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Herausgegeben von
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Nicole Kloth



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Inhaltsverzeichnis

<i>Abdel-Raziq, Abdalla</i>	
An unpublished small sculpture of a female acrobat at the Al-Salam School Museum in Assiut (Taf. 1–2)	1–9
<i>Abdelwahed, Nassef/Iskander, John M./Tawfik, Tarek S.</i>	
The Blocks from the Nilometer at Roda. Preliminary Report on the Reconstruction Work (Taf. 3–29)	11–59
<i>Ahmed, Bassem</i>	
The Stela of Hori-Sheri at the Egyptian Museum (Cairo JE 59858) (Taf. 30–31)	61–66
<i>Beinlich, Horst</i>	
Das Relief Hildesheim F 38 (Taf. 32)	67–73
<i>Brown, Marina Wilding</i>	
A New Analysis of the Titles of Teti on Statue BM EA 888 (Taf. 33–34)	75–103
<i>Cortebeeck, Kylie</i>	
Stamp seals in ancient Egyptian tombs. A revision of the usages in quest of the sex of their owners	105–123
<i>Hassan, Khaled</i>	
Two Administrative Hieratic ostraca from Deir el-Bahri (Late 20 th and Early 21 st Dynasties) (Taf. 35–37)	125–136
<i>Hufft, Barbara</i>	
Motivtransfer und Rezeption? Ein Beitrag zu den ägyptischen reliefierten Lotuskelchen der 3. Zwischenzeit	137–167
<i>Jansen-Winkel, Karl</i>	
ḥ3wtj „Anführer“ als allgemeine Bezeichnung und als Titel	169–185
<i>Lanciers, Eddy</i>	
The Cult of Arensnuphis in Thebes in the Graeco-Roman Period	187–216
<i>Madkour, Haitham</i>	
An Eleventh Dynasty Stela of the Priest Ka-whmi (Taf. 38–41)	217–225
<i>Metawi, Dina</i>	
A Late-Eighteenth Dynasty Memphite Stela (Cairo Museum JE 20222) (Taf. 42–46)	227–235

Morales, Antonio J.

A false-door spell in the Pyramid Texts?

An interpretation for the discontinuation of PT355 237–255

Morales, Antonio J./Falk, Sebastian/Osman, Mohamed/Sánchez Casado, Raúl/

Shared, Hazem/Yamamoto, Key/Zidan, Eman H.

The Middle Kingdom Theban Project: Preliminary report

on the Freie Universität Mission to Deir el-Bahari,

First and Second Seasons (2015-2016) (Taf. 47–52) 257–282

Quack, Joachim Friedrich

Zur Situierung von TB 166 Pleyte 283–293

Rashed, Mohamed Gamal/Abdelrahman, Abdelrahman Ali

The Statue of Ankhef-Khonsou from

Karnak Cachette (CK 1164) (Taf. 53–59) 295–306

Sánchez-León, Juan Carlos/Jiménez-Serrano, Alejandro

Keeping Provincial Power in the Lineage During the Twelfth Dynasty:

The Case of Khema, Governor of Elephantine 307–314

Serrano, Jose M.

Three solar hymns from Dra Abu el-Naga (Taf. 60–63) 315–326

Soleiman, Saleh

An Inscribed Slab of Unknown Ownership

discovered recently at Saqqara (Taf. 64) 327–339

Staring, Nico

Revisiting Three Objects in Berlin Pertaining to the Mayor of Memphis,

Ptahmose: The “Lost” Faience Stela ÄM 19718 and

the Limestone Pyramid Panels ÄM 1631-1632 (Taf. 65–69) 341–374

Töpfer, Susanne

Teile des Totenbuches des Anch-ef-en-Chonsu, Sohn des Bes-en-Mut

in der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek

(Papyrus Wien Aeg. 12022a+b) (Taf. 70–71) 375–388

Anschriften der Autorinnen und Autoren 389–391

Tafeln 1–71

An unpublished small sculpture of a female acrobat at the Al-Salam School Museum in Assiut

Abdalla Abdel-Raziq*

(Taf. 1–2)

Abstract

Publication of a small sculpture of a female acrobat dating to the Middle Kingdom, currently in the Al-Salam School Museum in Assiut.

The only museum in Assiut is a small hall on the second floor of the Al-Salam Secondary School (formerly American College) library. Although the collection is not well known, it is of significant size and contains objects of considerable interest. This collection was assembled from various sources by various antiquarians and private collectors who were in charge of the school from the 19th century onwards,¹ but after the 1952 revolution the then owner offered his collection to the Antiquities Service. This paper presents one of the collection's most interesting pieces (pl. 1–2), which is numbered 238 in the museum's register.² It is an uninscribed statuette of a female acrobat who is throwing her body backwards to form a 'span', or 'bridge'. This was a favored acrobatic or dancing posture in ancient Egypt, as can be ascertained from several extant parallels.

Description of the statuette

The statuette is of a female acrobat made of a single block of limestone, in a good state of preservation but unfortunately unprovenanced. It measures 12 cm in length and 5.5 cm in height (at the knee area). The figure is represented as a young girl (without breasts) resting

* I am mostly indebted to Dr. Roland Enmarch for revising my English. My thanks are also due to the Director General of the Egyptian Antiquities Sector, for permission to publish the statuette. I also owe thanks and gratitude to Mr. Raouf Farouk, curator of the Al-Salam Museum for providing the technical data and Mr. Hany Abu-el Azam the director general of the Department of Foreign Missions Affairs and P. Committees.

¹ Among contributors to the museum collection were Petrie, Blackman, Sami Gabra, Sayed Pasha Khashaba and others, but unfortunately it is very difficult to determine exactly the dedicators and the provenance of most pieces of the collection. For further information about the American college Museum establishment at Assiut, see W. M. Fl. Petrie, *Gizeh and Rifeh*, London 1907, 2. For the excavation of Sayed Pasha Khashaba and his small Museum at Assiut see: A. Kamal, *Rapport sur les fouilles exécutées dans la zone comprise entre Deïrout au nord et Deïr-el-Ganadlah, au sud*, in: ASAE XI, 1911, 3–39; *Fouilles à Dara et à Qoçêir el-Amarna*, in: ASAE XII, 1912, 97–142; *Rapport sur les fouilles de Saïd bey Khachaba au Déir-el-Gabraoui*, in: ASAE XIII, 1914, 161–178; A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir I*, London 1914, 16; J. Baikie, *Egyptian antiquities in the Nile valley: a descriptive handbook*, London 1932, 268, 274.

² The statuette carries two register numerals; an ancient one (= no. 69), written in black ink in Arabic numerals, and a modern one recorded in the new official register, with numerals in blue ink (= no. 238), added after 1991 but I preferred to use the new inventory number. The statuette is only mentioned in the Arabic catalogue prepared by Mr. Mahmoud El-Nabwy el-Shal, who occupied the post of General Director in the Ministry of Education, entitled 'the Museum of Artistic Monuments under the Direction of the Public Relation of the governorate of Assiut in 1971, 39, 105–106. This catalogue is a brief guide most probably prepared based on an original register which is now lost. On the Museum's collection see A. Abdel-Raziq, *Three Late Middle Kingdom Stelae from Al-Salam School Museum, Assiut*, in: SAK 43, 2014, 1, n. 2–3; E. Mahfouz, *Late Middle Kingdom Stelae from Assiut*, in: H.-W. Fischer-Elferd/R. B. Parkinson, *Middle Kingdom Studies dedicated to Detlef Franke*, Wiesbaden 2013, 161.

on an elongated oval base. Both legs are closed together, with knees bent and, unlike other similar examples (fig. 1–4), the feet of the figure are placed flat on a special semicircular base (a mat, a cushion or a block?). The negative space between the body of the actual figure and the base is not cut away. There is no indication of clothing so she appears nude, though it is possible that clothing may originally have been indicated in paint.³ The girl has long braided hair falling straight down as far as the statuette base.

The acrobat seems to be in the ‘bridge’ position, the final phase of which is achieved either by raising the body from a supine position or – difficult to perform – by bending the body backward and simultaneously stretching the arms backward.⁴ Alternatively, she may be trying to execute a back walkover movement⁵ from a (back-arch) bridge position, bringing one foot, then the other, smoothly down toward the front, ending in an upright position with the help of the elevated special semicircular base.⁶ However, the upper body is held parallel to the ground and is supported by the fully mounted hands and feet while the face looks upward, a position from which the acrobat would then be expected to push her hip up strongly from her hands and feet until the arms and legs are straight to reach a fully arched bridge position most probably from a supine position here and not from a backbend. The back of this female acrobat statuette is arched more than tucked, and the hand position does not allow a flow of movement in that direction so it is impossible to execute a rollover,⁷ a

³ The dancing or acrobatic girls usually wore brief open-fronted or fringed, skirts (short men’s skirts) probably to free their legs for the dance or on other occasions loose tunics (diaphanous in the New Kingdom) with shoulder-straps or were simply draped in long shawls. Sometimes they danced naked except for a narrow ribbon across the belly. See: I. Lexová, *Ancient Egyptian Dances*, trans. K. Haltmar, Praha 1935, 57–63; P. Spencer, *Dance in Ancient Egypt*, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, No. 3, *Dance in the Ancient World*, Sep., 2003, 115, 118; E. Strouhal, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge/Melbourne 1992, 42.

