

PAPYRUS OF ANI

PLATE 33 [Chapter 151]



Disharmonious Harmony

by

orlando mezzabotta

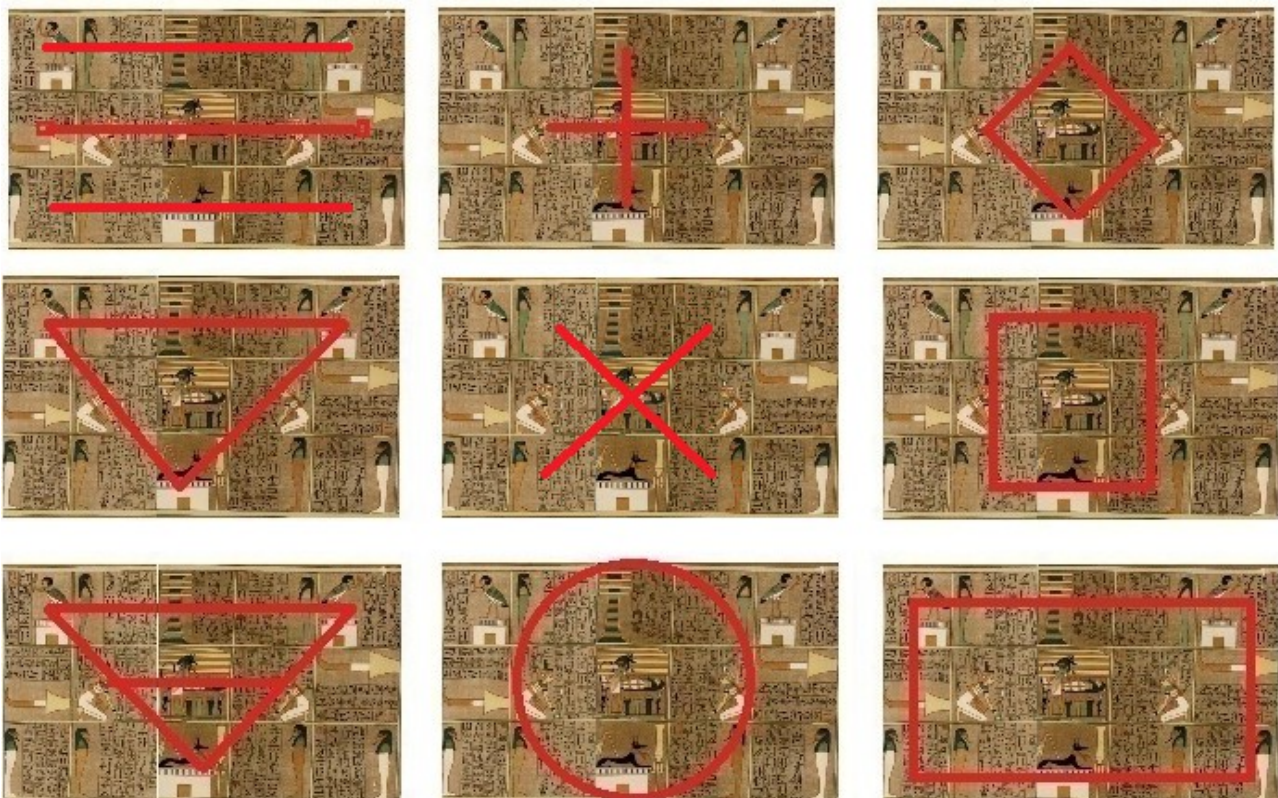
www.ormezza.it

ormezza@yahoo.com

Giving a look, no matter how cursorily, at the *ante litteram* cubistic rendering of Plate 33, one is impressed by its outstanding visual impact: its relatively small space filled by fifteen vignettes disposed in a three rows per five columns matrix,

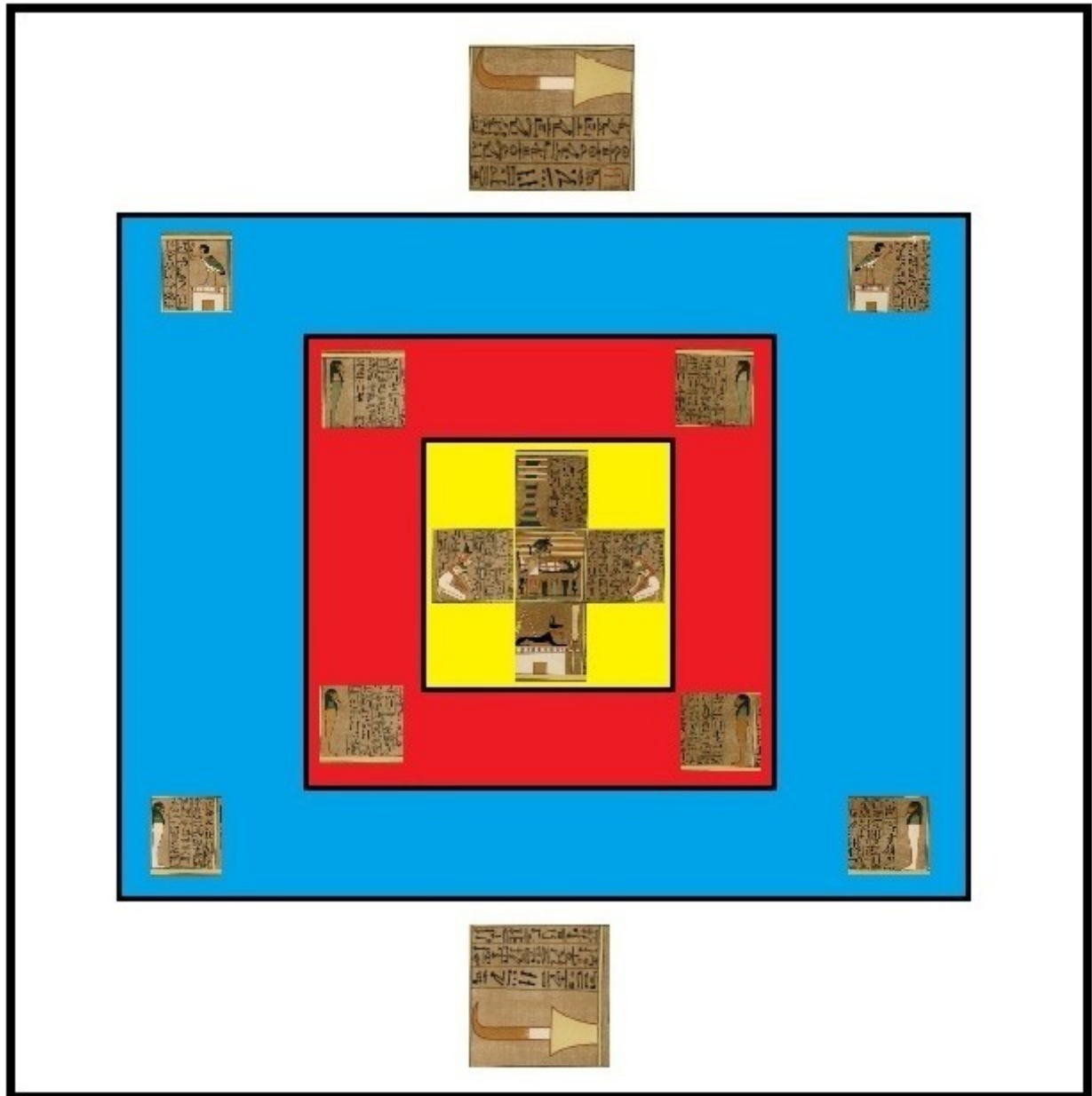
| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

the central one [8] surrounded by symmetrical series of groups arranged in several geometric patterns:



The eye is enticed to follow the regular cadences of lines (horizontal and vertical), triangles, circles and the four sided shapes of the trapezoid, the lozenge, the square and the all enclosing rectangle.

A more attentive look may let us discover a *matryoshka*-like structure formed by three one inside another psychic chambers that enclose and protect the mummy of the deceased (Ani) carefully attended by the embalming Anubis (central vignette):

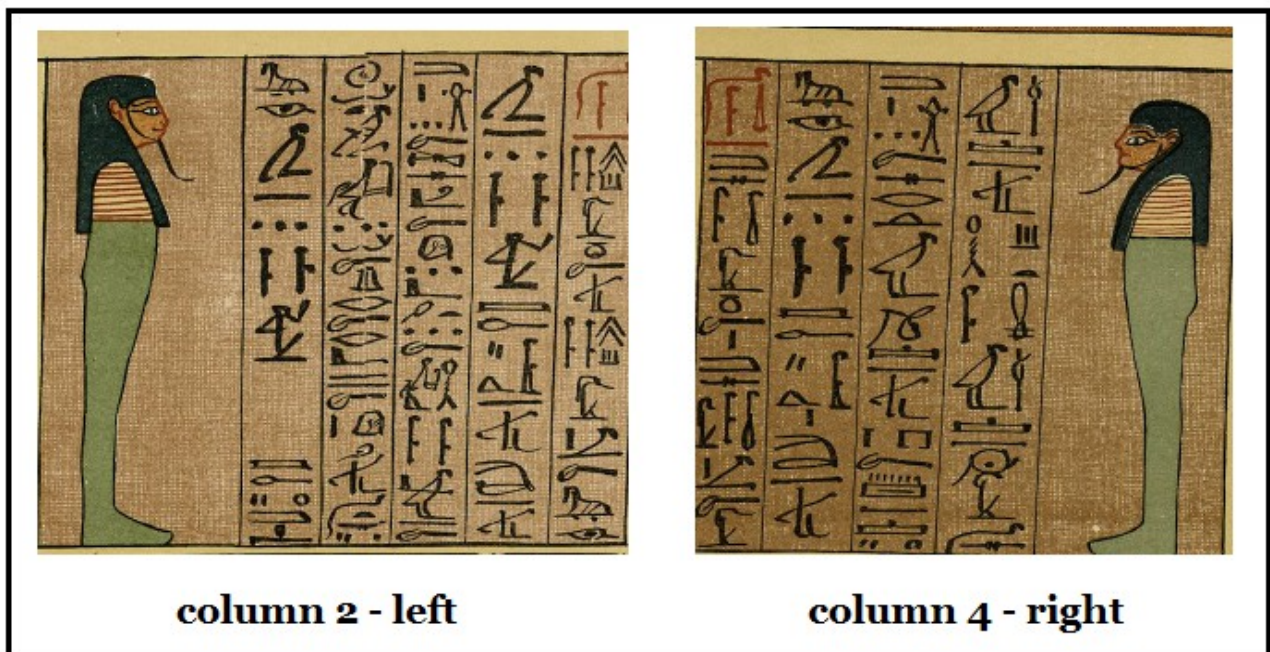


The innermost chamber (yellow) is composed by the four divine figures of Osiris (Djed), Khentiamentiu, Isis and Nephtys; the middle one (red) by the four sons of Horus; the outer chamber (blue) by two *b3s* (upper) and two Ushebtis (lower). The floor being the “lower” flame; the “upper” one the roof. How can we not see in the composite vignettes a well balanced harmonious whole? We might even make an anachronistic recourse to Thomas Aquinas's

