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# The Selection and Layout of the Opening of the Mouth Scenes in the Chapel of Amenirdis I at Medinet Habu

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The Opening of the Mouth ceremony, arguably the most commonly attested Ancient Egyptian ritual, has attracted much scholarly attention. Yet, many aspects concerning this ritual remain obscure. One aspect that has hitherto drawn little attention is the physical organization of the ritual's various episodes. This paper demonstrates the close interconnectedness between the ritual's physical layout and its textual content by examining the version inscribed in the funerary chapel of Amenirdis I at Medinet Habu. There, parallel and complementary relationships governed the layout of the texts.

Recent work on the funerary texts of Amenirdis has revealed that her selections from the Opening of the Mouth ritual were meticulously chosen and deliberately laid out on the various walls of her funerary chapel. 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). Her chapel, which lies to the southeast of the main temple, consists of two tent shrines, set one inside the other. Each of the two buildings is independently roofed, with the result that a corridor is created between the two structures (fig. 2). Amenirdis's selections from the Opening of the Mouth (OM) ceremony occupy the upper register of the outer walls of this corridor, i.e., the internal walls of the external structure<sup>1</sup> (fig. 3).

When depicted in a funerary context, the main objective of the OM ceremony was the re-animation of the mummy of the deceased. Re-animation was believed to take place once the deceased's body parts (especially his/her mouth and eyes) were touched using various "magical" implements.<sup>2</sup> A scene, or an "episode," is the smallest unit of the OM ceremony. Each scene depicted one ritual act: the ritual slaughter of an ox, the presentation of the foreleg (*hps*) to the deceased, opening his/her mouth (*wpr*), censuring, ritual purification of offerings, presentation of various offerings to the deceased, or an offering list. In addition to the pictorial representations, in the more complete versions of the ritual, texts describing the events of a particular scene were arranged in columns either under or next to the illustration. Typically, a frame enclosed both the pictorial representation and the accompanying texts. In his line-by-line monumental edition of the ritual, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual*, Otto identified 75 separate scenes.<sup>3</sup> In its arrangement and numbering of the ritual's various

<sup>1</sup> The lower registers of these walls contain selections from the Pyramid Texts and two solar hymns, which will be dealt with separately. For the chapel, see PM II, 476–78; G. Daressy, *Notice explicative des ruines de Médinet Habou* (Cairo: Imprimerie Nationale, 1897), 29–42; and *idem*, "Inscriptions de la chapelle d'Amenirtis à Médinet-Habou," *RT* 23 (1901): 4–18. An architectural survey of the chapel can be found in U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu V: Post-Ramessid Remains* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 17–30.

<sup>2</sup> On the significance of the various implements used, see Ann Macy Roth, "The *ps-kf* and the 'Opening of the Mouth' ceremony: A ritual of Birth and Rebirth," *JEA* 78 (1992): 113–17 and *id.*, "Fingers, Stars, and the 'Opening of the Mouth': the nature and function of the *utraj*-Blades," *JEA* 79 (1993): 57–79.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the concordance of scenes given in E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* II, ÄA 3 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1960), 181–88, where the two most extensive copies belonging to Rekhmire and Seti I are comprised of 62 and 51 scenes, respectively.

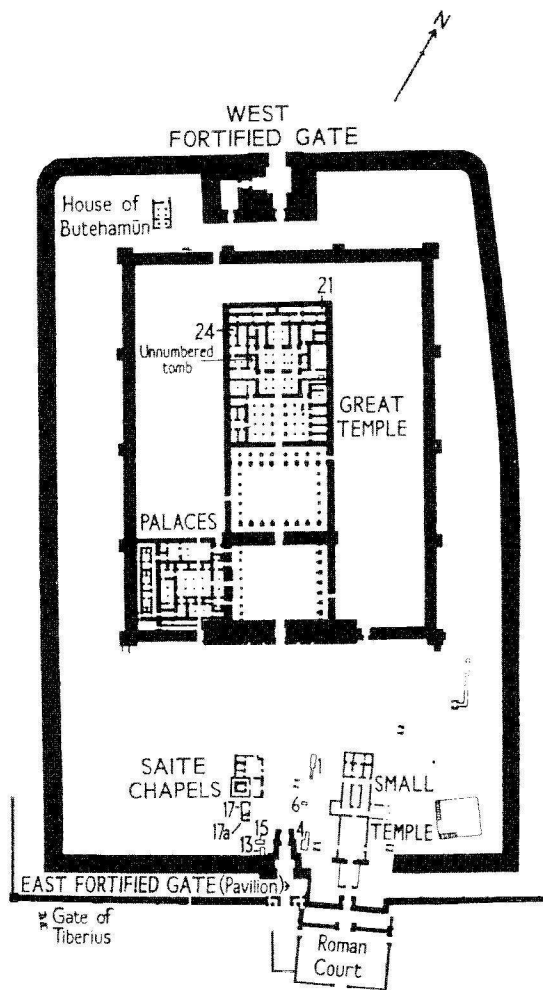


Fig. 1. Plan of the Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (after PM II, plan xliii).

Like most other extant copies of the ritual, the version inscribed in the chapel of Amenirdis is arranged in columns and inscribed in retrograde. On either side of the doorway, the texts were oriented away from the doorway and toward the nearest corner. The texts inscribed on the North Wall, east of the doorway were oriented to the right facing the eastern horizon, while the texts inscribed on the western half of the doorway were oriented toward the west. But as these texts were inscribed in retrograde, they progressed toward the corners and away from the doorway. Along the East and West Walls, the hieroglyphic signs are oriented toward the south, but proceed from the northern end of each wall inward (fig. 4).

<sup>1</sup> Otto adopted (with few modifications) a much older numbering system: one that dates to Schiaparelli's initial publication of the tomb of Seti and later adopted by Lefébure. Cf. E. Schiaparelli, *Il libro dei funerali degli antichi egiziani* (Rome and Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1881), pls. I–Ixxx; and G. Lefébure, *Les Hypogées royales des Thèbes. Première division: Le Tombeau de Sèti Ier. Mémoires Publiés par les membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire (1882–1884) 2* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1886), 21 and pls. 3, I–XIII.

<sup>2</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual II*, 173.

scenes, Otto's publication, the most comprehensive to date, followed the tradition set by earlier scholars, most notably, Ernesto Schiaparelli and Gustave Lefébure.<sup>1</sup> But because Otto did not include any data on the physical placement or location of any of the OM scenes, it was not possible to reconstruct the layout of the ritual relying solely on his publication. This omission was especially challenging when studying the texts of Amenirdis, which were presented in his publication without column numbers or similar pertinent information crucial for identifying her texts.

Comprised of 45 scenes, Amenirdis's copy is one of the most extensive known versions of the ritual. As such, it was one of the seven principle versions included in Otto's study where it is identified as text no. 5.<sup>2</sup> Superimposing Otto's scene-numbers and his interpretation of the ceremony on the texts of Amenirdis proved most confusing. Thus, in an attempt to understand the purpose and function of her texts, less emphasis was put on Otto's subdivisions of the ritual. Instead, the focus became relating the content of the scenes to their physical layout on the various walls of her chapel. Once this was accomplished, it became apparent that (1) there was a clearly discernible thematic continuity between adjoining walls and (2) a distinct parallelism exists between the content of the East and West walls.

#### 1. Orientation of Texts and Their Direction of Reading



Fig. 2. Cross-section of the Chapel of Amenirdis (after Hölscher, *Excavations V*, pl. 2).



Fig. 3. Corridor surrounding the cella (photograph © M. Ayad).

On the South Wall, scenes and texts of the OM were arranged on either side of two symmetrically opposed scenes depicting an *Im-mutef* priest consecrating offerings before Amenirdis I, who is shown sitting at her offering table (fig. 5). On either side of this central representation, the texts, also inscribed in retrograde, are oriented towards the central scene. Thus, on the eastern half of the South Wall (Se), the texts flow from east to west, while the texts inscribed of the western half of the South Wall (Sw) proceed from the western end of the wall eastward (figs. 6a–b).

Amenirdis's selections from the Opening of the Mouth ceremony thus seem to be organized along a central north-south axis. On either side of this axis, the texts mirror each other, both in orientation and direction of reading. Along either side of this axis, the texts flow uniformly in one direction (fig. 4). The orientation of texts and their direction of reading suggest a reading of the texts that started near the entrance to Amenirdis's tomb-chapel and proceeded towards the chapel's South Wall. The content and layout of the scenes seem to re-enforce this assumption as well.

