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The Pyramid Texts Of Amenirdis I: Selection And Layout

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Abstract

Although long recognized to include selections from the Pyramid Texts, not since their original publication in 1901 have the texts inscribed on the walls of the funerary chapel of Amenirdis I been adequately examined. Work on the funerary texts of Amenirdis has revealed her selections from the Pyramid Texts to be both unique and concise. The texts, which were meticulously arranged along a north-south axis, include several allusions and references to elements of the Egyptian cosmos, and served to equip Amenirdis for her ascension to the northern sky, thereby helping her achieve a resurrection and an afterlife. This paper relates the textual content of Amenirdis's selections from the Pyramid Texts to their physical placement along the walls of her funerary chapel and argues that the particular arrangement of the texts was intended to guide Amenirdis out of her funerary chapel and to lead her toward the north sky.

It has long been recognized that the texts inscribed on the walls of the funerary chapel of the God's Wife of Amun, Amenirdis I, include Pyramid Text spells. However, not since their initial publication in 1901, have these texts been adequately examined.¹ Recent work on the funerary texts of Amenirdis has revealed that her unique and concise selections from the Pyramid Texts were meticulously chosen and deliberately laid out on the various walls of her funerary chapel. The texts, which are laid out along and north-south axis, include several allusions or references to several essential elements of the Egyptian cosmos such that the South Wall may be equated with the *Duat*, while the texts inscribed on the North Wall equipped Amenirdis for her ascension to the sky. This paper relates the content of Amenirdis's selections from the Pyramid Texts to their physical placement along the walls of her funerary chapel to demonstrate that the particular arrangement of the texts was intended to guide Amenirdis out of her funerary chapel and to lead her toward the north sky.

1. Layout and Orientation of the Texts

Amenirdis, the first Nubian woman to become a God's Wife of Amun, erected her funerary chapel in the vicinity of the mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (fig. 1).² Her chapel, which lies

¹ G. Daressy, "Inscriptions de la chapelle d'Amenirtis à Médi-net-Habou," *RT* 23 (1901), 4–18. References to her selections from the Pyramid Texts may be found in T. G. Allen, *Occurrences of Pyramid Texts with Cross Indexes of These and Other Egyptian Mortuary Texts*. SAOC 27 (Chicago, 1950), 12–13 and passim; M. Patané, *Les Variantes des Textes des Pyramides à la Basse Époque* (Genève, 1992), iii and passim. For Sethe's use of Amenirdis's version of the Pyramid Texts to reconstruct the Old Kingdom versions published in his *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrücken und Photographien des Berliner Museums: Neu herausgegeben und erläutert*. I–II (Leipzig, 1908–10), see M. Ayad "Closing the Circle: On Deconstructing a Reconstructed Text: The Case of the Pyramid Texts," in: *Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists. Cairo, 28 March–3 April 2000. Abstracts of Papers* (Cairo, 2000), 24.

² PM II, 476–78; G. Daressy, *Notice explicative des ruines de Médi-net Habou* (Cairo, 1897), 29–42. An architectural survey of the chapel can be found in U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu V: Post-Ramessid Remains* (Chicago, 1954), 17–30.

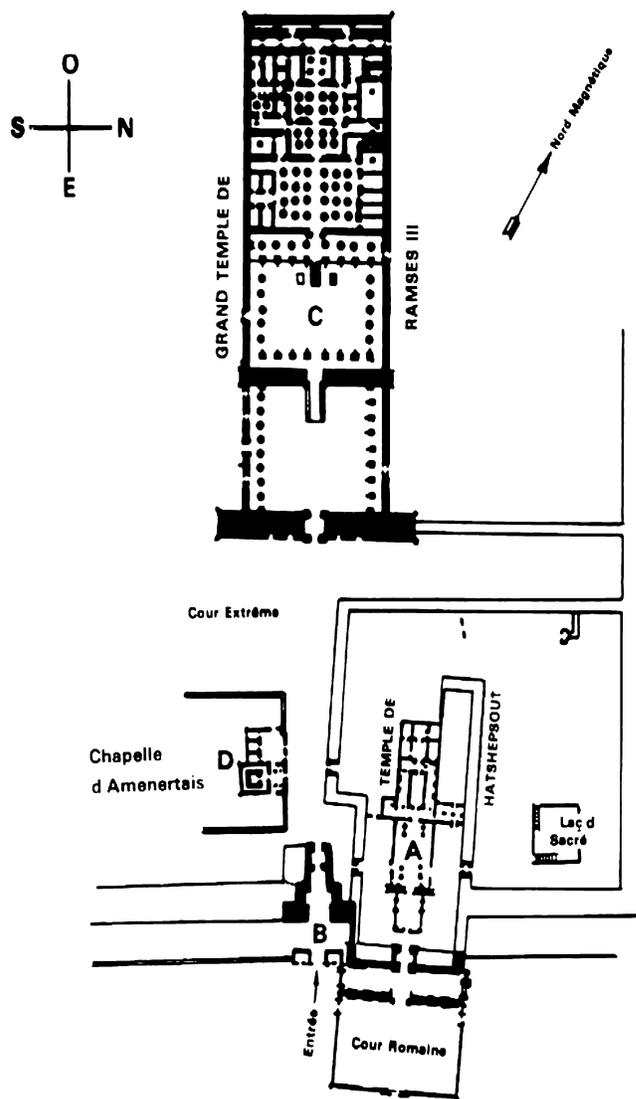


Fig. 1. Plan of Medinet Habu.

should start reading at the side facing the glyphs. Typically, Egyptian writing flows from right to left.⁴ In this respect, the texts inscribed on the East Wall as well as those found on the eastern half of the North Wall adhere to regular Egyptian practice. However, for a number of different reasons, including confrontation, symmetry and concordance, monumental inscriptions may flow from left to

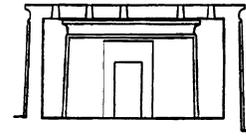


Fig. 2. Cross-section through the chapel showing corridor surrounding the cella (after Hölscher, *Excavations V*, pl. 2).

to the southeast of the main temple, consists of two tent shrines, set one inside the other. Because each of the two buildings is independently roofed, a corridor is formed between the two structures (fig. 2). Selections from the Pyramid Texts occupy the lower register of three walls of this corridor (i.e., the internal walls of the outer structure): the East, West, and North Walls³ (fig. 3). Two solar hymns, which will be dealt with separately, occupy the South Wall.

On two walls, the orientation of the glyphs is uniform throughout: right to left on the East Wall, and left to right on the West Wall. Along the North wall, the hieroglyphs are oriented both toward the right and the left. To the east of the doorway, the hieroglyphic signs face right (east), while to its west the signs are oriented toward the left (west) (see table 1 and fig. 3).

As a rule, unless texts are inscribed in retrograde, the orientation of the hieroglyphic signs points to the direction of reading Egyptian texts. Thus, since none of the Pyramid Texts found in the funerary chapel of Amenirdis is inscribed in retrograde, one

³ The upper registers of these walls contain selections from the Opening of the Mouth Ceremony and have been dealt with in a separate article: M. Ayad, "The Selection and Layout of the Opening of the Mouth Scenes in the Chapel of Amenirdis I at Medinet Habu," *JARCE* 41 (2004), 113–34.

⁴ This assumption is based on the fact that both the hieratic and demotic scripts run from right to left (script is oriented from right to left when scribes write with a pen on papyrus).

