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Gloria Rosati

JOINING POPYRI: THE BOOK OF THE DEAD FRAGMENTS AT CORTONA

The Museum of the Accademia Etrusca at Cortona (Arezzo) houses an interesting collection of Egyptian antiquities.¹ Very few objects (about 30) were already gathered in the 18th century, and among them (shabtis, small bronzes, a well preserved hearth scarab of the Dynasty 26) I would point out for attention a small statue of a man offering a statue of the Thot baboon, dating from the reign of Amenhotep III.² The greater part, however, was acquired as a gift from one of the notables of Cortona in the 19th century, the Archbishop of Pelusium Guido Corbelli, Apostolic Delegate for Arabia and Egypt. With his See at Alexandria between 1891 and 1896, he was able to collect more than four hundred objects, part of them on the advice of an expert, Ernesto Schiaparelli, who was then in Egypt on behalf of the Egyptian Museum of Florence before he became Director of the Turin Museum in 1894. Archbishop Corbelli could allot to the Cortona Museum a coffin of the Deir El Bahari second cachette, the 17th lot in Daressy's report,³ and other coffins and mummies, statues, shabtis, stelae, items ranging from the Predynastic period to the Roman period and later, so that the Cortona collection, assembled with educational purposes and a view to a comprehensive illustration of the Egyptian civilization, can be described as the largest among the small collections in Italy. Every dispatch from Egypt, with the sole exception of the first one, is documented in the archive, and each list of objects (at least the extant ones, of course) was clearly drawn up by experts. The list of the 1894 dispatch is an important one, because it is an official document recorded at the Alexandria Museum and signed by Giuseppe Botti 'the first' or 'senior', the first Director of the Graeco-Roman Museum,⁴ on behalf of Jacques de Morgan, who was then Director of the Service des Antiquités. The other lists are not signed.

¹ Description of the collection by G. BOTTI, *Le antichità egiziane del Museo dell'Accademia di Cortona ordinate e descritte* (Firenze, 1955). History of the collection and records: M.C. GUIDOTTI and G. ROSATI, Il materiale egizio del Museo dell'Accademia Etrusca di Cortona. La ricerca d'archivio in *Annuario dell'Accademia Etrusca di Cortona* 22 (1985–86), 73–79. New edition of some items: M.C. GUIDOTTI, 'Preistoria, Antico e Medio Regno nella collezione egizia dell'Accademia Etrusca di Cortona' in *Annuario dell'Accademia Etrusca di Cortona* 26 (1993–94), 63–72; G. ROSATI, 'Bolli d'anfora greci e romani nella collezione egizia di Cortona' in *Annuario dell'Accademia Etrusca di Cortona* 28 (1997–98), 233–245.

² Already pointed out by E. SCHIAPARELLI, 'Le antichità egiziane del Museo di Cortona' in *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 7 (1893), 317–338; BOTTI, *Antichità*, 63 nr. 23, tav. VII; J. VANDIER, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne* III, (Paris, 1958) 465.

³ G. DARESSY, 'Les cercueils des prêtres d'Ammon. Deuxième trouvaille de Deir el Bahari' in *ASAE* 8 (1907), 21.

⁴ W.R. DAWSON and E.C. UPHILL, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 3rd rev. ed. by M.L. BIERBRIER (London, 1995), 57; S. Curto, 'Giuseppe Botti 'primo': la vita e gli scritti' in *SEAP* 13 (1994), 71–80. By chance, the 'second' Giuseppe Botti is the author of the Cortona catalogue.

I wish to remind us now that in 1895 Mons. Corbelli decided to send cases filled with antiquities to two recipients: one was the Cortona Museum, the other the Academy named after the Latin poet Propertius in Assisi (where the Archbishop had his first cell as a friar).⁵ We are not able to distinguish now, however, which and how many objects he had decided to send there in the beginning, because the Egyptian workers filled the case addressed to Assisi... at random (!) through an oversight.

