

*Original article***THE MAP OF THE BOOK OF AMDUAT**

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Abstract:

The Book of Amduat, i.e., "That which is in the Duat" or "what is in the Netherworld", is an abbreviated name for "Writings of the hidden chamber which is in the Netherworld". It depicts a map of the Duat, showing the journey of the sun god from the sunset to sunrise over the twelve hours of the night, passing through many important topographical features of the Netherworld and culminating in the daily rebirth of the sun. This journey begins with Re on the western mountain, called "Manu" and ends on the eastern mountain, called "Bakhu" above which Re rises in the morning. Moreover, the Book describes the functions of the entities in the Netherworld as well as the sun god's speeches and actions presented between the sunset and sunrise.

1. Introduction

The Book of Amduat is the earliest and most detailed book describing the Netherworld in the new kingdom. It is the first completely illustrated book, as its figures depict unity with one another, and its texts create a continual reference to its illustrations [1]. It was a guidebook to the beyond, which was created to ensure the well-being and rejuvenation of the dead people and to help them on their journey through the night sky, i.e., the place of the sun god Re [2]. It provides information about the topography of the Duat and its creatures with their functions [3]. The Book of Amduat is divided into twelve sections corresponding with the twelve hours of the night except for the first hour, which is divided into four registers. Each hour is divided into three registers; the middle one always contains a depiction of a solar bark inside which the nocturnal form of the sun god is depicted as he travels through the Netherworld [1]. The lower register contains depictions specific to the hour's region while the upper register includes general phenomena in the Netherworld [4]. The division of the hours of the Book of Amduat into three registers for each hour visualizes the Netherworld as substantially the same as Egypt, in which the two inhabited banks surround the Nile River, which flows in the middle. Therefore, the middle register depicts the solar bark while the upper and lower registers depict the inhabitants of the different regions in these night hours.

2. Methodology

The Book of Amduat was inscribed on the walls of different royal and non-royal tombs and coffins. Its oldest fragments were found in the two royal tombs of Tuthmosis I and his daughter Hatshepsut, while the first complete version of this Book is depicted on the walls of the burial chamber of King Tuthmosis III, dating back to the 18th dynasty. The first complete non-royal version of the Amduat dates to the time of the vizier of King Tuthmosis III, whose name Useramun (TT. 61). The priests of Amun at Thebes depicted the Book of Amduat on their coffins and papyri dating to the 21st dynasty [1]. This study is descriptive. It is based on the data derived from the royal and non-royal scenes of the Book of Amduat to define its map. It conducts an examination, refutation, and comparative analysis of the ancient Egyptian concept of the cosmos, the ancient Egyptian theologies of creation, and the astronomical scenes related to the ancient Egyptian concept of the cosmos, along with the definitions of the Duat and the Underworld.

3. Results

The research paper publishes the twelve hours of the Book of Amduat to shed light on its cosmological and mythological map, as follows: **a)** The Book of Amduat is the earliest and most detailed book that contains descriptions of the Net-

herworld in the new kingdom. It depicts a map of the Duat, showing the journey of the sun-God through many important topographical features of the Netherworld. **b)** This Book gives a comprehensive idea about the topography and mapping of the Netherworld. It is rich in many topographical features represented in complete and solid unity. It furnishes and organizes the spaces of the Netherworld during the nightly journey of the sun, which leads through the inner region of the cosmos. **c)** The ancient Egyptians designed most of their books of the afterlife, including the Book of Amduat, as maps that described the Netherworld in consistent terms, showing a sequence of the topographical features with charting of the Netherworld. However, the Egyptian cartography was often more pictorial than planimetric. **d)** The Book of Amduat served as a guidebook that helped the king in his journey in the Netherworld. It provides information about the inhabitants, gods, the topography of the Netherworld, and the journey of the sun god during the night. **e)** The locations of the hours of the Book of Amduat correspond to the real orientations of the sun's cycle. The first four hours are depicted on the western wall in the tomb of Tuthmosis III, corresponding to the same orientation from which the sun god begins his journey, and the last four hours on the eastern wall to indicate the orientation at which the journey ends. **f)** The decorations and the oval design of the burial chamber of Tuthmosis III depict the composition between the construction and decorations, which transfers the tomb to a microcosm of the Netherworld. This oval design represents the curved shape of the Netherworld itself, or it indicates the endless cycle of the sun in a circular path [3].

