The Autobiography of Admiral Ahmose

Part III

The Nubian Campaign of Amenhotep I
The Nubian Campaign of Thutmose I
The Syrian Campaign of Thutmose I

m ḫt mn wd3 r ṭnw r ḫt ẖ3swt

spr ḫm.f [r] nhrn gmt ḫm.f ẖn(.w)-(w)dẖ(.w)-s(nb.w) ḫrw pf

.toDouble3f sk iw

wn.in ḫm.f ḫr irt ḫ3wt ẖt im.sn

nn tnwt m skrw-ẖnh inn ḫm.f m nhwt.f
יסי ומכנין נמס נמא נמס נמס נמס נמס

איני ורסם סטי הר סט סקרא-נט מז נמס

ויתנוהו ויימן נב הר סננーシ

מנקוו פה ניי בית הצליל מז נמס נמס

[חצב מ] חרט ירט ני די ני
The Autobiography of Admiral Ahmose: Part III

Vocabulary

kš Kush (northern Sudan)
swšš broaden, widen
tbš border, boundary
kmt Egypt, lit. Black (land)
hr(i)-ib (noun) middle
gw3w3 strangle-hold, choke
wthw fugitive
di hr gs kill, destroy, dispose of, show partiality
wn-m3 reality, true being
cht fight
tp head, top
mz bring, present
hihi seek, pursue
mnmmt herd (of cattle)
hrw day, daytime, (day’s duty
hnmt well, cistern
hrw r apart from, besides
h3w3ti warrior
hk3 ruler
sswn destroy, crush; (noun) destruction
h3yt stife, rebellion, civil war
dr subdue/repel (enemies), drive out, expel
bzi (transitive) introduce; (intransitive) enter
b3h presence; m b3h in the presence of
mw water
bin bad, evil
s3s3 drive back, repel; s3s3 hr force/tow ship over rapids
h5w ships; p3h5w the fleet
pn5yt cataract
hr5 rage
hby leopard, panther
wdi place, set, throw, shoot (arrow)
šsr arrow
tpi first
mn firm, established; mn m fixed to, attached to
šnbt breast, chest
bdš become faint, weak, exhausted
nzrt/nsrt uraeus
At (moment of attack) hbyt carnage, slaughter 3mmt grasp hzi (adjective-verb) wretched, miserable, vile shd upside down; m shd head downwards bik falcon ipt-swt Karnak temple rTnw Retjenu (Lebanon and Syria) i'ī wash nhrn Naharin (Mesopotamia) t'z tie, knot skiw troops tni grow old išwi old age hzt favor htp (adjective-verb) content, calm, pleased, happy, peaceful hrt tomb
Grammar Points

The Nubian Campaign of Amenhotep I

There are only a few new grammar points in this passage.

In the first sentence we learn that Ahmose served under Amenhotep I since $\text{DRS-}K3-R^c$ is the throne name of this pharaoh. The particle $\text{iw}$ introduces an adverb clause: “(when) he sailed south to Kush to enlarge the borders of Egypt.”

The second sentence describes how the pharaoh smote the Nubian Bowmen in the middle of his army.

In the third sentence the verb form of $\text{ini}$ “bring” in the composition $\text{in.w(i)}$ is (transitive) stative expressing state: “they were carried off in chains/fetters,” lit. “in strangle-hold/choke.” (There is a possibility of the passive $\text{inw}$ with subject $\text{iwnti sti pf}$ “that Nubian Bowman” since it is a noun phrase (not a pronoun). On the other hand, in the next adverb clause the enemy appears in plural as indicated by the suffix pronoun $\text{sn}$.)

The phrase $\text{nn nhw.sn}$ can be compared with a similar phrase in the Story of Ship-
wrecked Sailor: 

In our present translation “missing” is more fitting than “loss.”

