

A
VERY EASY
CRASH COURSE
IN
ABNORMAL HIERATIC

BEING A STEP BY STEP INTRODUCTION TO THE LEAST
ACCESSIBLE OF ALL ANCIENT EGYPTIAN SCRIPTS

by
KOENRAAD DONKER VAN HEEL



Papyrologisch Instituut – Leiden 2013

This is *Uitgaven vanwege de Stichting "Het Leids Papyrologisch Instituut"* no. 25

CONTENTS

Concordances	5
Introduction	7
Lesson 1 The multifunctional sign, gods, the alphabet, the article, some handy sign groups and words & personal names	9
• The multifunctional sign	12
• Gods	15
• The alphabet	21
• The article	30
• Some handy sign groups and words	32
• Personal names	39
Lesson 2 The process of elimination	43
Lesson 3 The process of elimination works, but only to some extent	61
Lesson 4 Right, let's move on to a really difficult text	69
Lesson 5 The Vienna papyrus revisited	89
Lesson 6 The proof of the pudding is in the eating	97

CONCORDANCES

Since this syllabus is part of a three-day crash course in abnormal hieratic that was designed to prepare students for the effective use of:

Koenraad Donker van Heel & Joost Golverdingen, *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book Containing Texts from the British Museum (London), the Brooklyn Museum (New York), the Egyptian Museum (Cairo), the Louvre (Paris), the Museo Egizio (Turin), the Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), Queen's College (Oxford) and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden), with a Palaeography of Abnormal Hieratic Signs and Sign Groups* (2013),

it was felt that we should refer to the publication numbers used in this reading book.

However, many Egyptologists generally cite texts using the museum inventory numbers, so these are also given throughout this syllabus.

In the table below you will find both:

A VERY EASY CRASH COURSE IN ABNORMAL HIERATIC

Museum inventory number	<i>An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book doc.</i>
P. BM EA 10113	1
P. BM EA 10907	4
P. Cairo 30657	6
P. Leiden F 1942/5.15	7
P. Louvre E 7847	8
P. Louvre E 7848	9
P. Louvre E 7851 recto	10
P. Louvre E 7852	12
P. Louvre E 7856 verso	13
P. Louvre E 7861	15
P. Vienna 12002	17
P. Vienna 12003	18

INTRODUCTION

This syllabus is part of a three-day crash course in abnormal hieratic that was designed to prepare students for the effective use of:

Koenraad Donker van Heel & Joost Golverdingen, *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book Containing Texts from the British Museum (London), the Brooklyn Museum (New York), the Egyptian Museum (Cairo), the Louvre (Paris), the Museo Egizio (Turin), the Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), Queen's College (Oxford) and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden), with a Palaeography of Abnormal Hieratic Signs and Sign Groups* (2013).

Or, to phrase it more precisely, this very easy crash course aims to take away people's fear of abnormal hieratic and to stimulate colleagues and students to open their hearts and minds to this wonderful discipline that has so much to offer. And, most important, to enjoy doing it.

It was felt that to achieve this we would need a really low-threshold syllabus for use in class, that will allow students to go through the material on their own without losing their way at any moment. This explains why so much attention has been paid to clarify details time and again, requiring constant references, sometimes *ad nauseam*.

This syllabus is part of a three day crash course consisting of six lectures of two to three hours, with minimal homework and lunch breaks. If colleagues want to use it for a course of their own they are welcome to it. Otherwise I will gladly come over and do it for them.

The reader is reminded that this is—just—a syllabus and not a real book. It was compiled in less than a working week (well, my working week). This work is something to grapple with, something to improve on and to use in class (together with the *editio princeps* and the notes in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book*) or—if you are still a student—to see if it really is any help to explore this unknown territory that holds so many treasures waiting for you to find them.

In a way preparing this syllabus has been a saddening experience, because it makes the magic disappear.

Abnormal hieratic is actually something that you can learn. And learn to love.

Leiderdorp, 13 September 2013

LESSON 1 | THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL SIGN, GODS, THE ALPHABET, THE ARTICLE, SOME HANDY SIGN GROUPS AND WORDS & PERSONAL NAMES

Abnormal hieratic is never easy, but it isn't so difficult that you will never learn to read it. All you need is a little talent, patience, flexibility (and preferably a sense of humour). Most Egyptologists seeing an abnormal hieratic text for the first time will be struck by its sheer—albeit often wild—beauty, but at the same time they will mostly feel frustration, because the writing can be forbidding, seemingly designed to shut everybody out. That is why there are only very few people publishing in this field.

Most Egyptologists won't bother. Too difficult. Still, abnormal hieratic was derived straight from late New Kingdom hieratic. It is not rocket science, so you can actually learn how to read it. Step by step. This crash course was designed to do just that. And have a lot of fun all the way.

What you do need is ready access to any palaeography you can lay your hands on, so apart from the concise palaeography compiled by Joost Golverdingen for *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013) you will find some of the titles below very useful, especially if you need to track down single signs or sign groups:

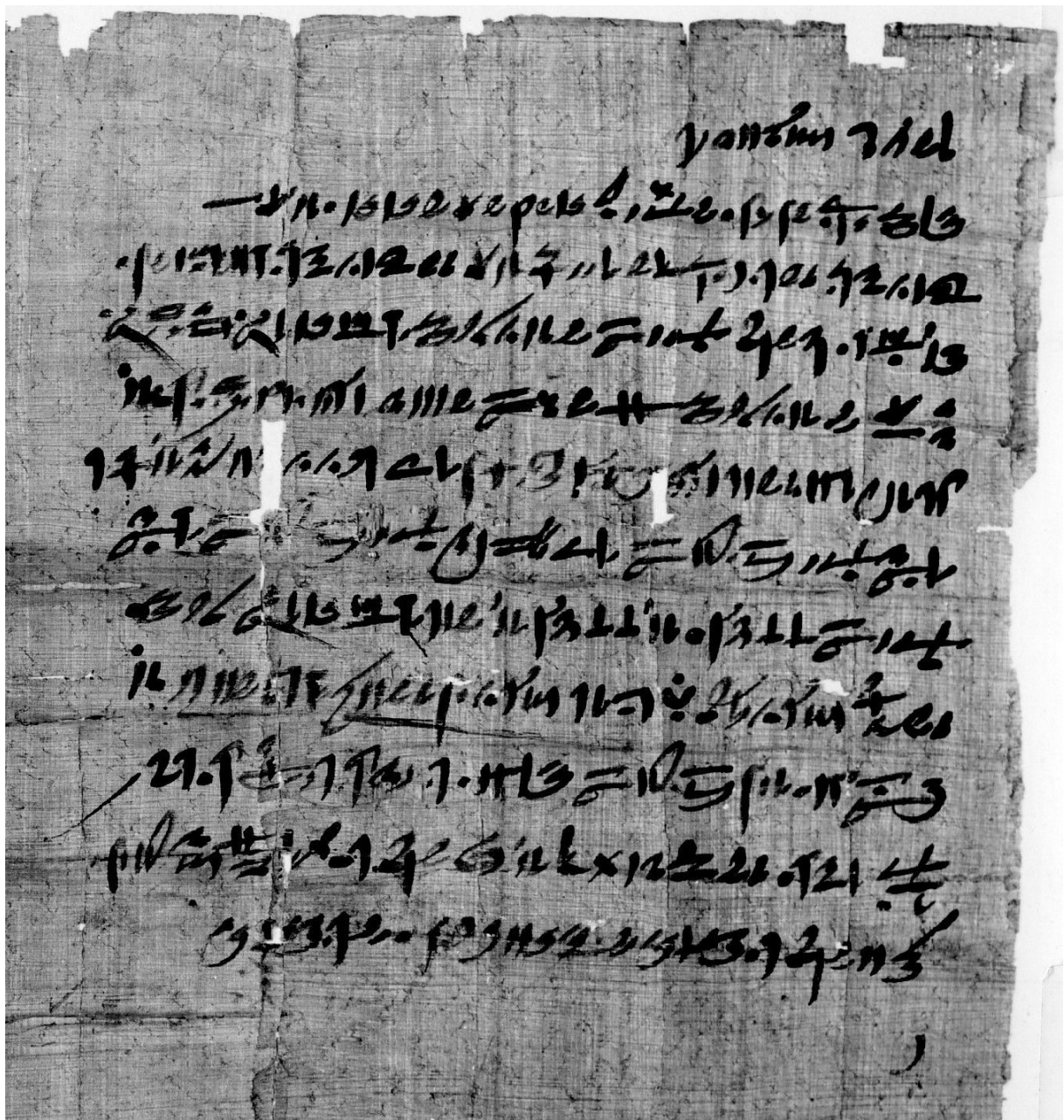
- G. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie* III (1936), a book that never ceases to amaze by the sheer vision behind it
- S.J. Wimmer, *Hieratische Paläographie der nicht-literarischen Ostraka der 19. und 20. Dynastie* (1989), containing signs and sign groups from New Kingdom documentary hieratic sources
- W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (1954), which has been a reliable and helpful tool for the past—almost—60 years, and will be for many years to come
- J.H. Johnson et al., *The Chicago Demotic Dictionary*, the online dictionary that was originally devised as a supplement to the *Demotisches Glossar*,—the standard dictionary for demotists and hieraticists today and in the next centuries
- S.P. Vleeming, *The Gooseherds of Hou* (1991), p. 191-252, which unravels many early demotic signs and sign groups, more than once including their (abnormal) hieratic counterparts
- P.W. Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, Vol. II (1994), p. 1*-57*, which is the first true palaeography of early demotic
- O. El-Aguizy, *A Palaeographical Study of Demotic Papyri in the Cairo Museum from the Reign of King Taharqa to the End of the Ptolemaic Period* (1998), also containing a very useful palaeography of abnormal hieratic signs and sign groups

- U. Verhoeven, *Untersuchungen zur späthieratischen Buchschrift* (2001), addressing uncial hieratic in the Late Period and indispensable when tracking down a hieratic sign

As long as there is no abnormal hieratic palaeography that entirely covers all known documents from the 25th and 26th dynasties—the palaeography compiled by Joost Golverdingen for *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013) was designed from the start as a concise palaeography—students may want to compile their own, using palaeographies of earlier sources:

- A. Gasse, *Données nouvelles administratives et sacerdotales sur l'organisation du domaine d'Amon, XXe-XXIe dynasties à la lumière des papyrus Prachov, Reinhardt et Grundbuch* (1988)
- A. von Bomhard, *Paléographie du Papyrus Wilbour: l'écriture hiératique cursive dans les papyri documentaires* (1998)
- The original S.P. Vleeming, *P. Reinhardt* (1983)—not the official publication that came out in 1993—which contains a handy list of late hieratic signs and sign groups. This list is also found in fascicle IV of *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013)

Reading abnormal hieratic is all about using your eyes (just like demotic, by the way). If we take, for instance, the relatively easy right half of P. Vienna 12002—doc. **17** in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013)—there is much that we can read already. So let us first take a look look at the text itself:



THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL SIGN

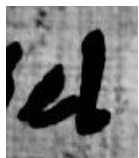
P. Vienna 12002 | doc. 17 was selected as our first text because the scribe writes in a very clear and neat handwriting throughout the contract. From this text we can take an entire set of signs, sign groups and words that will be useful for our purpose: how to learn abnormal hieratic. The only correct way to do this is to try and transcribe it first.

We will therefore single out specific words (like divine names), one letter signs (the alphabet), common words and some patterns to form names. Combined, these will be the basis for your further studies. But first we will have to address a curious sign that seems to recur time and again in this papyrus.

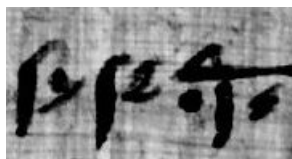
If you study the photo of P. Vienna 12002 | doc. 17 and pay close attention to the individual signs, sign groups and words—this usually takes a few hours—you will notice that this scribe uses what we may term a multifunctional sign, which looks like this, almost as if the scribe wanted to write two oblique ticks but forgot to lift his brush off the papyrus, drawing a loop instead:



This is not a particularity of this scribe, because the same sign is found in many other abnormal hieratic papyri. In fact, this sign has a number of uses, and the transcriptions to match:

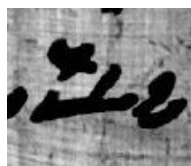


| the second part of $\dot{h}3.t-sp$

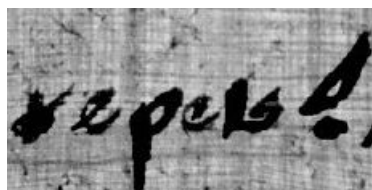


| w in $\dot{I}r.t-w-r=w$

A VERY EASY CRASH COURSE IN ABNORMAL HIERATIC



| *t3* in *t3 ḥbs*



| *3* in *Ḥr3w3*



| *s3*



| in *p3*



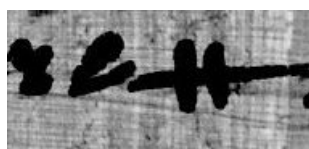
| in *ʾIs.t*



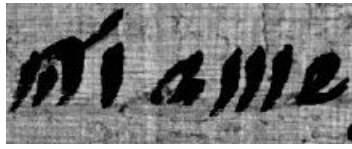
| for *ʾImn*



| for the tusk in *m3^c-ḥrw*



| as the phonetic complement of *šp*



| for *kt* in *kt* 3½ *hḏ*

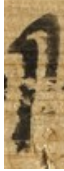
This is not an exhaustive list. See e.g. *rmt nb n p3 t3* on p. 36.


One could argue that one of the main advances of demotic over abnormal hieratic is that the concept of abbreviating a number of widely varying hieroglyphic signs and sign groups into a single sign was applied systematically by the demotic scribes, more or less the same way they invented stock phrases that could be used for specific purposes. The verb *shn* (commission, lease) used in demotic land leases, for example, does seem to be more practical than abnormal hieratic leases, which use widely varying expressions, some of which are already known from Deir el-Medina sources: *dī i sk3* (to give to till), *dī* (to give), *šp* (to receive), *šp i sk3* (to receive to till).

Learning abnormal hieratic requires that you are familiar with Late Egyptian and hieratic, and preferably also demotic, although the latter is not absolutely necessary (but it helps). Some of the signs, sign groups and words should really be memorised if you do not know them already. If you recognise these, your reading will become much quicker.


