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MEDINET HABU GRAFFITI

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MEDINET HABU GRAFFITI
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Edited by

WILLIAM F. EDGERTON

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LIST OF PLANS AND ELEVATIONS SHOWING LOCATIONS OF GRAFFITI

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INTRODUCTION

The ancient texts and pictures reproduced in this volume were found in modern times at Medinet Habu, but possess no other kind of unity. A few of them probably originated elsewhere: Nos. 22, 25, and 26 may well have been written by workmen of Ramses III in the quarry at Gebel Silsilah, while the ultimate provenience of Nos. 103, 212, and 338 is quite unknown. Chronologically, the interval between the earliest and the latest texts in the volume is probably as great as that from the time of Christ to the present; culturally, it spans one of the sharpest breaks which have ever cut the history of any country—the collapse of Egyptian paganism and the triumph of Christianity. In language and in purport the divergencies are equally conspicuous.

The task of finding, copying, and publishing these disparate and usually inconspicuous documents was undertaken as a part of the larger work of recording all existing remains of antiquity at Medinet Habu. The present volume of facsimiles will be followed by a text volume in the "Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization" where the attempt will be made to translate all of the texts as far as that is now possible, with transliterations of the Demotic texts and with philological and historical notes.[1] Further discussion of the significance of the texts will be more appropriately printed there than here.[2]

The facsimiles were made in the presence of the originals during the three seasons 1928/29, 1931/32, and 1932/33. Nos. 1 and 2 were drawn under my direction by Mr. J. A. Chubb, and No. 6 partly by Mr. D. N. Wilber and partly by me. Nos. 395–98 are reproduced from tempera paintings made by Mr. Wilber. This last was a particularly difficult task, and no one who has not carefully compared Mr. Wilber's paintings with the originals can appreciate the patience and skill with which he has rescued even the most minute traces of these excessively obscure Coptic paintings. The remaining drawings of graffiti are entirely my own work.

Of the key plans, Figures 1–3, 4, and 7 have been adapted from U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu* I (Chicago, 1934) Plates 20, 28, and 5 respectively. Figures 5 and 8–11 and Plate 88 were drawn at Medinet Habu by Mr. R. M. Engberg and Figure 6 by Mr. H. Hanson. All of these plans and elevations are intended only to show the locations of graffiti, and not for architectural purposes.

Nos. 185–87, 214, and 402 were traced directly from the originals; the other reproductions in line and Mr. Wilber's tempera paintings were made on photographs. The great majority of the photographs were made by Mr. Henry Leichter, many by Mr. A. Q. Morrison, and some by Mr. Leslie F. Thompson. As everyone knows who has ever facsimiled difficult texts by this method, the ease and speed of drawing depend very largely on the amount of skill and of patience which the photographer has brought to his task; I owe a great debt, for this reason, to all three photographers, but especially to Mr. Leichter.

It became evident in the course of the work that large numbers of graffiti are now so fragmentary as to possess no interest whatever. The inclusion of all of these would have required many months of additional labor in the field, besides greatly increasing the cost of reproduction and printing. An effort has been made to include every doubtful case, but graffiti whose complete worthlessness seemed unquestionable have been rejected. A considerable number of texts were rejected only after they had been completely or partially facsimiled; for texts which at first glance seem fairly well preserved often prove to be, as it were, mirages, where nothing solid can actually be attained. This is especially true of texts written in ink on stone or plaster, of which there are hundreds at Medinet Habu.

While many scanty remains of graffiti have accordingly been omitted from the volume, a few ancient monuments which are not graffiti have been included. No. 338, the inscription on a small altar excavated by Professor Hölscher, might properly have appeared in Dr. Anthes's publication of the "finds"; it has been placed here instead because its language and content relate it to a large group of Demotic graffiti.[3] Nos. 1 and 2 differ from most hieroglyphic graffiti in being carefully drawn and carved, but in no other respect. Nos. 395–98, remnants of the formal decoration of a Christian chapel, are certainly not graffiti and have no very precise congeners at the site, but are related in some degree to the Coptic votive graffiti from the church which once occupied the second court of Ramses III's temple.

[1] The "enigmatic" hieroglyphic text, ~~No. 6~~, will be treated by Canon Étienne Drioton, and the Semitic texts, Nos. 406 and 408, by Dr. Raymond A. Bowman; the others by the present writer.

[2] See, meanwhile, my "Preliminary Report on the Ancient Graffiti at Medinet Habu," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* L (1933/34) 116–27.

[3] The Demotic and other ostraca from the excavation will be published separately.

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MEDINET HABU GRAFFITI

It has already been indicated that many graffiti are almost invisible. When incised, the lines are often difficult to distinguish from other intentional or accidental depressions in the stone.[4] When written with ink, the fading ink and the darkening surface of the wall have often become so nearly identical in color that long study is needed to determine the outlines. Careful wetting will often, but not always, make such texts clearer; photographic experiments with rays outside the visible spectrum have not yet produced any important results but are still being made. Some graffiti became covered with plaster in ancient times, and certain of these were only accidentally discovered through small breaks in the plaster; in such cases plaster which contained nothing of interest (as in the case of No. 43) was carefully removed so that the hidden text could be recovered, but in other cases (such as No. 341) valuable remains of later ages forbade the removal of the plaster.

The facts mentioned in the last paragraph make it clearly impossible to assert that all of the ancient graffiti existing at Medinet Habu have been discovered. Many of the persons who were employed there, both Egyptians and foreigners, gave me valuable help in the search. I am especially indebted to Mr. Henry Leichter and to two young Egyptians, Ibrahim Muhammad ʿAbd er-Rahman and ʿAli ʿAbd er-Rasul Muhammad, each of whom showed me numerous texts which I had not previously seen. I myself tried to examine every inch of existing surface on the ancient walls and roofs, going over repeatedly, on different occasions, all areas which looked at all promising. This search for materials constituted a very considerable fraction of the total labor involved in the publication. Nevertheless it is to be expected that renewed search will reveal additional texts.[5]

The co-operation of Dr. T. George Allen and his assistants Mr. and Mrs. Albert R. Hauser and Mr. Walter W. Romig and of Miss E. Stefanski has been of great value in preparing this volume for the press.

No restorations of any kind have been included in the plates; those which I am able to offer will be presented in the text volume. The exact shapes and sizes of all lacunae in the incised graffiti have been indicated with great care,[6] but lacunae in the graffiti written with ink have not been indicated at all. I offer it as my considered opinion, that the question whether a particular blank space in an Egyptian manuscript is or is not a lacuna can be answered only by philological study of the text, never by physical examination of the surface on which the text was written.[7] In studying manuscripts written on papyrus, on plaster, and on stone, I have repeatedly observed that damaged areas in the material were sometimes skipped by the scribe and sometimes written over as if they had been smooth, while on the other hand areas where the philological analysis shows that lost signs or parts of signs must once have stood are often smooth and free from any objective sign of injury.

In general, facsimiles in solid black represent originals written in ink, while facsimiles in outline only represent incised originals. Exceptions to this rule are Nos. 12, 125, 174, and 219, the originals of which are incised.

It was largely with a view to my editing these texts that Professor Breasted enabled me to take up the study of Demotic under Wilhelm Spiegelberg in the summers of 1927 and 1928. During his next visit to Luxor, in 1929, Spiegelberg read with me and criticized such facsimiles of Demotic graffiti as I had then made, a process which was very helpful to me. I owe even more to the use of the manuscript materials which he had collected for his Demotic Dictionary, which have been in my care, by his wish and through the great generosity of Mrs. Spiegelberg and her sons, since 1931; and most of all to the solid groundwork of Demotic philology which he laid. I shall not attempt here to express my obligations to Professor Breasted, since these words are to appear under his editorship.

WILLIAM F. EDGERTON

August, 1935

[4] In extreme cases an entire graffito may be so crudely made that persons unable to read it may not know whether it is a text or a mere aggregation of accidental scratches.

[5] Professor Nelson informs me that additional remains of graffiti were in fact discovered in cleaning some walls during the season 1934/35. These are apparently not well enough preserved to warrant publication.

[6] I used different conventions for this purpose at different times, but I believe the results will be clear nevertheless.

[7] Even where a space was purposely left blank by the ancient scribe with the intention of inserting a word or words later, it is always the philological evidence that is decisive; physical examination of the surface alone can never prove that the text is not continuous.

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American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures L (1933/34) 118–25 (Edgerton):	
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Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* VI (1849) 71:	
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Society of Biblical Archaeology, *Proceedings* IV (1882) 121, note 1 (Sayce, following Wiedemann)	395
Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde XLV (1908) 90 (Spiegelberg)	207

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GRAFFITO NO.	LOCATION
1	See Fig. 1
2–11	" " 7
12	" " 6
13–14	" " 7
15	" " 6
16	" " 9
17–20	" " 7
21	" " 9
22	" " 1
23–24	" " 2
25	Eastern outer wall, west face, about 16.50 m. south of the southern guardhouse
26	See Fig. 1
27	" " 2
28	" " 1
29	" " 2
30	" " 1
31–33	" " 3
34	" " 2
35–36	" " 1
37	" " 3
38	" " 2
39–40	" " 3
41–42	" " 9
43–46	" " 8
47	" " 7
48	" " 11
49–52	" " 9
53	" " 8
54	" " 9
55	" " 7
56–60	" " 9
61	" " 7
62–63	" " 9
64	" " 3
65	" " 9
66	" " 7
67	" " 9
68–69	" " 7
70	" " 2
71	" " 11
72–73	" " 2
74–78	" " 3
79	" " 11
80	" " 10
81–82	" " 11
83	" " 3
84	" " 7
85–86	" " 3
87	" " 2
88–89	" " 3
90	See Fig. 6
91	" " 1
92	" " 2
93	" " 9
94	" " 2
95	" " 6
96	" " 1
97	" " 6
98	" " 1
99	" " 6
100	" " 1
101–2	" " 6
103	Found on the ground
104–7	See Fig. 6
108–10	" " 1
111–12	" " 6
113	" " 1
114	" " 6
115–16	" " 9
117	" " 8
118–19	" " 7
120	" " 9
121	" " 7
122–66	" " 6
167	" " 5
168–87	" " 6
188–90	" " 7
191–94	" " 6
195	" " 1
196–98	" " 5
199	" " 6
200–201	" " 1
202	" " 6
203–4	" " 7
205	" " 3
206	" " 1
207	" " 7
208	" " 1
209–10	" " 6
211	" " 1
212	Found on the ground
213	See Fig. 1
214–15	" " 6
216	" " 1
217	" " 4
218–19	" " 6
220	" " 3
221	" " 6
222	" " 7
223	" " 10
224	" " 3
225	" " 7
226–27	" " 3
228–29	See Fig. 10
230–32	" " 9
233–35	" " 3
236–37	" " 7
238–39	" " 10
240–41	" " 2
242	" " 9
243–44	" " 1
245	" " 2
246	" " 10
247	" " 2
248	" " 6
249	" " 1
250	" " 2
251–52	" " 1
253–54	" " 6
255	" " 1
256–58	" " 3
259	" " 8
260–61	" " 9
262–84	" " 2
285	" " 3
286–91	" " 2
292	" " 3
293–95	" " 2
296	" " 3
297	" " 2
298–99	" " 3
300–306	" " 2
307–13	" " 3
314–37	" " 7
338	Found in rubbish. Now in Cairo Museum (*Journal d'entrée* 59893)
339	See Fig. 9
340	" " 7
341	" " 9
342	" " 1
343	" " 7
344	" " 1
345–47	On pillars of the Coptic church which once stood in the Second Court of the Temple of Ramses III. These now lie outside, a few meters south of the Second Court
348–50	See Fig. 1
351	Same as Nos. 345–47
352–53	See Fig. 1
354	" " 7
355	" " 6
356	" " 7

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GRAFFITO NO.	LOCATION
357–59	See Fig. 1
360	" " 7
361–62	" " 4
363–64	" " 7
365–66	" " 1
367	" " 7
368	" " 1
369	" " 7
370	" " 1
371	" " 7
372–74	" " 1
375	Same as Nos. 345–47
376	See Fig. 7
377	" " 1
378	See Fig. 7
379	" " 1
380	Same as Nos. 345–47
381	See Fig. 1
382	Same as Nos. 345–47
383	See Fig. 1
384	" " 6
385	" " 7
386	" " 1
387	" " 7
388–89	" " 1
390	" " 7
391–92	" " 1
393–94	" " 3
395	See Fig. 9
396–98	" " 8
399	Tomb in Roman cemetery above Temple of Eye and Harmhab
400	See Fig. 1
401	" " 9
402	" " 6
403	" " 2
404	" " 3
405	" " 7
406–7	" " 6
408	" " 7
409–10	" " 6

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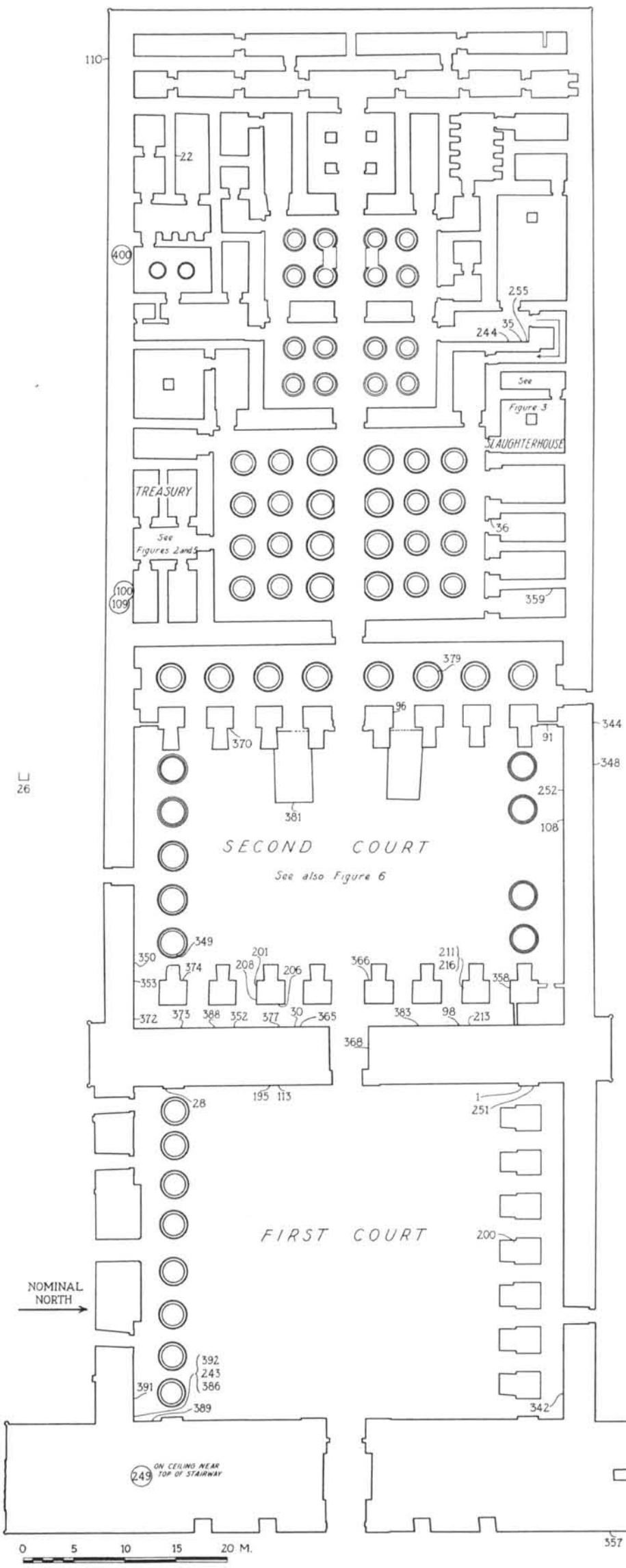

FIG. 1. THE GREAT TEMPLE OF RAMSES III

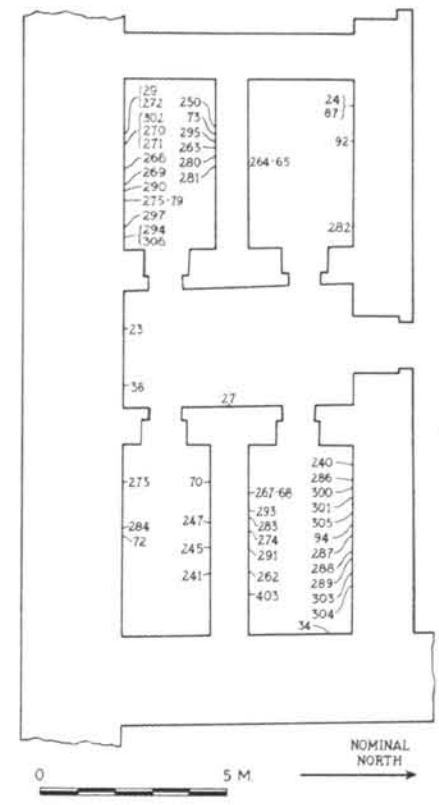

FIG. 2. THE TREASURY

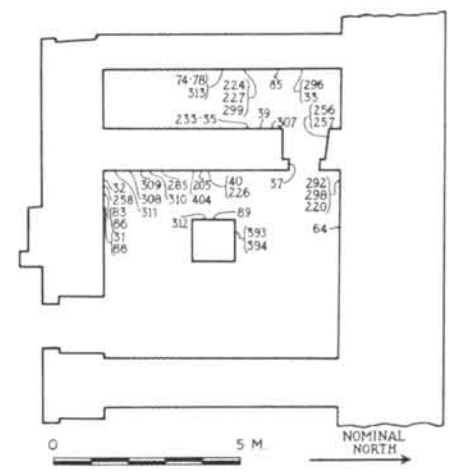

FIG. 3. THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE AND THE ROOM BEHIND IT

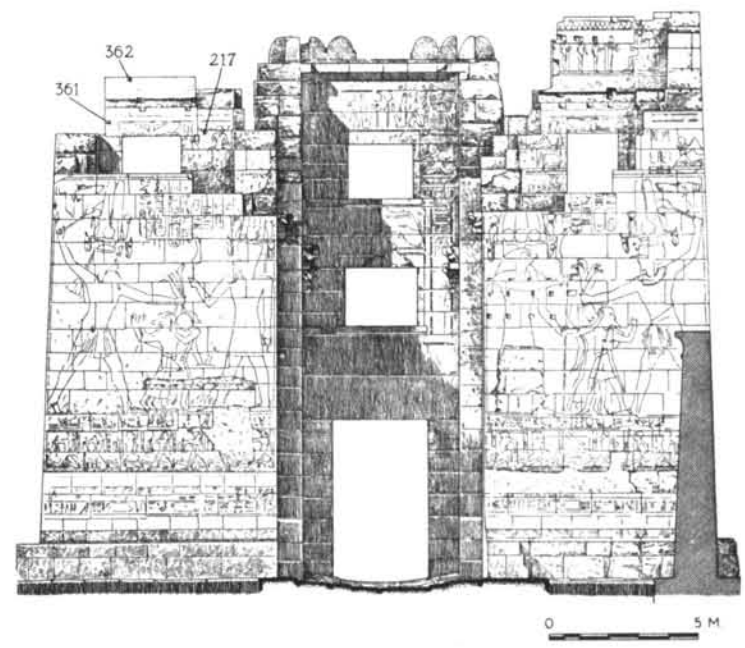

FIG. 4. FRONT OF THE EASTERN FORTIFIED GATE

PLAIN NUMBERS REPRESENT GRAFFITI ON VERTICAL SURFACES; RINGED NUMBERS, THOSE ON HORIZONTAL SURFACES

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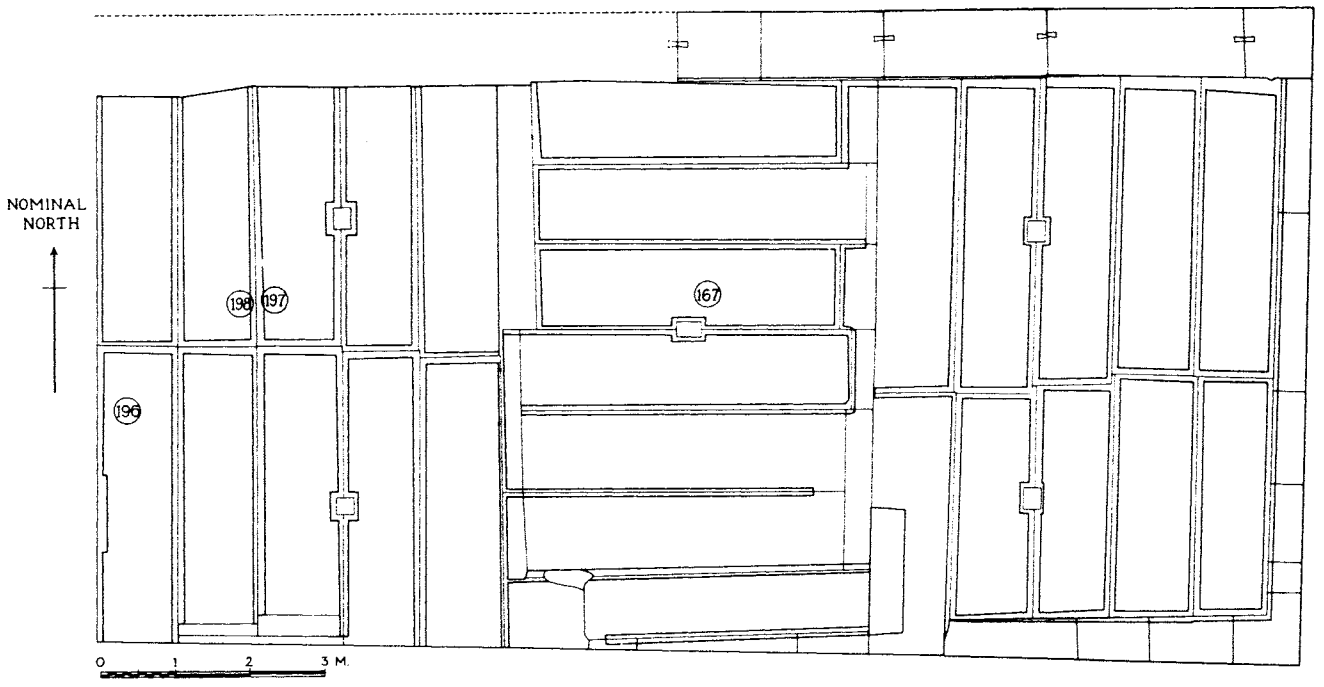

FIG. 5. ROOF OF THE TREASURY

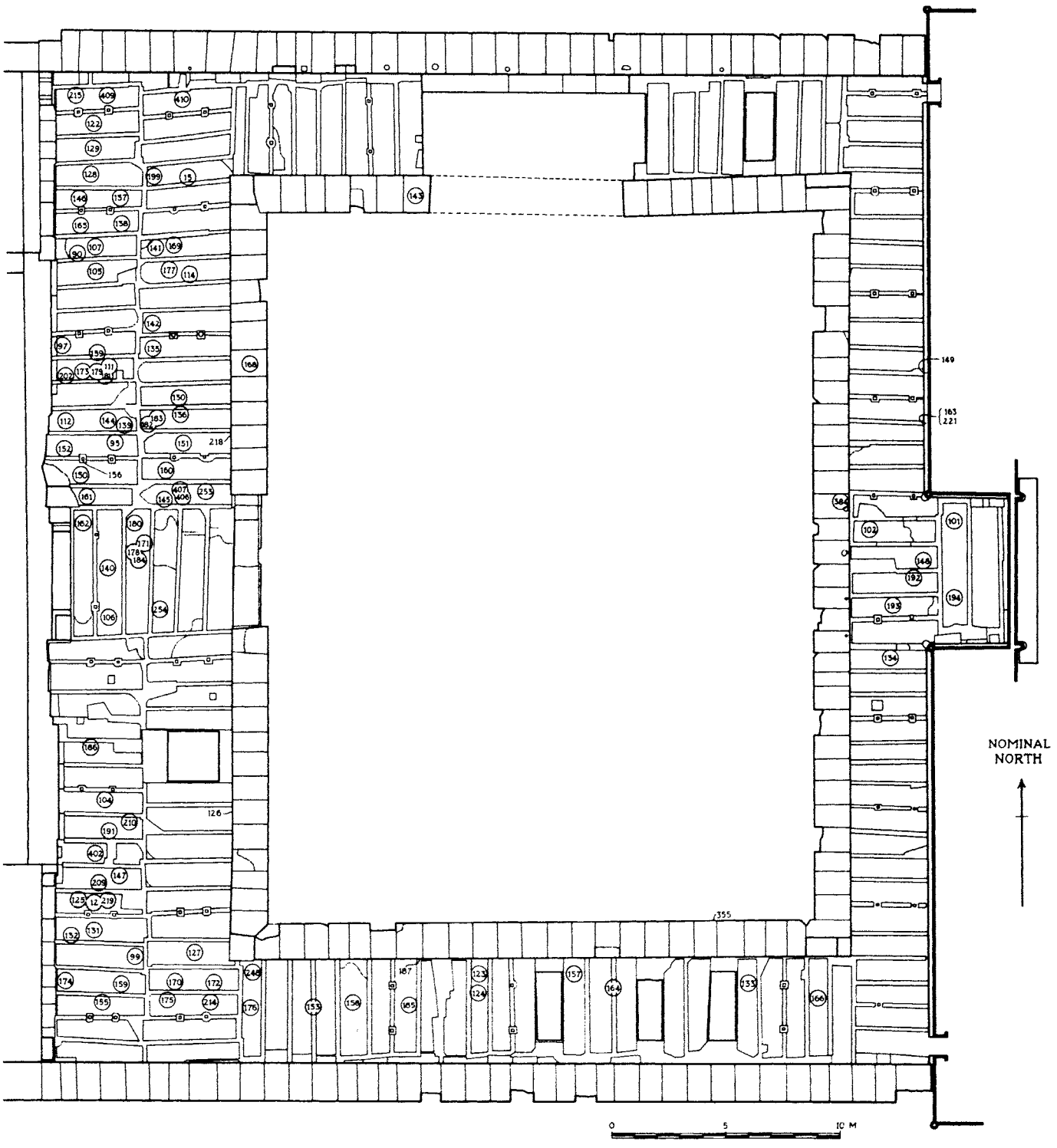

FIG. 6. ROOF OF THE SECOND COURT

PLAIN NUMBERS REPRESENT GRAFFITI ON VERTICAL SURFACES; RINGED NUMBERS, THOSE ON HORIZONTAL SURFACES

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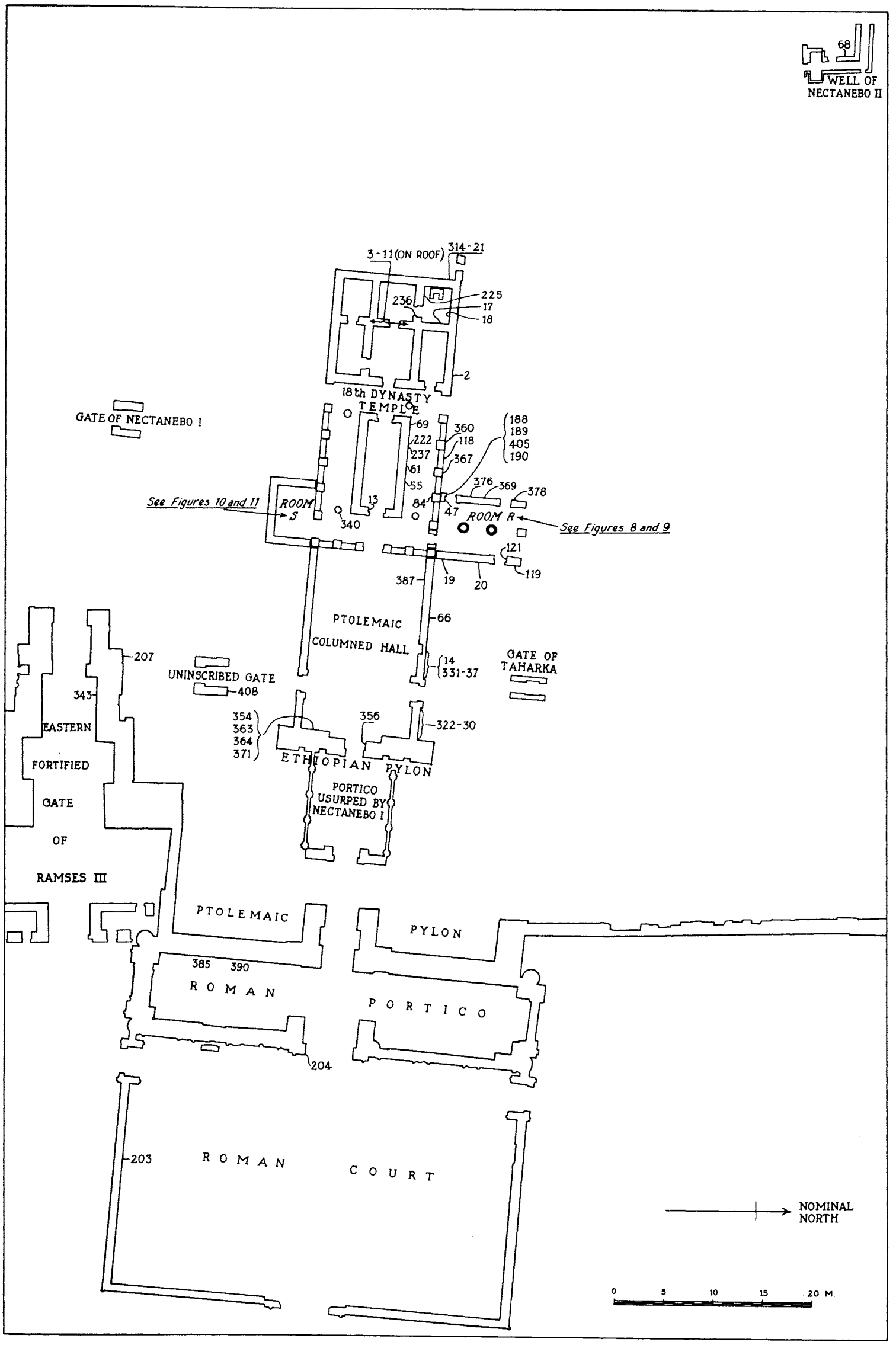

FIG. 7. THE SMALL TEMPLE AND ADJACENT STRUCTURES

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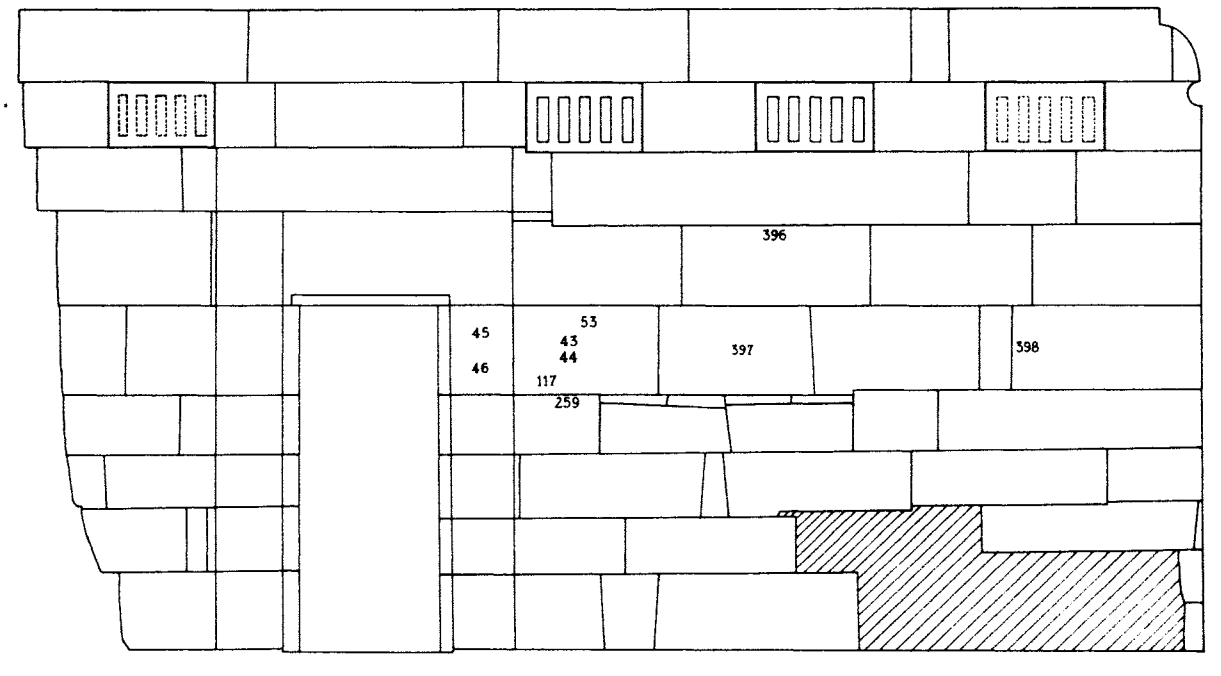

FIG. 8. ROOM *R* OF THE SMALL TEMPLE. EAST WALL

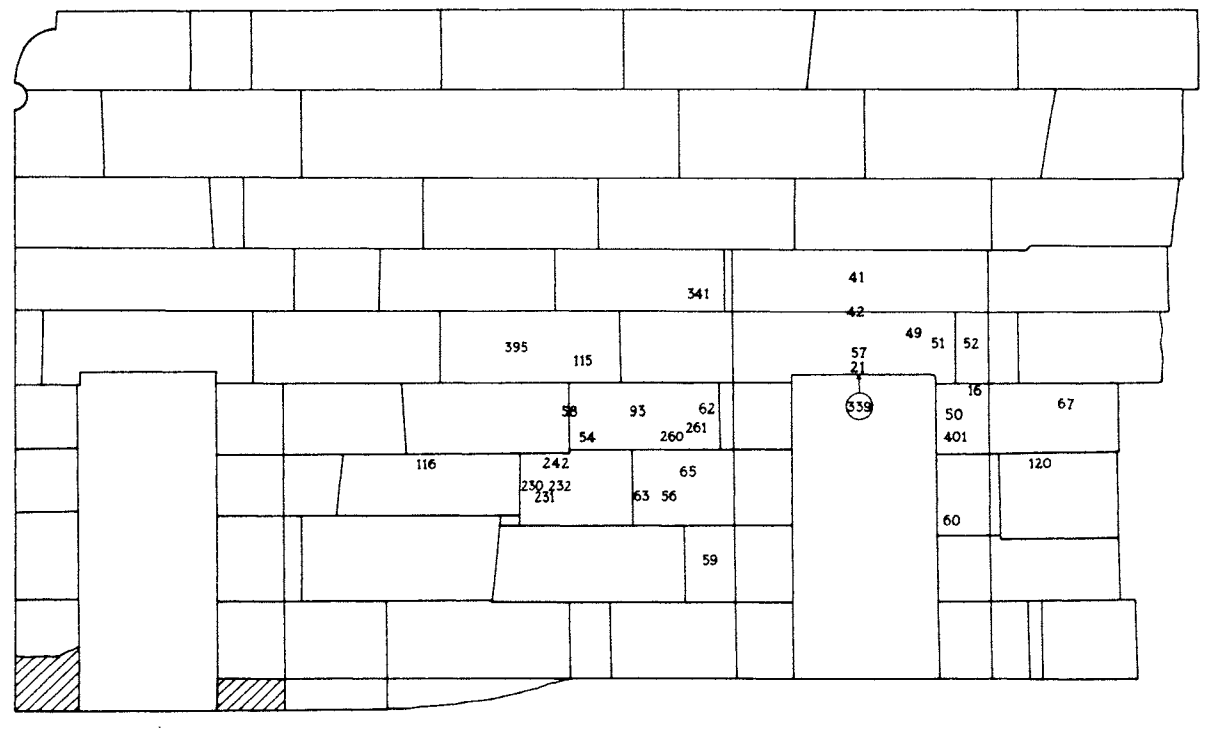

FIG. 9. ROOM *R* OF THE SMALL TEMPLE. WEST WALL

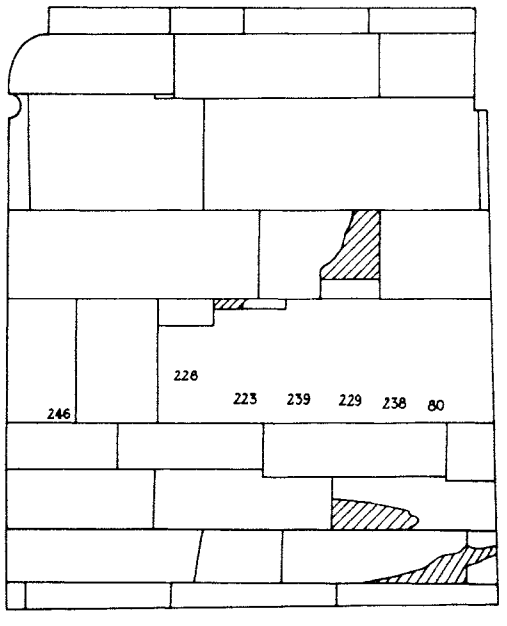

FIG. 10. ROOM *S* OF THE SMALL TEMPLE. EAST WALL

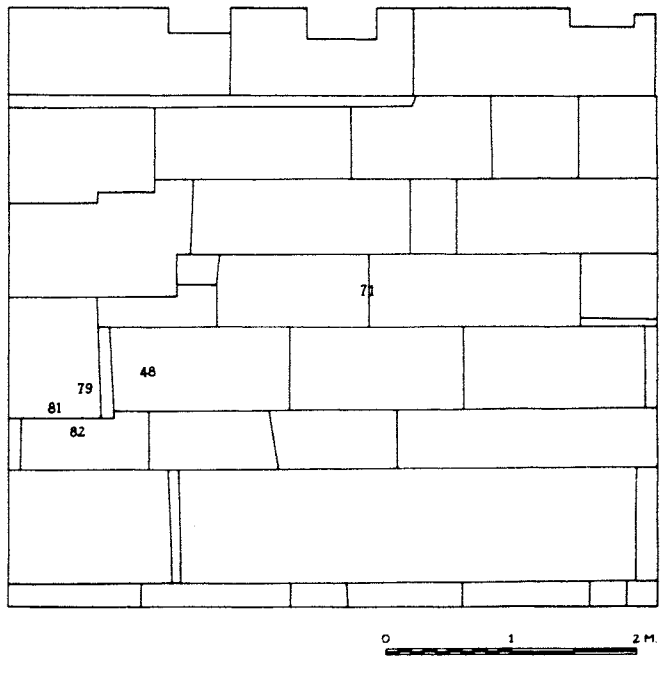

FIG. 11. ROOM *S* OF THE SMALL TEMPLE. SOUTH WALL

PLAIN NUMBERS REPRESENT GRAFFITI ON VERTICAL SURFACES; RINGED NUMBERS, THOSE ON HORIZONTAL SURFACES

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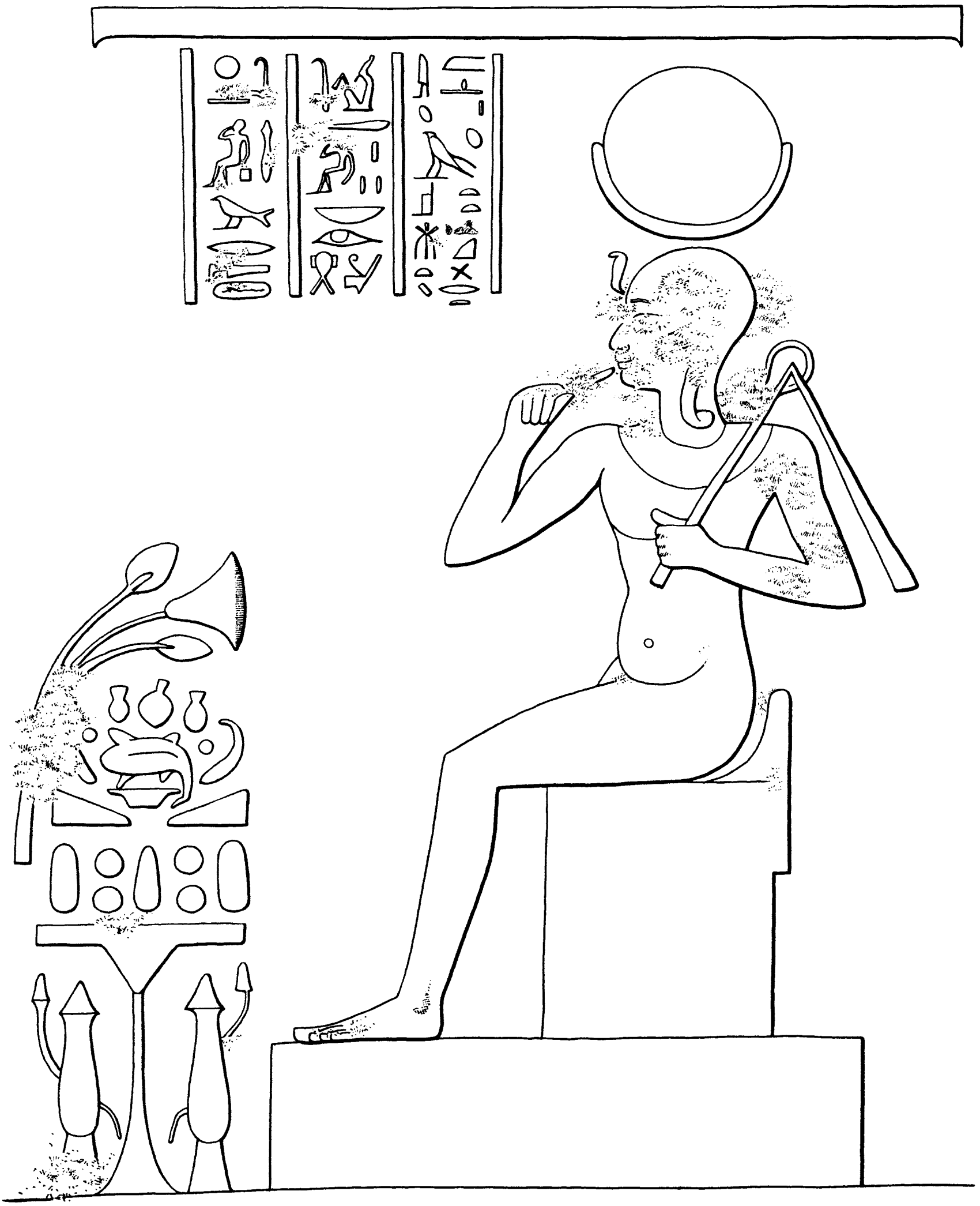

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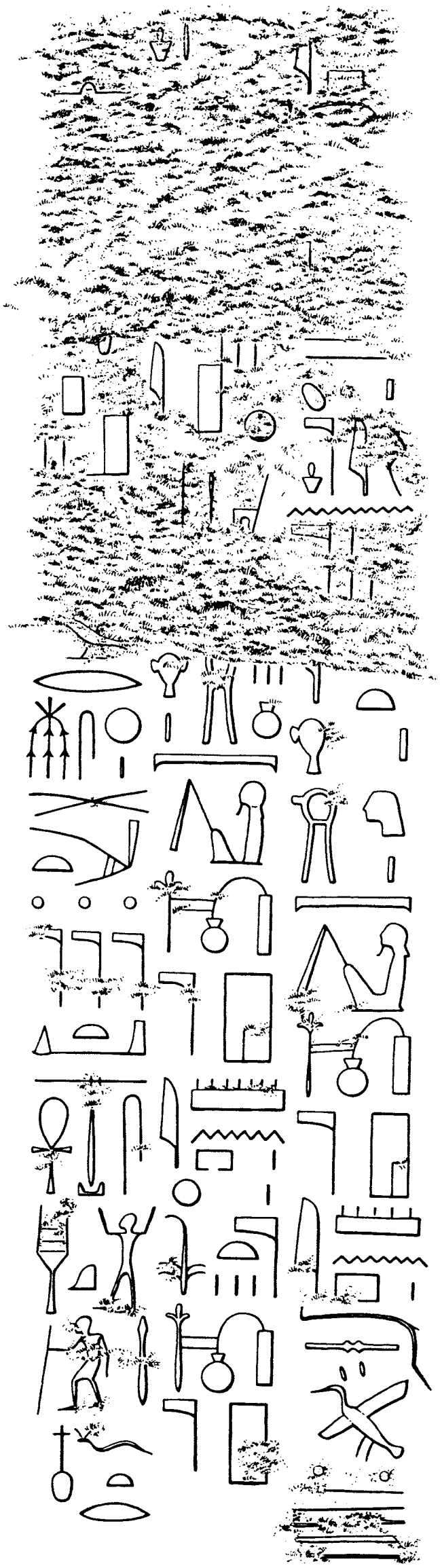

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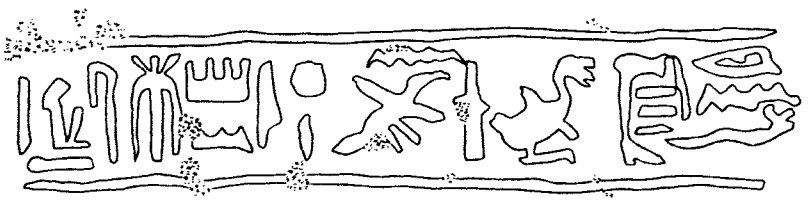

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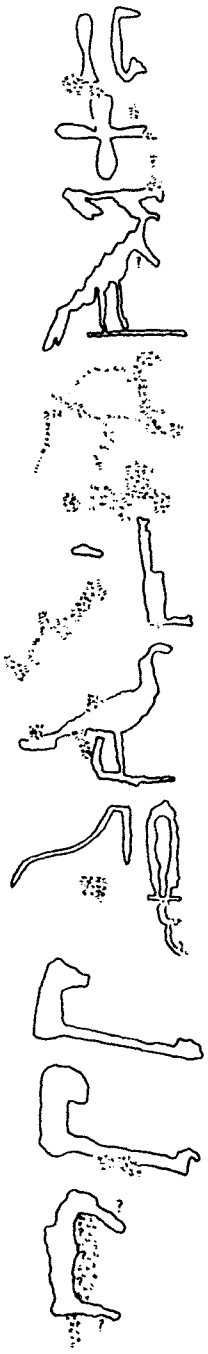

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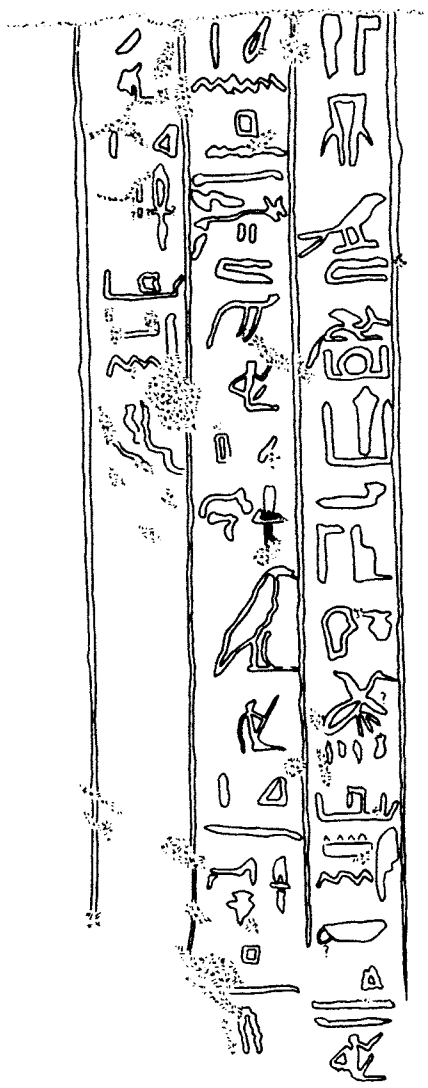

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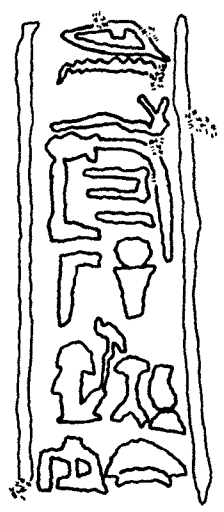

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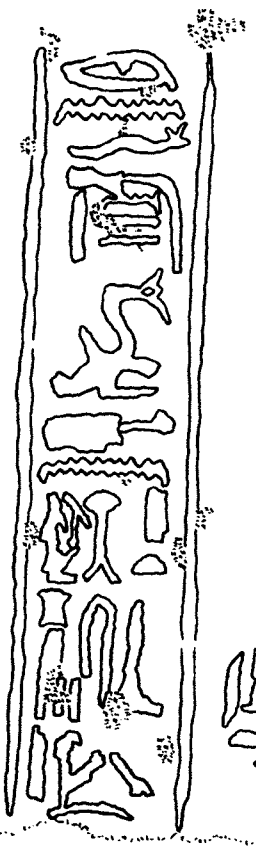

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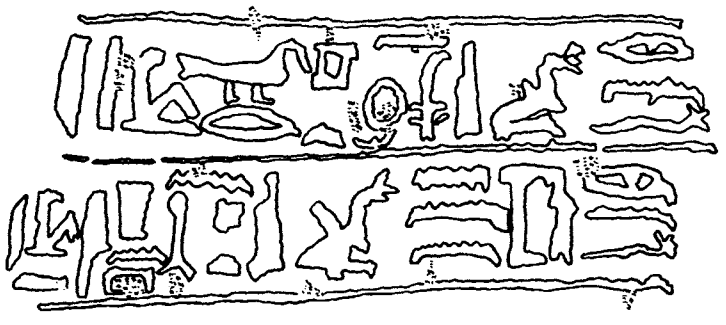

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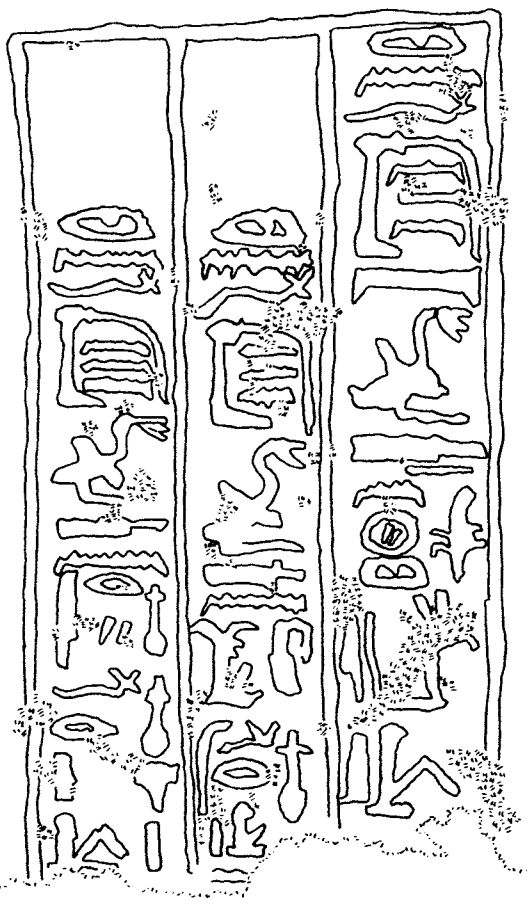

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All 2:5

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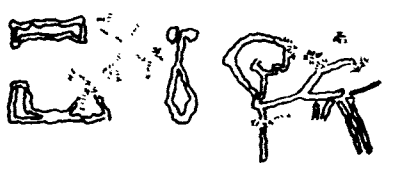
12 1:5

13 1:1



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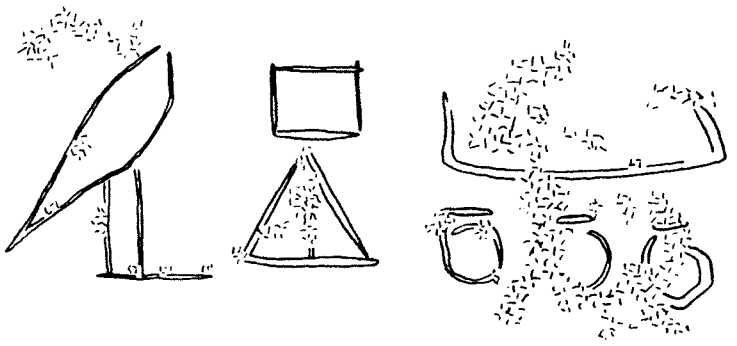

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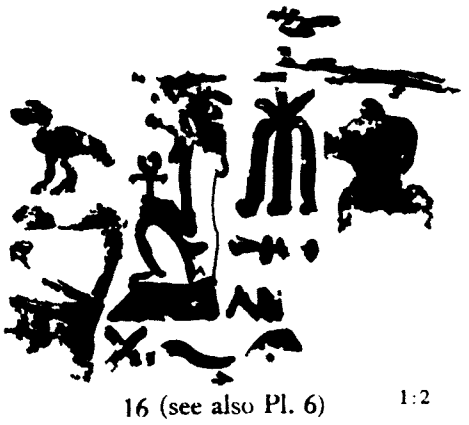
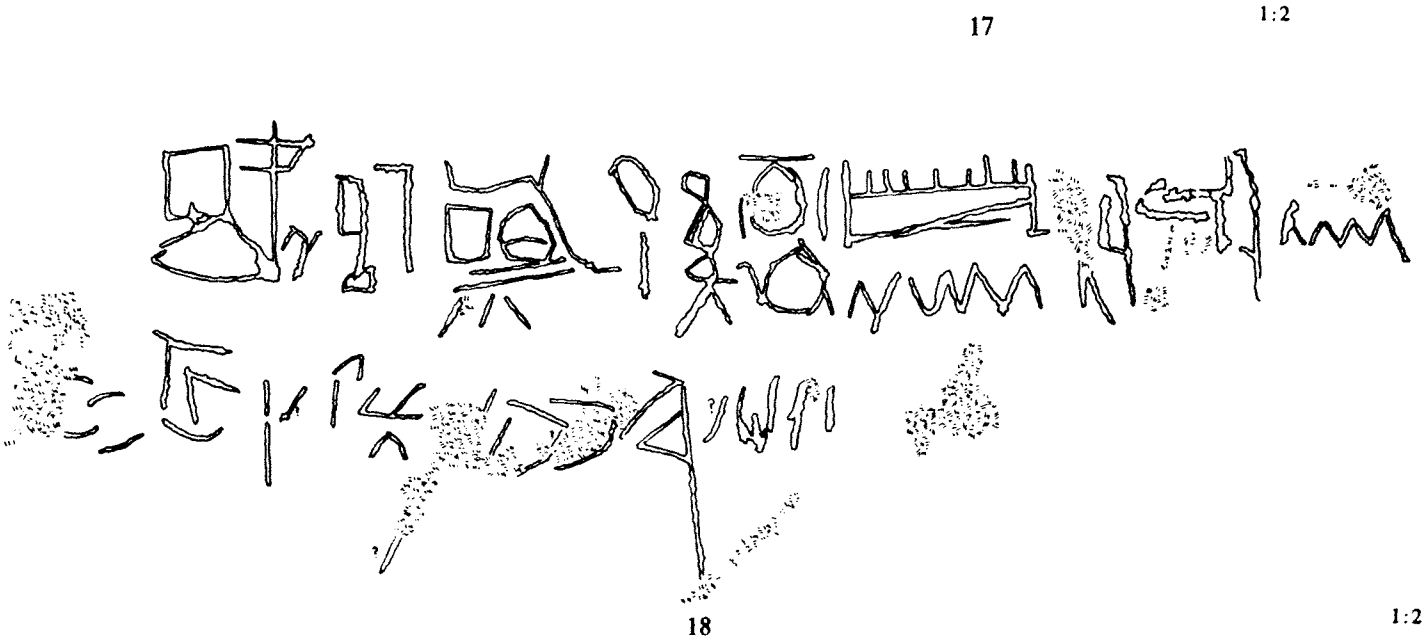


16 (see also Pl. 6) 1:2

17 1:2



18 1:2

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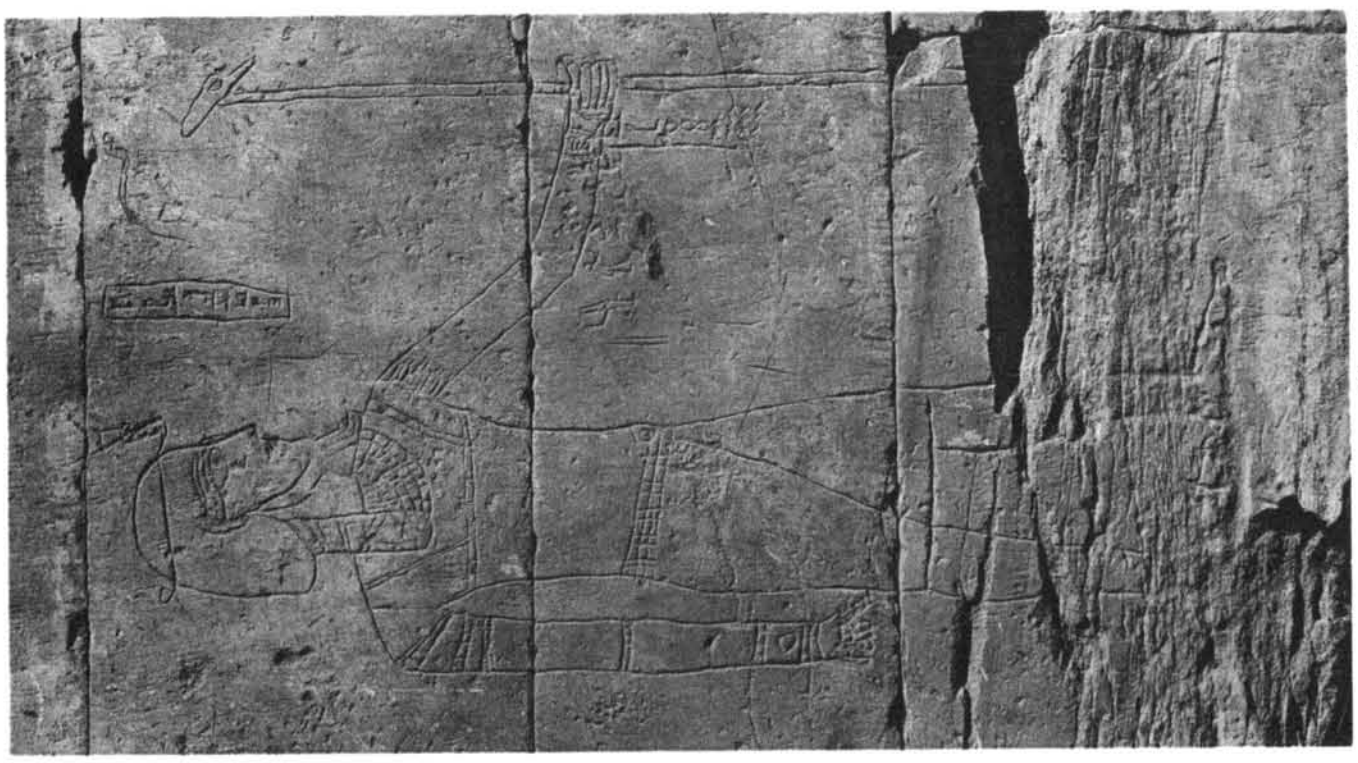
20 Scale unknown



19 Scale unknown

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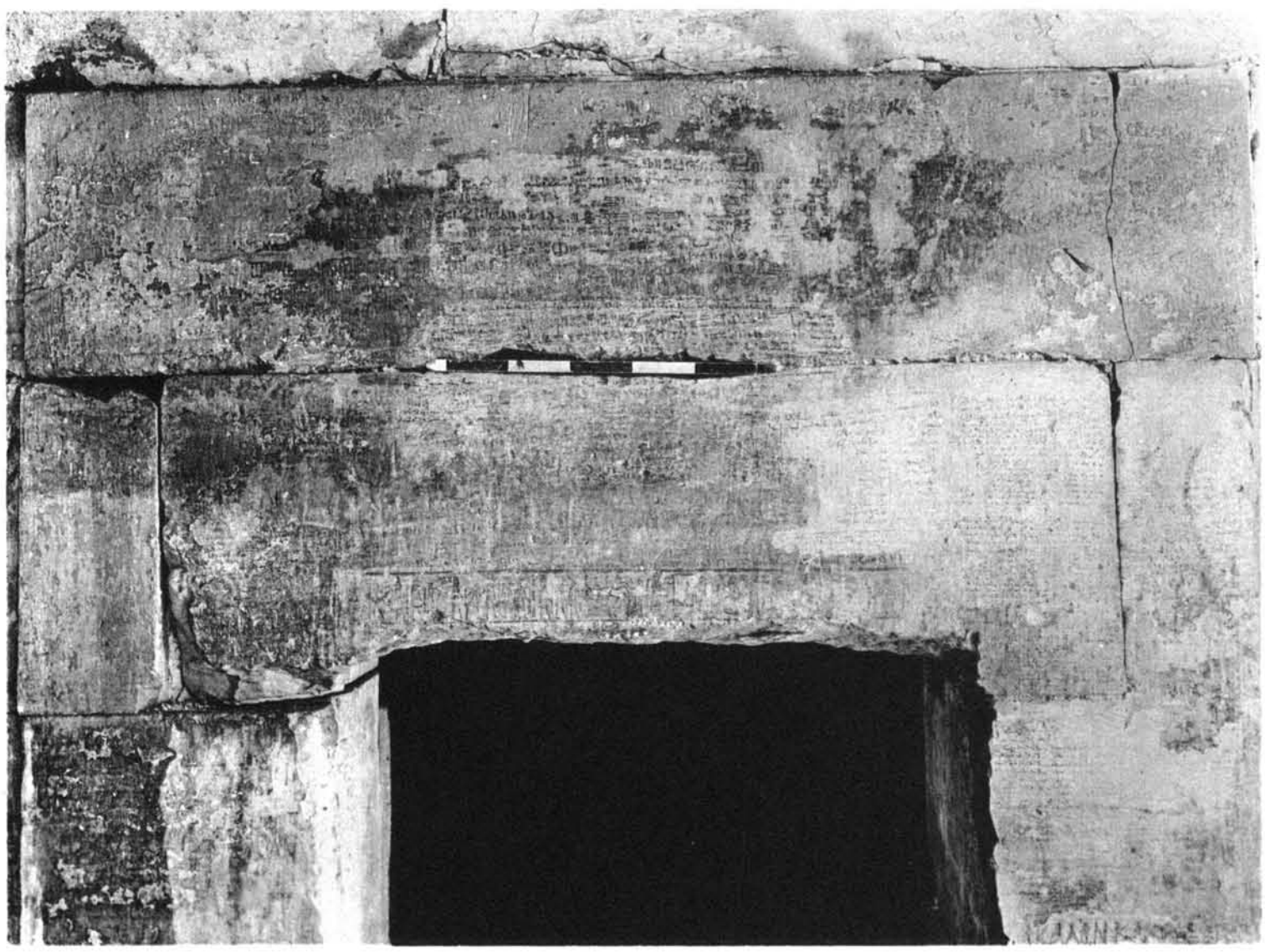
21 2:5

21 2:5



SMALL TEMPLE. ROOM *R*. WEST WALL. NORTH DOORWAY, BEARING NOS. 16, 21, 41–42, 49–52, 57, 401, AND OTHER TEXTS TOO POORLY PRESERVED TO REPAY COPYING. NO CLEANING WAS DONE IN THIS AREA. THE DIVISIONS ON THE SCALE ARE 10 CM. EACH

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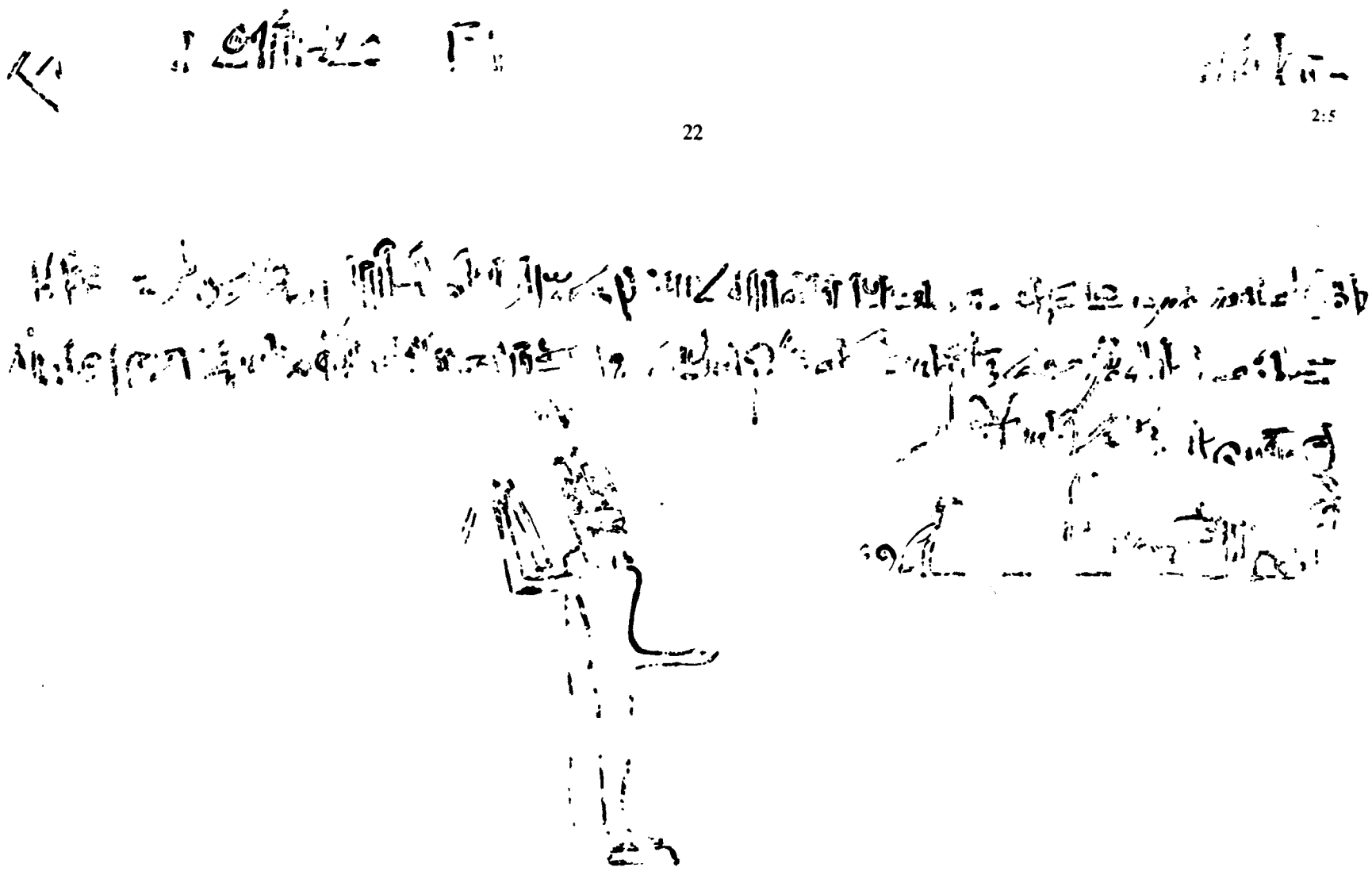

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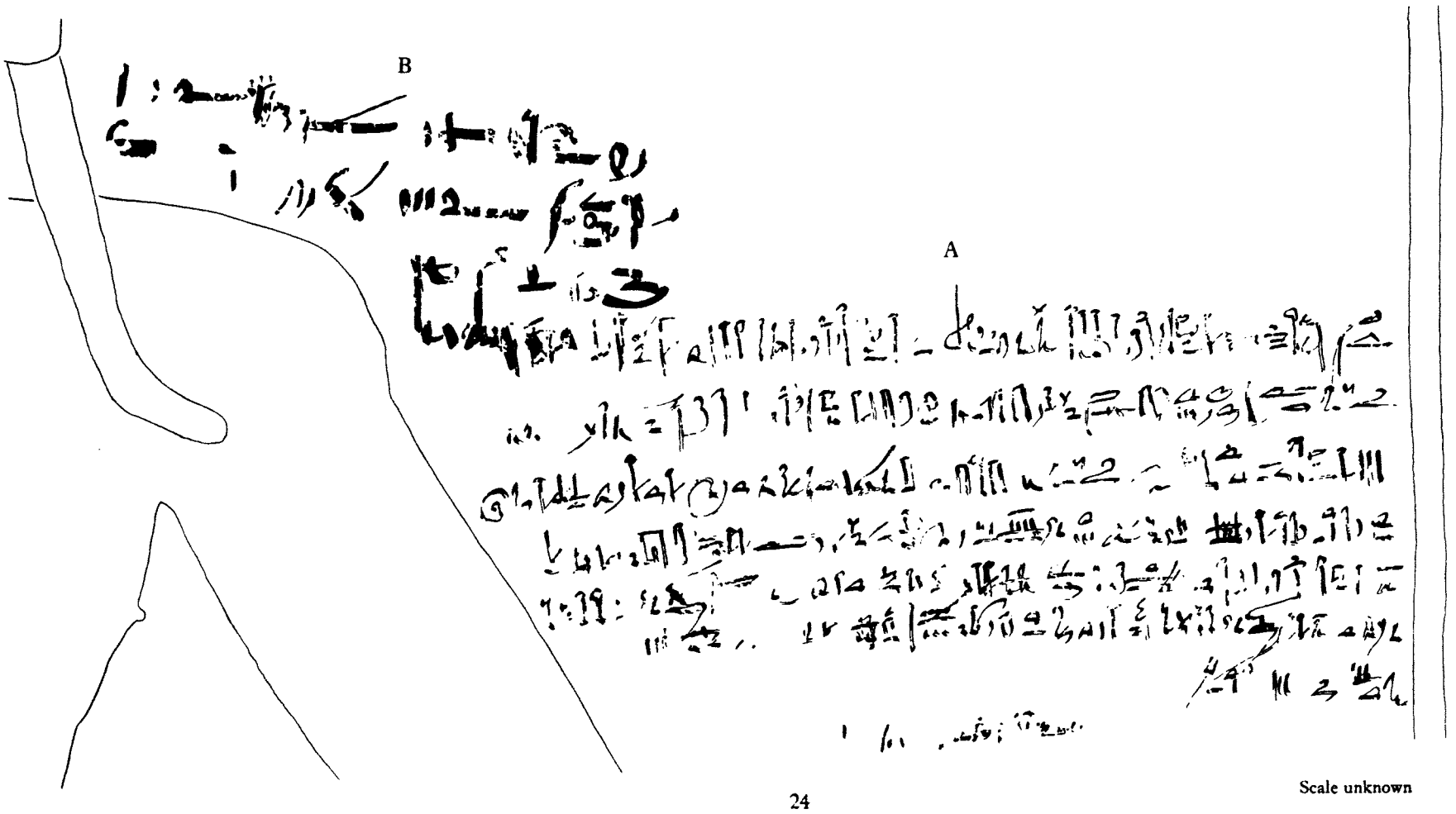