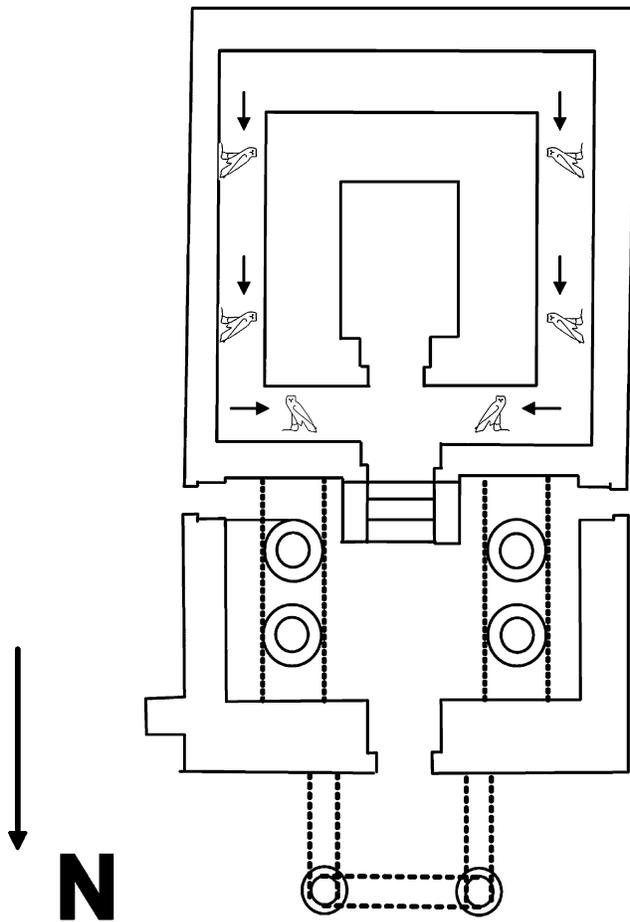


Fig. 3. Layout of Amenirdis's selections from the Pyramid Texts, Orientation of texts (𐀀) and their direction of reading (←).

orientation leads to a reading that starts at the eastern end of the wall and proceeding towards the door, where the texts stop. Similarly, on the northwestern (Nw) section of the North Wall, the western orientation causes us to read the texts starting from the western end of this wall, and also proceeding toward the doorway. The different orientation of the signs on the two sections of the North Wall thus also serves the purpose of directing the reader to the doorway (see fig. 3).

Based solely on the orientation and layout of the texts, it seems that the Pyramid Texts inscribed on the lower registers of the corridor's various walls must all be read from the innermost parts of the

right.⁵ James P. Allen suggested that a fourth reason may stem from the Egyptians' desire to ensure that texts on the walls of a tomb or tomb-chapel are read from the innermost parts outward. Allen also noted that it was exactly such a preference that governed the layout of the texts inscribed in the pyramid of Unis, where the outward reading of the texts superseded the more conventional right to left orientation of the glyphs.⁶ In the funerary chapel of Amenirdis I, the texts inscribed on the West Wall as well as those inscribed on the western part of the North Wall run from left to right (see fig. 3). While the chapel of Amenirdis I differs structurally and architecturally from the pyramid of Unis, Allen's observations equally apply to the layout of the texts of Amenirdis. The specific orientation of the hieroglyphic signs in the chapel of the Amenirdis likewise served to lead her (the deceased) outward.⁷

On both the East and West Walls, the southern orientation of the hieroglyphic signs leads to an out-bound reading of the texts that starts at the southern end of each of the two walls. In each case, the southern end is also the innermost part of each of the two walls. On either side of the doorway to the chapel, the texts are oriented toward the nearest corner. Thus, on the northeastern (Ne) portion of the North Wall, the eastern

⁵ H. G. Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs* (New York, 1977), 9–16.

⁶ J. P. Allen, "Reading a Pyramid," in C. Berger, G. Clerc and N. Grimal, eds., *Hommages à Jean Leclant. BdE 106/1* (Cairo, 1993), 23–24.

⁷ In this context, it is appropriate to note that, exceptionally, hardly any scribal errors occur in the texts of Amenirdis. Copyists' errors abound in Egyptian funerary literature. See, for example, J. P. Allen's remarks on coffin B16C, where the texts were miscopied from a retrograde original in: "The Funerary Texts of King Wahkare Akhtoy on a Middle Kingdom Coffin," in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes. SAOC 39* (Chicago, 1976), 4.

Table 1. Orientation of the Hieroglyphic Signs and Direction of Reading

Wall	Orientation of Signs	Direction of Reading
E	South	Right to left
W	South	Left to right
Ne	East	Right to left
Nw	West	Left to right

walls, outward. New columns numbers were assigned to the texts of Amenirdis to reflect the layout of her texts. The new numbers are preceded by an upper case letter indicating the cardinal orientation of the wall on which they are inscribed. Thus, (N) indicates the North Wall, (W) indicates the West Wall, and (E) indicates the East Wall. When a wall is divided into two sections, such is the case for the North Wall, a lower case letter indicates more specifically, the side of the wall on which the texts are inscribed.

Thus (Ne) stands for the northeastern section of the North Wall, while (Nw) indicates the northwestern section of the North Wall.

2. Content

2.1. The East Wall

At the southern end of the East Wall, the texts commence with a representation of Amenirdis standing before an offering table. An offering list is inscribed just above the table (coll. A 35–44).⁸ Immediately following this vignette is Shepenwepet’s dedicatory inscription (coll. A 45–49), in which she declares that she has erected this “monument for eternity” for her mother Amenirdis. It is only in her capacity as Horus, the living son, that Shepenwepet is able to dedicate and consecrate this monument for her deceased adoptive mother. “See . . . this monument which (I) erected for you, so that your heart may be appeased (with it) as the heart of Osiris was appeased because of what his son Horus . . . made for him . . .” (col. A 45–46). In this passage, Amenirdis I is clearly identified with Osiris, and Shepenwepet assumes the role of Horus, who is responsible for providing for the funerary cult of his deceased father. Such role-playing is a recurrent theme throughout the texts of this chapel. The only exception is found at the end of spell PT 468, which is found further along the East Wall, where a line identifying the officiant as Horus or Thoth: *jnk hrw/dhwtj* “I am Horus/Thoth” (Pyr. 905a) is omitted from the version inscribed for Amenirdis. Instead, Amenirdis’s texts proceed directly to a standard offering formula: “an offering that the king gives is given to you . . .” (col. E 33).

Two “resurrection” spells: PT 468 and PT 412 occupy the remainder of the East Wall (coll. E 1–35).⁹ PT 468, which occupies coll. E 1–35, is comprised “a series of short spells.”¹⁰ The scribes of Amenirdis I skip the first two paragraphs of PT 468 altogether, in which the deceased is addressed:

If the Great one spends the day with his *ka*-spirit, . . . then this king NN will spend the day with his *ka*-spirit. If this Great one awakes, then this king NN will awaken¹¹

⁸ Column numbers starting with “A” follow Daressy’s numbering system. See Daressy, “Amenirtis,” 4–10.

⁹ Much use was made of T. G. Allen’s *Occurrences* in identifying the texts of Amenirdis. References to Pyramid Texts are to the spell (PT) and line (Pyr.) numbers of K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*.

¹⁰ R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford, 1969), 157 (henceforth referred to as Faulkner, *Pyr.*). Subsequent references to spell titles also follow Faulkner’s proposed titles.

¹¹ Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 157.

Nor do they associate her with Geb “prince of gods,” Osiris who is “at the head of the powers,” or with Horus “lord of the patricians and the gods” as the deceased king is at the beginning of this spell. It is only when the deceased is described as “mysterious” as Anubis, and is called upon to receive his “jackal-face,” that the scribes of Amenirdis pick up the text of this spell (cf. coll. E 1–2 and Pyr. 896 a–b).

This omission suggests that older religious beliefs were transformed as they were adapted during the Nubian period. Davis pointed out that the assumption of divinity was not merely a prerequisite to the deceased’s ascension to the sky, and thereby attaining an afterlife, but by taking on “various attributes of the gods,” the deceased also proved his (in this case: her) “ability to change shape.”¹²

The same spell (PT 468) continues with an exhortation for the king to become an *Akh*-spirit. Indeed, the deceased is transformed as the head of the *Akh*-spirits. The deceased is magically revived by means of the Eye of Horus, the White Crown, which is identified with the serpent-goddess of Nekheh, and finally by the Red Crown. It is only through the magical power of this “many-natured” Red Crown that the king is able to set his *ba*-power “at the head of the Two Enneads.”

h3 hmt-ntr dw3t-ntr s3t-nsu nb t3wj [k3st3] m3c hrw
drt-ntr jmn-jr-dj-s m3c-hrw
htm tn m jrt hrw d3rt wr(t) b3w 33t jnw
nd.sn tn mj nd.s hrw.s
dj.s b3w.t hmt-ntr dw3t-ntr hnwt t3wj [jmn-jr-dj-s] m3c hrw
hnwt psdt m wtt jm(t) h3t.t
ts tn hmt-ntr dw3t-ntr s3t-nsu [k3st3] m3c hrw
drt-ntr jmn-jr-dj-s m3c hrw
[s3]m.sn tn hr mwt.t nwt ndr(t) 3.t

Ho God’s Wife, Divine Adoratrice, king’s daughter of the Lord of the Two Lands [Kashta], justified,
 God’s Hand, Amenirdis, justified!

Provide yourself with the Eye of Horus, the Red Crown, rich in *ba*-power and many-natured,
 that they may protect you, just as it protects her Horus;
 that it may set your *ba*-power, O God’s Wife, Divine Adoratrice, Mistress of the Two Lands,
 [Amenirdis], justified,

at the head of the Ennead, as the serpent-goddess¹³ who is at your brow.