GODS

We will start with some divine names. Please note that if these names are used in personal


names in pure abnormal hieratic the divine determinative—a vertical stroke  with an oblique tick on top (regularly with something drooping from it as in this example, and one has to assume that this is the beak of the falcon representing Horus) or sometimes just a vertical stroke—is very often suppressed, although it was used increasingly more often in

the 26th dynasty. Scribes do like to use the seated child determinative  at the end of a personal name.


For the sake of completeness we will also include the names of divinities from other sources, which will be indicated below:




Imn, but this name may also be written




or



(in P. Louvre E



7847 | doc. 8) or



(in P. Louvre E 7852 | doc. 12) | demotic



Is.t, with once again the multifunctional sign (see p. 12-14) for *t* + egg + cobra

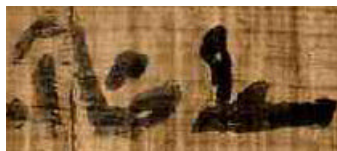
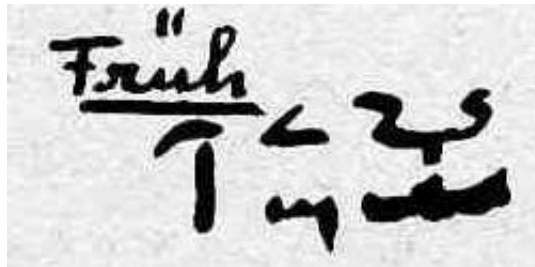


determinative? | **demotic**

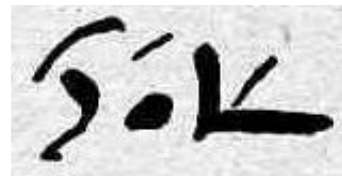
(definitely without the cobra).



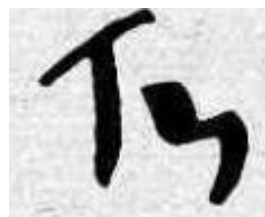
Wp-w3.w.t | **demotic**



Wsir (in P. Louvre E 7858) | **demotic**

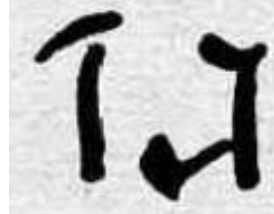


Pth | **demotic**





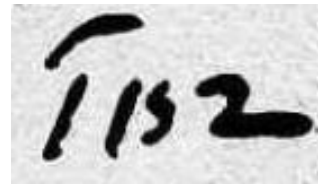
Mw.t (in P. BM EA 10907 recto | doc. 4, in which the tail of the cobra is



actually much longer than shown here) | **demotic**



Mnt (in P. BM EA 10113 | doc. 1, with the *mn* sign + *n*, a vertical crack



touching the *t* sign and the divine determinative) | **demotic**



Hw.t-hr (in P. Vienna 12003 | doc. 18) | **demotic**





Hr (P. BM EA 10907 | doc. 4), or even

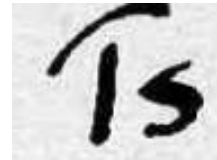


which both look like *dd*, but the



name is also written

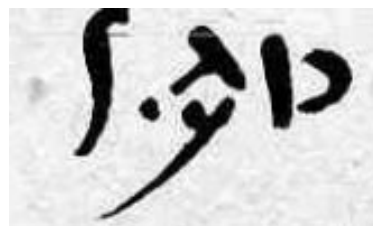
(in P. Louvre E 7858) | **demotic**



.



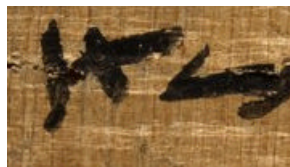
Hry-šfy | **demotic**



.

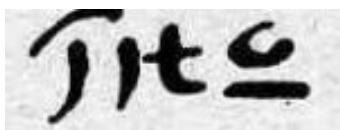


Hnsw (in P. BM EA 10113 | doc. 1), which can even be more abbreviated to

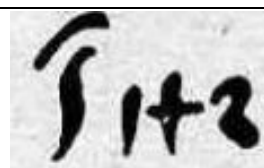


(in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. 8; the oblique trait at the right belongs to

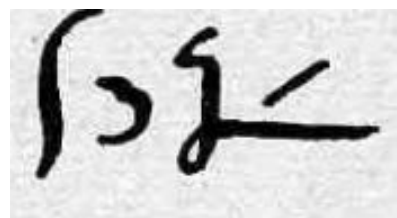
the preceding word) | **demotic**



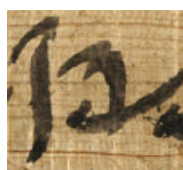
and



Hnmw (in P. Vienna 12003 | doc. 18) | **demotic**

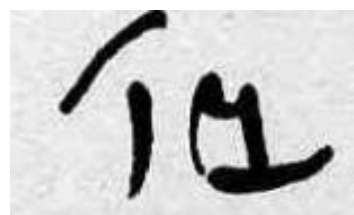


Dhwt (from col. II of P. Vienna 12002 | doc. 17), which is more clearly written in P.



Louvre E 7848 | doc. 9

(discount the little dot at the bottom right) | **demotic**




and later





THE ALPHABET









— **3** | the multifunctional sign can often be 3, but 3 also appears as  (t3, in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**) or as a dot. Compare also *h*3^c=w in ^c below, p. 28 (š3^c) and p. 48 (3*h*).








— **i**, which may also look like ,  (compare *h* below) or  (in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**).



— **c**, or in *h*3^c=w  (from P. Louvre E 7852 | doc. **12**). Note how the scribe writes 3.

 — *w*, in *iw=f*
 and *pzy=k*
, *ʾIr.t=w-r=w*

 and  (lasso).

 — *b* in *snb*
 and in *bn* (neg.)
  and note the use of the ba bird for *b* in *hbr*

 (business associate) (in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. 8).

 — *p*, but note how it is written in *Pz-di-ʾImn-ʾIp* directly below (in P. Louvre E 7856 verso | doc. 13), in which the v-shaped sign is *ʾImn* (see p. 15), followed by an *i*, a *p* + two little strokes below (?) and the house determinative



. In P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10** the scribe wrote yet another *p* in *Ns-Imn-ṯp* which closely resembles the book roll determinative / flesh determinative / walking legs determinative (p. 33):

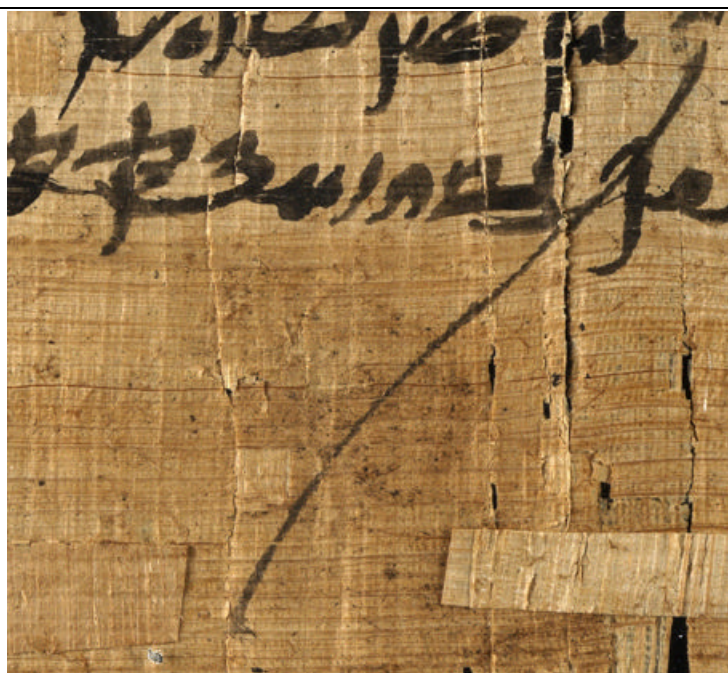


(in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc.

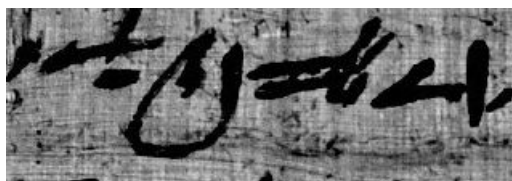
10).



—*f*, in *Hry-šfy*. The *f* often prompts scribes to go wild, as can be seen in the example from P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. **9** directly below, so it is often the easiest one letter sign to recognise (the suffix *=k* allows scribes to do the same, viz. go wild):



— *m*, and in *ir tm(=i) di.t*



(where the ligature

of *m* and book roll may be easily mistaken for a writing of *Imn*) and in P. Louvre E



7851 recto | doc. 10:

A VERY EASY CRASH COURSE IN ABNORMAL HIERATIC



— ***n***, and in *nn* (these)



and *n=n* in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**



, alternating with



in *nty* <*iw*>=*n*.



— ***r*** (+ vertical stroke), in *tšr*



and in *ir* (if)



and note the use of the



reclining lion for *r* in *hbr* (business associate)

(in P.

Louvre E 7847 | doc. **8**) and in *r.r=f* in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**:





—*h*, in P. Louvre E 3228 etiq. H carton H, alternating with



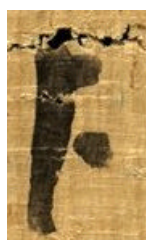
—*h*, which also occurs as



(in P. Louvre E 7856 verso | doc. **13**), allowing the



scribe to embellish at wish, as he does here in *hn* (in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. **9**). Sometimes it may be hard to distinguish from *i*, e.g. in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**:




(in *hn*). See also p. 48 (*zh*).

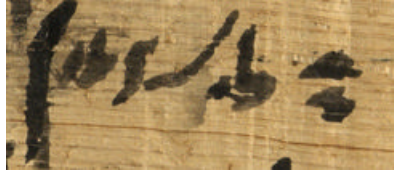


—*h*, with a dot underneath, e.g. in *hbr*



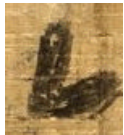
(in

P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. **8**), as a round or in this case oval shape  (in P. Louvre E 7858) and in the shape of the lotus, e.g. in the personal name



Tz-Hri (The Syrian woman), and maybe we could even read the dot after *h* as an *z* (in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. **9**).

May be hard to distinguish from *b*, as is this example from P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**:



— *S*, with both the horizontal and vertical forms in *i.r=s*



and written *sw*

in *dd=s*




, and with horizontal *s* in *s.hm.t* (in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**).



(in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**).



—š, and in *tšr*  or in šz^c (until 9).



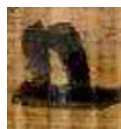
(in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc.



—k, in *kn*, and in *ʿrk* in P. Louvre E 7861 | doc. 15



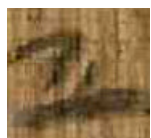
(the dots above





and below do not belong to *k*) or (in P. Louvre E 7858).






—k.



—g (P. Louvre E 3228 etiq. F carton B)

 — *t* or  (in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**).

 — *t* or  (in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10**).

 — *d*.

 — *d*.

THE ARTICLE

It may seem a waste of time to devote an entire section to the article, but since especially *p3* comes in the most fantastic shapes we will have to.

p3



t3



n3



(in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. **9**) and



(in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. **8**). Both

texts were written by the same scribe. See also p. 78.

SOME HANDY SIGN GROUPS AND WORDS

Jack Janssen once related how Černý would take a photo of a hieratic text with him each time he took the bus. To go over illegible passages again and again. And again. The average time a photo of an abnormal hieratic text that you intend to publish will spend on your desk will be years rather than months.

Abnormal hieratic can be very frustrating, because there will always be signs and sign groups that you are unable to read. Patience and endurance are part and parcel of our trade (but the people working in this field are always ready to help). If you look for quick success, try Amarna sculpture instead.

But it would be a waste of time to come to a full stop with each and every sign, sign group or word you encounter. So you will have to be able to recognise the most common ones. Here are some from P. Vienna 12002 | doc. **17** and from a number of other papyri:



iw | Note the subtle difference with *i* directly below (also note that some scribes do not distinguish between the two).




i | Here in *i* (which looks like *iw* with a dot) the second sign consisting of a vertical stroke with a loose dot on top is the seated man with hand to mouth. In its more elaborate form, also in P. Vienna 12002 | doc. **17**, it looks like this:



This is the seated man with hand to mouth used as a determinative. It looks faintly




similar to its demotic equivalent , which came to replace the book roll determinative to denote abstracta (note, however, that Möller II already shows this 'demotic' shape for P. Abbott (!), but as a determinative in abnormal hieratic it is often still preceded by the tusk, which was suppressed in demotic:



In this case it is difficult to decide how to transcribe the multifunctional sign (see p. 12-14). Is it just the tusk or do we put two little ticks above it?



In specific cases the abnormal hieratic scribes still wrote the book roll determinative, which is often indistinguishable from the flesh determinative in, for instance, *h₃.t* (heart) or the walking legs determinative in *īy* (come). Yes, complicated. You may also want to note the way *p* is written in the name *Ns-Imn-īp* (see p. 23), or even as a little dot in *wd₃.t* in line 7 of P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10** (see below p. 85).

In *nn* (these) the scribe of P. Vienna 12002 seems also to have used a different sign to write the book roll: .



ink (l), in which the *nw* pot may be written exactly like this second variant of the book roll determinative (which is not really surprising). But the same sign is also used to write $\frac{1}{2}$, *mn* in *Mn₁* and more ...




ir.t (eye).



ih (COW, OX). If that is the true explanation, by the way. For this you will have to check the original note to P. Vienna 12002 by Günter Vittmann.



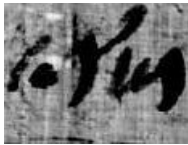
nh (to live), which often looks like *s* + dot  or even a vertical stroke with a dot.



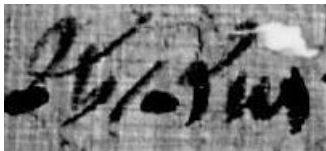
pr-3 (pharaoh), in which the opening of the cartouche very often extends below the sign for 3.



m3^c-hrw (true of voice).



ms (to give birth).



ms (child, calf). For the determinative, which may be the seated child or the dancing man, see *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013), fasc. I, p. 15 note to I. 2 (*Ir.t=w-rf*).



nb (every).



nty (who) | In some abnormal hieratic documents scribes already use the



demotic writing (in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. 8).



rmt nb n p3 t3 (any man on earth) | (in

P. Leiden 1942/5.15 | doc. 7). Note that in this case the seated man in *rmt* is another use of the multifunctional sign.



rh (to know) | Sheer efficiency: only the first sign differs in *m3^c-hrw* (p. 35).



h3.t-sp (regnal year).



hm-ntr (god's servant).



