The Four Wt3w- Gods in the Book of the Dead and Book of the Gates

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Abstract: This article is concerned with the study of the *Wt3w* deities in the Book of the Dead (Cave 9 and Cave 11, chapter 168), and The Book of Gates (middle register of the third hour). In the Book of the Dead, these deities are depicted as a standing mummifrom, below him or in front of him, number 4. In the Book of Gates, these deities are depicted in the form of four standing deities with bent arms hidden in their garments, and their name *Wt3w* t3 is written among them. Mostly the figures are wrapped in white linen. The functions of these deities are clear in the Book of the Dead. They help the deceased to be next to the Great God Osiris, and they make the deceased soul live forever. Furthermore in the Book of Gates, these deities are found in a preferable place at the far end of the middle register of the third Hour, this indicates that they play an important role in the events of this register.

Keywords: *Wt3w, Wt3w-t3, Wt3w-Wsir*, Hidden arms, book of the dead, Book of Gates, number 4.

معبودات الوتاو (Wt3w) الأربعة في كتاب الموتى وكتاب البوابات

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الملخص: يتناول هذا البحث دراسة معبودات الوتاو في كتاب الموتى (الكهف التاسع والحادي عشر من الفصل ١٦٨)، وكتاب البوابات (السجل الأوسط من الساعة الثالثة)، وهم عبارة عن مجموعة مكونة من أربعة معبودات، لا تحمل أسماء فردية ولكن يُطلق عليهم اسم "وتاو". وتم تصوير هذه المعبودات في كتاب الموتى على هيئة مومياء واقفة بذراع خفي مكتوب أمامها أو أسفلها الرقم أربعة (يُشير هذا الرقم إلى عددهم)، وفي كتاب البوابات تم تصويرهم على هيئة أربعة مومياوات واقفة بذراع مثني مخفي في ملابسهم، ومكتوب بينهم اسمهم "Wt3w-t3"، وفي الغالب الأشكال تكون ملفوفة في الكتان الأبيض الناصع. وتتضح وظائف هذه المعبودات في كتاب الموتى فهم يُساعدون المتوفي في أن يكون بجوار المعبود العظيم أوزير، وأن تعيش روح المتوفي إلى الأبد، وفي كتاب البوابات توجد هذه المعبودات في مكان مُميَّز في أقصى السجل الأوسط للقسم الثالث وهذا يُشير إلى أنهم يقوموا بدورٍ هام في أحداث هذا السجل.

الكلمات الدالة: Wt3w-Wsir,Wt3w-t3,Wt3w خفي الذراع، كتاب الموتى، كتاب البوابات، رقم ٤.

Introduction:

The Ancient Egyptian Religion contained numerous groups of deities; they were of two different types, although they sometimes overlapped with each other. On the one hand, there is what might be referred to as "numerical groups" made up of independent deities who are usually symbolically tied to one another. On the other hand, there are numerous other deities—who may or may not have individual names—that exist as members of "collective groups" or "regional groups"— meaning those in a particular region of Egypt or the cosmos, such as netherworld deities or star gods. These groups may contain any number of deities.¹

In this article, a group of four deities who do not have individual names, but whose names are summed up into collective group, called *Wt3w*, will be discussed.

This research aims to study and identify the *Wt3w* deities with hidden arms, which appeared in the Book of the Dead (chapter 168) and the Book of Gates (the third hour), and to try to find out the reasons for hiding their arms in their garments.

I- Wt3w-Gods in the Book of the Dead (Ch. 168):

This chapter is considered an extraneous to the Book of the Dead, as it is a topic in its own right, dividing the underworld into 12 caves, and it is clear that those who transmitted this text -which was very rare- transferred it timidly and did not refer to the first seven caves, and the chapter always begins with the cave eight to twelve. The texts of this chapter are similar to the texts of the Book of Gates and the Book of the Amduat in terms of dividing the underworld into 12 hours ². In this chapter, the *Wt3w-*Gods appeared, as a group of four deities belonging to the Ninth Cave Gods and the Eleventh Cave Gods. They were depicted in the form of a standing mummy, number 4 written below it or in front of it.

