

ALBERTYNA DEMBSKA

Some Remarks Concerning the Meaning of the Verb ḥ^c

Since the Old Kingdom in the Egyptian language had began appear some to words which were employed as auxiliary verbs¹. Combined with the simple forms of suffix conjugation they produced compound verb-forms which served to mark tense nuances. This process was finally accomplished in Coptic, the last stage of the Egyptian language.

According to the generally accepted opinion, triliteral verb ḥ^c "stand up", "arise", "stand fast" was also employed as an auxiliary verb². It is said that this verb came into favour as an auxiliary when its ties with the original meaning were loosened and it started to lose its determinative of the walking legs³. Examples from the Pyramid Texts are evidences of the popularity of this verb even in the Old Kingdom, but texts coming from the Middle Kingdom prove that it was in common use from the time of 11th Dyn.⁴.

From the grammatical point of view the verb ḥ^c used as an auxiliary verb precedes the simple verb-form. This compound verb-form serves to introduce the main statement. There, this triliteral verb has the following forms: ḥ^c and $\text{ḥ}^c.n$, and as such it forms, in different stages of Egyptian language, the following compound verb-forms:

I ḥ^c

$\text{ḥ}^c(.f)$ SDM.F (a) active, (b) passive⁵,

¹ A. M. B a k i r, *An Introduction to the Study of the Egyptian Language*, Cairo 1978, p. 95; A. H. G a r d i n e r, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed, Oxford 1957, p. 382.

² Wb I, 218-219.

³ Cf. G a r d i n e r, op. cit., § 476. As an auxiliary verb ḥ^c is translated into English by "then", "thereupon", French "alors", German "da" and the like.

⁴ G a r d i n e r, op. cit., p. 382.

⁵ Cf. M. K o r o s t o v t s e v, *Grammaire du Néo-Egyptien*, Moscou 1973, p. 390 § 435 where the author gives New Egyptian examples of ḥ^c SDM.F and mentions the fact that they were corrected by A. H. G a r d i n e r (*Late-Egyptian Stories*, Bruxelles 1932) into $\text{ḥ}^c.n$ SDM.F.

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.f$ old perfective⁶,

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.f$ SDM.HR.F

II $^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n$

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n$ SDM.F (a) active⁷, (b) passive,

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n.f$ SDM.F (a) active),

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n$ SDM.N.F (a) active, (b) passive,

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n.f$ SDM.N.F⁸,

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n.f$ old perfective,

$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n.f$ *hr* SDM⁹,

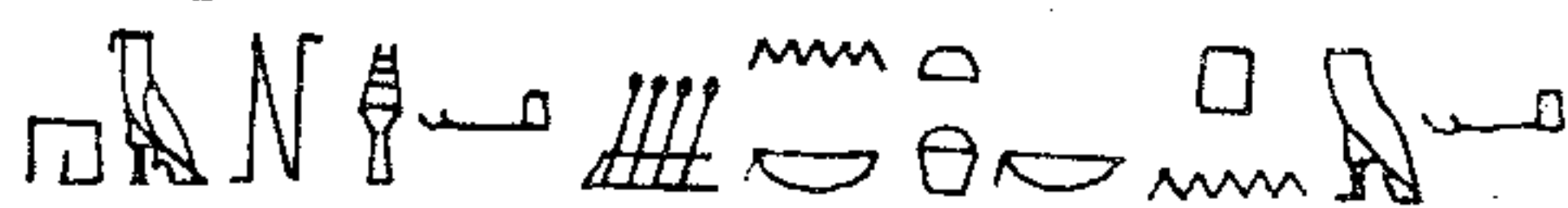
$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.n$ *iw.f* *hr* SDM

Examples¹⁰


$^{\circ}h^{\circ}.f$ SDM.F

a) active


Old Egyptian:

- 1)  $h' N ^{\circ}h^{\circ} \text{ šsp } n.k t p n m ^{\circ}(i)$ (Pyr. 217a) "O N, arise, receive this your bread from [my] hand"¹¹.

Middle Egyptian:

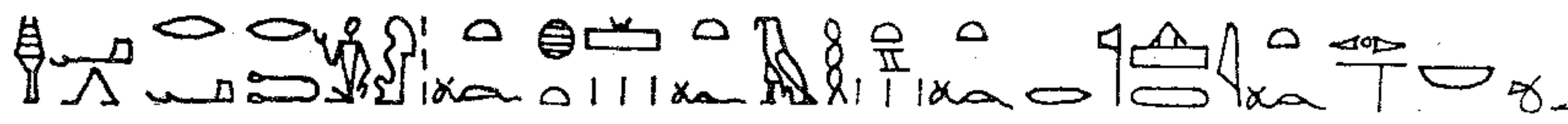
- 2)  $^{\circ}h^{\circ} wš.f ddft nbt$ (Eb. 20,7-8) "then he passes all worms", lit. "[he] arises and he urinates all worms"

Late Egyptian:

- 3)  $^{\circ}h^{\circ} ptri.s$ (d'Orb. 18,3) "Alors elle regardait".

b) passive

Middle Egyptian:

- 4)  $rdi rmtt.f ht.f' ht.f r htp-ntr itf(i) mn nb gbtyw$ (Kopt. 8,9-10) "his people, his property, his fields shall be given for the offerings of my father Min, lord of Coptus".

⁶ This construction, according to Gardiner, *Gram.*, p. 477 expresses "vaguely present time".

⁷ Examples occur in the Late Egyptian language only.

⁸ Very uncommon construction, cf. Gardiner, *Gram.*, § 479.


⁹ Cf. also Korostovtsev, op. cit., p. 389, § 432; the author gives the following form $^{\circ}h^{\circ}.f (hr) \text{ SDM}$; A. M. Bakir, *An Introduction ...* p. 88.