4. Discussion

4.1. Ancient Egyptian concept of the cosmos

Egypt was the center of the universe according to the ancient Egyptian concept. It was defined by the Nile River, which flows from the south to the north. According to the ancient Egyptian cosmologies, there were two basic theologies of the cosmos: the first theology included a central feature, such as the primeval hill of Nun, and the second one was the flat earth cosmology in which the universe was seen as made up of separate layers (heaven, earth, and the Underworld), which were supported by pillars [5]. This early Egyptian concept of the universe could be understood through hieroglyphic language and the way of writing the words. For instance, “*t3*” in the Coffin Texts referred to the entire world (both land and sky), which suggests that the ancient Egyptian concept of the earth was a flat patch of land and the sky was a flat surface with the projections, depicted as four columns, touching the farthest points of the earth [6]. Hence, the ancient Egyptian universe consisted of the land with Egypt at its center, the sky, and the Duat [7].

4.2. Ancient Egyptian creation theories

Ancient Egyptians were interested in knowing and speculating about the creation of the cosmos, how it was created and by whom. Therefore, they created many cosmogonies or cosmological systems based on the traditions of the four main ancient religious cities: [8] *Heliopolis*, *Hermopolis*,

Memphis, and *Thebes*. Although the essential vision of the world's creation remained relatively unchanged throughout ancient Egypt, the sophistication and details of these ancient Egyptian cosmogonies were developed from the oldest agricultural image of the primeval mound to the development of the Heliopolitan theology of the Ennead during the old kingdom, then the transcendent creator of the Theban theology of the Ramesside period [9]. Ancient Egyptians configured all nature's elements as deities. Therefore, the deities of these creation theories represented different aspects of the cosmos.

4.3. Heliopolitan theology

This theology centered on a group of cosmic gods, with the city of Heliopolis as their theological center [9]. In this theology, the cosmos contained the primeval water called Nu or Nun [10], the sun-God who was the main figure and played the main role was Atum (the complete one). Atum was sometimes said to have been born inside a lotus flower out of the primeval water (*as he came into the cosmos by himself*) and stood on a primeval mound, which was formalized as Benben (a firm pyramidal elevation to support the sun-god) [8]. Then, Atum produced two children from his body fluids: *Tefnut* (moisture) and *Shu* (air). Next, *Shu* and *Tefnut* brought forth their children *Nut* (sky) and *Geb* (earth), who gave creation its full spatial extent and took their places above and below their parents. After that, *Nut* and *Geb* brought out their children *Isis*, *Osiris*, *Seth*, and *Nephtys*, who, in one theology, represented the fertile land of Egypt and its surrounding desert. Accordingly, the main features of the Egyptian cosmos were completed. After that the son of Osiris (Horus) joined this group; he was associated with kingship and served as a link between the societal structures and physical creation [11].

4.4. Hermopolitan theology

The main cult center of the Ogdoad of this cosmological theology was the ancient Khemnu (Eight-town), which the Greeks called Hermopolis. In this theology, the primeval waters were divided into four aspects of the undifferentiated state of the universe: chaos, water, darkness, and flood, which were represented as four like-named divine couples that completed the eight primeval gods or the Ogdoad (usually translated as the primeval chaos) of Hermopolis. These eight gods were responsible for creation, as they existed before the creation of the world. Also, they represented the universal ocean features.

4.5. Memphite theology

In this theology, the primeval god firstly showed himself materially as the primeval mound, and then intellectually as his tongue and heart, which were embodied in the divine craftsman god *Ptah*. *Ptah* could transform the creation's concept in his mind into a physical realization, such as a sculptor who was able to transform a block of stone into a statue [10]. He was the creator, represented as *Ptah Tatenen* (*Ptah* of the primeval mound).

