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Ancient Egypt

Tales of Ancient Egypt

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Egyptian scribes

W. M. Flinders Petrie (1895–1899)

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About:

Three tales the Egyptians copied on papyrus, full of gods, magicians and marvels. In the Tales of the Magicians (Westcar Papyrus), King Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid, hears from his sons stories of priests who bring a wax crocodile to life and part the waters of a lake; the magician Dedi then foretells that the wife of a priest of Ra will bear three sons of the god, future kings, and the goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Meskhenet and Heqet come down to attend the birth.

The Shipwrecked Sailor tells of a sailor cast on an enchanted island, where a great divine serpent, "prince of the land of Punt", takes him in and sends him back to Egypt.

In Anpu and Bata (the "Tale of the Two Brothers"), the younger brother, falsely accused, lays his heart in the flower of an acacia, is fashioned anew by the gods, is reborn as a bull and as a tree, and ends as king of Egypt.

They are masterpieces of Egyptian literature: the Shipwrecked Sailor dates from the Middle Kingdom (c. 1900 BC), the Westcar Papyrus was copied about 1600 BC, and the Tale of the Two Brothers, from the d'Orbiney Papyrus (c.

1200 BC), recalls the biblical story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

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KHUFU AND HIS SONS

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1 One day, when King Khufu reigned over all the land, he said to his chancellor, who stood before him, "Go call me my sons and my councillors, that I may ask of them a thing." And his sons and his councillors came and stood before him, and he said to them, "Know ye a man who can tell me tales of the deeds of the magicians?"

2 Then the royal son Khafra stood forth and said, "I will tell thy majesty a tale of the days of thy forefather Nebka, the blessed; of what came to pass when he went into the temple of Ptah of Ankhtaui."

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KHAFRA'S TALE

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1 "His majesty was walking unto the temple of Ptah, and went unto the house of the chief reciter Uba-aner, with his train. Now when the wife of Uba-aner saw a page, among those who stood behind the king, her heart longed after him; and she sent her servant unto him, with a present of a box full of garments.

2 "And he came then with the servant. Now there was a lodge in the garden of Uba-aner; and one day the page said to the wife of Uba-aner, 'In the garden of Uba-aner there is now a lodge; behold, let us therein take our pleasure.' So the wife of Uba-aner sent to the steward who had charge over the garden, saying, 'Let the lodge which is in the garden be made ready.' And she remained there, and rested and drank with the page until the sun went down.

3 "And when the even was now come the page went forth to bathe. And the steward said, 'I must go and tell Uba-aner of this matter.' Now when this day was past, and another day came, then went the steward to Uba-aner, and told him of all these things.

4 "Then said Uba-aner, 'Bring me my casket of ebony and electrum.' And they brought it; and he fashioned a crocodile of wax, seven fingers long: and he enchanted it, and said, 'When the page comes and bathes in my lake, seize on him.' And he gave it to the steward, and said to him, 'When

the page shall go down into the lake to bathe, as he is daily wont to do, then throw in this crocodile behind him.' And the steward went forth bearing the crocodile.

5 "And the wife of Uba-aner sent to the steward who had charge over the garden, saying, 'Let the lodge which is in the garden be made ready, for I come to tarry there.'

6 "And the lodge was prepared with all good things; and she came and made merry therein with the page. And when the even was now come, the page went forth to bathe as he was wont to do. And the steward cast in the wax crocodile after him into the water; and, behold! it became a great crocodile seven cubits in length, and it seized on the page.

7 "And Uba-aner abode yet seven days with the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebka, the blessed, while the page was stifled in the crocodile. And after the seven days were passed, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebka, the blessed, went forth, and Uba-aner went before him.

8 "And Uba-aner said unto his majesty, 'Will your majesty come and see this wonder that has come to pass in your days unto a page?' And the king went with Uba-aner. And Uba-aner called unto the crocodile and said, 'Bring forth the page.' And the crocodile came forth from the lake with the page.

8.2 Uba-aner said unto the king, 'Behold, whatever I command this crocodile he will do it.' And his majesty said, 'I pray you send back this crocodile." And Uba-aner stooped and took up the crocodile, and it became in his hand a crocodile of wax. And then Uba-aner told the king that which had passed in his house with the page and his wife.

8.3 And his majesty said unto the crocodile, 'Take to thee thy prey.' And the crocodile plunged into the lake with his prey, and no man knew whither he went.

9 "And his majesty the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebka, the blessed, commanded, and they brought forth the wife of Uba-aner to the north side of the harem, and burnt her with fire, and cast her ashes in the river.

10 "This is a wonder that came to pass in the days of thy forefather the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebka, of the acts of the chief reciter Uba-aner."

11 His majesty the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khufu, then said, "Let there be presented to the king Nebka, the blessed, a thousand loaves, a hundred draughts of beer, an ox, two jars of incense; and let there be presented a loaf, a jar of beer, a jar of incense, and a piece of meat to the chief reciter Uba-aner; for I have seen the token of his learning." And they did all things as his majesty commanded.

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BAUFRA'S TALE

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1 The royal son Bau-f-ra then stood forth and spake. He said, "I will tell thy majesty of a wonder which came to pass in the days of thy father Seneferu, the blessed, of the deeds of the chief reciter Zazamankh. One day King Seneferu, being weary, went throughout his palace seeking for a pleasure to lighten his heart, but he found none.