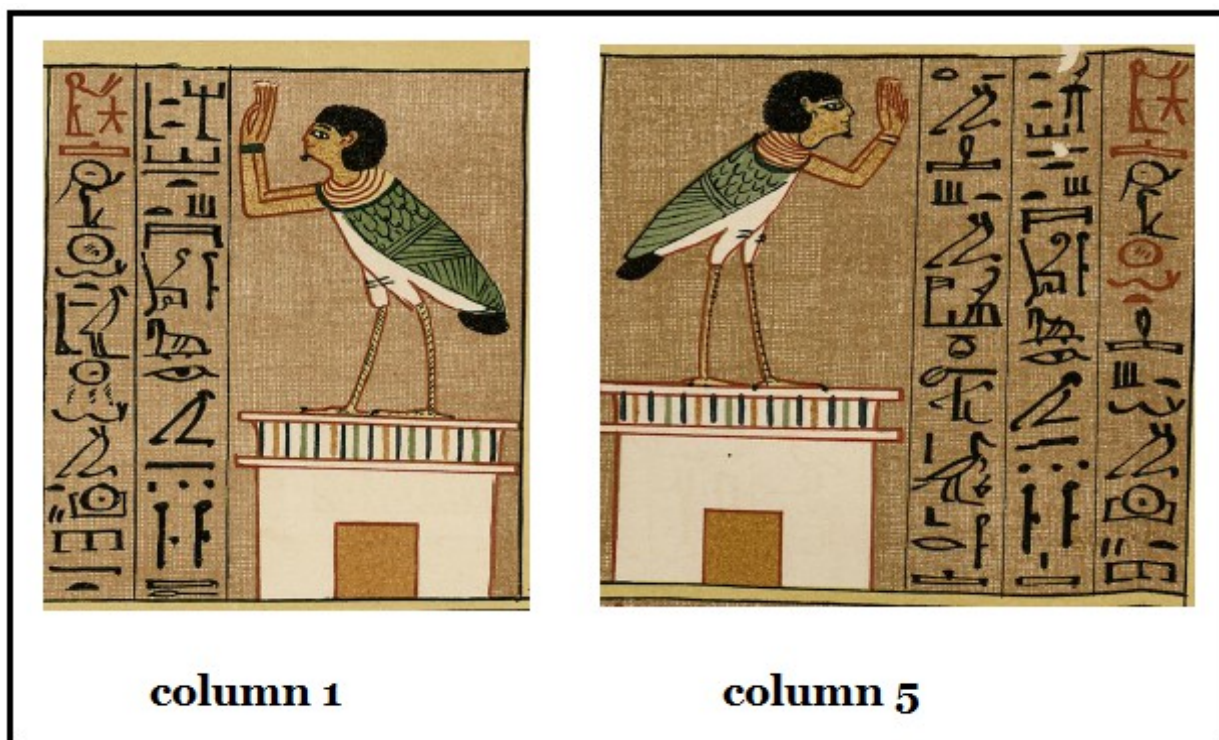
Aesthetics admiring the *Integritas* of the whole composition; the *Consonantia* of the balanced interplay of the single components; and, grand finale, the *Claritas* of its holistic vision.

Nonetheless a closer and more punctilious examination may invite us to point out a not small amount of dissonances. We see in fact how the each other mirroring first and fifth columns have not the same width, the leftmost one a little bit smaller, compelling the scribe to decrease the size of the glyphs. That's the opposite of columns two and four. In fact the texts of those on the left side [2,7,12] have all one more column than those on the right [4,8,13]. Then of course we can observe how the vignettes of the flames [6,10] and their texts are placed horizontally, not vertically as the other ones (probably to underline their qualitative difference from a building perspective: horizontal roof and floor vs vertical walls). And another major difference is given by vignette 13 (the jackal recumbent on a shrine) which has no text at all.

One other peculiar dissonance comes from the direction of the glyphs of vignettes 1 and 5 (the two *b3s*). In the other vignettes the glyphs on the left turn their “backs” to the figures, whereas those on the right “look at” their faces:



But in the case of the two *b3s* we can observe how the common direction is in fact “reversed”: the left glyphs looking at the *b3*, the right ones turning their backs to it.



column 1

column 5

I'll give my tentative explanation when dealing with them.

However the dissonances are not only visual, but textual as well. There are in fact many apparent scribal errors, be they simple oversights, ambiguous renderings or patent mistakes. But being so many in such a compact space seems to me highly suspicious. The solidified commonplace says that most scribes had no idea of what they were writing, the result being spurious or corrupted texts. It goes without saying that I am of a different advice, especially in this particular scene characterized by a profound magic aura, manifestly expressed by the textless vignette at the very core of the plate. Differently from other versions in which Anubis utters his magic spells, in our case his apparent silence points to the secret words that cannot be made public; a silence doubly underlined by the “silent” recumbent jackal [13], which is a variant of “Anubis on his mountain” (*jnpw tpj ḏw =f*).

What I am trying to say is that the spells were deliberately spoiled in order to neutralize possible improper uses of them by the uninitiated. Only he who can correct the apparent mistakes can give them their productive effectiveness. And this may also explain the strange “blank spaces” connected with Ani's name which are found in vignettes 2, 3 and 12. We shall come to that in due time.

Leaving aside the central vignette (Anubis on the mummy) which condenses the symbolic values of the whole structure, I am fairly convinced that the series should start from the *djed* pillar [3], which, in a certain sense, axially incorporates the recumbent on the shrine jackal vignette [13]. The huge “*shm*” sceptre does in fact correspond to the *djed* pillar. We know that the jackal was also a symbol for the god who guarded the city of the dead, namely *Khentiamentiu*, a title applied to Osiris as well. Our two vertical vignettes compose thus the name of *Osiris (Djed)-Khentiamentiu* (jackal), the *Foremost of the Westerners*. The flail being also typical of Osiris.

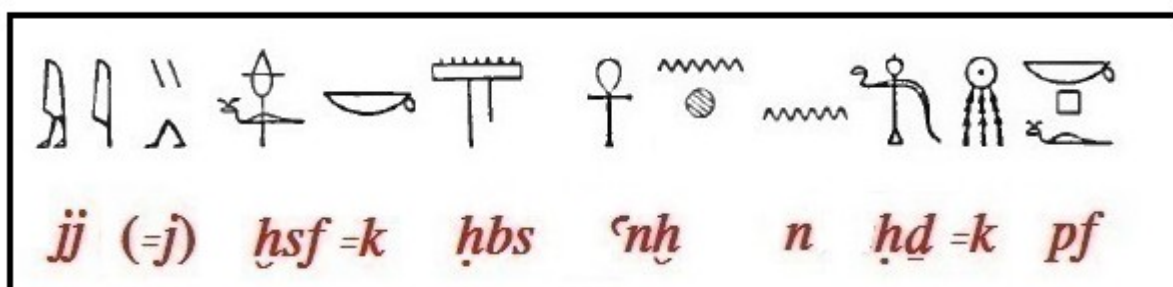
We have then the two sisters. Usually Isis comes first, being the most important both as Osiris's spouse and as mother of Horus. But since the *Book of the Dead* is a journey from darkness to light, I'd say Nephtys should be the third of the series. She is in fact the lady of the barque of night, whereas her sister is in command of the barque of day.

At this point let us look at the texts.

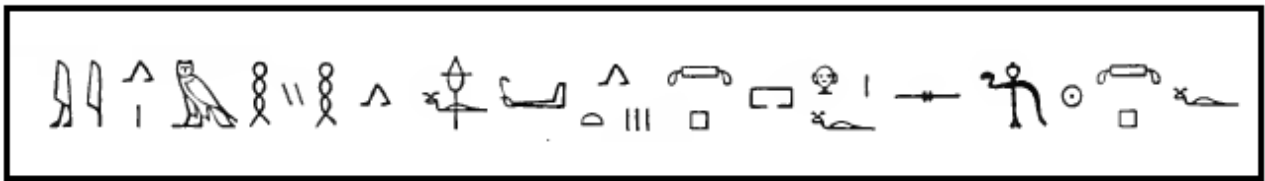
DJED PILLAR

- 1 I have come so that you may remove the (outer) garment.
- 2 Live through that light of yours!
- 3 I am he who stands behind [→ who sustains] my Djed pillar
- 4 on the day the furious rage is chased away.
- 5 I have risen as your protection, Osiris...

The first lines show a few ambiguities from the very beginning:



And that may be the reason why Budge invites us to read them as



which seems to be the version of *pJuja* [*pKairo CG 51189*]. In Allen Thomas's version: “*Thou who comest seeking to repel (my) steps, Hidden of Face while he illumines his hiding place*”.

Honestly I can't see why we should do that. Why not try to extract a plausible meaning from the text “as it is”? So...

“*jj*” could be a participle (who comes / came) in our case used as a vocative (you who came); but I am more inclined to see in it a *sdm =f* form, with a non expressed pronoun (=j). As a matter of fact that is a common formula (together with its variant “*jj .n =j*”) used by many figures of the other vignettes.

We have then an unorthodox S28 (cloth with fringe) which is the typical determinative for cloth. In this case it is evidently used as an ideogram; so I chose to transliterate it as “*hbs*” (garment). Now since the action is that of “removing” (*hsf*) the garment I doubt that “*nh*” be an adjective related to it. Unless we consider “*hbs nh*” as the garment of the “living ones”, that is: the mortal body (quite an oxymoron!).

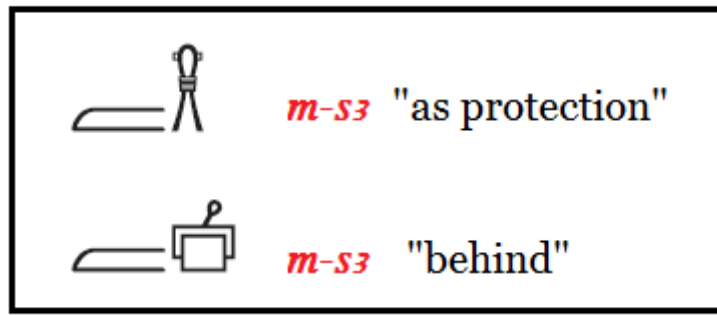
I'd rather see in “*nh*” an imperative. The general image is that of Ani divesting himself of his “outer” garment (the use of the S28 ideogram may in fact stress the picture of the “outer shell” of the human body) so as to live (*nh*) because of (*n*) his inborn splendid light (*hd =k pf*). As Gardiner tells us (E.G. § 112) the demonstrative pronoun “*pf*” like Latin *iste* may be used to express some emotional stress, whether of disgust or of admiration. In our case the latter: thus underlining the “splendour” of Ani's inner light.

As for line 3 I doubt we should see the fearful Osiris hiding behind the *djed* pillar. He is behind it in order to sustain it, as a show of his might and stability. Energy that is needed when fighting hostile forces [4].

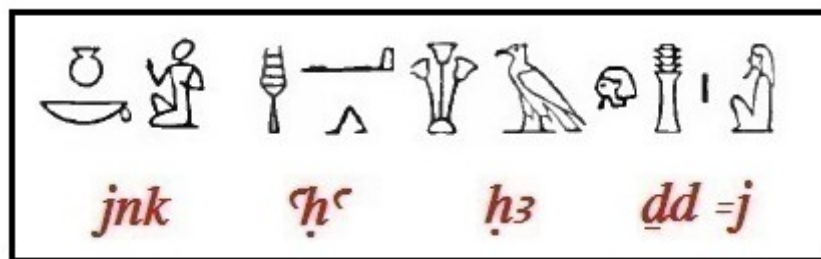
The graphic rendering of the last line allows multiple subtly nuanced readings:



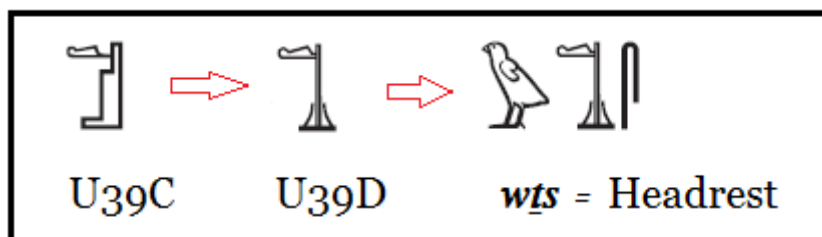
Here we find once again an ideogram (U39C) referred to the verb “*wts*” (raise, lift up). As it is “*wts*” could be read as a participle, either active (who has raised) or passive (who has been raised). Or, adding an implicit suffix, read it as “*wts (=j)*”. In all the three cases a reference to the erected *djed* pillar, working as protection (*m s3 =k*); resonating with a similar “*m-s3*” (behind),



recalling “*h̄ h3*” of verse 3



Another possible visual wordplay comes from the similarity of U39C (verb →to raise) and U39D (headrest):



The headrest hinting at the solidity of the head firmly planted on the body, with a double allusion to the *djed* pillar and to the “giving of the head” of the vignette at its left [2 : Hapj].