Raise yourself, O God’s Wife, Divine Adoratrice, King’s daughter of the Lord of the Two Lands
 [Kashta], justified, God’s Hand Amenirdis, justified¹⁴

that they [may gui]de you to your mother Nut, who grasps your arm.¹⁵

(E 18–24 = Pyr. 901a–902d)

The role of Nut in aiding the deceased/king to ascend to the sky has been examined at length by Davis. Nut assumed a number of roles in the “ascension myth.” She is featured as a prominent helper to the deceased/king in the ascension process, as she grasps his hand and grants him “life and dominion”

¹² W. M. Davis, “The Ascension-myth in the Pyramid Texts,” *JNES* 36 (1977), 168.

¹³ For *wtt* as the “snake-goddess,” see R. Van der Molen, *A Hieroglyphic Dictionary of Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Boston-Leiden, 2000), 104.

¹⁴ *wts tn*: I am reading this phrase as an imperative followed by the dependent pronoun. For the inflection of *wts* in the imperative, see J. P. Allen, *The Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts* (Malibu, CA, 1984), 33.

¹⁵ *ndr.t*. Taking this phrase as it occurs in the chapel of Amenirdis poses problems. In the Old Kingdom version of this line (Pyr. 902d) a conjugated verb form appears here *ndr.s*. Taking *ndr* as a participle, the text would require emendation, as the feminine participle requires the addition of the feminine ending “t.”

(Pyr. 1036). Nut also prepares the deceased for his journey by “assembling his body.”¹⁶ She guides the deceased to the afterlife and gives him “a road to the horizon, ‘to the place where Re is’ (Pyr. 756). Nut will not allow him to fall or slip on his journey (Pyr. 1021).”¹⁷

At the same time, Nut also symbolized the sky. As such, the king’s desire was to reach her body and, more specifically, “that island of land . . . which is between Nut’s thighs (Pyr. 1188d–f).”¹⁸ Indeed, it is “through the application of *the maternal power of Nut*, [that] the body was made whole and was given direction in the Hereafter.”¹⁹ As a mother figure, it is Nut who is responsible for the deceased’s rebirth.

In the Pyramid Texts, most instances in which the sky is personified as a living being involved the goddess Nut. Nut appears throughout these texts in the role of a mother who gives birth to the king, sun, stars, and other celestial beings.²⁰

The text of Amenirdis continues with an exhortation “may you not suffer, may you not languish, may you not groan” (E 25 = Pyr. 903a). Indeed, preserving the body was essential to attaining an afterlife. Amenirdis shall not suffer because “Horus has caused you to become an *Akh*-spirit at the head of the *Akh*-spirits and to have power at the head of the living” (E 25–26 = Pyr. 903b).

The texts of Amenirdis are completely adapted to suit her feminine gender. For example, Pyr. 903c, “How good it is what Horus has done for this king . . . etc.,” is adapted to “How good it is what Horus, the protector of his father, has done. How good it is what Horus has done for you, *his mother*, Amenirdis” (E 26–28).

Spell PT 412 (E 35–39) is also “a resurrection text.” And just as the first part of spell 468 was omitted from Amenirdis’s version, so was the first part of this spell. The omitted sections (Pyr. 721a–722d) read:²¹

j.ḥr wr ḥr gs.f
nmnm jmj ndjt
ts tp.f jn rꜥ
bwt.f ḥdd msd.f bꜣgj
jf n NN pn m ḥwꜣ
m jmk.(k) m dw st.k
nj swꜣꜣ rd.k nj šꜣss nmt.k
nj ḥnd.k ḥr ḥwꜣt wsjr

When the Great One fell on his side
 and he who is in Nedit quivered,
 his head was lifted by Re
 for his abomination is sleeping and he hates to be weary.

Flesh of this NN, do not decay,
 Do not rot, do not let your smell become bad!
 Your foot will not be overpassed,

¹⁶ Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 164

¹⁷ Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 171.

¹⁸ J. P. Allen, “The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” in W. K. Simpson, ed., *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*. Yale Egyptological Studies 3 (New Haven, 1989), 15.

¹⁹ Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 165; emphasis mine.

²⁰ J. P. Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 15.

²¹ For those utterances or parts of utterances that do *not* occur in the chapel of Amenirdis, I have relied on Faulkner’s *Pyr.*

and your stride will not be overstridden;
you will not tread upon the decay of Osiris.

Since the exhortation of the deceased not to sleep, and not to let his body decay, was already included in the texts of Amenirdis as part of spell PT 468 (cf. E 25 cited above), her scribes probably did not see the need to repeat it.

Indeed, only three sections of PT 412 are inscribed in the chapel of Amenirdis, and these are somewhat abbreviated. The text of Amenirdis adheres to the Old Kingdom version, which exhorts the king not to lose strength, but to be strong.

But for the longer

mj nt tpt bjt mj mjzwt tpt nswt
mj hnzkt tpt mntw

like the *Net*-crown which is on the King of Lower Egypt,
like the *Mizut*-crown which is on the King of Upper Egypt
like the tress which is on the vortex of the *Mentju*-tribesmen

(Pyr. 724b-c)

Amenirdis has only

mj mwt tp rst

like Mut of (the tip of) the South (E 38).

It similarly abbreviates her identification with Orion and Sothis. For the longer invitation to “reach the sky as Orion, your *ba*-power shall be as effective as Sothis,” Amenirdis only has “. . . like Orion and Sothis” (E 35–36).

The relationship of Orion and Sothis to the deceased is fluid.²² Both often appear as helpers in the ascension process. Faulkner cites a passage found in the pyramid of Queen Neit (Nt 827, 829), which identifies both Orion and Sothis as the siblings of Re and the king: “His brother is Orion, his sister is Sothis.”²³ Sometimes the deceased was identified with Orion: “Behold, he has come as Orion” (PT 442, Pyr. 819).²⁴ “Reaching the sky as Orion” takes place at the *eastern* region of the sky.²⁵ It thus seems fitting to find a reference to Orion on the *eastern wall* of the corridor surrounding the *cella* of Amenirdis.

The texts of the East Wall end with:

ndr ʿ.t jn jhmw-sk
n sk.t n htm.t dt

Your limb has been grasped by the imperishable stars
You will not perish, you will not be destroyed ever! (E 39).

²² See R. Krauss, *Astronomische Konzepte und Jenseitsvorstellungen in den Pyramidentexten*. ÄA 59 (Wiesbaden, 1997), 146–73.

²³ R. O. Faulkner, “The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts,” *JNES* 25 (1966), 156.

²⁴ For the full text of the spell, see Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 147–48, who gave it the title: “the dead king becomes a star.” For more on the relationship between Orion and Sothis and the deceased, see Faulkner, “King and Star-Religion,” 156–57.

²⁵ Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 23.

Numerous passages from the Pyramid Texts indicate that the Imperishable Stars are located in the region of the Field of Offerings.²⁶ It is for their unchanging nature that the deceased aims to join them.²⁷ Because of their seemingly unchanging nature, the Imperishable Stars have been traditionally identified with the circumpolar stars. But Krauss has recently demonstrated that the Imperishable Stars are actually *all* the stars north of the ecliptic, with which he identifies the *h3*-canal.²⁸ More specifically, they are found to the northeast of the sky.²⁹ Finding references to the Imperishable Stars in the last/northernmost column of Amenirdis's East Wall (E 39) can thus hardly be coincidental.

While Amenirdis I is not identified here with the Imperishable Stars, nor is she asked explicitly to join them, they still feature prominently as her helpers. Indeed, it is more common in the Pyramid Texts to find allusions to the role of the Imperishable Stars in aiding the deceased's ascension than it is to find direct references to the deceased becoming one of them. In this respect, the texts of Amenirdis follow older religious tradition.³⁰

The text of Amenirdis thus seems to present us with an *abridged* version of spell PT 412. Nevertheless, none of the essential elements of PT 412 is missing. The placement of this particular spell with its references to Orion, Sothis, and the Imperishable Stars, at the north end of the East Wall, is hardly coincidental. It suggests that the texts of Amenirdis were deliberately placed in such a way that their content would be complemented by their physical placement on the walls of her chapel. Since the intent was to guide her to the north sky, it is only appropriate to find references to all points north at the northern end of her East Wall.

