

The Process of Cursing in Ancient Egypt

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For David Teagan Brown *m3c-hrw*

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>AJSL</i> | American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures |
| <i>ASAE</i> | Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte |
| <i>BIFAO</i> | Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale |
| <i>BMMA</i> | Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York |
| <i>BSAK</i> | Beihefte Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur |
| <i>CASAE</i> | Cahiers supplémentaires des Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte |
| <i>FIFAO</i> | Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale |
| <i>GM</i> | Göttinger Miszellen |
| <i>HÄB</i> | Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge |
| <i>IFAO</i> | l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale |
| <i>JANER</i> | Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions |
| <i>JARCE</i> | Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt |
| <i>JEA</i> | Journal of Egyptian Archaeology |
| <i>JESHO</i> | Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient |
| <i>JNES</i> | Journal of Near Eastern Studies |
| <i>LÄ</i> | Lexikon der Ägyptologie |
| <i>MDAIK</i> | Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo |
| <i>OLA</i> | Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta |
| <i>OMRO</i> | Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden |
| <i>RdE</i> | Revue d'Égyptologie |
| <i>SAK</i> | Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur |
| <i>SAOC</i> | Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization |
| <i>Wb</i> | Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache |
| <i>ZÄS</i> | Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde |

INTRODUCTION

The theme of ancient Egyptian curses is one which attracts the public's attention via numerous mainstream films and novels. However, relatively few scholarly publications examine this subject in depth, usually dealing with curses and cursing to varying extents, and usually in relation to a wider context. Although numerous such publications have been consulted,¹ only two consider Egyptian curses as their main topic and so are presented here: Morschauser, S. (1991), *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt: a Study of the History, Structure and Use of Threats and Curses in Ancient Egypt*, Baltimore: Halgo and Nordh, K. (1996), *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. The study of Greek curses, such as Eidinow, E. (2009), *Oracles, Curses and Risks among the Ancient Greeks*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, is also relevant here for cross-cultural comparative background as it provides useful comparisons in the themes and structure of the presentation.

THREAT-FORMULAE IN ANCIENT EGYPT: A STUDY OF THE HISTORY, STRUCTURE AND USE OF THREATS AND CURSES IN ANCIENT EGYPT BY S.

MORSCHAUSER

Morschauser's publication provides an extensive collection of curses from the monuments of pharaonic Egypt under the heading 'threat-formulae'. This categorisation is not represented by any ancient vocabulary or category, but by the German term 'Drohformeln'.² Morschauser deems the term 'curse' unsuitable due to its modern connotations of invoking the wrath of deities, although he later states

¹ The most useful are: Bochi, 1999: 73-86 (execration figures and *damnatio memoriae*), Frankfurter, 2005: 157-185, Pinch, 1994: 321-336 (an extensive overview of magical practices, including tomb curses, execration figures and magic spells), Sauneron, 1951: 11-21 and Sottas, 1913. For discussion on curses (and blessings) in other cultures and religions see Crawley, 1911: 366-374, which focuses more on curses than on blessings. Booth, 2009, attempts to bridge the gap between general misconceptions held by the public and accepted theories and understandings based on archaeological evidence. The misconceptions dealt with are: the origins of the ancient Egyptians, the pyramids and sphinx, religion, Hatshepsut, Akhenaten, Tutankhamun, Cleopatra, the Exodus and, of most relevance here, curses (Booth, 2009: 181-201). As this book is aimed at the general public it is easy to read, but lacks references to particular points and arguments; it instead has a generic and wholly English bibliography.

² *LÄ I*, 1145-1147.

‘Egyptian threats essentially rely on deities for their enforcement’.³ Morschauser only uses curses which fit his particular formula, those with two parts: a stipulation/protasis (‘if this happens...’) and an injunction/apodosis (‘...then that happens’), although curses which differ from this formula are briefly referred to in various sections. This publication is divided into an introduction and conclusion, with three intervening chapters: ‘The Form and Structure of the Threat in Ancient Egypt’, ‘The Nature and Use of the Threat in Ancient Egypt’ and ‘Egyptian Classification of the Threat-Formula’.

Morschauser’s introduction provides a wide chronological context for cursing in general, ‘Indeed, throughout the ancient world, the “curse” was a common instrument of social, political, and religious interaction (or the lack of it)’.⁴ The threat-formulae under consideration are also given a chronological, as well as a geographical, context. Morschauser accompanies the word ‘curse’ with double quotation marks each time it occurs in this section, as he says his threat-formulae lack the modern magical connotations which curses hold. Morschauser states that he omits ritual and religious literature such as the Pyramid and Coffin Texts, although he hoped to deal with these in a future publication. His publication is stated to be ‘intended to discuss the structure, nature and use of the threat-formulae in ancient Egypt’.⁵

The first chapter examines the grammatical structures and vocabulary of both Middle and Late Egyptian threat-formulae. Morschauser lists grammatical forms found in the stipulations, as well as the words and constructions used to identify the subject of the curse. He examines the type of offences referred to in the stipulation, and notes that it is difficult to separate criminal cases from civil offences: both are treated equally by the ancient Egyptians. Morschauser categorises the curses according to the criminal act which they try to prevent, and groups them by the vocabulary used to describe the act. The vocabulary and grammatical structures used in the injunction are then presented in the same way. Morschauser provides full transliterations and translations, as well as references and a time period (e.g. Middle Kingdom or Dynasty number), but sometimes fails to expand on the context of the examples, such as geographical or physical locations, the medium and the user.

³ Morschauser, 1991: 141.

⁴ Morschauser, 1991: xi. Morschauser also provides a bibliography for those interested in the subject of cursing beyond ancient Egypt.

⁵ Morschauser, 1991: xiii.

Morschauser repeatedly highlights the correlation between ‘codified law’⁶ and threat-formulae due to shared language features, but it is unclear which examples he is presenting as codified law, and which as threat-formulae: all examples have the same grammatical formula, and contain a situation to be prevented, and a consequence should the situation occur. Due to this ambiguity, it is unclear whether Morschauser actually provides any examples of codified law to support his argument – that threat-formulae, like codified law, protect people and their interests using a shared vocabulary and structure, namely conditional clauses. The differences between threat-formulae and codified law are also addressed: the former generally holds supernatural entities responsible for enforcing a vague punishment, and the latter an official body for enforcing a specific, usually physical, punishment. Threat-formulae also remained effective after the curser’s death.

Morschauser provides tables in an attempt to highlight the usage of a selection of words found in curses throughout the pharaonic period, but as most of the chosen words were used across extensive time periods, no real pattern emerges. Morschauser does not address the popularity of the selected words in other genres of text, which would provide the context and comparison necessary for discussion.

The subject of deities acting as agents is addressed, in particular the favouring of certain deities at different periods in time. Morschauser assumes that as religious and magical texts such as the Pyramid and Execration Texts contained ritual acts, and the threat-formulae he focuses on make no mention of these types of acts, the latter did not involve rituals, and so were not seen as magical or ritual texts by the Egyptians.⁷ Morschauser says that verbalisation of these threat-formulae was not a ritual act associated with magic, but was due to their function as an oath. Also, as some magical texts such as Papyrus Bremner Rhind have clearly stated titles, Morschauser concludes that threat-formulae do not belong to these genres, or even their own genre, as none are titled. He states that threat-formulae are components of legal texts, in particular a conditional legal formulation.

Morschauser’s second chapter, ‘The Nature and Use of the Threat in Ancient Egypt’, discusses the types of curses used in the different time periods, from the Old Kingdom through to the Late Period. Although this chapter refers to the curses from

⁶ Morschauser, 1991: xiv.

⁷ Morschauser, 1991: 144.

the first chapter, the more detailed context previously lacking is addressed here. The areas of discussion here mirror the subject themes of the protasis and apodosis addressed in the first chapter. If Morschauser discusses anything new here it is not obvious to the reader.

The third chapter, ‘Egyptian Classification of the Threat-Formula’, is brief in comparison to the first two chapters. Here, Morschauser examines four ancient Egyptian words or phrases traditionally translated as ‘curse’, and dismisses each one as a suitable label for his threat-formulae due to their ambiguous meanings: *wꜥ* (conspire), *ḥwi sꜥb* (to punish a moral wrong), *šḥwr* (make, declare (a person) a criminal) and *šni* (a binding pronouncement, ban).⁸

The publication concludes by summarising Morschauser’s argument, and by stating that the formulae were used by private individuals who chose the injunction based on personal choice rather than regulation. The threats were a way of keeping order and maintaining Maat, designed to compensate for limitations in the law.

Morschauser’s publication is useful as an introduction to the subject of cursing in ancient Egypt and provides extensive philological material and bibliography. However, the repeated presentation of opinions as facts perhaps undermines this study of curses, suggesting that one might more fully explore the genre. Morschauser’s main concern is to secularise cursing and demonstrate that curses are actually legal texts; evidence that does not pertain to this is largely overlooked. Beyond sentence structure, Morschauser does not mention how his sample of threat-formulae have been chosen, and the philological data is not related to wider material beyond legal documents. A common mistake made in this publication is the projection of modern day biases onto ancient concepts, in particular the differentiation between types of offence as legal or social crimes. Morschauser himself appears to realise his error, as seen in conflicting quotes: ‘As noted, the threat was designed to address judicial circumstances’⁹ and ‘However, it would be ill-founded to infer that every stipulation in a threat corresponded to some formally defined legal structure’.¹⁰ Overall, this publication is useful to those interested in this one particular type of curse, but Morschauser’s strict criteria guidelines mean that this is by no means an exhaustive study of cursing in ancient Egypt.

⁸ Morschauser, 1991: 261.

⁹ Morschauser, 1991: 37.

¹⁰ Morschauser, 1991: 38.

ASPECTS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CURSES AND BLESSINGS BY K. NORDH

Nordh's work aims to 'illustrate different aspects of the ancient Egyptian curses and blessings, to analyse their role in society, in the totality of Egyptian life and thought...'.¹¹ In her introduction (Chapter One) she recognises that there is a dearth of works on ancient Egyptian curses, with the main publications being those by Morschauser (above) and Sottas.¹² Nordh repeats the theme of Morschauser's work by focussing on certain written curses which can be divided into two parts – a stipulation and an injunction – and largely ignoring other cursing forms. Written curses which do not contain a stipulation, labelled 'open curses' by Nordh, are omitted from the study as they are deemed to strike targets 'indiscriminately'.¹³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind is given as an example of an open curse as the target Apophis' reason for being cursed is generally assumed, not explicitly stated. Nordh defines a curse as a record of the negative actions of the target against the user, and a description of the consequences of the curse via an agent. Her study of the ancient Egyptian terminology for 'curse' uses the same words as Morschauser (*shwr*, *šnwt*, *wz* and *hw sdb*), although Nordh is less critical of their meaning. Her evidence ranges widely both chronologically and geographically, and is categorised according to the medium used: a tomb, temple, something in the open (e.g. stelae and graffiti) or something else (e.g. papyri and amulets). Her sources consist of Old Egyptian, Middle Egyptian, Late Egyptian and Demotic, and are written in hieroglyphs, hieratic and demotic.

In Nordh's second chapter she addresses ancient Egypt's society, culture and religion from a scribe's viewpoint, with them being 'the originators and user of the (curse and blessing) formulae'.¹⁴ The importance of maintaining Maat to an ancient Egyptian is stressed here and throughout her work. Emphasis is also given to the importance of studying an ancient culture without a modern bias, while translating the data into a form readily understood by a modern audience. Nordh calls this concept the 'Egyptological research model', with the ancient Egyptian literate are labelled as the 'research model' and the illiterate as the 'folk model'. Due to the reliance of

¹¹ Nordh, 1996: 1.

¹² Sottas, 1913.

¹³ Nordh, 1996: 5.

¹⁴ Nordh, 1996: 16.

Nordh's study on written evidence, she finds the folk model harder to analyse, although she suggests they could be the target of curses and blessings. She provides examples of curse and blessing formulae, and explains how they fit into ancient Egyptian religion. The rest of the chapter deals with scribes and the importance of writing, which leads to an in-depth discussion of a scribe's work, education, environment and status. The chapter ends with a look at the different forms (*hprw*) which the curser could take – flora, fauna or mineral – in order to curse the target.

In the third chapter, Nordh describes the formulae as forms of communication which convey a message from the sender to the receiver: a communication model. This communication model is used to structure and analyse the formulae, and consists of a sender, receiver, message, topic, medium, context and executor. Nordh then addresses her chosen formulae by breaking them down into three sections: form, content and function. The form consists of two parts, as already noted, and utilises a wide variety of grammatical forms and tenses. The content is the formulae's reason for use, i.e. the concerns and welfare of the sender, and the intended outcome of the curse or blessing. The function is the magical aspect of cursing and blessing, and writing in general, and how the formulae acted as persuasions (in blessings) or warnings (in curses). Finally, she discusses methods of counteracting curses, which largely consists of appeasing deities. She provides examples throughout to support her statements.

Nordh's fourth chapter deals with transmission: how Egyptian texts, including the formulae, were written, stored and copied, and by who. This leads to a detailed study of the House of Life – its definition, history, function, staff and role in society. As with her discussion of scribes in the second chapter, this chapter does not directly deal with curse and blessing formulae, but provides support to her findings and theories; these are summarised in her conclusion in the fifth chapter.

Like Morschauser, Nordh ignores or dismisses cursing methods which do not fit her criteria, using only those which follow the stipulation and injunction framework. Much of the publication deals with the context of ancient Egyptian society, in particular scribes and the House of Life, while the rest is an overview of cursing and blessing formulae and its relation to Maat. When examples are given, they are generally in English, with only occasional words given in transliteration. Overall, Nordh's work provides a view into how particular curses and blessings fitted into ancient Egyptian society, but the focus is on the wider context, not on individual pieces

of evidence. However, Nordh's work provides an extensive bibliography, and also addresses the concept of how the ancient Egyptians were able to avoid or counteract a curse's effects; an interesting theme not addressed in the current thesis.

ORACLES, CURSES AND RISKS AMONG THE ANCIENT GREEKS BY E. EIDINOW

Eidinow's publication deals with Greek curses, but the manner in which her study is carried out and presented provides a useful comparison.¹⁵ In Eidinow's introduction she sets out her study as one which encompasses both divination and curses, and she states that it 'is intended to further understanding of the nature and significance of these two practices for ordinary men and woman of the ancient world'.¹⁶ To do this, Eidinow uses oracle questions inscribed on tablets found at Dodona, Didyma and Delphi, and curse tablets ranging in age from the sixth century BC to the first century BC. She explains how her study is divided by summarising the contents of the chapters: 1) the concept of 'risk', 2) interaction with the supernatural, 3) the Greek understanding of oracles, 4) the context of the Dodona oracles, 5) a catalogue of oracle questions, 6) an overview of the catalogue, 7) how curses were written and sold, and 8-11) published curses. The study ends with an overall conclusion. Eidinow highlights the issues of reading ancient text: even if the text is complete and legible, we may not grasp the full or intended meaning if the context is unclear. Regardless of this, her aim is to understand what motivated the oracle or curse user, and what that reveals about ancient Greek society.

The risks faced by the ancient Greeks are addressed in the first chapter, titled 'Exploring Uncertainty'. Here Eidinow discusses how the Greeks used oracles and curses as a way of dealing with potential risk. She addresses the confusion which some words hold when used in relation to other cultures, due to their inherent meaning in our own culture; Eidinow's examples are the words 'magic' and 'risk'. The aim of her study is to bridge the gap between the cultures in order to better understand concepts such as magic and risk in the contexts of the civilisation in question, i.e. ancient Greece. She acknowledges that the archaeological evidence for oracles and curses is

¹⁵ For wider reading on magic in other cultures see Gager, 1992.

¹⁶ Eidinow, 2009: 4.

not complete, but rather it is a starting point and can be used to support other sources of evidence.

In the second chapter, 'A Lapse into Unreason', Eidinow puts ancient Greek oracle sanctuaries into context: the community, in particular the titles given to certain roles or social groups, and how society engaged in religious activity. Previous works and current theories on oracles are also discussed, and the resulting questions and gaps in knowledge which arise are then debated. This forms the basis for the next four chapters of Eidinow's work.

In Eidinow's third chapter, 'Individuals and Oracles', she studies the individual's relationship with an oracle. She starts by examining in which circumstances an oracle was deemed suitable: when the individual was uncertain or concerned about a (possible) future event. Sources of evidence used, besides the surviving oracles, are accounts from historic Greek historians and ancient Greek literature. The phraseology of the oracles is also examined by Eidinow, to discover in each case whether the future event was seen as unavoidable (e.g. when we sail, will it be favourable?) or controllable (e.g. should we sail?), and what form the answer took (yes/no or choosing one option between two). Eidinow then presents examples of oracular texts from the sites of Delphi and Didyma, and relates them to her findings so far.

In her fourth chapter, titled 'The Dwelling of the Spirit', Eidinow looks at one particular oracular site due to its popularity in ancient times: Dodona. Dodona's geographical location, history and society are discussed, before the focus shifts to Dodona's sanctuary: the location where the oracles were used. She uses both archaeological and ancient literary sources to discuss how oracles functioned at Dodona, relating them to ancient Greek culture, for example their religious views or major political events.

In Chapter Five, 'A Catalogue and Summary of Published Questions by Individuals and Responses from the Dodona Oracle', Eidinow presents a catalogue of oracle questions and responses from Dodona. She categorises the questions according to the concern which the oracle addresses, for example travel, work or health. She mentions the problem of some oracle questions belonging to more than one category, but she solves this problem by assigning the category in accordance to the main focus of the oracle. Each category (travel, work, health, etc.) is divided into further sub-categories. As an example: 'Travel' is split into 'location identified', 'unspecified

location' and 'remaining at home'. Within each category, an overview is given of the questions, and the details of the pieces – the user's identity, the reason for use, the phraseology, etc. – are discussed where possible. After this overview, the relevant oracle questions are presented in ancient Greek and English, with their references and dates, in chronological order. Where oracle responses survive, Eidinow discusses each one with its relevant question. The exception is two responses given at the end of the chapter which have no accompanying questions.

In the sixth chapter, 'Oracle and Daily Life', Eidinow uses the catalogue of oracle questions and responses from the previous chapter to discuss four themes: the content and timing of the questions, the users' identities, the language of the questions and what the questions and responses tell us about the use of oracles by individuals. By focusing on these themes, Eidinow examines what concerned the ancient Greeks, who held these concerns, and how they viewed and dealt with their concerns. This provides a summary of how and why oracles were utilised by the ancient Greeks.

Eidinow's introduction to curses in the seventh chapter 'Curses!' explains the two types of curses used in ancient Greece: conditional and binding. While the former attempts to prevent a bad thing from happening, the latter intended to harm the target immediately. Eidinow utilises ancient literature and additional archaeological evidence alongside her selection of curse tablets, which are presented fully in later chapters. She discusses the identities of the curse users and victims, linguistics – in particular the use and meaning of specific words – and the involvement of deities and the dead as agents. In the final section of this chapter, Eidinow contemplates the reasons why the ancient Greeks used curses, and introduces the basic categories she will use to classify and analyse them: judicial, theatrical, commercial and love curses. As with oracles, above, Eidinow mentions the difficulties which can arise from grouping curses into artificial categories, in particular when curses overlap multiple categories or do not fit comfortably into one category.

In Chapter Eight, 'Urban Drama', Eidinow studies theatrical curses (those aimed at public performers), Chapter Nine, 'The Best Defence', deals with judicial curses, and Chapter Ten, 'Business as Usual?', deals with commercial curses. The eleventh chapter, 'Love and Curses', looks at love or relationship curses, including both separation and attraction curses (depending on the wish of the user). She discusses each curse based on the identities of the people involved, the situation or reason for use (if known) and the intended outcome. Eidinow presents her findings in

relation to ancient Greek culture, discussing its relevance to social behaviour, interaction and beliefs.

In Chapter Twelve, 'Curses and Risk', Eidinow relates the previously discussed curses to the concept of risk. As with the oracles, she summarises that curses were initially a method of controlling or preventing a perceived risk, but were later used as an act of aggression when the user wished to gain something.

After Eidinow presents her conclusion and chapter notes, she gives a catalogue of oracle questions from Dodona, and a catalogue of binding curses which were used throughout the publication. In each catalogue the texts appear in both ancient Greek and English and are referenced.

Eidinow provides extensive and detailed background information about the ancient Greeks and their practices, and relates this knowledge with her oracles and curses. Eidinow discusses previous works and theories, and gives clear technical information about how the study is divided, how her work will progress, etc. Most of the primary material, i.e. the oracle and curse texts, appears at the end of the work, but a selection are used within the chapters where they are used for explanation or clarification purposes. Eidinow's publication was useful to me in picking a framework on which to form my own work, for example how to divide the curses into categories most effectively, although many of the features of her publication are superfluous due to differences in our studied themes and, more pressingly, to differences in the available space.

The two publications concerning ancient Egypt, although beneficial to their own particular agenda, fall short of addressing the wider context. By focussing on what he terms threat-formulae, Morschauser excludes any written curses which do not fit his particular specifications. He is more focussed on the shared structure and wording of the threat-formulae with codified law, rather than on the curses' peculiarities or functions. Nordh has a similar approach, but her study lacks focus on the individual pieces of evidence, and she instead concentrates on fitting her curse and blessing formulae into the wider context of ancient Egyptian religion and Maat. Narrowly focussed studies such as Morschauser's and Nordh's do not consider the wider understanding of the practice of cursing; they do not explain the mechanics of the various cursing methods, what role they played in society, or what the intricacies of each curse tell us about ancient Egyptian behaviour. Eidinow's work is not directly

relevant to the study of ancient Egyptian curses, but the structure and manner of her work provided a useful framework on which I could base my own work.

To redress the shortfall in this area of study, my thesis examines widely different cursing practices through specific examples, before relating their characteristics to the wider theme of cursing. This study targets an understanding of the role which cursing played in the lives of the ancient Egyptians via monument curses, magic spells, execration figures, *damnatio memoriae*, reserve heads and corpse mutilation (defined below). To achieve this, the following questions are addressed:

1) How widespread was cursing?

This is the **context** of the curse: the age, geographical location, physical location, medium and content of the curse in question. This section provides an overview of a particular piece of evidence before the more detailed discussion happens. In order to address this area satisfactorily, numerous forms of cursing from different contexts are considered. A wide range of material provides a clearer view about the frequency with which cursing was used, but sometimes geographical or chronological diversity had to be sacrificed for content variety to provide answers for the following questions.

2) Who cursed who?

This is the **identity** of the curse's participants and targets. What type of people used curses, were they wealthy, upper class Egyptians or poor, low class Egyptians? What type of people were cursed, were they Egyptians or foreigners, the living or the dead, men or women? Did the curse have one target or many?

3) For what reasons were curses used?

This is the **situation** of the curse. This question considers the scenarios in which curses were considered necessary. Were curses used for attack or defence, were they a preventive measure or retaliation? This section focuses on the cultural attitudes of the Egyptians, what they considered to be worthy enough to warrant the use of a curse, and what was deemed suitable to be associated with a curse.

4) How does a curse work?

This is the **mechanics** of the curse. This section deals with the particularities of a medium, the affiliation of the curse with the target, and any accompanying ritual or performance; this is the procedure which was carried out. The choice of medium depended on the function of the curse, which impacted on where and how the curse was used. The target had to be identified, and this would be influenced by the context and medium. Cursing could entail physical actions of preservation, e.g. writing a spell, or they could entail destruction, e.g. erasing a name. Recitation is sometimes referred to directly, but more often must be assumed. Agents could be evoked to help punish the target, or sometimes the curser is explicitly stated as being the one responsible. Some methods of cursing had an immediate effect, while others became active only when certain circumstances were met.

5) What is the consequence of a curse?

This is the **outcome** of the curse. Did a curse have implications for this life or the afterlife? Were these implications long term or short term? Were certain punishments favoured in specific circumstances or was it down to the personal choice of the curser? Those curses which directly threaten retribution reveal the fears of the Egyptians, and must play on acknowledged concerns in order to be effective. When the outcome of a curse is not directly stated, exploration of the reason for its use can also provide information concerning their fears.

Chapter One deals with monument curses, Chapter Two with execration figures, Chapter Three with magic spells and Chapter Four with *damnatio memoriae*. Each of these chapters is divided into sections to focus on the above agenda – context, identity, situation, mechanics and outcome. This division also facilitates a comparative analysis in the results chapter (Chapter Six) by bringing together the different forms of cursing to examine their similarities and differences, leading to an overall conclusion being made for the act of cursing as a whole. When the curse takes a written form, my own

translation has been produced from the hieroglyphs¹⁷ provided in the specific publications for the piece, along with the standard language and grammar publications.¹⁸ Corpse mutilations and reserve heads are discussed in Chapter Five. These acts share similar features with the curses in the main chapters, so their discussion here encourages an original analysis. However, due to the scant information about these subjects, the structure used for the previous chapters is abandoned here. Instead, the purpose is an overview of the act in question, looking at previous works and theories, followed by my own theories as to the act's relevance as a form of cursing.

All monument curse translations for Chapter One appear at the end of the thesis in the Monument Curse List section, where they are listed in order of their assigned reference: A01, A02, A03, etc. The monument curses assigned as A protect a tomb and its contents, B monument curses protect other monuments, C monument curses protect endowments and agreements, and D monument curses are miscellaneous. Within these groups, the curses are arranged alphabetically according to author; when the curse has a common name, e.g. the Semna Stela, this is used instead. In this study, a monument curse's reference number is always written in bold (e.g. see footnote 17). Translations for Papyrus Bremner Rhind – The Book of Overthrowing Apophis in Chapter Three, section 6 are also found at the end of the thesis; these are too lengthy to include in the main body of text.

Some evidence collected for this study had ultimately to be omitted, usually for reasons of space. For instance, Posener and Osing¹⁹ discuss a collection of execration tablets, and also provide photographs and drawings, but they are too broken to be of use here. Texts which are missing critical elements have not been used to avoid speculative analysis; that is not the purpose of the study. Also, texts for which hieroglyphic script is unavailable have also been omitted – a text must be translated from its original source for a proper understanding of the vocabulary, meaning and structure. Any execration figure or example of *damnatio memoriae* for which there is no suitable photographic evidence has been omitted – the particular intricacies of cursing texts and objects may not be apparent from a written description. Cases in

¹⁷ When the original text appears in hieratic form, for example the graffiti curse **B11** at Hatnub, the published hieroglyphic text has been consulted to produce the translation.

¹⁸ The main publications are Erman and Grapow, 1926-71, Faulkner, 1962, Gardiner, 1957, Junge, 2001 and Lesko, 2002-4.

¹⁹ Posener & Osing, 2013: 135-174.

which only a line drawing exists have also been omitted – drawings cannot illustrate features such as depth of damage or overall visual impact. Focus on the primary material is essential for a fair analysis. Some topics have received extensive interest from scholars, resulting in an abundance of published works, sometimes conveying diverse opinions. In this study, the erasure of Hatshepsut’s name and image, and the erasures performed during the Amarna Period presented this problem. It is beyond the scope of this study to do justice to these topics, so they have been ultimately bypassed. The vast theme of bound prisoner motifs on temple walls, furniture, sandals, etc. is avoided for the same reason. The act of usurpation of monuments, although involving erasure, as in *damnatio memoriae*, has been omitted from this study – these erasures have been performed in order to reuse the monument, not solely to attack the original owner. While usurpation, like *damnatio memoriae*, erased the original owner from memory, the motivation and circumstances may have been different.²⁰ Oaths, although initially considered as a theme for this thesis, have been omitted as their legal context provided a contrast which could not satisfactorily be addressed in this study.²¹

Problems encountered include locating a wide variety of curses to allow a comparative analysis to be performed, but to limit the number to allow this comparison to be performed in an efficient and timely manner. Some texts were found to be ambiguous, leading to difficult questions about what exactly a curse entails. While these types of questions are addressed in the conclusion, I will note here that the curses examined in this study all have: a reason for use, a clear target and an outcome. This confusion is most problematic in funerary literature, i.e. the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts and The Book of the Dead, where situations and negative outcomes are presented as everlasting, without clearly being expressed as desires or threats. Due to this ambiguity, these texts are not directly used as sources of curse material. They do, however, provide additional sources of interest in relation to the curses studied here, and footnotes are provided where appropriate throughout. I have defined what I mean by ‘curse’ below. There was an issue of repeated curses on monuments - some curses used in this study have the same situation or threat, but their inclusion here indicates that they were not unique; this helps to build a picture about the frequency of their use. The criteria for selection were the differences in contexts or presentation of the curses,

²⁰ For more on usurpation of monuments, see Brand, 2010a and 2010b, and Fischer, 1974: 5-34.

²¹ For discussion on oaths as a form of cursing see Assmann, 1992: 149-62 and Morschauser, 1991: various.

so although there is repetition in some examples, each curse provides new information to build a relatively comprehensive catalogue of curse situations and outcomes. The large number of monument curses gathered for this study warranted some form of categorisation. Originally this was based on the physical location of the curse, i.e. tomb, temple, stela or other, but as the focus of the study shifted, I decided that these curses should be grouped according to their function, i.e. protecting a tomb, protecting another monument, protecting an endowment or agreement, or something else. A problem arises from this: some curses had a dual purpose, and so belong to two categories.²² The same problem occurs when the monument curses are grouped according to their outcome;²³ some curses threatened more than one thing. Choosing how best to structure the chapters in order to allow comparison between curse types was a problem encountered early in the study. The decision was made to address each agenda separately to make the sometimes large volumes of evidence more manageable for the writer, and more accessible for the reader.

Throughout this study certain words have a definite meaning in the confines of this work. For clarity, they are defined here in accordance with their relation to curses and cursing. To start, by ‘curse’ I mean a threat or intent to harm a defined target using a non-direct method, for an expressed or implicit reason, usually as retaliation. Each method of cursing studied here fits this definition. The person responsible for the curse, the one who initiates and utilises it, is classified as the ‘user’ or ‘curser’, while the person who the curse is aimed at is frequently called the ‘target’, but ‘victim’ and ‘wrongdoer’ are also used, depending on the context. The reason for the curse’s use is labelled as the ‘crime’, ‘criminal act’ or ‘wrongdoing’, and the outcome of the curse for the target is the ‘consequence’, ‘punishment’ or ‘retribution’. Although these latter two words have legal connotations in modern society, of courtrooms and juries for example, their use here does not hold these associations. Sometimes a curse will call upon someone, or something, for help in punishing the target; whether this help is natural or supernatural it is defined as the ‘agent’ of the curse. ‘Activation’ occurs when a curse turns from dormant to active via actions from either the curser or the target. When a curse is activated, the target becomes susceptible

²² The monument curses which this affects are Wersu’s statue **A27/B09** which protects the corpse and the statue, Demedjibtawy’s decree **B03/C01** which protects numerous monuments as well as endowments, and the Kanais Temple inscription **C04/D01** which protects the pharaoh’s arrangements and the achievements of the community.

²³ Chapter One, section 5.

to the curse's consequences. Some methods of cursing – execration figures, *damnatio memoriae*, corpse mutilation and reserve heads – require violent physical actions to be performed on a representation of the target; these actions are denoted as 'attacks' to portray their damaging nature. The attacker, the one who carries out the attacks, may or may not be the curser, but this is discussed in the relevant chapters. A 'conditional' curse is one which requires a particular set of circumstances for activation, for example a tomb being disturbed; monument curses and some magic spells are conditional curses. The surface or material on which a curse is recorded or presented, such as a tomb wall or amulet, is denoted the curse's 'medium'. In this study, 'magic' is an abstract quality held by curses which allows targets to be harmed via association with a representation; it enables the cursing of distant or dangerous targets without direct physical contact. A 'ritual' designates a set of words spoken, and/or actions performed, which do not directly harm the target, but which allow harm to come about via the target's magical association with a representation.

In transliteration and translation a standardised practice is followed: ... denotes a lacuna with no restoration, [] denotes a lacuna with restoration, < > denotes an omission made by the original scribe, whether intentional or accidental, and () denotes a modern addition, usually in the translation to give proper English sense or to provide clarification. In cases where an Egyptian word is legible but the meaning is unclear, ___ denotes an unknown transliteration and a (?) denotes an uncertain transliteration. When multiple curses are found within one inscription but are separated by other texts, they are divided by a horizontal line; this practice is used in the Monument Curses List at the end of the thesis.

Each chapter of this thesis deals with a particular method of cursing, with the fifth chapter dealing with two methods. The features of the particular cursing method are discussed at the beginning of each chapter; as Chapter Five is divided into two parts, the features are discussed at the beginning of each section. For convenience these discussions are also included here. 'Monument curses' is a label given to written curses found on monuments, in particular on tomb walls, funerary furniture, statues, stelae and temple walls. These curses generally protect the physical structure of the monument, the monument's ability to function, and/or the monument's writing and decorum. This label also covers graffiti on quarry walls – although not generally considered to be a monument, the function is to protect an image; its function mirrors that of curses found on monuments. 'Execration figures' denotes the use of a

representation of the target which can be portrayed as restrained and subdued, and can be physically harmed in order to harm the target. Some execration figures use writing to clarify the identity of the target(s) or the reason for use. In this study, ‘magic spells’ describes texts specifically written to curse a target, with or without the use of a representation of the target. Magic spells are generally found on papyri or ostraca. All of the magic spells in this study are curses, but not all ancient Egyptian magic spells were curses. ‘*Damnatio memoriae*’ is the act of damaging or erasing the name and/or image of the target on a monument; the monument does not have to belong to the target, but the target has to be represented on it. ‘Corpse mutilation’ is the practice of damaging or rearranging parts of dead bodies, usually while they are in the grave; this compromises the integrity of the body. ‘Reserve heads’ are detailed representations of the head of the target, typically made from limestone, which are subjected to damage to the ears, neck and/or back of the head. The reserve heads discovered so far all have a funerary context, i.e. they were found in the burial shaft or chamber of a tomb. Further details about these cursing methods are given in their relevant chapters.

By studying these seemingly different forms of cursing together, their similarities and differences will become apparent, allowing an understanding to be made about how and why the ancient Egyptians cursed.

CHAPTER ONE – MONUMENT CURSES

For translations of these texts see the Monument Curse List at the back of the thesis.

1: CONTEXT

Curses were regularly inscribed on tomb and temple walls, on statues and on stelae, warranting the use of the label ‘monument curses’ for this study. Usually the author of the curse was also the owner of the monument, however curses could also be written on surfaces not commissioned by the author, e.g. an inscription or graffito on a quarry wall or deity temple. Monument curses were addressed to the literate public, so their monuments were logically accessible to the public; these curses were potentially visible to a large number of people. Tombs provide the primary source for this material, with twenty seven tombs being selected for study here. Tomb curses were in the form of direct speech to visitors, and were characteristically written in a conspicuous location such as the façade or entrance. The tomb curses in this study are to be found throughout the length of the country and throughout the whole pharaonic period. The tomb environment of some of these curses means they were typically part of a group of tomb texts, for example Harkhuf’s tomb curse **A05** follows an address to the living. The Old Kingdom tombs discussed here are found throughout Egypt at Giza,²⁴ Abusir,²⁵ Saqqara,²⁶ Deshasha,²⁷ Tehna,²⁸ Abydos²⁹ and Qubbet el-Hawa.³⁰ The First Intermediate Period material comes from two tombs at Siut and one at Mo’alla.³¹ A Middle Kingdom tomb at Siut, a New Kingdom tomb at Zawyet Sultan and a Late Period tomb at el-Hasaia are also included here,³² as are Old Kingdom tomb fragments from unknown locations.³³

²⁴ **A10** Khuiwer, **A11** Meni, **A14** Nefer, **A16** Nekhebu, **A20** Petety, **A22** Sefetjwa and **A26** Tjetu. For the bibliography for each tomb, see the Monument Curse List at the end of the thesis.

²⁵ **A19** Pehenwikai.

²⁶ **A01** Ankhmahor, **A06** Hesi, **A07** Hetephorakhty, **A09** Khenu, **A12** Merefnebef, **A17** Nenki, **A21** Seankhuiphtah and **B06** Meru/Bebi.

²⁷ **A08** Inti.

²⁸ **A18** Nykaankh.

²⁹ **D03** CG 1650 (unknown author).

³⁰ **A05** Harkhuf.

³¹ **A25** Tefibi, **C05** Khety and **A02** Ankhtifi respectively.

³² **A03** Djefayhapy, **A15** Nefersekheru and **A28** (unknown author) respectively.

³³ **A04** Djenwen and **A23** Senni/Idu.

Seventeen ‘stelae’ are studied here – several are actually wall engravings rather than a separate piece of stone, but represent stelae in form and content. As the exact form of the piece is not the feature under consideration here, the focus being on the content of the inscription, they will be referred to as stelae for convenience. The Old Kingdom stelae originate from Abydos and Koptos,³⁴ the Middle Kingdom stelae are from Abydos,³⁵ Elephantine and Semna,³⁶ and the New Kingdom cases are from Bilgai and Deir el-Medina.³⁷ The Third Intermediate Period stelae were erected at Kom Firin, Bubastis, Abydos and Karnak,³⁸ and the two Late Period stelae are from unknown locations.³⁹ As with tomb curses, stela curses have also been found throughout the length of the country and from the whole pharaonic period. Some of these curses were found alongside texts with differing functions, in particular they were found with texts setting out endowments and agreements on what are referred to as donation stelae. The curses were not physically separated from these texts and consequently were not visibly highlighted for a reader. Curses in this context supported the surrounding texts and were therefore an integral part of the functioning stelae rather than separate pieces which could stand alone.

In this study there are three examples of curses on monuments other than tomb walls or stelae; a Middle Kingdom offering table of unknown provenance, a New Kingdom statue from Koptos, and a Third Intermediate Period statue from Karnak.⁴⁰ Although there are only three examples, their differing ages tell us that this form of cursing was used for a large part of the pharaonic period. In each of these cases the curse never appeared alone and was always accompanied by other texts. The size of these objects (the Koptos statue stood at 48cm, the Karnak statue at 94cm) meant that space was more limited than on a tomb wall or stela, this restriction may account for the comparable rarity to tomb and stela curses. Curses were also included in two sets of Middle Kingdom graffiti inscribed at Hatnub,⁴¹ in New Kingdom inscriptions at Karnak, Kanais and Aniba,⁴² and in Third Intermediate Period graffiti at Karnak.⁴³ As

³⁴ **B07** Pershenay and **B03/C01** Demedjibtawy respectively.

³⁵ **C06** and **C07** Neferhotep, and **B10** Cairo 20458 (unknown author).

³⁶ **B08** Sarenput and **C08** Senusret III respectively.

³⁷ **B02** (unknown author) and **D02** Neferabu respectively.

³⁸ **C11** (unknown author), **C02** Harkhebe, **C09** Sheshonq and **B01** the Apanage Stela by Iuwelot.

³⁹ **C10** (*Dd-Dḥwty-īw=f-ḥnh*) and **C12** (unknown author).

⁴⁰ **B12** (unknown author), **A27/B09** Wersu and **A13** Montuemhat respectively.

⁴¹ **B05** Khenty and **B11** (unknown author).

⁴² **C03** the Hittite Treaty by Ramesses II, **C04/D01** Seti I and **A24** Sobekhau respectively.

⁴³ **B04** (unknown author, protects mark of Djediah).

with the offering table and statues, the wide range of dates here means that this practice was carried out for much of the pharaonic period. These types of curses were also part of larger bodies of text. Monument curses did not need to be on a tomb wall or stela, or even on a surface belonging to the author. Curses could be written anywhere they were needed, and were part of a collection of writings used continuously throughout Egyptian history.

2: IDENTITY

2.1: The Curser

Nine of the studied texts contain curses written in the name of the pharaoh, the highest member of society.⁴⁴ For the other monument and inscription owners, job titles and ranks do sometimes survive and show that they were from the higher levels of society. Only a couple of examples are included in the translations here as most are found in texts before and after the curse. Titles such as sole companion (*smr w^cty*), overseer of the house (*imy-r pr*), governor (*h³ty-^c*) and overseer of all the works (*imy-r k³t nbt*) are found in most of these texts, but no titles relate to any of the magical professions; no particular training or knowledge was necessary to use a curse in this way. Nine texts have lost the name of the author,⁴⁵ but the vast majority of texts do still preserve the name. An individual had to hold a high social position and have significant material resources to be able to build or commission a monument, so this type of cursing was only available to the wealthy, and does not tell us anything about the poorer members of society. Anyone who had the means to build a monument could use a curse of this type, they were not just limited to people associated with magic.

2.2: The Target

The targets of monument curses ranged widely, but were always addressed in a general way and were never specifically named. In the majority of cases the victim was referred to only vaguely, such as by *s st nb* ‘any man or woman’, *rm^t nb* ‘anyone’ or *p³ nty* ‘the one’. An example of this is **B01** ‘As for the one (*p³ nty*) who shall move (*mnmn*) this stela’.⁴⁶ The target could be referred to by a participle (as in the previous example) or by a *s^dm.ty=fy* describing the unwanted action to be carried out, such as **A11** ‘he who will do something (*ir.ty=fy ht*) against this tomb’.⁴⁷ The singular and plural both occur with this latter form. In texts from the Nineteenth Dynasty onwards, where *s^dm.ty=fy* was not used, a *p³ nty iw=f r...* form was frequently used instead. In

⁴⁴ **B03/C01** (Demedjitawy), **C03** (Ramesses II), **C04/D01** (Seti I), **C06-10** (Neferhotep twice, Senusret III, Sheshonq, Necho II respectively) and **C12** (Necho II).

⁴⁵ **A28, B02, B04, B10, B11, B12, C10, C11, C12** and **D03**.

⁴⁶ Other examples of this type of labelling are found in **A01, A04, A05, A06, A07, A08, A09, A12, A16, A18, A19, A22, A23, A24, A26, A27/B09, B03/C01, B04, B07, B10, C02, C03, C04/D01, C07, C12** and **D03**.

⁴⁷ **A01, A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07, A08, A09, A10, A11, A12, A14, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A22, A23, A25, A26, A27/B09, A28, B03/C01, B05, B07, B08, B10, B11, B12, C04/D01, C05, C06, C07, C08** and **C10**.

these cases the *f* pronoun indicates a single, male target, although there are instances of =*k*, =*sn* and =*w* being used.⁴⁸ This method labelled the wrongdoer via the unwanted action, emphasising that it was the action not the individual who performed it which was important. The prospective criminal could be referred to by different methods when his or her identity was not specifically known, even within one text. The wrongdoer could be described in the singular or plural, so these texts could be aimed at an individual or an envisioned group. The use of a plural pronoun also encompassed both genders, allowing a wider audience to be included efficiently.

Social class or profession could be used as a means of addressing the wrongdoer, for example **A03** says ‘As for any person, any scribe, any wise man, any commoner or any inferior’. This text shows that negative words could also be used as an address. The groups and professions covered in these curses are ruler (*hkꜣ*), ruler of the foreign lands (*hkꜣ hꜣswt*), scribe (*sš*), wise man (*rh ht*), commoner (*nds*), inferior (*twꜣ*), governor (*hꜣty-ꜥ*), dignitary (*sꜥh*), office-holder (*sr*), priest of Hathor (*hm-ntr Hwt-Hr*), musician (*hnw*), rebel/dissident (*sbi*), chief (*hry-tp*), son of a man (*sꜣ s*), august man (*šps*), wab priest (*wꜥb*), ka priest (*hm-kꜣ*), king (*nsw*), ignorant (*hꜣk-ib*), army chief (*ꜥꜣ-n-mšꜥ*), leader (*hwttyw*), administrator (*rwd*), messengers (*ipwty*) and those sent on business (*hꜣbw n wp*).⁴⁹ The Bilgai Endowment Stela **B02** carries the most specific example of an address, only naming the overseer of the fortress of the sea (*imy-r htm n pꜣ wꜣd-wr*) as the target. The holder of this position must have been the only one capable of acting against the wishes of the author, in this case by neglecting a chapel built for Amun-of-Usermaatre-Setepenre; it was pointless to warn any other group or section of society. As the target’s name was not given, the curse would be effective against the present, and also any future, holder of the titles stated in the curse. The use of numerous and varied words to identify the target ensured that a wider audience was addressed, allowing the curse to ensure protection from a larger number of potential wrongdoers.

The target of a curse was often an unidentifiable future wrongdoer and could be labelled either by their profession, social class, the action for which they were being cursed, or an insult. People could be cursed whether they held a respected post or whether they were at the bottom level of society. Curses could be aimed against

⁴⁸ **A13, A15, A21, A24, B01, B02, B04, B06, C02, C03, C09, C11 and C12.**

⁴⁹ From texts **A02, A03, A13, A17, A20, A25, B08, C04/D01, C05 and C09.**

specific sections of society or could be open to the public. They could be refined and tailored to a certain context, or they could encompass everyone and anyone who had the means and motive to act against the curser. As the curser held a privileged position, these curses were directed either at societal equals or inferiors. There are no examples here of cursing occurring up the hierarchy, that is of an inferior cursing a superior, although examples of this do exist.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ The most well-known example is the Harem Conspiracy in the reign of Ramesses III, recorded on the Turin Judicial Papyrus. For a translation see de Buck, 1937: 152-164.

3: SITUATION

The monument curses in this study are divided into four categories based on their function. The first category deals with the protection of the tomb, its contents and its functionality; these texts are labelled A followed by their individual number. Texts dealing with the protection of other monuments, such as chapels and statues, make up the second category and are labelled B. The third category contains texts safeguarding endowments and agreements set up by the author, and are labelled C. Finally, those texts which do not belong to any of the categories, of which there are only three, are labelled D. Within each group the texts are arranged in alphabetical order according to either the author or the common name of the piece. Some texts contain multiple curses and can therefore belong to more than one group. An example is Wersu's statue, labelled **A27/B09** because the curse protects both the tomb contents (A) and the statue itself (B). Texts with unknown authors are placed at the end of the relevant group in alphabetical order of accession number.

3.1: Tomb and Contents (A Texts)⁵¹

The type of offence carried out against the tomb was sometimes very general, as in the case of **A01** 'As for anything which you will do against this tomb of mine'.⁵² Several tomb curses used the adjective *ḏw* 'evil'⁵³ for emphasis, for example **A03** 'As for any person... who will do something evil in this tomb'.⁵⁴ While these phrases may seem vague, visitors must have been aware of the type of behaviour expected in a tomb environment and would therefore have known exactly what type of actions were being referred to. No further clarification was needed here. Despite this, a variety of words could be used to clarify which negative actions were unwanted in the tomb: **A08** states '[As] for any person... who will do anything destructive (*nbdṯ*)⁵⁵ against this tomb', while **A18** says 'As for any man who will disturb (*hnn*)⁵⁶ the tomb'. **A13** and **A25** contain the phrase *šd-hrw* to describe the unwanted actions which referred to a

⁵¹ For discussion of the role of curses in protecting tombs see Snape, 2011: 80-83.

⁵² Texts **A04**, **A09**, **A10** and **A11** also use this vague wording.

⁵³ *Wb* V 548.1.

⁵⁴ This method was also used in **A02**, **A07**, **A08**, **A14**, **A19**, **A20** and **A22**.

⁵⁵ *Wb* II 247.3.

⁵⁶ *Wb* III 383.5.

particular type of disturbance.⁵⁷ Entering the tomb in a hostile (*sbn*)⁵⁸ or destructive (*ngw*)⁵⁹ way were also referred to, as is venting anger (*sšnt*)⁶⁰ in a tomb.⁶¹ These words all described negative actions being committed against the tomb which would interrupt or prevent it from functioning for the benefit of the owner.

Sometimes specific examples of offences were given. Stealing stones or bricks from the tomb was referred to in **A17** and **A26** ‘As for any man who will steal (*it*)⁶² or rip out (*sšn*) a stone (*inr*) or brick (*dbt*) from this tomb of mine’. This stolen material would probably have been used by the thief for the construction of their own tomb. There was also a fear of the tomb being taken over, as is evident in **A23** ‘As for [any] men who will take (*itt*) this tomb from me’. The word *itt* was used here with the sense of someone taking the ownership of the tomb, which could be done by erasing the names, and sometimes the images, of the original owner and replacing them with those of the new owner.⁶³ These specific actions were referred to on tomb walls, for example **A03** ‘As for any person... who will damage (*hd*)⁶⁴ its inscriptions, who will destroy (*nss*)⁶⁵ its images’.⁶⁶ The consequences of names or images being erased or damaged were severe for the deceased, so these elements were just as necessary for the wellbeing of the author as the physical structure and contents of his tomb were. Destruction or interference of the tomb’s decorum would affect the functioning of the mortuary cult, having personal implications for the tomb owner.

A28 is evidence of the importance of tomb texts: the wrongdoing in this curse was not the carrying out of a physical action, but the omission of a verbal one. The unknown author states ‘As for the one who does not say this’, referring to the text preceding the curse, which in this case is an offering formula. The neglect of this particular duty carried similar consequences for the visitor as if they had physically harmed the tomb or its contents. By not reciting the offering formula, the visitor was hindering the functioning of the tomb and mortuary cult of the deceased.

⁵⁷ For discussion of this word see Frandsen, 1998: 975-1000, also Morschauser, 1991: 68-69. *Wb* IV 566.2 has ‘mischief’ and ‘transgress against’.

⁵⁸ From *Wb* IV 89.10 which conveys a sense of going astray and not doing what you should be doing.

⁵⁹ *Wb* II 348.5.

⁶⁰ From *Wb* IV 293.4 ‘upset’ or ‘overturn’ and 294.1 ‘break’.

⁶¹ From **A16**, **A20** and **A16** again, respectively.

⁶² *Wb* I 149.5.

⁶³ *Damatio memoriae* as a form of cursing is studied in Chapter Four.

⁶⁴ *Wb* III 212.10.

⁶⁵ *Wb* II 336.7.

⁶⁶ Examples are also found in **A08** and **A25**.

A theme in this category is the requirement of ritual purity for entry into a tomb: some curses indicated that entering the tomb in impurity was to be avoided, but provided no further detail.⁶⁷ Only two curses give specific detail: **A06** states that a visitor who has eaten something which an akh hates and/or has copulated with women should not enter his tomb. These actions meant that this person was in an impure state and was unfit to enter the tomb. **A12** also refers to eating unsuitable food, but here it was hinted that a person can go through a purification process before entering a tomb, in the same manner as being purified for entering a temple:

As for [anyone] who will [enter] this tomb of eternity in their impurity,
having eaten an abomination
which an akh who has travelled to the necropolis abominates,
and they have not removed their impurity
as they purify (themselves) for the temple of a god...

The akh mentioned in this curse referred to the tomb owner in his deceased state. Failure to purify oneself in the correct manner before entering the tomb would personally displease the owner; it was not only about the physical functioning of the tomb.

The protection of the tomb and its contents was not the sole responsibility of the tomb owner. **A25** says ‘As for any chief, any son of a man, any noble man, any august man, any commoner, who will not protect this tomb and what is in it’. The sense here was that everyone had a social duty to protect tombs from harm in order to allow them to function, whatever class that person belonged to. Visitors were expected to look out for wrongdoers in the tomb, failure to do so meant being subjected to the curse. Although the targets here had not physically done wrong, the neglecting of this responsibility could lead to others carrying out unwanted actions. This curse is the clearest example of these writings being used for protection and prevention, rather than just dealing with the wrongdoer; the author’s intentions were to keep his tomb safe, not just to seek revenge after the event.

Tomb curse **A02** warned against anyone doing bad things to the coffin and cultic objects within the tomb: ‘As for any ruler... who will do an evil (*ḏw*) or bad

⁶⁷ This is found in texts **A01**, **A05**, **A07** and **A19**.

(*bin*)⁶⁸ thing against this coffin (*dit*) or against any cultic objects (*mnw*) of this tomb'. Not only could the tomb and its decorations be protected, but its contents as well. **A27/B09** was written on a statue and was divided into two sections, each stating wrongdoings against the tomb contents as well as the statue itself. The word 'violate' or 'desecrate' (*tht/thi*)⁶⁹ was used at the beginning of each section, in the first to describe unwanted actions against the corpse and in the second section against the tomb. 'Remove' (*šd*)⁷⁰ follows in both sections, in the first relating to the statue, in the second section relating to the corpse. This repetition of words to produce a symmetrical pattern shows how the same words could be used in relation to different objects.

ir nty nb r tht h3t=i m hrt-nṯr

As for anyone who will **desecrate** my corpse in the necropolis,

nty r šd twt=i m is=i...

who will **remove** my statue from my tomb...

ir thi r st=i

As for the one who **desecrates** my place,

hb.ty=fy is(=i) šd.ty=fy h3t=i

who will damage (my) tomb or **remove** my corpse...

A curse written on a statue could protect the tomb and corpse as well as the statue itself, which in this case was also placed in the tomb, according to the writing. The grammar used in relation to the tomb and corpse could similarly be used in relation to the statue. This indicates that each of these elements were equally important to the author of the curse, and that they were equally vulnerable to the actions of wrongdoers.

⁶⁸ *Wb* I 443.2.

⁶⁹ *Wb* V 319.3.

⁷⁰ *Wb* IV 560.7.

3.2: Other Monuments (B Texts)

Monument curses in places other than on tomb walls could protect the medium on which it was written from interference: **B10** says ‘Now, as for any man who will interfere (*dʒt-tʒ*)⁷¹ with this stela of mine’. **B11** and **B05** warned against damaging accompanying images, and the latter also warned against erasing a command which the author has given in the preceding text. Graffiti **B04** protected not the memory of the author, but the memory of his servant Djediah: it was Djediah’s footprint, engraved into a wall on the roof of the Khonsu temple, which was the focus, ‘(As for) the one who will obliterate (*ft(t)*)⁷² the footprint of Djediah, (my) servant’. These potential cases of *damnatio memoriae* were feared enough to warrant the use of a curse against the wrongdoer as they would endanger the lasting memory of the author or his personal wishes.

A27/B09 was written on a statue which not only protected the tomb and corpse, but the statue itself as removal of this would remove the curse and warning: ‘As for anyone... who will remove my statue from my tomb’. A curse on an offering table (**B12**) was directed at anyone who harmed (*dʒt*)⁷³ the offerings on it. The word *dʒt* must have covered anything which would hinder the offerings from reaching the intended recipient, such as consumption, theft or intentional spoilage. It is unknown where this offering table originally belonged – in a temple, chapel or tomb – but it shows that offerings outside of tomb environments could potentially be protected. In this instance, it appears that the offering table itself was not protected by the curse, although the text is fragmentary.

3.3: Endowments and Agreements (C Texts)

The principle reason for writing curses on stelae was the neglect of endowments or decrees set out on them. Sometimes this wrongdoing was described in a general manner, for example **C02** on a donation stela used the word *tht* ‘go against’ or ‘violate’, and **C05** warned against anyone overturning (*pnʿy*)⁷⁴ an endowment. The terms may have been intentionally general to encompass numerous actions, thereby providing a higher level of protection. **C07**, written on a boundary stela, declared that the curse would affect anyone who trespassed within the boundaries set out on it. **C10**

⁷¹ *Wb* V 511.7.

⁷² *Wb* I 580.8.

⁷³ *Wb* V 517.4.

⁷⁴ *Wb* I 508.4.

says ‘(As for) any scribe, official or any man (who will) go down to the field (in order to) take possession (*itt*) and do things on it upon earth’. This curse dealt with the problem of people mistreating the donated land intended to support a temple or cult. This misuse of land was also mentioned in **B03/C01** and warned against stealing endowments of bread, beer, meat and milk, in particular. An allocation of land was protected from displacement (*mmmn*)⁷⁵ by curse **C12**, referring to shifting the boundaries in favour of the wrongdoer. The problems of trespassing and repossession were being addressed in these curses and were therefore serious concerns for an author allocating land and setting boundaries. Although this may not have affected his own personal cult, it would have impacted on the lasting memory of the deceased through the eyes of the recipient of the endowment. If offerings or provisions to the intended cult were impacted, it could have caused the author to be disgraced.

C03, the Hittite treaty, is an example of protecting a decree, as anyone who did not heed (*sꜣw*)⁷⁶ the words of Ramesses II were subjected to the curse.⁷⁷ Seti I’s inscription at Kanais (**C04/D01**) warned officials, future pharaohs and everyone else about going against the arrangements which he had set out, including taking away workers to another place to support a different endowment.⁷⁸ These curses were used to emphasise and support the authority of the author, even when he was not around to physically empower this personally. These curses protected the memory and achievements of the individual, rather than the physical object on which they were written. They benefited the author by ensuring he was always thought of favourably.

3.4: Miscellaneous (D Texts)

C04/D01 was a warning against tampering with the achievements of another person. Seti I, the author of this piece, was not protecting himself here but anyone else whose actions justified protection. This reflects the theme from the previous section, that of protecting honour, but it is applied to someone other than the curse’s author. **D03** is a fragment from an Old Kingdom tomb which defended the children of the owner: ‘As for any person who will do something against my children’. This general statement covered anything and everything which could be done against the owner’s successors, ensuring the author had future generations to continue his mortuary cult

⁷⁵ *Wb* II 80.9.

⁷⁶ *Wb* IV 16.3.

⁷⁷ Those who act against the pharaoh’s wishes are also cursed in texts **C06** and **C08**.

⁷⁸ The concept of removing workers from an endowment arrangement is also addressed briefly in **B02**.

and memory; he would therefore enjoy a successful afterlife. Tomb curses were not only used to protect physical objects, but also family and successors, for the benefit of the author.

D02 is not a curse, but a record of a curse being carried out due to a particular wrongdoing, in this case lying to a deity:

I am a man who swore falsely to Ptah, lord of truth,
and he made me see darkness in the daytime.
I will speak of his power
to he who does not know him, and he who does know him,
to the small and the great.

This was a warning to anyone who intended to carry out the same wrongdoing, using the author's own personal experience to explain the consequences. The author gained no clear benefit from this, although the stela had been set up as a dedication to the power of the deity and appears to be an apology to Ptah. This stela may have been erected to mollify Ptah, but it also provides evidence of how seriously curses were taken. This text shows how deities were capable of carrying out harmful actions on wrongdoers: curses were not just empty threats, they had real potential of enabling revenge to be accomplished.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ The concept of deities acting as agents is discussed in section 4.2.2.

4: MECHANICS

4.1: Structure and Grammar

Monument curses were typically a record of the curser's speech, ranging from short, simple statements to lengthier, more elaborate writings:

As for anything which you will do against this tomb of mine of the necropolis,

[the like will be done] against your possessions. (A01)

But, as for any dissident or any ignorant who will overturn (the endowment) after this which he has heard:

[his] name will not exist,

[he will not] be buried in the necropolis,

he will be cooked together with criminals

who the god has planted obstacles against;

[his] local god rejects him. (C05)

Although the lengths of these curses are significantly different, the structures are the same: both curses first identified the target via the potential wrongdoing, then warned of the consequences should those actions be carried out. This structure is repeated in the majority of monument curses studied here, with only four texts using a reversed structure of stating the punishment first, followed by the wrongdoing.⁸⁰ Although a set structure was followed by the majority of monument curse users, it did not have to be adhered to, and could be altered if required.⁸¹

Curse C02 is symmetrical when the lines are written out one by one, displaying a pattern of wrongdoing, consequence, consequence, wrongdoing:

Wrongdoing: As for the one who will transgress this stela in its place,

Consequence: he is for the slaughter of the powerful king,

Consequence: he will fall to the slaughter block of Sekhmet,

⁸⁰ They are A11, A15, C06 and C09.

⁸¹ There is an example of a pictorial representation supporting a written monument curse: Hetepu's false door in his tomb at Giza has a drawing of a man being attacked by animals – birds of prey, a snake, scorpion, hyena and crocodile – to support his curse (Handoussa, 2010: 137-152).

Wrongdoing: the one who will transgress this stela.

This curse was written over two lines on a stela, so the pattern was not immediately obvious to a reader, but would have been more noticeable when verbalised; this piece was intended to be read aloud. The practice of reading these texts aloud explains how illiterate members of society, mentioned in two monument curses,⁸² would be made aware of the curse and its implications.

Monument curses were commonly constructed using main and continuous clauses, although there are several instances where circumstantial clauses are utilised:⁸³

ir rmt nb ʕk.t(y)=f(y) r is pn

As for anyone who will enter this tomb

wmm.n=f bwt nt bwt ʕh

after he has eaten abominations which an akh abominates

nk.n=f hmwt

(or) after he has copulated with women... (A06)⁸⁴

Monument curse users generally favoured future tenses; these curses were primarily warnings, so the indefinite nature of a future tense reflected a hope that the wrongdoings would not happen.

Almost half of the monument curses in this study are from the Old Kingdom and so follow the Old Egyptian practice of omitting the personal pronoun *i*, although this does not present a problem in identifying these texts as personal speech:

iw <=i> r wdʕ hnʕ=f in ntr ʕ3

<I> will be judged with him by the Great God (A06)⁸⁵

⁸² A03 and A25 are both addressed to any ‘commoner’ (*nds*), amongst others.

⁸³ There are numerous cases where a clause may be circumstantial or continuous, in each case the clause has been translated to give the best English sense.

⁸⁴ Other examples can be found in A09, A15, B06 and B07.

⁸⁵ The other Old Kingdom texts A01, A04, A05, A06, A07, A08, A09, A10, A11, A12, A14, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A23, A26, B03/C01, B06, B07 and D03 show similar examples of this.

In this example it is clear that it is the author, ‘I’, who was being judged alongside the target. Later monument curses generally included the first person pronoun,⁸⁶ showing that these curses were indeed the personal speech of the author.⁸⁷ In contrast, the repeated use of third person pronouns to identify potential wrongdoers in these curses reflects a detached approach when dealing with targets. In this study there are a few examples of second person pronouns being used to address the target directly,⁸⁸ but this is comparatively rare. At the time of the curse’s construction, the wrongdoing had not yet occurred, and the curse was intended to prevent it from occurring. By using the third person, the author of the curse distanced the reader from the future wrongdoer, presumably in the hope that they would not become one and the same. The relative rarity of the use of ‘you’ to address a potentially innocent reader was seemingly deemed inappropriate, unnecessary or too direct. This theme is highlighted in **B03/C01** which uses ‘you’ to address those whose monuments were under the protection of the curse, and ‘they’ to identify the wrongdoers being cursed:

ir sw nb nw t3 pn m̄-kd=f

As for any men of this entire land

ir.ty=sn ht nbq̄ bin

who will do a destructive and evil thing

r twt=k nb ntw m r-prw nb hwt-ntr nb...

to any of your statues which are in any of the chapels or divine temples...

n rd̄i.n hm=i mn ht=sn ht iwt=sn im=sn

my Majesty does not permit that their goods or their fathers’ goods are attached to them.

⁸⁶ **A15, A27/B09, B01, B08, B10, C04/D01, C06, C08, C09** and **D02**.

⁸⁷ A number of texts which do not belong to the Old Kingdom also omit the *i* pronoun. **A25** and **B05** belong to the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom respectively and so Middle Egyptian may not have been fully in use at the time. **A13** and **B04** belong to the Twenty Fifth and Twenty Third Dynasty respectively and therefore have no clear reason for this omission.

⁸⁸ **A01, A10** and **A15**. Texts including second person pronouns could also include third person.

Certain words may have been used to indicate the start of a curse. In almost every case *ir* ‘as for’ appears at the beginning immediately before the target was identified.⁸⁹ The Middle Kingdom texts generally also included an enclitic particle to mark the start, such as *hm* ‘indeed’, *swt* ‘but’, *grt* ‘now’, *hr* ‘now’ and *rf*.⁹⁰ These words drew attention to the start of the curse both in writing and when spoken aloud, which would have been helpful in changing tone or focussing attention when the curse was embedded within other texts.

4.2: Agents

The person issuing the curse was not always the agent of the punishment, and in the majority of cases the agent was not specified. For instance, those punishments connected to the physical denial of afterlife emphasised scenarios such as the lack of a proper burial or offerings, so identifying the agent was unimportant. The focus was on the omission of certain (beneficial) actions rather than the carrying out of other (negative) actions, or on the permanence of the situation. In some cases the punishment was clearly attributed to a specified agent, for example **A10** ‘the like will be done against your possessions by your successors (*imy-ht-tn*)’. Here it was not just the actions which constituted the punishment, but the involvement of certain agents to enact it. When the punishment was physical loss, the agent was deemed unimportant and was therefore not mentioned. When the threat was bodily retribution, the enactor of the physical actions was generally not specified. This was repeated in threats to the target’s family, with the majority of outcomes not being attached to an identified agent. Whether these agents were assumed to be the author of the curse or someone else is unclear, but no official body was mentioned in any curse studied here. What is clear in these cases is that it was the punishment itself which was the focus, rather than who actually carried it out. These threats were constructed without agents because in most cases they were not relevant to the mechanics of the curse.

4.2.1: Pharaoh

In this study, most examples of the pharaoh being named as the agent appear in Demedjibtawy’s decree (**B03/C01**). In this text, the pharaoh was identified as bringing about several punishments: being tied up, losing goods, losing life, and not

⁸⁹ *ir* is used in this way in thirty nine of the forty nine texts in which the beginning is preserved.

