

PAPYRUS OF ANI

PLATE 25 [Chapter 77]

PLATE 27 [Chapters 87,88]

The Transformation Chapters

{ GOLDEN FALCON }

{ SERPENT, CROCODILE }

by

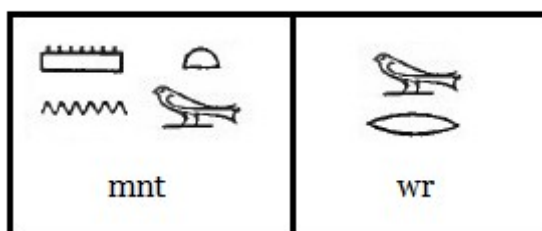
orlando mezzabotta

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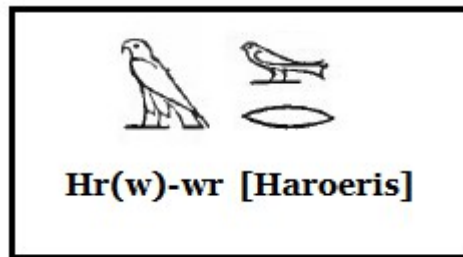


At the end of my annotations of chapter 86 (the *swallow*) I suggested that in “*studying and taking note of Horusian traits Ani is preparing his transformation into the Hawk (Horus) of Gold of the following spell [77]*”.

The juxtaposition “swallow/falcon”, the gracious little bird facing the stately hawk, has a definite dramatic impact. But there may be a subtle pun if we note that a synonym for swallow (*mnt*) is “*wr*”



Now, if we append it (in a respectful honorific transposition) to the falcon of our chapter, a symbolic Horus, we obtain a virtual “*hr-wr* → Haroeris → Horus the Elder”



Far-fetched as it may be I wouldn't exclude this semantic resonance, especially because it would fit the general atmosphere of this chapter: a triumphant and solemn mood of **Officialdom** and **Might**. The golden falcon is in fact an emblematic figure which enshrines a multiplicity of mythical and social meanings.



PLATE 25 -- CH 77

- 1 Making a transformation into a Golden Falcon.
- 2 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani -- Ani:
- 3 I have appeared in the shrine
- 4 as a golden falcon emerged from his egg.
- 5 I have flown, I have alighted as a falcon:
- 6 his back seven cubits long;
- 7 his wings of (the colour of) the green stone of the South.

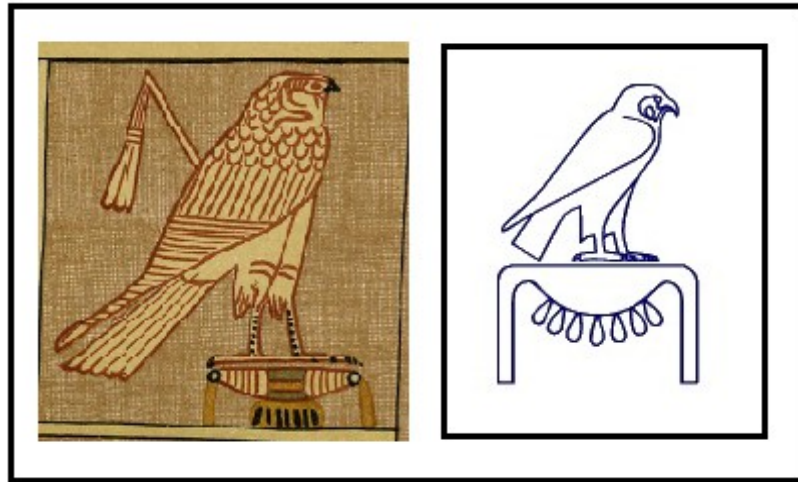
8 I have emerged from the Barque of the Night.
9 I have brought my heart in the eastern mountain.
10 I have alighted on the Barque of the Day.

11 To me have been brought
12 those in their primordial time [the ancestral gods], bowing in respect.
13 I have appeared, whole,
14 as a beautiful falcon of gold, atop the *Benu*-bird.
15 Ra enters into “*He-who-is-within-my [the]-father*”,
16 as I sit among those gods:
17 the Great Ones of Nut.

