



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

A Fragment from the Osiris Chapels at Dendera in Bristol

Kaper, O.E.

Citation

Kaper, O. E. (2009). A Fragment from the Osiris Chapels at Dendera in Bristol. *Jaarbericht Van Het Vooraziatisch Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux*, 41, 31-45. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14086>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)
Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14086>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

A FRAGMENT FROM THE OSIRIS CHAPELS AT DENDERA IN BRISTOL


OLAF E. KAPER

A sandstone slab with Ba-bird and text

The Egyptian Gallery in the City Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol, possesses a fragmentary sandstone relief block with the registration number H 4972, which is the subject of the present article (Fig. 1).¹ The block was bequeathed to the museum in 1956 as part of the collection of Charles R. Mapp, when Leslie Grinsell was curator of Archaeology and Anthropology.² It is not known from where Mapp had obtained the items in his collection. He had been a schoolmaster from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and was not trained as an Egyptologist, although he had a collection of books on the subject. Grinsell remarked in his autobiography: “My recollection is that the assemblage contained a fair proportion of modern fakes such as any collector without special knowledge would be likely to accumulate”.³ Apart from antiquities, Mapp also collected geology specimens. The geology collection of the Cheltenham & Gloucestershire College of Higher Education (formerly in the Cheltenham Museum) is based on the Mapp collection, which is said to have been assembled in the early 20th century.⁴

The dimensions of the block are as follows: Height 31 cm, width 32 cm. There are no remains of plaster or colour. The piece remains unpublished. Previously it was mentioned in L.V. Grinsell’s *Guide Catalogue to the Collections from Ancient Egypt* as: “a sandstone slab with Ba-bird and text” and it is dated “Ptolemaic or Roman”.⁵

The block bears an image in raised relief (Fig. 2), showing a falcon with a male human head (ba-bird), facing right. There is a solar disk set on top of the human head. The bird’s feet are placed on top of the hieroglyph *nbw*, “gold”. Its wings are spread out in a protective gesture and between the wings three separate elements are added:

1. A seated image of Osiris holding the sign of life on his knees and seated on the hieroglyphs *nb* and *hnt*: 

2. Behind Osiris is a sceptre, the top of which has been damaged, but it is likely that this was a *hw*-hieroglyph, “protection”, through which is drawn a protective *šn*-ring,⁶ set against the back of the god.

¹ I am grateful to Sue Giles, Curator of Ethnography & Foreign Archaeology at the City Museum & Art Gallery for permission for publication and for her kind assistance. Thanks are also due to Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton for introducing me to the collection.

² Grinsell, *Guide Catalogue to the Collections from Ancient Egypt*, City Museum Bristol 1972, 12; Aidan Dodson and Sue Giles, ‘Ancient Egypt in the City and County of Bristol, England’, *KMT a Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 18/4 (2007), 20-32, p. 29.

³ L.V. Grinsell, *An Archaeological Autobiography*, Gloucester and Wolfeboro 1989, 30.

⁴ Information obtained from the website of the South West Museums Council, dated November 1999.

⁵ Grinsell, *Guide Catalogue*, 62. A more specific dating as “Ptolemaic” is given in the inventory on p. 83.

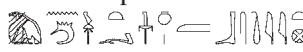
⁶ On this feature, cf. S. Cauville, *Le temple de Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes*, Dendara X, 2 vols, Cairo 1997, 240,9: *šn [hr] irt mkt=k*.




Fig. 1. Photograph Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives, Reg. No. H 4972.

3. The third element is another staff with a similar top as the first, but this time it has a different element set on top, of which only the lower left corner remains. This must have been a wedjat-eye (right eye).

The inscriptions:

 (...) *mk n<=i> 'nht⁷ wnmty h_w.n=i m Bstyt*, “I protect the right eye, I protect in Menelais”.⁸

Behind the bird:  [*iy.n*] *sšt3 tpy n b3 n 'Itm* (...), “The pre-eminent secret image of the ba of Atum (comes to you ...)”.⁹

⁷ For this sign, depicting the left eye of a god; cf. E. Laskowska-Kusztal, *Deir el-Bahari III: Le sanctuaire ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, Warsaw 1984, 56, n. 66e.

⁸ On this identification, cf. below.

⁹ Reconstructed on the basis of parallels, cf. below.

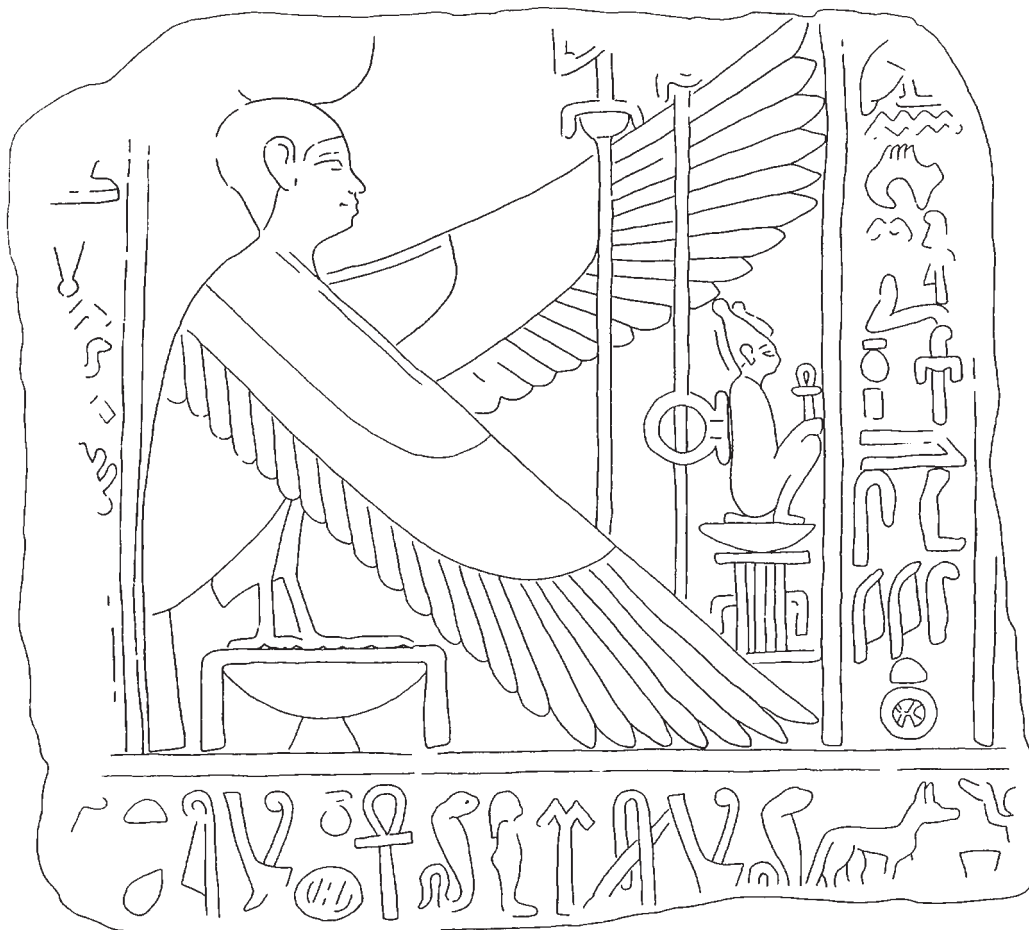
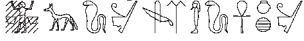


Fig. 2. Line drawing of the relief by the author.