And finally we come to the blank space at the end of the spell:



It would have not taken much effort to adjust the glyphs so as to fill the whole column. How come the scribe did not do it? Let's first say that “*wsjr*” could be either Osiris, the god, represented by the *djed* pillar, asserting that he acts as a protector; or a vocative (Osiris/*Djed* addressing Osiris [Ani]). In the latter case what is left out is the usual label “*ꜥnj mꜣꜥ ḥrw*”. As if to hint that Ani himself must fill the blank space in order to become a justified Osiris. The apparent “silent blankness” subtly alluding to his “vindication”.

NEPHTHYS



A look at the first column puts us in an uncomfortable state. As it is the glyphs seem assigned to Ani: “*ḏḏ mdw jn wsjr ʒnj mʒꜥ ḥrw*” who then addresses Nephthys who, in her turn, begins her spell. That sounds definitely unusual since, at least, in the course of his mummification, Ani is in a passive state; and in all the remaining vignettes of the embalming chamber, when it is present (Isis and the four sons of Horus), the formulaic “*ḏḏ mdw*” is assigned to the protective figures. Thus I come to the conclusion that in our case we face what we might call a “syntagmatic metathesis”. The text should be read as “*ḏḏ mdw jn nbt-ḥwt wsjr ʒnj mʒꜥ ḥrw* &tc.” As I already said this may be a deliberate oversight.

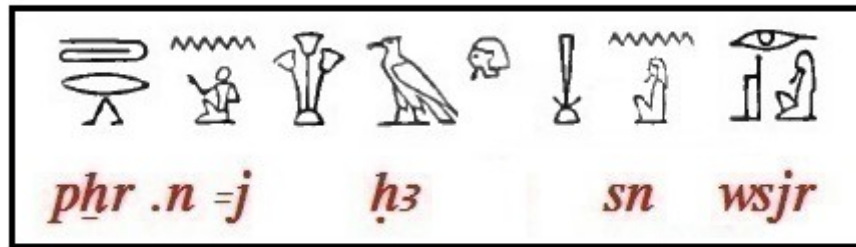
So Nephthys, addressing Ani, starts her monologue:

- 1 Words to be spoken by Nephthys:
- 2 “Justified Osiris Ani,
- 3 as I have encompassed [with my hands] the nape of (my) brother Osiris,
- 4 so I have come to be your protection, behind you.
- 5 The Two Lands have bowed down in force of your call.
- 6 So, be triumphant among them!
- 7 I raised up so as to triumph over what might be done against you.
- 8 Ptah it was who felled your foe.”

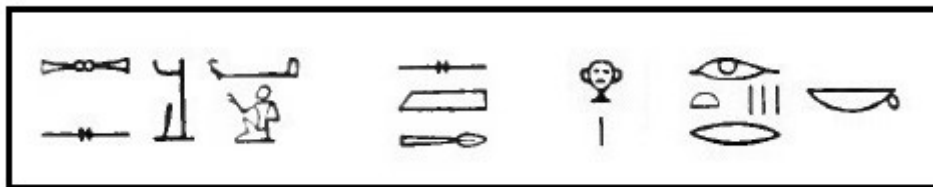
Line 3 describes Nephthys's spatial position, which is usually at the back of (behind: *m-s3*) Osiris, as in our case:



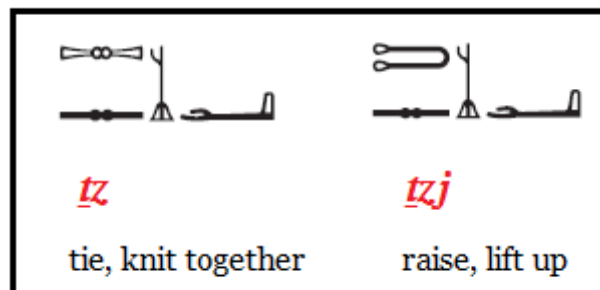
It is the image of Nephthys caressing and tenderly holding in her hands the head of her brother Osiris; with “*phr .n =j h3*”



which might also mean “I have attended” (I have circled around). Line 7 poses some problems due to the ambiguous verb “*tz/tzj*”



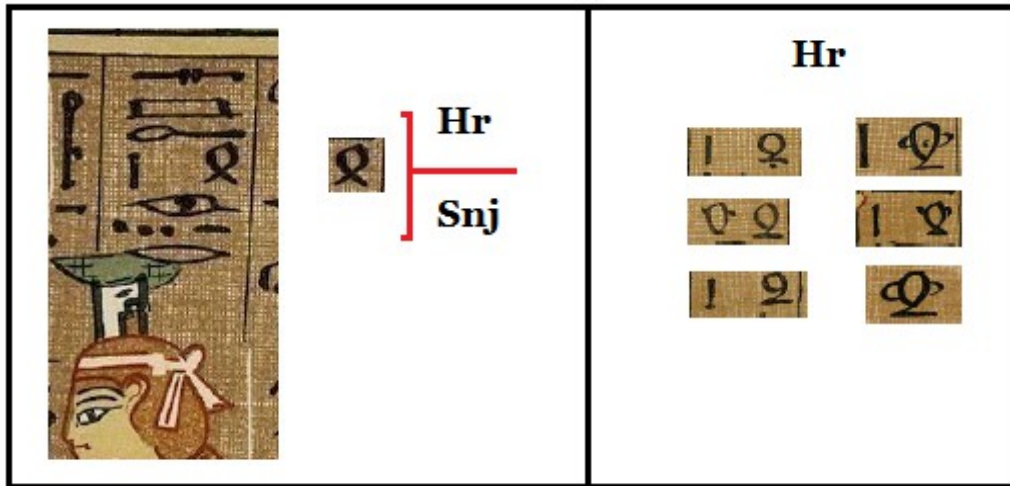
As it is, with S24 (knotted belt) it means “knot, tie, knit together”; although, given the context, it could also be a variant of “raise, lift up”:



Were it not for the suffix pronoun following “*tzj*” the verb form could be read as an imperative; ditto for “*sm3^c-hrw*”. Resulting in “Raise, be triumphant over what is done against you!” Which would be in consonance with line 6. Adding that “*sm3^c-hrw*” would also underscore Ani’s “vindication”.

But if the suffix pronoun is not put there for “devious” reasons, then the verb should be assigned to the goddess, who raises herself (*tz =j*) so as to triumph over (*sm3^c-hrw [=j] h3*) the wrongdoings done to Ani (*jrt r =k*). Presuming, of course, an implicit “*j*”. A nice way to point out that she acts as his protector. But in the next line [8] it is clearly stated that Ra has already defeated Ani's enemy (*hftj =k*),

thus Nephthys's claim would seem to be somewhat superfluous. There is, though, another possible interpretation (I must admit far-fetched) which would harmonize the two final lines. A closer look at the text over Nephthys's head lets us discover an ambiguous glyph:



That is a possible cursive rendering of the preposition “*hr*”, found in other parts of the papyrus, although in many cases the common glyph D2 (face) is also used; but, at face value, it looks like V7 (*šn*). Which, by the way, is the *shen*-sign, a symbol of protection, that both Isis and Nephthys hold in their hands:



Thus we might see in it the ideogrammatic rendering of the verb “*šnj*”

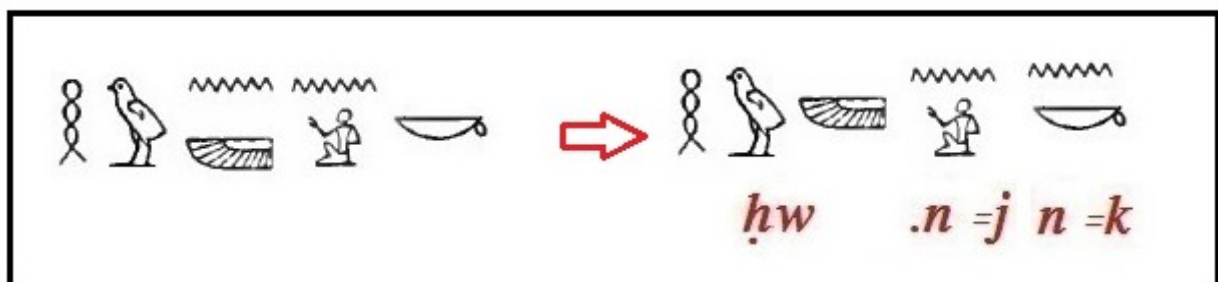
| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <p>v šnj</p> <p>šnj</p> | <p>(III. inf.) belegt seit <u>Lige</u> rund sein; umkreisen, umgeben u. ä.</p> <p>III. ringsum einschliessen, umgeben. a) von Osiris, der die Duat im Kreise umgibt 7. Königsgr.</p> <p>b) die Feinde, einem feindlichen Ort einschliessen (militärisch) 8. D.18; Äth.</p> |
|-----------------------------|--|

One of its possible meaning is “to surround” in a military sense. In which case Nephthys's “*sn =j*” would point to the “imprisonment” of the hostile deeds [7] of the enemy defeated by Ptah [8].

ISIS

- 1 Words to be spoken by Isis.
- 2 I have come to be your protection.
- 3 I have fanned for you
- 4 air to your nose,
- 5 cool north-wind to your nostrils
- 6 come out from Atum.
- 7 I have wiped for you your throat;
- 8 I have caused that you be a god.
- 9 Fallen are your foes under sandals. [→ Your foes are trod upon]
- 10 and you triumph in the sky,
- 11 strong of limbs by the means of the gods.

The basic image of this chapter is the divine breath of life that Isis blows in Ani [3-7]. Interesting to note the underscoring of the anatomical traits that trace the flow of the air from the nose [4], through the nostrils [5], downwards along the windpipe [7]. All this accompanied by the reassuring presence of the gods who take care of Ani's enemies [9], as Ra did in line 8 of the previous spell. As regards the glyphs there is only one slight metathesis in line 3:



MIDDLE CHAMBER

This middle space is a square at whose right angles are placed the four sons of Horus:



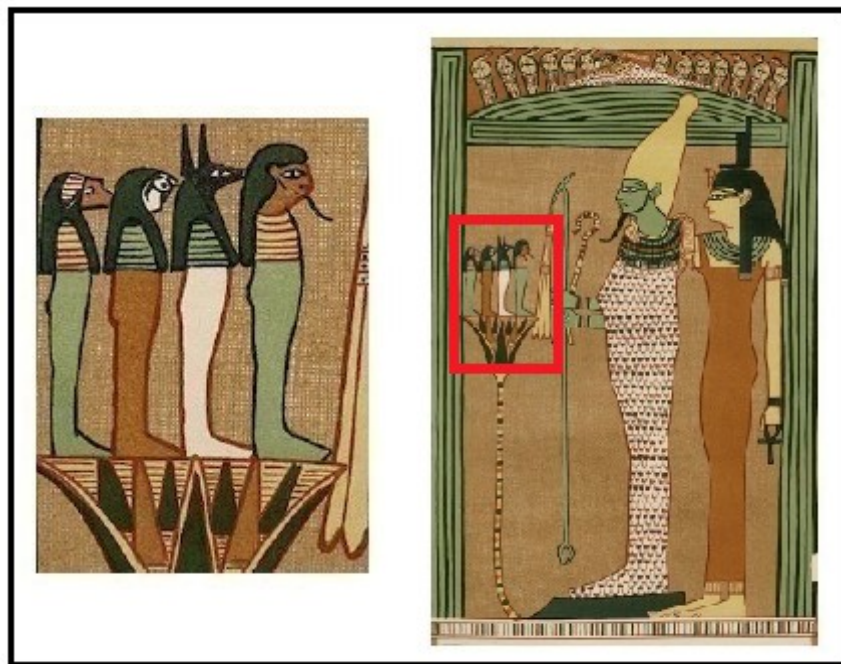
Following my working hypothesis of a reading sequence we should determine their concatenation, which is not an easy task. I would exclude a hierarchical order since they constitute a unique conceptual block, both physiologically (canopic jars) and spatially (the four cardinal points). A possible difference of importance could be inferred by their shapes: human, ape, hawk, jackal which, if referred to godheads might allude to Atum, Thoth, Horus, Anubis; with Atum at their head. But perhaps in our case the fact they have all a human shape is a way to underscore their equal state. That is indeed quite uncommon, since in the other three instances where they appear they have their specific traits, as in Plate 4,