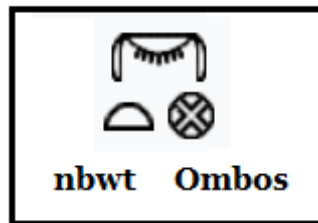
18 The *Field of Offerings* has laid down for me
19 bread before me, that I may feed on it,
20 become an *Akh* through it,
21 so that I be inundated to my heart's satisfaction.
22 *Neprj* has given me my throat [my corn stalk]
23 that I might have power on me, as he who keeps watch on my head.



Now, beginning from the vignette, there is no doubt that it recalls one of the images of the royal titulary, in our specific case that of *Horus of Gold* (*bjk nbw*):



And I am wondering whether, in this particular instance, this vignette might hint at Horus triumphing over Seth, the Ombite,



as reported by the swallow in the previous chapter [86, lines 18-19].

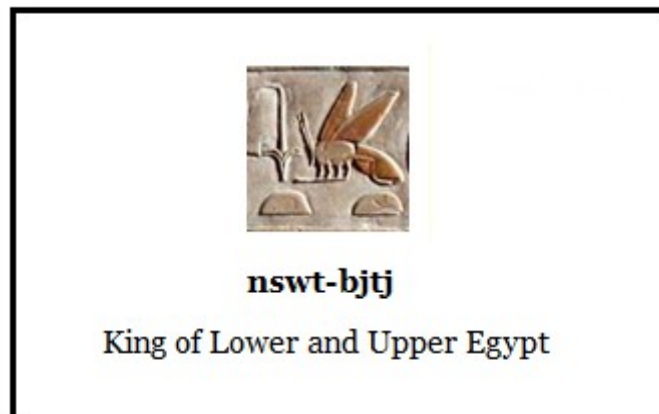
But there is also a reference to the first title, the *Horus-name*, as specified in lines 3-4, where the shrine (*sšdt*), on which the falcon stands, is expressly mentioned (*I have appeared in the shrine*):



In this case the “egg” [4] would be the “built-in” destiny of Ani, who, from the moment he had been conceived, was supposed to emerge as a new Horus. And this textual reference to “birth”, namely to “maternity”, might also allude to the second royal title: “*hrw nbtj*” (Horus of the Two Ladies):



The fourth title “*nswt-bjtj*”, King of Lower and Upper Egypt,



may be traced in lines 16-17, describing Ani seated among the primordial gods who respectfully bow down in front of him [11-12]. And in this specific block [11-17], we may also find the last title “*s3 r*” (son of Ra)



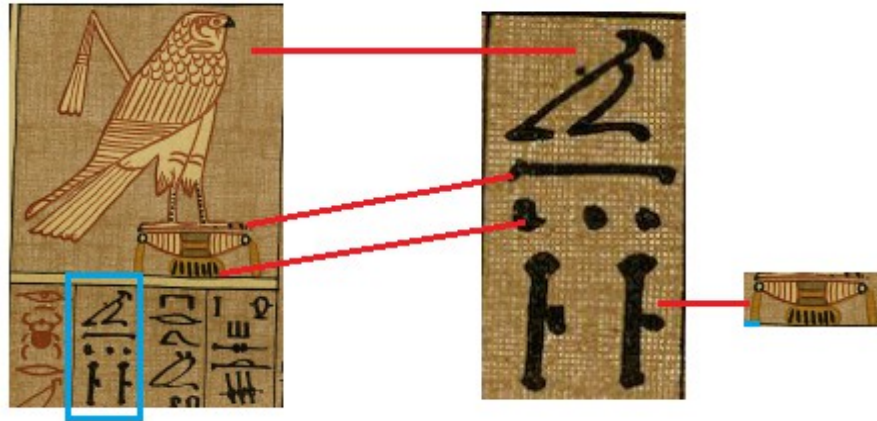
when in line 15 (highly controversial, but I'll expand on it later on) there is a specific reference to Ra as Ani's father. This title is in close connection with the name of the king, which usually appears inside a cartouche



In our case, though, the only possible name inside a virtual cartouche is “*He who is within the father*” of line 15, which is not a name of birth, but a prenomen better applied to the *nswt-bjtj* title. Nonetheless this apparent “lack” may be balanced by the name of Ani which appears twice at the beginning of the spell:



Now, if we focus our attention on the second Ani, we note how the glyphs of the name, placed under the vignette, have a peculiar visual correspondence with the graphic components of the golden falcon:



as if to state that Ani is the golden falcon of our specific royal titulary. And perhaps it is not inattention the fact that there is not the usual A1 determinative (as shown in the first instance of the name), hinting thus that Ani is no more an earthly being, but a golden Horus. Then an apparent scribal oversight could be a subtle invitation to find out the many allusions concealed within the spell.