Two sources are used by the researcher to study the Wt3w- Gods in the chapter 168 of the Book of the Dead, which are:

1- P. Kairo, J.E. 34001 (CGC, 24742), New Kingdom, 18 dynasty³:

In this papyrus, the *Wt3w*-gods were depicted in the ninth cave (group 12) (fig.1) and the eleventh cave (group 8) (fig.2), in the shape of a standing mummy with a hidden arm (in the eleventh cave the mummy with a false beard), below it, number 4, above it the name of these deities was written (*Wt3w Wsir*). There are no texts explaining the function of these deities on this papyrus.

¹ Richard Wilkinsin, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 75, 79.

² Sharif Alsaify, *Going out durng the day-Book of the Dead* (Cairo: National Center for Translation, 2009), 381 (in Arabic).

³ Alexandre Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, Bd. 6: BS XL (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 44ff, Pls. 10-16; Georges Daressy, *Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois (1898-1899). CG 24001-24990, Bd. Nos 24001-24990: Catalogue Général des Antiquitiés Égyptiennes* (Cairo: Printing of the French Institute of Oriental Archeology, 1902), 184-189, Pls. XLI-XLII.

2- British Museum Papyrus 10478, New Kingdom, 19 dynasty¹:

On this papyrus, the *Wt3w*-gods were depicted in the form of a standing mummy with a hidden arm, in front of it, number 4, and there are some texts explaining the function of these deities on this papyrus. As follows:

- Cave ninth, Group twelve (fig.3):



Wt3w Wsir di.sn wn Wsir.....r-gs² ntr 3 nb imnt

"Utau of Osiris, they may cause Osirisbe next to the Great God, Lord of the West"



Iw wdn³ n.sn \(^b\) tp \(^t3\) in Wsir.....hpr.f m nb \(^wy\), shm ib m \(^ht\) ntr \(^t4\)

"A bowl has been offered to them on earth by Osiris......taking form as lord of arms, controlled of heart in the realm of the dead"

- Cave eleventh, Group eight (fig.4):



Wt3w Wsir di.f \(\cappa n\) b3 n Wsir.....n mwt.f m whm\(\frac{1}{2} \)

"Utau of Osiris, (They) cause the ba-soul of Osiris may live, and may not die again forever"



Iw wdn n.sn cb tp t3 in Wsir.....-mwt, wd.n.f i(3)kbwt⁶ n it.f

"A bowl has been offered to them on earth by Osiris-mut, who has decreed mourn for his father"

¹ Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 44ff, Pls. 17-33; Thomas Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in their own Terms*, SAOC. 37, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 162-168.

² Wb V, 194-195.

³ Wb I, 391(1-16).

⁴ Wb III, 394 (10-13).

⁵ Wb I. 340.

⁶ Wb I, 34 (5-8).

II- Wt3w-Gods in the Book of Gates:

This book's original title is not known, and the title that is currently in use is based on the prominent depiction of gates concluding the section of every hour at night¹. This book appeared for the first time in the tomb of King Horemhab (the Eighteenth Dynasty), but only the first five parts of the book were depicted. It appeared complete (in only four cases); For the first time on the sarcophagus of King Seti I, the second copy in the corridor leading to the Osireion at Abydos, it was decorated by king Merenptah, the third copy in the tomb of King Ramses VI and the fourth copy in the tomb of the priest "PA-di-imn-ipt" of the late period (26th dynasty)². Parts of this book were also depicted in many other tombs such as: the tomb of King Seti I, the tomb of King Ramses II and the tomb of King Ramses IV...etc³.

This book has been divided into twelve divisions, corresponding to the hours of the night illustrating in words and pictures the journey of the sun god during these hours until his youth is renewed every morning. Each hour is divided into 3 registers except for the judgment hall and the final representation. Often, the gods (or the blessed dead) do not have individual names, but they are combined into collective groups⁴, as in the Wt3w-gods under study in this article.

