

# The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth

by Joshua Aaron Roberson

Wilbour Studies



Brown University

Department of Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies

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# THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BOOKS OF THE EARTH



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Die Finsternis vertrieben  
durch verzehrende Glut.  
Durch Gefahr führt unser Weg  
und Bilder von Bestien.  
Überall reißt die Erde auf  
Selbst in die Unterwelt dringt durch Spalten Licht,  
versetzt die Herrscher in Angst und Schrecken.  
—Einstürzende Neubauten, *Sonnenbarke*

So dark and deep and nebulous it was,  
Try as I might to force my sight below,  
I could not see the shape of anything.  
“Let us descend into the sightless world,”  
began the poet (his face was deathly pale):  
“I will go first, and you will follow me.”  
—Dante, *Inferno*, Canto IV.13–15



# CONTENTS

List of Figures, Tables, and Plates	xi
Acknowledgements	xix
Abbreviations	xxi
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	
§1.1 General Remarks	1
§1.2 Underworld Books	3
§1.3 The Designation of “The Book of the Earth”	4
§1.4 Definition of the Corpus	6
§1.5 Outline of Sources	9
§1.6 Content and Internal Structure of the Book	11
§1.7 The Notational System Used in the Present Study	12
<b>CHAPTER 2: ARCHITECTURE</b>	
§2.1 Development of the Royal Tomb in the Valley of the Kings	15
§2.2 Underworld Cosmology and Architecture	16
§2.3 Considerations on the Evolution of the Ramesside Royal Tomb: Precursors and Prototypes	19
§2.4 Internal Orientation in the Mature Ramesside Royal Tomb	24
§2.5 Catalogue of Monuments	27
2.5.1 The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos	28
2.5.2 Merneptah (KV8)	32
2.5.3 Tawosret (KV14)	34
2.5.4 Ramesses III (KV11)	35
2.5.5 Ramesses IV (KV2)	37
2.5.6 Ramesses VI (KV9)	39
2.5.7 Ramesses VII (KV1)	42
2.5.8 Ramesses IX (KV6)	43
2.5.9 Osorkon II (NRT1)	45
2.5.10 Pedamenopet (TT33)	47
2.5.11 Mutirdis (TT410)	49
2.5.12 Padihorresnet (TT196)	51



2.5.13	Padineith (TT197)	52
2.5.14	Horira'a (Saqqara, Lepsius 23)	54
§2.6	The Symbolic Significance of the Ramesside Sarcophagus Chamber as <i>akhet</i> and Divine Birth Station	55
§2.7	Excursus: The Sarcophagi	59
<b>CHAPTER 3: ORTHOGRAPHY</b>		
§3.1	General Remarks	65
§3.2	Orthographic Variation among Individual Signs	66
§3.3	Phonetic Change	67
3.3.1	Consonantal Shift	68
3.3.2	Omission of Unpronounced Consonants	71
3.3.3	Omission/Coalescence of Semivowels	72
§3.4	Adaptations from the Hieratic	74
3.4.1	𓂏, from 𓂏	75
3.4.2	𓂏/𓂏, from 𓂏	77
3.4.3	𓂏, from 𓂏	78
§3.5	Shape Substitutions	79
§3.6	Superfluous Signs	80
3.6.1	Plural Strokes	80
3.6.2	Superfluous <i>w</i> , <i>j</i> , <i>y</i> , and <i>t</i>	82
3.6.3	Unusual Verbal Morphology	83
§3.7	Miscellaneous	86
3.7.1	<i>Pars pro toto</i> Substitutions	86
3.7.2	Class Substitutions	88
3.7.3	Perturbation	92
§3.8	Cryptography	93
3.8.1	General Remarks	93
3.8.2	Sources	94
3.8.3	Substitution Mechanisms	94
3.8.4	Complete List of Enigmatic Sign Values	96
<b>CHAPTER 4: GRAMMAR</b>		
§4.1	General Remarks	101
§4.2	The Introductory Formula <i>nn (n) ntr.w m shr pn</i>	101
§4.3	Pronouns	105
4.3.1	The Proclitic Pronoun Construction ( <i>sw sdm=f / sn sdm=sn</i> )	105
4.3.2	The <i>sn r=sn</i> Construction	107
4.3.3	Demonstrative Pronouns and Adjectives	111
§4.4	Prepositions <i>ht(w)</i> and <i>m-ht</i>	115
§4.5	The Proclitic Particle <i>tf</i>	117
§4.6	Circumstantial <i>sdm=f</i>	119
§4.7	Noun + <i>sdm=f</i> Construction	120
§4.8	<i>sdm.hr=f</i>	124
§4.9	Subject + Stative vs. Pseudo-Verbal Construction	126

<b>CHAPTER 5: THE VIGNETTES</b>	
§5.1	General Remarks 129
§5.2	Catalogue of Scenes 133
§5.3	The Merneptah Template 293
§5.4	The Aker Group 295
<b>CHAPTER 6: THE TEXTS</b>	
§6.1	General Remarks 301
§6.2	The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos 303
§6.3	Merneptah 307
§6.4	Tawosret 308
§6.5	Ramesses III 310
§6.6	Ramesses IV 315
§6.7	Ramesses VI 316
§6.8	Ramesses VII 383
§6.9	Ramesses IX 389
§6.10	Twenty-First Dynasty Mythological Papyri 404
6.10.1	Djedkhonsuiusankh (Louvre 3276) 404
6.10.2	Khonsumes (Bibliothèque Nationale EG 153–54) 408
§6.11	Osorkon II 416
§6.12	Pedamenopet 417
§6.13	Mutirdis 427
§6.14	Padineith 432
§6.15	Horira'a 436
§6.16	Sarcophagus of Nakhtnebef (Berlin 7) 440
§6.17	Sarcophagus of Tjahorpta (CG 29306) 442
§6.18	Sarcophagi Inscribed on the Model of Ramesses III 447
<b>CHAPTER 7: CLOSING REMARKS</b>	
§7.1	The Internal Structure of the Books of the Earth 455
§7.2	Date of Composition 457
§7.3	The Original Function of the Books of the Earth, from the Later New Kingdom (Dynasties 19–20) 459
§7.4	The History and Evolution of the Books of the Earth from the Third Intermediate Period and Later 461
Appendix 1, Tables	463
Appendix 2, Black and White Plates	469
Appendix 3, Text Plates	509
Bibliography	541
Indices	557



# LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES, AND PLATES

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## FIGURES

### Chapter 2

Figs. 2.1–4	Axial evolution in the Valley of the Kings (tomb plans courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	17
Fig. 2.5	Plan and section of the “Amduat Tomb” of Senwosret III at Abydos (after Wegner 2009a, fig. 7).	20
Fig. 2.6	Clockwise rotation of the internal (symbolic) axis of decoration.	26
Fig. 2.7	Plan of the cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos (after Frankfort <i>et al.</i> 1933, 2:plate 1). Reproduced by permission of the Egyptian Exploration Society.	29
Fig. 2.8	Plan and section of the monumental “sarcophagus” in the cenotaph of Seti I, local direction indicated (wall with BE marked as ‘X’; after Frankfort <i>et al.</i> 1933, 2:plate 3). Reproduced by permission of the Egyptian Exploration Society.	30
Fig 2.9	Relative locations of Books of Nut and Night in the cenotaph of Seti I, internal (symbolic) alignment indicated (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; after Frankfort <i>et al.</i> 1933, 2:plate 3).	31
Fig. 2.10	KV8 sarcophagus chamber and adjoining rooms, minor axis indicated (wall with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	33
Fig. 2.11	KV14 sarcophagus chamber, minor axis indicated (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	35
Fig. 2.12	KV11 sarcophagus chamber and adjoining rooms, minor axis indicated (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	37
Fig. 2.13	KV2 sarcophagus chamber and adjoining rooms (lintel with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	38
Fig. 2.14	KV9 sarcophagus chamber and adjoining rooms, minor axis indicated (walls and pillars with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	40
Fig. 2.15	Organization of scenes on the pillars (faces with BE circled). Grayed areas indicate unexcavated/unfinished pillar faces, wholly or partially attached to the parent wall.	41
Fig. 2.16	KV1 sarcophagus chamber and adjoining room (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	42

Fig. 2.17	KV6, sarcophagus chamber (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; tomb plan courtesy of the Theban Mapping Project).	44
Fig. 2.18	NRT1 tomb plan (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; after P. Montet 1947, plate 5). Reproduced by permission of the Mission Française des Fouilles de Tanis.	46
Fig. 2.19	TT33 tomb plan (wall with BE marked as ‘X’; after <i>PM</i> I, 1:65). Reproduced by permission of the Griffith Institute.	48
Fig. 2.20	TT410 tomb plan (wall with BE marked as ‘X’; after Assmann 1977, plate 46).	51
Fig. 2.21	TT410 Chamber I, east wall overview (after Assmann 1977, fig. 28).	52
Fig. 2.22	TT196 tomb plan (wall with BE marked as ‘X’; after Graefe 2003, 2:17, fig. 16). Reproduced by permission of the Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth.	53
Fig. 2.23	TT197 tomb plan (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; adapted by the author from <i>PM</i> I, 1:196). The eastern stairway and side room with Earth scenes have been added to the plan by the author and are not to scale. Reproduced by permission of the Griffith Institute.	54
Fig. 2.24	Lepsius 23 (Saqqara) tomb plan (walls with BE marked as ‘X’; after Lepsius 1897, 1:175).	55
Fig. 2.25	Ideal organization of the Ramesside “ <i>akhet-style</i> ” burial chamber as a <i>perpetuum mobile</i> model of the cosmos.	57
Fig. 2.26	Sarcophagus variant A (Ramesses III, interior sides).	62
Fig. 2.27	Sarcophagus variant B (Ramesses IV, exterior sides).	62