In lines 5-10 there is the description of Ani's successful journey in the Netherworld: his voyage in the Night-barque [8]; his emergence in the eastern horizon [9]; his going aboard the Barque of the Day [10]. All this preceded by lines 5-7 dynamically showing the falcon who, from on high, alights (on the shrine) and stands there [5] like a monument seven cubits long [6].

Line 7 is a little bit curious. The green wings seem somewhat alien to the golden falcon. In fact they are a substantial feature of the divine falcon of the following chapter [78], that, in my interpretation, temporally precedes the golden falcon epiphany.

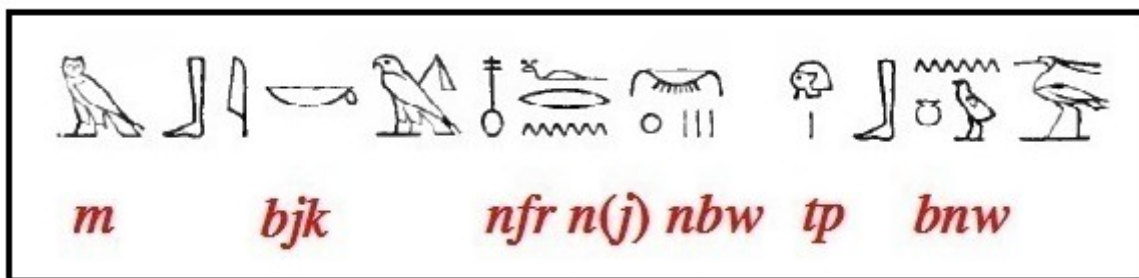


In other words the green wings are those of the divine falcon that accomplished the mission (the extended ritual of chapter 78) of transforming Ani into our magnificent Horus of Gold.

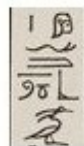
There may be, though, further allusions. The “green stone of the South” could balance a possible pun on “*mh*”, whose glyph (V22) has semantic connections with North Egypt, hinting thus at a South/North unification. Definitely far-fetched, although I wouldn't exclude it.

But the green wings may also be part of a more ample symbolic landscape described by the last block of the spell [18-23]. We shall meet it in a moment, after having discussed an enigmatical passage inside what might be called the “ceremonial block” [11-17].

Let's start first with line 14:

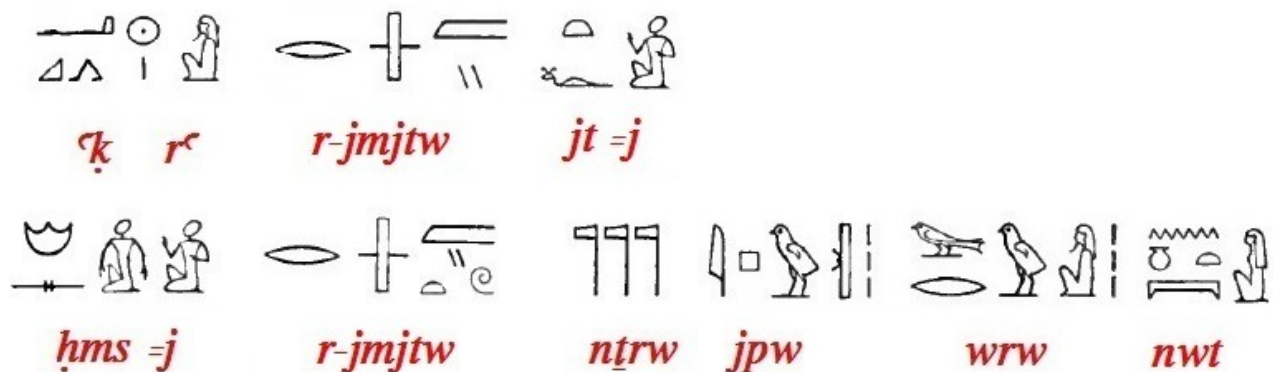


The dubious point is “*tp bnw*”. Some versions, for example *pTurin*, have a more specific rendering (*tp =f m bnw*) :



