

THE ADVENTURES OF SETNA AND SI-OSIRE (SETNA II)

P*urchased in Aswan in 1895, the second tale of Setna (P. British Museum 604) is written on the verso of two reused Greek account papyri, joined to produce a scroll. The Greek texts contain official land registers dated to year 7 of Emperor Claudius (A.D. 46–47) in regard to fields at Crocodilopolis near Gebelein, and this copy of the Demotic tale probably derives from the same region and century. One or more pages at the beginning of the tale are lost, as is much of the first of the seven preserved columns. In comparison with the first Setna tale, the manuscript of Setna II is far less carefully written, with obvious omissions, phonetic renderings, and a few scribal corrections. Beyond the initial publication, however, the text has received scant philological study and little modification in subsequent translations. The current translation contains a number of lexical and grammatical revisions, of which only the most important are referenced in the notes.*

The British Museum scroll contains three distinct tales, in each of which Setna's son Si-Osire is the pivotal character: Si-Osire's miraculous birth, Si-Osire's visit with Setna to the underworld, and Si-Osire's magical duel with a Nubian shaman. As the final episode makes Si-Osire the reincarnation of yet another magician, Setna II links the cycles of three magician heroes: Setna, Si-

Osire, and Hor son of Punesb ("The Wolf"), whose adventures are known from both Demotic and Aramaic versions.¹

The existence of an Aramaic translation of a magician's tale is evidence of the international appeal of these stock characters of Egyptian literature, prominent also in the nascent Alexandrian Greek novel. Cultural influence was hardly unidirectional, and two adaptations of Greek myth are clearly recognizable in Setna's "harrowing of hell," during which he views individuals punished with futile labors: plaiting ropes invariably gnawed by donkeys or attempting to reach food suspended overhead while the ground gives way beneath. The former torment is that of Oknos, the Greek personification of delay, and the latter a variant of that administered to Tantalus, a son of Zeus, who stole the food of the gods for mankind. In the Setna tale, however, the basic Greek imagery has been recast for Egyptian cultural values. These damned are not single mythic figures, but common people whose earthly misdeeds and misfortunes are reenacted in the underworld, maintaining the longstanding Egyptian view of the afterlife as a repetition of life (whm 'nh), contingent upon a weighing of the heart. The equation of the voracious donkeys with ill-fated men's wives who "rob them behind their backs" echoes contemporary Demotic wisdom literature, as in 'Onchsheshonqy, col. 12/13–14.

Traditional Egyptian motifs include incubation for pregnancy, as in the stela of Taimhotep (British Museum 147); the damned as a doorsocket, found in architecture and netherworld descriptions; and the visit to the netherworld itself, long a feature of funerary spells and central to Papyrus Vandier, a tale of the magician Meryre copied in the late sixth century B.C. Suggestions of an Orphic inspiration for this underworld visit may be safely disregarded. An Egyptian origin has also been noted for the "Dives and Lazarus" motif of the rich and poor man, later found in Luke 16: 19–31 and medieval sources. No less traditional is the overt hostility to Nubia, its food and magicians,² here set in the reigns of Thutmose III and Ramses II, both prominently memorialized in conquered Nubian territory.

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1. See B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1993), 23 and 54–57. Dating to the fifth century B.C., the Aramaic translation of "Hor Bar Punesb" is the earliest Aramaic literary text known from Egypt.
2. See S. Sauneron, "L'avis des Egyptiens sur la cuisine soudanaise," *Kush* 7 (1959): 63–69; and R. K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54 (Chicago, 1993), 140.

[Setna and his wife Meheweskhe desire a child so she sleeps in a temple and there sees ... a] dream, while they spoke with her, [saying: "Are] you Mehe-
weskhē, [the wife] of Setna, who sleeps here [in the temple] to gain a
remedy? [... When] tomorrow [morning] has come, go to the entrance [of
the] cistern of Setna, your husband. There you will find a melon vine³
growing. [...] to them. Break it with its gourds, and grind it. [Make it] into a
remedy and put [it in water and drink it. ... You will conceive in a fluid of
conception] from him on that very night.

1/5 Meheweskhe awoke [from] the dream, with these being the things that
she had seen. She acted in accordance with [every]thing / [that she had
been told in the dream. She lay down] beside [Setna] her husband. She
conceived in a fluid of conception from him. Her [menstrual cycle] came,
[and she showed] evidence [of a woman who has conceived. It was an-
nounced to Setna, and] his heart was very [happy] on account of it. [He]
bound [on her an] amulet, and he recited for her a spell.

Setna slept one night [and dreamed that they] spoke with him, saying:
"Meheweskhe, your wife, [has] received [conception in the night.] The
child who will be born [should be named] Si-Osire. Many [are the wonders
that he will do in the land of Egypt.] Setna [awoke] from the dream, with
these being the things that he had seen, [and his heart was] very [happy.]
Her months of pregnancy were apportioned, while she was in [... Her time
of bearing came,] and she bore a male child. Setna was informed of it, [and
he named him] Si-Osire in accordance with what had been said in the
1/10 dream. [He was put] at the breast, / [...] they] cradled [him] and nurtured
him.

