

Some Commentaries on Encountering the Snake in Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor

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Abstract

This article introduces some commentaries concerning moment of encountering the snake in tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor. This included explaining the snake's threat to burn the sailor and indicating its symbolic identity which would lead to suggest interpretations of some sentences from the context between the sailor and snake.

Key Words: Commentaries, Encountering, Snake, Sailor.

Introduction

The shipwrecked sailor is a remarkable tale that attracted scholars' attention to make notes, interpretations and literal studies (Simpson V, 1984, 621-622; Foster, 1988, 69-109 and Rendsburg, 2000, 13-23). For the tale's synopsis, it started with bright sentences of a " follower " to inform a " local prince " about safe arrival of their ship to Egypt. Then he asked the prince to get prepared for the moment of presenting his report to the king of Egypt about the naval expiation which was under his leadership. But the prince seemed depressed because he did not succeed in his mission (Spalinger, 1984, 91 and Devauchelle, 1988, 21).

Thus the follower, in order to ease feelings of the prince, narrated a story which happened to him while he was a sailor. He was navigating in a great ship among talented sailors to one of the king's mine but fierce storm stroke them in the heart of the sea. Being the only survivor, he found himself in an isolated island where he found nourishment. After making burning offerings as a gratitude to the gods, a huge snake suddenly appeared. The snake threatened to burn him if he did not explain his existence in the island. The sailor became terrified and could not answer and lost his conscious, and then the snake carried him to its residential place and repeated the question. After holding himself, the sailor narrated the wreck of his ship and the death of its crew. The snake taking course of conversation tried to calm the sailor and told him that would be reunited with his family. Then the snake narrated a tragic story about death of its entire family because of a falling star. After that the snake predicted about arrival of a ship to the island and it would transport the sailor to his home. This was actually happened and the sailor showed his gratitude to the snake which in turn provided the sailor with precious products from the island. After reaching home, the sailor was rewarded by the king. But the story was not having any positive influence over the prince who described his position as a bird given water in the morning before being slaughtered at noon (Burkard, 2001, 284).

Since encountering the snake can be considered climax point in the tale for witnessing dramatic conditions, this paper intends to display the following points:-

- I. Explaining the snake's threat to burn the sailor.
- II. Indicating symbolic identity of the snake which varied between regarding it as god or king or manifestation of fate (Lopriens, 1991, p. 211 and Burkard, 2001, 284).
- III. Interpreting some sentences of the sailor and the snake in a tale which was believed to be full of thoughts and significances (Devauchelle, 1988, 21).

The thesis would depend on transcription, transliteration and translation of Allen which is considered one of the adequate recent works about the ancient Egyptian middle literature (Allen, 2015, 10-52).

I. Threat of Burning

The snake, after making its sudden appearance, angrily asked the sailor about the one who brought him to the island (Allen, 2015, columns 69-72). Then it threatened to burn him if he delayed the answer through the following expression (Allen, 2015, 24 column 72):



iw.k m ss hprt m nty m33 t(w).f

“ You will be as ash (and) become as one who is not seen ”.

In ancient Egypt, burning was used as an expression of threat against a person for not showing respect to another one who occupied high position in the society (Galán, 2005, 32 and footnote 39). From dramatic viewpoint, there might be an enquiry about reason that caused the snake use threat of turning the sailor into ash especially it was simple to swallow him or crush his body. An explanation can be suggested from two different situations in the tale which witnessed setting fire represented in:

(a) The sailor, in order to show gratitude to gods for his survival from the fierce sea storm and after finding needs for nourishment in the island, performed ritual of burning offerings (Allen, 2015, 20 columns 55-56):



shpr.n.j ht jr.n.j sb-n-sdt n ntrw

“ I created fire. I made offering of fire to the gods ”.

(b) Family of the snake was burnt because of a falling star (Allen, 2015, 35 columns 129-130).



sb3 h3w pr.n n3 m ht m c.f


“ A star fell. They went into fire in its track ”.

