

FROM THE HORIZON OF THEBES





# From the Horizon of Thebes

Studies in Honour of Tamás A. Bács

*Edited by*

Balázs J. Irsay-Nagy & Kata Jasper



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THE PREPARATION OF A FESTSCHRIFT, especially when intended as a surprise, is always a bit of a conspiracy. The editors are profoundly grateful to their chief co-conspirator — without whom this volume would not have been possible — Tamás’s wife, Magdolna Vicze. From the very beginning, she wholeheartedly embraced the idea, and despite her own demanding commitments in fieldwork, conferences, and travel, she consistently found the time to support and assist with the many complex tasks involved in producing this volume — all while keeping the secret from Tamás. Her valuable ideas, insights, and contributions were important throughout the entire process, and the editors are deeply appreciative of her unwavering commitment to the success and spirit of this volume.

This project began in the autumn of 2021 with the collaboration of three individuals. Andrea Hasznos, the third founding member alongside the present editors, played a crucial role in the early stages, offering significant ideas and insights that helped shape the direction of the volume. Unfortunately, due to her eventual complete withdrawal from academia, the editorial work in earnest had to start without her active involvement. Nevertheless, her early contributions are deeply appreciated.

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Kata Jasper

## TAMÁS ANTAL BÁCS

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CELEBRATING TAMÁS A. BÁCS — a teacher, colleague, and friend — with a *Festschrift* is both a pleasure and an honour. It is a task that is not only a privilege but a genuine joy, one that grows deeper with each step as the editors reach out to contributors and are repeatedly met with a vivid sense of respect, admiration, and sincere friendship for the person to whom this volume is dedicated. Someone for whom high standards matter just as much as meaningful human connections — even within the professional sphere. And it is no wonder, for the person one encounters in the classroom, in the office, at a conference, over dinner or a beer, or out in the field (where he perhaps feels most at home) is always exceptionally well-prepared and composed, embodying a profound and unwavering commitment to scholarship. And yet, perhaps the most difficult task in the editorial process is: writing a preface worthy of him — someone who has himself set the bar exceptionally high, in every genre — all the while knowing that no words can ever fully capture the reality.

This reality is best reflected in the experiences of those who have had the privilege to work, study, or spend some time with him. They have sat in his always fascinating, insight-filled lectures; consulted with him; and experienced first-hand how a single, precisely formulated question could breathe entirely new life into a research project. They may have shared a table with him at a bar near the university or in Thebes, listening to his wide-ranging reflections on all manner of topics — from medieval European history and sports to the literary works of Goethe — or, if lucky enough, visited the concession of the TT 65 Project of the Hungarian Archaeological Mission in Thebes and enjoyed one of his always thrilling site tours. They may also have encountered his sharp sense of humour — piercing through his characteristic reserve — most memorably in the form of his delightfully risqué wordplay.

His biography, too, reflects this extraordinary range. Tamás's life path spans several continents and is impressive by any standard. He was born in New York City, NY, USA, on 14 March 1960. After a brief period in his native Hungary — between the ages of approximately one and a half and six — his early education unfolded across several continents. He attended kindergarten in New Delhi, India, followed by primary school in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. After his teenage years back in Budapest, his second year at a science-focused(!) secondary school in Cairo brought him to a fifth continent and marked a turning point in his life: the meeting with László Török. This encounter had a profound and lasting impact on Tamás, both as a scholar and as a person, redirecting his interests from ancient Greece toward Egyptology. The intellectual affinity they shared, along with their mutual commitment to excellence, forged a lifelong friendship — even Tamás's son (László Bács) was named after László Török.

After studying English and French Literature at the University of Baghdad, Iraq, Tamás in 1979 started Egyptology with László Kákósy and Archaeology with Miklós Szabó at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, which has remained his academic home ever since. He gained practical archaeological experience through excavations directed by the renowned and highly respected Ilona Stanczik at Tiszaug-Kéménytető — one of Hungary's most significant Bronze Age tell settlements and cemeteries — as well as by the then-young lecturer and researcher (and now friend) Pál Raczky at his iconic Late Neolithic site at Öcsöd-Kováshalom.

The Department of Archaeology with its iconic ‘common room’ was also the place where Tamás met his future wife, Magdi (Magdolna Vicze), a fellow student of archaeology.

In 1984, the same year he received his university degree in Egyptology, Tamás participated in his first archaeological mission in Egypt. He joined the team of László Kákosy, at the tomb of Djehutymes (TT 32) on the hill of el-Khokha. These years marked the beginning of continuous Hungarian presence in Thebes since 1983, and also saw the emergence of a second generation of scholars under Kákosy’s mentorship. A decade later, this new generation started their own independent research, near the tomb of Djehutymes (Zoltán Imre Fábíán, Ernő Gaál), or slightly further away, on the Sheikh Abd el-Qurna hill (Tamás A. Bács), thus significantly strengthening and expanding Hungarian presence in the Theban necropolis. It was also a golden age in many ways, with its specialities, like waiting for weeks for a letter from home, or to endure the lack of hot water and also the cold in the legendary yet unheated Stopler and Carter Houses — the then dig houses of the Hungarian Mission — because they lived there too!

Tamás began his own excavation in 1995 in and around Theban Tomb 65 (TT 65), where he initially worked alongside the ongoing investigations at TT 32. The tomb (TT 65), originally constructed for Nebamun during the reign of Hatshepsut, was later usurped by Imiseba, overseer of the altar and third-generation chief archivist at the temple of Amun at Karnak during the reign of Ramesses IX.

Over the decades of research, Tamás meticulously documented every aspect of the tomb’s architecture and decoration, while continuously deepening his understanding of its ancient and modern history. His characteristic drive — and intellectual imperative — to observe phenomena from a broader perspective is truly mirrored in the very layout of the concession area he selected. Its boundaries were deliberately set to encompass a Late Antique anchorite monastery (the Monastery of Cyriacus), centred on the tomb of Imiseba (TT 65) — a monument whose exceptional decorative and textual programme continues to astonish all who visit.

With characteristic scholarly foresight, he chose to focus on a monumental rock-cut tomb representing the final chapter of a grand Theban tradition — one that had been largely overlooked by earlier scholarship. The tomb’s decorative programme integrates elements from temple, royal and private contexts, while its inscriptions reveal the exceptional intellect and personality of Imiseba himself. In this, one glimpses not only the ingenuity of the tomb’s ancient owner but also the interpretive acuity and depth of the modern scholar who brought his world back into view.

Yet Tamás’s scholarly interests are by no means limited to the Theban necropolis. He has also conducted research in the Giza region, published articles on the emergence of the Egyptian state, and examined broader, cross-period phenomena, such as reuse, copying practices, and model transfer. A few years ago, he authored a volume on ancient Egyptian art — regrettably, still only available in Hungarian. This short yet immensely rich book, perhaps too modestly titled *Introduction to the Art of Ancient Egypt (Bevezetés az ókori Egyiptom művészetébe, 2017)*, is dedicated to a subject especially close to his heart. Written entirely from the perspective of an art historian, it focuses primarily on figurative art — sculpture, relief, painting, and glyptic — and offers a meticulous analysis of genre developments and stylistic changes, traced diachronically from dynasty to dynasty, or, in the case of the New Kingdom, even within individual dynasties.

Alongside his fieldwork and publications, Tamás A. Bács has played — and continues to play — a key role in academic life at his alma mater, the Department of Egyptology at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), where he has taught since 1985. He served four consecutive terms as head of the department starting in 2005, and between 2016 and 2020 he also directed the Institute of Ancient and Classical Studies, which includes the Department of Egyptology. His teaching spans seminars on Late Egyptian and Hieratic, as well as colloquia on Egyptian art, history, and the history of Egyptology.

Tamás is a regular participant of both international and domestic conferences and workshops and has been invited as a guest lecturer at numerous universities and museums around the world, including those in Cambridge, London, Liverpool, Granada, Liège, Copenhagen, Heidelberg, Mainz, Berlin, Basel, Pisa, Bologna,

Paris, and Prague. His academic journey also brought him back to two emblematic locations from his early years: the United States (Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York in 2016) and Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide in 2011). Additionally, he regularly provides peer reviews for leading Egyptological journals. He is also a co-organiser, supervisor, and lecturer in the CENTRAL Joint Workshop — an important platform for postgraduate talent development in Egyptology — held within the CENTRAL Network (Universität Wien, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, ELTE Budapest, Univerzita Karlova, Praha, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa).

He has held numerous roles in professional and academic organizations. A member of the International Association of Egyptologists (IAE) since 1987, he has served as president of its Hungarian chapter since 2019. He joined the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in 2018. Since 1987, he has also been a member of the Hungarian Society of Ancient Studies, serving as board member from 2003 and president between 2015 and 2021. Within the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), he has been a public body member since 2004, a member of the Committee of Ancient Studies since the same year, and its secretary from 2005 to 2011. From 2019 to 2022, he served as a non-academic general assembly member. Between 2007 and 2010, he was also a member of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee's Expert Committee for History.

In 2012, he was awarded the Károly Marót Prize by the Hungarian Society of Ancient Studies for his recent research achievements related to the tomb of Nebamun and Imiseba. On March 15, 2020, President János Áder conferred the Hungarian Order of Merit (Commander's Cross) on him in recognition of his contributions to the study of the history, architecture, and artistic heritage of Ancient Egypt's New Kingdom, as well as his significant achievements in teaching, professional service, and scholarly publications. In September 2024, he received the Pro Universitate Gold Medal by ELTE for his outstanding teaching, research, and leadership at the Department of Egyptology over several terms.

On a more personal note. His colleagues in Budapest know well his legendary enthusiasm for sport, and it is perhaps unsurprising that his place of birth is reflected in his choice of teams. He is a dedicated supporter of the Boston Red Sox (baseball) and the Pittsburgh Steelers (American football). Time zone differences notwithstanding, he diligently follows their games and often recounts — with a blend of fatigue and pride — staying up all night to watch them live. His cultural interests are equally expansive and discerning, encompassing everything from the etchings of Piranesi to baroque opera and rock music. In keeping with his profession, Tamás holds a deep admiration for Sir John Eliot Gardiner, especially for his masterful interpretations of baroque operas, particularly his recordings of Handel and Rameau, which blend historical authenticity with expressive depth. He also harbours a strong appreciation for the operas of Lully, whose works he sees as foundational.

Finally, those who have been part of his excavation team know very well how much Tamás values personal connections. He has always placed great importance on colleagues and friends, and on fostering a cohesive, supportive, and spirited team — something that those fortunate enough to work with him in the field have experienced time and again.

