



# HIEROGLYPHIC EGYPTIAN

A Practical Grammar of Middle Egyptian

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SPÉCIMEN

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*Cover picture: Inscription from the White Chapel of Senusret I in Karnak © Cl. Obsomer 2006*

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## B. Adjectives

- [97] In Egyptian, there are two types of adjectives: qualifying adjectives and nisbe adjectives.

### 1. Qualifying adjectives

- [98] One of the most common qualifying adjectives will be used as a paradigm:

 *nfr* “perfect”, “beautiful”, “good”, etc.

If an adjective is invariable when functioning as an predicate, as an attributive adjective it has endings that, in theory, are the same as those of the nouns.

Adjective	masculine	feminine
singular	 <i>nfr</i>	 <i>nfrt</i>
plural	 <i>nfrw</i>	 <i>nfr(w)t</i>
dual	 <i>nfr(wy)</i>	 <i>nfrt(y)</i>

- [99] Placed after the noun with which it agrees, an attributive adjective in its hieroglyphic form may have abbreviated endings, reduced to a minimum.

Thus, in the feminine plural, the ending *-wt* will often be reduced to  $\triangle$  alone:

033  *w<sup>3</sup>wt nfr(w)t* “beautiful roads”

[Ex. 27.1-6]

### 2. Nisbe adjectives

- [100] Nisbe adjectives are formed from a noun or preposition, by adding the suffix  $\mathbb{N}$  -y (in the masculine singular). Their meaning indicates a relation with the term from which they are derived: “the one from...”, “the one who is...”.

#### a. Nisbes derived from nouns

- [101] The following nisbe will be used as a paradigm for nisbe adjectives derived from nouns:

 *ntry* “divine”, “the one of god”, derived from the noun  $\mathbb{N}$  *ntr* “god”

Like the qualifying adjective *nfr*, the nisbe  $\mathbb{N}$  *ntry* functioning as an attributive adjective agrees with the noun to which it refers.

Adjective	masculine	feminine
singular	 <i>ntry</i>	 <i>ntr(y)t</i>
plural	 <i>ntryw</i>	 <i>ntr(yw)t</i>

Note: the ending -y is frequently omitted when writing nisbes. Only context and experience allow all ambiguity to be removed: in transliteration, the elements not written in hieroglyphs are placed in parentheses.



### 3. Numbers in dates

#### a. The elements of dates

[246] Complete Egyptian dates contain, in order, the following information:

187 Date on the stela of Mery (reign of Senusret I):

- |   |  |                  |                         |
|---|--|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Year of the reign  |  | <i>Rnpt-sp 9</i> | "Year 9"                |
| 2. The 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> month... |  | <i>3bd 2-nw</i>  | "2 <sup>nd</sup> month" |
| ...of the season  |  | <i>n(y) 3ht</i>  | "of Akhet"              |
| 3. The day of the month   |  | <i>sw 20</i>     | "day 20"                |

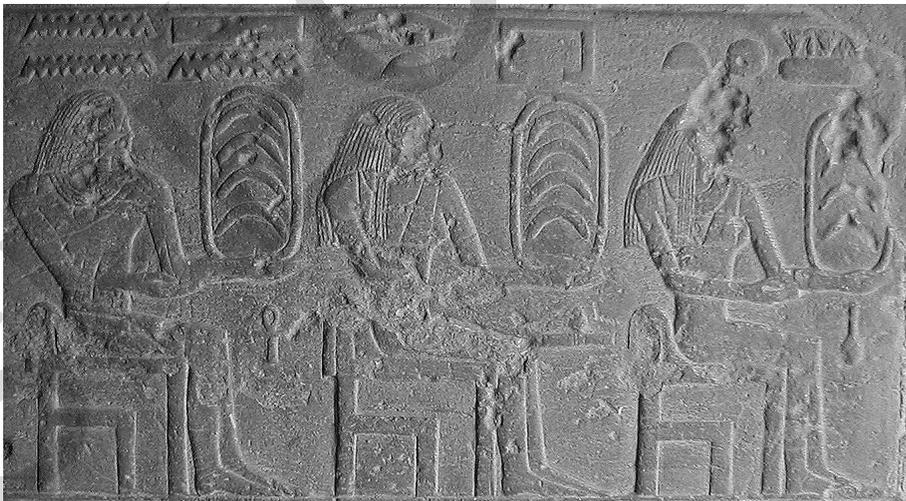
#### Comments

- [247] 1. Only the numbering of the months uses an ordinal number.
- [248] 2. The date can be abbreviated as follows: Year 9, Akhet II.20, of that reign.
- [249] 3. Do not confuse and or , which refer to the year as a duration.