⁹⁰ These appear in texts **A08**, **B05**, **B06**, **B10**, **B11**, **B12**, **C04/D01**, **C05**, **C07**, **C08** and **C11**. **A08** is a Sixth Dynasty text, **C04/D01** is from the New Kingdom and **C05** is from the First Intermediate Period.

being able to join akhs in the necropolis. **B02** states ‘he is a hated one (*hbd*)⁹¹ of the reigning king’ but does not explain how this hatred would be acted out. In **A28**, which says ‘he will be for... the king’s striking down (*sh*)’,⁹² a violent physical action was clearly intended. Two other texts used a similar (if not the same) word to describe physical action from the pharaoh, ‘he is for the slaughter (*šꜥt*)⁹³ of the powerful king’ and ‘he will become a cut one (*šꜥd*)⁹⁴ of the king’.⁹⁵ The latter of these texts also includes a knife determinative to emphasise exactly what this entailed. The pharaoh could act as an agent in various monument curses, but mainly those involving physical retaliations; the pharaoh could be relied on to seek revenge against those who had done wrong. It is noteworthy that the pharaoh was not referred to by name in any of these examples, he was instead called *hm* and more frequently *nsw*. This practice ensured the curse remained effective even after the passing of one pharaoh to another. **B02** emphasises this by the use of the phrase *nsw n hꜣw=f* ‘the reigning king’ (literally: the king of his time) to guarantee the curse would always be relevant and effective. These monument curse users had the authority to call upon the king to seek revenge on their behalf.

4.2.2: Deities and Akhs

In **B03/C01**, when the wrongdoer was threatened with being tied up as a prisoner of pharaoh, he was also at the mercy of deities: ‘they will be bound and tied as prisoners of the king, of Osiris, and of their local gods’. In Old Kingdom tombs the most common threat was that of being judged unfavourably by Osiris, named ‘the Great God’, in the underworld; not only could a wrongdoer be punished by his local gods, but also by the national god of the underworld. Deities had the potential to impact negatively on both the life and afterlife of the target.

One monument curse in this study provides an example of akhs acting as the agents: **A25** states that a wrongdoer ‘will be an enemy of the akhs’, although the actions carried out by the akhs are unspecified. All other punishments involving akhs are situations which do not require a specified agent, for example being forgotten by akhs.⁹⁶ Authors could call upon supernatural beings to punish transgressors, either by

⁹¹ *Wb* III 257.8.

⁹² From *Wb* IV 228.10.

⁹³ *Wb* IV 416.1.

⁹⁴ *Wb* IV 422.5.

⁹⁵ Texts **C02** and **C11**, from the Twenty Third and Twenty Second Dynasty respectively.

⁹⁶ **A28**.

physical or supernatural methods. Although these beings were not always the ones responsible for carrying out the punishment, their inclusion was considered enough of a threat that identifying the agent was not necessary.

4.2.3: Animals

Animals acted as the agent in three monument curses in this study.⁹⁷ Crocodiles and hippos in the water and snakes and scorpions on land would be ‘against’ any wrongdoer, indicating personal persecution by wild animals. Although it is unclear in these examples how the animals would be set against the target, another text may provide the answer: in **B08** Sarenput says ‘I am against him as a crocodile on the water... as a snake on the land’. In this curse, the author seemed to have the ability to take the form of a crocodile or snake, or at least call upon and take control of the animals, to get revenge on the wrongdoer. The curser may have been threatening to act against the wrongdoer in the same manner as a wild animal would against its prey in real life; there is scope to translate some of these curses metaphorically rather than literally.

4.2.4: Author

There are some clear examples of the author of the curse declaring personal agency. In Old Kingdom tombs the owner regularly said ‘I will wring his neck like a bird’.⁹⁸ The tomb owner had the ability to inflict physical punishments onto a victim. In **B04**, the violation of an engraved image on a temple wall was punished by the removal of the violator’s own mark (on the pharaoh’s benben stone), carried out by the author. Here the author threatened to carry out an act of *damnatio memoriae* in retaliation of the same act from the wrongdoer. Those authors protecting something other than their tomb could also threaten to seek revenge personally: **A16** describes physical punishment meted out on the wrongdoer’s family as the tomb owner threatened to subdue (*dr*)⁹⁹ his successors and their homes; although the exact details of how this would be done were not given. In **A17** Nenki stated that that he would make all living people afraid of akhs, so a deceased tomb owner, thought to be an akh, could influence other akhs. In **B08** Sarenput promised to be ‘an enemy in the necropolis’ to anyone who interfered with his offerings, impacting on the target’s

⁹⁷ **A11, A20, B08.**

⁹⁸ This is from **A17** however similar wording is used in **A01, A05, A26** and **B08.**

⁹⁹ *Wb* V 473.1.

afterlife. Although the authors could potentially be deceased, they still had the ability to interact with the world of the living, either physically or via ghosts.

These agents held fear for the Egyptians and would have been seen as real threats, otherwise their use would have been pointless. The utilisation of agents could compensate for the visible absence of the author; just because the curser was elsewhere or deceased did not mean that the wrongdoer could get away with any criminal acts. Pharaoh always had a visible representation in society through his temples and images, the gods and akhs were supernatural and so could be present anywhere, and wild animals were to be found throughout the country; there could be no escape for the victim of a curse. Whatever reason a monument curse was used for, it was always explicitly stated within the text. This public record of wrongdoing served to degrade the target, enabling the user to punish accordingly, and even call upon agents for assistance.

5: OUTCOME

5.1: Categories

The consequences of a curse are the bad things that will happen to the wrongdoer in retaliation of their wrongdoing. For convenience of discussion these are presented here under the heading of individual categories, but these categories were not made explicit in the ancient sources. The ancient Egyptians did not make this distinction and we regularly see consequences from different categories being used together in one text.

5.1.1: Physical Denial of Afterlife

This first theme deals with the denial of the physical elements which were needed for a successful afterlife. Punishments belonging to this category were understandably favoured by tomb owners protecting their own mortuary cult, and reflect a like-for-like basis: if the curser's afterlife was threatened, then the target's afterlife would be also. This type of punishment was also used to safeguard endowments and so was not solely linked to the protection of mortuary elements, e.g. **B08** protected temple offerings. The wrongdoings and punishments were not always related to each other.

The most common outcome was the wrongdoer being denied burial in the necropolis, suggesting that they would either be buried somewhere unsuitable or not buried at all. A typical example of unsuitable burial being threatened is curse **A21** which states 'there is not his burial in the necropolis'.¹⁰⁰ The target may not have been allowed burial in any location in curse **A13**, which labelled the wrongdoer as 'one whose burial does not exist'. This was also the threat made on Sarenput's stela **B08** which said of the criminal 'his corpse is for kissing the ground', indicating that this body had been left lying face down on the floor without linen wrappings or a coffin to protect it. The wrongdoer here was clearly being denied a proper burial. The threat of an unsatisfactory or non-existent burial was taken a step further in **C11** which threatened a burial of fire: the corpse would be burned.¹⁰¹ In some cases this burning

¹⁰⁰ Curses **A28**, **C05** and **C10** also have similar wording. **A25** differs slightly by using the term *imnt* 'west' rather than *hrt-ntr* or *smyt* 'necropolis'. **B08** says that his tomb is the thing which will not be in the necropolis, rather than his burial *kr*, however the meaning and outcome are the same. **C11** states that 'his tomb will be sought for', while **A25** states that it is the *hrt* 'possessions' which will not be in the necropolis, again indicating that his tomb will not be located in the desired place.

¹⁰¹ For discussion of the use of fire see Leahy, 1984: 199-206.

was also said to be done to criminals.¹⁰² In this scenario, a proper burial would have been impossible as the body was too damaged to receive the necessary ritual preparations.

The threat of not receiving cult libations was also threatened, a typical example being ‘water will not be poured for him’ in **A25**.¹⁰³ A proper burial would be pointless if the ritual libations necessary for the continuation of the afterlife were neglected. This continuation of the mortuary cult was as important as the initial burial, as both were necessary for a successful afterlife.

The importance of a proper burial and cult in a tomb environment was especially clear in those curses protecting the curser’s own mortuary cult, so here a curse threatening the mortuary possessions of the wrongdoer was an obvious choice. This would not only threatened the target with a punishment designed to fit the crime, but it was also a fear which was at the forefront of the author’s mind and a punishment which the wrongdoer would have understood. A warning containing a like-for-like punishment would have been a logical deterrent by encouraging the wrongdoer to consider their own situation; the outcome for both the author and the victim were connected.

5.1.2: Supernatural Denial of Afterlife

The majority of curses here, particularly those from Old Kingdom tombs, threatened the wrongdoer with unfavourable judgement by Osiris in the afterlife. Although the wording differed slightly between tombs, the end result was the same. For example, in some curses the deceased stated that they would be judged alongside the victim, but in most curses only the victim was judged.¹⁰⁴ Unfavourable judgement was threatened for the protection of monuments other than the tomb: **B06** protected a chapel, **B07** protected possessions and **B10** protected a stela. Although located in a tomb, **D03** did not defend the monument, but the author’s children, by threatening unfavourable judgement from Osiris. One curse in this study threatened judgement in a different manner: **C06** says ‘he will be at the gates of this god’, with the god being Osiris. This curse, found on a stela at Abydos, was used to protect an agreement made

¹⁰² For discussion on criminals see Lorton, 1977: 2-60.

¹⁰³ **A27** states ‘he will not receive water in the necropolis’ and also says that the water denied is from the *kbh n zsr* ‘the water jar of Osiris’.

¹⁰⁴ Judgement is used in texts **A01**, **A04**, **A05**, **A06**, **A07**, **A08**, **A09**, **A11**, **A14**, **A16** (twice), **A19** (twice), **A22**, **A23** and **A26**.

by Neferhotep to provide offerings to the god in his name. Successful judgement in the afterlife was important enough to the Egyptians to make this a serious threat.¹⁰⁵ It was especially important to those seeking protection for their tomb and mortuary cult but could also be utilised by those protecting other monuments and endowments. The punishment did not necessarily have to fit the crime.

The name of a person was required to be spoken aloud regularly by society after death in order for that person to have an enduring afterlife. In monument curses, the forgetting, slandering or non-existence of the wrongdoer's name after death could be threatened, as in **C06** which said 'his name will not exist among the living'.¹⁰⁶ **A28** stated that the name would never be pronounced, and **C10** that the name would not be pleasing among society. The lasting memory of an Egyptian was achieved by speaking the name and evoking the memory, and ensuring that person was not forgotten, so some curses used the threat of erasing memory of the target: **B02** states 'his lifetime will not be on the lips' and **A25** said 'memory of him will not exist with those upon earth'.¹⁰⁷ Tefibi (**A25**) also dealt with the loss of a memory, but it was not society who would forget. He stated that this loss would happen by the lord of the necropolis (*nb smyt*); it was only he who would not know the wrongdoer, which clearly would have had serious consequences for his mortuary cult.

The target's voice offerings could be threatened for misbehaving in a tomb: **A28** plainly stated 'there will not be a voice offering for him'.¹⁰⁸ As with physical offerings in section 5.1.1. above, the loss of voice offerings would severely affect the target's mortuary cult and afterlife. The worry of ceasing to exist is reflected in the Apanage Stela **B01** which threatened wrongdoers with the notion of not existing and also being destroyed forever.¹⁰⁹ How exactly this would have been done was not specified, but must have involved events such as the forgetting or dishonouring of the name, memory or voice offerings. Failure to preserve the name and memory of the deceased was a clear worry for the Egyptians, as can be seen by the use of this threat in these curses, while failure to pronounce voice offerings for the deceased would mean cessation of sustenance in the afterlife, therefore leading to the second death.

¹⁰⁵ CT 565 prevents judgement from happening with a foe, stopping a negative outcome for the user.

¹⁰⁶ **C05** has a similar threat.

¹⁰⁷ **C11** and **B07** (respectively) share a similar phrase to these two lines.

¹⁰⁸ **A25** also contains this threat.

¹⁰⁹ **A27/B09** threatens not the individual himself but their soul, stating that it will be destroyed forever.

Several monument curses in this study threatened other consequences for the afterlife: **A25** denied benefit (*ꜣḥ*)¹¹⁰ for the wrongdoer in the necropolis, and Sarenput **B08** stated he would be ‘an enemy in the necropolis’ against anyone who interfered with his offering to a statue. **C06** said ‘his ka will be restrained in front of the officials’, therefore the soul of the wrongdoer would be hindered in the afterlife. Seti I’s inscription at Kanais Temple (**C04/D01**) provides two examples of other types of punishment: the wrongdoer would be taken to the execution room (*ḥbt*)¹¹¹ of the underworld, and that ‘the end of one who acts likewise happens to him’, indicating he would come to a bad end but not specifying how. These punishments were designed to have a negative impact on the success of the target in the afterlife by supernatural hindrance, restraint and sometimes brutality.

5.1.3: Retribution by Deities

Several monument curses entailed angering or falling into the disfavour of deities, in particular those curses which dealt with the safeguarding of endowments and agreements. The rejection of offerings by a deity was threatened in a number of curses, for example **B02** which says ‘none of his offerings will be received’. **A25** and **B08** identified the god further by labelling him as ‘his (the wrongdoer’s) god’, meaning the local god of the target. While this rejection was clearly defined through the refusal of offerings, some curses did not provide this detail: a punishment termed ‘rejection’ (*bw*)¹¹² by the local god was used in curse **C05**. **C04/D01** stated that the god of the criminal ‘never fails to turn away the hand of the destroyer’, so anything which was offered to the deity would be rejected. There were several ways of threatening rejection by a deity, whether national or local, but they all had the same implications of supernatural out casting.

A more severe punishment was the rage or wrath (*ḡnd* or *dndn*)¹¹³ of deities, as in **A03** and **A28**. Similar consequences threatened are the power (*bꜣw* or *šḥm*)¹¹⁴ of a god,¹¹⁵ or being opposed (*wšbw*)¹¹⁶ by gods. The word *ḥbd* ‘hate’ was used in three curses to describe how the wrongdoer would be viewed by the deities: **A27/B09** stated

¹¹⁰ *Wb* I 15.3.

¹¹¹ *Wb* III 252.4.

¹¹² From *Wb* I 453.4 and 453.5 – what you do to an ‘abomination’.

¹¹³ *Wb* V 579.1.

¹¹⁴ *Wb* I 413.2 and *Wb* IV 249.1 respectively.

¹¹⁵ **B01**, **B02** and **C09**.

¹¹⁶ **C04/D01**. See footnote 733.

that the criminal ‘will be a hated one of Re’ and ‘the soul of Re will hate him’, **C11** said he will be hated in the temples of Amun, Re and Ptah, and **B02** threatened the wrongdoer with being ‘a hated one of the gods of the sky and the gods of the land’, therefore including all manner of deities, both local and national. All deities could be angered by negative actions towards a monument holder, and could seek appropriate revenge.

Deities were capable of acting in a more active manner towards those who brought about a curse. Two curses threatened potential wrongdoers by stating that a particular deity, or group of deities, would be ‘after’ (*m-s3*) them: Sobekhau (**A24**) used a local deity, Horus lord of Mi’am, to threaten this, while Seti I (**C04/D01**) used Osiris, Isis and Horus to threaten not only the wrongdoer but his wife and children as well. The concept of retaliation from a deity was also indicated in this curse when Seti I said ‘it is the Ennead who will contend (*shn*)¹¹⁷ him’ and ‘all the gods and goddesses of my temples will act as adversaries (*ḥ3*)¹¹⁸ against him’. A curse in the Hittite Treaty (**C03**) stated that the thousand gods of Hatti and Egypt would destroy (*fh*)¹¹⁹ the house, land and servants of anyone who did not uphold the agreement laid out in the treaty. It was not just the wrongdoer himself who was eligible for attack from the gods, his family and resources could also be actively sought out and destroyed.

In some cases, the actions carried out by the deities against the target were clearly defined, such as with the use of fire: **C04/D01** says the gods would ‘burn (*nswt*)¹²⁰ their whole bodies’ and **C12** declares the victim ‘will be for Sekhmet’s fire (*hh*)’¹²¹ as well as ‘for Bastet’s heat (*šmm*)’.¹²² These were not just life-threatening actions, but events which would also destroy the corpse and therefore prevent a successful afterlife.¹²³ Deities could also stab their victims and this fear was acknowledged by two authors; both state that the target would fall (*hr*),¹²⁴ one ‘to the knife of Horus who is in Three Hundred Town’, the other ‘to the slaughter block of Sekhmet’.¹²⁵ The idea of the wrongdoer being killed by a divine being was directly

¹¹⁷ *Wb* IV 254.4.

¹¹⁸ *Wb* I 216.1.

¹¹⁹ *Wb* I 578.5.

¹²⁰ *Wb* II 324.12.

¹²¹ *Wb* II 501.11.

¹²² *Wb* IV 468.1.

¹²³ This is a case where the consequences belong to more than one category – rejection by deities, denial of afterlife (physical) and also bodily retribution.

¹²⁴ *Wb* III 319.2.

¹²⁵ **B12** and **C02** respectively.

addressed by Sheshonq (**C09**) who asked Osiris if he would kill (*hdb*)¹²⁶ anyone who interfered with his offerings; the reply was affirmative. The deities were therefore not only capable of refusing offerings and rejecting worship at the behest of the curser, but they could also play an active role. Deities could seek out those who had acted inappropriately and carry out various severe actions against them, ranging from destroying their property to ending their lives and preventing their afterlives.

There are two curses in this study which threatened the consequence of having an obstacle (*sdb*)¹²⁷ placed against them, either by Osiris or Thoth.¹²⁸ While the meaning of this punishment is abstract, it was obviously a negative action which would hinder the target in his everyday life, his career or maybe his afterlife. It was something unwanted in the target's life which he would either have to overcome or accommodate.

5.1.4: Retribution by Akhs

In this study there are eight examples of akhs seeking out revenge on behalf of the author, with six being linked to the protection of the tomb.¹²⁹ Further, two authors played on the terror of encountering these ghosts by stating 'fear will be put in him about seeing akhs upon earth'.¹³⁰ The threat here was that ghosts would appear in the land of the living where they did not belong. This hostility from akhs was reflected in Tefibi's curse (**A25**) which stated that any wrongdoer 'will be an enemy of the akhs'. Although the specific actions of these akhs were not given, the sense of terror which these supernatural beings instilled from their malevolent nature is clear. The Egyptians wished to placate or avoid akhs, not encounter them in their everyday life or anger them.¹³¹

Akhs could refuse to perform positive actions: **A25** stated that akhs would not pronounce the wrongdoer's name, while **A28** said 'he will not be remembered among the akhs'. This theme of being forgotten or remembered badly is discussed in section 5.1.3 above, although in this case it was akhs who would forget, rather than society. Failure to unite with akhs after death was a concern, especially for tomb owners trying to protect their mortuary cult in order to have a successful afterlife: Demedjibtawy

¹²⁶ *Wb* III 403.3.

¹²⁷ *Wb* IV 381.1, although the exact meaning is unclear.

¹²⁸ **A12** and **A28** respectively.

¹²⁹ **A01**, **A17**, **A25** (x2), **A26**, **A28** and **B03/C01** (x2). All but **B03/C01** protected the tomb.

¹³⁰ **A01** and **A26** both contain this threat, while **A17** states that all of the living will be afraid of akhs.

¹³¹ For interactions between akhs and the living see Eyre, 2009: 34-46. See also the Letters to the Dead, discussed alongside reserve heads in Chapter Five, section 2.

(**B03/C01**) twice threatened this particular consequence to safeguard furniture and offerings in divine temples and chapels. In both of these examples the akhs were said to be ‘in the necropolis’ (*hrt-ntr*), i.e. where they belonged, as opposed to being ‘upon earth’ (*tpw t3w*) when they were portrayed negatively, see above. The worry here was not that akhs will act in a hostile manner against them, but that they will refuse beneficial acts in their own environment. Akhs were to be avoided in life, and placated in death.

5.1.5: Bodily Retribution

A repeated theme, found especially in Old Kingdom tomb curses,¹³² is the wrongdoer’s neck being wrung like a bird’s. This threat was usually stated to be performed by the tomb owner himself, although **B08** omits this detail: ‘his neck will be snapped like a bird’. This was not just a death threat, but something which involved the degradation of the criminal by being treated in the same manner as a bird slaughtered for consumption. Degradation was a key theme in outcomes of this type: **A28** said about the target ‘his face will be spat upon’, while **B01** warned that ‘all of his limbs are rolled about in muck’. These punishments would not have had any sort of painful or permanent effect, but would have caused disgrace and degradation for the target. **B03/C01** threatened that wrongdoers would be ‘bound and tied as prisoners’; degradation here involved physical restraint of the type usually reserved for enemies of war or foreigners.¹³³ Physical punishments did not necessarily have to involve a severe physical action.

Fire was a popular method of punishment as it had severe consequences for the victim’s afterlife. There were a wide range of ways in which this event could be described, using different words and constructions: two curses stated that the wrongdoer was ‘for the fire’, using the words *sdt* and *nsrt*,¹³⁴ while another said the wrongdoer ‘will be burned’, using the word *wbd*.¹³⁵ Three other examples added an extra element to the threat by revealing that the victim would be burned (*tk/tk3*)¹³⁶ or

¹³² **A01, A05, A17** and **A26**.

¹³³ For further discussion of this see Chapter Two on execration figures.

¹³⁴ **B08** and **C04/D01** respectively. *Wb* IV 375.5 and *Wb* II 336.1.

¹³⁵ **C07**. *Wb* I 297.1.

¹³⁶ *Wb* V 331.6.

cooked (*pst*)¹³⁷ with criminals (*hbntyw*).¹³⁸ This was a painful and frightening method of death, so its use here would have held real fear for the ancient Egyptians, not just due to the physical consequences but for the implications for the afterlife.¹³⁹

Having an arm chopped off (*sh*)¹⁴⁰ was threatened by Ankhtifi (**A02**) and Sarenput (**B08**), and in the latter case this was a like-for-like punishment carried out in revenge of theft of an offering of a leg of beef – a limb for a limb. The chopping off of a limb may have been survivable, even if the victim was hindered for life, but **C11** states ‘his head will be cut off’ (*hsk*).¹⁴¹ Decapitation obviously meant death, and as the preservation of the body was necessary for a successful afterlife, the final outcome here was second death. Bodily retribution could entail actions which hindered the target for life, or in some cases caused instant and ultimate death.

Four curses in this study contain consequences which do not provide the particular details seen in the punishments discussed above: **C11** says ‘he will become a cut one (*šꜥd*) of the king’ which clearly involved a violent action against the wrongdoer, but the location and severity of the cut is unknown. **A28** had a similar threat, saying that the victim would be struck down (*sh*t with a knife determinative) by the king, and **C02** stated ‘he is for the slaughter (*šꜥt*) of the powerful king’. Death was unavoidable in curse **C06** as the wrongdoer ‘will not breathe the air’, although exactly how this would come about was not explained.¹⁴² At the very least these consequences would have meant considerable pain, and some would have ended with death.

5.1.6: Physical Loss

The loss of a wrongdoer’s possessions (*išt* or *ht*) was threatened in several curses in this study, with various methods of disposal. **A10** warned ‘the like will be done against your possessions’ as revenge for ‘acting against’ the tomb. In this case, whatever actions the wrongdoer carried out against the author, they would likewise be

¹³⁷ *Wb* I 551.8.

¹³⁸ **A25**, **A28** and **C05** respectively. Burning is referred to in The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon as a suitable punishment for criminals (Caminos, 1959: 48 and 51). *Wb* III 254.3.

¹³⁹ Although this process would have had dire consequences in the afterlife for the victims, the focus here was on the fire itself, hence its inclusion in this category – this is an example of a punishment belonging to more than one category.

¹⁴⁰ From *Wb* IV 228.9.

¹⁴¹ *Wb* III 168.13.

¹⁴² For the importance of breathing the air in mortuary literature see Pyr. 254, 329, 331 and 493, CT 20, 61, 89, 96, 106, 162, 163, 223, 373, 603, 630, 631, 632, 633, 663, 690, 691, 770, 777, 1025, 1026, 1087 and 1162, and BoD 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 70, 99, 149, 161, 169 and 172.

carried out against him.¹⁴³ **B03/C01** not only stated that the wrongdoer would lose his possessions, but also lose those which belonged to his father. This affected not only his personally acquired wealth but his inheritance as well, which would impact on the inheritance which he in turn was able to pass down to his successors. While this example does not state how the goods would be lost, **A02** provided more detail: ‘all of his possessions will be presented to Hemen’. These goods would be taken from the original owner, the wrongdoer, and given to a particular deity. Physical goods could be damaged, perhaps to reflect and emphasise the aftermath of a criminal act, or taken from the owner and disposed of in such a way that there was no way to retrieve them.

B08 warned any potential wrongdoer that his Nubian house and his office (*st*) would not exist if he acted against the wishes of the author; rather than being taken away or destroyed however, these things would simply cease to exist to the target.¹⁴⁴ The target was denied the hope of earning his property and job back. This theme of denial is also seen in **B11** which threatened three different things:

Now, [as for] he who will damage this image,
 he will not reach his house,
 he will not embrace his children,
 and he will not see Egypt.

Here, the wrongdoer’s house, children and country would still exist, but they would all be beyond reach, with no hope of returning to them.¹⁴⁵ A like-for-like punishment was used in **C04/D01**: ‘the monuments of a destroyer (*ḥd*) are destroyed (*ḥd*)’. The use of the same word for both the actions of the wrongdoer and the consequential state

¹⁴³ **A01** states the same thing.

¹⁴⁴ These structures use the negated existential *nn* to emphasise this concept.

¹⁴⁵ The importance which the home and family held for the Egyptians is indicated in ‘The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor’ (132-134):

ir ḳn.n=k rwd ib=k
 If you are brave, master your heart,
mḥ=k ḳni=k m ḥrdw=k
 you will fill your embrace with your children,
sn=k ḥmt=k m3=k pr=k
 you will kiss your wife, and you will see your house.
nfr st r ḥt nbt
 It is better than anything.

Own translation from Blackman, 1932: 45. See also Parkinson, 1999: 95.

of the wrongdoer's property emphasised the connection between wrongdoing and consequence. The punishment here very clearly fitted the crime.

The wrongdoer's inheritance could be threatened, as seen in **A02** and **B01**. In the former example, the wrongdoer's heirs (*iwꜥw*)¹⁴⁶ would be inherited by the god Hemen, so his successors would be lost to him. The latter example warns that the wrongdoer's inheritance would go to someone else other than the intended or desired heir. The social norm was to pass inheritance on to successors, but these curses denied this for the wrongdoers. In addition, a lack of successor meant that there was no one to continue the wrongdoer's mortuary cult after his death.

5.1.7: Abstract Loss

As well as physical belongings, non-physical aspects could also be threatened in monument curses. The cessation of life was referred to in several curses: **C06** stated that the wrongdoer 'will not live', while **B03/C01** said 'my Majesty does not permit that they are amongst the living upon earth'. In **A13** it was not immediate death which was threatened but a reduction of lifespan by stating 'his years will be diminished'. The loss here was not just that of life, but loss of old age before death.

A popular theme was the loss of position in society and becoming a social outcast, which could be expressed in different ways. **B01** used the phrase 'a down-and-out' (*m hr iw*) to describe the aftermath of the curse and later says of the wrongdoer 'he has (his) head <on> (his) knees until he passes on' to portray his subdued and dejected nature.¹⁴⁷ Being a 'hated one' (*hbd*) of the pharaoh would also mean exclusion, and this was threatened in curses **B02** and **C11**, although the specific reason for the exclusion was not made explicit.

The loss of memory of an individual or being remembered unfavourably has been discussed above, but specific examples are given here: **B04** warned that anyone who obliterated (*ftt*) a footprint engraved in stone would have his own print obliterated (*ftt*), in this case his name on the pharaoh's benben stone. This is another instance of a like-for-like punishment, the wrongdoer suffered the same fate as the one his actions caused for the user. On three occasions **B01** threatened the idea of an individual having

¹⁴⁶ *Wb* I 50.6.

¹⁴⁷ A similar phrase is used in Sinuhe (R10) to describe the emotions felt by the pharaoh's entourage after they learn of his death:

šnwt m tp hr mꜣst

The entourage were with head on knees (a literal translation)

Own translation from Koch, 1990: 6. See also Lichtheim, 1973: 224 and Parkinson, 1999: 27.

respectable helpers and companions, something which only the higher members of society would have been privileged to. The first example says he would not have ‘adherents’ and the second states ‘his companions are slaves and those he begs’, clearly emphasising his loss of standing in society through his lowly companions. The third is vague, but carries a sense of losing face in front of others: ‘I will shoot my arrows in the presence of his helpers’. Social exclusion through loss or degradation of followers was a repeated theme here. Another example which continues this theme is the warning made on the Semna Stela (**C08**), which stated of anyone who did not maintain the border ‘he is not my son, he will not be born to me’. Here the wrongdoer would still be born, but to another family rather than the royal one. His life as a prince would cease to exist and instead he would be seen as belonging to an ordinary family, thereby losing status and respect in society.

Several curses used the threat of not achieving something in life. **B02** contained two such threats, stating of any wrongdoer ‘nothing he does will succeed (*hpr*)’¹⁴⁸ and ‘nothing he does will be mastered (*hꜣmy*)’.¹⁴⁹ The theme of failure continues in **B05** where Khenty says ‘he will not see completion (*kmt*)’¹⁵⁰ and ‘he will not do what he came to do’. The implication here was of being condemned to strive continually for success, but constantly fail; he would continue to live his life but would not gain anything from his actions. This was also reflected in **A27/B09** ‘his heart will not rest in life’ and **A15** ‘he is confused of heart’, so any wrongdoer would not be happy or satisfied, whatever they did in their lifetime. **C04/D01** says ‘the liars’ achievements do not last’ so anything which he succeeded at in his lifetime would only be temporary; society would not remember him after death.

5.1.8: Familial Retribution

There are numerous examples of retributions being directed at the family of a wrongdoer in this study. The principal threat was that of not being succeeded by an heir, which was referred to in several curses. **A13** warned that anyone who acted against Montuemhat’s tomb would be ‘without an heir from his wife’, denying both the main target and his wife the chance to produce offspring. The user of **A16** stated

¹⁴⁸ *Wb* III 260.9.

¹⁴⁹ From *Wb* III 231.4.

¹⁵⁰ *Wb* V 128.3.

‘I will subdue (*dr*) their successors and their home on earth’,¹⁵¹ so in this case successors had been produced but they would be hindered from succeeding in the proper manner. A successor was expected to inherit his father’s position, however this transferral could be threatened: **B04** stated that the author would not ‘appoint his son to the office of his father’. Other curses of this type say ‘his son will not remain at his office’¹⁵² and ‘the office of his son will not exist’.¹⁵³ The expected process of a child inheriting his father’s legacy would now not happen. It was not just the wrongdoer who would suffer, but the son as well. A child forgetting the parent’s name was also a fear: **A25** warned ‘his name will not exist with his children’. The wrongdoer’s children could become implicated via their parent’s actions.

Sometimes the children of the wrongdoer would be directly threatened. Such threats included being burned alive, having their mummies removed from their tombs, and even being denied existence.¹⁵⁴ Not only could the succession be endangered, but the lives and afterlives of the successors also. The criminal’s wife was not immune from her husband’s misdeeds either, **B01** states that the wife would be seized (*it*) but emphasised that it would be done in full view of the wrongdoer (*r-ḥft-ḥr=f* in front of him). This added social humiliation to the wrongdoer’s loss. The theme of humiliation is continued in **C11** where the wife would copulate with both their child and a donkey. This also added social out casting by having a child and animal perform sexual acts on a woman which only the husband, the wrongdoer, should have been permitted to carry out. The actions threatened here also played on a desire for continual production of offspring, but added disgrace through the use of unsuitable partners, incest and bestiality.

5.1.9: Animal Infliction

The most frequently mentioned animal in the monument curses of this study is the crocodile. Two curses state ‘the crocodile is against him/them in the water’ while another says ‘I am against him as a crocodile on the water’.¹⁵⁵ **A20** included other dangerous animals and described what these animals would do to their victim: ‘it is the crocodile, the hippo and the lion who will eat them’. Being injured or killed by

¹⁵¹ **B06** is almost identical ‘I will subdue their successors without allowing their homes to be established’.

¹⁵² **B02** and **C11**.

¹⁵³ **B08**.

¹⁵⁴ These threats occur in **B08**, **A25** and **C10** respectively.

¹⁵⁵ **A11**, **A20** and **B08** respectively.

these man-eaters would have been a serious threat to anyone venturing close to the Nile, so this danger was a very real one. Being eaten also carried the danger of denial of proper burial and therefore a successful afterlife through damage or destruction of the corpse.¹⁵⁶

There was danger on land as well: scorpions could be against the wrongdoer, as stated in **A20**, as well as snakes ‘the snake is against them on land’.¹⁵⁷ **B08** emphasised the part played by the author by saying ‘I am against him... as a snake on the land’. Here it is unclear whether the author was threatening to pursue the wrongdoer in the manner of a wild animal, or actually in the form of a wild animal;¹⁵⁸ there is potential to translate this literally or metaphorically. Although these animals were not man-eaters, the venom carried by them made snakes and scorpions extremely dangerous.¹⁵⁹ A final example of infliction from a land animal is found in **C11**: ‘he will copulate with a donkey’. Here the warning did not involve life-threatening injury, poisoning or death, but social humiliation and degradation. Animal threats could be used to facilitate a range of punishments leading to widely different consequences from death to disgrace. As these animals would have already been a known danger, the use of them in this situation would have made the threats very real to the ancient Egyptians.

5.2: Timing and Occurrence

Some consequences happened to an individual only once, these punishments included loss of possessions,¹⁶⁰ mutilation of the body¹⁶¹ and unfavourable judgement in the afterlife.¹⁶² The loss of possessions and physical afflictions were to be suffered either immediately or in the near future, whereas unfavourable judgement was a punishment to be encountered after death. Some consequences had the potential to

¹⁵⁶ This is discussed further in Eyre, 1976: 103-114.

¹⁵⁷ The same wording is used in **A11**.

¹⁵⁸ The notion of transforming into an animal is referred to in Coffin Text spells and the Book of the Dead: crocodiles (CT 268, 285 and 991, and BoD 88) and snakes (CT 374 and BoD 87) are mentioned, as are different species of birds. The Pyramid Texts describe the king as both a snake (Pyr. 318) and Sobek (Pyr. 317), as well as ascending into the sky as various species of bird. I have found Faulkner’s publications of these three groups of texts to be the most manageable, see bibliography, as well as Allen, 2005 and Sethe, 1908.

¹⁵⁹ Two magic spells studied in Chapter Three deal with the danger of scorpions and their venom: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 (section 3) and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII (section 5).

¹⁶⁰ **A01, A02, B03/C01 and B08**.

¹⁶¹ **A01, A02, A05, A17, A25, A26, A28, B01, B03/C01, B08, C02, C04/D01, C05, C07 and C11**.

¹⁶² **A01, A04, A05, A06, A07, A08, A09, A11, A14, A16, A17, A18, A19, A22, A26, B06, B07, B10 and D03**.

occur multiple times, for example a deity rejecting offerings from a wrongdoer, as emphasised in **B02** ‘none of his offerings will be received’ (*bn sšpw wdnw=f nb*), which implied a repeated event rather than a one-off punishment.¹⁶³ Similarly, denial of offerings for the wrongdoer’s own mortuary cult would occur repeatedly as each potential offering was prevented.¹⁶⁴ The majority of consequences did not explicitly happen either once or multiple times, but implied a continuous state which the target would be in: being denied a proper burial or afterlife,¹⁶⁵ being in the wrath of deities,¹⁶⁶ being an outcast or a failure,¹⁶⁷ being pursued by animals¹⁶⁸ and being unable to return home.¹⁶⁹ These were not quantifiable events. Denial of a proper burial could involve the refusal or destruction of a tomb, the lack of necessary preparations on the corpse, or the omission of offerings, so these events were all being alluded to without specifically stating them, turning one curse punishment into a continuous detrimental situation.

Punishments could be targeted at the life or the afterlife of the victim. Consequences to be faced in life ranged from losing property and possessions,¹⁷⁰ suffering physical afflictions,¹⁷¹ becoming a social outcast¹⁷² and being hated by the gods.¹⁷³ Consequences to be faced in the afterlife focused on the loss of afterlife and ranged from unfavourable judgement by Osiris,¹⁷⁴ maltreatment of the tomb or corpse,¹⁷⁵ denial of offerings¹⁷⁶ and being forgotten or remembered unfavourably.¹⁷⁷ The family of the wrongdoer could also suffer, both in this life and the next: consequences for the family included copulation with offspring or a donkey,¹⁷⁸ loss of job or position in society,¹⁷⁹ loss of property or possessions,¹⁸⁰ denial of a proper burial

¹⁶³ This rejection also occurs in **A25** and **B08**.

¹⁶⁴ **A25** and **A27/B09**.

¹⁶⁵ **A13, A21, A25, A27/B09, A28, B03/C01, B07, B08, C04/D01, C05, C06, C10** and **C11**.

¹⁶⁶ **A03, A12, A24, A27/B09, A28, B01, B02, C04/D01, C05, C09** and **C11**.

¹⁶⁷ **A27/B09, B01, B02, B05** and **C04**.

¹⁶⁸ **A11, A20** and **B08**.

¹⁶⁹ **B11**.

¹⁷⁰ **A01, A02, B03/C01** and **B08**.

¹⁷¹ **A01, A02, A05, A17, A25, A26, A28, B01, B03/C01, B08, C02, C04/D01, C05, C07** and **C11**.

¹⁷² **A27/B09, B01, B02, B05** and **C04/D01**.

¹⁷³ **A03, A12, A24, A27/B09, A28, B01, B02, C04/D01, C05, C09** and **C11**.

¹⁷⁴ **A01, A04, A05, A06, A07, A08, A09, A11, A14, A16, A17, A18, A19, A22, A26, B06, B07, B10** and **D03**.

¹⁷⁵ **A25, B08** and **C11**.

¹⁷⁶ **A25, A27/B09** and **A28**.

¹⁷⁷ **A25, A27/B09, A28, B01, B02, B07, C05, C06, C10** and **C11**.

¹⁷⁸ **C11**.

¹⁷⁹ **B02, B04, B08** and **C11**.

¹⁸⁰ **A16, A27/B09** and **B06**.

or afterlife,¹⁸¹ or even non-existence.¹⁸² The wrongdoer's family and descendants could be implicated as they represented the extended identity of the wrongdoer. The threat of actions against seemingly innocent people was used as a deterrent as it would have personal consequences for the target through loss or hindrance of future successors.

Monument curses were activated by the behaviour of the target. When the curse was written, the consequences did not happen immediately, rather they were dormant until the stated unwanted action was carried out. These curses were conditional – they had the potential to cause severe consequences for an individual, but they did not necessarily do so. These curses acted as a warning, and were an attempt by the user to prevent the wrongdoing from happening.

¹⁸¹ **A25 and B08.**

¹⁸² **A13 and C10.**

6: SUMMARY

Monument curses were a way of protecting a monument and its inscriptions. Some curses protected the integrity of the monument, allowing it to function; most curses found in tombs and on statues had this function. Other monument curses protected an agreement or endowment set out on the monument; the curses on donation stelae had this function. In this study, the monuments on which curses were written include tombs, chapels, statues and stelae; inscriptions in temples and graffiti on walls are also included due to their shared purpose.¹⁸³ A monument curse was never alone, instead it accompanied, and was therefore part of, the monument's operational inscription. These curses were a feature which protected the integrity and functioning of the monument. Utilising this type of curse did not necessarily require monument ownership, as seen by the examples of graffiti,¹⁸⁴ but access to tools to engrave stone and literacy were required. Monument curses were therefore used by educated or wealthier members of society, the wealthier illiterate may have employed the services of a scribe. The level of literacy required depended on the difficulty of the writing: some curses were comprised of a short, formulaic and often repeated text, for example 'As for any man who will disturb (the tomb), there will be judgement with him',¹⁸⁵ while others were lengthy or seemingly original.¹⁸⁶ None of the monument owners had titles which associated them with the magic profession, indicating that knowledge of this area was not necessary for monument cursing.

Monument curses required a surface on which to be written, and in most cases this surface had been created for a purpose other than cursing – tombs, statues and stelae were produced to honour the dead, set out an endowment, etc. Monument curses made use of a medium which already existed, so the only creative element in this form of cursing was the writing of the curse itself.¹⁸⁷ Although many examples in this study held the user responsible for the consequence of the curse, others evoked agents in the form of the pharaoh, deities, akhs and animals. Monument curses sometimes required additional help in order to function properly; they were not always self-sufficient. No official body or mediator was mentioned in these curses; monument curses were a

¹⁸³ Although these latter two scenarios involve curses written on surfaces not belonging to the curse author, their function is to protect something, hence their inclusion here.

¹⁸⁴ **B04, B05** and **B11**.

¹⁸⁵ **A18**.

¹⁸⁶ For example see **B01**: the Apanage Stela.

¹⁸⁷ Rituals may have been performed, but there is no evidence beyond the presentation of these curses as the speech of the monument owner – recitations may have been performed.

form of self-help in an environment which lacked a formal system of protection. Sometimes an agent was not identified, either because none was needed, or because they were not considered essential to the curse. Whether agents were required or not, the victim of a monument curse was targeted due to the unwarranted behaviour outlined in the curse, which ranged from stealing bricks from the tomb¹⁸⁸ to harming the monument owner's children.¹⁸⁹ Monument curses would have been visible to the public, so anyone who read the curse, or even passed by the monument, was a potential target. It was the carrying out of the specified negative actions which made someone eligible to suffer the consequences.

Monument curses were conditional curses – they required certain conditions to become active. The role of a monument curse was to protect, which was achieved by preventing a wrongdoing from occurring; monument curses were preventive. For this reason, the wrongdoing and consequence of the curse were explicitly stated: people (potential targets) were warned that if they acted inappropriately, they would suffer a severe outcome. Additionally, as the wrongdoing was clearly stated, the target (once they had carried out the wrongdoing) was openly degraded. Through the target's inappropriate actions, the curser assumed the moral superiority needed to punish the wrongdoer. In this study, monument curses provide the widest range of consequences, so categorisation was essential for efficient analysis. The consequences of monument curses could affect the target in life or in death, in the long term or short term, or they could affect the target's family. Some monument curses contained a mixture of these consequence types. Punishment could come in the form of bodily harm, loss of possessions, loss of position in society, animal attacks, denial of an afterlife or conflict with supernatural entities. Some curses threatened one outcome, other curses threatened many outcomes, but all were intended to instil fear into the reader in order to ensure their cooperation or good behaviour. There appears to have been no limits in regards to the threatened outcomes.

Using a broad sample of monument curses from different contexts, with different roles and outcomes, enables a better overview to be made of this particular method of cursing. By initially grouping these curses together by function, then categorising by outcome, any patterns and trends between these two factions could be

¹⁸⁸ **A17** and **A26**.

¹⁸⁹ **D03**.

detected more efficiently. However, the broad sample indicates that there were no limits in regards to the threatened outcome, with apparently no set patterns between a curse's outcome, and the wrongdoing, geographical location, time period or user. Monument curse consequences may have been chosen based on personal preference, and could therefore portray the hopes and fears of either individual ancient Egyptians (i.e. the monument owner) or society at that time (i.e. the potential targets). Despite the variations, the underlying themes of protection, circumstantial activation and unlimited repercussions were always present in monument curses.

CHAPTER TWO – EXECRATION FIGURES

The practice of cursing via an execration figure involved the use of a representation of the target – the figure – which could be portrayed as restrained and subdued, and could be physically harmed in order to harm the target. Some execration figures used writing to identify the target or reason for use.

1: CAIRO MUSEUM EM00-130 (Figure 1)

1.1: Context

This figure has been crudely carved from wax¹⁹⁰ and is now in the Cairo Museum. The figure stands at about 14cm high and 5cm at the widest point, the shoulders. It has an uncertain date of origin, but was found at the Predynastic to early Old Kingdom site of Helwan. Although the figure has a basic human shape, few features can be distinguished apart from the head and limbs, and these are misshapen. The legs are only separated below where the knees should be, and only one foot has been fashioned. The right arm has been made too short, to what should be elbow length, with a rounded end and no indication of a hand. The left arm is even shorter, stopping abruptly just below the armpit, and also has no hand. The ears and nose have only been roughly defined, as have the genitals. There are no other details. The crudeness of the object indicates that it was made without the use of a tool, it was instead moulded by hand from pliable wax. The figure has suffered considerable damage in the form of cutting, piercing and burning, evidence of which covers the entire body of the figure. Rope impressions on the back show that it was once tied up.

1.2: Identity

The target is unknown, and can only be determined as a man. The absence of clothes could indicate a person of lowly rank, however the crudeness of the figure suggests that clothes would have been too complicated a feature to include. Further identification of the target is impossible due to the complete lack of distinguishing features; it is unclear whether this figure represents an Egyptian or a foreigner.

¹⁹⁰ Raven has produced an in-depth study of the use of wax in ancient Egypt, including its magical functions in contexts such as this figure: Raven, 1983: 7-47. This publication also provides references for previous works on the subject of wax, as well as a comprehensive list of objects and texts made from and referring to wax.

The crude appearance of the figure indicates that the user was someone of basic means. This was not a carefully constructed piece, to be used in a formal or public ritual, but a piece made quickly and easily for an informal, private ritual. The crudeness of the figure suggests that it was made by someone unskilled, presumably the user rather than a ritualist or craftsman. This was a homemade piece for personal use.

1.3: Situation

For Cairo Museum EM00-130, without clear identification of the target, the reason for use can only be assumed. The figure's arms are not complete, therefore it is unknown whether the figure was originally depicted with the hands behind the back in the typical prisoner posture (see other figures in this chapter); the legs are complete but are not bent in a kneeling position. This lack of subdued posture could have relevance concerning the personal situation between the user and the target or, more likely, the figure was portrayed standing for simplicity and efficiency. The extent of the damage on the piece, and the presence of rope impressions on the back, indicates that the target was considered to be a serious threat to the user and had to be subdued and restrained physically. This figure was used to overpower the user's enemy, who was a man probably living nearby; the crude nature of the figure suggests a personal motivation and an informal ritual.

1.4: Mechanics

The lack of visual or textual details suggests that Cairo Museum EM00-130 was associated with the target verbally via recitation. Extensive damage was done to the figure: it was cut on the front and back, pierced on the right side, burned, and rope impressions on the back show that it was tied up with rope. The hole from the piercing shows that the damage was done while the wax was only slightly pliable; if the wax was too pliable it would 'heal' once the implement was removed, but if the wax had set, the figure would have cracked when pierced. The cutting would have been more effective when the wax had set, so the cut marks would not heal but remain visible. The impressions on the back show that the wax was pliable when rope was around the figure, but as the impressions are only present in one small area, this pliability was probably due to heating or burning by a flame. The burning has resulted in dark patches of wax, which are focussed on the lower half of the figure, suggesting it was held by the upper half during burning. The lack of dark, burnt patches of wax around

the torso, where the rope would have been, suggests that either this area was not burned to avoid burning the rope, or it was burned but the rope took the brunt of the damage. The burning has been carefully carried out to avoid melting the figure; damage rather than complete destruction was the intention here. While the right arm ends with a rounded edge, suggesting this how it was moulded, the left arm ends abruptly, as if it has been snapped off. This could only have been done when the wax had set, as pliable wax would stretch rather than snap. It is unclear whether this was done intentionally as part of the ritual or accidentally after disposal. Activation of this curse was clearly carried out physically via violent and harmful actions. There could also have been an accompanying verbal element to this curse to harm the target further, but naturally no evidence of this exists.

1.5: Outcome

Wax figure Cairo Museum EM00-130 acted as a representation of the target, and it was cut, stabbed, burned and tied up in order to have a negative impact on that target. How exactly this negative impact manifested itself in reality is unknown, but the violent physical actions performed on the figure suggest outcomes involving degradation, subjugation and control were the intention. The curser used a medium, an execration figure, to carry out ritual actions to overpower an enemy and remove the threat which they posed. This figure was used to control someone to the user's advantage.

1.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Knoblauch, C. (2011), 'Bound, Stabbed and Left for Dead: a Damaged Wax Figurine from Helwan', *GM* 229, 53-63.

2: WALTERS ART GALLERY 48.1773 (Figure 2)

2.1: Context

This Ptolemaic Period figure is made of terracotta and depicts a man sitting on the ground with his arms behind his back and his knees raised. It measures 10.5cm high, 6.5cm wide and 9.3cm deep. The details of the face are shown: the eyes, nose and mouth are clearly defined, and hairs on the head and in the beard are indicated, and the toes on each foot have also been individually rendered. These features could not have been made by hand; tools allowed the craftsman to be more precise than with hand-made figures such as Cairo Museum EM00-130, above. There is no evidence of damage on the figure, but the arms are restrained behind the back. The provenance of this piece is unknown.¹⁹¹

2.2: Identity

There are no markers to identify the target represented by this figure accurately, but the beard and hairstyle indicate that this was not an Egyptian. Care has been taken to highlight these particular features – the hair is marked by lines – in order to associate the figure with a foreign enemy. This targeting of a foreigner is a recurring theme in execration figures, as seen in the other examples below.

The identification of the user of this figure is not stated, and only minor details can be determined through the remaining evidence. Although this figure lacks intricate detail, some care has been taken to distinguish facial details, and the material used, terracotta, suggests a maker with some level of skill. Whether this maker is the user, or whether the user had the figure commissioned, cannot be known.

2.3: Situation

Without textual evidence, the function of this piece must be assumed based on context. The figure depicts a foreigner in a submissive posture, sitting on the floor with the hands behind the back. This suggests an enemy who was deemed to be a physical threat to the user; by portraying the enemy as restrained, the figure removes the threat and subdues the target. The fact that the figure portrays a foreigner suggests an impersonal motivation for use, with the figure being used in a political or military based ritual.

¹⁹¹ Bochi, 1999: 80 and n.34.

2.4: Mechanics

In order for this figure to have an effect on the target, it had to be associated with that target in some way. The portrayal of the figure as foreign, with a non-Egyptian hairstyle and substantial facial hair, may have provided this connection. A recitation may have been used to strengthen this connection, although no archaeological evidence remains.

The portrayal of the target as restrained with the hands behind the back served to restrain the target in real life. This figure shows no evidence of being subjected to physical harm, possibly indicating that the depiction of the target as subdued was enough to activate the curse. Forms of harm which leave no evidence may have been carried out, including spitting and trampling on a soft surface, before being buried.¹⁹² In this case it would have been symbolic actions which activated the curse, rather than physically destructive actions. Without evidence however this is purely conjecture, and we must assume it was the visual representation of the target as restrained which activated the curse.

2.5: Outcome

Although the result of this curse was not explicitly stated, the visual evidence suggests that restriction of a foreigner, or a group of foreigners, was the intention. Whether this restriction was envisaged as being literal or metaphorical is unknown. The target was being controlled in order to prevent an attack against the user or against Egypt. Egypt's enemy was restrained, subdued and overpowered via an execration figure.

2.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Bochi, P. A. (1999), 'Death by Drama: the Ritual of *Damnatio Memoriae* in Ancient Egypt', *GM* 171, 73-86.

¹⁹² These physical actions are all attested in Papyrus Bremner Rhind (Chapter Three, section 6.4).

3: ABUSIR EXCAVATION 1984 (Figures 3-5)

3.1: Context

These are a set of nine Old Kingdom wooden prisoner figures from the 1984 excavation at Abusir. Figures 1-5 stand at 14-15cm high, while figures 6-9 are about twice the height at 28cm tall. All of the figures are in a kneeling position and most have their arms at their sides and hands at their thighs; only one clearly has the arms behind the back. Each figure is portrayed being restrained by rope tied around the elbows behind the back. These figures depict enemies of Egypt via characteristic racial features: there are Asiatics, Nubians and a Libyan. Each one wears a kilt of slightly varying length, but all end above the knees. The detailing on each piece shows that a precision tool was used, and time and care were taken to render each one lifelike and distinguishable.¹⁹³

The Asiatics (figures 1, 2, 6 and 7) are slim with shoulder length hair and a centre parting. Care has been taken to define the hair and hair bands. Figure 1 shows astonishing detail on the face; the eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, cheekbones and beard have all been rendered in an extremely lifelike way. The muscles in the chest, the fingers on the one remaining hand, and the navel have also been distinguished. Figure 2 has damage to the face but the features are still visible; this damage is probably accidental as any deliberate attack to the face would be focussed on the facial features. The facial features of figure 2 are similar to those of figure 1. The muscles of the chest and the navel have been defined and the fingers of the left hand can be seen, although the right hand is now missing. Both of these figures have a protruding nodule on their head. This feature, along with the traces of black paint which remain on the hair of these figures, indicates that they were part of a display; they were used for decoration as well as for cursing. Figures 6 and 7 share similar features: they have shorter, fuller hair and very thin bodies. The facial features are not as defined as on the previous two but are still clearly visible. Figure 5 is the only one in this collection which has the hands and arms behind the back, while figure 6 is missing both arms below the elbow. The damage done to these figures is sporadic and does not appear to have been done deliberately.

¹⁹³ The Abusir figures resemble the Old Kingdom stone prisoner figures found and discussed in Jéquier, 1936-40: 27-9, pl 47 and 48.

Figure 3 represents a Libyan, with straight hair, as shown by the detailing, ending just above the shoulder. Although labelled as a Libyan by Verner,¹⁹⁴ it has a round, Negroid face with a flattened nose, detailed eyes and mouth, and a small beard on the chin. The chest and arms are well defined, the navel is marked, and two protruding nipples are present. Both hands have survived and clearly show five fingers on each. The left half of this figure has suffered severe damage: the left knee is missing and the left side of the upper part of the face appears to have been gouged out, destroying the left eye. The asymmetrical nature of the damage indicates that this was probably accidental. As with figures 1 and 2, this one also has traces of black paint on the hair and a nodule on top of the head, suggesting a decorative as well as a practical function.

Figures 4, 5, 8 and 9 represent Nubians. Figures 4 and 5 are similar in appearance due to their short braided hairstyles, although only figure 4 has a band tied around the head, which hangs down the shoulders. The facial features of both figures are clearly marked, although the tip of figure 5's nose has been damaged. The fingers, navel and muscles of the chest have been marked out on both figures, but figure 4 is missing its left hand. Figure 4 has an overall slim appearance, while figure 5 has a rounder face and a chunkier torso. Figures 8 and 9 also bear a closer resemblance to each other. While their hairstyle is similar to figures 4 and 5, 8 and 9 have smaller and less defined braids with a straighter, more severe haircut. The faces are Negroid with less defined features, and figure 8's head seems to be proportionally too small for the body. The torsos are very muscular, with figure 9 having wider shoulders and a narrower waist. The arms below the elbows of both figures are missing, and both have cracks covering the full length of the body. The damage on these four figures is too sporadic and irregular to have a clear purpose; it does not appear to have been done deliberately.

3.2: Identity

As with any execration figure, the identity of the user of these figures is not stated. These pieces were made from wood, a rare commodity in a desert country, and great care was taken to produce figures which represented (accurately or stereotypically) enemies of particular races. Once carved, these figures were then painted, and nodules on the heads of figures 1, 2 and 3 suggest they were used in some

¹⁹⁴ Verner, 1985: pl 6.

type of display. The user of these figures had the resources necessary either to craft these pieces himself, or to commission them via a craftsman, in order to produce a collection of figures for public display. As the figures all represent foreigners, it can logically be assumed that the user was an Egyptian who felt that these people were a threat, either to himself or to the country. The striking similarity between the figures suggests that either one craftsman was responsible for their production, or one craftsman was overseeing their production.

As described above, the figures in this collection all represent foreigners: Asiatics, Nubians and a Libyan. The differences between these races, both between each other and between them and Egyptians, have been clearly highlighted by the hairstyles and facial structures. Although they are all kneeling in the same position and have the same posture, care has been taken to emphasise their differences; they all represent distinct but equally subdued enemies. As noted above, five of the figures are 14-15cm tall, and four are 28cm tall. The smaller figures (1-5) depict two Asiatics, two Nubians and one Libyan, and the larger figures (6-9) depict two Asiatics and two Nubians. This suggests that there is either one figure missing, a larger Libyan, or three figures missing, one smaller and two larger Libyans.

3.3: Situation

The targets were portrayed as restrained, suggesting that they were a physical threat. As these targets were all foreigners, it is logical to assume that the figures were being used to defend Egypt from outside attack. The large number of figures in this collection, nine, and the presence of nodules on the heads of three of them suggests that they were intended to be part of a formal display. The high level of detailing and the presence of paint traces indicates that this display was public; these execration figures would have been aesthetically pleasing. These figures were produced for a military or royal person whose role it was to defend the country; they did not just personally benefit the user.

3.4: Mechanics

Association of the Abusir execration figures with the targets was achieved through the visual similarity of the figures with particular races, in this case Asiatic, Libyan and Nubian. This was achieved by emphasising racial and cultural differences through hairstyles, facial features and body shapes. Whether these likenesses were

stereotypical or true, they were intended to be identifiable by an Egyptian audience. There is no evidence of a textual or verbal element to identify the targets further.

These figures were not intentionally harmed (there is some accidental damage), but they were depicted as subdued: they are kneeling down with their arms tied behind their backs. It was this visual representation of defeat which activated the curse. The likelihood that these figures were on public display suggests that they relied heavily on this visual element of activation, and perhaps also on verbal activation initiated by viewers of the display. There is no evidence of any physical or textual forms of activation being carried out on these figures.

3.5: Outcome

This collection of figures was used to control and defeat Egypt's enemies: the portrayal of the figures as restrained was intended to restrain their enemies in real life, either physically or subjectively. The overt nature of these specific figures, indicated by the care taken to produce and decorate them, also suggests that they were intended to belie the fears of the community; these figures may have provided a political symbol of dominance of Egypt over her enemies.

3.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Verner, M. (1985), 'Les statuettes de prisonniers en bois d'Abousir', *RdE* 36, 145-152.

4: LOUVRE E 27145 (Figure 6)¹⁹⁵

4.1: Context

This Roman Period figure was moulded from clay to depict a naked woman. The arms are tied behind her back and the legs are pulled up and also tied behind her, in the manner of a prisoner. Care has been taken to render the figure lifelike by distinguishing the facial features, hair, rounded contours of the body, and even jewellery in the form of a necklace. This figure appears to have been created with a specific person in mind; it has realistic rather than stereotypical properties. The damage done to the figure is obvious: metal pins have been driven into parts of the body. The head was the main focus, with a pin being inserted into the top of the head, into each eye, into the mouth, and into each ear. The chest, genitals, hands and feet also have pins protruding from them. The figure was buried in a clay pot, along with a lead tablet containing a magic spell, which includes the line ‘I pierce the (body part) of X, that she may think of no one but me’.¹⁹⁶ The spell was to be recited each time a pin was inserted into the figure. This ritual was something which could only have been done while the clay was still malleable, allowing the pins to be inserted without compromising the integrity of the piece. Once the pins were in place, it was allowed to dry; the absence of pins underneath the figure suggest it was stood upright to dry.

4.2: Identity

The spell which accompanied Louvre E 27145 includes a blank space for the woman’s name, therefore the target had to be known to the user before the curse could be performed. Her name has not been written in the blank space – perhaps indicating the user’s illiteracy and the reliance on another to write the spell – but it could have been spoken during recitation. This was not a curse to attract any woman, but one specific woman whose name was known by the user; the figure represented a specific target through body shape, hairstyle and facial features.

It is logical to assume that the user crafted the figure himself, as he would have been most familiar with the target’s appearance. As discussed above, the ritual must have taken place before the clay dried, to allow the pins to be inserted without the clay cracking; the figure was made only after the spell had been written. The user of Louvre

¹⁹⁵ Although this piece of evidence includes a magic spell, it is the execration figure which is the focus, so it will be dealt with in this chapter rather than in the following magic spells chapter.

¹⁹⁶ Pinch, 1994: 90.

E 27145 was a man, probably illiterate but with clay-working skills (both for the figure and the pot in which it was buried) and resources to acquire a written spell on a lead tablet, who wished to acquire a particular woman.

4.3: Situation

As stated in the accompanying spell, this figure, with the help of an additional ritual, was intended to alter the thoughts of a targeted woman, so she would think only of the user. The situation therefore suggests a man who had tried, and failed, to attract the attention of this woman in everyday life; he was now seeking magical assistance. It is unclear why the woman had previously been unwilling to engage with him, but such an aggressive and violent ritual suggests a scenario such as her being socially superior to him (hence the depiction of the necklace), or her being already married. This is, of course, merely speculation. This was a very personal situation, with the figure being used solely for the benefit of the user, probably in an informal and private ritual.

4.4: Mechanics

The Louvre E 27145 figure was identified with the target by visual similarity – care was taken to show details such as body shape, facial features and jewellery. The accompanying spell has a blank space where the name should have been written; this would have identified the target textually. When the spell was recited along with the insertion of the metal pins into the figure, the target's name would have been spoken aloud; she was also identified verbally. This is the only figure in this study which clearly identifies the target using all three methods: visually, textually and verbally.

This figure shows a woman fully restrained with her limbs tied uncomfortably behind her back. She is further subdued by the insertion of thirteen metal pins in the body, along with the recitation of a spell written on a lead tablet. According to the spell, these pins were not intended to harm the target physically, but to control her mentally. This control penetrated each part of the target's body with the insertion of each pin and meant that she would only be able to think of the user.¹⁹⁷ Visual representations, textual recordings, verbal recitations and physical manipulations

¹⁹⁷ The accompanying spell alludes to the creation of a male figure as part of this ritual (Ritner, 1993: 113). This second figure was to hold a sword, ready to stab the female figure in the neck, presumably as a threat should the spell fail. This further emphasises the power and control which the man wished to have over his target.

combined to activate the curse and alter the target's mental state. Louvre E 27145 is the only figure in this study which undisputedly used all four methods of activation: visual (portrayed as restrained), physical (insertion of metal pins), textual (the spell) and verbal (the recitation of the accompanying spell).

4.5: Outcome

The intended outcome of Louvre E 27145 is clearly stated in the spell: the female target would become enamoured with the male user. The helpless posture of the figure alludes to the user's wish to control her, so that she would be unable to fight his advances. The physical restraint of the figure translated into a mental restraint for the target; the ritual was intended to remove the target's resistance rather than to restrain her physically.

4.6: Bibliography

Main Publication:

Kambitsis, S. (1976), 'Une nouvelle tablette magique d'Égypte. Musée du Louvre, inv. E 27145 – IIIe/IVe siècle', *BIFAO* 76, 213-223.

See also:

Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 90 and fig. 48.

Ritner, R. K. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54, Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 113 and figure 2.

5: CAIRO JdE 63955-63959 (Figures 7-10)

5.1: Context

These five Middle Kingdom alabaster pieces have an unconfirmed provenance of Helwan.¹⁹⁸ They are shaped like tablets, rather than fully formed figures, with flattened surfaces on the front and back. A head protrudes from the top of each tablet, but it has only basic features, making it impossible to identify the target visually. The limbs were drawn on the back, and traces of paint survive on two pieces: Cairo JdE 63956 and 63959. The arms are drawn tied together with rope at the elbows, while the legs are not tied but are pulled upwards unnaturally so the feet almost meet the hands. There are between twenty and thirty one lines of text written on the front of each figure which identified the targets, of which there are many. Parts of the text are repeated on some figures, but when arranged correctly they produce a continuous text which is a detailed list of Egyptians and foreigners who are the targets of this curse. Each person mentioned is labelled as an enemy by Gardiner's A13 prisoner determinative.¹⁹⁹ The first part of the text has numerous lacunae, but a clear pattern can be distinguished: the ruler of a specific foreign land is introduced and named, they are described as being born to his/her mother, a degrading nickname is given, and finally their army is mentioned. The second part of the text starts with a list of foreign lands, followed by the inclusion of any Egyptian, whatever class or gender, who will rebel or conspire to fight (against Egypt). The people of several foreign lands are then listed, including their families and any Egyptian who sides with them. Towards the end of the text, a deceased person is named along with his parents, who are also labelled as enemies. The text ends with an Egyptian name, and the name of his father, both of which are labelled as enemies. The whole text is as follows:

...*ḥꜣt nb n...*

...every chief (enemy) of...

ḥꜣꜣ n Kꜣs... ms-n mwt=f

the ruler (enemy) of Kush... (enemy) born to his mother,

¹⁹⁸ Helwan is generally considered to be a much earlier site.

¹⁹⁹ Gardiner, 1957: 443.

d[d]w r=f k3 ms-n g[f]²⁰⁰ mš^c=f]

called ‘a bull born to a [monkey]’ and [his] army,

hḳ3 n Š3^ct ...y ...K3-m-šw s3 Wsr-3h=f...

the ruler (enemy) of Shaat, ... (enemy)... Kaemshu’s son Userakhef...

[hḳ3 n] ʾIrsyk Mnnki3 ms-n mwt=f

[the ruler (enemy) of] Irsik, Mennkia (enemy) born to his mother,

ddw r=f bw...mš^c=f

called ‘...’ and his army,

hḳ3 n... H3i ms-n mwt[=f]

the ruler (enemy) of... Khai (enemy) born to [his] mother,

[ddw r=f... m]dw mš^c[=f]

[called ‘...’] and [his] army,

hḳ3 [n]... Ks...

the ruler (enemy) [of]..., Kes...

ddw r=f...

called ‘...’ ...

[hḳ3] n ...s ...

[the ruler] (enemy) of...

hḳ3 n t3... kmk..wi ms-n mwt=f

the ruler (enemy) of the ...land, ... (enemy) born to his mother,

ddw r=f in iw=k m d3is mš^c=f

called ‘are you an opponent?’ and his army,

²⁰⁰ Restorations are based on the repetition within the text or suggestions by Posener, 1987: various.

ḥḳz [n T]ẉz ʼIny ms-[n] mw[t]=f

the ruler (enemy) [of T]ua, Iny (enemy) born [to] his mother,

ḏdw r=f in iw=k ... im mṣ̌[=f]

called ‘are you... there’ and [his] army.