2.2 The West Wall

The Pyramid Texts inscribed on the West Wall are utterances PT 670, PT 33 (= PT 423) and part of PT 454. These spells occupy columns W 1–25, W 27–34, and W 35–37 respectively. Columns W 37–45 merit some attention, as they seem to be without easily identifiable parallels.³¹ For this section, I have been able to locate some (remote) parallels in spells PT 365 and PT 470, which contain references to the themes of milk, suckling/nursing, and life.

Spell PT 670, a (later) variant of spell PT 482,³² is most similar to coll. W 1–25, although the text of Amenirdis exhibits some variations from the Old Kingdom version. Spell PT 670 (W 1) starts with:

*wn 3wy pt sn 3wy pd[wt]*³³

The doors of the sky have been opened. The doors of the celestial expanses have been thrown open . . .”

It goes on to include the famous line (W 6):

*šm.t jw[t.t] sdr.t rs.t mny.t ʿnh.t*³⁴

If you go away, you will return, if you go to sleep, you will wake up, if you die, you will live.

²⁶ J. P. Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 6; Krauss, *Astronomische Konzepte*, 29 and 48.

²⁷ Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 10.

²⁸ Krauss, *Astronomische Konzepte*, 48–49, and 86–130, especially 103. See also 86–89, for a convenient summary of earlier scholarship on the subject.

²⁹ Krauss, *Astronomische Konzepte*, 36. In this respect, Allen's remarks regarding the location of the Field of Offerings at the northeast of the sky remain valid (cf. J. P. Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 6). At least part of the Field of Offerings was located there.

³⁰ Faulkner, “King and Star-Religion,” 155.

³¹ Daressy, “Amenirtis,” 9.

³² So Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 285; and Sethe, *PT II*, 475.

³³ For a discussion of *pdwt* or ‘celestial expanses,’ see J. P. Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 5–6 and 9.

³⁴ The tall *s* after *mny* is probably an error for the mooring-post determinative of *mjnj*.

As well as (W 7):

ḥ m3.t jr<t.n> n.t s3.t ḥr
rs sdm.t jr<t.n> n.t s3.t ḥr

Stand up, that you may see what your son Horus has done for you.

Awake, that you may hear what your son Horus has done.

And (W 16–18):

st st.<t> jn <3st> w6b tn jn nbthwt
sntj.t wrtj 3tj s3k.s mnjw.t.t ts.sn 6wt.t

<Your> libation has been libated by <Isis>, Nephthys has purified you,
 your two very great sisters pulling together your thighs and rejoining your limbs.

And (W 22–23):

shn.t swt ntr 3
dj n.t pt
rdj n.t sxt j3rw jn ntrwy 3wy

May you traverse the places of the great god.

The sky has been given to you,

the Field of Reeds has been given to you by the two great gods.³⁵

The Field of Reeds is located in the eastern part of the sky, or to the east of the sky proper.³⁶ More recently Krauss was able to show that comprising the home of the “Unwearying Stars,” the Field of Reeds comprises the sky *south* of the ecliptic.³⁷ By “traversing the places of the great god,” the deceased was identified with Re.³⁸ PT 670 is thus clearly a “resurrection text.”

It should be noted, however, that its variant PT 482 contains, in addition to the “resurrection texts” cited above, an introductory part, in which “the king is summoned to take food.”³⁹ This introductory part is not present in the text of Amenirdis. Whether this omission was intentional (either for lack of space, or because Amenirdis’s scribe(s) decided to emphasize the resurrection aspect of the spell and forgo the offering section) or a scribal error is impossible to tell. Most likely, however, in light of the texts found on the East wall discussed above, this was an intentional omission. It is probable that the selector(s) of the texts of the chapel of Amenirdis considered it sufficient to include the offering table and offering list inscribed at the southern end of the East Wall.

The next few columns on the West Wall (W 27–34) contain spell PT 33 (= PT 423), a later variant of spell PT 32, in which the deceased is presented with cool water and natron.⁴⁰ Libations were essential for reviving the deceased. Ritual pouring of “cool water” served to restore the bodily fluids to the “dry and shriveled” corpse.⁴¹ The text of the spell is accompanied by a representation of a *hry-ḥb*

³⁵ The “two great gods” are probably Geb and Nut. For a more detailed discussion of their role in this process, see Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 170–71.

³⁶ See, for example, L. H. Lesko in “The Field of Hetep in Egyptian Coffin Texts,” *JARCE* 9 (1971–72), 89–101; J. Lelant, “Earu-Gefilde,” *LÄ* I, 1156; J. P. Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 6.

³⁷ Krauss, *Astronomische Konzepte*, 60 and passim. See also fig. 5c on p. 59. His arguments are conveniently summarized in a review by J. P. Allen in *JNES* 61 (2001), 63.

³⁸ An interesting analysis of this identification process can be found in Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 166–68.

³⁹ Cf. Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 169.

⁴⁰ The Amenirdis version is most similar to PT 33. Cf. Sethe, *PT* I, 14 (for PT 32); 16 (for PT 33); 419 (PT 423). Cf. pls. 37–38.

⁴¹ A. M. Blackman, “The Significance of Incense and Libations in Funerary and Temple Ritual,” *ZÄS* 50 (1912), 71.

priest pouring libations for Amenirdis. It is worth noting that the version inscribed in the chapel of Amenirdis I drops the natron from the formula. The omission of natron is intriguing considering its importance not only for ritual purity, but also for the deceased's resurrection and his subsequent ascension to the sky.⁴²

The next few columns (W 35–37) are harder to identify. Here, the deceased is called upon to “surround all the gods.”⁴³ The deceased is further asked to seize their provisions, and all their possessions. It is thus an assertion of the king's authority, and resonates with themes found in PT 454. The text of Amenirdis reads:

m rn.t m mw rnp
ḥpr.sn mm Wsjr
ʕ.f wrš.f wsr.f
šḥm.f m mw šnw.f r nṯrw nbw
ʕnh.sn jsḥt.sn nb js šn.n.f n.f
dj.n.f n.f phr n ḥʕw-nbw

in your identity of fresh waters that
 come into being around Osiris
 that he may become great, may be awake, may dominate,
 and be strong in the water of his circuit more than all gods,
 their lives, or all their things, having enfolded to himself,⁴⁴
 and given to himself the circuit of the *Hau-nebut*.

(W 34–37)

In PT 454, the king's power embraces the sky and earth

wsjr NN šn.n.k nṯr nb m ḥnw ʕwj.k
tʕw.sn jsṯ jšwt.sn nb jsṯ
wsjr NN wr.tj dbn.tj m dbn phr ḥʕw-nbw

O Osiris NN, you have enfolded every god in your arms,
 their lands and all their possessions.
 O Osiris NN, you are great and round like the ring that circles the *Hau-nebut*-islands

(Pyr. 847 a–c).

In PT 366 we find

mk wr.t šn.t m šn-wr
mk dbn.tj šn.t m dbn pšr ḥʕw-nbw
mk šn.tj ʕ.tj m šn ʕ sk

Behold, you are great and round as the “Great-Encircler”
 Behold, you are circular and round as the circle which surrounds the *Hau-nebut*
 Behold, you are round and great as the *Shen-aa-sek*⁴⁵

⁴² Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 163–64; J. A. “Wilson Funeral Services of the Egyptian Old Kingdom,” *JNES* 3 (1944), 216. On the importance of incense for achieving “communion” with the gods, and unity with the deceased's *ka* (the latter constituted the Egyptian conception of “resurrection,” see Blackman, “Significance of Incense and Libations,” 74–75.

⁴³ The text of Amenirdis I is similar to PT 454, yet shows considerable variation from the Old Kingdom version of this spell.

⁴⁴ Or “which he enclosed for him.”

⁴⁵ Translation adapted from Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 120.

with its variant spell 593

šn.(k) n.k ḥt nb m ḥnw ʿwj.k
m rn.k n dbn pšr ḥš-nbw
ʿ.t m rn.k n ʿ-sk

May you enclose everything in your embrace
 in your name of “Surrounder of the Islanders”
 you being great in your name of *Aa-sek*.⁴⁶

None of the examples cited above completely parallels the text of Amenirdis. At best, her text bears allusions to some of the themes found in all three utterances.

The reference to the *Hau-nebut* is intriguing. On the one hand, it can be taken to refer to the Aegean Islands or Islanders; but as Vercoutter has shown, it is only in the Late Period that the term came to acquire this specific meaning.⁴⁷ More recently, Bontty has convincingly argued that the term should rather be taken as a reference to “everything beyond.”⁴⁸ As such, it would be aptly employed here to underscore the king’s authority. Nonetheless, one must keep in mind that the chapel of Amenirdis does indeed date to the Third Intermediate Period, and as such the selector(s) of these texts must have been aware of the “northern” implication of the term *Hau-Nebut*. Once again, the northern reference found in this spell coincides with its location at the northern end of the West Wall.