188 *rnpt 6* "6 years" (duration)    *rnpt-sp 6* "Year 6" (date)

#### b. Information concerning seasons and months

[250] The Egyptian civil year included three seasons, each four months long, which are personified in this relief from the mastaba of Mereruka in Saqqara (two women and a man, according to the gender of the names of the seasons).



- |  |            |         |   |
|--|------------|---------|---|
|  | <i>3ht</i> | "Akhet" | referring to the period of flooding       |
|  | <i>Prt</i> | "Peret" | referring to the period of receding water |
|  | <i>šmw</i> | "Shemu" | referring to the period of low water      |



## C. Non-verbal clauses with adverbial predicates

- [332] Whatever the nature of the “adverbial Predicate” (adverb, prepositional objects, etc.), the construction of this very common non-verbal clause is always S + P.

271  *Tw Hnw • m sgr.* “The Residence was in silence”.

In our example, the clause is introduced by an auxiliary *iw*, which is placed before the Subject *hnw*. The absence of an auxiliary would have led us to consider the clause as a subordinate: “(...), while the Residence was in silence.”

Note that introductory words other than the auxiliary *iw* exist, which give different nuances to the clause: the auxiliaries *h<sup>c</sup>.n*, *wnn*, etc.; the proclitic particles *mk*, *ist*, etc.

### 1. NVCs introduced by an auxiliary

- [333] The combined presence of *iw* and a nominal subject clearly indicates in Middle Egyptian that we are dealing with a main or independent clause, to be translated in the indicative. The choice between the present and the imperfect of the indicative depends on the context (present or past).

#### a. With an adverb or prepositional object as predicate

- [334] The first example has an adverb as predicate, the second a noun preceded by a preposition.

272  *Tw Gb • im.* “Geb is there”.

273  *Tw Hnw • m sgr.* “The Residence was in silence”.

- [335] It matters little whether the preposition introduces a prepositional phrase indicating time, location or manner, etc.: all that is needed is a prepositional object for the latter to function as an adverbial Predicate.

274  *Tw nst • n.i.* “The throne (belongs) to me”.

[Ex. 38.1-2]

#### Comments

##### 1. With the *m* or *r* of equivalence

- [336] The adverbial predicate of the following NVC is a prepositional object introduced by the preposition *m*. The main meanings and translations of this preposition were presented above. Here, of all evidence, it is the *m* of equivalence which is used.

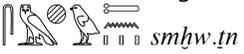
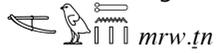
275  *Tw hm.k • m Hr i(w).*

“Your Majesty (appears) as Horus the conqueror”

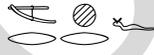
=> “Your Majesty is Horus the conqueror”.

In short, the adverbial predicate of this NVC corresponds, in the English translation, to a predicative nominal. A reminder: there is also a NVC with a predicative nominal: P + *pw* + “real” Subject [314-316].

**a. Simple verbal stems**

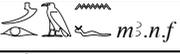
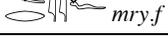
- [542] 1. Short form, attested for strong, weak and geminated verbs:  
 *sdm.f*       *mr.f*       *m<sup>3</sup>.f*
2. Short form ending in *-w*, attested for strong and weak verbs, but very rare:  
 *smhw.tn*       *mrw.tn*      ----
3. Short form ending in *-y*, attested for weak verbs:  
 ----       *mry.f*      ----
4. Geminated form, attested for weak and geminated verbs:  
 ----       *mrr.f*       *m<sup>33</sup>.f*

**b. Verbal stems with suffixes**

- [543] 1. Form with the suffix *n*, the most common, used for the “perfect”.  
 *sdm.n.f*       *mr.n.f*       *m<sup>3</sup>.n.f*
2. Form with the suffix *t* (this suffix is written before any determinative).  
 *sdm.t*       *mrt.f*       *m<sup>33</sup>t.f*
3. Form with the suffix *in*  
 *sdm.in.f*       *mr.in.f*       *m<sup>3</sup>.in.f*
4. Form with the suffix *hr*  
 *sdm.hr.f*       *mr.hr.f*       *m<sup>33</sup>.hr.f*
5. Form with the suffix *k3*  
 *sdm.k<sup>3</sup>.f*       *mr.k<sup>3</sup>.f*       *m<sup>33</sup>.k<sup>3</sup>.f*

**c. Main active forms and their uses**

[544] The *sdm.f* and *sdm.n.f* forms are used to express the perfect, the imperfect or the prospective. The following table shows the various forms and their uses.