It can be deduced from situation (a) that the snake realized existence of the sailor who spent three days in the island from the act of making offering of fire. For nature of this ritual, the sailor used fleshes of sacrificial animals as indicated in another position in the tale when he promised to glorify the snake (Allen, 2015, 38-39 lines 144-145):



sft.i n.k k3w m sb-n-sdt

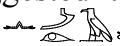
“ I will slaughter for you bulls as offerings of fire ”.

Probably fire smoke of the burnt sacrificial animals which were prepared by the sailor caused the snake recall horrible scene of the dead bodies of its family with smolders rising from after being burnt because of the falling star as mentioned in situation (b). Consequently, the snake’s anger feelings were fired with moral pain. Its threat to turn the sailor into “ ashes ”  *ss* is normal because this represented what exactly happened to the family members at the moment of seeing their dead bodies as clearly expressed in its heart-breaking phrase (Allen, 2015, 35 columns 131-132):



mwt.kwi n.sn gm.n.i st m h3ywt wct

“ I died for them (after) I found it as one heap of corpses ”.

According to the previous, it can be suggested that the snake’s continual sentence represented in making the sailor as  *n m3t.f* “ one who is not seen ” expressed its sadness for living lonely without seeing the family anymore.

Idea of the snake which was influenced by painful experience can be compared with the sailor who, after hearing the sound of thunder before appearance of the snake, instantly assumed that a sea wave would attack him (Allen, 2015, 22 columns 57-59).



hc.n sdm.n.i hrw qrw ib.kwi w3w pw n w3d-wr

“ Then I heard sound of thunder. I thought it was wave of the great sea ”.

Thinking of the sea wave seems logic because the sailor witnessed deadly experience of the fierce sea storm that led to death of his comrades.

II. Symbolic Identity of the Snake

There is an interesting question about the snake’s identity and what it exactly represented in the tale. Many hypotheses regarded the snake as god or king or representation of fate according to its aspects in the tale (Loprieno, 1991, p. 211 and Burkard, 2001, 284).

The hypothetical opinions included considering the snake as incarnation of the sun god *Re*. This because the snake was having a gilded body and eyebrows of lapis-lazuli (Allen 2015, 22 columns 62-65) which resembles image of god *Re* in legend of “ Destruction of Mankind ” (Lichtheim II, 1976, 198; Bryan, 1979, 10 and Galán, 2005, 42). Beside, the snake’s family comprised 74 snakes of “children” and “ companions ” added to them a “ little daughter ” (Allen, 2015, 33-34 lines 126-129). Number of the snake’s family was suggested to represent figures of god *Re* in his litany and its daughter was believed to be *Maat* goddess of justice (Bains, 1990, 63; Parkinson, 1997, 90 and 99 notes 17 and 18 and Galán, 2005, 45 and footnotes 72 and 73). The Snake was thought to be the creator god *Re-Atum* (Bains, 1990, 62; Derchain-Urtel, 1974, 89-93; Malaise, 1977, 277 and Loprieno, 1991, 211).



In a religious text, god *Re-Atum* was described as lord of fire and this suits the snake’s menace to burn the sailor (Canhão, 2012, 133). The snake was also suggested to be a foreign god in far land which is not known to the Egyptians (Fischer, 1977, 157; Redford, 1981, 174-175 and Allen, 2015, 39 lines. 147-148). In addition size of the snake which reached 30 cubits in length (Allen 2015, 22 columns 62-65) and its threat to burn the sailor (Allen, 2015, 24 column 72) bear a resemblance to the mythical giant snake that lived in *Bakhu* mountain for having the same body measurement and its nomenclature was “ He who is in his Burning ” as mentioned in spell 160 from the Coffin Texts (De Buck A., 1938, 377-381; Faulkner, 1973, 138; Goedicke, 1980, 27 and Carrier, 2004, 394-395) as well as spell 108 from the Book of Coming Forth by the Day (Goedicke, 1980, 27; Faulkner, 1985, 101 and Carrier, 2009, 380).