Just as the East Wall began with an offering scene and text, the West Wall ends with a purification text, in which Amenirdis is censured and offered cool water (coll. W 37–45).⁴⁹ Amenirdis is asked to “take the Eye of Horus which is in the waters”⁵⁰ (W 40). She is also asked to take “this cool water which is in the breasts of your mother Nut⁵¹ that you may live therewith” (W 40–41). Although I have been able to locate only remote parallels to this section of the texts, the allusion to the enlivening power of the water (i.e., milk) that is in the breasts of a mother goddess is a recurrent theme in the Pyramid Texts. In spells PT 365 and PT 470, the king is suckled by Selket and the Red Crown, respectively.⁵²

The role of milk and suckling has been examined extensively by Leclant.⁵³ He contended that both served to assert the king’s dominion and sovereignty over all people and all gods. In this respect, we find that the same theme is expressed with the notion of encircling “everything beyond.” The assertion of the deceased’s/king’s divinity in the Pyramid Texts was a prerequisite to his ascension.⁵⁴ Divinity was another claim to dominion.

⁴⁶ Translation follows Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 244.

⁴⁷ Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (London and Oxford, 1968), 206–8 and J. Vercoutter, “Les Haou-Nebout (suite),” *BIFAO* 48 (1948), 195–96.

⁴⁸ M. Bontty, “The Haunebu,” *GM* 145 (1995), 45–58.

⁴⁹ Cf. pls. 5 and 6. Daressy thought that this passage comprised a new text; see “Amenirtis,” 9.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ḥbbt* in: Van der Molen, *Hieroglyphic Dictionary of the Coffin Texts*, 326; P. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon: A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu* (Leuven, 1997), 636, where *ḥbbt* is given as a name for the primeval waters.

⁵¹ It is worth noting that in the text of Amenirdis, the name of Nut does not appear with any determinatives, either divine or human. In that respect, the text of Amenirdis does not differ much from Old Kingdom practice where, “[a]lthough her name does not occur with divine determinative, she is frequently addressed and can be envisioned as a living being, either human or cow” (Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 15).

⁵² “For you are an *akh*-spirit whom Nut bore and Nephthys suckled, and they put you together. Arise in your strength and do what formerly you used to do, what you were doing before, for you are more *akh*-spirit-like than all the *akh*-spirits” (Pyr. 623 a–c). And “O my mother, says this King NN, give me your breast that I may suck from it, says King NN. O my son, says she, take my breast and suck it, says she, this King NN that you may live, says she, and be little (again), says she” (Pyr. 911b–912d).

⁵³ See J. Leclant, “Le rôle du lait et de l’allaitement d’après les textes des pyramides,” *JNES* 10 (1951), 123–27, and idem, “The Suckling of the pharaoh as a part of the coronation rites in Ancient Egypt. Le rôle du l’allaitement dans le cérémonial pharaonique du couronnement,” *Proceedings of the IXth International Congress for the History of Religions. Tokyo and Kyoto 1958 August 27th–September 9th* (Tokyo, 1960), 133–45.

⁵⁴ Davis, “The Ascension-myth,” 166.

2.3. The North Wall

Offering spells continue on the western half of the North Wall (Nw 1–12). Spell PT 81 (Nw 1–12) comes first and is followed by the first four lines of spell PT 414 (Pyr. 737 a–d = Nw 10–12). PT 81 is a “hymn for awakening the king adapted for the presentation of napkins,”⁵⁵ while in PT 414 the deceased is “summoned to clothe himself.”⁵⁶ PT 81 starts with a resurrection theme:

rs.t m htp rs t3jt m htp

May you awake in peace as Tait awakes in peace.

and ends with the presentation of napkins (*wnhw* 2). Although this explicit ending is missing from the text of Amenirdis, the accompanying representation clearly shows a *hry-hb* priest presenting cloths (napkins?) to Amenirdis. Spell PT 81 is thus still meant for the presentation of clothing and crowns in the chapel of Amenirdis. The presentation of such insignia was necessary for the establishment of the deceased’s authority. In the chapel of Amenirdis, the text of this spell ends with the “Words to be recited 4 times in front, and 4 times to the back,” clearly indicating the ritualistic nature of the text.⁵⁷

Spell PT 414 comes next and also deals with the theme of clothing. It is devoted solely to the offering of clothing to the deceased/Amenirdis. It starts with:

šsp n.t ššp pn

šsp n.t hdt.t hr.<t>

wnh.t m jrt hr <jmt> t3jt

Take for yourself this bright tunic.

Take your cloak upon <you>.

May you be clothed with the Eye of Horus <which is in> Tait.

It is here that the numbering system used by Daressy proves most confusing. Spell PT 414 starts on the *western* side of the North Wall with Nw 10–12, which contain the first half of the spell: Pyr. 737 a–d. The same lines are then partially repeated on the *eastern* side of the North Wall (Pyr. 737 b–d can be found in Ne 1–2 = <A 97–98>). The text of the end of the spell (Pyr. 737 e–f) is completed in coll. Ne 2–3.

The rest of the eastern half of the North Wall, coll. Ne 4–12, continues with the theme of clothing. PT 634E occupies coll. Ne 4–6, PT 635 coll. Ne 6–10, and PT 634C coll. Ne 10–12.⁵⁸ PT 634E starts with a presentation of the Eye of Horus to Amenirdis (col. Ne 5). Its mid-section is rather corrupt. It ends with:

hmt-ntr dw3t-ntr jmn-jr-dj-s m3t hrw

jn.n.<j> n.t <s(y)> m kd.s nbw

3h.t jm.s 3nh.t jm.s

O God’s Wife, Divine Adoratrice, Amenirdis, justified,

I bring <it> to you in all its forms

that you may become an *Akh*-spirit with it, that you may live through it

(Ne 6)

⁵⁵ Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 19.

⁵⁶ Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 136.

⁵⁷ For the use of the Pyramid Texts in the funeral ritual, see Wilson, “Funeral Services,” 217. J. P. Allen, Reading a Pyramid,” 12, asserts that “the term ‘ritual’ is appropriate for these texts, because they are clearly meant to accompany the presentation of offerings, and to be uttered by an officiant to the dead king.”

⁵⁸ See J. P. Allen, *Inflection of the Verb*, 682–83, for the identification of columns Ne 4–6 <A 100–102> and Ne 10–12 <A 106–8> as variants of spell PT 634.

Spell PT 635, in which “the king is robed,”⁵⁹ is quite similar to spell PT 414. It starts out with the same invocation of the “Eye of Horus, which is the Weaving Town” but continues with more details concerning clothing the deceased king/Amenirdis. Clothing is important because it equips the deceased with power, “so that the gods may fear [the deceased] just as they fear Horus.” It is *only* in his capacity as the king of Upper and Lower Egypt that the deceased is able to strike terror in the hearts of the gods. By adopting the whole spell, including the part about becoming king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Amenirdis ensures that she will have an afterlife. The text of this spell is completely modified to suit Amenirdis’s feminine gender.

PT 634C is less obscure than PT 634E. In fact, it is quite similar to both spells PT 635 and PT 414 in that it, too, implores the Eye of Horus “which is in Tait” to join and therefore perhaps protect the God’s Wife Amenirdis I. In fact, PT 634C = 414 mid [Pyr. 1792 mid = Pyr. 737].⁶⁰ But PT 634C goes further, saying:

ndr.t r tp.s
jj.t jf.s
dmd.t n.s ʿt.s
d[r].t rdw
hw.t s<y> m ʿ[ʒg]b⁶¹ n ʿstš

May you grasp her head.
 May you take possession of her
 May you reassemble her every limb.
 May you expel the efflux
 May you protect her from the flood of Seth.

Depending on the determinative, *Tait* can refer either to the “Weaving City/Town” or to the minor goddess of weaving.⁶² According to Davis, as the goddess of weaving, *Tait* is “the heavenly personification of the earthly relations of the deceased.”⁶³ She played an important role in aiding the deceased during ascension. More specifically, she was responsible for clothing the deceased/king and lifting him up to heaven (Pyr. 741). Moreover, Tait’s involvement in “presenting, making and clothing the deceased king” emphasizes her connection “with the cloth used in the wrapping of Osiris.”⁶⁴ Cruz-Urbe has argued for identification of Tait with Isis, especially when she is called a *Djerty*. Thus, evoking Tait not only served to assert the deceased’s authority through acquiring appropriate clothing, but having the wrappings of Osiris was also necessary for achieving a resurrection.

