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Demotic Papyrus Hamburg 39 (inv. no. 35.2806): A New Religious Text from Roman Egypt

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Summary: This article offers the first edition of a Demotic papyrus fragment of early Roman date and of uncertain, probably Fayumic, provenance in the collection of the Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky. The fragment preserves parts of two columns of a hitherto unattested enigmatic religious work, for which mostly only distant and short parallels can be found in the evidence currently available to us in any of the Egyptian languages and scripts used in the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods. The only relatively close parallel that we are aware of is a slightly modified form of a sentence that occurs in the composition known as ‘The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land’. The vocabulary and the meagre parallels suggest that we may be catching a glimpse of a previously unknown work of Osirian religious literature. This article provides a general introduction, a transcription and translation of the text, as well as a commentary.

Keywords: Demotic papyrus – Osirian Religion – Roman Period

A small brown papyrus fragment with a few tiny holes, preserving on its recto the ends of lines from the top of a column and the beginnings of lines from the top of another column with a blank margin between them and some, probably most, of the upper margin. The surface has suffered abrasion in numerous areas of the left-hand side of the fragment, particularly along a vertical line running across approximately the middle of the surviving part of the second column, making the reading difficult in places. The widest distance between the two columns is 2 cm, the narrowest is 0.4 cm. The width of the upper margin is 1.6 cm at its narrowest and 2.2 cm at its widest.

The papyrus is today kept in a glass frame the edges of which are firmly sealed and the back of which is covered. Despite my express requests to be allowed to examine the back of the fragment, this was declined by the Hamburg papyrus collection citing conservation grounds. It has therefore not been possible for me to examine the verso of this papyrus but the fact that the back of the frame is

covered suggests that the verso is blank¹. This fact appears to suggest that the papyrus fragment comes from a book of some importance², which conclusion is supported by the neat and skilled literary handwriting on the recto (see further below).

The text of the recto is written with a reed pen, which on the whole tends to be characteristic of Roman-period Demotic texts³. Further, various features, such as the divine determinative extending below the line, the exaggerated definite articles (e. g. col. x+1.6, 7, col. x+2.6, 7) and the two ‘bad’ determinatives standing next to each other (col. x+1.9, col. x+2.3), suggest a date somewhere in the Roman period. The palaeographical parallels P.Carlsberg 79 + PSI inv. D 80 and P.Eleph. Dem. 13 (see further below) appear to advocate the first century AD. The text is written in a neat and practised literary hand. The characters are written relatively close to each other, without making the impression of the lines being crammed. A typical general feature of this hand is that, although the lines are neat and to a degree bilinear, the signs frequently protrude into the interlinear space above and below the line. Despite its general similarity to Roman-period literary hands from the Fayum⁴, I have not been able to find any particularly close parallels to this type of handwriting⁵. As the bulk of the published Roman-period

1 This was expressly confirmed in email correspondence dated 22 July 2020 by Dr J. Neubacher, Head of Historic Collections at the Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky), writing: “... lehrt uns die Erfahrung, daß bei der Verglasung der Papyri keine beschriebenen Seiten abgedeckt wurden”.

2 Cf. Quack 2014, 111–135, esp. 120–130 and Ryholt 2018, 155–161 and 183.

3 The process of transition to using a reed pen for writing Demotic in fact appears to have started as early as the late second century BC: see Quack 2015, 444–445.

4 Cf., for example, P.Petese Tebt. A (= P.Carlsberg 165 + PSI inv. D 4 + P.CtYBR 4514) in Ryholt 1999, plates 1–8; P. Tebt. Tait 1–16 in Tait 1977, plates 1–4; P.Carlsberg 640 in Quack 2018, 187, 190 figure 8.4; P.Carlsberg 416 + PSI inv. D 86 in Quack and Ryholt 2019, no. 1, plate 1; PSI inv. D 79 + P. Tebt. Tait 14 + P.Carlsberg 130 + P.CtYBR inv. 4390(19)+4805(18), *ibid.*, no. 3, plates 3–4; P.CtYBR inv. 422 vo., *ibid.*, no. 10, plate 11; P.Carlsberg 649 + P.CtYBR inv. 1154 + PSI inv. D 78, *ibid.*, no. 13, plates 13–15; P.Carlsberg 14 + P.CtYBR inv. 4530 + PSI inv. D 76, *ibid.*, no. 16, plates 17–20; P.Carlsberg 560 + P.Florence MA 11928, *ibid.*, no. 43, plate 50 and PSI inv. 1730 vo., *ibid.*, no. 47, plate 52.

5 Perhaps the closest palaeographical parallel that offers itself is P. Carlsberg 79 + PSI inv. D 80 (Tebtynis temple library, 1st c. BC/1st c. AD),

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non-documentary Demotic material comes from Tebtynis, the lack of close similarity with this large body of evidence⁶ may suggest that our papyrus is not from this location but from somewhere else in the Fayum⁷. The writing runs with the fibres: the ink is black throughout. It is interesting to note that the lines in the two columns are not aligned to each other, suggesting that no strict and consistent general lay-out system was applied for the spatial presentation of the text on the sheet.

No information is available on the exact provenance of the papyrus. The general impression made by the handwriting, however, suggests the Fayum. In addition, we know that Carl Schmidt, who bought Greek and Coptic papyri that are now in the Hamburg papyrus collection, was active in the Fayum, purchasing these texts from an antiquities dealer there in 1927⁸. Thus, it is quite possible that he also bought Demotic papyri, including no. 39, in the Fayum.

