

PAPYRUS OF ANI

{ The Transformation Chapters }

PLATE 27 [Chapter 82]



PTAH

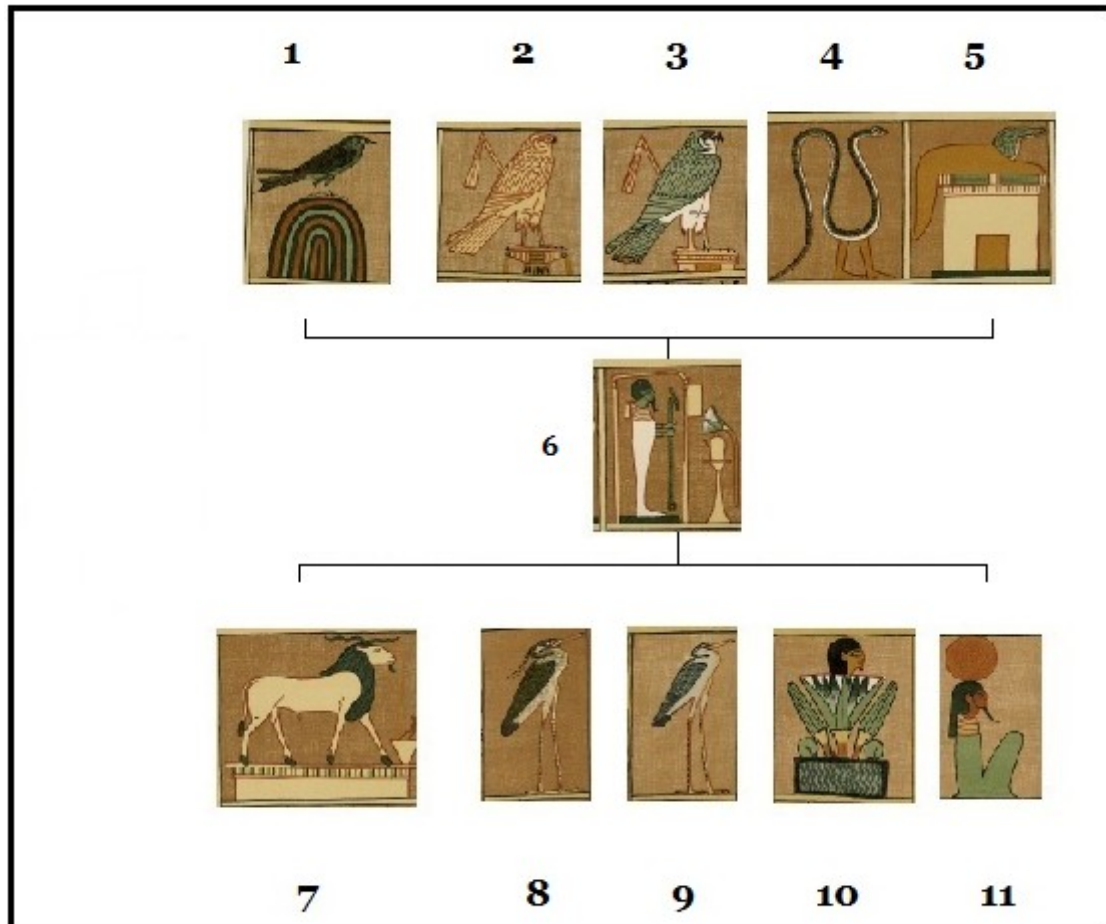
by

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In my “Prologue” to the “Transformation Chapters” I remarked how, in my opinion, Ptah plays the role of a pivot around which spin the two parallel blocks of the various figures represented by the corresponding vignettes, eleven in number, Ptah being the central sixth one.



As a matter of fact, in our specific context, Ptah's standing human figure holding the *was*-sceptre may indeed allude to the ecstatic shaman having visions of his “transformations”. And perhaps it is not a coincidence that our vignette shows a white rectangle attached to the closed shrine the god is in, a sort of virtual window levelled at his face:



And of course Ptah is the “Craftsman”, who creates through “Authoritative Utterance” (the god *ḥw*) what he (as *sj3*) has visions of (→ Perception) . Very similar to our shaman who, through sounds and mimics, gives psychic shapes to his visionary beings.

And this is, in my opinion, the central theme of this chapter: the “creative aspect” which Ani makes his own, extolling and exploiting the characters and traits of Ptah.

