



**IDENTIFICATION OF GODLIKE  
THROUGH THE EGYPTIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS**





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A comprehensive review of the religious texts; pyramid texts(1), coffin texts(2), and book of the dead(3), reveals that numerous names of characters, who resemble gods, appear in these texts having no reference in the other texts or in the inscriptions on the walls of temples and/or tombs. The ancient Egyptians, in their life, did not express any petitions or prayers to those characters indicating doubts about their god-being and whether they were gods acting in the netherworld or they were spirits who had a definite duty in the netherworld. So, they will be dealt with as the so called "godlikes" in this paper.



Among the godlikes under this study whose names frequently appear in the religious texts, Nhb-K3w, M3-h3.f, and Cqn are the godlikes to be considered in this respect.

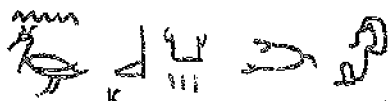
### Nhb-k3w

This name appears in the pyramid texts in various forms of writings as follows :

1.  (PT I 489 b)
2.  (PT I 361 a)
3.  (PT I 340 b)
4.  (PT I 346 a)

Other forms of the name Nhb-k3w writings appear in the coffin texts as follows:

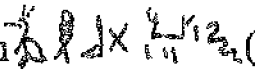
1.  (CT III 318 d)
2.  (CT IV 311 b)

3. 

(CT VI 133)

4. 

(CT VII 116 g-h)

Also, the form  (BD30) appears in the book of the dead.

Moreover, WB dealt with this name as "der die kas macht" describing it as a characteristic of some gods particularly, both of Horus and Thot. In addition, this name refers to the evil snake and the feminine form Nhb-k3w means the snake who guards the queen(4).

Nhb-k3w was drawn in various snaky forms. The most important forms are : (1) a great snake having two heads each with a different neck,(5) and the tail is ended with a snaky head(6). (Fig. 1,2), (2) a snake having a human limbs with raising hands to the mouth or carrying a small container, with w3dt eye. This form is also graved on the basis of Sekhmet and Bastet thrones(7). (Fig. 3), and (3) a human form with snaky head. This form is represented in the ivory statues in the British Museum(8). Also, the form of a kneeling man catching a snake in both hands.(9) (Fig. 4).

Concerning the duty of Nhb-k3w, it is obvious, from the religious texts and the drawings, that he had a conflict duties. For example, Nhb-k3w is mentioned in the pyramid texts in a letter to the snakes in the netherworld.

*dd mdw cnt tw nn nt itm hrt ts qbsw Nhb-k3w ss3t  
hnw m Wnw jhr sbn.*

. Words to be said: O you adze of Atum which is upon the vertebra of Nehebkau, which brings to an end the strife in Unu; fall! perish! (PTI 229 a-c).

Another example from the coffin texts reveals that Nhb-k3w had a similar duty, besides to describing the dead with the name of Nhb-k3w.

*j 3m hm Nhb-k3w*

"O you who burn Nehebkaui." (CT V 40 b).

*jnk Nhb-k3w*

"I am Nehebkaui" (CT V 37 l).

*hpr m Nhb-k3w*

"To become Nehebkaui" (CT VI 133 i).

Moreover, the name of Nhb-k3w is mentioned as a judge of the forty-two judges of Osiris in the netherworld at the 125<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of the dead. It is also shown, in the religious texts, that Nhb-k3w is one of the sun god characteristics(10) with a supporting references in the pyramid texts.

*jn.sn n.f.fdw jpw 3hm smsw hntjw knsktjw  
chcw m gs j3bt n pt dsrw hr dcmw sn  
dd.sn rn nfr n Wnjs pn n Rc sjw.sn Wnjs  
pn n Nhb-k3w.*

"They (the gods) bring to him those four eldest spirits who are in front of the tresses of Horus, who stand in the east of the sky, adorned with their sceptres. They tell the beautiful name of this Weins to Re, they announce this Wenis to Nehebkaui." ( PTI 339b-340b).

*njs.tw jr Ttj jn Rc dj.tw n.f jht jn Nhb-k3w*  
 "Teti is summoned by Re, food is given to  
 him by Nehebkaou." (PTI 346a).

As for the coffin texts, Nhb-k3w has the characteristic of the god Ptah. Also, he was considered the godson of the god Geb and the goddess Rennut.