1.2 And he said, 'Haste, and bring before me the chief reciter and scribe of the rolls Zazamankh'; and they straightway brought him. And the king said, 'I have sought in my palace for some delight, but I have found none.' Then said Zazamankh to him, 'Let thy majesty go upon the lake of the palace, and let there be made ready a boat, with all the fair maidens of the harem of thy palace; and the heart of thy majesty shall be refreshed with the sight, in seeing their rowing up and down the water, and seeing the goodly pools of the birds upon the lake, and beholding its sweet fields and grassy shores; thus will thy heart be lightened.

1.3 And I also will go with thee. Bring me twenty oars of ebony, inlayed with gold, with blades of light wood, inlayed with electrum; and bring me twenty maidens, fair in their limbs, their bosoms and their hair, all virgins; and bring me twenty nets, and give these nets unto the maidens for their garments.' And they did according to all the commands of his majesty.

2 "And they rowed down the stream and up the stream, and the heart of his majesty was glad with the sight of their rowing. But one of them at the steering struck her hair, and her jewel of new malachite fell into the water.

And she ceased her song, and rowed not; and her companions ceased, and rowed not.

2.2 And his majesty said, 'Row you not further?' And they replied, 'Our little steerer here stays and rows not.' His majesty then said to her, 'Wherefore rowest thou not?' She replied, 'It is for my jewel of new malachite which is fallen in the water.' And he said to her, 'Row on, for behold I will replace it.' And she answered, 'But I want my own piece back in its setting.' And his majesty said, 'Haste, bring me the chief reciter Zazamankh,' and they brought him.

2.3 And his majesty said, 'Zazamankh, my brother, I have done as thou sayedst, and the heart of his majesty is refreshed with the sight of their rowing. But now a jewel of new malachite of one of the little ones is fallen in the water, and she ceases and rows not, and she has spoilt the rowing of her side.

2.4 And I said to her, "Wherefore rowest thou not?" and she answered to me, "It is for my jewel of new malachite which is fallen in the water." I replied to her, "Row on, for behold I will replace it"; and she answered to me, "But I want my own piece again back in its setting."' Then the chief reciter Zazamankh spake his magic speech.

3 And he placed one part of the waters of the lake upon the other, and discovered the jewel lying upon a shard; and he took it up and gave it unto its mistress. And the water, which was twelve cubits deep in the middle, reached now to twenty-four cubits after he turned it. And he spake, and used his magic speech; and he brought again the water of the lake to its place.

3.2 And his majesty spent a joyful day with the whole of the royal house. Then rewarded he the chief reciter Zazamankh with all good things. Behold, this is a wonder that came to pass in the days of thy father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Seneferu, of the deeds of the chief reciter, the scribe of the rolls, Zazamankh."

3.3 Then said the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khufu, the blessed, "Let there be presented an offering of a thousand cakes, one hundred draughts of beer, an ox, and two jars of incense to the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sene-feru, the blessed; and let there be given a loaf, a jar of beer, and a jar of incense to the chief reciter, the scribe of the rolls, Zazamankh; for I have seen the token of his learning." And they did all things as his majesty commanded.

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HORDEDEF'S TALE

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1 The royal son Hordedef then stood forth and spake. He said, "Hitherto hast thou only heard tokens of those who have gone before, and of which no man knoweth their truth. But I will show thy majesty a man of thine own days." And his majesty said, "Who is he, Hordedef?" And the royal son Hordedef answered, "It is a certain man named Dedi, who dwells at Dedsneferu.

1.2 He is a man of one hundred and ten years old; and he eats five hundred loaves of bread, and a side of beef, and drinks one hundred draughts of beer, unto this day. He knows how to restore the head that is smitten off; he knows how to cause the lion to follow him trailing his halter on the ground; he knows the designs of the dwelling of Tahuti.

1.3 The majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khufu, the blessed, has long sought for the designs of the dwelling of Tahuti, that he may make the like of them in his pyramid."

2 And his majesty said, "Thou, thyself, Hordedef, my son, bring him to me." Then were the ships made ready for the king's son Hordedef, and he went up the stream to Dedsneferu. And when the ships had moored at the haven, he landed, and sat him in a litter of ebony, the poles of which were of cedar wood overlayed with gold. Now when he drew near to Dedi, they set down the litter.

2.2 And he arose to greet Dedi, and found him lying on a palmstick couch at the door of his house; one servant held his head and rubbed him, and another rubbed his feet.

3 And the king's son Hordedef said, "Thy state is that of one who lives to good old age; for old age is the end of our voyage, the time of embalming, the time of burial. Lie, then, in the sun, free of infirmities, without the babble of dotage: this is the salutation to worthy age.

3.2 I come from far to call thee, with a message from my father Khufu, the blessed, for thou shalt eat of the best which the king gives, and of the food which those have who follow after him; that he may bring thee in good estate to thy fathers who are in the tomb."

4 And Dedi replied to him, "Peace to thee! Peace to thee! Hordedef, son of the king, beloved of his father. May thy father Khufu, the blessed, praise thee, may he advance thee amongst the elders, may thy ka prevail against the enemy, may thy soul know the right road to the gate of him who clothes the afflicted; this is the salutation to the king's son."

4.2 Then the king's son, Hordedef, stretched forth his hands to him, and raised him up, and went with him to the haven, giving unto him his arm. Then said Dedi, "Let there be given me a boat, to bring me my youths and my books." And they made ready for him two boats with their rowers. And Dedi went down the river in the barge in which was the king's son Hordedef.

4.3 And when he had reached the palace, the king's son, Hordedef, entered in to give account unto his majesty the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khufu, the blessed. Then said the king's son Hordedef, "O king, life, wealth, and health! My lord, I have brought Dedi." His majesty replied, "Bring him to me speedily."

