

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN to serve as a companion volume to the third edition of my Middle Egyptian grammar.¹ It provides editions of both well-known and lesser-known texts for students to apply their knowledge of the language to the exercise of working with real Middle Egyptian compositions.

Besides that pedagogic purpose, the book has two other goals: to make the texts more readily available than is currently the case, and to present them in a fashion as close to the original as possible. All but one of the originals are written in hieratic on papyrus. Unlike other editions, this book presents hieroglyphic transcriptions in the same orientation as the originals: right to left, and in columns as well as lines.²

Each text is presented in hieroglyphs, transliteration, translation, and textual notes. The notes deal with matters of both grammar and interpretation; the former are keyed to the relevant sections of my grammar, and the latter sometimes cross-reference the essays in that book. Grammatical notes are extensive for the first text, for which every form and construction is discussed. They diminish in frequency in subsequent texts, as students (ideally) become more proficient in working with the language.

Five of the texts are those that any student of Middle Egyptian should read: the stories of the Shipwrecked Sailor and Sinuhe, the instructions of Kagemni's father and Ptahhotep, the discourses of the Eloquent Peasant, and the Debate between a Man and His Soul. The other three were chosen to complement these: the Loyalist Instruction, to illustrate the attitude toward the king that underlies the story of Sinuhe; the tale of the Herdsman, because it is on the same papyrus as the Debate; and the Hymns to Senwosret III, to exemplify the genre of hymns.

The great anthologies of Egyptian literature in translation contain many more works than these, but the compositions here have been singled out for two more reasons. First is the question of genre. Egyptian literature can be divided into two categories. Many texts that are literary in quality were composed not as literature but for an external purpose: for example, hymns, for use in temple or royal ceremonies; and biographical inscriptions, designed to record the deeds of their subjects as evidence of their worthiness to receive offerings after their deaths. In a narrower sense, "true" Egyptian literature consists of works that were composed for no purpose other than their own existence: primarily instructions, discourses, and stories. While Text 8 exemplifies the first category, the rest belong to the second.

1 James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: an Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed.; Cambridge, 2014.

2 Hieratic signs originally in red are filled in black in the hieroglyphic transcription, and the corresponding transliteration and translation are presented in **bold** type.

Second is the question of date. Recent research has demonstrated that the corpus of Middle Kingdom literature is both broader and narrower than was previously thought to be the case (Stauder 2014). It is broader because it contains two works that have been traditionally identified as compositions of the Old Kingdom, the instructions of Kagemni's father and Ptahhotep. While the texts themselves place their authors in the Old Kingdom, the language in which they are written is Middle Egyptian, and the document on which they are preserved is of Middle Kingdom date. In fact, there is no evidence whatsoever for the second, "true" genre of Egyptian literature prior to the Middle Kingdom. The corpus is also narrower because a number of works once thought to have been written in the Middle Kingdom have features of the language that do not appear until the Second Intermediate Period or later, and survive only in copies later than the Middle Kingdom. With the exception of a few texts, mostly fragmentary, the works in this book are the only examples of "true" literature that are undoubtedly of Middle Kingdom origin, since they all are preserved on sources of Middle Kingdom date. As such, they represent the golden age of Middle Egyptian.

STYLE

All of the works in this book are written in verse. As far as we can tell, ancient Egyptian verse was similar to the "free verse" form of modern poetry. Its lines did not have a regular pattern of stresses, and they did not (normally) rhyme with one another. Nonetheless, it did obey certain rules of composition.

The basic unit of composition was what has been called the "thought couplet" (Foster 1975). This is two lines of verse that form a coherent thought, in which the second line mirrors, complements, contrasts with, or expands on the first: for example,

nm wn rwj ʿh3w.f
nm jth pdt.f (Sin. B 62–63)

There is none who can escape his arrow,
none who can draw his bow.

nb jm(3)t pw ʿ3 bnjt
jL.n.f(m) mrwt (Sin. B 65–66)

He is a master of kindness, great of sweetness:
he has taken possession through love.

jnk pw mdw n.k
(j)m(j)-r pr wr pw sh3y.k (Peas. B1 51–52)

The one who speaks to you is I,
but the one you mention is the chief steward.

sʿnd.k qd bjn
m tm hsf sw m 3t.f (Ptahhotep 65)

You belittle one who speaks badly
by not opposing him in his moment.

As these couplets illustrate, each line is normally a self-contained unit. Things that belong closely together, such as a verb and its subject or a preposition and its object, are not broken between lines. The second line does not have to be a complete sentence, and can therefore consist of an adjunct, as in the last example; in some cases, this can even extend to pseudo-verbal predicates that have a long subject in the first line.

The identification of a couplet is based primarily on meaning. By that criterion, Middle Kingdom literature also uses single lines, mainly as headings; groups of three lines, known as tercets; and occasionally a group of four, called a quatrain. There are few rules that can help identify when these other groups are used, and the division is partly a matter of interpretation. For example, the following text can be parsed either as a couplet or a tercet:

mj.k jrrt.sn pw r shjtw.sn

jww n ktht r gs.sn mj.k jrrt.sn pw (Peas. B1 76–77)

Look, that is what they do to their peasants

who come to others besides them; look, that is what they do.

mj.k jrrt.sn pw r shjtw.sn

jww n ktht r gs.sn

mj.k jrrt.sn pw (Peas. B1 76–77)

Look, that is what they do to their peasants

who come to others besides them;

Look, that is what they do.

One criterion that can help in parsing lines of verse is that of meter. Meter is simply the pattern of stresses in a line of verse: for example, the pattern of 4–3–4–3 in the opening lines of Lewis Carroll’s poem, “The Walrus and the Carpenter”:

The **sun** was **shining on** the **sea**,

Shining with **all** his **might**:

He **did** his **very best** to **make**

The **billows smooth** and **bright**—

And **this** was **odd**, because it **was**

The **middle of** the **night**.

While Egyptian verse does not seem to use a regular, repeating meter such as this, studies have determined that its lines do conform to a general pattern of stresses. Most lines have two or three stresses. Lines can have as few as one or as many as five, but apparently never more than five.

Hieroglyphic writing, of course, does not reveal how words were stressed, but we can make educated guesses based partly on common sense, partly on syntax, and partly on Coptic, which does reflect stress. Small words such as prepositions, particles, and dependent pronouns were probably not stressed, but independent pronouns can be stressed or not, depending on their meaning (see § 13.6 and p. 94 n. 5). Prepositional phrases and adverbs are stressed, with the exception of the dative with a suffix pronoun (§ 13.6). Indirect genitives have two stresses but direct genitives have only one (which is why nothing can normally come between the two elements): *hrw n mst* (Coptic **ⲁⲓⲙⲓⲥ** = **how** ‘nmeesuh) but *hrw-mst* “birthday” (Coptic **ⲁⲓⲙⲓⲥ** = **hoomeesuh**). The

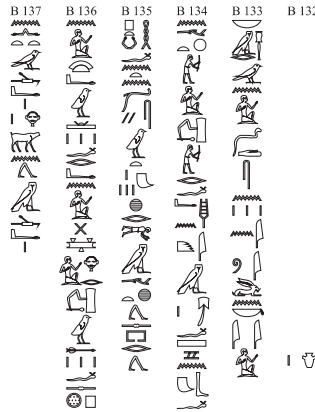
direct genitive rule also applies to an infinitive followed by a noun as its subject or object, which is a genitival construction (§§ 13.4.2, 13.5.1). There is some ambiguity about adjectives that modify nouns, including demonstrative pronouns and the quantifier *nb*, since Coptic shows two patterns: *stj nfr* “good smell” (Coptic ⲥⲏⲩⲟⲩⲥⲉ = *steennoofuh* “perfume”) and *stj nfr* (Coptic ⲥⲟⲟⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲣⲓ = *stoy noofee*). Verbs and nominal subjects and objects are generally stressed. Using these guidelines, we can reconstruct the stress patterns of the opening lines of the Shipwrecked Sailor as follows (the – dash links words with a single stress):

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 3 | <i>gd jn-šmsw jqr</i> | Recitation by an able follower. |
| 3 | <i>wgʒ jb.k hʒt(j)-ʕ</i> | Be informed, high official: |
| 2 | <i>mj.k-ph.n.n hmw</i> | look, we have reached home. |
| 4 | <i>šzp hrpw hw mjnt</i> | The mallet has been taken, the mooring-post has been hit, |
| 3 | <i>hʒtt rdj.t(j) hr-tʒ</i> | and the prow-rope is set on land. |
| 4 | <i>rdj hknw dwʒ ntr</i> | Praise has been given, and thanks, |
| 2 | <i>z(j)-nb hr-hpt-snmw.f</i> | and every man is embracing the other. |
| 3 | <i>jzwt.tn jj.t(j) ʕd.t(j)</i> | Our crew has returned safe, |
| 2 | <i>nn-nhw n-mʕ.n</i> | with no loss of our expedition. |
| 2 | <i>ph.n.n phwj-wʒwʒt</i> | We have reached the end of Wawat, |
| 2 | <i>zn.n.n znmwt</i> | we have passed Bigga. |
| 2 | <i>mj.k-r.f-n-jj.n m-htp</i> | So, look, we have returned in peace; |
| 2 | <i>tʒ.n ph.n-sw</i> | our land, we have reached it. |

Although parsing the verse structure of a work of Middle Kingdom literature is sometimes a matter of interpretation, there is good evidence that the structure itself was a deliberate creation of the ancient author and not an accidental feature of the text. In the Debate (Text 6), for example, the man’s second speech divides thematically into two parts, the first of which records the soul’s arguments for death (cols. 5–29) and the second, his argument against life and the man’s response to it (cols. 29–55): the fact that the two sections each contain thirty-six lines is undoubtedly not mere coincidence. Moreover, this verse structure is a clue to meaning as well. Among other things, it shows that the line *gd.t.n n.j bʒ.j* “what my ba said to me” (cols. 30–31) is not the heading of a new section in which the soul responds to the man but the second line of a couplet and a phrase in apposition to *štʒw ht.j* “the secrets of my belly” in the first line.

The ancient writers used tercets both for variety, to break up what might otherwise be a monotonous string of couplet after couplet, and for thematic effect. A good example of the latter is the first half of the speech discussed in the last paragraph. It contains two tercets (cols. 8–10 and 15–17), each of which marks the end of a subsection in the text. Tercets are also used in litanies, a verse form in which a common first line is followed by different couplets; examples can be found in the Debate and in the Hymns to Senwosret III (Texts 6 and 8).

Versification can also be an aid to understanding grammar. The story of Sinuhe's battle against the champion from Retjenu, for example, contains the following lines:



The beginning (B 132–34) is easily analyzed as a couplet:

3 *jb-nb mr.(w)-n.j ḡd.sn*

4 *jn-jw-wn ky-nḥt ḥ3 r.f*

Every mind was sick for me, saying,

“Is there another strongman who can fight against him?”

The text that follows has been universally understood as a SUBJECT–stative construction introduced by *ḥ.n* (B 134–35), followed by a *sdm.n.f* clause as object of the compound preposition *m ḥt* (B 135–36), and a second *sdm.n.f* clause followed by an adverbial phrase and an adverb clause (B 136–37). Since the SUBJECT–stative construction has six units of stress (*ḥ.n jkm.f mjnb.f ḥpt.f nt-nsjwṯ ḥr.(w)*), it has been divided into two lines; for example,

Then his shield, his axe,

his armful of javelins fell (Parkinson 1997, 33)

And then his shield, his dagger,



his armour, his holder of spears fell (Quirke 2004, 63).³

This analysis separates the SUBJECT–stative construction into two lines, which is not a feature elsewhere in Middle Kingdom verse. Moreover, it requires the next sentence to begin with a preposition, which is something that Middle Egyptian regularly limits to the preposition *jr*:

3 These two examples are chosen because they translate the story as verse. Other translations are mostly presented as prose.

after I had escaped his weapons and made them pass by me (Parkinson 1997, 33)⁴

As I approached his weapons
I made my face dodge (Quirke 2004, 63).

These difficulties prompt a different analysis. The anomalies of both versification and grammar can be avoided by understanding  as a second participle followed by the preposition *n*, despite the spelling without the usual determinative , and *hr* as the particle that allows a prepositional phrase to stand at the beginning of the sentence (§ 15.6.13), yielding two tercets with the same pattern of stresses:

3 *jb-nb mr.(w)-n.j dd.sn*
4 *jn-jw-wn ky-nht h3 r.f*
5 *h' n-jkm.f mjb.f hpt.f nt-nsjw*
3 *hr-m-ht spr.n.j h'w.f*
4 *rdj.n.j sw3 hr.j h3w.f*
5 *zp n-jwtt w' hr-hn m-w'*

Every mind was sick for me, saying,
“Is there another strongman who can fight against him,
who can stand up to his shield, his axe, his clutch of spears?”
Afterward, I made his weapons come out.
I made his arrows pass by me
to no avail, one chasing the other.

Versification is therefore not just an incidental feature of Middle Kingdom literature: it is integral to the compositions and essential for understanding the texts as their authors intended—insofar as that is still possible. This book is also meant to provide material for the study of that aspect of Middle Kingdom literature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Foster, John L. “Thought Couplets in Khety’s ‘Hymn to the Inundation’.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 34 (1975), 1–29.
- Parkinson, Richard B. *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems 1940–1640 BC*. Oxford, 1997.
- Quirke, Stephen. *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC, Questions and Readings*. Egyptology 2. London, 2004.
- Stauder, Andréas. *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*. *Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica* 12. Hamburg, 2014.

4 In this translation, this is the first clause of a complex sentence that extends beyond B 137.

TEXT 1

THE STORY OF THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR

THIS TEXT is the oldest surviving ancient Egyptian story. It is preserved in a single manuscript, a papyrus now in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (pHermitage 1115).¹ The text is written in hieratic, the handwritten form of hieroglyphic (§ 1.9), mostly in vertical columns but at one point in horizontal lines.² With some exceptions, red ink is used to mark the beginning of a new section in the narration. The grammar of the text and the paleography of the hieratic date the composition to the early Middle Kingdom (ca. 2000–1900 BC).

The story is unusual in several respects: its rather abrupt beginning, its anonymous characters, its literary device of a story within a story within a story, and its downbeat ending. The moral of the tale is perseverance through travails. At the beginning of the story, an expedition up the Nile to Africa has returned apparently without success. The expedition leader has to report to the king, and to encourage him, one of the crew members tells the leader how he survived a worse situation, being shipwrecked alone on a previous mission. In the course of his story, the sailor meets a god in the form of a giant snake, who encourages the sailor by telling him how he persevered through an even worse disaster, the loss of his entire family.