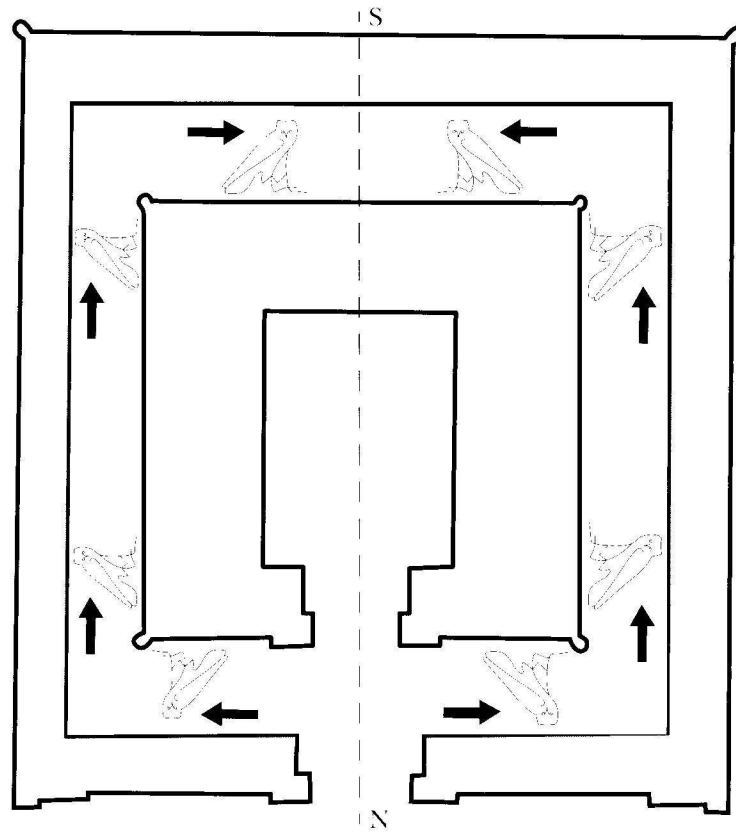


Fig. 4. Orientation of the hieroglyphs (𓂏) and direction of reading (←)

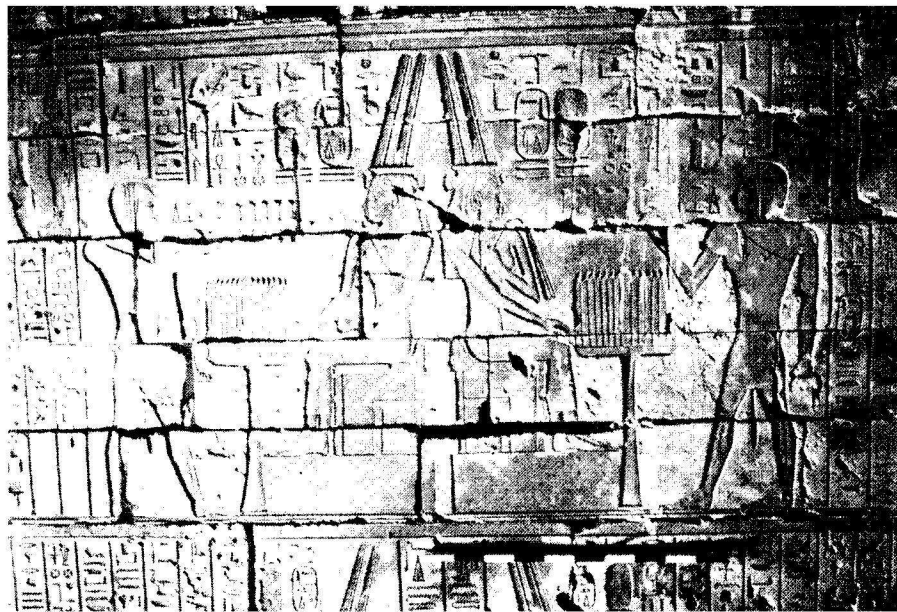


Fig. 5. Amenirdis at her offering table. (After W. J. Murnane, *United with Eternity: A Concise Guide to the Monuments of Medinet Habu* (Chicago, 1980), 213)

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

Wall	Orientation of Signs	Direction of Reading
Nc	Right (= East)	Retrograde: Left to right
Nw	Left (= West)	Retrograde: Right to left
E	Right (= South)	Retrograde: Left to right
W	Left (= South)	Retrograde: Right to left
Sc	Right (= West)	Retrograde: Left to right
Sw	Left (= East)	Retrograde: Right to left

## 2. Layout and Content of Scenes

2.1. *The North Wall*

Immediately to the east of the doorway, a scene depicting the ritual slaughter of an ox and the presentation of the foreleg dominates the eastern half of the North Wall. The scene occupies 12 columns (Nc1–12), and comprises Otto's scene nos. 24 I and 24 II. This scene is followed by a smaller episode (only 4 columns of text: Nc13–16), which is part of what Goyon calls the "*habillage du Sem*."<sup>6</sup> An identical butchery scene occupies the western end of the North Wall (coll. Nw5–17). In the preceding columns (Nw1–4 = scene no. 45), the foreleg is used to open the eyes and mouth of the deceased<sup>7</sup> (Pl. 1). The two butchery scenes are accompanied by representations of female mourners.

2.2. *The East Wall*

The theme of the "*habillage du Sem*," started on the east half of the North Wall, continues on the northern end of the East Wall (Coll. E1–5 = Otto's nos. 19 and 20). The next four scenes (nos. 18–15) are concerned with the triad Osiris, Isis, and Horus (pl. 2). The role of Isis as her son's helper is given special attention in this sequence. In the first scene (no. 18), the lector priest invites the *sm*-priest to "come, see your father" (E9). In the next scene, Isis goes (to lend a helping hand) to Horus, who seeks out his father, the deceased/Amenirdis (E11–12). Then the *sm*-priest assumes the role of Horus and Seth in order to prevent his father's head from becoming pale (E15–17). Lastly, the gathering of his father's (organs) is accomplished (E18–19).

The next section of the East Wall is rather ambiguous, with many of the verbal forms bearing multiple interpretations. But it remains clear that in coll. E22–30 (scene nos. 14 and 13) the *sm*-priest assumes the role of Horus, opens his father's mouth, and generally tries to protect him. These so-called "craftsmen" scenes, which presumably take place at the workshop, often feature conversations between the artisans.<sup>8</sup>

The next two scenes deal with the statue/mummy of the deceased. The former deals with the statue of the deceased (coll. E32–36 = scene no. 12), while the latter is concerned with the "weaving" of the mummy (coll. E37–45 = scene no. 10).<sup>9</sup> Next, the chamberlains take charge of awakening the *sm*-priest, who initially appears sleeping in the workshop (E50). It is with this scene that Goyon's "*jeu de l'animation de la statue*"<sup>10</sup> begins. This and the following scene vividly describe actions taking place

<sup>6</sup> J.-C. Goyon, *Rituels funéraires de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 120.

<sup>7</sup> See A. H. Gordon and C. W. Schwabe, "'Live Flesh' and 'Opening-of-the-Mouth': Biomedical, Ethnological, and Egyptological Aspects," in: *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995*, ed. C. J. Eyre (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 461–69, for the suggestion that the Egyptians attributed life-giving powers to the amputated foreleg of an ox because it continues to contract even after it is severed from the sacrificial animal.

<sup>8</sup> Otto classified these scenes (nos. 11–18) as both "craftsmen scenes" and interpreted them as being at the "core of the statue ritual." Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 8–9.

<sup>9</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 115–16; Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* I, 24–30; and *idem*, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 55–59.

<sup>10</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 141.

Table 2. Sequence of Scenes on the Northern Half of the West Wall

Col. no.	Scene no.	Content of Scene
W 1-2	Scene 41	Offering "Eye of Horus and the water in it"
W 2-3	Scene 42	sm-priest and "Beloved Son"
W 5-7	Scene 39	Offering feather
W 8-9	Scene 37	OM: sm-priest using psš-knife
W 9-10	Scene 38	Offering Raisins
W 11-13	Scene 36	OM: "Beloved Son"
W 14-15	Scene 34	OM: sm-priest
W 16	Scene 35	"Come to your father"
W 17-19	Scene 33	OM: sm-priest
W 20-26	Scene 32	OM: "Beloved Son"

### 2.3. The West Wall

At the southern end of the West Wall is scene no. 27 dealing with the "Opening of the Mouth" proper. The rest of the West Wall is dominated by offering scenes and, once more, the foreleg is presented. Otto assumed that for the offering of the foreleg depicted in scene nos. 28-40, the slaughter was "pre-supposed."<sup>13</sup>

In the northernmost episode, Amenirdis is offered "the Eye of Horus and the water that is in it" (W1-2 = scene no. 41). The *sm*-priest, then "grasps (the hand of) the Beloved Son,<sup>14</sup> who is placed in/ as *s3-β* and is reckoned an *β3m*-priest"<sup>15</sup> (W2-3 = scene no. 42). Col. W4 follows with an excerpt from a hymn adoring Re in all "his forms of the horizon."<sup>16</sup> This particular text does not appear in older versions of the ceremony, but is commonly found in later Ptolemaic and Roman texts,<sup>17</sup> which suggests that Amenirdis's version may have influenced later versions.

