect of the goddess receives him into her body, her lion-shaped aspect protects him during gestation, and finally, the cow-shaped aspect gives (re)birth to the king after death. Accordingly, the lion-headed funerary

¹⁰ For various interpretations of the myth of royal birth, see: [Frandsen 1997, 84–93; Assmann 2010, 88–94].

¹¹ See: [Altenmüller 1996a, 1996b and 1997].

¹² For iconographic similarities between the interiors represented in Old Kingdom versions of the scene of 'the installation of the bed' and those of later scenes with the mummy lying on the funerary bier, see: [Altenmüller 1997, 4]. These similarities seem to suggest that the two (imaginary) places basically share the same symbolism. Consequently, it cannot be excluded that the Old Kingdom scene type was one of the precursors of the later pictorial topos of the mummy lying on the lion-shaped funerary bier.

bier seems to have had a pivotal role during the intermediate stage of the passage rite (*rite de marge*), when the deceased ruler was preparing for rebirth in the womb of the protective goddess. And it is exactly the same period that the deceased was believed to spend in a sleeping state.

Consequently, the bed, though at first glance seemingly everyday object, through the use of various symbols and iconographical motifs was placed in a ritual context as a focal point of the series of ritual events. As a part of burial equipment, however, at the same time it functions in a funerary context too, ensuring rebirth for the deceased in the afterlife through the use of the same symbols and motifs.

From this point of view, as the representations of lion-headed and lion-legged funerary biers in the above mentioned contexts clearly show, the sleeping state of the deceased and the metaphor of the 'awakening from sleep' (i.e. rebirth from death) must have been associated to the lion-shaped aspect of the mother goddess (e.g. Hathor) ensuring rebirth. On the other hand, the lion-shaped bed at the same time is a clear symbolic reference to the divine *hieros gamos* that takes place on an iconographically very similar bed, and, as a consequence, to Horus, the posthumus child of Osiris and Isis with whom the deceased intended to be identified [Altenmüller 1996a, 16; Altenmüller 1997, 6–7].

1.3. The passage symbolism of the headrest

As it was mentioned above, one of the standard motifs of the scene of 'the installation of the bed' is a figure who places a headrest on the head end of the bed (see 1.2.1). Headrests (*wrs*) were used in daily life in ancient Egypt in order to support the neck of the sleeping person lying on his or her side. On the other hand, headrests were part of the burial equipment from the Third Dynasty onwards [Konrad 2007]. Headrests found in tombs are often heavily worn, obviously suggesting that – similarly to beds – objects of daily use were often transferred to a funerary context.

The ancient Egyptian concept according to which the deceased spends the period between his death and rebirth in a sleep-like liminal state highlights the passivity, unconsciousness and vulnerability of his condition [Seidlmayer 2001, 229; Hellinx 2001, 92], when he was in need of magical protection against dangers in the afterlife. The headrest was one of the apotropaic objects ensuring rebirth after

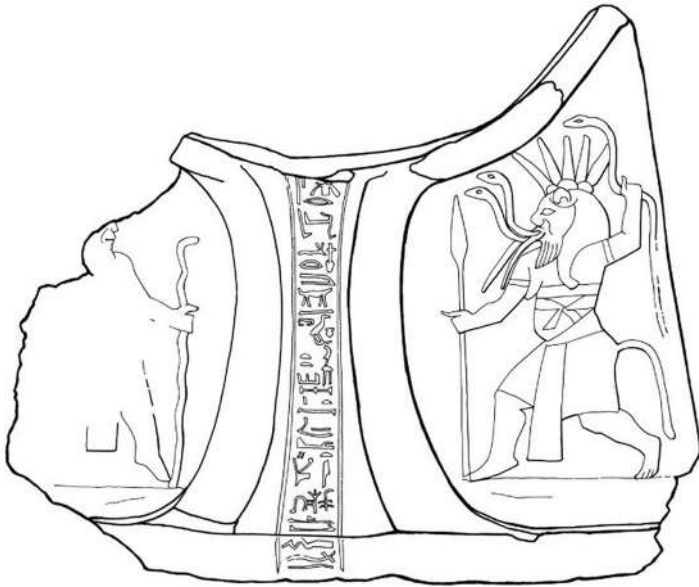


Fig. 4. Headrest with the representation of Bes (London, BM EA, no. 63783)

