

PAPYRUS OF ANI

{ The Transformations Chapters }

PLATE 28 [Chapters 81-80]



A Perfect(ive) End

by

orlando mezzabotta

www.ormezza.it

ormezza@yahoo.com

The last two spells of the Transformations Chapters are characterized by the extensive use of perfective forms in its verbs: the basic ungeminated stem of active participles of 81 (*pr*) and the many *sdm.n =f* of the last chapter [80]. I can't help but seeing in that an allusion to the successful accomplishment of the shamanistic ritual performance. The vignettes point in fact to “rejuvenation” (Lotus) and to the acquisition of solar traits (the seated god with the sun disc on his head, recalling the hieroglyphic rendering of Ra in some passages).



But the “luminous aspect” has also a marked lunar character (→ Thoth), as we shall see in due time.

[81]



More than the text (just four short columns) it's the vignette that plays the leading role. This is not the place to expand on the multi-layered symbolism of the lotus: suffice it to say that it is an archetypal image of rebirth and regeneration; and the manifestation of the god *Nefertem*, namely the new-born Atum, the moment he comes forth from the *Nun*. But whereas the god has the flower on his head, in our case the head is placed upon the flower, being in a certain sense the “embodiment” of the deceased.



The fact then that the lotus pertains both to the water and to the air is an allusion to the *h3* aspect amply shown in the three preceding chapters; but since it opens its petals at sunrise and closes them at sunset it also alludes to the solar aspect, being thus an introduction to the spell that comes next [80] and which marks the end of the Transformations Chapters.

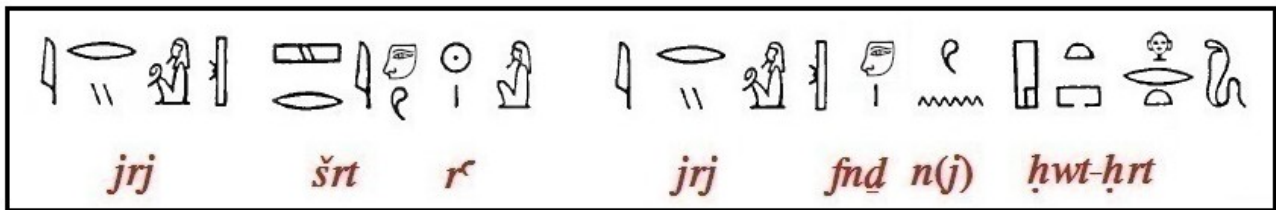


- 1 Making a transformation into a lotus flower.
- 2 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani.
- 3 I am the pure lotus which came forth in the Sunlight,
- 4 companion of the nose of Ra, companion of the nose of Hathor.
- 5 I made my descent so as to find it for Horus.
- 6 I am the pure one emerged from the field.



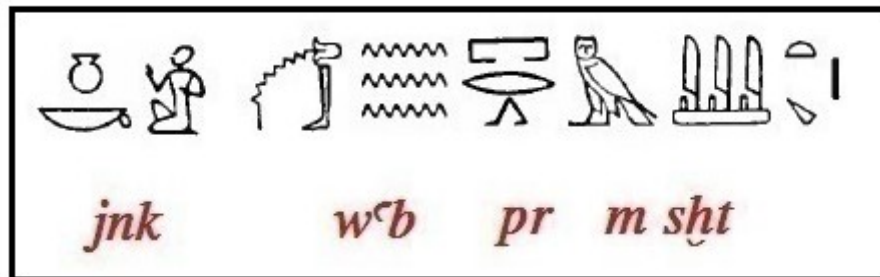
The lotus is also known for the fragrance of its perfume, which may be interpreted as the sweetness of life-giving breath, inherent to the archetypal parental figures (Ra → Father, Hathor → Mother) [4], but which Ani must fetch so as to give it to the “son” (Horus), alluding to his ritual passage towards rebirth [5].

It's interesting to note the graphic rendering of line 4:



Both “*šrt*” and “*fnd*” mean “nose”. So why the two different glyphs? That may be a subtle stylistic nuance. In fact “*šrt*” is also the anterior part of a boat, thus a hint at the solar barque of Ra; whereas “*fnd*” is more proper to the human face, in our case to the gentler mother aspect.

Further nuances are present in the last line:

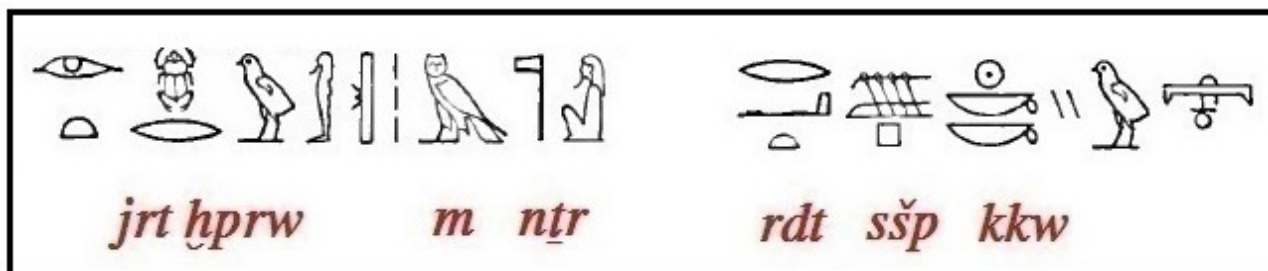


“*w^ˆb*” may indeed refer to the initiate who has come forth, cleansed (*w^ˆb*), from the field (*sht* → Duat), like the pure lotus (*sšn w^ˆb*) of line 3, who has come out from the mud of the primordial waters. But *sht* may also allude to the fertilizing aspect of the flower, thus “*pr m sht*” could be rendered as “who emerged in the field”. With a possible (somewhat far-fetched) word play related to Horus. Since the lotus is for him [5], could *sht* hide an implicit *hrw* (Horus)? Thus a **sht-hrw* resonating with *sht-j3rw*, the heavenly *Field of Reeds* → *Field of Offerings*? (Plate 34)