It is no surprise, then, that many wished to express their appreciation for Tamás through scholarly contributions. Naturally, the thirty-nine contributors to this volume cannot fully represent the wide circle of friends, colleagues, and students who would have liked to celebrate him in this way — often for reasons beyond the control of both editors and authors. As is often the case with academic writing — which is less completed than interrupted — the editing of this volume, too, had to be brought to a close at a certain point. In doing so, we may have departed slightly from Tamás's own scholarly philosophy, which consistently resists external pressure when it comes to the pursuit of the highest standards. Nevertheless, we sincerely hope he will take pleasure in the result — and that reading these studies will offer him genuine intellectual enjoyment. We hope, too, that the spirit of friendship, admiration, and gratitude that inspired this volume will come through in its pages.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

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### I. General

Abb.	Abbildung, 'figure'
approx.	approximately
BD	Book of the Dead
bzw.	beziehungsweise, 'respectively', 'or rather'
BEN	benefactive
b/w	black and white
<i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i> , 'approximately'
<i>ca.</i>	<i>circa</i> , 'ungefähr'
CAUS	causative
cf.	confer, 'compare'
ch(s)	chapter(s)
cm	centimetre
COMPL	completive
ders.	derselbe, 'the same'
doc.	document
E	east(ern)
eadem	'the same' (feminine)
ed.	edition
ed./eds	editor/editors
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , 'for example'
eidem	'the same' (plural)
esp.	especially
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , 'and so on', 'and others'
exp. cat.	exposition/exhibition catalogue
fig./figs	figure/figures
FPL	feminine plural
FSG	feminine singular
Hg./Hgg.	Herausgeber, Herausgeberin/Herausgeber (plural), Herausgeberinnen
ibidem	'in the same place'
idem	'the same'
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , 'that is'

## Abbreviations

JE	Journal d'entrée of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo
JUNC	juncture
KIU	Karnak identifiant unique, cf. <a href="https://www.cfeetk.cnrs.fr/archives/">https://www.cfeetk.cnrs.fr/archives/</a>
kv	Valley of the Kings
l.p.h.	Life, Prosperity and Health!
LOC	locative
m	metre
MDU	masculine dual
MSG	masculine singular
N	noun
n(n).	note(s)
N	north(ern)
n.d.	no date (of publication)
n.p.	no place (of publication)
NEG	negative
no.	number
O.	ostrakon
o. J.	ohne Jahr, 'no date'
o. O.	ohne Ort, 'no place'
<i>op. cit.:</i>	<i>opere citato</i> , 'in the work cited'
p	Papyrus (prefixed to the name or the museum identification of the papyrus)
p(p).	page(s)
Pap.	Papyrus
PGN	person-gender-number
pl./pls	plate/plates
PP	postposition
PRES	present tense
PRIV	privative
PST	past
QV	Valley of the Queens
REC	reciprocal
rev.	review
rev. ed.	revised edition
rto	recto
S	south(ern)
S.	Seite(n), 'page(s)'
SG	singular
SG.F	singular feminine
s.	siehe, 'see'
s. o.	siehe oben, 'see above'
sim.	similarly
TIP	Third Intermediate Period

## Abbreviations

TT	Theban Tomb
u. a.	und andere, unter anderem, ‘and others’, ‘among others’
u. ä.	und ähnliches, ‘and similar’
u. ö.	und öfters, ‘and more often’
V	verb
v. Chr.	vor Christus, ‘BC’
vso	verso
z. B.	zum Beispiel, ‘for example’
W	west(ern)

## II. Bibliographical

ÄA	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, Wiesbaden
AAASH	<i>Acta archaeologica Academiae scientiarum hungaricae</i> , Budapest
AAOJ	<i>American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal</i> , Chicago
AASRS	Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Series, Fayetteville
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament, Wiesbaden
<i>AcAnt (B)</i>	<i>Acta antiqua Academiae scientiarum hungaricae</i> , Budapest
ACER	Australian Centre for Egyptology Reports, Macquarie University, Sydney
ADAIK	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Glückstadt, Hamburg & New York
ÄDS	Ägyptische Denkmäler aus der Schweiz, Basel
AegHelv	Aegyptiaca Helvetica, Geneva & Basel
AegLeod	Aegyptiaca Leodiensia, Liège
AESC	African Ethnographic Studies of the 20th Century, London
AF	Afrikanische Forschungen, Hamburg
ÄF	Ägyptologische Forschungen, Glückstadt, Hamburg & New York
ÄgLev	Ägypten und Levante, Vienna
AGSK	Abhandlungen der Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Mainz
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> , New York, Baltimore & Norwood
AJPA	<i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i> , Philadelphia
AMG	<i>Annales du musée Guimet</i> , Paris
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia, Rome
ANRW	H. Temporini et al. (eds), <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Rise and Decline of the Roman World</i> , Berlin & New York, 1972–
<i>AntWelt</i>	<i>Antike Welt</i> , Zurich, Mainz & Darmstadt
AOB	Acta orientalia belgica, Brussels
ArchaeoEg	Archaeopress Egyptology, Oxford
ARG	<i>Archiv für Religionsgeschichte</i> , Berlin & Boston
ArtAs Suppl	Artibus Asiae, Supplementum, Ascona
ASAE	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte</i> , Cairo
ASEg	Archaeological Survey of Egypt, London
<i>Atti Sc. Mor.</i>	<i>Atti della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche</i> , Accademia delle Scienze di Torino
<i>AulOr</i>	<i>Aula Orientalis</i> , Barcelona

## Abbreviations

AV	Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Mainz am Rhein & Wiesbaden
ÄWb. I	R. Hannig 2003 <i>Ägyptisches Wörterbuch</i> , Volume I: <i>Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit</i> , Hannig-Lexica 4; KAW 98, Mainz am Rhein
ÄWb. II	R. Hannig 2006 <i>Ägyptisches Wörterbuch</i> , Volume II: <i>Mittleres Reich und Zweite Zwischenzeit</i> , Hannig-Lexica 5; KAW 112, Mainz am Rhein
BAÄ	Beiträge zum Alten Ägypten, Basel
BACE	<i>Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology</i> , Sydney
BAEDE	<i>Boletín de la Asociación Española de Egiptología</i> , Madrid
BAR-IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series, London
BAW	Bibliothek der alten Welt, Zurich, Stuttgart & Munich
BCLE	<i>Bulletin du Cercle lyonnais d'égyptologie Victor Loret</i> , Lyon
BdE	Bibliothèque d'études, Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Cairo
BiAeg	Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, Brussels
BIE	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut égyptien/d'Égypte</i> , Cairo
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i> , Cairo
BiGen	Bibliothèque générale, Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Cairo
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies, Atlanta
BMFA	<i>Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts</i> , Boston
BMMA	<i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i> , New York
BMRP	British Museum Research Publications, London
BMSAES	<i>British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan</i> , London. <a href="https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/british-museum-publications/bmsaes">https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/british-museum-publications/bmsaes</a>
BNE	<i>Bioarchaeology of the Near East</i> , Warsaw
Boreas	Boreas. Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations, Uppsala
BSAA	<i>Bulletin de la Société archéologique d'Alexandrie</i> , Alexandria
BSAE	British School of Archaeology in Egypt (and Egyptian Research Account = ERA), London
BSFE	<i>Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie</i> , Paris
CAA Boston 3	R. J. Leprohon, <i>Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</i> , Fascicle 3: <i>Stelae 2. The New Kingdom to the Coptic Period</i> , Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum, Mainz am Rhein, 1991
CAENL	Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant, Vienna
<i>CahKarn</i>	<i>Cahiers de Karnak</i> , Centre franco-égyptien d'étude des temples de Karnak (CFEETK), Paris
CASAE	Suppléments aux Annales de Service des antiquités de l'Égypte, Cahiers, Cairo
CBDBM	Catalogue of the Books of the Dead in the British Museum, London
CCEM	Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean, Vienna
CDD	<i>Chicago Demotic Dictionary</i> , Chicago, 2001. <a href="https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/publications/chicago-demotic-dictionary">https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/publications/chicago-demotic-dictionary</a>
<i>CdE</i> (= <i>ChronEg</i> )	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i> , Brussels
CEMG	B. Boyaval, <i>Corpus des étiquettes des momies grecques</i> , Publication de l'Université de Lille III, Lille, 1976
CEML	Fr. Baratte & B. Boyaval, 'Catalogue des étiquettes de momies du Musée du Louvre (CEML)', <i>CRIPEL</i> 2-5 (1974-1979)
CENiM	Cahiers d'Égypte nilotique et méditerranéenne, Montpellier. <a href="http://www.enim-egyptologie.fr/?page=cahiers">http://www.enim-egyptologie.fr/?page=cahiers</a>
CGC	Catalogue générale, Cairo

## Abbreviations

CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, Leiden
CNIP	The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near East Studies, Publications, Copenhagen
CRIPeL	<i>Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille</i> , Lille
CSEG	Cahiers de la Société d'égyptologie Genève, Geneva
CT	A. de Buck, <i>The Egyptian Coffin Texts</i> , 7 volumes, OIP 34, 49, 64, 67, 73, 81, 87, Chicago, 1935–1961
CTWI	D. van der Plas, & J. F. Borghouts, <i>Coffin Texts Word Index</i> , PIREI 6, Utrecht & Paris, 1998
DakhOP-Monogr.	Dakhleh Oasis Project Monographs, Oxford
DE	<i>Discussions in Egyptology</i> , Oxford
Dendara I–V	E. Chassinat, <i>Le temple de Dendara</i> , volumes I–V, Cairo, 1934–1952
Dendara IX	F. Daumas, <i>Le temple de Dendara</i> , volume IX, Cairo, 1987
Dendara VI–VIII	E. Chassinat & F. Daumas, <i>Le temple de Dendara</i> , volumes VI–VIII, Cairo, 1965–1978
Dendara X–XV	S. Cauville, <i>Le temple de Dendara</i> , volumes X–XV, Cairo, 1997–2020
Dendara. <i>Temple d'Isis</i>	S. Cauville, <i>Dendara. Le temple d'Isis</i> , 2 volumes, Cairo, 2007
DFIFAO	Documents de fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Cairo
DÖAW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie, Vienna
DUW	Dissertationen der Universität Wien, Vienna
DZA	Digitalisiertes Zettelarchiv des Wörterbuches der ägyptischen Sprache, <a href="https://aaew.bbaw.de/digitalisiertes-zettelarchiv">https://aaew.bbaw.de/digitalisiertes-zettelarchiv</a>
EAG	E. Edel, <i>Altägyptische Grammatik</i> , AnOr 34/39, Rome, 1955/1964
EALT	Empirical Approaches to Language Typology, University of Zurich, Zurich
EAO	<i>Égypte, Afrique &amp; Orient</i> , Avignon, Paris & Montségur
EAT	Études d'archéologie thébaine, Brussels
ECHAUB	Études publiées par les chaires d'Histoire ancienne de l'Université Loránd Eötvös de Budapest, Budapest
ECHOMS	Egyptian Cultural Heritage Organisation Monograph Series, London
<i>Edfou I</i>	Le Marquis de Rochemonteix, <i>Le temple d'Edfou</i> , volume I, MMAF 10, Cairo, 1897
<i>Edfou II–XIV</i>	E. Chassinat, <i>Le temple d'Edfou</i> , volumes II–XIV, MMAF 11, 20–21, Cairo, 1918–1928
<i>Edfou XV</i>	S. Cauville & D. Devauchelle, <i>Le temple d'Edfou</i> , volume XV, MMAF 32, Cairo, 1985
<i>EgArch</i>	<i>Egyptian Archaeology</i> , London
EG <sup>3</sup>	A. H. Gardiner, <i>Egyptian Grammar. Being an Introduction to the Study of the Hieroglyphs</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed., Oxford, 1957
EgMem	Egyptological Memoirs, Leiden & Boston
EgUit	Egyptologische uitgaven, Leiden
EME	Études et mémoires d'égyptologie, Paris
ENiM	<i>Égypte nilotique et méditerranéenne</i> , Montpellier
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain, Leiden
ERA	Egyptian Research Account, London
ErgHÖJh	Ergänzungshefte zu den Jahreshften des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts, Vienna
ERTR	Egyptian Religious Texts and Representations, Bollingen Foundation, New York
EtudEg	Études d'égyptologie. Collège de France, Paris
<i>EtudTrav</i>	<i>Études et travaux</i> , Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Warsaw
EVO	<i>Egitto e Vicino Oriente</i> , Pisa

