

# ENIGMATIC TEXTS FROM DEIR EL-MEDINA

## ON THE TRANSMISSION AND DECIPHERMENT OF ‘CRYPTOGRAPHIC’ COMPOSITIONS IN THE COMMUNITY OF WORKMEN\*

BY

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Recent years have witnessed a growing scholarly interest<sup>1</sup> in so-called ‘cryptographic’ compositions, a more appropriate label for which would be ‘enigmatic’.<sup>2</sup> Following in the footsteps of E. Hornung and his exemplary publications and studies of the Netherworld Books from the New Kingdom royal tombs, scholars such as J. C. Darnell, A. von Lieven, L. Morenz, J. A. Roberson, and D. A. Werning<sup>3</sup> have continued to advance our understanding of the underlying mechanisms, orthographic principles, and contextual functions of these non-standard uses of the hieroglyphic system during the New Kingdom. In this respect,

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<sup>1</sup> See the historical overview in D. Meeks, “L’écriture énigmatique égyptienne est-elle énigmatique ?”, *BiOr* 78 (2021), col. 552-554.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the term ‘enigmatic’ stretches back to the nineteenth-century ‘pre-Driotonian’ tradition inspired by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* V, 4, § 20.3): Fr. Lauth, “Aenigmatische Schrift”, *ZÄS* 4 (1866), p. 24-26; Ch. Goodwin, “On the Enigmatic Writing on the Coffin of Seti I”, *ZÄS* 11 (1873), p. 138-144; P. Le Page Renouf, “The Royal Tombs at Bibān-el-Molūk and ‘Enigmatical’ Writing”, *ZÄS* 12 (1874), p. 101-105; Th. Devéria, “L’écriture secrète dans les textes hiéroglyphiques des anciens Égyptiens”, in G. Maspero (ed.), *Mémoires et fragments*, II (*BiEg* 5), 1897, p. 49-80; K. Sethe, “Die aenigmatischen Inschriften”, in W. G. Northampton – W. Spiegelberg – P. E. Newberry, *Report on Some Excavations in the Theban Necropolis during the Winter of 1898-1899*, 1908, p. 3\*-12\* and pl. XI-XII; H. Grapow, *ZÄS* 72 (1936), p. 23-29.

<sup>3</sup> See in particular J. C. Darnell, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity: Cryptographic Compositions in the Tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI and Ramesses IX* (*OBO* 198), 2004; A. von Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne: Das sogenannte Nutbuch (The Carlsberg Papyri 8, CNIP 31/1)*, 2007; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel der Zeichen: Visuelle Poesie im Alten Ägypten (Pictura et Poesis 21)*, 2008; J. A. Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth* (*WSEA* 1), 2012; *id.*, *The Awakening of Osiris and the Transit of the Solar Barques: Royal Apotheosis in a Most Concise Book of the Underworld and Sky* (*OBO* 262), 2013; D. A. Werning, “Aenigmatische Schreibungen in Unterweltbüchern des Neuen Reiches: gesicherte Entsprechungen und Ersetzungsprinzipien”, in C. Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf (GM Bh. 3)*, 2008, p. 124-152; *id.*, *Das Höhlenbuch: Textkritische Edition und Textgrammatik (GOF IV/48)*, 2 vol., 2011.

*Enigmatic Writing in the Egyptian New Kingdom*, edited by D. Klotz and A. Stauder,<sup>4</sup> and its companion volume, the *Lexicon of Ancient Egyptian Cryptography of the New Kingdom*, by J. A. Roberson,<sup>5</sup> represent two substantial milestones capping twenty years of research in this area of research.

One dimension of these enigmatic texts, however, is almost systematically absent from these previous studies: that of the agents who composed, copied, monumentalized, deciphered, and interpreted these enigmatic texts in ancient times.<sup>6</sup> The New Kingdom community of Deir el-Medina, which was in charge of building and decorating the royal tombs in which many of these texts appear, provides an ideal opportunity to investigate such questions,<sup>7</sup> but even those studies<sup>8</sup> and handbooks<sup>9</sup> that deal specifically with the inhabitants of the village and their written production do not directly address these questions.<sup>10</sup>

The present paper aims to fill this gap. In Section 1, we present a brief overview of the different types of enigmatic practices attested in the written products of the Deir el-Medina community. This allows us to better situate our subsequent discussion of two ostraca, O. Cairo CG 25359 and O. Turin CGT 57440, which are given a new interpretation in Sections 2 and 3 respectively.

<sup>4</sup> D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing in the Egyptian New Kingdom I: Revealing, Transforming, and Display in Egyptian Hieroglyphs* (ZÄS Bh. 12/1), 2020.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Roberson, *Enigmatic Writing in the Egyptian New Kingdom, II, A Lexicon of Ancient Egyptian Cryptography of the New Kingdom* (with contributions by David Klotz) (ZÄS Bh. 12/2), 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Exceptions are L. Morenz, “Visuelle Poesie als eine sakrale Zeichen-Kunst der altägyptischen hohen Kultur”, *SAK* 32 (2004), p. 313-315; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel der Zeichen*, p. 108-132; and A. D. Espinel, “Play and Display in Egyptian High Culture: The Cryptographic Texts of Djehuty (TT 11) and their Sociocultural Context”, in J. Galán – B. Bryan – P. Dorman (eds.), *Creativity and Innovation in the Reign of Hatshepsut* (SAOC 69), 2014, p. 327-328. Note that academic study of the scribes as social agents is, in any case, a recent development in Egyptology, which largely explains this state of affairs.

<sup>7</sup> See the remarks in St. Polis, in J. Cromwell – E. Grossman (eds.), *Scribal Repertoires in Egypt from the New Kingdom to the Early Islamic Period*, 2018, p. 78-88.


<sup>8</sup> Illustrative of this point is the absence of any discussion of the enigmatic texts from the four volumes that resulted from the most recent Deir el-Medina conferences: A. Dorn – T. Hofmann (eds.), *Living and Writing in Deir el-Medine: Socio-historical Embodiment of Deir el-Medine Texts* (AH 19), 2006; J. Toivari-Viitala – T. Vartiainen – S. Uvanto (eds.), *Deir el-Medina Studies: Helsinki, June 24-26, 2009, Proceedings* (The Finnish Egyptological Society – Occasional Publications 2), 2014; A. Dorn – St. Polis (eds.), *Outside the Box: Selected Papers from the Conference “Deir el-Medina and the Theban Necropolis in Contact” Liège, 27-29 October 2014* (AegLeod 11), 2018; S. Töpfer – P. Del Vesco – F. Poole (eds.), *Deir el-Medina: Through the Kaleidoscope: Proceedings of the International Workshop, Turin 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 2018*, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> There is, for instance, no entry on the topic in the excellent handbook by B. G. Davies, *Life within the Five Walls: A Handbook to Deir el-Medina*, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> One exception, which focuses on the ‘perturbation’ of the order of signs in the *Netherworld Books*, though not specifically on their enigmatic aspect, is Fl. Mauric-Barbério, “Copie de textes à l’envers dans les tombes royales”, in G. Andreu (ed.), *Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois : la vie en Égypte au temps des pharaons du Nouvel Empire. Actes du colloque organisé par le Musée du Louvre, les 3 et 4 mai 2002*, 2003, p. 173-194.

## 1. ENIGMATIC PRACTICES IN DEIR EL-MEDINA

Given the quantity of written material at our disposal from Deir el-Medina, we have surprisingly little evidence regarding the production of enigmatic texts by the community outside of the royal tombs themselves. But scarcity is not absence. As we shall see, all the types of enigmatic writing<sup>11</sup> are actually attested in the archaeological sources that come from the village *sensu lato*.<sup>12</sup> In structuring (our presentation of) this material, we propose a continuum of enigmatic practices ranging from “images that beg to be read” [+ICONIC] to “texts that ask to be looked at” [+TEXTUAL].<sup>13</sup>

Two famous examples of enigmatic writing are decisive representatives of the iconic pole. In a scene from the double tomb of Khabekhenet (i)<sup>14</sup> and his brother Khonsu (ii)<sup>15</sup> (TT 2-2b; 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), the mummy of the deceased (fig. 1a) is replaced by a fish<sup>16</sup> (fig. 1b). This surprising substitution<sup>17</sup> can be straightforwardly explained: based on the enigmatic principle of categorial sign exchange,<sup>18</sup> this fish may be read as ,<sup>19</sup> which stands for the lexeme

<sup>11</sup> On these different types of enigmatic writing, see É. Drioton, “La cryptographie égyptienne”, *CdE* 9/18 (1934), p. 192-206; *id.*, “La cryptographie égyptienne”, *Revue Lorraine d'Anthropologie* 6 (1934), p. 5-28; H. Brunner, “Änigmatische Schrift (Kryptographie)”, in H. Kees (ed.), *Ägyptologie: Ägyptische Schrift und Sprache (HdO I.1.1)*, 1959, p. 52-58; J. C. Darnell, “Ancient Egyptian Cryptography: Graphic Hermeneutics”, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> The overview presented here is based exclusively on published documents and is not exhaustive. A systematic investigation of all our surviving materials (including graffiti, tomb inscriptions, etc.) would reveal many more cases of enigmatic writing, while the summary below also excludes the enigmatic writing practices instantiated in the royal tombs themselves.

<sup>13</sup> The interplay of visual and linguistic dimensions is key to each of the different types of enigmatic writing; see in particular L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 105 & *passim*, and A. Stauder, “The Visual Otherness of the Enigmatic Text in Some Netherworld Books of the New Kingdom”, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 249-265. On the dynamic relationship between image and writing in ancient Egypt in general, see P. Vernus, “De l’image au signe d’écriture, du signe d’écriture à l’image, de l’image au signe d’écriture : la ronde sémiotique de la civilisation pharaonique”, *Actes sémiotiques* 119 (2016), p. 1-19.

<sup>14</sup> The identities of the ancient individuals referred to in this contribution are based on B. G. Davies, *Who’s Who at Deir el-Medina: A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen’s Community (EgUit 13)*, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. B. Bruyère, *Tombes thébaines de Deir el-Médineh à décoration monochrome (MIFAO 86)*, 1952, p. 22-56 and pl. I-XII. A complete publication of this funerary complex is being prepared by Anne-Claire Salmas. See K. Gabler – A.-Cl. Salmas, dans S. Töpfer – P. Del Vesco – F. Poole (eds.), *Deir el-Medina: Through the Kaleidoscope: Proceedings of the International Workshop, Turin 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 2018*, 2022, p. 120-125.

<sup>16</sup> With respect to the pastiche of this scene in the IFAO house at Deir el-Medina, see A.-Cl. Salmas, *BIFAO* 118 (2018), p. 410-435; N. Cherpion, *EA&O* 100 (2020-2021), p. 77-82.

<sup>17</sup> Several other iconic and mythological links are instantiated in the tomb, though these cannot be discussed here; see B. Bruyère, *Tombes thébaines*, p. 39-40: “S’il était besoin d’identifier le latès représenté ici, on trouverait cette identification dans la scène suivante qui complète et éclaire la scène XII. (...) Le dieu Kheper-Rê hiéracocéphale et Osiris Khentamenti (...) se tiennent accroupis et mumiformes l’un devant l’autre (...). Vis-à-vis des deux dieux est écrit en gros caractères le nom du nome latopolite composé de deux poissons superposés au-dessus du signe des nomes et des signes de la ville. C’est dire clairement que la forme syncrétisée Osiris-Rê est la divinité éponyme d’Esneh”.

<sup>18</sup> Principle no. #7a in D. A. Werning, “Semiotic Aspects of Alienated and Cryptographic Encodings in the Netherworld Books of the New Kingdom”, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 207-208.

<sup>19</sup> J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 111.



Fig. 1a. TT 2B, north wall  
(after B. Bruyère, *Rapport*, 1952, pl. VII).



Fig. 1b. TT 2B, south wall  
(after A.-Cl. Salmas, *BIFAO* 118 [2018], p. 412).


*h3(.t)* “corpse” (*Wb.* III, 359, 9-20).<sup>20</sup> The substitution thus adds a linguistic dimension to the visual one.

Another image-that-can-be-read is to be found in the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Anhurkhawy (ii) (TT 359). In this illustration of *BD* spell 17 (fig. 2), signed by the artist Hormin (i)<sup>21</sup>, the Great Cat of Heliopolis is depicted slaughtering Apophis with his knife.<sup>22</sup> This composition features a number of interesting visual features,<sup>23</sup> but it is the abnormally long ears on the cat that have attracted the greatest attention from Egyptologists.<sup>24</sup> These have generally been interpreted as the ears of a hare,<sup>25</sup> though the painting make much better sense if they are identified as the ears of a donkey.<sup>26</sup> This turns the cat into a ‘cat-donkey’, *mjw-3* in Egyptian, which is a homograph for the “Great Cat” (3 “donkey” ~ 3 “great”)<sup>27</sup> depicted in this masterful composition.

<sup>20</sup> See the discussion in L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 86. For the non-enigmatic (*i.e.*, metaphoric) interpretation of this sign, based on *BD* spell 88, see S. Martinak, *Bedeutung und Rolle des Motivs: Anubis als Balsamierer in den thebanischen Privatgräbern des Neuen Reiches*, 2018 (unpublished MA thesis), p. 72-73.

<sup>21</sup> About the *sš-ḳd* Hormin (i) and his written production, see recently H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, in S. Gerhards *et al.* (eds.), *Schöne Denkmäler sind entstanden. Studien zu Ehren von Ursula Verhoeven*, 2023, p. 61-101.

<sup>22</sup> N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d’Inherkhâouy (TT 359) à Deir el-Medina (MIFAO 128)*, 2010, vol. 1, p. 111-114; vol. 2, p. 51 (fig. 78), p. 65, fig. 98-99.

<sup>23</sup> Note that the Ished-tree in this composition grows out of the slaughtered Apophis, just as the sun rises from the horizon in the general shape of the Akhet-sign . This is a clear reference to the solar dimension of the Ished-tree of Heliopolis that grew on top of the *Ḳ3.t-wd* ‘Mound of Beheading’ (on this place, see J.-P. Corteggiani, *BIFAO* 95 [1995], p. 141-151; on the general interpretation of this scene, see V. Angenot, in M. Weemans – D. Gamboni – J.-H. Martin [eds.], *Voir double, pièges et révélations du visible*, 2016, p. 134-136).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the early copy made by Sir J. G. Wilkinson in 1849 (N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d’Inherkhâouy*, I, p. 112).

<sup>25</sup> *E.g.*, J.-P. Corteggiani, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), p. 147.

<sup>26</sup> On the association between the donkey and the sun in the context of Deir el-Medina, see D. Meeks, *EA&O* 25 (2002), p. 46; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 171-172.

<sup>27</sup> Following V. Angenot, “Rébus, calembours et images subliminales dans l’iconographie égyptienne”, in Cl.-A. Brisset – Fl. Dumora-Mabille – M. Simon-Oikawa (eds.), *Rébus d’ici et d’ailleurs : écriture, image, signe; colloque international*,



Fig. 2. TT 359, Vault G, West wall  
(after N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d'Inherkhâouy*, II, p. 65 [fig. 98]).

Images that can be read are not found exclusively in tombs. Some stelae display similar features. An example is stela Cairo CG 35028 (= JE 72022; fig. 3), a vivid testimony to royal piety found by B. Bruyère in the North-East corner of the Ptolemaic precinct.<sup>28</sup> It reflects several layers of meaning, which is typical of enigmatic compositions:

2-4 mai 2012, *Université Paris Diderot*, 2018, p. 93-95. The drawing on the same wall of a scarab with forelegs shaped like ibex-horns is different in nature; it does not call for linguistic decoding. On this case of a 'surcharge symbolique', see the discussion in Chr. Cannuyer, in Chr. Cannuyer *et al.* (eds), *L'animal dans les civilisations orientales / Animals in the Oriental Civilizations*, 2001, p. 45-52; *id.*, *GM* 184 (2001), p. 81-84; N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d'Inherkhâouy*, I, p. 95-96; II, p. 57, fig. 84.

<sup>28</sup> The enigmatic dimension of this stela was first recognized by B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el-Médineh (1935-1940). Fascicule II : Trouvailles d'objets (FIFAO 20/2)*, 1952, p. 50, 99, pl. XLII. See the recent publication in J. M. Galán – G. Menéndez, *Deir el-Medina stelae and other inscribed objects (CGC)*, 2018, p. 80-81, pl. xxv. For a discussion, see L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 87-88. A similar representation from Deir el-Medina is found on lintel Cairo CG 35017 (= JE 43690; see B. Bruyère, *Rapport (1935-1940)*, II, p. 12, fig. 83). Another enigmatic representation which is not yet properly understood is found in the tomb of Néferrenpet (TT 336), see B. Bruyère, *Tombes thébaines*, frontispice.

- (1) The figure of Amun functions both as a visual representation of the god in the solar boat<sup>29</sup> – accompanied by the caption *Jmn-R*<sup>c</sup>, *nswt ntr.w n [Jp.t-]s.(w)t, ntr ʿ3* “Amun-Ra, king of the gods of Karnak, the great god” – and as a ‘decalibrated’<sup>30</sup> sign facing the rest of the name of Ramses II (*Wsr-M3<sup>c</sup>.t-R<sup>c</sup> stp-n-R<sup>c</sup> Mry-Jmn*). The king is thus assimilated to the god Amun in his journey.
- (2) The sun encircling this scene is also a *šn*-sign (☉).<sup>31</sup> It functions as a cartouche around the name of the king and plays simultaneously on the expression *šnn.t-Jtn* “what the sun disk encircles” (*Wb.* IV, 490, 7).
- (3) Finally, on an even more granular level, if one combines the *šms.w*-symbol with an enigmatic reading (*Jmn-R<sup>c</sup>*) of the solar boat (< *jm(w)-n-R<sup>c</sup>* “boat of Ra”),<sup>32</sup> one arrives at the phrase *šms(.w) Jmn-R<sup>c</sup>* “follower/servant of Amun-Ra”, which turns the king into the first devout of the Theban god.<sup>33</sup>



Fig. 3. Stela Cairo CG 35028  
(= JE 72022; after B. Bruyère, *Rapport*, 1952, pl. XLII).

<sup>29</sup> Compare with B. Bruyère, *Rapport (1935-1940)*, II, p. 88, fig. 163.

<sup>30</sup> On this notion, see P. Vernus, *Actes sémiotiques* 119 (2016), p. 3 and *passim*.

<sup>31</sup> See B. Bruyère, *Rapport (1935-1940)*, II, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> This interpretation was proposed by L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 88. On this reading of the solar boat, see already É. Drioton, *BSFE* 19 (1955), p. 5 [63]; E. Hornung – E. Staehelin, *Skarabäen und andere Siegelamulette aus Basler Sammlungen (ÅDS 1)*, 1976, p. 174. É. Drioton (“La valeur cryptographique du signe représentant la barque solaire avec le disque”, *RdE* 12 [1960], p. 89-90) has noted other examples where the solar boat possesses the value *Jmn* and not *Jmn-R<sup>c</sup>*, which would obviously be suitable here as well.

<sup>33</sup> A good parallel to this boat (though without the royal name within the sun disk) is the stelophorous statue of Ramose (i) (Cairo JE 72000, now in the Suez Museum; see B. Bruyère, *Rapport (1935-1940)*, II, p. 56-57, pl. XXXV; D. Valbelle,

Stela CG 35028 exemplifies the suitability of the names of kings for displays of enigmatic virtuosity on the part of the scribes of the Necropolis. Similarly, O. Cairo CG 25671 (fig. 4) might even testify to the fact that they honed their skills and developed greater inventiveness within the framework of these special writing practices.<sup>34</sup> This large limestone ostrakon (40 × 28 cm) from the Valley of the Kings was probably created by Ramose (i) himself, perhaps in celebration of his appointment as Scribe of the Tomb in year 5 of Ramses III.<sup>35</sup> This is suggested by the hieratic text below the two hieroglyphic lines: *wḥm dj.t(w)zʿf*<sup>36</sup> *r šḥḥ m S.t-M3ʿ.t m ḥsb.t 5 3bd 3 3ḥ.t sw 10 nswt bjty Wsr-M3ʿ.t-Rʿ stp-n-Rʿ .w.s s3-Rʿ Rʿ-ms-sw mr[y-Jmn] “Repeating<sup>37</sup> his appointment as scribe of the Necropolis in year 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Akhet, day 10 of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt *Wsr-M3ʿ.t-Rʿ stp-n-Rʿ*, l.k.p., son of Ra, Ramses Meryamun.”*



The two hieroglyphic lines<sup>38</sup> in black ink on this ostrakon read *jr.n šḥḥ Rʿ-ms (m3ʿ-ḥrw) n pr Mn-ḥpr.w-Rʿ Dḥwty-ms Ḥʿ-ḥ.w* “What the scribe Ramose (j.v.) of the temple of Thutmose IV has done (*i.e.* this inscription)”. As noted by several scholars,<sup>39</sup> the two

“Le khénou de Ramsès II”, in B. J. J. Haring – O. E. Kaper – R. Van Walsem [eds.], *The Workman’s Progress: Studies in the Village of Deir el-Medina and Other Documents from Western Thebes in Honour of Rob Demarée* [EgUit 28], 2014, p. 246-247).

<sup>34</sup> The ostrakon was published in J. Černý, *Ostraca hiératiques, troisième fascicule (CGC)*, 1933, p. 55-56, pl. 75\* & LXX. For discussions of the ostrakon, see S. Sauneron – J. Yoyotte, *RdE* 7 (1950), p. 10-11; L. Morenz, *SAK* 32 (2004), p. 314-315; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 113-115, and H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, *Grundzüge einer Geschichte des Hieratischen*, II (*Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie* 14/2), 2021, p. 374-376. Two other ‘ostraca’ with ‘royal titularies’ in enigmatic writing have been published by É. Drioton (*ASAE* 40 [1940], p. 377-387). These differ substantially from the ostrakon discussed here: their texts are incised. Their interpretation by Drioton is problematic in many ways. They probably date to much later times, too. As such, they are best interpreted as trial pieces or ‘aides-mémoires’ (see L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 107; D. Klotz, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder [eds.], *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 53-54).

<sup>35</sup> On the early career of Ramose (i), see J. Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period (BdE* 50), 2004, p. 317-320; B. G. Davies, *Who’s Who*, p. 79-83; B. G. Davies, *Life within the Five Walls*, p. 260-263.

<sup>36</sup> The construction is most likely *wḥm* + INF. ‘to do something again’, which is well attested in the administrative sources from the village (for *wḥm (r)dj.t* specifically, see, for instance, O. DeM 931, 1-3; O. Glasgow D.1925.66, r<sup>o</sup> 13-16; O. Glasgow D.1925.71, v<sup>o</sup> 4-6; O. UC 39645, r<sup>o</sup> 1-6). An interpretation of the form as an (emphatic) perfective passive (*wḥm dj.twzʿf*) is possible, but unlikely in this context.

<sup>37</sup> The introductory lexeme *wḥm* is generally left untranslated by commentators (*e.g.*, J. Černý, *A Community of Workmen*, p. 317; B. G. Davies, *Who’s Who*, p. 79, n. 33). H.-W. Fischer-Elfert (*Grundzüge*, II, p. 375) made the ingenious suggestion to read the first two quadrats as *št.twzʿf* with the meaning “er wird aufgezo-gen (zum Schreiber)”. However, this reading suffers from a lack of palaeographical and orthographical parallels:  does not normally feature the cross on top of the leg in Ramesside hieratic, unlike , for which it is a characteristic feature; the construction *št.t* “to mind (a child)” (*Wb*. I, 23, 9) with DIRECT OBJECT + *r* STATUS is not attested (as far as we know). We suggest that Ramose’s appointment as scribe was confirmed on several occasions in year 5 of Ramses II, which would justify the use of *wḥm*, including during a visit to the Valley of the Kings (here) and to the Valley of the Queens (Theb. Gr. 1140, probably written 10 days after O. Cairo CG 25671; see J. Černý, *Graffiti hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques de la nécropole thébaine : n<sup>os</sup> 1060 à 1405 (= DFIFAO 9)*, 1956, p. 6 & pl. 13).

<sup>38</sup> The signs that are visible above the first line have been interpreted by J. Černý (*Ostraca hiératiques*, p. 55) as ‘un essai de plume’. This claim is somewhat problematic, though it cannot be properly assessed without access to the original document.

<sup>39</sup> See already S. Sauneron – J. Yoyotte, *RdE* 7 (1950), p. 10-11.



Fig. 4. O. Cairo CG 25671 (after J. Černý, *Ostraca hiératiques*, 1935, pl. LXX).

versions of the name of Thutmose IV vary between them. This is most notable with respect to *Dḥwty-ms*,<sup>40</sup> where the baboon on its standard (*Dḥwty*) is accompanied by a child (*ms*) in the first line, and where the baboon (*Dḥwty*) is brought (*mz* [Wb. 2, 135, 7-21] ~ *ms*) by a standing figure (the king?) who holds its tail in l. 2.<sup>41</sup> This has generally been understood as an ‘exercice de lettrés’ on the part of the scribe Ramose (i) (“mit der er seine Fähigkeit zu sinnträchtigen Schreibungen unter Beweis stellte”<sup>42</sup>) or even as a kind of test whereby he could prove his facility with enigmatic writing<sup>43</sup> as an essential part of his new job. However, this interpretation is built on the assumption that both lines were written by the same scribe; this is far from certain, especially given the obvious palaeographic discrepancies between the two hieroglyphic hands.<sup>44</sup> It seems more likely that, as often happens in graffiti, the second line was a response to the first line written by Ramose (i), as a later scribe sought to emulate the literate achievements of a predecessor.

This example carries us quite naturally into the realm of so-called ‘ornamental’ or ‘monumental cryptography’,<sup>45</sup> which usually refers to the names and titles of individuals, most often kings,<sup>46</sup> written using “anthropomorphic figures, typically striding, combined with divine

<sup>40</sup> For the value *ḥ* of the sundisk in *ḥ-ḥ.w* (l. 1), see *ibid.*, p. 11, n. 3.

<sup>41</sup> As suggested by L. Morenz, *SAK* 32 (2004), p. 314; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 113.

<sup>42</sup> L. Morenz, *SAK* 32 (2004), p. 315.

<sup>43</sup> L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 114 & 116.



<sup>44</sup> H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, *Grundzüge*, II, p. 376.

<sup>45</sup> See the foundational study by É. Drioton, *ASAE* 40 (1940), p. 305-429.

<sup>46</sup> Famous examples are the names of Ramses VI in KV 9 (KRI VI, 328, 3-4; see D. A. Werning, “L’écriture énigmatique : distanciée, cryptée, sportive”, in St. Polis (ed.), *Guide des écritures de l’Égypte ancienne* [GIFAO 2], 2022, p. 203-204).

emblems and sacred animals, appearing more like a very wide offering scene than a normal text.”<sup>47</sup> This type of enigmatic writing was in vogue during the Ramesside period, and was particularly fashionable under Ramses II.<sup>48</sup> As such, it is not surprising that this writing practice is evidenced by a pair of limestone slabs from Deir el-Medina (Cairo CG 35061 [= JE 72015] and Cairo CG 35062 [= JE 72016]).<sup>49</sup> These were originally painted in yellow, and bear the titulary of queen Nefertari. They were found in 1939 by B. Bruyère during his excavations<sup>50</sup> to the east of the *hnmw* of Ramses II.<sup>51</sup> They might have belonged to an inner room of this (or a nearby) building, where they most likely formed part of an ornamental frieze.