Another opinion regarded the snake as an embodiment of the king, it depended on some aspects. Having a bearded human resembles a snake statue with human beard for king *Amenemhat* IV from the XIIth Dynasty (Fischer, 1977, 156 and footnote 7 and 166, fig. 3 and Bryan, 1979, 10-11 and footnotes 52 and 53). There are also magical knives with human headed snakes from the Middle Kingdom (Fischer, 1977, 156 and 166, figs. 1-2 and Fischer, 1981, 26). Kings were associated with gold and lapis lazuli as clearly mentioned in describing the three royal children in one of the “ Three Tales of Wonder ” (Erman, 1906, 10; Lichtheim, 1973, 220; Bryan, 1979, 10; Galán, 2005, 42 and Goedicke, 1980, 28).






Fulfillment of the snake’s prediction to the sailor about his return to home suits nature of the king who possessed clear knowledge (Bryan, 1979, 11). Inability of the sailor to control his senses before the snake and bending himself on his belly resembled and situation of *Sinuhe* in his tale while standing in front of king *Senusert* I (Gardiner, 1908-1909, 63). The snake was also regarded as the foreign king due to its description as ruler of Punt and the sailor’s promise to mention its greatness in his town (Bryan, 1979, 10 and 11). In addition, the snake was suggested to represent *ka* of the king for it appeared to the sailor in the “ island of the *ka* ” (Bryan, 1979, 11 and footnote 68).


Besides, the ka was shown with divine beard and it was associated with king's royal title known as the Horus Name (Bryan, 1979, 10 and 12 and Gardiner, 2007, 71).

In addition, the snake was regarded as symbol of fate for being adapted with death of its family and for providing the sailor with prediction of being reunited with his family (Bryan, 1979, 8 and Der Manuelian, 1992, 227).

As an attempt to pinpoint the exact symbolic identity of the snake, the numbers of its measurements represented in  *mh 30* “30 cubits” in its length and  *hbswt.f wr.s(y) r mh 2* “its beard (is) greater than 2 cubits” (Allen, 2015, 22 columns 62-64) might have certain significances according to the concepts of the ancient Egyptians.






Starting with number 30, it was associated with duration of the king's rule for thirty years as ritually celebrated in the royal festival known as *Sed*-festival (Wilkinson, 1994, 133; Rosalind, 1996, 105-121 and Shaw, 1997, 256). Idea of relating length of the snake's body with thirty years of rule can be indicated through measurements of the three new born royal children in the “Three Tales of Wonder”. Each one of them was said to be one cubit in size (Lichtheim, 1973, 220) as if they were starting their first year in life.

For number 2, it was politically used to emphasize the king's authority over the two united lands of Egypt. This was indicated through in numerous occasions like the existence of two thrones in the *Sed*-festival (Shaw, 1997, 256); the royal title known as  *nsw-bit* “king of Upper and Lower Egypt” (Wilkinson, 1994, 130-131 and Gardiner, 2007, 73-74) and the  *nbty* “two Ladies” with whom the king belonged represented in the southern vulture goddess *Nekhbet* and the northern cobra one *Wadjet* (Gardiner, 2007, 72). In the tale royal title of the “sovereign” in front of whom the prince supposed to present his report about the expedition is written in form of two crocodiles  *ity* (Allen, 2010, 435 sign I3 and Allen, 2015, 28 column 92) rather than other forms like  and  (Faulkner, 1991, 32-33).

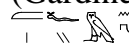

There might be further suggestion from using word “greater” in measurement of the snake's beard as mentioned  *wr s(j) r mh 2* “greater than 2 cubits” (Allen, 2015, 22, columns 62-64). It might refer to expansion of the Egyptian domination outside its borders in Lower Nubia in the XIIth dynasty which was started by king *Amenemhat* I (Ignatov, 1994, 198). King's authority in two lands of Egypt and part for Nubian regions suits the administration division during reign of king *Senusert* III which comprised Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia (Clayton, 2001, 85). This was indicated in beginning of the tale when the follower showed the good news of returning to home after reaching *Wawat* (Allen, 2015, 10 columns 8-9) which is located in Lower Nubia (Erman I, 1971, 250.7 and Galán, 2005, 31 footnote 32).

According to the previous, numbers of the snake's measurements symbolized the king's rule over two lands of Egypt and part from the Lower Nubia for thirty years.