The four Wt3w-Gods are depicted at the end of the middle register of the third division of the Book of Gates* (fig. 5). In this register, we see the Boat of Ra, which is pulled by a rope by four figures in human form, called dw3tyw**, The rope passes through a long object, called Wi3-t3 "boat of earth", that starts and ends with a bull's head. A bull stands at each end. The boat of earth is carried on the shoulders of eight mummiforms, standing upright with their faces turned towards the sun Boat, Called Byw "bearers", and above the Boat of the earth, between the heads of its bearers, there are seven seated mummies, called *ntrw imiw*, then there are four *dw3tyw* pulling the rope from the boat of earth. At the end of the register, we see four wrapped gods standing with hidden arms, uncovered heads and their faces turned towards the gods

¹ Erik Hornung, the Egyptian Book of Gates, 1st Ed (Zurich: Living Human Heritage Publications, 2013),

² Abdel Halim Nur el din, *The Ancient Egyptian Religion*, part. 3 (Cairo: dar alagsa, 2011), 443 (In Arabic); Rania Mostafa Muhammad Abd al-Wahed, The Book of Caves: A Study in Funerary Literature (Alexandria: University Knowledge Dar, 2011), 13 (In Arabic); Ali Mahfouz Abbas, "depiction of the Book of Gates on Antiquities from its inception until the end of the New Kingdom", (Master Thesis, Mansoura University, 2016), 1(In Arabic).

³ Charles Maystre and Alexandre Piankoff, Le Livre des Ports, part. 1 (Cairo: Printing of the French Institute of Oriental Archeology, 1939).

⁴ Hornung, Gates, 7-9.

^{*} Both Ghada Bahnasawy and Rania Abdel Aziz Mesbah mentioned that the WtAw-Gods are the seven Gods sitting on the rope. (See Ghada Mohammed Bahnasawy, "Hidden in Religious Books in Ancient Egypt", (PhD Thesis, Ain Shams University, 2011), 31 (In Arabic); Rania Abdel Aziz Mosbah, "Expressions of sound in ancient Egypt until the end of the New Kingdom period (a civilized linguistic study)," (PhD Thesis, Cairo University, 2014), 489 (In Arabic), But this is wrong, and they are the four Gods standing at the end of the middle register of the third division of the Book of Gates, and their name WtAw tA is written between them.

^{**} Group of four gods pulling the sun barge, called collectively dw3tyw (Gods of the Netherworld), For more information about it See: LGG VII, 513f.

dw3tyw, they are called W13w-t3 "wrapped of earth", and the gods dw3tyw address them***:-

st3w Ntr pn '3 in dw3tyw m wi3 dsrt im t3 wd mdw¹ n [w]t3w imn- hrt².tn n.tn Wt3w-t3 hmhmt hnty-mnt.f kf3t³ (n) tpw.tn imnw (n) wy.tn t3w n fndw.tn snfhfh⁴ n wtw.tn [shm.tn]* m 3wt.tn htp.tn m km3⁵ n.i 3wt.sn m t3 hnkt.sn m d(s)rt kbhw.sn m mw iw ddw (n.)sn 3wt.sn m sšpw6.sn m dw3t

"This great god is being pulled by dw3tyw, in the protected Boat which is on Earth, commands to Wt3w (wrapped) whose arms are hidden: Your shares are yours, Wt3w-t3 (Wrapped of the Earth), who roar for Khentymentef*, uncovering your heads, and hiding your two arms, breath of air be to your noses, loosening for your wrappings, You have your rations, when you rest in what I have created, Their rations are bread, their

^{***} To avoid repetition, the Scholar used one source for this text, which is (text from the tomb of King Horemhab).

¹ Wb I, 396 (1-8); Rami Van der Molen, A Hieroglyphic dictionary of Egyptian Coffin texts (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 108.

² Wb III, 390(5)-391(20)

³ LGG VII, 283.

⁴ Wb IV, 163 (16-18); FCD, 232.

^{*} The text here omits the word sxm.Tn, this word is found in other sources such as the tomb of Ramses I and the tomb of Seti I, See: Maystre and Piankoff, *Ports*, 99.