The content of this enigmatic papyrus fragment is difficult to define precisely owing to the relatively limited amount of text preserved by it, the numerous uncertainties of reading and interpretation and the lack of close parallels in any of the Egyptian languages and scripts used in the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods. Despite my extensive searches in the published material and scholarly literature and despite my consultations with world-leading experts on ancient Egyptian religion and literature, the only relatively close parallel that I have been able to find is a slightly modified form of a sentence that occurs in the work known as 'The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land', a ritual composition written in a mixture of classical Egyptian and later stages of the Egyptian language and surviving on papyrus in two hieratic copies from the early Ptolemaic period⁹. Shorter hieroglyphic versions of this work on approximately 20 different stelae and on an ostrakon and

another version in a mixture of classical Egyptian and later stages of the Egyptian language but written in the demotic script on another ostrakon are also known¹⁰. In col. x+2.8 of our text the sentence *bw-ir=w sy n p3 rmy* 'they are not/cannot be satiated with the crying' occurs, which is paralleled by *bw jr:f s3j n rm* 'he cannot be satiated with crying' in col. V.12 of P.MMA 35.9.21 and, incompletely, in col. x+3.16 of PTamerit 1, the only difference between the two versions being the number of the subject (see further in the commentary on line 8 of column x+2 below). Despite numerous occasional, isolated instances of similarities of vocabulary and phraseology¹¹, no further, closer, more substantial or more continuous parallels can be established between our papyrus and 'The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land', nor have I been able to find parallels in any other religious or literary text from the Late and Graeco-Roman periods¹².

¹⁰ Smith 2009, 68–69, 599–609, with the earlier literature cited there.

¹¹ See, for example, P.MMA 35.9.21 col. VII.2, 11, XIV.15: *t3 m kkw* 'land in darkness', cf. also XV.12: *kkw* 'darkness' – P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.9: *s.t n kky* 'place of darkness'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. VII.4, 7: *t3w* 'breath' – P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+2.1: *t3w (?)* 'breathing', 'breath'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. VII.6: *šw* 'lakes' – P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.5: *šy* 'lake'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XI.9: *w3b.t* 'embalming chamber' – P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.2: *w3b.t* 'embalming', 'embalming place'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XIII.3: *rm* 'weeping' – P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.7: *rmy* 'crying', 'weeping'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XIV.8: *3h3* 'lamentation' ~ P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.5: *smv* 'lamentation' and col. x+2.3: *šrr (?)* 'prayer', 'lamentation'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XIV.15–16: *Pr-š3* 'Pharaoh' – P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+2.1: *Pr-š3 (?)* 'Pharaoh', 'king'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XII.11, XVI.7: *nhp* 'morning', 'dawn' ~ P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+2.1: *twe (?)* 'morning', 'dawn'; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XVI.8: *mr h3* 'consumed with burning' (Smith, *ibid.*, 93, n. 131), ~ P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+2.3: *h3sy=s (?) n-t3y (?) šrrm (?)* 'she (?) suffered from glow/burning' (?). Note, however, that a number of these correspondences rely on readings in our papyrus that are far from certain.

¹² Cf. also the narrow range of isolated lexical and more distant phraseological similarities, occurring repeatedly, between our text and the Osirian religious works collected and published by Kucharek and Coenen in their recent volume (2021) (in the authors' transcription and translation): *nn wrd j3=j hr /// rmt=k* 'my heart does not tire /// weeping for you' (*ibid.* p. 16 and 160), *nn hst hr njs n=k /// rm* 'who is not weakening invoking you, weeping' (*ibid.* p. 17 and 162), */// wrd j3=n hr h3=k* 'our hearts do [not] tire of searching for you' (*ibid.* p. 164) and [... *nn wrd j3=j* 'my heart [does not wear]ry' (*ibid.* p. 295) ~ *iw=y w3h* 'I shall not stop/omit (?)' in P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.3 and *bw-ir=w sy n p3 rmy* 'they are not/cannot be satiated with the crying' in P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+2.8; *jr=f n=k w3bt* 'he made a purification hall for you' (*ibid.* p. 20 and 170), *jr=f w3bt n [j]t=f Wsjr* 'he made a purification hall for his [fa]ther Osiris' (*ibid.* p. 24 and 185) and *njs rnw nw Wsjr m w3bt* 'invoking the names of Osiris in the purification hall' (*ibid.* p. 24 and 186) ~ *w3b.t Wsjr r-ir=w* 'embalming/embalming place of Osiris which they did/made' in P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.2. For *rmy* in P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+1.7 and col. x+2.8, cf., in addition to some of the passages cited above, *ibid.* p. 10 and 155, 19 and [166]–167 and 289. For *h3sy* in P.Dem. Hamburg 39 col. x+2.3, cf. *ibid.* p. 17 and 162.

published by J. F. Quack in Quack, Ryholt 2019, no. 5, plates 5–7, but this hand is more decorated than ours. Another closer parallel, this time documentary, is P.Eleph. Dem. 13 (Elephantine, 2 BC), published by Spiegelberg 1908, 26–27, plate X.

⁶ Cf. for example, Ryholt 2018, 177–182, esp. figure 7.12 on p. 179.

⁷ See, however, the cautionary words of Ryholt (2018, 178–179). On the palaeography of Roman-period Demotic literary hands, see Tait 1977, viii–ix and Quack 2018, 184–210. Cf. also Ryholt 2018, 153–183.

⁸ Schubart, Schmidt 1936, 3, 9 and Schmidt 1936, 352. See also La'da 2002, 249–521.

