

The Internal Friezes of the Sanctuary's Gate of Isis temple at Philae

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Abstract:

The research deals with republishing the internal friezes of the sanctuary's gate of the Isis Temple at Philae, which are divided into two types:

1- Decorative friezes, such as the upper frieze decorated with (*hkr*) decorations, and the base (soubasement) or (dado) decorated with a representation of the god (*H^cpi*) in repeated units.

2- An inscription frieze (bandeau de la frise) that starts from the middle of the hall and turns right and left. It contains the titles of King Ptolemy II and his names, as well as the titles of the goddess Isis, to whom the temple and its halls are consecrated.

The paper includes the correction of some marks contained in previous scientific publications of Bénédite, G., *Le Temple de Philae*, Paris, 1893. Zabkar, L., *Hymns to Isis in her temple at Philae*, 1988, after conforming to the original text, Comment on some vocabulary and doing a new facsimile.

Keywords: Isis temple, Philae, Ptolemy II, friezes, Greco- Roman.

الأفاريز الداخلية لبوابة قدس أقداس معبد إيزيس بفيله

ملخص البحث :

يتناول البحث إعادة نشر الأفاريز الداخلية لبوابة قدس أقداس معبد إيزيس بفيله ، والتي تنقسم إلى نوعين :

أ- أفاريز زخرفية ، مثل الإفريز العلوى المزخرف بزينة الخكرو والإفريز السفلي المزخرف بتمثيل للمعبود حعبي في وحدات زخرفية متكررة .

ب- إفريز كتابي : ويبدأ من منتصف القاعة ويتجه يمينا ويسارا ويتضمن ألقاب الملك بطلميوس الثانى وأسمائه وكذلك القاب المعبودة إيزيس والتي كرس لها المعبد وقاعاته .

كما يتناول البحث تصحيح لبعض العلامات الواردة بالنشر العلمى السابق ل ج.بندت وكذلك ل. زابكر بعد مطابقتها بالنص الأصلي ، والتعليق على بعض المفردات اللغويه وكذلك عمل فاكسميلي حديث .

الكلمات الدالة : معبد إيزيس ، فيله ، بطلميوس الثانى ، الأفاريز ، اليونانى الرومانى .

Introduction: Friezes are of great importance, and although they appeared since the period of the Old Kingdom¹, they became a distinctive feature of the temples in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods².

Friezes were divided into two types:

- 1- Written or linear type
- 2- Decorative type

The first type, which is written, was found in two places: Inside the halls of the temples, Or it surrounds the outer wall of the temple and includes a description of the halls, their names, and their measurements in the Egyptian cubit.³


As for the second type of friezes, they are the decorative friezes, and they are found in each hall in two places⁴:

As for the top of the hall or the bottom of the hall, it is directly under the inscription frieze. The frieze includes repeating decorative signs or the names of deities or epithets for which the hall is dedicated.

First, the upper decorative friezes

First: Khekr Frieze:

It is an upper horizontal frieze that surrounds the whole hall⁵ and is composed of regularly repeated units of khekr decorations, which is a series of cane sticks or plant stems linked to each other from its top once and from the base again.

Khekr  (*hkr*) linguistically means decoration or decorate as a verb and as a noun it comes in the sense of


¹ Fischer, H.G., "Hieroglyphen", *LÄ* II, col. P.1189-1199.

² Metwally, N., *The Encrypted writings in the ancient Egyptian civilization*, Alex, 2010, p.44.

³ Cauville, S., "Les inscriptions dedicataires de Dendera", *BIFAO* 90, 1990, p.98.

⁴ Abdulrahman, A., "Readings in the decorative friezes at Dendera temple", *JARCH* 25, VOL II, 2022, p.p: 148 – 149.

⁵ Shehab, N., "kheker frieze in ancient Egypt", *JGUAA2* V2.Issue 1 p.132-158.

adornment or decoration and it is used as a decorative element and its plural is Khekro(*hkrw*)  6.

