


Part I

2 

[illegible][illegible]

¹ The grammar between the lines 17-27 as well as several other shorter passages are discussed in detail in my Introduction to Middle Egyptian through Ancient Writings, Linus Learning, New York, 2013.

st3.in.tw.f n.f hr ʕwi

wn.in.f hr ht.f m b3h-ʕ hm.f lph

dd.in hm.f lph mi mi nfri hnms.i

dd.k n.i nhi n mdwt nfri t3w stpw

d3y-hr n hm.i n sdm st

dd.in hr-h3b nfri

in iw m hprt in iw m hprt(i).si ity lph nb[i]

dd.in hm.f lph m hprt(i).s(i) swt min is hpr(.w) sw3(.w) hr.f

ʕhʕ.n dwn.n.f drt.f r hn n hrt-ʕ

ʕhʕ.n šd.n.f n.f šfdw hnʕ gsti

wn.in n.f hr irt m zh3w ddt.n hr-h3b nfri

rh-hwt pw n i3bt n(i)-sw [b3]stt m wbn.s

ms pw n hk3(t)- ʕd[.]

iw.f mhi.f hr hpr.t(i.si) m t3

iw.f sh3.f kni n i3btt

hpw 3mw m hpš.sn sh.sn ibw [...] ntiw hr šmw

nḥm.sn ḥtrw hr sk3

dd.f ḥws ib.i

rmw.k t3 pn š3.n.k im.f

gr(g) m iwh

m.k wn ddti r.f m [s]tryt

m.k r.f wn wr m pth <m t3> š3.n.k im

m wrdw m.k st ḥft hr.k

ḥ.k r ntt m b3h.k

m.k nn r.f wn wrw m shrw nw t3

iryt m tmt ir(w)

š3.r m grg

t3 3k.w r 3w ni hpr d3t

nn zp km n ʕnt m š3wt.f

nn zp km n ʕnt m š3wt.f

hḏ t3 pn nn mḥi ḥr.f nn ḏḏ nn ir rmw

hḏ t3 pn nn mḥi ḥr.f nn ḏḏ nn ir rmw

wnn t3 pn m mi

wnn t3 pn m mi

itn ḥbs.w nn psd.f <r> m33 rhyt

itn ḥbs.w nn psd.f <r> m33 rhyt

nn ʕnh.tw ḥbs šnʕ

nn ʕnh.tw ḥbs šnʕ

wn.in ḥr-nb id(.w) m g3(w).f

wn.in ḥr-nb id(.w) m g3(w).f

iw.i r ḏḏ nti ḥft ḥr.i ni sr.n.i ntt ni ii(t)

iw.i r ḏḏ nti ḥft ḥr.i ni sr.n.i ntt ni ii(t)

itrw šw(.w) nw kmt ḏ3y.tw mw ḥr rdwi

itrw šw(.w) nw kmt ḏ3y.tw mw ḥr rdwi

tw r ḥ(i)ḥi mw n ʕḥw r škd.f

tw r ḥ(i)ḥi mw n ʕḥw r škd.f

w3t.f [ḥpr].ti m w3db iw w3db r nt

w3t.f [ḥpr].ti m w3db iw w3db r nt

st mw r nti [m] st mw w3db

st mw r nti [m] st mw w3db

iw rsw r ḥsf mḥyt nn pt m t3w wʕ

iw rsw r ḥsf mḥyt nn pt m t3w wʕ

iw 3pdw drdri(w) r mst m ḥ3t nt t3-mḥw

iw 3pdw drdri(w) r mst m ḥ3t nt t3-mḥw

ir.n.f zšw ḥr gswi rmt stkn sw r(m)t n g3w

ir.n.f zšw ḥr gswi rmt stkn sw r(m)t n g3w

ḥd nḥm nḥ n bw-nḥr

n3 n šiw kḥw wnyw ḥr wgs

wbnw ḥr rmw 3pdw

bw-nḥr nb rwi.w pṯw t3 n ksnt

m-ḥ nḥ n dḥw stiw ḥtiw t3

g3w.tw ith ky r gs(f) nn sdm mi nfw

tw r isḥ m3kt m grḥ

tw r ḥ ithw tw r sbn kdd m irti

sdr.kw ḥr iw.i rs.kw

wt ḥ3st r swr ḥr itrw nw kmt

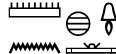

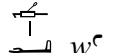
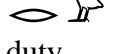

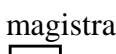
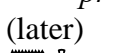

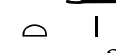
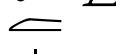

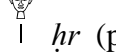
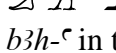


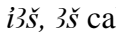


skbb.sn ḥr w3dbw.sn n g3w s(t) tri.sn



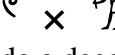

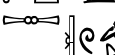

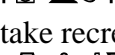
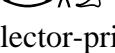





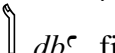
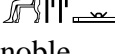




iw t3 pn r itt int ni rh bsw

hpri.fi imn(.w) m dd ptr sdm ḥr idw iw gr ḥf(t) ḥr

The prophecies of  *nfrtj* Neferti: Part I

Vocabulary

 *mnh* beneficent, functional, worthwhile
 *dr* (verb) end up, (preposition) since, (noun) limit
 *w* (number) one
 *hrw* day, daytime, (day's) duty
 *k* enter
 *knbt* court of magistrates, council
 *pr* Great House, palace, Pharaoh (later)
 *nd-hrt* greet
 *pri* come/go up, emerge, issue
 *nt* custom, observances
 *htm* seal-bearer (official title)
 *gs* side
 *st3* bring, admit, drag, usher in
 *hr* (preposition) (up)on
 *b3h* presence; *m b3h*, *m b3h-* in the presence of
 *whm* repeat
 *rhw* men, fellows, mates, comrades, loyal subjects
 *i3š*, *3š* call, summon

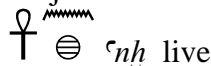
 *d'r* search (out), seek out, investigate
 *s3i* be wise, prudent
 *wdi* put, place, plant (tree); *wd zp* do a deed
 *nhi* some, a little, a few
 *mdt* word, matter, affair
 *t3z* speech, sentence, phrase
 *stpw* the choicest, pick
 *sd3y-hr* amuse oneself, take recreation
 *hr(i)-h(3)b* lector-priest, lit. one who is under the festival-scroll
 *b3stt* Bastet
 *ity*, *itii* sovereign
 *nds* commoner; from *nds* little
 *kni* brave, strong, powerful
 *gb3* arm
 *ikr* excellent, trustworthy
 *db* finger
 *špss*, *špsi* fine, special, noble
 *hwi* would that...
 *sw3i* pass