Amenirdis is then presented with an ostrich feather and the Eye of Hours, by which her face would not lack (anything) or be empty<sup>18</sup> (W5-7 = scene no. 39). A *psš-kf* knife is then used to open her mouth (W8-9 = scene no. 37). Amenirdis is then offered raisins<sup>19</sup> and the Eye of Horus. Both the Eye of Horus and raisins would help the deceased not to be traversed, or passed by (coll. W9-10 = scene no. 38). Next, the "Beloved Son" takes charge of opening the mouth and eyes of Amenirdis (W11-13 = scene no. 36). His instrument of choice is the *abet*, which he is instructed to use 4 times. The contents of scene nos. 34 and 36 are almost identical, with the only difference being the identity of the priest carrying out the opening of Amenirdis's mouth: a *sm*-priest officiates before Amenirdis in scene no. 34 (W14-15), but a "Beloved Son" appears in scene no. 36. The deceased is then invited to "come! having united your father"<sup>20</sup> (W16).

<sup>11</sup> Although not included within the main text of the scene, the caption to this episode declares that the lector-priest and the chamberlain are *šm r ks*, "walking to the tomb."

<sup>12</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Since the text of Amenirdis is damaged, the meaning of this passage must be inferred through comparisons with parallel texts.

<sup>15</sup> Heliopolitan priest (Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 135, n. 6).

<sup>16</sup> The hymn, together with the preceding two scenes (coll. W1-4), forms Daressy's §10.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 103 for the parallel texts; Schiaparelli, *libro funerals*, pls. xix-xlx for the Late Roman hieratic text of papyrus I. 3155 (Hathor-Sais).

<sup>18</sup> This is an obvious play on words: *šwtj* = "feather" and *šwi* = "to be empty or lacking." Goyon notes another pun: *hw* "to protect" and *šw* "to be empty." See *Rituels funéraires*, 134, n. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 133-34.

<sup>20</sup> Note that the 2nd person masculine pronoun is used in col. W16 (*i.k 9.n.k i.k*). Cf. Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 132 for *9* as the instrument, rather than the verb.

either in the workshop or at the tomb.<sup>11</sup> Otto interpreted the Egyptian word *is* as "workshop" and consequently suggested that scene nos. 8-10 mark the beginning of the "statue ritual."<sup>12</sup> The East Wall ends with the presentation of the Eye of Horus to Amenirdis (E56), followed by the ritual purification of Amenirdis (coll. E57-58 = scene no. 6).



Applying various implements to the mouth and eyes of Amenirdis, the next two scenes (nos. 33, 32) are concerned with opening the mouth of Amenirdis and the restitution of her eyes. Once more, the “Beloved Son” and the *sm*-priest alternate playing the lead role. In coll. W17–19 (scene no. 33), a *sm*-priest is responsible for carrying out the rites, while in coll. W20–26 (scene no. 32), it is the “Beloved Son” who opens Amenirdis’s mouth. In both scenes the *snly*-instrument is used. Otto considered this group of scenes to be mere repetitions of previously encountered scenes, albeit with different officiants.<sup>21</sup>

The next section is comprised of four different scenes (nos. 31–28), all of which relate to Isis aiding her son Horus in restoring and reviving his father/the deceased. First, the “Beloved Son” enters into the tomb to see (?) the deceased, Amenirdis (W27–29 = scene no. 31). Then, a priest assumes the role of Horus and Seth in order to present the revealing/paling of his father’s head (W33–36 = scene no. 30).<sup>22</sup> Isis then goes to Horus, who seeks his father (W37–40 = scene no. 29).<sup>23</sup> Finally, the deceased is asked to join *her* mother, who beweeps her/him (W41–44 = scene no. 28).<sup>24</sup>

The last and southernmost episode on the West Wall is also the longest, occupying coll. W45–54 (= scene no. 27). More gods are mentioned in this scene than in any other. Nut raises the deceased’s head (W46), while [another god] seizes the *Wereret-Hekau*, “which has come forth from your head” (W46–47). It is also here that Amenirdis, the deceased, appears as the King of Upper and Lower Egypt (W50), thereby having strength and power among all the gods and their *kas*. Shu, son of Atum is also evoked (W51), so that Amenirdis might live as he lives (W52). Shu, through his effectiveness, power, and might, then sets his protection around Amenirdis (W52–53) so that she might not die. In the last column of the West Wall (W54), Horus opens Amenirdis’s mouth. This time, however, the opening of her mouth is performed before (all?) the gods. Goyon suggested that this episode is concerned with opening the mouth using the *Wereret-Hekau* instrument.<sup>25</sup> Alternatively, the text may refer to the *Wereret-Hekau* crown, especially in view of the fact that here Amenirdis appears as the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. For it is only through her power as the King that she is able to overcome her enemies and become one of the gods.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.4. The South Wall

*2.4.1. The Eastern Half of the South Wall.* The eastern half of the South Wall comprises six almost identical OM scenes. Otto’s scene no. 1, with its “governing remarks” appears near the center of the South Wall, with more purification scenes (scene nos. 2–7) inscribed on the rest of this section of the South Wall. In the episode closest to the East Wall (scene no. 5), Amenirdis is purified with Lower Egyptian natron. In the immediately following scene (no. 4), Upper Egyptian natron is used to purify her (pl. 4). The two scenes are almost identical. But in the former, Amenirdis’s mouth is likened to the mouth of a calf (Se2), while in the latter, both *sm’in* and the efflux of Horus and Seth (Se7).<sup>27</sup> The next two scenes (nos. 3 and 2) have similar captions and an identical function: the purification of

<sup>21</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9. Further examination of these scenes, however, may lead to a better understanding of the significance of having different individuals officiate before Amenirdis.

<sup>22</sup> This scene is identical to the one inscribed in coll. E14–17 on the East Wall. Otto’s scene 30 thus is the same as scene 16.

<sup>23</sup> These column repeat the content of coll. E11–13 (= scene 17). But while on the East Wall, the Chamberlains who recite this portion, on the West Wall, no officiants are explicitly mentioned.

<sup>24</sup> This scene corresponds to coll. Nw2–3 on the North Wall and Sw15–16 on the South Wall.

<sup>25</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 127.

<sup>26</sup> See W. M. Davis, “Ascension-myth in the Pyramid Texts,” *JNES* 36 (1977): 161–79, especially at 166–68, for a discussion of PT 468 which (among other Pyramid Text utterances) indicates the deceased’s need to become god in order to achieve an afterlife.

<sup>27</sup> For the importance of the efflux issuing from the divine body for the revival of the deceased, see A. M. Blackman, “The Significance of Incense and Libations in Funerary and Temple Ritual,” *ZÄS* 50 (1912): 69–75.

Amenirdis by water. Two different vessels, the *Deshret*, and the *Nemset* are used.<sup>28</sup> More fumigations take place next. Finally, in scene no. 1, the deceased's statue, or mummy, is placed on "golden sand" with her face directed towards the south (Sc20–21).

At the center of the South Wall is a double scene of Amenirdis seated before an offering table. Amenirdis appears here, for the first time, without a statue base and more like a living person. The scene is accompanied by a caption declaring that these offerings are being consecrated before "Nekhbet, mistress of Upper Egypt, who gives [Amenirdis] life and dominion" (fig. 5).

*2.4.2. The Western Half of the South Wall.* Only two scenes (nos. 25 and 26) occupy the western half of Amenirdis's South Wall.<sup>29</sup> Scene no. 25 appears next to another central representation at the middle of the South Wall. In this instance, it is the goddess "Wedjat, mistress of Lower Egypt" that is named next to the offering table. In scene no. 25 (coll. Sw13–17), the *sm*-priest opens the mouth of Amenirdis and her eyes using *hph*.<sup>30</sup> Assuming the role of Horus, the deceased's "Beloved Son," or the *sm*-priest, walks into Amenirdis's embrace (or possibly seeks her out),<sup>31</sup> and splits open the mouth of her "whose mother cries for her" (col. Sw15).

Beginning at the western end of the South Wall, scene no. 26, is the nearest to the West Wall. In the twelve columns of text describing this scene (Sw1–12), the two sides of Amenirdis's mouth are joined.<sup>32</sup> Her eyes and mouth are then opened, using the same instruments (*nwʒ*, *mshtyw*) by which the mouths of the gods were opened (Sw7), and with which Horus opened the mouth of his father (Sw10). All these rituals are performed so that Amenirdis can "walk, herself, before the Great Ennead, which is in Heliopolis" (coll. Sw11–12). It is only then that she is able to seize the "Wereret-crown, before Horus, the Lord of the Patricians" (col. Sw12).

Along with scene nos. 23 and 24 (inscribed on the eastern half of the North Wall), scene no. 25 was considered by Otto to be the point of contact between the statue ritual and the slaughter ritual.<sup>33</sup> But this may not be the case. In fact, the location of this scene on Amenirdis's South Wall may reflect its original grouping with other scenes. To have a clearer idea of the Egyptians' understanding of the ritual, a critical examination of which scenes were included (sometimes more than once) and why others were omitted altogether is necessary.