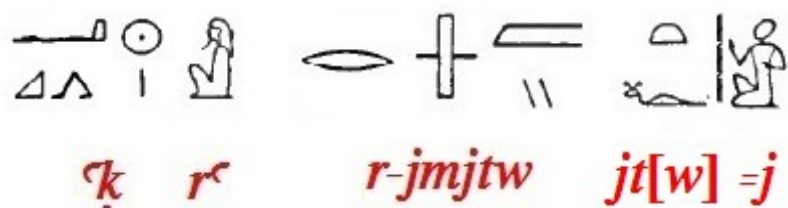
which, if grammatically limpid, seems nonetheless to be logically questionable. Why should the falcon appear with the head of the *benu*-bird? Probably because that could be a metaphor specifying that, in this particular instance, the function of Ani/Golden-Falcon is the same as that of the heron/phoenix (the *b3* of Ra) that was basically the energy through which Atum came into being from the “*nwn*”, the primordial waters. But in our case, missing the “*m*”, “*tp bnw*” might acquire a different connotation. It could recall the “*benben* stone”, namely the primordial mound on which the *benu*-bird is shown standing (*tp* : preposition); pointing thus to the swallow of the previous spell, so as to underline the accomplished “psychic” transformation. I'd exclude a possible allusion to the falcon's superiority over (*tp*) the *benu*-bird. I see instead the image of the falcon superseding it.

And now let us proceed with lines 15-17, where we find a very problematic passage due the dubious hieroglyphic rendering of the first line.



Now “*r-jmjt看*” means basically “between / in the midst of” (Faulkner C.D. 19), which makes sense in the second line, describing Ani who sits “in the midst of” the great gods of the sky (Nut). According to Faulkner a possible variant is “*r-jmy*” which is the graphic rendering in the first line. Unfortunately that would result in a meaningless sentence: “*Ra enters between/in the midst of my father*”.

We might suppose that the scribe forgot a plural sign, thus the emended line would become:



“*Ra enters in the midst of my fathers*”, which would be logically more acceptable; the “fathers” being of course the primordial gods, with Ra playing a very important (if not the leading) role.

The use of “*r-jmjt看*” instead of a much simpler “*m-m*” is probably due to a visual nuance: Ra walking between the two sides of the godly crowd. However that would be somewhat out of tune, since the scene would focus on Ra, whereas the whole episode turns around the figure of Ani as a golden falcon. In fact other versions of this chapter depict Ra making his entrance in order to listen to the speech of the deceased, whose figure plays the leading role. Just a couple of examples:

ḳ r̄ r̄ nb r sdm mdwt =f

Coffin Texts 302,54

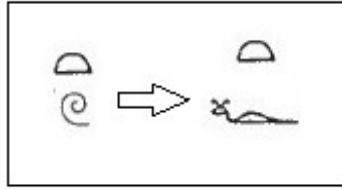
ḳ r̄ r̄ sdm mdt =f

pTurin

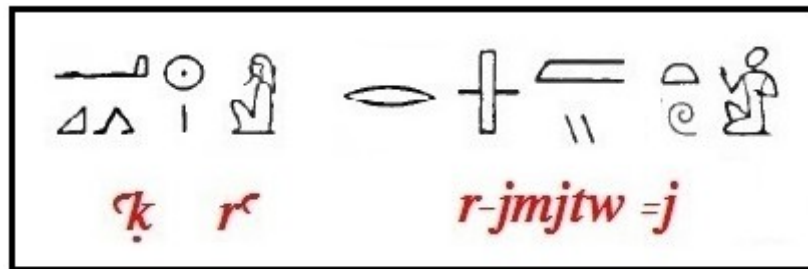
That's why we might try to parse the sentence from different perspectives. Let's first have a better look at the original cursive:



We can see how close together are the double strokes, the “t” and the “f”. What if, for reason of space, the scribe did substitute the coil determinative with that of the snake (→ coils)?