4.6. Theban theology

This theology represented Amun as *Amun-Re*, the great creator, and a transcendent god who exists independently of both the world and the universe [10]. Amun created himself in the universe before the existence of any other matter. His

creation was represented by welding of his body to his fluid to form a cosmic egg. After the emergence, the primeval matter was formed by him who was “the first one who gave birth to first ones”.

4.7. The relation between the astronomical scenes and the ancient Egyptian concept of the cosmos

Timing, calendars and astronomy were essential in the ancient Egyptian life. During the middle kingdom, ancient Egyptians inscribed the lists of the decans on coffins from Assiut. They showed different features of the sky, such as lists of stars, planets, and depictions of the southern and northern constellations, which were inscribed on the ceilings of tombs during the new kingdom [12]. These scenes included the arched celestial body of the goddess *Nut*, representing the vault of the sky, which separated the atmosphere of the humans’ world from the outermost areas of the cosmos, which are defined as cold, dark, empty, and the primeval water (Nun). This was Abyss, the primordial ocean from which the world emerged at the first moment of creation. This cosmic ocean surrounded the Earth from all sides. Therefore, the body of Nut protected the Earth from flooding by the water of the cosmic ocean, which was the reason for the sky’s watery nature [13]. Ancient Egyptians set up many aspects of their daily and religious life on the movements of specific celestial bodies, which enabled them to predict of the annual flood and choose the best time to plant and harvest. They organized their calendars around the orbits of the Earth and the moon, as these two cycles were originally used to form two calendars (civil and lunar calendars) that were later merged. The lunar calendar was formed in Lower Egypt, that probably dating to the pre-historic period. It consists of a cycle of 365 days divided into months of 29 or 30 days each, and extra days added every two or three years. This period begins with the annual birth of the sun, then continues as it returns to its birthplace, completing a full circuit and rising again from the same point. Thus, this whole cycle begins with one winter solstice to the next. There was a suggestion that the entrance to the Duat was identified by the westerly point of this cycle in which the mouth of Nut was almost due west at this moment [14]. The 2nd calendar is the civil calendar. The goddess Isis who was the daughter of the sun-God *Re* in some contexts, was identified by the star Sirius [15]. The heliacal rising of this star was another important astronomical indication, as it disappeared below the horizon for seventy days once a year. The upper Egyptian calendar considered its New Year’s Day at the moment of the reappearance of Sirius. This civil calendar, dates to the predynastic period. It is based on each year and contains twelve months, each with 30 days, plus five “epagomenal” days that were added after the last month. It was supposed that these two calendars were merged after the unification of Egypt [16].

4.8. A general conception of mythological maps

Scenes of the mythological maps depict different religious depictions of the topography of the Netherworld. These maps draw the ancient Egyptian perspective in which the Netherworld must have been deemed a physical reality [17]. The topography of the Netherworld is depicted in its different

ancient Egyptian books, such as the Book of Amduat. The texts and depictions give a complete idea about the topography and mapping of the Netherworld, as they furnish the creative and organize the spaces of the Netherworld during the nightly journey of the sun which leads through the inner region of the cosmos that was regarded as the Netherworld, the depths, the primeval water called *Nun*, the darkness, and the interior of the sky [4].

4.9. The Duat

Definition: The Duat is a realm of Osiris through which *Re* travels every night during his journey underneath the earth [18]. It could be identified with the maternal womb of *Nut*, as it was the metaphysical place of regeneration for the deceased, deities, and celestial bodies [19]. **Location:** The Duat is a great parallel region located under the earth, connected to the waters of *Nun*, and it starts at the western horizon and ends at the eastern horizon. The sun rises in the east, goes up to the zenith in the afternoon, then descends to the west, forming the ancient Egyptian concept of the entire world, which contains “sky, earth and Duat” [6]. Therefore, the Duat is a part of the Netherworld. Also, the Duat was suggested by the religious astronomical texts of the Book of Nut as being located behind the earthly world or maybe in the sky in the living place of the gods [14], so the ancient Egyptians gave the same importance to both theologies because they did not represent contradictory theologies but rather complementary ones to ensure the deceased’s everlasting survival [19]. **Description:** The Duat is a deep, hidden and dark place. Its hieroglyphic word is written as a star or a star inside a circle, which perhaps refers to all the celestial bodies that cross the Duat [18]. Ancient Egyptian represented the Duat as a reflection of the natural world in which they were lived. All the features of the natural world were depicted in the Duat, such as the earth, the desert, the lands, the waterways, the mounds, the caverns, and the fields [7]. It is imagined as the same as Egypt, where the Nile River flows in the middle between two inhabited banks. The same idea is depicted in the Book of the Amduat and the Book of the Gates in which the scene is divided into three registers, the inhabitants of each region are shown in the side registers, and between them, the solar bark is depicted [20].

