

Meet Your Classmates

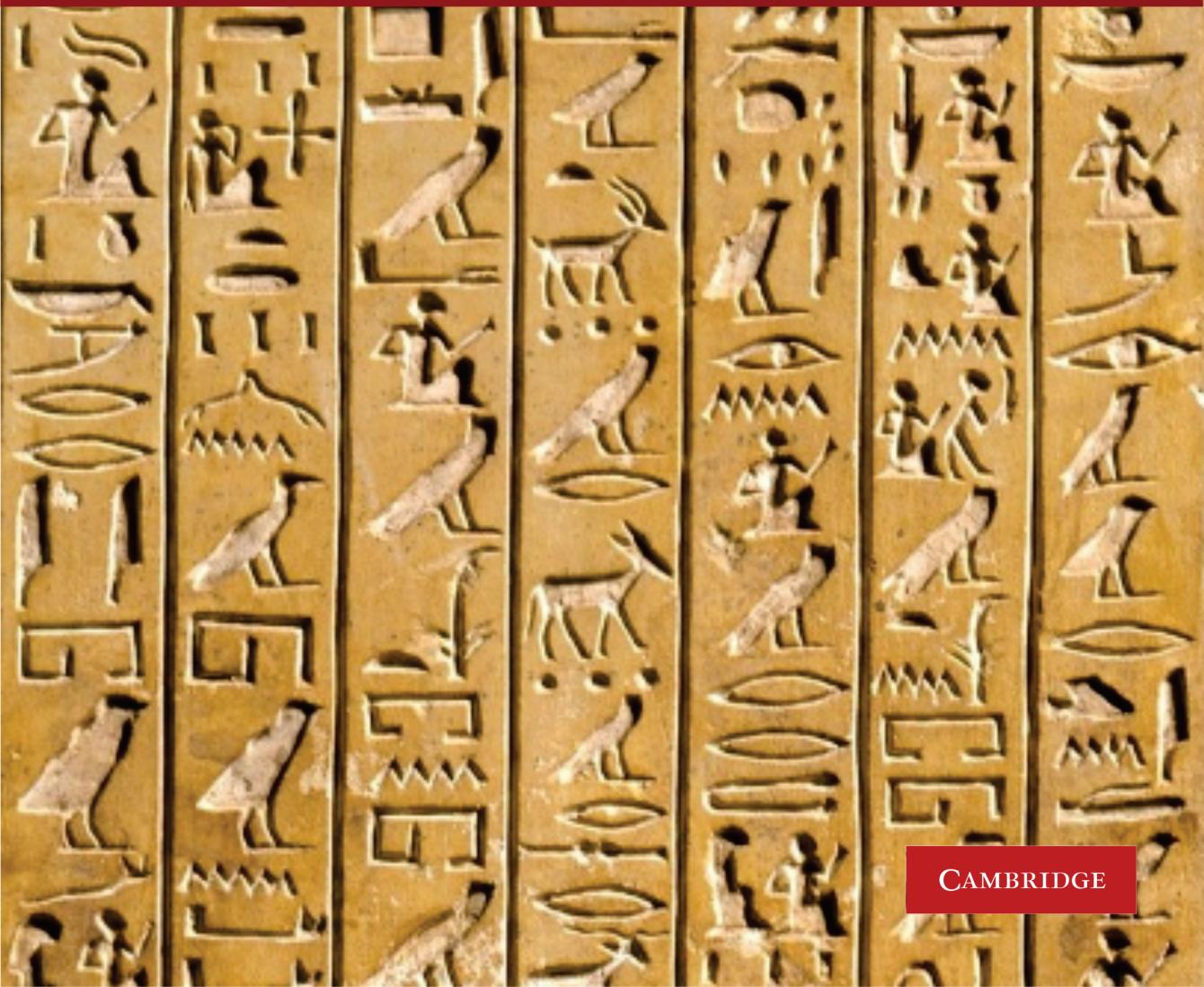
Go around the room and learn everyone's name using only their nametag (and maybe the occasional hint). Find out where they are from and at least one interesting fact about them.

JAMES P. ALLEN

Middle Egyptian

An Introduction to the Language
and Culture of Hieroglyphs

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND REORGANIZED



CAMBRIDGE

3. MULTILITERAL SIGNS

3.1 Biliteral signs

Most of the uniliteral signs introduced in Lesson 2 seem to have been chosen on the basis of the “rebus principle” (see § 1.5). For example, the picture of a mouth (Ὥ) was apparently chosen to represent the consonant *r* from the word for “mouth,” which was something like **ra'* (the pronunciation is deduced from the Coptic word **PO** “mouth”). The inventor (or inventors) of hieroglyphic writing ignored the vowels and concentrated only on the consonants. The sign for *r* could therefore be used not just for the sound *ra* but for the consonant *r* in any word, regardless of the vowels around it. By the same principle, we might choose to represent the consonant *b* in English words with the picture of a bee (❀), and so write the words *baa*, *be*, *by*, *bay*, *bow*, *boo*, *ebb*, and *oboe* as ❀, ignoring the vowels.

The rebus principle is not limited to single consonants. In an English rebus we might use the picture of a leaf (莩) to write not only the word *leaf* but also the second syllable of the word *belief* (❀莩). If we ignored the vowels, we could use the same sign ❀ to write the words *life*, *laugh*, *loaf*, and *elf* as well. In doing so, we would be using ❀ to represent *two* consonants, *l* plus *f*. In the hieroglyphic system such signs are known as **biliteral** (“two-letter”). An example is the picture of a tree branch (↷), which was used as a biliteral sign for *yt*, from the Egyptian word **ȝut* or **ȝut* “wood.”

Biliteral signs are among the most frequent of all hieroglyphs. There were nearly a hundred in common use. The table spread over the following two pages shows these signs, arranged in the order of their first consonant, reading down the table, and their second consonant, reading across. To find the biliteral sign *yt*, for example, scan down the first column to the *y* row, then across to the *t* column.

As you can see from the table, not every possible combination of two consonants has a corresponding biliteral sign: there are none with the consonant *f* as the first or second consonant, and none with the consonants *h*, *ḥ*, *š*, or *g* as the second consonant. Conversely, some two-consonant combinations have more than one sign. When this is the case, the different signs are generally used in different words. Some biliterals are very common, and are used in the writing of many different words. Others are less frequent, and are used to spell only one word or family of words. For example, the biliteral ☩ is used for *ȝȝ* in many words that have this two-consonant combination, while the sign ☻ is used for *ȝȝ* pretty much only in the word ☻ ☩ *ȝȝ(w)t* “offering table.” Some signs can also be used for more than one two-consonant combination: for example, the hieroglyph ☩ has the value *ȝb* in some words and *mr* in others.

3. MULTILITERAL SIGNS

BILITERAL SIGNS (ENDING IN *ȝ-r*)

	<i>-ȝ</i>	<i>-j</i>	<i>-c</i>	<i>-w</i>	<i>-b</i>	<i>-p</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>-n</i>	<i>-r</i>
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>j-</i>									
<i>c-</i>									
<i>w-</i>									
<i>b-</i>									
<i>p-</i>									
<i>m-</i>									
<i>n-</i>									
<i>r-</i>									
<i>h-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>s-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>k-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>ȝ-</i>									
<i>t-</i>									
<i>t-</i>									
<i>d-</i>									
<i>d-</i>									

Notes:

- a. There is some evidence that this sign is actually a trilateral (§ 3.4) with the value *mȝr*.
- b. The second sign originally had the value *dȝ*.
- c. Originally *db*.
- d. The traditional transcription of these two signs, *tp*, is now known to be wrong.

BILITERAL SIGNS (ENDING IN *h-d*)

	<i>-h</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>-z</i>	<i>-s</i>	<i>-q</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t̄</i>	<i>-d</i>	<i>-d̄</i>
<i>ȝ-</i>										
<i>j-</i>										
<i>c-</i>										
<i>w-</i>										
<i>b-</i>										
<i>p-</i>										
<i>m-</i>										
<i>n-</i>										
<i>r-</i>										
<i>h-</i>										
<i>ȝ-</i>										
<i>l-</i>										
<i>ȝ-</i>										
<i>z-</i>										
<i>s-</i>										
<i>ȝ-</i>										
<i>q-</i>										
<i>k-</i>										
<i>g-</i>										
<i>t-</i>										
<i>t̄-</i>										
<i>d-</i>										
<i>d̄-</i>										

Notes:

- e. Also *jt* (see § 2.8.4).
- f. Also ^c*d* (see § 2.8.4).
- g. Also *pd* (see § 2.8.4).
- h. Often for *dd*.

3.2 Phonetic complements

For the beginner, the sheer number of biliteral signs can be overwhelming. Because they are used so frequently, however, they must be learned in order to read hieroglyphic texts.¹ Fortunately, the hieroglyphic writing system itself offers some help in reading biliteral signs—now that you have memorized the uniliteral signs.

Although the biliterals could be used by themselves to write two-consonant words or two consonants of larger words, most often scribes wrote them together with uniliteral signs that “spell out” the biliterals. When used in this way, the uniliteral signs are called **phonetic complements**. In Middle Egyptian, phonetic complements are used mostly to “spell out” the *second* consonant of a biliteral. The “house” hieroglyph  for example, is regularly complemented by the uniliteral  when it is used as the biliteral phonogram *pr*. The group  is to be read *pr*, not *prr*: the  sign isn’t supposed to be read in addition to  but together with it. This is an important rule to remember: **a uniliteral sign following a biliteral sign is almost always a phonetic complement and not an additional letter**. To write *prr*, a scribe would use two  signs (). The only common exception to this rule is the sign : when used as a biliteral (*jr*) it normally has no phonetic complement (); the group  normally represents *jrr*.

Although most biliterals in Middle Egyptian are written with a phonetic complement indicating their second consonant, a few also can have one for their first consonant. In those cases, the biliteral sign normally occurs *between* the two complements (for example, ), though sometimes it can precede one or both of them: for example,  *wd* and  *mr*. Here again, the complements are meant to be read *with* the biliteral, not in addition to it: thus, the group , for example, is to be read *‘b*, not *‘bb*;  represents *wd* rather than *wdw*, and  is to be read *mr*, not *mrmr*.

Phonetic complements are a handy aid to reading hieroglyphs, since they offer a clue to the consonants that the biliteral stands for. For the few signs with more than one biliteral value, the complements also indicate which value is meant: thus,  is to be read *mr*, but  stands for *bb*. The table above has been arranged to help you look up the value of a biliteral sign based on its phonetic complements. To find the value of , for example, look down the *‘* column (answer: *h‘*); to find the value of , look across the *t* row (answer: *tm*).

¹ A good method for doing so is to prepare a set of flash cards with which you can drill yourself. There are also a number of websites with computerized flash cards.

3.3 Phonograms as ideograms

Since the biliteral signs are all pictures of objects, they can also be used as ideograms to write the words for those objects. When used this way in Middle Egyptian, the biliterals normally have no phonetic complements and usually are written with a stroke: for example,  “house” or  “mace.” The stroke is a signal meaning “read the sign for what it represents, not for how it sounds.” The same convention is used with some of the uniliteral signs: for instance,  “mouth.”

As you might expect, the ideograms normally have the same consonants as the uniliteral or biliteral signs (which is how the signs got to be used as phonograms in the first place). Thus, the word for “house” is *pr*, “mace” is *hd*, and “mouth” is *r*. Since this is so, we can say that the signs are still used as phonograms even when they are also used as ideograms. The difference is one of range: ideograms refer to one and only one word, while phonograms can normally be used in many words, which have nothing at all to do with the object that the sign represents. When used as an ideogram, the sign , for example, refers **only** to the word “mace,” which happens to have the consonants *hd*; as a phonogram, however, it can occur in many words, such as  *hdw* “onions” (with the determinative of a plant) and  *shd* “brighten” (with the determinative of the sun), which happen to have the same two consonants *hd*.