In the bandeau inscription underneath:

...]  [...] *ḥ^c iy=k n sšm=k 'nh.w m m3't* [..., "(...) joyful. May you come to your image, the one who lives on Maat (...)].

Provenance

The block comes from Dendera, from the second chapel of the eastern series on the roof of the temple of Hathor. This is the chapel of the famous zodiac in the Louvre, and also the chapel where one of the versions of the *Stundenwachen* text is found that was studied by H. Junker,¹⁰ as well as the most important list of the body parts of Osiris studied by H. Beinlich, the so-called

¹⁰ H. Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien nach den Inschriften von Dendera, Edfu und Philae*, Vienna 1910.

Canopic Procession.¹¹ The chapel no. 2 has been described by S. Cauville as the place where the body of Osiris was assembled and where the figurine of the Khoiak mysteries was prepared.¹² These rituals formed the necessary preparations for the rebirth of the god that was celebrated in the temple every year.¹³ The reading of the walls proceeds from the interior to the exterior. According to L. Pantalacci, the geographical aspects of the decoration may be considered as its dominant theme.¹⁴ In addition, she has compared the room of chapel 2 to the decoration found on sacophagi, with its image of Nut on the ceiling and the 77 spirits of Pharaohs on the walls.¹⁵

The ascription of the Bristol block to the Dendera temple means that its date can be set between 51 and 44 BC, in the reign of Cleopatra VII before the joint rule with her son Ptolemy XV Caesar.¹⁶ This date may be even further specified by reference to the zodiac ceiling of the same chapel, which was designed in August 50 BC, in accordance with the analysis of the astronomical contents of the design by E. Aubourg.¹⁷

The decoration of the chapel from which the Bristol block stems contains images of the gods of the provinces or nomes of Egypt, both in the frieze and in the bottom register of the same walls. In the symbolism of the chapel, each nome was identified as one of the parts of the body of Osiris, who thereby incarnated the country as a whole. The bottom register of the walls of the same chapel 2 contains an illustration of this situation, where the provinces are depicted each carrying a water container and mentioning a part of the body of Osiris to be reassembled by Ptah in the House of Gold.¹⁸ They are described as "the gods of the nomes in their true form".¹⁹ Osiris' body parts are equated with the gods of the capital cities, and united, it symbolizes the unity and integrity of Egypt.

In the frieze, Osiris is represented as a ba-bird, receiving water and bread from Isis. The ba is invited to join his images represented on the walls of the chapel. Following Isis, the gods of the nomes are represented likewise as ba-birds with different heads that have been chosen in relation to the god or goddess they represent.²⁰ Each bird is designated as "Pre-eminent secret image" (*sšṯ tpy*) of the ba of the god in question, and they are said to protect the body of Osiris.²¹ It is

¹¹ H. Beinlich, *Die "Osirisreliquien". Zum Motiv der Körperzergliederung in der altägyptischen Religion*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 42, Wiesbaden 1984.

¹² S. Cauville, *Le zodiaque d'Osiris*, Louvain 1997, 66.

¹³ S. Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire*, BdE 118, Cairo 1997, 177.

¹⁴ L. Pantalacci, 'Décor de la 2ème chapelle osirienne de l'est (sud) sur le toit du temple de Dendara', in: S. Schoske (ed.), *Akten des vierten Internationalen Ägyptologen-Kongresses, München 1985*, SAK Beihefte 3, Hamburg 1989, 333.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 337.

¹⁶ On the dating of the temple, cf. the summary in S. Cauville, *Le temple de Dendara, Guide archéologique*, Cairo 1990, 4. During these years, Cleopatra may have ruled alone (according to Hölbl) and subsequently as joint ruler with Ptolemy XIII [50-47] and XIV [47-44]; Cf. the chronology in G. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches. Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung*, Darmstadt 1994, 205-215; 373-375; and a more recent view, omitting the sole rule by Cleopatra: B. Andreae et al. (eds), *Kleopatra und die Caesaren*, Catalogue Bucerius Kunst Forum, Munich 2006, 248 e.a.

¹⁷ E. Aubourg, La date de conception du zodiaque du temple d'Hathor à Dendara, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 1-10.

¹⁸ Dend. X, 71-92; Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire*, 34.

¹⁹ Dend. X, 72.2; 208.9.

²⁰ J.-Cl. Goyon, *Les dieux-gardiens et la genèse des temples*, BdE 93, Cairo 1985, 202, finds these images "quelque peu monstrueuses", which was certainly not the intention of the makers.

²¹ Mariette, 337-338, held the erroneous view that the birds are represented flying: "les divinités des nomes transfigurées en oiseaux et planant dans le ciel au dessus du temple pour empêcher l'approche des génies mal-faisants" And on p. 338, note 1: "Remarquez la place de cette composition tout au sommet de la paroi et contre le plafond. Ce plafond était le zodiaque actuellement à Paris. C'est peut-être là la seule raison d'être du zodiaque dans la petite chambre où il a été placé. Il représente le ciel dans lequel planent les oiseaux protecteurs".

