

The types of ornamentations in the Coptic art

Al Shaimaa Nagy Ali Hassan

The ornamentations in Coptic art divided into Geometric and floral ornamentations like the leaves of palm trees, leaves of grapes, crowns of ghar, and geometric ornamentations like geometric units with its different kinds like, the square, the rectangle and the combined ornamentation, the Writing ornamentations, which the Coptic artist used in it some letters and the meaningful statements, the Creatures ornamentations Like using the birds, fish in creatures paintings like saints and angels. ⁽¹⁾

First: floral ornamentations

A- The leaves of Plants:

They had a prominent status in the Coptic art, especially the plant-based ornaments, represented by the leaves and fruit of grapes as well as the acanthus. Those were used so often in the art of Coptic sculpture after so modulations that a large part of them became closer to geometric shapes. The most important of these plant leaves are as follows:

Acanthus:

It is a thorny plant that the artist developed its shape to take the form of a pointed leaf far from the natural form of the plant. This modification emphasized the genuine traits of the Christian art as the artist ornamented the column capital with Christian symbols as he used the Cross in some vertical branches of the plant instead of the fruit. This plant was used extensively in the Coptic art because it symbolized peace and heavenly gardens. ⁽¹⁾

Oak:

It was also called the sacred oak which is evergreen. It also included some thorns, therefore, it symbolized the crown of thorns placed on the head of Christ at the crucifixion. It is also said that the Christian cross on which Christ was crucified was made of the woods of the oak tree. There are nine different types of it in Palestine, some carrying edible fruits and the others are just for shade. Some grow in the high mountains, while others grow in the low plains and valleys.⁽⁷⁾

Myrtle:

It is a small tree with shiny evergreen leaves, and sweet-smelling white flowers. Its symbolizes love since ancient times, and in the Roman mythology, this plant is considered the god of love. Christians use it to refer to the pagans who converted to Christianity.⁽⁸⁾

Ivy:

Ivy symbolizes the eternal life because it is evergreen, and the ivy that grows up somewhere is the symbol of persistence, consistency and fidelity. It is sometimes referred to as the lover of trees as it symbolizes honesty and eternal life.

Reeds:

One of the symbols of Christ's sufferings and pains on the cross, as "one of the soldiers gave Christ - while fastened to the Cross - a sponge full of vinegar on the tip of a stick of reed. So, reeds symbolize humility, and sometimes used to refer to justice. It is said that the Cross John the Baptist was made of reeds.⁽⁹⁾

Lotus:

The name of the lotus flower is derived from the word (lota), a name used by the Greeks for this plant. The lotus plants grow in the waters of the Nile, static ponds, swamps and float on the water running surfaces. To the ancient Egyptians, it is similar to the Nile as its leaves resemble the lakes branching of the Nile, the stalk is its course, and the flower resembles the Nile Delta.

The Egyptian Lotus was called the Nile lilies, and blue lotus was called the water lilies.^(١)

Lilies are carried by floral green long stalks to allow the flower to float on the water higher than the other leaves. It is one of the most beautiful flowers in a stellar shape, and has four green sepal leaflets of the outer surface and white bluish to the interior. In addition, it has a number of long blue coronet edged end with some traces of purple. The inner part of the flower is golden yellow and has a large number of thin strip leaflets with golden yellow stems. The blooming of these flowers lasts for four days.

Scientists described this plant as a sort of water lilies called Lotus that was cultivated for the good taste of its roots. In addition, its flowers were dried to be grinded with flour for baking. The army of Egypt took it as slogan in the Pharaonic times.

Lotus was one of the plant motifs that accompanied the Egyptian heritage as it was used as a decoration for the surface of pottery at the end of the Ptolemaic period and the beginning of the Roman era. It was also used in the Roman art as an architectural unit in some Egyptian temples. This unit occupied a large area. As for the Coptic art, it represented evolution and communication between the past and the present as it added the element of decorative creativity in the Coptic art, stemming from its adherence to the ancient heritage.

