

The Kaftiw spell against Asiatic disease from the London Medical Papyrus

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Abstract

The text of the Kaftiw/Minoan spell against Asiatic disease from the London Medical Papyrus is the following: *s3n tik3pwp w33yw3ti ym^cn tiirk3k3*. The original phrase probably was the following: *sa-n(1) ti-kapu-p(V)(2) u-wa_a-pi-wā-at(3) imallen(4) ti-hir-kar-kar(5)* – “horns of health-giving Moon(1-2) help me(3) this way(4) clean the rash(5)”. Kaftiw/Minoan language can be decoded through Hattic language. The form *s3n tik3pwp* looks much like Hattic possessive genitive where the possessor has suffix *-n*, and the possessed has prefix *te/še/le*; *s3* ~ Hattic *sa* “to make healthy”; *tik3pwp* has root *kap* “Moon” and a partial reduplication, so *k3pwp* probably means “crescent”. *w33yw3ti* ~ *u-wa_a-pi-wā-at* where: *u* – agent, *wa_a* – patient, *pi* – centripetal version, and *wā* – root “to set”. *ym^cn* ~ Hattic *imallen* “thus” / “this way”. *tiirk3k3* – *ti-hir-kar-kar* where: *ti/te* – optative, *kar-kar* – root “to rake”, “to scrape”, *hir* ~ Hattic *hil* “to strew”, and so *ti-hir-kar-kar* means “may [this/someone] remove the rash”.

Keywords: Minoan language; Kaftiw language; Kaftiw; Egyptian Papyruses; Minoan Crete

1. Introduction to the problem

The London Medicine Papyrus is an ancient Egyptian papyrus from British Museum. The papyrus is a collection of recipes, descriptions of magic means, and spells. The main theme of the papyrus is skin and eyes diseases. The papyrus was published by Walter Wreszinski (Wreszinski 1912). It is dated to about 1629 – 1628 BCE (Friedrich et al. 2006). Among others spells the papyrus contains some spells in languages other than ancient Egyptian: in Semitic, Nubian, and in Kaftiw (Haider 2001: 479). Kaftiw/Keftiw was the ancient Egyptian name of the Crete and Cretan people. There are two Kaftiw spells in the papyrus. Earlier I analyzed the spell against *samuna ubuqi* disease (Akulov 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) and in the current paper I am going to consider the Kaftiw spell against Asiatic disease (the text of the spell can be seen in fig. 1).

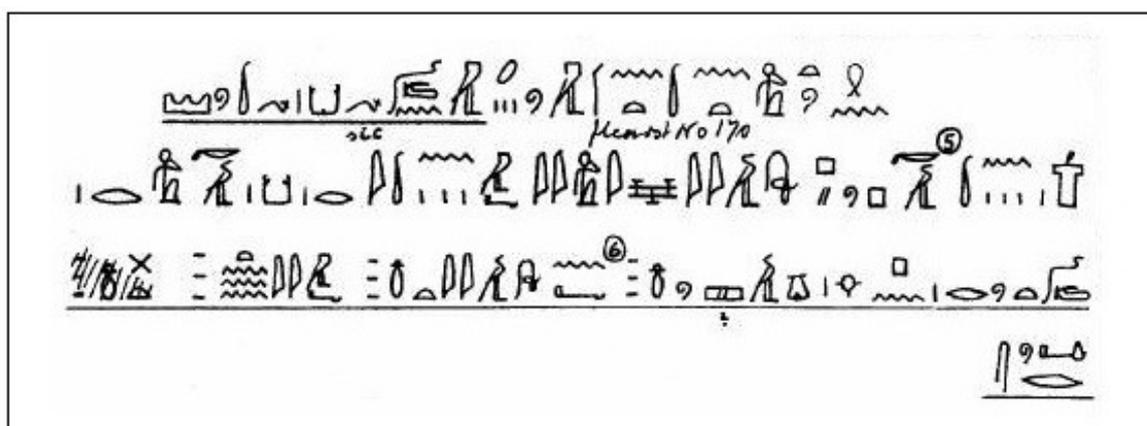


Fig. 1. Text of the spell (image source – Wreszinski 1912: 151)

2. The text of the Kaftiw spell and the accompanying ancient Egyptian text

For the convenience of further consideration, the inscription is turned so that it reads from left to right.