⁹ The most complete copy of this work has been preserved by P.MMA 35.9.21 cols. 1–17 and a less complete one by PTamerit 1 cols. x+1–x+15. For the former papyrus, see Goyon 1999, 17–47, plates I–XVIA; Kucharek 2010, 275–423, 535–542 and Smith 2009, 67–95, with the previous literature cited in these works. For the latter papyrus, see Beinlich 2009, with the important review of this book by Quack (2011, 131–143). For the work 'The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land', see also Quack 2016, 75–78.

Thus, for these reasons, we may conclude that our papyrus preserves a fragment of a hitherto unknown composition of Osirian religious literature that seems to show some, rather limited, similarities to 'The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land', but precisely what the relationship between the two works was, whether the one influenced the other in some way or whether they were independently derived from a common ancestor composition, or just the same religious lore or mythology, is impossible to say. Because of the lack of further parallels, it is also impossible to say whether our text is an original, creative composition on the topic of Osirian cult or whether in fact it is something of a composite work, put together from a variety of models with occasional modifications.

Finally, we may ask what the purpose of this text may have been or, in other words, whether it derives from the context of temple cult, from the sphere of funerary religion or possibly from that of magic. Again, the small amount of preserved text and the numerous problems of reading and interpretation seriously limit our ability to answer this question with any degree of certainty. However, in the light of recent research¹³ this text appears most likely derives from Osirian temple cult and so we are probably faced with a ritual rather than a funerary or magical text. Whilst the fact that its content appears to be largely unparalleled in hitherto published texts makes decipherment and interpretation more difficult, its unique content renders this small and enigmatic fragment all the more important.

Although I am acutely aware of the numerous unresolved problems that remain in both the reading and the interpretation, with this tentative first edition I wish to bring this important text to the attention of the scholarly public so that specialists more familiar with this genre can attempt to elucidate it to a greater extent.

Bibliography: C. A. La'da, "The Demotic Papyrus Collection of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky", in: K. Ryholt (ed.), *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23–27 August 1999*, (Copenhagen 2002) 249–54.

For further isolated semantic similarities, cf. also the works cited by Kucharek and Coenen in their commentary (ibid. p. 201, 250, 252 and 276) as parallels to the texts published by them.

¹³ See Quack 2009, 597–629, esp. 616–622, id. 2016, 75, 80 and Backes 2015, 15–35.

Transcription

Col. x+1

1].. p³ m³c t³y c³my
2]r-r=w w^cb.t Wsir r-ir=w
3].. 3pd.w bn iw=y w³h
4]m³c n hbstn i-ir
5]šy n smy n=k
6 Pr(?)–]Wsir hr.(t) (?) t³
7] rmy r t³ sbt.t (?)
8]^rmw' (?) in p³ swr=f p³ nty
9]tw=y (n) s.t n kky
10]^rr² ti n=y (?)
11] . [

Col. x+2

1 r htp r/n (?) p³y=s (?) Pr-^c3 (?) t³w (?) [or r (?) htp r/n
(?) p³y=s (?) twe (?) Wsfir
2 n³ t³y=y kyt (?) n³ t³y=y ly^rk' (?) /ly^rg' (?) . [
3 hsy=s (?) n/hsy iw=f (?) /i-ir (?) t³y (?) mrr³ (?) [/šrr(m)
(?) mw (?) [
4 nty-iw/w³h (?) šhm.t/šr=s (?) ht ms. (?) i-ir [
5 Wsir n p³ itn (?) p³y Wsir n p³ ym (?) [
6 Šm^c.t Wsir n t³ m (?) [
7 rn=f n-im=w dr=w (?) n³ . [
8 bw-ir=w sy n p³ rmy [
9 wn-^rn³w' (?) ^cw' (?) (n) sh [
10] [

Translation

Owing to the numerous uncertainties of reading and interpretation and the numerous possible alternatives, the translation offered below is merely for sake of example.

Col. x+1

1].. the place of/for taking clay
2] to/concerning them, embalming/embalming place of
Osiris which they did/made
3] birds. I shall not stop/omit (?)
4] place of mourning (?) ...
5] lake of lamentation for you
6 Per(?)–]Wesir, nourishment (?) /feeding place (?), the (fem.)
7] crying (?) to/concerning the hill (?)
8] water (?). Is the drinking the one which
9] I am (in) a place of darkness
10] in order (?) to give to me (?)
11] . [

Col. x+2

1 to (the) offering for/of (?) her (?) king (?) of breathing (?)
 or to (the) offering for/of (?) her (?) morning (?), Os[iris]
 2 those whom/which I took (?) ... those whom/which I took
 (?)[
 3 she (?) suffered from [/ glow/burning (?) of water [or
 she (?) tired of taking [/ prayer/lamentation (?), water
 (?) / [or prayer/lamentation (of water) (?) [or suffering,
 while he taking / prayer/lamentation (?), water (?)
 4 and a woman (?) / her son (?) rubs (?) and bears (?) ...[
 5 Osiris in the ground (?) is (?) Osiris in the sea/Fayum (?) [
 6 the Upper-Egyptian (serpent), Osiris in/of (?) the (fem.) .[
 7 his name among them/(the) aforesaid of them all (?) the
 (plural) .[
 8 they are not/cannot be satiated with the crying [
 9 who was (?) great (?) (as) scribe [
 10] [

Commentary**Col. x+1**

1) *J*..: Traces of one or possibly two signs belonging to the lost word are visible after the break. The latter sign might be a big *t* after a determinative. Compare the writing of the word *w^cb.t* in the next line. A more likely alternative is that it is part of a “dying man” (or “evil”) determinative: cf. this sign in col. x+1.2, col. x+1.7, at the end of col. x+1.9 and at the end of the first word in col. x+2.3 below.