3.4 Triliteral signs

In addition to uniliteral and biliteral phonograms, there are also hieroglyphic signs that represent *three* consonants; these are called **triliteral** (“three-letter”) signs. Like biliterals, triliteral signs were often written with phonetic complements to “spell out” all or part of their value. An example is the hieroglyph , which represents a sandal-strap. This sign could be used as an ideogram to write the word “sandal-strap” (). In Egyptian, this word has three consonants, *nly*. The same three consonants, however, also appear in the verb “live” (*nly*). For that reason (and not because living has anything to do with sandal-straps), the  sign was also used as a phonogram in writing this verb and words related to it: for example,  or  “live” and “life” (*nly*),  “cause to live, nourish” (*s nly*), and  “the living” (*nlyw*, with the determinative for a group of people). This use of the  hieroglyph is actually much more common than its use as an ideogram, for obvious reasons: people tend to talk about life more than they do about sandal-straps, even in ancient Egypt.

Triliteral signs are just about as frequent as the uniliteral and biliteral hieroglyphs. The following list shows most of these signs, arranged alphabetically:

									
<i>juv</i>	<i>jm3</i>	<i>jsw</i>	<i>jdn</i>	<i>wt</i>	<i>b3</i>	<i>pr</i>	<i>nh</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>ss3</i>

<i>w3l</i>	<i>w3s/w3b</i>	<i>w3d</i>	<i>wbn</i>	<i>wh3</i>	<i>whc</i>	<i>whm</i>	<i>wsr</i>	<i>wsh</i>	<i>wd</i>	<i>wdb</i>
<i>b3s</i>		<i>p3q</i>	<i>psd</i>		<i>m3c</i>	<i>mwt</i>	<i>msn</i>	<i>mdh</i>		
<i>nfr</i>	<i>nnj</i>	<i>nlb</i>	<i>ntr</i>	<i>ndm</i>		<i>rwd</i>				
<i>hnw</i>	<i>hq3</i>	<i>htp</i>	<i>htm</i>		<i>hpr</i>	<i>hnt</i>	<i>hnt</i>	<i>hrw</i>	<i>hsf</i>	
<i>hnm</i>		<i>zw3</i>	<i>zwn</i>	<i>zm3</i>						
<i>s3b</i>	<i>s3t</i>	<i>sj3</i>	<i>sw3</i>	<i>sb3</i>	<i>spr</i>	<i>snd</i>	<i>slm</i>	<i>ssrn</i>	<i>stp</i>	<i>sdm</i>
<i>smc</i>	<i>sms</i>	<i>sn</i>	<i>szp</i>	<i>ssr</i>		<i>k3p</i>		<i>grg</i>		<i>tjw</i>
<i>t3z</i>		<i>dw3</i>	<i>dmd</i>	<i>d3r</i>		<i>dcm</i>	<i>db3</i>			

As you can see from this list, some triliteral signs can have more than one value, just like some biliterals. Unlike the biliterals, however, most triliteral phonograms were limited to spellings of only one word and its relatives. Most of the Egyptian words with the consonants *nh*, for instance, have something to do with “life” (except for *nh* “sandal-strap”), even if the connection is not immediately obvious: the word “nh” “oath” (with the determinative of a speaking man), for example, comes from the fact that, in Egyptian, oaths began with a form of the verb *nh* “live.” For this reason it is not as important to memorize the triliteral signs: you can learn them as you learn the words they are used to write.

3.5 Summary

In this lesson and the two preceding ones, you have learned about the three different ways in which hieroglyphs can be used to write Egyptian words:

- 1) as **ideograms** (“idea writing,” also called *logograms* “word writing”)—using the signs to write the word for the object they depict: *pr* “house.” In Middle Egyptian, ideograms are usually written with just the one hieroglyph and a stroke.
- 2) as **phonograms** (“sound writing”)—using the signs to represent the consonants of words rather than pictures of objects. Phonograms can represent one (uniliteral),

two (bilateral), or three (trilateral) consonants, and are used in writing many words that have nothing at all to do with the objects that are pictured in the hieroglyphs themselves. Biliteral and trilateral signs are often “complemented” by one or more uniliteral signs, usually representing the last one or two consonants of the multiliteral phonograms. In most cases, the phonetic complements are meant to be read *with* the sign they complement, not in addition to it: for example,  ‘b’ (not ‘‘bb’),  ‘nl’ (not ‘nl nl’).

- 3) as **determinatives**—one or more signs added at the end of a word to indicate the general idea of the word: for example,  ‘pr’ “emerge,” where the “walking legs” determinative indicates that this is a word having to do with motion; and  ‘nl’ “oath,” where the sign of a man with his hand to his mouth shows that this is a word having to do with the use of the head. Determinatives also serve to indicate that the signs preceding them are to be read as phonograms rather than ideograms. Since hieroglyphic writing does not separate words by spaces, determinatives are a useful guide to knowing where one word ends and the next one begins.

These three uses of hieroglyphs mean that an Egyptian word could only be written in two ways: either as an ideogram, or with phonograms. Writing with ideograms, of course, was only possible for words that could actually be pictured (such as “house”). Since there were about five hundred hieroglyphs in common use, only about the same number of words could theoretically be written this way; in practice, however, the number was much less, since not all hieroglyphs seem to have been actually used as ideograms. The rest of the 17,000 or so known Egyptian words had to be written with phonograms.

Contrary to popular belief (and the opinion of scholars before hieroglyphs were deciphered), writing with ideograms was therefore the exception, rather than the rule. Even words that we might imagine could have been written with an ideogram often used phonograms instead. The verb “speak,” for example, theoretically could have been written , using the hieroglyph of a man with his hand to his mouth. But this hieroglyph seems to have been used in Middle Egyptian only as a determinative; the verb “speak” was always written with the phonograms  (dd)—sometimes with the determinative , but more often without it. This is why it is so important to memorize the uniliteral and bilateral phonograms: they are the backbone of the hieroglyphic system.

Determinatives were normally used only for words written with phonograms, for obvious reasons (there is no need to add the determinative  to the word  ‘pr’ “house,” for example). Besides their practical value, determinatives can add a nuance to the hieroglyphic writing of a word that is often impossible to capture with a single word in translation. The word *mjw*t “mother,” for example, is normally written as , with the

determinative of a woman (the first sign, representing a vulture, is a triliteral phonogram *mwt*, followed by the phonetic complement *t*).² When the “mother” in question is a goddess, however, the word can be written as , with the “divine” determinative of a falcon on a standard: even though the hieroglyphs still represent only the single Egyptian word *mjwt*, the nuance added by this determinative requires two words in translation, “divine mother.”

Despite the usefulness of determinatives, however, not every word spelled with phonograms has one. Some “small” words, such as prepositions ( *m* “in,”  *r* “to”), never have determinatives; and a few of the more common words, such as  *dd* “speak” and  *nl* “live,” are often written without these signs as well. Texts written in cursive hieroglyphs or hieratic tend to have more determinatives than do carved or painted hieroglyphic inscriptions, since the effort required to make an additional sign is much less in handwriting than in carving or painting. For the same reason, handwritten texts also tend to use more phonetic complements.

3.6 Non-standard spelling

Even though it was often “written in stone,” hieroglyphic spelling was not fixed. Scribes could add or omit phonetic complements and determinatives, and some words could be written either with ideograms or phonograms. You should not expect to find the same word spelled the same way in every text, or even in the same text. No matter how they were spelled, however, the Egyptian words themselves remained the same, just as the English spellings “love,” “luv,” and even “♥” all represent the same word. This is one reason why Egyptologists use transcription, to show the words represented by the hieroglyphs, regardless of their hieroglyphic spelling.

Whatever their use, hieroglyphs themselves were still pictures, and because of that characteristic scribes could sometimes play with the hieroglyphic writing of words. For example, the name of the goddess Hathor, *hwt-hnw*, which means “Horus’s Enclosure,” is often written as , with the falcon representing the god Horus () actually shown inside an enlarged version of the hieroglyph for “enclosure” (). Some spellings of hieroglyphic words can be even more playful. The preposition *m-hnw* “inside” (literally, “in the interior”) is usually written in straightforward fashion as  (with the “house” determinative), but scribes sometimes wrote it with the signs  instead; this derives from an ancient Egyptian pun: the signs are to be read *mw* “water” *hr* “under” *nw* “pot,” and this sounded similar to the word for “inside”: *mw-h(r)-nw* = *m-hnw*.

² Although it is written with the triliteral *mwt*, the word for “mother” has an unwritten *j* as its second consonant.

Although it tended to be conservative in spelling, hieroglyphic wasn't a frozen system. Scribes seem to have been aware of its underlying principles, and from time to time they used these to invent new spellings. These could involve new uses of older hieroglyphs, like the pun for *m-hnw*, or completely new ideograms or determinatives: the word *mry* “beloved,” for instance, is normally written with phonograms (𓏏𓏏𓏏), but in one text the scribe replaced it with a new ideogram, the picture of a man touching a woman (𓏏𓏏). In Ptolemaic and Roman times, the fad for new and clever spellings was so popular that the hieroglyphic system itself was practically reinvented; one text even consists mostly of crocodile signs, each of which is to be read differently. These later texts are much more difficult to read than most hieroglyphic inscriptions, even for specialists.

3.7 Transcription symbols

Besides the letters introduced in Lesson 2, Egyptologists also use a number of symbols in transcribing hieroglyphic texts:

- () Parentheses are used to add words or parts of words that aren't represented in the hieroglyphs but were part of the word nonetheless. They are mostly used to show the “weak” consonants, which are often omitted in hieroglyphs. Examples: 𓏏 h(3)b, 𓏏 𓏏 r(m)t (see § 2.8).
- [] Square brackets show words or parts of words missing in hieroglyphs. Unlike parentheses, square brackets are used for parts of a hieroglyphic inscription that were once present but have become damaged or broken away. If Egyptologists can be fairly certain what the missing words were, they restore them between square brackets; if not, they use three dots (called an “ellipsis”) between the brackets. Examples: *sw hr t3 [n] ȝmw, t3 [...] n3 n ȝmw* (Helck, HBT, 94).
- ¹ [) Half brackets enclose words or parts of words for which Egyptologists think the original scribe used the wrong hieroglyph; example: 𓏏 ȝlw (for 𓏏). They can also be used to indicate restorations of missing text that are considered likely but uncertain.
- < >* Pointed brackets are used to add words or parts of words that aren't represented in the hieroglyphs and which Egyptologists think were left out by mistake; example: *jn(h)wj.*

This book uses small capitals to transcribe names that are enclosed in cartouches; example: *JMN-M-H3T* “Amenemhat.” A dash is sometimes used to link compound words, such as the three parts of this name (which means “Amun-in-front”).

Most Egyptologists also use a dot in transcription. Many words that the Egyptians pronounced as a single word actually consist of several elements, and the dot is used to separate these elements to make them easier for us to recognize. For example, the word *dd.n.f* “he has spoken,” consists of three elements: the verb *dd* “speak”; the consonant *n*, a mark of completed action; and *f*, the pronoun “he.” The dot is usually pronounced like “e” as in *met*: i.e., “JED-en-ef” (rather than “JED-nef”). You will learn more about the use of the dot in subsequent lessons.

