

Das Höhlenbuch: Textkritische Edition und Textgrammatik. 2 vols. Teil I: *Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textgrammatik.* Teil II: *Textkritische Edition und Übersetzung.* By DANIEL A. WERNING. Göttinger Orientforschungen, Ägypten, vol. 48. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2011. Pp. xviii + 345, 13 pls., illus; xv + 543, illus. €159.

In 1997, the eminent Egyptologist Erik Hornung—widely considered the foremost authority on ancient Egyptian funerary texts—remarked in his *Altägyptische Jenseitsbücher* (Darmstadt), better known in the English-speaking world as *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* (Ithaca, 1999), that an adequate scholarly treatment of the Book of Caverns had yet to be published. And indeed, apart from A. Piankoff's pioneering articles on "Le Livre des Quererts" in the *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 41 (1942): 1–11, pls. 1–9; 42 (1944): 1–62, pls. 10–79; 43 (1945): 1–50, pls. 80–81; and 45 (1947): 1–42 (index), as well as his publication of *The Tomb of Ramesses VI* (New York, 1954), no systematic presentation of this work had been attempted. One would like to think that Professor Hornung now wholeheartedly approves of the present book under review.

The Book of Caverns is one of the so-called New Kingdom Books of the Afterlife, which describe the sun god's nightly journey through the Netherworld. Like the earliest such compilation, the Book of Amduat, which is divided into the twelve hours of the night, the Book of Caverns is also split into a number of sections. The work, which is heavily illustrated, consists of two halves, each containing three "caverns" (*qereret*, a feminine word); the name Book of Caverns is a modern one, originating from these designations. The last cavern shows the concluding tableau where the now-rejuvenated sun god will be reborn in the eastern horizon at dawn.

In fact, the motif of a cave or a cavern as a symbolic place of rebirth is well known (S. Onstine, "The Relationship between Osiris and Re in The Book of Caverns," *JSSEA* 25 [1995]: 73–74; A. Schweitzer, *The Sungod's Journey through the Netherworld: Reading the Ancient Egyptian Amduat* [Ithaca, 2010], 27–30). The introductory scene shows a ram-headed Re standing before a group of underworld divinities, who face him. He extends his hand toward them as he begins his speech with a vocative: "Oh gods who are in the underworld (*duat*), (in) the first cavern of the west." Re realizes he is "entering in the twilight darkness," and also assures the underworld denizens that "I know your names, your caverns, and your secrets." This last statement hearkens back to the earlier Coffin Texts (Spells 39, 220, 248, 251, 306, 401, etc.) and Book of the Dead (Spells 71, 72, 79, 81, 125, 144, etc.), where the deceased had claimed to know the name of various underworld dwellers. Later, Re explains his presence by informing the gods that he will take care of Osiris, punish the latter's enemies, and "illuminate the darkness of the Mysterious Chamber." The sun god repeats the latter statement numerous times during his journey through the darkened underworld; notably, such declarations become more numerous the more powerful the sun god becomes as he comes closer to his rebirth at dawn.

The design of the scenes is fairly consistent. The tableaux are presented in three or five registers, with the lower one, called The Place of Annihilation, invariably reserved for the damned, who represent the enemies of Osiris. These are shown tied up and often upside down, sometimes beheaded or with their hearts torn out. The fifth cavern even shows corpses placed in cauldrons heated by flames; this is the closest the ancient Egyptians ever came to a depiction and description of what we would call Hell (see E. Hornung, "Black Holes Viewed from Within: Hell in Ancient Egyptian Thought," *Diogenes* 42:1 [1994]: 133–56, esp. 138–39).

From an aging ram-headed god bent over and leaning on a staff in the second and third caverns, the sun god is then shown as a child within an oval—possibly meant to represent him gestating inside an egg (S. Onstine, *JSSEA* 25 [1995]: 72)—in the fifth cavern, followed by the newly born Khepri in the final, sixth cavern. Only in this last tableau do we get a representation of the solar bark, a motif so ubiquitous in the Book of Amduat.

As Werning's title indicates, this is not meant to be a theological exposition of the Book of Caverns, but rather a highly detailed analysis of the transmission of the composition from the Ramesside through the Late Period, as well as a grammatical and paleographical study of the text.

