

Magical Bricks in the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago*

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(Tafel 9–18)

Abstract:

This article publishes in full the 10 magical bricks in the Egyptian collection of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago, including description, transcription, transliteration, translation, photographs and copies. Their relationship to the corpus of known magical bricks is detailed and their relevance to this corpus discussed.

1 Introduction

Among the holdings of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago are 10 magical bricks or fragments thereof ranging in date from the reign of Tuthmosis III to the 25th Dynasty.¹ Currently published magical bricks range in date from the reign of Tuthmosis III in the 18th Dynasty² to the reign of Nectanebo I in the 30th Dynasty,³ the Oriental Institute Museum examples spanning nearly this entire period. The bricks themselves are not the result of the systematic excavation of the Oriental Institute but derive from art market purchases and shares of finds made at Abydos by the Egyptian Exploration Society (EES) in 1900–1904.⁴ Although magical bricks contained portions of spell 151 of the Book of the Dead, none of the objects studied here were published in the edition of Book of the Dead documents from the Oriental Institute Museum

* I would like to thank following for their help: the Oriental Institute Museum for permission to publish the magical bricks in their collection; Dr. Ray Tindel and Helen MacDonald of the Oriental Institute Museum for all their generous help; Dr. Stephen Harvey for suggesting this publication; Archivist John Larson for his unfinished manuscript on OIM 10544; and Dr. Peter Dorman, Dr. Janet Johnson, Dr. Robert Ritner, Dr. Magnus Widell and Jackie Jay for reading drafts of this article and making helpful suggestions. All errors remain my own.

¹ One additional fragment which may or may not have been part of a magical brick, has no inscription: OIM 6798, provenance: Abydos, material: unbaked clay, description: fragment of an uninscribed brick, size: 6.5 x 5.5 x 3 cm.

² Until now, the earliest known magical bricks are those mentioned in Alan H. Gardiner's description of the contents of the dynasty 18 (reign of Tuthmosis III) tomb of Amenemhat (TT 82) (N. Davies/A.H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhet* (No. 82), 1915, 24 and n. 4, 116–118). However, no photos or facsimiles were published in that volume and the translations of BD 151 by Gardiner were based on papyrus copies of the Book of the Dead rather than on the bricks themselves (Davies/Gardiner, *Tomb of Amenemhet*, 117–118). This makes OIM 12289 below the earliest known magical brick in the published corpus. Amenemhet's bricks would have been deposited only a few years before those of his vizier User (published in I. Régen, *Les 'briques magiques' du vizir Ouser* (Ep. Thoutmosis III). *Reconstitution de l'ensemble* (Caire JE 37621, Avignon A 59), in: M. Eldamaty/M. Trad (eds.), *Egyptian Collections around the World: Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 2002, 991–1002*). It should be mentioned that Isabelle Régen of the IFAO is currently preparing a comprehensive work on magical bricks based upon her DEA [*Les quatre amulettes protectrices ou 'briques magiques.'* *Étude d'un rite funéraire égyptien* (chap. 151 A LdM, sections d-g)]. Dr. Régen informs me that no earlier bricks than those of Amenemhat's have yet been discovered and none later than Nectanebo I.

³ E. Bresciani in: E. Bresciani/S. Pernigotti/S. el-Naggar/F. Silvano, *Saqqara I. Tomba di Boccori. La Galleria di Padineit, Visir di Nectanebo I*, 1983, 89–90, fig. 19; L. Kákosy, *Magical Bricks from TT 32*, in: J.H. Kamstra/H. Milde/K. Wagtenok (eds.), *Funerary Symbols and Religion: Essays Dedicated to M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss on the Occasion of his Retirement from the Chair in History of Ancient Religions at the University of Amsterdam*, 1988, 65–66.

⁴ Several appear in facsimile in the excavation reports. See D. Randall-MacIver/A.C. Mace, *Abydos and El Amrah, 1902*, 96, pl. XL–XLI and L–LI.

prepared by Thomas George Allen.⁵ Despite such an unusual oversight, the importance of these magical bricks within the known corpus will become clear in the following discussion.

A complete assemblage of magical bricks consisted of four bricks with associated amuletic figures, each inscribed with a portion of Book of the Dead spell 151,⁶ which provides instructions on the production and use of the magic bricks and associated figures.⁷ The bricks were to be placed in the burial chamber of the tomb. Each brick occupied its own niche carved into the wall, one brick for each of the four cardinal directions. The combination of brick, spell and amuletic figure served a particular purpose, protecting the deceased from various dangers originating from one of the cardinal directions.⁸ The northern brick with its mummiform figure protected against a violent attacker. The eastern brick with the jackal figure of Anubis protected against the striking force of an angry demon. The southern brick with its torch protected against sand filling the secret chamber and repelled an opposing demon. The western brick protected against a disguised force.⁹

The placement of magical bricks in niches around the walls of the burial chamber of the tomb is best known from their examples in royal tombs, which show developments in placement and execution over time.¹⁰ Niches from private burials are known, but are less common.¹¹ Tombs without niches, such as KV 55, perhaps also KV 34, and many private tombs, had their magical

⁵ T.G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents in the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago*, 1960.

⁶ T.G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, 1974, 148–149; I. Munro, *Totenbuch-Spruch 151 des wieder lesbaren pTnn3* (pLouvre N. 3074), in: H. Behlmer (ed.), ... *Quaerentes Scientiam: Festgabe für Wolfhart Westendorf zu seinem 70. Geburtstag überreicht von seinen Schülern*, 1994, 133–142; B. Lüscher, *Untersuchungen zu Totenbuch Spruch 15*, in: *SAT* 2, 1998, 54–57 and 258–272.

⁷ The most relevant articles are the following: P. Davoli, *Mattoni magici da corredi funerari privati nel Museo Egizio del Cairo*, in: *Studi di Egittologia e di Papirologia* 1, 2004, 61–81; Bresciani *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 87–90, figs. 18–19; M. Heerma van Voss, *An Egyptian Magical Brick*, in: *JEOL* 18, 1964, 314–316; *idem*, *Egyptische magische Tichels*, in: *Handelingen van het Negenentwistigste Filologencongres*, 1966, 198; Kákósy, *Magical Bricks from TT 32*, 60–72; J. Monnet, *Les briques magiques du Musée du Louvre*, in: *RdE* 8, 1951, 151–162; E. Naville, *Les quatre stèles orientées du Musée de Marseille*, in: *Comptes rendus du congrès provincial des orientalistes*, 1878, 275–293; S. Pernigotti, *Un mattone con iscrizione magica nel museo civico di Bologna*, in: *Oriens Antiquus* 16, 1977, 35–39; M.J. Raven, *Papyrus Sheaths and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris Statues*, in: *OMRO* 59–60, 1978–1979, 251–296; A. Roth/C. Roehrig, *Magical Bricks and the Bricks of Birth*, in: *JEA* 88, 2002, 121–139; D. Silverman, *Magical Bricks of Hunuro*, in: P. Der Manuelian (ed.) *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, 1996, 725–741; Taylor, *Burial Assemblage*, 59–72; *idem*, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 2001, 207–208; E. Thomas, *The Four Niches and Amuletic Figures in the Theban Royal Tombs*, in: *JARCE* 3, 1964, 71–78; A. Wiese/A. Brodbeck (eds.) *Tutanchamun: Das goldene Jenseits. Grabschätze aus dem Tal der Könige*, 2004, 162–163; M. Nelson, *Catalogue des Antiquités Égyptiennes*, 1978, 70–72 (I would like to thank Dr. Stephen P. Harvey for pointing this reference out to me); H.W. Fairman, *Once Again the So-Called Coffin of Akhenaten*, in: *JEA* 47, 1961, 37–38, pl. 6 n. 2; T.M. Davis, *The Tomb of Queen Tiyi*, 1990, 34–35, pl. 24; S. Olson, *New Kingdom Funerary Figurines in Context: An Analysis of the Cemeteries of Aniba, Gurob, and Soleb*, Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Pennsylvania, 1996, 83–86; R.K. Ritner, “Magic,” in: D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion*, 2002, 212–213; “Ziegel (magische),” in: *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 1402; M. Gabolde, *D'Akhénaten à Toutankhâmon*, 1998, 257–258.