EXERCISE 3

Transcribe the following words (determinatives are explained in parentheses).

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1.  “Amun” (god) | 14.  “companion” (man) |
| 2.  “blessing” (speak, think) | 15.  “likeness” |
| 3.  “head, above” | 16.  “great” |
| 4.  “secret” (abstract) | 17.  “exist” |
| 5.  “build” (effort) | 18.  “enter” (motion) |
| 6.  “go” | 19.  “big” |
| 7.  “he, him” | 20.  “come” |
| 8.  “under” | 21.  “stop” (motion) |
| 9.  “appear” | 22.  “pyramid” (pyramid) |
| 10.  “face, over” | 23.  “Orion” (star) |
| 11.  “the above” (sky) | 24.  “fetch” |
| 12.  “feed” (use the mouth) | 25.  “beloved” |
| 13.  “all” | 26.  “new” (abstract) |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 27.  “who gives birth” | 53.  “ferry” (boat) |
| 28.  “witness” (accuracy and speak) | 54.  “naked” (cloth) |
| 29.  “interior” (house) | 55.  “conceive” (pregnant woman) |
| 30.  “forceful” | 56.  “narrow” (bad) |
| 31.  “wipe” (effort) | 57.  “son” (man) |
| 32.  “place” (place) | 58.  “daughter” (woman) |
| 33.  “hair” (hair) | 59.  “snake” (snake) |
| 34.  “take” (force) | 60.  “tomb” (house) |
| 35.  “give” | 61.  “tongue” (flesh) |
| 36.  “fluid” (effluent) | 62.  “swim” (water) |
| 37.  “ear” (ear) | 63.  “skin” (skin) |
| 38.  “stable, steady” (abstract) | 64.  “widow” (woman) |
| 39.  “staff” (wood) | 65.  “give” |
| 40.  “plow” (plow) | 66.  “pass” (path, motion) |
| 41.  “arrow” (arrow) | 67.  “bow” |
| 42.  “wild” | 68.  “form” (mummy) |
| 43.  “brighten” (sun) | 69.  “perish” (bad) |
| 44.  “bring to mind” (think) | 70.  “black” (hair) |
| 45.  “take away” (force) | 71.  “empty” (bad) |
| 46.  “fear” (emotion) | 72.  “protection” (abstract) |
| 47.  “gate” (house) | 73.  “pound” (pounding) |
| 48.  “seed” (seed) | 74.  “eternity” (time) |
| 49.  “water” | 75.  “stela” (stela) |
| 50.  “ball” (ball) | 76.  “hack” (hoe, effort) |
| 51.  “eye” | 77.  “strength” (force) |
| 52.  “heart” | 78.  “what is done” |

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE

AN HISTORICAL STUDY

BY

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1. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN is the oldest and longest continually attested of the world’s languages. Recent discoveries have demonstrated the existence of Egyptian hieroglyphic writing with phonograms as well as ideograms around 3250 BC, roughly contemporary with the comparable development in Mesopotamian cuneiform, and the last documents composed in Coptic, the final stage of the language, date to the eighteenth century AD.¹ This extraordinary lifespan of five thousand years is preserved in a wealth of written material, making it possible to trace the development of the language through at least three millennia of its history.²

A. AFFINITIES

Egyptian belongs to the Hamito-Semitic family of languages.³ It has affinities with Hamitic languages such as Beja, Berber, and Oromo, and with all the Semitic languages, including Akkadian, Arabic, and Hebrew. Common Hamito-Semitic features include consonantal root structures; lexical morphology (e.g., nouns of instrumentality with initial *m-*, verbal causatives with initial *s-*); two genders, masculine and feminine, the latter marked by a final *-t*; plural marked by final *-w/-wt*; independent and suffix forms of the personal pronouns; the stative verb form; and non-

1 Kahl 2003; see also Jiménez-Serrano 2007; Richter 2009. The Bohairic dialect of Coptic is still used in the liturgy of the Coptic church.

2 Major diachronic studies are those of Stricker 1945, Junge 1984, Loprieno 1995, Kruchten 1999, and Winand 2006. Documents before 2600 BC reveal only a few features of grammar, and developments in Coptic after the Arab conquest of Egypt in the seventh century AD have not been studied systematically (Richter 2009).

3 Also called, less accurately, Afro-Asiatic (Arabic is both an African and an Asian Semitic language). For an overview, see Petráček 1988.

verbal sentences.⁴ Non-Hamitic features of Egyptian include a preponderance of triconsonantal roots (almost two-thirds of all verb roots in the early text corpus known as the Pyramid Texts), a dual marked by final *-wj/-tj*, some lexical cognates (e.g. *spt* “lip” ≈ Akkadian *šaptum*, Arabic *šafatun*, Hebrew *šāpā*), and the vocalization pattern of some verbal derivatives.⁵ Non-Semitic features include other lexical cognates (e.g., *jrt* “eye” ≈ Oromo *ila* versus Semitic *‘yn, fdw* “four” ≈ Beja *fadhig* versus Semitic *rb’*); roots of two and four to six radicals, a number formed by reduplication (e.g., *sn* “kiss” ≈ *snsn* “fraternize”); a dearth of lexical verb stems other than the root and causative;⁶ and passive verb forms marked by gemination of the final radical (e.g., *nḥmm* “be taken” from *nḥm* “take,” *rḥḥy* “known” from *rḥ* “learn”).

These peculiarities identify Egyptian as a distinct branch within the Hamito-Semitic language family, with no close relatives of its own—perhaps, therefore, closer to the common ancestor of Hamito-Semitic than to either of the other two branches. The value of some hieroglyphs, however, reflects an original relationship to Semitic lost in historical times:

- 4 The phonological realization of features such as the causative prefix and feminine and plural endings varies in Hamito-Semitic languages. The stative is cognate with the Akkadian form known variously as the stative or verbal adjective, and with the perfect of other Hamito-Semitic languages.
- 5 The symbol ≈ is used in this study to indicate correspondence. For verb roots in the Pyramid Texts, see Allen 1984, 541–601; Satzinger 2008. For vocalization patterns, see especially Osing 1976a and Schenkel 1983.
- 6 Egyptian has a few roots with initial *n-* that may correspond to the Semitic medial/intransitive/passive stem, such as *nhp* “escape,” related to *hp* “free;”: see Vernus 2009. The existence of a factitive corresponding to the Akkadian and Arabic II or D stem (Breyer 2006) is questionable. Hieroglyphic spelling regularly shows only one of two identical radicals in contact. The meanings “perish” and “destroy” of the verb *htm* could therefore represent *ḥ̥t̥m versus *ḥ̥t̥t̥m, respectively. But it is also possible that Egyptian used a single root for both meanings, as in English *the door closed* versus *he closed the door*.

- the Egyptian word for “hand” is  *drt* (related to *ndrj* “grasp”), but the hieroglyph  (a human hand) itself has the phonemic value *d*,⁷ as in Semitic *yd* “hand” (also reflected in Egyptian *djw* “five”);
- the word for “eye” in Egyptian is  *jrt* (\approx Oromo *ila*), but the hieroglyph , variant  (a human eye, Semitic *'yn* “eye”) is also used in writing the word *'n* “beautiful”;
- the word for “ear” in Egyptian is  *msdr* (an instrumental from *sdr* “lie down”), but the hieroglyph  (a cow’s ear, Semitic *'dn* “ear”) is also used to write the words *jdn* “substitute” and *jdnw* “deputy.”⁸

These suggest that Egyptian may be closer in origin to Proto-Semitic than to the Hamitic branch of Hamito-Semitic.

B. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Ancient Egyptian is commonly divided into five historical stages, known as Old, Middle, and Late Egyptian, Demotic, and Coptic. Significant differences in grammar separate the first two of these from the last three, so that the stages can be grouped into two major historical phases, here designated as Egyptian I and Egyptian II. The relationship between these two phases has been a major quandary in the history of the language.

Old Egyptian can be said to begin with the first known instance of a complete sentence, from a cylinder seal of the pharaoh Peribsen, near the end of Dynasty II (ca. 2690 BC):



⁷ The phonological value of this phoneme is discussed in Chapter 5.

⁸ The IPA symbol *ð* represents the consonant sometimes transcribed in Semitic studies as *d* (Arabic *ذ ðāl*). An Egyptian word *jdn* meaning “ear” is attested once (CT VII, 30k).

[1.1] *d(m)d.n.f t3wj n z3,f nswt-bjt pr-jb.snj* (Kahl 2002–2004, 229)
 He has united the Two Lands for his son, Dual King Peribsen.

Prior to this, the language is represented solely by proper names, titles, and labels. Some of the latter, however, contain phrases such as *zp dpj phrr h3pw* “first occasion of the Apis running,”⁹ demonstrating the existence of several grammatical features that characterize the later language: in this case, nisbe formation (*dpj* “first” from the preposition *dp* “atop”); adjectival modification (*zp dpj* “first occasion”); verbal nouns (*phrr* “running”); and genitival relationships expressed by direct juxtaposition, including that between a verb and its subject and consequent VS word order (*phrr h3pw* “the running of the Apis”).

The first extensive Egyptian texts are inscriptions in the tomb of Metjen, whose career spanned the end of Dynasty III and the beginning of Dynasty IV (ca. 2600 BC). These belong to the first of two sub-stages of Old Egyptian, early and late. Early Old Egyptian is represented by secular texts of the Fourth and early Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2600–2450 BC) and the Pyramid Texts of the late Fifth–Sixth Dynasty (ca. 2325–2150 BC); late Old Egyptian (ca. 2450–2100 BC) is distinguished from its predecessor mostly by the appearance of the “pseudo-verbal” constructions subject–*hr-stp* and subject–*r-stp*.¹⁰

The transition between Old and Middle Egyptian is gradual rather than sharp. Some late Old Egyptian texts contain Middle Egyptian features; conversely, some of the Coffin Texts and other early Middle Egyptian documents are marked by the retention of Old Egyptian morphological and grammatical features largely absent from later texts.¹¹ Middle Egyptian proper exhibits three major sub-stages, classical, late, and traditional.

⁹ Kahl 2002–2004, 291.

¹⁰ See Edel 1955/1964, §§ 12–15; Allen 1984, § 721.

¹¹ See Edel 1955/1964, §§ 16–20; Allen 1984, § 722; Vernus 1996.

Classical Middle Egyptian is the language of most texts of the Middle Kingdom (Dynasties XI–XIII, ca. 2000–1650 BC), including the classical literature of ancient Egypt. Late Middle Egyptian, in use from the Second Intermediate Period through the New Kingdom (Dynasties XIV–XVIII, ca. 1650–1350 BC), exhibits some features of its successor, Late Egyptian. By the time the latter appeared in writing, Middle Egyptian had ceased to be a living language. Middle Egyptian was retained for monumental inscriptions and some religious texts until the end of hieroglyphic writing (in the fourth century AD), in the form known as traditional Middle Egyptian, which is primarily an artificial construct whose grammar was influenced by that of the contemporary language.

Late Egyptian began to appear in texts from the time of Akhenaten (Dynasty XVIII, ca. 1350 BC) and became the standard written language in the succeeding dynasty. It is attested in two forms, literary (retaining some features of Middle Egyptian) and colloquial. The latter exhibits some changes between its earlier and later stages, essentially Dynasties XIX–XX (ca. 1300–1100 BC) and Dynasties XX–XXVI (ca. 1100–650 BC), respectively.

Demotic, first attested in its distinctive written form about 650 BC, developed directly out of Late Egyptian. It has three major sub-stages, early (Dynasties XXVI–XXX), Ptolemaic, and Roman. For the last three centuries of its existence, until the mid-fifth century AD, it existed alongside Coptic, essentially two different written forms of the same language.