Whereas the images of the previous chapter ran softly and smoothly all along the text, in our case they are entangled in such a web of grammatical and semantic threads that they may put at stake the hermeneut's reputation. Nonetheless I'll run the risk of being scornfully pilloried. Let us start from the very beginning:



At face value it seems a very simple line, divided as it is in two parts: (i) the transformation into a god; (ii) the giving/bestowing (*rdt*) of light (*sšp*) and darkness (*kkw*). The generic not better defined god (*ntr*) may point to the sun that gives light in its rising and darkness in its setting. But the “light of darkness” may also be an image of the “moonlight”, considering the various references to Toth, the lunar god, that appear throughout the chapter. Thus, once again, a complementary diurnal and nocturnal solar aspect.

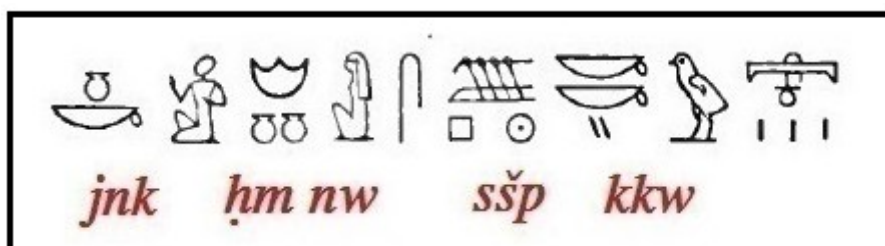
However we may read “*sšp*” as an infinitive. “*sšp kkw*” would then be a nominalized “the lightening of the darkness”; and the

second part would thus be a literal “the causing of the lightening of the darkness”.

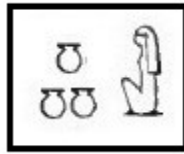
No matter how inelegant and rude my translation I think the image is more appropriate than the previous one, showing the nocturnal sun in the act of shedding its light and opening its way through the abysmal darkness of the Duat.

And why not view “*rdt*” as an active perfective participle? In this case the second part would be an attribute of the god “*who lightened the darkness*”, thus an image of *Atum/Ra* at the moment of his first appearance.

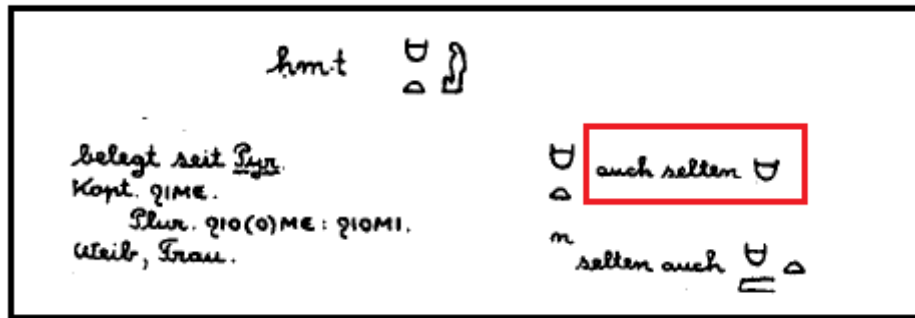
Of course one might object that “*rdt*” looks like a feminine participle. That's true – in Middle Egyptian. But if we use the Late Egyptian lens that's another story. I admit that my knowledge of Late Egyptian – and some may say of Middle Egyptian as well! - is somewhat approximate, but as far as I know Late Egyptian active participles take no account of gender and number and the attached pseudo-feminine “*t*” does not necessarily have a morphological value. But I wouldn't exclude the Middle Egyptian perspective, no matter how contradictory may seem the feminine *rdt* attached to the masculine *ntr*: what could jokingly be called “grammatical androgyny” which recurs so frequently in this specific chapter. The compound of masculine and feminine traits would point to the complementary aspects of the self-generation process; made perhaps more evident by the enigmatic figure of “*hmnw / hmnwy*” whom Ani identifies with.



In my investigations I could not find any news about such a goddess, so I have come to the conclusion that her traits must be reconstructed according to the values of her glyphs, that is: N41 (*hm*), a well with water; and W24 (*nw*), a jug. Now, considering the context, I am inclined to see in the well a symbolic “womb”; and the two jugs could allude to the breasts. And since N41 might be seen as a graphic variation of W24 we could adjust the glyphs like this:



thus the feminine aspect of “*nw / nwn*”, the primordial waters. And in fact N41 might also be a glyph, though rare, for “*hmt*” (woman)



At this point let us give a look at my tentative translation, whose extreme linguistic solutions I'll try to justify as best as I can on the basis of the original script.

