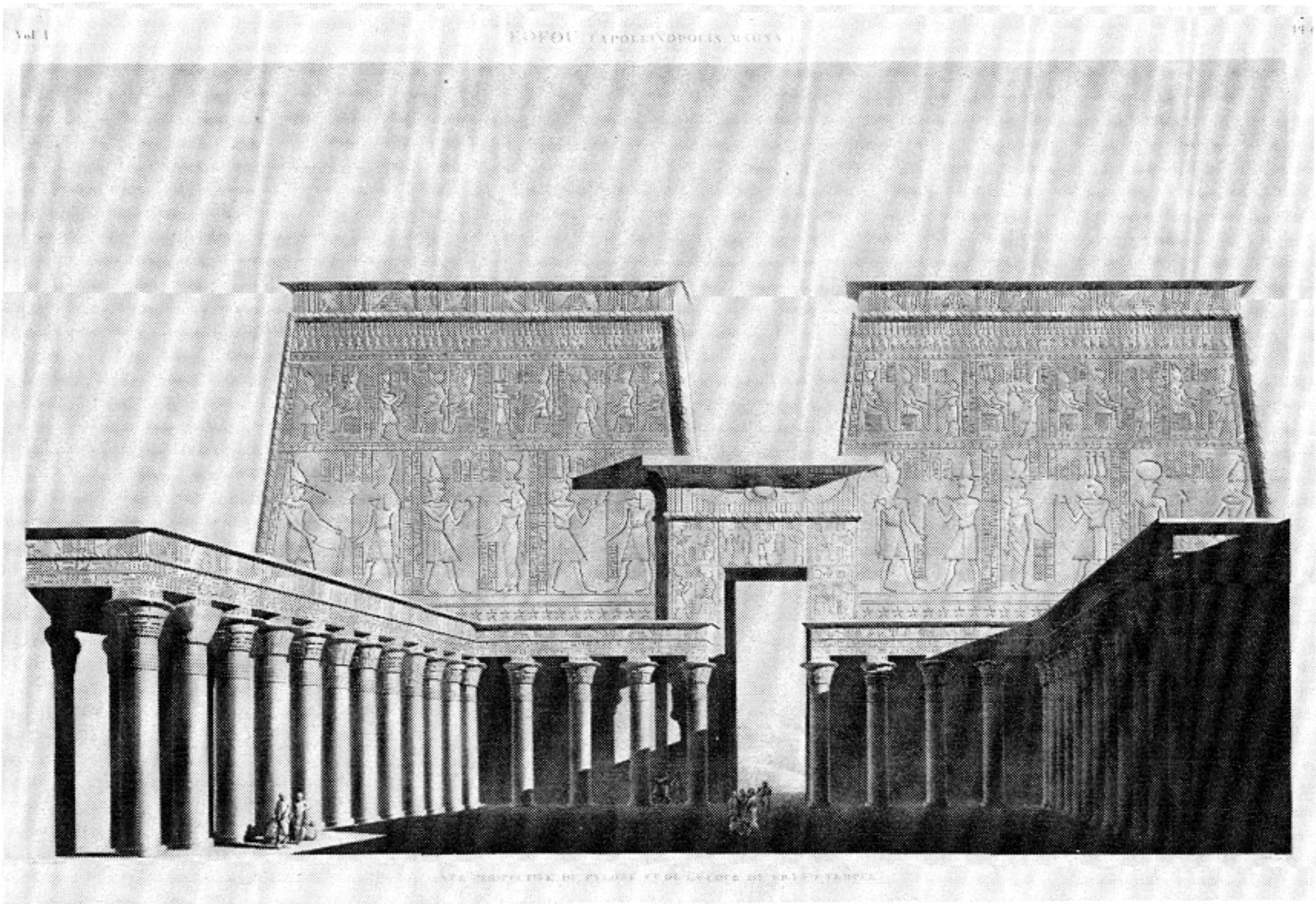


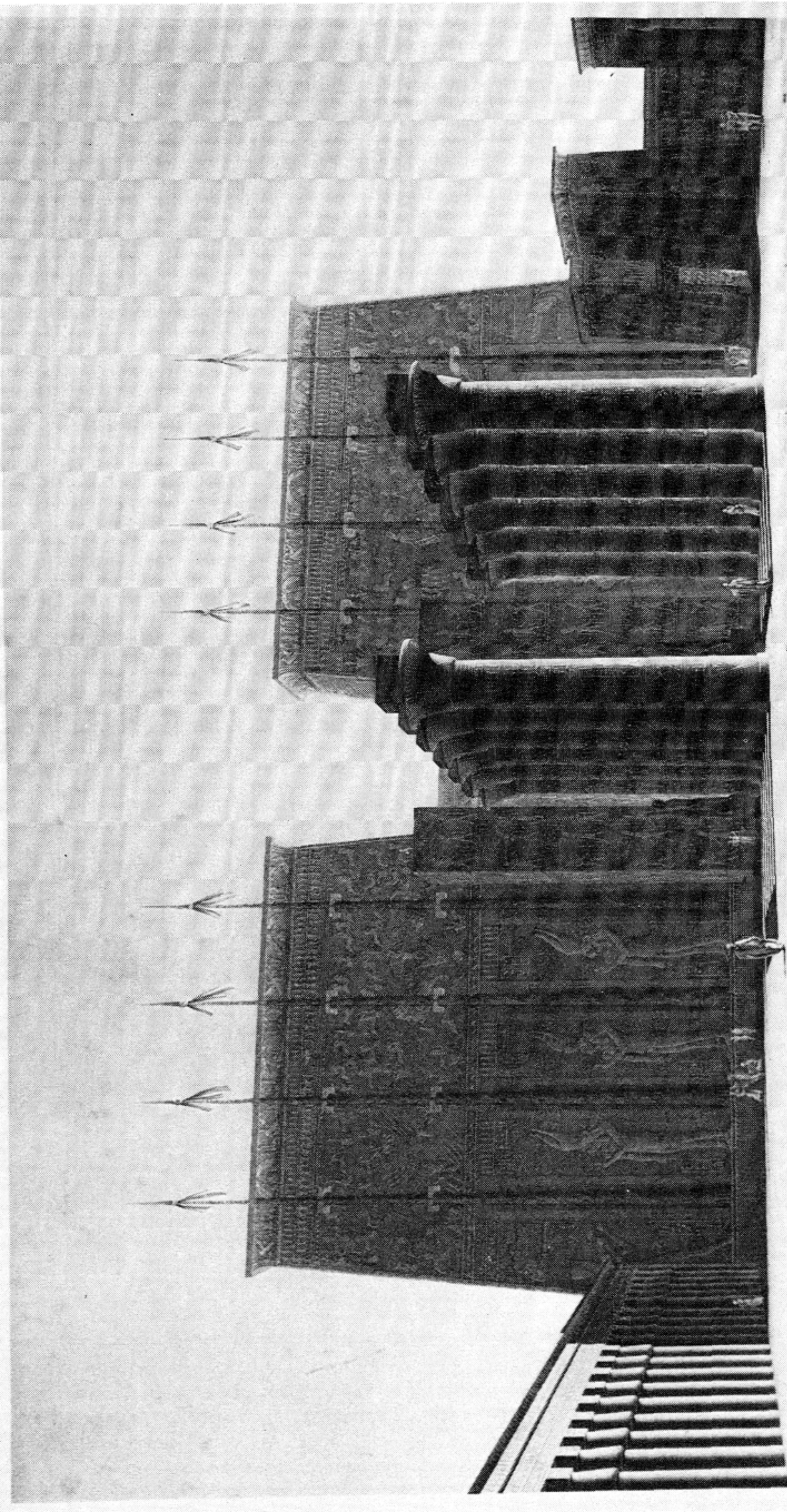
The Egyptian Poems

Clinton F. Larson

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory,
every one in his own house. (Isa. 14:18)



Clinton F. Larson is a professor emeritus of English at Brigham Young University. The engravings printed with Dr. Larson's poems are from the twenty-three volume *Description de L'Égypte*, published in Paris from 1809–28, the result of the work of the 170 scientists and scholars who accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte when he invaded Egypt in 1798 and the first scientific attempt to describe fully and systematically an entire nation. The Harold B. Lee library at Brigham Young University owns a complete set of the *Description de L'Égypte*, and the engravings from it were printed with the cooperation and assistance of Chad J. Flake, Curator of Special Collections; Robert J. Espinoza, Library Conservator; and Glen Leon Anderson, Photo Supervisor and Assistant Manager of Instructional Graphics; this project was partially funded by a grant from the College of Fine Arts and Communications, James A. Mason, Dean.



THEBES, KARNAK. THE GREAT TEMPLE. THE COLONNADE OF THE GREAT TEMPLE.

The Glory of Egypt

The inner mind is a veil one sees
But does not see. It is a chemistry,
Arranged and taught at the knees
Of Orion to enfold a glistening tree.