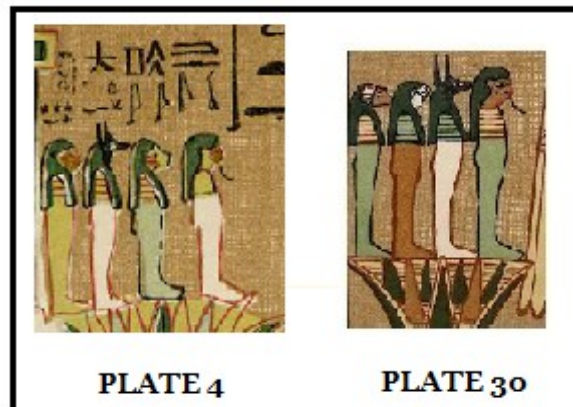
in Plate 8,



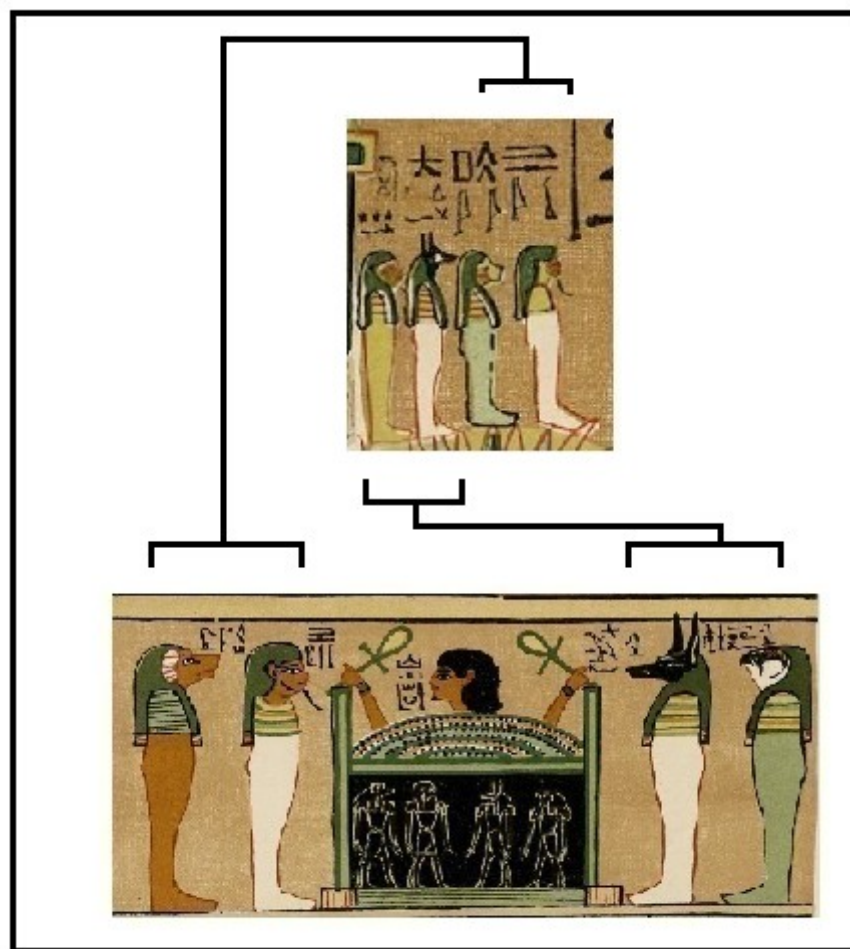
and in Plate 30



What is to remark is that in these three plates they are placed in different orders



although the groups of two of Plate 8 follow the same pattern of the Plate 4 quartet



But the important thing to point out is that in Plate 30 they are not accompanied by their names. Is it a way to state that they are a sole body? That would have interesting correspondences with the four figures of our plate, who have the same human aspect although each one introduces himself by his own specific name. Thus, following the sequence of Plate 30 we have Imseti, Duamutef, Qebhesenuf and Hapi; which is exactly the clockwise sequence of our figures starting from Imseti; or the anticlockwise sequence if we start from Hapi.

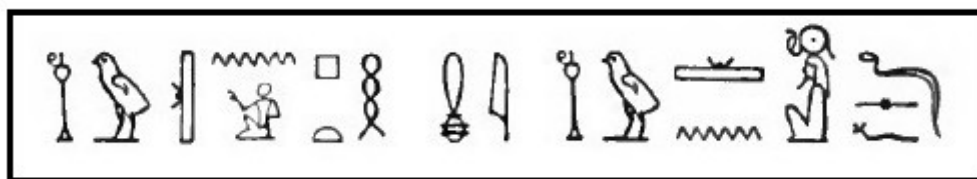
I would opt for the first hypothesis for thematic reasons. As we shall see Imseti tells about the eternal solidity of Ani's house (are we entitled to see in it a metaphor for his eternal divine state?); which is obtained by (a) the defeat of the enemy (Duamutef); (b) the reassembling of the scattered body (Qebhesenuf); (c) the planting of the head on the reassembled body. They are thus the four phases of a unique process.

IMSETI

- 1 Words to be spoken by Imseti.
- 2 I am Imseti, your son,
- 3 justified Osiris Ani.
- 4 I have come to be your protection.
- 5 I have made your house to flourish - permanently and steady!
- 6 Ptah entrusted (that matter) to me, as Ra himself did.

Leaving aside the formulaic introduction [1-4] (common to all the sons with the exception of Duamutef), here the basic theme is that of line 5 where the house of Ani (as hinted above a plausible metaphor for his personality) is depicted as flourishing in a solid and permanent state.

The last line may be misleading:

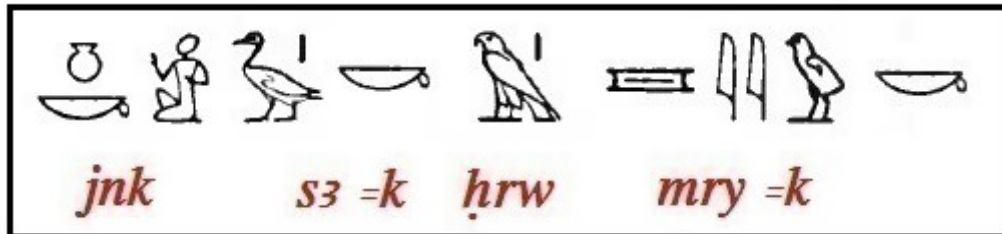


I'd exclude the too presumptuous “*wḏ .n =j pth*” (I commanded Ptah), opting for a more reasonable “*wḏ n =j pth*”. As for the second part it could be “*mj wḏ .n pth*” or a specular “*mj wḏ n(=j) pth*”; in both cases suggesting that both the gods did entrust the matter to Imseti.

DUAMUTEF

- 1 Words to be spoken by Duamutef.
- 2 I am your son, Horus, your beloved.
- 3 I have come as Protector of my father Osiris
- 4 from the grasp of the one who would made him injury.
- 5 I shall place him under your feet, forever and forever, permanently and securely,
- 6 O Osiris Ani justified. Justified, in peace.

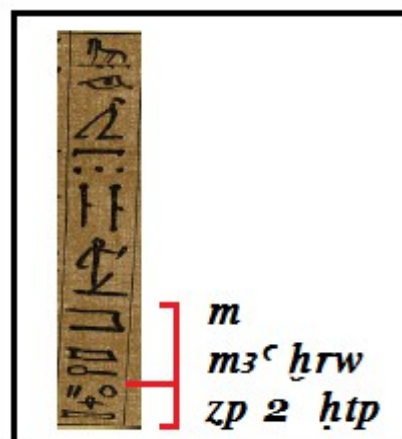
As I stated above the formulaic usual presentation made by the sons is here quite different and poses lots of problems. Let us start from line 2:



It seems an evident appeal to Horus, whom we know is the father of the four figures. But in this case he is evidently out of context, since he who should be protected is Osiris Ani; in fact, in the other three instances we always have “*jnk z3 =k wsjr 3nj m3^c hrw*”. Thus we have two possibilities: (i) Horus is here considered an aspect of Ani, as a rejuvenating Osiris; (ii) Imseti presents himself having the traits of Horus, Osiris's son; that's because Horus triumphed over Seth, he who injured Osiris. And in fact the main theme of this spell is the protection of Osiris Ani [3], whom he calls father as the other sons do. As Horus revenged Osiris, so Duamutef will protect Osiris Ani [3] from his possible enemies [4].

But in the final lines [5-6] Duamutef lets alone the metaphor and directly addresses Ani [6] assuring him that his enemy has been defeated once and for all [5].

As for the end of the spell there may be dubious readings:



The graphic rendering of “*mꜣꜥ hrw*” has an unusual “*m*” (Aa13) at its head. As for “*ꜣp 2*” should it be applied to “*mꜣꜥ hrw*” or to “*hꜣtp*”? And what if the first “*m*” (Aa13) be ideally connected with “*hꜣtp*” so as to give “*m hꜣtp*”? That would visually depict a doubly “justified” Ani in a virtual embrace of peace.