⁴ The bridge is a more advanced foundational skill than the support skills. It is an arched position of the body with hands and feet flat on the floor and abdomen raised. This bridge position is used in walkovers and limbers. The most important component of the bridge is range of motion, particularly the flexibility in the upper back and shoulders. The shoulders must be directly over the hands. The beginning of practicing the bridge starts on the floor. An elevated mat may be used once gymnasts are able to support a bridge with straight arms. W. Decker, *Sport and games of ancient Egypt*, trans. A. Guttmann, Cairo 1993, 138; D. Mitchell/B. Davis/R. Lopez, *Teaching FUNDamental Gymnastics Skills*, USA 2002, 83–84, with figures; A. Room, *Dictionary of Sports and Games Terminology*, Jefferson/North Carolina/London 2010, 24.

⁵ Walkover, Back Walkover: Both these stunts are built on the ‘bridge’ pose and on an inverted split. In the back walkover the bridge is reached bending the trunk backward. At the same time an extended leg is thrown up and the other follows to an inverted split, smoothly ending to an upright position. In the forward walkover the Initial movement is similar to a handstand but then the legs move to an Inverted split before going to the bridge posture and then to the final upright position. More complex than a walkover or back walkover is the aerial walkover that is a special type of front somersault done in an arched position with a take-off from one leg and a landing on the other leg. A. Camurri, et al., *Dance and Movement Notation*, in P. Morasso/V. Tagliasco (eds.), *Human Movement Understanding*, *Advances in psychology* 33, 1986, 123; Room, *Dictionary of Sports and Games Terminology*, 12.

⁶ There are two main terms used in lead-up and skill development for walkovers. The bridge starts on the floor and is an arched position with the hands and feet flat on the floor and the abdomen up. The back bend starts from a standing position and the gymnast arches the back into a bridge.

Mitchell/Davis/Lopez, *Teaching FUNDamental Gymnastics Skills*, 154.

⁷ Roll (gymnastics, swimming) a move in which the body, in a tuck position, rolls forward or backward. Room, *Dictionary of Sports and Games Terminology*, 125.

walkover, or somersault (flip)⁸ from this variation of the bridge position as the hand position is inverted and acts as a break.

Comparable examples of such a span or 'bridge' position from the Middle Kingdom (figs 1a–b and 2) show a back only slightly arched, or even quite flat (figs 3 and 4), so that it is difficult to imagine a return to an upright position. The athlete or dancer in the latter examples may bring her hands to her feet and return into an arched span position, or by distancing her hands and feet she would be able to come into a recumbent position or by moving her hands and feet to walk on all fours.⁹

In the tomb of the nomarch Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan (eleventh dynasty) a dance connected with the cult of the statue of the dead is encountered. It has acrobatic characteristics, including a unique representation of a tree shaken by the wind. One of the three girls shown bends backward until her hands touches the ground (Fig. 1–c). Here one can surely speak of a backward bridge.¹⁰ On the other hand, such a span in the examples or the scenes dating to the New Kingdom is excellently arched,¹¹ like the famous female dancer drawing inscribed upon a chalk shard, kept now in Turin Museum,¹² so it is absolutely a part of a fluid continuous movement so unlike the Assiut statuette and other examples being examined here.

Although there is no clear borderline between dancing and acrobatic (or gymnastic) performances in ancient Egypt, demonstrations of these types of skills are known from sporting scenes, especially from the Middle Kingdom, as well as in ritual dancing, mainly during funeral and temple processions.¹³ There, one of the main choreographic figures is some kind of a 'bridge' which has been carried out with or without the help of a partner. This cult-dance, which has been represented, from the Middle Kingdom onward, on tombs and temple walls, on ostraca, and in limestone "servant-figures" to which Assiut statue type

⁸ Somersault (general) a complete turn of the body head over heels on the ground or in the air; (gymnastics) another term for a salto (Old French *sombresaut*, from Provençal *sobre*, 'over', and *saut*, 'leap'). Flip (gymnastics) another term for a somersault. Room, *Dictionary of Sports and Games Terminology*, 56, 142.

⁹ Lexová, *Ancient Egyptian Dances*, 22.

¹⁰ P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan I*, London 1893, pl. XXIX; PM IV, 148(21); J. Vandier, *Manuel D'Archéologie Égyptienne IV*, Paris 1964, fig. 226; Decker, *Sport and games of ancient Egypt*, 143.

¹¹ This position (or dance) presence in processions is attested from New Kingdom, for example, by scenes from the reign of Hatshepsut carved on blocks from her Red Chapel at Karnak and also by pictures from a similar scene dating to the reign of Tutankhamen (Eighteenth Dynasty) in the temple of Luxor. See. P. Lacau/H. Chevrier, *Une chapelle d'Hatshepsout à Karnak I*, Cairo 1977, 198–202, fig. 18; II, 1979, pl. 9. For other examples. See: W. Decker/M. Herb, *Bildatlas zum Sport im Alten Ägypten*. *Corpus der bildlichen Quellen zu Leibesübungen, Spiel, Jagd, Tanz und verwandten Themen I*, Leiden etc., 1994, 708–723; II, pls. CCCLXXXVII–CDII.

¹² This ostrakon kept in Turin's Egyptian Museum, represents an acrobat female dancer performs a graceful back bend. Fragment of a painting limestone. Deir el-Medina, West Thebes, 18th Dynasty. G. Maspero, *Art in Egypt*, New York 1912, pl. 287; Decker/Herb, *Bildatlas zum Sport im Alten Ägypten I*, 718; II, pl. CDI:R3.26; Strouhal, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 42–43, fig. 46; J. A. Tyldesley, *Egyptian Games and Sports*, *Shire Egyptology* 29, Malta 2007, 54, fig. 51.

¹³ The most important processions were the processions of deities that took place during the major festivals. Among the participants who were actively involved in the outward appearance of these events, the priests who bore the processional bark, the standards, or other cultic instruments, the rowing crew of the processional bark, and singers, musicians, and dancers who accompanied the cult statue. R. Stadelmann, in: *LÄ IV*, 1982, col. 1160–1164, s.v. Prozessionen; M. Stadler, *Procession*, in J. Dieleman/W. Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles 2008, 1–8.

belongs, was above all dedicated to the goddess Hathor.¹⁴ During the New Kingdom this complicated acrobatic ‘bridge’ position became a standard part of a dance performed during the processions of the gods, where it appears in some depictions to have been simply a bridge, although Decker¹⁵ thinks that it was probably a forward or backward flip.

The oldest depictions of the ‘bridge’ posture, dating to the Middle Kingdom, come from Beni Hasan,¹⁶ occurring in the tombs of Khnumhotep III (no. 3) (fig. 1–c),¹⁷ Baqet III (no. 15) (fig. 1–a),¹⁸ and Khety (no. 17) (fig. 1–b).¹⁹ In addition, three sculptures of acrobats of this type are known which bear a striking resemblance to the Assiut figure under discussion (fig. 2–4).

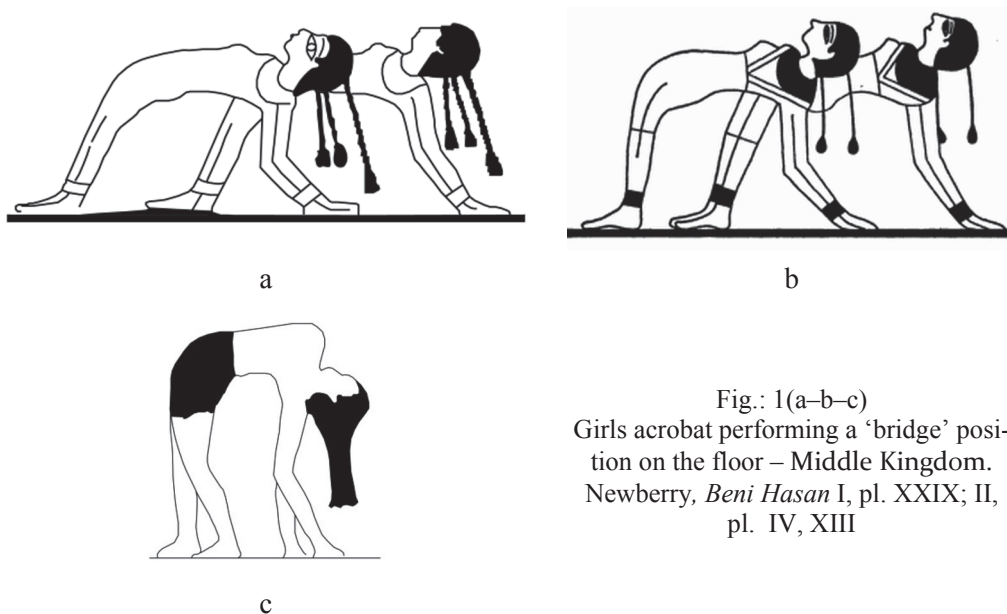


Fig.: 1(a–b–c)
Girls acrobat performing a ‘bridge’ position on the floor – Middle Kingdom.
Newberry, *Beni Hasan I*, pl. XXIX; II, pl. IV, XIII

¹⁴ Cult dances were essential to worshipping the gods in Egypt. The goddess Hathor had many connections to dance and music. Scribes included inscriptions naming Hathor in depictions of a leaping dance and an acrobatic dance. Blocks from the Red Chapel built by Hatshepsut at Karnak depict dancers in a procession during the Feast of the Valley and the Feast of Opet. The dancers in both festival processions performed an acrobatic dance. Its major movement was the ‘bridge’ where the dancers leaned back until their arms supported them. Characteristically for this dance, their hair surrounded their upper bodies. The women wore only long skirts and their hair was loose. E. Bleiberg, *Dance*, in E. Bleiberg (ed.), *Arts and Humanities through the Eras: Ancient Egypt (2675–332 B.C.E.)*, USA 2005, 81, with plate.; E. Brunner-Traut, *Der Tanz im alten Ägypten*, Glückstadt/Hamburg/New York 1958, 23–24, 27–30, 39–40, 48–52, 61; Ead., in: *LÄ I*, 1975, col. 117, s.v. Akrobaten; A. D. Touny/S. Wenig, *Der Sport im alten Ägypten*, Leipzig 1969, 86–87, pl. 37; Decker, *Sport and Games*, 136–146; L. Kinney, *Dance and Related Movements*, in: L. Donova/K. MMCorquodale, (eds.), *Egyptian Arts: Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes*, Prism Archaeological Series 6, Guizh, Egypt 2000, 193–196.