At first sight, *pace* the title, this god does not seem to play such an important role; in fact he is cursorily mentioned only in a line of the last part of the spell. But there is a “sound” reason for it. In fact the text is composed by two main blocks: in the first one Ani claims he has reached the state of a “divine being”; but in order to make it unequivocal he makes use of Ptah's traits to give it “shape” in an “Official Formalization”. We might even consider the first part as *sj3*'s jurisdiction (Perception), the second one as *ḥw*'s (Utterance). Thus Ani's transformation into Ptah points to the “creative power” that lets him integrate the qualities of the other ten mythological figures he has psychic intercourse with in his shamanistic trance.

Let us give a look at the text:



- 1 Making a transformation into Ptah.
- 2 Words to be spoken by Osiris Ani.
- 3 I have eaten bread,
- 4 I have drunk beer.
- 5 Being attired, I have flown as a falcon.
- 6 having cackled (before) as a goose,
- 7 and alighted like that (same) one
- 8 near the mound of the Feast of Great One.
- 9 Filth! Filth! I don't eat ordure! [it is excluded that my food is ordure]
- 10 I don't eat it, (it is) my kA's abomination!
- 11 It shall not enter my belly!
- 12 *How am I, then, alive?*
- 13 The gods, the *Akhs*, they know
- 14 that I live and have power through their food;

15 that I have power and I feed on it
16 under the branches which
17 Hathor, my mistress, is in;
18 celebrating the ritual offerings
19 of bread in Busiris and of corn in Heliopolis.
20 I put on the linen garment of Tayt, [woven by that goddess]
21 and I stand or sit wherever
22 my heart desires.
23 My head like (that of) Ra, my wholeness (like that) of Atum:
24 the fourfold sun of the vastness of the land.
25 I emerge, my tongue like (that of) Ptah,
26 my throat like (that of) Hathor.
27 I recall the speech of Atum
28 to my father - in my utterance -
29 when he [my father] wiped out the majesty of the wife of Geb [Nut], [when they quarrelled]
30 and heads had been broken [(about) heads (that had been) destroyed].

[Atum's warning]

31 *Be afraid of that!*
32 *Let not that be done again! Or woe shall follow!*

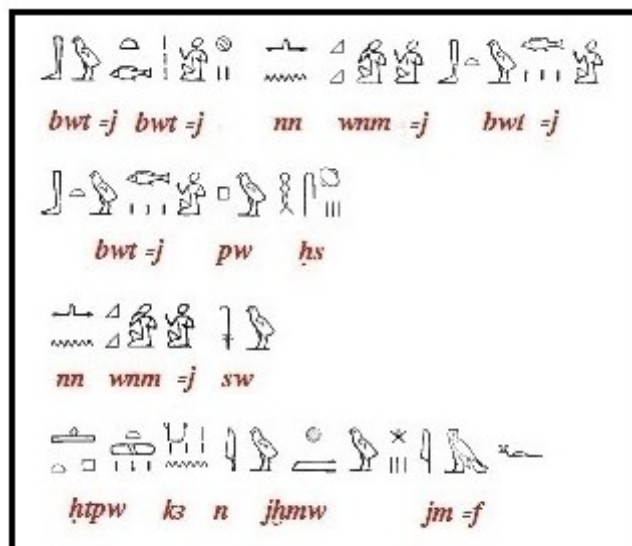
[Ani's utterance]

33 As the inheritance of the Lord of the earth [Tatenen], has been assigned to Geb
34 and distinguished (has been) Geb and ritually washed,
35 thus he [Geb] shall give to me his appearance in glory,
36 so that shall bow to me their heads
37 those who dwell in Heliopolis.
38 I am the Bull (that is) made more potent as times goes by, [moment after moment]
[I am the Bull made strong of striking power more than Striking Power (itself)]
39 letting out my virility and commanding over millions.