Among many kinds of antiquities, Archbishop Corbelli was particularly fond of papyri, which he considered the leading pieces in a collection. 'Fragments of papyri' were recorded in the accompanying note of the dispatch which arrived at the Museum of Cortona in 1895, and they must be, by exclusion, the hieratic Book of the Dead fragments nr. 3186 and nr. 3187.

Nr. 3186,⁶ whose photograph has never been published before, is a nearly square fragment (19×17 cm); its layout is similar to Style 2, according to the classification of Late Period papyri by Malcom Mosher Jr.,⁷ but the typical feature of Style 2, that a spell terminated in its column, cannot be assured in this case. The extant columns, written with a hieratic hand using different sign-sizes and spacings, depending on the length of each text, keep a series of transformation spells: the vignette of BD 83 and its text (spell to be transformed into a phoenix), after the concluding lines of BD 82 (to change into a lotus flower); a large part of BD 85 (to change into a *ba*), which could continue in the following column, now lost; a few words of BD 86 (to change into a swallow), then vignette and text of BD 87 (to be transformed into a *Sata*-snake).

The name of the owner is clear: the woman Ipetweret,⁸ daughter of Shesemtet,⁹ a rare or even unique female name. In such cases, it is easier to look for possible other fragments scattered around the world through the resources of the rich Archive of the only institution specifically devoted to research on the Book of the Dead (mostly on papyri and mummy bandages) and to reassembling scattered fragments, that is the Totenbuch-Projekt of the University of Bonn.¹⁰ Directed at the beginning (1994) by Ursula Rössler-Köhler and Heinz-Josef Thissen, the team comprises researchers and partners and many important results. For the present subject, I wish to remember the contributions by Irmtraut Munro and Ursula Verhoeven.

As soon as I sent the pictures of these fragments there, I found such small pieces settled into international puzzles: the Book of the Dead papyrus of Ipetweret counts now twenty-one chapters. A major contribution to the scroll is in Moscow, in the Pushkin Museum. Other fragments are in Cairo and two are in the Buffalo Museum of Natural History.¹¹

No less interesting is the smallest fragment in the collection, nr. 3187¹² (27,3 cm long, maximum height 8,8 cm). It has however two vignettes with bright colours, that is: the figure

⁵ G. ROSATI, 'Antichità Egizie ad Assisi — I' in *OrAnt* 24 (1985), 55–65; G. ROSATI, 'Antichità egizie ad Assisi — II' in *OrAnt* 25 (1986), 59–67; G. ROSATI, 'Antichità egizie' in M. MATTEINI CHIARI (ed.), *Catalogo Regionale dei Beni Culturali dell'Umbria. Raccolte Comunali di Assisi. Materiali Archeologici. Cultura materiale, antichità egizie* (Perugia, 2002), 221–239.

⁶ BOTTI, *Antichità*, 50, nr. 186.

⁷ M. MOSHER JR., 'Theban and Memphite Book of the Dead Traditions in the Late Period' in *JARCE* 29 (1992), 149–150.

⁸ H. RANKE, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* (Glückstadt 1935–1949), I, 22 (8).

⁹ Absent in RANKE, *PN*; BOTTI, *Antichità*, 50, read Chontit.

¹⁰ <<http://www.totenbuch-projekt.uni-bonn.de/>>, accessed on 20.03.2011.

¹¹ I. MUNRO, 'From Nine to One: Scattered Manuscripts Rejoined' in B. BACKES, I. MUNRO, S. STÖHR (Hrsg.) *Totenbuch-Forschungen. Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums, Bonn 25.–29. September 2005* (SAT 11, Wiesbaden, 2006), 237–238: pCortona 3186 belongs to pMoscow I, 1b, 104; pBuffalo C 5186 and C 12661; pCairo S.R. IV 940.