Aspects	Forms	Strong verbs	Weak verbs	Geminated verbs
Perfect	<i>sdm.n.f</i>	 <i>sdm.n.f</i>	 <i>mr.n.f</i>	 <i>m<sup>3</sup>.n.f</i>
	perfective	 <i>sdm.f</i>	 <i>mr.f</i>	 <i>m<sup>3</sup>.f</i>
Imperfect	aorist	 <i>sdm.f</i>	 <i>mr.f</i>	 <i>m<sup>33</sup>.f</i>
	imperfective	 <i>sdm.f</i>	 <i>mrr.f</i>	 <i>m<sup>33</sup>.f</i>
Prospective	prospective	 <i>sdm.f</i>	 <i>mr.f</i>	 <i>m<sup>3</sup>.f</i>
		 <i>mry.f</i>		



The passive form is *s<sub>dm</sub>.k<sub>3</sub>.tw.f*.

### 1. Origin

[693] According to Gardiner (*Egyptian Grammar*, § 437), the suffix *-k<sub>3</sub>* could come from the verb *k<sub>3</sub>i* “to think”. Note the following uses in interpolated clauses: *k<sub>3</sub>.k* “you will say”, *k<sub>3</sub>.f* “he will say”.

### 2. Variant

[694] The *s<sub>dm</sub>.k<sub>3</sub>.f* form has a well-attested variant, which will soon replace it: *k<sub>3</sub>* + possible Subject + *s<sub>dm</sub>.f*.

## b. Uses

[695] The *s<sub>dm</sub>.k<sub>3</sub>.f* form is used in main clauses to express a purely chronological sequence. Often used after a conditional subordinate clause, it is translated as a future.

604

*Ir gm.k ntrw hms.y, hms.k<sub>3</sub>.k r.k hn<sup>c</sup>.sn.*

“If you find the gods seated, you will sit with them”.

605

“They will rejoice when they see you”.

## E. Passive suffix forms

### 1. Passive forms ending in -w

[696] The *s<sub>dm</sub>(w).f* form is the passive form of the perfect in a predicative function, but it is also sometimes found as the passive form of the prospective in a predicative function.

[697] The or is often omitted before a suffix pronoun. In order to identify the form as a passive, the meaning of the sentence must be considered. Some weak verbs have a passive ending in -y.

#### a. Passive of the perfect with a predicative function

[698] The perfect *s<sub>dm</sub>(w).f* may be preceded by an auxiliary (*iw* or <sup>c</sup>*h<sup>c</sup>.n*) or a proclitic particle.

606 After his reception at the Palace, Sinuhe narrates his settling in the Residence:

*Tw rdi(w) n.i pr.*

“An estate was given to me”.

607 A person indicates his date of birth:

*Msy.i m rnpt-sp l n(y) S<sub>3</sub>-R<sup>c</sup> Imn-m-h<sub>3</sub>t, ntr-nfr Shp(w)-ib-R<sup>c</sup>.*

“I was born in the first year of the Son of Re, Amenemhat, the perfect god Sehetepibre”.