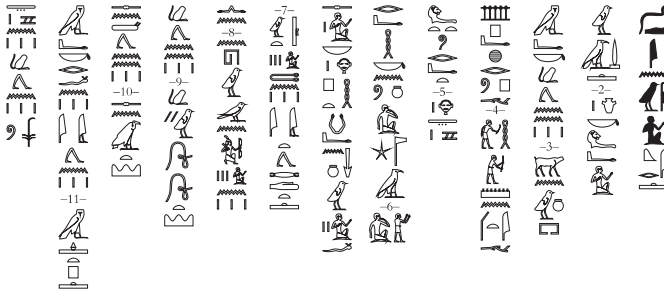
Like all early Middle Kingdom literature, the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor is composed in narrative verse (Foster 1988). Besides the basic unit of the couplet, this text also makes liberal use of tercets, the occasional single line, and one possible sestet (group of six lines). Like all literary compositions, it also uses devices such as metaphor and alliteration.

The original papyrus has yet to be properly published. The text here is transcribed, and the hieratic signs used in the notes are drawn, after Golenischev 1913; the use of red ink is from Golenischev 1912. For this first text, the columns and lines of the papyrus have been separated into discrete columns or lines corresponding to the verse lines of the composition; the hieroglyphic transcription of Texts 2–8 will be presented consecutively, according to the columns or lines of the original. The numbers to the right of the transliteration indicate the probable units of stress in each line (see pp. 3–4, above).

1 Two probable citations from the story are attested in later texts: Allen 2008, 32–33; Simpson 1958, 50.

2 Cols. 1–123 are vertical; lines 124–76, horizontal in six pages (124–32, 133–42, 143–51, 152–60, 161–69, 170–76); and the rest of the papyrus, vertical (cols. 177–89).

Episode 1 — Setting the Scene (cols. 1–21)



| | | |
|-------|--|-----------|
| 1 | <i>ḡḏ jn šmsw jqr</i> | (heading) |
| 1–3 | <i>wḡ? jb.k ḥ?t(j)-</i> <i>mj.k ph.n.n ḥnw</i> | 3 2 |
| 3–5 | <i>šzp ḥrpw ḥw mjnt</i> <i>ḥ?tt rdj.t(j) ḥr t?</i> | 4 3 |
| 5–6 | <i>rdj ḥknw dw? ntr</i> <i>z(j) nb ḥr ḥpt snnw:f</i> | 4 2 |
| 7–8 | <i>jzwt.tn jj.t(j) r.d.t(j)</i> <i>nn nhw n mšr.n</i> | 3 2 |
| 8–10 | <i>ph.n.n phwj w?w?t</i> <i>zn.n.n znmwt</i> | 2 2 |
| 10–11 | <i>mj.k r.f n jj.n m ḥtp</i> <i>t?n ph.n sw</i> | 2 2 |

1 **Recitation by an able follower.**

- 1–3 Be informed, high official:
look, we have reached home.
- 3–5 The mallet has been taken, the mooring-post has been hit,
and the prow-rope is set on land.
- 5–6 Praise has been given, and thanks,
and every man is embracing the other.
- 7–8 Our crew has returned safe,
with no loss of our expedition.
- 8–10 We have reached Wawat's wake,
we have gone by Bigga.
- 10–11 So, look, we have returned in peace;
our land, we have reached it.

The numbers in the hieroglyphic text refer to the columns or lines of the original manuscript. The opening section of the story sets the scene: an expedition up the Nile from Egypt into Africa has returned home.


- 1 *dd jn* — infinitive with *jn* marking the agent (§ 13.4.1). A *sdm.jn.f* is unlikely, since that form regularly expresses the consequence of some previous action or statement (§ 19.10). It has been argued, however, that the beginning of the story has been lost (Bolshakov 1993). The fact that the adjective *qjr* is in black suggests that it has a separate stress of its own.

šmsw — basic title for a low-ranking royal attendant (Berlev 1978, 206–29).

- 1–3 *wḏḏ jb.k* — literally, “may your mind become sound” (Essay 25).

h3tj-^c — literally, “one who is front of arm.” *h3tj* is a nisbe (§ 6.1) from *h3t* “front,” and the whole phrase is a *nfr hr* construction (§ 6.5). *h3tj-^c* is a title indicating a high-ranking official; in this case, the expedition leader. In keeping with the anonymity of the story’s characters, the official’s functional title is not mentioned.

hnw — literally, “the inside”: in this case, “inside” Egypt. The term is also used to refer to the capital, Memphis, but the locale mentioned in col. 10 sets the scene in Aswan, first home port for a river expedition returning from the south.

- 3–5 A couplet referring to the docking of the expedition boat. The *mjnt* “mooring-post” (hieroglyphic : see P 11 in the Sign List) was a wood stake, driven into the ground with a mallet, to which the *h3tt* “prow-rope” was tied.


šzp ... hnw — passive *sdm.f* (§ 19.5).

h3tt rdj.t(j) — SUBJECT–stative (§ 16.8). *h3tt* is a feminine nisbe (§ 6.1) from *h3t* “front.” The stative is 3fs, literally “given, put.” Note the contrast between the first line of the couplet, referring to two past actions, and the second, referring to the state resulting from a past action.

- 5–6 This couplet reflects the structure of the preceding one: two past actions in the first line followed by a description of the present situation in the second.

rdj ... dw3 — passive *sdm.f* (§ 19.5). In the phrase *dw3-ntr*, the *ntr* sign is put first, in honorific transposition (§ 4.15). To “worship god” is an Egyptian idiom for giving thanks, so the second clause means that the god has been thanked for a safe return.

z(j) nb hr hpt snmw.f — pseudo-verbal construction with *hr* plus the infinitive, denoting action in progress at the moment of speaking (§ 14.2). *snmw* literally means “second” (§ 9.3): in other words, “every man is embracing the other.”

- 7–8 *jzwt.jn.jj.t(j) ^cd.t(j)* — SUBJECT–stative (§ 16.8), with a second stative used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8). The suffix *jn* is for 1s *n*:  is a way of indicating that the feminine ending of *jzwt* was pronounced before a suffix pronoun (Essay 17).

nn nhw n mš^c.n — a negated adverbial sentence (§ 11.4) used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.15). It can also be interpreted as an independent statement, “Our expeditionary force has no loss(es).” *mš^c* was an armed force sent on expeditions; the term later came to mean “army.”

- 8–10 Note the alliteration in the two lines of this couplet: *ph.n.n phwj w3w3t* and *zn.n.n znmwt*.

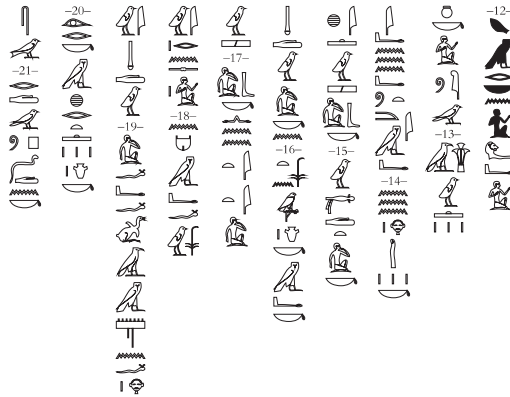
phwj wšwšt — Wawat was the name of northern Nubia, bordering Egypt. Since the Egyptians oriented themselves to the south (Essay 2), the “end of Wawat” means the northern border of Wawat.

znmwt — Bigga is an island south of Aswan, one of the first two places in Egypt proper that would be encountered by an expedition sailing north from Wawat.

- 10–11 This is the final couplet of the opening description of the expedition’s homecoming.

mj.k r.f n jj.n — SUBJECT–stative (§ 16.8), with the older form of the 1pl stative pronoun (§ 16.2). *r.f* is literally, “with respect to it,” where the pronoun refers to what has been said previously (§ 15.7.2).

t3.n ph.n sw — the object of the verb is topicalized by preposing it (§ 17.4). Various interpretations are possible for *ph.n*, none of which is completely satisfactory. Normally, a *sgm.n.f* would be expected, as in cols. 2 and 8, so perhaps *ph.n* is an error for *ph.n.n*. This text does use the *sgm.f* as a past tense elsewhere (cols. 76–77: see § 18.4), so perhaps also here, but with transitive verbs the meaning is usually past (“we reached”) rather than perfect (“we have reached”); a gnomic or present-tense meaning (“we reach”: see § 18.5) is ruled out by the context, since the previous couplets describe the expedition as already at home. An archaic use of the transitive stative as an active perfect is also possible (§ 16.5).



| | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|---|
| 12–13 | <i>sdm r.k n.j ḥšt(j)-r</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jnk šw ḥšw</i> | 2 |
| 13–15 | <i>j-r tw jmj mw ḥr db-r.w.k</i> | 4 |
| | <i>jḥ wšb.k wšd.t(w).k</i> | 2 |
| 15–17 | <i>mdw.k n nswt jb.k m-r.k</i> | 4 |
| | <i>wšb.k nn njtjt</i> | 2 |
| 17–19 | <i>jw r n z(j) nḥm.f sw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jw mdw.f dj.f t3m n.f ḥr</i> | 4 |

- 20–21 *jr r.k* (or *jrr.k*) *m hrt jb.k* 2
swrd pw dd n.k 2
- 12–13 **So, listen to me**, high official:
 I am free of excess.
- 13–15 Wash yourself, put water on your fingers:
 then you can answer when you are addressed.
- 15–17 You can speak to the king with your wits about you;
 you can answer without stuttering.
- 17–19 For the mouth of a man saves him;
 for his speech makes leniency for him.
- 20–21 But you act as you have in mind;
 speaking to you is wearisome.

Although it has returned safely, with no loss of life, the expedition has apparently been unsuccessful in its mission. The leader has to report to the king, and the sailor tries to encourage him.

- 12–13 *sdm r.k* — imperative: literally, “listen, with respect to yourself” (§ 15.7.2).

jn k šw hšw — an A B nominal sentence (§ 7.14): literally, “I am one free of excess.” *šw hšw* is a *nfr hr* construction (§ 6.5). Normally, however, the expression is *šw m* “free from” (§ 8.2.3), with the preposition *m*; the preposition may have been overlooked here when the scribe moved from the bottom of col. 12 to the top of col. 13. *hšw* refers to “excess” of words: i.e., exaggeration.

- 13–15 This couplet refers to the Egyptian practice of washing before any formal occasion: in this case, the official’s forthcoming audience with the king.

jr ... jmj — imperatives (§ 15.3, 15.2.3).

jh wšb.k — a construction indicating result (§ 18.11).

wšd.t(w).k — the *sdm.f* with passive suffix *tw* (§ 18.3), used in an unmarked adverb clause of concomitant circumstance (§ 20.11). The suffix *tw* is written here before the determinative, as if it was part of the verb stem or an ending.

- 15–17 *mdw.k ... wšb.k* — the two *sdm.f* forms here have future sense (§ 18.7).

jb.k m r.k — an adverbial sentence used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7). It means literally, “your mind in your hand” (§ 8.3.1).

nn njtjt — a negative adverb clause with the infinitive (§§ 13.15, 20.15). *njtjt* “stutter” is clearly onomatopoeic (probably *ni’it’it).

- 17–19 The use of the particle *jw* in both lines of this couplet relates the two statements to the preceding couplet (§§ 10.3, 15.6.1). The sense can be conveyed in English by the initial “for.” In both lines, *jw* is followed by the SUBJECT–*sdm.f* construction, expressing a gnomic generalization (§ 18.6).

dj.f ȝm n.f hr — literally, “gives veiling of the face for him” (*ȝm* is infinitive). The idiom refers to the idea of a listener concealing his emotions: in other words, if the official is persuasive in his report, he can make the king ignore his anger at the failure of the expedition.

- 20–21 In this couplet, the last of the opening section of the story, the sailor tells the official to do whatever he wants, since he is apparently not responding to the sailor’s advice.

jr r.k (or *jrr.k*) *m hrt jb.k* — two interpretations are possible for the first three signs: either an imperative with self-referential *r.k* (§ 15.7.2) or the geminated *sdm.f* as the predicate of an emphatic sentence (§§ 25.4, 25.6). The first option makes sense stylistically, since *r.k* would be used here as a bridge from the previous statements, as it was in col. 12 *sdm r.k n.j*. An emphatic sentence also makes sense, however, since the sailor is not just telling the official to act but to act as he wants: *m hrt jb.k* is the rheme (§ 25.2). The last phrase means literally, “as that which is with your mind”; *hrt* is a nisbe from the preposition *hr* (§ 8.6.10), a means of indicating possession: i.e., “what your mind has.”

swrd pw ȝd n.k — an A pw B nominal sentence with two infinitives (§§ 7.10, 13.13). *swrd* is the causative of *wrd* “become weary.” The sentence does not mean “Speaking is wearisome for you,” since *n.k* in that case would follow *swrd*, not *ȝd*.

Episode 2 — The Sailor’s Story Begins (cols. 21–32)



| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|---|
| 21–24 | <i>sd.d.j r.f n.k mjtt jrj</i> | 3 |
| | <i>hpr.(w) m ʕ.j ȝs.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>šm.kw r bjȝ n jtj</i> | 3 |
| 24–27 | <i>hȝ.kw r wȝȝ-wr m dpt</i> | 3 |
| | <i>nt mḥ 120 m ȝw.s</i> | 2 |
| | <i>mḥ 40 m šw.s</i> | 2 |
| 27–28 | <i>sqdw 120 jm.s</i> | 2 |
| | <i>m stp n kmt</i> | 2 |

- 28–30 *mʒ.sn pt mʒ.sn tʒ* 4
mjkʒ jb.sn r mʒw 3
 30–32 *sr.sn ɣʳ nj jjt* 3
nʒnj nj hprt.f 2
- 21–24 **Nonetheless, let me relate** to you something similar
 that happened to me myself,
 when I went to the mining country for the sire.
- 24–27 I went down to the sea in a boat
 of a hundred twenty cubits in length
 and forty cubits in width,
- 27–28 a hundred twenty sailors in it
 of the choice of Egypt.
- 28–30 Whether they saw sky or saw land,
 their mind was more observant than lions.
- 30–32 **They could predict** a gale before it came,
 a thunderstorm before it happened.

The beginning of the story within a story is the sailor's description of the boat and its crew. This part is repeated almost verbatim in cols. 89–101, when the sailor tells the serpent how he came to be shipwrecked.