The relationship between these various stages of Egyptian is not strictly diachronic in nature. Coptic shows evidence of six major dialects and numerous sub-dialects (see Chapter 2), and these undoubtedly existed in some form in earlier stages of the language as well: a Late Egyptian text likens the task of deciphering a garbled composition to “the speech of a Delta man with a man of Elephantine” (Anastasi I 40, 3–4). Dialectal distinc-

tions are generally invisible in pre-Coptic writing. Morphological and grammatical features, however, indicate that Old and Late Egyptian are historical phases of a single dialect, or closely related ones, probably from the north, while Middle Egyptian represents a separate dialect, most likely southern in origin.¹² In the history of the language, therefore, Middle Egyptian somewhat interrupts and obscures the presumably direct evolution of Old Egyptian into Late Egyptian.

C. WRITING

The original Egyptian writing system, hieroglyphic, is the basis of the scripts used for all stages of the language except Coptic. Hieroglyphic proper, carved or painted on stone or wood, was the script of monumental inscriptions in Old and Middle Egyptian and some literary Late Egyptian texts. Hieroglyphic texts were also written with ink on papyrus, usually with simplified forms of the signs. For most handwritten texts, scribes used hieratic, a cursive form of hieroglyphic with numerous ligatures.

Old Egyptian is attested in hieroglyphic inscriptions and a few letters and accounts in hieratic. As the premier language of monumental inscriptions from the Middle Kingdom onward, Middle Egyptian too is preserved largely in hieroglyphic texts. Secular and literary texts, however, are mostly in hieratic on papyrus. To judge from school exercises, this was the script in which scribes were first instructed. Religious compositions were also written in hieratic (also carved inside Middle Kingdom coffins), although some funerary texts—notably, the “Book of the Dead”—were inscribed in simplified hieroglyphs on papyrus. Literary Late Egyptian appears both in hieratic and in some hieroglyphic inscriptions, but the colloquial language is attested

12 Edgerton 1951; Edel 1955/1964, §§ 21–22; Allen 2004; Gundacker 2010.

almost without exception in hieratic. Demotic is written almost exclusively in the script of the same name, developed from a form of hieratic with abbreviated and more cursive signs.¹³

Coptic uses a script based on the Greek alphabet, with a few characters derived from Demotic for sounds that existed in Egyptian but not in Greek (see Chapter 2). Although the earliest Coptic texts proper date to the second century AD, they are prefigured by a number of compositions of slightly earlier origin, in a script known as Old Coptic, ancestral to that of Coptic. The alphabet itself, however, reflects Greek and Egyptian phonology of the third century BC, indicating that scribes had developed this writing system some three hundred years before the first extant Old Coptic texts.¹⁴

Coptic is the only script that regularly shows vowels. The earlier writing system is consonant-based, like Hebrew and Arabic: it occasionally indicates the presence, but not necessarily the nature, of vowels by use of the graphemes transcribed *ȝ*, *j*, and *w*;¹⁵ it can also be deficient in conveying information about the consonants themselves. The resulting lack of morphological data makes it difficult, and occasionally impossible, to discern formal differences in the four stages preceding Coptic. The identification of individual grammatical forms in these stages is therefore partly educated guesswork, particularly in Old and Middle Egyptian, and the existence of some grammatical forms is a continuing subject of discussion.

13 For Demotic written in hieroglyphs, see Quack 1995.

14 Satzinger 2003, 201–213.

15 Beginning in the Old Kingdom, scribes developed a syllabic orthography known as “group writing,” primarily to transcribe foreign names and loan words. That system seems to have regularly represented the presence of vowels, though not always with consistency: see Chapter 4.

D. DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

In common with all languages, ancient Egyptian displays historical changes in vocabulary, phonology, morphology, and syntax. The first of these includes alterations in the semantic range or meaning of words and the replacement of one word by another. An example of the former is OE–Dem. *ht* “belly, body” > Dem. *ht* “manner” > Coptic **ȝe** “manner.”¹⁶ The latter involves both substitutions from inside Egyptian and the adoption of words from other languages, either as replacements for existing lexemes or as neologisms: e.g., OE–Dem. *m33* versus LE–Dem. *nw* > Coptic **naγ** “see,” OE–LE *rwtj* and *bntw* versus LE–Dem. *bl* (Sem. *barra*) > Coptic **baꝫ** “outside,” LE *dphw/dpht* (Sem. *tappūha*) > Dem. *dph/dmph* > Coptic **χηπεȝ** “apple.” This kind of change has not been examined in detail for Egyptian and will be treated only cursorily in the present study.

The first major studies of Egyptian phonology identified the distinct consonantal phonemes of the language and, based on Coptic, reconstructed its vowels and syllable structure.¹⁷ Subsequent studies have concerned themselves primarily with the phonological value of the consonants and their historical development.¹⁸ The latter is relatively well understood, but the former is still the subject of debate, centered largely on the values proposed for a number of the consonants on the basis of Semitic cognates.¹⁹ The phonological history of Egyptian is the subject of Chapters 2–5 in the present study.

16 The symbols > (“develops into”) and < (“develops from”) are used in this study to indicate diachronic change. For the Coptic alphabet, see Chapter 2.

17 Steindorff 1894, §§ 1–46; Sethe 1899–1902, I, 3–188; Sethe 1923, 145–207. The classic synthesis is Edgerton 1947.

18 Major studies include Czermak 1931 and 1934; Worrell 1934; Vergote 1945; Loprieno 1995, 28–50; and Peust 1999a.

19 Based on Rößler 1971. For summaries of the debate, see H. Satzinger, 1997; Peust 1999a, 80–84; Müller 2011.

With the exception of verb-forms and the vocalization of nouns (see n. 5, above), the historical morphology of ancient Egyptian has not received much attention.²⁰ For nouns and pronouns, this is discussed in Chapter 6, below.

Syntax and semantics, the subject of Chapters 7–12, has been the focus of the greatest amount of study, but mostly in its synchronic dimension. Apart from Coptic, which had been known before the decipherment of hieroglyphs, the first stage of the language to be identified as a discrete entity was Demotic.²¹ Late Egyptian was described as a stage distinct from Middle Egyptian a quarter-century later, and Old Egyptian only in the middle of the last century.²² More recent studies have elucidated sub-stages of these, including early Old Egyptian, colloquial Late Egyptian, and various genres of traditional Middle Egyptian.²³

For the language as a whole, the modern understanding of its verbal system and grammar has undergone a historical evolution of its own, through three major interpretive paradigms. Initially, the various forms of the Middle Egyptian verb were interpreted largely on the analogy of Semitic grammar.²⁴ The culmination of this approach was Alan H. Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*, first published in 1927. Gardiner's system identified an aspectual distinction between perfective and imperfective in the Old–Middle Egyptian form known as the *stp.f* and its attributive counterparts:²⁵ for example,

20 An exception is Loprieno 1995, 51–102.

21 Brugsch 1855.

22 Erman 1880; Edel 1955 and 1964.

23 Schweizer 2005. Černý and Groll 1984. Jansen-Winkel 1996; Peust 1999b; Engsheden 2003; Kurth 2007.

24 Codified by Sethe 1899–1902.

25 See Gardiner 1957, § 438. Translations are for illustration only: the verb forms are not specific as to tense. The verb *stp* “choose” is used throughout this study in place of the more traditional *sdm* “hear,” because the latter has some formal restrictions.

	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE
<i>stp.f</i>	<i>mr.s</i> “she wants”	<i>mrr.s</i> “she loves”
active participle	<i>mrt</i> “who wants”	<i>mrrt</i> “who loves”
passive participle	<i>mryt</i> “who is wanted”	<i>mrrt</i> “who is loved”
relative	<i>mryt.f</i> “whom he wants”	<i>mrrt.f</i> “whom he loves.”

A second analysis accepted the aspectual interpretation of the attributive system but analyzed the *stp.f* on the basis of syntactic function. This approach began with the identification of a distinct form of the *stp.f* serving as object of the verb *rđj*, labeled “dependent” (*Subjunktiv*).²⁶ The functional analysis languished under the dominance of the aspectual model, until it was revived and amplified by Hans J. Polotsky between 1944 and 1976.

Polotsky began with a ground-breaking study devoted to the problem of the “second tenses” in Coptic.²⁷ It had long been recognized that the Coptic verbal system possessed two forms of its primary tenses, styled “first” and “second”.²⁸

	FIRST	SECOND
PRESENT	ყ <u>С</u> ФТП	ე <u>ყ</u> СФТП
AORIST	ფ <u>ა</u> ყСФТП	ე <u>ფ</u> აყСФТП
PERFECT	ა <u>ყ</u> СФТП	Н <u>თ</u> აყСФТП
FUTURE	ყ <u>на</u> СФТП	ე <u>զ</u> наСФТП.

The significance of the distinction had defied analysis, until Polotsky demonstrated that the second tenses were used when the focus of interest was not on the verb itself but on another, usually adverbial, element of the clause or sentence. For instance, in Ex. 1.2, both the First Perfect **ѧተຕηѧ** and the Second Perfect **նտѧተຕηѧ** mean “you did it,” but the latter is used because the interest of its clause lies not in the verb but in the prepositional phrase **նաի** “for me”:

26 Erman 1884.

27 Polotsky 1944.

28 For details, see Chapter 12, Section D.

[1.2] **επιζοcon ατετναac нoγa ннeicnhy εтcoвk**

NTATENAAC NAI (Matt. 25:40)

As long as you did it for one of these little brothers,
you did it for me.

Based on the kinds of sentences in which the Coptic second tenses appeared, such as questions with an adverbial interrogative, Polotsky found antecedents for the second tenses in earlier stages of Egyptian, including Gardiner's imperfective *stp.f.* e.g.,

[1.3] *mrr.k wš.t ḥryt.k hr jh* (Gardiner and Sethe 1928, pl. 6, 4–5)

want^g.2MS strip.PASS portal.2MS on what

Why do you want your portal to be stripped?

where the focus of interest is on the interrogative phrase *hr jh*.²⁹

Such sentences are commonly called “emphatic.” Polotsky analyzed the second tenses as nominal subjects of an adverbial predicate, on the analogy of the non-verbal sentence in which a nominal subject is followed by an adverbial predicate:

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
<i>r^c sun</i>	<i>jm</i> there	“The sun is there.”
<i>prr r^c emerge sun</i>	<i>jm</i> there	“The sun emerges there.” ³⁰

He later identified an adverbial (“circumstantial”) form of the *stp.f.* based on similar criteria:

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
<i>r^c sun</i>	<i>pr.f</i> emerge.3MS	“The sun emerges.” ³¹

Eventually, five forms of the active *stp.f.* of Old and Middle Egyptian were identified: dependent (renamed “prospective”); Polotsky’s nominal and adverbial; an “indicative” form used primarily in the past/perfect negation *nj stp.f.*; and a form marked by final *-w* in some verb classes.³²

29 For conventions used in the glosses, see p. 299, below.

30 Polotsky 1965, analyzing the last as “That the sun emerges is there.”

31 Polotsky 1976.

32 For the last, see Edel 1955/1964, §§ 511–31; Allen 1984, 722–23.

In the 1970s, the understanding of these forms as primarily syntactic alternants replaced Gardiner’s system as the “standard theory” of Egyptian grammar, and is still widely regarded as normative.³³ Already at the end of that decade, however, some scholars had begun to question the notion of paradigmatic substitution inherent in Polotsky’s system: e.g., that the “circumstantial” *stp.f* is a verb form marked for adverbial function rather than one used adverbially. This has now produced a third analytical approach, usually described as “post-Polotskyan.” It has recognized the existence of the second tenses, along with the other four forms of the active *stp.f*, but argues that their use is governed by semantic and pragmatic criteria as well as syntactic ones. In a construction such as *prr r^c jm* “The sun emerges *there*,” for example, the use of the verb form *prr* is understood as motivated by all three criteria:

- SYNTACTIC — serving as the predicate
- SEMANTIC — expressing a particular aspect
- PRAGMATIC — indicating that the primary interest is not in the verb itself.