⁸ A helpful diagram can be found in Roth/Roehrig, *Magical Bricks*, 122.

⁹ Some scholars believe that the magical brick tradition derives from birth bricks, which are known as early as Dynasty 6. If this were the case, besides being simply apotropaic elements, magical bricks were also associated with rebirth, watching over the birthing process just like Meskhenet in Papyrus Westcar. See the hypothetical discussion of Roth and Roehrig, “Magical Bricks.”

¹⁰ Laid out nicely in Roth/Roehrig, *Magical Bricks*, 124.

¹¹ Thomas, *Four Niches*, 77–78.

bricks simply placed on the floor. The geographical arrangement of the bricks was often contrary to the instructions found in the rubrics of BD 151.

Magical bricks were molded from fine clay,¹² often left unbaked,¹³ and inscribed with the appropriate portions of BD 151. Inscriptions on different bricks varied, being written in different scripts and with different writing instruments. Magical brick inscriptions are attested in hieroglyphs, cursive hieroglyphs and hieratic. Each of these scripts could be written on the brick in ink (white, black, or yellow)¹⁴ or incised into the wet clay using a stylus.¹⁵ Accompanying the bricks were magical amulets to which the inscriptions refer. Very few of the amulets have survived.¹⁶ Sometimes the text was written directly on a large amulet itself, producing a magical amulet rather than a magical brick.¹⁷ In lieu of an amulet, one example actually contains an impression made from a small *dd*-pillar amulet in the clay body of the brick.¹⁸

Following Janine Monnet, László Kákosy has made a distinction between bricks made for royalty, written in hieroglyphs, and those for private persons, written in hieratic.¹⁹ However, the northern brick from TT 82 (OIM 12289) was made for the scribe *Imn-m-h3.t*. It was inscribed with cursive hieroglyphs similar to those appearing on royal bricks such as OIM 10544 from KV 34. Additionally, the fragments from Abydos D 14, while in ink, are also written in cursive hieroglyphs for a private person, *P3-ib-mr*. As a result, hieroglyphs were not a royal prerogative, but rather were used as an expression of the formality of the funerary sp here. Hieratic should be viewed as a more cursive form which still had the religious sanctity needed to effectively ward off enemies. The use of magical bricks is one of the few funerary traditions which, from known examples, developed

¹² Despite the use of the term *db.t* (Wb. V, 553) in the rubrics to BD 151, magical bricks can take a wide variety of sizes and shapes. They are quite different than mud bricks, although many have similar rectangular shapes. The materials used also differ, as magical bricks are made from finely sifted clay as opposed to the mud and straw used in preparing mud bricks (Silverman, *Magical Bricks of Hunuro*, 731).

¹³ Although several examples do appear to have been purposely baked in antiquity, for which see Silverman, *Magical Bricks of Hunuro*, 731–733.

¹⁴ The ultimate significance of such color patterns remain uncertain, but all the OI bricks from Abydos are inscribed in black ink while those from Thebes are incised with the additional presence of white ink for noting the orientation. P. Montet (*La nécropole royale de Tanis: Les constructions et le tombeau d'Osorkon II à Tanis*, 1947, 64) mentions bricks inscribed with red ink, but their current whereabouts are unknown (I would like to thank Dr. Isabelle Régen for this information).

¹⁵ A technique long practiced by the Egyptians, cf. the clay tablets from Balat in L. Pantalacci, *La documentation épistolaire du palais des gouverneurs à Balat-Ain Asil*, in: BIFAO 98, 1998, 303–315; *idem*, *Le palais des gouverneurs de l'époque de Pépy II: Les sanctuaires de ka et leurs dépendances*, 2002, 331–364.

¹⁶ The complete set of Henutmehyt (BM EA 41544–41547) is remarkable (Taylor, *Burial Assemblage*). Another set from KV 62 is complete, although there is a substitution of an Osiris figure for the torch and the geographical orientations do not correspond to those mentioned in BD 151. For the KV 62 magical bricks see *inter alia* Chr. Desroches-Noblecourt, *Tutankhamen: Life and Death of a Pharaoh*, 1965, 76–77. A splendid photograph of one of the magic bricks can be found in the recent catalogue to the Burton photographic exhibit S. J. Allen, *Tutankhamun's Tomb: The Thrill of Discovery*, Photographs by Harry Burton, 2006, 49.

¹⁷ E. g. *dd* amulet OIM 6792: MacIver/Mace, *Abydos*, pl. xli, n. 3 and below; *dd* amulet: M.J. Raven, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt*, 2001, 5, 48, pl. 21 n. 240, 38 n. 240; Mummiform figure CGC 51305: J.E. Quibell, *Tomb of Yuua and Thuiu*, CGC Nos 51001–51191, 1908, pl. XVIII. This settles the comments of Thomas: “This figure [mummiform figure CGC 51305] alone served, therefore, in lieu of the ushebti-brick and the torch-brick; no parallel to the dual function is known to me, not to mention the double dual” (Thomas, *Four Niches*, 78). For the mummiform figure accompanied by an alternative spell, see OIM 6780 and OIM 6785, below.



¹⁸ Heerma van Voss, *An Egyptian Magical Brick*, pl. xvii.

¹⁹ Monnet, *Les briques magiques*, 154–155; Kákosy, *Magical Bricks from TT 32*, 64 with exceptions noted in n. 10 and n. 11. I would like to thank Dr. Isabelle Régen for reminding me that Monnet also made this distinction.

simultaneously in both royal and private spheres. Typically in Egyptian traditions, such practices first appear for royalty and are later appropriated for private use.

An examination of the BD spells from magical bricks demonstrates the varieties and problems posed to the interpreter.²⁰ The cursive nature of the hieratic texts combined with the seemingly corrupted manuscript tradition often inhibit clear understanding.²¹ What modern scholars see as mistakes or re-interpretations inspire many questions – many of which are unanswerable. Who wrote the texts? The garbled nature of many magical brick spells suggests that their authors were not comfortable with these religious texts. Were these local account scribes recruited for convenience, or even other semiliterate workmen? Did the scribes not have access to a reference from which to copy? We must wonder when, where and at what time such objects were inscribed. The fine examples from KV 34 (OIM 10544) or KV 43 (CGC 46042)²² suggest production by a well-trained scribe perhaps at a local temple *pr-ḥnḥ*, scribal workshop, or with the appropriate reference materials at hand in the field. In contrast, garbled examples such as OIM 6777 and OIM 6401 (also hampered by the faded state of the hieratic text) leave one wondering. It should also be noted that the manuscript tradition as represented in the papyri bears witness to multiple scribal traditions as well.²³

2 *Magical Bricks in the Oriental Institute Museum Collection*

OIM 6330 (1) and **OIM 6401 (2)** are two rather large magical bricks found at Abydos associated with tomb D 57 and inscribed with BD 151e and g respectively. OIM 6330 preserves indentions and fragments of clay where an Anubis jackal had once lain and OIM 6401 preserves the hole in which a now missing *dd*-pillar stood. They were acquired by the Oriental Institute Museum as gifts from the Egyptian Exploration Fund excavations at Abydos in 1900–1904. A most intriguing aspect of these bricks is the amber-colored material mixed with the clay. It appears to be the remnants of incense added in the preparation of the bricks according to the instructions accompanying BD 151. The individual named on these bricks is none other than the 25th dynasty vizier Nespamedu,²⁴ whose son is the famous Nespaqashuty D from TT 312. Nespamedu's father Nespaqashuty C is named on two other magical bricks in the Oriental Institute Museum collection (OIM 6776–6777). Unfortunately, the hieratic sections which should contain his parents names are badly faded, but one would expect  *Ns-p(3)-q3-šw.ty* and  *T3-ḥ3ʿw-n-B3st.t.*²⁵ Leahy has identified Nespamedu as the man mentioned in the annals of Ashurbanipal as king of Thinis,²⁶ and

²⁰ “The inscriptions and placing of the bricks seem to have confused the personnel who deposited them, for the texts often contain mistakes, and the positioning of the bricks in the tomb did not always follow the prescribed pattern” (Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife*, 208).