¹² BOTTI, *Antichità*, 49 nr. 187.

of Imseti belonging to chapter 148, about 4–5 lines of the same chapter, the fragmentary title (in red ink) and first vignette of chapter 149, with the peculiar picture of a daemon with a ‘head’ consisting of four snakes. So, few words, but for the second time among them the name of the owner, the ‘God’s Father of Amon-Ra King of the Gods Djed-khy’, a shortened form for Djed-Khonsu-iufankh.¹³ This time the owner is not only well-known, as belonging to the Besenmut family and member of the Theban clergy as a prophet of Amon and of Montu, he is moreover definitely datable to the Dynasty 26, middle and second half of the 6th century BC.¹⁴ His papyrus, at least 10 m long, is shattered in thousands of fragments, most of them in the Cairo Museum with different inventory numbers, then some in Budapest, Uppsala and Heidelberg, and finally another one in Moscow.¹⁵ In the Cairo Museum and other collections, they have been mixed with fragments of similar papyri belonging to members of the same family, a proof of their original closeness, not only in time, and of similar histories. A further confirmation is found in the composition of Archbishop Corbelli’s dispatch of the year 1895: the little collection now housed in the Civic Library of Assisi, 24 objects at all, includes two fragments of Book of the Dead papyri. Nobody knows whether they arrived there according to, or against the donor’s will, because of that incident during the packing operations. However in the same dispatch, though eventually inside different cases, the fragment of Djed-khy (Cortona nr. 3187) and the fragment of the Book of the Dead of his wife, Ta-sheret-Aset (Assisi nr. 351, old number 24a) were sent. This last fragment deserves at least a mention because the virtual reassembly of the (at minimum) 16 m long papyrus has been a major success of the Totenbuch-Projekt, thanks to the research of U. Verhoeven¹⁶ and I. Munro.¹⁷ The owner has long remained unknown because the name is written only in the first chapters at the beginning of the scroll, in fragments kept in the Cairo Museum. Other important fragments are in the Heidelberg Portheim Stiftung and the University Collection, the New York University, and the Bible Lands Museum at Jerusalem, whose fragment joins perfectly with the one at Assisi.¹⁸ Thanks to so many records, we are now able to suggest that it is very probably the same scribe who wrote the Book of the Dead of the son of Djed-khy and Ta-sheret-Aset, Irti-rw-tjaw. Fragments of his papyrus were found in April 1964 by the Polish mission working at the reconstruction of the temple of Hatshepsut, among the debris covering the area of the temple of Thutmose III at Deir el Bahari.¹⁹ A few months earlier they had found the intact wooden coffin of the same owner, overseer of the priests of Min, of

¹³ RANKE, *PVI* 412 (1) and 412 (4).

¹⁴ I. MUNRO, ‘Die Entwirrung eines ‘Papyrus-Knäuels’ im Museum Kairo — Rekonstruktion zweier Totenbuch-Papyri der 26. Dynastie’ in M. EL-DAMATY and M. TRAD (eds.), *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World. Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo* (Cairo, 2002), II, 836, n. 16; G. VITTMANN, *Priester und Beamte im Theben der Spätzeit (Beiträge zur Ägyptologie 1, Wien, 1978)*, 24–27; M.L. BIERBRIER, *The Late New Kingdom in Egypt* (Warminster, 1975), 92; M.L. BIERBRIER, Review of G. VITTMANN, *Priester und Beamte in Theben der Spätzeit in BiOr* 36 (1979), 310, table.

¹⁵ pCairo S.R. IV 615, 692, 938, 939, 996; pBudapest B460 (now Uppsala), pBudapest Inv. Nr. OSZK

Cod. Afr. 2a; pHeidelberg von Portheim-Stiftung (B); pMoscow I, 1b, 152. Cfr. finally I. MUNRO, *Die Totenbuch-Papyri des Ehepaars Ta-scheret-en-Aset und Djed-chi aus der Bes-en-Mut-Familie (26. Dynastie, Zeit des Königs Amasis)* (HAT 12, Wiesbaden 2011).

¹⁶ U. VERHOEVEN, ‘Internationales Totenbuch-Puzzle’ in *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 224–225.