It was first appeared beginning in the period of the Third Dynasty in the pyramid group of King Djoser at Saqqara ⁷, and it was classified into several types:

- 1- The pointed type
- 2- The open and splay –topped kheker –frieze
- 3- The splay – topped kheker –frieze with sun disks
- 4- Two , three or five bundles of kheker signs inside an alternatin group .
- 5- The kheker sign used in conjunction with Hathor heads
- 6- The kheker sign in conjunction with the representations of the God Anubis rested on a pedestal.
- 7- The kheker sign in conjunction with Hathor heads and the God Anubis couchant on a pedestal wit or without vertical bands of inscriptions .
- 8- The kheker sign in conjunction with figures of deceased adoring Anubis
- 9- The kheker sign in conjunction with the “djed “and “tjet” signs ⁸

As for the type used in the hall of the sanctuary, which dates to the period of King Ptolemy II, it is of the frieze type :open and splay –topped kheker –frieze (fig 1), The era of King Ptolemy II was not limited to this type only, but we find in other rooms of the temple other types of kheker decorations, such as the pointed type in the room V.

⁶ Gardiner ,A., Egyptian Grammer , Being an Introduction to the study of Hieroglyphs , 3rd Ed.pub.Griffith Institute , Oxford , 1957 .p.543.

⁷ Firth,M., and Quibell, J.E., Excavation at Saqqara , the step pyramid , Vol II , 1935, p.77.

⁸ Shehab , N., JGUAA2 V2 , p.132- 158.

Second: the head band frieze (bandeau de la frise)

It is an inscription that starts from the middle of the hall and goes to the right and left

Location : Philae , Isis temple , Room x, right building inscription

Bibliography:

G. Bénédite, le temple de Philae , textes ,F1, tab III p.58-59

Zabkar,l., hymns to Isis in her temple at Philae ,1988.p.81



(fig 2)(fig 3)(fig 4)









*ḥnḥ Hr- Rḥ ḥwnw kni nbty wr pḥty Hr-nwb sh^c(.n) s(w) it.f
nswt bity nb t3wy wsr K3 Rḥ mri Imn*

*s3 Rḥ nb ḥ^cw (ptlmis) ir.n.f mnw.f n mwt .f 3st di(t) ḥnḥ
nb(t) iw-rk špst wsrt ḥnwt itrti ḥsf (t) iwntyw ḥsy(w) r
idbw Hr kd .f n.s iḥyt .s ḥ n.f dsr n.f s(.i) r 3ḥt pt ḥ^c.ti m
nswt bity ḥr st Hr nst gb dt .*

Horus the strong child ,who belongs to the two ladies , Great of might , the golden Horus , his father causes (him) to appear ,king of upper and lower Egypt , lord of the Two Lands ,strong is the ka of Ra ,beloved of Amun ,son of Ra ,lord of crowns, Ptolemy.

He made his monument to his mother Isis ,who give life , Lady of Philae ,the noble , the mighty one ,lady of Egypt (mistress of the two shrines) ,who repels the wretched Nubian people from the shores of Horus , building for her a sanctuary he has founded it and has made it more splendid than horizon of heaven . May he appear As lord of upper and lower Egypt, upon the throne of Horus ,upon the throne of Geb forever .

Comment and corrections:

- 1- The original shows  not  as G. Bénédite's copy.
- 2- The original shows the two complete cartouche of the king Ptolemy II which is not complete in the G. Bénédite's copy .
- 3- The original shows  not  as G. Bénédite's copy.
- 4- The original shows  not  as G. Bénédite's copy.
- 5- The original shows  not  as G. Bénédite's copy.

Leopronon has divided the names of Ptolemy II to five names as:

Horus: *hwnw kni* : which meaning brave youth but the searcher translate it as the strong child .

Two Ladies: *wr phty* : Great of might

Golden Horus: *sh^c .n sw it,f* : whose father enthroned him but literally :caused him to appear .

Throne: *wsr k3 R^c*: the strong one of ka of Ra

Birth: *ptwlmys*: Ptolemy

Additional titles to the throne name: *mri Imn*: beloved of Amun⁹

Wr phty:   :

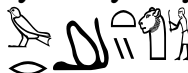
A common title for the gods and kings which means (Great of might)¹⁰ , the title has appeared since the middle kingdom and continued till the Greco-Roman period.