²¹ The lack of space could also present the scribe with difficulty, but note that the smallest magical bricks examined here (OIM 6776 and 6777) contain the complete text.

²² Wiese/Brodbeck, *Tutanchamun*, 162.

²³ Lüscher, *Totenbuch Spruch* 151.


²⁴ A. Leahy, Nespamedu, ‘King’ of Thinis, in: *GM* 35, 1979, 31–38.

²⁵ G. Vittmann, *Priester und Beamte im Theben der Spätzeit*, 1978, 154–155.

²⁶ Note that the reference comes from the annals of Assurbanipal, one copy of which is the famous Rassam cylinder. The reference refers to column I, line 109, which occurs in a list of rulers conquered by Assurbanipal (correcting the citation of Leahy, Nespamedu, 37 n. 2 where he states “cols. 90–109”).

these magical bricks can now be added to the list of objects attributable to Nespamedu compiled by Leahy.²⁷

OIM 6776 (3) and **OIM 6777 (4)** are two rather small magical bricks inscribed with BD 151d and f respectively. They were discovered in tomb D 13 at Abydos and acquired by the Oriental Institute Museum as gifts from the Egyptian Exploration Fund excavations at Abydos in 1900–1904. They belong to the 25th dynasty vizier Nespaqashuty C, father of the vizier Nespamedu (Abydos D 57) and grandfather of the vizier Nespaqashuty D (TT 312). OIM 6776 preserves indentions on the back showing where a figure had been attached to the brick and OIM 6777 preserves the hole in which a torch once stood. These bricks further demonstrate the importance of Abydos in the 25th dynasty as the residence of the vizierate and to the Nespaqashuty family prior to the reunification under the Saites and the transition to the Theban tomb of Nespaqashuty D. As far as it is known, these are the only two bricks found in D 13 and it is assumed that the other two have never been found or that they were lost or destroyed.

OIM 6780 (5), **OIM 6785 (6)**, **OIM 6786 (7)** and **OIM 6792 (8)** are the remnants of magical bricks from Abydos D 14 belonging to *P3-ib-mr*, god's father of Amun from Dynasty 19, acquired by the Oriental Institute Museum as gifts from the Egypt Exploration Fund excavations at Abydos in 1900–1904. OIM 6780 is the base of a magical brick preserving the feet from a once striding human figure.²⁸ The back and side are inscribed with text. This piece may have once joined OIM 6785, OIM 6780 being a back pillar and OIM 6785 being its base with text of the same size and spacing. Although these pieces are associated with a human figure, they bear BD 151g which is normally associated with the Anubis jackal. OIM 6786 is a magical brick with BD 151d running horizontally around all four sides. The upper surface is hollowed to hold a now missing magical amulet. It is uncertain what originally stood here as BD 151d was normally associated with a mummiform figure (the mummiform figure among this set is associated with BD 151g on OIM 6780). OIM 6792 is a faience *dd*-pillar with the appropriate BD 151e written directly on the amulet. Unlike the other *dd*-pillar with inscription known to me,²⁹ Paibmer's is decorated with two eyes on the upper portion of the pillar and the text ends with the word  *m3*. Morphologically this looks like an imperative "see!," directing the amulet to perform its job.³⁰ Significantly, this group of magical bricks is nearly complete, missing only the southern brick for the torch.

OIM 10544 (9), a magical brick from the tomb of Tuthmosis III, is by far the most surprising of the Oriental Institute Museum magical bricks to have remained virtually unnoticed.³¹ It was

²⁷ Leahy, Nespamedu, 33.



²⁸ The striding pose is unusual for such figures. Most often we find a mummiform figure much like a shabti. Cf. the statuettes in Davoli, *Mattoni magici*, 67–68 and pls. 16, 18–19.

²⁹ A practice which has parallels elsewhere – see above n. 18.

³⁰ It could also be a participle "the one who sees," though not geminated and thus perfective in form.

³¹ Publication of this brick ties together several lingering notes: Silverman, *Magical Bricks of Hunuro*, 731 n. 26; Missed by Roth/Roehrig, *Magical Bricks*, 124 n. 20, "It seems likely that the burial of Thutmose III included bricks since two bricks were found in the private tomb of his contemporary, Amenemhat (TT 82)." See also the note of Thomas (*Four Niches*, 74): "To return to chronological order, the Protectors themselves are found in the Kings' Valley for only one reign in advance of the niches, though they must have occurred in the tomb of Thutmose III, as in that of Amenemhat, if not also in the preceding royal tombs of the dynasty." The range of dates should be corrected in the recent publication of Z. Hawass on the royal tombs: "Beginning with Tuthmosis IV, some royal

purchased from Moharb Todrous by James Henry Breasted on January 30, 1920 for £20. Only recently has it been rediscovered by Oriental Institute archivist John Larson.³² The clay is very fine and dark, resembling sealing clay and may be mixed with other substances (incense?). Portions of the jackal attached to the top remain. Although it ultimately derives from KV 34, the tomb of Tuthmosis III, it is not known whether the object was found in the burial chamber of this tomb or in one of the other caches of Tuthmosis III tomb material.³³ No niches are known from KV 34 and the existence of OIM 10544 suggests that they never existed. Even if the niches had been filled and covered with plaster as directed by BD 151, a single niche should be known from which OIM 10544 derived. Consequently, they may have been placed on the floor of the burial chamber like the bricks from KV 55. The hieroglyphic text of BD 151g had been inscribed into the moist clay with a stylus, in a very fine 18th dynasty hand. Next to the recumbent jackal, the geographical orientation is written in hieratic with white ink. OIM 10544 is thus far the earliest published magical brick to derive from a royal tomb.

OIM 12289 (10) is a well-preserved magical brick from the tomb of Amehemhat (TT 82) acquired by James Henry Breasted for the Oriental Institute on March 12, 1925. The purchase records simply state “purchased from Egyptian natives.” However, Gardiner mentions a magical brick of Amenemhat in the hands of Sheikh Abd er-Rasul and one wonders if this is not that very brick.³⁴ Amenemhat was the steward of the vizier and scribe of the granary of Amen under Tuthmosis III. His father was an overseer of plough-lands named Djehutymes and his mother was a lady of the house named Antef. As of yet, this is the earliest known magical brick to be published. In the center is an indentation which once held a now missing amulet. BD 151d was laid out with white grid lines and incised with a stylus in a neat hand. There are fragmentary hieratic texts in white ink on both long ends. Text from the lower end is too badly damaged to be deciphered, but presumably indicates the geographic orientation of the brick. The upper end contains a descriptive label of the amulet which accompanies the brick:  *twt* “statue.” The obverse of the brick contains a mysterious inscription: .³⁵ No other published magical brick has an exact parallel; admittedly, few photographs of the reverse of magical bricks have been published, and thus for those working solely from museum photographs, it would be impossible to know if such inscriptions existed.

tombs were also equipped with magical bricks” (Z. Hawass, *The Royal Tombs of Egypt*, 2006, 232). As the bricks of Amenemhat from TT 82 and User from TT 61 are the earliest known magical bricks, OIM 19544 is the earliest known royal magical brick.

³² I would like to thank John Larson for providing me with his unpublished manuscript on OIM 10544.

³³ E. Hornung/C.E. Loeben/A. Wiese (eds.), *Immortal Pharaoh: The Tomb of Thutmose III*, 2005, 19; N. Reeves/R. H. Wilkinson *The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt’s Greatest Pharaohs*, 1997, 98–99.

³⁴ Davies/Gardiner, *Tomb of Amenemhet*, 24 n. 2. See also quote in n. 30. At least one other magical brick from TT82 should exist, perhaps in Cairo, if not two, excavated by Davies and mentioned by Gardiner.

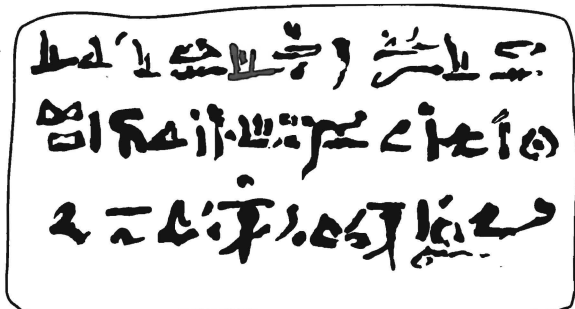
³⁵ What the meaning or function of such a text is, I can only guess, see textual commentary below.