## Abbreviations

FouillesSaqq	Fouilles à Saqqarah, Cairo
GIFAO	Guides de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Cairo
GM	<i>Göttinger Miszellen. Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion</i> , Göttingen
GM-B	Göttinger Miszellen. Beihefte, Göttingen
GOF	Göttinger Orientforschungen, Wiesbaden
HÄB	Hildesheimer ägyptologische Beiträge, Hildesheim
HATb	Handschriften des altägyptischen Totenbuches, Wiesbaden
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik, Leiden
HPBM	Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, London
HTMB V	H. R. Hall, <i>Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, etc. in the British Museum</i> , Volume V, London, 1914
HWB	R. Hannig, <i>Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)</i> , KAW 64, Mainz am Rhein, 1995
HWB <sup>4</sup>	R. Hannig, <i>Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.). Marburger Edition</i> , 4 <sup>th</sup> rev. ed., KAW 64, Mainz am Rhein, 2006
IBAES	Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie, Berlin. <a href="https://www.ibaes.de/">https://www.ibaes.de/</a>
ImagAeg	<i>Imago Aegypti. Internationales Magazin für ägyptologische und koptologische. Kunstforschung, Bildtheorie und Kulturwissenschaft</i> , Munich
ISAC Seminars	Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures Seminars, University of Chicago, Chicago
JAI	<i>The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland</i> , London
JANEH	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i> , Berlin & Boston
JARCE	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i> , Boston & New York
JAS	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i> , London & New York
JCH	<i>Journal of Cultural Heritage</i> , Amsterdam
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i> , London
JEH	<i>Journal of Egyptian History</i> , Leiden
JEOL	<i>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux</i> , Leiden
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> , London & Cambridge
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> , Chicago
JSepSci	<i>Journal of Separation Science</i> , Weinheim
JWAS	<i>Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences</i> , Washington
KÄT	Kleine ägyptische Texte, Wiesbaden
KAW	Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt, Mainz am Rhein
KRI I–VIII	K. A. Kitchen, <i>Ramesside Inscriptions</i> , volumes I–VIII, Oxford, 1969–1990; reprint, Wallasey, 2015–
KRITA IV–V	K. A. Kitchen, <i>Ramesside Inscriptions. Translated &amp; Annotated. Translations</i> , volumes IV–V, Malden & Oxford, 2003–2008; reprint, Wallasey, 2015–2025
KRITANC II	K. A. Kitchen, <i>Ramesside Inscriptions. Translated and Annotated. Notes and Comments</i> , volume II, Oxford & Malden, 1999
KSG	Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen, Wiesbaden
LÄ	W. Helck, E. Otto & W. Westendorf (eds), <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , 7 volumes, Wiesbaden, 1975–1992
LÄS	Leipziger ägyptologische Studien, Glückstadt, Hamburg & New York
LD	Carl Richard Lepsius, <i>Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien</i> , 12 volumes, Berlin, 1849–1859. <a href="https://edoc3.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/lepsiust/">https://edoc3.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/lepsiust/</a>

## Abbreviations

LES	A. H. Gardiner, <i>Late-Egyptian Stories</i> , BiAeg 1, Brussels, 1932
LGG	C. Leitz, <i>Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen</i> , 8 volumes, OLA 110–116, 129, Leuven, 2002–2003
LGPN-Ling	<i>Etymology and Semantics of Ancient Greek Personal Names</i> , Paris & Oxford. <a href="https://lgpn-ling.huma-num.fr/">https://lgpn-ling.huma-num.fr/</a>
LGPN	<i>Lexicon of Greek Personal Names</i> , Oxford. <a href="http://clas-lgpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/name/">http://clas-lgpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/name/</a>
LIDEA	Les institutions dans l'Égypte ancienne, Paris
LingAeg-StudMon	Lingua Aegyptia, Studia Monographica, Göttingen
LMAOS	Liverpool Monographs in Archaeology and Oriental Studies, Warminster
LRL	J. Černý, <i>Late Ramesside Letters</i> , BiAeg 9, Brussels, 1939
MAIBL	Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Paris
MÄS	Münchener ägyptologische Studien, Berlin & Munich
MÄSB	Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen Sammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin
MDAIK	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i> , Wiesbaden & Mainz am Rhein
MDOG	<i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin</i> , Berlin
MEEF	Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund, London
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Cairo
<i>Minerva (L)</i>	<i>Minerva. The International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology</i> , London
MKS	Middle Kingdom Studies, London
MMA Papers	The Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, New York
MMAEE	Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Expedition, New York
MMAF	Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire, Cairo & Paris
MMJ	<i>Metropolitan Museum Journal</i> , New York
MonAeg	Monumenta aegyptiaca, Brussels
<i>MonPiot</i>	<i>Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot</i> , Paris
MOS	Mitteilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen, Königliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin
MRE	Monographies Reine Élisabeth, Brussels
MVCAE	Material and Visual Culture of Ancient Egypt, Atlanta
NBS	Numen Book Series. Studies in the History of Religions, Leiden
<i>Nexus Netw J</i>	<i>Nexus Network Journal</i> , Turin & Berlin
OBL	Orientalia et biblica lovaniensia, Leuven
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis, Fribourg & Göttingen
OCMA Monogr.	Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology Monograph, Oxford
OEE Min	Oxford Expedition to Egypt, Egypt in Miniature, Oxford
OIC	Oriental Institute Communications, Chicago
OIMP	Oriental Institute Museum Publications, Chicago
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications, Chicago
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta, Leuven
<i>OrAnt</i>	<i>Oriens antiquus</i> , Rome
<i>Orientalia</i>	<i>Orientalia Nova Series</i> , Rome
OrMonsp	Orientalia Monspelienzia, Montpellier
P.L.Bat.	Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, Leiden

## Abbreviations

PALMA	Papers on Archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities, Leiden
PAM	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i> , Warsaw
PapFlor	Papyrologica Florentina, Florence
PdÄ	Probleme der Ägyptologie, Leiden
PES	<i>Prague Egyptological Studies</i> , Prague
PFLS	Publications de la Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Strasbourg
PIA	<i>Papers from the Institute of Archaeology</i> , London
PJAE	<i>PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology</i> , Amsterdam
PLO	Porta linguarum Orientalium, Leipzig
PM	B. Porter & R. L. B. Moss et. al., <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings</i> , 8 volumes, Oxford, 1952–1999
PMMAEE	Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition, New York
PN 1	H. Ranke, <i>Die ägyptischen Personennamen</i> , Volume 1: <i>Verzeichnis der Namen</i> , Glückstadt, 1935
PN 2	H. Ranke, <i>Die ägyptischen Personennamen</i> , Volume 2: <i>Einleitung. Form und Inhalt der Namen, Geschichte der Namen. Vergleiche mit anderen Namen. Nachträge und Zusätze zu Band 1. Umschreibungslisten</i> , Glückstadt & Hamburg, 1952
PN 3	H. Ranke, <i>Die altägyptischen Personennamen</i> , Volume 3: <i>Verzeichnis der Bestandteile</i> , Glückstadt, 1977
POHCCC	Publications of the Office of the Hungarian Cultural Counsellor in Cairo, Cairo
PPYE	Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt, New Haven & Philadelphia
PSBA	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i> , London
PTMP	Publications of the Theban Mapping Project, Cairo & New York
RA	<i>Revue archéologique</i> , Paris
RAPH	Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie et d'histoire. Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Cairo
RÄRG	H. Bonnet, <i>Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte</i> , Berlin, 1952
RCTA	Routledge Classic Texts in Anthropology, London
RdE	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i> , Paris & Leuven
RevEg	<i>Revue égyptologique</i> , Paris
RevLouvre	<i>Revue du Louvre et des musées de France</i> , Paris
RitesEg	Rites égyptiens, Brussels
RT	<i>Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes</i> , Paris
SAAC	<i>Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization</i> , Jagiellonian University, Cracow
SAC	Studies in Ancient Cultures, University of Chicago, Chicago
SAE	Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Cairo
SAGA	Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens, Heidelberg
SAK	<i>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</i> , Hamburg
SAK-B	Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur Beihefte, Hamburg
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, Chicago
SASAE	Suppléments aux Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte, Cairo
SB	F. Preisigke et al., <i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten</i> , Strasbourg, Berlin, Leipzig, Heidelberg & Wiesbaden, 1915–
SDAIK	Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo, Mainz am Rhein
SEC	<i>Studies in Egyptian Culture</i> , Tokyo

