

The Tale of Setna I (P. Cairo 30646)

Notes by Minh-Tâm Trinh

I warmly thank Mary Becker, Galen Goldsmith, Dieter Hoffmann, Rachel McEnroe, Foy Scalf, Dawn Schreiner, and Eric Whitacre for their input.

Glossing Conventions

(May not match the conventions in my older notes)

()	text omitted by the scribe, but implicitly understood
< >	addition to fix a scribal error
{ }	deletion to fix a scribal error
[]	addition to fix lacuna, or addition uncertain

Sources

[E] *Demotische Lesestücke*, Vol. 1: *Literarische Texte mit Glossar und Schrifttafel*. Ed. W. Erichsen. J. C. Hinrichs Verlag. Leipzig (1937).

[G] *Der Erste Setna-Roman* (P. Kairo 30646). Umschrift, Übersetzung, und Glossar von S. Goldbrunner. In *Der Verblendete Gelehrte*. Demotische Studien, Band 13. Gisela Zauzich Verlag. Sommerhausen (2006).

[R] *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*. With translations by R. K. Ritner, W. K. Simpson, V. A. Tobin, E. F. Wente, Jr. Ed. W. K. Simpson. 3rd Ed. Yale University Press. New Haven, CT (2003).

Other References

[J] J. H. Johnson. *Thus Wrote 'Onchsheshonqy: An Introductory Grammar of Demotic*. 3rd Ed. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, No. 45. Chicago, IL (2000).

s hr mw
rh=f s iw w3h=f wyt swr=f s
rh=f

(4.4) of fresh papyrus [“papyrus of the new”] to be brought [passive?] before him.
 He wrote every word, that was [*r wn n3.w* = IMPERF relative converter] upon the

papyrus before him, entire.

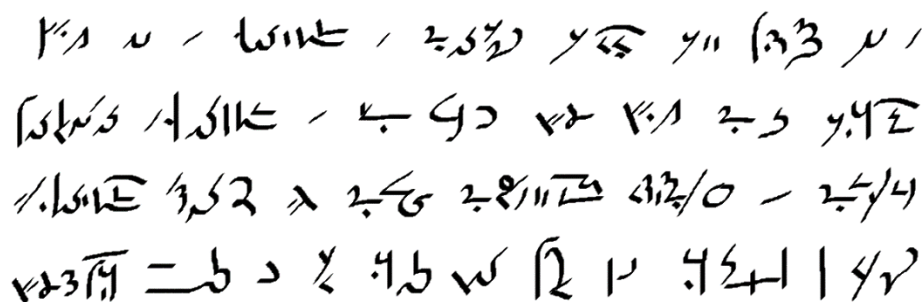
He caused that he burn [? Is *h* or *h* written here?] [it] in fire, [then] doused

it in [“upon”] water.

That he [might] learn it, he dissolved and drank it,

[then] he knew

10/6/24



r p3y wn-n3.w iw=f n im=f
 (4.5) *st3T=n r KbT n p3 hrw*

n rn=f
ir n hrw nfr m b3h Is n KbT Hr-p3-hrd.T

l=n r mr.t
hty=n ph=n pr mh.T n KbT n

3r I
s[?] w3h Dhwti gm md nb <i>ir hpr n (4.6) N3-Nfr-

of that which [“it”] was within it.

(4.5) We returned to Koptos on the named

day [“the day of its name”].

We observed [“made”] the holiday of Isis-of-Koptos and Harpocrates.

We came onboard.

We went down to north of Koptos,

[“at”] 1 *ar* away.

[But look], it happened [PERF] that Thoṯ found [out] all things made [participle, following G, 12] to happen to (4.6) Nanefer-

10/20/24

ḥꜣḥḥḥḥḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ
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-K3-Pth r-db3 p3 dm̄
bn-pw Dhwtj ḥrr smi=f m-b3ḥ

p3 R̄ dd
rh p3y hp
t3y wpi.t irm N3-Nfr-K3-

-Pth p3 šri n Pr-3 Mr-Nb-Pth
šmi=f r p3y pr-ḥd

-kaptah because of the book.

Thoṯ did not hesitate [G, 66], but [he] reported before

Pre, saying:

Decide [G, footnote 16] my case.