ḥḳẓt nt ʼỊsṃṇṣ Ṣṭyt ms[t-n] mwt=s

the (female) ruler (enemy) of Iamnas, Satyt born [to] her mother,

ḏdt r=s n sṃ... mṣ̌=s

called ‘did not kill...’ and her army,

ḥḳz n Rwḳyt Ṣkṭwy ms-n mwt=f

the ruler (enemy) of Rukyt, Saktawy (enemy) born to his mother,

ḏdw r=f in iw mḏd sw mṣ̌=f

called ‘is (anyone) loyal to him’ and his army,

ḥḳz n Ṃḳịẓ Ẉị ms-n mwt=f

the ruler (enemy) of Mekia, Wai (enemy) born to his mother,

ḏdw r=f ḅḥs mṣ̌=f

called ‘calf’ and his army,

Ḳẓyḳẓ Ṭẉkṣẓị Ḅẓḥṣyṣ Ṃḳịẓ

Keyke, Tukesai, Behasis, Mekia,

ʼỊbṭyṣ G̣rẉ Ṇṣṃḥ ...

Ibtys, Geru, Nasemekh...

ʼỊẓẓṭ Ṭkṣyṣ Ṃg[s]ṛwịẓ Ṛwịṣ̌

Iaat, Teksis, Meg[es]ruia, Ruish,

rm̄t nb p̄t nbt rh̄yt nb[t]

everyone, every upper class person, every commoner,

t̄zyw nb sh̄w nb h̄mt nb[t]

every man, every eunuch, every woman,

sr[w] nb kb Hr W̄z̄w̄z̄t...

every official of the libation of Horus, of Wawet, of...

šm̄w t̄z Mh̄w

of Upper Egypt and of Lower Egypt,

nh̄t=sn s[i]nw=[sn]

their strong ones, [their] agile ones,

sbi.ty=sn w̄z.ty=sn ḏdw sb[t]=sn

those who will rebel, those who will conspire, who say they will rebel,

ḥ̄z.ty=sn

those who will fight,

ḏdw ḥ̄z=sn

who says they will fight,

sbi nb ḏdw sbi=f m t̄z pn r-ḏr=f

every rebel who says he will rebel in this whole land,

Mḏ̄z̄w nbw nw Wb̄z̄t-spt

all the Medjay of Webet-Sepet,

Nh̄sw nbw nw W̄z̄w̄z̄t

all the Nubians of Wawet,

Kꜣs... Šꜣꜥt Bꜣs

Kush... Shaat and Bekes,

nḥt[=sn s]inw=sn

[their] strong ones, their agile ones,

rmꜥ nbw ntw [ḥ]nꜥ=sn

all the (Egyptian) people who are with them,

Nḥsw nbw ntw ḥnꜥ=sn

all the Nubians who are with them,

ꜥꜣmw nbw nt[w ḥnꜥ=sn]

all the Asiatics who are [with them],

šmꜣw mḥty ꜣbt...

the south and the north, the families...

...ntw ḥnꜥ=s[n]

...who are with them,

...nbw ntw ḥ[nꜥ]=s[n]

all the... who are with them,

ḥꜣstyw nbw ntw ḥnꜥ[=sn]

all the desert people who are with [them],

ꜥmḥw nbw nw ḥꜣst nb[t] imnt

all the Tjemehu Libyans of all the western desert lands,

nw tꜣ ꜥmḥ nw h...ks <nw> Hbꜣs

of the Tjemeh Libyan land, of... and <of> Hebkes,

nḥt=sn sinw=sn

their strong ones, their agile ones,

mwt In-ḫt=f-ikr ms-n S3t-s3-sbk msy-n In-ḫt=f-ikr

the dead Intefiker (enemy), born to Satsasobek (enemy), born to Intefiker (enemy)

S-n-wsrt msy-n I3m-s

and Senusret (enemy) born to Iames (enemy).²⁰¹

5.2: Identity

The targets of this curse were clearly stated in the text: the rulers of numerous foreign lands and their armies, any Egyptian who will rebel (*sbi*), conspire (*w3*) or fight (*ḥ3*)²⁰² (against Egypt), Medjay, Nubians, Asiatics, Libyans and even two deceased individuals along with their parents. This curse was aimed at foreigners and Egyptians who were considered to be a threat to Egypt at that time, suggesting a military role for these figures.

The user(s) of the figures was not named, but it is logical to assume that they were concerned with the protection of the country, perhaps as part of the army. The fact that the names of the targets were known and included in the text also provides a personal element; this curse wasn't just aimed at foreigners or Egyptian rebels in general, it was also aimed at known individuals who were considered to be dangerous. The similarity between the tablets suggests that either one craftsman was responsible for their production, or was responsible for the overseeing of their production.

5.3: Situation

These figures were targeted at groups of people, both Egyptian and foreign, who were considered to be a threat to Egypt. The situation for this curse's use was impersonal and professional: the targets were known to be dangerous enemies of Egypt, and there was a threat of attack from them. The figures were probably used in a formal ritual to remove the threat of attack and protect Egypt. These figures were used to control and defeat Egypt's enemies, whether they were living or dead.

²⁰¹ Own translation from Posener, 1987: 22-55.

²⁰² *Wb* IV 87.3, *Wb* I 244.6 and *Wb* I 215.1 respectively.

5.4: Mechanics

These figures are only vaguely human-shaped and therefore lack any distinguishing features to allow an identification to be made visually. Association between the figures and the targets was therefore achieved textually, and possibly verbally; these five figures represent the countless number of targets mentioned in the writings. When the text named a target, Gardiner's A13 prisoner sign²⁰³ followed, further identifying that person as an enemy.

The enemy label mirrors the drawing of the hands tied and the legs bent on the back of each tablet; activation was achieved textually and visually by representing the targets as subdued. There is no evidence of physical actions being carried out on the figures, but the presence of a text suggests that a recitation may have provided a verbal element to activate the curse.

5.5: Outcome

Although the text does not specify the outcome of the curse, the intended results for the user(s) are clear: Egypt's enemies would be subdued and unable to carry out the negative actions stated in the text – they would not be able to rebel (*sbi*), conspire (*wꜣ*) or fight (*ḥꜣ*). It was not just physical actions which were being prevented by this curse, but negative thoughts as well. The targets were controlled physically and mentally in order to allow the user(s) to overpower and defeat Egypt's enemies.

5.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Posener, G. (1987), *Cinq figurines d'envoûtement*, Cairo: IFAO.

²⁰³ Gardiner, 1957: 443.

6: LOUVRE E 16492-16501 (Figure 11)

6.1: Context

This collection of ten terracotta figures dates from the New Kingdom. The figures are about 14cm high and are crudely made representations of people standing naked with their arms behind their backs. These figures clearly portray women, having emphasised hips, curves and pubic hair. The facial features have been defined to varying degrees across the figures; some only have ears and a nose, while others also have eyes and a mouth. None of the figures appear lifelike and no attention has been paid to proportions or other details. The hairstyles also vary; some figures have severely short bobbed hair, while others seem to be bald. Figure Louvre E 16499 has material wrapped around the legs, and a photograph taken of the back of the figure shows clearly defined hands and arms tied behind the back. There does not appear to be any deliberate damage on the figures.

These pieces share characteristics with the so-called ‘concubine figures’ produced from the Predynastic Period through to the New Kingdom.²⁰⁴ These figures depict women, sometimes holding a baby, with emphasised genitals, bodily curves and either unformed or intentionally broken feet. They were made from materials such as earthenware, limestone and terracotta. There are a number of theories concerning the function of concubine figures which may, or may not, be relevant to Louvre E 16492-16501: to provide the dead with concubines in the afterlife, a wish to procreate in this life, the worship of female deities (in particular Isis and Nephthys due to their connection to Osiris – the form the deceased take), a vessel for the deceased’s ka, or a method of ensuring a deceased man’s virility in an ‘Opening of the Mouth’ type of ritual. Concubine figures are not considered to be associated with cursing, however the feature which distinguishes Louvre E 16492-16501 from (other) concubine figures is the presence of legs and the positioning of the arms. Concubine figures have arms which hang to the sides of the body,²⁰⁵ while the figures in this collection have arms

²⁰⁴ For further information on concubine figures see: Bruyère, 1939: 109-150, Desroches Noblecourt, 1953: 7-47, Hornblower, 1929: 29-47, Michalowski, 1938: 112-114, Michalowski, 1939: 198 and 207, Rutten, 1949: 307-309, Schott, 1930: 23 and Winlock, 1942: 207.

²⁰⁵ For example the group of forty nine Middle Kingdom concubine figures discovered at Edfu (Michalowski, 1938: 112-114 and Michalowski, 1939: 198 and 207). These are extremely crude in appearance and focus solely on the portrayal of the female form, with little attention paid to facial features or hairstyle. Where arms survive, they hang to the sides of the body, and where just the shoulder survives, the positioning suggests these arms also hung to the sides.

behind their backs in the manner of prisoners: a common theme with execration figures. The figures in this Louvre collection may represent concubine figures in general appearance, but in form and function they have more in common with execration figures, hence their inclusion here.

6.2: Identity

These figures undisputedly represent women, but there are no distinguishing features which allow further identification; they could represent either Egyptian or foreign women. The only clear distinction made is that these women have been through puberty, highlighted by the feminine curves of the body and the pubic hair. These women were represented because of their perceived fertility, and are unlikely to portray specific women.

The use of terracotta suggests a user with available resources to be capable of either acquiring this material to produce the figures, or to commission them from a craftsman. While concubine figures could arguably have been used by women in an effort to boost their own fertility, this Louvre collection depicts restrained women, indicating a user seeking to suppress or control fertility. The user of these types of figures was probably a man who wished to manipulate women for his own personal benefit. The differences between styles and presentations of the figures suggest three scenarios: one user employed the services of different craftsmen, several users created the figures themselves, or several users employed different craftsmen.

6.3: Situation

The situation in which these figures would be used is unclear, but the portrayal of women as restrained suggests an element of control. The theories about the function of concubine figures, discussed above, may not be relevant to these figures due to this element of restraint; they were unlikely to be offerings to female deities or a house for the ka as neither would benefit from restriction. The use as a provision of concubines, and therefore a wish to procreate, may be relevant here. The user obviously wished to control a number of fertile women, and as polygamy in ancient Egypt is a complicated subject,²⁰⁶ it is unclear whether this wish was intended for this life or the afterlife. Whatever the exact reason for use, these women were deemed to be unobtainable

²⁰⁶ El-Amir, 1964: 103-107, Pestman, 1961: 62-63 and Simpson, 1974: 100-105.

without the use of magic, and the user was utilising these figures for his own personal benefit.²⁰⁷

6.4: Mechanics

These figures all represented women, but the lack of detailed or distinguished features suggests they portrayed women in general rather than specific targets. No accompanying writing survives, so it is unknown whether the figures were associated with their targets textually. Without visual or textual association, recitation could have taken place to identify the targets verbally. However, if the figures were intended to represent generic women rather than known women, textual or verbal association may not have been necessary.

No damage was done to the figures, so the curse was activated by the portrayal of the women as restrained with the hands behind the back, rather than by harmful physical actions. An exception to this may be the use of material to bind the limbs, as seen on one figure in this collection – Louvre E 16499; this could be evidence of a ritual representing the user's control of the target, and may have originally been used on all of these figures. It is interesting to note that these figures are not shown kneeling, as most other execration figures in this study. This could either be due to the perceived physical weakness of the female targets in comparison to the stronger male user, so excessive subjugation was not necessary, or due to the presence of material wrapped around the figures' limbs which restrained the legs and made kneeling superfluous. There is no evidence of any textual or verbal elements to activate the curse.

6.5: Outcome

Although the outcome of this curse is not explicitly stated, it can be reasonably assumed by the available evidence. These figures of fertile women were restrained and subdued, so the women they represented were also intended to be restrained and subdued. It is unclear whether this restraint and subjugation was to be taken literally or metaphorically. No harmful physical actions were performed on the figures, at least none which have left evidence, so the women were not to be harmed; control was the intention here, not defeat. The outcome was that the user gained control over a number of fertile women, most likely for his own personal benefit.

²⁰⁷ This mirrors Louvre E 27145 in section 4.

6.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Bochi, P. A. (1999), 'Death by Drama: the Ritual of *Damnatio Memoriae* in Ancient Egypt', *GM* 171, 80.

See also:

Louvre website (illustration):

http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=19802&langue=fr (accessed 4/2/13)

7: CAIRO JDE 88146 (Figures 12 and 13)

7.1: Context

This is a collection of seventy four figures, discovered by Reisner in eastern cemetery G.7273 at Giza.²⁰⁸ Now housed in the Cairo Museum, sixty seven of the figures are complete, six are broken, and there is one larger figure inscribed with a text which defines the targets of this curse. The figures are crudely made rectangular tablets, moulded from unbaked Nile mud, and each one has a protrusion on the top to represent the head, and a small amount of text to identify a particular target. The smaller figures vary slightly in size, but measure about 5cm by 2cm, and have eyelets on the back to allow them to be hung, a feature also facilitated by the use of lightweight Nile mud. The larger figure measures 9.4cm (7.5cm without the head) by 6cm. All of the figures were found in an Old Kingdom pot of red clay, now lost, and both figures and pot were inscribed with black ink, with the exception of one figure inscribed with red ink.²⁰⁹

The larger figure has a much greater surface area than the smaller figures (45cm² as opposed to about 10cm²), providing much more space on which to write. The text is hieratic, and describes the targets using both their national identity and their wrongdoings:

Nḥsi nb sb.ty=fy m

Any Nubian who will rebel in

ʾIrt[t] Wꜣwꜣt Sꜣtꜣw ʾIꜣm Kꜣꜣw ʾꜥnh Mꜣsꜣt

Irtje[t], Wawet, Satjew, Iam, Kaawm, Iankh, Mesit

Mꜣꜣ Mtrti

Medja or Metreti,

sb.ty=sn ʾir.ty=sn wꜣ

those who will rebel, those who will brood,

²⁰⁸ There are strong parallels between this collection and the Boston 07.1025 collection – a set of ninety one Sixth Dynasty figures which resemble Cairo JdE 88146 in both size and appearance. For more information see Osing, 1976: 133-185 and pl 40-44).

²⁰⁹ As noted by Osing, 1976: 133-134.

w3.ty=sn dd.ty=sn mdt nbt dwt

those who will conspire and will say any evil word.

7.2: Identity

The larger figure states that the targets of this curse were Nubians, from numerous regions, who would act against Egypt, while the smaller figures provided further identification in the form of individual names. The targets here were foreigners who were considered to be a threat to the country.

As the names of the country's enemies were known to the user, he most likely had a military connection, in particular a role involving the protection of the country from foreign invasion. The use of Nile mud, an abundant material, suggests a user with limited resources. The similarity between the size and shape of each piece suggests that either one person, or a small group of people, was responsible for their production.

7.3: Situation

The text on the larger figure explains the reason for this curse: there was a threat of Nubians who could rebel (*sbi*), brood (*ir w3*),²¹⁰ conspire (*w3*) or say any evil word (*mdt nbt dwt*) against Egypt. The curse was not only protection against physical actions, but also dangerous speech, perhaps a reference to a magic spell, another form of cursing or rebellion (as mentioned in section 5). This could be a case of a curse being used as protection against a curse, but on a basic level the curse had a military function of protecting Egypt from outside attack. These figures were probably used in a formal ritual by military personnel for professional reasons.

7.4: Mechanics

The Cairo JdE 88146 figures are not human-shaped, but are tablets with a crude protrusion at the top representing the head. Each smaller tablet has writing on the front to identify a target, while the larger tablet identifies numerous targets. The targets were connected to the figures via textual, rather than visual, association; some verbal association may also have occurred if the texts were recited.

There is no evidence of physical actions being performed on the figures, so the curse was activated visually by the representation of the figures as being subdued –

²¹⁰ From *Wb* I 244.6.

the hands have been drawn tied up and the legs bent upwards and backwards on the back of each figure. If verbal activation occurred it would have left no archaeological record.

7.5: Outcome

The figures are shown bound which portrays a wish for the enemies represented to be restrained. The desire here was for the targets to be controlled, in this case to prevent them from doing the negative actions stated in the text: rebelling (*sb*), brooding (*ir wꜣ*), conspiring (*wꜣ*) and saying evil words (*ḏḏ mdt nbt ḏwt*). These figures were a way of controlling the behaviour of Egypt's enemies from a safe distance, therefore preventing a physical or magical attack.

7.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Osing, J, (1976), 'Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich (II)', *MDAIK* 32, 133-185, pl 45-51.

See also:

Ritner, R. K. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54, Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 139.

8. SUMMARY

The practice of using execration figures as a form of cursing relied on the use of a representation of the target which could be subjected to harm or degradation in order to affect that target. Execration figures present a wide range of construction materials and levels of crafting abilities, from a set of finely worked wooden creations to a crude handmade wax piece.²¹¹ The size of the figures can also vary, with the smallest being 5cm tall, and the biggest standing at 28cm tall.²¹² Some figures were actually tablets, on which text was written,²¹³ or figures could be buried with an accompanying tablet.²¹⁴ The figures which are devoid of writing may originally have had a written accompaniment which is now lost, or a verbal accompaniment which would leave no archaeological evidence. The option of using text denotes that a level of literacy was sometimes required. Execration figures varied in size, material, appearance and intricacy – this was an adaptable form of cursing.

Execration figures were not a self-sufficient method of cursing as the figures had to be crafted, from whatever material was available or desirable, and in some cases text was written. This was a creative method of cursing because the figures were made especially for the purpose of cursing. However, this practice also had destructive properties as some figures were subjected to violent physical actions such as cutting, piercing and burning,²¹⁵ or being impaled by metal pins.²¹⁶ Some figures were completely destroyed by violent actions.²¹⁷ The use of a representation of the target meant that it was essential to establish the representation's identity, i.e. the association between the representation and the target. Figures could visually resemble the target, for example by distinguishing racial features of foreigners,²¹⁸ or the text could specify who was being targeted. In the sample studied here, when an execration figure bared a likeness to the target, there was no writing, but when writing was used then the figure shows no attempt at visual similarity. The one exception is Cairo Museum EM00-130 which is too crude to resemble the target visually, but which has no identifying text;

²¹¹ Abusir Excavation 1984 (section 3) and Cairo Museum EM00-130 (section 1) respectively.

²¹² Cairo JdE 88146 (the smaller pieces, section 7) and Abusir Excavation 1984 (figures 6-9) respectively.

²¹³ Cairo JdE 63955-63959 (section 5) and Cairo JdE 88146.

²¹⁴ Louvre E 27145 (section 4).

²¹⁵ Cairo Museum EM00-130.

²¹⁶ Louvre E 27145.

²¹⁷ See Papyrus Bremner Rhind (Chapter Three, section 6.4) and Ritner, 1993: 148-153.

²¹⁸ Walters Art Gallery 48.1773 (section 2) and Abusir Excavation 1984.

this piece must have been connected to the target verbally by recitation. With execration figures, it appears that written or verbal identification made visual identification superfluous, and in turn visual identification rendered written or verbal identification unnecessary.

The association of a target with an execration figure allowed the condition or state of the figure to be applied magically to the target. Execration figures were commonly portrayed with their hands tied behind their backs, and sometimes also kneeling – these targets were being overpowered and subdued.²¹⁹ The one figure studied here which is not portrayed in this way, Cairo Museum EM00-130, has instead been subjected to physical harm in order to overpower and subdue the target. Rope impressions on the back of this piece show that it was also tied up, and therefore restrained.²²⁰ Louvre E 27145 is a figure of a bound woman which also had metal pins inserted into various parts of its body in order to subdue the target. Even those figures which bear no mark of harmful actions may have been subjected to acts such as spitting,²²¹ burying and verbal assault,²²² as these would leave no archaeological evidence. Burial in a pot may have been intended to protect the integrity of the piece and to leave the text intact.²²³ Execration figures were used when the user wished to control the target, and this was achieved by overpowering and subjugating the target. This method of cursing removed the need for direct physical contact with the target, so dangerous, distant or numerous targets could be controlled safely. The submissive state of the target also removed the need for an agent – none of the figures in this study call upon help to curse. Crude execration figures were probably made by those from lower in the social hierarchy for private rituals, while the finer figures were probably made or commissioned by wealthier individuals. The finest examples, such as the Abusir Excavation 1984 collection, may have been created for formal rituals, and also public display, as indicated by the presence of connecting nodules on some of these figures. In this way, detailed execration figures functioned in a similar manner to monument curses (see Chapter One) by being open and public methods of cursing. Execration figures were an immediate form of cursing which were used at the time

²¹⁹ For discussion on this body posture, see Ritner, 1993: 113-118.

²²⁰ For discussion on binding, see Ritner, 1993: 142-143.

²²¹ Spitting as a ritual action is discussed in Ritner, 1993: 74-91.

²²² Such actions are mentioned in Papyrus Bremner Rhind (Chapter Three, section 6.4).

²²³ This was done to Louvre E 27145 and Cairo JdE 88146, both of which have text.

when their effects were required; the circumstances necessary for activation (the desire to control the target) had already been met when the figures were used.

The execration figures in this study range widely in date from the Predynastic Period or Old Kingdom²²⁴ to the Roman Period.²²⁵ Geographically these figures are restricted to Lower Egypt, specifically Helwan,²²⁶ Giza²²⁷ and Abusir,²²⁸ but this is a limited survey and there is no reason why this flexible method of cursing was not used throughout the whole country.²²⁹ In this study, execration figures have a range of uses: four of the seven pieces of evidence represent foreigners,²³⁰ highlighting the ancient Egyptians' fear of invasion and their desire to prevent Egypt's enemies from conspiring and rebelling.²³¹ One of these pieces also targets rebellious Egyptians and the dead for this same reason.²³² Of the three remaining pieces, two represent women: one was used to control a group of women, and the other to attain one specific woman.²³³ This latter figure is the only one in the study which clearly states the intended outcome of the curse – the target would be able to think (romantically) of no one but the user. The final piece²³⁴ represents an unknown man, but the harmful actions carried out on it – the cutting, piercing and burning – tell us that this figure represented someone the user had a passionate animosity towards. Together, these figures emphasise the ancient Egyptians' need for control when confrontation with a target was not an option.²³⁵ The range of materials used, and the various levels of skill evident, show that this was a flexible practice which could be adapted to the needs and capabilities of the user. Execration figures were a method of cursing which could potentially have been used by many levels of ancient Egyptian society.

²²⁴ Cairo Museum EM00-130, Abusir Excavation 1984 and Cairo JdE 88146.

²²⁵ Louvre E 27145.

²²⁶ Cairo Museum EM00-130 and Cairo JdE 63955-63959.

²²⁷ Cairo JdE 88146.

²²⁸ Abusir Excavation 1984. The remaining figures have unknown provenances.

²²⁹ For more examples of execration figures and execration texts see Ritner, 1993: 136-144.

²³⁰ Walters Art Gallery 48.1773, Abusir Excavation 1984, Cairo JdE 63955-63959 and Cairo JdE 88146.

²³¹ As laid out in writing on Cairo JdE 63955-63959 and Cairo JdE 88146.

²³² Cairo JdE 63955-63959.

²³³ Louvre E 16492-16501 (section 6) and Louvre E 27145 respectively.

²³⁴ Cairo Museum EM00-130.

²³⁵ Execration figures could also represent non-human targets. Papyrus Bremner Rhind provided instructions for the use of wax figures which represented Apophis (Chapter Three, section 6.4).

CHAPTER THREE – MAGIC SPELLS

The magic spells in this chapter are texts specifically written to curse a target, with or without the use of a representation. Magic spells are generally found on papyri or ostraca, and the reason for use is usually clearly defined. All of the magic spells in this study include curses, but not all ancient Egyptian magic spells used or represented curses.

1: BERLIN 23308 (Figure 14)

1.1: Context

This Late Period spell was written on a wooden tablet measuring 6cm by 4.5cm. The spell is written in hieroglyphs, which are engraved into the wood in eleven lines of uniform length; six lines on the front of the tablet, then five lines on the reverse. The last line of the spell consists solely of seven Wadjet eyes.²³⁶ The tablet has a protruding eyelet at the top, in the centre, allowing the piece to be hung or suspended: this piece is an amulet. Berlin 23308 was worn to protect the user by threatening everyone who would use the evil eye against him.

(1) *iw Shmt sšr=s im=tn*

Sekhmet, her arrow is in you,

ḥkz (2) n Dḥwty m ḥ^c=tn

the magic of Thoth is in your body,

shwr tn zst (3) bhⁿ tn Nbt-ḥyt

Isis curses you, Nephthys drives you off,

m^cbz n Hr m tp=tn

the harpoon of Horus is in your head,

²³⁶ The healing properties of the Wadjet eye is explained by Pinch, 1994: 109-110.

irr=sn (4) tn m whm n spy

they act (against) you again and again,

imy ḥ (5) n Hr imy Šnwt

one who is in the brazier of Horus who is in Three Hundred Town,

ntr ʿ3 hr-ib pr-ḥ

the Great God who resides in the House of Life,

šp=f irty=tn

he blinds your eyes,

rmṯ (6) nb pḥt nb rḥyt nb ḥnmmt nb ḥmt-r

everyone, all mankind, all commoners, all sun-folk, etc.

nty iw=sn (7) ḥ3ḥ irt bint

who will cast the evil eye

r Pd-ḥmn-nb-nswt-t3wy (8) ms-n Mḥwt-m-wšḥt

against Pedamunnebnestawwy, born of Mehutemwesket,

(9) m ḳdt nb ḳw dšr

in any evil or ominous form.

šhr < w > =tn mi (10) ʿ3pp

You will be felled like Apophis,²³⁷

mwt=tn nn ʿnh=tn r nḥḥ

you will die, you will not live for eternity.

²³⁷ See Papyrus Bremner Rhind (section 6) for details on the felling of Apophis.

1.2: Identity

The spell identifies the user as ‘Pedamunnebnestawy, born of Mehutemwesket’ but no further details, such as age or rank, are provided. The user’s position in society was therefore deemed irrelevant to the functioning of the spell, only the name and parentage were required. This indicates that it was the spell which held the power, i.e. the hieroglyphs and any accompanying ritual, not the person using it. The amulet was personalised for a specific individual through the inclusion of the name; it could only be worn and used by Pedamunnebnestawy. Magic spells could incorporate the name of the user to ensure the magic worked effectively for the benefit of that particular individual only. This piece tells us that the user was someone who was concerned about the effects of the evil eye. The tablet was to be worn as a necklace, making this a portable curse to be used in this individual’s everyday life.

The spell’s target is defined as ‘everyone, all mankind, all commoners, all sun-folk, etc. who will cast the evil eye’. This spell encompassed many levels of society and shows that the evil eye could be used by a wide range of people, from commoners to the distinguished. The user, whatever his position in society, had the power to curse other members of society should they use bad magic against him. The use of the plural pronoun *tn* throughout the text when referring to the target shows that this spell could potentially be used against multiple people – this was a direct address to anyone and everyone who would use the evil eye.

1.3: Situation

This spell protected the user against people who would ‘cast the evil eye’ against him; it was for personal use. The spell was written on a small wooden tablet with an eyelet, so it was convenient to be worn on the body, for example as a pendant – it protected the wearer as he went about his everyday life. Berlin 23308 was a form of personal protection against magical danger in everyday life.

1.4: Mechanics

The curse begins with the auxiliary *iw* and shows topicalisation²³⁸ ‘Sekhmet, her arrow is in you’, which marks and draws attention to the beginning of the spell. The spell is written in the third person, so the emphasis is on the content of the spell, not the person using it – this spell’s power came from the words, not the user. These

²³⁸ As discussed in Junge, 2001: 250ff.

words also had the power to evoke deities as agents – Sekhmet, Thoth, Isis, Nephthys, Horus and the Great God are all called upon for help in this spell. The portable nature of this object allowed the user to carry it with him, and the visible presence of the words and Wadjet eyes protected the user, perhaps with recitation as an accompaniment. This was a conditional curse which was activated by the negative actions of others, in this case the use of the evil eye. Berlin 23308 was a preventive form of cursing.

1.5: Outcome

This amulet threatened people who used the evil eye against the owner with acts of hostility from deities, mainly physical acts of violence: Sekhmet will shoot an arrow and Horus will drive a harpoon into anyone using the evil eye, Osiris will blind (*šp*),²³⁹ and Nephthys will drive off (*bḥn*)²⁴⁰ the target. This target is also referred to as one who is ‘in the brazier²⁴¹ of Horus who is in Three Hundred Town’, and so will be burned by this deity. Non-physical acts of being cursed (*šḥwr*)²⁴² by Isis and having Thoth’s magic in their body are also threatened. This latter threat must refer to bad magic, such as that used by the target; this is an example of like-for-like retaliation. The result of these individual punishments is stated at the end of the spell: the target will be felled (*šhr*)²⁴³ like Apophis. The target is not only associated with this hated deity, but will suffer the same defeat.

1.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Schott, S. (1931), ‘Ein Amulett gegen den bösen Blick’, *ZÄS* 67, 106-110.

See also:

Borghouts, J. F. (1978), *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 2.

Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, London: British Museum Press, 109-110.

²³⁹ This punishment is stated in Stela BM 589 (D02), in which Neferabu admits to lying to Ptah. The god’s revenge takes the form of Neferabu suffering blindness. *Wb* IV 443.1.

²⁴⁰ *Wb* I 468.6.

²⁴¹ This is the same word as used in The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon (Caminos, 1959: 50-51).

²⁴² *Wb* IV 213.4.

²⁴³ *Wb* IV 257.2.

2: OSTRACON DEIR EL-MEDINA 1057 (Figure 15)

2.1: Context²⁴⁴

This Twentieth Dynasty spell was written in hieratic, in black ink, on the concave side of a 10cm by 13cm potsherd. Due to the irregular shape of the potsherd, the text is divided into eight lines of differing lengths. The text was written on the concave side of the ostrakon. Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 is a love spell which was used to attract a woman by calling upon various deities to make her pursue the user. Although this piece does not conform to the typical curse structure – the target is not threatened with anything seemingly bad – the spell was intended to control the target against her wishes. The element of control in cursing is an important one, and is addressed fully in Chapter Six. Here, it is the god Osiris who would suffer harmful, violent actions, but only if the spell fails; he was a secondary target.

(1) *i nd-ḥr=k R^c-Ḥr-šhty it nṯrw*

Hail to you, Re-Horakhty, father of the gods!

i nd-ḥr=t (2) t3 T hwt-Ḥr

Hail to you, the seven Hathors

nty²⁴⁵ št m w3 insy

who are adorned in ribbons of bright red²⁴⁶ linen!²⁴⁷

(3) *i nd-ḥr=tn nṯrw nbw pt t3*

Hail to you, all the gods of the sky and the earth!

mī ï t3 mnt (4) ms-n t3 mnt m-s3=i

Come, so that so-and-so born of so-and-so will come after me

²⁴⁴ For discussion on the types and forms of magical practice taking place in Deir el-Medina see Borghouts, 1994: 119-130.

²⁴⁵ Scribal error, the hieroglyphs show *iwty* but *nty* is clearly meant in this context.

²⁴⁶ For discussion on the magical significance of the colour red see Ritner, 1993: 147-148.

²⁴⁷ These red ribbons of the Seven Hathors were used to restrain malevolent spirits (Pinch, 1994: 37) perhaps through the power held by the colour red (Pinch, 1994: 81).

mī ih m-s3²⁴⁸ smw

like a cow after pasture,

(5) *mī b3kt m-s3 hrdw=s*

like a maidservant after her children,

mī s3w m-s3²⁴⁹ (6) i3wt=f

like a herdsman after his herd.

ir tmt=w dit ii=s (7) m-s3=i

If they fail to make her come after me,

iw=i <r> h3c [ht r D]dw

I <will> set [fire to Bu]siris

(8) *mtw=i d3ft <3sir>*

and I will burn <Osiris>.²⁵⁰

2.2: Identity

The user of Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 is not identified in the spell, but the context tells us that he was a man trying to attract a certain woman. The user was only referred to by the pronoun ‘I’ throughout the text, therefore his identity was not necessary for the spell to function. This spell was to be used on a woman whose name and parentage were known, and these were to be written in a copy of the text or inserted during recitation.

The woman referred to in the spell is not threatened beyond being controlled. The woman is the target of the spell and the reason for its use, but revenge for the spell’s failure was sought against a deity and his town: the user would seek revenge on Osiris and the town of Busiris if the spell failed. Osiris and Busiris were secondary targets and were deemed responsible for the success or failure of this spell.

²⁴⁸ Scribal error, *mī* is written instead of *m*.

²⁴⁹ As the previous note.

²⁵⁰ Although the reading of these consequences is uncertain here, there is a close parallel with Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213, which deals with the restraint of a scorpion. The curse, although it has a different function, also states *mtw=i h3c ht r ddw mtw=i d3ft 3sir* ‘I will set fire to Busiris and I will burn Osiris’. As the words used in both spells is the same, the consequences can be confidently restored.

2.3: Situation

This curse was to be used to make a specific woman ‘come after’ the user. The manner in which she is to pursue the user is described using three similes, ‘like a cow after pasture’, ‘like a maidservant after her children’ and ‘like a herdsman after his herd’. These are all scenarios in which the actor in the simile was expected to seek out their target willingly and continuously without coercion; this was how the user wished the woman to pursue him. Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 was to be used to attract one specific woman as there is space in the text to insert her name, as well as her mother’s name, where the text says ‘so-and-so born of so-and-so’ (*t3 mnt ms-n t3 mnt*). The spell on this ostrakon was to be copied or used for recitation, with the personalised addition of the correct names. The target was already known to the user; this spell was not used to attract an idealised, imagined figure. This was a personal spell which could be altered by an individual to fit his own specific situation.

2.4: Mechanics

The spell begins with addresses to Re-Horakhty, the seven Hathors and ‘all the gods of the sky and earth’, each written as ‘hail to you’ (*i nd-ḥr=k/t/tm*).²⁵¹ These deities were urged to ‘come’ (*mi*)²⁵² so that the female target of the spell would come after the user in the desired manner. It was these deified agents which would allow the spell to work, implying that the user could not control the actions of another person alone. The spell was presented as the speech of the user, with the first person pronoun ‘I’ being used to indicate who the woman would ‘come after’ and who would seek revenge should the spell fail; this spell was to be recited by the user. The target was connected to the spell by the insertion of her name, and that of her mother. There is no indication of any additional ritual, such as manipulation of a representation, being performed. The method of using similes to describe the desired behaviour of the woman adds a depth to the text not seen in the other spells studied here; perhaps the mental image which these conjure up made a physical representation of the target superfluous. This curse did not rely on others for activation, it was used at the time needed by the user. This was an immediate form of cursing.

²⁵¹ *Wb* II 372.3.

²⁵² *Wb* II 35.7.

2.5: Outcome

For the user, the desired outcome of the spell was acquisition of the named woman. However, if this did not happen then other consequences were threatened: ‘I will set fire (*ht*)²⁵³ to Busiris and I will burn (*dꜣft*)²⁵⁴ Osiris’. These consequences of failure would not affect the focus of the curse, the woman or the deities evoked for help – Re-Horakhty, the seven Hathors, and all the gods of the sky and earth. Instead, the town of Busiris and the deity associated with it, Osiris, are targeted and punished for this failure through the physical threat of fire. The deities sought for help do not seem ultimately to be responsible for the spell’s success, this falls to Osiris. It is therefore ambiguous why the user did not evoke Osiris to help him instead.

2.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Smither, P. (1941), ‘A Ramesside Love Charm’, *JEA* 27, 131-132.

See also:

Borghouts, J. F. (1978), *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 1.

Posener, G. (1938), *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh* I, Cairo: IFAO, 15, pl 31 and 31a.

²⁵³ *Wb* III 217.7.

²⁵⁴ *Wb* V 522.8.

3: OSTRACON DEIR EL-MEDINA 1213 (Figure 16)

3.1: Context

This Ramesside Period spell was written in hieratic on a 23cm by 14.5cm piece of grey and pink pottery which was found broken in seven pieces at Deir el-Medina. The text has been written in black ink over twelve irregular lines, eleven of which are on the recto or convex side. The final line, which consists of one word – Ptah – is on the verso or concave side. There are small dots of red ink above the lines of text, which act as punctuation marks. This spell is titled ‘Another spell of catching a scorpion and of holding its mouth and not allowing it to bite’. The word ‘mouth’ must refer to a scorpion’s sting, and ‘bite’ must refer to the action of stinging. This spell was used to restrain a scorpion and prevent it from stinging.

Recto to verso:

(1) *ky r t3w dnri*²⁵⁵

Another spell of catching a scorpion

*mh*²⁵⁶ (2) *r-s tmt dit psh=s*²⁵⁷

and of holding its mouth and not allowing it to bite.

h^c t3²⁵⁸ dnri

Stand still, scorpion!

(3) *iw=i <r> nb htm r=s*²⁵⁹

I <will> shut and seal its mouth.

ir tm=w (4) *h^c sdm mdwt=i*

If they do not stand and listen (to) my words,

²⁵⁵ *Wb* V 577.6 has *dnrri*.

²⁵⁶ The wrong determinative is used in the hieroglyphs.

²⁵⁷ From Papyrus Chester Beatty V.

²⁵⁸ From Papyrus Chester Beatty V.

²⁵⁹ Scribal error, the *n* should be *s*.

iw=i <r> š^cd 78 d₃d₃²⁶⁰

I <will> cut off the 78 heads

(5) *nty tp n p₃ n_{tr} ^c₃ nty s_{dr} [...]*

which are upon the Great God who lies down [...]

(6) *mtw=i š^ct drt Hr*

I will chop off Horus' hand,

mtw=i k₃mn irt (7) Sth

I will blind Seth's eye,

mtw=i m_h r n Ps_{dt} ^c₃t

I will hold shut the mouth of the great Ennead,

mtw=i [h₃]^c ht [r] (8) Ddw

I will [set] fire [to] Busiris,

mtw=i d₃ft ₃sir

I will burn Osiris,

mt[w=i (9) pn^c]²⁶¹ p₃ k_{rs} nty h_{tp} (10) m [...]_t ^c₃ <t>

and [I will overturn] the burial which rests in the great [...]

h^c [... (11) h^c]_t m_i h^c Sth [...] (1) Pth

Stand [... stan]d like Seth stands [...] Ptah.

3.2: Identity

The user of this spell is not named and there are no clues as to his identity; details of the user were deemed unimportant for the functioning of the spell. The use of the first person suggests recitation, therefore the user was literate.

²⁶⁰ Scribal error, original hieroglyphs have *d₃iw*.

²⁶¹ The hieroglyphs suggest a transliteration of either *shd* or *pn^c*.

The target of this spell was not the one being cursed: the target was a scorpion, which was to be restrained to prevent stinging, but if the words of the spell were not heeded, it was the Great God, Horus, Seth, Osiris and the Ennead who would suffer the violent consequences. These deities were secondary targets. The scorpion itself was not threatened beyond being restrained, so it was the deities who were deemed responsible for failure.

3.3: Situation

This spell was used to catch and restrain a scorpion in order to prevent it from stinging. This is done by declaring that the user ‘will shut (*ꜥnb*)²⁶² and seal (*htm*)²⁶³ its mouth’. If the user failed to accomplish this, and was presumably stung, the spell would act against a number of deities. This spell was intended to prevent the stinging from occurring, rather than to deal with the consequences of a sting. This was a preventive spell to be used when dealing with a potentially deadly animal.²⁶⁴

3.4: Mechanics

After the spell’s title, an imperative follows ‘Stand still, scorpion!’. This betrays the power and control which the user had over the scorpion. This spell is a personal speech in which the user clearly defines himself as the agent of the curse: ‘I will blind Seth’s eye’. There is no reference to any form of manipulation of a representation of the scorpion; the presence of the real scorpion made a representation superfluous. The curse contained in this spell was activated by the behaviour of the named deities: if they ignored the user’s words and allowed the scorpion to sting, they would suffer the consequences. This tells us that divine intervention was expected in this potentially fatal scenario, and if it was found to be lacking, the deities were eligible to be punished. Deities could be threatened to protect the life of an individual.

3.5: Outcome

Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 was intended to restrain a scorpion in order to prevent it from stinging, and this was its only purpose. However, if the words of the spell were not adhered to, and the scorpion was not restrained, a number of deities

²⁶² *Wb* I 192.2.

²⁶³ *Wb* III 350.4.

²⁶⁴ This mirrors the use of monument curses (Chapter One) as protection against potentially volatile members of the public.

would suffer acts of physical violence: the Great God²⁶⁵ would have his seventy-eight heads cut off (*šꜥd*),²⁶⁶ Horus would have his hand severed (*šꜥt*),²⁶⁷ Seth would be blinded (*kꜣmn*),²⁶⁸ the Ennead's mouths would be held shut (*mḥ*),²⁶⁹ the town of Busiris would be set on fire (*ḥꜣꜥ ḥt*) and Osiris would burn (*dꜣft*). A burial was also threatened.²⁷⁰ The user of the spell was the agent of the curse, and the one who was responsible for the actions against the deities. Most of the violence threatened against the deities was restrictive – severing heads, chopping off a hand, blinding and holding mouths shut – which mirrored the desire of the user to restrain the scorpion. This is emphasised by the use of the same word, *mḥ*, in both the title of the spell to refer to holding shut the scorpion's mouth, and in the threatened consequences in reference to holding shut the Ennead's mouths. If the user could not successfully restrain the scorpion, he would restrain deities instead. Osiris was threatened in a different manner: he was to be burned. As burning destroys the body, Osiris would suffer the second death.

3.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Posener, G. (1951-72), *Catalogue des ostraca hiéroglyphiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh* II, Cairo: IFAO, 28, pl. 48 and 48a.

See also:

Borghouts, J. F. (1978), *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 76.

²⁶⁵ The 'Great God' usually corresponds to Osiris, however he is referred to later in the text by name. The inclusion of the seventy-eight heads may indicate that this deity is actually Re, referring to the seventy-five, or sometimes seventy-seven, forms of Re but with a scribal error.

²⁶⁶ *Wb* IV 422.5.

²⁶⁷ *Wb* IV 416.1.

²⁶⁸ *Wb* V 107.1.

²⁶⁹ *Wb* II 119.3.

²⁷⁰ The location and specific outcome of this burial is missing due to damage to the ostrakon.

4: PAPYRUS DEIR EL-MEDINA 36 (Figure 17)

4.1: Context

Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 measures 21cm by 11.8cm and was written in the Twentieth Dynasty. It was originally found folded up to form a 2cm by 1cm amulet, and had been tied with string. The amulet was tied to a 50cm by 3cm piece of linen, which had been folded lengthways to allow the whole thing to be hung around the neck. The linen had been knotted seven times.²⁷¹ When the linen was untied and unfolded, a depiction drawn in black ink was discovered on the interior showing Re, Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis and Nephthys seated in front of two figures, who are each scuffling with a crocodile. Within the amulet, the spell was written in hieratic on the recto and was divided into six lines of equal length, fitting neatly onto the rectangular papyrus. This spell was to be used in the event of an individual suffering from two particular medical symptoms, labelled as *sr̄f* and *(i)r̄(y)-hnt*.²⁷² While the first symptom can confidently be translated as ‘fever’ due to the association of *sr̄f* with heat and temperature,²⁷³ the second symptom is more obscure but has been translated as ‘catarrh’ or ‘cold’.²⁷⁴ The use of *hnt* refers to the head,²⁷⁵ more specifically problems in the eyes and nose,²⁷⁶ and as ‘Schnupfen’ (runny nose), ‘Katarrh’ (catarrh) and ‘Augenentzündung’ (ocular inflammation).²⁷⁷ Papyrus Ebers refers to *hnt* of the head or face (391), eyes (362) and nose (418).²⁷⁸ Using this information, it is logical to assume that *hnt* refers to secretion from these areas: *hnt* of the face means sweating, *hnt* of the eyes means tears, and *hnt* of the nose means a runny nose. In Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36, the word following *hnt* is missing, so it is unknown which type of *hnt* is being referred to. The context must be used to provide an answer: the *hnt* appears with a fever, so the most plausible translation is a *hnt* of the face, i.e. sweating. In the text, the fever is said to recur every three days, which is a characteristic trait of

²⁷¹ Knots were thought to offer protection from hostile forces, as discussed by Pinch, 1994: 83-84 and Ritner, 1993: 143-144, n.638 and 639.

²⁷² Although Quack, 2011: 415 transliterates this second word as *t3 r̄mn.t* ‘itching’.

²⁷³ Faulkner, 1962: 236.

²⁷⁴ Borghouts, 1978: 37 and Sauneron, 1970: 8 respectively.

²⁷⁵ Hannig, 1995: 652.

²⁷⁶ *Wb* III, 308.1.

²⁷⁷ Westendorf, 1999: 150.

²⁷⁸ Westendorf, 1999: 26.

malaria,²⁷⁹ in particular an infection caused by *Plasmodium falciparum*.²⁸⁰ During a malarial attack, the sufferer goes through three stages: a cold stage consisting of shivering, a hot stage consisting of a fever and headache, and finally a sweating stage.²⁸¹ This supports the reading of the second symptom as sweating and indicates that Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 was used to combat malaria.²⁸²

(1) *wḏ nsw nsw bity ʒsīr*

Royal decree of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Osiris,

dd n tʒty rpʿt Gb

spoken to the vizier and hereditary prince, Geb:

sḥꜥ ḥt=k (2) šʒbw ḥtʒ=k ...šḥty iʒnr

“Erect your mast, hoist your sail, [and travel to] the Field of Reeds,

in nsy (3) nsy

and take (with you) the (male) diseased and the (female) diseased,

dʒy dʒy

the (male) opponent and the (female) opponent,

mwt mwt

the (male) dead and the (female) dead

nty m ḥr n ʒny-nḥt ms-n Wbḥt

which are in the face of Anynakhte, born of Webkhet,

²⁷⁹ Nunn, 1996: 73.

²⁸⁰ Scheidel, 2001: 75.

²⁸¹ <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Malaria/Pages/Symptoms.aspx> (Accessed: 14/2/15)

²⁸² Scientific tests have identified mosquito eggs within ancient Egyptian mummies (consumed via drinking Nile water), indicating that mosquitoes, and possibly malaria, was prevalent (e.g. Miller et al., 1994: 31-32 and Bianucci et al., 2008: 1880-1885). Although it is widely accepted that there is no written record of malarial infection (Nunn, 1996: 73), Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 may be evidence to the contrary.

(4) *hn̄ p̄s srf t̄z <i> r<y> -hnt*

along with the fever and the sweating

...*bin ḏw m-ht iw=sn r=f ḥr-tp* (5) *hrw 3*

...bad and evil, when they come to him every 3 days”.²⁸³

ḏḏ<w> n̄tr mdw ḥr w̄īz w̄īz w̄zḏt w̄zḏt (6) *ḥpr̄r ḥpr̄r*

The god’s words to be spoken over 2 divine barques, 2 wadjet eyes and 2 scarabs

sš ḥr ḏm̄ n m̄z̄w

which have been drawn on a new piece of papyrus,

ḏiw r ḥḥ=f

put on his throat

rwi=f sw ʒs

(so) it expels it quickly.²⁸⁴

4.2: Identity

The ill individual was named ‘Anynakhte, born of Webkhet’, but he had no active role in this spell. A speaker in the guise of Osiris ordered Geb to remove the illness from Anynakhte, who was referred to in the third person. It is this speaker who was the user of the spell, and he was using it for the benefit of the ill Anynakhte. Anynakhte was unable to repel this illness himself, but it is unclear whether this was due to illiteracy or illness.

The spell was directed at Anynakhte’s fever and sweating, but also at male and female diseased, opponents and dead; they were deemed to be responsible for the illness.²⁸⁵ The words ‘bad’ (*bin*) and ‘evil’ (*ḏw*)²⁸⁶ follow a lacuna, so they could refer to either the entities or to the symptoms they are causing. By targeting these

²⁸³ Borghouts translates this line as ‘after they have come for him for a period of (? *ḥr-tp*) 3 days’ (Borghouts, 1978: 37).

²⁸⁴ So the amulet expels the illness quickly.

²⁸⁵ For discussion on supernatural entities or ‘demons’, see Ritner, 2011: 3-24.

²⁸⁶ *Wb* I 443.2 and *Wb* V 548.1 respectively.

supernatural entities, this spell sought to remove the cause of the symptoms and therefore rid the body of illness.

4.3: Situation

Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 was used to remove for the symptoms of malaria: fever (*srf*) and sweating (*iry-hnt*) which were recurring every three days. As it included the name of the sufferer, this spell was written specifically for that person; this was a personal spell. As the symptoms were said to be recurring, Anynakhte must have been ill for a length of time before the spell was used. This spell was probably not the first attempt to cure him.

4.4: Mechanics

The spell was a royal decree of Osiris as king of Upper and Lower Egypt to Geb as vizier and prince. It began with Osiris' command to Geb to take the illness-inducing entities to the Field of Reeds, to be recited by someone on behalf of the user. Osiris and Geb were the agents of this spell. The spell ends with ritual instructions for drawing specific symbols on a new piece of papyrus: two divine barques, two wadjet eyes and two scarabs.²⁸⁷ The text states that the new piece of papyrus was to be worn around the neck of the infected individual in order to repel the illness. This spell used a combination of recitation, in the form of the personal speech of Osiris to Geb, and manipulation, in the form of drawn images being placed on the throat. Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 was intended to be a set of instructions for the verbal and physical rituals, but it was actually used as part of the physical ritual: the hieroglyphic symbols were not drawn on a new piece of papyrus, the ones in the instructions were used instead. The whole thing – the instructions, recitation and images – was placed around Anynakhte's neck.

4.5: Outcome

The intention here was the removal of fever and sweating from Anynakhte's body through the targeting of supernatural entities: male and female diseased (*nsy*),²⁸⁸ opponents (*dzy*)²⁸⁹ and dead (*mwt*).²⁹⁰ The entities and symptoms were to be taken to

²⁸⁷ Recitation over replicas or representations is a feature also seen in religious literature, clear examples of which include CT 22, 37, 100, 103, 341 and 472, and BoD 130, 133, 134, 136A, 144 and 148.

²⁸⁸ *Wb* II 324.7.

²⁸⁹ *Wb* V 514.1.

²⁹⁰ *Wb* II 55.5.

the Field of Reeds by Geb in his boat, so exile from the land of the living to the underworld removed the illness from the sufferer. By cursing the supernatural entities responsible for the illness, it was intended that Anynakhte would recover from what might have been malaria.

4.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Sauneron, S. (1970), 'Le Rhume d'Anynakhte (Pap. Deir el-Médinéh 36)', *Kémi: revue de philology et d'archéologie égyptiennes et coptes* 20, 7-18, fig.2.

See also:

Bianucci, R., Mattutino, G., Lallo, R., Charlier, P., Jouin-Spriet, H., Paluso, A., Higham, T., Torre, C. and Massa, E. R. (2008), 'Immunological Evidence of Plasmodium Falciparum Infection in an Egyptian Child Mummy from the Early Dynastic Period', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35 (4), 1880-1885.

Borghouts, J. F. (1978), *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 36-37.

Bruyère, B. (1953), *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médinéh (années 1948 à 1951)*, FIFAO 26, Cairo: IFAO, 78.

Faulkner, R. O. (1962), *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford: Griffith Institute, 236.

Miller, R. L., Ikram, S., Armelagos, G. J., Walker, R., Harer, W. B., Shiff, C' J', Baggett, D., Carrigan, M. and Maret, S. M. (1994), 'Diagnosis of Plasmodium Falciparum Infections in Mummies using the Rapid Manual ParaSight™-F test', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 88, 31-32.

Nunn, J. F. (1996), *Ancient Egyptian Medicine*, London: British Museum Press, 73.

Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, London: British Museum Press, 83-84.

Quack, J. (2011), 'Beiträge zu einigen religiösen und magischen Texte' in Collier, M. & Snape, S. (eds.), *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen*, Bolton: Rutherford Press Limited, 413-416.

Scheidel, W. (2001), *Death on the Nile: Disease and the Demography of Roman Egypt*, Leiden: Brill, 75.

Westendorf, W. (1999), *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin I*, Leiden: Brill, 150.
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Malaria/Pages/Symptoms.aspx> (Accessed: 14/2/15)

5: PAPYRUS CHESTER BEATTY VII (Figure 18)

5.1: Context

This Nineteenth Dynasty piece is a collection of spells which was discovered in Thebes and is now in the British Museum (BM EA 10687). Papyrus Chester Beatty VII actually consists of four sheets of papyri, with the spell of interest appearing on the fourth sheet on recto 7. This sheet is 71cm long and 19.2cm wide, and the text is written in hieratic in black ink. This spell was used to rid the body of scorpion venom after a sting through the use of a replica scorpion. All of the spells on the recto involve scorpions, while the spells on the verso protect against scorpions and also fever. As with Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 above, the reference to a scorpion's 'mouth' and 'tooth' must refer to its sting and the action of stinging.

Recto 7, lines 5-7:

kyt irt

Another recitation²⁹¹

r r r ibḥ r ibḥ

A mouth against a mouth, a tooth against a tooth,

R^c [s3w] mtwt

Re, [ward off] the venom!

(6) *t3 wh^ct ir.n=i m sin*

The scorpion which I have made with clay,

snt nt mfk3t rdi.n=i [hr... k...] n hdn

a replica of turquoise which I have put [on...]. . . of *hdn* plants

r wh^c=i št3 ht

so I (can) release²⁹² the difficulties of the body.

²⁹¹ Literally 'another doing', read here as 'another reciting' but changed to 'another recitation' for proper English sense.

²⁹² A play on words, *wh^c* is being done against the *wh^ct*.

mī (7) r=i ḥft ḏd m-^c[=i]

Come to me when (this) speech is with [me]:

īnk Ḥr irt tn

“I am Horus who made you!

šp=t wh^ct

You will depart, scorpion!”

5.2: Identity

The user was not named in the text, but was associated with the spell via the use of the first person pronoun. In the recitation, the user stated that he had made the replica scorpion, and was using it to free the body of scorpion venom. The user was unlikely to be the one who had been stung as he would have been too ill to perform the required actions effectively.²⁹³ The lack of a first person pronoun in relation to the body of the affected individual also indicates that an intermediary was being used; this spell was being performed for the benefit of another.

The target of the spell was the scorpion venom, which the user wished to remove from the body of an affected individual. The last line of the spell suggests that the scorpion was being targeted as well, but this is actually another reference to the venom, see section 5.3 below.

5.3: Situation

This spell was used against scorpion venom through the use of a *hḏn* plant, which had mythological properties,²⁹⁴ and a replica scorpion. The final line of the spell tells the scorpion to ‘depart’ (*šp*) using hieroglyph D26 as a determinative, a sign which denotes actions such as vomiting and spitting where liquid leaves the body.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ The symptoms of a sting from a Buthidae scorpion include burning pain, muscle cramp, physical weakness and breathing difficulties: <http://www.cmej.org.za/index.php/cmej/article/view/2545/2580> (Accessed: 26/2/16).

²⁹⁴ This plant is mentioned in Pyr. 400 due to its offensive smell (Faulkner, 1969: 131 and n.2) and in CT 660 due to its primordial origin. There is also an obscure reference in CT 678. The *hḏn* plant seems to have a purifying connotation which removes anything unwanted, in this particular case a scorpion’s venom. This plant may have been imported from Nubia (von Deines and Grapow, 1959: 331), and was also used to heal eye injuries (Germer, 2002: 371).

²⁹⁵ Gardiner, 1957: 453 and *Wb* IV 443.3.

Although at first it appears that it was the scorpion being addressed here, the determinative suggests the target was the scorpion's venom, which was being ordered to leave the body. The presence of this determinative in 'venom' (*mtwt*)²⁹⁶ supports this theory; the venom was seen as part of the scorpion and could therefore be referred to as *whꜥt*.

5.4: Mechanics

Papyrus Chester Beatty VII used a replica scorpion against a real scorpion: 'a mouth against a mouth, a tooth against a tooth'. The replica was being compared equally to the scorpion, so the replica was seen as a match of the real animal. This replica was put onto a *hḏn* plant, but the rest of this ritual is lost. The whole spell was a recitation, but the final two lines were presented as the words of Horus, and instructed the venom to leave the body. Both Re and Horus were evoked as agents in this spell, with the user taking on the form of Horus: 'I am Horus, who made you!'. This was an immediate form of cursing which required no circumstances for activation; it was to be used at the time it was needed.

5.5: Outcome

This spell commanded the scorpion's venom to leave the body. Although no mention was made of specific symptoms shown by the affected individual, the removal of venom would also remove the 'difficulties (*štꜣ*)²⁹⁷ of the body'. This spell was to be used as an anti-venom, to negate the effects of a scorpion sting; this was a medicinal spell.

5.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Gardiner, A. H. (1935), *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series. Chester Beatty Gift*, London: British Museum Press, pl 35.

See also:

Borghouts, J. F. (1978), *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 72.

<http://www.cmej.org.za/index.php/cmej/article/view/2545/2580> (Accessed: 26/2/16).

²⁹⁶ *Wb* II 169.1.

²⁹⁷ *Wb* IV 551.1.

6: PAPYRUS BREMNER RHIND – THE BOOK OF OVERTHROWING

APOPHIS (Figures 19-28)

The division of The Book of Overthrowing Apophis into ten passages has been done to highlight the areas of interest for this study, and does not reflect any division made by the ancient Egyptians. For translations of these passages see Papyrus Bremner Rhind – The Book of Overthrowing Apophis Translations at the back of the thesis.

6.1: Context

Papyrus Bremner Rhind is a Ptolemaic piece which was found at Deir el-Medina. It is now in the British Museum (BM EA 10188) and comprises fifteen separate sheets of papyrus of four different texts. The first text is ‘The Songs of Isis and Nephthys’ which was to be performed by two priestesses as part of a temple ritual to evoke the deceased Osiris. The second text, ‘The Ritual of Bringing in Sokar’, was an invocation to the deities Sokar, Hathor and Osiris in the form of a temple ritual to be recited sixteen times with a musical accompaniment. The third text is ‘The Book of Overthrowing Apophis’, a collection of spells used to protect Ra and accompanying deities on the solar barque during its nightly journey through the underworld via the subjugation of Apophis. The third text is the focus of this section.²⁹⁸ The fourth text, ‘The Names of Apophis Which Shall Not Be’, not only lists the names of Apophis, but provides instructions for making representations of Apophis for ritual use.²⁹⁹ A hymn to Re, to be recited over representations, is also given.

6.2: Identity

The only clue to the identity of the user of this spell is found at the beginning, where the spells were instructed to be performed in Karnak Temple every day.³⁰⁰ These spells could only have been performed by the temple priests, although they are not named or even referred to anywhere in this text. The lack of mention indicates that the priests’ identities were not important to the effectiveness of the spells, and it was the rituals which held the power and enabled the spells to function, rather than the

²⁹⁸ Due to time and word restraints, only sections of interest have been translated for use here; these have been divided into passages and are found in the Papyrus Bremner Rhind – The Book of Overthrowing Apophis Translations section at the end of the thesis. Any repetitive or irrelevant parts are omitted.

²⁹⁹ This text would be useful for the further study of execration figures, but has had to be omitted here.

³⁰⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,1 (Passage 1).

people performing them. The inclusion of recitations in these rituals indicates that the priests must have been literate. Omitting the priests from the text also meant the spells were appropriate despite changes to the temple staff over time; a lack of personalisation meant the curse was always current and relevant.

Apophis is undoubtedly the main target of these spells as he is referred to numerous times, especially in spell headings such as ‘Destroying Apophis’.³⁰¹ Apophis is also referred to by epithets and descriptions which emphasise either his aggressive character or his intended or resulting subdued state:³⁰² ‘enemy (*hfty*) of Re’,³⁰³ ‘enemy of Wennefer’,³⁰⁴ ‘roarer’ (*hnhmty*),³⁰⁵ ‘bound one’ (*kꜣs*),³⁰⁶ ‘rebel’ (*sbt*),³⁰⁷ ‘boiled one’ (*snht*),³⁰⁸ ‘foe’ (*hry*),³⁰⁹ ‘fallen one’ (*hr*)³¹⁰ and ‘annihilated one’ (*tm*).³¹¹

Although no other targets are explicitly named in this text, multiple targets could be incorporated into the spells:

You will obliterate every enemy of Re,
every enemy of the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health, dead and living,
along with every accused one who is in his heart³¹²

Here, the word ‘every’ indicates that there was more than one potential target; the enemies were targeted as a group.³¹³ The targets could be either dead (*m mwt*) or alive (*m ꜥnh*),³¹⁴ and so include both natural and supernatural enemies. Multiple targets

³⁰¹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,6 (Passage 5).

³⁰² Although not translated here, Apophis is frequently referred to as ‘evil-natured one’ (*ḏw ꜣd*): Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,4, 22,11, 22,16 and 22,22.

³⁰³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,1 (Passage 1), 22,18 (Passage 3), 23,2 (Passage 4), 23,4 (Passage 4), 23,9 (Passage 5) and 23,17 x 2 (Passage 6). *Wb* III 276.4.

³⁰⁴ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,1 (Passage 1).

³⁰⁵ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,12 (Passage 5), also referred to here as Nehahir. *Wb* II 490.10.

³⁰⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,19 (Passage 3). *Wb* V 13.2.

³⁰⁷ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,3 (Passage 4), 23,17 (Passage 6) and 25,14 (Passage 8).

³⁰⁸ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,10 (Passage 5). *Wb* IV 157.12.

³⁰⁹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,17 (Passage 6). *Wb* III 321.2.

³¹⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 25,9 (Passage 8). *Wb* III 319.2.

³¹¹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 25,12 (Passage 8). *Wb* V 301.4.

³¹² Papyrus Bremner Rhind 26,2 (Passage 9).

³¹³ Of course *nh* can also be translated as ‘any’, but this does not significantly alter the meaning or this discussion.

³¹⁴ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,6 (Passage 2) and 28,18 (Passage 10).

could also be referred to as ‘enemies’ (*hftyw*),³¹⁵ ‘bound ones’ (*kꜣsw*)³¹⁶ and ‘(male) foes and (female) foes’ (*sh̄ty* and *sh̄tyt*).³¹⁷ The Book of Overthrowing Apophis was not just a set of spells against Apophis, it could also be used against other eligible targets, whether natural or supernatural.

6.3: Situation

The beginning of The Book of Overthrowing Apophis explicitly states that this curse is to fell Apophis,³¹⁸ but the reason for this is indicated only a handful of times throughout the text. The ‘Spell of Trampling Apophis with the Left Foot’ says:

You are more powerful, Re, than your enemies,
move freely, Re, in your horizon,
those who are in the night barque praise you,
the crew of your barque serve you, rejoicing,
and you repeat the crowning in joy within the day barque.³¹⁹

The spell was designed to allow Re to overcome his enemies, so his barque could travel unhindered through the night, and therefore successfully travel through the day.³²⁰ The ‘Destroying Apophis’ spell provides the clearest reason for use by stating that Apophis is driven off ‘so he will not attack the night barque’.³²¹ ‘The First Book of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re’ says ‘the Great Ennead who are in the prow of the barque of Re repel you’;³²² Apophis had to be prevented from attacking this sacred barque. The spell for ‘Destroying Apophis’ explains the consequences of Apophis successfully attacking the barque, saying it was done:

when the storm cloud brews in the east of the sky,

³¹⁵ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,6 (Passage 2), 22,7 x 2 (Passage 2), 22,8 (Passage 2), 23,4 (Passage 4) and 28,17 x 2 (Passage 10).

³¹⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,18 (Passage 3).

³¹⁷ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 28,17 (Passage 10). *Wb* IV 265.5 and 258.3.

³¹⁸ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,1 (Passage 1).

³¹⁹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,7-22,8 (Passage 2).

³²⁰ CT 414, BoD 15 and BoD 39 are also concerned with repelling Apophis from Re’s barque. Driving off or controlling a snake is the theme in Pyr. 278, 288, 289, 293, 295, 296, 298, 377, 378, 382, 385, 388, 389, 390, 393, 727, 729 and 733, CT 434, 435, 436 and 885, and BoD 33, 34 and 35. See Faulkner’s publications in the bibliography.

³²¹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,13 (Passage 4).

³²² Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,21-23,22 (Passage 6).

when Re sets in the west,
to prevent the wrath appearing in the east of the sky.
This is done by you likewise very many times
to prevent the storm appearing in the sky,
to prevent the storm cloud appearing in the sky.
This is done very many times against the storm
so the sun shines, and Apophis is truly felled.³²³

If the barque was hindered in its journey, a great storm would rage from the east in place of the rising sun. Subduing Apophis not only allowed the barque to travel through the underworld at night, but also through the sky in the day as the sun.

The Book of Overthrowing Apophis begins with an explanation of when and where these spells were to be used:

The beginning of the book of felling Apophis,
the enemy of Re, the enemy of Wennefer, life prosperity, health, true of
voice,
which is performed in the house of Amun-Re,
lord of the throne of the two lands,
who lives in Karnak Temple, every day.³²⁴

This was a temple ritual to be performed daily by the serving priests.³²⁵ Each spell had a specific function and ritual guidelines concerning any recitations and manipulations to be performed. Some spells had to be carried out at specific times of the day and night, and during certain festivals; the spell of ‘Destroying Apophis’ required Apophis’ name to be written on a piece of papyrus and burned:

as he (Re) reveals himself in the morning and at midday likewise,
and in the evening when Re sets in the west,
at the sixth hour of the night, at the eighth hour of the day,

³²³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,13-23,15 (Passage 5).

³²⁴ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,1 (Passage 1).