⁵ Wb V, 36 (6-7); Leonard Lesko, *A Dictionary of late Egyptian*, Vol. IV (Berkeley: B.C. Scribe Publication, 1989), 11.

⁶ Wb IV, 284 (8-9).

^{*} A title for Horus, who appears in the Amduat as a separate divine figure. The most likely meaning is "who is in front of his thighs" (usually Horus). See: Wb II, 68(12); Wolfhart Westendorf, "Bemerkungen zur ,Kammer der Wiedergeburt" im Tutanchamungrab", ZÄS 94 (1967): 146; Erik Hornung, Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits, AegHelv. 8 (Geneve: Editions of Belles-Lettres, 1980), 90. For more information about it See: LGG V, 815f.

beer is Djeseret*, their refreshment is of water, who offers them their rations, is among those with luminous clothes in the underworld'

III- Other figures similar to the Wt3w-Gods in some Religious Books:-

In the middle register of the sixth hour of the Book of Gates, there is a sun boat pulled by four gods called *dw3tyw*, and front of them there are twelve gods with hidden

arms - as in the case of the Wt3w gods- called imn- imn-

In the Book of Amduat, this strange figure also appears depicting some Gods with bent arms that disappear in scrolls, for instance: In the middle register of the third hour in the Book of the Amduat, we see four gods with bent arms at the reception of the procession of the boat (Nos. 248-251)². These gods are similar to the *Wt3w*-gods in the form. (Fig. 7)

IV- Names and Numbers of the WtAw-Gods:

They are a group of four Gods who do not have individual names. Instead, they are combined into collective groups, called *Wt3w*. Some did not translate the name, but they were satisfied with the phonetic pronunciation of the name Utau, such as Piankoff³, Budge⁴ and others. In the Berlin dictionary⁵, the name is translated as "Those who are wrapped". This previous name was associated with some other words, in the Book of the Dead followed by the name Osiris "*Wt3w Wsir*", and in the Book of Gates followed by tA (earth) "*Wt3w t3*"⁶.

The forms of writing the name are as follows:

^{*} A drink called Dsrt is known from the offering lists of the Fourth Dynasty. It seems to be a type of beer. In medical texts it often occurs next to beer or wine, there is a type of plant called Dsrt which may be an ingredient in Dsrt-beer. For more information about it See: WPL, 1248.

¹ Wallis Budge, an Account of the Sarcophagus of Seti I. king of Egypt, B. C. 1370 (London: Harrison and sons, 1908), 79.

² Erik Hornung, Das Amduat: *die schrift des verbogenen Raumes*, *ÄgAbh.*7 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963), 52-53, pl. 3; Erik Hornung and Theodor Abt, *The Egyptian Amduat: The* Book of the Hidden chamber (Zurich: Living Human Heritage Publications, 2007), 79,90.

³ Alexandre Piankoff, the Tomb of Ramesses VI, Vol.1, BS. XL.1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), 153-154.

⁴ Budge, Sarcophagus of Seti I, 50.

⁵ Wb I, 380 (6).

⁶ Researcher.

⁷ Wallis Budge, an Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray Press, 1920), 189.

⁸ Wb I, 380 (6).

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$$Wt3w Wsir$$

- $Wt3w Wsir$
- $Wt3w Wsir$
- $Wt3w III$ $Wt3w III$ $Wt3w III$

V- Their looks and clothes:

In the Book of the Dead, the *Wt3w*-gods are depicted as a standing Mummifrom, below him or in front of him, number 4, among the deities belonging to the ninth Cave Gods and the Eleventh Cave Gods of Chapter 168 of the Book of the Dead⁶. Mostly the figures are wrapped in white linen, and on the head, there are wigs; they also wear a false beard, as stated on Papyrus No. 10478 in the British Museum (Group 8 of Cave 11)⁷. (Fig. 8)

The figures were also colured green, as stated on Papyrus No. 10478 in the British Museum (Group 12, cave 9, Chapter 168 of the Book of the dead)⁸. (Fig.9)

In the Book of Gates, the Wt3w deities are depicted in the form of four standing deities with bent arms hidden in their garments; mostly the figures are wrapped in bright white linen, and their name Wt3w t3 is written between them⁹. (Fig. 10)

VI- Functions of the Wt3w-Gods:

It is clear from the texts in the Book of the Dead the function of the *Wt3w*-Gods, they cause the deceased to be next to the Great God, Lord of the West (Osiris), and they make the soul of the deceased live forever¹⁰.