Over the years, several problems in Drioton’s original interpretation have been overcome,<sup>52</sup> resulting in the following reading:<sup>53</sup> *h̄m.t nswt wr.t, nb.t t3.wy, Nfr.t-jry, mr.t n.t Mw.t, n̄h.tj* “Great royal wife, Lady of the Two Lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, may she live” (fig. 5) and [<sup>?</sup>*h̄m.t nswt wr.t*], *nb.t t3.wy, h̄nmw.t Šm̄.w M̄h.w* “[<sup>?</sup>Great royal wife<sup>?</sup>], Lady of the Two Lands, Mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt” (Cairo CG 35062). This enigmatic frieze, while providing the name and titles of Nefertari, visually situates the queen within

An ingenious composition is to be found on the stela of Baki (i) from Deir el-Medina (Turin Cat. 1549 [N. 50055] = *KRI* I, 372, 10), where the name *Mn-M3̄.t-R̄*, i.e. Sety I, is written using the hieroglyphic sequence  and  positioned just below the winged sun (*Behdety*) on top of the stela, thus combining iconic and textual elements to form the name of the king (M. Tosi – A. Roccati, *Stele e altre epigrafi di Deir el Medina: n. 50001 – n. 50262 [CMT Serie Seconda – Collezioni I]*, 1972, p. 90-91, 285). Note further the unpublished ostrakon O. Cairo JE 96561 from the Valley of the Kings, which bears an enigmatic cartouche of Ramses VI and two lines of hieratic on each of its sides with portions of the Book of Caverns V and VII (B. J. J. Haring, in U. Verhoeven [ed.], *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II: Neue Forschungen und Methoden der Hieratistik, Akten zweier Tagungen im Mainz im April 2011 und März 2013*, 2015, p. 72-73; cf. § 2.3 *infra*).

<sup>47</sup> D. Klotz, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder [eds.], *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 49.

<sup>48</sup> A. Pries, “Ἐμψυχα ἱερογλυφικά I: Eine Annäherung an Wesen und Wirkmacht ägyptischer Hieroglyphen nach dem indigenen Zeugnis”, in S. L. Lippert – M. Schentuleit – M. A. Stadler (eds.), *Sapientia Felicitas: Festschrift für Günter Vittmann zum 29. Februar 2016 (CENiM 14)*, 2016, p. 469-470; D. Klotz, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder [eds.], *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 49-99.

<sup>49</sup> *Editio princeps* in É. Drioton, “Cryptogrammes de la reine Nefertari”, *ASAE* 39 (1939), p. 133-144.

<sup>50</sup> B. Bruyère, *Rapport (1935-1940)*, II, p. 35, 82-83 & pl. XLII; J. M. Galán – G. Menéndez, *Deir el-Medina Stelae and Other Inscribed Objects*, p. 168-171 and pl. L.

<sup>51</sup> On this building, see D. Valbelle, in B. J. J. Haring – O. E. Kaper – R. Van Walsem (eds.), *The Workman’s Progress*, p. 237-254. On the special relationship between the aforementioned scribe Ramose (i) and the *hnmw* of Ramses II, see K. Exell, in R. J. Dann (ed.), *Current Research in Egyptology 2004: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium which Took Place at the University of Durham January 2004*, 2006, p. 51-67; *ead.*, *Soldiers, Sailors and Sandalmakers: A Social Reading of Ramesside Period Votive Stelae (GHP Egyptology 10)*, 2009, p. 73-74.

<sup>52</sup> See M. Étienne-Fart, “‘De rebus quae geruntur...’ dans deux inscriptions ramessides”, *BIFAO* 94 (1994), p. 139-142; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 222-224; F. Taterka, “Les mystères des hiéroglyphes – la cryptographie égyptienne sous le Nouvel Empire”, *Annales de l’Académie polonaise des sciences* 14 (2012), p. 443-444; *id.*, “Ancient Egyptian Royal Cryptography in the Ramesside Period”, in M. Zadka – K. Buczek – P. P. Chruszczewski – A. R. Knapik – J. Mianowski (eds.), *Antropologia Komunikacji: Od starożytności do współczesności*, 2015, p. 78-80; D. Klotz, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 54-55.

<sup>53</sup> We follow D. Klotz’ analysis here (see previous fn.). Note that the *t* in front of the depiction of Mut should most likely be understood as the feminine ending *apo koinou* for the three elements of the epithet *mr.t n.t Mw.t*.

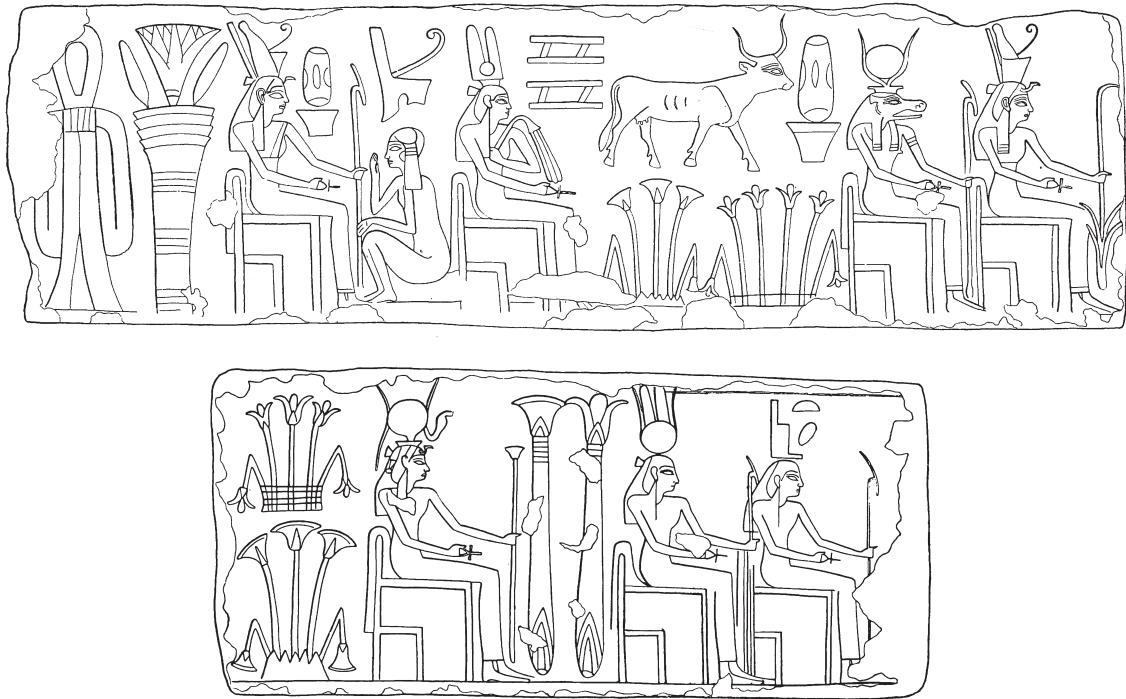


Fig. 5. Slabs Cairo CG 35061 & 35062  
(based on É. Drioton, *ASAE* 39 [1939], pl. XIII-XIV).

the realm of the goddesses and, more specifically, amongst those goddesses who were worshipped locally.

Although small ‘tableaux’ typical of ‘thematic cryptography’<sup>54</sup> are common in such examples (e.g., in the epithet *mr.t n.t Mw.t*), the linearization, orientation, and spatial organization that are characteristic of this writing bring us closer to the textual pole of enigmatic writing, and to the so-called ‘regular’ or ‘annotational’ type of enigmatic writing.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> On the near-absence of scarabs (on which the type of enigmatic writing known as ‘thematic cryptography’ commonly appears) in the material excavated at Deir el-Medina, see E. Hornung – E. Staehelin, *Skarabäen*, p. 16-17 and 377. Enigmatic inscriptions on scarabs (and similar small artefacts) are generally an issue (see O. Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit: Einleitung* [OBO Ser Arch. 10], 1995, p. 177-180; Cl. Jurman, “Ein Siegelring mit kryptographischer Inschrift in Bonn”, *ÄgLev* 20 [2010], p. 227-242; J. Fr. Quack, *Altägyptische Amulette und ihre Handhabung* [ORA 31], 2022, p. 174).

<sup>55</sup> We focus exclusively on sequences of more than one sign here. Texts from the village are regularly interspersed with isolated signs that are typical of the enigmatic repertoire, which goes to demonstrate the continuum of practices between ‘normal’ and ‘enigmatic’ orthography. See, for example,  $\text{𓆎}$  with the value *n* in the spelling of the proper name *Jn-hr.t-ḥ'.w* (N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d'Inherkhâouy*, II, pl. 6 and 8);  $\text{𓆏}$  for *m33* ‘to see’, e.g., in stela Turin N. 50046, l. 2; N. 50050, l. 3 (= M. Tosi – A. Roccati, *Stele*, p. 80, 280; p. 85, 282), T. Turin N. 22025 (L. Habachi, *Tavole d'offerta, are e bacili da libagione: n. 22001-22067* [CMT Serie Seconda – Collezioni II], 1977, p. 30, 133),

An example of this type is found on the limestone funerary headrest of Qenhirkhopshef (i) (BM EA 63783; fig. 6), the famous scribe of the Tomb who is known to have been an erudite of the Deir el-Medina community.<sup>56</sup> On one outside edge of the artefact (C), the first

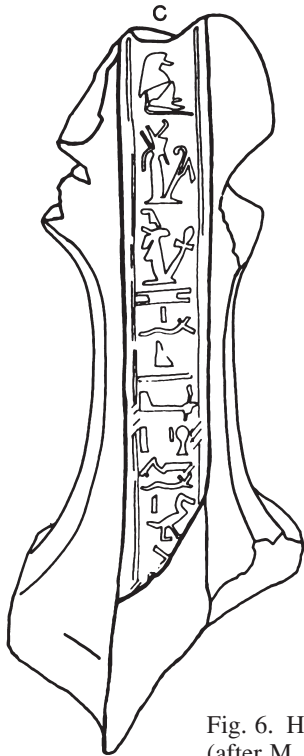








Fig. 6. Headrest of Qenhirkhopshef (i)  
(after M. Bierbrier – R. B. Parkinson, *HTBM* 12, 1993, pl. XLIII).

three hieroglyphic signs  are typically left unexplained,<sup>57</sup> though a comparison with Qenhirkhopshef's title on face A and B of the headrest (and in many other contexts) show that *sh3 nswt m3c* "truthful royal scribe" must be the correct reading, with a logographic value for the three signs.<sup>58</sup>


Another similar case of enigmatic writing is found on the papyrus-amulet of the scribe Butehamun (P. Turin Cat. 1858; fig. 7).<sup>59</sup> Here, a representation of the goddess Nut (similar to those found in the Book of Caverns, V) is captioned with the text . This can be understood as *Jtm rnzk m-m3c.t* "Atum is truly your name,"<sup>60</sup> reading  as *j* (class exchange with *ju*),  as *t3*, and  as *m* (from *jm(3)w* "solar brilliance").<sup>61</sup> This spelling of the name of the god is a rather straightforward (and early) example of a 'graphie théologique'.<sup>62</sup> Khepri is associated here with his complementary form, the god Atum, and acts visually as an intermediary between the earth and the shining

cf. Fr. Servajean, *Le tombeau de Nakhtamon (TT 335) à Deir el Medina: paléographie (PalHiéro 5)*, 2011, p. 46-47, § 85;

 for *Dhwtwy* on stela Turin N. 50046, top (M. Tosi – A. Roccati, *Stele*, p. 80, 280).



<sup>56</sup> See B. G. Davies, *Life within the Five Walls*, p. 257-260.

<sup>57</sup> See e.g., M. Bierbrier – R. B. Parkinson, *HTBM* 12, 1993, p. 15, pl. 42-43; R. Parkinson, *Cracking Codes: The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment*, 1999, p. 69. Cf. *KRI* VII, 200, 8.

<sup>58</sup> On the value *sh3* "scribe" for the seated baboon, sacred animal of Thot, the god of the scribes, see H. De Meulenaere, "Les valeurs du signe  à la Basse Époque", *BIFAO* 54 (1954), p. 75; D. Klotz – M. Brown, *JARCE* 52 (2016), p. 283.

<sup>59</sup> S. Demichelis, *BIFAO* 100 (2000), p. 267-273.

<sup>60</sup> Following L. Morenz, *DE* 56 (2003), p. 57-68; with E. Meltzer, *DE* 58 (2004), p. 69 and L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 236-238.

<sup>61</sup> This interpretation of the sequence  as *Jtm* is supported by an enigmatic trigram for Atum attested since the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty:  (see M.-L. Ryhiner, *RdE* 29 [1977], p. 125-137; Y. Koenig, *RdE* 43 [1992], p. 124-127; D. Kurth, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische: eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken*, I, 2007, p. 319, 328 n. 67 A; III, p. 1, Nachtrag zu p. 43f; A. Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine: les chapitres supplémentaires du Livre des Morts [SAT 16]*, 2010, p. 82-83; D. Klotz, *ENiM* 3 [2010], p. 72-73; *id.*, *ENiM* 7 [2014], p. 45 assuming a retrograde reading of the group).

<sup>62</sup> Voir J. Yoyotte, "Jeux d'écriture sur une statuette de la XIX<sup>e</sup> dynastie", *RdE* 10 (1955), p. 81-89.

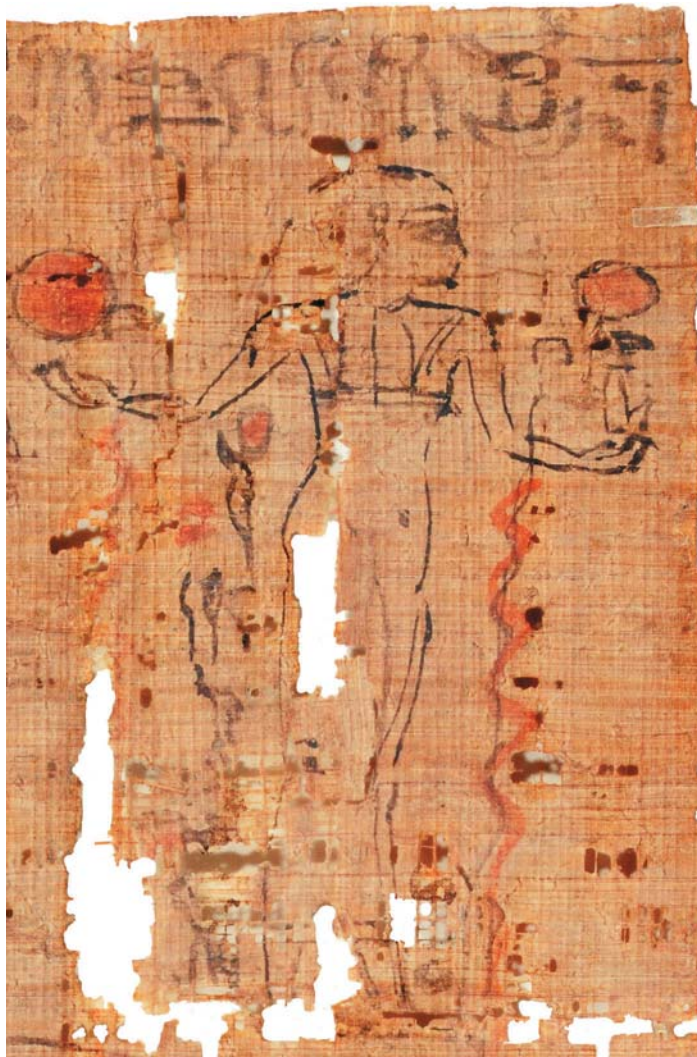


Fig. 7. The goddess Nut with an enigmatic caption on P. Turin Cat. 1858 (© Museo Egizio).

sun. As such, the caption does not refer directly to Nut but to the two representations of the sun god that she holds in her hands.

In the examples of ‘annotational’ enigmatic writing discussed so far, however, words or phrases are the highest syntactic units to which the enigmatic principles are applied;<sup>63</sup> longer phrases and even full sentences are missing. The two ostraca discussed in § 2 and § 3 below change this picture dramatically.

<sup>63</sup> Another example from the tomb of Anhurhawy is discussed in R. Pietri – St. Polis, “Altering Writing: Neutralizing and Re-activating the Agency of Animate Signs in Less or Non-figurative Graphic Registers” (in prep.).

## 2. O. CAIRO CG 25359:<sup>64</sup> AN ENIGMATIC NETHERWORLD BOOK ON AN OSTRACON

### 2.1. Description

O. Cairo CG 25359 is a red pottery sherd of unknown provenance that measures c. 15 × 16 cm. It is inscribed on both sides with black ink (fig. 8).<sup>65</sup> The shape of the ostracon is more or less rhomboidal, but none of its original edges is preserved, and its original shape and dimensions are uncertain.<sup>66</sup> The ostracon is likely to have been broken already during antiquity: the irregular surface of its sides is distinctly worn out. The surviving texts suggest that only small triangular pieces are missing from the bottom and on the left of the recto, but it is impossible to assess the dimension of the fragments missing from the top and at the right of the ostracon.



Fig. 8. O. Cairo CG 25359 r<sup>o</sup> and v<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> We are very grateful to Dr. Marwa Abdel Raziq and to Prof. Khaled Hassan for their help in accessing high quality pictures of this ostracon.

<sup>65</sup> The exterior of the vessel is referred to conventionally here as the 'recto' and its interior as the 'verso'. The red colour of the clay is more vivid on the upper part of the recto, perhaps as a consequence of contact with water or another liquid.

<sup>66</sup> Note, however, that the bulky edge at the left bottom of the recto may be original, as there is a margin of c. 2 cm between the end of text A (cf. § 2.2) and the edge of the potsherd.

As observed by Daressy in his *editio princeps*,<sup>67</sup> the recto bears three texts (A-B-C) written using a type of enigmatic norm that is characteristic of compositions found in the royal tombs of the New Kingdom, the so-called ‘abgad cryptography’<sup>68</sup> or ‘cryptographic alphabet’<sup>69</sup>. These texts are written in columns of linear hieroglyphs facing right, and read from right to left (fig. 9).<sup>70</sup>

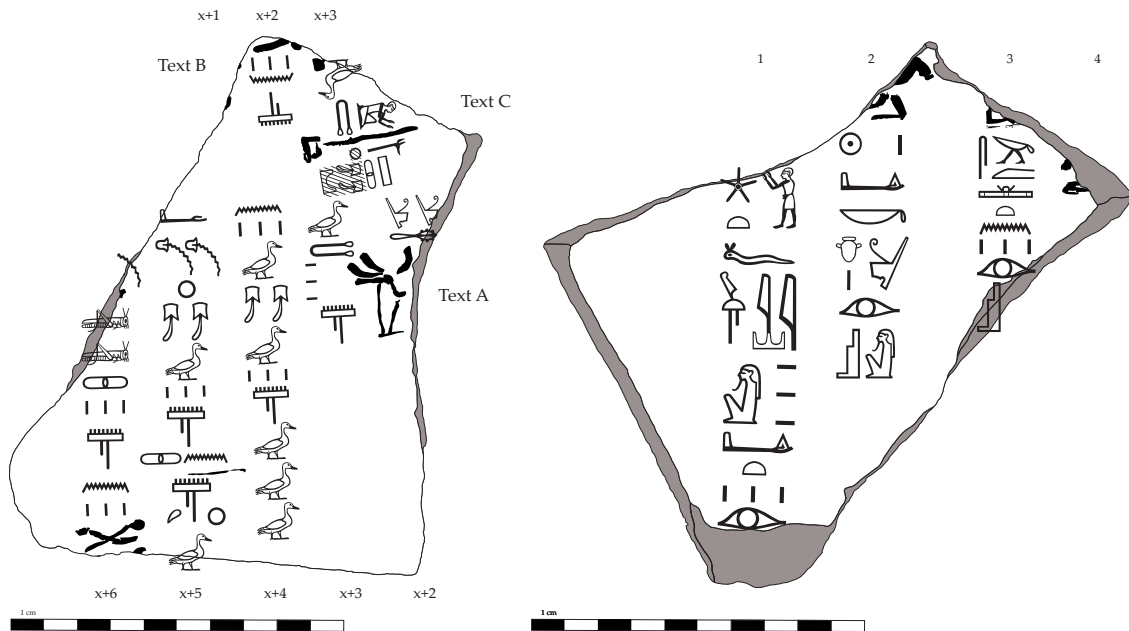


Fig. 9. Hieroglyphic transcription of O. Cairo CG 25359.

The best-preserved text, Text A, consists of five columns of varying length that follow the smoothing grooves of the vessel. We identify Text A as a copy of the caption to ‘scene 5’ from the Enigmatic Netherworld Book of the Solar-Osirian Unity, whose only other attestation thus far is from the second shrine of Tutankhamun.<sup>71</sup> The parallel suggests that the first third of this text is missing from the ostracon. In between the short col. x+2

<sup>67</sup> G. Daressy, *Ostraca (CGC)*, 1901, p. 92-93.

<sup>68</sup> J. C. Darnell, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> D. A. Werning, “Semiotic Aspects of Alienated and Cryptographic Encodings in the Netherworld Books of the New Kingdom”, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 219-221. Drioton (“La cryptographie de la chapelle de Toutânkhamon”, *JEA* 35 [1949], p. 117-122) used the label “cryptographie religieuse” for this specific enigmatic norm.

<sup>70</sup> Even though Daressy thought that the texts were ‘probablement rétrogrades’ (G. Daressy, *Ostraca*, p. 92).

<sup>71</sup> JE 60666 = Carter 237; A. Piankoff, *Les chapelles de Tout-ankh-amon (MIFAO 72)*, 1952, p. 31, pl. IV; A. Piankoff – N. Rambova, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon (BollSer XL.2)*, 1977, pl. 47; J. C. Darnell, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 74 and pl. 5C. It is irrelevant to our discussion whether the *Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity* reflect one large composition, as argued by Darnell, or three different ones (J. Fr. Quack, *WdO* 35 [2005], p. 38-39).

and x+3 is a sketch of a seated divinity (c. two-quadrats tall) on top of a large blank space. Text C is located on top of these first two columns at 90°. It consists of two columns divided by a vertical line. These correspond to two captions from the scene that precedes Text A in the second shrine of Tutankhamun (labelled ‘scene 2’ in Darnell’s publication).<sup>72</sup> Finally, Text B (at the top of the ostracon) mirrors Text A in terms of its layout (*i.e.*, it is rotated by 180°). Unfortunately, Text B is very fragmentary, and it is not possible to estimate the number of columns missing. Since the two other texts on the verso belong to a single enigmatic composition, it is possible that Text B also belongs to the same composition, though the few surviving signs do not allow for a secure identification (see § 2.2.1, Text B below).

The verso of the ostracon preserves parts of four columns. These are written perpendicular to the horizontal turning-marks on the interior of the pot; the hieroglyphic signs face left. A margin of c. 4 cm lies between the left edge of the ostracon and the first column of the text, meaning that this is almost certainly the beginning of the text. The number of columns lost to the right is unclear, as is the number of quadrates missing from the top. The same observation holds true for the bottom. This is due both to the irregular length of the columns and to the fact that we could find no parallels to this text. Compared to the palaeography of the recto, the signs of the verso are more figurative, though still hastily written.<sup>73</sup>

## 2.2. Texts

### 2.2.1. Recto

#### *Text A*<sup>74</sup>

##### Transliteration

[x+1 ... w]<sup>x+2</sup>nn h<sup>3</sup>.<sup>x+3</sup>(w)t<sup>z</sup>s<sup>x+4</sup>n m kkw.w-sm<sup>3</sup>.w<sup>x+5</sup> ‘pp R<sup>c</sup> jy b<sup>3</sup>.wzsn m-s(3) jtnz<sup>f</sup> s[t.wt<sup>x+6</sup>z<sup>f</sup>]  
 ‘k(.w)’ [r k]rr.wt<sup>z</sup>sn<sup>2</sup>t<sup>s</sup>?

##### Translation

“[...] It is in the complete darkness that their corpses [ex]ist. When Ra passes, their bas come after his disk, [his] r[ays] having entered [into] their [ca]verns. – ?spell?”


<sup>72</sup> A. Piankoff, *Chapelles de Tout-ankh-amon*, p. 30, pl. IV; A. Piankoff – N. Rambova, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, pl. 47; J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, pl. 4.C.







<sup>73</sup> For the *ductus*, compare O. DAN 8 (G. Burkard, *Dra’ Abu el-Naga II: Hieratische Ostraka und Namenssteine aus Dra’ Abu el-Naga* [AV 129], 2018, p. 108-110 and pl. 6).



<sup>74</sup> Our translation largely follows J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 74; earlier discussions of this text can be found in A. Piankoff, *JEA* 35 (1949), p. 114 and E. Hornung, *JSSEA* 13 (1983), p. 30.

Comments<sup>75</sup>

col. x+2–3

[<sup>x+1</sup> ... w]<sup>x+2</sup>nn . At least one column is missing before the first one. As such, we number this column <sup>x+2</sup>.

*h3.wt* . The partially preserved horizontal sign at the end of col. x+2 does not correspond palaeographically with either  (Tutankhamun version) or , as suggested by Daressy (*Ostraca*, p. 92). According to current understandings of this passage,<sup>76</sup> the most likely restoration here would be the clear-text uniliteral sign ,<sup>77</sup> an ‘alienated’ form of the common spelling of *h3.t* using initial  (*Wb.* III, 359, 9-20).<sup>78</sup> An alternative would be another fish-sign (e.g., )<sup>79</sup> but this does not fit especially well with the surviving ink traces.

[SEATED DIVINITY]. Daressy erroneously identified the sketch of a seated divinity between col. x+2-3 as text. He thus concluded his transliteration of col. x+2 with  and col. x+3 with  (*Ostraca*, p. 92). The divine figure between these columns is depicted with a long false beard whose tip curls forward; two curved lines stretching backwards on top of his head resemble horns or feathers, while a horizontal line departing from the back of his head perhaps reflects a simplified wig. If the curved line in front of the figure’s forehead belongs to this seated figure – as its *ductus* seems to indicate – and not to a preceding drawing or hieroglyphic sign, it might represent an uraeus. These attributes do not suggest a generic god, or any of the common ‘big divinities’,<sup>80</sup> and thus seem to suggest a specific entity. At first glance, the figure does not seem to correspond with any of the divinities that accompany the KV 62 text, where only the first and fifth gods (*hprj* and *jk3*)<sup>81</sup> wear a similar false beard (and lack further attributes on their heads). However, if the two curved lines on the figure’s head are identified as the forelegs of an insect, our figure might represent the scarab-chested *hprj*, though this divinity has no uraeus in the Tutankhamun version.<sup>82</sup> It is attractive to suggest that the first of the eight

<sup>75</sup> In addition to traditional tools, digital corpora such as the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (<https://aew.bbaw.de/tla/> and <https://thesaurus-linguae-aegyptiae.de>) and *Ramses Online* (<http://ramses.ulg.ac.be>) have been used to prepare the comments in Sections 2.2 and 3.2.

<sup>76</sup> A. Piankoff, *JEA* 35 (1949), p. 114; J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 74.

<sup>77</sup> For attestations of this sign in linear hieroglyphs, see e.g. O. Turin CGT 57440 r<sup>o</sup>, col. 4 (below); H. Milde, *The Vignettes in the Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet (EgUit 7)*, 1991, pl. 31, col. 15; I. Munro, *Das Totenbuch des Bak-su (pKM 1970.37/pBrocklehurst) aus der Zeit Amenophis’ II. (HAT 2)*, 1995, photo pl. 1, col. 19; *id.*, *Das Totenbuch des Nacht-Amun aus der Ramessidenzeit (pBerlin P. 3002) (HAT 4)*, 1997, pl. 3, col. 54.

<sup>78</sup> On the concept of ‘alienating’ spellings, see D. A. Werning, “Semiotic Aspects of Alienated and Cryptographic Encodings”, p. 197-200 and *id.*, “Écriture énigmatique : distanciée, cryptée, sportive”, in St. Polis (ed.), *Guide des écritures*, 2022, p. 200-203.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 111 & 204.




<sup>80</sup> Compare the examples in A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten im Tal der Könige: Ein Beitrag zur altägyptischen Sozialgeschichte aufgrund von neuem Quellenmaterial aus der Mitte der 20. Dynastie (ca. 1150 v. Chr.) (AH 23)*, 2011, 3 vol., pl. 150-203.