No.	OIM	Provenance	Date	Material	Size
1	6330	Abydos Grave D 57	Dynasty 25	Unbaked Brown Clay	9.5 x 4.75 x 5 cm
2	6401	Abydos Grave D 57	Dynasty 25	Unbaked Brown Clay	9.5 x 5 x 5 cm
3	6776	Abydos Grave D 13	Dynasty 25	Unbaked Grey Clay	6.5 x 4 x 1.5 cm
4	6777	Abydos Grave D 13	Dynasty 25	Unbaked Grey Clay	6.5 x 4 x 1.5 cm
5	6780	Abydos Grave D 14	Dynasty 19	Unbaked Brown Clay	6.5 x 2 x 2.5 cm
6	6785	Abydos Grave D 14	Dynasty 19	Unbaked Brown Clay	10 x 4 x 3 cm
7	6786	Abydos Grave D 14	Dynasty 19	Unbaked Brown Clay	10.5 x 6 x 3 cm
8	6792	Abydos Grave D 14	Dynasty 19	Faience	18.5 x 7.25 x 2.5 cm
9	10544	KV 34	Dynasty 18	Unbaked Brown Clay	11 x 5 x 2 cm
10	12289	TT 82	Dynasty 18	Unbaked Grey Clay	14 x 7.5 x 2.5 cm

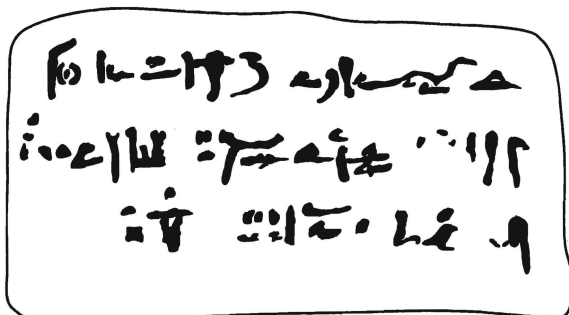
3 Text Edition

1. OIM 6330 (Tafel 9 Nr. 1–2)

Front



Back



Transliteration (Front)

- 1 *rs=k m htp rs Wsir*
- 2 *t3ty Ns-p(3)-mdw tpy-dw*
- 3 *=f 3.t=k hsf.tw^c hsf.n=i^d 3*

Translation (Front)

- 1 As you are vigilant in peace,^a so the Osiris,
- 2 vizier, *Ns-p(3)-mdw*, and he who is upon his mountain^b are vigilant
- 3 when your^e striking power^f is opposed. I have repelled

Transliteration (Back)

- 1 *d iw=i m s3 Wsir*
- 2 *hm-ntr [Imn-R^c]ⁱ t3ty Ns-p(3)-mdw ms.*
- 3 *n [T3-h3]w-n-B3st.t (?)^j*

Translation (Back)

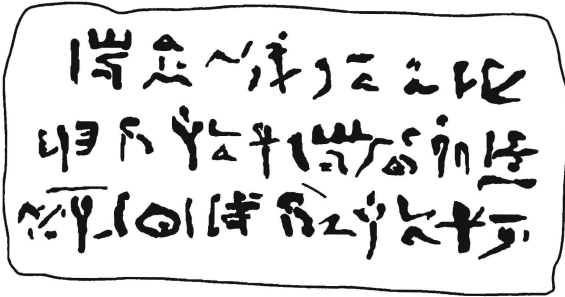
- 1 the furious one. I am the protection^g of the Osiris^h
- 2 the prophet of [Amun-Re], vizier, *Ns-p(3)-mdw*, whom
- 3 *[T3-h3]w-n-B3st.t(?)* bore.

Commentary

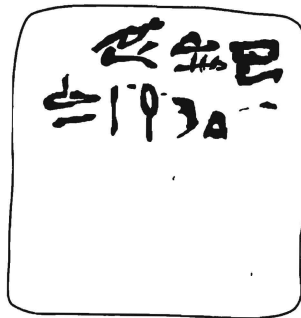
- (a) In BD 151, the verb *rs* “to be wakeful, watch over” (Wb II, 449) is usually used with *tp*, literally “watch your head” (Wb. II, 450), but here the optative *sdm=f* is used. The expression *rs=k m ḥtp* does not normally occur in BD 151, however a parallel can be found in another magical brick (JE 35012 = CG 9442) from Abydos (Davoli, *Mattoni magici*, 70). The phrase was already known in the Pyramid Texts (e.g. PT 81, PT 270). Cf. Lüscher, *Totenbuch Spruch 151*, 272 n. c. Presumably, the 2ms suffix refers here to the deceased who is mentioned again in the third person in the following phrase.
- (b) Other interpretations of this line are possible, however, I find it easiest to understand *tpy-dw* (“he who is upon (his) mountain” – the common epithet of Anubis) as the second element of a compound subject. All parallels suggest that *tpy-dw* is a beneficial force in favor of the deceased so that *ʒ.t=k* should not refer to him. In addition, the expression *rs=k m ḥtp* is associated in PT 270 with the ferrying of the deceased, a role played by Anubis as psychopomp.
- (c) For the 3fs stative ending *.ti* as already common in Dynasty 18.
- (d) Usually *iw ḥsf.n=i*. Interpreting the current passage as a second tense would necessitate understanding *iw=f m sʒ* as an emphasized circumstantial phrase.
- (e) As the spell is intended to be apotropaic, the 2ms pronoun should not refer to the deceased as it did in line 1, but to the negative force which the spell seeks to ward off.
- (f) Instead of *ʒ.t* “critical moment,” see Silverman, “Magical Bricks of Hunuro,” 736 n. d; Lüscher, *Totenbuch Spruch 151*, 272 n. d.
- (g) The concept of *sʒ* is multifaceted. The lexical root *sʒ* means “protection” and it can be used to mean “amulet,” a definition reinforced by the small amulets placed on the mummy in the shape of the *sʒ*-hieroglyph. In addition, the position behind a person was a place of protection, reflected in the homophone *sʒ* “back” as it appears in the compound preposition *m-sʒ* “in the back of, behind, after.” Furthermore, Horus, as son (*sʒ*) of Osiris, often took the epithet *nd-it=f* “protector of his father.” None of this would have been lost on the Egyptians who did not see such correspondences as mere coincidences.
- (h) For the epithet “Osiris” as applied to the deceased compare L. Kákosy, “Osiris of NN,” in: M. Eldamaty/ M. Trad (eds.), *Egyptian Collections around the World: Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 2002*, 629-636, and M. Smith, “Osiris NN or Osiris of NN?,” in: SAT 11, 2006, 325-337.
- (i) Signs have completely faded away.
- (j) The last sign may alternatively read *imnt.t* and refer to the geographical position of the brick.

2. OIM 6401 (Tafel 10 Nr. 3-5)

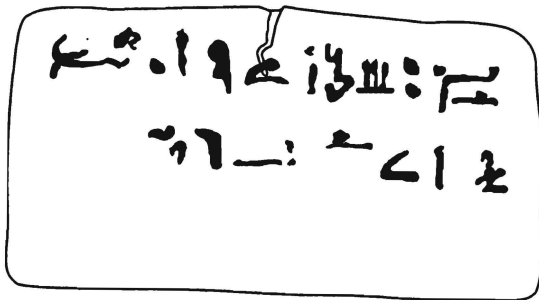
Front



Left Edge



Back



Transliteration (Front)

- 1 *ii n=i m^a hsf nmt.t(=i) k3p^b*
 2 *hr=k shd k3p (ink)^c 'h^c [h3 dd]*
 3 *(ink)^e irf^h 'h^c [h3 dd] hrw hsf*

Translation (Front)

- 1 O' you who comes [to me as one who repels (my) footsteps,] with hidden
 2 face,^d may (your) hiding place^e be revealed. (I am)^f the one who stands [behind the *dd*-pillar].
 3 Indeed, (I am) the one who stands [behind the *dd*-pillar] on the day of opposing

Transliteration (Left Edge)

- 1 *g^cd*
 2 *[iw]=i m s3 n*

Translation (Left Edge)

- 1 slaughter.
 2 I am the protectionⁱ of


Transliteration (Back)

- 1 *Ns-p(3)-mdw m3^c-hrw s3 (?)^j*
 2 *3ty [Ns-p(3)-q3y-šw.ty (?)^k*

Translation (Back)

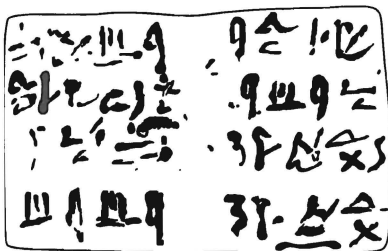
- 1 *Ns-p(3)-mdw*, justified, son of (?)
 2 the vizier [*Ns-p(3)-q3y-šw.ty (?)*].