My dispute with Naneferka-

-ptah, the son of Pharaoh Merneptah.

He went to my storehouse,

11/3/24

ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ ḥḥ
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(4.7) ḥl=f s t3i=f t3y tb.t hr t3y knb.t

ḥdb=f p3y=y mnTy r-wn-n3.w ḥrh r-ir=f
dd.w

n=f
iw=f iir hr=k irm rmt nb nty mtw=f dr=w
wT=w w^c

nht.T n ntr r hry (4.8) n t3 p.t
dd m-ir

(4.7) [and] robbed [G, 69] it, took my chest [G, 84] with my scroll [G, 81],

killed [G, 72] my doorman [G, 49] who was keeping guard [G, 66] over it [*pr-hd*, the storehouse, since the object must be a masculine noun].

They said

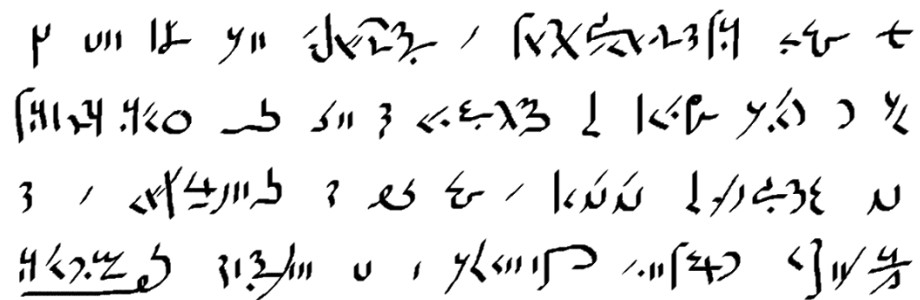
to him:

He is before you, with every person who was belonging to [preposition] him, in their entirety.

They [then] brought a

divine power [“strength”] down (4.8) from the sky,
 saying, Do not

11/17/24



di.t šmi N3-Nfr-K3-Pth r Mn-Nfr
iw=f wd3 irm rmt

nb nty mtw=f dr.w
w^c.t wn.wt t3 i-ir hpr Mr-Ib-Pth

p3 Hm-hl iw r bnr hr t3 hjb.t n t3

shr.et (4.9) Pr-^c3
hi=f r p3 ir ir=f hsy

let Naneferkaptah go to Memphis,
 while he [is] safe [G, 43] among any

man who is with him, whatsoever.

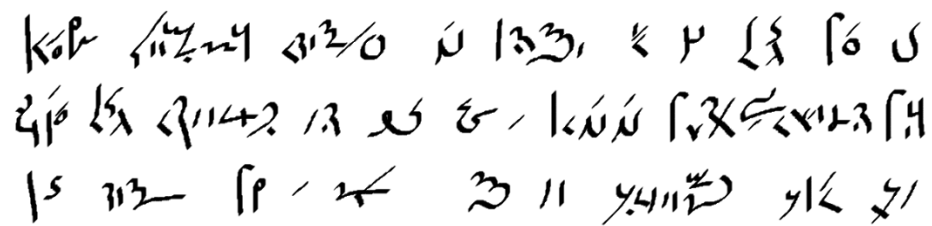
One hour from when this happened [“from this happening”] [nominalized past participle: see J, §90],
there appeared Meribptah,

the boy [G, 68], who [came] forth [G, 44] from under the shade [G, 70] of the

barque [G, 75] **(4.9)** of Pharaoh.

He fell [IND] into the river [and] became [“made himself”] praised

12/1/24



p3 R^c
š rmt nb r-wn-n3.w hr mr.t sgpe dr.w

N3-Nfr-K3-Pth iw r bnr hr t3i=f hbe.t
š=f sh r=f

di=f p3i=f iw wn (4.10) mh n ntr mw 21

of Pre [euphemism for “drowned”].

Everyone who was on board uttered [G, 40] cries [G, 77] to their limit.

Naneferkaptah came forth from his tent [G, 63].

He [FIX TRANSCRIPTION] uttered a spell

for him, [and] he caused that he rise up, even though **(4.10)** 21 divine cubits of
water...