<sup>81</sup> For these names, see J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 70-74 and the interpretations offered by E. Hornung, *JSSEA* 13 (1983), p. 30.


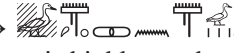





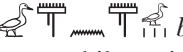


<sup>82</sup> One might also think of the figure of *w3.y* in the Amduat of KV 35 (P. Bucher, *Les textes des tombes de Thoutmosis III et d’Aménophis II [MIFAO 60]*, 1932, pl. XXIX).



deities (*ntr.w*) may have stood *pars pro toto* for the full row of divine beings, but one would then have to argue that his headdress changed over time.


col. x+4




*kkw.w-sm3.w* . On the use of  for *k*, based on the similarity of its shape to linear hieroglyphic  *kkw*<sup>83</sup> and on the consonantal principle, see D. Meeks, *BiOr* 78 (2021), col. 564-565.<sup>84</sup> For other attestations of the three birds with the sense *m3w*, see J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 75, n. b.

col. x+5

*b3.wzsn m-s(3) jtnzf s[...]*.  (Daressy) → . Compared with the KV 62 version, the spelling of this phrase on the ostrakon is highly condensed. For example, the signs  and  (value: *m*)<sup>85</sup> are arranged horizontally next to one other and not grouped vertically as would be expected. In the following group, the logogram  (*jtn*)<sup>86</sup> and (most probably) the suffix *ρ zf* (which is more likely here than the palaeographically similar ; cf. its shape above in the same line)<sup>87</sup> were inserted in the free bottom corners of . Although these peculiarities might have been due to space limitations, the unusual layout suggests rather that the scribe originally wrote  *b3.wzsn <m->s(3)*, as in the Tutankhamun version, and then modified this sequence while revising the text (and inserting the missing signs for *m* and *jtnzf*). This hypothesis is further confirmed by the thin line underneath the , which most probably led the reader's eye to the sign on its left before the subsequent . If this interpretation is correct, the primary spelling would have been *jy b3.wzsn s(3) st.wtzf k(.w) r krr.wtzsn* “their bas come after his rays have entered into their caverns” instead of *jy b3.wzsn m-s(3) jtnzf st.wtzf k(.w) r krr.wtzsn* “their bas follow after his disk, his rays having entered into their caverns”.

<sup>83</sup> The cursive shapes of  already resemble  in the *CT* (R. O. Faulkner, *JEA* 67 [1981], p. 173). For cursive hieroglyphic examples that are palaeographically similar to those on the Cairo ostrakon, see stela KV 18/5.276 (A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, pl. 224-225 no. 240 v°).





<sup>84</sup> See already A. Grimm, “Zu einer kryptographischen (änigmatischen) Schreibung des Substantivs *kkw* ‘Finsternis’ im Höhlenbuch (Livre des Quererts)”, *GM* 32 (1979), p. 23-26. Other explanations include (1) a synecdoche of  (J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 77, following J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 68, n. d and C. W. Goodwin, *ZÄS* 11 [1873], p. 142) or (2) the application of the consonantal principle to the lexeme *k3(3)* “panther” (W. Westendorf, *GM* 40 [1980], p. 57-62), even though this word is a reconstructed lexeme.









<sup>85</sup> At first glance, it seems possible to suggest  as a substitute for  (J. A. Roberson, *op. cit.*, p. 135). However, the rectangle contains a dot and we suggest reading ; this sign would have the value *m* as result of a shape-based substitution (not yet attested in *ibid.*, p. 178). For the same sign with the value *t*, see col. x+6.








<sup>86</sup> For the value of the sign, see *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>87</sup> If this alternative reading is correct, it would represent an interesting variant to KV 62, as the text would thus address the sun god directly and evoke the phraseology of contemporary solar hymns. Cf. J. Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott: Untersuchungen zur altägyptischen Hymnik* (MÄS 19/1), 1969, p. 359-360.



col. x+6

ḳ.  (Daressy) → . No trace of the object from which the liquid emerges is preserved. In the Tutankhamun version, the sign takes the shape , which corresponds to the combination of a pot pouring water on top of the sign .<sup>88</sup>

[r ḳ]rr.wt  (Daressy) → : The sign is not drawn as a single line but as a rectangle.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, Daressy's edition does not include the traces of ink that are visible above the first locust. If the spelling of this passage parallels that of KV 62, these signs should most probably be read as  or . Because the left part of the following signs is lost, however, it remains unclear whether they form the end of the preceding verb ḳ or the beginning of ḳrr.wt. If the former, the first locust should be read as the preposition r, while another ḳ before the second locust would have been lost:  (C) ~  (T) ḳr(r).wt. If the latter, ḳrr.wt should be read as  or  with the loss of the preceding r.

?ts? [...].  (Daressy) → . The sign consists of two lines which cross in the fashion of a saltire; it therefore corresponds to Z10 or to a cursive variant of .<sup>90</sup> As the text ends just before this sign in the KV 62 version, and because no additional column follows,  might simply represent a paratextual sign indicating the end of this text.<sup>91</sup> Alternatively, because  is attested once in New Kingdom enigmatic writing<sup>92</sup> (while  seems to be absent from it, which would be expected if it is a paratextual sign here), the reading  ts may mark the end of the spell (ts) or point to its inscription in reverse (ts phr), i.e. retrograde(?), writing.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>88</sup> J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 76-78 refers to the uncombined variant in another section of the same composition (*ibid.*, p. 89, pl. 7C) and provides a compelling explanation for its reading as ḳ.

<sup>89</sup> The reading t accords with the principle of class exchange, with  standing for  (cf. J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 178).

<sup>90</sup> For rare examples of the sign with open ends, see Stela BM EA 1628, l. 4 & 6 (First Intermediate Period; see D. Franke, *JEA* 93 [2007], p. 153, fig. 2 and p. 154, fig. 3); TT 158 (period of Ramses III; K. C. Seele, *The Tomb of Tjanefter at Thebes [OIP 76]*, 1959, pl. 13 col. 2 and 7) and the shabti boxes of Maatkara at Cairo Museum, JE 26264A-B (Third Intermediate Period).

<sup>91</sup> Note that the sign is not attested as a checkmark in hieratic archival documents from the New Kingdom; see the recent discussion by J. Jüngling, *Hieratische Aktenvermerke (HSO 2)*, 2021.

<sup>92</sup> A. von Lieven, *Nutbuch*, I, p. 433; J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 155.

<sup>93</sup> For this mark in general, see W. Westendorf, in O. Firchow (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien (VIO 29)*, 1955, p. 383-402; A. Motte – N. Sojic, “Paratextual Signs in the New Kingdom Medico-magical Texts”, in N. Carlig – G. Lescuyer – A. Motte et al. (eds.), *Signes dans les textes. Continuités et ruptures des pratiques sribales en Égypte pharaonique, gréco-romaine et byzantine : actes du colloque international de Liège (2-4 juin 2016) (PapLeod 9)*, 2020, p. 69-70. Note also its use as the paratextual mark ts-phr “inverted spell” in PT manuscripts: in the pyramid of Unis, it was copied at one occasion from the *Vorlage* and later corrected (A. Grimm, *SAK* 13 [1986], p. 101; C. Alvarez, in C. Alvarez – Y. Grebnev [eds.], *Approaching Monumentality in Pre-modern Epigraphic and Manuscript Traditions [Manuscript and Text Cultures 1]*, 2022, p. 132-133).

*Text B*

## Transcription

x+1 [...] .. [...]

x+2  $\approx sn$  .[...]x+3  .[...]


## Translation

x+1 “[...] .. [...]”

x+2 “their .[...]”

x+3  .[...]

## Comments

Daressy’s hieroglyphic transcription of Text B appears to be correct, though he omits the faint traces of ink that belong to the first two signs of col. x+1.<sup>94</sup> Based on the spelling of  $\approx sn$  (x+2), and given the presence of the bird at the beginning of x+3, it is evident that we are looking at another abgad text, probably another caption belonging to the same composition as Texts A and C. The paucity of preserved signs, however, does not allow for a secure identification. One might tentatively suggest reading the end of col. x+2 as , a sign which is attested only twice in the parallel Tutankhamun version.<sup>95</sup> If this suggestion is correct, Text B would correspond to the caption of ‘scene 4’ in the second shrine of Tutankhamun, which is positioned there on top of ‘scene 5’ (= Text A).<sup>96</sup> Text B would then read as follows: [*nn n nṯr.w m šḥr pn m ḳrr.wt*] $\approx sn$  [*jmy.wt ḥry(.t)*] [*w[nn ḥ3.wt $\approx sn$  m ḳkw]*] “[These gods are in this fashion in] their caverns, which are in [the Upper Region:] I[t is in the darkness that their corpses exist]”.<sup>97</sup> The neck of the goat-skin is usually closed in other linear hieroglyphic texts, however, which makes this suggestion questionable.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> G. Daressy, *Ostraca*, p. 92.

<sup>95</sup> J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 595.

<sup>96</sup> A. Piankoff, *Chapelles de Tout-ankh-amon*, p. 30, pl. IV; A. Piankoff – N. Rambova, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, p. 121 and pl. 47; J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 64-69, pl. 5B.

<sup>97</sup> Translation after J. C. Darnell, *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>98</sup> See, e.g., O. Turin CGT 57403, r<sup>o</sup> (J. López, *Ostraca ieratici N. 57320-57449 [CMT Serie Seconda – Collezioni III.3]*, 1982, pl. 130) and P. BM EA 9964, BD spell 124, 16 (G. Lapp, *British Museum Totenbuch-Papyrus Nebamun [BM EA 9964] [BAÄ 5]*, 2014, pl. 6).

## Text C

## Transcription






RIGHT  $Wsr-[?R^{e?}] \check{S}t[y.t]$ <sup>99</sup>LEFT  $Dw\check{z}.t$ 

## Translation

RIGHT “Neck [<sup>?</sup>of Ra<sup>?</sup>]. Shet[yt]”


LEFT “Duat.”

## Comments

Daressy’s hieroglyphic transcription reads  on the right side.<sup>100</sup> Our reading   $\check{S}t[(\check{z})y.t]$ <sup>101</sup> fits better with the traces of ink to the right of the vertical line; it allows us to identify Text C as a copy of the captions from ‘scene 2’ in the KV 62 version.<sup>102</sup> There,  $\check{S}t(\check{z})y.t$  is written , while the spelling of  $Dw\check{z}.t$  (to the left of the vertical line) corresponds precisely with the spelling on O. Cairo CG 25359. Note that the  $Wsr$ -post is oriented to the left on the second shrine of Tutankhamun, with  $\check{S}t(\check{z})y.t$  to its left and  $Dw\check{z}.t$  to its right, while the scene is mirrored horizontally on the ostracon. On the Cairo ostracon, a simple vertical line corresponds to the neck of the  $Wsr$ -post in the monumental version from KV 62; its nature is explained by the group   $Wsr-R^e$  “neck of Ra”, an indication that must have served both as a caption and as an explanatory annotation. Following this line of thought, the sign below the middle line might represent a hieratic spelling of , referencing the ram-headed bird which hovers in the sun disk above the  $Wsr$ -post in the Tutankhamun version.

<sup>99</sup> Based on the corresponding motif in the *Book of the Gates* (E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Pforten des Jenseits: Nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches*, I [AH 7], 1979, p. 4; II [AH 8], 1979, p. 29, 31-32), J. C. Darnell (*Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 52) suggests reading the word as *Smy.t* “necropolis”. However, there are significant differences between the two compositions: the divinities in the relevant scene in the *Book of the Gates* are characterized as male by their false beards, while the captions to the second, female couple (*3s.t* and *Nb.t-ḥw.t*) do not correspond with the pair on the shrine of Tutankhamun. As such, we prefer to stick with the former (and much simpler) reading  $\check{S}t(\check{z})y.t$  (E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Pforten*, II, p. 31).

<sup>100</sup> G. Daressy, *Ostraca*, p. 92.

<sup>101</sup> The value  $t$  for  is attested throughout the *Book of Caverns* and the *Books of the Gates* (J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 132).

<sup>102</sup> J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 52-55 and pl. 4C.

2.2.2. Comparing O. Cairo 25359 r<sup>o</sup>, Text A (C) with KV 62 (T)

T C		T C		T C		T C	
1.15	1. x+6		1. x+5	1.9		1.6	
				1.10		1.7	1. x+2
		1.13				1.8	1. x+3
				1.11			
		1.14					1. x+4

Fig. 10. Synopsis of Text A on O. Cairo CG 25359, r<sup>o</sup> (C) and on the second shrine of Tutankhamun, ‘scene 5’ (T).

As highlighted throughout the comments above, scenes from the Enigmatic Netherworld Book of the second shrine of Tutankhamun provide the key to understanding the texts and drawings on the recto of O. Cairo CG 25359. Both sets of enigmatic texts reflect the same kind of enigmatic practice (abgad). Generally speaking, both documents also follow a two-step encoding process. First, the spellings were ‘alienated’ by reducing most pluriliteral signs to monoliteral signs<sup>103</sup> and omitting the classifiers<sup>104</sup> (except for the plural strokes). In a second step, the signs underwent different processes of substitution, based on graphic

<sup>103</sup> E.g. the words *wnn*, *ḥ33.wt*, and *sm3.w*. For this principle, see D. A. Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch: Textkritische Edition und Textgrammatik, Teil 1: Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textgrammatik (GOF IV/48.1)*, 2011, p. 99; *id.*, in C. Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, p. 128: 12. “Analyse”; *id.*, in St. Polis (ed.), *Guide des écritures*, p. 198-200.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211: “principle #11: reduction of redundancies”.

or categorial similarity.<sup>105</sup> Interestingly, the resulting ‘crypto-alphabets’ differ slightly between T and C. T resorts to  $\equiv$  for  $t$ <sup>106</sup>,  $\text{𓆎}$  for  $k$ <sup>107</sup> and  $\text{𓆏}$  for  $n$ , while C uses  $\text{𓆐}$ <sup>108</sup>,  $\text{𓆑}$ , and  $\text{𓆒}/\text{𓆓}$  for the same values. Additionally, in T, the spelling of ‘ $pp$ ’ appears to be corrupted (<‘ $pp$ ’),<sup>109</sup> while one also finds the obscure spelling  $\text{𓆔} \text{𓆕}$  for  $hsw.t$  (~  $\text{𓆖} \text{𓆗} \text{𓆘}$  in C, col. x+2), employing  $\text{𓆙}$  (or perhaps  $\text{𓆚}$  for  $\text{𓆛}$ , as per the orthographic habits of the New Kingdom) for  $s$ <sup>110</sup> and the prototypical bird  $\text{𓆜}$  instead of plural strokes. On the other hand, C uses a very short spelling for the phrase  $m-s(s) jtn=k$  at the end of col. x+5 (which results from the limited space available for inserting the correction; see the comments in § 2.2.1); compare the longer (and more expected) abgad spellings  $\text{𓆝} \text{𓆞} \text{𓆟} \text{𓆠} jtn$  and  $\text{𓆡} \text{𓆢} s3$  in T.<sup>111</sup> These differences show that the two versions are not directly related to one another, as well as indicating that different textual (or at least graphemic) traditions coexisted for this text during the New Kingdom period.<sup>112</sup>

### 2.2.3. Verso

#### Transliteration

COL. 1 [...]  $dw3\{.t\}z\{n\} Jmn.tyw, djzw^2Ws[jr^2 \dots]$

COL. 2 [...] ..  $R^e djzk jb n Wsjr$

COL. 3 [...] .  $s3mzn Ws[jr \dots]$

COL. 4 [...] .. [...]

<sup>105</sup> For an overview, see J. C. Darnell – C. Manassa Darnell, *The Ancient Egyptian Netherworld Books (Writing from the Ancient World 39)*, 2018, p. 50-55 and D. A. Werning, in St. Polis (ed.), *Guide des écritures*.

<sup>106</sup> This value is also widely attested in other royal netherworld books (J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 184).

<sup>107</sup>  $\text{𓆎}$  has the value  $k$  only in the *Enigmatic Netherworld Book of Tutankhamun*. It has been explained by its shape similarity in hieratic to  $\text{𓆑}$ . In this respect, J. A. Roberson (*Lexicon*, p. 116) cites hieratic shapes from the Ramesside period (G. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie: die ägyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit*, II, 1909, n<sup>os</sup> 166 and 268). However, the substitution is much more likely to go back to the shapes of  $\text{𓆑}$  from the Second Intermediate Period or the very beginning of the New Kingdom, as these correspond more closely to  $\text{𓆎}$  (*ibid.*, I, 1909, n<sup>os</sup> 166 and 268).

<sup>108</sup> For this value, see J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 178.

<sup>109</sup> O. Cairo CG 25359 confirms the suggestion that J. C. Darnell (*Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 74 – *contra* A. Piankoff, *JEA* 35 [1949] p. 114: ‘ $p$ ’) made for T. On ‘ $p$ ’ vs. ‘ $pp$ ’ in such contexts, see J. A. Roberson, *JARCE* 43 (2007), p. 106.

<sup>110</sup> For this sign-value, see J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 120.

<sup>111</sup> Note that J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 76, n. d reads the lexeme as  $m-s3$ , which would imply swapping the signs. We suggest reading ( $hr$ )- $s3$  (*Wb*. IV, 11, 31; Coptic  $\text{ca}$ ), which fits better with the actual spelling.

<sup>112</sup> Based on the contents of the text and its use of ‘abgad cryptography’, J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 468-471 dates a preliminary version of the text to the Second Intermediate Period, and its final redaction to the time of Amenhotep III. However, as J. Fr. Quack, *WdO* 35 (2005), p. 44-45 remarks, the dating of the text has not yet been assessed according to the “sprachhistorische Methode”, as outlined by A. von Lieven, *Nutbuch*, I, p. 223-250.

## Translation

COL. 1 “[...] he praises the Westerners, so that they put Osi[ris(?) ...]”










COL. 2 “[...] .. Ra, may you give <his> heart <back> to Osiris”




COL. 3 “[...] . may you<sup>PL</sup> guide Osi[ris ...]”

COL. 4 “[...] .. [...]”




## Commentary

COL. 1

*dw3}{.t}{z}f {n} Jmn.tyw*. For more carefully executed examples of the standing man giving praise, see the table in M. S. Ali, *GM* 180 (2001), p. 15; compare the *ductus* and spelling of the group *dw3.t* with O. DAN 8, r° 2 (G. Burkard, *Dra‘ Abu el-Naga II*, pl. 6). The group *{n} Jmn.tyw* is the result of an emendation by the scribe: in revising the text, the classifier  was added underneath the second  of , while the middle-hill of the classifier touches the lower part of the . In a second step, two short horizontal strokes were added to this . This addition might be explained by a confusion of the oddly shaped <sup>113</sup> with  during the revision process; this would have made the correction of the first  to  necessary and resulted in the phrase *dw3.tz}f n Jmn.tyw* “his adoration of the Westerners”<sup>114</sup> instead of the original [...] *dw3z}f Jmn.tyw* “he praises the Westerners”. This locution is similar to a locution found in the Litany of Ra (103-104)<sup>115</sup>: *jw Wsjr NN dw3z}f Jmn.tyw* “Osiris NN praises the Westerners” (note the spelling of *dw3* in the version of Ramses IX, which is probably identical with the spelling on the Cairo ostrakon).

*djz}w*. The inversion of the -sign in col. 1 and 2 is not indicated in the *editio princeps* (G. Daressy, *Ostraca*, p. 93). For the common spelling of the subjunctive of *rdj* as , see J. Winand, *Études de néo-égyptien, 1 : la morphologie verbale (AegLeod 2)*, 1992, p. 213, § 348. *Wsjr*<sup>2</sup>. There are no traces below the -sign that confirm the reading *Wsjr*. This reading is based primarily on the mention of *Wsjr* – as the name of the deceased king (?) – in col. 2 and 3. Alternatively, the beginning of the verb *jri* might be read here.

COL. 2


 *r*. Daressy proposed transcribing the traces of ink here as . This seems unlikely, as the lower and upper traces do not join.<sup>116</sup> From a palaeographic point of view, these traces of ink seem to belong to two different signs, the latter of which is most probably . The remains of





<sup>113</sup> The sign consists of two strokes: the first marks the characteristic feather, and the second the left part of its base and the standard pole. This might be due to a hasty writing process, as the usual form of the sign consists of four parts (Fr. Servajean, *Le tombeau de Nakhtamon (TT 335) à Deir al Medina : paléographie [PalHiéro 5]*, 2011, p. 92, § 180).

<sup>114</sup> The construction of *dw3* with a dative introduced by *n* is well attested in sources from the New Kingdom (see *Wb.* V, 426, 9), probably by analogy with the *verba dicendi* (p.c. Jean Winand, 10.1.2023).



<sup>115</sup> References to the Litany of Re in this paper follow the standard edition by E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei): nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches, Teil 1: Text (AH 2)*, 1975.

<sup>116</sup> Compare with the bee on O. BM EA 50716, v° 1 (R. Demarée, *Ramesside Ostraca*, 2002, pl. 109).

the first sign bear a certain resemblance to the tail of a bird. Although the lack of direct parallels to this text does not allow a clear identification, one might suggest , as in 'q R' "the entering of Ra", which is a common motif in the royal Netherworld Books<sup>117</sup> and the Book of the Dead.<sup>118</sup>

*djz:k jb n Wsjr*. With respect to the mirrored -sign, see the comment on *djz:w* (col. 1) above. The sign following *djz:k* may be read , resulting in the locution *djz:k hr<zk> n Wsjr* 'may you pay attention to Osiris', or alternatively as , to be interpreted as *djz:k jb n Wsjr <nzf>* 'may you give (his) heart (back) to Osiris'. We have opted for the second reading for three reasons. First, the co-referential suffix pronoun *zk* in the locution *djz:k hrzk n* should appear after *hr*.<sup>119</sup> Second, in the Litany of Ra, one finds the following passage, which is thematically close to col. 2 and 3 of the verso: *hy R', djz:k jr.ty n Wsjr PN nzf, djz:k nzf ntr.t jr.ty:zf(y), ssm:sn Wsjr, hy R' djz:k jb n Wsjr PN nzf jw'zf t3 hns:zf jdb.wy mj-n.t R'* 'Hail, Ra, may you give his eyes (back) to the Osiris PN, may you give him (back) his two divine-eyes, that they may guide the Osiris PN; hail, Ra, may you give his heart (back) to the Osiris PN, that he may inherit the earth and that he may pass by the two banks like Ra'<sup>120</sup> (134-135). Third, from a palaeographical point of view, the sign is closer to shapes attested for .<sup>121</sup> Note, however, that the dative phrase *<nzf>* is lacking in col. 2 and that this interpretation remains subject to caution.

#### COL. 3

*sšm:tn Wsjr*.  (Daressy) → .<sup>122</sup> The locution *sšm R'/Wsjr* "guiding Ra/Osiris" is common in the Netherworld Books.<sup>123</sup> For the locution with a 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural subject and Ra as the object, see, for instance, Book of the Gates, 121-122<sup>124</sup> (*sšm:tn wj, jnk ms tn* "may you<sup>goddesses of the hours</sup> guide me<sup>Ra</sup>, (for) I am the one who gave you birth"); Amduat, 573-574<sup>125</sup> (*sšm:tn R' pn jmy žh.t r Jmnt.t nfr.t m htp* "may you<sup>HOURS</sup> guide this Ra who is in the horizon to

<sup>117</sup> E.g., in the Enigmatic Netherworld Books (J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 122).

<sup>118</sup> E.g., in *BD* spell 77 (B. Lüscher, *Die Verwandlungssprüche (Tb 76–88) [Tbt 2]*, 2006, p. 21-22).

<sup>119</sup> Exceptions are rare, but see, e.g., O. CoA II.6, l. 3 (H. W. Fairman, in H. Frankfort – J. D. S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten, Part II: The North Suburb and the Desert Altars: The Excavations at Tell el Amarna during the Seasons 1926-1932 [EEF Memoir 40]*, 1933, pl. 57): *jmy hr nzs, hn' [nt]k [...]* "pay attention to her and y[ou ...]".

<sup>120</sup> See A. Piankoff, *The Litany of Re (ERTR 4, BollSer 40/4)*, 1964, p. 32; E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei): nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches, Teil 2: Übersetzung und Kommentar (AH 3)*, 1976, p. 78-79.

<sup>121</sup> B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem (PalHiero 2)*, 2006, p. 40, § 28 and p. 58, § 76; Fr. Servajean, *Le tombeau de Nakhtamon*, p. 17 § 27 and p. 33 § 60.

<sup>122</sup> Note that the classifier Y1 is regularly attested for the verb *sšm* since the Middle Kingdom (see already *Wb*. IV, 285, 38). Given the presence of the suffix pronoun *tn*, one can safely exclude here any mention of the *sšm.w (šb.w n) Wsjr* "secret images of Osiris", for which see *Litany of Ra*, 144.

<sup>123</sup> For the meaning of *sšm* in these texts, see D. A. Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch: Textkritische Edition und Textgrammatik, Teil 2: Textkritische Edition und Übersetzung (GOF IV/48.2)*, 2011, p. 515.

<sup>124</sup> See E. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits: Nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches, Teil 1: Text (AH 7)*, 1979.

<sup>125</sup> See E. Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat, Teil 2: Langfassung, 4. bis 8. Stunde (AH 14)*, 1992. For a later version of the 7<sup>th</sup> hour (Saite), with Osiris as the object of *sšm:tn*, see the tomb of Panehesi, TT 20 (= A. El-Sawi – F. Gomaà, *Das Grab des Panehsi, Gottesvaters von Heliopolis in Matariya [ÄAT 23]*, 1993, p. 76 and pl. 10).

the beautiful West, in peace”). The construction of *sšmꜣtn* with Osiris as the object,<sup>126</sup> on the other hand, is found in the Litany of Ra, 117: *sšmꜣtn*<sup>CAVERNS INHABITANTS</sup> *Wsjr r wš.wtꜣtn* “may you guide Osiris on your roads”.

COL. 4

𓆎. The traces probably belong to two different signs, but the lack of parallels impedes a secure identification. The organisation of the texts on the recto suggests that the ostrakon might originally have been broader, with space for additional text after col. 4.

#### 2.2.4. *Nature of the Text on the Verso*

While we cannot provide any direct parallels to the verso, the comments above make it clear that col. 1-3 relate to the journey of the deceased in the Netherworld, which provides a thematic link to the texts on the recto of the ostrakon. The Litany of Ra, in particular, contains several passages that are possibly connected to the Cairo ostrakon. Interestingly, this text exhibits clear intertextual connections with two *BD* spells, which also employed excerpts from this composition:<sup>127</sup> spell 127 (≈ Litany of Ra, 115-sq. & 188-sq.) and spell 180 (≈ Litany of Ra, 222-255).<sup>128</sup> Interestingly, (parts of) these spells have been monumentalized on walls and sarcophagi from New Kingdom royal tombs.<sup>129</sup> Spell 127 is especially relevant here, since it is addressed to “the ones who are in the caverns, the ones who are in the West, the doorkeepers of the doors of the netherworld, and the guardians”<sup>130</sup> (compare with col. 1 of the ostrakon). One also finds the locution *sšmꜣtn Wsjr* PN in spell 127,<sup>131</sup> e.g., *sšmꜣtn (Wsjr) PN, wnꜣtn nꜣf sbš.w Dwš.t, wp tš nꜣf*

<sup>126</sup> For 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural subjects of *sšm* in the same text, see, e.g., Litany of Ra, 97 (Ra), 159-161 (Ra), 191-193 (Pelican-goddess), 230 (those who know the spells), 245 (Djeba-Demedj).