*nšm.j njw.j m wj3 Rc dj.j swt n Nhb-k3w*  
 "I departed and returned in the bark of Re,  
 that I give thrones to Nehebkaou" (CT VII  
 169 f-h)

*h3 Wsjr N pn twt Nhb-k3w S3 Gb n mwt.f*  
*Rnnwt twt jrf k3 n ntr nb šhm m jb.f.*

"Ho! this Osiris N ! you are Nehebkaou,  
 son of Geb, born of his mother Rennut;  
 you are indeed the double of every god,  
 having power in his heart." (CT VI 392 j).

*jnk rs jnb.f jtij ntrw jnk nsw n pt Nhb-k3w*  
*srr t3wjj Nhb-k3w ddj b3w hčw k3w Svcw*  
*jnk Nhb-k3w jw čnh.sn r c.j mrr.j čnh.sn.*

"I am he who is south of his wall(11),  
 Monarch of the gods; I am king of the sky,  
 even Nehebkaou who rules the two lands,  
 Nehebkaou who grants souls, crowning  
 doubles and beginnings, I am Nehebkaou,  
 and their lives are at my hand, when I  
 wish I act they live." (CT VI 268 h-l).

In the book of the dead, messages for the sun god and Nhb-k3w to let the former sails in the sky leading an enjoyable and healthy life and later in the M<sup>c</sup>ndtj - bark<sup>(12)</sup> which belonged to the god Re.

*d3.k hrjj m Cnh w3s Nhb-k3w m m<sup>c</sup>ndt rsj  
wj3.k jb.k*

"You sail over the sky in life and health, Nehebkau being in the M<sup>c</sup>ndt-barque, your barque rejoices your heart "(BDI 15 a.).




### M3-h3.f and Cqn

Another godlikes named M3-h3.f and Cqn appear in the religious texts in relation to the deceased's journey to the field of Iaru across the winding waterway<sup>(13)</sup>. They have special duties with the ferry-boat by which the deceased traverses to the field of Iaru.


### M3-h3.f.



The godlike M3-h3.f appears in the religious texts in various writing forms:

In the pyramid texts :

1.  (PT 1 383 a)
2.  (PT 1 597 a)
3.  (PT II 925 c)

In the coffin texts.

1.  (CT V 73 n)
2.  (CT V 74 i)
3.  (CT V 170 g M2N4a)





8  
 4.   
 5. 

(CT V 170 g M<sub>2</sub>N<sub>4</sub>b)  
 (CT VI 17 a)


Also the book of the dead involves the same name in numerous locations.

From the previously mentioned writings, the name can be transliterated in different types; m-h3.f, m3.n h3.f and m3-h3-tp.f. In spite of being written or transliterated in different forms, the name M3-h3.f has sole translation with the meaning of "a person who can see his back" or "who can see backwards". This meaning is in agreement with the translation given by Mueller<sup>(14)</sup>, Budge<sup>(15)</sup> and Faulkner<sup>(16)</sup>.

The abovementioned meaning is in accordance with the appearance of the name in other forms such as :

- 1.  (PT I 383 a)
- 2.  (PT II 999 a)
- 3.  (PT II 1441)
- 4.  (CT III 174 i)

These form have the transliteration: Hr.f-h3.f which has the synonymous of the name M3-h3.f. Als it was written in the form Hr.f-m-h3.f (PT I 493) as translated with the meaning "his face is in his back", which leads to the same meaning.

Using the world hnt instead of h3 with indication in  Hr.f m hnt.f (PT I 493 ) was another form for the godlike name.

The duty of M3-h3.f is obviously shown in the various religious texts. He is frequently mentioned in the spells related to the deceased's journey in the netherworld at his way

to the field of Iaru<sup>(17)</sup>. He seems to be responsible of the ferry-boat, by which the deceased traverses to the field of Iaru across the winding waterway which surrounds its northern edge.

Meuller believes that the name of the godlike M3-h3.f is due to the fact that the ferry-man, during rowing, must sit at a position in which his back faces the foremast. In other words "his face is backward". That ensures the normality of the godlike M3-h3.f's face position.

There is a scene on Ani papyrus<sup>(18)</sup>, in which the deceased appears carrying the writing tools in one hand and raising the other in front of the ferry-man (M3-h3.f) sitting in the ferry-boat. with his face towards his back. (Fig. 5).