23

1:2

24

Scale unknown

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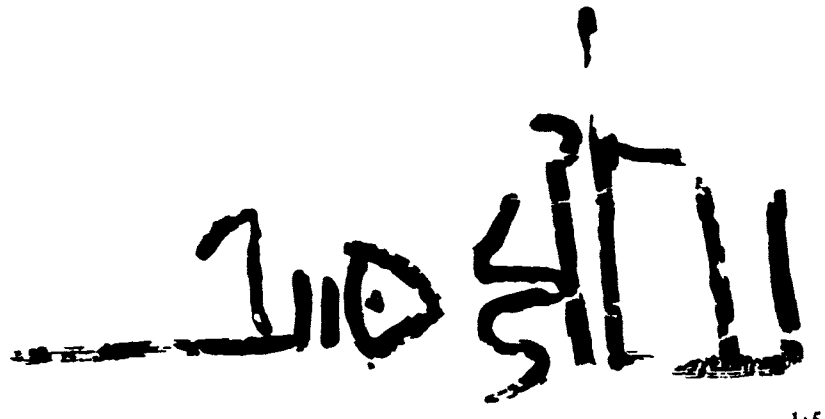
25 1:5



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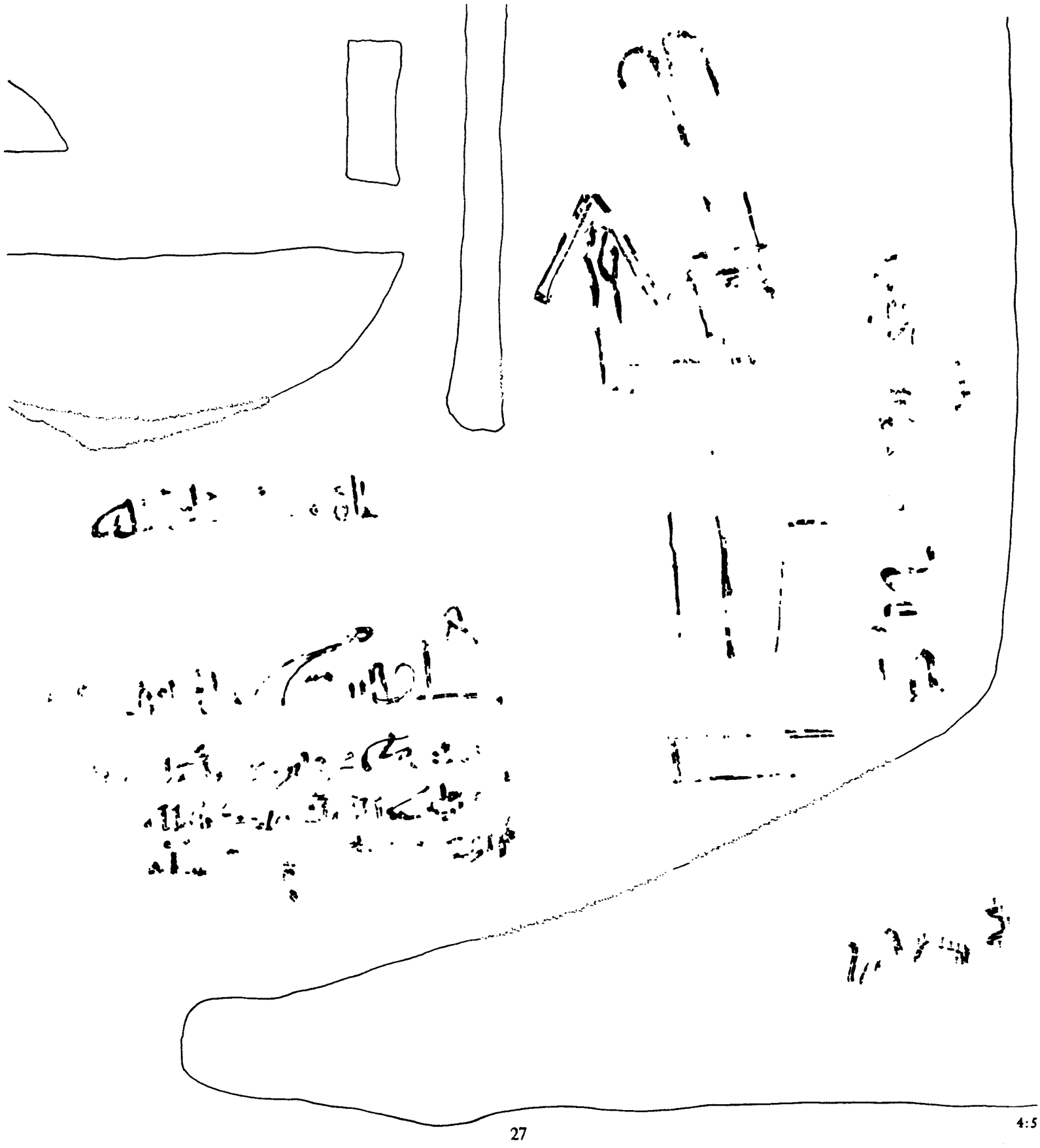

27 4:5

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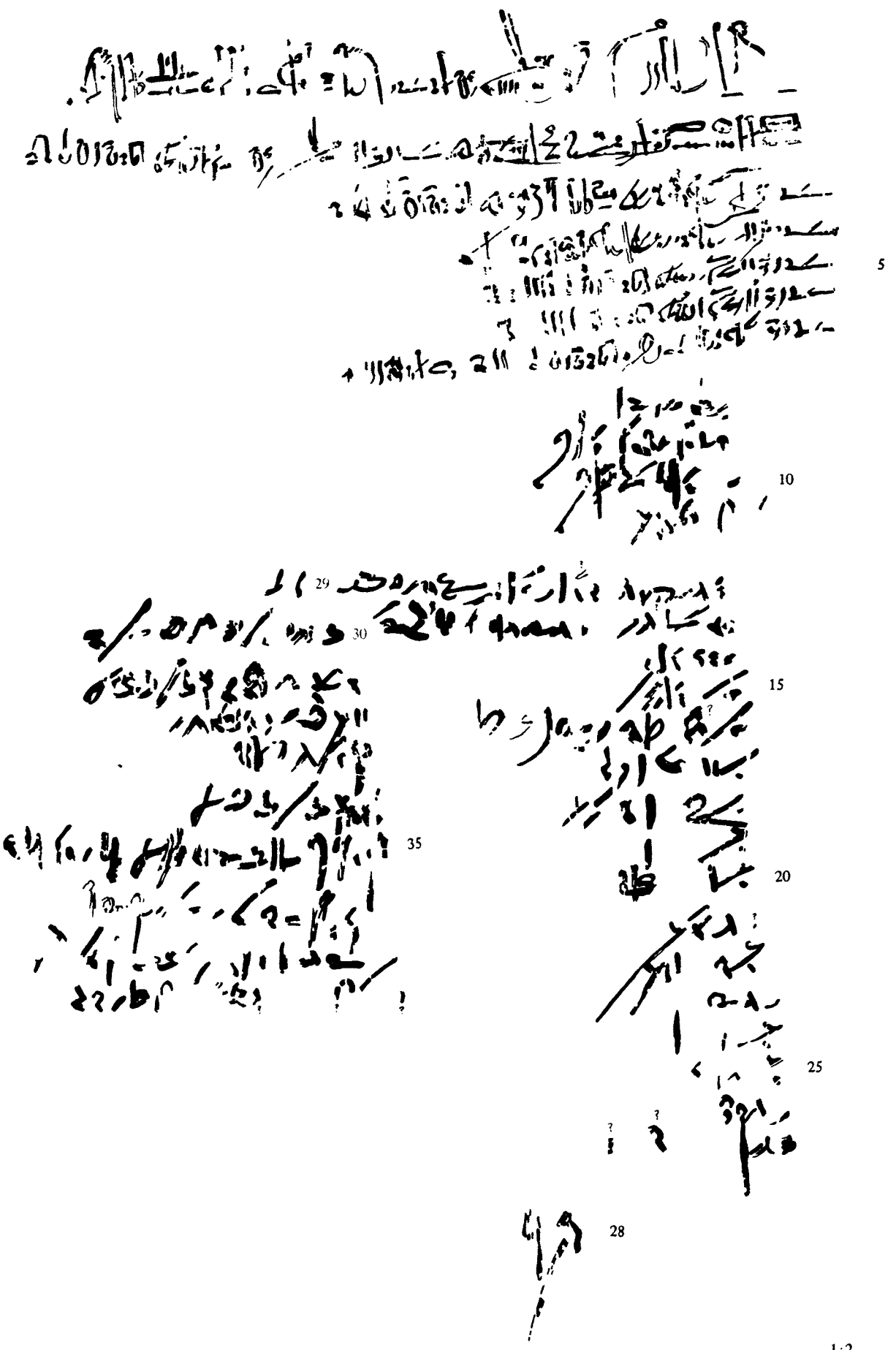
28 1:2



29 1:2

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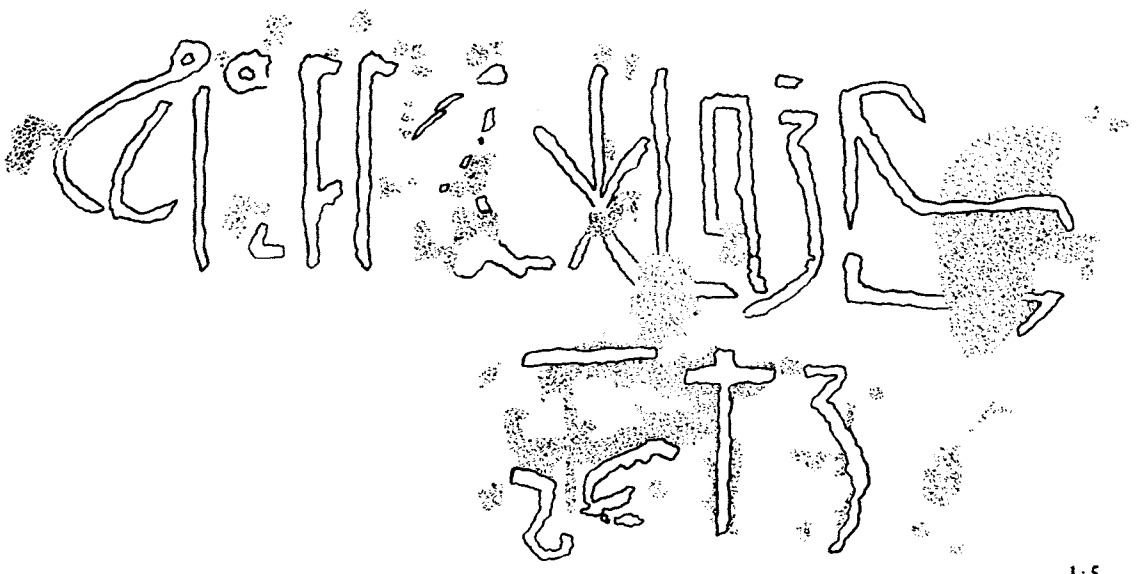

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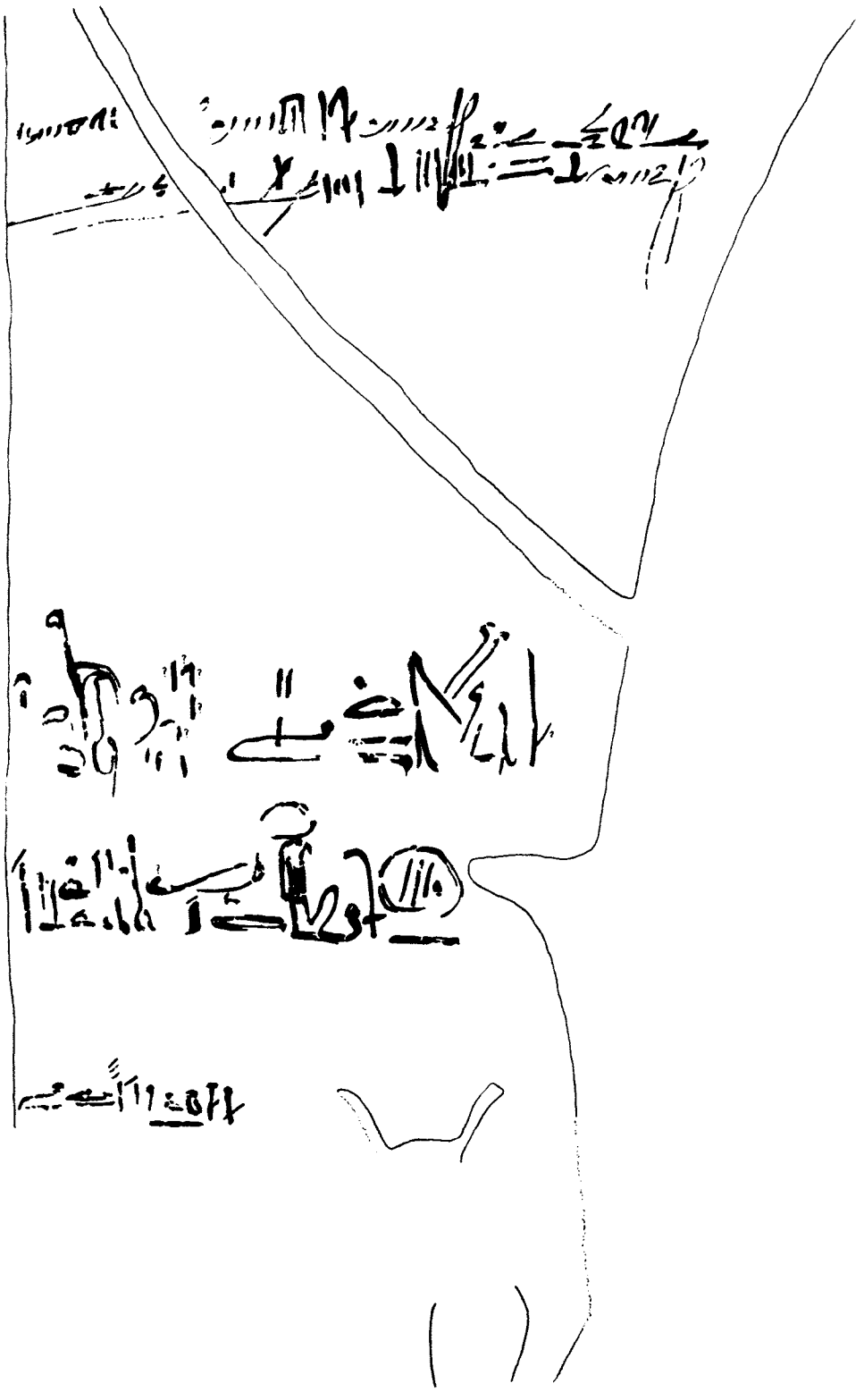

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1:2

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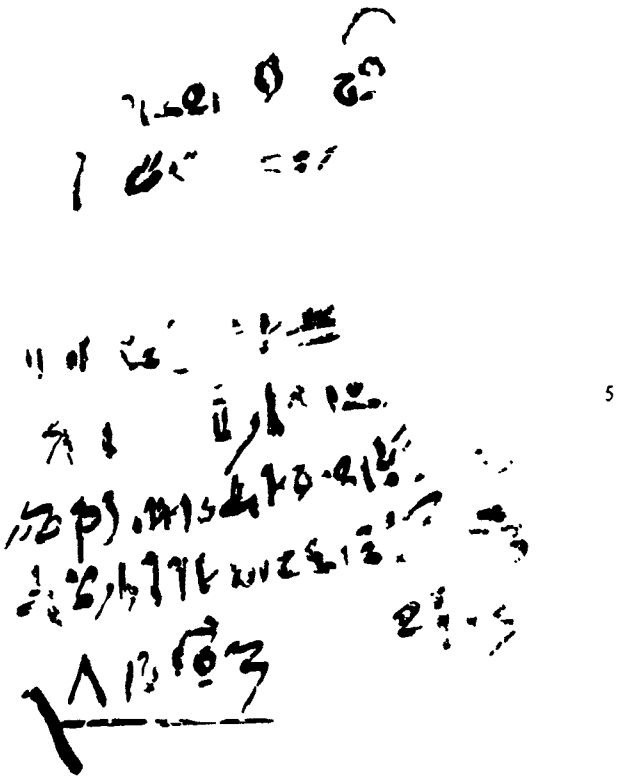
32

3:5



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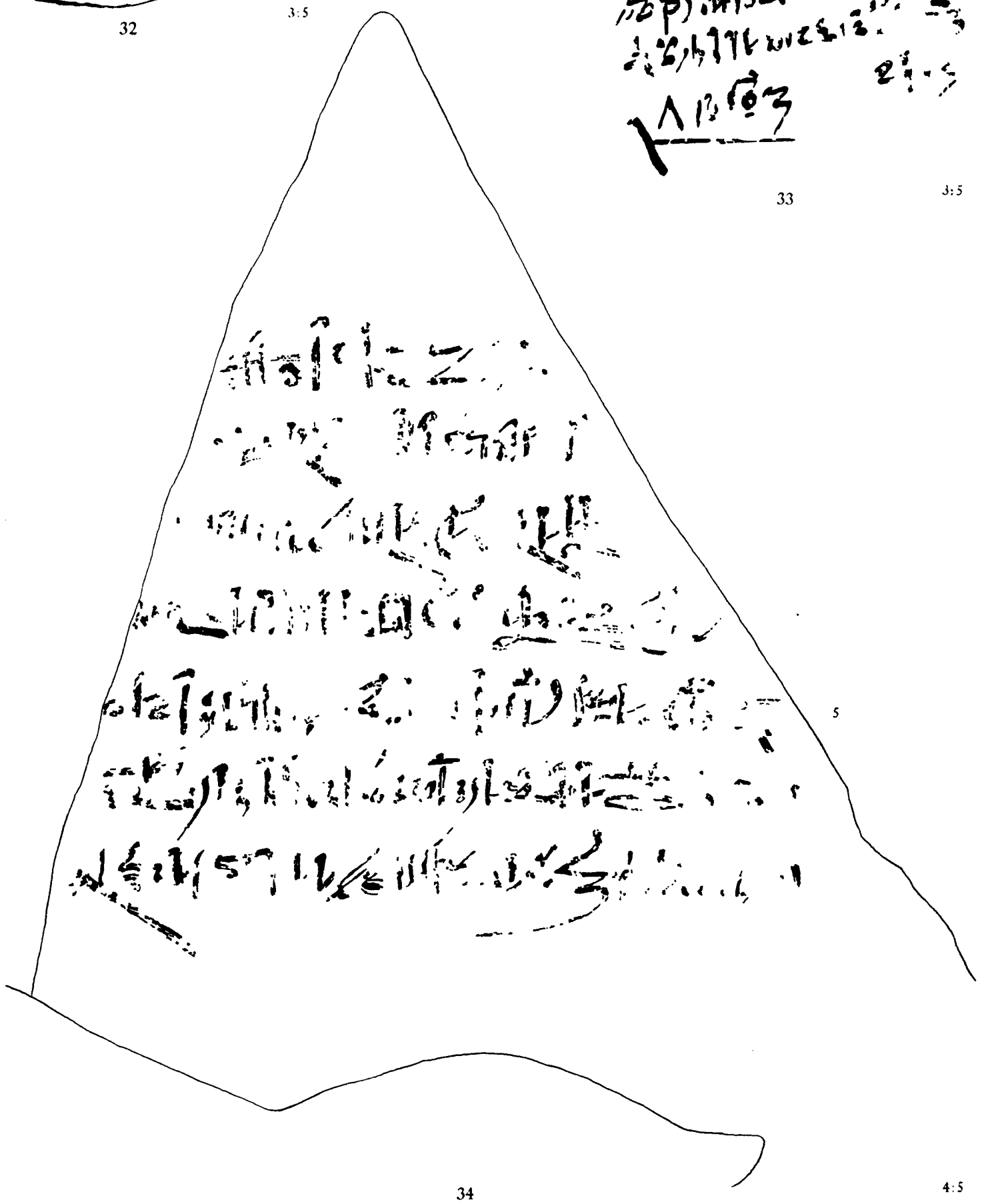

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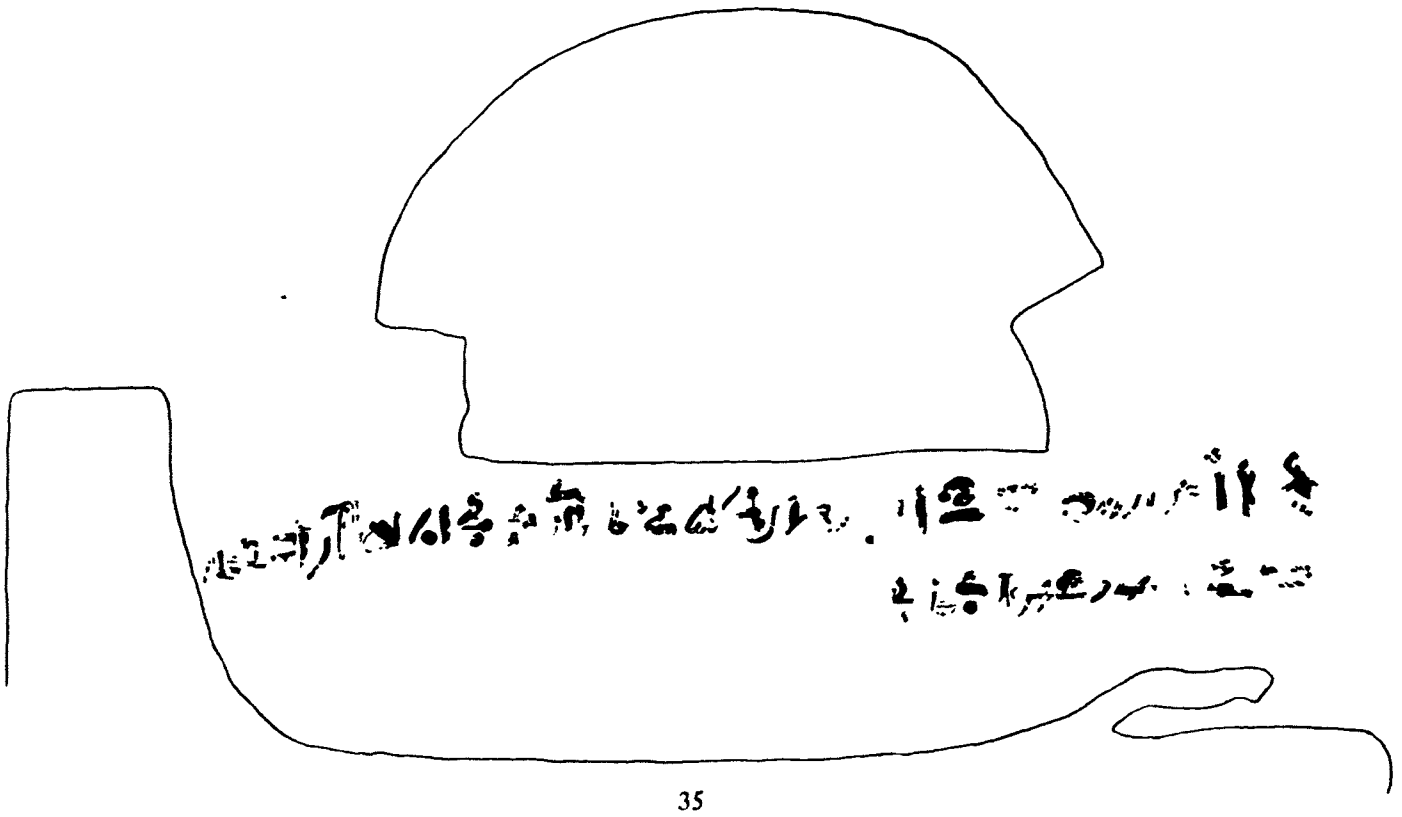

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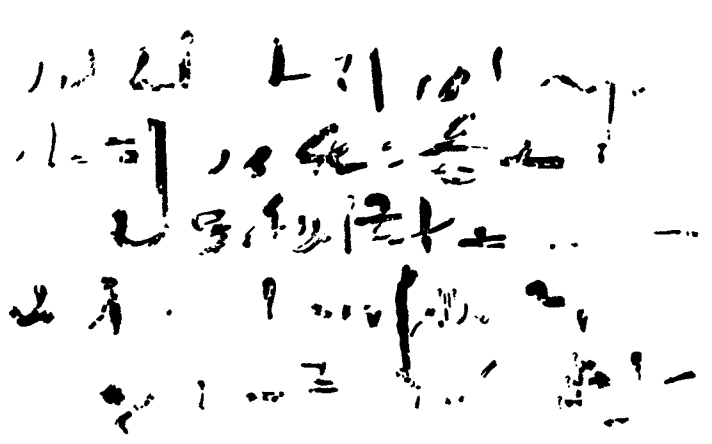

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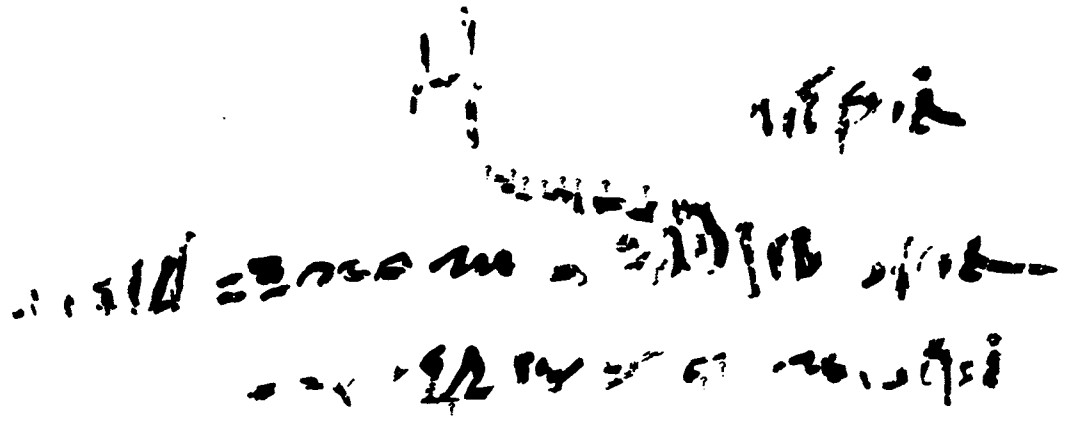

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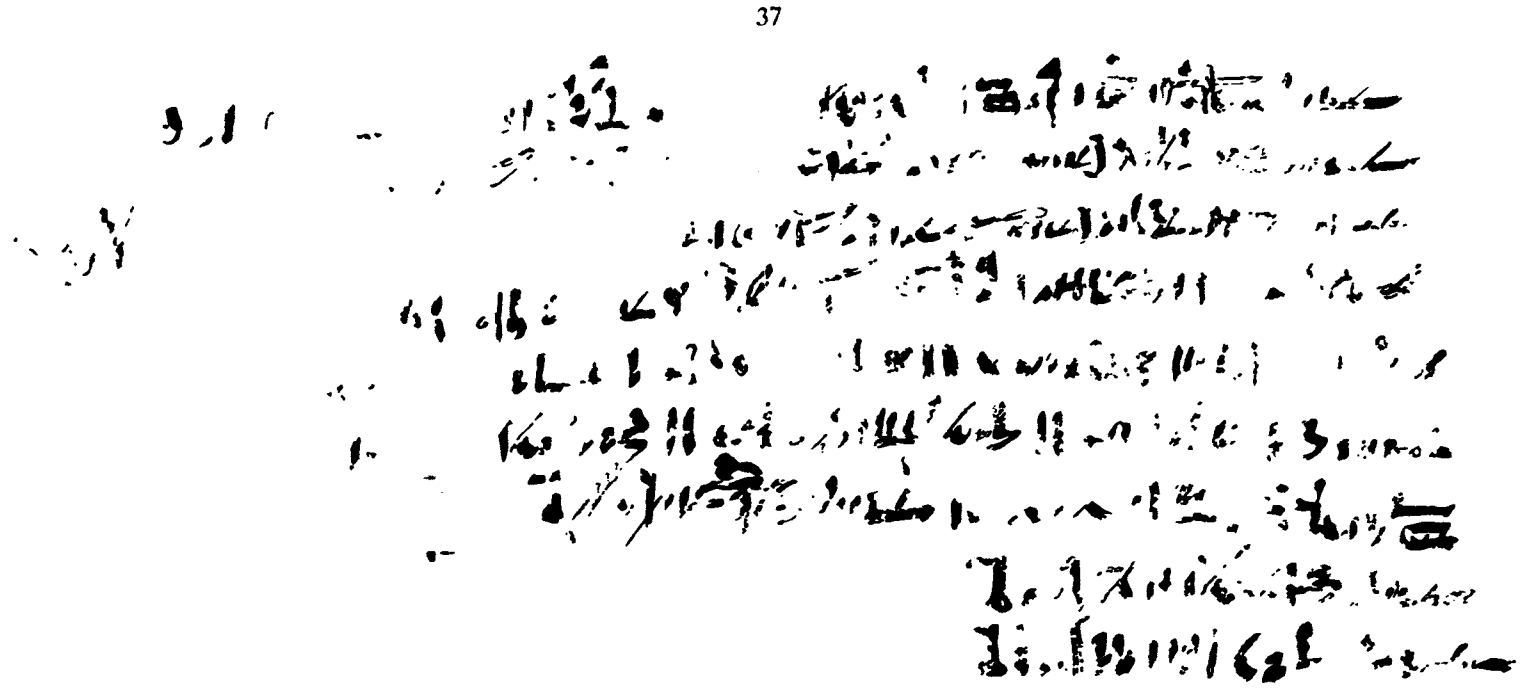

38

All 1:1

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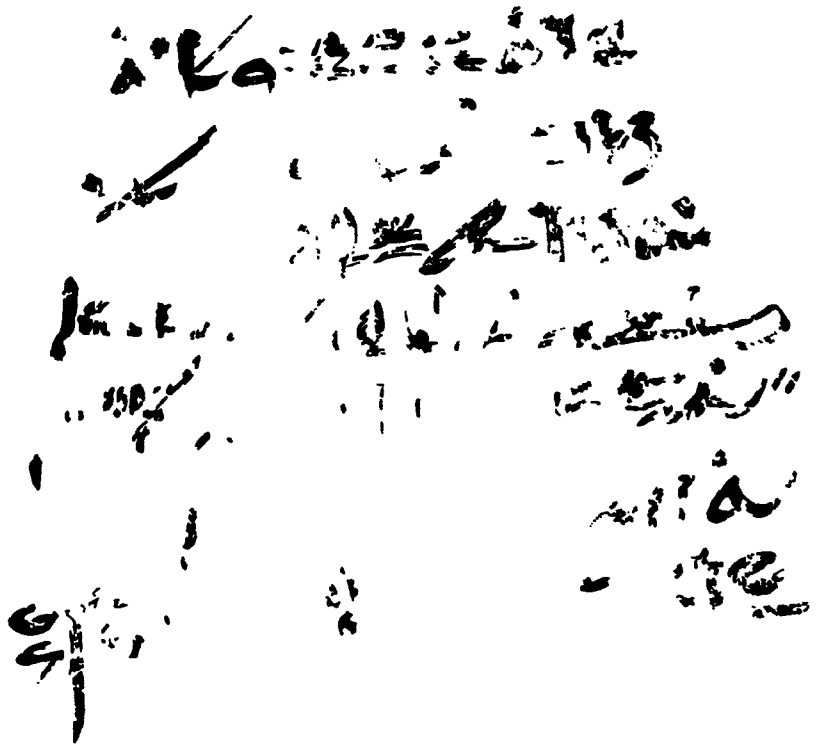

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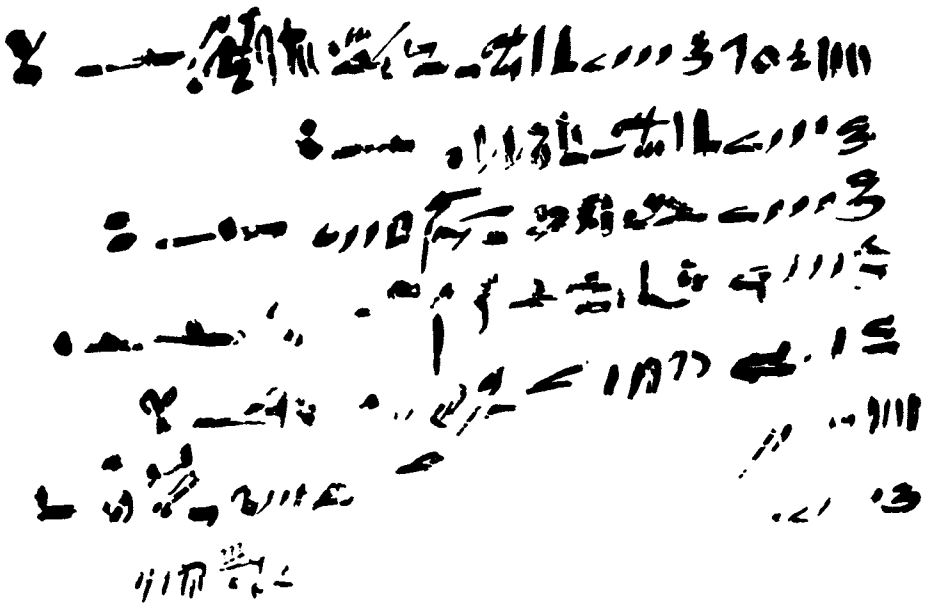

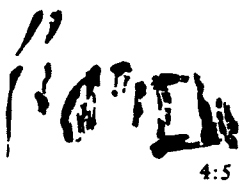

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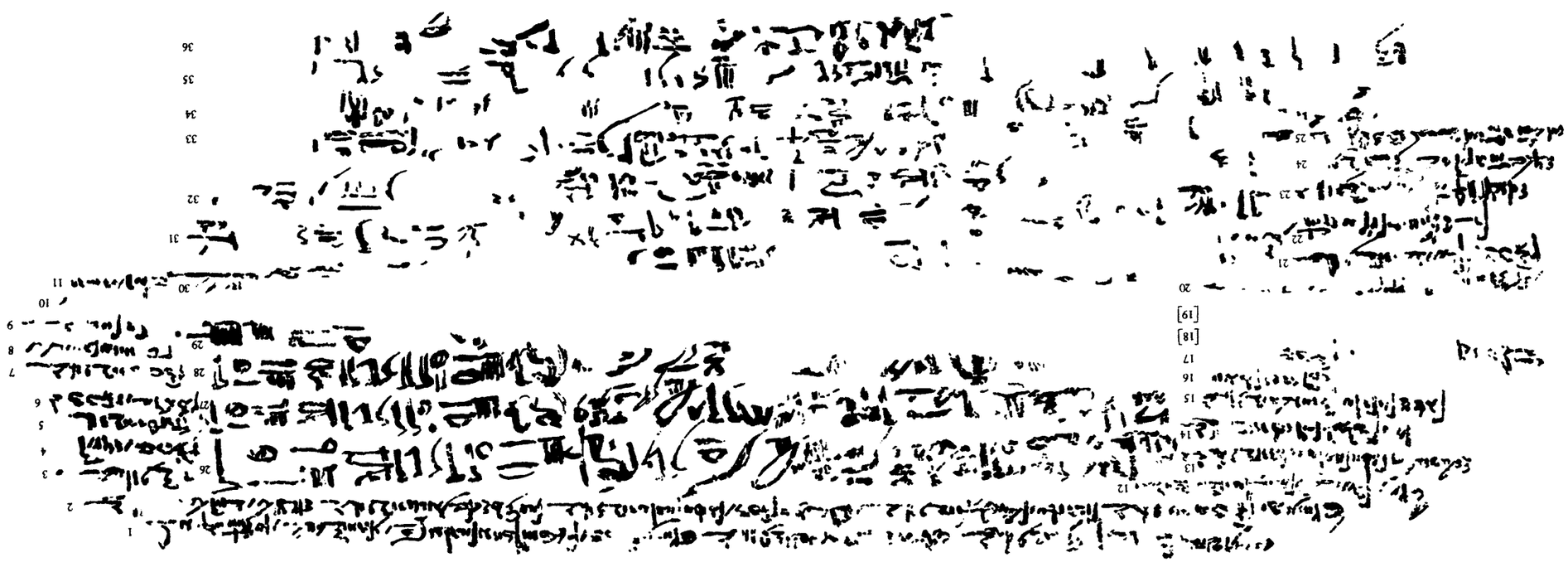
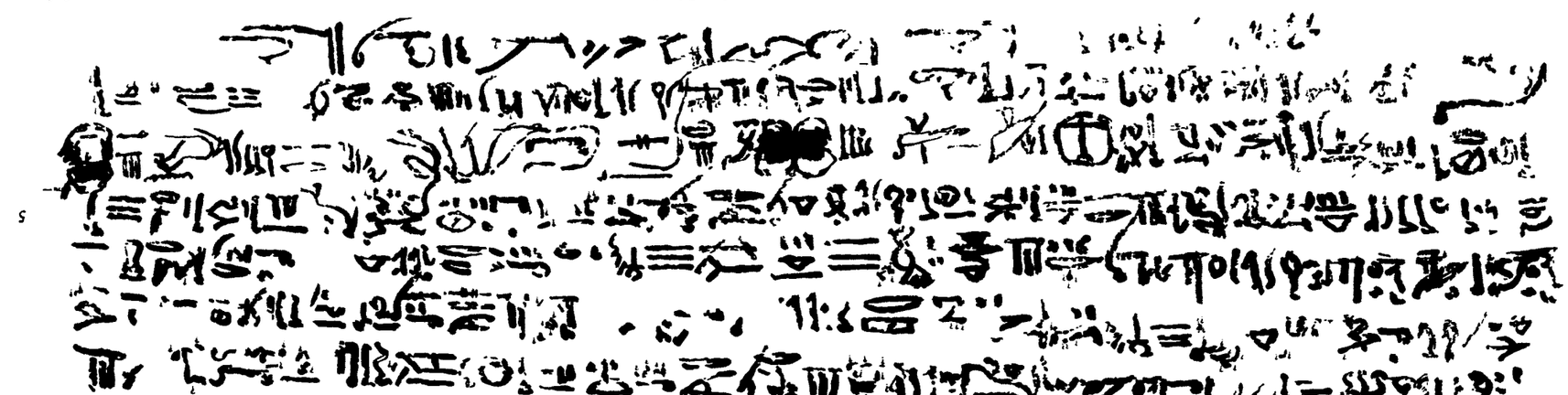


42 (see also Pl. 6)

2:5



41 (see also Pl. 6)

2:5

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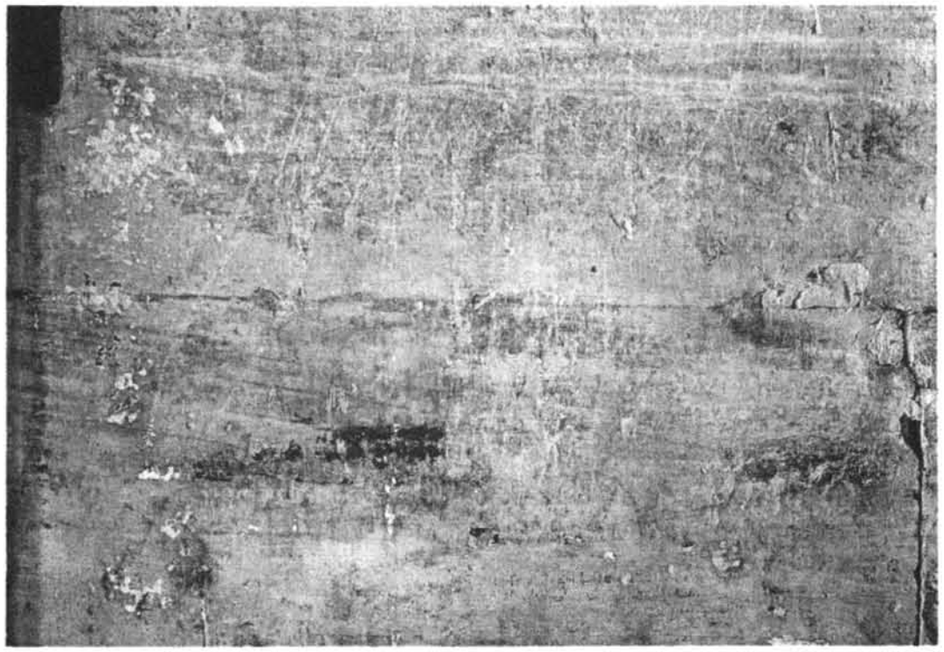
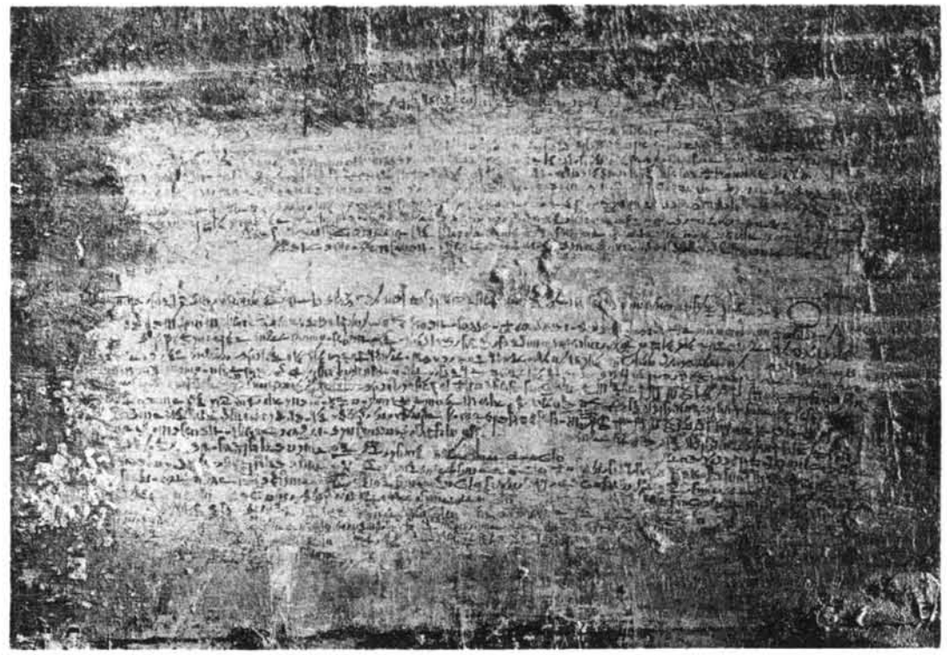


A

C

B



D

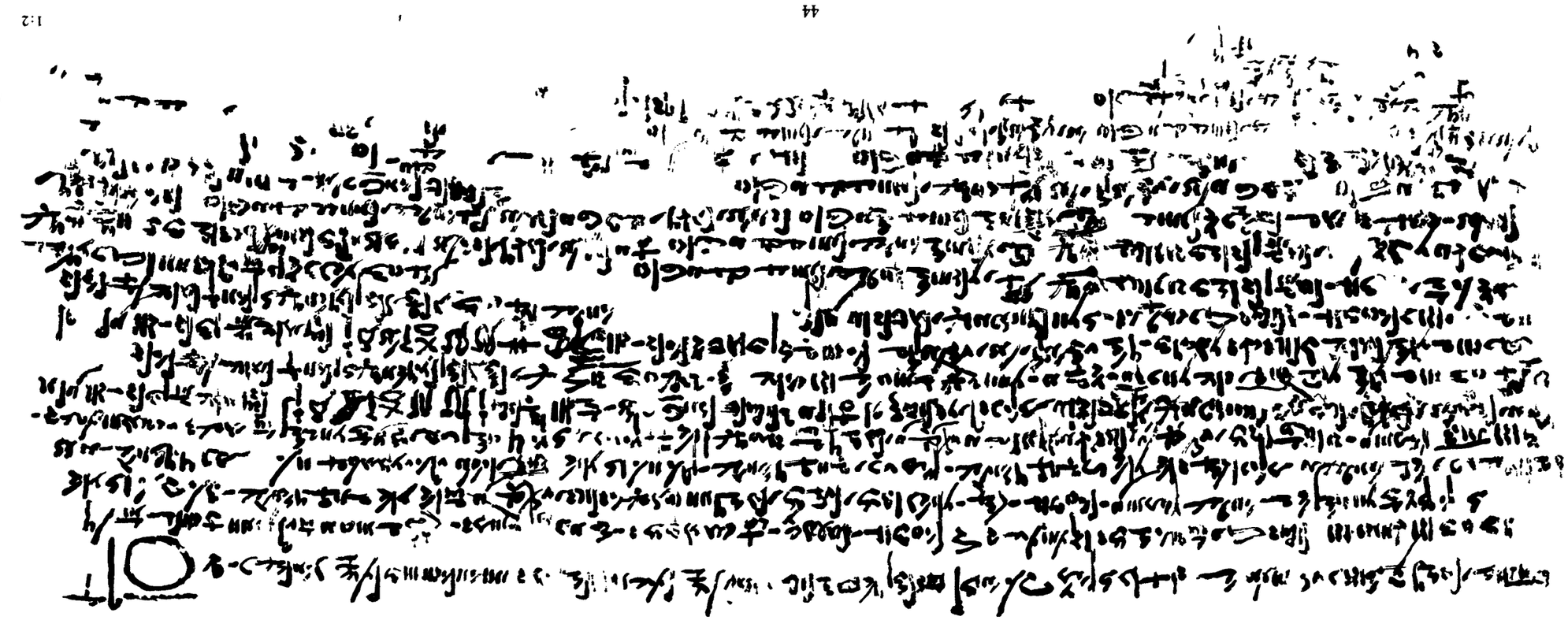
A. ABOVE, NO. 117 (HARDLY VISIBLE), ON ANCIENT PLASTER WHICH COVERED NO. 44. BELOW, ILL PRESERVED TEXTS WHICH WERE LEFT UNCLEANED

B. NO. 44, LINES 1–7, AFTER CLEANING. ANCIENT PLASTER STILL HIDES THE REMAINDER OF NO. 44 AND, ABOVE IT, THE WHOLE OF NO. 43

C. DETAIL OF NOS. 43 AND 44, SHOWING "ISLAND" OF ANCIENT PLASTER BEARING NO. 117, JUST BEFORE ITS REMOVAL

D. NOS. 43 AND 44 AFTER FINAL CLEANING

PLATE 16



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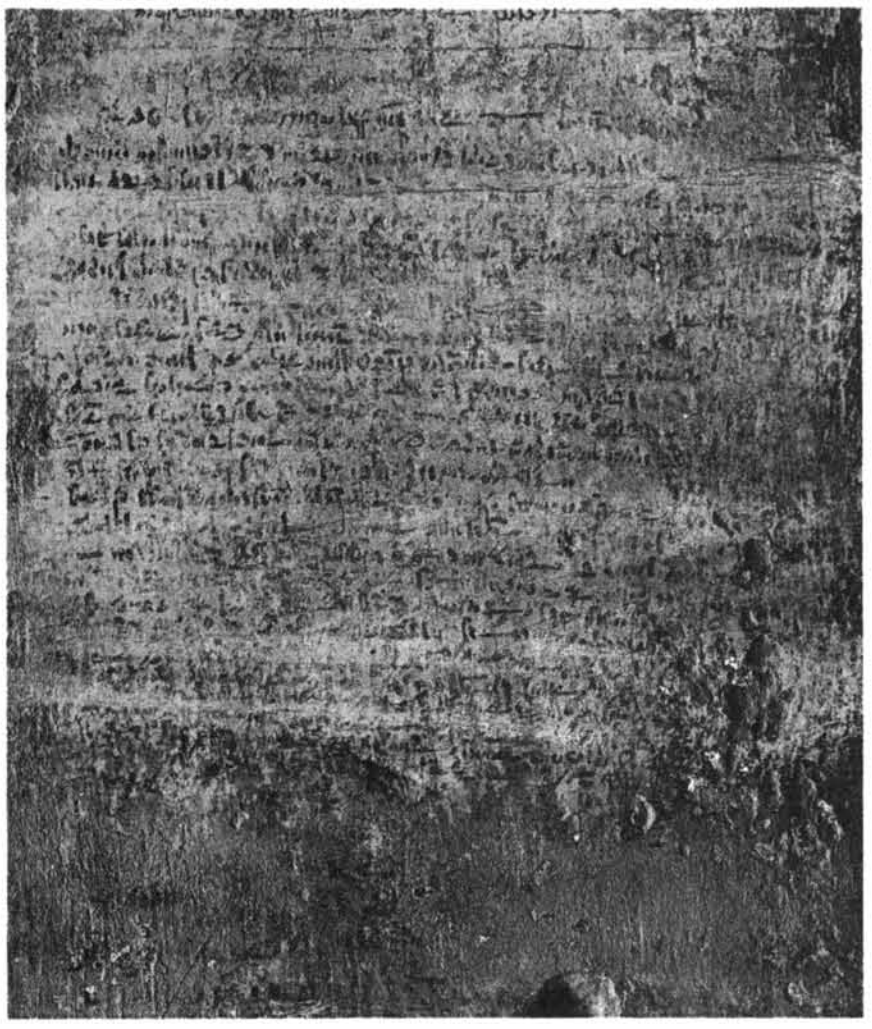
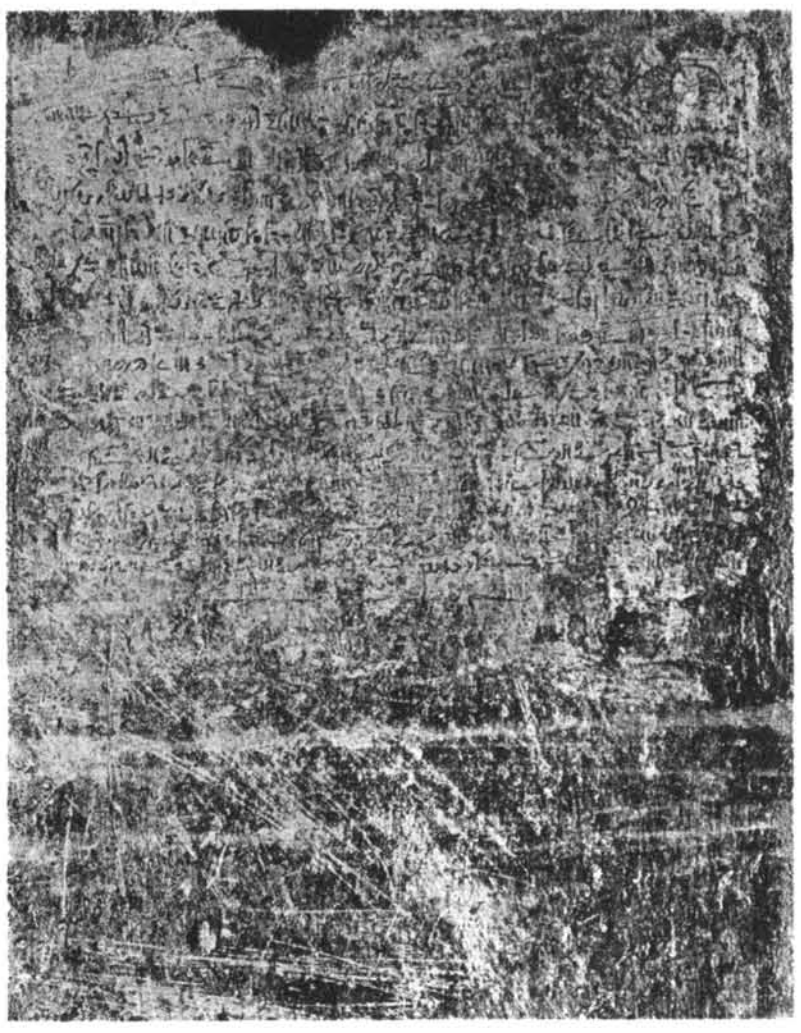


A



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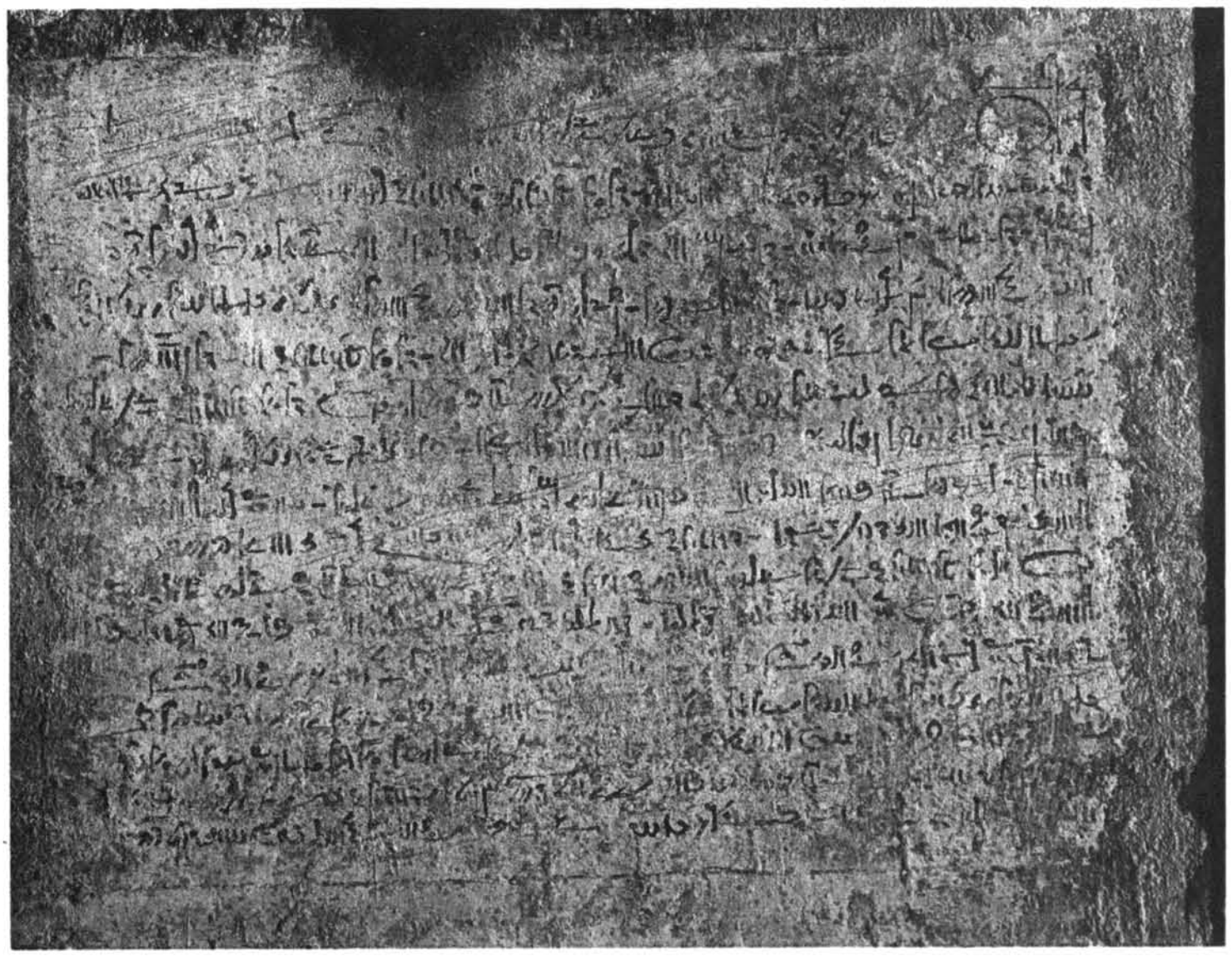

C

A. NO. 46 AFTER FINAL CLEANING

B. ABOVE, NO. 45 AFTER PRELIMINARY CLEANING. BELOW, ANCIENT PLASTER COVERING THE FIRST 12 OR 13 LINES OF NO. 46

C. NO. 45 AFTER FINAL CLEANING

PLATE 18

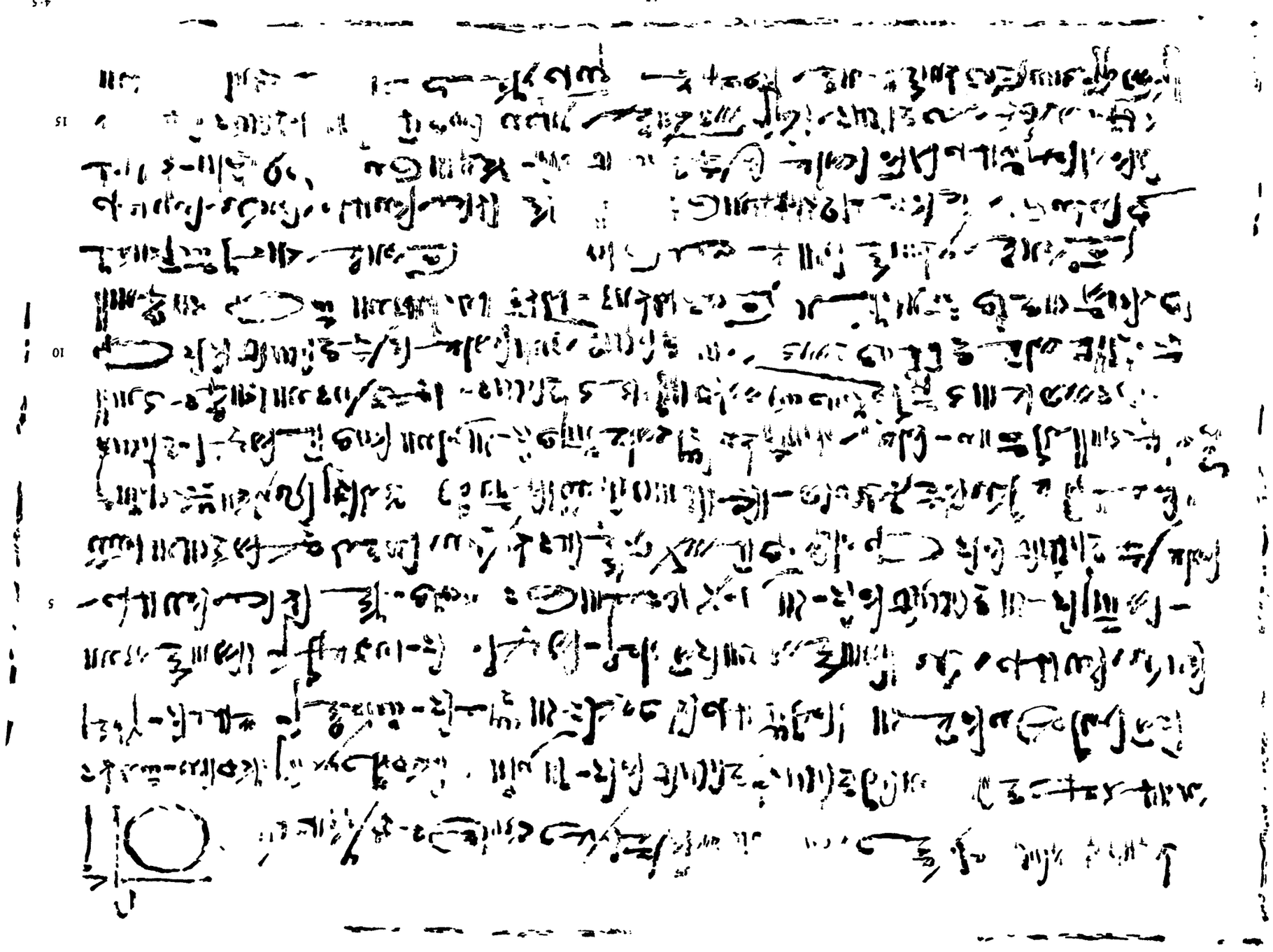

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PLATE 19

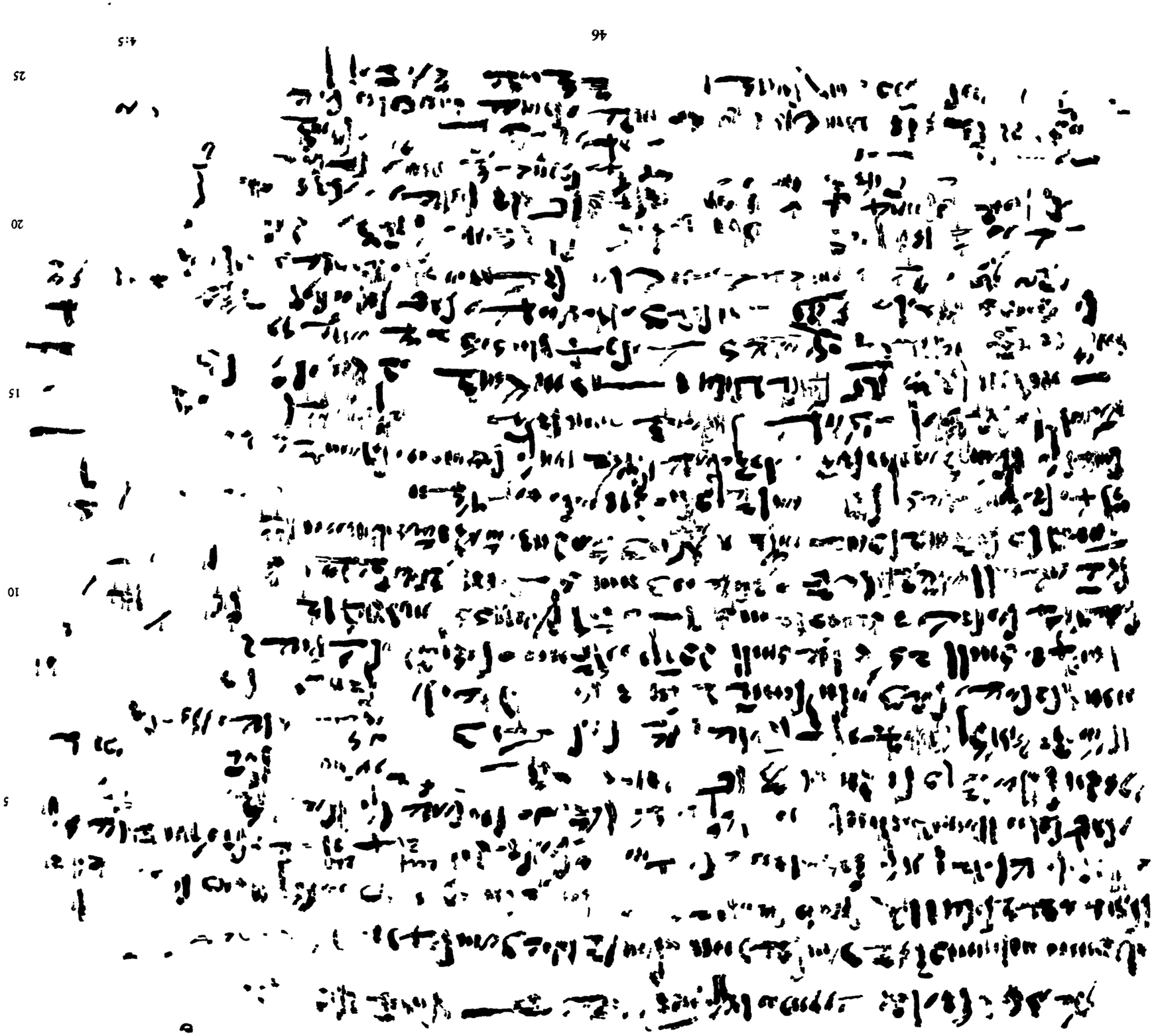

PLATE 20

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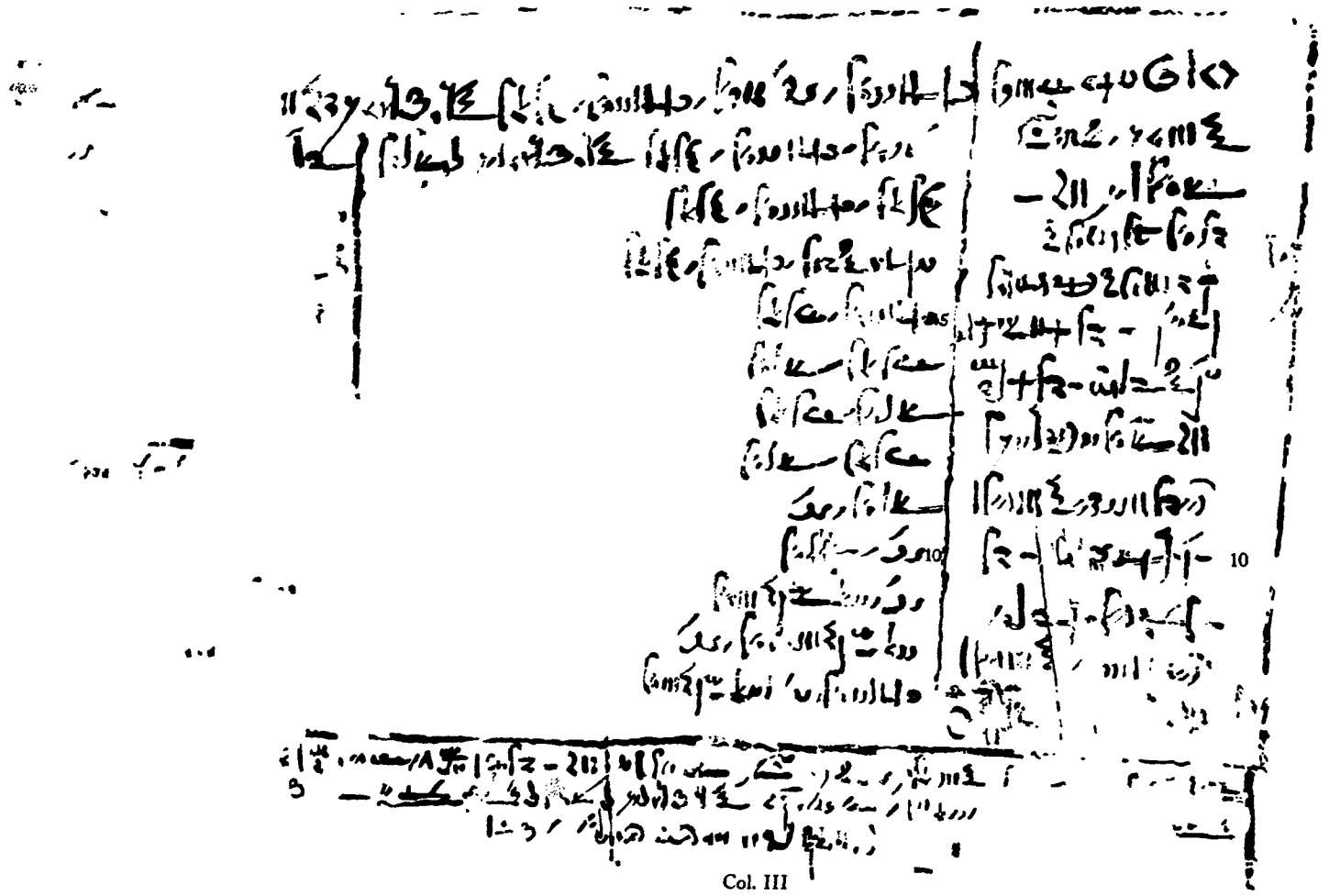

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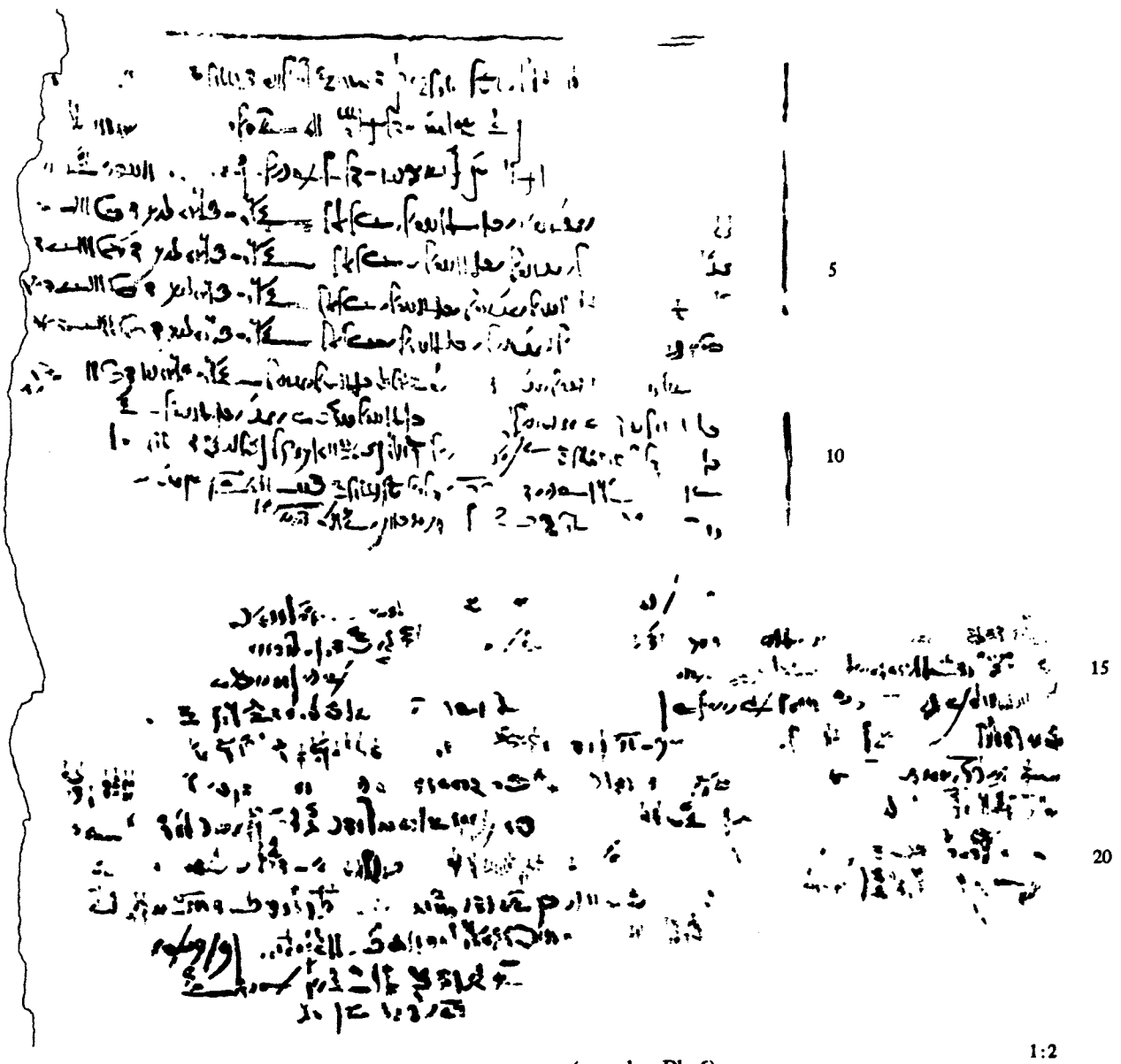
49 (see also Pl. 6)



