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## THE ENCHANTED ISLAND IN MIDDLE EGYPTIAN LITERATURE

*Sergei Ignatov*

### ABSTRACT

The article presents a detailed study of the Island of Ka in the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor. It is considered in a dialogue with the texts of Middle Egyptian Literature and other text that are accessible. The translation of Ka is discussed and the nature and place of the Island as well. The interpretation of the text has been built on that principle – what does not exist in the Egyptian language, does not exist in the world of Ancient Egyptians either.

**Key words:** *shipwreck, sailor, island, ka, double, serpent, dead, Egyptian, literature*

The Enchanted Island appears in the Ancient Egyptian Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor. The text of the Story is considered to be the most ancient specimen of adventure literature and in the same time this is an ‘esoteric’ text, which describes mechanisms for trespassing the Worlds, throws light on the nature of the deity and its world, and guides the human beings by instructing them as to how to conduct themselves under such extraordinary situations.

The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor (further Sh. S.) contains the most ancient evidence of the prayer and a sacrifice, committed without the mediation of priests and is the most ancient story, describing a meeting of a man with a deity.

The papyrus was found by Vladimir S. Golenischeff in the Hermitage and was published by him (Golenischeff 1913). The bibliography on the various related problems is immense (Simpson LA V: 619-22; Goedicke 1974; Kurt 1987; Baines 1990: 55-72; Ignatov 1994, 2012, 2017).

After a shipwreck an Egyptian sailor was placed on an Island of a strange nature. The text describes the encounter and the discourse of this Egyptian man with a Serpent – lord of the Island. According to the protagonist the Serpent is ‘a god who loves people (= Egyptians) from a distant land, unknown to mortals’ (Sh. S. 147-148).

About himself the Serpent states that he is ‘the Ruler of Punt’ (Sh. S. 151) and announces the name of the Island – The Island of Ka (Sh. S. 114)! Traditionally Ka is translated as Double – the mysterious Egyptian word! And what is more – the Island ‘will be converted into waves’ and the Egyptian man shall never see this Island any more (Sh. S. 153-154).

The Island of Ka is the main subject of my study. It is considered in a dialogue with the texts of the epoch that are accessible.

(109) *ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n.(j) jn.kwj r jw pn* (110) *jn w3w n w3d-wr* (111) *dd.jn.f n.j m snd m sp*  
 2 (112) *nds m 3tw ḥr.k* (113) *ph.n.k wj mk ntr rdj.n.f* (114) *ḥn.k jn.n.f tw r jw pn*  
*n k3* (115) *nn ntt nn st m-ḥnw.f* (116) *jw.fmḥ(.w) ḥr nfrwt nb(w)t*

And then I was brought to this island by the wave of the Great Greenness. And then said he to me: ‘Fear not, fear not, nedjes, cover not your face. You have reached me. Here, God has given you life! He has brought you to this island of ka. There is no such thing that does not exist on it. It is abundant of good things, various’.

*ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n.(j) jn.kwj r jw pn jn w3w n w3d-wr* – pseudo-verbal construction with *ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n.f* + form, expressing quality and condition. It should be noted that in the second part of Sh. S. the suffix for first-person singular is omitted after *ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n*. A. Gardiner notes that this is a grammatically correct construction, similar to which appears after *wn.jn*.

Here is one of the rare cases of this construction with the transitive verbs. It is possible only when the subject is a pronoun and then the meaning is passive. It is to be noted, that when the subject is a noun, then preference is given to the passive *ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n sdm.n.f*. (Gardiner 1957: §482; compare §470, §481).

The best examples of this construction in the Middle Egypt language are from Sh. S., compare Sh. S. 174.

*m snd* – negation of the imperative (Gardiner 1957: §340). *m* is imperative form of the verb *jmj*. Thus, with the help of *m* negation imperative is formed (Petrovskiy 1958: §156).