It happened that when the child [Si-Osire was one year old], people
would say that he was two years old, and when he was two years old, people
would say that he was three years old. [Setna did not spend an hour] failing
to look at the child Si-Osire, so very great was the love [that he had for
him.] He became big and strong. He was put in school, [and soon] he
surpassed the scribe who had been assigned to give him instruction. It
happened that the child [Si-Osire] began to recite writings with the scribes
of the House of Life in [the temple of Ptah. All who heard were] earth-
shaken in wonder by him. Setna was desirous [to have them] bring him to

3. Suggested to be a persea tree in F. Hoffmann, "Einige Bemerkungen zur Zweiten
Setnegeschichte," *Enchoria* 19/20 (1992/93): 11–12.

the festival before Pharaoh, and that [Pharaoh ask him many questions], and that he give him an answer to all of them.⁴

1/15 [Afterward, a day occurred when] Setna was purified for the festival in accordance with [the custom of] his home, / [...] and the child [Si-Osire was to go to the] festival with [him also.] At that very [moment], Setna heard the sound of a wailing [...] He looked [down from the window] of his home, [and he saw the coffin of a rich man] who was being carried out to the necropolis, while the wailing was [very great ...] and great were the honors [...] He looked [again]; he [looked toward his] feet, and he saw [the corpse of a poor man being carried out of Memphis] wrapped [in] a mat, while there was [silence(?)], with no [one] walking behind [him.]

Setna [said]: “By [Ptah, the great god, how much happier is the rich man who is honored with] the sound [of wailing] than the poor man whom they carry to the necropolis [...].”

1/20 / [Si-Osire said to his father: “May there be done to you in the West] like [that which] will be done to this poor man in the West. [There shall not be done to you what will be done to this rich man in the West. ...] the place(?) [...] you will [go(?)] in the West [...].”

[When he had heard the words of Si-Osire,] the heart of Setna was very [grieved on account of] it. [... He said: “Do I] hear the voice of [my son?”] The child [Si-Osire] said: [“If you wish I will show you the fate of the poor man who was not mourned and that of the rich man who was taken] to his 1/25 [tomb with] mourning. / [Setna] asked [him: “How can you do this?”⁵ ...]

Afterward, [he did not] know [where on earth he was.⁶ ... Si-Osire had] Setna go to a place [... , saying: “...] in [the West]. You will [see ... 1/30 Osiris and the council of(?)] his nobles [...] / [...] which is on the [necropolis(?) ...] life [...] like [...] his [...] there. [...] give [...]. They made [...]

[They went into the fourth hall. Setna saw some people who were plaiting ropes, while donkeys were gnawing on them], and there were some 2/1 others whose⁷ / provision of water and bread was suspended above them,

4. Restoration following Hoffmann, *ibid.*, 12–13.

5. Restorations of ll. 24–25 conjectural, following Lichtheim and Bresciani (see bibliography).

6. Lit. “Afterwards, [he could not] find [any place on earth in which he was].” The conjectural restoration, indicating Setna’s obsession and disorientation, follows Setna I, 3/20 and 5/1, and Setna II, 2/32 and 3/3–4 and 7–8.

7. Column 2 begins with dittography, repeating: “and there were some others whose.”

and as they raced to bring them down, some others dug pits under their feet to prevent them from reaching it.

They went into the fifth hall. Setna saw the noble spirits standing in their ranks. Those who had accusations of violence were standing at the door pleading, and the pivot of the door of the fifth hall was fixed in the right eye of a man who was pleading and crying out loudly.⁸

They went inside the sixth hall. Setna saw the gods of the [council] of the inhabitants of the West standing in their ranks, while the servants of the West stood giving reports.

2/5 They went inside the seventh hall. Setna saw the secret form of Osiris, the great god, / seated upon his throne of fine gold and crowned with the *atef*-crown, with Anubis, the great god, on his left, the great god Thoth on his right and the gods of the council of the inhabitants of the West standing to the left and right of him, the balance being set up in the center before them while they measured the faults against the good deeds and Thoth, the great god, wrote while Anubis gave information to his colleague. And the one who will be found with his faults more numerous than his good deeds will be given to the Devourer belonging to the Lord of the West, while his *ba*-spirit and corpse are destroyed, nor does she let him breathe ever again. But the one whom they will find that his good deeds are more numerous than his faults, they will bring him in among the gods of the council of the Lord of the West, while his *ba*-spirit goes to heaven with the noble spirits. And the one whom they will find that his good deeds are equal to his faults, they will bring him in among the excellent spirits who serve Sokar-Osiris.

2/10 Setna saw a rich man who was wrapped⁹ in a garment of royal linen and who was near the place where Osiris was, being of very high rank. Setna was earthshaken in wonder by what he had seen in the West. Si-Osire walked out before him. He said to him: “My father Setna, don’t you see / this rich man who is wrapped in a garment of royal linen and who is near the place where Osiris is? He is that poor man whom you saw as they were bringing him out from Memphis with no one walking behind him and who was wrapped in a mat. They brought him to the underworld. They mea-

8. For the image and its Egyptian antecedents, see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 117–19.

9. The text entails a play on words between the “mat” (*tm*) in which the poor man was once placed and his current “wrapping” (*tm*) in royal linen.

sured his faults against his good deeds that he had done on earth. They found his good deeds more numerous than his faults in proportion to his span of life that Thoth wrote for him to be given to him and in proportion to his luck on earth. It was commanded before Osiris to transfer the burial equipment of that wealthy man whom you saw as they were bringing him out from Memphis and for whom the honors made were great, to that same poor man, and that he be brought in among the noble spirits as a man of god who serves Sokar-Osiris and who is near to the place where Osiris is. That wealthy man whom you saw, they brought him to the underworld. They measured [his] faults against his good deeds. They found that his faults were more numerous than his good deeds that he had done on earth. It was commanded to punish him in the West. He is [the man whom you] saw with the pivot of the door of the West fixed in his right eye, so that they shut and open out (the doors) on his eye while his mouth is open in a loud cry. By Osiris, the great god, Lord of the West, I said to you on earth: [‘May there be done] / to you according to what will be done to this poor man. There shall not be done to you according to what will be done [to] this rich man,’ since I knew the outcome that had happened to him.”