¹⁷ MUNRO in EL-DAMATY and TRAD, *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World*, 831–834.

¹⁸ See previous notes; pAssisi 351 (ex 20a): ROSATI in *OrAnt* 25, tav. 1; pJerusalem Bible Lands Museum H 376: VERHOEVEN in *RdÉ* 49, pl. 27.

¹⁹ E. DĄBROWSKA-SMEKTAŁA, ‘Fragment of Hieratic Papyrus of *IR.TY-RW-T3W*’ in *BIFAO* 66 (1968), 183–189.

Wepwawet and of Horus of Aphroditopolis. The sure provenance of these fragments is of course very important for the whole group of papyri.

Let's turn to the main topic, to Cortona. The small fragments of the collection, however nearly unknown or unnoticed, could find their collocation quite easily, thanks to the Book of the Dead Project. Two more fragments are kept in the collection (not to speak of another large fragment of a papyrus with an Amduat text, which is not considered here), but they are still unique pieces, and less easy to describe, assess and label.

Nr. 3185 and 3184 (together with the Amduat papyrus I have just mentioned) were sent to Cortona in a very simple manner, by post, on Good Friday of the year 1896. The first of them, which is shown here for the first time, is a very tall, nearly rectangular fragment with 44,6 cm as its maximum height, and around 19,5 cm as its width.

One is immediately struck by the peculiar layout of texts and figures: a large figure is in the lower part and the four Horus' sons are outlined with black ink, with their captions (but from the traces there must have been an exchange between Hapi and Duamutef). The middle part is written, on columns apparently painted white, now faded. Giuseppe Botti 'the second'²⁰ strangely did not identify there, from the fourth column on, the text of chapter 72 of the Book of the Dead (without its title, the chapter of coming forth by day), though with some omissions, and he misunderstood the name of the owner, which is not written within this text but is probably kept in the first column on the right, where one can read *Wsir T3*..[...], a female name, one may say at least. Luckily the list enclosed in the postal parcel describes this fragment as the papyrus of Ta-si-bast,²¹ and we may infer that a piece of the column is now faded and even lost and accept this integration. The text in the first three columns is not yet identified.

Above, another figure and short columns with hieroglyphs, which are not easy to understand. The vignette shows, on the left, two Horus' sons (Hapi and Qebhsenuf), and the Solar Boat.

The Horus' sons below are depicted as in the vignette of chapter 148; they are present also in ch. 27 and 124. The Solar Boat is often represented in the Book of the Dead, for instance in ch. 17; on the contrary it is not usually related to ch. 72, neither are the Horus' sons.

So this is clearly not a standard, usual Book of the Dead; we could describe it better as a funerary papyrus with at least one Book of the Dead text, but I am not able to indicate a parallel or a comparison to it. Giuseppe Botti in 1955 thought it could date from the Dynasty 22, but I would prefer a later dating: I wish to point out the writing of *hk3w*, 'magic',²² with the *ph* — sign on a standard, which is very common during the Ptolemaic period, and the realistic drawing of some signs together with very cursive ones.

The largest — though not the best — fragment in the collection is nr. 3184, 81 cm long and 18,5 cm high.²³ It looks nearly complete above and on the left side, while it is broken on the right and below, but the lost part here should be not great. We may infer that we have the beginning of the papyrus on the left side, as the vignette above the hieratic text (running right-to-left) is in fact related to one of the last scenes of the standard funeral sequence that opens the Late Period papyri:²⁴ purification of the upright mummy, held up by the god Anubis.

²⁰ Botti, *Antichità*, 49-50 nr. 185.

²¹ Prob. *T3-s3t-B3stt*, though absent in RANKE, *PN*.

²² Wb III 175-176.

²³ BOTTI, *Antichità*, 50-51, nr. 184, tav. III.

²⁴ M. MOSHER JR., *The Papyrus of Hor (BM EA 10479) with Papyrus MacGregor: The Late Period Tradition in Akhmim* (London, 2001), 14 n. 74.