The tree was once a burning bush
That became the vision of Seraphim,
Who kept a mountain in the hush
Of nightshade and Anubis, trim

In the hieroglyphic, when Ramses
Came to carve his chariot in stone.
What in that stone might seize
The stars in their going to atone

For forgetfulness? It is not Amun
Who craved them for the sands of Paradise,
But the rising sands themselves, undone
In the winds, fleet sand to entice

The stars to fall among the tombs
That are stone. The stone will thin
In the winds and disappear in rooms
Of the heavens that are tombs. They win

The echoes of the dynasties that murmur
Like heavenly sails that fold serrations
Of light. See the Pharaoh of summer
Honor the sun and kings of the nations

That Isaiah brought to him in scrolls
Of the azure! Sun at noon is the king,
And heat must rise as a stone rolls
Away. The Pharaoh emerges to bring

His people from darkness. See their hands
That like reeds seem to bend! They follow
And come until they are the sands
That glisten in the high-borne hollows

And caverns of heaven, where light
Is a flicker and the wind a whisper
Down a long hall, where in our sight
The solemn halls are many and mystery

Is joy. The kings reside in the height
Of the glistening. They are as stars, supreme
As the falcon rides to his aerie, bright
In their raiment of colors, who will dream

While the sun is away. See their stone.
Their figures remain high in their graves.
Abu Simbel is there, and the zone
Of their majesty before Amun laves

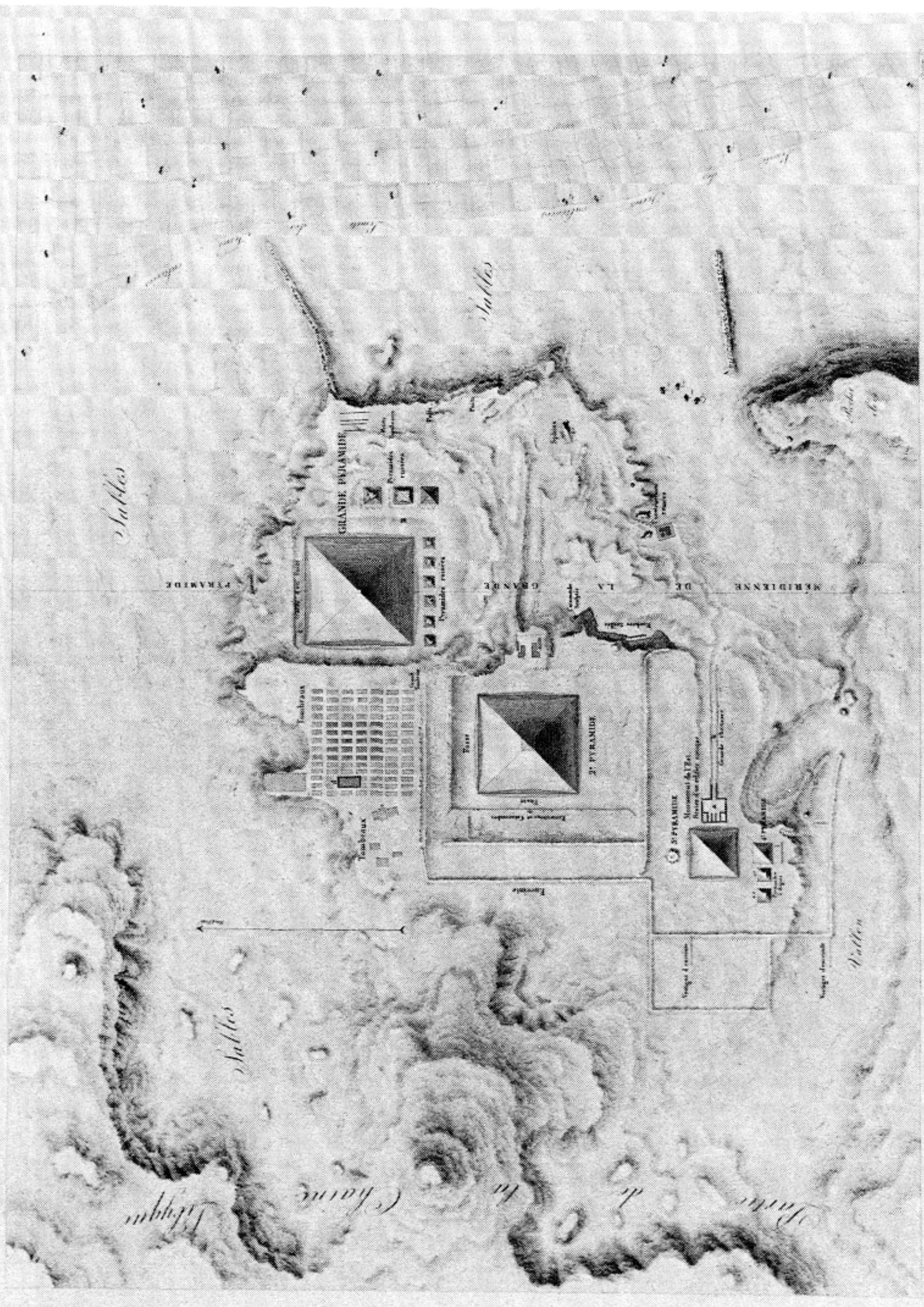
Them anew, when the morning of Egypt arrives.
Again the sands are bright, and the Pharaoh
Is there. He sees the blue Nile and skives
A sliver of light in gold as the marrow

Of glory.

PYRAMIDES DE MEMPHIS.



VUE GÉNÉRALE DES PYRAMIDES ET DU SUEZ, PRISE AU SOLEIL COUCHANT.



PLAN TOPOGRAPHIQUE DES PYRAMIDES ET DES ENVIRONS.

The Pyramids of Egypt

Each from its apex suspends the light of Ra
Down into sand that spreads it, each to draw
The gaze aloft into the clerestories of cloud
Brazen with dusk, as if their planes might flaw

The truth with their variety. Each follows
The light from silver to amber to blue in shallows
Of sky overhead as we, envisioning the eternities
Of their geometry, follow the edging hallows

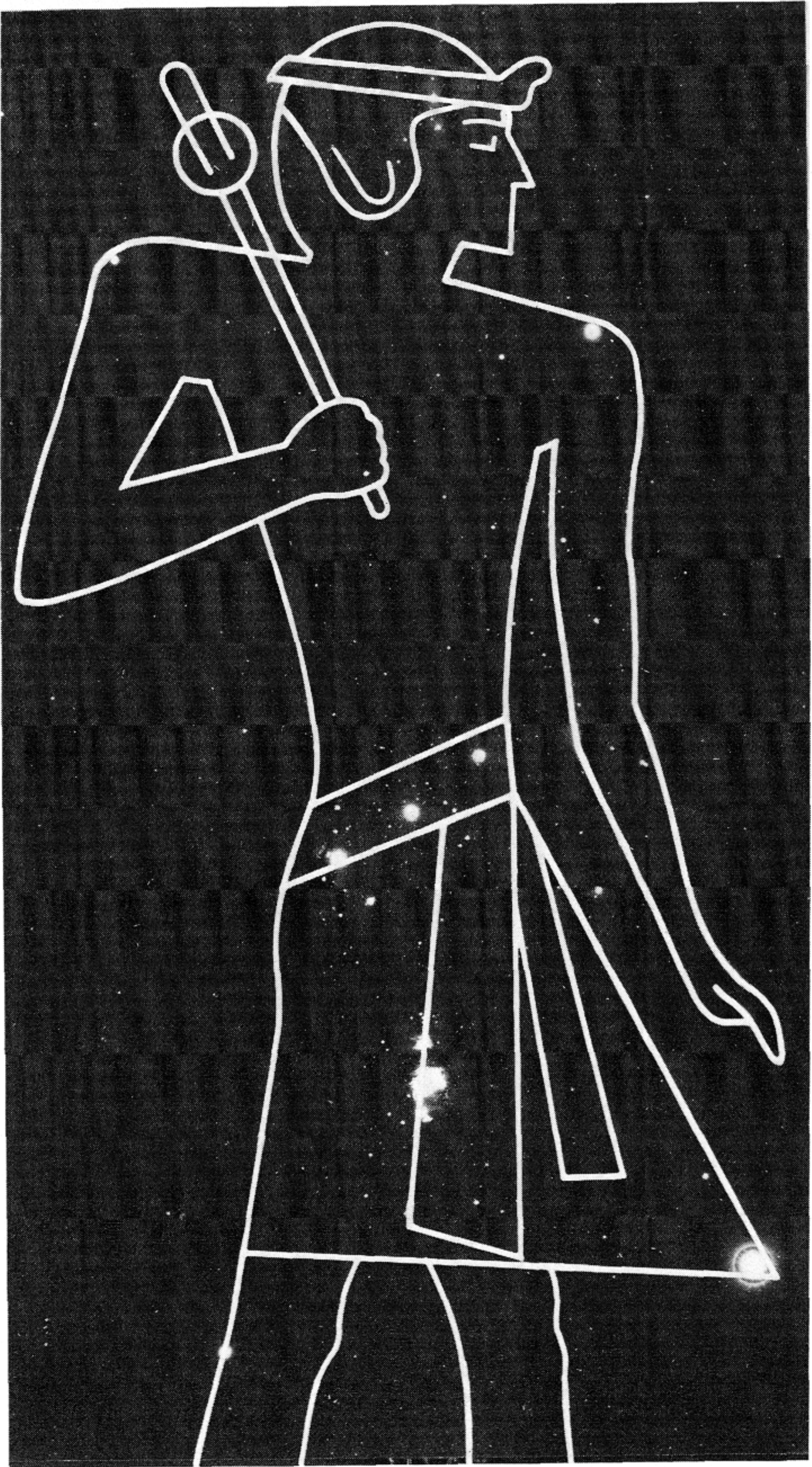
Of sequestering each pharaoh who lives and lives
To rise from a mummy's steady, gazing eyes
Deep in a tomb. The dynasties were hives
Of the Geometer who offers the spiritus and skives

The light into foil that curls into a gathering skiff
Of cloud to shade the linen across a throne like a massif
For a falcon gliding to an ever higher aerie.
There, in the thinning air, are prisms stiff

With the tectonic discipline that rests as trinity,
The fathering lord, the lordly father of eternity,
And the ghost that slips between as one moves
Before and near and then around in the intensity

Of every light, even in the oceanic blue
That wavers with white to anneal the quiver
Of silver into deeper blue. And then, anew,
The pyramids dream their souls aloft to sue

God Amun for his synchrony with Christendom.