4.4 And his majesty went into the hall of columns of Pharaoh (life, wealth, and health), and Dedi was led before him. And his majesty said, "Wherefore is it, Dedi, that I have not yet seen thee?"

4.5 And Dedi answered, "He who is called it is that comes; the king (life, wealth, and health) calls me, and behold I come," And his majesty said, "Is it true, that which men say, that thou canst restore the head which is smitten off?"

5 And Dedi replied, "Truly, I know that, O king (life, wealth, and health), my lord." And his majesty said, "Let one bring me a prisoner who is in prison, that his punishment may be fulfilled." And Dedi said, "Let it not be a man, O king, my lord; behold we do not even thus to our cattle." And a duck was brought unto him, and its head was cut off.

5.2 And the duck was laid on the west side of the hall, and its head on the east side of the hall. And Dedi spake his magic speech. And the duck fluttered along the ground, and its head came likewise; and when it had come part to part the duck stood and quacked. And they brought likewise a goose before him, and he did even so unto it.

5.3 His majesty caused an ox to be brought, and its head cast on the ground. And Dedi spake his magic speech. And the ox stood upright behind him, and followed him with his halter trailing on the ground.

6 And King Khufu said, "And is it true what is said, that thou knowest the number of the designs of the dwelling of Tahuti?" And Dedi replied, "Pardon me, I know not their number, O king (life, wealth, and health), but I know where they are." And his majesty said, "Where is that?"

6.2 And Dedi replied, "There is a chest of whetstone in a chamber named the plan-room, in Heli-opolis; they are in this chest." And Dedi said further unto him, "O king (life, wealth, and health), my lord, it is not I that is to bring them to thee." And his majesty said, "Who, then, is it that shall bring them to me?"

6.3 And Dedi answered to him, "It is the eldest of the three children who are in the body of Rud-didet who shall bring them to thee." And his majesty said, "Would that it may be as thou sayest! And who is this Rud-didet?" And Dedi replied, "She is the wife of a priest of Ra, lord of Sakhebu.

6.4 And she has conceived these three sons by Ra, lord of Sakhebu, and the god has promised her that they shall fulfil this noble office (of reigning) over all this land, and that the eldest of them shall be high priest in Heliopolis."

6.5 And his majesty's heart became troubled for this; but Dedi spake unto him, "What is this that thou thinkest, O king (life, wealth, health), my lord? Is it because of these three children? I tell thee thy son shall reign, and thy son's son, and then one of them." His majesty said, "And when shall Rud-didet bear these?"

7 And he replied, "She shall bear them on the 26th of the month Tybi." And his majesty said, "When the banks of the canal of Letopolis are cut, I will walk there that I may see the temple of Ra, lord of Sakhebu." And Dedi replied, "Then I will cause that there be four cubits of water by the banks of the canal of Letopolis."

7.2 When his majesty returned to his palace, his majesty said, "Let them place Dedi in the house of the royal son Hordedef, that he may dwell with him, and let them give him a daily portion of a thousand loaves, a hundred draughts of beer, an ox, and a hundred bunches of onions." And they did everything as his majesty commanded.

8 And one day it came to pass that Rud-didet felt the pains of birth. And the majesty of Ra, lord of Sakhebu, said unto Isis, to Nebhat, to Meskhent, to Hakt, and to Khnumu, "Go ye, and deliver Rud-didet of these three children that she shall bear, who are to fulfil this noble office over all this land; that they may build up your temples, furnish your altars with offerings, supply your tables of libation, and increase your endowments."

8.2 Then went these deities; their fashion they made as that of dancing-girls, and Khnumu was with them as a porter. They drew near unto the house of Ra-user, and found him standing, with his girdle fallen. And they played before him with their instruments of music. But he said unto them, "My ladies, behold, here is a woman who feels the pains of birth."

8.3 They said to him, "Let us see her, for we know how to help her." And he replied, "Come, then." And they entered in straightway to Rud-didet, and they closed the door on her and on themselves. Then Isis stood before her, and Nebhat stood behind her, and Hakt helped her. And Isis said, "O child, by thy name of User-ref, do not do violence."

8.4 And the child came upon her hands, as a child of a cubit; its bones were strong, the beauty of its limbs was like gold, and its hair was like true lapis lazuli. They washed him, and prepared him, and placed him on a carpet on the brickwork. Then Meskhent approached him and said, "This is a king who shall reign over all the land."

9 And Khnumu gave strength to his limbs. Then Isis stood before her, and Nebhat stood behind her, and Hakt helped her. And Isis said, "O child, by thy name of Sah-ra, stay not in her." Then the child came upon her hands, a child of a cubit; its bones were strong, the beauty of its limbs was like gold, and its hair was like true lapis lazuli.

9.2 They washed him, and prepared him, and layed him on a carpet on the brickwork. Then Meskhent approached him and said, "This is a king who shall reign over all the land." And Khnumu gave strength to his limbs. Then Isis stood before her, and Nebhat stood behind her, and Hakt helped her. And Isis said, "O child, by thy name of Kaku, remain not in darkness in her."

9.3 And the child came upon her hands, a child of a cubit; its bones were strong, the beauty of its limbs was like gold, and its hair was like true lapis lazuli. And Meskhent approached him and said, "This is a king who shall reign over all the land." And Khnumu gave strength to his limbs. And they washed him, and prepared him, and layed him on a carpet on the brickwork.