## Abbreviations

SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i> , Amsterdam
ShirEgypt	Shire Egyptology, Aylesbury
SJE	Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia, Odense
SM	Smärre Meddelanden, Stockholm
Source	<i>Source. Notes in the History of Art</i> , Chicago
SPBDStudies	Saite through Ptolemaic Book of the Dead Studies, Charleston (South Carolina), Prescott (Arizona) & Norwell (Massachusetts)
SRTC DP	Studies from the Research and Training Centre for Depth Psychology According to C. G. Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, Zurich
SSR (W)	Studien zur spätägyptischen Religion, Wiesbaden
SSR	Studi storico-religiosi, L'Aquila
StudAeg	Studia Aegyptiaca, Budapest
StudCon	<i>Studies in Conservation</i> , London
StudDem	Studia Demotica, Leuven
StudEg	Studies in Egyptology, London
SudNub	<i>Sudan &amp; Nubia. The Sudan Archaeological Research Society Bulletin</i> , London
Suppl.-HAW	Supplemente zu den Schriften der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Heidelberg
TCAM	Travaux du Centre d'archéologie méditerranéenne, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw
TICMO	Travaux de l'Institut des cultures méditerranéennes et orientales, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw
TLA	<i>Thesaurus linguae aegyptiae</i> , <a href="http://aaw.bbaw.de/tla/">http://aaw.bbaw.de/tla/</a>
TM	<i>Trismegistos</i> , <a href="http://www.trismegistos.org">www.trismegistos.org</a>
TM Nam	<i>Trismegistos Name</i> , <a href="http://www.trismegistos.org/ref/">www.trismegistos.org/ref/</a>
TRIA	Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin
TUAT	O. Kaiser (ed.), <i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i> , 18 volumes, Gütersloh, 1982–1997
UCLAP	University of California Publications, Occasional Papers, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London
UGAÄ	Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens, Leipzig, Berlin & Hildesheim
UgForsch	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i> , Neukirchen
Urk. I	K. Sethe, <i>Urkunden des Alten Reichs</i> , 1–4, Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums, Erste Abteilung, 1–2, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1932 and 3–4, Leipzig 1933
Urk. IV	K. Sethe, <i>Urkunden der 18. Dynastie</i> , 1–16, Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums, IV. Abteilung 1–4, Leipzig, 1906–1909, and W. Helck, <i>Urkunden der 18. Dynastie</i> , 17–22, Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums, Vierte Abteilung 17–22, Berlin, 1955–1958
Urk. VI	S. Schott, <i>Urkunden mythologischen Inhalts</i> , Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums, Sechste Abteilung, Leipzig, 1929
Urk. VII	K. Sethe, <i>Historisch-biographische Urkunden des Mittleren Reiches [VII, 1–66]</i> , unter Mitwirkung von W. Erichsen, Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums, Siebte Abteilung 1, Leipzig, 1935
USE	Uppsala Studies in Egyptology, Uppsala
UZK	Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts, Vienna
VIO	Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Orientforschung, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World, Atlanta and Leiden & Boston
Wb.	A. Erman & H. Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> , 5 volumes, Leipzig & Berlin, 1926–1963

## Abbreviations

<i>Wb. Belegst.</i>	A. Erman & H. Grapow, Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache, Die Belegstellen, 5 volumes, Leipzig & Berlin, 1940–1971
<i>WdO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i> , Göttingen
<i>WES</i>	Wilkinson Egyptology Series, University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition, Tucson
<i>WilbMon</i>	Wilbour Monographs, New York & Brooklyn
<i>WorldArch</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i> , London
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i> , Leipzig & Berlin
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> , Leipzig, Wiesbaden & Stuttgart
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i> , Bonn

Jean Winand

## WENAMUN IN ALASIYA\*

Imagination has no source except in reality, and ceases to have any value when it departs from reality. Here is a fundamental principle about the imagination: It does not create except as it transforms.  
(Letter of Wallace Stevens to Hi Simons, 10 August 1940)

THE TEXT OF *Wenamun's Mission*, as this famous text should be preferably titled,<sup>1</sup> ends abruptly. For reasons that remain not completely clear, Wenamun is forced to leave Byblos in a hurry.<sup>2</sup> He lands in a foreign country that looks un-Egyptian: the people there behave very aggressively, trying to kill Wenamun without apparent reason;<sup>3</sup> the country is ruled by a queen, and Wenamun cannot communicate freely in Egyptian as he did previously in Dor and Byblos.<sup>4</sup> In the world of Sinuhe, the lands just across the border of Egypt were exotic, but in Wenamun's time, one had to go as far as Alasiya to feel an alien. With the notable exception of Alessandra Nibbi (followed by C. Vandersleyen),<sup>5</sup> there is a consensus among scholars to equate Alasiya with

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<sup>1</sup> There is no reason to coin a modern title as this is what is actually stated in the opening line: see J. Winand, 'The Opening Line of *Wenamun*', in a *Festschrift* for a distinguished colleague (forthcoming). The text, which is known by a single copy (pMoscow 120: A. H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories*, BiAeg 1, Brussels, pp. xi–xii, 61–76), was found in el Hibeh together with two other literary texts (*A Tale of Woe* and the Golenischeff Onomasticon).

<sup>2</sup> The Tjekers allude to some dispute (*n3j.n iry n tttt*) without entering into the details of the matter (2,72). This brings immediately to mind the affair of the stolen money and how Wenamun found a way to compensate for his loss, apparently following the prince of Dor's advice (1,23–28). However, it remains unexplained why the Tjekers in the first place let Wenamun go with the money: he had not concealed what he planned to do (1,28–32), stressing that he only seized the money as caution. As he apparently was unaccompanied to fulfil his mission, except for the image of Amun-of-the-road (but this is open to discussion, see J. Baines, 'On *Wenamun* as a Literary Text', in J. Assmann & E. Blumenthal (eds), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten. Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener*, 5.–10. September 1996 in Leipzig, BdE 127, Cairo, 1999, p. 228), the absence of reaction from the men of the ship where he confiscated the money is puzzling.

<sup>3</sup> This unexpected reaction from Alasiya's people is reminiscent of the story of Busiris, who used to put to death foreigners landing in Egypt, as was told much later by classical authors, like Isocrates (*Busiris*), Diodorus (IV,18 and 27), and Plutarch (*Parallela minora*, 38).

<sup>4</sup> Whether such business transactions were held in Egyptian or in a sort of Semitic *lingua franca* (Baines, *op. cit.*, p. 228) is an open question. As fictional characters, Wenamun and Zekerbaal are cast as speaking Egyptian, which is also the case in Dor. The famous allusion to the hymn to Ramesses IV by Zekerbaal would not make any sense otherwise. When inquiring in Alasiya if someone understands Egyptian, Wenamun uses the expression *md.t km.t*, which has no parallel in Late Egyptian texts except for an interesting passage in the *Teaching of Ani* (pBoulaq 4, 23,5–6: *md.t rmt n km.t*; cf. A. Mariette-Bey, *Les papyrus égyptiens du musée de Boulaq. Papyrus Nos 1–9*, vol. 1, Paris, 1871), precisely dealing with the teaching of Egyptian to Nubians and Syrians.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. Nibbi, 'Wenamun and the Great Water of Khor (Kharu)', *DE* 51 (2001), pp. 53–71; C. Vandersleyen, *Le Rapport d'Ounamon (vers 1065 avant Jésus-Christ). Analyse d'une mission manquée*, *Connaissance de l'Égypte ancienne* 15, Brussels, 2013.

Cyprus. From a literary perspective, however, the issue is of little consequence. For the plot to unfold, it only mattered that Wenamun's Odyssey did not come to an immediate end.

When addressing the princess, Wenamun first stresses the importance of Maat against evil, in an assertion, not completely devoid of flattery, which states that Alasiya's fame is known as far as Thebes as the sole country where Maat is done. This argument does not move Hatiba, who asks for more precision ('What do you have in mind?'). Wenamun then produces some down-to-earth reasons, explaining how hazardous it would be to kill him and his crew because he would be searched for endlessly, and Tjekerbaal would seek revenge for his lost crew and ship. This last line of reasoning achieves the expected result, as Hatiba summons those who were responsible for the assault on Wenamun.

In this article, which is connected with a larger project for a new edition of the text, I reconsider the Alasiyan episode (2,74–83). I first give the transliteration (1), followed by a translation (2).<sup>6</sup> I then propose a general interpretation of the episode (3) before offering some suggestions for the nature of the text, its *Sitz-im-Leben*, and its *Sitz-in-der-Literatur* (4). It is with an unmitigated pleasure that I present this small tribute to Tamás Bács, an internationally acclaimed expert in Late Ramesside times, who I hope may take some interest in what happened later in Thebes.

### 1. Transliteration

*iw p3 ʔw hw.t.(i) r p3 ʔ n* <sup>(2,75)</sup> *irs*  
*iw n3y-(n) ʔ3 dmj.t pr r.i r hdb.i*  
*iw.i (hr) wš.t.(i) (r)-iwd.w r p3 nty h3tib3* <sup>(2,76)</sup> *ʔ3 wr.t n p3 dmj jm*  
*iw.i (hr) gm.t.s*  
*m-dr pr.s m p3j.s w<sup>c</sup> pr*  
*jw.s m <sup>c</sup>k m p3j.s ky*  
*iw.i (hr)* <sup>(2,77)</sup> *wšd.s*  
*iw.i (hr) dd <n> n3 rmt nty <sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup> (r)-k3r-n.s*  
*“in mn w<sup>c</sup> im.tn*  
*iw.f sdm md.t km.t”*  
*iw w<sup>c</sup>* <sup>(2,78)</sup> *im.w (hr) dd*  
*twj (hr) sdm*  
*iw.i (hr) dd n.s*  
*i.dd n ʔy.i hnw.t*  
*wn.i sdm š3<sup>c</sup> niw.t r p3 nty imn jm r-dd*  
*i.ir.tw* <sup>(2,79)</sup> *grg m dmi.t nb*  
*i.ir.tw m3<sup>c</sup>.t m p3 ʔ n irs3*  
*ist i.ir.tw jr grg r<sup>c</sup> nb dy*  
*iw.s (hr) dd*  
*y3 jh m* <sup>(2,80)</sup> *p3j.k dd.f*  
*iw.i (hr) dd n.s*  
*ir iw p3 ym (hr) knđ*  
*mtw p3 ʔw hw.t.i r p3 ʔ nty twt im.f*  
<sup>(2,81)</sup> *in iw.t (r) di.t šsp.w n-h3.t.i r hdb.i*  
*iw ink wpwti n imn*  
*mk ptr ink iw.tw wh3.i* <sup>(2,82)</sup> *š3<sup>c</sup> h3w nb*

<sup>6</sup> A full philological analysis will be provided in the edition of the text. I limit myself here to points that relate directly to the interpretation of this episode.

ir t3y is.t n p3 wr n kpn nty st wh3 hdb st  
 in bn iw p3j.s nb gm<sup>(2,83)</sup> 10 n is.wt m-di.t  
 mtw:f hdb.w gr mntf  
 iw.s (hr) di.t š.tw n n3 rmt  
 iw.tw (hr) s<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>.w  
 iw.s (hr) dd n.i  
 sdr n.k

## 2. Translation

For lack of space, I cannot enter here into the details of my translation. The main differences from previous translations are briefly discussed in footnotes and in the commentary.<sup>7</sup> The translations are in French and English. The reference translation is the French one; the English one has been added for convenience because the paper is in English. This is the compromise I have found for handling literary texts without losing too many nuances along the way. This concern applies especially to pieces that, like *Wenamun*, were composed by talented authors who had a full mastery of the rhetorical and stylistic tropes of their language.