## Chapter 5

Fig. 5.1	Aker beneath the Solar Barque 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI).	132
Fig. 5.2	Aker beneath the Solar Barque 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 89). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	135
Fig. 5.3	Aker Group 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 102). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	139
Fig. 5.4	Aker Group 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, figs. 104–105). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	143
Fig. 5.5	Aker Group 3 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 101). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	146
Fig. 5.5b	Aker Group 3, additional figures (funerary papyrus of Djedkhonsuiusankh).	155
Fig. 5.6	Aker Group 4 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 105). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	157
Fig. 5.7	Aker Group 5 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 106). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	158
Fig. 5.8	Aker Group 6 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	160
Fig. 5.9	Aker Group 7 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	163
Fig. 5.10	Aker Group 8 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	165
Fig. 5.11	The <i>ba</i> of Re in its disc (tomb of Ramesses VII).	167
Fig. 5.12	Bent sunshades and mourning deities (tomb of Ramesses VII).	169

Fig. 5.13	The birth of the corpse of Osiris (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, figs. 114–15). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	171
Fig. 5.14	The birth of Horus 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 116). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	173
Fig. 5.15	The birth of Horus 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	174
Fig. 5.16	The birth of Khepri 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 119). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	175
Fig. 5.17	The birth of Khepri 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 122). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	177
Fig. 5.18	The birth of Khepri 3 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	178
Fig. 5.19	The birth of the hours 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 95). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	181
Fig. 5.20	The birth of the hours 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 94). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	189
Fig. 5.21	Concealing the arm of the westerner (tomb of Ramesses VII).	191
Fig. 5.22	Concluding representation 1 (Caverns <i>Schlussbild</i> , modified; tomb of Tawosret).	193
Fig. 5.23	Concluding representation 2 (tomb of Ramesses VII).	196
Fig. 5.24	The corpses of Tatenen and Nun (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 97). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	197
Fig. 5.25	Creation of the solar disc 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 111). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	199
Fig. 5.26	Creation of the solar disc 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 98). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	202
Fig. 5.27	Creation of the solar disc 3 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 93). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	204
Fig. 5.28	The crocodile who guards the solar corpse (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	207
Fig. 5.29	The crocodile who gives birth to the sun (tomb of Ramesses IX).	211
Fig. 5.30	The damned 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 123). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	213
Fig. 5.31	The damned 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 124). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	215
Fig. 5.32	The damned 3 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 125). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	217
Fig. 5.33	The damned 4 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	219
Fig. 5.34	The Eye of Re burning in its Sarcophagus (tomb of Ramesses VII).	220
Fig. 5.35	Fire demons with Ram-headed attendants (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 121). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	221
Fig. 5.36	The flesh of Khepri, encircled by hydra- <i>ouroboros</i> (Amduat, Sixth Hour; tomb of Ramesses IX).	222
Fig. 5.37	Four gods minister to the corpse of Osiris (tomb of Ramesses VII).	223
Fig. 5.38	Goddesses of the hours (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 90). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	224

Fig. 5.39	Guiding the mysteries of Osiris (Book of Caverns, First Division; tomb of Ramesses IX).	225
Fig. 5.40	Greeting the disc, "Great of Shadow" (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 99). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	227
Fig. 5.41	The head and neck of Re (sarcophagus of Djedhor 1).	229
Fig. 5.42	The heart and eyes of Horus (tomb of Ramesses IX).	229
Fig. 5.43	Human-headed Stakes (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	230
Fig. 5.44	Imsety, Hapy, and Duamutef with three minor goddesses (tomb of Ramesses VI).	231
Fig. 5.45	The inundation of Nun (tomb of Ramesses III; after J.-F. Champollion 1884, 422–23).	233
Fig. 5.46	Ministering to Khepri (tomb of Ramesses IX).	235
Fig. 5.47	Mound scene 1 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 100). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	237
Fig. 5.48	Mound scene 2 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 120). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	238
Fig. 5.49	Mound scene 3 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	239
Fig. 5.50	Mound scene 4 (tomb of Ramesses VII).	240
Fig. 5.51	Mound scene 5 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 88). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	241
Fig. 5.52	Mound scene 6 (tomb of Ramesses IX).	245
Fig. 5.53	Mound scene 7 (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	246
Fig. 5.54	Mourning women over a sarcophagus (tomb of Ramesses IX).	247
Fig. 5.55	Mummiform deities with discs (tomb of Ramesses VI).	248
Fig. 5.56a	The mysterious lady (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 112). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	255
Fig. 5.56b	Sarcophagus lid of Siptah (after Burton 1916, 14, fig. 2).	255
Fig. 5.57	Naru-demons and Aker (sarcophagus of Djedhor 2).	257
Fig. 5.58	Osiride figures presented with discs (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	259
Fig. 5.59	Praising the <i>ba</i> of Re in its disc (tomb of Ramesses VII).	259
Fig. 5.60	Praising the great god (tomb of Ramesses IX).	259
Fig. 5.61	Praising ram 1 (tomb of Ramesses IX).	261
Fig. 5.62	Praising ram 2 (tomb of Ramesses VII).	261
Fig. 5.63	Prone mummies atop sarcophagi, with attendants (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	262
Fig. 5.64	Prone Mummies in Upright Sarcophagi (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	264
Fig. 5.65a	Ram-headed solar bird (tomb of Tawosret).	265
Fig. 5.65b	The " <i>ba</i> of Re" (tomb of Siptah).	265
Fig. 5.66	Raising the <i>ba</i> of Osiris (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 117). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	267
Fig. 5.67	Raising Hathor (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 118). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	268

Fig. 5.68	Re-Osiris and the hours (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 89). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	269
Fig. 5.69	Re-Osiris encircled by a Serpent (tomb of Ramesses III; after Lefébure 1886–90, 2: plate 58).	272
Fig. 5.70	Re-Osiris flanked by four gods (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 92). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	274
Fig. 5.71	Serpent guardian (tomb of Ramesses IX).	277
Fig. 5.72	She Who Annihilates (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 126). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	277
Fig. 5.73	Shrewnices greet the Sun God (tomb of Ramesses IX).	278
Fig. 5.74	Shrine of Osiris with the damned (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 357). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	280
Fig. 5.75	Standing mummies in upright sarcophagi (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	284
Fig. 5.76	Stretching Apep (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 137). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	287
Fig. 5.77	Two gods in one sarcophagus (tomb of Ramesses VI; after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	288
Fig. 5.78	Two gods praise the solar disc (tomb of Ramesses VI). Left: variant A (pillar 3a); right: variant B (pillar 2b).	291
Fig. 5.79	Two gods within the solar disc 1 (tomb of Ramesses VII).	292
Fig. 5.80	Two gods within the solar disc 2 (tomb of Ramesses VII).	292
Fig. 5.3.1	The Merneptah template.	294
Figs. 5.4.1–8	The Aker group.	296–97

## TABLES

### Chapter 1

Table 1.1.	Sources for the Books of the Earth.	10
Table 1.2.	Location of scenes and texts by letter designation and their correspondences in previous literature.	13

### Chapter 3

Table 3.4.1.	Occurrences of <i>sz</i> .	76
Table 3.6.3.	Occurrences of <i>sz(z)</i> .	85
Table 3.7.2.	Noncryptic class substitutions.	89
Table 3.8.4.	Enigmatic sign values in the Book of the Earth.	97

### Appendix 1

Table 1.	Seriation of Earth scenes.	464
Table 2.	Concordance of text plates in Piankoff 1953.	467



Table 3.	Concordance of Book of the Earth texts in Hornung 1990b.	468
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## PLATES

### Appendix 2, Black and White Plates

*All scene and text numbers are those of the present study (see chs. 5–6).*

Plate 1	Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos, final transverse chamber, west wall (after Frankfort, de Buck, and Gunn 1933, 2:pl. 87). Reproduced by permission of the Egypt Exploration Society.	471
Plate 2	KV14, Tawosret, sarcophagus chamber, left wall.	472
Plate 3	Tawosret, sarcophagus chamber, right wall.	473
Plate 4	KV11, Ramesses III, sarcophagus chamber, right wall (after Champollion 1884, 422–33). Scenes 25 (above) and 45 (below).	474
Plate 5a	Ramesses III, sarcophagus chamber, left wall, far right (after Lefébure 1886–90, 2:plate 58). Scenes 69 (top, left) and 56 (below), with apotropaic demons at top, right (all figures now destroyed).	475
Plate 5b	Right wall, far left (after Lefébure 1886–90, 2:plate 58). Scenes 55 (top, right) and 70 (below), with apotropaic demons at top, left (all figures now destroyed).	475
Plate 6	KV2, Ramesses IV, Room I, rear lintel (after Lefébure 1886–90, 3:plate 40). Scene 2.	476
Plate 7	KV9, Ramesses VI, sarcophagus chamber, left wall (after Piankoff 1954, figs. 110–127). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	477
Plate 8	Ramesses VI, sarcophagus chamber, rear wall, engaged columns, left (after Piankoff 1954, fig. 109). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	478
Plate 9	Ramesses VI, sarcophagus chamber, right wall (after Piankoff 1954, figs. 88–107). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	479
Plate 10	Ramesses VI, sarcophagus chamber, rear wall, engaged columns, right (after Piankoff 1954, fig. 108). Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	480
Plate 11	KV1, Ramesses VII, sarcophagus chamber, left wall.	481
Plate 12	Ramesses VII, sarcophagus chamber, right wall.	482
Plate 13	KV6, Ramesses IX, sarcophagus chamber, left wall.	483
Plate 14	Ramesses IX, sarcophagus chamber, right wall.	484
Plate 15a	Hieratic text R9.B.1.29.6 (after Lefébure 1886–90, 2:plate 18).	485
Plate 15b	Hieratic text R9.B.2.36.10 (after Lefébure 1886–90, 2:plate 18).	485
Plate 16	Hieratic text R9.B.2.19.8 + captions (after Lefébure 1886–90, 2:plate 19).	486
Plate 17	Hieratic text R9.B.2.19.7 + captions (after Lefébure 1886–90, 2:plate 19).	487
Plate 18a	Funerary papyrus of Djedkhonsuiusankh (Louvre 3276).	488
Plate 18b	Djedkhonsuiusankh, continued.	488
Plate 19a	Djedkhonsuiusankh, continued.	489
Plate 19b	Djedkhonsuiusankh, conclusion.	489
Plate 20a	Funerary papyrus of Khonsumes (Bibliothèque Nationale 153).	490
Plate 20b	Khonsumes, continued.	490
Plate 21a	NRT1, Osorkon II, entrance chamber, right wall (after Montet 1947, 57, fig. 16). Scene 26. Reproduced by permission of Philippe Broussaud, Mission Française des Fouilles de Tanis. Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	491