¹⁵ Decker, *Sport and Games*, 138.

¹⁶ Decker/Herb, *Bildatlas zum Sport im Alten Ägypten I*, 719–710; II, pl. CCCLXXXVIII:R3.4–5

¹⁷ Newberry, *Beni Hasan I*, pl. XXIX; PM IV, 148(21); Decker, *Sport and Games*, 143.

¹⁸ Newberry, *Beni Hasan II*, London 1894, pl. IV; PM IV, 151(3); Decker/Herb, *Bildatlas zum Sport im Alten Ägypten I*, 618; II, pl. CCCXXXVIII: P 1.1.

¹⁹ Newberry, *Beni Hasan II*, pl. XIII; PM IV, 155(3); Decker/Herb, *Bildatlas zum Sport im Alten Ägypten I*, 618; II, pl. CCCXXXVIII: P 1.2.

The Blocks from the Nilometer at Roda

Preliminary Report on the Reconstruction Work

Nassef Abdelwahed/John M. Iskander/Tarek S. Tawfik

(Taf. 3–29)

“There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed”

Abstract

Since their discovery in the 30s of the past century, the current location and most of the contents of the blocks reused in the substructure of the Nilometer at Roda Island have become obscured for the Egyptologists. In this report the scenes and texts of six tomb-chapels are presented after reconstruction.

1. Introduction

During the work of the Artifact Selection Unit of the Grand Egyptian Museum in searching for blocks and architectural elements to be reconstructed and displayed in this new museum, the Unit was led to limestone blocks stored in a rock-cut tomb at the Giza plateau (Selim Hassan 8). Unfortunately, no register was found for them, although they are carrying numbers preceded by the letter “R”, which refers to a previous registration. The number of blocks is approximately 240, belonging to several tomb-chapels from the Late-Period in addition to some other blocks that have been excluded from the present study, since they date to other periods, and probably their provenance is different than the majority of the blocks.

To commence with the documentation work, the stone blocks were transferred from the rock-cut tomb to the storerooms at Giza, and then registered. In order to reconstruct the scenes and texts, the unit began by taking measurements and photographing the blocks, then the conservators of the team provided first aid treatment for some of the blocks and started to make facsimiles of the scenes. Following team members were involved:

Egyptologists:	Dr. Rezk Diab
	Mrs. Catrien Dawood
	Dr. Ibrahim Megahid
	Mr. Osama Abd el-Shakour,
Conservators:	Mr. Mohamed Anwar
	Mr. Mahmoud Anis
	Mr. Negm Morshed

2. The provenance

There was a hunch in the inspectorate office that these blocks came from Heliopolis, since the findings uncovered from El-Matarjeh and Ain-Shams were often being stored during the last decades of the 20th century in the Giza storerooms. After thorough research, it is quite certain that they came from the Nilometer at Roda Island. They had been reused in the substructure of the Nilometer and discovered during the restoration work, which took place from December 1934 till July 1939 by the Ministry of Public Works under the supervision of Kamel Osman Ghaleb Bey.¹ Among the findings was a stela of the brewer of Re's House *P3-ntj-jw=f-ḥnh* dated to the Saite Period and published in 1938 by Étienne Drioton, who

¹ É. Drioton, *Les sculptures coptes du Nilomètre de Rodah*, Cairo 1942, I-II.

was Director General of Antiquities of Egypt at that time. In his article about the stela, Drioton stated:

[Dans les massifs de ses murs (the Nilometer), une quantité de blocs sont en train d'être découverts, jadis arrachés par les constructeurs à une nécropole égyptienne antique. Ces blocs, couverts de sculptures du meilleur style saïte, appartiennent, autant qu'on peut en juger jusqu'à présent, à trois tombes de fonctionnaires royaux de la XXVI^e dynastie. Déjà, avec ce qui a paru à la lumière, il est possible de reconstituer quelques ensembles et de se faire une idée de la structure et de la décoration des monuments ainsi exploités. Qu'ils aient été bâtis en surface du sol, ou presque, leur utilisation le donne à penser; la tige des blocs le confirme, ainsi que leur état de conservation qui démontre qu'ils ont été pris commodément et non pas arrachés à grand-peine des entrailles de la terre. Mais, comme les groupes de bas-reliefs retrouvés jusqu'à présent appartiennent à une décoration semblable à celle qui couvre, à Thèbes, les couloirs souterrains de l'hypogée célèbre dans la science que Dümichen a décrit et publié sous le nom de *Palais funéraire de Pédouaménap*, on peut espérer que cette nouvelle découverte permettra enfin d'atteindre les prototypes memphites, qu'on ne faisait jusqu'à présent que soupçonner sans les avoir jamais rencontrés, des somptueuses tombes de cette époque, dont les hypogées thébains ne seraient que l'adaptation souterraine, conformément aux exigences et aux traditions de la Haute-Égypte.]²

Drioton published also a book about the Coptic monuments reused in the construction of the Nilometer and he intended to study these blocks, since Piankoff mentioned that he had the opportunity to have a look at some photos and reconstructions from Drioton's work.³ Unfortunately, Drioton died and this work did not come to light. The photos of the Roda blocks have since been kept in the University of Strasbourg in France in a file known as *Dossier Drioton* or *Fond Drioton*,⁴ which is mentioned in many publications about the books of the Netherworld. However, these blocks are still unpublished and for generations, their current location became obscured.⁵ In his work about the Book of the Night, published in 1996, Gilles Roulin used the photos from *Dossier Drioton*. In addition to transcribing the text of the 12th hour, he made an attempt to reconstruct the scene of the 8th hour.⁶ Through this scene, it became obvious to us that our blocks are the proposed ones.

3. Discovery and original site

The Roda Island, where the blocks have been discovered, was a district of the ancient city *hr(j)-ḥ3* (in the 13th Nome of Lower Egypt), the area known today as Old Cairo. Its location is situated between Heliopolis in the north and the Memphite necropolis in the south. Thus, two possibilities can be provided to assume the original provenance of these blocks before they were dismantled and reused in building the Nilometer. The first supposition argues

² Drioton, La stèle d'un brasseur d'Héliopolis, in: Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte 20, 1938, 231.

³ A. Piankoff, Le livre des Quererts. I^{er} tableau, in: BIFAO 41, 1942, 2, Anm. 2.

⁴ By asking Prof. Erik Hornung about the Dossier Drioton, he kindly answered that this dossier includes just photos and there are no plans or reconstructions. Upon contacting the responsible for Drioton's archive in the University of Strasbourg, he informed us that this file is currently not available.

⁵ There is a hint in the book of O. Neugebauer/R.A. Parker, Egyptian Astronomical Texts III, 48 that the blocks were kept in a storeroom near the Nilometer at the time of publishing this book in 1969.

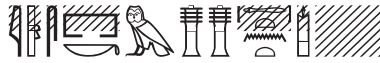
⁶ G. Roulin, Le Livre de la Nuit. Une composition égyptienne de l'au-delà, OBO 147, Freiburg (Switzerland), 1996, 21, pl. XXI.

that these blocks came from a local necropolis related directly to the city of *hr(j)-ḥ3*, which had been destroyed and the stone blocks of its tombs had been reused in building the new capitals during the Islamic Periods.

The oldest mention of this city is in the Pyramid Text PT 550 (Pyr. 1350b).⁷ In Chapter 149 of the Book of the Dead,⁸ the toponym *j3.t n.t hr(j)-ḥ3* “the mound of Kheraha”⁹ is mentioned in the text and vignette as well, which, according to the text, prevents the flood from Busiris and lets the Nile/flood comes measured with bushels. So, such an important city should have its own necropolis.¹⁰ The second supposition is that these blocks had been transferred from the necropolis of Heliopolis based on the reference to “the house of Re” in the stela of *P3-ntj-jw=f-ḥnḥ*. Furthermore, the name of the necropolis of Heliopolis *Ḍd.t 3.t n.t Jwnw*” currently situated at al-Matariya and Ain-Shams, is mentioned on two of the Roda blocks, the first is from the tomb of *Ḍd-Hnsw-w3ḥ=s* [Pl. 24/I].



The second block is most probably from the same tomb [Pl. 3/I],¹¹ where the text could be read:



[...] *js=k m Ḍd.t 3.t n.t Jwnw*

[...] your tomb in the necropolis of Heliopolis¹²

Accordingly, attributing those blocks to the necropolis of Heliopolis seems more appropriate.

⁷ H.M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts: Typology and Disposition*, PÄ 31/I, Leiden, 2012, 515.

