

# RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AT DEIR EL-MEDINA

by

L. Weiss



NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR HET NABIJE OOSTEN  
LEIDEN

PEETERS  
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2015

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Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten  
Witte Singel 25  
Postbus 9515  
2300 RA Leiden, Nederland  
NinoPublications@hum.leidenuniv.nl  
www.nino-leiden.nl

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Cover image:

Religious Practice at Deir el-Medina / by Lara Weiss – Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten. – (Egyptologische Uitgaven, ISSN 0927-0043; 29)  
ISBN 978-90-6258-229-7 (Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, Leiden)  
ISBN 978-90-429-3210-4 (Peeters, Leuven)  
D/2015/0602/1

Printed in Belgium

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Traditionally studies of so-called personal piety (“*Persönliche Frömmigkeit*”) in ancient Egypt have availed themselves of a primarily phenomenological approach and thus endeavored to explore how individuals gradually discovered (religious) consciousness. In other words personal religion and piety have been understood in terms of an inner relationship between the human and divine. Egyptologists sought such expression of inwardness in (hymnal) texts since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> In view of Michela Luiselli’s recent work detailed inquiry into the history of scholarship would seem rather redundant.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, only a brief overview will be presented in order to illuminate the limitations of both a methodological focus on textual sources and a conceptual apparatus that understands devotion as a central component of Egyptian religion and piety, which are, in fact, notions heavily influenced by the Protestant tradition.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1960s, Siegfried Morenz drew on James Henry Breasted’s ideas when developing his model on the so-called “*Heraufkunft des transzendenten Gottes*” (i.e., the advent of the transcendental god).<sup>4</sup> Morenz described a historical development in which the Egyptian king gradually loses power simultaneously gained by the god.<sup>5</sup> This idea was further developed by Jan Assmann who also outlined this development but, contrary to Morenz, emphasized that one should imagine an intellectual achievement rather than a pure historical development.<sup>6</sup> Despite such criticism, however, Assmann has presented a fairly similar model aimed at understanding processes of religious change—or as he would probably say “theological discourse”—in ancient Egypt, whereby individuals ceased to trust the royal-regulated order and began to trust a single god instead.<sup>7</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> James Henry Breasted formulated the idea of a dawn of conscience leading to “*inner aspiration*” to god (cf. J.H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, London 1912, quoted after paperback Pennsylvania 1972, 349) and J.H. Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1933), New York 1934.

<sup>2</sup> M.M. Luiselli, *Die Suche nach Gottesnähe. Untersuchungen zur Persönlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten von der ersten Zwischenzeit bis zum Ende des neuen Reichs*, ÄAT 73, Wiesbaden 2011. A brief summary of different approaches towards “personal piety” is also found in C.L. Ausec, *Gods Who Hear Prayers: Popular Piety or Kingship in Three Theban Monuments of New Kingdom Egypt*, PhD thesis Berkeley 2010, 13–27; including a brief summary on some votive stelae from Deir el-Medina; cf. Ausec 2010, 62–4.

<sup>3</sup> See also S.K. Stowers, ‘Theorizing Ancient Household Religion’, in: J. Bodet and S.M. Olyan (eds), *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, Oxford 2008, 8, who emphasizes the influence of Christianity and Romanticism. An interesting, though tangential, aspect is that the biased interpretation for ancient Egyptian religion through the Protestant lens finds parallels in critics the early Copts’ monastic life. Contrary to the present example, where ancient Egyptian texts are screened for evidence of early conceptions of inwardness and piety, the absence of such concepts receives disapproval in these examples. A common Protestant criticism of the monastic life is, for example, the notion that “mechanical memorization [of texts and rules that] did not penetrate the heart,” cf. D. Burton-Christie, *The World in the desert. Scripture and the quest for holiness in Early Christian Monasticism*, New York 1993, 14, quoting H. Lietzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche*, vol. 4: *Die Zeit der Kirchenväter*, Berlin 1944, 140–51.

<sup>4</sup> S. Morenz, ‘Die Heraufkunft des Transzendenten Gottes in Ägypten’, Reprint in E. Blumenthal und S. Herrmann (eds), *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten*, Köln 1975, 77–119.

<sup>5</sup> Summarized at the end of his study: S. Morenz 1975, 116–17.

<sup>6</sup> J. Assmann, *Theologie und Weisheit im alten Ägypten*, München 2005, 45 und J. Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.), Stuttgart 1984, 225.