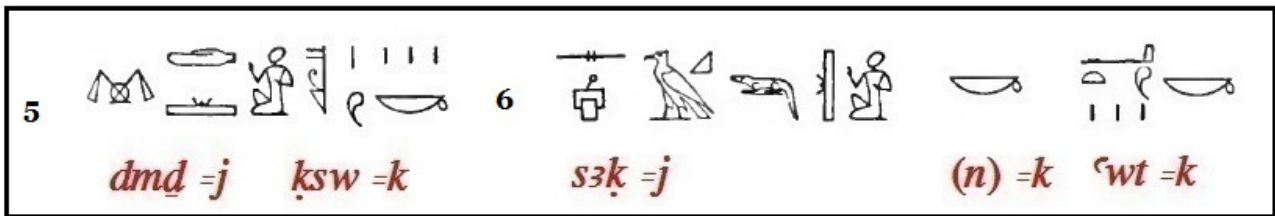
QEBHESENUF



This spell is composed by two thematic parts. I'll deal with them separately, since the last one is indeed highly cryptic and needs a very particular approach. For what concerns the first lines they follow the common pattern of the other spells:

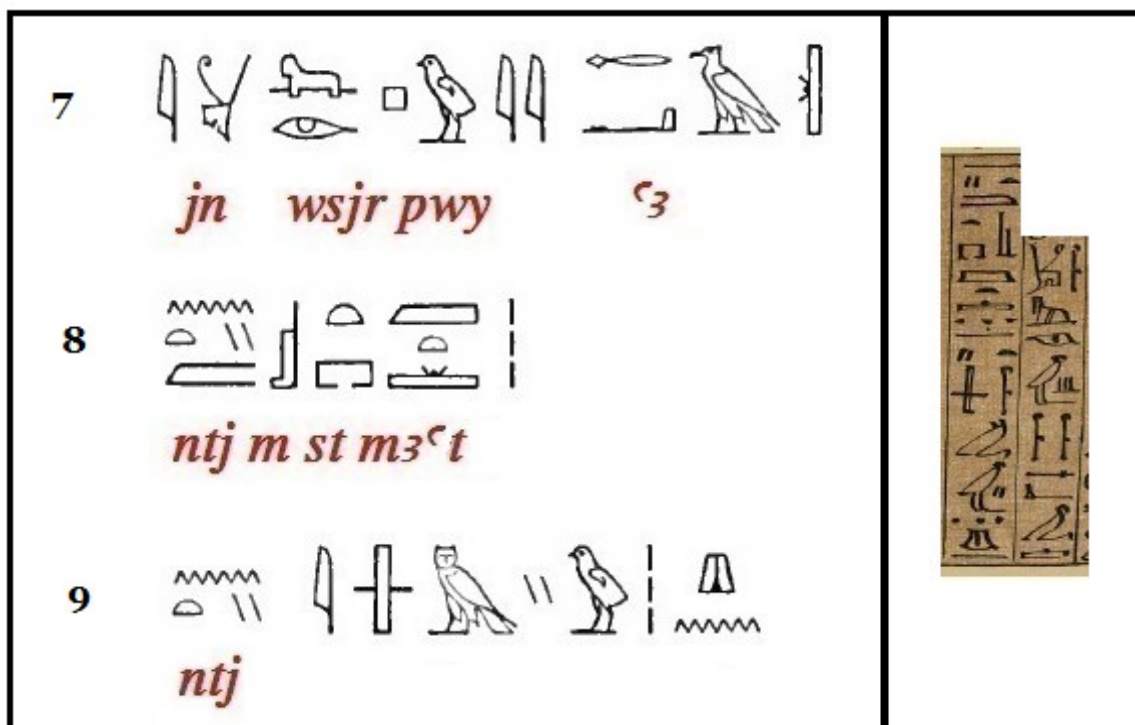
- 1 Words to be spoken by Qebhesenuf.
- 2 I am your son,
- 3 justified Osiris Ani.
- 4 I have come to be your protection.
- 5 I shall reassemble your bones,
- 6 put together for you your limbs.

The basic theme is that of the reassembling of the scattered limbs of Osiris [5-6], thus an image of reconquered solidity. The only scribal oversight is a missing “*n*” (preposition), in line 6;



but for the rest everything runs quite smoothly, except for the blank space at the end of the first column, as already pointed out. We can see how the “blank” comes after the glyphs of Osiris which should be followed by those of Ani. As a matter of fact there is ample space for the “3” of the name. Thus the “blank” works as a sort of “visual suspense” (Osiris...Ani justified). As if to inquire: which Osiris is pointed to? Answer: not just the god, but Ani as well, whose blank Osirian space he himself is supposed to fill.

Now, if the first part presented no particular problems, the matter is quite different as regards the last three lines [7-9], of which the final one seems to defy every deciphering effort.

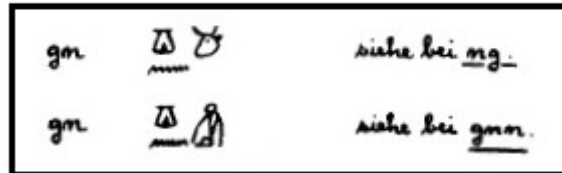


The “*jn*” of line 7 is used to emphasize the subject “*wsjr*”, the demonstrative “*pwy*” pointing to “this Osiris”, namely Ani, who is shown as a “great one” (3) seated in the throne of Maat [8]. Thus a triumphant image which entitles us to expect a further one as a grand finale. Unfortunately the concluding line does not seem to be such a one.

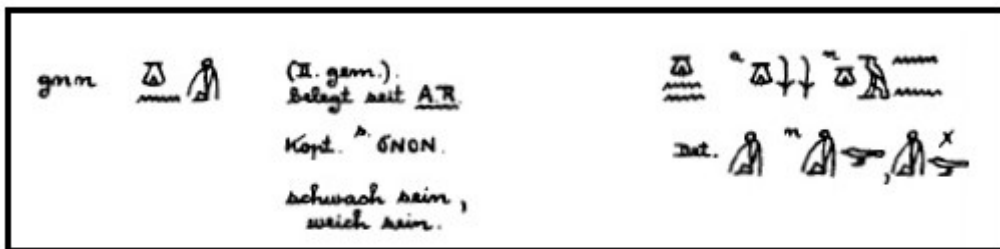
The first thing to decide is what kind of glyph is



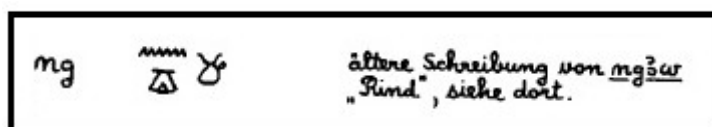
W11 may be “g” or “nst”, but I'd exclude an ideogrammatic use of it as “throne”, since the “n” would be hardly acceptable. It's true that “*jmjw nst*” (those who are in the throne) might fit the context, since it could refer to the gods who sit in their thrones and Ani (→ *ntj*) would be one of them. But, as I said, I have serious doubts. Thus we should resort to “g” and read the glyph as “gn”. The absence of determinatives may confuse us. In WB we find:



Let us first look at “*gnn*”:



It is a verb (to be weak, soft) which could be nominalized into “weakness” resulting in “those who are in a state of weakness”, with a vague reference to the “weary ones”. But Ani as “one of the weary ones” would be such an obvious assertion hardly to be taken into account and certainly far from grandeur. So let us see whether the other reading (*gn* → *ng*) can be more persuasive and fruitful.

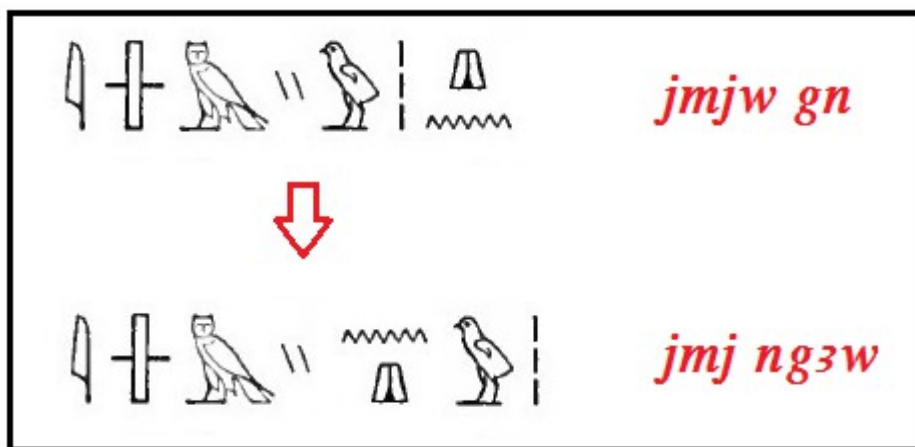


Following WB's direction we find:



The problem is that “those who are in the long-horned bull” is kind of weird. However we know that the bull was an archetypal symbol of Might, thus “those who are in him” could be his built-in energies, Ani being among them.

But let us suppose that the scribe wanted to lead astray the orthodox reader. What if line 9 be emended like this?



That would make sense showing Ani who is in the ranks of the long horned bulls, symbols of power and strength. Or, in a different view, that Ani is like the energy that the long-horned bulls have in themselves.

But we should also note that “*ng3w*” could be referred, no matter how rarely, to “long-horned cows”. And that could be a subtle invitation to bring back to memory the seven cows of Plate 35, with the long-horned bull as their husband. And that would be indeed a grandiose finale!



Thus our last three lines could be:

- 7 This is Osiris, the great one,
- 8 who is in the seat of Truth,
- 9 he who is in the long-horned bulls,
- 9a [he who is in the long-horned cows].

HAPI

The spell begins with the usual introductory notes:

- 1 Words to be spoken by Hapi.
- 2 I am Hapi, your son,
- 3 justified Osiris Ani.
- 4 I have come to be your protection.

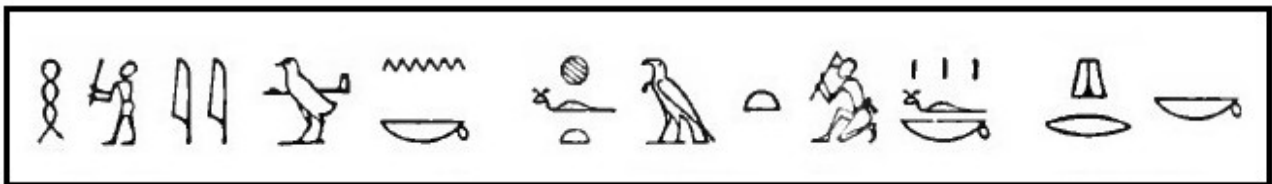
The rest of it looks like an ungrammatical conspiracy, so weird and misleading are the graphic renderings. Let us examine the lines one at a time:



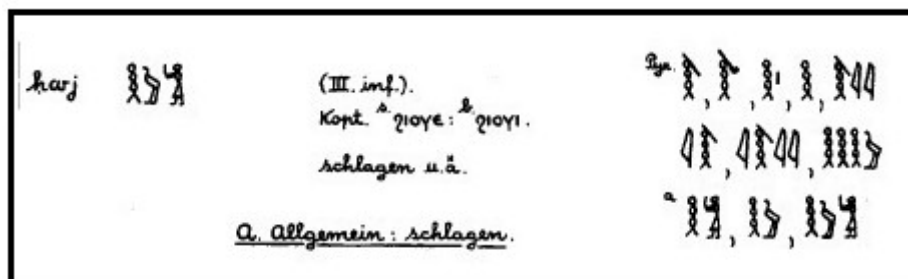
The first problem here comes from the plural strokes following the head (*tp*). The image is clearly that of “attaching” (*tz*) the head to the limbs (*wt =k*). Now if we take for granted that Ani was not tricephalous the plural strokes are either an error or perhaps a to me unknown way of substituting a simple stroke; or a deliberate misdirection. We could in fact read in the glyphs a “*tp-^c*” (before, erstwhile) which could refer to the limbs as they were “before” their cutting apart; the plural strokes being thus an allusion to the plural limbs. We could jokingly call it a “limbic resonance”!

The other problem is related to the subject who attaches the head. As it is the glyphs point to Ani (*=k → ts =k*) and that's a little bit strange since usually the helping figures are those who act in behalf of Ani. However, if we opt for Hapi, the line should be emended like this: “*tz (=j) (n) =k tp wt =k*”. I have serious doubts and I'd rather stick to Ani: the act of “planting” the head on his own reassembled body pointing to a sort of proud *self-coronation*. In fact, as we shall see in a moment, Hapi offers him the head that he'll tie to the body.

Similar problems arise from the next line:



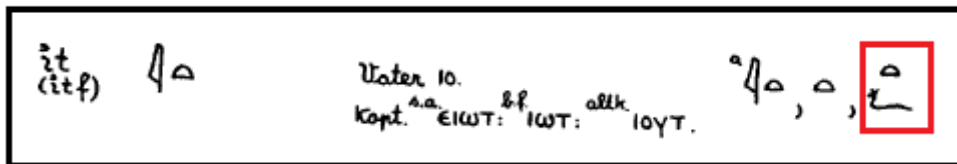
It seems evident that the verb is “*hwj*” (to beat), but its graphic rendering is somewhat puzzling. Let us have a look at its various forms:



If we read our verb as a *sdm .n=f* we would have a “*hw .n =k*” referred to Ani who has beaten hostile forces. But I'd rather see in it a passive plural “*hwyw n =k*” (beaten have been for you). As for the beaten enemies our glyphs are tricky:



The second “*t*” of “*hftjw*” has probably been added for phonetic reasons; but one of the two apparent suffix pronouns “=*f*” and “=*k*” seems definitely erroneous. Since the addressee is Ani the right one should be “=*k*”. There's though a possible although highly far-fetched devious reading. We know that the viper (I9) is a determinative of “*jtj*” (father); and if we couple it with the *hftjw*'s superfluous “*t*” we have indeed one of the possible hieroglyphs for “father”



Thus we have a compound image of the enemies of Ani and of those of Ani's father (a father god: Osiris, Ra, &c.) put under his feet (*hr =k*).