¹⁰ All the examples cited in this paper have been taken together with their translations from: R. O. Faulkner, *Pyramid Texts*, Oxford 1969 (Old Kingdom texts), A. H. Gardiner, *Gram.* (Middle Egyptian texts), A. Erman, *Neuaegyptische Grammatik*, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1933, M. Korostovtsev, *Gram.*, J. Černý, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, Rome 1975 (Late Egyptian texts).


¹¹ The most frequent examples are those of 2nd pers. sing. masc. imperative and optative mood.

$^c h^c .f$ old perfective

Old Egyptian:


- 5)  $^c h^c b'bi hsf(w) m hnt-hm$ (Pyr. 419)
 "Babi stands up, having met *Hnt-hm*".

Middle Egyptian:

- 6)  $^c h^c .s h'.ti hr-^c$ (Eb. 51, 18) "then it goes down immediately".

$^c h^c$ SDM.HR.F


Middle Egyptian:


- 7)  $^c h^c dd.hr.sn n.f$ (Coffins, B7C, 3) "then they shall say to him".

$^c h^c .n$ SDM.F

a) active

Late Egyptian:


- 8)  $^c h^c .n ptri.st p' ym$ (d'Orb. 10,5) „da erblickte sie das Meer".

- 9)  $^c h^c .n iry A ss n.i$ (Adoption, rt. 3-4) "thereupon A made a writing for me".

b) passive

- 10)  $^c h^c .n m' n, n k't$ (Louvre, 12,16) "then these works were inspected".


Late Egyptian:

- 11)  $^c h^c .n$
 $msyw w^c s' iyt pw ir.n n' ht hrywt iw.sn hr dd$ (Pr. 5,6) „da gebär [sie] einen Sohn.
 Da kamen die Hathoren ... und sie sagten".

$^c h^c .n.f$ SDM.F

a) active

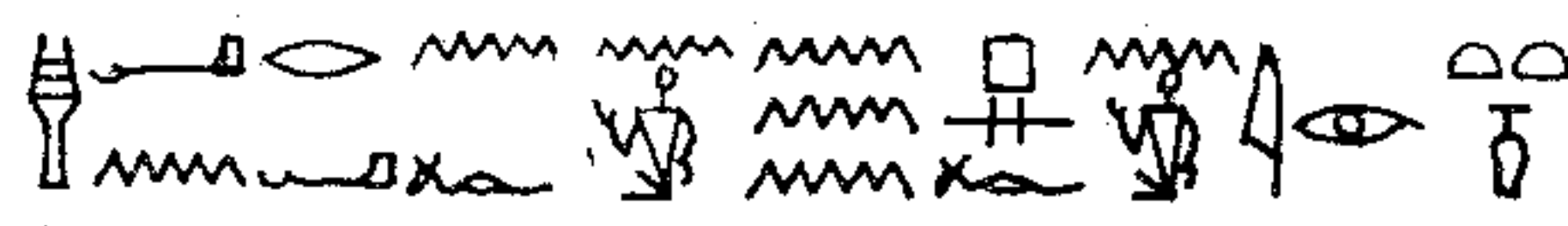
Late Egyptian:

- 12)  $^c h^c .n dhwti ^c s.f$ (H. and S. 3,6) "da rief Thoth"


$^c h^c .n$ SDM.N.F

a) active


Middle Egyptian:

- 13) "... Their ... chief perceived me, ...  $^c h^c .n$ $rd(i) .n .f$ $n .i$ $m w$ $ps .f$ $n .i$ $irtt$ (Sin. B 27) "then he gave me water and boiled milk for me".

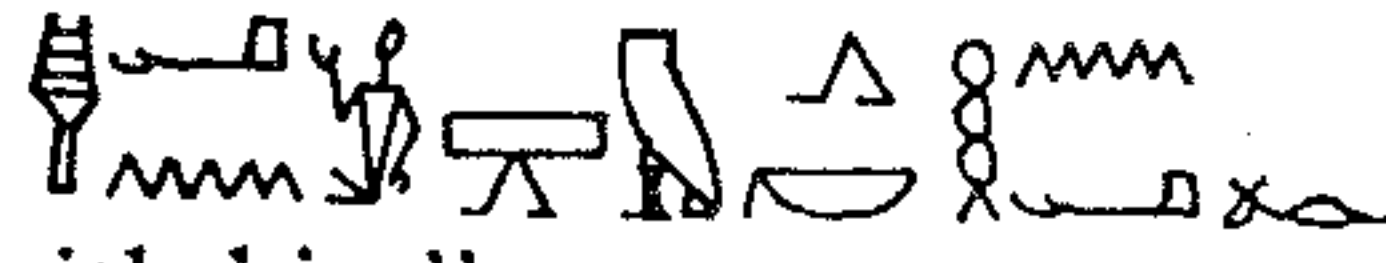
Late Egyptian:

- 14)  $^c h^c .n$ $f' .n$ $hm .f$ $^c .f$ r pt (Amarna V, 29,8)
"da streckte S.M. seinem Arm zu Himmel [und schwur]".
 $^c h^c .n .f$ SDM.N.F


Middle Egyptian:

- 15)  $^c h^c .n$ hm n $nsw-bit$ $hwny$ $mni .f$
(Pr. 2,7-9) "then the Majesty of king Huny died".
 $^c h^c .n .f$ old perfective


Middle Egyptian:

- 16)  $^c h^c .n .i$ $šm .kwi$ $hn^c .f$ (Louvre C 12) "then I went with him".


Late Egyptian:

- 17)  $^c h^c .n$ $hm .f$ $h'w$ (Kadesh 35) "da erschien der König".
 $^c h^c .n .f$ hr SDM


Middle Egyptian:

- 18)  $^c h^c .n .tw$ hr $i w^c .i$ m nbw (Urk. IV,7) "rewarded me with gold".

