

PAPYRUS OF ANI

SCENE 3 [PLATE 11: Chapters 147, 146]

{ a pseudoanalytic approach }

by

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*In order to follow my analysis the reader should have at hand **Plate 11** of the papyrus. Although I make use of many images to illustrate my working hypotheses, a general view of the vignettes shall make the reading easier. My translations are, of course, highly questionable; and I'll try to justify them explaining, when necessary, the reasons of my linguistic choices. Needless to say that a complete grammatical examination would exceed the scope of this essay.*

Before delving into the intricacies of PLATE 11 I think it's important to point out its positional value within the papyrus layout. This scene comes after the well known Chapter 17, which is basically, if not a classic lesson of theology, a sort of catechism séance, through an extended series of questions and answers, under the supervision of the demiurge *Atum*. Even though the exposed events have a mythical character, nonetheless they are elucidated through a rationalistic approach. That is essentially *scholastic knowledge*. Our scene, composed by Chapters 147 and 146, is built on quite different foundations, were it not for the fact that its central figure is the archetypical image of the *Great Mother*, experienced by Ani in her inner structure as he traverses seven spaces (controlled by male wardens) which correspond to specific levels of Osirian self-awareness. This said , let's get to the point.

What's interesting is the fact that texts and vignettes are placed on two superimposed registers, so as to underscore their synchronicity. Both deal with “entrances”. Those of the upper register look like doors; whereas those of the lower register are more like niches or shrines. Let's have a closer look at them, starting from the upper register, which shows seven doors, or gates.



The first one is definitely different from the others, which seem to be thresholds, or passages.



The brown colour inside the green frame gives the idea of a closed door, underlined by the two shafts that look like pillars or columns. Add to this that the three guardians are separated from it, as if placed in a different space (being low down they may perhaps hint at an image of “descent”); whereas all the other guardians are in front of the entrances. And this points to the high symbolical and liminal character of this singular space.

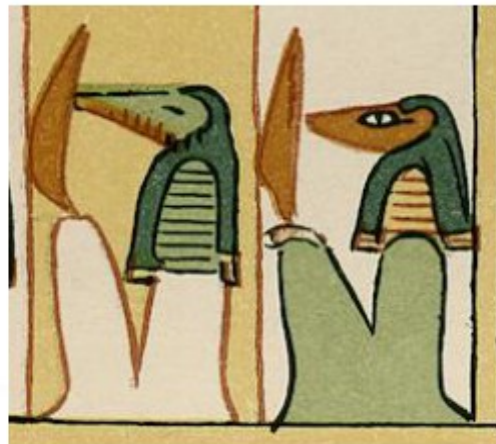
So let us consider now the other six gates and note the sequence of their colours : *green / white / beige-1 / beige-2 / white / green* (according to the facsimile of Heidelberg University, which in some instances is different from the more known Goelet's edition). It's a symmetrical disposition that might allude to an *immersion/emersion* process (going in – coming forth).

For what concerns the three wardens (door-keeper, guardian, herald) I doubt there is a correspondence between their names and their figures. Nonetheless it is possible to classify them according to their genre (*animal, human*) and to the objects they handle: either an *ear of corn* (peace, friendship) or a *knife* (war, hostility).

As for the animals the jackal (2 presences) has only the ear of corn; hares and hawks have both objects; the others (snakes, crocodile, lions, dog; and three undefined ones in gate 2 and 6) only knives.



Gate 2



Gate 6

undefined animals

The human figure (4 presences) alternates knives and ears of corn. In conclusion: the only sure friendly figure is the jackal (Anubis : gates 3 and 6); hares, hawks and humans should be approached with due attention, since they might be either friends or enemies; the rest are definitely hostile.

At any rate in all the gates the three wardens have in their hands an ear of corn and two knives, thus a potentiality of friendliness and hostility. With the exception of the second gate where there are only knives.



In fact, as shown in my general introduction, this marks the actual beginning of the journey inside *Rosetau*; being thus a hint at its implicit menace.

All the wardens have also colours: *green, white* and *brownish*. The white one is always in the middle, in correspondence with the entrance, holding always a knife. The knives themselves are either green or brownish, thus one might infer that the green knife could be used in defence of the deceased; the brownish, darker one against him. In the last two gates they are only brown, pointing out, perhaps, their particularly ominous traits.

One might of course wonder: why three wardens with their tripartite functions? What's their hierarchy? “*s3w*” (door-keeper) and “*s3wtj*” (guardian) are very similar,



although the door determinative of the first one might point to “door maintenance”, whereas the second one, who always holds a knife, may be indeed “*he who protects the entrance*”. Last, and perhaps least, the herald plays the bureaucratic role of “*he who takes note / reports*”.

But let us now leave aside this “positional” question and get back to the first gate, which is a psychic entrance into *Rosetau*, namely into the Osirian premises.

PLATE 11: Gate 1

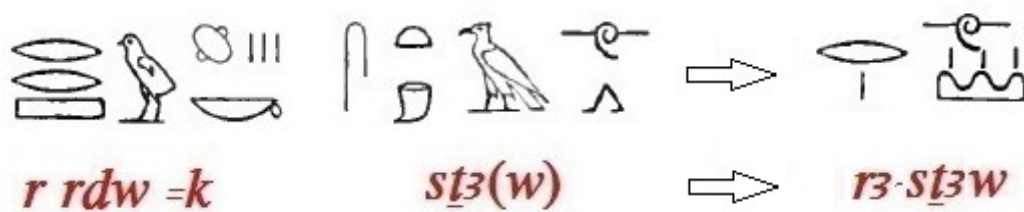
1 The first Gate.
2 The name of its door-keeper: *Head upside-down, abundant of forms.*
3 The name of its guardian: *Fiery-eyed scrutinizer.*
4 The name of its herald: *Deep-of-voice.*
5 Words to be spoken by Ani, justified,
6 when reaching the first Gate.
7 I am a pure one, who makes himself bright.
8 I have come at your presence, Osiris,
9 so as to adore you and be cleansed by your efflux
10 which flows in you
11 and on whose account the name of Rosetau was made.
12 Hail to you, Osiris,
13 in your might and your strength in Rosetau.
14 Raise up, Osiris, from within yourself,
15 from Abydos, so that you may go around the sky,
16 ferry yourself in accordance with Ra,
17 watch every earthly subject.
18 O, attend on Ra in it! [as he goes around the sky]
19 Behold what I say, Osiris:
20 I am a worthy one, a god! [To me belongs the worth of a god!]
21 What I have said is as good as happened -
22 no way to prevent it! -
23 within that wall of burning coals.
24 Open the path in Rosetau,
25 make happy, Osiris, "*He-who-is-in-pain*",
26 embrace he who cuts the mound,

27 he who works out his path in the valley.

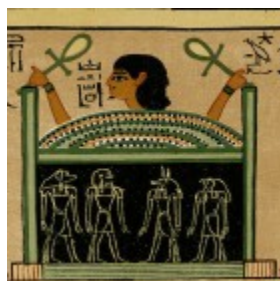
28 Great is the white path of Osiris.

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The text reports that the name of *Rosetau* derives from the efflux that comes from Osiris's body [9-11].



Although Osiris is not shown, nonetheless his presence is felt through his psychic aura, his efflux. And Ani addresses him telling that he wants to imitate the course he (Osiris) took in order to board the solar barque of Ra: the resurrection course [14-17]. It's interesting to note that Ani's attitude is, if not aggressive, very determined. He claims he is one who can make himself bright (who can obtain by his merits the state of *Akh*) [7], that he is a god *in nuce* and that he is going to be one, no way to prevent it [20-23]. As if to state that **that** is his destiny. That he shall cut through the mound, the tumulus, in which (Osiris like) he is momentarily entombed and that he will come to light [26-27], bringing life with him, as shown in Plate 8.



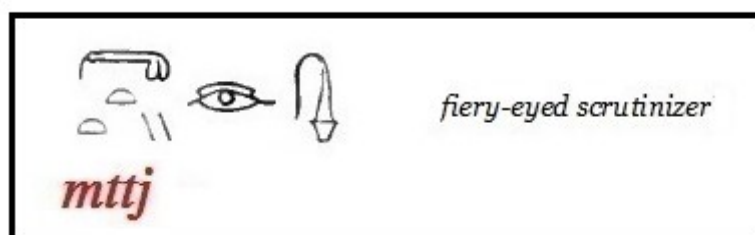
In a certain sense that is the representation of the “*wall of burning coals*” [23], namely a metaphor of *Rosetau*, or of the *Island of flames*, where the process of purification takes place.

