

# News & Notes

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# “WHERE A SHATTERED VISAGE LIES” DIGITAL RESTORATION OF ORIENTAL INSTITUTE BOOKS OF THE DEAD

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With the words “where a shattered visage lies,” the poet Percy Shelley evoked an image of the broken statue of King Ozymandias, the name of Shelley’s sonnet written in 1818. Ozymandias is none other than Ramses “the Great” (a.k.a. Ramses II), whose pharaonic titulary included the throne name User-maatre, which made its way into Shelley as “Ozymandias.” Shelly’s poem was based directly on how Diodorus Siculus, a first-century Roman historian, described the Ramesseum, the mortuary temple of Ramses II, even providing a translation of its inscription: “King of Kings am I, Osymandyas. If anyone would know how great I am and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works” (trans. C. H. Oldfather, Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, books 1–2.34, Loeb Classical Library 279, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933, p. 169). While Diodorus described a monument without “a single crack or blemish,” Shelley’s words rather unfortunately provide a more apt description for the often fragmentary state of many cultural-heritage remains from the ancient world. These shattered visages and disjointed lives result from both natural decay and millennia of interest in these objects, from ancient Egyptians pillaging tombs of their own ancestors for precious materials to European antiquities dealers seeking fortune in the nineteenth century and beyond. Like those who came before us, we all make various claims on the past—what it means and what it represents. One of the goals of modern scholarship is to piece this past back together, uncover the provenance that links objects back to the cultural context of their invention, and collaborate with all stakeholders to determine how the meaning of these objects is interpreted in today’s world.

One way to accomplish this goal is to disseminate information about objects in museum collections and information about how those objects were acquired. The Oriental Institute provides an exemplary vehicle for such dissemination in its special exhibits program and the accompanying publication series, Oriental Institute Museum Publications. In curating the special exhibit on the Book of the Dead (October 3, 2017, through March 31, 2018) and editing its associated catalog, we attempted to include as many objects as possible from the museum’s collection that had been previously unpublished or had received relatively little scholarly attention. With the help of colleagues such as Bryan Kraemer and Tamás Mekis, we were able to raise awareness of important new pieces, including the beginning of Papyrus Ryerson, now in the Spokane Public Library, as well as the hypocephalus (a round document inscribed with religious texts often placed on the head of the mummy) of Nesshutefnut (now in the Cairo Museum), the original owner for whom Papyrus Ryerson was made. However, subsequent interest in objects from this exhibit proved stunning. Within months of its publication, researchers around the world were able to make new joins among artifacts in their collections and objects in the Oriental Institute Museum. With new technologies, these objects can often be digitally restored, an exciting and rewarding aspect of the research and publication process that allows scholars to more accurately reconstruct both the objects and their collecting history. This issue of *News & Notes* provides a wonderful venue to highlight the work of several scholars from around the globe who have made new connections to the Oriental Institute’s “Books of the Dead.”



Left: A toppled colossal statue of Ramses II at the Ramesseum, the site of the Ozymandias described by Percy Shelley and Diodorus Siculus (Photo: Foy Scalf).

Opposite, top: The funerary set of Petemenekh with inscribed mummy bandages still in place (Photo: Foy Scalf).

Opposite, bottom: Charles Edward Moldenke (1860–1935), from *The New York Obelisk* (Lancaster: The Lancaster Press, 1935), frontispiece.