Plate 21b	NRT1, Osorkon II, entrance chamber, left wall (Montet 1947, 56, fig. 15). Scene 27. Reproduced by permission of Princeton University Press.	491
Plate 22	NRT1, Osorkon II, crypt 3, left wall (after Montet 1947, plate 37). Scene 51. Reproduced by permission of the Mission Française des Fouilles de Tanis.	492
Plate 23	TT33, Pedamenopet, Corridor XIII, easternmost wall.	493
Plate 24	Pedamenopet, continued.	494
Plate 25	Pedamenopet, continued.	495
Plate 26	Pedamenopet, conclusion.	496
Plate 27	TT410, Mutirdis, Chamber I, east wall (after Assmann 1977, plate 25).	497
Plate 28	Mutirdis, continued (after Assmann 1977, plate 26). Scene 51.	498
Plate 29a	Mutirdis, continued (after Assmann 1977, plate 27). Scenes 70 (?) and 45.	499
Plate 29b	Mutirdis, conclusion (after Assmann 1977, plate 27). Scene 55.	499
Plate 30	TT197, Padineith, unnumbered chamber, rear wall, left. Scene 5.	500
Plate 31	Padineith, unnumbered chamber, left wall.	501
Plate 32	Padineith, unnumbered chamber, left wall, conclusion. Scene 22.	502
Plate 33	Lepsius 23 (Saqqara), Horira'a, Chamber A, west wall (after Lepsius, 1842–45, part 3, 280c).	503
Plate 34a	Cartonnage pectoral, Dynasty 28 (after Quibell 1898, plate 28), including scene 19 (top, right) plus miscellaneous Book of the Dead and other mythological scenes.	504
Plate 34b	Pectoral detail, top right.	504
Plate 35	Sarcophagus of Nakhtnebef (Berlin 7; after Dümichen 1984–94, plate 27). Scenes 5 and 6.	505
Plate 36a	Sarcophagus Djedhor 2 (CG 29307), foot end, Book of Gates introductory tableau.	506
Plate 36b	Sarcophagus of Djedhor 2 (CG 29307), head end. Scene 26.	506
Plate 37a–b	Sarcophagus of Djedhor 2 (CG 29307), left and right sides.	507
Plate 38a	Funerary papyrus of Gautsushen (MMA 25.3.31), right half.	508
Plate 38b	Middle Kingdom apotropaic knife with Underworld iconography (British Museum 18175)	508

### Appendix 3, Text Plates: Interlinear Transcription of Parallel Sources

Plate 1	Cenotaph.3; R6.B.1.2.43; Tjahorpta.3.	511
Plate 2	Cenotaph.4; R9.B.2.75.12.	512
Plate 3	Tutankhamun annotation; Cenotaph.5; R9.B.2.75.13, cols. 1–7.	513
Plate 4	M.B.1.22.1–3; T.B.1.22.1–3; R3.B.1.22.4–6.	514
Plate 5	R3.B.1.25.8; R6.A.1.25.5.	515
Plate 6	R6.A.1.25.4; R6.A.1.74.12.	516
Plate 7	R6.A.1.25.6; R6.A.1.25.7.	517
Plate 8	R6.B.1.38.44; Tjahorpta.1.	518
Plate 9	R6.B.1.38.45, cols. 21–24; R6.B.2.19.53; R9.B.2.19.7–8.	519
Plate 10	R6.B.1.38.46; R6.B.2.20.54.	520
Plate 11	R6.B.1.51.47; O.A.1.51.1.	521
Plate 12	R6.B.1.51.49; R6.B.3.26.60; Mt.A.2.51.7.	522
Plate 13	R6.B.1.51.49; Mt.A.2.51.7 (conclusion).	523
Plate 14	R6.B.1.68.50; R6.B.1.68.51.	524

Plate 15	R6.B.3.40.62; R6.B.3.47.63.	525
Plate 16	R6.B.4.3.65, row 1; Kh.2.3.6; Pa.B.2.3.10; H.B.1.3.1.	526
Plate 17	Kh.2.3.6; H.B.1.3.1 (conclusion).	527
Plate 18	R6.B.4.5.68; Pa.B.3.5.12.	528
Plate 19	R6.B2.1.75.77; R9.B.2.75.13, cols. 14–17.	529
Plate 20	R6.B2.1.77.78; Pa.B.1.77.9.	530
Plate 21	R6.B2.2.10.80; Tjahorpta.2, cols. 3–21.	531
Plate 22	R6.B2.2.10.80; Tjahorpta.2, cols. 3–21 (conclusion).	532
Plate 23	R7.A.1.29.1; R9.B.1.29.6.	533
Plate 24	R7.A.1.37.2; R9.A.3.37.3.	534
Plate 25	R7.A.2.12.5; R9.A.2.12.2; Sarcophagus.2.	535
Plate 26	R9.A.2.12.2; Sarcophagus.2 (conclusion).	536
Plate 27	Kh.1–3.4.1; Pa.B.1–3.4.1.	537
Plate 28	Kh.1.4.2; Pa.B.1.4.2.	538
Plate 29	Kh.1.8.3; Mt.A.1.8.2.	539
Plate 30	Kh.1.9.5; Pa.B.1.9.3–4; Mt.A.1.9.3.	540
Color Plate	Scene 5 (Aker Group 3). Top: right half, tomb of Pedamenopet (TT 33). Bottom: left half, tomb of Padineith (TT 197).	569

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# ABBREVIATIONS

## GENERAL

BD	Naville, Édouard, ed. <i>Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie aus verschiedenen Urkunden zusammengestellt</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin: A. Asher, 1886).
BE	Book of the Earth
BM	British Museum (accession number).
CG	Catalogue Générale du Musée du Caire, Cairo.
CT	De Buck, Adriaan, ed. <i>The Egyptian Coffin Texts</i> (8 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications, 1935–61).
EA	British Museum reference number prefix
KV	Valley of the Kings (tomb number)
LE	Late Egyptian
ME	Middle Egyptian
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art (accession number)
OE	Old Egyptian
PT	Sethe, Kurt, ed. <i>Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den papierabdrücke und photographie des Berliner Museums</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–1922).
Sin.	Sinuhe; Blackman, A. M., ed. <i>Middle-Egyptian Stories</i> (Bruxelles: Édition de la fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1972), 1–41.
TT	Theban tomb (tomb number)
<i>Urk.</i> IV	Sethe, Kurt. <i>Urkunden der 18. Dynastie</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906–9).

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

<i>AäG</i>	Edel, Elmar. <i>Altägyptische Grammatik</i> , 2 vols (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955–64)
<i>AEPT</i>	Faulkner, Raymond O. <i>The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969)
<i>AEPTS</i>	Faulkner, Raymond O. <i>The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, Supplement of Hieroglyphic Texts</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).
<i>ARg</i>	<i>Archiv für Religionsgeschichte</i>
<i>AME</i>	Allen, James P. <i>Middle Egyptian. An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs</i> (Cambridge: University Press, 2000)

<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités d'Égypte</i>
<i>BÉ</i>	<i>Bibliothèque Égyptologique</i>
<i>Belegstellen</i>	Erman, Adolf and Hermann Grapow, eds. <i>Wörterbuch der Ägyptische Sprache: Die Belegstellen</i> , 5 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1940–55)
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale au Caire</i>
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
<i>BSFE</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie</i>
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>
<i>CCD</i>	Crum, W. E. <i>A Coptic Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929–39)
<i>CdÉ</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CDME</i>	Faulkner, Raymond O. <i>A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian</i> (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1996)
<i>CRAIBL</i>	Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie d'Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
<i>DE</i>	<i>Discussions in Egyptology</i>
<i>Expedition</i>	<i>Expedition: The Bulletin of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania</i>
<i>GEG</i> <sup>3</sup>	Gardiner, Alan H. <i>Egyptian Grammar. Being an introduction to the study of hieroglyphs</i> (3rd rev. ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957).
<i>GEL</i>	Liddel, H. G. and R. Scott. <i>A Greek-English Lexikon</i> (9th rev. ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996)
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i>
<i>HGHwb</i>	Hannig, Rainer. <i>Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)</i> (Mainz: von Zabern, 1995)
<i>HÄWb</i>	Hannig, Rainer. <i>Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I: Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit</i> (Mainz: von Zabern, 2003)
<i>HDECT</i>	Van der Molen, Rami. <i>A Hieroglyphic Dictionary of Egyptian Coffin Texts</i> (Leiden: Brill, 2000)
<i>HMEG</i>	Hoch, James. <i>Middle Egyptian Grammar</i> (Mississauga: Benben, 1997)
<i>IOS</i>	Israel Oriental Studies
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JEOL</i>	<i>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap "Ex Oriente Lux"</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JLEG</i>	Junge, Friedrich. <i>Late Egyptian Grammar: An Introduction</i> (translated from the German by David Warburton; Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2001)
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSSEA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
<i>JWAG</i>	<i>Journal of the Walters Art Gallery</i>
<i>KRI</i>	Kitchen, Kenneth A. <i>Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical</i> . 8 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968–99)
<i>LÄ</i>	Helck, Wolfgang, Eberhard Otto, and Wolfhart Westendorf, eds. <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , 7 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972–92).
<i>LÄGG</i>	Leitz, Christian, ed. <i>Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen</i> , 7 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 2002)
<i>LEG</i>	Černý, Jaroslav and Sarah Israelit Groll. <i>A Late Egyptian Grammar</i> (4th ed.; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993)
<i>LingAeg</i>	<i>Lingua Aegyptia</i>
<i>MÄS</i>	Münchener Ägyptologische Studien
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
<i>MIO</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Institut für Orientforschung</i>

<i>MMA Bulletin</i>	<i>The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York</i>
MMAF	Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire
<i>MMJ</i>	<i>Metropolitan Museum Journal</i>
NAWG	Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIC	Oriental Institute Communications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
<i>OLP</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica</i>
OMRO	<i>Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheiden te Leiden</i>
<i>PM</i>	Porter, Bertha and Rosalind Moss. <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts</i> , 8 vols. (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1960–2000)
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>RAIN</i>	<i>Royal Anthropological Institute Newsletter</i>
<i>RdE</i>	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i>
<i>RdSO</i>	<i>Rivisti degli Studi Orientali</i>
<i>SAK</i>	<i>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
<i>SPAW</i>	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i>
<i>TGABD</i>	Allen, Thomas George. <i>The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms</i> (SAOC 37; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1974)
<i>VA</i>	<i>Varia Aegyptiaca</i>
<i>VO</i>	<i>Vincino Oriente</i>
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
<i>Wb</i>	Erman, Adolf and Hermann Grapow, eds. <i>Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache</i> , 7 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955)
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
<i>WZKM</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
YES	Yale Egyptological Studies
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache and Altertumskunde</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>



# INDICES

## INDEX OF EGYPTIAN WORDS (SELECT TERMS AND EPITHETS)



*ʒw*, “to stretch” (verb, plus derivatives). 286–87.