### 3. Omissions, Repetitions, and Parallelism

#### 3.1. Omitted Scenes

With the exception of three scenes only, Amenirdis's selection of OM scenes is intact up to the point where her texts break off at scene no. 46.<sup>34</sup> While incomplete, Amenirdis's selection includes, either wholly or in part, all the major "sequences" of the ritual.<sup>35</sup> Her selection included the "prelim-

<sup>28</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 99 and Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 22, who suggests that the *nms.t* was made of gold, while the *ds.t* of silver.

<sup>29</sup> See pl. 20 for the hieroglyphic texts of the western half of the South Wall.

<sup>30</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 78–80. In WB III, 268, *hph* is considered a play on words or a pun on *hps* "foreleg," but no other meaning is offered.

<sup>31</sup> Depending on how one translates *shn*, this phrase could be translated either way.

<sup>32</sup> See Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 126, for the suggestion that *hng* means something beneficent. Otto (*Mundöffnungsritual* II, 81) avoids translating it altogether.

<sup>33</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 189.

<sup>35</sup> See Svein Bjerke, "Remarks on the Egyptian Ritual of 'Opening the Mouth' and Its Interpretation," *Namen* 12 (1965): 201–15, for the suggestion that a change in officiants or of the attire of the same officiant marked off a transition between one ritualistic sequence and another. At p. 209, the entire repertoire of OM scenes is divided into 6 sequences: A to E Sequence A: scenes 2–7; sequence B: scenes 9–10; sequence C: scenes 12–18; sequence D: scenes 23–30; sequence E: scene 31–42; sequence F: scenes 43–75.

inary” scenes: the so-called title and scene nos. 1–8; animation of the statue (scene nos. 9–22); the ritual slaughter of an ox (scene nos. 23–25); as well as scene nos. 26–30, 31–42, and nos. 43–45.<sup>36</sup>

Of the sequence of scenes chosen for inclusion in the chapel of Amenirdis (scene nos. 1–45), only three scenes are omitted: nos. 22, 23 I, and 40 A/B.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, by including *only* the “first” 45 scenes of the Opening of the Mouth ritual, Amenirdis, or her scribes, chose to exclude more than a third of the entire ritual.<sup>38</sup> It is not likely that such an omission was haphazard. Indeed, a closer examination of the omitted scenes will prove that their content was already included in the chapel of Amenirdis.

Perhaps the easiest omissions to explain are scenes 40A and 40B. Not only do they have an identical content to scene nos. 20/21 and 36 respectively<sup>39</sup> (included in the chapel of Amenirdis), but neither scene appears prior to the 26th dynasty.<sup>40</sup> Scene no. 40A is first attested in TT 33 and later on the Roman papyrus of Hathor-Sais, while scene no. 40B is known only from the tomb of Pedamenophis (TT 33). Both scenes thus seem to be 26th dynasty variants, which were later incorporated into the ritual.

In scene no. 22, the *hry-hb* leads the *smr* by the hand. Since this scene exhibits a change in the officiating priest, it has been taken to mark the beginning of a new “sequence.”<sup>41</sup> Introducing the Upper Egyptian slaughter rites, scene no. 23 I may be considered similarly “transitional.”

The texts of Amenirdis break off at scene no. 45, just before the “*cérémonial de vêtue*” commences with scene no. 47.<sup>42</sup> The intervening scene, no. 46, is merely a variant of scene nos. 26/27. In scene no. 46, the deceased’s mouth is opened using the same tools mentioned in scene nos. 26/27.<sup>43</sup> Scene no. 46 has thus the same function as the earlier scenes. Since scene nos. 26 and 27 were already included among the texts of Amenirdis, adding scene no. 46 would have been redundant.

The last eighteen scenes of the ritual (nos. 57–75) are primarily concerned with libations and censuring. Consequently, they have been considered to make up an “Offering ritual.”<sup>44</sup> Scene nos. 2–7 are similarly concerned with libation and censuring. In various combinations with scene nos. 26/27, select scenes from these two groups are found on New Kingdom stelae.<sup>45</sup> There, they appear interchangeably such that their content is always complementary, but almost never repetitive. It is conceivable that in the chapel of Amenirdis the “preliminary” offering scenes (nos. 2–7) substituted for the longer offering ritual. Moreover, scene no. 57 and nos. 73–75 overlap with the Offering Ritual of

<sup>36</sup> The titles of the sequences were adapted from Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 104–6 and Bjerke, “Remarks on the ‘Opening the Mouth,’” 209.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 189.

<sup>38</sup> Although none of the surviving versions of the Opening of the Mouth ritual contain all 75 scenes, the assumption is made here for the sake of argument. Indeed, the most extensive extant version, that inscribed in for the vizier Rekhmire in TT 100 is comprised of 61 scenes only. Cf. Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 189.

<sup>39</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* I, 93–94, and id., *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 100 and 189.

<sup>41</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 73; Bjerke, “Remarks on the ‘Opening the Mouth,’” 209.

<sup>42</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 139–65; the rite is comprised of scene nos. 47–63.

<sup>43</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 106.

<sup>44</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9–10.

<sup>45</sup> See Alan R. Schulman, “The Iconographic Theme: ‘Opening of the Mouth’ on Stelae,” *JARCE* 21 (1984): 177–96, especially 173–75 where stela Cairo JE 41722 depicts scene 72 (*ibid.* 177); stela Philadelphia 40-19-2 depicts scenes 27 and 72 (*ibid.* 177–79); stela Turin 50074 depicts scene 2 or 3 (*ibid.* 179); stela Cairo JE 18925 depicts scene 72 (*ibid.* 179–80); stela BM 1629 depicts censuring scenes 4–6 (*ibid.* 181); stela Florence 2562 depicts libation scene 70 (*ibid.* 183); stela Chicago Art Institute 20.264 also depicts a libation scene, but this time it is identified as scene 2 and is combined with episode “possibly 70” (*ibid.* 184); stela Turin 50075 depicts scene 2 (*ibid.* 184); stela Berlin 7306 also depicts scene 2 (*ibid.* 185–86); stela of Ptahhotep depicts scene 7 (*ibid.* 187); stela of Ramose depicts scenes 2 and possibly 7 (*ibid.* 188, 190); stela Louvre E3143 depicts a censuring and libations scene identified as scene 70 (*ibid.* 190–91); stela Bologna 1922 depicts a combination of scenes 2, 25, 26, 27 and 32 (*ibid.* 191); stela Liverpool 13851 depicts scene 2 (*ibid.* 192); stela Brooklyn 37 depicts episodes 70–72 (*ibid.* 192–93); stela of Paser depicts a combination of scenes 2 and 71; stela of Amunemope depicts scene 71 and possibly scene 2 (*ibid.* 196).

the Pyramid Texts.<sup>46</sup> Since this particular section was already partially included among the Pyramid Texts inscribed on the lower register, there was no need to repeat it.

### 3.2. Repetition and Parallels

Since the omission of certain OM scenes seems to have been deliberate, it is equally important to examine *both* the content and the layout of the scenes that share a similar content. It has been well established that the content of scene nos. 16–27 (coll. E15–1; Ne1–16; Sw1–17; W46–55) is repeated in scene nos. 29–32 (W41–20).<sup>47</sup> In the chapel of Amenirdis, scene nos. 16–27 appear on the East, Northeast, Southwest, and West Walls, while scene nos. 29–32 all appear on the West Wall (see Table 3). The two groups are separated by one scene only, scene no. 28, in which her mother/Isis is called. In the same scene, one reads: *rmꜥ.s sw* “she cries over him/her” (W43).

Scene nos. 31–32 essentially repeat the content of scene no. 14 (East Wall) and no. 25 (west part of the South Wall). Otto suggested that scene nos. 33–36 represent a more advanced stage of the Opening of the mouth where actions depicted previously are taken further and completed.<sup>48</sup> However, this is not immediately obvious from the content of scene nos. 33–36 as these scenes contain verbatim copies of the earlier scene. Otto also noted that scene nos. 43–46 repeat the content of scene nos. 22–27, such that 43 = 23; 44 = 24; 45 = 25; and 46 = 26/27.<sup>49</sup>

Recurring references to Upper and Lower Egypt in the chapel and the inscriptions accompanying the symmetrically opposed scenes of Amenirdis at her offering table may provide an explanation for such apparent repetitiveness. They point to the possibility that the texts of the eastern and western halves of Amenirdis’s chapel were designed to parallel each other. Goyon noted that scene nos. 23–42 were “Upper Egyptian” while scene nos. 43–46 comprised the “Lower Egyptian rites.”<sup>50</sup>

Thus the ritual slaughter depicted in scene no. 43 inscribed on the western half of the North Wall would be the Lower Egyptian version, while the identical scene (no. 23) engraved on the eastern half of the same wall would represent its Upper Egyptian counterpart.<sup>51</sup> A female mourner, *ḏrt*, is depicted with each group of scenes.<sup>52</sup> The female mourners represent the goddesses Isis and Nephthys.<sup>53</sup> Garnot suggested that rather than standing for Upper and Lower Egypt, each of the two goddesses represented a bank of the Nile: Isis represented the western bank and Nephthys, the eastern bank.<sup>54</sup>

References to Upper and Lower Egypt are also found on the South Wall. On the western half of the South Wall, Wedjat “mistress of *per-nw*”<sup>55</sup> grants Amenirdis “life and dominion,” while on the eastern half of the same wall, it is “Nekhbet, mistress of Upper Egypt” who gives Amenirdis “life and dominion.”<sup>56</sup> The goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt are also represented in the tomb of Seti I,

<sup>46</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9–10.