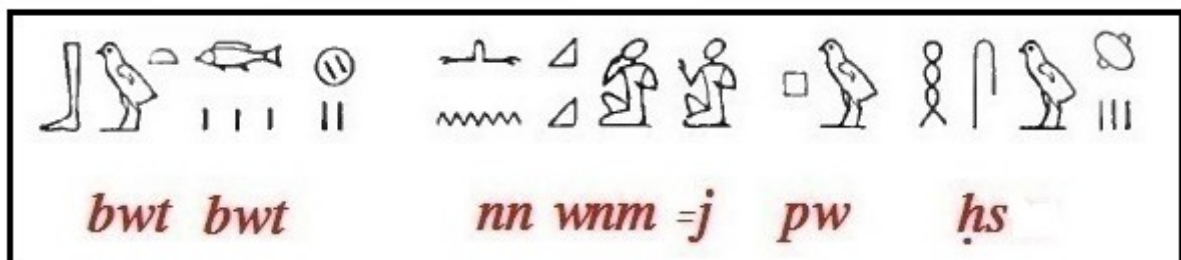


Lines 3-4 may be seen either as the result of lines 5-8 or as a qualitative juxtaposition to them. Bread and beer are usually presented as ritual divine offerings; and they may be an indication of the divine state Ani has reached once he passed through the “hatching” experience of lines 6-8. Like Ra who came out from the cosmic egg laid by Geb, the great cackler, on the primeval mound [8]; and who keeps rejuvenating as Horus, the falcon [5].

But it may also refer to the prior “earthly state” of Ani, the material food he ate as one who lived on earth, a mortal being. A food that necessarily becomes “excrement” and that Ani, having reached a superior existential level [5-8], disdainfully rejects [9-11]. That is a motif very common in religious texts; and in fact it has been anticipated in almost identical terms in Chapter 124, which I consider a prologue to the following transformation spells [see my commentary].



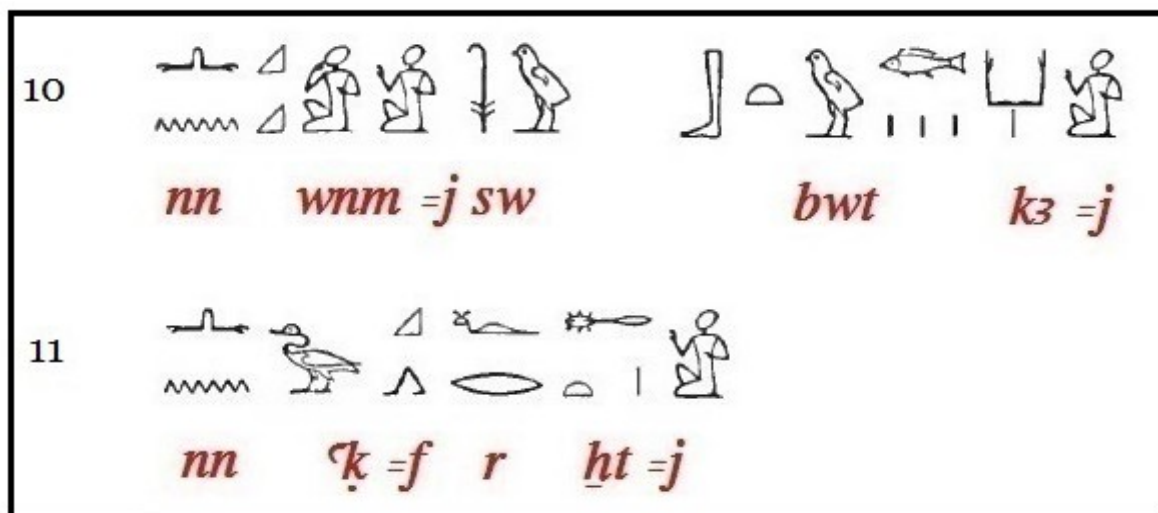
In our chapter the first line shows a curious difference:



The presence of “*pw*” looks somewhat puzzling, especially if we read “*wnm*” as a verb (to eat). Once again, leaving aside the scribal

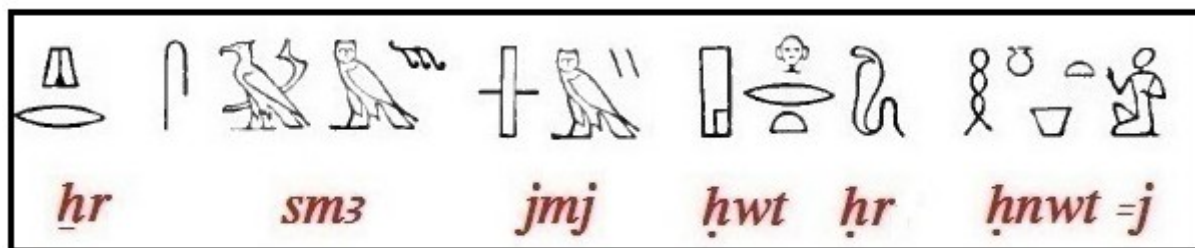
error (an uninvited “*pw*”), we might read “*wnm*” as a substantivized noun (eating → food), so that the sentence would be a negated “A *pw* B”, seen as: “*nn [wnm =j pw ḥs]*”. In other words: it is excluded (*nn*) the expression “my food is excrement” (*wnm =j pw ḥs*). Someone might object about its grammatical correctness, but as far as I know (and this is not the place to expand on this subject) it is an acceptable linguistic solution.