Similarly, in the Coptic clause **NTATETNAA** **NAÏ** “you did it for *me*,” the second tense is analyzed not as a verb-phrase serving as the nominal subject of an adverbial predicate **NAÏ** but as the clausal predicate (syntactic), expressing past tense (semantic), and focusing attention on the prepositional phrase rather than on the verb itself (pragmatic).

The discussions in Chapter 9–12 follow a more recent model based in part on this last analytical approach, with equal weight given to morphology as well as syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic criteria.

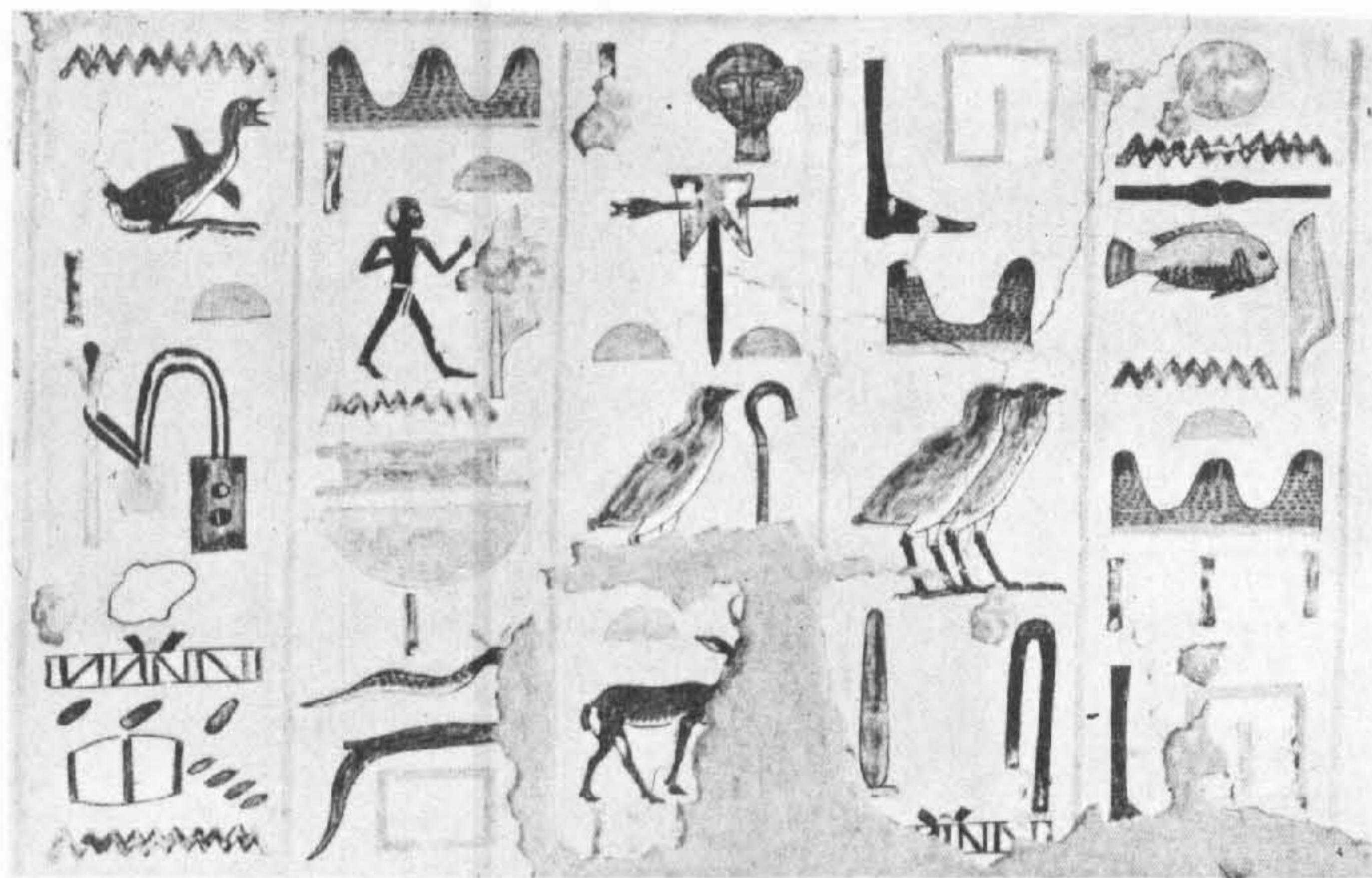
33 See Depuydt 1983.

Timeline of Egyptian Languages

Part 1: Create your own timeline below based on the information in the reading.

- *You may use whatever scale you think best captures the information.*
- *Try to include as much information as you can.*

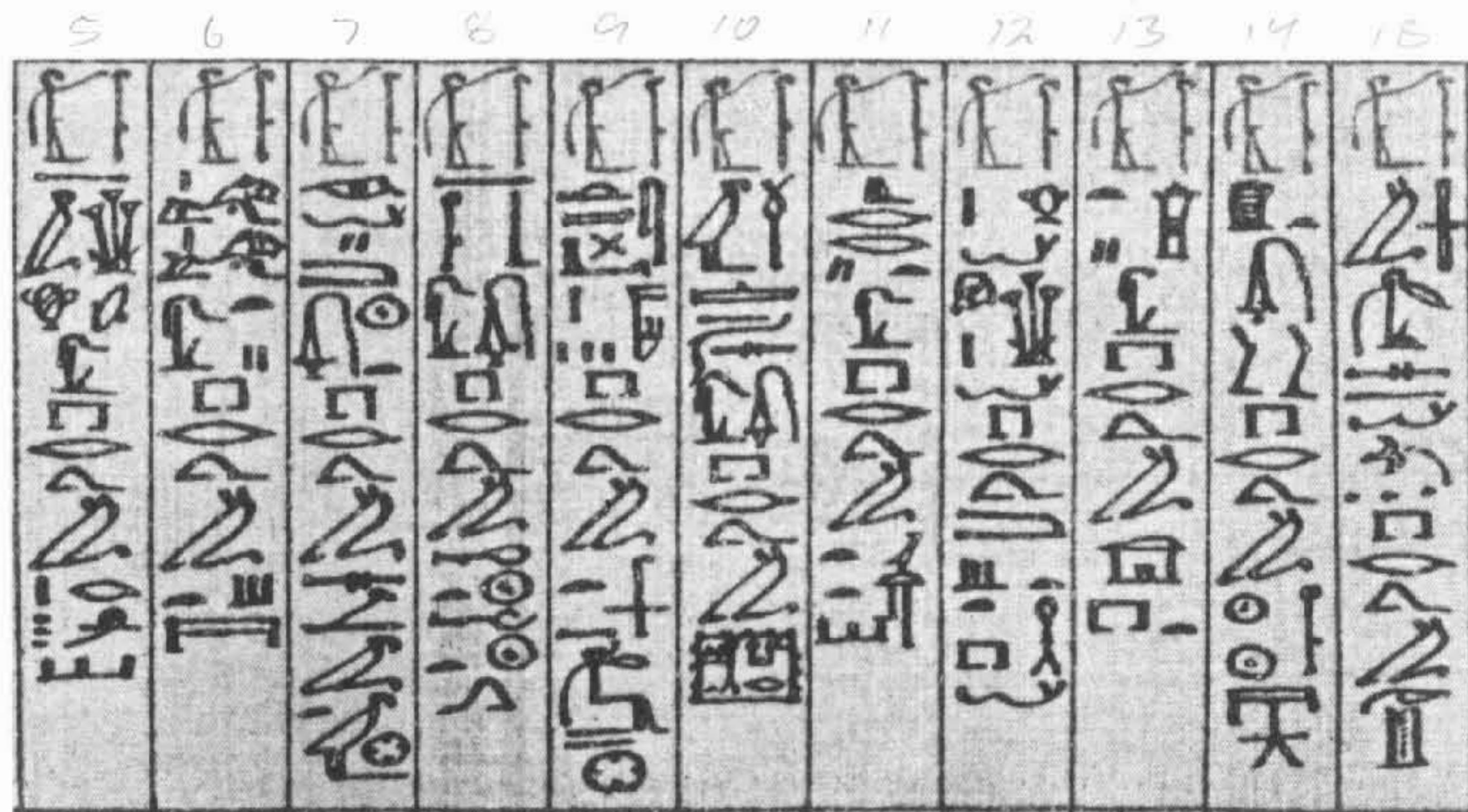
PLATE I



ELABORATE PAINTED HIEROGLYPHS FROM A THEBAN TOMB



HIEROGLYPHS INCISED UPON A LIMESTONE STELA



CHAP. CXXV - cont.

CURSIVE HIEROGLYPHS WRITTEN WITH A REED ON PAPYRUS

DIFFERENT STYLES OF HIEROGLYPHIC WRITING (DYN. XVIII)

EGYPTIAN GRAMMAR

BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE STUDY OF HIEROGLYPHS

BY SIR ALAN GARDINER

THIRD EDITION, REVISED

GRIFFITH INSTITUTE
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

§ 4. Different stages of the language.¹ Bearing in mind the fact that the written language reflects the spoken language of the different periods only to a limited extent, and that monumental records on stone are always more conservative than business documents and letters on potsherds and papyrus, we may roughly distinguish the following linguistic stages:

Old Egyptian: the language of Dynasties I–VIII, about 3180 to 2240 B.C.² This may be taken to include the language of the Pyramid Texts (below, § 13), which, however, displays certain peculiarities of its own and is written in a special orthography. Otherwise the surviving documents of this stage are mainly official or otherwise formal—funerary formulae and tomb-inscriptions, including some biographical texts. Old Egyptian passes with but little modification into

Middle Egyptian, possibly the vernacular of Dynasties IX–XI, about 2240–1990 B.C., later contaminated with new popular elements. In the later form it survived for some monumental and literary purposes right down to Graeco-Roman times, while the earlier form was retained as the religious language.

Late Egyptian: the vernacular of Dynasties XVIII–XXIV, about 1573 to 715 B.C., exhibited chiefly in business documents and letters, but also in stories and other literary compositions, and to some extent also in the official monuments from Dyn. XIX onwards. There are but few texts, however, wherein the vernacular shows itself unmixed with the ‘classical’ idiom of Middle Egyptian. Various foreign words make their appearance. For some other characteristics, see above, pp. 3–4.

Demotic: this term is loosely applied to the language used in the books and documents written in the script known as Demotic (see below, § 8), from Dyn. XXV to late Roman times (715 B.C. to A.D. 470). Here again the old ‘classical’ idiom is blended with later, vernacular elements, often inextricably.