In the following adverbial sentence (m of predication) the phrase \( \text{di} \) has the first of its two meanings: “kill, destroy, dispose of” and “show partiality,” lit. “put/place on the side.” The verb form of \( \text{di} \) here is a perfective passive participle.

Finally, in the last relative clause \( \text{ni hpr} \) (with suppressed subject) stands for \( \text{ni hpr.sn} \), where the suffix pronoun refers back to “the fugitives, the fleeing.” This construction is a negated indicative/perfective \( sdm.f \).

It is interesting to compare the two negations of \( hpr \) in the text: \( \text{mt m hpr} \) (negated participle), and \( \text{ni hpr} \) (negated indicative/perfective).

The particle \( \text{ist} \) allows the adverb clause \( \text{wi m tp n mšè.n} \) (with adverbial predicate) to stand in front of the main clause (introduced by the particle \( \text{iw} \)). When the subject is a personal pronoun, after \( \text{ist} \) it is always the dependent form that is used.

Ahmose once again shows his valor in front of the army, with true (\( wn-m33 \)) fighting spirit expressed by the circumstantial \( sdm.n.f/\text{perfect of the verb } \text{hž} \) “fight.” His bravery once again is noticed by the pharaoh (circumstantial \( sdm.n.f/\text{perfect of the verb of } m33 \)), and he presents the (right) hands of the two slain (with \( mz \) “bring;” infinitive) to the king.
Once again the text is somewhat repetitive, and in this passage there is not much new grammar. The meaning of the 4-lit. verb "seek" that appears in a hr + infinitive construction should be changed to the more aggressive “pursue.”

The name of the ship is a noun phrase of apposition, where the first noun is "well, cistern" and the second is "top, the upper part" clearly related to the prepositional nisbe "upper." This name can be translated as “Upper-Well.”

The adverb + preposition combination has the literal meaning “apart from.”

The title that Ahmose received at the end is an indirect genitive with the first noun being a variant spelling (and containing a graphic transposition) of "warrior.”

The Nubian Campaign of Thutmose I
r sswn h3'i(i) h t h3swt r dr bз n  Cosbyst

The grammar here is almost identical with the initial passage in the Nubian campaign of Amenhotep I. ē3-HPR-K3-Rc is the throne name of Thutmose I, the successor of Amenhotep I to the Egyptian throne. The two r + infinitive constructions express purpose and have the meaning: “in order to.” The verb bzi is used here intransitively as an active participle, and the literal meaning “(he) who enters” can be translated as “intruder.” n  Cosbyt “through the hand” has the same meaning as the compound preposition m Cosbyt “from.”

wn.in.i hr knm b3h.f m p3 mw bın

m p3 s3s3 p3 ēw hr t3 pn∔yt

wn.in.tw hr rdl.t  Cosby hr hnyt

In the first sentence the hr + infinitive construction is applied to the adjective-verb kni “be brave.” This has been discussed previously. The meaning of the noun phrase mw bın, lit. “bad water” becomes clear in the subsequent passage when Ahmose relates that they towed the fleet over the cataract. The infinitive of the 4-lit. verb s3s3 functions as a noun here since it receives the demonstrative pronoun (definite article) p3 and it is governed by the preposition m: “in the towing.”

In the second sentence it is this act of rescuing the fleet for which he receives the title Cosby Cosbyt “crew/naval commander” mentioned at the very beginning of his autobiography.

wn.in hm.f ēnh(w)-(w)d3(w)-s(nb.w) […]

 Cosby Cosby r.s mi 3by

wdt hm.f šsr.f tpi mn(w) m šnb ṣnt hr pf
The *sdm.in.f* verb form applied to the verb *h†r* “rage” expresses subsequent action, but what the pharaoh was reacting to is hidden in the lacuna. One may only guess that his rage was triggered by having learned some action of the Nubians.