<sup>47</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9. See also Wolfgang Helck, “Einige Bemerkungen zum Mundöffnungsritual,” *MDAIK* 22 (1967): 27–41, at 27.

<sup>50</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 121–35, esp. 121 and 136–39.

<sup>51</sup> Also noted by Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 103.

<sup>52</sup> Daressy, “chapelle,” 14.

<sup>53</sup> See H. G. Fischer, “Representations of *ḏrt*-mourners in the Old Kingdom,” in: *Egyptian Studies I: Varia* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), 39–50, especially at pp. 42–43 for statues of *ḏrt*-mourners inscribed with the names of the goddesses Isis and Nephthys. See also B. S. Lesko, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 161–62.

<sup>54</sup> J. Sainte Fare Garnot, “Notes philologiques sur les Textes des Pyramides: 1—Le mot *ḏrit*, nom d’oiseau,” *RdÉ* 8 (1951): 71–75, at 73.

<sup>55</sup> Daressy, “Chapelle,” 14. See A. H. Gardiner, “Horus the Behdetite,” *JEA* 30 (1941): 27, n. 3 for the location of *Per-nw*, and *ibid.* 54–57, for the role of *wꜥḏrt* in nursing the king and her later identification with Isis; and Lesko, *Great Goddesses*, 69–73.

<sup>56</sup> Daressy, “Chapelle,” 10. See also Lesko, *Great Goddesses*, 64–69.

Table 3. Parallelism and Repetition in Amenirdis's Selection of OM Scenes

Content of Scene	East Wall	West Wall	North Wall		South Wall	
			East	West	East	West
Ritual Slaughter			Ne1-12	Nw5-17		
Presentation of the foreleg or <i>hph</i>						
Isis goes to Horus:						
Horus seeks his father	E 11-13 (scene 17)	W 37-40 (scene 29)				
Priest is Horus/Seth						
<i>ink hr sth</i>	E 11-17 (scene 16)	W 33-36 (scene 30)				
<i>ii.n&lt;.i&gt; m shn.k</i>	E 23-24	W 1-2?		Nw 1-2		Sw11
Deceased joins her mother		W 11-11		Nw 2-3		Sw15-16
Presentation of the Eye of Horus	E 54-56	W 1-2 (?)				Sc17-19

where each is depicted as a “guardian uraeus serpent.” As such, they guard the entrance to the vestibule (I). There, Nekhbet is represented along with her emblematic lily on the left, while Wedjat, together with a papyrus plant, is found on the right.<sup>57</sup>

In the chapel of Amenirdis, certain episodes are repeated. Whereas on the North Wall such scenes were identical in both content and physical layout on the walls, scenes with identical or similar content do not appear immediately opposite each other along the East and West Walls. Indeed, occasionally, they are diametrically opposed. For example, while texts describing Isis’s going out to Horus and the priest assuming the role of Horus and Seth occur on both the East and West Walls, they appear in different order. Reading the texts of the East Wall southward, scene no. 14, describing Isis going out (possibly to help) her son in his quest for his father, appears first (E11–12), followed by the *sm*-priest’s assumption of the role of Horus/Seth (E15). Scenes with similar content (nos. 29–30) occur further along on the West Wall, and appear in reversed order (W37–40 and W33, respectively).

An explanation of the layout of the “Isis” sequence may be found among the texts inscribed in the tomb of Seti I.<sup>58</sup> There, scene no. 14 is inscribed on the left of the entrance to corridor H, while scene no. 45 is inscribed on the right.<sup>59</sup> Significantly, the first two columns of scene no. 14: *ii.n<.i> m shn.k* are identical with the first half of scene 45. Thus,

Sw 14–15 = E 23–24 = scene 14 = 1st half of “45” = NW 1–2.

And

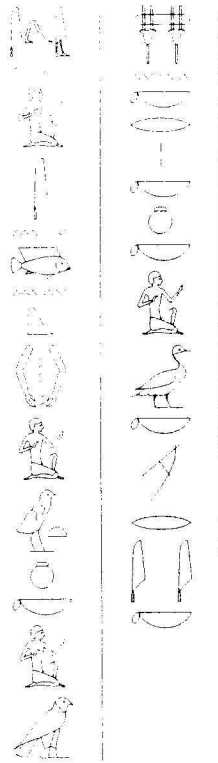
Sw 16–17 = W 43–44 = scene 45 (2nd half of 45) = Nw 3–4.

<sup>57</sup> Erik Hornung, *The Tomb of Seti I Das Grab Sethos’ I* (Zurich and Munich: Artemis, 1991), 21. In the tomb of Seti I, Scenes of OM are found in corridors G and H, left and right with respect to the onlooker as one proceeds *into* the tomb, heading towards the west. When facing west: Left = South, and Right = North.

<sup>58</sup> In the tomb of Seti I (TF 17), the Opening of the Mouth ritual is inscribed in corridors G and H. The ritual starts in corridor G with “an introductory scene” depicting the deceased seated before an idealized offering table. In front of the king is an *hau-mutef* priest who officiates on behalf of the king’s son. “The double figure of the priest is followed by the title of the ritual . . . [which] is followed on the left wall by the first thirteen scenes of the ritual, each consisting of a vignette with its text below. The illustration consists of rites before a statue of the king standing on a heap of sand. The statue is *purified* and *presented* with offerings by various priests . . . the ritual continues on the rear wall (left) with scene 14, then into corridor H . . . returns to G with scene 45 (rear wall, right) and continues with *several omissions, northward* on G’s right wall. It is followed by part of the *Litany of the Eye of Horus* and by offerings lists . . . In corridor H, OM scenes 15–26 are inscribed on the left (including the entrance), while scenes 27–35 are inscribed on the right” (Hornung, *Tomb of Seti I*, 20–21; emphasis mine).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Hornung, *Tomb of Seti I*, pl. 103.

Scene no. 14



Scene no. 45

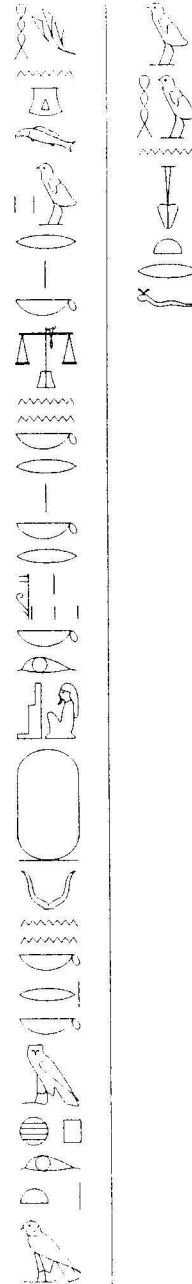


Fig. 6. Tomb of Seti I: Texts on the door jambs going into corridor II.

Scene no. 35



Scene no. 17

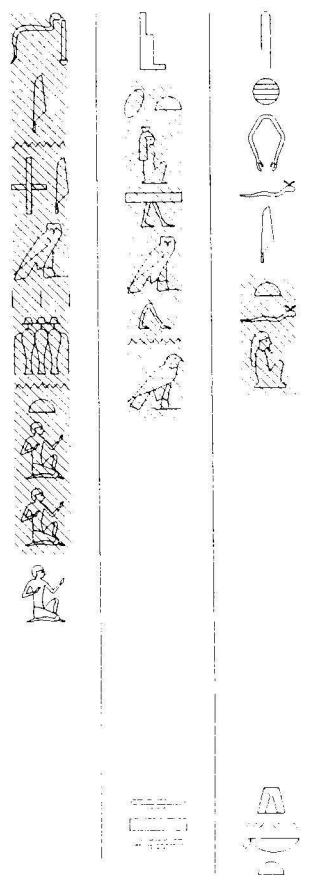


Fig. 7. Tomb of Seti I: Texts on the door jambs heading out of corridor H.