The textual block is built according to a model which repeats itself in all the other gates. There is first the naming of the three wardens, then Ani introduces himself explaining his qualities and his aims; finally he asks (and we infer he is given) permission to enter.

As regards the wardens, if, as I noted above, their visual rendering is somewhat generic, nonetheless their names might have a special meaning in their specific context. It goes without saying that in my elucidations I am mostly speculating, but I am of the opinion that hypothetical guesses, no matter how far-fetched, if placed in their specific context, may shed, though, some useful light; waiting for falsifying procedures that must always be at hand in order to point out the degree of their (the guesses) validity. So, back to our wardens.

The name of the door-keeper is “*Head upside-down – Abundant of forms*”. Upside-down is the mark of the other-world. The domain Ani is going to enter follows rules that are the reverse of those of the living. A lot of new norms/forms which may morph in unexpected ways, leading to unexpected results.

The name of the guardian (*Metetj*) poses problems. “*mt* ” can be etymologically linked to various sememes (poison, sperm, rectitude, testimony, etc.). But, considering our determinatives (an eye and a flame),



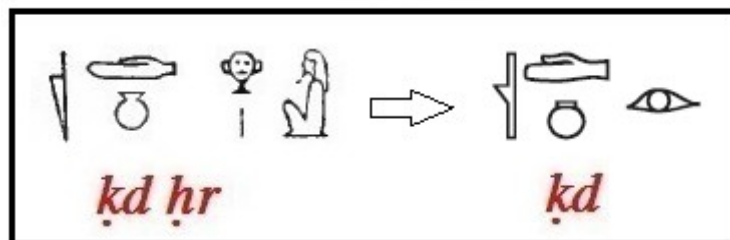
I am inclined to see in it “*mtrw*” (witness) and “*mtrt*” (midday) [“*mtt / mtrt*” is also “middle/centre” : and the guardian is in the middle of the trio]. In conclusion he may be one who sees with radiant/flaming eyes (midday light); one who can scrutinize and keep an alert eye on the person in front of him. Ani is thus warned that he shall be closely watched.

The herald does not seem to pose particular problems. I see in his name the profound tonality of his voice, anticipating the mighty and awesome resonances of the abysmal region into which Ani is going to descend.

PLATE 11: Gate 2

So Ani has been granted the entrance into *Rosetau* (first gate) and now he has to cross a series of thresholds. The names of the wardens of the second gate are somewhat difficult to elucidate. The door keeper is “*wn ḥꜣt*”, where “*ḥꜣt*” may be interpreted in various ways. I am inclined to read it as “beginning”. In our context this door marks indeed the beginning of the exploration of mysterious places, thus “*wn ḥꜣt*” is “*he who gives the starting signal*”, he who opens the beginning.

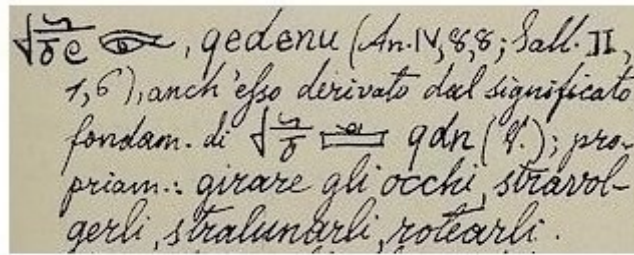
The guardian is “*ḳd ḥr*”. I would not exclude that in this case “*ḳd*” could point to “sleep”, with “*ḥr*” functioning as substitute of the “eye” determinative .



Of course a *somnolent* guardian would contradict his task. So the name may just be an advice to Ani, telling him that the place he is going to enter might confuse his sight and conscience, may hypnotize him, taking possession of his personality. Unless “*ḳd*” be read as “go round”, with an implicit D54 determinative:



In which case “*ḳd ḥr*” would depict an aggressive image of “rolling eyes”, as explained by Simeone Levi in his *Vocabolario geroglifico Copto-Ebraico* (Turin, 1887):



The guardian would thus be a very frightening figure.

The name of the herald is also very difficult to make sense of, since the lemma “**wsd**” is not present in any dictionary I could consult. Nonetheless it is legitimate to read the two determinatives (knife and hitting arm) as bellicose signals.



There could be a word play on “**wsj**” (to saw) and “**wst**” (sawdust). Or a metathesis (**wsd** / **wds**), where “**sd**” becomes “**ds**” (knife). Inside a word play “**wds**” may turn into “**wd ds**” (he who throws the knife). At any rate , once again, threatening figures, who underscore how dangerous the place may be.

1 The second Gate.

2 The name of its door-keeper: *Wanhuat*.

[he who opens the beginning : he who gives the starting signal]

3 The name of its guardian: *Qudhar*.

[face that sleeps -> the hypnotizer]

4 The name of its herald: *Wadas*.

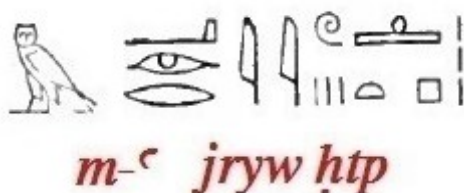
[the sawyer, who throws knives]

5 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani:

6 “His privilege (it is) to act (to stand) before the triad

7 (of those) who judge as the seconds [deputies] of Thoth.
 8 (Be) the protection of Thoth on the *weary one*!
 9 O mysterious just ones,
 10 who live in Truth in their years:
 11 I am one who is firm when opening his own pathway.
 12 And a treading it was which I did;
 13 a seeking out of the pathway.
 14 Grant that I pass, announce
 15 that I shall see Ra through the help of those who give offerings.
 [of the peaceful wardens]”

No matter what, Ani does not care about dangers, since he has a high esteem of himself and of his capabilities [11-13]. And he manifests as well a consummate diplomatic skill. There are in fact two instances of *captatio benevolentiae*: first when he says what a privilege it is to be judged by such a jury [6-7], whose holy aura he reveres [9-10] and whom he prays to be merciful [8] towards him. Then when he asserts that he could get to seeing Ra only with their help [15].



Their offering (*h₁tp*) may in fact be the *pass* given by benevolent gatekeepers, if, via word play, we turn “*jryw*” in to “*ryw*” (gate-keepers) and read “*h₁tp*” as *peaceful (h₁tpw)*. There's no doubt that the textual rendering of this passage is somewhat contorted. I wonder whether it was done on purpose, so that it might reflect the mental confusion coming from the entrance into an unknown psychic landscape.

PLATE 11: Gate 3

The names of the wardens are relatively easy to translate. We have one who loves eating excrements or rejoices in smelling flatulence; then a vigilant guardian; finally one who seems to be an “*opener of the gate*”, although the second determinative might in fact be “*šj*” (lake), thus “*He who opens the lake*”, with possible allusions to the flood (*šgbj*) that is mentioned soon after. The names might in fact point to specific psychological traits. The stinking one can smell Ani's bravery, verifying whether he is one who gets scared. The alert of face may be he who advises Ani to be on guard. The possible lake could be a warning about the flood that could sweep over Ani.

- 1 The third Gate.
- 2 The name of its door-keeper: *He-who-eats- the-foul-smell-of-the-buttocks*.
- 3 The name of its guardian: *He who awakes the visage* (alert of face).
- 4 The name of the herald : *He who opens the gate (of the Lake)*.
- 5 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani:
- 6 To me belongs the secret of the flood that separates the two contenders.
- 7 I have come, so that I might chase away the evil that looms over Osiris.
- 8 I am he who is dressed with his [Osiris] force, he who emerges as a Uraeus.
- 9 Celebrated have been for me, efficiently!, the rites of Abydos
[the funerary rites of Osiris].
- 10 Open for me the pathway in Rosetau,
- 11 since I have softened the pain in Osiris,
- 12 I am he who rejuvenates his standard.
- 13 Make for me the pathway so that he may shine in Rosetau.