Dr. Larson writes: "I believe that Ramses II instructed his artists to use the configuration of the constellation Orion in portraying him at Abu Simbel. The pharaoh wished to show his eminence, and therefore that of Egypt, in the great quest for assured immortality. The hieroglyph matches the constellation with remarkable accuracy, as can be seen by superimposing a transparency of it over a photograph of the constellation.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the afterlife was a mirror image of this life. Therefore, the hieroglyph is a reversal of the image of Orion, with Rigel appearing at the point of the extended skirt. Ramses II faces left in the hieroglyph, and Orion right in the heavens. The sketch has been turned over and superimposed to show the matching of form and spirit that Ramses believed was faithful to the finest insights of his religion.'

To the Pharaoh-Hunter K Orion

Supernal hieroglyph of the hunter-warrior,
O Ramses, evocative constellation in your sway
Over these stars, you came as a venerable courier

Of Ra at night to stand forth as if at day
Against the underworld. You move as on a spindle,
Passing overhead, autumn to autumn, in the play

Of the oversoul. That dark Anubis must dwindle
And not stay. But your Bellatrix, Betelgeuse,
And Rigel stay starry full over the brindle

Sand of starpoint pyramids in the ruse
Of immortality, brandishing forward blue-white
Gemstones in that setting. What is there to lose

But glory, to think of the wash of satin in the flight
Of river-wings of falcons rising softly into mist
And corona of the moon? O Egypt, in the sleight

Of living that favors immortality, the far bell
Of windsong arrives among the columns of Abu Simbel
To touch the fleeting spirit with its fleeting knell.

There is no pain. Wrought gold lies over the fell
Visage that is decay. The voice of artifice will tell
Of your dynasty with eloquence as in a dell

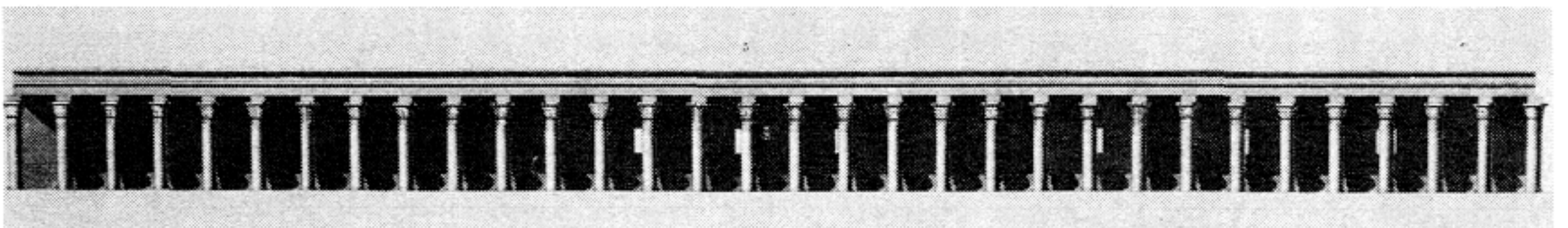
Where the golden visage is sure, whose eyes clear
Where the empire of darkness yields the weir
And net of stars to the Fisherking. He sheds a tear

For you, who strode before him as the mighty seer
Of Ra, who saw his coming in the hieroglyphic mere
That is the heavens, there and there in the sheer

Darkness over us. It will shimmer and appear
Above the sands of Egypt, eternally without loss,
In another vision, within the Southern Cross.

The Ramesside Sensibility

Peaks and vales demark the isochores of history.
How may I survive dissolution or a decline
Into the commonplace of time and the tempera shine
Of mediocrity to keep the lapis lazuli? A clerestory
Admits light as a green flame in the consistory
Of Osiris, whose eyes reveal and then define
His power like the oblique faces of a pyramid
That rests forever in the sands of the mounding earth.
This is the Ramesside glory, not the dearth
Of long forgetfulness. It exists amid
The tall columns in the vision of existence
Kept high and hieroglyphic in my penitence
Before Amun and the asphodel transliterated
Sublime from windstone ergo propter ego
Translated instantly bright and ergodic Ra Ra Ra
Anagogically agog for him.



Ramses II of Egypt

Before me is the length of the Nile and two lands
Inviting the reign of Amun Ra in his pharaoh
Of the sun and the lapis lazuli of the sands

Of Egypt. So I take up the sceptre to harrow
The lands as one, my insight and uraeus
Forward, quick as the quickest eyelet, narrow

To see the will of Amun from golden Sirius,
Star of the endless dynasty. The sparrow
Is not the falcon, and the falcon, curious

In flight, will find the widest domain. Char
And ruins of the past lie against a hill,
And in that repose allow the brightest star

New access to god Amun's brightest will
In the temple's languor of eternal peace
Near the Nile. The star will rise and spill

The brilliance of the golden mien to release
The gold of our desire across the hieroglyph
And flow through it until a hand will crease

Death's linen into darkness even as the sylph
Of light reaches its cloudy height. What is nearer
Than darkest water? There, among the stars, a skiff

Of light will rise and touch the brightening mirror
Overbending us. Great Egypt is the golden land
From which the vision falls away, still clearer

Here as the golden dream and the fire of sand,
The three to five proportion of all experience.
This is the meaning and the image that will stand

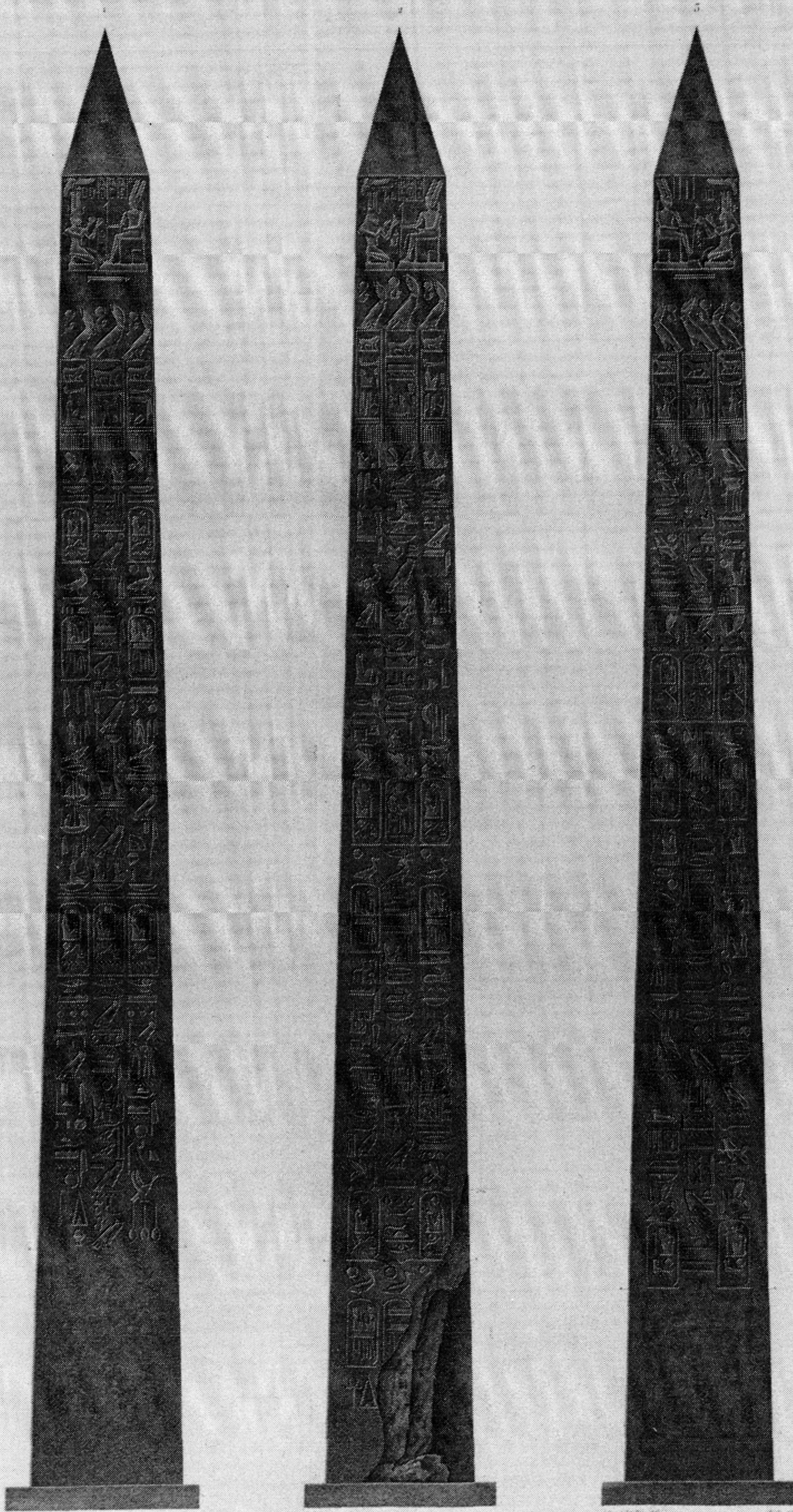
The wear of time as it dusts against the prurience
Of death. Know the azimuth, the azure span
Of light, the aureole, and the prescience

Of Amun Ra. I take my sceptre and lift
Its lustre over Africa. I announce the mean
At Abu Simbel in my very image and sift

The winds to come. I keep the lands in the sway
Of record. I am of these people, the mien
Of their desire, the fire of sand, the array

Of light from Amun Ra. I touch the rift
Of sound. I hear god Amun come. I will not stray.
I whisper what I know in silence. The drift

Of time sustains me in my tomb. Death stings
In dark Amenti, but within the falcon's wings
I am Osiris of the lapis lazuli.