³²⁵ For detailed discussion on the performance of temple rituals, and what these entail, see Gee, 2010: 67-80.

at the end of the evening, down to every hour of the day and of the night,
in the New Moon Festival,
in the day and in the month in the Sixth Day Festival,
the Fifteenth Day Festival likewise, and every day.³²⁶

The spell entitled ‘The First Book of Felling Apophis’ instructed the ritual to be performed ‘at night, in the day, at every hour of every day, at the Monthly Festival, at the Sixth Day Festival, at the Fifteenth Day Festival’,³²⁷ while some spells only specified that the ritual was to be performed daily: ‘bind, tie up and put (it) onto a fire every day, trample with your left foot and spit on it four times daily, every day’.³²⁸ In the latter spell, the time of day that the ritual was performed did not influence the effectiveness of the spell.

The majority of spells in the Book of Overthrowing Apophis did not state at what hours the rituals were to be carried out or how many times a day they were to be performed; they were either used daily, as part of a set routine, or only when necessary. As these were spells to be performed by temple personnel in their official capacities, there was no immediately obvious personal gain for the priests. However the ‘Destroying Apophis’ spell says about completing the rituals:

It is beneficial for the one who does it upon earth,
it is beneficial to him in the necropolis,
giving more strength to that man than (to) the office of his superior,
it is truly his salvation from all bad and evil things.³²⁹

The performance of the rituals in this section of Papyrus Bremner Rhind personally benefitted the priests in life and in death. By carrying out their duties, these priests ensured they had a successful life and afterlife; they were not just performing these spells for the benefit of Re and his solar barque.

³²⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,7-23,9 (Passage 5).

³²⁷ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 24,20-24,21 (Passage 7).

³²⁸ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 28,16-28,17 (Passage 10).

³²⁹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,15-23,16 (Passage 5).

6.4: Mechanics

In the passages of Papyrus Bremner Rhind considered here, there are four clear sets of ritual instructions concerning the creation and manipulation of representations:

1) In ‘Destroying Apophis’³³⁰ a drawing of Apophis in green ink on a fresh piece of papyrus, and a wax figure of Apophis with his name written on in green ink, were to be put onto a fire at the sixth hour of the night and the eighth hour of the day. As well as these burnings, the representations were trampled with the left foot,³³¹ and also spat on every hour of the day.³³² The remains were to be placed in a pot of urine. Although the actions of burning and trampling could potentially destroy the representations, in this case they were only intended to subdue the target as destruction would mean no remains surviving to be put into the pot of urine. The intention here was for Apophis to suffer harm and degradation, not to be destroyed completely.

2) The instructions in ‘The First Book of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re’³³³ state that Apophis’ name was to be written on a fresh piece of papyrus and burned every hour throughout the day and night, even during festivals. Here, the desire was to destroy the name of Apophis repeatedly and entirely. No specification was made concerning the colour of the ink in which the name is written, and no figure was to be created as an accompaniment to the ritual.

3) In ‘The Second Chapter of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re’³³⁴ numerous targets – every enemy of Re and the pharaoh and any ‘accused one’ (*shry*)³³⁵ – had their names written on the chests of wax figures. These figures were to be tied up with rope, spat on, trampled with the left foot, pierced with a harpoon and knife, and then put onto a fire. Also, the names of the targets’ father, mother and children were to be written on fresh papyrus in green ink and put into the fire. The name of Apophis was then burned, but there are no further details for this part of the ritual. As no instructions are provided

³³⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,6-23,12 (Passage 5).

³³¹ The text says this trampling is to be done at the sixth and eighth hours of the day, rather than the sixth hour of the night and eighth hour of the day when the burning was to be carried out. This could be a scribal error.

³³² Spitting as a form of cursing is discussed in Ritner, 1993: 82-88.

³³³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 24,19-24,20 (Passage 7).

³³⁴ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 26,2-26,4 (Passage 9).

³³⁵ *Wb* IV 258.4.

for after the burning, the intention here was the complete destruction of the representations; the burning was the final action to be performed on them.

4) ‘The Book of Knowing the Creations of Re and Felling Apophis’³³⁶ states that Apophis was to be drawn in green ink on a fresh piece of papyrus and put into a jar with Apophis’ name written on it. The jar was then subjected to being tied up, trampled with the left foot, and spat on four times daily. Finally, the jar was put onto a fire every day while reciting the words:

Re is triumphant over you, Apophis (x4),
Horus is triumphant over his enemies (x 4),
the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health, is triumphant over his enemies (x 4)³³⁷

Depending on the material of the jar, Apophis’ name on the papyrus may or may not have survived the burning. As no further instructions were given, it seems that this burning was intended to destroy the jar and its contents. Others could be cursed by writing the target’s name, and the names of the target’s father, mother and children, on an unspecified medium. These names were put into a container of wax, which was put onto a fire. The wax container would only provide partial protection from the fire, and once it melted the names inside it would burn. The representations of these targets would suffer a slow but ultimate destruction.

Certain lines within The Book of Overthrowing Apophis hint at additional actions being carried out on the representation, for example:

Look, Re, he prevails over you Apophis,
his fire rages against you, it prevails over you,
its blast is effective against you,
its flame falls upon all the enemies of Re (x4),
the flame falls upon all the enemies of the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health.³³⁸

³³⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 28,16-28,19 (Passage 10).

³³⁷ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 28,17 (Passage 10).

³³⁸ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,6-22,7 (Passage 2).

This example suggests that a representation may have been burned as the text was being recited. There are numerous other references to burning,³³⁹ as well as being tied up or restrained,³⁴⁰ cut,³⁴¹ spat on³⁴² and trampled.³⁴³ While these actions were instructed to be carried out on a representation elsewhere in the text, see above, the references here were not explicitly linked to a representation or any ritual action. These examples could potentially narrate extra rituals to be performed by the priests, sometimes evoking deities, as in the example given above.

Most of the spells studied here were statements which declared what had happened, what was happening and what would happen to Apophis by presenting the subjugation of this deity as a fixed, permanent situation. Some passages were presented as the speech of the user, and used the first person to present the actions carried out against Apophis as the user's own: 'I have (made) you retreat, I have cut you'.³⁴⁴ Although the user had the power to attack Apophis, the frequent mention of deities throughout the text, see below, indicates that help from agents could also be sought. The concept of having power over Apophis is also evident in the frequent use of imperatives: 'Retreat, enemy of Re!'.³⁴⁵ These imperatives ordered Apophis to carry out, or be subjected to, actions which emphasised his submission and defeat; he was being degraded. Apophis was also degraded through the use of demeaning epithets in place of his name, see section 6.2 above.

Deities played an active role in The Book of Overthrowing Apophis, for example:

The great Ennead who are in Heliopolis repel you,
Horus has repelled your aggression,
Seth has diminished your moment,
Isis repels you, Nephthys drives you away.

The great Ennead who are in the prow of the barque of Re repel you³⁴⁶

³³⁹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,19 x 2 (Passage 6) and 25,11 (Passage 8).

³⁴⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,18 x 2 (Passage 3), 22,19 x 3 (Passage 3), 22,20 (Passage 3), 23,20 (Passage 6) and 25,11 (Passage 8).

³⁴¹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,2 (Passage 4) and 23,18 (Passage 6).

³⁴² Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,1, (Passage 4), 23,2 (Passage 4), 23,3 (Passage 4) and 23,4 (Passage 4).

³⁴³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,5 (Passage 4).

³⁴⁴ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,2 (Passage 4); other examples are found in 23,3 (Passage 4) and 23,4 (Passage 4).

³⁴⁵ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,2 (Passage 4).

³⁴⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,21-23,22 (Passage 6).

The gods and goddesses evoked in the particular passages studied here are: Re,³⁴⁷ Horus,³⁴⁸ Re-Horakhty,³⁴⁹ Seth,³⁵⁰ Isis,³⁵¹ Nephthys,³⁵² the great Ennead of Heliopolis,³⁵³ the great Ennead in Re's barque,³⁵⁴ and the children of Horus.³⁵⁵ Pharaoh³⁵⁶ were also evoked in a similar manner, so the priests were able to call upon both natural and supernatural agents for assistance in dealing with Apophis. Other spells used staves to avoid naming any agent, for example 'you are fallen, overthrown',³⁵⁷ which instead put the focus on the outcome of the spell. Passives were also used in the same way, for example: 'your nose is cut off from your face'.³⁵⁸ Both of these techniques suggest that, in these particular cases, the one carrying out the consequences was not important to the functioning of the spell.

The representation of the target could take the form of a name, sometimes written on a fresh piece of papyrus, or a wax figure. The representation could be burned, trampled, spat upon, tied up, stabbed or put into a pot of urine. These actions emphasised the user's power and control over the target, and highlighted the target's submissive and degraded state. The actions were not always designed to destroy the representation, but to inflict punishment on it while preserving the form, allowing numerous physical actions to be performed on each representation. Recitations meant that verbal and physical elements complemented each other to maximise the effectiveness of the spell.

6.5: Outcome

The consequences of these spells focused on the resulting state of Apophis. Words regularly used to describe Apophis include 'felled, fallen or overthrown'

³⁴⁷ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,6 x 2 (Passage 2), 22,8 x 2 (Passage 2), 22,19 (Passage 3), 22,20 (Passage 3), 23,2 (Passage 4), 23,4 (Passage 4), 23,5 x 2 (Passage 4), 23,6 (Passage 4), 23,7 x 2 (Passage 5), 23,9 (Passage 5), 25,10 (Passage 8) and 28,17 (Passage 10).

³⁴⁸ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 22,19 (Passage 3), 22,20 (Passage 3) – Horus of Mekhentyirty, 23,20 (Passage 6), 23,21 (Passage 6) and 28,17 (Passage 10).

³⁴⁹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,18 (Passage 6).

³⁵⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,21 (Passage 6).

³⁵¹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,19 (Passage 6) and 23,21 (Passage 6).

³⁵² Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,21 (Passage 6).

³⁵³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,21 (Passage 6).

³⁵⁴ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,21-23,22 (Passage 6).

³⁵⁵ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,20 (Passage 6).

³⁵⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,4 (Passage 4) and 28,17 (Passage 10).

³⁵⁷ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,18 (Passage 6).

³⁵⁸ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,18 (Passage 6).

(*s/hr*),³⁵⁹ ‘destroyed’ (*s/hm*),³⁶⁰ ‘annihilated’ or ‘perished’ (*tm*),³⁶¹ ‘spat upon’ (*tp*)³⁶² and ‘boiled’ (*snwh*).³⁶³ Although various words were used, they all emphasised the subdued and repressed state of Apophis as a consequence of the spells,³⁶⁴ thereby allowing Re’s solar barque to travel unhindered through the underworld each night. The section of The Book of Overthrowing Apophis in Papyrus Bremner Rhind entailed a combination of verbal and physical rituals, performed by the priests of Karnak Temple, to degrade and subdue Apophis.

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³⁵⁹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,9 x 2 (Passage 5), 23,15 (Passage 5), 23,18 x 3 (Passage 6), 23,19 (Passage 6), 23,20 (Passage 6), 25,9 (Passage 8) and 25,10 x 2 (Passage 8).

³⁶⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,3 (Passage 4), 23,4 (Passage 4), 23,20 (Passage 6) and 25,11 (Passage 8). *Wb* IV 223.7.

³⁶¹ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,3 (Passage 4), 23,4 (Passage 4), 25,10 x 2 (Passage 8) and 25,12 (Passage 8).

³⁶² Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,1 (Passage 4), 23,2 (Passage 4), 23,3 (Passage 4) and 23,4 (Passage 4). Similar to *Wb* I 555.4.

³⁶³ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,3 (Passage 4), 23,10 (Passage 5) and 26,4 (Passage 9). *Wb* IV 157.12.

³⁶⁴ Although not translated here, Apophis was also described as ‘restrained’ (*sꜣw*): Papyrus Bremner Rhind 24,4 and 24,6.

7: SUMMARY

The use of magic spells as a form of cursing involved words being written and recorded³⁶⁵ for the purpose of recitation, instruction or display. Various media were used to record these spells, but they were light, typically portable mediums such as papyri and ostraca. Magic spells sometimes provided instructions for rituals based on a physical manipulation of a representation of the target, in the manner of an execration figure.³⁶⁶ Magic spells required a level of literacy in order to write and recite them; some spells may have been beyond the capabilities of the lower levels of society. An exception to this is Berlin 23308, which comprises a hieroglyphic text engraved on a small wooden tablet to be worn on the body. This piece has no explicit ritual apart from being worn, and if recitation occurred, the use of the third person in this text³⁶⁷ suggests it was carried out by someone other than the user. Berlin 23308 would not have required literacy skills if the text had been written and recited by another, so it could have been commissioned by an illiterate individual.

Papyrus Chester Beatty VII³⁶⁸ provides evidence of verbal and physical rituals being performed by someone on behalf of another: this spell was intended to rid the body of venom after a scorpion sting, but it involved recitation and the creation of a representation of the scorpion in clay – not something which the sufferer of a scorpion sting could easily have carried out. In this case it is easy to imagine that a specialist in this field would have acted on behalf of the affected individual, especially as the first person is only used in relation to the creation and manipulation of the representation, not in relation to the affected individual.³⁶⁹ Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 is similar: the user acted on behalf of a fevered and sweating individual called Pedamunnebnestawy to rid his body of the illness.³⁷⁰ The spell entailed recitation and manipulation, which the unnamed user carried out for Pedamunnebnestawy. In contrast, Papyrus Bremner Rhind was only to be used by the priests of Karnak Temple, and it involved recitation and physical manipulations as part of the temple's daily

³⁶⁵ All but one of the spells in this study were written in hieratic, only Berlin 23308 (section 1) was written in hieroglyphs.

³⁶⁶ Chapter Two.

³⁶⁷ 'Everyone... who will cast the evil eye against Pedamunnebnestawy' (section 1.1).

³⁶⁸ Section 5.

³⁶⁹ 'The scorpion which I have made with clay' as opposed to the venom causing 'difficulties of the body' (section 5.1).

³⁷⁰ Section 4.

rituals.³⁷¹ No one else could perform this spell on behalf of the priests. Magic spells as a form of cursing were flexible to an extent: they could be detailed and complex for highly trained users, as in the case of Papyrus Bremner Rhind, they could be made simpler for illiterate or less literate users, as in Berlin 23308, or they could be performed by intermediaries, as in Papyrus Chester Beatty VII.

Cursing via a magic spell was a creative process, but it could also be destructive. The spell was written, and in some cases a representation for ritual use was made, but this ritual could comprise of destructive acts such as burning, cutting and trampling underfoot.³⁷² The need for a spell to be written, in this study at least, means that this method of cursing was not self-sufficient because something had to be created in order to carry out the curse. However, if some magic spells were recited and passed on from memory, i.e. they were not written down, then there would be no archaeological evidence. It is reasonable to assume that illiterate individuals used magic spells in this way, and this would have been a self-sufficient form of cursing if no ritual beyond recitation was necessary; magic spells may have been more flexible than the archaeological record suggests. However a spell was used, the target of the curse was identified in the spell either by name (if it was known),³⁷³ by unwanted actions (if the wrongdoing had not yet occurred)³⁷⁴ or by a general label.³⁷⁵ It was this recording of the identity of the target which connected the target to the spell. When a representation was made for ritual purposes,³⁷⁶ the use of the target's name or image provided an additional connection between target and spell. As identification of the target was made in writing, and as some targets were not human, this raises the question of whether non-human targets could acknowledge the spell, or whether the physical presence of the words was enough to allow the spell to function. Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII provide an answer: the words of the spell were to be spoken aloud, so it was the act of speaking the words which enabled spells to curse non-human (as well as human) targets.

³⁷¹ Section 6.

³⁷² Section 6.4.

³⁷³ Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 (the name was to be inserted in the text, section 2) and Papyrus Bremner Rhind (Apophis).

³⁷⁴ Berlin 23308 (whoever uses the evil eye, but further defined by social group to include all of mankind).

³⁷⁵ Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 (a scorpion, section 3), Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 (the diseased, the opponent, the dead, and the symptoms: fever and sweating) and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII (scorpion venom).

³⁷⁶ Papyrus Chester Beatty VII and Papyrus Bremner Rhind.

Magic spells could be conditional, requiring a potential target to perform a specific negative action which would activate the curse,³⁷⁷ while others activated immediately upon use, and were therefore used when the target had already caused an unwanted situation.³⁷⁸ The mechanics of a magic spell depended on its reason for use, either as a preventive measure or a solution to an existing problem. Whether the wrongdoing had already happened or not, the identification of the target through their wrongdoing meant degradation, thereby allowing the morally superior user to curse the target. When rituals were part of this cursing method, physical manipulation of the representation, such as burning, provided further degradation. Degradation allowed the magic spell to function, and the consequences to happen; no magic spell (or any other method of cursing) in this study lacks this element. Sometimes the consequences were achieved with the help of deified agents,³⁷⁹ but these deities could also be eligible for punishment should a spell fail.³⁸⁰ The moral superiority of the user in relation to the target and his wrongdoings gave the user power to threaten non-human agents, as well as non-human targets. Some spells of this study show a combination of verbal and physical acts, with recitation being performed alongside: the making of a replica scorpion to remove scorpion venom, drawing hieroglyphs on papyrus to place on the throat to cure malaria, and burning representations of a target to subdue Apophis.³⁸¹ Other spells appear to have consisted solely of recitation: to protect the user from the evil eye, to acquire a particular woman, and to restrain a scorpion.³⁸² A physical problem did not only require a physical process to solve it, and in turn a non-physical problem did not only require a non-physical process.

When a name was included in the spell,³⁸³ it became a personalised form of magic to be used only for the benefit of the named individual. Typically however, magic spells did not contain a name, but instead used the first person pronoun to

³⁷⁷ Berlin 23308 is the only circumstantial spell in this study.

³⁷⁸ Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057, Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213, Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36, Papyrus Chester Beatty VII and Papyrus Bremner Rhind are all spells which worked immediately upon use.

³⁷⁹ All of the spells in this study evoke deities, with the exception of Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213.

³⁸⁰ Both Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 and Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 threaten to burn Osiris and the town of Busiris, the latter spell also threatens Horus and Seth with mutilation of the hand and eye respectively. These threats mirror those seen in monument curses (Chapter One) where the intention is to prevent a negative outcome by making threats.

³⁸¹ Papyrus Chester Beatty VII, Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 and Papyrus Bremner Rhind respectively.

³⁸² Berlin 23308, Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 and Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 respectively.

³⁸³ Berlin 23308 (Pedamunnebesuttawy) and Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 (Anynakhte).

establish the speaker as the user.³⁸⁴ Those spells which used the third person³⁸⁵ appear to have been recited on behalf of the user.³⁸⁶ By not including personal names, magic spells could be reused without having to alter the text to fit the individual user.

The particular spells studied here convey the range of scenarios which the ancient Egyptians faced which they felt could be solved by a magic spell curse. Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII both deal with scorpions: the former as protection against being stung, and the latter to rid the body of venom after a sting. These two spells were used to help the ancient Egyptians deal with a dangerous environment. Illness could also be treated with this type of curse: Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 was used in the event of someone suffering from recurring fevers, a common symptom of malaria. Problematic social interactions could also be handled in this manner: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 was used when a man wished to attract a particular woman, and Berlin 23308 was a deterrent against people using the evil eye. The social interaction of deities was also addressed: Papyrus Bremner Rhind ensured the successful passage of Re's solar barque through the underworld by subduing Apophis, who threatened the safety of the barque. Together, this sample shows how the ancient Egyptians dealt with daily situations through the use of cursing via magic spells. This was a method of cursing which could be tailored to suit the needs of the user, whether of a medical, romantic, animal, magical or supernatural nature; magic spells could counteract the causes of a wide range of problems. It also appears that the mechanics of the spell could be altered to suit the capabilities of the user, with the creator of a spell playing an active role in recitation and other rituals on behalf of an illiterate or incapacitated user. This sample was chosen based on content and form, rather than on date or origin, so they are restricted in age from the Ramesside Period through to the Ptolemaic Period, and all but one spell³⁸⁷ comes from Deir el-Medina. Magic spells were flexible enough to have been far more widespread, chronologically and geographically, than this sample suggests.

³⁸⁴ Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057, Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213, Papyrus Chester Beatty VII and Papyrus Bremner Rhind.

³⁸⁵ Berlin 23308, Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII.

³⁸⁶ Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 is an exception as it is an instruction for the ritual: 'put on his throat (so) it expels it quickly'.

³⁸⁷ The origin of Berlin 23308 is unknown.

CHAPTER FOUR – *DAMNATIO MEMORIAE*

Damnatio memoriae is the act of damaging or erasing the name and/or image of the target on a monument. The monument does not have to belong to the target, the target only has to be represented in some form on it.

1: NEFERSEHEMRE'S TOMB (Figures 29-34)

1.1: Context

This Sixth Dynasty tomb is located in the Teti cemetery at Saqqara.³⁸⁸ The doorway on the east side opens into Room I, which has a north-side axis. This room leads to Room II at the south side, Room III (pillared room) at the south end of the west side, Room IV (offering chapel) at the north end of the west side, and Room V at the north side. Room VI (serdab) lies northwest of Room I but is completely enclosed by walls, making it inaccessible. The burial chamber is west of the offering chapel and is reached via a stairway at the west end of the pillared room which leads to the roof. A shaft in the roof would have enabled access to the burial chamber (see Figure 29).

The walls of each of the seven rooms are either undecorated (Room II, Room III, Room V, Room VI, burial chamber) or are poorly preserved (Room I, Room IV) with many of the upper halves of the figures missing. In Room III, Neferseshemre is depicted on every pillar face. Sometimes he is alone, sometimes he is with a son, wife or daughter, standing alongside him on a smaller scale. The owner prominently presents himself as elderly, with rolls of fat on his stomach and short hair or a close-fitting cap, on the pillar faces facing the entrance and those along the central axis of the room. Neferseshemre is always depicted alone in his elder state. Where a son appears, he is standing in front of his father, facing the same way, sometimes holding his father's staff with one hand. Where a mother or daughter appears, she is kneeling between the owner's legs with one hand clasping the ankle of his leading leg (see Figure 30).

³⁸⁸ The main publications for this tomb are Firth and Gunn, 1926: 18-20, and Kanawati and Abderraziq, 1998: 11-38. Information can also be found in Capart, 1907a: 17-26, Capart, 1907b: pl 9-17, Kanawati, 2003: 111-113 and Loret, 1900: 86-7.

1.2: Identity

Neferseshemre held many titles, but the most important was vizier (*tšty*).³⁸⁹ Other people depicted in this tomb include his wife Semdet and his three sons Hekaib, Sheshi³⁹⁰ and Meteti. Two sons had titles associating them with Teti's pyramid, called 'Teti is Enduring of Places' (*dd swt Tti*). Hekaib was a tenant (*hnty-š*)³⁹¹ of the pyramid as well as overseer of documents (*imy-r sš*), and Meteti was a tenant as well as attendant of the palace tenants (*imy-ht hnty-š pr-ε*). Sheshi is not explicitly connected to the pyramid but was senior lector priest (*hry-hbt smsw*) and he had other ritual roles.³⁹² Two of the sons are depicted twice, Hekaib on the west faces of pillars 2 and 6, and Sheshi on the east faces of pillars 2 and 4, while the third son Meteti only appears once on the north face of pillar 5. This suggests that the unnamed figure on the north face of pillar 6 must be Meteti. Both Hekaib and Sheshi are depicted in two different stances: they hold their father's staff in one scene, and have an arm across the chest in the other scene. Meteti is holding his father's staff on pillar 5, so again the unnamed figure with his arm across his chest on pillar 6 is likely to be Meteti.

Figures on the east faces of pillars 3 and 5, and the west faces of pillars 1 and 5, have been chiselled out. These damaged figures appear to have held identical stances to the three preserved sons, i.e. standing before Neferseshemre,³⁹³ but their names and titles have also been erased. All of the erased sons appear to be holding their father's staff.³⁹⁴ The stance suggests that the targets were also sons of Neferseshemre, while the inclusion of the pyramid's name in all of the accompanying inscriptions indicates that, like two of the preserved sons, the erased sons were also attached to Teti's pyramid. These figures follow the pattern of location on pillar faces seen for each of the preserved sons, with one paired depiction on the east faces of pillars 3 and 5 and another on the west faces of pillars 1 and 5. These erasures can be viewed as two sets of attacks, each attack being made against one son. It cannot be

³⁸⁹ For the full list of titles see Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: 11-13.

³⁹⁰ Sheshi is not referred to as a son of Neferseshemre in this tomb, however the stance he shared with Hekaib and Meteti, i.e. holding the owner's staff, allows this assumption to be made.

³⁹¹ The exact meaning of this title is unclear but is discussed in Andrassy, 1994: 3-12, Roth, 1991: 177-186 and Vymazalová, 2013: 187-195.

³⁹² Sheshi was also Keeper of Secrets of the House of the Morning, Scribe of the God's Book and Great One of Censing.

³⁹³ From the outline of the damage it appears that all four erased figures were holding Neferseshemre's staff with one hand, rather than two holding the staff and two holding their arm across their chest. Due to the circumstances however this is obviously not verifiable.

³⁹⁴ The act of erasing the owner's son from a tomb scene in Neferseshemre's tombs, as well as in others, is discussed in Myśliwiec, 2010: 305-334.

shown for certain that these were sons whose names are now lost, rather than attacks on Hekaib, Meteti or Sheshi, but the thorough nature of the erasures would indicate this. The preservation of the name of Teti's pyramid in each case indicates that either the chiseller or the person issuing orders to the chiseller was literate.

1.3: Situation

Neferseshemre is depicted on the south entrance recess. His face is severely damaged here, but the damage is unfocussed and extends needlessly beyond the face. In Room III, the west face of pillar 1 has damage which encompasses Neferseshemre's feet and legs, as well as his wife kneeling between his feet. The damage is excessive and rough. The inscription above Neferseshemre shows rough and indiscriminate damage on a number of pillar faces, without any attempt to target particular words or parts of the writing. The name of the owner has not been targeted here. The false door in room IV has excessive damage along the bottom which encompasses figures of the tomb owner. Other figures of Neferseshemre survive untouched on the upper parts of the false door. These examples of damage are too indiscriminate and sporadic to be part of a focussed attack; they are due to either deterioration or accident. There is no deliberate attack on Neferseshemre.

Intentional damage is limited to the small figures standing in front of the owner on the pillars in room III, as discussed above. The figure, name and title were erased in each case, however the name of Teti's pyramid (*dd swt Tti*) was repeatedly left intact within the title. Repair work was made in ancient times to cover over the removed figures; the scene on the east face of pillar 5 has traces of plaster which would have filled the indent left by the erasure (see Figure 31). This plaster shows a resulting smooth surface, therefore the erasure would not have been as obvious to an ancient visitor as to a modern one. The now suspended name of Teti's pyramid would however have remained an obvious sign of alteration. These attacks were focussed only on specific targets, perhaps two sons of the tomb owner. Other sons and family members, as well as Neferseshemre himself, were left unharmed. This was a focussed attack on particular family members only.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ This attacking of family members in another's tomb was not unique to Neferseshemre. Djehuty's TT 11 contains images and inscriptions relating to members of his family which have been intentionally damaged, including two 'beloved sisters' (Galán, 2014: 251), and his parents (Galán, 2014: 252). Unlike in Neferseshemre's tomb however, Djehuty himself was attacked in his own tomb (Galán, 2014: 251).

1.4: Mechanics

Three of the four erased figures, those on the west face of pillars 1 and 5, and the east face of pillar 3, were attacked in a manner which removed all of the detail of the original carving (see Figures 32-34). All that remains are relatively smooth indented blocks of straight-lined shapes; the outlines of the original carvings are not visible. The erasure of the fourth figure on the east face of pillar 5 is different. A much shallower erasure shows hints of the legs and arms of the figure, which was holding Neferseshemre's staff (see Figure 31). While this chiselling mimics the smoothness of the other erasures, it does not completely remove the figure; this erasure was either performed in haste, not completed, or carried out by a different chiseller. In all cases the hieroglyphs relating to the figures have been cleanly erased, with the exception of the name of Teti's pyramid which starts the inscription in each case. Overall, the attacks were thorough and covered pillars throughout Room III on both frontal (east) and rear-facing (west) pillar faces. Everyone who was intended to be targeted was indeed erased. This was a method of cursing which allowed victims to be targeted through the use of physical actions against representations. The curser used the tomb images and writings as a physical focus for an attack.

1.5: Outcome

The intended result of this type of damage is never stated, but it provides a clear visual impact on a viewer. The complete erasures indicate that the figure once represented is no longer desired, especially when viewed with fully preserved scenes. The erasure of the targets' titles but the preservation of Teti's pyramid name shows dissociation from the royal office; their names are no longer preserved alongside that of the pharaoh. The targets were under attack in their father's tomb, so the targets' link with their family was under attack. The targets were being dissociated from their family, which meant disruption to the process of inheritance. It is impossible to know whether these actions were taken as part of a political persecution, seeking out the images wherever they occurred, or a familial persecution to disassociate the targets from themselves and the pharaoh.³⁹⁶ Erasing the memory and associations of the

³⁹⁶ The act of erasing sons from the father's tomb also occurred in Merefnebef's tomb. Here three sons were targeted, Manefer, Merefnebef II/Fefi II and Mem the Elder. Images, names and figures of the sons were chiselled out on the doorway and in the main chapel. The sons were shown walking with their father and acting as offering bearers. Not all figures were attacked however, his son Manefer can clearly be seen accompanying his father in the fowling scene on the east wall of the main chapel. Myśliwiec, 2004: 51-52, 74, 87, 100, 125, 135 and 163.

targets was important enough to warrant harmful actions against the tomb of a vizier. There is no way of telling whether the targeted sons were alive or dead at the time of the attack; this could have been a curse on the living or on the deceased.

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2: SEANKHUIPTAH'S TOMB (Figures 35-43)

2.1: Context

This Sixth Dynasty tomb is in the Teti cemetery at Saqqara.³⁹⁷ It was discovered in a reasonable state of preservation, with the decorated areas largely complete. The tomb lies on a north-south axis, with a decorated doorway in the south side. Room I is accessed via the tomb entrance. This room contains the false door and is the only decorated room. Room II lies to the west and contains shaft 1. Shaft 2 is beyond an arch at the north end of room II, this leads to the subterranean burial chamber. Room III is to the north of room I and the east of shaft 2, but is fully enclosed; this is a serdab without a door but with vertical communication slits (see Figure 31).

Depictions of the tomb owner, and lengthy inscriptions, appear on the façade surrounding the tomb entrance and the interior door thicknesses. He is represented standing, either holding a staff or with his hand raised as if addressing the visitor. Each wall of room I is decorated. The south wall, positioned behind the visitor on entry, contains butchery scenes and depictions of various animals and food offerings. The left (west) wall shows the owner seated, facing left, before an offering table surrounded by food offerings, which are listed in registers of hieroglyphs at the top of the scene. Offering bearers below him carry birds and cuts of meat to the right (north) side of the wall, where the false door is located. The entrance to room II is on the left (south) side of the wall, so this scene is symmetrically framed by the doorway and false door. The north wall has a similar scene, with the owner seated, facing right, before an offering table and food offerings which are again listed in registers of hieroglyphs. Offering bearers below him carry food to the left, again towards the false door. In the scenes on both the west and north walls, the tomb owner is seated with his back to the intervening false door to provide symmetry. The right (east) wall is the largest uninterrupted wall in room I. This wall contains the popular fishing and fowling scenes. On the left part of the wall, the owner is facing right and spearing fish in the middle of the scene. On the right part of the wall, the owner is facing left and throwing sticks at birds in the middle of the scene and perhaps around his head. Erasures here obscure the decoration. The overall effect is again one of symmetry. In the registers

³⁹⁷ The primary source of information for this tomb is Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: 39-71, although it was discovered by Dr. M. Abder-Raziq in the early 1980s. This tomb is also mentioned in Kanawati, 2003: 117-120.

above, people catch birds in nets above the fowling scene, and carry the owner in a palanquin above the fishing scene.

2.2: Identity

Seankhuptah, also called Hetepnuptah, held a range of titles such as chief physician (*wr swnw*), lector priest (*hry-ḥbt*) and keeper of secrets (*hr-sštꜣ*). He was also associated with Teti's pyramid as a tenant (*hnt-š*)³⁹⁸ and priest (*hm-ntr*).³⁹⁹ In the scenes he was shown seated before an offering table on the north and west walls, with more offerings being brought for him, and fishing, fowling and riding in a palanquin on the east wall. The only place in which he does not appear is the animal and butchery scenes on the south wall. His wife Iti is the only other person named in the tomb decoration. She accompanies her husband in the fishing and fowling scenes. In both scenes she stands by, and holds, her husband's leading leg. Her other hand is outstretched and touches a vertical line of hieroglyphs which label each scene; she appears to be pointing to either the hieroglyphs or the animals which her husband is targeting. Other figures are involved in the scenes in room I, but the majority are labelled only by the actions which they perform, for example a figure on the west wall who is 'pouring water' (*stt mw*). Occasionally figures are given a title, for example the two lector priests (*hry-ḥbt*) on the west wall or the six figures labelled as overseer of the linen (*imy-r sšr*) in the fishing and fowling scenes on the east wall.

2.3: Situation

The panel above the entrance originally contained six standing figures with raised hands, with four of them being identified by accompanying hieroglyphs. These figures have been erased, along with all but one of the names (see Figure 36). Two panels flanking the doorway were each decorated with a standing figure of the owner and inscriptions. The figures, and large parts of the corresponding names and titles, have been erased. The second line of each of the vertical inscriptions, the line which falls directly in front of the figure, has also been erased. The writings are different on each side; the second line on the west side contained the beginning of a dedication to Osiris, on the east side this line was the beginning of a curse.⁴⁰⁰ Neither line contained

³⁹⁸ This title is discussed in Vymazalová, 2013: 187-195, Andrásy, 1994: 3-12, and Roth, 1991: 177-186.

³⁹⁹ For the full list of titles see Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: 39-40.

⁴⁰⁰ Monument curse **A21**, translated in the Monuments Curse List at the end of the thesis.

the names or titles of the owner. Seankhuptah's name and figure on two panels which together frame this entrance decoration have also been erased (see Figures 37 and 38). On the doorway thicknesses, the images and names of the owner have been erased, one on each side. An inscription stating the owner's name and titles on the entrance drum shows damage; the *wr* bird (Gardiner's G36) in the title 'great one of censuring' (*wr idt*) has been targeted, but the head, feet and tail of the bird are still visible. Another *wr* bird in the inscription, denoting the title 'chief physician' (*wr swnw*), has been left unharmed.

In room I, Seankhuptah has been erased in the offering scenes on the west and north walls, along with the chair he was sitting in (see Figures 39 and 40). He has been erased from the fishing and fowling scenes on the east wall along with his hunting equipment: a spear and a throw stick (see Figures 41 and 42). His target animals, the fish and birds, have also been erased (see Figure 43). His titles have been erased in the fowling scene. Both Seankhuptah and his palanquin have also been erased on the east wall. This wall also shows the only example of someone other than the tomb owner being targeted; his wife has been erased in the fowling scene but her name and titles were untouched. Seankhuptah's image, and in most cases his name, has been erased wherever it occurred, both inside and outside his tomb.

There are two very clear examples of Seankhuptah's name being left untouched. The first is on the panel above the tomb entrance, the second is on the drum of the entrance, where the *wr* bird was erased instead. In every other occasion where his name occurs, it has been attacked to varying degrees. Sometimes the name is completely erased, but normally parts survive due to light chiselling or intention. The 'Ptah' element of his name survives in numerous places on the exterior and interior of the tomb, including on the false door. Although the owner's name and image have been erased in most cases, his titles are generally left alone. The exception is the fowling scene on the east wall, in which the whole of the accompanying inscription next to the owner's head has been erased. As the corresponding inscription in the fishing scene gives his titles and name, it can be assumed that the erased inscription in the fowling scene also contained these elements.

Seankhuptah's wife and her inscription has been left unharmed in the fishing scene, however her figure has been erased in the fowling scene. Her inscriptions here remain untouched. Other figures appear in room I in the form of palanquin bearers,

offering bringers and other dependents. These are all left unharmed, as are any accompanying inscriptions which do not name the owner. Most other details in the scenes are left untouched, for example animals, offerings and furniture; the exceptions have been discussed above. The south wall, containing only animal and butchery scenes, is the only wall in the tomb which has not been intentionally damaged.

The panel above the entrance is missing a large chunk of its inscription, but rather than having specific words chiselled out, the first half of the top two lines have disappeared with the surface of the panel. This type of damage, where the surface has been lost, can be seen on the south and west walls above the doorways, and sporadically across every room I scene. This damage is too unfocussed and random to be intentional, they are examples of accidental damage or deterioration.

2.4: Mechanics

Seankhuptah's images have been routinely and meticulously hacked out wherever they appear. A very rough method of erasure was used, normally chiselling within the outline of each figure without any attempt to smooth out the tool marks. What remains are the recognisable shapes of figures made up of coarse pitting and no internal detailing. The owner's name has been attacked in this manner, although in a number of cases light or patchy chiselling mean parts of the name are still visible.

The figures on the panels which flank the entrance show different methods of erasure. The right (east) figure has been erased in a manner similar to the majority of erasures in this tomb; the figure's outline is visible and contains short, sharp chisel marks (see Figure 38). The left (west) figure however is different; the outline has been hidden by lines of continuous chisel marks which also encompass much of the surrounding space (see Figure 37). In room I, the figures of the owner within the fishing and fowling scenes were both erased in a similar manner, i.e. within the figure's outline using short, sharp chiselling, but the fowling scene has additional erasures; the inscription accompanying Seankhuptah and the figure of his wife have been erased (see Figures 41 and 42). The lack of coordination between the scenes on both the entrance and the east wall suggests two possibilities: either these attacks were carried out by two different people, one of whom made a mistake by erasing too much, or specific instructions regarding the erasures in each scene were being followed.

2.5: Outcome

The failure to erase two highly visible examples of his name may have been intentional, emphasised by the systematic erasures throughout the rest of the tomb, or it may have been due to an oversight. Time constraints are an unlikely reason for these omissions due to their conspicuous location at the tomb entrance; logically this area would be the priority target. The failure to erase the whole name, leaving only the 'Ptah' element in a number of cases, dissociated the owner from this god.⁴⁰¹ Seankhuptah was no longer deemed worthy of this association.

The erasure of two seemingly random lines of text from the entrance indicates that the attacker was either unable or unwilling to read the inscriptions. The fact that these lines are symmetrical suggests his actions were due to given (or misunderstood) orders, rather than his own motivation; there is no clear reason for their erasure. The two failures to erase the owner's name also indicate that the attacks were not personally motivated, but orders; if the attack was of personal benefit to the chiseller, he would have been more meticulous and thorough in his work.

On the east wall, Seankhuptah's fishing spear and throw sticks were erased, along with the speared fish and targeted birds, and also his palanquin. On the north and west walls, his chair was erased. The erasure of equipment and specific animals within room I emphasises the importance held by these items. Their iconography within the scenes was powerful enough to warrant their erasure; the erasure of the tomb owner was not enough here.

The removal of Seankhuptah's figures from the façade meant he was no longer the presented owner of the tomb. His removal from the scenes in room I meant he would no longer receive offerings for his mortuary cult, or enjoy fishing or fowling in the afterlife, meaning implications for the continuation of his mortuary cult and a successful afterlife. The removal of his names, and therefore his identity, meant he would no longer be remembered by society. The results of this method of cursing affected the target's property physically in this world, and the success of the target supernaturally in the afterlife. The removal of Seankhuptah's image and name was carried out in a manner which left obvious damage, with no attempt at repair. This was

⁴⁰¹ Seankhuptah's name (*s^cnh-wi-pt^h* 'Ptah makes me live') provided him with a close association to Ptah during his life.

a clear message to any visitors, that this person was no longer worthy of receiving the benefits of his tomb.

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3: SENENMUT'S TOMB – TT 71 (Figures 44-53)

3.1: Context

Theban Tomb 71 is located on the Sheikh Abd el Qurna hill to the south of Hatshepsut's mortuary temple, in an area open and visible to the public.⁴⁰² This tomb has an inverted-T layout, orientated towards the northwest. The entrance leads to the transverse hall which runs north east to south west. There are six niches on the rear wall of this hall, three on each side of the axis, and eight columns, four on each side of the axis. The axial corridor contains nine rock-cut stelae spread over both walls, which form the focus of this section. The corridor ends in a false door under a stone-lined niche (see Figure 44).

The tomb has a lot of structural damage: the entrance lintel has been lost, and much of the ceiling in the traverse hall has collapsed. The decoration is also in a poor state of preservation. Many walls have lost their surface plaster, and therefore the scenes recorded on them, as the rock was too poor quality to use for this purpose. The survival of the decoration in the transverse hall has been hindered by the collapse of the ceiling; only texts, patterns and a tribute scene survive in the northwest corner where the ceiling is still in place. The patterns consist of Hathor heads lining the tops of the walls, with coloured rectangles, then a line of hieroglyphic text below. The tribute scene originally showed six figures,⁴⁰³ but three have been completely lost. The remaining figures are damaged, but they depict tribute bearers carrying differently shaped vessels.⁴⁰⁴ The rest of the decoration in this hall is too fragmentary to be described comprehensively.

The decoration of the axial corridor survives mainly at the tops of the walls, which are patterned with kheker friezes, coloured rectangles and a line of hieroglyphs. The southern wall of the corridor is dominated by a hieroglyphic list of daily offerings, which are divided into three registers of at least nineteen columns; a large part of the list is damaged. A banquet scene also survives on this wall, although only the upper halves of the banqueters, Senimen (Senenmut's brother) and Seniemyah (Senenmut's mother) survive. The northern wall is more damaged. One scene shows a group of

⁴⁰² The main publication for this tomb is Dorman, 1991: 21-79. Exerts can be found in Dorman, 1988: 84-94, Dorman, 2005: 131-133 and Weigall, 1910: 148-149. Brief mention is given to Senenmut's two tombs in Winlock, 1932: various. Earlier drawings and notes by Davies and Winlock exist, but are too patchy and sporadic for use here.

⁴⁰³ See Davies, 1935: 23-25 and n.31 for discussion on the racial identity of these people.

⁴⁰⁴ Dorman, 1991: pl 8a and 21d.

people dragging shrines, although the details are obscure, and a second scene shows two scribes standing before a larger scaled, seated figure, of which only details of the face (eye, eyebrow and nose) survive. This larger figure appears at the end of the wall, and must logically represent Senenmut himself.

Although descriptions and photographs of most parts of this tomb are easily accessible, only the nine rock-cut stelae have been photographed to a high enough standard to allow visual analysis of the process of *damnatio memoriae* to be carried out. Only these stelae are discussed in this section.⁴⁰⁵

3.1.1: The Rock-Cut Stelae

There are six rock-cut stelae on the southern wall of the axial corridor, and three on the northern wall.⁴⁰⁶ They are at heights ranging from 50cm to 170cm above the floor and are different sizes, from 36cm to 74cm tall, and from 22cm to 44cm wide. All nine stelae have rounded tops, and were carved into the wall at a depth of 8 to 9cm. They all have hieroglyphic inscriptions which were originally painted blue. There is no evidence of any surrounding decoration. The numbering used below follows the order of the stelae from the eastern to the western side of the southern wall (1-6), then from the eastern to the western side of the northern wall (7-9). The erasure of Amun's name is discussed only in relation to the method of removal of Senenmut's name.⁴⁰⁷

3.1.2: Stela 1 (Figure 45)

This stela measures 73cm high by 36cm wide, the hieroglyphs are vertical and read:

imy-r pr n [Imn Sn-n-mwt]

Steward of [Amun, Senenmut].

The outlines of the attacked signs are visible enough to allow the names to be read. They show different methods of attack: Amun's name has been smoothly removed to blend in with the stela surface in a neat and controlled erasure, while Senenmut's name

⁴⁰⁵ For the false door see Dorman, 2005: 132-133, for the niche see Dorman, 1991: 55-59, and for the wall inscriptions see Dorman, 1991: various.

⁴⁰⁶ Dorman, 1991: 51-54 is the most complete publication of these stelae. Exerts can be found in Müller, 1906: pl 3,2, 3,3, 3,5, 3,6 and 4, and Weigall, 1910: 148-149.

⁴⁰⁷ For discussion on the actions of the Atenists see Manuelian, 1999: 285-298. This publication also provides references for further reading on erasures made during the Amarna Period.

has been roughly removed in a harsh erasure, leaving deep chisel marks. The remaining signs have been left untouched.

3.1.3: Stela 2 (Figure 46)

This stela measures 37cm high and 29cm wide. The words are to be read in an unconventional order, starting at the top left corner (*imy-r pr*), then to the bottom right corner (*wr*), the top right corner (*n imn*), and finally the bottom left corner (*Sn-n-mwt*):

imy-r pr wr [n imn Sn-n-mwt]

Great steward [of Amun, Senenmut].

The outlines of the attacked hieroglyphs are still visible. The erasure of Amun's name has been done in a much smoother and cleaner manner than the erasure of Senenmut's name, which has been carried out in a very rough and untidy manner. The hieroglyphs representing Senenmut's titles have been left unharmed.

3.1.4: Stela 3 (Figure 47)

This stela measures 52cm high and 26cm wide. The inscription and erasures are identical to Stela 1:

imy-r pr n [Imn Sn-n-mwt]

Steward of [Amun, Senenmut].

The erasure of Amun's name appears to be rougher, and the erasure of Senenmut's name is smoother, than on the previous two stelae. These differences make the two erasures blend in with each other; they appear to have similar levels of coarseness, rather than the clearly visible differences seen on Stelae 1, 2, 4 and 5. The remaining signs are unharmed.

3.1.5: Stela 4 (Figure 48)

This stela is 71cm high and 43cm wide. The inscription is in two vertical lines:

imy-r šnwtj n [Imn Sn-n-mwt m^c3-ḥrw]

Overseer of the two granaries of [Amun, Senenmut, true of voice],

ir-n R^c-ms ms-n H₃t-nfr

made by Ramose, born to Hatnefer.

The ‘true of voice’ part of the inscription has been partially erased, but some blue paint remains as if their erasure was started in error and abandoned before completion. The erasure of Amun’s name is smoother than the erasure of Senenmut’s name, the latter being made with harsher and deeper chisel strokes. The gaps between the signs have been left untouched, which is especially clear in the space between the *sn* and *mwt* signs where the smooth surface of the stela is visible. Senenmut’s titles and the references to his parents, Ramose and Hatnefer, are unharmed.

3.1.6: Stela 5 (Figure 49)

At 74cm high and 44cm wide, this is the biggest of the nine stelae. The inscription is in two vertical lines:

[*imy-r... n Imn Sn-n-mwt m^cz-hrw*]

[...of Amun, Senenmut, true of voice],

ir-n R^c-ms ms-n H₃t-nfr m^ct-hrw

made by Ramose, born to Hatnefer, true of voice.

Senenmut’s titles have been erased, along with his name. While it is clear that the inscription is *imy-r... n imn*, it is not clear whether the intervening sign is a *pr* to give the title ‘steward’, or a *šnwty* for ‘overseer of the two granaries’. Either suggestion is plausible based on the survival of these titles on the other stelae of this tomb. The erasure of Amun’s name is smoother than the erasure of Senenmut’s name and title, but most of the hieroglyphs are identifiable. The hieroglyphs relating to Senenmut’s parents are unharmed.

3.1.7: Stela 6 (Figure 50)

This stela is 37cm high by 23cm wide, the hieroglyphs read vertically:

imy-r pr [Sn-n-mwt]

Steward, Senenmut.

The erasure of the name is extremely rough, the roughest seen on all nine stelae, and encompasses much of the surrounding surface. Only faint traces of the *sn* and *n* signs survive at the edge of the violent chisel marks, so it is the context alone which identifies the erased word, rather than the surviving visual clues. Senenmut's title has been left unharmed. This is the only stela on the southern wall which does not mention Amun; none of the stelae on the northern wall include Amun's name.

3.1.8: Stela 7 (Figure 51)

At 36cm high and 22cm wide, this stela is the smallest, although it contains a lengthy inscription across two vertical lines:

imy-r pr wr [Sn-n-mwt m^cz]-hrw

Great steward, [Senenmut, true] of voice,

ir-n R^c-ms ms-n H^zt-nfr

made by Ramose, born to Hatnefer.

The erasure of Senenmut's name has been done with deep chisel strokes, however traces of the hieroglyphs are still visible. The *m^cz* sign has also been erased, but as the *hrw* sign has been left untouched, this must have been down to error or overzealous chiselling. The rest of the inscription has been left unharmed.

3.1.9: Stela 8 (Figure 52)

This stela is 67cm high and 42cm wide. Its inscription reads vertically:

imy-r kzi nsw nb [Sn-n-mwt]

Overseer of all the king's works, [Senenmut].

Senenmut's name has been erased with deep chisel strokes, although the individual signs are still visible. The *sn* hieroglyph has been erased separately from the *n* and *mwt*, as the intervening surface of the stela is untouched. The damage encroaches on part of the *nb* sign in Senenmut's title, but this is most probably due to overzealous chiselling as the rest of Senenmut's title is left untouched.

3.1.10: Stela 9 (Figure 53)

This stela is 37cm high and 24 cm wide. The whole vertical inscription has been erased, although parts can be reconstructed:

[*imy-r... Sn-n-mwt*]

[...Senenmut].

As with Stela 5, the title is unclear and could be *imy-r pr* ‘steward’ or *imy-r šnwtj* ‘overseer of the two granaries’. The limited space on this stela eliminates the possibility of *imy-r pr wr* ‘great steward’ as seen on stela 7 or *imy-r kꜣi nsw nb* ‘overseer of all the king’s works’ as seen on stela 8. The erasure is very coarse and encompasses the areas between the signs. This is the only stela of the nine which has had the whole inscription erased, and one of only two in which Senenmut’s title has been completely erased.

3.2: Identity

The name of the tomb owner is known through surviving inscriptions in this tomb, and in some cases the ‘erased’ hieroglyphs which make his name can still be read. Senenmut bore a number of titles on these stelae: steward, steward of Amun, great steward, great steward of Amun, overseer of the two granaries of Amun and overseer of all the king’s works. Most of the titles chosen for the stela associate Senenmut with either the god Amun or the female king Hatshepsut.

The identities of the attackers cannot be known, but the large amount of destruction carried out on these stelae, as well as throughout the rest of the tomb, suggests that they were workmen who were skilled in handling chisels.

3.3: Situation

Whatever wrongdoing Senenmut was guilty of, we have no evidence of it. He was closely associated with Hatshepsut, see the Chicago Field Museum 173800 and Kimbell Art Museum AP 1985.02 in sections 5 and 6 below, and as she was also the subject of this type of attack,⁴⁰⁸ it is plausible this association was his wrongdoing. TT 71 must still have been in a good state of preservation at the time of the attacks to

⁴⁰⁸ The defacement of Hatshepsut’s monuments is a subject which had to be omitted from this study due to time and space restraints.

deem the erasures worthy. Restorations were made to the false door, and are thought to date to the Ramesside Period,⁴⁰⁹ so the tomb was still in a worthy condition at this time. We cannot know for certain when Senenmut was cursed in this manner, but it logically would have been carried out at a time when the tomb was still being visited; *damnatio memoriae* is most effective when it has an audience, as discussed in the summary below.

3.4: Mechanics

The differences in the erasures of the names of Amun and Senenmut show they were done by different people, at different times, and for different reasons. The erasure of Amun's name was carried out in a neat and controlled attack, indicating actions carried out under formal orders. The erasure of Senenmut's name was carried out in a harsh and violent attack, indicating actions influenced by personal motivation. The exception is stela 3, on which both names have been erased in a similar manner. On two occasions (stelae 5 and 9) Senenmut's title was also erased, but it was more commonly left unharmed. In the three cases where Senenmut's parents are named (stelae 4, 5 and 7), they are also left unharmed. The main focus was Senenmut's name, although even here there are discrepancies between the method of erasure, with some stelae showing a rough but shallow erasure (stelae 1-5) and others showing a very deep and harsh erasure (stelae 6-9). These two sets of erasures may reflect the methodology of two different chisellers who were assigned specific stelae to attack. In most cases traces remain of the targeted hieroglyphs; complete erasure was either unnecessary or unachievable due to time constraints.

3.5: Outcome

Senenmut's name is still legible on most of the nine rock-cut stelae of the axial corridor (the exceptions are stelae 6 and 7), so although his name has been physically attacked, his identity has not been completely erased. Senenmut's legacy was degraded; if his name was completely erased then tomb visitors may not have known who had been degraded. The survival of titles on most stelae (not on stelae 5 and 9) show that dissociating Senenmut from honour was the intention; the fact that he had held these titles was in no way hidden. This was a very public method of cursing, emphasised by the fact that TT 71 was not usurped, but rather left in a vandalised state.

⁴⁰⁹ Dorman, 1991: 67.

Usurpation would have erased Senenmut's identity entirely; the aim here was to hinder Senenmut in his afterlife through public degradation, although it cannot be known whether these attacks were carried out during Senenmut's life or after his death.

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4: SENENMUT’S TOMB – TT 353 (Figures 54-57)

4.1: Context

Theban Tomb 353 was discovered in 1927 by H. Winlock, in a quarry north east of Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahri.⁴¹⁰ The tomb has a linear layout consisting of three passages which descend westwards and are interposed with chambers. When discovered, the entrance to the tomb was partially sealed with a wall of mudbricks. At the beginning of the sloping passage, stairs were roughly cut in poor quality rock, descending to a length of 51m. At this point, 23m below ground, the rock changes to hard limestone and the stairs were more finely executed. It is here that the first chamber is located, although it is undecorated and so is of no interest to this study. Beyond this chamber there is a round-topped niche on the southern wall of the corridor, and a round-topped smooth recess on the northern wall. In this recess there is a rock-cut stela measuring 80cm high and 52cm wide which displays an ink sketch of Senenmut’s profile, labelled as ‘steward of Amun, Senenmut’. After 10.2m, the passage ends at chamber A, which was filled with loose stone chips excavated from deeper within the tomb. This chamber measures 3.6m x 3m, and any cracks in the walls were repaired with plaster and smoothed ready for decoration. The chamber’s entrance is on its east wall, there is a false door in the west wall, and the tomb’s passage continues along the south wall. The walls of chamber A are covered with texts and vignettes, and the ceiling has astronomical scenes. This chamber forms the focus of this section. The second passage terminates after 24.8m at chamber B. This rectangular chamber was also filled with loose stone chips, but it was not decorated, or even prepared for decoration, and so is of no interest to this study. The third passage, beginning on the south side of chamber B, slopes 10.4 m and ends at chamber C. In the north east corner of this chamber is a 1.5m deep pit for the sarcophagus. In the north side of the pit there is a 0.9m high niche with a vaulted ceiling, and in the east side of the pit there is a 0.7m high niche with a flat ceiling. Chamber C has a vaulted ceiling and prepared walls, but they are undecorated, and so is superfluous to this study. The passage leading to this chamber was originally filled with stone chips to prevent access (see Figure 54).

⁴¹⁰ The most complete publication for this tomb is Dorman, 1991: 81-159. The original publication is Winlock, 1928: 34-43.

4.1.1: Chamber A

Most of the damage in this chamber is due to salt damage and falling bits of plaster, put on the walls as part of the preparation. The damage is not significant and the majority of the Book of the Dead passages, liturgies and vignettes which make up the decoration still survive in a good state of preservation. The hieroglyphic writing is in columns and divided into sections to separate the different texts, which are laid out symmetrically around the chamber entrance and the false door. The texts on the north wall are to be read in the conventional manner, but those on the south wall are retrograde. The vignette labels always follow the symmetry of the room, and the vignette figures always face the chamber entrance.

The intentional damage is infrequent, but attacks on Senenmut's face,⁴¹¹ hands,⁴¹² elbow⁴¹³ and waistband⁴¹⁴ are evident on the vignettes of the false door and entrance jambs (see Figures 55-57). In most cases the damage is inconsistent and light, so the original details are still visible. The numerous depictions of Senenmut in the vignettes on the south wall have all escaped damage.⁴¹⁵ The faces of Senenmut's parents, Ramose and Hatnefer, have been attacked on the false door, and Ramose's hand was also attacked (see Figure 55).⁴¹⁶

4.2: Identity

The inscriptions of TT 353 are intact, so identification of the targets is easy. Not only has Senenmut's name been left unharmed, but also his titles and his parents' names. Senenmut has been accorded numerous titles including steward of Amun, as seen on the rock-cut stelae of TT 71 above, as well as extra titles such as hereditary noble (*rp*) and governor (*ḥꜣty*).

As with all cases of *damnatio memoriae*, the identity of the attacker is unknown, but the light and sporadic damage suggests someone acting unofficially and without real intent. It has been suggested by Dorman⁴¹⁷ that the attacks were done by disappointed thieves who broke into the tomb to steal valuables. When they found

⁴¹¹ Dorman, 1991: pl 60, 61, 70, 71, 80 and 81.

⁴¹² Dorman, 1991: pl 60 and 61.

⁴¹³ Dorman, 1991: pl 80 and 81.

⁴¹⁴ Dorman, 1991: pl 60 and 61.

⁴¹⁵ Dorman, 1991: pl 66 and 67. Patchy damage can also be seen on Hatshepsut's cartouches on the south side of the east wall (Dorman, 1991: pl 60 and 61), but her name remains untouched on the vignette on the north side of this wall (Dorman, 1991: pl 80 and 81).

⁴¹⁶ Dorman, 1991: pl 70 and 71.

⁴¹⁷ Dorman, 1991: 163.

nothing of interest, they instead scratched at the tomb owner's face in spite. This would also explain why Senenmut's names were not attacked: the thieves were unlikely to have been literate.

4.3: Situation

As this tomb was never completed, it may not have been considered worthy of an official attack, like that taken out on TT 71. The damage to some of Senenmut's images, as well as the images of his parents, is too sporadic to indicate a clear agenda. What is clear is that someone wanted to degrade at least some of the tomb owner's images, even if it was done half-heartedly.

4.4: Mechanics

Where intentional damage has been done to Senenmut's images – on the false door and door jambs – it is usually light enough that the underlying details can still be identified (see Figures 55-57). On the central portion of the false door, where Senenmut sits with his parents,⁴¹⁸ his head and that of his father have been haphazardly attacked, so his father's face is erased but Senenmut's is partially preserved. His mother's face has a few marks, but her features are still visible. On the southern door jamb,⁴¹⁹ Senenmut's face, hands and to some extent his waistband are damaged; his facial features can still be made out. On the northern door jamb,⁴²⁰ Senenmut's face and one elbow have been damaged, but again the features can still be seen.

Senenmut's name was not intentionally damaged anywhere in TT 353: numerous examples of his name survive in highly visible locations but none were harmed. No other names or words have been consistently targeted. The main focus of attack in this chamber was Senenmut's image, although his parents have also suffered.

4.5: Outcome

TT 353 was originally sealed with a mudbrick wall at the entrance, and stone chips in the passage before chamber C; this was a private tomb not open to members of the public. This was an unfinished tomb, with excavated stone chips left in the upper chambers prior to a removal which never happened. This tomb was abandoned, which explains why the level of attack seen in Senenmut's TT 71 is not seen here. Where

⁴¹⁸ Dorman, 1991: pl 83a.

⁴¹⁹ Dorman, 1991: pl 60 and 61.

⁴²⁰ Dorman, 1991: pl 80, 81 and 82b.

intentional damage occurs in TT 353, it is sporadic and careless; this is the opposite of the focussed and consistent damage seen in TT 71. This tomb was not subjected to an official attack as there would have been no visitors to view the vignettes or read the inscriptions. This was not a curse to be viewed by the public, unlike the other cases of *damnatio memoriae* in this chapter. This was an act of cursing to spite the tomb owner in his afterlife, probably motivated by personal rather than official reasons.

4.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Dorman, P. F. (1991), *The Tombs of Senenmut: the Architecture and Decoration of Tombs 71 and 353*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 81-159.

See also:

Dorman, P. F. (1988), *The Monuments of Senenmut: Problems in Historical Methodology*, London: Kegan Paul International, 80-84.

Winlock, H. E. (1928), 'The Egyptian Expedition 1925-1927: the Museum's Excavations at Thebes', *BMMA* 23, 34-43.

5: CHICAGO FIELD MUSEUM 173800 (Figures 58 and 59)

5.1: Context

This Eighteenth Dynasty statue is made of black granite and stands at 52.5cm high, 14cm wide, and 26.5cm deep (due to its base).⁴²¹ It was bought in Luxor and is assumed to have belonged originally to Karnak Temple due to the references to Amun in the inscription: Senenmut is described as a ‘steward of Amun’, ‘overseer of the two granaries of Amun’ and ‘master of the servants of Amun’, and there is an offering formula for Amun. The statue shows Senenmut standing with his left foot forward, but leaning back against an obelisk. He is wearing a shoulder length wig and an ankle length tunic which also covers his whole arms. He holds a child in his arms, who is identified in the inscription as the God’s Wife Neferure. She sits facing left (as viewed by an observer) and has a side lock of youth on the right side of her head. She has a uraeus on her forehead, and holds a sekhem sceptre⁴²² in her left hand. Her right arm is bent backwards so her right hand can rest on Senenmut’s shoulder in a semi-embrace.

The engraved hieroglyphs are lightly coloured, so they are highly visible against the dark stone. The majority of the text is written on the length of Senenmut’s tunic in six horizontal lines. The first line explains the context of the statue, that it was given as a favour (*ḥswt*)⁴²³ to Senenmut by the king.⁴²⁴ The second and third lines are an offering formula to Amun by the king on behalf of Senenmut. The fourth, fifth and sixth lines contain Senenmut’s speech, stating his titles, epithets and the tasks he achieved for the king; Senenmut helped the king with her ‘miracles’ (*bi3yt*)⁴²⁵ and took care (*mḥ*)⁴²⁶ of her daughter Neferure. There are three lines of text on the statue base to the left of Senenmut’s feet; one short vertical line (line 7) and two horizontal lines (lines 8 and 9) which state Senenmut’s name and titles. There is one long line (line 10)

⁴²¹ This statue is published with a translation in Allen, 1927: 49-55. There are references in Aldred, 1951: 51-52, pl 33, Wilson, 1951: fig. 19a, Capel and Markoe, 1996: 109-111, Bothmer, 2004: 221-223, figs. 14.12-14. A partial translation with description can also be found in Roehrig, 2005: 115-116.

⁴²² Gardiner’s S42 sign (Gardiner, 1957: 509).

⁴²³ *Wb* III 157.4.

⁴²⁴ Allen, 1927: 50 n.4 states that ‘the king’ refers to Hatshepsut, as seen on the similar statue Cairo 579, although the king is always referred to as ‘he’.

⁴²⁵ *Wb* I 440.4.

⁴²⁶ *Wb* II 119.3.

of vertical text on the back of the obelisk which describes the power Senenmut holds by associating him with the Nile (*ḥꜥpy*),⁴²⁷ inundations (*bꜥḥ*)⁴²⁸ and floods (*zgb*).⁴²⁹

(1) *dīw m ḥswt nt ḥr nsw*

Given as a favour of the king

<n> *rpꜥ ḥꜣty-ꜥ imy-r pr n 'Imn [Snn-mwt]*

<to> the prince, governor, steward of Amun, [Senenmut].

(2) *ḥtp di nsw 'Imn nb nsw tꜣwy*

An offering which the king gives (to) Amun, lord of the thrones of the two lands,

dī=f prrt nbt ḥr wdḥw=f m ḥrt-hrw nt hrw nb

so he can give all that is issued from his offering table in the course of every day

(3) *n kꜣ n rpꜥ <i>r<y> kꜣr⁴³⁰ n Gb*

for the spirit of the prince, keeper of the shrine of Geb,

mḥ-īb ꜥꜣ n nb tꜣwy ḥsy n nꜥr nfr

great confidant of the lord of the two lands, favoured of the Perfect God,

imy-r šnwty n 'Imn [Sn-]n[-mwt]

overseer of the two granaries of Amun, [Sen]en[mut].

(4) *ḏd=f ink sꜥḥ mr nb=f*

He says: “I am a dignitary, who loved his lord,

ꜥḳ ḥr biꜣyt nt⁴³¹ nbt tꜣwy

who carried out the miracles of the mistress of the two lands

⁴²⁷ *Wb* III 42.9.

⁴²⁸ *Wb* I 448.1.

⁴²⁹ *Wb* I 22.11.

⁴³⁰ Following the translation in Allen, 1927: 54 as the hieroglyph here closely resembles Gardiner’s O18 shrine sign (Gardiner, 1957: 494).

⁴³¹ Gardiner N17 replaces N35 here (Gardiner, 1957: 487 and 490 respectively).

s^c3.n=f w <i> hnt t3wy

after he glorified me among the two lands,

di.n=f w <i> (5) r r-hry n pr=f

after he appointed me as master of his house

wq^c-rwt m t3 mi-kd=f

and judge over the whole land

n-^c3t-n⁴³² mnḥ ḥr ib=f

because it was pleasing to his heart.

iw <=i> mḥ n nsw s3t (6) smswt

<I> took care of the king's eldest daughter

ntr ḥmt Nfrw-r^c ḥḥ.ti

the god's wife Neferure, alive.

rdi.n.tw <=i> n-s⁴³³ r it nḥrt

<I> was given to her as the goddess' father

n-^c3t-n 3ḥ <=i> n⁴³⁴ nsw

because <I> was beneficial to the king".

(7) sd3w-bity [Sn-n-mwt] m3^c-ḥrw

The seal-bearer of the king, [Senenmut], true of voice.

(8) rp^c <i> r <y> k3r n Gb ḥry mrw (9) n Imn [Sn-n-mwt] šps m^c3-ḥrw

The prince, keeper of the shrine of Geb, master of the servants of Amun,
[Senenmut], noble, true of voice.