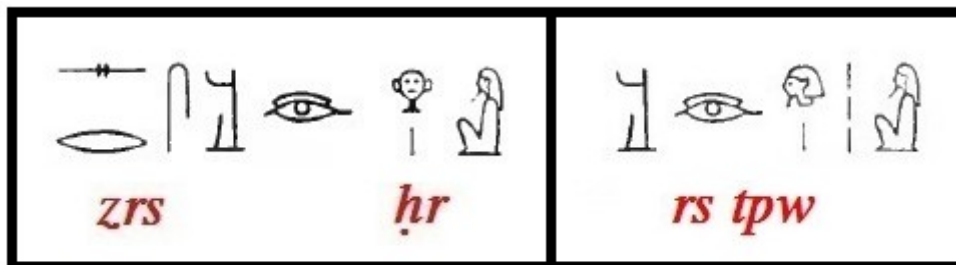
The “two contenders” [6] may refer to multiple meanings. But in this instance I am inclined to see in them *Atum* vs the *Primordial Flood*. At any

rate Ani claims the knowledge of these mythemes [6], and, by consequence his ability to chase away the evils that may damage him, in his Osirian aspect [7]. He asserts his power [8], that comes from the funerary rites celebrated on his behalf [9]. He asks to be allowed to pass since he has already come to terms with his new condition [10-11]. Line 12 may in fact be read as a triumphant display of Osiris's flag/insignia. Of course, provided that “*shh*” be read as “*snhh*” (to rejuvenate oneself) [Grapow's suggestion]: in which case Osiris's standard does rejuvenate itself thanks to Ani's efforts.

PLATE 11: Gate 4

The names of the wardens have definite menacing traits. There is one whose face is repulsive, who speaks with many voices (changing timbre and pitch. It's a pendent with the door-keeper of the first gate, who stood upside down and had an abundance of forms).

Then there is a vigilant guardian who recalls the one of the previous gate. But in that case it was the face (*hr*), the sight, that had to be alert; here it is the head (*tp*), underscoring body dynamics.



In fact it is not one head, but many (plural determinative); as if to suggest that the guardian adopts multiple perspectives.

The last warden is an example of bravery, one who can fight and chase away furious enemies (“*zd*” is in fact both “crocodile” and “fury”). One must note the use of the verb “*hsf*”, the same that describes the repellent face of the first warden. Here, once again, those menacing traits may be addressed to Ani, inviting him to “cloth” himself with them, in order to face the dangerous place he is about to enter.

- 1 The fourth Gate.
2 The name of its door-keeper: *repellent of face, abundant of voices*.
3 The name of its guardian: *alert of faces*.
4 The name of the herald: *he who repels the crocodile [furious enemy]*.
5 Words to be spoken by Osiris Scribe
6 Ani, justified:
7 I am the power of the son of Osiris's kite.
8 Look, his father, the Lord of his broad-leaf tree, he it was who testified
9 that I cut off the weeds [wrongdoings] therein.
10 I it was who brought life
11 to his nostrils, for ever and ever.
12 I am Osiris's son.
13. Make for me the path
14 so that I may pass through (and emerge) from the necropolis.

Ani assumes the aspect of Horus [7 / 12], who rescued his father [8-11]. It's a way to assert his bravery. No matter how treacherous the place he is sure he can face it victoriously [14], acting, as Horus, in his own behalf.

PLATE 11: Gate 5

This passage poses indeed a lot of interpretive problems. Let's begin from the wardens. The first one may be "*he who eats snakes*", thus one who can identify enemies; but also "*he who eats worms*", in which case, following the suggestion of Thomas Allen, that could point to "rotten flesh", thus one who feeds on carrions, or one who can identify a decaying body.

"š**3bw**" of the second warden is open to multiple and ambiguous readings, depending on the various determinatives. As a matter of fact there are not lemmas with the Q7 (flame) determinative; although it follows "**3bw**" (brand, scorch).



š3bw



š3bw [food]



3bw

Thus it could be either an oversight or an intended signal. It could point to someone who likes cooked food, in opposition to the first warden who likes it raw. And it could also hint at one who “brands” his prey.

The name of third warden needs an attentive parsing.



db hr

kh3

hft

I am inclined to read it as “*db hr kh3 hft*”; where “*db hr*” is “hippopotamus faced”. “*kh3*” looks like a portmanteau word. With A2 determinative it would be “rage furiously”, but it has instead D54, walking legs, that follows “*h3*” (descend, go down). The general image could be that of a monstrous figure charging with horrible shouts.

The real problem of this gate, though, comes from the text. It revolves around the figure of the reassembled Osiris, but in a very ambiguous form, with images and actions which are not easy to assign to Ani, although he seems to be the one who puts them into execution.

- 1 The fifth Gate.
- 2 The name of its door-keeper: *He lives on worms.*
- 3 The name of its guardian: *Shabu (he who brands the prey)*
- 4 The name of its herald: *Hippopotamus faced*
who charges the enemy with terrible shouts.

5 Words to be spoken by Osiris Scribe
6 Ani, justified:
7 I have brought the two jaws that are in Rosetau.
8 I have brought to you the radiant spine which is in Heliopolis,
9 reassembled in its integrity.
10 I chase away, in your behalf, Apophis,
11 having spread on the wounds my saliva.
12 Make for me a pathway among you.
13 I am a Nobleman among the gods.
14 I shall purify Osiris,
15 whom I protected, triumphantly:
16 his bones reassembled, his limbs put together.

Now, he who puts together Osiris's limbs and gives firmness to his body is Anubis. Line 7 (*two jaws that are in Rosetau*) cannot be referred to Ani, who has not yet entered the secret place; thus it's legitimate to infer that it points to the jackal headed god, the two jaws being also a trait of his face. And the “firmness” of the jaws is specifically related to the opening of the mouth and to the birth rituals of which Anubis is celebrant. Line 8 seems to describe the raising of the djed pillar, where “*psd*” is both the radiance and the spine. Thus the speaker seems to be Anubis, saying: “*Since I have healed you [11] and made you whole [7-9] I have in fact given you the force to repel future evils [10].*” As a matter of fact it is Ra who, under the aspect of the Great Cat, repels Apophis; but he can do that only because of the soundness of his Osirian polarity. At any rate, since it is Ani who in fact speaks [5-6] we may infer that he is playing the role of Anubis, stating that he has in himself the god's ability to protect his own Osirian aspect; a concept repeated more explicitly in the final lines [13-16].

In conclusion Ani claims his self-protecting abilities, silencing thus the three menacing wardens. What is to remark is the coupling of the verbal forms “*sdm =f*” vs “*sdm .n =f*”. The present (or prospective) pointing to Ani who imitates what Anubis did in the past.

PLATE 11: Gate 6

The first warden has interesting points of contact with the last one of the previous gate. They share in fact the same verb “*kh3*”, with the same D54 determinative.



Thus we have one who, with a furious deep voice, grabs offerings; or perhaps the “eye of Horus” which Ani claims to protect.

The second warden seems to be one who removes the face, probably one who can unmask, can verify the true identity of the subject who would like to pass.

The third warden needs a more accurate elucidation. He seems to have a double aspect, pointed out by the two god determinatives (A40).



That might suggest, of course, two epithets “*mds hr*” and “*š(y)*” (he of the lake). As for “*mds hr*” he could be “sharp of face” (one whose sight can cut through, in a certain sense connected with the second warden); but he could also be “he who slashes the face” (should the *unmasked* face of the deceased be found unfit). The lake could be “the lake of fire”, or any “cleansing place” the deceased must traverse. Thus “*mds hr š*” could be a genitival construction: the slasher/punisher (first determinative) acting on behalf of the overseer of the Lake (second determinative).

At any rate, once again, three menacing figures, warning Ani, threateningly, that should he be found unqualified his face would be slashed. But Ani is not afraid since, as in the previous gate he imitated Anubis, by the same token he does play here the role of Horus, whose eye (the potent *jrt hrw*), rescued Osiris.

1 The sixth Gate.

2 The name of its door-keeper: *He who grabs bread, furious of voice.*

3 The name of its guardian: *He who removes the face (the Unmasker).*

4 The name of he who speaks there: *Sharp of face, He of the Lake.*

[Face slasher (armed wing) of He-of-the-Lake.]

5 Words to be spoken by Osiris Scribe Ani:

6 I have come, today; I have come, today,

7 having walked through the pathway which Anubis created.