*ʒmy.t*, *Amyt*, a body part of Osiris. 172.

*ʒh*, “brilliance.” 220, 387.

*ʒh.t*, “horizon” (also see General Index, “Re-Hor-Akhti”). 18, 23, 56, 58, 123, 134, 138, 149, 152, 186, 198–99, 266, 314, 318, 320–21, 354–55, 365, 372, 375, 384, 440–41, 443–44, 446, 461.



*jʒ.t*, “(burial) Mound.” 99, 102–3, 110, 112, 121, 159, 171–72, 175, 177, 235–36, 239–43, 246–47, 285, 287, 331, 333–34, 349, 373, 379–80, 385, 389, 450.

*jʒw*, “to praise” (verb, plus derivatives). 141, 244, 248, 260, 387, 392, 404, 409.

*jʒw hr*, “Old of face.” 180–81.

*jʒb(.t)*, “east” (also see General Index, “Direction, east”). 24, 33, 71, 134, 149, 152, 172, 186, 193, 207, 253–54, 294, 298, 375, 409, 414, 436, 440, 443–44.

*jʒr.t*, “uraeus.” 123, 318, 334, 448.

*jwf*, “flesh.” 136, 244, 356, 361, 405, 416.

*jwty*, “rotting, to rot.” 285, 380, 403, 452.

*jb*, “heart.” 179, 180, 270, 282, 317, 319, 324, 328, 404–5, 407.

*jby.t*, “She of the heart.” 216.

*jmn*, “to hide” (verb, plus derivatives; also see below, *ʕ.t jmn.t*, and General Index, “Amaunet,” “Amun,” and “Amun-Re”). 6, 65, 74, 77–8, 87, 108, 118, 123, 125–27, 154, 157–59, 170, 183–85, 191, 198, 200, 202, 227, 242–43, 289, 313–14, 318, 320–22, 324, 336, 339, 344–45, 349, 356, 360, 367, 372–73, 379, 392, 396, 402, 405, 411, 413, 420, 442, 450.

*jmn.tj*, “The Westerner.” 82, 170, 191, 358, 401.

*jmn(t).t*, “the West” (also see General Index, “Direction,

west”). 84, 177, 179, 206–7, 211, 240, 250, 254, 266, 281, 336–37, 339–40, 346, 349, 358, 361, 363, 370, 374, 375, 381, 396, 401–2, 405, 407, 416, 436, 438, 442, 446.

*jm(ty)*, “Formed one.” 160, 201, 203.

*jr(w)*, “(visible) form.” 171, 202–3, 328, 336, 339–40, 342, 356–58, 363, 367, 384, 389, 442–43.

*jtn*, “solar disc.” 6, 72, 87, 118, 120, 123, 129, 165–67, 198, 200, 248, 260, 271, 273, 310, 313, 320, 330, 333, 346, 355, 359, 361, 365, 368, 371, 382, 383, 385, 387–88, 394, 401, 416, 422, 427, 438, 444, 446.

*jtn(y).t*, “female disc.” 200, 313, 320.

*jdb*, “shore.” 114–15, 156, 207, 347, 356, 362, 374, 377, 402, 409–11, 414, 417–19, 422, 425, 436, 442.



*ʕ.wj*, “two arms” 70, 89, 109, 123, 138, 143–45, 148–49, 155, 165, 168, 170, 176, 183, 191, 204, 206, 208, 216–17, 260, 268, 281, 284, 310–11, 313, 320–21, 325, 333–34, 346, 348–50, 358, 371, 376, 381–84, 386–87, 389–92, 394, 399, 410, 419, 433, 440–41, 444, 449.

*ʕ.t jmn.t*, “Hidden Chamber.” 5, 18, 21, 118, 282, 284, 317, 319, 324, 327, 448.

*ʕʕ*, “to spew, expel” (verb, plus derivatives). 126, 127, 212, 216, 383, 394, 452.

*ʕpp*, see General Index, “Apep.”

*ʕby*, “Horned one.” 262.

*ʕbw.tj*, “He of the double horns.” 249, 251.

*ʕd.t*, “chest, box.” 281, 283.

*ʕm*, “to swallow” (verb, plus derivatives). 172, 212, 279, 281, 318, 342.

*ʕmʕm*, “shrewmouse.” 177, 249.

*ʕʒ hr*, “Warlike of Face.” 201, 203, 204, 244, 363, 370, 431.

ḥr.w, “Numerous of faces.” 221.

ḥr.pw, “This one who enters.” 135.

ḥr.nfr, “Perfect entrance.” 38, 135.



wꜣwꜣy, “He of flame.” 142, 145.

wꜣḥr, “Distant of face.” 181.

wꜣmmy.t, “She who roasts.” 215.

wꜣšy, “He who venerates.” 260.

wꜣz, “barque.” 102, 115, 162, 355, 374, 402, 404, 407, 409, 413–14, 416, 420–21, 428, 436, 444, 446.

wꜣty, “He of the horn.” 262.

wꜣps.t, “She who burns.” 142, 144.

wꜣny, “He who hastens.” 270.

wꜣnw.t, “hour.” 87, 120, 183–85, 187, 201, 203, 224, 271, 318, 354–56, 365, 367, 371, 396, 440, 442, 445–46, 448.

wꜣnmy.t, “She who devours.” 268–69.

wꜣnny.t, “She who shall exist.” 231–32.

wꜣntj, Wenti (demon). 209, 383, 394. Also see *p(ṣ)-n-Wntj*.

wꜣrš, “to awaken, spend the day” (plus derivatives). 263–65, 347, 348, 401, 438.

wꜣzy, “He who escapes.” 160.

wꜣsr.t Jtm, “Neck of Atum.” 208.

wꜣsr.t Rꜥ, “Neck of Re.” 228, 261.

wꜣdby.t, “She who burns.” 214.

wꜣḏy.t, “She who judges.” 139–42.



bꜣ, *ba*-soul (also see below, *bꜣ.wj*, and *bꜣy*). 28, 82, 104, 107, 109, 113–16, 121, 123, 125, 127, 145–46, 149, 157–59, 161, 183, 185, 190, 238, 249, 250, 260, 275–76, 279, 281, 284, 286, 288, 304, 307, 313, 317–19, 321, 324, 326, 328–31, 333–34, 336–37, 340, 342–43, 345, 347–50, 353–56, 359, 361–66, 368, 371–72, 374, 380, 382, 384–85, 387–90, 396–97, 401–3, 405, 409, 411–12, 414, 417–19, 421–23, 425, 427, 433, 436–38, 440, 442, 448, 450–52.

*bꜣ.wj*, “Double *ba*.” 159, 160, 268, 321, 348, 383, 395.

*bꜣ.w-Rꜥ*, “Manifestations of Re.” 5.

*bꜣy*, “He of the *ba*.” 175, 334.

*bnwy*, “He of the heron.” 209.

*bḥy.t*, “She who gives birth.” 210.

*bgsy*, Betsy (minor god). 142.



*p(ṣ)-n-Wntj*, Penwenti (demon; also see below, *Wntj*). 102,

113, 208, 381, 383, 394.

*p(ṣ)-n-šty*, Penshetay (locality). 113, 183–84, 187.

*prry*, “One who emerges.” 135.

*pr(t) nfr(t)*, “Perfect emergence.” 38, 135.

*pnꜥ*, “He who is inverted.” 249.

*psd*, “to shine, illuminate” (verb, plus derivatives). 185, 249, 254, 276, 305, 314, 354, 375, 397, 409, 433, 446.

*psd.t*, “Ennead.” 276, 313, 336, 372, 429.



*mꜥnd.t*, “morning barque.” 150, 382, 409, 418, 440, 444.

*mwjw Nnw*, “Watery one of Nun.” 146, 150.

*mmj tꜣ*, “He who is earth bound.” 181.

*mḥn*, See General Index, “Mehen.”

*msw.tj*, “He of the birth.” 197–98.

*mst.t*, “evening barque.” 150, 382, 409, 418, 444.



*nꜣny*, “He of the serpent.” 175–76.

*njnj.t*, “She of the *njnj*-gesture.” 214.

*nꜥwtj*, “Traveler.” 201.

*nḥj*, “flame.” 123, 320–21.

*nfrj.t*, “rudder.” 141.

*nmy*, “He of the knife.” 216, 217, 344.

*nmw.tj*, “He of the oval.” 197, 249, 251.

*nr.ty*, “He of the vulture.” 86, 209–10.

*nḥꜣ ḥr*, “Terrible of face.” 102, 113, 254, 322, 323.

*nsw.t*, “She of the flame.” 215.

*nsr*, “flame” (noun, plus derivatives; also see *š nsrsr*). 142, 144, 216, 220, 254, 268, 269, 284, 322, 325, 404, 407.

*ntr* ḥꜣ, “Great God.” 79, 115, 117–18, 122, 126, 153, 167, 169, 188–89, 266, 270, 273, 307–9, 312–13, 321, 327, 333, 344, 354, 368, 372–73, 385, 392, 395, 405–6, 417.

*ndry*, “He who seizes.” 268.



*rw*, “flood land.” 253.

*rwḏ*, “bond, restraint.” 218.

*rḥsy*, “He of the slaughter fish.” 256.

*rs(y)*, “He who awakens, is awake.” 160, 263.