m³c: The house determinative of *m³c* is written as three strokes.

t³y cmy: The determinative at the end of the line suggests reading the word *cmy* ‘clay’, ‘mud’ and, with an extended meaning, ‘plaster’, ‘poultice’ (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 60, 61; CDD 66–67) rather than the expression *t³y-cmy.t*. For the significance of clay in ancient Egyptian mythology and religion, see Couroyer 1968, 549–561, esp. 549–558, Dorman 2002, 114–132 and F. Löffler in Leitz, Löffler 2019, 76–78, with the previous literature cited in these works. For the meaning of the expression *t³y-cmy.t*, see Quack 1996, 62–69, esp. 65–69, CDD 29–30 and T 12: lit. ‘taking on character (cultural norms)’, ‘maturity’, ‘adulthood’.

2) The first preserved group in the line is probably to be read as *r-r=w*.

w^cb.t: The second group I propose to read as *w^cb.t* and interpret as “embalming” or, more likely, as “embalming place” or perhaps as the wabet of a temple (cf. the house determinative without an ‘evil’ sign, interpreting the last character as a big *t*). See Erichsen, *Glossar*, 83; CDD W 55–56. Alternatively, the last sign of this group might be taken as the “dying man” (or “evil”) determinative;

cf. col. x+1.1 above and x+1.7, col. x+1.9 and col. x+2.3 below.

Wsir: This reading appears to be more correct than *n Wsir* as in all other cases this scribe writes this divine name with a long horizontal stroke and as the short gap in the horizontal stroke appears to be due to the ink flaking off the surface in this area.

3) *J*..: The first sign surviving in the line belongs to the word lost in the lacuna.

3pd.w: The reading of the first complete word preserved in the line is problematic, the more so as it seems to have been corrected slightly by the scribe. The most likely reading is a historical writing of *3pd.w* ‘birds’, ‘geese’. The birds might have served as offerings: cf. PW551 col. IX.1: Barbash 2011, 229–230, 235, 236–238, 240, 242–244, 336–339, plate 9. A less likely alternative for the reading of this group is *htp-ntr*, however, the second part appears to deviate from most writings of this word.

w3h: For *w3h* at the end of the line, a variety of meanings are possible: see Erichsen, *Glossar*, 76–77 and CDD W 7–14.

4) *hbstn*: This word has the star determinative, which could suggest that it was a star or a word in some way connected with astronomy. However, it should be noted that the determinative does not have the standard form of an Egyptian star. CDD H 94 and 97 offer the meaning ‘mourning’ for the word *hbstn*. However, the determinative here is different from those in P.Harper 1.12. The extended meaning of *hbs tp*, of which *hbstn* is a variant, ‘sixteenth lunar day’, would suit the determinative better but the various attested writings of this expression are largely different from that of *hbstn* in our papyrus. For *hbs tp*, see PTamerit 1 x+3.12 with Quack’s comments on page 134 of his review (2011) and the commentary in Kucharek 2010, 350. See also Smith 1993, 60, comment (b) on line 13; Meeks 2006, 78–79 (176) and 216–217 and Altmann-Wendling 2018, Teil 2, 827, with the previous literature cited there. For the meaning ‘place of mourning’, cf. perhaps *bw pwy imim* ‘this place of lamentation’ in PW551 col. VIII.16: Barbash 2011, 214–215, 221, 332–333, plate 8.

i-ir: The line ends with the second tense auxiliary *i-ir* or with the first part of the compound preposition *i-ir-hr* ‘before’, ‘to’, ‘at the time of’ (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 318 and CDD T 23–24).

5) *sm**y*: The group following *3y* is spelt clearly as *sm**y* and I take it to be a writing of *sm**y* ‘complain’, ‘complaint’ (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 432 and CDD S 223–227) even though no closely identical writings are offered by these lexica. Cf. also the writings of *sm* and *sme* ‘greeting’, ‘blessing’ (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 430–431 and CDD S 211–219).

n=k: The group transcribed as *n=k* could also be a determinative (for example, hair) at the end of the preceding

word but no word starting with *sm* and ending with such a determinative is listed in these lexica.

For this line, cf. perhaps *rm.n<.j> ntr m [...]* š.f 'Ich beweihte den Gott in [...] seinem Becken (?)' in line 55 of the first hour of the day of the composition 'Stundenwachen' in Kucharek 2010, 445.

6) *Pr(?) - Wsir*: The interpretation of the line is problematic. If we take the stroke curving up at the bottom after *Wsir* as a geographical determinative, the supplement *Pr-* offers itself, suggesting a toponym (cf. the determinative in *Pr-Wsir* in P.Harkness I.30 and 35; Smith 2005, 124–125 n. a on line 30, 364, pl. 3); CDD *P* 82–83. For similar writings of *Pr-Wsir*, see P.Bibl.nat. 149 col. II.18 and 25 (Stadler 2003, 33, 34, 163, 183 and large photo).

hr.(t) (?): After the geographical determinative, we might read *hr.(t)* 'food' or 'feeding place' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 389–390; CDD *H* 62–65). For the determinative of *hr.(t) (?)*, see the same sign towards the middle of col. x+2.8. The interpretation of the whole group of characters between *Wsir* and the feminine definite article at the end of the line as representing the compound *pr.(t)-hrw* or *pr.(t)-hrʿ* ('funerary/invocation) offerings' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 135 and CDD *P* 121, cf. esp. the writings in P.Bibl.nat. 149 col. III.25; Stadler 2003, 39, 104, 139, 184 and large photo) seems to be unlikely.