10 And the deities went out, having delivered Rud-didet of the three children. And they said, "Rejoice! O Ra-user, for behold three children are born unto thee." And he said unto them, "My ladies, and what shall I give unto ye? Behold, give this bushel of barley here unto your porter, that ye may take it as your reward to the brew-house."

10.2 And Khnumu loaded himself with the bushel of barley. And they went away toward the place from which they came. And Isis spake unto these goddesses, and said, "Wherefore have we come without doing a marvel for these children, that we may tell it to their father who has sent us?"

10.3 Then made they the divine diadems of the king (life, wealth, and health), and laid them in the bushel of barley. And they caused the clouds to come with wind and rain; and they turned back again unto the house. And they said, "Let us put this barley in a closed chamber, sealed up, until we return northward, dancing." And they placed the barley in a close chamber.

11 And Rud-didet purified herself, with a purification of fourteen days. And she said to her handmaid, "Is the house made ready?" And she replied, "All things are made ready, but the brewing barley is not yet brought." And Rud-didet said, "Wherefore is the brewing barley not yet brought?"

11.2 And the servant answered, "It would all of it long since be ready if the barley had not been given to the dancing-girls, and lay in the chamber under their seal." Rud-didet said, "Go down, and bring of it, and Ra-user shall give them in its stead when he shall come," And the handmaid went, and opened the chamber.

11.3 And she heard talking and singing, music and dancing, quavering, and all things which are performed for a king in his chamber. And she returned and told to Rud-didet all that she had heard. And she went through the chamber, but she found not the place where the sound was. And she layed her temple to the sack, and found that the sounds were in it.

11.4 She placed it in a chest, and put that in another locker, and tied it fast with leather, and layed it in the store-room, where the things were, and sealed it. And Ra-user came returning from the field; and Rud-didet

repeated unto him these things; and his heart was glad above all things; and they sat down and made a joyful day.

12 And after these days it came to pass that Rud-didet was wroth with her servant, and beat her with stripes. And the servant said unto those that were in the house, "Shall it be done thus unto me? She has borne three kings, and I will go and tell this to his majesty King Khufu the blessed."

12.2 And she went, and found the eldest brother of her mother, who was binding his flax on the floor. And he said to her, "Whither goest thou, my little maid?" And she told him of all these things. And her brother said to her, "Wherefore comest thou thus to me? Shall I agree to treachery?" And he took a bunch of the flax to her, and laid on her a violent blow. And the servant went to fetch a handful of water, and a crocodile carried her away.

13 Her uncle went therefore to tell of this to Rud-didet; and he found Rud-didet sitting, her head on her knees, and her heart beyond measure sad. And he said to her, "My lady, why makest thou thy heart thus?"

13.2 And she answered, "It is because of this little wretch that was in the house; behold she went out saying, 'I will go and tell it.'" And he bowed his head unto the ground, and said, "My lady, she came and told me of these things, and made her complaint unto me; and I laid on her a violent blow. And she went forth to draw water, and a crocodile carried her away."

14 (The rest of the tale is lost.)

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THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR

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1 The wise servant said, "Let thy heart be satisfied, O my lord, for that we have come back to the country; after we have long been on board, and rowed much, the prow has at last touched land. All the people rejoice, and embrace us one after another.

1.2 Moreover, we have come back in good health, and not a man is lacking; although we have been to the ends of Wawat, and gone through the land of Senmut, we have returned in peace, and our land—behold, we have come back to it. Hear me, my lord; I have no other refuge. Wash thee, and turn the water over thy fingers; then go and tell the tale to the majesty."

2 His lord replied, "Thy heart continues still its wandering words! but although the mouth of a man may save him, his words may also cover his face with confusion. Wilt thou do then as thy heart moves thee? This that thou wilt say, tell quietly."

3 The sailor then answered, "Now I shall tell that which has happened to me, to my very self. I was going to the mines of Pharaoh, and I went down on the sea on a ship of 150 cubits long and 40 cubits wide, with 150 sailors of the best of Egypt, who had seen heaven and earth, and whose hearts were stronger than lions.

3.2 They had said that the wind would not be contrary, or that there would be none. But as we approached the land the wind arose, and threw up waves eight cubits high. As for me, I seized a piece of wood; but those

who were in the vessel perished, without one remaining. A wave threw me on an island, after that I had been three days alone, without a companion beside my own heart.

3.3 I laid me in a thicket, and the shadow covered me. Then stretched I my limbs to try to find something for my mouth. I found there figs and grapes, all manner of good herbs, berries and grain, melons of all kinds, fishes and birds. Nothing was lacking. And I satisfied myself; and left on the ground that which was over, of what my arms had been filled withal. I dug a pit, I lighted a fire, and I made a burnt-offering unto the gods.

4 "Suddenly I heard a noise as of thunder, which I thought to be that of a wave of the sea. The trees shook, and the earth was moved. I uncovered my face, and I saw that a serpent drew near. He was thirty cubits long, and his beard greater than two cubits; his body was as overlayed with gold, and his colour as that of true lazuli. He coiled himself before me.

5 "Then he opened his mouth, while that I lay on my face before him, and he said to me, 'What has brought thee, what has brought thee, little one, what has brought thee? If thou sayest not speedily what has brought thee to this isle, I will make thee know thyself; as a flame thou shalt vanish, if thou tellest me not something I have not heard, or which I knew not, before thee.'