<i>m wn m³ˢ</i> “truly”	<i>m-wḥm</i> “again”
<i>m-b³ḥ</i> “before”, “previously” ( <i>ḏr-b³ḥ</i> )	<i>m-mitt</i> “likewise”, “similarly”
<i>m-ḥ³t</i> “before”, “previously” ( <i>ḥr-ḥ³t</i> )	<i>m-ḥt</i> “next”
<i>m³ˢ</i> “really”	<i>min</i> “today”
<i>nfy</i> “unfairly”	<i>nfr</i> “well”
<i>n sp</i> “immediately”, “together”	<i>nḥḥ</i> “eternally”
<i>r tp nfr</i> “at best”, “favourably”	<i>ḥr-ˢ(wy)</i> “immediately”, “straight away”
<i>ḥft(w)</i> “in keeping”	<i>ḥnt(w)</i> “previously”, “before”
<i>sp</i> “once”, “never”	<i>sf</i> “yesterday”, “the day before”
<i>gr</i> “also”, “more”	<i>ḏw³(w)</i> “morning”
<i>ḏt</i> “eternally”, “forever”	<i>ḏr-ˢ</i> “for a long time”

## C. Interrogative words

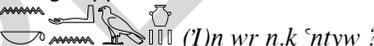
### 1. The particle *in*

- [844] Placed at the beginning of a verbal or non-verbal clause, the interrogative particle *in* is used to ask a question whose expected answer is “yes” or “no”.

795   *In ˢw³.tw.i rf m ḏ³tt.f ?*  
 “Will I therefore be robbed in his district?”

- [845] This particle can be developed into  *in-iw* and  *in-ntt* or, on the contrary, be contracted into  *n* (sometimes written  *n*).

796   *In-iw wn ḥprt m Ḥnw ?*  
 “Did something happen at the Residence?”

797   *(I)n wr n.k ˢntyw ?*  
 “Do you own so much incense?”  
 (literally: “Is incense important to you?”)

- [846] To reinforce a question, the enclitic particles  *rf* “therefore” and  *tr* “really”, sometimes written  *ty*,  *f*, or even  *f* can be used.

798  *In rf wrš.i r.f ?*  
 “Am I therefore going to spend my time doing that?”

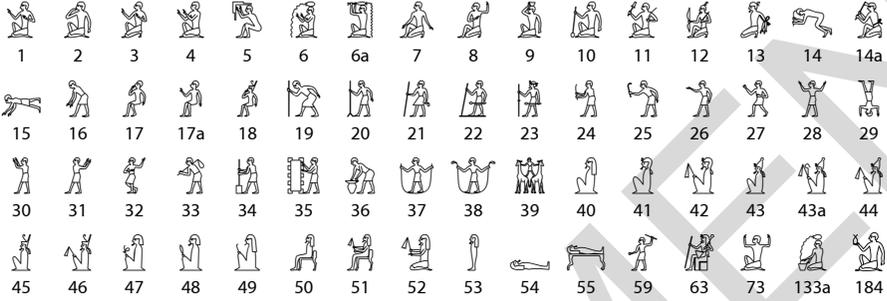
799  *In tr ḥw tw irt mrrt ḥsst nb.k ?*  
 “Are you really a man capable of carrying out what your Lord loves and praises?”



## A. List of hieroglyphic signs

### 1. General table

#### A. Men



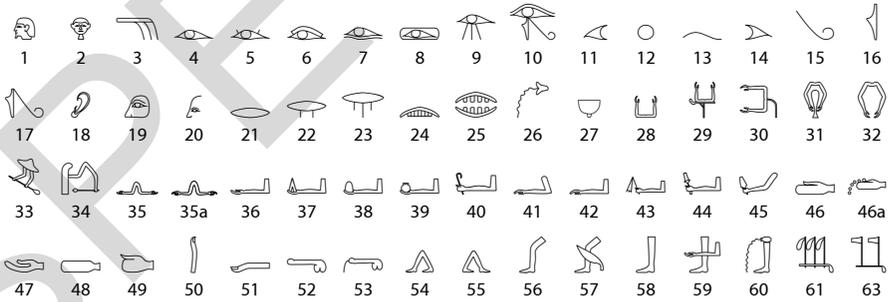
#### B. Women



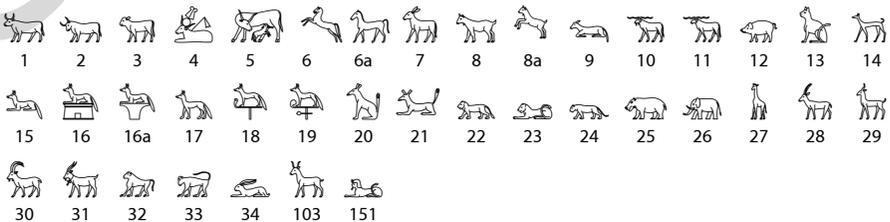
#### C. Anthropomorphic deities



#### D. Parts of the human body



#### E. Mammals





## B. Egyptian-English Vocabulary



3 vulture

3 therefore, certainly (enclit. part. 841)