*3tw(?) 3t* ‘Cover (?)’ – this is the only case of use of this verb during the Middle Kingdom epoch. It is possibly a modification of *3jt* ‘cover’ (?) (Faulkner 1988:1).

*ph.n.k wj* – *sdm.n.f* – in this given case it has the meaning of narrative past tense (Petrovskiy 1958: §117). In this sentence the predicative relations are: predicate is verb in the form *sdm.n.f* and subject expressed through pronoun-suffix (Petrovskiy 1970: 19).

*mk ntr rdj.n.f ḥn.k* – affirmative use of *sdm.n.f* (Gardiner 1957: §414).

Here we need to make a comparison between the story of the Egyptian and what the Serpent said with a confirmative intonation.

**The Egyptian**

*ḥꜥ.n.j jn.kwj r jw pn*

*jn w3w n w3d-wr*

And then I was brought to this island

by a wave of

the Great Greenness.

**The Serpent**

*ph.n.k wj mk ntr rdj.n.f ḥnh.k*

You have reached me.

Here, granted has God you with

your life!

There are two points of view: the man in a completely human way thinks that he was brought to the island by the surf, while the Serpent teaches him that not the surf of the sea, but god has granted him with his salvation and life! The important element in this excerpt is that the Serpent deity mentions god in the single mode, who has brought the Egyptian to him. From the context a certain hierarchy could be seen, in which the Serpent is at a lower step. In the specialized literature, the comparison of these two positions is viewed as the core of the didactic sense of Sh. S.

And indeed, in a basic didactic text it is disclosed that the human faith is driven by gods will. This is not the only example, but its value is in its antiquity. This is what Ptahhotep says:

*wḏ.t(w) ntr pw ḥprt (Pr. 116)*

The order of god is what is happening (= Everything happens by gods will).

While the Egyptian man, who had survived the sea wreck needed to be enlightened about god's interference, Sinuhe, whose story has been put in writing during the same epoch, sees always and everywhere the presence of god (Bryan 1979: 8).

*n rh.j jnj wj r ḥ3st tn  
jw mj shr ntr (Sin. B 42-43)*

I do not know what has brought me to this country.

It looks like the intention of god.

*jn.n.f* is normally written with double *n*. The example from Sh. S. is exception to the rule. The other cases in which only one sign stands for *n* are Sin. B 30 and an inscription from Beni Hasan (Newberry, Griffith 1893-1900: 1, 25, 71 (Gardiner 1957: §413).

*Jw pn n k3* – according to N. Petrovskiy, in the word combination with *n* one could easily introduce a definition to the indefinite article (Petrovskiy 1970: 53). In respect to the translation of the word *k3* in the context of Sh. S., no common view has been established.

The word *ka* is traditionally translated as ‘Double’. The tradition is inherited from the XIX century, ever since the time of F. Champollion, but the authorship of that translation is attributed to G. Maspero. In addition to ‘double’, *ka* is also translated as ‘personality’, ‘genius guardian’, ‘food’. The analysis of the basic concepts, accompanied with bibliography, is collected in my study ‘An Attempt at a New Interpretation of the Ancient Egyptian ‘Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor’ (Ignatov 1988: 148-151).

During the last years, in addition to the traditional views, new interpretations such as ‘energy’, ‘energy double’, etc. came to the fore. We will note only that such views are alien to the ancient Egyptians’ concepts of the world. What did not exist in the language of the ancient Egyptians did not exist in their world either!

The newest detailed analyses of the notions about *ka*, together with exceptionally detailed bibliography, are gathered in the works of T. Lekov (Lekov 2004; 2007).

What then is the ancient Egyptian image of the Double? Three evidences from the ‘Pyramid Texts’ provide specific and unambiguous descriptions.

*jꜥj tw jꜥj sw k3.k ḥmsj k3.k wnm.f t ḥnꜥ n nwr n d.t d.t* (Pyr. 436)

Wash yourself, (and let) your *ka* be also washed, (and let) your *ka* be seated and let it eat bread together with you, without cessation throughout eternity.

