# The Tale of Setna I (P. Cairo 30646)

## Notes by Minh-Tâm Trinh

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

*Glossing Conventions*

(May not match the conventions in my older notes)

( ) text omitted by the scribe, but implicitly understood

< > addition to fix a scribal error

{ } deletion to fix a scribal error

[ ] addition to fix lacuna, or addition uncertain

*Sources*

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

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

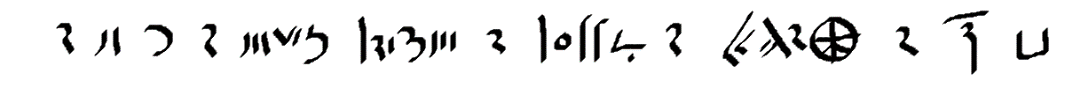
[R] *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry.* With translations by R. K. Ritner, W. K. Simpson, V. A. Tobin, E. F. Wente, Jr. Ed. W. K. Simpson. 3rd Ed. Yale University Press. New Haven, CT (2003).

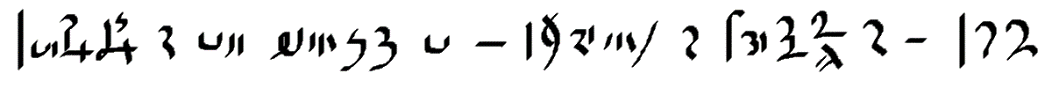
*Other References*

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

**8/25/24**

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**(4.1)** […] pXr=i tA p.t

pA tA tA twA.t nA tww.w nA ym.w

gm=i nA nty iw nA

Apt.w n tA p.t nA rim.w n pA mtry irm nA iAw.w

**(4.1)** […] bewitched the sky,

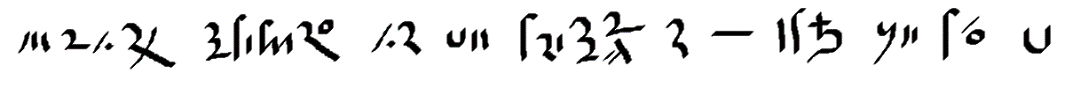
the land, the *duat*, the mountains, the seas.

I have found [IND] that which the

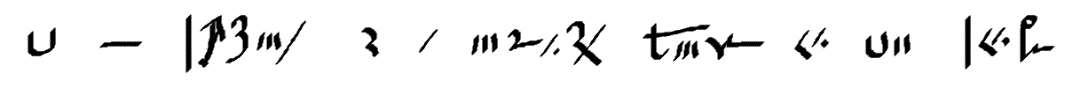
birds of the sky, the fish of the depth[s], and [G, 36] the beasts

**9/1/24**









Dd n im.w dr.w

aS=i ky **(4.2)** hp n sXA

nw-i r

pA Ra iw=f xa.w n tA p.t irm tAy=f PsD.t

nw=i

r pA IaH iw=f wbn irm nA siw.w n tA p.t

dr.w irm pAy=w gy

nw=i r nA **(4.3)** rim.w n pA

said, to its limit [“to” + mediated object].

I recite another **(4.2)** formula of magic.

I have gazed at [IND]

Pre when he appears [1-PRES] in [“at”] the sky with his Ennead.

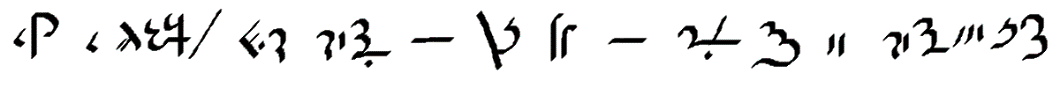
I have gazed

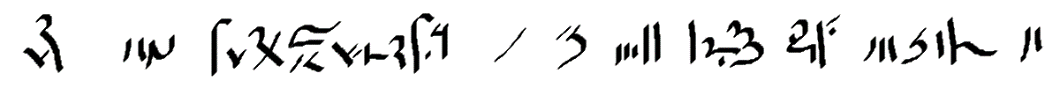
at Iah [the Moon] when he arose with the stars in the sky

entire, with their totality [G, 83].

I have gazed at the **(4.3)** fish of the

**9/15/24**







mtry iw wn mx n ntr 21 n mw tAy.w ri.t Hry.t

iw bw iry sX wn-nA.w

iw=i Dd r NA-Nfr-KA-PtH pAy sn

aA nty iw sX nfr rmt rx m-Ss pAy

di=f in.w wa.t Sa\*.t

depths, though there were 21 divine cubits of water brought[?] above them.