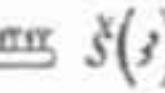
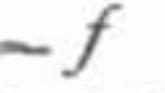
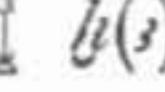
Coptic: the old Egyptian language in its latest developments, as written in the Coptic script, from about the third century A.D. onwards; so called because it was spoken by the Copts,³ the Christian descendants of the ancient Egyptians, in whose churches it is read, though not understood, even at the present day. After the Arab conquest (A.D. 640) Coptic was gradually superseded by Arabic, and became extinct as a spoken tongue in the sixteenth century. Coptic is written in the Greek alphabet supplemented by seven special characters derived ultimately from the hieroglyphs,

¹ B. H. STRICKER, ‘De Indeling der Egyptische Taalgeschiedenis’, in *Oudheidkundige Mededeelingen*, XXV, Leyden, 1944.

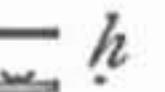
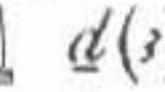
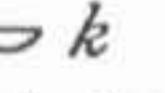
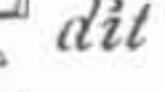
² The dates adopted are approximately those given by SEWELL in *The Legacy of Egypt*, Oxford, 1942; those prior to Dyn. XII are much disputed.

³ The name Copt is doubtless a corruption of the Greek ‘Aiguptos’, i.e. Egypt.

namely:

Ϣ	= <i>sh</i> = hieroglyphic 	<i>s(j)</i>
Ϣ	= <i>f</i> = „	
Ϣ	= <i>kh</i> = „	 <i>b(j)</i> , only in the Bohairic dialect;

the Akhmimic **Ϩ**, a differentiation from **Ϩ**, answers the same purpose.

Ϩ	= <i>h</i> = hieroglyphic 	<i>h</i>
Ϩ	= <i>dj</i> = „	
Ϩ	= <i>g</i> = „	
Ϩ	= <i>ti</i> = „	

The importance of Coptic philologically is due to its being the only form of Egyptian in which the vowels are regularly written.¹ It must not be forgotten, however, that Coptic represents a far later stage of the language than even the most vulgar examples of late Egyptian. The vocabulary is very different from that of the older periods and includes many Greek loan-words, even such grammatical particles as *μέν* and *δέ*. The word-order is more Greek than Egyptian. To a certain extent, at least, Coptic is a semi-artificial literary language elaborated by the native Christian monks; at all events it is extensively influenced by Greek biblical literature. The first tentative efforts to transcribe the old Egyptian language into Greek letters belong to the second century A.D., and are of a pagan character (horoscopes, magical texts, and the like). Several dialects of Coptic are distinguished, of which the following are the most important:

1. **Akhmîmic**: the old dialect of Upper Egypt, which early gave place to **Saïdic**.
2. **Saïdic** (less correctly written Sahidic): the dialect of Thebes, later used for literary purposes throughout the whole of Upper Egypt.
3. **Bohairic**: doubtless originally the dialect of the Western Delta only,² but later, after the removal of the Patriarchate to Cairo in the eleventh century, the literary idiom of the whole of Egypt.

B. THE EGYPTIAN WRITING

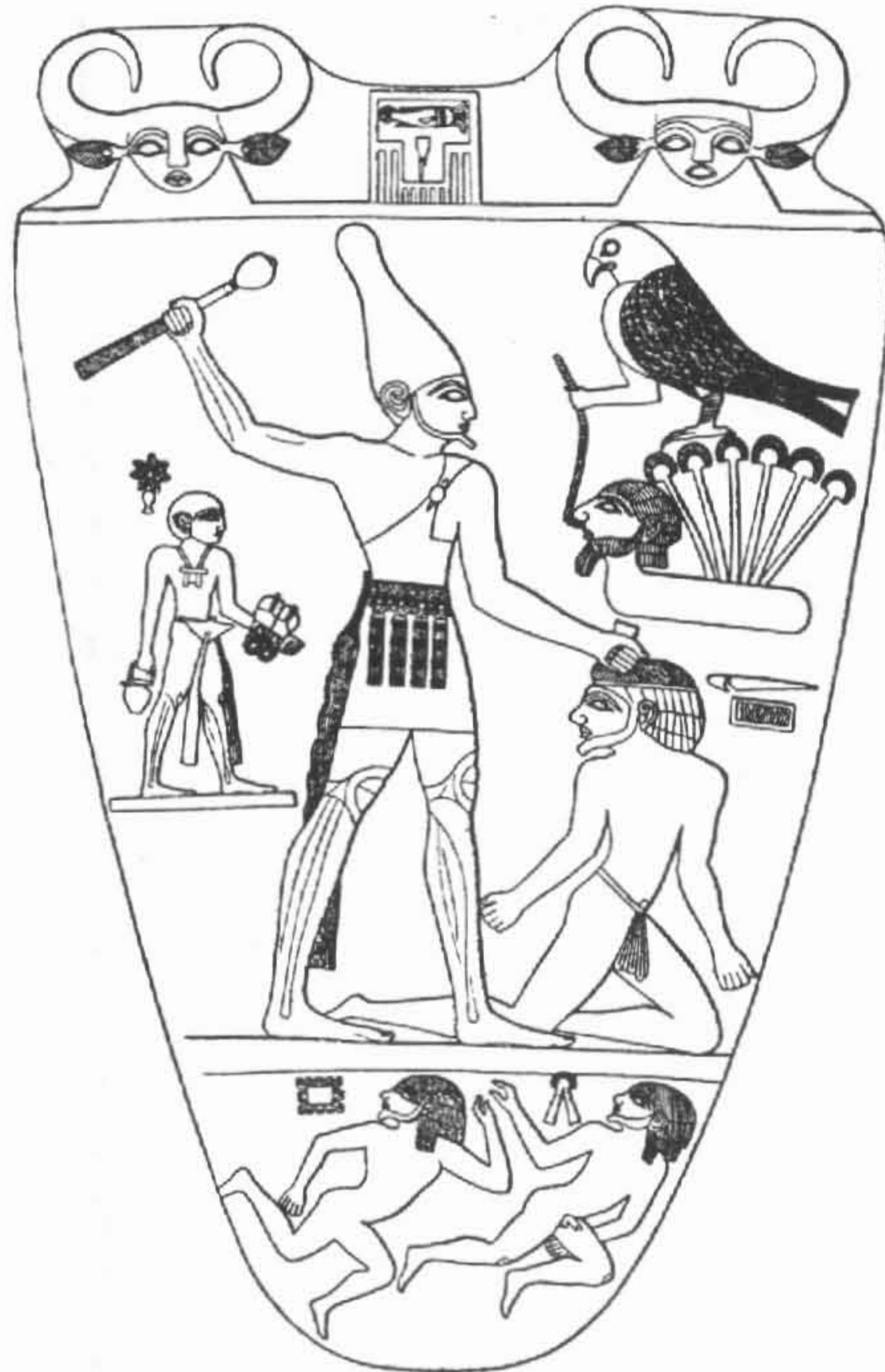
§ 5. The **hieroglyphic writing**³ is an offshoot of **pictorial art**, a very early and important function of which was to provide a visible record of facts and occurrences, accessible to those who for one reason or another were beyond the range of the spoken word. The limitations of pictorial art as a medium for conveying or storing information are, of course, obvious; and recorded history may be considered to have been non-existent until, shortly before the end of the Pre-dynastic period, the Egyptians discovered the principle of the **rebus** or **charade**. The new departure consisted in using the pictures of things, not to denote those things themselves or any

¹ See Appendix A at the end of the book.

² See CRUM's remarks, *JEA*. 27, 180.

³ For the general theory see SETHE, *Das hieroglyphische Schriftsystem*, Leipzig, 1935; also in wider perspective, ID., *Vom Bilde zum Buchstaben*, Leipzig, 1939. A popular account by the present writer, *JEA*. 2, 61.

cognate notions, but to indicate certain other entirely different things not easily susceptible of pictorial representation, *the names of which chanced to have a similar sound*. Obviously proper names could only be communicated in this way, and it is perhaps



Verso of the slate palette of NARMER (DYN. I).

This is one of the oldest specimens of Egyptian writing known. The name of the king, written with the *nr*-fish and the *mr*-chisel, occupies the rectangle (below, p. 72) between the Hathor-heads. The other small hieroglyphs give the names or titles of the persons over whose heads they are written; the captured chieftain may have been named Washi (harpoon *wr*, pool *ȝ*). The group at top on right was probably intended as explanation of the picture in the centre; at this early date the gist of complete sentences could apparently be conveyed only by symbolical groups of which the elements suggested separate words. The conjectural meaning is: The falcon-god Horus (i.e. the king) leads captive the inhabitants of the papyrus-land (*Tȝ-mhw* 'the Delta').¹

with them that hieroglyphic writing began (see the annexed cut). The method was that by which Prior Burton, in the Middle Ages, playfully symbolized his name by a thistle or *burr* placed upon a barrel or *tun*. In similar manner, the notion of high

¹ See RANKE in *Studio Orientalia* (Helsingfors, 1925), 167 ff.; KEIMER in *Aegyptus*, 7, 169 ff.

numbers such as 'thousand' or 'ten thousand' could only have been conveyed pictorially by the thousandfold or ten-thousandfold repetition of a stroke or of the object to which the number referred; and even if the draughtsman had accomplished this laborious task, the spectator desirous of grasping the meaning would have been condemned to the hardly less laborious task of counting the strokes or objects so depicted. The Egyptians adopted a simple way of avoiding this difficulty. The word for 'thousand' in Egyptian was *kha*, and that for 'ten thousand' was *djēbar*; but *kha* in Egyptian also meant 'lotus' and *djēbar* meant 'finger'. In order, therefore, to write '32,000 cattle' in hieroglyphs all that was necessary was to depict three fingers and two lotus-plants in close proximity to the image of an ox, thus:— As is hinted by the example just quoted, Egyptian hieroglyphic writing did not attempt completely to replace pictorial elements by sound-elements; throughout the entire course of its history that script remained *a picture-writing eked out by phonetic elements*. Hieroglyphic writing may be said to have come into existence as a properly differentiated entity at the moment when, in a given pictorial representation, one portion of the objects figured was shown in miniature and was clearly intended to be interpreted in terms of language, while the other portion, of larger size, was no less clearly intended to be construed purely visually without reference to language. The development of Egyptian writing is well epitomized in those sculptured scenes on the walls of tombs or temples where what cannot easily be represented pictorially is conveyed by sequences of hieroglyphic signs graven above the figures to which they refer. By this means we may not merely watch the ancient craftsmen at their work, but even overhear their banter and listen to the songs they sang.

§ 6. Even in the fully developed form of hieroglyphic writing only two classes of signs need be clearly distinguished. These are: (1) **sense-signs** or **ideograms** (Greek *idea* 'form' and *gramma* 'writing'); (2) **sound-signs** or **phonograms** (Greek *phonē* 'sound' and *gramma* 'writing').

1. **Ideograms** or **sense-signs** signify either the actual object depicted, as ☺ 'sun', ☻ 'hill-country', or else some closely connected notion, as ☺ the sun in the sense of 'day', ☻ a scribe's palette, water-bowl, and reed-holder in the sense of 'scribe', 'write', or 'paint'.¹

2. **Phonograms** or **sound-signs** are signs used for spelling, which, although originally ideograms and in many cases still also employed elsewhere as such, have secondarily acquired sound-values on the principle explained in § 5. Examples are ☚ *r*, from original ☚ 'mouth', in Egyptian *ra*; ☚ *p* + *r*, from original ☚ 'house', Egyptian *pāru*.²

¹ In strictness ideograms represent words rather than objects or notions connected therewith. Nevertheless, substitution of the term 'word-sign' could only obscure the clear distinction above made.

² The pronunciations here given are reconstructions from Coptic *po* 'mouth' and -*nwp* in *xenenwp* 'roof'.