At the end, the hawk-headed Solar God, which is usually the closing figure in the sequence. The text underneath is appropriate, as it is a solar hymn, properly an evening hymn and a very famous one, numbered ch. 15 B3.²⁵ The next right is the classic scene of ch. 125, the judgement in front of Osiris. Undoubtly, it is a free-hand drawing. However, it is complete: developed left-to-right, outlined in black ink, between two columns and a cavetto-corniche above, containing the row of gods, who are indeed 42. Left, the goddess Maat supports the owner, with his arms upraised in the exulting attitude which has been described and classified by Christine Seeber.²⁶ The gods Horus and Anubis stand under a peculiar balance without its stand; a *atef*-crowned Thot writes on his tablet. A great figure of the Devourer with red tongue, the only touch of colour; then the four Horus' sons, and at the end Osiris in his throne. The captions are written in hieroglyphs, but it is not at all easy to understand their correct reading and meaning when they show shortening strokes or signs mixed with hieratic forms.²⁷ Though they may be orderly-looking, on the contrary, they show a somewhat disordered arrangement. Nonetheless, they hand down the name of the owner: *P3-di-Mnw* (Peteminis in Greek),²⁸ without any title,²⁹ son of the woman *T3-šryt-Qrw* (probably),³⁰ who for the moment are not otherwise known.

Such peculiar hieroglyphic inscriptions are to be considered evidence of the decline of this writing,³¹ but at the same time evidence of the existence and of the conservation of the classic models. Giuseppe Botti's dating of this papyrus to the 2nd century AD could even be worth considering, if it hadn't been ascertained that the latest Book of the Dead papyri can be ascribed to the late Ptolemaic period.³² Is this papyrus, however, a true Book of the Dead? Actually, it is different from the previous fragment. So, it cannot be classified vaguely as a funerary papyrus because it hands down rather correctly typical and important vignettes and texts from the Book of the Dead, and it is evidence of good preserved models. For this reason, I would prefer a dating to the late Ptolemaic period, and that is what I will suggest to keep in the Book of the Dead Project's files. I am happy to support this institution at least as a 'follower' and to be able to remember its work here. I hope it will be evident from my words and my paper that any research in this field can take advantage of a great resource: cooperation.

²⁵ On ch. 15 cfr. B. BACKES, ET AL., *Bibliographie zum altägyptischen Totenbuch, 2. erweiterte Auflage* (SAT 13, Wiesbaden, 2009), 116–119; J. ASSMANN, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott. Untersuchungen zur altägyptischen Hymnik* (MÄS 19, Berlin, 1969); T.G. ALLEN, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day* (SAOC 37, Chicago, 1974), 15 (h), 22–23.

²⁶ C. SEEBER, *Untersuchungen zur Datierung des Totengerichts im alten Ägypten* (MÄS 35, Berlin, 1976), 230, nr. 4: classed E I/a/1.

²⁷ A note on these captions by F. CREVATIN, 'La senescenza della scrittura geroglifica egiziana in un papiro di Cortona (Pap. Cortona 184)' in P.G. BORBONE, A. MENGOSZI and M. TOSCO (eds.), *Loquentes linguis. Studi linguistici e orientali in onore di Fabrizio A. Pennacchetti* (Wiesbaden, 2007), 201–208.

²⁸ RANKE, *PNI* 123 (18).

²⁹ Botti misunderstood a few signs and read, incorrectly, a title 'prophet of Ra'.

³⁰ RANKE, *PNI* 370 (1); cfr. J.K. WINNICKI, 'Pkalasiris, ein fremder Gott im römischen Ägypten und die Personennamen auf kal-' in *JJP* 23 (1993), 169–180.

³¹ Though they are not comparable at all with the pseudo-hieroglyphic inscriptions brought to attention by Sternberg — H. EL HOTABI, 'Der Untergang der Hieroglyphenschrift. Schriftverfall und Schrifttod im Ägypten der griechisch-römischen Zeit' in *CdÉ* 69 (1994), 218–248.