Commentary

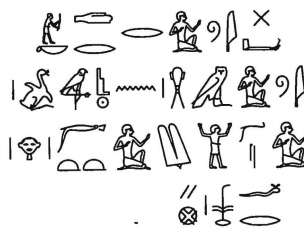
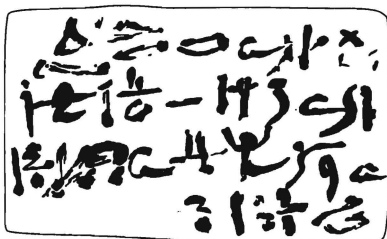
- (a) The standard is phraseology is *ii m hhy* “O' you who comes seeking ...” Omission of *hhy* is unparalleled, but I can find no way to make it fit the preserved traces.
 (b) For *k3p* rather than *h3* (also in line 2), see Silverman, *Magical Bricks of Hunuro*, 733–734 n. b; Lüscher, *Totenbuch Spruch* 151, 264 n. d.
 (c) As with known parallels. Omission paralleled only by a brick of Amenhotep IV: Monnet, *Briques magiques*, 159.
 (d) Literally “your face having been hidden.” For *k3p-hr* as an epithet of the dangerous spirit, see Lüscher, *Totenbuch Spruch* 151, 264 n. d.
 (e) Or “hidden one.”
 (f) Although the 1cs suffix pronoun is often omitted, the independent pronoun normally is not. Cf. note c above.
 (g) As with the known parallels. See notes f and c above.
 (h) Traces could also fit  *ntf*, though the sense is less desirable and the known variants unanimously agree with *irf*.
 (i) For discussion, see note g to number 1 above.
 (j) If correctly identified, this is an unusual form of the *s3* sign.
 (k) What is expected, but again it is difficult to identify the fragmentary traces with certainty.

3. OIM 6776 (Tafel 11 Nr. 6–7)

Front



Back

*Transliteration (Front)*

- 1 *ii r s[p]sp nn*
- 2 *di=i spsp=k wi ii r*
- 3 *wd im[=i] nn di=i w*
- 4 *d=k im[=i] spsp(=i)*

Transliteration (Back)

- 1 *iw=i r dr=k*
- 2 *iw=i m s3 n wsr t3ty*
- 3 *Ns-q3i-šw.ty mht.t hr*
- 4 *=f r rsy*

Translation (Front)

- 1 O' you who comes to entangle,^a I will
- 2 not allow you to entangle me. O' you who comes
- to
- 3 assault [me],^b I will not allow
- 4 you to assault [me]. May (I) entangle (you).

Translation (Back)

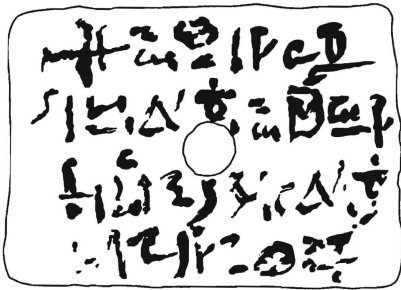
- 1 I will dispel^c you.
- 2 I am the protection^d of the Osiris, vizier,
- 3 *Ns-q3i-šw.ty* – (On the) north, it facing
- 4 to the south.

Commentary

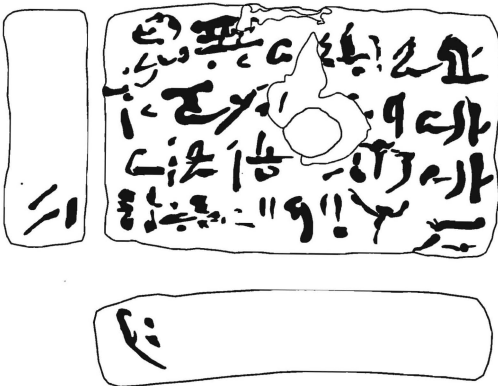
- (a) Wb IV, 107. Note that in contrast to other editors and despite other references of *sps(p)* to the tangling of the hair, the intended meaning here is “to obstruct.”
- (b) Here in line 3 and again in line 4, the idiom *wd m* is used rather than the more common direct object with dependent pronoun (*wi*).
- (c) Here the verb *dr* “to dispel, drive out” (Wb V, 473) is used instead of *wd* “to assault” (Wb I, 386), as would be expected.
- (d) For discussion, see note g to number 1 above.

4. OIM 6777 (Tafel 11 Nr. 8–11)

Front



Back



Transliteration (Front)

- 1 *ink ih ḥ.t db3*
- 2 *imn.w ḥsf^c.wy*
- 3 *ḥsf imy=w tk3*
- 4 *smy.t iw{=i} s*

Translation (Front)

- 1 I am the one who drags things^a (to) block
- 2 the hidden ones (and to) repel the actions
- 3 of the one who repels who displaces those who are in the torch^b
- 4 of the necropolis.^c I have

Transliteration (Back)

- 1 [t3].n=i *smy.t*
- 2 *iw{=i} s[trm].n=i w3.t*
- 3 *iw=i m s3 [n] wsir t3ty*
- 4 *Ns-q3i-šw.ty rsy ḥr=f^e mḥt.t^h*

Translation (Back)

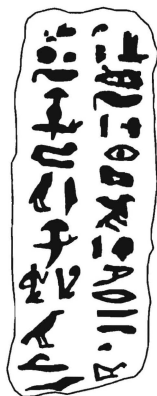
- 1 lit up^d the desert.
- 2 I have confused the(ir) path.^e
- 3 I am the protection^f of the Osiris, vizier,
- 4 *Ns-q3i-šw.ty* – (On the) southⁱ it facing (to the) north.

Commentary

- (a) Though written *h.t*, this could result from a confusion with the phonetically similar $\text{š}^{\text{c}}d$ “cut,” or š^{c} “sand,” both of which are commonly found in BD 151f. See Silverman, “Magical Bricks of Hunuro,” 741 n. g; Lüscher, Totenbuch Spruch 151, 188–189.
- (b) Wb V, 331.
- (c) The passage presents many problems and follows several traditions. See Lüscher, Totenbuch Spruch 151, 268 n. c.; Allen, Book of the Dead, 149; Kákosy, Magical Bricks from TT 32, 62; Silverman, “Magical Bricks of Hunuro,” 739–741. The translation here follows primarily the version from the magical bricks of Ouser, see Régen, Les ‘briques magiques’ du vizir Ouser, 994–995.
- (d) Wb IV, 333/11.
- (e) Alternatively as third future with dative, “I will illuminate on my behalf the desert. I will confuse on my behalf their path.” A parallel can be found in a magical brick inscribed for *3s.t-n-hb*: *ink ih š^c{.t} r db3 imn.w=f hsf.n=i sw r t3 smty iw{=i} stnm.n=i w3.w=sn tw=i m s3 hr 3s.t-n-hb nb n im3h* “I am the one who drags sand (cf. note a) in order to block his hidden ones. I have repelled him only to heat the necropolis. I have confused their paths. I am the protection for *3s.t-n-hb*, possessor of veneration” (on lower edge *rsyw* “south”). For the sake of completeness, as no edition of these texts has been made, I give here also the northern brick: *it r sph nn sph=k it r wd nn dt=i wd=k iw=i m s3 hr 3s.t-n-hb nb im3h* “One who comes to bind, you will not bind. One who comes to attack, I will not allow you to attack. I am the protection for *3s.t-n-hb*, venerated” (on lower edge *mht.t* “north”) [Randall-MacIver/Mace, Abydos, pl. xli; a third brick belonging to *3s.t-n-hb* was published by Davoli, *Mattoni magici*, 69-70].
- (f) For discussion, see note g to number 1 above.
- (g) On left edge.
- (h) On top edge.
- (i) Even though a hand copy of this piece made by Percy Newberry has been published by Petrie in the Abydos series, it has been unmentioned among publications on magical bricks. Unfortunately, the hand copy does not reproduce the edges on which the final signs of the last line remain. These signs give the important location in which the magical brick is to be placed.