⁴³² As previous note.

⁴³³ As previous note.

⁴³⁴ As previous note.

(10) *imy-r pr Sn[-n-mwt] pw pr m 3gb*

It is the steward Sen[enmut] who went forth from the flood,

rdiy n=f⁴³⁵ bch⁴³⁶

abundance was given to him,

shmf im=f m Hpy

he controls it as the Nile.⁴³⁷

5.2: Identity

On this statue, Senenmut is entitled prince, governor, steward of Amun, keeper of the shrine of Geb, overseer of the two granaries of Amun, seal-bearer of the king and master of the servants of Amun. Senenmut held several hierarchical positions which associated him with deities and the king. The epithets given to him are ‘great confidant of the lord of the two lands’ and ‘favoured of the Perfect God’, which also emphasise his divine and royal relationships.

In his speech, Senenmut describes himself as a dignitary, one who loved his lord, glorified, master of his (the king’s) house, judge over the whole land, goddess’ father, and beneficial to the king. Senenmut also describes two roles he performed, carrying out the miracles of the king, and taking care of Neferure. His descriptions highlight the closeness between Senenmut and the king.

The lines of inscription on the base are the only ones which refer to Senenmut as true of voice, so these lines were written after his death. The short vertical line includes the only reference, on this statue, to Senenmut as a seal-bearer of the king. These lines appear to have been written later than the others, as an addition after his death, with the inclusion of a position gained after the original inscription. The statue was in use throughout Senenmut’s life as well as after his death.

As with all cases of this type of curse, the identity of the attacker is not known. The relatively small size of the statue, compared to a tomb for example, suggests that the attack could reasonably have been carried out by one man, with little skill in

⁴³⁵ As previous note.

⁴³⁶ Also a verb meaning ‘flood’ or ‘inundate’, perhaps wordplay on the preceding *3gb* ‘flood’ (Faulkner, 1962: 81).

⁴³⁷ These lines of text are not unique to this statue, see Allen, 1927: 55.

chiselling. Further details about the attacker can be logically assumed, as discussed below.

5.3: Situation

Senenmut's name has been attacked each time it occurred on this statue, but his titles and epithets have been left untouched. All names and references to other people were left intact: Amun, Geb, the king, the mistress of the two lands and Neferure are all mentioned in the inscriptions but have not been attacked. The two figures of the statue are also unharmed: Senenmut and Neferure have not suffered any intentional damage. This was a focussed attack on the inscriptions only, in particular the statue owner's name. This suggests that specific orders were being followed, rather than this being a personal backlash.

5.4: Mechanics

Senenmut's name originally occurred five times on this statue, however it has been attacked in each case. In two instances (lines 1 and 8) all three hieroglyphs which make up the name, Gardiner's T22, N35 and G14,⁴³⁸ have been chiselled out. In line three, the *n* (N35) sign is still visible beyond the upper edge of the damage, and in the tenth line the *sn* sign (T22) is only partially erased. In line 7, each of the three signs are distinguishable; the *sn* sign is on the edge of the damage, the *n* is only half erased, and the feet and tail of the *mwt* (G14) sign are faintly visible.

The small size of this object means the attacks were most likely carried out by one person. Each erasure has been done to leave a relatively smooth, circular patch of lighter coloured stone where the name once was. The name was targeted as a whole; the individual signs which comprise 'Senenmut' were not attacked separately, indicating that the chiseller had some level of literacy. The varying degrees of erasure, from complete to partial, also suggest that one person was responsible; as he progressed, he became less thorough in his task.

5.5: Outcome

Senenmut's name was removed, but his titles remained, so he was being dissociated from the honour which these titles held. His titles emphasised the favour he received from the king, and the privileged position he held relating to Neferure,

⁴³⁸ Gardiner, 1957: 514, 490 and 469 respectively.

Amun and Geb; Senenmut was therefore no longer worthy of this close association with royalty and deities.⁴³⁹ The removal of the name erased the identity, leaving a statue portraying an honoured but unknown individual entrusted with the care of the royal daughter, and other important tasks. Neferure was still worthy of being cared for by an important individual, but Senenmut was not worthy of this position of importance. This is also reflected in the decision to preserve Senenmut's figure; by not attacking the physical features of the statue, Neferure was still being carried by an honoured man. Erasing only Senenmut's name preserved Neferure's honour while dissociating Senenmut from his honour.

5.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Dorman, P. F. (1988), *The Monuments of Senenmut: Problems in Historical Methodology*, London: Kegan Paul International, 123-124, 150, 193.

See also:

Aldred, C. (1951), *New Kingdom Art in Ancient Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty 1590 to 1315 B.C.*, London: Alec Tiranti Ltd, 51-52, pl 33.

Allen, T. G. (1927), 'A Unique Statue of Senmut', *AJSL* 44, 49-55.

Bothmer, B. V. (2004), *Egyptian Art: Selected Writings of Bernard V. Bothmer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 221-223, fig. 14.12-14.14.

Capel, A. K. and Markoe, G. (1996), *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt*, New York: Hudson Hills Press, 109-111.

Roehrig, C. H. (2005), *Hatshepsut: from Queen to Pharaoh*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 115-116.

Wilson, J. A. (1951), *The Burden of Egypt: an Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, fig. 19a.

⁴³⁹ Allen, 1927: 53 suggests that Senenmut was attacked because of his association with the dishonoured king (Hatshepsut). If this was true, however, the references made within the inscription to the king, and perhaps also her daughter, would also have been erased. The removal of the name instead protected the royal identity by disassociation.

6: KIMBELL ART MUSEUM AP 1985.02 (Figure 60)

6.1: Context

This Eighteenth Dynasty piece is made of greywacke or schist, and stands 41.6cm tall, 15.2cm wide and 30.4cm deep (when viewed face on). It is thought to originate from Armant, near Thebes, due to this area being mentioned three times in the inscription. The statue shows the owner, Senenmut, kneeling on the plinth, with his back against an obelisk and his hands placed on either side of a large coiled cobra before him. The cobra, or uraeus, wears the horned sundisk headdress and is supported on the plinth by a pair of raised *k3* arms.⁴⁴⁰ Although the cobra is Renenutet (determined by the inscription), the combination of the *k3* arms and the *r* headdress suggests the cobra reads *m3t*, giving Hatshepsut's name: Maatkare. The statue's inscription starts on the back of the obelisk (lines 1-3), goes around the sides of the plinth (lines 4-7), across the top of the plinth (line 8), and then down the right and left sides of the obelisk (lines 9 and 10 respectively). The inscription tells us that the statue is an offering to the goddess Renenutet by Senenmut, who in turn is acting on behalf of Hatshepsut. Senenmut's name has been erased wherever it occurred.

(1) *imy-r pr wr [n 'Im]n [Sn-n-mwt]*

The great steward [of Amun, Senenmut]

[rmi=f Rnn]⁴⁴¹wtt hntt 'Iwni

[he carries Renen]utet, foremost of Armant,

(2) *di=f h^cw=s wt_s=f nfrw=s*

he causes her appearance and he displays her beauty

hr-tp ^cnh wd3 snb nsw-bity M3t-k3-r^c

on behalf of the l.p.h. of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Maatkare.

(3) *htp di Rnnwtt špst nt 'Iwni*

An offering which Renenutet, the august one of Armant, gives,

⁴⁴⁰ Gardiner's D28 sign (Gardiner, 1957: 453).

⁴⁴¹ Accidental damage.

dī-s ḥtpt-s imyt šmꜥwt

she gives her offerings which are in Upper Egypt

(4) *dfꜣw imy Mḥw*

and the provisions which are in Lower Egypt

(5) *n imy-r šnwt n Ḳmn [Sn-n-mwt]*

to the overseer of the two granaries of Amun, [Senenmut].

*dī-s prrt nbt ḥr wdḥt n smr wꜥty*⁴⁴²

May she grant all that comes forth upon the altar to the sole companion,

(6) *mḥ ib n nsw m st nbt [Sn-n-mwt]*

the intimate of the king in every place, [Senenmut].

(7) *dī-s ʒḥ m pt wsr m tꜣ*

May she grant akh status in heaven and power on earth

n ḥry sštꜣ n imyt wrt [Sn-n-mwt]

for the keeper of secrets of the west side, [Senenmut],

(8) *imy-r kꜣt nbt nt Ḳmn [Sn-n-mwt] mꜣꜥ-ḥrw*

the overseer of all the work of Amun, [Senenmut], true of voice,

(9) *imy-r kꜣwt n [Ḳmn] m Dsr Dsrw [Sn-n-mwt] mꜣꜥ-ḥrw*

the overseer of the works of [Amun] in Deir el-Bahri Temple, [Senenmut], true of voice,

(10) *sdꜣw-bity imy-r ḥmw-ntr n Mntw m Ḳwni [Sn-n-mwt] mꜣꜥ-ḥrw*

seal-bearer of the king, overseer of the priests of Montu in Armant, [Senenmut], true of voice.

⁴⁴² The *s* hieroglyph appears before the *n*.

6.2: Identity

On this statue, Senenmut is referred to by numerous titles and epithets: great steward [of Amun], overseer of the two granaries of Amun, the intimate of the king in every place, keeper of secrets of the west side, overseer of all the works of Amun, overseer of the works of [Amun] in Deir el-Bahri Temple, seal bearer of the king and overseer of the priests of Montu in Armant. This extensive list emphasises Senenmut's importance and trustworthiness, and associates him with both the pharaoh and deities. In the last three lines, inscribed on the top of the plinth and down the sides of the obelisk, Senenmut's name is followed by 'true of voice', indicating that he was now deceased. These three lines, numbers 8-10, were written at a later time than the preceding lines, at some point after Senenmut's death.

The identity of the person who erased Senenmut's name is not known, but an erasure on this relatively small scale could have easily been performed by one person with little skill in chiselling. More details about the attacker can be gleaned from the manner and method of the attack, see below.

6.3: Situation

Senenmut's name was the main focus of attack on this statue, being erased in all seven (definite) occurrences in lines 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Other intentional damage is seen in two places: in line 1 on the back of the obelisk, and in line 9 on the right side of the obelisk;⁴⁴³ both attacks were aimed at Amun's name. This persecution of Amun was half-hearted however, as his name survives untouched in line 5 on the side on the plinth and in line 8 on the top of the plinth. The erasure of Amun's name in two places has encroached on two of Senenmut's titles: great steward [of Amun] and overseer of the works of [Amun] in Deir el-Bahri Temple; however no other titles or epithets of Senenmut have been targeted. A chunk of stone is missing from the back of the obelisk on the left side (when viewing the piece face on) which has erased part of the text. The right horn of Renenutet's headdress has also been broken off. These two instances are not in keeping with the other examples of damage, and neither successfully erases a name or other important feature; these were done accidentally. The figures of Senenmut and Renenutet were not intentionally attacked.

⁴⁴³ Although it is not an academic website, I have found that the clearest and most accessible photo of the statue's right side is on the Wikimedia Commons website:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egypt_Senenmut_2_Kimbell.jpg

Inclusion of this website is necessary to enable discussion of the whole statue.

The damage to this statue was done by two different people, most likely at two different times. The attack on Senenmut's name was methodical and thorough, but the attack on Amun's name seems sporadic and half-hearted. Whatever the circumstances were regarding the erasure of Amun's name, the erasure of Senenmut's name was focussed and probably the result of specific instructions; this was not a personally motivated attack.

6.4: Mechanics

The erasure of Senenmut's name has been carried out so successfully that reconstruction is only possible due to the rest of the inscription; the set of titles and epithets, and the link to Hatshepsut, all correlate to other statues and monuments of Senenmut's. The name has been attacked as a whole, rather than attacks being made on the individual hieroglyphs, suggesting a level of literacy in the attacker. The erasures targeting Senenmut were all done smoothly and cleanly, indicating one attacker who was skilled in chiselling. There are erased areas in front of Senenmut's feet on both sides of the statue; the fact that no evidence remains of what was originally written here suggests it was Senenmut's name in both cases.

Amun's name has been attacked twice, once each in lines 1 and 9, but these erasures are partial and lack the depth necessary to erase the hieroglyphs completely. Although the name appears to have been targeted as a whole, rather than singling out the individual signs, the attack on the back of the obelisk was aimed at the wrong set of signs: the *n* of the preceding preposition 'of' was targeted instead of the *n* in 'Amun', see line 1. This error suggests a low level of literacy in the attacker; the chiseller could not read the inscription. Amun's name remains untouched in two places, one each in lines 5 and 8; this was an unfocussed and careless attack. The differences between the methods of erasure of Senenmut's and Amun's name strongly suggest that two different people were responsible for the attacks, which were most likely carried out at different times.

6.5: Outcome

As with the Chicago Field Museum 173800 statue (section 5), the erasures here did not completely erase Senenmut's existence. The survival of Senenmut's titles, epithets and figure show that the intention here was to dissociate the target from the honours bestowed on him. The result is that the statue still honours Renenutet and Hatshepsut on behalf of an important and trustworthy individual, but this individual is

no longer identified as Senenmut. Erasure of the name was enough to degrade the target, but ensured that the honour of Renenutet and Hatshepsut were protected.

6.6: Bibliography

Main publication:

Dorman, P. F. (1988), *The Monuments of Senenmut: Problems in Historical Methodology*, London: Kegan Paul International, 127-128, 150-151, 193, 221, pl 21.

See also:

Bothmer, B. V. (2004), *Egyptian Art: Selected Writings of Bernard V. Bothmer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 218-219, figures 14.2-14.5.

Roehrig, C. H. (2005), *Hatshepsut: from Queen to Pharaoh*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 129-130, 301.

7: SUMMARY

Damnatio memoriae was a method of cursing which targeted an individual via the vandalising of their monument. In the examples studied in this chapter, tombs and statues provided the focus for the attacks. On these monuments, the name and/or the image of the target was attacked, but the integrity of the piece was left intact. *Damnatio memoriae* did not always seek to destroy a monument,⁴⁴⁴ only to prevent it from fully functioning. The requirements for the process of *damnatio memoriae* were access to a monument and adequate tools to inflict damage; this method of cursing was not an option for everyone. For those who met the requirements, the level of skill needed to curse someone successfully depended on two things: the monument and the element targeted. Attacking a tomb would mean more chiselling than attacking a statue, and may have required a team of people, or those with more skill. Inscriptions written high up on a tomb wall would also require some form of scaffolding or ramp to gain access them. An attack on the target's name would be quicker than an attack on the whole image, but literacy skills would be necessary to enable the attacker to locate the name each time it occurred. An attack on the target's image would be more time-consuming, unless only specific features such as the eyes were targeted, and no literacy skills would have been required.

Damnatio memoriae was a self-sufficient form of cursing; it did not require the creation of a medium or representation, a specialist with esoteric knowledge, or divine intervention. Beyond the need for basic skill with a chisel or other tool, *damnatio memoriae* was a simple process. This simplicity stems from the destructive nature of the practice – there was no creative procedure, it used resources already available, i.e. monuments. This method targeted specific individuals; groups of people, for example Nubians, could not be targeted unless they were also depicted. There was no ritual to connect the representation (name or image) to the target as they were already associated – the monument owner had made them specifically to represent himself. *Damnatio memoriae* focussed on the reversal of this association, breaking the link between the target and their representation. This method of cursing could be performed on a distant or deceased target; it was only the monument which needed to be accessible.

⁴⁴⁴ If some cases of *damnatio memoriae* did seek to destroy a monument, the process would leave no surviving evidence to be studied.

As a form of cursing, *damnatio memoriae* centred on the vandalising of a monument which the owner had created to establish and uphold their reputation for eternity. By harming the monument, the owner's wishes were being denied.⁴⁴⁵ *Damnatio memoriae* not only dissociated the monument from the monument owner, but degraded the owner by destroying the features created to honour him. This was intended to be a permanent method of cursing,⁴⁴⁶ one which would have been visible to large parts of the public, in particular tomb visitors and temple worshippers, depending on the monument's original purpose. The focus of *damnatio memoriae* on elimination means that the specific reasons for its use can only be surmised based on the context. The only evidence provided by the process itself is the manner in which the erasures occurred: rough and deep erasures suggest a hasty backlash motivated by personal reasons, while smooth and clean erasures suggest a professional and impersonal motivation. However, the person carrying out the chiselling may have been acting on the orders of a superior, in which case the manner would appear professional but the underlying reason was personal. Whatever the motivation, the aim was either to degrade the target publicly, or to prevent them from being remembered, as referred to in numerous monument curses studied here⁴⁴⁷ and in the Coptos Decree of the Min Temple:

tm sh3 rn=f m r-pr pn

His name is not remembered in this temple.⁴⁴⁸

The study of two tombs – TT 71 and TT 353⁴⁴⁹ – and two statues – Chicago Field Museum 173800 and Kimbell Art Museum 1985.02⁴⁵⁰ – belonging to one person, Senenmut, allows comparisons to be made concerning the methodology of cursing in each case. Although the statues honoured different deities, Amun and

⁴⁴⁵ The theme of 'debaptism' is discussed in Posener, 1946: 51-56.

⁴⁴⁶ Restorations could be made at a later date: during the Ramesside Period, both Senenmut's and Amun's names were restored on the false door in Senenmut's TT 71 (Dorman, 1991: 67).

⁴⁴⁷ **A25, A28, B02, B07, C05, C06, C10 and C11.**

⁴⁴⁸ Own translation from Sethe, 1959: 98.13-98.14. This sentence appears to be an example of an emphatic sentence using a relative form, here in negated form (Junge, 2001: 379-380), in which case more literal translations would be 'It is in this temple that his name is not remembered' or 'His name is not remembered in this temple'.

⁴⁴⁹ Sections 3 and 4 respectively.

⁴⁵⁰ Sections 5 and 6 respectively. These statues were selected based only on their differences in appearance and apparent function.

Reenenutet respectively, they were both treated in the same manner: both were subjected to focussed attacks on the names within the inscriptions only. The tombs had contrasting functions; TT 71 was a place for the public to honour Senenmut, while TT 353 was sealed off and private. This difference shows itself in the types of attack which each tomb suffered: TT 71 was subjected to focussed attacks on the names in the inscriptions, but TT 353 was subjected to careless attacks on the images. When Senenmut's monuments were visible to the public, he was repeatedly presented as degraded and unworthy through the dissociation of his identity with his honours. This suggests that one person was ultimately responsible for these cases of *damnatio memoriae*, although stonemasons or other skilled individuals were probably ordered to carry out the attacks. When a monument of Senenmut's was not visible to the public, it was not deemed worthy of attack, but instead suffered half-hearted vandalism at a later date. The theme of dissociation discussed here is in contrast to the examples of *damnatio memoriae* in Neferseshemre's and Seankhuiptah's tombs,⁴⁵¹ where whole images of the target, as well as the name, were completely erased. The intention in these cases was not dissociation, but complete elimination.

⁴⁵¹ Sections 1 and 2 respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE – CORPSE MUTILATION AND RESERVE HEADS

1: CORPSE MUTILATION

Corpse mutilation is the practice of damaging or rearranging parts of dead bodies, usually while they are in the grave, compromising the integrity of the body. This practice may have been performed for religious reasons, and may not have been a form of cursing, however the study of this subject in relation to cursing methods such as execration figures and *damnatio memoriae* provides an interesting comparison. This is the only (possible) method of cursing in this study which appears to act directly on the target, as all other methods use a representation or medium. This perhaps suggests that the real focus was actually the target's spirit or akh, and the corpse was used as the representation.

1.1: Gerzeh Excavation

A number of excavations in Egypt have uncovered evidence of corpse mutilation. One of the earliest in-depth accounts is that of Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay,⁴⁵² in which two hundred and eighty eight pre-dynastic graves in Gerzeh are recorded. Of these, twelve graves contained bodies showing various signs of mutilation. A selection of undisturbed⁴⁵³ burials is mentioned here to highlight the main points of discussion.

An example of mutilation to the head and neck is grave no. 67, in which the head has been severed and rotated to stand on its base; a position too extreme to be explained by natural causes. The discovery of a gold necklace, still in position around the neck, highlights that this damage was not due to rough handling by a thief. The only intention here was mutilation of the corpse by the detachment of the head from the body, not the removal of valuable objects; whoever did this may have had a direct link to the deceased. The body in grave no. 200 is missing the upper six vertebrae, and the skull was wedged against pots, with a mat between them. This mat also passed

⁴⁵² In particular Chapters IV and V by Wainwright: Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912: 8-11 and Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912: 11-15 respectively.

⁴⁵³ Apparently these particular graves were not plundered in ancient times or restored in more modern times due to the fragility of the bones. The relocation of bones due to decay has also been dismissed due to the condense, packed nature of the surrounding sand; there would have been no room for the bones to move naturally (Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912: 8).

underneath the pots, so it is unfeasible that plunderers could have disturbed the head without also disturbing the pots. As the pottery appears to be undisturbed,⁴⁵⁴ this suggests the mutilation was carried out at the time of burial. Mutilation was the sole purpose here, carried out by those at the graveside during burial. Grave no. 251 contains a decapitated body, which is also missing the right leg. This grave is of interest due to its small size (38 inches); it was never intended to hold a complete corpse. This body was buried without the head, clearly showing that, in this case at least, the mutilation was carried out before or during burial, not at a later date.

Hands were targeted in graves no. 187 and 284. In these graves, hand bones were discovered out of place, alongside the forearm, indicating trauma to the hand. In both cases the rest of the hands were missing. It cannot be known when this trauma happened, but it is suggestive of an intention to remove and therefore disable the hands of the deceased.⁴⁵⁵

The body in grave no. 138 shows interference to the pelvis, legs and feet. Of the pelvis, the sacrum bone is missing, and only two pieces of the iliac bones remain. The left femur replaces the left iliac bone, while the right femur was located on the bones of the feet, of which few remained. While the majority of the bones are still present, they are in the wrong place, and have moved in a manner beyond that caused by natural decay. The intended result is the complete disarray of the lower half of the body. Grave no. 280 contains a body with a missing left iliac bone, despite the undisturbed⁴⁵⁶ body lying on its left side. The lower ends of the tibiae bones are broken, and most of the feet are missing. The trauma here is clearly focussed on the legs and feet, and appears to have been carried out either before burial or before the final positioning of the body.

Grave no. 142 was discovered underneath a two inch man-made layer of unbroken mud. The body here was missing most of its feet. This is unlikely to have been done by thieves, who would not have covered the grave with the mud layer, but by someone who still wanted to protect the body, despite the mutilations. Again, this

⁴⁵⁴ Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912: 9.

⁴⁵⁵ The removal of hands as trophies for the purpose of gaining a reward in a Hyksos palace in Tell el-Daba is discussed in Bietak, 2012: 32-33. Removing the right hand also deprives the person of power and supports the pictorial evidence seen in numerous temple scenes of the pharaoh smiting his enemies in battle.

⁴⁵⁶ Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912: 9.

suggests someone who was close to the deceased person in life. In grave no. 137 the feet are entirely missing.

The damage on the bodies in the Gerzeh cemetery focuses on the head, hands, legs and feet. In several cases, these parts of the body have been preserved in the grave, but moved from their natural position. Here, it was not the complete destruction of the body which was intended, but the disabling of it. Where body parts appear to have been removed, for example the hands and feet, this would have the same effect (disability) but more severe consequences for the deceased as the body is no longer complete. Decapitation and mutilation could be punishments for both the living and the dead,⁴⁵⁷ but it would clearly be a major hindrance to the deceased who required a preserved body for a successful afterlife. In contrast, the preservation of the deceased's grave goods indicates that a successful afterlife was still wished for the deceased.

1.2: Hierakonpolis Excavation

This excavation has been chosen for discussion here as it provides detailed evidence, and further theories, of a particular type of mutilation seen at the Gerzeh excavation. Carried out by Dougherty and Friedman, their account starts by referring to theories for corpse mutilation in previous publications,⁴⁵⁸ before describing their own work carried out on four hundred and fifty three burials in cemetery HK43 at Hierakonpolis. The bodies of interest here number fifteen, from fourteen graves, plus six cases of damaged vertebrae found in a highly disturbed part of the cemetery, making twenty one in total.⁴⁵⁹ Each affected body shows damage to the skull and/or vertebrae, to varying extents.

This cemetery has graves holding more than one body. Grave no. 147 suffered 'skeletal displacement'⁴⁶⁰ but contains an elderly couple, each with over fifteen cuts on the upper vertebrae. While their torsos appear to be in the original positions, their heads are separated from the necks.⁴⁶¹ Undisturbed⁴⁶² grave no. 123 contains two young adult males buried together, but only one occupant has been mutilated, with

⁴⁵⁷ Eyre, 2002: 94-97, Ritner, 1993: 168-171 and Willems, 1990: 33-43.

⁴⁵⁸ Headhunting (Trigger, 1983: 31), cannibalism (Murray, 1956: 92) and human sacrifice (Dougherty and Friedman, 2008: 313, Hoffman, 1979: 116, Midant-Reynes, 2000: 227-228, Wilkinson, 1999: 229-231 and Yoyotte, 1980-81: 31-102). Cannibalism is stated to have occurred 'in order to secure the transmission of the qualities of the dead to his descendants' (Petrie and Quibell, 1896: 32-33).

⁴⁵⁹ Only a selection will be used here to provide the necessary points for discussion.

⁴⁶⁰ Dougherty and Friedman, 2008: 313.

⁴⁶¹ This couple is discussed in Maish and Friedman, 1999: 6-7, who also refer to mutilation as being a method of ridding the body of evil, discussed below.

⁴⁶² Dougherty and Friedman, 2008: 316-318.

cuts to the vertebrae and hyoid bone. Mutilation was not carried out on every corpse buried, even in double burials. This was not a necessary part of the burial ritual, but something to be performed in certain circumstances on particular corpses.

The skull found in grave no. 350 had roughly sixty cut marks, as well as finer marks thought to have been caused by a scraping action.⁴⁶³ In fact, the vast majority of the mutilated bodies have numerous cut marks, indicating repeated action with a lighter weapon rather than a single blow with a heavy weapon. These marks appear more frequently on the front of the skull and on the left side, suggesting a right handed person would perform this task with the body facing him. Whether this is evidence of scalping or not is unclear.⁴⁶⁴

While only about 5% of the excavated bodies were mutilated, they were still treated with the particular customs seen in the unaffected bodies: the body was always positioned lying on its left side facing west, with the head to the south, and hands near the face. The body was placed in a round pit, sometimes containing a shroud or mat. The mutilated bodies were shown the same respect and care as the unharmed ones. Many of the affected graves are undisturbed, so either their loved ones were involved, whether directly (performing the mutilation themselves) or indirectly (allowing someone else to perform the mutilation), or it was carried out prior to the positioning and burial of the body. The mutilated burials are to be found scattered throughout the cemetery; there is no pattern to their placement and they were not segregated from the unaffected burials. These are not considered to be human sacrifices.⁴⁶⁵ These people were ordinary members of society who were buried using the standard practices of the time, but who were also mutilated in a very specific manner.

1.3: Theories

Wainwright⁴⁶⁶ suggests that the removal of the head and the rearranging of the bones relates to passages in the Pyramid Texts which deal with the resurrection of the king. Pyr. 13 states 'I give you your head, I fasten your bones'.⁴⁶⁷ The idea here is that the head, flesh and bones are removed, then given back to the deceased, who then

⁴⁶³ Maish, 2003: 26.

⁴⁶⁴ Scalping is discussed in Dougherty, 2004: 11-12 and Dougherty and Friedman, 2008: 326-328.

⁴⁶⁵ There is nothing of sacred significance nearby (elite cemetery HK6 is more than two kilometres away) according to Dougherty and Friedman, 2008: 329.

⁴⁶⁶ Petrie, Wainwright and Mackay, 1912: 13.

⁴⁶⁷ The same theme is found in Pyr. 254, 355, 364, 367, 447, 450 and 603, as well as CT 106, 390, 532, 769 and 850, and BoD 43.

owns them. It is only through the disassembling of the body that the evil within it can be destroyed. Once rebuilt, the body is complete and the deceased is able to enjoy a successful afterlife. Wainwright states that this idea is also seen in the later Opening of the Mouth ceremony, in which the head is presented, the bones are put in order, and the eyes are restored to allow the deceased to live again. Wainwright links corpse mutilation to the Osirian myth, with the body being chopped up and then reunited in order that he will live for eternity.

Dougherty and Friedman⁴⁶⁸ disagree with the theory of decapitation and bone arranging being for the benefit of the deceased. They draw attention to Pyr. 535, which relates how Horus punished the followers of Seth through decapitation, dismemberment and disembowelment.⁴⁶⁹ Instead of allowing the deceased to lead a successful afterlife, corpse mutilation was a punishment to be meted on those who were evil or had done wrong.

1.4: Corpse Mutilation as a Form of Cursing

Damage to the corpse was something which the ancient Egyptians feared, and it was condemned in religious literature. BoD 89 protected the corpse from destruction, CT 861 restored the deceased's eyes, CT 910 protected the knees, and CT 454 and 691 prevent decapitation. CT 691 acted against those 'who take away hearts, who snatch [hearts]';⁴⁷⁰ perhaps this act was also performed during corpse mutilation. There can be no archaeological evidence to support this idea, but literary evidence survives.⁴⁷¹ The act of corpse mutilation may have involved destroying the heart to kill the deceased permanently. Further evidence exists of other procedures which may have been carried out on corpses; BoD 154 says:

⁴⁶⁸ Dougherty and Friedman, 2008: 333.

⁴⁶⁹ The aspects of decapitation are addressed in Pyr. 452 (to destroy evil) and 477, CT 229, 453, 454, 619, 660, 677, 691 and 820, and BoD 39, 71, 90, 98, 154, 163 and 166.

⁴⁷⁰ Faulkner, 2004: 257.

⁴⁷¹ The seriousness of the heart being destroyed is evident in 'The Two Brothers' (Papyrus BM EA 10183): Bata places his heart at the top of a pine tree, and he drops dead when the tree is felled and cut up. Years later, his brother Anubis finds the heart, puts it in a bowl of water, and lets Bata drink it. Bata is instantly restored to health and can now change form, becoming first a bull, which is slaughtered, then a Persea tree, which is felled. A splinter from the felled tree is swallowed by his wife, who then becomes pregnant and gives birth to Bata (Lichtheim, 1976: 203-211). When the heart was destroyed, Bata was dead, but when it was restored to him, Bata lived again. Destruction of the corpse's heart would prevent that person from coming back to life.

There is no destruction in my viscera, I have not been injured, my eye has not rotted, my skull has not been crushed, my ears are not deaf, my head has not removed itself from my neck, my tongue has not been taken away, my hair has not been cut off, my eyebrows have not been stripped, no injury has happened to me. My corpse is permanent, it will not perish nor be destroyed in this land for ever.⁴⁷²

Most of the destructive acts mentioned here would leave no archaeological evidence, but it is possible that during the act of corpse mutilation the body was subjected to removal of the ears, tongue, hair and eyebrows.

The act of corpse mutilation is a possible example of the living cursing the dead, which betrays the fear which the dead held for the living. The Egyptians believed that the dead were capable of rising up from their graves, as seen in Pyr. 662:

Arise, you who are in your tombs! Cast off your bonds, throw off the sand which is on your face, raise yourself upon your left side, support yourself upon your right side, lift up your face that you might see this which I have done for you.⁴⁷³

The dead could rise up and re-join the world of the living, so corpse mutilation could have been a direct attack on the body to prevent it from reanimating. The legs of the deceased could be taken apart and rearranged, or the vertebrae could be cut, to prevent walking⁴⁷⁴ while ensuring the body remained largely intact. This concept is mirrored in some examples of *damnatio memoriae* studied here (Chapter Four), where images of the deceased were targeted in a manner which did not destroy, but merely disabled the image, e.g. in Senenmut's TT 353.⁴⁷⁵ Common areas of attack in *damnatio memoriae* were the face, hands and feet, which were also the areas focussed on during corpse mutilation. However, where the act of corpse mutilation differs from that of *damnatio memoriae* is the reason for use: the Egyptians feared that once arisen, the

⁴⁷² Faulkner, 1985: 153.

⁴⁷³ Faulkner, 1969: 272. This theme is also seen in Pyr. 666, which mentions throwing off earth which is on the flesh, and BoD 26, where the corpse is said to not be restrained.

⁴⁷⁴ The theme of the deceased being able to walk is referred to in CT 490, 499, 500 and 574, and BoD 26, 68, 78 and 92.

⁴⁷⁵ Chapter Four, section 4.

dead would terrorise the living. This theme of the dead interacting with the living, or the dead being a threat to the living, is mentioned in funerary literature⁴⁷⁶ as well as in some of the monument curses studied here.⁴⁷⁷ The clearest explanation of why the living would wish to disable or hinder the dead is found in Pyr. 146:

The Terrible One, Lady of Pestilence, who casts away thousands of human souls, who hacks up human dead, who decapitates him who would go out, who creates terror.⁴⁷⁸

Although the corpses were subjected to disfigurement, they had been given a proper burial, sometimes with suitable burial equipment; these bodies were not just dumped in the ground. Being buried in the correct manner indicates that these people were wished a successful afterlife, but the mutilation of relatively few corpses indicates that this practice was not a standard part of the burial procedure. Only certain bodies were targeted, perhaps indicating a fear that these particular people were dangerous or a threat to the living. Harming the corpse may or may not have had a big effect on the deceased's afterlife, but it did hinder the physical body and the soul, meaning that the deceased could not interact with the world of the living.

⁴⁷⁶ CT 874 (the soul will walk amongst the people) and BoD 90 (severing the necks of spirits because of their magical powers).

⁴⁷⁷ **A01, A17, A25** and **A26** – all of which are found in tombs, i.e. a mortuary environment.

⁴⁷⁸ Faulkner, 1985: 136-137.

2: RESERVE HEADS

A reserve head is a detailed representation of the head of an unnamed person, displaying highly detailed facial features and usually also a hairline. They were typically made from limestone, and were used in the mid-late Old Kingdom. Reserve heads were commonly subjected to damage to the ears, neck and/or back of the head. As with corpse mutilation in section 1 above, reserve heads may have had a purpose other than cursing, however their study in this context highlights similarities with more accepted forms of cursing, such as *damnatio memoriae*.

2.1: Context

Reserve heads were typically found at the bottom of the tomb shaft at the entrance to the burial chamber (see Figure 67), but only a limited number have been discovered; they were not a commonly used or widespread item which was essential to the functioning of the tomb. Of the thirty-eight examples collected by Tefnin, only two were made from baked Nile mud.⁴⁷⁹ Most examples have detailed facial features, with carefully carved eyes, nose and mouth, and a visible hairline. The nose is usually carved complete with nostrils, which reach into the main part of the head, seemingly to allow the head to breathe. The head is always shown with very closely shaved hair. Most examples survive without their ears intact, although generally they were originally present. Only two examples still have their full ears: Boston 14.719 and Cairo JE 47838.⁴⁸⁰ The damaged ears seem to have been hacked off deliberately by a tool such as a chisel, leaving either a rough, obvious edge (e.g. Figure 61), or one which was then rounded off (e.g. Figure 62). Two examples (Boston 21.329 and Cairo JE 44975) have ears which were not originally carved onto the head, but made separately and then attached, perhaps by plaster.⁴⁸¹ All that remains on these examples are a pair of holes on each side of the head (see Figure 63).⁴⁸² Three examples (Berlin 16455, Boston 36-12-6 and Cairo CG 519) have only a single, rough hole or indentation on each side of the head (see Figure 64),⁴⁸³ while London 15988⁴⁸⁴ and a head from a private collection have no evidence that ears were ever present (see Figure

⁴⁷⁹ The two examples are Cairo JE 44975 and Obj.Reg. 13-12-1 (Tefnin, 1991: 110 and 129 respectively).

⁴⁸⁰ Tefnin, 1991: pl 8 and 20 respectively.

⁴⁸¹ Tefnin, 1991: 35-36.

⁴⁸² Also Tefnin, 1991: pl 14.

⁴⁸³ Also Tefnin, 1991: pl 13.

⁴⁸⁴ Tefnin, 1991: pl 26.

65). Eleven reserve heads have horizontal lines just above the base of the neck.⁴⁸⁵ These are usually fine, multiple lines, made by a narrow tool (e.g. Figure 66). At least seventeen reserve heads have a line cut down the back of the head which reaches the base of the neck⁴⁸⁶ (e.g. Figure 67). This line was generally rougher and deeper than those lines defining the facial features. Occasional damage to other parts of the head can be seen, for example the nose on Berlin 16455 (see Figure 64) or the side of Boston 21.329 (see Figure 63). These types of damage are inconsistent however, and may reflect accidental damage or deterioration.

Although every example of a reserve head shows the same overall characteristics (i.e. being just the head and neck, with detailed facial features and missing ears), they are not all alike. Each head shows distinctive differences in relation to their face shape and features, which produces a unique resemblance. The Boston 14.719 head⁴⁸⁷ portrays a Nubian face, the Boston 14.718 head⁴⁸⁸ has an obviously long face, while Cairo JE 67569⁴⁸⁹ has a round face but with an extremely downbeat, glum expression. While the facial features all show slight differences, they are generally unremarkable when viewed alone; the exception is Boston 06.1886⁴⁹⁰ whose nose was sculptured with a flat, curved bridge, giving a peculiar appearance. This detail shows that the heads were given considerable effort and attention, giving the impression that they are portraits of a particular person. The fact that the majority of the heads were made from stone tells us that they were made to last for eternity.

2.2: Previous Works

In a report of his 1913-4 excavation at Giza, Reisner describes finding reserve heads in several tombs. Beyond the description, he goes on to label them as extra heads, for use if the mummy's own head becomes decayed or lost.⁴⁹¹ He later comments on the family resemblance of the heads, and states they were members of the royal family.⁴⁹² Reisner thought he could recognise different racial types according

⁴⁸⁵ Tefnin, 1991: 24, the original surface of the neck only exists in twenty six of the thirty eight pieces.

⁴⁸⁶ Tefnin, 1991: 28, there may be more but the backs of the heads are not always photographed.

⁴⁸⁷ Tefnin, 1991: pl 8.

⁴⁸⁸ Tefnin, 1991: pl 6.

⁴⁸⁹ Tefnin, 1991: pl 20.

⁴⁹⁰ Tefnin, 1991: pl 3.

⁴⁹¹ Reisner, 1915: 30.

⁴⁹² Reisner, 1915: 32.

to the facial features, identifying Egyptians, Asiatics and Nubian.⁴⁹³ The ears or other intentional damage is not referred to.

Junker mistakenly declares that all reserve heads were found in the burial chamber of the tomb.⁴⁹⁴ A number of simultaneous theories are given about the function of reserve heads in this publication. They are suggested as being replacement heads for when the real head decays, to allow the deceased to see, hear, taste and smell, and also to allow the ba to recognise the body.⁴⁹⁵ Reserve heads are also likened to statues within tombs, which looked out from a slit within the serdab to observe the outside world.⁴⁹⁶ The positioning of a head at the entrance to the burial chamber (according to Junker), looking out, provided a connection between the deceased and the outside world. This account states that while reserve heads were originally placed in a niche, they ended up on the tomb floor due to rough handling by thieves, which also explains the damage to the ears.⁴⁹⁷ Junker fails to mention the vertical line down the back of the head.

Millet explains a reserve head's unusual features by suggesting it was a mould to form a funerary mask.⁴⁹⁸ The damage to the ears and back of the head happened unintentionally when the mask was removed after it had set hard. The ears could be replaced to allow multiple masks, or other images of the head, to be made. After it had served its purpose, it was deposited in the tomb due to its importance 'either because it was somehow felt to have absorbed too much of the owner's identity or because it was a royal gift'. The sporadic appearance of reserve heads in tombs is put down to the speculation that those lower in the hierarchy had heads made from more perishable materials such as mud, clay or plaster; they were either discarded after use or did not survive in the tomb.

Tefnin's publication contains an extensive catalogue of every reserve head discovered, and discusses features omitted by previous authors, such as the damage to the ears and traces of paint discovered on some heads.⁴⁹⁹ This latter feature takes the form of monochrome red paint which would give the head an unrealistic appearance, allowing the distinction to be made between object and person, according to Tefnin.

⁴⁹³ Reisner, 1915: 32.

⁴⁹⁴ Junker, 1929: 57.

⁴⁹⁵ Junker, 1929: 58.

⁴⁹⁶ Junker, 1929: 59.

⁴⁹⁷ Junker, 1929: 60.

⁴⁹⁸ Millet, 1981: 130-131.

⁴⁹⁹ Tefnin, 1991: 35 and 12 respectively.

Addition of plaster to the face, or the recarving of the stone to alter the head's appearance is also noted, emphasising the importance of the facial features to the functioning of the object.⁵⁰⁰ The theory that these are replacement heads, to be used by the deceased's ba should the mummy's head decay or be damaged, is dispelled due to the purposeful damage repeatedly carried out on them.⁵⁰¹ Tefnin links the horizontal line around the neck to decapitation, and explains the vertical line as an attack to draw blood,⁵⁰² as seen in Gardiner's A14⁵⁰³ hieroglyph of a man with blood streaming from his head. The concept of the head being bled to 'whiten' it, and therefore make it harmless to the living, as in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, is briefly mentioned.⁵⁰⁴ Tefnin openly criticises Junker's work, accusing him of ignoring elements in order to fit his own theories.⁵⁰⁵

Roehrig discusses the idea that similarities seen between some reserve heads are due to family resemblances, but suggests they could also be due to a shared sculptor or workshop.⁵⁰⁶ She observes that most of the heads were found in the tomb shaft or burial chamber, with one being found in front of the coffin in a Giza tomb.⁵⁰⁷ This tomb was unopened but had been subjected to flood water and mud which had disturbed the contents; the head was found lying on its side and is presumed to have originally been upright. Roehrig suggests this was the original position of all reserve heads, and that thieves were responsible for throwing them into the shaft in their search for valuables. Roehrig acknowledges the concept that the heads were not part of the offering cult of the deceased,⁵⁰⁸ as they were located underground. She connects the heads with an Eighteenth Dynasty piece showing Tutankhamun's head emerging from a lotus; in this latter work the head has shaven hair and has been made separately, so it would stand alone. It does not show any intentional damage, however. She suggests that reserve heads may represent the sun god, or Atum, and were originally placed on the floor of the burial chamber on top of a mound of mud or sand, representing creation from the primeval mound, this is not rooted in any contemporary evidence, however. Roehrig refers to previous authors' theories about the intentional damage to the heads,

⁵⁰⁰ Tefnin, 1991: 19-23.

⁵⁰¹ Tefnin, 1991: 31.

⁵⁰² Tefnin, 1991: 78-80 and 83-84.

⁵⁰³ Gardiner, 1957: 443.

⁵⁰⁴ Tefnin, 1991: 85.

⁵⁰⁵ Tefnin, 1991: 53.

⁵⁰⁶ Roehrig, 1999: 74.

⁵⁰⁷ Roehrig, 1999: 75.

⁵⁰⁸ Roehrig, 1999: 77-78.

but does not agree with Reisner's suggestion that the line was a result of thieves determining whether the head was hollow or solid. She also disagrees with Millet's theory that the damage was due to these pieces being sculptors' models for plaster masks; the ears and line being a result of the removal of the plaster once set.

Nuzzolo starts by summarising previous works on the subject of reserve heads, then takes Tefnin's theories forward by stating that reserve heads were a hindrance to resurrection.⁵⁰⁹ Decapitation meant the loss of vital senses for the deceased.⁵¹⁰ He then suggests that the heads were placed on the east side of the burial chamber, based on Papyrus Westcar in which a goose is decapitated; the body was placed on the west side of the room and the head on the east side.⁵¹¹ He further proposes that the heads would have faced Khufu's pyramid, so as the sun moved across the sky it would have appeared from behind the pyramid and illuminated the mastabas, which in turn would 'resurrect' the heads. He has no evidence for his speculations.

2.3: Theories⁵¹²

The ears were repeatedly the focus of the object. The removal of the ears, or the omission of them, would have been done by a skilled craftsman; this action was therefore carried out as part of the procedure of creating the head. Two separate ears have been found in or near burial chambers,⁵¹³ suggesting the ears were removed in the subterranean part of the tomb.⁵¹⁴ The removal of ears from the reserve heads would stop the deceased from hearing the words spoken by visitors.⁵¹⁵

Some reserve heads have a clear line carved down the back of the head and neck (see Figure 67). In most cases this line is fairly straight, but a few examples have crooked and imprecise lines.⁵¹⁶ Although this line is generally deeper than those which define the facial features, the depth varies from piece to piece. Some reserve heads

⁵⁰⁹ Nuzzolo, 2011: 212.

⁵¹⁰ Nuzzolo, 2011: 214.

⁵¹¹ Nuzzolo, 2011: 215.

⁵¹² The publications mentioned above are by no means an exhaustive list. Other works which deal with reserve heads are: Smith, 1949: 23-30, Hawass, 1995: 97-101, and Picardo, 2007: 221-252.

⁵¹³ These are Cairo (unknown number) and Hildesheim 2384. While other ears exist, their exact area of discovery is not recorded.

⁵¹⁴ Carved ears were a common feature of 'hearing ear' chapels, which could be an elaborate chapel or a simple niche (Wilkinson, 2000: 71). These chapels were designed to allow a supernatural entity to hear the words of visitors. The removal of the ears was a clear sign that the deceased would no longer be able to hear the words and prayers of the living.

⁵¹⁵ The importance of ears as a symbol for listening continues well beyond the Old Kingdom, as seen by a wooden ear in the Liverpool World Museum (M12638) from the New Kingdom – Late Period.

⁵¹⁶ For example the Cairo JdE 46217 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 17).

have very deep cuts, while others have only shallow cuts.⁵¹⁷ The line is generally carved rougher than those on the rest of the head, with flakes of stone being lost along the edges in many cases (see Figure 67). The rough nature of these lines suggests that they were not done by the original sculptor, but perhaps by someone attached to the deceased or attending the burial. From the available photographs, the line is not visible when the head is viewed from the front or side; it was not something intended to have an aesthetic impact on the object. Although the line could be fairly deep, it was never deep enough to split open the head; this gouge was not intended to destroy the piece. Although there is no contemporary evidence to explain this damage, Pyr. 669 says:

King N is my brother,
who comes forth from the leg,
who judges the companions,
who separates (*pšn*) the fighters,
who splits (*pšn*) your heads⁵¹⁸

Here the ‘splitting’ of heads uses the same word (*pšn*)⁵¹⁹ as ‘separating’ fighters; it is an aggressive action done to defeat enemies. This attack on the reserve heads may also have been a way to subdue and control the deceased person as an enemy. Attacks of this form may also have had consequences involving damage to the brain; this is discussed further in the summary below. Book of the Dead spell 154 contains statements that the corpse will not be destroyed: ‘my skull has not been crushed, my ears are not deaf, my head has not removed itself from my neck’. These statements reflect the damage seen on the reserve heads – the split on the back of the head, the detached ears and the cut line around the neck. The actions performed on reserve heads were intended to destroy it enough to prevent the deceased from enjoying a successful afterlife. Reserve heads were a method of harming the deceased.

2.4: Reserve Heads as a Form of Cursing

Reserve heads do not appear to be objects which were originally created to honour an individual, then harmed to serve an additional function; reserve heads seem

⁵¹⁷ For example Hildesheim 2384 (Tefnin, 1991: pl 25) and Cairo JdE 46216 (Tefnin, 1991: pl 17) respectively.

⁵¹⁸ Own translation from Sethe, 1922: 473.

⁵¹⁹ *Wb* I 560.5.

to have been purposely made to be attacked. In this respect they correlate closely to execration figures (Chapter Two), particularly those which could be fashioned in a highly detailed manner to identify the target, such as the Abusir execration figures.⁵²⁰ For those execration figures with no engraved inscription, it is the accurate portrayal of the enemy which links the ritual attack to the correct target. The lifelike facial features of the reserve heads suggest identification with a specific person, to ensure that the harmful actions impact on the correct target. Any attack on the facial features of the reserve head would make the head unidentifiable, therefore damage was focussed elsewhere – on the back of the head, the neck and of course the ears. Execration figures were used to curse enemies or the dead, in situations where physical interaction with the target was undesirable or impossible. When considering reserve heads, the tomb context tells us that the target must be the deceased. Physical interaction (with the corpse) would have been impossible without breaking into the burial chamber, and was probably also undesirable, hence the need for the reserve head as a medium. Damage done to the reserve head was intended to have consequences for the deceased person it portrayed. The intended consequence of an execration figure curse always had the theme of control: an enemy could be subdued or a love interest influenced; reserve head curses may have been a way to control the dead. The physical act of harming the execration figure could be accompanied by an incantation, such as with Louvre E 27145,⁵²¹ so perhaps the physical actions performed on the reserve heads were also accompanied by an incantation to ensure effectiveness.

Reserve heads share a feature with some aspects of *damnatio memoriae* (Chapter Four) as they show a focussed attack: when attacking a depiction of the target, particular parts of their body are focussed on.⁵²² The damage done to a reserve head was not just wanton violence, such as seen on execration figure Cairo Museum EM00-130,⁵²³ it centred on specific areas – the ears, neck and back of the head. This damage was done with a specific purpose in mind; the damage was not just to harm the target, but to facilitate a particular consequence. However, while *damnatio memoriae* dealt with dissociation between target and positive image through the

⁵²⁰ Chapter Two, section 3.

⁵²¹ Chapter Two, section 4.

⁵²² For example Senenmut's TT 353 (Chapter Four, section 4).

⁵²³ Chapter Two, section 1.

erasure of identity, reserve heads left this identity intact. Dissociation was not the intended outcome of a reserve head.

Letters to the dead⁵²⁴ indicate how the deceased could affect the living.⁵²⁵ A letter on the exterior of the Kaw Bowl from a son to his deceased mother asks her to stop the deceased Sobekhotep from making him ill (*mr*).⁵²⁶ Here, the dead have a negative influence on the living, but that person seeks help from the dead in return. Some letters ask the deceased for help against living people; on Cairo Linen CG 25975 a wife asks her deceased husband to make haste (*wn*) against⁵²⁷ the people who repossessed their house. The wife calls upon the dead to seek revenge on the living. The deceased were thought to be influential (ꜥ) [in] the necropolis,⁵²⁸ therefore the gouging of the back of the reserve head and the insinuation of decapitation may have been an attempt to incapacitate the dead. Recitations were important to the deceased, as indicated in a First Intermediate Period letter on a stela from an imploring husband to his deceased wife: ‘I did not garble [a spell] in your presence when I perpetuated your name on earth’.⁵²⁹ Removing a reserve head’s ears would render that deceased individual deaf, and so unable to hear perpetuations. If voice offerings could no longer be heard, the deceased would not have an afterlife and so their *akh* status would be lost. The dead could negatively impact on the living, either seemingly by their own will, or through the pleas of the living. Reserve heads may have been a method to stop or prevent the dead from affecting the living; they were a way to control the dead without the need for a written curse.

The study of letters to the dead raises an interesting issue, that of the hierarchy of power. In other forms of cursing, the target is degraded in some manner before being cursed. This is achieved by name calling, by highlighting their undesired behaviour, or by representation them as subdued. The exception is *damnatio memoriae*, in which the target is already disgraced, and the hacking out of the name or image happens as a consequence. Therefore, in all forms of cursing, the target is degraded first. There is no evidence of cursing in the letters to the dead as the living

⁵²⁴ The most useful publications to an English reader are Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, Wente, 1990: 210-219, Ritner, 1993: 180-183 and Strudwick, 2005: 182-184.

⁵²⁵ The dead can also affect deities, as discussed in Grapow, 1911: 48-54.

⁵²⁶ Gardiner and Sethe, 1928: 4, pl 3-3a, Wente, 1990: 212 and Strudwick, 2005: 183. *Wb* II 95.3.

⁵²⁷ Gardiner and Sethe, 1928: 1-3, pl 1-1a, Wente, 1990: 211 and Strudwick, 2005: 182. *Wb* I 313.5.

⁵²⁸ Berlin Bowl, Gardiner and Sethe, 1928: 5-7, pl 5-5a (translated as ‘great [in] the necropolis’) and Wente, 1990: 214. *Wb* I 161.3.

⁵²⁹ Wente, 1990: 215.

are communicating with akhs, entities with more power than the writer. In fact we see the opposite of cursing: many letters implore, beseech and attempt to pacify the receiver. How then can the dead be cursed by the living through a reserve head? The implications of an akh becoming deaf have been mentioned above; they would no longer be an akh. It is plausible to assume that the deceased would now be a malignant entity, such as the *mwt* dead as mentioned in Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36,⁵³⁰ making them susceptible to cursing. It is the removal of the ears, the most common feature of a reserve head, which allowed the object to function as a form of cursing. It is this feature which provided the necessary degradation of the target, therefore removing the target's power. This allowed the deceased to be cursed via decapitation, gouging and possibly recitation.

The relative rarity of reserve heads suggests a function beyond that of ensuring a fully functioning tomb and a successful afterlife. These objects were made and used only in certain circumstances: perhaps this was when the living wanted to curse the dead. This use deems the common name 'reserve heads' inadequate. These heads were not replacements to be used by the deceased in the event of their own head becoming damaged or decayed, but substitutes for the purpose of execration. The name 'execration heads' more accurately portrays their use.

⁵³⁰ Chapter Three, section 4.

3: SUMMARY

The act of corpse mutilation shares some features with reserve head cursing, a concept which did not appear until two thousand years later. The horizontally cut line at the base of the reserve head mirrors the cut vertebrae seen in the cemetery at Hierakonpolis; both suggest decapitation, or at least loss of movement through the breaking of the spine. The positioning of the vertically cut line on the back of numerous reserve heads is interesting when considering the disarray seen in the Gerzeh cemetery, where leg and pelvis bones in particular were wrongly placed or removed, clearly to impede walking. The parietal lobe of the brain is located at the back of the head, in the area underneath the vertical line hacked out on reserve heads. The parietal lobe deals with spatial orientation and perception, as well as the understanding of language.⁵³¹ Damage to this lobe can cause apraxia of the limbs, meaning an inability to move them;⁵³² the target would be severely disabled or even unable to walk. Damage to the parietal lobe can also lead to difficulty in navigating familiar surroundings and in the manipulation of objects.⁵³³ Perhaps the attack to the back of the reserve head was an attack on this lobe, meant to hinder the deceased from walking and interacting with their environment. Cursing by corpse mutilation allowed a direct attack on any part of the body, but cursing by reserve head could only deal the damage via a medium representing the head. If corpse mutilators wanted to prevent the dead from rising up and walking they could attack the legs and pelvis, but reserve head users had to damage the brain instead. Further down from the parietal lobe is the occipital lobe, which deals with visual functions, in particular the processing of visual information.⁵³⁴ The occipital lobe also lies under the vertical attack line seen on many reserve heads. Damage to this lobe could cause severe visual impairment and even blindness.⁵³⁵ As the facial features of a reserve head were portrayed in great detail in order to link the target with the object, they could not be damaged; attacking the occipital lobe would harm the target's vision without the need to damage the reserve head's eyes. This procedure could be a remnant of an earlier corpse mutilation practice, which would hinder the deceased's vision by directly attacking the eyes – something which may not leave physical evidence on a skeleton. The occipital and

⁵³¹ Nolte, 2002: 60-61.

⁵³² Nolte, 2002: 548.

⁵³³ Nolte, 2002: 547.

⁵³⁴ Nolte, 2002: 61.

⁵³⁵ Nolte, 2002: 444.

parietal lobes were targeted on a reserve head to hinder the use of the target's body and senses while allowing the face of the reserve head to be left untouched. This method allowed the reserve head to maintain its vital portrait element while incapacitating the deceased. Old Kingdom Egyptians may have understood the correlation between brain and body, or they may just have witnessed how trauma to the back of the head affected a person, without properly understanding the reason why. Reserve heads are evidence that early Egyptians were aware that trauma to the back of the head would have severe consequences.

The removal of the ears of a reserve head, and the rearranging of bones during corpse mutilation indicate different purposes. Although both involved detaching parts of the body, the bones were still in possession of the deceased, and so were still usable in the afterlife. The element of separation meant they would not function for the physical body. Reserve heads were mainly deposited without their ears;⁵³⁶ they were not intended to be used by the deceased in this life or the afterlife. While corpse mutilation focuses on the physical body of the deceased, reserve heads also target the *akh*.

In the two Predynastic cemeteries studied here, the bodies were relatively easy to access, being located in pits dug into the sand or gravel. In the Old Kingdom, higher members of society were buried in tombs which were then sealed off, meaning the body was not easily accessible. While one reserve head was found in the burial chamber next to the coffin,⁵³⁷ the majority of heads were discovered in the shaft, suggesting deposition after the sealing of the tomb. Rather than desecrating the body of a loved one, reserve heads allowed the deceased to be identified with an object, so the object could be desecrated instead. This concept is seen in the use of execration figures to curse an individual or group when direct physical contact is impossible or undesirable. As the head is the most distinguishable part of the body, this was the most obvious form for the object to take when it needed to replicate a particular individual, without the use of written words. Reserve heads succeeded corpse mutilation as a means of controlling the dead. As the methods of burial changed, so too did the methods of cursing.

⁵³⁶ The exceptions are Boston 14.719 (Tefnin, 1991: pl 8) and Cairo JdE 47838 (Tefnin, 1991: pl 20), which were deposited with their ears intact and attached to the head.

⁵³⁷ Roehrig, 1999: 75.

The act of corpse mutilation and the use of reserve heads occurred relatively infrequently, so they were not an essential part of burial; they were not intended to help the deceased in the afterlife, otherwise they would be a common feature on Predynastic and Old Kingdom burials. Both acts were used only in specific, and probably negative, circumstances, such as those mentioned in the letters to the dead. Mutilating bodies and attacking substitute heads were a means of decapitating, disabling and hindering the dead. They prevented the deceased from having a negative impact in the world of the living.

CHAPTER SIX – RESULTS

1: IDENTITY – WHO CURSES WHO?

1.1: The Curser

Curses on monuments - on tombs, temples, stelae and statues - were usually presented as the speech of the monument owner: ‘The governor, the ruler of the foreign lands, Montuemhat, he says...’.⁵³⁸ Here, the name of the curser is not given within the curse, but before it. The curse is a part of the monument design, and the name of the curser is known only due to the personal context of the monument. Monument curses are commonest on tomb walls, where tomb owners curse to protect their tomb and its contents, but they also appear on temple walls: Seti I used Kanais Temple⁵³⁹ to curse anyone, including future rulers, who would defy the wishes of himself and his people. Stelae owners, including Ramesses II and Senusret III,⁵⁴⁰ cursed to protect an agreement or endowment which they had set up. Statue owners Montuemhat and Wersu⁵⁴¹ cursed to protect their tomb and corpse respectively, as well as the statue itself in the latter case. Although monument owners belonged to the higher, wealthier levels of society, none of the examples studied here are connected to those in the magical profession. Monument curses could be used by anyone who owned a monument, regardless of their profession.

The user of an execration figure is never named in the curse, so their identity is only known by the context of the figure’s use. The Louvre E 27145 figure⁵⁴² is a bound woman, with a spell to influence the woman’s yearnings in the user’s favour, therefore indicating a male user who desires this woman. The intricacy of the figure, and the presence of an accompanying spell, indicates a user with significant resources who had a degree of literacy. In contrast, the crude and basic wax figure Cairo Museum EM00-130⁵⁴³ indicates a user of limited resources, and the lack of any writing suggests either illiteracy or the use of a method which bypassed the need for writing. This was a figure made quickly and easily by someone conducting a personal, and perhaps

⁵³⁸ **A13.**

⁵³⁹ **C04/D01.**

⁵⁴⁰ **C03** and **C08** respectively.

⁵⁴¹ **A13** and **A27/B09** respectively.

⁵⁴² Chapter Two, section 4.

⁵⁴³ Chapter Two, section 1.

private, ritual. When figures portray anonymous groups of foreigners, for example the Abusir execration figures,⁵⁴⁴ it suggests a user who was concerned with the safety and protection of Egypt. This particular user was not cursing for personal gain, but for official benefit of the country. The intricacy seen in these figures, in particular the marked differences between the races, suggests either a user who had good woodworking skills, or a user who had the resources necessary to employ such a person. The presence of decoration in the form of paint traces on these figures indicates use by someone conducting a formal ritual. In contrast, tablet figures Cairo JdE 63955-63959 and Cairo JdE 88146⁵⁴⁵ display limited artistic ability, but do show various levels of literacy. The first, a set of five figures, contains lengthy texts which identify the targets; the user of these figures had a high level of literacy. The head and limbs are drawn in ink on the back of each tablet, but they lack detail and individuality. The Cairo JdE 88146 figures display even less artistic skill, with a human form being alluded to by a crude bump at the top of each tablet, representing the head. While most of these figures have only the names or titles of the targets written on them, a larger figure in this collection has a short but continuous text, indicating a user with a degree of literacy. These figures were used by someone who wanted to target non-Egyptian groups or individuals. All of these execration figures suggest a user who wished to control others for the purpose of protection or personal benefit.

A group of six spells studied here – on papyrus, ostraca and wood – use the format of a curse to provide protection. The user is named in only two spells: Pdamunnebnestawy in Berlin 23308 and Anynakhte in Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36.⁵⁴⁶ Further details about the user's identity can be gained through the context of each curse. Those suffering from the effects of supernatural influence could be cured via spells: Anynakhte was a sufferer of fever and sweating, possibly malaria, which was thought to be caused by supernatural entities; Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 was used to control and remove these entities and rid the body of illness. Those who were afraid of harmful magic also turned to cursing for protection: Pdamunnebnestawy cursed potential users of the evil eye through a spell written on the wooden pendant Berlin 23308. Individuals suffering from, or in fear of, the natural world could also

⁵⁴⁴ Chapter Two, section 3.

⁵⁴⁵ Chapter Two, sections 5 and 7 respectively.

⁵⁴⁶ Chapter Three, sections 1 and 4 respectively.

curse: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII⁵⁴⁷ were used by those wishing to protect themselves from scorpions and their venom; the former through restraint of the animal, the latter through a replica scorpion made of clay. Not all spells were used by someone in fear: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057⁵⁴⁸ was used by an individual who wished to receive the affections of a woman. The name of the intended target was to be inserted in the text, therefore this particular spell was used by a man who desired a specific, known woman. These spells were used by those who wished to gain control over their environment and its inhabitants for personal benefit. The Book of Overthrowing Apophis in Papyrus Bremner Rhind⁵⁴⁹ was not used by one individual, but by the priests at Karnak Temple. These spells cursed the god Apophis, subduing him in order to allow the safe passage of the solar barque through the underworld. In this case, the priests' use of the spells stemmed not just from their personal needs, but also from their professional situation; the curse were part of the ritual functioning of the temple, and the priests were promised benefits in this life and in the afterlife if they used them successfully.⁵⁵⁰

Those who cursed via *damnatio memoriae*, through the destruction of monuments, were never named; the destructive nature of this method means little evidence of the process survives. What is evident in many examples is the level of focus and thoroughness needed to curse in this manner: the removal of Neferseshemre's son's name and title occurred twice in Neferseshemre's tomb,⁵⁵¹ but in both cases the name of Teti's pyramid was preserved, showing that a specific procedure was being followed. In contrast, omissions and peculiarities within other erasures indicate attackers who were illiterate or neglectful: Seankhuptah's⁵⁵² name survives in two highly visible places near the entrance of his tomb, and two apparently random yet symmetrical lines of text were erased on the tomb front. The high volume of chiselling which could be required during *damnatio memoriae*, especially within a tomb, suggests the involvement of a stone mason. Those who wished to curse in this way may have instructed a skilled craftsman to carry out the task for them, as in Papyrus Rylands XI: 'They had a mason brought, and had him efface the stela which

⁵⁴⁷ Chapter Three, sections 3 and 5 respectively.

⁵⁴⁸ Chapter Three, section 2.

⁵⁴⁹ Chapter Three, section 6.

⁵⁵⁰ Papyrus Bremner Rhind 23,15-23,16 (Passage 5).

⁵⁵¹ Chapter Four, section 1.

⁵⁵² Chapter Four, section 2.

Petiese son of Ireouerou had put on the stone platform'.⁵⁵³ The person who physically attacked the names and images of the target may not have been the one who was ultimately responsible for the curse; discrepancies in the erasures, such as in Siankhuiptah's tomb, may be evidence of miscommunication rather than of a particular type of user.

Those who mutilated corpses left no evidence to identify themselves. The injuries carried out on the bodies could only have been made by people wielding weapons, but it is unclear whether these mutilations were performed during burial or later. If the attack happened during the burial, the user and his actions were part of the burial procedure, however as this practice was relatively rare, it was not an essential part of the procedure. The user felt that these actions were required for this particular burial. If the attack happened sometime after the burial, an intervening event must have been responsible for it. Corpses in the Gerzeh cemetery⁵⁵⁴ show restricted but varying damage across the graves: head and neck injuries (no. 67, 200 and 251), missing hands (no. 187 and 284), damage to the pelvis (no. 138 and 280), and mutilation of the legs and feet (no. 137, 138, 142 and 280). Sometimes only specific body parts were targeted in one geographical location: the skull and vertebrae of the fifteen mutilated corpses in cemetery HK43 at Hierakonpolis⁵⁵⁵ were attacked, but in each case the rest of the body was left unharmed. Those who mutilated corpses were either acting with specific purposes in mind, or performing under strict instructions. The severity of the mutilations seen in graves such as no. 147 at Hierakonpolis, where the two corpses have each suffered more than fifteen cuts to the vertebrae, indicates someone who was focussed on the physical harming of the bodies, rather than merely robbing the grave. The presence of a gold necklace still in position around the severed head of the corpse in grave no. 67 at Gerzeh is also evidence that this was a ritual attack, rather than just brutal plundering. Those who mutilated corpses wanted to hinder specific members of the dead.