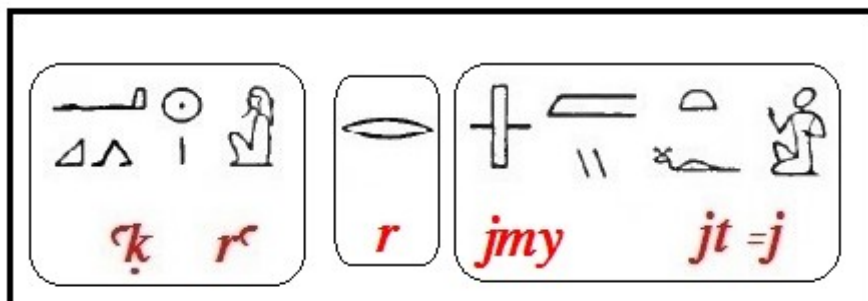


In this case we would get



Now, according to Hannig's dictionary [Marburger Edition, p. 79] “*r-jmjt看* + suffix pronoun” points to “Begleitung” (attendance, company, escort, etc.). He translates “*jmjt看 =sj*” as “in ihrer Begleitung”; so I suppose we might translate our possible “*jmjt看 =j*” as “in my company”. The image would then be that of the Golden Falcon escorted by Ra in the Council of the gods among whom he will take his place.

It's true, though, that such an emendation would be a little bit hazardous. So, why not parse the sentence at “face value”? We should only be careful not to be led astray by the “*r-jmjt看*” of the second line, obtaining thus:



What I suggest is to read “*jmy*” as a nisbe. “*jmy jt =j*” would then be “he who is in/within my father”, namely “the son of Ra”, “he who resides in Ra”. In our case Ani himself.

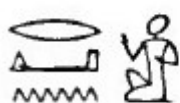
We might even consider A1 (seated man) not as a pronoun (*j*), but as a determinative of “he who is within the father”; but that is a minor point and I personally stick to the first reading. In conclusion Ra enters (*rk r*) into Ani, the son whom he enshrines (*jmy*) in himself, infusing in him his solar traits, as Ani takes his place among the sky gods.

But, on second thought (I think it's a good practice to have multiple thoughts when dealing with Egyptian texts) and with some extrapolations this line might make sense even in its first rendering. Since he who speaks is Ani under the aspect of the golden falcon, namely Horus, “*jt =j*” could be referred to Osiris; who, being the god of the Netherworld, is, by metonymy, the *Realm of the Dead*. Thus Ra who enters in the Realm of the Dead may be referred to the night journey of the sun. The use of “*r-jmj(tw)*” may point in fact to the image of the solar barque sailing “between” the virtual two banks of the abysmal river.

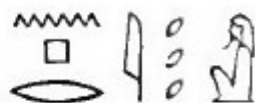
This netherworld image is balanced by the celestial one of the golden falcon who sits in the midst of the Great Ones of Nut. In this case “*hms =j*” might be interpreted, too, as a possible prospective, resulting in: “*Ra enters in the Realm of the Dead [my father] so that I may sit in the midst of those gods (who are) the Great Ones of Nut.*” Once again an image of the eternal course of the sun, of death and resurrection. A second reading not in conflict with the first one.

And now it's time for us to deal with the conclusive block: lines 18-23. The reference to the Field of Offerings, whose nourishment will transform Ani into a blessed spirit [18-21] is an evident image of apotheosis, adding to the general atmosphere of magnificence; but with an unexpected (and I'd say quite genial) touch.

Nepri, the god of corn, seems to come out of the blue; although it's possible that he be the supervisor deity of the Field of Offerings. Now, what is exactly the “throat” (*htyt*) he gives to Ani?