Another nuance to remark is that of lines 10-11:



“*k =f*” of line 11 refers to a masculine subject; but “*bwt*” is feminine, thus it's legitimate to infer that “*=f*” refer to “*sw*” [10] that refers in its turn to the “*ḥs*” of line 9, with “*bwt k3 =j*” which would then be a description of “*ḥs*”.

In lines 12-19 Ani makes clear that his food is that of the gods, the nourishment found in the branches (*sm3*) of the tree of the great mother Hathor:



Since “*jmj*” is probably a reverse nisbe we get the image of Hathor within a thick and ample foliage, as the one shown in Plate 37



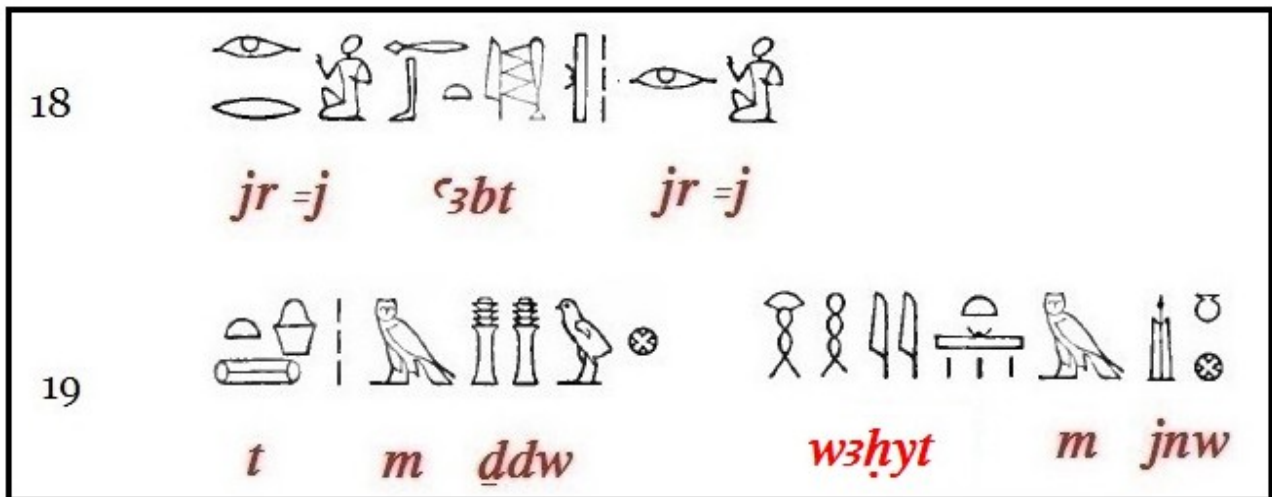
but, in a more fitting visual rendering, as the one shown in the vignette of Plate 16, Chapter 59:



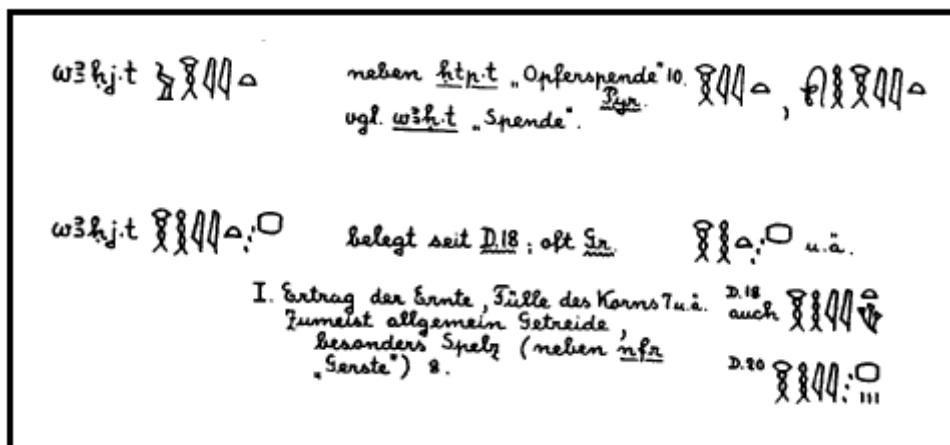
whose foliage (*sm3* → hair/crown) is also present in the above mentioned chapter 124:



The specific traits of the food explained with subtlety in lines 18-19:



where we can see how in the ritual offerings (*ʿ3bt*) [18] there is a juxtaposition of “*t*” (bread) and “*w3hyt*” which, in this particular context is not only the generic “Spende” mentioned by WB, but also “Ertrag der Ernte, Fülle des Kornes”

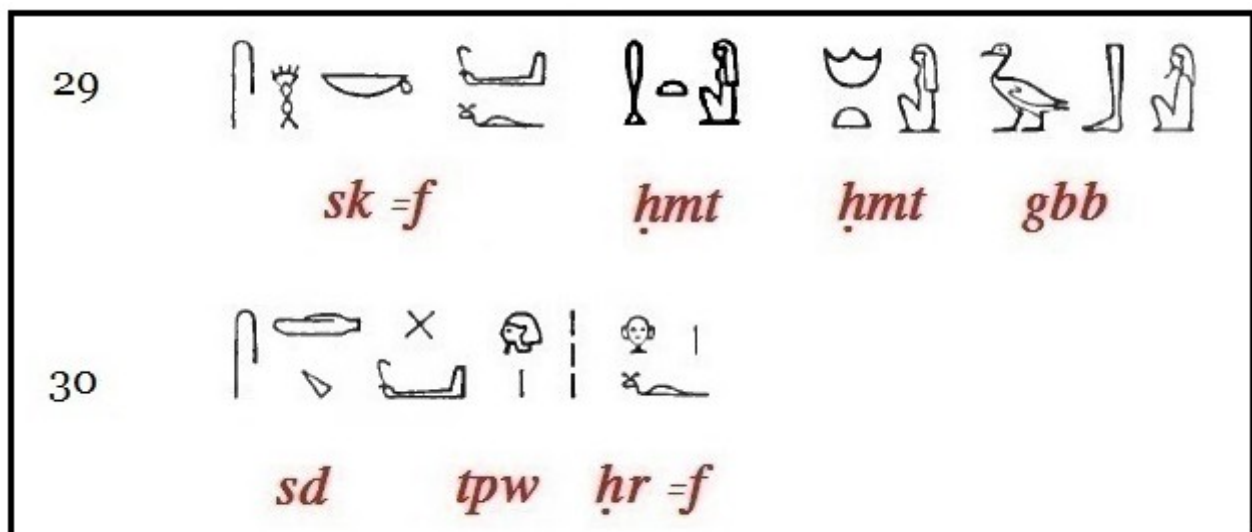


In other words the “seed” (*t*) planted in Busiris (Netherworld) becomes the full corn (*w3hyt*) of Heliopolis. An image that may trigger an analogy with the garment of the goddess Tayt directly linked with the clothing of the cult statues of the gods. Putting on the linen vest [20] (the full corn) Ani claims he is a god who can go wherever he likes [21-22]. A god with definite solar character, uniting the head of Ra with the full form of Atum [23], namely the four aspects of the sun in its dawning (*Kheprj*), zenith (*Ra*), sunset (*Atum*) and nocturnal manifestation (*Osiris*); four aspects which cover both the temporal (birth, life, senescence, death) and spatial (the four cardinal points) traits.

At this point, as I anticipated, there is the need of stamping a godly seal on Ani's credentials and this is done through Ptah's creative power [25], his tongue being the “authoritative utterance”, amplified by Hathor's throat [26], an evident allusion to the breath of life. The passage [27-39] is somewhat obscure and one must needs make recourse to conjectural hypotheses and questionable interpretations. I am of the opinion that its main theme is that expressed in lines 33-37, when Osiris-Ani asks his father Geb to transmit to him the “glorious appearance” [35] that Geb himself inherited from the *Lord of the Earth* [33-34] so that he (Ani) be adored by those who adore Ra [35-36].

That is not a request, but a command given with the same authoritative tone that Atum used with Geb [27-28] when he ordered him to stop the furious quarrel he was having with Nut [29-30] so as to avoid a severe punishment [31-32].