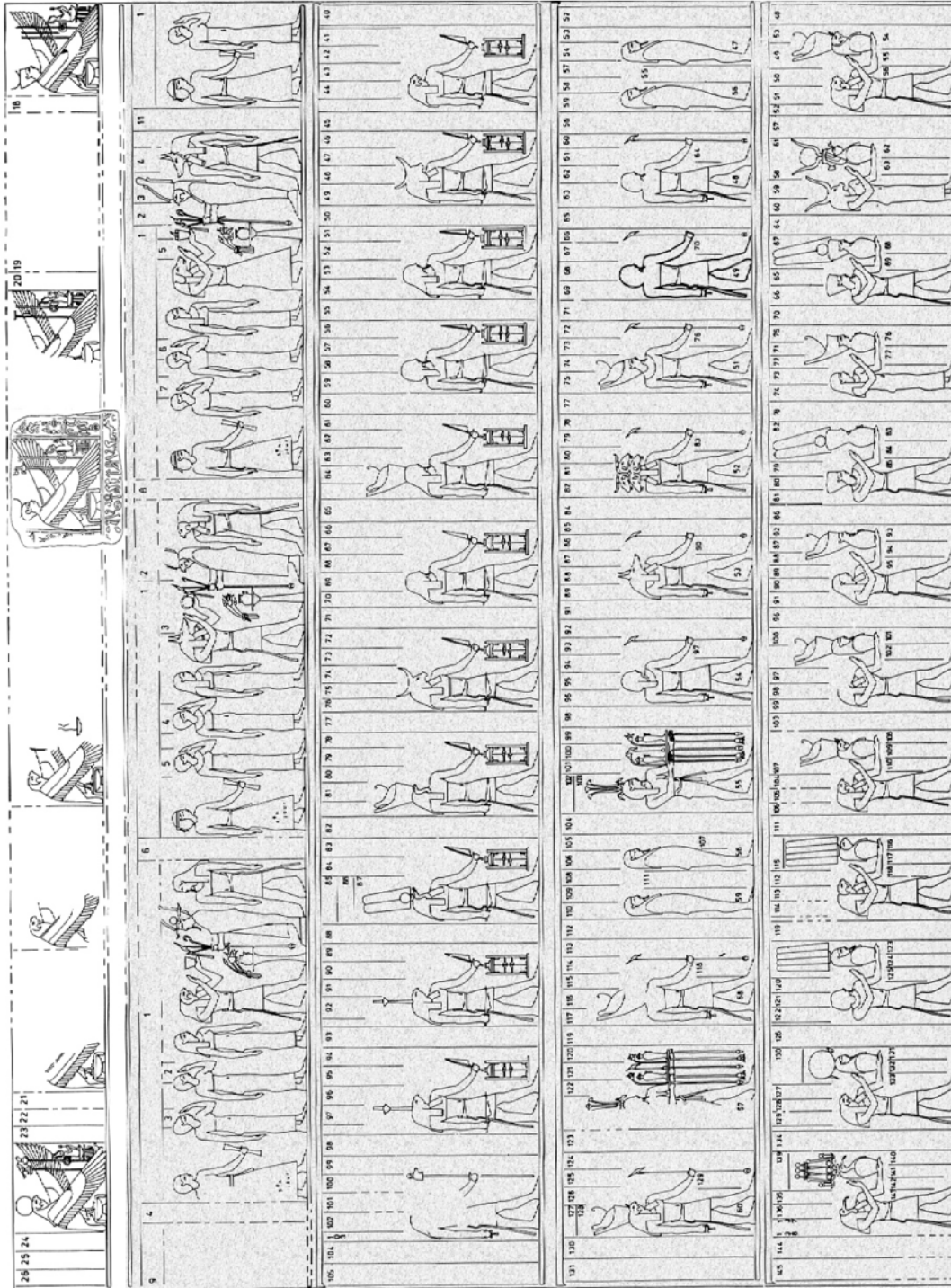



Fig. 3. The western wall of Osiris chapel no. 2 in Dendera. Drawing by B. Lenthéric (*Dendara X/2*, pl. 38), modified and with an addition by the author.

from this frieze upon the western wall, representing the nomes of Lower Egypt, that the relief in Bristol was taken. In figure 3 its drawing has been inserted into the drawing of the entire wall by B. Lenthéric, that was published in the tenth volume of the publication of the temple of Hathor by S. Cauville.²² Nearly every ba bird carries a solar disk on the head.²³ Another recurring element is the *hw* sceptre, albeit with a few variants in shape.²⁴ The element following the *hw* sceptre is one of four possibilities. From the first bird onwards, these are a large scale *m*-hieroglyph, a *nh*-sign, a wedjat-eye set on a *supprt* (as in the block under discussion), and finally a large *s*-hieroglyph surmounted by a small bird perched on top of a “canal”-sign. The bird is difficult to determine ornithologically because its head is never preserved intact,²⁵ and I will come back to this sign. The occurrence of hieroglyphic signs in this series suggests a reading for the four consecutive signs as  *m nh wd3 snb*. The wedjat eye as a reading for *wd3* is unproblematic, only the fourth group as the word *snb* needs elucidation. The *s*-hieroglyph should here be read first, followed by the canal for *n*,²⁶ and the bird should be read as *b*. There are several bird signs with this reading attested in Dendera,²⁷ and on the basis of the shape of the bird in the reliefs, a heron would seem most likely.²⁸

The sequence *nh-wd3-snb* indicates a general wish for well-being of the god, which is being bestowed on him by the gods of the country. The words are employed in the adjoining chapel no. 3 as an epithet of Osiris.²⁹

Cauville has not commented on these signs and their significance, but she did suggest that the *nbw*-sign, “gold”, under the feet of the ba-birds refers to the “House of Gold” where the body of Osiris is reassembled. For this, she had to assume that “le cadrat formé par les hampes protectrices et les colonnes de textes gravées derrière l’oiseau semble reproduire le groupe *ht-nbw* « Temple-de-l’or »”.³⁰ This seems to me unfounded. In general, frieze decorations in Egyptian temples have since the New Kingdom included birds, usually falcons, with outstretched wings and perched on *nbw*-signs.³¹ This iconographical element is also generally found underneath cartouches of the king in friezes, and it seems to symbolize heaven and function as a support for divine images in general.³²

The frieze decoration in the temple of Hathor was especially rich in its variation.³³ The most common elements in the friezes are the following: *kheker*, royal names, deities, sun

²² Dend. X, pl. 38.

²³ Exceptions are Nekhet of Elkab and Haroeris of Letopolis.

²⁴ A different shape is found with the gods of UE9, UE11 in the eastern frieze, and with LE1 and possibly LE18 in the western frieze.

²⁵ cf. photos in Dend. X, pl. 75-76, 78.

²⁶ Attested elsewhere in the same temple; S. Cauville, *Dendara. Le fonds hiéroglyphique au temps de Cléopâtre*, Paris 2001, 156.

²⁷ Cauville, *Le fonds*, 107-108, readings derived from *b3*, *ib* or *bnw*.

²⁸ With a reading *bnw* abbreviated to *b*.