In addition, there are other aspects which might support opinion of considering the snake as king's symbolic image represented in the followings:-

(a) The snake released  *hrw qri* "sound of thunder" (Allen, 2015, 22 column 57) before appearing to the snake. It is noticed the existence of recumbent lion sign  (Allen, 2015, 431 sign E 23) in word  *hrw* "sound" which was usually written as  (Erman III, 1971, 324.7 and 325.11 and Faulkner, 1991, 196). According to some military texts, king in his anger condition because enemies had attacked Egypt, was rhetorically described as lion (Edgerton, 1936, 9, pl. 17, lines 11-12; 14, pl. 22 lines 20-22 and 41, pl. 37 lines 17-19). This might refer to the snake's regard towards the sailor as an enemy who violated its island. This also suits the snake's intimidating sentence to the sailor represented in  *rdi.i rh.k tw* "I will cause you know yourself" (Allen, 2015, 24 column 72) as if to make him feel regret for daring to exist in the island which was under his domination. Expression of making the sailor know his diminutive position resembles text of enemies who showed their regret for challenging Egypt because they did know Egypt while invoking mercy from its mighty king (Epigraphic Survey, 1986, 26, pl. 8, lines 19-20, 43 pl. 14, line 27). Thus inserting sign of recumbent lion in word *hrw* can be considered an indirect method to make readers equate between the snake and the king of Egypt.

(b) Threat of the snake to burn the sailor is similar to symbolic role of goddess *Wadjet* whose cobra image adorned the king's forehead. She was said to breathe fire against his enemies in wars (Wilkinson, 2003, 227).

(c) The snake's island which was thought to incarnate agricultural land in the *Iyaru* Field or the Primeval Hill (Bains, 1990, 67) as well as resident of spirits (Gardiner, 1908-1909, 65 and Loprieno, 1991, 214) was said to have  *gs(wy).fy m nwy* "its two sides are in waters" (Allen, 2015, 27 columns 84-86). This led to consider the island as a peninsula (Radomska, 1987, 27). It can be noticed from the island's description that it resembles the geographical condition of Egypt for its northern and eastern shores are overlooking the Mediterranean and Red seas respectively. This might suit calling it as island of the  *Ka* (Allen, 2015, 31-32 column 114). For, a place called *Ka* existed in the Nile Delta branch (Ignatov, 1994, 196).

III. Significance of Encountering the Snake

Considering the snake as symbolic image of the king might show the follower's main purpose in telling the prince what happened to him while he was a sailor. For, this would lead to equate between positions of the sailor while answering the snake about circumstances that led him to the island and the prince in the expected moment of presenting his report while standing in front of the king. Accordingly, the following assumptions can be suggested:-

(a) The snake's menace to destroy the sailor by fire might reflect fear of the prince who failed in his mission and so he expected anger reaction from the king because burning was a method for punishment in ancient Egypt (Malaise, 1977, 274).

(b) The sailor described his critical situation for reaching extreme limit of fear before the snake through the following phrase (Allen, 2015, 24-25 columns 73-75):-



iw mdw.n.f n.i nn wi hr sdm.i st iw.i m-b3h.f hm.n wi

“ It spoke to me without my hearing it, I was in front of him not knowing myself ”.

Inability of the sailor to answer the snake would resemble the prince in his troubled condition not knowing what proper sentence he should use while presenting his report to the king about the expedition. The previous suggestion might refer to awareness of the follower with frustration thoughts that possessed mind of the depressed prince. Here appears importance of encountering the snake in the follower's fictional tale about what happened to him while he was a sailor for he wanted to provide the prince with positive ideas to gain confidence before meeting the king. Purpose of the follower can be suggested by interpreting some sentences in context of the Sailor and the Snake as displayed in the coming part.