Lotus is still the symbol of Egypt as the Pharaonic inscriptions and drawings shown on the ancient Egyptian temples manifested the ancient Egyptians deep admiration of this flower. Those beautiful paintings showed the great pharaohs of Egypt holding lotus with their hands to show their appreciation for those wonderful flower.^(٢)

It was considered the symbol of creation to the ancient Egyptians as the ancient Egyptian myth of creation mentioned the creation of the blue water lily (Nile Lotus) as the ancient

Egyptians used to watch the lotus flowers floating on the Nile open every morning to close their corollas in the afternoon every day and then dive under the water surface.^(A)

Therefore, it was an object of artistic and architectural creativity as the inscriptions painted on the tombs preserved good painting of a boat making its way through the water and a girl outstretches her hand to reap one of lotus flowers that does not bloom then. It is noted that the tops of columns in many of the ancient Egyptian temples take the form of lotus flowers as well. Hence, it had a significant role in the ancient Egyptian worship rituals as it was one of the most sacred flowers. It was the symbol of perfection and the best perfume-emitting flowers. The sacred Nile lilies were used as offerings during the funeral rites, and some of its remnants were found covering the body of Tutankhamun on opening his tomb in 1922. The white Egyptian lotus was the symbol of purity and virtue because its bright white and beautiful leaves grow out of mud, however, they can't afford the luster and splendor of the Egyptian blue bright lilies.

Chestnut:

It is a genre including eight or nine species of trees and shrubs. It falls under the oak and grows in warm temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. Chestnut refers also to the good edible nuts that it produces. This flower is surrounded by thorns but they do not harm it. Therefore, the Coptic artist used it to symbolize chastity and purity. There are many types of chestnut including the American that grows in North America. It is characterized by a relatively small-sized grain, and it is considered one of the best types of chestnut. The Chinese chestnut is one of the more resistant species to agricultural pests and this raises its commercial value. It grows in short trees, and is characterized by medium-sized grains. There is also the European chestnuts that grow in long trees, their fruit are similar to the Chinese and is characterized by their sweet taste also. The Japanese chestnuts are small trees, characterized by large size

fruits of good taste. They are resistant to pests. There is also the hybrid chestnut that is closer in description to the American.⁽⁹⁾

Laurel:

The ancient Greeks in ancient times used to crown the victors with a crown of laurel because this plant leaves do not wither and they are evergreen. Therefore, the laurel leaves were of particular importance in the Coptic plant motifs used by the Coptic artist to symbolize victory, eternity and purity because this plant was placed with virgins who protected their modesty and chastity.⁽¹⁰⁾

Branch:

The artist used branches to symbolize important figures. The Bible mentioned the importance of tree branches, where Jacob says in his blessing to his children, "Joseph [is] a fruitful bough, [even] a fruitful bough by a well; [whose] branches run over the wall" Branches were used to reflect metaphorically the nations and the Bible mentions the words of the prophet Ezekiel about Pharaoh, "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes ... his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth... All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters". The word branch was also mentioned when the Lord spoke to his disciples and said, "I am the vine; you are the branches".⁽¹¹⁾

Flowers that take the form of shell:

This is one of the ancient Greek symbols that appeared in Coptic Art. Both may be relevant as the shell for Christians means the case of re-birth. Therefore, the monk considers himself to be born again. Thus, this flower came out in the form of shell to refer to the concept of re-birth through the blessing of Christ.

Palm fronds:

The palm fronds were the Roman symbol of victory, but in Christianity, it refers to the martyr's victory over death. Therefore, the martyrs were depicted with palm fronds and the death machines were decorated with it. Sometimes, Christ was depicted carrying a palm frond in reference to his victory over sin and death. In addition, with the advent of Christ, when people entered Jerusalem in the Palm Sunday, they furnished the ground with palm fronds to signify Christ's triumph in Jerusalem. Some scholars said that there was a legend about a saint telling that he cut off a palm frond and reclined on it in his travel. After he crossed the river, he threw it on the ground, it implanted and ripened fruit.⁽¹⁷⁾

Hyssop:

This plant has many analyses from the scholars' viewpoints as it symbolizes remorse because it grows in isolated places. It is one of the plants that can be handled easily, thus it symbolizes innocence and purity. It was mentioned in the Bible, " Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow". Thus, it also symbolizes baptism.⁽¹⁷⁾

B- Fruits and Leaves

Vine Fruits and Leaves:

It was an important fruit in ancient Egypt as they used to extract wine from it. The nobles were concerned with it especially during the New Kingdom of Egypt and it was the symbol of the deity Asir. Vine was associated with the god Dionysus, the Greek deity. The artists continued using the fruit of the grape until the Coptic era as it was so often symbolizing Christ as he has always been described as the true vine. It can also be a symbol of the Holy Virgin that was described as the true vine that carried the cluster of life. The bunches of grapes were used to symbolize the mystery of Holy Communion, and

also the blood of Christ. In addition, the work in producing the grape juice sometimes shows those watering the field of the Lord. The Coptic artist innovated when he used the branches of grapes and its clusters instead of the branches of fruit basket. They also made the vine juice out of it. It was either used in the forms of clusters, or full vine, or leaves. Some of the Holy verses mentioned the grapes..." Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table", and also "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles, are they?"^(١٤)

Apple:

The word apple in Latin indicates sin and they refer to this by the scenes illustrating the experience of Eve when she appeared holding in her hand an apple and offering it to Adam. As for Christianity, the apple is the symbol of Christ as he is the symbol of the fruit of salvation. If the apple is seen in the hands of the Virgin Mary, it is the symbol of salvation as well.

Orange:

Copts used orange trees as a symbol of purity and chastity, therefore it is seen in many scenes depicting the Virgin Mary.^(١٥)

Pomegranates:

The fruit of pomegranate tree rises about five meters high. It is one of the preferred fruits to the ancient Egyptian artist. He depicted it with the fruit on the walls of tombs. As for the Roman era, pomegranate was the symbol of fertility as it symbolized to the large number of children.

As for the Christian art, the pomegranate was the symbol of charity that used to spread when the fruit seeds bloomed. The Coptic artist was also concerned with it as it appeared on the walls of monasteries and churches especially in Baweit area as it was cultivated heavily in this region. The Coptic artist saw in this fruit many things, as the outer cover of pomegranate is very

thick, therefore, it symbolized strength and stiffness of faith. To the interior, it has a white layer that symbolizes the purity of the faithful. As for the berry itself, they appear next to each other in a coordinated manner. If it is squeezed, it produces red liquid that the artist used to signify the Blood of Christ or martyrs. Thus, it can be said that the pomegranate in general indicates the strong church. Moreover, the Coptic artist used the fruits of pomegranates to decorate the dress of the high priest.⁽¹⁷⁾

Figs:

Fig is one of the fruits damned by Jesus Christ because it symbolizes, in the Bible, people without work, i.e., fruitless people. Some historians believe that the fruit of the fig from outside symbolizes lust but its seeds symbolize fertility.

Olive:

The olive branch is the symbol of peace, so it can be seen in the scenes depicting the message of peace. It is of the fruits that are rich with oil, so it symbolizes the sound judgments of God as stated in the Old Testament of the Bible, when the Prophet Noah sent - while he was on his ark - a dove to see if the flood reached at low tide from the ground and it returned with an olive branch in its peak. That was a sign of the dry ground, and that is what the scene Noah's Ark depicted in the chapel of peace in Bagawat cemetery.

Strawberry:

A plant that is red in color and was used in a coordinated magnificent manner and with splendid aesthetic forms to symbolize piety.

Peach:

It symbolizes silence, heart, tongue uttering good speech which is the symbol of salvation.⁽¹⁸⁾

Second: geometric ornamentations

Triangle:

It is the symbol of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Square:

The square shape symbolizes the form of cemetery in the early centuries, and the baptism that take the form of square to symbolize the tomb of burial from which Christ resurrected. Thus, it is a symbol of the new city. As for the length of square, it refers to the heavenly joys, and the breadth indicates the emergence of this joy of all senses. The artist used the equal sides to refer to the continuity of happiness and joy, and the box height is a symbol of highness. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Hexagon:

The hexagon refers to Friday as it the sixth day of the week as well as the sixth hour in which Jesus put on the cross. Thus, it symbolizes the directions and Monogram of Christ.

Octagon:

This figure refers to the eighth day, i.e., the first day of the new week, which thus symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As for the circle, it symbolizes eternity. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Third: numbers ornamentations

Number 1: 

Symbolizes the oneness of God and to the physical union between man and woman.



Number ٢:

symbolizes the association, coupling, union, the sufficient evidence. There were many evidences on the use of number (٢) such as:

- In the narrative of Noah as he took two of all flesh,
- Christ was crucified with two robbers, one to the right and the other to the left, when he sent disciples, they were sent two after another.
- Good and evil.
- Moses and Aaron.
- Heaven and Hell.
- In the words of Christ, "No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and money".
- In the Bible as evidence on the cooperation and help "Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up".
- In the adequate witness "Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established".^(٢٠)

Number ٣: ̄ϣ

This figure was used in the Coptic art to identify things such as:

- The composition of the human from soul... spirit ... body.
- In the incident of Moses Transfiguration and the appearance of Elijah with Christ three times.
- The joy of victory over death by resurrection on the third day.