<sup>7</sup> J. Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*, Stuttgart 1984.

religion in ancient Egypt. Nevertheless, focus on practice should not exclude any individual agency altogether for every meaningful religious action is embedded in a broader social framework.<sup>86</sup> According to Egyptian wisdom texts, the heart (i.e., some kind of inner reflection) should ideally play a role in the practice of daily life.<sup>87</sup> Such experiences, however, remain difficult to grasp in ancient culture.<sup>88</sup> We cannot know whether an individual performed an offering out of personal piety or social obligation. Even in modern society the individuals sitting in the first church pew may not be the most religious. Since ancient Egyptians cannot be studied ethnographically, scholarly inquiry must focus on evidence of religious actions performed irrespective of questions as to whether these actions were driven by piety, routine or,—most probably—by both. By no means was the individual entirely constrained (see also further below chapters 1.1.2. and 1.1.3.).

## 1.1. Defining Terms and Concepts

The present thesis aims to analyse individual religious practice of ancient Egyptians in the domestic space.<sup>89</sup> Clear investigation requires clear definition of the object of inquiry. Therefore, central concepts of the current study will undergo definition.

### 1.1.1. “Individual”

Within the Western intellectual tradition, the term “individual” evokes a wealth of semantic connotations.<sup>90</sup> Needless to say, that even a brief summary of the *Begriffsgeschichte* lies far beyond the scope of this study.<sup>91</sup> It is paramount to note, however, that the ancient Egyptian individual was never fully “detached from the community relations.”<sup>92</sup> On the contrary, individuality in ancient Egypt never meant

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<sup>86</sup> In fact generally belief should not be causally separated from action, though religious action should be understood as expression of religious tenets, cf. H.G. Kippenberg, ‘Einleitung: Lokale Religionsgeschichte von Schriftreligionen. Beispiele für ein nützliches Konzept’, in: H.G. Kippenberg and B. Luchesi (eds), *Lokale Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg 1995, 14–5. In Egyptology this idea has recently been stressed by H.H. Roeder, ‘Zwischen den Stühlen. Zugangsbeschreibungen zur altägyptischen Religion zwischen Transdisziplinarität und Eigenbegrifflichkeit’, in: A. Verbovsek, B. Backes and C. Jones (eds), *Methodik und Didaktik. Herausforderungen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Paradigmenwechsels in den Altertumswissenschaften*, München 2011, 744–45, note 20.

<sup>87</sup> J. Assmann 1993b, 92.

<sup>88</sup> See also Luiselli 2011a, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Individual religious practices were also performed in non-domestic spaces, for example, in the various chapels at Deir el-Medina; cf. e.g. A.H. Bomann, *The Private Chapel in Ancient Egypt*, London 1991, but these activities are largely excluded here.

<sup>90</sup> E.g. W. Janke, ‘Individuum/Individualismus I: Philosophisch’, in: G. Müller, H. Balz and G. Krause (eds) *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 16, Berlin 1987, 117–24 and H. Luther, ‘Individuum/Individualismus II: Praktisch–Theologisch’, G. Müller, H. Balz and G. Krause (eds) *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 16, Berlin 1987, 124–7.

<sup>91</sup> A comprehensive summary has been presented by L. Meskell, *Archaeologies of Social Life. Age, Sex, Class et cetera in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford 1999, 8–52.

<sup>92</sup> Definition of the modern individual by H. Abels, *Identität*, Wiesbaden 2006, 18. The question of freedom of the individual in the modern world is a question beyond the scope of an Egyptologist.

## Chapter 2: Fixed Cultic Emplacements

In the houses at Deir el-Medina various types of architecturally fixed structures have emerged that most probably served as cultic emplacements. Though perhaps somewhat imprecise, the term “cultic emplacement” is deployed hereto avoid any conceptual importation that might occur through the application of terminology otherwise specific to other contexts or even other cultures. Such analytical slippage has proven quite pervasive. A good example of this problem within the Deir el-Medina context itself comes from the discussion of the so-called false doors that appear in houses.<sup>259</sup> While Egyptological usage often employs the term a “false door” related to the mortuary context,<sup>260</sup> the main purpose of a false door came from its function as the central cultic locations in the tombs,<sup>261</sup> where the Ka (i.e., one particular dimension of the person according to Egyptian conceptualization)<sup>262</sup> of the deceased received offerings. From this perspective, false doors—a general classification including those found in houses—received interpretation as imaginative “point[s] of transition”<sup>263</sup> between this world and the next.<sup>264</sup> Whereas some of these so-called false doors at Deir el-Medina might appertained to ancestral worship within the house,<sup>265</sup> a broader interpretation remains not only possible but also probable. The function of false doors as primary cultic location in tombs may have found parallel in the houses.<sup>266</sup> As a working hypothesis, false doors were no longer

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<sup>259</sup> Bruyère 1939, 67.

