The Heqanakht Letters

Letter IV

means ‘phrase’ in this context.

sꜣt ḏdt n mwt=s sꜣt-nb-sḫtw

A daughter who speaks to her mother, Satnebsekhtu,

ḏdt n sꜣt-nb-sḫtw ḥꜣ n

who speaks to Satnebsekhtu: A thousand

smdt m nḏ-ḥrt=ṯ m

phrases of greeting in

ꜥ.*w*.*s*. *nfr*=*t* *ỉb*=*t* *nḏm*(.*w*) *snḏm*

life, prosperity and health. May you be good, and your heart in the state of being pleasant. May

ḥwt-ḥr ỉb=*t* *m rdỉ ỉb*=*t*

Hathor make your heart pleasant. Do not fuss/worry

Verb construction: Negative imperative (‘do not do X’)

ỉmỉ is the imperative form of *rdỉ*; used when the imperative is not negated.

m-sɜ=i̯ m.t wi̯ snb.kw

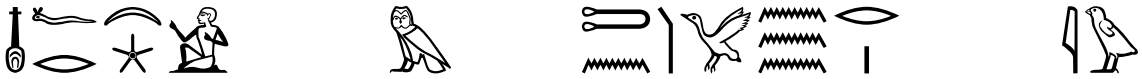
about me. Look, I am healthy.

Verb construction: Subject-stative

m.t i̯r i̯nnt nbt n

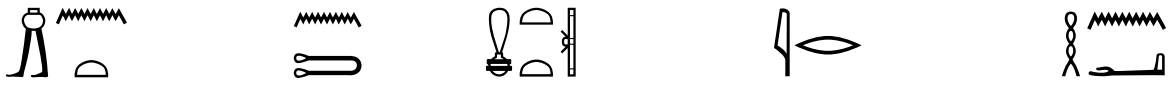
Look, concerning everything which is brought to

Verb construction: *i̯nnt* is the passive participle of the verb ‘to bring’



nfr-ɜbd m tn-r i̯w

Neferabed as a reminder/memorandum/payment



i̯nt n=t mi̯tt i̯r ḥnʿ

what which is brought to you (is) the same. In addition,

nḏ-ḫrt grg m ꜥ.w.s.

greeting (to) Gereg in life, prosperity and health.

m.ṯ rdỉ.n=ỉ ỉwt sȝ-ḥwt-ḥr

Look, I caused the coming of Sa-Hathor

r sỉpt=ṯ m rdỉ ꜥm-ỉb

to check on you. Do not allow the neglect/forgetfulness

n grg ḥnꜥ nḏ-ḫrt

of Gereg. And greetings

r pr ꜣw=f ꜥ.w.s.

to the whole household (life, prosperity and health).

Letter II

Allen translates as ‘the white of his eyes’. The term can be translated as ‘here’.

sꜣ=i ḏd n mwt=f ḥm-k=i

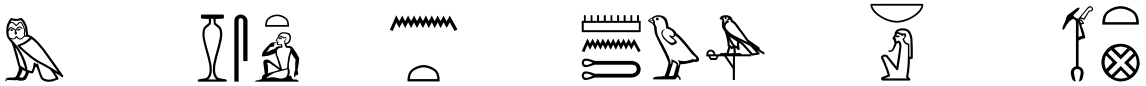
A son who speaks to his mother, the Ka-Servant

ḥḳꜣ-nḫt n mwt=f ỉpỉ n ḥtpt

Heqanakht, to his mother Ipi, (and) to Hetepet:

ỉw ṯn mỉ ỉḫ n ꜥ.w.s.=ṯn

How are you, in your l.p.h.,



m ḥst nt mnṯw nb wɜst

through/in/by the favour of Montu, Lord of Waset/Thebes?