<sup>127</sup> See É. Naville, *Das ägyptische Tottenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie aus verschiedenen Urkunden zusammengestellt und hrsg.*, Einleitung, 1886, p. 165; E. Hornung, *Das Tottenbuch der Ägypter*, 1979, p. 493, 519-520; *id.*, in Université Paul Valéry, Institut d'égyptologie (ed.), *Hommages à François Daumas*, II, 1986, p. 427-428; *id.*, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife: Translated by David Lorton*, 1999, p. 137 and 181; N. Billing, in B. Backes – I. Munro – S. Stöhr (eds.), *Tottenbuch-Forschungen: gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Tottenbuch-Symposiums, Bonn, 25. bis 29. September 2005 (SAT 11)*, 2006, p. 9-10; A. Gaber, *The Scientific Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels* 17/2 (2020), p. 264-265.




<sup>128</sup> Moreover, the *sšm Wsjr* motif appears in some versions of spell 118, which is attested from the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, e.g., in the Book of the Dead of Nebseki (G. Lapp, *The Papyrus of Nebseki [BM EA 9900] [Catalogue of the Books of the Dead in the British Museum III]*, 2004, pl. 33) and its conceptual model CT 1150 (L. Lesko, *The Ancient Book of Two Ways [UCPNES 17]*, 1972, p. 45, 142) – and of spell 130 (S. Wiebach Koepke, *SAK* 25 [1998], p. 360-362) and 148 (e.g., P. Turin Cat. 1971, 11).

<sup>129</sup> See F. Abitz, *Pharao als Gott: In den Unterweltbüchern des Neuen Reiches (OBO 146)*, 1995, p. 183-184 and E. Hornung, in *Hommages à François Daumas*, II.

<sup>130</sup> See E. Hornung, *Das Tottenbuch der Ägypter*, 1979, p. 247-249.

<sup>131</sup> See already the final spell of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Book of the Dead of Maiherperi, P. Cairo 24095 (= I. Munro, *Die Tottenbuchhandschriften der 18. Dynastie im Ägyptischen Museum Cairo [ÄA 54]*, 1994, pl. 135).

*krr.wtꜣf* “may you<sup>DOORKEEPERS</sup> guide (Osiris) PN, may you open for him the doors of the Netherworld, that the earth and its caverns be opened for him”<sup>132</sup> (compare with col. 3).

To conclude, the use of the signs  (col. 2) and  (col. 3) on the verso of the Cairo ostrakon,<sup>133</sup> as well as the logographic spelling of the theonym *R' 𓂏* (col. 2), point to a monumental context, while the mirrored- suggests that they might have accompanied a scene consisting of at least two actors.<sup>134</sup> In this respect, the reduced size of col. 2 and the larger distance between col. 2 and col. 3 might indicate that the text consisted of at least two captions. The intertextual links with the Litany of Ra and *BD* spell 127 point to an adaptation of their contents to three main actors: Osiris, Ra, and the gods of the West, who were expected to support the deceased during his journey through the Netherworld.<sup>135</sup>

### 2.3. Discussion

The layout of the texts on both the recto and the verso, as well as the use of a highly figurative written norm, indicate that these texts relate to monumental compositions that consisted of both images and inscriptions. Because funerary monuments (tomb walls, shrines, sarcophagi, and the like) could be decorated with both Netherworld Books (cf. recto) and (excerpts from) spells from the Book of the Dead<sup>136</sup> (or sim., cf. verso), the two sides of the Cairo ostrakon might relate to a single ensemble (though they obviously do not have to).

This monument should certainly be sought in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings, as the Enigmatic Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity and similar royal funerary compositions were essentially limited to the royal sphere in the New Kingdom.<sup>137</sup> It is tempting to postulate that the texts once belonged to a context similar to that of the parallel from KV 62, namely a shrine.<sup>138</sup> Except for this *in situ* find, however, no other similar shrine from the Valley of

<sup>132</sup> For the construction *sšmꜣn Wsjr* in the Tomb of Ramses IV (KV 2), see E. Hornung, *Zwei Ramessidische Königsgräber: Ramses IV. und Ramses VII. (Theben 11)*, 1990, p. 81 and pl. 55, col. 16 (= 12) and 21 (= 17). In the Tomb of Ramses VI (KV 9), see A. Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI, II (ERTR 1, BollSer 40/1)*, 1954, pl. 106, col. 1.

<sup>133</sup> B. J. J. Haring, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 76-77.

<sup>134</sup> According to the categories proposed by H. G. Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs, Part I: Reversals (Egyptian Studies II)*, 1977, p. 86, the mirrored sign might be defined as a ‘reversal relating to divinities’. However, caution is required here, since sign-reversals are common in the hieroglyphic versions of the Netherworld Books of the New Kingdom (royal) tombs and are often not to be explained by association with neighboring representations.

<sup>135</sup> Note that spell 127 is not among the *BD* spells that appear in the shrines of Tutankhamun.

<sup>136</sup> In this respect, see the insightful remarks by H. Beinlich, *GM* 102 (1988), p. 7-18.

<sup>137</sup> As is well-known, very high-ranking personalities of the early New Kingdom had non-enigmatic royal Netherworld Books placed in their tombs, e.g., the version of the *Amduat* and of the *Litany of Ra* in the tomb of Useramun TT 61 (E. Hornung, *NAWG* 5 [1961], p. 99-120; E. Dziobek, *Die Gräber des Vezirs User-Amun Theben Nr. 61 und 131 [AV 84]*, p. 44-46).

<sup>138</sup> See A. Piankoff, *Chapelles de Tout-ankh-amon*, pl. IV. It might be possible to explain the layout of the texts on the recto, namely ←Text B← ↓Text C↓ →Text A→, in connection with the different faces of a three-dimensional object, but such an artefact would have to be rather small. A more convincing explanation for this symmetrical layout might be that the text was (to be) inscribed on top of an artefact (with Text C at the centre, and Text A and B unfolding on each side of this vertical axis). Similar arrangements of Netherworld Books on the ceilings of royal tombs make this option likely.

the Kings has withstood the ravages of both time and looters,<sup>139</sup> though such shrines were surely a normative part of royal funerary equipment during the New Kingdom.<sup>140</sup> As such, even if we suggest that the texts from both sides of the ostrakon relate to the decoration of a single monument, *e.g.*, a royal funerary shrine, this remains purely hypothetical.<sup>141</sup>

As to the primary function of the ostrakon, one might wonder whether it was a ‘Zwischen-Vorlage’,<sup>142</sup> or whether the texts reflect secondary copies of inscriptions for study or some other purpose.<sup>143</sup> The disposition of the signs in short columns with empty spaces for the figures is not much help in elucidating this question, as their arrangement may have resulted from either practice. Of seemingly greater significance is the vertical dividing line in Text C, which is identified as a *Wsr*-post by its caption. Because this symbol appears in the scene in the parallel from KV 62, one wonders why the copyist did not reproduce the whole image and instead simplified it into a mere line.<sup>144</sup> The same holds true for the sketch of a single divine figure between col. x+2 and x+3 of Text A in place of a row of eight gods.<sup>145</sup>

These features recall a small group of pottery and limestone ostraca that relate to the decoration of non-royal Theban tombs. These preserve sketches of scenes and/or texts written in (very) figurative linear hieroglyphs.<sup>146</sup> However, except for two ostraca that are most

<sup>139</sup> H. Hohnack, *Naoi: Königliche Steindenkmäler in den Tempeln Ägyptens: vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende der pharaonischen Ära*, I, 2020, p. 214-217.

<sup>140</sup> Indirect evidence is to be found in the plan for the Tomb of Ramses IV of P. Turin Cat. 1885 (H. Carter – A. H. Gardiner, *JEA* 4 [1917], pl. XXIX; G. Andreu-Lanoë, *L'art du contour: le dessin dans l'Égypte ancienne*, 2013, p. 206-207 no. 64) and P. Turin CGT 55002 (S. Demichelis, *ZÄS* 131 [2004], pl. XVI).

<sup>141</sup> The lack of comparative evidence, combined with the absence of trustworthy internal criteria of a palaeographic nature, makes it very difficult to suggest a date for this ostrakon. We prefer to be cautious and assign it a very broad 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (*i.e.*, New Kingdom) dating.

<sup>142</sup> Label from P. Der Manuelian, *SAK* 10 (1983), p. 231; see also B. Lüscher, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 97-98.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. the so-called *Erinnerungsbild* (W. Spiegelberg, *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst NF VI* [1927-28], p. 100-102; A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 119-122, cat. 291 and p. 360-364, pl. 319-323). Famous examples are: (1) O. BM EA 5620, with a scene copied from the Libyan War of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (*KRI V*, 50-52), though the name of the king is turned into Ramses IX (W. H. Peck, *Drawings from Ancient Egypt*, p. 114 no. 44; R. J. Demarée, *Ramesside Ostraca*, p. 15, pl. 1; N. Allon, *SAK* 50 [2021], p. 13-16); (2) O. Berlin ÄM 21447, whose author copied a squatting scribe with the name *Hwy* and his captions from TT 359 with slight modifications (G. Andreu-Lanoë, *L'art du contour*, p. 172 no. 39); (3) O. KV 18/4 from the surroundings of KV 18, referring to its entrance scene (H. Jenni, *Das Grab Ramses' X. (KV 18)* [AH 19], 2015, p. 64-65; B. Lüscher, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 93: ‘Lehrer-Schüler-Übungsstück’); other more recently published examples might include O. Carter-Carnavon 288 (= HO. Cairo 40; Kh. Hassan, *NeHet* 6 [2018-2020], p. 80-81) and O. KV exc. no. 1008 (Z. Hawass, *Ostraca from the Valley of the Kings, 2018-2019 Field Season*, I, 2022, p. 158).

<sup>144</sup> Cf. the *aide-mémoire* signs which were meant to record the general layout of the (planned) decoration of TT 96A (G. Pieke – D. Laboury, “‘Die vorausleuchtende Idee’: zu Künstlermarkierungen im Grab des Sennefer (TT 96A)”, in Chr. Bayer – H. Franzmeier – O. Gauert – R. Schulz [eds.], *Dem Schreiber der Gottesworte: Gedenkschrift für Rainer Hannig*, 2003, p. 183-200).

<sup>145</sup> Similar figures might have preceded it, however, as the right end of the ostrakon is not preserved.

<sup>146</sup> A. Dorn, “Men at Work: zwei Ostraka aus dem Tal der Könige mit nicht-kanonischen Darstellungen von Arbeitern”, *MDAIK* 61 (2005), p. 7-10. Prominent examples of ostraca with corresponding monumental scenes come from TT 39 (with a sketch of the “Ruderlauf”-scene; N. De G. Davies, *The Tomb of Puyemrê at Thebes II: The Chapels of Hope*, II [RPTMS III], 1922-1923, pl. 72, no. 44-45 and 79.D) and TT 79 (H. Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min und des Men-cheper-Ra-seneb*

probably ‘Zwischen-Vorlagen’ for the copy of col. 13-14 and the end of the Duties of the Vizier in the tomb of Amenemope (TT 29),<sup>147</sup> and for a group of ostraca with *BD* spells from the tomb of Nakhtmin (TT 87),<sup>148</sup> the drawings and texts on these documents generally do not correspond exactly – or at least to a reasonably high degree – with their alleged monumental version. As such, they cannot be seen with any certainty as drafts.<sup>149</sup> As to the Valley of the Kings, A. Dorn has convincingly argued that such drafts were only rarely used in royal tombs.<sup>150</sup>

In the case of portable objects belonging to the tombs’ equipment, the situation may have been slightly different. Although the fragility of these objects makes their preservation less likely, thus hampering the comparison of the ostraca with corresponding patterns and inscriptions on the artefacts, it is difficult to imagine that copies of inscriptions were taken from these kinds of object before burial ceremonies. As such, documents like O. Cambridge E.GA.6140.1943 + O. Michaelides 83 r<sup>o</sup><sup>151</sup> and O. Berlin 3300<sup>152</sup> are probably better explained as drafts used during the process of composing the decoration of shrines, chests or coffins.<sup>153</sup> Simpler drafts noted only divine speeches, without providing sketches of the associated figures.<sup>154</sup> Interestingly, all these drafts are characterized both by

*Theben Nr. 87 und 79* [AV 34], p. 125-126, pl. 47a/b and p. 177-178, pl. 47). In the case of similar ostraca from TT 71 (W. C. Hayes, *Ostraca and Name Stones from the Tomb of Sen-mūt (No. 71) at Thebes* [PMMMA 15], 1942, p. 5, 17-20, pl. IX-XII), TT 99 (N. Strudwick [ed.], *The Tomb of Pharaoh’s Chancellor Senneferi at Thebes – TT 99, I, The New Kingdom*, 2016, p. 286-287) and TT 296 (E. Feucht, *Das Grab des Nefersecheru (TT 296)* [Theben 2], 1985, p. 146, pl. LXIX: obj. nos. 11601-11602), the corresponding scenes could not be identified with the decorations of the respective tombs.

<sup>147</sup> O. MANT 292600 and O. MANT 296224<sup>et al.</sup> (P. Tallet, “Un nouveau témoin des «Devoirs du vizir» dans la tombe d’Aménémopé (Thèbes, TT 29)”, *CdE* 80/159-160 [2005], p. 66-75; *id.*, “La fin des Devoirs du vizir”, in E. Warmenbol – V. Angenot (eds.), *Thèbes aux 101 portes. Mélanges à la mémoire de Roland Tefnin* [MonAeg 12], 2010, p. 153-163); cf. also B. J. J. Haring, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 70-71.

<sup>148</sup> B. Lüscher, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*; *id.*, *Die Vorlagen-Ostraka aus dem Grab des Nachtmin (TT 87)* (BAÄ 4), 2013.

<sup>149</sup> B. J. J. Haring, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 71-72.

<sup>150</sup> A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 118-122. There are however some likely candidates, such as O. MMA 14.6.212 for the decoration of a pillar, most probably in the tomb of Ramses II (U. Rummel, *MDAIK* 59 [2003], p. 389-409).

<sup>151</sup> The dimensions, *ductus*, content, and the shape of the two fragments suggest that they most probably join. See F. Hagen, *New Kingdom Ostraca from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge* (CHANE 46), 2011, p. 40, 111, pl. 53 and H. Goedicke – E. F. Wente, *Ostraka Michaelides*, 1962, pl. XXXVI.

<sup>152</sup> E. Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptischen Scherbenbilder*, 1956, p. 58, pl. XIX no. 50; L. Weiss, *Religious Practice at Deir el-Medina* (EgUit 29), 2015, p. 405, cat. 11.29. Cf. the drawings of a shabti and a heart amulet on O. Stockholm MM 14120 and MM 14121, which have been interpreted as trial pieces (B. E. J. Peterson, *Bulletin Medelhavsmuseet* 7-8 [1973], p. 105-106, pl. 76).

<sup>153</sup> The recently excavated O. KV exc. no. 3275 with sketched divinities (Z. Hawass, *Ostraca from the Valley of the Kings*, p. 135) and O. KV exc. no. 3494 (*ibid.*, p. 138) should be added here. Outside of funerary equipment, P. Turin Cat. 2034 represents a beautiful example of detailed drawings of the footboard of a bed (r<sup>o</sup>) and of a *mšr*-chair (v<sup>o</sup>) that were used as templates for their manufacture by a team of craftsmen, as indicated by the hieratic captions (see K. Gabler – M. Müller, in K. Gabler – R. Gautschy – L. Bohnenkämper *et al.* (eds.), *Text-Bild-Objekte im archäologischen Kontext: Festschrift für Susanne Bickel* [LingAeg StudMon 22], 2020, p. 117-150).

<sup>154</sup> See, e.g., A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 133-134, nos. 468-471, pl. 406-409; O. KV exc. no. 3258 (Z. Hawass, *Ostraca from the Valley of the Kings*, p. 134).

highly figurative hieroglyphs that were penned in a hasty *ductus*<sup>155</sup> and by the significant simplification of the accompanying figures: the text had to be precisely rendered, while the artists in charge of monumentalizing the scenes were apparently able to provide the images with the appropriate attributes.<sup>156</sup> In sum, O. Cairo CG 25359 would fit within the category of ‘tomb equipment drafts’, adding a rare document concerning a royal funerary shrine to the extant corpus.<sup>157</sup>

The Cairo ostrakon is also important for understanding the transmission of royal Netherworld Books. It is well known that the workmen of Deir el-Medina had direct access to manuscripts that contained this kind of royal funerary literature, as evidenced by the copies of the Book of the Celestial Cow on the verso of P. Turin Cat. 1982 (= CGT 54077) and P. Turin Cat. 1826, for instance.<sup>158</sup> That said, ostraca that shed light on the adaptation of these texts to monumental contexts are particularly rare.<sup>159</sup> A special case is the (still unpublished) ostrakon O. Cairo JE 96561 from the Valley of the Kings. According to R. Demarée, it bears parts of sections V and VII of the Books of Caverns on one side and a cartouche with an enigmatic spelling of the throne name of Ramses VI on the other (with hieratic annotations).<sup>160</sup> Unlike the ostrakon discussed here, it is written mainly in hieratic (with some hieroglyphic signs interspersed) and does not correspond to the version found in the tomb of Ramses VI, which is why Haring considers it not to be a draft.<sup>161</sup> Ostraca that are more similar to our case are O. BM EA 29509 (‘found in the rubbish of the tomb of Ramses VII’ [KV 1], according to the auction catalogue)<sup>162</sup> + O. BM EA 29510 (from the neighbourhood of the tomb of Sety I [KV 17]).<sup>163</sup> The scenes and texts on this ostrakon

<sup>155</sup> The same characteristic “sloppiness” was also remarked upon in the case of the aforementioned O. MMA 14.6.212 (U. Rummel, *MDAIK* 59 [2003], p. 405-406 n. 73).

<sup>156</sup> Cf. D. Laboury, “Artistes et écriture hiéroglyphique dans l’Égypte des pharaons”, *BSFE* 207 (novembre 2022), p. 37-68.

<sup>157</sup> The provenance of O. Cairo CG 25359 is unknown, but unlike many other ostraca published by Daressy in his *Catalogue*, it might not originate from the Valley of the Kings: one would not really expect the manufacture of complex artefacts of this kind to take place in such a remote area.

<sup>158</sup> W. Pleyte – F. Rossi, *Papyrus de Turin*, 1869-1876, 2 vols., p. 122, pl. LXXXIV; cf. A. Roccati, *BSFE* 99 (mars 1984), p. 23 and n. 35; E. Hornung, *Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh: Eine Ätiologie des Unvollkommenen (OBO 46)*, 1982, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 130; N. Guilhou, “Myth of Heavenly Cow”, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* 1(1) (2010), p. 1-2.

<sup>159</sup> In this context, it should be noted that the first well-preserved copies of these compositions in the tombs of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II are written in linear hieroglyphs (M. P. Bucher, *Les textes des tombes de Thoutmosis III et d’Aménophis II [MIFAO 60]*, 1932) while later texts employ regular hieroglyphs, with some interspersed cursive signs. See also the Litany of Ra on the shroud dedicated by Amenhotep II to his father Thutmose III (Cairo CG 40001 + Boston MFA 60.1472; cf. E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen, Teil 2*, p. 10-11).

<sup>160</sup> B. J. J. Haring, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 72-73.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>162</sup> R. Demarée, *Ramesside Ostraca*, p. 25 and pl. 72.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25 and pl. 73. According to the online database of the Museum, the fragments are being studied by J. F. Quack and might belong to a single ostrakon ([www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\\_EA29509](http://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA29509); the third picture shows where the two pieces might join; accessed 18.11.2022).

do not correspond to any of the royal Netherworld Books known to us.<sup>164</sup> As such, it could – on analogy with O. Cairo CG 25359 – have been part of a composition that was materialized solely on the portable equipment of royal tombs.

### 3. O. TURIN CGT 57440:<sup>165</sup>

#### TRANSCODING A NON-ROYAL ENIGMATIC COMPOSITION INTO PLAINTEXT HIERATIC

##### 3.1. Description

O. Turin CGT 57440 (= suppl. 9610) is a limestone ostrakon that was found during E. Schiaparelli's excavations at Deir el-Medina in 1909.<sup>166</sup> It measures 12.5 × 11.3 × (max.) 1.3 cm (fig. 11-12) and its shape is roughly that of an elongated trapezoid with undulating edges. The recto of the ostrakon is flat, except for four little ridges in the upper right corner; it preserves seven columns of text.<sup>167</sup> Three vertical 'lignes de fracture' are visible at the level of col. 4, 5, and 6. The top of the recto corresponds to the top of the verso, which is convex and exhibits similar vertical 'lignes de fracture' (middle and right part).

On both sides of the ostrakon, the upper, right, and left original edges are nearly entirely preserved, even if small flakes have broken off at sporadic intervals.<sup>168</sup> A brownish patina covers the original surface of limestone on both sides; the brighter white color at the bottom of the recto suggests that two large flakes were broken off in more recent times; the same observation holds true for a flake at the bottom right corner of the verso.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>164</sup> R. Demarée, *Ramesside Ostraca*, p. 25; A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 27, 119 and 134; cf. the recently found O. KV exc. no. 2062 (Z. Hawass, *Ostraca from the Valley of the Kings*, p. 130). Note that some ostraca from the Valley of the Kings bear only divine figures and scenes without texts which might relate to (or be inspired by) Royal Netherworld Books as discussed in n. 141 *supra*.

<sup>165</sup> We thank Dr. Susanne Töpfer for granting us access to the ostrakon during two research stays at the Museo Egizio (21–22.09.2021; 8–9.11.2022) and for providing us with high-definition photographs.

<sup>166</sup> J. López, *Ostraca ieratici N. 57320-57449*, p. 44, pl. 146-146a; pictures: J. López, *Ostraca ieratici N. 57450-57568, tabelle lignee N. 58001-58007 (CMT Serie Seconda – Collezioni III/4)*, 1984, pl. 206.

<sup>167</sup> We refer to the flat side of the ostrakon ('face d'éclatement') as the recto and to the other side of the ostrakon, which was flattened with a hammering tool, as the verso. All the edges of O. Turin CGT 57440 are tapered, except for the right edge of the recto (= the left edge of the verso), which is c. 7-8 mm thick and can be identified as the 'talon'. The percussion (using a stone or wooden hammer) that produced a split fracture was probably applied at the lower middle zone of the 'talon' where its surface is especially irregular. On the purposeful production of ostraca, see J. Pelegrin – G. Andreu-Lanoë – C. Pariselle, "La production des ostraca en calcaire dans la nécropole thébaine : étude préliminaire", *BIFAO* 115 (2016), p. 325-352 and G. Andreu-Lanoë – J. Pelegrin, "La fabrique des ostraca en calcaire : comment scribes et dessinateurs se procuraient-ils ces supports?", in A. Dorn – St. Polis (eds.), *Outside the Box*, p. 17-25.

<sup>168</sup> This is especially true of the beginning of col. 2, 3, and 7 on the recto and the beginning of l. 3-4, as well as the ends of l. 2 and 7-9, of the verso.

<sup>169</sup> Judging from the missing text, the ostrakon may originally have had the shape of an irregular half-circle.




Seven columns of linear hieroglyphs<sup>170</sup> are written in black ink on the recto. They cover the entire surface of the recto, without right or left margins, and the bottom section of the text is lost. Horizontal lines in red ink divide the text into smaller sections.<sup>171</sup>

The verso is covered by eleven lines of hieratic text, except for the end of l. 5-6, where the irregular surface appears to have been deemed unsuitable for writing.<sup>172</sup> The scribe competently navigated the (very) irregular surface and was undoubtedly highly skilled, even if the lines undulate slightly and the interlinear spacing varies a bit as a result of the poor quality of the surface. The *ductus* is characterized by highly cursive shapes<sup>173</sup> (which were occasionally retraced)<sup>174</sup> as well as ligatures,<sup>175</sup> while the dipping of the pen respects the linguistics units<sup>176</sup> – additional clues to the hieratic proficiency of the scribe.<sup>177</sup>














<sup>170</sup> For an overview of other New Kingdom ostraca written in columns see Fr. Hagen, in R. Mairs – A. Stevenson, *Current Research in Egyptology 2005: Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Symposium, University of Cambridge 2005*, 2007, p. 43.

<sup>171</sup> The layout of the text in columns and its segmentation using red lines are reminiscent of scribal practices associated with the *Kemyt*. On the layout of the *Kemyt* ostraca, see A. Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires de Deir al-Medina : nos 1775-1873 et 1156*, V (DFIFAO 44), 2005, p. 88-89; O. Goelet, in G. Moers – K. Widmaier – A. Giewekemeyer *et al.* (eds.), *Dating Egyptian Literary Texts (LingAeg StudMon 11)*, 2013, p. 114-118; A. Motte, “Learning through Practice: On How *Kemyt* Contributed to Crafting and Transmitting Scribal Knowledge” (to appear in *ZÄS* 2024). Horizontal dividing lines, but in black ink, are found in a copy of the *Teaching of Amenemhat* written in columns on O. LACMA M.80.203.203 (= O. Michaelides 50 r<sup>o</sup>; see H. Goedicke – E. Wente, *Ostraka Michaelides*, pl. I).

<sup>172</sup> This has been checked on the original (08.11.2022).

<sup>173</sup> Note, for instance, the *ductus* of  (l. 1 and 2),  (l. 2), and  (l. 7).

<sup>174</sup> This is the case for the beginning of l. 2 up to *s.t.*, for l. 3 up to *jsy*, for *3s.t.* in l. 4, and for the classifier as well as the suffix of *p(3)d* in l. 7.

<sup>175</sup> The following ligatures are found in the text:  (l. 1, 3, and 5; cf. St. J. Wimmer, *Hieratische Paläographie der nicht-literarischen Ostraka der 19. und 20. Dynastie [ÄAT 28/2]*, 1995, p. 234, type b; A. Dorn – St. Polis, *BIFAO* 116 [2016], p. 70, tab. 2),  (l. 3),  (l. 3 and 8),  (l. 3 and 11; cf. St. J. Wimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 27),  (l. 10; cf. *ibid.*, p. 238),  (l. 4 and 7; cf. *ibid.*, p. 354, type e),  (l. 4),  (l. 5),  (l. 8; cf. *ibid.*, p. 352, type b),  (l. 8; cf. *ibid.*, p. 365, type b),  (l. 2 and 6; for the latter, cf. *ibid.*, p. 383, type b),  (l. 7). Additionally,  at the end of l. 1 is ligatured.

<sup>176</sup> See Chl. Ragazzoli, *Scribes : les artisans du texte en Égypte ancienne*, 2019, p. 68-77 (with references to previous literature on the topic).

<sup>177</sup> With respect to its date, see § 3.3.2.

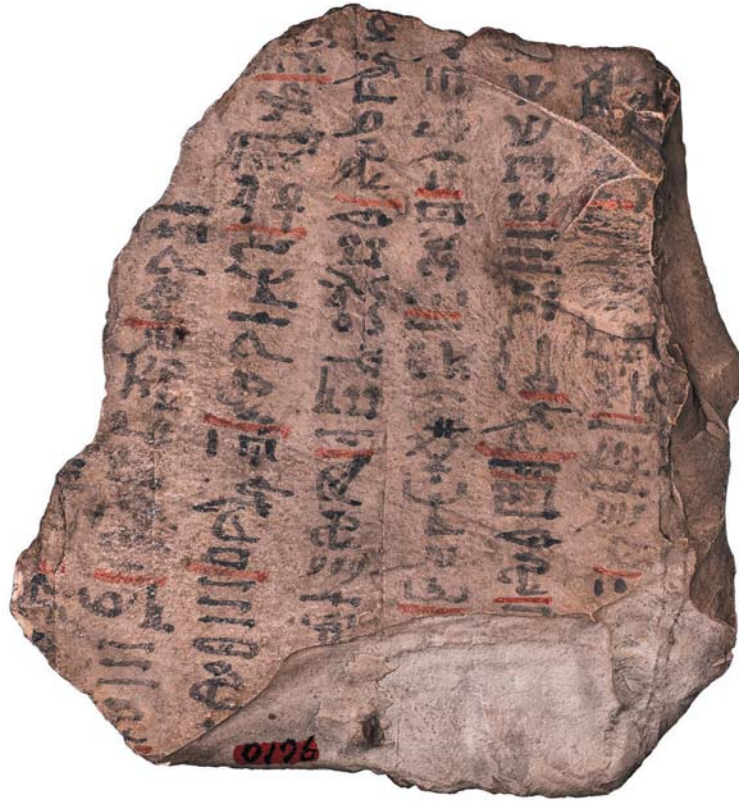


Fig. 11. O. Turin CGT 57440 r<sup>o</sup>.