<sup>260</sup> Studied in detail by S. Wiebach, *Die ägyptische Scheintür. Morphologische Studien zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Hauptkultstelle in den Privatgräbern des Alten Reichs*, HÄS 1, Hamburg 1981. See also recently A. Kahlbacher and L. Zelenková Hudáková, ‘Kultstelle in Bewegung. Position und Konzeption von Scheintür, Statue und zugehöriger Dekoration in den Felsgräbern von Mier und Beni Hassan im Mittleren Reich’, in: G. Neunert, K. Gabler and A. Verbovsek (eds), *Nekropolen: Grab – Bild – Ritual. Beiträge des zweiten Münchner Arbeitskreises Junge Ägyptologie (MAJA 2)*, GOF 54, Wiesbaden 2013, 90–2.

<sup>261</sup> E.g. recently H.M. Hays, ‘Funerary Rituals (Pharaonic Period)’, in: J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, 2; cf. [www.escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32g9zn](http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32g9zn), accessed on 24 June 2013.

<sup>262</sup> It is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss the ancient Egyptian conception of a person in detail. Compare, for example, G.C. Borioni, *Der Ka aus religionswissenschaftlicher Sicht. Veröffentlichungen der Institute für Afrikanistik und Ägyptologie der Universität Wien* 101, Wien 2005, 17–28.

<sup>263</sup> Meskell 1998, 231 following Bruyère 1939, 67 who had defined them as “*portes fictives qui s’ouvrent imaginaiement sur un monde irréel.*”

<sup>264</sup> Similarly, the ones found in the royal mortuary temples have been interpreted as passages to the netherworld, a palace/residence, or other rooms etc. cf. Weiss 2011, 201–2.

<sup>265</sup> E.g. recently N. Harrington, ‘Funerary furniture made to order? Stela UC 14228’, in: D. Magee, J. Bourriau and S. Quirke (eds), *Sitting beside Lepsius. Studies in Honour of Jaromir Malek at the Griffith Institute. OLA* 185, Leuven 2009, 229 and L. Gahlin, ‘Private Religion’, in: T. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World*, New York 2010, 334. See also Fitzenreiter 1994, 57–9.

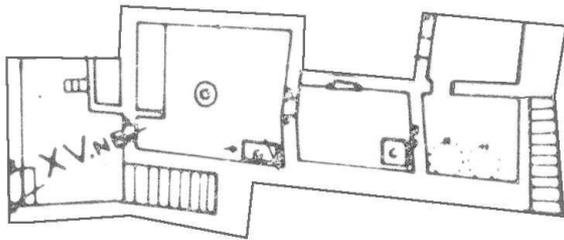
<sup>266</sup> In fact, the function of false doors in New Kingdom tombs also shifted: false doors were degraded from main cult place to *Nebenkultstellen*, cf. J. Spiegel, ‘Die Entwicklung der Opferszenen in den Thebanischen Gräbern’, *MDAIK* 14 (1956), 190. This development has been interpreted as evidence for the idea that the world of the living gradually became more distant from the world of the deceased in the New Kingdom, cf. Spiegel 1956, 206. This is interesting because others have argued that the borders between the two worlds became blurred, cf. J. Assmann, ‘Geheimnis, Gedächtnis und Gottesnähe: Zum Strukturwandel der Grabsemantik und der Diesseits-Jenseitsbeziehungen im Neuen Reich’, in: J. Assmann, E. Dziobek, H. Guksch and F. Kamp (eds) *Thebanische Beamtennekropolen, Neue Perspektiven archäologischer Forschung. Internationales Symposium Heidelberg 9.–13.6.1993*. SAGA 12, Heidelberg 1995, 281–93.

symbolic orientation pragmatically.<sup>286</sup> Accordingly, the importance of orientation existed only in theory,<sup>287</sup> with the actual location of domestic cult places depending on space and other practical considerations (such as the location of exits).