Thus, heading towards Seti's burial chamber, one would read scene no. 45 in its entirety starting with the inscriptions on the left thickness of the doorway leading into corridor H, then reading the inscriptions of the right thickness (fig. 6). Indeed, the inscriptions found on the jambs leading into corridor H are so similar<sup>60</sup> that one has to wonder whether their particular placement was intended to mark off various stages of the ritual as (the spirit of) the deceased, or the officiating priests passed from one corridor to another (figs. 6, 7). That the texts and iconographic themes found in the tomb

<sup>60</sup> Scene no. 17 reads: *shn ḥ.k*, while scene no. 14 has the slightly different *shn ḥ.k*. Cf. Hornung, *Tomb of Seti I*, pls. 103 and 110.

of Seti I were deliberately placed on specific sections of the walls of his tomb has been well documented.<sup>61</sup> The layout of these particular OM episodes should be no exception.

The Isis-Horus-Osiris scenes are not the only scenes that occur at diametrically opposed locations along Amenirdis's long walls. At its southern end, the East Wall concludes with a reference to the purifying effects of the Eye of Horus. A similar text describing the presentation of the Eye of Horus and the "water that is in it" occurs at the northern end of the West Wall. The implication of this particular layout of texts is that reciprocal and complementary relationships governed the layout of OM scenes in the chapel of Amenirdis.

Scene nos. 26 and 27 are the two OM episodes that deal most explicitly with the opening of the deceased's mouth. In the tomb of Seti I, these two scenes occur opposite each other at the end of corridor H.<sup>62</sup> Located innermost in the sequence of OM episodes inscribed for Seti, the two scenes mark one "end" of the ritual in this tomb.<sup>63</sup> Represented at the other end of the ritual, the grand offering list is inscribed on the right wall of corridor G. The offering list has traditionally been considered the conclusion of the ritual. In the tomb of Seti I, it is inscribed opposite scene 1 of the ritual, depicting Seti I seated before his offering table. Considered together, the two scenes seem to complement one another. The offering list explicitly details the offerings symbolically represented in front of Seti I. Thus, in the tomb of Seti I, the first and last scenes of the Opening of the Mouth ritual seem to be complementary in both meaning and function.

The scenes inscribed on Amenirdis's South Wall are similarly complementary in function. The western half of the South Wall contains the scene that most specifically deal with Amenirdis's Opening of the Mouth: no. 26. To the east of the central representation, scene nos. 2-5 deal with Amenirdis's ritual purification. Schulman has shown that on New Kingdom stelae depicting Opening of the Mouth ritual, scene no. 26 or no. 27 occurs in various combinations with select scenes depicting the ritual purification of the deceased. Because of space limitations on the stelae, only one scene of each category was chosen for inclusion.<sup>64</sup> For the libation/censing scenes, a scene from group A (scene nos. 2-7) or group B (scene nos. 57-75) was included such that their content was always complementary but never redundant. A similar combination is found on Amenirdis's South Wall. In the chapel of Amenirdis, the South Wall summed up the most important elements of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. As such, it may be argued that the South Wall comprised one ritualistic unit. In addition to omissions, repetitions and parallels, thematic continuity governed the layout of Amenirdis's Opening of the Mouth texts.

### 3.3. Thematic Continuity

Thematic continuity is quite clear along the eastern half of the chapel. Scene nos. 19-21, depicting the "*habilage du sem*," bridge the transition from the eastern half of the North Wall to the adjoining East Wall.<sup>65</sup> In these scenes, after the *sm*-priest is awakened, he puts on his panther-skin attire. Similar continuity can be observed for the transition from the southern part of the East Wall

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, E. Hornung, *Valley of the Kings: Horizon of Eternity*, trans. D. Lorton (New York: Timken Publishers, 1990), 41. R. H. Wilkinson, "Symbolic Location and Alignment in New Kingdom Royal Tombs and their Decoration," *JARCE* 31 (1994): 79-86 and id., "Symbolic Orientation and Alignment in New Kingdom Royal Tombs," in: *Valley of the Sun Kings: New Explorations in the Tombs of the Pharaohs. Papers from the University of Arizona International Conference on the Valley of the Kings*, ed. R. H. Wilkinson (Tucson: The University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition, 1995), 74.

<sup>62</sup> See note 45 above.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Hornung, *Tomb of Seti I*, pls. 118 and 119.

<sup>64</sup> Schulman, "'Opening of the Mouth' on Stelae," 181 for stela BM 1629 combining scene nos. 4-6 with no. 26; 187 for the stela of Ptahehheb combining scenes 7 and 26; and 191 for stela Bologna 1922 which combines scenes 2, 25, 26, 27, and 32.

<sup>65</sup> Goyon, *Rituels funéraires*, 120.



to the eastern part of the South Wall. In this instance, the governing theme is Amenirdis's ritual purity: on the East Wall she is purified by water (scene no. 6), while on the South Wall, incense is used to purify her (scene no. 5). Apart from the agent used to purify Amenirdis, the two scenes are identical. As shown by Blackman, water and natron have the same ritualistic function in temple and funerary ritual.<sup>66</sup>

A similarly obvious continuity also governed the layout of the texts inscribed at the southwestern corner of her chapel. Here, various gods are called upon to help revive Amenirdis: Shu in scene no. 27 inscribed at the southern end of the West Wall, and Anubis on the western half of the South Wall (scene no. 26). Since scene nos. 26 and 27 are both concerned with the opening of the mouth "proper," together they form a unit.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4. Progression of Amenirdis's Selection of OM Scenes

Being innermost in her chapel, the South Wall seems to have had the same symbolic function as the West Wall. The scene depicting her funerary repast carried the same symbolic function as the false door, becoming her gateway to the netherworld and the afterlife. Accordingly, OM scenes proceeded from the North Wall southward with the following sequence of events: (1) the ritual slaughter of an ox and the presentation of the foreleg; (2) using the foreleg and other instruments to open her mouth and revive her; (3) various gods aid Amenirdis in her ascent to the sky as she is being purified by water and natron; (4) and finally the funerary repast.

Evidence from other monuments further confirms this interpretation of the layout of Amenirdis' texts. That, in the Late Period, scene 23 I, depicting the ritual slaughter, was considered to mark the logical beginning of the Opening of the Mouth ritual is evident from the selection of OM episodes found in the Twenty-sixth dynasty tomb of Pedamenopet (TT 33). Since the first 22 scenes of the ceremony were omitted from the selection found in TT 33, scene 23-I has become the first episode of the Opening the Mouth ritual depicted in this tomb.<sup>68</sup> In TT 33, scene 23 is placed at the beginning (outermost section) of the left wall of Hall V.<sup>69</sup>

This particular order of texts is in line with the Egyptians' own understanding of where this rite took place. At funerals, the ritual slaughtering of an ox typically took place in front of the entrance to the tomb.<sup>70</sup> It is no wonder, then, that in the chapel of Amenirdis, the ritual slaughter scenes are represented on the walls adjacent to the entrance to her chapel. Moreover, this interpretation allows the ritual slaughter scenes depicted on the North Wall to precede the scenes depicting the presentation of the foreleg and the Opening of Amenirdis's Mouth. The suggested north-to-south progression

<sup>66</sup> Blackman, "Incense and Libations in Funerary and Temple Ritual," 75.

<sup>67</sup> Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 9.

<sup>68</sup> The version inscribed in TT 33 was included in Otto's study as Text no. 6. See Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 189–90 for the concordance of OM scenes.

<sup>69</sup> J. Dümichen, *Der Grabpalast des Patuamenap in der thebanischen Nekropolis*. II (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1885), pl. I; PM I.1, 50–56, see especially p. 53 for description of the scenes in Hall V (the corridor where OM episodes appear in TT 33).

<sup>70</sup> H. Altenmüller refers to a passage from the story of Sinuhe that describes the funeral in R. Germer, *Mummies: Life and Death in Ancient Egypt* (Munich: Prestel, 1997), 36. The relevant line reads: "There will be a slaughter at the entrance of your tomb" (emphasis mine). Old Kingdom representations of the Egyptian funeral often show the slaughter taking place in front of the tomb. See J. A. Wilson, "Funeral Service of the Egyptian Old Kingdom," *JNES* 3 (1944): 213 for the scenes occurring in the fourth dynasty tomb of Debelmi at Giza. Oddly this scene is represented in the middle of the version inscribed in the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100). There, Opening of the Mouth scenes, which are inscribed on the western half of the North Wall of his passage, are arranged in 7 registers. The sequence of scenes progresses from the eastern end of the bottom register to the western end of the uppermost register. The slaughter episode occurs twice in the tomb of Rekhmire. Once at the eastern end of the third register (scenes 23 I–24) and another time on the fourth register (scenes 43–44). See N. De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes II* (New York: Arno Press, 1973 reprint of 1913), pls. CVI–CVII; and Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, abb. 1.

solves Otto's problematic assumption that for certain Opening of the Mouth scenes, the slaughter was "presupposed."<sup>71</sup>

Other scenes in TT 33 also support the proposed sequence for the chapel of Amenirdis. Representations of the funerary repast retrieved from this tomb are found at the innermost end of the same wall in Hall V. There, Pedamenopet is depicted seated before his offering table, where in addition to all kinds of food offerings, knives and various other implements used in the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth are depicted.<sup>72</sup>

The proposed sequence of Amenirdis's Opening of the Mouth episodes is also essentially the same as the sequence found in the demotic manuscripts of the book of *Opening the Mouth for Breathing*. In both, the "[r]econstitution of the individual . . . and reanimation of his limbs"<sup>73</sup> occur before the presentation of offerings. According to Smith:

Participation in the offering meal is itself a social act and, in sacramental terms, the presentation of such a repast is a symbol of the process of social reintegration which the deceased is supposed to undergo.<sup>74</sup>

It is at her offering table that Amenirdis is first depicted, not as a statue or a mummy, but in the more dynamic posture of extending an arm towards the food. It is here that the process of her reanimation is finally complete. After all the purifications, incantations and rituals, she is finally able to eat the food offered her.