2/15

Setna said: “My son Si-Osire, many are the wonders that I have seen in the West. However, let me discover [what is happening] to these people who are plaiting ropes while the donkeys gnaw at them, with some others whose provision of water and bread is suspended above them, and as they race to bring them down, some others dig pits under their feet to prevent them from reaching them.”

Si-Osire said: “It is true, my father Setne. These people whom you saw who are plaiting ropes while the donkeys gnaw them, they are the counterpart of the people who are on earth and who are under the curse of god, working by night and day for their livelihood, while their women rob them behind their backs, and they find no bread to eat. They have come to the West also. Their faults were found to be more numerous than their good deeds. They found [that what] had happened to them on earth happens to them there in the West; and similarly those other people whom you saw, whose provision of water and bread is suspended above them, and as they race to bring them down, some / others dig pits under their feet to prevent them from reaching them: the counterpart of the people who are on earth and whose life is before them, but god digs a pit beneath their feet to prevent them from discovering it. They have come to the West [also]. It

2/20

has been set down that what had happened to them on earth happens to them [in the West] also when their *ba*-spirits have been received into the underworld.

Take it to heart, my father Setna, that the one who is beneficent on earth, they are beneficent to him in the West, while the one who is evil, they are evil to him. This is established [and will not be changed] ever. The things that you have seen in the underworld of Memphis, they occur in these forty-two nomes in which [reside the judges] of Osiris, the great god. See, then, [...] Abydos, the place of promenade, the houses of the hereditary princes [in(?)] Philae."

(Si)-Osire finished these words spoken before Setna, [his father, and] he proceeded up onto the necropolis of Memphis, [with his father Setna] embracing him, his hand in his hand. Setna asked [him]: "My son, Si-Osire, is the place by which we went down different / [from] the place by which we came up?" Si-[Osire] did not answer Setna in any manner whatsoever. Setna marveled at the situation he was in, thinking: "He will be able to be a noble spirit, a man of god, [while I] go with him, saying: 'He is my son!'" Setna recited [a protective spell from] the "Scroll of Exorcising Spirits," while yet earthshaken in wonder from what he had seen in the West, and what he had seen weighed [upon] him heavily, since he was unable to reveal [them to any] man [on earth.] The child Si-Osire [attained] twelve years of age, and it happened that there was no [good scribe or wise man who could] surpass him in Memphis in the recitation of protective spells.¹⁰

[Afterwards,] a day occurred when Pharaoh User [maatre¹¹ went] to the court of the palace in Memphis, [while the council] of the nobles, of the generals and of the great men of Egypt were standing [in their] ranks in the court. Then came [a messenger, saying:] "There is a report that a shaman¹²

10. Lit. "writings which take protection," cf. Setna I, 4/31–32.

11. The throne name of Ramses II, preserved in Greek as *Ozymandias*.

12. Determined as a foreign word, the term *ʒte* has often been considered a variant of the Egyptian *ity* "sovereign" (Wolja Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* [Copenhagen, 1954], p. 46), but as early as 1918 Griffith and Gardiner linked the term with the Nubian rebel "Aata" noted in the campaigns of Ahmose (*Wb.* I, 2/7 = *Urk.* IV, 5). For more recent discussion, see C. Vandersleyen, *Les guerres d'Amois* (Brussels, 1971), 76–77; M. Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London, 1987), 61, n.d., and cf. the possible Meroitic title *ate-qere* "royal ate" in B. Trigger, *Meroitic*

2/30 of Cush has made, [who is sealed] on his body with a letter.” He was reported / [before] Pharaoh. He was brought to the court. He gave salutation [and said: “Is there anyone who] will read this letter that I have brought to Egypt before Pharaoh without removing its seal, and who will read the writings that are on it without opening it?¹³ If it happens that [there is no good scribe or wise man] in Egypt who will be able to read it without opening it, I shall take the humiliation of Egypt to the land of Nubia, my country.”

At the moment when Pharaoh [and the nobles] heard these words, [they did not know where on] earth they were, so that they said: “By Ptah, [the great god,] is it in the power of a good scribe or a wise man to read writings [at whose] edge he has looked, or yet to read a letter [without opening it?] Pharaoh [said]: “Let them summon to me Setna [Khaemu]as, my son!” They ran; they brought him back at that moment. He bowed himself¹⁴ / to the ground, he adored [Pharaoh,] he [raised] himself, and he stood on his feet performing the salutations of the adoration of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said to him: “My [son] Setna, have you heard the words that this shaman [of Cush] has said before me, saying: ‘Is there a good scribe or wise man in Egypt who will be able to read this letter which [I possess] without removing its seal and who will discover what is written on it without opening it?’ ”

At the moment when Setna heard the words, he did not know where [on earth] he was, so that he said: “My good lord, who will be able to read a document without opening it? However, let me be given ten days further, so that I might see what I can / do [to] prevent the humiliation of Egypt from being taken to the land of Nubia, the country of gum eaters.” Pharaoh said: “They are given to my son Setna.”