1:2

50 (see also Pl. 6)

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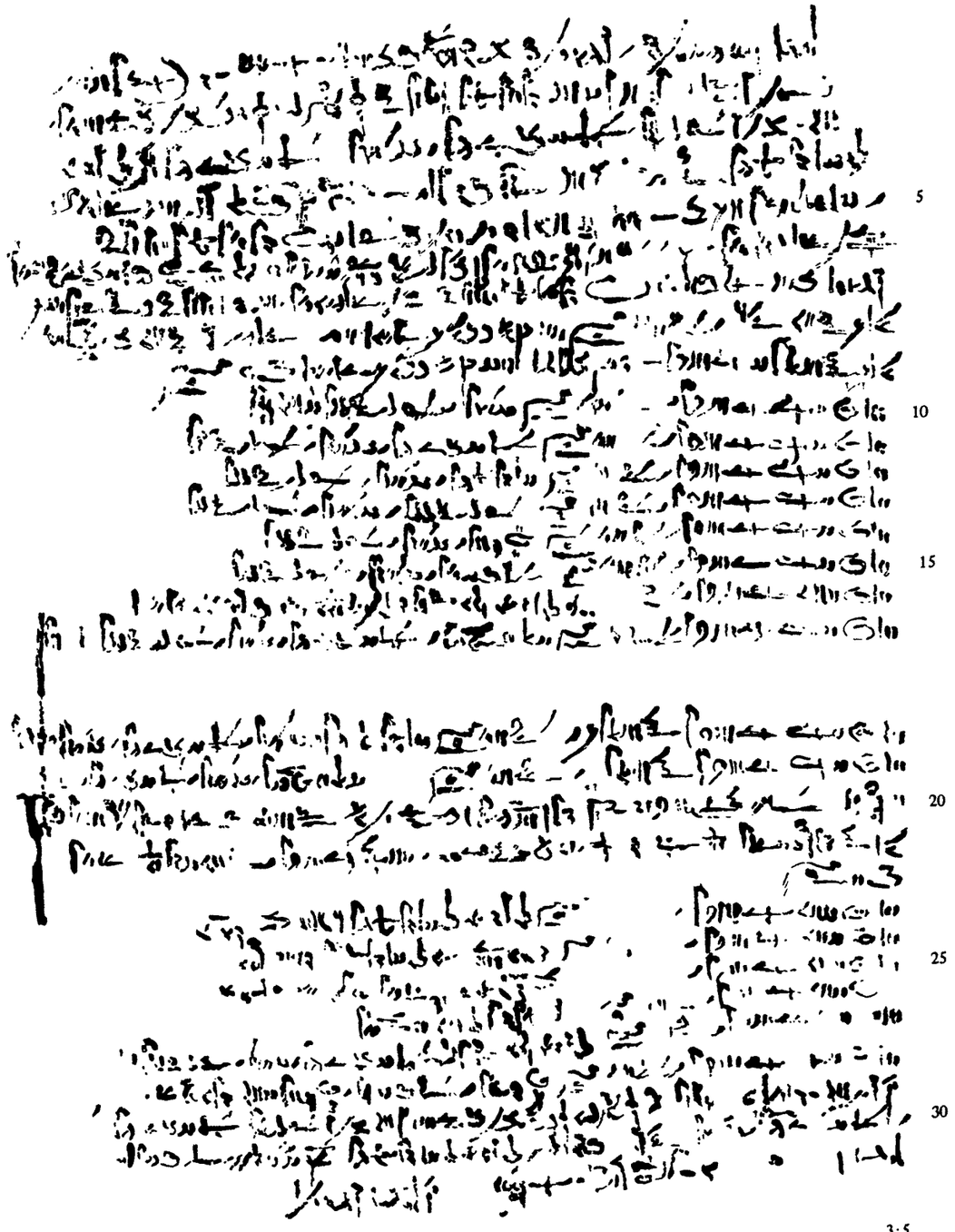
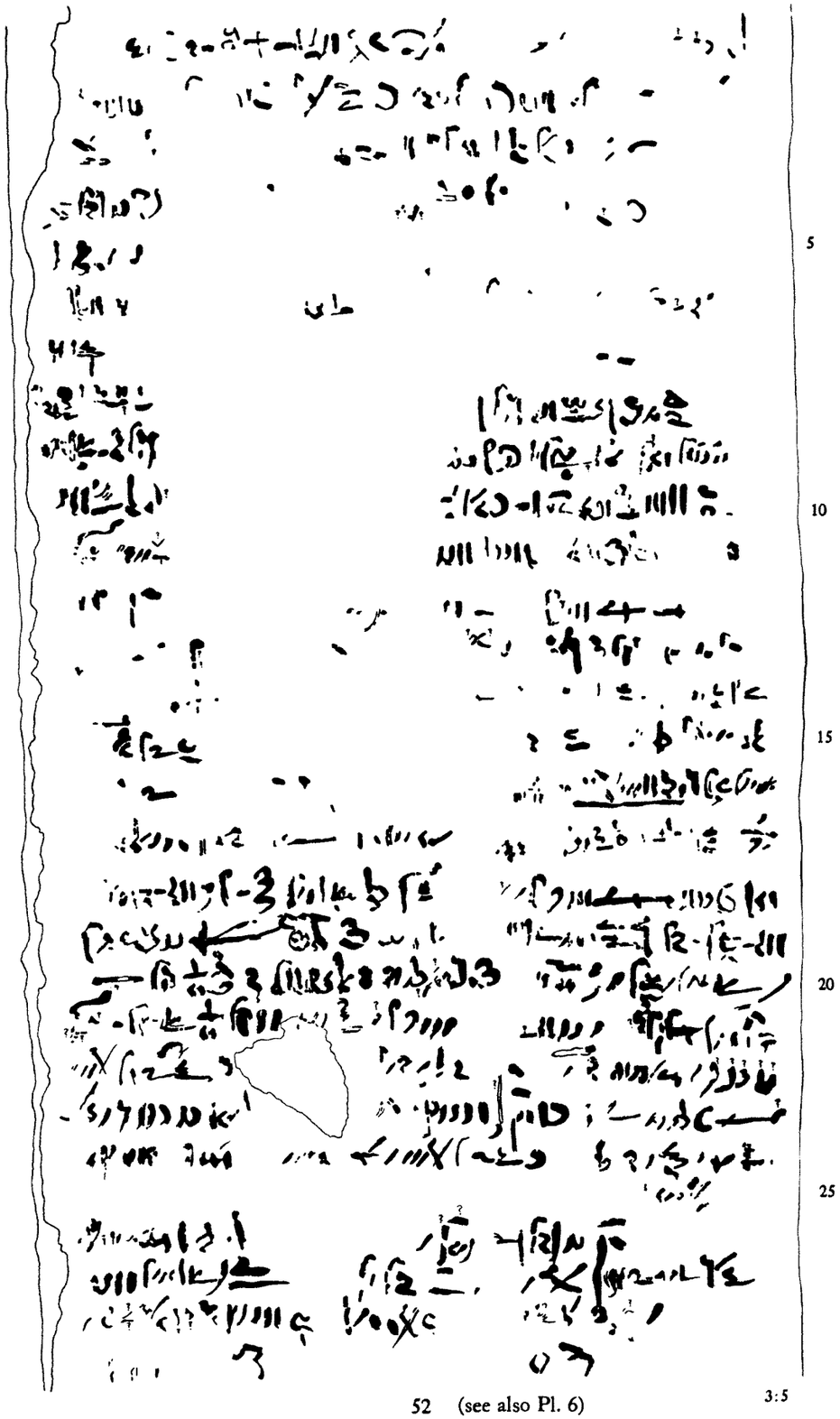


51 (see also Pl. 6)



52 (see also Pl. 6)

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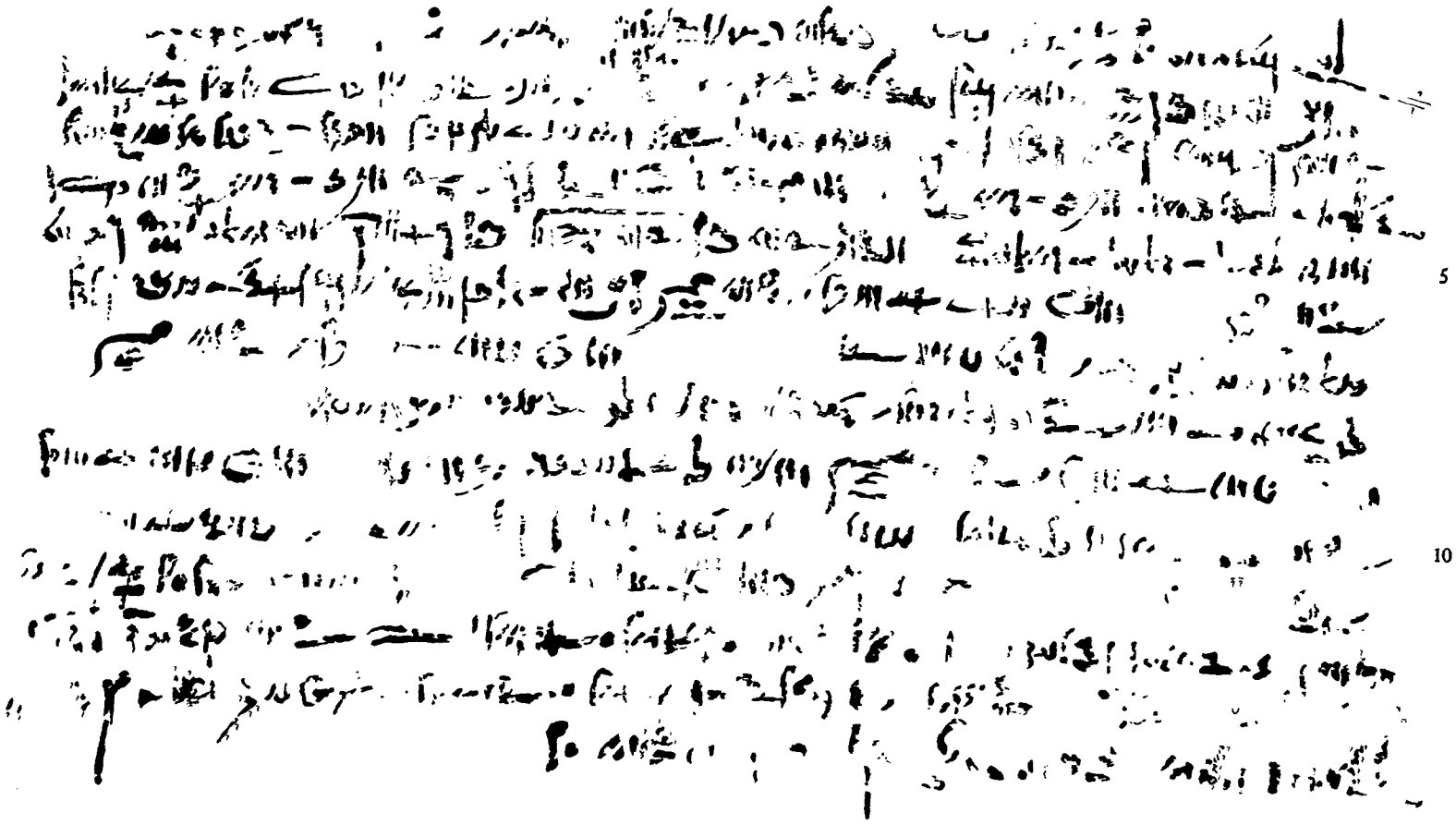

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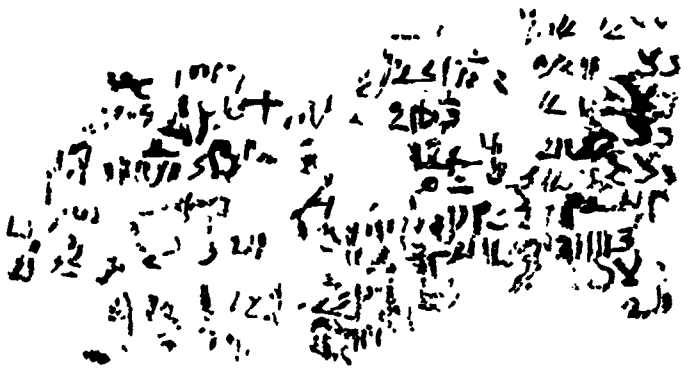

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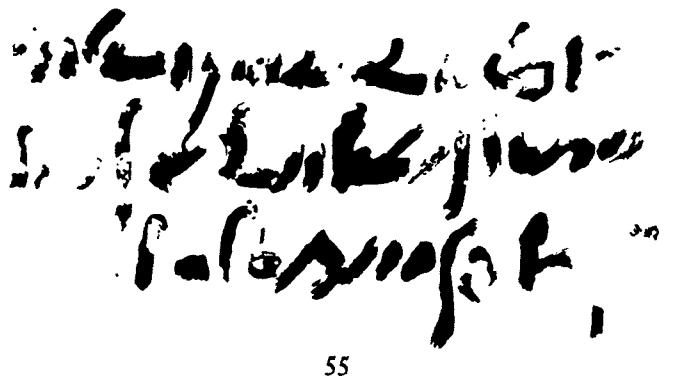

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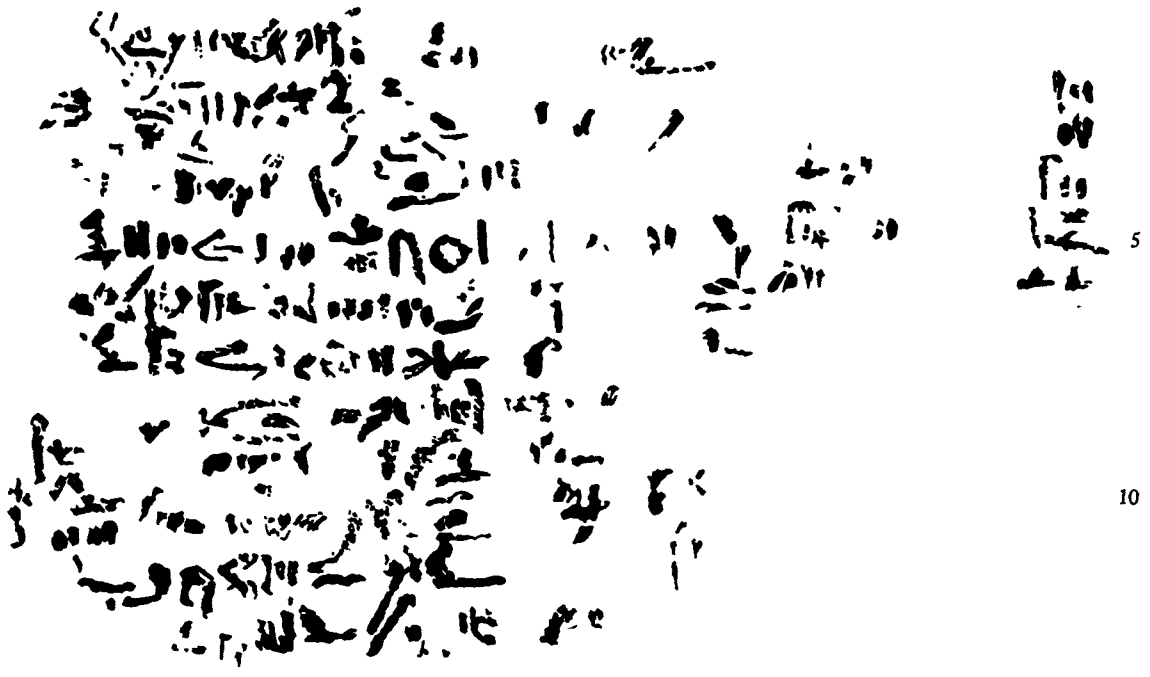

56

All 1:2

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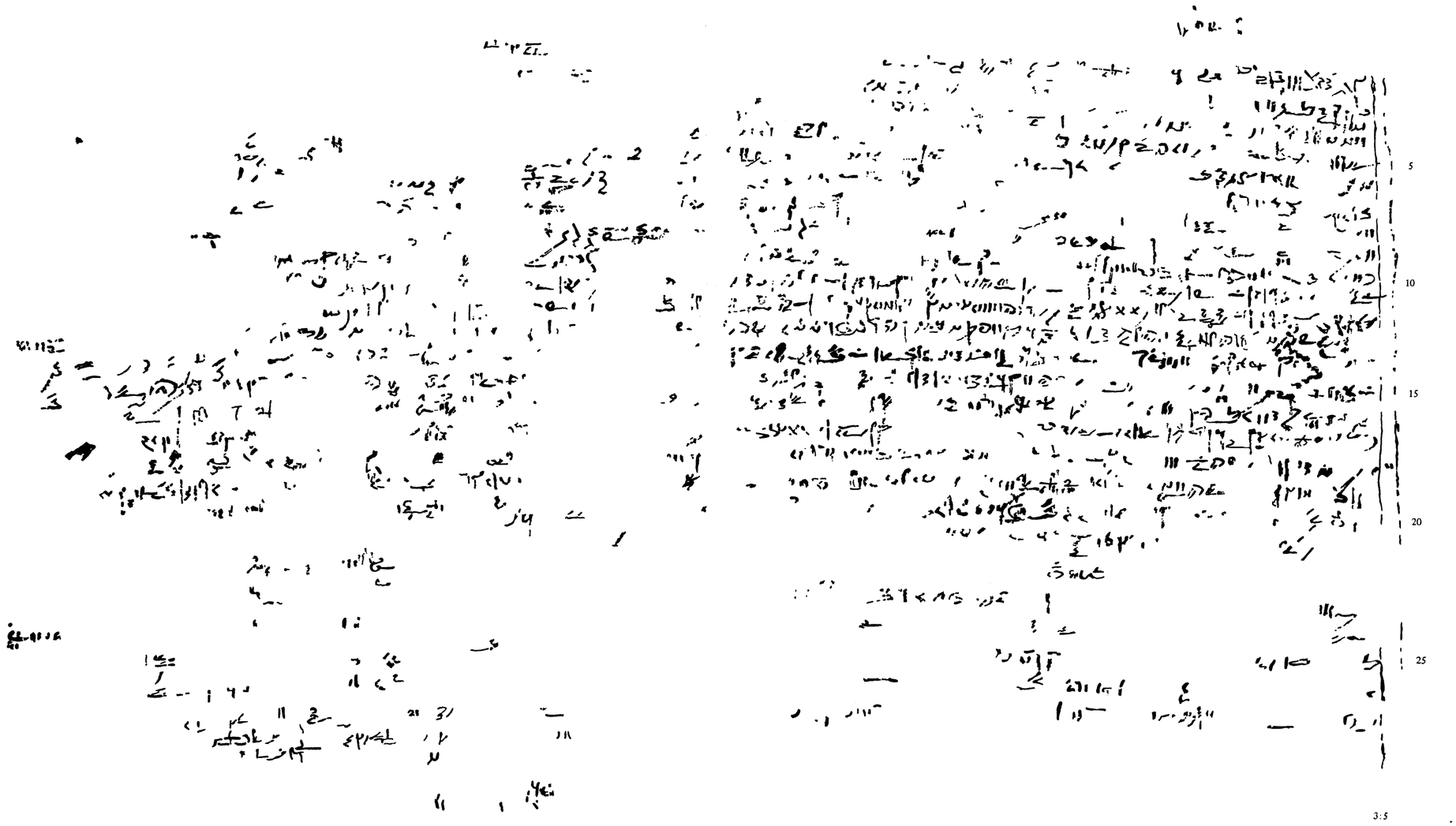
2:5

57 (see also Pl. 6)



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58

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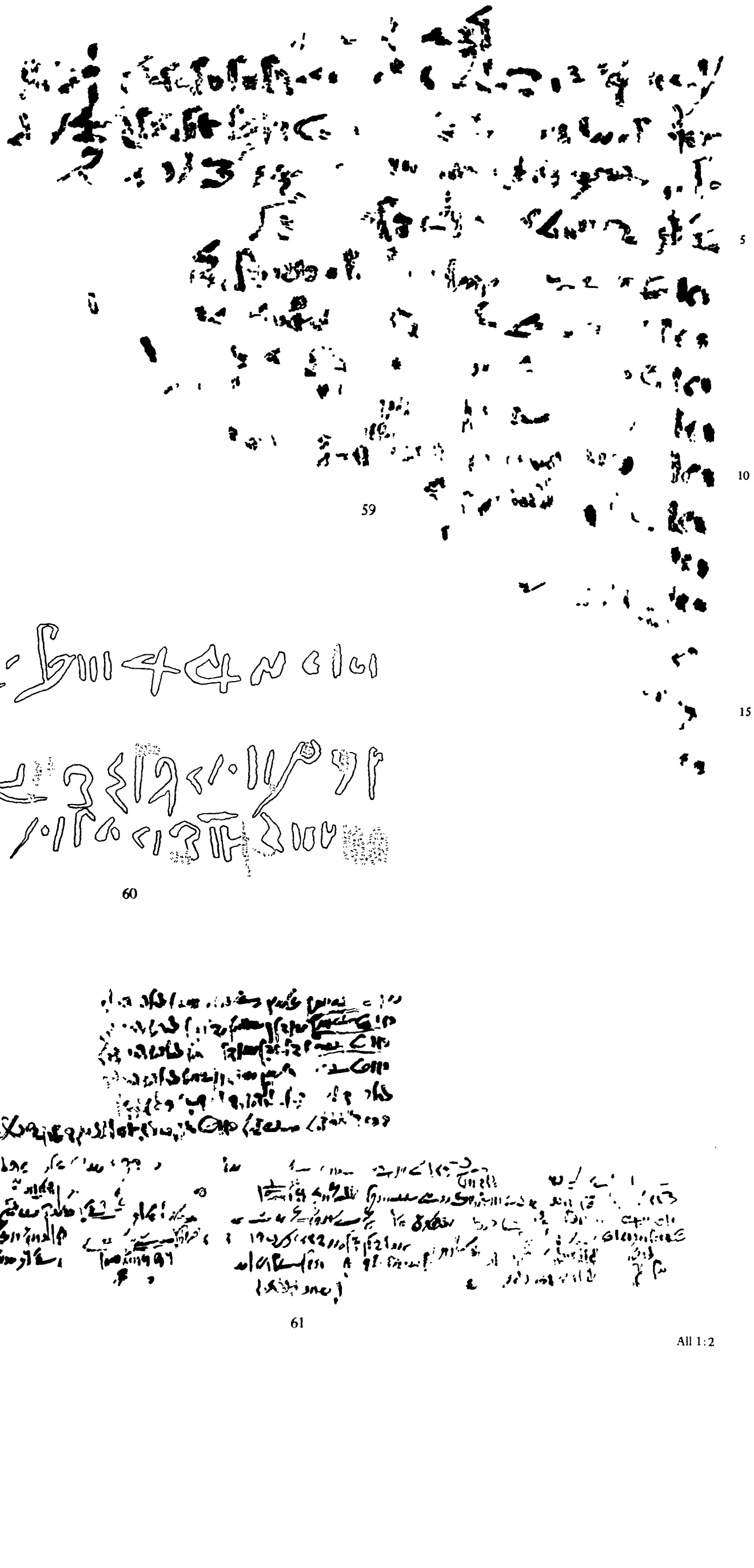

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61

All 1:2

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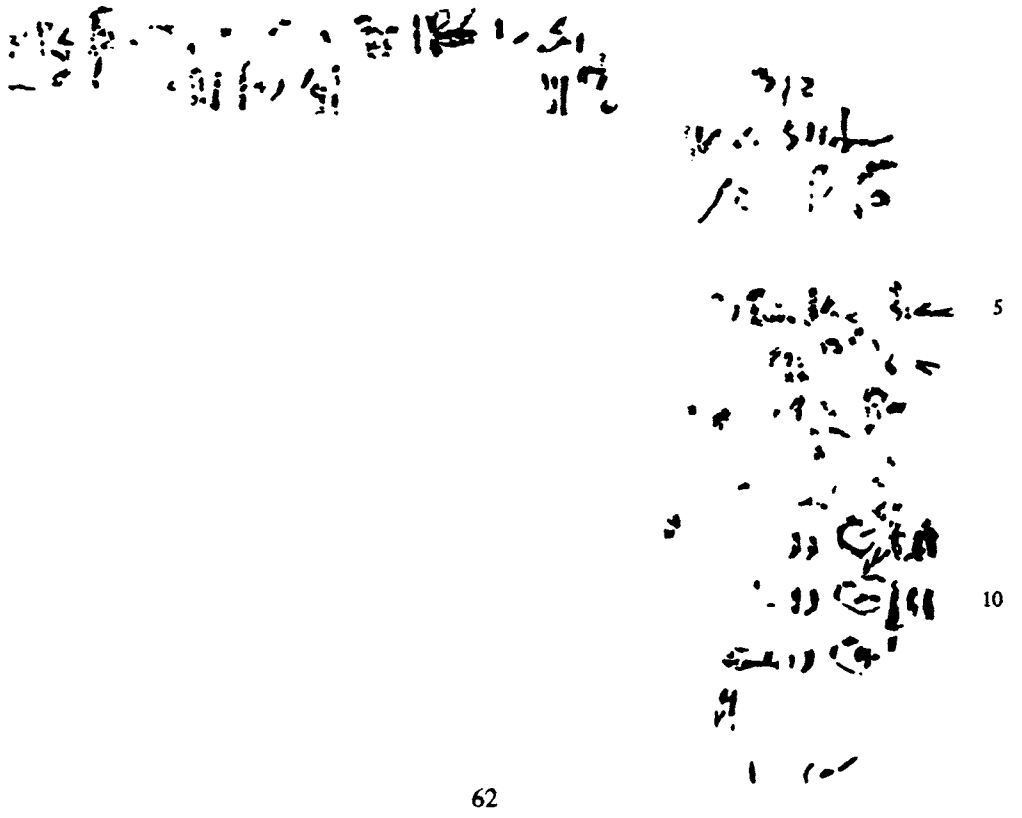

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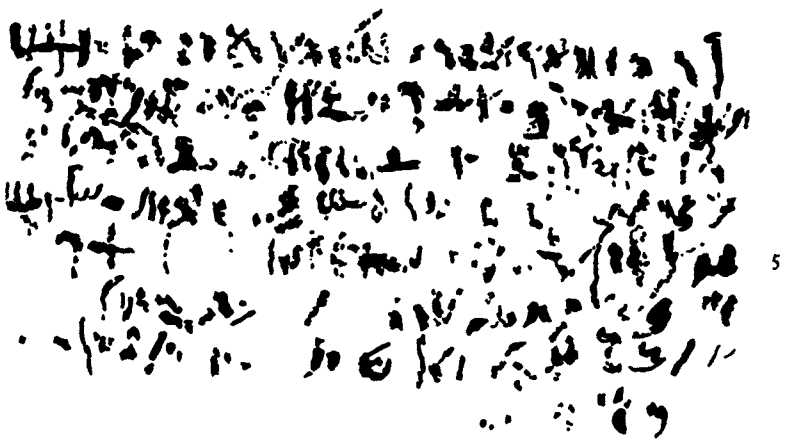

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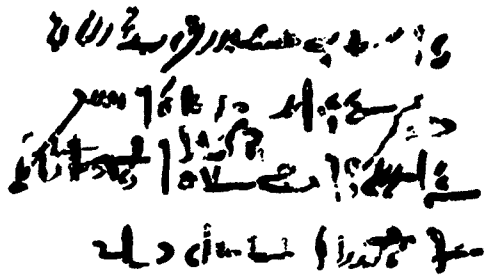

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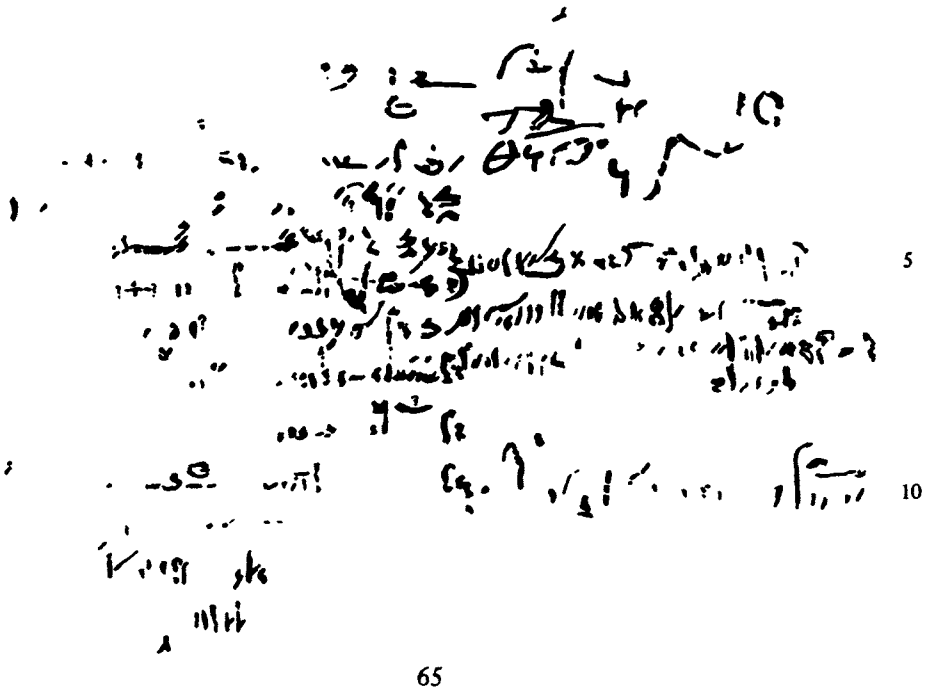

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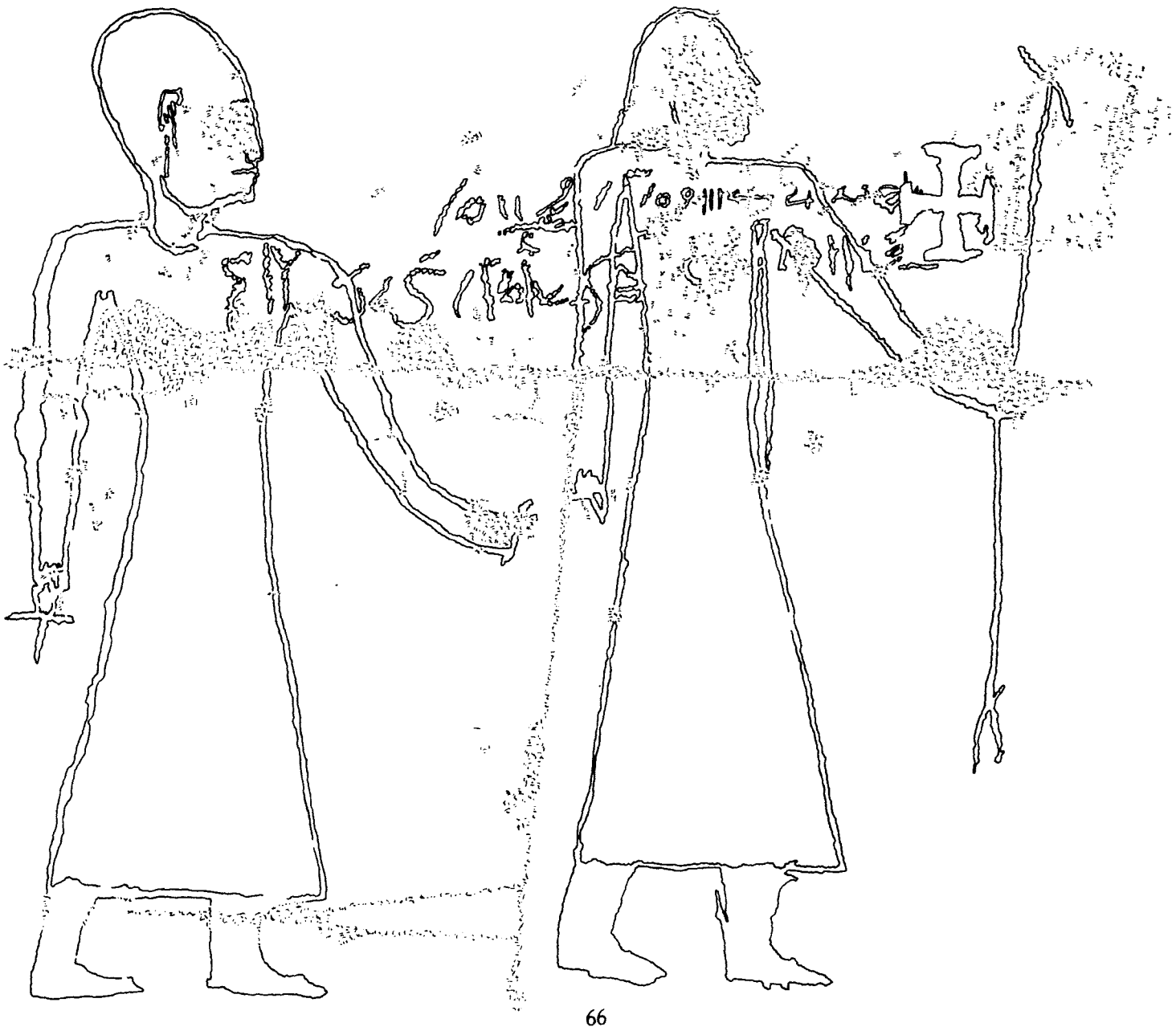

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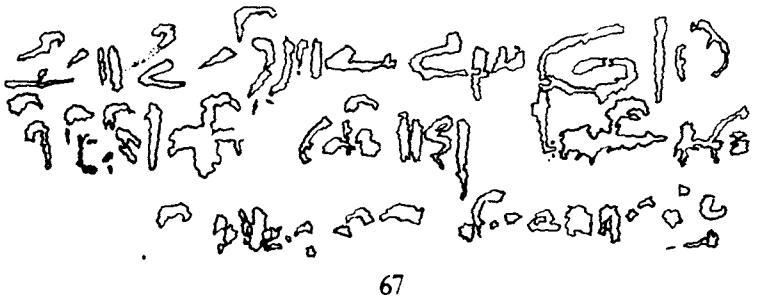

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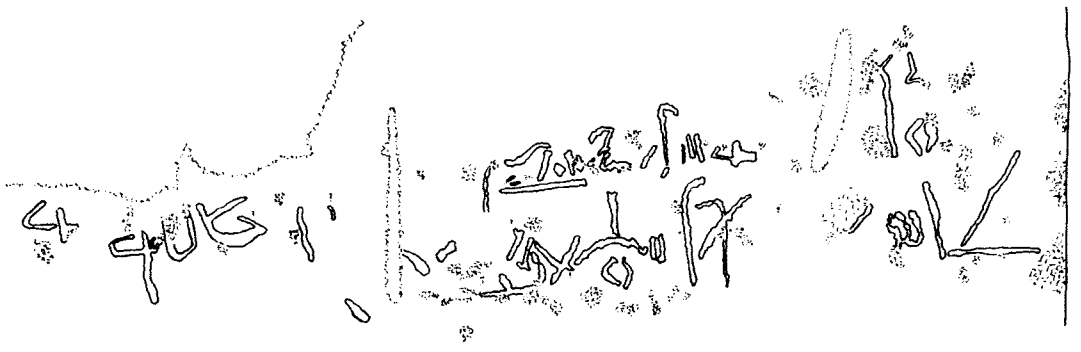

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All 1:5

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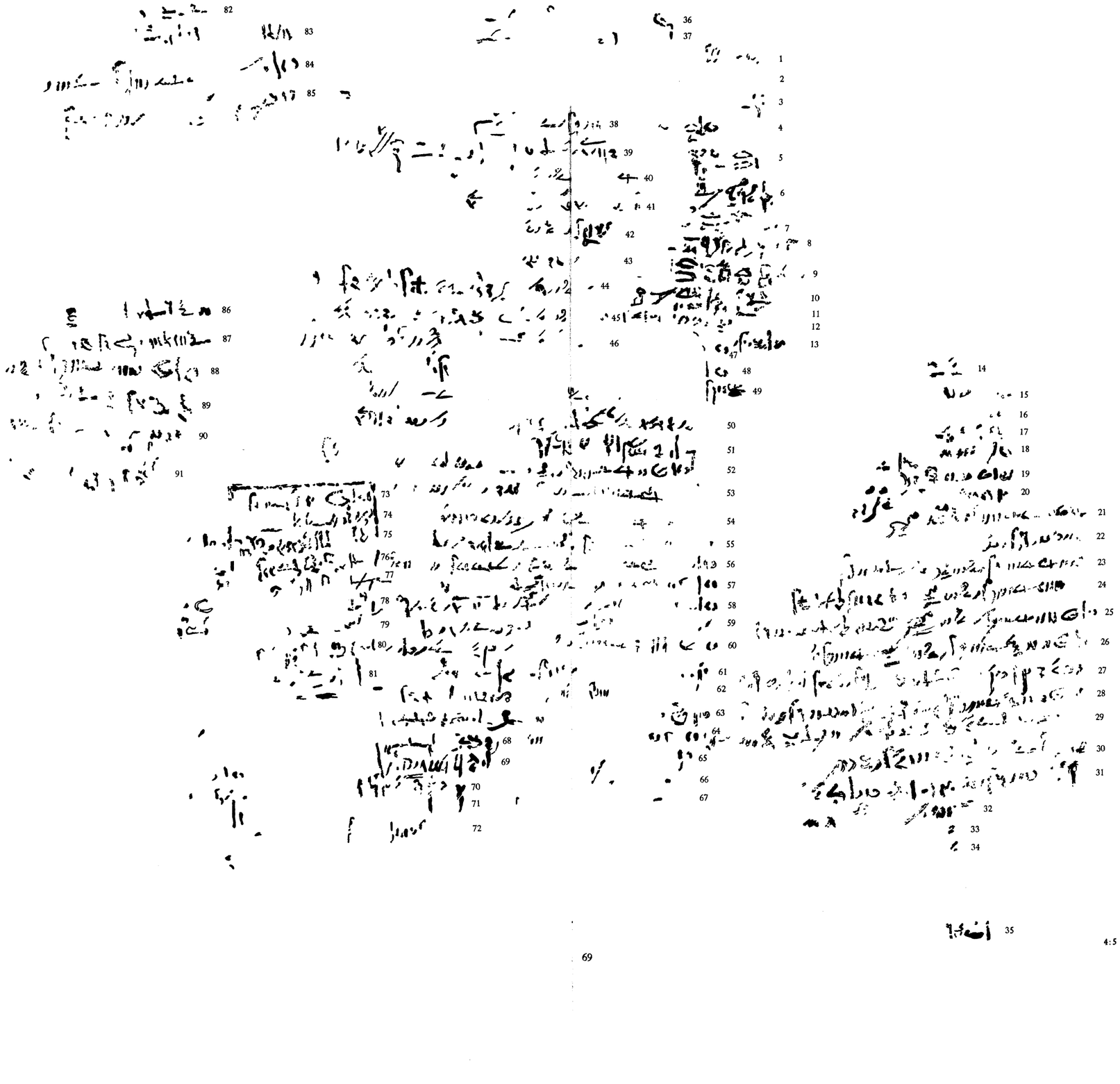

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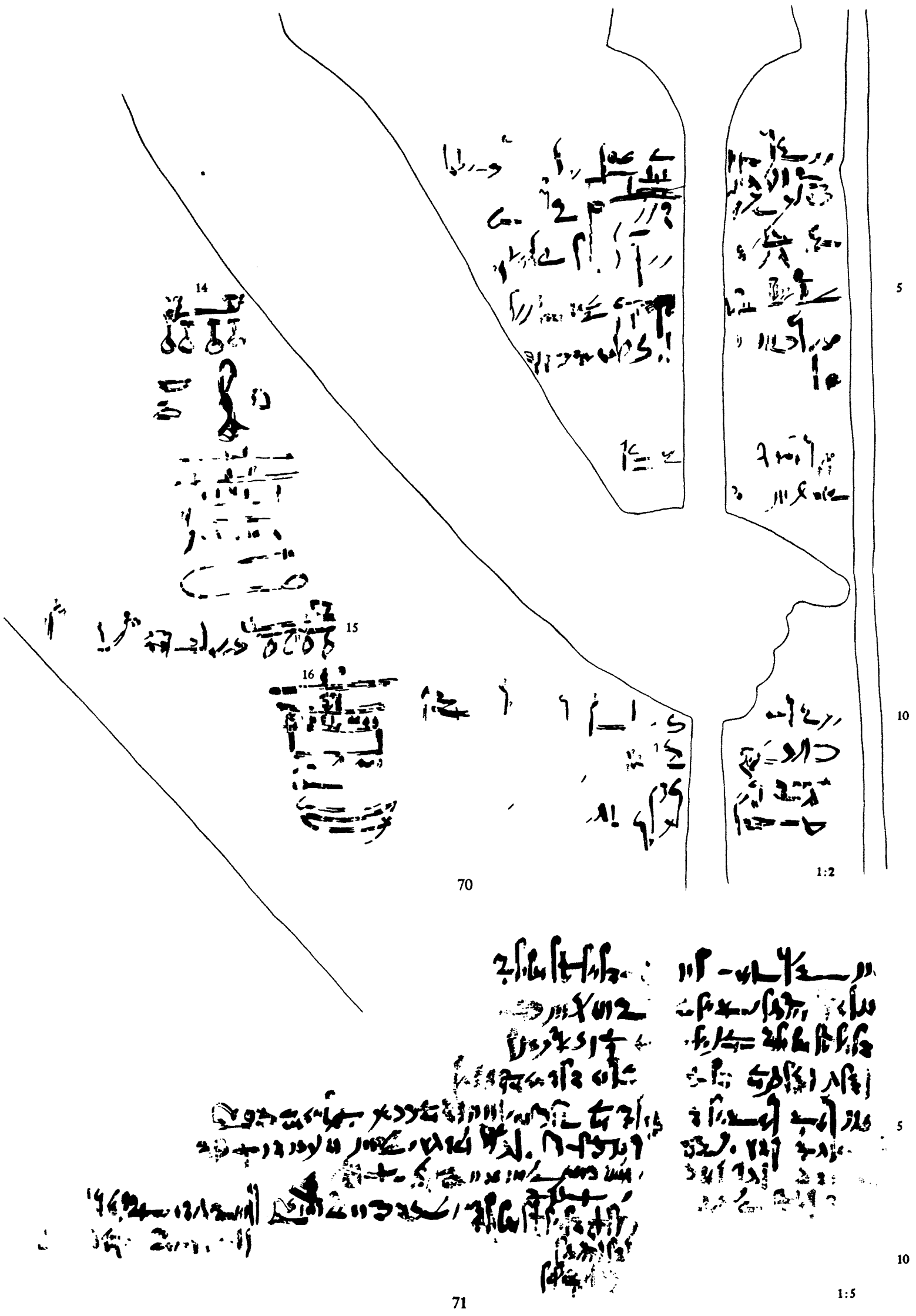

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71

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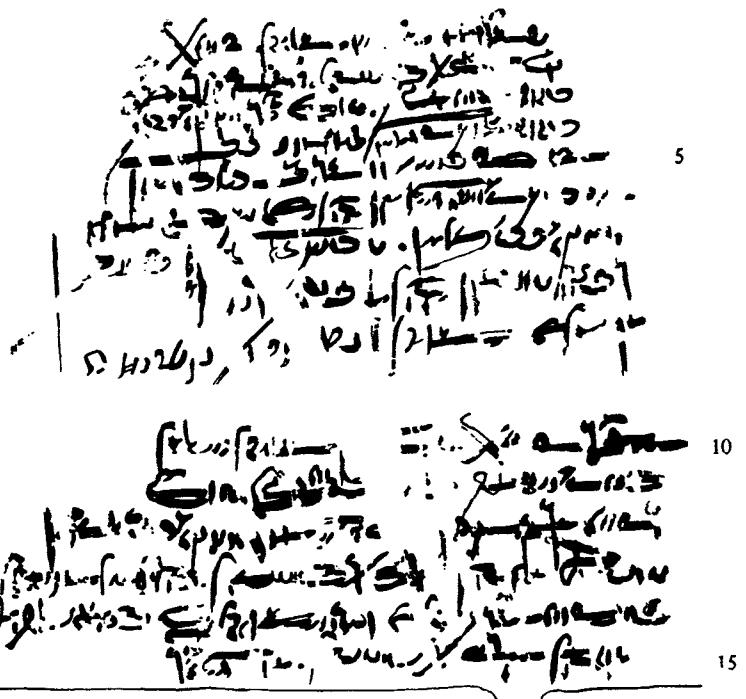

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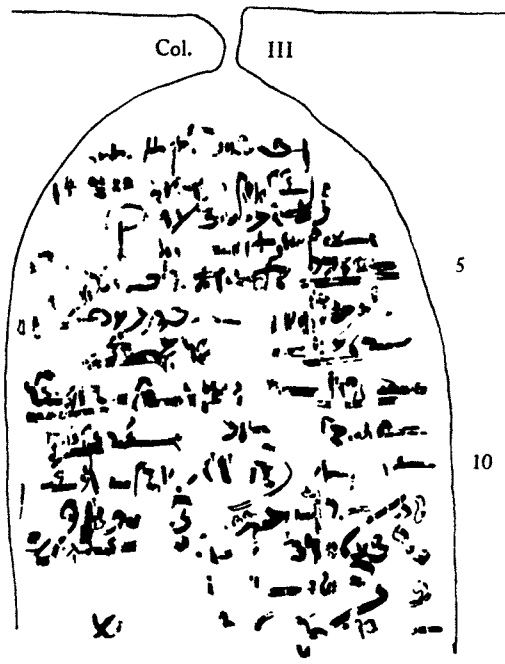

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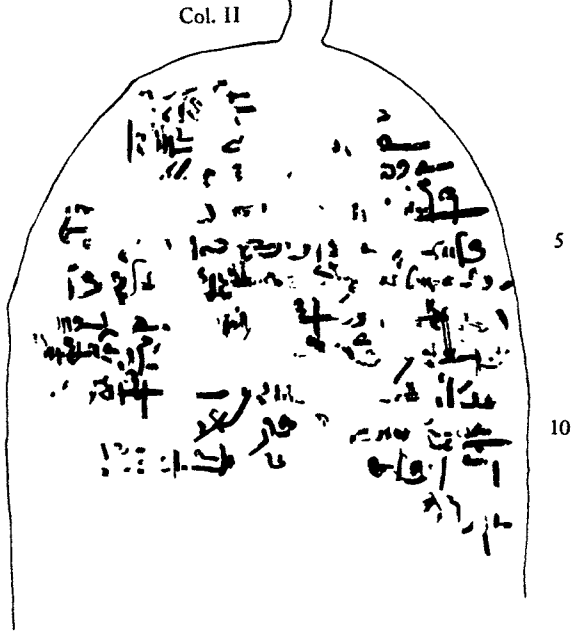

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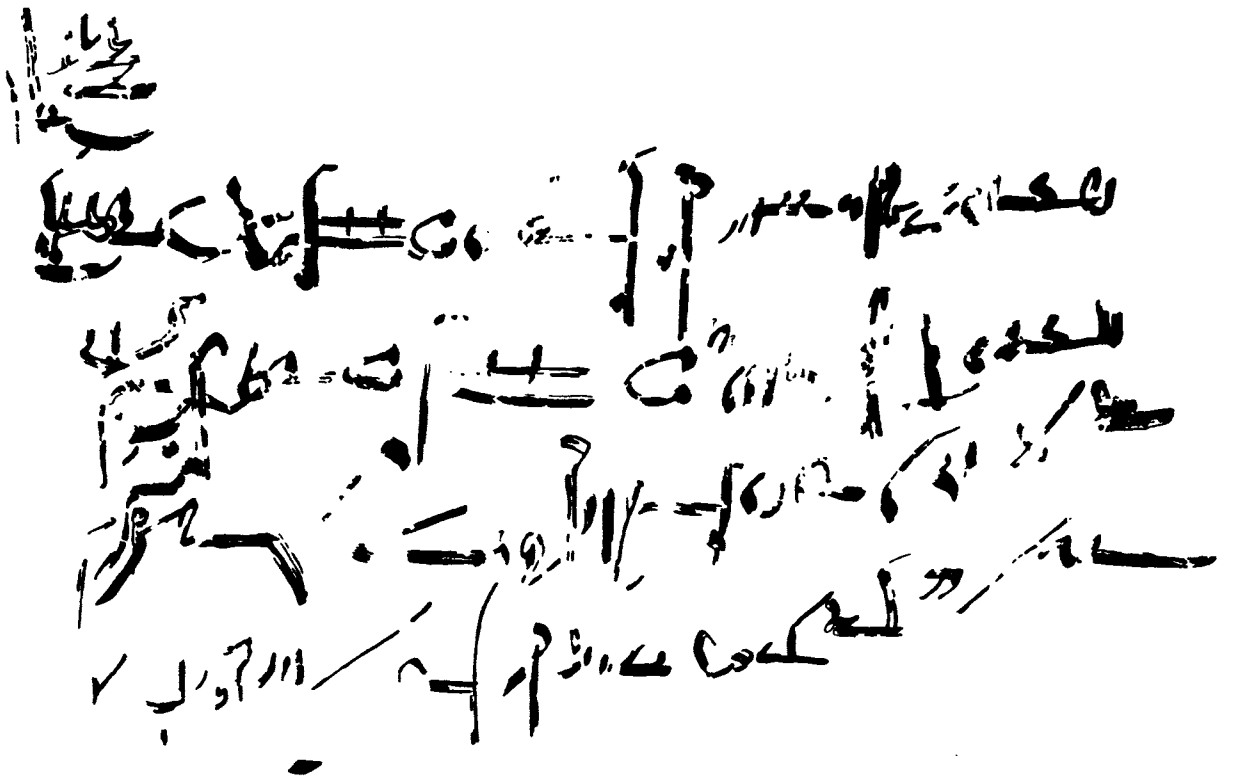

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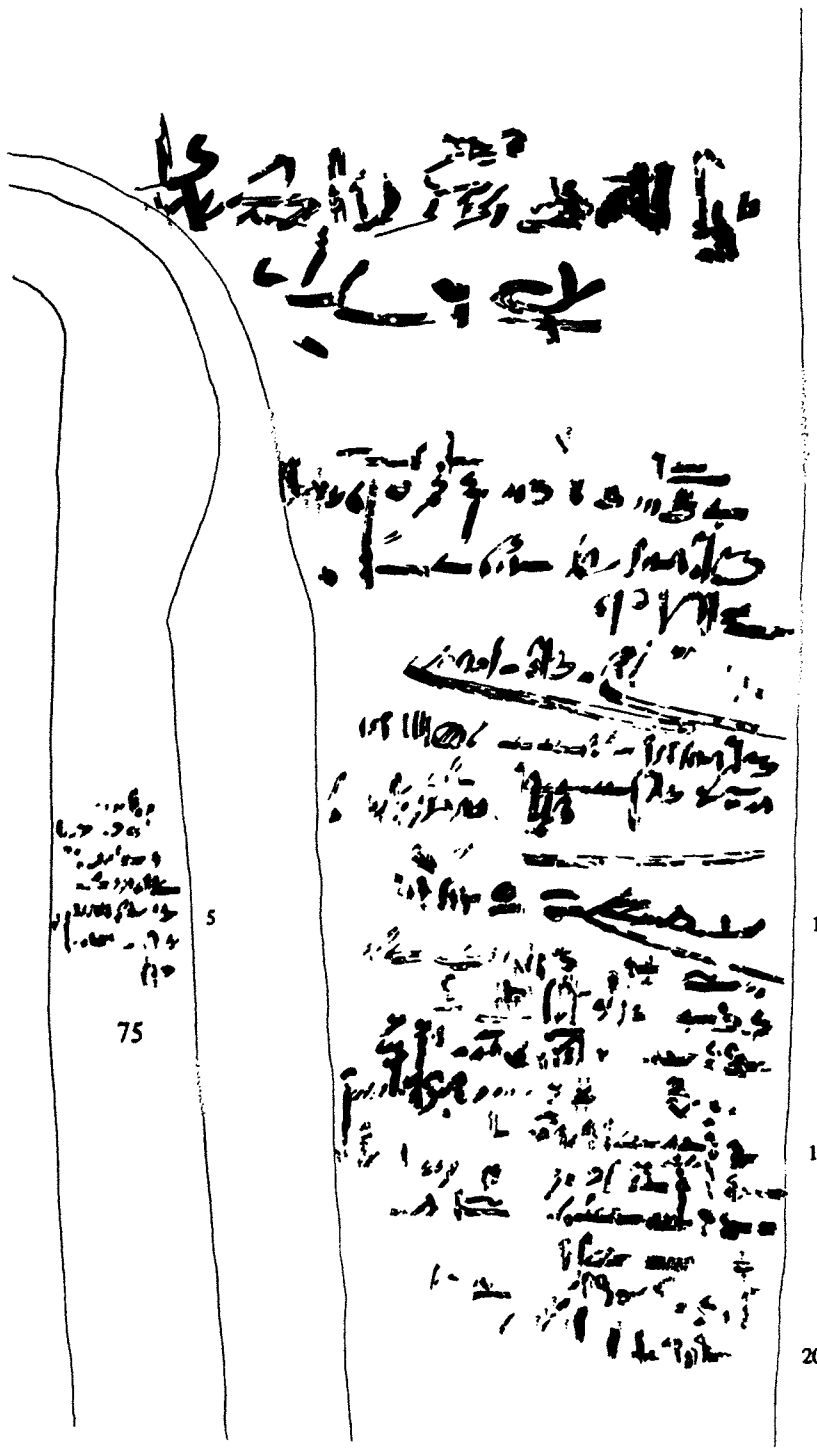

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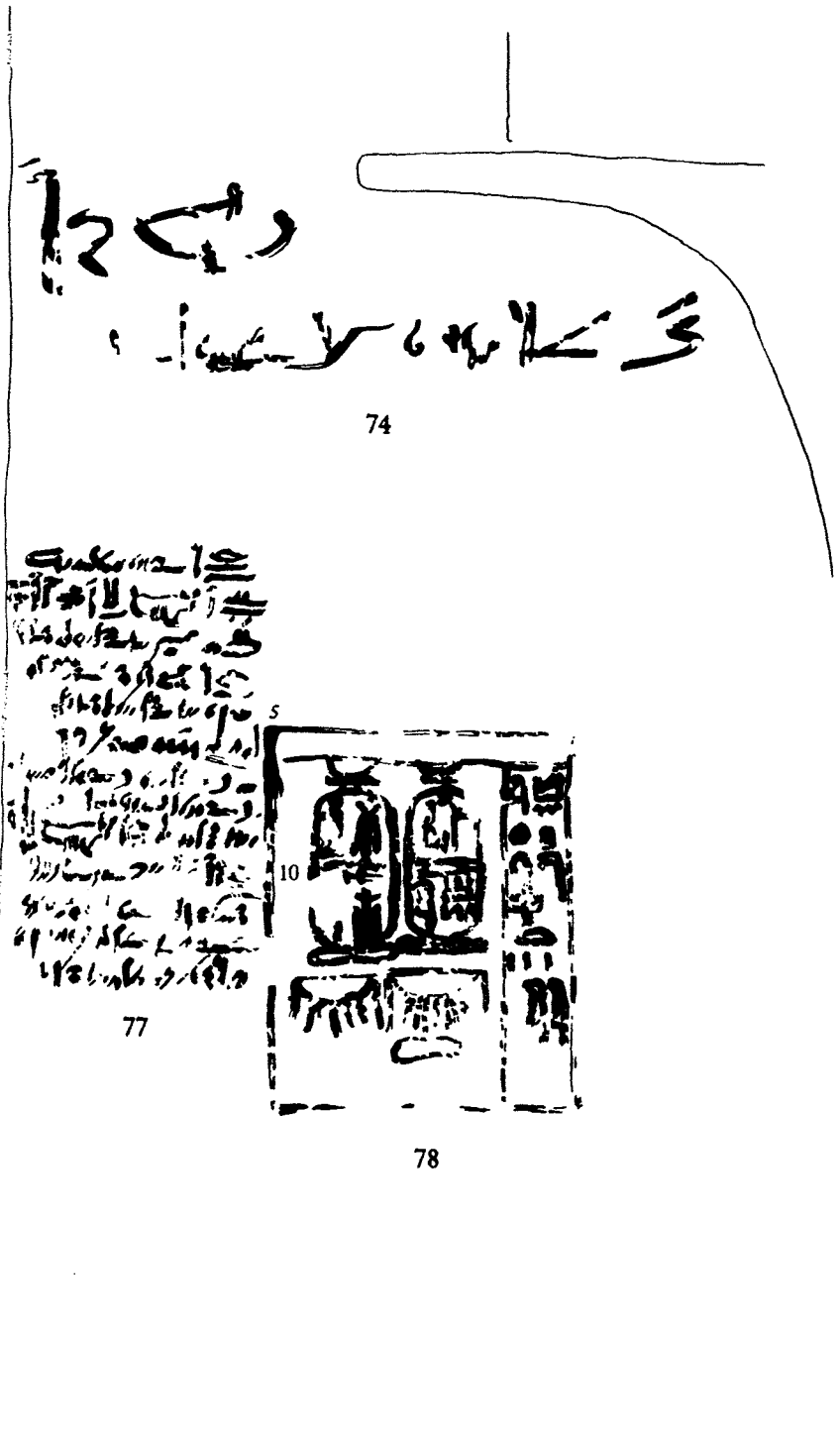

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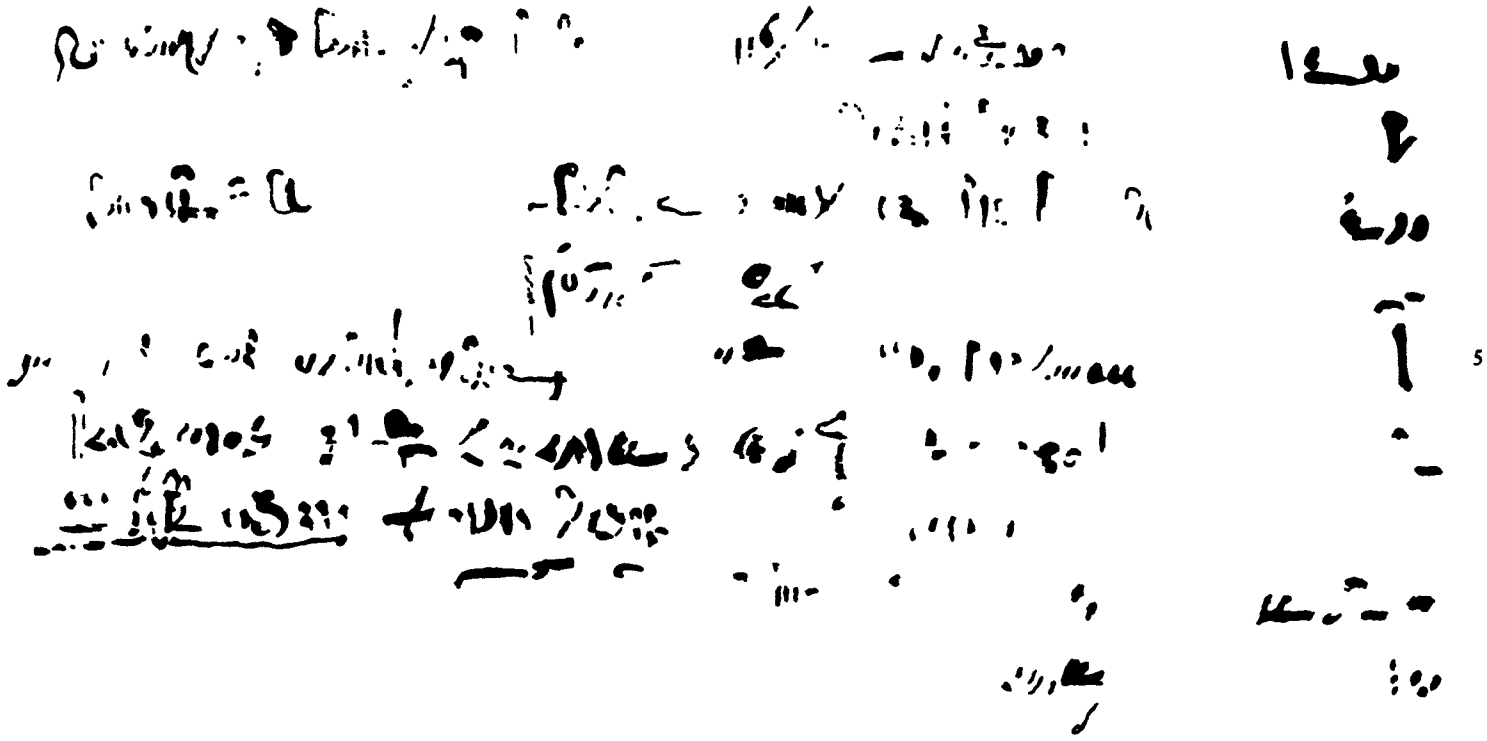

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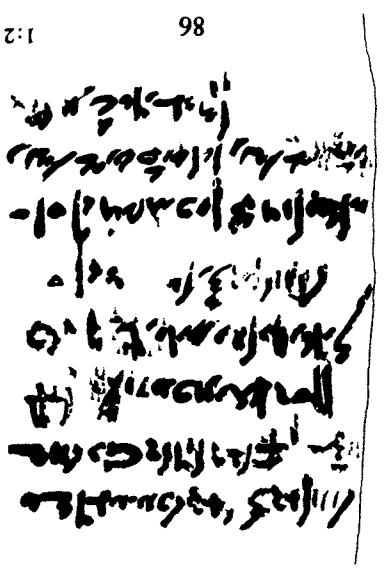
PLATE 32

PLATE 33

84 Scale unknown

83 1:2



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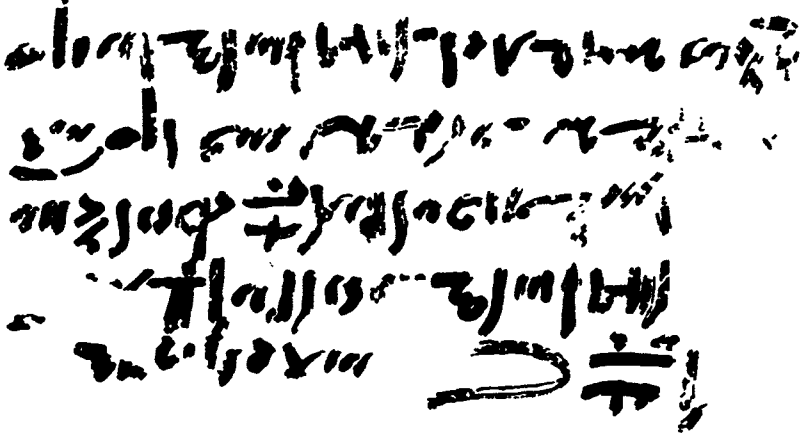

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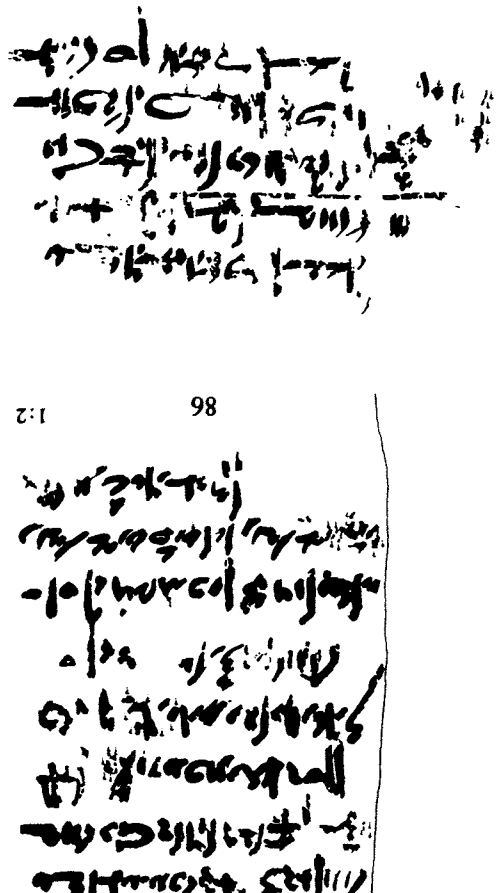

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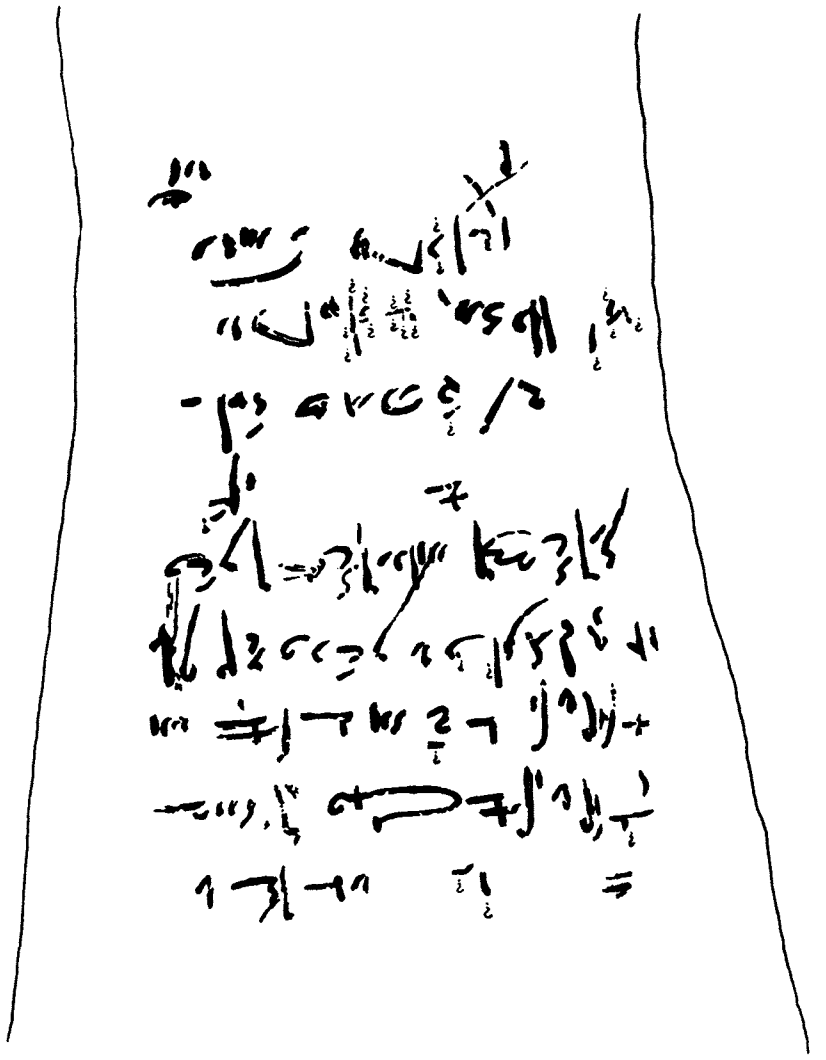

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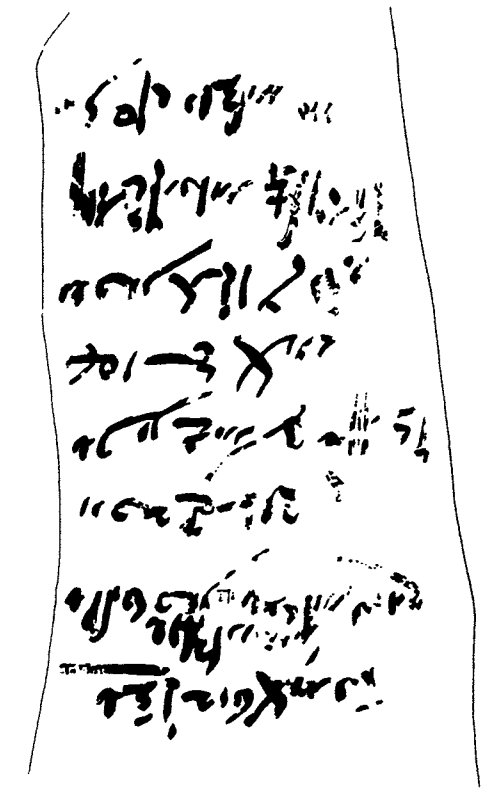

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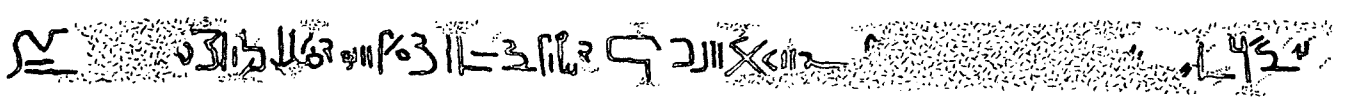
90 4:5



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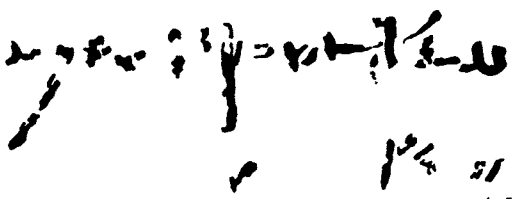
92 Scale unknown



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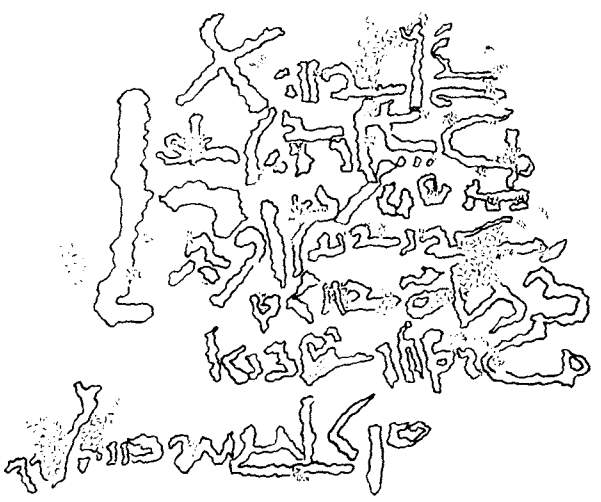
94 1:1



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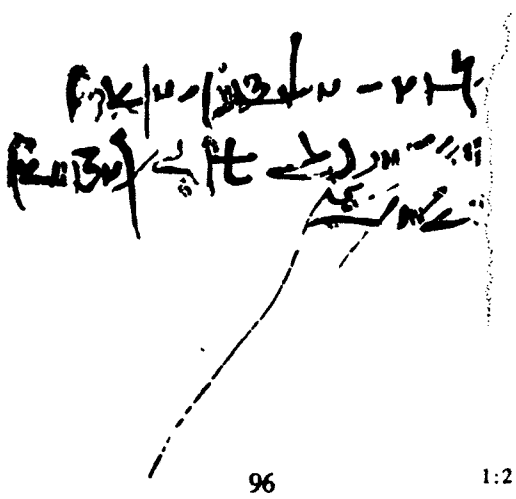

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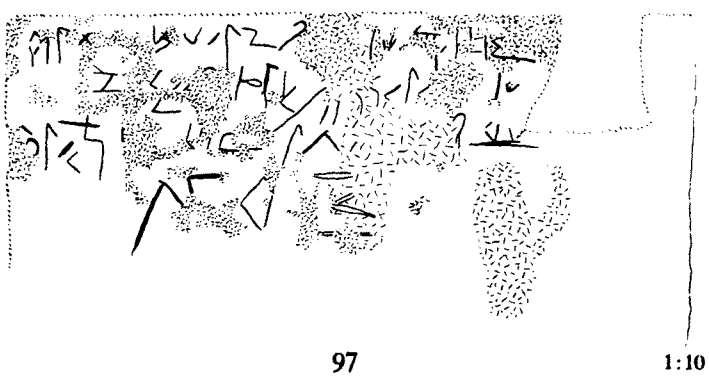

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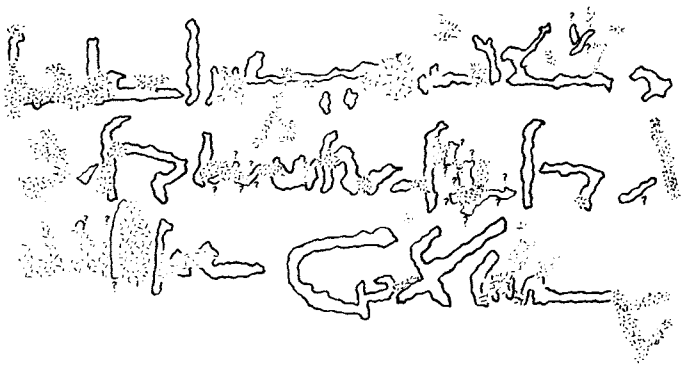

99 1:10

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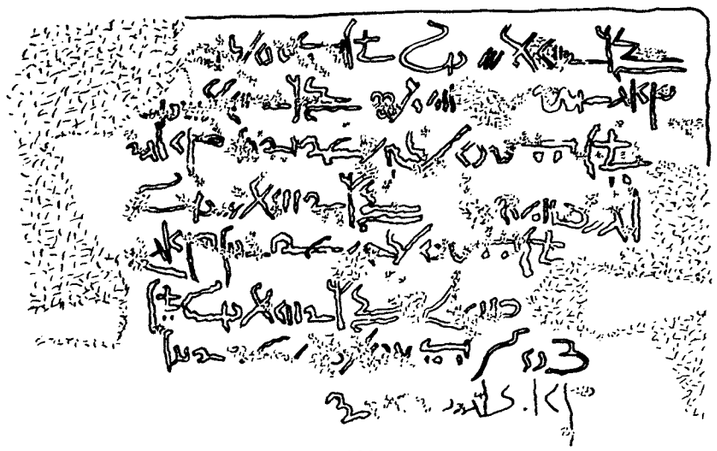

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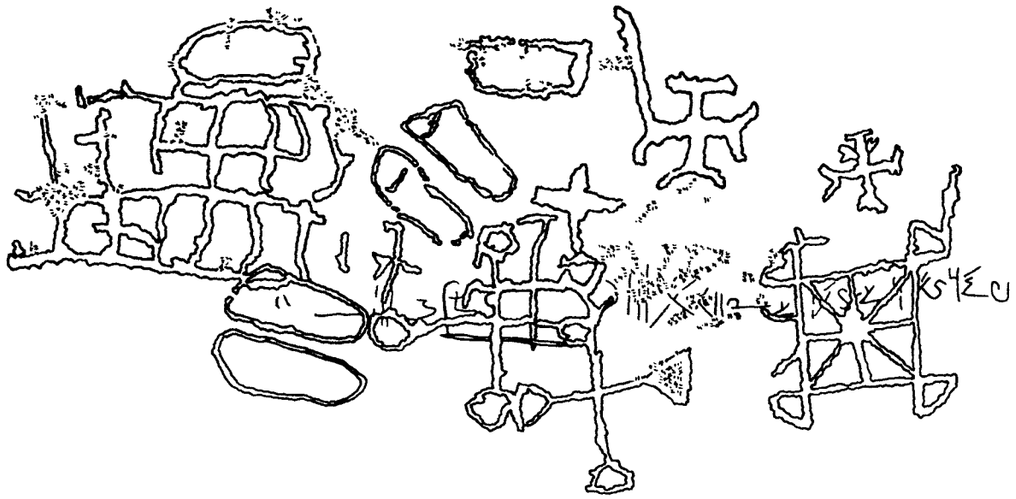
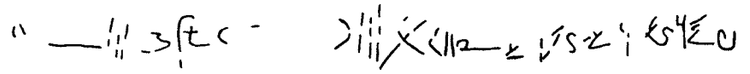
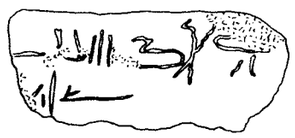


DEMOTIC TEXT OBSCURED BY LATER DESIGNS ETC.