## 5. Conclusions

This particular understanding of the layout of Amenirdis's texts implies that her selections from the Opening of the Mouth were meant to be read, or recited, concurrently, rather than sequentially. After walking across the chapel's courtyard, a contingent of priests would split into two groups, possibly just in front of the *cella*. Each group would then proceed in one direction, right or left, reading the texts, inscribed in retrograde as they encountered them (i.e., in the order in which they occur on her walls). The two groups would finally meet in front of the South Wall where the ritual culminates (fig. 8).

It has been suggested that "the [Opening of the Mouth] ritual . . . changed and evolved over the centuries of its use."<sup>75</sup> Examining how the ritual was used in Third Intermediate and Late Period monuments provides us with, not just with an understanding of how the ritual evolved, but also with valuable insight into the ancient Egyptians' own interpretation of the ritual. The scribes/priests who chose which scenes to include in this chapel as well as determined their layout on the chapel's various walls definitely had a clearer understanding of the ritual than we do. It may be more prudent to follow their interpretation of the ritual than to rely on our own (mis)conceptions of Egyptian ritual practice.

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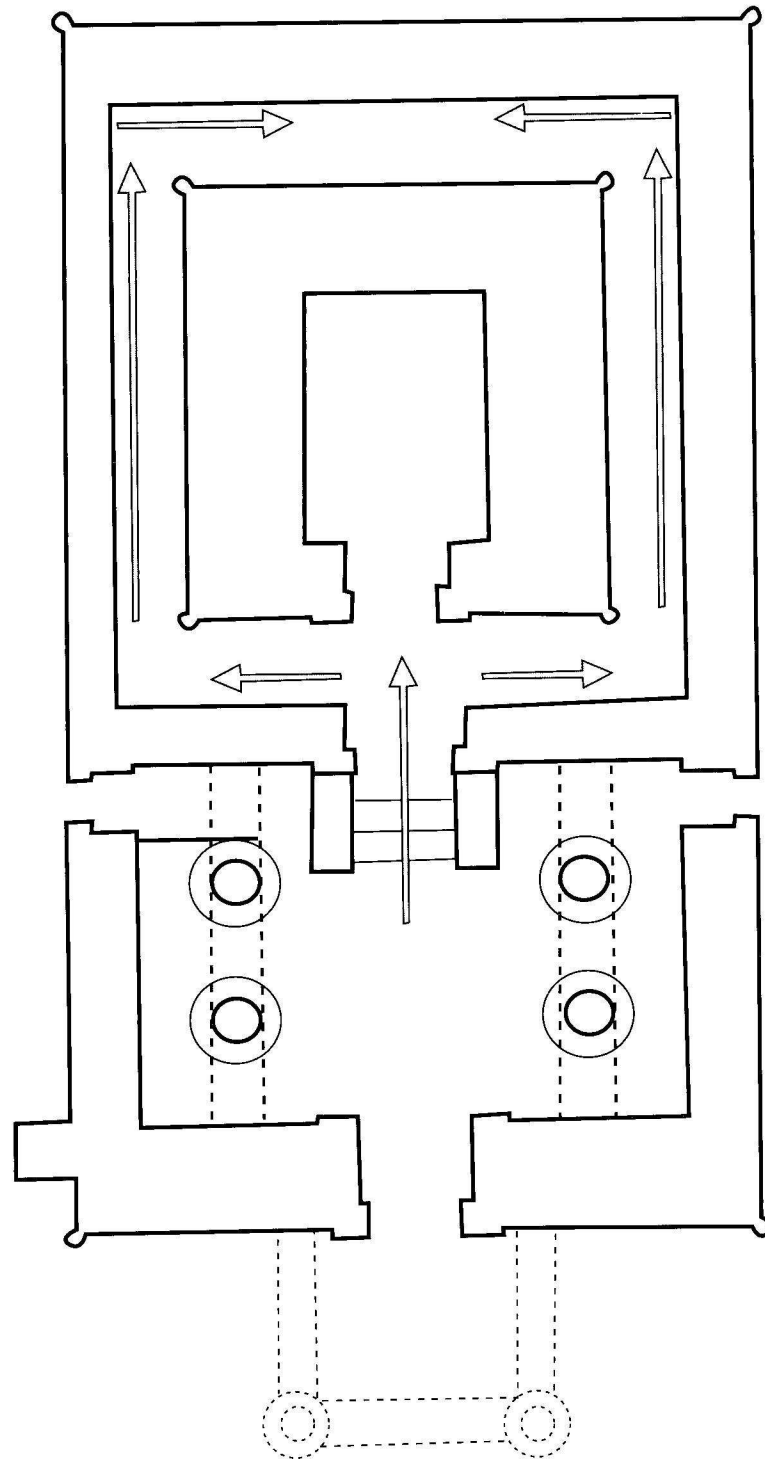
<sup>71</sup> Cf. Otto, *Mundöffnungsritual* II, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Dümichen, *Der Grabpalast des Patuamenap* II, pl. XIV. The inclusion of OM implements among the offerings presented to the deceased is also attested on New Kingdom stelae. See Schulman, "'Opening of the Mouth' on Stelae," 173.

<sup>73</sup> M. Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1993), 7–8. While p. Berlin 8351 and p. Louvre E 10607 both share these two elementary themes, the former also includes passages on the "reintegration of the individual into the cosmos" (*idem*, *Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, 10).

<sup>74</sup> Smith, *Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, 8.

<sup>75</sup> A. M. Roth, "Opening of the Mouth," in: *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 605–9, at 606.



*Fig. 8. Ceremonial progression of the Opening of the Mouth ritual in the Chapel of Amenirdis.*

Plate 1. Texts of the North Wall

a. North wall, eastern half

Nw17 Nw17  
-<202>   
 Nw16 Nw16  
-<201>   
 Nw15 Nw15  
-<200>   
 Nw14 Nw14  
-<199>   
 Nw13 Nw13  
-<198>   
 Nw12 Nw12  
-<197>   
 Nw11 Nw11  
-<196>   
 Nw10 Nw10  
-<195>   
 Nw9 Nw9  
-<194>   
 Nw8 Nw8  
-<193>   
 Nw7 Nw7  
-<192>   
 Nw6 Nw6  
-<191>   
 Nw5 Nw5  
-<190>   
 Nw4 Nw4  
-<189>   
 Nw3 Nw3  
-<188>   
 Nw2 Nw2  
-<187>   
 Nw1 Nw1  
-<186>

b. North wall, western half

Ne1 Ne1  
-<185>   
 Ne2 Ne2  
-<184>   
 Ne3 Ne3  
-<183>   
 Ne4 Ne4  
-<182>   
 Ne5 Ne5  
-<181>   
 Ne6 Ne6  
-<180>   
 Ne7 Ne7  
-<179>   
 Ne8 Ne8  
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 Ne9 Ne9  
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 Ne10 Ne10  
-<176>   
 Ne11 Ne11  
-<175>   
 Ne12 Ne12  
-<174>   
 Ne13 Ne13  
-<173>   
 Ne14 Ne14  
-<172>   
 Ne15 Ne15  
-<171>   
 Ne16 Ne16  
-<170>   
 Ne18 Ne18  
-<169>

Plate 1. OM Texts on the North Wall (a: Eastern Half; b: Western Half)