7) The first preserved sign of the line is probably the sparrow (or "evil") determinative. Alternatively and less likely, it might be the second sign of the possessive *pʿy=k* 'your'.

rmy: The reading is clear although the curving shape of the determinative seems unusual; but cf. the shape of the determinatives at the beginning of line 1 and in the middle of line 2.

sbt.t (?): The interpretation of the final group of characters in the line is uncertain. The feminine definite article indicates that it must be a feminine noun. Palaeographically, the most likely reading seems to be *sbt.(t)* 'hill' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 423 and CDD *S* 164–166) but cf. also *stbh* 'tool', 'weapon', 'equipment' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 476–477 and CDD *S* 508–510), *qt.t* 'sleep' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 552 and CDD *Q* 97) or *qty* 'form', 'shape' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 554 and CDD *Q* 101). *qt.t*, which can also mean 'Todesschlaf', 'sleep of death' (cf. *kd* in Wb. V 78), would suit the context well. *qty* 'form', 'shape', referring to the dead Osiris' mummy, also seems to be appropriate to the context. Cf. these two alternative possibilities of interpretation in col. V.12 of P.MMA 35.9.21 and col. x+3.18 of PTamerit 1: Goyon 1999, 32, plates IV–IVA ('forme'); Beinlich 2009, 69, 127 and Smith 2009, 81, n. 65 ('form'), on the one hand, and Kucharek 2010, 282, 355–356 ('Schlafender'), on the other.

8) *Jmwʿ (?)*: For the writing of the first group of signs after the break, cf. line 5 above, where it functions as a

group of determinatives after the noun šy 'lake'. If the same word occurs here too, we would need to supplement šy in the lacuna. Another possibility is to read 'mwʿ 'water'.

in: The interrogative particle introduces a nominal sentence. Alternatively, *in* could be taken as the negative, with what goes before.

swr=f: To the jar determinative of *swr* an *f* is attached, which may be interpreted either as a noun-building affix ('Nominalbildungs-Affix': see Osing 1976, vol. I 326, vol. II 870, n. 1402) or as an object suffix after an infinitive. The meaning could be: 'Is drinking it what he shall do?'. Or, if *in* is taken as the negative, with what goes before, this sentence could be a statement: 'It is drinking it that he shall do.'.

9) *Jtw=y*: The first signs surviving in the line suggest the reading *tw=y*. A house determinative could also be considered rather than *=y*.

s.t n kky: For *s.t n kky* 'place of darkness', cf. Wb. V 143.9. Cf. also *pr kkw* 'house of darkness' in Wb. V 143.9; Hannig 2006, Teil 1, 903; PW551 col. IV.37; Barbash 2011, 111–112, 115, 318–320, plate 4; P.MMA 35.9.21 col. V.5 and LII.7: Goyon 1999, 31, plates IV–IVA and 92, plates XXXIX–XXXIXA; Kucharek 2010, 282, 348–349, with the textual parallels cited there, and Smith 2009, 80. Cf. PTamerit 1 col. x+3.9: Beinlich 2009, 68, 127. On the motif of darkness, see Kucharek, *ibid.*, 554–560, with the parallels collected and analysed there.

10) The most plausible reading of the line is the one offered above in the transcription. For less likely alternatives, cf. the plural copula (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 203) and the expression *r-b(w)-nʿy* 'here', 'hither' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 113 and CDD *B* 33–34). The latter interpretation would have the advantage over the plural copula of being able to account for the first diagonal stroke as well.

11) Only a small and faint speck of ink from the top end of a vertical stroke survives of the line.

Col. x+2

1) *r*: The first sign in the line, a short stroke aligned with the top of the line, is likely to be the preposition *r*.

hṭp: The first sign in the line is followed by a group which closely resembles *hṭp* 'offering' (see esp. CDD *H* 303; PTurin 6107.3) although it does not fully agree with its most common writings listed in Erichsen, *Glossar*, 339 or in CDD *H* 301–303.

r/n (?) pʿy=s (?): The surface of the papyrus after *hṭp* is abraded and the ink is faint. Perhaps the most likely option would be to read the small and faint strokes in this area as proposed above. An alternative would be to read *n-im=f*. The shape of the supposed *=f* is unusual but the traces at the beginning of this group would better suit this reading than *pʿ*.

Pr-ʿʿ (?) tʿw (?) / twe (?): The interpretation of this group is difficult. One possibility would be to read *Pr-ʿʿ tʿw*

[and to translate it as 'king of breathing' (?). The group after *Pr-ʿ* resembles *tʿw* 'wind', 'breath', 'breathing' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 669–670 and CDD *T* 13) although it does not fully match the forms of this word offered by these two lexica. Another possibility would be to read the signs after *pʿy=s* as *twe* 'dawn', 'morning' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 614 s. v. *twʿw* and CDD *T* 119–122), interpreting the signs of *tʿw* [of the alternative reading as the determinatives of this word.

Ws[ir: The last sign preserved at the end of the line is very likely the first sign of *Wsir*.