- 21–23 *sdd.j r.f* — *sdd* is the causative of *dd*, but it means “report, relate” rather than “cause to speak.” *r.f* is relational, with the pronoun referring back to what was said previously (§ 15.7.2). Since the sailor has just told the official that “speaking to you is wearisome,” a translation such as “nonetheless” makes better sense here than “so.”
- mjtt jrj* — *mjtt* is a feminine nisbe made from a feminine nisbe of the preposition *mj* “like” (§ 8.6.2). The feminine is used to refer to an unspecified antecedent (§ 22.15). *jrj* is the adverbial form of the preposition *jr* (§§ 8.2.7, 8.15). The phrase as a whole means literally, “a likeness thereunto.”
- hpr.(w) m ʳ.j* — in Egyptian, things happen “with” (*m ʳ*, literally “in the hand of”) someone rather than “to” them. Since *mjtt*, the antecedent of *hpr*, is feminine, *hpr* should be feminine as well. The use of the masculine form here is probably related to a similar phenomenon noted for *ht nbt* “any thing,” which is often *ht nb* when *ht* doesn't refer to any “thing” in particular (i.e., “anything” as opposed to “any thing”). The similar line in Episode 10 (line 125) shows that *hpr.(w)* is the 3ms stative used in an unmarked relative clause (§ 22.11); *mjtt* is therefore undefined (“a likeness”).
- 23–28 *šm.kw ... hʒ.kw* — the stative used as a past tense (§ 16.5). The *šm.kw* clause could be an independent statement as well as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8).
- bjʒ* — the word *bjʒ* means “metal”; with the determinative (𓆎) it refers to the (desert) place where metal was mined (probably a nisbe, *bjʒj*). In most cases, the Sinai is meant, the source of much of ancient Egypt's copper. The main deposit was at Serabit el-Khadim, located

halfway down the Sinai peninsula and 16 miles (26 km) inland from its east coast. A nautical expedition to there (as described in the following columns) would have set sail from a port on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea.

n jtt — in the repetition of this line in cols. 90–91, the sailor’s voyage is described as *wpwt jtt* “the sire’s mission,” so the preposition *n* “for” is more likely here than an indirect genitive “of the sire.” For the spelling of *jtt*, see Essay 6.

wšd-wr — literally, “great blue-green”: see Essay 2. The term was used for the Red Sea as well as the Mediterranean.

mḥ 120 m šw.s mḥ 40 m šḥw.s — literally, “cubit 120 in its length, cubit 40 in its width.” The measurements are equivalent to 206.7 feet (63 m) and 68.9 feet (21 m) (§ 9.7.1). *šw* and *šḥw* are verbal nouns (§ 13.1) from *šwj* “extend” and *wšḥ* “become broad”; 3-lit. verbs with initial *w* often lose that radical in verbal nouns.

sqdw 120 jm.s — an adverbial sentence used either independently or as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7).

m stp n kmt — *stp* is a verbal noun from *stp* “choose.” For *kmt*, literally “Blackland,” see Essay 2.

- 28–30 The opening line of this couplet reflects the ancient practice of sailing whenever possible within sight of land; when land is out of sight, only the sky is visible on the horizon. There is a deliberate word-play between the verb *mšš* “see” in the first line and the noun *mšw* “lions” in the second.

mš.sn pt mš.sn tš — the *sdm.f* used to express an initial condition (§§ 18.12, 25.8.1). The literal meaning is close to that of the more archaic English translation “Saw they sky, saw they land.”

mjkš jb.sn r mšw — the meaning of *mjkš* has been discussed recently in Graefe 2013. Egyptian usually prefers the singular when referring a body part belonging to multiple owners: thus *jb.sn* “their mind” rather than *jbw.sn* “their minds.” The clause is an adjectival sentence of comparison (§ 7.4.2). In such sentences, Egyptian also prefers to compare body parts to owners: thus, *r mšw* “than lions” rather than *r jbw mšw* “than lions’ minds.” The language has no construction analogous to English “than those of lions.”

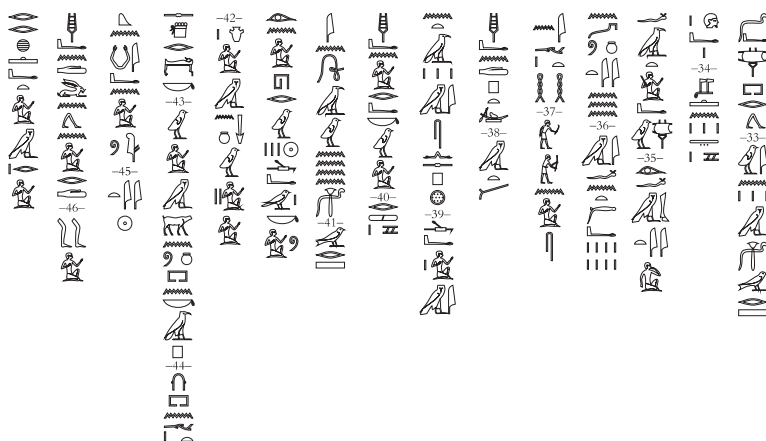
- 30–32 Despite the use of red ink here, repeated in col. 97, this line belongs with this episode rather than the next. The scribe’s choice of marking it as a new section was evidently influenced by the mention of *ḡr* “gale,” the theme of Episode 3.

sr.sn — in hieroglyphic, the verb *sr* is often determined with the sign of a giraffe (E 27), whose long neck allows it to see farther into the distance than animals closer to the ground. In hieratic, the giraffe is usually replaced by the Seth animal (E 20).

nj jtt ... nj ḥprt.f — negated *sdmt.f* (§ 19.14), in the first case with unexpressed subject; the repetition in col. 98 has *nj jtt.f*.

nšnj — thunderstorms were seen as a manifestation of Seth; hence the determinative.

Episode 3 — The Shipwreck (cols. 32–46)



| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|---|
| 32–34 | <i>ḏꜣ pr.(w) jw.n m w3ḏ-wr</i> | 3 |
| | <i>dp Ṛ s3ḥ.n t3</i> | 2 |
| 34–37 | <i>f3.t(w) ṭ3w jr.f whmtyt</i> | 4 |
| | <i>nwytyt jm.f nt mh 8</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jn ḥt ḥ(w)ḥ(w) n.j s(j)</i> | 2 |
| 37–39 | <i>ḥꜣ.n dpt m(w)t.(tj)</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ntjw jm.s nj zp wꜣ jm</i> | 4 |
| 39–41 | <i>ḥꜣ.n.j rdj.kw r jw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jn w3w n w3ḏ-wr</i> | 2 |
| 41–42 | <i>jr.n.j hrw 3 wꜣ.kw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jb.j m snnw.j</i> | 2 |
| 42–45 | <i>sḏr.kw m ḥnw n k3p n ḥt</i> | 4 |
| | <i>qnj.n.j šwyt</i> | 2 |
| 45–46 | <i>ḥꜣ.n dwn.n.j rdwj.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>r rh djt.j m r.j</i> | 2 |

- 32–34 A gale came up while we were at sea,
before we could touch land,
- 34–37 the wind lifted repeatedly,
with a swell of eight cubits from it.
The mast was what broke it for me.
- 37–39 Then the boat died,
and of those who were in it, not one survived.

- 39–41 Then I was put on an island
by a wave of the sea.
41–42 I spent three days alone,
my mind as my only companion,
42–45 lying inside a thicket,
having embraced the shade.
45–46 Then I stretched my legs
to learn what I might put in my mouth.


This section has two parts. The first describes the shipwreck; the second, the sailor's first days as a castaway. Like Episode 2, the first part is repeated almost verbatim when the sailor tells the serpent how he came to be shipwrecked (cols. 101–10).

- 32–34 The second line of this couplet explains why the boat was caught in a gale, even though the sailors could predict one.

ḡ^r pr.(w) — SUBJECT–stative used as a past tense for an intransitive verb (§ 16.8).

jw.n m wṣḡd-wr — an adverbial sentence used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7). Egyptian is more specific than English in using the preposition *m*, literally “in” the sea.

dp ṛ sḡh.n tṣ — the *sḡm.f* fused in unmarked noun clause as object of the compound preposition *dp ṛ* (literally, “atop the arm of”) (§ 21.9). The verb *sḡh* means literally “toe” (the hieroglyph with which it is written here: Sign List D 63): the image is of setting foot on land.

- 34–37 *fṣ.t(w) ḡṣw* — the *sḡm.f* with passive suffix, which can be interpreted as either an independent past tense (§ 18.4) or an unmarked adverb clause of concomitant circumstance (“the wind being lifted”), dependent on the preceding sentence (§ 20.11). For the writing of the verb, see the note to col. 15 *wṣd.t(w).k*, above; the arm sign is a second determinative (for D 40 : see D 36 in the Sign List).

jr.f wḥmyt — literally, “it making repetition,” an unmarked adverb clause of concomitant circumstance with the *sḡm.f* (§ 20.11). *wḥmyt* is a verbal noun of *wḥm* “repeat.”

nwyt jm.f nt mḥ 8 — an adverbial sentence, either independent or an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7). *nwyt* “swell” is derived from *nwy* “waters” (of the sea, as opposed to *mw* “water” as a substance). It evidently refers to a rogue wave caused by the storm; the height is 13.8 feet (4.2 m).

jn ḥt h(w)h(w) n.j s(j) — participial statement (§ 23.10). The noun *ḥt* “wood, stick, tree” probably refers to the ship's mast, which English-speaking sailors still call the “stick.” The verb is otherwise unattested (except for the repetition in col. 105), but its first determinative indicates that it is related to the verb *ḥwj* “hit,” and the reduplication indicates multiple action: rather than “pummel” (since the wave hit the mast only once), the sense is probably “break into pieces.” The line apparently refers to the sailor taking cover behind, or tied to, the mast when the wave swept over the boat.

- 37–39 *ʕhʕ.n dpt m(w)t.(tj)* — SUBJECT–stative as a past tense after *ʕhʕ.n* (§ 16.8). The 3fs stative suffix is not written because the verb ends in *t* (§ 16.2); the repetition in col. 106 has *m(w)t.t(tj)*.

ntjw jm.s nj zp wʕ jm — literally, “those in it, one thereof did not survive.” The marked relative clause *ntjw jm.s* (§ 22.4) is logically the object of the final preposition *jm*, topicalized by putting it in front; the preposition is then in the adverbial form (§§ 8.2.3, 8.15, 9.4).
- 39–41 *ʕhʕ.n.j rdj.kw r jw* — SUBJECT–stative as a past tense after *ʕhʕ.n* (§ 16.8); literally, “then I was given to an island.” The stative is used to express the passive with a pronominal subject (§ 19.3).
- 41–45 This sentence consists of a main clause and four unmarked adverb clauses.

wʕ.kw ... sdr.kw — 1s stative describing concomitant state (§ 20.8), literally “I being single” and “I having lain down.”

jb.j m smnw.j — an adverb clause with adverbial predicate (§ 20.7), literally “my mind as my second.”

k3p n ht — literally, “private place of wood.”

qnj.n.j šwyṯ — adverb clause of prior circumstance with the *sḏm.n.f* (§ 20.10).
- 45–46 *ʕhʕ.n dwn.n.j rdwj.j* — *sḏm.n.f* as a past tense after *ʕhʕ.n* (§ 17.9).

r rh — infinitive after the preposition *r*, expressing purpose (§ 13.11.3). For the meaning of *rh*, see § 16.5.

djt.j — relative *sḏm.f* as a noun, object of *rh* (§ 22.14).

Episode 4 — Exploring the Island (cols. 47–56)









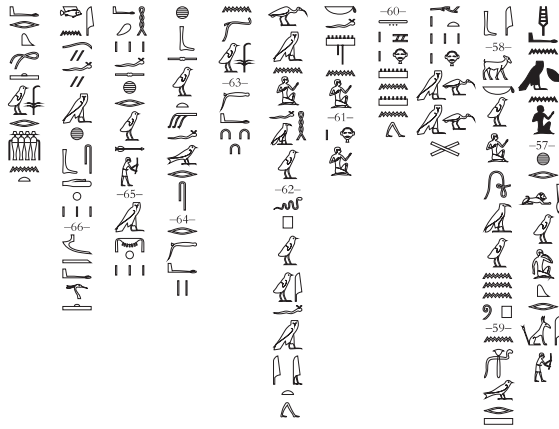
| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 47–48 | <i>gm.n.j d3bw j3rrt jm</i> | 4 |
| | <i>j3qt nbt špst</i> | 2 |
| 49–50 | <i>k3w jm hnꜥ nq(ꜥ)wt</i> | 3 |
| | <i>šzpt mj jr.t(w).s</i> | 2 |
| 50–52 | <i>rmw jm hnꜥ 3pdw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>nn ntt nn st m hnw.s</i> | 2 |
| 52–54 | <i>ꜥhnꜥ.n ss3.n.(j) wj</i> | 2 |
| | <i>rdj.n.j r t3 n wr hr ꜥwj.j</i> | 4 |
| 54–56 | <i>šdt.j d3 šhpr.n.j sđt</i> | 4 |
| | <i>jr.n.j zj n sđt n ntrw</i> | 3 |

- 47–48 **I found** figs and grapes there,
and all (kinds of) fine vegetables.
- 49–50 Green and ripe sycamore figs were there,
and melons as if cultivated.
- 50–52 Fish were there, and birds:
there was nothing that was not inside it.
- 52–54 Then I sated myself,
and put some down because of how much was on my arms.
- 54–56 I took a fire-stick, created a fire,
and made a burnt offering to the gods.

This section describes the natural riches that the sailor found on the island.

- 47–48 *špst* — the bookroll determinative is written next to the final *t* at the end of the column, so as not to break the word between columns.

- 49–50 *k3w ... nq(ʕ)wt* — both terms refer to figs of the sycamore tree: *k3w* is the unripe fruit and *nq(ʕ)wt* (usually spelled with an ayin), the ripe fruit (Manniche 1989, 103).
- šzpt mj jr.t(w).s* — literally, “melons like it was made.” The suffix pronoun of *jr.t(w).s* shows that *šzpt* is a collective, treated as a feminine singular (§ 4.6). The verb *jrj* “make” is used of cultivating plants: *jr.t(w).s* is the *sgm.f* with passive suffix, used as object of the preposition *mj* (§ 21.9).
- 50–52 *nn ntt nn st m hnw.s* — a negated adverbial sentence, *nn st m hnw.s* “it (was) not inside it” (§ 11.4), made into a marked indirect relative clause by means of *ntt* “that which” (§§ 22.4, 22.6), negated in turn by *nn* (§ 11.4): literally, “that which (was) not inside it (was) not.”
- 52–54 *ʕhʕ.n ss3.n.(j) wj — sdm.n.f* as a past tense after *ʕhʕ.n* (§ 17.9), with unwritten 1s subject before the 1s dependent pronoun *wj* (§ 17.5). *ss3j* is the causative of 3ae-inf. *s3j* “become sated.”
- rdj.n.j r t3* — the object of *rdj.n.j* is unexpressed.
- n wr hr ʕwj.j* — literally, “for much on my arms”: the sailor found so much to eat that there was too much for him to carry.
- 54–56 The final couplet describes the sailor’s act of thanksgiving to the gods for his being spared and provided with food.
- šdt.j d3 — d3* “fire-stick” is the object depicted by the hieroglyph , a piece of wood rubbed briskly between the two hands against another piece of wood; the friction ignites a flame. The two determinatives are written to the left of the word to keep them in the same column as the phonograms. The verb form *šdt.j* is troublesome. It is usually interpreted as the “narrative infinitive” (from 3ae-inf. *šdj* “take”: see Berg 1990), but the context does not suit the usual use of that form (§ 13.14.2). Nor is it the *sgmt.f*, since it is not preceded by *nj* or the prepositions *r* or *dr* (§ 19.14). The relative *sgm.f* is possible as the first element of an A B nominal sentence — “what I took (was) a fire-stick” — but that pattern of the nominal sentence is normally reserved for inalienable subjects in Middle Egyptian (§ 7.7). Since the *sgm.n.f* would be normal here (*šd.n.j*), perhaps the  (hieratic ) has been misread by the scribe from an original  (hieratic ) in which  is the determinative.
- zj n sdt* — literally, “go-away of fire.” The phrase is a single term, therefore probably with a single stress instead of two.