We come then to the next line:



If grammar is OK the sense is dubious for what concerns an ambiguous “*tp =j*”. Does Hapi give *his* head to Ani? If it is not a scribal trick (“=*j*” instead of “=*k*”) he might refer to the head in his possession as a patent symbol of Ani's personality. The same head we have seen a few lines above, the head that Ani receives after the enemies have been neutralized “*hwyw*” and which he ties to his body. The head that shall give the final shape to Ani's completed self.

At this point we meet the third quite puzzling “blank space”:



Whereas in the other instances the blanks followed the glyphs of Osiris, in this case it comes after the complete name of Osiris-Ani, creating a suspense before the “justifying process” (*m3^c hrw*). It is like a musical *rest* -- which is then ideally filled by the twice repeated “*m3^c hrw*”, followed by a peaceful end (*m htp*). These could be then the final lines:

- 5 You shall knot together the head and your limbs,
- 6 since your foes have been beaten for you and (put) under you,
- 7 and I have given to you *my* head for ever, for ever,
- 8 O Osiris Ani -- justified, justified in peace!

OUTER CHAMBER



The four components of the other chambers ran along clearly defined isomorphic axes: the *divine figures* of the inner chamber and the *brothers* of the middle one. But in this case their conceptual and symbolic coherence is not so evident. How can we find common traits between the pair of birdlike *b3s* of the upper row with the pair of human figures of the lower one? As for these it's true that the one on the right side states he is an “excellent *b3*”, claiming thus his similarity with the classic upper ones; but the human on the left is an expressly identified *ushebti*, a serving figure who does not seem to have much in common with the other three. However the fact that he is visually similar to the human *b3* on the right should put us on the alert. Whereas the upper figures are the archetypal forms of the *b3* mytheme (the capability of going in and out of the Duat), the two humans correspond to their effectual manifestation. They are different modalities of Ani in his journey in the Realm of the Dead. On the right are indicated the divine “levels” that must be reached through the “physical” efforts shown on the left. Otherwise said: the *ushebti* represents the “earthly” aspect of Ani, which is a constituent part of his personality. The same different modalities of the birdlike *b3s*: that on the right shown in his western descent which expects a laborious psychic effort (→ human left) in his progress through the underworld so as to be finally invested by the solar traits (→ human right) and come forth to the light of the day (left birdlike *b3*).

One might then figure that the sequence be 5-11-15-1



and that would invalidate the outer rectangular pathway. However we should remember that in many instances the “result” is shown before its inner mechanics, as in the case of the golden falcon in the

Transformations Chapters, that precedes the “workings” of the divine one; or of the *benu*-bird placed before the “labouring” heron [See my commentary of Plate 24]. Thus I am of the opinion that the sequence follows the rectangular 5-15-11-1 course, from dusk till dawn.

BA OF THE SETTING SUN



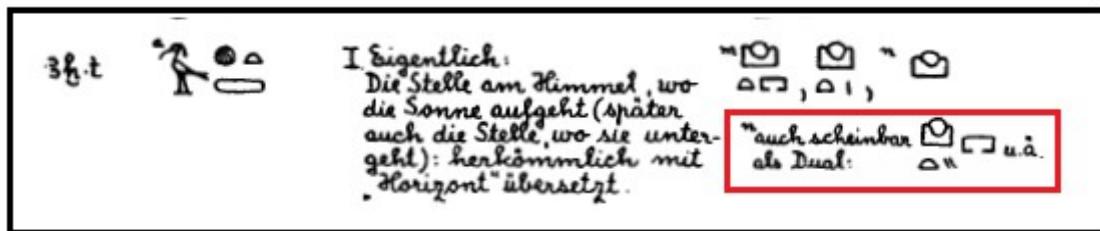
As I anticipated the peculiarity of this vignette is given by the direction of the glyphs, which must be read starting from the rightmost column. But that makes sense. Since it describes the descent into the sky's western horizon the text is in fact leaving behind the birdlike figure. It's a sort of “fade-out” sound effect.

- 1 Adoration of Ra at his setting
- 2 in the sky's western horizon [as dweller of the sky's western horizon]
- 3 by Osiris Ani justified,
- 4 at rest in the Realm of th Dead.
- 5 “I am an excellent bA.”

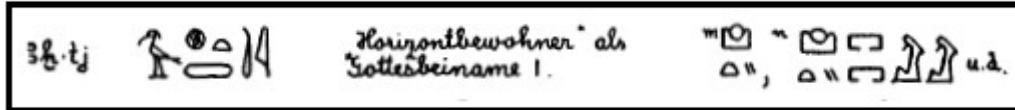
There is an ambiguous point in line 2:



The most obvious reading would refer to the setting (*htp = f*) of the sun in the sky's western horizon (*m 3ht j3btt nt pt*). The fact is that the glyphs of the horizon are not the common ones:

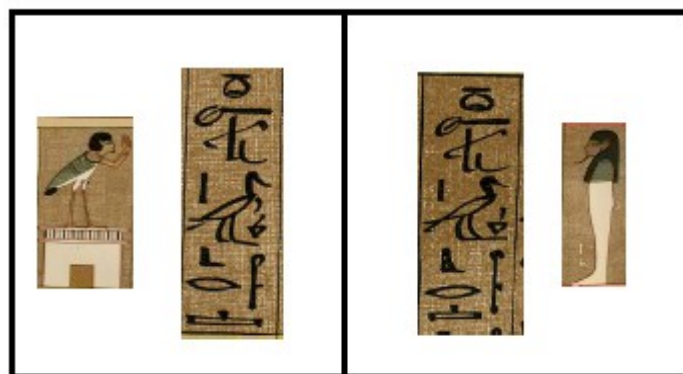


although the dual form may be used as well. But our glyphs look like an exact rendering of “*3htj*” (horizon dweller):



Thus Ra is shown as “dweller of the horizon”, the dual form alluding to both east and west; in our case the latter one.

In line 5 Ani states he is an “excellent *b3*”, in other words he claims his capability of entering the Realm of the Dead; a statement that is exactly repeated by the human figure of the next vignette [15]



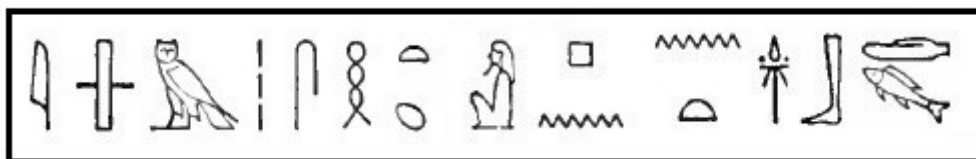
HUMAN bA : Numinous Ani



- 1 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani justified.
- 2 I am the excellent bA
- 3 who is in this egg of the *Abdju*-fish.
- 4 I am the great cat
- 5 who is in the place of Truth,
- 6 he in whom the Light does shine.

If we leave apart the devious “*dd mdw jn 3nj*” of vignette 9, which in my interpretation was a deliberate misdirection, this is the first time that the typical starting formula is made use of regarding Ani. That is not a coincidence, since, having been prepared by the helping figures of the two previous chambers, he can manifestly express his *b3* “numinous” configuration.

In line 3 we have the *abdju*-fish,

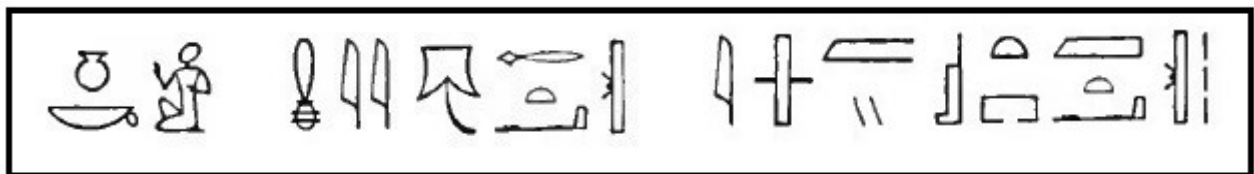


which is the sentinel of the solar boat in its night journey, whose task is to detect the approach of Apophis; but of course there is

homophony between *abdj*, the fish, and *ꜥbdw*, Abydos, the city of Osiris, thus in “this egg of Abydos” we may see a “germinal” Osiris-Ani. The glyphs show some inconsistencies. The demonstrative “*pn*” seems apparently erroneous, since *swḥt* (egg) is feminine, thus it should be “*tn*”. But the seated god determinative (A40) of the egg is definitely strange. It could then be a “marker” to say that the germ in the egg is a “divine masculine”, which would justify the “*pn*”.

The “double vision” of *ꜥbdw* (fish/Abydos) may also explain the apparent erroneous plural strokes of “*jmjw*”. The *b3* which is in the egg is singular, thus we should have “*jmj*”; but, being applied to the fish and to the city, it morphs into a plural nisbe. Thus not an oversight, but a scribal wink.

Another apparent confusion of genders is found in lines 4-5:



A masculine cat (*myw*) whose “greatness” is “female” (*ꜥt*). Coming after the *abdj*-fish who spotted Apophis we are entitled to see in it the “great cat” (which is a form of the sun god Ra) found in Plate 10:

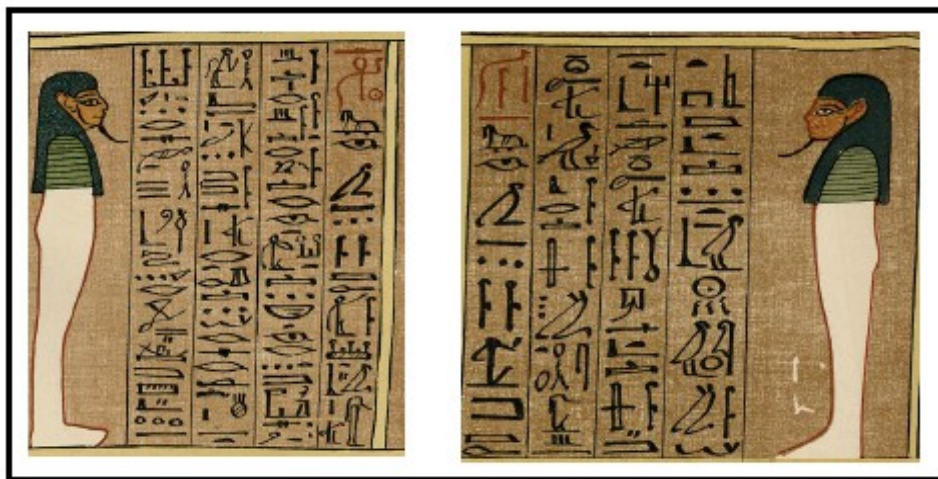


As for the feminine adjective once again it might be a mistake, or the “*t*” might have no morphological value; or it might have been deliberately placed there as an allusion to the feline goddess Mafdet of whom one of her epithets is “slayer of serpents”. Let us call that a strengthening of the effectiveness of the symbolic image; although the most important figure is that of Ra, a solar trait emphasized in the triumphant ending of the last two lines. An imposing portrait of Ani [5] in all his solar splendour [6].