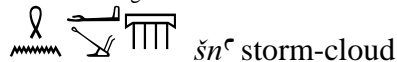
down stretch out, straighten
 knees
drt hand
hn box, chest
hrt-^c writing equipment
šdi take (away), pull,
 rescue, save, cut out
šfdw papyrus scroll, register
gsti scribal palette
zh3w writing
rh-hwt wise, learned man
i3bt East
wbn rise, shine
nome of the undamaged /prosperous/
 flourishing scepter; the Lower Egyptian 13th
 nome
mhi (adjective-verb) concerned;
 take thought, ponder, (noun) care
sh3 recall, bring to mind
ki form, shape/condition/state of
hpi walk, course, roam, invade
3m Asiatic
hpš strong arm, strength, power
hpš scimitar
sh terrorize
šmw harvest
nḥm save, take away, carry off
ḥtr yoke (of oxen)
sk3 plough

hwsj beat up, pound
rmi weep
š3^c begin, spring, originate
 (*m* from)
grg falsehood
gr silent, still, silence
iwh moisten, irrigate, water
iw wrongdoing, injustice, evil
hzi turn back (*m* face aggressively)
tryt respect, awe
wr great, much, many, elder,
 important
pth cast/bow to the ground, put down
wrd be/grow weary/tired
ḥ^c stand (up), rise (up), attend, go
 on duty
shr plan, counsel, governance,
 conduct, affair, fashion, nature
3k perish
d3t remainder
km black
ḥnt finger/toe nail
š3w fate
ḥdi (trans.) destroy, injure, disobey
 (heart); (intrans.) destroyed, perished, suffer
itn sundisk
ḥbs cover, clothe
psdi shine

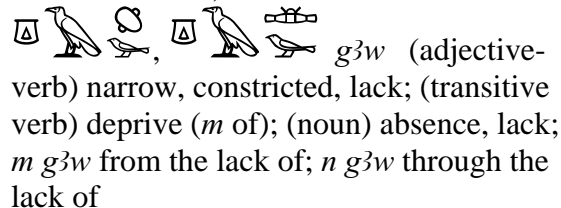
 *rhwt, rhyt*

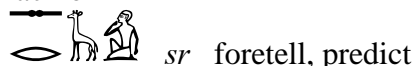
subjects

 *nh* live

 *sn* storm-cloud

 *idi* deaf, numb

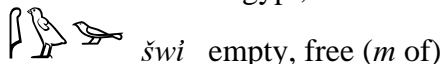
 *g3w* (adjective-verb) narrow, constricted, lack; (transitive verb) deprive (*m* of); (noun) absence, lack; *m g3w* from the lack of; *n g3w* through the lack of

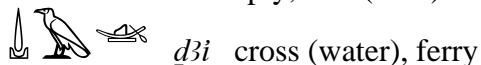
 *sr* foretell, predict

 *ii* come, return

 *itrw* river

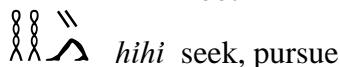
 *kmt* Egypt, lit. Black (land)

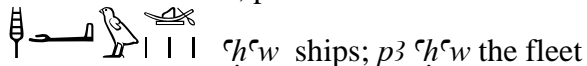
 *swi* empty, free (*m* of)

 *d3i* cross (water), ferry

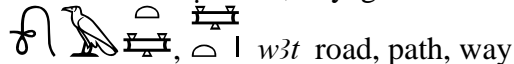
 *mw* water

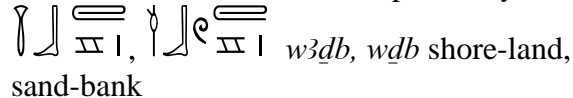
 *rd* foot

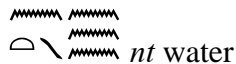
 *hihi* seek, pursue

 *hw* ships; *p3 hw* the fleet

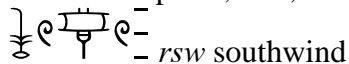
 *skdi* sail, voyage

 *w3t* road, path, way

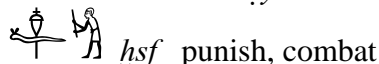
 *w3db, wdb* shore-land, sand-bank

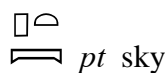
 *nt* water

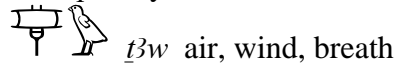
 *st* place, seat, throne

 *rsw* southwind

 *mhyt* northwind

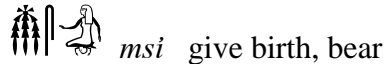
 *hsf* punish, combat

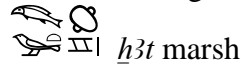
 *pt* sky

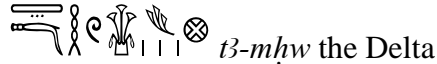
 *t3w* air, wind, breath

 *3pd* bird


 *drdri* stranger

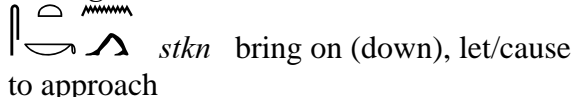
 *msi* give birth, bear

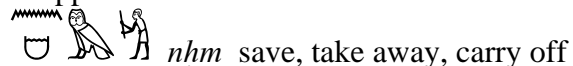
 *h3t* marsh

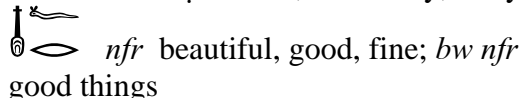
 *t3-mhw* the Delta

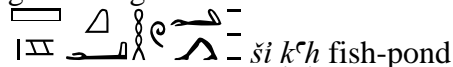
 *zš* nest

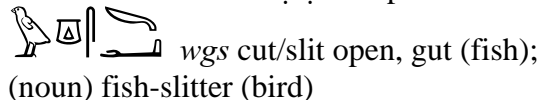
 *gs* side

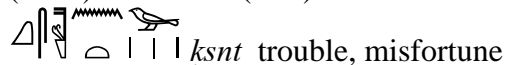
 *stkn* bring on (down), let/cause to approach

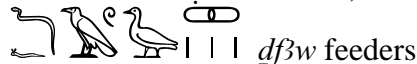
 *nhm* save, take away, carry off

 *nfr* beautiful, good, fine; *bw nfr* good things

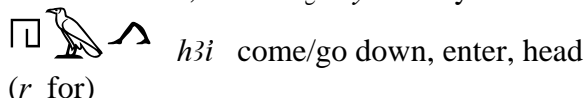
 *ši kḥ* fish-pond

 *wgs* cut/slit open, gut (fish); (noun) fish-slitter (bird)