Those who used reserve heads⁵⁵⁶ as a form of cursing left limited evidence as to their identity. Although reserve heads used intricate detail to portray distinctive facial features, it is not the belief of the author that the person depicted is the user, but

⁵⁵³ Papyrus Rylands XI, 18, 14-22, from Eyre, 2013: 339-340.

⁵⁵⁴ Chapter Five, section 1.1.

⁵⁵⁵ Chapter Five, section 1.2.

⁵⁵⁶ Chapter Five, section 2.

rather the target. Attacks carried out on the heads left damage which was harsh and imprecise, suggesting that the curser was not the craftsman who created the reserve head, but another less skilled individual. It can not be known whether the head was deposited during burial or later, but if it was during burial, the user was a part of the burial custom and may have been some sort of ritualist. As with corpse mutilation, this was a relatively rare practice only performed for specific individuals. If the head was deposited sometime after burial, the user was someone who later felt that this particular deceased person was a threat which needed to be controlled. The curser's name is never known, but they evidently held a high position in society to have the resources necessary to commission or produce an elaborate limestone⁵⁵⁷ head. Reserve head users were people who felt that this considerable effort was justified to control a specific deceased individual.

1.2: The Target

Monument curses were publicly visible, and so could be targeted at anyone in the vicinity: any tomb visitor, any temple worshipper, or anyone who passed by a stela. These curses did not have one specific target, rather a target category which was identified and defined by a particular wrongdoing: 'As for the one who will violate the tomb'.⁵⁵⁸ Sometimes the target category was preceded by a rank or position to define the targets further, as in Ankhthifi's tomb: 'As for any ruler who will rule in Mo'alla'.⁵⁵⁹ The target of a monument curse was someone who acted in a manner which went against the wishes of the monument owner. This usually concerned the integrity of the monument or the information contained on it: 'Concerning these words which are (written) on this tablet of silver... as for the one who will not heed them'.⁵⁶⁰ The target of a monument curse was not known at the time of the curse's creation, but would later identify himself through his actions.

The targets of execration figure curses were not necessarily Egyptians, but were more likely to be foreigners or the dead; those who were not present to attack directly. Targets could be identified visually by foreign facial features and hairstyles,⁵⁶¹ or in writing via labels, insults, or name and parentage: 'the ruler of

⁵⁵⁷ Only two heads have been found which were not made from limestone: Cairo JE 44975 (Tefnin, 1991: 110) and Obj. Reg. 13-12-1 (Tefnin, 1991: 129) were made from Nile mud.

⁵⁵⁸ **A24.**

⁵⁵⁹ **A02.**

⁵⁶⁰ **C03.**

⁵⁶¹ Abusir Excavation figures and Walters Art Gallery (Chapter Two, sections 3 and 2 respectively).

Rukyt, Saktawy born to his mother, called ‘is (anyone) loyal to him’ and ‘the dead Intefiker, born to Satsasobek, born to Intefiker’.⁵⁶² The crude wax figure of Cairo Museum EM00-130⁵⁶³ has no distinguishing features or text, so it is unclear whether it represents an Egyptian or non-Egyptian, but it can be identified as male based on its anatomy. This lack of identification suggests that execration figures could be associated with the target via a wholly verbal ritual: Cairo Museum EM00-130 was identified by a recitation performed by the user. The Louvre E 27145 figure⁵⁶⁴ shows a plump female wearing jewellery, so the target was a woman of some wealth. The accompanying written spell has a space for her name to be spoken during recitation; this target was a specific individual whose name was known to the user. The target of an execration curse was always unapproachable, whether this was due to geographical, supernatural or social boundaries, but could be connected to a representation either visually, verbally or via writing.

Victims of magic spells were usually identified by their actions, for example (those) ‘who will case the evil eye’,⁵⁶⁵ but specific targets could be identified by name: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057⁵⁶⁶ includes the line ‘so-and-so born of so-and-so’ where the target’s name was to be spoken during recital. The target in this latter example was a woman, but if the spell failed, the user threatens to burn Osiris and Busiris. In this case, if the primary target remained unaffected, secondary targets became the focus of the spell instead. Scorpions and scorpion venom were the targets in Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII,⁵⁶⁷ where they were cursed to repel the animal or to cure a sting, respectively. As with Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057, if Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 failed, secondary targets were implicated: the user threatened physical violence to the Great God, Horus, Seth and the Ennead, and also threatened to burn Osiris and Busiris. In both of these spells the primary target was a natural entity, but the secondary targets were supernatural. When the target of a magic spell was supernatural, they could be identified either in groups or individually: Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36⁵⁶⁸ removes the symptoms of malaria by targeting male and female diseased, male and female opponents, and the male and

⁵⁶² Cairo JDE 63955-63959 and Cairo Figures JdE 88146 (Chapter Two, sections 5 and 7 respectively).

⁵⁶³ Chapter Two, section 1.

⁵⁶⁴ Chapter Two, section 4.

⁵⁶⁵ Berlin 23308 (Chapter Three, section 1).

⁵⁶⁶ Chapter Three, section 2.

⁵⁶⁷ Chapter Three, section 3 and 5 respectively.

⁵⁶⁸ Chapter Three, section 4.

female dead, while Papyrus Bremner Rhind⁵⁶⁹ primarily targeted Apophis. People, animals and supernatural entities could all be cursed via magic spells to prevent them from doing wrong, or to bring them under control. They could be targeted individually, in groups, or according to their behaviour.

Damnatio memoriae was an attack on the name and/or image of an individual on a monument, however not every target had their own monument: Neferseshemre's son's name and image was erased in his father's tomb.⁵⁷⁰ The identity of this son is not known due to the destructive nature of this form of cursing. In many examples of *damnatio memoriae* only aspects of the target's identity were attacked: on statues Chicago Field Museum 173800 and Kimbell Art Museum AP 1985.02⁵⁷¹ Senenmut's name was erased but his titles and image survive, allowing these statues to be identified as his. Occasionally the name was not cleanly erased: in Senenmut's TT 71⁵⁷² the outline of his name can repeatedly be seen on the rock-cut stelae lining the axial corridor. The chiseller sometimes missed a targeted name: Seankhuiptah's⁵⁷³ name survives in two visible locations near the entrance to his tomb, but all other names and images of him were erased throughout his tomb. The victims of *damnatio memoriae* suffered destruction, not only of their identity, but usually also of their monument. Neferseshemre's son is the exception here as he was attacked in his father's tomb, rather than in his own. Whatever wrongdoing they were guilty of, elite members of society and their families could be removed and dissociated from a monument.

The exact identity of corpse mutilation targets can not be known; this Predynastic method of cursing was carried out on bodies buried in the sand before writing was a common practice. It is also unknown how long after death the corpse was attacked; whether it was attacked during burial or later. Violently mutilating a corpse indicates that the deceased target was considered dangerous to the attacker. The body of the target must have been seen as a threat to the living and, as only a small percentage of corpses were attacked, these specific individuals had done something to warrant this treatment; this was not ordinary burial custom. Grave goods and parts of

⁵⁶⁹ Chapter Three, section 6.

⁵⁷⁰ Chapter Four, section 1.

⁵⁷¹ Chapter Four, sections 5 and 6 respectively.

⁵⁷² Chapter Four, section 3.

⁵⁷³ Chapter Four, section 2.

the body not mutilated were generally left undisturbed;⁵⁷⁴ the burial was left as intact as possible so the deceased retained their status as honoured members of society. These members of the dead were not denied an afterlife, but only hindered and controlled for the benefit of the living.

The target of a reserve head curse⁵⁷⁵ was never named; these Old Kingdom objects were used at a time when writing was still in its infancy. The reserve heads discovered so far are all unique in appearance, so it can be reasonable assumed that they were designed to resemble a particular person, most likely the deceased person in whose tomb the head was deposited. It is not known when the reserve head was deposited; either during burial or later, but a physical attack on a representation suggests the target was a threat to the user. The purpose of the reserve head was not to prevent an afterlife, as the burial and tomb remained intact, but to hinder the deceased. The target was a dangerous member of the dead who needed to be controlled by the living.

⁵⁷⁴ Chapter Five, section 1.2.

⁵⁷⁵ Chapter Five, section 2.

2: SITUATION – WHY DID THEY CURSE?

The most common reason to use a monument curse was to protect the monument on which the curse was written. This protection could potentially cover all wrongdoing towards the monument by using broad words such as evil, and destructive.⁵⁷⁶ These curses protected monuments from harm, they were a preservation which allowed the monument to function properly. Other monument curses served as protection against specific physical actions which would compromise the integrity of the monument, for example stealing a tomb's bricks,⁵⁷⁷ damaging inscriptions and depictions,⁵⁷⁸ or interfering with the contents of a tomb.⁵⁷⁹ The proper functioning of a monument required certain conditions, and monument curses ensured that these conditions were met: 'As for any man or woman who will enter into this tomb of mine in their impurity'.⁵⁸⁰ Monument curses did not just protect a physical structure, but also its ability to function. Monument curses on stelae favour this latter purpose; they preserved the function of the monument, i.e. the endowment or agreement set out in its text, rather than the physical structure of the monument. Words used to describe actions against the stelae's instructions could be broad to cover all wrongdoing, and include: neglect,⁵⁸¹ interfere,⁵⁸² and go against.⁵⁸³ Curses on stelae enforced the wishes of the monument owner when they were not present. In this study, there are two monument curses which protect things other than the owner's monument or instructions: Seti I's curse at Kanais Temple protected the achievements of the community, and the curse in tomb CG 1650 was a threat against 'anyone who will do something against my children'.⁵⁸⁴ Monument curses could protect physical structures such as tombs and statues, but also non-physical notions such as endowments, agreements or whatever the user wished to protect. Monument curses could be tailored to the particular preferences of the owner through the choice of vocabulary used, or even by choosing to protect their family or the well-being of others. Whatever their specific function, monument curses were always used for protection. These curses

⁵⁷⁶ **A03** and **A08** respectively.

⁵⁷⁷ **A17**.

⁵⁷⁸ **A03, A08, A25, B04, B05** and **B11**.

⁵⁷⁹ **A02** and **A27/B09**.

⁵⁸⁰ **A07**.

⁵⁸¹ **B02**.

⁵⁸² **B10**.

⁵⁸³ **C02**.

⁵⁸⁴ **C04/D01** and **D03** respectively.

were primarily a threat, but should that threat fail they were a retaliation to a wrongdoing by the target.

Most execration figures represent foreigners, and some have detailed facial features and hairstyles to render non-Egyptians, such as the Abusir Excavation 1984 collection⁵⁸⁵ which portray Asiatics, Libyans and Nubians. Other figures used accompanying texts to describe foreign targets; the Cairo JdE 63955-63959 figures were used against ‘all the Medjay of Webet-Sepet, all the Nubians of Wawet’.⁵⁸⁶ These texts can also explain why particular people were targeted: ‘those who will rebel, those who will brood, those will conspire and will say any evil word’.⁵⁸⁷ Foreigners were a threat to Egypt, so execration figures were used to manage this threat safely. A common theme with execration figures is the depiction of the target as restrained with bindings around the hands or arms, and kneeling in a submissive posture; the target is displayed as subdued, thereby removing the threat they held. Louvre E 27145 and Louvre E 16492-16501⁵⁸⁸ depict women. Louvre E 27145 is represented with the hands tied behind the back and kneeling, and it has been subjected to physical harm: thirteen metal pins have been inserted into specific parts of its body. An accompanying spell, written on a lead tablet, explains the reason for the use of the metal pins: ‘I pierce the (body part) of X, that she may think of no one but me’.⁵⁸⁹ This figure is a love charm which worked by subduing the target into behaving according to the user’s desires; it was not used to remove a threat for the good of the country, but to enrich the personal life of the user. The Louvre E 16492-16501 figures all depict restrained women, usually with the arms behind the back, but none are kneeling. Within this collection, Louvre E 16499 is unique because it has a piece of cloth wrapped around the legs; the legs were physically restrained. There is no accompanying spell, and no evidence of further physical harm beyond the cloth restraint. These figures do not represent threats from foreigners, rather, their emphasised feminine features in the form of clearly defined hips and genitals suggest a purpose similar to that of Louvre E 27145: to subdue women for personal benefit. While the ultimate goals of execration figures may have been different, they shared a theme: execration figures were used to control others through subjugation and submission.

⁵⁸⁵ Chapter Two, section 3.

⁵⁸⁶ Chapter Two, section 5.

⁵⁸⁷ From the larger figure in the Cairo JdE 88146 collection, Chapter Two, section 7.

⁵⁸⁸ Chapter Two, sections 4 and 6 respectively.

⁵⁸⁹ Pinch, 1994: 90.

Magic spells had a range of uses: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057⁵⁹⁰ was used when a man wished to seek the attention of a particular woman whose name he knew; there is space in the text to insert her name and her mother's name. This piece had a similar function to the Louvre E 27145 execration figure. Berlin 23308⁵⁹¹ is a wooden pendant which protected the wearer, Pdamunnebnestawwy, from anyone who used the evil eye against him. This curse was a preventive measure, in the style of monument curses. Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213⁵⁹² was intended to stop a bad situation from happening, but it was also used when required: when a scorpion was nearby, to prevent it from stinging. This spell had elements of preventive curses – it was used at a time when the bad situation had not yet occurred – but it also had elements of the problem-solving curses – there was a problem which required an immediate solution. Papyrus Chester Beatty VII⁵⁹³ was also effective against scorpions, but this spell used a replica scorpion made of clay to counteract the effects of venom from a real scorpion. This spell was not preventive, but was used after the sting had happened to remove the venom and its effects. Another spell with a medicinal purpose is Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36,⁵⁹⁴ for use in the event of fever and sweating. This spell banished the supernatural entities responsible for the illness to the Field of Reeds, thereby ridding the user of their illness. Hieroglyphs of two divine barques, two wadjet eyes and two scarabs were drawn on a fresh piece of papyrus, then placed on the throat of the sufferer. Papyrus Bremner Rhind⁵⁹⁵ also used rituals; in this case to subdue Apophis in order to protect the deities on the solar barque as it travelled through the underworld. Most of the spells studied here were for personal benefit; they helped the user to prevent or solve a bad situation, whether it had a natural or supernatural cause. Magic spells were diverse in function and form, so a wide range of needs could be met by cursing in this manner.

Damnatio memoriae focussed on the hacking out of the target's name and/or image on a monument. Unlike cursing via an execration figure, which required the creation of a figure, *damnatio memoriae* used existing representations of the target; this form of cursing was limited to those targets who already had this representation,

⁵⁹⁰ Chapter Three, section 2.

⁵⁹¹ Chapter Three, section 1.

⁵⁹² Chapter Three, section 3.

⁵⁹³ Chapter Three, section 5.

⁵⁹⁴ Chapter Three, section 4.

⁵⁹⁵ Chapter Three, section 6.

i.e. a monument. Unlike monument curses, *damnatio memoriae* focused on the damaging of a monument, rather than on its protection. Seankhuptah's⁵⁹⁶ image was consistently and violently erased wherever it appeared in his tomb, and only two occurrences of his name survive; these omissions are thought to be accidental. The aim here was complete erasure of the identity of the tomb owner through the erasure of his name and image, as well as his titles on several occasions. However, *damnatio memoriae* did not always mean complete destruction of an identity: on Senenmut's Chicago Field Museum 173800 and Kimbell Art Museum 1985.02 statues⁵⁹⁷ the damage was limited to the name of the target; his titles, achievements and image were left unharmed. Obliteration was not the aim here, only dissociation of the honours (the titles, achievements and image) from Senenmut's name. Dissociation was also the purpose of the attacks in Neferseshemre's tomb.⁵⁹⁸ Here, the target was not the tomb owner but his son, whose name and image were completely erased from pillars in room III where he originally appeared with his father. This was not degradation of a monument owner, but dissociation from a monument owner. Sometimes the element under attack was not completely erased: in Senenmut's TT 71⁵⁹⁹ his name was targeted on the nine rock-cut stelae in the axial corridor, but in each case enough of the writing remains to allow his name to be reconstructed. This was a physical attack which left behind a powerful visual impact, and by allowing the name to be read, viewers knew exactly who was being cursed. Complete erasure was not the goal here, but degradation was. A contrasting scenario is seen in another of Senenmut's tombs: in TT 353⁶⁰⁰ his name was left untouched but his image was attacked. This tomb is unfinished, and the decoration, which can only be found in chamber A, has suffered considerable damage due to deterioration. Senenmut's image has escaped natural damage at the chamber entrance, on the false door and on the south wall. Focussed attacks are evident on Senenmut's face, hands, elbow and waistband at the chamber entrance and on the false door, but in many cases the damage is light enough to allow the features to be distinguished. Senenmut's images on the south wall have all escaped attack, so this was not a methodical attack. This tomb was left nowhere near completion, so would not have been accessible by visitors. The scope for public

⁵⁹⁶ Chapter Four, section 2.

⁵⁹⁷ Chapter Four, sections 5 and 6 respectively.

⁵⁹⁸ Chapter Four, section 1.

⁵⁹⁹ Chapter Four, section 3.

⁶⁰⁰ Chapter Four, section 4.

degradation was limited, making a thorough attack unnecessary; *damnatio memoriae* was most effective when there was an audience. This process was used against those who were to be publicly degraded or dissociated from honour, or when complete erasure of the target was desired.

The act of corpse mutilation entailed attacks on certain areas of the body: an attack on the skull or vertebrae, repeatedly seen in the form of violent cuts in the Hierakonpolis cemetery,⁶⁰¹ could render a body immobile. The attackers considered the corpses to be a threat, so took the same action as would be taken against a living enemy. Attacks on the pelvis, legs and feet, seen in graves no. 138 and 280 at Gerzeh,⁶⁰² emphasise the fear of corpse animation. The living took direct action against the threat of the dead by mutilating their bodies in a manner which would disable a living person. Corpse mutilation mirrors an element seen in execration figures and *damnatio memoriae*: subjugation via a physical attack. However, rather than using created representations or existing images to achieve this, Predynastic Egyptians used the actual bodies of their targets. The aim of corpse mutilation was not to destroy the body but to disable it, to render it powerless and therefore prevent reanimation of the dead.

Reserve heads were representations of the target, created to be identifiable with that target visually. The damage sustained to reserve heads is relatively uniform across all examples: there is a gouge on the back of the head, sometimes extending down to the neck, and a cut line around the base of the neck. Other damage is occasionally seen: several heads show damage to the nose, but this appears to be accidental, and sometimes the ears were hacked off.⁶⁰³ On most reserve heads, the ears were created separately and could be attached via holes on the side of the head, perhaps with plaster or something resembling a mortise and tenon joint. As with corpse mutilation, the target of a reserve head curse was clearly deceased as these pieces have only been found in tomb environments. As execration figures were used when direct contact with the target was undesirable or impossible, it is plausible that reserve heads were too, so an attack on a reserve head was an indirect attack on a body sealed away in a tomb. Reserve heads may have been a later form of corpse mutilation, which developed to

⁶⁰¹ Chapter Five, section 1.2.

⁶⁰² Chapter Five, section 1.1.

⁶⁰³ Chapter Five, section 2.1.

counter the problem presented by the use of tombs. They were used to disable and hinder the dead, should they pose a threat to the living.

3: MECHANICS – HOW DID THEY CURSE?

Monument curses were a written form of curse which were publicly displayed to potential targets. This type of curse was typically presented as the speech of the monument owner, so recitation may possibly have been a part of this cursing process. The writings were executed in hieroglyphs, at least when the author owned the monument; there are two examples in this study where the author of the curse does not own the monument: the graffito for Djediah and the inscription of Khenty[...].⁶⁰⁴ The first was written on the roof of the Khonsu Temple at Karnak to protect the engraving of the foot of Khonsu's servant Djediah. The second was written on a rock face at Hatnub, by an author whose name is only partially preserved, to protect an image of the author. In both cases, the inscriptions were written in a manner which was most convenient for the opportunistic author: hieratic. In contrast, curses in tombs, and on statues and stelae, were a formal part of the monument's design, and so were written in hieroglyphic form. It was not this composing of words which activated the curse, but the performance of specified actions by the wrongdoer; monument curses were conditional curses. Monument curses threatened future action based on potential wrongdoings which the user wished to avoid, so these curses lay dormant until activated by the target. As text had to be written and displayed in a monument curse, this was a creative form of cursing which degraded the target publicly by stating their wrongdoings within these texts.

Some monument curses contained threats which the user declared he would carry out himself, even in tomb environments when this user would be deceased; wringing the target's neck⁶⁰⁵ and causing the living to be afraid of akhs⁶⁰⁶ are both threatened this way. Other monument curses evoked agents to act on the user's behalf: the pharaoh might strike down, slaughter or cut⁶⁰⁷ the target, he could restrain and tie up a target, and prevent the target from inheriting goods or joining akhs in the necropolis.⁶⁰⁸ Deities,⁶⁰⁹ akhs⁶¹⁰ and animals⁶¹¹ could also be called upon to help monument owners defend their monuments, protect their endowments, etc. Many

⁶⁰⁴ B04 and B05 respectively.

⁶⁰⁵ A01, A05, A17 and A26.

⁶⁰⁶ A17.

⁶⁰⁷ A28, C02 and C11 respectively.

⁶⁰⁸ B03/C01.

⁶⁰⁹ A03, A12, A24, A25, A27/B09, A28, B01, B05, B12, C02, C03, C04/D01, C05, C09, C12 and D02.

⁶¹⁰ A25.

⁶¹¹ A11, A20, B08 and C11.

threats in monument curses did not refer to an agent, usually because the consequence could occur without an agent, for example ‘his heart will not rest in life’,⁶¹² or because the consequence centred on the omission or neglect of actions, for example ‘memory of him will not exist’.⁶¹³

Cursing via an execration figure required the creation of a representation of the target, sometimes with an accompanying text. In some examples studied here, such as the Abusir Excavation 1984 collection,⁶¹⁴ it was the portrayal of the target(s) as subdued, in this case kneeling down with their hands behind their backs, which activated the curse. In other examples, like the Cairo JdE 88146⁶¹⁵ figures, the crude portrayals of the targets shift the focus onto the text written on the flat surface of each tablet; in these cases it was the writing of the texts, and possibly the recitation of them, which activated the curse. Wax figure Cairo Museum EM00-130⁶¹⁶ lacks both visual and written elements, having no detail to distinguish the target, and no text. Activation here was achieved by physical actions, in this particular case by cutting, stabbing and burning the figure. Rope impressions in the wax show that the figure was also tied up. The figure was physically manipulated to curse the target which it represented, so execration figures could also be a destructive method of cursing. There is one figure in this study which shows all three modes of activation (visual, verbal and physical): Louvre E 27145.⁶¹⁷ This clay Roman Period figure portrays a naked woman with jewellery, with her hands and feet tied behind her back – she is clearly being presented as physically restrained, which provides the activation visually. An accompanying lead tablet, which was buried in a pot with the figure, contains a spell intended to control and influence the target – she is being restrained verbally. Thirteen metal pins have been inserted into the figure, into body parts mentioned in the spell: the head, hands, chest, genitals and feet – she is also being restrained physically. Execration figures as a form of cursing relied on a selection or combination of physical, verbal and visual processes to target and degrade an individual, but they all relied on the use of a representation of the target as an intermediate. Unlike monument curses,

⁶¹² **A27/B09.**

⁶¹³ **A25.**

⁶¹⁴ Chapter Two, section 3.

⁶¹⁵ Chapter Two, section 7.

⁶¹⁶ Chapter Two, section 1.

⁶¹⁷ Chapter Two, section 4.

execration figures were an instantaneous form of cursing which could be activated immediately and used without the need for interaction with the target.

The magic spells studied here worked in different ways, but as with monument curses they all took a written form and so were mainly creative methods of cursing. Berlin 23308 and Papyrus Bremner Rhind⁶¹⁸ were preventive, to be used in the manner of monument curses, to stop an unfavourable situation from occurring. The former was written in hieroglyphs on a wooden tablet and worn as a pendant to prevent the wearer from suffering the effects of the evil eye through threats. The latter is asset of spells to subdue Apophis, performed daily in Karnak Temple to enable the safe passage of the solar barque through the underworld. These spells were recited by priests, and accompanying ritual actions were performed on representations of Apophis, in the manner of execration figures: Papyrus Bremner Rhind required violent and sometimes destructive actions to be performed. While Papyrus Bremner Rhind was regularly activated in this way to prevent Apophis from overpowering the solar barque during its nocturnal journey, Berlin 23308 was activated only in the event of someone using the evil eye against the user.

The remainder of the magic spells studied here were all used to counteract a particular scenario faced during daily life, and so were only activated when needed. Some magic spells only required a recitation: Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057⁶¹⁹ to attract a woman, and Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213⁶²⁰ to restrain a scorpion did not include any physical ritual actions. However, in both cases innocent deities were threatened should the spell fail; their effectiveness was ensured through supernatural intimidation. Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057 had a similar function as execration figure Louvre E 27145 – to attract and control a woman – however the former used only recitation, while the latter used recitation, visual subjugation and physical actions. One problem could be solved by two contrasting solutions. In contrast, Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36⁶²¹ which cured fever and sweating (possibly malaria), and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII⁶²² which cured a scorpion sting, do not contain threats to deities, but they do involve ritual actions in addition to recitation. Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36 required specific hieroglyphs to be drawn on a fresh piece of papyrus, which was then placed

⁶¹⁸ Chapter Three, sections 1 and 6 respectively.

⁶¹⁹ Chapter Three, section 2.

⁶²⁰ Chapter Three, section 3.

⁶²¹ Chapter Three, section 4.

⁶²² Chapter Three, section 5.

on the sufferer's throat, and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII required the creation of a clay scorpion to counter a real scorpion's venom. The effectiveness of these spells was ensured through physical as well as verbal ritual actions. Although magic spells could be used for a wide range of purposes, the basic mechanics remained the same: a recitation, sometimes aided by threats or physical rituals, activated the curse to prevent or to solve a particular difficulty faced by the user. As with monument curses, magic spells recorded or implied the target's wrongdoings in writing for the purpose of association between target and curse, and also degradation.

Damnatio memoriae shares some features with execration figures: visual subjugation and physical activation. The representation of the target was attacked in a manner which left a clear visual message to any observer, for example every image of Seankhuptah⁶²³ was attacked and erased in his tomb, leaving only pitted silhouettes within otherwise unharmed scenes. In this tomb it is clear that the owner was once represented numerous times throughout, but he has now been publicly degraded. This attack was focussed and thorough, and required physical action in the form of chiselling or hacking out of stone in order to activate the curse. However, where execration figures relied on the creation of a representation, *damnatio memoriae* used pre-existing representations in the form of monument inscriptions and depictions. This act of vandalising the target's name and image, which had been recorded to honour the individual for eternity, degraded the target. *Damnatio memoriae* could be carried out in a number of ways: the first was through complete erasure of the name and image, as seen in Neferseshemre's tomb⁶²⁴ where his son has been erased so thoroughly that no trace of him remains. The erasure was carried out so that no outline of the son can confidently be asserted, and no guess can be made as to his name. The assumption that this was Neferseshemre's son is made only due to the presence of Neferseshemre himself standing (unharmed) over the erased figure, a stance taken elsewhere in the tomb with his other (also unharmed) sons. The purpose of this attack was complete and total erasure, and therefore dissociation from Neferseshemre, his family and his tomb. Traces of plaster on the chiselled areas also show that deletion was the purpose here; there was to be no trace left of his existence.

⁶²³ Chapter Four, section 2.

⁶²⁴ Chapter Four, section 1.

The second manner of *damnatio memoriae* was through thorough, but not complete, erasure, as seen in Seankhuptah's tomb, discussed above, and also in Senenmut's TT 71.⁶²⁵ In this latter case, Senenmut's name was attacked wherever it appeared on nine rock-cut stelae in the axial corridor, but traces remain which allow the name to be reconstructed. These attacks were exhaustive but light; complete erasure was not the intention here. Any visitors to the tomb would be able to discern Senenmut's name, and know that he had been disgraced; public degradation was the intention in Senenmut's TT 71, as well as in Seankhuptah's tomb.

The third manner of *damnatio memoriae* involved attacking only specific parts of the target's identity. This concept can be seen on Senenmut's statues Chicago Field Museum 173800 and Kimbell Art Museum 1985.02⁶²⁶ where only his name has been erased,⁶²⁷ but not always completely; traces of his name can still be seen. Senenmut's titles and deeds in the statues' texts have been left unharmed, and the figures of the statues are also untouched. Here, the purpose of the attacks was not to delete Senenmut from memory, but to remove his identity by attacking his connection with the achievements preserved on the statues; dissociation was the intention. The idea of attacking only specific parts of the target is evident in Senenmut's TT 353,⁶²⁸ where an image of Senenmut has suffered damage to the face, hands, elbows and waistband, but his name and titles remain unharmed. This theme of focussed attacks on specific body parts is mirrored in corpse mutilation, and suggests an intention to disable a target which posed a threat. The intention here may have been to hinder Senenmut in the afterlife, or to disgrace him through vandalism. Cursing via *damnatio memoriae* was a destructive act which damaged monuments in order to have a detrimental effect on the target's identity and memory; an event feared in monument curses:

As for any person, any scribe, any wise man, any commoner, or any inferior,
who will do something evil in this tomb,
who will damage its inscriptions, who will destroy its images,
they will submit to the wrath of Thoth.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁵ Chapter Four, section 3.

⁶²⁶ Chapter Four, sections 5 and 6 respectively.

⁶²⁷ Amun's name has been attacked twice on the Kimbell Art Museum 1985.02 statue, but the light and scanty nature of these attacks suggest that they happened at a different time to the more thorough attacks on Senenmut's name. For the purpose of this study, only the attacks on Senenmut's name are addressed.

⁶²⁸ Chapter Four, section 4.

⁶²⁹ **A03.**

Corpse mutilation was a purely physical form of cursing where the bodies of the targets were attacked. As with *damnatio memoriae*, corpse mutilation could be performed in a number of ways: the first is seen in grave no. 251 at Gerzeh,⁶³⁰ where a headless body was discovered in a grave dug to the dimensions of the decapitated corpse; it was never intended that the head would be part of the burial. The right leg is also missing in this grave. Removal of a body part is also seen in other graves at Gerzeh: in no. 187 and 284 where the hands are missing, and in no. 142 and 137 where the feet are missing. This manner of corpse mutilation mirrors the aspects of *damnatio memoriae* where parts of the target were erased from a monument, but in this case they were removed from the corpse. The second manner of corpse mutilation shows a different method: body parts were separated from the body but still remained a part of the burial. In Gerzeh the skull in grave no. 67 was stood upright, while the rest of the body remained lying down. This 90° rotation of the head could only be possible after decapitation had occurred, but as the head was replaced, disabling not removal was not the intention here. Body parts were moved in Gerzeh grave no. 138 (legs and feet) and also in Hierakonpolis⁶³¹ grave no. 147 (heads). These targets were cursed by being mutilated and disjointed. The third manner of corpse mutilation involved mutilating the corpse without affecting its integrity. This is seen in grave no. 123 at Hierakonpolis where the vertebrae and hyoid bone were attacked but the corpse was left intact in its original position. Degradation and disabling were the intentions here. Corpse mutilation was a destructive form of cursing which instantly cursed the target through physical and violent activation by the user – the mutilator. Unlike execration figures, corpse mutilation did not use an intermediate but instead attacked the target's body directly in order to subdue and control the target.

Physical damage to reserve heads had the same purpose as corpse mutilation: to control the dead. Unlike corpse mutilation, however, reserve heads used a representation in an indirect attack on the target, a process similar to that seen in the use of execration figures. The use of reserve heads as intermediates was made necessary due to the emergence of tombs, as some bodies were not accessible via digging, as those targeted by corpse mutilation were. Reserve heads used detailed

⁶³⁰ Chapter Five, section 1.1.

⁶³¹ Chapter Five, section 1.2.

facial features to identify the target,⁶³² and physical actions were performed on it, mimicking some execration figures. Where corpse mutilation was a purely destructive method of cursing, reserve heads contained an element of creation as the head was made specifically for the purpose of cursing. The reserve head was forcibly hit on the back of the head, and a line was cut around the base of the neck, which is suggestive of decapitation. The ears were either hacked off, or in most cases were created separately to the head, mirroring the theme of separation seen in corpse mutilation. The exact intention of these features was never stated, but corpse mutilation attacks reflect those which would be detrimental to a living person, and so too do the attacks on reserve heads. Damage to the back of the head, in the location repeatedly targeted on reserve heads, would harm the parietal and occipital lobes of the brain, which deal with movement and the senses.⁶³³ The decapitation suggested by the cut line around the neck would clearly mean death, but severing the spine would only disable the body, and removing the ears would further disable by rendering the target deaf. The attacks carried out on reserve heads were intended to disable and degrade the target through association between the representation and the deceased person which it represented.

⁶³² Chapter Five, section 2.1.

⁶³³ Chapter Five, section 3.

4: OUTCOME – WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY CURSE?

The consequences of a monument curse were always explicitly stated as this type of curse was a warning used as prevention, so its strength was derived from the seriousness of the threat. Monument curses entailed a wide variety of consequences, so for the purpose of this study they have been categorised:⁶³⁴

1) Physical denial of afterlife – the interference or restriction of physical items which would obstruct a successful afterlife. These items are the tomb and its contents,⁶³⁵ and offerings,⁶³⁶ for example **B08** ‘As for any governor... who will take it (an offering) from my statue... his tomb in the necropolis will not exist’. When this type of consequence appeared in a tomb curse, the element of a like-for-like punishment is seen, because if the curser’s mortuary environment was compromised, then so too was the target’s.

2) Supernatural denial of afterlife – the interference or restriction of non-physical concepts which would obstruct a successful afterlife. This category of punishment involved unfavourable judgement in the afterlife, usually by Osiris,⁶³⁷ degradation or the forgetting of the target’s name,⁶³⁸ or an absence of voice offerings.⁶³⁹ In a tomb context, this type of consequence would be a like-for-like punishment as it countered a risk to the curser’s afterlife with a threat to the target’s afterlife.

3) Retribution by deities – falling into disfavour with, and being punished by deities. This could result in offerings to particular deities being rejected,⁶⁴⁰ or to being persecuted by deities.⁶⁴¹ Monument curses in this study warned targets that various deities would hate them,⁶⁴² that they would suffer their wrath,⁶⁴³ or that deities would

⁶³⁴ There are several instances where these consequences belong to more than one category, and when this occurs, the consequence is assigned to the category which best fits the main element of the punishment. An example is being burned by a particular deity, which fits the ‘retribution by deities’, ‘physical denial of afterlife’ and ‘bodily retribution’ categories; in this case the deity is the focus of the punishment, so this example would be assigned to the ‘retribution by deities’ category.

⁶³⁵ **A13, A15, A21, A25, A28, B08, C05, C10 and C11.**

⁶³⁶ **A27/B09.**

⁶³⁷ **A01, A04-09, A11, A14, A16-19, A22, A23, A26, B06, B07, B10, C06 and D03.**

⁶³⁸ **A25, A28 and C10.**

⁶³⁹ **A28.**

⁶⁴⁰ **A25 and C05.**

⁶⁴¹ **B05, B08, C03, C04/D01 and D02.**

⁶⁴² **A27/B09, B02 and C11.**

⁶⁴³ **A03 and A28.**

be after them.⁶⁴⁴ More explicit curses state that deities would burn them,⁶⁴⁵ that they would be for both Sekhmet's and Bastet's fires,⁶⁴⁶ that they would be stabbed or cut,⁶⁴⁷ or simply killed.⁶⁴⁸ Numerous deities were evoked in these curses, from national gods such as Thoth⁶⁴⁹ to local or obscure gods such as Hemen.⁶⁵⁰

4) **Retribution by akhs** – falling into disfavour with, and being punished by akhs. This type of consequence could result in akhs appearing on earth,⁶⁵¹ which would cause fear among the living, being forgotten by akhs,⁶⁵² or being an enemy of akhs after death.⁶⁵³ A threat of punishment by akhs would have been particularly effective in a tomb environment, where the tomb owner (i.e. the curser) would have been considered to be an akh.

5) **Bodily retribution** – suffering physical infliction. This type of consequence was commonly used against a wrongdoer in Old Kingdom tombs, where the tomb owner threatened to snap his neck like a bird's.⁶⁵⁴ Other violent threats include being burned⁶⁵⁵ or being for the fire,⁶⁵⁶ being cooked,⁶⁵⁷ having an arm chopped off,⁶⁵⁸ being cut⁶⁵⁹ and even decapitation.⁶⁶⁰ Less serious, but more degrading, actions could also be threatened: the target could be spat on, or his limbs could be 'rolled about in muck'.⁶⁶¹ The threat of being bound and tied as prisoners⁶⁶² mirrors the posture repeatedly seen in execration figures.

⁶⁴⁴ **A24 and C04/D01.**

⁶⁴⁵ **C04/D01.**

⁶⁴⁶ **C12.**

⁶⁴⁷ **C02.**

⁶⁴⁸ **C09.**

⁶⁴⁹ **A03, A28 and B05.**

⁶⁵⁰ **A02.**

⁶⁵¹ **A01, A17 and A26.**

⁶⁵² **A25.**

⁶⁵³ **A28.**

⁶⁵⁴ **A01, A05, A17, A26 and B08.**

⁶⁵⁵ **A25, A28 and C07.**

⁶⁵⁶ **B08 and C04/D01.**

⁶⁵⁷ **C05.**

⁶⁵⁸ **A02 and B08.**

⁶⁵⁹ **A28, C02 and C11.**

⁶⁶⁰ **C11.**

⁶⁶¹ **A28 and B01** respectively.

⁶⁶² **B03/C01.**

6) **Physical loss** – losing or suffering interference to items. On a basic level, this type of consequence involved the loss of property and possessions, such as houses, monuments and inheritance⁶⁶³ but the threat of never seeing a home, children and even Egypt could also be made.⁶⁶⁴ In this latter example, although nothing was physically taken away from the target (this curse was found in a quarry in Hatnub, and was presumably made by and targeted towards those on expedition) these things would be lost to the target. A like-for-like punishment could also be used to protect things: ‘A[s for you who will act] against this (tomb), the like will be done against your possessions by your successors’;⁶⁶⁵ whatever happened to the curser’s possessions would also happen to the target’s.

7) **Abstract loss** – losing or suffering interference to non-physical concepts. The most common theme in this category is the loss of social standing within the community: becoming a down-and-out⁶⁶⁶ or a hated one,⁶⁶⁷ losing adherents, having slaves as companions,⁶⁶⁸ and even losing royal heritage by not being born to the pharaoh.⁶⁶⁹ The loss of a fulfilled life was also threatened, so the target would fail to succeed, master⁶⁷⁰ or complete⁶⁷¹ anything, and his heart would never rest in life.⁶⁷² Finally, a target could be threatened with a loss to his length of life or to a loss of the rest of his life.⁶⁷³

8) **Familiar retribution** – punishments which involved the target’s family. A common threat in this category is the concept of interference with inheritance, achieved by the wife failing to produce an heir,⁶⁷⁴ the successors being subdued,⁶⁷⁵ or the son failing to take over his father’s role.⁶⁷⁶ The family could be directly threatened: children could be burned, removed from their tombs after death and even denied existence.⁶⁷⁷ The

⁶⁶³ **A02, B01, B03/C01, B08 and C04/D01.**

⁶⁶⁴ **B11.**

⁶⁶⁵ **A10.** A similar threat is made in **A01.**

⁶⁶⁶ **B01.**

⁶⁶⁷ **B02 and C11.**

⁶⁶⁸ **B01.**

⁶⁶⁹ **C08.**

⁶⁷⁰ Both occur in **B02.**

⁶⁷¹ **B05.**

⁶⁷² **A27/B09.**

⁶⁷³ **A13, B03/C01 and C06.**

⁶⁷⁴ **A13.**

⁶⁷⁵ **A16 and B06.**

⁶⁷⁶ **B02, B04, B08 and C11.**

⁶⁷⁷ **B08, A25 and C10** respectively.

target's wife could be seized⁶⁷⁸ in front of him, or forced to copulate with their child or a donkey.⁶⁷⁹

9) **Animal infliction** – suffering retribution from animals. Attacks of this nature could occur in the water from crocodiles⁶⁸⁰ and hippos,⁶⁸¹ and on land from lions,⁶⁸² snakes⁶⁸³ and scorpions.⁶⁸⁴ Attacks from these animals could be fatal, and magic spells such as Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII were used to prevent attacks from animals, in this case scorpions. It was not only wild animals which could punish a wrongdoer as copulating with a donkey could also be threatened.⁶⁸⁵ The outcome here would have been social disgrace rather than serious injury.

The consequence of a monument curse could threaten many aspects of the target's life, and retaliation could come from both natural and supernatural sources. These curses did not appear to have guidelines concerning what could and could not be threatened, whether the punishment was permanent or temporary, immediate or for the future, for this life or the afterlife. Monument curses provide the widest range of consequences of all the cursing methods in this study.

Only one execration figure in this study, Louvre E 27145,⁶⁸⁶ explicitly states the consequence of its use: that the female target will be unable to think of anyone but the curser. In this case, the representation of the target as restrained by rope and embedded with metal pins was not to be taken at face value; the curser did not want to harm the target physically, but to alter her perception of him through the control of her behaviour. Every other execration figure in this study only has an implied consequence, achieved via the visual representation of the target as restrained or subdued. Even those figures which have writing – Cairo JdE 63955-63959 and Cairo

⁶⁷⁸ **B01.**

⁶⁷⁹ **C11.**

⁶⁸⁰ **A11, A20 and B08.**

⁶⁸¹ **A20.**

⁶⁸² **A20.**

⁶⁸³ **A11, A20 and B08.**

⁶⁸⁴ **A20.** Magic spell Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 was also intended to prevent attacks from scorpions (Chapter Three, section 3).

⁶⁸⁵ **C11.**

⁶⁸⁶ Chapter Two, section 4.

Figures JdE 88146⁶⁸⁷ – do not declare the consequence of the curse beyond controlling rebellious behaviour. The majority of these figures are depicted as being restrained by rope, however it is unlikely that the users envisioned this as a literal consequence; it is logical to assume that the purpose of these figures was to restrain the target metaphorically rather than physically, as Louvre E 27145. The Cairo Museum EM00-130⁶⁸⁸ figure was not only bound with rope, but also burned, stabbed and cut; this user wished to harm their target physically or mentally through these violent actions. The survival, and in some cases the displaying,⁶⁸⁹ of these figures suggests the consequences of these curses were a permanent situation, rather than a short term solution; the targets would be eternally under control.

Like monument curses, magic spells had clearly defined consequences. Both Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1213 and Papyrus Chester Beatty VII were used for protection against scorpions;⁶⁹⁰ the former to prevent a sting from occurring, the latter to counteract the effects of a sting. The consequences of these spells were, respectively, that the offending scorpion was restrained via recitation and therefore prevented from stinging, and the venom was removed from the body via a replica scorpion, perhaps in the manner of an execration figure. Papyrus Deir el-Medina 36⁶⁹¹ is a medical spell which combated recurring fever and sweating; the symptoms of malaria. The symptoms were blamed on malign supernatural entities, so the spell tackled these entities by calling upon deities, in this case Osiris and Geb, to banish them to the underworld. By removing the entities from this world, it was believed that the symptoms would also be removed, and the user would therefore be restored to health. Wooden pendant Berlin 23308⁶⁹² protected the wearer from those who would use the evil eye against him by threatening potential wrongdoers. A number of deities – Sekhmet, Thoth, Isis, Nephthys, Horus and the Great God – would seek revenge on the target, who would be felled like Apophis. Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 1057⁶⁹³ was used to attract the attention of a particular woman, and the consequence was that all the gods of the sky and earth would make the woman come after the user. Papyrus

⁶⁸⁷ Chapter Two, sections 5 and 7 respectively.

⁶⁸⁸ Chapter Two, section 1.

⁶⁸⁹ The Abusir Excavation 1984 collection had been painted, and the level of detail of the pieces suggests they were intended for public display (Chapter Two, section 3).

⁶⁹⁰ Chapter Three, sections 3 and 5 respectively.

⁶⁹¹ Chapter Three, section 4.

⁶⁹² Chapter Three, section 1.

⁶⁹³ Chapter Three, section 2.

Bremner Rhind⁶⁹⁴ dealt with the problem of Apophis attacking Re's solar barque in the underworld, by using various physical and verbal rituals to subdue Apophis. The consequence was that Apophis was overpowered, and unable to attack Re's barque, meaning it could travel freely. Magic spells were used to prevent or solve a particular problem, so the consequences were tailored to address the user's situation. Some magic spells used representations in the manner of execration figures to control the target, while others evoked deities in retaliation.

As with the use of execration figures, the practice of *damnatio memoriae* did not have an explicitly stated consequence, but the Thirteenth Dynasty Coptos Decree states as a punishment that the target's name would not be remembered in the Min Temple where the decree was set.⁶⁹⁵ The erasure of an image or name sent a clear visual message to an observer that this person's legacy was not worthy of remembrance. Even when the damage was repaired, this message was still clear: the erasure and subsequent plastering of a son's name and image in Neferseshemre's tomb⁶⁹⁶ resulted in blank spaces and the suspension of Teti's pyramid's name which remained where his titles had been inscribed. The erasure of both the name and image throughout a monument, as also seen in Seankhuptah's tomb⁶⁹⁷ but with some oversights, erased identity and therefore erased memory of the target, preventing tomb visitors from honouring him. Senenmut's name was attacked, but not completely erased, in the axial corridor of TT 71.⁶⁹⁸ Here, remnants of hieroglyphs allow reconstructions to be made, but the name, and therefore the memory, of the target have clearly been dishonoured. In Senenmut's TT 353⁶⁹⁹ his name was preserved but his image was attacked, resulting in targeted damage to the face, hands, elbow and waistband. In cases such as this, where the name or image was not completely erased, the visual result mirrors that seen with execration figures: the target was degraded. The damage done to Senenmut's Chicago Field Museum 173800 and Kimbell Art Museum AP 1985.02 statues⁷⁰⁰ reflect that seen in his TT 71, but on the statues the name was cleanly and thoroughly erased, so reconstruction has been based on surviving statue images and titles. The result here is the dissociation between the

⁶⁹⁴ Chapter Three, section 6.

⁶⁹⁵ Chapter Four, section 7.

⁶⁹⁶ Chapter Four, section 1.

⁶⁹⁷ Chapter Four, section 2.

⁶⁹⁸ Chapter Four, section 3.

⁶⁹⁹ Chapter Four, section 4.

⁷⁰⁰ Chapter Four, sections 5 and 6 respectively.

person depicted by the image and titles, and Senenmut's name; he would not be remembered as a prince, governor, steward of Amun or any other honorary title or role. Cursing by *damnatio memoriae* was intended to have a permanent effect.

The practice of corpse mutilation involved focused attacks on the dead bodies of targets. The types of attacks could be consistent across a number of corpses⁷⁰¹ or seemingly sporadic,⁷⁰² but they all targeted the body in a way which would have had serious consequences on a living person: the separation of body parts to disable, and decapitation to kill. Removing body parts resulted in a burial which was no longer complete, and harming the corpse resulted in a body which was no longer intact, but was defiled, both of which had serious consequences for the target in the afterlife. The act of corpse mutilation mirrored some cases of *damnatio memoriae* when only specific body parts were targeted; the aim here was to hinder the target through the removal or disabling of body parts. This concept of control is also seen in the wax Cairo Museum EM00-130 execration figure, which suffered severe violent action; the difference is that in corpse mutilation there was no representation to focus these attacks on, so they were carried out on the target's body. The result of corpse mutilation was the disabling and subjugation of the deceased target, actions which were intended to hinder movement; the corpse could no longer rise up and pose a threat to the living.

As with the case of *damnatio memoriae* of Senenmut's image in TT 353 above, and come examples of corpse mutilation, reserve heads were attacked in a precise and generally consistent manner: the ears were detached, the back of the head was cracked open, and the bottom of the neck was cut around the circumference.⁷⁰³ The result of this damage is not explicitly stated, but the severity of the damage seen on some heads, such as Hildesheim 2384,⁷⁰⁴ suggests an intent to hinder or immobilise the target. If the damage done to the back of the reserve head was carried out on a person, it would cause damage to the brain, in particular the parietal and occipital lobes. Damage to the parietal lobe could affect the target's special orientation and ability to control their limbs,⁷⁰⁵ while damage to the occipital lobe could affect the target's vision.⁷⁰⁶ Where corpse mutilation affects the target's bodily functions by directly attacking the body,

⁷⁰¹ For example the corpses in the Hierakonpolis cemetery which show repeated damage to the skull and vertebrae (Chapter Five, section 1.2).

⁷⁰² For example the differing types of damage seen in the Gerzeh cemetery (Chapter Five, section 1.1).

⁷⁰³ Chapter Five, section 2.1.

⁷⁰⁴ Tefnin, 1991: pl 25.

⁷⁰⁵ Nolte, 2002: 61 and Nolte, 2002: 548 respectively.

⁷⁰⁶ Nolte, 2002: 61. For discussion see Chapter Five, section 3.

reserve heads achieve this via the brain, one of the few areas available for attack in this situation. As reserve heads share the theme of degradation via physical attacks or visual impact, as seen in execration figures and *damnatio memoriae*, the consequences must be logically assumed based on these similarities, that reserve heads were designed to control and hinder the target. Corpse mutilation involved physical attacks on the deceased in order to control and subdue them, and the physical attacks seen on reserve heads appear to mirror this; reserve heads prevented or stopped the dead from being a threat to the living.

CONCLUSION

At the start of this thesis I defined curses as “a threat or intent to harm a defined target using a non-direct method, for an expressed or implicit reason, usually as retaliation”.⁷⁰⁷ These principles have been discussed in each cursing method considered here and they highlight the purpose of cursing. Curses were a tool which the ancient Egyptians used to prevent or to resolve problematic situations. This tool could be utilised in everyday life, for example as a spell to ward off dangerous animals, or used in specific scenarios such as a reserve head to hinder a problematic deceased individual. Ancient Egyptian curses were a method of control, and so cursing was a widely used practice performed by a variety of people. Across the different forms discussed here, curses could be used on a wide range of targets – men and women, the living and the dead, animals and supernatural entities – sometimes with the help of natural or supernatural agents. Each individual example of cursing portrays an aspect of how the Egyptians interacted with each other, but as a whole, cursing provides an overview of the relationships within ancient Egyptian society; curses show how they treated each other, what they expected from each other, and how they dealt with problems.

Actions which warranted the use of monument curses were predictable; curse authors foresaw their tombs being desecrated or their endowments being neglected. Similarly, the Berlin 23308 tablet anticipated and obstructed the use of the evil eye against its owner. These curses were preventive measures undertaken by individuals in contexts where official intervention was not available. The contrast to this is the use of cursing to solve a particular problem, for instance when a man wanted to attract a particular woman, or to cure the symptoms of malaria. Execration figures were used as a means to control enemies, and in a similar fashion corpse mutilation and reserve heads were used to control the dead, should they start to interfere with the living. Cursing allowed individuals to take a situation which might otherwise have been beyond their control, and help themselves to deal with it. The social norms and expected social behaviour of the ancient Egyptians are highlighted through these curses; the situations in which curses were used were either common or predictable occurrences which were eligible to be solved by cursing.

⁷⁰⁷ Introduction, page 24.

The consequences of a curse had a purpose which was tailored to the context. If the curser has an immediate problem, the consequences focussed on controlling and appropriately handling the responsible factors, whether they were natural or supernatural. If the curser wished to prevent a problem, the consequences focussed on threatening the responsible factors to stop them from acting. This latter situation presents a wide range of consequences, and portrays the insecurities of ancient Egyptian society: loss of an afterlife, conflict with deities and akhs, animal attacks and violence were all threatened, and must have played on widely held fears.

The intricacies of a curse varied widely, from methods which relied heavily on physical actions – *damnatio memoriae*, corpse mutilation and reserve heads – to those which focussed on written or verbal processes – monument curses and magic spells. The execration figures studied here relied mainly on visual impact, but physical actions could also be performed on them. Cursing could be a creative process through the production of texts and representations in the form of execration figures or reserve heads, or it could be a destructive process through the erasure of names and images, the harming of representations, and the mutilation of corpses. Monument curses were generally self-sufficient, needing only an existing monument on which to write the curse, and *damnatio memoriae* only required an existing monument to attack and the tools to do so. Corpse mutilation required tools to harm a dead body, and possibly also to dig up the body if this practice occurred after burial. The other cursing methods studied here – magic spells, execration figures and reserve heads – all required something to be made or produced, either a medium or a representation.

Some curses implemented agents to help the user, from the pharaoh to deities, akhs and animals. Curses empowered individuals, allowing them to call upon assistance in the form of benevolent natural and supernatural entities who sought to punish people for their wrongdoings on behalf of the user. None of the curses studied here use an official body as an agent; curses were not law, but a way for an individual to seek justice. Cursing could be a solution to an existing problem, such as illness or the troublesome dead, or they could be a preventive measure to stop a situation from happening, such as theft from a tomb or renegeing on an endowment. In the case of the former, the curse was activated instantly because the circumstances required for activation (the occurrence of a particular problem) were already present. This type of curse was used at the time it was needed. In the case of the latter, the curse was dormant until the required circumstances were met (until the problem occurred). This type of

curse was intended to be a deterrent to prevent the problem from happening, so it was used before the problem presented itself.

Cursing could be performed on distant or nearby targets, on identified or unidentified targets, and on living or dead targets by literate or illiterate users, wealthy or poor users, and skilled or unskilled users. Cursing as a practice was flexible, with different methods being used to fit the specific circumstances and requirements of individual situations. However, there is one area where cursing was not flexible: the concept of degradation. Every type of curse in this study degraded the target, whether through a written (and perhaps verbal) recording of their wrongdoing, being portrayed as subdued or restrained, or via harmful physical actions carried out on a representation or other connection with the target. Degradation made the target morally inferior to the user, and so made the user morally superior. This may have been the key to a curser's power, allowing the user to punish their target accordingly. The consistent use of degradation techniques suggests that this was an essential element of cursing; without degrading the target, an individual may not have been able to curse.

The methods of cursing in this study sometimes present vast differences in form and function when compared to each other, and it is these differences which convey the adaptability of the practice of cursing. What is also evident in this study is the similarities between seemingly distinct methods of cursing, and it is these similarities which tell us about practicalities of cursing. All curses, whether they happened via the process of monument curses, execration figures, magic spells, *damnatio memoriae*, corpse mutilation or reserve heads, had to have the following criteria:

- 1) A user or someone who benefitted from the curse – curses were a tool to help people.
- 2) A reason for use – curses always had a purpose, whether it was defined or implied.
- 3) A target – someone or something on which the curse was focussed.
- 4) Association between target and curse – a way to connect the curse to the target.
- 5) Degradation – to give the user power to curse the target.
- 6) An outcome – a solution to a problem or the punishment meted to the target.

This thesis began as a study of several cursing methods – monument curses, execration figures, magic spells and *damnatio memoriae* – and evolved into an analysis of how these cursing methods differ in form and function. As research progressed, the similarities between these methods became as evident as the differences, until the above criteria could be repeatedly seen throughout. The differences can be attributed to the particular and individual circumstances of both the curse environment and user, while the similarities reflect the basic underlying principles of the process of cursing. These principles were then used to reconsider two practices with unknown or obscure motives – corpse mutilation and the use of reserve heads – allowing fresh theories to be put forward about the purpose of these practices. The evaluation of the role of corpse mutilation and reserve heads within the theme of cursing is something which could only have happened due to the amalgamated structure of this work. This thesis is a synthesis which allows widely different practices to be studied together under the overall subject of cursing in ancient Egypt.

MONUMENT CURSE LIST

All monument curse translations for Chapter One appear here, where they are listed in order of their assigned reference: A01, A02, A03, etc. The monument curses assigned as A protect a tomb and its contents, B monument curses protect other monuments, C monument curses protect endowments and agreements, and D monument curses are miscellaneous. Within these groups, the curses are arranged alphabetically according to author; when the curse has a common name, e.g. the Semna Stela, this name is used instead.

A01: Tomb of Ankhmahor – Sixth Dynasty at Saqqara

ir ht nb irt=tn r is=i pn hrt-ntr

As for anything which you will do against this tomb of mine of the necropolis,

[ir mitt] ir išt=tn

[the like will be done] against your possessions.

[ir s st] nb ꜥty=sn r is=i pn m ꜥbw=sn...

[As for] any [man or woman] who will enter into this tomb of mine in their impurity...

...[iw=i r it]t=f mi 3pd

...[I will wring] him like a bird

dy.tw snd im=f r m33 3hw tpw t3

and fear will be put in him about seeing akhs upon earth,

snd=sn n 3h ikr

so they will fear an excellent akh.

[iw=i r wd^c-mdw] hn^c=f m d3d3t špst nt ntr 33

[I will be judged] with him in the august council of the Great God.

Main publication:

Kanawati, N. and Hassan, A. (1997), *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara II: The Tomb of Ankhmahor*, ACE Reports 9, Warminster: Aris & Philips, 28, pl 2 and 35.

See also:

Kanawati, N. (2003), *Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepy I*, London: Routledge, 51-53.

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 202.1 and 202.3-9.

A02: Tomb of Ankhtifi – First Intermediate Period at Mo’alla

ir ḥkꜣ nb ḥkꜣ.ty=fy m Ḥfꜣt

As for any ruler who will rule in Mo’alla,

ir.ty=fy ʿ ḏw bin r dit tn

who will do an evil or bad thing against this coffin,

r mnw nbw nw pr pn

or against any cultic objects of this tomb,

sh.tw ḥpš=f n Ḥmn m pr<w>=f nw Ḥrp Ḥb

his arm will be chopped off for Hemen in his processions of the District Festival,

sh.tw ḥpš=f n Ḥmn m pr<w>=f nw Gs ʿIꜣbt Ḥb

his arm will be chopped off for Hemen in his processions of the Eastern Side Festival,

sh.tw ḥpš=f n Ḥmn m pr<w>=f nw Ḥfꜣt Ḥb

his arm will be chopped off for Hemen in his processions of the Food Festival,

sh.tw ḥpš=f n Ḥmn m pr<w>=f nw Ḥm Nḥ Ḥb

his arm will be chopped off for Hemen in his processions of the Eternal Servant Festival⁷⁰⁸

sh.tw ḥpš=f n Ḥmn m pr<w>=f nw Šwt ʿꜣt Ḥb

his arm will be chopped off for Hemen in his processions of the Great Feather Festival,

ḥnkꜣw Ḥmn sftt=f rʿ n Ḥm Nḥ Ḥb

his slaughter is presented (to) Hemen on the day of the Eternal Servant Festival,

⁷⁰⁸ The reading of the name of the festival is uncertain.

ḥnkw Ḥmn išt=f nb

all of his possessions are presented (to) Hemen,

iw^cw sw iw^c<w>=f

and his heirs will be inherited (by) him.

Main publication:

Vandier, J. (1950), *Mo'alla: La Tombe d'Ankhtifi et la Tombe de Sebekhotep. Bibliothèque d'Étude XVIII*, Cairo: IFAO, 206.

See also:

Willems, H. (1990), 'Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment (Mo'alla Inscription 8)', *JEA* 76, 27-54.

A03: Tomb of Djefayhapy – Twelfth Dynasty at Siut

ir rmt nbt sš nb rḥ ḥt nb nḏs nb twz nb

As for any person, any scribe, any wise man, any commoner, or any inferior

ir.ty=sn [ḥt] ḏw⁷⁰⁹ m is pn

who will do [something]⁷¹⁰ evil in this tomb,

ḥḏ.ty=sn sš=f nss.ty=sn n ḥntyw=f

who will damage its inscriptions, who will destroy its images,

ḥr=s[n] n ḏnd n Dḥwty...

they will submit to the wrath of Thoth.

Main publication:

Griffith, F. Ll. (1889), *The Inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh*, London: Trubner, 9-10, pl 4.

See also:

Frandsen, P. J. (1998), 'On the Avoidance of Certain Forms of Loud Voices to the Sacred' in Clarysse, W., Schoors, A. and Willems, H. (eds.), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years II*, Leuven: Peeters, 975-1000.

⁷⁰⁹ The hieroglyphs show *dw* not *ḏw* here (Sottas, 1913: 50).

⁷¹⁰ Frandsen translates *ḥt ḏw* as *šd-ḥrw* 'disturbance' due to the uncertainty of the hieroglyphs.

Sottas, H. (1913), *La préservation de la propriété funéraire dans l'ancienne Égypte; avec le recueil des formules d'imprécation*, Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 50.

A04: Tomb of Djenwen – Sixth Dynasty

ir s nb ir.ty=fy ht ir nw

As for any man who will do something against this (tomb),

wnn wd^c-mdw hn^c=f in ntr ʕ3

there will be judgement with him by the Great God.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 390.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 73.4-5.

A05: Tomb of Harkhuf – Sixth Dynasty at Qubbet el-Hawa

ir s nb ʕk.ty=fy r is=i [pn m ʕbw=f]

As for any man who will enter [this] tomb of mine [in his impurity],

[iw=i r itt]=f mi ʕpd

[I will wring] him like a bird,

iw=f r wd^c hr=s in ntr ʕ3

he will be judged about it by the Great God.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 329.

See also:

Lichtheim, M. (1973), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings I*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 23-27.

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 122.14-16.

Simpson, W. K. (1972), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: an Anthology of Stories, Instructions and Poetry*, London: Yale University Press, 408.

A06: Tomb of Hesi – Sixth Dynasty at Saqqara

ir rmt nb ꜥk.t<y>=f<y> r is pn

As for anyone who will enter this tomb

wmm.n=f bwt nt bwt 3h

after he has eaten abominations which the akh abominates

nk.n=f hmwt

(or) after he has copulated with women;

iw<=i r> wdꜥ hnꜥ=f m d3d3t ntr ꜥ3

I will be judged with him in the council of the Great God.

Main publication:

Kanawati, N. and Abder-Raziq, M. (2000), *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara V: The Tomb of Hezi*, ACE Reports 13, Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

See also:

Kanawati, N. (1984), *Excavations at Saqqara: North-West of Teti's Pyramid*, Ancient History Documentary Research Centre 2, Sydney: Macquarie University, 18-22.⁷¹¹

Silverman, D. P. (2000), 'The Threat-Formula and Biographical Text in the Tomb of Hezi at Saqqara', *JARCE* 37, 1-13.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 277.

A07: Tomb of Hetepherakhty – Fifth Dynasty at Saqqara

ir s st nb ꜥk.ty=sn ir is=i pw m ꜥbw=sn

As for any man or woman who will enter into this tomb of mine in their impurity,

⁷¹¹ This reference is for information on Hesi's tomb, but the translated text is not included.

ir.ty=sn ht dw ir nw

who will do an evil thing against this (tomb),

wnn wd^c-mdw hn^c=sn hr=s in ntr ʕ3

there will be judgement with them about it by the Great God.

Main publication:

Mohr, H. T. (1943), *The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti: Study on an Egyptian tombe Chapel in the Museum of Antiquities*, Leiden: Brill, 35.

See also:

Lichtheim, M. (1973), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings I*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 16.

Lichtheim, M. (1988), *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: a Study and an Anthology*, Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 11.

Sethé, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 50.16-51.1.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 274.

A08: Tomb of Inti – Sixth Dynasty at Deshasha

[i]r hm rmt nb [ir].ty=sn ht dw r nw

Indeed, as for any person who will [do] something evil against this (tomb),

ir.ty=sn ht nb nbdt r nw

who will do anything destructive against this (tomb),

[s]n.ty=sn sš im

or who will erase the inscriptions within,

[w]nn wd^c-mdw hn^c=sn hr=s in ntr ʕ3 nb wd^c-mdw

there will be judgement with them about it by the Great God, lord of judgement,

m bw nty wd^c-mdw im

in the place where judgement is.

Main publication:

Kanawati, N. and McFarlane, A. (1993), *Deshasha: The Tombs of Inti, Shedu and Others*, ACE Reports 5, Sydney: Australian Centre for Egyptology, 32-33.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 70.15-71.2.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 372.

A09: Tomb of Khenu – Fifth Dynasty at Saqqara

i[r] s nb ir.ty=fy ht r nw

As for any man who will do something against this (tomb)

ir.n=i r im3h hr nb=i

which I have made in order to be revered before my Lord,

wnn wdꜥ-mdw hnꜥ=f m bw nty wdꜥ-mdw im

there will be judgement with him in the place where judgement is.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 221.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 35.1-3.

A10: Tomb of Khuiwer – Fifth Dynasty at Giza

i[r ir.ty=tn] r nw

A[s for you who will act] against this (tomb),

wnn ir mitt r išt=tn in imy-ht=tn

the like will be done against your possessions by your successors.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 293.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 46.11-12.

A11: Tomb of Meni – Sixth Dynasty at Giza

msh ir=f m mw hfzw ir=f hr t3

The crocodile is against him in the water and the snake is against him on land,

ir.ty=fy ht ir nw

he who will do something against this (tomb),

n-sp ir=i ht ir=f

as I have never done a thing against him.

in ntr wd=f

It is the god who judges him.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 253.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 23.12-16.

A12: Tomb of Merefnebef – Sixth Dynasty at Saqqara

ir [rmj nb k].ty=sn r is pn n dt

As for [anyone] who will [enter] this tomb of eternity

m bw=sn wnm.n=sn bwt

in their impurity, having eaten an abomination

bwt ʒḥ nt(y) ḥp r ḥrt-nṯr

which an akh who has travelled to the necropolis abominates,

ny wḏ^c=sn ḥbw=sn

and they have not removed their impurity

mī w^cb=sn r ḥwt-nṯr nt nṯr

as they purify (themselves) for the temple of a god,

rdīw sḏb=sn ḥr=s ḏw wrt in nṯr ḥʒ

their very evil obstacle is placed by the Great God because of it.

