



# BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT FRANÇAIS D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ORIENTALE

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## BIFAO 55 (1955), p. 111-121

### Constant De Wit

Some Values of Ptolemaic Signs.

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# SOME VALUES OF PTOLEMAIC SIGNS <sup>(1)</sup>

BY

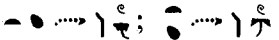

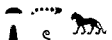

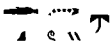
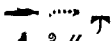

C. DE WIT

Having had the privilege of reading Ptolemaic Texts with Prof. H. W. Fairman, I had the opportunity of assessing the values of certain signs, which are not generally known.

I wish in this connection to express my gratitude to Prof. Fairman for having placed his large collection of slips at my disposal and for the help he has given in bringing the demonstration to a conclusion.

$$\text{.....} = m$$

In the lion-gargoyle texts, at Edfu, the name of the lion  $\text{t}m$  is written thus :

	E. IV, 117, 9
	IV, 354, 4; IV, 342, 12
	VII, 323, 5
	VI, 305, 6
	IV, 274, 4
	IV, 274, 6
<sup>(2)</sup> 	VIII, 97, 16.

From these examples, it seems quite obvious that the value for the sign of the spitting mouth is  $m$ . I would at this stage already point out that the material shows the equivalence  $\text{.....} = m$ .

<sup>(1)</sup> Nous nous excusons auprès des lecteurs de *BIFAO* de n'avoir pu, faute de temps, traduire en français le texte de cette communication faite au XXIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international des Orientalistes, à Cambridge (août 1954).

But it now remains to be seen how this value came to be accepted.



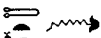


The vomiting mouth appears as a determinative in a number of verbs indicating the action « to spit, to vomit », etc. Here are a few examples :

	<i>išš</i>	« to spit ». E. IV, 77, 7
	<i>bš</i>	« to spit ». IV, 28, 12
	<i>bst</i>	« to vomit, come forth ». IV, 339, 3
	<i>ntt</i>	« to spit out ». IV, 21, 14
	<i>k(:)</i>	« to vomit ». III, 2, 7
	<i>k(:)</i>	« to vomit ». III, 95, 13; 170, 4-5
	<i>k(:)</i>	« to vomit ». IV, 29, 2
	<i>kš</i>	« to spit ». IV, 336, 8
	<i>k(j)š</i>	« to vomit ». III, 95, 13
	<i>k(j)š</i>	« to vomit ». III, 133, 2.
	<i>tfn</i>	« to spit ». IV, 143, 9.
	<i>p</i>	« to spit out ». II, 260, 12 = XII, pl. 414.
	<i>p'y</i>	« to spit out ». Mag. P. Lond. Leid. 20/12.

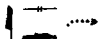


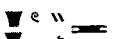


As Grdseloff has pointed out in *Archiv Orientalni*, XX (1952), nos 1-2, p. 482, this last example gives us the origin of the value *p* for this sign, with which we are not now concerned.

Hence, the vomiting mouth is used as a general determinative of verbs indicating « pouring, flowing, etc. » :



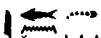
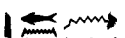





	<i>wdh</i>	« to pour out ». E. IV, 363, 11.
	<i>wdh</i>	« to flow ». IV, 35, 15.
	<i>pr</i>	« to come forth ». P. Mag. Harris 501, 6, 12; 8, 5.
	<i>sti</i>	« to pour out ». E. III, 90, 2.



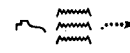








	<i>sti</i>	« to pour out ». IV, 48, 11.
	<i>kš (?)</i>	« to stream » (?) VI, 88, 7.
	<i>tf</i>	« to pour out ». IV, 3, 4.
	<i>tftf</i>	« to drip ». III, 171, 17 (cf.  <i>dfdf</i> , IV, 386, 16-17).







The sign in question then serves as a determinative of nouns « spittle, vomit » :

	<i>isd</i>	« spittle ». E. IV, 21, 14.
	<i>isd</i>	« spittle ». III, 170, 3.
	«	« sweat, spittle ». IV, 32, 6.
	«	« sweat, spittle ». V, 13, 8.
	<i>nhnh</i>	« spittle ». V, 21, 1.
	<i>&lt;n?&gt; nt</i>	« spittle, sweat ». IV, 197, 7.