²⁹ Dend. X, 181,14: *Wsr Wn-nfrw m3'-hrw nh-wd3-snb ity m Ddw nsw-ntrw hnty hwt-nbw*.

³⁰ Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire*, 73.

³¹ E.g. in the first hypostyle hall of the Great Temple at Abu Simbel, left half of the east wall, Chr. Desroches-Noblecourt and G. Gerster, *Die Welt rettet Abu Simbel*, Wien and Berlin 1968, pl. 58; idem M. Peters-Destéract, *Abou Simbel, à la gloire de Ramsès*, Paris 2003, 202, ill. 58; and from the 20th Dynasty in *Medinet Habu V*, pl. 283D; some later examples from Luxor, Umm Ubayda (Siwa) and Edfu are mentioned in D. Kurth, *Die Friese innerhalb der Tempeldekoration griechisch-römischer Zeit*, in: M. Minas and J. Zeidler (eds), *Aspekte spätägyptischer Kultur: Festschrift für Erich Winter zum 65. Geburtstag*, Mainz am Rhein 1994, 195, Abb. 2-3 and 198 with note 72.

³² Cf. J. von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*², MÄS 49, Mainz am Rhein 1999, 17-21.

³³ D. Kurth, *op.cit.*, 191-201, 196.

discs and ostrich feathers or scarabs, words or short captions.³⁴ Kurth has studied the friezes in general, and concluded: “daß der Fries als eine Art ‘Überschrift’ der Raumdekoration gestaltet werden konnte, welche, in Einklang mit der übrigen Dekoration, die reale wie auch die theologische Bestimmung des Raumes zum Ausdruck bringt.”³⁵ In chapel 2, the frieze serves to emphasize the protection of the god and his geographical dimension.

Cauville also remarked on the figure of Osiris with each bird, “placée sur une corbeille *nbw*, elle-même posée sur le signe *hnty* « qui préside à », l’ensemble se lisant « Osiris qui préside au Temple-de-l’or ».”³⁶ However, this does not seem to accord with the facts. The sign upon which Osiris is seated is in every instance a simple *nb*-basket and not *nbw*. Moreover, there is no apparent reference to the House of Gold in the frieze, as mentioned before. As there is no known title *nb hnt* for Osiris,³⁷ a different solution needs to be sought. It is more likely that Osiris is seated upon a *hb*-basket (☐), with which the *nb*-basket is often confused in Dendera.³⁸ Alternatively, the *nh*-sign upon the knees of the god may be involved in the reading, so that the common title *nb nh* can be read.³⁹ Then the element *hnt* or *hnty* should be read separately as “pre-eminent in” followed by the name of the nome in question, which is not written out. Each *ba*-bird represents the principal deity of a certain nome, and its image may serve as an ideogram for the name of the nome.

The nome gods on the western side have been badly damaged, and on first sight there is no immediate join of the Bristol block with one of the fragments of relief remaining *in situ*. Since there was no rigidly fixed order of the gods of the nomes of Lower Egypt in such lists,⁴⁰ it is difficult to assign a place for it on that basis. Fortunately, with the assistance of the sign of the eye in the formula identified above, we can reconstruct the original location of the block in Bristol exactly. As a result, the sequence of gods may be reconstructed as follows.

The frieze on the eastern side of the chapel has 21 gods, omitting the god of Oxyrhynchos (UE19).⁴¹

Nome	Deity	Head and crown	hieroglyph
UE1	Khnum of Elephantine	lost	[<i>m</i>]
UE2	Horus of Edfu	falcon, sun disc	<i>nh</i>
UE3	Nekhbet of El-Kab	vulture, atef-crown	[<i>wd3</i>]
UE4	Amun-Re of Thebes	human, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
UE5	Min of Coptos	falcon, sun disc	<i>m</i>
UE6	Hathor of Dendera	human, Hathor crown	<i>nh</i>
UE7	Neferhotep of Hiu	cobra, sun disc	<i>wd3</i>
UE8	Horus-Anubis of This	falcon, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
UE9	Min of Panopolis	falcon, sun disc	<i>m</i>
UE10	Horus-Maaty of Aphroditopolis	dog, sun disc	<i>nh</i>
UE11	Khnum of Hypselis	ram, sun disc	<i>wd3</i>

³⁴ Ibid., 197.

³⁵ Ibid., 198.

³⁶ Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire*, 73.

³⁷ According to the data presented in Ch. Leitz (ed.), LGG.

³⁸ Cauville, *Le fonds*, 227.

³⁹ The title is common in the Osiris chapels: Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Index*, BdE 119, Cairo 1997, 248; as also in Edfu: idem, *La théologie d’Osiris à Edfou*, BdE 91, Cairo 1983, 200 index.

⁴⁰ W. Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, TAVO Beihefte B5, Wiesbaden 1974, 132.

⁴¹ Dend. X, 154-158, pl. 49-50, 75-76.

Nome	Deity	Head and crown	hieroglyph
UE12	Horus-Nemty of Antaiopolis	falcon, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
UE13	Wepwawet of Assiut	dog, sun disc	<i>m</i>
UE14	Hathor of Cusae	human, sun disc	<i>'nh</i>
UE15	Thoth of Hermopolis	ibis, sun disc	[<i>wḏ3</i>]
UE16	Horus of Hebenu	falcon, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
UE17	Anubis of Cynopolis	dog, sun disc	<i>m</i>
UE18	Anubis of El-Hiba	lost	[<i>'nh</i>]
UE20	Herishef of Herakleopolis Magna	ram, sun disc	<i>wḏ3</i>
UE21	Khnum of Meidum	human, sun disc	[<i>snb</i>]
UE22	Hathor of Atfih	lost	lost

On the western side, there are 20 gods of Lower Egypt.⁴²

Nome	Deity	Head and crown	Hieroglyph
LE1	Ptah of Memphis	human, sun disc	<i>m</i>
LE2	Haroeris of Letopolis	falcon, double crown	<i>'nh</i>
LE3	Hathor of Kom el-Hisn	human, Hathor crown	<i>wḏ3</i>
LE4	Amun-Re of Buto	human, Amun cap, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
LE5	[Neith of Sais?]	lost	[<i>m</i>]
LE6	[Amun-Re of Xoïs?]	lost	<i>'nh</i>
LE7	Ha of Menelais	human, skull cap, sun disc	<i>wḏ3</i>
LE8	Atum of Pithom	lost	[<i>snb</i>]
LE9	[Horus wenty of Busiris?]	falcon	[<i>m</i>]
LE10	[Horus Khenty-Khety of Athribis?]	falcon	[<i>'nh</i>]
LE12	[Onuris of Sebennytos]	lost	[<i>wḏ3</i>]
LE13	Re-Harakhty of Heliopolis	falcon, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
LE15	Thoth of Hermopolis (Baqliya)	ibis, lunar disc	[<i>m</i>]
LE16	Banebdjed of Mendes	ram, sun disc	<i>'nh</i>
LE14	Horus of Mesen (Sile)	lion, sun disc	[<i>wḏ3</i>]
LE17	Amun-Re of Balamun	human, Amun cap, sun disc	<i>snb</i>
LE20	Sopdu of Saft el-Henna	falcon, sun disc	[<i>m</i>]
LE18	Bastet of Bubastis	lion	[<i>'nh</i>]
LE19	Wadjet of Buto	serpent, sun disc	<i>wḏ3</i>
LE11	Hormerty of Pharbaithos	lost	[<i>snb</i>]