4.10. The underworld

Definition: The underworld is a place beneath the earth. **Location:** The underworld is located where the regions of *Nun*, the primordial waters meaning “the watery one”, flow throughout. **Description:** Although the origin of the forces of chaos connected with the waters of *Nun*, the latter also had a positive aspect in the ancient Egyptian theology; the rejuvenation of these waters is essential to the rebirth of the sun-God every day. The universe is surrounded by chaos and disorder; the nonexistence came into direct contact with the cosmos in a few places such as the deserts and under-world. The earth, or the land of the living, was the center of the universe, a flat-oval shaped expanse surrounded by oceans. The earthly link between the living world and the afterlife was the tomb [18]. The union of the royal ba of the deceased king and mummy that leads to the resurrection of the king was paralleled with the reunion of *Re* and *Osiris*.

4.11. Topography of the twelve hours of the Book of Amduat

The Book of Amduat begins with the first hour, fig. (1) of the night, which shows the great city of the Duat where the sun god enters the interstitial realm. This hour ends with the sun god's entrance into the Duat at sunset [3]. The upper and lower registers show inhabitants of the Duat who are gods and goddesses represented in individual squares [8]. The Duat which is called the great city for the large number of its inhabitants is opened and resealed at the end of this hour [21].

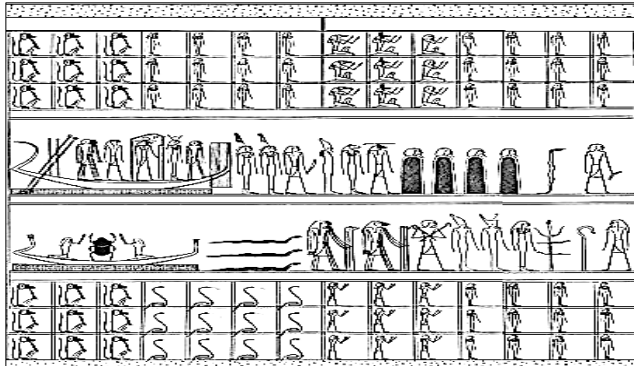


Figure (1) first Hour of Amduat (After: Hornung & Abt, 2007) [1].



ḳ ntr pn m ḥryt imntt nt 3ḥt

“This god enters the western gateway of the horizon”.



itrw 120 ḥr nmntt ḥryt tn n sprt wī3 dw3tyw ḥpi.f mw m-ḥt r Wrns, itrw 300 pw m 3w.s

“120 miles, the journey through this gateway before the bark reaches those of the Netherworld. He passes the water after it to Wernes whose length is 300 miles”.

The second, fig. (2-a) and the third, fig. (2-b) hours depict the beginning of the actual Duat, which is depicted as an abundant landscape dominated by water in these two hours. The second hour which is called “Wernes” contains Fields of Reeds of the Duat with the watery expanse, while the third hour is dominated by the fields of reeds with a great space of water called “Waters of Osiris”. Also, these two hours contain many boats that are depicted with the solar bark, these boats are considered special boats because they are not depicted again in the later hours [4]. The lower register of the second hour depicts the blessed dead who are carrying grain in their hands as they are farmers of Wernes, while the lower register of the third hour starts with a depiction of God *Khnum* who guarantees the fertility of the land by supervising the Nile inundation [1].