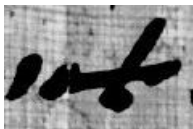
hd (silver, money).



s.hm.t (woman, (adj.) female).



šp (to receive).



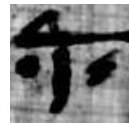
dī(=ī) (I have given, caused) | In this specific case it seems the scribe wrote the infinitive *dī.t* and the curly *w* (the abbreviated quail chick) instead of initial *dī(=ī)*.



d3d3 (head).



dr.t (hand) | Note the subtle difference with *ir.t*



.



dd (to say) | But compare *Hr*

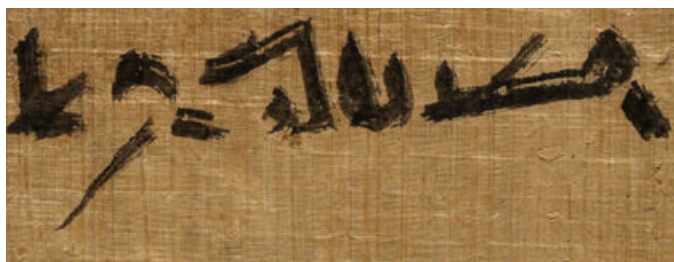


(in P. BM EA 10907 | doc. 4).

PERSONAL NAMES

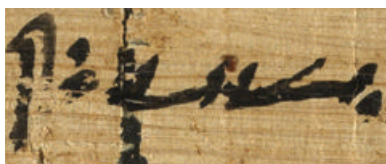
If you memorise the most common personal name-formatives the time spent on transcribing abnormal hieratic will become significantly shorter:

P₃-di-names



P₃-di-Hr-Rsn

(in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc.



8) and *P₃-di-Wsir*

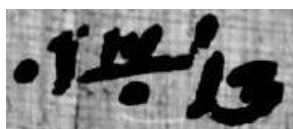
(in P. Louvre 7848 | doc. 9) and *P₃-di-Is.t*



(in P. Louvre E 7856 verso | doc.

13). Note the writing of *p₃*.

Ns-names



Ns-Pth

and *Ns-Imn*



(in P. BM EA 10907 | doc. 4)

H3^c=w-s-n-names

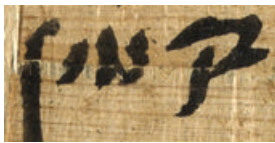
H3^c=w-s-n-Dhwt



(in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. 9)

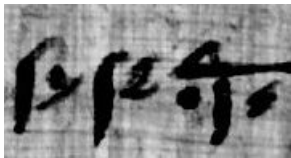
Names composed with *ir.t* (eye)

ir.t-Hr-r=w



(in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. 9)

ir.t=w-r=w



ir.t=w-r_t



(short for *ir.t=w-r-tzy*; in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc. 9)

Note the free variation in the writing of the eye sign.

A VERY EASY CRASH COURSE IN ABNORMAL HIERATIC

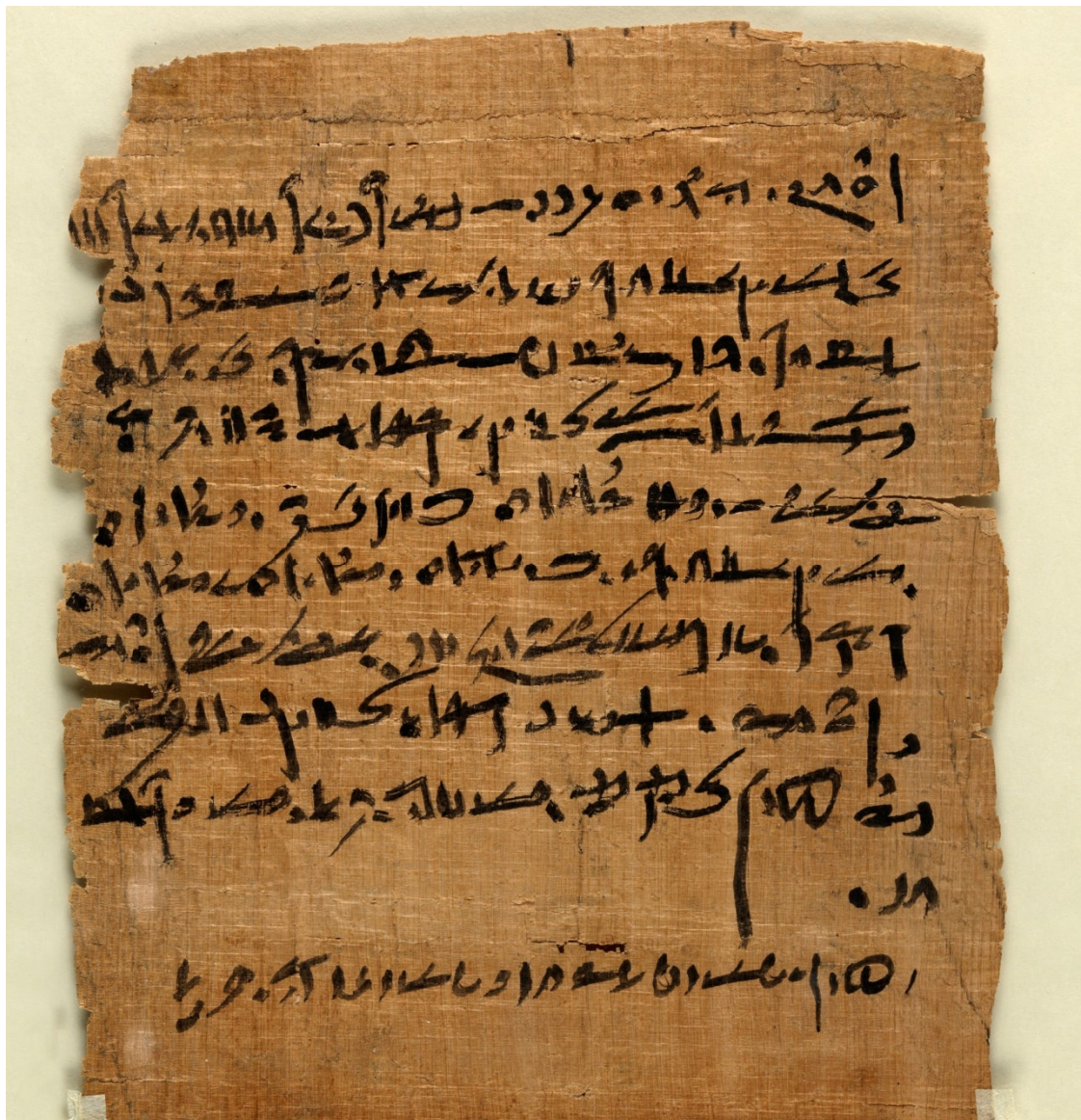


I am convinced that even (in P. Louvre E 7858) is a writing of the name *ʾr.t-w-r-w*. No doubt the same woman is also mentioned in one of the witness signatures in the second column of this text:

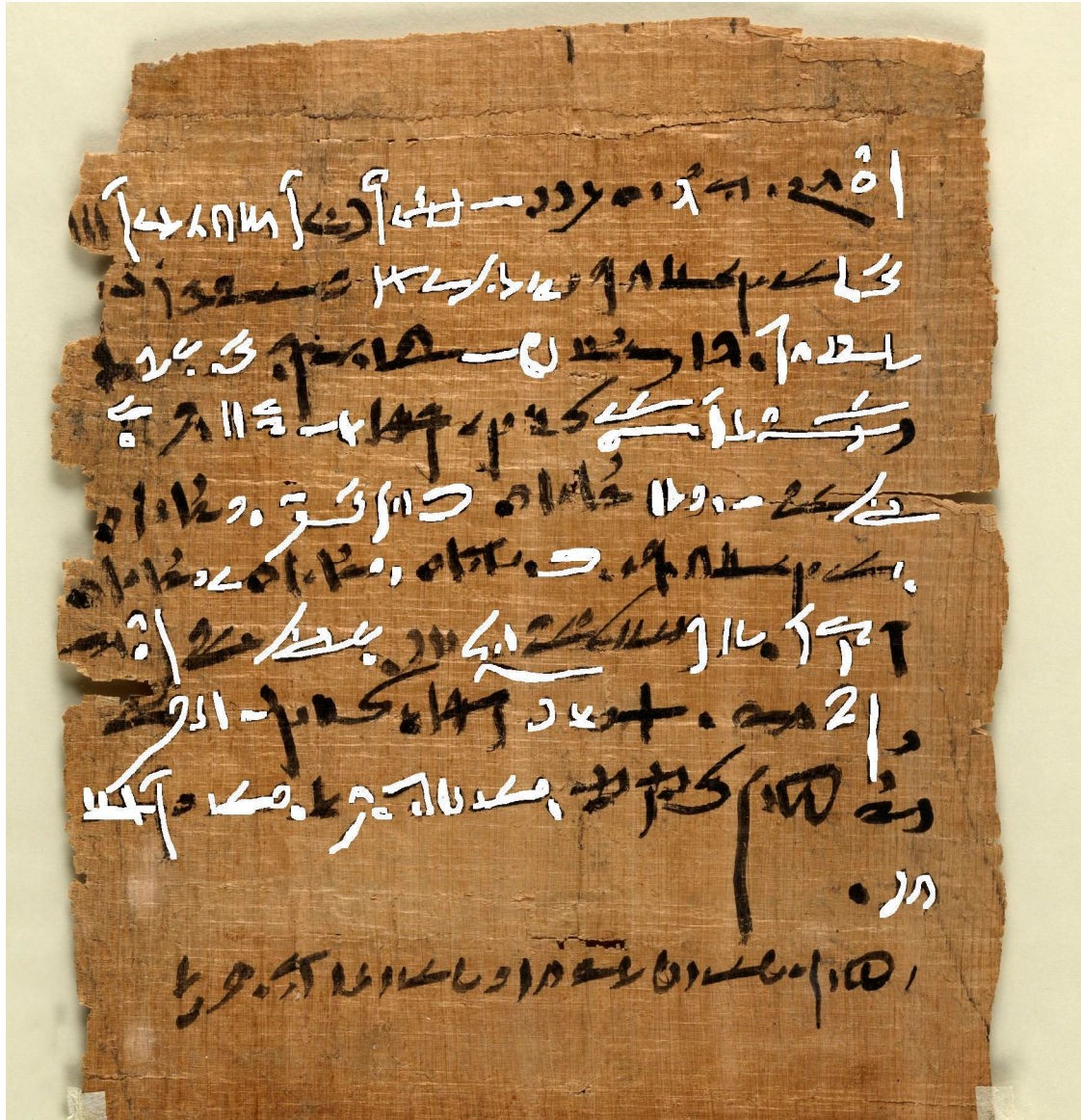


LESSON 2 | THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

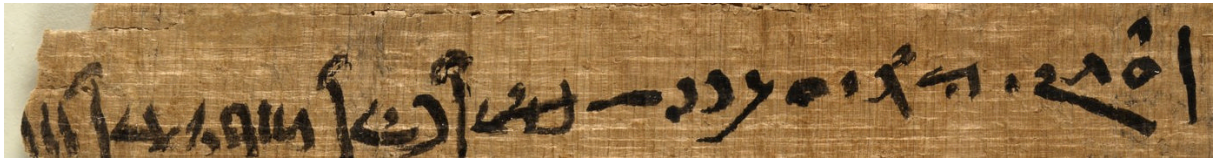
So how does it work? And does it work? Assuming that you have memorised all the signs, sign groups, words and names from the first lesson, we can now try and see if this pays off when we take on another text from *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013), namely doc. 8 (P. Louvre E 7847). This is it:



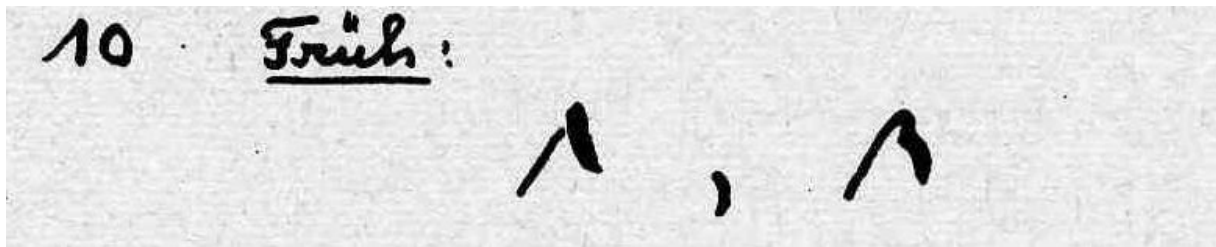
At first sight it looks forbidding, but if we erase the signs, sign groups, words and names from the first lesson, the picture changes. About 25 percent of this text is already in the bag!



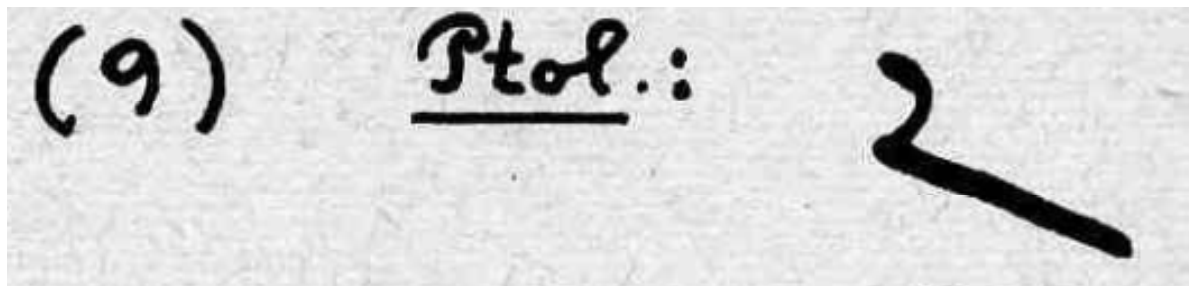
With a few more hints—and for those of you who read demotic: this is where it pays off—we can even extend this to 75% or much more. So here are a few other tips (and words) that will help:



Line 1 is obviously a dating formula, so you can look up the numbers in Möller III or Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (1954):



and



We have seen the š, we see a dot and a round sign. That leaves us with šmw in a very short spelling. Sometimes it is very difficult to discern between the first sign in šmw and in pr.t, and that is why abnormal hieratic scribes like to extend the first stroke of the š to well below the line. Following pr-š we see a clear opening of the cartouche, and then something that looks like the moon + divine determinative. The three strokes following it form ms, and



you should be able to figure out the rest yourself, except perhaps (the seated child determinative), which is the same in demotic (and see also p. 15). The little tick on the left belongs to the closing of the cartouche (always check the photo).