⁹ Leopronon ,R., The Great name , Ancient Egyptian Royals Titulary , 2013 p. 178-179 .

¹⁰ Wilson ,P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon ,Leuven , 1997,p.242.


Many gods held this titles like: Ptah, Osiris, Horus, Behdty ,Amun Ra ¹¹

The title was written by many ways like:

In the Saite period :  ,

In the Greco- Roman period :  ,

 ,  , 

hnwt itrty  :

Itrty :Literally the two shrines of the festival of *hb –sd* which representing the upper and lower Egypt .the word is known since the old kingdom¹² .the singular word “itrt “ was translated as the king's palace¹³ while Gardner believes that the word (itrt) is related to the word (itrw) , which means river and expresses the meaning of a row¹⁴ and in its dual form(itrty) means the two sides, based on that in a celebration The *hb-sed* that was held in Memphis The deities of the two parts of the country would come to gather there and put their statues in two rows of chapels on both sides of the courtyard of the *hb-sed*.

The word also could be translated “both sides “, as a metaphor for the two sides of the sky, where the god *hr bhd* circles¹⁵.

the title of “*hnwt itrty* “ means the lady of two shrines which refer to upper and lower Egypt . it has become a metaphor of Egypt ¹⁶.


¹¹ IGG II, p.437.

¹² Wb,I,148 .

¹³ Wb,I ,147.

¹⁴ Gardener ,A., “Horus the *Behdetite*” , *JEA* 30 ,1944,P.27F.



¹⁵ Wilson ,P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon , P.P123-124.


Twntyw 

it means the race or genealogy of people, and this name was assigned to all the peoples of the white race who inhabit the Nile Valley and the neighboring deserts and armed with bows and may have been invaded by another people who came from the north¹⁷.

Perhaps it means foreigners, as Gauthier mentions that it was mentioned in the lists of foreigners, including an inscription belonging to King Senusret III in Wadi Hammamt , mentioning the four foreign peoples¹⁸. May be here it means the Nubians Based on Hanning's translation, where he mentioned that he meant by this word the people of the bows and the Caves, Bedouins and the inhabitants of the southern desert, most of whom are from Nubia.¹⁹

Idbw 

The sign  in nature refers to a cape of the earth which mean or to a sign of the borders ²⁰, which reads “w_{db}”, or” idb “ the plural is “ idbw “ 

Idb which mean plots land in the form  and “w_{db} “ refers to the banks of river .

It is a well-known sign since the old kingdom , which comes as a phonetic sign or as a custom in words expressing the land, banks, beaches, borders, and others.

It is possible to express the land of Egypt in general.

Written in many shapes like :

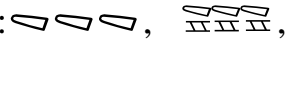
¹⁶ LGG, V, P.169.


¹⁷ Wilson ,P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, p.54.

¹⁸ Gauthier DG I , P.58.

¹⁹ Hanning ,R., agyptisches wörterbuch 1 ,Hanning lexica 4 ,p.60.

²⁰ Wb, I, 153, 2-6 .

In the middle kingdom period : 

In the Greco-Roman period  ²¹

*d**s**r*  :

A term which means “ to prepare or to consecrate²² , the term has appeared since the old kingdom and this verb is considered the main root for the word “ *d**s**r* “ which is meaning scared.

The form of the verb an arm holding a scepter showing a symbolic cleansing of the path of the gods to walk on without fear or pollution.

Sethe²³ mentioned that the verb “ *d**s**r* “appeared that in parallel with the verb “ *tw*3”

Which means to raise anything from pollution.

Left side :

Location : Philae , Isis temple , Room x, left building inscription

Bibliography: G. Bénédite , la temple de Philae , texts ,F1, tab III p.58- 59.

Zabkar, I., hymns to isis in her temple at Philae, 1988.p.81

Berlin Philae photographs (1035-36).



²¹ Wilson ,P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, p.126.