Late Egyptian:

- 19)  Apophis $^c h^c .n$ nsw Apophis hr irt $n .f$ (Apophis 1,2) "da machte König Apophis ihm ...".
 $^c h^c .u.$ $i w .f$ hr SDM

Late Egyptian:

- 20)  $^c h^c .n$ $i w .tw$ hr ii (Sall. III, 1,5) "da kam man".

When examining these sentences from the grammatical point of view, one may notice that the verb $^c h^c / ^c h^c .n$ is employed in SDM.F form or SDM.N.F form. In these forms the suffix pronoun, sometimes replaced by a noun, may be written and may be not. What mood they express it is difficult to say, for this problem, due to the lack of morphological marks, may be resolved only with in the context. It may express indicative, imperative and even optative mood. Beside those forms in which

the verb h^{c} is employed, there is another verb used in the narrative verb form or in forms which belong to the pseudo-verbal construction. These are the SDM.F form (act. and pass.), the SDM.N.F form (act. and pass.), the SDM.HR.F form, old perfective, *hr* SDM and *iw.f hr* SDM. When the suffix expressing "subject" of $\text{h}^{\text{c}}/\text{h}^{\text{c}}.n$ is not written, it is supposed that either it has been dropped because it was the same as that of the following verb¹², or that the verb in question is a predicate to virtual noun clause as subject and has its own verb employed in the narrative -verb form¹³.

In all the examples cited above there is also the concord of tenses between the verb h^{c} and the following verb. Moreover, the "subject" of the verb h^{c} is always the same as that of the following verb employed in narrative verb form or pseudo-verbal construction.

A. M. B a k i r in one of his grammars devoted to the Egyptian language replaces the conventional translation of $\text{h}^{\text{c}}.n$ 'thereupon', 'then' by 'began' or 'started' and explains that "the fundamental indication of this verb is to start a new item in sequel of narrative events"¹⁴. One may notice, looking at the examples given by him, that a "new" meaning refers to the verb $\text{h}^{\text{c}}.n$ when it appears in some of the grammatical constructions cited above. May we try to translate all the given examples following B a k i r's suggestion. Perhaps a "new" semantical value of this verb refers also to other examples.

1) "Hail N! Start taking this bread of yours from [my] hand". Lit. "Hail N! Begin to receive this bread of yours from [my] hand".

2) "He begins to urinate all worms".

3) "She begins to behold". Lit. "She begins to take notice".

4) "His people, his property, his fields shall begin to be given for the offerings of my father Min, lord of Coptus".

5) "Babi starts to be in meeting *Hnt-hm*". Lit. "Starts Babi his being in meeting *Hnt-hm*".

6) "It starts to go down immediately". Lit. "Starts it, its being in a state of going immediately".

7) "They begin to say to him". Lit. "begin: they said [they say] they will say to him".

8) "She began to take notice of the sea".

9) "A began making a writing for me".

10) "Those works started to be inspected".

11) "[At the time when] a son began to be born came Hathors [and] they said ...".

12) "Thoth began to summon".

¹² The "subject" of the following verb is the "subject" of those two words, cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Gram.*, § 477.

¹³ A. H. Gardiner, *Gram.*, § 470.

¹⁴ A. M. Bakir, *An Introduction ...*, p. 101; cf. also J. B. Callender, *Middle Egyptian*, Malibu 1975, 31; A. Erman, *ZÄS* 27 (1889), 38; F. Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Still und Sprache Neuägyptischer Erzählungen*, Berlin 1950, 34.

13) "He began to give me water [and] he boiled milk for me". Lit. "Began: he gave me water [and] he boiled for me milk".

14) "His Majesty started to lift his arm to the sky [and swore]". Lit. "Began: lifted His Majesty his arm to the sky [and swore]".

15) "The Majesty of Upper [and] Lower Egypt, Huny began dying". Lit. "Began the Majesty of Upper [and] Lower Egypt, Huny, he died".

16) "I started to go with him". Lit. "Began I being in the state of going with him".

17) "His Majesty began to appear in glory". Lit. "Began His Majesty the state of appearing in glory".

18) "One began to reward me with gold". Lit. "Began one rewarding me with gold".

19) "King Apophis began to make to him". Lit. "Began king Apophis making to him".

20) "One started to come". Lit. "Began one coming".

It seems that this meaning suits the contents of the sentences. And, according to the context, the sentences introduced by the verb $^{\circ}h^{\circ}$ describe one or more events which began as the result of some precedent conditions. Due to this fact, this "new" meaning helps to understand more precisely the content of a particular sentence, and in consequence of the whole text. In one case the verb $^{\circ}h^{\circ}$ was rendered in south-western Semitic language, namely Arabic, by the word *qāma*¹⁵. This fact seems to be important for searching the "new" meaning of the Egyptian verb $^{\circ}h^{\circ}$. The word 𓂏𓂛 having the same semantic value as the verb $^{\circ}h^{\circ}$ also means "to begin"¹⁶.

This meaning appears when the verb *qāma* and the following verb are employed in the same grammatical forms and the subject of those two verbs is the same in respect of number and person. E.g. *wa-qāmati 'l-mar'atu tanūhu* 'woman began to weep'. In this case the verb *qāma* means *ṭafiqa* 'begin', 'begin suddenly'¹⁷. The great syntactical resemblance of the two verbs and the meaning seems to point out that the triliteral verb $^{\circ}h^{\circ}$ might have meant 'to begin', too. It occurs when the verb $^{\circ}h^{\circ}$ is used in a narrative verb form having the same "subject" as the verb which follows it.

Appendix

This appendix contains a series of examples from the Pyramid Texts composed


¹⁵ A. M. B a k i r, *Principles of Egyptian Language in Its Golden Age* (in Arabic), 2 ed Cairo 1955, p. 70.