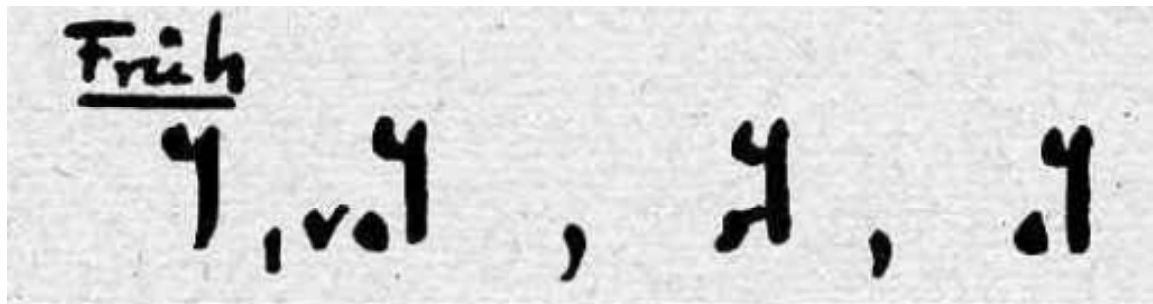
The title in line 2 may look tricky, but this was an abnormal hieratic scribe who knew some demotic and used it whenever it seemed appropriate, so he combined the early demotic writing of *sdm* with the abnormal




hieratic determinative for abstracta, the tusk + seated man with hand to mouth, which leaves us with a title (servant). The seat + house sign should be obvious, so that we get *sdm s.t* ... But the next sign you can probably find in Möller III, and then we get a title that is known from many older sources.

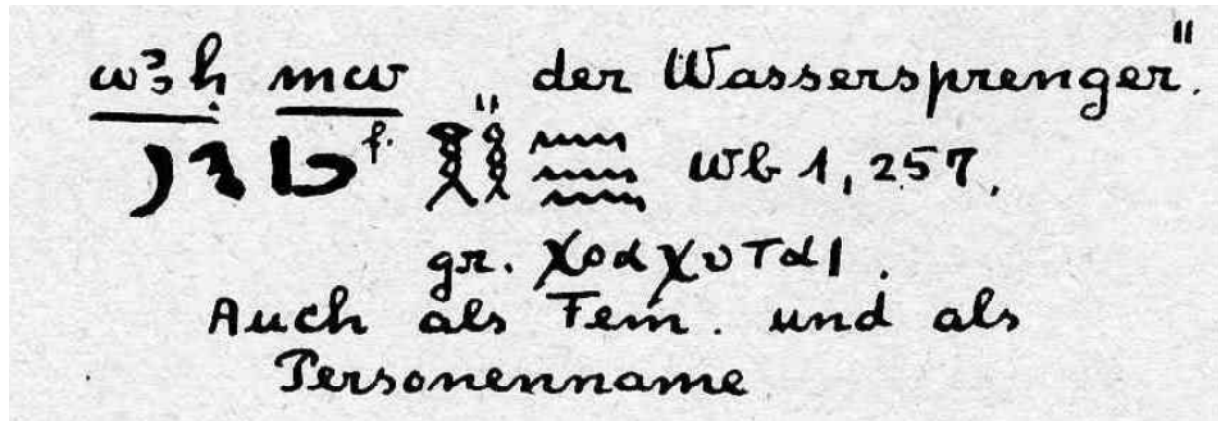


in line 3 looks almost like demotic: *mw.t.t=f Htp*... albeit that *mw.t* in demotic is often more simple:





Apart from the first sign,  would be the perfect demotic way to write *w3h-mw* (choachyte, libationer). This is the demotic version:




And this is an abnormal hieratic scribe who writes a proper *w3h*:



(in P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. 10).

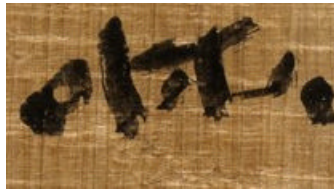


 is the demotic way to start a sales contract, but this abnormal hieratic scribe uses it more creatively: *di=k mtr h3.t(=i) n* (you have satisfied my heart with). The vertical stroke at the extreme left belongs to another word. The spelling of *mtr* is probably the phallus above *t* + two throwing sticks (check the note in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013), which failed to notice that this is simply a damaged passage) + tusk + seated man with hand to

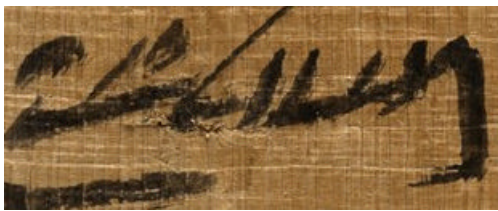
mouth. Note that the determinative looks different from the same determinative presented in the first lesson (p. 32-33). You should be able to figure out the spelling of *ḥz.t(=l)* yourself.



in line 5 is *ḥz* (field), and this particular word should probably be transcribed as *ḥ* with tick above + *ḥ* + double z determinative (the one you often find to determine fields) + vertical stroke + city determinative. Abnormal hieratic has many ways to write *ḥz*, as does demotic.



in line 6 is *pzy=f rsy*. It has the same determinatives as *ḥz*.



In the group in line 7 it should be possible to single out initial *s* and the striking arm determinative + cross or hoe above (and we now suddenly see that this same determinative is also used with *ḥbr* on p. 22), and we are in a context of cultivating fields. So what is the word for plowing? The large horizontal stroke at the lower left belongs to another word.



in line 8 is a verb you have already seen on p. 37. The first sign often has a double vertical stroke. Note that the phonetic complement is not the so-called multifunctional sign described on p. 12-14 (although it occurs very often with this verb, but just a small tick. The last sign should be easy (see page 33).

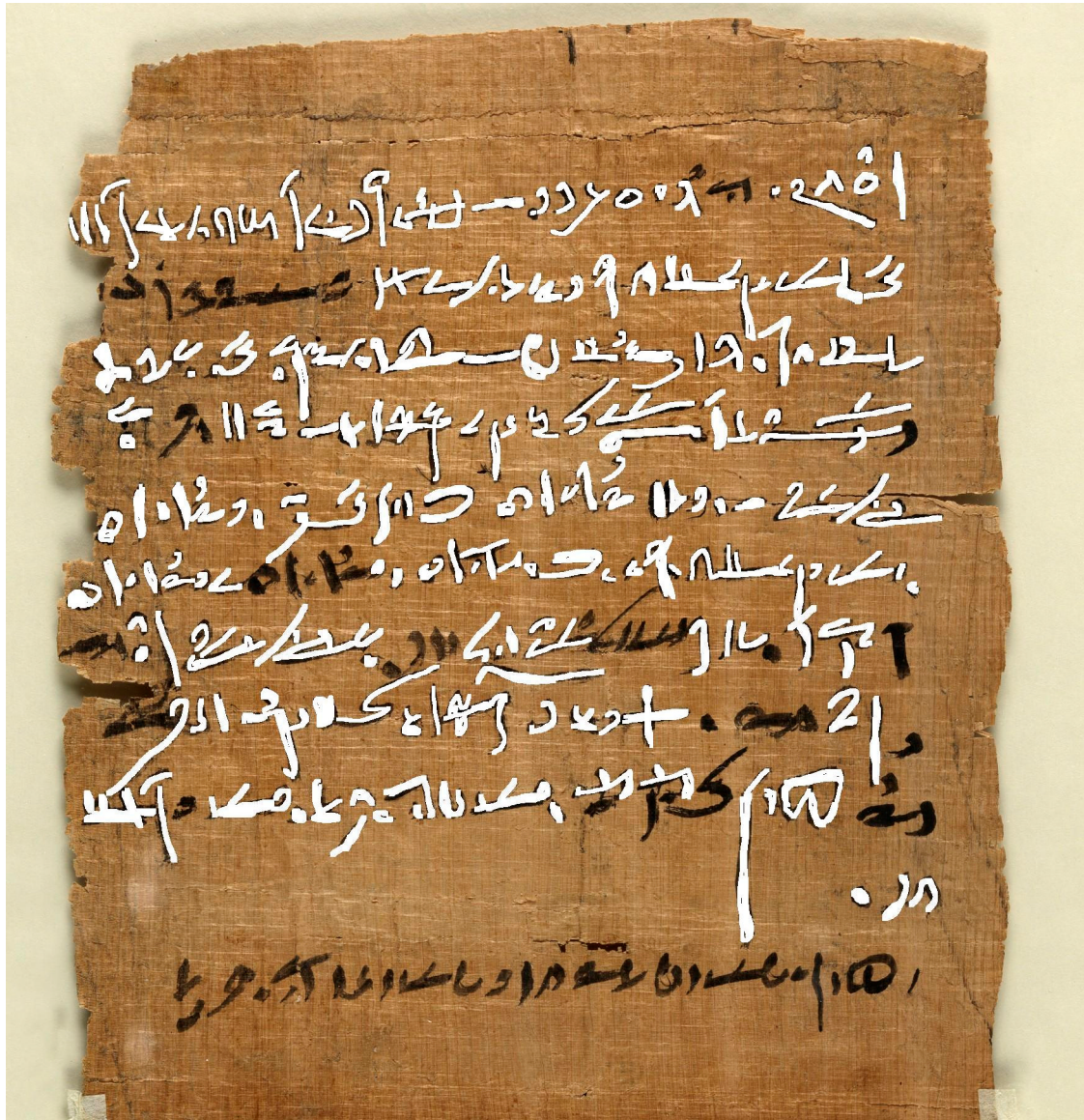


in line 9 will be obvious to anyone who ever did demotic. This is where the contract ends and the scribe puts his signature (*sh*, or *sš* for those who have stopped at the New Kingdom). And after that we may expect the name of the scribe and if not the name, it will probably be a title. In this case it is a title that—with a bit of luck—should not be too difficult:



The ancient Egyptians often referred to the necropolis as *h3s.t*. If you single out the sign for *h3s.t* and then decide how to transcribe the signs below, all you have to do is to find out what is the Egyptian for “manager, supervisor, overseer”.

And if we let all this sink in it turns out that in two easy lessons we have actually managed to identify most signs, sign groups and words in this text:



By now you should have discovered that the last line has become quite easy to read. So that's done and we are left with just a few unread words.

Line 1 starts with a dating formula, and you have already identified *šmw* in



, so it makes sense to assume that the remaining sign group denotes the month in which this contract was written. Try some palaeographies.

In most contracts parties are identified also by their filiation, so “Mr So-and-so **son of** Mr So-



and-so”, and the “son of” here in line 2 looks like this: , although the same scribe writes it differently in *s3 Di-sw-Mn* a little further on:



. Here the filiation sign *s3* has become an elegant oblique tick that was linked to the horizontal *s*. So now we have solved the first sign in line 4 as well.



But we are still left with at the end of line 2.



We have seen that the first sign may be used to write *Hnsw* (on p. 18, representing the ligature of *h* + *n*) but also for *n3*, which is not just the plural article (see p. 31), but also a prefix used with adjective verbs, like *n3-nfr* (to be good), and this is what we have here, an adjective verb.

This particular scribe was heavily influenced by early demotic and that explains the divine



name being written in demotic. is the demotic way to write *ʾmn* (see p. 15), and to the left you can still see traces of the divine determinative, that was allowed in personal names in demotic. It also fits in well with the beginning of the next line, where we see *ʾp* + house determinative.

For those reading demotic the middle part of the name may look slightly familiar. It is *mnḥ*, even though the determinative looks weird:



, in demotic



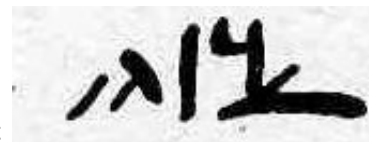
in line 4 looks more or less similar to



mw.t in line 3, but that would not make sense here. Still, Möller III will probably give you a clue.



Some of the signs in (demotic

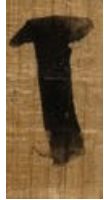


) in line

6 should actually ring a bell. Please note that the oblique stroke in the top left corner belongs to another word. But it seems we have here the same determinatives that we saw before in *ʾḥ* and in *rsy*. The tick in the right upper corner looks exactly like the tick this scribe uses when writing *ʾḥ* (see p. 48) and with some luck you have also decided that the vertical

stroke may be just that, a vertical stroke. So we are left with a single sign that looks like a *t*, a hand (*ḏr.t*), or that other sign that looks so similar (it is in the alphabet).

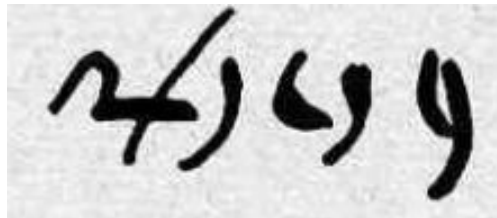




in line 7 is almost hieroglyphic. You have already identified the element *dr.t*, you know what honorific transposition means and you are faintly familiar with Late Period female titles. See e.g. *hm-ntr* on p. 37.