Le vent me poussa jusqu'au pays d'Alasiya. Les gens de la ville basse<sup>8</sup> firent une sortie contre moi pour me tuer. Je me frayai un chemin parmi eux jusque-là où était Hatiba, la princesse de la cité. Je la rencontrai alors qu'elle sortait de l'une de ses résidences et s'apprêtait à entrer dans l'autre<sup>9</sup>. Je

<sup>7</sup> The following translations have been systematically checked for their understanding of the text: J. A. Wilson, 'The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia', in J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Princeton, New Jersey, 1955, pp. 25–29; M. Korostovtzev, *Путешествие Ун-Амуна в Вавилон*, Moscow, 1960; E. Edel, 'Der Reisebericht des Wn-'mm (um 1076 v. Chr.)', in K. Galling, *Textbuch zur Geschichte Israels*, 2<sup>nd</sup> reworked ed., in Verbindung mit E. Edel und R. Borger, Tübingen, 1968, pp. 41–48; E. Bresciani, *Letteratura e poesia dell'antico Egitto. Cultura e società attraverso i testi*, Turin, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1969; E. F. Wente, 'The Report of *Wenamun*', in W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, and Poetry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New Haven, 1973, pp. 142–155; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. II: *The New Kingdom*, Los Angeles, 1974; H. Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun*, John Hopkins Near Eastern Studies, Baltimore & London, 1975; G. Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens de l'époque pharaonique*, Paris, 1976; J. F. Borghouts, *Egyptische sagen en verhalen*, Bussum, 1979; E. Blumenthal, *Altägyptische Reiseerzählungen. Die Lebensgeschichte des Sinuhe; der Reisebericht des Wenamun*, Reclams Universal-Bibliothek 928, Leipzig, 1982; J. M. Galán, *Four Journeys in Ancient Egyptian Literature*, LingAeg–StudMon 5, Göttingen, 2005; G. Moers, 'Die Reiseerzählung des Wenamun', in E. Blumenthal, F. Junge, F. Kammerzell, A. Loprieno, G. Moers & H. Sternberg-el Hotabi (eds), *Weisheitstexte, Mythen und Epen. Mythen und Epen*, TUAT Vol 3.5, Gütersloh, 1995, pp. 912–921; P. Grandet, *Contes de l'Égypte ancienne*, Paris, 2005; B. Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun. Ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion*, OBO 209, Fribourg & Göttingen, 2005; E. A. Knauf & H. M. Niemann, *Geschichte Israels und Judas im Altertum*, De Gruyter Studium, Berlin & Boston, 2021; M. Panov, *Литературные и историко-биографические надписи позднего периода*, Египетские тексты 20, Novosibirsk, 2023; L. Popko with contributions by *Altägyptisches Wörterbuch*, J. Jancziak, B. Böhm, S. D. Schweitzer, P. Dils & A. Weber, Sentences of text 'Recto. Die Reise des Wenamun', in *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, n.d. (<https://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/OTPassport?u=guest&f=0&l=0&oc=757&db=0>; accessed 10/14/2023); P. Vernus, 'Choix de textes pour illustrer le temps des rois tanites et libyens', in J. Yoyotte (ed.), *Tanis. L'or des pharaons*, Paris, 1987, pp. 102–111; and A. Loprieno, *Topos und Mimesis. Zum Ausländer in der ägyptischen Literatur*, ÄA 48, Wiesbaden, 1988, the latter two of whom give only parts of the text, but do not include the Alasyian episode.

<sup>8</sup> The translation 'ville basse' is an attempt to capture the difference between *p3* and *t3 dmi.t* in the text.

<sup>9</sup> The passage has almost unanimously been translated 'from one of her houses to enter another' (as if it were *w<sup>c</sup> m n3j.s pr.w*), implying that Hatiba owned many houses, which is of course impossible to check and irrelevant from a literary point of view. Actually, the combination possessive article + *w<sup>c</sup>* ... possessive article + *ky* always opposes the two parts of a natural pair: two sides (pAnastasi 1, 24,3–4; cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts. Transcribed, Translated and Annotated*, Leipzig, 1911), two horns (*Truth & Falsehood*, 9,3; cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift*, HPBM 3, vol. 1,

l'apostrophai, puis je dis aux gens qui se tenaient près d'elle : « N'y a-t-il personne parmi vous qui entende un mot d'égyptien ? », et l'un d'entre eux dit : « Je l'entends ». Et je lui dis : « Dis à Madame que j'avais toujours entendu dire jusqu'à Ne, là où Amon se trouve, que, dans toutes les villes, on commettrait l'injustice, mais que dans le pays d'Alashya, en revanche, on pratiquerait la justice. Ce n'est tout de même pas ici qu'on commet l'injustice chaque jour ? »<sup>10</sup> Alors, elle dit : « Qu'est-ce que tu as dans la tête en me disant cela ? »<sup>11</sup> Et je lui dis : « Supposons<sup>12</sup> que la mer se déchaîne et que le vent me chasse vers le pays où tu te trouves, est-ce que tu vas me faire tuer en guise d'accueil, alors que je suis un envoyé d'Amon ? Réfléchis, moi, on va me rechercher jusqu'à la fin des temps. Quant à l'équipage du prince de Byblos qu'on cherche à massacrer, est-ce que son seigneur ne trouvera pas dix équipages t'appartenant pour les massacrer, lui aussi ? » Alors, elle fit convoquer les gens et on les tança, puis elle me dit : « Calme-toi ! »<sup>13</sup>. (*la suite manque*)

'And the wind drove me to the land of Alasiya. Then the lower town's people came out against me to kill me. I forced my way through them to the place where Hatiba, the princess of the town, was. I met her as she was going out of one of her houses and about to enter her other one. I addressed her and said to the people who stood around her: "Is there not one among you who understands Egyptian?" And one of them said: "I understand it." So I said to him: "Tell my lady that I kept hearing, as far away as Thebes, the place where Amon is, that injustice would be done in every town but justice would be done in the land of Alasiya. But is it not the case that injustice is done here every day?" And she said: "What do you mean by saying so?" And I told her: "Let's assume that the sea rages and the wind drives me to the land where you are, will you let them welcome me with killing me, while I am a messenger of Amon? Look here, as for me, they will search for me until the end of time! As to this crew of the Prince of Byblos whom they seek to kill, will not their lord find ten crews of yours and kill them also?" Then she had the people summoned and they were admonished. And she said to me: "Cool down!"

London, 1935), two shoulders (pBM EA 10052, r° 6,11, cf. KRI VI, p. 782.13). On this passage in relation to another well-known description in the *Eloquent Peasant*, see below.

<sup>10</sup> The difference between *i.ir.tw* and *i.ir.tw jr* is one of modality (a nuance that has not been taken into account by previous translators); Wenamun opposes what he knows by hearsay to what he says to be the reality as he could directly observe by himself.

<sup>11</sup> The text bears *y3 jh m p3j.k dd.f*, with a prepositional phrase (cf. pTurin 1981, r° 8, for *y3 jh p3j.k dd*: E. F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, WAW 1, Atlanta, 1990, n° 165; cf. pAnastasi IV, 9,4: Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts*). The meaning is thus not 'what is it that you say?', but rather '(lit.) what does that mean, by your saying that?', i.e. 'what do you have in mind by saying so?', a nuance well perceived by Wilson (*The Journey of Wen-Amon*, p. 29) and Korostovtzev (*Путешествие Уи-Амуна*, p. 19), but largely ignored afterwards, except for Moers ('Die Reiseerzählung des Wenamun', p. 921) and Panov (*Надписи позднего периода*, p. 387).

<sup>12</sup> The translations are divided in how they understand the protasis (implicative conditional or counterfactual conditional sentence). In Late Egyptian, when the if-clause has the pattern *ir + iw + present I*, the condition is presented as objective ('let's assume that x'), and the then-clause considers what will happen next, here in the future ('you will do y'). The interrogative marker *in* suggests that the expected answer is no ('will you really do y'). See M. Collier, 'Conditionals in Late Egyptian', in E. Grossman, M. Haspelmath & S. Richter (eds), *Egyptian-Coptic Linguistics in Typological Perspective*, EALT 55, Berlin, Munich & Boston, 2015, p. 162, ex. 6.

<sup>13</sup> On the last sentence, see below.

### 3. General interpretation of the Alasiyan episode

Taken at face value, the short narrative of the Alasiyan episode presented above has almost a picaresque tone. It could of course be received as such by a naïve audience. But when one looks a bit closer, the episode turns out to be replete with allusions that set it in perspective with other parts of the text, as well as with other pieces of Egyptian literature. When dealing with works of literature—and *Wenamun's Mission* is one of Egypt's finest—the safest approach is always to take the author very seriously. I consider that the text was written by an exceptional artist who, with utmost mastery, chose his words very carefully, and succeeded wonderfully in arranging the threads of his tapestry to subtly convey his message.

When he manages to meet the princess, Wenamun quite unexpectedly gives a short description of the activity in which she is engaged (2,76): Hatiba was leaving one of her houses and about to enter the other one. This is the second time Wenamun describes the surroundings of one of his meetings. The first time was in Byblos, when he was introduced in Zekerbaal's office.<sup>14</sup> Wenamun then noted how the waves of the sea looked as if they were striking the prince's head from the back (1,48–50).<sup>15</sup> As already pointed out,<sup>16</sup> the princess's activity unmistakably evokes the first meeting between the peasant and the high steward Meru, son of Rensi:

Ex. 1:

*gm.n.f sw m pr.t m sb3 n pr.f m h3.t r k̄k.f n ʕrry.t*

'He found him as he went out of the porch of his house and was about to go down to board his official barge'. (*Peas. R* 12, 7–8)

For intertextuality to work,<sup>17</sup> the reference must of course be evident for at least some of the audience,<sup>18</sup> but it has also to be meaningful. The last point is important as it shows that the author's intention went far beyond

<sup>14</sup> It is probably no coincidence that the word used to designate Zekerbaal's place, ʕrry.t, is associated in the Onomasicon Golenisheff to *h3j.t*, which is part of Wenamun's title (Winand, 'The opening line of *Wenamun*').

<sup>15</sup> This has always been interpreted as a rare piece of a picturesque description, which is doubtful. It seems rather to demonstrate the power of Zekerbaal over the sea, as emphasized later by his advice to Wenamun (2,49–50) 'Do not come to contemplate the terror of the sea! As soon as you contemplate the terror of the sea, you shall contemplate mine as well'. More importantly, the verb *hwi* 'to hit' which is used in 1,49 (*iw i.ir n3 hmw n p3 ym ʕ3 n h3rw hwi r mkh3.f*) subliminally foretells the final episode in 2,74–75: *iw p3 t3w hw.t(i) r p3 t3 n irs3*. Far from being a dispensable, anecdotal description, the mention of the beating waves reminds the audience that Wenamun remains subject to the power of the sea (see J. Winand, *Wenamun's Mission* (provisory title), in preparation).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. J. Winand, 'The Report of *Wenamun*. A Journey in Ancient Egyptian Literature', in M. Collier & S. Snape (eds), *Ramesseid Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen*, Bolton, 2011, p. 554.