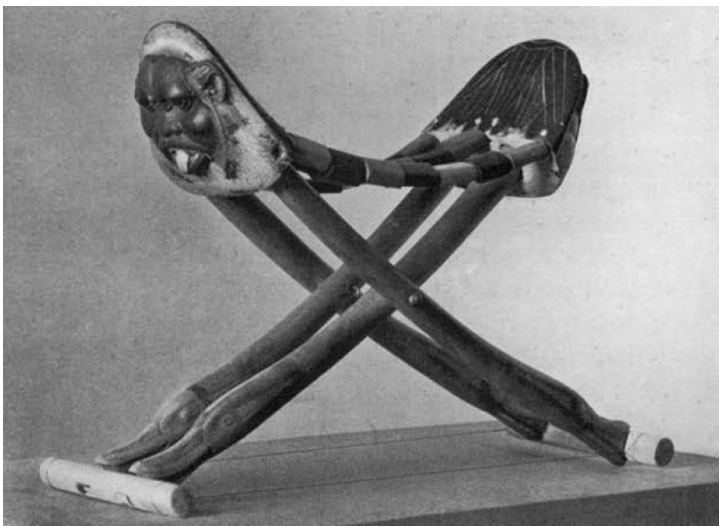


Fig. 5. Tutankhamun's headrest with the representations of Bes (Cairo, Egyptian Museum, J.E. 62023)

death, as attested e.g. by Chapter 166 of the *Book of the Dead* that describes the rebirth of the deceased as awakening from sleep. Indeed, a clear sign of the awakening from sleep is the rising of the head which is *ab ovo* guaranteed by the use of the headrest. The decorations of some headrests make it obvious that the head of the deceased placed on them was thought to be identified with the sun-god emerging from Nun, defeating his enemies and rising to the eastern horizon [de Buck 1939, 6–14; Dasen 1993, 75–76; Hellincx 2001; Perraud 2002; Konrad 2007; Szpakowska 2010, 35–37]; i.e. in this context the headrest symbolizes the liminal scene of the eastern horizon [Fischer 1980, *Nos.* 4 and 13; Hellincx 2001, 77–80]. Other headrests – similarly to beds – are decorated with the figures of apotropaic deities (e.g. Bes or Taweret) who were believed to provide magical protection in liminal states/during dangerous passages, such as birth, disease, sleep/dreaming¹³ or death (**Fig. 4**¹⁴, **Fig. 5** [Carter 1933, *pl.* XXXVIA]).

2. Awakening from death

2.1. *Rs-wd3* – ‘He who awakened complete’

During the intermediate phase of the passage rite (*rite de marge*), the most important divine archetype or mythical pattern of the deceased lying on the funerary bier was Osiris. When the embalming and wrapping were completed, the mummified body of the divinity laid on the funerary bier until dawn had to be magically protected. In that vulnerable state the rite of the nightly vigil over his body was thought to provide sufficient magical protection around him [Assmann 2001, 349–358; Lucarelli 2012; Roberson 2013]¹⁵. According

¹³ Dreaming or seeing a dream (*m33 rswt*) too was considered by ancient Egyptians as a dangerous liminal state when the soul of the sleeper was temporarily staying between life and death [Vernus 1986; Szpakowska 2010, 21, 23]. Nightmares symbolizing chaos and evil were believed to be sent by demons who had to be kept away by magic spells that often invoked the same helpers (e.g. the fire of the Solar Eye/protective cobra goddess) who were believed to protect the sun-god against his cosmic enemies [Szpakowska 2010, 21–22, 33].

¹⁴ © Trustees of British Museum.

¹⁵ For the divine guards around the mummified body of Osiris, see: [Zandee 1960, 204; Willems 1988, 240; Willems 1996, 308–309; Liptay 2011, 153].

to textual sources, one of the most effective weapons against malevolent forces threatening the god in the darkness was fire; i.e. torchlight held by the divine guards of the nightly hours¹⁶. It is worth to add that a similar magical fire was believed to banish netherworldly and demonic figures during nightmares¹⁷.