### 3.2. Two Versions of the Same Text

The repertoire of carefully drawn linear hieroglyphic signs<sup>178</sup> on the recto were written using the ‘private’ or ‘non-royal’ enigmatic style known as ‘ordinary’,<sup>179</sup> ‘normal’<sup>180</sup> or ‘annotational cryptography’.<sup>181</sup> This type of enigmatic writing<sup>182</sup> is most commonly found in Theban tombs of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty,<sup>183</sup> as well as on contemporary statues, stelae, and

<sup>178</sup> Compare with O. BM EA 66303 from Abydos (R. Demarée, *Ramesseid Ostraca*, p. 45 and pl. 205-207: ‘fragments of religious texts, which may have been copied from those in the Osireion’) and O. KV 18/7.1081A (A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 353 and pl. 410-411). Many of the signs on O. Turin CGT 57440 r<sup>o</sup> are rare in other ostraca with cursive hieroglyphic texts, which impedes a proper palaeographical comparison.

<sup>179</sup> É. Drioton, *CdE* 9/18 (1934), p. 192-195.

<sup>180</sup> J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 14.

<sup>181</sup> *Id.*, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 10.

<sup>182</sup> The foundational study is É. Drioton, “Essai sur la cryptographie privée de la fin de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> dynastie”, *RdE* 1 (1933), p. 1-50.

<sup>183</sup> Known examples include two hymns, addressed to the sun and chthonic deities respectively, in TT 11 (K. Sethe, “Die aenigmatischen Inschriften”, p. 1\*-12\*; A. D. Espinel, “Play and Display in Egyptian High Culture”, p. 297-335); *BD* spell 85 in TT 57, which is nowadays largely destroyed (É. Drioton, *RdE* 1 [1933], p. 2-14; A. D. Espinel, “In Tombs,

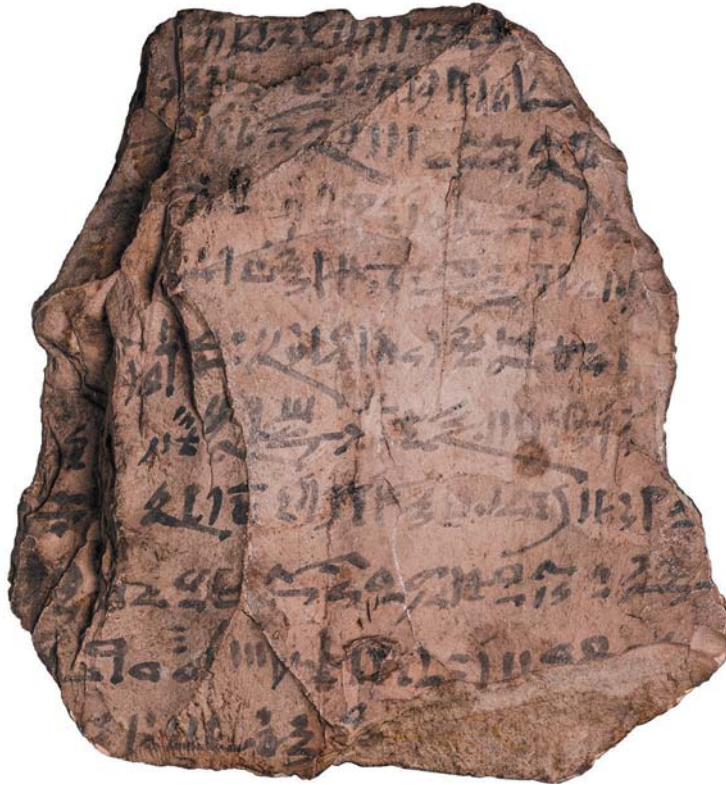





























Fig. 12. O. Turin CGT 57440 v°.

smaller objects.<sup>184</sup> Occurrences of such texts in private contexts are rare in the Ramesside period, however.<sup>185</sup>






Temples and on Scribal Palettes: Contexts and Functions of Private Cryptography during the Mid-Late Eighteenth Dynasty”, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder [eds.], *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 104-106), small fragments from TT 368 (*ibid.*, p. 106), and two short adorations in tomb Kampp No. 162 (Fr. Kampp, *MDAIK* 50 [1994], p. 185-186, pl. 26b; J. C. Darnell, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, p. 21-26, pl. 1B-C).


<sup>184</sup> For an overview of 18<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty objects with enigmatic inscriptions, see A. D. Espinel, in D. Klotz – A. Stauder (eds.), *Enigmatic Writing*, p. 109-121.

<sup>185</sup> In addition to the enigmatic texts discussed in § 1, Ramesside period examples of non-royal cryptography are limited to a series of short texts containing the name and titles of the Abydenian Priests Minmose (U. Effland – A. Effland, *GM* 198 [2004], p. 11-16) and Parahotep (H. Brunner, *JEA* 54 [1968], p. 132); statue Boston MFA 03.1891 from the reign of Ramses II (W. M. Fl. Petrie, *Abydos Part II, 1903* [*EEF Memoir* 24], 1903, pl. XXXV and XXXVII); the name of Atum on statue Paris, BN 23 (J. Yoyotte, “Jeux d’écriture sur une statuette de la XIX<sup>e</sup> dynastie”, *RdE* 10 [1955], p. 81-89); and occasional spellings from TT 32 (L. Kákósy, “A Strange Form of the Name Djehutimes”, *BSEG* 13 [1989], p. 69-71; Z. I. Fábíán, “Some Unusual or So-Called Late or ‘Cryptic’ Hieroglyphs in Djehutimes’ Tomb (TT 32)”, *RRE* 2-3 [1998-1999], p. 29-34; L. Kákósy – T. A. Bács – Z. Bartos *et al.*, *The Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes (TT 32)* [*StudAeg SerMai* 1], 2004, p. 115, 118). Note that Ph. Collombert is currently preparing a study of the prince Khaemwaset, son of Ramses II, and will devote a chapter to the enigmatic practices of his cenacle (p.c., 27.08.2022).

Our study of the original ostracon has allowed us to improve at a number of points upon the *editio princeps*,<sup>186</sup> which contains several misidentifications of linear hieroglyphic signs as hieratic signs, e.g.,  as ?  ? (col. 3); in addition, many signs originally presented in facsimile can now be read, such as  (col. 1),<sup>187</sup>  (col. 2) and  (col. 3) as  (= variant of );<sup>188</sup>  (col. 1) as ;  (col. 3) as ;<sup>189</sup>  (col. 5) as ;<sup>190</sup>  (col. 6) as ; and the group  (col. 6) as .<sup>191</sup> Among the readings that it was possible to clarify was the sequence interpreted by López as     (col. 5), which actually reads    .<sup>192</sup> Since the same phrase appears in the hieratic text on the verso – where López’s transcription  should be emended to  (l. 8) – we hypothesized that we are in fact faced with two versions of the same text here: an enigmatic text in linear hieroglyphs on the recto and a plaintext hieratic version on the verso. A systematic comparison of the two texts quickly made clear that this hypothesis was correct.

The analysis of this document will follow two steps. First, we provide a transliteration, translation (§ 3.2.1), and a series of philological comments (§ 3.2.2) in which we adopt a decidedly emic perspective: we attempt to figure out how the scribe himself understood the enigmatic composition based on his hieratic transcoding on the verso. In the second step, we see that this text was probably challenging for ancient readers, if not quite to the same extent as for modern readers. As such, while discussing the relationship between the two versions of the text (§ 3.3.1), the nature of this composition (§ 3.3.2), its *Sitz im Leben* (§ 3.3.3), and its encoding strategies (§ 3.3.4), we adopt a set of etic glasses, distancing ourselves from the hieratic version and suggesting possible alternate interpretations for some of the sentences in this tantalizing work.

<sup>186</sup> Recurring mistakes in López’ transcription are: the transliteration of  as  (col. 2, 4, 5, and 6; in the last three instances, twice per line), and  as  in col. 1 and 3 (twice), with the facsimile  in col. 2.

<sup>187</sup> The second occurrence of the sign in this column is read .

<sup>188</sup> This sign depicts a circular loaf of bread above a wide cup. This form goes back to the late Middle Kingdom at least (R. Cotteville-Giraudet, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Médamoud (1931) : les monuments du Moyen Empire [FIFAO 9]*, 1933, pl. XLIII). In most painted hieroglyphs from Deir el-Medina, the bread is given a more elongated shape (B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem*, p. 134, § 270 and p. 217), but examples from TT 359 recall the present form (N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d’Inherkhâouy*, I, p. 225 col. 9, p. 236, col. 7). See also the comment on l. 3 in § 3.2.2.

<sup>189</sup> Note that the middle vertical stroke is rather more angled than the straight line found in most examples of this sign (B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem*, p. 87, § 150 and p. 185; Fr. Servajean, *Le tombeau de Nakhtamon*, p. 70, § 135 and p. 172).

<sup>190</sup> Cf. the more complex form in TT 1 (B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem*, p. 147, § 307 and p. 214).

<sup>191</sup> For the shape of the sign  (misunderstood as ) see Fr. Servajean, *op. cit.*, p. 56, p. 164, § 102.

<sup>192</sup> For the *p3*-sign, which usually exhibits a round- or lozenge-shaped extension at the level of its tail, see the examples on O. Turin 57348 (J. López, *Ostraca ieratici N. 57320-57449*, pl. 103). Variants similar to the present case are to be found on stela KV 18/2.145 (A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, pl. 208-209 no. 230) and in TT 359 (N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d’Inherkhâouy*, I, p. 232 col. 25, p. 247 col. 14).

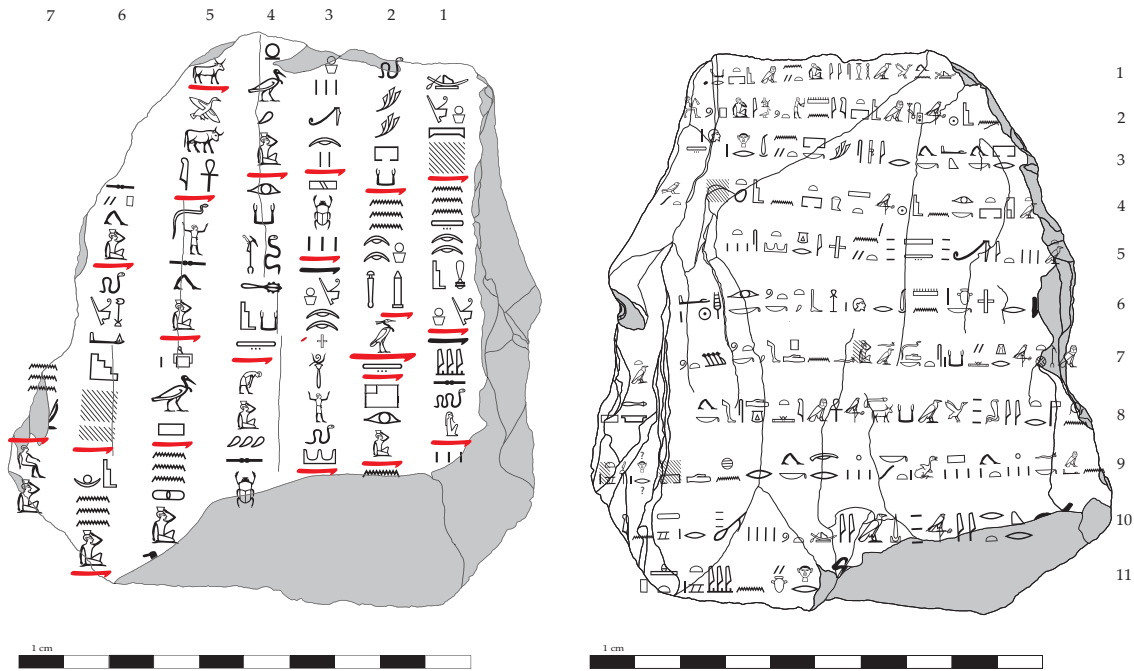


Fig. 13. Hieroglyphic transcription of O. Turin CGT 57440 r° (left) and v° (right).

3.2.1. An Emic Transliteration and Translation

<sup>r1/v1</sup> *d3.t n p3 ḥsy nty m s.t-dsr.t* <sup>v2</sup> *n Wsjr šḥ3 m s.t-m3°.t Jmn-nḥt s3 Jpw(y)*

<sup>v3</sup> *pr>k ḳ>k* <sup>r2</sup> *r js(y)>k nty mn(.w) ḥr-tp t3*

<sup>v4</sup> *t3 ḥw.t jr>k n Wsjr t3 šṯ3(y).t n(.t) 3s.t wr.t*

<sup>v5/t3</sup> *t3 3 tj.w(t) šṯ3.w(t) nty jmy(.wt) Jgr.t*

*st* <sup>v6</sup> *[...](.w) r-jmy jb>k mn(.w) r-tp* <sup>r4</sup> *šnb.t>k*

*jr>k ḥ°(.w)* <sup>v7</sup> *[m] W3s.t ḥr k3(.w)>st*

*ḏḏ>k n p(3)d>k f3>f s(w) / ḏḏ>k 'f3>f' n p(3)d>k šsp ṯw t3* <sup>v8</sup> *[°psḏ].t n(.t)° ntr.wt* <sup>r5</sup>  
*p3 k3 ḥḥ m M3°.t dgs>k sb3/3* <sup>v9</sup> *n mfk(3.t) nmt.t tkt(.j)*

<sup>r1/v1</sup> « Travel by boat of the praised one who is in the holy place <sup>v2</sup> of the Osiris, the scribe in the Place-of-Truth, Amennakhte, son of Ipu(y).

<sup>v3</sup> May you exit and enter <sup>r2</sup> your tomb which remains upon earth,

<sup>v4</sup> the chapel which you made for Osiris, and the secret chamber of Isis the great.

<sup>r3/v5</sup> The three secret images that are in the midst of the Silent Place,

they <sup>v6</sup> are [°placed°] close to your heart; they stay on top of <sup>r4</sup> your chest.

May you spend a (long after)life <sup>v7</sup> [in] Thebes, supplied with its food.

May you tell to your knee to raise up, that the <sup>v8</sup> ennead of goddesses may receive you. <sup>v5</sup>

Oh bull who lives from Maat, may you walk through the door <sup>v9</sup> of turquoise, quartzite and *tkt.j*-stone.

<sup>r6</sup> *sprz k r hnd(.w) ?hr jmn.t?*  
*sjnz k* <sup>v10</sup> [n] *krr.tyw*

*d3y tw 4 hm.w r* <sup>r7</sup> *Jw-n-m3'(.tjw)*

*hmsz k* <sup>v11</sup> [...] *hry-jb Sh.t-htp(.w)*

<sup>r6</sup> May you reach the stairway <sup>?</sup>in the West?  
 May you hurry <sup>v10</sup> [to] the inhabitants of the  
 Caverns.

May the four oars drive you to the <sup>r7</sup> Isle-of-the-  
 Justified-Ones.

May you rest <sup>v11</sup> [...] in the middle of the Field-  
 of-Offerings. »

### 3.2.2. Palaeographical and Philological Comments<sup>193</sup>

r <sup>o</sup>	col. 1 						
v <sup>o</sup>	l. 1 						
	<i>d3.t n</i>	<i>p3</i>	<i>hsy</i>	<i>nty</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>s.t</i>	<i>dsr.t</i>

*d3i.t* <sup>r6</sup> ~ <sup>v6</sup>. The beginning of the text is written logographically in both versions. On the recto, the that follows indicates that the word ends with a dental (or palatal) stop, while it is classified with <sup>194</sup> on the verso. As such, according to the verso, we are dealing with a verb that refers to [MOTION BY BOAT]; based on the recto, this verb has a final dental / palatal stop. The number of possible interpretations is rather high:<sup>195</sup> *skd* “to sail” (D. Jones, *Glossary of Ancient Egyptian Nautical Titles*, p. 225 n° 94), as well as infinitives of *3<sup>ae</sup> inf.*<sup>196</sup> such as *n'i* “to travel by boat” (*ibid.*, p. 216 n° 40), *hni* “to rudder” (*ibid.*, p. 219-220 n° 63) and *d3i* “to cross over” (*ibid.*, p. 230 n° 124). Of these, *skd* and *d3i* are most commonly attested in non-royal (solar) hymns of the New Kingdom and in offering formulas,<sup>197</sup> while *hni* dominates in royal funerary compositions.



<sup>193</sup> With respect to the enigmatic signs, we only comment on those values that are not already found in J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*.



<sup>194</sup> The *ductus* of the hieratic sign, which has an open bottom, does not allow for the transcription .

<sup>195</sup> The verbs *hnti* “to sail southwards” (D. Jones, *A Glossary of Ancient Egyptian Nautical Titles and Terms*, 1988, p. 219 n° 58) and *hdi* “to sail northwards” (*ibid.*, p. 219 n° 61) are not listed here because they are not used for describing journeys in the Netherworld.

<sup>196</sup> Provided that the final *t* of the infinitive of the *3<sup>ae</sup> inf.*, probably lost at the time, was indeed written down. On O. Turin CGT 57440, r<sup>o</sup>, this etymological *t* does not appear in *st3.w(t)*, *Jgr(.t)* (both col. 3), *snb(.t)* (col. 4), though it is written in *st* (col. 4).

<sup>197</sup> For the use of these verbs in the sun hymns, see J. Assmann, *Sonnenhymnen in thebanischen Gräbern (Theben 1)*, 1983, p. 385, 392, 394, and 398. As for the offering formula, the different wishes for crossing the Netherworld are expressed by *d3i* in the so-called ‘Bitte 30’ (W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel [ÄgFo 24]*, 1968, p. 91, 113, and 144) and *skd* in ‘Bitte 62’ and ‘Bitte 112’ (*ibid.*, p. 115, 120, and 148). According to the evidence cited *ibid.*, p. 179, 182, and 245, the verb *n'i* is not employed in these contexts before the Third Intermediate Period.

$h_{sy}$    $^{ro} \sim$    $^{vo}$ . The faint sign(s) on the uneven and partially abraded surface of the recto are difficult to read, but two options can be explored based on the presence of the lexeme  $h_{sy}$  (“praised one” = *Wb.* III, 156, 5-22 or “singer” = *Wb.* III, 165, 3-11) on the verso.<sup>198</sup> (1) The traces might be read as  $\text{𓆎}$ , encoding  $h$  ( $\rho$ )<sup>199</sup> and  $s$  ( $\text{𓆎}$ )<sup>200</sup>. This is not entirely satisfactory from a paleographical point of view, however. Indeed, the  $\rho$  does not exhibit the characteristic long *Abstrich* and its top is more angular than the tops of the four other examples found in col. 4.<sup>201</sup> Further to this, if the circular top of the second sign and the ‘ears’ below evoke  $\text{𓆎}$ , its bottom would not display a horizontal line (at least not on the basis of the parallels that we know).<sup>202</sup> (2) Another, palaeographically more adequate, reading would be the standing harper  $\text{𓆎}$  ( $h_{sy}$ ), which is paralleled on the scribal palette Frankfurt, Liebighaus IN 1899.<sup>203</sup> The lower left part of the sign indeed resembles the legs of the standing man  $\text{𓆎}$  in col. 3 and 5, while the round shape at the top is similar to the head of the human figures in col. 4, 5, and 6. The standing man would bend his right arm, as in the shapes of  $\text{𓆎}$  (col. 2, 4, and 5), and extend his left arm to hold the triangular harp at its top-left end.<sup>204</sup>

$d_{sr}.t$    $^{ro} \sim$    $^{vo}$ . On the verso, faint traces of the last quadrat of l. 1 are preserved and read by López hesitantly as  $\text{𓆎}$ . Despite the distortion caused by the edge of the stone, minute observation of the original document suggests reading  $d_{sr}.t$ .<sup>205</sup> The phrase  $s.t-d_{sr}.t$  “holy place” might refer generically here to the Theban necropolis.<sup>206</sup> The reading of the enigmatic signs

<sup>198</sup> Cf. J. Assmann, *Maât, l'Égypte pharaonique et l'idée de justice sociale : conférences, essais et leçons du Collège de France*, 1989, p. 82-84 and the following statements from tombs in Deir el-Medina:  $jnk w'(w) m h_{sy}.w p^3 d_3(i.w) n t_3-d_{sr} jwz-k d_3i.twzj$  “I am one of the blessed ones. Oh ferryman of the holy land, you should make me cross over” (TT 321; *KRI* III, 817, 16);  $jwzj m tpj n h_{sy}.w m-b_3h Wsjr$  “I am the first one of the blessed ones before Osiris” (TT 218; *KRI* VII, 210, 11).

<sup>199</sup> See J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 81.

<sup>200</sup> This value derives from  $s^3$  (on the basis of the consonantal principle); see Statue Boston MFA 24.743 (D. Klotz – M. Brown, *JARCE* 52 [2016], p. 274) and several spellings of the name Minmose from Abydos (U. Effland – A. Effland, *GM* 198, p. 11-14).

<sup>201</sup> Cf. the shapes on O. BM EA 5630, col. 10 and 12 (The Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak, part 2: Ramses III's Temple within the Great Enclosure of Amon*, II [OIP 35/2], 1936, pl. 122). The sign is, however, less elongated in the hieroglyphs in TT 1 (B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem*, p. 59, § 79-80 and p. 172).


<sup>202</sup> E.g., O. KV 18/1.14 (A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, pl. 406-407, no. 468), O. BM EA 50710, r<sup>o</sup> (R. Demarée, *Ostraca*, pl. 103) and O. Michaelides 83, r<sup>o</sup> (H. Goedicke – E. Wente, *Ostraka Michaelides*, pl. XXXVI). See also the hieratic forms in G. Möller, *Aegyptische Buchschrift*, II, no. 389. As such, this peculiar feature should presumably be explained by some sort of graphic assimilation to the hieratic form of  $\text{𓆎}$  (*ibid.*, no. 398) or similar.




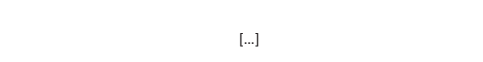
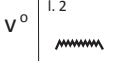



<sup>203</sup> S. J. Seidlmayer, “Eine Schreiberpalette mit ägyptischer Aufschrift (Städtische Galerie Liebighaus / Frankfurt a.M. Inv.-Nr. IN 1899)”, *MDAIK* 47 (1991), p. 321 and 324. The type  $\text{𓆎}$  (A241) in J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 31 misses the form of the large triangular harp which lies on the ground. The same value  $h_{sy}$  is already attested for a seated harpist in the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb BH 17 (A. G. Shedid, *Die Felsgräber von Beni Hassan in Mittelägypten* [AW Sondernummer 25], 1994, p. 38, fig. 56; L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 132-134).


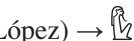






<sup>204</sup> For the classification of harps in Ancient Egypt, see H. Hickmann, *BiEg* 35 (1952-1953), p. 309-358. The harp represented here might be similar to the one on O. Cairo, JE 69409 (*ibid.*, p. 328, fig. 21) and on KV 11 (*id.*, *ASAE* 50 [1959], p. 523-545).

<sup>205</sup> See the shapes in St. J. Wimmer, *Hieratische Paläographie*, II, p. 72.

<sup>206</sup> J. K. Hoffmeier, *Sacred in the Vocabulary of Ancient Egypt: The Term d<sub>sr</sub>, with Special Reference to Dynasties I-XX* (OBO 59), 1985, p. 171-177. See, for instance, the statements  $wn.tw nzk s.t-d_{sr}.t, mwtzk m sbj n k_3zj$  “May one open

 would derive from *dšr.t* “red crown”<sup>207</sup> ~ *dsr.t* “sacred”. As such, it necessitates the phonemic equivalence *š* ~ *s*, which is not attested in the later development of the word.<sup>208</sup> Among the phonographic equivalences attested in New Kingdom enigmatic writing, however, this interpretation seems possible,<sup>209</sup> even if it is admittedly a bit of a stretch.

r <sup>o</sup>				
v <sup>o</sup>				
	<i>n</i>	<i>Wsjr</i>	<i>sh3</i>	<i>m s.t-m3°.t Jmn-nht s3 Jpw(y)</i>

*Wsjr*  (López) → <sup>ro</sup> ~ <sup>vo</sup>.<sup>210</sup> A similar Greco-Roman period encoding of the name of Osiris with a fish sign instead of the middle  is found, for example, in *Dendera X*, 26.12:  (on such spellings of Osiris, see M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, “Die Namen der Götter”, in W. Clarysse – A. Schoors – H. Willems (eds.), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, I [OLA 84], 1998, p. 575 and 579). For the value *w* of  in Ptolemaic inscriptions, see D. Kurth, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische*, I, p. 314, n. 217. The origin of this value  is usually left unexplained (e.g., D. Meeks, *Les architraves du temple d'Esna [PalHiero 1]*, 2004, p. 119). However, H. W. Fairman (“An Introduction to the Study of Ptolemaic Signs and Their Values”, *BIFAO* 43 [1945], p. 67) suggests that it is obtained “by rebus” and adds (“Notes on the Alphabetic Signs Employed in the Hieroglyphic Inscriptions of the Temple of Edfu”, *ASAE* 43 [1943], p. 277, LX) that its value is “due to a pun” interpreting the sign as *w* “district” (see further M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, “Die Namen der Götter”, p. 578, who explicitly refers to “das Zeichen  für *w(w)* ‘Feld’”).

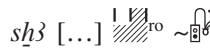




for you the holy place, may you die as one who goes to his Ka” and *tknzk m-bšh m s.t-dsr.t s'r.tw r rd špsj* “May you arrive in front of (God) in the holy place having been lifted up to the noble stair” in TT 57 (J. Assmann – M. Bommas – A. Kucharek, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien, Band 2: Totenliturgien und Totensprüche in Grabinschriften des Neuen Reiches [SSHAW 17]*, 2005, p. 358 and 362-363; M. A. L. El-Tanbouli, *The Tomb of Khâemhat (Meh) [TT 57]: The Royal Scribe and Overseer of the Granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt [CEDAE]*, 2017, p. 218 H. 2a and 221 H.12). For Deir el-Medina more specifically, see the epithet of Osiris *hry s.t-dsr.t* on the stela Turin N. 50011, 1<sup>st</sup> reg. (M. Tosi – A. Roccati, *Stele e alter epigrafi di Deir el-Medina, n. 50001 – n. 50262 [CMT serie seconda – collezioni I]*, 1972, p. 45).


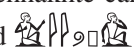


<sup>207</sup> The logographic reading as *dšr.t* “red crown” is attested in the Amduat (E. Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat, Teil III: Langfassung, 9. bis 12. Stunde [AH 15]*, 1994, p. 708) and in the Book of Nut (A. von Lieven, *Nutbuch*, I, p. 278, § 20). In the Book of the Gates, it encodes *dšr.t* “redness” (E. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten*, I, p. 195; C. Manassa, *RdE* 57 [2006], p. 112, 130-131).












<sup>208</sup> Compare *dšr* > Demotic *tšr/trš* (*CDD [T]*, p. 263 and p. 301-302) > Coptic  $\tau\omega\rho\psi$ ; *dsr* > Demotic *tsr* (*ibid.*, p. 293) > Coptic, not attested. Additionally, the phenomenon *š*-*s* may be explained by palatal assimilation to the preceding *d* > *d*, but this has been observed only in words where *š* follows *d* (C. Peust, *Egyptian Phonology: An Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language*, 1999, p. 168).


<sup>209</sup> J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 9.