DETAIS DE TROIS FACES DE L'OBELISQUE ORIENTAL DU PALAIS



ÉLEVATION DÉTAILLÉE DE LA PARTIE POSTÉRIEURE DU GRAND TEMPLE.

The Handmaiden of Nefertari

I will go with you and care for you.
Wings may flutter, but the sound
Will shimmer in a nearby pond,
Then soften, though our days are few.

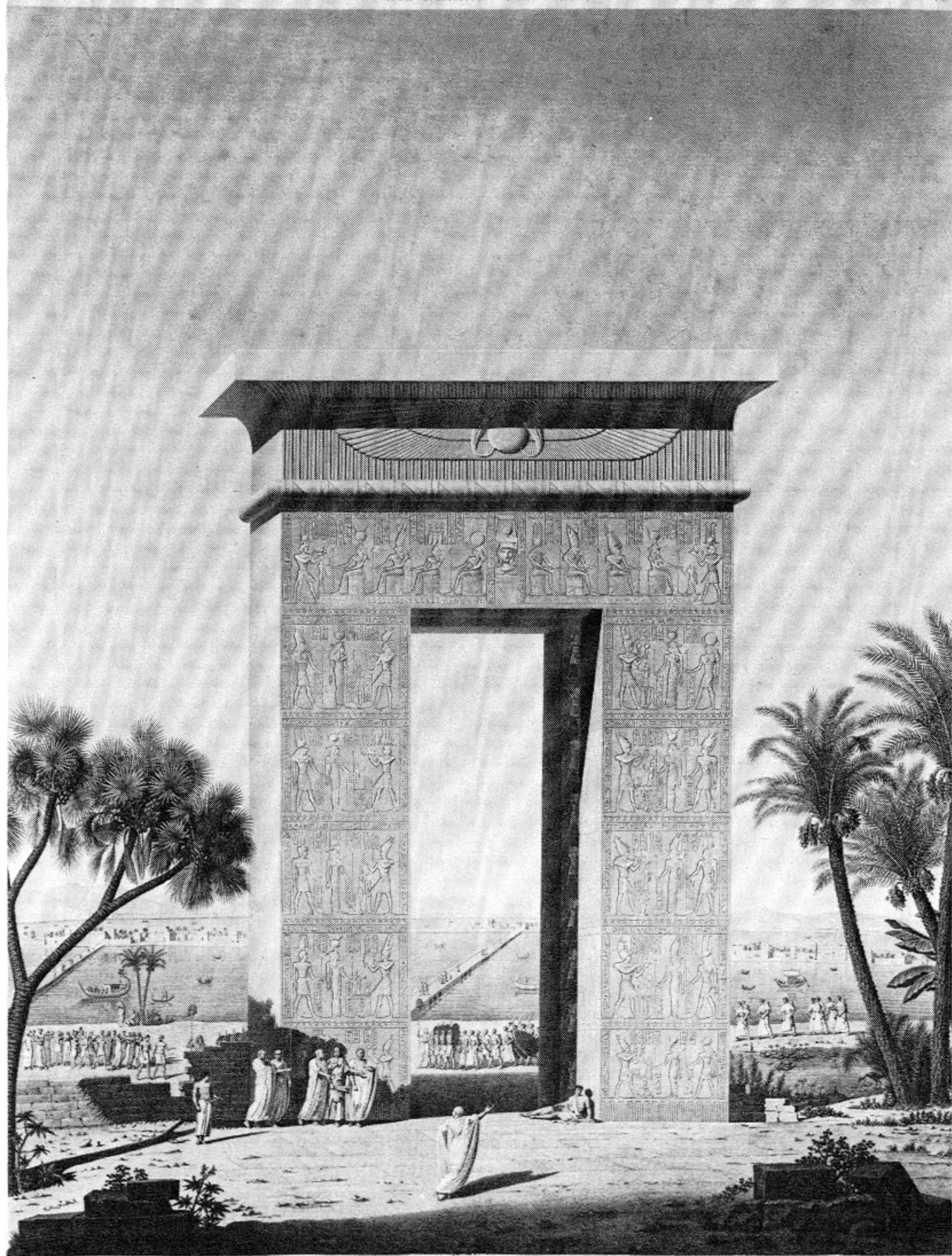
O Queen, I know your quiet gaze
Through shadows where the evening
Runs like wavelets against seeming
Islands beyond the darkening haze

Of the listing sun. I know that hue
Against your indigo, swanlight
Under the azimuth of blue-white
Stars that sink away like rue

That dies in our hands from being taken
Too quickly in the sun. Long in the sieve
Of woven gold you remained to live
Till now, and then beyond, unforsaken

Then in Ra. Steady in my gaze
You shall be still, curved and even
In a hieroglyph and the seven
Circlets of grace in eternal days

Of beauty for our Pharaoh, whose sway
Is blue-dark night or golden day
Whether we go with him, or stay.



ELEVATION PERSPECTIVE DE LA PORTE DU NORD.

May: The Architect of Ramses II

The eye is the aperture of the very sun;
So concentric rings of circlet stone
Will bring the sun into the cave of bone
As the mummy sees, in the dark unknown,
The obelisk rise where great god Amun

Rides the golden blue of the upper rooms
Of sky. The veiling light hangs here
From his azimuth, transcribing the mere
Of sunset red and gold. Later, I peer
Above to see the stars from tombs

In the Valley of the Kings in darkling day!
Sun so warm and full will surely dim
The light of the architect but limn
The angles that here will fall and skim
The mind with variant lines that stay

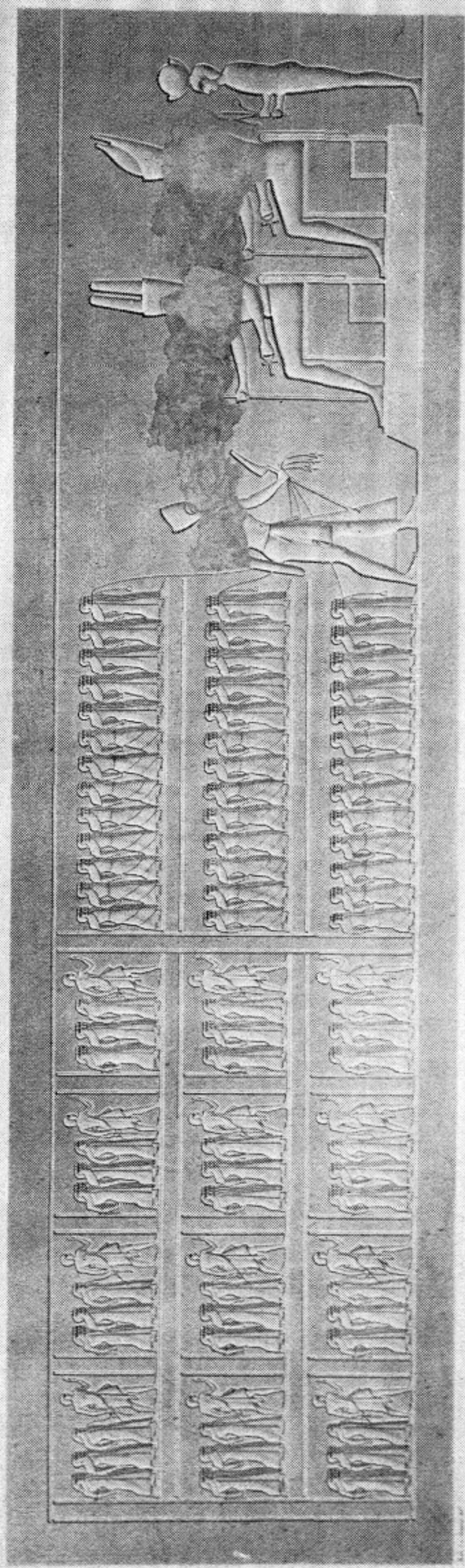
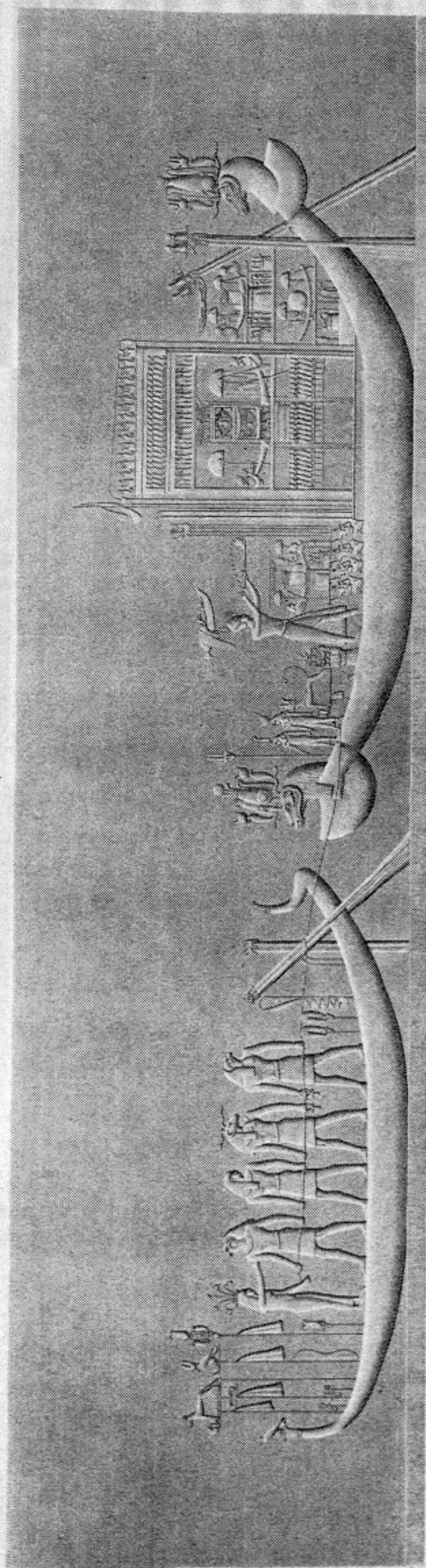
The compassing. Still, I draw the edge
And threshold of a tomb to meet
The light that touches Ramses to delete
All death. The dead for whom we entreat
Osiris arise in hieroglyphs as from a ledge