¹⁶ H. W e h r, *Arabisches Wörterbuch*, 4 ed. Wiesbaden 1977, p. 711.

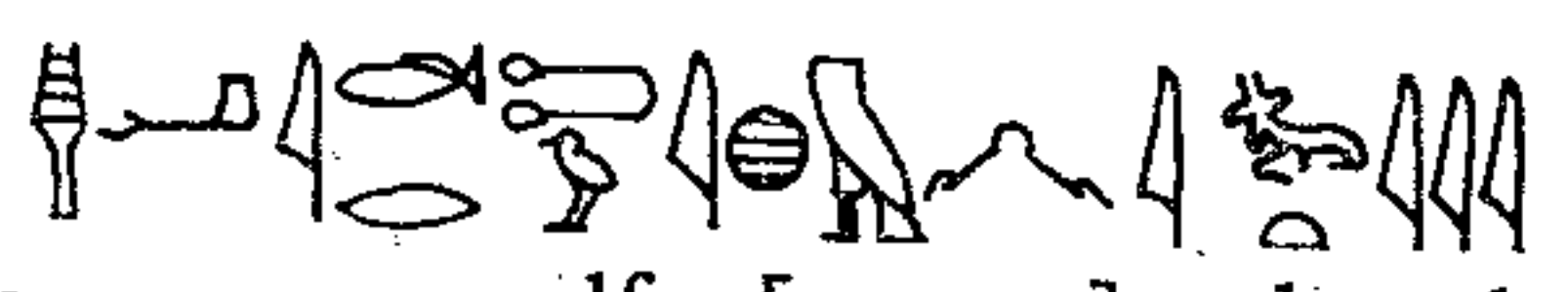
¹⁷ Mağd ad-Dīn a l - F ī r ū z ā b ā d ī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt*, Cairo n.d., IV, 168 sub *al-qawm*. This information I owe to W. D e m b s k i. Cf. also the very frequent expression *qāma wā-qāla* "he began to say". The similar meaning possesses the Hebrew verb *qūm* in the very grammatical construction, cf. G e s e n i u s (transl. E. R o b i n s o n), *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford 1957, 3 ed. 878a (Gen. 13,17; 19.14.15). This information I owe to prof. W. T y l o c h.

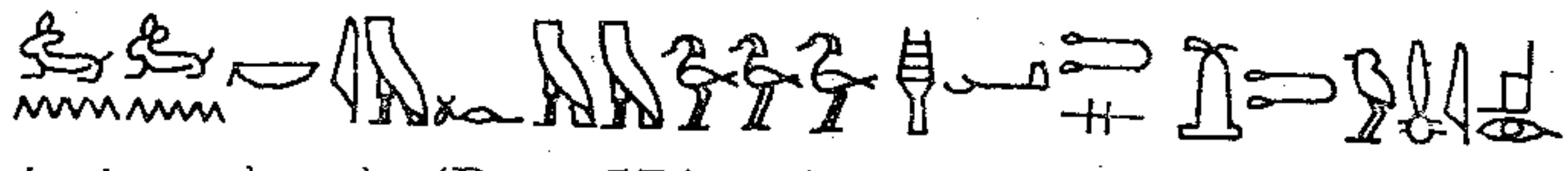
in the Old Egyptian language, *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, a tale composed in the Middle Egyptian language, *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, the Late Egyptian tale. It has also a few additions from grammars. The examples have been arranged according to the grammatical construction the verb *ḥ*^c appears.


ḥ^c.f SDM.F

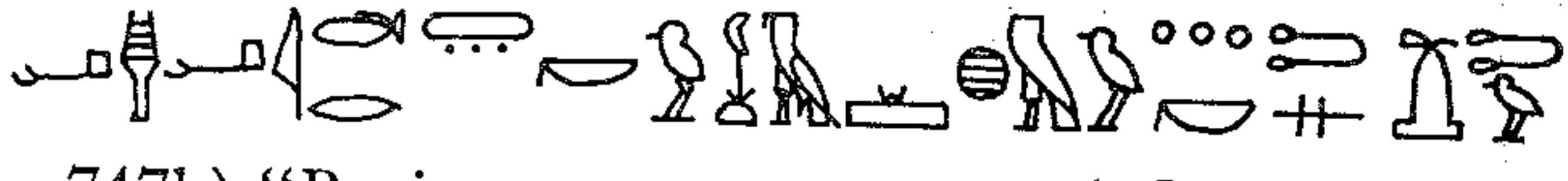
 *h' N ḥ^c ḥms r ḥ' m t ḥ' m ḥ(n)kt* (Pyr. 214b)


"Hail N! Begin to settle down to a thousand [loaves] of bread, a thousand [jugs] of beer".

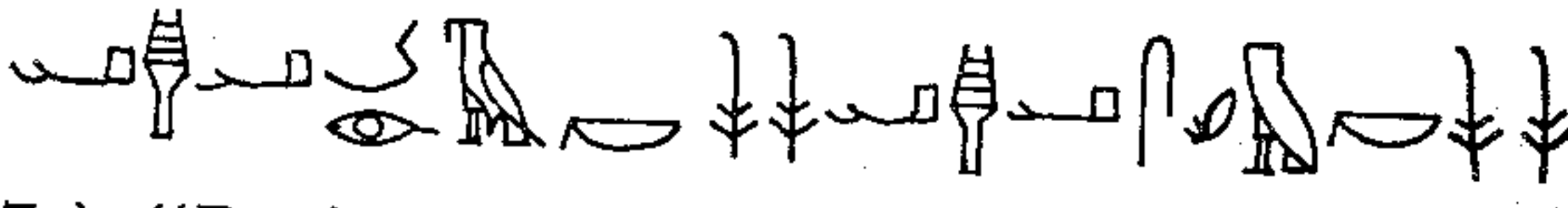
 *ḥ^c idr tw ḥm(w) iwt* (Pyr. 367a) "Begin to remove yourself, [o you] who do not know the Thicket of Reeds".