³² E.g. S. Quirke, 'The Last Books of the Dead?' in W.V. DAVIES (ed.), *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities. A Tribute to T.G.H. James* (BM Occasional Paper 123). London, 1999, 83–99.



Figure 1. pCortona 3186, owner: Ipetweret
(© Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana, Firenze)

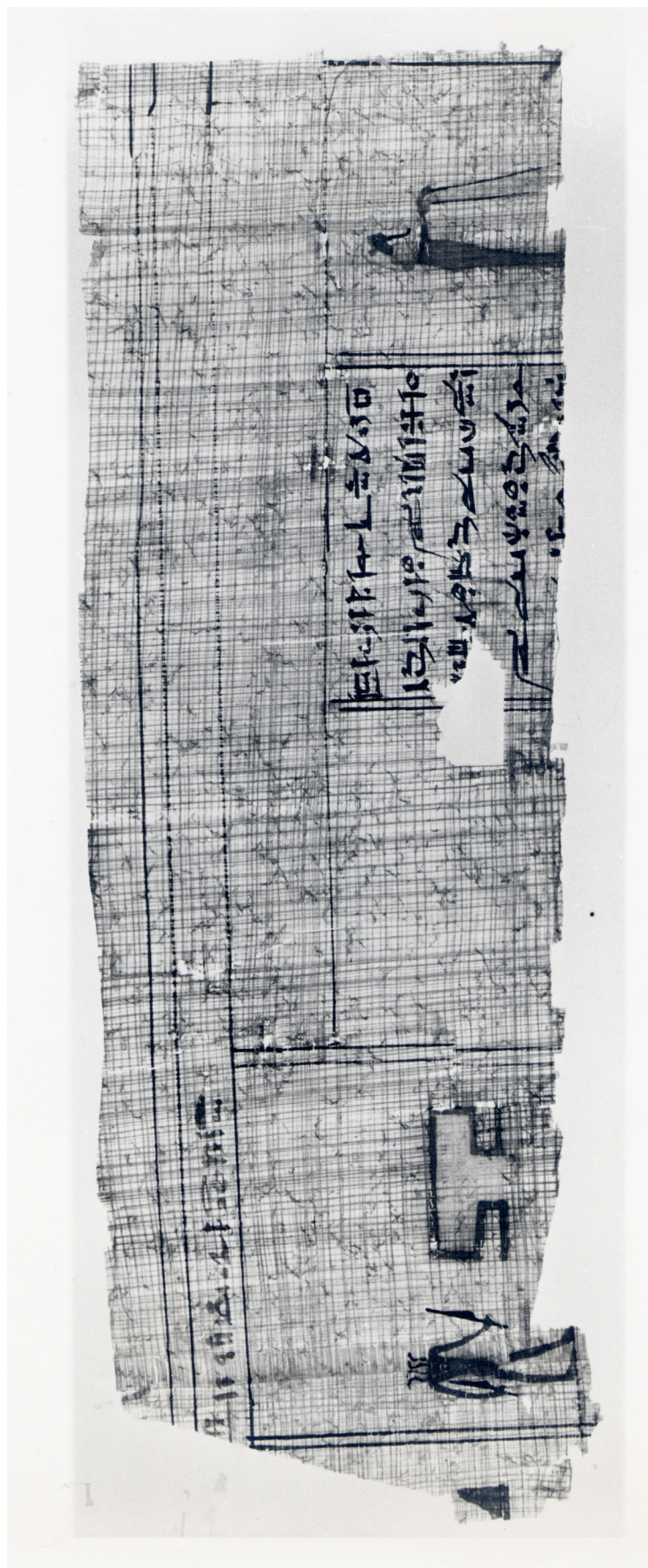


Figure 2. pCortona 3187, owner: Djed-khy (© Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana, Firenze)