I make a place for them for Amun Ra,
Who will keep them as the king was kept
From day to day. I bowed and wept
As Ramses lay unmoving and slept
In prayer to envision what he saw,

Dreaming geometric lines that render
Endless curves, as the Nile bends
Across the plain of wheat. Starlight wends
There brighter still, where Ra suspends
Night's sudden vision. See the king as lender

Of Amun's glory! Death is as the caret stone,
The pyramid, the gleam, the valley's rim
Across the mounds where the dark will brim
Into the sky. Amun comes for him
As our geometer where light is sown

And rapt in linen as we pray.



BARQUES SYMBOLIQUES FAISANT PARTIE DE LA DÉCORATION DE LA SALLE HYPOSTYLE ET SUJETS GUERRIERS SCULPTÉS SUR LES MERS EXTÉRIEURES DU PALAIS.

Ramses II on the Delta

The wash of sand where firelights skim
The shallows, and the sand must gleam the shades
Of pearling images where the twilight fades
Into recesses of the sun. The pools are but a whim
Of the foundling breeze that shelters the dim
Overlords of night and yet, slipping forward, abrades
The silences. For I am here, where land
And water come together imperishably, one shimmer near
The other like the Pleiades upon the trades
Of gravity. They hold there, softly prim
To be together, reticent and sparing, and here,
Where their reflections were and are to be.

The Death of Ramses II

Like droplets from a clock, or rain,
Time comes descending over me.
Drafts of light pass over the sea
To reside in a tomb and in the pain

Of memory. They pass and are gone,
But shelter still another day. O sun,
Your rays enfold and fade in dun
Sand, but make it gold. Upon

My sepulchre so shine to be
Remembered so in me. Circle
My life with gold, before death's sickle,
As if with wheat, and over the sea

Of sky where then I may embark
With remembrances in the hush of time.
I keep these artifacts like thyme
In my devotion. Not on the stark

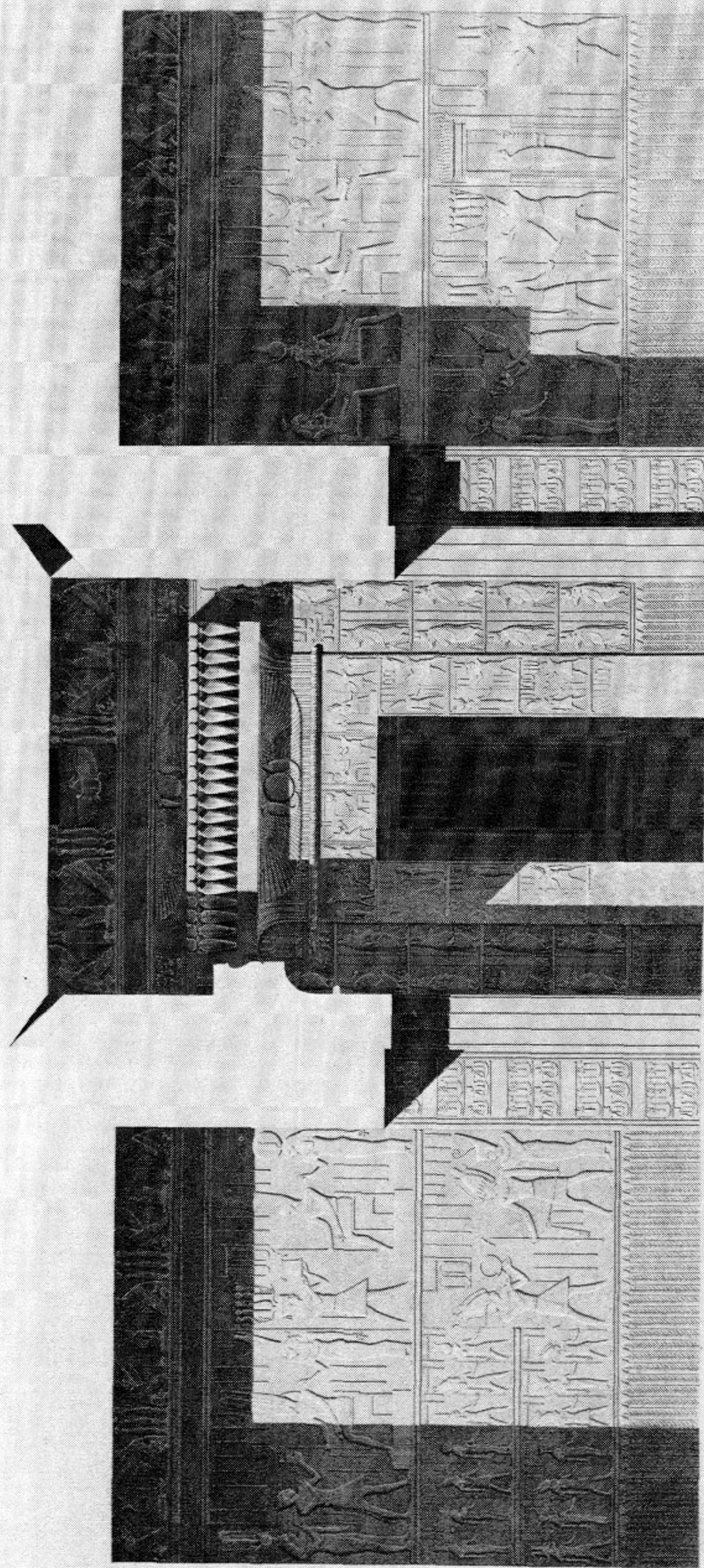
Night river may I pass, but on the golden
Shimmer I see like the molten
Sun that blesses me. Distant, unspoken,
And unspeaking Thou in the fold

Of your eternal day. I keep
My cartouche near unto the height
Of heaven in the haven of your might.
Transform my Egypt, and me, before I weep

To feel my passing into the silent tomb.

The Cartouche of Ramses II

The senses are the holy seven, as I proclaim:
Sight and sound and hearing and touch and taste
And exopraxis, and infolding time in which I waste
The loss of heavenly Amun, caressing my name
Into stone. The river bends and flows the same,
Whether future or past, into the godly green
Of Osiris, who receives us in the haste
Of our dynasty. Now is the green curve's frame
Of the parallax which I shall bend to follow
The depths of diamonding. Space is the hollow
Of the mind as it floats in the diaphane of tile,
In the myriad and range of color in the Nile
Of hieroglyphs. Time is the line of tallow
Aflame in holy linen that wafts in the timbrel
Gold lifting in folds of stone into the windswell
Over the flooding Nile beyond Abu Simbel and the wings
Of the Falcon as it rises in the valley of the celebrant kings.



COUPE TRANSVERSALE DU PETIT TEMPLE DU SUD.