Episode 5 — Encountering the Snake (cols. 56–66)

| | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|---|
| 56–59 | 𐎗𐎕.𐎎 𐎔𐎡𐎎.𐎕 𐎕𐎖𐎗 𐎕𐎖𐎕 | 3 |
| | <i>jb.kw w3w pw n w3d-wr</i> | 3 |
| 59–60 | 𐎕𐎖𐎗 𐎕𐎖 𐎕𐎕𐎕𐎕 | 2 |
| | <i>t3 𐎕𐎖 mnmn</i> | 2 |
| 60–62 | 𐎕𐎕.𐎕 𐎕𐎖.𐎕 | 2 |
| | <i>gm.n.j hf3w pw jw.f m jjt</i> | 3 |
| 62–64 | 𐎎(j)-sw mḥ 30 | 2 |
| | <i>ḥbswt.f wr s(j) r mḥ 2</i> | 3 |
| 64–66 | 𐎕𐎖𐎗.𐎕 𐎕𐎕𐎖.𐎕 m 𐎕sbw m3𐎖 | 3 |
| | <i>𐎖𐎕 sw r 𐎕nt</i> | 2 |

- 56–59 **Then I heard** a sound of thunder;
I thought it was a wave of the sea.
- 59–60 Trees were cracking,
the ground was quaking.
- 60–62 When I uncovered my face,
I found it was a snake, and he was coming.
- 62–64 He was thirty cubits long,
and his beard, it was greater than two cubits.
- 64–66 His body was plated with gold,
his eyebrows were real lapis-lazuli,
and he was bent forward.

- 56–59 *qrrj* — the basic form of this word is *qrr*, usually describing a storm-cloud (for the Seth-animal determinative, see the note to col. 32 *nšnj*, above). The form here probably represents the loss of the second *r* (§ 2.4, Essay 17).

jb.kw wšw pw n wšd-wr — the 1s stative used as a past tense (§ 16.5). The rest of the sentence is an *A pw* nominal sentence used as an unmarked noun clause, object of *jb.kw* (§ 21.7).

- 59–60 *htw hr gmgm tš hr mnmn* — two pseudo-verbal constructions describing action in progress (§ 14.2).

- 60–62 This couplet is a good example of narrative style. It is not necessary for the author to first tell us that he covered his face (in fear), since that action is implied by the words “I uncovered my face.”

kf.n.j ... gm.n.j — the initial verb is 3-lit. *kfš*; the final consonant has been lost in pronunciation and is therefore not written. These two *sgm.n.f* forms describe two consecutive actions. They can be interpreted as two independent statements (“I uncovered ... and I found”) or as an emphatic sentence in which the first clause is logically subordinate to the second (§ 25.8.3).


hfšw pw — An *A pw* nominal sentence serving as an unmarked noun clause, object of *gm.n.j* (§ 21.7).

jw.f m jjt — a pseudo-verbal construction with *m* plus the infinitive, implying that the snake’s arrival was imminent (§ 14.2). It can be understood as an unmarked relative clause modifying the undefined antecedent *hfšw* “a snake” (§ 22.10) as well as an independent statement (“and he was about to come”).

- 62–64 *n(j)-sw mh 30* — literally, “he belonged to thirty cubits,” an *A B* nominal sentence of adherence (§ 7.8). The measurement is equivalent to 51.7 feet (15.75 m) (§ 9.7.1).

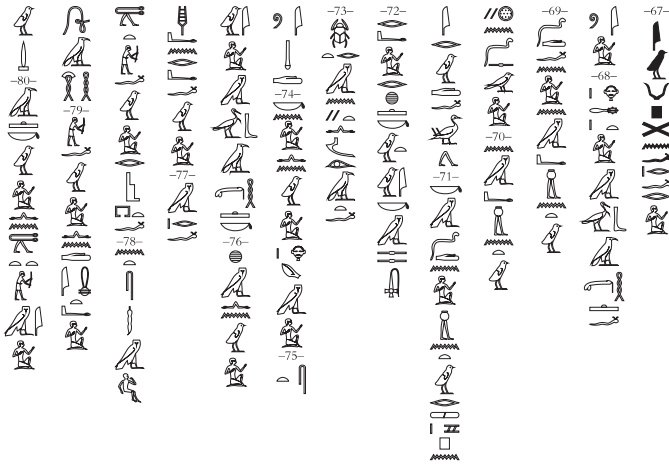
hbswt.f wr s(j) r mh 2 — an adjectival sentence with the subject topicalized and resumed by the dependent pronoun *s(j)* (§§ 7.3, 7.4.2). The beard identifies the snake as a god; its length exceeded 3.4 feet (1.05 m) (§ 9.7.1).

- 64–66 *hrw.f šhr.w m nbw* — SUBJECT-stative. *hrw* is the plural of *hr* “limb” but is regularly used as a kind of collective for “body” — in this case, aptly, since snakes don’t have limbs. The skin of gods was thought to be gold, since it, like the gods, is immutable. The verb is originally *šhr*; the *h* has become *h* in this scribe’s dialect.

jnhwj.fj m hšbd mšr — the word for “eyebrow” normally has a , omitted here. The dual strokes are commonly found after the 3ms suffix pronoun of dual nouns (§ 5.7). The hair of gods was regularly described as blue in color (lapis-lazuli) rather than black; in this case, the hair is genuine lapis-lazuli.

rq sw r hnt — an adjectival sentence with a passive participle as the adjectival predicate (§ 24.5). *r hnt* means literally “to the fore”: the image is that of a cobra, rearing with its head bent to strike.

Episode 6 — The Snake Captures the Sailor (cols. 67–80)



| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 67–68 | <i>jw wp.n.f r.f r.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jw.j hr ht.j m b3h.f</i> | 2 |
| 69–70 | <i>dd.f n.j n-mj jn tw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>zp 2 nds n-mj jn tw</i> | 5 |
| 70–73 | <i>jr wdf.k m dd n.j jn tw r jw pn</i> | 4 |
| | <i>rdj.j rh.k tw jw.k m zz</i> | 3 |
| | <i>hpr.t(j) m ntj nj m3.t(w).f</i> | 3 |
| 73–76 | <i>jw mdw. {n.f} n.j nn wj hr sdm. {j} st</i> | 2 |
| | <i>jw.j m b3h. {f} hm.n. (j) wj</i> | 2 |
| 76–78 | <i>h' n rdj.f wj m r.f</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jt.f wj r jst.f nt sndm</i> | 3 |
| 78–80 | <i>w3h.f wj nn dmjt.j</i> | 2 |
| | <i>wd3.kw nn jtt jm.j</i> | 3 |

- 67–68 **He opened** his mouth at me,
as I was on my belly in his presence,
- 69–70 saying to me, “Who fetched you?
Who fetched you, mister? Who fetched you?”
- 70–73 If you delay telling me who fetched you to this island,
I will make you find yourself as ash,
having become one who is not seen.”

73–76 But he spoke to me without my hearing it,
 though I was in his presence, because I had fainted.

76–78 Then he put me in his mouth,
 took me away to his place of residence,

78–80 and set me down without my being touched,
 sound, with nothing taken from me.

69–68 *jw wp.n.f.r.f* — the use of *jw* here relates the snake’s act of opening his mouth directly to the preceding context, as opposed to a simple past act (§§ 10.3, 17.7).

jw.j hr ht.j m b³h.f — adverbial sentence used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7).

69–70 *dd.f* — *sdm.f* in an unmarked adverb clause of concomitant circumstance (§ 20.11).

n-mj jn tw — participial statement (§ 23.10). *n-mj* is a “phonetic” spelling of *jn mj* as a single word (*iníma).

zp 2 — repeats the preceding question (§ 9.5).



nds — this term was used during the Middle Kingdom to refer to a person of modest means who did not hold a specific office (Franke 1998). Its literal meaning is “little,” which also has an ironic sense here, given the snake’s size.

70–73 *jr wdf.k m dd n.j jn tw r jw pn* — protasis of a conditional sentence with the *sdm.f* (§ 18.12): literally, “if you delay in saying to me.” *jn* is an active participle.

rdj.j rh.j tw — the *rdj sdm.f* construction (§ 21.8), in which *rdj.j* has future sense (§ 18.7): literally, “I will give that you learn yourself.”

jw.k m zz — adverbial sentence used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7): literally, “you being as ash.” The clause implies that the snake will incinerate the sailor with his fiery breath.

hpr.t(j) m ntj nj m³.t(w).f — *hpr.t(j)* is the 2s stative used in an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8); *hpr m* means “evolve into.” The relative clause marked by *ntj* is direct (the unexpressed antecedent is identical with the subject of the relative clause), but the suffix pronoun is required because it is the subject of the negated *sdm.f*. The clause means literally, “one who he is not seen” (§§ 18.3, 18.13).

73–76 *jw mdw. {n.f¹ n.j}* — the text has *jw mdw.k* “you speak,” which could be interpreted as part of the snake’s speech, as a virtual question (“Do you speak to me?”), but the second line of the couplet (see next) indicates that the snake is not the speaker. The scribe has evidently misread an original ligatured hieratic  as . For the use of half-brackets, see § 3.7. As in col. 67 *jw wp.n.f*, the use of *jw* relates this statement directly to the preceding context.

nn wj hr sdm. {j} st — the usual negative counterpart of the pseudo-verbal construction with *hr* plus infinitive is *nj sdm.n.f* (§§ 14.8, 17.11). The unique construction here may have been prompted by the need to express action in progress (“I was not hearing it”), which *nj sdm.n.f* does not specifically connote. Alternatively, the superfluous suffix of *sdm* suggests that the scribe was thinking of *nn* plus the infinitive (*nn sdm.j st* “without my hearing it”: § 13.15),

which he converted to *nn wj hr sdm st* “without me (upon) hearing it” in order to avoid the usual future meaning of *nn sdm.j st* (“I would not hear it”: § 18.14), but without omitting the (original?) 1s suffix of the infinitive. In any case, this clause is an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7).

jw.j m b3h.f¹ — an unmarked adverb clause with adverbial predicate (§ 20.7). The text has *jw.j m b3h.k*, which, like *jw mdw.k* in the first line, could be taken as part of the snake’s speech: “Do you speak to me? I am not hearing it, though I am in your presence.” Against such an interpretation, however, is the fact that *hm.n.(j) wj* can only refer to the sailor (see next). Moreover, the object of *m b3h* “in the presence of” is regularly a superior, so the snake would not likely describe himself as being in the sailor’s presence.



hm.n.(j) wj — a *sdm.n.f* with unwritten 1s suffix before *wj* (§ 17.5), used in an unmarked adverb clause of prior circumstance (§ 20.10). The verb *hm* means “not know, be ignorant, be unaware”: the clause means literally, “I was unaware of myself,” the usual Egyptian idiom for losing consciousness.

78–78 *h^c.n rdj.f wj m r.f* — an unusual use of the *sdm.f* for past action instead of the *sdm.n.f* (§ 18.4).

jt.f wj — the verb *jtj* has become *jtj* in this text’s dialect. The verb means basically “take possession of” and not “take” someone somewhere; its use here implies the snake’s taking control of the sailor. In the *sdm.f* here, it could be an unmarked adverb clause (“taking me away”: § 20.11) but more likely continues the past sense of *rdj.f* in the preceding line.

sn^cdm — an infinitive (§ 13.10). It is the causative of *n^cdm* “become sweet, easy” but is regularly used with reference to a person’s residence: this use of *sn^cdm* is similar to the English idiom “taking it easy.”

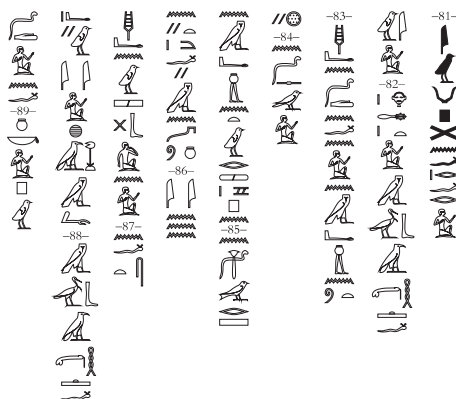
78–80 *w3h.f wj* — like *jt.f wj* in the preceding stanza, the sense is probably past rather than circumstantial.

nn dmjt.j — an unmarked adverb clause with *nn* plus the infinitive (§ 13.15), with the pronominal suffix as object rather than subject of the infinitive (§ 13.5.1). *dmj* is a 3-lit. verb (originally, and still in some Middle Kingdom texts, *dmr*), and should therefore have an infinitive without *t* (§ 13.3); it is possible that the scribe has misread an original  as . The only other possible interpretations of the form do not make sense in this context: passive *nn dmj.t(w).j* should mean “I would not be touched” (§ 18.14), and *nn* with a relative *sdm.f* would mean “without that which I might touch” (§ 22.14). Since the snake has in fact “touched” the sailor, the sense is one of harm, as in “the storm never touched us.”

w^c3.kw — 1s stative in an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8).

nn jtt jm.j — *jtt* is a feminine passive participle used as a noun: literally, “without that which was taken from me” (cf. § 11.4). In other words, the snake did not bite off any of the sailor’s limbs.