In the stela of Piankhi, two fortress close to each other are mentioned one called *hr(j)-ḥ3* and the other to the south of it called *pr-ḥ3pj*. The location of *pr-ḥ3pj* is identified by Gardiner with Athar al-Nabi, while a recent study tried to push its location further south at Ezbet el-Walda, see: A. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica II*, Oxford 1947, 131ff; W. Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, TAVO B/5, Wiesbaden, 1976, 185–186; S. el-Kholi, *The Lost Colossus of the Mate of the Sphinx*, in: *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century II*, Cairo, 2002, 253–256.

⁸ Naville, Tb., pls. CLXXI [94–103], CLXXII.

⁹ Drioton translated the word *j3.t* as “necropolis” which seems not so accurate. See Drioton, *Les origines pharaoniques du Nilomètre de Rodah*, in: *Bulletin de l’Institut d’Égypte XXXIV*, 1952, 291–316; P. Montet, *Géographie de l’Égypte I*, Paris 1957, 164–166.

¹⁰ There is a site called Batn el-Baqara at el-Fustat in which two undecorated rock-cut tombs had been discovered in 1936, the first is the tomb of *P3-wn-ḥ3.t=f* included his sarcophagus (Cairo Museum, JE 67764), amulets and vessels, while the second is chamber included 22 sarcophagi (JE 67134–5, 68490, 68491). See: A. Hamada, *The Clearance of a Tomb Found at Al-Fostat*, 1936, in: *ASAE 37*, 1937, 58–70; id., *Tomb of Pawen-Hatef at Al-Fostat*, in: *ASAE 37*, 1937, 135–142.

¹¹ No. 902, R 24? (the backside of block [e] in §6.2.6).

¹² Cf. Gauthier, *Une tombe d’époque saïte à Héliopolis*, in: *ASAE 27*, 1927, 4; A. el-Sawi/F. Goma, *Das Grab des Panehsi, Gottesvaters von Heliopolis in Matariya*, *ÄAT 23*, Wiesbaden 1993, 4; S. Bickel/P. Tallet, *Quelques monuments privés héliopolitains de la Troisième Période intermédiaire*, in: *BIFAO 100*, 2000, 72 [text X+3–4].

4. The owners of the tomb-chapels

The blocks belong to several persons. While Drioton reported three owners without giving their names, we were able to recognize six. The criteria applied to distinguish the blocks of each tomb-chapel are based on:

- The names of the owners
- Blocks completing scenes and texts
- Style of relief



The majority of the blocks belong to the tomb of *Jmn-jr-dj=s* and that of *Dd-Hnsw-w3h=s*. To distinguish between the blocks of both tombs, we are depending on the shape of the divider-lines between the texts and scenes. In the tomb of *Jmn-jr-dj=s*, the divider-line is a double incised line, while in the blocks of *Dd-Hnsw-w3h=s*, it is one sunk line.

4.1 *Jmn-jr-dj=s*




This person held the titles:

jrj-p^c.t h3.tj-^c htm-bj.tj jmj-r 3 h3s.wt hm-ntr Jmn-R^c nsw ntr.w jmj-r hm.w ntr m W3s.t jmj-r šm^c mj kd=s.

“The prince, count, seal-bearer of the king of Lower Egypt, overseer of the gate of the foreign countries, prophet of Amonre, King of the gods, overseer of the priests in Thebes, chief of the whole of Upper Egypt.”

About his family, we just know the names of his parents. His father is called *P3-k(3)p*  but unfortunately his titles are not mentioned, while the name of his mother is  *Krrht*. To this high ranked person, we can attribute an offering table in Cairo museum CG 23099, whose owner held the same name and the title *jmj-r šm^c*. He held also the title *wpw.tj nsw m h3s.wt nb(.wt)* “messenger of the king to all foreign countries”. Such a title is not found among the titles inscribed on his tomb-chapel, but the title *jmj-r 3 h3s.wt* may refer to a promotion in his career.

4.2 *Dd-Hnsw-w3h=s*

He is called also *Psmṯk-snb* and he held the titles *sš nsw rh nsw*, “the royal scribe and king’s accountant”. His father’s name is  [...m]t [Pl. 4/I]¹³ and his preserved titles are *hm-ntr Jmn sm* “the prophet of Amon, sem-priest” [Pl. 19/II b]. His mother held the title *nb.t-pr* “Mistress of the House” and part of her name is mentioned on a block from a ceiling  *Š3-n*[...]. Another feminine name  *Hwj.t-m-h3.t*, probably of his wife, is mentioned on a block from the same ceiling [Pl. 22 g].

4.3 *W3h-jb-R^c*

Just two of the blocks are attributed to a person called *W3h-jb-R^c*. On both blocks, his name is inscribed without any title, just designated as Osiris.

¹³ Block [a] no. 799, R 81, m.: 37 x 29 x 19 cm., Block [b] no. 839, R 15?, m.: 40.5 x 28 x 18 cm.

4.4 *P3-šrj-(n)-Mw.t*

From all owners of the Roda blocks, only this person was already known, since De Meulenaere mentioned him and his titles in an article published in 1981.¹⁴ *P3-šrj-n-Mw.t* is called also *Nfr-jb-R^c-m-3h.t* and he held the titles:

jrj-p^c.t h3.tj-^c htm-bj.tj rh-nsw m3^c mr(j)=f jmj-r smsm n nsw W3h-jb-R^c

“The prince, count, seal-bearer of King of Lower Egypt, the true accountant of the king, the overseer of the horse(s) of King Apries.”

The later title is the most common on the blocks of his tomb-chapel. The name of his mother was mentioned, but unfortunately just the first part is preserved *Mr[...]*.

4.5 *Hr-wd3(.w)*

This person was recognized on two blocks. A third block carries part of his name and by the topic of scenes, two other blocks are attributed to him. The career of this person is not known, he is just designated as Osiris.

4.6 *Nb-(3)h-bj.t*

This person is known from two blocks carrying his name, in addition to a third block of the same style. From his titles, two are preserved *hrj-sšt3 Dd.t* and *htm-ntr*. These titles are mentioned directly before his name supposing that he has other sacerdotal titles more highly, traces of which are shown on the third block.

5. Dating

All the chapels date back to the 26th Dynasty. This is comprehensible from the names of the owners, who bear names of kings from this dynasty, especially the so-called *rn nfr* “beautiful name”, which often is composed of the name of the ruler followed by an epithet. It is possible that the person would still be alive and serve during the reign of the successive king, as in the case of *Nfr-jb-R^c-m-3h.t*, the beautiful name of Pasherienmut, who most probably started his career in the reign of King Psamtik II (Neferibre) the predecessor of King Apries, whose name is mentioned in Pasherienmut’s title. In the case of *Psmṯk-snb*, the beautiful name of *Dd-Hnsw-w3h=s*, it is hard to specify the king under whom he served, since the name *Psmṯk* is held by three kings of the 26th dynasty, but at least it confirms dating his chapel to this dynasty [Pl. 3/II].¹⁵ However, it is uncertain, to which tomb-chapel it belongs.

Another block inscribed with the names of King Nakhtnebef (Nectanebo I) from the 30th Dynasty has been found stored with the blocks [Pl. 3/III].¹⁶ This block is not mentioned by the Egyptologists, who communicated about the Roda blocks, although they mentioned

¹⁴ H. De Meulenaere, Le surnom égyptien à la Basse Époque (Addenda et Corrigenda), in: OLP 12, 1981, 129 [83]; P.-M. Chevereau, Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens de la basse époque: carrières militaires et carrières sacerdotales en Egypte du XIe au IIe siècle avant J.C, 95 [120]; D.A. Pressl, Beamte und Soldaten: Die Verwaltung in der 26. Dynastie in Ägypten (664–525 v. Chr.), Frankfurt 1998, 233–234 [E.4]; Lodomez, La statuette de Bruxelles MRAH E. 8039, in: CdE 85, 2010, 75 [6]; K. Jansen-Winkeln, Inschriften IV/I, 397 [127].

¹⁵ No. 866, R 31, m: 65 x 24 x 18.5.

¹⁶ No. 782, R 222, m: 60 x 32 x 18 cm.

that of Apries. This may make its association with the other blocks under suspicion, but there is still a possibility, that it had also been reused in the building of the Nilometer.

6. The Text and Decoration Programme of the Tomb-Chapels

These blocks are decorated with texts and scenes from the books of the Netherworld.

6.1 The tomb-chapel of *Jmn-jr-dj=s*

To this chapel, a large number of the blocks are attributed. It resembles in its decoration the significant tombs of the late 25th and 26th Dynasty at Thebes, which are known as the “funerary palaces”.¹⁷ Such tombs are very rich in their scenes, which are related to the books of the Netherworld, especially the tomb of *P3-dj-Jmn-m-jp.t* (TT 33), which includes among its decorations the books that appeared during the New Kingdom in the royal tombs, with few exceptions in private ones. According to the titles of *Jmn-jr-dj=s*, there is a close relation between him and Thebes, which could hint at an important link in the transmission of knowledge between Upper and Lower Egypt. These Books of the Netherworld are the following:

6.1.1 The *Amduat*

The oldest attestation of this book is found in the tomb of Thutmosis I at the Valley of the Kings. However, it dates back earlier than this period and is considered the most popular to be represented in the royal tombs and some of the tombs of high officials. This book is divided into 12 sections representing the twelve hours through which the solar-bark sails in the night.¹⁸ Each section is divided into three registers. What remains on the blocks is related to the sixth, seventh, tenth and eleventh hours.