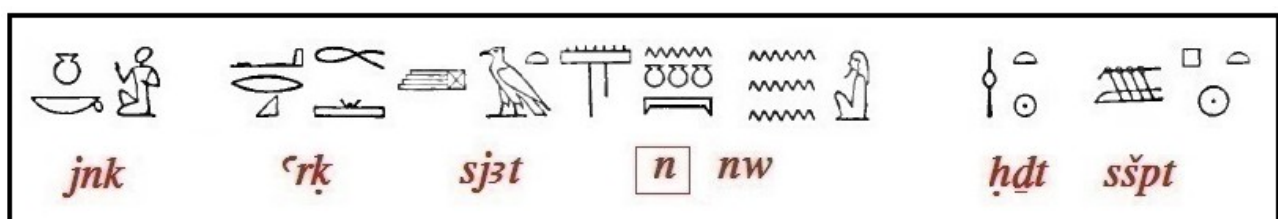


- 1 Making a transformation into the god who caused the lightening of the darkness.
- 2 Words to be spoken by Osiris Scribe Ani, justified.
- 3 I am he who put a garment on Nun:
- 4 a bright, white linen;
- 5 his guide, the light in the darkness;
- 6 he who united the two female companions, who are in my inner self,
- 7 by the great magic upon my mouth,
- 8 in order to lift up he who fell down, the father,
- 9 and he who fell down with him in the battleground of Abydos.
- 10 Peace (came) because of me and pleased I was. I am one who shall be remembered.
- 11 For I fetched the god Hu from my town
- 12 where I had found him.
- 13 And I took the dark with my strength.
- 14 I restored the eye to *Him-who-was-without-it*, [→ Horus]

15 or it would not have arrived the fifteenth day of the month; [→ full moon]
 16 I did judge Seth,
 17 in the supernal courts, about the Elder with him;
 18 I did equip [→ carried out the task of] Thoth, in the temple of the Moon-god,
 19 or it would not have arrived the fifteenth day of the month.
 20 I have fetched the *Wureret* crown.
 21 Truth is in my inner self,
 22 the turquoise and the fayence of her monthly feasts. [→ waxing crescent]
 23 And my field therein
 24 made of the lapislazuli in the plough lands of its riverbank.
 25 I am *Hemnu*, who lightened the darkness.
 26 I have come so as to lighten the darkness,
 27 and it does shine, it does shine!
 28 I have lightened the darkness,
 29 having felled the ravenous demons.
 30 They praised (and thanked) me those who are in the darkness.
 31 I did relieve the mourners [→ the frightened deceased] -
 32 their faces covered, wailing -
 33 when they saw me against you [→ the demons].
 34 I am *Hemnu* and, as for me, I shall not allow
 35 that you hear (any more) about it.



Having already treated the title let us now face lines 3-10 which pose a lot of problems. Let us start with 3-4:



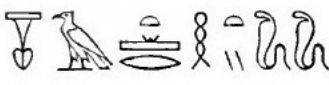



In our context the most plausible meaning of “*rk*” could be “to don a garment”; thus an image of Ani who dons the *sjzt* of Nun [3]. But that would be out of tune with the “bright (*sšpt*) white linen (*hdt*)” of line 4, since the primordial waters are enveloped by a mantle of darkness. Unless, of course, we consider *hdt* and *sšpt* as attributes of *sjzt nw*, offering thus an image of Nun at the moment it was made luminous by the emerging sun.

However I am more inclined to read “*rk*” as “to put a vest on someone” (jemandem [n] ein Kleid anlegen):

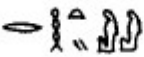


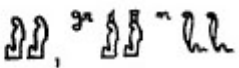
II. jemandem (n) ein Kleid anlegen 21.

In this case the image is that of Ani who puts a bright white linen on Nun (*n nw*), making it shine. An obvious metaphor for the rising sun, which fits perfectly the content of line 5. Or, from a lunar view, the whiteness of the moon-light.

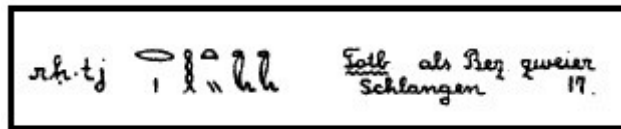
The next four lines demand a closer reading:

6	 <i>smzt</i> <i>rhtj</i> <i>jmj</i> <i>ht=j</i>	7	 <i>m</i> <i>hk3 wr</i> <i>tpj r3=j</i>
8	 <i>n tz</i> <i>hr</i> <i>jt=j</i>	9	 <i>hr</i> <i>ntj hn^c=f</i> <i>m</i> <i>jnt</i> <i>3bdw</i>

“*smzt*” might be a noun (union); but since I consider the four lines as a unique block I am inclined to see in it an active participle (the “*t*” having no morphological value, unless deliberately put there for the above hypothesized “androgyny” reasons), thus “he who united”. As for “*rhtj*” it might refer to the two goddesses Isis and Nephtys

<i>rhtj</i> = 	belegt seit Eze die beiden Frauen d.h. Isis und Nephtys IG	ⁿ mit  , ^{np} mit  Det. 
---	--	--

and/or to the two Uraei



Now, if we consider “*jmj*” as an erroneous “*jmjw*” the two companions might be the divine “*female*” energies immanent in Ani's inner self (*ht* → belly); in other terms Isis and Nephtys in their capability of reassembling the scattered members of Osiris, thus giving “wholeness” to Ani. Or they might be seen as the two Uraei that give him protection with their fiery power.