Nevertheless, a pattern does emerge for the location of the large cultic emplacements insofar as almost all rest within the houses second rooms.<sup>288</sup> The rather poor state of wall preservation, however, does allow for the possibility of other large cultic emplacements having since fallen into decay;<sup>289</sup> in addition, others may have been painted onto mud brick walls<sup>290</sup> and hence had disappeared from visibility by the time Bruyère arrived at the site. Numbers, therefore, do not necessarily yield representative results.

Investigation will now turn to the large cultic emplacements themselves following Bruyère's numbering system, their precise meaning<sup>291</sup> discussed further below (chapter 2.2).

### House N.E. XV



(fig. 3)<sup>292</sup>

Painted yellow with red bands, the large cultic emplacement (155 x 90 cm) of house N.E. XV rests in the north wall of the third room.<sup>293</sup> Though somewhat vague, this description converges with recent analysis of another large cultic emplacement at Amarna. Such coloring may refer the emplacement's red decoration along with a "yellow ground colour of for the hieroglyphic column:"<sup>294</sup> according to the report, the side posts

<sup>286</sup> Cf. H. Kees, Ägypten, in: A. Alt *et al.* (eds), *Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 3. Abt., Tl. 1, Bd. 3, Abschnitt 1, Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients 1*, München 1933, 295 and see Raven 2005, 39 stating that "pragmatic" orientations could also be "symbolic" ones.

<sup>287</sup> Compare for example the text-based considerations by G. Posener, *Sur l'orientation et l'ordre des points cardinaux chez les Égyptiens, Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen I. Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Göttingen 1965*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>288</sup> Bruyère had stated that—with one exception—all large cult emplacements were located in the second room of the houses which is thus not entirely correct, cf. Bruyère 1939, 67.

<sup>289</sup> For a similar argument concerning the examples from Amarna cf. B. Kemp, 'Wall Paintings from the Workmen's Village at El-Amarna', *JEA* 65 (1979), 51 and A. Stevens, 'The Material Evidence for Domestic Religion at Amarna and Preliminary Remarks on its Interpretation', *JEA* 89 (2003), 151.

<sup>290</sup> This idea has been suggested for the houses at Amarna by Ricke 1967, 27.

<sup>291</sup> Or "Sinnhorizont;" cf. H.H. Roeder, "Mit dem Auge sehen." Ägyptisches und Ägyptologisches zum "Auge des Horus", *GM* 138 (1994), 50.

<sup>292</sup> Figs cf. [http://www.ifao.egnet.net/uploads/images/sites/deir-el-medina/1\\_Plan\\_topo\\_gen\\_DeM.jpg](http://www.ifao.egnet.net/uploads/images/sites/deir-el-medina/1_Plan_topo_gen_DeM.jpg)

<sup>293</sup> Bruyère 1939, 261.

<sup>294</sup> Kemp and Stevens 2010a, 132.

## Chapter 3: Artifacts Used in Religious Practice

Following previous chapter's analysis of fixed features and artifacts, the remaining categories are those artifacts that cannot be related to any fixed structure. As stated since the beginning (p. 23), although conclusions based on artifacts must be treated with caution, thesis presupposes that artifactual patterns can illuminate the religious activities that took place in the houses. One means overcoming these obstacles, at least partly, involves discussion of artifacts at large on the one hand and the general patterns of performed religious actions on the other.

### 3.1. Offering Equipment

Offering stood as the fundamental religious activity in ancient Egypt. Considering the sustaining significance Egyptian religion attributed to offerings, it is all the more striking that Egyptology has tended to neglect the topic considering the term "offering" self-evident and engaging in no broader theoretical approach.<sup>876</sup> The category "offering table" has received limited investigation as well.<sup>877</sup> Since "offerings" as a subject of inquiry is entirely too expansive in both time and space for any single study, the present foray into offering theory has the humble objective of an initiating further discussion.