6.1.1.1 The Sixth Hour [Pl. 4/II]:

a	879	R 212	263	77 x 29.5 x 18 cm.	band and upper register
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Only one block can be attributed to the sixth hour. The block is topped by a band of hieroglyphs with the name and part of the title of the owner, below which is a text in eight columns of hieroglyphs related to the last scene of the middle register showing the serpent with the four heads.¹⁹

¹⁷ For the typology and program of these tombs, see: N.K. Thomas, *A Typological Study of Saite Tombs at Thebes*, Ph. D-Dissertation, Los Angeles 1980.

¹⁸ E. Hornung, *Das Amduat. Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes*, *ÄA* 7, 1963; id., *Altägyptische Jenseitsbücher: Ein einführender Überblick*, Darmstadt 1997, 40–54; H. Altenmüller, *Zur Überlieferung des Amduat*, in: *JEOL* 20, 1967–1968, 27–42; Thomas, *A Typological Study of Saite Tombs at Thebes*, 245–247; P. Jürgens, *Das Stemma des Amduat nach den Textzeugen des Neuen Reiches*, in: *SAK* 27, 1999, 141–171; D. Werning, *An Interpretation of the Stemmata of the Books of the Netherworld in the New Kingdom – Tomb Decoration and the Text Additions for Osiris NN*, in: J.-Cl. Goyon/Ch. Cardin (eds.), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists*, Grenoble, 6–12 September 2004, *OLA* 150, Leuven, 1935–1937.

¹⁹ Hornung, *Amduat* I, 110–111; C. Manassa, *The Late Egyptian Underworld: Sarcophagi and Related Texts from the Nectanebid Period*, *ÄAT* 71, Wiesbaden 2007, 234, pl. 180B.



x+1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

6.1.1.2 The Seventh Hour [Pl. 5]

a	908	R 166	52.5 x 39 x 19 cm.	Middle register
	905	R ?	49 x 36 x 18 cm.	
b	783	R 241	80.5 x 35 x 18 cm.	
c	743	R 151	77 x 35 x 18 cm.	
d	759	R 158	78 x 35.5 x 17.5 cm.	Middle – lower register
e	967	R 182	80.5 x 34.5 x 18 cm.	
f	740	R 219	70 x 34 x 19 cm.	Lower register
g	919	R 216	79.5 x 32 x 17 cm.	
h	933	R 237	90 x 32 x 18 cm.	

To this hour eight blocks, one broken into two pieces, can be attributed, four of which are from the middle register, two are from the lower register and two contain parts of both registers.

The middle register is topped by the *hṭp-dj-nsw* formula with the titles of the tomb's owner in a horizontal line of hieroglyphs [a, d].



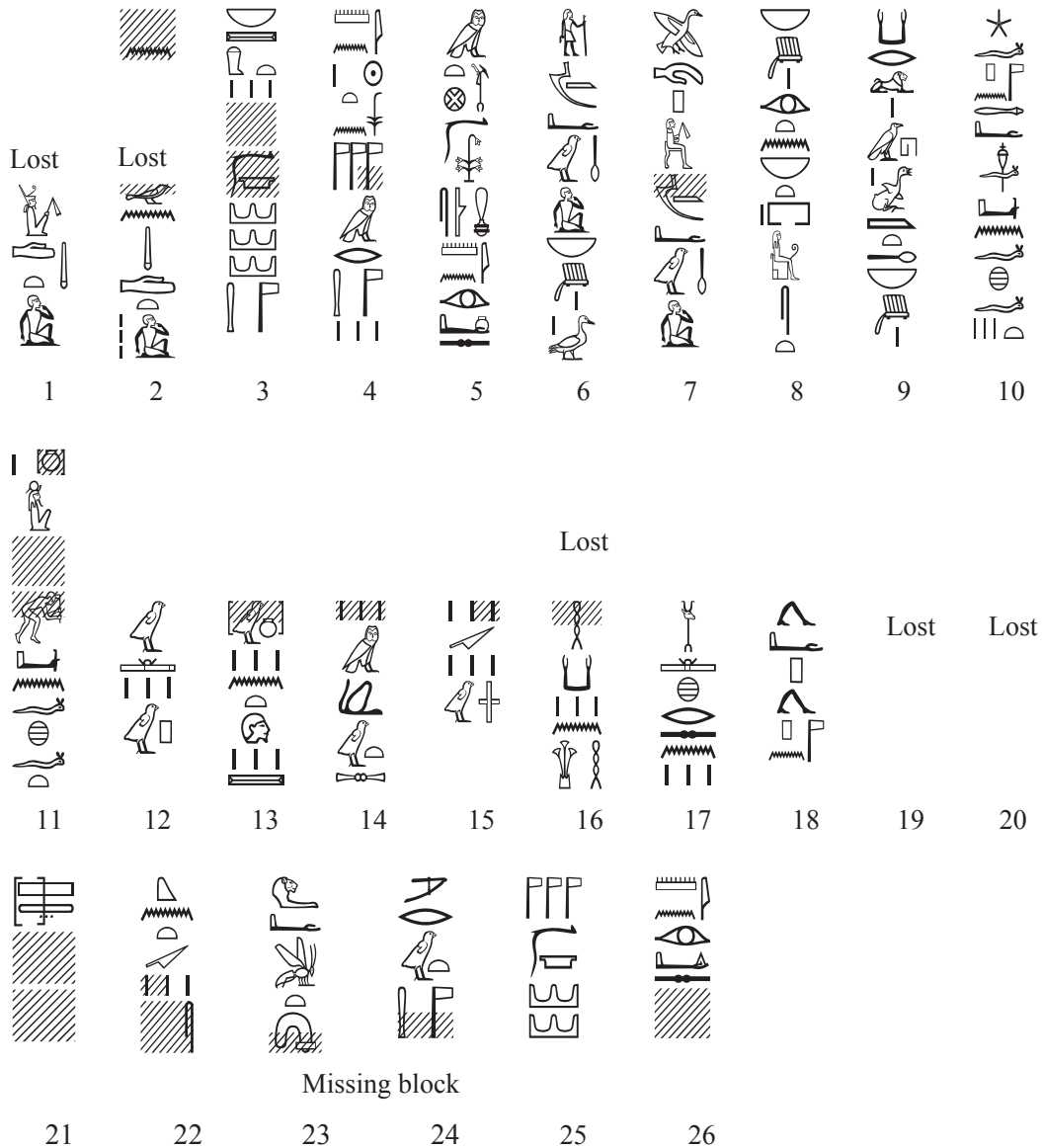
[a block missing]

The full register depicts the solar-bark sailing through the 144 cubit sand-bank, in which it would be attacked by the serpent Apophis, who is depicted slaughtered by the gods. Then the next scene shows four chests, each with two human heads and a knife. The blocks [b-c, e] are parts of this scene, in which we can see the last three chests together with their names (Hornung, *Amduat I*, 523–525).



The last scene of this register, depicting a standing god with a *w3s*-staff and a standing goddess (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 526–527), is preserved [block f] except for the upper part of the figures. The lower/end part of the goddess' name is shown.²⁰

The text above the scenes is as follows:

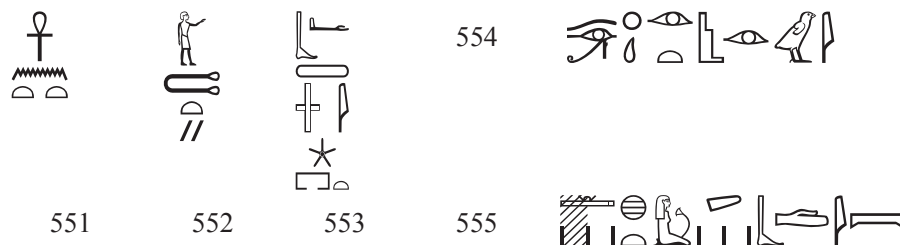


The lower register should begin with the scene of the god Horus sitting on a throne and in front of him twelve standing male figures and twelve female figures, each with a star representing the hours. One of the preserved blocks from this register is depicted with the last two of the standing female figures [block g] (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 551–552).²¹ The

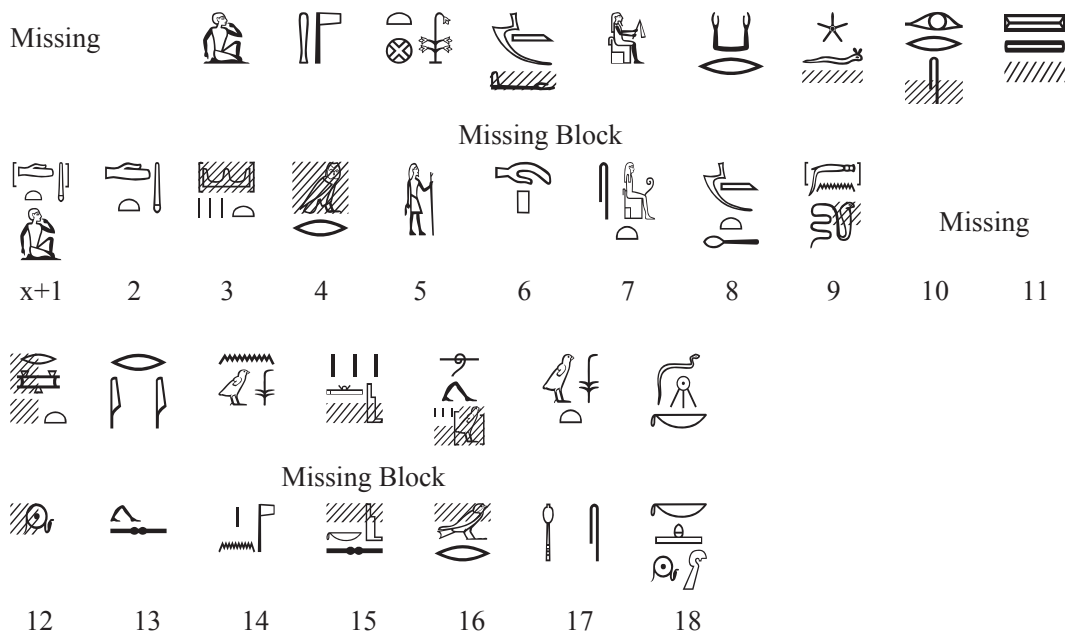
²⁰ Hornung, *Amduat I*, 126–127.