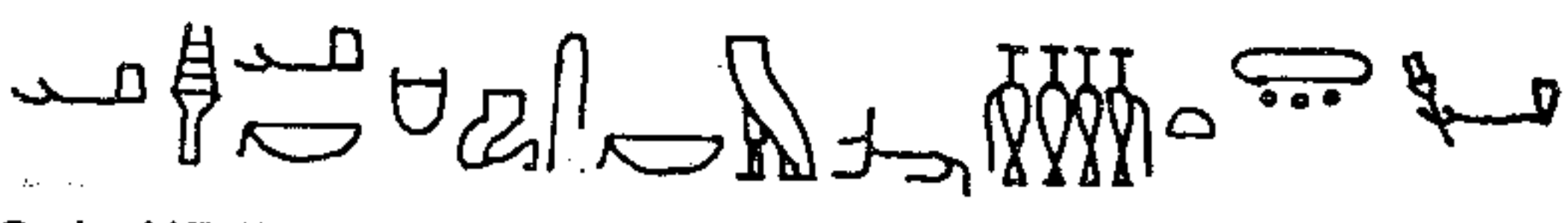
 *wnn.k im.f mm ḥw ḥ^c ts tw mi wsir* (Pyr. 574c, d) "You exist there among glorious spirits. Begin to raise yourself like Osiris".


 *dd mdw h' wsir N ḥ^c ts tw* (Pyr. 626a) "Recite: hail N! Begin to raise yourself". (im. Pyr. 867b).

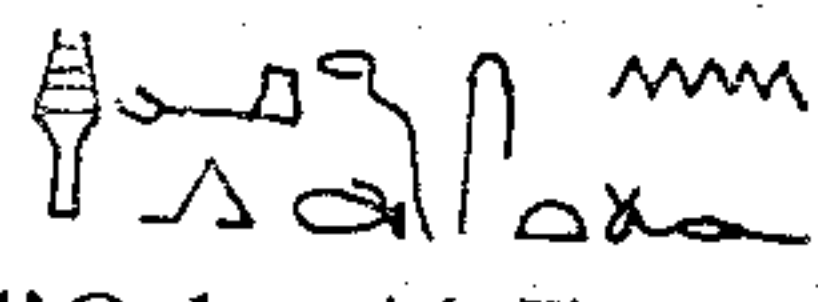
 *ḥ^c idr t'.k wh, ḥmw.k ts tw* (Pyr. 747b) "Begin to remove your earth [and] shake off your dust. Raise yourself".

 *dd mdw h' N pw irs ts tw ḥ^c w^cb.k w^cb k'.k* (Pyr. 837a, b) "Recite: hail this N! Awake, raise yourself. Begin to be pure [for] your *ka* is pure.

 *ḥ^c m".k nn ḥ^c sdm.k nn* (Pyr. 1067a) "Begin to see this, begin to hear this".

 *ḥ^c.k ḥms.k m inpw ḥnty t' dsr* (Pyr. 1552c) "May you begin to sit as Anubis, who is at the head of the Secluded Land".


 *wn in ḥ^c.sn ḥms.sn ḥft* (Pr. 2,7) "They began to sit accordingly".

"Who has quarreled with you?"  *ḥ^c dd.st n.f* (d'Orb. 4,10) "She begins to say to him". (Sim. d'Orb. 11,7)

Handwritten symbols and characters, possibly representing a code or a stylized text.

^c*h*^c.*n* SDM.F

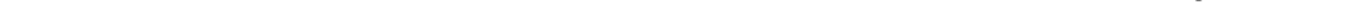
... "Isis" ... "took an oath in the presence of the Ennead".

"They told Pharaoh, l.p.h. ... 

'h'.n SDM.F (passive)

^c*h*^c.*n* SDM.N.F


... "I made a burnt offerings for the god".


... "Who it is who has brought you to this island" ... 

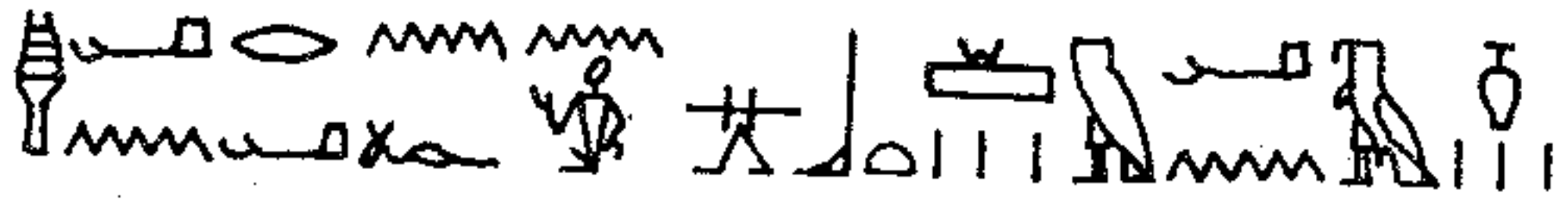
$^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ wšb}.n.i \text{ n.f st}$ (Sh.S. 86/87) "I began to report [lit. answer] him this".