The first rays of the sun at dawn penetrating into the embalming place marked the end of the nightly vigil when the torches were ritually extinguished. The following phase of the passage was the awakening from sleep or rebirth from death [Bommas 2007]¹⁸. After awakening (*rs*), the transformation of the god lying on the funerary bier is marked by the loosening of the mummy bandages (thus providing an ability to move in the afterlife), and his rise from lying position¹⁹. This transformation is expressed by the divine aspect *Rs-wd3* ('He who awakened complete') [Van de Walle 1972], a qualitative change that at the same time implies the success of the previously performed rite of the nightly vigil.

Mummy bandages were thought to be only an intermediate garment protecting the deceased that was taken off in the moment of rebirth in order to allow the deceased to move freely in the afterlife [Zandee 1960, 78–81; Hornung 1983; Kurth 1990, 53; Grallert 1996, 152–153; Rummel 2006, 395, n. 69]. The same dichotomy between the image of the wrapped mummy and the unwrapped and transformed state of the deceased (i.e. coffin lids representing the deceased as a living person in a 'daily life' dress) is reflected by mummiform coffin lids from the New Kingdom onwards. On the other hand, the

¹⁶ This torches were thought to have magic power and were identified with the fire of the cobra-shaped goddess of the Solar Eye destroying the enemies of the sungod [Willems 1988, 144, 159; Willems 1996, 205; Liptay 2002, 29–30].

¹⁷ See n. 13.

¹⁸ In the burial rites the key figure is the son of Osiris, Horus (or the *sem* priest identified with him). He goes into a death-like ritual sleep, in the course of which he identifies with the funerary god wrapped in mummy bandages whom he is supposed to wake up at the end of the ritual [Vernus 1986, 746; Altenmüller 2009, 10–12; Altenmüller 2013]. For the role of the divine conductor of the ritual, see also [Willems 1997, 360–364; 367–368].

¹⁹ This key episode of the rituals is already highlighted in the earliest funerary texts, e.g., "Wake up! Rise up! Raise your head!" (Pyr. 735).

removal of the mummy bandages signifies that the deceased who in his earlier liminal state existed between worlds and outside communities, in post-liminal state becomes an identifiable member of his new (divine) community.

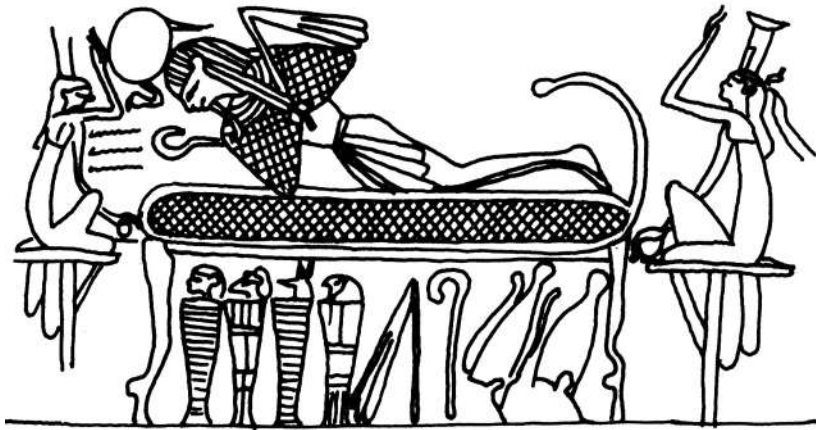


Fig. 6. Osiris awakening from death in a funerary papyrus

The scene representing Osiris as just rising from his funerary bier and starting to move his limbs first appeared in the temple of Seti I at Abydos [Roberson 2013]. It was adopted by the decoration programmes of several New Kingdom royal tombs, and later by Third