As already indicated in chapter 2 (p. 56) ancient Egyptians conceived of no fundamental distinction or dual offerings system that bifurcated temple offerings from others, as Burkhard Gladigow has suggested for other contexts.<sup>878</sup> Although divine images in temples were concealed and access to them limited apart from festivals and processions,<sup>879</sup> the evidence from Deir el-Medina demonstrates the similarity between the offerings or religious activities performed. Offering in ancient Egypt generally meant an exchange of goods, i.e., giving something to the gods in order to satisfy them and receive

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<sup>876</sup> Nicolaus Tacke has recently presented a complete edition of the text formerly known as "Ritual of Amenhotep I" or "Ritual of the Royal Ancestors," which he now views as "the standard ritual for the daily offerings of food in the divine temples of the New Kingdom," cf. Tacke 2013 (quote: vol. I, 1). While Tacke's study certainly provides easy access to a vital source, the lack of putting the material in a broader theoretical perspective appears to be a missed opportunity. Thanks to the synthetic priorities of the time, the most detailed study on offerings still remains: A. Moret, 'Du sacrifice en Égypte', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 57 (1908), 81–101. Apart from this study, the topic has received attention in lexicographical articles, but no comprehensive study of offerings in general has been published as of yet. Silvie Cauville's recent study (Cauville 2012), for instance, takes an encyclopedic rather than an analytic approach. For other general descriptions, cf., e.g. A. Erman, *Die Religion der Ägypter. Ihr Werden und Vergehen in vier Jahrtausenden*, Berlin 2001<sup>2</sup>, 10–1; H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin 1952, 547–50; H. Altenmüller, 'Opfer', *LÄ IV* (1982), 579–84; G. Englund, 'Offerings', in: D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt II*, Oxford 2001, 564–9.

<sup>877</sup> A.O. Bolshakov, 'Offering tables', in: D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt II*, Oxford 2001, 572–3.

<sup>878</sup> B. Gladigow, 'Opfer und Komplexe Kulturen' in: B. Janowski and M. Welker (eds), *Opfer. Theologische und kulturelle Kontexte*, Frankfurt 2000, 95–8.

<sup>879</sup> Gladigow 2000, 97; for the types of images carried in processions, cf., e.g., K. Eaton, 'Types of Images Carried in Divine Barks and the Logistics of Performing Temple Ritual in the New Kingdom', *ZÄS* 134 (2007), 15–26.

## Chapter 4: Synthesis

Claude Lévi-Strauss showed that we tend to see progress in those cultures that resemble our own and stagnation in those that differ.<sup>1498</sup> As Baines argued, “Egyptologists often wish to propound “their” civilization’s unique role in the history of human ideas and social forms, in the process sometimes finding precedents for their personal faith.”<sup>1499</sup> For Egyptian religion, this tendency becomes tangible in the focus on personal piety and Assmann’s bipolar model describing the “revolution” superseding “man in the collective” in favor of “man in front of god.”<sup>1500</sup> Stevens<sup>1501</sup>, Luiselli,<sup>1502</sup> many others demonstrated that the Ramesside Period was not the proclaimed “Age of Personal Piety”; instead, evidence attests to individual religious practices even earlier. Perhaps the increased data for so-called personal piety in the New Kingdom simply results from the state of preservation at Deir el-Medina without reflecting any radical turning point.

Whereas previous studies on personal piety at Deir el-Medina have mainly focused on written sources, the present study aimed at exploring personal religious practice in the everyday life Deir el-Medina’s inhabitants in the domestic space. This perspective once again demonstrated that the traditional focus on religious expression in terms of inwardness derived from a biased European Protestant perspective that does not necessarily converge with ancient Egyptian conceptualizations. In order to grasp this individual action, it was crucial to broaden the scope of analysis and include the archaeological remains from these localities. In addition, a model for analyzing the variation of individual action within the frame of traditions and *decorum* was developed. Consisting of four degrees of group participation on the individual, family, local, and translocal levels, this model allows for varying appropriations within these categories.

The record from the houses of Deir el-Medina reveals little evidence for individual expression of personal piety towards gods, a phenomenon perhaps expected based on earlier studies that focused on hymnal texts. Without excluding the possible experience of pious feelings towards deities as an important motivation for any religious activity, the majority of religious actions sought the individual’s well-being within a broader familial context. Egyptology may have long asserted that the individual should undergo analysis as part of the greater social whole,<sup>1503</sup> but the field has not applied such a perspective of social embeddedness to religious practice. Assmann’s dominance of Egyptological discourse—particularly his conceptions of personal piety—have contributed to such restriction. Moreover, his studies concerning the importance of individual loyalty to specific deities has received more adherence than it probably deserves.<sup>1504</sup> The present study has shown that personal religious practice within the home centered on the family, including

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<sup>1498</sup> C. Lévi-Strauss, *Race et histoire. Suivi de l’œuvre de Claude Lévi-Strauss par Jean Pouillon*, Paris 1961, 41–2.