III.A. Sailors' Additional Description

The Sailor in his reply to the Snake gave the 120 drowned sailors who were the best chosen from Egypt extraordinary abilities represented in seeing sky and land; possessing hearts braver than lions and predicting a gale before its coming and a thunderstorm before its happening (Allen, 2015, 28-29 columns 93-98). It is clearly shown using the same sentences for their early description in the beginning of the Follower's story to the Prince (Allen, 2015, 14-15 columns 27-32). In the second narration before the snake, the sailor added further praising affirmation for the sailors (Allen, 2015, 99-101 columns 99-101) represented in:



w' im nb mik3 ib.f nht 'f r snnw.f nn wh3 m hr(i)-ib.sn

“ Each one of them, his heart is more brave (and) his arm is more power than his companion, there was no fool in their midst ”.

The previous sentence was thought to be an attempt from the sailor to show courage he possessed like his comrades before the snake (Rendsburg, 2000, 15). From viewpoint of equating narration of the sailor to the snake and report supposed to be presented by the prince to the king, the additional description for the drowned sailors might represent an indirect instruction from the follower to provide the prince with guidelines of proper sentences he could use in his testimony to the king.

For instance, he would assure that fear did not hinder him or his men because their hearts possessed enthusiasm to fulfill their missions; each one of them did the best of his efforts and they took right decisions without committing faults in critical dangerous moments.

The follower seemed to have used this helping method because the prince did not respond to his advice in the beginning of the tale about the necessity of speaking well to gain the sympathy of the listener (Allen, 2015, 12-13 columns 17-18):



iw r3 n s nḥm.f sw iw mdw.f di.f t3m n.f ḥr

“ The mouth of a man, it saves him, his speech makes one be tolerant to him ”.

III.B. Wreck of the Ship

The sailor mentioned position of the ship in heart of the sea when it was struck by a fierce storm (Allen, 2015, 32-34 columns 101-103):



dꜥ pr iw.n m w3d-wr tpꜥ s3ḥ.n t3

“ A gale came up while we were at the sea before we could touch land ”.

At the end of his narration, the sailor used a dramatic sentence to state the wreck of the ship with its sailors (Allen, 2015, 37-39 columns 106-107):

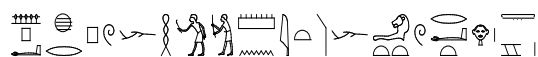


ḥꜥ.n dpt m(w)t.(tj) ntjw im.s nj zp wꜥ jm

“ Then the boat died and those who were in it, not one survived ”.

The previous sentences are clearly different from what was said by the Follower while informing the Prince about the good news of reaching home represented in:

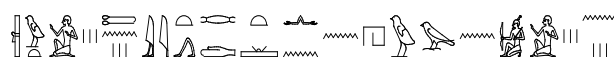
(a) Emphasizing ship anchorage in a port (Allen, 2015, 10 columns 3-5):



šsp ḥprw ḥw mjnt ḥ3tt rdj.t(i) ḥr t3

“The mallet has been taken, the mooring-post has been hit and the prow-rope is set on land ”.

(b) Stating safe condition of the ship-crew (Allen, 2015, 10 columns 7-8):



iswt.tn jj.t(i) ꜥd.t(i) nn nhw n mšꜥ.n

“ Our crew has returned safe with no loss of our soldiers ”.

Most likely the follower, through the shipwreck incident, wanted to make the prince think about positive aspects of his situation. So he would believe that he was fortunate because he returned with intact ship and without losing anyone from his men. This resembles a common saying concerning a person who would be adapted with his problem when he thinks about troubles of others.

III.C. Reaction of the Snake

The snake, after hearing story of the sailor, gave a positive comment to calm the Sailor represented in the following phrase (Allen, 2015, 31 columns 111-114):



m snd m sp 2 nds m 3tw hr.k ph.n.k wi mk ntr rdi.n.f nh.k ini.f tw r iw pn n k3

“ Do not fear do not, twice, commoner, do not blanch your head (because) you reached me. Behold, god, he caused you to live, he brings you to this island of the *ka* ”.

Sentence of the snake included two points represented in calming the trouble sailor and mentioning role of the god in bringing him to the island.