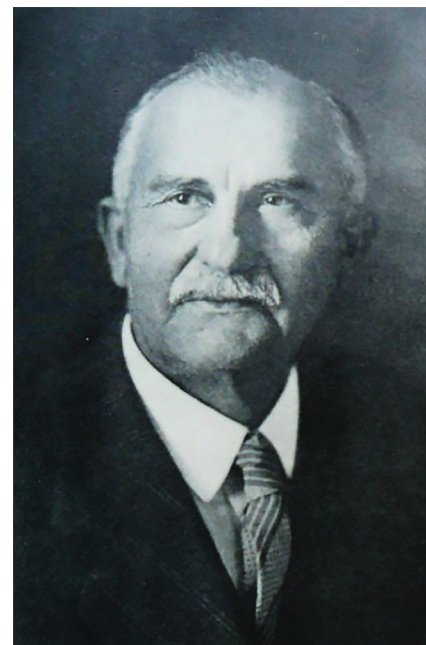
## THE MUMMY BANDAGES OF TJAIHORPATA

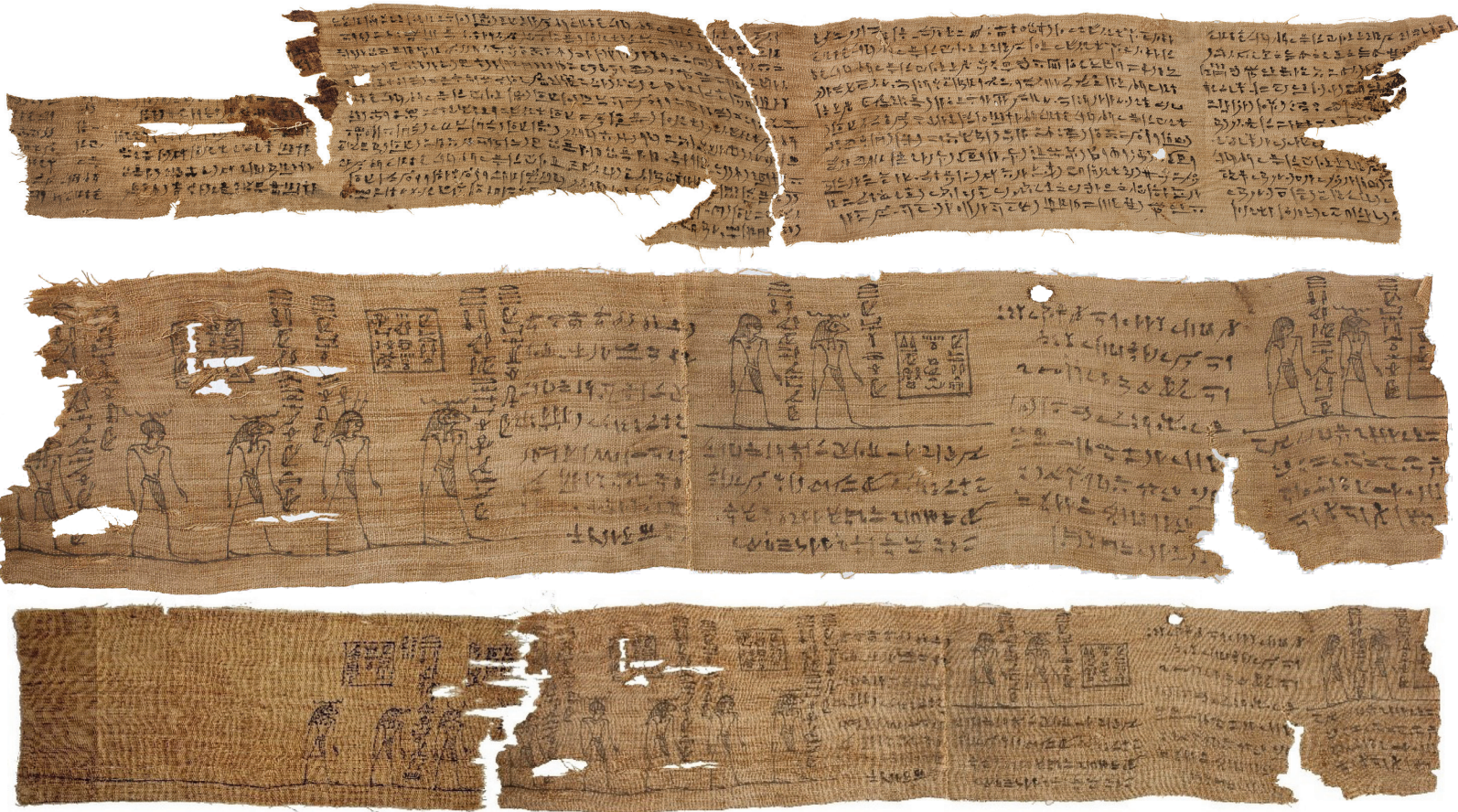
As discussed extensively in *Book of the Dead: Becoming God in Ancient Egypt*, Egyptian funerary literature was remarkably diverse, and the Book of the Dead itself wasn't really a single composition, but rather a collection of many shorter spells gathered together. Ancient Egyptians adorned many surfaces with extensive copies of these texts, the decoration of which was well complemented by the image-based hieroglyphic script. Such decoration was even found on the linen bandages used to wrap the mummy itself, a ritual practice particularly common after the fifth century BCE. Long, thin strips of linen, often of great length (up to 45 m!), were inscribed with spells and wrapped around the mummy. How these would have looked during the mortuary preparations can be seen among the funerary assemblage of Padimenekh, son of Nesmin, in the St. Louis Art Museum today, where the edges of the inscribed bandages are visible under the black resin poured over the body.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of similar linen bandages are no longer attached to their mummies, and thousands of fragments are scattered across collections throughout the world. The Oriental Institute now houses a collection of fourteen linen bandage fragments that were donated by Harold Norman Moldenke, who had received them from his father Charles Edward Moldenke after the latter's death in January 1935. Three of these fragments, registered as E19438A–B and E19439, belonged to a man named Tjaihorpata, whose mother was named Taneferether; one of them (E19439) appeared in the Book of the Dead exhibit catalog. Pieces of Tjaihorpata's mummy bandages are today scattered among at least nine institutions, four in the US and five in Europe. It is clear that Tjaihorpata's bandages were torn apart; the edges between individual pieces are jagged and frayed, without the clean cuts produced by a sharp knife or scissors. The tears were made without regard to the text, often bisecting columns of the hieratic