Even though I cannot write [NEG-AOR],

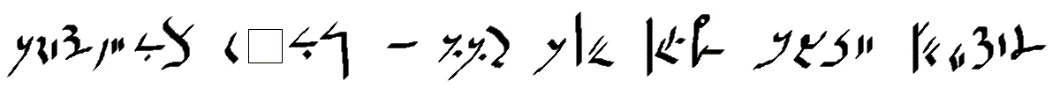
I spoke to Naneferkaptah, my elder

brother, who was a good scribe [and] very learned man [“man of knowledge”].

He said, cause a piece

**9/22/24**

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**(4.4)** n Dma n mAy.t i.ir Hr=f

sX=f md nb r wn nA.w Hr pA

Dma i.ir Hr=f dr=w

di=f mX[?]=f n st[i].t wty=f

s Hr mw

rx=f s iw wAH=f wyt swr=f s

rx=f

**(4.4)** of fresh papyrus [“papyrus of the new”] to be brought [passive?] before him.

He wrote every word, that was [r wn nA.w = IMPERF relative converter] upon the

papyrus before him, entire.

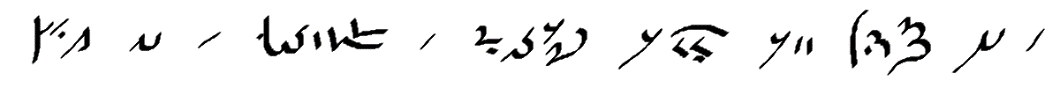
He caused that he burn [? Is H or X written here?] [it] in fire, [then] doused

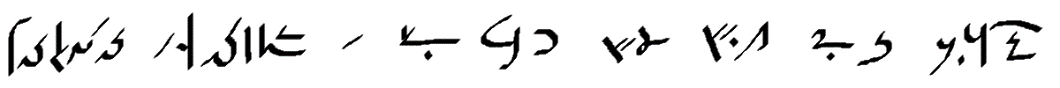
it in [“upon”] water.

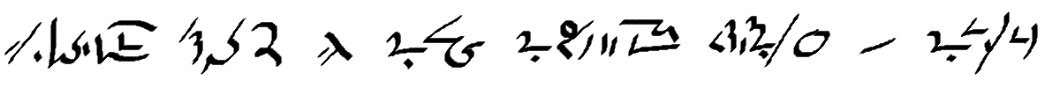
That he [might] learn it, he dissolved and drank it,

[then] he knew

**10/6/24**









r pAy wn-nA.w iw=f n im=f

**(4.5)** stA\*=n r Qb\* n pA hrw

n rn=f

ir n hrw nfr m bAH Is n Qb\* @r-pA-Xrd.\*

al=n r mr.t

Xty=n pH=n pr mH.\* n Qb\* n

Ar 1

as[?] wAH \_Hwty gm md nb <i>ir xpr n **(4.6)** NA-Nfr-

of that which [“it”] was within it.

**(4.5)** We returned to Koptos on the named

day [“the day of its name”].

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

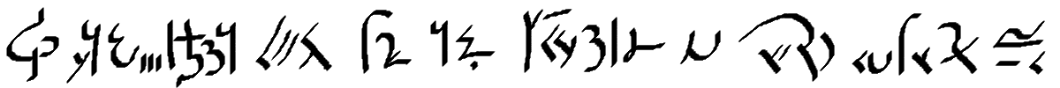
We came onboard.

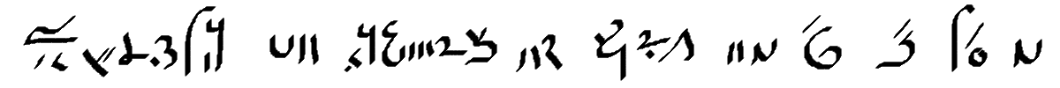
We went down to north of Koptos,

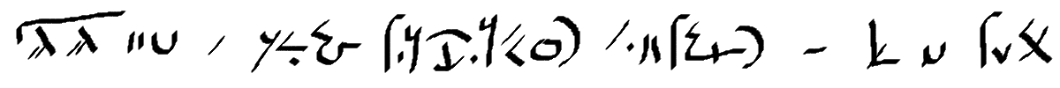
[“at”] 1 *ar* away.