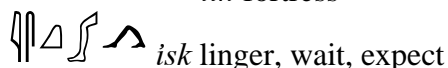
 *ksnt* trouble, misfortune

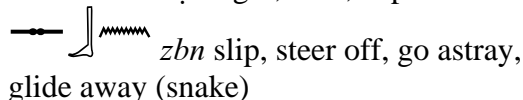
 *df3w* feeders

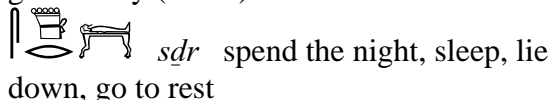
 *hrwy* enemy

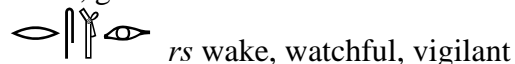
 *h3i* come/go down, enter, head (*r* for)




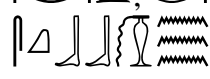
 *ith* fortress

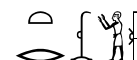


 *isḳ* linger, wait, expect

 *zbn* slip, steer off, go astray, glide away (snake)

 *sdr* spend the night, sleep, lie down, go to rest

 *rs* wake, watchful, vigilant

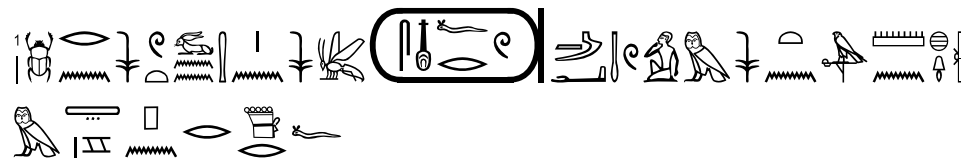
 *wt* flock, sheep and goats
 *h3st* desert hills/land, foreign land
 *swr/swi* drink
 *skbb* make cool, refresh, rest

 *tr/tri/twr* (show) respect, awe
 *iti* take (possession of), take away; *iti hr* avert attention; *itit int* to and fro
 *imn* hide

The prophecies of  *nfrti* Neferti: Part I

Grammar Points

The complete text is preserved on an 18th Dynasty hieratic manuscript, the Papyrus St. Petersburg 1116B (abbreviated here as P1116B). Fragments and small parts are in two 18th Dynasty writing boards (C25224 and BM5647) and on many Ramesside ostraca. They often correct the scribal errors in P1116B. Whenever needed, I used parts of these to emend P1116B. I indicated the sources of these corrections directly following the transliteration. The hieroglyphic text I used here is in Helck's monograph¹. English translations are published by A. H. Gardiner², Lichtheim (I)³ and V.A. Tobin⁴.



hpr.n (n)swt wnn ḥm n (n)sw(t)-bit(i) SNFRW m3^c hrw m nswt mnḥ m t3 pn r dr.f

The subject of the perfect of the verb *hpr* “happen” is a noun clause beginning with (the nominal use of) the non-attributive imperfective relative form of *wnn*. Literally, *hpr.n X wnn Y* means: “that Y used to be X happened,” where X is *nswt* “king” and Y is *ḥm n nswt-biti SNFRW* “king of Upper and Lower Egypt SNEFRU...”

An example of the non-attributive perfective use of *wnn* in this situation is:



it(i).i⁵.



w^c m nn n hrw hpr.w ʕk pw ir.n knbt nt hnw r pr-ʕ3 [lph]⁶ r nd hrt (OL⁷, DeM1182)

w^c m X, where X is a noun or a noun phrase in plural, means “one of X.” The entire phrase *w^c m*

¹ W. Helck, Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.ti, 2nd ed. Wiesbaden, 1992.

² JEA, I, No. 2 (1914) 100-106.

³ M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. I, University of California Press, 1975.

⁴ W. K. Simpson, The Literature of Ancient Egypt, The American University in Cairo Press, 2003.

⁵ See Allen (25.15) and [Urk. IV, 897, 11-13].

⁶ In what follows, the phrase *ʕnh(.w)-(w)d3(.w)-s(nb.w)* will be abbreviated *lph* in the transliteration.

⁷ Liverpool Ostrakon.

nn n hrw “one of these/those days” is the topicalized subject of a subject-stative construction using the stative of the verb *hpr* “happen.” The construction has the literal meaning: “one of these days happened.” In English it can be translated as an adverbial phrase: “on one of these days.”

A well-known *sḏm pw ir.n.f* construction follows: “what he did was to hear.” In its subject *ḳnbt* “council” the plural strokes indicate that it is a collective noun, though Lichtheim translates this as genuine plural: “magistrates.” The indirect genitive *ḳnbt nt ḥnw* has the clear meaning: “council/magistrates of the capital /residence.” 3-*pr* spelled here as means “palace” (later the Pharaoh himself).

Finally, an *r* + infinitive pseudo-verbal construction using *nd ḥrt* “greet, offer greetings” expresses purpose. Gardiner notes that “the phrase *nd ḥrt* is very clumsily used in this passage.” In fact, it was the magistrates’ everyday’s duty to report to the Pharaoh the state of affairs in their jurisdictions and *nd ḥrt* refers to this function.

Another example to this is from the Duties of the Vizier in the tomb of Rekhmire⁸ at Thebes: *ḫꜣw-ḫꜣw smi n.f ḥrt t3wi m pr.f r nb*⁹
 ḳnbt pw ir.n.sn nd.n.sn ḥrt mi nt-ḥ.sn nt r nb (DeM1183)

Another *sḏm pw ir.n.f* construction emphasizes that offering greetings or, by Gardiner, “performing their duty” was the council’s *nt-ḥ* “custom, observances” (feminine collective noun).

Note that the (perfect) suffix *n* in *nd.n.sn ḥrt* was missing in P116B (and also in the ostraca OL, DeM1182, DeM1185) and was conjectured by Gardiner until it was found in DeM1183.¹⁰

dd.in ḥm.f lph n ḥtmw nti r gs.f





The *sḏm.in.f* form of *dd* “say, tell, speak” is used to indicate sub/consequent action. In English translation the word “then” can be inserted to introduce this construction. The pharaoh’s speech

⁸ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/egypt/explore/rekhmire.html>

⁹ [Urk. IV, 1105, 12-13]

¹⁰ See H. Polotsky, Egyptian Tenses, The Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Proceedings, Vol. II, 3 (1965), p. 3.

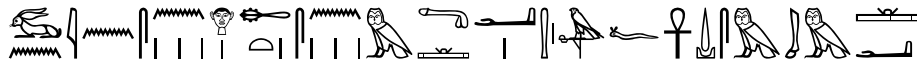
The imperative of “go” is prefixed *i.zy*, a holdover of Old Egyptian. The *y* ending indicates that the command is addressed to several people, the (members of the) council of the capital. The gender of the noun *knbt* is matched with the feminine perfective active participle *pṛt* of *pri* “go out, leave.”