n pr r-ḏr=f ỉw ṯn mỉ

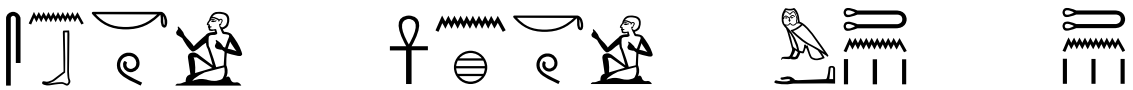
(And) to the entire household: How are you,

ỉḫ sp-sn n ꜥ.w.s.=ṯn m rdỉ

how are you in your l.p.h.? Do not

ỉb=ṯn m-sɜ=ỉ m.ṯn wỉ

worry about me. Look, I



snb.kw ʿnḫ.kw m.ṯn ṯn

am healthy and alive. Look, you (are)

m pɜ wnm r sɜ=f

as the one who eats until he sates

ḥḳr r bɜḫt ỉrty=fy m.ṯn

hunger to the white of his two eyes. Look,

tɜ r-ḏr=f mwt(.w) n

the entire land is dead;

ḥḳr=ṯn m.ṯn ỉỉ.n=ỉ mỉnɜ

(but) you have not hungered/starved. Look, I came here

m hnt ỉr.n=ỉ ꜥḳw=ṯn

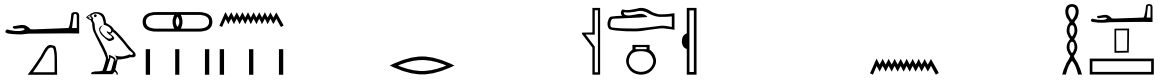
travelling south, (after) I had made your provisions

r nfr ỉn grt ỉw ḥꜥpy

to perfection. Moreover, (was/is) the Nile/inundation

ꜥ3 wrt m.ṯn ỉrw n=n

very great? Look,



ꜥḳw=n r ḳd n ḥꜥpy

our provisions/rations have been made for us according to the nature of the inundation,

Allen translates the obscure phrase as 'which one and all bear'.

wḫd mỉ rnw m.ṯn pḥ.n=ỉ

which is a pain for everyone. Look, I reached

pꜣ hrw ỉm=ṯn ḥr sʿnḫ=ṯn

the day with you, keeping you alive.

sš n ʿḳw n pr

Record of the rations/provisions of the household:

What follows next is a list of names and measures of grain. Allen counts as 0.8.

ỉpỉ 0.8 *bꜣkt=s ḥtpt bꜣkt=s*

Ipi: 0.8 (of a sack) – (and) her maidservant

Hetepet and her maidservant:

0.8 *ḥt(i) sꜣ nḫt* 0.8 *ḥnᶜ*

0.8 (of a sack)

Heti's son Nakht: 0.8 (of a sack), together with

ḫrw=f mr-sw ḫrw=f

his dependents.

Mersu and his dependents

sꜣ-ḥwt-ḥr 0.8 *sꜣ-nb-nỉwt* 0.7

Sahathor: 0.8 (of a sack)

Sanebniut: 0.7 (of a sack)

ỉnpw 0.4 *snfrw* 0.4

Anubis: 0.4 (of a sack)

Sneferu: 0.4 (of a sack)

sꜣ-ỉnwt 0.4 *mꜥy sꜣt*

Sainut: 0.4 (of a sack)

May's daughter

Allen counts as 0.3 ½.

ḥtpt 0.5 *nfrt* 0.3 ½

Hetepet: 0.5 (of a sack)

Nefret: 0.3 ½ (of a sack)

sꜣt-wrt 0.2 *dmḏ r* 7.9 ½

Satweret: 0.2 (of a sack)

A total of 7.9 ½ (of a sack)

ḫꜣꜣ.tw ꜥḳw n sꜣ-nb-nỉwt

The rations/provisions of Sanebniut will be measured

m mḥ ỉtỉ=f

as his barley in full.

wnn=f m ḫtw=f r

He/it will be with/amongst his things until/with regards to

rwt=f r pr-hɜɜ

his leaving for Per-Haa.