The duty of the godlike M3-h3.f begins as the deceased calls him to be awake.

*dd mdw rs.k m htp Hr.f - h3.f m htp M3-  
h3.f m htp*

words recited: "May you awake in peace!  
O Hr.f - h3.f in peace! O M3-h3.f in  
peace! (PTI 383a).

Then the deceased asks him to bring the ferry-boat to traverse across the winding waterway, calling him with many different attributes and describing him as a gods ox to indicate the M3-h3.f powerful.

*Hr.f-m-hnt.f Hr.f-m-h3.f jn nw n Wnjs*



"O Herefemkhentef, Herefemhaef, bring this to king Wenis" (PTI 493).

*M3-h3.f k3 ntrw jn nw n Wnjs dj Wnjs pn  
m gs pf n Cnh w3S*

"O Mahaf, Bull of the gods, bring this to the king Wenis and set this king Wenis on that side of life and authority" (PTII 925 c-d).

*j Hr.f-h3.f m hntj n s'Nh3 jn n.j nw d3 wj  
dj wj m pf gs hnc snw pn ntjw m-c.j*

"O Herefhaf, Ferryman of the winding waterway, bring this to me, ferry me across, and put me in that side with these bags which are in my hand." (CT III 174 i-l).

After that the deceased asks him to awaken Cqn (the other godlike who will be discussed in the next part of this paper).

*M3-h3.f srs n.j Cqn hn.k m cnh mk wj  
jj.kwj*

"O Mahaf, awaken Aqen for me, may you endow with life. Behold, I have come" (CT V 77 b-c).



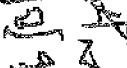

*M3-h3.f SrS Cqn jn.tj.fj n.j nw hn.k m cnh  
mk wj wr jj.kwj*

"O Mahaf, awaken Aqen who will bring me this, may you endow with life.

Behold, I am a great one and I have come.  
(CT V 74 i-l).

### Ḳqn

The name of the godlike Ḳqn appears in the same texts of his companion M3-h3.f in various writing forms as follows:

1.  (CT V 730)
2.  (CT V 77 b)
3.  (CT V 82 c)
4.  (BD 99)

He often is the ferry-boat servant or attendant who is responsible for preparing the ferry-boat to be ready to cross the winding waterway. It was mentioned before that the deceased asks M3-h3.f to awaken Ḳqn. Here Ḳqn awakes saying:

*jsšt pwj jn Ḳqn wnnt sgr. kwj*  
"What is it? says Aqen, I was asleep"  
(CTV 107a).

In a long conversation between the godlike Ḳqn and the deceased which deals with the knowledge of the later about the gods names and the portions of the ferry-boat, indicates the ability of the deceased to reply most of the questions. However, the Ḳqn says:

*nn n ḏd.n.k ḏ3.k r bw hr ntr pf špsj jm ḏd*  
*jrj ntr pn špsj jn ḏ3.n.k n.j z n rh.f tnw*  
*ḏbcw.f*

"As for what you have said, that you would ferry over to the place where this august god is, this august god will say: "have you ferried over to me a man who doesn't know the number of his fingers?"  
(CT V 115 a-d)

Then, the  $\epsilon_{qn}$  permits the deceased to ascend the ferry-boat after the later shows his knowledge by counting his fingers.(19)

*h3 rk r mhnt tn n rh.k tnw nw db<sup>c</sup>w.k*

"Go abroad the ferry-boat, because you know the number of your fingers." (CT V 154 d-e).

In a conclusion, the mentioning of the name of Nhb-k3w accompanied with and in equal to the god Re is a good indication that he is not a characteristic of Re and can be considered an independent creature named Nhb-k3w, who often was a companion or an attendant of Re. Some texts mentioned that Nhb-k3w was an enemy who was attacked by the god Atum. This evil role may be due to the appearance of Nhb-k3w among the terrifying gods consisting the forty-two judges of Osiris tribunal.