ḥtp m Wrns in ḥm n ntr pn irt ḥpwt i3rw m nt mw R^c itrw 309 m 3w n sḥt tn 120 m shw.s,

“be pleased in Wernes by the majesty of this god, rowing Iaru in this water of Re, 309 miles is the length of this field, 120 is its breadth”.



ḥtp m sḥt npr3yw in ḥm n ntr pn 3 irit ḥpwt m nt mw Wsir itrw 309 m 3w n sḥt tn,

“be pleased in this field of the shore-dwellers by the majesty of this great god, rowing on this water of Osiris, 309 miles is the length of this field”.

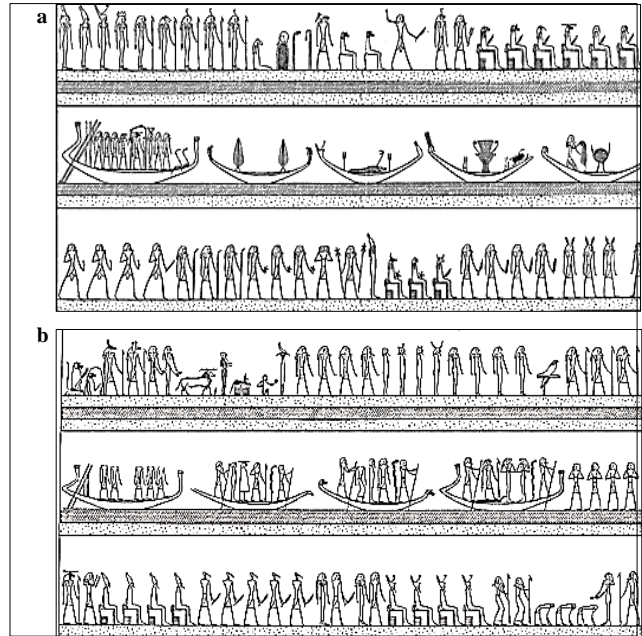
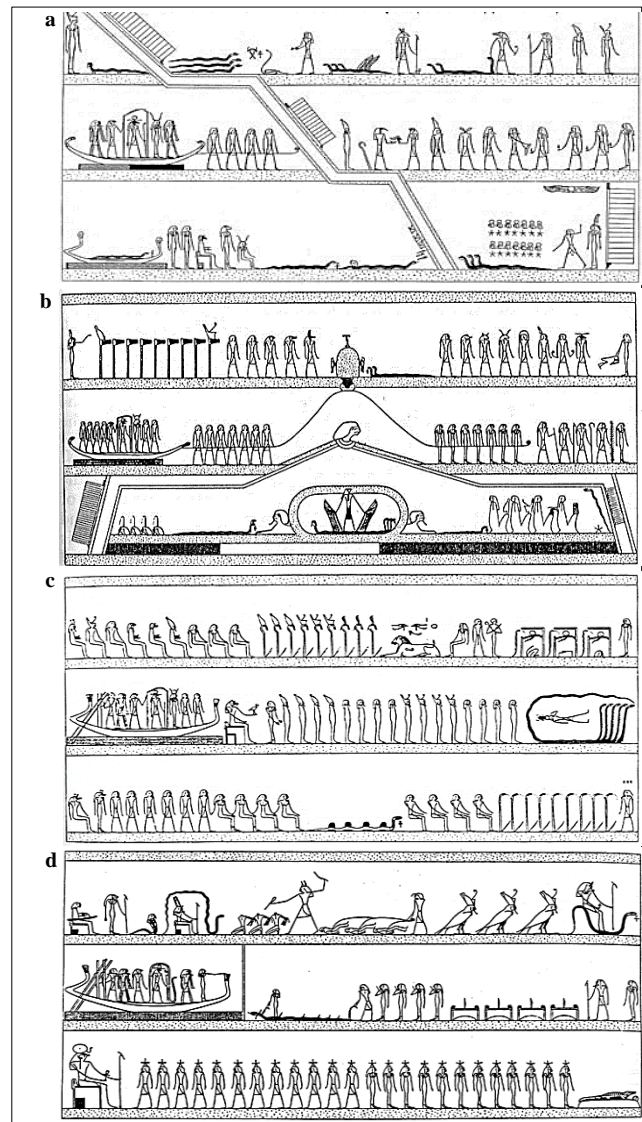


Figure (2) a. second hour b. third hour of Amduat (After: Hornung & Abt, 2007) [1].