2) There is a symmetry between the first half and the second half of the preserved part of the line. The reading and the interpretation are highly uncertain. Perhaps we should assume that an *r* fell out before *tʿy=y* in both places and should interpret this construction as a relative form: *nʿ* (*r-*)*tʿy=y*. A palaeographically less satisfactory alternative to the reading offered above would be to read the adjectival verb *nʿ-ny* instead of *tʿy=y* – though the writing of the first sign is more reminiscent of the plural definite article with the horizontal stroke above (cf. perhaps also the end of col. x+2.7 below) – followed by what must be a noun. In neither case is the word known to me. *kyt* (?) has the wood determinative. The line could then be translated as "good is x, good is y[". At the end of the surviving part of the line, *ly* appears to be followed by a *k* or a *g*. The verb *l(y)k* 'to stop' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 260, 264 and CDD *L* 2, 19–20) and the noun *l(y)g* 'hindrance', 'obstacle' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 260, 265, s. v. *lgj* and CDD *L* 2, 21) are the only palaeographically suitable words offered by these lexica. At the edge of the papyrus the right end of another long horizontal stroke can be seen in parallel with what might be the horizontal bar of the *k* or a *g*.

3) Although most words are written clearly, the interpretation of the line is problematic.

hsy=s (?) *n/hsy iw=f* (?) *tʿy* (?): The first word is *hsy* 'to suffer', 'to be weary' 'to be weak' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 396 and CDD *H* 80–81). What follows it is, however, less clear. Could it be *iw=f* or, less likely, the female third-person singular suffix? If we read the female third-person singular suffix, then follows the preposition *n* and, in either option, what looks like *tʿy*. Should one perhaps interpret these two words together as the compound preposition *n-tʿy* 'from ... on', 'from' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 667 and CDD *T* 9–10)? Or does the *n* go rather with *hsy* in the sense 'to suffer from', 'tire of' (cf. Erichsen, *Glossar*, 396 and CDD *H* 81; cf. also Wb. III 398–399, 8 and Westendorf 2008, 391, n. 9)? An alternative reading could be *i-ir tʿy*; cf. the end of the next line.

mrrʿ (?) [*šrr(m)* (?) *mw* (?)]: The group between *tʿy* and the lacuna may read *mrrʿ* with a water determinative or, paleographically less likely, *šrrm* or *šrr*. The meaning of *mrrʿ/mrr/mrl/ml* is unfortunately unknown (see CDD

M 157–158) and its writings listed in this dictionary do not contain a water determinative. If we considered the less likely reading *šrrm* or *šrr*, the former we might interpret as a form of the word *šllm* 'to burn' or 'heat' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 520 and CDD *Š* 198) although in this case the determinative would be missing. Or could the last group surviving on the papyrus before the break be the determinative of this word? Its shape and general meaning ('water') appears to contradict such a hypothesis. For the latter reading *šll* or *šrl* 'to pray', 'to lament', 'prayer', 'lament(ation)' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 518, 519 and CDD *Š* 191, 196–198) offers itself as an interpretation although the determinative would then be rather unusual for this word palaeographically. The last preserved group in the line appears to be the noun *mw* 'water' or, alternatively, it could also be interpreted as a determinative, which would suit the meaning 'lamentation' of the preceding word. No such writing of *šll* or *šrl* is, however, attested to date to my knowledge.

Given the numerous uncertainties in this line, the translation offered above is merely for sake of example. For the sense 'she (?) suffered from glow/burning (?)', cf. the passage *jw ht.j mr m ht* 'my body aches from fire' of 'The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land', in P.MMA 35.9.21 col. XI.6 and in P.Tamerit 1 col. x+10.9: see, for the former, Goyon 1999, 39, plates X–XA ('mon ventre est malade du feu qui (le) brûle'); Kucharek 2010, 296, 390–391, 621–622 ('mein Leib schmerzt vor Hitze'); Smith 2009, 88 ('My body aches with burning flame') and, for the latter, Beinlich 2009, 87, 138 ('mein Leib ist leidend (wie) von Feuer'). For the possible meaning 'she (?) suffered from glow/burning (?) of water', see the potential distant parallels collected and commented upon by Kucharek, *ibid.*, 550–551¹⁴. These passages might suggest that 'water' in our papyrus should be understood as the equivalent of 'tears' (cf. *mʿwt* and *rmw* in the passages transcribed and translated *ibid.*) and that the burning sensation was the consequence of crying as part of mourning and lamenting.

4) *nty-iw/wʿh* (?): The first group in the line looks like either *nty-iw* (conjunctive or relative present [or relative future without the *r*]) or *wʿh* (verb or perfect auxiliary).

šhm.t/šr=s (?): For the reading and interpretation of the second group in the line *šhm.t* ('woman') or *šr=s* ('her

14 'Songs of Isis und Nephthys', 3.2–3 (P.Bremner-Rhind = P.BM 10188) in Kucharek, *ibid.*, 168: (in her transcription and translation) *jrtj.n m bjf hr-hr.k wfh<.w> mʿwt* 'Unsere Augen weinen (so sehr) über dich, daß (sie von) Tränen verbrannt sind'; Cauville 1997, 224, 413.3–4: (in Kucharek's transcription and translation) *wfh šrtj.s m mʿwt ʿpr jrtj.s m rmw* 'Ihre Lider sind von Tränen verbrannt, ihre Augen sind mit Tränen gefüllt'; and Herbin 1994, 62, 210, 461 (P.Leiden T 32, V.23): (in Kucharek's transcription and translation) *mʿk jrtj.sn wfh.tj mw.tj* 'Mögest du ihre Augen sehen, die brennen und naß sind'.

son') or possibly $w^c.t$ (feminine indefinite article) may be suggested. An alternative reading of the signs at the beginning of the line could be $nty-iw-i(w)=s$.