6 "Then he took me in his mouth and carried me to his resting-place, and layed me down without any hurt. I was whole and sound, and nothing was gone from me. Then he opened his mouth against me, while that I lay on my face before him, and he said, 'What has brought thee, what has brought thee, little one, what has brought thee to this isle which is in the sea, and of which the shores are in the midst of the waves?'

7 "Then I replied to him, and holding my arms low before him, I said to him,' I was embarked for the mines by the order of the majesty, in a ship, 150 cubits was its length, and the width of it 40 cubits. It had 150 sailors of the best of Egypt, who had seen heaven and earth, and the hearts of whom were stronger than lions.

7.2 They said that the wind would not be contrary, or that there would be none. Each of them exceeded his companion in the prudence of his heart and the strength of his arm, and I was not beneath any of them. A storm came upon us while we were on the sea. Hardly could we reach to the shore when the wind waxed yet greater, and the waves rose even eight cubits.

7.3 As for me, I seized a piece of wood, while those who were in the boat perished without one being left with me for three days. Behold me now before thee, for I was brought to this isle by a wave of the sea.'

8 "Then said he to me, 'Fear not, fear not, little one, and make not thy face sad. If thou hast come to me, it is God who has let thee live. For it is He who has brought thee to this isle of the blest, where nothing is lacking, and which is filled with all good after another, until thou shalt be four months in this isle. Then a ship shall come from thy land with sailors, and thou shalt leave with them and go to thy country, and thou shalt die in thy town.

9 '"Converse is pleasing, and he who tastes of it passes over his misery. I will therefore tell thee of that which is in this isle. I am here with my brethren and my children around me; we are seventy-five serpents, children, and kindred; without naming a young girl who was brought unto me by chance, and on whom the fire of heaven fell, and burnt her to ashes.

10 "'As for thee if thou art strong, and if thy heart waits patiently, thou shalt press thy infants to thy bosom and embrace thy wife. Thou shalt return to thy house which is full of all good things, thou shalt see thy land, where thou shalt dwell in the midst of thy kindred.'

11 "Then I bowed, in my obeisance, and I touched the ground before him. 'Behold now that which I have told thee before. I shall tell of thy presence unto Pharaoh, I shall make him to know of thy greatness, and I will bring to thee of the sacred oils and perfumes, and of incense of the temples with which all gods are honoured.

11.2 I shall tell, moreover, of that which I do now see (thanks to him), and there shall be rendered to thee praises before the fulness of all the land. I shall slay asses for thee in sacrifice, I shall pluck for thee the birds, and I shall bring for thee ships full of all kinds of the treasures of Egypt, as is comely to do unto a god, a friend of men in a far country, of which men know not.'

12 "Then he smiled at my speech, because of that which was in his heart, for he said to me, 'Thou art not rich in perfumes, for all that thou hast is but common incense. As for me I am prince of the land of Punt, and I have perfumes. Only the oil which thou sayedst thou wouldest bring is not common in this isle. But, when thou shalt depart from this place, thou shalt never more see this isle; it shall be changed into waves.'

13 "And, behold, when the ship drew near, according to all that he had told me before, I got me up into an high tree, to strive to see those who were within it. Then I came and told to him this matter; but it was already

known unto him before. Then he said to me. 'Farewell, farewell, go to thy house, little one, see again thy children, and let thy name be good in thy town; these are my wishes for thee.'"

14 "Then I bowed myself before him, and held my arms low before him, and he, he gave me gifts of precious perfumes, of cassia, of sweet woods, of kohl, of cypress, an abundance of incense, of ivory tusks, of baboons, of apes, and all kind of precious things. I embarked all in the ship which was come, and bowing myself, I prayed God for him.

15 "Then he said to me, 'Behold thou shalt come to thy country in two months, thou shalt press to thy bosom thy children, and thou shalt rest in thy tomb.' After this I went down to the shore unto the ship, and I called to the sailors who were there. Then on the shore I rendered adoration to the master of this isle and to those who dwelt therein.

16 "When we shall come, in our return, to the house of Pharaoh, in the second month, according to all that the serpent has said, we shall approach unto the palace. And I shall go in before Pharaoh, I shall bring the gifts which I have brought from this isle into the country. Then he shall thank me before the fulness of all the land.

16.2 Grant then unto me a follower, and lead me to the courtiers of the king. Cast thy eye upon me, after that I am come to land again, after that I have both seen and proved this. Hear my prayer, for it is good to listen to people. It was said unto me, 'Become a wise man, and thou shalt come to honour,' and behold I have become such."

17 This is finished from its beginning unto its end, even as it was found in a writing. It is written by the scribe of cunning fingers Ameni-amen-aa; may he live in life, wealth, and health!

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ANPU AND BATA

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1 Once there were two brethren, of one mother and one father; Anpu was the name of the elder, and Bata was the name of the younger. Now, as for Anpu he had a house, and he had a wife.

1.2 But his little brother was to him as it were a son; he it was who made for him his clothes; he it was who followed behind his oxen to the fields; he it was who did the ploughing; he it was who harvested the corn; he it was who did for him all the matters that were in the field.

1.3 Behold, his younger brother grew to be an excellent worker, there was not his equal in the whole land; behold, the spirit of a god was in him.

2 Now after this the younger brother followed his oxen in his daily manner; and every evening he turned again to the house, laden with all the herbs of the field, with milk and with wood, and with all things of the field. And he put them down before his elder brother, who was sitting with his wife; and he drank and ate, and he lay down in his stable with the cattle.

2.2 And at the dawn of day he took bread which he had baked, and laid it before his elder brother; and he took with him his bread to the field, and he drave his cattle to pasture in the fields.