8 I am the Lord of the Wureret Crown, [Horus]

9 the companion (he who takes care) of the magic spells that protect the Truth.

10 I have protected his eye,

11 I have rescued Osiris for him.

12 Make a pathway, so that Osiris Ani may walk

13 with you, therein.

As I said here we have a passage mirroring in its composition the previous one. Ani claimed he had the force of Anubis, here underscored in line 7, enhanced by the repetition of line 6 (twice recited). Now in [8] he asserts that he is like Horus, who knows the magic spells, which indirectly point to Thoth as well. Then Ani puts away the mask of Horus, claiming that, having in himself the “eye of Horus” [10] he could protect his own Osirian aspect as Horus did in behalf of Osiris [11]. The Horusian trait has already been mentioned in the fourth gate; but in that occasion the major theme was Horus's strength. Here is underscored his possession of magic means. It's a second and more profound level of experience, in accord with the basic composition of the rite of passage.

PLATE 11-7

The text is somewhat ambiguous, so let's have a closer look at it, leaving alone for the moment the wardens.

- 1 The seventh Gate.
- 2 The name of its door-keeper: *powerful (over) their knives*.
- 3 The name of its guardian: *great one, justified. [great of justification]*
- 4 The name of its herald: *he who repels the evil demons*.
- 5 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani:
- 6 I have come at your presence, Osiris,
- 7 cleansed of body efflux:
- 8 and you turn around the sky, and see Ra, he who sees the earthly subjects.
- 9 *Unique One*: when he is in the night barque [Osiris],
- 10 or when he goes around the sky's horizon [Ra].
- 11 I do express my desire for his worth, for his strength.
- 12 May it happen as he [Ra] says
- 13 when you [Osiris] get the better of him [when you chase away his face].
- 14 “*Do make for me*
- 15 *all the good pathways towards you!*”

We can note significant parallels, in themes and lexemes, with the text of the first gate. Both spin around the figure of Osiris who should traverse the sky, accompanying Ra [8]. But whereas in the first gate Ani was inviting Osiris to raise up and join Ra (complementing their polarity); here, having crossed the seven gates, he states that Osiris is now on the solar boat, namely that he has *come forth*. Alluding to Ani's psychological prefiguration of his successful journey. The same “*sdm =f*” form that was in Gate 1 a prospective, has now become a present tense. In fact the polar figure of Ra/Osiris is

manifested by the *Unique One*, who goes through night [9] and day [10]. That may be seen as a metaphor applied to Ani, dealing with his own Osirian aspect. He has crossed the gates and now he is in a position (he has the strength [11]) to imitate Ra traversing the night. Lines 12-15 may be paraphrased like this: when the main role is played by Osiris, namely, when the solar barque enters the night (Ra's face is substituted by Osiris's one [13]), Ra asks Osiris [12], to guide him along his (Osiris) pathways [14-15]; that is: to pass successfully through the various stages of the transformation process.

In my general introduction I advanced the hypothesis that Ani's progress through the seven gates is a circular one, starting from the vestibule (Gate 1) in which Osiris's presence is immanent; and re-entering it (Gate 7) after the circular route. And if we remember the above mentioned symmetry of the colours of the gates (*green / white / beige-1 / beige-2 / white / green*) we may indeed detect the ideal circularity of going in and out of *Rosetau*, a variation of the basic model of the “*coming forth by day*”.

From this perspective, getting back to our wardens, we detect how their names have ample justification. They anticipate Ani's features as : (1) he who can control the hostile force (knives) of his enemies; (2) he who shall be a triumphant, justified winner; (3) he who can chase away any kind of evil. All three pointing to a positive omen.

If we try now a brief résumé of Ani's progress, we can look at him in front of the door of the mysterious space

[**Gate 1**] : confident in his own capabilities; and hear him asserting that:

[**Gate 2**] : he is qualified to traverse *Rosetau*;

[**Gate 3**] : he can chase away the forces that threaten Osiris (his own self);

[**Gate 4**] : since he has the strength of Horus and he is not afraid of anyone;

[**Gate 5**] : he has the help of benevolent gods and he can defeat Apophis;

[**Gate 6**] : since he possesses for that magic means and knowledge;

[**Gate 7**] : and thus he is qualified to join the solar barque.

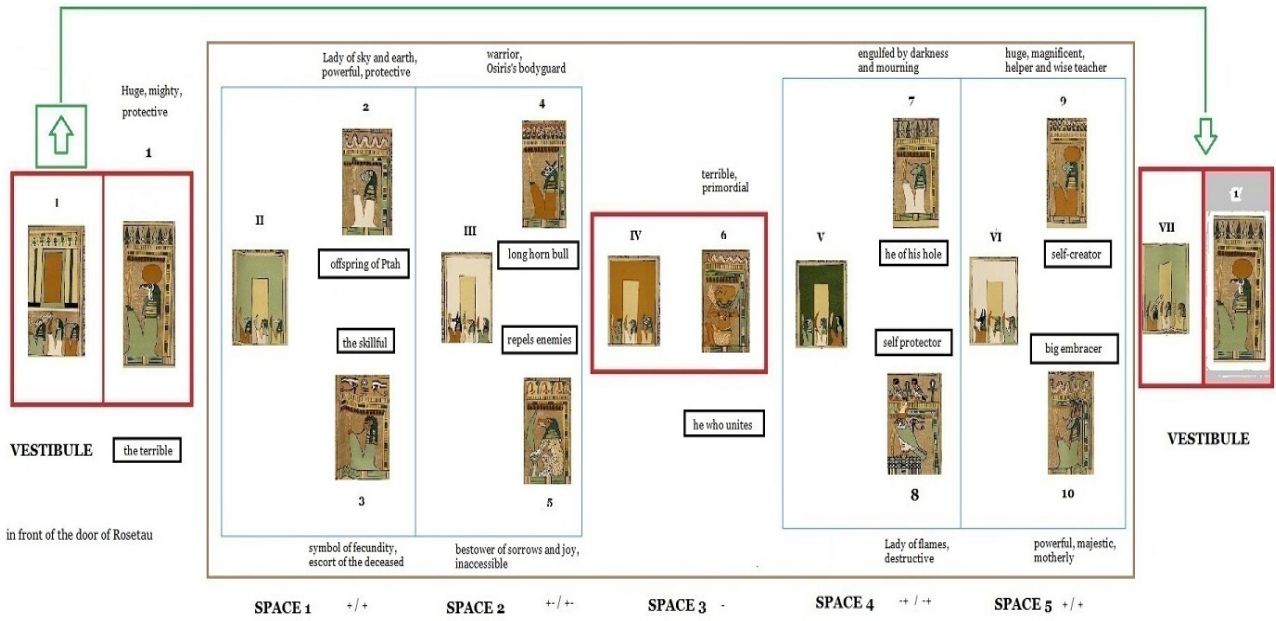
PLATE 11: LOWER REGISTER

Now that we are through with the upper register we must descend to the lower one, aware, though, that they run along a synchronous course, as shown by the plate. In my general introduction I suggested how the ten enclosures may be assigned to five of the seven gates (gate 1 and 7 being passages into what we might call the “vestibule” of *Rosetau*). At any rate, for reasons I shall soon explain, I modified their distribution. In fact the first image is different from the others, being definitely taller; and especially because the name of its door-keeper has feminine traits (*n3rwt*).