<sup>17</sup> For intertextuality as a key element in defining literature, see A. Loprieno, 'Defining Ancient Egyptian Literature. Ancient Texts and Modern Theories', in A. Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature. History and Forms*, PdÄ 10, Leiden, New York & Cologne, 1996, pp. 39–58; G. Moers, 'Fiktionalität und Intertextualität als Parameter ägyptologischer Literaturwissenschaft. Perspektiven und Grenzen der Anwendung zeitgenössischer Literaturtheorie', in J. Assmann & E. Blumenthal (eds), *Literatur und Politik in pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten. Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener, 5.–10. September 1996 in Leipzig*, BdE 127, Cairo, 1999, pp. 37–50; idem, *Fingierte Welten in den ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität*, PdÄ 19, Leiden, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> The later reception of the *Eloquent Peasant's* story remains largely in the dark. The text is not mentioned in Jasnow's survey of the traces left by classical literature in Demotic (R. Jasnow, 'Remarks on Continuity in Egyptian Literary Tradition', in E. Teeter & J. A. Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise. Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*, SAOC 58, Chicago, 1999, pp. 193–210). Nor does it seem to have survived in the text corpus of the community of Deir el-Medineh. These gaps, however, are insufficient to prove that it had fallen into oblivion. The *Shipwrecked Sailor*, for instance, which is known from a single witness (pPetersburg 1115; W. Golénisheff, *Les papyrus hiératiques No.No.* [sic] 1115, 1116 A et 1116 B de l'Ermitage Impérial à St. Pétersbourg, St Petersburg, 1913), left a fortuitous trace in the ostrakon of Menna (H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, 'Literature as a Mirror of Private Affairs. The Case of Menna and his Son Mery-Sekhmet', in A. Dorn & T. Hofmann (eds), *Living and Writing in Deir el-Medine. Socio-historical Embodiment of Deir el-Medine Texts*,

a superficial stylistic ornamentation. There are indeed some parallels between both tales. The peasant was stolen and beaten; Wenamun nearly escaped a violent death. They both apply for justice to their tormenters' superiors, the high steward and the princess respectively. The peasant makes his case by discussing in detail the properties and qualities of Maat, and the duties of those in charge of defending and applying it. In comparison, Wenamun's speech, while being much more circumscribed, also focusses on the duality of *mꜣ.t* and *grg*. In both cases, the recipient of the discourse is not ready to concede quickly. The high steward remains silent, and Hatiba says she does not understand what this is all about (*yꜣ jḥ m pꜣj.k dd.f*). In the end, however, the peasant is vindicated and Wenamun's right seems to be acknowledged in some way as the princess summons those who attempted to take his life.

The Alasiyan episode depicts a country where everything seems to be upside down by Egyptian standards. As already stressed, the country is ruled by a woman, which is contrary to the official Egyptian royal ideology.<sup>19</sup> This is all the stranger as there is no indication in the surviving sources that Cyprus (if Alasiya must be equated with this island) had ever a female ruler at its helm.<sup>20</sup> But there is more. Wenamun immediately discusses highly important matters: justice and injustice. He is surprised that injustice would be done every day in Alasiya since it is well known as far as Thebes that justice is done in Alasiya while injustice is done everywhere else. Such a statement is curious in the mouth of an Egyptian, for *mꜣ.t* is the very founding principle of the Egyptian society. If taken literally, Wenamun's declaration implies that injustice is regularly done in Egypt, in the place where Amun is. One wonders what impact this could possibly have had on the Egyptian audience: some might be sincerely shocked (the naïve ones); others probably rather had a good laugh. Hatiba's reaction ('What do you have in mind?') is extremely short and ambiguous. She can of course simply be showing her embarrassment. Some of her people behaved aggressively toward a foreigner who had just landed, creating some turmoil, and the first thing she heard from Wenamun is a metaphysical lecture on the eternal struggle between justice and evil. She obviously could not understand what was going on. From a literary perspective, her reaction must be related to Bader's and Zekerbaal's. For the third time indeed, Wenamun faces misunderstanding. After being robbed in Dor, Wenamun immediately reported to Bader, the prince of the city. He did so without any greetings, making his arguments known quite aggressively. The prince's reply shows how deeply he resented what he thought — rightly — to be a lack of respect and consideration:<sup>21</sup>

**Ex. 2:**

(i)n *dns.k* (i)n *mnḥ.k*

*ḥr ptr bw ir.i* <sup>(1,18)</sup> *ꜣm n tꜣy wšb.t i.dd.k n.i*

« Vas-tu te comporter lourdement ? (ou) vas-tu te montrer raisonnable ? Je ne comprends rien à cette requête que tu viens de me dire. »

AegHelv 19, Basel, 2006, pp. 87–92), and it is alluded to once later, in the *Triumph Stela of Piye* (Jasnow, *op. cit.*, p. 200). Of course, pieces of literature sometimes survive only for one or two sentences that acquired a proverbial character over time. Think for instance of the famous 'To be or not to be'. Everyone probably has heard of it. But not everyone knows it is from Shakespeare; a smaller segment of this second group knows it is taken from *Hamlet*, and a still narrower group has actually read *Hamlet*!

<sup>19</sup> Egypt occasionally experienced female rule, which left mitigated traces in the collective mind.

<sup>20</sup> See already Baines ('On *Wenamun* as a Literary Text', p. 226), who rightly sees Hatiba as a fictitious character. In this seminal article, Baines suggests that Wenamun is able to evoke positive responses in women, which contrasts with men's reactions. This can however be ascertained only for Tenetamun. For Tenetne was sent on duty to bring some solace to Wenamun. The text says nothing of what she felt about Wenamun. As regards Hatiba, her reactions are limited to controlling her people, probably relying more on her analysis of possible damaging consequences for her land than motivated by any genuine sympathy for Wenamun. Once more, the text is not very explicit. Hatiba's speech is limited to two short statements ('What do you in mind?' and 'Keep quiet!') that are not shining examples of a natural empathy.

<sup>21</sup> For the meaning of *dns* and *mnḥ* here, see Winand (*The Report of Wenamun*, pp. 556–557).

“Will you act stupidly, or will you show some sense? I know nothing about the request you just made to me”. (1,17–18)

When in Byblos, Wenamun first had a hard time to be taken seriously. He had no resources to pay for the logs, no gifts for Zekerbaal, and he had left his credentials with Smendes in Egypt. Zekerbaal then sarcastically lectures Wenamun first on royal ideology (2,10–19), then on theology (2,19–2,22), concluding the latter speech by a rhetorical question:

Ex. 3:

*ih n3 mšc swg i.di.w iry.k*

« C’est quoi ces stupides démarches qu’on t’a fait entreprendre ? » (2,22)<sup>22</sup>

“What are these foolish errands they made you undertake?”

Interestingly enough, Zekerbaal’s second lecture sharply contrasts with Wenamun’s statement on *m3c.t* and *grg* before Hatiba:

Ex. 4:

*hr i.ir imn<sup>(2,20)</sup> grg n n3 t3.w dr.w*

*i.ir.f grg.w*

*iw grg.f p3 t3 n km.t p3 iw.k nim hr<sup>(2,21)</sup> h3.t*

*hr i.ir mnh.t pr im.f r ph r p3 nty twi im*

*hr i.ir sb3 pr<sup>(2,22)</sup> nim.f r ph r p3 nty twi im*

« Car Amon a fondé tous les pays absolument<sup>23</sup>, mais il les a fondés après avoir fondé auparavant la terre d’Égypte dont tu proviens. Alors l’intelligence en est sortie pour atteindre l’endroit où je suis, et la sagesse en est sortie pour atteindre l’endroit où je suis. » (2,19–22)

“Indeed, Amun founded all lands without exception, but he founded them after having beforehand founded the land of Egypt from which you have come. And cleverness has come from it to reach the place where I am, and wisdom has come from it to reach the place where I am”.

Zekerbaal’s statement is apparently in complete agreement with what was common knowledge in Egypt: everything wise and clever comes from Egypt. But he also ironically suggests that *mnh.t* and *sb3* left Egypt for the place where he is,<sup>24</sup> which explains why Wenamun has been led into a foolish (*swg*) mission. The use of *mnh.t* subtly links Zekerbaal’s speech with Bader’s when the latter questioned Wenamun’s sanity (*in mnh.k*, see above, Ex. 2). Wenamun’s suggestion that *m3c.t* would have its abode *par excellence* in Alasiya (thus pursuing Zekerbaal’s line of reasoning) rather than in Egypt could not but sound completely incongruous to an Egyptian’s ear.

It is appropriate to note here how differently Wenamun behaves as he moves further away from Egypt, as he gradually passes from a place where Egypt’s power could still be felt strongly (Dor) to Alasiya, which was at the

<sup>22</sup> Goedicke translates (*The Report of Wenamun*, p. 84, with note bs) “what is this unsupported travel which you are caused to make?”. He suggests to analyze the sentence as *ih n3* ‘what is this?’ with *mšc swg i.di.w iry.k* in apposition, which has no parallel in Late Egyptian syntax. The use of the plural with *mšc* with the meaning ‘errand’ is well attested. An interesting parallel to our passage is the question asked to Apopi’s messenger, which marks Seqenenre’s surprise: *ph.k wi <m> n3j mšc.w hr ih* (LES 87,9). Cf. LRL 49,1-2: *hr bwpw.f ir n3 mšc* (𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒), same spelling as in *Wenamun*) *nty sw im.w n*. Moreover, Zekerbaal uses the same word when later addressing the Tjekers: *ih n3j.tn mšc.w* (2,71), which settles the grammatical question unequivocally. As for the adjective *swg3*, it is used in contrast to teaching, wisdom (*sb3j.t*), to which Zekerbaal referred specifically in his previous sentence.

<sup>23</sup> I add ‘absolutely’ in the translation deliberately to mark the stress on (*r*)-*dr.w*. On the construction, see E. Grossman, ‘Protatic *iir=f sdm* in the Report of Wenamun. A “Proto-Demotic” Feature?’, *GM* 215 (2007), pp. 49–55.

<sup>24</sup> I am not sure of the sense of *pri* here. Does it mean ‘to come from’ or ‘to leave’, which implies that wisdom is no longer in Egypt. Zekerbaal is probably playing deliberately with the ambiguity.

periphery of Egypt's influence. In Dor, Wenamun could still show some arrogance; in Byblos, he was compelled to play by the rules of the local prince, and in Alasiya he resorted to a little dubious flattery to save his life.

The second line of Wenamun's reasoning appeals to Hatiba's sense of responsibility, to her political instincts. If Wenamun and Zekerbaal's crew are killed, there will be immediate reprisal. As regards the crew, Wenamun promises that Zekerbaal will seek revenge by killing ten times more Alasiyan crews. But for himself, he does not venture to say that Smendes or anyone in Egypt will try to kill Alasiyan people. He only states that he will be endlessly searched for (2,81–82). Such a statement contrasts with that of Zekerbaal, who overtly doubted that Wenamun's fate would trigger much reaction from the Egyptian side:

**Ex. 5:**

*in i.ir.f hn.k n p3y hry-mnš drdr r di.t hdb.f<sup>(1,56)</sup> tw*

*mtw.w h3<sup>c</sup>.k r p3 ym*

*wn i.ir.w<sup>(1,57)</sup> wh3 p3 ntr m-di nim*

*mntk m-r-<sup>c</sup> i.ir.w wh3.k m-di nim m-r-<sup>c</sup>*

« Ne t'a-t-il pas plutôt confié à ce capitaine barbare<sup>25</sup> pour qu'il te tue et qu'on te jette à la mer ? Chez qui aurait-on alors cherché le dieu ? Et toi aussi, chez qui aurait-on été te rechercher aussi ? » (1,55–57)

“Did he not entrust you to this barbarian ship's captain in order to have him kill you and have them throw you into the sea? From whom would one then seek the god? And you, from whom would one seek you?”