²²Wilson ,P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon , p.p1247-1248

²³ Seethe,K., übersetzung und kommentar zu den altägyptischen pyramidtexten , vol.VI, Glückstadt – Hamburg – Newyork , 1935-1966, p.208.

*ḥnh Ḥr ḥwnw kni nbty wr pḥty Ḥr-nwb shꜥi it.f nswt bity
 nb t3wy wsr K3 Rꜥ mri Imn
 s3 Rꜥ nb ḥꜥw (ptlmis) i 3st wrt mwt ntr(t) nb(t) irꜥ , mi(.t)
 m ḥtp ḥꜥ ir m33 .t mnw nfr pn
 ir.n ḥm .i n im3t n pr.s ḥry ib wr mw m irꜥ (ḥbw)snnwt n
 ꜥ rsyt ḥwt .t skd m inr ḥd nfr rwd n kn m nwb mi 3ḥt ḥr
 Itn ḥnmt.t im.f dt*



Horus the strong child ,who belongs to the Two ladies , Great of power , the golden Horus , his father causes him to appear ,lord of upper and lower Egypt , lord of the two lands ,strong is the ka of Ra ,beloved of Amun ,son of Ra ,lord of crowns , Ptolemy .

He says :O, Isis , the Great One , the divine mother , mistress of Philae

Come in peace , happiness to see this beautiful monument ,which my majesty has made as in adornment for your house ,which is In the middle of the great water(river) , at Philae . (to celebrate) a (snwt) festival for the southern region (or in southern region of Egypt) , (which you) protect it . This monument built of strong white beautiful sand stone and filled with gold like the horizon supporting the sun disk , may you unite with it forever.

Comment :

The original shows  not  as G. Bénédite s copy. It could be” nis” or “I “.

1- The original shows  not  as G. Bénédite s copy

2- *snwt* 

One of the names by which Egypt was known as the seat of one of the important celebrations, which is the Feast of (Snwt) Which has been known since the Old Kingdom

and referred to by the pyramid texts ,It is the feast that completes the eye of the *wḏ3t*

Therefore, the researchers interpreted it as the feast that falls on the sixth day of the lunar month every month.²⁴

However, it is clear from the lunar calendar that the moon is full in the middle of the month and not on the sixth day of it , Numerous texts indicated that this celebration was taking place in the (*hr- ḥ3*) area, which is the Babylonian fortress in ancient Egypt now²⁵.

And at the time when the summer solstice begins, And at the beginning of the flood, at the time when the summer sun begins to complete, as an eye for the god Ra, compatible with the beginning of the flood, which is a symbol of Osiris. Therefore, this date is considered a fixed date for the summer solstice, and the Egyptians preferred it to celebrate the beginning of building temples or major projects, desiring to complete them, such as the completion of Ra eye²⁶ .

Third soubassement:

The lower part of the wall consists of repeated units of the god "Hapi" in his traditional form consisting of a headdress, a long hooked beard, sagging breasts, and a sagging belly. He holds a nemst jar in one hand and the other *hs* vessel. And on his head is a lotus flower on the right side towards the eastern wall until the middle of the northern wall, and on the left his head is topped by a papyrus flower towards the western wall and up to the middle of the northern wall, with a depiction of papyrus and lotus plants. The frieze on the northern wall ends with a hieroglyphic text, facing the king on both sides

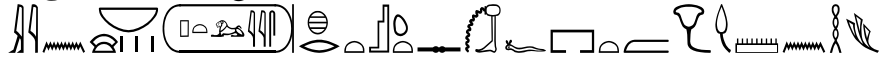
²⁴ wb,IV,153(4-6); Parker, R.A., The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, Chicago, 1950, P.11

²⁵ Elsaid , M., The Eastern ledder (w) and the western ledder (x) at Dendera temple , PHD, Faculty of Archeology, Cairo university, 2014 , p.224.