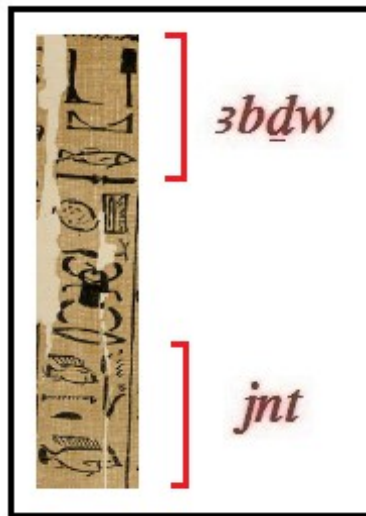
But if we read “*jmj*” as a noun (*he who is*) that might allude in the first case to the Osiris who is in Ani (I can't help thinking that the well known formula “Osiris N” can also be seen as a genitive construction: the Osiris of N). Or, in the second case, it might point to the solar aspect of Ani adorned by the two Uraei: “the eye of Ra”.



Were it so, then the “two companions” and the “solar inner energy” would be the figures whom Ani does unite (*smst*). At any rate either reading would point to the acquisition of divine power obtained by the means of magic words [7]. As a matter of fact “*r3*” could be not only the mouth that utters the magic words, but also the spell (*r3*) which the great magic (*hk3 wr*) radiates upon (*tpj*).

And now we come to a very puzzling couplet [8-9]. The first thing to note is that there has been a struggle between two subjects in the battleground of Abydos (*m jnt 3bdw*).

[I am wondering whether *jnt* and *ꜥbdw* have been deliberately chosen so as to recall, by word play, the two fishes mentioned in the hymn to Ra of Plate 1



jnt being the scout-fish of the solar barque and *ꜥbdw* the sentinel-fish that detects the approach of Apophis.]

It is legitimate to evince that in the struggle both the fighters fell down (*hr*). Since the battleground is Abydos it is plausible to suppose that it was a fight about Osiris; very probably that of Horus and Seth, both of them coming out with an injury (Horus's eye and Seth's testicles). The identification of the first figure is, though, a little problematic

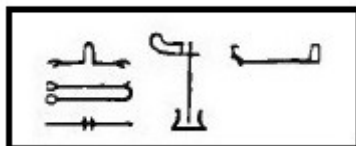


Excluding a scribal error I have come to the conclusion that “*t + f*” cannot be but “*jt / jtj*” (father). A1 (seated man) could be either the father determinative (although, being a god, A40 would have been more proper) or a suffix pronoun (*=j*), thus either “the father” or “my father”: very probably Osiris. In which case the struggle would point not to a fight like that between Horus and Seth, but to the symbolic figures of Osiris, fallen by the means of Seth; and of Seth, fallen by the means of Horus.

Another possible reading: since Horus is the archetypal form of rebirth, Ani, who is his manifested figure, may consider him as “his

father”. And if the “fallen father” is Horus, that would be in accord with lines 14-17 where there is no doubt about the identities of the two adversaries.

There is, though, a third possible interpretation if “he who fell down with him” be not referred to Seth, but to Horus. In fact not only Osiris, the father, fell because of his evil brother; but Horus as well (*hnꜥ =f*). And this may be of help in elucidating the ambiguous “*n tz*” of line 8.

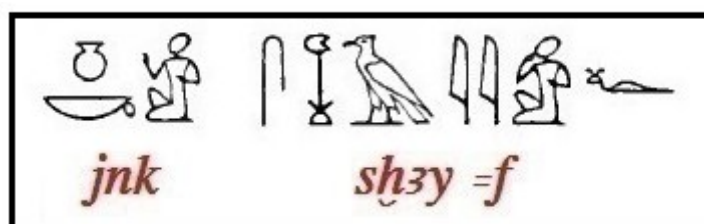


At face value it seems a negative construction. Thus reading “*tzj*” as a reflexive verb we have the fallen father and the one who fell down with him that “shall not set (themselves) upright”. In other words the result of the great magic [7] would cause the enemies not to stand up again and continue their fight; putting thus an end to the struggle.

However there is another concomitant possibility if we read D35 (*n*), as sometimes is the case, not as a negative marker, but as a preposition (for, to). Thus the result of the spell would be that of raising up the two fallen figures, implicitly healing them, with peace following because of Ani (*hꜥp n =j*) [10]; he himself pleased (*hꜥp .n=j*).

Or, as said above, if the fallen figures are Osiris and Horus, that would show Ani rescuing (lifting up) the two gods. That might sound a little strange for what concerns Horus, who is usually shown as a protective figure, not one who needs help. But, as we shall see in the continuation, Ani does assume the role of Thoth [14], who is the god that restored Horus's injured eye. And that would comply with the *hkꜣ wr* upon Ani's mouth [7], since magic is a specific power of Thoth.

Ani's self-gratification (*hꜥp .n=j*) might also help to explain the second part of line 10:



If we read “*sh3w*” as “memory, remembrance” we have to decide who or what “*f*” points to. He could be the father of line 8 mentioned also in line 9 (*hn^c =f*), thus Ani would be “the memory of him”: anyone looking at Ani would see in him the image of his father. Or “*f*” could be a neutral pronoun referred to the peace or to the efforts that brought it.