Allen translates as ‘lest’.

ỉr sɜw ḳnd=ṯn ḥr nɜ

Beware, if you are angry about these (things)!

ḳnd=ṯn is probably the future *sḏm=f*.

m.ṯn pr r-ḏr=f

Look, the entire household

mỉtt ḫrdw=ỉ ỉnk ḫt nb

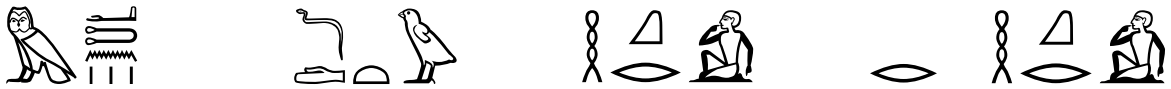
(are) like my children. I (am) everything.

r-ḏd nfr gs n ʿnḫ

(That is) to say, “Half of life (is) better

r mwt m sp wʿ

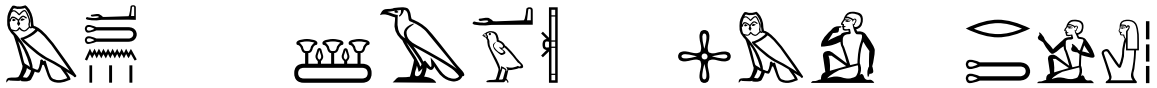
than death in a single instance”.



m.ṯn ḏd tw ḥḳr r ḥḳr

Look, one should say hunger (only) regarding (real) hunger.

ḏd tw is probably the future *sḏm=f* with an impersonal pronoun (‘one’).



m.ṯn šzꜥ.w wnm rmṯ

Look, they have started to eat people

Here we have a 3rd pl. stative followed by an infinitive.

The form seems to be a passive participle; the negation carries the meaning ‘there is no one who…

ꜥz n ddw n=sn

here. There is no one who is given

pɜ ꜥḳw m st nbt

these rations in any place.

ỉn=ṯn n=ṯn m ỉb ḳn

You should be dutiful/brave/diligent

Verb type: Future *sḏm=f*

r pḥt=ỉ m.ṯn ỉr=ỉ šmw

until my arriving. Look, I will spend Shemu/Harvest/Summer

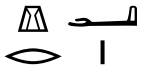
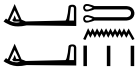
Verb types: Infinitive used as a noun; future *sḏm=f*

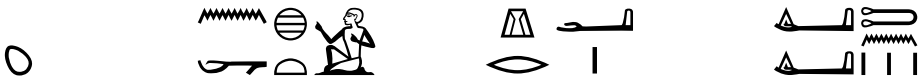
ꜥ3 r-ḏd ỉn ḥm-k3

here. Spoken/communication by the Ka-priest

ḥḳ3-nḫt n mr-sw n ḥty

Heqanakht Mersu (and) to Hety's

Allen translates  as 'subordinately'. He treats  as a variant of the future *sḏm=f*.



s3 nḫt ḫr-ꜥ dd=tn

son Nakht, (his) subordinate: You should/will give

pɜ ꜥḳw n rmṯ=ỉ

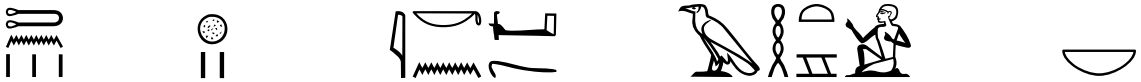
the provisions/rations to my people,

Allen translates as ‘mind you.