²¹ Manassa, *The Late Egyptian Underworld*, pl. 136.

other block [h] contains part of the final scene in this register and accordingly in the whole hour, which depicts a crocodile crouching on a body of sand topped by a human head of Osiris (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 553–555).²²



Over this scene, it is wrongly written the text of the middle register of the eighth hour. From this text, the upper and lower parts of 18 columns [blocks e-h] are preserved.²³



6.1.1.3 The Tenth Hour [Pl. 6–7]

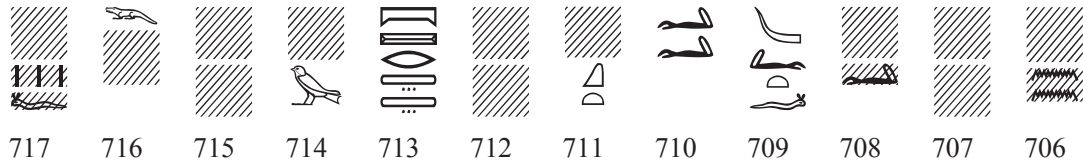
a	912	R ?	76 x 31.5 x 19 cm.	Upper register
b	751	R 189	72.5 x 30 x 18 cm.	
c	969	R 130	73 x 33 x 18.5	Middle register
d	745	R 133	82 x 33 x 18 cm.	
e	809	R 32	81 x 23 x 18 cm.	Lower register

²² Manassa, *The Late Egyptian Underworld*, pl. 136.

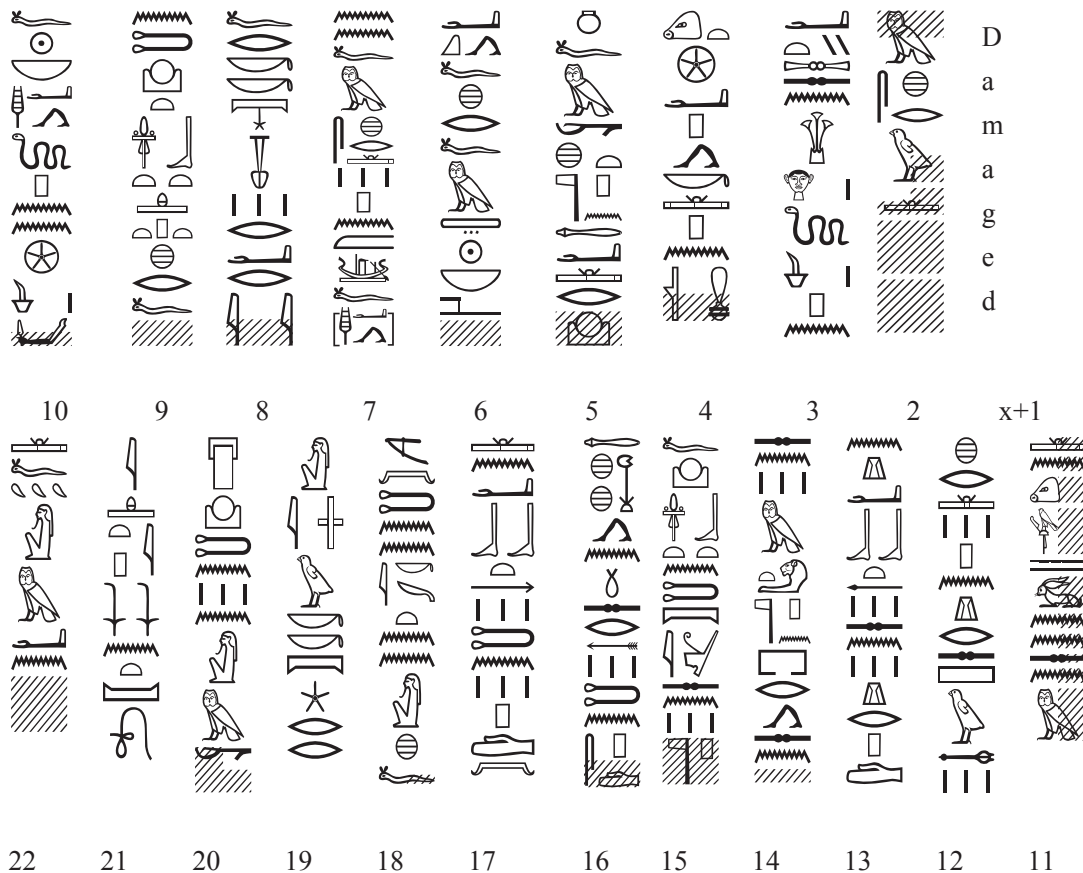
²³ Cf. Hornung *I*, *Amduat*, 142–143.

From this section four blocks are preserved, two from the upper register [a-b] and two from the middle register [c-d].

The usual depictions of the upper register show a standing god and a scarab, two pairs of goddesses, each flanking a disc representing each eye of Re, eight standing goddesses, four of which with lioness heads and the other four with human heads. The two blocks, we have, begin with the depiction of this scene and cover the rest of this register, where we can see the last three of the eight goddesses facing the seated baboon with the Udjat-eye. Then eight standing gods follow, the first four with differently shaped heads, while the other four are in an Osirian shape with the white crown (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 706–717).



From the middle register, two blocks [c-d] are preserved with 22 columns of hieroglyphs carrying the texts over the scenes of the serpent *tsj-hr.w* and the twelve armed standing gods.²⁴



²⁴ Hornung, *Amduat I*, 173–175.

It is noteworthy that block [e], which depicts the lower part of a human figure holding a staff, might represent the final scene of the lower register showing the god Horus with a solar-disc in front of a water stream with shipwrecked figures inside. Unlike our block, Horus is mostly represented leaning on a staff, but the vertical line incised on the block looks more like a side of the rectangular representation of a water stream.

6.1.1.4 The Eleventh Hour [Pl. 8–10/I]

a	943	R 220	80 x 32 x 18 cm.	band and upper register
b		R 41	81 x 34 x 18 cm.	upper register
c	803	R 144	84 x 35 x 17 cm.	
d	968	R 180	80 x 34 x 18.5	
e	764	R 179	82 x 34.5 x 18 cm.	
f	936	R 172	81 x 34 x 18.5 cm.	
g	915	R 137	84 x 35 x 18 cm.	middle register
H	755	R 143	84 x 34 x 18 cm.	
i	909	R ?	45 x 33 x 18 cm.	
	800	R 134	66 x 34 x 18 cm.	
j	881	R 68 R 169	44.5 x 28 x 18 cm.	
k	877	R 129	76 x 29 x 18 cm.	lower register
l	871	R 40	80 x 21.5 x 18 cm.	
m	827	R 42	31.5 x 19.5 x 15.5 cm.	
n	823	R 74	44.5 x 15 x 18 cm.	

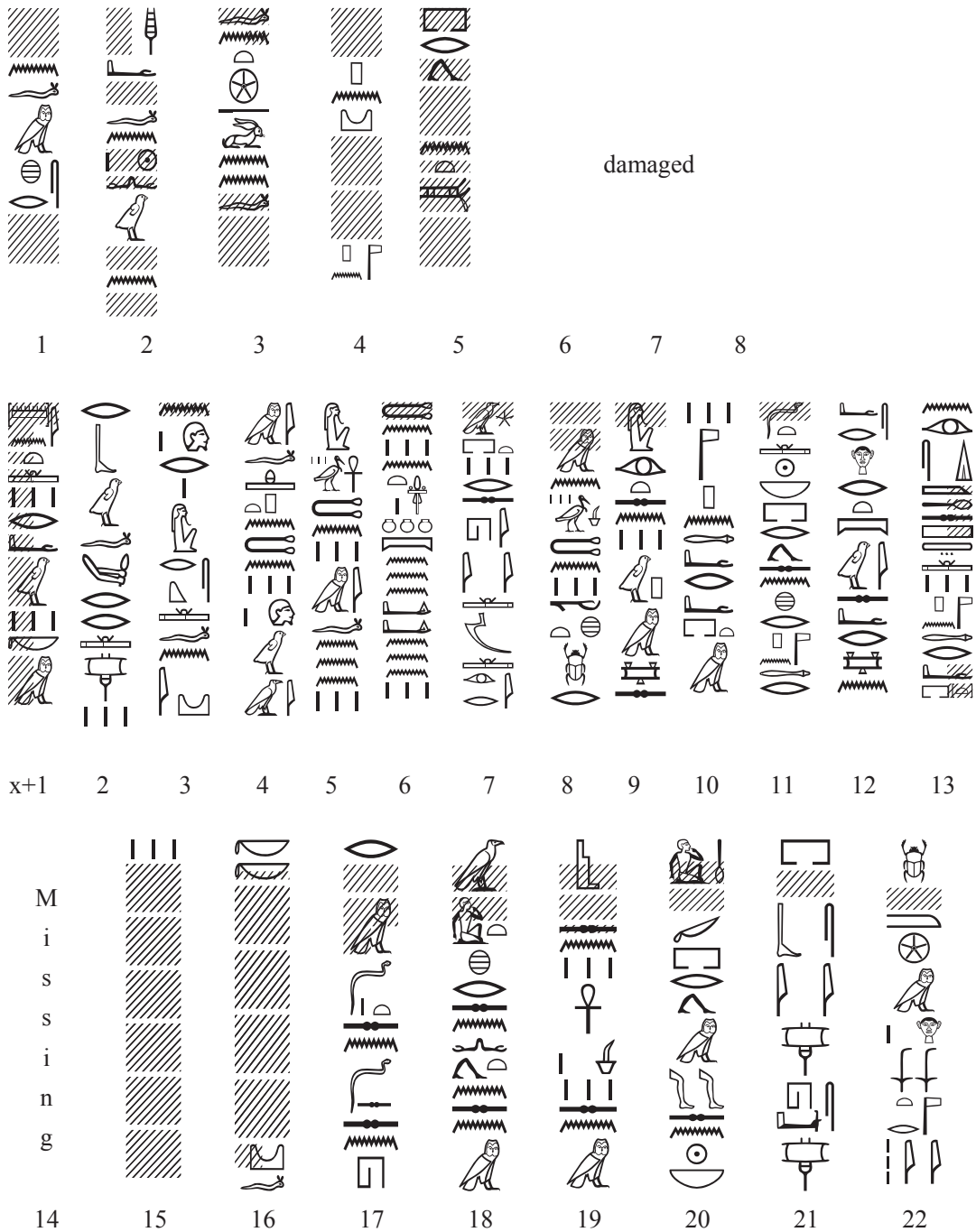
From this hour, we have 14 blocks from its three registers. It consists of eight courses of stone blocks. The layout shows a band of hieroglyphs running from left to right. The rear block [a] is engraved with a text extracted from the introductory text to this hour.²⁵