There were still some signs left in the word for “plowing”, and the first is , and as usual Möller III will come to the rescue. Or Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (1954), because this is what it may look like in demotic:



. What you do with the remaining sign is up to you. Look hard enough in Möller III or the *Wb.* and you will find it.



is impossible to solve if you have never seen it before. The oblique stroke in the lower left corner belongs to another word (the ink is blacker). This is the short spelling of *irm* (with), consisting of *r* beneath two oblique traits + vertical stroke + *m* + a dot, which in this case is probably the book roll (*irm(=i)*).



in line 7 and



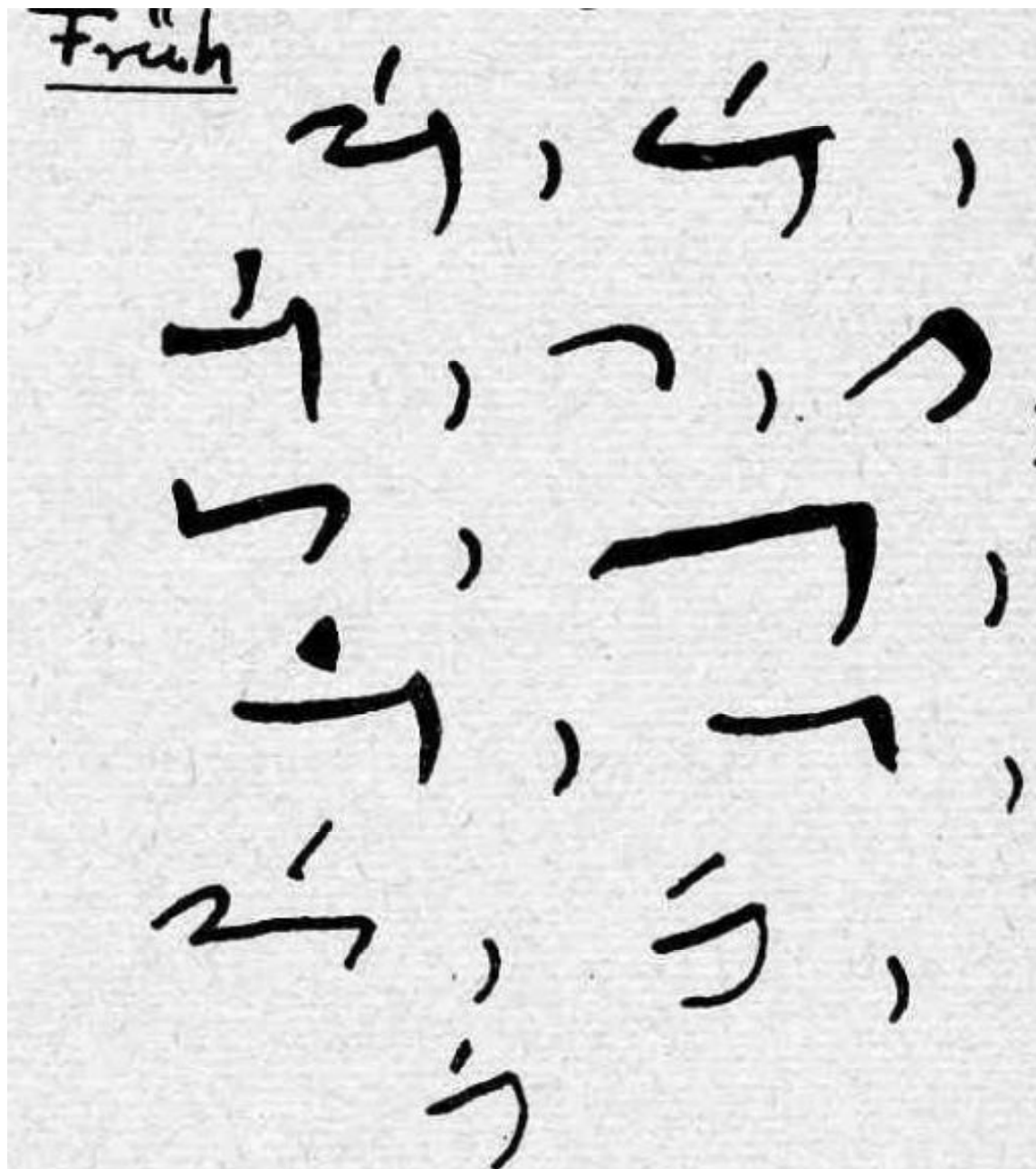
in line 8 are numbers that will be found in



Möller III, and that will also give you a clue to the remaining sign that was not included in the alphabet in the first lesson. The dots that remain are probably just dots.

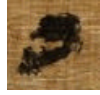


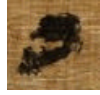
in line 9, in which the little tick in the upper left corner belongs to another word is *sp* (remainder), and with a bit of luck this clue allows you to solve the word at the end of line 8. Remember that this text is about a late payment of the share of a business associate. In demotic this word—sometimes perhaps written by an account scribe a hundred times a day—acquires the most fantastic shapes, and this is where Vleeming, *Gooseherds* (1991) comes to the rescue on p. 229-230 §67. It may look similar in demotic (but this abnormal hieratic scribe was already heavily influenced by early demotic):



If you haven't found the first sign in Möller yet, you will

have to look further.



And we have just learned that  may be the early demotic way to write *ʾImn*. The signatures of the scribe and his son are really complicated. In his own name the scribe Petehorresne writes *Hr* in a way that almost looks like abnormal hieratic *ʾImn*, whereas he writes *ʾImn* in the name of his father (*P3-di-ʾImn-ʾIp*) in early demotic.

His son, who signs this text as a witness, writes *ʾImn* in his own name (*P3-di-ʾImn-ʾIp*) in abnormal hieratic.

So did we really solve all these reading problems in two easy lessons? No. We didn't. If that were the case anyone could do abnormal hieratic. What we have done so far is to break down a mental barrier. And show that you can actually learn to read abnormal hieratic.

To check how much can already be done with the little knowledge that we have just acquired, we will apply the erasure principle to another text, this time far more difficult than the ones we have seen so far, namely P. Leiden 1942/5.15 | doc. 7, that was published by Sven Vleeming. This is his facsimile:

245 210 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11
 7 24 12 - 24 11 11 11 11 11 11 11
 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11
 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11

1945. 12. 24. 11. 16

٢١ - خواتین کا شمار ۹۰ سالہ سے زیادہ کی عمر والوں میں کیا جاتا ہے۔

21214-172.04 / 01.12.17 1233.4

Handwritten: ۱۰۲۳۴۵۶۷۸۹۱۰

2, 11, 2, 4, 1, 0, 5, 1, 5, 9, 7, 1, 2, 5, 2, 1, 6, 1

פ. 131 א. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844.

[Handwritten signature]

אשר יצאנו ממצרים ונעלה אל הרי סיני

የገንዘብ ምርመራ

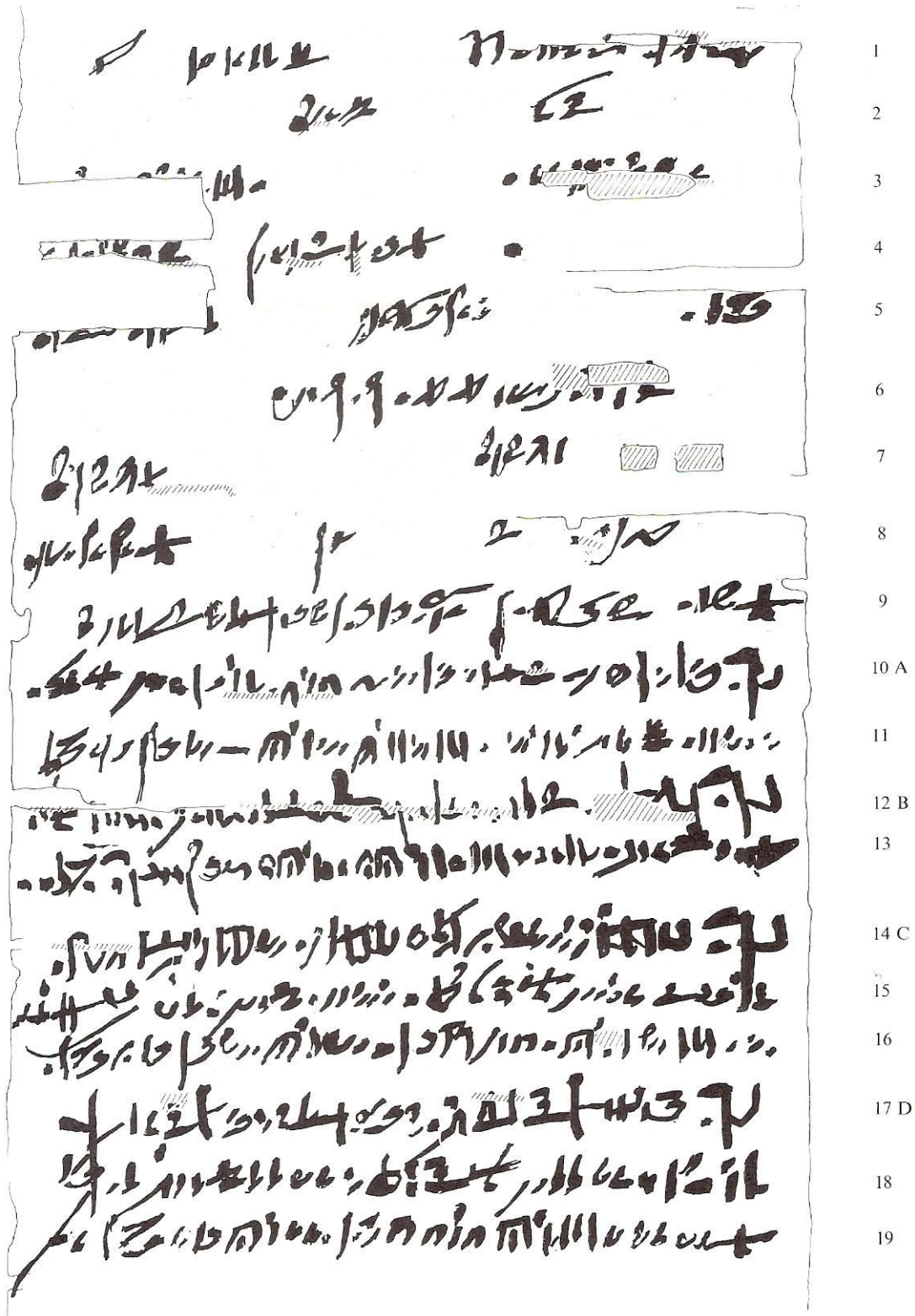
و انچه در مورد (تجارت) و غیره در این کتاب مذکور است

[illegible]

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840.


אשר יצאנו ממצרים ונעלה אל הרי סיני ונעלה אל הר סיני ונעלה אל הר סיני

After eight lines erasing became boring, so I stopped. But everything that was erased is something you have seen before in the first two lessons:



So what makes abnormal hieratic so difficult that people are unable to trust their own eyes? The answer is probably that there is abnormal hieratic and abnormal hieratic. Each scribe has his own handwriting and peculiarities, and sometimes they obviously have a bad hair day.

Even though we refer to both P. Vienna 12002 | doc. **17** and P. Leiden 1942/5.15 | doc. **7** as abnormal hieratic, the first text has a very uncial quality to it so that it is very easy to read (if you know how), whereas the Leiden text is extremely cursive and much more difficult.

I am pretty sure that if you were told that  in line 1 is the name of a pharaoh from the Late Period written with one letter signs most of you would come up with the right solution. You have seen all the individual signs, you have seen what the ending of the cartouche is like, so who could it be?

It is now time to try and see if you can read a text on your own, namely P. Cairo 30657 | doc. **6**. Even though it is relatively easy to read, don't worry if you can't read it all at once. You are not expected to do this flawlessly. The more mistakes you make, the more you will never make again.

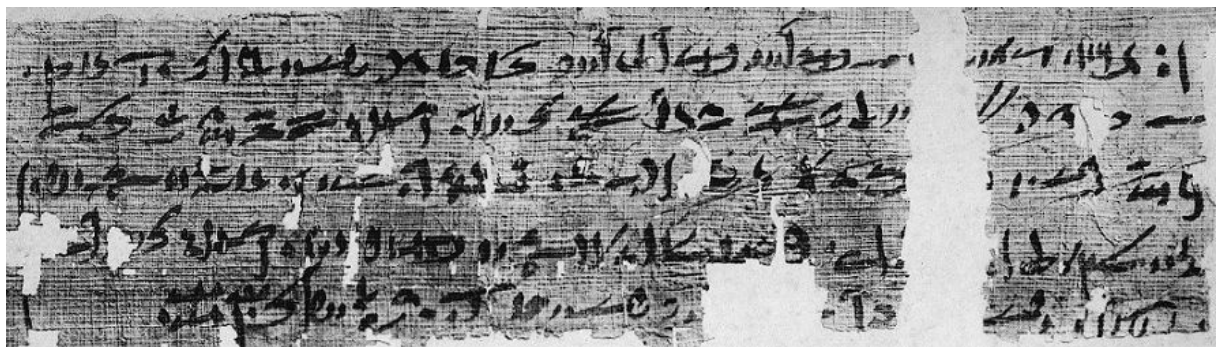
Anyway, the best learning results are achieved if you put your ideas on the table in class and discuss them. There is no such thing as a stupid question. The only stupid thing in class is not asking a question when there is something you don't understand.

LESSON 3 | THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION WORKS, BUT ONLY TO SOME EXTENT

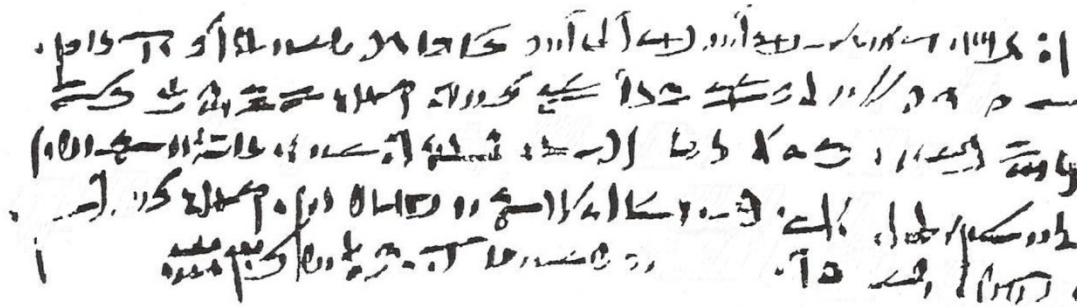
Erasing the signs, sign groups and words that you already know is actually precisely what hieraticists and demotists do when they try to read a new and difficult text, but this is of course not enough. You have to have most common words, names and stock phrases in your head. So in each of these lessons we will single out some of these words and names that you should memorise. The more you know, the more you can erase forthwith. It is really a very simple procedure. What makes abnormal hieratic so much fun is that sometimes it takes you months to read the most obvious words you can imagine. Just check any abnormal hieratic publication and you will notice that there are always signs, sign groups and words that “have to be left for a future generation”.

P. Cairo 30657 | doc. 6 is a strange text. This scribe was very confused. He is the son of the scribe who wrote P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. 8 and 7848 | doc. 9, a man already influenced by early demotic, and it shows. We know that he started his career in the office of his father. In fact, in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. 8 we have seen him sign the document written by his father as a witness.

Most scholars have never been able to decide to which scribal tradition P. Cairo 30657 | doc. 6 belongs, saying that it was either abnormal hieratic or demotic. In fact, it is a hybrid. There is some abnormal hieratic in it, and some early demotic. This is the photo from the *Catalogue Général*:



And this is the (slightly reworked) facsimile made by Michel Malinine:



Note that the gap on the photo was—according to Malinine—in reality not as big as is suggested. If you carefully compare both versions you will be quick to note for yourself where the facsimile does not do justice to the original (well, the photo, actually). Which is not surprising, because the making of a facsimile is all about eye-hand coordination and drawing what you think you see. And concentration. Try to draw fascimiles for eight hours a day and soon you will be mad.