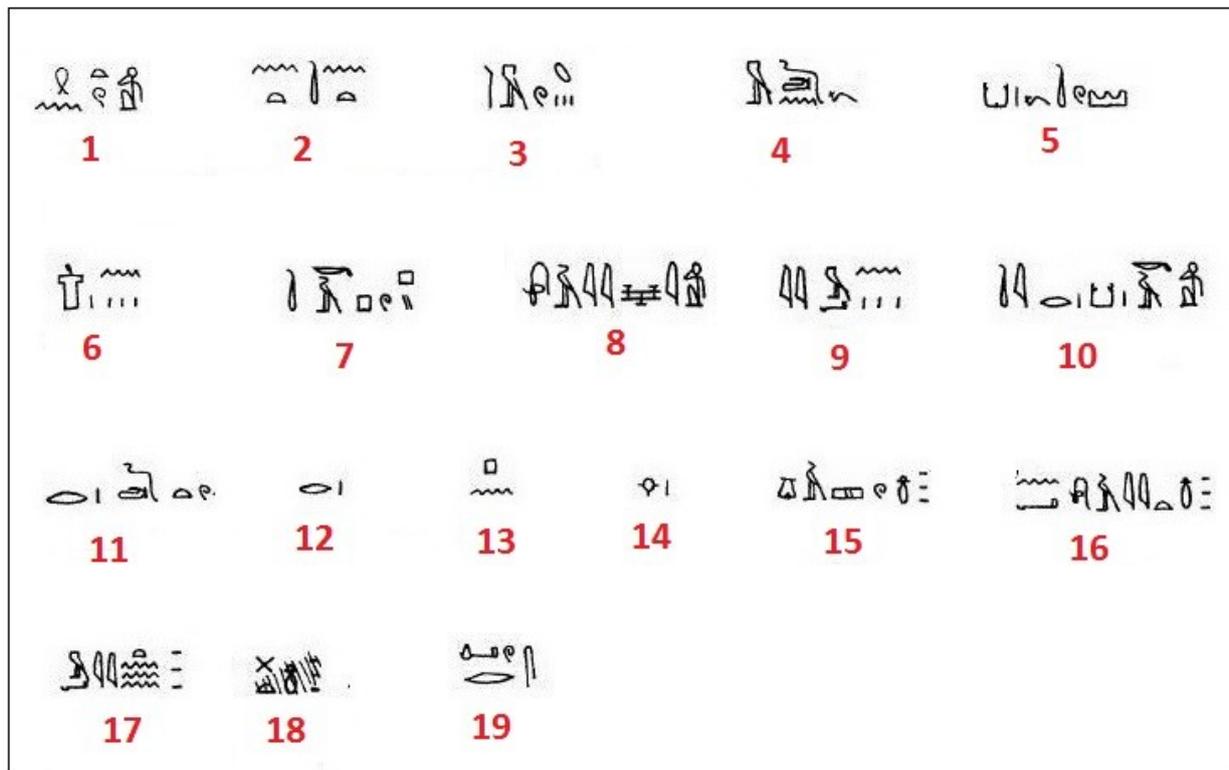


Fig. 2. The text of the spell is divided into words, the signs are turned so that the reading direction is from left to right