Asking the sailor to drive fear away was regarded as an advice to make the Sailor pass his troubles through accepting his destiny and not fear from the future (Malaise, 1977, 274 and Otto, 1966, 111). Perhaps there is another interpretation for sentence of the snake from point of considering it as symbol of the King. According to the follower’s purpose to provide the prince with positive ideas, the snake’s positive comment would resemble situation of the king who would show mercy towards the prince after understanding difficulties and obstacles that hindered the expedition which was under his command. For sentence *m 3tw hr.k* “do not blanch your head”, this might be relevant with feelings of the prince would be extremely embarrassed with pale face for not fulfilling his mission.

Concerning the god’s interference in saving the Sailor, this was said to represent the perfect answer which the snake wanted to hear for his question about the one who brought the sailor to the island in the beginning of their encounter (Bryan, 1979, 8 and footnote 42). From another point the divine role might be a periphrasis from the Follower who directed sort of hidden blame to the Prince because he did not show any sign of gratitude to the gods after returning safely to Egypt with intact ship intact and without losing any person from the crew. This can be indicated from the sentence of the follower while describing the cheerful behaviors of the ship-crew and the soldiers (Allen, 2015, 10 columns 5-6):



rdi(.sn) hknw ntr dw3

“ (They) give praises and the god’s worshipping ”.

For the unnamed savior god, he can be suggested to be either *Min*, god of *Coptos* or the Theban god *Amun*. This is because both of them were associated with expeditions which were sent to the land of Punt. For examples, god *Min* was given favor for the safe return of an expedition under leadership of prince *Khentkhetwer* from the reign of king *Amenemhat II* in the XIIth dynasty (Breasted I, 1927, 275 § 605). For god *Amun*, he guided the famous expedition of Queen *Hatshepsut* in the XVIIIth dynasty (Breasted II, 1927, 116 § 285).

III.D. Tragedy of the Snake

The Snake's narration about death of its family because of the falling star was believed to console make the Sailor who would accept his fate (Bryan, 1979, 8 and footnote 43 and Galán, 2005, 44). The Snake used a pathetic sentence to express great morale pain at moment of finding the burnt corpses of its family (Allen, 2015, 35 lines 130-131) represented in:



hpr.n rs nn wi hn^c 3m ny nn wi m hri-ib.sn h^c.n mwt.kwi n sn

“ It happened when I was not with those who were burnt. I was not in the middle of them, then I died for them ”.

The snake's sad sentence might express its wish to be with members of the family in their last moments in life. It can be also suggested that existence of the snake might have caused rescue of the family through taking them away from course of the falling star. This is because, the Snake possessed ability of knowing future events. This was indicated from the fulfillment of its predictions to the Sailor about a ship that would reach the island (Allen, 2015, 31-32 lines 119-123 and 43 line 155) and his return to home after two months (Allen, 2015, 46-47 lines 167-168 and 48 lines 173-174).

Thus the snake's absence when the star fall, its prediction ability, the similarities between deadly fates of its family and the sailor's comrades beside considering the snake as symbol of the king, all of these ideas might lead to the following two interpretations according to the purpose of the follower in providing the prince with moral support:-

(a) Non existence of the Snake with its family symbolized same feelings of the King who wished to be in the expedition which was under the leadership of the Prince so he would provide its sailors and soldiers with his support especially in the dangerous moments.

(b) Sadness of the Snake would reflect to what extent the King would be happy after hearing news about arrival of the expedition with all its members because he expected death for them. Idea of the King who was caring about safety of his men can be indicated from praising arrival of expeditions without losing any person in Middle Kingdom writings of high officials like commander *Amenemhat* from reign of king *Montuhotep IV* (Breasted I, 1927, 215 § 448), prince *Amenemhat* from reign of king *Snusert I* (Breasted I, 1927, 251 § 519-520 and 525 § 521 and Galán, 2005, 35) and prince *Khentkhetwer* from reign of king *Amenemhat II* (Breasted I, 1927, 275 § 604-605).