DEMOTIC TEXT ALONE
101

102



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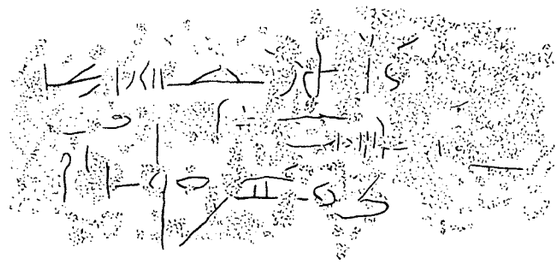

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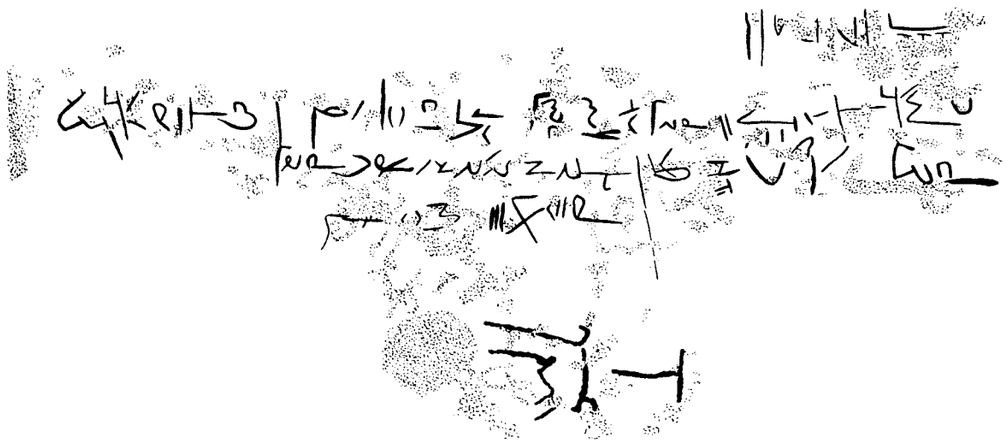

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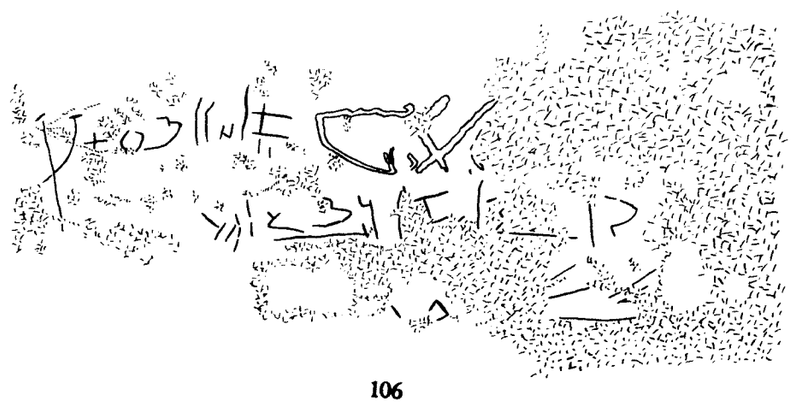

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All 1:10

PLATE 35

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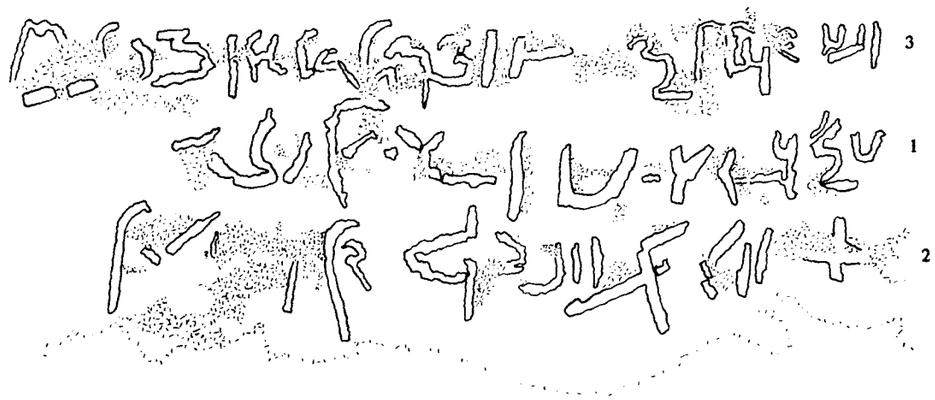
107



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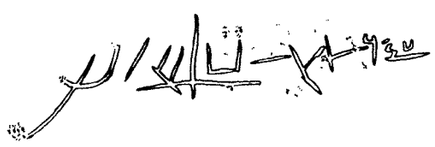

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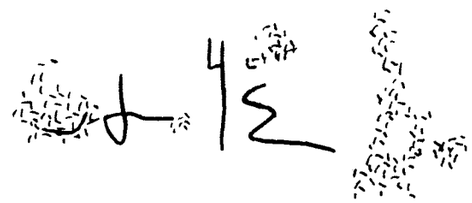

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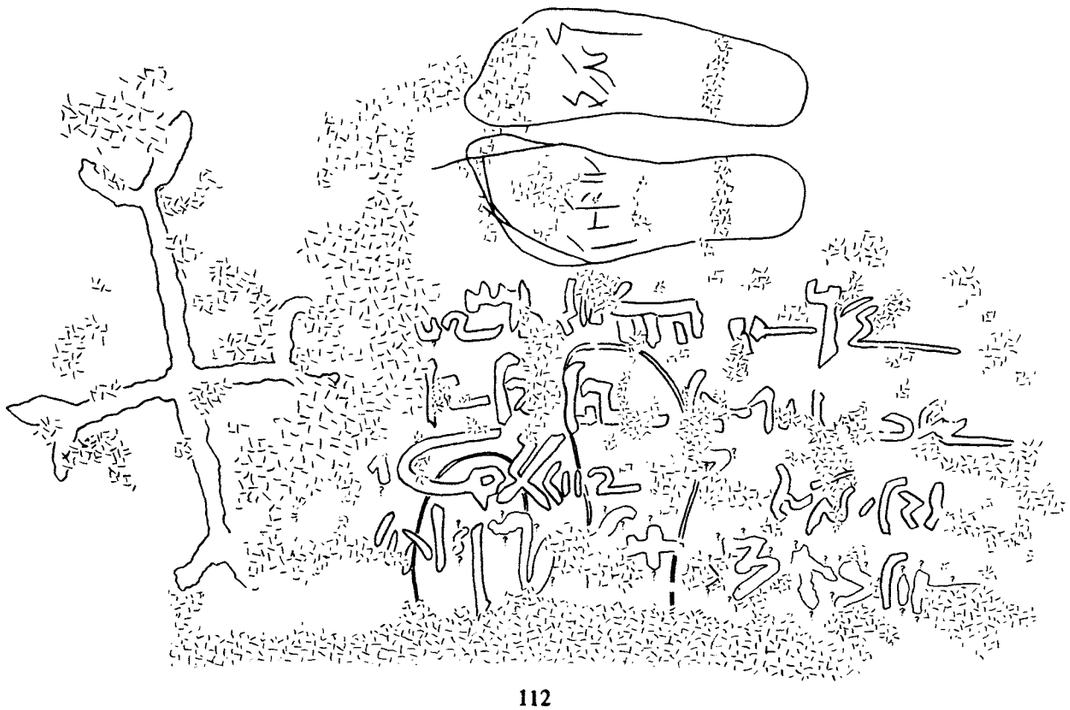

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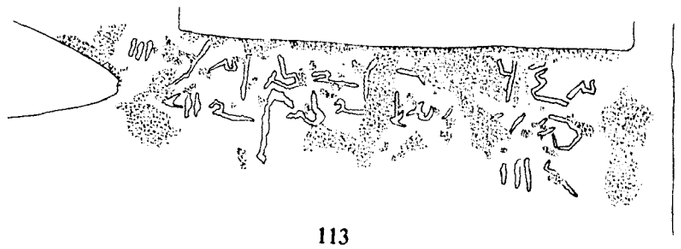

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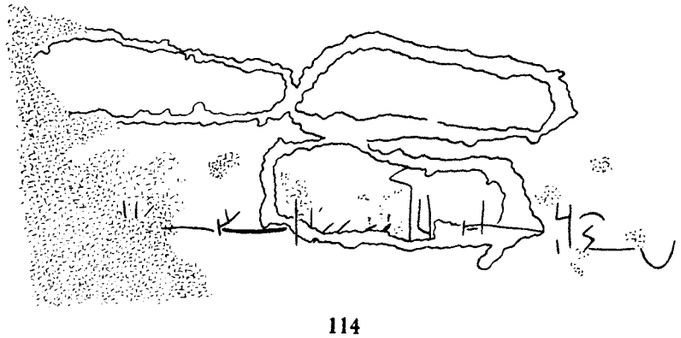

114

All 1:5

PLATE 36

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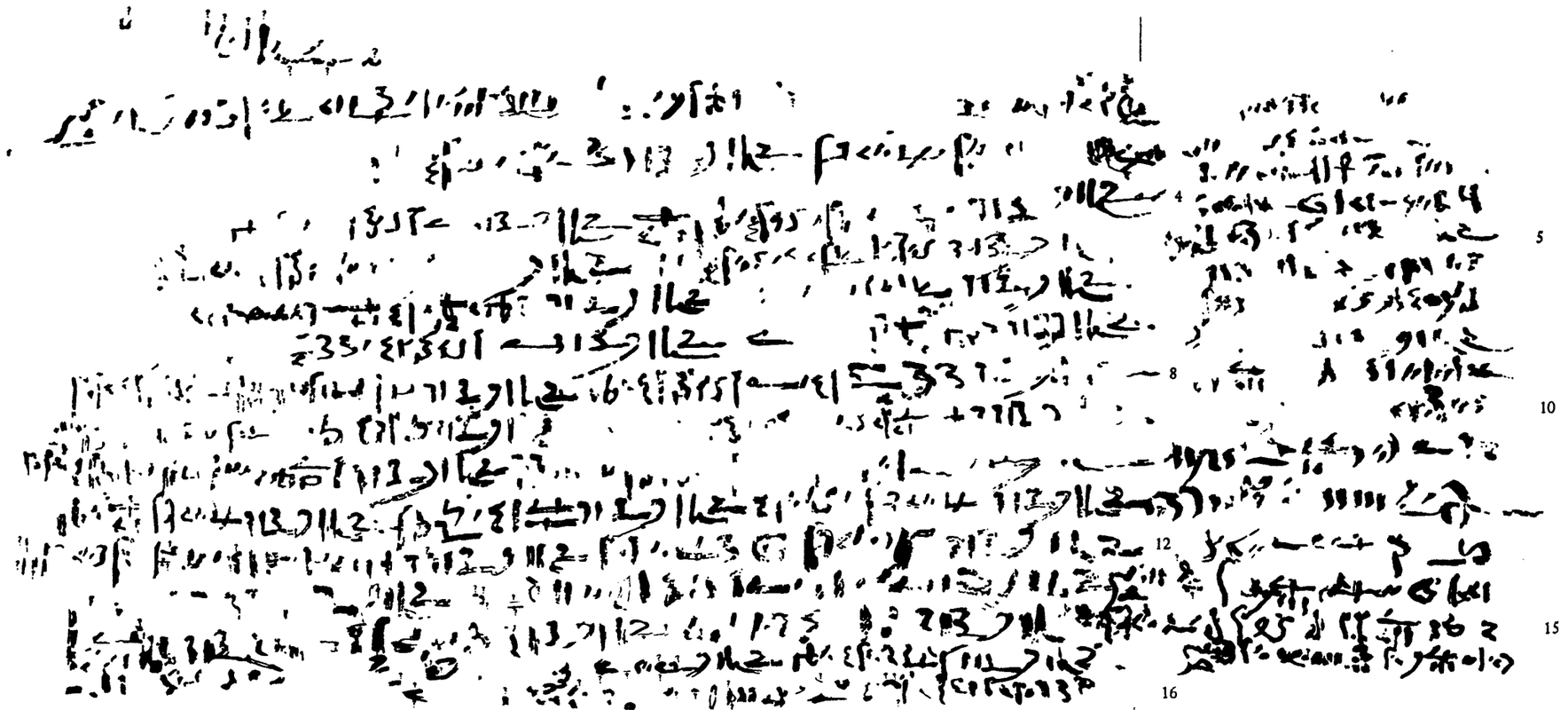
B



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16

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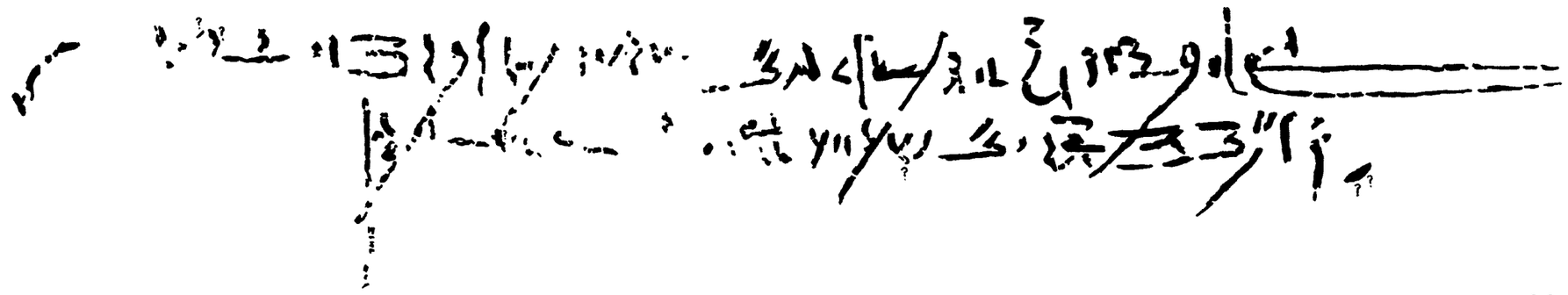

116

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PLATE 37

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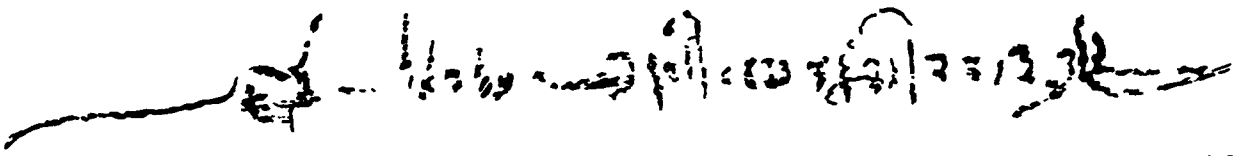
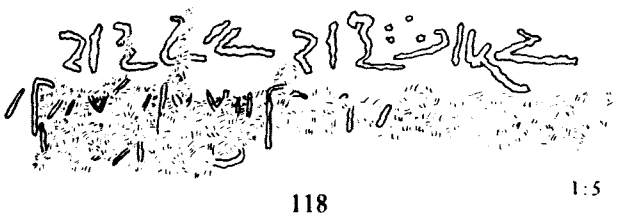


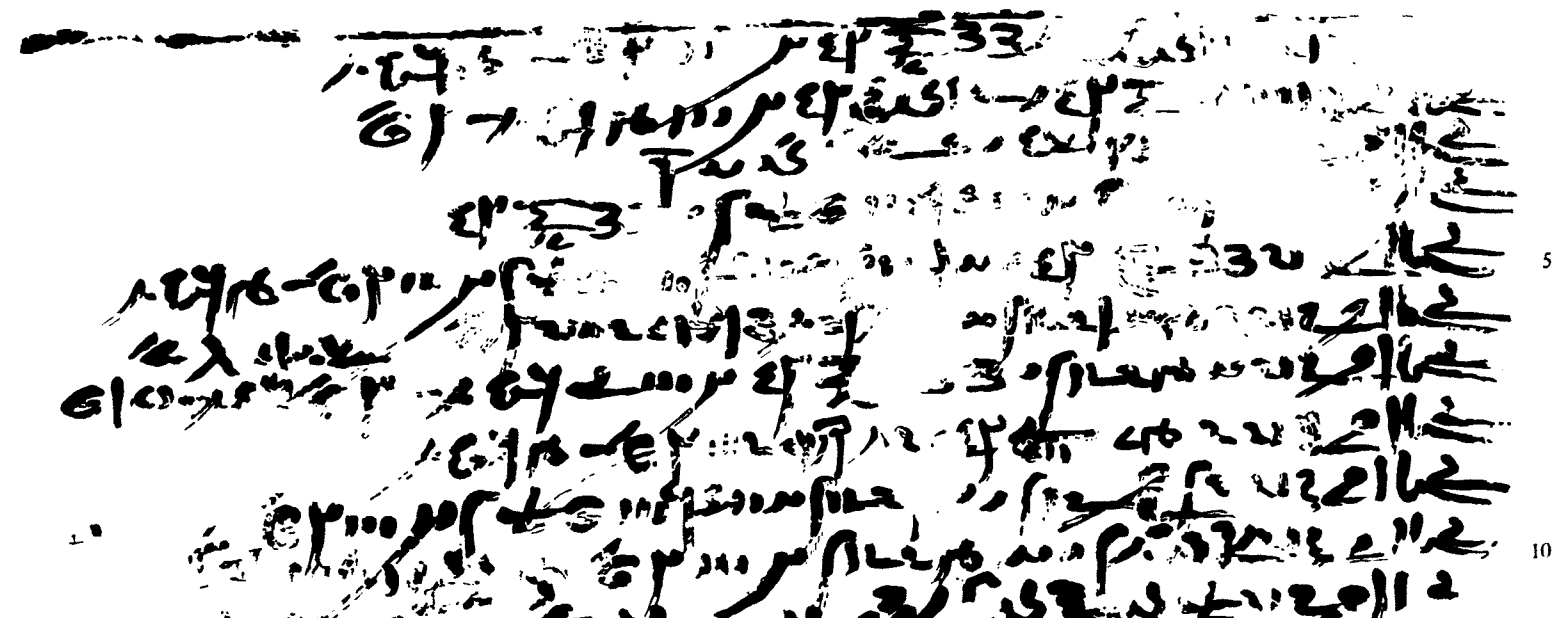
117 (see also Pl. 15) 4:5



118 1:5

119 1:5

120 2:5



121 3:5

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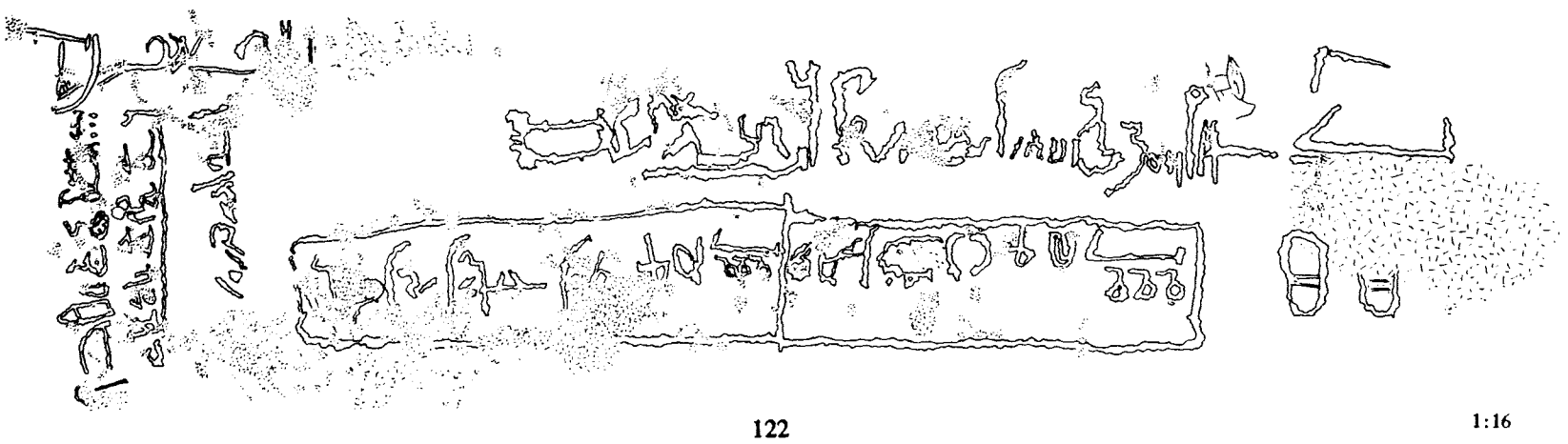

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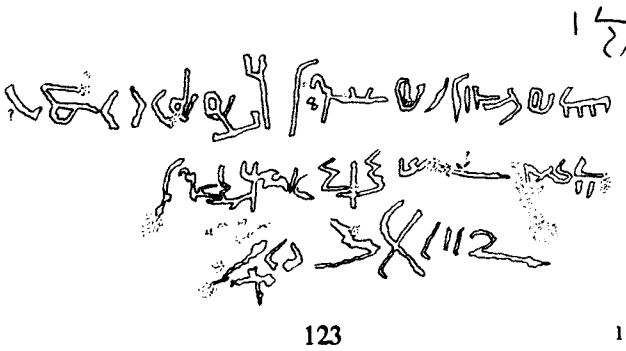

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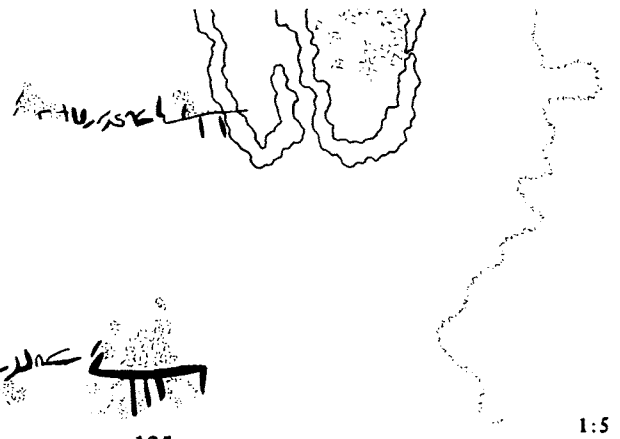

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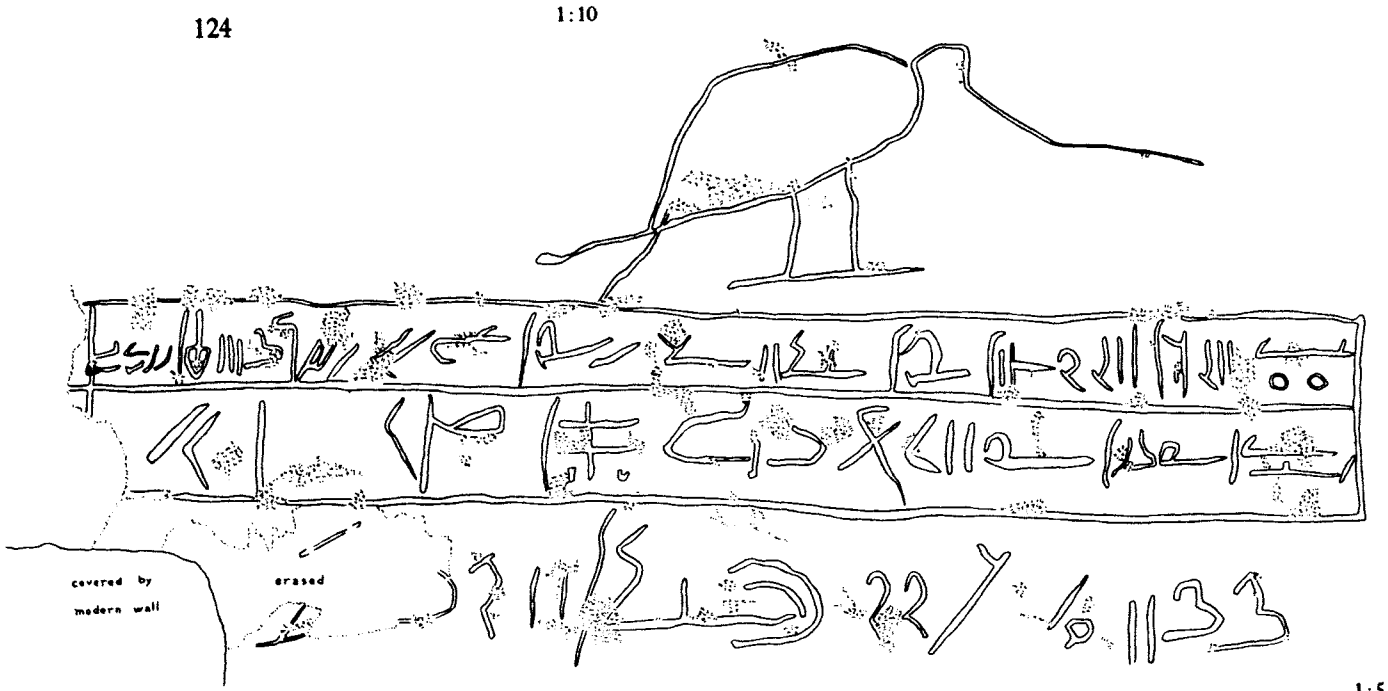
1:5

124

1:10



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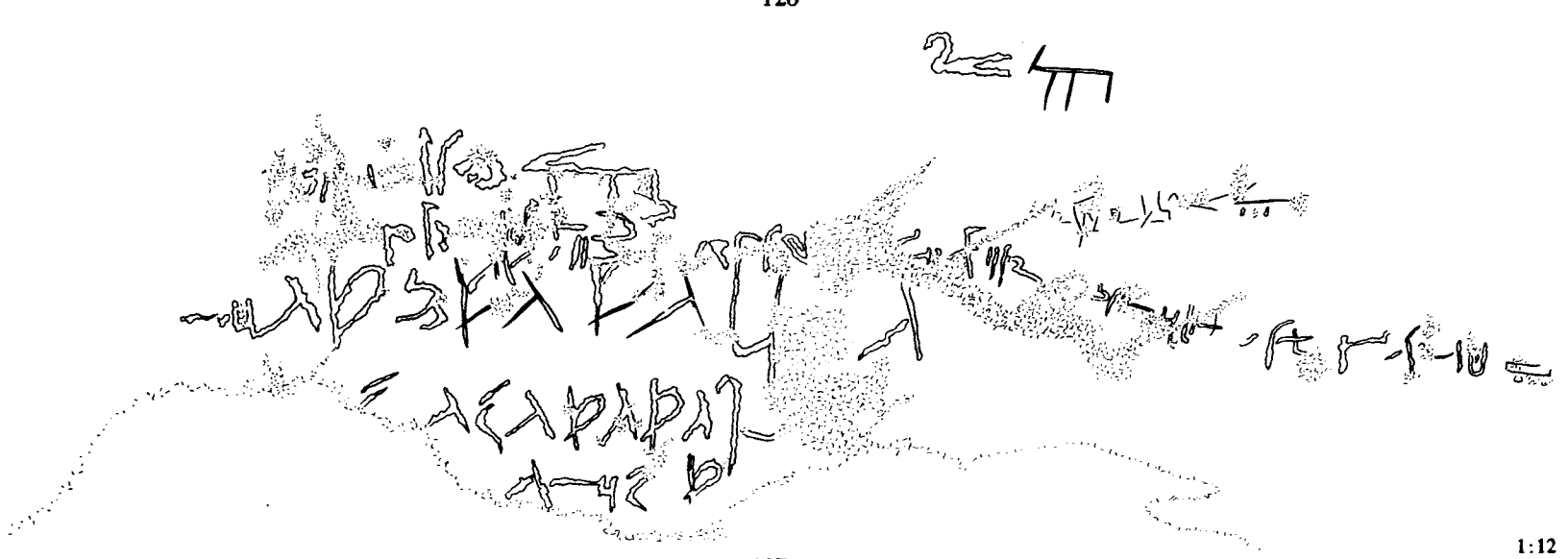

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1:12

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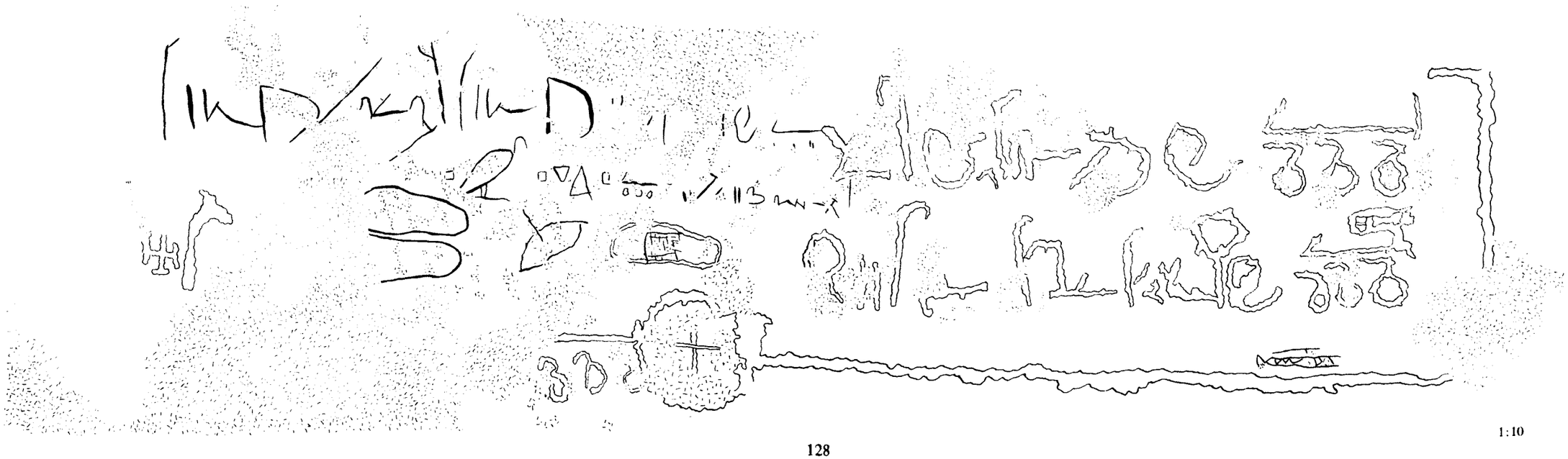

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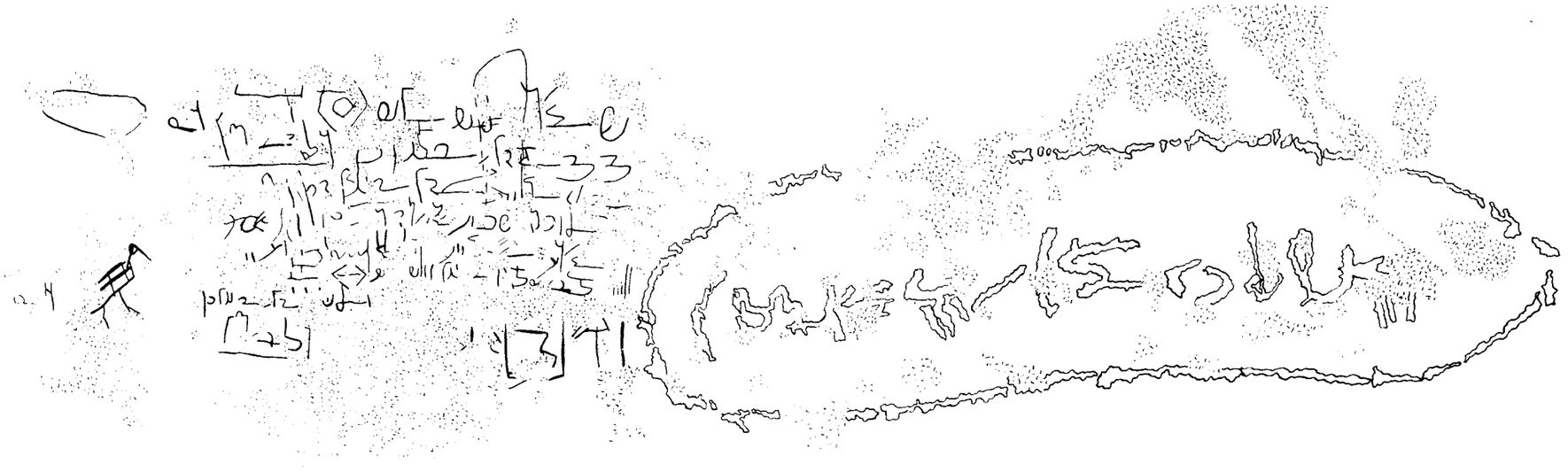

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1:10

PLATE 40

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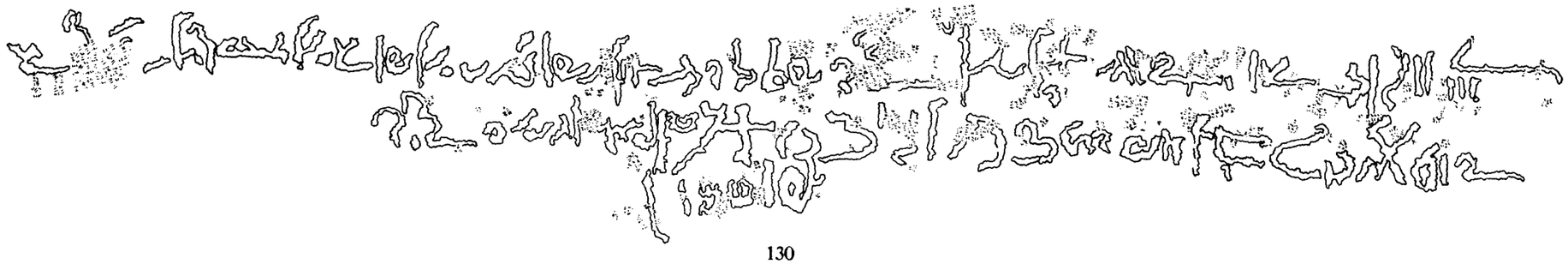

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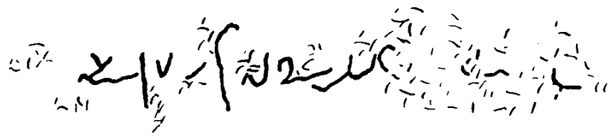

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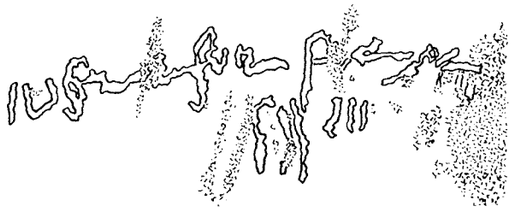

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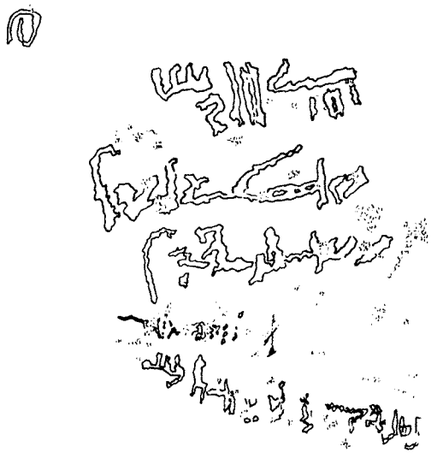

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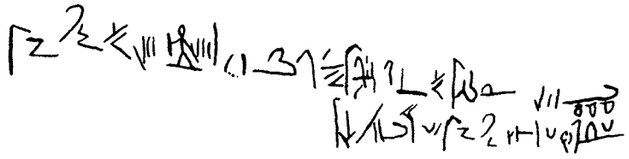

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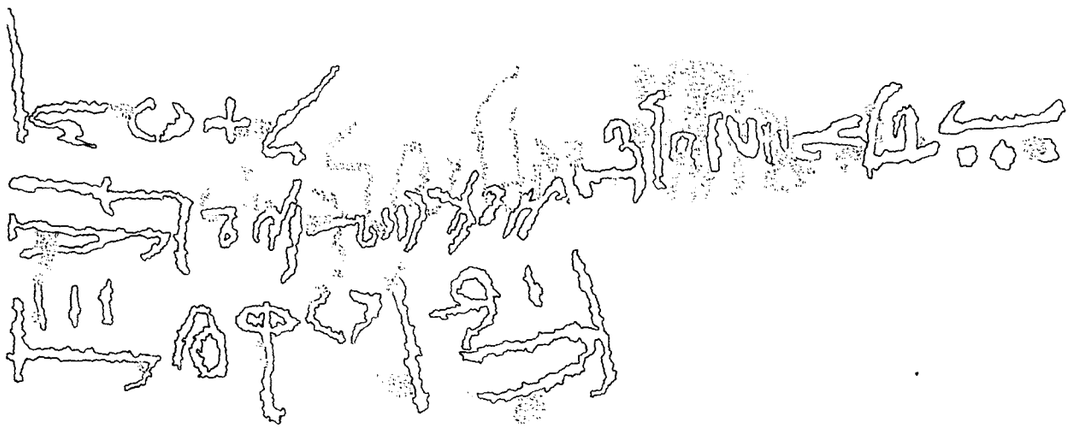

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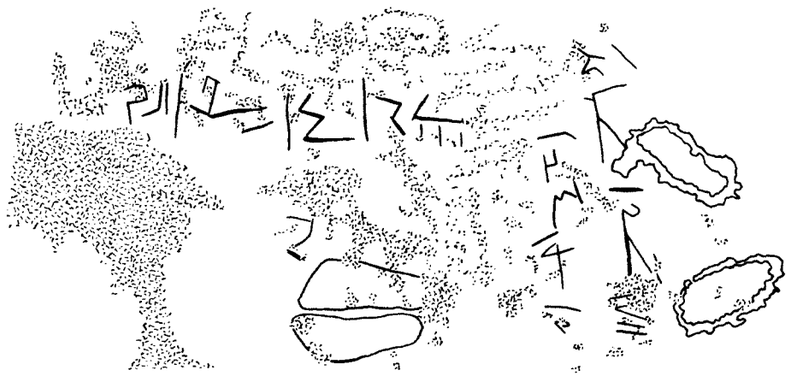

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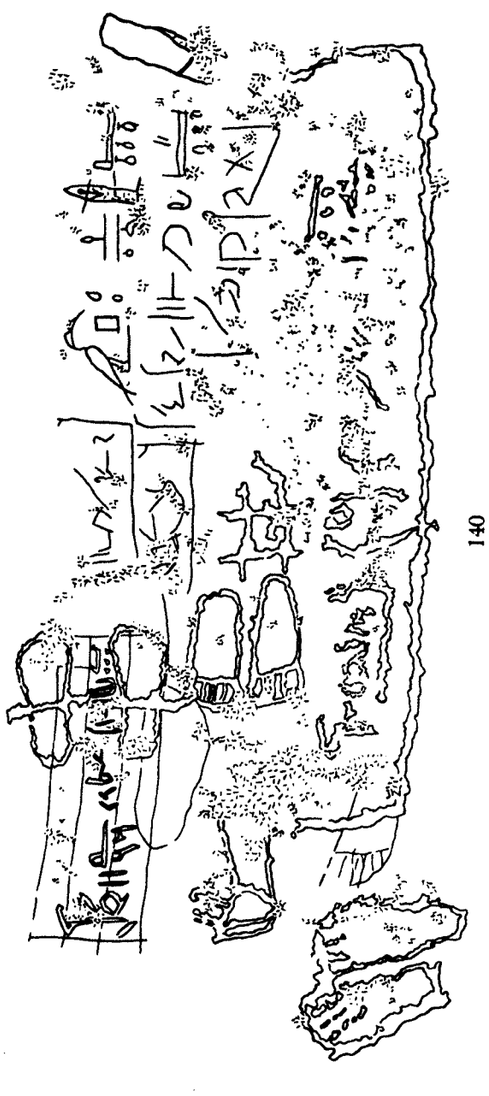
PLATE 41



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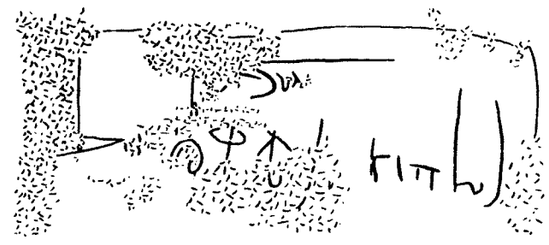

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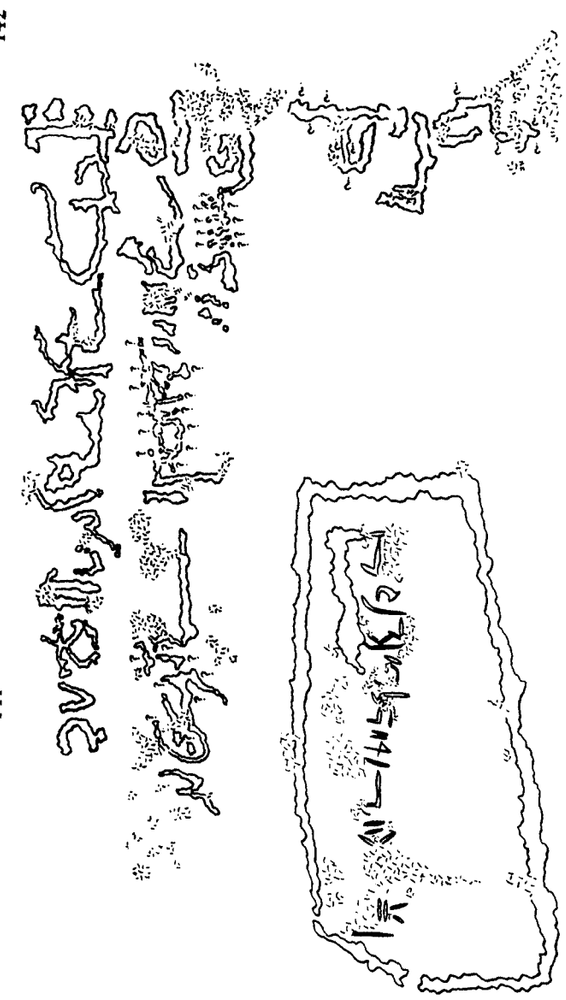

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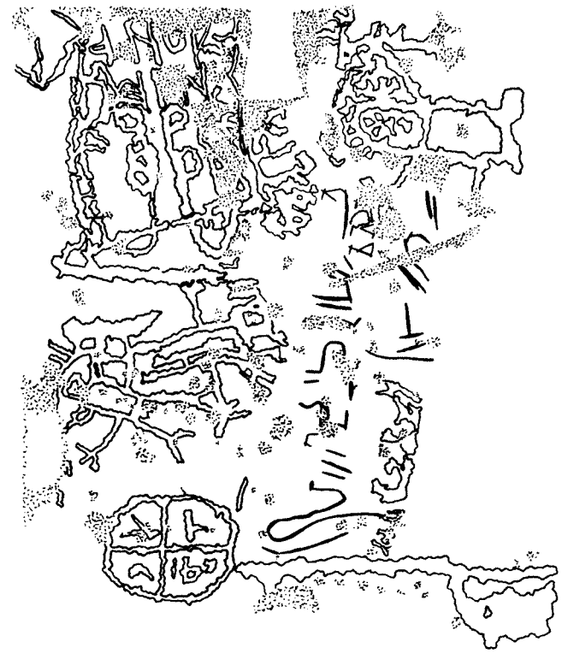

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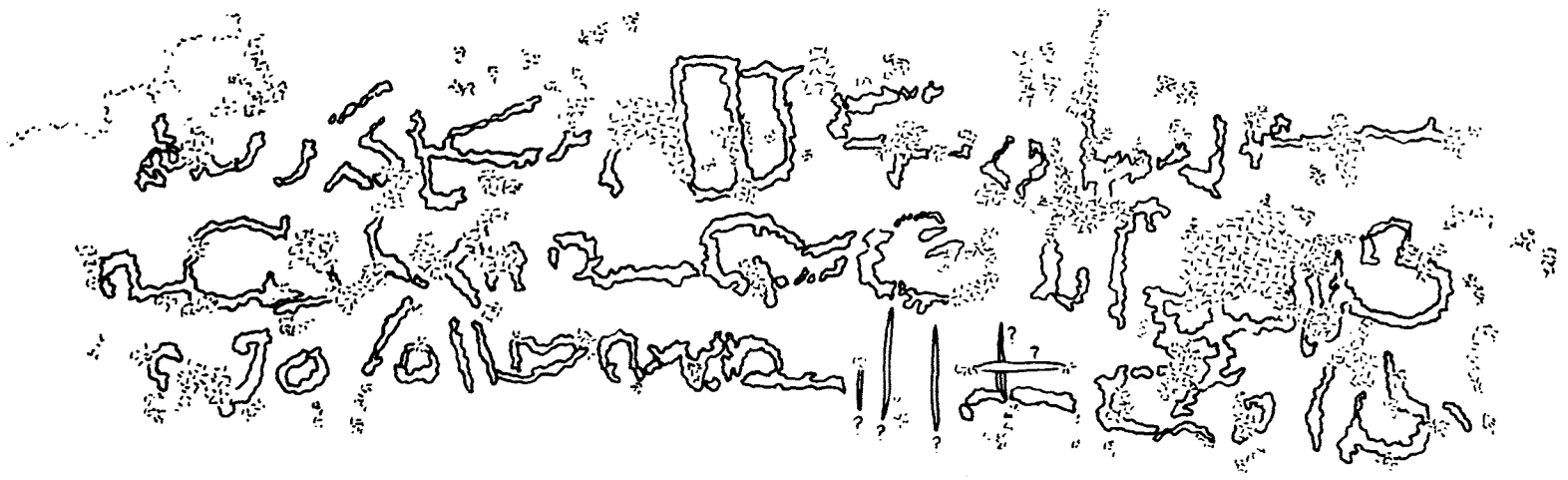

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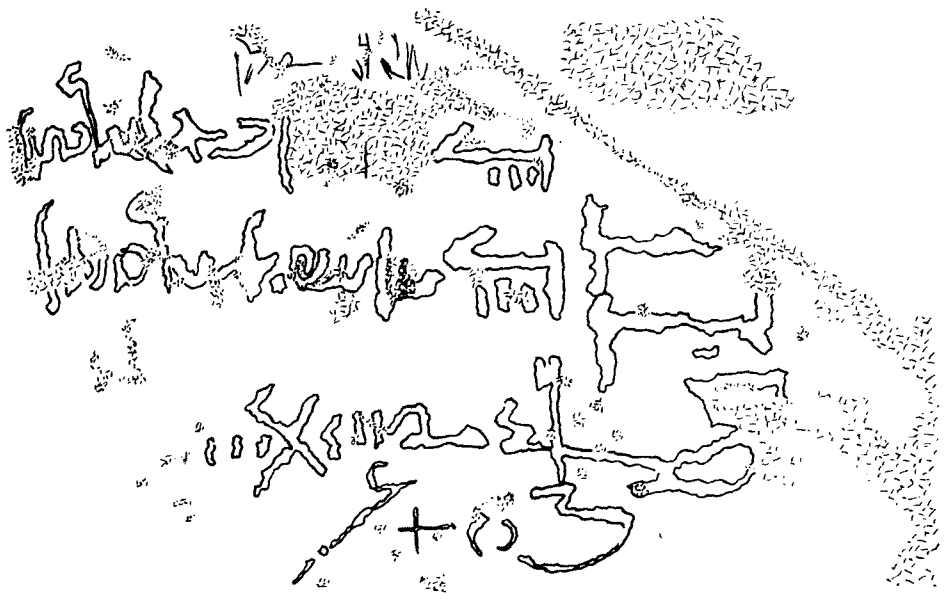

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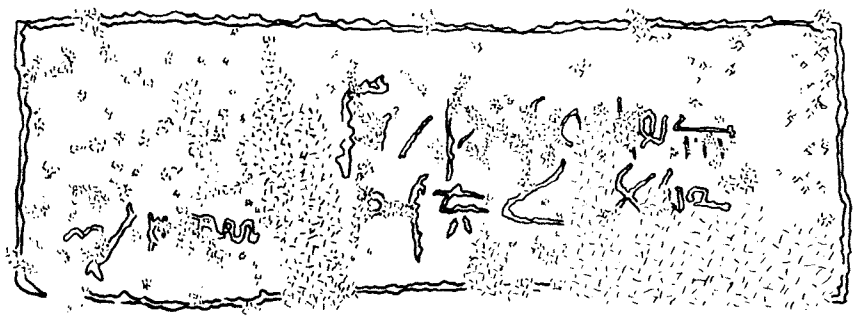

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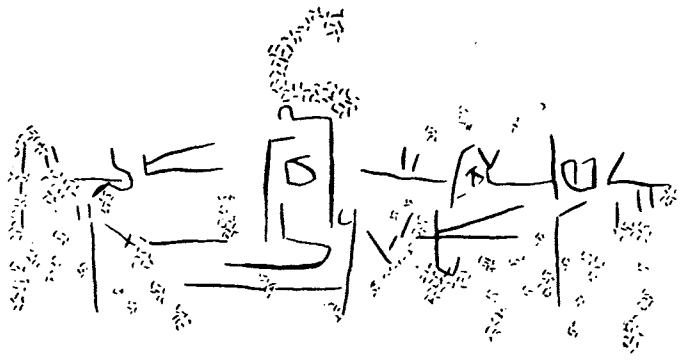

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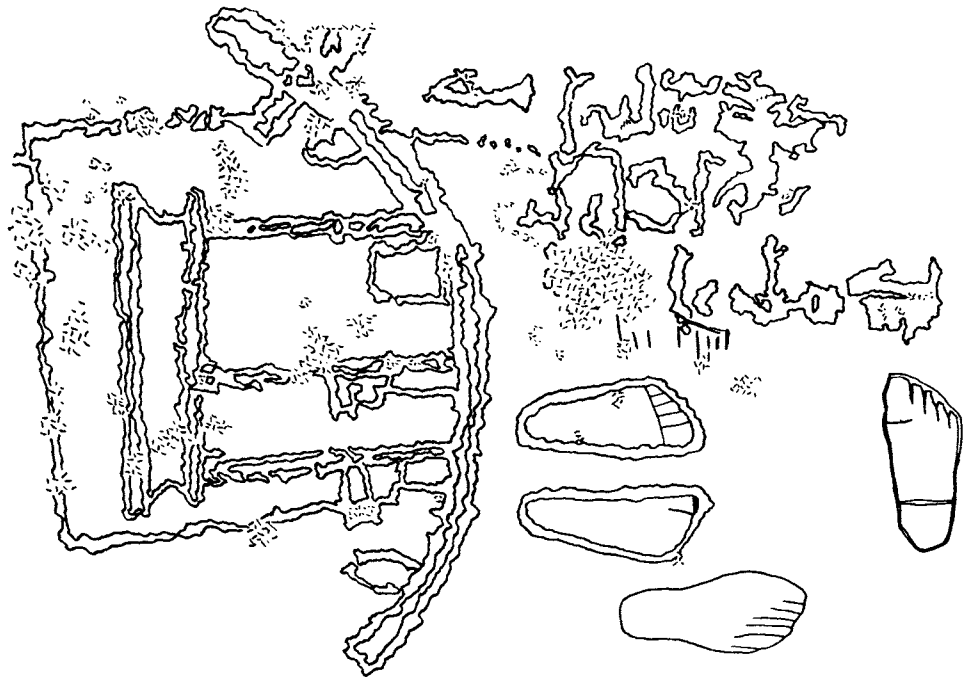

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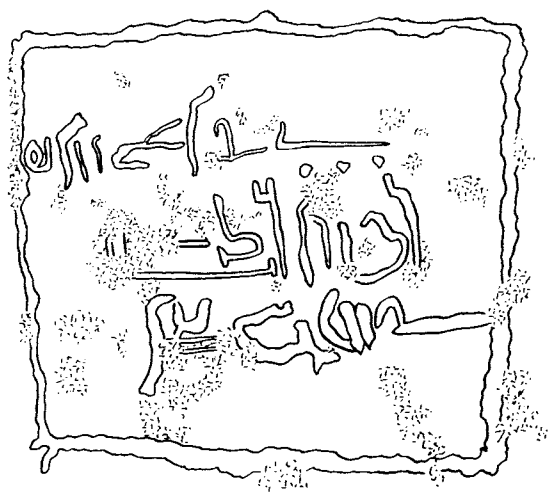

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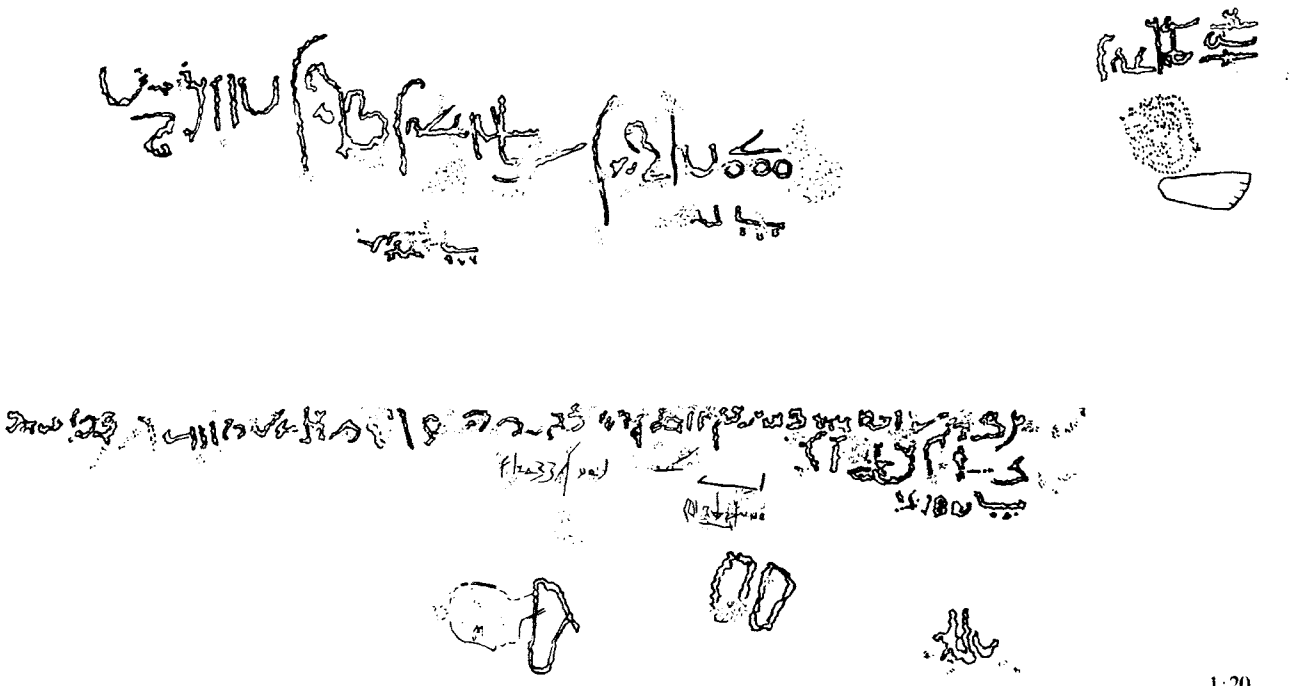

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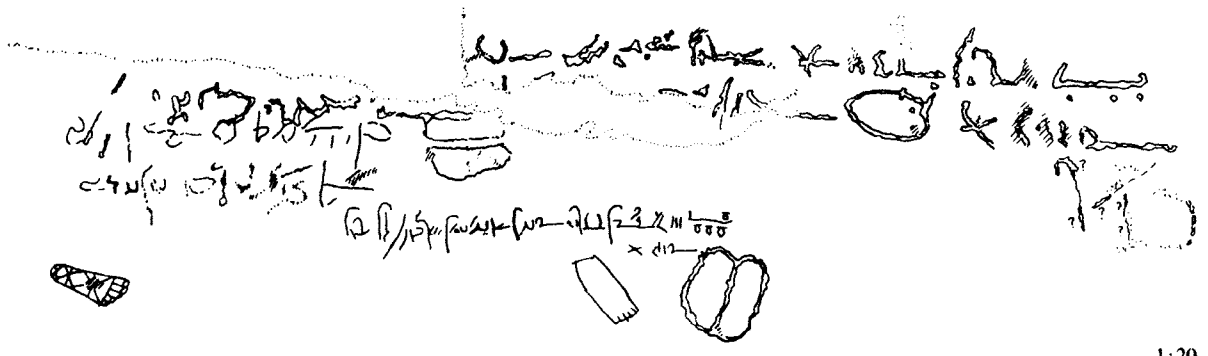

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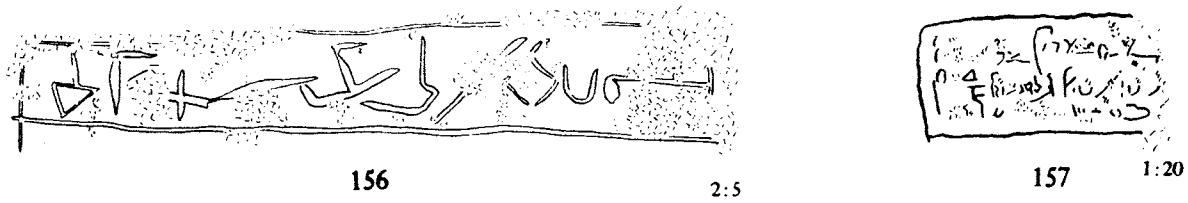

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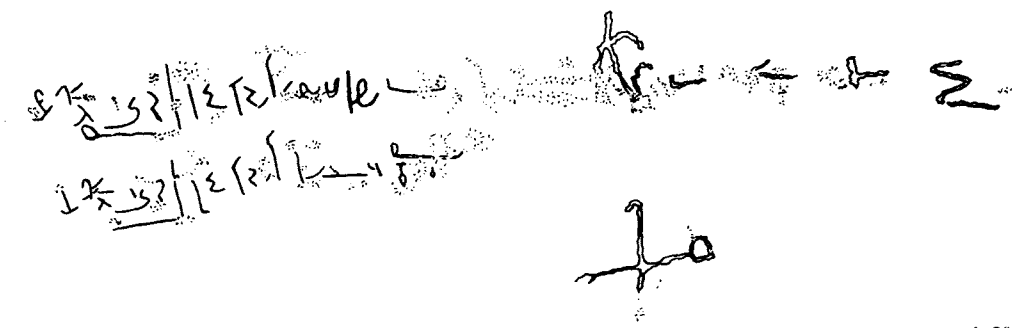

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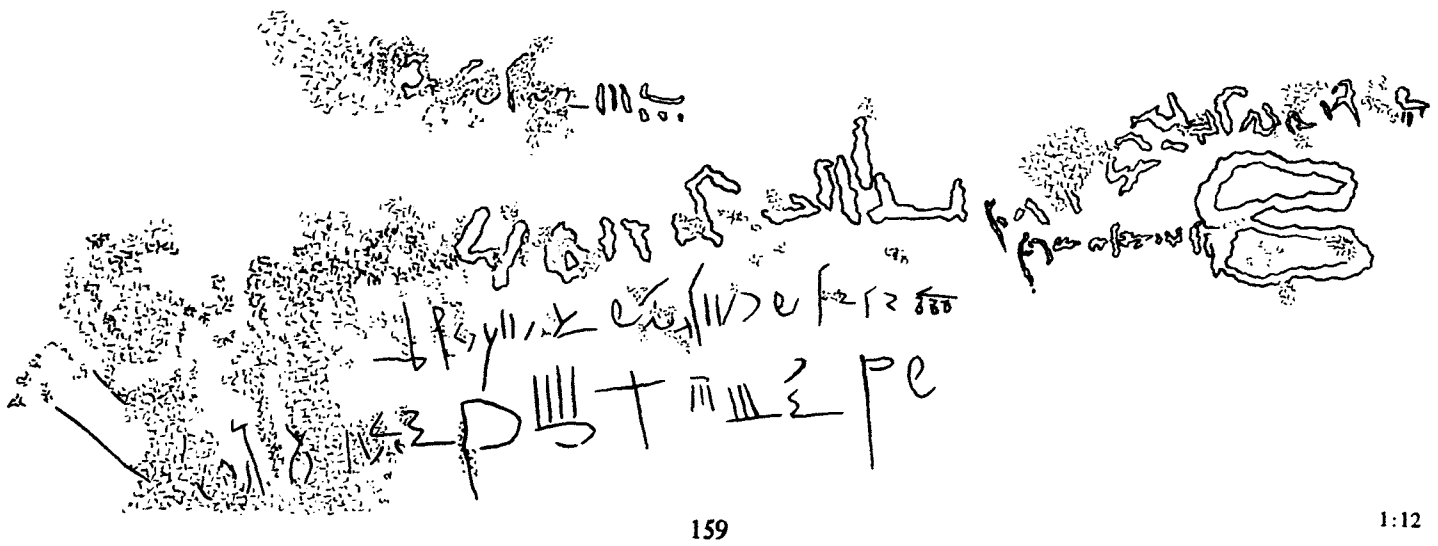

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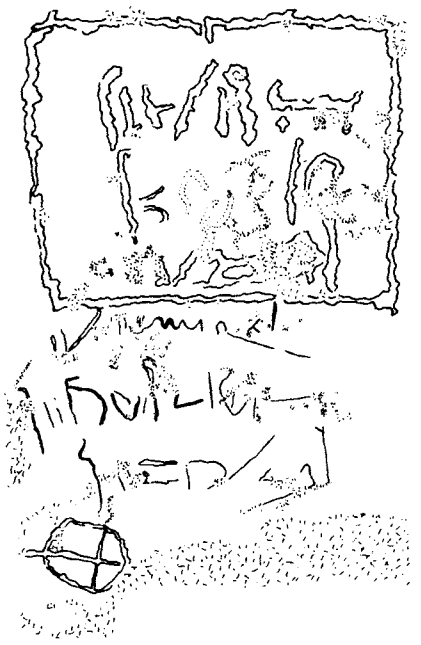

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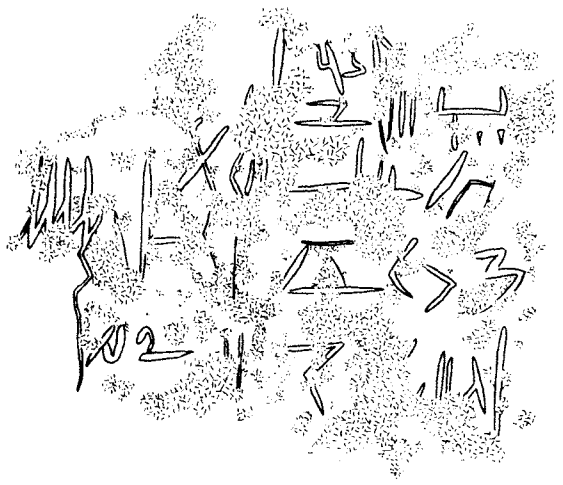

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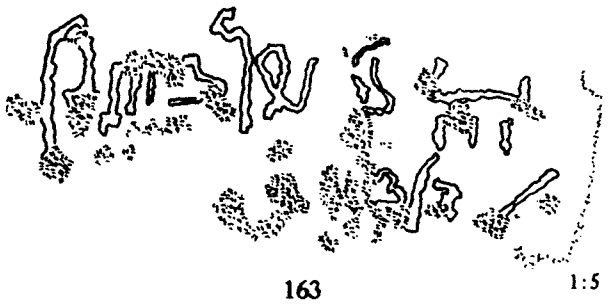

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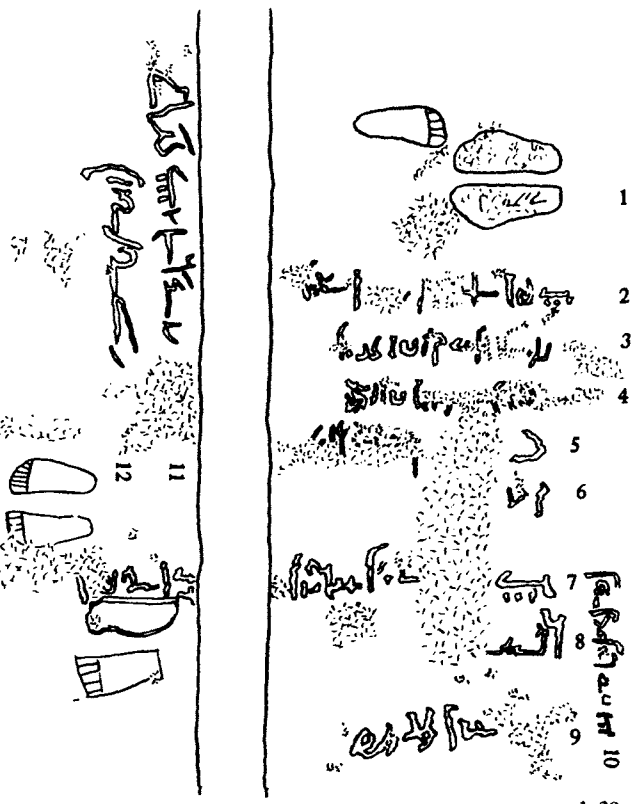