Funerary Inscriptions from Arminna West (New Haven, 1970), 13 and 46 (Text 3a, l. 15). A further Demotic example appears in an unpublished Copenhagen tale; see A. Volten, *Archiv Orientalni* 19 (1951): 72. As the role of these individuals regularly concerns Nubian magic, the title is here translated “shaman.”

13. Egyptian spells for this purpose are noted in R. K. Ritner, “Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and Their Religious Context,” in Wolfgang Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.18.5 (Berlin, 1995), 3344–45.

14. The third column begins with dittography, repeating: “they brought him back at that moment. He bowed himself.”

Rooms for relaxation were given to the Cushite. They made for him swill¹⁵ in the Cushite manner. Pharaoh arose in the court, with his heart very grieved. He lay down without drinking or eating. Setna went off to his home without knowing where on earth he was going. He bundled himself in his clothing from his head to his feet. He lay down without knowing where on earth he was.

Meheweskhe his wife was informed of it, and she came to the place where Setna was. She extended her hand inside his clothing. She found no warmth. He lay listless in his clothing. She said to him: "My brother, Setna, there is no warmth in the breast. A change for the worse is in the flesh. Illness and grief are in the heart."

3/10 / He said to her: "Leave me alone, my sister Meheweskhe. The matter about which my heart grieves, it is not a matter fit to reveal to a woman." The child Si-Osire came inside. He stood above Setna his father. He said to him: "My father, why are you lying down with your heart grieving? The matters that are enclosed in your heart, tell them to me so that I might heal them."¹⁶ He said: "Leave me alone, my son Si-Osire. As for the matters that are in my heart, you are too young and have not yet gained mastery over yourself."¹⁷ Si-Osire said: "Tell them to me so that I might comfort your heart regarding them."

3/15 Setna said: "My son Si-Osire, there is a shaman of Cush who has come up to Egypt sealed on his body with a letter, saying: 'Is there anyone who will [be able] to read it without opening it? If it happens that there is no good scribe or wise man in Egypt / who will be able to read it, I shall take the humiliation of Egypt to the land of Nubia, my country.' It is because my heart is grieved on account of it that I am lying down, my son Si-Osire."

At the moment that Si-Osire heard these words, he laughed for a long time. Setna said to him: "Why are you laughing?" He said: "I am laughing because it is on account of this trivial matter that you are lying down with your heart grieved. Raise yourself, my father Setna! I shall be able to read the letter that was brought to Egypt without opening it, and I shall discover what is written on it without removing its seal."

At the moment that Setna heard these words, he raised himself at once, saying: "What is the proof of the words that you have said, my son Si-

15. Lit. something "sinful/injurious."

16. Lit. "cause that they cease." For the medical nuance, cf. Coptic **ⲧⲁⲗⲗⲟ** (CD 411b).

17. The previously misunderstood passage reads: *ḥw b-ḥr.t=k mḥ r-ḥr=k*.

3/20 Osire?” He said to him: “My father Setna, go to the ground-floor rooms of your home. Every scroll that you will lift up / from inside the chest, I shall say to you what sort of scroll it is. I shall read it without looking at it while I stay above you in your ground-floor rooms.”

Setna raised himself. He stood on his feet. Everything that Si-Osire had said to him, he acted completely in accordance with it. Si-Osire read every scroll that Setna his father lifted up opposite him without opening them. Setna came up from within the ground-floor rooms of his home, being in utmost joy. He did not delay in going to the place where Pharaoh was. He related before him all the words that the child Si-Osire had said to him. His heart was very happy on account of it. Pharaoh purified himself for a festival at the same time together with Setna. He had Si-Osire brought to the festival before him. They drank and celebrated.

3/25 The morning for the next day occurred, / and Pharaoh appeared at the court among his great men. Pharaoh sent for the shaman of Cush. He was brought to the court sealed on his body with the letter. He stood in the center of the court. The child Si-Osire came to the center. He stood before the shaman of Cush. He spoke opposite him, saying: “Woe, O villain of Cush, at whom Amon, his god, rages! You who have come up to Egypt, the beautiful garden of Osiris, the footstool of Re-Horachty, the beautiful horizon of Fate, saying: ‘I shall take [its] humiliation to the land of Nubia.’ The possessive wrath of Amon, your god, is cast upon you! The words that I shall utter, which are those that are written in the letter, do not tell a lie about them before Pharaoh, your lord!”

3/30 At the moment when the shaman / of Cush saw the child Si-Osire standing in the court, he lowered his head. He spoke, saying: “Everything that you will say, I shall not tell a lie about them.”

4/1 The beginning of the narration that Si-Osire told, narrating before Pharaoh and his nobles, while the throngs of Egypt listened to his voice as he said: “Such are the things that are written in the letter of the shaman of Cush who is standing in our midst, stating: A time occurred in the reign of Pharaoh Menkheperre Si-Amon, who was¹⁸ / an excellent king of the entire land, with Egypt overflowing with all good things in his reign, since he was generous in granting expenditures and work in the great temples of Egypt.

18. The fourth column begins with dittography, repeating: “Menkheperre Si-Amon, who was.” The royal name is a phonetic rendering of the throne name of Thutmose III of Dynasty 18.