<sup>1499</sup> Baines 2011, 42.

<sup>1500</sup> J. Assmann 1990, 280–1.

<sup>1501</sup> Stevens 2006.

<sup>1502</sup> Luiselli 2011a.

<sup>1503</sup> E.g. J. Assmann 1996, 92–4; J.J. Janssen, ‘Die Struktur der pharaonischen Wirtschaft’, *GM* 48 (1981), 63 and see above (p 10).

<sup>1504</sup> E.g. J. Assmann 1996, 92.

## Introduction to the catalogue

The present catalogue includes technical descriptions of those objects discussed in this study. The object term is followed by the inventory number and—when available—other numbers as well, such as find numbers or old museum numbers. A brief description then follows along with, if applicable, transcription, translation, names, titles, and a select bibliography, the latter meant for quick reference rather than exhaustive resource. Since many objects have been already published in several different studies and catalogues, reference is only provided for the oldest and most recent publications. Table 1 lists the known owners of the houses according to the findings by Bruyère (1939) as well as those suggested by the present analysis. The catalogue begins with tables of fixed features, i.e., altars and niches (tables 2-3). For every fixed feature, the location and orientation is listed following Bruyère's numbering of the houses. Tables 4 to 13 organize the artifacts according to specific artifactual groups, again following Bruyère's numbering system. Since its submission as part of the requirements of a doctoral thesis at Göttingen University in February 2012, the catalogue has been reduced. Artifacts easily available in other publications—as with most pictorial ostraca (Brunner-Traut 1956), the anthropoid busts (Keith 2011), *ꜣḥ-jkr-n-R<sup>c</sup>*-stelae (Demarée 1983), as well as objects with unclear find spot in the vicinity of the village—have been omitted. Such exclusion also applies to the frame fragments found by Schiaparelli in 1909 (Tosi and Roccati 1972). Where relevant, their museum numbers receive citation within the previous chapters, the considerable size of such fragments suggesting they came from tomb rather than domestic contexts. Publications and notebooks as well as databases in the IFAO, Egyptian Museum in Cairo (ECM), and Louvre have all supplied information for this catalogue. Still, “empty records” do occur, for recording techniques at the time of excavation and registration frequently permitted the absence of sizes, drawings, and even descriptions. I have nonetheless chosen to incorporate as much information as possible, hoping that future researchers might be able to match these records with objects in museum collections.

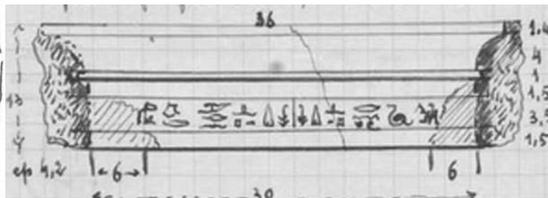
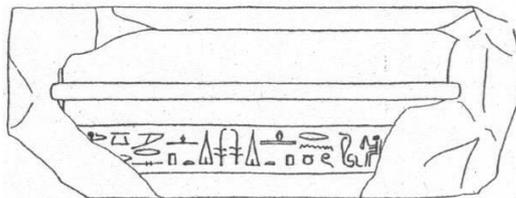
## Excavation Records

This study has confined its scope to the religious activities performed in the village of Deir el-Medina. Consequently, the catalogue is restricted to those objects discovered in the village. In theory, they consist of objects excavated by Schiaparelli in 1909, Möller in 1911 and 1913, or Bruyère in 1930 and 1934-35 (for the history of the excavation see above chapter 1.6)

In practice, however, the excavation and recording techniques at the time of excavation do not always allow the clear designation of a find spot. This applies especially to the objects now in the Turin Museum. In spite of the kind support by Elvira Amicone it has been very difficult to trace the provenance of the objects found by Schiaparelli in 1909. It is clear that he excavated parts of the village in 1909, but at the same time he was digging the tombs. My analysis of the fragments has shown that the iconography of lintels is different from the usual village material and that they are also quite large. It is therefore