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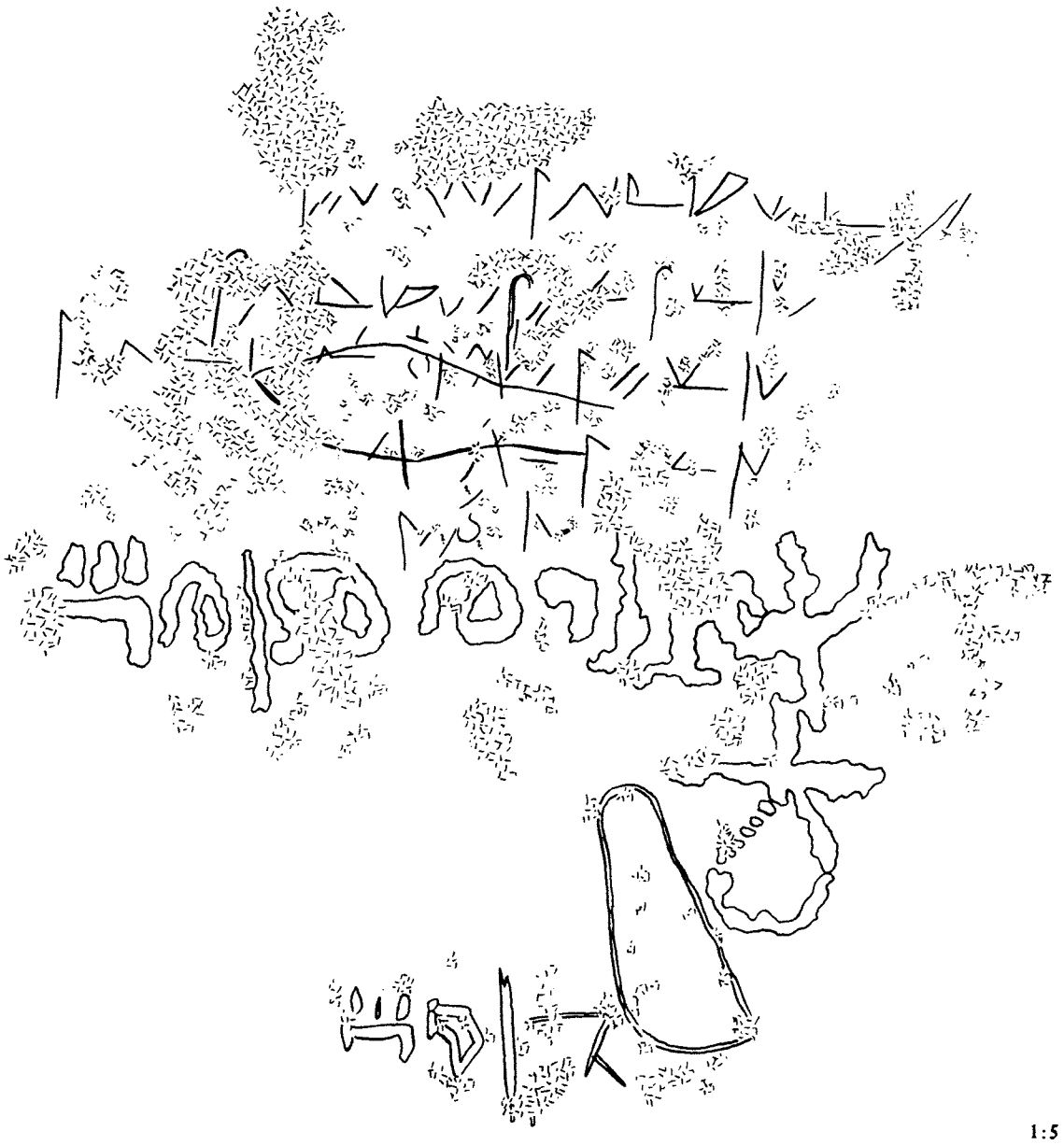

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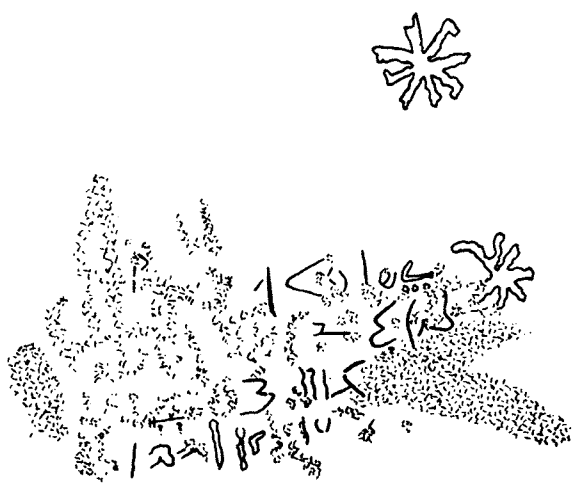

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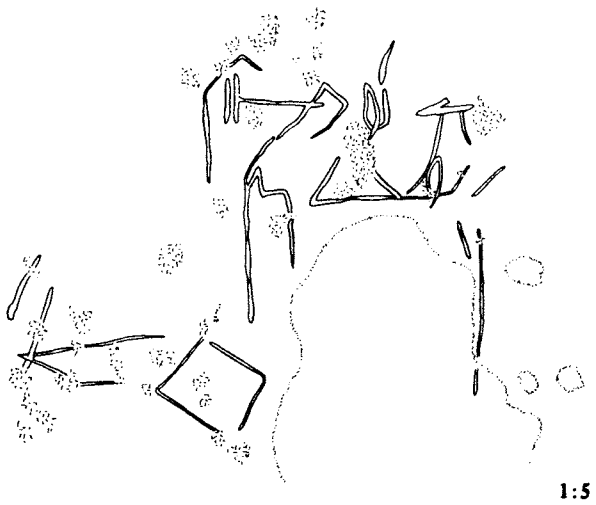

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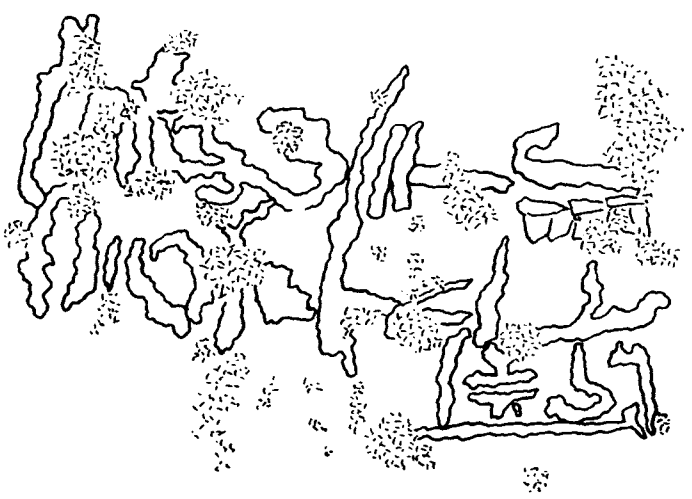

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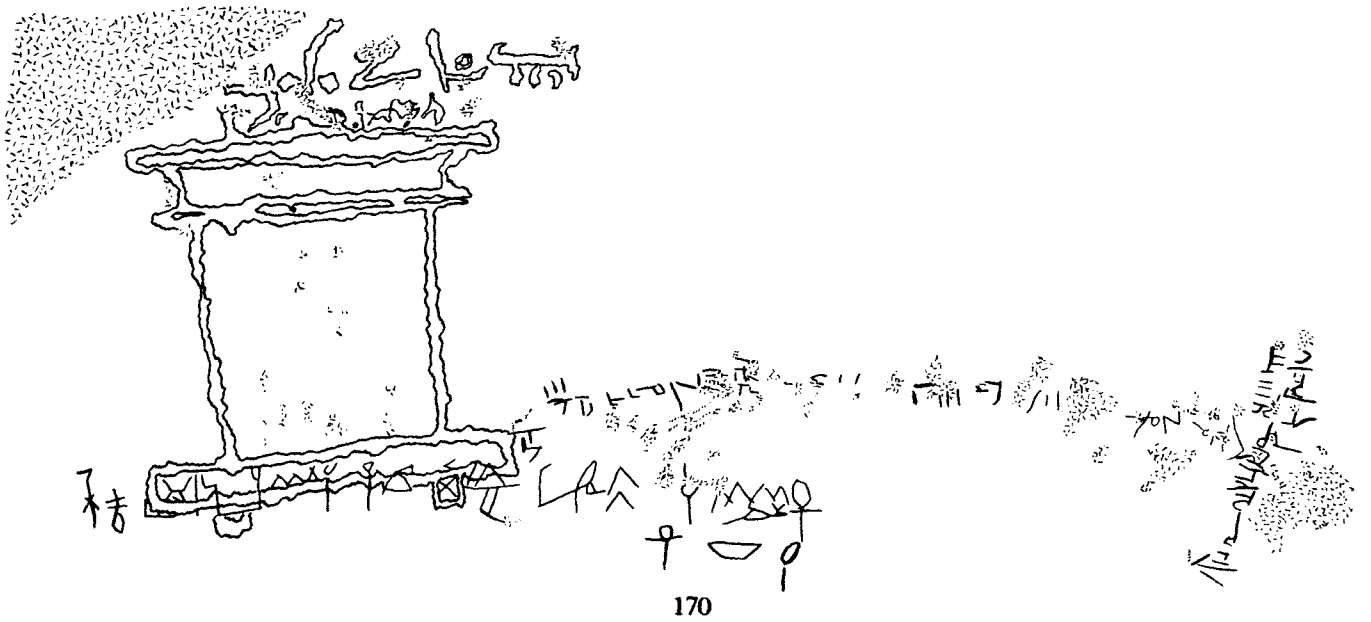

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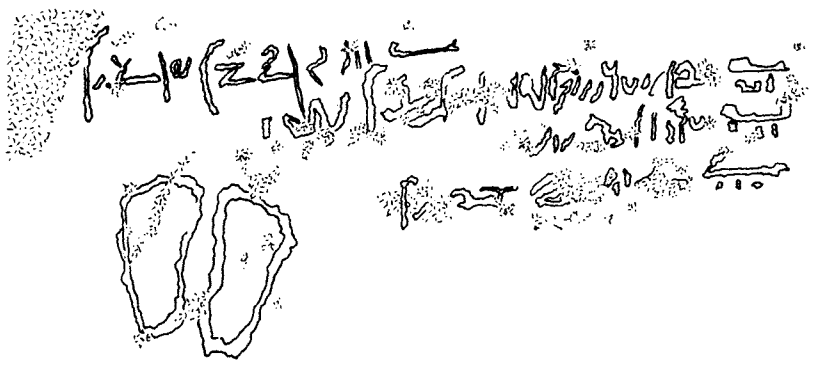

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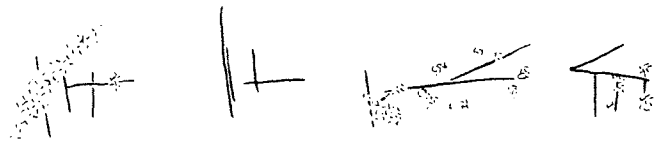

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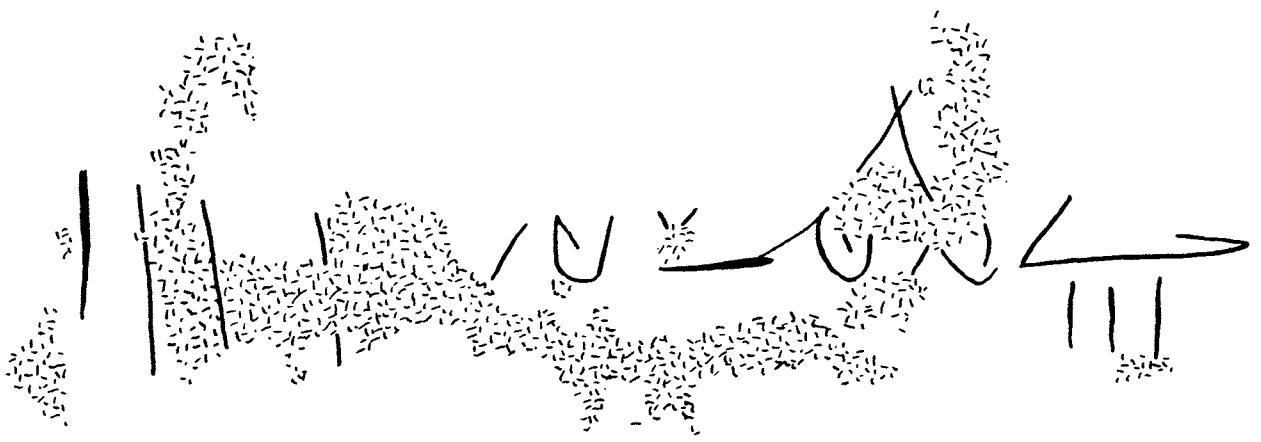

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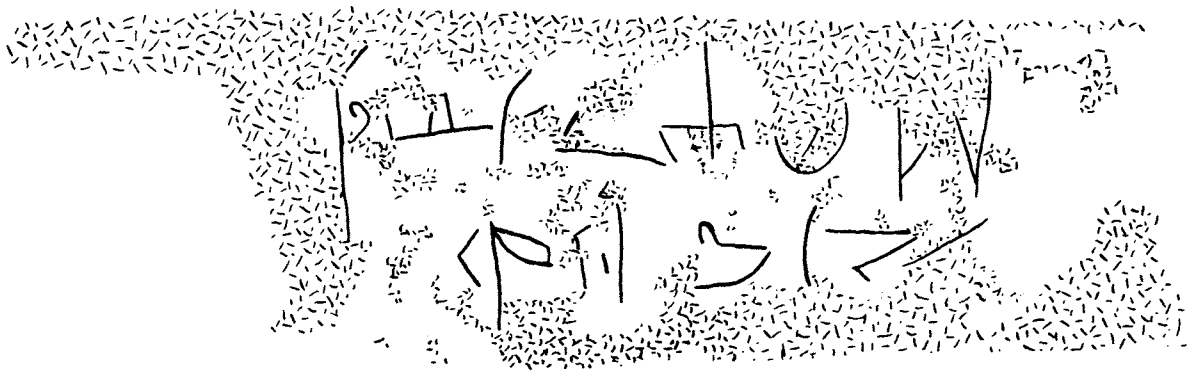

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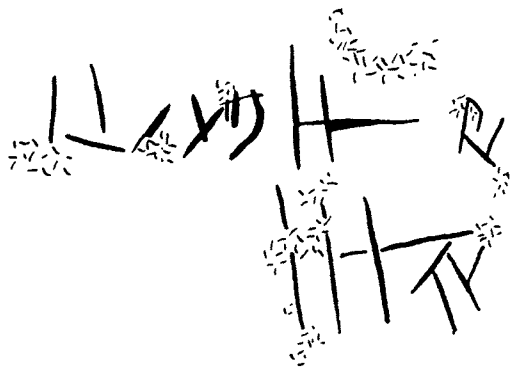

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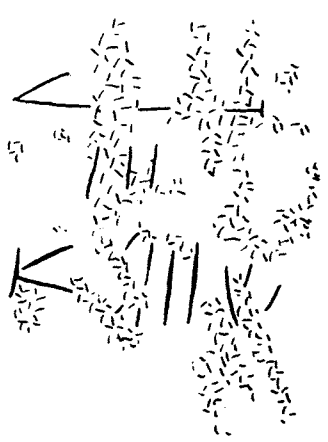

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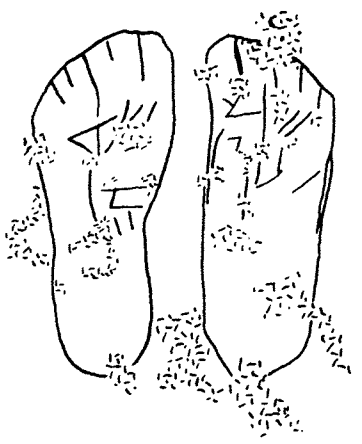

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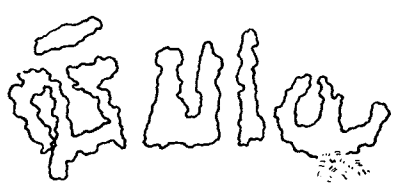

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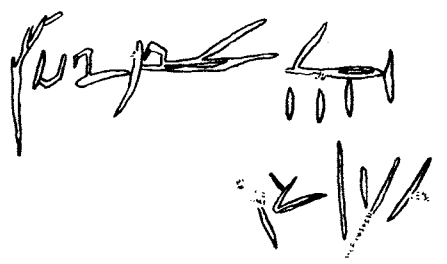

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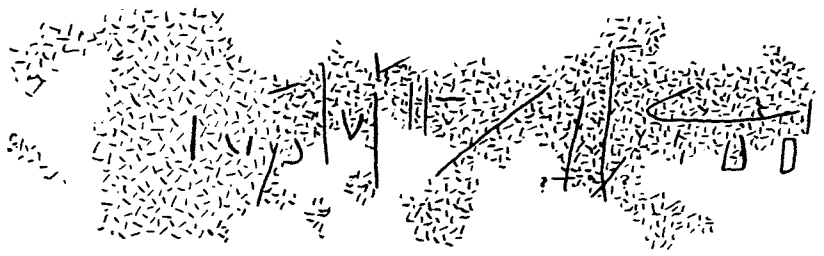

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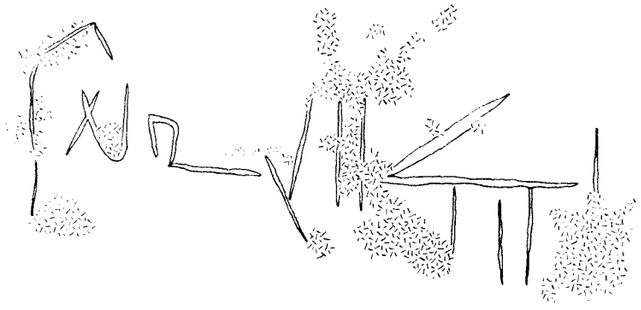
1:3



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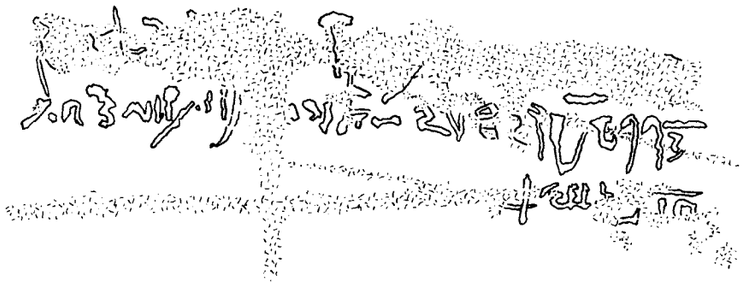

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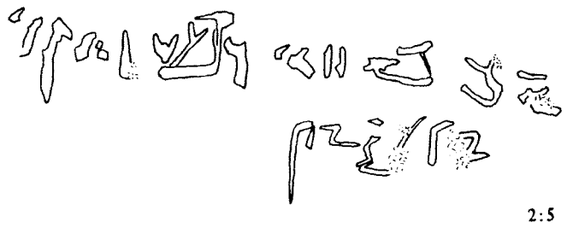

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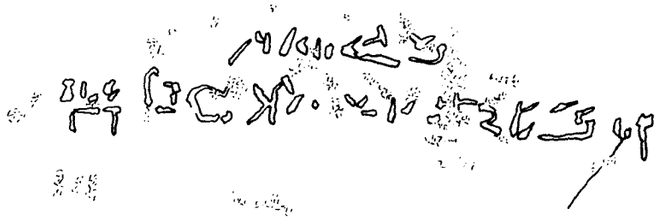

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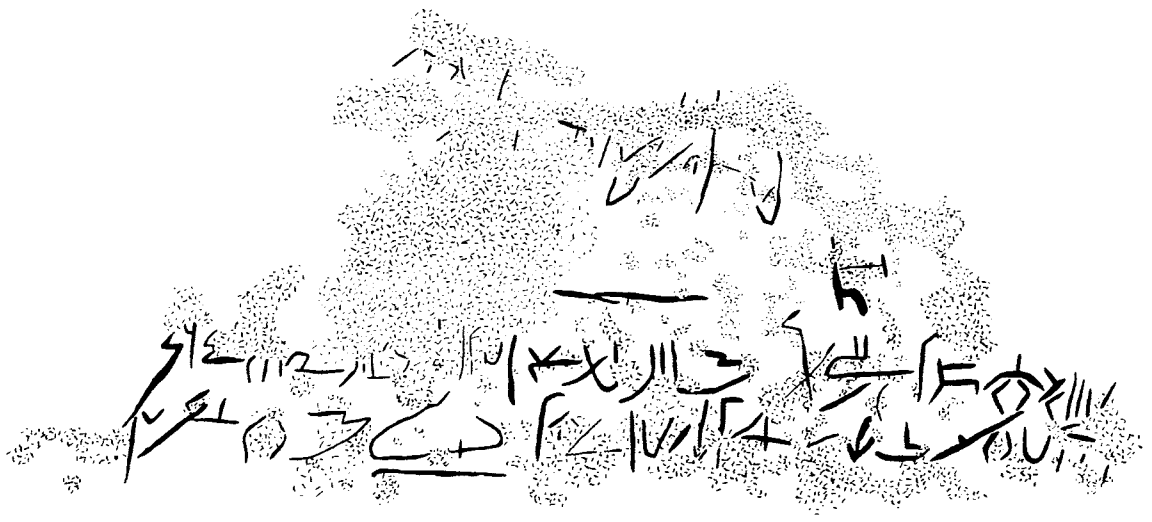

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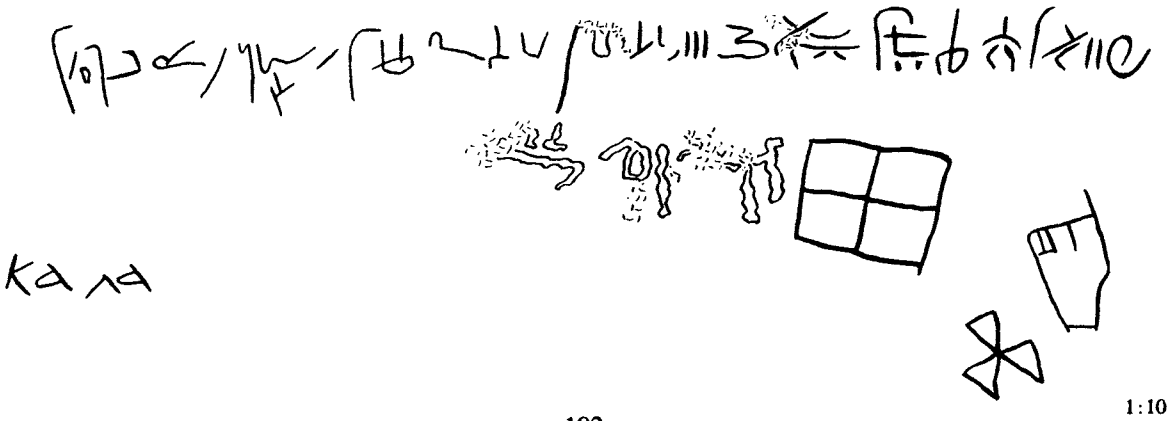

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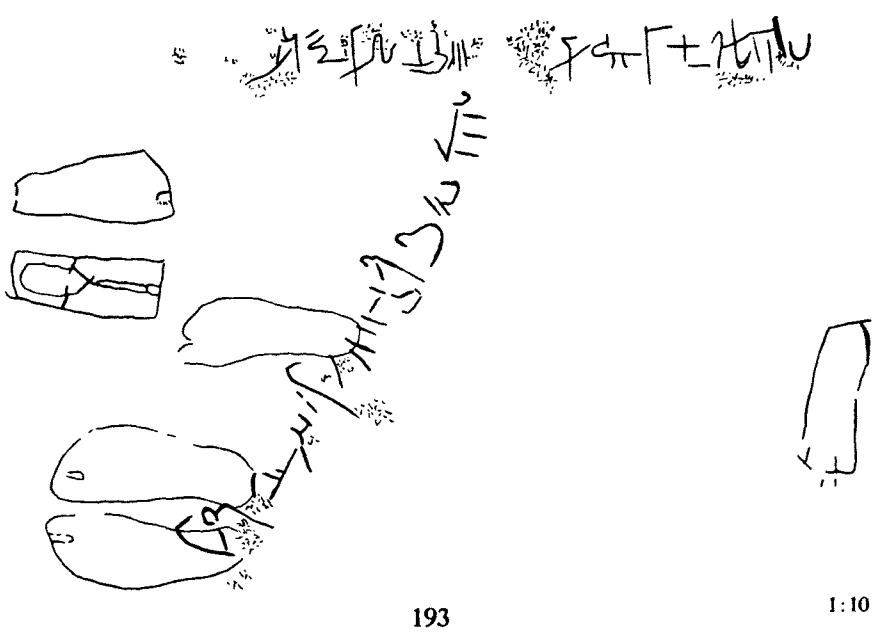

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194 1:10

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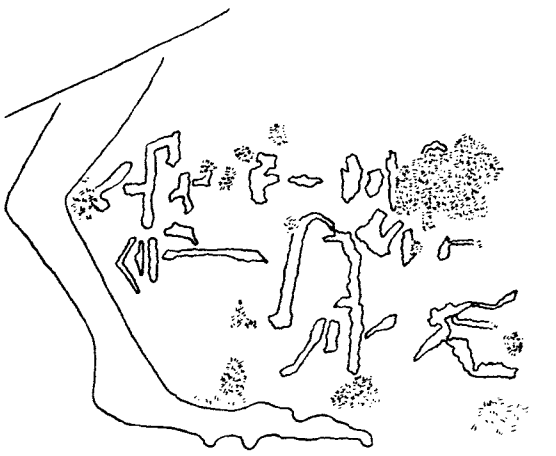

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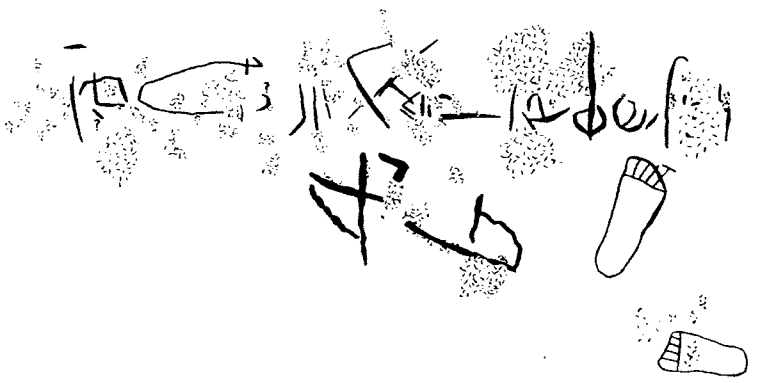

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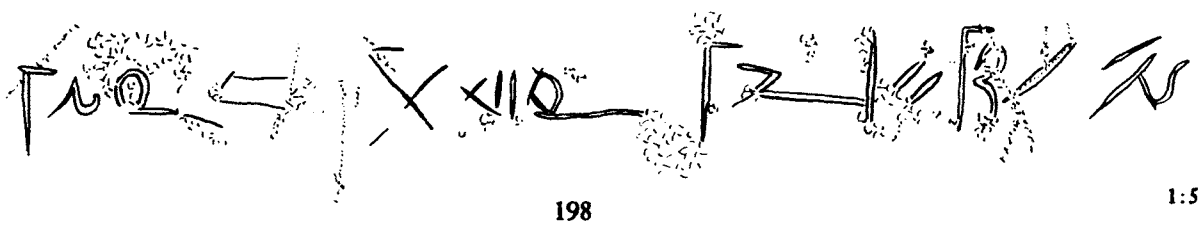

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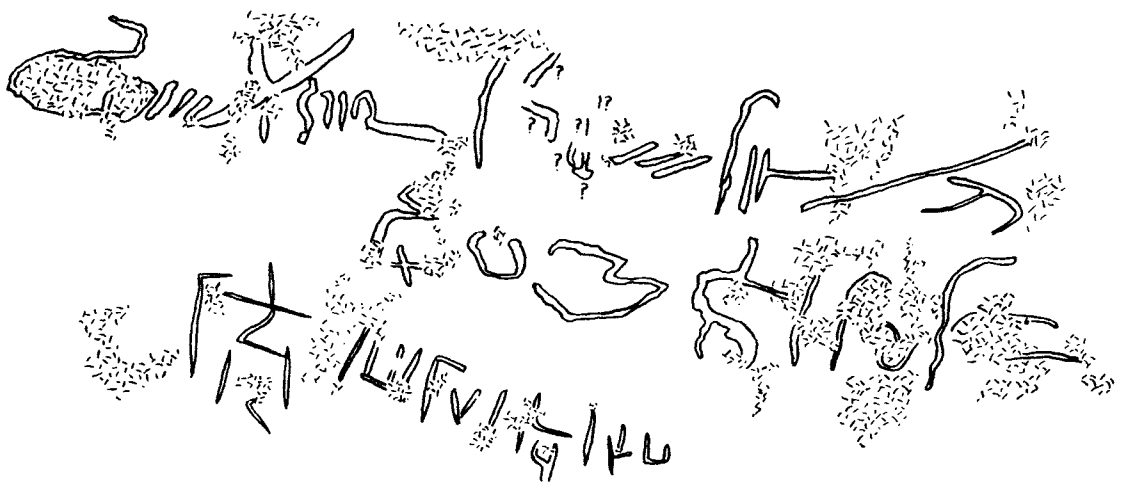

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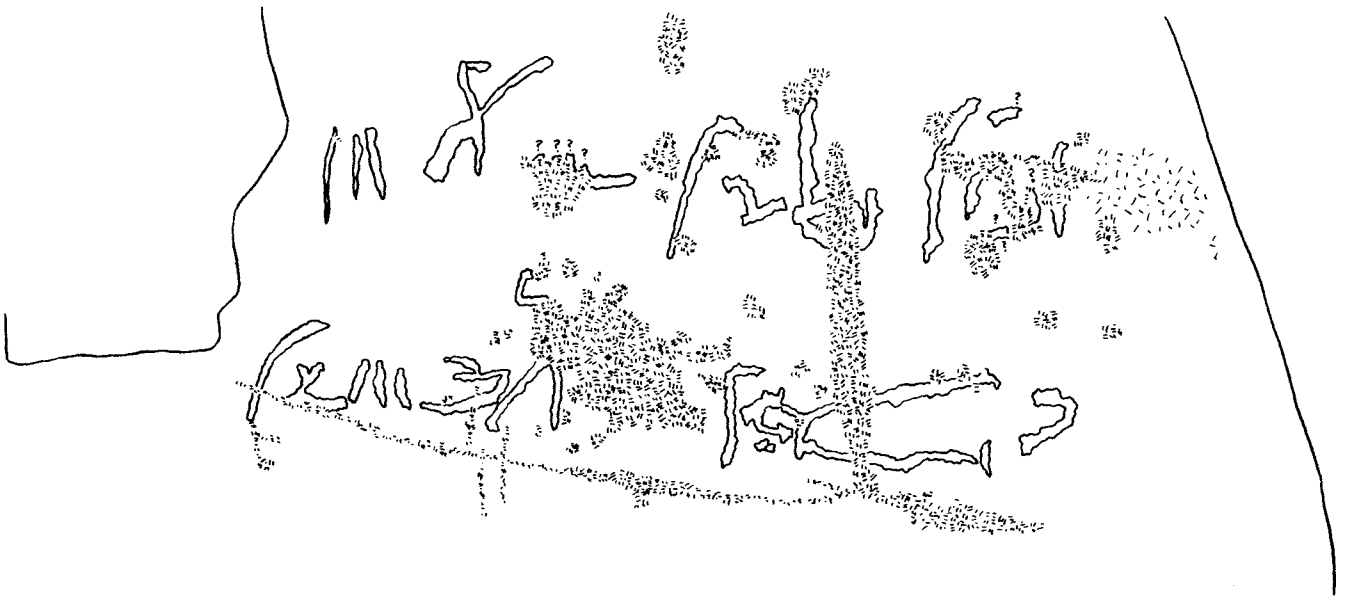

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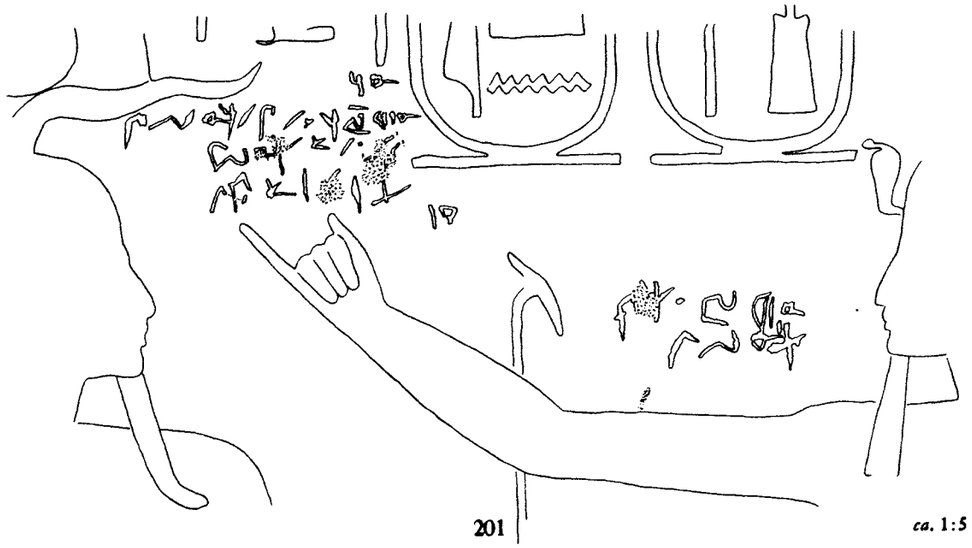

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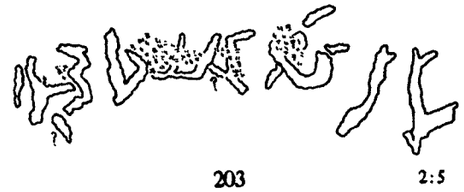
202 1:5



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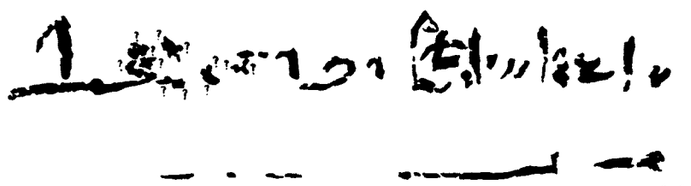

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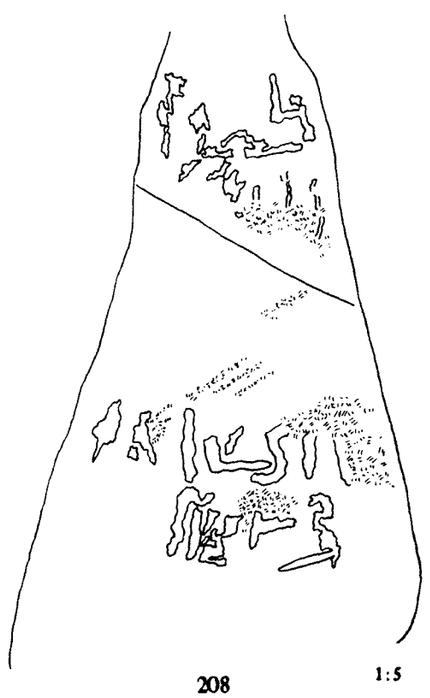

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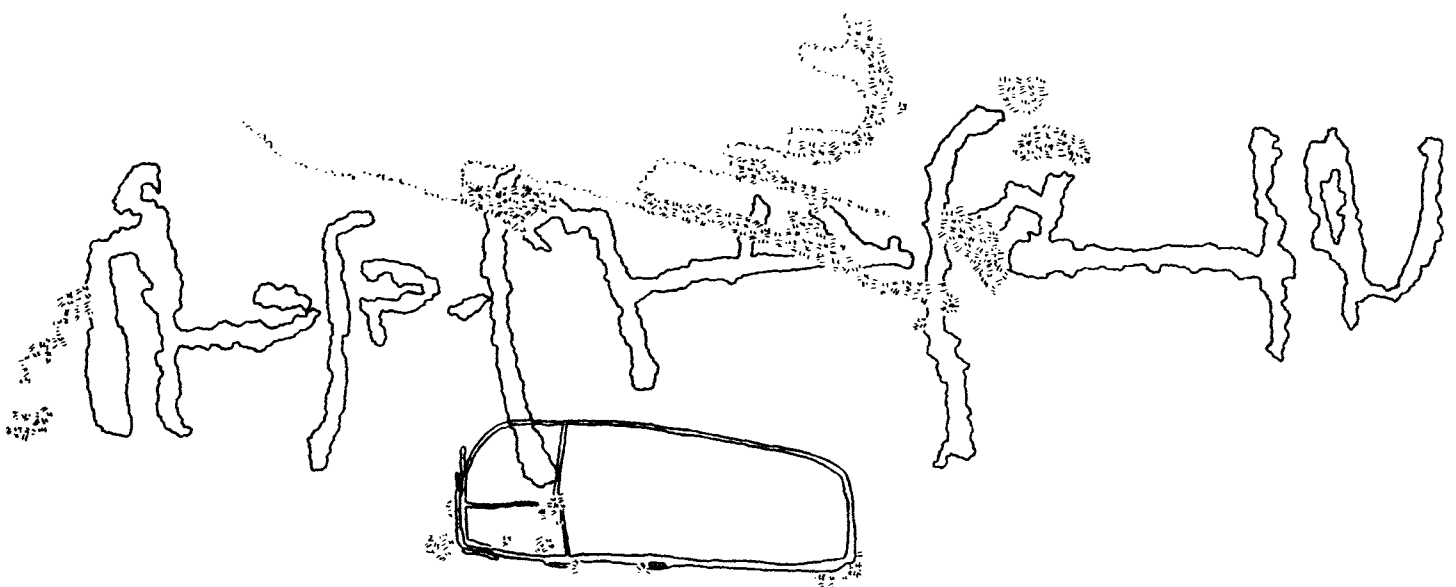

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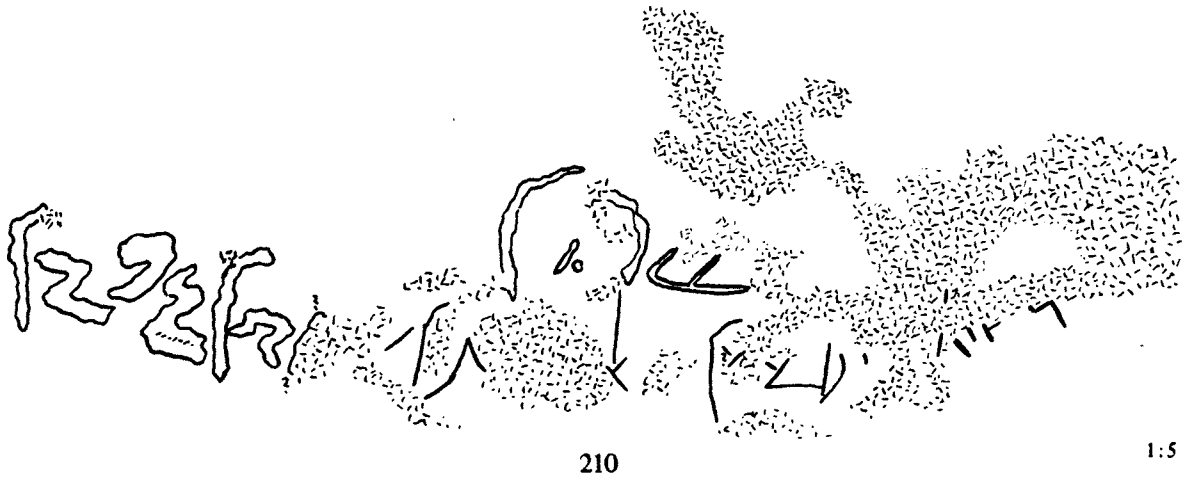

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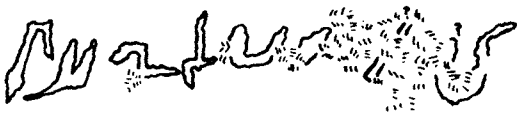

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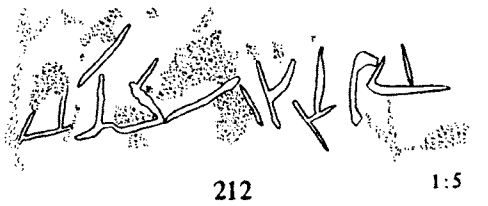

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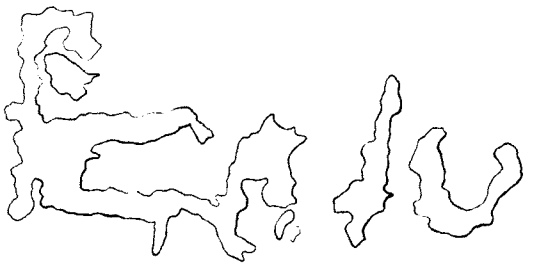
213 2:5



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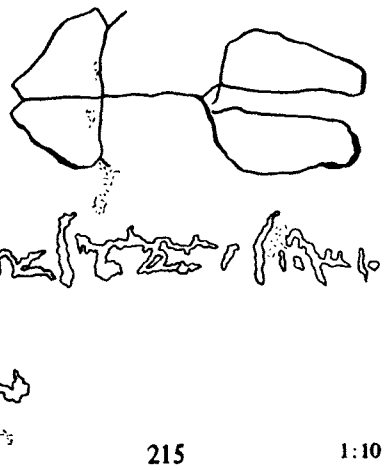

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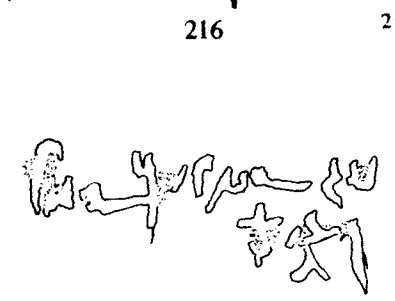

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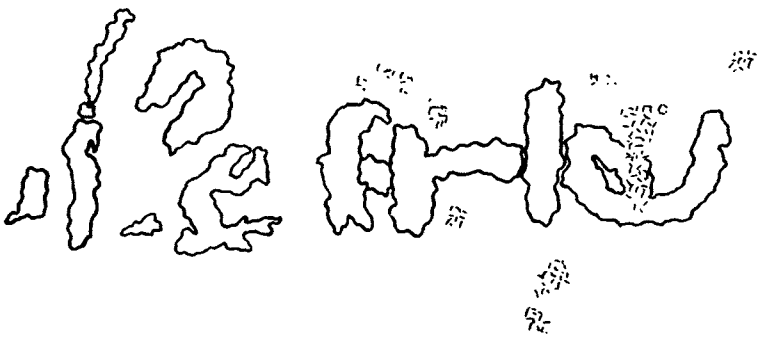

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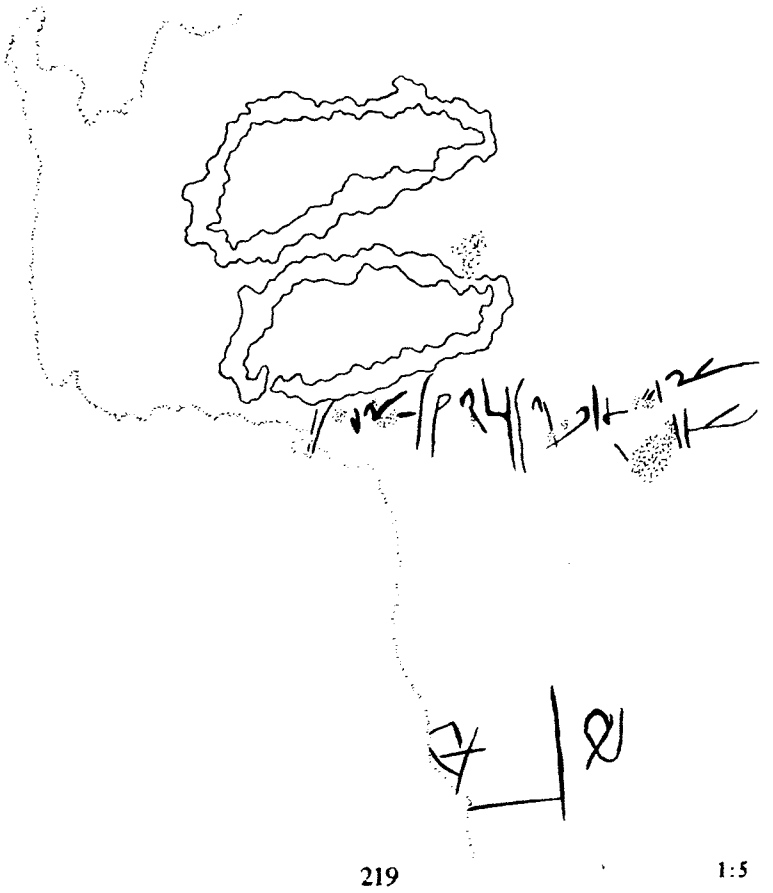

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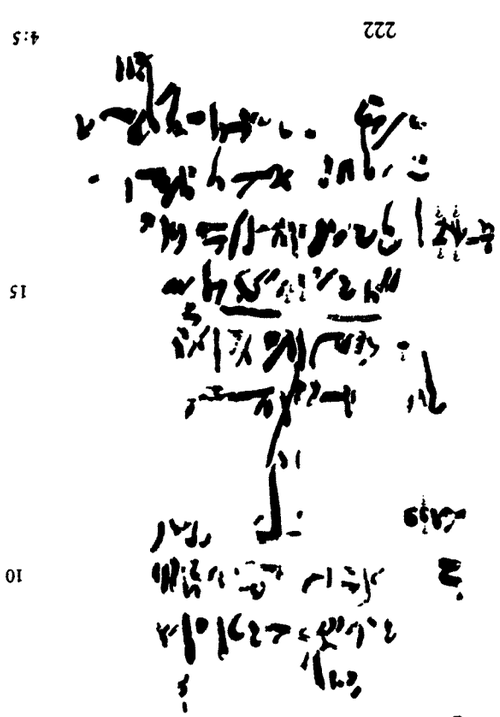

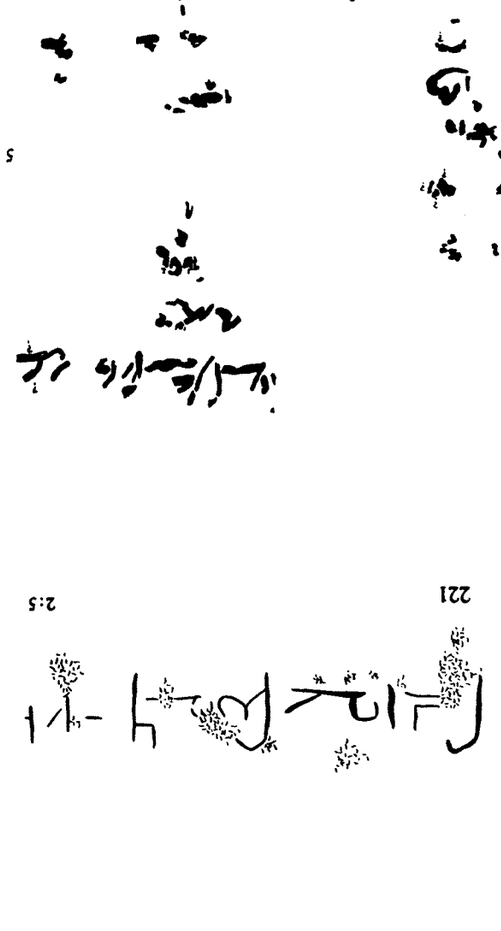

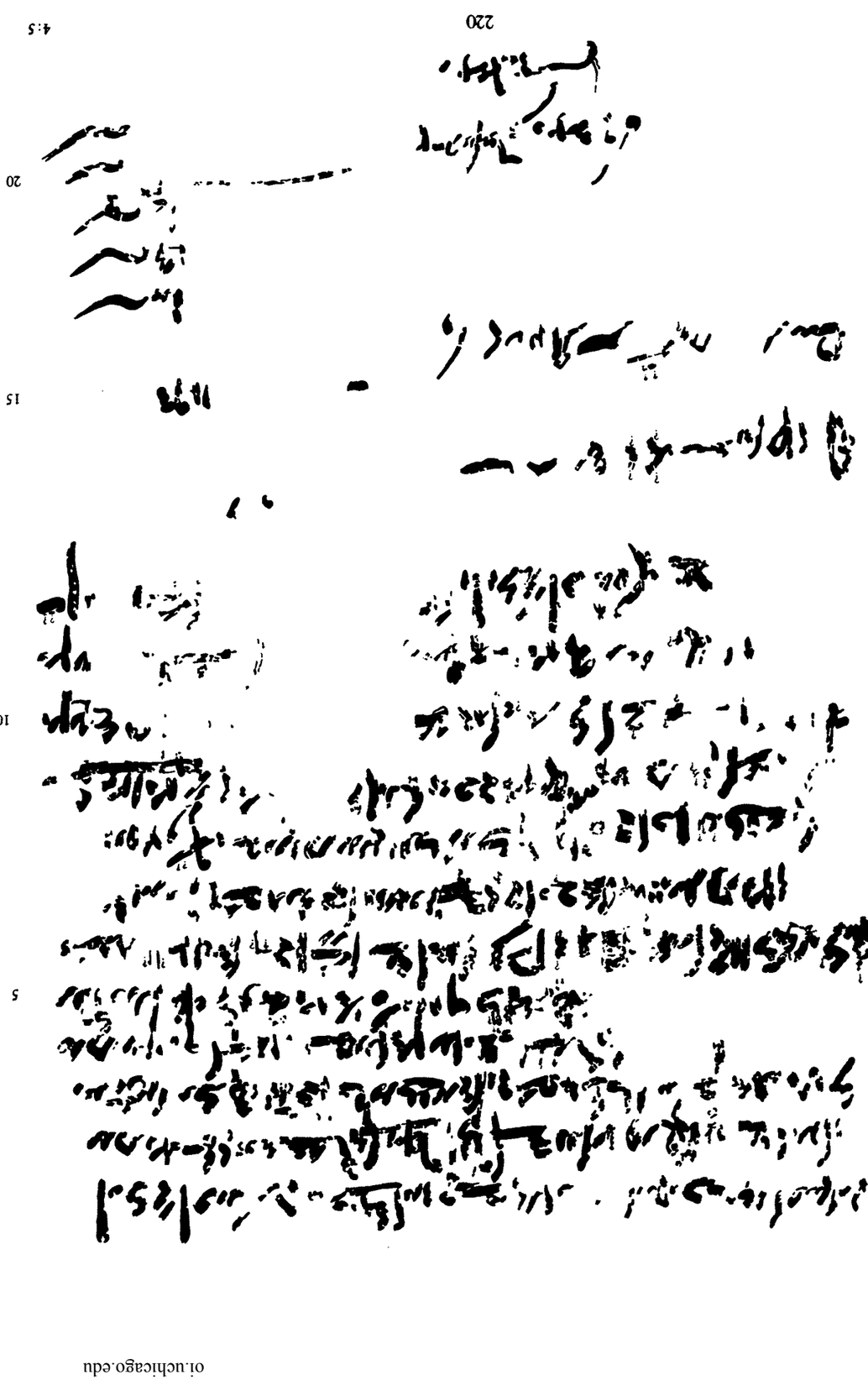

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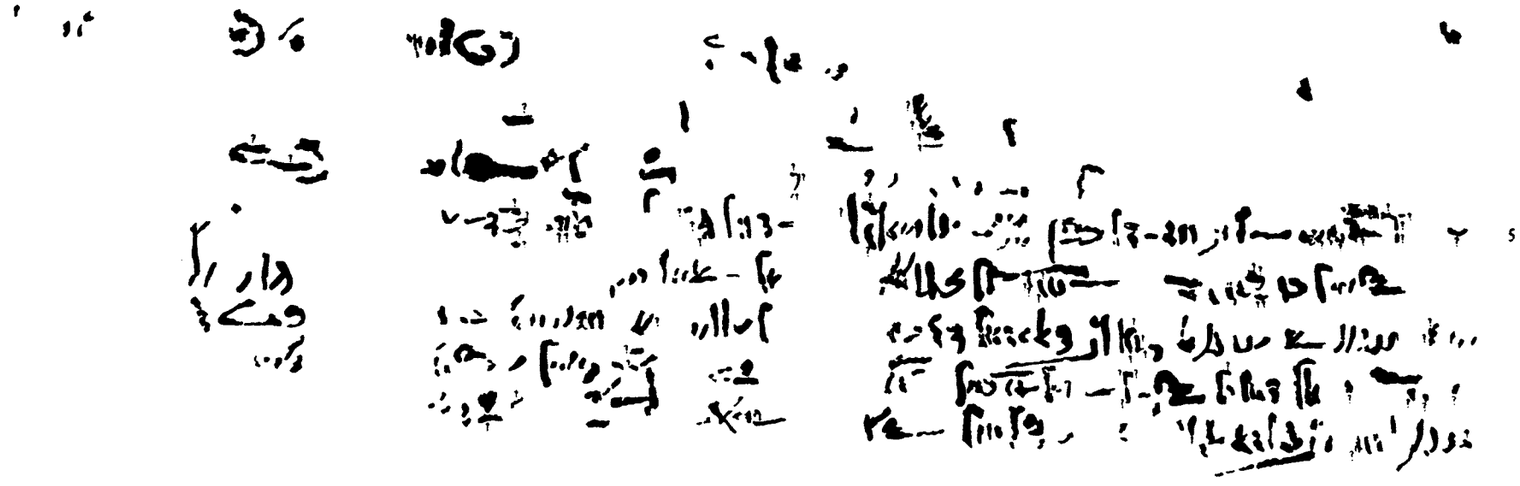

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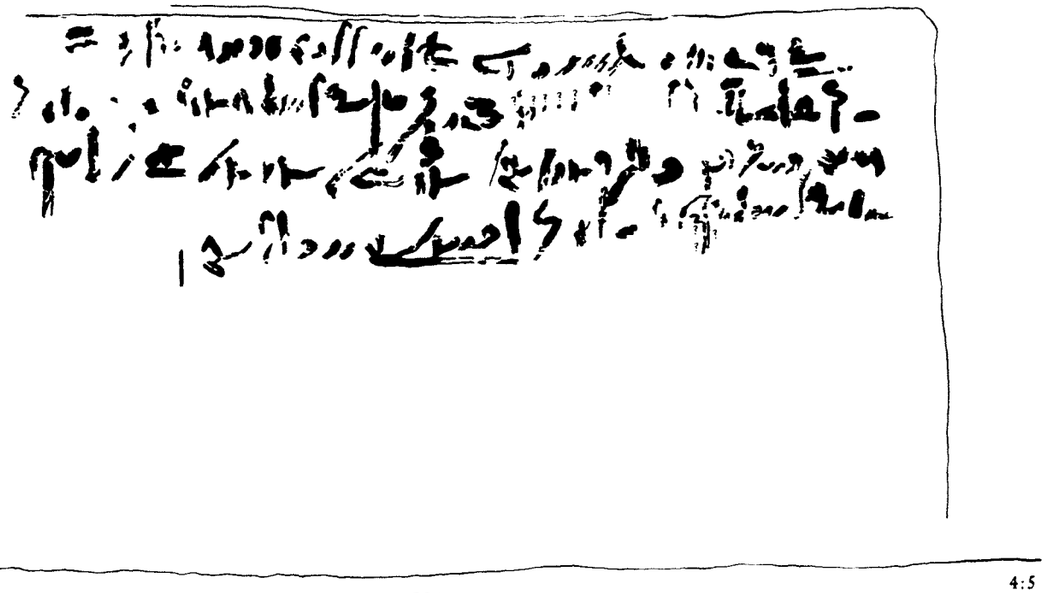

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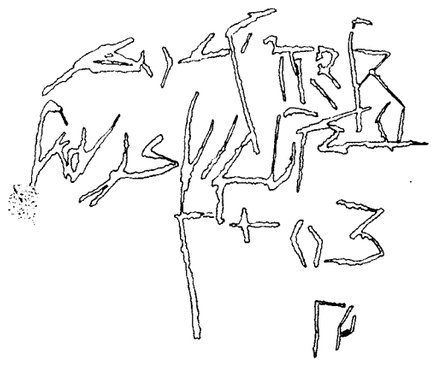

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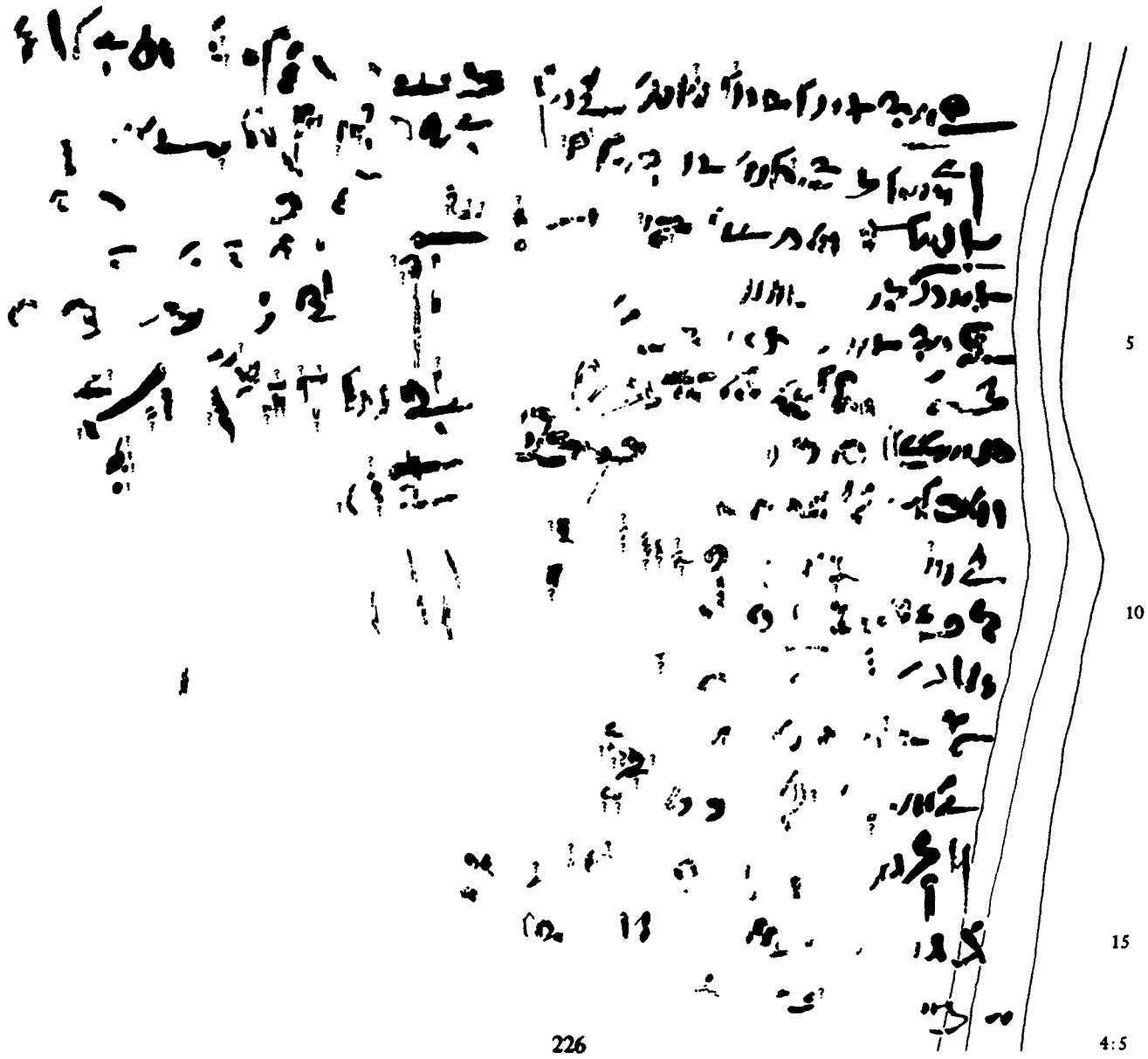

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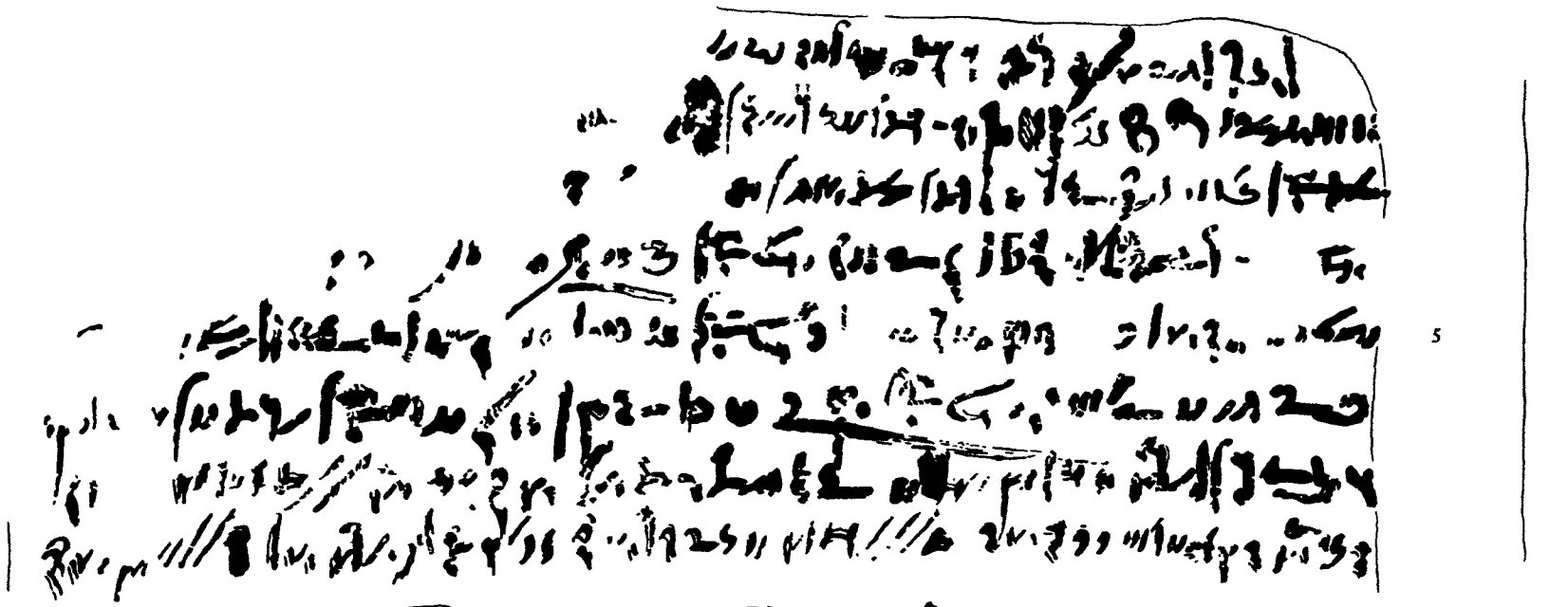

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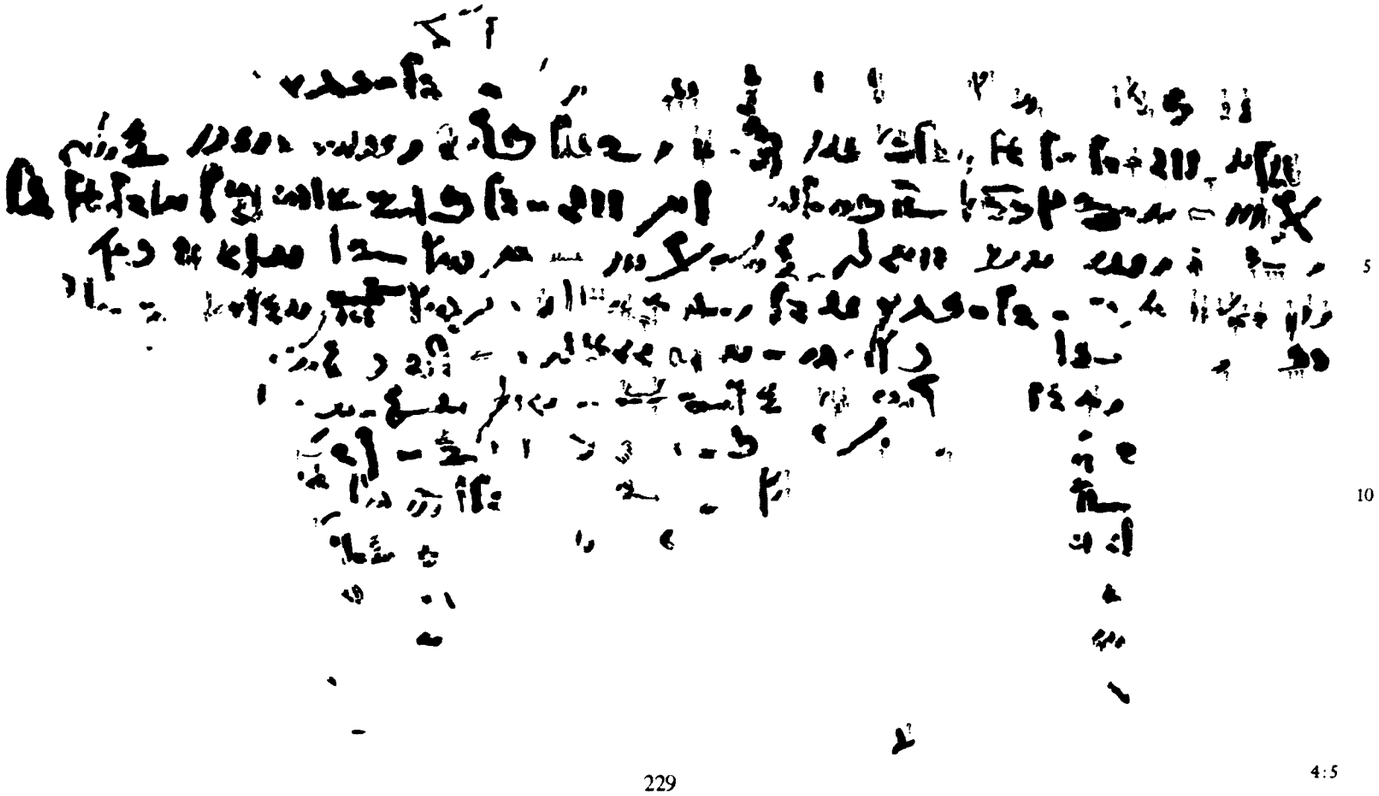

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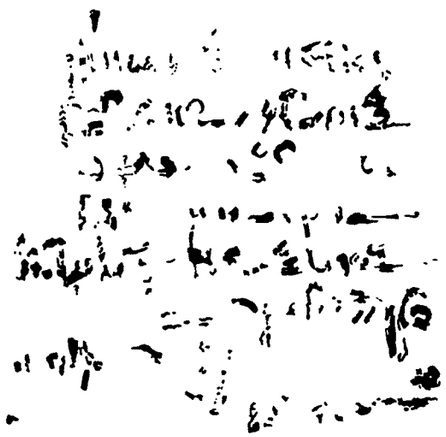

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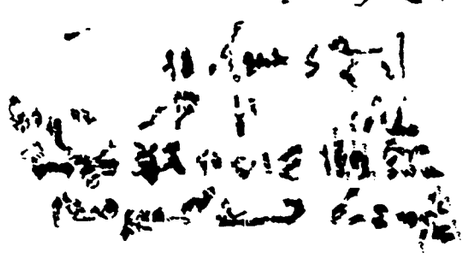

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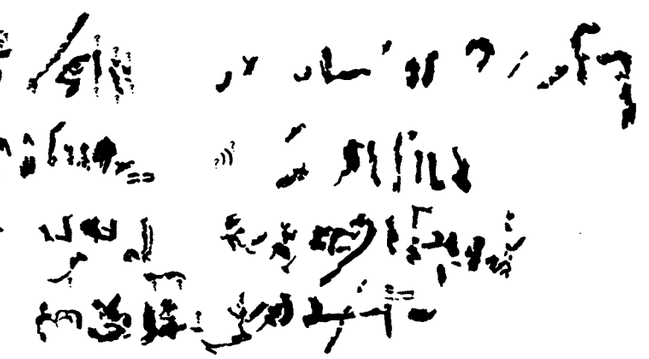

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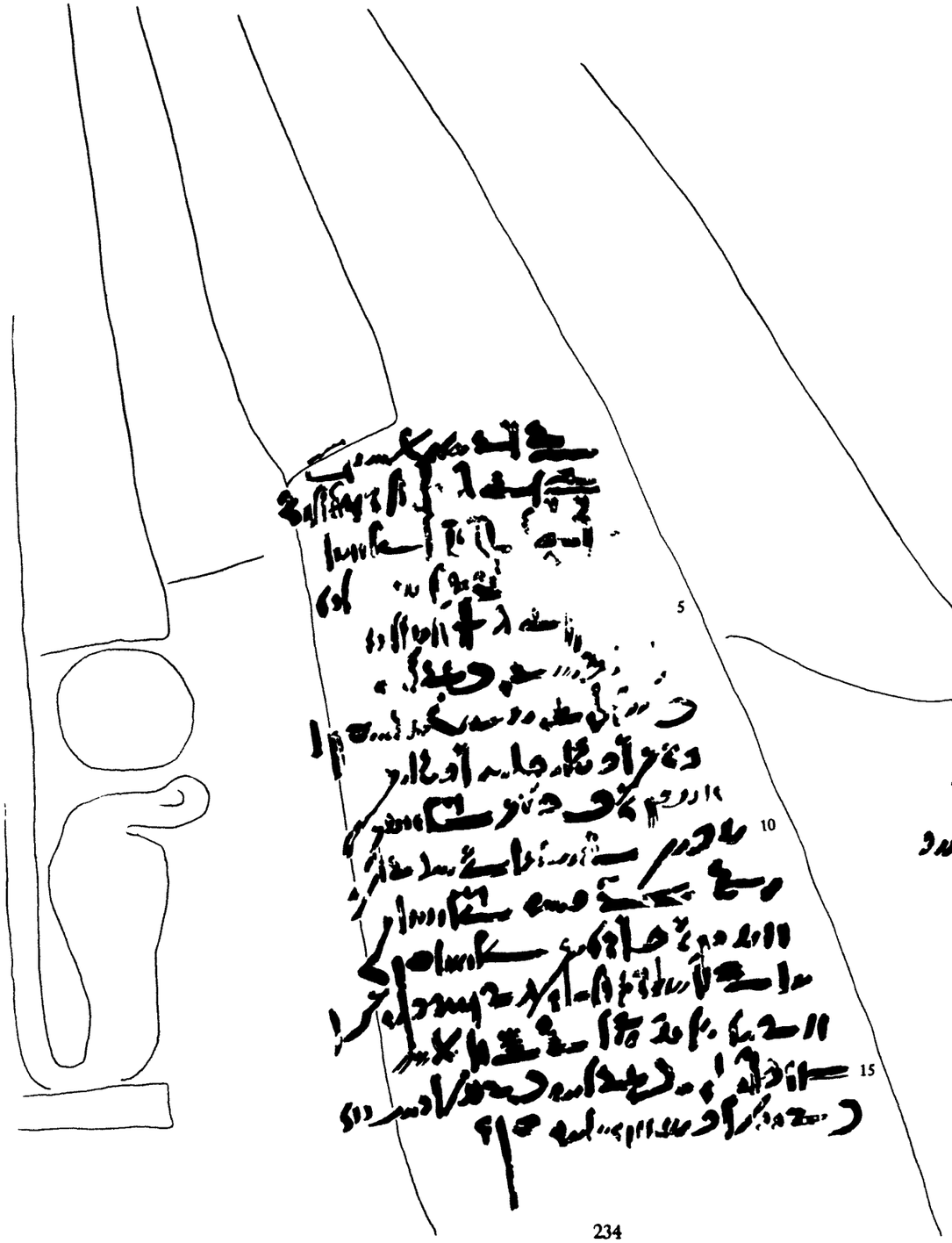