Since many figures from the western frieze are lost, this reconstruction has been based on the surviving traces and on other reliefs in the Osiris chapels at Dendera.⁴³ Not surprisingly, there is a close resemblance with the Canopic Procession on the bottom of the same wall,⁴⁴ which has the god Harsiese of Buto instead of Hormerty in the final position,⁴⁵ but otherwise they seem to have been highly similar in contents.

⁴² Dend. X, 158-161, pl. 52-53, 78-79.

⁴³ Dend. X, 114-125; 209-10; 277-81 and 331-38.

⁴⁴ Dend. X, 83-92; cf. Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gauen*, 133 (Q). The identical location in both lists of LE 14 and LE 20 is remarkable.

⁴⁵ Goyon, *Les dieux-gardiens*, 202 considers the final position in this list "une place de choix", but it is not clear on what basis. Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire*, 81 ascribes the final position of the gods of Buto and Pharbaithos here to the influence of ideas from Edfu.

Consequently, the bird represented in the Bristol block may be identified as a representation of the principal deity of the 7th Lower Egyptian nome in the north-western part of the Nile Delta: the region of Alexandria. This was already indicated by the toponym in the legend to the right. This toponym is so rare that it still presents some problems of identification, and the present occurrence provides a welcome new confirmation of the name of the capital as *Bstyt*, . In Edfu, the name is rendered as ,⁴⁶ while the geographical papyrus Amherst from the Ptolemaic period gives the spelling .⁴⁷ In the 26th Dynasty, the name was written as , which is the oldest attestation.⁴⁸ The name has been identified with the site of Kom el-Giza, and linked to the Greek name Schedia,⁴⁹ but the latter is not certain. Strabo mentioned the capital of this nome as Menelaos,⁵⁰ which has confused the matter considerably.⁵¹

Another problem is the identity of the principal god of this nome. In the lowest register on the same wall the god Ha is depicted as representing this nome, and the same has to be assumed also for the relief in Bristol. However, in other geographical lists, the same nome may be represented by Isis, Harsiese or Sobek, and on the Roman period coins of the nome the syncretistic god Harpokrates-Sobek is depicted.⁵² The iconography of the god in the Bristol relief, with a human face and a solar disc, could belong either to Harsiese or to Ha, but because of the parallel list on the same wall, the identity of the god would almost certainly be Ha.

The god Ha is known from sources of the 3rd Dynasty onwards, but he remains a little known god.⁵³ The present inscription connects him to the right eye of the sky god, which is the sun, and he is depicted with a solar disc on the head. This solar nature of Ha was not seen as clearly before.

The block in Bristol provides a new part of the fragmentary bandeau inscription at the top of the western wall. It addresses Osiris and invites him to join the gods of Egypt in his temple. I translate the entire text, inserting the newly found fragment in its original location:

“Greetings, Osiris Lord of Eternity (*nḥḥ*), You are in the sky appearing as Re, you repeat your (original) form as the moon god (lah). Awake, get up, do not be tired! Come to your hidden image (*sšṯ*) among the gods of the nomes; the bas of the gods protect you. Lord of eternity (*nḥḥ*), do not ignore your temples. Lord of the gods, make haste, do not turn away from the one who comes to meet you (? *m n r iy iw=k*). Your temple has been constructed anew, opened for you [...]. Your (image) has been sculpted on its walls, (your) majesty embraces [... ..] **joyful. May you come to your image (*sšm*),**

⁴⁶ Edfou VI, 50,1, mentioning a cult of Isis; see also Gauthier, DG II, 32.

⁴⁷ pAmherst VIII, col. III no. 3: Gauthier, DG II, 32; P.E. Newberry, *The Amherst Papyri...*, London 1899, pl. XVI.

⁴⁸ Adoption Stela of Nitocris, line x+26; cf. most recently O. Perdu, *Recueil des inscriptions royales Saïtes I: Psamétique I^{re}*, Paris 2002, 25. On the place name and its identification, cf. Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, 169-170.

⁴⁹ Cf. the summary of discussions on the Greek name in M. Weber and A. Geissen, *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptische Nomenprägungen VII*, *ZPE* 157 (2006), 277 with note 4.

⁵⁰ Strabo XVII, 1, 23; J. Yoyotte and P. Charvet, *Strabon: Le Voyage en Égypte. Un regard romain*, Paris 1997, p. 118-119, n. 254.

⁵¹ The sources of information on the 7th Lower Egyptian nome have been collected in H. Beinlich, ‘Spätzeitquellen zu den Gauen Unterägyptens’, *GM* 117/118 (1990), 68-69.

⁵² Weber and Geissen, loc.cit., 279-285, 288. According to J. Yoyotte, *Annuaire du Collège de France* 94 (1993-1994), 667-672, the god Harsiese or Sobek is most commonly representing the nome in temple decoration.

⁵³ On this god, cf. J. Yoyotte, *Annuaire du Collège de France* 92 (1991-1992), 626-634; 94 (1993-1994), 667-670; supplemented by the material in Leitz e.a. (ed.), *LGG* V, 10-11 and VIII, 342.

the one who lives on Maat [... ..] (the holder) of the *mks*. It pleases the Ennead [... ..], you join in with the rejoicing (*3wt-ib*), you [...], your enemies no longer exist. Your manifestation shines in the House of Gold, your *ba* is powerful (*b3.w*), the rays of [...]. Your [...] is among the divine powers (*shmw*). The *bas* of the gods protect your corpse. (As for) your sister Isis, may you receive water from her hand, and your heart is refreshed by her libation. You partake of the bread from her hands, may your mind be at rest through what she has done. Your son Horus is on your throne of eternity (*dt*). You are vindicated (*m3'-hrw*), your justification (*wšb*) has come about. The name of your grandson shall be established on his throne like the sky is enduring on its supports [... ..]".⁵⁴

Why and when was the relief removed from Dendera?