²⁶ Barta, W., "Zur Bedeutung des *snwt-Festes*", *ZÄS* 95 ,1969, PP. 73-80

carrying a *hs* vessel , with papyrus flowers on it, and wearing a white crown, sometimes carrying *hs* vessels , topped with lotus flowers, and wearing a red crown. The following is the text on the northern wall:

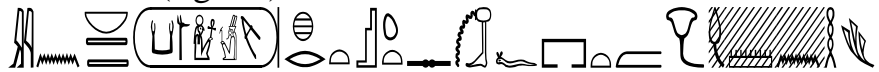
Right side : (fig 10)



ii.n nb h^cw ptlmys hr.t 3st sw^cb .f pr.t m nhb mnḥ

May the lord of the crowns(Ptolemy II) is coming before you ,O Isis he purifies your house (temple) with the lotus and papyrus .

left side : (fig 10)



ii.n nb t3wy (wsr k3 R^c mry Imn) hr .t 3st sw^cb .f pr.t m (nhb mnḥ)

The lord of the two lands (wsr ka Ra mry Amun) is coming before you , O Isis , he purifies your house (temple) with lotus and papyrus .

h^cpy:(fig 11)

For the ancient Egyptian, the flood symbolized the first renewable source of fertility, so he portrayed it in a form that combines male and female at the same time.²⁷This appeared in the manifestations of masculinity represented in the face, the crooked beard, and the hair wig. As for the manifestations of femininity, it appeared in the chest, The details differed from period to period .

The development of “*h^cpy* “ through the old and middle kingdom :

a- the wig :

For example, the hair wig ,In the Old Kingdom, it was drawn almost completely in the middle of the back, lined in straight lines, and was connected to the hooked chin. An example of this is the representation of Habi in the

²⁷ Nur eldin , A., The ancient Egyptian language , Cairo , 1998 , p.218.

funeral temple of Sahure from the Fifth Dynasty²⁸. the flabby abdomen, and the thick buttocks. *h^cpy* is the first god to be depicted in a double form.²⁹ As for the depiction of the Nile god in most of the inscriptions, he was represented in two main cases, either carrying the offering table, whether of food or liquid offerings, or carrying out the process of unity, or “*sm3 t3wy* “ and a two-figure image of the northern and southern Nile god.³⁰ Its form appeared since the old kingdom and continued until the Greco-Roman period .³¹ The details differed from period to period .Starting from the Sixth Dynasty, the hair wig seemed a little shorter, and this appeared in the northern chapel of the pyramid of King Pepi II³²,In the mortuary temple of King Ne User Ra, the same hair wig and arms were found, as if they were emerging from one shoulder³³, and this form continued until the Middle Kingdom period ³⁴.

Then another type of wig appeared, which ended at the neck and the beginning of the shoulder, as if it was knotted from the back. Another form appeared showing the wig as if it had been collected from the back and a small part of it on the chest. There is another form drawn with a thin part of it that falls on the back and a part on the chest³⁵. As for the most famous form, it is in which the hair wig is extended on the back with a part on the chest, and there is a unique form in which the god is

²⁸ Borchardt , L., *Das grabdenkmal des kÖnigs, sa- 3hw – re II* , Leipzig,1907, pl.29 – 30 .

²⁹ Kurth , ” *NilgÖt* “ , in : *LÄ IV* cl 486.

³⁰ Emar , M., *The God Hapi in The Ancient Egyptian Religion* , unpublished master thesis , Cairo university , Fayuom, 2004 , p.43.

³¹ Baines , J., *fecundity figures* , England , 1985 , p. 44.

³² Jéquier,G., “*Le Monument funéraire de pépi* “ , *IFAO*, Le Caire , 1936,

³³ Borchardt , L., *Ne User Re* , pl.16

³⁴ Blackman , A., M., “*Meir*” , VI, *ASE* 29(1953) , pl.17

³⁵ Bénédite, G., *La temple de Philae* , p.36.

depicted wearing the royal uraeus. As for the abdomen and the breast, most of the inscriptions show him with a flabby and swollen abdomen, with the appearance of the navel, which is wrapped directly below it by the waist belt. Often the breast is depicted prominent and large, and bare feet, whether standing or kneeling. As for the beard, it was connected to the hair wig in the old kingdom , and then became independent after that.

b- The necklaces :