ht: The second word in the line is followed by a partially abraded group. *ht* with a flesh determinative (perhaps with a pot determinative before the flesh determinative) is palaeographically more likely than *hb*. For the meaning of *ht* 'rub', German 'reiben', see Quack in Hoffmann, Quack 2018, 217 and 405 n. v, who refers to the qualitative of the Coptic verb $\omega\tau\epsilon$, $\omega\tau$ (S) and $\epsilon\tau$ (B): Crum, *Dictionary*, 722: 'rub' etc. and Westendorf 2008, 395 and 397: 'reiben' etc.; see also Erichsen, *Glossar*, 377, s. v. *hjt* 'reiben', CDD *H* 21 s. v. *hyt* 'to rub, scratch, wear away' and *TLA* (Demotic) s. v. *ht* '(sich) reiben (?)'. Cf. also Erichsen, *Glossar*, 397 and CDD *H* 83 without offering a meaning.

ms. (?) *i-ir*/: After *ht* comes a group which closely resembles *ms*, followed by what looks like either *sp* 2 (cf. some of the writings listed in Erichsen, *Glossar*, 425–426 and CDD *S* 174–180) or a flesh determinative. The last group preserved in the line is a clear *i-ir*.

Because of the numerous alternative readings and interpretations, the translation of the line offered above is merely for sake of example.

5) $p^3 itn$ (?): The reading of the word towards the middle of the preserved part of the line is uncertain. It must be a masculine noun, judging by the gender of the definite article preceding it. We could consider reading *itn* 'ground' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 47 and CDD *I* 244–245). Alternatively and less likely, the word might start with a *w* (?) or *hr* (?). After the first character the right ends of two parallel horizontal lines are visible. What follows is damaged by the abrasion running vertically across the middle of the column. Cf., for example, *wtn* 'libation' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 107 and CDD *W* 202–203).

$p^3 ym$ (?): An alternative, but less likely, reading of the last signs before the lacuna might be the possessive $p^3 y=s$.

The general idea of 'Osiris in the land, Osiris in the sea' is similar to those found in the praises of Isis.

6) $\check{S}m^c y.t$: Because of the snake determinative, the interpretation of the word $\check{S}m^c y.t$ as a feminine divine name (LGG VII, 82) appears to be more likely than taking it as the noun 'singer', 'musician' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 509 and CDD *\check{S}* 138–139). The alternative, less likely, sense of the line would be: 'songstress of Osiris in/of (?) the (fem.).'.

Wsir n t^3 m (?): At the end of the line *m* appears to be more likely a reading than \check{s} . For the expression *Wsir n t^3 m* (or \check{s}) no close parallel offers itself; cf., however, *mgt* 'the one who is upon the catafalque', an epithet of Osiris, related to *mkwt.t* 'bier', 'catafalque', 'chariot' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 183 and CDD *M* 260–261); *mnt n Wsir* 'night bark of Osiris' (P.Harkness col. III.23, CDD *M* 128–129 and Erichsen,

Glossar, 154, s. v. $m^c t.t$) and $\check{s}t^c t$ as an expression for the 'coffin of Osiris' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 527 and CDD *\check{S}* 231), but written with a different initial character.

7) $dr=w$ (?) n^3 ./: The group in the middle of the preserved section of the line presents difficulties of reading and interpretation. The second half of this group is partially abraded. The penultimate sign of the group seems to be a large determinative signifying a sitting man lifting his hand to his mouth, which is followed by a plural stroke. We could consider reading $dr=w$ (cf. some of the Roman-period writings in Erichsen, *Glossar*, 642). Or, as a less likely alternative, we might consider reading *snt* or *snt* 'to create' 'to found', 'to establish' and, as a noun, 'order', 'custom', 'habit' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 439–440 and CDD *S* 277–278), or some similar word (cf. CDD *S* 278–281), or perhaps *snt* 'to fear' and, as a noun (*snt(y).(t)*), 'fear', 'fright' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 440 and CDD *S* 281–283). After this problematic group follow characters which may be either the plural definite article or, less likely, perhaps the first part of an adjectival verb (for similar writings, with a long horizontal stroke at the top, cf. col. x+2.2 above). At the edge of the lacuna, at approximately mid-height of the line, the right end of a horizontal stroke can be seen.

8) $bw-ir=w sy n$: The line starts with a negative aorist form followed by what looks like the verb *sy* 'to be satisfied', 'to be filled', 'to be sated' (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 406–407 and CDD *S* 42). For what are probably determinatives at the end of this word, cf. *hr(t)* (?) in col. x+1.6. The Coptic equivalent of *sy*, $\epsilon\epsilon\iota$, $\epsilon\iota$, $\epsilon\alpha\iota$ normally takes the preposition *n* 'to be filled with something' (Crum, *Dictionary*, 316–317); cf. also $\check{s}j$ constructed with the preposition *m* in Wb. IV 14–15.

$p^3 rmy$: It is noteworthy that *rmy* in this line is written with the water determinative rather than a 'bad' determinative as in col. x+1.7; for the water determinative, see the variant writing *lmy* in P.Michael. Bresc. L5, 6 (CDD *R* 34).

For this line, cf. the parallel passage *bw jrf s^3j n rm* 'he cannot be satiated with crying' in the section where Isis laments her departing dead brother and husband, Osiris, to the land of eternity and entreats him to return to her in 'The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land' (see the introduction). The most complete copy of this work is known from P.MMA 35.9.21 cols. 1–17 and a less complete one from PTamerit 1 cols. x+1-x+15. The parallel passage quoted above appears in col. V.12 of P.MMA 35.9.21 and, in an incomplete form, in col. x+3.16 of PTamerit 1. For col. V.12 of P.MMA 35.9.21, see Goyon 1999, 31, plates IV–IVA; Kucharek 2010, 282, 355, 535–542, 626–627 and Smith 2009, 81. For x+3.16 of PTamerit 1, see Beinlich 2009, 69, 127 and plate 3 (see, in general, the review of this book by Quack [2011, 131–143]).