Because of these uses the vomiting mouth could act as a determinative of liquids in general, exudation, blood, and of verbs indicating « to drink » :

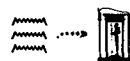

	<i>idt</i>	« odour, exudation ». D. IV, 70, 12. var. with  D. IV, 70, 10.
	<i>inf</i>	« fluid ». E. IV, 333, 12.
	<i>inf</i>	« fluid ». III, 154, 5.
	<i>wtr (tvr)</i>	« blood ». IV, 59, 2.
	<i>pd</i>	« burn incense ». IV, 99, 6.
	<i>fdt</i>	« exudation ». D. IV, 30, 6.
	<i>fdt</i>	« exudation ». E. V, 326, 17.
	<i>m;<sup>c</sup></i>	« Name of the <i>mr</i> (canal?) of the Theban nome ». E. IV, 175, 7.




	<i>m</i> <sup>3</sup>	« <i>id.</i> ». IV, 175, 6.
	<i>mint</i>	« a kind of field (cf. GARDINER, <i>Wilbour</i> , II, p. 165 f.) ». D. IV, 56, 9.
	<i>nw</i>	« water ». E. VIII, 35, 6.
	<i>snf</i>	« blood ». IV, 91, 16.
	<i>snf</i> or <i>wtr</i>	« blood ». VI, 73, 9; VI, 83, 7.
	<i>b</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>b</i> <sup>c</sup>	« to drink ». VI, 77, 8.
	<i>shb</i>	« to drink » IV, 262, 15.
	<i>mt</i>	« seed ». V, 112, 5.
	<i>mt</i> (for <i>m</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>t</i> )	IV, 102, 5.
	<i>mj</i>	« seed ». IV, 178, 12.
	<i>mt</i>	« seed ». VI, 16, 4-5.

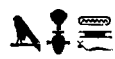
This last group is particularly interesting because it gives us the origin of alphabetic *m*. It is one of such words as *my*, *mt*, *mw* which must be the origin of the value *m*. It is this same history that enables  to replace ,  or  and leads on to the final development that  =  = *iw*.

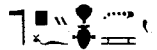
We can now develop further consequences :


a) Because of the occurrence of the vomiting mouth as determinative of *sti*, *mt*, etc.  and  can replace each other :


	<i>mw ntri</i>	« divine seed ». E. V, 304, 7.
	<i>mw ntri</i>	« divine seed ». IV, 217, 6.


b) In all this section  is a) phon. *mw* or b) det. *mw*. Our examples show that  and  = *mw* :

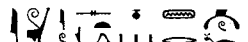
	<i>Hr hrj-ib mw.f</i>	« Horus presiding over his water » E. V, 221, 1. (not <i>mr</i> , as <i>WB.</i> II, 97).
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 *ntr pfj hrj-ib mw-f* « This god presiding over his water ». D. III, 190, 13.


 *Idem.* D. II, 177, 7.



 *Idem.* Mam. 204, 18.



c) Eventually, this leads to  = *mw* :

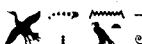
 *in-~~iw~~ skd-n mw r-w-f* « Have we not travelled over all the water? »<sup>(1)</sup>. E. VI, 128, 5.


 *mw n skd* « waters of travel »<sup>(2)</sup>. VI, 128, 5-6.

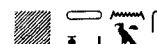
 *mj (mw) n skd* « waters of travel »<sup>(2)</sup>. VI, 9, 4.







d) Finally the vomiting mouth  acquires the value *iw*, by simple replacement of  with which it has come to be equated<sup>(3)</sup> :

 *iw nsr-r* « the Isle of Flame ». E. VII, 162, 8.  
var.  (in parallel text). V, 84, 14.

 *p; iw n t; swht* « the Isle of the Egg ». IV, 140, 2.


var.  *Idem.* IV, 392, 16; VI, 339, 8-9.

 *Idem.* Mam. 23, 6-7.

 and  have come to be equated, I suspect, because  as det. « vomit » comes to replace all determinatives of verbs of spitting, pouring, ejaculation, etc., hence comes to act as determinative of liquids and exudations, and so inevitably can replace  and  and even  as determinative and as phonogram. This is the secret of the whole use of the sign.

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. *JEA* 21, 35.


<sup>(2)</sup> *JEA* 21, 35.