§ 7. Vowels not written.¹ In reading the last section, the student has doubtless noted that the sound-values derived from , the ideogram of the 'mouth' (*ra*), and from , the ideogram of the 'house' (*pāru*), were said to be, not *ra* and *pāru*, but simply the consonantal elements entering into those two words, namely *r* and *p + r*. To put it differently, the Egyptian scribes ignored the vowels in writing. It thus came about that both these signs could be used in a far greater number of different words than would otherwise have been the case:  might virtually represent *ră*, *rā*, *rĕ*, *rē*, *ăr*, *ār*, *ĕr*, *ēr*, or any other combination of vowel and *r* that the Egyptian language might contain; similarly  might stand, not only for *pāru*, but also for *pĕr*, *āpr*, *epr*, *epra*, and so forth. A like neglect of the vowels is seen in Phoenician, Hebrew, and Arabic, though in certain other Semitic scripts (Babylonian, Ethiopic) the vocalization is always indicated. The reason for the Egyptian omission of the vowels is not far to seek. It is characteristic of the family of languages to which Egyptian belongs that one and the same word presents different vocalizations according to the forms that it assumes and the contexts in which it appears; thus the ideogram for 'house' , pronounced *pār* (from *pāru*) in isolation, may well have represented **pĕr*² when followed by a genitive and **pră(yyu)* in the plural. Such a variability of the vowels could not fail to engender the feeling that the consonants were all that mattered, whereby it became easier to utilize the sign  for writing other words pronounced with *p+r* in that order, whatever vowels they may have possessed. In actual fact  is found in the writing of words which we have reason to believe may have been spoken as **prāref* or **perrāref*, 'he habitually goes up', and **prāyet* 'spring'.

§ 8. Hieroglyphic writing is only one of three kinds of script which in course of time were evolved in Ancient Egypt. Out of hieroglyphic sprang a more cursive writing known to us as **hieratic**, and out of hieratic again there emerged, towards 700 B.C., a very rapid script formerly sometimes called **enchorial** but now always known as **demotic**. None of these styles of writing utterly banished the others, but each as it arose restricted the domain of its progenitor. In the Graeco-Roman period all three were in use contemporaneously.

Hieroglyphic owes its name to the fact that in the latest times it was employed almost exclusively for 'sacred' (Greek *hīeros*) inscriptions 'sculptured' (Greek *glūpho*) on temple-walls or on public monuments. At the outset hieroglyphic was used for all purposes; on stelae of stone and the like the signs are incised, or more rarely in raised relief, without interior markings; in temples and tombs where their decorative effect was of account the hieroglyphs were often executed with the most elaborate detail and beautifully coloured; upon papyrus the outlines were, on the other hand, abbreviated to a very considerable extent. For specimens of these different types of

¹ Sethe's convincing views on this topic are vindicated by De Buck in *Bibl. Or.* I, II against Scharff in *Sitz. Bay. Ak.* 1942, 72, n. 311.

² The asterisk * indicates that the reconstruction so marked is purely hypothetical.

hieroglyphic writing see the Frontispiece, Plate I. As time went on, hieroglyphic became restricted more and more to monumental purposes, though for religious texts it was in general employment even on papyrus down to the end of Dyn. XX; as an occasional medium for writing texts on potsherds or papyrus it survives right down to Christian times.

Hieratic,¹ so called because in the Graeco-Roman age it was the usual script employed by the priests (Greek *hieratikos* 'priestly'), is the name now given to all the earlier styles of writing cursive enough for the original pictorial forms of the signs to be no longer clearly recognizable. Hieratic was nothing more, in the beginning, than hieroglyphic in the summary and rounded forms resulting from the rapid manipulation of a reed-pen as contrasted with the angular and precise shapes arising from the use of the chisel. Under the Old Kingdom, hieratic is hardly differentiated from hieroglyphic. Under the Middle Kingdom and in the Eighteenth Dynasty hieratic is invariably used on papyrus, except for religious texts; it is developing a relatively consistent orthography of its own and distinguishes both more and less cursive varieties. Religious texts on papyrus begin to be written regularly in hieratic about Dyn. XXI, and from that time onward sporadic inscriptions on stone in the same script are found. In the latest period, as already said, hieratic was generally employed by the priests when writing religious texts on papyrus.

Demotic² (Greek *dēmōtikos* 'popular'), or **enchorial** (Greek *enkhōrios* 'native') as some of the earliest decipherers called it, is a very rapid form of hieratic that made its first appearance about the time of the Ethiopian Dynasty. Throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman ages it was the ordinary writing of daily life, and is occasionally found even upon stelae of stone.

For specimens of hieratic and demotic see Plate II. With demotic we are not concerned at all in this work, and with hieratic we deal only in so far as it has been converted or, to employ the usual term, 'transcribed', into hieroglyphic. Individual hieratic hands differ as all handwriting is apt to differ; for this reason Egyptologists, before translating a hieratic text, habitually transcribe it into hieroglyphs, just as the modern printer sets up a modern author's manuscript in type.

C. BRIEF HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN PHILOLOGY

§ 9. The tradition and its interpreters.³ As Christianity spread throughout Egypt, the knowledge of the old native scripts and lore, long since the jealously

¹ See MÖLLER, *Hieratische Paläographie*, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1909–12; *Ergänzungsheft*, 1936; also ID., *Hieratische Lesestücke*, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1909–10. On the transcription of hieratic see Add. § 63 A.

² See W. SPIEGELBERG, *Demotische Grammatik*, Heidelberg, 1925; W. ERICHSEN, *Demotische Lesestücke*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1937–9; FR. LEXA, *Grammaire démotique égyptienne*, I, II, Prague, 1939–40.

³ See P. MARESTAING, *Les écritures égyptiennes et l'antiquité classique*, Paris, 1913; H. SOTTAS and E. DRIOTON, *Introduction à l'étude des hiéroglyphes*, Paris, 1922.

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian hieratic script, consisting of approximately 15 characters, written from right to left.

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian hieratic script above a modern transcription in a cursive hand. The transcription reads: "w-n-n s-n-n t-n-n m-n-n d-n-n".

LITERARY HIERATIC OF THE TWELFTH DYNASTY (*Pr. 4, 2-4*),
WITH TRANSCRIPTION

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian hieratic script, consisting of approximately 15 characters, written from right to left.

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian hieratic script above a modern transcription in a cursive hand. The transcription reads: "m-n-n s-n-n t-n-n m-n-n d-n-n".

OFFICIAL HIERATIC OF THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY (*Abbott 5, 1-3*),
WITH TRANSCRIPTION

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian demotic script, consisting of approximately 15 characters, written from right to left.

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian demotic script above a modern transcription in a cursive hand. The transcription reads: "m-n-n s-n-n t-n-n m-n-n d-n-n".

LITERARY DEMOTIC OF THE THIRD CENTURY B.C. (*Dem. Chron. 6, 1-3*),
WITH TRANSCRIPTION

SPECIMENS OF HIERATIC AND DEMOTIC
with hieroglyphic transcriptions in a modern Egyptological hand.

The Misadventures of Wenamun Text

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, each representing a different object or concept. From left to right, they include: a person sitting on a stool; a small animal; a curved line; a staff or reed; a large bird-like creature; a person kneeling; a double-headed bird; a person standing; a staff or reed; a person sitting on a stool; a staff or reed; and a small circle.

The image shows four horizontal rows of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. The first row contains symbols for '19' (a vertical bar with a horizontal stroke), a person, a bird, a kneeling figure, a double-bar symbol, a spoon-like symbol, a small circle, and a large circle. The second row contains a person, a bird, a kneeling figure, a double-bar symbol, a spoon-like symbol, a small circle, and a large circle. The third row contains a person, a bird, a kneeling figure, a double-bar symbol, a spoon-like symbol, a small circle, and a large circle. The fourth row contains a person, a bird, a kneeling figure, a double-bar symbol, a spoon-like symbol, a small circle, and a large circle.

A row of 14 ancient Egyptian symbols, likely representing the 23rd nome of Upper Egypt. The symbols include various animals like birds and a scorpion, geometric shapes, and human figures in different poses.

A horizontal row of 12 numbered Egyptian hieroglyphs, labeled 24 through 35. Each number is placed to the left of its corresponding symbol. The symbols include various figures, animals, and abstract shapes typical of ancient Egyptian script.

A row of three groups of hieroglyphs. The first group contains a vertical staff, a bent staff, and a wavy line. The second group contains a kneeling figure, a standing raven-like bird, a double-headed arrow, a seated figure, and a rectangular frame. The third group contains two fish-shaped symbols, a seated figure, and a rectangular frame.

A row of five Egyptian cartouches, each containing a different hieroglyphic symbol. From left to right: 1) A falcon standing on a staff. 2) A falcon standing on a staff with a sun disk above it. 3) A falcon standing on a staff with a wavy line below it. 4) A falcon standing on a staff with a double-headed arrow below it. 5) A falcon standing on a staff with a double-headed arrow and a sun disk above it.

A horizontal row of Egyptian hieroglyphs. From left to right, they include: a falcon, a person carrying a basket, a bird's eye, a scorpion, a falcon with a ring around its neck, a square frame, a coiled cobra, a ladder, a double-headed arrow, a bird with a staff-like object, a person kneeling, a ladder, a double-headed arrow, a scorpion, a staff with a hook at the end, a cobra with a red disk on its back, a person lying down, a crown with a cross, a person with a staff, and a double-headed arrow.

A horizontal row of Egyptian symbols. From left to right: a seated figure with arms raised; a falcon; a bowl; a kneeling figure; an eye; a double eye; a small decorative element; a falcon; a bowl; a kneeling figure; a small decorative element; a falcon; a bowl; a kneeling figure.

A horizontal row of fifteen small, stylized Egyptian hieroglyphs. From left to right, they include: a hand holding a staff; a small animal; a person standing; a person sitting at a table; a person carrying a tray; a person carrying a basket; a person carrying a large object; a person carrying a small object; a person carrying a long object; a person carrying a small object; a person carrying a large object; a person carrying a small object; a person carrying a large object; a person carrying a small object; a person carrying a large object; a person carrying a small object.

This row contains fifteen small, distinct Egyptian hieroglyphs arranged horizontally. From left to right, they include: a person sitting and writing; a curved line; a person lying down; a person sitting with a wavy line above them; a bird; a small square; a person carrying a tray with two items; a bowl; a person with a large head; a person with a long neck; a person carrying a tray with three items; a person carrying a tray with four items; a person carrying a tray with five items; a person carrying a tray with six items; and a person carrying a tray with seven items.

Three small illustrations: a hawk-like bird perched on a branch, two birds facing each other, and a person working at a loom.

A row of nine Egyptian cartouches, each containing a different symbol or combination of symbols. From left to right, the symbols include: a kneeling figure holding a staff; two birds facing each other; a balance scale with a bird on top; a wavy line; two birds facing each other; a staff with a circle at the top; a staff with a circle at the top; two birds facing each other; a staff with a circle at the top; and a wavy line.

A row of six Egyptian cartouches, each containing a different symbol or combination of symbols. From left to right, the symbols are: a falcon, a double-headed falcon, a cartouche with a 'W' shape, a cartouche with a 'W' shape, a cartouche with a 'W' shape, and a cartouche with a 'W' shape.