HUMAN bA : Menial Ani (Ushebti)

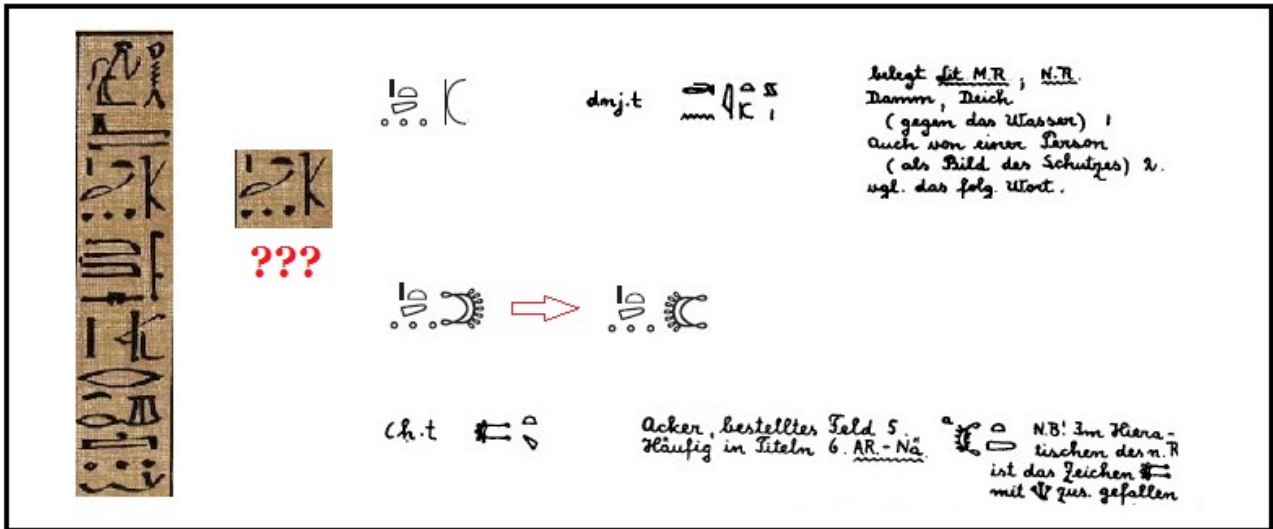


This vignette is indeed very particular, needing an attentive look. As I said before we might consider it the “labouring” aspect of Ani’s *b3*. Interesting to note the size of the glyphs definitely smaller and more crowded than those of the specular vignette [15], as if to underscore the difference between the serene state of the numinous aspect and the frenzied pace of the menial one.



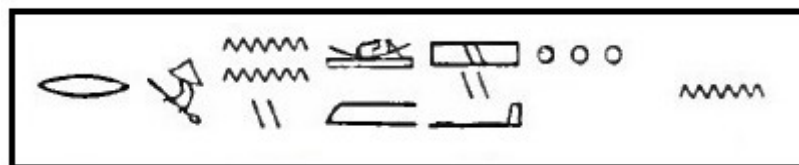
The text itself seems to begin in *medias res*, with the rubrum “*shd*” (causative: to illumine) which could be either an infinitive (the illumination of Osiris Ani) or the continuation of the last line of the previous vignette (*he in whom the Light does shine*) with “*shd*” being an active participle [(the Light) that illumines Osiris Ani]. Or it could be a title of Ani: the “enlightening”. In any case he directly addresses *his* ushebti commanding him to take note of the common tasks expected to be done in the *Realm of the Dead*.

At this point there is the description of a series of jobs, starting from a very problematic one, due to a hardly decipherable glyph:

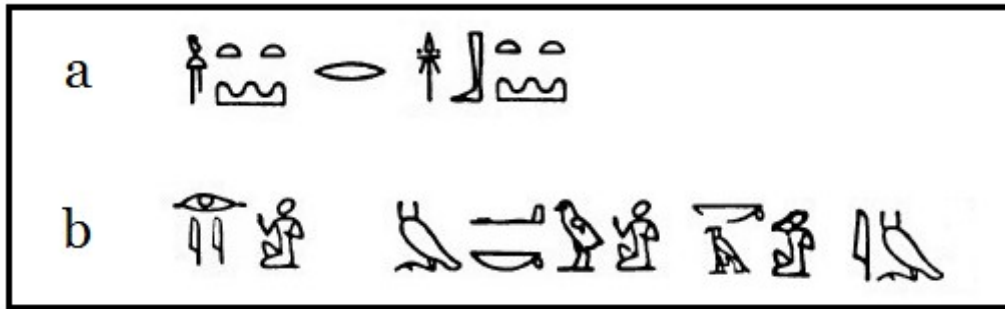


The very crux is what seems to be a half cartouche (V11) which could be used as an ideogram (unattested) for “dam, dyke” (*dnjt*), of which it is a determinative. Thus “*hw n (=j) dnjw*” could point to the building of dams for irrigation purposes, the verb “*hw*” (to beat) describing the material “beating” of the ground and the driving of poles in it.

But the ambiguous sign could also refer to T24 (fishing net) and consequently to the noun “*ht*” (field), although its direction should be reversed. At any rate both the readings would plausibly fit the context, especially since the following lines describe the growing up of the fields and the watering of the irrigation canals of the riverbanks. Once again the question: was it carelessness or were the glyphs deliberately distorted for “security” reasons? An apparent distortion emphasized by the final glyphs resulting in a truncated sentence:



Budge invites the reader to fill the gap making recourse to other papyri in which this spell corresponds to their chapter 6. We may find therein these concluding lines (with some slight variations):



with (a) describing the direction of the transport (*h₂nj*) from west to east and (b) the answer of the *ushebti* who declares he is there to do his work. We can of course consider this truncation as a way to neutralize the spell, especially line (b) where the *ushebti* says he is ready to act. But I think there could be another more intriguing and subtle reason.

First of all let us have a closer look at the verb “*h₂nj*” which is usually rendered like this:



In our case, though, we have “*h₂n₂nj*” with a possible allusion to “*h₂nn*” (to disturb, perturb, interfere with, &tc.). Thus a compound image of a difficult voyage. Usually “*h₂nj*” refers to rowing, to convey by water; but in our case we have a transportation in the sand (*m š'j*). One might object that it is sand which is conveyed by water from the western to the eastern bank, but honestly that would seem quite an “original” action. I'd rather see in it the image of a difficult voyage (*h₂n₂nj*) through the desert land (*m š'j*) towards (*n*) → *sh₂d wsjr 3nj m3₂ hrw*, the beginning of the spell, the enlightenment of Osiris Ani, in a circular never-ending course.

- 1 The enlightening Osiris Ani, justified:
- 2 O Ushebti of mine,
- 3 examine, make reckonings, accounts
- 4 related to all the jobs that are made in the Realm of the Dead.
- 5 So beat for me the fields therein,

- 6 like a man who complies with his task:
 7 for the growing of the farmlands,
 8 for the watering of the riverbanks,
 9 for the transport in the sands to ...

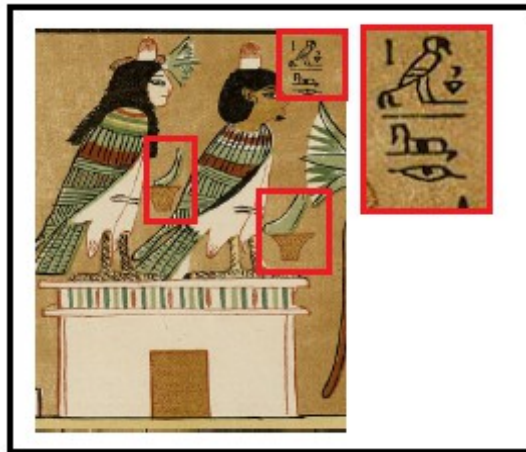
BA OF THE RISING SUN



- 1 Adoration of Ra at his rising
 2 in the sky's eastern horizon [as dweller of the sky's eastern horizon]
 3 by Osiris Ani, justified.

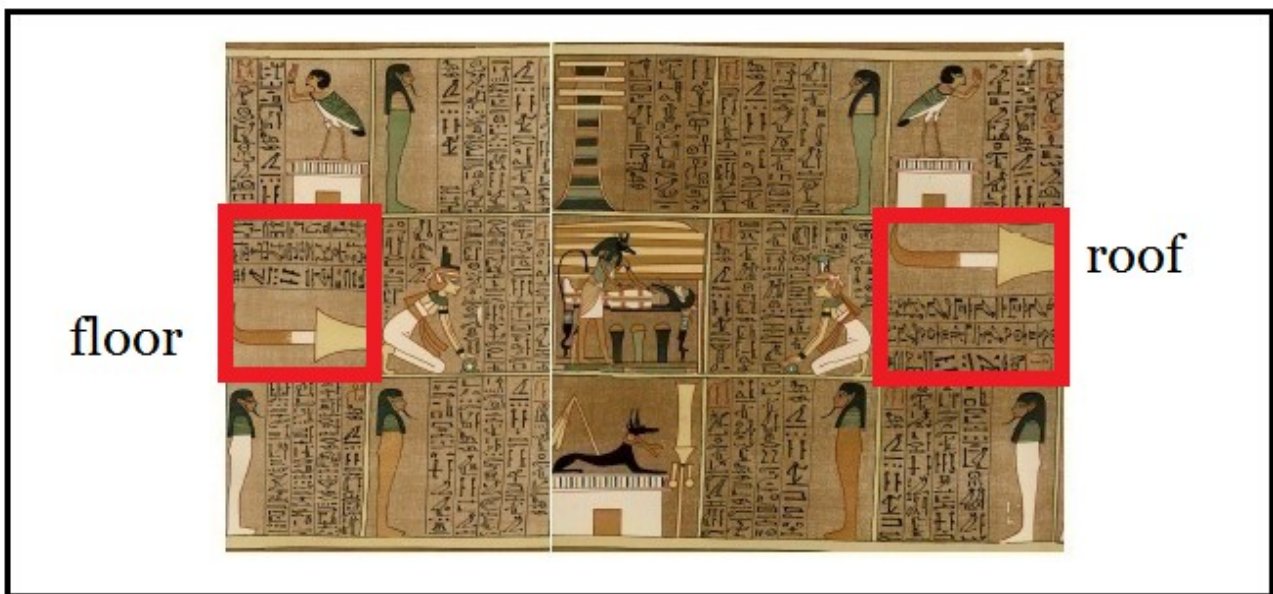
As in the case of the western *ba*, but in a reversed perspective, what is interesting to remark is the flowing of the glyphs towards the praising *ba*, as if the words made themselves heard from a far-away distance. Whereas in the western *ba* the sounds faded-out, here the sounds fade-in. A fade-in that is homologous to the rising of the sun; ending the symbolic cycle of the *ba* experience.

As a matter of fact the *ba* keeps being present also on the last two vignettes [6,10], those depicting the horizontal flames, since a vessel with a flame is the determinative of one of the various graphic renderings of *ba*, as that shown in a vignette of Plate 7:



Let us see then what light they can shed.

PROTECTING BAS: ROOF AND FLOOR



As already pointed out the horizontal positioning of the flames creates a visual dissonance, but that complies with the architectural perspective, since being roof and floor they are perpendicular to the “wall” vignettes.

As regards the reading sequence I think there are substantial motives to start with the “roof” [10]. First of all let us underline that the flames are polar components of the same theme; but the one on the right begins with the rubrum formula “*dd mdw jn wsjr 3nj m3^c hrw*”; and that is a good point in its favour. Furthermore we must remember that the last vignette of the reading sequence was that of

the *b3* of the rising sun, thus consistent with the “upper” flame on the right; the “lower” flame would then be the underworld aspect, once again concluding the cycle. So, let us start with the

ROOF

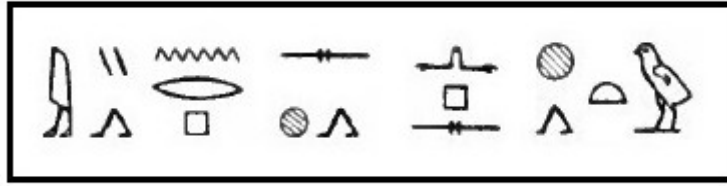
The text may be misleading, unless we detect its dramatic structure and point out its actors. At first sight it seems that the flame successfully faces a hostile force that tries to give it trouble; assuring then Ani that it is his protector. The fact is that Ani is not explicitly called by name, but only referred to by a generic pronoun (*k*). This may generate some confusion, since that same pronoun (*k*) is used by the flame to address the hostile force.