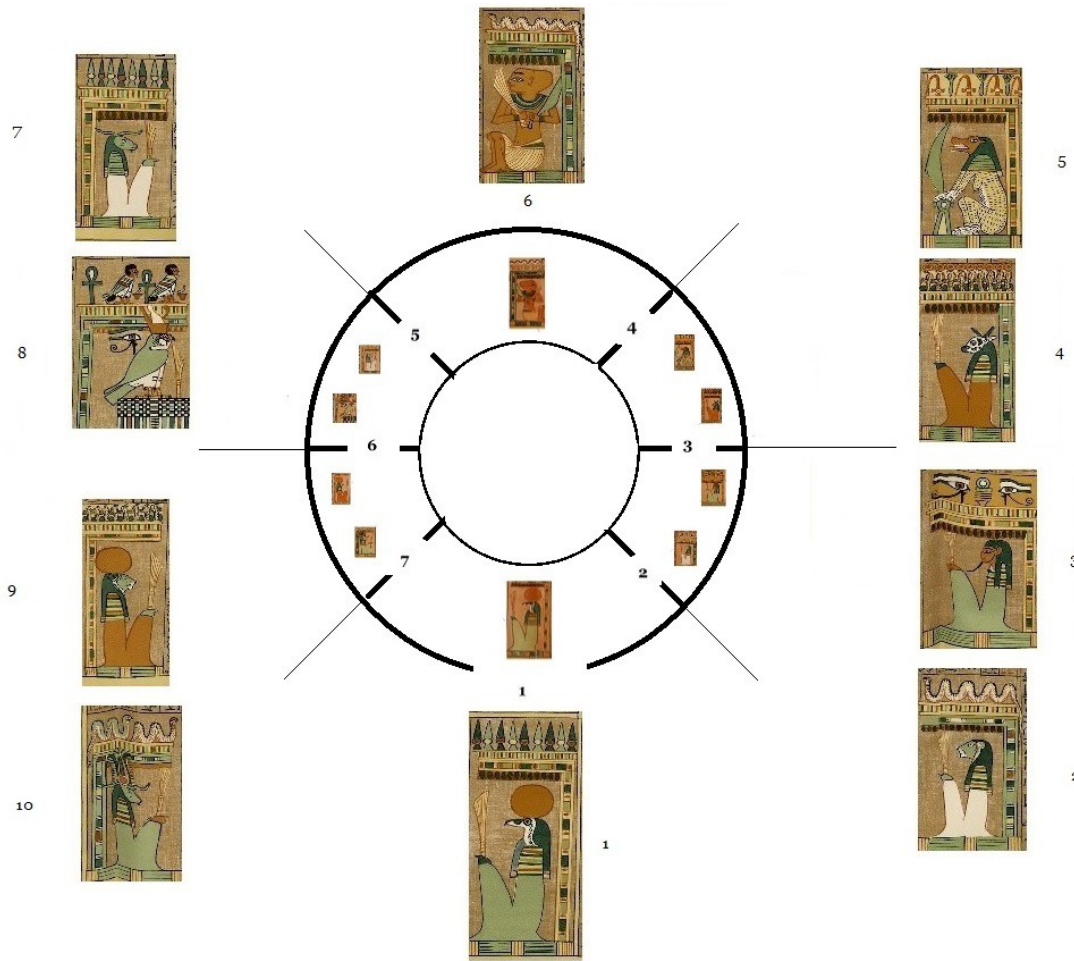


It may be seen, indeed, as an image of the vulture goddess *Mwt*, the Great Mother. As I said all the ten *sbhwt* (be what they are) are feminine and, symbolically, they may be compared to sacred wombs, in other words to a comprehensive idea of an archetypical mother.

Now, the first image may well be placed in the space corresponding to the “Osirian” vestibule, where Osiris is present only “in absence”, since he is the figure that must be given shape to. It is the Mother who is going to give birth (if all goes well) to the “germinating” Ani. We might even consider the remaining *nine* niches as the symbolical representation of the nine months of gestation. The problem, of course, is how to coordinate *nine niches* to *five spaces*. As shown in the figure I resolved the problem dividing the niches in groups of four and assigning only one niche to the central space, which works like a pivotal hinge.



In a circular corresponding layout:



In fact the sixth niche, corresponding to the fourth space/gate, is the only one in which the alleged guardian holds both the knife and the ears of corn, indicating a double perspective. Moreover, this new layout allows a series of interesting correspondences. But, before proceeding, there is a methodological approach which must be made clear. Each space presents a series of relations. First the one between each niche and its guardian; then the relation between the pair of niches in the same space; finally the relation between Ani and the two separate niches and their corresponding guardians. In other words: what is Ani's reaction to them?

There is then the relation between each pair of niches on the right [2-3 / 4-5] and each pair of niches on the left [7-8 / 9-10]. Has their sequence a special meaning? And also the relation between the two blocks composed by the four niches on the right and the four on the left. Does their symmetry follow some plan?

Finally there should be a further investigation concerning the relation among the niches according to their specific iconography.

Let us then begin with the translation of each single niche in order to get a better idea of their conformation.

VESTIBULE : GATE 1 : NICHE 1



- 1 What is to be said
- 2 having reached the first niche.
- 3 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani, justified:

- 4 Lady of fear and trembling, she who raises up high walls;
5 chieftainess, Mistress of subjugation;
6 she who gives names to the spells that chase away storms,
7 she who rescues the one who has been robbed in the travel.
- 8 The name of her Door-keeper: *Narwt* [the terrible one].

The image is that of a majestic, awe inspiring, but protective motherly figure. “*kꜣt šbtj*” [4] may in fact point to her gigantic size, which equals the height [*kꜣt*] of the walls [*šbtj*] protecting a town. The other images underscore this idea. The door-keeper, whose shape is that of a vulture, points in fact to the goddess *Mut*, or *Nekhbet* herself, who is both vulture and mother.



As I remarked above, it's a powerful image of the Great Mother, who can protect but threaten as well. And, as an archetype, it does subsume the traits of the other female figures.

SPACE 1: GATE 2 - NICHE 2



- 1 What is to be said
- 2 having reached the second niche.
- 3 Words to be spoken by Osiris Scribe Ani, justified:
 - 4 Lady of the sky, Mistress of the Two-Lands;
 - 5 she who heals through licking; Lady of mankind;
 - 6 she who offers support to anyone.
[or : more distinguished than anyone]
- 7 The name of her Door-keeper: *Maspitahpiw* (Born of Ptah).

A very protective motherly figure, who takes care of her “divine” offspring [5-6]. Her guardian is in fact a son of Ptah. Which might be also an oblique allusion to Ani, beginning to take shape.

SPACE 1: GATE 2 – NICHE 3



- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the third niche
- 3 of Osiris's house,
- 4 by Osiris Scribe Ani, justified:
- 5 Lady of Offerings, great of Sacrifices;
- 6 partner of each god who sails to Abydos.
- 7 The name of her Door-keeper: *Sobeq* (the clever).

Line 5 underlines the sacrality of the goddess (whom offerings and sacrifices are presented to [5]) who accompanies, like a vigilant figure, the deceased who is going to face the perilous journey [6]. The reference to Abydos points clearly to Osiris, thus to the Osirian state of the deceased. In fact she may be Isis, playing, in the case of Ani, the role of his amorous wife. The guardian may be seen as one who knows (clever) [7] how to manage his evolving state. A trait Ani must inherit.

Thus in [niche 2 & 3] we see two allied, tender and watchful figures taking care of their protégé, who, in front of the second gate, asserted that he felt qualified to enter *Rosetau*.

SPACE 2: GATE 3 - NICHE 4



- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the fourth niche,
- 3 by Osiris Scribe Ani.

- 4 Mighty of blades, Mistress of the Two-Lands;
- 5 she who destroys the enemies of the Weary-hearted One [Osiris];
- 6 she who makes understanding void of defects.
[maker of wisdom; she who is void of defects]
- 7 The name of her Door-keeper: *Negau* (long horned bull).

We should note how the Mistress of the Two-Lands [4] has already appeared in Niche 2 of Space 1, where her first epithet was “Lady of the sky”. In our case we have instead a lady “mighty of blades” [4], thus underscoring her belligerent traits: the amorous mother who can fight victoriously against her son's enemies [5]. Line 6 may be seen under two perspectives: it may refer to her “perfect wisdom” (she knows exactly what she has to do); but also to her ability as a teacher (she can give the right directions to her son, correcting his possible mistakes or misunderstandings). The long-horned bull of the door-keeper displays the warlike character that Ani must make his own.

SPACE 2: GATE 3 - NICHE 5



This is a very ambiguous passage which may be read according to different and opposing perspectives; thus in need of accurate comments.

- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the fifth niche,
- 3 by Osiris Scribe Ani.

- 4 Flame, Lady of laments and joys,
- 5 who does not descend when one implores her
- 6 without a *bald-head* [priest] who has access to her.
- 7 The name of her Door-keeper: *He who has command on the fiends.*

[He who gores the renegades]

Lines 5-6 pose a lot of problems. First of all one must decide who “*wnn tp =f*” is. Reading “*wnn*” as a geminated “*wn*” (exist) would lead, in my humble opinion, to surrealistic renderings. Some scholars opt for “bald-headed”, referring to “*wn*” (WB “kahl werden, kahl sein), which has, though, a D3 determinative (hair) that in our case is not present.

wm  III

kahl werden, kahl sein (?):
von den Augenbrauen 15
und vom entlaubten
Baum 16. Totb.; dit. M.R.