and cursive hieroglyphic writing. This is true even of the previously unpublished two pieces (E19438A–B) in the Oriental Institute, which clearly once belonged together. When and how the bandages were dismembered is uncertain. They could have been torn apart in antiquity by tomb robbers looking for valuables; it is also possible that they were ripped up by looters or antiquities dealers to make higher profits by turning a single marketable product into several. There are many other possibilities, and at this point it is impossible to say for certain.

Holger Kockelmann had brought together information about the various fragments of Tjaihorpata's bandages in 2008. However, the publication of the Oriental Institute fragment proved important for Dr. Lucía Díaz-Iglesias Llanos, for she was able to determine that the left edge of E19439 once joined the right edge of a linen fragment in the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid, Spain. As her digital reconstruction shows, the fragment in Madrid had once directly joined the fragment now in Chicago. Dr. Díaz-Iglesias Llanos has noted that among the many linen fragments once belonging to Tjaihorpata, a fair number of spells are missing, suggesting that more fragments may await discovery and integration into a complete digital reconstruction of Tjaihorpata's mummy bandages. The collection history of these fragments is extremely complicated and murky, but it is possible that archival research into the various collectors may one day provide the key for determining a common origin for how they entered the global antiquities markets.





## THE SARCOPHAGUS OF IBI

Like the bandages of Tjaihorpata, the sarcophagus of Ibi was broken into many pieces at some point in the past. Ibi lived a few hundred years before Tjaihorpata, in a time called the Saite Period, named after a dynasty of Pharaohs from the city of Sais (otherwise known as Dynasty Twenty-six). Ibi was a very important official who worked as, among other things, an overseer of Upper Egypt and a high-ranking administrative figure collaborating with the divine adoratrice Nitocris in the reign of Psammetichus I (ca. 664–610 BCE). Ibi had inner and outer stone sarcophagi, the former of quartzite and the latter of basalt, which were demolished and broken into hundreds of small fragments. Only the lid to the inner sarcophagus remains intact, now on display in the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy, after it had been “discovered” and taken away by Bernardino Drovetti in 1823. Fragments from these two sarcophagi remained in Ibi’s tomb (Theban Tomb 36) in the necropolis on the west bank of Thebes when they were excavated in 1989 and are now being studied by Mareike Wagner for the German Archaeological Institute. However, a fragment from the shoulder of the base of the inner sarcophagus somehow made its way in antiquity to the Ramesseum, where it was discovered in 1895–96 by an archaeological mission sponsored by the Egypt Exploration Society. The Oriental Institute helped to partially fund this mission through “subscription” payments in return for a share of the finds. Thereby, Ibi’s sarcophagus fragment was shipped to Chicago in 1896.