The division of utterance PT 414 between the eastern and western sides of the North Wall *and* its continuation across the two sides implies a certain unity that exists among the texts of the North Wall. Indeed, the content of the utterances inscribed on either side of the doorway confirms that the texts of the North Wall functioned as a single unit. Together, they equipped Amenirdis with the proper insignia (clothing and crowns) needed for the afterlife.

⁵⁹ Faulkner, *Pyr.*, 263.

⁶⁰ T. G. Allen, *Occurrences*, 82 and 96.

⁶¹ J. P. Allen, *Inflection of the Verb*, 682.

⁶² M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, *LÄ VI*, 185–86; B. S. Lesko, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt* (Norman, 1999), 275.

⁶³ Davis, “The Ascension Myth,” 177.

⁶⁴ E. Cruz-Urbe, “Comments on the Goddess Tayt,” *Varia Aegyptiaca* 11/1 (1996), 17–55, at 22.

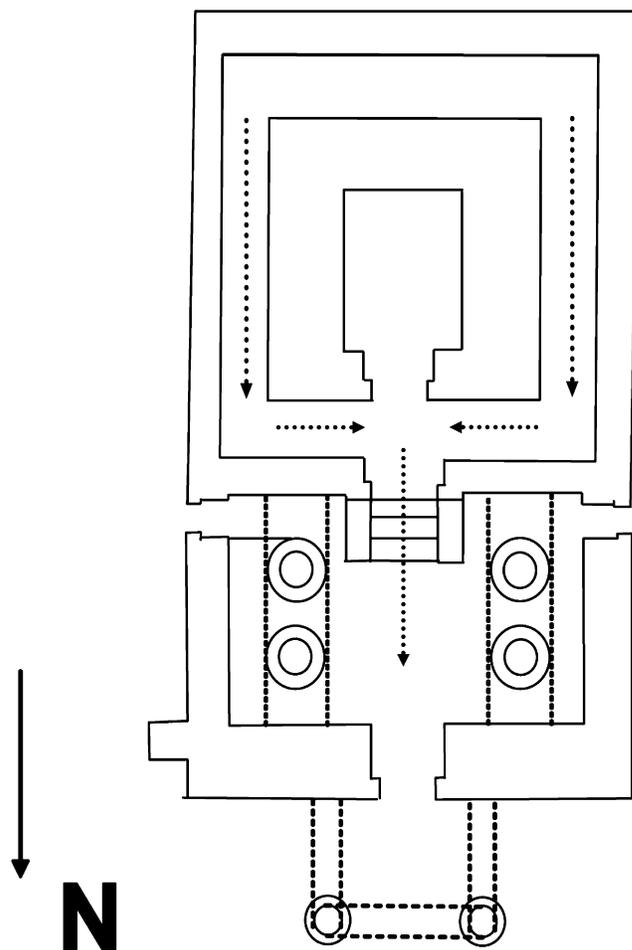


Fig. 4. Amenirdis's progression out of her Funerary Chapel.

3. The Interconnectedness of Layout and Content

As demonstrated above, the particular selection of Pyramid Text utterances inscribed on the walls of the corridor surrounding the *cella* of Amenirdis and their specific layout on these walls were quite deliberate. The Pyramid Text utterances inscribed on the East, West and North Walls were meant to function together. Together, they led her out of her tomb and directed her toward the north sky, where she could become one of the Imperishable Stars (fig. 4).

The destiny of the deceased king in the Pyramid Texts is to “go forth to the sky among the imperishable stars” (Pyr. 1123a) . . . For the Pyramid Texts, this celestial vision of the after-life is a single-minded goal.⁶⁵

The South-facing hieroglyphic signs inscribed on the East and West Walls of the corridor surrounding the *cella* of Amenirdis I were intended to be read from south to north. Thus, they served to lead her north, just as the Pyramid Texts of Unis were intended to lead him out of his tomb. The notion of moving toward the north finds further support in the content of the texts as well. Those texts inscribed at the northern

ends of the West and East Walls refer to northern themes (imperishable stars, *Hau-Nebut*). In spell PT 412, inscribed on the East Wall, close to the north end, Amenirdis's limb is grasped by the northern stars. Similarly, on the West Wall, also close to its north end, the authority of Amenirdis is emphasized by an invocation to her to take hold of all the gods and their possessions, and to encircle the *Hau-Nebut*, “the Aegean Islands” or “everything beyond.”⁶⁶ Regardless of whether the scribes of Amenirdis meant to use this term to refer to the farthest point North or to “everything beyond” in this context, it is certain that the *Hau-nebut* symbolized a heavenly/northern realm. It thus seems that the Pyramid Texts of the funerary chapel of Amenirdis I are distributed axially along a north-south axis with the purpose of leading Amenirdis northward out of her *tomb*-chapel.

The selection of Pyramid Texts spells inscribed in the chapel of Amenirdis is extremely concise, yet quite functional. Of the hundreds of utterances available for Amenirdis and her scribes, only nine

⁶⁵ J. A. Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 1.

⁶⁶ Bonty, “Haunebu,” 45.

were chosen for inclusion among the texts of her funerary chapel.⁶⁷ But in just nine spells, Amenirdis is resuscitated, provided with food, cool water, incense, and the proper clothing and crowns that would equip her with the magical power needed to achieve the afterlife.

4. Conclusions

None of Amenirdis I's contemporaries (members of her staff), or their successors, had her particular selection of Pyramid Text utterances inscribed in their tombs. Similarly, the selections found on the sarcophagi of the God's Wife Ankhnesneferibre and the Napatán king Aspelta are so different from the selection of Pyramid Text utterances found in the chapel of Amenirdis I⁶⁸ that they probably did not (even remotely) share the same religious/funerary beliefs.

Moreover, the texts of Amenirdis are completely adapted to suit her feminine gender. For example, Pyr. 903c "How good it is, what Horus has done for this king . . . etc." is adapted to "How good it is what Horus has done, namely the protection of his father! How good it is what Horus has done for you, *his mother*, Amenirdis!" (coll. E 26–28).

Pedamenopet's and Sheshonq's extensive selections of Pyramid Texts served to guide them out of the *Duat* and into eternal existence. In the chapel of Amenirdis, it is the architecture, the orientation of the signs, and the symbolic references found at strategic junctures in her texts that together served that same purpose. References to the *Hau-nebut* and the imperishable stars, strategically placed at the north ends of the East and West Walls, pointed Amenirdis toward the north, where she would join the circumpolar stars in the night sky, and become "imperishable" herself. Thus, it seems that what was explicitly spelled out in the tombs of Sheshonq and Pedamenopet, was symbolically referred to in the choice and layout of the Pyramid Texts in the chapel of Amenirdis.

The particular selection of Pyramid Texts found in the funerary chapel of Amenirdis together with its thoughtful and deliberate placement on the walls of her chapel provide us with an unparalleled example of the Egyptians' creative use of space and their innovative use of familiar, traditional texts. The selection of the texts of Amenirdis clearly involved a thoughtful and deliberate process, while their use, placement, and layout were both creative and innovative.

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⁶⁷ It is not known who made the selection. It is most probable, however, that it was Amenirdis's successor and adopted daughter, Shepenwepet II, who was responsible for erecting her mother's chapel.

⁶⁸ For the uniqueness of Amenirdis's selections from the Pyramid Texts, see M. Ayad, "Some Remarks on the Pyramid Texts Inscribed in the Chapel of Amenirdis I at Medinet Habu" in S. Thompson and P. der Manuelian, eds., *Egypt and Beyond: Studies in Honor of Leonard H. Lesko* (Providence, 2008), 1–13.