Episode 7 — The Sailor Repeats His Story (cols. 81–110)



| | | |
|-------|--|---|
| 81–82 | <i>jw wp.n.f r.f r.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jw.j hr ht.j m b3h.f</i> | 2 |
| 83–84 | <i>ḥr.n ḏd.n.f n.j n-mj jn tw</i> | 4 |
| | <i>zp 2 nds</i> | 3 |
| 84–86 | <i>n-mj jn tw r jw pn n w3ḏ-wr</i> | 4 |
| | <i>ntj gs(wj).fj m nwy</i> | 3 |
| 86–89 | <i>ḥr.n wšb.n.j n.f st</i> | 2 |
| | <i>ʿwj.j h3m.(w) m b3h.f</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ḏd.j n.f jnk pw</i> | 2 |
| 81–82 | He opened his mouth at me, | |
| | as I was on my belly in his presence. | |
| 83–84 | Then he said to me, “Who fetched you? | |
| | Who fetched you, mister? | |
| 84–86 | Who fetched you to this island of the sea, | |
| | whose two sides are in the waters?” | |
| 86–89 | Then I answered him, | |
| | my arms bent in his presence, | |
| | saying to him, “It was I. | |


This section is basically a repetition of Episodes 2 and 3, with the same marking of *sr.sn ḏr* as the beginning of a new section. The notes below address points supplemental to those for Episodes 2–3 (cols. 21–46).

81–82 A repetition of the opening couplet of Episode 6 (cols. 67–68).

83–84 Essentially the same as cols. 69–70, except for the opening clause *ḥr.n ḏd.n.f n.j*.

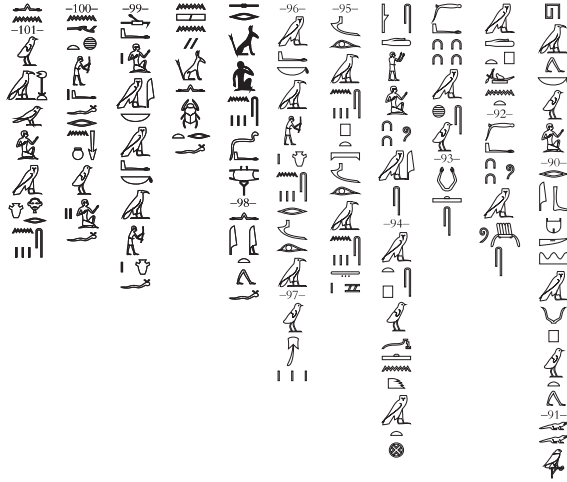
84–86 *ntj gs(wj).fj m nwy* — a marked indirect relative clause with adverbial predicate (§ 22.6). The dual strokes after the suffix pronoun indicate that the noun is in the dual (§ 5.7), even though it is written as a singular. The dual suggests that the author was thinking of north–south or east–west, although islands are by definition surrounded on all sides by water. For *nwy*, see the note to col. 35 *nwy*t, above.

86–89 *wšb.n.j n.f st* — the verb *wšb* “answer” requires a direct object in Egyptian, here the neutral pronoun *st* (§ 5.4), referring to the snake’s questions.

ʿwj.j hʒm.(w) m bʒh.f — SUBJECT–stative in an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8). “Arms bent” refers to the Egyptian posture of worship or respect: . The double reed-leaf in *ʿwj.j* is phonetic (**ʿúwai* > **ʿúway*).

ḏd.j n.f — the *sgm.f* in an unmarked adverb clause of concomitant circumstance (§ 20.11), literally, “I saying to him.”

jnk pw — an A *pw* nominal sentence (§ 7.9), answering the snake’s question.



| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|---|
| 89–93 | <i>hʒ.kw r bjʒ m wpwt jtj</i> | 3 |
| | <i>m dpt nt mh 120 m ʒw.s</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mh 40 m shw.s</i> | 2 |
| 93–94 | <i>sqdw 120 jm.s</i> | 2 |
| | <i>m stpw n kmt</i> | 2 |
| 95–97 | <i>mʒ.sn pt mʒ.sn tʒ</i> | 4 |
| | <i>mjkʒ jb.sn r mʒw</i> | 3 |
| 97–98 | <i>sr.sn ḏʿ nj jjt.f</i> | 3 |
| | <i>nšnj nj hpṛt.f</i> | 2 |

| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| 99–101 | <i>w^ʿ jm nb mj k² jb.f</i> | 3 |
| | <i>nht ʿ.f r snnw.f</i> | 2 |
| | <i>nn wh² m hr(j) jb.sn</i> | 2 |

89–93 I went down to the mining country on the sire’s mission
in a boat of a hundred twenty cubits in length
and forty cubits in width,

93–94 a hundred twenty sailors in it
of the choice of Egypt.

95–97 Whether they saw sky or saw land,
their mind was more observant than lions.

97–98 **They could predict** a gale before it came,
a thunderstorm before it happened.

99–101 Each one of them, his mind was more observant
and his arm more forceful than his companion;
there was no fool in their midst.

89–94 This tercet and couplet repeat the opening of the sailor’s story, with a slightly different phrasing in the tercet.

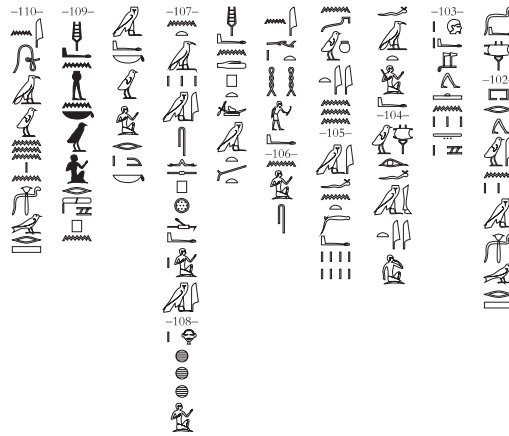
97–98 This differs from the couplet in Episode 2 (cols. 30–32) in using a suffix pronoun with the *sdmt.f* in the first line (*nj jjt.f*).

99–101 This tercet, expanding on the description of the crew, is additional, not in the initial version of the sailor’s story.

w^ʿ jm nb — adverbial *jm* (§ 8.2.3) is one of the few elements that can come between the adjective *nb* and the noun it modifies, indicating that this phrase has a single stress. For *w^ʿ jm*, see § 9.4.

mjk² jb.f nht ʿ.f r snnw.f — a sentence with two adjectival predicates, both with comparative sense (§ 7.4.2).

nn wh² m hr(j) jb.sn — a non-verbal statement of negative existence (§ 11.4). *hrj jb* is a nisbe from *hr jb* “on the heart,” an expression for “middle” or “midst.”



| | | |
|---------|--|---|
| 101-103 | <i>ḏꜣ pr. (w) jw.n m wꜣḏ-wr</i> | 3 |
| | <i>dp ḥ sꜣḥ.n tꜣ</i> | 2 |
| 103-106 | <i>fꜣ.t(w) tꜣw jr.f whmyt</i> | 4 |
| | <i>nwyꜣ jm.f nt mḥ 8</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jn ḥt ḥ(w)ḥ(w) n.j s(j)</i> | 2 |
| 106-108 | <i>ḥꜣ.n dpt m(w)t.t(j)</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ntjw jm.s nj zp wꜣ jm ḥr ḥw.j</i> | 5 |
| | <i>mj.k wj r gs.k</i> | 1 |
| 109-110 | <i>ḥꜣ.n.(j) jn.kw r jw pn</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jn wꜣw n wꜣḏ-wr</i> | 2 |
| 101-103 | A gale came up while we were at sea, before we could touch land, | |
| 103-106 | the wind lifted repeatedly, with a swell of eight cubits from it. The mast was what broke it for me. | |
| 106-108 | Then the boat died, and of those who were in it, not one survived except me, and here I am beside you. | |
| 109-110 | Then I was fetched to this island by a wave of the sea.” | |

106-108 A slightly different version of the couplet in Episode 3 (cols. 37-39), expanded to a tercet by the final line.

ḥꜣ.n dpt m(w)t.t(j) — the stative suffix is written here, as opposed to col. 38.

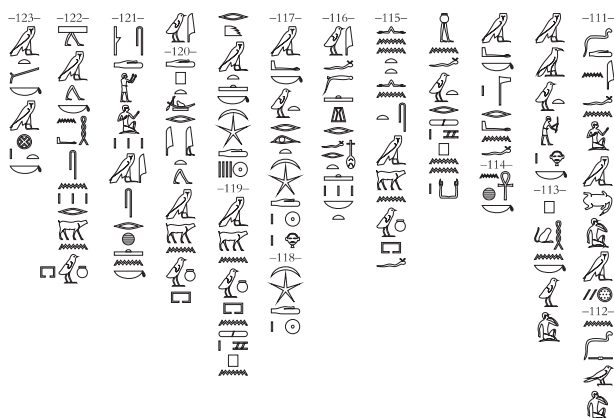
hr h_w.j — a compound preposition meaning literally, “upon my exemption.” *hw* is a verbal noun from *hwj* “exempt, defend.”

mj.k wj r gs.k — an adverbial sentence introduced by *m.k* (§ 10.4.1): literally, “Look, I am at your side.”

109–110 Although marked in red, this final couplet is part of the sailor’s account and belongs with this episode rather than the next. This is a slightly different version of the corresponding couplet in Episode 3 (cols. 39–41), with *jn.kw* substituted for *rdj.kw* in response to the snake’s question.

ḥ^c.n.(j) jn.kw — with the 1s stative, *ḥ^c.n* regularly has a 1s suffix pronoun: in this manuscript, cols. 39 (the parallel to this line), 131, and 155. In cases such as this, therefore, the 1s suffix is probably unwritten rather than omitted (so also in lines 157, 169, 174, and col. 177).

Episode 8 — The Snake’s Prediction (cols. 111–123)



| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| 111–13 | <i>dd.jn.f n.j m snd zp 2 nds</i> | 4 |
| | <i>m 3tw hr.k ph.n.k wj</i> | 3 |
| 113–14 | <i>mj.k ntr rdj.n.f^c nh.k</i> | 3 |
| | <i>jn.f tw r jw pn n k3</i> | 4 |
| 115–16 | <i>nn ntt nn st m hnw.f</i> | 2 |
| | <i>jw.f mh.(w) hr nfrwt nbt</i> | 2 |
| 117–19 | <i>mj.k tw r jrt jbd hr jbd</i> | 3 |
| | <i>r kmt.k jbd 4 m hnw n jw pn</i> | 4 |
| 119–21 | <i>jw dpt r jjt m hnw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>sqdw jm.s rh.n.k</i> | 3 |
| 122–23 | <i>sm.k hn^c.sn r hnw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>m(w)t.k m njwt.k</i> | 2 |

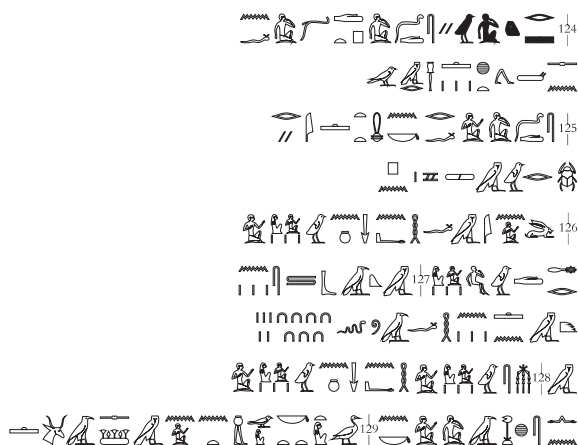
- 111–13 So, he said to me, “Don’t fear, don’t fear, mister.
Don’t blanch because you have reached me.
- 113–14 Look, the god, he has let you live
by fetching you to this island of ka.
- 115–16 There is nothing that is not inside it,
for it is full of all good things.
- 117–19 Look, you are to spend month upon month,
until you have completed four months inside this island.
- 119–21 A boat is to come from home,
with sailors you know in it.
- 122–23 You will go home with them,
and die in your town.
- 111–13 *dd.jn.f* — the *sgm.jn.f*, indicating that the snake’s speech follows as a consequence of the sailor’s tale (§ 19.10).
m snd m zp 2 — negative imperative (§ 15.4), with *zp 2* for the repeated *snd* (§ 9.5).
m 3tw hr.k — negative imperative with third-person subject of the negational complement (§ 15.4): literally, “Don’t (let) your face get white.” Blanching (*3t*) was a stereotypical reaction to seeing a snake.
ph.n.k wj — unmarked adverb clause of prior circumstance with the *sgm.n.f*, here expressing causality (§ 20.10).
- 113–14 This is an emphatic sentence with a rhematic adverb clause (§ 25.7), the latter unmarked with the *sgm.f* (§ 20.11). The first clause (*mj.k ntr rdj.n.f nḥ.k*) is given information (since the sailor has in fact been spared the fate of his shipmates) and the new information, or rheme, is the adverb clause that explains how “he has let you live.”
rdj.n.f nḥ.k — the *rdj sgm.f* construction (§ 21.8). The subject of the *sgm.n.f*, *ntr* “the god,” is topicalized (§ 17.4).
jw pn n k3 — Gardiner (1908, 65) interpreted the reference to the ka here as a statement that the island was not real but “phantom.” The phrase *rdj.n.f nḥ.k* as well as the couplet following, however, point to the primary sense of “life force” (Essay 7): the island contains everything needed to sustain life (Vandersleyen 1990, 1022).
- 115–16 The first sentence of this couplet is a repetition of the sailor’s comment on the island in Episode 4 (cols. 51–52).
jw.f mh.(w) hr nfrwt nbt — the SUBJECT–stative construction expressing a state (§ 16.10). Egyptian uses the preposition *hr* “under” here rather than *m* “with” because the island is in fact “under” the things it is full of.
- 117–19 This couplet is the first part of the snake’s prophecy. It and the next couplet use the pseudo-verbal SUBJECT *r sgm* construction to express an involuntary future (§ 18.7).
r kmt.k jbd 4 — the *r sgm.f* construction (§ 19.14).

119–21 *sqdw jm.s rh.n.k* — *sqdw jm.s* is an adverbial sentence used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7). *rh.n.k* is the *sgm.n.f* used as an unmarked relative clause after an undefined antecedent (§ 22.12); for the meaning of *rh.n.k*, see § 17.10.

122–23 In this couplet, the future is expressed by the *sgm.f*, because it is voluntary (*šm.k*) and subjective (*m(w)t.k*).

m(w)t.k m njwt.k — Because of the necessity of mummification and a proper tomb for the afterlife (Essay 8), Egyptians were concerned not to die away from home.

