

Limestone relief showing Mentuhotep II embraced by Montu



From the Temple of Mentuhotep II, Deir el-Bahari, Egypt
11th Dynasty, around 2050 BC

The god Montu was probably the original supreme local deity of the Theban region, with his cult centre at Armant. His cult became more prominent with the rise to power of the family of the Eleventh Dynasty (about 2125-1985 BC) in Upper Egypt. The name Mentuhotep means 'Montu is satisfied', and King Mentuhotep II depicted Montu many times on his monuments.

Here the figure of Montu, most of which is destroyed, is shown wearing a sun disc on his head, with two uraei. A figure of another deity, probably a goddess, stood behind the king with her hand on his shoulder. Strangely, the outlines of two hands are visible; the second may have been carved in error, perhaps when the relief was restored some time in the Nineteenth Dynasty (about 1250 BC).

G. Robins, *The art of ancient Egypt* (London, The British Museum Press, 1997)

E.R. Russmann, *Eternal Egypt: masterworks of* (University of California Press, 2001)