rd n =j

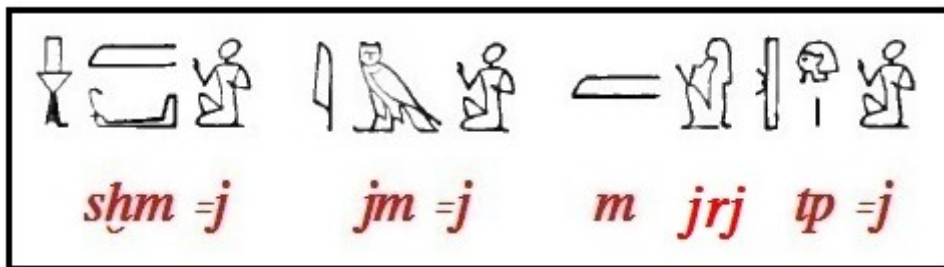


nprj



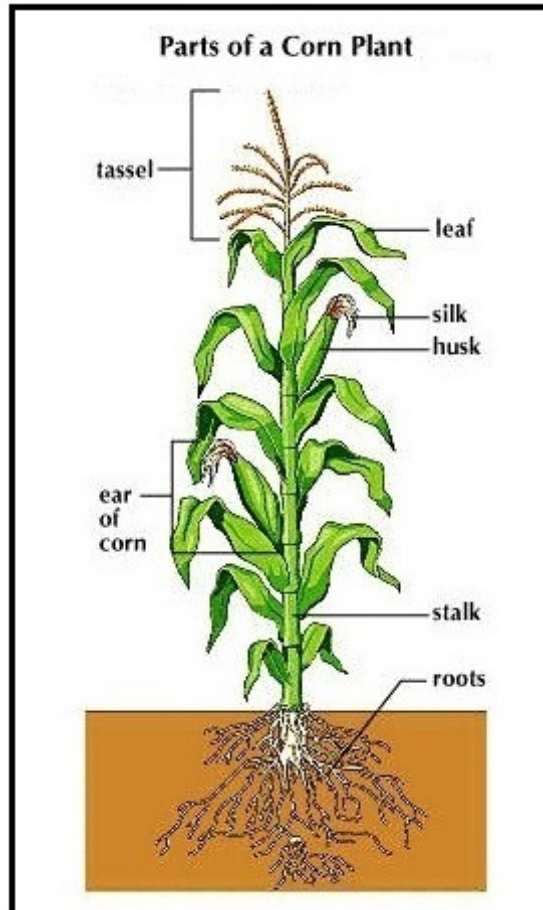
ht yt =j

One might imagine that Neprj has transformed Ani's earthly throat into a divine “oesophagus” through which he can receive the food of the gods, so as to be, as it were, self-sufficient.

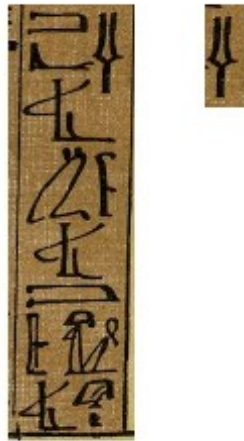


He would in fact have power in himself (*sh̄m =j jm =j*) as one who can take care (*jrj* or *s̄w*) of his own being (*tp =j*). As a matter of fact “*jrj tp =j*” could be a metaphoric reference to the same *Neprj* who, says Ani, plays the role of “my custodian / he who keeps guard on me”: where “*tp*” could be both noun (head) and preposition (on).

The fact remains that the word “*htyt*” is somewhat peculiar; and I am wondering whether, being in relation to *Neprj*, it might not be a metaphor for the “stalk” of a corn plant.



Were it so our “head” (*tp*) could stand both for the “ear of corn” and the “tassel”. And note also how in the cursive writing of “*shm =j*”



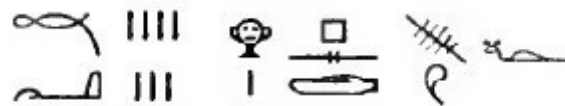
the S42 (*shm* → sceptre) glyph does visually resemble a corn spike. We might thus look at the whole chapter from a different perspective, namely as a metaphoric description of the process of resurrection, like the one of chapter 44, Plate 16, already discussed in a previous comment. Where the corresponding vignette



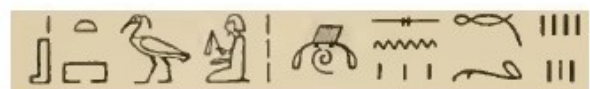
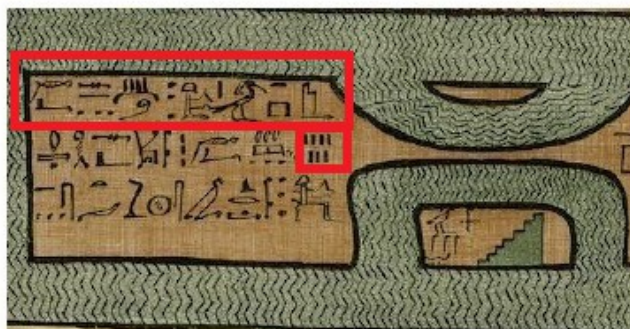
could indeed be read as the visual rendering of the last line of our spell: “*shm =j jm =j m jrj tp =j*” [23].