III.E. Advice of the Snake

The Snake, after narrating death of its family, asked the Sailor to show bravery in difficult circumstances to gain better fate (Malaise, 1977 and Spalinger, 1984, 92) represented in the family reunion through the following conditional sentence (Allen, 2015, 35 lines 132-134):-



ir qn.n.k rwd ib.k mh.k qni.k m hrdw.k sn.k hmt.k m33.k pr.k nfr st r ht nbt

“ If you consolidated the firm of your heart, you will fill your embrace with your children, you will kiss your wife, you will see your house, it is better than anything ”.

Perhaps the follower used the affectionate scene of a family reunion in the Snake’s speech to provide the prince with motivation. He, indirectly, wanted from the prince to think about the family so he would drive fear away from his heart known to be center of senses and intelligence (Erman I, 1971, 59-60.10-11). So he would be determined to pass the critical situation before the King through speaking with confidence while presenting his report. This hypotheses can be indicated from existence of alliteration through words *qn* “ consolidate” in *ir qn.n.k rwd ib.k* “ if you consolidated the firm of your heart ” and *qni* “ embrace ” in *mh.k qni.k m hrdw.k* “ you will fill your embrace with your children ”.

In addition, maintaining stability of the heart might be relevant with the Follower request from the Prince to speak without hesitation before the King (Allen, 2015, 30, columns 15-17):



mdw.k n nswt ib.k mꜥ.k wšb.k nn njjt

“ you will speak to the king, your heart will be with you, you will answer without restrain ”.

For the point of regarding family as better than anything as affirmed by the Snake, maybe this intended to enlighten the Prince with the positive side of his condition in life. Although he did not success in his mission and lost glory of being honored by the King but he still has beloved family that nothing can be compared with spending precious moments with them. The Prince would believe in truthfulness of this bright idea because it was said by the Snake which lost its entire family.

III.F. The Snake and the Sea Wave.

From the follower’s tale, it seems interesting to realize resemblance between the Snake and the Sea Wave represented in the following points:-

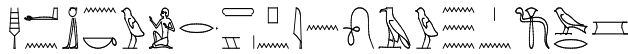
(a) The Snake carried the unconscious Sailor to its residential place (Allen, 2015, 25 columns 76-78).



hⁿ.n rdi.f wi m r.f itt.f wi r st.f nt sndm

“ Then it places me in its mouth, it takes me to its place of residence ”.

For the sea wave, it threw the helpless sailor to the island (Allen, 2015, 17-18 columns 39-41 and 30 columns 109-110).



hⁿ.n ini.n.kwi r iw pn in w3w n w3d-wr

“ Then I was brought to this island by a wave of the sea ”.

(b) The sailor being carried in the snake’s [⊖] r3 “mouth” refers to extreme edge of danger he had reached. For, it was simple for the snake to swallow him at any moment. But nothing bad happened to the sailor (Allen, 2015, 24-25 columns 76-80) as expressed in his sentence:



w3h.f wi nn dmit.i wd3.kwi nn itt im.i

“ He set me down without touching me, I was intact, nothing taken from me ”.

Being swallowed by the snake can be equated with the situation of the sailor in the sea. According to a rhetoric expression which is still in use, any drowned person was said to be swallowed by the sea waves. But the Sea Wave saved the Sailor from fate of being drowned.

(c) The sailor, after being delivered to the island by the Sea Wave, found nourishments of figs, grapes, vegetables, green and ripe sycamore, melons, fish and birds (Allen, 2015, 20 columns 47-52).

For the snake’s dwelling place, it was referred with word sndm which carried other meanings like “ to make pleasant ”, “ to revive ”, “ to make oneself comfortable ” and “ to rest ” (Erman IV, 1971, 185.10, 186.18, 185.19, and 186.26). Probably the word *sndm* was used rather than others like n^{cyt} (Erman I, 1971, 160.1-13), and n^{cyt} (Erman II, 1971, 207.16) to express the idea of considering the snake’s residency as the place where the sailor would find tranquility. This happened when the snake calmed the Sailor through asking him not to be afraid and predicting his return to home and family (Allen, 2015, 31 column. 123).

(d) Words hf3w “ snake ” and w3w “ wave ” end with letter *w*. Beside, their determinatives represented in snake (Allen, 2010, 435 sign I14) and rippled water (Allen, 2010, 439 sign N35) are featured with curves.