Concerning the duties of M3-h3.f and  $\epsilon_{qn}$ , it is evident that they have the responsibility of the ferry-boat. The M3-h3.f has numerous and different writings and transliterations i.e., Hr.f-h3.f, M3-h3.f, Hr.f-m-hnt.f, M3-h3-tp.f and Hr.f m h3.f, which all lead to the same meaning: "whose face is in his

back". That indicates his principal duty as a ferry-man whose face must be in this position. The Cqn is in charge of preparing the ferry-boat to be ready for sailing across the winding waterway to the field of Iaru. Also he has the duty to ask the deceased to prove his knowledge about the gods and he has the right to permit the deceased to ascend the ferry-boat.

Thus, the Nhb - k3w, M3-h3.f and Cqn are three characters who have different duties in the netherworld. Their duties give them the periorities to have characteristics that make them of god-being nature. But they can not be considered as real gods.

#### Notes

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2. De Buck, A., *The egyptian coffin texts*, 7 vols. Chicago 1935-1961; Faulkner R., *The ancient egyptian coffin texts*, 3 vols, Warmister, 1973, 1977, 1978.
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4. WB II 291-292; Shorter A., *The god Nehebkau in JEA* 21 (1935), P. 41.
5. Clark R., *Myth and Symbol*, P. 40.
6. Bucher P., *Les Textes de Tombes de Thauthmosis III et d'Amenophis II*, I.P. 25; Budge W., *The egyptian heaven and hell*, I. P.79; Shorter A., *The God Nehebkau*, JEA 21, p. 42.

7. Shorter A., Two statuettes of the goddess Sekhmet-Ubastet, JEA 18 (1932) pp. 121 ff.
8. Petrie F., Objects of Daily use, London, 1915, pls. 37. 39.
9. Shorter A., op. cit.
10. Grapow, H., Feligiose Urkunden, (Translation), P. 27, note 8; Piper M., Die grosse Inschrift des konigs Neferhotep in Abydos, Warminster 1976, p. 40.
11. About the phrase rs jub.f as a title for the god Ptah see WB II 452.
12. Shorter A., op. cit. p. 45.
13. About the winding waterway (Nh3) see: Budge W., The book of the dead, An English translation of the chapters, Hymns, etc., of the Theban Recension with introduction, 3rd ed., London 1977, P. IX; Lesko H, The field of Hetep in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, JARCE 9, P. 93.
14. Mueller D., An Early Egyptian Guide to the Hereafter, JEA 58, P 104.
15. Budge W., op. cit., p. 324.
16. Faulkner R., CT, Vol. II, pp. 24 ff.
17. About the field of Iaru see: Weil R., Le Champ des roseaux et le champ des Offerands dans la religion funéraire et la religion générale, Paris 1936; Bayoumi A., Autour du champ des souchets et du champ des Offerandes, Cairo, 1940.
18. Faulkner R. BD, P. 94.
19. Sethe K., Ein alt ägyptische Fingerzahlrein, ZÄS 54, P. 16 ; Gunn B., Fingernumbering in the pyramid texts, ZÄS 57, p. 71.