As was the case with Wenamun's opening statement, this is a complete reversal in the positions of Wenamun and his/her interlocutor. Hatiba reacts quickly by summoning the people responsible for the attack. Her intention is apparently to take some legal or administrative action, as is implied by the verb *s<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>*.<sup>26</sup> She then turns to Wenamun and says *sdr n.k*. This final sentence of the surviving text has been understood in many ways. Here is a large sample of translations.

‘Leg dich schlafen!’<sup>27</sup>

‘Spend the night ...’<sup>28</sup>

‘Ложись (отдыхать) ...’<sup>29</sup>

‘Coricati [...]’<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Zekerbaal probably plays with the dual sense of *drdr* (‘foreign’ vs. ‘barbarian’), being himself a *drdr* in the eyes of Wenamun and his audience; see Winand, *Wenamun's Mission*, for a detailed analysis.

<sup>26</sup> In judicial contexts, *s<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>* can have different meanings according to the argument structure of a sentence. When followed by a direct object, it can mean either ‘to denounce a fault’ or ‘to denounce someone’ (the latter one being used countless times in the Great Tomb Robberies papyri). The pattern *s<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup> X r Y* ‘to reproach someone’ is occasionally attested (e.g., KRI II, p. 231.12). The verb can also take on a softer meaning ‘to make a reprimand, a reproach’ (pBM EA 75016, r<sup>o</sup> 7: *iw.k (hr) s<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup> p3y <sup>c</sup>dd šri* ‘and you will reprimand this young lad’: cf. R. J. Demarée, *The Bankes Late Ramesside Papyri*, BMRP 155, London, 2006, p. 9), which could well be the case here.

<sup>27</sup> F. Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache neuägyptischen Erzählungen*, VIO 2, 6, Berlin, 1950–1952, p. 90; Edel, ‘Der Reisebericht des Wn-‘mn’, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, ‘The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia’, p. 29; Wente, ‘The Report of Wenamun’, p. 155; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. II, p. 229; R. K. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy. Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period*, WAW 21, Atlanta, 2009, p. 98.

<sup>29</sup> Korostovtzev, *Путешествие Ун-Амуна*, p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> Bresciani, *Letteratura e poesia*, p. 515.

- ‘Be at rest! ...’<sup>31</sup>  
 ‘Va dormir [en paix ...]’<sup>32</sup>  
 ‘Leg u maar te ruste’.<sup>33</sup>  
 ‘Ruh dich aus!’<sup>34</sup>  
 ‘Leb wohl!’<sup>35</sup>  
 ‘Stay for the night!’<sup>36</sup>  
 ‘Sleep ...’<sup>37</sup>  
 ‘Repose-toi donc !’<sup>38</sup>  
 ‘Leg dich hin ...’<sup>39</sup>  
 ‘Проведи ночь <...>’<sup>40</sup>

These translations can be sorted into two main groups. In the first, much larger one, *sdr* has been understood etymologically as ‘to lie down’, hence ‘to sleep’ or ‘to spend the night’, and occasionally ‘to take some rest’. A second option was suggested by F. Haller, followed by E. Graefe.<sup>41</sup> In a short note, the former understood the final words *sdr n.k* as a farewell formula ‘*Leb wohl!*’. Three years later, the latter concurred with Haller’s suggestion that *sdr n.k* are the tale’s final words, with a slight variation in interpretation, suggesting that  $\text{𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛}$  is a non-etymological spelling for *sdr* ‘to protect’. Graefe concludes his note by stating that this ‘*gibt diesem Text ein „normales“ Ende*’. This interpretation has not been followed by scholars in later editions or translations of the text. There is indeed no compelling reason to do so. It seems that a passage in the *Teaching of Amenemope* that can shed an interesting light on possible interpretations has so far escaped attention. Chapter 3 of *Amenemope* includes a discussion of how to behave when speaking with an opponent.

**Ex. 6:**

*m ir nḥb tttt irm p3 r3-t3*  
*mtw.k dbdb.f n mdw.t*  
*wsf r-h3.t rḳw*  
*ḥ3b tw n th3*  
*sdr ḥ3.t md.t*

‘Don’t start a quarrel with a hot-mouthed man, / Nor needle him with words. / Pause before a foe, bend before an attacker, / Sleep (on it) before speaking’. (pBM EA 10474, 5,10–13)<sup>42</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun*, p. 126.

<sup>32</sup> Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens*, p. 220.

<sup>33</sup> Borghouts, *Egyptische sagen en verhalen*, p. 124.

<sup>34</sup> Blumenthal, *Altägyptische Reiseerzählungen*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>35</sup> F. Haller, ‘Miszelle. Widerlegung der allgemeinen Annahme, der Bericht des Wenamun (Papyrus Moskau, nr. 120) breche gegen Ende unvermittelt ab und der Schluss sei verloren’, *GM* 173 (1999), p. 9; E. Graefe, ‘Die letzte Zeile des „Wenamun“ und *sdr*  $\text{𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛}$  „stark“, *sdr* „sichern“  $\text{𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛}$ ’, *GM* 188 (2002), pp. 73–75.

<sup>36</sup> Baines, ‘On *Wenamun* as a Literary Text’, p. 225.

<sup>37</sup> Galán, *Four Journeys*, p. 153.

<sup>38</sup> Grandet, *Contes de l’Égypte ancienne*, pp. 151–152.

<sup>39</sup> Moers, ‘Die Reiseerzählung des Wenamun’, p. 921; Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun*, p. 110; Popko, *Die Reise des Wenamun*.

<sup>40</sup> Panov, *Надписи позднего периода*, p. 387.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Haller, *op. cit.*; Graefe, *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Transl. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. II, p. 150.

It is unlikely that *sdr* really means here ‘to spend the night’, but rather ‘to relax, to cool down’ in some metaphorical way. The use of *sdr* in Chapter 13 in the same text might provide the missing link between the etymological meaning and the metaphorical one. The discussion is about how an official should treat people, especially as regards taxation. It is suggested that one should not claim the maximal amount of taxation if the fiscal pressure is too high. The official is enjoined rather to take only a third of what is due (happy times!). The text then concludes:

Ex. 7:

*gm.k sw <m> mi.t n ʿnh*

*sdr.k swḥ3 twk*

<ir> *mj dw3w gm.k sw mi smi nfr*

‘You will find it a path of life, you should calm down, spend the night, and the following day you will find it to be a good decision’. (pBM 10474, 16,8–10)<sup>43</sup>

One could of course translate *sdr* ‘to spend the night’ without making a huge misinterpretation, but this would create some redundancy with the following *swḥ3 twk*. In *Amenemope*, the verb is written in both cases as in *Wenamun’s Mission* (𓏏𓏏𓏏𓏏𓏏𓏏). From the standard meaning ‘to lie down’, ‘to sleep’, *sdr* occasionally took a derived sense, the absence of activity, hence ‘to be cool’, ‘to calm down’.<sup>44</sup> As suggested by the two passages quoted above, Hatiba invites Wenamun to take it easy and relax.<sup>45</sup> She in fact with her own words denounces Wenamun’s behaviour as unbalanced and excessive,<sup>46</sup> which is completely in line with the reproaches already expressed by Bader in Dor and Zekerbaal in Byblos.

#### 4. Enlarging the picture

Even if it is frustrating to keep some distance from using *Wenamun’s Mission* for reconstructing Egyptian history at the beginning of the Twenty-first Dynasty,<sup>47</sup> one must accept it as the only safe attitude from an epistemological viewpoint. Nothing in the text supports the claim that the text was an administrative report. As will be discussed in detail elsewhere, treating *Wenamun’s Mission* as an administrative report triggers a chain of related questions that will be left hopelessly unanswered.

<sup>43</sup> The passage is not without philological problems (see Dils’s comment in sentences of text ‘pBM EA 10474’, in *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, n. d. (<https://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/OTPassport?u=guest&f=0&l=0&oc=1167&db=0>; accessed 10/14/2023)). I here suggest to understand, without correction, *swḥ3 twk* as an imperative followed by the object pronoun. The restoration of *ir* before *mj dw3w* is supported by parallels in the same text (20,16 and 26,4).

<sup>44</sup> By contrast, the verb ʿḥ ‘to stand up’ can express activity as opposed to *ḥmsi* and *sdr*.

<sup>45</sup> Another possibility would be to take it as slang with the meaning ‘shut up!’ (cf. French ‘écrase!’), or ‘to throw in the towel’ (cf. French ‘couche-toi!’; lit. ‘lie down!’), but this would be a drastic shift in textual register.

<sup>46</sup> According to the legal practices of the Levant, it is unlikely that one could claim a compensation worth ten times the value of what has been lost.

<sup>47</sup> Recently see A. Dodson, *Afterglow of an Empire. Egypt from the Fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite Renaissance*, Cairo & New York, 2012, pp. 57–60; S. Gregory, *Herihor in Art and Iconography. Kingship and the Gods in the Ritual Landscape of Late New Kingdom Thebes*, London, 2014, pp. 68–71; and F. Payraudeau, *L’Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, tome III: *Les époques tardives (1069–332 av. J.-C.)*, Paris, 2020. Vandersleyen’s opinion (*Le Rapport d’Ounamon*, p. 16) (« J’imagine, sans preuve évidemment, que ce document (i.e. pMoscow 120–JW) a été retrouvé dans la maison privée d’Ounamon, en même temps que l’Onomasticon Golénischeff et qu’une lettre (...). Le rapport très sérieux d’Ounamon, mais abandonné au milieu de la rédaction, « un dictionnaire » très complet, l’Onomasticon, et un texte pouvant correspondre aux sentiments de l’auteur après l’échec de sa mission. Car le fait qu’il ait arrêté d’écrire son Rapport au milieu d’une phrase alors que la feuille de papyrus était encore en partie vide, disponible donc, est l’indice d’une « volonté d’en rester là », d’un « à quoi bon » découragé.) goes furthest in its unsupported romantic vision of Egyptian history.