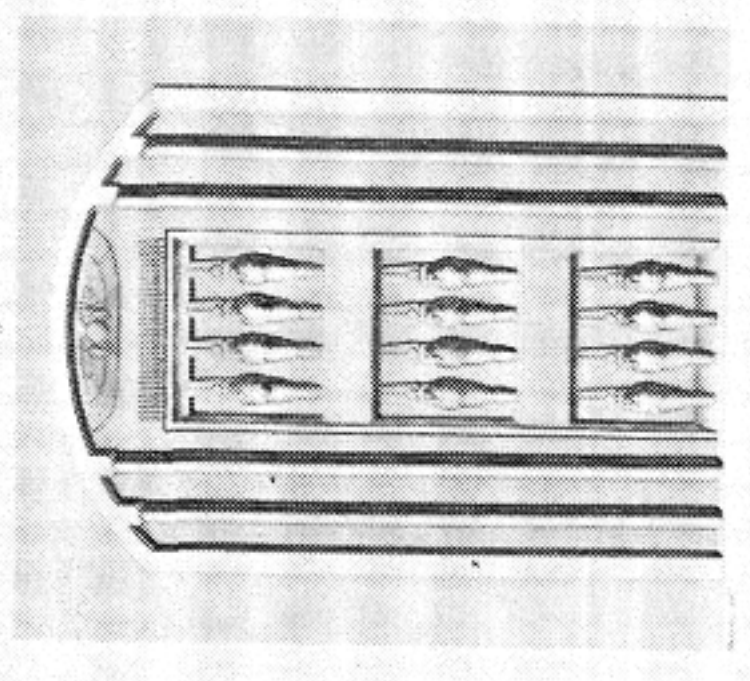
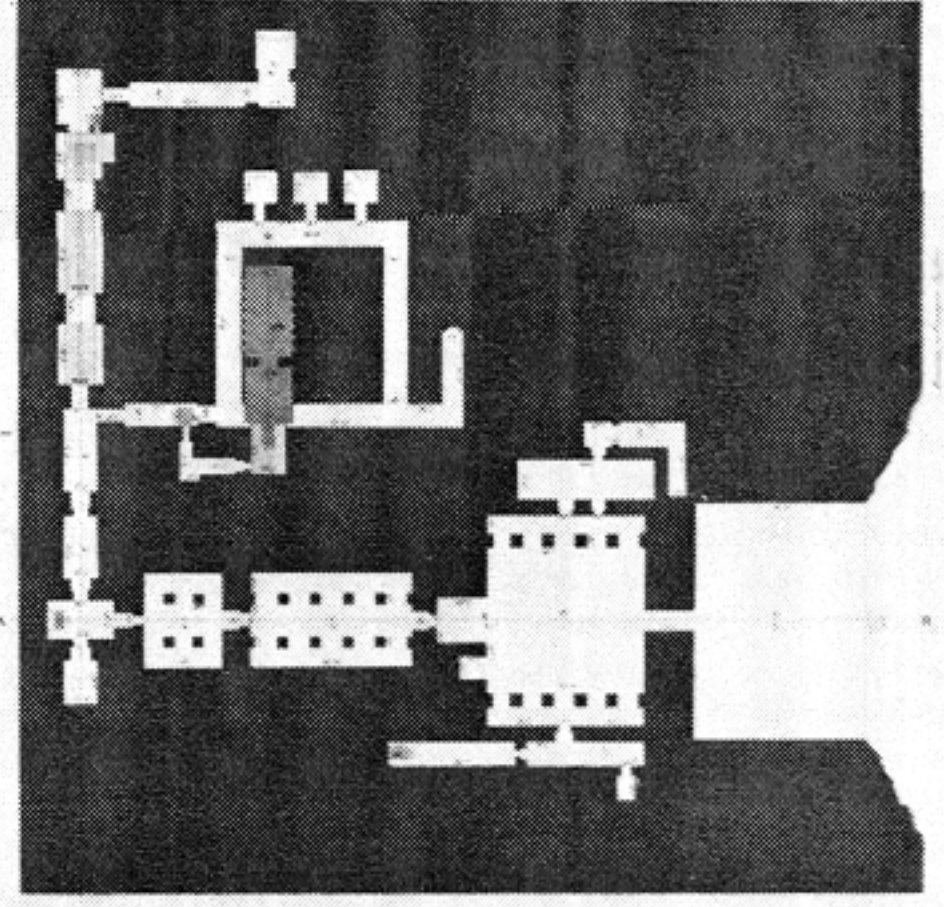
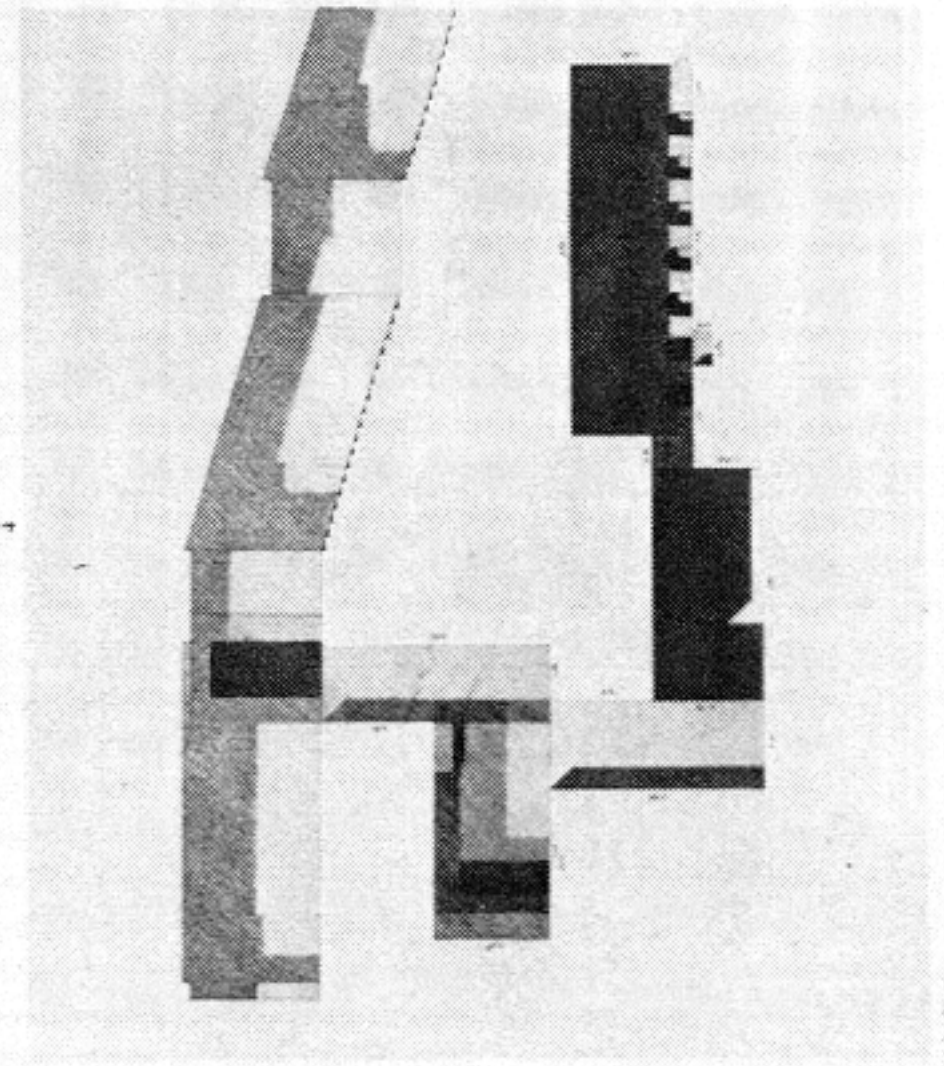
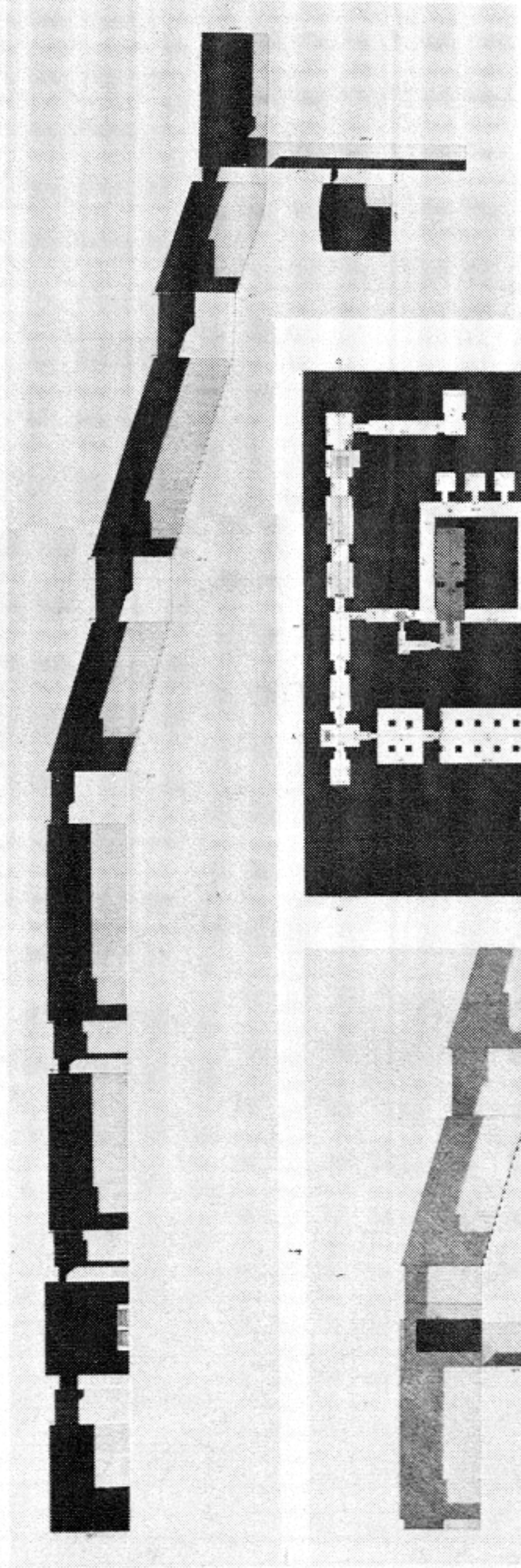
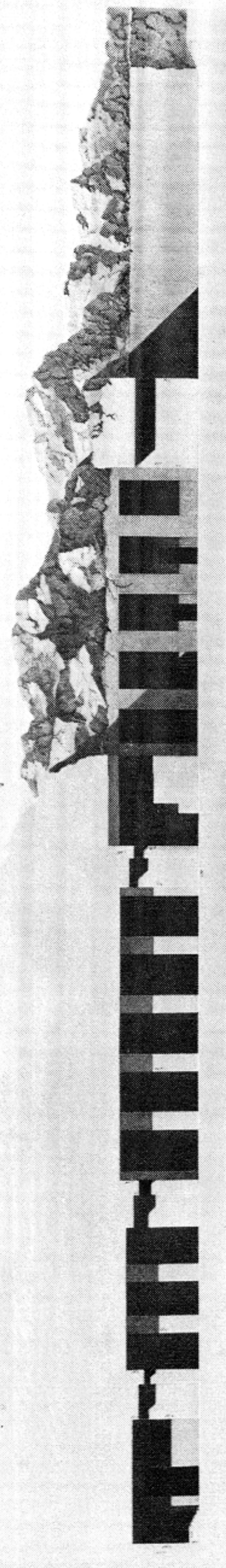
Temple of the Dead

Soul of antiquity, you arrest time
To gather it once again in glyph
Or plaque to specify an eminence.