The presence of the sign  is strange here. In the present context it is a synonym of *st3* “bring, admit, drag, usher in,” (usually spelled as   ) but here it seems to be used for its

tion. For another analogy, a passage in the Eloquent Peasant has:

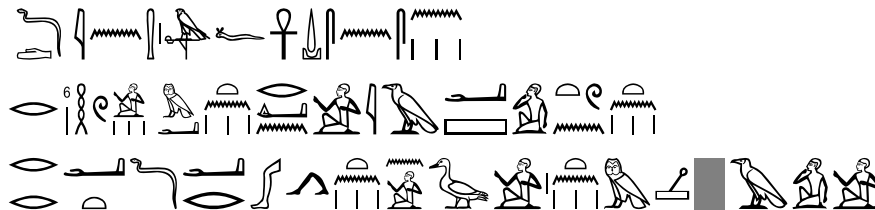
All in all, one is inclined to conclude a scribal error in P1116B, and admit that the line here intended to use the *sdm.in.f* verb form: *st3.in.tw.sn n.f* “they (the members of the council) were brought in to him.” (In retrospect, the omission of the suffix pronoun is forgivable as it is clear from the context.)

¹¹ [Peas. R 7, 7]



wn.in.sn hr h(w)t.sn m b3h-^c hm.f lph m whm-^c

Submission to royalty is expressed here in a simple adverbial sentence. The adverbial phrase *m b3h-^c X* means “in the presence of X,” and emphasis is brought out using another adverbial phrase: *m whm-^c* “repeatedly.”

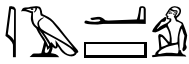

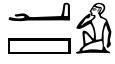


dd.in hm.f lph n.sn (OL)

rhw m.tn rdi.n.i i3š.tw n.tn

r rdit d^cr.tn n.i z3.tn m s[3]3

The pharaoh’s speech starts with a sentence containing two *rdi* + subjunctive *sdm.f* “cause that he hears” constructions. He addresses the people around him as *rhw* “men, fellows, comrades” (Lichtheim¹²), “loyal subjects” (Tobin).

The first *rdi* is perfect and  *i3š* is a variant spelling of  *i3š* or  *š* “call, summon.” The second *rdi* is infinitive (part of an *r* + infinitive pseudo-verbal construction expressing purpose) and the following subjunctive is *d^cr* “search/seek out.” The literal meaning is: “Comrades, I have caused that one summons you to give that you search out (one of) your son(s) for me.”

m s3i is an adverbial phrase of identity attached to *z3.tn* in which the adjective-verb *s3i* “wise” is the object of the preposition *m* and the seated man determinative also indicates that it is used as a noun: “wise man.”

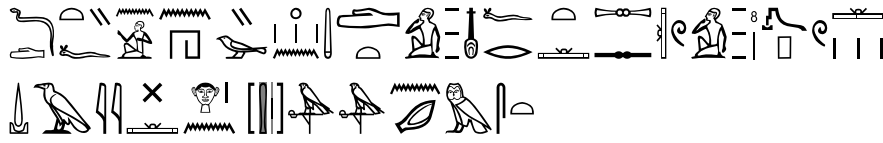


sn.tn m ikr hnms.tn <*m*> wd zp nfr

The pharaoh’s desire to be entertained with fine speech continues. This time he asks for a brother or a friend of the council members who distinguished himself by excellence or noble deed expressed by another *m* of predication and a participle of the verb *wdi* “place, put” which here with

¹² Lichtheim, Tobin, etc. in parentheses refer to the respective translations in op. cit.

the object *zp* means “to do a deed.”

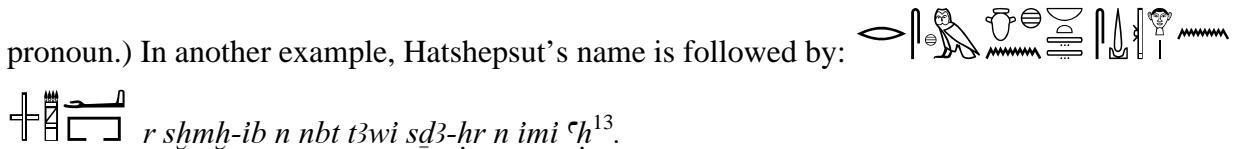


ddti.f n.i nhi n mdwt nfirt t3zw stpw

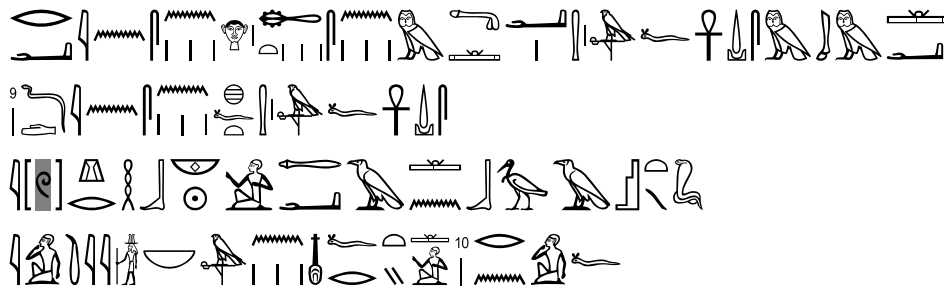
d3y-ḥr n ḥm.i n sdm st

The prospective participle *ddti.f* (of *dd* “speak”) “the one who will speak” is used here to indicate an action that is yet to happen.

d3y-ḥr has the same sense as its causative *sd3y-ḥr* “amuse/divert oneself.” It is an active participle and the following preposition *n* and object *X* can be translated as “that which pleases *X*.” (Note that in *X* one of the falcons on standard is a determinative, the other is a 1MS suffix pronoun.) In another example, Hatshepsut’s name is followed by:



Finally, the last preposition *n* “at” governs the infinitive of *sdm* (used as a noun) and *st* refers back to *mdwt nfirt t3zw stpw* “fine speech, choice sentences.”



rdi.in.sn <st> ḥr hwt.sn m b3ḥ-ḥ f lph m wḥm-ḥ

dd.in.sn hft ḥm.f lph

iw <wn> ḥr-ḥ3b ʕ3 n b3st

ity nb.n nfirti rn.f

The only note one can make in this passage with simple grammar is that after the particle *iw* one expects the indicative/perfective *sdm.f*: *wn* of *wnn*: “there is a lector-priest.” A good

comparison is the example: *iw wn nds ddi rn.f*¹⁴.