The earliest published drawing of part of the frieze in the Osiris chapel no. 2 was included in the plates of *Description de l'Égypte*, Antiquités volume IV, which appeared in 1817.⁵⁵ It contains a selection of the *ba*-birds in pl. 22, nos. 3,4,5. Porter and Moss have said that some of them are reversed,⁵⁶ but this is not the case. The drawings are not complete, however, as none of them include the figure of Osiris. The birds in no. 3 are a falcon with a sundisc and a *m*-hieroglyph followed by a Hathor headed bird with a *'nh*-hieroglyph and some traces of the legend. These seem to fit with the two birds on the east wall, left end, and they may be identified with Min and Hathor of UE5 and UE6. The second drawing no. 4 has a serpent-headed bird with a sun disc holding what seems to be a double *hw*-scepter and a dog-headed bird with a sun disc and a *'nh*-hieroglyph. The only dog-headed bird combined with *'nh* is UE10, Horus-Maaty of Aphroditopolis on the east wall. The preceding bird in the frieze has a falcon head, so that a mistake has to be assumed here. The third drawing in the Description, no. 5 has unmistakably the goddess Nekhbet with a *'nh*-sign followed by a form of Amun with a *m*-sign. The only place where Nekhbet occurs is on the north wall, east end, where the following bird is indeed Amun. According to the recent publication, however, these birds are shown with a damaged hieroglyph, to be reconstructed as a wedjat eye (Nekhbet), and with a *s*-sign (Amun). Here, it is clear that the drawing has been freely adapted by the engraver and the damaged signs have been restored on the basis of the parallels. The Description thus shows only some of the birds from the eastern frieze, representing gods of Upper Egypt, and there is no information on the western frieze.

The first full publication of the western frieze was prepared by Johannes Dümichen, who spent three months in Dendera in the Summer of 1864,⁵⁷ where he was living on the roof of the temple.⁵⁸ He brought back a large collection of copies of inscriptions, from which he produced his *Geographische Inschriften altägyptischer Denkmäler in den Jahren 1863-1865 an Ort und Stelle gesammelt und erläutert, Abt. 1*, Leipzig 1865.⁵⁹ On plate 82 he renders the frieze of the western wall of the Osiris chapel no. 2 (here Fig. 4).⁶⁰ Dümichen was mainly

⁵⁴ Dend. X, 152-153; S. Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Transcription et traduction*, BdE 117, Cairo 1997, 80.

⁵⁵ It was prepared by Devilliers and Jollois. An overview of the publication history of the Description is given in Y. Laissus, 'Étude sur la publication de la Description de l'Égypte', *RdE* 56 (2005), 215-250.

⁵⁶ PM VI, 99.

⁵⁷ As described in his report in *ZÄS* 2 (1864), 77.

⁵⁸ J. Dümichen, 'Namen und Eintheilung der Stunden bei den alten Ägyptern', *ZÄS* 3 (Jan. 1865), 1.

⁵⁹ At the same time, the volume carried the following title: H. Brugsch (ed.), *Recueil de monuments égyptiens*, vol. III.

⁶⁰ On p. 26, Dümichen describes the frieze and erroneously identifies the birds as vultures.

Pl. LXXXII.

DENDERA.

Rec. d. M. III.

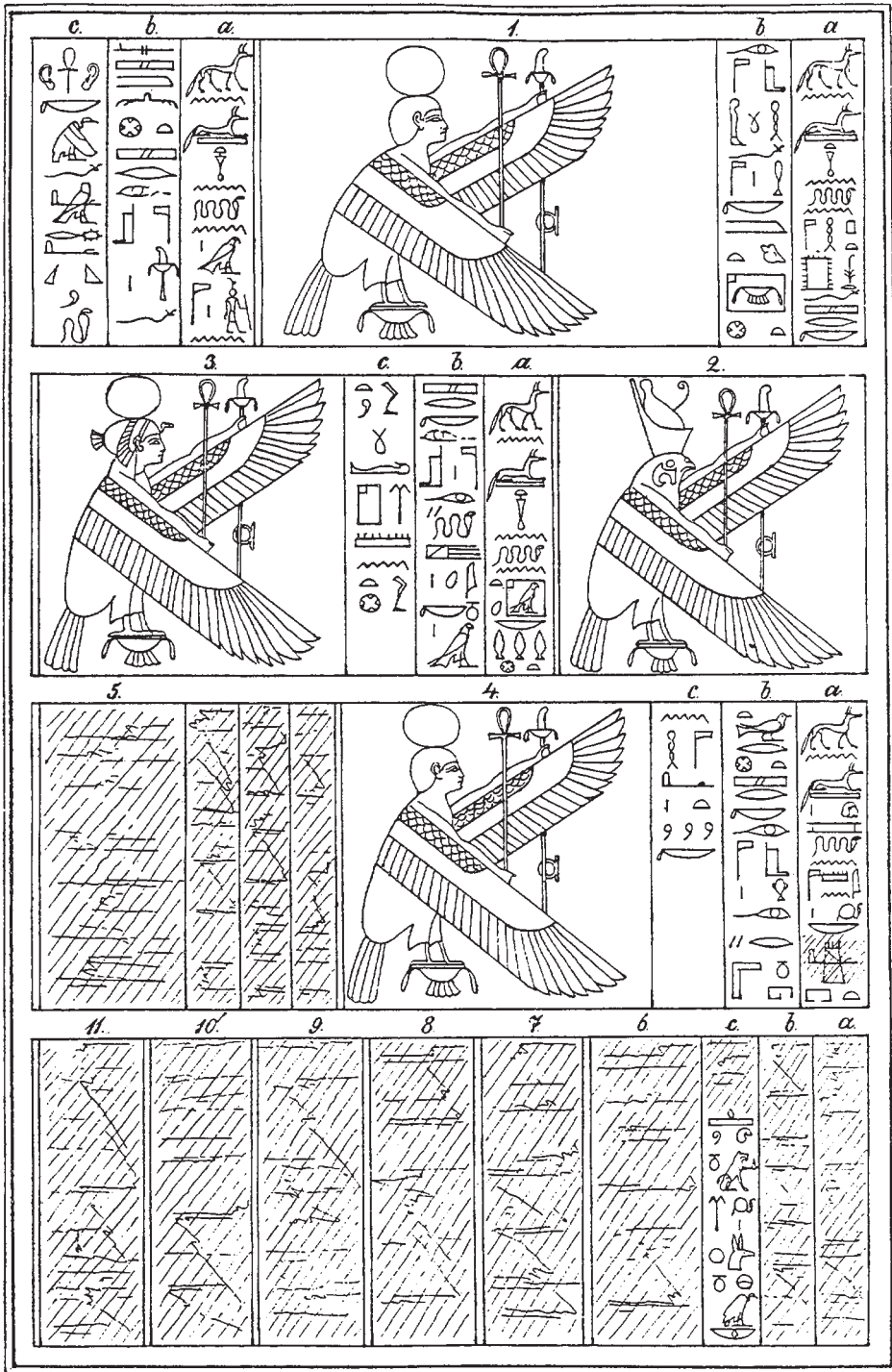


Fig. 4. State of the western frieze decoration in 1864, as published by J. Dümichen, *Geographische Inschriften* 1, pl. 82.