3t strength, power

3t moment, instant, time

3yt to become pale, to fade

3cc to shout; cry out

3w (to be) long; length

3w-ib (to be) joyful

3wt-ib joy

3wt gifts, offerings

3b to cease, stop, halt, stay

3bw cessation, interruption

3bt family, clan

3by, 3bw panther

3bw elephant

3bw ivory

3bw

Elephantine (UE town)

3bh to melt, mingle, unite

3bd month, monthly festival

3bdw Abydos (UE town)

3pd duck, poultry, bird

3m to burn

3mm to seize, grasp

3mmt grasp

3ms Ames sceptre, mace

3ms (ib) to show interest, solicitude

3r to drive away, push back,

deprive

3ksindr

Alexander

3hd to palpitate,

quiver, falter, to be weak

3ht field, arable land

3ht Akhet season (flood)

3h clump of papyrus

3h-bit Chemmis (LE town)

3h Akh spirit

3h (to be) glorious, splendid, useful, beneficial, profitable

3ht "horizon"

3hty of the "horizon"

3hty the god of the "horizon"

3hw radiance (of the sun), sunshine

3s to hurry, rush, invade

3st quickly

3st Isis (goddess)

3st Isis (PN)

3sb incandescence (of radiance)

3sh to reap, harvest

3k to perish, disappear

3khw war axe

3tfw Atef crown

3tw commander





## A. Hieroglyphic writing and vocabulary (ex. 1 to 23)

### Exercise 1. A few words to discover hieroglyphs

- |    |     |     |
|----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 8.  | 15. |
| 2. | 9.  | 16. |
| 3. | 10. | 17. |
| 4. | 11. | 18. |
| 5. | 12. | 19. |
| 6. | 13. | 20. |
| 7. | 14. | 21. |

### Exercise 2. Unilateral phonetic signs (from *ḥ* to *f*)

- |    |     |     |
|----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 8.  | 15. |
| 2. | 9.  | 16. |
| 3. | 10. | 17. |
| 4. | 11. | 18. |
| 5. | 12. | 19. |
| 6. | 13. | 20. |
| 7. | 14. |     |

### Exercise 3. Unilateral phonetic signs (from *m* to *h*)

- |    |     |     |
|----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 7.  | 13. |
| 2. | 8.  | 14. |
| 3. | 9.  | 15. |
| 4. | 10. | 16. |
| 5. | 11. | 17. |
| 6. | 12. | 18. |



### Exercise 1. Solution

1. <i>rm</i>	fish	12. <i>h3b</i>	to send
2. <i>rd</i>	foot	13. <i>f3y</i>	camp, encampment
3. <i>rh</i>	to know	14. <i>i3rt</i>	Uraeus
4. <i>msh</i>	crocodile	15. <i>inr</i>	stone, block
5. <i>t3sm</i>	dog	16. <i>ky</i>	other
6. <i>bdš</i>	to become weak	17. <i>wi3</i>	bark (sacred)
7. <i>fdt</i>	sweat	18. <i>wbn</i>	to rise, shine
8. <i>sgr</i>	silence	19. <i>d3sr</i>	sacred, holy
9. <i>h3nk</i>	to offer, present	20. <i>hrd</i>	child
10. <i>Pth</i>	Ptah	21. <i>ikr</i>	excellent, skilful
11. <i>3pd</i>	duck, poultry		

### Exercise 2. Solution

1. <i>3pd</i>	duck, poultry	11. <i>wi3</i>	bark
2. <i>h3b</i>	to send	12. <i>wbn</i>	to rise, shine
3. <i>i3rt</i>	Uraeus	13. <i>pw</i>	this, that
4. <i>inr</i>	stone	14. <i>pw</i>	this, that
5. <i>ky</i>	other	15. <i>bdš</i>	to become weak
6. <i>h3y</i>	to be naked	16. <i>rd</i>	foot
7. <i>h3y</i>	to look for	17. <i>Pth</i>	Ptah
8. <i>h3ty</i>	opponent, enemy	18. <i>3pd</i>	duck, poultry
9. <i>f3y</i>	camp, encampment	19. <i>fdt</i>	sweat
10. <i>i3rt</i>	Uraeus	20. <i>f3y</i>	camp, encampment