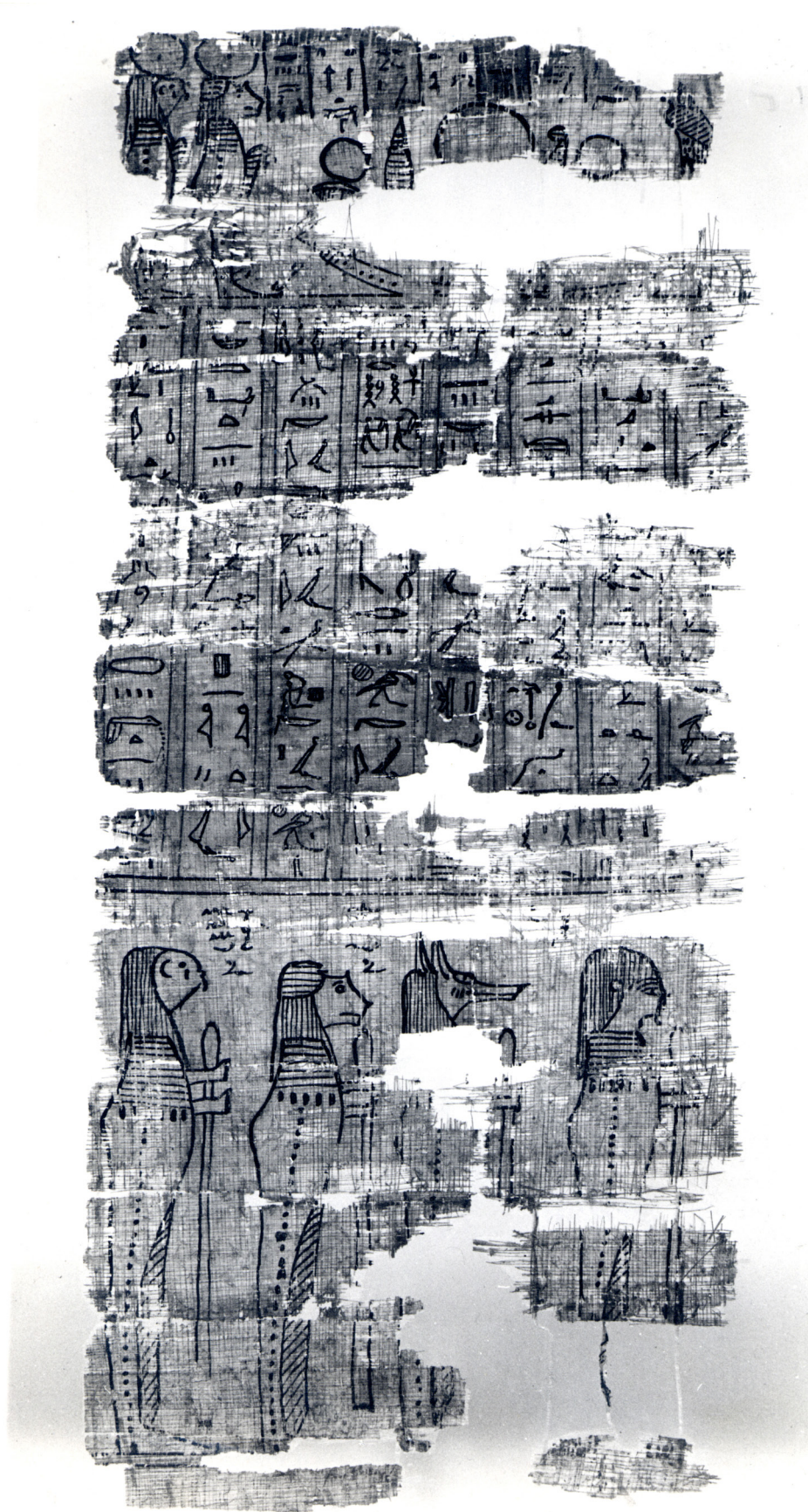


Figure 3. pCortona 3185, owner: Ta... (© Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana, Firenze)



Figure 4. pCortona 3184, owner: Pa-di-Min (© Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana, Firenze)