When did Ramses settle his hand
Upon his crypt to evoke from you
Celestial air that he might

Breathe as a dry reed fluting
Thin tones in the wind—even in
The rustling wind that might wisp

Into his tomb?



124 PLAN ET COUPES D'UN GRAND HYPOGÉE OU STRONGE. 3 DÉTAIL DE MUSEÛME D'UN AUTRE HYPOGÉE. 6-8 PLAN ET COUPES D'UN ÉDIFICE AVANT UN PLAFOND EN FORME DE VOUTE.

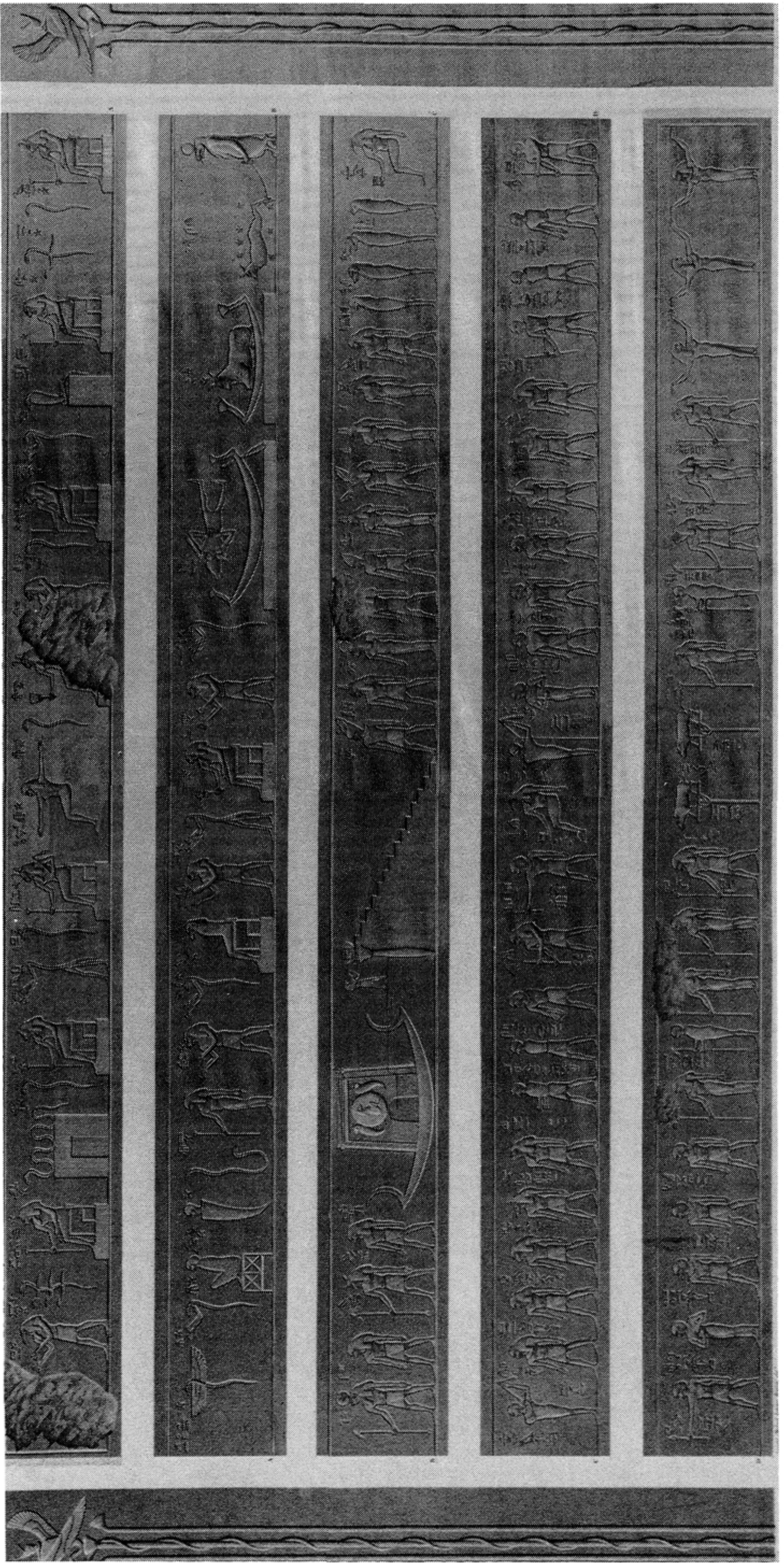
The Tomb of Ramses II

Look down. One's sorrow is a tear
That vanishes in the quiet air,
And Egypt's power's image is the pear-
Shaped headdress in the Pharaoh's bier.

The painted wood has been the lid
Of that patron of the golden sun,
And his seven necklaces may so stun
With glory and array that one might bid

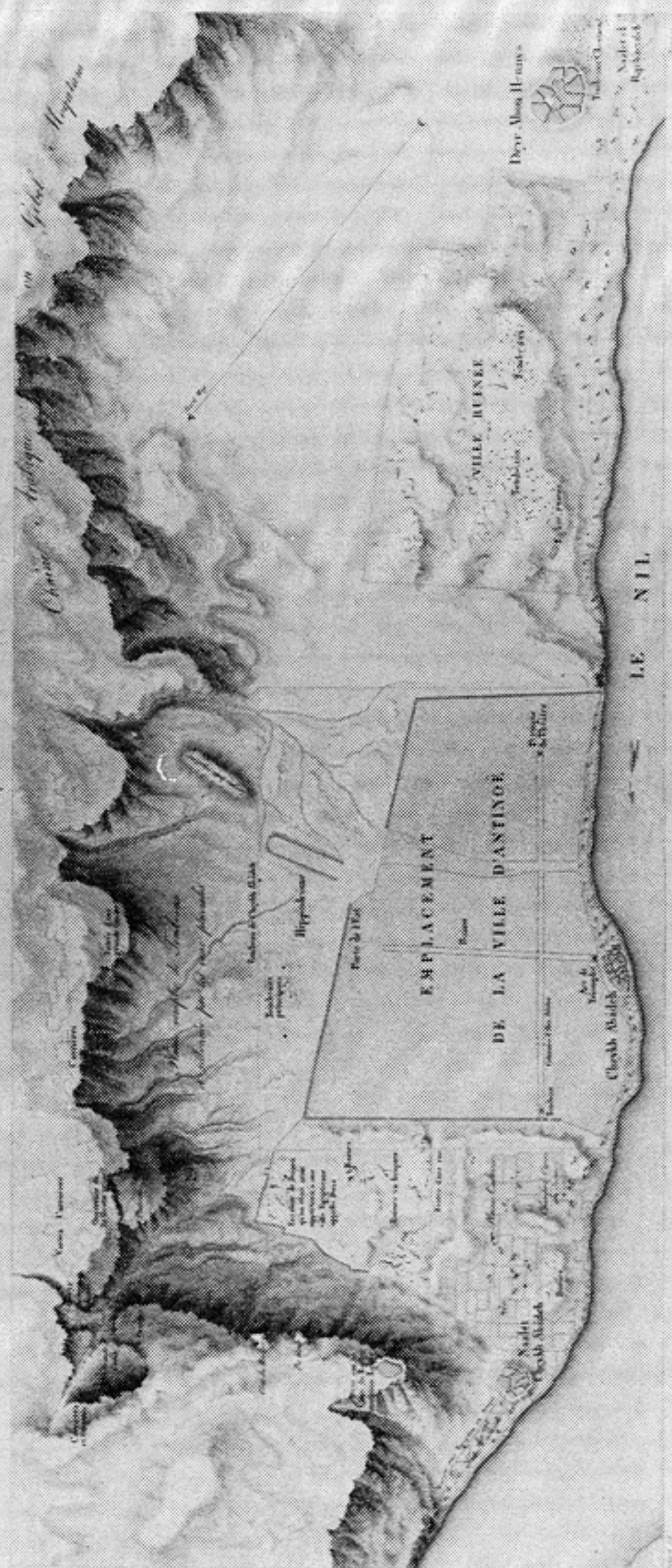
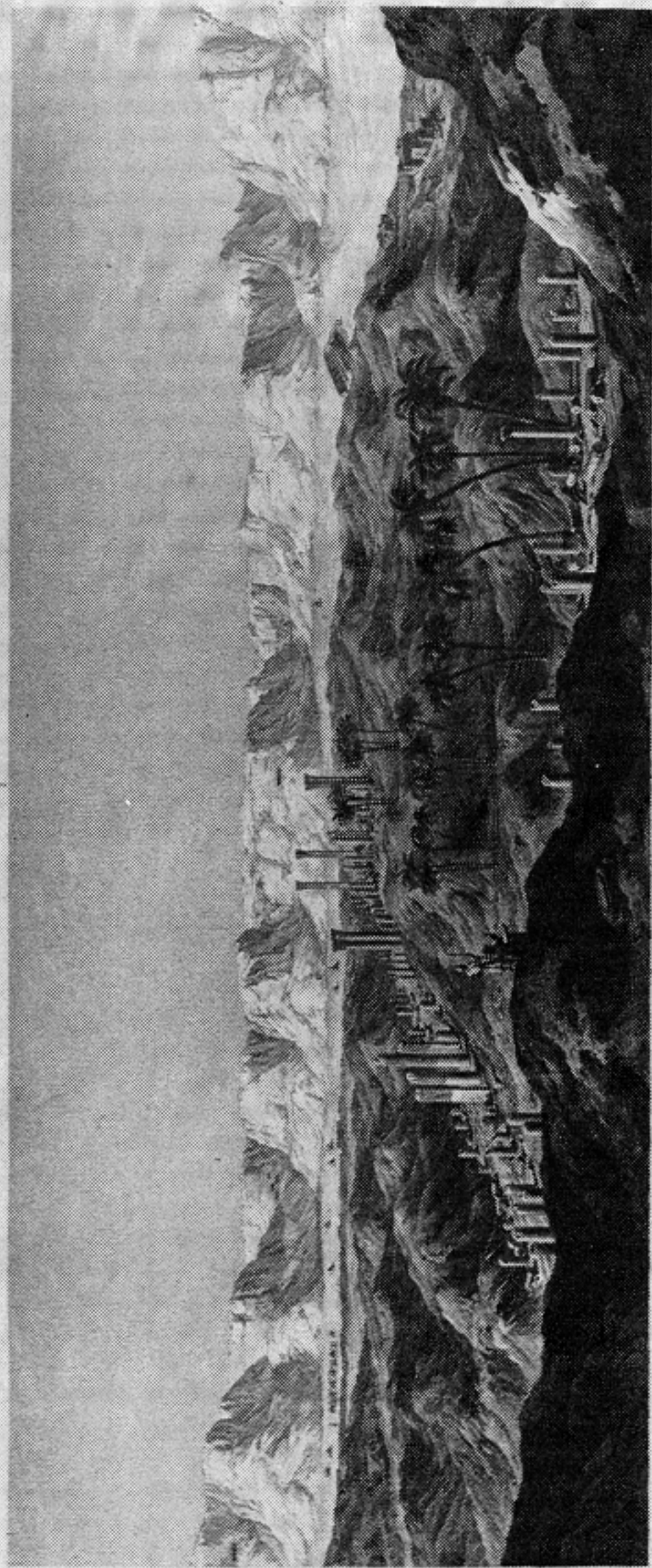
For a place amid his still antiquity.
See the cartouche, the Scarabaeidae.
See the lotus flower in eternity.
And see them each in their ubiquity.