2.3 And as he walked behind his cattle, they said to him, "Good is the herbage which is in that place;" and he listened to all that they said, and he took them to the good place which they desired. And the cattle which were before him became exceeding excellent, and they multiplied greatly.

3 Now at the time of ploughing his elder brother said unto him, "Let us make ready for ourselves a goodly yoke of oxen for ploughing, for the land has come out from the water, it is fit for ploughing. Moreover, do thou come to the field with corn, for we will begin the ploughing in the morrow morning." Thus said he to him; and his younger brother did all things as his elder brother had spoken unto him to do them.

4 And when the morn was come, they went to the fields with their things; and their hearts were pleased exceedingly with their task in the beginning of their work. And it came to pass after this that as they were in the field they stopped for corn, and he sent his younger brother, saying, "Haste thou, bring to us corn from the farm."

4.2 And the younger brother found the wife of his elder brother, as she was sitting tiring her hair. He said to her, "Get up, and give to me corn, that I may run to the field, for my elder brother hastened me; do not delay." She said to him, "Go, open the bin, and thou shalt take to thyself according to thy will, that I may not drop my locks of hair while I dress them."

5 The youth went into the stable; he took a large measure, for he desired to take much corn; he loaded it with wheat and barley; and he went out carrying it. She said to him, "How much of the corn that is wanted, is that which is on thy shoulder?" He said to her, "Three bushels of barley, and two of wheat, in all five; these are what are upon my shoulder:" thus said he to her.

5.2 And she conversed with him, saying, "There is great strength in thee, for I see thy might every day." And her heart knew him with the knowledge of youth. And she arose and came to him, and conversed with

him, saying, "Come, stay with me, and it shall be well for thee, and I will make for thee beautiful garments."

5.3 Then the youth became like a panther of the south with fury at the evil speech which she had made to him; and she feared greatly. And he spake unto her, saying, "Behold thou art to me as a mother, thy husband is to me as a father, for he who is elder than I has brought me up. What is this wickedness that thou hast said to me? Say it not to me again.

5.4 For I will not tell it to any man, for I will not let it be uttered by the mouth of any man." He lifted up his burden, and he went to the field and came to his elder brother; and they took up their work, to labour at their task.

6 Now afterward, at eventime, his elder brother was returning to his house; and the younger brother was following after his oxen, and he loaded himself with all the things of the field; and he brought his oxen before him, to make them lie down in their stable which was in the farm. And behold the wife of the elder brother was afraid for the words which she had said.

6.2 She took a parcel of fat, she became like one who is evilly beaten, desiring to say to her husband, "It is thy younger brother who has done this wrong." Her husband returned in the even, as was his wont of every day; he came unto his house; he found his wife ill of violence; she did not give him water upon his hands as he used to have, she did not make a light before him, his house was in darkness, and she was lying very sick. Her husband said to her, "Who has spoken with thee?"

7 Behold she said, "No one has spoken with me except thy younger brother. When he came to take for thee corn he found me sitting alone; he said to me, 'Come, let us stay together, tie up thy hair:' thus spake he to me.

7.2 I did not listen to him, but thus spake I to him: 'Behold, am I not thy mother, is not thy elder brother to thee as a father?' And he feared, and he beat me to stop me from making report to thee, and if thou lettest him live I shall die. Now behold he is coming in the evening; and I complain of these wicked words, for he would have done this even in daylight."

8 And the elder brother became as a panther of the south; he sharpened his knife; he took it in his hand; he stood behind the door of his stable to slay his younger brother as he came in the evening to bring his cattle into the stable.

9 Now the sun went down, and he loaded himself with herbs in his daily manner. He came, and his foremost cow entered the stable, and she said to her keeper, "Behold thou thy elder brother standing before thee with his knife to slay thee; flee from before him." He heard what his first cow had said; and the next entering, she also said likewise.

9.2 He looked beneath the door of the stable; he saw the feet of his elder brother; he was standing behind the door, and his knife was in his hand. He cast down his load to the ground, and betook himself to flee swiftly; and his elder brother pursued after him with his knife. Then the younger brother cried out unto Ra Harakhti, saying, "My good Lord!

9.3 Thou art he who divides the evil from the good." And Ra stood and heard all his cry; and Ra made a wide water between him and his elder brother, and it was full of crocodiles; and the one brother was on one bank,

and the other on the other bank; and the elder brother smote twice on his hands at not slaying him. Thus did he.

9.4 And the younger brother called to the elder on the bank, saying, "Stand still until the dawn of day; and when Ra ariseth, I shall judge with thee before Him, and He discerneth between the good and the evil. For I shall not be with thee any more for ever; I shall not be in the place in which thou art; I shall go to the valley of the acacia."

10 Now when the land was lightened, and the next day appeared, Ra Harakhti arose, and one looked unto the other. And the youth spake with his elder brother, saying, "Wherefore camest thou after me to slay me in craftiness, when thou didst not hear the words of my mouth? For I am thy brother in truth, and thou art to me as a father, and thy wife even as a mother: is it not so?

10.2 Verily, when I was sent to bring for us corn, thy wife said to me, 'Come, stay with me;' for behold this has been turned over unto thee into another wise." And he caused him to understand of all that happened with him and his wife. And he swore an oath by Ra Har-akhti, saying, "Thy coming to slay me by deceit with thy knife was an abomination."

10.3 Then the youth took a knife, and cut off of his flesh, and cast it into the water, and the fish swallowed it. He failed; he became faint; and his elder brother cursed his own heart greatly; he stood weeping for him afar off; he knew not how to pass over to where his younger brother was, because of the crocodiles.