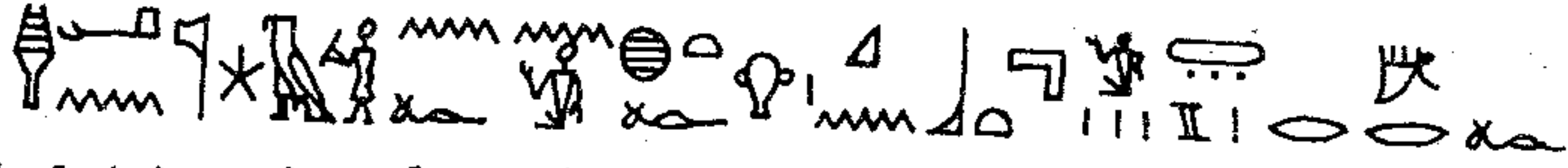
$^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ sbt}.n.f \text{ im}.i \text{ m nn dd}.n.i$ (Sh.S. 148)
"He began to laugh at me because of that I have said".


... "I went to report it" ...  $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ dd}.n.f \text{ n.i}$ (Sh.S. 158) "He began to say to me".

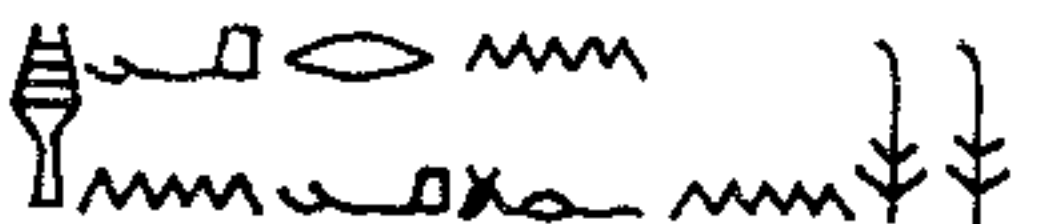
"Farewell, farewell ... to your home !" ...  $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ rd}.n(i) \text{ wi hr ht}.i$ (Sh.S. 161) "I began to place myself upon my belly".

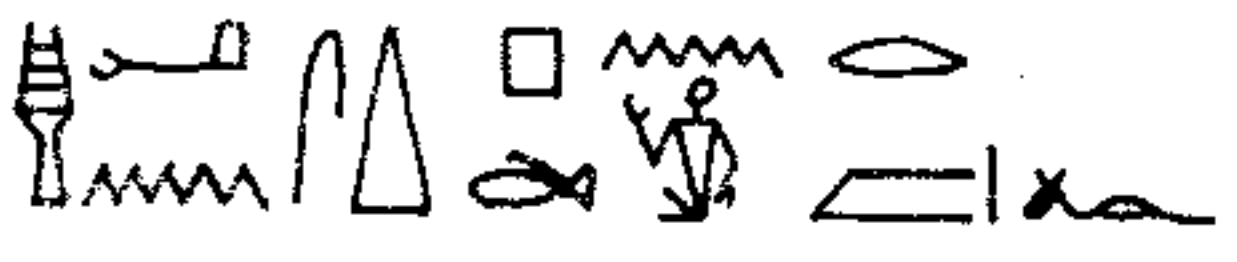
"Farewell, farewell ... to your home !" ...  $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ rd}(i).n.f \text{ sbt m } ^{\text{c}}\text{ntyw}$ (Sh.S. 162) "He began to give me a cargo consisting of myrrh" ...

... "a cargo" ...  $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ 'tp}.n.i \text{ st}$ (Sh.S. 166) "I began to load it".

... "I presented
to him this produce" ...  $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ ntr-dw'}.n.f \text{ n.i hft-hr knbt}(y)w \text{ t' r dr}.f$ (Sh.S. 176) "He began to thank me in the presence of the entire land".


 $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ ph}.n.(i) \text{ w'd-wr}$ (Hamm. 114,14) "I almost reached the Great Green".

 $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ rd}(i).n.f \text{ n}(i) \text{ nn}$ (Br. Mus. 614.6) "He began to give me this".

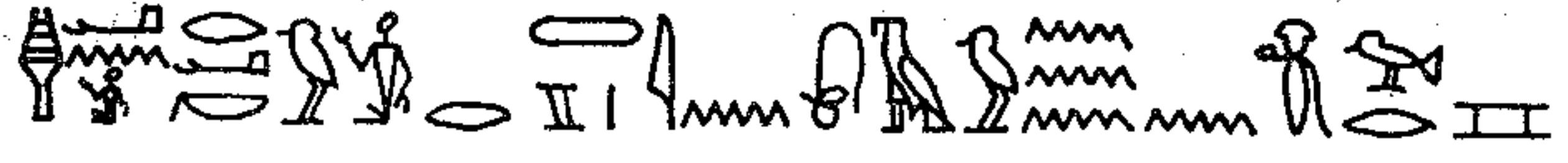
 $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ spd}.n.i \text{ r gs}.f$ (Sebekkhu 14) "I started to show my keenness in his presence".


 $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ dd}.n.f$ (Kadesh 102) "He began to say".

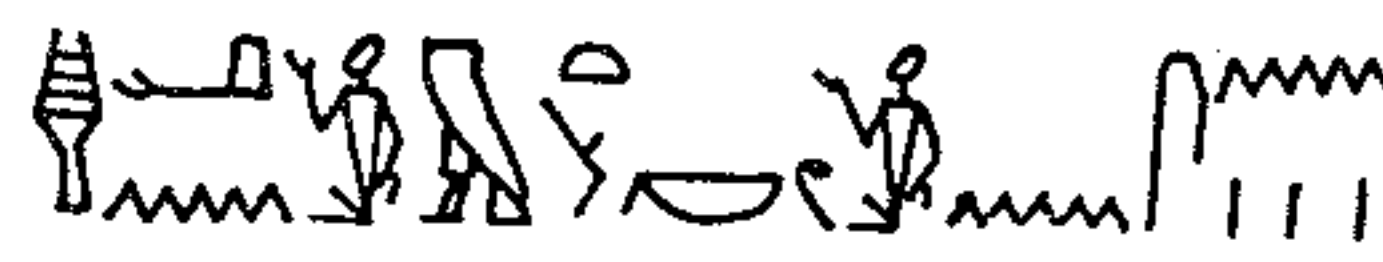
$^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n$ old perfective