5. OIM 6780 (Tafel 12 Nr. 12)

Back

*Transliteration**Translation*

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | <i>rs-tp=k hr^a wsir P3-ib-mr m3^c-hrw tpy(?)
dw^b [...]</i> | 1 | May you be vigilant for Osiris <i>P3-ib-mr</i> ,
justified, One who is upon (his) mountain
[...] |
| 2 | <i>[3].t=k ḥsf.t iw ḥsf.n=i 3d [...]</i> | 2 | for your striking power has been opposed. I
repelled the furious one [...] |

Commentary

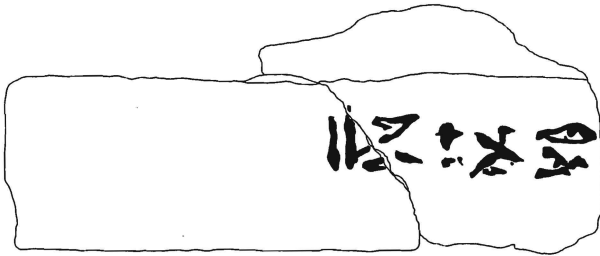
- (a) This use of *hr* is unique.
- (b) This reading fits the preserved traces, but it remains uncertain.

6. OIM 6785 (Tafel 12 Nr. 13–14)

Back



Right

*Transliteration (Back)*

- 1 [...] *rs tp(y)-ḏw=f*^a
 2 [... 3ḏw] *iw[=i(?)] m(?)* [...]

Translation (Back)

- 1 May He-who-is-upon-his-mountain be vigilant.
 2 [... aggressor.] I am [the protection ...]

Transliteration (Right)

- 1 *wsir P3-ib-mr m3^c-ḥrw*

Translation (Right)

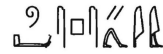
- 1 Osiris *P3-ib-mr*, justified.

Commentary

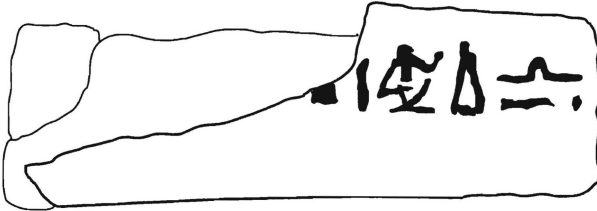
- (a) The common idiom in Egyptian is *rs-tp* “be vigilant,” literally “watch the head.” However, either *rs* is used as a *sḏm=f* without *tp* (cf. OIM 6330 Front line 1 above) or we have the ellipse of *tp* with *tp* performing double duty because *tp* is needed here for the nisba-form (*tpy*) found in the epithet of Anubis. For the common idiom to grammatically apply, we would want *rs-tp tpy-ḏw=f*. Thus there seems to be a contraction of the two *tp* signs. See Lüscher, Totenbuch Spruch 151, 272 n. c.

7. OIM 6786 (Tafel 13 Nr. 15–17; Tafel 14 Nr. 18–19)

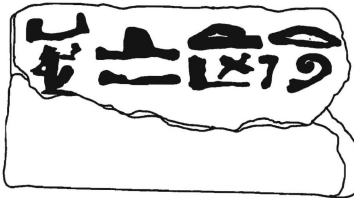
Front



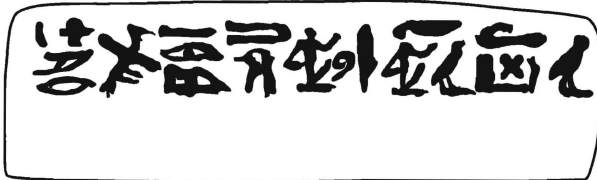
Left Edge



Back



Right Edge



Transliteration

Translation

(Front) *iy (r) sps*
(Left Edge) *nn di=i sp[s iy]*

(Front) O' you who comes (to) entangle!
(Left Edge) I shall not allow you to entang[le me.
You who comes]

(Back) *r wd nn di=i*
(Right Edge) *wd=k wi iw=i m s3 n wstr*
P3-ib-mr

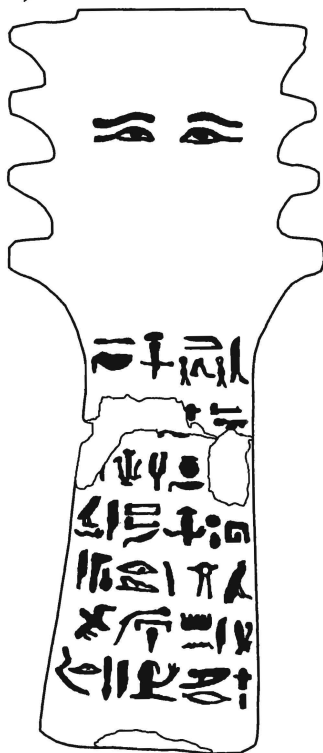
(Back) to assault, I shall not allow
(Right Edge) you to assault me. I am the protection^a
of Osiris P3-ib-mr.

Commentary

(a) For discussion, see note g to number 1 above .

8. OIM 6792 (Tafel 15 Nr. 20)

Front (1:2)

*Transliteration*

- 1 *ii m hh hsf n=k^a*
- 2 *k3p hr=k^c [...]*
- 3 *[...] ink ^ch^c h3 [...]*
- 4 *hrw hsf s^c(.t) iw=f*
- 5 *m s3 wsir it-ntr*
- 6 *n imn imy-r3 pr-hd P3-*
- 7 *ib-mr m3^c-hrw m3*

Translation

- 1 You who comes seeking, who victimizes you,^b
- 2 your face having being hidden [...]
- 3 [...] I am the one who stands behind [the *dd*-
pillar]
- 4 on the day of repelling slaughter. He^d
- 5 is the protection of the Osiris, god's father
- 6 of Amun, overseer of the treasury, P3-
- 7 *ib-mr*, justified. Watch!^e

Commentary

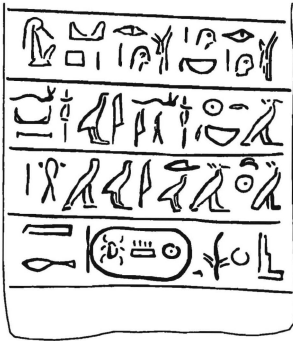
- (a) Cf. *K3s3* in Lüscher, Totenbuch Spruch 151, 181.
- (b) Wb III, 336/15. Or perhaps “who repels for you.”
- (c) Cf. *pNht* in Lüscher, Totenbuch Spruch 151, 181; Silverman, “Magical Bricks of Hunuro,” 733.
- (d) Rare 3ms pronoun here, where the 1cs is usually used. The scribe here has apparently thought that the seeker was the beneficent being, unlike the parallels to this spell.
- (e) The imperative here instructing the amulet to watch relates to the eyes painted on the top of the amulet, which themselves could read *m3* (or *rs* “Be vigilant!”). In a magical brick of User (Avignon A59), Isabelle Régen has suggested that the eyes scratched into the bottom of the brick represent the eyes of Anubis as he “watches” (*rs/m3*) over the deceased, thereby protecting (*s3*) him (Régen, Les ‘briques magiques’ du vizir Ouser, 998–1000).

9. OIM 10544 (Tafel 16 Nr. 21–22)

Top (In White Ink)



Top

*Transliteration (Hieratic, in black)*1 *inb i3bty hr r imnt**Translation (Hieratic)*

1 (On the) eastern wall facing west.