Also, in the indirect genitive *ʕ3 n b3st* the adjective *ʕ3* “great” is used as a noun “great

¹³ [Urk. IV, 456, 2]

¹⁴ [Westcar, 1.5]

one,” and *b3st* “Bubastis” is a town in the eastern Delta. As the cobra determinative suggests (usually placed after the name of a goddess) the spelling of *b3st* is influenced by the cat-goddess *b3stt* “Bastet” whose cult center was Bubastis.¹⁵

Finally, note the nominal sentence of type A B: *nfrti rn.f* “His name is Neferti.”



nds pw kn gb3.f zh3w pw ikr n db3w.f (BM5647)

This passage consists of two bipartite A *pw* B nominal sentences with B being *nfr hr* constructions: *kn gb3.f* “valiant of arm” (direct genitive) and the frequently occurring¹⁶ *ikr n db3w.f* “excellent of fingers” (indirect genitive). Note the graphic transposition in the spelling of the noun

gb3 “arm.” Another example is:  *n k3 n nds kn gb(3).f*¹⁷.

Strictly speaking (as in the next passage) *kn gb3.f* could also be interpreted as a virtual relative clause with adjectival predicate (following an A *pw* nominal structure): “whose arm is valiant,” but the symmetry of the construction rules out this possibility.



špss pw 3 n.f hwt r miti.f nb

The previous term *nds* for Neferti can mean “commoner” or “citizen.” The first, doubtless related to the adjective *nds* “little, small,” is an antonym of *špss* “nobleman” therefore it must be discarded. In this A *pw* nominal sentence *špss* is modified by a virtual relative clause (without the introductory relative adjective *nti* and defined antecedent) having adjectival predicate. The relative clause (with a comparative) itself indicates wealth with literal translation “things were great to him with respect to all the likes of him.”



hwi [in(.tw)].f m33 hm.f

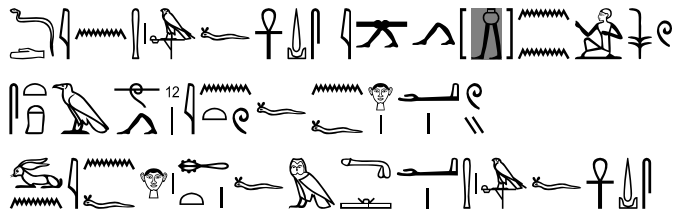
The particle *hwi* “would that” is a good choice to introduce the passive form of the subjunctive *sdm.f* of *ini* “bring” expressing the wish of the councilmen. Note that the subjunctive of *ini* has a special *t* ending, e.g. *int.f* “he will bring,” but with the suffix pronoun *tw* only one *t* is written out: *in.tw*. Another subjunctive *sdm.f* of the verb *m33* “see” introduces an adverb clause of purpose:

¹⁵ Lichtheim translates Bubastis as Bastet of the East.

¹⁶ See e.g. [ShS. 188]

¹⁷ [Urk. IV, 414, 17]

“so that his majesty may see.” Note that subjunctive is used since the subject *ḥm.f* is expressed (as opposed to the *r* + infinitive pseudo-verbal construction for unexpressed subject: **in.tw.f r m33*.) Finally, Gardiner notes that the suffix pronoun *.k* is more logical than *.f*.



dd.in ḥm.f lph i.zy [in] n.i sw

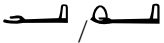
st3.in.tw.f n.f ḥr ʿwi

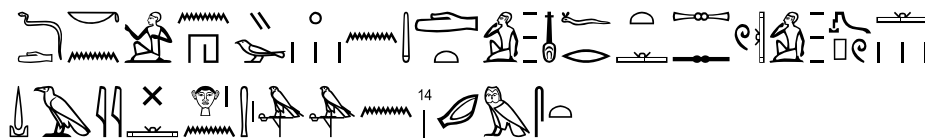
wn.in.f ḥr ht.f m b3ḥ-ḥ ḥm.f lph

The grammar in this passage has been discussed previously.



dd.in ḥm.f lph mi mi nfrti ḥnms.i

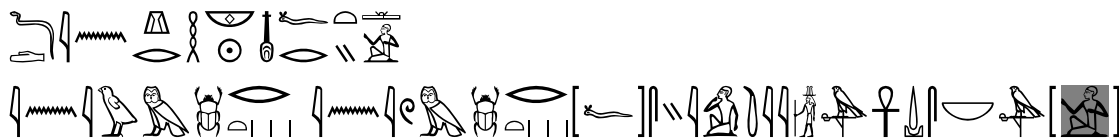
The imperative *mi* of *ii/iwi* “come” with regular spelling (in which  has phonetic value *mi*) starts the pharaoh’s speech. In a typical use of the imperative, it is followed by the enclitic particle *mi* “now, please.”



dd.k n.i nḥi n mdwt nfrt tẓw stpw

d3y-ḥr n ḥm.i n sdm st

The subject of the imperative (if expressed) uses a dependent pronoun, so that in this passage *dd* “say, tell” is not imperative but subjunctive *sdm.f* (which is typical following the previous imperative *mi*). Literally: “come that you may tell.” The rest of this passage occurred previously.



dd.in ḥr-ḥ3b nfrti

in iw m ḥprt in iw m ḥprt(i).si ity lph nb[i]

In Neferti’s questions (with adverbial predicates introduced by *iw*) the feminine (perfective and prospective) participles are written with plural strokes since they refer to plural nouns. As Gar-

diner and Helck noted, the suffix pronoun .f is a scribal error.




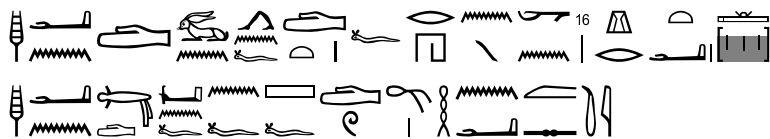
dd.in hm.f lph m hprt(i).s(i) swt min is hpr(.w) sw3(.w) hr.f

(The Turin Ostrakon has *hr n.i* at the end.)

Once again Helck notes that the *t* ending in *st* is a scribal error. The particle *swt* introduces the second circumstantial clause in which the enclitic particle *is* indicates subordination to the first. The verbs *hpr* “occur, become” and *sw3i* “pass” appear in subject-stative constructions (with common subject *min*).


Finally, Helck also suggests restoring the eroded text at the end with *hr.f* since *sw3* with

hr + object means “pass by.” Another example:  *hr*
*m-ht hrww sw3(.wi) hr nn*¹⁸.



h^c.n dwn.n.f d_rt.f r hn n hrt-^c

h^c.n šd.n.f n.f šfdw hn^c gsti

This passage has a simple grammar. The only note to make is about the writing tools that the pharaoh is reaching out for. The noun *hn* “box, chest” usually appears with the chest determinative , *hrt-^c* is in general “writing equipment,” and the specific tools are given by *šfdw* “papyrus scroll” and *gsti* “scribe’s palette.” Finally, Gardiner notes that it is the pharaoh himself who writes: “an unexpected and interesting trait.”



wn.in n.f hr irt m zh3w ddt.n hr-h3b nfrti (Tur.)