In the next sentence the narrative infinitive of the verb *wdi* “shoot” signals the beginning of the real action. The noun phrase *sšr.f tpi* “his first arrow” serves as the object of *wdi* as well as the preposed subject of the subsequent subject-stative construction. The verb *mn* in question should be intransitive here (expressing past or perfect), and along with the preposition *m* it carries the literal meaning “be attached to/stuck in.” The situation is quite clear in that the (first) arrow of Thutmose I pierced the enemy’s chest.

The determinative is suggestive to the meaning of the verb *bdš* “become faint, weak, exhausted.” Despite the lacuna, it is clear that it is stative referring to the subject *nn n …* “those [enemies].” What causes the enemy to be exhausted is the royal serpent *nsrt/nzrt* “the uraeus” (with an alternative spelling) and a fitting choice of the translation of the preposition *n* is “because of.”

In the next sentence the passive of the verb *iri* with object *ḥbyt* depicts the situation: “carnage/ slaughter was made,” and the adverbial phrase *im m ʿt* (moved forward) specifies that this happened right there and right that moment. In a perfect symmetry the passive of the verb *ini* relates what happened to the “underlings.”

The break in the narrative once more is marked by the narrative infinitive of the
verb nə"l.

This is followed by an adverb clause describing the gruesome fate of “that Nubian bowman” with the suggestive determinative 𓊪. The ship determinative clearly indicates that 𓊢 𓊪 “falcon” is the name of the royal vessel, therefore 𓍱𓊪 “front” must be the bow.

In the last sentence 𓊥 𓊨 𓊪 with the verb di is passive: “land,” lit. “it was put to land.” Finally, 𓊥 𓊨 𓊪 “Ipet-sut” is the name of the temple of Karnak, lit. “most select of places.”

The Syrian Campaign of Thutmose I

The object of the compound preposition m ḫt is the demonstrative pronoun nn used by itself: “after this.” In the first sentence the verb form of wḏ “proceed” (r “to”) is narrative infinitive with suppressed subject (the Pharaoh). In the r + infinitive construction expressing purpose, the Egyptian idiom if 𓊨 𓊪 means “vent (one’s) wrath,” lit. “wash (one’s) heart.”

In the beginning of the second sentence the adverb clause is initial hence emphatic so that the verb form of spr is a non-attributive perfective relative form. The verb form of gmi in the main clause clearly indicates that it is infinitive again, and its object, as we have seen previously, is the adversary referred to as hrw pf “that enemy,” a singular noun phrase. The grammar of the last short clause containing the circumstantial sdm.f/ imper-
ective ṯz.f is subject to several interpretations. First, the ṯz.f clause may be an un-marked relative clause modifying hrw pf: “that enemy which marshals his troops.” Second, it can be an adverb clause “that enemy marshalling his troops. Finally, hrw pf can be the noun/subject in a noun + circumstantial sdm.f/subject-imperfective construction functioning as a noun clause and the object of the narrative infinitive gmt: “his majesty lph found that that enemy is marshalling his troops.”

The particle nn is used in the second, a typical negated adverbial sentence in which nn tnwt can be translated as “innumerable,” lit “no number/without number.” The relative form of the verb ini “bring” governs the subsequent relative clause.

Most of the grammar has been discussed previously. The suffix pronoun .s refers to the chariot (with a variant spelling ), and the relative adjective nti that introduces a relative clause is used here as a noun “he who…”

1 Allen (20.14).
In the last two lines of his autobiography Ahmose describes himself as an old man. The first line is a good example of the fact that the stative for intransitive verbs (such as tni “grow old”) and the circumstantial $sdm.n.f$/perfect for transitive verbs (such as $ph$ “reach” with object $i\hat{w}i$ “old age”) are counterparts of each other. For the nisbe $tpi$ the preposition $tp$ should be translated as “before.”

The bottom part of the text where the verbal predicate supposedly was written is damaged but the clearly visible $hrt$ “tomb” suggests an appropriate verb form of $htp$ “rest.”

Finally, Ahmose emphasizes that his tomb was created by himself with the perfect relative form of the verb $iri$. 