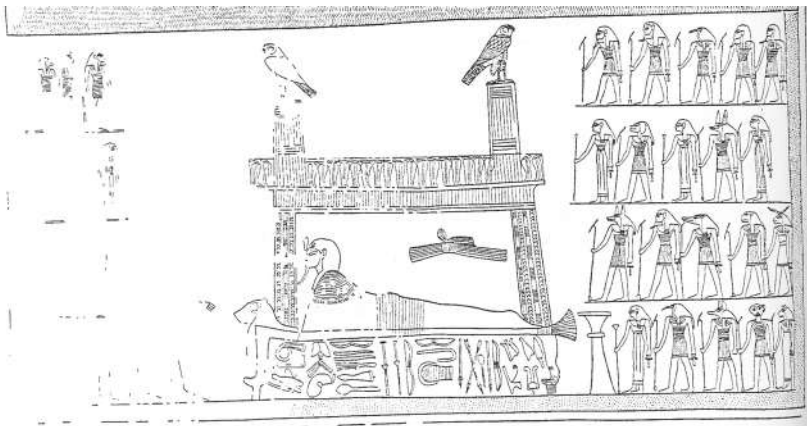


Fig. 7. Osiris awakening from death in the tomb of Ramesses VI

Intermediate Period coffins and funerary papyri (**Fig. 6**)²⁰ [Niwiński 1989, *fig.* 37]. On some variants a large-sized *rs* ('to awaken') symbol is placed above the figure of Osiris rising from the funerary bier, simultaneously referring to his awakening state and his new divine quality (*Rs-wd3*) (**Fig. 7**)²¹ [Piankoff 1964, 438, *fig.* 142].

However, the *Rs-wd3* aspect – as the first moment and first visible sign of rebirth – is still an intermediary phase. The god in transformation already possesses all his divine abilities, but the final stage of his transformation is when he is finally seated upon his throne as the ruler of the realm of the dead. In this regenerated and triumphant state Osiris is usually called Wennefer (*Wnn-nfr*; 'He who remains perfect').

2.2. Representations of the deceased as awakening from sleep

Representations of figures lying on funerary biers occurring in private tombs generally depict Osiris, as a divine pattern of rebirth after death. It occurs only exceptionally that the represented figure can be identified – instead of Osiris – with the deceased himself or herself.

Among Old Kingdom versions of 'the installation of the bed' (1.2.1.), there are some rare and unusual occasions, where the deceased is represented on the bed. For instance, the motif appears in the Sixth Dynasty tombs of Mereruka (Saqqara) and Pepi (Meir) where the tomb owner is depicted as sitting on the bed (prepared by his servants earlier) in the company of his wife who plays the harp for him [Duell 1938, I, *pl.* 92–95; Blackman and Apton 1953, *pl.* 45–46; Vasiljević 1996, 90; Altenmüller 1996a, 5; Altenmüller 1997, 4]. In these exceptional cases both their position (i.e. relaxing on the bed) and the role of the harp are intended to symbolize awakening/rebirth after death²².

Additionally, a similarly unusual scene can be found in the Theban tomb of Djari (Eleventh Dynasty) where a special version of 'the installation of the bed' represents the mummified deceased lying on the top of his rectangular-shaped coffin (instead of the lion-shaped funerary bier), while a funerary rite is being performed with an incense burner at his head. The head of the mummy is slightly raised, however

²⁰ Cairo, Egyptian Museum, S.R.VII.10240.

²¹ The tomb of Ramesses VI.

²² For the rebirth symbolism of the harp, see 1.2.1.

without a headrest or any other support below it [Galán 1994, *pl. IX*; Vasiljević 2001, 354–355]. Very probably all these unusual iconographic details are intentionally used here to express the awakened state of the transfigured deceased.

Similarly interesting and unusual versions of the same motif are also known from Graeco-Roman period funerary iconography. In a scene on the head end of the wooden coffin of Phaminis (a child from the Soter family) the rays of the winged sun disc reach the mummified body lying below. However, in an unusual way, the head of Phaminis is not covered by a mummy mask or wig, but depicted with short hair he presumably had during life. Similarly to the Middle Kingdom representation of Djari, the head is slightly raised, with layers of unwrapped bandages below it [Germer, Kischkewitz and Lüning 2009, 60, *Abb. 69*]²³.

Presumably the same idea is expressed in the case of an unwrapped mummy from the early Roman era, preserved at the Egyptian Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest (inv. no. 51.2079) the eye sockets of which are inlaid with artificial (black and white) stone eyes, and the right eyelid is still supported by a tiny stick to keep the eye open²⁴. Similar techniques are known already from the Twenty-first Dynasty to make the face more lifelike and to give the impression that the person was alive [Gray 1971; Taylor 2010, 44]. In this case it is the mummified body that displays the iconography of the transfigured deceased awoken from death, thus becoming the eternal living image of itself²⁵.