Main publication:

Myśliwiec, K. (2004), 'The Decoration of the Main (West) Chapel' in Myśliwiec, K. (ed.),
Saqqara I: The Tomb of Merefnebef, Warsaw: Editions Neriton, 72, pl XII.

See also:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature,
438-439.

A13: Block Statue of Montuemhat (Cairo JdE 31883) – Twenty Fifth Dynasty at Karnak

ḥʒty-ḥ ḥḳʒ ḥʒswt Mnt-m-ḥʒt=s ḏd=f

The governor, the ruler of the foreign lands, Montuemhat, he says:

ir nb r is tw m st<=i>

As for anyone against this tomb in my place:

ḥbnty pw šd-ḥrw

the one who disturbs is a criminal,

ḥnd rnpwt<=f>

his years will be diminished,

īwty ḳrs=f

one whose burial does not exist,

n<n> iw^ꜥw=f n ḥmt=f...

without an heir from his wife...

Main publication:

Borchardt, L. (1925), *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Statuen und Statuetten von Konigen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo II*, Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 191.

A14: Tomb of Nefer (Hildesheim Nr. 2403) – Sixth Dynasty at Giza

ir ir.ty=fy ḥt ḏw r nwy

As for he who will do something evil against this (tomb),

wnn wḏ^ꜥ-mdw ḥn^ꜥ=f in nṯr

there will be judgement with him by the god.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 255.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 225.16-17.

A15: Tomb of Nefersekheru – Nineteenth Dynasty at Zawyet Sultan

šb ib pw

He is confused of heart,

ḏg=f ʒw m ḥsy

he will see death as a weakness,

shn=f is=f

he will demolish his tomb,

ḥrtyw nty di kb pn

(the one?) who pours this libation,

tkn=k rn=i

when you approach my name.

Main publication:

Osing, J. (1992), *Das Grab des Nefersecheru in Zawyet Sultan*, Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 43-53, pl 35.

See also:

Frood, E. (2007), *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 147.

A16: Tomb of Nekhebu (Cairo JdE 44608) – Sixth Dynasty at Giza

ir s nb ꜥk.ty=fy im sbn⁷¹² m-ḥt nn

As for any man who will enter there, hostile after this,

iw=i r wḏꜥ ḥnꜥ=f in nṯr ꜥ3

I will be judged with him by the Great God,

iw dr tpw=sn-t3 ꜥrrwt=sn tp t3

Their successors are expelled (from) their homes on earth.

ir s nb sšnt.ty=fy⁷¹³ ḥt nb m is=i pn

As for any man who will vent anger on this tomb of mine,

iw=i r wḏꜥ ḥnꜥ=sn⁷¹⁴ in nṯr ꜥ3

I will be judged with them by the Great God.

Main publication:

⁷¹² The *n* is missing in the hieroglyphs.

⁷¹³ The second *t* is missing in the hieroglyphs.

⁷¹⁴ The *n* here is shared with that of *in*.

Dunham, D. (1938), 'The Biographical Inscriptions of Nekhebu in Boston and Cairo', *JEA* 24, 1-8.

See also:

Lichtheim, M. (1988), *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: a Study and an Anthology*, Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 14.

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 218.12-14 and 219.4-5.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 268-269.

A17: Tomb of Nenki (Leipzig Inv. 359) – Sixth Dynasty at Saqqara

ir s^h nb sr nb rmt nb

As for any dignitary, any magistrate, or any person

sšn.ty=fy inr nb dbt nb m is=i pn

who will rip out any stone or any brick from this tomb of mine,

iw=i r wd^c hn^c=f in ntr ʿ3

I will be judged with him by the Great God,

iw=i <r> itt ts=f mi 3pd

I will wring his neck like a bird,

iw=i r rdit snḏ ʿnhw nb tpw t3

and I will cause all the living upon earth to be afraid

n 3hw imyw imnt

of the akhs in the west.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 226.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 260.12-18.

A18: Tomb of Nykaankh – Fifth Dynasty at Tehna

ir s nb hnn.ty=fy

As for any man who will disturb (the tomb),

wnn wd^c-mdw hn^c=f

there will be judgement with him.

Main publication:

Thompson, E. M. (2014), *The Old Kingdom Cemetery at Tehna I: The Tombs of Nikaiankh I, Nikaiankh II and Kaihep*, Sydney: Australian Centre for Egyptology, 35 and pl 54a.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 30.12-13.

A19: Tomb of Pehenwikai (Berlin Museum Nr. 304) – Fifth Dynasty at Abusir

[ir s nb k̄.ty=fy hr twt]=i pw m bw=f

[As for any man who will enter by] this [statue] of mine in his impurity,

ir s nb k̄.ty=fy hr twt=i pn m bw=f

as for any man who will enter by these images of mine in his impurity,

wnn wd^c-mdw hn^c=f m bw nty wd^c-mdw im

there will be judgement with him in the place where judgement is.

[ir] s st nb k̄.ty=sn im=f m bw=sn

[As for] any man or woman who will enter into it in their impurity,

ir.ty=sn ht dw r=f

who will do something evil against it

m-ht nn dd.n=i

after this which I have said,

wnn [wḏꜥ]-mdw [ḥn]ꜥ=[s]n m [b]w <nty> wḏꜥ-mdw im

there will be [judgement with them] in [the place] where judgement is.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 232.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 49.1-3 and 49.8-10.

A20: Tomb of Petety – Fourth or Fifth Dynasty at Giza

rmṯ nb ḥm-nṯr Ḥwt-Ḥr ḥnw ḥw=f ḏbꜥ.wy(?) tr

(As for) anyone, priest of Hathor or musician who strikes (an instrument?),

ꜥk.ty=sn m nw

who will enter into this (tomb),

ir.ty=sn ḥt im ḏw

and who will do something evil there,

in nṯr nḏ=f w<ḏ> m-ꜥ=sn

it is the god who protects me from them

ink imšḥw n nb=f

as I am a revered one of his lord,

n sp iry<ḏ> ḥt ḏw r rmṯ nb

and I never did something evil against anyone.

ir=f ḥt r<ḏ> ḥr=s

(If) he does something against me about it,

in msh db msi wnm=f sn

it is the crocodile, the hippopotamus and the lion who will eat them.

rmꜥ nb ir.ty=sn ht nb(t) ḏw r nw

(As for) anyone who will do anything evil against this (tomb),

ꜥk.ty=sn im ngw

who will enter there destructively,

msh r=sn m mw

the crocodile is against them in the water,

hfꜥw r=sn hr tꜥ

the snake is against them on land,

db r=sn m mw

the hippopotamus is against them in the water,

ḏꜥrwt r=sn hr tꜥ

the scorpion is against them on land.

Main publication:

Hawass, Z. (2004), ‘The Tombs of the Pyramid Builders – The Tomb of the Artisan Petety and his Curse’ in Knoppers, G. N. and Hirsch, A. (eds.) *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, Leiden: Brill, 29-30, figures 6 and 7.

See also:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 437.

A21: Tomb of Seankhuptah – Fifth Dynasty at Saqqara

... r ꜥk im=f wꜥb

(anyone who) will (not) enter into it pure,

mꜥ wꜥb r ꜥk r is

like a pure one will enter the tomb

n ʕḥ ikr <n>n kʕi=f

of an excellent spirit: his ka will not exist,

n nfr n=f hr ntr

it is not good for him before the god,

<n>n krs=f m hrt-ntr

there is not his burial in the necropolis.

Main publication:

Kanawati, N. and Abder-Raziq, M. (1998), *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara III: The Tombs of Neferseshemre and Seankhuptah*, ACE Reports 11, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 41-62, pl 24c.

See also:

Kanawati, N. (2003), *Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepy I*, London: Routledge, 117-120.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 310.

A22: Tomb of Sefetjwa (Berlin Museum Nr. 15126) – Fifth Dynasty at Giza

<ir> s nb ir.ty=fy ht qw r nwy

As for any man who will do something evil against this (tomb),

wnn wd^c-mdw hn^c=f in ntr ʕ3

there will be judgement with him by the Great God.

Main publication:

Daoud, K. (2005), ‘The (Auto) Biographical Inscriptions of *Sft-w3*’, *Bulletin of the Egyptian Museum* 2, 41-46.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 72.4-5.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 259.

A23: Tomb of Senni / Idu – Sixth Dynasty at el-Qasr wa es-Sayed

ir sw [nb] iṭ.ty=sn ḥꜣt tn m-ꜥ=i

As for [any] men who will take this tomb from me,

iw=i r wdꜥ ḥnꜥ=sn in nṯr ʕꜣ

I will be judged with them by the Great God.

Main publication:

Säve-Söderbergh, T. (1994), *The Old Kingdom Cemetery at Hamra Dom (El-Qasr wa es-Saiyad)*, Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 28-29, pl 6a.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 117.5-6.

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 349.

A24: Inscription of Sobekhau – Nineteenth Dynasty at Aniba

ꜣsir ḥm-nṯr tpy n Ḥr nb Miꜥt Sbꜣw-ḥꜥ mꜣꜥ-ḥrw

The Osiris, the high priest of Horus lord of Mi'am, Sebakhou, true of voice.

ir pꜣ nty iw=f r th r tꜣ ʕḥꜥ

As for the one who will violate the tomb

<ḥr>-sꜣ dwꜣw

after tomorrow

Ḥr nb Miꜥt m[-sꜣ=f]

Horus lord of Mi'am is [after him].

Main publications:

Kitchen, K. A. (1980), *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical III*, Oxford: Blackwell, 130.

Kitchen, K. A. (2000), *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated III*, Oxford: Blackwell, 88.

A25: Tomb of Tefibi – Herakleopolitan Period at Siut

ir sbi nb sbi.ty=fy

As for any rebel who will rebel,

kzi.ty=fy m ib=f irt šd-hrw r is pn hn^c ntt im=f

who will plot in his heart to commit disturbance against this tomb and what is in it,

hd.ty=fy sš nss.ty=fy hntyw m isw nw tp^cwy

who will damage the inscriptions, who will destroy the images in the tombs of the ancestors,

m smyt nt Szwt m r-pr nb R^c-krret

in the necropolis of Siut or in the temple of the lord of Rekerret,

n snd=f wd^ct ntt im=f

because he did not fear the judgement which is in it.

nn žh n=f m hrt-ntr st nt žhw

there is no benefit for him in the necropolis, the place of the akhs,

nn wnn hrt=f m hrt-ntr

his possessions will not exist in the necropolis,

nš.tw hrdw=f m isw=sn

his children will be expelled from their tombs.

iw=f r hfty n žhw hm.n nb smyt

He will be an enemy of the akhs, one who the lord of the necropolis does not know,

[nn dm.tw rn=f] m-m žhw

[his name will not be pronounced] among the akhs,

nn šh³=f hr tpw t³

memory of him will not exist with those upon earth,

nn rn=f hr msw=f nn sti.tw n=f mw

his name will not exist with his children, water will not be poured for him,

nn prt-hrw nbw n=f m W3g hb nb...

and there will not be any voice offerings for him in the Wag Festival or any festival.

ir hry-tp nb s3 s s^ch nb šps nb nḏs nb

As for any chief, a son of any noble man, any august one, any commoner,

tm.ty=fy mk is pn hn^c ntt im=f

who will not protect this tomb and what is in it,

nn šsp ntr=f t-hḏ=f

his god will not accept his white-bread offering,

nn krs.tw=f m imnt

he will not be buried in the west,

h^cw=sn r tk hn^c hbntyw ir m tm-wnn

their bodies will be fire together with criminals, who have been made as non-existent ones.

Main publication:

Griffith, F. Ll. (1889), *The Inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh*, London: Trubner, 11, pl 11 and 12.

See also:

Edel, E. (1984), *Die Inschriften der Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber in Mittelägypten aus der Herakleopolitenzeit*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 26-27 and 38-39.

A26: Tomb of Tjetu (Tomb G. 2001) – Fifth or Sixth Dynasty at Giza

ir s nb it.ty=fy sšn.ty=fy inr ḏbt m is=i pn⁷¹⁵

As for any man who will steal or rip out a stone or brick from this tomb of mine,

⁷¹⁵ The *pn* is upside down.

iw=i r wd^c hn^c<=f> m d3d3t⁷¹⁶ ntr^c 3

I will be judged with him in the council of the Great God

ir n=f phw hr=s r m33 nhw tpw t3

and an end will be made for him because of it, in respect of seeing the living upon earth..

iw=i r itt ts=f mi 3pd

I will wring his neck like a bird

dy snd im=f r m33 3hw tpw t3

and fear will be put in him in respect of seeing akhs upon earth.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 234.

See also:

Goedicke, H. (1956), 'Juridical Expressions of the Old Kingdom', *JNES* 15, 27-32, pl XVI.

A27/B09: Statue of Wersu – Eighteenth Dynasty at Koptos

Wr-sw dd=f

Wersu, he says:

ir nty nb r tht h3t=i m hrt-ntr

“As for anyone who will desecrate my corpse in the necropolis,

nty r šd twt=i m is=i

who will remove my statue from my tomb,

wnn=f m hbd n R^c

he will be a hated one of Re,

nn sšp=f mw hr kbh n 3sir

he will not receive water from the water-jar of Osiris,

⁷¹⁶ The wrong hieroglyph is used at the beginning of the word.

*nn swd=f ht=f n hrdw=f r nhḥ*⁷¹⁷

he will not hand over his possessions to his children, ever.”

dd=f ir thi r st=i

He says: “As for the one who desecrates my place,

hb.ty=fy is<=i> šd.ty=fy hzt=i

who will damage my tomb or remove my corpse,

hbd sw k3 n R^c

the soul of Re will hate him,

n<n> swd=f ht=f n msw=f

he will not hand over his possessions to his children,

nn htp ib=f m ḥḥ

his heart will not rest in life,

nn sšp=f mw m hrt-nṯr

he will not receive water in the necropolis,

ḥtm.tw b3=f r nhḥ

his soul will be destroyed forever.”

Main publication:

Griffith, F. Ll. (1915), ‘A New Monument from Coptos’, *JEA* 2, 5-7, pl II and III.

A28: Tomb Inscription at el-Hasaia – Twenty Sixth Dynasty at el-Hasaia

ir tm dd nn

As for the one who does not say this,

⁷¹⁷ The now obliterated part of the text was captured in earlier rubbings.

iw=f [r]⁷¹⁸ dndn n ntr=f niwty
he [will be for] his local god's rage,

sh̄t nt nsw
and (for) the king's striking down,

nn sh̄z.tw=f m-m sh̄w
he will not be remembered among akhs,

nn dm.tw rn=f m t̄z hr nh̄h
his name will not be pronounced in the land forever and ever,

nn prt-hrw n=f
there will not be a voice offering for him,

nn krs=f m smyt imnt
there is not his burial in the western necropolis,

iw=f <r> t[k̄z h̄]n̄c hbntyw
he will b[urn tog]ether with the criminals,

h̄wi.[n] dh̄wty sdbw r=f
after Thoth [has] planted an obstacle against him,

pgs.tw hr=f
his face will be spat upon.

Main publication:

Edel, E. (1984), *Die Inschriften der Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber in Mittelägypten aus der Herakleopolitenzeit*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 190.

See also:

Nordh, K. (1996), *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 82.

⁷¹⁸ A change to the suggested restoration of *n* by Edel, 1984: 190.

**B01: Apanage Stela of Iuwelot (Cairo JdE 31882) – Twenty Second
Dynasty at Karnak**

iw ir p3 nty iw=f mmmn wdt tn

As for the one who shall move this stela,

wh3 pw w3w3 r hsf ddt=i

he is a plotting fool to oppose what I have said,

iw=i r hcr hr-c r th<3> k3t=i

I will be enraged immediately about the transgression of my plan

nd.n=i sdgi h3=i m-ht hnty

which I have championed, sheltered behind me forever,

dbcw sp im=f n<n> wn=f

one pointed at of deed, he does not exist.

nym whd=f b3w n dd=i

Who will endure the divine intervention I send?

iw=i r rdit hpr=f m hr iw

I will cause him to become a down-and-out,

iwcw=f m-di ky irty=f hr dgi=w

his inheritance is with another but his eyes see it,

iw=f m tp <hr> m3sty r swd3 n=f

he has (his) head on (his) knees until he passes on,⁷¹⁹

iw it.tw hmt=f r-hft-hr=f

as his wife is seized in front of him,

⁷¹⁹ Having your head on your knee is a sign of grievance, as in The Tale of Sinuhe (Lichtheim, 1973: 224).

ḥꜥw=f nb ʒbh m ḥr ꜥbw

all his limbs are rolled about in muck,

iw=f m ʒk n dt

he is one who is destroyed forever,

nn iw=f <m> nty wn mriw=f

he will not come as one who has his adherents,

ḥr-rwty n=w pw

he is an outcast for them,

snnty=f m ḥmw n nḥwt=f

his companions are slaves and those he begs

iw=f ḥr <dd> mʒꜥ-ḥrw kʒ=k

saying ‘May your ka be true of voice’.

nn sdm=i n wʒwʒ r th<ʒ> wdt tn hn=i im=s

I will not listen to one plotting to transgress this stela which I have assented to,

iw=i r mdd šsr=i ḥr imy-st-ꜥ=f

I will shoot my arrow in the presence of his helpers,

tp r tʒ ḥr st-ꜥ ꜥwy=i

they are thrown down under the striking of my arms,

iw=f n irt Ḥr ḥtt šhm=s im=f

he is for the fiery eye of Horus and it shall have power over him,

iw drp=i sw m iw=f n ḥd ddwt=i

for I have sacrificed him as meat for damaging what I have said,

šw m swḥ ḥr nḥd=s r ḥꜥw=f tm

Shu is the wind blowing it towards all his limbs,⁷²⁰

⁷²⁰ The feminine pronoun suggests that the ‘it’ is the Eye.

snwh m b<w>-wr hr shtp ib=i

boiling in intensity, pleasing my heart.

Main publication:

Jansen-Winkel, K. (2007), *Inschriften der Spätzeit II*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 79-80.

See also:

Ritner, R. K. (2009), *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 274 and 277.

B02: Bilgai Endowment Stela (Cairo JdE 43341) – Nineteenth Dynasty at Bilgai

*[ir imy-r htm nb n p3 w3d-wr]*⁷²¹

[As for any overseer of the fortress of the sea]

nty iw=f r hpr mtw=f shi-hr r t3y ipt

who there will be, and who neglects this chapel,

i.ir [t3 r-p^ct]⁷²² c3t [n t3 nb]

which [the] great [prince of every land] made

...[p3y=s] it

... [their] father,

r tm dit htp Imn n Wsr-m3^ct-r^c Stp-n-r^c im=s

so as not to let Amun-of-Usermaatre Setepenre to rest within it,

r tnw h^c=f m wpw nb

at every appearance of his at all festivals,

⁷²¹ Restored from a later line in the text.

⁷²² Suggested restoration by Kitchen, 1982: 342.

mtw=f [t3i]⁷²³ rmt im=s

who will [take] people from it

r dit=f r ky h3w

to put him to another use

iw bn sw m n3 shnw n ipt

although it is not within the administration of the chapel;

iw=f m b3w n 'Imn n Wsr-m3'c-t-r' Stp-n-r'

he is in the power of Amun-of-Usermaatre Setepenre,

iw=f m hbd n n3 ntrw n t3 pt n3 ntrw n p3 t3

he is a hated one of the gods of the sky and the gods of the land,

iw=f m hbd n nsw n h3w=f

he is a hated one of the reigning king,⁷²⁴

bn sšpw wdnw=f nb

none of his offerings will be received,

bn 'h'w=f hr spt mn snw

his lifetime will not be on the lip (although) the siblings endure,⁷²⁵

bn 'h' s3=f r st=f

his son will not remain at his office,

bn hpr i.irt=f nb

nothing he does will succeed,

bn h3my=f r p3 nty nb iw=f r ir=f

nothing he does will be mastered.

⁷²³ Restoration based on context.

⁷²⁴ Literally: he is a hated one of the king of his time.

⁷²⁵ Meaning his lifetime will not be spoken about and remembered although his family are alive.

Main publication:

Gardiner, A. H. (1912), 'The Stela of Bilgai', *ZÄS* 50, 49-57.

See also:

Frood, E. (2007), *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 177-180.

Kitchen, K. A. (1982), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV*, Oxford: Blackwell, 341,5-343,16.

Kitchen, K. A. (2003), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated IV*, Oxford: Blackwell, 246-248.

Nordh, K. (1996), *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 82.

B03/C01: Decree of Demedjibtawy (Cairo JdE 41894) – Eighth Dynasty at Koptos

ir sw nb nw t3 pn mi-ḳd=f

As for any men of this entire land

ir.ty=sn ḥt nbḏ bin

who will do a destructive, evil thing

r twt=k nb ntw m r-prw nb ḥwt-nṯr nb

to any of your statues which are in any of the chapels or any of the divine temples,

r ʿb3w=k nb ntw m r-prw nb ḥwt-nṯr nb

to any of your offering stones which are in any of the chapels or any of the divine temples,

r ḥwt-k3=k nb ntw m r-prw nb ḥwt-nṯr nb

to any of your ka chapels which are in any of the chapels or any of the divine temples,

r ḥt wtw=k nb ntw m r-prw nb ḥwt-nṯr nb

to any of your furniture which is in any of the chapels or any of the divine temples,

r mnw=k nb ntw m r-prw nb ḥwt-nṯr nb

or to any of your monuments which are in any of the chapels or any of the divine temples,

n rdi.n ḥm=i mn ḥt=sn ḥt itw=sn im=sn

my Majesty does not permit that their goods or their fathers' goods are attached to them,

n rdi.n ḥm=i dmi=sn r šḥw m ḥrt-ntr

my Majesty does not permit that they join the akhs in the necropolis,

n rdi.n ḥm=i wn=sn m-m ḥnh[w] tpw t3

and my Majesty does not permit that they are amongst the living upon earth.

ir sw nb nw t3 pn mi-ḳd=f

As for any men of this entire land

ḥnn.ty=sn ḥb.ty=sn ḥt ḥnt wḥbw t ḥnḳt=k

who will disturb or damage a thing from your offerings

ityt r ḥt irt n twt=k

which are taken under authority and are made for your statues

ntw m ḥwt-ntr nt šmḥw

which are in the temples of Upper Egypt,

m šḥt irt n=k m swḏ

as fields made for you as an endowment,

m t irt n=k m swḏ

as bread made for you as an endowment,

m ḥnḳt irt n=k m swḏ

as beer made for you as an endowment,

m iwḥ irt n=k m swḏ

as meat made for you as an endowment,

m irtt irt n=k m swḏ

as milk made for you as an allocation,

*n grt*⁷²⁶ *wḏ.n ḥm=i wnn=sn tp ʒḥw m ḥrt-nṯr*

now, my Majesty does not ordain that they are at the head of the akhs in the necropolis,

wp-r wnn=sn snḥy nṯty m ḥrw-mdw nw nsw

rather, they be restrained and tied as prisoners of the king,

ʒsir nw nṯr=sn niwty

of Osiris, and of their local gods.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 123-124.

See also:

Goedicke, H. (1967), *Königliche Dokumente aus dem alten Reich*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 190-192 and 195-196.

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 304.16-305.7 and 305.8-306.1.

Weill, R. (1912), *Les decrets royaux de l'ancien empire égyptien*, Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 268-275.

B04: Graffito for Djediah – Twenty Third Dynasty at Karnak (Khonsu Temple)

pʒ nty iw=f <r> ft<t> pʒ dgʒ

(As for) the one who will obliterate the footprint

n Ḍd-iḥ pʒ<y=i> bʒk

of Djediah my servant,

*iw<=i r> ftṯ m=f m*⁷²⁷ *bnbn*

I will obliterate his name from the benben stone,

⁷²⁶ The hieroglyphs (*Urk I 305.8-306.1*) show *ḥrw*, however this is presumably a scribal error.

⁷²⁷ Inserting an *m* here in place of the *n* in Jacquet-Gordon, 1979: 170.

<n> pꜣ pr-ꜥꜣ šps[y]
of the august pharaoh,

iw tm dīt sꜣ=f r tꜣ st n i[t]=f
and not appoint his son to the office of his father.

Main publication:

Jacquet-Gordon, H. (2003), *The Graffiti on the Khonsu Temple Roof at Karnak: a Manifestation of Personal Piety. The Temple of Khonsu, Volume 3*. Oriental Institute Publications 123, Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 55, pl 55.

See also:

Jacquet-Gordon, H. (1979), ‘Deux graffiti de l’époque libyenne sur le toit du temple de Khonsu à Karnak’ in Vercoutter, J. (ed.), *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron, 1927-1976*, Cairo: IFAO, 167-183.

Nordh, K. (1996), *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 72.

B05: Inscription of Khenty[...] - Twelfth Dynasty at Hatnub

[ir swt] ḥd.ty=fy twt=i pn
[Now, as for] he who will damage this image of mine,

sin.ty=fy wd=i pn m ...
who will erase this command of mine in ...

nn mꜣ=f kmt
He will not see completion

nn ir=f [iit.n=f r]=s
and he will not do [what he came to] do.

[in Dḥwty nb] Ḥmnw
[It is Thoth, lord of] Hermopolis,

i[n] ʿnty nb [Trty ḥsf=sn n=f]

and it is Anty, lord of [Tjerty who will punish them for it].⁷²⁸

Main publication:

Simpson, W. K. (1961), ‘An Additional Fragment of a “Hatnub” Stela’, *JNES* 20, 25-30.

B06: Chapel of Meru / Bebi (Brussels E. 2243) – Sixth Dynasty at Saqqara

...in ḥmw-k3 nw dt=i

...by the soul priests of my funerary estate,

iw=i r wḏḥ ḥnʿ=sn in ntr ʿ3 nb imnt

I will be judged with them by the Great God, the lord of the west,

m bw nty m3ʿ im

in the place where truth is.

...iw=i grt r d[r] tp=sn t3

...Moreover, I will subdue their successors,

nn rdit grg ʿrr<y>t=sn

without allowing their home to be established,

nn rdit ʿnh...

without allowing [...] to live.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 225.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs* I, Leipzig: Hinrich, 256.2-3 and 256.7-9.

⁷²⁸ Presumably the ‘it’ here refers to the statue mentioned before.

B07: Stela of Pershenay – Sixth Dynasty at Abydos

ir rmt nb it.ty=sn ist nb m⁷²⁹ cħz

As for anyone who will take any possessions violently,

iw=i <r> wd^c ħn^c=sn in ntr c3 m ħrt-ntr

I will be judged with them by the Great God in the necropolis

sk <wi> m imnt

when I am in the west,

sh3=sn dw m ħrt-ntr

when their memory is evil in the necropolis.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 351.

See also:

Sethe, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 263.9-12.

B08: Stela of Sarenput (Aswan Museum No. 1373, Stela No. 9) – Twelfth Dynasty at Elephantine

ir ħzty-^c nb w^cb nb ħm-k3 nb sš nb sr nb

As for any governor, any wab priest, any ka priest, any scribe, or any official

nħm.ty=fy s<y> r twt=i

who will take it⁷³⁰ from my statue,

sh.tw ħpš=f mī iw3 pn

his arm will be chopped off like this bull,

⁷²⁹ There is dittography in the hieroglyphs here (*Urk I* 263.9-12).

⁷³⁰ In reference to a meat offering mentioned in a previous line (not translated here).

mn.tw ts=f mi ʔpd

his neck will be snapped like a bird,

nn st=f nn st nt sʔ=f

there is not his office, there is not the office of his son,

nn pr=f m Tʔ-sty nn is=f m smyt

there is not his house in Nubia, and there is not his tomb in the necropolis,

nn šsp ntr=f t-hd=f

his god will not accept his white bread,

iwf=[f] n sdt

[his] body is for the fire

msw=f n ht hʔt=f n sn-tʔ

his children are for the fire, his corpse is for kissing the ground.

iw=i r=f m msh hr mw m hfʔw hr tʔ

I am against him as a crocodile on the water, as a snake on the land,

m hfty m hrt-ntr

and as an enemy in the necropolis.

Main publication:

Franke, D. (1994), *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine: Geschichte eines*

Provinzheiligtums im mittleren Reich, Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, pl 1.⁷³¹

See also:

Habachi, L. (1985), *Elephantine IV: The Sanctuary of Heqaib. Text*, Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 36.

Habachi, L. (1985), *Elephantine IV: The Sanctuary of Heqaib. Plates*, Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, pl 24.

Raue, D. (2014), ‘Sanctuary of Heqaib’, in Wendrich, W. (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of*

⁷³¹ The translated part of the text used here does not appear in Franke’s publication.

Egyptology [online], 6-8. Available from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2dp6m9bt>
(Accessed: 18/4/15)

B09: See A27

B10: Stela Cairo JdE 20458 – Early Middle Kingdom at Abydos

ir grt s nb ir.ty=fy d3t-t3 r ḥꜥ=i pn

Now, as for any man who will interfere with this stela of mine,

wnn=i wdꜥ.kw ḥnꜥ=f m bw nty wdꜥ-mdw im

I will be judged with him in the place where judgement is.

Main publication:

Sethe, K. (1959), *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht: Texte der mittleren Reiches / Zusammengestellt*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 87.17-18.

See also:

Lange, H. O. (1908), *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire II, nos. 20001-20780, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs*, Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 56-57.

Sottas, H. (1913), *La préservation de la propriété funéraire dans l'ancienne Égypte; avec le recueil des formules d'imprécation*, Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 44.

B11: Hatnub Inscription – late Eleventh / early Twelfth Dynasty at Hatnub

Quarries

[ir] grt ḥd.ty[=fy] twt pn

Now, [as for he] who will damage this image,

nn ph=f pr=f

he will not reach his house,

nn ḥpt=f [h]rdw=[f]

he will not embrace [his] children,

nn m3=f Kmt

and he will not see Egypt.⁷³²

Main publication:

Posener, G. (1968), 'Une Stèle de Hatnoub', *JEA* 54, 67-70, pl IX-IXA.

See also:

Shaw, I. (2010), *Hatnub: Quarrying Travertine in Ancient Egypt*, London: Egypt Exploration Society, 163-164.

B12: Offering Table (British Museum, unknown number) – Middle Kingdom

ir grt ir.ty=sn d3t r htp pn

Now, as for those who will harm this offering,

hr=sn n dmt n Hr imy Šnwt

they will fall to the knife of Horus who is in Three Hundred Town.

Main publication:

Sethe, K. (1959), *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht: Texte der mittleren Reiches / Zusammengestellt*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 87.

C01: See B03

C02: Donation Stela of Harkhebe (Stela Florence 7207) – Twenty Third Dynasty at Bubastis

ir p3 nty iw=f <r> tht p3y wđ hr st=f

As for the one who will go against this stela in its place,

iw=f r š' t n nsw nht

he is for the slaughter of the powerful king,

⁷³² The lack of determinative (Posener, 1968: pl IXa) allows *kmt* to be translated either as 'completion' or 'Egypt', however the latter fits in better with the context.

iw=f <r> hr r nmt n Shmt

he will fall to the slaughter block of Sekhmet,

p3 nty iw=f thi p3y wd

the one who will go against this stela.

Main publication:

Caminos, R. A. (1969), ‘An Ancient Egyptian Donation Stela in the Archaeological Museum of Florence (Inv. No. 7207)’, *Centaurus* 14, 42-46, pl 2.

See also:

Meeks, D. (1979), ‘Les Donations aux Temples’, in Lipinski, E. (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II*, OLA 6, Leuven: Peeters, 605-688.

Nordh, K. (1996), *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 66.

C03: The Hittite Treaty – Nineteenth Dynasty at Karnak

ir n3y mdw nty hr p3y 3nw n hd

Concerning these words which are (written) on this tablet of silver

n p3 t3 n Ht3 n p3 t3 n Kmt

for the land of Hatti (and) for the land of Egypt:

ir p3 nty bn iw=f r s3w=sn

as for the one who will not heed them,

ir h3 n ntr n p3 t3 n Ht3 m-di h3 n ntr n p3 t3 n Km[t]

the thousand gods of the land of Hatti together with the thousand gods of the land of Egypt[t] will act

r fh p3y=f pr p3y=f t3 n3y=f b3kw

in order to destroy his house, his land and his servants.

Main publications:

Kitchen, K. A. (1979), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical II*, Oxford: Blackwell, 230.

Kitchen, K. A. (1996), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated II*, Oxford: Blackwell, 84.

C04/D01: Inscription at Kanais Temple – Nineteenth Dynasty at Kanais

ir thh sp n ky

As for the one who goes against another's achievements,

hpr n=f phy m irr mitt

the end of one who acts likewise happens to him,

ḥd.tw mnw n ḥd

the monuments of a destroyer are destroyed,

bw mn sp grgyw

the liars' achievements do not last.

ir nsw nb nty r hpr shnn.ty=fy shrw=i nb

As for any future king⁷³³ who will upset any of my arrangements,

ḥn^c ntf dd t3w r-ht=i

and says "The lands are under my authority,

ink sn mi wn=sn ḥr=f

they are mine like they were his",

sp n bin ḥr-ib ntrw

(this is a) bad deed amongst the gods.

mk tw=tw r wšbw=f m Iwnw

Look, he will be opposed in Heliopolis,⁷³⁴

⁷³³ Literally 'As for any king who will exist'.

⁷³⁴ Literally 'Look, one will be for his answer in Heliopolis'.

ntsn dꜣdꜣt...

they are the assessors...

irr=sn wšb hr hwt=w

it is about their matters that they answer,

dšr=sn mi bsw n sꜣt

they become red like a firebrand,

nwh=sn hꜣw=sn tmw sꜣm n=i

they burn their whole bodies. Listen to me!

st r sswn hꜣ shrw=i

They will consume the one who destroys my arrangements,

r rdꜣ.tw=f r hbt dwꜣt

so he is placed at the execution room of the underworld.⁷³⁵

d[d.n]=i [nn nd=i] rh=tn

I [have said this and I consider] your condition.

imꜣ nhꜣm sw m btꜣ=f

Let the one who is free from his crime save himself

hy-r-ꜣ ky sbn hꜣty

but the other who is crooked of heart,

m Psꜣt shn=sn hnꜣ=f

it is the Ennead who will contend him.

hr ir sr nb nty sw r stkn ib pn n nb=f

Now, as for any official who will encroach on this desire of his lord

⁷³⁵ Literally ‘so his placing is at the execution room of the Underworld’.

r nḥm ḥsbw rdī.tw ḥr ky sdf

to take away the workers and be placed on another endowment

m šḥrw n mtr bin

in the manner of bad conduct;

iw=f n nsrt

he is for the fire,

tkz=s ḥ^cw=f n zḥt

it burns up his flaming body,

wmm=s ^cwt=f

and it eats his limbs,

ḥr nty ir.n ḥm=f nn r ḏr=sn n kz=sn

because his Majesty has done these (things) for their kas,

nz nbw ḥwt=i

the lords of my temple.

bw n ntr th rmt=f

The abomination of (the) god is one who goes against his people,

bw tm.n=f ^cn ḏrt ḥd

he never fails to turn away the hand of the destroyer.

ir p3 nty nb iw=f r th rmt im=sn

As for anyone who will go against the people there,

dd r kt st

who moves (them) to another place,

ir n=f nz ntrw ntrwt nbw ḥwt=i r iry n ^cḥz

all the gods and goddesses of my temples act as adversaries against him,

p3-wn ht=i nb m imy-pr hr rd=sn

because all my property is in a deed at their feet.

r nhh hn^c dt

forever and ever.

ir p3 nty nb iw=f r shi hr wdt tn

As for anyone who will be deaf to this decree,

ir 3sir m-s3=f iw 3st m-s3 hmt=f iw Hr m-s3 hrdw=f

Osiris is after him, Isis is after his wife, and Horus is after his children,

m n3 wrw nbw t3 dsr ir=sn wpw=sn hn^c=f

it is all the great ones of the sacred land who will make their judgement against him.

Main publications:

Kitchen, K. A. (1975), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical I*, Oxford: Blackwell, 68-70.

Kitchen, K. A. (1993), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated I*, Oxford: Blackwell, 58-60.

See also:

Lichtheim, M. (1976), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings II*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 55-56.

Morales, A. J. (2010), 'Threats and Warnings to Future Kings: The Inscription of Seti I at Kanais (Wadi Mia), in *Millions of Jubilees: Studies in Honor of David Silverman*, CASAE 39, 387-412.

C05: Tomb of Khety – Herakleopolitan Period at Siut

ir swt sbi nb h3k-ib nb ir.ty=fy pn^cyt m-ht nn sdm.n=f

But, as for any dissident or any ignorant who will overturn (the tomb endowment) after this which he has heard,

nn wn rn[=f]

[his] name will not exist,

[nn] krs.t[w=f] m smyt

[he will not] be buried in the necropolis,

iw=f r pst hn^c hbntyw

he will be cooked together with criminals,

hw.n ntr sdb r=sn

who the god has planted obstacles against,

bw sw ntr[=f] niw[ty]...

[his] local god rejects him,

bw sw nwt=f

and his town rejects him.

Main publication:

Griffith, F. Ll. (1889), *The Inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh*, London: Trubner, 98-99.

See also:

Edel, E. (1984), *Die Inschriften der Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber in Mittelägypten aus der Herakleopolitenzeit*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 67-156.

C06: Larger Stela of Neferhotep I (Cairo JdE 6307) – Thirteenth Dynasty at Abydos

nn nḥ rk.ty=fy wī

He who will defy me will not live,

nn tpr itnw=i tẓw

my opponent will not breathe the air,

nn rn=f m-m nḥw

his name will not exist among the living,

nḥb k3=f ḥnty srw

his ka will be restrained in front of the officials,

iw=f r rwty n ntr pn

he will be at the gates of this god,

[m i]tnw.ty=fy wdt ḥm=i

[namely] he who will oppose the decree of my Majesty.

tm.ty=sn ir ḥft wd pn n ḥm=i

those who will not act in accordance with this decree of my Majesty,

tm.ty=sn s^crw wi n ntr pn špsy

those who will not present me to this august god,

tm.ty=sn i3m [n] ir[t].n=i m ḥtpw=f ntr

those who will not offer what I have made as his divine offerings,

[tm.ty]=sn rdi n=i ḥknw m ḥb nb n r-pr pn

those [who will not] give praise to me at every festival of this temple,

m-ḥnw ḥwt-ntr mi-ḳd-s nt r-pr pn

within the entire divine temple of this temple,

i3t nbt nt 3bdw

and every office of Abydos.

Main publication:

Helck, W. (1975), *Historisch-biographische Texte der 2. Zwischenzeit und neue Texte der 18. Dynastie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 29.

See also:

Mariette, A. (1880), *Abydos. Description des fouilles exécutées sur l'emplacement de cette ville II*, Paris: Librairie A. Franck, pl 28.

Ryholt, K. S. B. (1997), *The Political Situation in Egypt During the Second Intermediate Period c.1800-1550 B.C. Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 20*, University of Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 345.

C07: Smaller Stela of Neferhotep I – Thirteenth Dynasty at Abydos

ir rf nty nb tw r gmt=f m-hnw n3 n wdw

As for anyone who will be found within these stelae,

m-h3w w^cb r hnt=f

apart from a priest at his business,

hr.tw wbd.tw=f

then he will be branded.

ir grt sr nb rd.ty=fy ir.tw n=f h3t

Now, as for any magistrate who will have a tomb made for himself

m-hnw t3 st dsrt

within the sacred place,

smi.tw=f wd<.tw> p3 hp hr=f

he will be reported and the law implemented on him

iry smyt mi hrw pn

and the necropolis keeper likewise on this day.

Main publication:

Leahy, A. (1989), 'A Protective Measure at Abydos in the Thirteenth Dynasty' *JEA* 75, 42 and 45-60.

C08: Semna Stela (Berlin Museum Nr. 1157) – Twelfth Dynasty at Semna

ir grt fh.ty=fy sw

Now, as for he who will let go of it,

tm.ty=fy h3 hr=f

who will not fight because of it,

n s3=i is n ms.tw=f is n=i

he is not my son, he will not be born to me.

Main publication:

Sethe, K. (1959), *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht : Texte der mittleren Reiches / Zusammengestellt*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 83-84.

See also:

Eyre, C. (1990), 'The Semna Stelae: Quotation, Genre, and Functions of Literature', in Israelit-Groll, S. (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim I*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 134-165.

Lichtheim, M. (1973), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings I*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 119-120.

Parkinson, R. B. (1991), *Voices From Ancient Egypt*, London: British Museum, 43-46.

Seidlmayer, S. J. (2000), 'Zu Fundort und Aufstellungskontext der großen Semna-Stele Sesostris III', *SAK* 28, 233-242.

C09: Stela of Sheshonq (Cairo JdE 66285) – Twenty Second Dynasty at Abydos

ḥꜥ.n⁷³⁶ whm dd.in <ḥm>=f⁷³⁷ m-b3ḥ p3y nṯr ʿ3

Then his Majesty spoke again before this Great God:

p3<y>=i⁷³⁸ nb nfr iw=k <r> hdb p3 ʿ3-n-mšꜥ

“My good lord, you will kill the army chief,

p3 ḥwtyw p3 sš p3 rwd

the leader, the scribe, the administrator,

p3 ipwty nb h3bw nb n wp r sḥt

all of the messengers, and all who are sent on business to the country,

⁷³⁶ This word is spelled incorrectly in the hieroglyphic script (Blackman, 1941: pl X).

⁷³⁷ The *i* is located where the *ḥm* should be, while the *ḥm* is missing. This group of signs is written correctly in line 5 of this text (Blackman, 1941: pl X).

⁷³⁸ Graphic transposition means the *i* determinative follows the *nb* sign (Blackman, 1941: pl X).

nty iw=w r tzt nkt n pzy hnty n zsr

who will take away anything of this statue of the Osiris,

wr ʕz n Mšwš Nmzrt mʕ-hrw sz Mht-n-wsht

the great chief of the Meshwesh, Namlot true of voice, son of Mehetenweskhet,

nty m zbdw

which is in Abydos,

rmṯ nb nty iw=w <r> hb n pʕ<y>=f htpw-ntr

and anyone who will diminish its divine offerings,

n ʕhwt=f rmtt=f n mnmn=f kzm=f

from its fields and its people, from its cattle, its vineyard,

ʕʕbt=f nb hmw-kʕ=f nb

any of its offerings or any of its ka service.

iw=k <r> irt⁷³⁹ nʕy=k bʕw ʕʕw drw r=w

You will enact your great and strong power against them,

r nʕ<y>=w hmwt nʕy=w hrdw

against their wives and their children.”.

wšd.in pzy ntr ʕz

Then this Great God assented.

wn.in hm=f hr snn tʕ m-bʕh=f

Then his Majesty kissed the ground before him.

Main publication:

Blackman, A. M. (1941), ‘Stela of Shoshenk, Great Chief of the Meshwesh’, *JEA* 27, 83-95,
pl X.

⁷³⁹ A scribal error, the hieroglyphs read *irr* (Blackman, 1941: pl X).

See also:

Ritner, R. K. (2009), *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 166-167 and 169.

C10: Stela Chicago OIM 13943 (*Dd-Dḥwty-īw=f-ḥ*) – Twenty Sixth Dynasty

<ir> sš nb sr s nb h3<.ty>=s<n> r⁷⁴⁰ 3ḥt

As for any scribe, official, or any man who will go down to the field

<r> یت m irt ḥt im=f ḥry-tp t3

in order to take possession and do things on it upon earth,

<nn> ndm rn=f ḥry-tp t3

his name will not be pleasing upon earth,

n<n> ḥpr s3=f s3t=f ḥry-tp t3

his son and his daughter will not exist upon earth,

nn krs=f⁷⁴¹ m ḥrt-nṯr

and there will not be his burial in the necropolis.

Main publication:

Jansen-Winkel, K. (2014), *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: die 26. Dynastie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 287-288.

See also:

Leahy, A. (1982-3), 'Two Donation Stelae of Necho II', *RdE* 34, 77-91.

Meeks, D. (1979), 'Les Donations aux Temples', in Lipinski, E. (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II*, OLA 6, Leuven: Peeters, 605-688.

⁷⁴⁰ A scribal error, the hieroglyphs show *nb* here (Leahy, 1982-3: 86).

⁷⁴¹ Assuming the *s* sign at the end of the word is misplaced and actually belongs before the determinative (Leahy, 1982-3: 86).

C11: Donation Stela (Cairo JdE 85647) – Twenty Second Dynasty at Kom

Firin

...⁷⁴² *nk=f ʕʕt*⁷⁴³

... he will copulate with a donkey,

nk ʕʕt ḥmt=f nk ḥmt=f ḥrd=f

a donkey will copulate with his wife, and his wife will copulate with his child.

ḥpr=f m šꜥd nsw

He will become a cut one of the king,

ḥsk=w tp=f ḥḥ is=f

his head will be cut off, and his tomb will be sought for.⁷⁴⁴

ir=w ḥꜥw=f <m> tm wn

His lifetime will be made as one which does not exist

ḥrst=f m wnmyt

and his burial will be in the devouring flame.

bn mn sʕ=f ḥr st=f

His son will not remain in his office,

iw=f <r> ḥbd n pr Ḳmn pr Rꜥ Pth pr n pʕ ḥkʕ

and he will be a hateful one of the house of Amun, the house of Re and Ptah, and the house of the ruler.

Main publication:

Meeks, D. (1979), 'Les Donations aux Temples', in Lipinski, E. (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II*, OLA 6, Leuven: Peeters, 605-688.

See also:

Bakir, A. (1943), 'A Donation Stela of the Twenty-Second Dynasty', *ASAE* 43, 75-86.

⁷⁴² The 'wrongdoing' part of this curse is no longer visible.

⁷⁴³ The word ʕʕt here denotes a female donkey.

⁷⁴⁴ i.e. His tomb will be lost.

C12: Donation Stela BM 1655 – Twenty Sixth Dynasty

<ir> p3 nty⁷⁴⁵ iw=f <r> mnmn=w

As for the one who will displace them,⁷⁴⁶

iw=f <r> hh n Shmt

he will be for Sekhmet's fire,

<r> šmm n B3štt

and for Bastet's heat.

Main publication:

Jansen-Winkel, K. (2014), *Inscriben der Spätzeit IV: die 26. Dynastie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 286.

See also:

Leahy, A. (1982-3), 'Two Donation Stelae of Necho II', *RdE* 34, 77-91.

Meeks, D. (1979), 'Les Donations aux Temples', in Lipinski, E. (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II*, OLA 6, Leuven: Peeters, 605-688.

Nordh, K. (1996), *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 82.

D01: See C04

D02: Stela of Neferabu (British Museum 589) – Nineteenth Dynasty at Deir el-Medina

ink s rḳ m-ḥ-d3 n Ptḥ nb m3ḥt

I am a man who swore falsely to Ptah, lord of truth,

di=f ptr=i kkw m hrw

and he made me see darkness in the daytime.

⁷⁴⁵ There is an incorrect spelling of *nty* in the hieroglyphs (Leahy, 1982-3: 78).

⁷⁴⁶ The allocation of land mentioned previously in the text (not translated here).

iw=i r dd b3w=f

I will speak of his power

n hm sw rh sw

to he who does not know him, and he who does know him,

n šriw ʿ3

to the small and the great.

s3w tn r Pth nb m3ʿt

Beware of Ptah, lord of truth!

mk b[w] w3h=f sp n rmt nb

Look, he does not ignore the (bad) deeds of any person.

hry tn r dm rn n Pth m ʿd3

Refrain from proclaiming the name of Ptah falsely!

mk dm sw m ʿd3 mk whn=f

Look, he who proclaims him falsely: look he is brought down.

di=f wnn=i mi iwʿyw n iwyt

He has made me like the dogs of the street,

iw=i m drt=f

and I am in his hand.

di=f ptri rmt ntrw im=i

He has made people and gods regard me

iw=i mi s iry=f bwt r nb=f

as a man who does abominations against his lord.

m3ʿty Pth nb m3ʿt ir=i

Ptah, lord of truth, is justified against me

ir.n=f n=i sbꜣy

he has taught me (a lesson).

ḥtp n=i mꜣꜣ.n=i ḥtp=k

Pardon me, I have seen your mercy.

Main publications:

Kitchen, K. A. (1980), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical III*, Oxford: Blackwell, 771-772.

Kitchen, K. A. (2000), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated III*, Oxford: Blackwell, 517-518.

See also:

Frood, E. (2007), *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 223-225.

Lichtheim, M. (1976), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings II*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 109-110.

D03: Unknown Tomb (CG 1650) – Late Old Kingdom at Abydos

ir rmt nb ir.ty=fy ḥt r ḥrdw=i

As for anyone who will do something against my children,

iw=i r wḏꜥ ḥnꜥ=f in nṯr ʕꜣ

I will be judged with him by the Great God

m bw <nty> wḏꜥw im

in the place where judgement is.

Main publication:

Strudwick, N. (2005), *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 358-359.

See also:

Sethé, K. (1933), *Urkunden des Alten Reichs I*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 150.9-11.

PAPYRUS BREMNER RHIND – THE BOOK OF OVERTHROWING APOPHIS TRANSLATIONS

The division of this text into ten passages has been done only for the purpose of this study, and does not reflect any divisions made by the ancient Egyptians.

Passage 1: Introduction (Figure 19)

(22,1) *ḥꜣt m mꜣꜣt nt šhr ʿꜣpp ḥfty nw Rꜥ ḥfty nw Wn-nfr ʿnh wꜣꜣ snb mꜣꜥ-ḥrw*

The beginning of the book of felling Apophis, the enemy of Re, the enemy of Wennefer, life prosperity, health, true of voice,

irt.n n pr ʿImn-Rꜥ nb nst tꜣwy

which is performed in the house of Amun-Re, lord of the throne of the two lands,

ḥnty ʿIpt-Swt m ḥrt nt⁷⁴⁷ hrw nb

who lives in Karnak Temple, every day.

Passage 2: Spell of Trampling Apophis with the Left Foot (Figure 20)

r n sin ʿꜣpp m rd iꜣby

Spell of trampling Apophis with the left foot.

Rꜥ dr-k ḥftyw=f nbt m mwt m ʿnh

Re, you subdue all his enemies, dead and alive.

mk Rꜥ šḥm=f im=k ʿꜣpp (22,7)

Look, Re, he prevails over you Apophis,

nšny nsr=f r-k šḥm=s im=k

his fire rages against you, it prevails over you,

⁷⁴⁷ There is some confusion in the text here, although the meaning is clear. See Faulkner, 1933: 42 for details.

*spd*⁷⁴⁸ *hh=s r=k*

its blast is effective against you,

hzi ht=s r hftyw nbt nw R^c sp 4

its flame falls upon all the enemies of Re, x 4,

hzi ht r hftyw nb nw pr-^c3 ^cnh wd3 snb

the flame falls upon all the enemies of the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health.

sh^m=k rk (22,8) R^c r⁷⁴⁹ hftyw=k

You are more powerful, Re, than your enemies,

swtwt rk R^c m zht=k

move freely, Re, in your horizon,

*dw3 tw*⁷⁵⁰ *imyw sktt*

those who are in the night bark praise you,

phr n=k ist wi3=k m h^c

the crew of your bark serve you, rejoicing,

*w^hm=k h^c m 3w*⁷⁵¹ *ib m-hnw*⁷⁵² *m^cndt*

and you repeat the crowning in joy within the day bark.

Passage 3: Spell of Binding Apophis (Figure 21)

r n k3s ^c3pp

Spell of binding Apophis.

⁷⁴⁸ *d* and *t* are interchangeable in this text.

⁷⁴⁹ *iw* and *r* are interchangeable in this text, both represent ϵ in Coptic.

⁷⁵⁰ A scribal error, read *tw* rather than *wt*.

⁷⁵¹ Read *3w* instead of *ntrw*, amended according to Faulkner, 1933: 43.

⁷⁵² A scribal error, the *hn* part of the hieroglyphs has been omitted.

ḏd mdw (22,18) k3s k3sw

Recitation: Bind the bound ones!

k3s ʕ3pp ḥfty pf n Rʕ

Bind **Apophis, that enemy** of Re!

im̄i=k rh̄ ir n=k ʕ3pp

you are not to know what is done to you, **Apophis**.

ḥsf ir=k mtr im=k

Turn back, you, testimony is against you.

i.ḥm m ʕt=f nkn=f (22,19) sw ḏs=f

The one who retreats in his moment, he damages himself,

srk ḥty=f

when his throat inhales.

s3w k3s

Take heed, bound one!

k3s=tn in Hr

You are bound by Horus,

ntt=tn in Rʕ

you are tied up by Re,

nn bnb̄n=tn nn tʕtʕ=tn

you will not become erect, you will not ejaculate,

nn ḥrw=tn (22,20) ḥr ḏbʕw=f

you will not be far from under his fingers,

nik=tn in Rʕ

you are hurt by Re,

ntt=tn in Hr imy Mhnty-irty

you are tied up by Horus who is in Mekhentyirty.

Passage 4: Speech of Magic when Setting Apophis on Fire (Figure 22)

dd m hk3 hft rdi ʕ3pp r ht

Speech of magic when setting Apophis on fire.

dd mdw tp=k m tw ʕ3pp (23,2)

Recitation: You are spat upon Apophis.

ht hm⁷⁵³ hfty m Rʕ

Retreat, enemy of Re!

hr sbn hm h3=k

Fall, glide away, turn back,

iw ht.n=i tw iw bh.n.n=i tw

I have (made) you retreat, I have cut you.

m3ʕ-hrw Rʕ r=k ʕ3pp sp 4

Re is triumphant over you Apophis, x 4,

tp=k ʕ3pp sp 4 (23,3)

you are spat upon Apophis, x4.

h3=k sbiw tm r=k

Turn back, rebel, you perish,

iw rf snwh.n=i tw iw rf shtm.n=i tw

I have boiled you, I have destroyed you,

sip.n=i tw n dw tm

I have destined you to complete evilness,

⁷⁵³ A scribal error for *hm ht*.

tm=k tp=k tm

you perish, you are spat upon completely,

nn wnn=k (23,4) tm

you do not exist at all,

tm=k tm rk

you perish completely,

tp=k tm

you are completely spat upon.

iw štm.n=i ʿzpp hfty n R^c

I have destroyed **Apophis, the enemy** of Re,

m3^c-hrw R^c r=k ʿzpp sp 4

Re is triumphant over you **Apophis, x 4,**

m3^c-hrw pr-ʿz r hftyw=f sp 4 (23, 5)

the pharaoh is triumphant over his enemies, x 4.

ir m-ht sin hr=k ʿzpp sp 4 m rd=k i3b

Now after trampling on you **Apophis, x 4, with your left foot,**

dd hr=k r-hft-hr R^c

speaking with you in front of Re,

iw ʿwy=k h3b m-ht wbn=f

your arms are bent after he rises.

m3^c-hrw R^c r=k ʿzpp sp 4 (23,6)

Re is triumphant over you, **Apophis, x 4,**

sm3^c-hrw R^c r=k ʿzpp m wn-m3^ct

Re is justified over you, **Apophis.**

Passage 5: Destroying Apophis (Figure 23)

štm ʕpp dd tw r pn hr ʕpp

Destroying Apophis – speak this spell over Apophis,

sšw hr šw n m3wt m ry w3d

which is drawn on a fresh papyrus roll in green ink

hnʕ ir ʕpp m mnḥ (23,7)

and (a figure of) Apophis is made in wax,

dmw rn=f hr=f m ry w3d

his name is proclaimed on it in green ink,

rdit r ht 3mm=f hft Rʕ

which is put on the fire so it burns before Re

dī=f sw m dw3 m ʕhʕ mitt

as he reveals himself in the morning and at midday likewise,

m mšr hft Rʕ htp=f (23,8) m ʕnht

and in the evening when Re sets in the West,

r wnw 6t nt grḥ r wnw 8t nt hrw

at the sixth hour of the night, at the eighth hour of the day,

r ph rwh3 nfryt r wnw nbt nt hrw nt grḥ

at the end of the evening, down to every hour of the day and of the night,

m Pšdntyw (23,9)

in the New Moon Festival,

m hrw m 3bd m 6nty ḥb

in the day and in the month in the Sixth Day Festival,

15nty ḥb mītt hrw nb

the Fifteenth Day Festival likewise, and every day.

šḥr ʿzpp ḥfty nw R^c m ḥzpt ḥr psd R^c

Apophis, the enemy of Re is felled in the storm by Re's shining.

šḥr ʿzpp m wn-mz^ct (23,10)

Apophis is truly felled.

snḥt pw m ḥt nt ḥzsyṯ

He is a boiled one in the fire of bryony.

rdit spw=f r ḥ^c hr wsš

His remains are put into a pot containing urine,

smn m ḥt⁷⁵⁴ w^ct

and set aside as one thing.

ir ḥr=k mītt nn n r wnwt 6t nt grḥ (23,11)

This is done by you likewise at the sixth hour of the night

r wnwt 8t nt hrw rdit ʿzpp r ḥt

and the eighth hour of the day when putting (the figure of) Apophis on the fire

pgs ḥr=f ʿšz sp sn

and spitting on it very many times

m ḥzt wnwt nbt nt hrw nfryt r pḥr šwyt

at the beginning of every hour of the day, until the turning of the shade.

ir m-ḥt nn n wnwt 6t (23,12) nt hrw

Now, after this sixth hour of the day

⁷⁵⁴ The wrong determinative has been written, amended according to Faulkner, 1933: 46.

rdit hr=k ʕpp r ht pgs hr=f

(the figure of) Apophis is put on the fire before you, spitting on it,

sin m rd=k izb hsf hmhmt Nh3hr

trampling with your left foot and driving off the roarer Nehahir.

ir hr=k mitt nn n (23,13) r wnw 8t nt hrw

This is done by you likewise at the eighth hour of the day,

hsf ʕpp tm=f⁷⁵⁵ dbdb r sktt

driving off Apophis so he will not attack the night bark.

ir⁷⁵⁶ hr=k mitt nn n hft psi šn⁷⁵⁷ m izbtt nt pt

This is done by you likewise when the storm cloud brews in the east of the sky

hft R ʕtp=f (23,14) m imntt

when Re sets in the west

r tm rdit hpr dšrt m izbtt nt pt

to prevent the wrath appearing in the east of the sky.

ir hr=k mitt nn n ʕšz sp sn

This is done by you likewise very many times

r tm rdit hpr h3t m pt

to prevent the storm appearing in the sky,

tm rdit hpr (23,15) kri m pt

to prevent the storm cloud appearing in the sky.

ir hr=k nn n ʕšz sp sn r h3

This is done very many times against the storm

⁷⁵⁵ Scribal error, *tm* is written incorrectly in the hieroglyphs.

⁷⁵⁶ *ir* has been corrected over *rdit*, amended according to Faulkner, 1933: 47.

⁷⁵⁷ Scribal error, *šn^c* is written incorrectly in the hieroglyphs, amended according to Faulkner, 1933: 47.

r psd itn shr ʕzpp m wn-mʕt

so the sun shines, and Apophis is truly felled.

ʕht n ir s hry-tp tʕ (23,16)

It is beneficial for the one who does it upon earth,

ʕht n=f m hrt-ntr

it is beneficial to him in the necropolis,

rdit phty n s pn r ʕt nt hry=f

giving more strength to that man than (to) the office of his superior,

nḥm=f pw m-ʕ ht nbt bin ḏw m wn-mʕt

it is truly his salvation from all bad and evil things,

iw mʕʕ.n=i hpr m-ʕ=i

I have seen it happen in my charge.

Passage 6: The First Book of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re (Figure 24)

mdʕt (23,17) tp nt shr ʕzpp hfty nw Rʕ

The first book of felling Apophis, enemy of Re.

ḏḏ mdw shr hr hr=k ʕzpp hfty pf nw Rʕ

Recitation: Fall on your face, Apophis, that enemy of Re!

ḥm ḥʕ=k hry

Turn your back, foe,

sbi iwty ʕwy=f iwty (23,18) rdwy=f

rebel who has no arms or legs.

ʕd<.w> hnty=k iw ht hr=k

Your nose is cut off from your face,

iw=k shr.tw shr.tw

you are fallen, overthrown,

shr.n tw R^c-Hr-šhty dr.n=f tw nik.n=f tw

as Re-Horakhty has felled you, he has driven you away, he has condemned you,

sswn tw irt=f n⁷⁵⁸ (23,19) dt=f

his eye of his body consumes you,

iw=k shr.tw n sdt pr im=s

you are felled by the flame which comes from it,

nsrt pr m hh=s

the flame which comes from its blast,

pr m ʒt=s hh=s r=k

which comes in its moment; its blast is upon you.

hsf<.w> ʒd=k in ʒst m ʒhw tpr=s

Your aggression is prevented by Isis through the power of her utterance.

bhn<.w> bʒ=k (23,20) iwd<.w> tswt=k

Your ba is severed, your vertebrae are separated,

wd.n Hr sdb=k

as Horus has placed your obstacle

msy Hr hr ʒʒw=k

while the children of Horus are restraining you,

štm.tw n ʒt=sn

you are destroyed in their moment.

hmhm=k htht=k

You will retreat! You will withdraw,

⁷⁵⁸ Dittography in the text due to the starting of a new line.

hr.tw ht<.tw> hm.tw ʕzpp (23,21)

as you are fallen, withdrawn and retreated, **Apophis!**

shtht tw Psdt ʕzt imyw Twnw

The great Ennead who are in Heliopolis repel you.

sh̄m.n Hr ʕd=k

Horus has repelled your aggression,

siʕd.n St̄h ʕt=k

Seth has diminished your moment,

hsf tw ʕst bh̄n tw Nbt-hyt

Isis repels you, Nephthys drives you away.

shtht tw Psdt ʕzt (23,22) imyw h̄ʕt wiʕ n R̄

The great Ennead who are in the prow of the barque of Re repel you.

Passage 7: The First Book of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re (Figure 25)

sin=k rn n ʕzpp

You will obliterate **the name of Apophis**

sš hr šw n mʕwt

which is written on a new, blank papyrus sheet.

(24,20) rdi<w>=f r ht h̄ft R̄ di=f sw

It is put on a fire when Re reveals himself,

h̄ft R̄ m ʕh̄c h̄ft R̄ h̄tp=f m ʕnh̄ imnt

When Re is rising, when Re sets in the west,

m gr̄h̄ m hrw

at night, in the day,

m wnwt nbt n hrw nb

at every hour of every day,

m zbd m 6-nty hb m (24,21) 15nty hb

at the Monthly Festival, at the Sixth Day Festival, at the Fifteenth Day Festival,

mıtt hrw nbt n shr hfty nw R^c-Hr-zhty

likewise every day of felling the enemies of Re-Horakhty.

Passage 8: The Second Chapter of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re (Figure 26)

i hr hr=tn (25,10) hr irf tn

Oh fallen one, you will fall, fall you!

iw=tn hr.tw shr.tw

You are fallen, felled.

hr=tn n R^c

You will fall to Re,

hr=tn n dndn n zt=f

you will fall to the anger of his moment.

tm=tn n=f tm=tn

You will be annihilated for him, you will be annihilated!

sh_m=f tn sh_r=f tn bh_n=f tn

He will destroy you, he will fell you, he will drive you off,

nik=f (25,11) tn sik_n=f tn sk=f rn=tn

he will condemn you, he will destroy you, he will wipe out your name,

bh_n=f b_z=tn h_ni=f tpr=tn h_m=f tn

he will drive off your ba, he will imprison you, he will destroy you,

rth=f tn sswn=f tn hr=f tn

he will restrain you, he will make you perish, he will fell you.

hr=tn n wnm̄y šhmt=s (25,12) tn imi=tn wn

You will fall to the devouring flame, it will destroy you, you will not exist.

i tm tm=tn sp 2

Oh annihilated one, you will be annihilated (x2),

tm irf tn tm=tn tm b3=tn

you are annihilated, you will be annihilated, your ba will be annihilated!

tm=tn tm h3t=tn

You will be annihilated, your corpse will be annihilated,

tm=tn tm šwyt=tn tm=tn

you will be annihilated, your shadow will be annihilated, you will be annihilated.

nn wn=tn nn wn (25,13) b3=tn

You will not exist, your ba will not exist,

nn wn=tn nn wn h3t=tn

you will not exist, your corpse will not exist,

nn wn=tn nn wn šwyt=tn

you will not exist, your shadow will not exist,

nn wn=tn nn wn ᵑnh=tn

you will not exist, your life will not exist,

nn wn=tn nn wn nhp=tn

you will not exist, your resurrection will not exist.

nn ts tp=tn m hᵑ=tn (25,14)

Your head will not join to your body,

ḥt irf tn n=f

retreat, you, because of him,

ḥm irf tn sbiw

retreat, you, rebel!

Passage 9: The Second Chapter of Felling Apophis, Enemy of Re (Figure 27)

sin=k ḥfty nbt nw R^c

You will obliterate every enemy of Re,

ḥfty nbt nw pr-^c3 ḥnh wḏ3 snb m mwt m ḥnh

every enemy of the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health, dead and living,

ḥn^c shry nbt nty m ib=f

along with every accused one who is in his heart.

rn n iwt=sn mwt=sn (26,3) msw=sn m 3bt nbt

The names of their fathers, their mothers and their children in every family

šsw m ry w3ḏ ḥr šw n m3wt

are written in green ink on a new, blank papyrus sheet.

mtn rn=sn ḥr šnbt=sn

Their names are inscribed on their breasts

ir m mnḥ mitt snḥ m šnt nt mnw

made from wax, likewise bound with a net of thread.

pg3is ḥr=sn (26,4) sin m rdt i3bt

Spit on them, trample with the left foot,

shr m m^cb3 m ds

fell with a harpoon and with a knife

rdit hr ht m mnt nt sntyw

and put (them) on the fire in the brazier of the companions.

hr-s3 rn n ʕ3pp snwht m ht nt hs3w

Afterwards the name of Apophis is cooked in the fire of bryony.