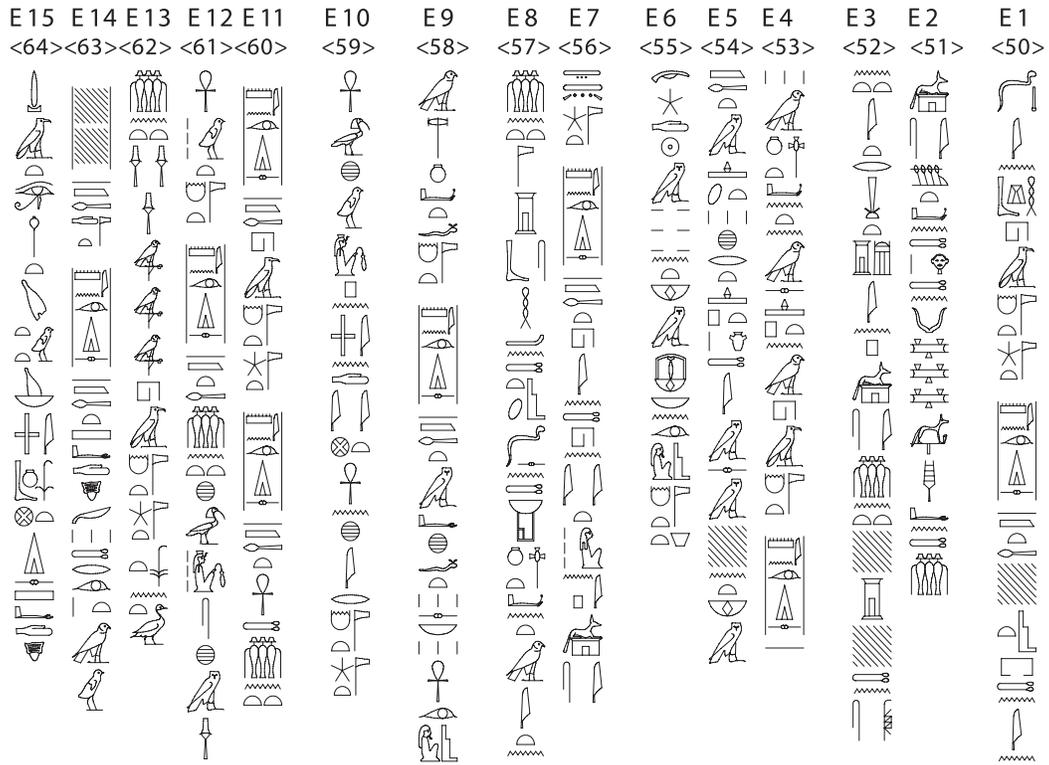


Plate 1. East Wall, lower register—Pyramid texts.



Plate 2. East Wall, lower register—Pyramid Texts.

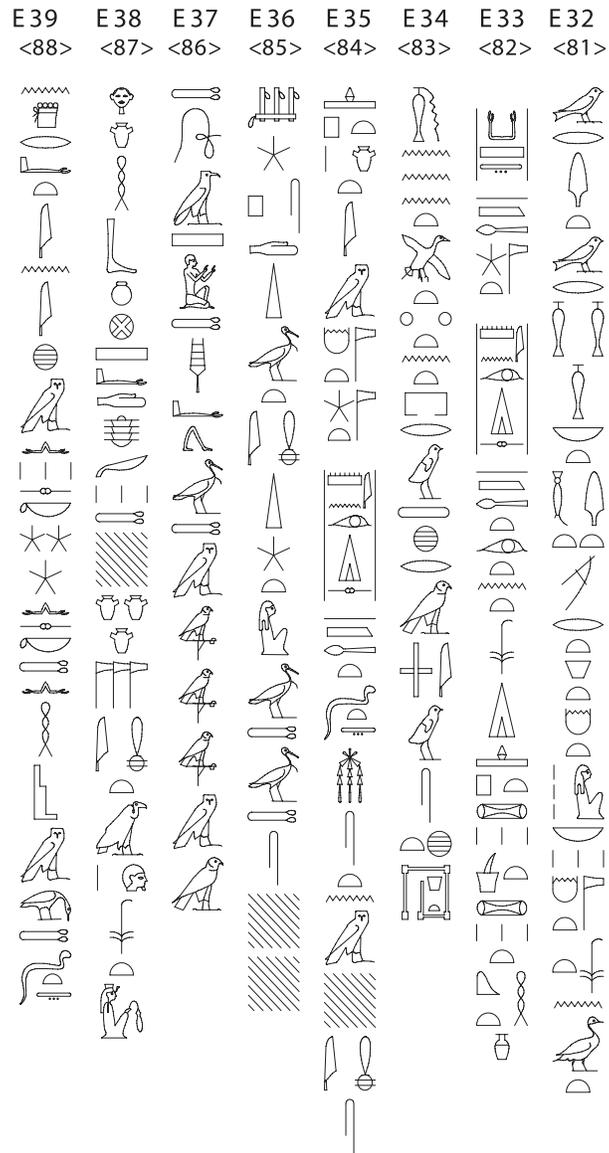


Plate 3. East Wall, lower register—Pyramid Texts.

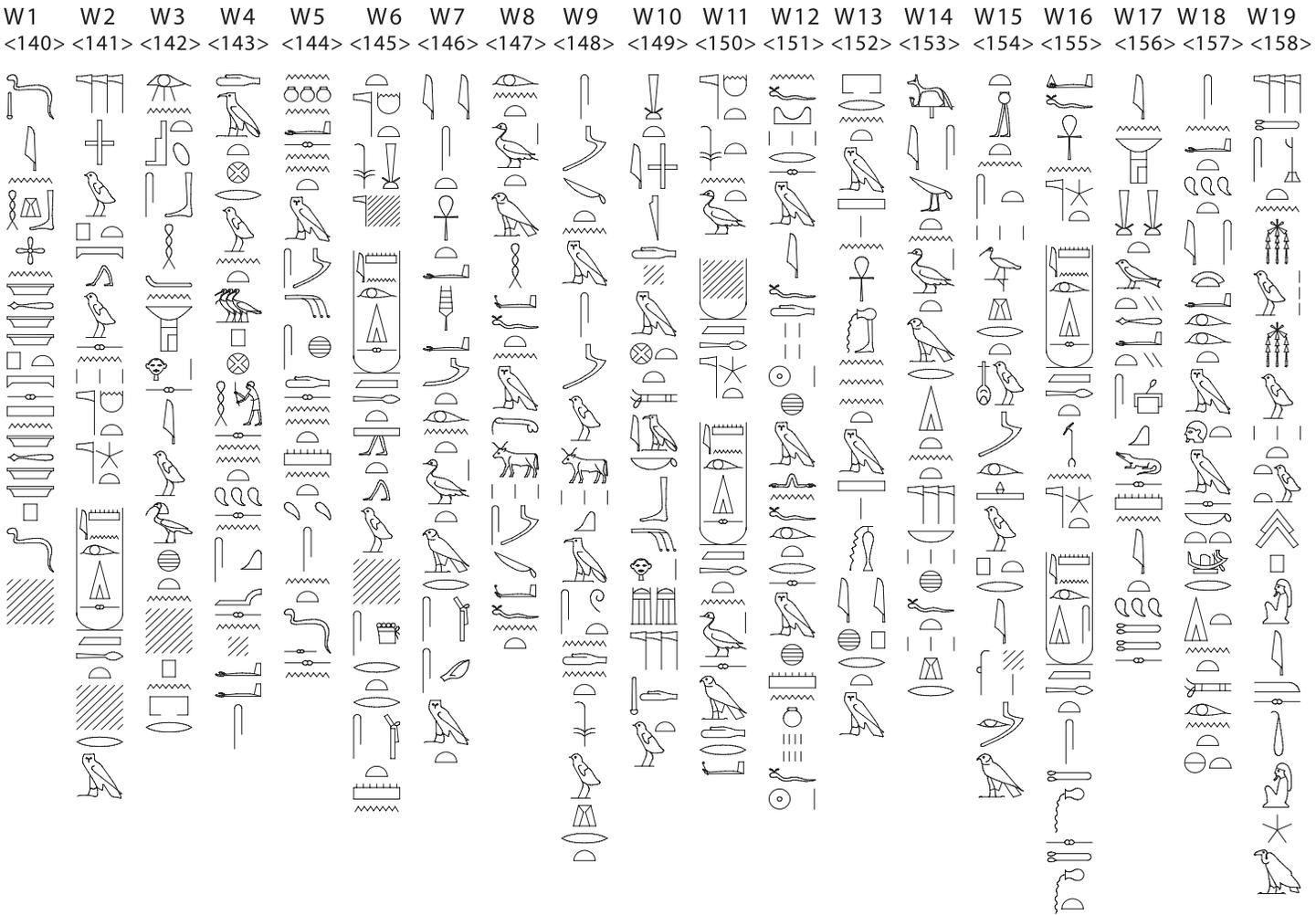


Plate 4. West Wall, lower register—Pyramid Texts.

W20	W21	W22	W23	W24	W25	W26	W27	W28	W29	W30	W31	W32	W33	W34	W35	W36	W37	W38
<159>	<160>	<161>	<162>	<163>	<164>	<170>	<171>	<172>	<173>	<174>	<175>	<176>	<177>	<178>	<179>	<180>	<181>	<182>

Plate 5. West Wall, lower register—Pyramid Texts.