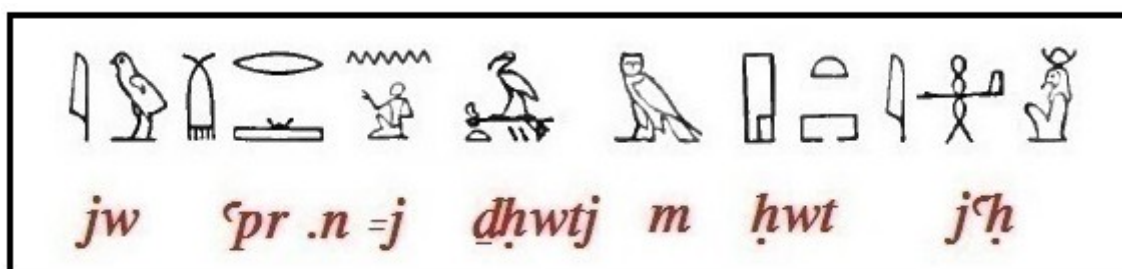
But I am not much convinced. I'd rather consider *sh3y =f* as a passive *sdm =f*. Although this construction is “normally not used with a personal pronoun as subject” [Allen], in this case it might make sense. Ani is one “who shall be remembered” for the qualities he has acquired and for his victorious deeds which he is going to describe throughout the rest of the chapter [11-35].

These lines may be divided into three sections: (i) Ani's inner strength [11-20]; (ii) Ani's enlightening qualities [21-27]; (iii) Ani's capability to control the monsters of chaos, the wild ravenous beasts of the Duat [28-35].

(i)

I am inclined to interpret Ani's city out of which he fetches the god *Hu* (Authoritative Utterance) whom he found therein [11-12] as a symbol of his personality, the repository of his psychic energies which he makes use of in order to wipe out the darkness [13].

In lines 14-19 Ani plays the role of Thoth [18] who settles the matter concerning Horus [14] and Seth [16]. When he says that he did equip Thoth in the temple of the Moon-god [18]

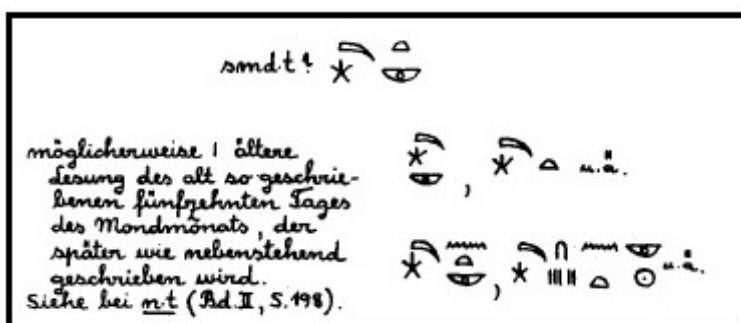


I see Ani who ritually invests himself with the office of Thoth, the lunar god, who rescued the eye of Horus (→ *jwtj sj = he who was without it*) which had been torn off by Seth.

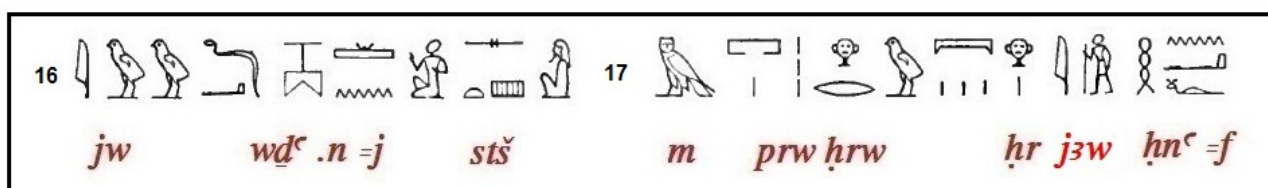
Line 15, repeated in line 19, deserves a closer reading:



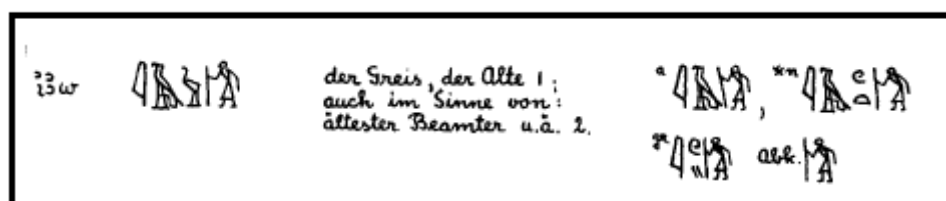
“*mḏ djnt*” is a graphic variation of “*smdt*”, the feast on the fifteenth day of the month, coinciding with the full moon, the light at its full splendour.



But the sentence might be read from two perspectives. The first one is “*when it had not yet arrived the feast &c.*” Ani restored the eye in the time between new moon (*darkness*) and full moon (*light*). We might, though, read “*n jj*” as a past conditional, which would give an interesting “*or it would not have arrived the feast &c.*” In other words it is Ani who gave the moon its full light measuring the time of its course; exactly like Thoth. And exactly like Thoth he did judge Seth in his contention with Horus [16-17]:



Line 17 deserves a particular attention, especially for what concerns “*j3w*”, of which our graphic rendering seems to be a variant:



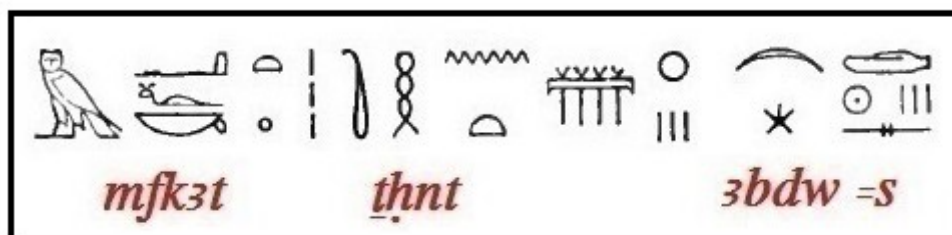
I think we are not off the mark considering it a reference to *Haroeris* (*hr-wr* →Horus the Elder), the *hrw* and *hr* preceding it being a side phonetic resonance. That would mix the myths of the confrontation between the *Old Horus* (sun god) and Seth, the god of storms (cosmic confrontation) and that of the *Young Horus* with his uncle Seth, god of evil (kingly confrontation); Thoth playing in both myths a prominent part.

As for “*prw hrw*” that may be both the “Courts (*prw*) supernal (*hrw*)”, the tribunal of the sky; and the “mansions (*prw*) of those who are on high (*hrw*)”, the starry vault of the sky with its constellations.

Thus, as said above, line 18 describes Ani's psychic integration of Thothean traits, his transformation into the god who brings the light of the full moon (→ *jj md djnt*). Had he not done so, darkness would have been victorious. But that is not the case since it is Ani who has fetched the kingly crown [20].

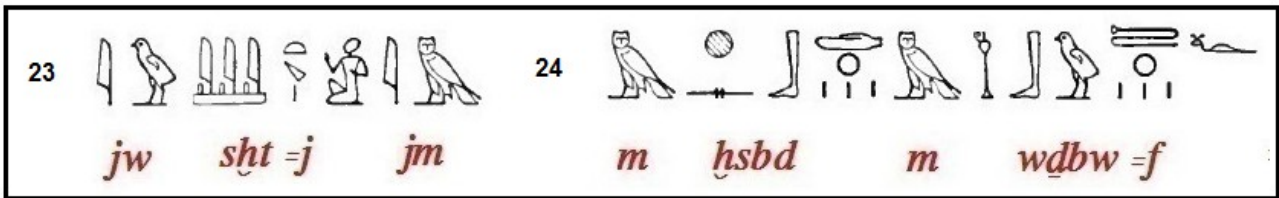
(ii)

Having shown his power, Ani wishes to manifest his moral righteousness, the Justice and Truth (*m3t*) that constitute an integral part of himself [21]. He does make use of an image of magnificence



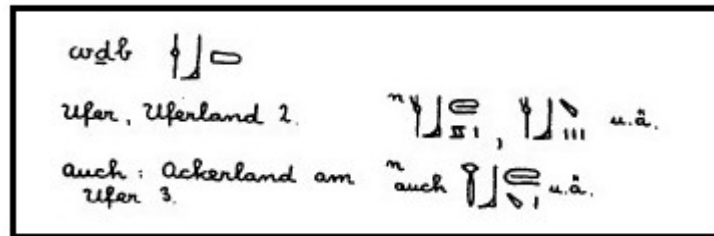
I see in it a picture of the “fayence” (*thnt*) waxing crescent standing out in the “turquoise” (*mfk3t*) sky [22]. In fact *3bdw* is the second day of the lunar month when the moon-sickle makes its first appearance. That is once again a Thothean trait, since it alludes at the time measurement, typical of the lunar god.

I find the same highly creative imagination in the next two lines [23-24]:



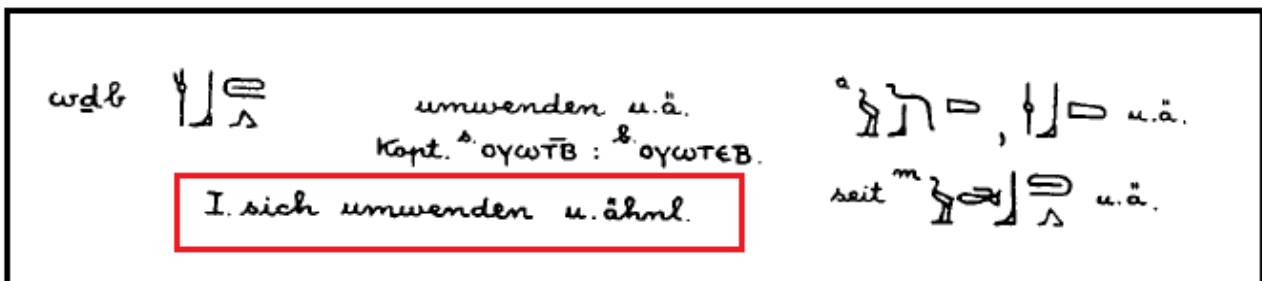
There is the similar blue backdrop of the lapislazuli (*hsbd*) resembling that of the turquoise (*mfk3t*); with Ani's field (*sht=j*) mirroring his "*ht=j*" of line 21. But line 24 may be tricky.

As a matter of fact, considering the context, we are entitled to read "*wdb*" as "river-bank" or "the plough land on the river-bank" (plough land → *wdb* → *sht*):



The problem is: what does "*f*" refer to? Excluding the feminine "*sht*" it remains only "*hsbd*". Thus we have an image of a lapislazuli land whose banks (*wdbw=f*) are formed by an implicit celestial river (in the cosmic context that might allude to the Milky Way). Ani's *sht* being like that plough land.