The desert of Rosetau, the “land of Sokar, who is on his sand,” lies at the fourth hour, fig. (3-a), as the well-watered realm of abundance ends at the beginning of this hour. The desert of Rosetau is a sandy realm, full of mysterious snakes whose bodies contain legs and wings. The zigzagging route of the region of this hour is filled with fire and blocked by doors [1]. According to the text, this route is called the mysterious way of Sokar. At the end of this hour, there is a schematic depiction of the celestial bodies [4]. The fifth hour, fig. (3-b) contains all the main factors of the western region, consisting of the drowned people in the primeval water, Isis and Nephthys, as birds, surround the mound, which depicts the desert tomb of Osiris from which the sun, in its morning form, Khepri the scarab beetle, emerges. This depiction confirms the ancient Egyptian belief that death and life are a continual cycle, with neither repressing the other [8]. On the far side of the burial mound, there are different threatening serpents with the slaughterers who protect the sun god during his passing into the narrow passage in the middle of the hour [21]. The lower register depicts the cavern of Sokar as an oval through which the journey is continues; two heads of the Aker-Sphinx are depicted on either side of this oval. The lake of fire, as a place of punishment, is depicted under the

cavern of Sokar [1]. The sixth hour, fig. (3-c) is considered the middle of the sun god's journey. It depicts the very depths of the Netherworld or the water hole filled with the primeval water Nun, within which the corpse of the sun god, in the form of a scarab beetle, lies, where it is united with Osiris to provide him with the power required for his journey to the eastern horizon [22]. The semi-upright position of the gods in the upper and lower registers confirms the concept of resurrection, while the resurrection of the deceased pharaoh is depicted by the kings of upper and lower Egypt, each with their symbols and crowns [4]. The seventh hour, fig. (3-d) depicts the cavern of Osiris and the city of the mysterious cave [8]. Also, the punishment of the enemies as a moment of grave danger is depicted by the self-engendering of the new sunlight at midnight [1]. The burial place of the corpse of the sun, which is protected by knives, is also depicted behind the sand bank in the middle register [4]. The upper register depicts the triumph of Osiris over his enemies [21]. A personification of the stars and plants whose movement would be arranged by the sun god with his enthronement as "Horus of the Netherworld," is depicted in the lower register. The eighth hour, fig. (3-e) depicts the city of the caverns. The gods, dwellers of these caverns, are depicted in the upper and lower registers, with each register divided into five caverns sealed by doors that open at an offering to the sun god. Inside these caverns, deities sit on the hieroglyphs for linen clothing. The main idea of this hour is to supply cloths, as they are important for the deceased's rebirth in the Netherworld. The response of the dead and the deities to the sun god from these caverns is described in the texts, as *Re* calls them while passing through their caverns [8]. Eight males pulling the solar bark to its final destination are depicted in the middle register [4]. The ninth hour, fig. (3-f) depicts a judgment court and the city of the living manifestations [8]. The middle register depicts the crew of the solar bark [21]. The upper register depicts the judgment with the gods and goddesses of the court, who care for Osiris [1]. The lower register depicts the twelve uraei, who are responsible for preventing enemies, and the nine field gods who ensure the provisioning of the deceased [8]. The entire tenth hour, fig. (3-g) entirely depicts the city of deep water and the steep banks, which are filled by the primeval water. Rescue and healing are the main themes of the upper register, where the gods and goddesses who are responsible for them are depicted [4]. At the beginning of the upper register, symbols of the imminent resurrection of the sun god at dawn are depicted: a scarab beetle holding an egg from which the sun god will emerge on the eastern horizon [8]. The middle register depicts Osiris before the solar bark, the ba-souls of Sokar, and the bodyguards of the sun god, who protect him in the darkness [21]. The sunken people in the water are the main theme of the lower register; Horus saves them from decomposition and takes them to a blessed existence, even though they have not been granted an appropriate burial [1]. The eleventh hour, fig. (3-h) depicts the city of the corpse and the preparations for the sunrise. The upper register depicts a winged serpent held by the sun god, referring to the capture of the exact time of sunrise. Then, there is a depiction of a serpent that gives birth to the stars and engorges them again which points to the time because the stars refer to the hours. After that there