This is line 1:



For those of you who do not read demotic we will single out the signs, sign groups and words that were written in demotic. In line 1, for instance, you should not yet be able to



decipher . This is the early demotic way to write *w3h-mw*, which you have already seen on p. 47. All other signs, sign groups and words we saw in lessons 1 and 2. If we compare this writing to the standard abnormal hieratic writing



we see that apart from the book roll + oblique stroke



determinative (which is often there in demotic), the only difference between the two



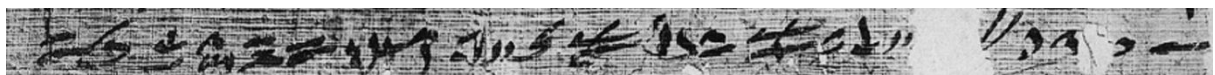
scripts is actually the first sign. Still, both and are transcribed in the same way, namely as the *w3h* sign. For the proper way to write *w3h* in abnormal hieratic, see p. 47.

Maybe *p3* in the personal name that follows is a problem because you have seen on p. 30 that in abnormal hieratic it is written differently, but that is because this scribe writes *p3* in



demotic, which—by the way—is exactly the sign that we have come to know as the multifunctional sign in abnormal hieratic (see p. 12-14). So did the Late Period hieratic scribes in the delta who designed the demotic script really single out ‘their’ multifunctional sign (if they had one) to become the article *p3*?

Line 2 presents some problems:



The long horizontal sign at the beginning is easy (see p. 25), but then the papyrus is damaged so that some signs are lost. With a bit of luck, however, you will notice that the damaged



is strikingly similar to



in line 1. And if there is a title, there is bound to be a name that follows, and if there is a name, there is bound to be a filiation. All these signs and sign groups we have already seen in lessons 1 and 2.



The only thing that is really strange in is the fact that our scribe writes *mtr* with the demotic seated man with hand to mouth determinative (see p. 32-33), whereas his father still did this in abnormal hieratic in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. 8, in a passage that we will reproduce here:



may be a problem, even though this word consists of one letter signs, a few determinatives and plural strokes only.



we have seen earlier in *rmt nb n pz tz* on p. 36. The end of the line



contains a nice problem of interpretation, perfect for a discussion in class. But you could also check the note in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013), fasc. I, p. 29.

By now you should have realised that the vertical line touching the sign in the upper left corner may actually belong to another word. Always check the photo, and if you publish, always check the original.

Line 3 is (fortunately) fraught with difficulties, partly due to the damage to the papyrus:



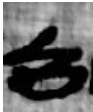
All the signs in  we have seen before, and even part of



. Here Malinine's facsimile




is a great help. We did

see  before in P. Vienna 12002 | doc. 17, where *s.hm.t* admittedly looks a bit different. In our text it looks more like *ir*, or even *wn*. The sign in the middle could be the walking legs, but that would make no sense. It appears to be a seated man determinative, so perhaps the scribe forgot the obligatory dot after it that is needed to write the seated woman determinative (see p. 67 below).

The last sign is not the seated child, but you will find a clue in the early demotic palaeography in *P. Tsenhor*.



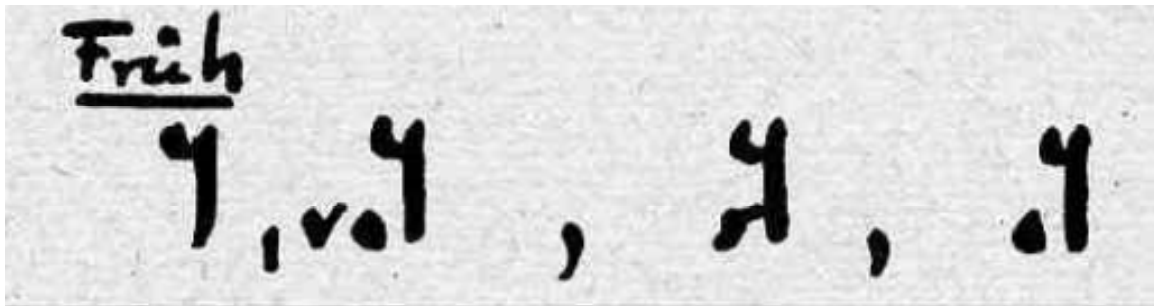
We now expect the name of a woman: , and it is there, even though it is heavily damaged. We know this same woman is also mentioned in P. BM EA 10113 | doc. 1, where it is written:



. The black line running from top to bottom slightly left to the middle is a break, and you have actually seen this name pattern before. So perhaps you should check on p. 40.

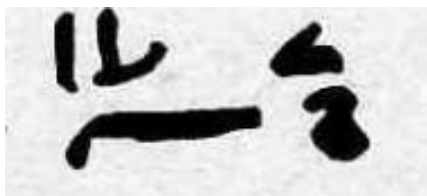


If you read demotic you will have the advantage, even though this is a very bad photo (so check Malinine's facsimile).

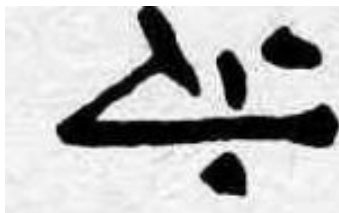


we

have already seen earlier on p. 46, and the first word in demotic looks like this:



or



is a reading problem, so we will have to check the note written by Malinine, and the note in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013).

Line 4



We have actually already seen the first part of this line before in P. Vienna 12002 | doc. 17, although there the first person singular applies:



. Also, here the seated child that follows is not a determinative, but a noun. This is the clause in which party A guarantees to party B that there will be no third party approaching him to stake a claim, and this third party is often a member of the family. So the most likely candidates are, as in P. Leiden 1942/5.15 | doc. 7:



šr šr.t sn snt, and this is the typical hieratic way to



write a seated woman determinative: .



you will have to find in Möller III or El-Aguizy. Once you have found this verb, you will know how to transcribe the signs that follow it. This example from P. Louvre E

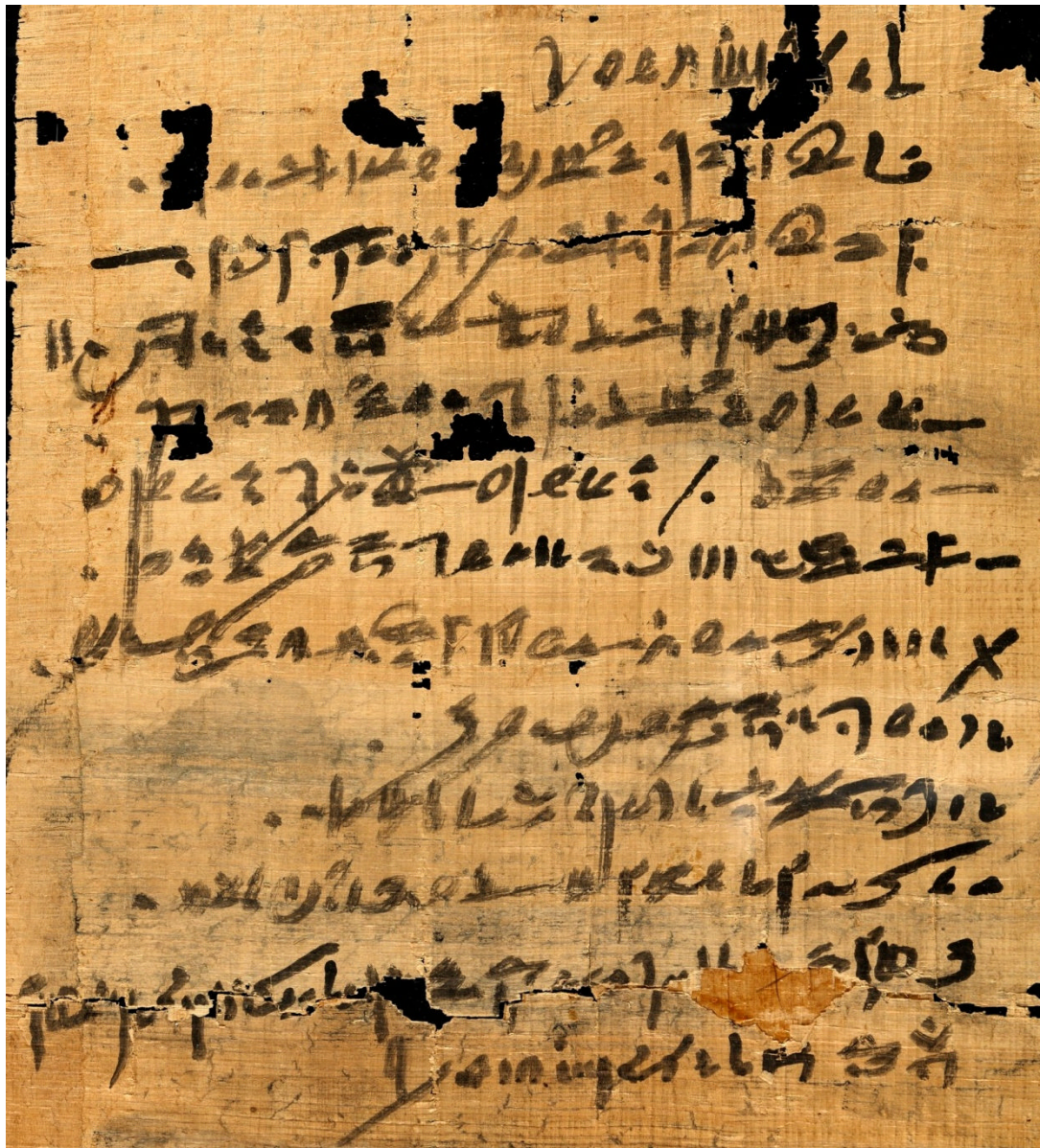


7861 | doc. 15 is more clear. The little oblique tick in the bottom right corner belongs to the preceding word.

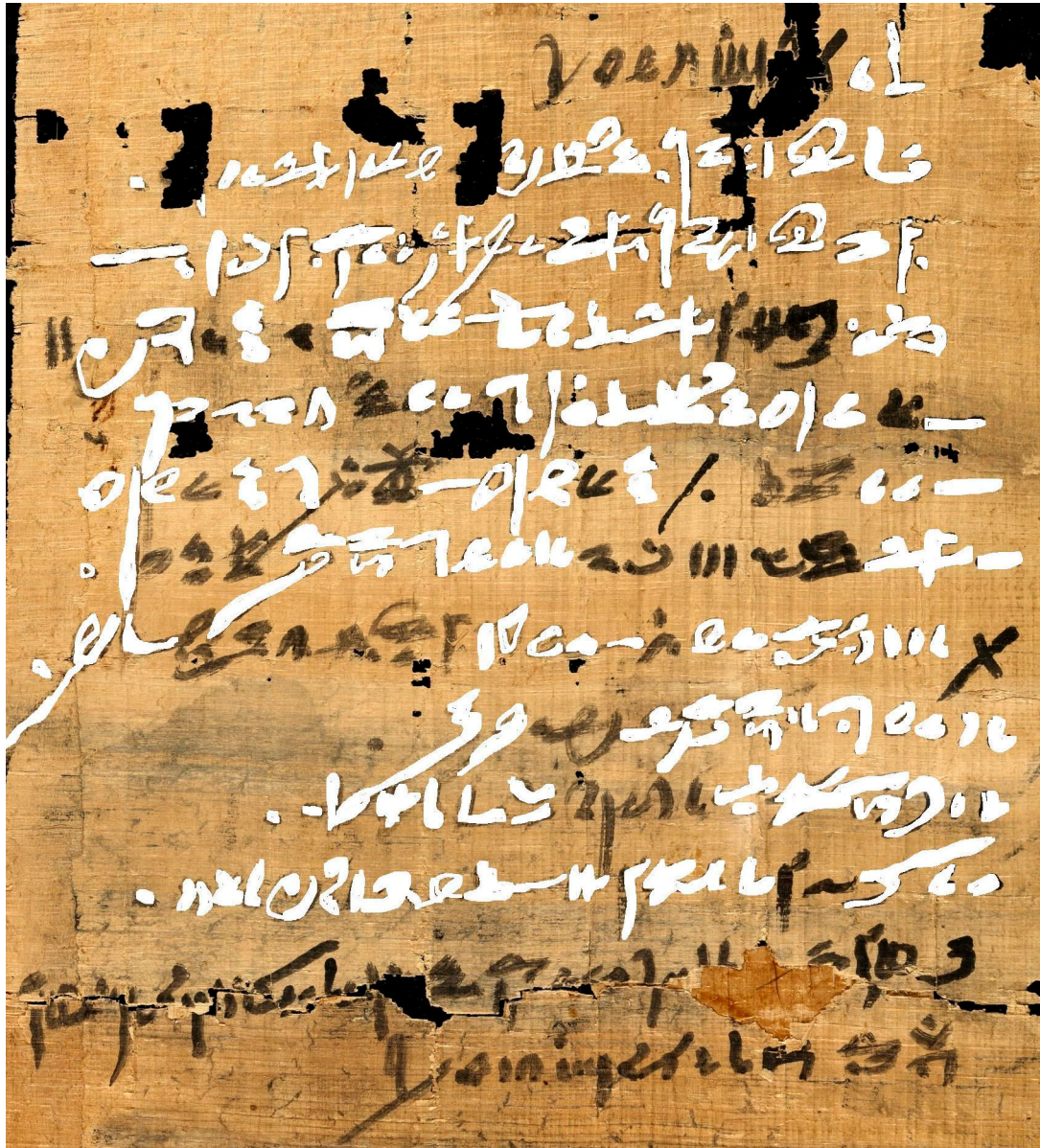
Line 5 is broken, but should not present any reading problems.

LESSON 4 | RIGHT, LET'S MOVE ON TO A REALLY DIFFICULT TEXT

So far we have been looking at relatively easy texts. This one is much more difficult, namely P. Louvre E 7851 recto, doc. 10 in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013). This is it:



This one has actually taken me some years, on and off (the small comfort is that Griffith, Černý and Malinine all had photos of this very difficult text in their archives, but no transcription was found, suggesting that they gave up at some point in time). Frustrating, vexing, demanding, that is exactly the way abnormal hieratic should be. Still, If we erase the signs, sign groups and words that we have seen in the previous lessons, we get this:



You may find this very hard to believe, but all the signs, sign groups and words that were erased we have really seen before. This time we will first run through the erased signs, one

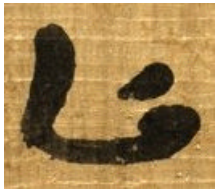
by one, and check where exactly we have seen them before (not all, by the way). If you haven't done so already, try to memorise as much of them as you can!