<sup>(3)</sup> The sign  can also be used for *imn*. In this connection, I wish to thank J. Leclant for having drawn my attention to the relation existing between Amon (the ram, in general) and water. Cf. WAINWRIGHT, *JEA*, XX (1934), 141-146; DRIOTON, *ASAE*, XLIV (1944), 147-148; FAIRMAN, *BIFAO*, 43, p. 119, n. 1; LECLANT, *BIFAO*, XLIX (1950), 206; LECLANT

& YOYOTTE, *BIFAO*, LI (1952), 23, n. 1 and also *Kémi*, X (1949), 33; Leiden Papyrus, GARDINER, *ZAS*, XLII (1905), 38-39; ZANDEE, *De hymnen aan Amon*, I, 350 3, 1; *P. Anastasi*, IV, 10/6; GARDINER, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 45; SPIEGELBERG, *BIFAO*, XXX (1930), 104; BRUGSCH, *Reise nach der grossen Oase el Khargeh*, pl. 27, 40; N. de G. DAVIES, *The Temple of Hibis in el Khargeh Oasis*, Part III (1953), pl. 33; SETHE, *Amun*, § 202.

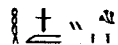
As is well known, the vomiting mouth also represents the values *p* and *pw*<sup>(1)</sup>. It also has the values *tf* and *wtr* (*twr*) or *snf*<sup>(2)</sup>.


Abusively, we find :


 *ink t; rdwy* « I am one hotfooted »<sup>(3)</sup>. E. IV, 274, 4.


 = 


The word which *WB.* III, 37, 4 lists as :


 *hjmj* must be read : *'nh-imy*; *'nh* having been taken for *h*, owing to the similarity of these signs in hieratic.


<sup>(1)</sup>  *irp* « wine ». E. VII, 8, 4.


 *irp* « wine ». III, 195, 8.

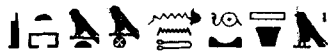
 *H'p* « inundation ». IV, 26, 3.

 *H'p* « inundation ». IV, 3, 5.


 *H'p* « inundation ». IV, 218, 16.

 *H'p* « inundation ». IV, 218, 14-16.


 *H'p* « inundation ». III, 2, 7.



*st ntrwy pw nt Re hn Hr* « It is the place-of-the two-gods, of Re and Horus ». I, 23, 8.



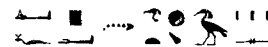
*hwt isbt pw nt h hr shrh* « It is the *Hwt-'Isbt* of He-who-stands-on-the-serekh ». I, 23, 8-9.



*ink pw h'd* « I am he who masturbates ». P. Bremner-Rhind, 26-24.



*nn ndm n s'h stf wb'hr pw m sbyw n s'f* « It is not pleasant for him who approaches his place, he is one well acquainted with the enemies of his stall ». E. IV, 112, 5-6. (CdE 57, 34).



*di-f p' ht h'w-s* « He causes the meadow (?) to spit out its glorious products (?) ». E. II, 260, 12 = XII, pl. 414.

<sup>(2)</sup>  *tfn* E. V, 98, 16.

 *Tfmt* VI, 290, 13.

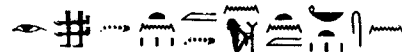
 *Tfmt* VII, 272, 1.

 *Tfrr* IV, 359, 17.

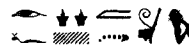
 *Tfrr* IV, 391, 13.



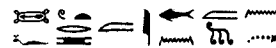
*s'm-tu m snf (wtr) f* « Drink ye of his gore ». E. VI, 73, 9 cf. 75, 8. (*JEA* 29, 15).



*ir b'b-tu m wtr (snf) n s'bi-tu m k'st-sn* « Drink ye the blood of your foes and of their females » VI, 77, 8 (*JEA* 29, 18).








*ir-f b'b' m wtr (snf) n s'bi* « He walloweth in (drinketh?) the blood of the foe » (*JEA* 30, 10, note a) E. VI, 83, 7.







*stj-f wtr (twr) m inn n wtr* « He pours out a river in the colour of blood ». E. VI, 83, 7-8 (*JEA* 30, 10, note c).







<sup>(3)</sup> *CdE* 57, 43.

Philae Photograph 524 II (= E. VIII, 136, 8; cf. E. VI, 226, 15) shows the correct spelling :


 =     *mh wd:t m 'nh-imy* « Who fills the Sound Eye with <sup>'nh-imy</sup> plant ».