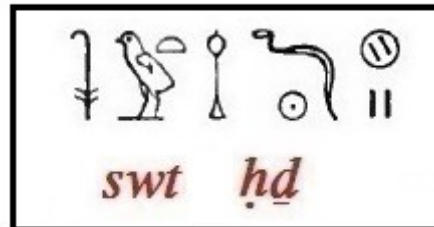
But the virtual river might hint, as a side resonance, at the course of the moon, letting us read "*wdb*" as a verb (to turn around):



An image of the way of the moon through the lapislazuli landscape.

Line 25 introduces the figure of the already discussed *Hmnw*. In a certain sense she is the androgynous compound uniting the just

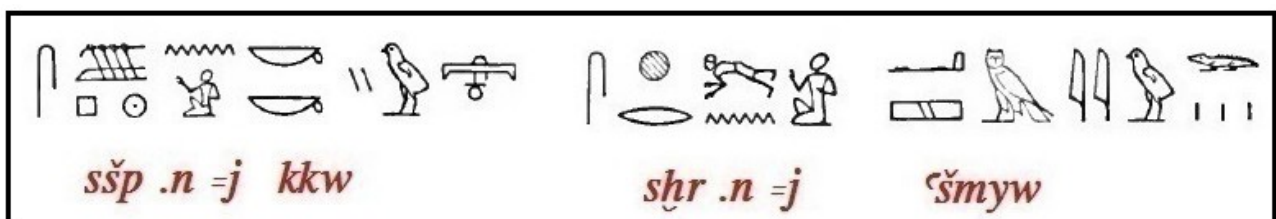
described traits of *Thoth* [14-19] and *m3't* [21-24], deities that in many texts stand in close relation. In conclusion, having integrated the *god/dess* who lightens the darkness [25], Ani himself has been able [26] to let the darkness shine [27].



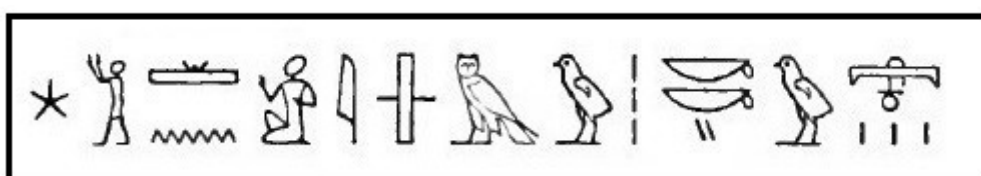
Note how “*swt*” (a third person independent pronoun which can be both masculine and feminine) may be applied in our case both to *kkw* and *hmnw*. And its repetition (*zp* 2) may have been a deliberate choice in order to make more evident the complementary reading.

(iii)

In this last section Ani describes how he defeated and silenced the monsters of the abysmal waters (*šmyw*) becoming thus the protector of those who dwell in the *Duat*. The bringing of light in the darkness is the consequence of his victorious fight [28-29]



We can in fact read “*shr .n=j*” as a circumstantial form; and I would not exclude that the next line [30] be also a circumstantial phrase:

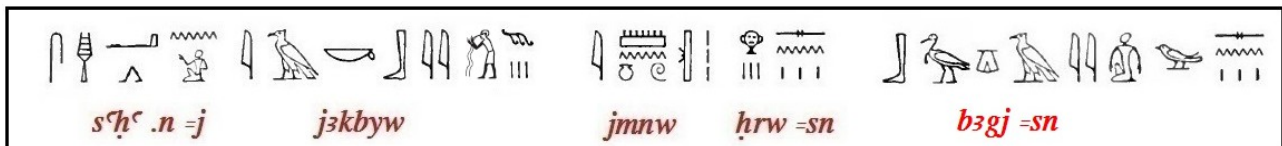


In that case we could transliterate: “*dw3 .n =j jmjw kkw*”; interpreting “*those who are in the darkness*” as the gods of the *Duat*. Having

first revered them (*dw3 .n=j*), so as to be imbued with their might, he felled the wild beasts, the voracious demons (*hmyw*), lightening up then the darkness. But I am not much convinced for two reasons: (a) addressing helping gods in such a generic way seems indeed out of tune; (b) Ani is usually so self-assured that he hardly needs help in his fights.

So I'd rather see in "*jmjw kkw*" the deceased who praise and give thanks to Ani; emending the beginning of the sentence in a graphically admissible "*dw3 .n (w)j*".

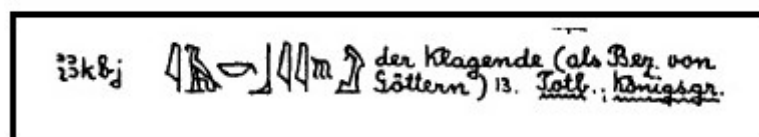
Then Ani explains why he has been praised [31-33]. He has in fact given relief to the mourners (*j3kbyw*), who covered their faces (*jmnw hrw =sn*) in terror, aware of their weakness, of their languid state (*b3gj =sn*):



Of course in the "*j3kbyw*" I see not the wailing people of the funeral cortège, but the frightened deceased. And we should note how the determinative (A88: a crying, wailing man)

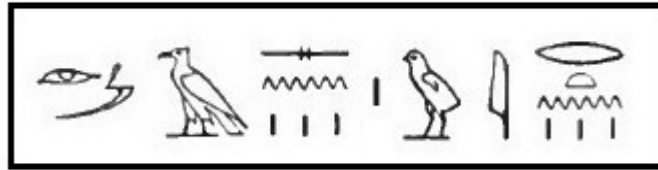


is a little bit different from the usual one,



the marked bent down head anticipating the hidden faces (*jmnw hrw =sn*) of those who are languid (*b3gj =sn*).