Number ٤: ̄λ

It is the number of the Earth that refers to the world, as mentioned in the Book of Revelation "Then I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the [̄]earth". As stated in Isaiah, " I, the lord your god... visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations".

Number ٥: ̄Ϸ

It refers to the grace and responsibility through the following:

- Both tablets of law, each has five commandments.
 - It refers also to the treatment and care.
 - In the "for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three"
 - in the narrative of the man who was given the five talents, three to another and the last for a third to trade in them.
 - There was a reference to the five wise virgins and five foolish.
- It refers to the five human senses (sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch).

Number ٦: Ⲭ

This number is used as a symbol of man and work and it is evident in the following:

- Christ's crucifixion took place at sixth day and in the sixth hour.
- God created the universe in six days, and rested the seventh day.
- It symbolizes the effort and fatigue.^(١١)

Number ٧: Ⲯ

This number refers to perfection as the number of praise in the daytime is seven.

Number ٨: Ⲩ

This number refers to the new day as mentioned in several occasions as follows:

- In the narrative of Noah, the lives of eight were saved from death.
- The Transfiguration took place on the eighth day.
- Christ was circumcised on the eighth day.
- The Day of Resurrection of Christ was in the beginning of the week which means the eighth day and the new day of the new week.

—
Number ٩: ̸

It is the number of obvious announcement. It was used to indicate many things as follows:-

- When Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mount about the horrors they were nine. He began with " woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in", and in his words he mentioned nine blessings, initiated with "Blessed are the poor in spirit" and finished with "Blessed are you when they shall insult you and shall persecute you".
- The Apostle Paul spoke of the fruits of the Spirit, which were nine, thus this number refers to grace and benevolence.

—
Number ١٠: ̩

This number symbolizes the resolution and responsibility as follows:

- It refers to the ten surveys of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.
- Determines the time in the sense that ten is the decade and its multipliers, i.e., the hundred and thousand.
- It also refers to the absolute wrath of God in the ten strikes.^(٢٢)

Fourth: Creatures ornamentations:

Dove:

The dove is one of the symbols used repeatedly in the Coptic Art as it was found in the icons of Annunciation, Baptism of the Virgin and Christ. It also refers to the return of the true self, that is, the church. In addition, it is the symbol of virtues of the faithful and the symbol of peace since the scene of Noah's Ark depicted the dove holding in its peak the olive branch, the symbol of peace.^(٢٣)

Eagle:

It is one of the birds that received considerable attention in the Coptic art. It was not of the same fame in the ancient Egyptian art compared to the hawk. The eagle also is of particular importance in the Roman civilization as it was the slogan of the state. As for the Coptic art, it was the symbol of the following: -

Renewal of repentance as stated in the Bible "your youth is renewed like the eagles". It was used to symbolize John the Baptist, who ascended with his body to the heavens. Thus, it symbolizes the strength, highness and height. He was depicted next to John the Evangelist as his symbol. It also symbolized one of the living four creatures represented around the divine throne as well as the Jesus Christ.

Ibis:

The ancient Egyptian artist used it as a symbol of the god Thoth and later it was used by the Coptic artist, in some of his works like the painting of St. Sonesius in Baweit due to the importance of this bird as a symbol of wisdom.^(٢٤)

Phoenix:

Some historians say that the ancient Egyptians inspired the idea of the phoenix from a bird called greater flamingo that used to live in East Africa and they called it "Bennu" which means the East. It refers to its repeated re-birth, therefore, they related it to the sunrise, the annual calendar which begins a new annually, the renewed flooding of the River Nile. All these were likened to his return to life after burning. It also refers to man's resurrection in the afterlife, so, the Coptic artist considered it a symbol of immortality, resurrection, re-birth and added it to his art almost to reflect the same idea.

Sparrows:

There is a text in the Bible where Jesus says, "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap ... So do not fear;

you are more valuable than many sparrows". The Coptic artist used it to refer to the grace and care of God to His creation.