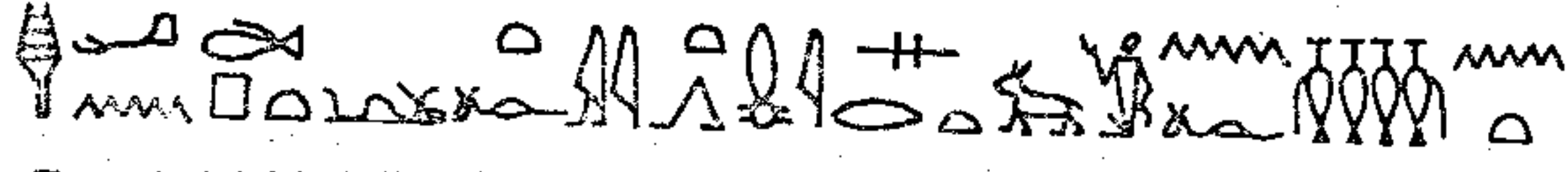
 $^{\text{h}^{\text{c}}}.n \text{ dpt mwt}(i)^{18}$ (Sh. S. 37/38) "The boat began to sink".
... "those who were in the boat not a single one survived".

¹⁸ Cf. also Luft, OLZ 1979, 2 (74), p. 120.


 °h°.n.i rd(i).kwi r iw in w'w n w'd wr (Sh.S. 40/41) "I was about to be brought to this island by a wave of the Great Green".


 °h°.n sb' r' h'w pr.n n' m bt m °.f 18 (Sh.S. 129/130) "A star of Rē° began to fall [and] these went up in its fire".


"I did not burn, for I was among them".  °h°.n.i mwt.kwi n.sn (Sh.S. 131) "I was about to die because of them".


 °h°.n dpt.f üt(i) mi srt.n.fh nt (Sh.S. 154/155) "His boat began to come as he foretold before".


 °h°.n.i šm.kwi (Sh.S. 155) "I started to go".

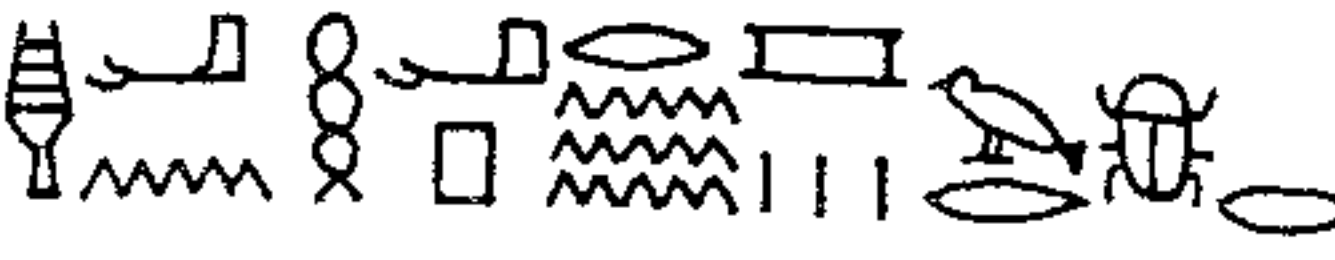
 °h°.n šm.kwi r smt st (Sh.S. 155) "I started to go in order to report it".

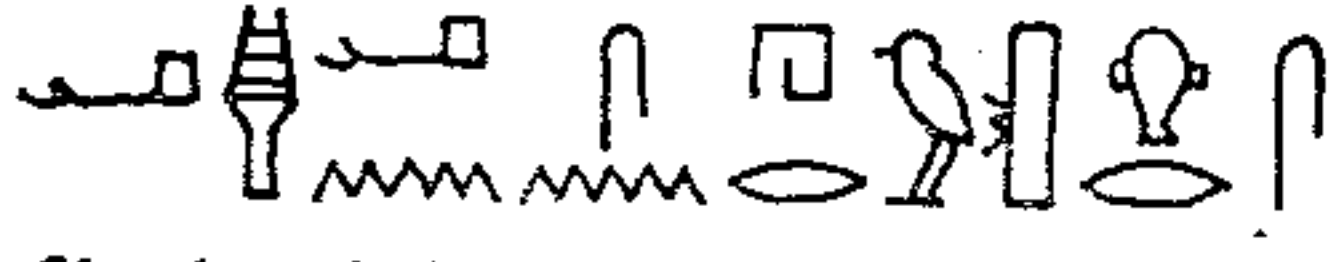
 °h°.n h'.kwi r mryt m h'w dpt tn (Sh.S. 169/170) "I started to go down to the shore in the vicinity of this boat".

... "we arrived at the Residence" ...  °h°.n °k.kwi hr ity (Sh.S. 174) "I was about to come to the sovereign".

 °h°.n hm.f wd'(w) m htp (BH. I, 8,10) "His Majesty began to set out at peace".

 °h°.n rd(i).kwi r šmsw (Sh.S. 177) "my position of a follower began".

 °h°.n h°prw wr(w) hpr(w) (BH. I, 8,21) "the great Inundation began to occur".

 °h°.n.sn hrw hr.s (Siut I, 276, 282) "They began to be satisfied with it".



h^c.n p' wh' n nt wr(t) mwt ntr spr(w) r t' psdt ntrw iw.w hsm(w) m t' wsh't (H. and S. 3,5/6) "the letter of Neit, the great, divine mother started to reach the Ennead sitting in the hall".



h^c.n in hr knd(w) m hh n sp (H. and S. 3,8/9) "Onuris began to become furious many times". (Sim. 8,5; 13,1).