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

**10/20/24**







-KA-PtH r-DbA pA Dma

bn-pw +hwty Hrr smi=f m-bAH

pA Ra Dd

rx pAy hp

tAy wpi.t irm NA-Nfr-KA-

-PtH pA Sri n Pr-aA Mr-Nb-PtH

Smi=f r pAy pr-HD

-kaptah because of the book.

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

Pre, saying:

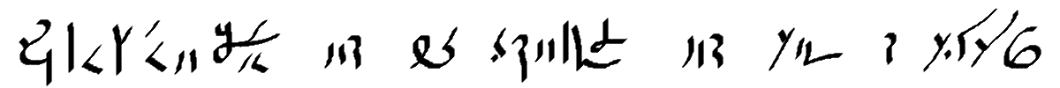
Decide [G, footnote 16] my case.

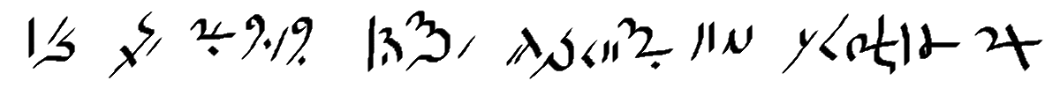
My dispute with Naneferka-

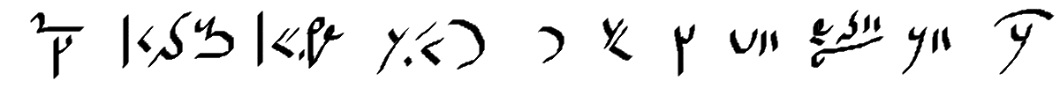
-ptah, the son of Pharaoh Mernebptah.

He went to my storehouse,

**11/3/24**









**(4.7)** xl=f s TAi=f tAy tb.t Xr tAy qnb.t

Xdb=f pAy=y mn\*y r-wn-nA.w HrH r-ir=f

Dd.w

n=f

iw=f iir Hr=k irm rmt nb nty mtw=f Dr=w

w\*=w wa

nxt.\* n ntr r Xry **(4.8)** n tA p.t

Dd m-ir

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

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

They said

to him:

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

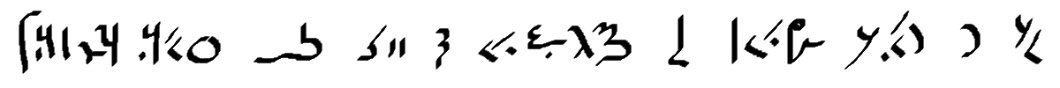
They [then] brought a

divine power [“strength”] down **(4.8)** from the sky,

saying, Do not

**11/17/24**









di.t Smi NA-Nfr-KA-PtH r Mn-Nfr

iw=f wDA irm rmt

nb nty mtw=f dr.w

wa.t wn.wt tA i-ir xpr Mr-Ib-PtH

pA $m-Xl iw r bnr Xr tA Xjb.t n tA

shr.et **(4.9)** Pr-aA

hi=f r pA ir ir=f Hsy

let Naneferkaptah go to Memphis,

while he [is] safe [G, 43] among any

man who is with him, whatsoever.

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

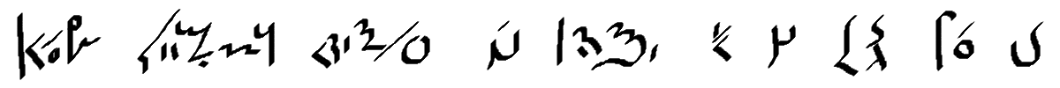
there appeared Meribptah,

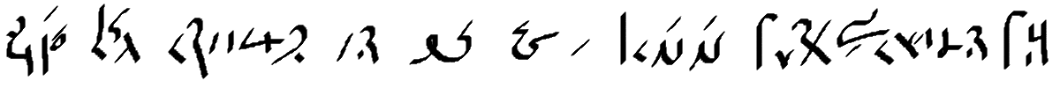
the boy [G, 68], who [came] forth [G, 44] from under the shade [G, 70] of the

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

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

**12/1/24**







pA Ra

aS rmt nb r-wn-nA.w Hr mr.t sgpe dr.w

NA-Nfr-KA-PtH iw r bnr Xr tAi=f Hbe.t

aS=f sX r=f

di=f pAi=f iw wn **(4.10)** mH n ntr mw 21

of Pre [euphemism for “drowned”].

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

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

He [FIX TRANSCRIPTION] uttered a spell

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