For the funerary *topos* expressed by this passage, cf. the textual examples and the discussion offered by Kucharek,

ibid., 626–627 and by Leitz 2011, 108–110. Dr Kucharek has kindly informed me (email 3 August 2020) that in unpublished Roman period material from Tebtynis she has identified no fewer than seven fragmentary copies of a shorter version of ‘The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land’, one of which contains another attestation of the passage paralleled in this line of our papyrus. Judging by the large number of copies, ‘The Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land’, or at least its condensed version, must have been well known in the Fayum of the Roman era.

9) The line opens with what seems to be a damaged imperfect converter, followed by traces suggesting the qualitative of the verb *ḥ*.

sh: An alternative interpretation of the signs might be to take the circle for the sun-disk determinative with a paler, vertical sign protruding from the line below.

The last sign surviving before the lacuna is a hieraticising form of the sitting man determinative that occurs frequently in manuscripts from Roman-period Tebtynis. An alternative interpretation of the line to the one offered in the translation above would be to put a full stop after *ḥw* and to start a new sentence with *sh*.

10) The remaining few, heavily abraded, traces of the line do not permit any interpretation.

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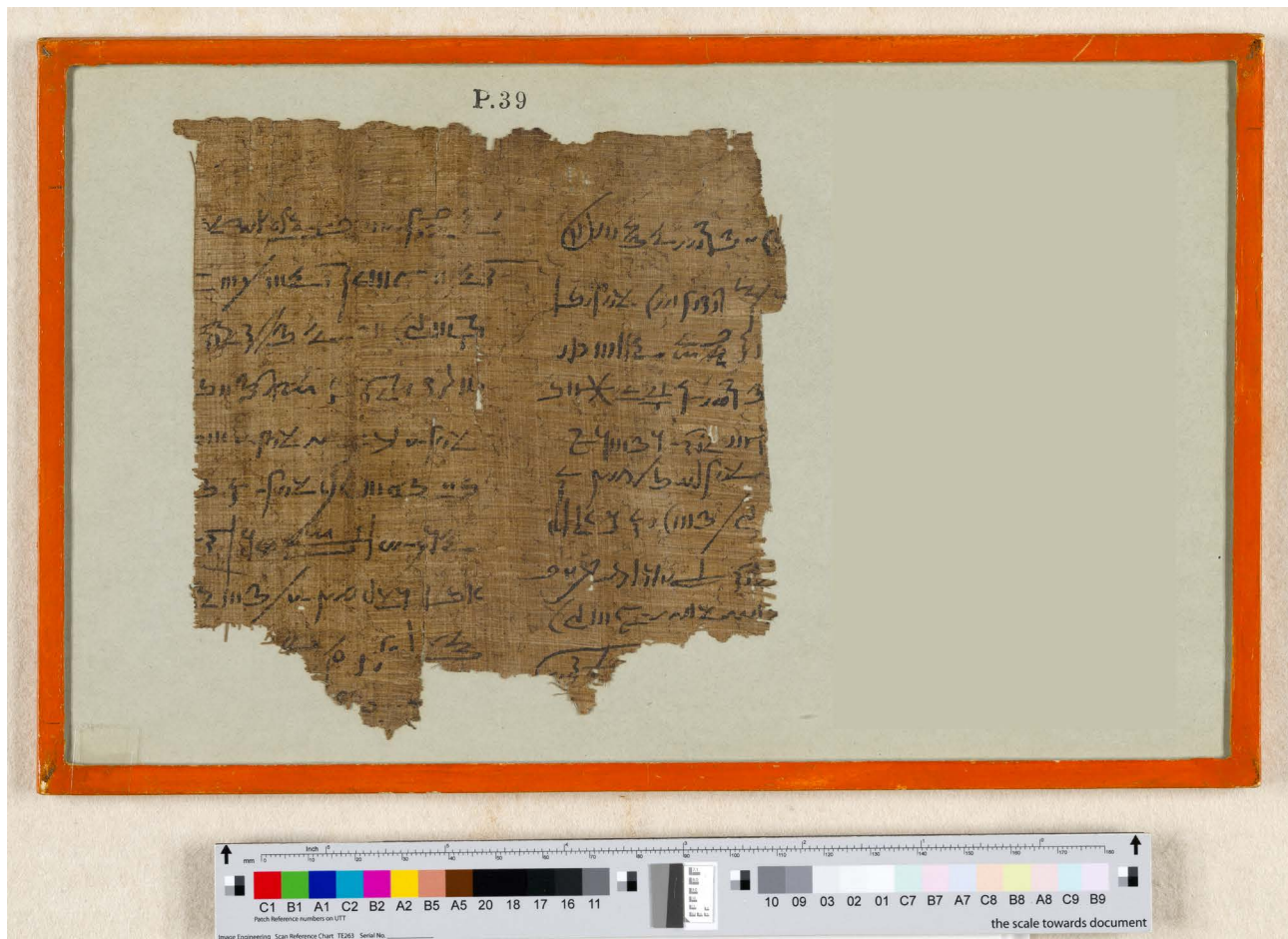


Figure 1: Digital photograph of P. Dem. Hamburg 39.