

The Coffin Texts Project

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As this is the first time that the annual report of the Oriental Institute has included an account of the Coffin Texts Project, a rather extensive survey might be useful.

This is a continuation of the project directed by Dr. Adriaan de Buck which completed the publication of all known coffin texts in seven large volumes in the "Oriental Institute Publications" series between 1935 and 1961. Translations and related materials are now in preparation. This ongoing phase of the project can be divided into the following steps:

Translation of the texts.—I use the translations left by the late Professor de Buck, which in some places exist only in notes and general outline. They include the translation of a main text (or group of main

texts) and the variant readings in parallel texts. These translations have so far been completed up to the middle of Volume IV.

Commentary.—Textual criticism, a philological and grammatical explanation of the given translation, references to parallel texts in Egyptian literature, a literary analysis of the spell concerned (if possible), and—if needed—some explanation in the field of Egyptian religion are included. This part has so far been completed up to the beginning of Volume III (Spell 202).

Source criticism.—In the commentary I regularly refer to a separate section in which I give a consistent general review of the particularities of the individual manuscripts, both orthographically and palaeographically. The handcopies and the extant photos of the documents are of great value to this part of the study. These data had been partially collected by Professor de Buck. They will be completed in the course of the work on the translation.

Glossary.—This glossary will include all words, including the suffix-pronouns. In the course of the work, I have realized that this glossary will be unsuited to general use because of the vast quantity of items. In due course a selection can be made from these data.

It has been my experience that a reliable glossary can only be based on a prior translation in which the nature of the word (e.g., verb, noun, or adjective) or of the construction (e.g., the form *sdm.n.f* or the form *sdm n.f*) concerned has been determined as clearly as possible. For this reason the compilation of the glossary follows the translation closely.

Beyond the reach of the project is the assembly of a grammar of the Coffin Texts. The translating work, though, is an outstanding opportunity to register grammatical peculiarities. In addition, a compilation of grammatical details has proved to be of great use in translating. Therefore, I continue collecting these data carefully.

Dr. Leonard H. Lesko, of the University of California at Berkeley, has been so kind as to offer his help in supervising the English text and to give his advice both on form and on content of this work; for this help and advice I am very grateful.