is a depiction of the retinue of the sun god with four goddesses, each sitting on double serpents that burn the enemies with their fiery breath; these enemies are thrown into fire pits in the lower register. Also, there are revenge goddesses who are responsible for protecting the sunrise and preventing any threat to it [4]. The twelfth hour, fig. (3-i) depicts the cavern at the end of darkness and the city of the appearance of the birth, as it concerns the daily rebirth of the sun. The upper and lower registers depict the general rejoicing of the deities for both the sun and Osiris who is promised a life to stay in the realm of the dead. The middle register depicts the body of the gigantic serpent, inside which the act of creation is relocated, through this serpent, twelve males and thirteen females drag the solar bark. On the solar bark, there is a great number of blissful dead people. In the backward direction from the tail of the serpent to its mouth, all creatures enter through its old tail and are weakened by age, but they emerge from its mouth as newborn babies. The Netherworld opens just for a moment before Shu closes it again, so the nocturnal journey ends and *Re* shines again between the thighs of *Nut* [8].



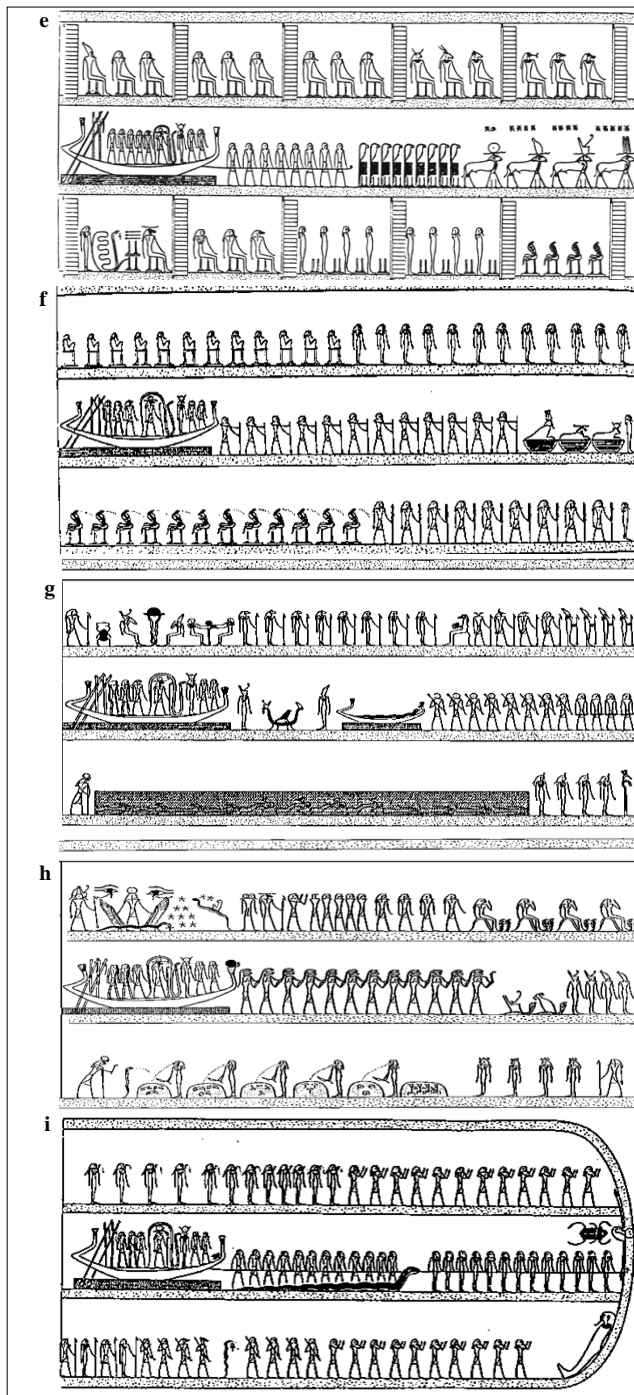


Figure (3) a. fourth, b. fifth, c. sixth, d. seventh, e. eighth, f. ninth, g. tenth, h. eleventh and i. twelfth hour of Amduat (After: Hornung & Abt, 2007) [1].