⁴³ ḥr wȝt sȝt ḥm̄t sȝt 99 > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t sȝt

⁴⁴ ḥr ḥm̄t

⁴⁵ ḥr ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t

⁴⁶ ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t

⁴⁷ ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t ḥm̄t
& ḥm̄t ḥm̄t

⁴⁸ ḥr ḥm̄t

⁴⁹ ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > > ḥm̄t

⁵⁰ ḥr wȝt ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t

⁵¹ ḥr ḥm̄t

⁵² ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t

⁵³ ḥm̄t ḥm̄t

⁵⁴ ḥr ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t

⁵⁵ ḥr wȝt sȝt > > ḥm̄t ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t

⁵⁶ ḥr ḥm̄t

⁵⁷ ḥr ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t > ḥm̄t > >

A horizontal row of seven Egyptian hieroglyphs. From left to right: 1. A person with arms raised, possibly a deity or a person in a ritual pose. 2. A bird, likely a vulture or hawk, standing on a small base. 3. A person sitting cross-legged, possibly a scribe or a person in a meditative state. 4. A stylized eye or sun disk. 5. A person kneeling on the ground. 6. Two people facing each other, possibly in a conversation or a ritual exchange. 7. A person sitting on a chair or stool, holding a long staff or object.

A horizontal row of Egyptian hieroglyphs. From left to right, they include: a small bird-like creature above a bowl; a stylized eye shape; a figure holding a staff over a small animal; two birds facing each other; a simple bowl shape; a double-headed arrow symbol; a figure sitting cross-legged; another stylized eye shape; a figure kneeling; a star-like symbol; and a figure standing next to a circle.

A horizontal row of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, each representing a different object or concept. From left to right, they include: a small bird-like creature; a falcon with its wings spread wide; a coiled cobra with its hood expanded; a falcon standing on a horizon line; a set of scales; a sun disk with a horizon line below it; a square frame; a double-headed arrow; a person sitting on a stool; a person standing; and a person carrying a large object on their back.

A horizontal row of ten Egyptian cartouches, each containing a different symbol or combination of symbols. From left to right, the symbols include: a kneeling figure holding a staff; two figures in a ritual pose; a double-headed hawk; a staff and a fan; a staff and a double-headed hawk; a double-headed hawk; a staff and a fan; a double-headed hawk; a staff and a fan; a double-headed hawk; and a staff and a fan.

A horizontal row of nine small, stylized figures or symbols, each accompanied by a vertical number from 65 to 73. The symbols include various human figures in different poses, some with objects like a staff or a shield, and some abstract shapes like a zigzag or a circle.

This row contains five distinct Egyptian hieroglyphs. From left to right: 1) A vertical column of three strokes above a horizontal bar. 2) A stylized animal head. 3) A figure standing with arms raised, holding a long staff or object. 4) A large vessel with a decorative rim. 5) A figure sitting at a loom, operating it with a staff.

The Misadventures of Wenamun – Transliteration

1. *h3w n wdy i-irw wn-imn r in t3 ht
n p3 wi3 3 n imn-r^c nsw ntrw nty hr-d3 irtw.*
2. *h3w n spr i-irw fr d^cnt r p3 nty ni-sy-sw-b3-nb-dd im.*
3. *iw.i h3ii r p3 iiwm 3 n h3rw.*
4. *iw.i sprw r dyr, w^c dmiit n tk.*
5. *iw bdr, p3ii.f wr, dit in.tw n.i qw irp.*
6. *iw w^c rmt n t3ii.i br t3ii hd.*
7. *iw.i dwnw m t3y d3wt.*
8. *iw.i ši r p3 nty p3 wr im.*
9. *iw.i dd n.f: "tw.i t3ii.tw n t3ii.k mr.*
10. *"mntk p3 wr n p3y t3.*
11. *"w3h3 p3ii.i hd."*
12. *iw.f dd n.i: "ir p3 it3ii, mntk sw, ns-sw t3ii.k br.*
13. *"i-irw n-h3ii-n h3ww d q3iwn.i w3h3 sw."*
14. *iw.i iry h3ww 9 m t3ii.f mr.*
15. *iw.i ši q3iwn.f.*
16. *iw.i dd n.f: "bwpw.k gmy p3ii.i hd."*
17. *iw.i pr m dyr.*
18. *iw.i ptri w^ct br.*
19. *iw.i gmy hd im.s.*
20. *iw.i dd n.w: "p3ii.tn hd, iw.fr w3hy m-di.i,
"s3^c i-irw.tn gmy p3ii.i hd."*
21. *iw.w ši n.w*
22. *iw.i hbt n.i hr spt p3 iiwm m t3 mr n kpwn.*
23. *iw p3 wr n kpwn h3bw n.i, r-dd: "i-rwi3-tw.k t3ii mr."*
24. *iw.i h3bw n.f, r-dd: "i-irw.i ši r tn?"*
25. *iw.i iry h3ww 29 n t3ii.f mr.*
26. *iw.f t3ii.i r-hr.*
27. *iw.i gmy-tw.f m t3ii.f^crt,
iw h3^c 3ty-tw.fr w^c ssdt
iw i-irw n3 h3nw n p3 iiwm 3 n h3rw hw r.f*
28. *iw.f dd n.i: "i-irw.k ii hr ih n shnw?"*
29. *iw.i dd n.f: "i-irw.i ii m-s3 t3 ht
n p3 wi3 3 n imn-r^c, nsw ntrw."*
30. *"i-irw p3ii.k it, i-irw p3 it n p3ii.k it,
iw.k r irw.f m-r-^c.*
31. *iw.f dd n.i: "iw.k r dit n.i n iry sw, mtw.i iry sw.*
32. *"ih p3 in.k n.i?*
33. *"in ink p3ii.k b3ki? in ink b3ki n p3 irw wdy.k m-r-^c?"*
34. *iw.i dd n.f: "mn dpt nb hr-d3 irtw, iw bn ni-sy st imn.*
35. *"mntf p3 iiwm.*
36. *"mntf p3 nb n p3 nhy wd3y snby.*

37. "mⁿtf p³ nb n n³i.i.k itii.
38. "mⁿtk m-r-^c mⁿtk b³ki n imn.
39. "ir i^w.k r ^cr^cr p³i.i.f shnw, i^w.k r ^cnhy, mtw.k wd³y, mtw.k snby.
40. "imm in.tw n.i p³i.i.k sh³, h³b sw n ni-sy-sw-b³-nb-dd,
mtw.f dit in.tw p³ hd."
41. i^w p³i.i.f iwpwty si r kmt.
42. i^w ni-sy-sw-b³-nb-dd dit in.tw p³ hd.
43. i^w p³ wr ^cr^cr z 300 r dit ^sd.w n³ htw.
44. i^w.w ^sd.w.
45. i^w.f dd ni: "ptri, p³ shnw i-irw n³i.i itii, i^w irii.i sw."
46. i^w.i ši n.i r spt p³ iiwm r p³ nty n³ htw im.
47. i^w.i ptri 11 n br, i^w.w n i^w m p³ iiwm
i^w ni-sy st n³ tkr.
48. r-dd: "ddh sw."
49. i^w.i hprw r rmw.
50. i^w p³ sh³ n p³ wr ii n.i.
51. i^w.f dd n.i: "ih r.k?"
52. i^w.i dd n.f: "in bw irw.k ptri n³ i^w r ddh.i ^cn?"
53. i^w.f ši n.f.
54. i^w.f dd-tw.f n p³ wr.
55. i^w p³ wr hprw r rmw m-dr n³ mdt i-dd.f n.f.
56. i^w in.f n.i irp.
57. i^w.f dit in.tw n.i tnt-niwt, w^ct hz n kmt.
58. i^w.f h³bw n.i, r-dd: "wnm. swri"
59. i^w.k r sdmy p³ nb nty i^w.i r dd-tw.f m d³wt.
60. i^w d³wt hpr, i^w.f dd n n³ tkr:
"bn i^w.i rhy dd³ p³ iwpwty n imn m p³i.i t³.
61. "imm-tw.i wdy.i sw, mtw.tn ši m-s³.fr ddh.f."
62. i^w p³ t³w hw-tw.i r p³ t³ n irs.
63. i^w n³y n p³ dmiit pr r.i r hdbw.i
64. i^w.i gmy ht^b, t³ wr n p³ dmiit, m-dr pr.s m p³i.i.s pr.
65. i^w.i dd n.s: "ink iwpwty n imn."
66. i^w.s dd n.i: "sdriw n.k."

The Misadventures of Wenamun – Translation

1. The day of the dispatch which Wenamun made to bring the wood
for the great boat of Amun-Re, king of gods, who is upon [the] river.
2. The day of arriving which he did to Tanis, to the [place] which Smendes is therein.
3. I went down to the great sea of Syria.
4. I arrived to Dor a town of the Tjeker.
5. Bader, its ruler, caused to be brought to me bread and wine.
6. A man of my freighter stole money.
7. I got up in the morning.
8. I went to the [place] which the ruler was in.
9. I said to him: “I was robbed in your harbor.
10. “You are the ruler of this land?
11. “Seek my money.”
12. He said to me: “As for the thief, he is yours, he belongs to your freighter.
13. “Spend some days here with me that I may seek him.”
14. I spent 9 days in his harbor.
15. [Then] I went to him.
16. I said to him: “You have not found my money.”
17. I went out from Dor.
18. I saw a freighter.
19. I found money in it.
20. I said to them: Your money, it will remain with me,
“until you have found my money.
21. They left.
22. I celebrated on the seashore in the harbor of Byblos.
23. The ruler of Byblos sent to me, saying: “Leave my harbor!”
24. I sent to him, saying: “Where would I go?”
25. I spent 29 days in his harbor.
26. [Then] he took me upwards.
27. I found him in his loft,
his back to a window,
while the waves of the Great Sea of Syria beat against it.
28. He said to me: “You did come upon what commission?”
29. I said to him: “I did come after the wood
“of the great boat of Amun-Re, king of gods.
30. “What your father did, what the father of your father did,
“you will do it also.”
31. He said to me: “You will give to me for doing it, and I will do it.
32. “What is it that you have brought for me?
33. “Am I your servant? Am I [a] servant of the one who dispatched you also?”
34. I said to him: “There is not any boat upon a river, which does not belong to Amun.
35. “His is the sea.
36. “He is the lord of life, prosperity, and health.

37. "He the lord of your fathers.
38. "You, also you, are a servant of Amun.
39. "If you should arrange his commission, you will live and prosper and be healthy.
40. "Cause your scribe to be brought to me that I may send him to Smendes,
 "and he will cause the money to be brought."
41. His diplomat went to Egypt.
42. Smendes caused the money to be brought.
43. The ruler arranged men, 300 to cause that they cut the wood.
44. They cut them.
45. He said to me: "See, the commission, which my fathers did, I have done it."
46. I went to the seashore, to the [place] where the wood was in.
47. I saw 11 ships, which were coming from the sea,
 which belonged to the Tjeker.
48. [Who were] saying: "Arrest him!"
49. I became about to cry.
50. The scribe of the ruler came to me.
51. He said to me: "What is toward you?"
52. I said to him: "Did you not see the ones who come to arrest me again?"
53. He went away.
54. He said it to the ruler.
55. The ruler became about to cry because of the matter which he said to him.
56. He brought to me wine.
57. He caused Tantne to be brought to me, a singer of Egypt.
58. He sent to me, saying: "Eat! Drink!"
59. "You will hear everything which I will say in the morning."
60. [When] morning happened, he said to the Tjeker:
 "I cannot arrest the diplomat of Amun in my land."
61. "Let me dispatch him, and you go after him to arrest him."
62. The wind threw me to the land of Alashiya.
63. Those of the town came out toward me to kill me.
64. I found Hatiba, the ruler of the town, when she went out from her house.
65. I said to her: "I am a diplomat of Amun."
66. She said to me: "Rest yourself."