Line 1

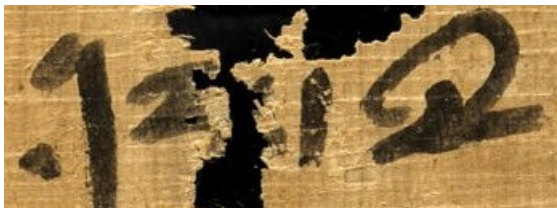


ḥ3.t-sp (regnal year) | See p. 36.

Line 2



dd (to say) | See p. 38.



w3ḥ-mw (choachyte, libationer) |

See p. 47.



ḥtp (to be satisfied) | See p. 46.



Imn (Amun) | See p. 15.



s3 (son of) | See p. 13 and 51.



dī (to give) | See p. 37, 47 and 51.



Imn (Amun) | See p. 15.



p3 (article) | See p. 30.



nh (to live, life) | See p. 34.

Line 3



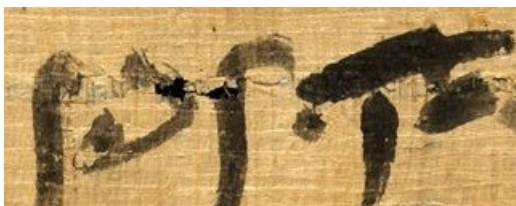
hn (and, with) | See p. 26.



Imn (Amun) | See p. 15.



pzy=f it (his father) | See p. 48 and the alphabet.



Ir.t=w-r=w (Ituru) | See p. 40-41.



n (dat. to) | See p. 25.

Line 4



s.ḥm.t (woman, Mrs) | See p. 37.



ʾIs.t (Isis) | See p. 16. The horizontal tick in the upper left corner belongs to the next word.



šp (receive) | See p. 37 and 49. Check the photo on p. 69 to see which ticks do not belong with this word.



=*n* (we) | See p. 25.



t3 (article) | See p. 30.



dni.t (share) | See p. 52.

Line 5



n (gen. of) | See p. 25.



| See p. 48.



Wsir (Osiris) | See p. 16.



nty (which) | See p. 36.



| Although the original publication transcribes the first two signs as *n* above two small strokes, these could very well be just two *nw* pots (for which see p. 33). The two groups that make up the determinative are actually the same as in *w3h-mw* in line 2 of this text. See p. 47.

Line 6

The signs already identified all come from previous lines.

Line 7

The signs already identified all come from previous lines, except (on the right):



ir or *ir=f* (to do, make, produce).

Line 8



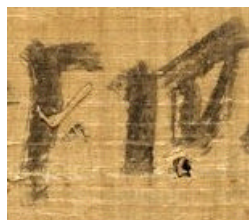
iw (converter) | See p. 32.



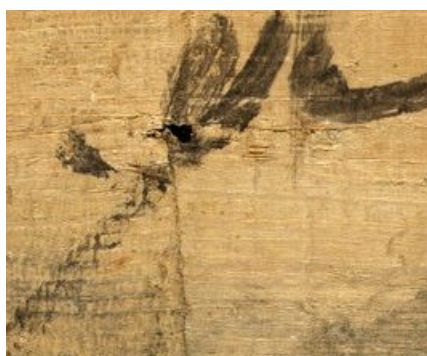
i.ir (to do, make, produce) | See p. 32 and 76.



or



sh (scribe) | See p. 49 and 86.



n.im=f (in it, from it). | See p. 66 (*n.im=w*).

Line 9

The signs already identified all come from previous lines, except:



n3 (article) | See p. 31.



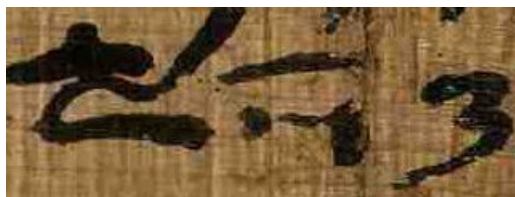
r.r=f (for it?) | See the alphabet.

Line 10



mn (there is not) | See the alphabet. The little

dot in the upper left corner belongs to the next word. The *m* (p. 24) + *n* (p. 25) should be clear enough and we have seen the plural strokes being written like this before (p. 25). With some imagination you can even read the upper sign in the determinative. The lower sign is a problem, but if this is the standard writing of *mn*, there is only one choice left, and we have even seen that sign before (p. 43). This is a clear example from P. Louvre E 3228 etiq



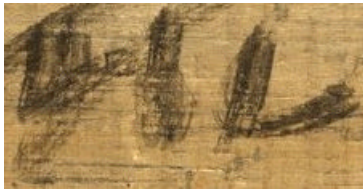
F carton B:



di.t (for the preposition *m-di(=i)*) | The little ticks in the lower right corner belong to the previous word.



nb r (any ... to) | See p. 64.



dd.t=s (say it) | See p. 27 and 38 (note that the little tick on top of *dd* is missing here). The vague oblique strokes you see belong to the previous line.



irm(=t) (with you) | See p. 53. Note that abnormal hieratic *irm* looks similar to demotic *hr* (prep. on) and *w3h* (to put, lay).

Line 11



H3^z=w-sw-n-

Is.t (Khausenese) | See p. 40 and check the photo on p. 69 to see which traces do not belong here.



s3 Ns-Imn-Ip (son of

Nesamunip) | See p. 39, 15 and 23.

So we are actually left with just a few passages, signs and sign groups that we cannot read yet.

At this point we will have to put our faith in some of the essential tools of the trade, namely Möller III (all time hero), El-Aguizy, the concise abnormal hieratic palaeography by Joost Golverdingen and Sven Vleeming's *Gooseherds* (1991), p. 191-252, dealing with all kinds of very common signs, sign groups and words in demotic, more than once also including the (abnormal) hieratic material.

Line 1



is obviously part of the dating formula, and it is broken (even if we do know that the verso of P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10** was written on the same day, let us pretend that we don't know). But we are in luck, because the dating is preserved in the witness signature at the bottom:



You can check Möller III for the year date, and it should not be a problem to read the month date. I see four clear vertical strokes with a little tick above (probably the moon sign), so *ibd* IV it is. Perhaps you do remember the discussion on p. 45 on the difficulty of deciding between *pr.t* and *šmw* in abnormal hieratic (and demotic, for which see again the last section in Vleeming, *Gooseherds* (1991)), but the two datings seem to agree. Apart from the fact that they both write a *pr* sign and not a *š* with the extended right vertical stroke (see p. 45) that is often characteristic of *šmw*, the first dating uses the multifunctional sign and the second just the ideogramme stroke (the same was done on the verso), which would be very awkward for *šmw*. The day date will be very easy to retrieve from Möller.

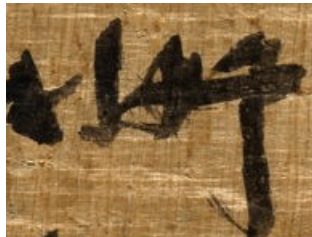
Line 4



looks like a reading problem, but in fact we have already seen it in P. Vienna 12002 | doc. **17**, the very first text in this crash course, in the abnormal hieratic




expression (p. 11 l. 6). The way the first ligature is written suggests that the abnormal hieratic scribes never really found a solution to write it in an elegant way. And the determinative we have seen as well, in P. Louvre E 7847 | doc. **8**, in *h3.t(=i)*, for which see p. 43:




. If we now look at the first ligature once more, the upper sign in



both P. Louvre E 7851 | doc. **10** and in P. Vienna 12002 | doc. **17**  is the almost hieroglyphic rendering of a one letter sign we encountered in the alphabet on p. 26. So is there a verb that starts with an *h* and has the heart determinative?




The verb *šp* is constructed with the dative and we know the addressed party is a woman.

The little strokes and ticks are often complicated, but  actually belongs to the previous sign group.

The most obvious reading for  is probably the correct one.

Line 5

The sign  is a problem, but it seems we have no alternative besides transcribing it as the double z.

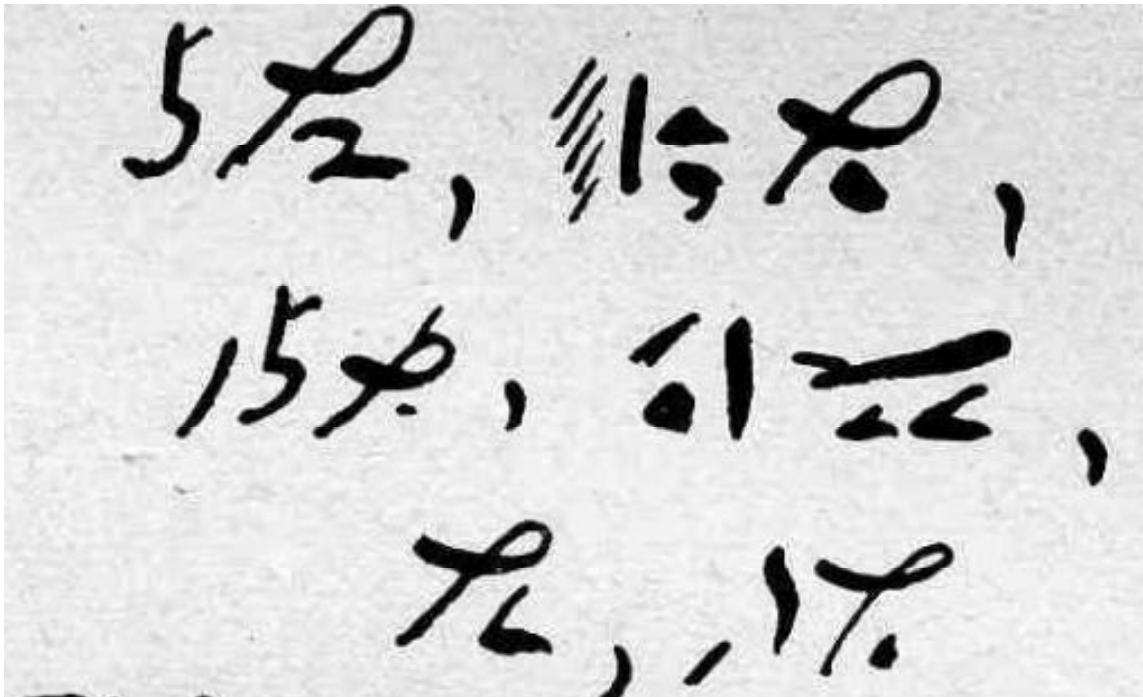


See e.g. Gasse, *Données nouvelles* (1988), pl. XIV no. 88.

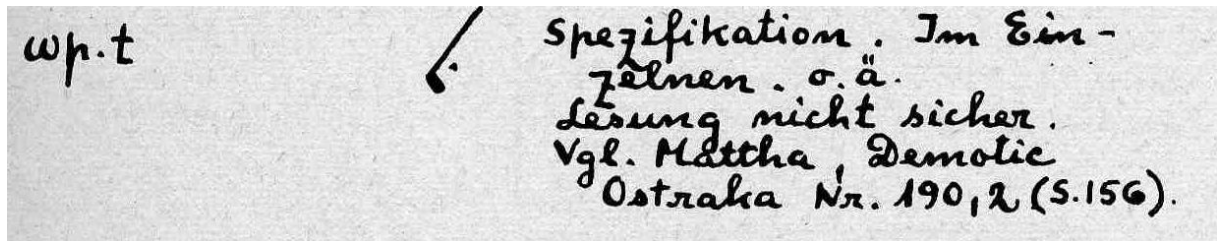
Line 6



is not very clear, but it seems to come closest to demotic *mh*_ⲗ
(north, northern):



was left unread in the original publication, but it is the same as demotic



which is now read *wp-st* (specification).

The next word is a reading problem.....

Line 7



is after many years still a complete mystery to me.



in which the lower oblique trait at the right belongs to a word in the line above, actually consists of one letter signs and a dot, which may be the book roll (see p. 33): $w + \underline{d}(z) + t$.

Line 8



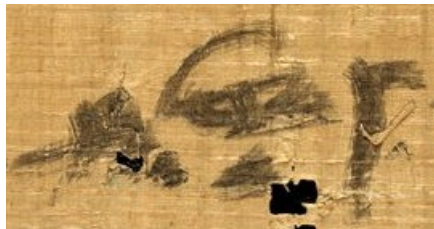
which in reality is slightly longer, is found in Möller III under “Brüche”, as is



We can read the first part that is clearly *sh*, even if we do not know the exact spelling (see p. 77), but the remaining



or



is still unread.



In the original publication the determinative of this word was transcribed as the standard grain + plural strokes determinative (check the photo on p. 69 to see which traits do not belong here), but on second thought this could actually be simply the single grain corn above plural strokes. The first sign we also see in *pr* (go out) on p. 93 and in *pr.t* (peret season) on p. 69 (last line), and the *r* (here just a blob) + *t* combination for

pri (seedcorn) generally also features an oblique stroke to the left of the *t*, which is very pronounced here.