10.4 And the younger brother called unto him, saying, "Whereas thou hast devised an evil thing, wilt thou not also devise a good thing, even like that which I would do unto thee? When thou goest to thy house thou

must look to thy cattle, for I shall not stay in the place where thou art; I am going to the valley of the acacia.

11 And now as to what thou shalt do for me; it is even that thou shalt come to seek after me, if thou perceivest a matter, namely, that there are things happening unto me.

11.2 And this is what shall come to pass, that I shall draw out my soul, and I shall put it upon the top of the flowers of the acacia, and when the acacia is cut down, and it falls to the ground, and thou comest to seek for it, if thou searchest for it seven years do not let thy heart be wearied.

11.3 For thou wilt find it, and thou must put it in a cup of cold water, and expect that I shall live again, that I may make answer to what has been done wrong. And thou shalt know of this, that is to say, that things are happening to me, when one shall give to thee a cup of beer in thy hand, and it shall be troubled; stay not then, for verily it shall come to pass with thee."

12 And the youth went to the valley of the acacia; and his elder brother went unto his house; his hand was laid on his head, and he cast dust on his head; he came to his house, and he slew his wife, he cast her to the dogs, and he sat in mourning for his younger brother.

13 Now many days after these things, the younger brother was in the valley of the acacia; there was none with him; he spent his time in hunting the beasts of the desert, and he came back in the even to lie down under the acacia, which bore his soul upon the topmost flower. And after this he built himself a tower with his own hands, in the valley of the acacia; it was full of all good things, that he might provide for himself a home.

14 And he went out from his tower, and he met the Nine Gods, who were walking forth to look upon the whole land. The Nine Gods talked one with another, and they said unto him, "Ho! Bata, bull of the Nine Gods, art thou remaining alone? Thou hast left thy village for the wife of Anpu, thy elder brother. Behold his wife is slain.

14.2 Thou hast given him an answer to all that was transgressed against thee." And their hearts were vexed for him exceedingly. And Ra Harakhti said to Khnumu, "Behold, frame thou a woman for Bata, that he may not remain alive alone." And Khnumu made for him a mate to dwell with him.

15 She was more beautiful in her limbs than any woman who is in the whole land. The essence of every god was in her. The seven Hathors came to see her: they said with one mouth, "She will die a sharp death."

16 And Bata loved her very exceedingly, and she dwelt in his house; he passed his time in hunting the beasts of the desert, and brought and laid them before her. He said, "Go not outside, lest the sea seize thee; for I cannot rescue thee from it, for I am a woman like thee; my soul is placed on the head of the flower of the acacia; and if another find it, I must fight with him." And he opened unto her his heart in all its nature.

17 Now after these things Bata went to hunt in his daily manner. And the young girl went to walk under the acacia which was by the side of her house. Then the sea saw her, and cast its waves up after her. She betook herself to flee from before it. She entered her house. And the sea called unto the acacia, saying, "Oh, would that I could seize her!"

17.2 And the acacia brought a lock from her hair, and the sea carried it to Egypt, and dropped it in the place of the fullers of Pharaoh's linen. The smell of the lock of hair entered into the clothes of Pharaoh; and they were wroth with the fullers of Pharaoh, saying, "The smell of ointment is in the clothes of Pharaoh."

17.3 And the people were rebuked every day, they knew not what they should do. And the chief fuller of Pharaoh walked by the bank, and his heart was very evil within him after the daily quarrel with him.

17.4 He stood still, he stood upon the sand opposite to the lock of hair, which was in the water, and he made one enter into the water and bring it to him; and there was found in it a smell, exceeding sweet.

17.5 He took it to Pharaoh; and they brought the scribes and the wise men, and they said unto Pharaoh, "This lock of hair belongs to a daughter of Ra Harakhti: the essence of every god is in her, and it is a tribute to thee from another land.

17.6 Let messengers go to every strange land to seek her: and as for the messenger who shall go to the valley of the acacia, let many men go with him to bring her."

18 Then said his majesty, "Excellent exceedingly is what has been said to us;" and they sent them. And many days after these things the people who were sent to strange lands came to give report unto the king: but there came not those who went to the valley of the acacia, for Bata had slain them, but let one of them return to give a report to the king.

18.2 His majesty sent many men and soldiers, as well as horsemen, to bring her back. And there was a woman amongst them, and to her had been given in her hand beautiful ornaments of a woman. And the girl

came back with her, and they rejoiced over her in the whole land.

19 And his majesty loved her exceedingly, and raised her to high estate; and he spake unto her that she should tell him concerning her husband. And she said, "Let the acacia be cut down, and let one chop it up." And they sent men and soldiers with their weapons to cut down the acacia; and they came to the acacia, and they cut the flower upon which was the soul of Bata, and he fell dead suddenly.

20 And when the next day came, and the earth was lightened, the acacia was cut down. And Anpu, the elder brother of Bata, entered his house, and washed his hands; and one gave him a cup of beer, and it became troubled; and one gave him another of wine, and the smell of it was evil.

20.2 Then he took his staff, and his sandals, and likewise his clothes, with his weapons of war; and he betook himself forth to the valley of the acacia. He entered the tower of his younger brother, and he found him lying upon his mat; he was dead. And he wept when he saw his younger brother verily lying dead.

20.3 And he went out to seek the soul of his younger brother under the acacia tree, under which his younger brother lay in the evening.