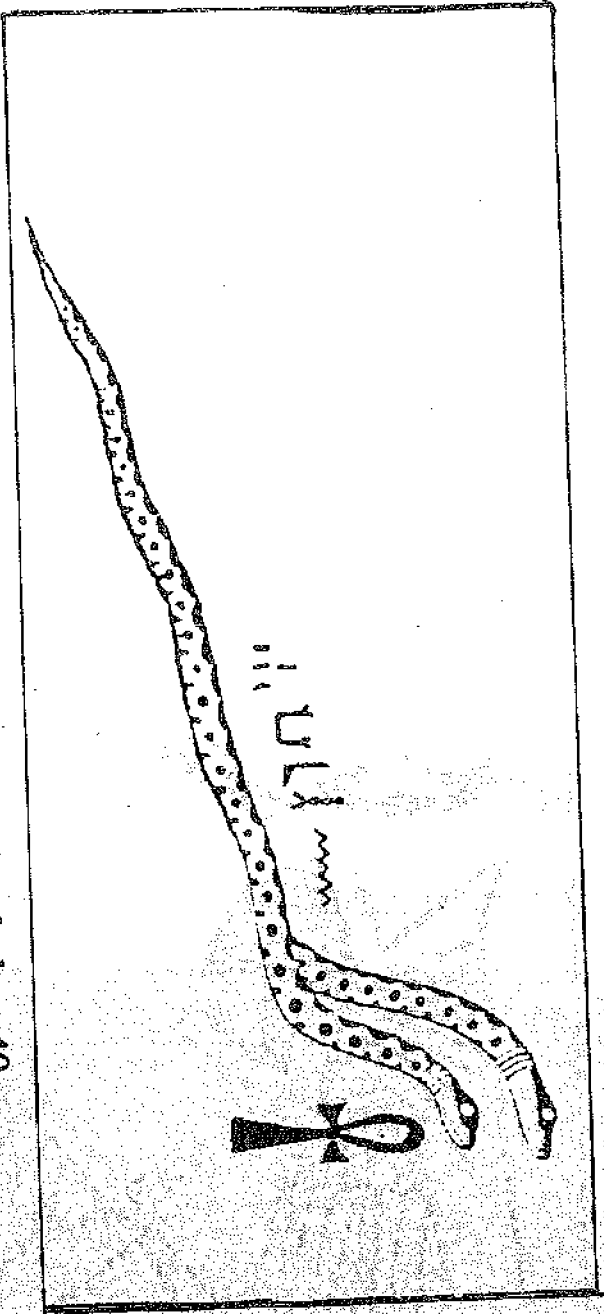


Figure 1 : Clark R., Myth and Symbol, p. 40

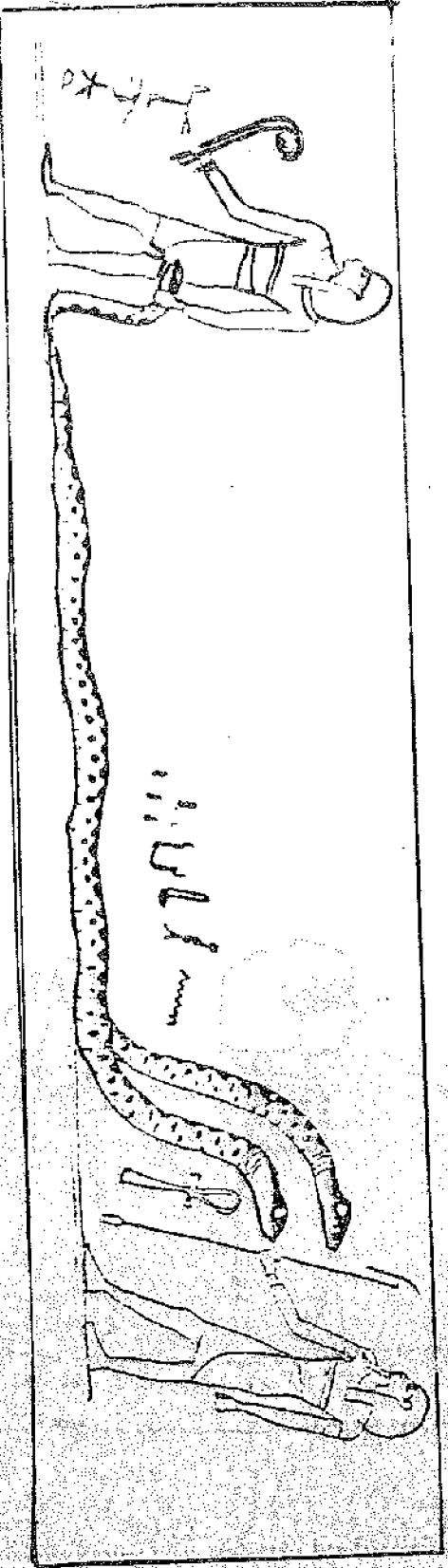


Figure 2 : Shorter A., The God Nehebkau, in JEA 21, p. 42

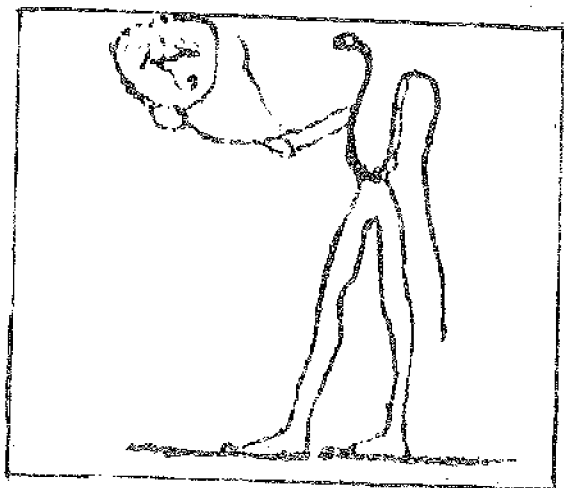


Figure 3 : loc. cit.