"Bebon ... told Pre-Harakhti: your shrine is vacant".



h^c.n p' r^c hr ,hty šnn(w) t' wšb (H. and S. 3,10) "Pre-Harakhti began to suffer at the insult".



h^c.n t' psdt ntrw pryw r bl (H. and S. 3,11) "The Ennead started to go out".



... "Hathor ... exposed her vagina before her father".



h^c.n p' ntr " sbi im.s (H. and S. 4,2/3) "the great god began to laugh at her".



h^c.n ist knd(w) r t' psdt ntrw (H. and S. 4,10) "Isis was becoming furious at the Ennead". (Sim. 4,13/5,1).

[Seth was] "eating bread together with the Ennead"  *h^c.n stš nw(w)* (H. and S. 6,3/4) "Seth began to observe". [Isis] "transformed herself into a maiden"  *h^c.n.f mr.ti st* (H. and S. 6,5) "He [= Seth] began to fall in love with her".



[Isis ashamed Seth] *h^c.n.f h^c(w) tmw* (H. and S. 7,1) "He began to weep".



h^c.n ist hms hr rmw r dd (H. and S. 8,11) "Isis began to sit weeping [and] saying".





h^c.n stš^c 'š(w) sgb^c, (H. and S. 9,4) "Seth began to let out a loud cry". (Sim. 9,6,12; 14,10; 16,2).




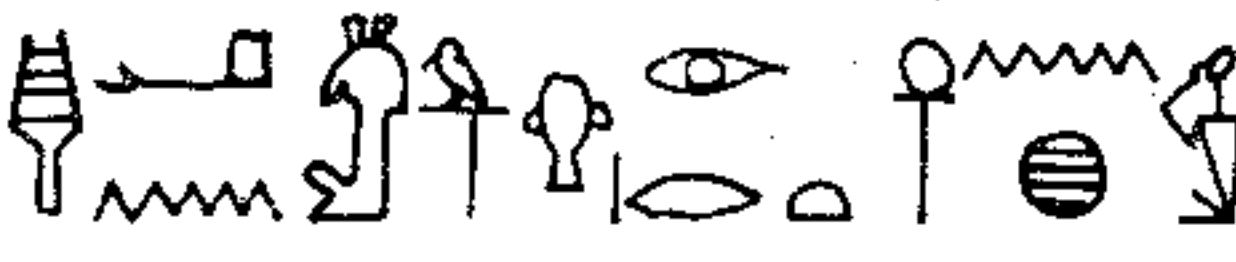
h^c.n. ' w) iwr m t' mtwt (H. and S. 11,12) "He began to stand pregnant with the seed of Horus".

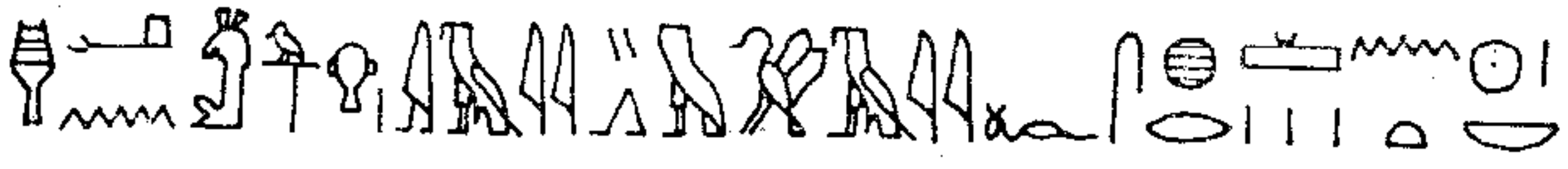
^ch^c.n.f hr SDM


 ^ch^c.n.f hr i's n mš^c nty m dpt tn
(Sh.S. 170) "I began to call to the troops who were in this boat".

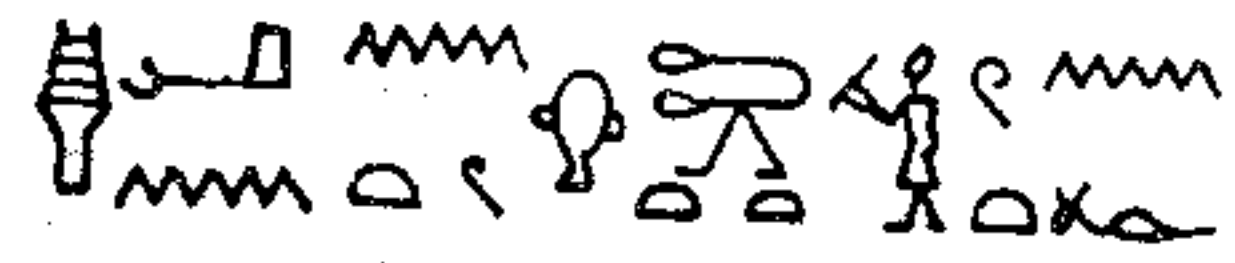
 ^ch^c.n dhwtj hr dd n.f (H. and S. 1,11) "Thoth began to say to him". (Sim. 1,7; 5,1; 6,12; 7,8,11,12; 8,5,9; 9,10/11; 11,10; 12,10).

 ntr^c hr irt w^c hrw (H. and S. 3,13) "The great god began to spend a day".

 ^ch^c.n stš hr irt nh (H. and S. 5,2/3) "Seth began to make an oath".

 ^ch^c.n stš hr iyt m p'y.f shrw nt r^c nb (H. and S. 11,11) "Seth began to return to his daily habit".

"The messenger of king Apophis l.p.h. hastened to journey to where his lord, l.p.h. was".  ^ch^c.n p'wr n niwt rsywt hr dit št n n'y.f wrw yyw (Apophis 3,1) "The prince of the Southern City began to call up his very great ones".

 ^ch^c.n.tw hr itt n.f (Pr. 4,10/11) "Someone began to catch [a greyhound]".