### Exercise 3. Solution

1. <i>msh</i>	crocodile	10. <i>inr</i>	stone
2. <i>im</i>	there	11. <i>h3b</i>	to send
3. <i>m</i>	in, during, out of ...	12. <i>nht</i>	sycamore
4. <i>m</i>	in, during, out of ...	13. <i>h3nk</i>	to present, offer
5. <i>nht</i>	sycamore	14. <i>hb</i>	festival
6. <i>fdt</i>	sweat	15. <i>hrp</i>	to govern, control
7. <i>n</i>	to, for	16. <i>rh</i>	to know
8. <i>n</i>	to, for	17. <i>hrd</i>	child
9. <i>rm</i>	fish	18. <i>hst</i>	cowardice



### Exercise 64. Royal titles and epithets

1. The king is the one who grants the privilege of having a tomb:



2. An extract from the inscription concerning the channel in Sehel:



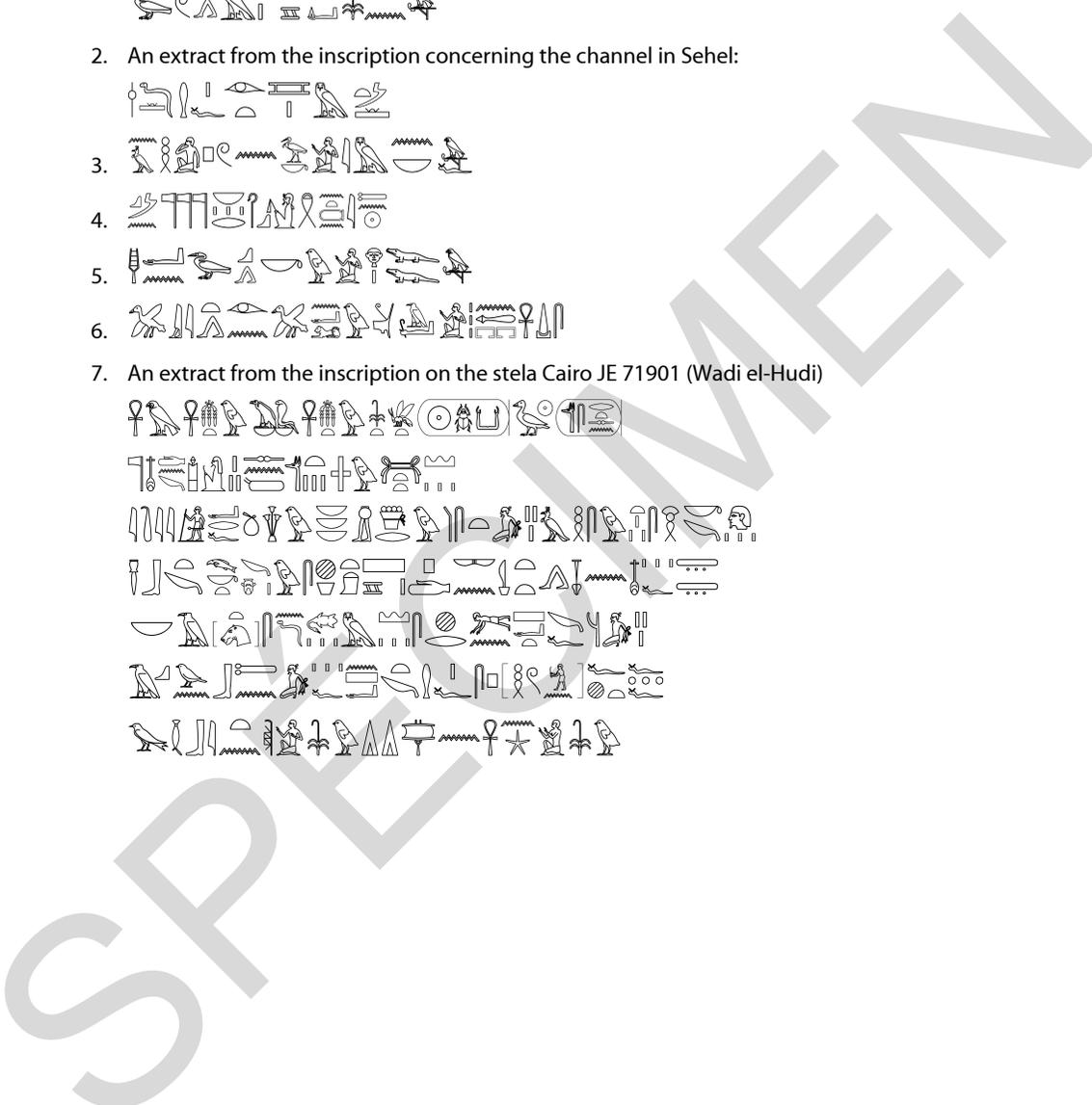
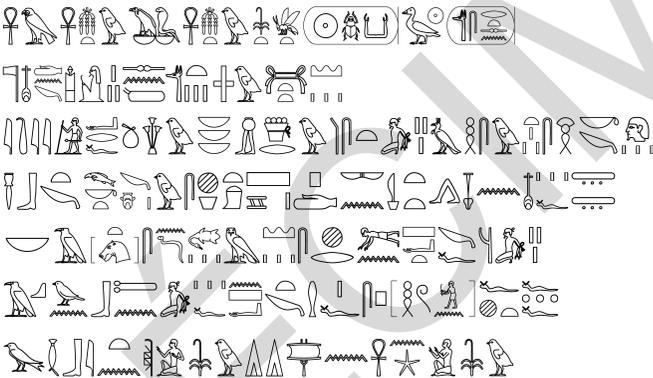
- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