Although the first assessments of this object misidentified it—our accession records refer to it as a “fragment of a Ptolemaic sarcophagus” and the first published account attributed it to

Dynasty Twenty-two—the hieroglyphic inscription on the OI fragment, despite missing the lower edge, makes it clear that it belonged to Ibi because of the presence of his titles and the beginning of his name.

Thanks to the work of Dr. Wagner, the missing text from this inscription can be restored by digitally “joining” the shoulder fragment in Chicago with the lower fragment of Ibi’s inner coffin that remained in his tomb. The Oriental Institute piece joins directly to one of two large fragments of the sarcophagus that remained in the tomb and are in the course of publication by Dr. Wagner. By joining the fragments together, we can now see the full writing of Ibi’s name (𓂏𓂏𓂏) as well as the details of the two underworld goddesses, one with a serpent over her shoulder and the other with a gazelle, situated to help guide the deceased’s journey along the solar path through the underworld. The inscription to the right names the goddesses Nephthys as the reciter, and it is the tip of Nephthys’s wings that can be seen on the upper-right corner of the fragment. Nephthys was depicted on the head end of Ibi’s sarcophagus with her wings spread out around his head. These texts are not, technically speaking, Book of the Dead spells, but belong to associated compositions that scholars collectively call the “underworld books.”

Top to bottom: Two linen bandage fragments in the Oriental Institute (E19438A-B) that once belonged together as part of Tjaihorpata’s set (D. 19917 and D. 19919) digitally joined by Foy Scalf). A fragment of a linen bandage (E19439) of Tjaihorpata (D. 19921); Photo: Kevin Bryce Lowry). The linen fragment from Madrid (MAN 2001/101/1) digitally rejoined to E19439 by Lucía Díaz-Iglesias Llanos (Photo of MAN 2001/101/1 by Miguel Ángel Navarro).

## DIGITALLY RESTORING BOOKS OF THE DEAD IN THE OI

Today more information is available about the OI's collections than ever before, including digital databases like the online collections search as well as PDF versions of publications for download. In particular, the special exhibitions program and their associated catalogs have provided a valuable forum to publicize and disseminate information about pieces in the OI Museum collections. Such value is heightened for unpublished, understudied, or fragmentary objects, whose stories require the collaboration of international scholars to piece them back together. These stories revolve around the objects themselves, but also their complicated provenance histories, compounded by the many hands that have been active in their objects' use, reuse, collection, and display. This is perhaps best exemplified here by the tomb of Ibi. Ibi was not the only person buried in his tomb; so was a man named Psammetichus, who called himself "the son of Ibi." Centuries later, in the Ptolemaic Period (305–30 BCE), the tomb was reused for a man named Horemheb. A recent scholar has even made the argument, very speculative and tenuous, that Ibi's tomb was used by mortuary workers in charge of the necropolis as not only a tomb, but as a corporate storage center for their archives over the course of the centuries from 400 to 50 BCE. Over the centuries, materials were disbursed with very little documentation about their precise origins. Despite these challenges, scholars at the OI and abroad are working diligently to put these pieces back together, illuminating the history of ancient Egypt as well as the subsequent interest and claims made on that past.

## FURTHER READING

*The research discussed in this article was kindly shared with us by their respective researchers. For further details of their ongoing work, see the following resources:*

Lucía Díaz-Iglesias Llanos. "Re-joining Scattered Pieces: A New Fragment of the Mummy Bandage of Tjaihorpata in Madrid," *Chronique d'Égypte* 93: fascicle 186: 262–80.