*rkḥ*, “flame; to burn” (noun and verb, plus derivatives). 84, 85, 213, 220, 221, 254, 322, 336, 340, 342, 387.



*hmhmy*, “Roarer.” 267.



*h̄sy.t*, “She who hails.” 142, 144.

*h̄sy.t*, “She of lament.” 143.

*h̄sy.tj*, “He of lament.” 143.

*h̄sy tp*, “Shining of head.” 241, 242, 243.

*h̄sdy*, “fiery pit.” 281.

*h̄wz̄z(.t)*, “putrefaction.” 225, 285, 380, 399, 403.

*h̄bs*, “to clothe.” 450.

*h̄bsj*, “He of the shroud.” 237.

*hr*, “face” (also see below, *ḥz hr*, *ḥz hr.w*, and *nhz hr*).  
75, 122, 155, 168, 171, 172, 179, 180, 181, 182, 194,  
249, 254, 263, 264, 275, 278, 308, 309, 312, 323,  
339, 346, 348, 354, 376, 386, 391, 407, 411, 413,  
438, 442, 449.

*hr.tj*, “He of the Sky.” 180.

*hrj.t st.t*, “She who presides over her ray.” 183–84.

*hry.t*, “oven.” 161, 217, 412, 420, 421, 428.

*h̄s*, “Ferocious One.” 174, 176.

*hsq*, “to decapitate” (verb, plus derivatives). 212, 213, 221,  
340.

*hkn(w)*, “to praise” (verb, plus derivatives). 117–18, 123,  
161, 182–83, 227, 311, 321, 330–31, 333, 347, 349,  
363, 368, 372–73, 381, 383–85, 389, 395, 401, 412,  
424, 438, 450, 452.

*htm*, “to annihilate, destroy” (verb, plus derivatives). 69, 90,  
149, 187, 202–4, 206, 252, 255, 258, 277–78, 284,  
286–88, 337, 350, 371, 374, 383, 394, 398, 401, 438.



*h̄ftj*, “enemy.” 102, 113, 155, 215, 283–84, 319, 324, 327,  
340–41, 343, 401, 404, 438.

*h̄bsy.t*, “She of the hacked-out (heart).” 216.

*h̄bsw*, “The hacked out (heart).” 81, 345.

*hmy*, “One who is destroyed; destruction-demon” 84, 113,  
218, 219, 351.

*hssy*, “He of the canal-fish.” 256–57.



*h̄z.t*, “corpse.” 112, 120, 144, 155, 159, 163, 168, 172–73,  
176–78, 205, 223, 228, 238, 249, 261–62, 266–67,  
270, 277, 282, 286–88, 317–19, 321, 324–25, 328–  
29, 349, 354, 358, 364, 370, 381, 384–85, 389, 391,  
401–2, 410, 413, 416, 419–21, 433, 446, 448.

*h̄z.tj*, “He of the corpse.” 159, 160.

*hrj t̄z*, “He who is beneath the earth.” 180.



*s̄hy.t*, “August lady.” 235–36.

*sbby.t*, “She who goes.” 231.

*snfy*, “The Bloody One.” 181, 184–85, 392, 398.

*sn̄w*, “He who weeps.” 143–44.

*sry*, “He of the ram.” 262.

*sh̄m*, “to be powerful” (adjective verb, plus derivatives).  
164, 179, 348, 385, 407, 445.

*sh̄by.t*, “She who savors.” 214–15.

*šsm*, “to guide, lead” (verb, plus derivatives). 109, 136–37,  
145, 156, 185, 189–90, 192–93, 221, 226, 242, 310,  
336, 342, 355–56, 358, 375, 395, 398, 402, 417, 442,  
443.

*stj*, “putrefaction.” 380.

*st̄z*, “to tow” (verb, plus derivatives). 19, 114–15, 140–41,  
360, 368, 375, 406, 409, 414, 418, 425, 433, 436,  
438.

*sq̄.t*, “fire, flame.” 142, 181, 183–85, 187, 214, 216, 284,  
289, 325, 336, 341, 363, 381, 398, 424, 426, 431.



*š n̄sr̄sr*, “Lake of Fire.” 103, 140.

*šzsy*, “He who travels.” 160.

*š̄.tj*, “He of the slaughter.” 213.

*šw.t*, “shadow” (also see General Index, “sunshade”). 107,  
118, 161, 165, 226–27, 288, 372–73, 412, 417.

*šw-ḥ*, “Bright of arm.” 164.

*šsp*, “to receive” (verb, plus derivatives). 72, 107, 110, 118,  
123, 184, 244–45, 304, 311, 317, 320–21, 334, 342,  
344, 347–48, 362, 368, 372–73, 379, 382, 398, 417,  
433, 440–41, 445, 450–51.

*šsp*, “to begin.” 103, 360, 367, 374, 414, 436.



*q̄z̄s*, “to bind.” 218.

*qrr.t*, “cavern.” 19, 69, 94, 99, 122, 141, 155, 179, 233,  
270, 307–9, 312, 328, 334, 339, 342, 345, 348, 350,  
356, 358, 360, 362, 367, 374–75, 383–84, 391, 394,  
405, 409, 416–18, 442.

*qdy*, “He of (fish-like) form.” 256.



*k3 jmn.t*, “Bull of the West.” 174, 176.

*km.t*, “pupil (of the eye).” 383, 394, 458.

*kkw(j)*, “darkness.” 114, 120, 125, 131, 183, 201, 205–6, 208, 221, 241–43, 275, 284, 307, 315, 327, 332–33, 336, 338, 340–42, 347–48, 351, 353–54, 356, 359, 361–62, 365, 366, 368, 378, 381, 385–86, 388–89, 392, 396–97, 401, 403, 411, 413, 417, 421–22, 432, 438, 443, 446, 448.

*kkw.t*, “darkness.” 94, 354.

*ktj.t*, “cauldron.” 279, 283.



*gmhy.t*, “She who sees.” 68, 210.



*tw3*, “to raise, support” (verb, plus derivatives). 92, 101, 122, 134, 244, 316, 409, 452.

*tpy*, “He of the head; (human)-headed one.” 207–8, 321, 381.

*tp R̄*, “Head of Re.” 208–10, 228, 381.

*tnny.t*, “She who grows old.” 231.



*ttj.t*, “She of the vessel.” 232–33.



*dz.t, Dat*, “Underworld.” 18, 73–74, 138, 204, 284, 306, 422, 436, 438.

*dw3*, “to praise” (verb, plus derivatives). 122, 139–41, 146, 161, 164–65, 180, 189, 192–93, 239, 244, 249, 251, 260, 267, 271, 285, 289–91, 307–9, 311–13, 378, 387, 389, 402, 423, 438, 444.

*dw3.t, Duat*, “Underworld” (noun, plus derivatives). 5, 68, 73–74, 102, 112–13, 115, 120, 122, 123, 125, 157–59, 162–63, 170, 174, 176, 192–93, 252, 254, 260, 273, 290–91, 307–9, 311–12, 317, 321, 328–30, 334, 336, 340, 346–49, 354, 358, 360, 367, 383, 386–87, 390, 394, 401–2, 414, 433, 438, 440, 442, 444–45, 556, 459.

*dm̄d*, “to unite, assemble.” 205, 247, 268, 389, 444–45.

*dsy*, “He of the knife.” 216.



*db3.t*, “sarcophagus.” 171, 172, 177, 196, 220, 223, 231, 235–36, 240, 246, 264, 179, 289, 307, 377, 381, 384, 387, 389, 391, 402–3, 410, 412, 419, 424.

*dsy.t*, “She of the wailing cry.” 143.

*dsy.tj*, “He of the wailing cry.” 143.

*dsr*, “to be sacred” (adjective verb, plus derivatives). 102, 142, 144, 276, 313.