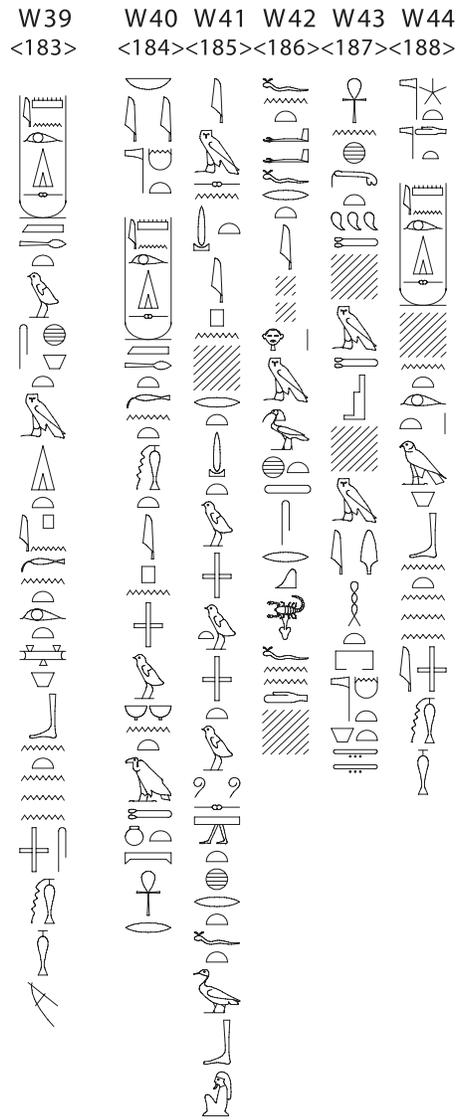


Plate 6. West Wall, lower register—Pyramid Texts.

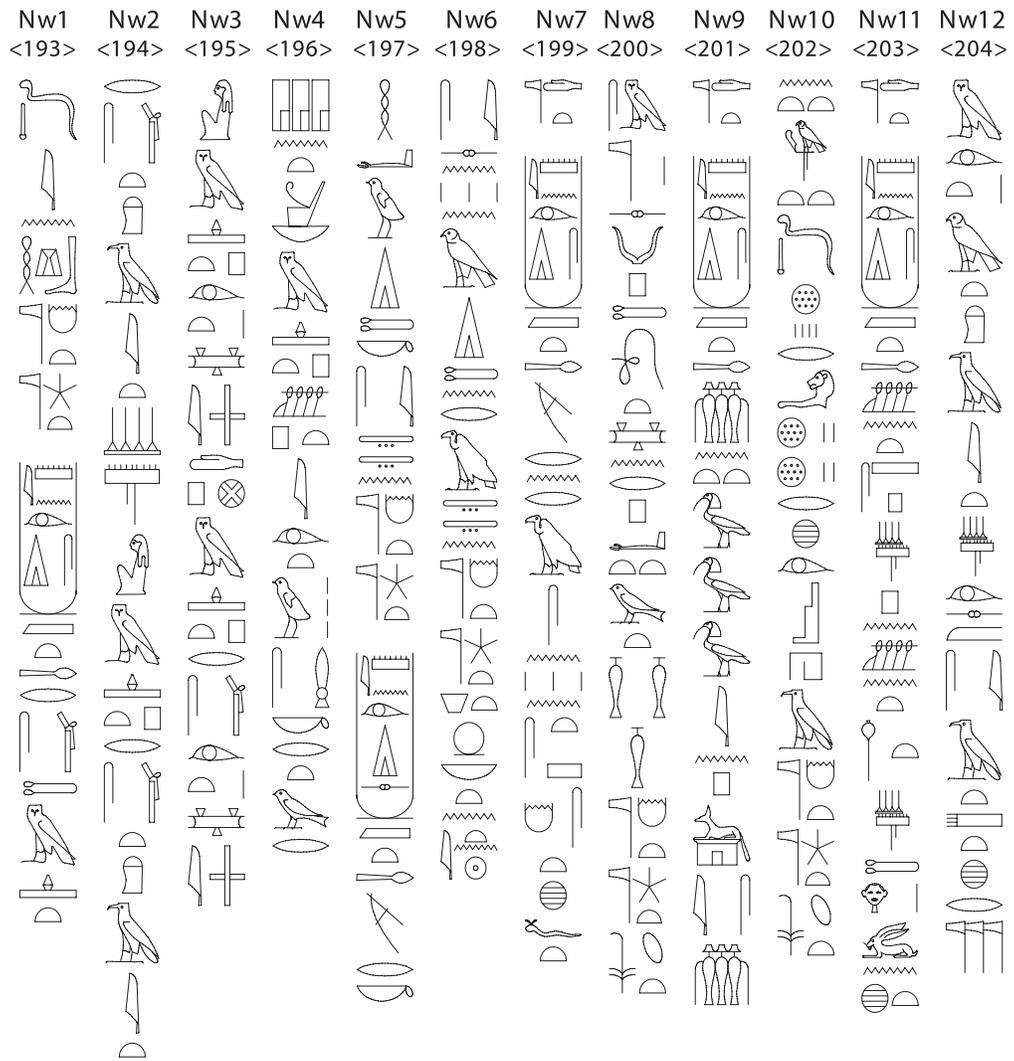


Plate 7. North wall, western half, lower register—Pyramid Texts.

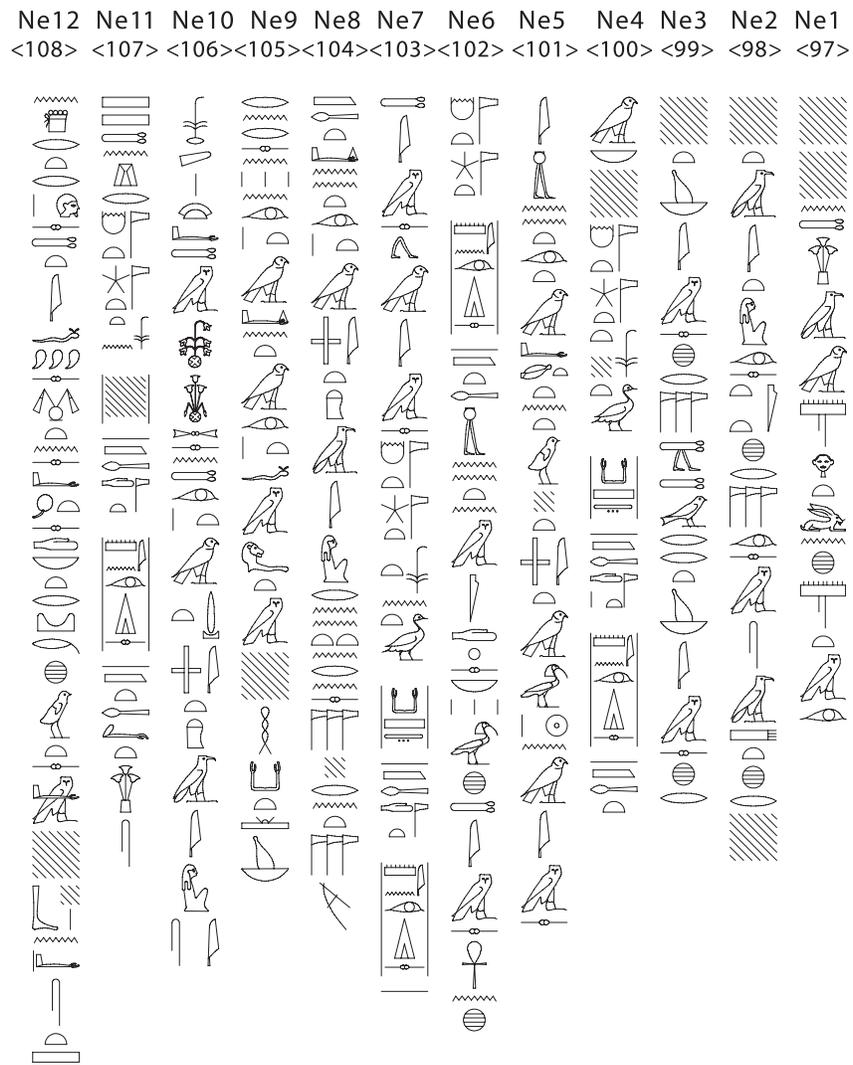


Plate 8. North wall, eastern half—Pyramid Texts.