Mareike Wagner. "New Research in the Tomb of Ibi (TT 36)," in *Thebes in the First Millennium BC: Art and Archaeology of the Kushite Period and Beyond*, edited by Elena Pischikova, Julia Budka, and Kenneth Griffin, pp. 177–89. GHP Egyptology 27. London: Golden House Publications, 2018.

M. Wagner, with contributions by D. Polz, R. Meffre, C. Hunkeler and T. Mekis. *Das Grab des Ibi. Theben Nr. 36. Volume 2: Die beiden Sarkophage des Ibi und die Sargkammer des Psametich.* Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 131. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, forthcoming.

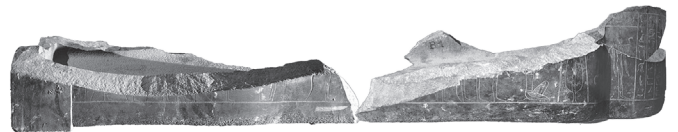
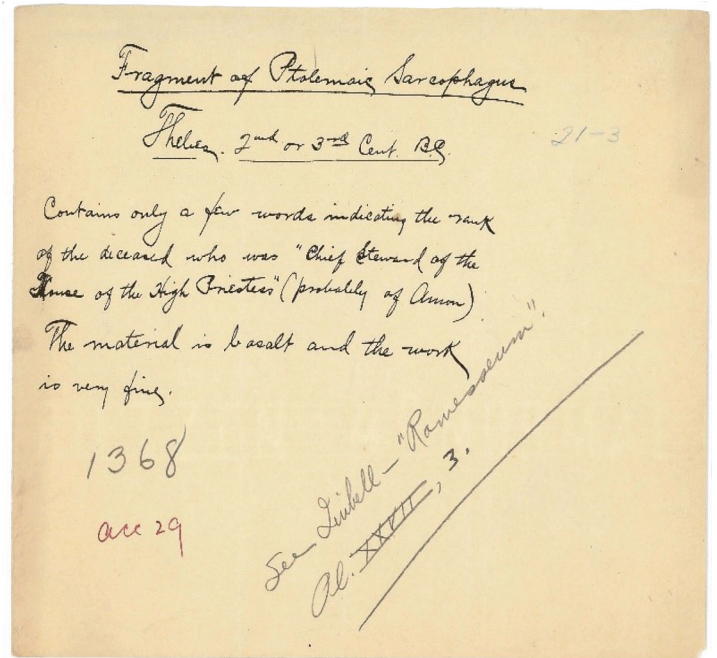
All the Oriental Institute Museum Publications volumes can be freely downloaded at [oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/oriental-institute-museum-publications-oimp](https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/oriental-institute-museum-publications-oimp).

The catalog for the Book of the Dead exhibit is available here:

Foy Scalf (ed.). *Book of the Dead: Becoming God in Ancient Egypt*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 39. Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2017. [oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/oimp/oimp-39-book-dead](https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/oimp/oimp-39-book-dead).

For more on Charles Edward Moldenke, see:

Foy Scalf and Anne Flannery. "Printing God's Words with the Devil's Infernal Machine: The Hieroglyphic Printing Font in the Oriental Institute." *Oriental Institute News & Notes* 242 (2019): 23.



Top to bottom: Notes in the OI's accessions records where the fragment of Ibi's sarcophagus was misidentified. A fragment (E1368) from the sarcophagus of Ibi (D. 18553; Photo: Kevin Bryce Lowry). Fragments of the shoulder and head of the lower trough of Ibi's sarcophagus, including E1368, digitally rejoined by Mareike Wagner (Photos: David Höpfner and Kevin Bryce Lowry). The shattered remains of Ibi's sarcophagus, including E1368, digitally rejoined by Mareike Wagner (Photos: David Höpfner and Kevin Bryce Lowry).