*Transliteration (Hieroglyphs)*1 *rs-tp=k rs(-tp) tpy-dw(=f)*2 *3.t=k hsf.ti iw hsf.n(=i)*3 *3.t 3dw iw(=i) m s3*4 *wstr ny-sw.t Mn-hpr-r^c m3^c-hrw**Translation (Hieroglyphs)*

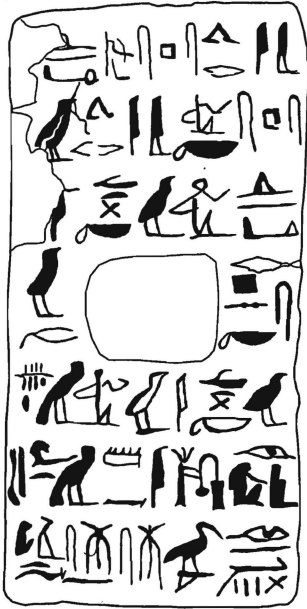
1 As you are vigilant, so He-who-is-on-(his)-mountain is vigilant,
 2 for your striking power has been opposed. I have repelled
 3 the striking power of the angry one. I am the protection^a
 4 of the Osiris, King *Mn-hpr-r^c*, justified.

Commentary

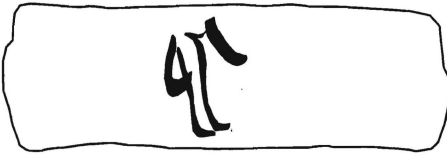
(a) For discussion, see note g to number 1 above.

10. OIM 12289 (Tafel 17 Nr. 23–24; Taf. 18 Nr. 25–26)

Top (1:2)



Front Edge (In white)



Back Edge (In white)



Bottom



Transliteration (Top)

1 *ii r sps nn di[=i]*
 2 *sps=k ii r «wdt»*
 3 *nn di=i wdt=k [iw=i]*
 4 *r sps=k [figure space] (i)w(=i) r*
 5 *wdt=k iw=i m sʒ*
 6 *wsir sʒ Imn-m-ḥʒ.t mʒ^c-ḥrw*
 7 *ir.n imy-rʒ ḥbs Dḥwty-ms ms.n*
«Intf»

Translation (Top)

1 You who comes to entangle, [I] will not allow
 2 you to entangle. You who comes to «attack,»
 3 I will not allow you to attack. [I]
 4 will entangle you. I will
 5 attack you. I am the protection^a
 6 of the Osiris, scribe,^b *Imn-m-ḥʒ.t*, justified,
 7 whom the overseer of the ploughlands^c *Dḥwty-ms*
 fathered, whom «*Intf*» bore.

Transliteration (Bottom)

mʒ^d

Translation (Bottom)

Watch!

Transliteration (Front Edge)

twt

Translation (Top Edge)

Figure

Transliteration (Back Edge)

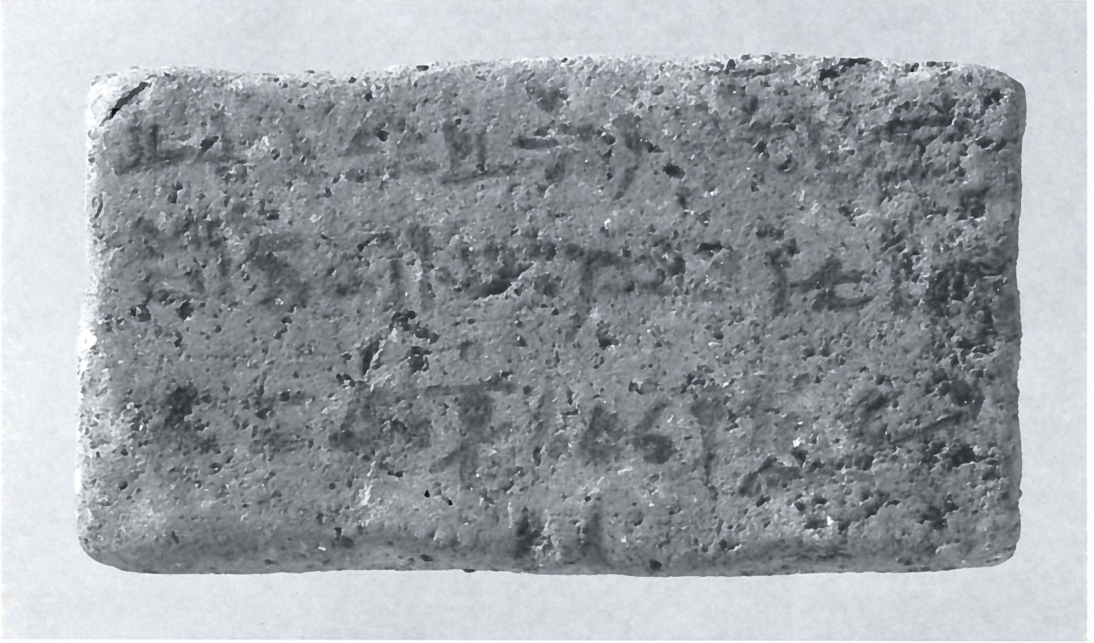
[(Traces) *ḥr=f r rsy (?)*]

Translation (Bottom Edge)

[(Traces) Facing south (?)]

Commentary

- (a) For discussion, see note g to number 1 above.
- (b) As an abbreviation of Amenemhat's title *sʒ ḥsb it-šm^cw n imn* "the account scribe of the Upper Egyptian grain of Amun." The simple designation "scribe" also appears in TT 82 (Davies/Gardiner, Tomb of Amenemhat, 6).
- (c) Similar orthographies of this title appear in TT 82, Davies/Gardiner, Tomb of Amenemhat, 2–4.
- (d) Cf. line 7 of OIM 6792 above and n. e there. However, other possible readings include: *rs* "Be vigilant!" (cf. line 1 of OIM 10544 above) or *šsp ir* "a palm(-width) made." This last suggestion is based on the fact that the brick itself is roughly the width of a palm (I would like to thank Dr. Robert K. Ritner for this suggestion). This should be compared with the "eyes of Anubis" mentioned by Régen, Les 'briques magiques' du vizir Ouser, 998–1000.