parison of his copy with the modern edition of the frieze, it appears that Dümichen did not divide the texts over the columns in the correct way, and his copies are apparently rapidly produced and not entirely reliable. However, it is clear from his publication that the frieze on the west wall was already badly damaged in 1864, and that the relief in Bristol was no longer in its original place.

The first scholarly edition of the inscriptions of the entire temple was prepared by Auguste Mariette and appeared between 1870 and 1875 under the title: *Dendérah: Description générale du Grand Temple de cette ville*. In vol. IV (1875), the Osiris chapels are included and it confirms the state of affairs observed by Dümichen. Mariette repeated some of the mistakes in the publication by Dümichen, especially noticeable in the division of the signs over the columns in the way Dümichen had published them. This is why in the legends with the third and fourth birds, the final columns are partly empty.⁶¹ In the drawing of the frieze of the western wall on his plate 42 (here Fig. 5), the birds are shown reconstructed, but without any of their distinguishing marks, such as their head and staffs. This shows that Mariette did not draw exactly what was to be seen, but he restored freely on the basis of the available material. It is remarkable that the few birds that are currently still recognizable as falcons, nos. 9 and 10 in his drawing, are not indicated as such. On the other hand, some details are visible that have been lost

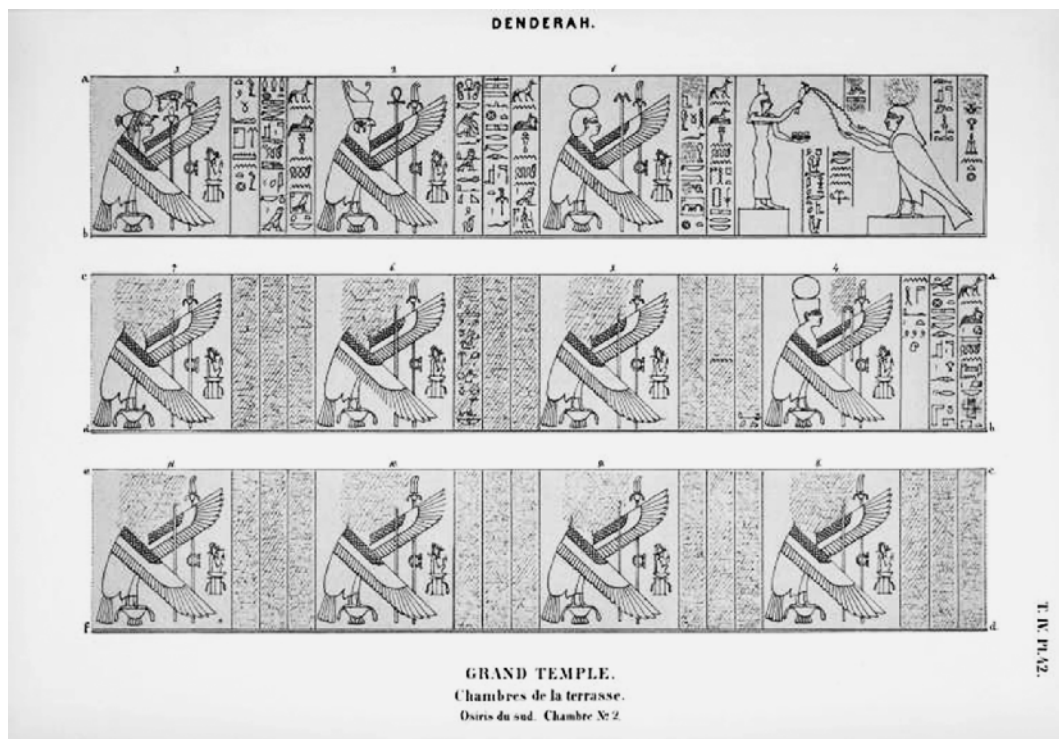


Fig. 5. The western frieze in the publication by A. Mariette of 1874, pl. 42.

⁶¹ Other inaccuracies in Mariette's edition of this room (pls. 44-55) were already noted by Junker, *Stundenwachen*, 1, n. 2.

since. Mariette's publication confirms that the western wall had been badly damaged, and he commented on how this had happened. He wrote: "La partie du plafond où était sculpté le zodiaque circulaire a été enlevée il y a cinquante ans et transportée à Paris. C'est à cette opération assez brutalement exécutée qu'on doit les mutilations dont ont souffert les tableaux des oiseaux symboliques des nomes qui font l'objet de quatre de nos planches".⁶²

Sebastien Louis Saulnier, a collector at Nancy, was the author of the decision to remove the circular zodiac from its site, as it was the finest of the five zodiacs then known. It had been first drawn and published by Dominique Vivant Denon, and the accurate large-scale drawing in the *Description de l'Égypte* had been published in 1817.⁶³ As an agent, Saulnier commissioned the young stonemason Jean Baptiste Lelorrain.⁶⁴ The details of the operation are cited here from the popular account written by L. Greener on the basis of accounts by Saulnier and Lelorrain: ⁶⁵ "On 18th April, 1821,... He recruited twenty Arabs... His first move was to build a scaffold up to the ceiling to support the stone when it was disengaged. Then straight away he was faced with the difficulty of making a hole through three feet of stone, through which to introduce the saw. He could not use his chisels for so formidable a task, else there would be none left for reducing the thickness of the stone, and hence its weight, when it was taken out. There was nothing for it but gunpowder, with all its risk of irreparable damage to the monument. He used it with infinite precaution, testing the strength of the powder until he had the right dose for making a succession of delicate blasts. But it took him two days in the blazing sun with a shade temperature of forty degrees Centigrade to get through to the chamber without hurting the Zodiac in any way. With a sigh of relief he imagined that the battle was won. But it had scarcely begun. He soon discovered that the saw could cut only one foot in a day; and since the three sides to be cut measured 24 feet in all, it was going to be a long job. Too long. He was in a hurry. His operation would not remain unperceived for many days more; and if he were discovered before he had finished, all would be lost. So he made two more holes with his gunpowder, and in this manner he could keep three saws going at once. It had taken twenty-two days to free the Zodiac."