So I am more inclined to look at the scene from a different angle and to take into consideration only two actors, that is: Ani and the flame, seen at first as a dangerous energy that may consume him by fire. As in a ritual trial. But Ani makes show of his strength and tells the flame that he won't be distraught. At this point the flame (acknowledging Ani's qualification) declares itself his protector.

The two interpretations are not contradictory, but may go hand in hand, as in a symbolic resonance; although I prefer to think that the dominant image is the second one, with the dangerous flame that eventually morphs into a benevolent *b3*, after a vivid theatrical contrast. Let us then follow the action:

- 1 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani justified.
- 2 [**FLAME**] I have come to disarray.
 [**ANI**] There shall be no disarray.
- 3 I shall not permit that you disarray me!
- 4 [**FLAME**] I come (as) he who does harm.
 [**ANI**] You shall not do me harm!
- 5 [**FLAME**] I am he who protects your flanks.

As regard grammar and syntax the text does not pose problems except for a couple of minor points. Let us begin with line 2:



I transliterate it as “*jj .n (=j) r psh n psh =tw*”. The last glyphs in the original are not so clear:

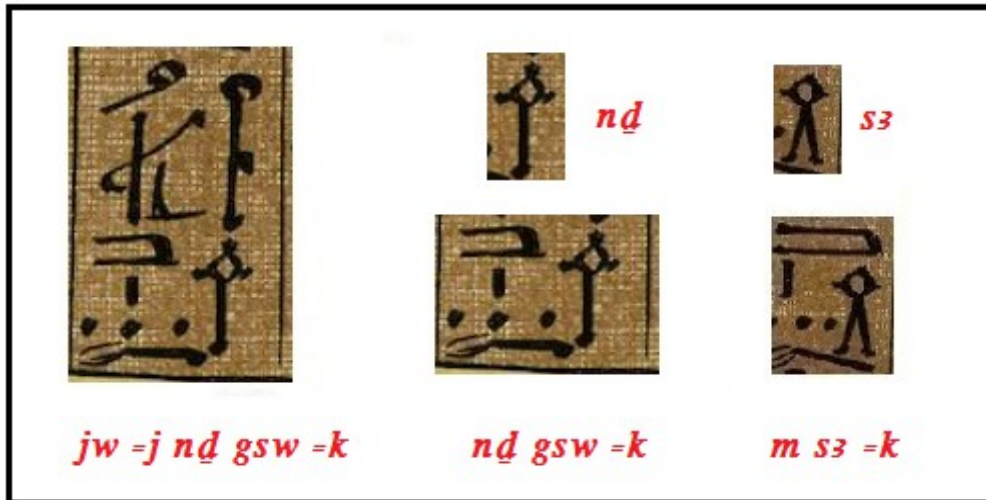


I decided to read the point near “*w*” as “*t*”, thus forming an impersonal “*=tw*”. We might even consider the possibility of an implicit (*=j*), resulting in a passive “*n psh =tw =j*” (I shall not be disarrayed).

But the most intriguing point is the initial “*jj*”. It could be read as a noun deriving from a participle (who comes), transliterated as “*jj n (=j)*” (you who come to me). In this case the confrontation between Ani and the flame would assume a different character. Ani would show from the start an aggressive attitude towards the flame seen as a possible obstacle. Thus lines 2-4 would be all assigned to Ani, showing a further concomitant reading:

- 2 You who come to me to disarray: there shall be no disarray.
- 3 I shall not permit that you disarray me!
- 4 I come (as) he who does harm. You shall not do me harm!

And the flame calms him down, making clear its protective task [5]. The graphic rendering of the last line, excluding an unintended mistake, may be another example of multiple reading, due to an ambiguous glyph which could be either Aa27 (*nd*) or/and V17 (*s3*):

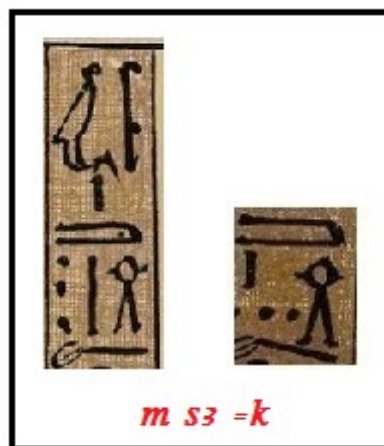


The common formula, amply used in many vignettes of this plate, would be “*m s3 =k*”, but considering the flames at the two sides of the central mummyform Ani I am more inclined to see “*nḏ gsw =k*” as the dominant image and “*m s3 =k*” as a side resonance.

The flame's friendly assurance is emphasized by the words of the one at the

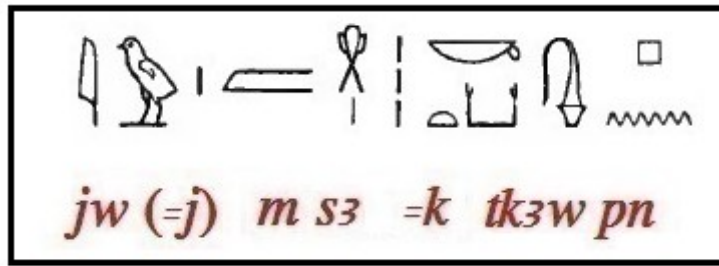
FLOOR

which seem to be the continuation of the previous spell

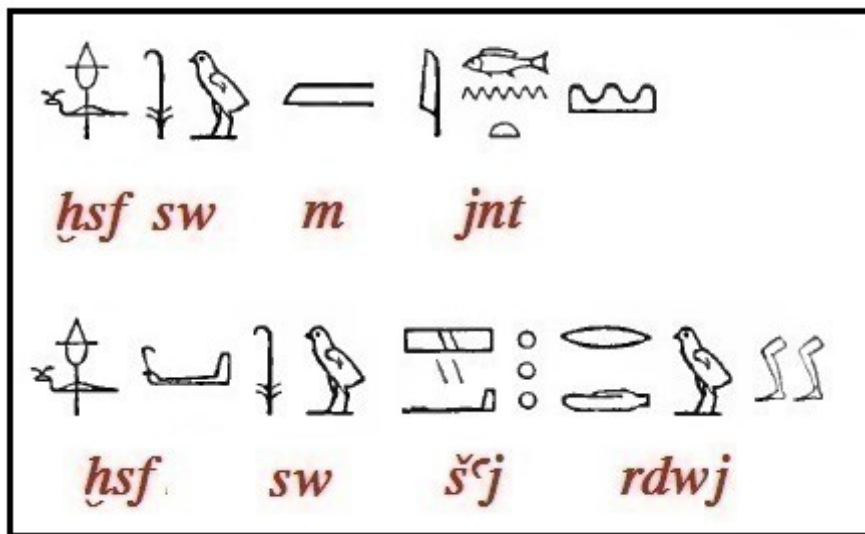


The vertical line beside “*s3*” (V17) is much longer than the usual one; and this may be a subtle invitation to reconsider the just seen “*nḏ / s3*” ambiguity.

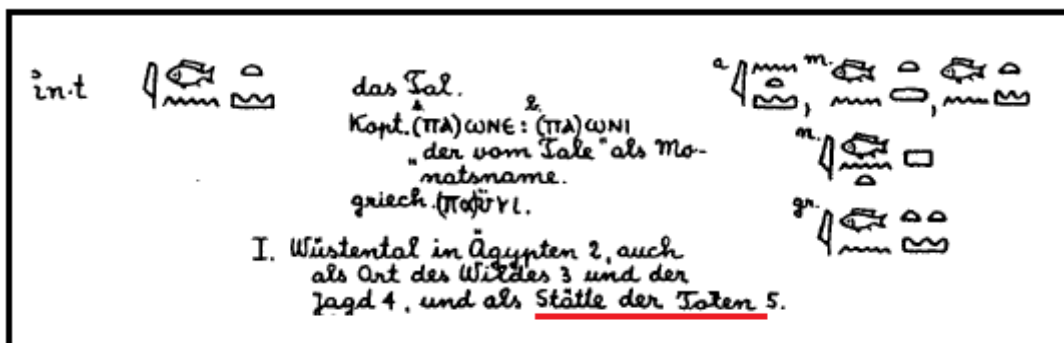
Being on the “lower level” the flame manifests its concrete materiality:



A torch (*tk3w*) having the specific task of chasing away (*hsf*) Ani's enemy:



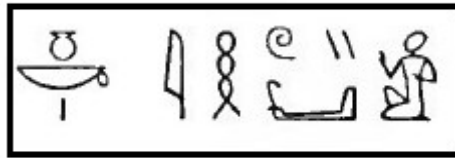
Not, though, a generic enemy, but a specific one described by two precise labels: “*sw m jnt*” and “*sw š'j rdwj*”. There is no doubt we are dealing with a desert, sandy landscape. “*š'j rdwj*” could be a “*nfr hr*” construction, thus “sandy of feet → Sandyfeet” treading the desert valley (*jnt*), which is also the “place of the dead”:



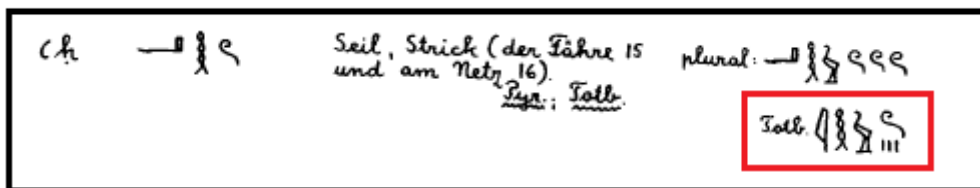
Now talking about an enemy who dwells in the desert I think we are entitled to recognize in him Seth, the god of the desert, becoming in this case a symbolic figure of hostile forces. And “sandyfeet” is in

my opinion quite a potent visual image of the god deeply rooted in the unfruitful desert land.

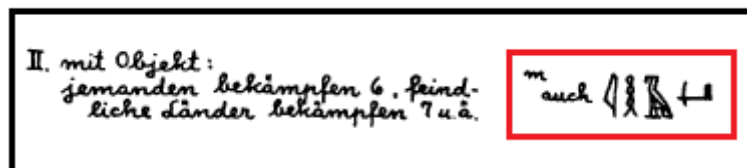
In the final line the flame presents itself as a “*jhy*”:



an unattested term not so easy to decipher. It seems to be a sort of compound of “rope”



and “warrior”



Thus one who fights in behalf of Osiris Ani, being also the rope which can drag the deceased in his underworld journey.

- 1 I am your protection, this flame
- 2 that drives away he who is in the desert valley,
- 3 that drives away Sandyfeet. [→ Seth]
- 4 I am the pugnacious transporter of Osiris Ani
- 5 justified, in peace, in truth.

Or, if we like,

- 4 I am a pugnacious transporter, O Osiris Ani
- 5 justified, in peace, in truth.



For what it's worth: that's it! But I cannot take my leave without mentioning a famous *terzina* of Dante (*Paradise, XXXIII, 85-87*) this highly imaginative plate kept reminding me of:

**Nel suo profondo vidi che si interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l'universo si squaderna.**

In my approximate translation:

*In its most inner depth did I behold,
bound up through love together in one volume,
what does throughout the universe unfold.*