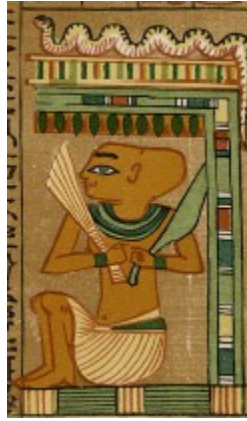


Until someone explains who this “bald-head” might be, I suggest, considering the context, to see in him a “priest”, since they used to shave their heads. Then we should decide whether lines 5-6 be linked together, or whether they be two separate clauses. That would lead to two contradictory meanings.

Let's consider first the lines as independent clauses. Line 5 points to the fact that the goddess does not descend (does not manifest herself) when prayers are sent to her [5], not only by laymen, but also by priests, who cannot have access to her (not even the initiated can reach her “core”) [6]. The goddess would then be totally inaccessible. Which seems to me definitely too extreme. So I opt for a subordinate clause. The goddess manifests herself only when the prayer is sent through a priest (or when the initiand reaches the “sacred” level).

Another possible interpretation, though somewhat far-fetched, may refer the “bald-headed” to the figure inside the next niche, suggesting that the goddess may be seen in her “essence” only having crossed the fourth gate: anticipating the appalling vision of the next goddess. And perhaps it is not a coincidence that the door-keeper of this niche is a crocodile-like androgynous monster, holding a huge knife (whereas all the other guardians hold a benevolent besom: number six has a knife but also a besom, for reasons I am soon going to explain). That's the trait (ferocity) Ani must inherit in order to go through the next fearful experience.

SPACE 3: GATE 4 : NICHE 6



- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the sixth niche,
- 3 by Osiris Scribe Ani:

- 4 Lady of the dark mien, great of warring howls,
- 5 whose extent and depth is not known,
- 6 whose original traits are not found,
- 7 since snakes are over her, which no one does know;
- 8 which were born before the time of the *Weary-hearted One* [Osiris].

- 10 The name of her Door-keeper: *Sematj* (he who rejoins).

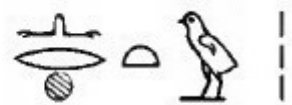
The description of the goddess is in fact awesome, terrifying, evoking primordial chaos [5] and reptilian brain strata [7]. It is the picture of an ante-litteram gorgon



entangled by a multitude of primordial snakes, born before Rosetau had ever been created [8].

As a matter of fact lines 7 and 8 allow different grammatical renderings.




n rh =tw *sn*


ms .n=tw *=sn* *hr-h3t wrd-jb*

I have opted for considering the plural strokes as implicit pronouns (*sn*): the first one a dependent (*n rh =tw sn*), the second a suffix (*ms .n=tw =sn*).

One should also remark the possible pun between “*ms .n =tw*” (born) and “*msn*” (to spin).

<p>belegt seit M.R.</p> <p>I. Ausdruck für, spinnen (meist mit s'n zu- sammen) 12.</p> <p>II. (Kleider 13, Amulettschnur 14, Netz 15) durch spinnen herstellen.</p>	<p> u.ä.</p> <p>Det. ^m ohne Det. oder mit </p> <p>seit ^m </p>

The last term pointing to the intricate texture resulting from the entangled snakes [7] around the goddess's figure.

As for the door-keeper he has indeed peculiar traits, with his dolicocephalic or hydrocephalous “bald head”. As I remarked in my general introduction, that might be the visual rendering of F36 glyph, which is used as a determinative for the verb “*sm3*” (or of the Sema Amulet),



thus a protective figure; who, not by coincidence, is named “*smtj*”; which could be rendered either as “*He who joins/rejoins*” or “*He who has been joined*”. He in fact joins two opposing symbols: the fecundating besom and the destroying knife. A symbolic way to underline how life (rebirth) comes again after death. This space, with its unique niche, may be seen as the deepest level of the *descensus ad inferos* and the first stage of the ensuing *coming forth*.

[Indulging in over-reading: it seems that at the fifth month of gestation the fetus is almost completely formed; that's the time of “quickenning” and when hair begins to grow on the baby's head.]

SPACE 4: GATE 5 - NICHE 7



- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the seventh niche,
- 3 by Osiris Scribe Ani:
- 4 Oh, Darkness that clothes the lamenting Weary One;
- 5 Mourner, who likes to be hidden.
- 6 The name of her Door-keeper: *Jakentj*

If the previous space hinted at the deceased ready to be reborn, we may find in these lines the figure of the lamenting sisters: Isis and Nephtys. We are still within the lugubrious atmosphere of the preceding space, but the allusions to the two caring sisters may be an anticipation of the positive result.

The name of the door-keeper is not easily understandable.



Ani



CT

There is a possible scribal error in the “*f*” following the god determinative. And what is written “*jkty*” could in fact be “*jknty*”, who is found in the coffin texts, with the epithet of “*kh3 hrw*” (bellowing of voice); appropriate to the funereal lamenting of lines 4 and 5.

The figure is that of a ram-headed god, which could be an allusion to the “*b3*”, indispensable for the coming forth of the deceased. According to Hannig and Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae “*jknt*” may be related to “hole” (as metaphor of the other-world) [Vertiefung; Höhle (“Aufgehacktes”) (hole; hollow (demon's habitation?))]; with a possible pun with “*jknw*” (hoe). Thus someone hoeing his path in order to emerge from “his” hole. (Which may justify the dubious “*f*”).

SPACE 4: GATE 5 - NICHE 8



The “*b3*” is also explicitly displayed in this niche on the frieze on its roof, accompanied by “*nh*” images. A manifest allusion to rebirth. This niche is different from the others because it does not have a pedestal. Whereas all the other guardians are seated, here we see *Horus* (symbol of the reborn Osiris), standing on the roof of *Rosetau*, as if in triumph, accompanied by the *wadjet* eye. That is what Ani shall be.

- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the eighth niche,

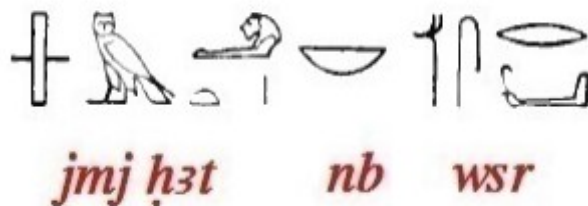
3 by Osiris Scribe Ani, justified:
4 she who lights the fire, she who extinguishes (it), she who heats;
5 sharp of flame, pugnacious [striking of fist];
6 she who smites without giving advice.
7 No one dares to cross her,
8 for fear of the pain she inflicts.

9 The name of her Door-keeper: *He who protects his person.*

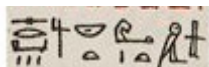
This is quite an interesting situation. The female traits are very dangerous. It is a goddess who has in her hands the fate of living beings. She can give life (light the fire), but she can put it out (extinguish) or let it burn (heat) [4]. Her flaming tongue (sharp of flame) is that of the aggressive cobra, striking down with violent blows [5], in unexpected ways [6]. The fear she inspires advises not to come to grips with her [7-8]. Those attributes might legitimately be applied to *Rosetau*; or, at any rate, to the dangers the deceased must face. Nonetheless Horus (it's not a coincidence that the name of the door-keeper is *He who protects his person*) is on top of it: he can handle the mother's efforts not to let the child stand on his own. But in the meantime that could be the image of the mother who protects (*wḏꜣt* eye) her child from external dangers and gives him the living “*bꜣ nḥ*” that will allow him to come forth. The double view may in fact recall the double figures of the previous niche (Isis and Nephtys).

SPACE 5: GATE 6 - NICHE 9

Although the general sense of this passage is relatively easy to get, since it deals with the positive image of a maternal figure; nonetheless it poses some problems because of the defective rendering of some glyphs which may cause ambiguities in translation. First we have a “*jmj-ḥꜣt nb wsr*”.



Were it referred to a goddess it should have a “*t*” (*jmjt-ḥꜣt nbt wsr*).