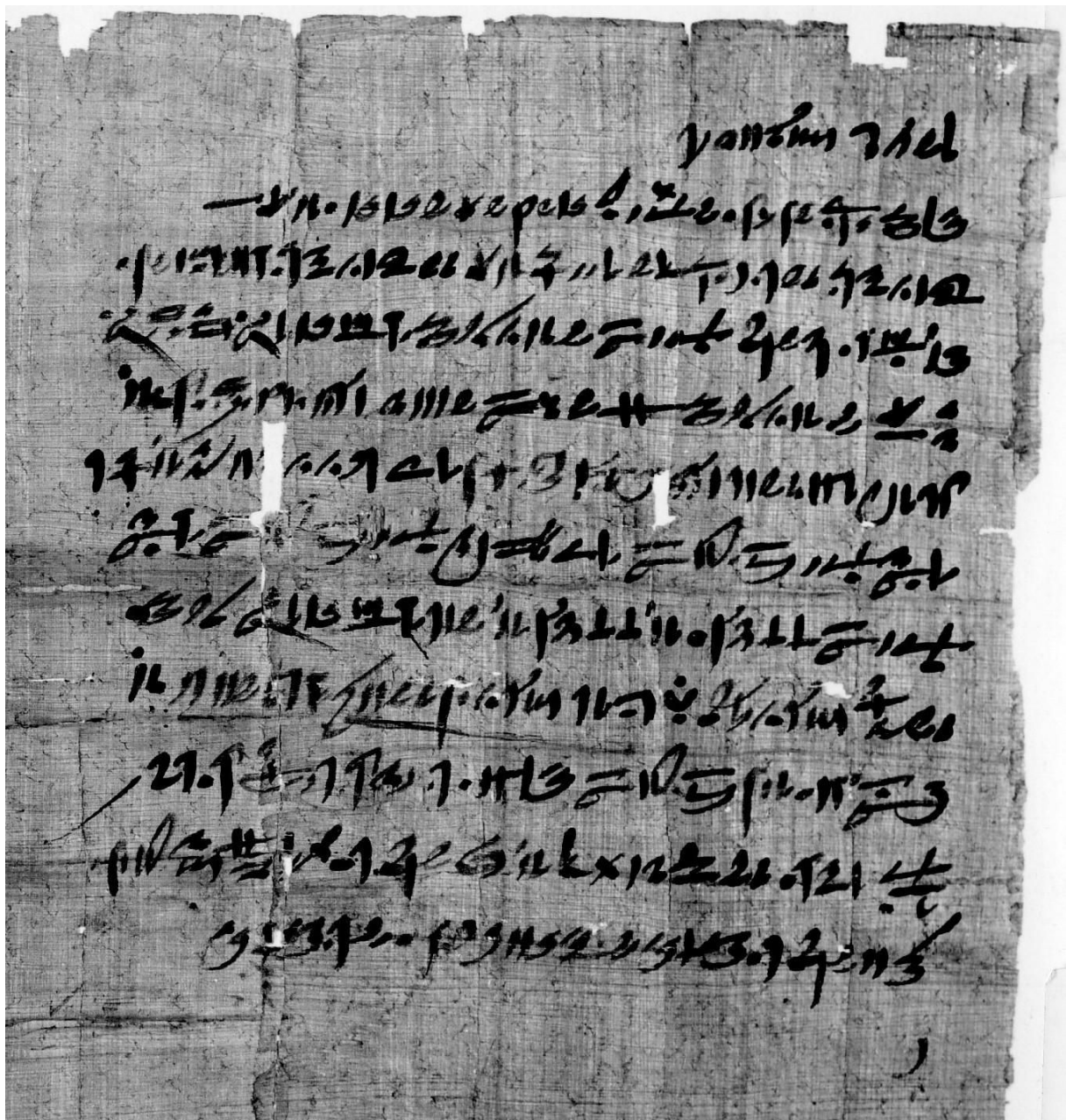
Line 9



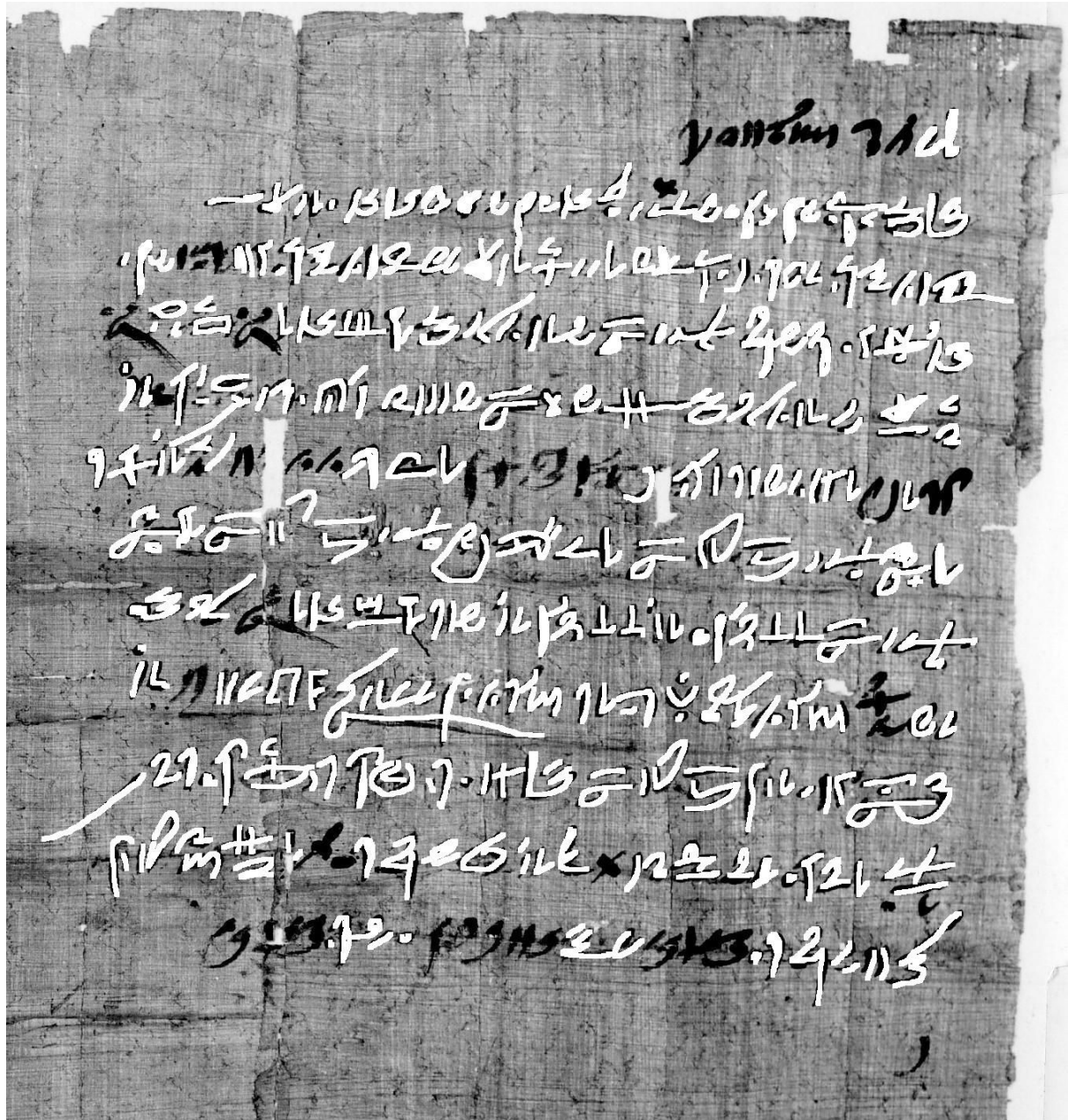
Since P. Louvre E 7851 recto | doc. **10** contains formulas never encountered before in a Late Period land lease it took considerable time to transcribe (let alone understand) it. This word was especially difficult, and the reading is doubtful. See Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, p. 274-275 n. *i* and Malinine, *Choix*, I (1953), p. 69-70 n. 16.

LESSON 5 | THE VIENNA PAPYRUS REVISITED

Of course things are never as simple as we think they are, but just like any other thing you can learn to read abnormal hieratic. If you memorise the few signs, sign groups, words and personal names from this syllabus, and apply what you have learned to the text we started with (P. Vienna 12002 | doc. 17) and then turn the page,




you will see that in a few easy lessons we nearly cracked the entire text:



Line 1




What remains to be read in  in line 1 should be peanuts. You know there must be a year date, so check Möller III. You see four strokes with a tick above, so you have got your month and as for the season, we have talked about *pr.t* and *šmw* (on p. 45 and 81) and the first sign does not look anywhere near these.

Line 3


We will not even bother with transcribing  in l. 2, because the scribe already did it for



us, and in  the *nw* pot has become a mere dot. The man involved here is Nesyptah, the son of the famous Late Period strongman Montuemhat.

Line 4



The determinative used twice in  *iprt tšr* (or *tšr.t*) is not in Möller III, but Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (1954) lists an entry *wš* (be empty) written like so:



The hair determinative.

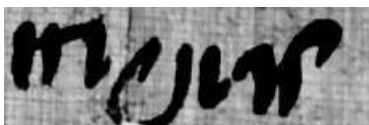
Line 5

This is a common phenomenon when reading abnormal hieratic. Your eyes will often play



tricks on you. The sign that I could not read in [the image] was transcribed by Günter Vittmann as a dot followed by *i* (belonging to *dbz* in the next line. It took me five minutes to see that he was absolutely right.

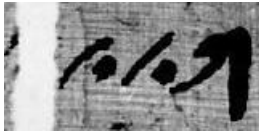
Line 6





This preposition is often very easy to distinguish, because scribes like to play with the first sign (*dbz*, which I found easily in Möller III under 462), which is followed by *b* + *w* + book roll, then the *l* to introduce the suffix =*s* which is written *sw* (we saw this before in *dd=s* on p. 27). Compare the ligature of the *w* + book roll here with *m* + book roll in *tm(=i)* on p. 24.



We have seen all this before on p. 82.



And should be easy. The first sign you have seen in the alphabet, and then we see two dots with oblique strokes. The determinative is lost. It should probably be connected with this word in Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (1954):

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <p>sp</p> <p>u112</p> | <p>Geschenk.
Auch: Lohn,
Entschädigung o.ä.
Vgl.   Wb. 4.437.
u112 Crum 574 b.
Zum Worte vgl. Sethe,
Sött. gel. Anz. 1918, Nr.
9 u. 10 S. 376, Anm. 1.
Zur Schreibung vgl. auch
bei <u>sl</u> "Veränderung"
S. 497.
Schreibung nur in Aus-
wahl.</p> | <p>Früh</p> <p>1/2, 1/2, 1/2,</p> <p>1/2, 2/2</p> <p>Ptol.</p> <p>u112, u112</p> <p>u112, u112</p> <p>u112, u112</p> |
|-----------------------|--|--|



I have always learned that if a sign is not the *h* (see p. 26) it may be *pr*, and if you look at it for some time this is probably the house sign + *r* (see p. 25) above fantastic walking legs.

Line 9



You have seen *p3*, you have seen the walking legs. And you have even seen the sign that looks like *s* (see *Wp-w3.w.t* on p. 16). The little tick on top may just be adornment, like we saw in *3h* on p. 48. And once you have figured out what an *ih3y* is you will know how to transcribe the determinative.

Line 10



The verb assures the other party that you will not go back on a business deal or any other arrangement. It looks like this in P. Loure E 7852 | doc. **12**:



and



Try *Wb.* IV, 351.

Line 12



This leaves us with two names, namely , also spelled



. We have seen the first two signs on p. 34, and in nine out of ten



cases will be *ir* (to do) or *wn* (to be), that is, if it is not a rare spelling of *s.hm.t* (see



p.65). The sign is *nfr*, and this should help you to figure out the rest. Note that the phonetic complement of *nfr* is always very creatively filled in by both the abnormal hieratic and the demotic scribes, e.g. in *Hnsw-m-W3s.t-Nfr-htp*, where the scribe just writes an *f*:



(in P. Louvre E 7848 | doc.

9).



The remaining name will be a nice puzzle. But you have seen the first group on p. 18.

LESSON 6 | THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING

So we will now move on to a text that is not in *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book* (2013):



Uitgaven vanwege de Stichting “Het Leids Papyrologisch Instituut”

1. W. CLARYSSE, *Encheiridon samengesteld voor de bijeenkomst in het Gravensteen te Leiden (7 april 1981), ter gelegenheid van het verschijnen van A Guide to the Zenon Archive* (1981)
2. S.P. VLEEMING, *De Opstand van Babylon in een Aramese Literaire Papyrus uit Egypte* (1983)
3. P.W. PESTMAN, *Memorabilia bijeengebracht ter gelegenheid van het 50-jarig bestaan van het Institutum Papyrologicum Universitatis Lugduno Batavae* (1985)
4. P.W. PESTMAN, *Het Archief van de Thebaanse Choachieten (2^e eeuw v. Chr.). Handboekje en catalogus bij de tentoonstelling ter gelegenheid van het 50-jarig bestaan van het Papyrologisch Instituut* (1985)
5. P.W. PESTMAN (ed.), *Papyrologendagen 1986-1987. Voordracht en Kroniek* (1987)
6. A.A. DEN BRINKER, *Demotische Papyri met Griekse Vertalingen* (1987)
7. S.P. VLEEMING (ed.), *Het Demotische Schrift* (1988; 1989)
8. P.W. PESTMAN (ed.), *Zenon. Reverse Index of Greek Words* (1988)
9. S.E.M. MEIJER (ed.), *Papyrologica van B.A. van Groningen. Artikelen en boekbesprekingen* (1990)
10. P.W. PESTMAN, *Papyrologie. Bundel bij de New Papyrological Primer* (1990)
11. K. DONKER VAN HEEL (ed.), *The Legal Manual of Hermopolis: P. Mattha. Text and Translation* (1990)
12. P.W. PESTMAN, *1952-1992. Veertig jaar Griekse Berichtigungsliste in Leiden* (1991)
13. N. KRUIT, B.L. *Bulletin. Liste von Neudrucken und vollständigen Textausgaben von 1987-1992* (1992)
14. S.P. VLEEMING & A.A. DEN BRINKER, *Check-list of Demotic Text Editions and Re-editions* (1993)
15. P.W. PESTMAN, *Papyrologie in Leiden* (1993; 2nd revised edition 1994)
16. P.W. PESTMAN, *Vreemdelingen en minderheden in het latere Egypte* (1994)
17. P.W. PESTMAN, *P. BM Andrews. Bij nader inzien* (1994)
18. K. VANDORPE, *Breaking the Seal of Secrecy. Sealing Practices in Greco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt* (1995)
19. N. KRUIT, B.L. *Bulletin II. Liste von Neudrucken und vollständigen Textausgaben von 1991-1995* (1995)
20. A.M.F.W. VERHOOGT (ed.), *Propaganda in de portemonnee. Catalogus van en inleiding tot de verzameling Mr. B. Kolff: biljoen tetradrachmen en bronzen munten uit Romeins Egypte* (2000)
21. P.W. PESTMAN, *P. Phil.* [status unknown]
22. P.W. PESTMAN, *Papyrologie. Een kijkje in de keuken* (1993)
23. P.W. PESTMAN, *Samen over de drempel* (1998)
24. K. DONKER VAN HEEL & J. GOLVERDINGEN, *An Abnormal Hieratic Reading Book Containing Texts from the British Museum (London), the Brooklyn Museum (New York), the Egyptian Museum (Cairo), the Louvre (Paris), the Museo Egizio (Turin), the Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), Queen's College (Oxford) and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden), with a Palaeography of Abnormal Hieratic Signs and Sign Groups* (2013)