ỉw=sn ḥr ỉrt kɜt ꜥḥɜ

when they are doing work. Mind you/take care/be careful,

Verb type: *ḥr* + infinitive



ṯn sp-sn ỉkn ɜḫt=ỉ nb

mind you/take care/be careful! Hoe all my land

Verb type: Imperative (*ỉkn*)

nḳr.w m nḳr bɜ m

tilled by tilling. Hack with

Verb types: Stative; infinitive; imperative

šrt=ṯn m kɜt m.k ỉr

your nose(s) in the work. Look, if

ḳn=sn dwɜ.tw n=k nṯr

they are brave/strong, God will be praised for you.

Verb types: Conditional future *sḏm=f*; future *sḏm.tw=f*

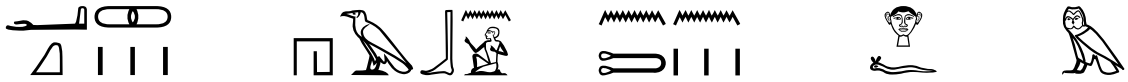
is a particle that functions as a type of negation, 'not at all', followed by a future *sḏm=f*.

nfr-ɜ dd=i̯ wg n=ṯn

I will not at all give you (both/all) grief.

šɜʿ.tw grt m rdi̯t pɜ

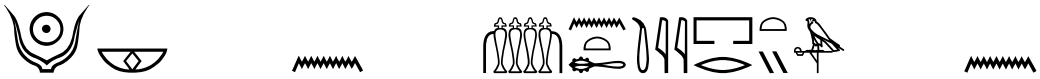
Now, one should begin giving the



ʿḳw hɜb.n=i̯ n=ṯn ḥr=f m

rations, which I have sent (a letter) to you about, on/from

is the name of a month; Egyptian months were usually named after religious festivals.



wpt-rᶜ n ḫnt-ḫtỉ-prty n

the Opening Day of Khenty-Kheti-Perty (and) for

Allen translates as ‘each succeeding first of the month’.

wpwt-rᶜ n mɜwt m ᶜm

the Opening Days of (each) new (month). Do not

Allen translates as 1.4.

ỉb=ṯn ḥr pɜ ɜḥt 1.4

forget about the 1.4 (arouras) of land

Allen reads as *smt*, 'pasturage'.

nty m smt rdỉ.n ỉp sȝ

which (are) pasturage/in cultivation, which Ip's son

can be read as a noun, 'diligence'.

ḫnt-ẖ(t) ḥr ỉkn=f ḳnt sp-sn

Khent-Kheti gave – regarding hoeing it: diligence, diligence!

m.ṯn ṯn ḥr wnm ʿḳw=ỉ

Look, you are (all) eating my rations.

The noun probably means ‘possession’ in this context.

ỉr grt ḥnw nb n ỉnpw

Now, as for every/any possession of Anubis

nty m ᶜ=k ỉmỉ n=f sw

which (is) in your hand: give it to him.

functions here as the subject of the stative.

ỉr nty ȝḳ(.w) dbȝ n=f sw

As for that which is lost, repay/replace it for him.

Verb types: stative + imperative

m rdỉ hɜb=ỉ n=k ḥr=s

Do not cause me to send/that I shall send to you about it.

Verb types: Negative imperative + future *sḏm=f*

ky sp m.k hɜb.n=ỉ

another time/occasion. Look, I (already) sent

Verb type: *sḏm.n=f*

n=k ḥr=s sp 2 *ỉr grt wnn*

to you about it two times/twice. Now, if

The term has the meaning ‘in charge’ here.

mr-snfrw ḥr mrt wnn m-sɜ

Mer-Sneferu is wanting to be in charge of

Verb types: conditional future *sḏm=f*, *ḥr* + infinitive

nɜ n kɜw ḫr=k dỉ=k

these/those bulls, you will/should put

Verb type: future *sḏm=f* expressing result

The preposition functions here as a way of expressing an unfulfilled condition, and can be translated as ‘since’ or ‘because’.

sw m-sꜣ ỉr n mr=f grt

him in charge, since he did not want

Verb type: n + *sḏm=f* (negated past)

wnn ḥnᶜ=k ḥr skꜣ ḥr

to be with you ploughing, (or)