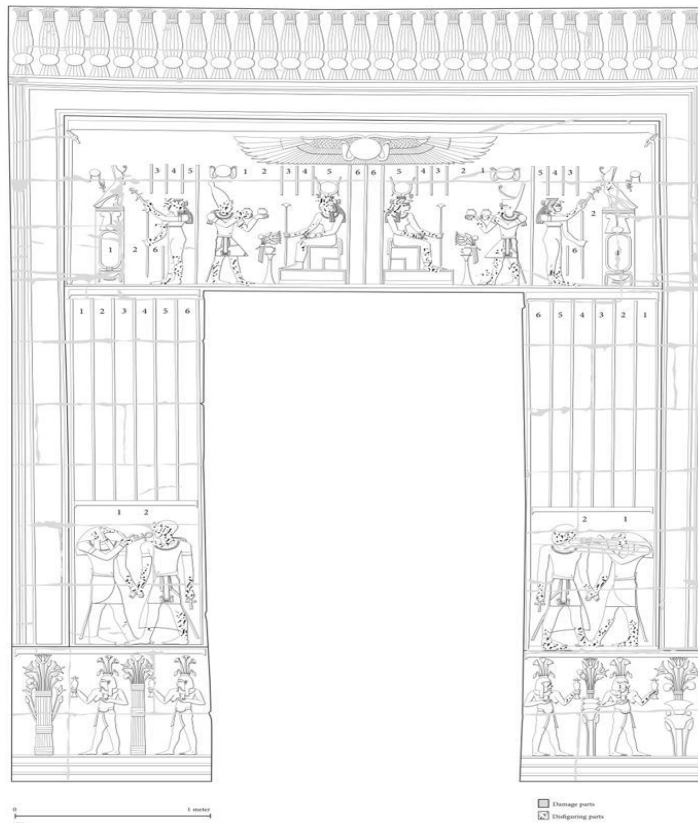
As for the necklaces, the inscriptions of the Old Kingdom were devoid of necklaces or bracelets, and since the Middle Kingdom, they began to be depicted with simple necklaces³⁶, and then they began to be depicted with many necklaces, and bracelets appeared in the period of the New Kingdom, and this continued until the Greco-Roman period .

the *hs* vessel :

The importance of the offering of *hs* vessels is that it carries the water of life that was brought from the main source of life (the deity Nun, the master of the eternal waters), as this life will help prepare life and permanent youth for those who drink it. Therefore, we find the offering bowl in the form of which means the cold, refreshing water that was brought from the waterfall, where the flood flows with its water, carrying with it the element of life³⁷. The crown of the south and the north, as well as the papyrus and lotus flowers, symbolize the bounties of the two countries.

³⁶ Lacou & Chevrier , *un chapelle de seastories I* " à karnak " IFAO , LE Caire , 1956, pl, II.

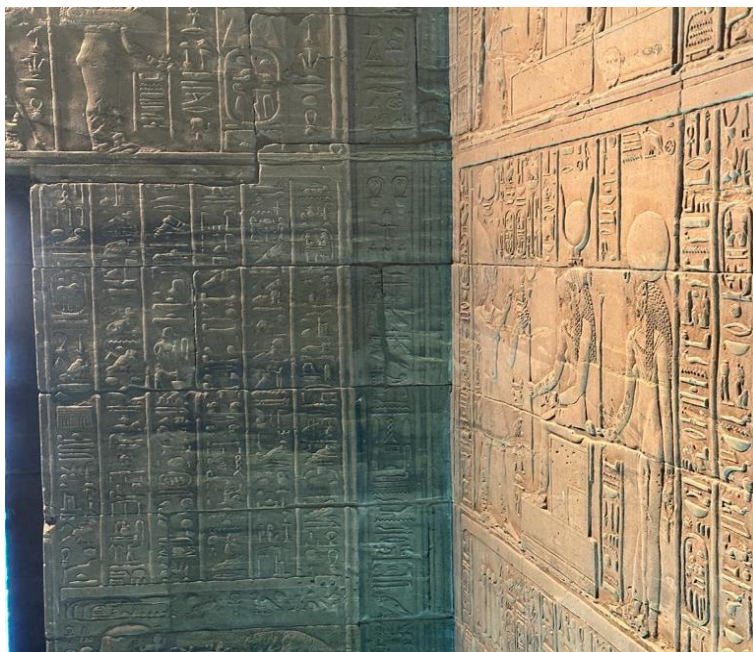
³⁷ Emara , M., The God Hapi in The Ancient Egyptian Religion , unpublished master thesis , cairo university , fayuom, 2004 , p. ١٢٥.