When the zodiac finally arrived in Marseille, two stones measuring together 2.55 x 2.53 m (the original relief had been carved across two stones) was all that was left.⁶⁶ Saulnier boasted: "it is from all the destructive forces described above (not cited here – OEK), that the circular zodiac of Denderah has happily been snatched to be placed under the protection of European civilization."⁶⁷ It was brought to Paris in January 1822 and exhibited to a rapturous public.⁶⁸ In the same year it was purchased from Saulnier by Louis XVIII and it

⁶² Mariette, *Dendérah*, 275. Similarly, on p. 37: "Il faut, malheureusement, compter aussi parmi les mutilations subies par le temple, le trou béant qu'a laissé dans le plafond de l'une des chambres, l'enlèvement brutalement et maladroitement exécuté du zodiaque circulaire, maintenant à Paris".

⁶³ D.V. Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte, pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*, Paris 1802, pl. 130.2. On the *Description*, cf. note 54 above.

⁶⁴ D. Manley and P. Rée, *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist*, London 2001, 194-196.

⁶⁵ L. Greener, *The Discovery of Egypt*, London 1966, 133-134.

⁶⁶ The photograph in G. Goyon, *BIFAO* 76 (1976), pl. LII shows the relief in its current irregular shape. The water lines in the relief on either side of the circular zodiac were almost completely destroyed by Lelorrain, as appears from the reconstruction drawing in *Dend.* X/2, pl. 60 as compared to the photograph in pl. 86.

⁶⁷ P. France, *The Rape of Egypt: How the Europeans Stripped Egypt of its Heritage*, London 1991, 106-107.

⁶⁸ The discussions engendered by the zodiac are reflected in Chr. Beinlich-Seeber, *Bibliographie Altägypten, 1822-1946*, Wiesbaden 1998, vol. III [Indices], 183-184, which lists 18 published titles from 1822, the year the relief was first put on display.

was exhibited in the Louvre. Its price was high, 150,000 francs,⁶⁹ because it was believed to be of great antiquity. When it subsequently emerged that it was Greco-Roman in date, it was thought to be less valuable and it was quickly relegated to the Cabinet des médailles in 1823 and Louis never bought Egyptian antiquities again.⁷⁰ In 1919, the zodiac was moved back to the Louvre, where it bears the number D 38 and it is currently exhibited in the galerie d'Alger.

Conclusions

The stone in Bristol belongs to the frieze of the west wall of the second chapel of the eastern series of Osiris chapels on the roof of the great temple of Hathor. It depicts the god Ha of Menelais in the form of a bird with the human head of the god. His outstretched wings protect the god Osiris, whose resurrection is celebrated in this chapel.

The block from Bristol allows the original order of the 20 gods depicted in this frieze to be partly reconstructed. Apart from geographical information, the block provides further information on the capital of the 7th Lower Egyptian nome, *Sbtyt*, and a new spelling of its name. In addition, it adds some religious information about the little known god Ha of this nome, because it associates him with the right eye of the sky god, the sun. The text in the bandeau inscription at the bottom of the block supplements the fragmentary phrases still *in situ* in Dendera, and it may thus be better understood.

The existence of this block provides conclusive proof that much damage was inflicted on the relief decoration during the removal of the ceiling of the room in 1821. The block has certainly become detached from the wall of the chapel around that time, because in 1864, when Dümichen worked in the chapel, most of the frieze of the western wall had already disappeared. The Bristol piece is, in fact, an indictment of the rough methods employed by Lelorrain when prising the ceiling from its surrounding masonry. This has not been accurately noted in the literature on the chapel and its ceiling so far. Generally, Lelorrain's own report has been cited, in which there is talk of "a little gunpowder".⁷¹ Greener writes: "He used it with infinite precaution, testing the strength of the powder until he had the right dose for making a succession of delicate blasts",⁷² and elsewhere, Montet has stated that the zodiac "fut très proprement scié".⁷³ Nothing could be further from the truth, and only Mariette has previously noted that the irreparable damage that Lelorrain inflicted on the temple was in fact considerable. Cauville only commented on the loss of the inscription bordering the Zodiac on its other side, which, she says, "a probablement été détruite lors de la dépose du zodiaque".⁷⁴ The gaping holes in the walls and the roof remained until they

⁶⁹ "Some 6,500 pounds – a far larger sum than Salt was to be paid for his legally acquired treasures"; Manley and Rée, *op.cit.*, 196.

⁷⁰ J.-J. Fiechter, *La moisson des dieux: [La constitution des grandes collections égyptiennes 1815-1830]*, Paris 1994, 155-156. H. Salt already suspected it to be of a later date than was generally believed, according to Manley and Rée, *op.cit.*, 194.

⁷¹ D. Manley and P. Rée, *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist*, London 2001, 195.

⁷² Greener, *The Discovery of Egypt*, 134.

⁷³ P. Montet, Les premiers collectionneurs d'antiquités égyptiennes, *Histoire pour tous* Hors Série 5 (mars-avril 1978): *L'aventure archéologique en Égypte des origines à Mariette*, 91-98; p. 98.

⁷⁴ Cauville, *Dendara, Les chapelles osiriennes. Commentaire*, 80.

were patched up by Baraize in 1920, as part of the reparation of the ceiling and the installation of a plaster cast of the zodiac.⁷⁵

Since the block was already missing from the temple in 1864, it may have started its life as an object in some private collection before that date. From 1859 onwards, Mariette had taken the cleaning of the temple at hand, so that he could write in 1875 that on the roof, “on ne trouvera plus une pierre qui gêne la marche”.⁷⁶ It is unknown when the stone left Egypt, but in the first half of the 20th century it came into the possession of Charles Mapp, who bequeathed it to the Bristol Museum in 1956, without any recollection of its origins.

⁷⁵ E. Baraize, ‘Rapport sur la mise en place d’un moulage du zodiaque de Dendérah’, *ASAE* 20 (1920), 1-2. The cast had arrived in Egypt already in 1914, but the installation was difficult and finished only in 1920. His report is dated 20 March 1920.

⁷⁶ Mariette, *Dendérah*, 2.