In *Edfu II*, we find :






  *'nh-imy* II, 210, 2-3 = XII, pl. 391.  
  *'nh-imy* II, 210, 6 = XII, pl. 391, but that *h* must be read <sup>'nh</sup> is borne out by the following example :





    *Fnd.f'nh* (Osiris). I, 196, 11 = XI, pl. 283.  
 var.   *Idem.* E. I, 131, 14. (cf. *WB.* I, 578, 2).

The <sup>'nh-imy</sup> plant is well known from the MK onwards (cf. *WB.* I, 203, 6-8) <sup>(1)</sup>.


 = *h(?)yt*




The double heaven-sign is to be read *h(?)yt* in the following :




     *h(?)yt-sn nb 'pr m hbsw (= h;b;w-s)*. « All their ceilings <sup>(2)</sup> are equipped with the stars ». E. VII, 12, 3.

  *hy* « ceiling ». IV, 19, 13.  
  *hyt* « heaven ». I, 543, 18.

The sign appears as a determinative either single or double in :

 *hyt* « heaven » (in : *b; nb hyt; Bhdty nb hyt*). VII, 147, 3; 162, 12.








  *hyt* « heaven » (in : *h(?)yt n b;f*). VIII, 93, 9.  
 *mnt* « heaven ». IV, 3, 10; III, 238, 12.


<sup>(1)</sup> In the *Rituel de l'Embaumement*, recently edited anew by S. Sauneron, we find    *'nh-imy* (15,1, 19.8,11, 24,6 24,12 26, 11 30,5 32,1 35,11 43,5).

<sup>(2)</sup> As H. W. Fairman has shown (in LECLANT, *Rev. Eg.* 8, p. 111, n. 2, the mean-

ing of *h(?)yt* is « ceiling » not « roof ». In *WB.* II, 476, « Dach » should be amended to « Decke ». Leclant has discussed the further meanings of this word (*Rev. Eg.* 8, 101-120) and also Sir Alan H. GARDINER (*On.* I, 60-1\*, II, 210-1\*; *JEA* 34, 21, n. 2).



	<i>imt</i>	« heaven ». III, 238, 12.
	<i>nww</i>	« heaven, sky ». VIII, 93, 6.
	<i>tw;yt</i>	« the supported one = heaven ». VIII, 129, 16.
	<i>smnt</i>	« the stable one = heaven ». VIII, 129, 17.
	<i>wst</i>	« the uplifted one = heaven ». VIII, 130, 5.
	<i>wst</i>	« the uplifted one = heaven ». VIII, 130, 9.
	(?)	VIII, 92, 4.

 = (*i*)*hr*

In the building text in *Edfu* IV, 11, 5-6, we read :




*ii·n b;·f hnm·n·f hwt-nr·f hn·f hr (i)hr(?)·f m St-Wrt·f*

« His *ba* came, it united with his temple, it alighted on his image in his Great Place ».

Remembering the love of Ptolemaic scribes for alliteration, I thought that the unknown sign which obviously means image, must start with a *h* sound. Leaving away the weak *i*, such a word exists. It is (*i*)*hr*, listed by *WB*. I, 126 (= *Theb. Tempel gr. Zeit* 55 k; 89 c; *Philae Phot.* 885; *Urk.* VI, 65).

I therefore suggest (*i*)*hr* as a possible reading for this sign <sup>(1)</sup>.

 = *rs'*

In *E.* IV, 131, 14, we read :



At first sight, one is inclined to think that a word has dropped out and to take the Nephthys sign as *i* 1st. pers. sign. fem.

This is however excluded, as it is a lion-god, who is speaking.

<sup>(1)</sup> In the *Tomb of Rameses VI* (PIANKOFF, p. 365, pl. 131), the snake is used as a word-sign for « Horus » (*Hr*). A reading *hm* is, of course, not excluded, as P. Derchain points out to me.

A parallel gargoyle-text, E. IV, 286, 15, gives us however the reading :



*rs.i hr Wlst-nt-Ré-dr-b;h* « I watch over the *Wlst-of-Ré-of-former-days* <sup>(1)</sup> ».

Seeing our two texts are absolutely parallel, and knowing that it is one of the duties of Nephthys to « watch over » Osiris, we cannot escape the conclusion that our sign must here be read : *rs.*



It is also the alliteration which makes us read *snm* (and not the usual *h; m*) in the egret (?) catching fish.