(Fig 1) A new General facsimile for the gate of the sanctuary illustrating the friezes By the researcher



(Fig 2) A photo for the inscription line –“ bandeau “ (right side)
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023



(Fig 3) A photo for the inscription line –“ bandeau “ (right side)
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023



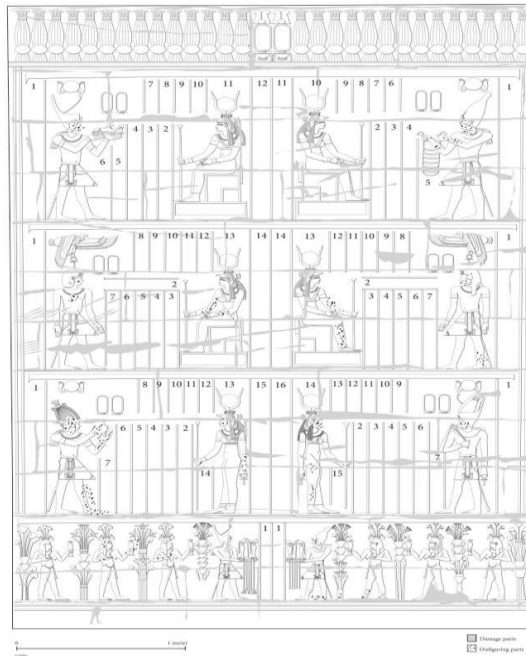
(Fig4) A photo for the inscription line –“ bandeau “ (right side)
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023



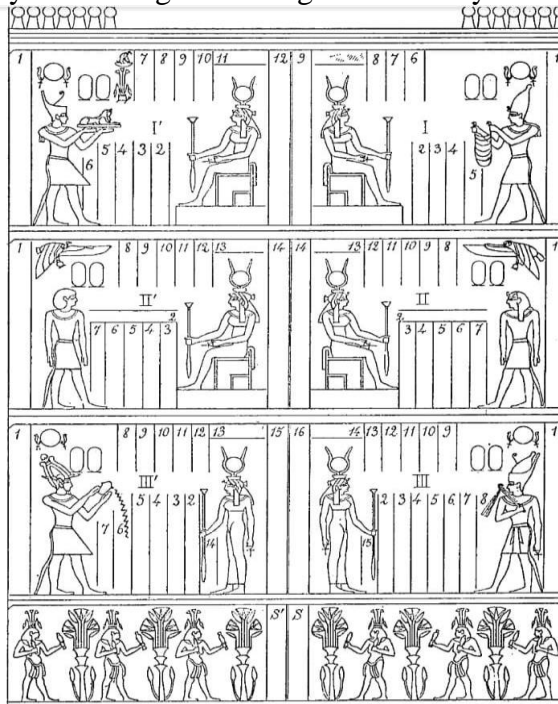
(Fig 5) A photo for the inscription line –“ bandeau “ (left side)
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023



(Fig 6) A photo for the inscription line –“ bandeau “ (right side)
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023



(Fig 7) Anew General facsimile for the northern wall of the sanctuary illustrating the ending of friezes By the researcher



(Fig 8) G. Bénédite, le temple de Philae, (pl.)xxII



(Fig 9) A photo for the kheker frieze which ending in the middle of the northern wall with the two cartouche of the king Ptolemy II,
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023



(Fig 10) A photo for the inscription in the middle of the northern wall where the *h̄pi* soubassement, Taken by the researcher 21-1-2023



(Fig 11) A photo for the lower part “soubassement “(left side)
Taken by the researcher 21- 1 -2023

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