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²³ A similar motif can be seen on one of the sides of the wooden coffin of Sensaos and Tkauthi [Germer, Kischkewitz and Lüning 2009, 63 and *Abb. 74*].

²⁴ Inv. no. 51.2079.

²⁵ Cf. [Belting 2003, 185–188].

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Є. Линмай

СМЕРТЬ ЯК СОН І ПРОБУДЖЕННЯ ВІД СМЕРТІ У ДАВНЬОЄГИПЕТСЬКІЙ ІКОНОГРАФІЇ

Метафора "смерть як сон" – головна концепція стародавніх єгипетських вірувань у загробне життя. Вважалося, що спляча людина, як і покійний, перебуває в небезпечній лімінальній зоні між життям і смертю. Відповідно до цього, в деяких археологічних контекстах тіло померлого розташовується так, ніби він спить. У цьому вразливому стані і сплячого, і померлого необхідно було магічно захистити від демонів й інших злих сил, які переховуються в темряві ночі. У тісному зв'язку з цим, важливі два предмети меблів для сну, тобто ліжко з головою лева та підголівник, які грали ключову роль у давньоєгипетських обрядах переходу як за життя, так і після смерті. Ця символічна роль ліжка та підголівника добре простежується у варіантах сцени "установки ложа", що фігурують в образотворчому оформленні елітних приватних гробниць Старого і Середнього царства. Символізм цієї конкретної сцени може бути пов'язаний із двома додатковими ритуалами переходу, в яких ліжко в формі лева грає однаково центральну роль: міфом про царське народження та ритуалами осірічних містерій. Ключова фігура останніх, а саме Осіріс, чиє відродження після смерті було описане в деяких поховальних текстах як пробудження від сну, являє собою найбільш важливий божественний архетип покійного, що лежить на поховальному ложі з головою лева. У дослідженні розглядається поширена сцена XXI династії, яка зображує Осіріса, що пробуджується від смерті. Серед перших ознак його відродження / пробудження від смерті були ослаблення бинтів мумії та підйом голови з положення лежачи. У дослідженні залучені деякі рідкісні приклади, коли ці важливі етапи трансформації після смерті представлені у графічній формі.

Ключові слова: стародавній Єгипет, поховальні уявлення, смерть, сон, концепції, іконографія, Осіріс

Е. Лунтай

СМЕРТЬ КАК СОН И ПРОБУЖДЕНИЕ ОТ СМЕРТИ В ДРЕВНЕЕГИПЕТСКОЙ ИКОНОГРАФИИ

Метафора “смерть как сон” – основная концепция древних египетских верований в загробную жизнь. Считалось, что спящий человек, как и покойный, находится в опасной лиминальной зоне между жизнью и смертью. В соответствии с этим в некоторых археологических контекстах тело умершего располагается так, как будто он спит. В этом уязвимом состоянии и спящего, и умершего необходимо было магически защитить от демонов и других злых сил, скрывающихся в темноте ночи. В тесной связи с этим, важны два предмета мебели для сна, то есть кровать с головой льва и подголовник, которые играли ключевую роль в древних египетских обрядах перехода, как при жизни, так и после смерти. Эта символическая роль кровати и подголовника хорошо прослеживается в вариантах сцены “установки ложа”, фигурирующих в изобразительном оформлении элитных частных гробниц Старого и Среднего царства. Символизм этой конкретной сцены может быть связан с двумя дополнительными ритуалами перехода, в которых кровать в форме льва играет одинаково центральную роль: мифом о царском рождении и ритуалами осирических мистерий. Ключевая фигура последних, а именно Осирис, чье возрождение после смерти было описано в некоторых погребальных текстах как пробуждение от сна, представляет собой наиболее важный божественный архетип покойного, лежащего на погребальном ложе с головой льва. В исследовании рассматривается распространенная сцена XXI династии, которая изображает Осириса, пробуждающегося от смерти. Среди первых признаков его возрождения / пробуждения от смерти были ослабление бинтов мумии и подъем головы из положения лежа. В исследовании привлечены некоторые редкие примеры, когда эти важные этапы трансформации после смерти представлены в графической форме.

Ключевые слова: древний Египет, погребальные представления, смерть, сон, концепции, иконография, Осирис

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