<sup>210</sup> For the form of the divine classifier A40 see B. Lüscher, *Totenbuch-Papyrus Neuchâtel Eg. 429 und Princeton Pharaonic Roll 2: zur Totenbuch-Tradition von Deir el-Medina (BAÄ 1)*, 2007, *passim*.

*sh3* [...]   $r^o \sim v^o$ . Two short strokes are preserved on the bottom-left side of col. 1. Their position implies that a third stroke was lost to the right, while the large distance between the two strokes on the left and the beginning of the break indicates that they were not part of a larger sign (e.g., the top of ). According to the hieratic text, one would expect the spelling *sh3*, but the sign  does not allow for this reading.<sup>211</sup> However, the group  might be assigned the value *s* (Copt.  $\text{COOY}_m / \text{CO}_f$ ), in an enigmatic spelling analogous to that of *sh3*  (*sjs.w h3.w*) in Stela Louvre C 65, l. 6.<sup>212</sup> This seems to be the most likely restoration.

*Jmn-nht s3 Jpw(y)*   $r^o$ . Name and filiation of the famous scribe of the Tomb of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Amennakhte (v), son of Ipyu (ii).<sup>213</sup> While the name of Amennakhte can be abbreviated as in O. Turin CGT 57440,<sup>214</sup> his father's name is generally spelled  and not .<sup>215</sup> The use of the classifier  is remarkable, as this sign is most commonly used after proper names in monumental contexts, as well as in religious, magical, and literary texts in hieratic.

$r^o$	[...]	col. 2					
$v^o$	 <i>pr=k k=k</i>	 <i>r</i>	 <i>js(y)=k</i>	 <i>nty</i>	 <i>mn(.w)</i>	 <i>hr-tp t3</i>	

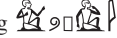
*pr=k k=k*   $v^o$ . This phrasing is reminiscent of the offering formula ‘Bitte 115’ (W. Barta, *Opferformel*, p. 149 and 166). During the Ramesside Period, this formula was used

<sup>211</sup> Cf. J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 181.

<sup>212</sup> E. Drioton, *RdE* 1 (1933), p. 24, 26, 32, 45 and pl. IV-V; first decoded by H. Brugsch, *ZÄS* 12 (1874), p. 147; cf. L. Morenz, *Sinn und Spiel*, p. 50; J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 119. The phonological development of the word *sjs.w* “six” led to the loss of the middle *j* and consequently to an assimilation of both *s* (K. Sethe, *ZÄS* 47 [1910], p. 17).

<sup>213</sup> For an overview of his life and career, see A. Dorn – St. Polis, in Fl. Albert – A. Gasse (eds.), *Études de documents hiératiques inédits : les ostraca de Deir el-Medina en regard des productions de la Vallée des Rois et du Ramesseum : travaux de la première Académie hiératique – Ifao (27 septembre - 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 2015)* (CENiM 22), 2019, p. 15-35. For a recent list of literary texts attributed to this scribe, see A. Dorn – St. Polis, in S. Töpfer – P. Del Vesco – F. Poole (eds.), *Deir el-Medina through the Kaleidoscope: Proceedings of the International Workshop, Turin 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 2018, 2022*, p. 437-439.

<sup>214</sup> E.g., O. Cairo HO 425,  $r^o$  x+8 and  $v^o$  x+7 (Kh. Hassan – St. Polis, in A. Dorn – St. Polis, *Outside the Box*, p. 259 pl. 2 and p. 261 pl. 4). For a discussion of the different spellings of the name, see A. Dorn, in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische Binsen-Weisheiten I-II*, p. 175-218; G. Burkard, in R. Enmarch – V. M. Lepper (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Theory and Practice* (PBA 188), 2013, p. 79, fig. 5.2-5.10.

<sup>215</sup> The double *yod* is not infrequently missing from this name. See, e.g., the similar spelling  in O. DeM 10038,  $r^o$  2 (= P. Grandet, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques non littéraires de Deir el-Médinéh*, X, Nos 10001-10123 [DFIFAO 46], 2006, p. 43 and 228), O. Gardiner 276, l. 3 (= *KRI* VII, 198, 8); P. Turin Cat. 2018,  $r^o$  A4.4 (= *KRI* VI, 853, 16).

to express the desire to *ḳ pri.t* (“to have access”) to two spheres, namely the necropolis and specific temples.<sup>216</sup>

$r \text{𐎓}^{\text{ro}} \sim \text{𐎓}^{\text{vo}}$ . The first sign in col. 2 on the recto may be restored as the snake  $\text{𐎓}$  with one coil. Its tail is not as long as the tails of the snakes in col. 1 ( $\text{𐎓}$ ) and col. 3 ( $\text{𐎓}$ ), but it is similar to the tail of the snake in col. 6 ( $\text{𐎓}$ ). The clear text  $\text{𐎓}$  in  $v^o$  3 leaves few doubts with respect to this reading.

$js(y)z\text{ḳ} \text{𐎓} \text{𐎓}^{\text{ro}} \sim \text{𐎓} \text{𐎓}^{\text{vo}}$ . For the lexeme *jsy* referring to the “tomb”, or more specifically to its “vault”, see I. Régen, “Aux origines de la tombe *js*  $\text{𐎓} \text{𐎓}$ : recherches paléographiques et lexicographiques”, *BIFAO* 106 (2006), p. 245-314. For a discussion of the relationship between the *js* and the *ḫw.t(-k3)*, see *ibid.*, p. 265-267.<sup>217</sup>

$mn(.w) \text{𐎓}^{\text{ro}} \sim \text{𐎓}^{\text{vo}}$ . During the Ramesside Period, the obelisk also had the value *mn* in non-enigmatic writing.<sup>218</sup> See, for instance, the name *Mn-m3'.t-r'-m-ḫb* (Offering slab, Boston MFA 00.690 = *KRI* III, 466, 3; cf. *Wb.* II, 106, 28; K. Jansen-Winkel, *Spätmittelägyptische Grammatik der Texte der 3. Zwischenzeit* [ÄAT 34], 1996, p. 12, § 8).

$(ḫr-)tp \text{ t3} \text{𐎓} \text{𐎓}^{\text{ro}} \sim \text{𐎓} \text{𐎓}^{\text{vo}}$  (López)  $\rightarrow \text{𐎓} \text{𐎓}^{\text{vo}}$ . On the recto, the first sign of this group depicts a dagger within its etui, which is characterized by a bulk on its lower end.<sup>219</sup> Typologically, the dagger corresponds to contemporaneous type VII “Dolche mit fächer- bis kelch- sowie T-förmigen bis zylindrischen Knauf” (S. Petschel, *Typologie der Stichwaffen*, p. 191-221, p. 460-482), with a long handle and a fan-shaped upper end. The body of the bird that follows is formed by a simple oblique line; as such, it differs from the  $\text{𐎓}$  (value: *b*) in col. 4 and 5. The wattle on the birds’ neck plays an important role in excluding  $\text{𐎓}$  here,<sup>220</sup> while the long beak and the curved neck also work to exclude  $\text{𐎓}$ <sup>221</sup> and  $\text{𐎓}$ ,<sup>222</sup> which occasionally exhibit a similar wattle in the repertoire of the Ramesside Period. Another possibility is

<sup>216</sup> For the latter, see also J. S. G. Auenmüller, *Die Territorialität der Ägyptischen Elite(n) des Neuen Reiches: Eine Studie zu Raum und räumlichen Relationen im textlichen Diskurs, anhand prosopographischer Daten und im archäologischen Record*, 2015, p. 209-222. See further the statue of the vizir Panehesy from Deir el-Medina (*KRI* IV, 84, 8).

<sup>217</sup> Since the publication of Régen’s comprehensive study, it has been demonstrated that, in her example from the tomb of Sen-mes (QH 351), one should read *ḫw.t* instead of *ḫw.t-k3* (E. Edel, *Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan I. Abteilung, Band 2: Architektur, Darstellungen, Texte archäologischer Befund und Funde der Gräber QH 35 – QH 101*, 2008, p. 915, pl. LIX).


<sup>218</sup> For this widely attested value see also E. Hornung – E. Staehelin, *Skarabäen*, p. 175 and 179 n. 17; J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 139.





<sup>219</sup> See, for example, the hieroglyphic dagger in MET 23.3.26 (Chl. Ragazzoli, “Secondary epigraphy in the North Asasif tombs: The ‘restoration label’ of Paser in Khety’s tomb TT 311, year 17 of Ramesses II”, *PAM* 30/1 [2021], p. 218) and the dagger depicted on the lid of the sarcophagus of Merenptah and Psusennes I, Cairo JE 87297 (S. Petschel, *Den Dolch betreffend: Typologie der Stichwaffen in Ägypten von der prädynastischen Zeit bis zur 3. Zwischenzeit* [Philippika 36], 2011, p. 71, fig. 9).














<sup>220</sup> B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem*, p. 67, § 98.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64, § 91, p. 174.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60, § 81, p. 173; in monumental hieroglyphs: Kh. El-Enany, *Le petit temple d’Abou Simbel: paléographie* (*PalHiéro* 3), 2007, § 67.

the bird  (G31), which exhibits this wattle in the Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet from Deir el-Medina<sup>223</sup> and in Ramesside paintings.<sup>224</sup> This identification is corroborated by the stroke on the back of the bird's head, which corresponds to the feather that characterizes this bird.<sup>225</sup> Moreover, its value *tš* in other enigmatic compositions of the New Kingdom<sup>226</sup> corresponds to the hieratic text at the end of v<sup>o</sup> 3.

For the *ductus* of  in hieratic, see the similar shape in l. 6. This sign is followed by two horizontal lines of differing length – under the  – for which we propose reading . This seemingly rather unusual hieratic spelling of *tš* is actually frequent in the phrase  *hr-tp tš* ‘on earth’<sup>227</sup> (e.g., O. Gardiner 308, 1 = HO 93, 3; P. Anastasi 3, IV, 8 = LEM 25, 3; P. Berlin 3048, col. I, 2 = Sv. Gülden, *Die hieratischen Texte des P. Berlin 3049* [KÄT 13], 2011, p. 2 and pl. I), notably in sources from the reign of Ramses IV (e.g., P. Turin 1882, r<sup>o</sup> I, 6 and IV, 5 = A. H. Gardiner, *JEA* 41 [1955], pl. VII and X; P. BM EA 9999, XL, 8 and XLV, 1 = P. Grandet, *Le papyrus Harris I* (BM 9999) [BdE 109], 1994, pl. 44-45).

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$ir>k$   $^{\text{ro}} \sim$   $^{\text{vo}}$ . One could be tempted to read on the verso because the shape of the  $k$  does not correspond to the other occurrences of this sign in  $v^{\circ}$  3, 5, 6, and 7 (that end with a long oblique stroke). The angle that closes its right end is, however, found in  $jb>k$  (l. 6),  $mfk>t$ , and  $spr>k$  (l. 9).

$t\dot{3}\ \dot{s}t\dot{3}(y)t$  [...]  $^{\text{ro}} \sim$  (López)  $\rightarrow$   $^{\text{vo}}$ . The reading *Nb.t-hw.t*, suggested by López, is tempting at first glance, but three details confirm that is to be preferred: (1) we are not aware of any other New Kingdom attestation of the divine name Nephthys preceded by the definite article; (2) the *ductus* of the putative does not correspond to the *ductus* of the sign in the word *hw.t* at the beginning of  $v^{\circ}$  4: the lack of an internal diagonal stroke, as well as the small curl at the top of the left vertical stroke, show that this sign should read ;<sup>230</sup> (3) finally, a comparison between the upper sign of the first group that comes before and the *ductus* of  $\dot{s}t\dot{3}.w$  in  $v^{\circ}$  3 shows that it should be read , resulting in the final reading ,  $\dot{s}t\dot{3}(y)t$  “the secret (place)” (cf. D. A. Werning, *Höhlenbuch*, I, p. 105-106; II, p. 519-520). Spellings of this lexeme without after can be found, e.g., in O. BTdK 695,  $v^{\circ}$  1 and 3 (= A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 576-578). This is a common designation for the Netherworld in royal funerary compositions; it also refers to the lower part of the burial chamber of royal tombs.<sup>231</sup> In Deir el-Medina, the term refers to an architectural element (a cellar or the like<sup>232</sup>) that can be located, in a funerary context, next (*r-gs*) to a pyramid (*mhr*) or next to a tomb superstructure (*m'hr.t*).<sup>233</sup>

$3s.t$  [...]  $^{\text{ro}} \sim$   $^{\text{vo}}$ . The hieratic signs were retraced using fresh ink of a slightly darker color. The classifier ( or sim.) was written at a particularly irregular point on the surface of the ostrakon and can no longer be read.

$wr.t$  [...]  $^{\text{ro}} \sim$   $^{\text{vo}}$ . For the shape of this barely visible group, see St. J. Wimmer, *Hieratische Paläographie*, II, 140, form c.

<sup>230</sup> <https://aku-pal.uni-mainz.de/graphemes#id=660&mdc=U30>, accessed 18.11.2022.

<sup>231</sup> E.g. P. Turin CGT 55002  $r^{\circ}$ , frg. T and  $v^{\circ}$  Text B, x+2.2 (S. Demichelis, *ZÄS* 131 [2004], p. 121-122 and 129, pl. XIII-XV).

<sup>232</sup> See, for instance, O. DeM 112,  $r^{\circ}$  2 (J. Černý, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques non littéraires de Deir el-Médineh : nos 1 à 113* [DFIFAO 3], 1935, pl. 62), O. DeM 964,  $r^{\circ}$  5 (P. Grandet, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques non littéraires de Deir el-Médinéh. Tome IX: Nos 831-1000* [DFIFAO 41], 2003, p. 135-136 and 415).

<sup>233</sup> P. Turin Cat. 2070,  $v^{\circ}$  II.6-7 (Sch. Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyrus aus der Ramessidenzeit* [URÄA 1], 1973, p. 328 and pl. 121). Cf. also A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, p. 431. Note that O. BTdK 695 ( $v^{\circ}$  3) locates a *mhr* inside a  $\dot{s}t\dot{3}(y)t$  and thus confirms its identification as a pyramidion (A. Dorn, in J. Toivari-Viitala – T. Vatiainen – S. Uvato [eds.], *Deir el-Medina Studies*, p. 54).





Avignon, Musée Calvet, inv. n° A4<sup>249</sup> from the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty. The stela Louvre E. 17341, l. 1 from Amara West (time of Amenhotep II) provides an even earlier example with the transitional spelling  $\text{𓆎}$ ,<sup>250</sup> this spelling also appears on the fragment of a statue base from Deir el-Medina.<sup>251</sup>  $Jr(y)z k \text{ 'h'.w}$  introduces the offering formula ‘Bitte 151’ (W. Barta, *Opferformel*).<sup>252</sup>

$W3s.t \text{ 𓆎}^{\text{ro}} \sim \text{𓆎}^{\text{vo}}$ . The beginning of  $\text{v}^{\circ} 7$  is lost but can be restored based on the corresponding  $W3s(.t)$  from  $\text{r}^{\circ}$ , col. 4: the traces before  $\text{𓆎}$  are clearly the ligature of  $\text{𓆎}$  (see, e.g., O. Gardiner 25,  $\text{r}^{\circ} 9$ <sup>253</sup>). The wish to live a long or a good life in a given town is attested, for example, on the Lintel JE 45707 from Edfu ( $\text{‘h'.w } k3 m Bhd.t$  and  $\text{‘h'.w nfr m } W3s.t nht.t$ ; K. A. Kitchen – G. A. Gaballa, *Serapis* 6 [1980], p. 75-76 = *KRI* V, 431, 6-7 and 8-9) and on the left door-jamb of Rame-Roy at Karnak ( $\text{‘h'.w } k3 m W3s.t nht.t hr rmn Jmn m Jp.t-s.wt$ ; G. Lefebvre, *Inscriptions concernant les grands prêtres d’Amon Romê-Roÿ et Amenhotep*, 1929, p. 28, insc. IV, b, l. 1).

$hr k3(.w)zst \text{ 𓆎}^{\text{ro}} \sim \text{𓆎}^{\text{vo}}$ . ‘Bitte 151’ of the offering formula wishes for a long or a good life  $hr hsw.t$  “in the favour” of the king or of divinities,<sup>254</sup>  $hr j3w$  “with a high age”<sup>255</sup> or  $hr ndm-jb$  “in joy”.<sup>256</sup> We are aware of only one parallel that potentially bears a certain similarity to the one on O. Turin CGT 57440, namely  $\text{‘h'.w nfr hr } \check{s}sp k3z f^{\text{ATEN}}$  “a good lifetime while receiving his<sup>ATEN</sup> food” on the lintel Cairo JE 55503 from Amarna (H. Frankfort – J. D. S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten, Part II: The North Suburb and the Desert Altars, the Excavations at Tell el Amarna During the Season 1926-1932 [EEF Memoir 40]*, 1933, pl. 23 n° 4).<sup>257</sup> As such, we read  $k3(.w)$  “food” (*Wb.* V, 91).<sup>258</sup>

<sup>249</sup>  $\text{‘h'.w nfr m hr.t-ntr}$  “a beautiful lifetime in the necropolis” (J. Ruffle – K. A. Kitchen, in J. Ruffle – G. A. Gaballa – K. A. Kitchen (eds.), *Orbis Aegyptiorum Speculum, Glimpses of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of H.W. Fairman*, 1979, p. 57-58 and 66-67 pl. V = *KRI* III, 193, 4).

<sup>250</sup>  $\text{‘h'.w } z3w m hsw.t nswt$  “a long lifetime in the favour of the king” (H. W. Fairman, *JEA* 25 [1939], p. 142, pl. XVI.1).

<sup>251</sup> B. Bruyère, *Deir el Médineh (1935-1940)*, II, p. 31, fig. 97.

<sup>252</sup> See the centrality of this word in the harpist’s song of Nefersekeru in Zawyet Sultan (J. Osing, in *Aspects de la culture pharaonique : quatre leçons au Collège de France (février-mars 1989) [MAIBL SN XII]*, 1992, p. 21).

<sup>253</sup> See A. Dorn – St. Polis, *BIFAO* 116 (2017), p. 71, tab. 5.







<sup>254</sup> E.g.,  $\text{‘h'.w } k3j hr hsw.t nswt$  “a long lifetime in the favour of the king” (statue Cairo CG 1134; L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten [CGC]*, IV, 1934, p. 73 = *KRI* III, 108, 10).







<sup>255</sup> E.g.,  $\text{‘h'.w nfr hr } j3w$  “a good lifetime with a high age” (B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1929)*, 1930, p. 22).














<sup>256</sup> E.g.,  $\text{‘h'.w nfr hr ndm-jb}$  “a good lifetime in joy” (Coffin Berlin, ÄM 20135; G. Roeder, *Aegyptische Inschriften aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, II: Inschriften des Neuen Reiches, Indizes zu Band 1 und 2*, 1924, p. 555).

<sup>257</sup> For this lintel, see also J. Budka, *Der König an der Haustür: die Rolle des ägyptischen Herrschers an dekorierten Türgehänden von Beamten im Neuen Reich (BZÄ 19, VIAÄUW 94)*, 2001, p. 120-121, fig. 31.


<sup>258</sup> J. Assmann, *JEA* 65 (1979), p. 63-64 notes that the provision of the deceased with food is an especially relevant topic of the harpists’ songs.

r <sup>o</sup>	 <i>ddzk n p(3)dk</i>	 <i>f3zf</i>	 <i>s(w)</i>
v <sup>o</sup>	 <i>ddzk</i>	 <i>f3zf</i>	 <i>n p(3)dk</i>

*ddzk n p(3)dk f3zf s(w)*    r<sup>o</sup>. The first sign depicts a man bowing down and stretching his arms towards his legs much like  (A16).<sup>259</sup> Following the transcoding on the verso, it seems that this sign was interpreted as a direct representation of a [MAN SPEAKING TO HIS LEGS] with the logographic reading *ddzk n p(3)dk*.<sup>260</sup> Accordingly, the following group *ppp* must have the value *f3zf* with two pieces of meat reading *f* and the middle sign possibly encoding a weak consonant between the two *f*-s.<sup>261</sup> Finally, it appears to be necessary to read the sign  as the enclitic pronoun *s(w)* (or even  as the pseudo-historical spelling *st*<sup>262</sup>).

*ddzk f3zf n p(3)dk*      (López) →      v<sup>o</sup>. The hasty *ductus* of the scribe produced some unusual sign forms here. First, the oblique stroke below *dd* is due to a ligature with the beginning of the , which was traced in a single movement after the upper group.<sup>263</sup> Both  of *f3zf* are very short, and it is noticeable that, in the first case, the scribe did not even lift his pen between the left horn of the viper and the . Finally, the fact that the scribe had to re-ink the end of *p(3)dk*, as well as the remarkably cursive *ductus* of  (see below), show that this line was penned very quickly.

<sup>259</sup> See the examples in the Book of the Dead of Any (R. Faulkner – O. Goelet – C. Andrews – J. Wassermann, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*, 1994, pl. 25, left col. 2), TT 335 (Fr. Servajean, *Le tombeau de Nakhtamon*, p. 6, § 10, p. 134), and TT 359 (N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La tombe d'Inherkhâouy*, I, p. 253 col. 7). For further variants, see D. Meeks, *Document numérique* 16/3 (2013), p. 40, fig. 2-3.

<sup>260</sup> Note that this kind of direct representation is not an isolated phenomenon, e.g.  for *dî 'nh* on the scribal Palette Frankfurt, Liebighaus IN 1944 (S. J. Seidlmayer, *MDAIK* 47 [1991], p. 320-321) and different representations of the king holding an offering table for *hṯp-dî-nsw* on the Statue Boston MFA 24.743 (D. Klotz – M. Brown, *JARCE* 52 [2016], p. 276 fig. 7, p. 278), the aforementioned scribal palette in Frankfurt, as well as its pendant in Paris, Louvre AF 12725 (S. J. Seidlmayer, *MDAIK* 47 [1991], p. 320-321); cf. J. J. Clère, “Un nouvel exemple du monogramme *hṯp-dî-nsw*”, in *Studi in memoria di Ippolito Rosellini*, II, 1955, p. 35-42.

<sup>261</sup> J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 80-81.

<sup>262</sup> This reasoning follows the segmentation of the text with red lines.

<sup>263</sup> It is not possible to read *nzk* here, as this would necessitate an additional angle to the left.

Content wise, the two versions are synonymous – the deceased should say to his feet (*psd* ~ *rd* in other texts) to rise up<sup>264</sup> (so that he may stand up<sup>265</sup>) – but differ in terms of their grammatical structure. On the recto, the phrase ends in an indirect speech whose subject (*šf*) corresponds to the addressee (*psd*);<sup>266</sup> it resorts to the reflexive pronoun *s(w)*. The text on the verso, on the other hand, inserts the indirect speech before the addressee.<sup>267</sup>

r <sup>o</sup>		col. 5 [...]				
v <sup>o</sup>		l. 8 				
	šsp	<i>tw t3 psd.t n(.t) ntr.wt</i>	<i>p3</i>	<i>k3</i>	<i>nh</i>	<i>m M3.t</i>

šsp *tw* [...] r<sup>o</sup> ~ v<sup>o</sup>. On the v<sup>o</sup>, the *ductus* of is particularly cursive;<sup>268</sup> it should be read as a logogram because it is followed by the enclitic pronoun *tw*, the shape of which has a close parallel in *tw* in l. 10<sup>269</sup>. We suggest, albeit with some hesitation, that corresponds to on r<sup>o</sup> 4. Unlike in r<sup>o</sup> 3 (where it has the value *t3*), here would have the value *šp*, which in turn means that *hpr* already possessed the palatalized pronunciation of Coptic  $\psi\omega\pi\epsilon$ .<sup>270</sup> If this hypothesis is correct, note that the scribe did not segment this subjunctive form with a red line; this might indicate that the verbal form was analyzed by the scribe as a dependent rather than an independent subjunctive.

<sup>2</sup>[*psd*].*t n(.t)*<sup>2</sup> *ntr.wt* [...] r<sup>o</sup> ~ v<sup>o</sup>.<sup>271</sup> Because v<sup>o</sup> 7 ends with the definite article *t3*, the (partially preserved) group of signs at the beginning of v<sup>o</sup> 8 must be a noun (feminine

<sup>264</sup> A phraseological parallel is found in P. Leiden I 343 + 345, v<sup>o</sup> V.4: [*f3*] *šk rd.wyšk r šššk p3 hw r htm r3 n p3* [...] “May you raise up your feet so that you hurry – oh akhu – until the mouth of [...] is sealed” (S. Beck, *Sāmānu: Ein vorderasiatischer Dämon in Ägypten* [ÄAT 83], 2015, p. 156). H.-W. Fischer-Elfert (p.c.; 3.1.2023) draws our attention to another possible parallel on O. DeM 1650, r<sup>o</sup> 6 (G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh: Nos 1607-1675. Tome III (fasc. 3)* [DFIFAO 20], 1980, p. 93 and pl. 72-72a), where one reads [...] *mdwšs hn rd w*. He is currently preparing a study of this text (incl. an unpublished parallel from Berlin).

<sup>265</sup> Cf. P. Koemoth, “Le rite de redresser Osiris”, in J. Quaegebeur (ed.), *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the International Conference organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 17th to the 20th of April 1991* (OLA 55), 1993, p. 157-174.

<sup>266</sup> C. Peust, *Indirekte Rede im Neuägyptischen* (GOF IV/33), 1996, p. 52-53, § 3.3.1.2.


<sup>267</sup> A similar case of direct speech introduced before the addressee is found in O. CoA II.1, l. 3-4: *hwšk hr dd jmy nšf n p3 sšw.ty nty hr sšw n3 šwy.w* “And you said ‘Give (it) to him’ to the watchman who takes care of the hay” (J. D. S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten, Part II: The Central City and the Official Quarters: The Excavations at Tell el-Amarna during the Seasons 1926-1927 and 1931-1936*, II [EES Memoir 44/2], 1951, pl. LXXXIV).




<sup>268</sup> Similar shapes appear in administrative ostraca from the period of Ramses III onwards, e.g. O. DeM 94, l. 1 (J. Černý, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques non littéraires de Deir el-Médineh: Nos 1 à 113* [DFIFAO 3], 1935, pl. 55), O. DeM 604, l. 1 and 3 (S. Sauneron, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques non littéraires de Deir el-Médineh: Nos 550-623* [DFIFAO 13], 1959, pl. 25). Cf. also St. J. Wimmer, *Hieratische Paläographie*, II, p. 259, form Ramses IX.





<sup>269</sup> For a 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty spelling of *šsp* as see O. Turin CGT 57001, r<sup>o</sup> 8 (J. López, *Ostraca ieratici N. 57001-57092* [CMT Serie Seconda – Collezioni III/1], pl. 1).

<sup>270</sup> For the palatalization *h* > *š*, see C. Peust, *Egyptian Phonology*, p. 123, § 3.9.5.



<sup>271</sup> We were not able to identify the animal which López used in his hieroglyphic transcription.

singular).<sup>272</sup> For lack of a better reading, we suggest ,<sup>273</sup> a logographic spelling (without Z1) of *psd.t n(t)* “the ennead of”<sup>274</sup>. According to *LGG* III, 155, the only attestation of an ennead of female goddesses is to be found in the Book of Caverns (a caption of nine human-headed goddesses standing on mountains). They are called *psd.t n.t ntr.wt* ‘*h*.*w.t* [*hr*] *h3s.wt=sn sšm(.wt) sšt3.w hr=sn* ‘3 *hnty Jmn.t* “ennead of goddesses who stand [on] their desert-mountains, who conduct the mysteries, who carry the great who is in front of the Hidden-Place”.<sup>275</sup> However, such an identification would be problematic, due to the lack of further parallels.<sup>276</sup> The author might actually not have intended to refer to a specific ennead of female divinities but rather to an abstract concept of all those goddesses who receive the deceased in the judgement hall.<sup>277</sup>

The corresponding section on the recto begins at the bottom of col. 4 and ends with a mammal on the top of col. 5. This animal has slender proportions, a discrete muzzle, and small pointed ears (or horns) which distinguish it from  below.<sup>278</sup> As a way of expressing the final part of *psd.t n.t ntr.wt* (and unable to compare this sign with other mammals in the same text), we read  as a *lectio facilior*, as this sign may stand logographically for any goddess,<sup>279</sup> though the same may be true for goddesses taking the appearance of smaller animals, e.g., a walking cat ().