Figure 4 : loc. cit.

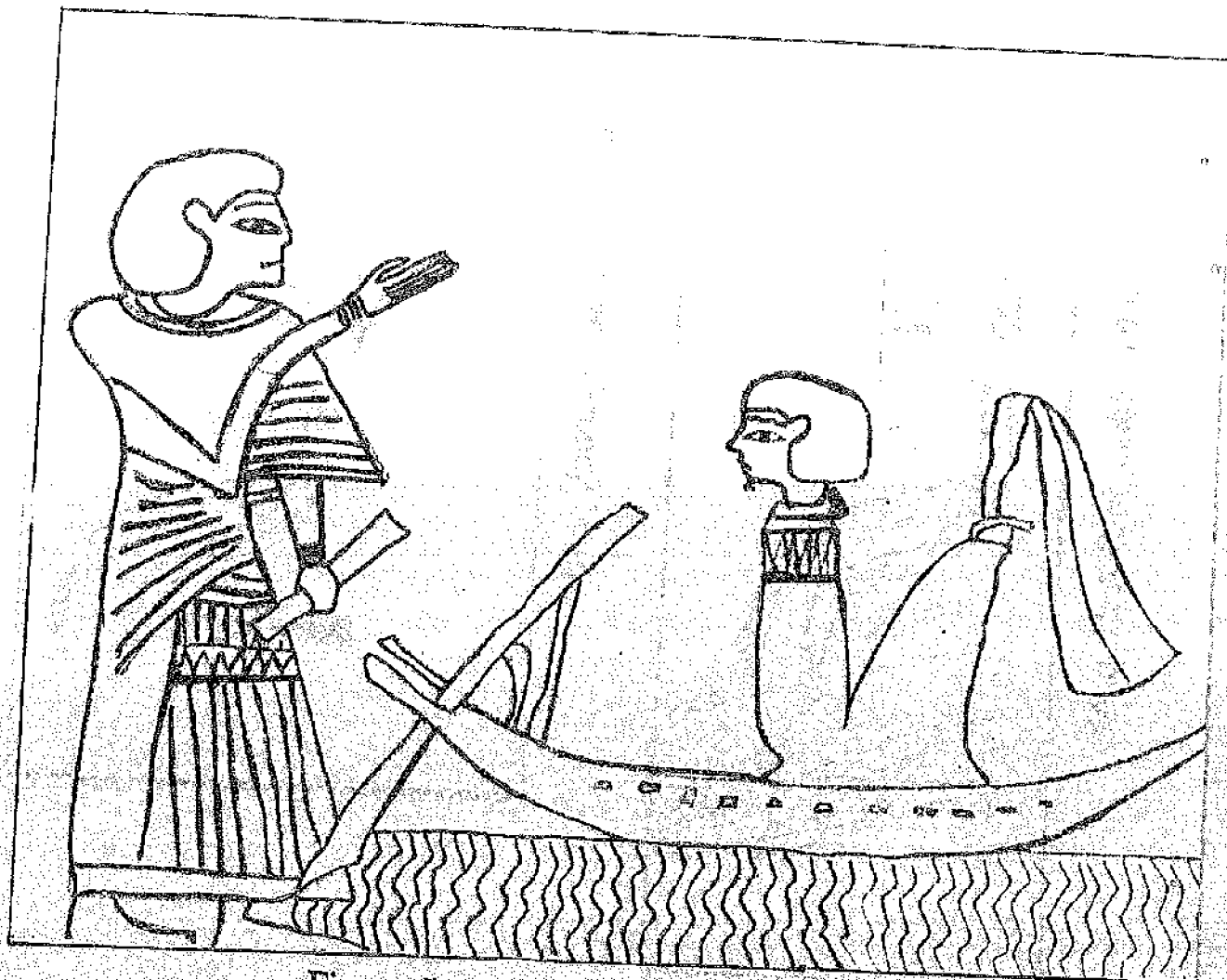


Figure 5 : Faulkner R., B.D., P. 94.