A day occurred when the chieftain¹⁹ of the land of Nubia was resting(?) in the forests of the domain of Amon.

4/5 He heard the voices of three shamans of Cush [in the] latrine,²⁰ while one of them spoke with a loud voice saying: ‘But that Amon not find fault with me and the chieftain of Egypt have [me punished], I would cast my magic up against Egypt / and I would cause the masses of Egypt to spend three days and three nights, [having] seen [no] light but only darkness.’

The other among them said: ‘But that Amon not find fault with me and the chieftain of Egypt have me punished, I would cast my magic up against Egypt, and I would have Pharaoh brought from Egypt to the land of Nubia, and I would have him beaten with 500 blows of the whip in public²¹ before the chieftain, and I would cause that they return him back [up] to Egypt before six hours have elapsed.’²²

{The third said: ‘But that Amon not find fault with me and the chieftain of Egypt have me punished, I would cast my magic up within Egypt, and I would not allow the fields to be productive for three years.’}²³

4/10 At the moment when the chieftain heard the words voiced by the three shamans of Cush, he had them brought before him. He said to them: ‘Who is it among you who said: I shall cast / my magic up against Egypt. I shall not let [them] see the light for three days and three nights.’ They said: ‘It is Horus-son-of-the-Sow.’

He said: ‘Who is it who said: I shall cast my magic up against Egypt. I shall bring Pharaoh to the land of Nubia. I shall have him beaten with 500 blows of the whip in public before the chieftain. I shall cause that they return him back up to Egypt before six hours have elapsed.’ {They} said: ‘It is Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman.’

He said: ‘Who is it who said: I shall cast my magic up within Egypt. I shall not allow the fields to be productive for three years.’ They said: ‘It is Horus-the-son-of-[the]-Princess.’

The chieftain said (to Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman): ‘Do it,

19. Written *kwr*, for the Meroitic title qere “king,” here translated “chieftain” from the ethnocentric Egyptian perspective.

20. Lit. “the place of the buttocks.”

21. Lit. “in the center.”

22. The previously misunderstood text reads: *hn wmw.t 6 iw b-ir.t=w mnq* “in six hours when they have not yet finished.”

23. Deleted in error by the scribe and restored on the basis of lines 13–14.

4/15 your spell²⁴ of magical / writing! By Amon the bull of Meroe, my god, if your hand provides satisfaction, I shall provide for you many good things.’

Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman made a litter of wax with four footmen. He recited a spell to them; he gave them the breath of hardiness; he caused them to live. He commanded them, saying: ‘You shall go up to Egypt, and you shall bring Pharaoh from Egypt up to the place where the chieftain is. He shall be beaten with 500 blows of the whip in public before the chieftain. You shall return him back up to Egypt in six hours. They said: ‘Fine, we shall not overlook anything.’

4/20 The sorceries of the Cushite flew up to Egypt. They became masters of the night; they became masters of Pharaoh / Menkheperre Si-Amon. They took him to the land of Nubia to the place where the chieftain was. They beat him with 500 blows of the whip in public before the chieftain. They returned him back up to Egypt before six hours had elapsed.”

As for these narratives, it was Si-Osire who was narrating them in public in the presence of Pharaoh and his nobles while the throngs of Egypt listened to his voice as he said: “The possessive wrath of Amon, your god, is cast upon you! The words that I am [saying], are they what is written according to the letter that you possess?” The shaman of the Cushites said: “Read on beyond what you have read. As for every word that you are saying, they are all true.”

4/25 Si-Osire said in the presence of Pharaoh: “When these things had happened, they returned Pharaoh / Si-Amon back up to Egypt with his buttocks badly beaten with severe blows. He lay down in the resting place of the palace of Horus with his buttocks badly beaten. The morning for the next day occurred, and Pharaoh said to the councilors: ‘What is it that has taken control²⁵ of Egypt up to the point that I am removed from it?’ Shameful were the things in the hearts of the councilors as they thought: ‘Perhaps Pharaoh’s mind has gone.’ They said: ‘You are well; you are well, O Pharaoh, our great lord! Isis the great goddess will put an end to your afflictions! What is the meaning of the words that you have just said before us, O Pharaoh, our great lord? It is in the resting place of the [palace of] Horus that you sleep; the gods guard you.’

24. For this term, “deed of written magic,” see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 68–69.

25. The verb *gm* in the sense of “control”; cf. Coptic Ⲅⲙⲓ “strength/power” (CD 815b).

4/30 Pharaoh raised himself. / He had the councilors look at his back that
 5/1 was badly beaten with severe [blows], and he said: ‘By Ptah, the great
 god,²⁶ / I was taken to the land of Nubia this night, and I was beaten with
 500 blows of the whip in public before the chieftain, and {I} was returned to
 Egypt before six hours had elapsed.’ At the moment of looking at Pharaoh’s
 buttocks badly beaten with severe blows, they opened their mouths in a
 loud cry.

Menkheperre Si-Amon had a magician²⁷ named Horus-the-son-of-the-
 Wolf.²⁸ He was a very wise man. He came to the place where he was; he
 cried out loudly, saying: ‘My [great lord], they are sorceries of the Cushites!
 By your rear end,²⁹ I shall make them end up at your [...] and slaughter.’
 [Pharaoh] said [to him]: ‘Hurry to me! Do not let me be taken to the
 5/5 land of Nubia / on yet another night!’