Episode 9 — The Snake's Story (lines 124–136)



- | | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 124 | <i>ršwj sqd dpt.n.f</i> | 3 |
| | <i>zn ht mr</i> | 2 |
| 125 | <i>sqd.j r.f.n.k mjtt jrj</i> | 3 |
| | <i>hpr.w m jw pn</i> | 2 |
| 126–27 | <i>wn.j jm.f hn^c snw.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>hrdw m q³b.sn</i> | 2 |
| 127–29 | <i>km.n.n hf³w 75</i> | 2 |
| | <i>m msw.j hn^c snw.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>nn sh³.j n.k z³t ktt jnt.n.j m ss³</i> | 4 |
| 124 | How happy is he who relates what he has tasted when something painful passes. | |
| 125 | So, let me relate to you something similar that happened in this island. | |

126–27 I was in it with my siblings
and children amid them.

127–29 We totaled seventy-five snakes,
consisting of my offspring and my siblings,
without me mentioning to you, from experience, the little daughter I got.

Episode 9 is the story within a story within a story. At this point in the papyrus, the scribe switched from columns of text to horizontal lines. The reason for the change is unknown.

124 *ršwj sḡd dpt.n.f* — an exclamatory adjectival sentence (§ 7.2). The subject is a participial phrase with an active participle governing a relative *sḡm.n.f* (§ 22.12) as object (§ 22.15). *dpt.n.f* “what he has tasted” means “what he has experienced.”

zn ḥt mr — an unmarked adverb clause with the *sḡm.f* (§ 20.11). For masculine *mr* modifying feminine *ḥt*, see the note to col. 22 *ḥpr.(w) m ʿ.j*, above.

125 This couplet is similar to the one with which the sailor began his tale (Episode 2, cols. 21–23).

ḥpr.w — the 3ms suffix is written here.


126–27 *wn.j jm.f* — the *sḡm.f* of *wnn* here serves to cast what is essentially an adverbial sentence into the past (§ 18.9). Since the verb is ungeminated, probably a single point in time is meant, rather than extended existence.

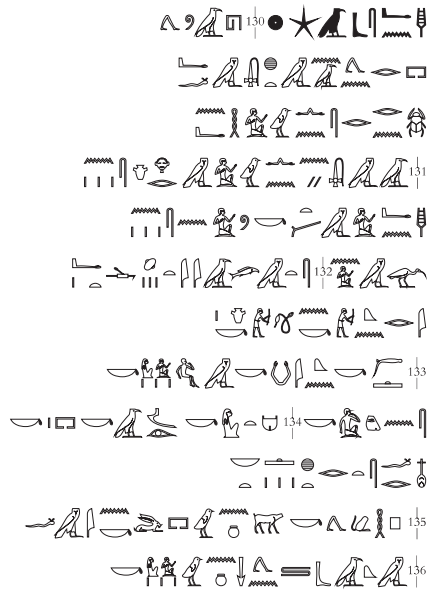
ḥrdw m qṣb.sn — an adverb sentence used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.7). *m qṣb* is a compound preposition (§ 8.3): literally, “in the innards.”

127–29 *m msw.j ḥnʿ snw.j* — for this meaning of the preposition *m*, see §§ 8.2.3 and 9.4.

nn shṣ.j n.k — an adverb clause with *nn* plus the infinitive (§ 13.15). It is also possible to understand this as the *nn sḡm.f* construction (§ 18.14) “I will not mention to you.” The verb *shṣ* means “bring to mind.”

jnt.n.j — relative *sḡm.n.f*; the gender ending shows that *zṣt ktt* is defined (§ 22.12).

m sṣṣ — following Gardiner 1927, § 457, this prepositional phrase has been understood with *jnt.n.j*, usually as Gardiner’s “through prayer” but also as “through knowledge, skill, foresight” (Derchain-Urtel 1974, 97–99). These interpretations involve two separate words: *sṣṣ* “entreat” and *ṣṣṣ* “experience” (often written *sṣṣ*). The bookroll determinative here, as in line 139, is better suited to the latter; the former is regularly determined with . Although the phrase follows *jnt.n.j*, it can be understood to modify *nn shṣ.j n.k*, since the object phrase *zṣt ktt jnt.n.j* belongs grammatically together after *nn shṣ.j n.k*. The sense of the passage is evidently that the snake knows, from experience, that bringing to mind “the little daughter I got” is painful.

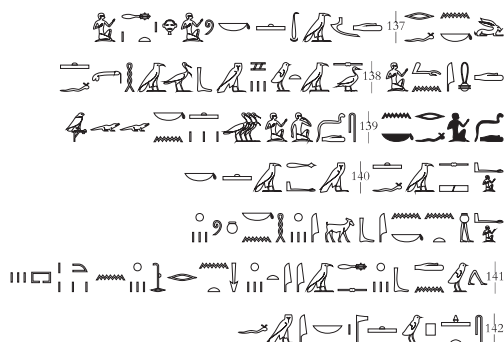


| | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|---|
| 129–30 | <i>ḥr̥.n sbꜣ hꜣ.w</i> | 3 |
| | <i>pr.n nꜣ m ḥt m ḥ̥f</i> | 3 |
| 130–31 | <i>ḥpr.n r.s nn wj ḥr̥</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ꜣm.nj nn wj m ḥr(j) jb.sn</i> | 3 |
| 131–32 | <i>ḥr̥.n.j m(w)t.kw n.sn</i> | 3 |
| | <i>gm.n.j st m ḥꜣyt w̥t</i> | 2 |
| 132–33 | <i>jr qn.n.k rwd jb.k</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mḥ.k qnj.k m ḥrdw.k</i> | 3 |
| 133–34 | <i>sn.k ḥjmt.k mꜣ.k pr.k</i> | 4 |
| | <i>nfr st r ḥt nbt</i> | 2 |
| 135–36 | <i>ph.k ḥnw wn.k jm.f</i> | 4 |
| | <i>m qꜣb n snw.k</i> | 2 |

- 129–30 **Then a star** came down,
and those went up in fire from it.
- 130–31 But it happened while I was not along:
they burned up when I was not in their midst.
- 131–32 Then I died for them,
after I found them as one pile of corpses.

- 132–33 If you have persevered, with your mind firm,
you will fill your embrace with your children;
133–34 you will kiss your wife and see your home:
it is better than anything;
135–36 you will reach home and be in it
amid your siblings.”
- 129–30 *ḥr̄.n sbꜛ ḥꜛ.w* — SUBJECT–stative as a past tense after *ḥr̄.n* (§ 16.8).
- 130–31 This passage is discussed in § 17.5. The negated adverbial sentences in both lines are unmarked adverb clauses. *ḥr̄* is the adverbial form of the preposition (§ 8.2.9).
- 131–32 This passage is discussed in § 20.10. The story within a story within a story ends here.
- 132–33 *jr qn.n.k* — this is a conditional apodosis with the *sgm.n.f*. The verb *qnj* means essentially “persevere, not give up.” The common connotation of bravery derives from the context of battle: one who perseveres in battle is “brave.” Egyptian soldiers who displayed this trait were rewarded by the king with a gold fly, because flies “persevere” in annoying people even when swatted at.
- rwḏ.jb.k* — *sgm.f* fused in an adverb clause of concomitant circumstance (§ 20.11).
- mḥ.k qnj.k m ḥrdw.k* — this is the first of five apodoses of the conditional sentence (§ 18.12); the other four follow in the next two couplets. The snake’s mention of this outcome is touching, given the loss of his own children. Note also the use of the words in the last couplet in comparison with the snake’s words in line 126.
- 133–34 *sn.k ḥjmt.k* — the verb *sn* means basically “smell” (hence the first determinative) but also “kiss”: Egyptians apparently “kissed” with the nose rather than the lips.
- nfr st r ḥt nbt* — an adjectival sentence with comparative meaning (§ 7.4.2).
- 135–36 *wn.k jm.f* — the *sgm.f* of *wnm* is used to cast what is essentially an adverbial sentence into the future (§ 18.9).

Episode 10 — The Sailor's Response (lines 136–148)

136–38 *wn.k(w) r.f dm̓.kw hr ht.j* 3*dmj.n.j z̓tw m b̓h.f* 3138–40 *dd.j r.f n. f̓¹ s̓dd.j b̓w.k n jtj* 4*dj.j s̓̓̓.f m ʿ̓.k* 3140–42 *dj.j jn.t(w) n.k jbj hknw* 4*jwdnb h̓z̓yt sntr n gsw prw* 4*sh̓tpw ntr nb jm.f* 3136–38 At that, I wound up prostrate on my belly,
having touched the ground in his presence,138–40 **and saying to him**, “I will relate your impressiveness to the sire
and make him aware of your greatness.140–42 I will have fetched to you *jbj*-oil and *hknw*-oil,
jwdnb-resin and *h̓z̓yt*-resin, the incense of temple stores,
with which every god is contented.

136–38 *wn.k(w) r.f dm̓.kw* — two 1s statives. The first is an archaic use of the form as a narrative past tense (§ 16.5), in place of the more contemporary *s̓dm.f* (cf. col. 126). The construction serves as a way of situating the state described by *dm̓.kw* “stretched out” over a period of time in the past (cf. § 18.9). *r.f* links this sentence with the preceding episode (§ 15.7.2).

dmj.n.j — the *s̓dm.n.f* expressing prior circumstance in an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.10).

138–40 *dd.j r.f n. f̓¹* — red ink marks the beginning of the sailor’s speech. The 2ms suffix can be interpreted as written (“So, let me tell you that I will relate”), but that would leave the sailor’s speech without an introduction; a circumstantial use of the *s̓dm.f* in an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.11) makes better sense in the context.

b̓w.k — an abstract written as a “false plural” (Essay 7, § 4.6).

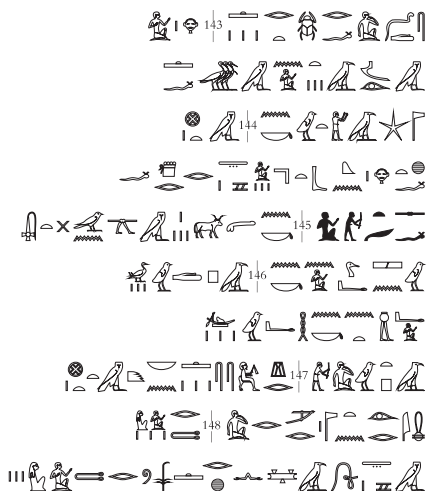
dj.j s̓̓̓.f — the *rdj s̓dm.f* construction (§ 21.8).

- 140–42 *dj.j jn.t(w)* — a second instance of the *rdj sdm.f* construction, with the passive suffix on the second *sdm.f* (§ 18.3).

jbj hknw jwdnb hzȝt — two kinds of oil and two kinds of resin or bark, the last perhaps cassia, a type of cinnamon from Arabia. *jbj* is a form of *jbr* (§ 2.8.4); it has been identified as laudanum, but the evidence is slight. *hknw* was used in funerary rituals, and cassia was used in oils for anointing.

gsw prw — literally, “sides of the houses.” A *gs pr* was a room on either side (*gs*) of the main axis of a temple (*pr*), in which supplies for temple rituals were kept.

štpw ntr nb jm.f — literally, “which every god is contented with it.” *štpw* is either a masculine singular relative *sdm.f* (§ 22.13) with passive sense, or the passive participle in the special use discussed in § 24.6.



- | | | |
|--------|--|---|
| 142–43 | <i>sdđ.j r.f hpṛt hr.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>m mȝt.n.j m bȝw. lk¹</i> | 2 |
| 143–44 | <i>dwȝ.tw n.k ntr m njwt</i> | 3 |
| | <i>hft hr qnbt tȝ r dr.f</i> | 3 |
| 144–46 | <i>ȝft.j n.k kȝw m ȝj n sđt</i> | 3 |
| | <i>wšn.n.j n.k ȝpdw</i> | 2 |
| 146–47 | <i>dj.j jn.t(w) n.k hꜥw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ȝtp.w hr špss nb n kmt</i> | 3 |
| 147–48 | <i>mj jrṛt n ntr mrr rmt</i> | 4 |
| | <i>m tȝ wȝ nj rh sw rmt</i> | 4 |

- 142–43 And when I relate what happened to me,
 what I have seen of your impressiveness,
 143–44 you will be thanked in the town
 in front of the council and the whole land.
 144–46 **I will slaughter** for you bulls as a burnt offering,
 having wrung the necks of birds for you.
 146–47 I will have fetched to you ships
 loaded with every specialty of Egypt,
 147–48 like that which is done for a god people love,
 in a far-off land that people don't know."

142–43 This can be taken as an emphatic sentence with an initial circumstantial clause (§ 25.8.3), as translated here, or as two independent statements ("I will relate ... You will be thanked").

143–44 *dw3.tw n.k ntr* — see the note to *dw3-ntr* in Episode 1 (col. 5–6), above.

hft hr qnbt t3 r dr.f — *hft hr* is a compound preposition: literally, "opposite the face of." The *qnbt* was the local body of officials and elders who adjudicated disputes. For *t3 r dr.f*, see § 6.7; the phrase is hyperbole for "everyone."

144–46 *zft.j* — The reason for the use of red ink is unclear; perhaps it is related to the meaning of the verb.

zj n sdt — see the note to this phrase in Episode 5 (col. 56).

wšn.n.j — the form can be understood as written, as a circumstantial use of the *sdm.n.f* (§ 20.10). A *sdm.f*, however, would make better sense in the context (*wšn.j* "I will wring the neck"); it is possible that the second *n* is superfluous, influenced by the final radical of *wšn*. The verb refers to killing birds (here, for sacrifice) by wringing the neck; English has no one-word equivalent for this action.

146–47 *dj.j jn.t(w)* — see the note to this phrase in line 140, above.

3tp.w hr šps nb n kmt — *3tp.w* is a 3pl stative serving as an unmarked relative clause after an undefined antecedent (§ 22.11); the determinative is the same one used for *f3j* "lift" in cols. 34 and 103 (𓂏 = 𓂏) but without the "stick," making it equivalent to 𓂏 (𓂏). Egyptian is more literal than English in using the preposition *hr* "under" rather than *m* "with" with the verb *3tp* "load." *šps* is an abstract from the adjective *špsj* "fine, special." The group 𓂏 is the determinative of *kmt*; 𓂏 is superfluous, influenced by the writing of *njw* "town" (cf. line 144).

147–48 *mj jrnt n ntr* — *jrnt* is a geminated passive participle, expressing customary action (§ 24.4), serving as object of the preposition *mj*.

mrr rmt — *mrr* is also geminated. It could be either a relative *sdm.f* (§ 22.13) or an active participle ("who loves people": § 23.7); the previous two lines, describing actions done for a god, indicate the former.

m tš wš — *wš* is a participle from the verb *wšj*, “go far away.” This line goes with *nṯr* (“a god in a far-off land”) rather than *jrrt* (“that which is done in a far-off land”). The snake lives “in a far-off land that people don’t know.”


nj rh sw rmt — a clause with the negated *sgm.f* (§ 18.3), serving as an unmarked relative clause after an undefined antecedent (§ 22.13).