Lamb:

It is one of the animals used by the ancient Egyptian artist. The ram that has the biggest horn is the commander of all species. These creatures embodied some gods, such as the god Khnum and Amun. After that, the Coptic artist used it as the symbol of Christ's sacrifice and redemption. The lamb was the animal of sacrifice to the Babylonian deities. Since the third millennium, all Semitic peoples began to think of the alternative sacrifice which replaced the human sacrifice in an attempt to calm the divine wrath.

Rabbit:

There are depictions representing the rabbit picking grapes from all fruits inside the basket and eat them later. The Coptic artist considered it as the symbol of holy wine. It here represents the human condition before the advent of Christ, and thus the grape is a symbol of Christ within the fruits basket that was known in the Old Testament as the basket of prophets. The faithful gather around Christ as a metaphor for the role of Christ as the shepherd or like the sacred wine revealing faith to those people.^(٧٥)

Peacock:

Some commentators say that the ancient Egyptians did not care for peacock. The reason for this was that the people who raised it considered it as a source of unhappiness and bad luck due to his throaty voice. However, in the Greco-Roman era, it was found in abundance in their arts because they tied between it and the rainbow in the sky. In addition, it was the preferred bird of the goddess Hera. As for the Copts, they were concerned with this bird in introducing their ornamentations for many reasons as follows:

The peacock loses its feathers and beauty in winter and regains them in spring, so, the Copts related this to the resurrection of bodies. This bird is of magnificent beauty, so, it is considered of the birds of Paradise. Therefore, it was drawn on the thresholds of churches as a symbol of paradise. This bird was also known for its purity and chastity, so it was depicted on the walls of churches to refer to the chastity and purity of places of worship. That was the reason for considering it the symbol of Santa Barbara that was famous for her chastity and purity. In addition, many churches were built in her name, the most famous of which is the church in Heliopolis.

When the Greeks depicted the symbols of four seasons, they painted naked children. When the Coptic artist inspired this idea to be executed on the coffins of their dead, they depicted the peacock instead of the child naked. So, this bird was a symbol of spring. When the peacock displays its elongated upper tail, it appears like a cochlea that is the symbol of eternity, so this bird is the symbol of eternity. The male peacock in particular is the symbol of pride and the peacock accompanying a woman whether in mosaics or other works of art represents the wife of the king of deities in her absolute greatness, realizing her great status and full of pride.^(١٧)

Geese:

The geese are from the birds that start crowing if they felt any threat or danger and do not calm until the presence of their owner. Therefore, they are used as guards because they do not rely on the sense of smell like dogs. They are also of clean birds when eating unlike the ducks, so they are of the birds that suggest beauty.

Geese, in the ancient Egyptian art, were associated with the god Amun, as some were found between the gilt chapels that took part in the funerary rituals. They were also found in the name of God (Jeb), the god of the earth. The ancient Egyptian artist used black in coloring them, in reference to resurrection,

fertility and old habits. As for their presence in the Coptic Art, scholars say that there is no clear explanation for their use and perhaps the reason was the ancient Egyptian concept of the unseen God. This is clear when the Lord says to Moses (no one may see me and live). Thus, they also symbolize the birth of the sun. ^(٢٧)

Lion:

The ancient Egyptians knew the lion since the beginning of creation as the first two gods made by the sun were in the form of cubs. It was of great importance as they believed that the lions could see at night in the vast desert where the sun comes to life and dies. The Egyptians depicted two lions as two ferocious guards to both horizons and they were likened to the two mountains determining the eastern and western borders. People used lions in decorating their beds and cushions in order to benefit from them in protection and security. They depicted lions also on the roofs of temples to devour the enemies of the god Horus. They appeared attacking the deer, which was one of the enemies of the sun god. Therefore, this animal symbolized the rejuvenation of the sun and to yesterday and tomorrow. ^(٢٨)

As for the Coptic art, the Book of Revelation mentions that the lion is one of the disincarnated creatures surrounding the throne of divine. There was an old belief among the Copts that the female lion when giving birth to its cubs, they spend three days without movement, but on the fourth, they begin to move. They associated this with Christ's resurrection after the third day. This signifies the sin introduced to the world by the devil, and the Christ's victory over it. The lion was always depicted next to St. Mark the Apostle, one of the preachers that talked repeatedly about the Resurrection, thus, it is a symbol of resurrection. It was also depicted with the saints and prophets quietly without ferocity in reference to the strength bestowed by God unto his servants who fear him when controlling everything in nature. This manifests their return to their genuine nature before Adam's

fall into sin. This is apparent in the scene of Daniel's den in the Chapel of Peace in al-Bagawat Necropolis.