Thus: “*Foremost One, Mistress of strength*”. With an evident word-play *wsr/wsjr* (she is the mistress of Osiris). But without emendations it could be: “*Model of the Lord of strength*”, since *jmj-ḥꜣt* may be read as “*model, pattern – Vorbild*”. Thus she models her “lord” (Osiris/Horus) according to her pattern (in her image).

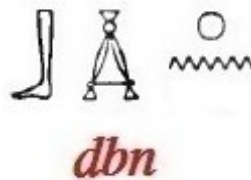
There is then a dubious rendering of “*mswt*”.



Apparently there is an obvious misspelling: G1 (*ꜣ*) instead of G43 (*w*);

but, considering the plural sign, that would give “children, offspring”, which in this case is definitely absurd (*pace* Allen Thomas). Thus I opt in favour of “*mst*”, which could be “mother”, or an active participle (*she who gave birth*). But “*mswt*” could also be a noun (birth). Thus “*mswt nb =s*” could be “*the birth(day) of her Lord*”. In this case she is joyful (*hrrt jb*) at the birth of the child who shall become her lord. (But grammar would perhaps twist her nose!)

Then there is a line referring to size: a huge circumference of 35000 cubits (18.375 km); which I think (*pace* Faulkner) is referred to the female figure, not to “her lord”. The glyph shows a couple of metatheses: “*bdn*” instead of “*dbn*”, but with the “*n*” coming after a determinative (possible N5).

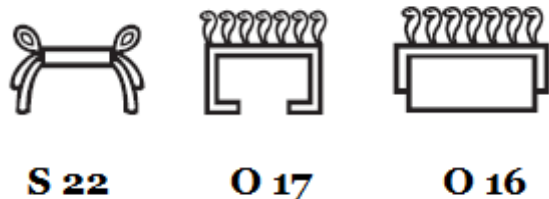


In my opinion it refers, symbolically, to the enormous size of the mother as seen by the tiny new-born. The measure may be also that of a city (symbolic mother). The 350 rods may have other hidden meanings as well (out of my reach). One must note, too, that the size varies according to different versions. Some report 360 rods, which might allude to the 360 days of the year. But in our case that's open to debate.

Then she is described in relation to green stones of Upper Egypt.



The verb form “*stt / stt*” is very likely a participle of “*stj*” (to shoot). In our case it may be the luxuriant image of her green radiance. But there may be also a reference to the niche. In fact, in some cases, S22 (*stt*) may replace O17 (variant of O16: cornice with cobras),



which is exactly what is displayed atop the niche, where are seen also “green” circles.



There is then a “*tzt bs ḥbst bg(ꜣw)*”. If “*bs*” is referred to the “initiant” (newborn) then the image could be that of the mother who lifts up the baby, either physically (an amorous act of tenderness), but mostly symbolically: she who teaches him her secrets (*bs*) that shall be the child's (the inert one) vestment. Or that could be the image of the mother who unveils herself, showing her nakedness, her truth, to the inert one who shall dress himself with that knowledge. As for “*wnmt nbt ḥr nb*” I wouldn't exclude an allusion to the Beautiful West, who, in her aspect of Death, is fatally the Mistress of everyone, whom she devours.

- 1 What is to be said,
- 2 having reached the ninth niche,
- 3 by Osiris Scribe Ani:

- 4 Foremost One, Lady of strength,
- 5 joyous at the birth of her Lord;
- 6 (she) whose perimeter extends for 350 rods,
- 7 radiant of the Upper Egypt's green stones ,
- 8 she who unveils the secret, she who clothes the Weary One;

- 9 she who devours, Mistress of everyone.
10 The name of her Door-keeper: *He who made himself*.

Thus the image of a magnificent, powerful and caring mother; even though the name of the door-keeper seems to be an invitation to the child not to be engulfed by the immense Great Mother [6], but to use her power, the knowledge of her secrets [8] to build up his own shape.

SPACE 5: GATE 6 - NICHE 10



The last niche shows once again a motherly figure who protects not by her physical strength, like the previous one, but by her charismatic halo.

- 1 What is to be said,
2 having reached the tenth niche,
3 by Osiris Scribe Ani:

4 Elevated of voice, she who awakens those who cry;
5 she who makes fun of terror because of her Charisma;
6 there's no fear of her in him who is within her.
7 The name of her Door-keeper: *Sakhenwur* (the great embracer).

The energy of her voice can raise those who are in trouble (the despairing deceased) [4] who can find in her bosom a secure haven [6], such an immanent authority she has[5]! A concept underlined by the name of the door-keeper. But, once again, in embracing her he is not engulfed in her. And I'd say it's not a coincidence that the figure of a ram headed god with an *atef* crown point to *Khnum*, the creator. Who might also be seen as the finalization of the door-keeper of niche 7, he himself a ram-headed god, symbolizing the *b3*. In a certain sense the *b3* that has been activated.

###

Now it's possible to reconstruct the inner logic of the sequence, starting from the first figure which forms a sort of symbolic unity:

- (1) The Great Mother, who can be seen as:
- (2) a mighty, protective goddess;
- (3) a symbol of fecundity, who accompanies the deceased;
- (4) ready to take arms for his defence;
- (5) but who can, nonetheless, be dangerous,
- (6) since she is an ancestral being, coeval with primordial chaos;
- (7) a tenebrous and deadly figure;
- (8) a mass of pure energy,
- (9) which can be positively canalized ,
- (10) so as to make of her a protective shield .

We may now try to point out the relations between the various groupings according to their constitutive traits. We see how [2] and [3] show basically positive characters, whereas [4] and [5] display both helping and threatening qualities. But the gorgon-like figure of the sixth niche is terrifyingly nightmarish. [7] and [8] on the contrary, together with menacing traits, coming directly from [6], show also positive angles; which become definitely benevolent in [9] and [10]. A structural path which seems to run like this:

[2] Positive - [3] Positive # [4] Positive/Negative – [5] Positive/Negative; #
[6] Negative; #

[7] Negative/Positive - [8] Negative/Positive # [9] Positive – [10] Positive #

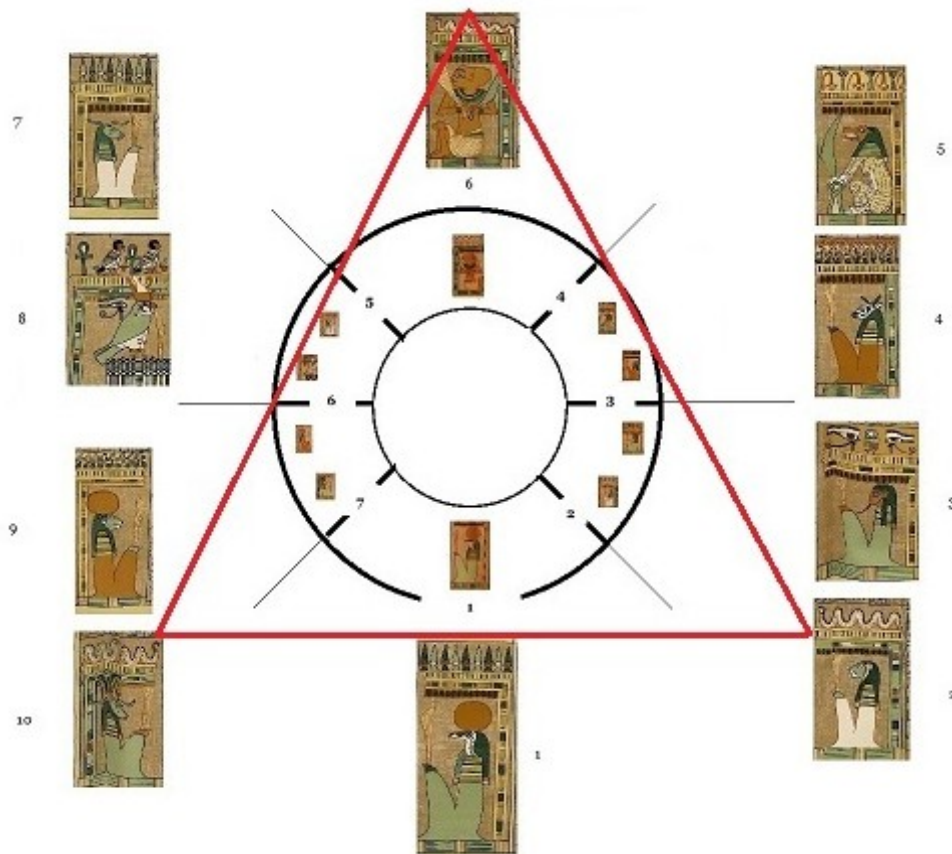
Where, of course, Positive is the helping, benevolent attitude; and Negative is the dangerous one. Thus we can remark the basic symmetry of the two major blocks pivoting around niche [6] and the gradual qualitative morphing of the two separate minor blocks: [2-3/4-5] from positive to negative; [7-8/9-10] from negative to positive. Guiding to the successful end of the perilous route.