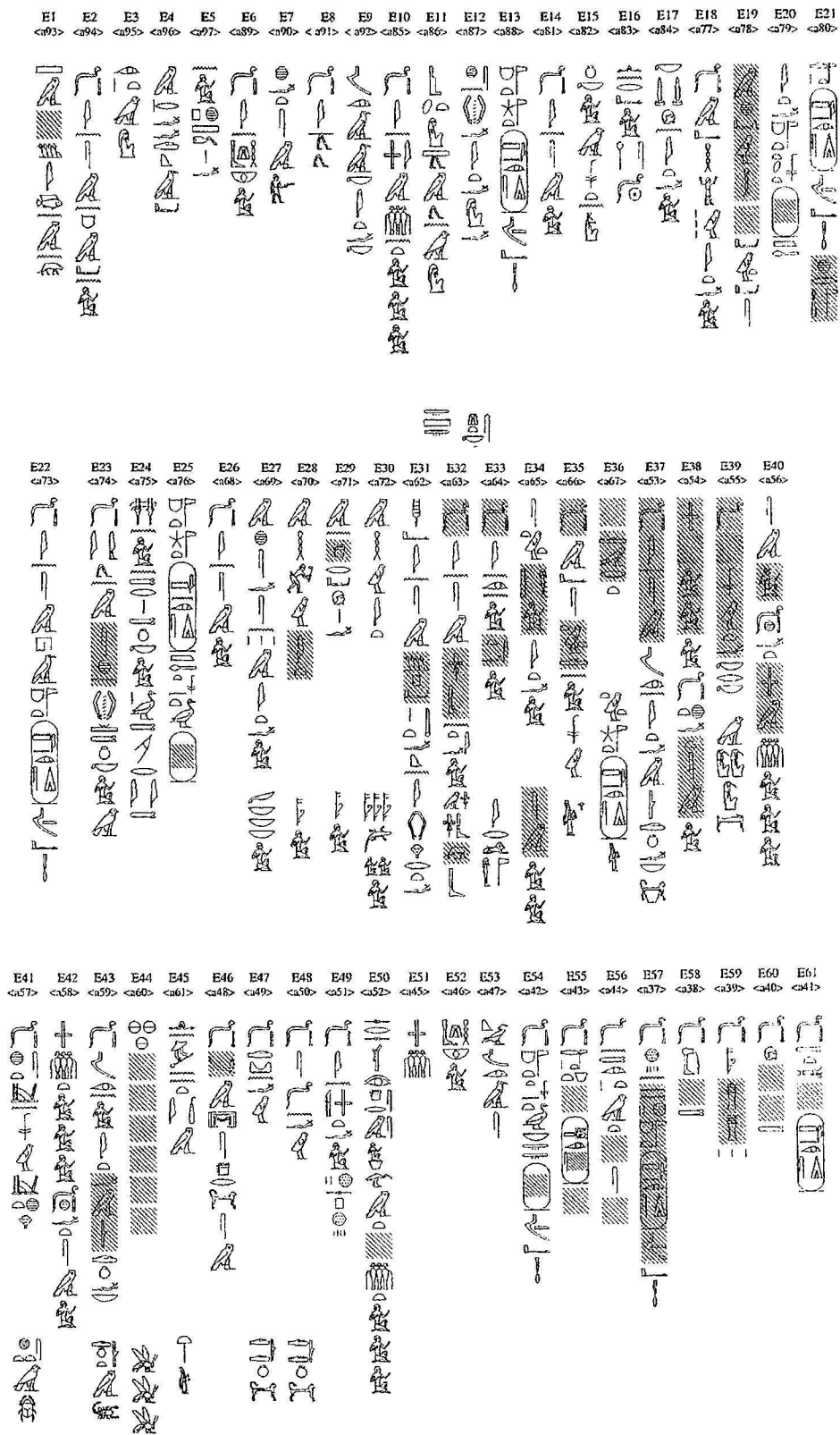


Plate 2. OM Texts on the East Wall

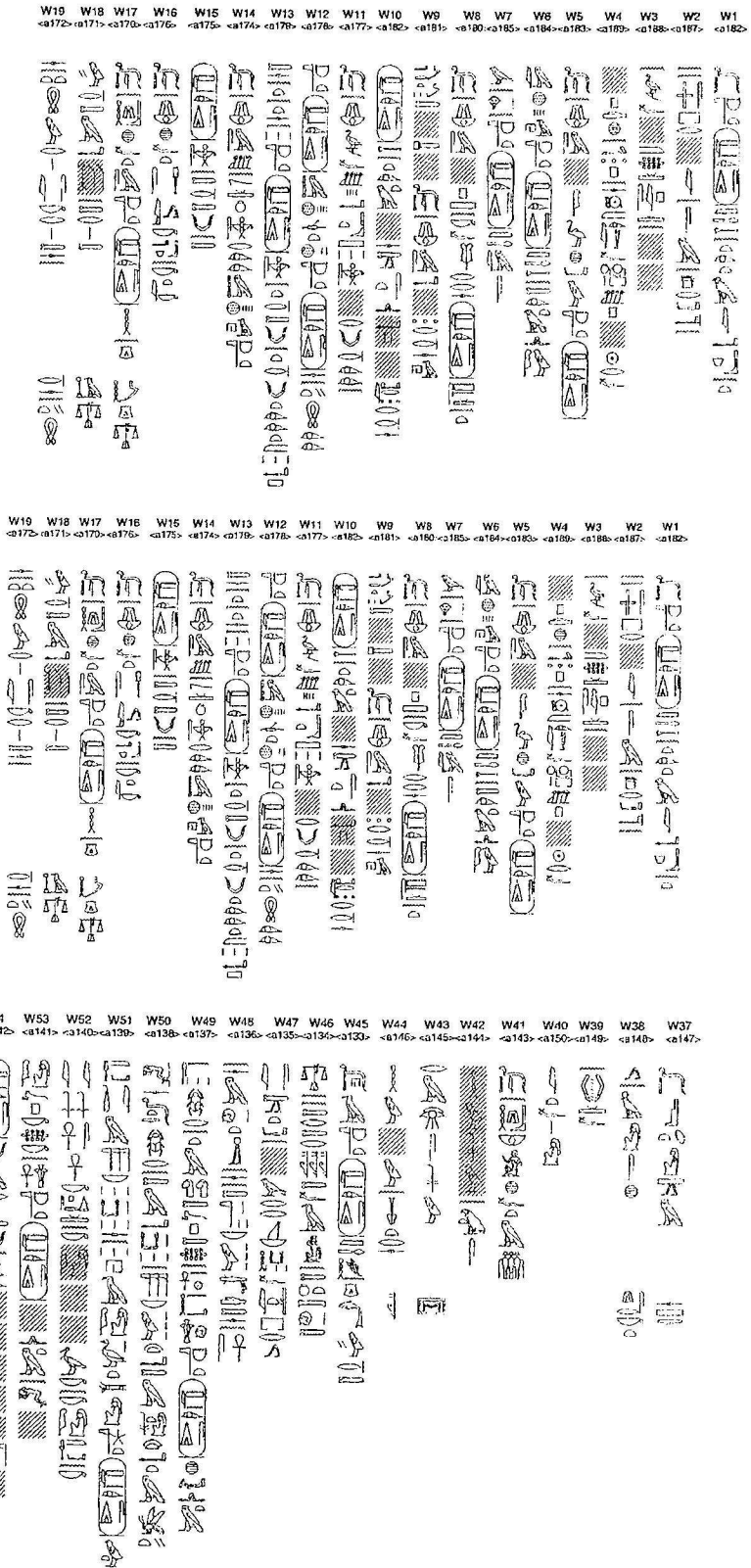
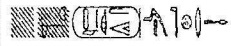
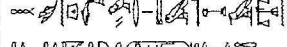
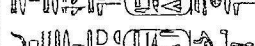



Plate 3. OMI Texts on the West Wall


b. South wall, western half


Sw1 SW1 <1121> 

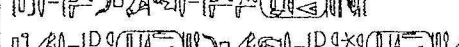
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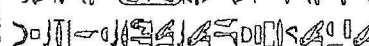
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Sw4 <1124> 

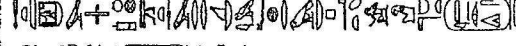
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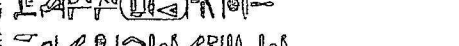
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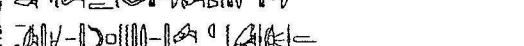
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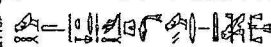
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Sw9 <1129> 

Sw10 <1130> 

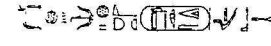
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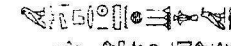
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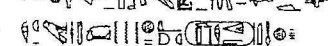
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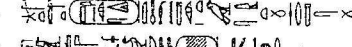
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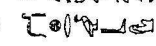
a. South wall, eastern half

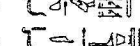
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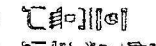
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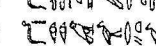
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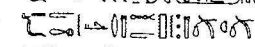
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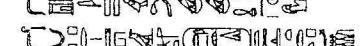
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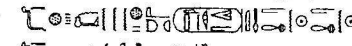
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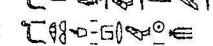
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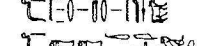
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Sw11 <1145> 

Sw12 <1146> 

Sw13 <1147> 

Sw14 <1148> 


Sw15 <1149> 

Plate 4. OM Texts on the South Wall