Episode 11 — The Snake’s Reaction (lines 149–154)



| | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 149 | <i>ḥḥ.n sbt.n.f jm.j m nn ḡd.n.j</i> | 5 |
| | <i>m nf m jb.f</i> | 2 |
| 149–50 | <i>ḡd.f n.j nj wr n.k ḥntjw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ḥpr.t(j) nb sntr</i> | 2 |
| 151 | <i>jnk js nb pwnt</i> | 2 |
| | <i>ḥntjw n.j jm sw</i> | 2 |
| 152 | <i>ḥknw pf ḡd.n.k jn.t(w).f</i> | 3 |
| | <i>bw pw wr n jw pn</i> | 3 |
| 153–54 | <i>ḥpr js jwd.k tw r jst tn</i> | 3 |
| | <i>nj zp mš.k jw pn</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ḥpr.(w) m nwy</i> | 2 |
| 149 | Then he laughed at me, at what I said to him, in error in his opinion, | |


- 149–50 saying to me, “Do you have so much myrrh,
and have you become owner of incense?”
- 151 For I am lord of Punt
and myrrh, it is mine.
- 152 That *hknw*-oil you said would be fetched,
it is the chief thing of this island.
- 153–54 And when you come to separate yourself from this place,
you will never see this island,
once it has become waters.”

149 *ḥꜥ.n sbt.n.f jm.j* — the *sgm.n.f* as a past tense after *ḥꜥ.n* (§ 17.9). *sbt* (originally *zbt*) means both “grin” and “laugh”; the determinative  represents a tooth, exposed in both actions. The preposition *m* here (*jm* with pronominal suffix: § 8.2.3) and in the next phrase indicates the reason for the snake’s laughter.

m nn dd.n.j — a second prepositional adjunct of *sbt.n.f*. *nn* is the neutral demonstrative pronoun (§§ 5.8–9). *dd.n.j* is a (masculine singular) relative *sgm.n.f* used after a defined antecedent (§ 22.12).

m nfm jb.f — the snake found the sailor’s promises of gifts outlandish enough to be amusing. The phrase *m jb.f* “in his mind” often means “in his opinion.”

149–50 *dd.f* — circumstantial use of the *sgm.f* (§ 20.11).

nj wr n.k ḥntjw — the words after *nj* are an adjectival sentence, literally “myrrh is much for you.” Since such sentences are regularly negated by *nn* (§ 11.6),  is most likely a writing of the particle *jn* introducing questions (§ 15.6.2). The term *ḥntjw* “myrrh” here and in the next couplet has the generic sense of “aromatic resin,” covering the more specific terms *jwdnb*, *hzȝyt*, and *sntr* promised by the sailor.

hpr.t(j) nb sntr — the verb *hpr* is regularly used with the preposition *m* before a person or thing that the subject “becomes” (*hpr m X* “evolve into X”) but is occasionally used with a direct object, as here. The verb form is the 2s stative, used in an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8): literally, “you having become.” *nb* implies ownership (§ 11.9.1), but here it probably also implies mastery (“lord of incense”).

151 This couplet and the next tell why the snake found the sailor’s promises of resin (used for incense) and oil funny.

jnk js nb pwnt — a nominal sentence subordinated by *js* (§ 20.5). The particle here ties the statement *jnk nb pwnt* to the preceding sentence (i.e., “You have become lord of incense even though I am lord of Punt?”). Punt, usually identified as either Somalia or Yemen, was known for its incense trees, and was a regular goal of Egyptian expeditions.

ḥntjw n.j jm sw — for this construction, see § 11.9.2. *ḥntjw* is topicalized and resumed by the dependent pronoun *sw*.

- 152 Having established that he has no need for aromatic resins, the snake now does the same for the oil promised by the sailor.

dd.n.k jn.t(w).f — an indirect relative clause in which the relative *sgm.n.f* governs a noun clause with the *sgm.f* (§ 22.17.4): literally, “you said it would be fetched.”

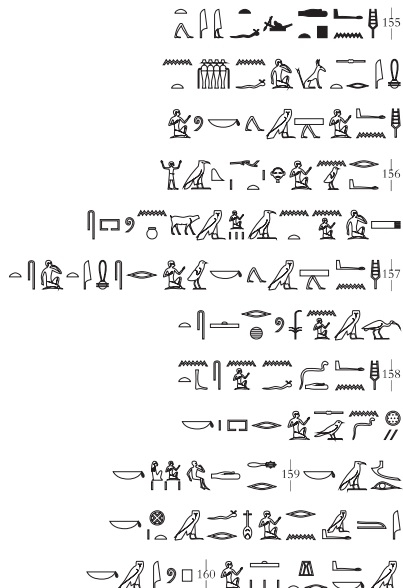
bw wr pw n jw pn — An A *pw* nominal sentence (§ 7.9). *bw* is a term used for any non-specific “thing.” The snake means that *hkmw* is the island’s chief product.

- 153–54 *hpr js jwd.k tw r jst tn* — *js* here marks the sentence as a second subordinate statement (“even though I am lord of Punt ... and even though ... you will never see this island again”). This is a complex emphatic sentence in which the first line is logically subordinate to the second (§ 25.8.3). In this line, *jwd.k tw r jst tn* is an unmarked noun clause with the *sgm.f*, serving as subject of the verb *hpr* (§ 21.11): literally, “(that) you separate yourself from this place happens.” The verb *jwd* means basically “push off from land” and is used with a direct object and the preposition *r* indicating what is being pushed off from: literally, “you push yourself off with respect to this place.”

nj zp mʒ.k jw pn — *nj zp sgm.f* usually has past sense (§ 18.13) but here is clearly future.

hpr.(w) m nwꜣ — *hpr.(w)* is the 3ms stative (referring to the island) used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.8). “Becoming waters” could mean that the island will sink into the sea but probably just refers to it sinking below the horizon as the sailor sails away.

Episode 12 — Rescue (lines 155–160)



| | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|---|
| 155 | <i>ʕhʕ.n dpt tf.jj.t(j)</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mj srt.n.f hnt</i> | 2 |
| 155–56 | <i>ʕhʕ.n.j šm.kw</i> | 2 |
| | <i>rdj.n.(j) wj hr ht qš</i> | 3 |
| | <i>sjš.n.j ntjw m hnw.s</i> | 3 |
| 157 | <i>ʕhʕ.n.(j) šm.kw r smjt st</i> | 3 |
| | <i>gm.n.j sw rh.(w) st</i> | 2 |
| 158–59 | <i>ʕhʕ.n dd.n.f.n.j snb.t(j)</i> | 3 |
| | <i>zp 2 nds r pr.k</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mš.k hrdw.k</i> | 2 |
| 159–60 | <i>jmj rn.j nfr m njwt.k</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mj.k hrt.j pw jm.k</i> | 2 |

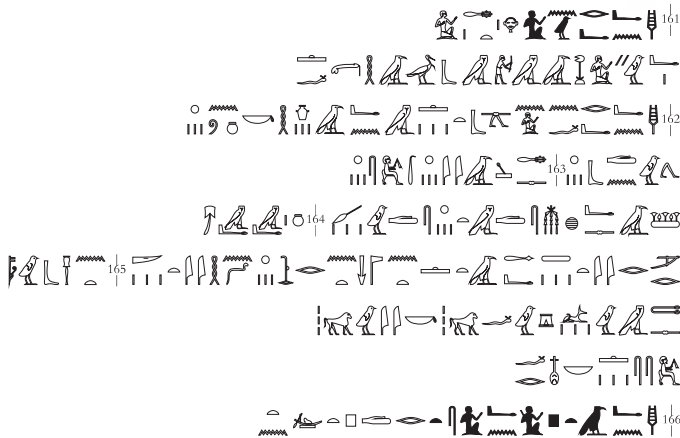
- 155 **Then that boat** came
as he had predicted before.
- 155–56 Then I went
and put myself on a high tree,
and I recognized those who were inside it.
- 157 Then I went to report it
and I found him aware of it.
- 158–59 Then he said to me, “Farewell,
farewell, mister, to your house.
You will see your children.
- 159–60 Put my good name in your town.
Look, that is what I need from you.”

The sailor’s story now jumps ahead four months, to the arrival of the ship that the snake had predicted in Episode 8.

- 155 *ʕhʕ.n dpt tf.jj.t(j)* — SUBJECT–stative as a past tense after *ʕhʕ.n* (§ 16.8).
mj srt.n.f hnt — *srt.n.f* is a feminine relative *sgm.n.f* serving as a noun, object of the preposition *mj*: literally, “like that which he had predicted.” *hnt* is the adverbial form of the preposition *hnt* (§ 8.2.12).
- 155–56 *sjš.n.j ntjw m hnw.s* — this fulfills the second part of the snake’s predication: “with sailors you know in it” (col. 121). *ntjw m hnw.s* is a direct relative clause (§ 22.3).
- 157 This passage is discussed in § 20.10.
gm.n.j sw rh.(w) st — this passage involves the 3ms stative used as an unmarked adverb clause after *gmj* (§ 20.8). For the syntax of *rh.(w) st*, see § 16.5: literally, “I found him having learned it.” This may be a sign of the snake’s prescience, or maybe simply his height.

- 158–59 *snb.t(j)* — the 2s stative used as a command (§ 16.6): literally, “be well” (which is also the original meaning of English *farewell*). *zp* 2 is used for the repetition of this command in the second line (§ 9.5).
- 159–60 *hrt.j pw jm.k* — *hrt* is a nisbe from the preposition *hr* “under” and is used to express both possession (§ 8.8: what one is “under” = what one has) and need (the requirement that one is “under”). The second sense is relevant here: the snake is telling the sailor that he only needs the sailor to speak well of him, and not all the material goods the sailor had promised to send.

Episode 13 — The Snake’s Gifts (lines 161–166)



- | | | |
|--------|--|---|
| 161 | <i>ḥḥ.n rdj.n.(j) wj hr ht.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ḥwj.j ḥzm.(w) m bzh.f</i> | 3 |
| 162–65 | <i>ḥḥ.n rdj.n.f n.j zbt m ḥntjw ḥknw</i> | 5 |
| | <i>jwdnb ḥzzyt tj-šps</i> | 3 |
| | <i>šzʿzh msdmt sdw nw mjmj</i> | 4 |
| | <i>mryt ʿzt nt sntr nḏhyt nt ʿbw</i> | 4 |
| | <i>tzmw gwfw kyw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>špss nb nfr</i> | 2 |
| 166 | <i>ḥḥ.n ʿtp.n.j st r dpt tn</i> | 3 |
| 161 | Then I put myself on my belly, my arms bent in his presence. | |
| 162–65 | Then he gave me a shipment of myrrh and <i>ḥknw</i> -oil, <i>jwdnb</i> -resin, <i>ḥzzyt</i> -resin, <i>tj-šps</i> wood, <i>šzʿzh</i> plants, galena, tails of giraffe, | |

big lumps of incense, teeth of elephant,
hounds, monkeys, apes:
every good specialty.

166 **Then I loaded it** onto that boat.

This section consists of an opening couplet followed by a list of thirteen kinds of goods given to the sailor by the snake. It is not certain that the list adheres to the verse form of the story or is a prose insert, but if it is in verse, it is an unusual stanza of six lines (a sestet). The section ends with a single line.

161 For the second line, see the note to the same clause in Episode 8 (cols. 87–88).

162–65 *zbt* — a verbal noun from *zbj* “send”: i.e., something to be “sent” with the sailor.

ʿntjw ḥknw jwdnb ḥzšyt — these first four items are the ones the sailor promised to send to the snake in Episode 12.

tj-šps — an aromatic kind of wood.

ššʿzḥ — an unknown kind of plant. The word is apparently not Egyptian.

msdmt — a lead mineral, used by the Egyptians for black eye-paint.

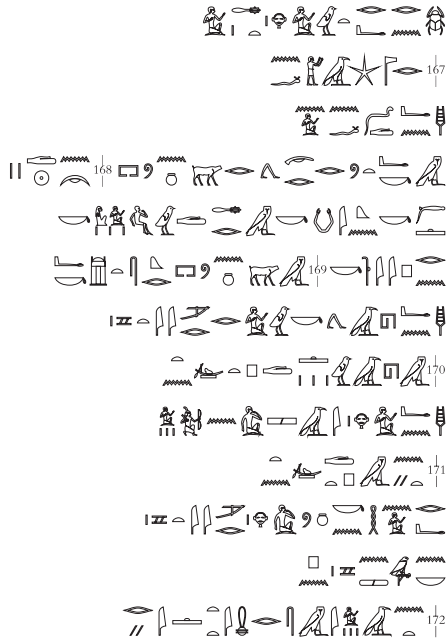
sdw nw mjmj — giraffe tails were prized by the Egyptians as fly-whisks.

mryt ʿšt nt sntr — *mryt* is a collective (§ 4.6).

ndhyt nt šbw — i.e., elephant-tusk ivory. *ndhyt* is also a collective.

ʿzmmw gwfw kyw — hounds were desirable for hunting; monkeys and apes were kept as pets.

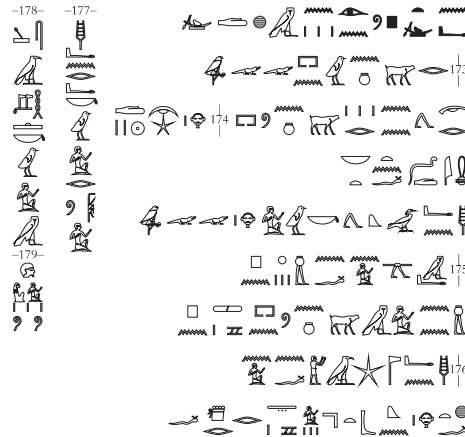
166 Despite the red ink, this line belongs with this section; the scribe apparently used it here at the top of a new column.

Episode 14 — Departure (lines 166–172)

| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| 166–67 | <i>hpr.n rdjt.(j) wj hr ht.j</i> | 3 |
| | <i>r dw3 n.f ntr</i> | 2 |
| 167–68 | <i>hr̄.n ḡd.n.f n.j</i> | 2 |
| | <i>mj.k tw r spr r hnw n jbd 2</i> | 3 |
| 168–69 | <i>mḥ.k qnj.k m hrdw.k</i> | 3 |
| | <i>rnpy.k m hnw qrst.k</i> | 3 |
| 169–70 | <i>hr̄.n.(j) h3.kw r mryt</i> | 3 |
| | <i>m h3w dpt tn</i> | 1 |
| 170–71 | <i>hr̄.n.j hr̄.j3š n mšr</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ntj m dpt tn</i> | 2 |
| 171–72 | <i>rdj.n.j hknw hr̄ mryt</i> | 3 |
| | <i>n nb n jw pn</i> | 2 |
| | <i>ntjw jm.s r mjtt jrj</i> | 4 |
| 166–67 | Once I had put myself on my belly to thank him, | |

- 167–68 then he said to me,
 “Look, you are to arrive home in two months.
 168–69 You will fill your embrace with your children
 and be rejuvenated inside your entombment.”
 169–70 Then I went down to the shore
 in that boat’s vicinity.
 170–71 Then I was calling to the expedition
 that was in that boat.
 171–72 I gave praise on the shore
 to the lord of that island,
 and those who were in it did likewise.