Transliteration

(1) *šnt* ^{Det of speak/ think, eat/drink} (2) *nt ti nt* (3) *ʿ3mw* ^{Det of disease", Det of plurality / majority / collective concept}
 (4) *m dd nf* (5) *k3ftiw* ^{Det of foreign land} (6) *s3n* ^{Det of plurality / majority / collective concept} (7) *tik3pwp* ^{Det of duality}
 (8) *w33yw3ti* ^{Det of speak/ think, eat/drink} (9) *ymʿn* ^{Det of plurality / majority / collective concept}
 (10) *tiirk3k3* ^{Det of speak/ think, eat/drink} (11) *r dd tw* (12) *r* ^{Det of ideogram} (13) *pn* (14) *hr* ^{Det of ideogram}
 (15) *g3s* ^{Det of vessel, Det of plurality / majority / collective concept}
 (16) *n3w3yt* ^{Det of vessel, Det of plurality / majority / collective concept} (17) *mʿyt* ^{Det of water, Det of plurality / majority / collective concept}
 (18) ??? (19) *rdirws*

Translation

[A] spell(1) of/about(2) Asiatic disease(3) say this (4) Kaftiw/Cretan(5) (6 – 10 the text in Kaftiw language), this(13) word(12) to be said(11) upon/over/above(14) [a] liquid (15), fermented drink(16), urine (17) ??? (18) do this (19).

The Kaftiw spell is recorded by the so-called group-writing, i.e.: by meaningless sets of signs which, however, in some way convey the original sound, and with the use of determinatives, and so it is possible to reconstruct original sound, to determine borders of words, and in some

cases it is also possible to determine classes of words and even say something definite about lexical meaning. It should be noted, however, that in the case of the spell against Asiatic disease determinatives seem to only point to the grammatical class of words (combination of words), and don't express possible meanings.

Unlike the spell against *samuna ubuqi* disease the disease against Asiatic disease contains no names of deities and thus it attracted less attention of researchers (see for instance Kiriakidis): for some unknown reasons, fantasizing about the names of deities seems more attractive than analyzing the structures of verbs.

3. Decoding the Kaftiw spell

Earlier it was found that samples of Kaftiw/Minoan language can be decoded through Hattic language; it is possible to say that Kaftiw/Minoan and Hattic belong to the same group (Akulov 2017b, 2017c, 2021)

And, thus, it is fairly logical to suppose that the text of the spell against Asiatic disease also can be decoded through Hattic.

The text of the Kaftiw spell itself is the following:

$s3n$ Det of plurality / majority / collective concept $tik3pwp$ Det of duality $w33yw3ti$ Det of speak/ think, eat/drink
 ym^n Det of plurality / majority / collective concept $tirk3k3$ Det of speak/think, eat/drink

I suppose that $w33yw3ti$ and $tirk3k3$ are verbs since they bear determinatives that denote actions. The rest words of the phrase seem to belong to other grammatical classes.

The words $s3n tik3pwp$ look much like Hattic possessive genitive construction.

Hattic possessive genitive is formed according to the following model: X-n + te-Y where X is the noun that denotes possessor and Y is the noun that denotes possessed (Kassian 2010b: 183). The suffix *-n* is a standard Hattic marker of the genitive, it also has variants: *-an*, *-in*, *-un* (Kassian 2010b: 177). The possessive prefix *te-* also has variant *še-*, and also the idea of possession can be implemented by the prefix *le-* (Kassian 2010b: 177).

Thus, it is possible to single out genitive suffix *-n* in $s3n$ and possessive prefix *te-/ti*¹ in $tik3pwp$: $s3-n ti-k3pwp$, i.e.: there is a certain $s3$ that possesses $k3pwp$.

This $s3$ correlates with the Hattic word *sa* "to favor", "to make healthy" (Kammenhuber 1969: 528).

And the second component $k3pwp$ correlates with the Hattic word *kap* "moon" (Soysal 2004: 364). In the papyrus the word $tik3pwp$ bears the determinative of duality (see 2), and in the word form itself, can be seen partial reduplication: $ti-k3pw-p$ – I suppose that the final *p* reduplicates the previous *pw*. Taking into account the fact that the Moon is often seen as a crescent, i.e.: as a structure with two horns, so it looks pretty natural and logical that crescent can be described by the partial reduplication in the word-form that denotes Moon.