The compound *iri m zh3w* clearly should mean “to put into writing.” The object is *ddt.n* X “what X said” with the perfect relative form of *dd*.





rh-hwt pw n i3bt n(i)-sw [b3]stt m wbn.s ms pw n h3(t)-^cd [..]

Three non-verbal sentences describe the whereabouts of Neferti. In a beautiful symmetry, two A

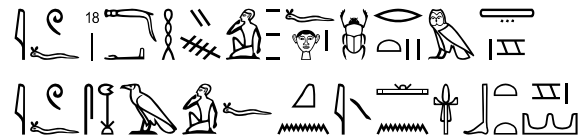
¹⁸ [Westcar 12.9]

pw nominal sentences bracket an adjectival sentence. In the A *pw* nominal sentences the nominal predicates (A) are *rh-hwt n i3bt* “wise man of the East” (in which *i3bt* “East” appears in early spelling), and *ms pw n hk3(t)- ʿd* “born in the nome of the undamaged/prosperous /flourishing scepter.” In the latter, *ms* itself is a perfective passive participle, and the birthplace is the Lower

Egyptian 13th nome with main city  *iwnw* “Iunu,” the Greek Heliopolis, the Biblical On.

Apart from the eroded part, the sign  indicates “nome.”

The middle adjectival sentence of possession has typical structure. The location is *b3stt m wbn.s*, lit. “Bastet in her rising.” The preposition *m* governs the infinitive of *wbn* with suffixed subject. Since the sun rises in the East, Lichtheim translates this location as “Bastet in her East” while Tobin chooses “Bastet in her glory.”



iw.f mhi.f hr hpr.t(i.si) m t3 (DeM1186)

iw.f sh3.f kni n i3bt

Neferti now begins to describe the future peril of the land with two circumstantial *iw.f sdm.f* /subject + imperfective constructions using the verbs *mhi* “ponder, be concerned” and *sh3* “remember, recall.”¹⁹

As Lichtheim²⁰ notes, throughout the text the tenses vary. They are the actual time when the writer of the text is reflecting about the past, the time of the speaker whose words Snefru busily recording, and the (relative future) time of the sage’s prophesies.

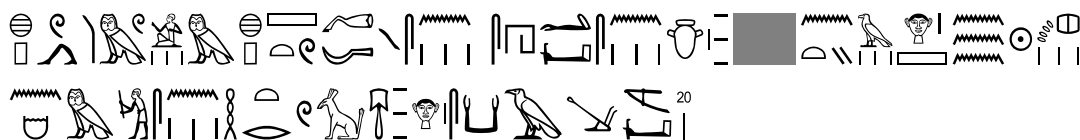
These time changes are also present here as in P1116B we have *hprt(i.si)* “what would happen,” a prospective active participle (the suffix pronoun is omitted as it refers to the general state of affairs), and in DeM116 the scribe only writes *hprt* “what (had) happened,” a perfective active participle. Accordingly, this particular sentence can be translated as: “He was thinking about what would/will happen to the land”²¹ or “...he deplored what had happened in the land.”²²

¹⁹ As noted previously, the grammar between the lines 17-27 is discussed in detail in my Introduction to Middle Egyptian through Ancient Writings. In this passage we will give only a rudimentary analysis.

²⁰ Lichtheim (I).

²¹ Allen (23.10).

²² Lichtheim (I).



ḥpw 3^cmw m ḥpš.sn sh.sn ibw ...ntiw ḥr šmw nhm.sn ḥtrw ḥr sk3

As this is a prophecy, from here on in the three circumstantial clauses the verb forms are all subjunctive *sḏm.f* expressing future predictions. The verb *ḥpi* is used intransitively meaning “walk, course, roam” (Lichtheim), “invade” (Tobin). The literal translation of the adverbial phrase *m ḥpš.sn* is “with strong arm, strength.” (Interestingly, the scimitar/battle axe with the same phonetic value *ḥpš* was added to the determinatives of *ḥpš*.)



dd.f ḥws ib.i

Neferti’s speech starts with the imperative of the 4ae-inf. verb *ḥwsi* “pound, beat up, stir” and object *ib.i* “my heart.”






rmw.k t3 pn š3^c.n.k im.f

The verb *rmi* “weep” is subjunctive *sḏm.f* (not imperative since its subject is a suffix not a dependent pronoun), a typical continuation of the previous imperative. *š3^c.n.k* is a perfect relative form modifying *t3 pn* “this land,” lit. “that which you have sprung from.”



gr(g) m iwḥ

This is a simple adverbial sentence but its meaning depends on interpretation. The scribe may have left the pick and basin sign  out and with this  *grg* means “falsehood.” The 3-lit. verb *iwḥ* (usually with the water determinative) means “moisten, irrigate, water.” Helck notes that this should be interpreted as “advantage, encouragement” (Begünstigung). With these, the sentence can be translated as: “falsehood is as the flood” (Tobin) or “an advantage.”

On the other hand, without the sign , *gr* as an adjective-verb means “silent,” and as a noun “silence.” In addition, *iw* by itself (with the evil bird determinative) means “wrong, injustice, evil.” Gardiner interprets *gr* as a participle and *iw* as a noun: “He who is silent is a transgressor” but questions the correctness of this rendering.

As before, ḥ^c “rise” (*r* “against”) is subjunctive *sḏm.f*. The object of the preposition *r* is a noun clause introduced by *ntt* and it has an adverbial predicate, lit. “(you) rise against that which is in front of you.”



m.k nn r.f wn wrw m shrw nw t3 (DeM1188)

Curiously,  is missing from P1116B, clearly a scribal error in the otherwise easy grammar.

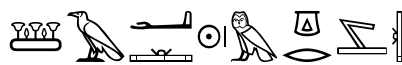
The only note one needs to be make is that *shr* does not mean “plan” here but “governance.”



irt m tmt ir(w)


This short adverbial sentence (of identity) is a word play with the participle of the verb *iri* “make, do” and its negation. First, *irt* is a feminine perfective passive participle (in plural as the triple strokes show), lit. “what was made.” It is used as a noun, the subject of the *m* of predication. The second noun negates this using the feminine perfective passive participle of *tm* and the negational complement of *iri*, lit. “is/has been unmade.” Lichtheim’s translation contrasts the good deeds of the past and the peril of the present: “what was made has been unmade”.

Tobin’s translation conveys a different meaning: The first part refers to the evil deeds and the second part expresses regret: “(that which) should not be done.”



š3c r m grg

Following P1116B Gardiner and Tobin interpreted *r*^c as “day” and *grg* as “falsehood” (see the discussion a few lines above). With these the literal meaning is: “the day begins with falsehood.”