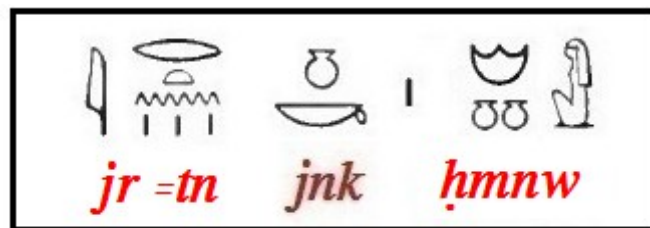
Line 33 looks ambiguous:



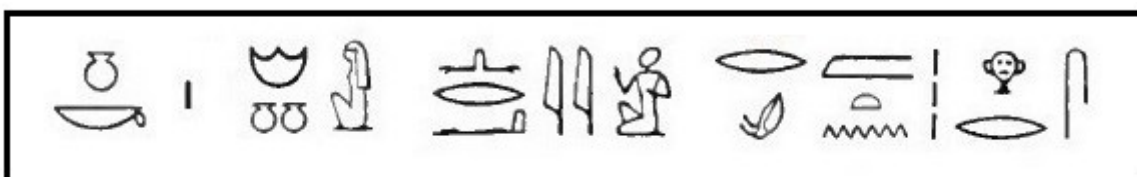
“*m3 =sn wj*” may be rendered as “when/as they see me”, referring to the deceased who are “relieved” when they see Ani opposing the horrid demons. One might object that since they have hidden their faces they cannot look at him. But that's a trifle. The moment they *hear* someone confronting (→ *jr / r*) the demons they look up and see Ani, their saviour.

But the problematic point is the second plural pronoun (*tn*), which presupposes a deictic context, as if the demons had physically appeared and Ani was addressing them. In other words the “narrative” form turns into a “dramatic” one, which gives the scene a definite theatrical touch: quite impressive, being the final stroke!

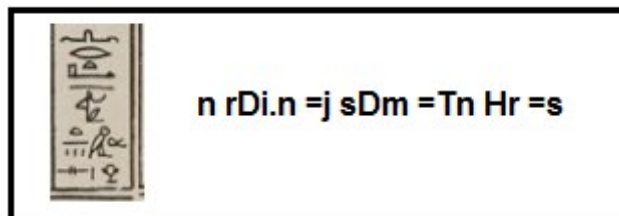
Needless to say that I read “*jr =tn*” as “against you”. There is, though, the possibility of reading it as “As for you / As regards you”. In this case Ani, once reassured the mourners, addresses directly the demons, in a threatening way, telling them that he is *hmnw*



In translation: “As for you: I am Hmnw!” But I am not much convinced by “*jnk*” following “*jr =tn*”, since usually *jnk* does start a new sentence. That's, though, a minor point. The real problem comes from what follows next:



As it is it should be transliterated as “*jnk hm_w n rdj =j r sdm =tn hr =s*”. I must admit that the “*r*” preceding “*sdm =tn*” is for me kind of puzzling. For example the *pTurin* version gives a much plainer rendering:



I know that in Late Egyptian “*r*” may substitute the prosthetic yod (*j*), which is used, though, only in specific cases; and, in my humble opinion, our sentence is not one of them. Thus I wonder whether “*r*” could in fact be “*r (=j)*” (→ as for me), which might balance the above mentioned questionable “*jr =tn*” (→ as for you).

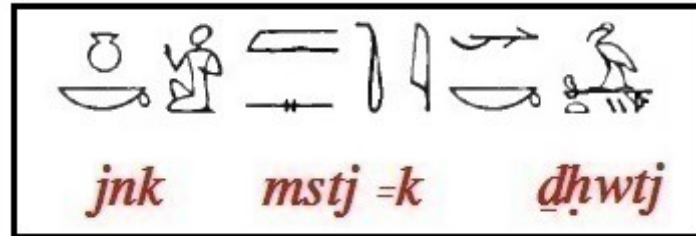
So the adjusted sentence could be: “*n rdj =j r(=j) sdm =tn hr =s*” (*As for me I will not permit that you hear about it/her*). In our context the meaning appears somewhat obscure.

What should be the “matter” the demons are forbidden to hear? My tentative guess is that the sentence is an idiomatic form for “*this is my last word about it, once and for all*”. Ani's statement that he is *Hmnw* (that he possesses the androgynous force of the Nun) cannot be questioned. That's a way for Ani to silence the demons.

As I anticipated, from a ritual perspective this is quite an impressive finale. But what should be taken into due account is the fact that this chapter, basically centred around the figure of Thoth, is an appropriate introduction to the next one (175, Plate 29), in the prologue of which the god of wisdom plays a prominent role, as shown in the unique vignette of the spell:



As a matter of fact it is not a coincidence that the last spell of the Transformations Chapters turns around the figure of the god of knowledge, whose qualities Ani integrates. It is not for nothing that in a line of the next chapter he presents himself as the “scribal tool [→ the palette] of Thoth” :



Acquired qualities that will let Ani plunge into the mysteries of the ultimate things (see my commentary of Plate 29).