**Table 3: Smaller (cult) emplacements**a) "*laraires*" and "*autels*"

House no.	Room no.	Location on wall	<i>Bruyère's term</i>	Size in cm	Opposite other niche(s)?	Related to <i>divan</i> , ' <i>lit clos</i> ' or <i>pétrin</i> ?	References
N.E. III	kitchen	next to the door, west	<i>laraire</i>		no	<i>pétrin</i> in the same room	Bruyère 1939, 245 and pl. XVI.
N.E. VII	2 <sup>nd</sup> room	east wall, between the two doors	<i>laraire</i>		same wall	opposite a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 251.
N.E. XIV	1 <sup>st</sup> room	east	<i>laraire</i>		no	located behind a <i>pétrin</i>	Bruyère 1939, 260.
S.E. VI	2 <sup>nd</sup> room	east	<i>autel</i>		no	opposite a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 271.
N.O. IV	1 <sup>st</sup> room	north-west corner	<i>laraire</i>	40 x 60 cm h. 65 cm	no	in the same room with a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 281.
N.O. X	2 <sup>nd</sup> room	west	<i>laraire</i>	125 x 80	no	opposite a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 285 and 291.
N.O. XII	kitchen	east	<i>laraire</i>		no	close to a <i>pétrin</i>	Bruyère 1939, 287.
N.O. XV	2 <sup>nd</sup> room	west	<i>laraire</i>		no	opposite a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 291.
N.O. XVI	2 <sup>nd</sup> room	west	<i>laraire</i>		no	opposite a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 293.
C. II	1 <sup>st</sup> room	south-east corner	<i>autel-laraire</i>		no	next to a <i>pétrin</i>	Bruyère 1939, 302.
S.O. VI	2 <sup>nd</sup> room	west	<i>autel</i>		next to one or more niches	opposite a <i>divan</i>	Bruyère 1939, 331.
S.O. VI	4 <sup>th</sup> room	south-east corner	<i>laraire</i>		no	no	Bruyère 1939, 331.

**Table 4: Architectural Limestone Fragments****Cat. 4.1**

Object:	lintel of a cult emplacement
Inv. no:	Louvre E. 14390 BIS
Other number:	–
Find spot:	N.E. III, kitchen I
Present location:	Louvre Museum, Paris
Material:	limestone
Size:	total: h. 13 cm; l. 36 cm; doorpost: w. 6 cm; door: w. 18 cm Louvre inventory: h. 13.5 cm; l. 39.5 cm; d. 6 cm
Description:	Fragment of a cult emplacement lintel, with cavetto cornice, inscribed with one line of text, painted red, and blackened by smoke.
Transcription:	left: <i>ḥtp dj nsw Mr-Sgr</i> [...] right: <i>ḥtp dj nsw Rn-nw šps(.t)</i> [...]
Translation:	left: An offering that the king gives to Meretseger [...] right: An offering that the king gives to Renenutet, the noble one [...]
Individual names:	–
Individual titles:	–
Religious titles:	–
Divine names:	Reenenutet; Meretseger
Remarks:	Meretseger, “the one, who loves the silence” was the patron of the workmen-s necropolis as suggested by several community shrines in the rocks “on the way to the Queens Valley” (Sadek 1988, 118). It is clear, however, that she was a very popular goddess whose cult was performed by many villagers (cf. Sadek 1988, 118–21). Compare also recently K. Sabri Kolta, ‘Die Schlangengöttin Meresger als Nothelferin und Beschützerin der Handwerker von Deir el-Medineh’, in: D. Kessler, R. Schulz, M. Ullmann, A. Verbovsek and S. Wimmer (eds), <i>Texte – Theben – Tonfragmente. Festschrift für Günter Burkard</i> , ÄAT 76, Wiesbaden 2009, 281–88. The goddess Renenutet was a fertility goddess, who was usually worshipped in her manifestation as a snake (on the latter see Sadek 1988, 121–5). Renenutet and Meretseger are often associated with each other (e.g. Sadek 1988, 122), but in the village record they do not appear frequently together (compare Bruyère 1939, pl. XVI, 22 for a parallel attestation of the goddesses Meretseger and Renenutet. According to the Louvre inventory, the present fragment is marked with “V. N.E. 14.1.34,” which apparently indicates the fragment was found on 14 January 1934 in house N.E. V. This marking is, however, an error. The notebook does not confirm the marking (cf. Bruyère, <i>Notebook</i> , MS_2004_0156_004). In fact, the object was found on 14 January 1935 in the house neighboring that of Nebamentet (Bruyère, <i>Notebook</i> , MS_2004_0155_014). All finds listed here were attributed to house N.E.