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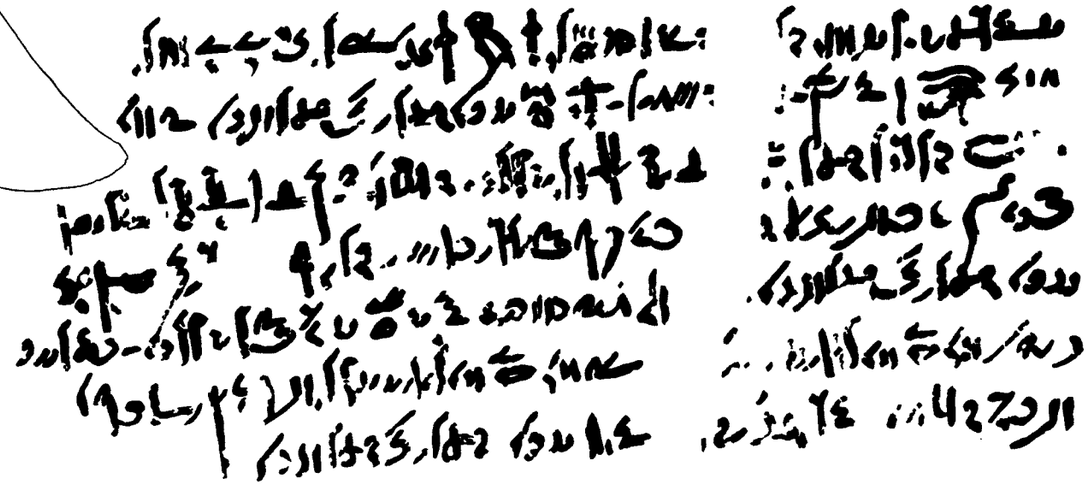

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ca. 3:4

PLATE 59

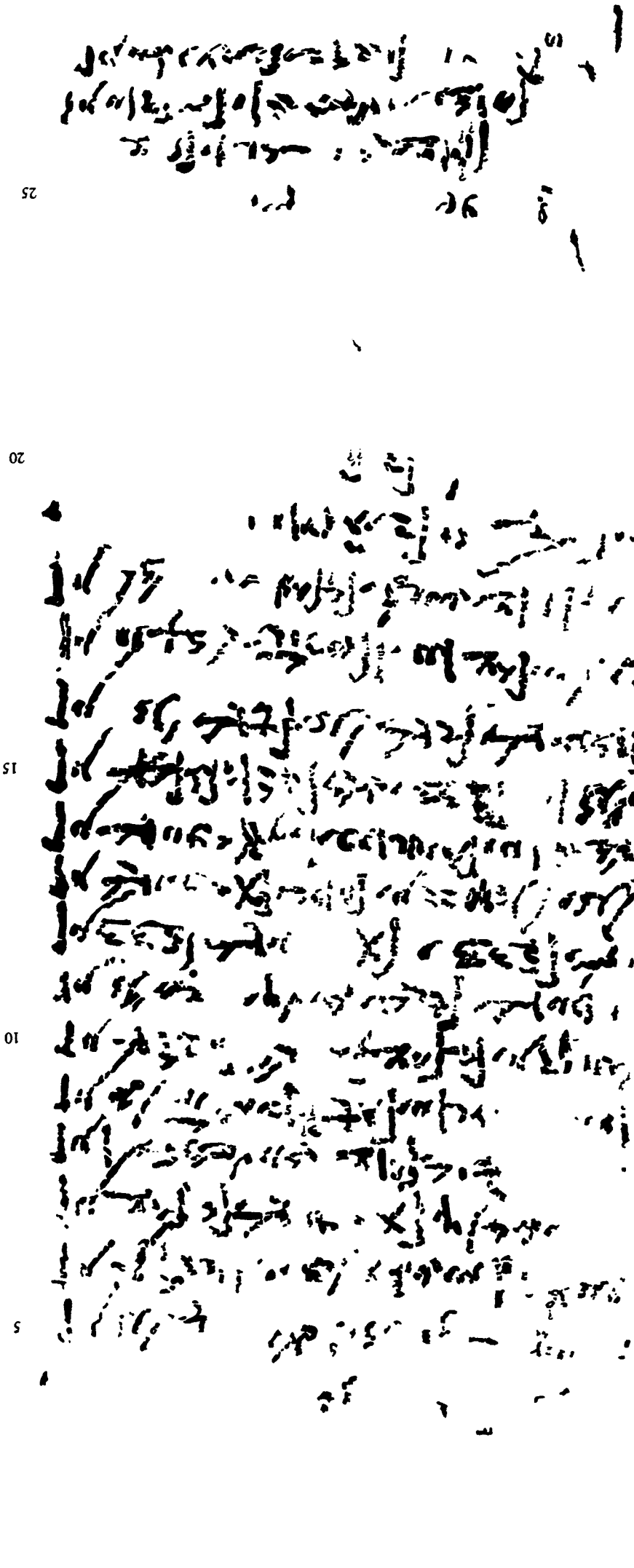

PLATE 60

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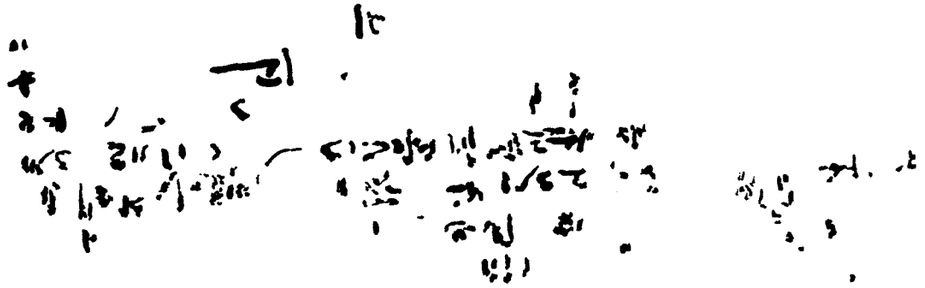

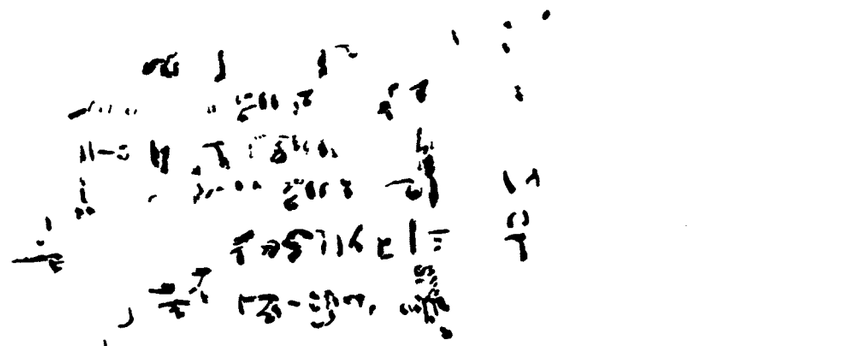

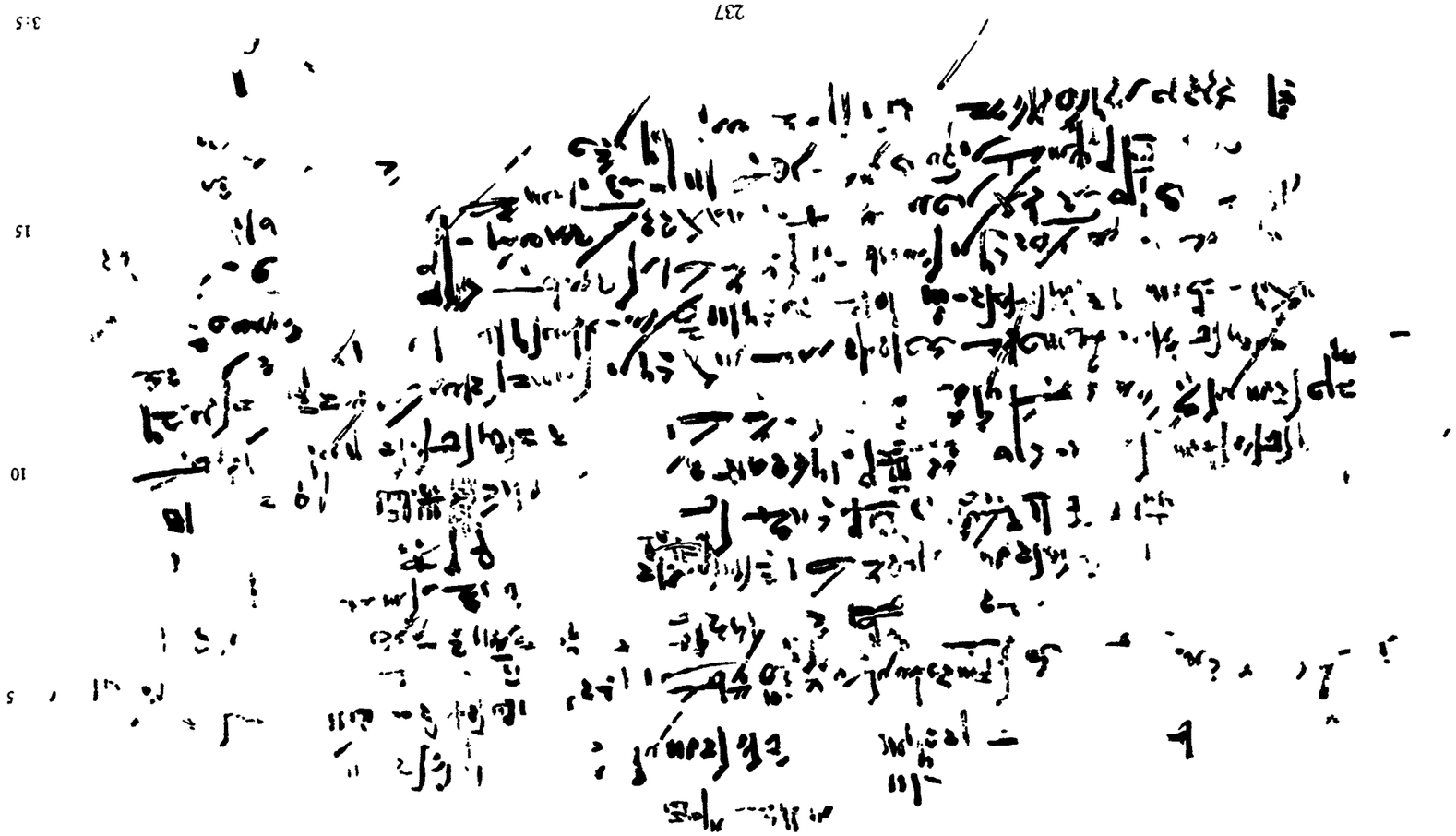

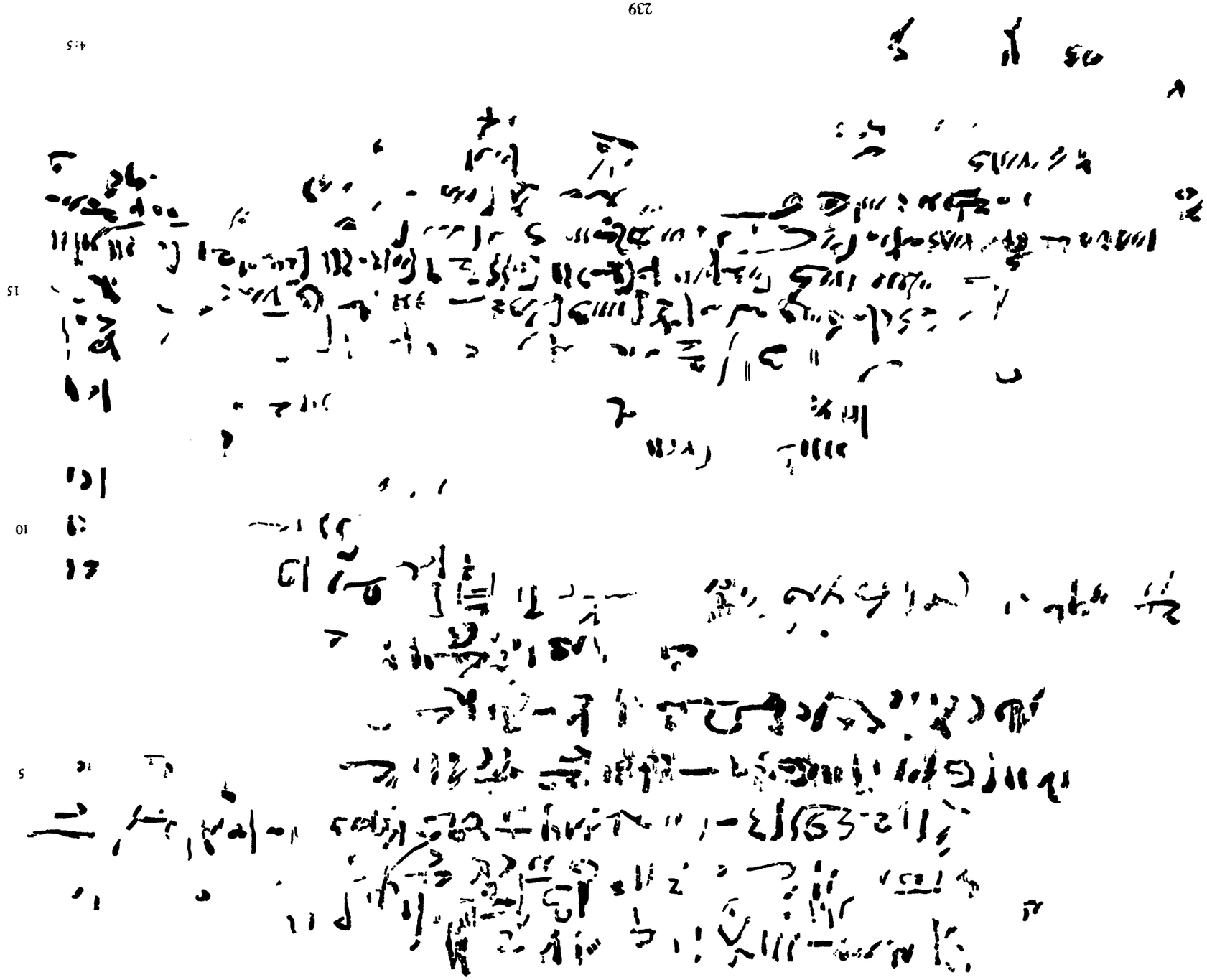

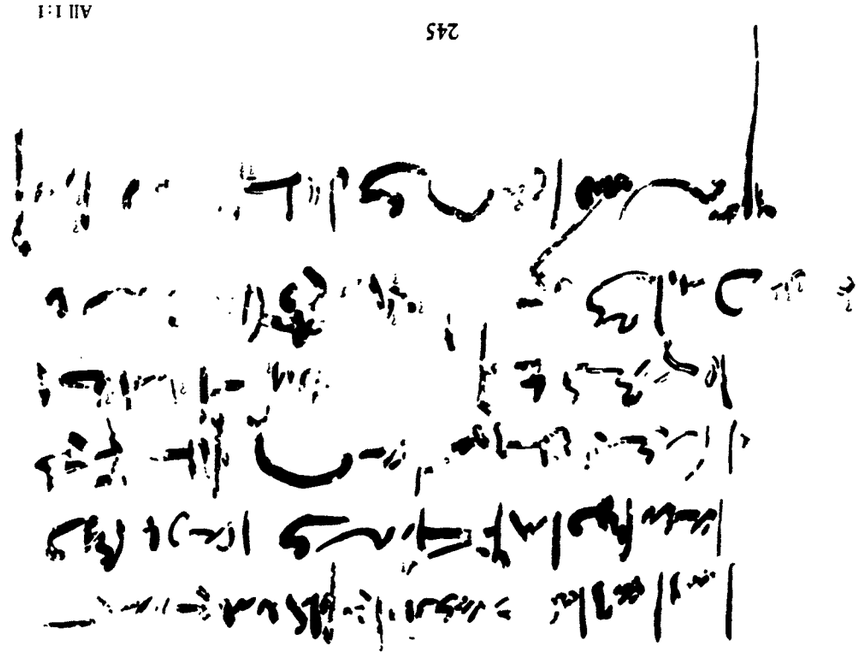

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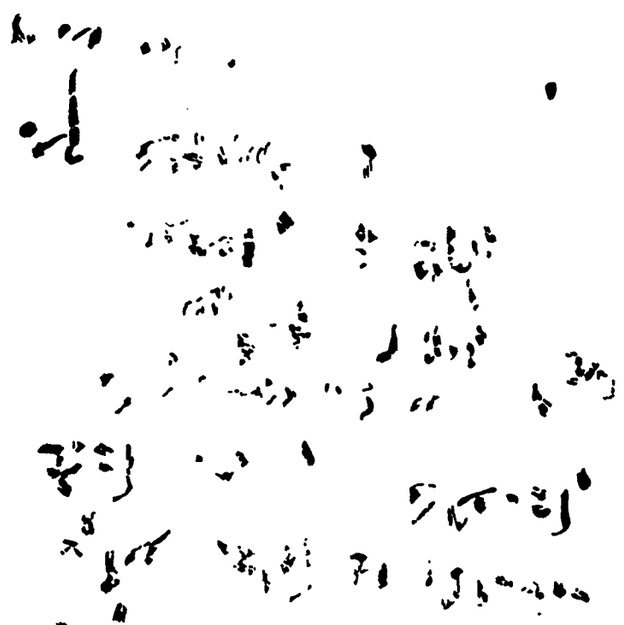

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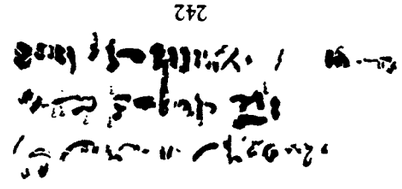

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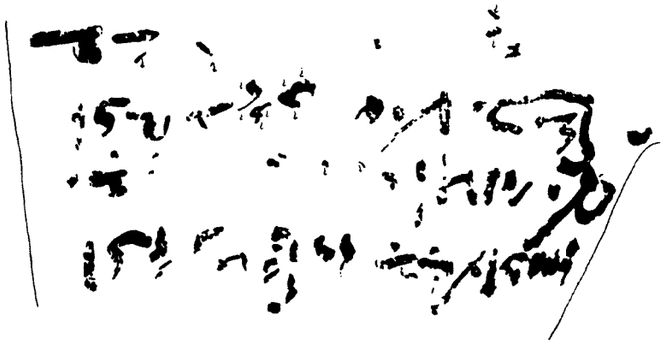

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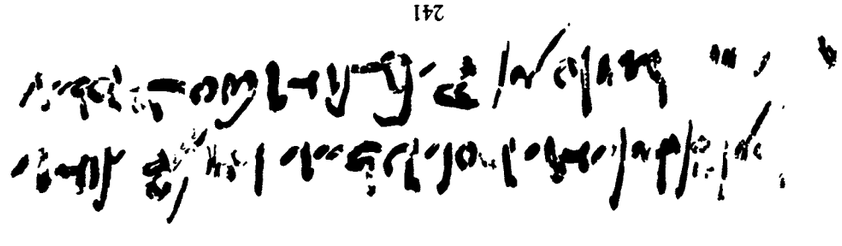

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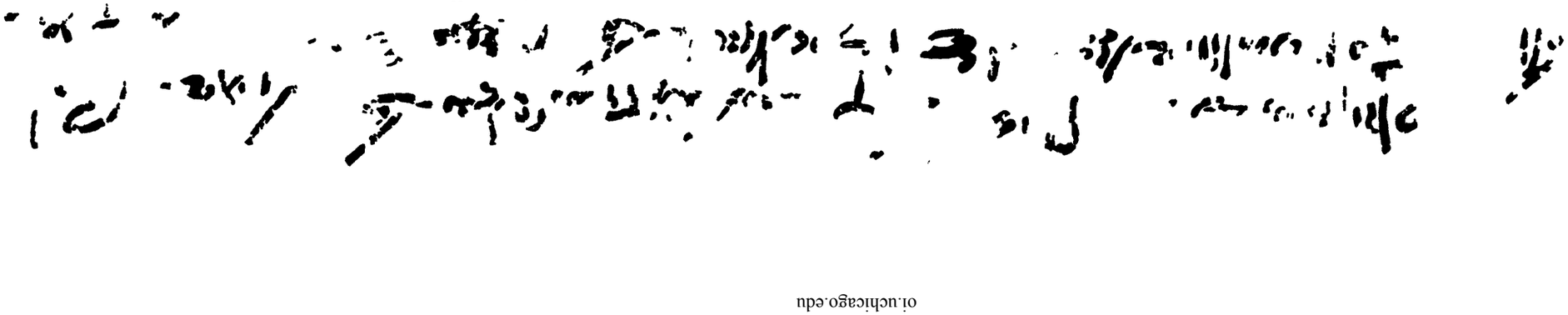

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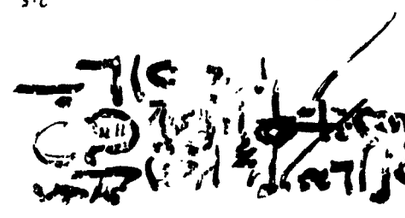

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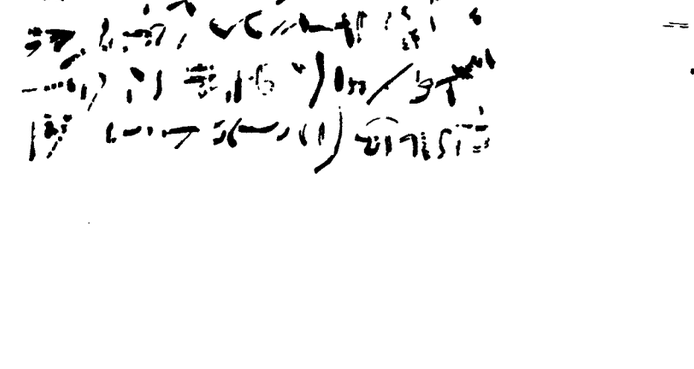
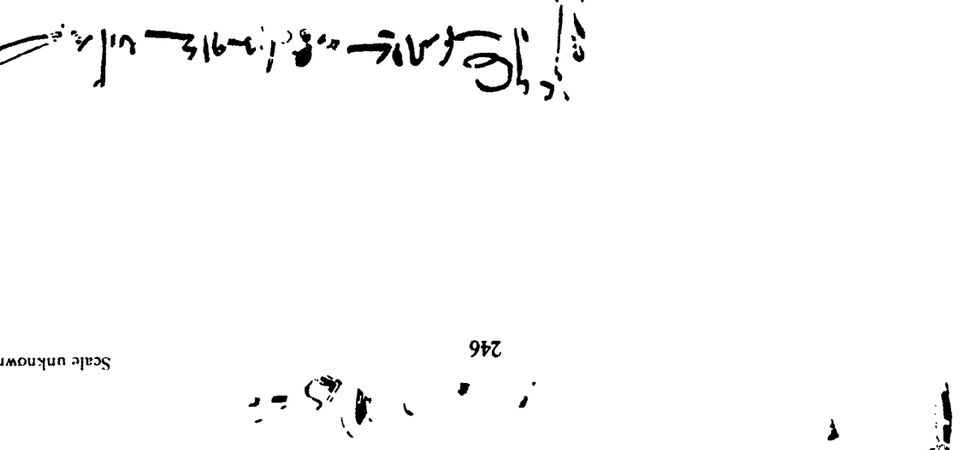
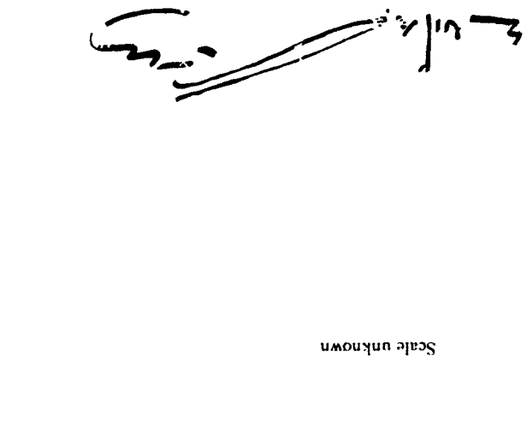


248 1:10



246 Scale unknown



247 Scale unknown

250 3:5

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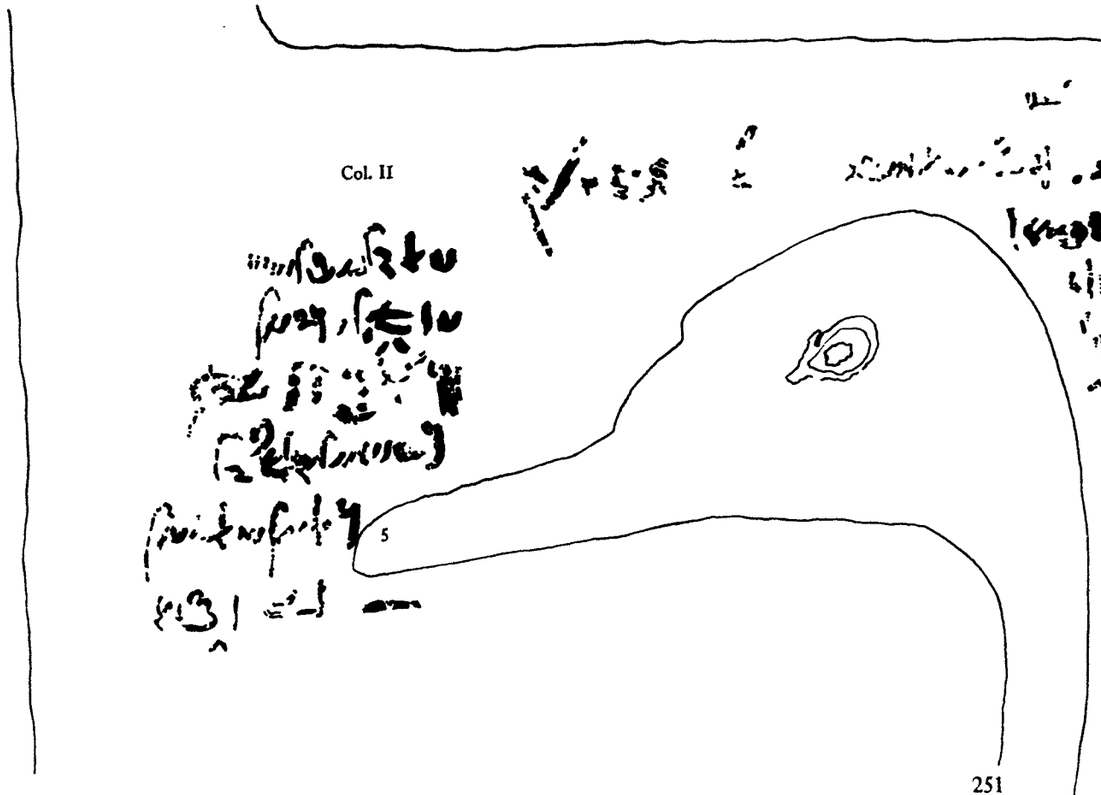
Col. I

Col. II



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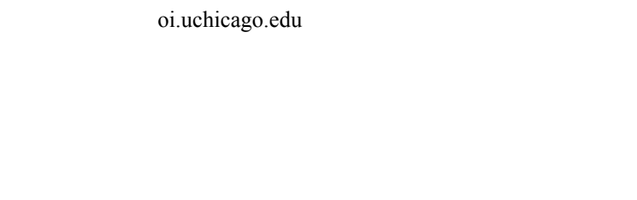

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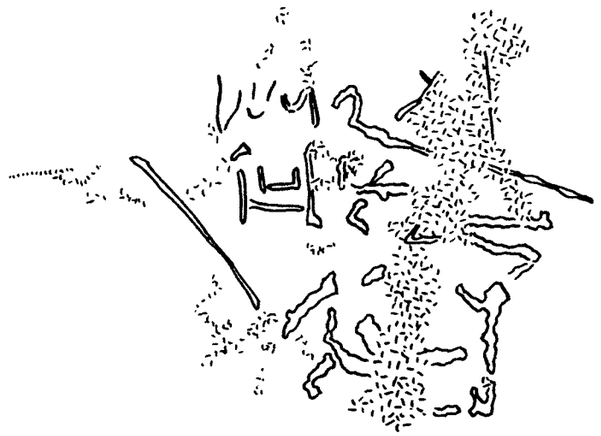

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1:5

254

1:5

4:5

PLATE 65

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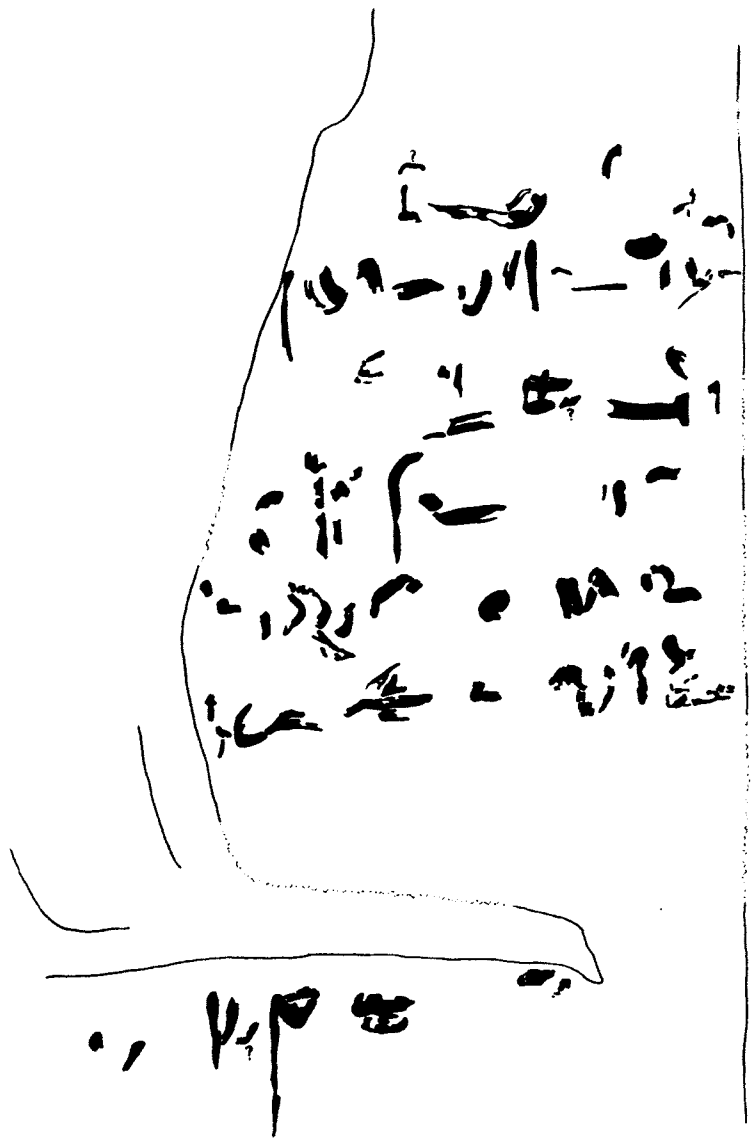

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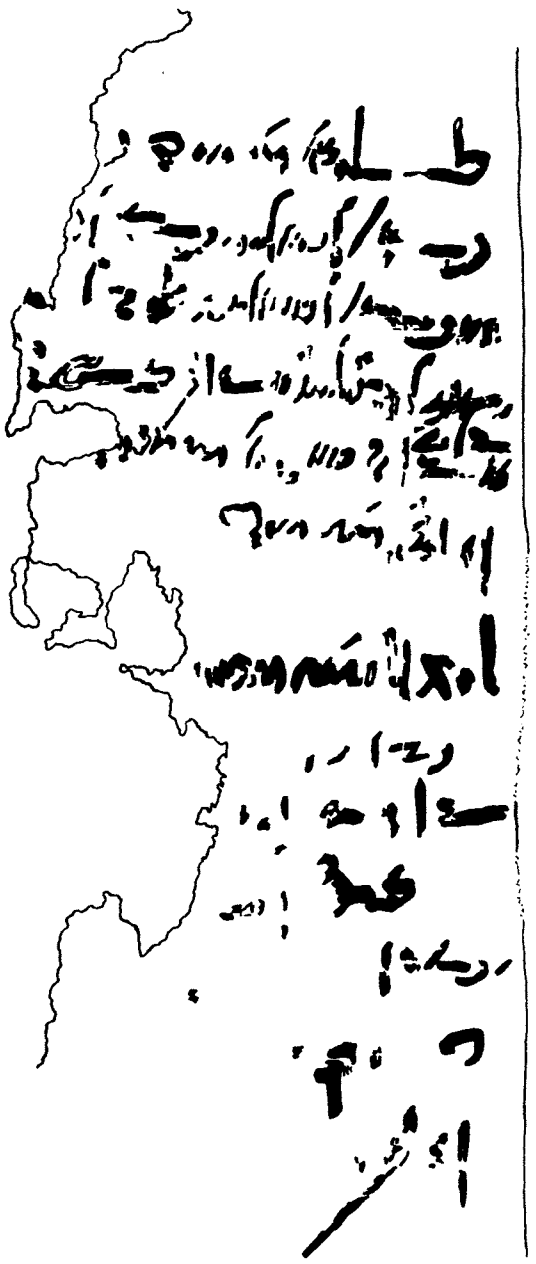

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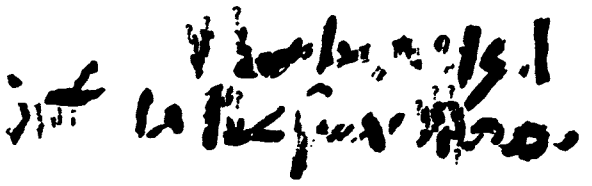

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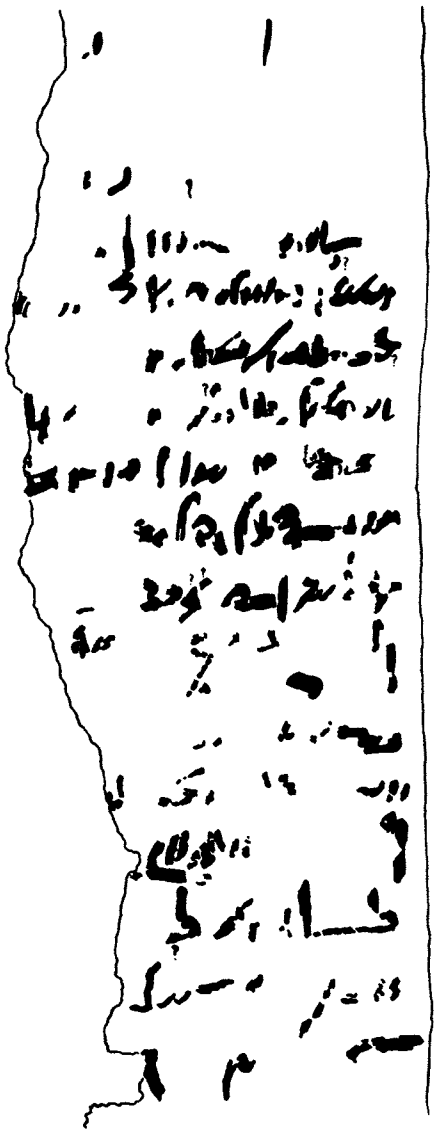

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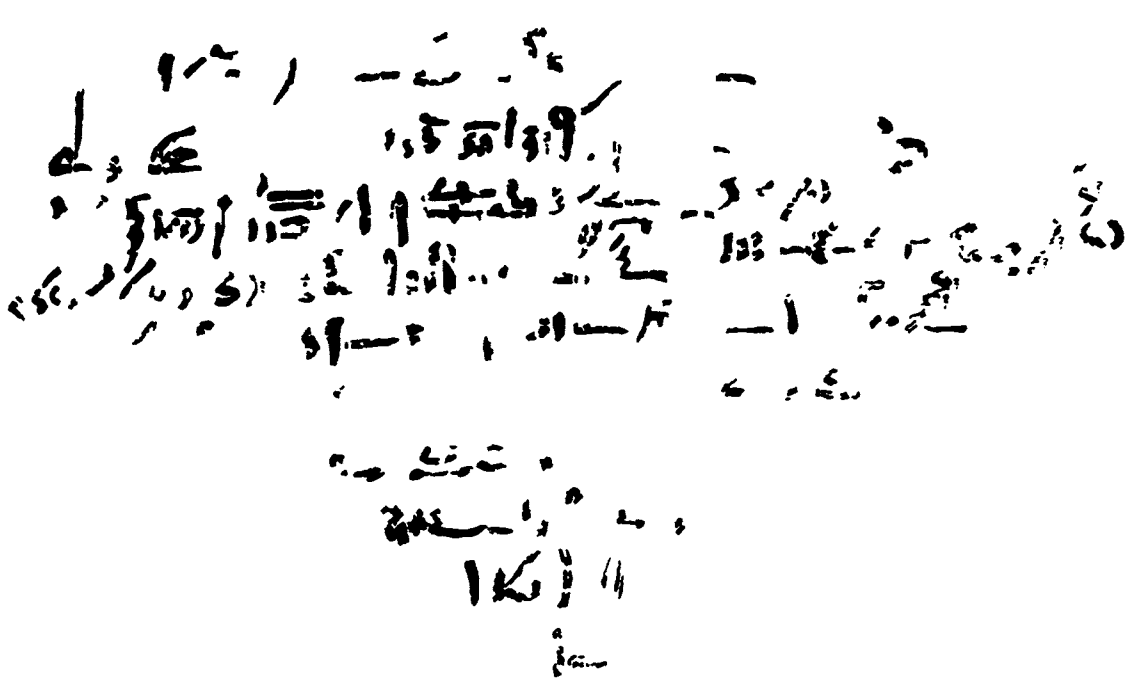

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All 4:5

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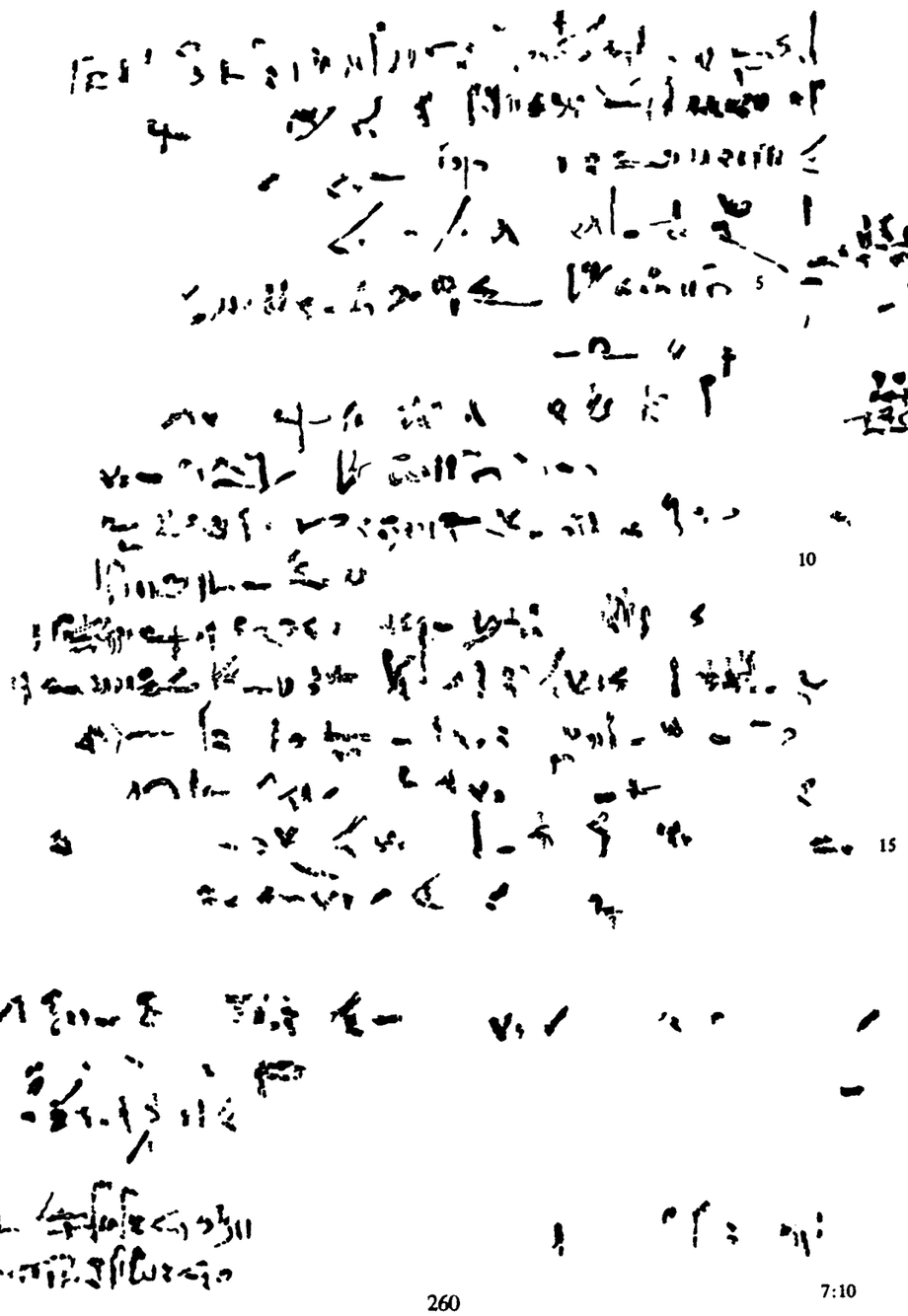

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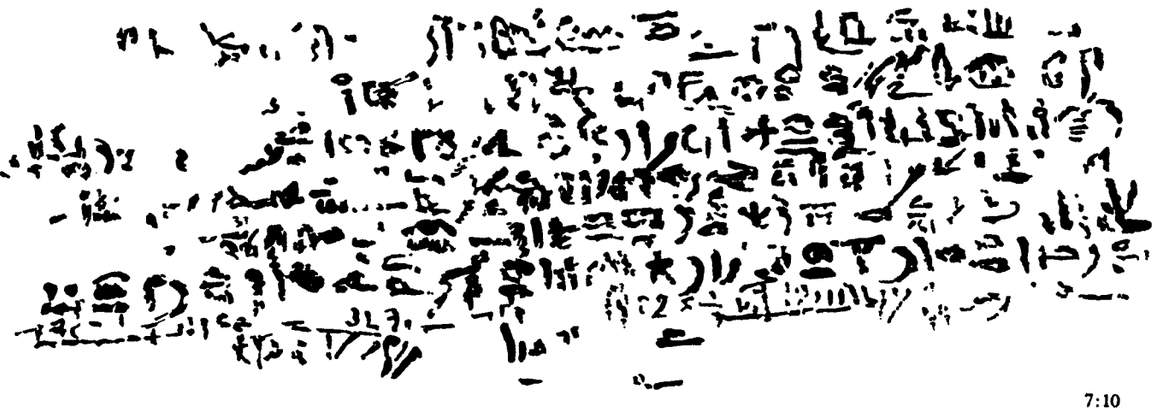

261

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PLATE 67

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Col. II

Col. I

Col. III

Scale unknown

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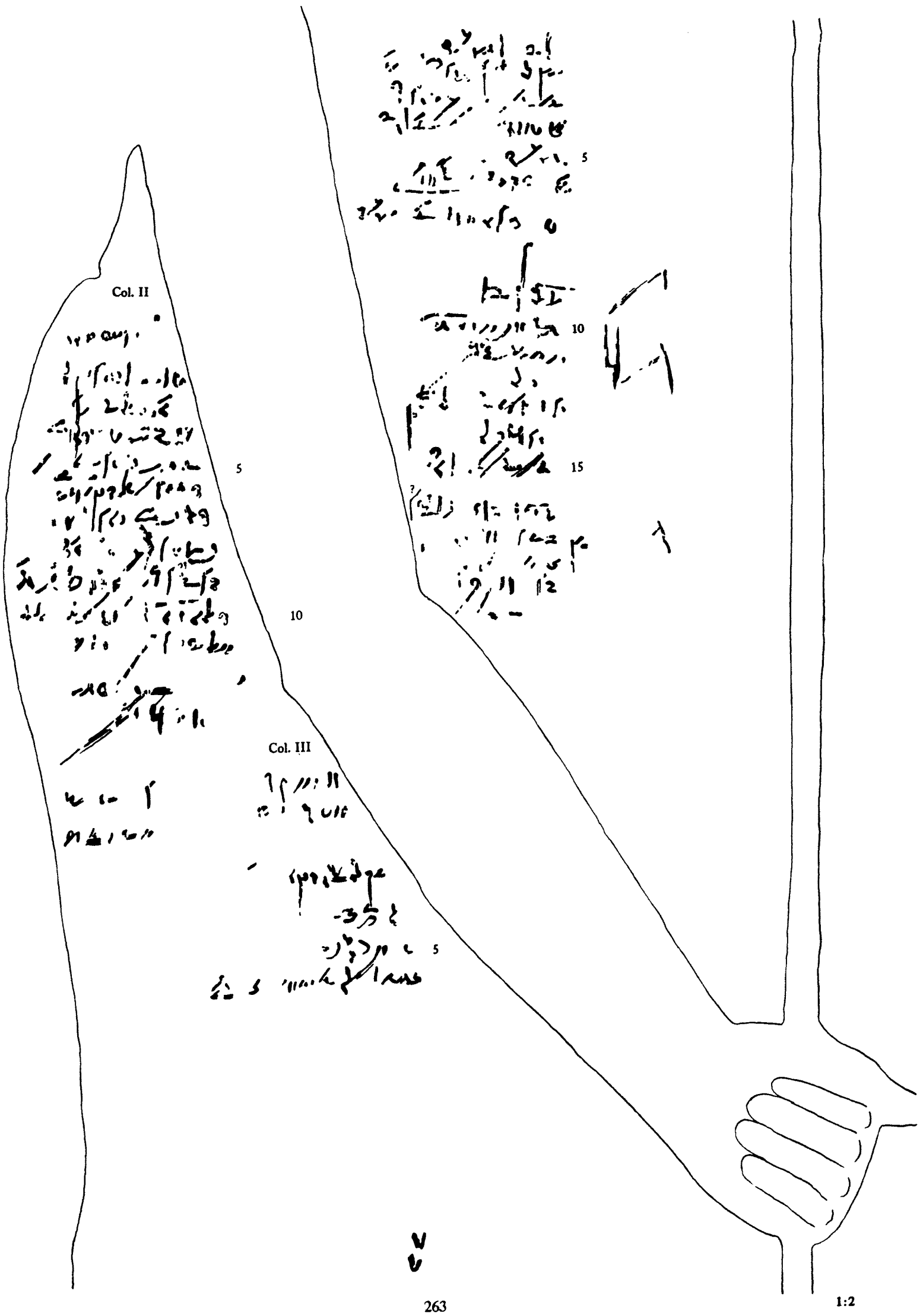
Col. I

Col. II

Col. III



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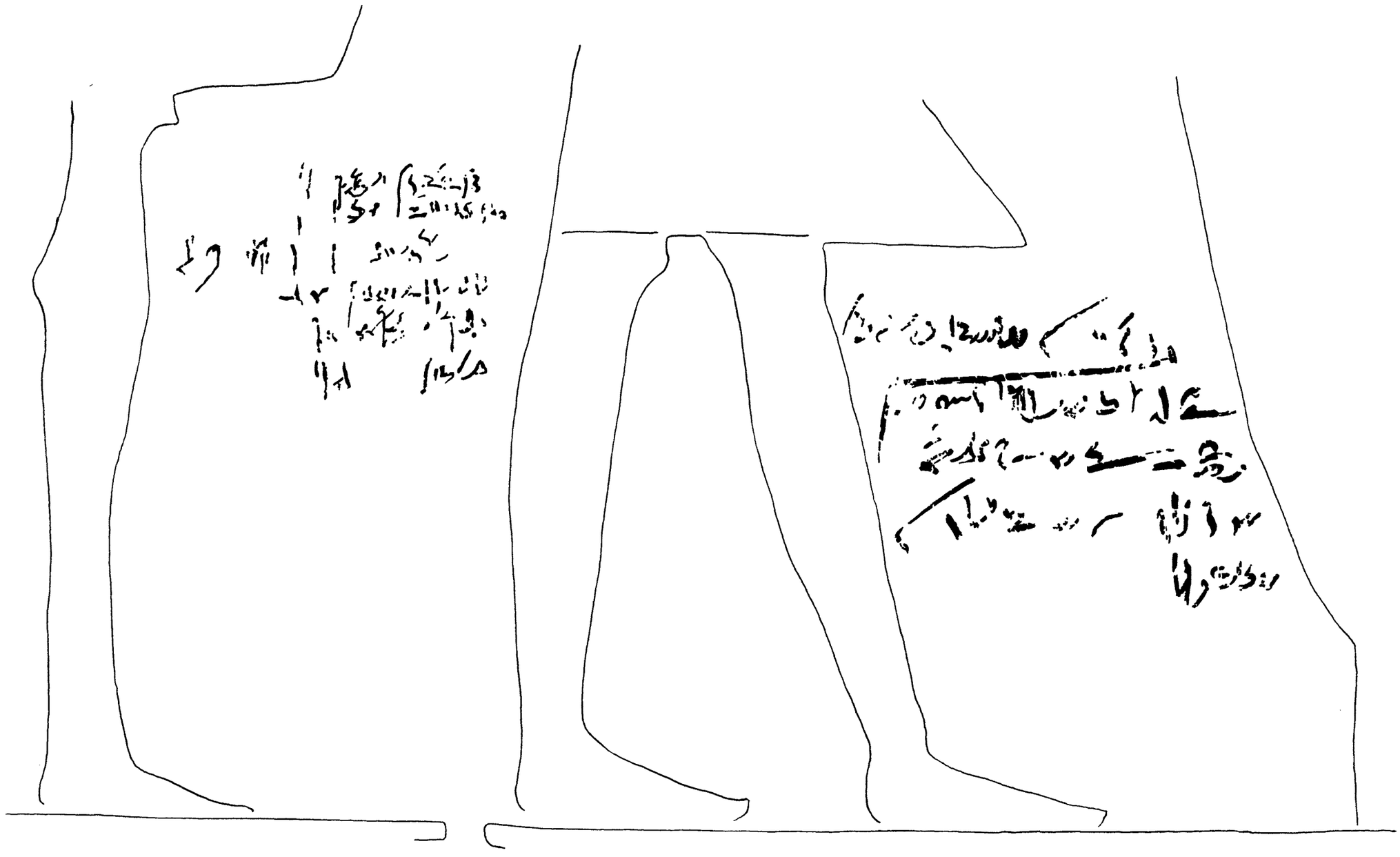

264

265

Scale unknown

PLATE 70

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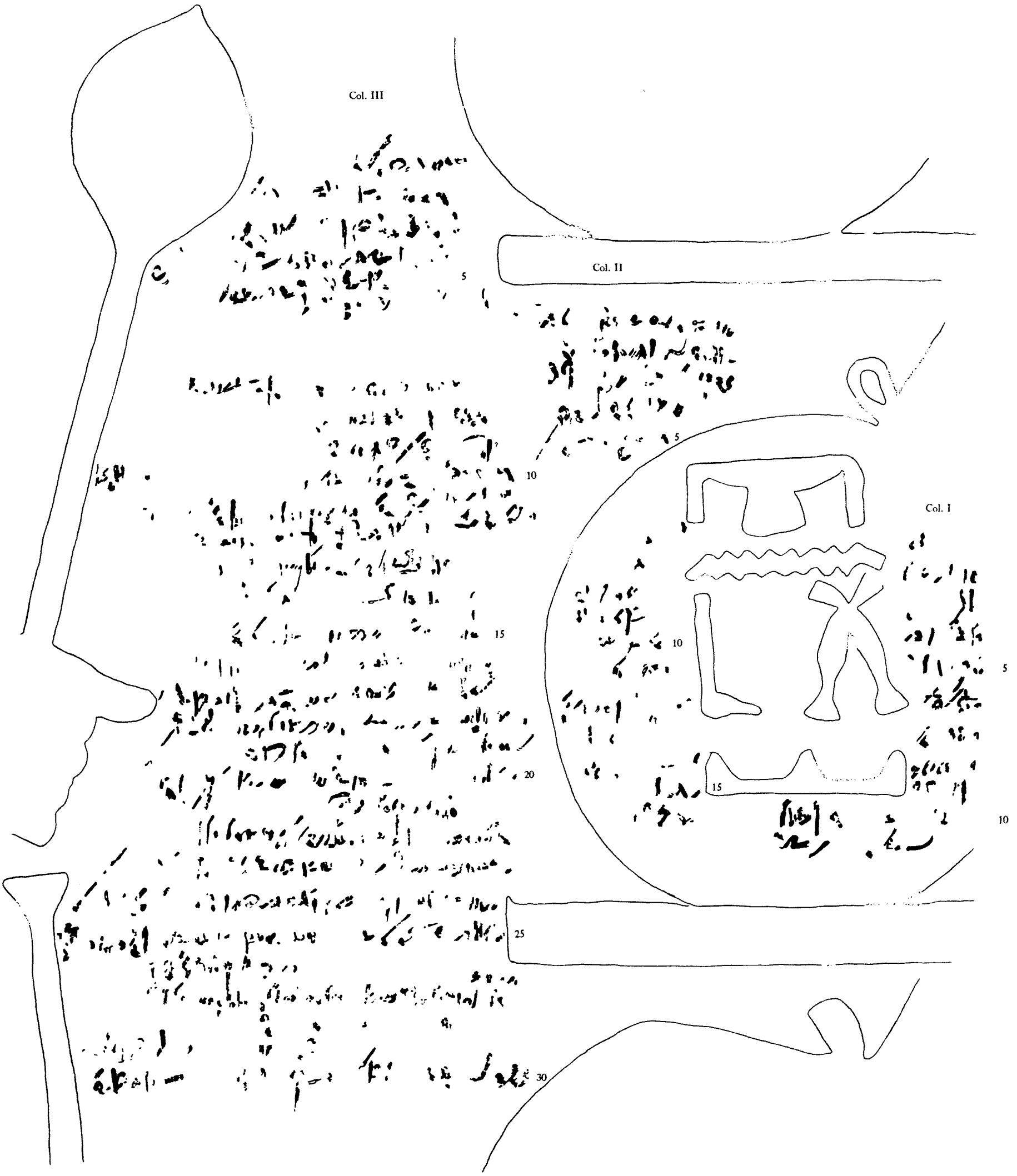

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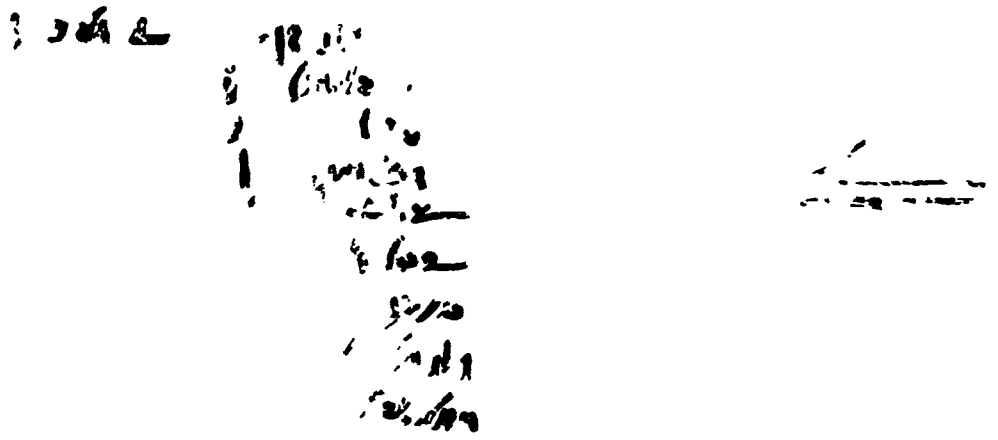

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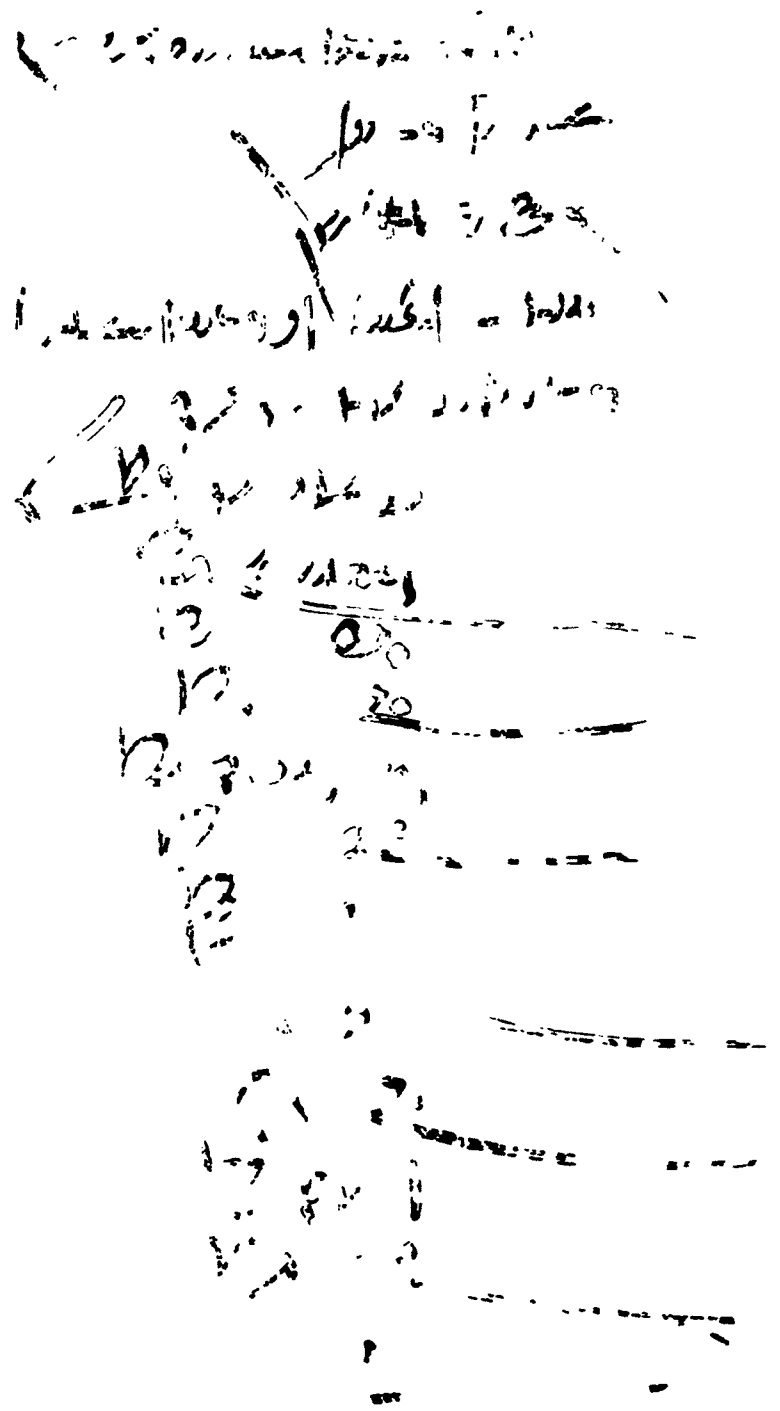

268 3:5

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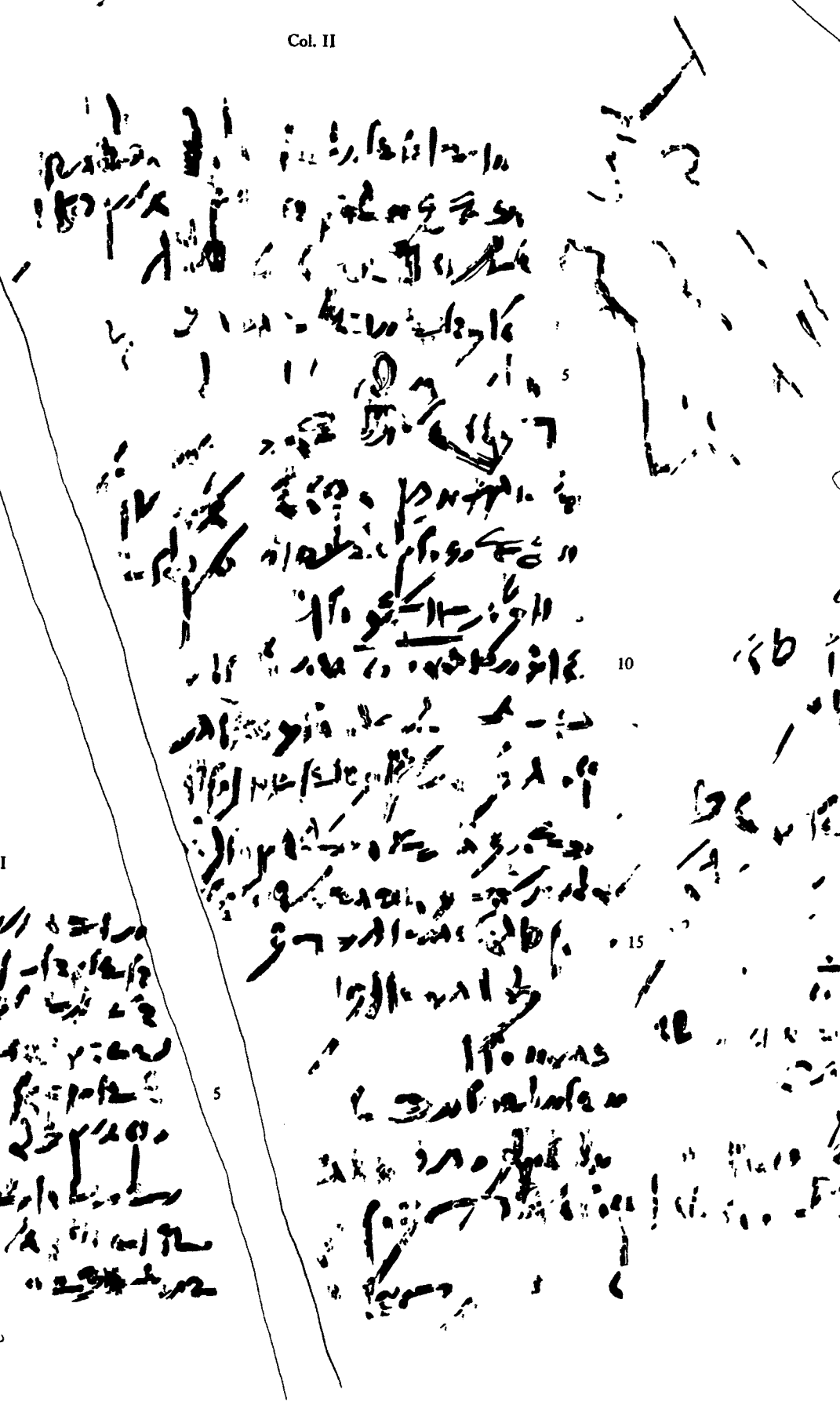
Col. II



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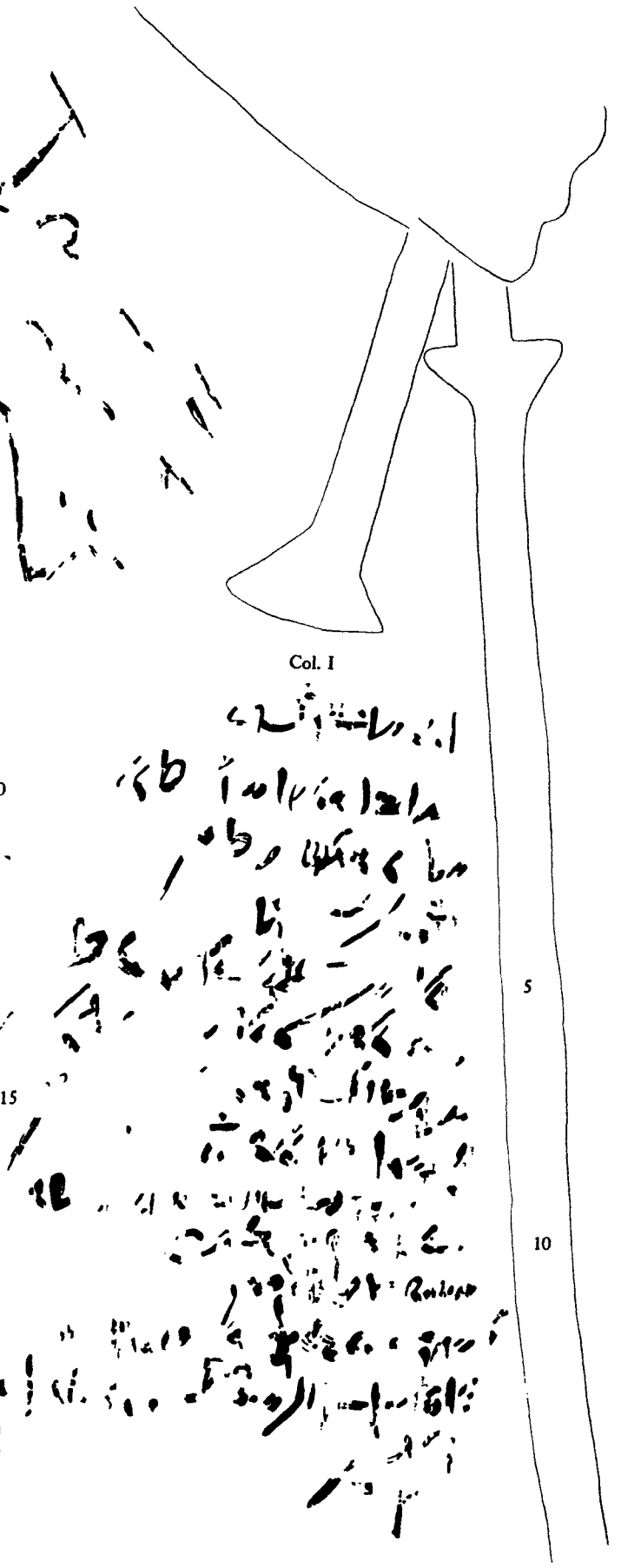
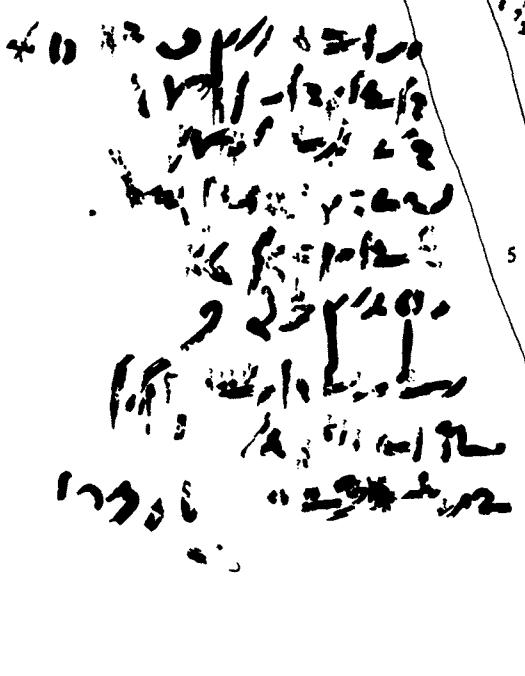


Col. III



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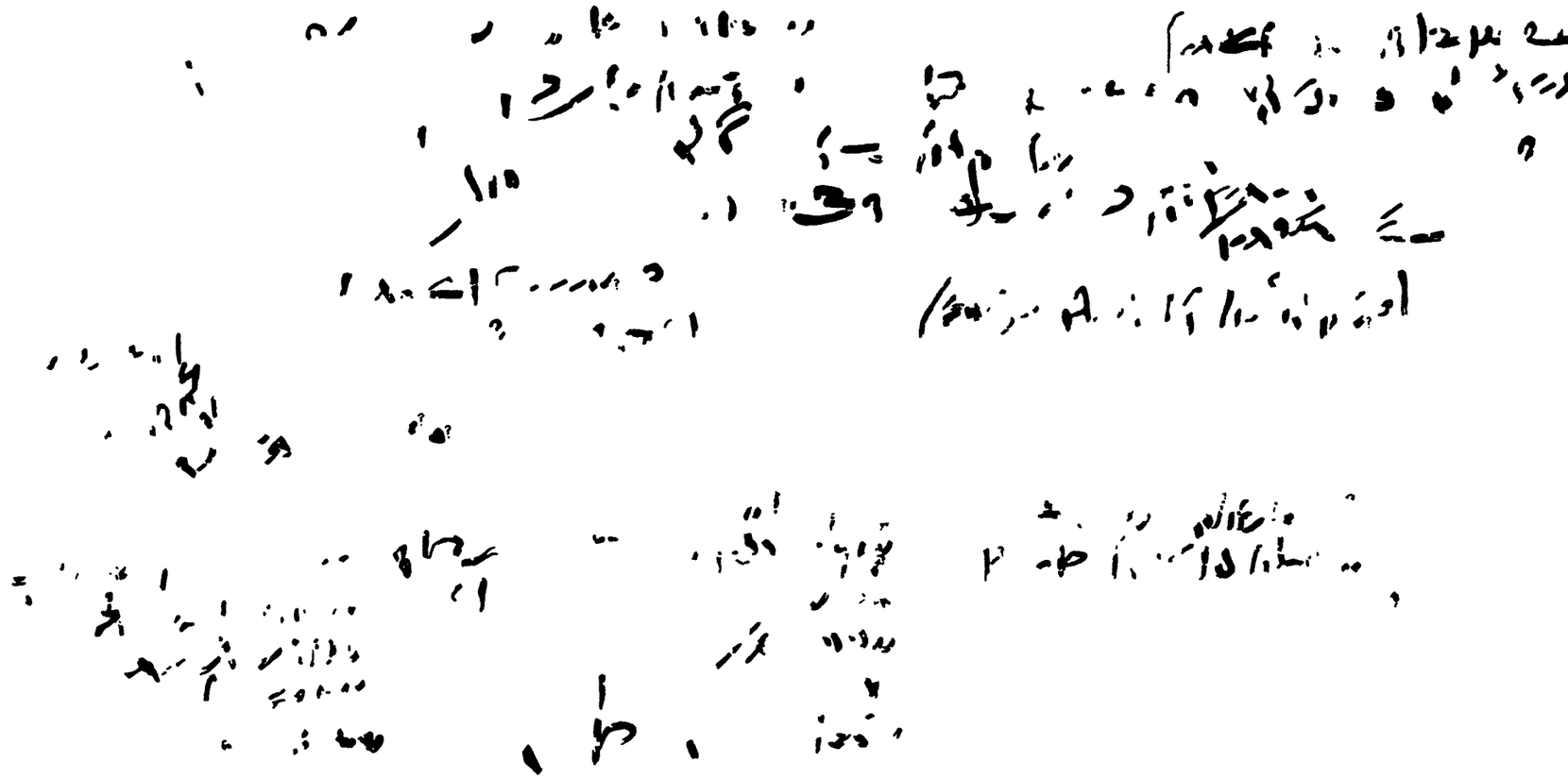