- 166–67 *hpr.n rdjt.(j) wj hr ht.j — rdjt.(j)* is the infinitive with an unwritten 1s suffix (cf. § 17.5) serving as subject of *hpr.n*: literally, “my putting myself on my belly happened.” This is the first half of a balanced sentence (§ 25.9), the second half of which is in the next couplet.
- 167–68 *mj.k tw r spr r hnw* — the pseudo-verbal construction connotes an involuntary future (§ 18.7). The verb *spr* “arrive” uses the preposition *r* to denote the goal of the action: literally, “arrive to the inside” (for *hnw*, see the note to col. 3 in Episode 1).
n jbd 2 — literally, “for two months”: see §§ 8.2.6 and 9.4.
- 168–69 *mḥ.k ... rnpy.k* — the *sgm.f* connotes a voluntary future (§ 18.7). The second line refers to the rebirth of the spirit inside the tomb (Essay 8); it is an alternative way of expressing the same promise made by the snake in Episode 9 (col. 123), *m(w)t.k m njwt.k* “you will die in your town.”
- 169–71 *ḥꜥ.n.j hr jšš* — the pseudo-verbal construction after *ḥꜥ.n* (§ 14.6). *jšš* is a common Middle Kingdom spelling of the verb *ʕš*, reflecting the change of the initial ayin to a glottal stop (**ʕš* > *iš*).
- mšꜥ ntj m dpt tn* — a marked direct relative clause (§ 22.3). For *mšꜥ*, see the note in Episode 1 (col. 8).
- 171–72 *ntjw jm.s r mjtt jrj* — a direct marked relative clause used as a noun (§ 22.4). The suffix of *jm.s* refers to feminine *dpt* “boat.” *r mjtt jrj* means literally, “with respect to the likeness thereunto,” with the adverbial form of the preposition *r* (§ 8.2.7).

Episode 15 — The Sailor's Return Home (lines 172–176 and cols. 177–79)

| | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|---|
| 172–73 | <i>nḥt pw jr.n.n m ḥd</i> | 3 |
| | <i>r ḥnw n jtj</i> | 2 |
| 173–74 | <i>spr.n.n r ḥnw ḥr jbd 2</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mj ddt.n.f nbt</i> | 1 |
| 174–75 | <i>ḥḥ.n.(j) ḥq.kw ḥr jtj</i> | 3 |
| | <i>mjz.n.j n.f jnw pn</i> | 2 |
| | <i>jn.n.j m ḥnw n jw pn</i> | 3 |
| 176 | <i>ḥḥ.n dwṣ.n.f n.j nṯr</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ḥft ḥr qnbt tṣ r ḏr.f</i> | 3 |
| 177–79 | <i>ḥḥ.n.(j) rdj.kw r šmsw</i> | 3 |
| | <i>sṣḥ.kw m dp 200</i> | 2 |

- 172–73 **What we did was to sail** downstream
to home and the sire.
- 173–74 We arrived home in month two,
like all that he had said.
- 174–75 Then I entered to the sire
and presented him with the cargo
that I had gotten inside that island.
- 176 Then he thanked me
in front of the council and the whole land.
- 177–79 Then I was appointed follower
and endowed with two hundred servants.

This section ends the sailor's story. The scribe reverted to columns at the end of the papyrus, again for unknown reasons.

172–74 *nꜥt pw jr.n.n* — a *sgm pw jr.n.f* construction (§§ 13.14.3, 22.24).

m hꜥd — literally, “in going downstream”; *hꜥd* is a verbal noun (§ 13.11.2). The phrase here refers to sailing north, since the island was in the Red Sea (see the note to *hꜥjꜥ* in Episode 2).

r hꜥnw n jtꜥ — this can also be read “to the home of the sire,” as a reference to the capital (Memphis or Lisht), but the interpretation of *n* as the preposition rather than the indirect genitive makes somewhat better sense; see § 8.2.6.

spr.n.n ... hr jbd 2 — an emphatic sentence with rhematic prepositional phrase (§§ 25.6; 25.13.2). Note the use of the preposition *hr* “upon” here as opposed to *n* “in” in Episode 14 (line 168): the latter implies that the voyage would take at least two months, and the former indicates that that was in fact the case.

mꜥ ddt.n.f nbt — see the note to col. 155 *mꜥ srt.n.f hnt* in Episode 14.

174–75 *ꜥhꜥ.n.(j) ꜥq.kw hr jtꜥ* — SUBJECT–stative as a past tense after *ꜥhꜥ.n* (§ 16.8). In Egyptian, one enters (*ꜥq*) *r* “to” a place but *hr* “upon” a person.

mꜥz.n.j — the verb is *mꜥz*; the biliteral *mꜥ* (Sign List D 38, here written as D 36) is often used after *m* in words beginning with that consonant, probably representing a syllable *ma.

jnw pn jn.n.j — *jnw* means basically things that have been “gotten” (*jnf*) from somewhere. It is often used to refer to goods brought back from an expedition or presented to the king as tribute. *jn.n.j* is the masculine singular relative *sgm.n.f* used after a defined antecedent (§ 22.12).

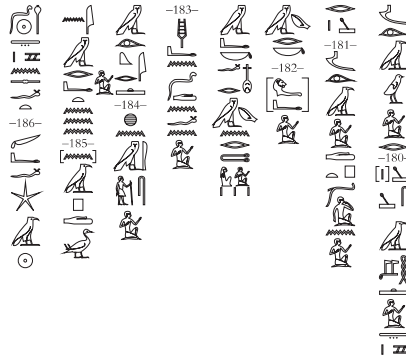
176 *hꜥft hr qnbt tꜥ r dꜥr.f* — note that this is the same phrase that the sailor used in promising that the snake would be thanked (Episode 10, line 144).

177–79 *ꜥhꜥ.n.(j) rdꜥ.kw r šmsw* — literally, “then I was given to (be) follower.” The stative is used here to express the passive with a pronominal subject (§ 19.3). For the sense of the preposition *r*, see the first example in § 25.7. *šmsw* here refers to the rank of “follower” (see the note to col. 1, above) rather than to a person.

sꜥh.kw — a second stative dependent on *ꜥhꜥ.n*. The verb *sꜥh* “toe” (see Episode 3, col. 34) is, for some reason, also used of endowing someone with property.

dp 200 — literally, “two hundred head”: *dp* “head” is sometimes used when speaking of servants, similar to the English idiom *head of cattle*. The number is absurdly large, in keeping with the fantastic nature of the story.

Episode 16 — The End of the Story (cols. 179–86)



| | | |
|--------|------------------------------|---|
| 179–81 | <i>mꜣ wj r sꜣ sꜣh.j tꜣ</i> | 3 |
| | <i>r sꜣ mꜣ.j dꜣt.n.j</i> | 2 |
| 181–82 | <i>sꜣm r.k [hꜣt(j)-ꜣ]</i> | 2 |
| | <i>mj.k nfr sꜣm n rmt</i> | 3 |
| 183–84 | <i>ꜣhꜣ.n ḡd.n.f n.j</i> | 2 |
| | <i>m jr jqr hnms</i> | 3 |
| 184–86 | <i>jn mj rdjt mw [n] ꜣpd</i> | 4 |
| | <i>hꜣ tꜣ n zft.f dwꜣ</i> | 4 |

- 179–81 See me, after my touching land,
after my seeing what I have tasted.
- 181–82 So, listen, high official:
look, it is good for people to listen.
- 183–84 Then he said to me,
“Don’t act so accomplished, friend.
- 184–86 What is the point of giving water to a bird
at the dawn of its slaughter in the morning?”

After the end of the sailor’s narrative, the story itself ends with a final exchange between the sailor and the official. The tops of cols. 177–89 are damaged, with some signs lost (restored here in brackets). This part of the papyrus was on the tightly rolled inside when the papyrus was rolled up.

179–81 *mꜣ wj* — imperative (§ 15.1). The sense is “see how I have turned out.”

r sꜣ sꜣh.j tꜣ — *r sꜣ* is a compound preposition (§ 8.3): literally, “with respect to the back.” For *sꜣh.j tꜣ*, see the note to col. 34 in Episode 3. *sꜣh.j* could be the *sꜣm.f*, as in col. 34 (and col. 103) but is more probably the infinitive here (§ 13.4.2). The phrase here means “after returning from my ordeal.”

r s3 m3.j dpt.n.j — *m3.j* is the same form as *s3h.j*; for the infinitive, see § 13.3.2c. This phrase echoes the snake's observation at the beginning of Episode 9. For *dpt.n.j*, see the note to line 124 there.

- 181–82 *s3dm* — the sense of the verb here is not merely “listen” but “heed”: *mrr s3dm pw jrr ddt* “One who does what is said is one who loves hearing” (Ptahhotep 554: Exercise 24, no. 8).

nfr s3dm n rmt — an adjectival sentence with the infinitive as subject. The sentence could mean “listening to people is good,” but wisdom texts such as the Instruction of Ptahhotep (Essay 19) use the term in the sense of a pupil listening to a teacher.

- 183–84 *m jr jqr* — literally, “don’t act the accomplished one.”

- 184–86 *jn mj rdjt mw n 3pd* — an A B nominal sentence with interrogative *jn mj* as A and the infinitive *rdjt* as B (§ 7.13.1): literally, “what is giving water to a bird?”

h3d t3 n zft.f dw3 — literally, “when the land becomes bright for his slaughter in the morning.” *h3d t3* is a *s3dm.f* used as an unmarked adverb clause (§ 20.11); the “land brightening” is an idiom for “dawn” (§ 25.8.3). *zft.f* is an infinitive with suffix pronoun as object (§ 13.5.1). *dw3* “morning” is a noun used adverbially (§ 8.14). The sentence as a whole means “What is the point of giving water to a bird at dawn when it’s going to be slaughtered that morning?” The metaphor indicates that the official expects the king to punish him for the failure of his expedition — though not necessarily by death — and therefore considers the sailor’s advice, to persevere in the face of hardship, useless to him. This pessimistic reaction to an “instruction” is unusual, but it may have been intended as a second moral to the story, pointing out the fate of one who does not “listen.”

The Colophon (cols. 186–89)



jw.f pw ḥ3t.f r ph(wj).ff mj gmyt m zḥ3
[m] zḥ3 zḥ3w jqr n ḏbꜣw.f
z3-jmny jmn-ꜣ3.(w) ꜣnh-wḏ3-snb

**That is how it goes, beginning to end, like what has been found in writing,
 in the writing of the scribe of accomplished fingers,
 Ameny's son Amenaa, lph.**

As is common in literary papyri, the colophon gives the name of the scribe who penned the papyrus rather than that of the text's author. This part of the text is in prose rather than verse.

jw.f pw — an A *pw* nominal sentence with the *sgm.f* in an unmarked noun clause as A (§ 21.12): literally, “it is (that) it comes.”

ḥ3t.f r ph(wj).ff — literally, “its front to its end.” The dual strokes after the second suffix pronoun indicate that the noun is in the dual: see the comment to col. 85 *gs(wj).ff* in Episode 7. The noun *ph* “end” is often used in the dual even when only one “end” is meant.

mj gmyt m zḥ3 — *gmyt* is a passive participle (§ 24.1). This phrase indicates that the papyrus was copied from another manuscript.

jqr n ḏbꜣw.f — the *nfr hr* construction with an indirect genitive (§ 6.5): literally, “one accomplished of his fingers.”

z3-jmny jmn-ꜣ3.(w) ꜣnh-wḏ3-snb — as usual in Middle Kingdom texts, the father's name is put first, in honorific transposition (§ 4.15). The son's name is a SUBJECT–stative construction, meaning “Amun is great” (§ 16.10). For *ꜣnh-wḏ3-snb* “lph,” see § 20.9.2. While this phrase is used mostly for royalty and superiors, it can also be applied to ordinary people: see the letter quoted in Lesson 25.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, James P. “The Historical Inscription of Khnumhotep at Dahshur: Preliminary Report.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 352 (November, 2008), 29–39.

Berg, David. “Syntax, Semantics and Physics: the Shipwrecked Sailor's Fire.” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76 (1990), 168–70.

Berlev, Oleg. *Общественные отношения в Египте эпохи Среднего царства*. Moscow, 1978.

Bolshakov, Andrey O. “Some *de visu* Observations on P. Hermitage 1115.” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 79 (1993), 254–59.

Derchain-Urtel, Maria T. “Die Schlange des ‘Schiffbrüchigen’.” *Studien zur Alt-ägyptischen Kultur* 1 (1974), 83–104.

Foster, John L. “‘The Shipwrecked Sailor’: Prose or Verse? (Postponing Clauses and Tense-neutral Clauses).” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 15 (1988), 69–109.


Franke, Detlef. “Kleiner Mann (*nds*) — was bist Du?” *Göttinger Miszellen* 167 (1998), 33–48.

Gardiner, Alan H. “Notes on the Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor.” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 45 (1908), 60–66.

———. *Egyptian Grammar*. Oxford, 1927.

Golenishchev, Vladimir. *Le conte du naufragé*. Bibliothèque d’Étude 2. Cairo, 1912.

———. *Les papyrus hiératiques no. 1115, 1116 A et 1116 B de l’Ermitage Impérial à St.-Petersbourg*. St. Petersburg, 1913.

Graefe, Erhart. “*mkꜣ*  ‘aufmerksam sein’, ‘erkennen’ und der rames-
sidische Gebetsanruf *mkꜣ.tw hft sdm.tw*.” In *Decorum and Experience: Essays in
Ancient Culture for John Baines*, ed. by E. Frood and A. McDonald (Oxford,
2013), 43–46.

Manniche, Lise. *An Ancient Egyptian Herbal*. London and Austin, 1989.

Simpson, William K. “Allusions to *The Shipwrecked Sailor* and *The Eloquent Peasant* in a Ramesside Text.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 78 (1958), 50–51.

Vandersleyen, Claude. “En relisant le Naufragé.” In Sarah Israelit-Groll, ed., *Studies in Egyptology presented to Miriam Lichtheim* (Jerusalem, 1990), 1019–24.