On the other hand, Ostrakon DeM1188 has  in which *r*^c has the divinity determinative pointing to the sun god Re. In addition, following Lichtheim, *grg* can be thought of as the 3-lit. transitive verb “found, establish, furnish waste land with vegetation.” Setting the predicate in subjunctive *sḏm.f* and *grg* in infinitive, she translates this sentence with positive tone: “Re should begin to recreate.”



t3 3k.w r 3w ni hpr d3t

The livelihood of every Egyptian, the cultivated soil is the subject of the next few lines. An easy subject-stative construction asserts the state of the “entire” (*r 3w*) land using the verb *3k* “perish, go to ruin.”

The second sentence uses the negated indicative/perfective *sdm.f* of the verb *hpr*. With the object *d3t* “remainder, remnant, balance” the literal meaning is: “remnant did not happen.”



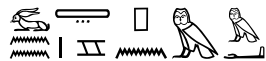
nn zp km n ʕnt m š3wt.f

The scribe here emphasizes the previous statement with an interesting hyperbole. The cultivated land, “The Black” (*kmt*), that is Egypt, which he just claimed to have perished without a trace, has disappeared to the extent that not even a patch of the size of the black of a fingernail (*km n ʕnt*) can be found. To express this he uses the negated subjunctive *sdm.f* of the verb *zp* “happen.” The adverbial phrase *m š3wt.f* “from its fate” gives the literal meaning: “(Even) the black of the fingernail from its fate will not happen.”



ḥd t3 pn nn mḥi ḥr.f nn dd nn ir rmw

This is an emphatic construction with initial emphasized adverb clause followed by three non-verbal negation of existence.²³



wnn t3 pn m mi

The future existence of the land is questioned here using an emphatic construction, lit. “This land will exist in what (state)?” The first part *wnn t3 pn* is the theme with *wnn*, an imperfective relative form. The second part *m mi* is the rheme.²⁴



itn ḥbs.w nn psd.f <r> m33 rhyt

The attention now turns to celestial domains. A subject-stative construction describes the disappearance of the “sun-disk” *itn* with the verb *ḥbs* “clothe, cover” as predicate.

This description is further detailed with the negated subjunctive *sdm.f* of the verb *psdi* “shine.” Note that the usual sun determinative is replaced by the spine influenced by the noun

²³ Allen (25.2).

²⁴ Allen (25.8).

the rhyme.²⁸



iw.i r dd nti hft hr.i ni sr.n.i ntt ni ii(t)

Neferti now claims the accuracy of his prophecies. A pseudo-verbal construction using *r* + the infinitive of the verb *dd* indicates purpose and can be translated as: “I am going to tell.” The relative adjective *nti* used as a noun (without antecedent) introduces a direct relative clause “(the one) which is before me.”

The negated perfect of the verb *sr* “predict, foretell” corresponds to English present tense. The direct object is a relative clause marked by *ntt* “that.” The verb form of *ii* “come, return” is a passive *s_dmt.f*. In this, the *t* ending is omitted along with the subject. Another example to this

construction is: *m w3 ntt ni iit*²⁹. With this, the literal meaning of the passage is: “I do not foretell what has not come about.”

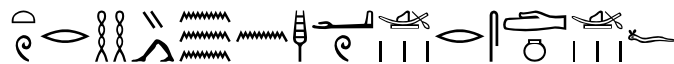
Gardiner points out that the verb form and the corresponding tense is a bit curious here as the visionary Neferti foretells future events as if they happen at present: “as though they were taking place before his eyes.”



itrw šw(.w) nw kmt d3y.tw mw hr rdwi (P38)

In the next few lines Neferti uses the changes in Egypt’s life giving waterways metaphorically to illustrate the complete reversal of order in Egypt. A subject-stative construction (moved up with in the indirect genitive) is applied to the verb *šwi* “dry up” in which *itrw* “river” (with irregular spelling) is treated as plural (liquid) even though it is a singular noun.³⁰

The subjunctive *s_dmt.f* of *d3i* “cross (water)” is made passive by the use of the impersonal suffix pronoun *tw* in the following result clause.



tw r h(i)hi mw n h'w r skd.f (DeM1074 and P38)

An *r* + infinitive pseudo-verbal construction using the verb *hihi* “seek, look for” describes the scarcity of water. The final syntactically adverbial phrase *r skd.f* using the caus. 3ae-inf. verb


²⁸ Allen (25.9).

²⁹ [Peas. B2, 27] in Allen (22.12-13).


³⁰ See Allen (17.4).

[illegible]


In the subject-stative construction, the subject *w3t.f* “its path/road” refers back to *itrw* and can be translated as “waterway/watercourse.” The predicate *hpr* with the preposition *m* literally means “evolve into, turn into” usually translated as “become something.”



st mw r nti m st mw w3db




iw rsw r hsf mhyt nn pt m t3w w^c (P38)

The second clause is a simple negated adverbial sentence in which  *w^c* “sole, unique” modifies *ṭ3w* “wind.” In P1116B there is an intrusive seated man determinative after *w^c* but absent from the ostraca P38. In addition, the latter makes the negated adverbial sentence affirmative

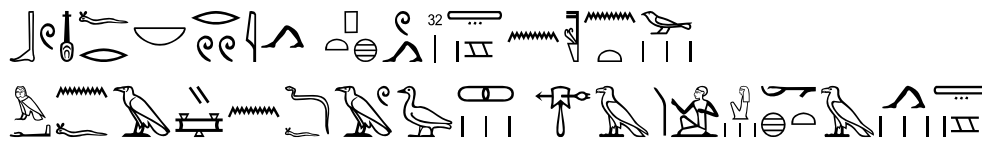
the Delta and its dire consequences.  is spelled out in P38 as   

[illegible]

Finally, note that P38 has 

n3 n šiw k^chw wnyw hr wgs wbnw hr rmw 3pdw (P38)

Gardiner notes that *št kḥ* is a special word for “fish ponds,” and both Lichtheim and Tobin adopt this. The (plural) participles *wnyw* and *wbnw* (of the verbs *wnn* “exist,” and *wbn* with usual meaning “rise, shine” but here “glitter, overflow”) are in symmetry and they are both followed by the preposition *hr* indicating possession. Gardiner points out that the verb *wgs* means “slit open” (fish for drying) but this does not fit here (as a fish pond cannot be teeming with fish slit open). Lichtheim resolves this problem by observing that in certain texts³¹ *wgs* means “fish-eating birds,” lit. “(fish) slitters,” and this fits to the context.

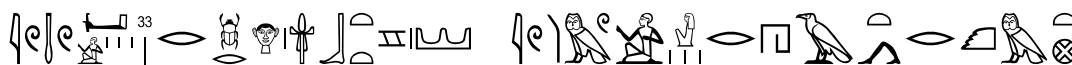


bw-nfr nb rwi.w pthw t3 n ksnt


m-^c nf3 n df3w sttiw htiw t3

A subject-stative construction uses the verb *rwi* “go away, disappear, vanish.” As before, the second clause contains the passive of the verb *pth* “cast/bow down,” and the adverbial phrase with *ksnt* “trouble, misfortune” has clear meaning.