In the Book of Gates, we find the Wt3w-Gods in a preferable place at the end of the middle register that indicates their important role in the events of the register. The text

⁶ Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 67, 81.

¹ Budge, *Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, 189.

² Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, pl.12 (Cave 9, group 12).

³ Budge, *Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, 189.

⁴ Erik Hornung, Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits, *AegHelv*. 7, (Geneve: Editions of Belles-Lettres, 1979), 71.

⁵ LGG II, 596.

⁷ Researcher description.

⁸ Researcher description.

⁹ Researcher description.

¹⁰ Raymond Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (New York: British Museum publications, 1972), 162; Thomas Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, *SAOC*. 37 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 165, 166.

refers to their arms being hidden, and there are several opinions about the reasons for the hiding of their arms.

Hornung¹ explained this strange form of depicting deities with bent arms that hide in the scrolls saying "In parallel with the many other phases of revival depicted in the underworld books, this figure can be interpreted as a transitional phase: after liberation from mummy rigidity, the arms have just begun to stir, but have not yet emerged from the encasement, but "hidden" in it".

Pippy² said they may be hiding something in their garments, and they are faithful followers of the sun-god.

According to Ghada Bahnasawy³, the *dw3tyw* order the *Wt3w* to hide their arms so that no one knows what tasks they are doing with their hands. Meanwhile they reveal their heads so that one knows them from their appearance, ones were afraid of them when they see them.

It is worth noting that we mention what Mona El Nadi⁴ said about armless Figures, which is "The armless figures may have imitated the sun god's period of weakness during his journey through the night, perhaps playing a role that was suspended for a while, and continued in the afterlife. Their role may have been the guardians of the burial place or demons protecting the deceased. Some divine figures appear with a definite role to help the sun god in his night hour's journey, as in the Amduat".

The Scholar believes that the dw3tyw who pull the boat of Ra, address the Wt3w to hide their arms for the god Ra in order to allow the sun boat pass. As we see the two guardians, who take on a shape similar to that of the Wt3w, bent their arms for Ra, and the accompanying text of the third gate guards explains this: (fig. 11)

"He bends his arms for Ra⁵"

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¹ Hornung, *Pforten*, 91.

² John Pippy, Egyptian Origin of the Book of the Revelation (Canada: Lulu Enterprises, Inc, 2011), 429.

³ Bahnasawy, "Hidden in Religious Books in Ancient Egypt", 32.

⁴ Mona Abou Elmaati El Nadi, "Armless Figures in Ancient Egypt until the end of the New Kingdom", *SHEDET* 8 (2021): 60.

⁵ Gaston Maspero, "Inscriptions and Decoration of the Tomb of Harmhabi", *Excavations in the Tomb of the Kings* (London: Harrison and sons, 1912), 72, Pl. XLVII; Hornung, *Pforten*, 87.

Conclusion:

From the above it is clear that:

- The *Wt3w* deities are a group of four deities that appeared in the Book of the Dead (Cave 9 and Cave 11, chapter 168), and the Book of Gates (middle register of the third hour). And there are other figures similar to them in some other books, such as the Book of Amduat.
- These deities are depicted as a standing Mummifrom with hidden arms.
- Most of the figures of these deities are painted white, and sometimes they are painted green.
- These deities don't have individual names, but were summed up into collective group, called *Wt3w*, meaning "the wrapped up".
- These deities cause the deceased to be next to the great God Osiris, as mentioned in the Book of the Dead.
- These deities make the soul of the deceased live forever, as mentioned in the Book of the Dead
- The presence of the *Wt3w* deities in a preferred place, at the end of the middle register of the third hour of the Book of Gates indicates that they play an important role in the events of the register, especially since the text refers to hiding their arms, possibly to the god Ra, to allow the sun boat to pass.