So, looking at the text from this other view, the “golden falcon” [1] would be a general image of a plant of corn that has reached “ripeness” [3-4]. In line 5 we might have a glimpse of the sowing season, when the seed is thrown in the air (*p3 .n =j*) and alights (*hnn .n =j*) on the fertile soil.

As for the “seven cubits” of line 6



we might be so bold as to see in them an anticipation of the “the blessed spirits of the *Field of Reeds* – seven cubits long”, found on the leftmost part of the inferior section of Plate 34. The impressive “height” underscoring the archetypal image of the corn.



So that, as I hinted above, we may consider the “green wings” of the falcon as the green leaves of the growing corn. Needless to say that number seven may also point to the seven cervical vertebrae which, in Egyptian imagery, allude to “stability”: the head firmly fixed to the body more expressly stated at the very end of the spell [23]. Which, by the way, may be also visually found in the second register of the Field of Reeds,



with the *benu*-bird, the *sh*m sceptre, the mounds of corn and the blessed spirits.

As for lines 8-10 we have a description of the process of growth: the time inside the earth (barque of night) [8]; the germinating seed [9]; the emergence into light (barque of day) [10].

Lines 11-12 may hint at the fertilizing energies of the soil, dutifully nurturing the plant that will eventually tower [14] over them [16], once received and metabolised the solar life [15].

As for the “great ones of Nut” [17], being an apparent cosmic image, one might wonder how it can fit the “cereal” landscape. True, we might see in their totality a vast field of corn, the “heads” up in the air, towards the sky. But I am more inclined to put them in relation with the *akhization* process announced in line 20. The ripeness of the corn being the “radiant” cereal counterpart of the heavenly shining *Akhs*.



As I said in my general introduction, the first five spells of the Transformation chapters (86, 77, 78, 87, 88) form a unique logic block. Sticking to my linear method I should now begin my study of the “Divine Falcon”. But, as I pointed out, chapter 78 is a sort of flash-back, the description of an extended and complicated ritual at the end of which Ani attains the state of our Golden Falcon.

Thus we can, for the moment, leave it aside (it will need a very detailed commentary) and focus our attention on the last two brief spells of this first logic block. They are in a certain sense the concrete manifestation of peculiar traits of the Golden Falcon: *eternal regeneration* and *mighty strength*.



PLATE 27 -- CH 87

- 1 Making a transformation into the son of the soil.
- 2 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani, justified.
- 3 I am the son of the soil, long of years,
- 4 he who lies down [in the night] and is born every day.
- 5 I am the son of the soil, who is within the bounds of the earth.
- 6 I lie down, but I am (re)born, renewed,
- 7 made young, every day.

There is not much to explain. Of course the snake points to its moulting process and, by consequence, to eternal “regeneration”. I preferred “son of the soil” instead of a plainer “son of earth” so as to add a further allusion to the germinating seed of grain. But it is not

to be excluded, especially under a shamanistic perspective, a possible reference to the snake's “wisdom”. Perhaps an anticipation of “*be ye therefore wise as serpents*” - Mt. 10,16. The ability of hiding and attacking at the proper time.



PLATE 27 -- CH 88

- 1 Making a transformation into a crocodile (Sobek).
- 2 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani, justified.
- 3 I am Sobek in the center of the terror that he inspires.
- 4 I am Sobek, I fetch by violent means.
- 5 I am the great fish in the nome of Athribis.
- 6 I am the lord of obeisance [those who bow down] in Letopolis.
- 7 Osiris Ani: Lord of obeisance in Letopolis.

Here we find the merging of the animal figure of a crocodile with that of the god Sobek, known for his brutal ferocity. (In line 3 he seems to be “*the eye of a tornado*”).

As a matter of fact he had also a lot of positive connotations as we can note in line 5 where he is the *great fish* that protects the eastern borders (Athribis, Kemur, the Bitter Lakes); in this acting like *hntj-htj* (Khentikhety), the crocodile god of Athribis who also merged with the figure of Horus; underscored in our line 6 that mentions Letopolis, city of the falcon god. But the most evident trait of this chapter is Sobek's threatening violence [3-4]. Something Ani must make his own, in order to fight hostile forces. A gradual assimilation that may be observed in the sequence of four “*jnk*”s in

lines 3-6, as if to underscore the process of identification, completed in the last line [7], where the missing “*jnk*” seems to have been absorbed by the figure of the god – and viceversa.