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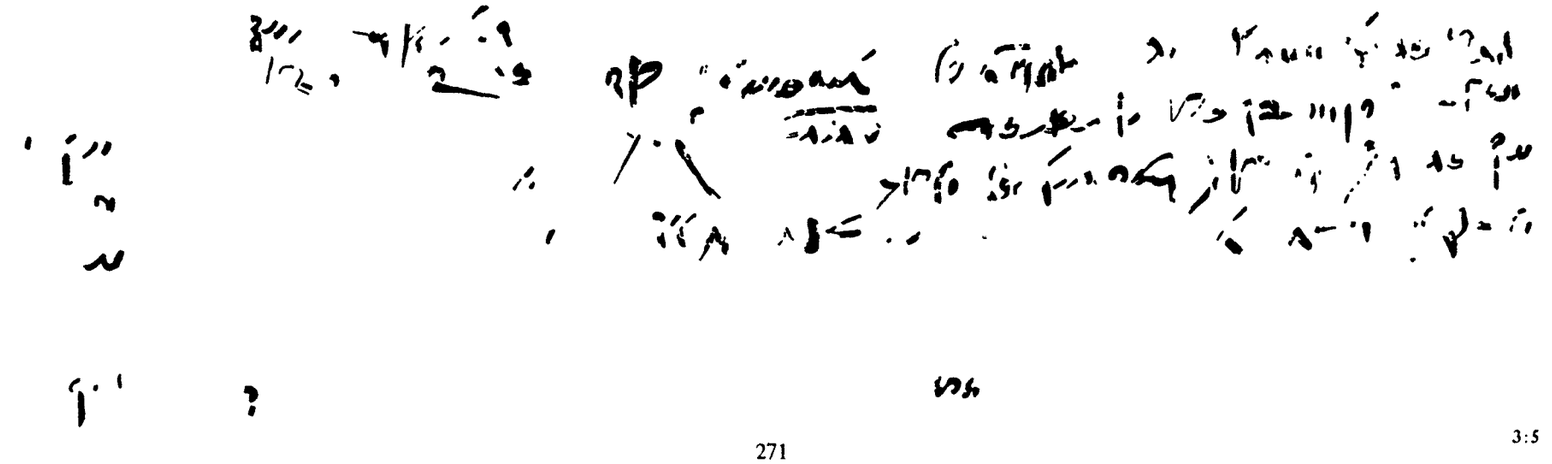

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3:5

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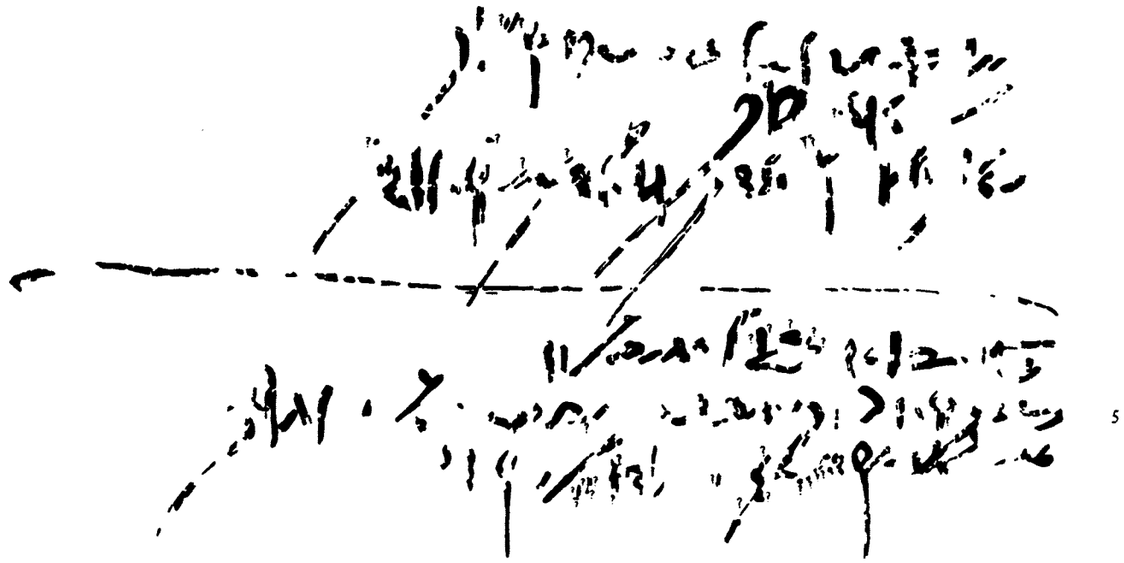
Col. I



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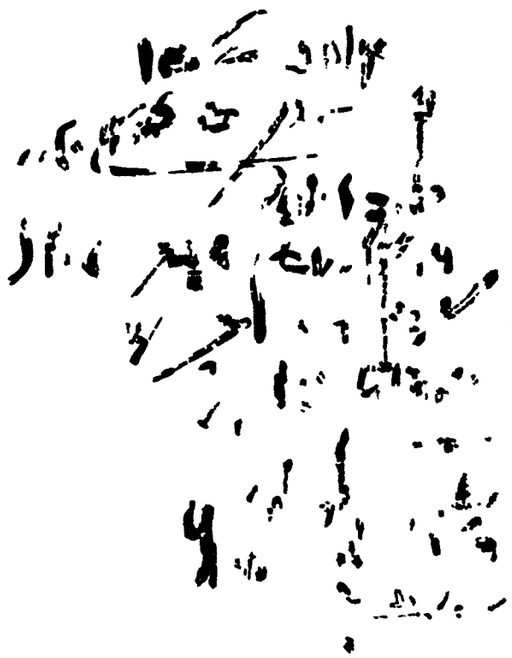

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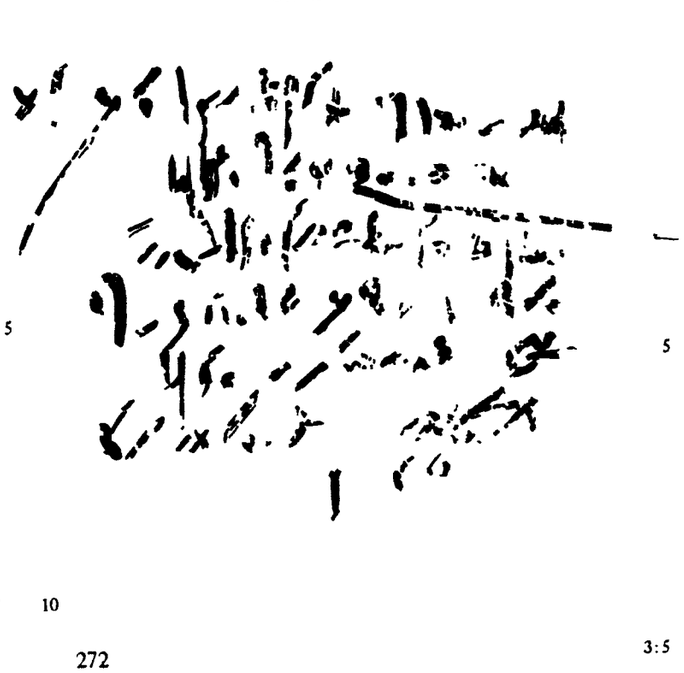

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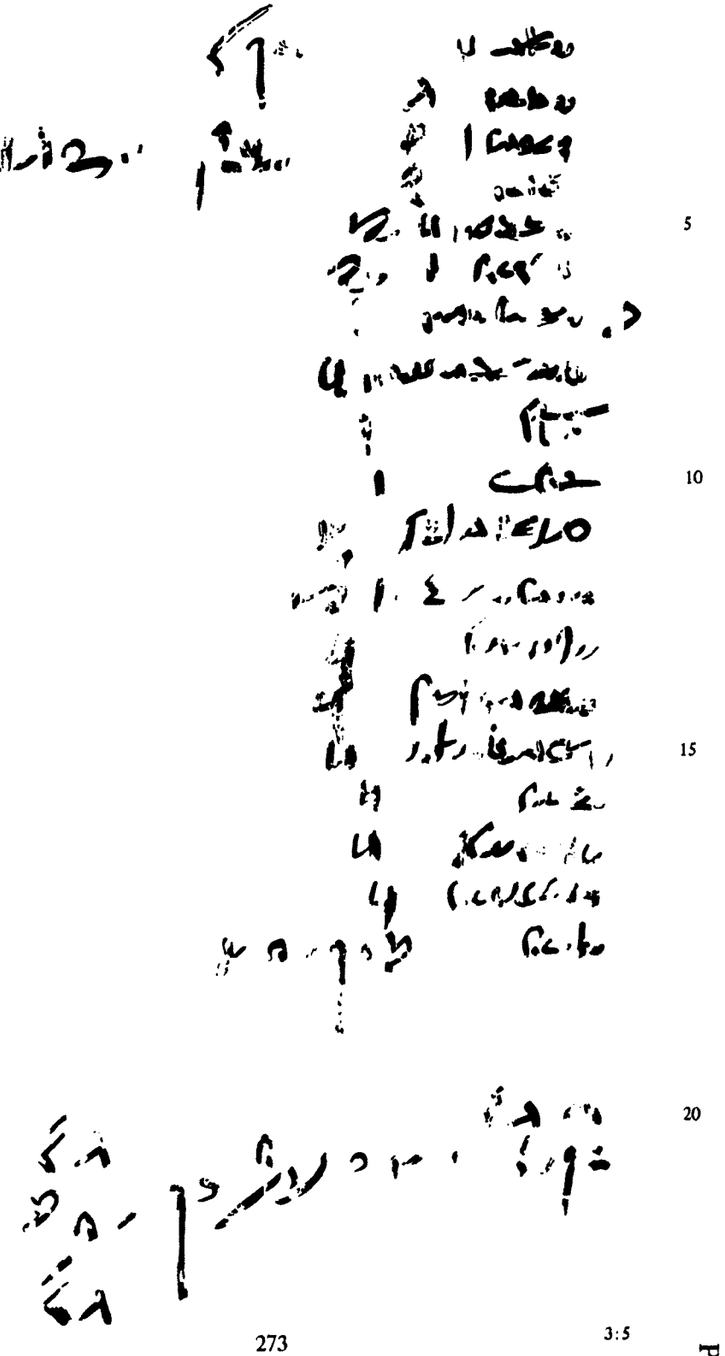

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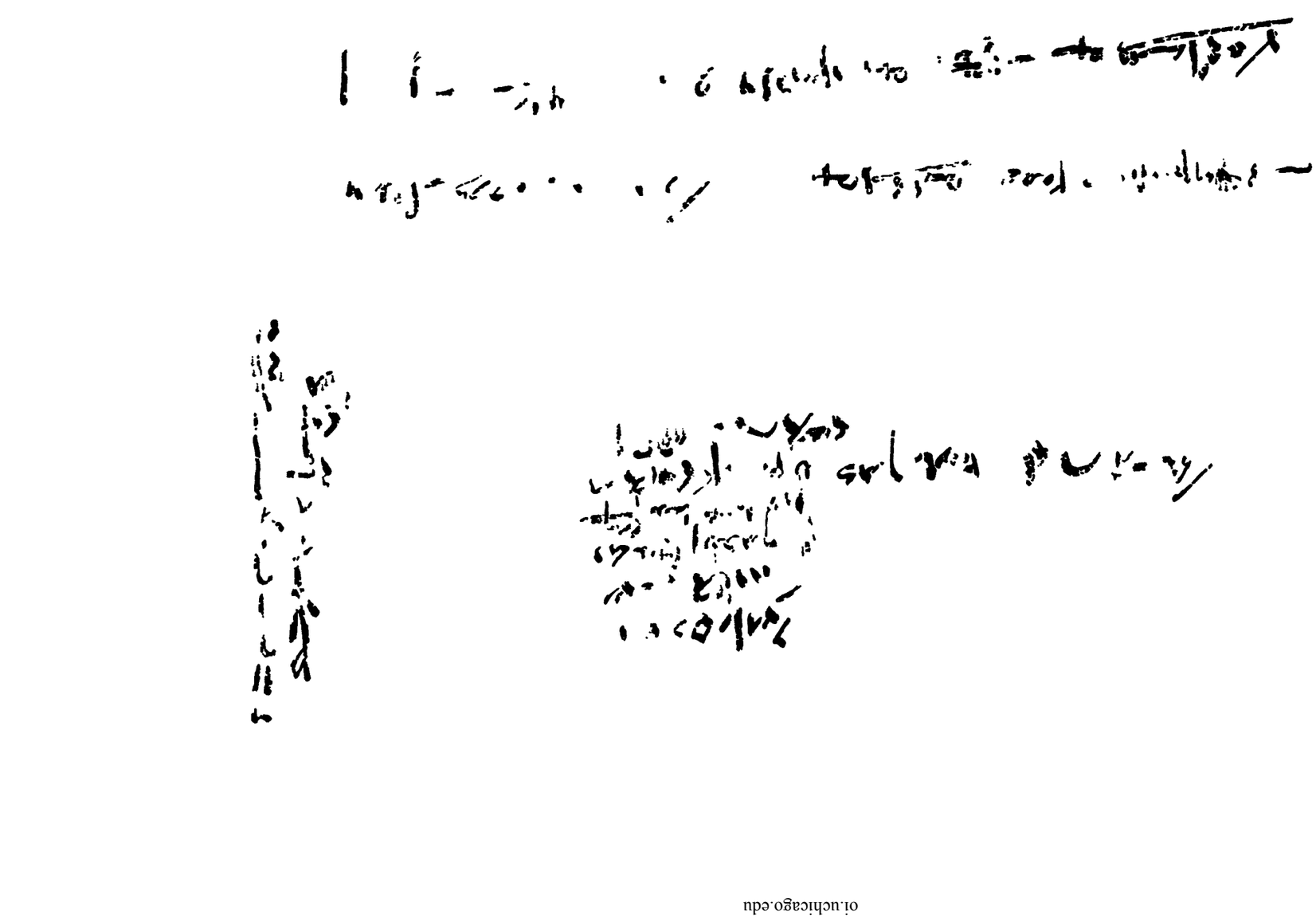
PLATE 75



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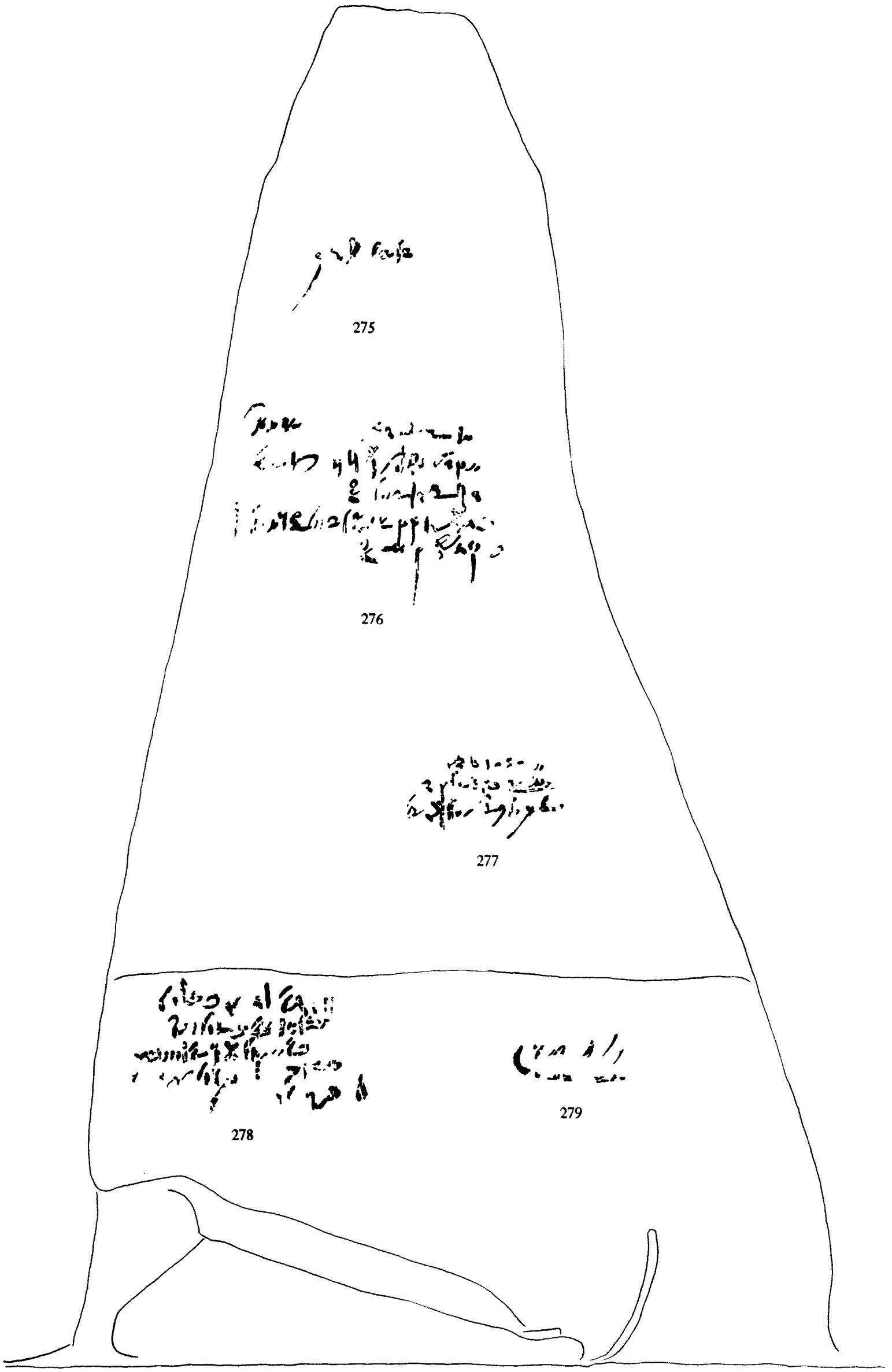

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279

All 1:2

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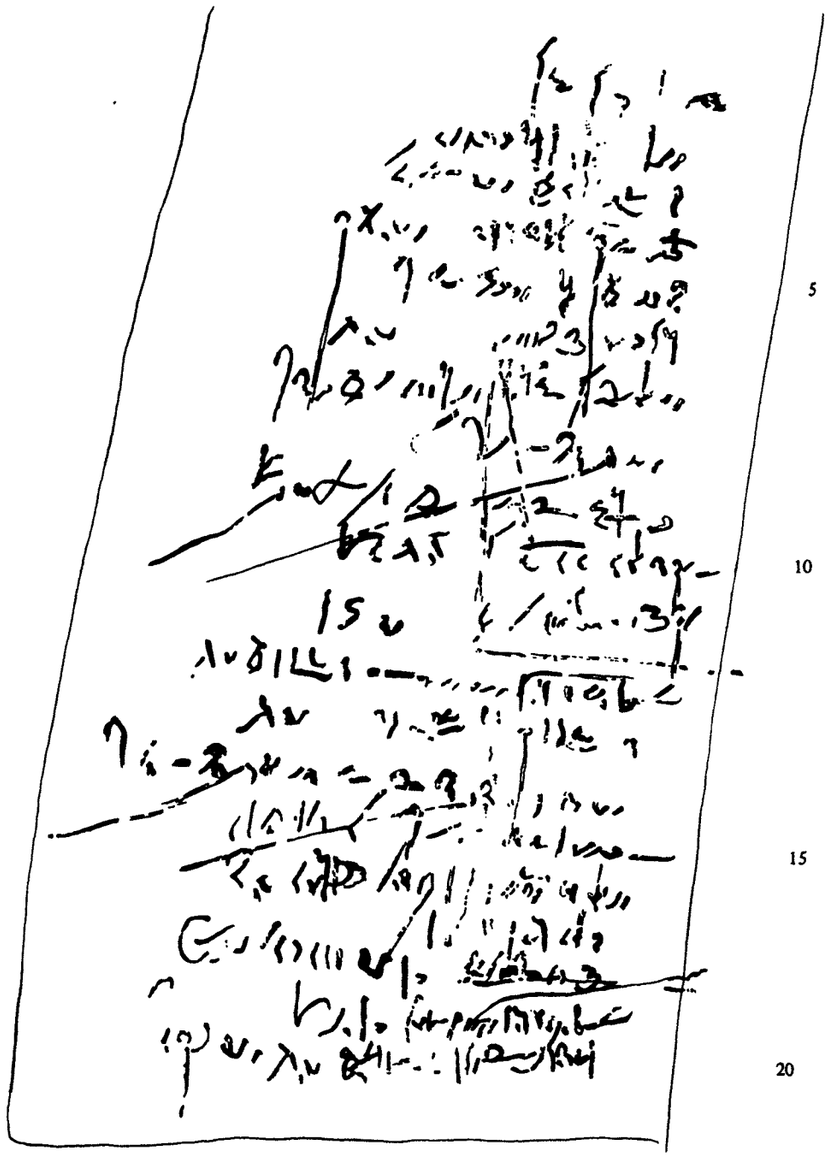

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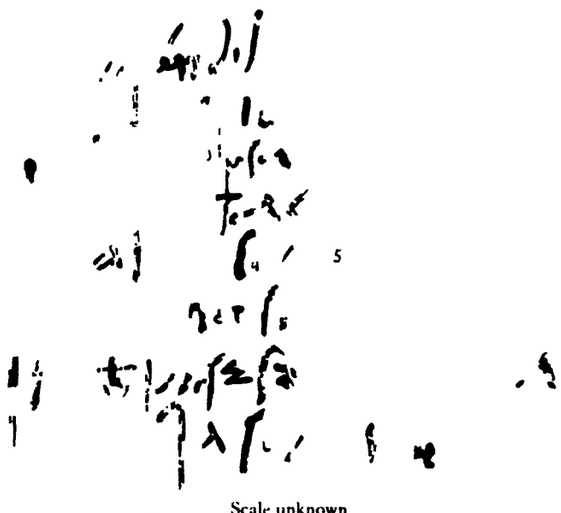

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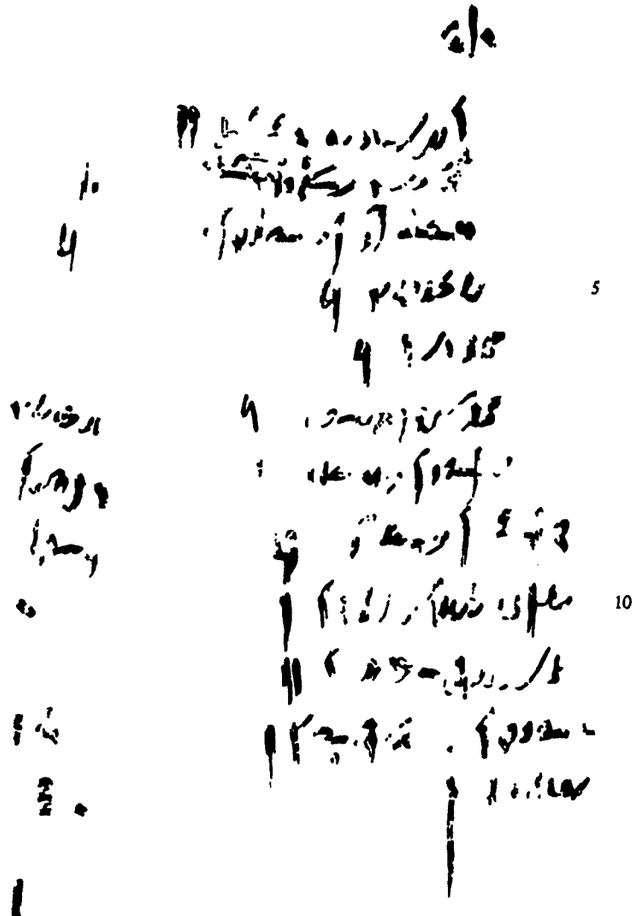

282

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PLATE 78

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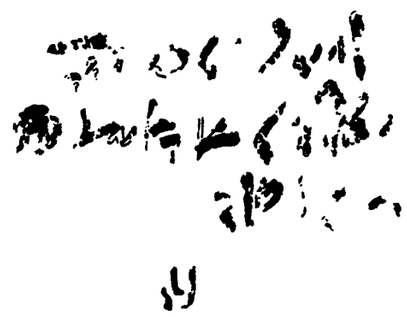

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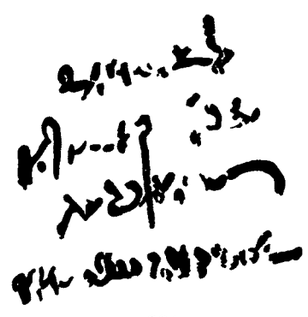

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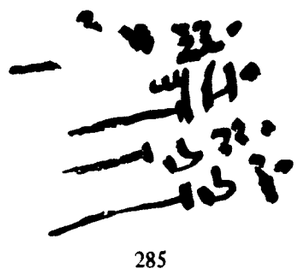

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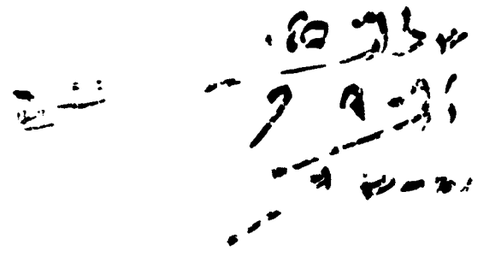

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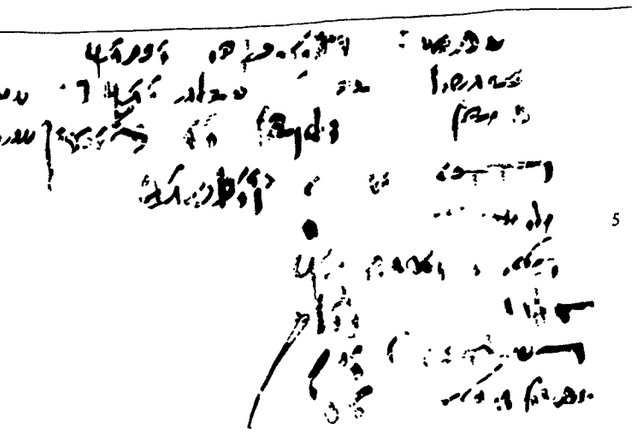

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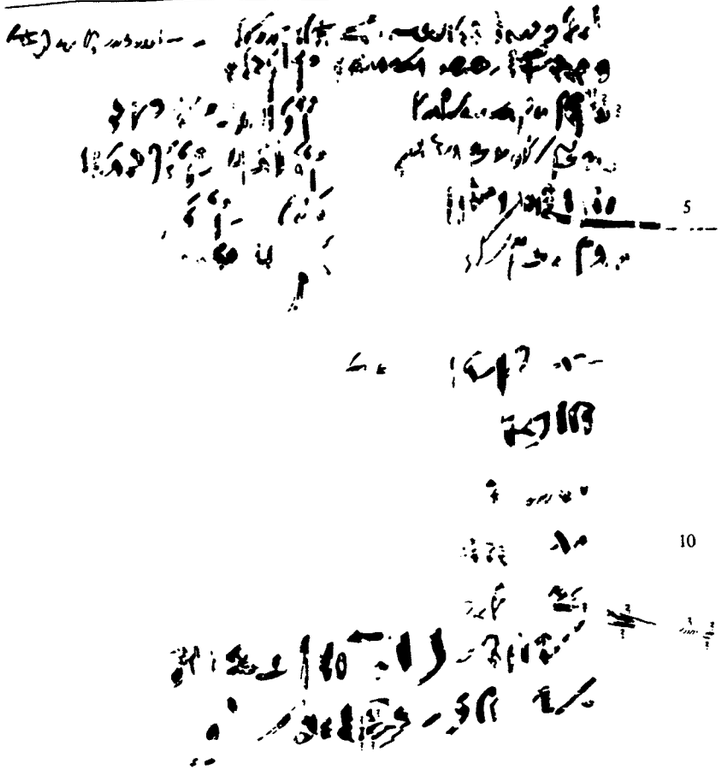

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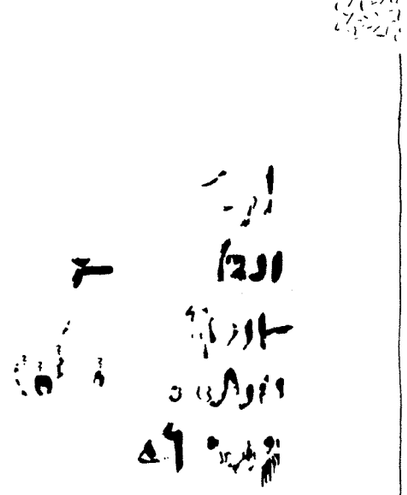

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PLATE 79

All 4:5

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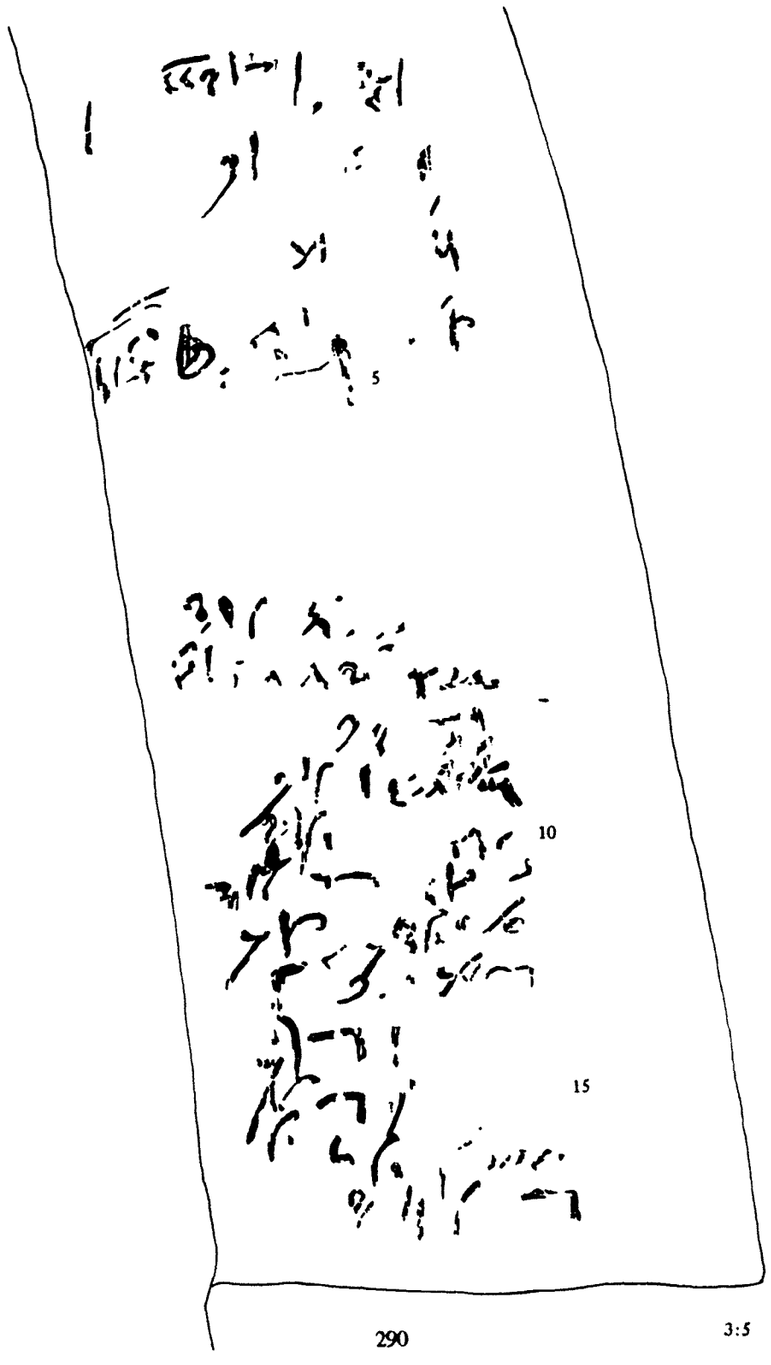

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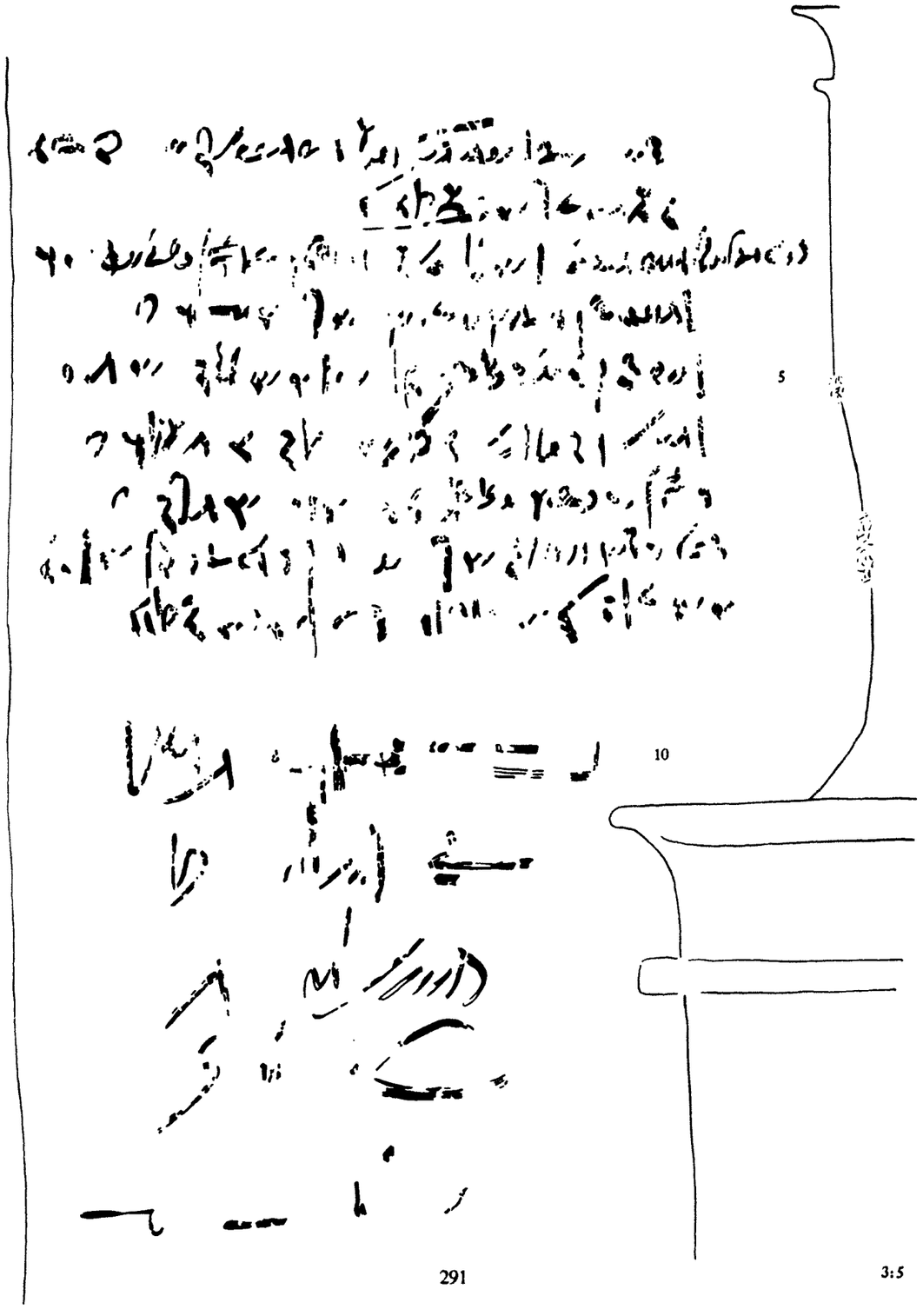

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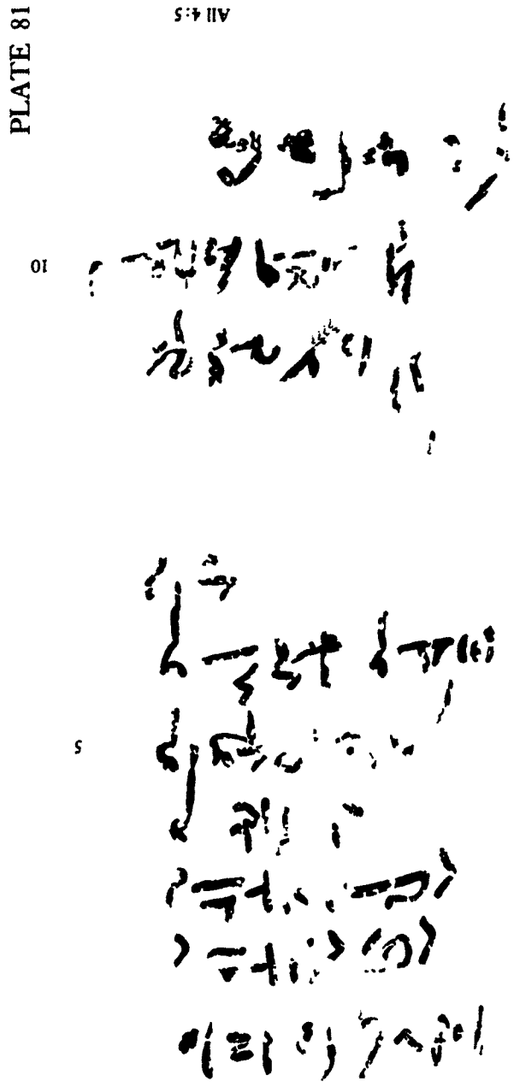
PLATE 80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296
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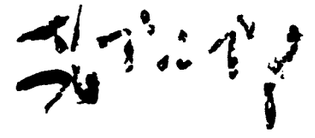
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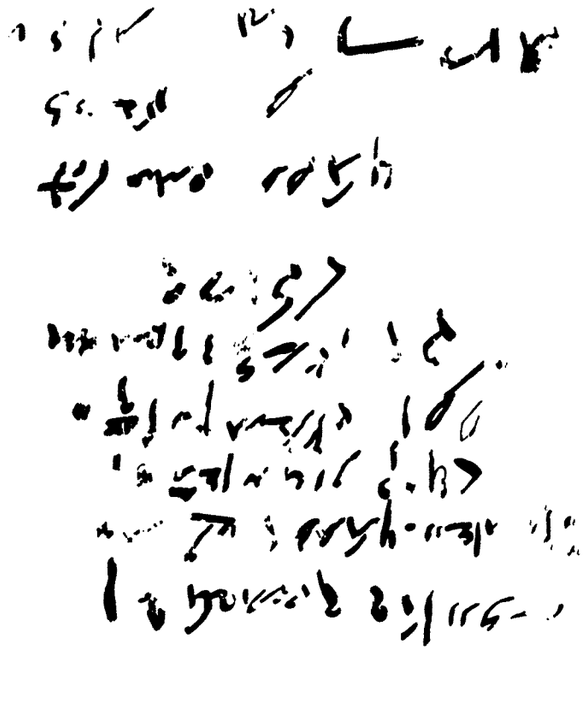
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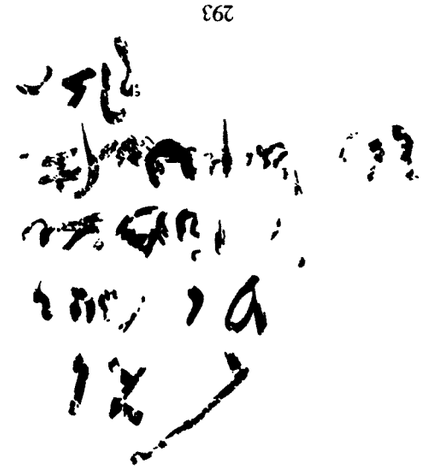
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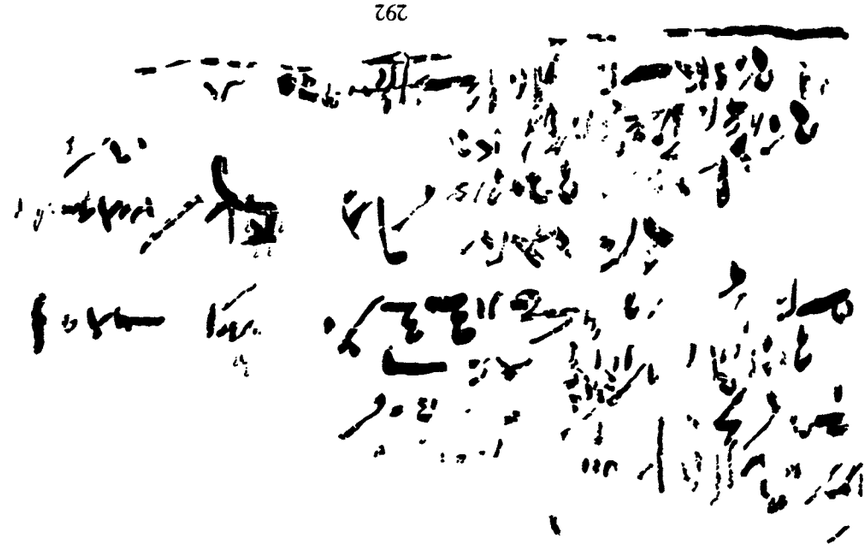
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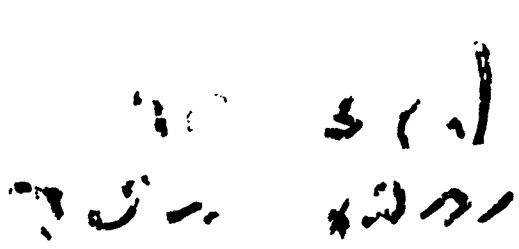

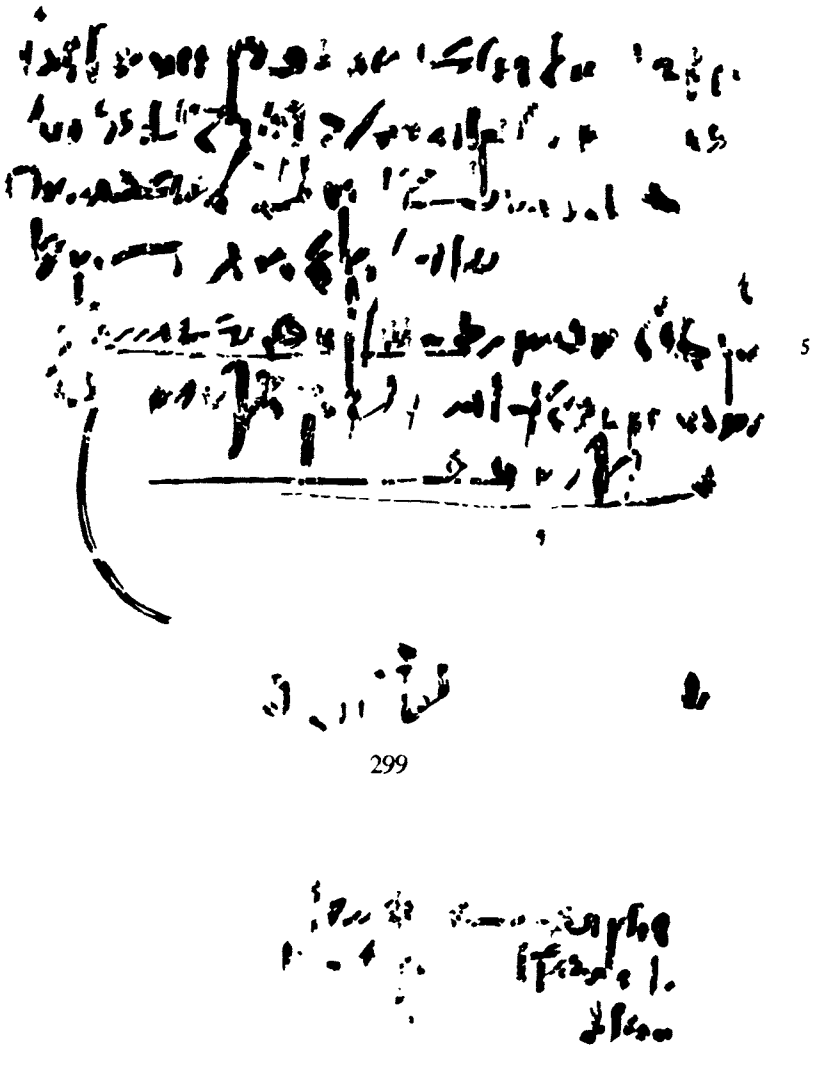

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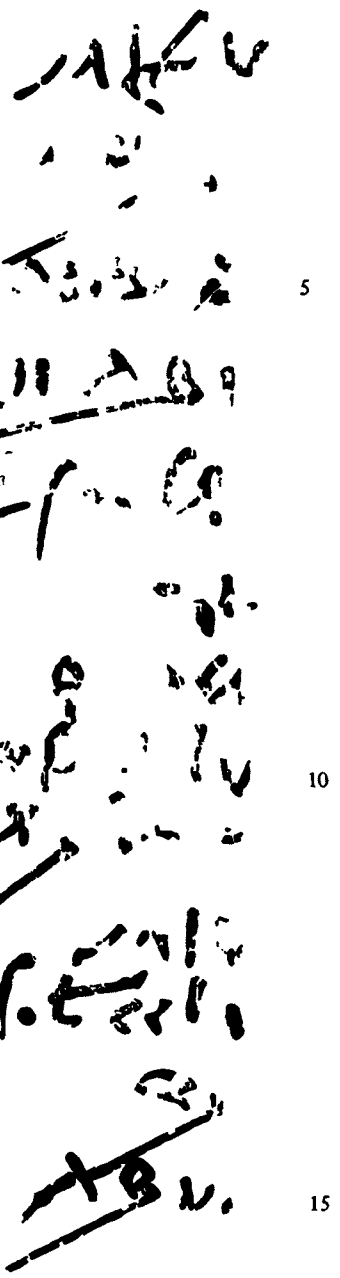

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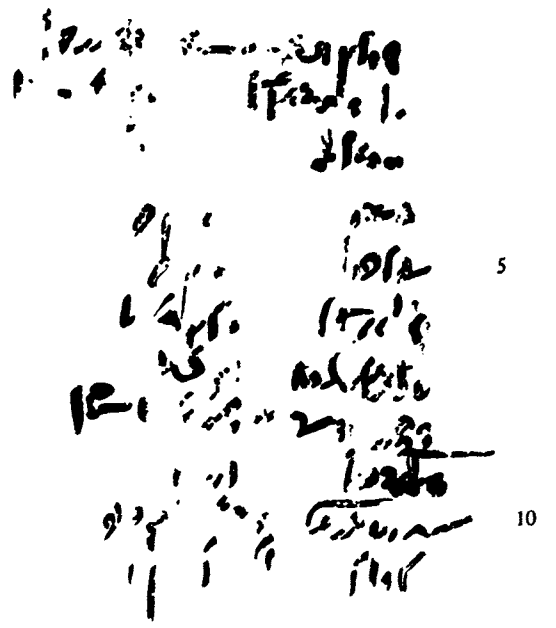

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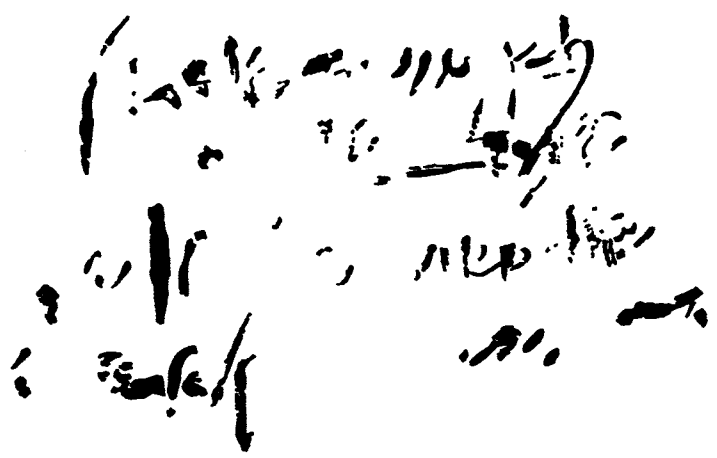

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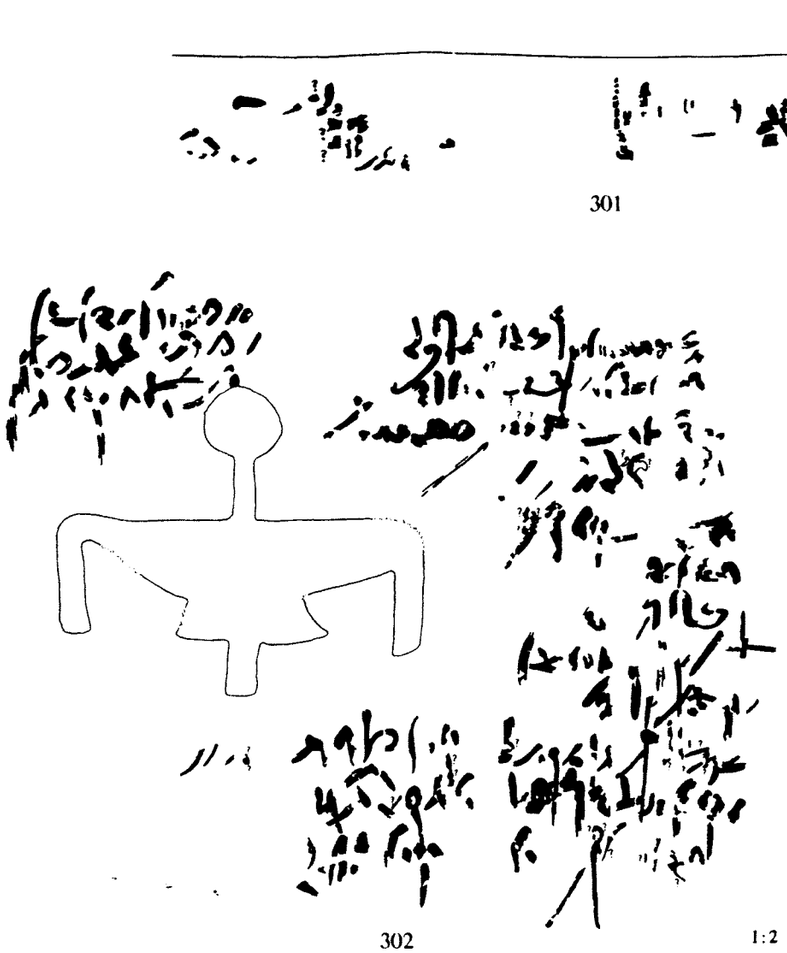
301

302 1:2



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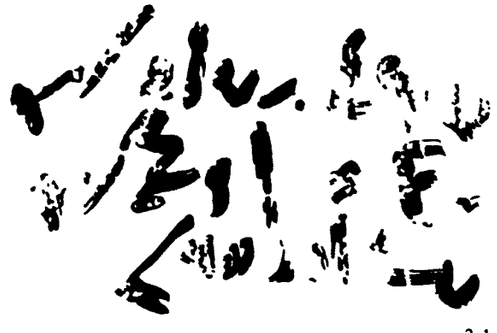

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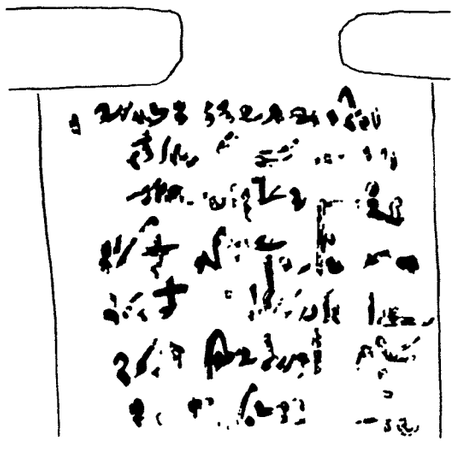

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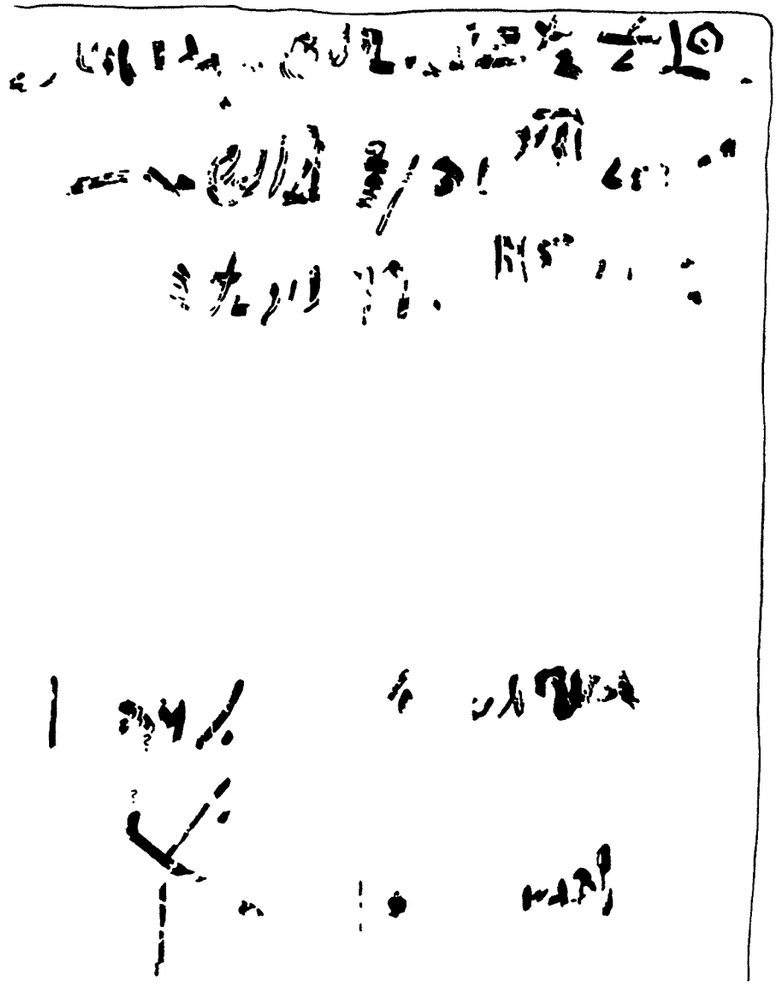

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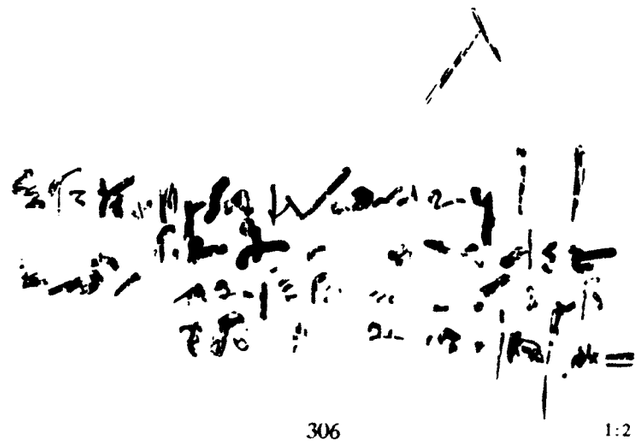

306 1:2

PLATE 83

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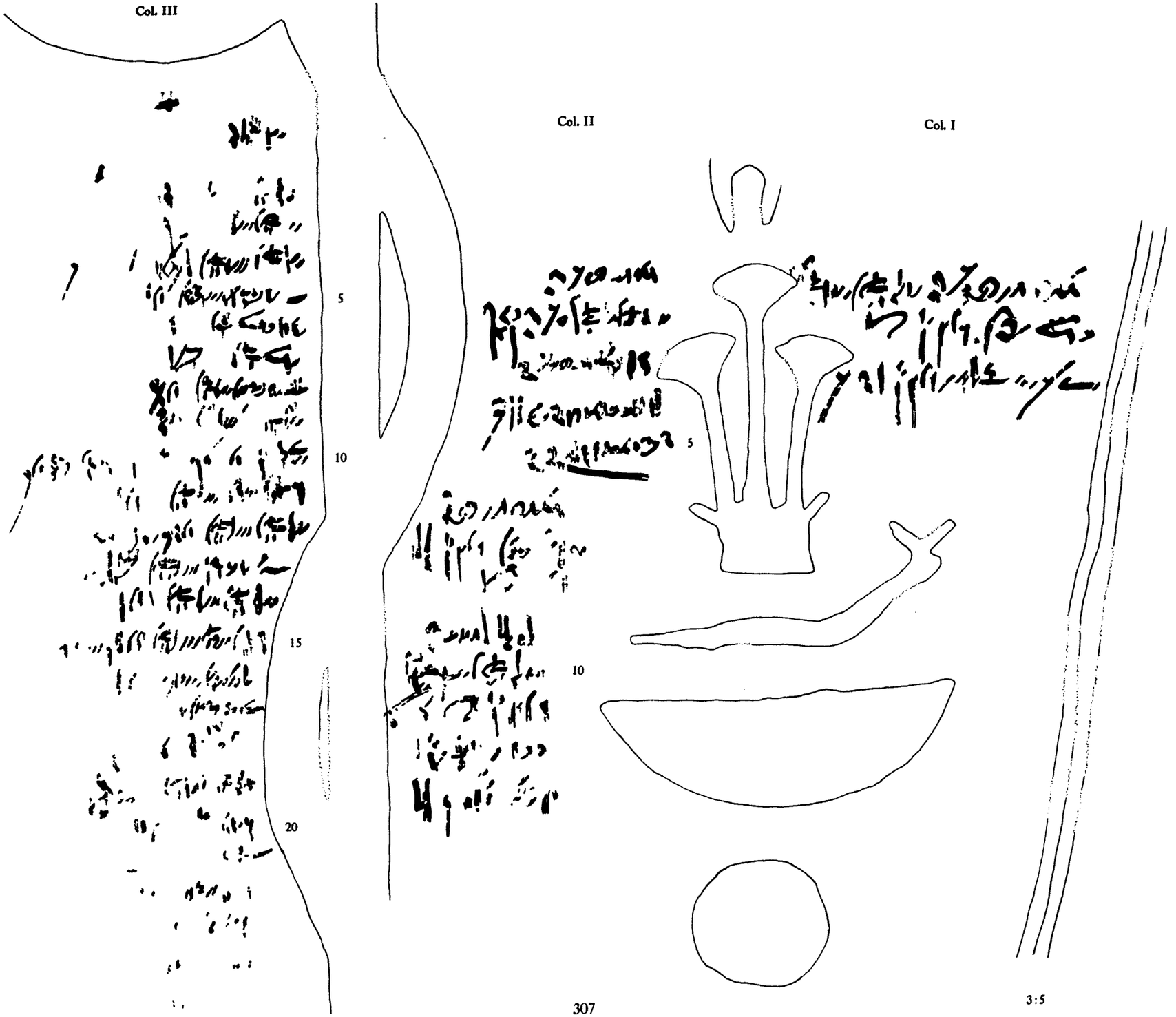
Col. III

Col. II

Col. I



307

3:5

PLATE 84

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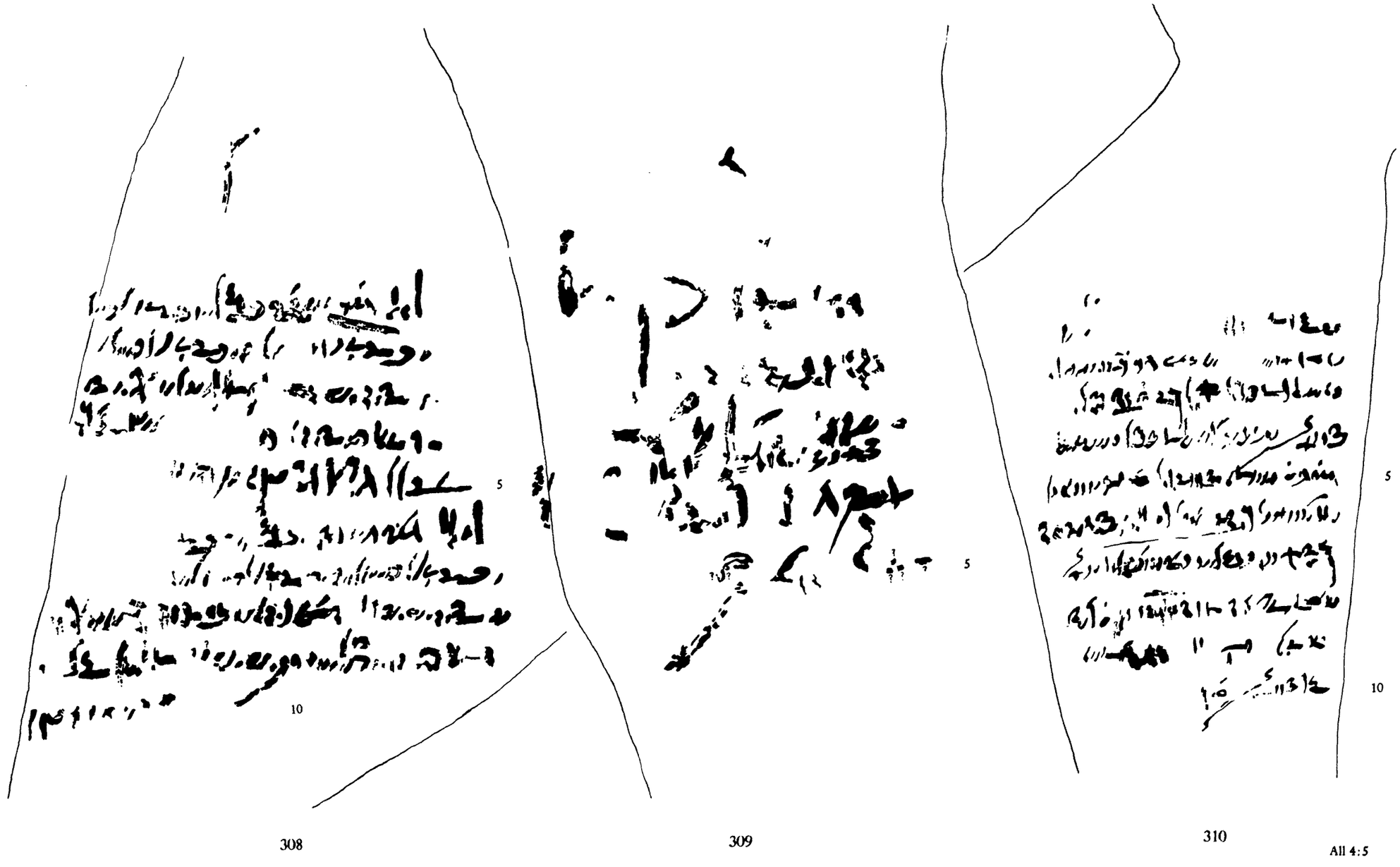

308 309 310

All 4:5

PLATE 85

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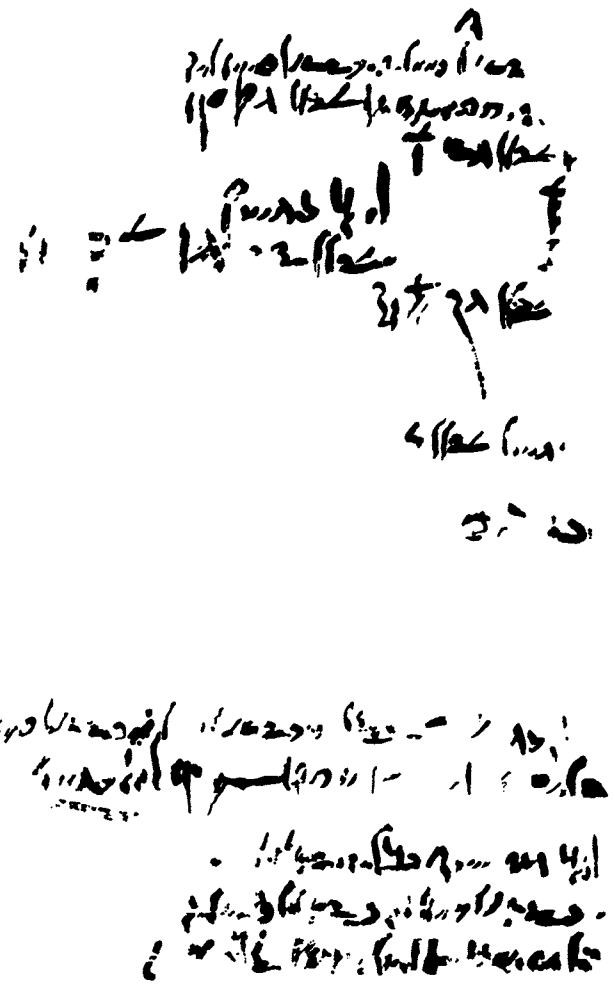

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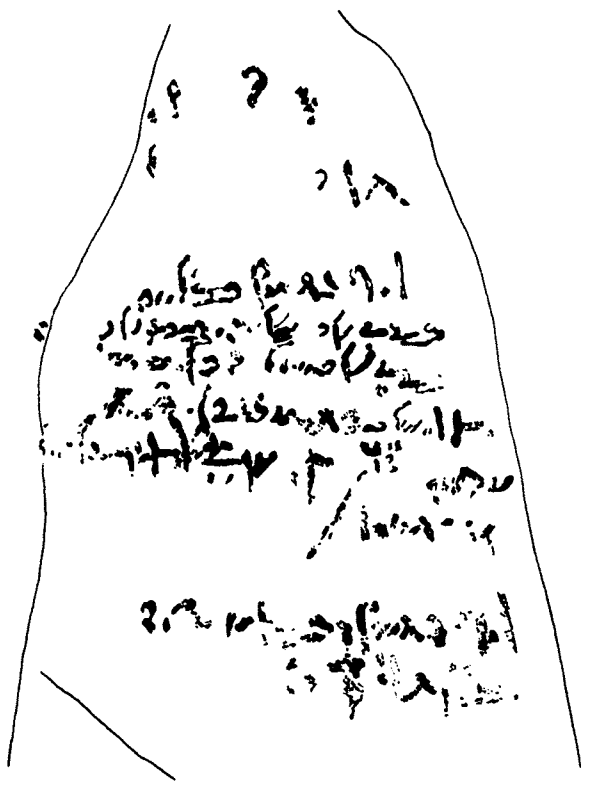

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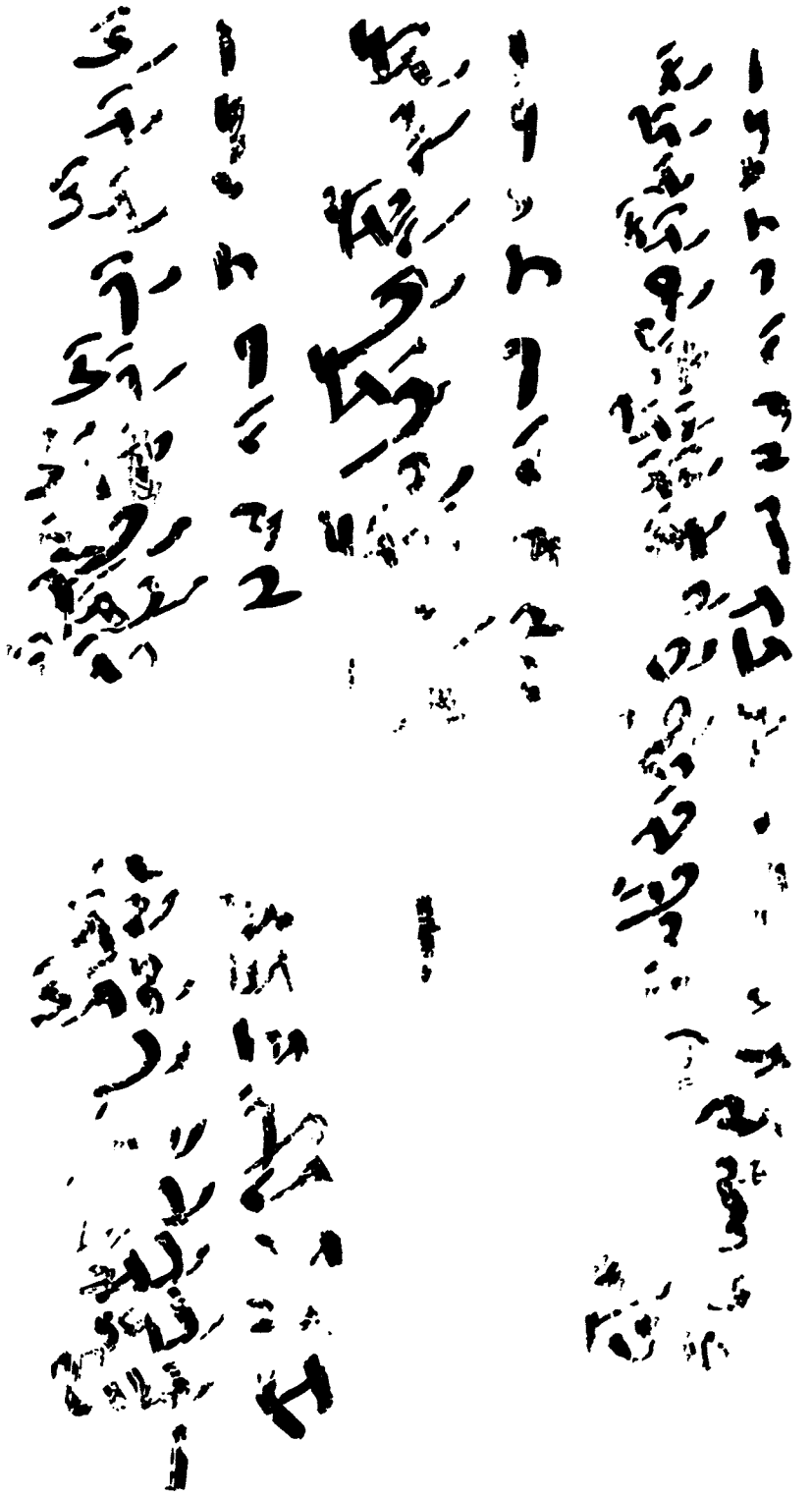