Figures:

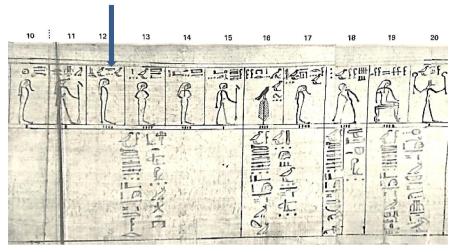


Fig.1: P. Kairo, J.E. 34001, ninth cave Piankoff, *the Wandering of the Soul*, pl. 12.

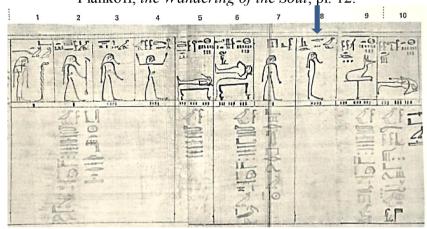


Fig.2: P. Kairo, J.E. 34001, eleventh cave Daressy, *Vallée des Rois, pl. XLII*.

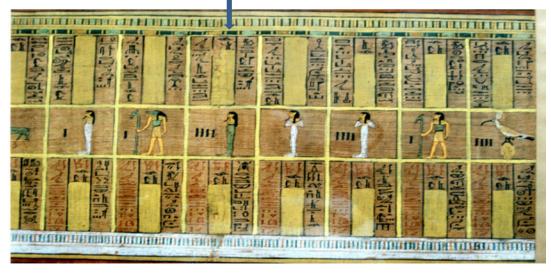


Fig.3: P. BM EA 10478, ninth cave http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134513#



Fig.4: P. BM EA 10478, eleventh cave http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134513#



Fig. 5: The middle register of the third division of the Book of Gates Alexandre Piankoff, "Le tombe de Ramsés Ier", *BIFAO* 56 (1957): 192; Hornung, *Gates*, 54-55.

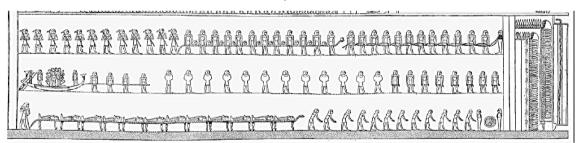


Fig. 6 Fig. 5: The middle register of the six division of the Book of Gates Piankoff, *Ramesses VI*, fig. 42.

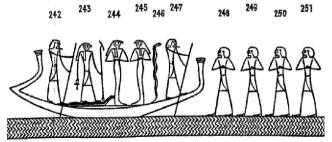


Fig. 7: the middle registers of the third hour in the Book of the Amduat Erik Hornung, Altägyptische Jenseitsbücher: Ein einführender überblick (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1997), 119.



Fig. 8: WtAw-wsir are wrapped in white linen http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134513#



Fig.9: WtAw-wsir are wrapped in green linen http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134513#



Fig. 10: WtAw-tA are bent their arms, from the tomb of Ramses I Photo by researcher



Fig. 11: Guardian who takes a shape similar to that of WtAw Maspero, *Tomb of Harmhabi*, Pl. XLVII.

Abbreviations:

AegHelv Aegyptiaca Helvetica (Bâle, Genéve)

ÄgAbh Ägyptologische Abhandlungen (Wiesbaden)

BIFAO Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Le Caire)

FCD Faulkner, Richard., A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, Oxford: Printed in Great Britian at The University press, 1964

LGG Leitz, Christian, Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2002.

SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations (Chicago, Illin)

Wb Erman, Adolf & Grapw, Hermann., Worterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache (Leipzig, Berlin)

WPL Wilson, Penelope. A Ptolemaic Lexikon A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu, OLA 78, Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1997.

ZÄS Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache undnd Altertumskunde, (Leipzig, Berlin)

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