Thus, it is possible to say that $s3n tik3pwp$ originally has the following view: $sa-n ti-kapu-p(V)$ ² that means "horns of health-giving Moon".

¹ It is possible to suppose that in Hattic [e] and [i] were variants of the same phoneme (Kassian 2010b: 171)

² I suppose that the original Kaftiw/Minoan word-form could probably have a vowel in its end.

The word-form *w33yw3ti* is supposed to be a verb.

I suppose that originally this word-form could be *u-wa_a-iwa-at* or *u-wa_a-pi-wā-at*.

If the form is *u-wa_a-iwa-at* then it consists of the following elements: *u* – a marker of agent (supposedly of 2nd person), *wa_a*³ – a marker of patient (supposedly of 1st person), *at* – a particle of unknown meaning⁴ (see Kassian 2010b: 178 – 180), and *iwa* – the root. The meaning of *iwa*, however, is still unknown (Soysal 2004: 283).

If the form is *u-wa_a-pi-wā-at* then it consists of the following elements: *u* – a marker of agent (supposedly of 2nd person), *wa_a* – a marker of patient (supposedly of 1st person), *pi* – a marker of dative, or something like centripetal version (see: Kassian 2010b: 178, 180, 177), and the component *wā* is the root that can be correlated with Hattic *wāḥ* “to set”, “to place” (Soysal 2004: 274).

In a fast speech the ending particle *at* could make a fusion with the root.

In the case of *u-wa_a-iwa-at* it isn't possible to restore the meaning, but in the case of *u-wa_a-pi-wā-at* it is possible to say that this word-form probably means “help me” enforced by the marker of centripetal version *pi* and by the particle *at*.

The word *ym^cn* can be correlated with Hattic *imallen* – “this”, “in this way” (Soysal 2004: 282)

The word-form *tīrk3k3* is supposed to be the second verb of the spell. It is possible to suppose that originally it was the following: *ti-hir-kar-kar* or *te-hir-kar-kar* where *ti/te* is the marker of optative, *kar-kar* is the main root meaning “to rake”, “to scrape” (Kassian 2010a: 376), “to cover by soil”, “to bury” (Soysal 2004: 285), and the component *hir* correlates with Hattic *hel*, *hil⁵* “to strew”, “to pour”, “to scatter” (Kassian 2010a: 343), “to pour” (Soysal 2004: 279). The component *hir* probably means “rash”, and it is incorporated into the verb *kar-kar*, and so *hir-kar-kar* means “to rake a rash”, “to clean a rash”, and thus the whole word-form *ti-hir-kar-kar* means “may [this/someone] remove the rash”⁶.

The verb *kar-kar* basically is a divalent verb, and with the incorporation of *hir* it becomes monovalent, i.e.: it requires subject only, however, in the form *tīrk3k3* can't be singled out the component that can be a marker of the subject, so it is possible to suppose that in this word-form subject is expressed by a zero morpheme or merged with the stem.

Summarizing the above said it is possible to say that the phrase: *s3n w33yw3ti ym^cn tīrk3k3* most probably initially had the following view: *sa-n(1) ti-kapu-p(V)(2) u-wa_a-pi-wā-at(3) imallen(4) ti-hir-kar-kar(5)* that means: “horns of health-giving Moon(1-2) help me(3) [and] this way(4) clean the rash(5)”.

³ This *wa_a* is the transliteration expressing a sign of Hittite cuneiform that was used in recording of Hattic language. It is supposed that this *wa_a* is the way to express Hattic [fa] in Hittite cuneiform (Kassian 2010b: 171)

⁴ I suppose that this particle *at* that also has variant *aš* can express optative/desiderative meanings.

⁵ I suppose that Kaftiw/Minoan /r/ correlates with Hattic /l/ (Akulov 2017a: 17).

⁶ The fact that rash seems to be mentioned in the text of the spell correlates well with the fact that London Medical Papyrus is mainly devoted to skin and eyes diseases.

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