## INDEX OF COPTIC WORDS CITED

**ⲁⲗⲎ**, “to ascend” : 383

**ⲃⲁⲓ**, “spirit” : 190

**ⲃⲁⲁⲙⲡⲎ**, “goat” : 190

**Ⲏⲣⲱⲓⲱⲓ**, “to have power” : 68

**Ⲛ̄**- direct object construction : 286

**Ⲛ̄** > **Ⲙ̄**- phonetic interchange: 70

**ⲚⲟⲩⲧⲎ**, “god” : 69

**Ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲓ**, third person masculine singular independent pronoun : 71

**ⲚⲧⲱⲣⲎ**, “goddess” : 69

**ⲡⲁ̄**-, **ⲧⲁ̄**-, **Ⲛⲁ̄**-, possessed pronoun series : 113

**ⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ**, “mouth” : 75

**ⲧ̄Ⲛ̄**-, second person plural suffix pronoun : 92

**ⲧⲎ(ⲓ)**, “Underworld” : 73, 436

**ⲧⲟⲟⲩⲎ**, “sandal” : 70

**ⲱⲗ**, “to lift up” : 383

**ⲱⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧ̄ⲙ** conjugation pattern : 124

**ⲱⲱⲡ**, “to receive” : 304, 414

**ⲓⲥⲱⲧ̄ⲙ** versus **Ⲏⲓⲥⲱⲧ̄ⲙ** : 126

**ⲒⲁⲓⲔⲎ**, “sunshade” (also see General index, “sunshade”) : 161

**ⲒⲓⲎⲧ**, “fish-trap” : 283

## INDEX OF EGYPTIAN TEXTS CITED

- BOOK OF AMDUAT (ED. HORNUNG 1987-94)**
- Volume 1**
- p. 76 : 74  
 p. 161 : 74  
 pp. 206-7 : 324  
 p. 261 : 74  
 p. 265 : 74  
 p. 268 : 74
- Volume 2**
- p. 405, nr. 345 : 328  
 p. 609 : 125
- Volume 3**
- p. 661, nr. 632 : 157  
 p. 668 : 115  
 pp. 714-15 : 324  
 p. 733 : 168, 386  
 p. 763 : 69  
 pp. 794-95 : 440
- BOOK OF CAVERNS (ED. PIANKOFF 1942-47)**
- BIFAO 41**
- p. 5-7 : 225  
 pl. I : 225, 282  
 pl. VII, 3 : 226  
 pl. III, 1, 3, 5, 8 : 74  
 pl. V, 5 : 74  
 pl. VI, 2, 3, 4, 6 : 74
- BIFAO 42**
- p. 2 : 130  
 p. 5 : 257  
 p. 16 : 154, 221  
 p. 17 : 130, 256, 257  
 p. 20, first group, nr. 3 : 74, 282  
 pp. 21-23 : 18, 138, 273  
 p. 23 : 221
- pp. 26-27 : 273  
 p. 31 : 130  
 pp. 37-38 : 228  
 p. 46 : 130  
 pp. 51-52 : 254  
 p. 52 : 254  
 p. 59 : 44  
 pl. X : 282  
 pl. XI, 3 : 257  
 pl. XII, 4, 7-8 : 74  
 pl. XIII, 2, 4, 5, 6 : 74  
 pl. XIV, 3 : 211  
 pl. XIV, 8-9 : 74  
 pl. XV, 9 : 386  
 pl. XVI, 5 : 74  
 pl. XVII, 1, 2, 5, 8 : 74  
 pl. XVIII, 2 : 74  
 pl. XX, 3, 9 : 74  
 pl. XXIII, 1-2 : 74  
 pl. XXIV, 3-4 : 74  
 pl. XXVII : 147, 282, 221  
 pl. XXXVII, 6 : 74  
 pl. XXXVIII : 171, 173, 228  
 pl. XLIII, 6 : 267  
 pl. XLIV, 3, 8 : 74  
 pl. XLVI, 2-3 : 228  
 pl. XLVI, 8 : 176  
 pl. XLVI, 9 : 74  
 pl. LI : 44, 208, 254  
 pl. LI-LIII : 196  
 pl. LIII, 1 : 171  
 pl. LIII, 3 : 176  
 pl. LIII, 4 : 74  
 pl. LX : 94  
 pl. LXI, 1 : 94  
 pl. LXII : 254  
 pl. LXIII, 1-2 : 209  
 pl. LXXI, 9 : 74  
 pl. LXXIII : 94  
 pl. LXXVI, 2 : 75  
 pl. LXXIX, 28, 30 : 94
- BIFAO 43**
- pp. 3-4 : 237  
 p. 4 : 130

pp. 5–6 : 192  
 p. 14 : 144  
 pp. 39–40 : 288  
 pp. 40–48 : 192  
 p. 45 : 153, 194  
 p. 47 : 152  
 pl. XLIII : 237  
 pl. XCVII, 9 : 144  
 pl. C, 8 : 211  
 pl. CXXI : 4, 44, 152, 195, 196, 288  
 pl. CXXII, 1 : 74  
 pl. CXLIV, 8 : 193  
 pl. CXLIV, III.P, 1310 : 33  
 pl. CXLVII, 13 : 175

### **BIFAO 45**

p. 19 : 254

### **BOOK OF THE DEAD**

Chapter 17 : 138, 144, 236  
 Chapter 126 : 133  
 Chapter 149 : 12, 196  
 Chapter 168 : 204  
 Chapter 174 : 282  
 Chapter 175b : 150  
 Chapter 180 : 272  
 Chapter 182 : 133

### **BOOK OF GATES (ED. HORNUNG 1979–80)**

#### **Volume 1**

p. 73 : 74  
 p. 77 : 304  
 p. 88 : 211  
 pp. 120–21 : 120  
 p. 197 : 354  
 pp. 199–200 : 328  
 pp. 235–39 : 129  
 p. 265 : 117

#### **Volume 2**

pp. 29–44 : 60  
 pp. 54–55 : 136  
 p. 112 : 120

p. 117, nr. 12 : 281, 283  
 pp. 134–35 : 149  
 p. 146 : 68, 88, 95, 96  
 p. 149 : 354  
 pp. 181–85 : 228  
 pp. 201–2 : 204  
 pp. 202–5 : 263  
 p. 205 : 263  
 pp. 255–56 : 194  
 pp. 289–92 : 149, 152, 199

### **BOOK OF THE NIGHT (ED. ROULIN 1996)**

#### **Volume 2**

p. 98 : 211

### **BOOK OF OVERTHROWING APEP (P. BREMNER-RHIND)**

22/21–23 : 288  
 24/9–10 : 288

### **BOOK OF THE SOLAR-OSIRIAN UNITY (ED. DARNELL 2004); LISTING TEXT REFERENCES ONLY**

p. 22 : 98  
 p. 26 (a) : 188  
 p. 42 (c) : 307  
 p. 42, n. 23 : 97  
 p. 42 and n. 25 : 68  
 pp. 43–45 : 97  
 p. 45 : 96  
 p. 46 : 172  
 p. 52 : 74  
 pp. 54–55 : 166  
 p. 55, n. 96 : 154  
 p. 62, n. 120 : 69, 96, 98, 305  
 pp. 65–67 : 304  
 p. 66 : 98, 176  
 p. 66, n. 139 : 73  
 p. 68 : 97  
 p. 70 : 288  
 p. 70, n. 158 : 112  
 pp. 80–83 : 285  
 p. 81 : 307

pp. 81–83 : 307  
 p. 83 : 305  
 p. 86 : 74  
 pp. 108–9, n. 339 : 98  
 p. 119, n. 380 : 304  
 pp. 121–22 : 109  
 p. 122 : 108  
 pp. 163–66 : 283  
 p. 176 : 108  
 p. 177 : 68  
 p. 183 : 112  
 p. 211 : 388  
 p. 236 (b) and n. 252 : 79  
 p. 237 : 65  
 pp. 259–60 : 79  
 p. 261 and n. 403 : 413  
 p. 263, n. 410 : 98  
 pp. 300–301 : 97  
 p. 312 (g) : 304  
 pp. 426–27 : 67  
 p. 453 : 96  
 p. 458 : 369  
 pl. 4b : 304  
 pl. 4b–c : 228  
 pl. 4c : 74  
 pl. 7a : 307  
 pl. 7a, 1 : 304  
 pl. 7b : 74, 304  
 pl. 10a, 1 : 304, 369  
 pl. 10b, 1–4 : 304  
 pl. 10b, 7 : 303  
 pl. 11a, 1–2 : 304  
 pl. 11, 16–17 : 73  
 pl. 13a, 2 : 440  
 pl. 13b, 4 : 440  
 pl. 15 : 4  
 pl. 21, 21, 26, 35, 46–47 : 354  
 pl. 24, 31–32 : 388  
 pl. 31 : 4

### COFFIN TEXTS (ED. DE BUCK 1935–61)

#### Volume 1

p. 160 : 283  
 pp. 378–79d : 145  
 pp. 382–83c : 145

#### Volume 2

p. 191i : 252  
 p. 288 : 211  
 p. 354b–c : 209

#### Volume 4

p. 54d : 283  
 p. 114c : 252  
 pp. 260–61c : 144

#### Volume 5

p. 27d : 147  
 p. 56a : 108  
 p. 165a : 276  
 pp. 265–68 : 208

#### Volume 6

pp. 3–47 : 283  
 p. 21k : 283  
 p. 140 : 148  
 pp. 205–8 : 208  
 p. 354 : 276  
 p. 408 : 283

#### Volume 7

p. 65s : 211  
 p. 201k : 209  
 p. 202d, f : 209  
 pp. 252–521 : 2  
 pp. 258a–259c : 2  
 pp. 418c–19 : 212  
 pp. 453h–54 : 138  
 p. 495g–k : 424

### DOOMED PRINCE

7,10–8,14 : 208

### KING AS SOLAR PRIEST (ED. ASSMANN 1970)

p. 17 : 440, 441

**LITANY OF RE (ED. HORNING 1975-76)****Volume 1**

p. 11 : 117  
 p. 14 : 78  
 p. 52 : 117  
 pp. 109-10 : 117  
 p. 178 : 272

**Volume 2**

pp. 28-30 : 129, 152, 234, 292  
 p. 37, nr. 9— : 266  
 p. 53-54 : 272  
 p. 55 : 129, 152, 234, 292  
 p. 56 : 261, 265  
 p. 58, nr. 9a : 266  
 p. 65 : 261  
 p. 68 : 175  
 p. 77, nr. 291 : 170  
 p. 83 : 272  
 p. 99, nr. 16 : 247, 390, 445  
 p. 100, nr. 18 : 112  
 p. 102, nr. 32 : 117  
 p. 112, nr. 122 : 117  
 p. 119 : 263, 265  
 p. 125, nr. 245 : 268  
 p. 137-38, nr. 406 : 272

**INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE MAMMISI AT PHILAE (ED. JUNKER AND WINTER 1965)**

p. 157 : 233

**PYRAMID TEXTS**

§5b : 73  
 §128b-c : 134  
 §151a : 73  
 §205b : 212  
 §268d : 282, 319  
 §282a : 73  
 §296b : 204

§325a : 148, 163  
 §390b : 73  
 §472d : 112  
 §541 : 185  
 §555a : 137  
 §581c : 276  
 §595b-f : 112  
 §595b : 112  
 §596d : 112  
 §599d : 112  
 §696g : 124  
 §796b : 137  
 §812b : 221  
 §§954-55 : 134  
 §1014a : 138  
 §1120b : 411  
 §1146 : 134  
 §1171a-d : 115  
 §1202 : 226  
 §1248a-d : 199  
 §1254c : 112  
 §1376c : 112  
 §1377c : 112  
 §1552c : 276  
 §1696a : 108  
 §2255a (AEPTS, 77) : 147