The magician [Horus-the-son-of]-the-Wolf returned immediately. He
 took his scrolls and his amulets [to the place where Pharaoh] was. He
 recited for him a spell. He bound on him an amulet to prevent the sorceries
 of the Cushites from gaining control over him. He [came] out from before
 Pharaoh. He took his burnt offerings and libations. He went on board a
 boat. He did not delay in going to Hermopolis. He went off into the temple
 of Hermopolis. He [performed his] burnt offerings and libations before
 Thoth the [eight times] great,³⁰ the lord of Hermopolis, the great god. He
 prayed before him, saying: ‘Give your attention to me, my lord Thoth! Do

26. The fifth column begins with dittography, repeating: “and he said: ‘By Ptah, the great god.’”

27. Lit. “Chief (lector priest)”; for the equation of this title with “magician,” see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 220–22.

28. Written as Horus-son-of-Paneshy, the name might be interpreted as “Horus, son of the Expeller (*nš Wb.* II, 337/12–14),” an appropriate designation for the exorcist hero. However, the pun in 6/13 shows that the writing *P3-nšy* is a contraction for *P3-wnšy* “The Wolf,” a suspicion confirmed by Demotic and Aramaic versions of further adventures of this Egyptian magician, see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 70–71, n. 320.

29. The damaged signs suggest *pḥ.w(y)* “rear” (Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 138), forming a pun on the hero’s threat to have the villains reach/end up at (*pḥ*) royal punishment. Oaths to kings are sworn on royal body parts, cf. 6/34.

30. For such epithets of Thoth, see R. K. Ritner, “Hermes Pentamegistos,” *GM* 49 (1981): 73–75, and idem, “Additional Notes to Hermes Pentamegistos,” *GM* 50 (1981): 67–68.

not let the Cushites take the humiliation of Egypt to the land of Nubia! You are the one who [created] magical writings. You are the one who suspended the heaven as he established the earth and the underworld, placing the gods and the [spirits]. Let me learn the way to save Pharaoh [from the sorceries of the] Cushites!’

5/10 Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf lay down / in the temple. That same night he beheld himself in a dream, while the secret form of the great god Thoth spoke with him, saying: ‘Are you Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf, the magician of Pharaoh Menkheperre Si-Amon? When the morning for the next day occurs, you should go into the library of the temple of Hermopolis. You will discover a locked and sealed chamber. Open it. You will discover a chest in the same chamber with a papyrus book in it, the one that I wrote with my own hand. Pick it up, take a copy of it, and set it down in its place again. Its name is the Book of Magic. It has protected me from the enemies, and it is what will protect Pharaoh and save him from the sorceries of the Cushites.’

5/15 Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf awoke from the dream, with these being the things that he had seen. / He discovered the fact that they were divine revelations. He acted in accordance with everything that was told to him by dream. He did not delay in going to the place in which Pharaoh was. He made amuletic protection³¹ for him against the sorceries by the writings.

The second day occurred, and the sorceries of Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman returned back up to Egypt at night to the place where Pharaoh was. They returned to the place where the chieftain was at the very same moment, since they were unable to gain control over Pharaoh because of the amulets and the magical spells that the magician Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf had bound to him.

5/20 The morning for the next day occurred, and Pharaoh related before the magician Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf everything that he had seen at night and the manner in which the sorceries of the Cushites were turned away, since they were unable to gain control over him. Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf had a great amount of pure wax brought to him. He made a litter with four footmen. He recited / a spell to them; he gave them the breath of hardiness; he caused them to live. He commanded them, saying: ‘You shall go to the land of Nubia tonight, and you shall bring the chieftain up to

31. This term for protection also signified “amulets,” and phylacteries are here intended; see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 49–51 and 216.

Egypt to the place where Pharaoh is. He shall be beaten with 500 blows of the whip in public in the presence of³² Pharaoh. You shall return him to the land of Nubia again before six hours have elapsed. They said: 'Fine, we shall not overlook anything.'

The sorceries of Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf flew below the clouds of the sky. They did not delay in going to the land of Nubia by night. They became masters of the chieftain. They brought him up to Egypt. They beat him with 500 blows of the whip in public in the presence of Pharaoh. They returned him to the land of Nubia before six hours had elapsed."

5/25 As for these narratives, it was Si-Osire who was narrating them in public in the presence of Pharaoh / and his nobles while the throngs of Egypt listened to his voice as he said: "The possessive wrath of Amon, your god, is cast upon you, O villain of the Cushites! The words that I am saying, are they what is written in this letter?" The shaman spoke with his head lowered, saying: "Read on beyond what you have read. As for every word that you are saying, they are what is written in this letter."

Si-Osire said: "When these things had happened, after they returned the chieftain to the land of Nubia before six hours had elapsed, they left him in his place. He slept; he rose in the morning badly beaten with the blows that he had been given up in Egypt. {He said to his nobles: 'I was taken up to the land of Egypt}, and I was beaten with 500 blows of the whip in public in the presence of Pharaoh of Egypt, and {I} was returned to the land of Nubia again.' He turned his back to the nobles; they opened their mouths in a loud cry.

5/30 The chieftain sent them after Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman. He said: 'May Amon / the bull of Meroe, my god, curse you! It is you who went against the people of Egypt. Set me at rest to see the method that you will use to save me from the hand of Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf.' He made his sorceries. He bound them to the chieftain in order to protect him from the sorceries of Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf.