Snake:

There were many types of snakes in ancient Egypt, the harmful and the beneficial, and they were of great importance among Egyptians as a symbol of protection and security. Therefore, they made the cobra snake as an emblem of ownership and put it on their crowns. As for the Copts, they considered it a symbol of evil. It was described in the Book of Genesis as having wings and short legs, thus it symbolized the Satan that appeared to Eve. Therefore, the artist always depicted it being crushed by saints and angels. Some commentators said that there was an incarnation to a brass snake made by Moses, by which every patient was cured after looking at it. Thus, it was the symbol of Christ's crucifixion by whose sufferings and wounds man was cured.^(٢٩)

Fish:

The fish in ancient Egypt was a source of food and livelihood of the country, so it had no symbolic meaning, and no kind of fish was forbidden as all species of the Nile fish were edible. Some scholars indicated that there were many amulets which took the shape of tilapia to bring luck. As for the Coptic art, the fish was of great importance because the Coptic artist used it to symbolize the faithful to God as the Bible stated that Jesus used fish as a symbol of his people when he called his disciples and said, "I will send you out to fish for people". Christ was likened to the fish in the heavenly kingdom, Christ is the fish that wnters the net in the midst of other fish. In addition, the fish is the symbol of the blessed dinner in reference to the miracle of Christ in feeding five thousand people from two fishes and some loaves. There is a scene depicting the big fish filling the table which refers to table requested by Apostles of Christ. Thus, it symbolizes Christ himself. This is one of the few scenes depicting the fish this way.^(٣٠)

Shell:

The shape of shell was found in ancient Egypt among the holdings of the deceased in cemeteries. For example, the jewelry casket of Queen Hetepheres, mother of King Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty took the shape of shell. It was made of pure gold. This shows the use of the shell shape in ancient Egypt but without any others outlining symbolism. However, it may be a reference to the idea of resurrection. The shell symbolized the goddess Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty in the Greco-Roman art as a marine goddess born of the sea foam of a shell. As for the Coptic art, the shell has become of the important marine arts due to its evolution as a significant architectural element, namely the mausoleum. This element is of particular importance as it symbolizes the Lord outstretching his arms to receive all his children. This inspired them with the idea of depicting Christ sitting on the throne in the conch and surrounded by the four creatures. ^(٢١)

Crocodile:

Crocodile is the god of evil in ancient Egypt. The Coptic artist inspired this concept in the same meaning. It was depicted in ancient Egypt in the scene of Horus stabbing the god of evil (Set), and the Coptic artist depicted the saints stabbing it as well. ^(٢٢)

Fifth: different ornamentation

Column Capitals:

It was known since ancient times that the crowns of columns were used in the form of baskets. This theme was found in the Coptic art since the fourth and fifth centuries, in Sakkara and Baweit where there were equal branches and decorations on the same column capitals attached to the walls. They appeared in a duplicated form and composed of two branches. ^(٢٣)

Sky:

The sky was a source of inspiration for the artist as he inspired from them what was known as the bench. It is an important ornament in the Coptic art, which means with the East or the Orient for which the church directs during the prayers of the Mass as the deacon says "Dear audience, stand and Look to the East". Some scholars say that it also symbolizes the desert in an imitation to the idea of the ancient Egyptian artist.

Sun:

The sun god in ancient Egypt took three forms, the sun in the morning (bread), and the sun in the afternoon (the sun disk) and the sun during the time of sunset (an old man). The Coptic artist depicted this idea in his paintings to symbolize Christ because he is the Light, the True Light and the Light of the World. This is because the sun is the source of light to the world, thus symbolizing a state of perfection.

Balance Scale:

The ancient Egyptian believed in resurrection after death as well as reward and punishment, so his actions were weighed by a balance scale against the feather of justice of the goddess Maat to be rewarded by eternal bliss or eternal torment. The same details were depicted by the Coptic artist as he complemented this concept to judge the actions of people. The balance scale in the Coptic art was associated with the Archangel Michael.

Door:

The door in the Coptic art symbolizes many things as follows: -

- It symbolizes Christ, who said of himself (I am the door of the sheep). - The church also was called (the door of the house of God - the doors of goodness, "This is the gate of the lord; the righteous will enter through it". Thus, it symbolizes the human work and struggle. He says, "enter through the narrow gate", but due to the scarcity of pious, he says, "and only a few find it".