**KRI**

Volume 2  
 p. 319,8-9 : 75

Volume 4  
 p. 6,1 : 75  
 p. 17,12 : 212

**SINUHE**

B,43 : 104

**Urk. IV**

p. 99 : 125  
 p. 99, 15-16 : 102  
 p. 306, 11 : 232  
 p. 2030, 9 : 127



## GENERAL INDEX

## A

Abydos. 3, 9–11, 15, 19, 20–22, 27–29, 32, 57–58, 65, 81, 94, 96, 102, 113, 117, 178, 233, 236, 263, 276, 303, 455, 471.  
 Ahmose. 19, 21–23, 30.  
 Akephalos. 246.  
 Aker (also see “Book of Aker”). 5, 9, 11, 18, 38–40, 43, 45, 48–51, 53–54, 58, 63, 90, 102, 120, 122, 130, 132–39, 142–66, 186, 193–95, 200, 224–25, 234, 236, 239–40, 253, 256–58, 266, 271–73, 289–90, 295, 298–99, 305, 315, 350, 353–55, 359, 374–75, 405, 417, 423, 426, 430, 432, 435, 446, 455–56, 461–62.  
 Akhenaten. 16, 18, 24.  
 Akhet, see “horizon.”  
 Amarna. 16–18, 22, 24, 169, 457.  
 Amaunet. 200, 313, 320.  
 Amduat, see “Book of Amduat.”  
 Amenhotep II. 19, 23, 26, 29, 35, 105, 222.  
 Amenhotep III. 22–23, 93.  
 Amun (also see “Amun-Re”). 4, 45, 50, 52, 166–67, 175, 186, 272, 410, 412.  
 Amun-Re. 47, 186, 187, 407, 410, 412.  
 Anubis. 104, 171, 178, 228, 239, 281–83, 296.  
 Apep. 67, 145, 178–79, 209, 211–12, 234, 286–88, 322, 348–49, 406–7, 451.  
 Apotropaia, see “Knife, apotropaic.”  
 Astronomical ceiling. 6, 30, 34, 35, 42, 56, 57, 59, 208, 455.  
 Aten, see Index of Egyptian words, *jtn*.  
 Atenet, see Index of Egyptian words, *jtn(y).t*.  
 Atum (also see Index of Egyptian words, *wsr.t Jtm*). 129, 133, 136–38, 145, 152, 167, 170–71, 174, 178–79, 191–92, 199, 208–11, 218–19, 228, 268–69, 276, 283, 347, 349, 369, 382, 384, 295.

## B

Barque, see Index of Egyptian words, *wjz*, *m'nd.t*, and *mskt.t*.  
 Bes. 246.  
 Book of Aker, 5–6, 11–12, 39, 48–49, 53, 152, 161, 186, 236, 240, 282, 295, 298, 455.  
 Book of Amduat, see Index of Egyptian Texts cited.  
 Book of Caverns, see Index of Egyptian Texts cited.  
 Book of Gates, see Index of Egyptian Texts cited.

Book of the Day. 3, 6, 25, 39, 45, 133, 142, 165, 460.  
 Book of the Dead, see Index of Egyptian Texts cited.  
 Book of the Earth, *passim*.  
 Book of the Fayyûm. 142, 209.  
 Book of the Night (also see Index of Egyptian Texts cited). 6, 28, 30, 31, 37, 45, 170, 263, 301, 460.  
 Book of Nut. 6, 28, 30, 31, 37, 79, 95, 105, 106, 211, 460.  
 Book of the Solar-Osirian Unity, see Index of Egyptian texts cited.  
 Book of Two Ways (also see Index of Egyptian Texts cited, “Coffin Texts, volume 7”). 2, 56, 134, 138, 175, 187, 188, 222, 460.  
 Books of the Sky (also see “Book of Nut,” “Book of the Day,” “Book of Night”). 3, 6–7, 28, 30, 36, 39, 42, 45, 56–57, 455, 459–60.  
 Brick, birth. 58, 59.  
 Brick, magical. 23–25, 58.

## C

Cartonnage, see “Pectoral”  
 Catfish, see “Fish, catfish”  
 Cenotaph. 9–12, 15, 19, 21, 27, 28–32, 34, 36–39, 43, 57, 65, 68, 73, 80, 86, 94–98, 102, 104–5, 113, 117, 135, 179, 194, 235–36, 263, 285, 293, 303–7, 354, 400, 403, 437, 446, 455, 457, 460, 464–66, 471, 511–13.  
 Coffin Texts, see Index of Egyptian texts cited.  
 Concluding representation (*Schlußbild*). 19, 21, 26, 33, 39, 43, 47, 49, 53, 56, 58, 148–49, 152–53, 159, 166, 192–96, 199–201, 266, 272–73, 293–94, 298–99, 408, 417, 432, 455–56, 460–61.  
 Coptic (language), see Index of Coptic words cited.  
 Cosmography. 2, 20, 56, 59, 459, 460.  
 Creation of the Solar Disc. 5, 6, 49, 74, 198–202, 204–6.  
 Crocodile. 113, 156, 174, 176, 207–9, 211–12, 254, 256–57, 382.  
 Crown, Atef. 152, 271.  
 Crown, Red. 95, 254.  
 Crown, White. 240, 267, 271, 282, 287.  
 Cryptography, see “Script, Cryptographic.”

## D

Damned, the. 3, 67, 130, 187, 204, 208, 212–19, 228, 230, 245–46, 252, 255, 279–81, 283–84.

*Dat*, see Index of Egyptian words, *d3.t*

Decapitation. 212–14, 221, 283–84, 327.

Demon, apotropaic. 36, 153, 475.

Demotic (language). 68, 113, 124, 304.

Direction, east (also see index of Egyptian words, *j3b(.t)*).  
3, ch. 2 *passim*, 71, 77, 130, 134, 138, 149, 152–53,  
161, 164–65, 172–73, 185–87, 193, 200, 204, 206–7,  
253–55, 266, 271, 293–94, 298–99, 275, 456, 460–  
61, 493, 497.

Direction, north. ch. 2 *passim*, 158, 208, 233, 289, 432.

Direction, south. ch. 2 *passim*, 152, 158, 173, 233, 417.

Direction, west (also see Index of Egyptian words, *jmn.tj*  
and *jmn(t).t*). ch. 2 *passim*, 65, 84, 94, 113, 130, 134,  
138, 141, 149, 152–53, 164–65, 172–74, 176, 177,  
179, 186–87, 200, 206–7, 211, 240, 250, 254, 266,  
271, 273, 281–82, 286–87, 294, 298–99, 303, 456,  
460–61, 471, 503.

Disc, see Index of Egyptian words, *jtn* and *jtn.t*.

Djedkhonsuiusankh. 10, 14, 49, 103, ch. 5 *passim*, 404,  
456, 461, 488–89.

Duamutef, see “Sons of Horus.”

Duat, see Index of Egyptian words, *dw3.t*.

## E

East, see “Direction, east.”

Enigmatic Netherworld Book, see Index of Egyptian Texts,  
“Book of the Solar-Osirian Unity.”

Evening barque, see Index of Egyptian words, *mskt.t*.

Excrement. 214.

## F

Fish, catfish. 177, 228, 256–58, 451–52.

Fish, general, see Index of Egyptian words, *rhsy*, *hssy*, and  
*qdy*.

Fish, Oxyrhynchus. 66, 172.

Fundamentals of the Courses of the Stars, see “Book of Nut.”

## G

Gautsushen. 153, 271, 273, 282, 508.

Geb. 5, 44, 138, 143–44, 177, 281–82, 286–87, 411, 420.

Great God, see Index of Egyptian words, *ntjr 3*.

## H

Hapy, see “Sons of Horus.”

Hathor. 58–59, 144, 156, 223, 268, 269, 420.

Hathors, seven. 172.

Heka. 136–37.

Hieratic, see “Script, Hieratic.”

Horemheb. 4, 16–17, 22–25.

Horira”a. 10, 39, 47, 54, 68, 139, 141, 145, 148–51, 282,  
295, 297–99, 436–39, 456, 462, 464–66, 503.

Horizon, see Index of Egyptian words, *3h.t*.

Horus (also see and “Horus of the Duat,” “Re-Hor-Akhti,”  
and “Sons of Horus”). 4, 96, 124, 130, 136–37, 139,  
141, 151, 166, 170–73, 176–79, 189–91, 209, 226,  
228–29, 234, 246, 251, 254, 263, 279, 330.

Horus of the Duat. 157–59, 161–64, 174, 176, 178, 347.

Hydra. 221–22.

## I

Ibi. 9, 253, 293.

Ichneumon mongoose. 177, 234, 252, 257, 279.

Imsety, see “Sons of Horus.”

Isis. 25, 59, 61, 134, 144, 150, 156, 162, 164–65, 168–69,  
171–73, 176, 178, 233, 246, 256, 266, 271, 282, 328,  
332, 440–41.

Israel stela. 212.

Ithyphallic. 164, 170, 183, 185–87, 199–200, 204, 223,  
237, 245–46, 254, 273.

## K

Khepri. 70–71, 92, 112, 129, 133, 136–41, 145, 151–52,  
174–79, 190–91, 221–22, 234–35, 238–39, 269,  
275–76, 282, 333, 339, 346, 349, 371, 440–41.

Khonsumes. 10, 14, 39, 47, 49–50, 54, 78, 92, 101, 105,  
Chapter 5 *passim*, 408, 410, 412, 415, 418–20, 428,  
456, 490.

Kilt. 134, 148–49, 159, 186, 203, 206, 213, 219, 223, 228,  
239, 251.

Knife, apotropaic (also see Index of Egyptian words, *nm* and  
*ds*). 137, 153–54, 234, 508.

Kryptograph, see Index of Egyptian texts cited, “Book of the  
Solar-Osirian Unity.”

## L

Late Egyptian (language and orthography). 65, 70–71, 84–  
85, 95, 101, 103, 116, 126, 128, 208, 340, 414, 436,  
458.

Late period. 5, 8–9, 11, 23, 26–27, 29, 36, 59, 60–61, 63,  
66–67, 76–79, 97, 135, 137, 141, 148, 165, 167–169,  
172, 186, 201, 203, 211, 224, 236, 245, 257, 263,  
359, 447–50, 456–57, 459, 461–62.

Lion, double, see “Aker.”

Litany of Re, see Index of Egyptian texts cited, “Litany of Re.”