The night of the second day occurred, and the sorceries of Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf flew to the land of Nubia. They brought the chieftain up to Egypt. They beat him with 500 blows of the whip in public in the presence

32. The scribe has corrected the simple preposition "before," used in parallel passages for the Nubian chieftain (4/18 and 21), to the preposition "in the presence of" reserved for Egyptian royalty and gods.

of Pharaoh. They returned him to the land of Nubia before six hours had elapsed. This pattern happened to the chieftain for three days, for the sorceries of the Cushites were unable to save the chieftain from the hand of Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf.

5/35 The chieftain was sorely troubled. He had Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman brought before him. He said to him: 'Woe, O villain of the Cushites! You have caused that I suffer at the hands of / the people of Egypt! You have not been able to save me from their hand! By Amon the bull [of] Meroe, my god, if it happens that you won't be able to cause me [to be safe] from the assaults³³ of the people of Egypt, I shall have you put to a miserable and prolonged death.'

He said: 'O my lord the chieftain, have me sent up to Egypt, so that I might see the one who performs magic among them, that I might be victorious against him, and that I might cause him to discover the scorn that opposes³⁴ his hand.'

6/1 Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman was sent away from before the chieftain. He came to the place where the Nubian woman, his mother, was. / {He told her what had happened to him, and she said to him: 'Do not go to the place where Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf} is! If you go up to Egypt to perform magic in it, guard yourself against the people of Egypt. You will not be able to contend with them. Do not suffer at their hands and so not return to the land of Nubia ever!'

He said: 'There is nothing to them, the words that you say. I shall not be able to avoid going up to Egypt and casting my magic up within it.' The Nubian woman, his mother, said to him: 'When it has happened that you have gone up to Egypt, leave some signs between me and you, so that if it happens that you are suffering, I shall come to you and see if I can save you.' He said to her: 'If it happens that I am suffering, may it happen regarding drinking [or eating], that the meat and water will become the color of blood before you, the food before you will become the color of meat, / and the sky will become the color of blood before you.'

Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman made signs between [himself]

33. Formerly misunderstood as "aerial cars" (Griffith) or "sky-boats" (Lichtheim), the term signifies "semen" or "injury" (Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, pp. 103 and 106 "Verderben") comparable to earlier Egyptian *mtw.t* "semen/poison."

34. The previously unread word is *mtr* "to be opposite" (Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 191).

and his mother; he flew up to Egypt engorged³⁵ with magic. He inspected from what Amon had made³⁶ up to Memphis to the place where Pharaoh was, sniffing after [the] one who made magical spells in Egypt. He came to the court in the presence of Pharaoh. He spoke with a loud voice, saying: ‘Woe, O he who performs magic against me in the court, in the place where Pharaoh is, with the throngs of Egypt looking at him, whether it be two scribes of the House of Life or one scribe of the House of Life who performs magic against the chieftain, bringing him up to Egypt in spite of me!’

6/10 And as he said these very words, Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf was standing in the court in the presence of Pharaoh, saying: ‘Woe, O villain of Cush! Are you not Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman, whom I saved in the gardens of Pre when your companion / from Cush was with you, and you were both fallen into the water, cast down from the mountain on the east of Heliopolis? Didn’t you give thought to the freedom of Pharaoh, your lord, when you had his buttocks beaten in the place where the chieftain was, and when you came up to Egypt, saying: Is there someone performing magic against me? By Atum, the lord of Heliopolis, the gods of Egypt have brought you back to repay you in their country! You are met! I am coming to you!’

6/15 At the moment when Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf said these words, Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman answered him, saying: ‘Is it the one whom I had instructed in the language of wolves³⁷ who now performs magic against me?’ The shaman of Cush made a spell of magical writing. He caused fire to break out in the court. Pharaoh and the nobles of Egypt cried out loudly, saying: ‘Hurry to us, O magician Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf!’ Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf made / a magical formula.³⁸ He caused the sky to make an Upper Egyptian rainstorm³⁹ above the fire, so that it was extinguished immediately.

35. The term “swallow” also signifies “to know” and is used for puns in magical contexts where, as here, food serves as a magical signal; see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 105–6.

36. A designation of Nubia.

37. Like the events of ll. 9–10 regarding the gardens of Pre, this seems a reference to a lost episode of the cycle, though here the Nubian shaman puns upon his opponent’s name Paneshy as Pa-(we)neshy “The Wolf.”

38. For this term “a pattern of writing,” see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 70–71.

39. The term refers to the infrequent but sudden and drenching downpours found in Upper Egypt.

6/20 The Cushite made another spell of magical writing.⁴⁰ He created a great mist over the court, while no one among them was able to see his brother or his colleague. Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf recited a spell to the sky. He caused it to stop being foul from the vile wind in which it had been. Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman made another spell of magical writing. He created a great vault of stone, amounting to 200 cubits in height by 50 cubits in width above Pharaoh and his nobles, so that it was about to make Egypt devoid of a king and the land lacking a lord. Pharaoh looked at the sky, he saw the stone vault above him, and he opened his mouth in a loud cry together with the throng who were in the court. / Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf recited a magical formula. He created a papyrus bark. He caused that it carry away the vault of stone. It halted with it beside the Great Lake,⁴¹ the large water of Egypt.