E. IV, 130, 6 gives us :



(I am the great guardian, who leads forth the rainwater and casts [it] upon earth), « when the storm (*snm*) is dispelled, who swallows up (*snm*) the tempest of the day of thunder » <sup>(2)</sup>.

Already in the New Kingdom, the sign appears as a determinative to *snm* (*WB. IV, 164*) and we know that it is quite a normal procedure for Ptolemaic scribes to take an old determinative for a word-sign.



Among other values (*st* being the commonest), the head of a jackal, with a loop, can read : *sd*.

So we have to read : E. I, 25, 10-12 :



*sd.n.i t; sh.n.i dbt* « I break the clay, I loosen the seal » <sup>(3)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> *CdE* 57, 39, n. 122.

<sup>(2)</sup> *CdE* 57, 38.

<sup>(3)</sup> ALLIOT, *Culte d'Horos*, 77, n. 6 : « J'ôte la terre sigillaire, je détache le cachet ».

The sign is used also in writings of *hb-sd* :



*hwt hb-sd* «The Heb-Sed Hall». E. V, 39, 2.

= *mdwt*

In the Myth of Horus at Edfu, appears a sign which resembles the abstract determinative, but seems to be crowned by a flower. Its meaning is certain : «at a distance of . . . .» (E. VI, 114, 7; 119, 2; 123, 10; 124, 1).

I believe it has to be transliterated *mdwt* (cf. *WB*, II, 184, 14), because = *md;t* :



*gmh-n-f st hr rsj-i;bi n w;st n mdwt itrw 2* «Then he saw them to the south-east of Thebes at a distance of 2 schoinoi»<sup>(1)</sup>. E. VI, 114, 7.

= *b-ni:w*

*b-ni:w* means «year» and in conjunction with *hh* is used in expressions indicating a million years.

L. Keimer, in *Cahier n° 5, Supplément aux A. S. A.* (1947), p. 11, has rightly put the word in relation with the *ni:w* animal (= bouquetin) and certain New Year vases. The horn of the animal is indeed covered with notches which resemble those of the sign for year.

*b-ni:w hh* is not to be translated «a million times»<sup>(2)</sup>.

Here are a few examples :

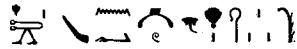


*(i)r 'jt m hrw wpt-rnpt b-ni:w hh n(n);b* «Who ascends to the roof on New Year's Day, a million years without cease» E. I. 569, 10.

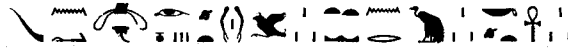
<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. *JEA* 21, 30, note 1; ALLIOT, *Culte d'Horus*, II, 714, n. 6, discusses this and suggests transliteration of this passage *m dmd*

<sup>(2)</sup> *itrw 2*.

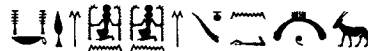
<sup>(3)</sup> ALLIOT, *Culte d'Horus*, I, 306, penultimate line.



*hr itt 'b-ni;w hr hk; rnpwt(?)* «Taking possession of year(s) and governing (regnal) years». E. IV, 93, 4.



*'b-ni;w ir-n hnt hpt-rhyt nriw-k hnt 'nhyw* «The million years which we have spent in *Hpt-Rhyt* are your periods at the head of the living». E. IV, 279, 9.



*dd-k im m hh n hh n 'b-ni;w* «You shall remain therein for millions and millions of years». E. VI, 18, 7-8.



*'b-ni;w hh hr wbn htp hr m;; itn m st hb-tpj* «millions of years, rising and setting, seeing the disk in the Place of the First Feast». E. I, 579, 11-12.



*wnn hk;t h'-tj hnt iwnt dd-tj m hh n 'b-ni;w* «The Princess has appeared gloriously in Dendera, being firmly established for millions of years»<sup>(1)</sup>. D. II, 114, 17.

<sup>(1)</sup> Prof. Fairman points out to me that he has patiently been accumulating material on 'b-ni;w for over 10 years and is making a detailed survey of the writings and meanings

of the different words for «year» e. g. 'b-ni;w, *rnpwt*, *h't-sp*, *nrit* and a word *h't(?)* that does not figure in any dictionary or list.