Chapter 2 of the first volume presents the various sources for the Book of Caverns. These will be known to readers of the previously mentioned book by Hornung, but the attention to detail that Werning brings to his presentation will make this the definitive description of these sources. The author gives us

the placement of the texts within the royal tombs along with the juxtaposition of other Afterlife books in relation to the Book of Caverns within each tomb.

Chapter 3 provides a highly detailed analysis of the transmission of the text over the ages, which includes a discussion of the all-important concluding tableau in the sixth cavern (Werning's *Schlussbild*) and a comprehensive examination of the process of laying out the text in the tomb of Ramses IV, where he offers a study of the orthography and the paleography of a number of cursive signs. These meticulous analyses allow the author to posit two different written traditions for the Book of Caverns: one used in the royal tombs and the other seen in the Late Period copies, which are connected to the text as presented in the Osireion. Because of their more limited space, some of the Late Period examples, such as the Thirtieth-Dynasty sarcophagus of Tjai-Hor-Pa-Ta (Werning's 'Tjihorpto'), show remarkable creativity on the part of their redactors in carefully selecting passages and scenes, in effect composing an almost entirely new version of the Book.

Chapter 4 deals with the grammatical forms found in the Book of Caverns. Included are exhaustive remarks on tenses, orthography, morphology of plurals, adjectival forms, numbers, pronouns, etc. These are followed by examinations of verbal forms such as infinitives, statives ("Pseudo-participles"), suffix conjugations, imperatives, negatives, and the like. The last section then tackles demonstrative pronouns, genitives, verbal- and non-verbal clauses, and relative clauses with *nty* or *iwtj*. From these, it can be deduced that, as with most religious compositions from these later periods of Egyptian history, scribes had learned to use the earlier Classical Middle Egyptian dialect but had also adapted it by employing forms found in the common Late Egyptian dialect of their own time.

Chapter 5 contains overall remarks on the date of the Book of Caverns. Here, the author wisely eschews the idea that the text is an older composition simply because earlier periods possessed long-standing funerary theological tracts of their own. His rigorous examination of the language used in the Book of Caverns allows him to quite properly point to a composition during the Ramesside Period.

This is followed by an extensive bibliography of works cited in the book. Additional entries can always be included, but one in particular can simply be updated: Joshua Roberson's study of the Book of the Earth, cited as a 2007 doctoral dissertation from the University of Pennsylvania, has now been published as *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth* (Atlanta, 2012). After this comes a long series of indexes of grammatical elements both in Egyptian transliteration and in German, general terms, names, divinities, toponyms, transliterated vocabulary, Coptic words, citations of general reference works, a list of scenes from the Book of Caverns discussed within the book, and other ancient texts mentioned throughout the work. After a number of appendixes, the volume closes with a series of beautifully detailed black-and-white drawings of all the scenes in the Book of Caverns, as seen in a number of the sources.

The second volume consists of a complete transliteration and translation of the text, followed by an index of lemmata, a useful tool that will enable scholars to look up a number of words, their uses, and transformation. The transliteration—printed on the even-numbered pages and facing the translations on the odd-numbered pages in an easy-to-follow presentation—is clearly laid out according to the scenes in a given cavern and further divided into clauses that are individually numbered. References to Piankoff's full handwritten version of the text (1942, 1944, 1945) make it easy to check the hieroglyphs against the transliteration.

Both the transliteration and the translations indent some of the clauses to indicate secondary statements that follow an opening declaration (e.g., "I have settled on the roads of the West, // so that you may attain satisfaction," First Cavern, Text 1: 17–18) or a vocative (e.g., "Oh (you) corpses, which have come about from me, // my images, my manifestations, and my created forms," Third Cavern, Text 32: 11–12). This format proves to be most useful to the reader in appreciating the flow of the text. But it is the presentation of the transliteration that is the most striking. Here, the author has added small font superscript hieroglyphs at the end of most words, to indicate either the determinative or the writing of the plural forms. Countless hours of typesetting must have gone into this layout and the author deserves a congratulatory tip of the hat for his industry.

Indeed, the entire project warrants our admiration. The incredible attention to details will make the book not only the definitive study of the Book of Caverns but will also be a springboard for many future studies. The field of Egyptology is grateful for the author's scholarship and energy.

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