- 6.

7. An extract from the inscription on the stela Cairo JE 71901 (Wadi el-Hudi)





### Exercise 64. Solution

1. *ᵑkw m t³ didi(w) nsw*  
Enter the earth that the king grants.
2. *Wḏ ḥm.f irt mr m m³(w)t.*  
His Majesty gave orders to restore this channel.
3. *Nḥ pw n b³k-im n nb.f.*  
Such is the prayer of the servant that I am to his master.
4. *km³(w) ntrw r ḥk³ šnt.n itn*  
he whom all the gods have created (to be) the sovereign of what the sun encompasses
5. *ᵑh°.n.(i) ᵑk.kwi ḥr ity.*  
Then I was taken to the sovereign.
6. *P³ iit ir(w).n p³ N°RNw n pr-°³, ᵑnh.(w) wḏ³.(w) snb.(w) !*  
Arrival made by the Ne'arin troop of Pharaoh, (may he be) alive, prosperous and healthy!
7. *ᵑnh Ḥr ᵑnh-mswt, Nbty ᵑnh-mswt, nsw-bity Ḥpr-k³-R°, s³-R° S-n(y)-Wsr̄t,*  
Long live Horus Ankh-mesut, He of the Two Ladies Ankh-mesut, King of Upper and Lower Egypt Kheperkare, Son of Re, Senusret,  
*ntr nfr dn(w) Iwnw, sn(w) wsrwt imyw Stt,*  
the perfect god who beheads the lunu and cuts the throats of those who are in Setjet,  
*ity ᵑrf(w) Ḥ³w-nbw, in(w) ḏrw nḥs(y)wt, sk(w) tpw*  
the sovereign who holds back the Hau-nebu, reaches the limit of the Nubian hordes (?) and kills the chiefs  
*³bt ḥ³kt-ib, wsh t³š, pd(w) nmtt, sm³(w).n nfrw.f T³wy,*  
of the rebellious clan, the one with an extended border line who prolongs expeditions (?), whose excellence has united the Two Lands,  
*nb ³t sndw m ḥ³swt, shr(w).n š°t.f sbiw*  
the one who possesses strength and respect in the mountainous regions, whose massacre has made opponents fall,  
– *³k.n bᵑnw.f n š°t ḥm.f; sph.n.f ḥfityw.f –,*  
– it is because of the massacre His Majesty inflicted that those who defied him died; it is with a lasso that he captured his enemies –,  
*wr bnit n šmsw sw, didi(w) t³w n(y) ᵑnh n dw³(w) sw.*  
a great one with a pleasant personality for the one who accompanies him, one who gives the breath of life to the one who adores him.