The core of the tale is a discontinuous dialogue between Wenamun, as the prototypical herald of the theocracy that was ruling Thebes at the time, and an alternative voice, the author's, who chose to express his ideas through his main characters. Why the author did this in a disguised way remains unknown but can be easily guessed at, especially if he resided in Thebes.<sup>48</sup>

There is ample evidence to convincingly argue that the text was structured in a masterly fashion by an author different from the 'I' character (i.e. Wenamun). The three main episodes in Dor, Byblos, and (partly) Alasiya, are interlinked in many ways, attesting to the internal coherence of the composition, as I argue in this paper. This pattern requires that there be one omniscient author who was in charge of orchestrating the drama.<sup>49</sup> To take only one example, it is indeed wonderful how the foreign characters easily master some arcane aspects of Egyptian literature. For instance, Zekerbaal completely overturns the scope of a hymn to Ramses IV to his own benefit,<sup>50</sup> while Hatiba, who does not speak Egyptian, is sufficiently aware of Egyptian culture to suggest to her guest that he does not behave as taught in a late New Kingdom wisdom text (i.e. the *Wisdom of Amenemope*). These details strongly suggest that under the disguise of being staged abroad, the tale is dealing with Egyptian matters, in an Egyptian way, for an Egyptian audience, as is of course the case with other pieces of literature like *Sinuhe* and the *Shipwrecked Sailor*.

The expedition to fetch the timber was thus only a pretext framing the author's intention, an astute and convoluted means for criticizing the overactivity of Amun's priesthood in every aspect of social and political life. The aim of the text was not of course — and could not be — anti-Amun. The target was rather the pervasive political influence of the priests. As already hinted at, there was nothing shocking in the discourse of Zekerbaal for an Egyptian audience. The ruler of Byblos freely acknowledges — even if only rhetorically — the theological supremacy of Amun.<sup>51</sup> He rather focuses his remarks on Wenamun's misbehaviour and on his claims to transform a commercial transaction into a theologically driven act of suzerainty. Even in the heyday of the Egyptian Empire, kings 'paid' for the timber,<sup>52</sup> as Zekerbaal was easily able to prove by showing his books. The business discussions with Wenamun are thus not illustrative of the declining power of Egypt, even if there was indisputably a decline of its influence in the Levant, but this was not the topic the author wanted to present.<sup>53</sup>

As can be exemplified from countless cultures, the author chose literature as a medium to criticize how the priests of Amun were handling state business. He did it by telling a story that in a very subtle way hints that a mission under the auspices of the high priest of Amun could sometimes turn out to be a hazardous business. If one takes the text seriously, there are several elements showing some reprehensible carelessness on the part of

<sup>48</sup> Literature — like irony, humour, and caricature — has always been a channel for expressing one's ideas, especially if they voice some criticism of the legal power. The papyrus was discovered in el-Hibeh, together with two other texts that are somewhat related (see Winand, *Wenamun's Mission*, for details). As pMoscow 120 is a copy, one has no idea where the text was composed — Thebes, el-Hibeh, or somewhere else.

<sup>49</sup> As already observed (e.g. Baines, 'On *Wenamun* as a Literary Text', pp. 217–218), there are scenes that Wenamun had no chance to witness personally, like the episode with the ecstatic (1,38–39) and the meeting of Zekerbaal with his people during a *mw'd*-assembly (2,71).

<sup>50</sup> See J. Winand, 'Derechef *Ounamon* 2,13–14', *GM* 139 (1994), pp. 95–108.

<sup>51</sup> See also Zekerbaal's reaction to his cupbearer suggesting that the prince's umbrella is Pharaoh's shadow.

<sup>52</sup> There was at least a form of compensation — the famous royal gifts (*βy mlk*) alluded to by Zekerbaal — whose importance probably only approximately matched the value of what was delivered in exchange.

<sup>53</sup> This is the more unlikely as in Egypt there was a well-known textual genre for depicting the misery of the land (*Admonitions*, *Lamentations*, etc). They, however, usually end with a solution, which at the political level is the promise of a new and successful leader (prophecy *post eventum*). There is nothing of the like in our text, at least in what is preserved in the existing copy.

Wenamun, but also pointing to bad luck, which is unexpected for a mission approved by the god and guided by Amun's lieutenant, Amun-of-the-road.<sup>54</sup>

Is it going too far to suggest that the unintended landing of Wenamun in Alasiya is a challenging metaphorical expression of the uncontrolled movements of the oracular bark?<sup>55</sup> The expedition was undoubtedly sanctioned by an oracular decree of Amun. When faced with the request (*wḥꜣ*) from the god, Smendes and Tanutamun obligingly said *iri.n zp 2*, which is the expected formula for acquiescing to the god's will. In the Twenty-first Dynasty, state problems were normally settled by oracular audiences that were tightly controlled by the clergy of Amun-Re.<sup>56</sup> In an insightful study, Eyre suggested that the text might be the manifestation of some rivalry between the higher and the lower clergy of the Amun temple, the former having the symbolic prestige and economic power, while the latter had the more concrete and substantive control of the oracular bark.<sup>57</sup> Tempting though this may be, there is nothing tangible in the text to support this. I am rather skeptical of setting the tale within the microcosm of the temple of Amun. If that had been the case, the issues would probably have remained cryptic to a general audience. I thus prefer to situate the text in a broader perspective. Even if there were some tensions between the different layers of the clergy,<sup>58</sup> they were unanimous in subordinating private and state affairs to the sanction of the god, which was key to maintaining the temple's supremacy and financial revenues. I would thus rather suggest that the real issue was how to reconcile Amun-Re as the respected supreme god (this was not an issue) and the royal power which was consolidating itself in the Delta. In modern terms, this could be rephrased as the eternal struggle between the temporal and the spiritual power.<sup>59</sup>

Scholarship very early pointed out that there are objective elements showing that there was an expedition to acquire timber for the new bark of Amun under Herihor's pontificate, and that the expedition succeeded,

<sup>54</sup> A detailed list cannot be given here. Here are a few points: Wenamun did not carry with him the resources to pay for the timber (when in Byblos, he never says as an excuse that he was robbed; moreover, he managed to get back as a caution the amount of financial resources that had been stolen), he left his credentials with Smendes, he seemingly travels alone (except for the statue of Amun-of-the road), which is curious for an important mission like this, and he behaves very arrogantly. He of course suffered bad luck, being robbed of his travel resources, and being pushed by the wind to Alasiya where he had to face an aggressive mob. Some other details are worth considering, such as the mess with the chronology, which could be suggestive of a misconceived organization, or the name of the ship captain, Mengebet, which ironically sounded like *mn-gbi.t* to an Egyptian ear, that is 'There is no problem', captain Mafish-mushkila. See already Winand, *The Report of Wenamun*.

<sup>55</sup> Moers observes (*Fingierte Welten*, pp. 267–268) that the most serious problems faced by Wenamun massively occur when at sea or at least on a ship, also pointing out the role played by chance in the successive, sometimes unpredictable developments of the plot. He also (*op. cit.*, p. 272) stresses the role of nautical elements (ships and sea) within a net of metaphorical relations (Amun-of-the-road and Wenamun are embarked on the same boat, and a possible allusion to Amun as the one who saves the shipwrecked), without connecting the bark to the oracular procedures.

<sup>56</sup> See, for instance, other contemporary cases such as the decrees for Djehutymose (J.-M. Kruchten, *Le grand texte oraculaire de Djéhoutymose, intendant du domaine d'Amon sous le pontificat de Pinédjem II.*, MRE 5, Brussels, 1986), for Henuttaui and Maatkara (J. Winand, 'Les décrets oraculaires pris en l'honneur d'Hénouttaouy et de Maatkarê (X<sup>e</sup> et VII<sup>e</sup> pylônes)', *CahKarn* 11 (2003), pp. 603–710), the Banishment stela (J. von Beckerath, 'Die „Stele der Verbannten“ im Museum des Louvre', *RdE* 20 (1968), pp. 7–36), down to the Twenty-second Dynasty decree of Osorkon (R. A. Caminos, *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon*, AnOr 37, Rome, 1958).

<sup>57</sup> C. J. Eyre, 'Irony in the Story of Wenamun. The Politics of Religion in the 21st Dynasty', in J. Assmann & E. Blumenthal (eds), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten. Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener, 5.–10. September 1996 in Leipzig*, BdE 127, Cairo, 1999, pp. 235–252.

<sup>58</sup> J.-M. Kruchten, *Les annales des prêtres de Karnak (XXI–XXIII<sup>mes</sup> dynasties) et autres textes contemporains relatifs à l'initiation des prêtres d'Amon*, OLA 32, Leuven, 1989.

<sup>59</sup> Interestingly enough, when Wenamun finds himself in a difficult position in Byblos, it is Smendes, not Herihor, who does what needs to be done. It is likely that this was how the author considered that state affairs should be handled.

as proven by official inscriptions.<sup>60</sup> But what does this actually prove? Thousands of fictional tales frame their stories in historically well-established facts. With this line of reasoning, one should categorize Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers* as a history book because we all know that Louis XIII, Anne d'Autriche, Richelieu, and even d'Artagnan did actually exist.

*Wenamun's Mission* is not an isolated island in Egyptian literature and in its reception by scholarship. The *Story of Sinuhe* experienced the same questioning, with the same kind of reactions from scholars, even in recent times, who have paid only lip-service to the fact that it is a literary work while using it at the same time (sometimes extensively) to reconstruct the history of the Twelfth Dynasty. The debates on the nature of the *Teaching of Amenemhat* are not yet settled. Time and again, historians desperately try to squeeze out every drop that could contribute to reconstructing an elusive factual history.<sup>61</sup> From the New Kingdom too there are — unfortunately badly damaged — fictional texts that take their inspiration from real historical facts, as nicely exposed by Colleen Manassa in her challenging study.<sup>62</sup> For a story like *Wenamun* to exist, the author only needed some kind of input. There was everything that was needed to offer a plausible frame for the tale. It was also common knowledge that the bark had to be repaired or replaced from time to time and that the timber came from Lebanon. That Herihor successfully managed to have a new bark made for the god could very easily be traced in the existing records. Working freely these primary sources, which gave the needed historically verifiable background, the author composed an original tale that would both entertain his public and challengingly propose some interesting issues for reflection and debate.

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<sup>60</sup> See already A. Erman, 'Eine Reisen nach Phönizien im 11. Jahrhundert v. Chr.', *ZÄS* 38 (1900), pp. 1–14. For the history of early translations and comments, see Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun*, pp. 7–32). For historians' recent positions, see above n. 45.

<sup>61</sup> I have suggested elsewhere (J. Winand, 'The Tale of Sinuhe. History of a Literary Text', in H. M. Hays, F. Feder & L. D. Morenz (eds), *Interpretations of Sinuhe. Inspired by Two Passages (Proceedings of the Workshop Held at Leiden University, 27–29 November 2009)*, EgUit 27, Leiden & Leuven, 2014, pp. 215–243) that the *Teaching of Amenemhat* should better be analyzed within a literary discourse as a response to later developments in the history of the text of *Sinuhe*.

<sup>62</sup> C. Manassa, *Imagining the Past. Historical Fiction in New Kingdom Egypt*, New York, 2013. To the same category belongs the so-called *Bentresh stela* (a.k.a. *Stela of Bakhtan*, see M. Broze, *La princesse de Bakhtan. Essai d'analyse stylistique*, MRE 6, Brussels, 1989), blurring even more the divisions between fiction and reality. The case of the Famine stela should also be considered in this respect.



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