- It also symbolizes the Virgin as she is considered "the gate of heaven".^(٢٤)

Stars:

Stars, in Coptic art, symbolized Christ himself, who was called "morning star, son of the dawn!" because he came to diffuse the darkness. They also symbolized the saints, angels and servants of religion. If there were many stars, they would be a reference to the miraculous and blessed works of God.^(٢٥)

The Ankh Cross:

This mark was one of the symbolic signs in the Christian art, perhaps because of its proximity to the shape of the Holy Cross. In addition, it is also consistent with the ancient Egyptian social heritage. However, the difference was in the loop as it was directly connected to the arms without any separation (neck) in the ancient Egyptian Ankh. As for the Christian loop, it became slightly over the arms. Thus, the evolution of the concept of the Ankh symbol in the Egyptian belief, i.e., the search for the other world or the eternal life continued with the Christians as it symbolized the redemption or salvation to the Lord.^(٢٦)

Notes

- ١- جلال أبو بكر، الفنون القبطية، مكتبة الأنجلو المصرية، القاهرة، ٢٠١١، ص ٧٨.
- ٢- Wulff, O., Beschreibung der Bildwerke der Christlichen Epochen, Berlin, ١٩٠٩, p. ١٨.
- ٣- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي، تقديم عبدالحليم نور الدين، الجزء الأول، دار الكتب، القاهرة ، ٢٠١١، ص ٤٧.
- ٤- Ibed, p. ١٨.
- ٥- Ibed, p. ١٩.
- ٦- ب. س. جيرار، وصف مصر، ترجمة زهير الشايب، منى زهير الشايب، دار الشايب للنشر، القاهرة، ١٩٩٢، ٢٢.
- ٧- Kropp, A., M., Ausgewahlte Koptische Zaubertexte, Brussels, ١٩٣٠. p. ٣٢.
- ٨- جورج فيرجستون، الرموز المسيحية ودلالاتها، ترجمة يعقوب جرجس نجيب، القاهرة، ١٩٦٤، ص ٤٨.
- ٩- حسين العروسي، المملكة النباتية، مكتبة المعارف الحديثة، الإسكندرية، ٢٠٠١، ص ٢٢.
- ١٠- جمال هرمينا، الزخارف النباتية في المخطوطات القبطية من القرن الرابع للقرن التاسع، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، ١٩٩٩، ص ٧٣.
- ١١- جورج فيرجستون، المرجع السابق، ص ٤٩.
- ١٢- جمال هرمينا، المرجع السابق، ص ٧٣.
- ١٣- جمال هرمينا، المرجع السابق، ص ٧٤.
- ١٤- وفاء محروس عامر، محمد عيد الوهاب الناغي، عادل احمد فتحى، أساسيات علم النبات، مكتبة الدار العربية للكتاب، القاهرة، ٢٠٠٥، ص ٧٦.
- ١٥- جمال هرمينا، المرجع السابق، ص ٧٥.
- ١٦- جورج فيرجستون، المرجع السابق، ص ٤٨.
- ١٧- جرجس داود ، الرموز والرمزية في الفن القبطي، جريدة وطني، عدد ٢٤٢٥، ٢٠٠٨ .
- ١٨- Duthuit, G., La Sculpture Copte, Paris, ١٩٣١.
- ١٩- جرجس داود، المرجع السابق.
- ٢٠- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي، الجزء الأول، تقديم عبدالحليم نور الدين، ٢٠١١، دار الكتب، القاهرة،
- ٢١- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي ، ص ٤٨.
- ٢٢- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي ، ص ٤٨.
- ٢٣- جرجس داود، المرجع السابق.
- ٢٤- جرجس داود، المرجع السابق.