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All 3:5

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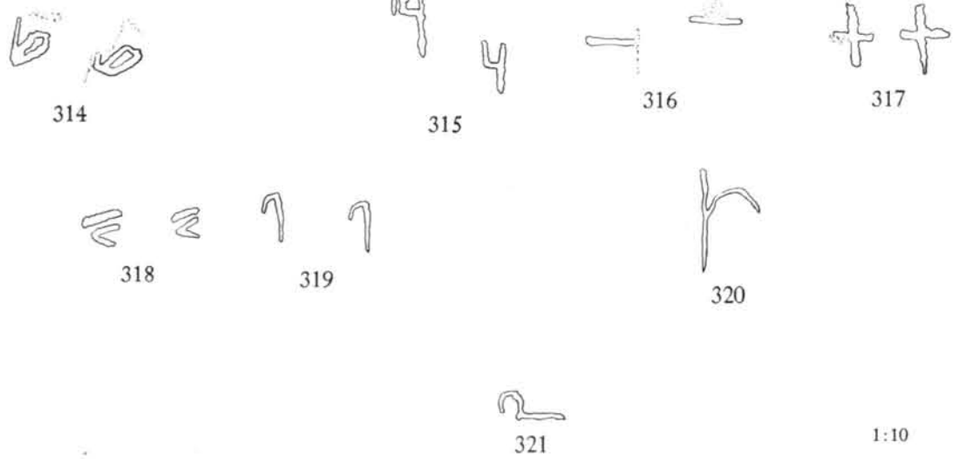

SMALL TEMPLE. EXTERIOR. WEST WALL. NORTH END. MASONS' MARKS (NOS. 314–21)

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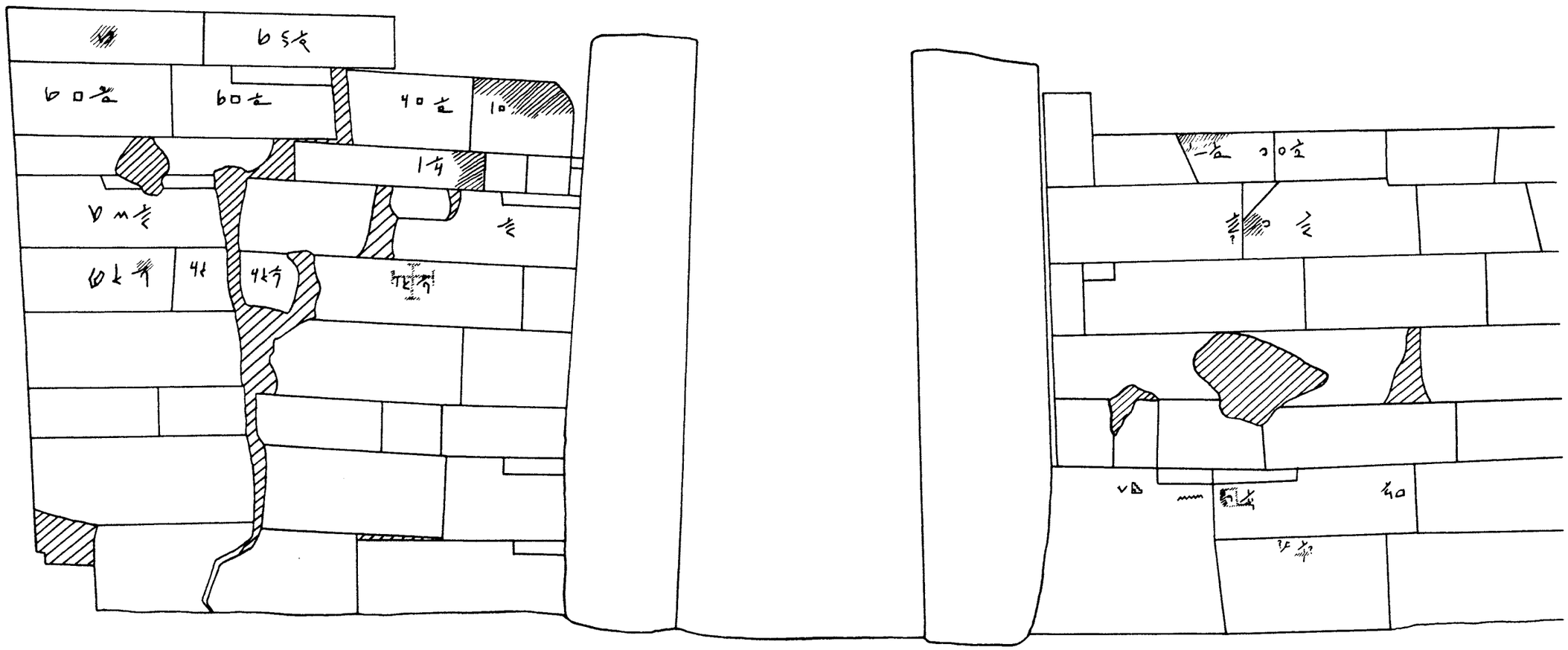

SMALL TEMPLE. EXTERIOR. NORTH WALL, WEST OF ETHIOPIAN PYLON.
DIAGRAM SHOWING POSITIONS OF MASONS' MARKS (NOS. 322–37)

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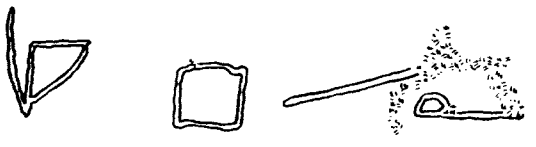
322



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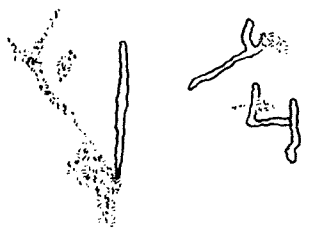

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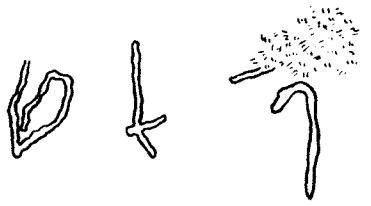

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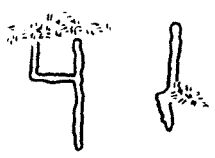

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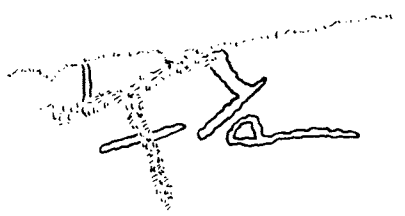

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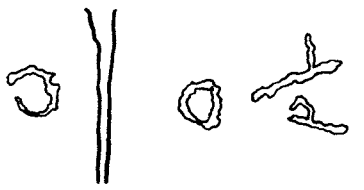

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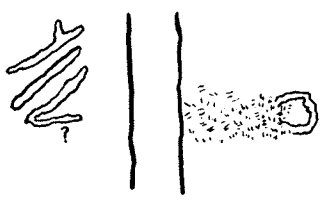

333

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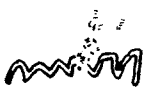

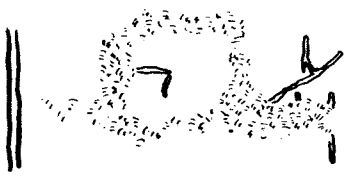

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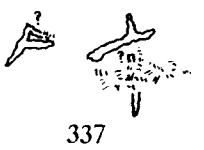

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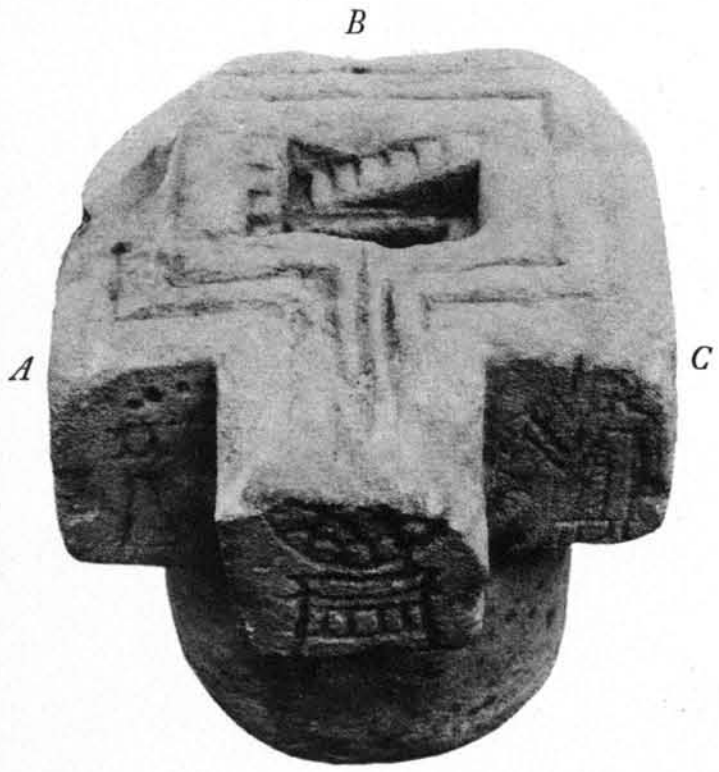

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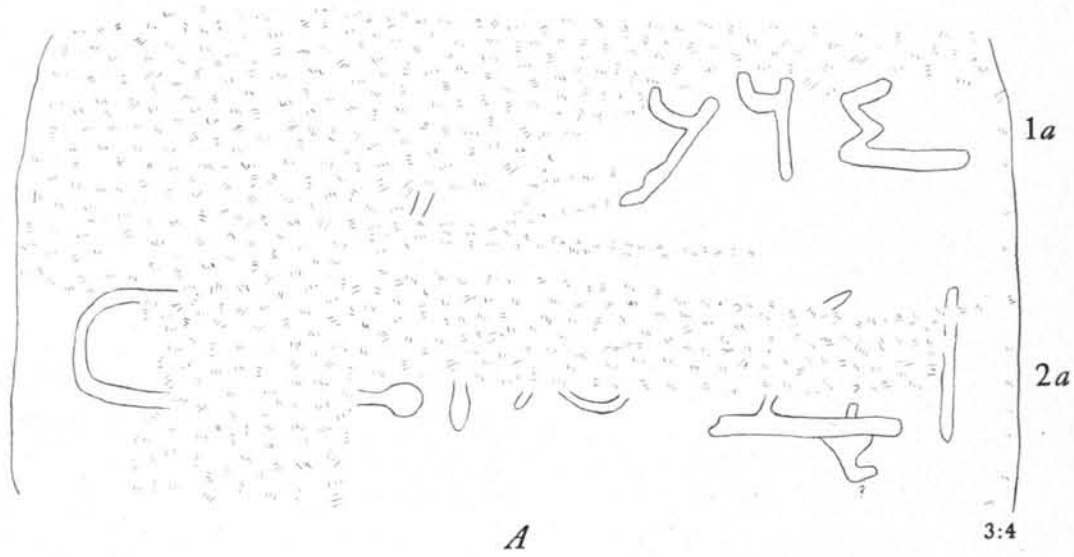

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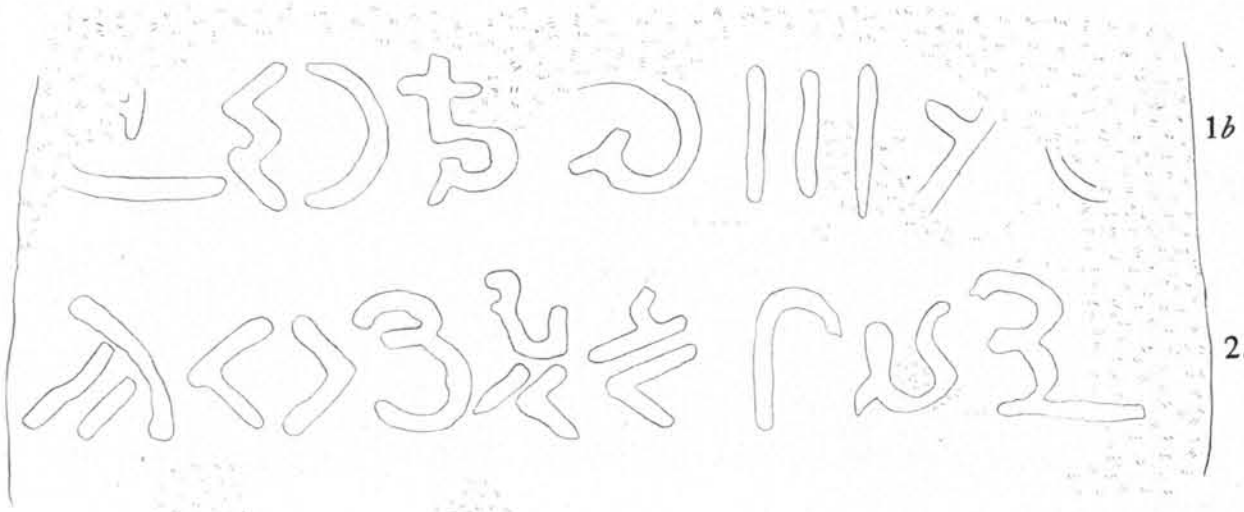

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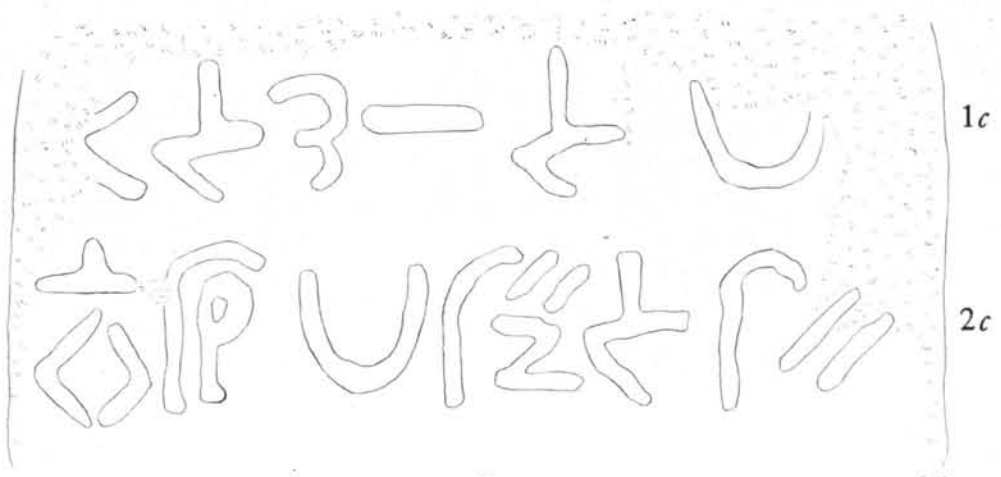

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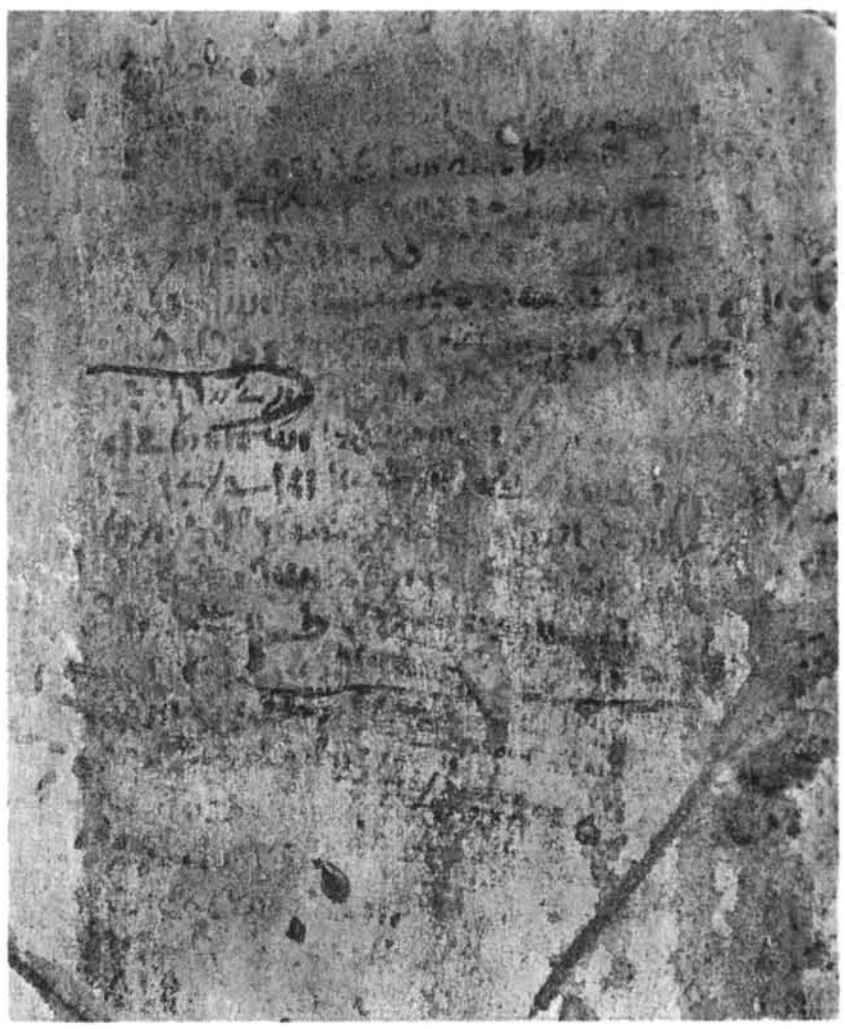
339 Scale unknown



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341 *ca.* 1:3

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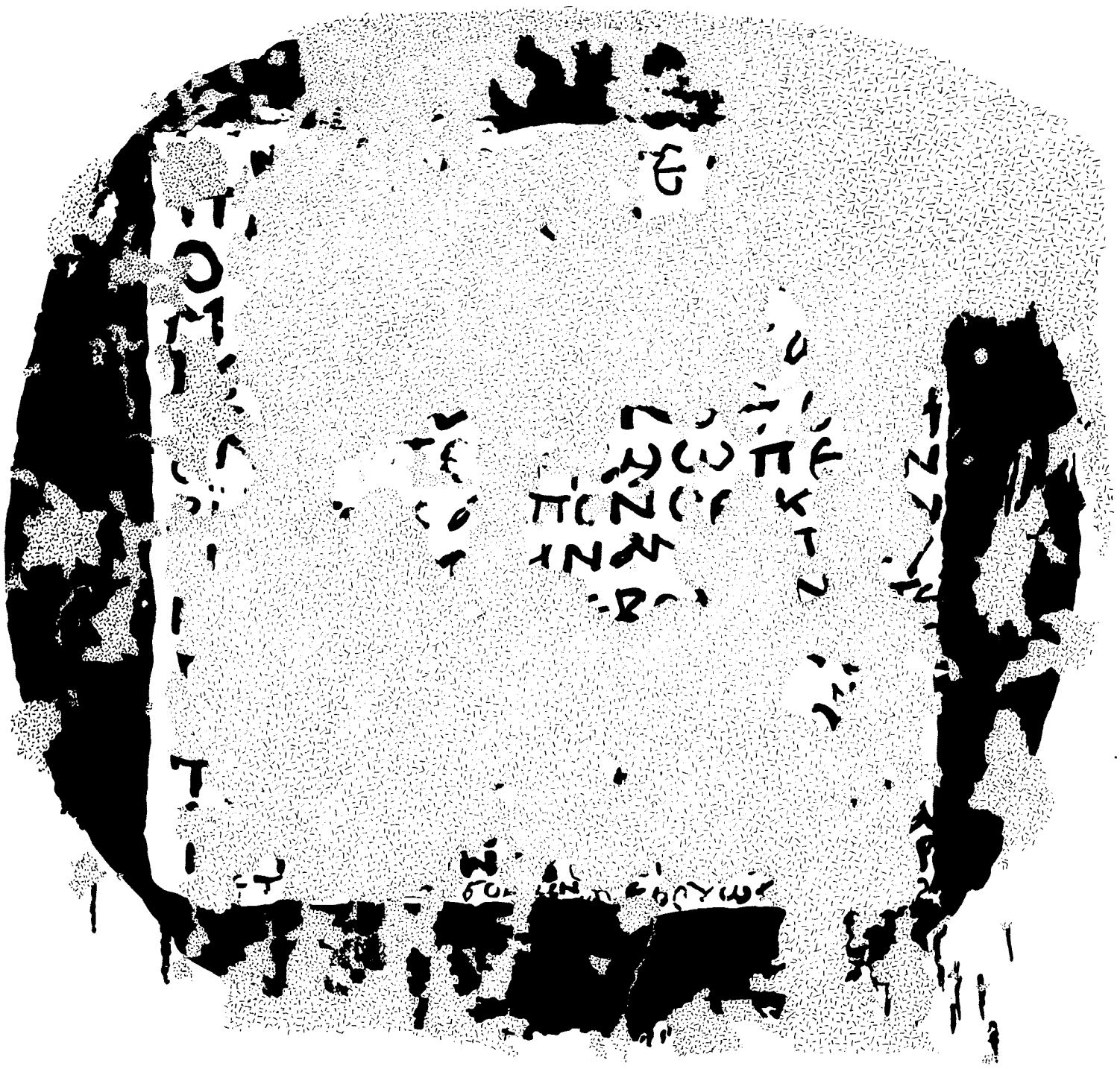

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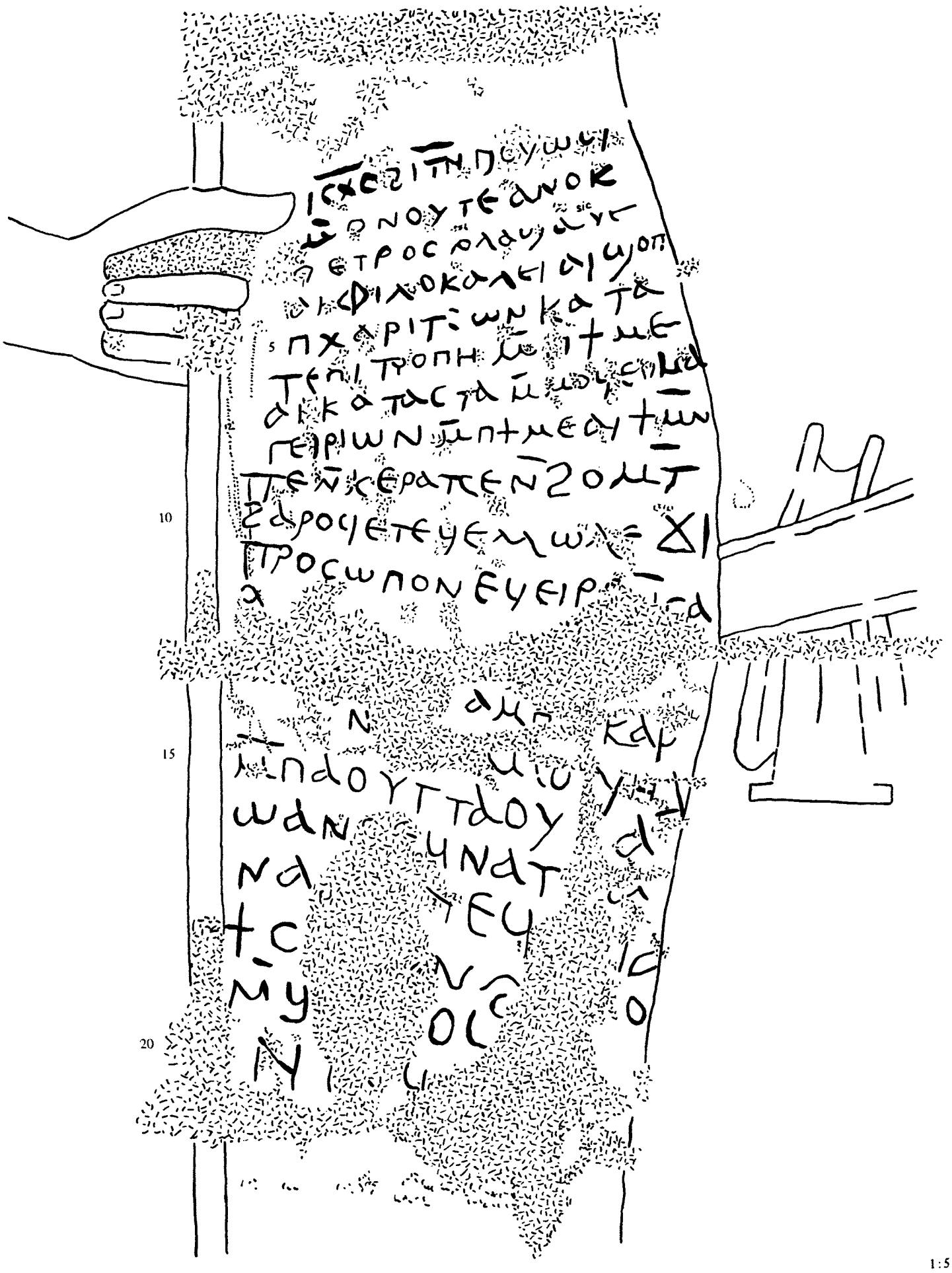

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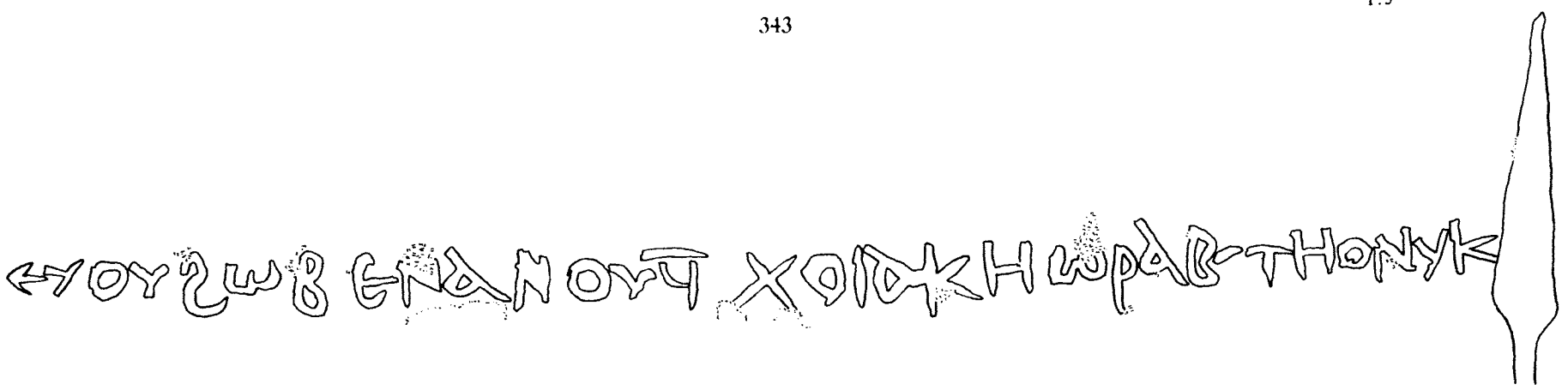

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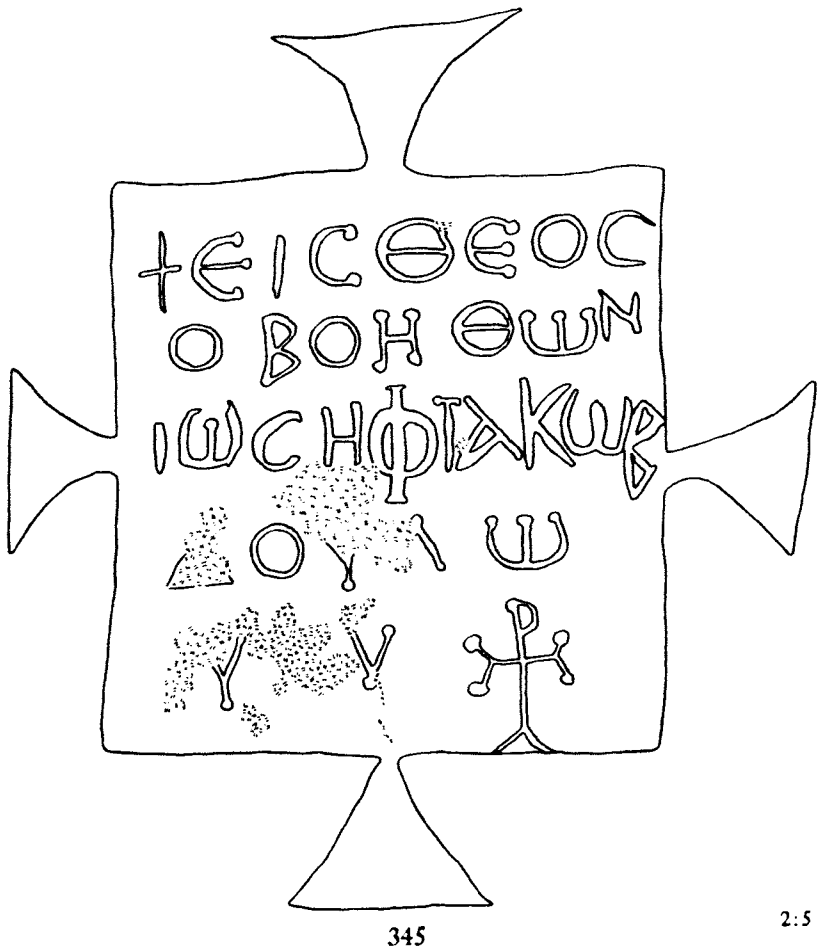

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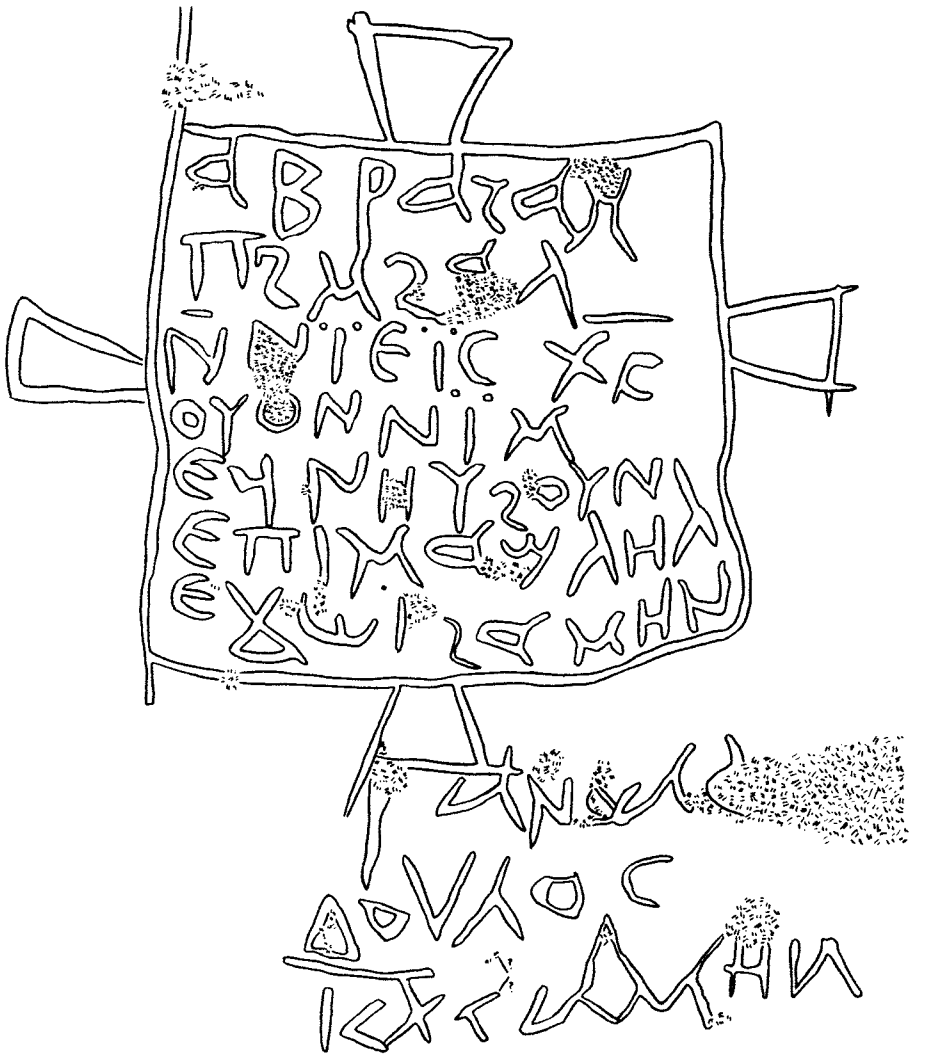

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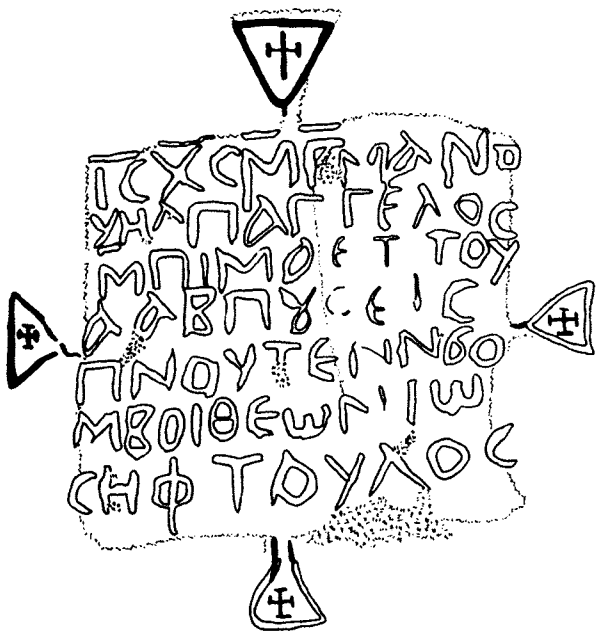

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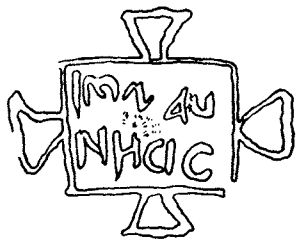

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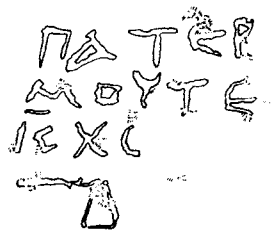

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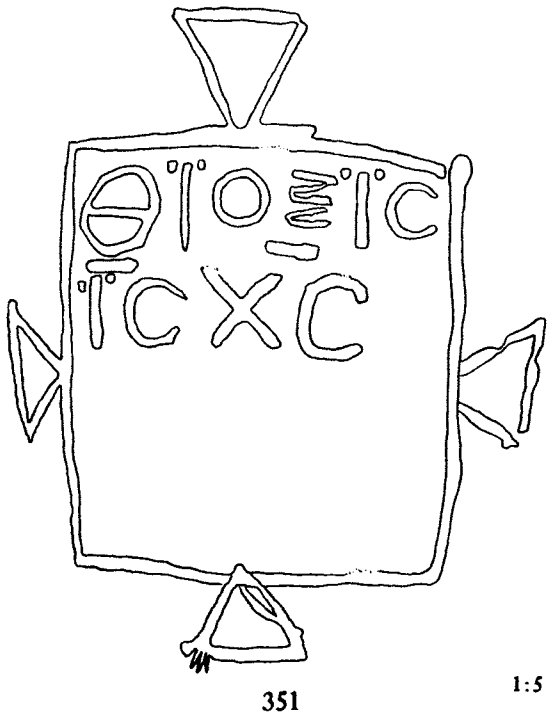

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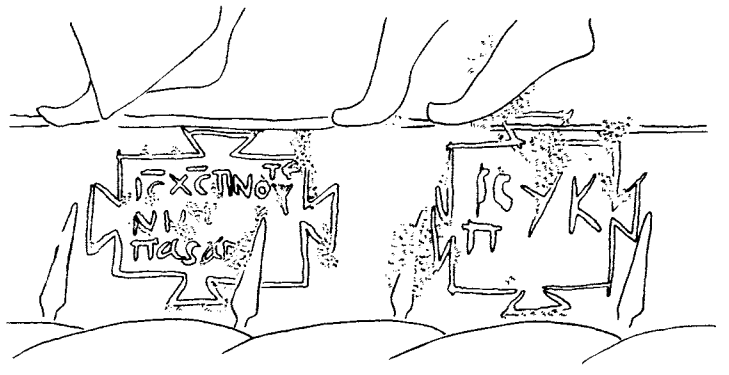

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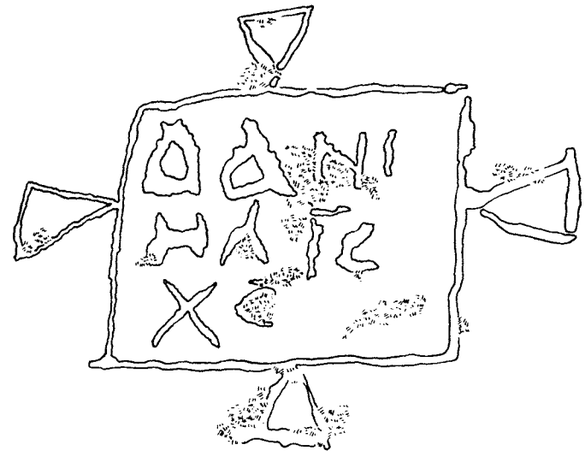

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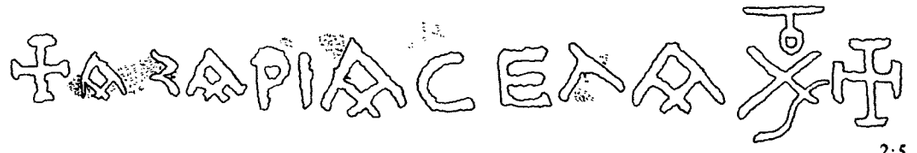

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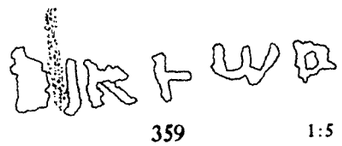

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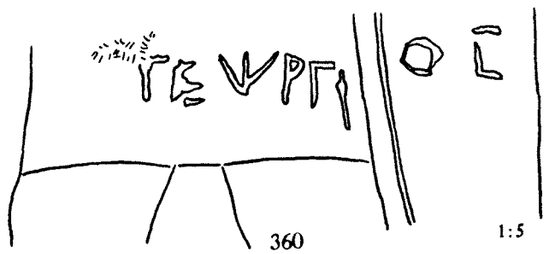

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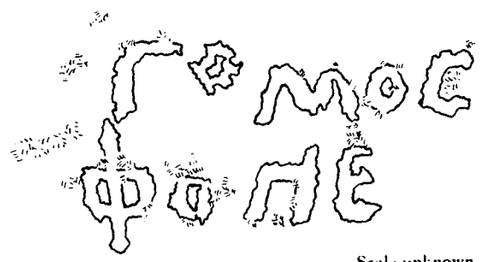

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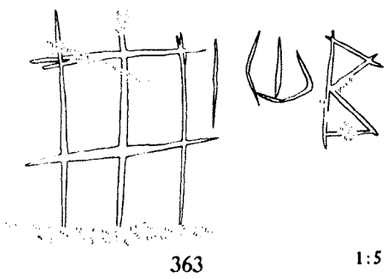
362 *ca.* 1:5



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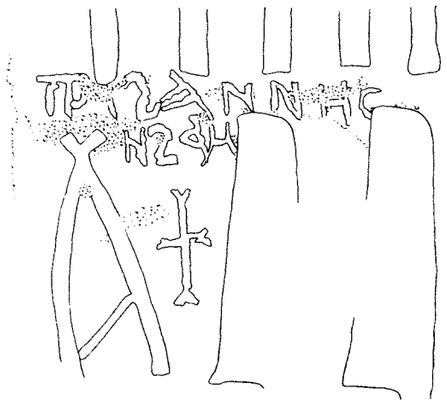

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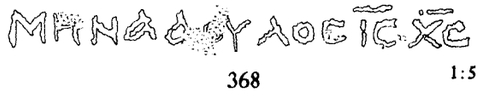

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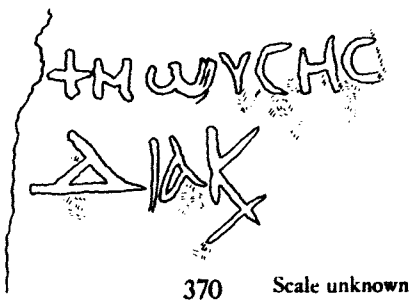

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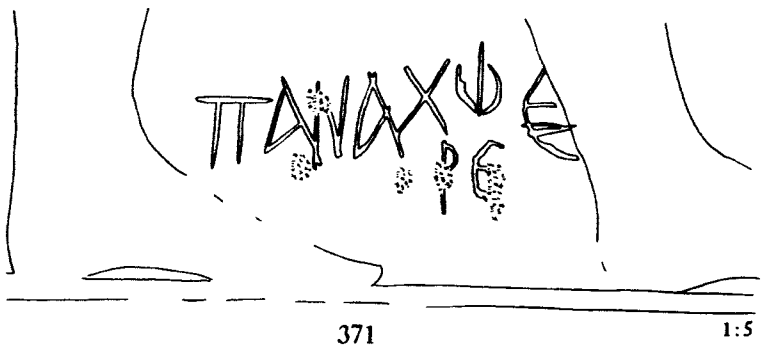

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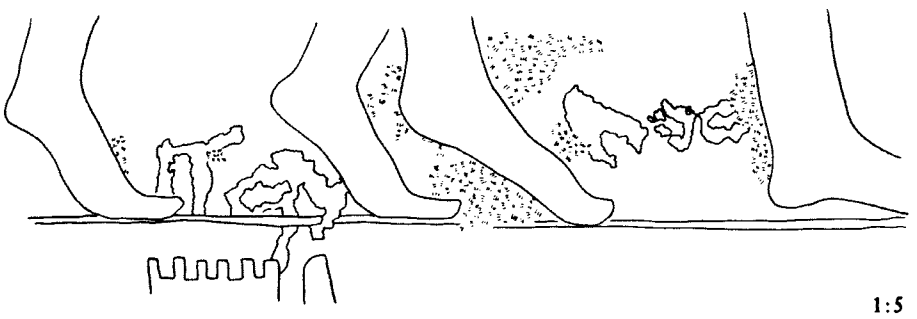

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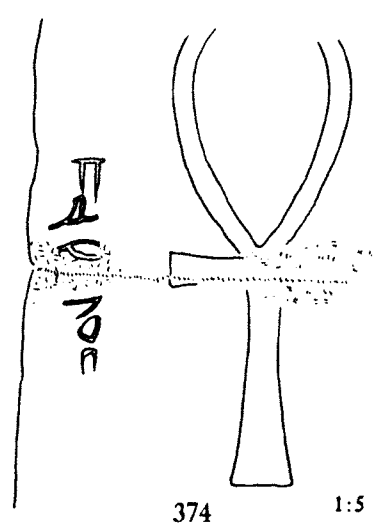

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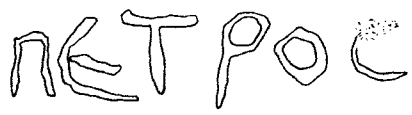

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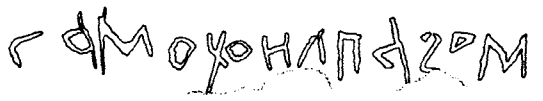

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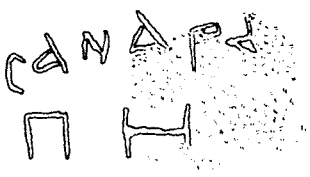

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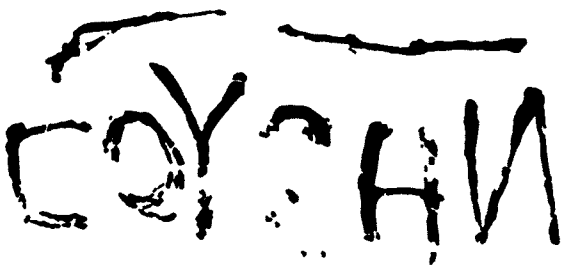

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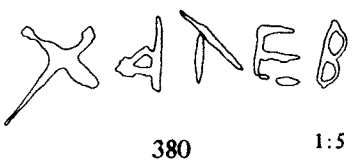

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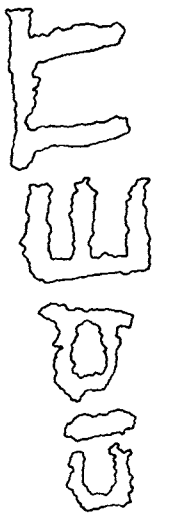

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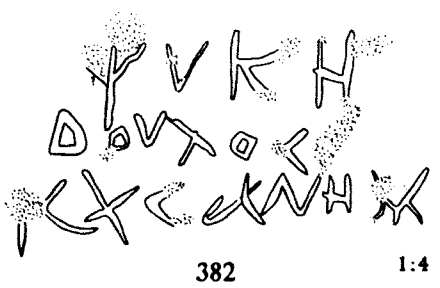

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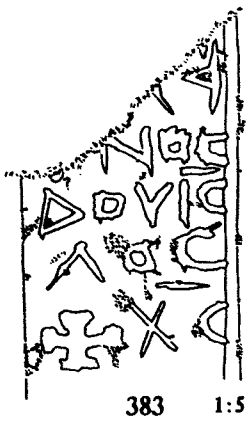

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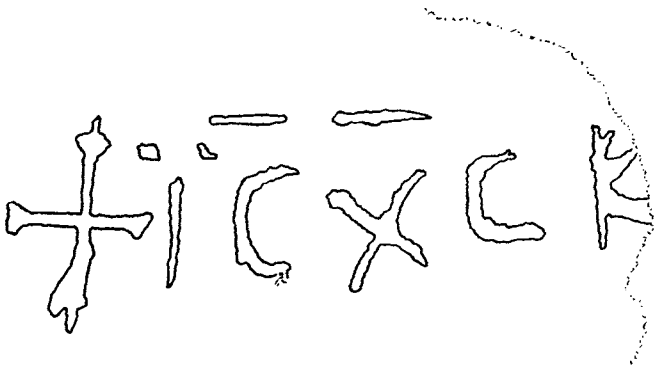

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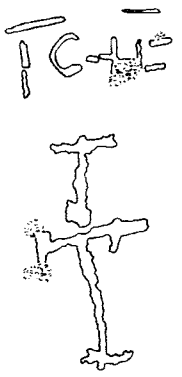

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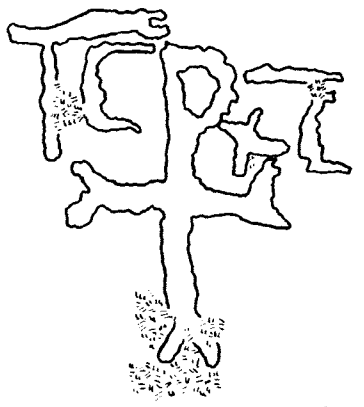

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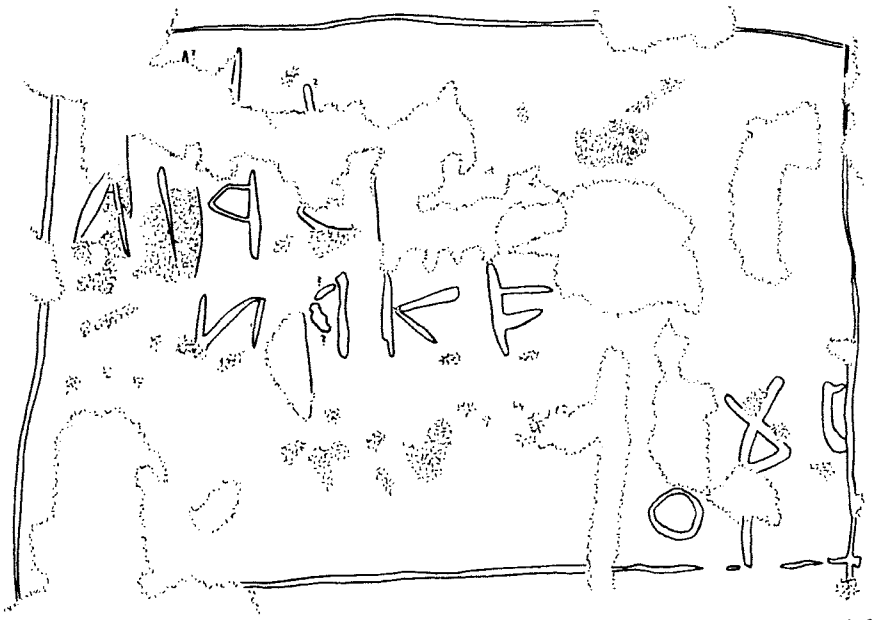

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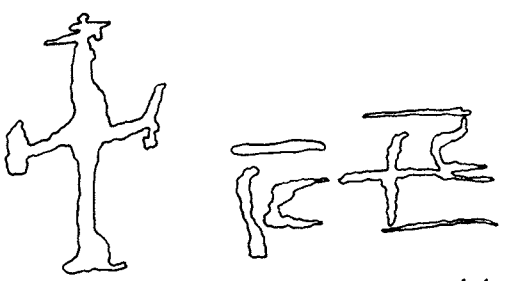

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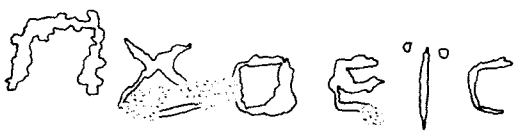

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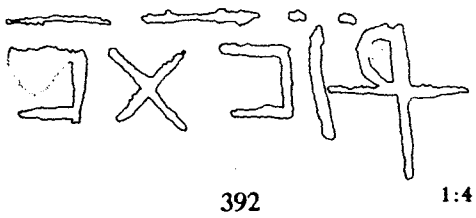

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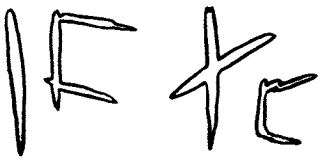

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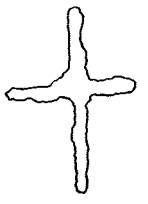

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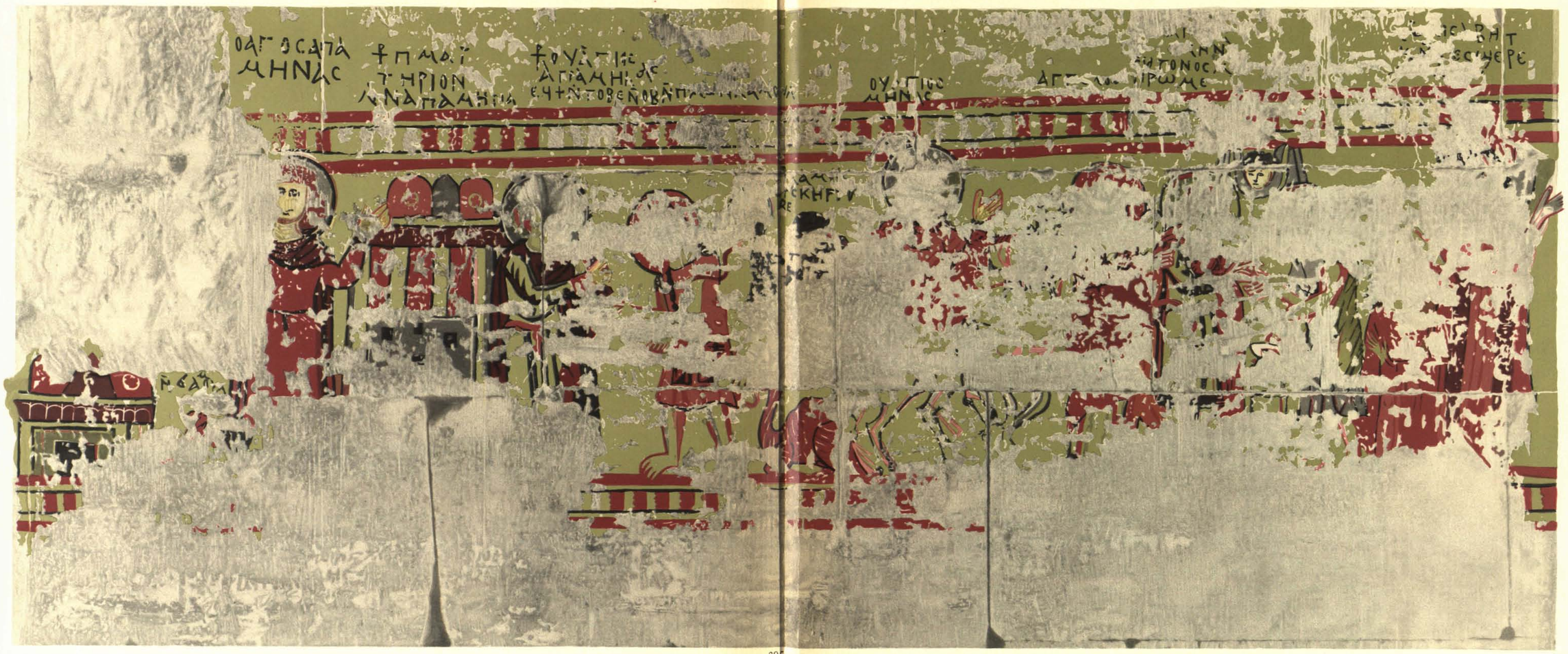

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PLATE 99

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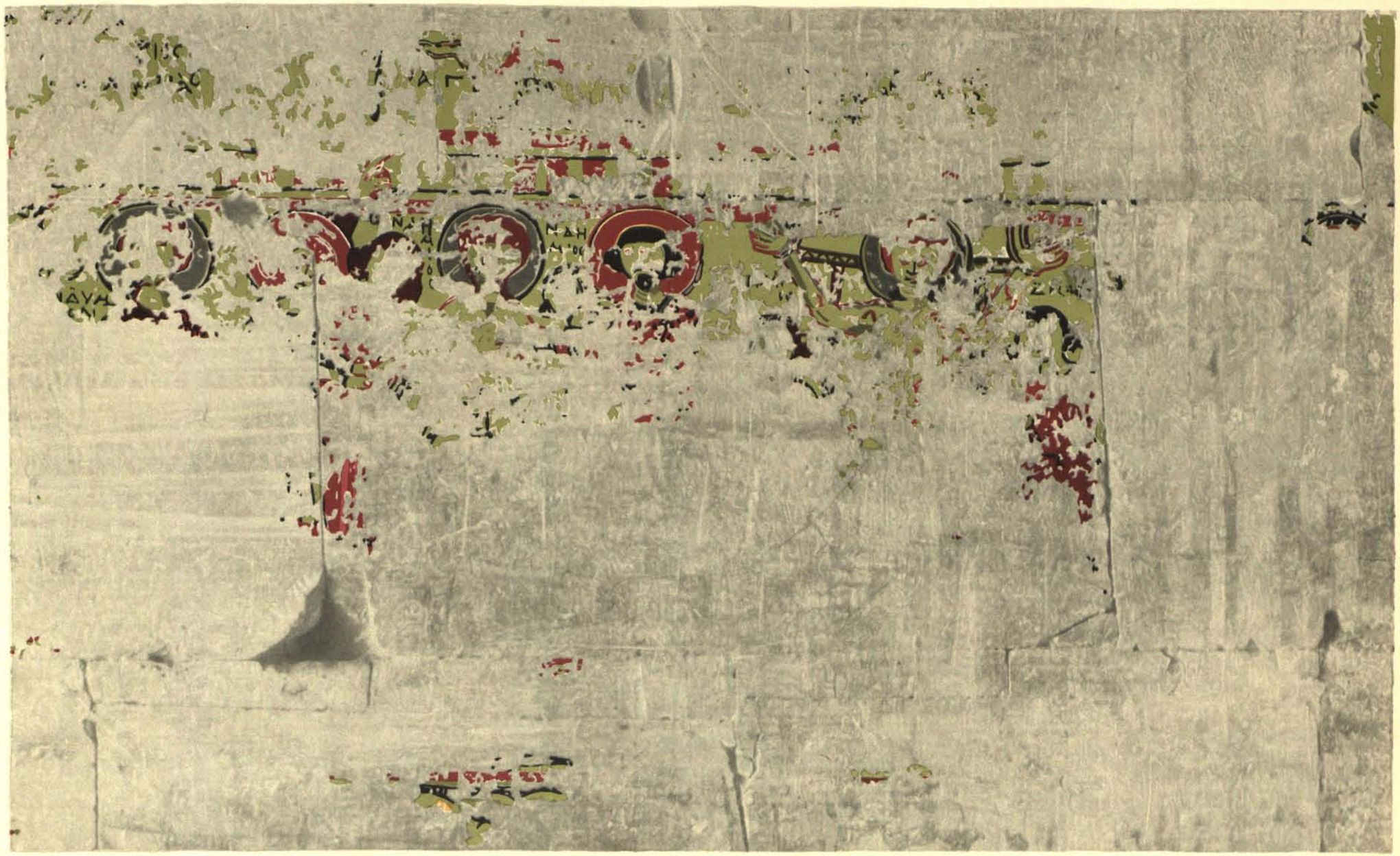

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PLATE 100

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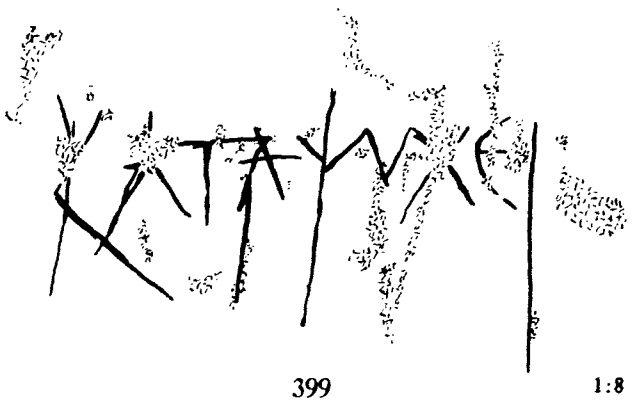

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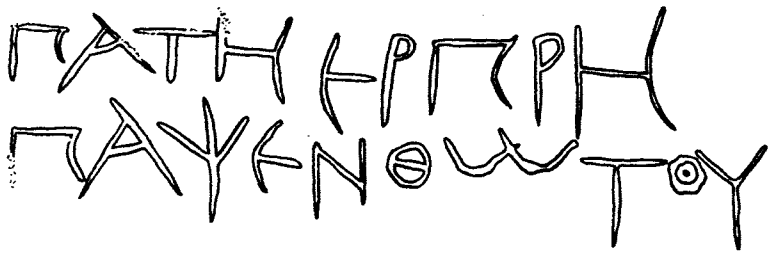

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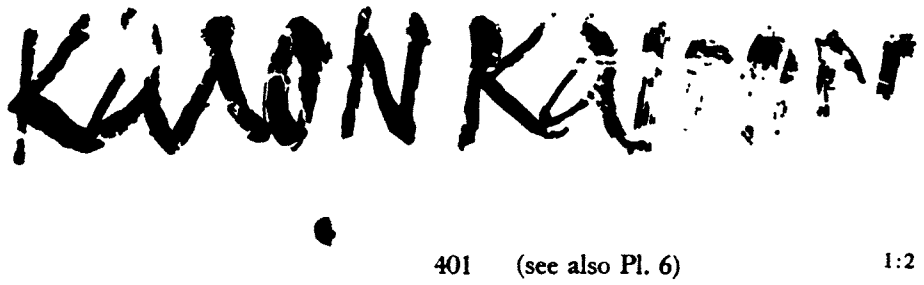
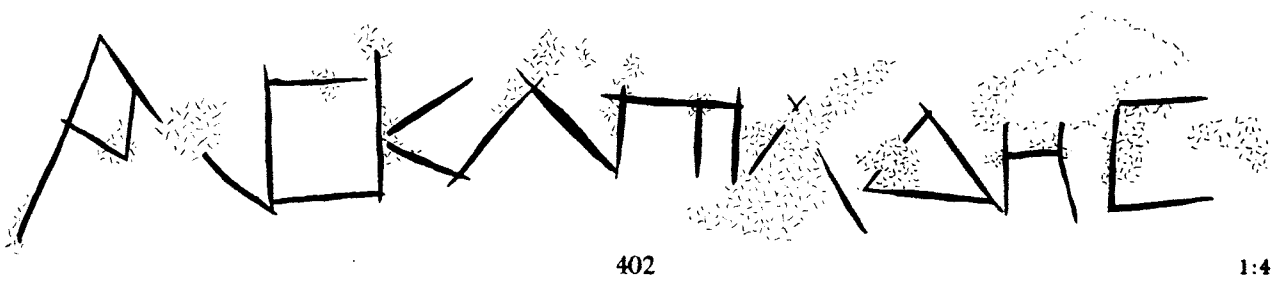


401 (see also Pl. 6) 1:2



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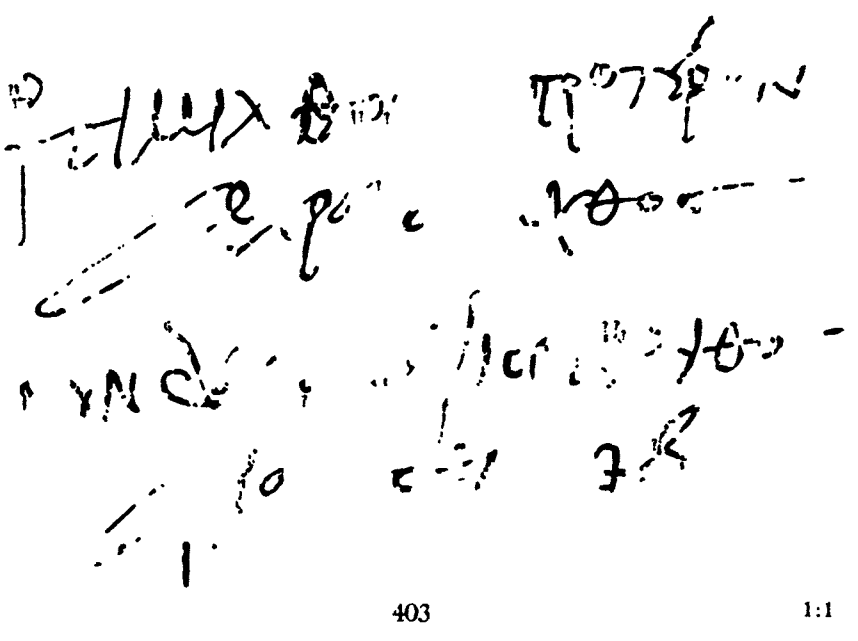

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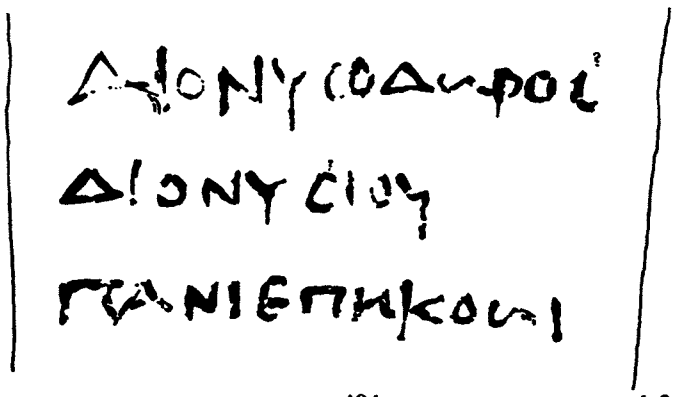

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405 1:2

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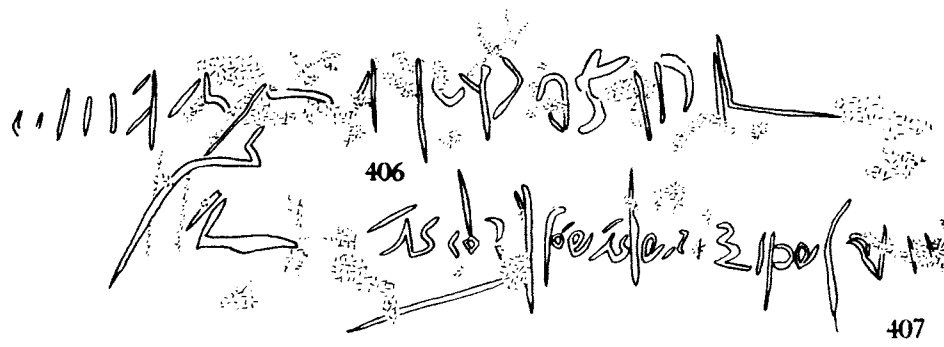

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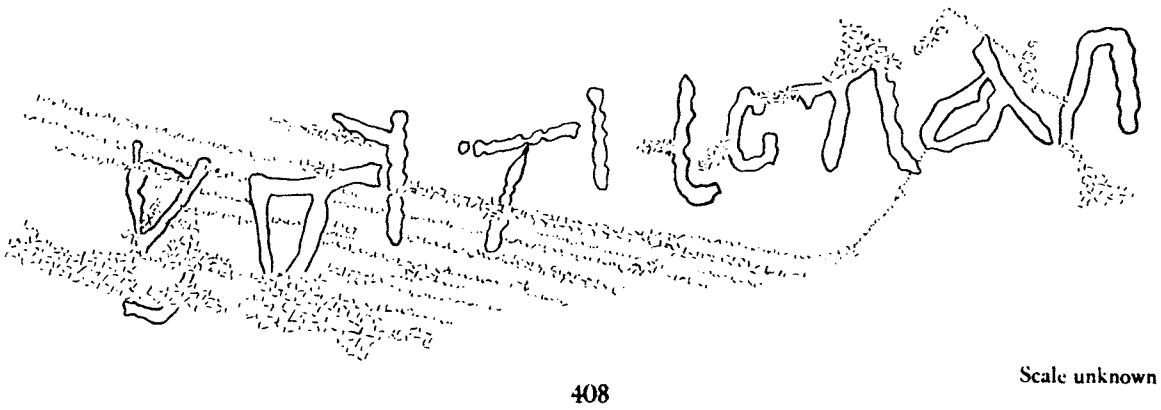
407

1:5



408

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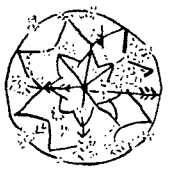

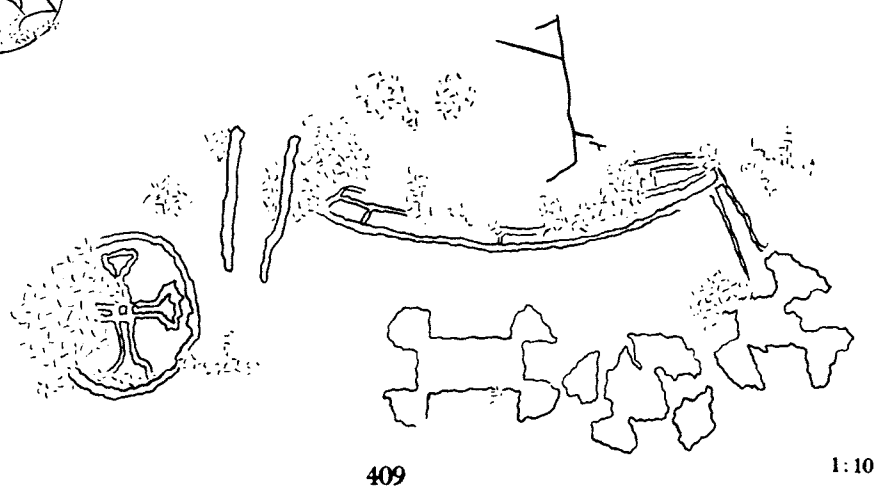

409

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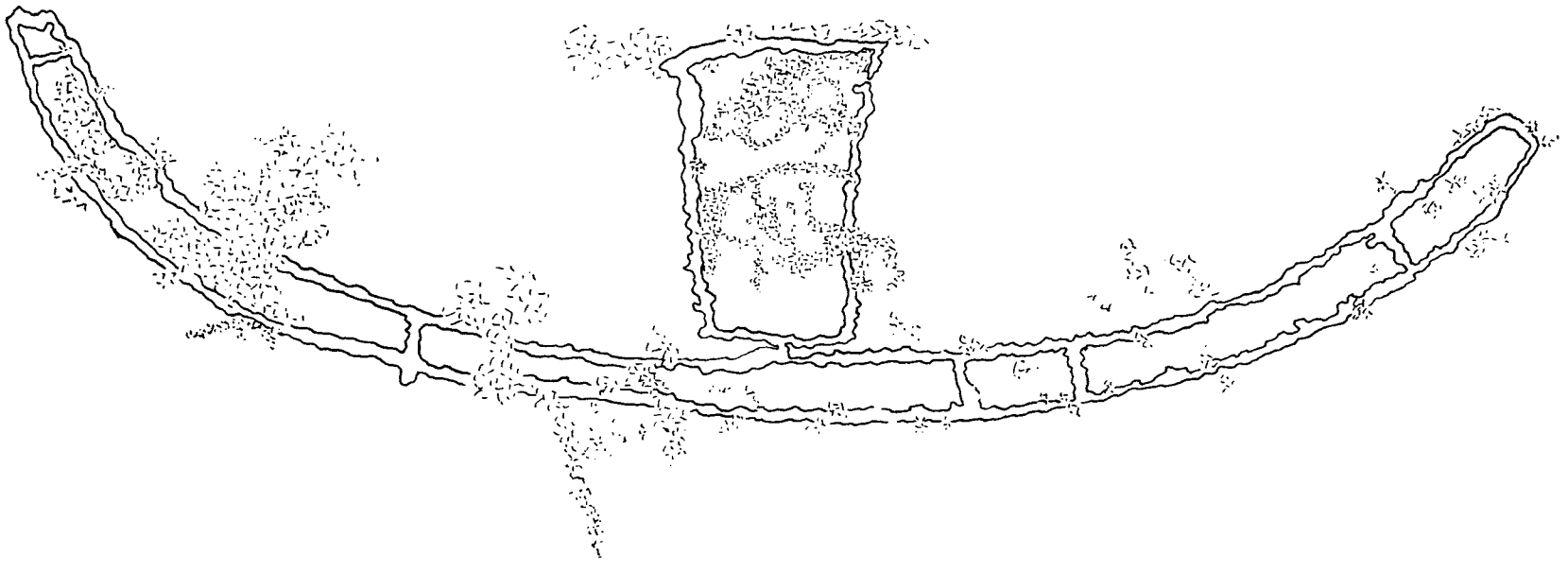

410

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