In addition, before the snake appearance the sailor heard hrw qri “ sound of thunder ” (Allen, 2015, 22, columns 56-57). Then “ trees ” were crushed and earth was quacked (Allen, 2015, 22, columns 56-60). In the sea, there was d “ storm ” which was naturally accompanied with howling voice of thunder. After that mast of the ship was broken (Allen, 2015, 31-32, columns 101-103 and 106-108) before its collapse. It is noticed that word htw was used for “ trees ” of the island and word ht for the ship’s wooden “mast”.

It is more likely to regard similarities between the snake and the sea wave as a moral method from the follower to make the prince believe that from what is expected to represent danger good things would emerge from it. So any person must hold on hope in the hard situations. According to this the follower presented the optimistic idea to the prince to expect satisfaction through receiving good treatment and tolerance from the merciful king.

Conclusion

The following points can be resumed from encountering the snake in tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor:-

- (a) The snake’s threat to burn the sailor reflected a great grief for losing its family.
- (b) The snake symbolically incarnated the king of Egypt.
- (c) Encountering the snake is clear evidence to the follower’s description as ikr “ excellent ” in the beginning of the tale (Allen, 2015, 10 column 1). For, he was aware with physiological condition of the prince and his frustration thoughts. His fictional narration to the experience of encountering the legendary snake intended to provide the prince with positive ideas and useful instructions in indirect way. This is indicated from some sentences of the sailor and the snake which are relevant with the follower’s sayings while asking the prince to prepare himself for his meeting with the king as well as aspects of similarity between the snake and the sea wave. Perhaps, efficiency of the follower suits the common proverb which is still in use “ Choose the companion before taking the road ”.
- (d) Positive aspect of the snake might be considered an indirect political propaganda for the king who appreciates his men that nothing can compensate losing them.
- (e) Encountering the snake is a clear display to the necessity of living with hope and optimism to pass through critical situations.
- (f) The snake represented the idle example of the persons who suffered in life but they provided the others with optimism to pass their hard times.

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بعض التعليقات حول مواجهة الثعبان فى قصة البحار الغريق

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الملخص العربى

يقدم البحث تعليقات حول لقاء البحار الغريق مع الثعبان فى رواية التابع الحاذق للأمير عقب عودتهم إلى مصر. فتهديد الثعبان بحرق البحار سببه ألم نفسه، فقيام البحار بحرق القرايين جعل الثعبان يتذكر احتراق أسرته بسبب سقوط النجم، ثم تم توضيح كينونة الثعبان خلال حجم جسده الذى يصل إلى ثلاثين ذراع ولحيته التى يصل طولها إلى ذراعين كرمز لملك مصر الذى يحكم ثلاثين عاما على أرضى مصر العليا والسفلى. وعلى ذلك الأساس تبرز أهمية مقابلة البحار للثعبان لأنه يتشابه مع الأمير عندما يقدم تقريره عن الحملة إلى الملك لأن التابع يريد إمداده بالنصائح والأفكار الإيجابية بأسلوب غير مباشر لينتقله من الإحباط. فوصف البحارة الغرقى بالشجاعة وعدم وجود أحقق بينهم يمثل العبارات قد يقولها الأمير للملك عن شجاعة رجاله وعدم إرتكابهم لأى خطأ، غرق السفينة يبغى جعل الأمير يدرك نعمة وصوله للوطن بمركب سليم وبكامل طاقمه، تهدئة الثعبان للبحار سيمائل الملك عندما يظهر رحمته للأمير، دور الإله فى وصول البحار إلى الجزيرة يحمل تأنيبا للأمير لعدم إمتنانه للإلهة لوصوله للوطن، عدم وجود الثعبان عندما هلكت عائلته يرمز لرغبة الملك فى التواجد مع الأمير لمساعدة رجاله. أخيرا تماثل الثعبان وموجة البحر فى حمل البحار يعبران عن فكرة التابع للأمير فى أن السلامة قد تأتى من عناصر الخطر.

الكلمات الدالة: تعليقات، مواجهة الثعبان، البحار الغريق.