Now, what kind of a quarrel do lines 29-30 refer to?

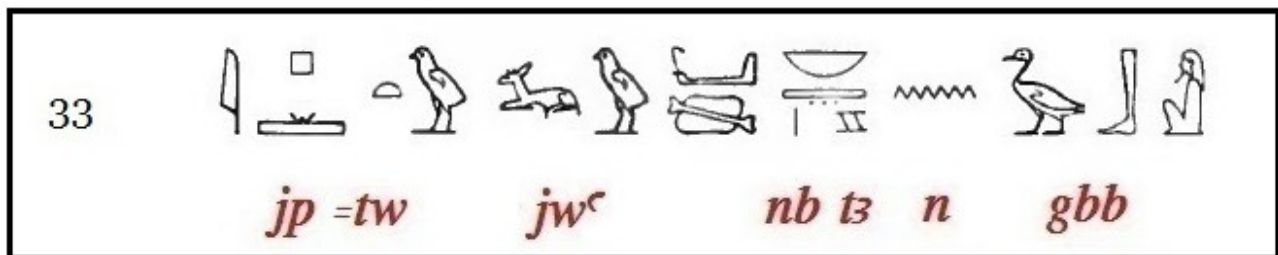


The only one I know is that described in the cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos where Geb is said to be angry with Nut because she eats her children (the stars that she makes disappear when she gives daily birth to the sun).

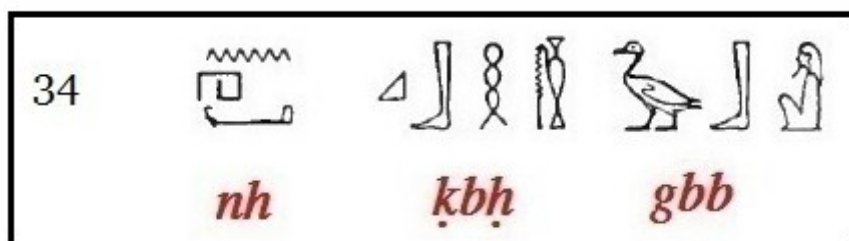
Interesting to remark the double rendering of “*hmt*”, the first one, in my interpretation, alluding to the female “majesty” of Nut; the other to her family status (wife). Thus the image is that of Geb, the husband, wiping out (*sk=f*) the wife's female prerogatives [29]. Line 30 allows a double interpretation. It may refer to the broken

heads (*sd tpw*) of the disputants due to their furious quarrel; with “*hr =f*” which may point to the generic “matter” or to the more specific “wiping out”. But the “broken heads” may also allude to the stars (heads) eaten, that is: destroyed (*sd*), by Nut; thus “*hr =f*” could point to the cause of their quarrel. In fact the dramatic text of the cenotaph says that “*then they lived; they showed their heads from the horizon*” [A. de Buck's translation], alluding probably to the stars re-appearing in night-time.

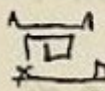
Line 33 explains how Geb became the heir of the “Lord of the Earth (*nb t3*)”:










That may sound a little bit strange, since we know that Geb is the lord of the earth. Thus we should admit that he “inherited” that title from an original “Lord”. Who this might be is open to debate. In my opinion he is *Tatenen* who is one of the manifestation of the “primeval hill / original mound”. And what is more important is the fact that in many representations he is linked with Ptah in the combined figure of *Ptah-Tatenen*. The central concept is thus the transmission of godly power from father to son, or from an original archetype (*nb t3*) to a divine manifestation (Geb). This is elucidated by the following line:



“*nh*” and “*kbh*” might be read as passive participles related to Geb who has been “selected / distinguished” (*nh*) and ritually purified by water (*kbh*). I give “*nh*” this meaning following Simeone Levi's rendering:







 , neh, disgiungere, separare,
 distinguere, fare una speciale
 scelta, scegliere, trascegliere; -
 dividere, segregare.
 2) - Disgiungersi, separarsi, di-
 vidersi, segregarsi, sottrarsi; ecclif-
 sarsi, ritirarsi pian piano, an-
 darsene furtivamente; - disertare
 (Bem-Hafsa).

although the glyph might be considered a variation of the “schützen, beschirmen” (to protect, to shelter) given by WB:

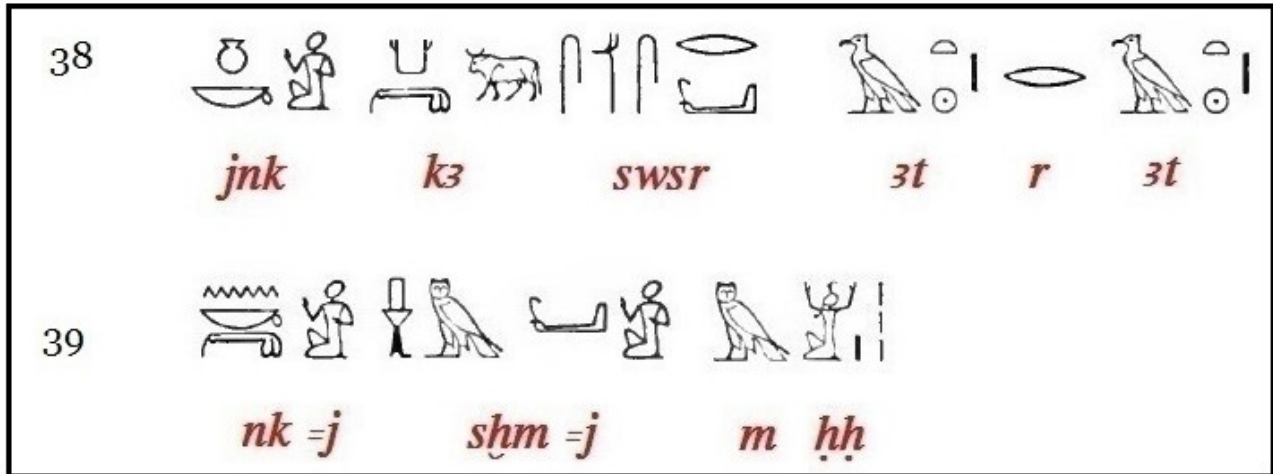
mh 	
Belegt seit M.R.; oft Sa. schützen, beschirmen (eine Person 7, Leib, Sieder 8; einen Ort 9).	    ,  , 

but in this case the two verbs could also be prospectives, as in anticipation of the following “*dj =f n =j h^cw =f*” [35], resulting thus in a possible: “May Geb protect, purify and give to me his appearance in glory”.

This may sound a little bit strange since the “appearance in glory” (*h^cw =f*) seems a trait more proper to the solar than the earthly god; which is in fact pointed out by lines 36-37. But there may be a possible word-play with “crown”

III. die Kronen. Erst seit D19 mit den Kronen determ. 17. a) Kronen bestimmter Sötter (des Re, Atum u. ä.) 18 b) die Kronen aufsetzen u. ä. (<i>imn</i> , <i>w^ta</i> , u. ä. w.) 19.	seit ^{D19}  ,  ,   ,  , 
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In other words the “crown” (title) Ani should receive from Geb becomes the splendour that gives him the traits of a solar figure. And a mighty one, according to the chapter's last lines:



Once again the glyphs allow multiple readings, especially since “*3t*” may be both “moment, time” and “striking power”. Thus “*swsr 3t*” may be a “*nfr hr*” construction, giving a “made strong of striking power”; and resulting in a bull stronger than the Striking Power itself (*r 3t*) [38]. But if we read “*3t*” as “moment” the sentence might allude to the bull made stronger as time goes by, moment after moment (*3t r 3t*).

As for the creative energy of the bull we can detect a subtle scribal nuance in the juxtaposition of “*jnk*” and “*nk =j*”. Ani's manifest show of virility (*nk =j*) becomes one with his own identity (*jnk*) exercising his power (*shm =j*) over millions (*m hh*). And if we read “*shm*” as a noun then “*nk =j shm =j*” may allude to the eternal (*m hh*) fecundation of his own Power.

Somewhat similar to the crocodile (Sobek) of chapter 88 (see my commentary) although expressed in a more refined and less aggressive stance, proper to Ptah's elegance.

And I think it is not a coincidence that Ptah's vignette is attached to that of the crocodile, which is itself attached to that of the serpent (*s3-t3*), forming a significant visual trio:



the regenerating image of the serpent, child of Geb; which becomes the animal and chaotic fecundating power of the crocodile (Sobek); filtered and canalized by the creative visions of Ptah.

In conclusion: the successful control of psychic energies in view of their constructive ritual use.