21 He spent three years in seeking for it, but found it not. And when he began the fourth year, he desired in his heart to return into Egypt; he said "I will go to-morrow morn:" thus spake he in his heart.

22 Now when the land lightened, and the next day appeared, he was walking under the acacia; he was spending his time in seeking it. And he returned in the evening, and laboured at seeking it again. He found a seed.

He returned with it. Behold this was the soul of his younger brother. He brought a cup of cold water, and he cast the seed into it: and he sat down, as he was wont.

22.2 Now when the night came his soul sucked up the water; Bata shuddered in all his limbs, and he looked on his elder brother; his soul was in the cup. Then Anpu took the cup of cold water, in which the soul of his younger brother was; Bata drank it, his soul stood again in its place, and he became as he had been. They embraced each other, and they conversed together.

23 And Bata said to his elder brother, "Behold I am to become as a great bull, which bears every good mark; no one knoweth its history, and thou must sit upon my back. When the sun arises I shall be in the place where my wife is, that I may return answer to her; and thou must take me to the place where the king is.

23.2 For all good things shall be done for thee; for one shall lade thee with silver and gold, because thou bringest me to Pharaoh, for I become a great marvel, and they shall rejoice for me in all the land. And thou shalt go to thy village."

24 And when the land was lightened, and the next day appeared, Bata became in the form which he had told to his elder brother. And Anpu sat upon his back until the dawn. He came to the place where the king was, and they made his majesty to know of him; he saw him, and he was exceeding joyful with him. He made for him great offerings, saying,

25 "This is a great wonder which has come to pass." There were rejoicings over him in the whole land. They presented unto him silver and gold for his elder brother, who went and stayed in his village. They gave to the bull

many men and many things, and Pharaoh loved him exceedingly above all that is in this land.

26 And after many days after these things, the bull entered the purified place; he stood in the place where the princess was; he began to speak with her, saying, "Behold, I am alive indeed." And she said to him, "And, pray, who art thou?" He said to her, "I am Bata.

26.2 I perceived when thou causedst that they should destroy the acacia of Pharaoh, which was my abode, that I might not be suffered to live. Behold, I am alive indeed, I am as an ox." Then the princess feared exceedingly for the words that her husband had spoken to her. And he went out from the purified place.

27 And his majesty was sitting, making a good day with her: she was at the table of his majesty, and the king was exceeding pleased with her. And she said to his majesty, "Swear to me by God, saying, 'What thou shalt say, I will obey it for thy sake.'" He hearkened unto all that she said, even this.

27.2 "Let me eat of the liver of the ox, because he is fit for nought:" thus spake she to him. And the king was exceeding sad at her words, the heart of Pharaoh grieved him greatly. And after the land was lightened, and the next day appeared, they proclaimed a great feast with offerings to the ox.

27.3 And the king sent one of the chief butchers of his majesty, to cause the ox to be sacrificed. And when he was sacrificed, as he was upon the shoulders of the people, he shook his neck, and he threw two drops of blood over against the two doors of his majesty. The one fell upon the one side, on the great door of Pharaoh, and the other upon the other door. They grew as two great Persea trees, and each of them was excellent.

28 And one went to tell unto his majesty, "Two great Persea trees have grown, as a great marvel of his majesty, in the night by the side of the great gate of his majesty." And there was rejoicing for them in all the land, and there were offerings made to them.

29 And when the days were multiplied after these things, his majesty was adorned with the blue crown, with garlands of flowers on his neck, and he was upon the chariot of pale gold, and he went out from the palace to behold the Persea trees: the princess also was going out with horses behind his majesty.

29.2 And his majesty sat beneath one of the Persea trees, and it spake thus with his wife: "Oh thou deceitful one, I am Bata, I am alive, though I have been evilly entreated. I knew who caused the acacia to be cut down by Pharaoh at my dwelling. I then became an ox, and thou causedst that I should be killed."

30 And many days after these things the princess stood at the table of Pharaoh, and the king was pleased with her. And she said to his majesty, "Swear to me by God, saying, 'That which the princess shall say to me I will obey it for her.'" And he hearkened unto all she said. And he commanded, "Let these two Persea trees be cut down, and let them be made into goodly planks."

30.2 And he hearkened unto all she said. And after this his majesty sent skilful craftsmen, and they cut down the Persea trees of Pharaoh; and the princess, the royal wife, was standing looking on, and they did all that was in her heart unto the trees. But a chip flew up, and it entered into the mouth of the princess; she swallowed it, and after many days she bore a son.

30.3 And one went to tell his majesty, "There is born to thee a son." And they brought him, and gave to him a nurse and servants; and there were rejoicings in the whole land. And the king sat making a merry day, as they were about the naming of him, and his majesty loved him exceedingly at that moment, and the king raised him to be the royal son of Kush.

31 Now after the days had multiplied after these things, his majesty made him heir of all the land. And many days after that, when he had fulfilled many years as heir, his majesty flew up to heaven. And the heir said, "Let my great nobles of his majesty be brought before me, that I may make them to know all that has happened to me."

31.2 And they brought also before him his wife, and he judged with her before him, and they agreed with him. They brought to him his elder brother; he made him hereditary prince in all his land. He was thirty years king of Egypt, and he died, and his elder brother stood in his place on the day of burial.

32 Excellently finished in peace, for the ka of the scribe of the treasury Kagabu, of the treasury of Pharaoh, and for the scribe Hora, and the scribe Meremapt. Written by the scribe Anena, the owner of this roll. He who speaks against this roll, may Tahuti smite him.

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