*p3 k3*   <sup>ro</sup> ~   <sup>vo</sup>. This vocative construction calls on the deceased as a bull. It might be linked to the preceding sentence, but it fits better at the beginning of the following sentence, which inaugurates the journey through the Netherworld.<sup>280</sup> Conceptually, the

<sup>272</sup> Palaeographically, numerals do not match the traces.

<sup>273</sup> We prefer the sign  to  (G. Möller, *Aegyptische Buchschrift*, II, no. 573) as it is possible to observe a small oblique stroke at the left bottom end of the upper sign (which would be the snake’s tail).

<sup>274</sup> As in other cases, this logographic spelling might result from the influence of enigmatic orthographic habits upon hieratic spellings.

<sup>275</sup> A. Piankoff, *BIFAO* 41 (1942), pl. VII col. 1-2. For the scene in the tomb of Ramses VI, see *id.*, *The Tomb of Ramses VI*, I (*BollSer* 40.1), 1954, p. 52, fig. 10, pl. 8.

<sup>276</sup> For a unique attestation of an ennead of gods (*psd.t n.t ntr.w*), see *LGG* III, 154-155. Note especially the *psd.t n.t ntr.w jmy.t-ht k3 Jmnt.t* “ennead of gods which follow the bull of the West”, which may relate to the following phrase on O. Turin CGT 57440.




<sup>277</sup> See W. Barta, *Untersuchungen zum Götterkreis der Neunheit* (MÄS 28), 1973, p. 37-38; Chr. Seeber, *Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts im Alten Ägypten* (MÄS 35), 1976, p. 133-136; L. Troy, in G. Englund (ed.), *The Religion of Ancient Egyptians: Cognitive Structures and Popular Expressions, Proceedings of Symposia in Uppsala and Bergen 1987 and 1988* (Boreas 20), 1989, p. 59-69. For a concrete phraseological parallel see *CT* 839 *ts(w)* ‘*z**k jn R’ šsp(.w)* ‘*z**k jn psd.tj* “your arm is lifted up by Ra, your arm is taken by the two Enneads” (*CT* VII, 41b). For the concept of being “received” (*šsp*) in the West, see J. Assmann – M. Bommas – A. Kucharek, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien*, II, p. 349-350. Cf. also the iconic depiction ‘which begs to be read’ of the Ennead on top of the entrance to the subterranean structure of TT 335 at Deir el-Medina (B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1924-1925)* [*FIFAO* 3/3], 1926, p. 116-117).



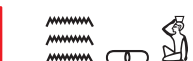






<sup>278</sup> Other (linear) hieroglyphic forms of the latter sign are found in in TT 1 (B. J. J. Haring, *The Tomb of Sennedjem*, p. 53, § 62, p. 169) and the O. KV 18/6.815 (A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten*, pl. 396-397 no. 451).


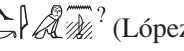

<sup>279</sup> This sign-value is not attested so far but is in line with the metonymic values *nb.t* and *hnmw.t* (J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 68); cf. also B. Lurson, “Cryptography, the Full Moon Festival of Min, and the King: Reading the Cryptographic Inscription of the Chapel of Min in the Temple of Ramses II at Abydos”, *JARCE* 52 [2017], p. 228-229 n. g).



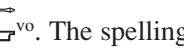

<sup>280</sup> Consider also the violent connotation of the construction *dgs* (*hr*) (*Wb.* V, 501, 9-10).

invocation of the deceased as a bull refers to the ‘ancient’ identification of the deceased as *k3 w' k3 m hsbḏ nb sh.t k3 ntr* “unique high bull of lapislazuli, lord of the field, the bull of the god,” which appears in *BD* spell 110<sup>281</sup> and its predecessor *CT* 468.<sup>282</sup>

*'nh m m3'.t*  ~  (López) → . Someone who “lives from Maat” typically refers to royal<sup>283</sup> or divine agents,<sup>284</sup> and only rarely to non-royal individuals.<sup>285</sup> One of the rare examples is *BD* spell 125 where the deceased states in front of the divine judges *'nh=j m m3'.t s'm=j m m3'.t* “I live from Maat, I feed from Maat”<sup>286</sup> as a metaphoric expression of the fact that he is free of any wrongdoing. It is interesting to note that the Horus name of Ramses IV, one of the kings under whom Amennakhte (v), son of Ipuw, lived, begins with the phrase *k3 nhḏ 'nh m m3'.t* (J. von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen* [MÄS 49], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1999, p. 166-167).

r <sup>o</sup>				 [...]	[...]
v <sup>o</sup>			<sup>1.9</sup> 		
	<i>dgs=k</i>	<i>sb3'3</i>	<i>n mfk(3.t)</i>	<i>nmt.t</i>	<i>ikt.(j)</i>

*dgs=k*   (López) → . The verb *dgs* is construed transitively here, with the meaning ‘to enter, to go through’ (*Wb.* V, 501, 1-8).

*sb3'ro'3'vo*   (López) → . The spelling of the lexeme ‘3’ “door” on the v<sup>o</sup> is common during the Ramesside period,<sup>287</sup> though it does not correspond to the substantive *sb3* of the r<sup>o</sup>. As such, one might read the v<sup>o</sup> alternatively as  *sb3*, which is palaeographically possible but highly problematic from an ‘orthographic’ point of view.<sup>288</sup> It seems more likely

<sup>281</sup> For this concept in general, see also R. Weill, *Le champ des roseaux et le champ des offrandes dans la religion funéraire et la religion générale* (*EtudEg* 3), 1936, p. 42-54.

<sup>282</sup> NN *k3 pw w'.ty k3 sdm nb hsbḏ nb sh.t k3 ntr.w* “NN is this unique bull, the large and painted one, lord of lapislazuli, lord of the field, the bull of the gods” (*CT* V, 384o-385a). For the history of the text, see L. Lesko, *JARCE* 9 (1971-1972), p. 89-101.

<sup>283</sup> R. Moftah, *Studien zum ägyptischen Königsdogma im Neuen Reich* (*SDAIK* 20), 1985, p. 221-228.

<sup>284</sup> *LGG* II, 144-145.

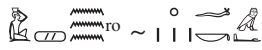




<sup>285</sup> J. Assmann, *Maât : l'Égypte pharaonique et l'idée de justice sociale*, p. 121.

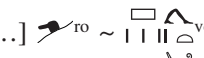


<sup>286</sup> G. Lapp, *Totenbuch Spruch 125* (*Tbt* 3), 2008, p. 170-171.


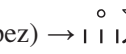


<sup>287</sup> E.g., P. Chester Beatty IV, v<sup>o</sup> II.11 (A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series: Chester Beatty Gift*, 1935, pl. 18).

<sup>288</sup> We are not aware of any similar spellings of the word. See the list in P. Spencer, *The Egyptian Temple: A Lexicographic Study*, 1984, p. 206.

that the two versions simply resorted to synonymous expressions (see further § 3.3.1).<sup>289</sup> Here, the text probably refers to the entrance of the Netherworld (*sb3.w Dw3.t*), which the deceased should not ‘back’ (*šnʿ*, perhaps the antonym of the above *dgsʿ*)<sup>290</sup> according to a wish made in the offering formula.<sup>291</sup>

*mfk(3.t)*  ~ . The encrypted version begins with . This group of signs has the value *n* in the rest of the text (e.g., *nty* in col. 1 and 2), but it could read *m* here (consonantal principle: *mw*). Alternatively, this spelling might suggest that the Graeco-Roman pronunciation of the word as *nfk* goes back to the Ramesside Period.<sup>292</sup> The second sign, a rectangle with round corners and two oblique lines in its center () is not attested in other enigmatic texts of the New Kingdom with the value *f*. It might go back to *f3w* “delivery of food” (*Wb. I, 575, 2*) which is classified using a similar sign () but this lexeme is very rare.

*nmt.t* [...]  ~ . The traces at the bottom of r<sup>o</sup> 5 most probably correspond to the upper end of the sign ; see its *ductus* in col. 3 and 6. As such, it might represent the beginning of the encrypted spelling of *nmt.t* “quartzite”.<sup>293</sup>

*tkt(.j)* [...]  (López) → . The *ductus* of the classifier corresponds to that of *mfk(3.t)* in the same line. The word appears in a lexical list in the *Geographical Papyrus* from Tanis ().<sup>294</sup> It also appears in P. Berlin P. 14447 + PSI I 78 () with the Coptic gloss  $\Theta\epsilon\kappa\tau\iota$ ;<sup>295</sup> it is listed next to *mfk3.t*, *bj3-n-p.t*, and *hmty*. As for its identification, K. Piehl (*PSBA* 13 [1890-1891], p. 38) proposed “magnet stone”.<sup>296</sup>

<sup>289</sup> For the use of these terms in the village of Deir el-Medina, see J. J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramesside Period: An Economic Study of the Village of Necropolis Workmen at Thebes*, 1975, p. 389.

<sup>290</sup> The term does not seem to be current in New Kingdom funerary texts and only later enters *BD* spell 1; cf. B. Backes, *Wortindex zum späten Totenbuch (pTurin 1791)* (*SAT* 9), 2005, p. 190.

<sup>291</sup> *nj šnʿ.tw hr sb3.w Dw3.t* (e.g. *KRI* III, 278, 11; 317, 11; 319, 11-12).

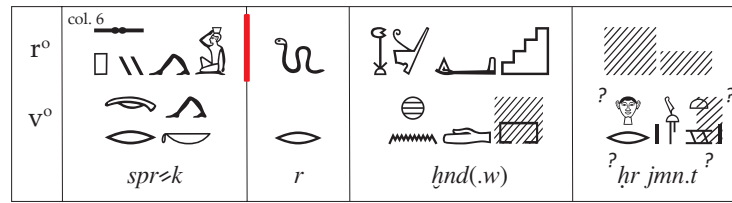
<sup>292</sup> See S. Sauneron, in J. Sainte Fare Garnot (ed.), *Mélanges Mariette* (*BdE* 32), 1961, p. 241-242; S. Aufrère, *L'univers minéral dans la pensée égyptienne* (*BdE* 105/2), 1991, p. 491-492.

<sup>293</sup> *Contra Wb. II, 272, 2*: “roter Granit”. Our translation is based on the self-designation of the Naos Cairo JE 47580 (H. Hohnack, *Naos*, II, p. 175; cf. J. R. Harris, *Lexicographical Studies in Ancient Egyptian Minerals* [*VIO* 54], 1961, p. 88).

<sup>294</sup> F. L. Griffith – W. M. Fl. Petrie, *Two Hieroglyphic Papyri from Tanis. I. The Sign Papyrus (A Syllabary); II. The Geographical Papyrus (An Almanack)* (*EEF Memoir* 5), 1889, pl. X frg. 16; Chr. Leitz, *Die Gaumonographien in Edfu und ihre Papyrusvarianten: ein überregionaler Kanon kultischen Wissens im spätzeitlichen Ägypten, Soubassementstudien III* (*SSR* 9), 2014: I, p. 450, 452 and II, pl. 96.

<sup>295</sup> J. Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I, The Carlsberg Papyri 2* (*CNIP* 17), 1998: I, p. 255-256 and II, pl. 28, frg. D 10 + D11, l. 3.

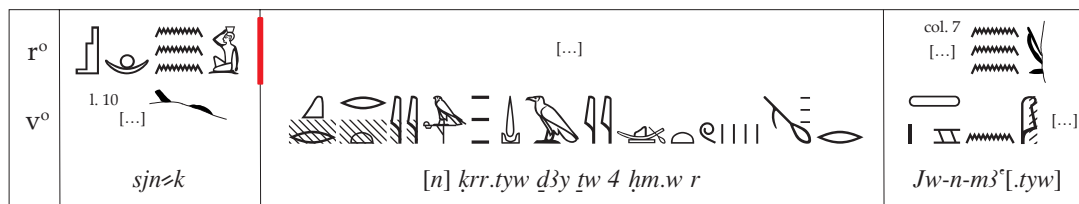
<sup>296</sup> This is based on its attribution to Horus in the *Geographical Papyrus*, while iron is attributed to Seth, which recalls Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 62: ἐτι τὴν σιδηρίτιν λίθον ὄστειον Ὀρου, Τυφῶνος δὲ τὸν σίδηρον [...] καλοῦσιν “they also call magnet stone the bone of Horus and iron the bone of Seth”. Moreover, Piehl compares the stem to Coptic  $\tau\omega\omega\epsilon$  “to be fixed” (*CD*, p. 464-465) which, however, goes back to *dg3* (*KHwB*, p. 262); cf. S. Aufrère, *L'univers minéral*, II, p. 434.



(López). We found no traces of this sign at the beginning of r<sup>o</sup> 6 during our examination of the ostracon.

*hnd.w* r<sup>o</sup> ~ (López) → v<sup>o</sup>. While the erased classifier for the word on the v<sup>o</sup> can be read as or even ,<sup>297</sup> the sign on the recto suggests that the lexeme means “stairway” (*Wb.* III, 314, 18-20) and not “throne” (F. L. Borrego Gallardo, *TdE* 6 [2016], p. 7-33) in this context. It seems to refer to the “large stairway” that forms part of the topography of the Netherworld in the vignette in *BD* spell 110<sup>298</sup> and in scene 33 of the Book of the Gates,<sup>299</sup> although it is usually referred to as *rd-wr* in other funerary text corpora.<sup>300</sup>

*hr Jmnt.t* r<sup>o</sup> ~ (López) → v<sup>o</sup>. The traces of ink on the v<sup>o</sup> suggest *hr Jmnt.t* “in the West” (for *hr*, compare with v<sup>o</sup> 3 and 11), the latter group of signs being written or the like. This would localize the “staircase” (*hnd.w*) in the Netherworld. Unfortunately, we are unable to identify the corresponding group of signs on the r<sup>o</sup>, which were probably erased and corrected in ancient times. One might tentatively suggest a squatting animal with long ears, a pointed muzzle, a down-curved tail, and a flagellum on its back – perhaps a jackal. This would reflect the common epithet of the jackal deities *hnty-jmnt.t* “foremost of the Westerners” or simply *Jmnt.t*.








*sjnz k* r<sup>o</sup> ~ v<sup>o</sup>. The traces of ink at the beginning of v<sup>o</sup> 10 are too scanty to be interpreted with any certainty, but they likely correspond to the end of the verb *sjn* “to hurry to”




<sup>297</sup> For the third option, see the spelling of *hnd.w* on O. Asmolean Museum HO 1935.39, v<sup>o</sup> 2 (J. Černý – A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, 1957, pl. LXXII-LXXIIA).


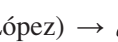
<sup>298</sup> J. S. Gesellensetter, *Das Sechet-Iaru: Untersuchungen zur Vignette des Kapitels 110 im Ägyptischen Totenbuch*, 1997, p. 182-192.





<sup>299</sup> E. Hornung – A. Brodbeck – E. Staehelin, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits*, II, *Übersetzung und Kommentar* (AH 8), 1980, p. 143-152.

<sup>300</sup> J. Assmann – M. Bommas – A. Kucharek, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien*, II, p. 256-257; *id.*, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien, Band III: Osirisliturgien in Papyri der Spätzeit* [SSHAW 20], 2008, p. 286-288. The closest phraseological parallel is *CT* spell 517 *sprzk r rd-wr* “May you reach the large stairway” (*CT* VI, 106b).

(*Wb.* IV, 38, 9-39, 9; W. Westendorf, *GM* 46 [1981], p. 27-28), if our interpretation of the enigmatic sequence  as *sjn-zk* on the recto is correct. Note that the sign of the moon faces upwards here. Because it faces downwards in the other instances here (col. 1, 2, 3), one might hypothesize that the scribe made a distinction between the final *y* (written with  and ) and the simple *j* (written with ).<sup>301</sup> The verb is probably intransitive here, with the prepositional phrase *n* + SOMEONE.<sup>302</sup> Alternatively,  might have the value *h* here,<sup>303</sup> but known verbs with a sequence of strong consonants *s-h-n* (or similar) do not possess meanings that would suit this context.

[*n*] *krr.tyw* [...] <sup>ro</sup> ~  (López) →  <sup>vo</sup>. Our reconstructed spelling refers to the *krr.tyw* “the ones of the Cavern” (*Wb.* V, 62, 11-12) and not to the place; this is because of the lack of the [LOCATION] classifier () combined with the presence of the [DIVINE] classifier (). For a similar spelling, see O. DeM 1441, col. III.4 (= G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el-Médineh : nos 1410-1606*, III/2 [DFIFAO 20], 1978, pl. 27).

4 *hm.w* [...] <sup>ro</sup> ~  (López) →  <sup>vo</sup>. The four oars seem to be a clear reference to *BD* spell 148 whose vignette generally depicts these oars between the seven cows and the four sons of Horus.<sup>304</sup> Neither their captions nor the *BD* spell itself provide parallels for the ostrakon’s phraseology.<sup>305</sup>

*Jw-n-m3'.tyw*  <sup>ro</sup> ~  (López) → [...]  <sup>vo</sup>. The *ductus* of the sign at the end of <sup>vo</sup> 10 corresponds to that of  in <sup>vo</sup> 8. Accordingly, the name of the place to which the deceased should be ferried is *Jw-n-m3'.tyw*, the “Island-of-the-Justified-Ones.” This location is known from *BD* spell 17,<sup>306</sup> and it also appears sporadically in funerary compositions.<sup>307</sup> The second

<sup>301</sup> On this form of the hieroglyphic sign of the moon (which appears somewhere in the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), see Cl. Vandersleyen, *Les guerres d'Amosis fondateur de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> dynastie (MRE 1)*, 1971, p. 207-213. For the value *j* of this sign, see D. Klotz, *ENiM* 7 (2014), p. 40, n. 27.

<sup>302</sup> Note that the construction *sjn r* [LOCATION] ‘to hurry to a place’ does not seem to be attested before the Ptolemaic Period.

<sup>303</sup> Based on the consonantal principle as applied to either *j’h* or, more probably, to *hry* (see J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 128, with S. J. Seidlmayer, *MDAIK* 47 [1991], p. 325, n. 9).

<sup>304</sup> Material evidence for oars as paraphernalia comes from the burial chamber of Tutankhamun, but their number amounts to eleven there (D. Jones, *Model Boats from the Tomb of Tut'ankhamun [TTS 9]*, 1990, p. 48-50; pl. 37-38; cf. H. Beinlich, *GM* 102 [1988], p. 12; S. Deicher, *ZKG* 83/3 [2020], p. 324-326).

<sup>305</sup> See the synthesis by R. El-Sayed, “Les sept vaches célestes, leur taureau et les quatre gouvernails”, *MDAIK* 36 (1980), p. 378-381.

<sup>306</sup> The “Island-of-the-Justified-Ones” appears in *CT* spell 335 (*CT* IV, 335a) and spell 341 (*CT* IV, 344d) as the destination for the deceased in the Netherworld. During the New Kingdom, it acquired a prominent place in the commentary of *BD* spell 17 on *CT* 335, where it is identified as *3bd.w* “Abydos” (G. Lapp, *Totenbuch Spruch 17 [TbT 1]*, 2006, p. 88-89, 92-93; U. Rößler-Köhler, *Kapitel 17 des ägyptischen Totenbuches: Untersuchungen zur Textgeschichte und Funktion eines Textes der altägyptischen Totenliteratur [GOF IV/10]*, 1979, p. 217). It is also mentioned in the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty Stela Chicago, OIM 8798, l. 11 (E. Brovanski, *JEA* 62 [1976], 63 n. o, pl. XI).





<sup>307</sup> E.g. a harpist’s song [...] *m jw-n-m3'.tj hnm.n-zf t3-ntr* “[...] in the *jw-n-m3'.tj*, after he has joined god’s land” (W. K. Simpson – G. E. Kadish – G. E. Freeman [eds.], *Studies in Philology in Honour of Ronald James Williams: A Festschrift*, 1982, p. 135 col. 7 and pl. V-VI) or the TT 106 *spr-zj m htp r jmy-wr.t p3 jw-m3'.tyw* “I shall reach the Netherworld in peace, the Island-of-the-Justified-ones (*KRI* III, 6, 16-7, 1).



### 3.3. Discussion



#### 3.3.1. A Decoding Exercise









Before analyzing the nature (§ 3.3.2) and the *Sitz im Leben* (§ 3.3.3) of the composition, it is crucial to establish how the two versions of the text on either side of the ostrakon relate to one another. The texts exhibit several features whose convergence argues beyond any reasonable doubt in favor of interpreting O. Turin CGT 57440 as a decoding exercise by a scribe of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty:

- From a material point of view, the enigmatic text was copied on the flat side of the ostrakon (the recto), while its hieratic transcription was written on the highly irregular surface of the verso, making use of all the available space. This suggests that the enigmatic composition was copied first, using the smoother side of the ostrakon, and that the plain-text hieratic version was added in a second step.
- On the recto, horizontal red lines were added between sequences of cursive hieroglyphs.<sup>312</sup> We understand these lines to be a way of segmenting the enigmatic text into smaller units that were recognized by the scribe as meaningful from a linguistic point of view. The regular vertical spacing between the linear hieroglyphs, which do not anticipate such horizontal lines, seems to support this line of thought. The addition of a longer red line in col. 2 after  (*t3*), as the scribe realized he had mistakenly segmented the text after  (which also reads *t3*), is yet another indication that the red lines were used to decode the enigmatic text after (and not during) the copying process.<sup>313</sup> In this respect, the addition of  in col. 3 (ticked with a red stroke) might have happened during the segmentation process with red lines, when the scribe realized that a word was missing.
- On the verso, the hieratic text exhibits orthographic features that are unexpected within this written norm, but which can be explained rather straightforwardly by a decoding process.<sup>314</sup> Several lexemes are indeed written with a single hieratic sign, which may result from the influence of the short spellings in the enigmatic text, such as  for *mn*



<sup>312</sup> Note that a material analysis of the ostrakon did not allow us to ascertain whether the red horizontal lines were added before or after the text written in black ink; this is because the black ink always looks as if it was written on top of the red ink, even in cases where that would be very difficult (or impossible) to explain from a practical point of view. See, for instance, sections where parts of some black hieroglyphs seem to have been written on top of the following red line (e.g., col. 2, 4<sup>th</sup> red line; col. 3, 1<sup>st</sup> red line; col. 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> red line).

<sup>313</sup> We were not able to correlate these red lines with systematic traces of dipping in the hieratic text on the verso.

<sup>314</sup> The spelling  for *kzk* “may you enter” (l. 3) instead of the more common  (or sim. in hieratic), may also be explained by the influence of an enigmatic spelling with mono-consonantal signs (lost at the bottom of col. 1). In addition, note that this spelling of *k* ‘to enter’ is common in the Netherworld Books of the New Kingdom.

- (l. 3 =  in col. 2);  for *psd* (l. 8 = lost in col. 4);  for *šsp* (l. 7 =  in col. 4);  for *nh* (l. 8 =  in col. 5);  for *hmw* (l. 10 = lost in col. 6).
- Finally, in addition to the problems that the scribe may have encountered with respect to the interpretation of this enigmatic composition (see below § 3.3.2), at the end of v<sup>o</sup> 8 he appears to have chosen to write ‘door (leaf)’ (*Wb.* I, 164, 12-165, 1) instead of *sb* ‘door’ (written  in r<sup>o</sup> 5). This translation process is rather rare, but not without parallels; it has been labeled ‘(Principle #10) Exchange of synonyms’ by D. A. Werning (“Semiotic Aspects of Alienated and Cryptographic Encodings”, p. 210). Note that the scribe further enriched the text with connectors that are not present in the enigmatic version (*hr-tp t* [l. 3] vs. *tp t* [col. 2]; *m* [l. 8] vs.  $\emptyset$  [col. 5]). Such changes and additions are not compelling arguments in favor of a decoding exercise but instead reflect converging clues that strengthen one another.

### 3.3.2. Nature of the text

Up to this point, the beginning of the text has been read *d*3.t n p3 *h*sy nty m s.t-*d*sr.t n *W*sjr “travel by boat of the blessed one who is in the holy place of the Osiris” – an unparalleled heading.<sup>315</sup> This interpretation is supported by the hieratic version on the verso, which begins with a boat that functions as logogram followed by the ‘moving legs’ classifier (, a spelling that can only be understood as referring to a verb of motion by boat. From a phonological point of view, however, the presence of a *t* in the enigmatic text on the recto () is somewhat problematic, since the *t* had already been dropped from the pronunciation of the infinitive (*status absolutus*) of the 3<sup>ae</sup> inf. during the Ramesside period;<sup>316</sup> as such, *d*3i.t would have to be explained as a historical spelling<sup>317</sup> (but *s*k*d* would obviously still be an option).

Another reading can be offered, however. The phrasing of this first sentence evokes the *incipit* of the so-called harpist’s songs<sup>318</sup> *d*d(.t).n p3 *h*sw nty m t3 *h*w.t/m *h*.t n *W*sjr [TITLES + NAME OF THE TOMB OWNER] “What the singer who is in the tomb said to the Osiris [TITLES

<sup>315</sup> Cf. S. Schott, *Bücher und Bibliotheken im Alten Ägypten: Verzeichnis der Buch- und Spruchtitel und der Termini technici*, 1990, p. 414-415.



<sup>316</sup> J. Winand, *Études de néo-égyptien, 1 : la morphologie verbale (AegLeod 2)*, 1992, p. 56-60, § 100-104.

<sup>317</sup> See § 3.2.2 above. The verb *d*3i “to travel” > demotic *d*y (*CDD [D]*, p. 11-12) does not appear to be attested in Coptic any longer. It is preserved only in the (etymologically) composite verb  $\alpha 100\text{P}$  “to ferry over” (*CD*, p. 82; *KHWb*, p. 51) and in the noun *d*3y.w >  $\alpha 01$  “ship” (*CD*, p. 754; *KHWb*, p. 415).

<sup>318</sup> For their historical context, see J. Assmann, “Fest des Augenblicks – Verheissung der Dauer: Die Kontroverse der ägyptischen Harfnerlieder”, in J. Assmann – E. Feucht – R. Grieshammer (eds.), *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur: Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto*, 1977, p. 83-84. For the harpists’ songs at Saqqara, see H. Twiston Davies, “The Harpists’ Songs at Saqqara: Transmission, Performance, and Contexts”, in N. Staring – H. Twiston Davies – L. Weiss (eds.), *Perspectives on Lived Religion. Practices – Transmission – Landscape (PALMA-Eg 21)*, 2019, p. 97-129.