## M

*Ma'at*. 41, 169, 218, 238, 332, 338, 346.  
 Magical brick, see “brick, magical.”  
 Magical knife, see “knife, apotropaic.”  
 Magical wand, see “knife, apotropaic.”  
 Mehen. 137, 179, 180, 182, 184–87, 346.  
 Memphite Theology. 105.  
 Meretseger. 156.  
 Merneptah. 9, 10, 12, 15–16, 24, 25, 27–28, 30, 32–36, 38–40, 43, 56–57, 59, 62, 75, ch. 5 *passim*, 307, 464–66.  
 Merneptah temple. 32, 33, 36, 130, 193, 266, 272, 293, 294, 299, 455, 460.  
 Middle Egyptian (language and orthography). 65, 68, 70, 80, 84, 86, 91, 101, 103, 108, 112–13, 115, 124, 126, 340, 361, 458.  
 Middle Kingdom. 2, 3, 18, 19, 21–24, 30, 36, 38, 56, 58, 68, 70–71, 74, 80, 105, 113, 137–38, 144, 153–54, 192, 212, 234, 236, 269, 278, 457, 459, 460–61, 508.  
 Mongoose, see “Ichneumon.”  
 Morning barque, see Index of Egyptian words, *m'nd.t*.  
 Mutilation of hieroglyphs. 289.  
 Mutirdis. 10–11, 28, 39, 47, 49–50, 51–53, ch. 5 *passim*, 427, 430, 456, 461–62, 464–66, 497–99.  
 Mythological Papyri (also see “Djedkhonsuiusankh,” “Gautsushen,” and “Khonsumes”). 8–9, 45, 47, 153, 404, 456, 461.

## N

Nakhtnebef. 10, 14, 61, 63, 103, 145, 147–50, 152, 156–57, 165, 173, 295, 297–99, 440–41, 456–58, 462, 464–66, 505.  
 Nectanebid period, see “Persian period.”  
 Nephthys. 25, 61, 134, 150, 162, 164–65, 168–69, 171–73, 246, 256, 266, 271, 282, 440–41.  
 New Kingdom, *passim*.  
 North, see “Direction, north.”  
 Nun (also see Index of Egyptian words, *mwjw Nnw*). 19, 29, 39–40, 134, 140–41, 145–50, 152, 154, 197, 199, 204, 232–34, 258, 268–69, 275–76, 317, 369–70, 374, 376, 405, 409, 418, 432–34, 440–41.  
 Nut (also see “Book of Nut”). 3, 6, 25, 30, 40, 42, 44–45, 59, 148, 154, 159–61, 173, 176, 178, 194, 196, 199, 208, 210–12, 252, 254–56, 268, 274, 310–11, 369, 383–84, 395, 402, 441, 445, 460–61.

## O

Old Egyptian (language, orthography). 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 74, 85, 88, 89, 90, 101, 112–13, 116, 124, 126, 128, 452, 458.  
 Old Kingdom. 2, 6, 15, 18, 23, 56, 105, 138, 147, 150, 151, 169, 208, 214, 226, 230, 234, 282, 283, 460.  
 Opet (goddess). 139–42.  
 Orientation (also see “Direction”).  
 Orion. 230, 238, 239, 353.  
 Osiris (also see “Re-Osiris” and “Sokar-Osiris”), *passim*.  
 Osiris tomb. 19.  
 Osorkon II. 9–11, 27, 39, 45, 47, 50, 72, 76, 78, 87, 102, 112, 201, 203, 205–7, 241–43, 416–17, 456–57, 461, 464–66, 491–92.  
 Ouroboros. 200, 221–23, 313.  
 Oxyrhynchus, see “Fish, Oxyrhynchus.”

## P

Padihorresnet. 9–11, 50–52, 247, 251–52, 274–76, 456–57, 462, 464–66.  
 Padineith. 10–11, 13–14, 33, 49, 51–54, 72, ch. 5 *passim*, 424, 432–33, 435, 456, 461, 464–66, 500–502, scene 5 color plate (bottom).  
 Pectoral. 9, 10, 148, 185, 186, 266, 462, 504.  
 Pedamenopet. 10, 11, 33, 39, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 61, ch. 5 *passim*, 417, 420, 423, 424, 426, 430, 432, 435, 456, 461, 464–66, 493–96, scene 5 color plate (top).  
 Perpetuum mobile. 56–57, 148, 151, 152, 461.  
 Persian period. 54, 61, 79.  
 Proclitic pronoun (*sw sdm=f*, etc.). 84, 88, 102, 105–11, 127, 302, 359, 373, 424, 450, 458.  
 Ptolemaic period. 19, 61, 93, 95, 221, 233, 239, 283, 458, 462.  
 Ptolemaic hieroglyphs, see “Script, Ptolemaic.”  
 Pyramid Texts, see Index of Egyptian texts cited.

## R

Ramesses II. 16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 34, 57, 178, 266.  
 Ramesses III. 4, 6, 8–12, 15–16, 23, 25, 32–36, 38–42, 44, 50, 56, 59, 60–63, 70, 72, 75, 79, 94, 128, ch. 5 *passim*, 310–11, 313–14, 447–51, 455, 456, 458, 460, 464–66, 474–75.  
 Ramesses IV. 6–7, 10, 15–17, 25, 30, 36–37, 40, 42–43, 45, 59, 60–62, 70, 75, 77–78, 90, ch. 5, *passim*, 315, 447–51, 456, 464–66, 476.  
 Ramesses VI, *passim*.  
 Ramesses VII. 6–8, 10–11, 13, 15, 37, 42–44, 57–59, 66,

68, 73, 75, 79, 104, 117, 119, ch. 5 *passim*, 301, 383, 449–50, 459–60, 464–66, 481–82.

Ramesses IX. 4, 8, 10–13, 15, 28, 37, 39, 43–45, 58, 59, 66–68, 74, 76–80, 86, 90, 94, 102, 113, 119, 123, 127, ch. 5 *passim*, 302, 306, 384, 389–91, 395–98, 402–3, 437, 450, 457–58, 460–61, 464–66, 483–85, 521, 535.

Re (also see “Re-Hor-Akhti,” “Re-Osiris,” and Index of Egyptian words, *wsr.t R<sup>c</sup>* and *tp R<sup>c</sup>*), *passim*.

Re-Hor-Akhti. 70, 276, 407.

Re-Osiris. 31, 75, 77, 129, 134, 138–39, 154, 161, 185, 195, 223, 247, 249, 253, 255, 269–74, 322, 390, 427, 445.

Roman period. 8, 59, 61, 63, 69, 134, 142, 201, 209, 233, 245, 257, 279, 283, 455, 457, 462.

Rosetau. 188, 208.

**S**

Saite Period. 9–11, 29, 43, 49–50, 52, 54, 60–61, 68, 69, 101–2, 116, 144, 148, 164, 168, 176, 195, 200, 224, 227, 232, 253, 289, 295, 298–99, 450, 456, 461.

Saqqara. 2, 9–10, 47, 54–55, 67, 74, 129, 230, 236, 462, 503.

Scarab (also see “Khepri” and “Scarab, ram-headed”). 49, 71, 95, 122, 129, 134, 137, 142, 150, 153–54, 173, 175–78, 191, 194, 197–98, 222–23, 234, 252, 254, 276, 330, 406, 440, 459.

Scarab, ram-headed. 151–53, 186, 193–95.

*Schlussbild*, see “Concluding Representation.”

Script, Cryptographic. 11, 65–66, 68, 73, 74, 80, 86–89, 91, 93–99, 113, 117, 172, 235, 301–7, 413.

Script, Hieratic. 4, 65–67, 69, 74–80, 85–86, 90, 94, 95–97, 107, 111–12, 116–17, 120, 158, 167, 177, 182, 186, 210, 222, 310, 315, 319, 324–25, 330–31, 333, 336, 339, 343, 347, 353–54, 356, 358, 366–68, 370, 372–74, 381, 384, 387, 392, 394, 396–99, 402, 404, 412, 416, 424, 449, 458, 485–87, 521, 535.

Script, Ptolemaic. 70, 79, 87, 88, 91, 93, 95, 172, 334, 336, 404, 458.

Selket. 238, 239.

Semen. 187, 199, 269.

Senwosret II. 3, 18, 19, 22, 154.

Senwosret III. 3, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 30, 138, 153, 154.

Seth. 147, 212, 222, 359.

Shrewmouse, see Index of Egyptian words, *ṣmṣm*.

Shu. 148, 177–79, 199, 275–76, 349, 375, 426.

Sia. 136–37, 283, 319.

Siptah. 9, 34–35, 59–61, 253, 255, 265–66.

Sokar (also see “Sokar-Osiris”). 18, 19, 22, 23, 138, 153,

188, 252, 296.

Sokar-Osiris. 20, 166.

Sons of Horus. 221, 230–32.

South, see “Direction, south.”

Stars, field of (ceiling motif). 47–48, 55, 57.

Stars, general. 11, 15, 56, 73, 75, 141, 162, 179, 185–87, 190, 195, 199–200, 224, 253, 270–71, 320, 364–65, 384, 413.

Stars, unwearying. 115, 406.

Sunshade (also see Index of Egyptian words, *šw.t*, and Index of Coptic words, **Ⲅⲏⲃⲉ**). 68, 130, 159, 161, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 195, 224, 225, 226, 227, 283, 383, 390.

*sw sdm=f*, see “Proclitic Pronoun.”

## T

Tanis. 9, 10, 27, 34, 45, 47, 263, 461, 491–92.

Tatenen. 5, 145, 147, 149, 197, 198, 286, 287, 370, 374.

Tawosret. 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, 32–36, 38, 40, 56, 59–60, ch. 5 *passim*, 308, 455, 460, 464–66, 472–73.

Tefnut. 159–61, 176, 178, 199, 239, 275–76, 369, 446.

Thebes. 9, 19, 29, 32, 45, 52, 67, 84, 186, 263, 272, 461.

Thoth. 104, 133–34, 237, 239, 262, 292, 385.

Thutmose III. 4, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 102, 105, 124.

Tjahorpta. 10, 28, 39, 61, 63, 120, 135, 137, 224, 442–43, 446–47, 456–57, 462, 464–66.

Tutankhamun. 4, 12, 15, 16, 22–24, 31, 66, 72, 129, 201, 204, 223, 228, 231, 233, 263, 282–83, 285, 305, 307, 403, 440, 457.

## U

Underworld, see Index of Egyptian words, *dʒ.t* and *dwʒ.t*.

Uraeus (also see Index of Egyptian words, *jʿr.t*). 137, 142, 144–45, 166, 189–91, 211, 588.

## W

Wand, see “Knife, apotropaic.”

Werethekau. 42, 43, 145.

West, see “Direction, west.”