The types of ornamentations in the Coptic art Al Shaimaa Nagy Ali Hassan

- ٢٥- فيليب سيرنج، الرموز فى الفن والأديان والحياة، ترجمة عبدالهادى عباس، دار دمشق للنشر، ١٩٩٢، ص ٩٧.
- ٢٦- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطى ، ص ٥٢:٥٣.
- ٢٧- سيد توفيق، معالم تاريخ وحضارة مصر الفرعونية، دار النهضة العربية، القاهرة ، ١٩٩٠، ص ٥٣.
- ٢٨- Cledat, J., Le monastere et la Necropole de Baouit, Memoires de l'institut Francais D'Archeologie Orientale, ١٩٠٤, p. ١٣٢.
- ٢٩- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطى ، ص ٥٦:٥٧.
- ٣٠- Doresse, J., Les Hieroglyphs a la Croix., Publications de l'institut Historique Neerlandais, Istanbul, ١٩٦٠.
- ٣١- رندل كلارك، الرمز والأسطورة فى مصر القديمة، ترجمة أحمد صليحة، الهيئة العربية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة، ١٩٨٨، ٨٨.
- ٣٢- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطى ، ص ٥٦:٥٧.
- ٣٣- القمص يوساب السريانى ، الفن القبطى ودوره الرائد بين فنون العالم المسيحى، تقديم الأنبا صموئيل، الطبعة الأولى، ١٩٩٥، ٧٨.
- ٣٤- Mohammad, G., The Coptic Art in Churches and Cairo, Ibdaa Magazine, no. ٢ , ١٩٩٤, p. ٣٣.
- ٣٥- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطى ، ص ٦٢.
- ٣٦- El Seriani, U., The Coptic Art, Anba Roues Abbasia, Cairo, ١٩٩٥, p. ١٤.

Bibliography

- ١- القمص يوساب السريانى ، الفن القبطى ودوره الرائد بين فنون العالم المسيحى، تقديم الأنبا صموئيل، الطبعة الأولى، ١٩٩٥.
 - ٢- ب. س. جيرار، وصف مصر، ترجمة زهير الشايب، منى زهير الشايب، دار الشايب للنشر، القاهرة، ١٩٩٢.
 - ٣- جلال أبو بكر، الفنون القبطية، مكتبة الأنجلو المصرية، القاهرة، ٢٠١١.
 - ٤- جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطى، الجزء الأول، تقديم عبدالحليم نور الدين، ٢٠١١، دار الكتب، القاهرة.
 -، الزخارف النباتية فى المخطوطات القبطية من القرن الرابع للقرن التاسع، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، ١٩٩٩.
 - ٥- جرجس داود ، الرموز والرمزية فى الفن القبطى، جريدة وطنى، عدد ٢٤٢٥، ٢٠٠٨.
 - ٦- جورج فيرجستون، الرموز المسيحية ودلالاتها، ترجمة يعقوب جرجس نجيب، القاهرة، ١٩٦٤.
 - ٧- حسين العروسى، المملكة النباتية، مكتبة المعارف الحديثة، الإسكندرية، ٢٠٠١.
 - ٨- رندل كلارك، الرمز والأسطورة فى مصر القديمة، ترجمة أحمد صليحة، الهيئة العربية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة، ١٩٨٨.
 - ٩- سيد توفيق، معالم تاريخ وحضارة مصر الفرعونية، دار النهضة العربية، القاهرة ، ١٩٩٠.
 - ١٠- فيليب سيرنج، الرموز فى الفن والأديان والحياة، ترجمة عبدالهادى عباس، دار دمشق للنشر، ١٩٩٢.
 - ١١- وفاء محروس عامر، محمد عبد الوهاب الناعى، عادل احمد فتحى، أساسيات علم النبات، مكتبة الدار العربية للكتاب، القاهرة، ٢٠٠٥.
- ١- kharter, A., Coptic Art Sculpture Architecture, vol.١١, Lehnert & Landrock, Cairo, ١٩٨٩.
 - ٢- Cledat, J., Le monastere et la Necropole de Baouit, Memoires de l'institut Francais D'Archeologie Orientale, ١٩٠٤.
 - ٣- Duthuit, G., La Sculpture Copte, Paris, ١٩٣١.
 - ٤- Doresse, J., Les Hieroglyphs a la Croix., Publications de l'institut Historique Neerlandais, Istanbul, ١٩٦٠.
 - ٥- El Seriani, U., The Coptic Art, Anba Roues Abbasia, Cairo, ١٩٩٥.
 - ٦- Kropp, A., M., Ausgewahlte Koptische Zaubertexte, Brussels, ١٩٣٠.
 - ٧- Mohammad, G., The Coptic Art in Churches and Cairo, Ibdaa Magazine, no.٢ , ١٩٩٤.
 - ٨- Wulff, O., Beschreibung der Bildwerke der Christlichen Epochen, Berlin, ١٩٠٩.