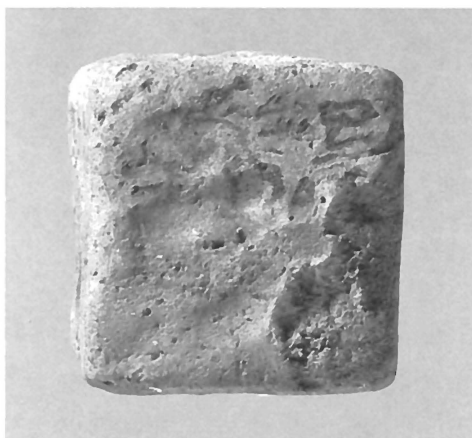
1. OIM 6330 Front



2. OIM 6330 Back



3. OIM 6401 Front



4. OIM 6401 Left Edge



5. OIM 6401 Back



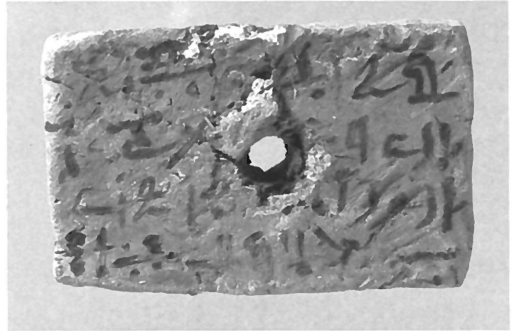
6. OIM 6776 Front



7. OIM 6776 Back



8. OIM 6777 Front



9. OIM 6777 Back



10. OIM 6777 Left Edge



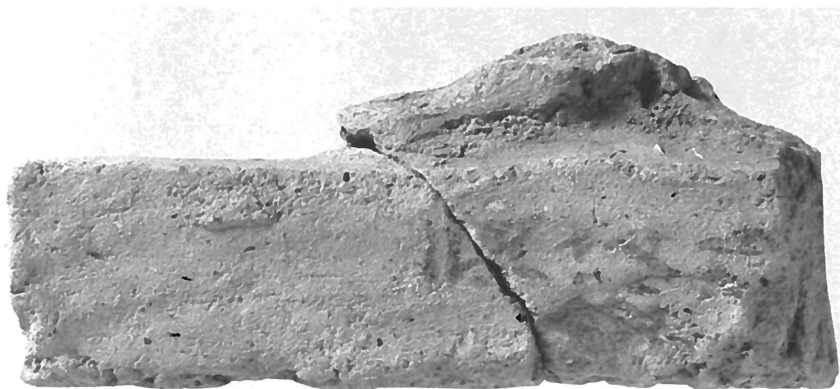
11. OIM 6777 Top Edge



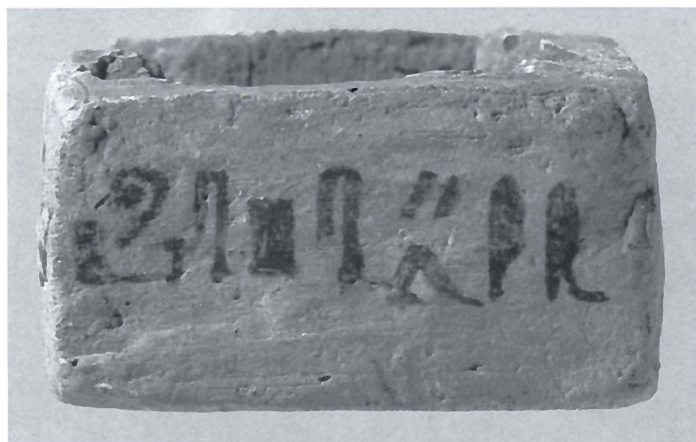
12. OIM 6780 Back



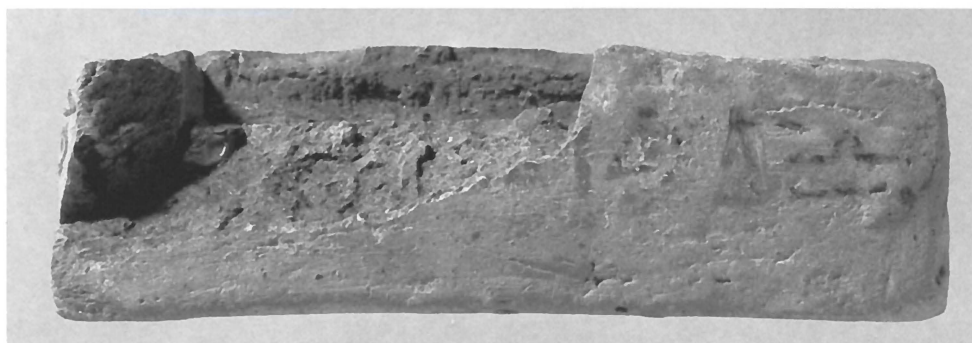
13. OIM 6785 Back



14. OIM 6785 Right Edge



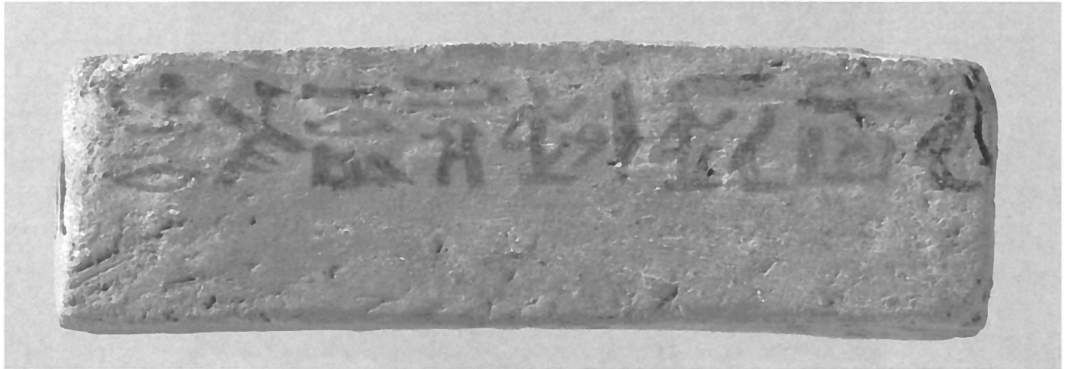
15. OIM 6786 Front



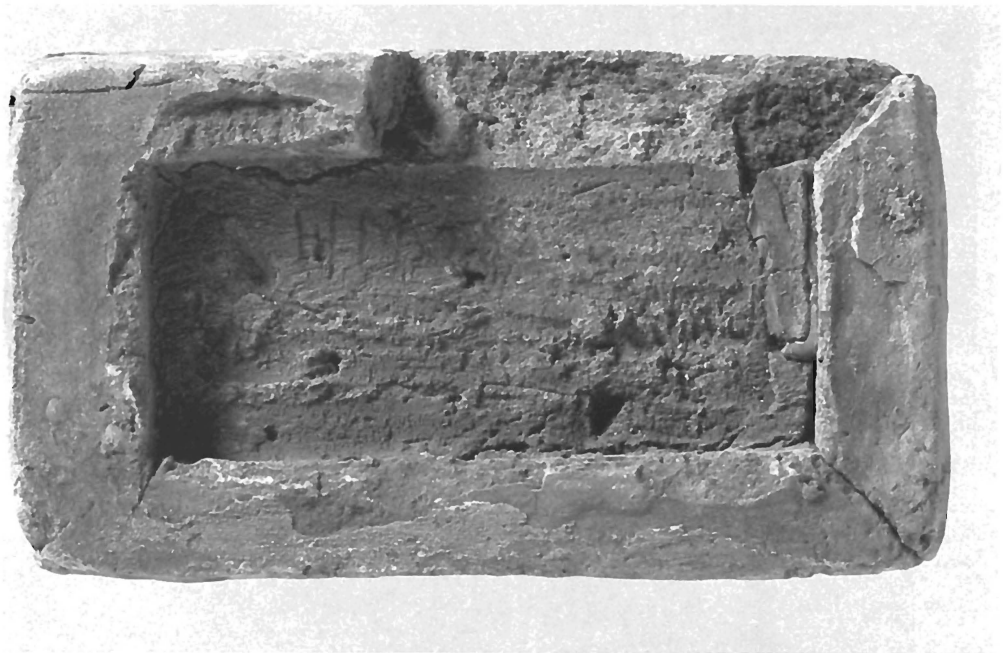
16. OIM 6786 Left Edge



17. OIM 6786 Back



18. OIM 6786 Right Edge



19. OIM 6786 Top



20. OIM 6792 Front



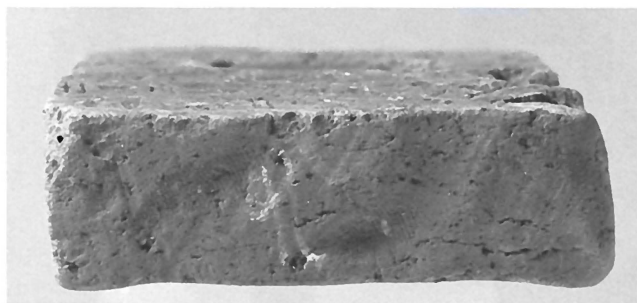
21. OIM 10544 Top



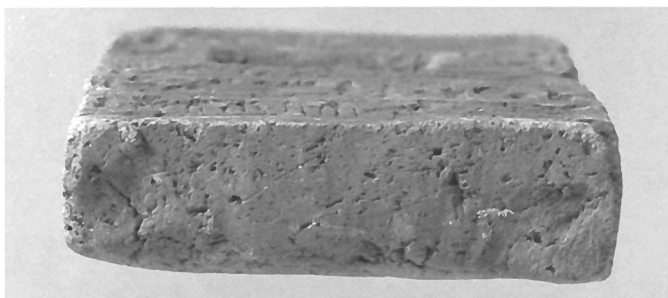
22. OIM 10544 Top (Text Detail)



23. OIM 12289 Top



24. OIM 12289 Front Edge



25. OIM 12289 Back Edge



26. OIM 12289 Bottom (Detail).