The shaman of Cush realized that he would not be able to contend with [the Egyptian]. He made a spell of magical writing to prevent his seeing him in the court, as well as the way that he would have himself go to the land of Nubia and his city. Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf recited a spell to him. He caused that the sorceries of the Cushite be revealed. He caused Pharaoh and the throngs of Egypt who were standing in the court to see him in the form of an evil bird⁴² that was about to get away. Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf recited a spell to him. He caused {him} to turn over on his back, while a fowler stood above him with his sharp knife in his hand, about to punish him.

6/25 When all these things happened, the signs that Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman had left / between himself and his mother happened before her in their entirety, so that she did not delay in going up to Egypt in the shape of a goose. She stood above the palace crying out in her voice to her son as he was in the form of an evil bird with the fowler standing above him. Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf looked at the sky; he saw the Nubian woman in the form in which she was. He recognized that she was the Nubian woman, the Cushite. He recited a spell to her. He caused her to be turned over on her back, while a fowler stood above her with his sword about to kill her. She ceased being in the shape in which she was. She made her form into a

40. The sentence is repeated by dittography at the beginning of l. 16.

41. Presumably a reference to the Faiyum, known as the "Great Water."

42. For this form adopted by the Nubian and his mother, see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 160–61; and Hoffmann, *Enchoria* 19/20 (1992/93): 13–14.

Nubian woman as she pleaded, saying: ‘Do not destroy us, O Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf! Forgive us this misdeed! If it happens that you might give us a bark, we shall not return to Egypt ever again!’

6/30 Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf made an oath of Pharaoh and of the gods / of Egypt, saying: ‘I shall not withdraw myself with respect to the spell of magical writing⁴³ until you have made for me an oath not to return back up to Egypt on another occasion.’ The Nubian woman raised her hand, so as not to come up to Egypt forever and ever. Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman made an oath, saying: ‘I shall not come up to Egypt for 1500 years!’ Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf withdrew his hand from his spell of magical writing. He gave a bark to Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman and the Nubian woman his mother. They flew off to the land of Nubia and their city.”

6/35 As for these narratives, it was Si-Osire who was making them in the presence of Pharaoh, while the throngs of Egypt listened to his voice, Setna his father saw everything, and the head of the shaman of Cush was lowered, as he said: “By your face, my great lord, this one who is before you, he is Horus-the-son-of-the-Nubian-woman, this one whose story I am narrating, and who has not given thought to what he has done previously! He has come up to / Egypt at the end of 1500 years in order to cast magic into it. By Osiris, the great god and lord of the West owing to whom I rest, I myself am Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf who stands in the presence of Pharaoh! What I did in the West was to discover that the villain of Cush was going to cast his magic into it, when there was no good scribe or wise man in Egypt at 7/1 the time who would be able to contend / with him. I made a request in the presence of Osiris in the West to let me go out to the earth once more to prevent his taking the humiliation of Egypt to the land of Nubia. It was commanded before Osiris to send me to the earth. I awoke. I settled in a skull⁴⁴ [to] find Setna, the son of Pharaoh, on the necropolis of Heliopolis

43. Reading the inserted correction above the line as *ḏ bn-ḥw=i r tṯ wy.t=i* followed by *n-rn pṣ sp n ḥyq sš*.

44. Written *wṣḥ=i r swḥ.t-ḏḏḏ*, cf. CD 505b (a soul leaves the body and settles on the hand of an archangel), and 374a (“egg of the head”). It would seem that in the lost beginning, the magician’s spirit temporarily occupied a skull in two cemeteries. Previous interpretations have combined an unetimological spelling with an untested idiom to produce: “I flew up to find Setna.”

and on the necropolis of Memphis, with the result I grew as that melon vine, which was the way to return to the body again so that I might be born on earth to perform magic against this villain of Cush who stands in the court.”

7/5 Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf made a spell of magical writing, while yet in the shape of Si-Osire, against the shaman of Cush. He caused fire to surround him. It consumed him in the midst of the court / as Pharaoh watched him, together with the nobles and the throngs of Egypt. Si-Osire passed away as a shadow from the presence of Pharaoh and Setna, his father, without their having seen him. Pharaoh was earthshaken in wonder together with his great men at the things that they had seen in the court, as they said: “There is no good scribe or wise man like Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf! No other will come into existence after him ever again!”⁴⁵ Setna opened his mouth in a loud cry when Si-Osire passed away as a shadow without his having seen him.

7/10 Pharaoh arose in the court, fainthearted at the things that he had seen. Pharaoh commanded to have preparation made before Setna in order to receive him because of Si-Osire, his son, so as to comfort his heart. Evening came. Setna went to his home with his heart very grieved. Meheweskhe lay down at his side. / She conceived in a fluid of conception from him that same night, nor did she delay in giving birth to a male child. His given name was Usermaatre.⁴⁶ It happened that Setna never failed to make burnt offerings and libations before the spirit of Horus-the-son-of-the-Wolf at all times.

It is the conclusion of the scroll. WRITTEN.

45. Written *bn-ḥw-nṣ* g³ [r] *ḥpr m-sʿ=fʿn sp-2*. For the form of the negative future, cf. J. Johnson, *The Demotic Verbal System*, SAOC 38 (Chicago, 1976), 174. The description recalls that of Naneferkaptah in Setna I, 4/20–21: “the good scribe, the wise man, like whom no other has existed.”

46. Previously misread, the name is written phonetically as *Wsy-mn-Rʿ*, corresponding to the Greek rendering Zmanres; cf. E. Lüddeckens et al., *Demotisches Namenbuch*, I/2 (Wiesbaden, 1981), 128 (no. 23).