The Pharaoh aimed his straightest arrow
As the Falcon drew him and his kin
Through time victoriously, not like Saladin,
Who came and vanished like a sparrow.



Images of God

To the Newtonian of consequence, the Word follows
The sinuous vine. It grows in nook and cranny,
As Tennyson saith. Where is the tendril, uncanny
With its bloom? It touches the very mallows
Of light, ochre in brown and turquoise as hallows
Of gold supervene. The gorgeous dawn, homey
With green, yields la vie en rose, with tallows
Of gold in its reprise. Who might instruct Adonoi
In this, with reason? Reason is what one makes of it,
With spirit, if you will, or variegations of wit,
Hot with emplaning Germanic prose, but for the roi
Who is sun, affecting the sun. Even sovereign
Louis of France had it right, right as serene
Of the sun at dawn to bless and be blessed, contrite,
Not contrarily, but like great Ramses of the chariot.

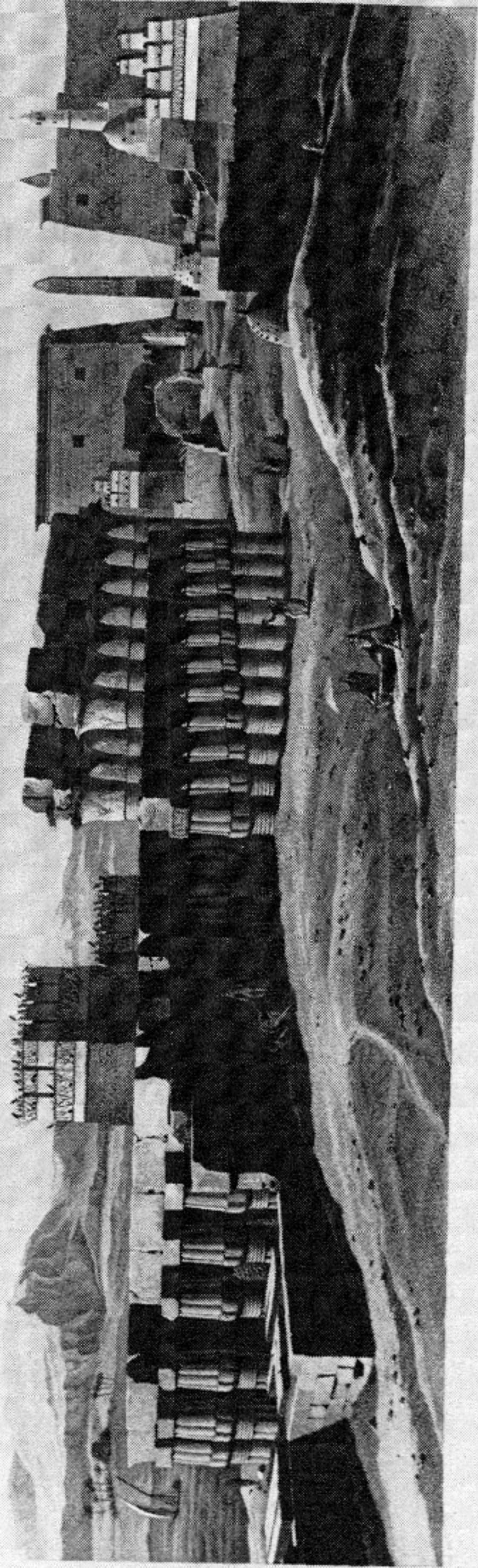


PLAN GÉNÉRAL DES ENVIRONS. VUE DES RUINES DE LA VILLE, PRISE DU CÔTÉ DU SUD-OUEST.

Intimations of Sun

Along the Nile, the tares
Must vanish, and the dynasty of astronomy
Must keep the king and the glory of autonomy
In him and each Egyptian that he would save
In stone and hieroglyph. In the timeless nave
Of origin Egypt basks, held in the flare
Of glory. Its many epithets remain to keep
The sun: palette for writing red and black, papyri
In grandeur and in pause, faience of lotus to repeat
Itself variously, alabaster luminescently pale,
Gold basin for pouring, water clock, and wheat
Of harvest as an offering. In an adoration at Qantir,
Ramses stills a veil. See the swan-like stir
Of light along the Nile, and the mirror gold
To reflect images of kingdoms that must not fail
The memory. Just a touch of knowing in the rift
Of time will serve. Rise and take the hand
That emerges from the dark river or from the sand
That flows from its repose.

Ramses of the sun
That brims with gold, the centuries are old
That house you. Open them and with a sail
Catch the winds, and on a swell of water
Or light, come. The savior touches you.



VUE PARTICULIÈRE DU PARVAIS PRÈS DE SICH.

The Artifacts of Ramses II

The rise of the leagues beyond the temples of Ur
Are of the desert still: this is Egypt, and the heat
Shimmers at morning. Ra in the east and the blue

Of the sky illumine to bring us here to the seat
I have raised against Amenti for the sun and king
In me, wavering into the vision of noon, when the fleet

Images change, transform as if a flare of spiriting
Sun were here for the moment of day. The very land
Is a mission, not of the night and its investing

Silence, but of the reality and shimmer that expand
The noon of majesty, or of the Nile of light wending
And turning to brighten the heavens and the wand

Of its fire. Steady now, in the stone of the rending
Will, we will limn and carve the supernal order
Of sun in this earth. We invoke and hold the bending

Will to sustain a record afar, across the border
Of memory. Some hint of salver, circlet, tending
To speak as an orifice, will be. Some intent gaze

Will fall to us, though sands will sift and cover
And the marauder find. We will speak though the phase
Of the stars may wane in the shadow. In the hover

Of light we remain before you. We speak though we hover
As memory. Artifacts themselves keep the replicate
Spirit. We stay in the artifact, in the server

Of the pronomen or word. And these will vindicate
Our claret of day and our vantage at night in the flow
And the caste of the sepulchre. Our wavering will sate

Poseidon in the basin of land, north, and the fiery Apollo,
Who may withhold the superlative will of the King
Of the Sacrament. We thirst for the waters that follow

Conversion. We mounted the stone and shaped it to bring
Amun into being here. The shape of sand is our mission
Of soul, and it will slowly lift like a veil to fling

The wind away.



ZODIAQUE SCULPTÉ AU PLAFOND DE L'UNE DES SALLES SUPÉRIEURES DU GRAND TEMPLE.

In his poem "The Unified Field," Clinton F. Larson writes:
 An endless line cast to a curve in the pearling dark
 Allows the universal light. They, wending together,
 Found and are divinity.