The compound preposition *m-^c* “together with, through, in the hand of, owing to” governs a noun phrase in which *df3* cannot be “food” but, as Lichtheim points out, must mean “feeder.” The plural prepositional nisbe *htiw* “who are pervading” derived from the preposition *ht* “(pervading) through” modifies the noun *sttiw* “Asiatics.”




iw hrw(y) r hpr hr i3btt iw 3mw r h3t r kmt (DeM1074)

Once again the symmetry of these two (syntactically adverbial) sentences is apparent. The *r* + infinitive constructions contain the infinitives of the verbs *hpr* “become, rise” (Lichtheim), “appear” (Tobin) and *h3t* “enter.” The seated man determinative in  rules out the possibility of this to mean *hrw(y)w* “war,” so it must be “enemy, foe” which as the plural strokes indicate is used as a collective noun.



g3w.tw ith ky r gs(.f) nn sdm mi nfw (DeM1024 and P38)

The next passages are difficult. The verb *g3w* “lack, to be lacking” along with subject 

³¹ [Peas. R 29]

ith “fortress” is interpreted by Posener³² and Lichtheim as “absence of fortresses needed” for protection. The next adverbial sentence *ky r gs.f*³³, lit. “(an)other is beside it” (with omitted generic subject) seem to indicate that as the Egyptians sought refuge in the fortresses, overcrowding ensued and the latecomers (the others) are kept outside. (Due to the obscurity of the meaning, the verb form of *g3w* is difficult to identify. According to Lichtheim this should be in the protasis of a conditional sentence consequently subjunctive *sdm.f*.)

The last part is easier. The abstract determinative in *sdm* indicates that “listening” is understood in an abstract sense: “to pay attention.” Just like in line 24 *sdm* appears in a *nn A* construction as a perfective active participle: “(there is) no one who pays attention.” The interrogative pronoun *mi* “who” used here as a noun specifies what is being ignored, the “wrongdoer” *nf* (with a seated man determinative) doubtless related to the noun *nf* “wrong.”



tw r isḳ m3ḳt m grḥ

The passage now returns to the situation at the fortresses with grammar as in line 27 (and also below). The verb *isḳ* “linger, wait” has the meaning here “expect.” The object is *m3ḳt* “ladder” and along with it the enemy to scale the walls and attack, lit. “one is to expect the ladder at night.”



tw r ʿḳ ithw tw r sbn ḳdd m irti

Identical grammar is applied here to the verbs *ʿḳ* “enter, breach (a fortress)” (Tobin). In symmetry, this construction is once again repeated using the verb *sbn* “slip, steer off, go astray, glide away (snake)” (sometimes with fish and walking legs and in P38 with wing determinatives).

Adding the object *ḳdd* “sleep” the meaning of the sentence becomes clear; lit. “one is to breach the fortress, one is to drive off the sleep from the eyes.”




sdr.kw ḥr iw.i rs.kw

Two contrasting verbs with 1MS subjects suddenly change the point of view. The stative endings of *sdr* “lie down, be asleep” and *rs* “wake, be vigilant/watchful” can be easily recognized and

³² Littérature, 21-60, 145-157.

³³ [Peas. B 1, 44, 46].

describe the state of the observer at the moment of attack. Note that the phonetic value of  here is *rs* due to similarity of the corresponding hieratic signs. In the two readable ostraca the two clauses are connected by the conjunction *hr* which, according to Gardiner, should be deleted.



ʿwt h3st r swr hr itrw nw kmt

This simple sentence uses pseudo-verbal *r* + infinitive construction with the 3-lit. verb *swr/swi* “drink.” The only note to make is that ʿwt “flock, sheep and goats” is a collective noun and the suffix pronoun in the next passage indicates that it is treated as plural. (For the morphology; the throw stick is a variant of the shepherd’s crook.)



skbb.sn hr w3dbw.sn n g3w s(t) tri.sn (Vand.)

As Helck notes, following the subjunctive *sdm.f* of the caus. 2ae-gem. verb *skbb* “refresh, rest” the 3PL suffix in the ostrakon Vand. is missing and is restored here. The second 3PL suffix after *w3db* “shore” refers to *itrw* “rivers, waters.” A more forgivable error is the omission of *t* in the dependent pronoun *st* (to avoid duplication).

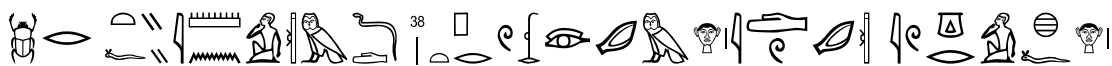
Although it is convenient to translate the 2-lit. verb *tr/tri/twr* “(show) respect, awe” as infinitive, lit. “to respect/to fear,” it is clearly not the case as infinitives do not have plural from. Instead, it is a relative form that modifies *st*, lit. “(one) that they respect/awe.”



iw t3 pn r itt int ni rh bsw (Vand. and C25224)

Gardiner notes that, according to Sethe, the *r itt int* in the first clause is “an expression for disorderly movement with various nuances.” Tobin’s “turmoil” and Gardiner’s “perturbation” indicate this meaning and Lichtheim’s “to-and-fro” is closest to the original meaning of the two infinitives.

The negated infinitive of *rh* “know” has object *bsw* “result, consequence” and the latter can also be considered as a passive participle of the 2-lit. verb *bs* “introduce, bring in,” lit. “what is brought in.”



hprti.fi imn(.w) m dd ptr sdm hr idw iw gr hf(t) hr (C25224)

The prospective active participle *hprti.fi* “what will/would happen” is the subject of a subject-stative construction using the (transitive) verb *imn* “hide” (with passive meaning).

Lichtheim gives a detailed account on the rest of this passage. According to this, *m dd* indicates that a proverb follows. The proverb itself consists of two adverb clauses and the particle *iw* signifies that the second is the main clause. As for the subject of the first, the signs for eye and ear in pair are suggestive: “sight and hearing.” The adverbial predicate contains *idw* which, as noted in line 25, means “numbness.” We thus see that the literal meaning of the first clause is: “when sight and hearing are numb.”

The main clause is adverbial with subject *gr* “silent, mute.” The adverbial predicate *hft hr* is a well-known compound, lit. “before the face,” that is, “in front.” Once again, as Lichtheim points out, this proverb is akin to the English saying: “among the blind the one-eyed is king.”

Tobin’s translation “...sight and hearing are dead, only silence abounds” conveys the meaning that Neferti is warning the Pharaoh that people will refuse to accept his prophecies.