Verb type: infinitive, *ḥr* + infinitive (gerund)

prt ḥr hɜt n mr=f

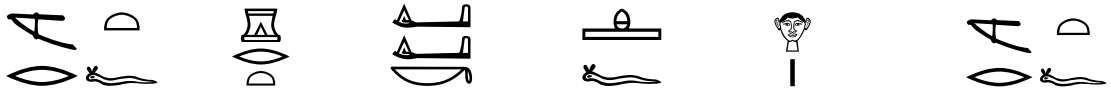
going out and coming (from the field). Now/moreover, he did not want

Verb types: *ḥr* + infinitive, n + *sḏm=f* (negated past)

grt ỉwt mỉnɜ ḥnᶜ=ỉ

to come here with me.

Verb type: Infinitive



mrt=f grt dd=k ḥtp=f ḥr mrt=f

Now, what(ever) he wants, you should cause him to be content concerning what he wants.

Verb types: Relative *sḏm=f*, future *sḏm=f* (*dd=k* and *ḥtp=f*), relative *sḏm=f*

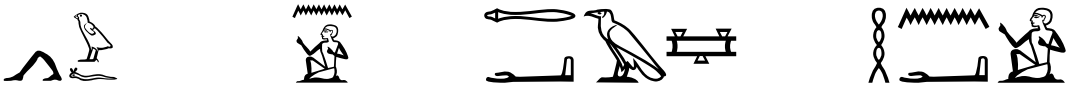
ỉr grt wỉn.ty.fy nb pз

Now/but, as for anyone who will reject the

Verb type: Future participle (*sḏm.ty.fy* form)

ꜥḳw m ḥmwt ṯзyw

rations among the wives and husbands,

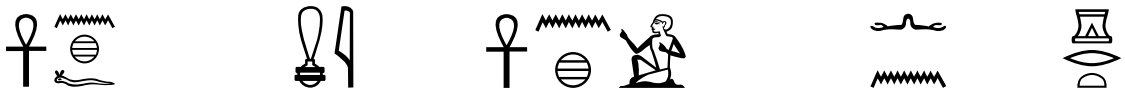


ỉw=f n=ỉ ꜥз ḥnꜥ=ỉ

he should come to me, (to be) here with me.

Verb type: Future *sḏm=f*

The negation seems to introduce a rhetorical question of the type “Did I not…?”.



ꜥnḫ=f mỉ ꜥnḫ=ỉ nn grt

He should live like I live. Now, did I not

Verb types: Future *sḏm=f* (subjunctive mood – something that could happen, may happen, should happen) + present *sḏm=f*

ỉy.n=ỉ ỉs mỉnꜣ ḏd.n=ỉ n=ṯn

come here (after) I spoke to you,

Verb type: *sḏm.n=f*

r-ḏd m šnᶜ ḥnmst

saying: Do not turn back a female friend

Verb type: Negative imperative

nt ḥtpt ḥr=s m nšt=s

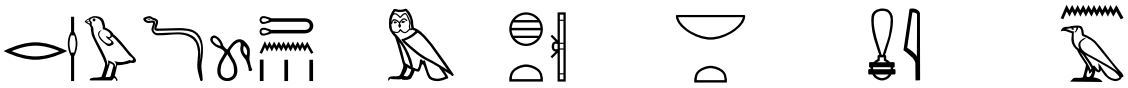
of Hetepet from her, (whether) her hairdresser

Allan translates as ‘domestic’. The particle can be translated as ‘if only’.

prt=s ᶜḥ3=ṯn sp-sn r=s ḥ3

(or) her domestic. You (all) should take care/be careful, you should take care/be careful regarding her! If only

Verb type: Future *sḏm=f*



rwḏ=ṯn m ḫt nbt mỉ nɜ

you would be (this) firm in everything, like (you are in) these (matters).

Verb type: Future *sḏm=f*