



# A Dancing Hoof: A Peculiar Writing of F25

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**Function**  
Logogram

**Value**  
*wḥm* [Repeat]

The canonical form of Gardiner F25, described by Gardiner as the “leg and hoof of an ox” (Gardiner 1957<sup>3</sup>:464), depicts the anatomical structure with relative realism: a robust upper segment tapering into a more slender, slightly flexed lower portion terminating in a hoof-like projection. Despite early debate around the zoological referent of the sign, the identification with the leg of a member of the *Bovidae* seems certain (cf. Keimer 1944 and Callender 2019:112 § 168). Moreover, the usual bent ending of the sign is a constant in the palaeography of this sign (cf. Moje 2007, Regulski 2010, Servajean 2011, and Callender 2019). The stela of Userhat presents, on the contrary, a straight line and rendering of the leg that lacks the characteristic bend at the hoof, producing a linear extension more reminiscent of an outstretched limb, as if the ox had straightened the hoof in a ballet move. As a result, the indentation one typically sees on the back of the sign serves here as the main element to identify it. The possibility of confusion is even more likely given what follows the sign, a plant in a bundle with one flower and two buds (M2B). This hieroglyph may be used in funerary contexts following A52 or B1, especially from the 18th Dynasty on (cf. Geßler-Löhr 1990), to write the epithet *mꜣꜥ hrw*, and it is possible to find it in combination with Aa11 (fig. 1; from the doorway to the inner room of T9 of Mahu, from de Garis Davies 1906 pl. XVIII), with which F25 of Userhat’s stela may be confused. However, the same sequence of signs appears elsewhere in the stela (fig. 2)—where F25 is written more clearly—and in the tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 335). As Servajean notes, the sequence F25-M2B could be read as writing *wḥm ‘nh*, but its meaning calls for further investigation (Verdura forthcoming).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



#### References:

- Callender, V.G. 2019. *El-Hawawish. Tombs, Sarcophagi, Stelae: Palaeography*, Paléographie hiéroglyphique 8. Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.
- Gardiner, A. 1957<sup>3</sup>. *Egyptian Grammar. Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*. Oxford, Griffith Institute.
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- Geßler-Löhr, B. 1990. "Zur Schreibung von mꜣ hrw mit der Blume," *Göttinger Miszellen* 116: 25–43.
- Keimer, L. 1944. "Le signe WHM 𓂏," *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 44: 311–315.
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- Servajeau, Fr. 2011. *Le Tombeau de Nakhtamon (TT 335) à Deir al-Medina*. Paléographie, Paléographie hiéroglyphique 5, with photographs by J.-Fr. Gout. Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.
- Verdura, U. Forthcoming. "The Bloom of Life: A Reexamination of the Lotus Flower with Buds Hieroglyph (M2B) after Personal Names in the New Kingdom."



#### Document: Votive Stela of Userhat

**Date:** New Kingdom, Late 18th Dynasty (ca. 1327–1295 BCE)

**Provenance:** Excavated by the Egypt Exploration Fund in the area of the temple of Mentuhotep II at Deir el-Bahri. Donated to the Museum by the EEF, 1905.

**Current location:** New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905 (05.4.2).

**Object type:** Stela

**Material:** Painted limestone

#### Hieroglyphic source



**MdC:** M17\*(N35:Y3\)-F12\*S29-I-F4-X1\*Z1-A52\*F25-M2B\R270

**Transliteration:** *jn zhꜣ.w Wsr-ḥꜣ.t whm(.w) 'nh*

**Translation:** By the scribe Userhat, repeating life

**Location:** Vertical text, 11th–12th columns, above Userhat's head