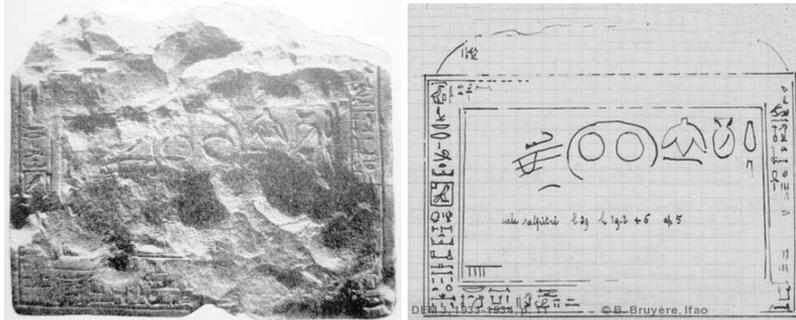
## Table 5: Offering Tables

### Cat. 5.1



Inv. no:	—
Other number:	—
Find spot:	N.E. III
Present location:	—
Material:	limestone
Size:	—
Description:	Fragment of an offering table inscribed with one line of text.
Transcription:	[...] <i>nb.t nfr.t w<sup>c</sup>b.t n k3 n Wsjr t3y-md3.t Pyj3</i> [...]
Translation:	[...] all the good and pure [things] for the Ka of the sculptor Piay
Individual names:	Piay (ii?)
Individual titles:	sculptor
Religious titles:	Osiris
Divine names:	—
Remarks:	The present location of the object is unknown. It was mentioned in the notebook, but not drawn. Lacking any information about the shape or decoration of the object no description can be provided. The name in this form is unknown. What is perhaps written here is a short form of Piay (ii), who was a sculptor at Deir el-Medina. For the other men from Deir el-Medina called Piay, only the family relations but no titles have been preserved (cf. Davies 1999, 302–3).
Reference:	Bruyère 1939, 246. Bruyère, <i>Notebook</i> , MS_2004_0156_006.

### Cat. 5.2



Inv. no:	—
Other number:	—
Find spot:	N.E. XI, first room, in front of the large house altar (“ <i>lit clos</i> ”)
Present location:	—
Material:	limestone
Size:	h. 25; l. 29 cm; d. 5 cm
Description:	Fragment of an offering table, corroded by humidity. Now highly damaged, it was most probably shaped like a <i>htp</i> -sign with two diagonal

**Table 10: Three-dimensional (Cult) Images****Cat. 10.1**

Object term:	figurine
Inv. no:	—
Other number:	—
Find spot:	area north of house N.E. IV (?); see remarks
Present location:	—
Material:	plastered mud
Size:	—
Description:	Fragment of a plastered mud figurine of Osiris.
Transcription:	—
Translation:	—
Individual names:	—
Individual titles:	—
Religious titles:	—
Divine names:	—
Remarks:	The find spot is not fully clear. In the notebook of 24 January, the entry follows <b>Cat. 11.6</b> with the additional indication “north.” Though this indication could refer to north of <b>Cat. 11.6</b> ’s find spot, such a proposal is uncertain. The object receives no mention in the publication. According to Bruyère, the fragment joins the head found in the community chapel north of the village. It is thus not clear whether the object belongs to the domestic religious context. No further information is available in the publication or the notebook.
Reference:	Bruyère, <i>Notebook</i> , MS_2004_0155_016.

**Cat. 10.2**

Object term:	figurine
Inv. no:	—
Other number:	Möller, <i>Fundjournal</i> , 153
Find spot:	<i>Grabungsstelle</i> D3 = N.E. X
Present location:	—
Material:	limestone
Size:	l. 10 cm
Description:	Raw figure of a panther or the like.
Transcription:	—
Translation:	—
Individual names:	—
Individual titles:	—
Religious titles:	—
Divine names:	—
Remarks:	Found by Möller on 6 March 1913, this object appears in his <i>Fundjournal</i> but not the Berlin inventory. It may have remained in Cairo as a result of the find share.
Reference:	Möller, <i>Fundjournal</i> , 153.