Below the band is the text of the upper register. More than two thirds of this text is preserved in columns of hieroglyphs on three blocks [b–d], in addition to the upper signs of the last eight columns on block [d].²⁶

²⁵ Hornung, *Amduat I*, 180.

²⁶ Hornung, *Amduat I*, 180–183.



As for the scenes of the upper register, two blocks [e, f] are available covering the first four scenes out of five included in this register as follows:

Scene 1: double-headed god with the white and red crown (Hornung, *Amduat I*, fig. 754).






















Scene 2: the god Atum with a solar disc in the protection of a winged serpent with four legs, above Atum are two Udjat-eyes, and below the serpent head is an ankh sign (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 755–756).

Scene 3: a snake with a goddess on its back in front of which are eight stars (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 757–758).





Scene 4: eight of twelve standing gods are available from this scene as follows:

- Double-headed god with a body in frontal view (Hornung, *Amduat I*, fig. 759)
- Ram-headed god (Hornung, *Amduat I*, fig. 760).
- Human-headed god raising his hands in an adoration attitude (Hornung, *Amduat I*, fig. 761).
- God with a double bird's head and without arms (Hornung, *Amduat I*, fig. 762)
- Four gods without arms (Hornung, *Amduat I*, fig. 763–766).

Although the figures of the next four gods are missing, the upper part of their names can be noticed on the block above [c] (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 767–770).

		Not mentioned													
754		755–757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764						
						Missing									
765	766	767	768	769	770	771–2	773	774							

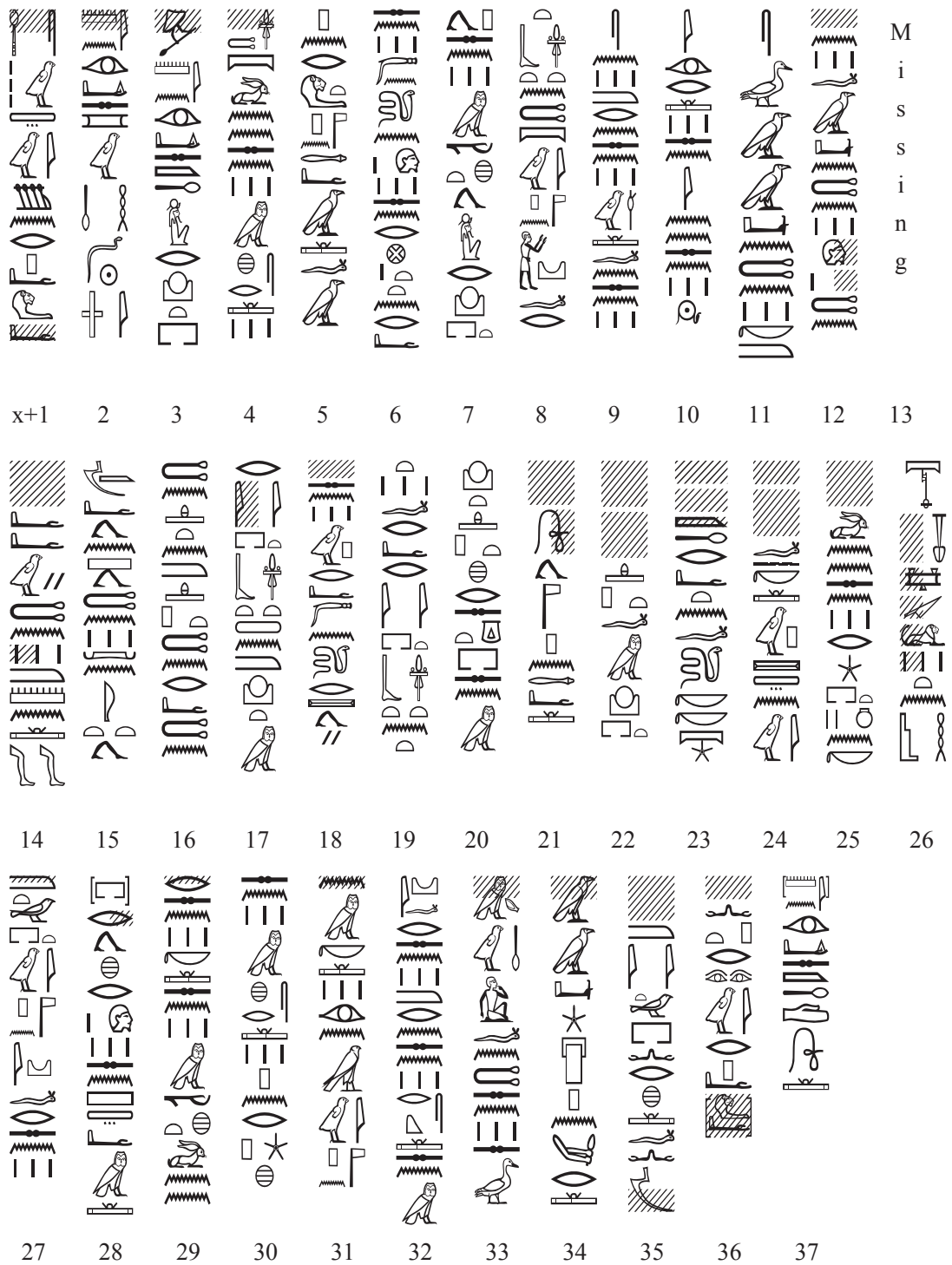
From the scenes of the middle register, only one block [j] is preserved, showing the four gods carrying the front part of the serpent and the next figure of the red crown, protruding of which a human head, which according to the original scene is put on the back of a uraeus. The three gods at the front are preserved with their names, while only an arm of the rear god is left (Hornung, *Amduat I*, figs. 795–798).

			
795	796	797	798


In contrast to the scenes, almost the whole text of this register is preserved through three blocks [g–i] with 37 columns of hieroglyphs. One of the blocks [i] is broken into two pieces:²⁸

²⁷  > .

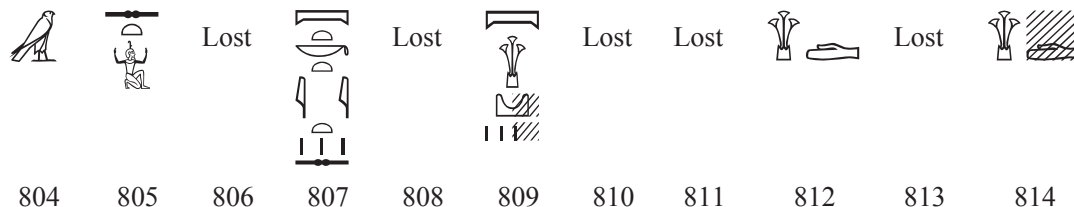
²⁸ Hornung, *Amduat I*, 184–188.