4.12. Measurements of the first three hours

Ancient Egyptians had a great knowledge of desert paths in Africa, thanks to their expertise in geography and exploration. They also visualized the Netherworld as substantially the same as Egypt, in which the two inhabited banks surround the Nile River that flows in the middle. The upper and lower registers represent the inhabitants of the different regions in these night hours [1]. Also, same as the country of Egypt is lightened by the sun, moon, and stars, the Duat is lightened

by the setting sun in the western end and rising sun in the eastern end [23]. Accordingly, these previous points refer to the description of the Amduat's landscape, which was derived from the actual landscape to the remote west of Egypt provided to visitors when the Amduat was created. Therefore, the exact measurements of the first three hours in the Book of Amduat refer to ancient Egyptian knowledge of the desert southwest of the Nile Valley, the area behind the Gilf Kebir and Gebel Uweinat on the southwest corner of modern Egypt. According to a recent investigation of the Western Desert of Egypt, especially the Trail of Abu Ballas that connected Egypt with the Chad Basin of Central Africa, a connection was found between this area and the factual descriptions provided in the topography of the Book of Amduat, especially these first three hours. The Book of Amduat described the 1st hour as an interstitial realm between the western horizon and the actual entrance to the Netherworld, measuring 1,260 km (120 iteru of 10.5 km); which is the same topographical structure stretching from the Nile Valley to the west, with the same measurements that could be seen as the distance between Dakhlah oasis (the site from which Abu Ballas Trail departed) and the northern shore of Lake Bodélé around 2000 BC [23]. The interstitial realm is followed by the 2nd and 3rd hours, which contain the watery expanses that should be sweet water to irrigate the Fields of Reeds of an abundantly fertile landscape in the same hours. The abundance of water and fertile fields is an actual description of the way across the Western Desert led to regions with the same fields and water. The lake, with its surrounding fields of each hour of the 2nd and 3rd hours, is given the precise measurements of 309 by 120 iteru. The topographical structure of these two hours is exactly found in the Palaeo- environmental structure of the Western Desert and the Chad Basin around 2000 BC, when two gigantic lakes existed: Lake Mega-Chad in the Chad Basin, and Lake Mega-Fezzan in southwest of modern Libya. Both lakes were located at similar distances from Egypt as were Egyptian trading and diplomatic partners in the Ancient Near East [23].

5. Conclusions

The Book of Amduat depicts a cosmological and mythological map of the cities and regions of the Netherworld in the twelve hours of the night. There is a passage between each hour and the next one. The first hour depicts the great city of the Netherworld; then the second contains the Fields of Reeds and the Field of Wernes; the third hour depicts the water of Osiris and the Fields of Reeds, including the field of the grain gods. The fourth hour depicts the cavern of the life of forms and the desert of Rosetau, which is a sandy realm full of mysterious snakes. Moreover, a zigzagging route of the region of this hour is filled with fire and blocked by doors. The fifth hour depicts the western region, which contains all the main factors of the dead's realm, with the cavern of Sokar and the lake of fire. The sixth hour depicts the very depths of the Netherworld or the water hole filled with the primeval water Nun. The seventh hour depicts the cavern of Osiris and the city of the mysterious cave, with the burial place of the corpse of the sun, which is depicted behind the sandbank. The eighth hour is about the city of the caverns of the gods which are sealed by doors. The ninth hour depicts the city of the living manifestations and the judgment court. The tenth hour depicts the city of deep water and steep banks, which is filled with the primeval water. The eleventh hour depicts the city of corpse, while the twelfth hour depicts the cavern at the end of darkness and the city of the appearance of the birth.

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