Passage 10: The Book of Knowing the Creations of Re and Felling Apophis (Figure 28)

dd.tw r pn hr ʕ3pp

This spell is to be spoken over (a drawing of) Apophis

sš hr šw n m3wt m ry w3d

who is drawn on a new, blank papyrus sheet in green ink.

rdit m-hnw hnw

Put (it) inside a jar,

diw rn=f hr=f

(with) his name put on it.

snh ntt di r⁷⁵⁹ ht hrw nb

Bind, tie up and put (it) onto a fire every day,

sin m rd=k izb

trample with your left foot

pg3s (28,17) hr=f sp 4 m hrt hrw nt⁷⁶⁰ hrw nb

and spit on it four times daily, every day.

dd.hr=k di=k sw n ht

You must say (when) you put it on a fire

⁷⁵⁹ Scribal error, read *r* instead of *n*.

⁷⁶⁰ Scribal error, read *nt* instead of *nd*.

m3^c-hrw R^c r=k ʿ3pp sp 4

“Re is triumphant over you, Apophis (x 4),

m3^c-hrw Hr r hfty=f sp 4

Horus is triumphant over his enemies (x 4),

m3^c-hrw pr-ʿ3 ʿnh wḏ3 snb r hfty=f sp 4

the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health, is triumphant over his enemies (x 4)”

isk sš.n=k nn n rn <n> shty nb shtyt (28,18) nbt

after you have written these names of all the (male) foes and all the (female) foes

snd ib=k r=sn

whom your heart fears,

m hfty nb n pr-ʿ3 ʿnh wḏ3 snb

namely every enemy of the pharaoh, life, prosperity, health,

m mwt m ʿnh

dead and alive,

rn n iwt=sn rn n mwt=sn rn n msw<=sn>

and the names of their fathers, the names of their mothers and the names of their children,

<rdi>⁷⁶¹ m-hnw n-s⁷⁶² hnt

put (them) inside a jar

irw m mnḥ

which has been made from wax

rdi hr ht hr-s3 rn n ʿ3pp

and put (it) onto a fire after the name of Apophis,

⁷⁶¹ This *rdi* does not actually appear here in the text, but in the following line before *irw m mnḥ*. It has been emended using (28,16) *rdi m-hnw hnw* as an example, to give the line clearer meaning. As there is already a scribal error at this point in the text, with the omission of the preceding *sn* pronoun, it is plausible the scribe made this additional mistake.

⁷⁶² Literally ‘inside it, a jar’.

(28,19) *zm hft R^c di=f sw*

which burns when Re manifests himself.

FIGURES

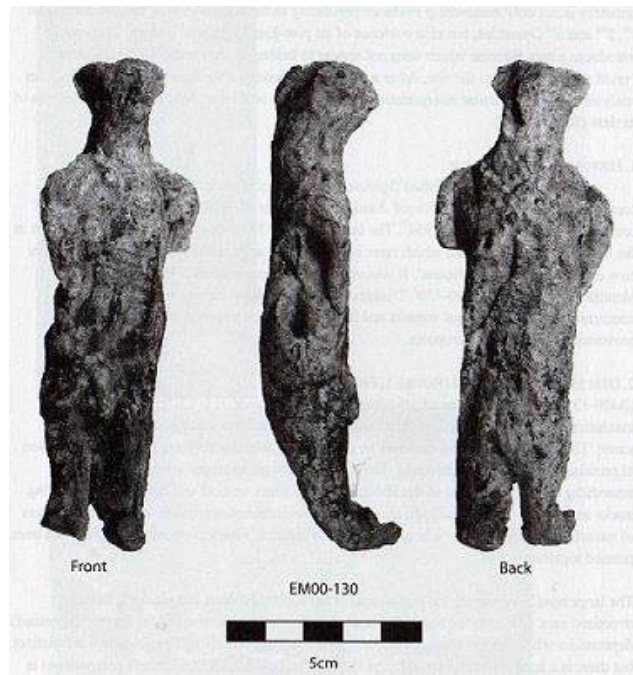


Figure 1: Cairo Museum EM00-130 (Knoblauch, 2011: figure 1)



Figure 2: Walters Art Gallery 48.1773 (Bochi, 1991: figure 1)

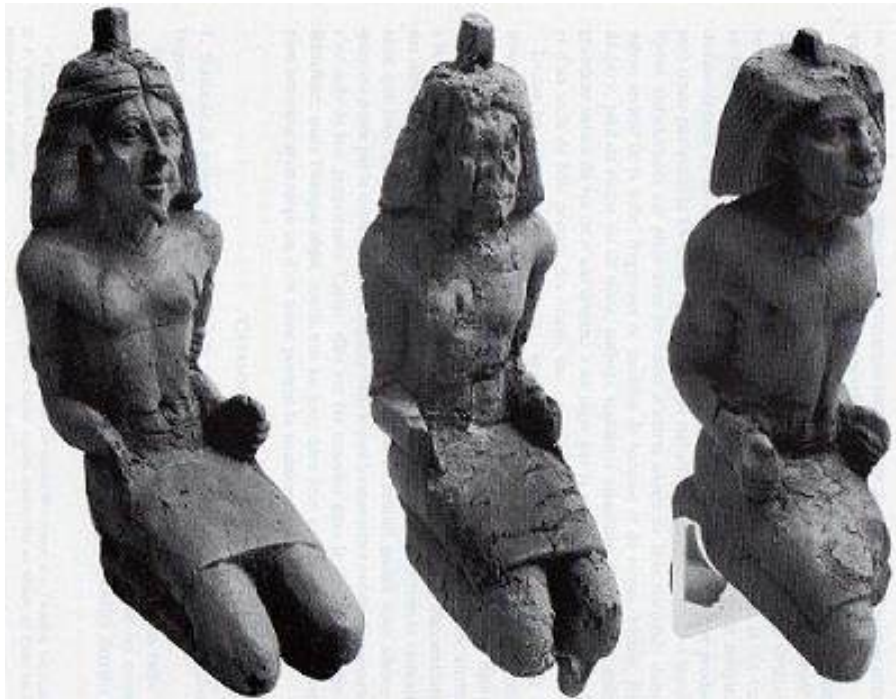


Figure 3: Abusir Excavation 1984 figures 1-3 (Verner, 1985: pl 6)



Figure 4: Abusir Excavation 1984 figures 4-6 (Verner, 1985: pl 7)



Figures 5: Abusir Excavation 1984 figures 7-9 (Verner, 1985: pl 8)



Figure 6: Louvre E 27145

http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=28021&langue=fr

(Accessed 1/2/13)

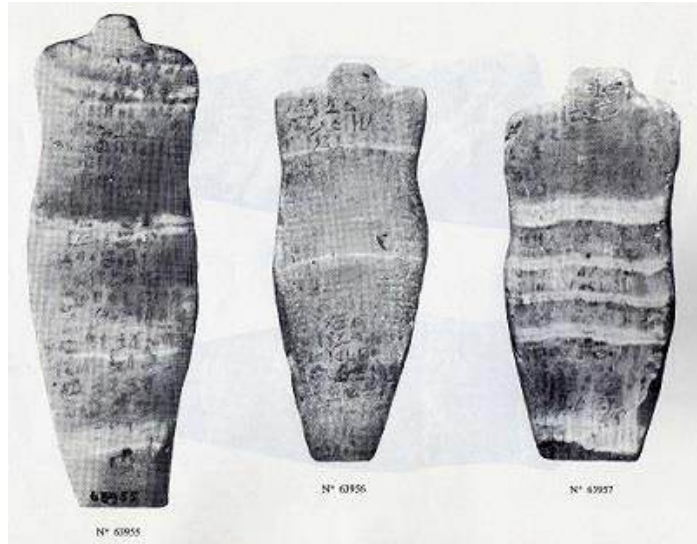


Figure 7: Cairo JdE 63955-63957 (Posener, 1987: pl 1)



Figure 8: Cairo JdE 63958 and 63959 (Posener, 1987: pl 2)

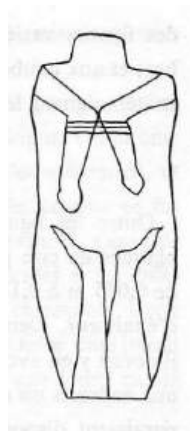

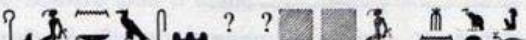

















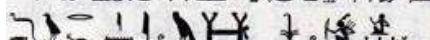





Figure 9: an example of the back of the Cairo JdE 63955-63959 figures (Posener, 1987: 9)

??? 
 9.  ? ? 



 9. 




 9.  ? 

 9. 


9. 

 9. 

 9. 





















Figure 10: Text from Cairo JdE 63955-63959 (altered from Posener, 1987: 22-55)



Figure 11: left to right: Louvre E 16493, 16497, 16498, 16499, 16499 back, 16501

http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=19802&langue=fr

(Accessed 4/2/13)

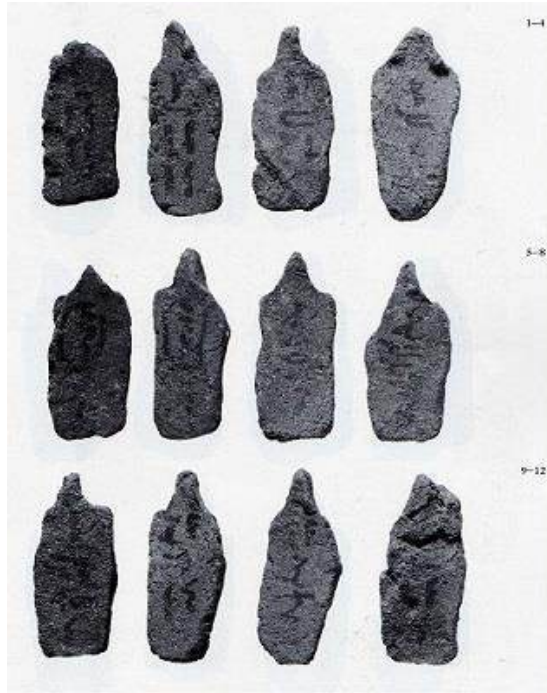


Figure 12: some of the Cairo JdE 88146 figures (Osing, 1976: pl 45)



Figure 13: the larger Cairo JdE 88146 figure (Osing, 1976: pl 51)

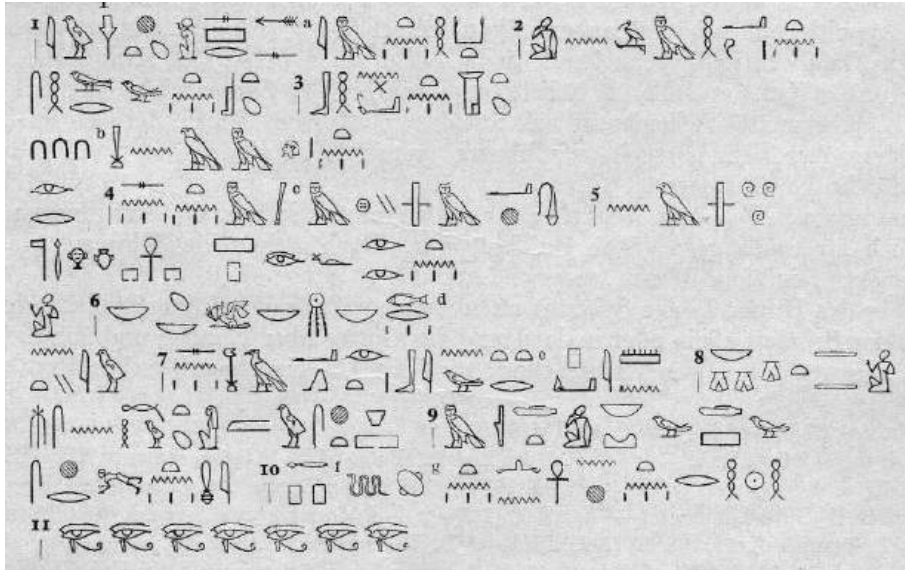


Figure 14: Berlin 23308 (Schott, 1931: 107)

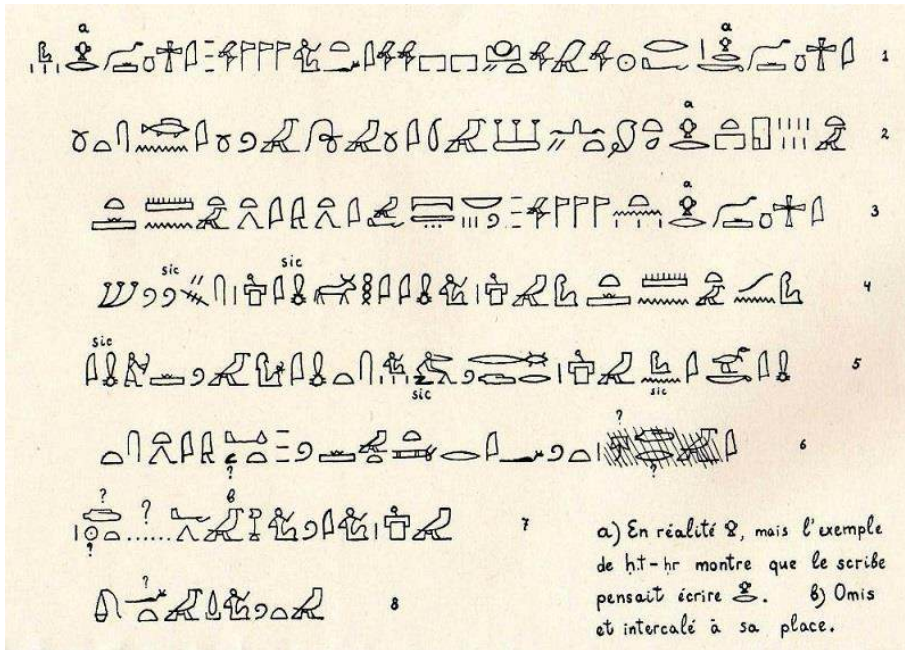


Figure 15: Ostracon Deir el-Medina 1057 (Posener, 1938: pl 31)



Figure 18: Papyrus Chester Beatty VII (Gardiner, 1935: pl 35)

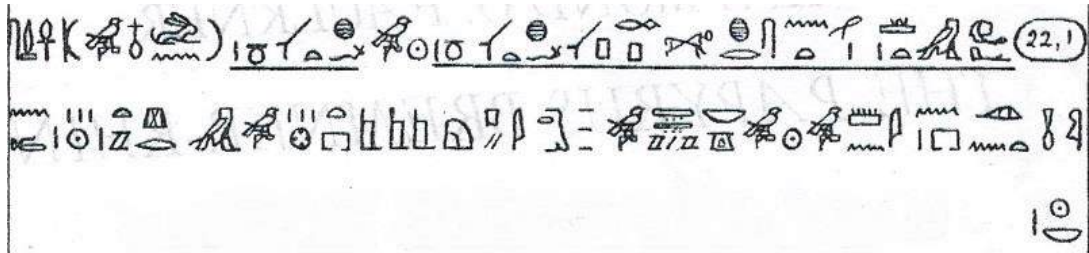


Figure 19: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 1 (Faulkner, 1933: 42)

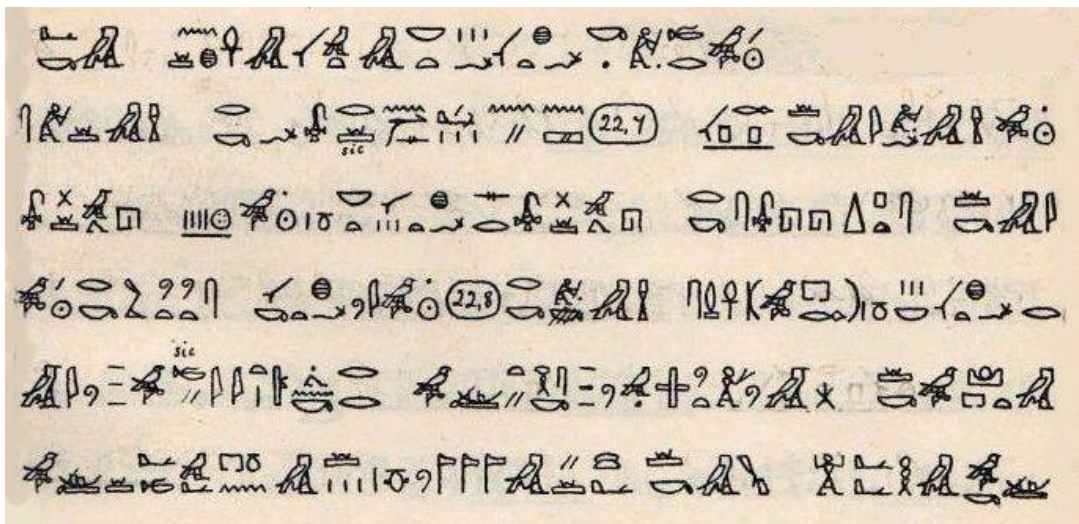


Figure 20: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 2 (Faulkner, 1933: 42-43)

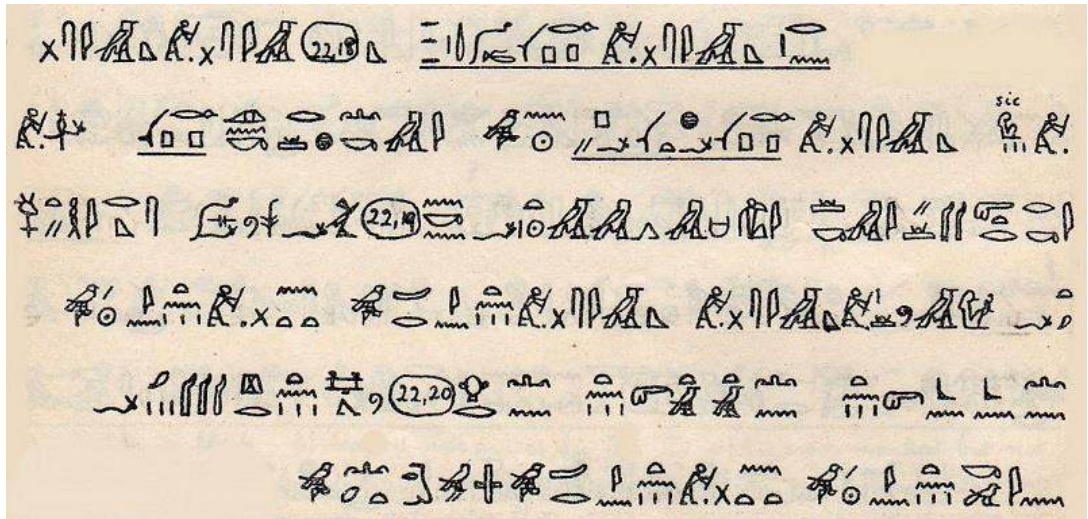


Figure 21: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 3 (Faulkner, 1933: 44)

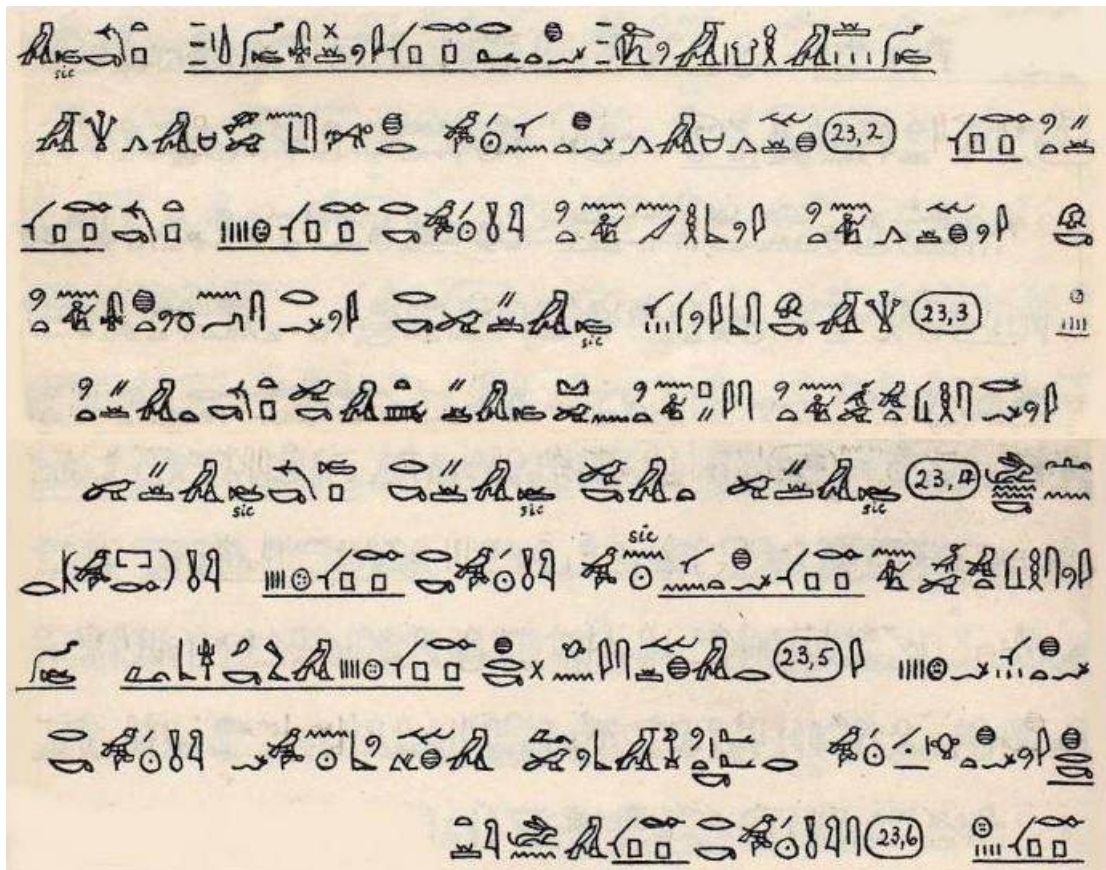


Figure 22: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 4 (Faulkner, 1933: 45-46)

10. 20 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1900 2000 2100 2200 2300 2400 2500 2600 2700 2800 2900 3000 3100 3200 3300 3400 3500 3600 3700 3800 3900 4000 4100 4200 4300 4400 4500 4600 4700 4800 4900 5000 5100 5200 5300 5400 5500 5600 5700 5800 5900 6000 6100 6200 6300 6400 6500 6600 6700 6800 6900 7000 7100 7200 7300 7400 7500 7600 7700 7800 7900 8000 8100 8200 8300 8400 8500 8600 8700 8800 8900 9000 9100 9200 9300 9400 9500 9600 9700 9800 9900 10000

Figure 23: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 5 (Faulkner, 1933: 46-47)

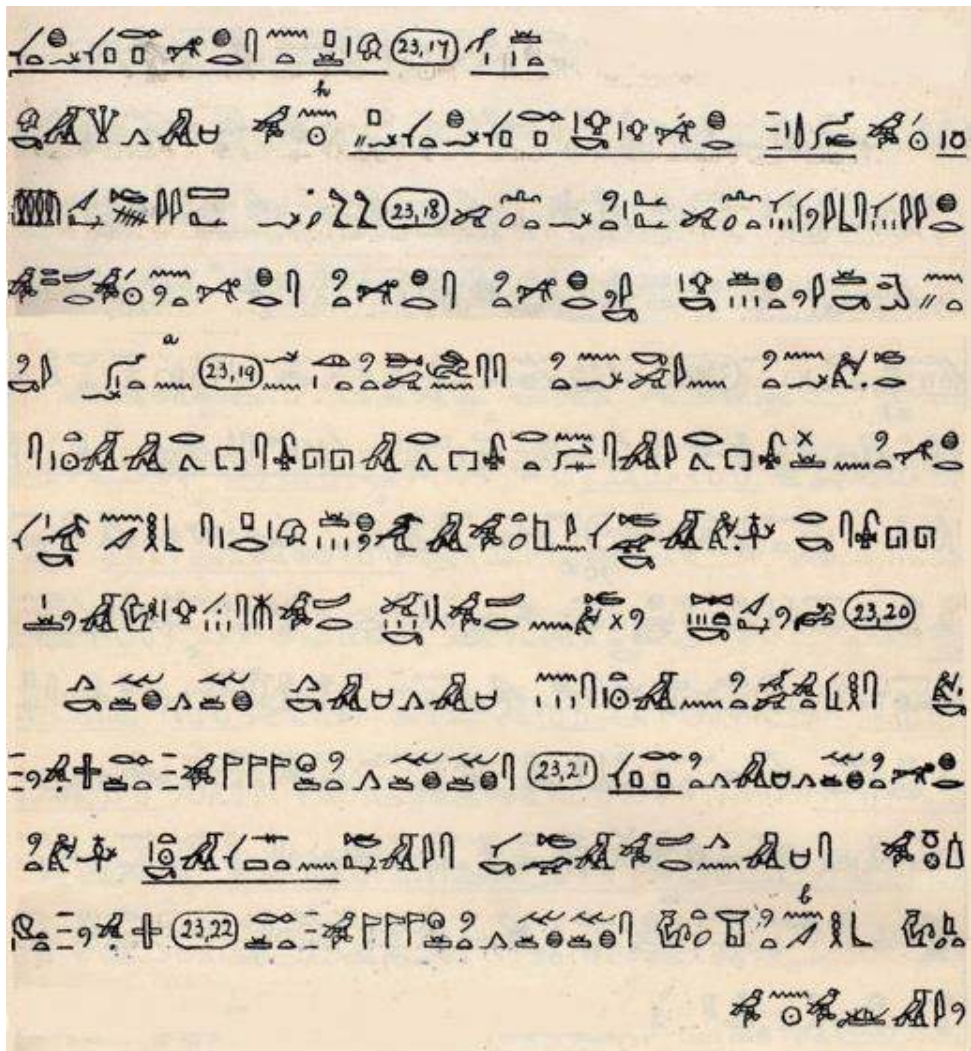


Figure 24: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 6 (Faulkner, 1933: 47-48)

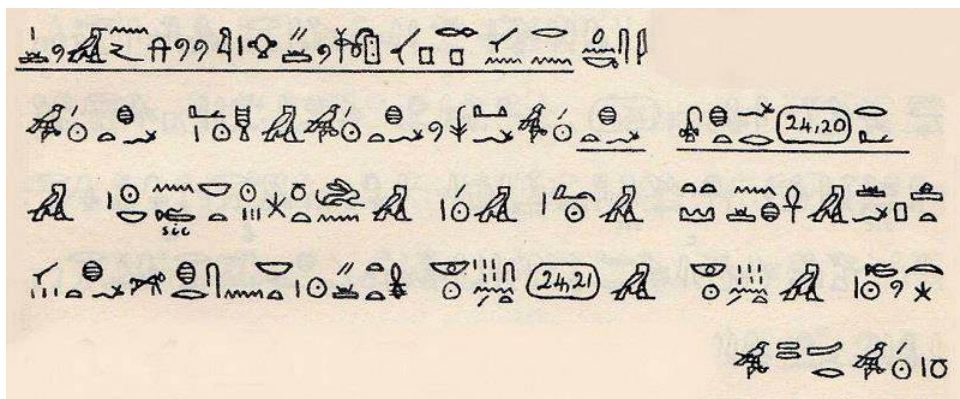


Figure 25: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 7 (Faulkner, 1933: 51)

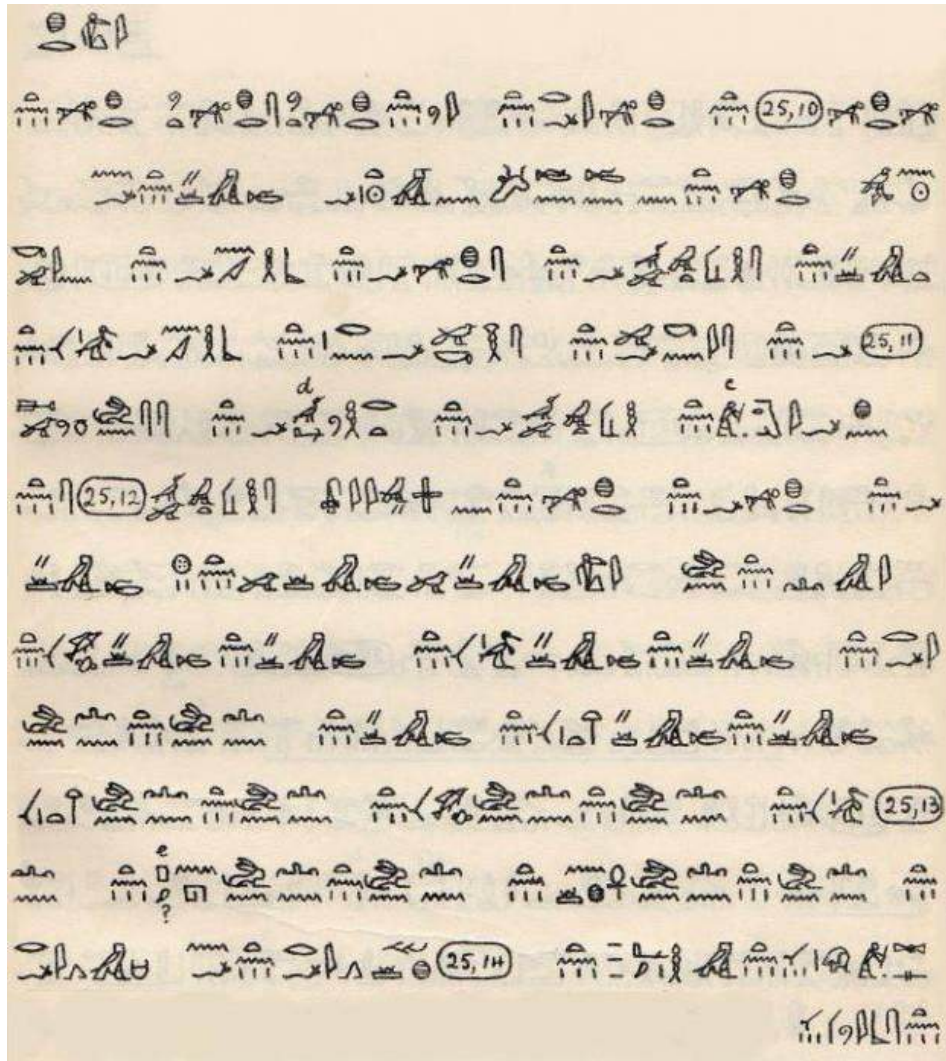


Figure 26: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 8 (Faulkner, 1933: 53-54)

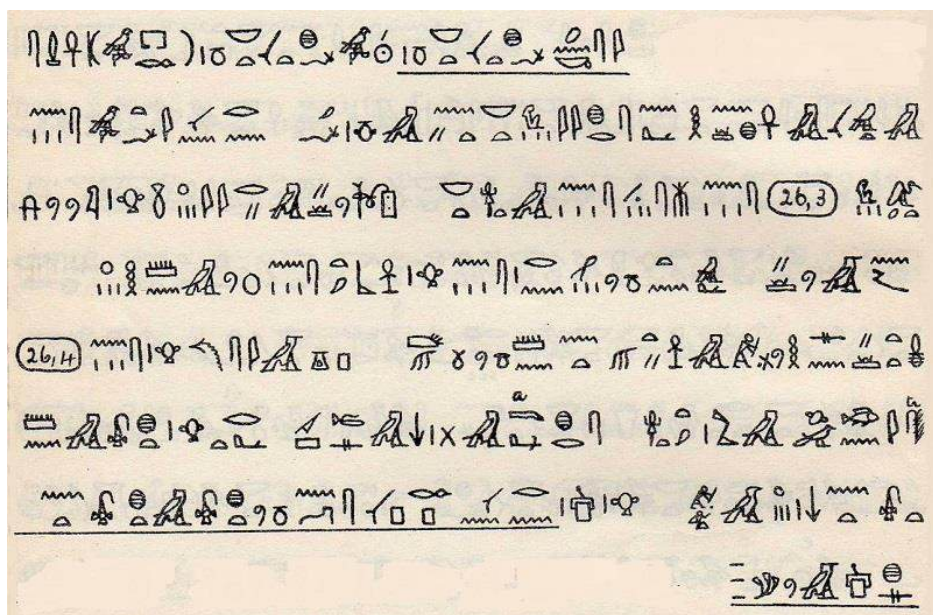


Figure 27: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 9 (Faulkner, 1933: 56)

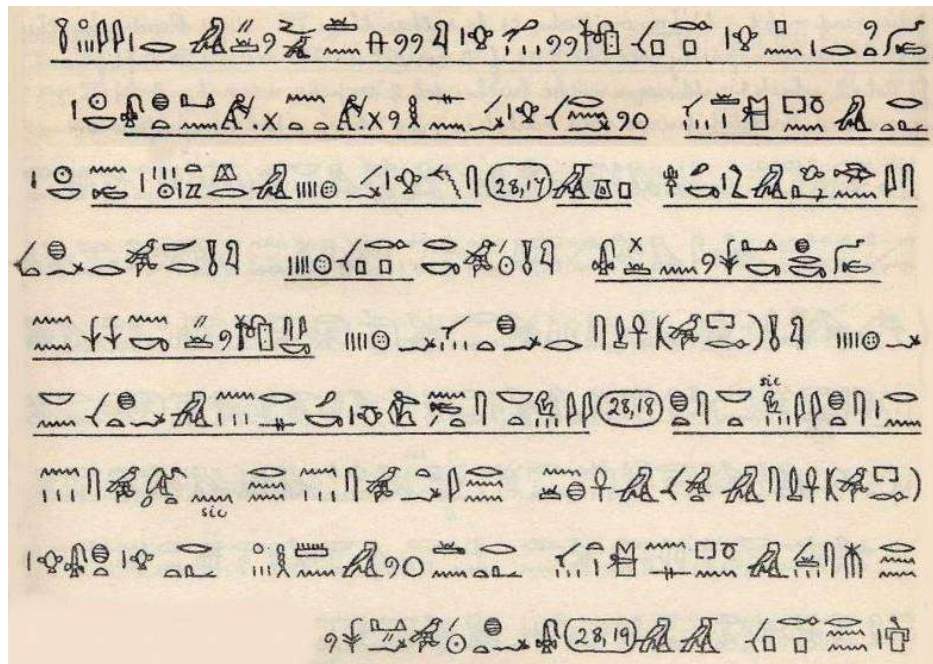


Figure 28: Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Passage 10 (Faulkner, 1933: 68-69)

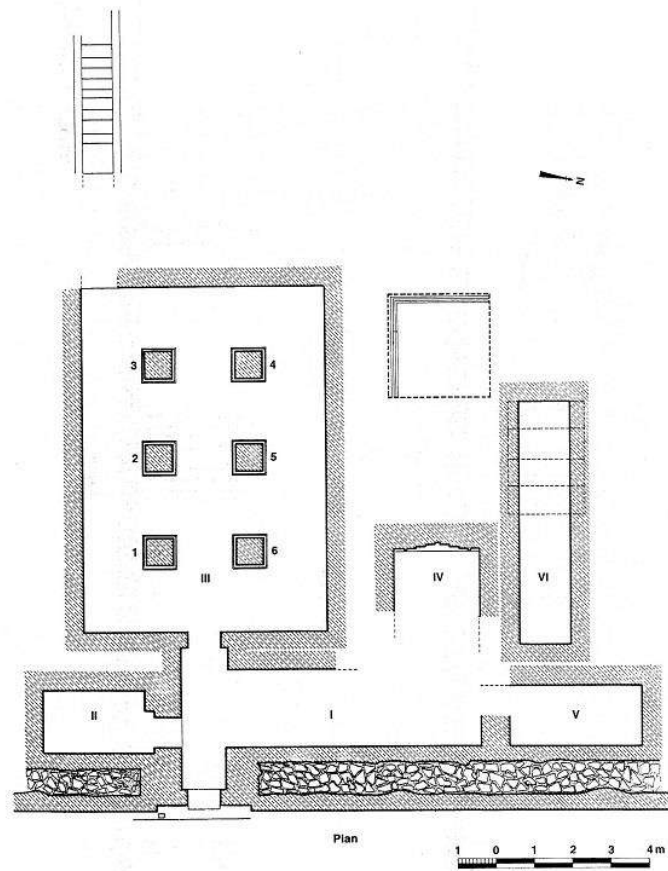


Figure 29: Neferseshemre, plan of tomb (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 40)



Figure 30: Neferseshemre, room III, pillar 2, west face (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 9)



Figure 31: Neferseshemre, room III, pillar 5, east face (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 12)

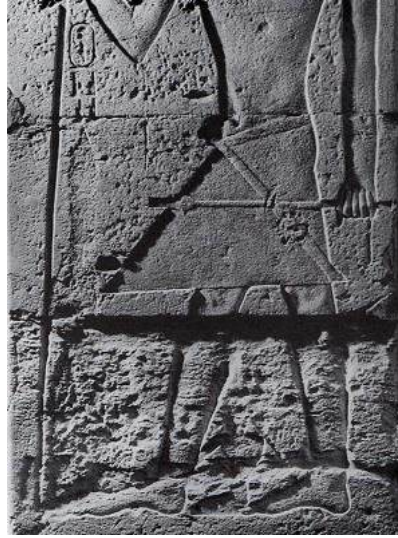


Figure 32: Neferseshemre, room III, pillar 1, west face (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 7)



Figure 33: Neferseshemre, room III, pillar 5, west face (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 14)



Figure 34: Neferseshemre, room III, pillar 3, east face (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 10)

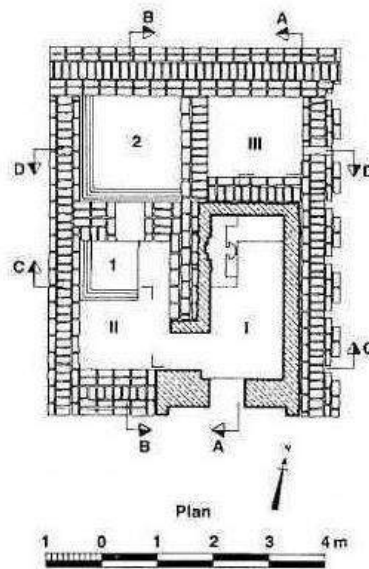


Figure 35: Seankhuiptah, tomb plan (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 61)



Figure 36: Seankhuptah, façade (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 23)



Figure 37: Seankhuptah, west of entrance (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 24b)



Figure 38: Seankhuptah, east of entrance (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 24c)

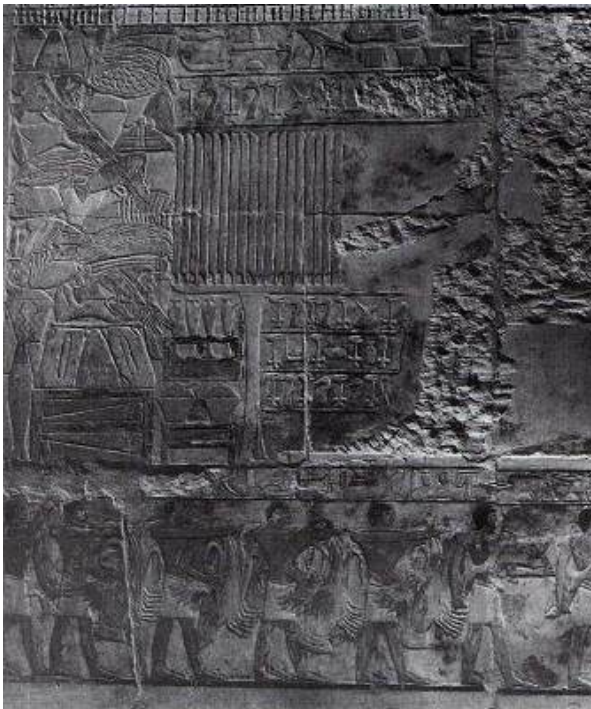


Figure 39: Seankhuptah, room I, west wall (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 27)

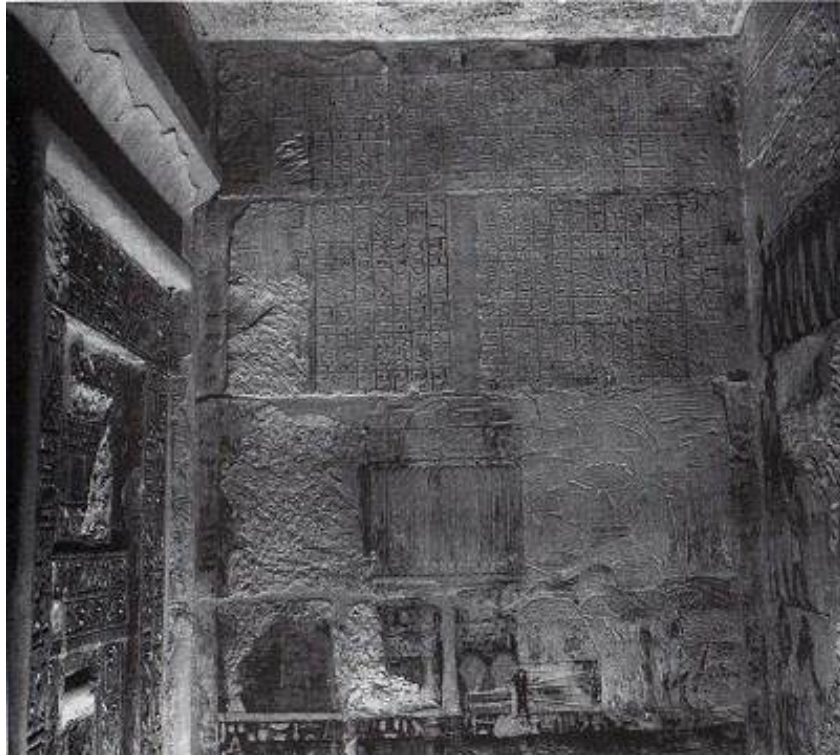


Figure 40: Seankhuptah, room I, north wall (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 30)

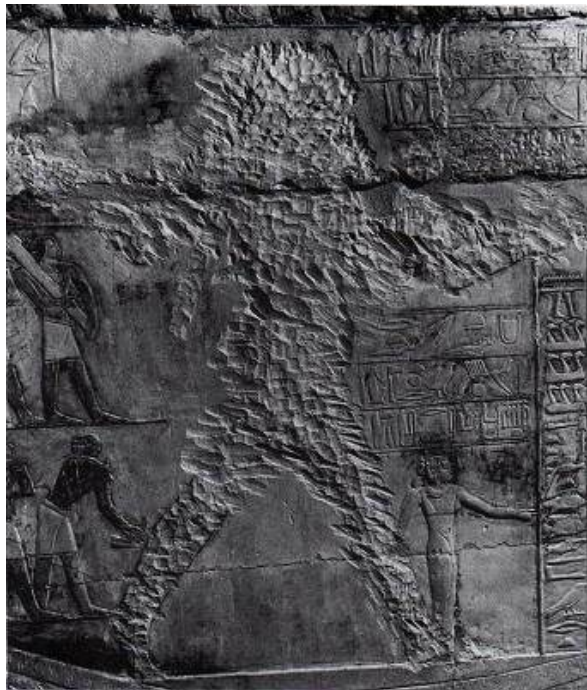


Figure 41: Seankhuptah, room I, east wall (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 34)

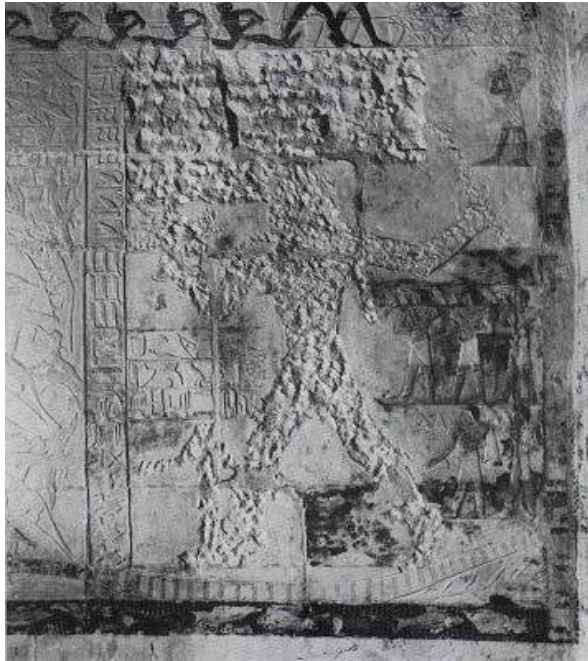


Figure 42: Seankhuiptah, room I, east wall (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 38)

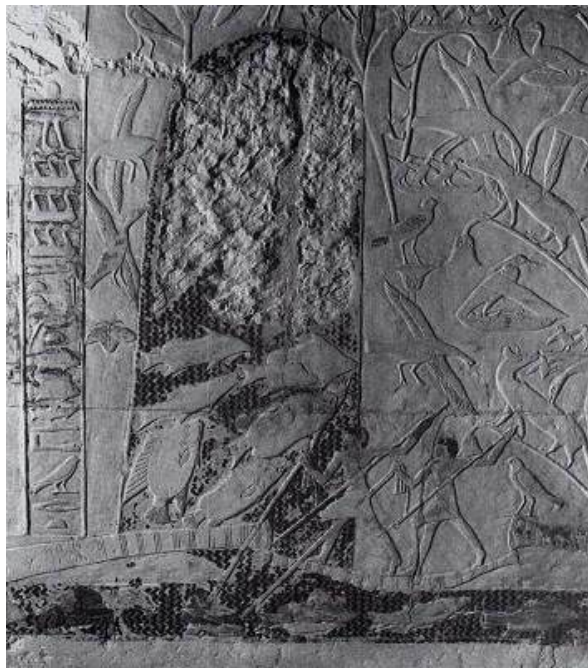


Figure 43: Seankhuiptah, room I, east wall (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 1998: pl 36)

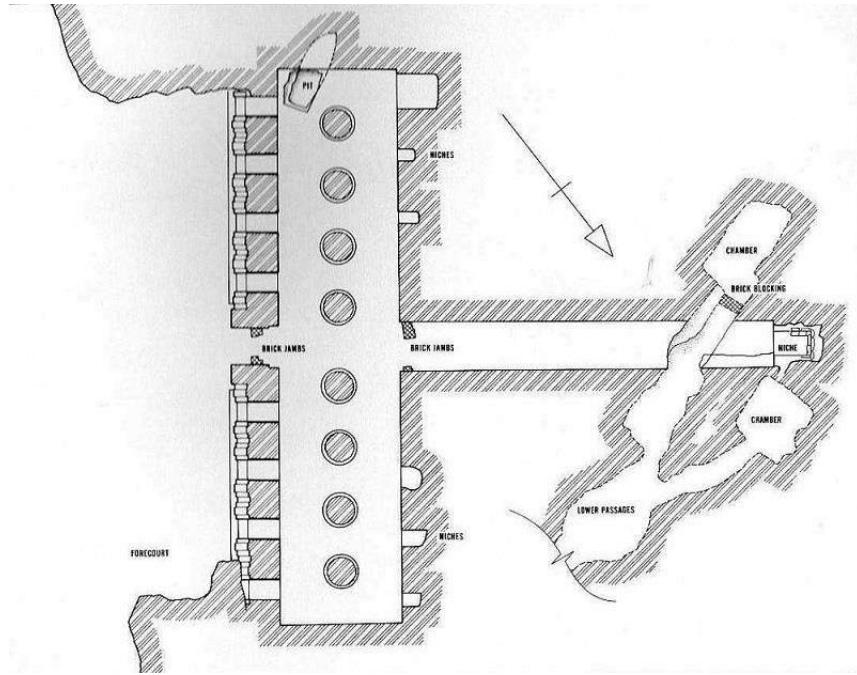


Figure 44: Senenmut TT 71, tomb plan (Dorman, 1991: pl 4a)



Figure 45: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 1 (Dorman, 1991: pl 14c)



Figure 46: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 2 (Dorman, 1991: pl 14d)

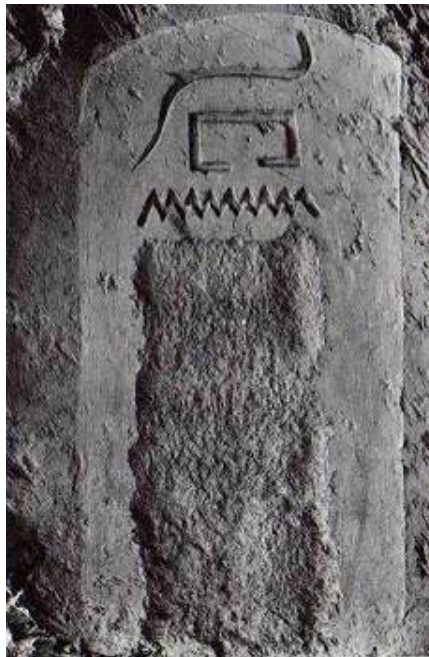


Figure 47: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 3 (Dorman, 1991: pl 14e)



Figure 48: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 4 (Dorman, 1991: pl 15a)



Figure 49: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 5 (Dorman, 1991: pl 15b)



Figure 50: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 6 (Dorman, 1991: pl 15c)



Figure 51: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 7 (Dorman, 1991: pl 15d)



Figure 52: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 8 (Dorman, 1991: pl 15e)



Figure 53: Senenmut TT 71, Stela 9 (Dorman, 1991: pl 15f)

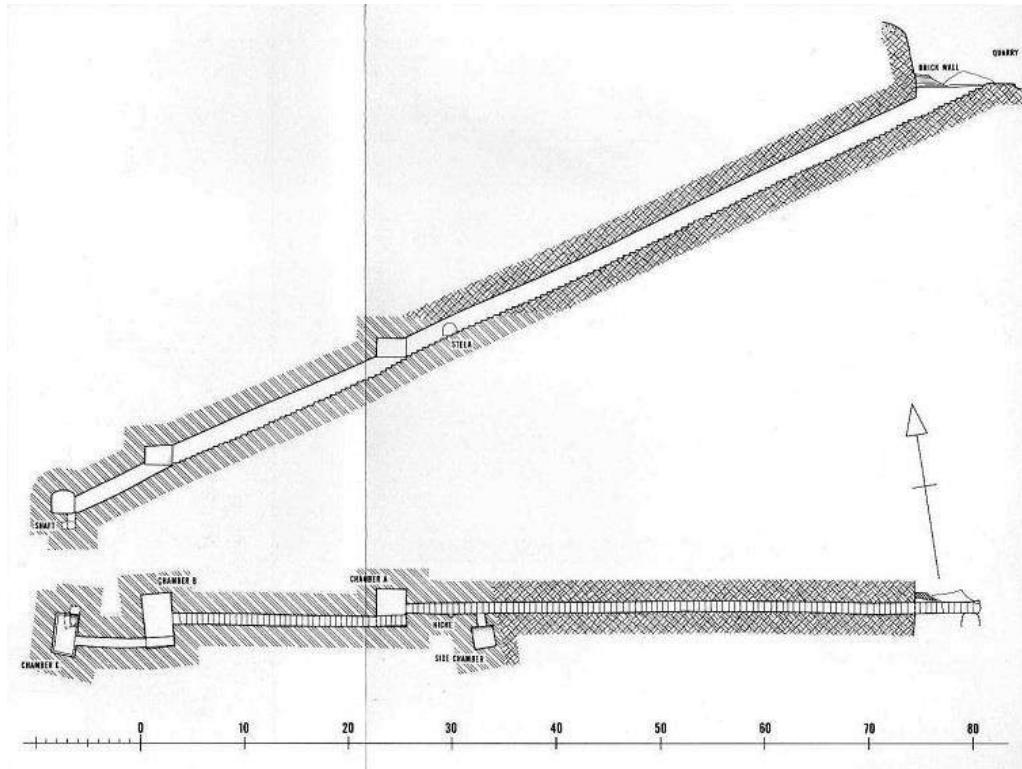


Figure 54: Senenmut TT 353, tomb plan (Dorman, 1991: pl 51c)



Figure 55: Senenmut TT 353, false door vignette (Dorman, 1991: pl 83a)



Figure 56: Senenmut TT 353, chamber entrance, north jamb (Dorman, 1991: pl 82b)

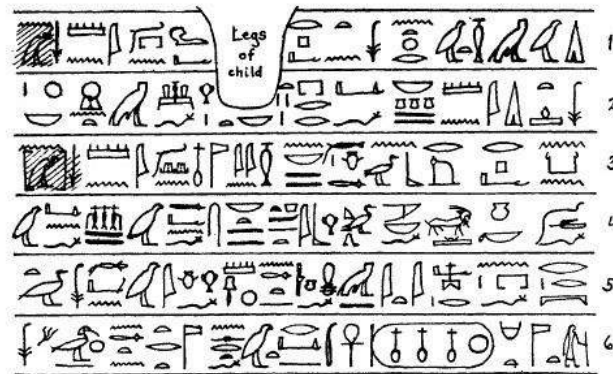


Figure 57: Senenmut TT 353, chamber entrance, south jamb (Dorman, 1991: pl 60)

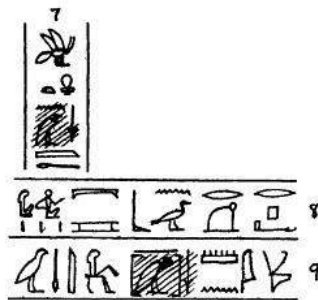


Figure 58: Chicago Field Museum 173800 (Allen, 1927: 51)

final proof of his queen's unparalleled graciousness.



On Senmut's costume



On top of base



Down back of plinth

Figure 59: Chicago Field Museum 173800 (Allen, 1927: 53)

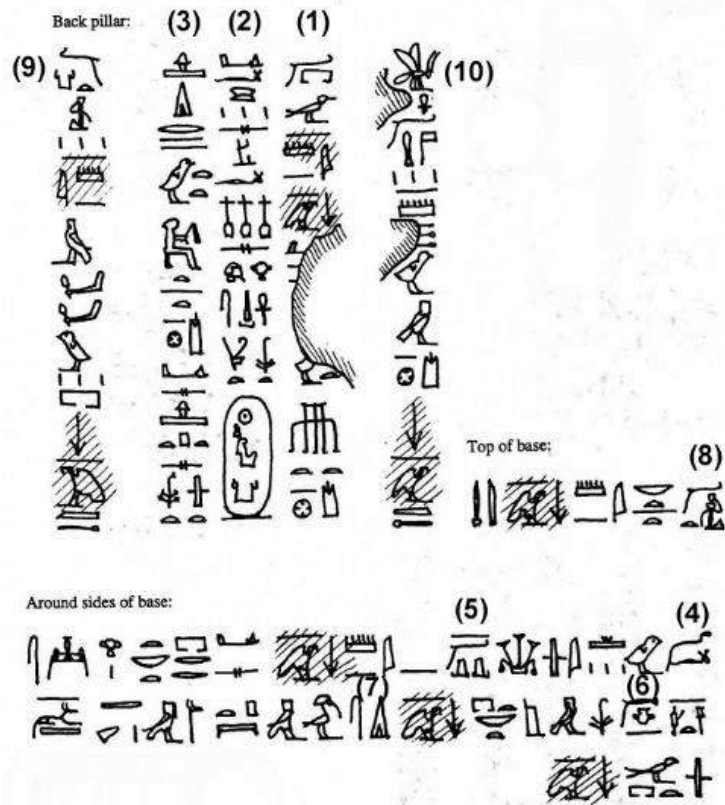


Figure 60: Kimbell Art Museum AP 1985.02, altered from (Dorman, 1988: pl 21)

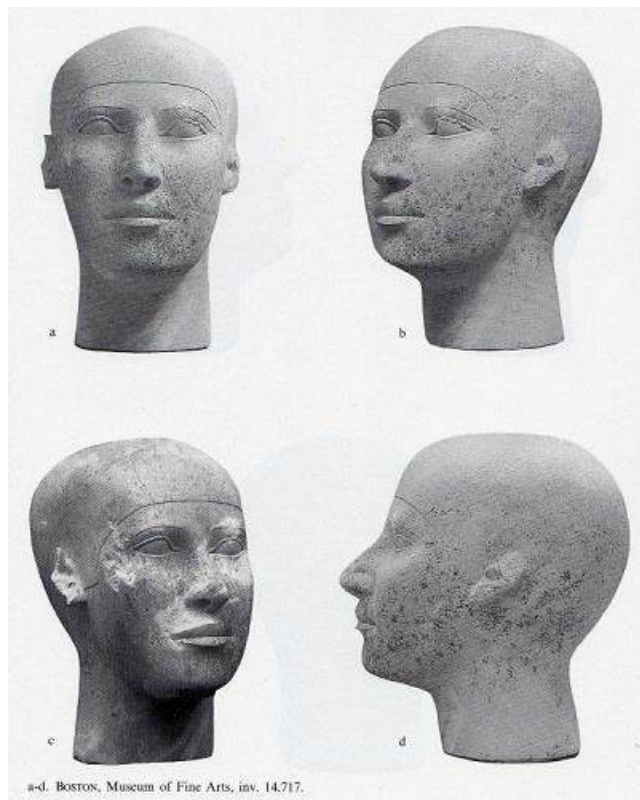


Figure 61: Boston 14.717 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 5)

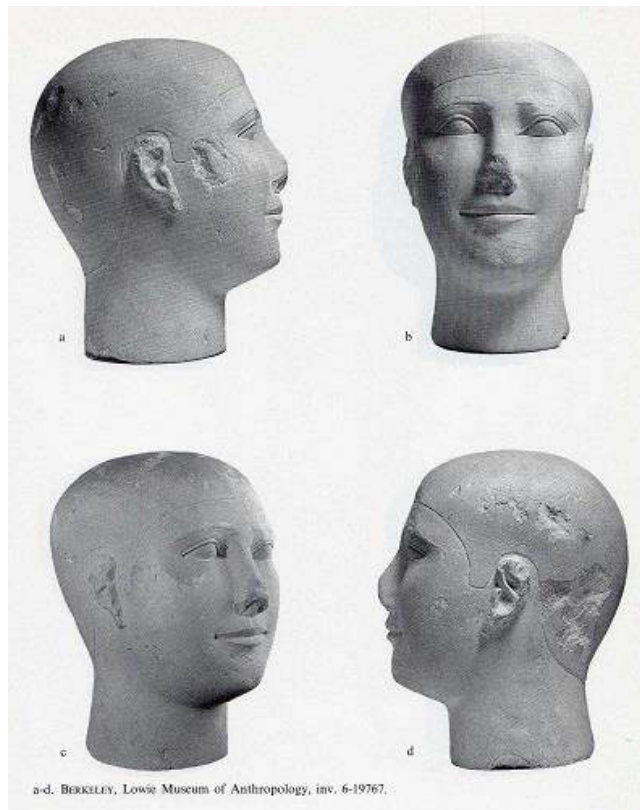


Figure 62: Berkeley 6-19767 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 1)

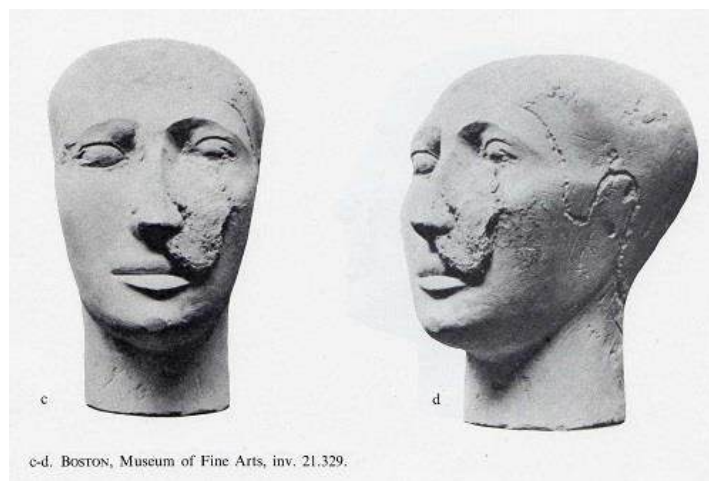


Figure 63: Boston 21.329 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 9)



Figure 64: Berlin 16455 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 2)

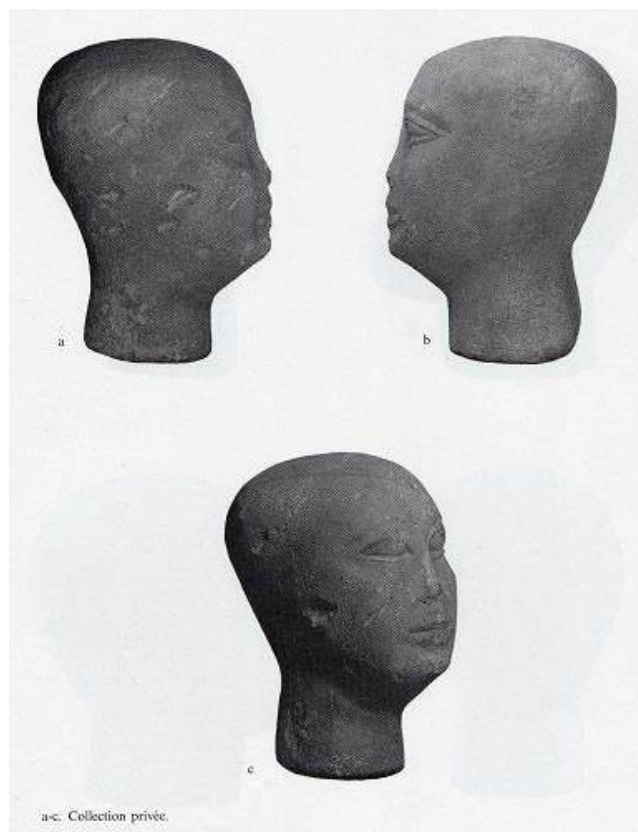


Figure 65: Reserve head from a private collection (Tefnin, 1991: pl 23)

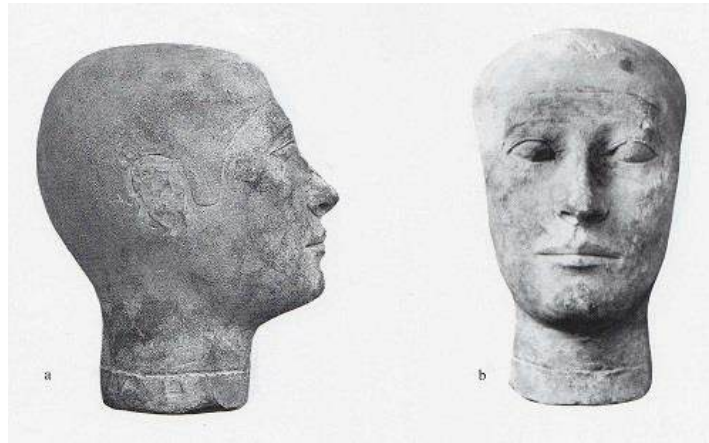


Figure 66: Cairo JdE 44974 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 14)

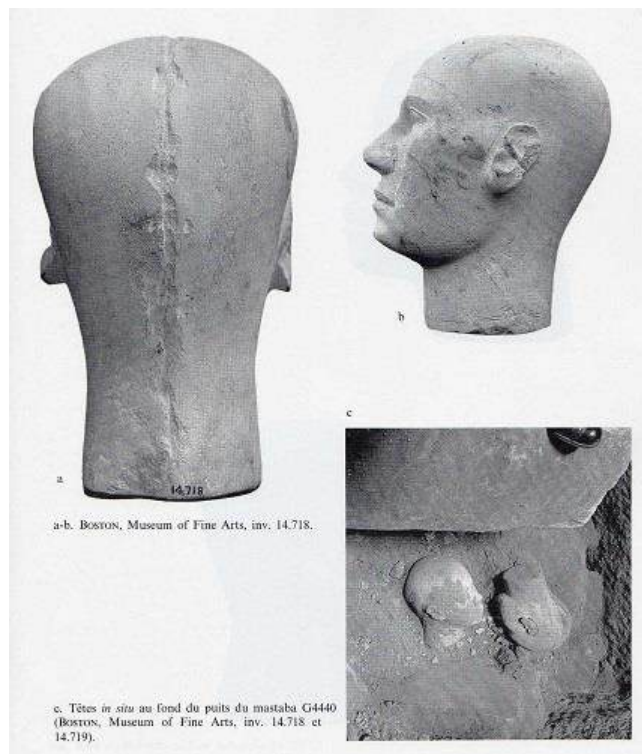


Figure 67: Boston 14.718 reserve head (Tefnin, 1991: pl 7)

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Chapter Two – Execration Figures

Louvre E 27145 illustration (Figure 6):

http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=28021&langue=fr

(Accessed: 1/2/13)

Louvre E 16492-16501 illustration (Figure 11):

http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=19802&langue=fr

(Accessed: 4/2/13)

Chapter Three – Magic Spells

Symptoms of malaria:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Malaria/Pages/Symptoms.aspx> (Accessed: 14/2/15)

Symptoms of a scorpion sting:

<http://www.cmej.org.za/index.php/cmej/article/view/2545/2580> (Accessed: 26/2/16)

Chapter Four – *Damnatio Memoriae*

Kimbell Art Museum AP 1985.02 illustration:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egypt_Senenmut_2_Kimbell.jpg

(Accessed 26/4/14)