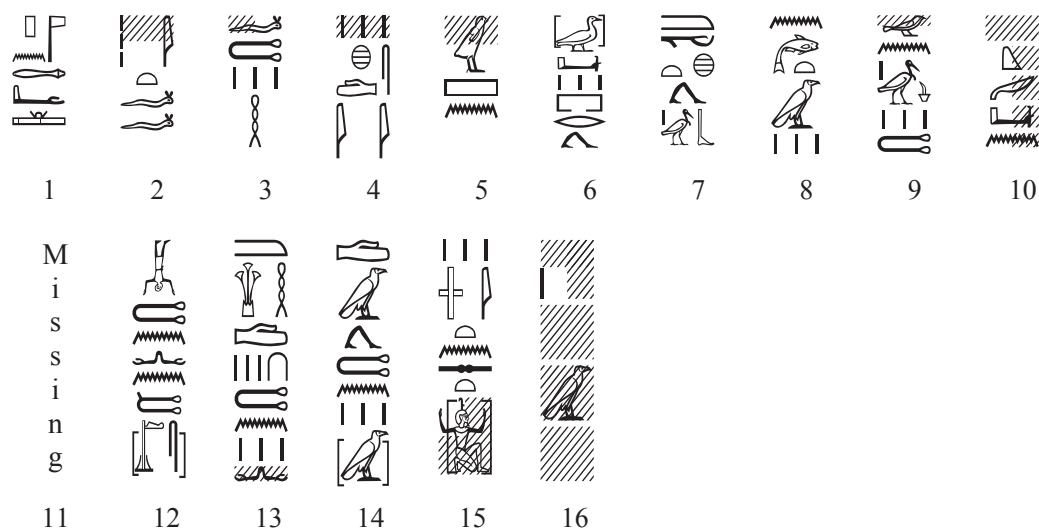
The lower register shows the punishment of the enemies. The complete register starts with Horus as a falcon-headed figure with the solar-disc leaning on a staff and holding a snake-shaped scepter. Then follows a shape of a serpent standing vertically. The next scene shows

six graves, five of them are attacked by five goddesses holding a knife. Finally, there are figures of goddesses crowned with  sign, and a standing god. Four blocks are available from this register. Two of them [k-l] are completing the scene of Horus and the snake. The lioness head of the first goddess is also preserved and just the name of the second (Hornung, Amdut I, figs. 804–807).

The third block [n] shows part of the third and fourth goddesses and part of the fifth and sixth graves. Inside the sixth grave is a cut head (Hornung, Amduat I, figs. 809–814).



Concerning the explanatory text, the lower part of ten columns of hieroglyphs are preserved on the block [k] and the upper part of five other columns is preserved on the block [m], as the following:



6.1.1.5 Band from a lost Hour [Pl. 10/II]

a	794	R 119	80.5 x 33 x 18 cm.
b	769	R 110	76.5 x 33 x 18 cm.
c	770	R 173	88 x 34 x 17 cm.

Finally, there are three blocks [a-c] with a horizontal *ḥtp-dj-nsw* formula, which perhaps were topping another hour of the Amduat that is totally lost.



6.1.2 The Book of Caverns

The oldest known attestation of the Book of Caverns dates to the reign of King Merenptah, who decorated the upper part of the sarcophagus hall of his tomb (KV 8) with the final scene of this book. To this king also, the decoration of the long entrance corridor of the Osireion is attributed, where a complete version of this religious book is inscribed on the north-east wall. Further, the Book of Caverns appears in the royal tombs of Tawesret and Sethnakht (KV 14) Ramesses III (KV 11), Ramesses IV (KV 2), Ramesses VI (KV 9), Ramesses VII (KV 1) and Ramesses IX (KV 6). The beginning of applying this book to private artifacts occurred in the 21st Dynasty, as in the papyrus of Nedjem and the papyrus of Butehamun, which include some of its scenes. In addition to our blocks, applying the scenes of the Cavern Books to the decoration of the private tomb is so far only attested in the tomb of Petamenophis (TT 33, corridor XVII). Finally, two sarcophagi (Petiese, Berlin 29, Tjehorpto, Cairo CG 29306) from Saqqara dated to the 30th Dynasty contain sections from this book.²⁹

From the Roda blocks, we have identified some related to the first and second divisions.

6.1.2.1 The First Division [Pl. 10/III-11]

a	934	R 209	83.5 x 32 x 18	first register
b	766	R 203	80 x 34.5 x 18 cm.	
c	910	R 202	89 x 32 x 18 cm.	
d	741	R 204	77 x 33 x 18 cm.	first-second register
e	767	R 102	87 x 32 x 22 cm.	
f	894	R 2	36.5 x 33.5 x 18.5 cm.	
g	918	R 191	81 x 35.5 x 22 cm.	second register
h	872	R 234	87 x 35 x 17 cm.	second-third register
i	820	R 69	30 x 23.5 x 18.5 cm.	third-fourth register
j	837	R 249	26 x 22 x 19.5 cm.	fifth register

The scenes of this division are originally distributed in five registers, which are full of figures of deities, serpents, enemies and graves. The blocks attributed to it are ten, eight of which can be reconstructed together [a–h]. From the first register, we still have five uraei followed by four standing figures, which were once nine for each group. The uraei here are depicted spitting balls of fire. However, the most unusual feature is the depiction of the standing figures with ibis-heads, not ox-headed as in the case of all other sources. This may be due to a corruption in the papyrus or leather roll used as a template for this division. From the second register there are seven jackal-headed figures standing, but slightly bow-

²⁹ Hornung, *Altägyptische Jenseitsbücher: Ein einführender Überblick*, Darmstadt 1997, 70–71; Thomas, *A Typological Study of Saite Tombs at Thebes*, 251–252; D. Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch. Textkritische Edition und Textgrammatik*, GOF IV/48, Wiesbaden 2011, I, 15–50.

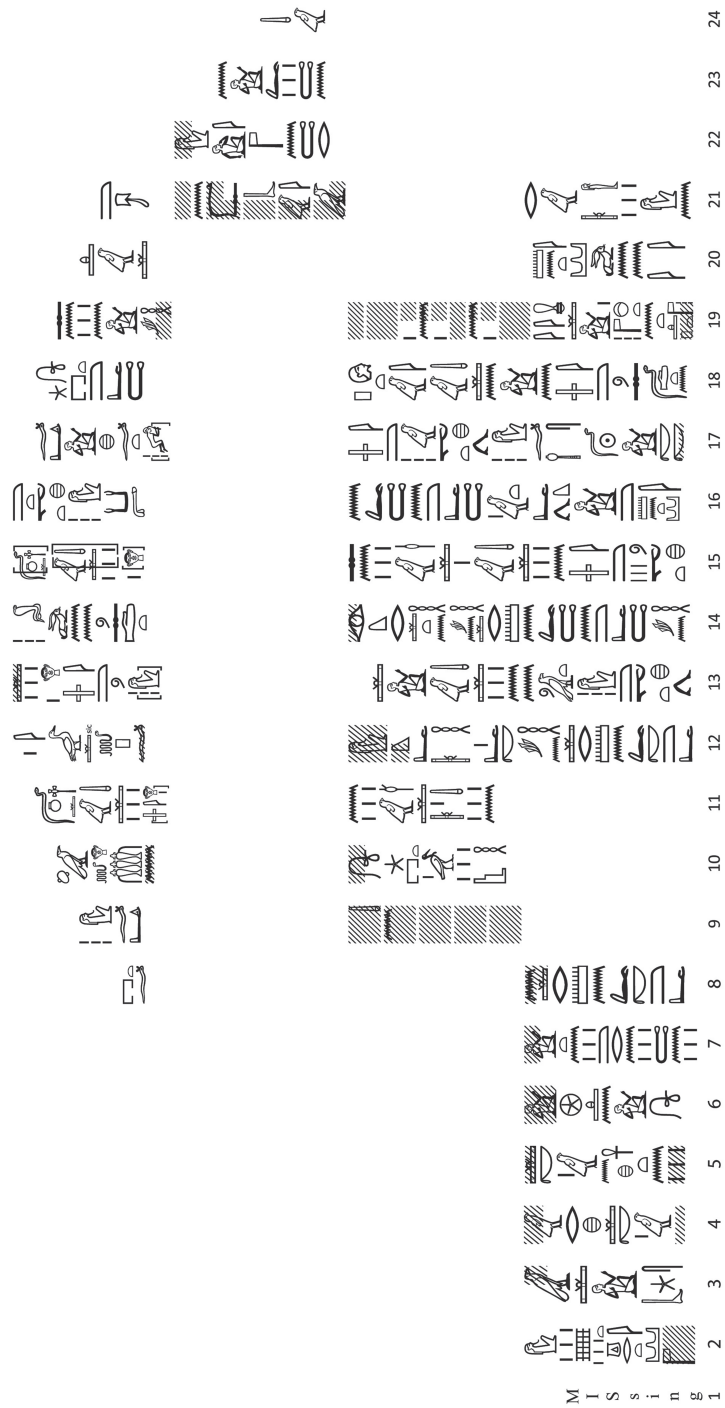
ing [e–h]. Two more figures were depicted below the uraei, where we can notice the ears of a jackal's head to the extreme left [d]. Below this, the uppermost of three shrines from the third register is visible. The ninth block [i] shows the legs of a figure from the third register and part of an oval grave with a human body from the fourth register. Finally, a tenth block [j] engraved with a body of a prisoner might be part of the fifth register of this division, if it is not related to the fifth register of the second division.

Text of the first Division [Pl. 12]

a	863	R 50	89 x 21.5 x 18 cm.	Cols. 8–15 first (upper) course
b	857	R 51	79 x 21 x 19 cm.	Cols. [15]–21 first (upper) course
c	950	R 33	85 x 25 x 18 cm.	Cols. 21–14 second course
d	878	R 231	82 x 22 x 18 cm.	Cols. 8–20 third course
e	752	R 22 ?	86.5 x 22 x 18.5 cm.	Cols. 2–8 fourth course
f	926	R 125	83.5 x 24 x 18 cm.	Cols. 12–21 fourth course

From the text of this division, six blocks are still preserved. After reconstructing the text, it can be said that it originally consisted of about 28 columns of hieroglyphs engraved inside a round-topped frame.³⁰

³⁰ For the complete text of this division, see: Piankoff, in: BIFAO 41, 1942, pls. III–IX.





The sculpture of a female acrobat at the Al-Salam School Museum in Assiut
Front view