+ NAME OF THE TOMB OWNER]”. The 15 known examples of this heading<sup>319</sup> display little variation. The main variants are found (a) in the title of the harpist in the ‘early’ 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty attestations (*ḥsw n bn.t* “singer of the harp”;<sup>320</sup> *ḥsw M3̣̣̣.t* “singer of Maat”;<sup>321</sup> *jmj-r3 ḥsw.w* “overseer of the singers”<sup>322</sup>) and (b) in the place where the song is located, namely the “tomb chapel” (*ḥw.t*; once *ḥw.t-k3*), the “tomb superstructure” (*m ḥ̣̣̣.t*), and the “necropolis” (*ḥr.t*).<sup>323</sup> As such, the harpist’s songs appear to correspond to a well-defined genre, with contents that were deemed to fit with the decoration of funerary chapels between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

Several arguments make a strong case for reading O. Turin CGT 57440, r<sup>o</sup> 1 as *ḏd(.t).n p3 ḥsw nty m s.t n.t Wsjr* [TITLE + NAME] “What the singer who is in the place of the Osiris [TITLE + NAME] said”:

- First, it is possible to decode the group  as the perfective relative form *ḏd(.t).n* typical of the headings of the harpist’s songs.<sup>324</sup> The relative form *ḏd(.t).n* would indeed have preserved two dental stops according to its syllable structure,<sup>325</sup> which favors this interpretation over the infinitive *status absolutus* of *3<sup>ae</sup> inf ḏḥ̣̣̣.t* (see § 3.2.2).
- Second, as discussed above (§ 3.2.2), the fourth quadrat of O. Turin CGT 57440, r<sup>o</sup> 1 may actually read . Even if this reading is subject to caution, this logographic spelling would visually indicate that the text belonged to the genre of the harpist’s songs.
- Third, within the genre of the harpist’s songs, the text on O. Turin CGT 57440 accords well with the category of “traditional” or “orthodox” compositions that glorify (*s3ḥ*) the deceased, describe the fulfilment of the duties of his funerary cult, and highlight his successful journey in the afterlife.<sup>326</sup> The fact that our text constantly refers to concepts that

<sup>319</sup> For a recent overview of all the *incipits*, see S. Emerit, “Le chant du harpiste: une porte ouverte sur l’au-delà ?”, *BIFAO* 115 (2016), p. 162-177.



<sup>320</sup> TT 50 (R. Hari, *La tombe thébaine du père divin Néferhotep (TT50)*, pl. IV and XXVI; S. Emerit, *BIFAO* 115 [2016], p. 162-163, doc. 1-2). Cf. the phrase *ḥsw m bn.t* in P. BM EA 10060, r<sup>o</sup> VI, 3 (M. V. Fox, *Or* 46/4 [1977], p. 405).

<sup>321</sup> TT 106: *ḏd.t.n p3 ḥs(w) M3̣̣̣.t nty m t3 ḥr.t jmj.t W3s.t* (M. Lichtheim, *JNES* 4/3 [1945], pl. V; *KRI* III, 7, 16; S. Emerit, *BIFAO* 115 [2016], p. 164, doc. 3).

<sup>322</sup> TT 263: *[ḏd.t.n] jmj-r3 ḥsw.w nty m t3 ḥr.t* (M. Lichtheim, *JNES* 4/3 [1945], pl. VIa; S. Emerit, *BIFAO* 115 [2016], p. 165, doc. 4).

<sup>323</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 159-160.

<sup>324</sup> In this case, the sign  would take the value *d*, applying the consonantal principle to its logographic value *ḏḥ̣̣̣* “to travel by boat”. Note that this enigmatic value is not attested so far (J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 143).

<sup>325</sup> Although the infinitive of the verb *ḏd* > copt. *ⲁⲱ* lost its final dental stop at some point (C. Peust, *Egyptian Phonology*, p. 156-157), an analogous development is unlikely to have happened in the phonological environment of the (feminine) relative form before the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty; this is because the word stress was most likely on the penultimate syllable, after *d*. Note the graphemic clues pointing in this direction in typical Late Egyptian orthographies of the relative form, such as  or  (for the latter, see J. Winand, *Études de néo-égyptien, 1: la morphologie verbale [AegLeod 2]*, 1992, p. 385 [§ 607]).

<sup>326</sup> For the distinction between the two categories of texts, (1) “Lieder, die das Diesseits erhöhen und das Jenseits herabsetzen” – *i.e.*, “heretical” songs – and (2) “Lieder zur ‘Verklärung’ des Grabherrn” – *i.e.* “orthodox” songs – see

are characteristic of the so-called glorifications (*sšh.w*) has already been stressed throughout the comments above (§ 3.2.2). One might also add that its general form (*Sprechweise*) also conforms with them.<sup>327</sup> It consists mostly of 2<sup>nd</sup> person wishes expressed by a sequence of subjunctive *sdm=f* forms.

- Finally, the highest degree of mastery of this specific enigmatic norm<sup>328</sup> is achieved when a sign (or group of signs) can be interpreted both in light of its regular orthographical value and an enigmatic value. We suggest that the boat-sign that opens the enigmatic composition visually (and logographically) refers to the central topic of the text, namely the deceased's journey by boat (*dš.t*) in the Netherworld,<sup>329</sup> while its phonographic value *d* is based on the consonantal principle.

If we are correct, this would mean that the scribe who translated the enigmatic composition into plain-text hieratic did not comprehend the doubled reading of this opening sentence, favoring the more obvious interpretation of the boat as a motion verb (with the classifier  $\curvearrowright$ ) and not as the first consonant of the enigmatic spelling  $\curvearrowright$  for *dd(.t).n*. Additionally, the fact that he stuck with a logographic spelling like  $\curvearrowright$  might point to his hesitation with respect to the precise motion verb that was intended in the enigmatic composition.

This opens up the possibility that some of the readings proposed by the scribe on the verso reflect his own personal understanding of the text; as such, these might not reflect the only possible understanding of the text, nor even the understanding intended by the *lettré* who composed the text. Two main points can be elaborated in this respect:

- In col. 3, we observed a redundant *n* ( $\rightarrow$ ) above *nty* ( $\curvearrowright$ ): *tš 3 tj.wt šš.w(t) {n} nty jmy(.wt) Jgr.t* “the three secret images that are in the midst of the Silent Place”. This putative *n* is preceded by a horizontal red line. This sequence [*red line* + *n*] is attested




J. Assmann, in J. Assmann – E. Feucht – R. Grieshammer (eds.), *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur*, p. 55-84; *id.*, *LÄ* II, col. 972-982; J. Assmann – M. Bommas – A. Kucharek, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien*, II, p. 24-25, p. 583-597. The former group are identified as songs which *sš tp-tš* “exalt the earthly (existence)” and *sš nd hr.t-ntr* “belittle the necropolis” in TT 50 (R. Hari, *La tombe thébaine du père divin Neferhotep (TT50)*, p. 12-13 and pl. IV middle col. 3-4) while the latter are identified as *sšh.w* “glorifications” on the block BM EA 55337 from TT 163 (J. Assmann, *JEA* 65 [1979], p. 56-58, pl. IX).




<sup>327</sup> For the formal characteristics of *sšh.w*-texts, see J. Assmann, in W. Burkert – Fr. Stolz (eds.), *Hymnen der Welt im Kulturvergleich (OBO 131)*, 1994, p. 49-50; *id.*, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete (OBO [special ed.], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1999, p. 17-30, 56-60.*

<sup>328</sup> As pointed out by É. Drioton on several occasions (e.g., É. Drioton, *RdE* 1 [1933], p. 14; *id.*, *CdE* 9/18 [1934], p. 194-195).

<sup>329</sup> The close connection between the verb *dš* “to travel by boat” and the harpist's songs is strengthened by their location within the funerary chapels: (1) they are mostly located below solar hymns (Y. Chobanov, in T. Lékov – E. Buzov [eds.], *Cult and Belief in Ancient Egypt: Proceedings of the Fourth International Congress for Young Egyptologists, 25-27 September 2012, Sofia*, 2014, p. 132-133), which often use the verb *dš* (as noted above, see J. Assmann, *Sonnenhymnen in thebanischen Gräbern*, p. 398); (2) the verb is even found below a boat-scene in the tomb of Nefersekheru (Zawyet Sultan), in which the caption says *dšy.t m bnw r Jšbt.t mššzj Hr-šh.ty* “Travelling with the *bnw*-bird to the east in order that I might see Harakhte” and *dšy.t m Wsjr nb dd.w ntr š nb Jmnt.t* “Travelling with Osiris, the lord of Busiris, the great god and lord of the West” (J. Osing, *Das Grab des Nefersecheru in Zawyet Sultan [AV 88]*, 1992, p. 65, pl. 17 and 42).



with *n* + dative is more frequent. (3) The entire sentence would conform with the pattern *jrj h'.w hr* STATE ‘To spend life in a given state’ (see § 3.2.2), and could be read as a whole: *jrzk h'.(w) [m] W3s.t hr ks.tzk hrzs* “May you spend a (long after)life [in] Thebes, you bowing to her,” ignoring the red segmentation between  and . Accordingly, the sign  that follows should be interpreted as *šp* (see above § 3.2.2).

- Finally, the second part of the expression *hnd(.w) hr Jmnt.t* (v<sup>o</sup> 9) is difficult to reconcile with the group on the recto, because the jackal-head is the only part of the sign that can be identified with a fair degree of certainty. Reading the traces on the r<sup>o</sup> as *hnd(.w) bj3* () “stairway of iron” would solve this problem. Indeed, this concept is not just attested in the Pyramid Texts with the meaning “throne of iron”,<sup>335</sup> but also in Late Period *s3h.w* II (spell 3, verse 19) as *rd bj3* “stairway of iron”.<sup>336</sup> Palaeographically, the head of the jackal in  would lie in the middle of the sledge<sup>337</sup> and the ‘cross’ hovering above the rear of the sledge would be identified as its load. Note that this sign is also attested with the value *bj3* in the enigmatic frieze of Aksha.<sup>338</sup> As a consequence of this interpretation, the traces of ink below this sign would represent another segmenting line, as discussed above (). We can only speculate about the reasons for transcribing this sign *hr Jmnt.t* on the verso: might the scribe have recognized a jackal-head and consequently made an association with Anubis *hnty-Jmnt.t*?

In addition to the heading, these three alternate readings are discussed here primarily to show that enigmatic texts – when they are not merely transcoding standard compositions (*PT, BD, offering formulas, solar hymns*) – may be somewhat difficult to crack, as well as being open to several interpretations. As a result, they would certainly have been read in different ways by ancient scribes themselves, based on their own degree of literacy and contextual expectations. As noted by É. Drioton himself, “[u]ne erreur (...), commise par un scribe ancien dans le déchiffrement d’un cryptogramme, n’est pas sans intérêt. Elle prouve que, comme nous l’avons toujours soutenu, ce déchiffrement n’était pas une affaire de listes de signes ni de codes et qu’il n’avait rien d’un procédé mécanique. Il était une réponse d’ingéniosité à l’ingéniosité d’un cryptographe qui s’était évertué à donner aux signes des valeurs inédites (...)”.<sup>339</sup>

<sup>335</sup> Cf. the attestations collected in F. L. Borrego Gallardo, *TdE* 6 (2015), p. 23-30.

<sup>336</sup> J. Assmann – M. Bommas – A. Kucharek, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien*, III, p. 259 and 264.

<sup>337</sup> Compare some of the examples collected by E. Graefe (*Untersuchungen zur Wortfamilie bj3-*, 1971, pl. 10, tab. 4 [after p. 90]).

<sup>338</sup> A. Danieri Rodrigo, “An Enigmatic Inscription at Aksha”, *JSSEA* 15/2 (1985), p. 69-70 and n. s; *id.*, “Aksha (Serra (West): el templo de Ramsés II, II: la inscripción enigmática del atrio”, *REE* 1 (1990), p. 49 and p. 51 n. s, fig. II, pl. VI b.

<sup>339</sup> É. Drioton, “Une erreur antique de déchiffrement”, *RdE* 12 (1960), p. 31; compare also Ph. Derchain, *Le papyrus Salt 825*, p. 134. Another possible transcription mistake made by an ancient scribe has been noted by É. Drioton, “La cryptographie du Papyrus Salt 825”, *ASAE* 41 (1941), p. 109-111.

The transcription into hieratic on the verso should therefore be seen as only one possible interpretation of this enigmatic text made by one ancient scribe, and we have been so bold as to suggest our own etic interpretation, adding a further layer – assuredly not the last – to the hermeneutic tradition of this text:

<sup>r1</sup> <i>dd(.t).n p3 ḥsw nty m s.t n.t Wsjr s[ḥ3 m s.t-m3<sup>c</sup>.t Jmn-nḥt s3 Jpw(y)]</i>	<sup>r1</sup> “What the singer who is in the place of the Osiris, the scri[be in the Place-of-Truth, Amennakhte, Son of Ipu(y),] said:
<i>[pr-zk ‘k-zk] <sup>r2</sup> r js(y)-zk nty mn(.w) tp-t3</i>	‘[may you exit and enter] <sup>r2</sup> your tomb which is stable upon earth,
<i>t3 ḥw.t jr-zk n [Wsjr t3 št3(y).t n(.t) 3s.t wr.t]</i>	the chapel which you made for [Osiris, and the secret chamber of Isis the great.]
<sup>r3</sup> <i>t3 3 tj.w(t) št3.w(t) nty jmy(.wt) Jgr.t</i>	<sup>r3</sup> The three secret images that are in the midst of the Silent Place,
<i>[st ...(.w) r-jmy jb-zk mn(.w) r-tp] <sup>r4</sup> šnb.t-zk</i>	[they are ‘put’ close to your heart; they stay on top of] <sup>r4</sup> your chest.
<i>jr-zk ‘ḥ(.w) [m] W3s.t ḥr ks.t-zk ḥr-zs</i>	May you spend a (long after)life [in] Thebes, you bowing to her.
<i>šsp [tw t3 ?psd.t n(.t)? ntr.wt] <sup>r5</sup></i>	[May the ‘enned of <sup>2</sup> goddesses] receive [you]. <sup>r5</sup>
<i>p3 k3 ‘nh m M3<sup>c</sup>.t dgs-zk sb3 n mfk[(3.t) nmt.t tkt(j)]</i>	Oh bull who lives from Maat, may you walk through the door of turquoise, qu[artzite and tkt.j-stone.]
<sup>r6</sup> <i>spr-zk r ḥnd(.w) bj3</i>	<sup>r6</sup> May you reach the stairway of iron.
<i>sjn-zk [n ḥrr.tyw]</i>	May you hurry [to the inhabitants of the Caverns.]
<i>[d3y tw 4 ḥm.w r] <sup>r7</sup> Jw-n-m3<sup>c</sup>(.tjw)</i>	[May the four oars drive you to the] <sup>r7</sup> Isle-of-the-Justified-Ones.
<i>ḥms-zk [... ḥry-jb Sh.t-ḥtp(.w)]</i>	May you rest [...in the middle of the Field-of-Offerings].”

### 3.3.3. *Sitz im Leben*

Our alternate interpretation is obviously of paramount importance for the contextualization of this text within the broader environment of Deir el-Medina. Indeed, all the harpist’s songs (1) share a common iconographic context – they accompany a male harpist who kneels in front of the seated deceased couple – and (2) are commonly found in passageways (entrance portals, gateways, or passages leading to inner cult chambers) or in the first chamber of the tomb chapel.<sup>340</sup>



<sup>340</sup> For a detailed comparison of the architectural contexts, see Y. Chobanov, in T. Lekov – E. Buzov (eds.), *Cult and Belief*, p. 131-134; S. Emerit, *BIFAO* 115 [2016], p. 157-159, 161-177.

Accordingly, if the text on the Turin ostrakon is a copy of a harpist's song from the tomb of the scribe Amennakhte (v) son of Ipy, as the title might indicate, the original text would have been painted in one of the rooms of his tomb chapel (*e.g.*, the *ḥw.t* of Osiris or the *šty.t* of Isis that are mentioned in the text itself). Unfortunately, even if the superstructures associated with P. 1340<sup>341</sup> or those linked with P. 1343 are attributed to Amennakhte (v),<sup>342</sup> their decorations are now completely lost. As such, the precise location of this song in the Western cemetery of Deir el-Medina will probably remain an open question.

Note, however, that the harpist's song of Amennakhte (v) would be one of the last of its kind, along with the song found in the tomb<sup>343</sup> of his contemporary Anhurkhawy (ii), the chief workman in the Place of Truth.<sup>344</sup> One could argue (even if this is admittedly speculative) that this is no mere coincidence: these two influential members of the Deir el-Medina community may have been directly inspired by the famous harpists in the tomb of Ramses III (KV 11), a tomb which was decorated during their lifetime and which they probably worked on themselves.<sup>345</sup>

### 3.3.4. *Encoding Strategies*

In § 3.2, we referred to the style of enigmatic writing under discussion as 'annotational cryptography,' noting that this practice went into decline during the Ramesside period. As such, it is important to conclude our discussion by summing up the peculiar encoding strategies employed on this ostrakon.<sup>346</sup>

All of the enigmatic values on the ostrakon that are secure from both an emic and etic point of view correspond (with a single exception<sup>347</sup>) to mono-consonantal phonograms.<sup>348</sup> As is common in enigmatic writing, the same value may be encoded by different signs (such as  and  for *k*).<sup>349</sup> The seemingly alienated logograms for longer sequences

<sup>341</sup> See A. Dorn – R. Pietri – St. Polis – C. Widow, in C. Larché, *BAEFE 2022*, p. 23-37. In the final publication of the tomb structures, we will show that B. Bruyère's architectural reconstruction is disputable.

<sup>342</sup> See already B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1933-1934). Première partie : la nécropole de l'ouest (FIFAO 14)*, 1937, p. 75-77 and 84-88.



<sup>343</sup> In the subterranean chamber 2, cf. N. Cherpion – J.-P. Corteggiani, *La Tombe d'Inherkhâouy*, I, p. 119-122, 231-234, col. 12; II, fig. 107.

<sup>344</sup> See B. G. Davies, *Who's Who*, p. 21-29 and chart 3.

<sup>345</sup> In the case of TT 359, this has already been suggested because of the unusual location of the harpist's song in the subterranean chamber of the tomb (S. Emerit, *op. cit.*, p. 159).

<sup>346</sup> The enigmatic values are mostly derived following the consonantal principle, class exchange, and synecdoche (J. A. Roberson, *Lexicon*, p. 4-11).

<sup>347</sup> The exception is *Q šn* (col. 4), which does not appear in regular spellings of the word before the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium (*Wb. Zettel* DZA 30.176.010).











<sup>348</sup> This includes signs standing for words which were reduced to one consonant by the Ramesside period, *e.g.*  "land" (col. 2) and  "with" (col. 4).

<sup>349</sup> Except for the moon-signs, we cannot explain their distribution based on their function or phonological environment.

(e.g.,  $\xi$  'h') are typically also attested in non-enigmatic texts, even if this occurs rarely. As to the use of classifiers, they were either (1) omitted (systematically for words that would take  $\underline{\text{w}}$ ) or (2) used to help the reader understand the lexemes written with alienated consonants, as they retain the same meaning that they possess in texts written in standard orthography.

The main differences between the Turin ostrakon and the abgad texts on the Cairo ostrakon from the Valley of the Kings (of the type discussed in § 2) are (1) its use of a larger number of logographic signs and (2) a broader and more innovative repertoire.<sup>350</sup> The latter characteristic is particularly important: the text contains a (rather large) number of values that are not documented in J. A. Roberson's *Lexicon*. As such, it demonstrates the limits of our scholarly cataloguing endeavors when applied to scribal compositions as original as those that employ enigmatic writing:<sup>351</sup>

Emic reading (§ 3.2.2, \* = emic only)

Sign	Code MdC	Value	Derivation principle	O. Turin CGT 57440 r <sup>o</sup> , col.
	A9	phon. <i>k</i> in $\neq k$ , $mfk\dot{z}.t$	consonantal $k\dot{z}.t$ <sup>352</sup> “work” > <i>k</i>	2, 4 <sup>2x</sup> , 5 <sup>2x</sup> , 6 <sup>2x</sup> , 7 <sup>2x</sup>
	A16var	*log. $dd n p(\dot{z})d$	direct representation	4
	A17A	log. $hms\dot{l}$	logogram	7
	A28	phon. <i>g</i> in $jgr.t$ and $dgs$	consonantal $k\dot{z}i$ “to be high” > phonetic $k$ <sup>353</sup> ~ <i>g</i>	3, 5
	D28	phon. $k$ <sup>354</sup> in $\neq k$	consonantal $k\dot{z}$ “Ka” > <i>k</i>	2, 4
	F32	log. $hm$ <sup>355</sup>	logogram	4
	I114var	log. $h^{\cdot}w$	logogram	4
	L1	phon./log. $\dot{s}p$ in $s\dot{s}p$	phonetic $s\dot{s}p \sim \dot{s}p$	4
	M20	phon. $w$ <sup>356</sup> in $wsjr$	direct representation ( $w.w$ “domain”) / synecdoche + phonetic $y \sim w$	1
	N12:N12	phon. <i>y</i> in $nty$	class (N19 > N18:N18: $\Xi$ ; cursive form) or phonetic $j^{\cdot}h$ “moon” > $j$ <sup>357</sup>	1, 2, 3

<sup>350</sup> One might even suggest that the conceptual similarity between the Turin ostrakon and the abgad-texts may indicate that the composer of the text on the ostrakon was influenced by these texts. In this respect, note that the workmen of Deir el-Medina constantly had to deal with enigmatic writing while decorating the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings (cf. § 2.3).

<sup>351</sup> Those signs that exhibit their regular or documented enigmatic values are omitted.

<sup>352</sup> For the value  $k\dot{z}.t$ , see its use in the Graeco-Roman Period (D. Kurt, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische*, p. 131, n° 25).

<sup>353</sup> The sign is used with the value  $k$  in the Graeco-Roman Period (*ibid.*, p. 127, n° 4).











<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171, n° 45.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226, n° 61.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305, n° 55.

<sup>357</sup> D. Klotz, *ENiM* 7 (2014), p. 40, n. 27.

## Emic reading (§ 3.2.2, \* = emic only)

	N12:Z4A	phon. <i>j.wt~j</i> in <i>tj.wt</i>	as N12:N12↑	3
	N62A	phon. <i>j</i> in <i>sjn</i>	as N12:N12↑	6
	O44	phon. <i>j</i> in <i>jgr.t</i> <sup>358</sup>	consonantal <i>j3w.t</i> “office”~ <i>j</i>	3
	Q1	phon. <i>s</i> <sup>359</sup> in <i>sjn</i>	consonantal <i>s.t</i> “seat; place” > <i>s</i>	6
	S3	*rad. <i>dsr</i> in <i>dsr.t</i>	direct representation	1
	T8	log. <i>tp</i> <sup>360</sup>	consonantal <i>tpy</i> “first” > <i>tp</i>	2
	W19	phon. <i>m</i> in <i>m</i>	consonantal <i>mj</i> “like” > <i>m</i>	1
	O47	phon. <i>f</i> in <i>mfk3.t</i>	consonantal <i>f3.w</i> “delivery” > <i>f</i>	5
	-	phon. <i>s</i> <sup>361</sup> in <i>s[h3]</i>	consonantal <i>sjs.w</i> “six” > <i>s</i>	1
+ etic reading (§ 3.3.2)				
	P1	phon. <i>d</i> in <i>dd.t.n</i>	consonantal <i>d3i</i> “to travel (by boat)” > <i>d</i>	1

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

In our quest for an emic perspective on New Kingdom enigmatic writing, we have focussed on the written production of the community of Deir el-Medina. The workmen of this settlement had direct access to different types of alienated and enigmatic forms of writing during their work in the royal tombs; it therefore seems very likely that some of them were capable of understanding and even composing texts of this kind. A survey of the scholarly literature on the topic shows that enigmatic representations and spellings are well-attested in the documents from the village: these witnesses cover virtually all types of enigmatic practices attested in ancient Egypt, from the most iconic to the most textual (§ 1).

However, until now, complete enigmatic texts have been missing from our picture. Two documents fill this gap: O. Cairo CG 25359 and O. Turin CGT 57440 provide direct testimony to the transmission, monumentalization, and emic interpretation of enigmatic texts.

In § 2, we showed that O. Cairo CG 25359 bears a copy of the captions to scenes 2 and 5 of the Enigmatic Netherworld Book of the Solar-Osirian Unity (r<sup>o</sup>) as well as other captions from an unidentified (but certainly related) composition written using the standard

<sup>358</sup> Cf. the glosses of the Tebtynis onomasticon where the sign transcribes the stressed vowel /é/ (J. Osing, *Hieratische Papyrus aus Tebtynis*, p. 47).

<sup>359</sup> D. Kurt, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische*, p. 363, n° 1.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392, n° 16.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442, n° 7.

orthography (v<sup>o</sup>). The fact that the only parallel to the Enigmatic Netherworld Book on the recto is found in the second shrine of Tutankhamun suggests that the ostrakon was related to a royal funerary shrine that is now lost. We propose that the captions in linear hieroglyphs, as well as the drawing, could be drafts used in the decoration of such a shrine. This is supported by a comparison of its material and palaeographical features with other such intermediary *brouillons* (§ 2.3). The Cairo ostrakon would thus provide rare direct testimony to the transmission of abgad enigmatic writing from a manuscript in linear hieroglyphs to a hieroglyphic monumental setting.<sup>362</sup>

O. Turin CGT 57440, on the other hand, bears a funerary composition in so-called ‘annotational cryptography’ on the recto and a *Klartext* hieratic version of the same work on the verso (§ 3). Using various material and philological clues, we have shown that the hieratic text most certainly represents a ‘decipherment’ of the enigmatic text written in linear hieroglyphs (§ 3.3.1). The hieratic text thus provides an emic interpretation of the enigmatic text. Further to this, we adopted an etic perspective in order to produce an interpretation of the enigmatic text that differs slightly from the ancient interpretation on the verso (§ 3.3.2). The text might have been a harpist’s song, originally inscribed in the tomb-chapel of Amennakhte (v), son of Ipuy (§ 3.3.3), and perhaps even been composed by Amennakhte (v) himself: the references to concepts from different funerary texts as well as the inventiveness of the encoding process are indeed familiar from other compositions by this famous Scribe of the Tomb.<sup>363</sup>

### Résumé / Abstract

Dans cette contribution, nous apportons un nouvel éclairage sur la transmission et l’interprétation des textes énigmatiques durant le Nouvel Empire, en proposant une étude approfondie de deux ostraca précédemment publiés, l’O. Caire CG 25359 et l’O. Turin CGT 57440. Nous montrons que l’ostrakon du Caire (CG 25359) préserve la copie de légendes d’un *Enigmatic Netherworld Book of the Solar-Osirian Unity* (dont la seule autre attestation se trouve sur la deuxième chapelle de Toutânkhamon) et nous suggérons que la composition funéraire rédigée en hiératique au verso de l’ostrakon de Turin (CGT 57440) n’est autre qu’une version « en clair » du texte énigmatique écrit en hiéroglyphes cursifs au recto. En nous appuyant sur des indices philologiques et matériels, nous proposons que le texte hiératique soit un « déchiffrement » du texte énigmatique. Enfin, nous faisons l’hypothèse que cette composition puisse être un chant de harpiste, lequel pourrait avoir été originellement inscrit dans la chapelle funéraire du scribe Amennakhte (v) fils d’Ipouy à Deir el-Médina.

<sup>362</sup> In this respect, the emendation in r<sup>o</sup> x+5 is especially important: it shows that the texts were double-checked before their execution in hieroglyphs. Interestingly, this ostrakon is certainly not a *unicum*: recently, A. Gasse (p.c., 12.11.2022, Alexandria) kindly informed us that similar pieces are to be found in the unpublished material of the Institut français d’archéologie orientale.

<sup>363</sup> If our etic interpretation (§ 3.3.2) is closer than the emic to the intentions of the original author of the enigmatic composition, the scribe who transcribed the text into hieratic cannot be the original author of this text, and would therefore not be Amennakhte (v) himself.

This paper aims to shed new light on the transmission and interpretation of enigmatic texts during the New Kingdom. It offers a fresh analysis of two previously-published ostraca, O. Cairo CG 25359 and O. Turin CGT 57440, which have so far been neglected by the Egyptological community. We show that O. Cairo CG 25359 contains a copy of captions from an Enigmatic Netherworld Book of the Solar-Osirian Unity (the only other attestation of which is found on the second shrine of Tutankhamun), and we demonstrate that the hieratic funerary composition on the verso of the Turin ostrakon is in fact a ‘clear-text’ version of the enigmatic text written in cursive hieroglyphs on the recto. Based on material and philological clues, we argue that the hieratic text is a ‘decipherment’ of the enigmatic text. Finally, we suggest that this composition may have been a harper’s song originally inscribed in the tomb-chapel of the scribe Amennakhte (v), son of Ipy.