###

And now we can focus our attention, no matter how questionable and speculative the procedure might be, on the friezes placed atop the niches, which cannot be dismissed as simple decorations. They must have a symbolical meaning, since the images seem drawn according to some sort of pattern. Let's take for example the niches with a serpent: [2-6-10].fig



If seen in the ideal geometrical layout I suggested (the circular path) we may look at them as forming a virtual triangle



which could allude to “*spd*”, thus to a Horusian form, since *Soped* is the “stellar” son of *s3h*/Orion/*Osiris* and *spdt*/Sirius/*Isis*. However the three serpents have different forms. In niche [2] four coils, in niche [6] five coils and in niche [10] there are two snakes, two coils each, namely four coils. The double snake might refer to *Nehebkau*, who protects Ra in his underworld journey. Being at the end of the sequence it does fit the context. And we should also note how the colour of the second snake is greenish, as to underline its positive character.



The snake of the beginning [niche 2] might allude to **z3-13** , “*who sleeps and is reborn each day*”; whereas the five coiled serpent of niche [6], which deals in fact with the ancestral snakes of primordial times, might point to *Apophis*.

As for the frieze of niche [3] I think there is no doubt about its symbolism.



There are two “eyes of Horus” pointing to “protection”; to “day and night” and to the verb “*ptr*” (see, behold). There is the “*šn*” ring, which is “eternal protection” and also the circular course of the sun. In our case there are also rays emanating from it, falling on a glyph which may be a visual rendering of “*nwn*”, the primeval waters; under them a vase, namely “*wsh*” (to be wide). In conclusion: an eternal protection of the course of the sun, both diurnal and nocturnal, along the wide space of the primordial waters of the underworld. All this fitting the mother-figure defined as “escort of the deceased”.

In the frieze of niche [4] we find a series of nine cobras.



Nine is “*psd*”; cobra is “*dt*”: thus a combined “*psd + dt*” which becomes a “*psdt*” (the holy Ennead). But cobra is also “*w3dyt*”, which has some homophony with the “*wḏ3t* eye” of the previous niche. A general image of holy protection.

A similar homophony is present in the frieze of niche [5], which shows a series of glyphs (in couple) formed by Q7 (flame) and M13 (papyrus).



Now M13 is “*w3d*” and Q7 is a determinative of “*sdt*” (flame), from which we may extract a “*dt*” pointing obliquely to the cobra of the previous niche. The alternation of flame and papyrus, that is *scorch/fruitlessness* vs *vegetation/fecundity*, may point to the two opposed possible results: *destruction* or *regeneration*. The figure of the fearsome guardian does enhance the general image. There is, though, a curious fact. The series seems out of balance. We see: *flame/papyrus – flame/papyrus – flame/papyrus - flame*. There is a missing papyrus. That could be of course an oversight; or the scribe did not evaluate the right size of the glyphs and there was no more space for the last papyrus. Or is it, instead, an implicit invitation, addressed to the deceased, to take the symbolic shape of the missing papyrus, namely: “to rejuvenate”?

Niche [6] has already been treated, so let's give a look at niche [7] where we find once again a series of “*hkr*” friezes, like those of niche [1].



As a matter of fact the tenebrous mourner [7] may be an aspect of the Great Mother [1], especially if in the double quality of darkness and mourning we catch an allusion to Isis and Nephtys (themselves an aspect of the Great Mother) taking care of Osiris. This might also explain why there are only eight “*hkr*” instead of the nine of niche [1].



The two sisters are in fact hierarchically inferior to Nut/Mut, the Great Mother. Unless, of course, once again, that be not a scribal oversight.

The “*b3*” and the “*nh*” of niche [8]

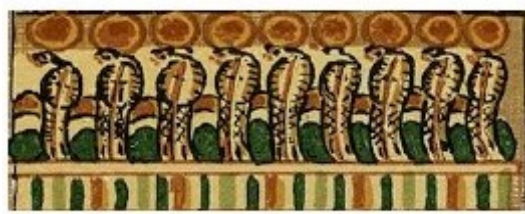


are manifest symbols of “coming forth” even in grammatical terms: “*b3 nh*” is the living “*b3*”, namely the psychic part that has been “activated”. A process amply exemplified in Scene 7, Plate 17, chapters 89, 91, 92.

As for niche [9] we find a frieze very similar to that of niche [4], that is a series of “*dt*” cobras.



There are though differences to be remarked. First of all there are eight cobras instead of nine. Then the cobras of niche [4] have on their heads a solar disk (a variation of the usual cobras that encircle it);



which is not present in the cobras of this niche. However the figure (leonine) inside the niche has on its head a big solar disk, similar to that shown in the figure of niche [1].



Were it not for the fact that the door-keeper is “male”, one could see an image of *Sakhmet* (a mythical variation of Mut/Great Mother). Nonetheless *Sakhmet* was the mother of *Maahes*, the lion-headed god of war,



and that might justify a possible parallel with niche [1] and the reason why there are only eight cobras: once again a figure hierarchically inferior to the one of niche [1]. No matter how magnificent and how immense her size, she cannot equal the might of the archetypical Mother.

As for the two snakes of niche [10] they have already been compared to *Nehebkau*, once again a manifest form of divine aid. In conclusion we may interpret the friezes as various modalities of further apotropaic means guarding Ani in the course of his perilous quest.

###

We may now try to give an overall view of the scene in its parallel course and show how gates and niches fit together.

[Gate 1]

Ani is in front of the door of *Rosetau* (Vestibule)

[Niche 1]: Archetypical figure of the Great Mother. At the moment Osiris is absent, since he is the figure which Ani must comprehend, in the course of his tour through the gates (his fetal development).

[Gate 2]

Ani asserts that he is qualified to traverse *Rosetau*;

[Niche 2]: since he has the help of a protective figure,

[Niche 3]: that accompanies the deceased.

[Gate 3]

Ani asserts that he can chase away the forces that threaten Osiris (his own self);

[Niche 4]: since the warlike mother acts in his defence.

[Niche 5]: Nonetheless he is aware that, should he not act properly, should he not be firm and brave as he claims he is, the mother might become dangerous.

[Gate 4]

But Ani asserts that he has the strength of Horus and he is not afraid of anyone;

[Niche 6]: not even of the threatening ancestral being, coeval with primordial chaos.

[Gate 5]

Ani asserts that he has in himself the potentialities of benevolent gods (Anubis and the Great Cat/Ra) and he can thus defeat Apophis;

[**Niche 7**]: since he is able to face despair (the tenebrous and deadly figure);

[**Niche 8**]: and to control the mass of pure energy that could be devastating.

[Gate 6]

Ani asserts that he possesses magic means and knowledge;

[**Niche 9**] which he can use to canalize, on his behalf, the immense energy of the motherly figure,

[**Niche 10**] so as to make of her his own protective shield.

[Gate 7]

At the end of his circular tour Ani re-enters, symbolically, into the Vestibule; but now in full possession of the psychic means that will be his protecting armour. Or, in more precise terms, he is now a new-born Osiris: an Osiris in his new-born state, who must evolve into his adult shape; qualified then to board the barque of Ra.

###

In conclusion, facing the nine niches, Ani passes through the phenomenological experience of gestation in the Great Mother's womb; during which he becomes aware of the energies he has to integrate in order to begin his "true" journey. This one is just a propaedeutic course, which in fact ends in PLATE 12 – the first part of which keeps running on the two superimposed and synchronous registers -- with the vignette of two doors: the effective entrance in the Realm of the Dead.



Sit finis libri non finis quaerendi