*tzj tw 3ḥ p(w) P. pn ḥmsj wšb.k ḥmsj k3.k wnm.f t3 ḥnꜥ.k n nwr n d.t d.t* (Pyr. 553)

Raise yourself, oh, blessed, you P! Sit down and eat, (and let) your *ka* sit (and) eat bread together with you, without cessation throughout eternity.

*šsp sw ḥr (j)r dbꜥ.wj.f(j) s(w)ꜥb.f Wnjs pn m š s3b sḥw.f k3 n Wnjs pn m š d3.tj jsk.f jwf n k3 n Wnjs pn n d.t.f* (Pyr 268)

Takes him Horus with both fingers. He purifies this Unas in the Jackal Lake. He cleanses (from dirt) *ka* of this Unas in the lake, which is in Dati (the eastern boundary of the sky and the netherworld). He wipes the flesh of *ka* of Unas, which is of his flesh (i.e. the double of Unas himself).

It follows that *ka* is an entity of flesh, the Double washes himself, the Double eats (See: Perepelkin 1988: 379; 2000: 167). According to Y. Perepelkin, the ancient Egyptians ‘have presented to us the Double as closely connected to man, but he has never been a part of his body and he has been deemed as existing outside his body’

(Perepelkin 1966: 9). Right in the same place (in connection to the quoted below example Pyr. 268), Y. Perepelkin underlines that in Egyptian language ‘double’ and ‘food’ are equally ‘*ka*’ (Perepelkin 1966: 9. See also Wb. V, 91).

Additional information on the nature of *ka* is provided with the following examples from the ‘Pyramid Texts’:

*psd t3.wj jwn.f hr ntrw shp.f k3 n W. pn n d.t.f r hwt 3.t* (Pyr. 268)

(When) the two lands (i.e. Egypt) are shining in light he uncovers the face of the gods (i.e. the statues), he delivers *ka* to this Unas, who is of his flash (in the sense of his, belonging to him, i.e. the personal Double of Unas) in the great mansion.

*n d.t.k h.t nb(t) n k3 W. h.t nb(t) n d.t.f ht nb.(t)* (Pyr. 50)

So as all things are of your flesh (of Re), thus everything (i.e. just as all things belong to yourself), so likewise whatever is from Unas’ Double is everything (thus all things belong to Unas’ Double), and whatever is of his flesh (of Unas) is everything (i.e. thus also everything belongs to Unas himself).

So apart from the complex connection between the notion of the ‘Double’ and ‘food’: there exists a notion that the ‘Double’ has property. The quoted fragment expresses a certain hierarchy:

1. God Re
2. The king’s Double
3. The king himself.

Hence the notion of the ‘double’ (*ka*), is inextricably linked to the idea of form (= body). After the extinction of the bodily existence, life in the afterworld is life in *ka* and through *ka* (Ignatov 2004 b: 162).

There is no common general opinion in regard to the translation of the word *ka* in the context of Sh. S. 114. V. Golenischeff has translated *jw pn n k3* as ‘*cette ile enchantee*’ (‘this enchanted island’) (Golenischeff 1906: 90).

In A. Gardiner’s opinion a translation such as ‘*cette ile enchantee*’ or as he literally writes in English ‘this phantom island’ is indeed the best that has been suggested; also the comparison put forward by V. Golenischeff to the Arab word *djin* (*djinn* – S. I.), used by the Arab narrators, seems to me to be excellent’ (Gardiner 1909).

If we were to accept that in the construction *jw pn n k3*, *ka* is the name of the island, i.e. that *ka* is a toponym, then the result would be the existence of a historically certified use of *ka* in similar context (Gardiner 1918: 254, No. 1, ib. 1947: II, 155; Gauthier 1925-31: V, 183-4; Ignatov 1994: 196). At the time of the Ramessid



Egypt, one of the sleeves of the Nile in the Delta was named *k3*. The Greeks translated *ka* as *αγαθοδαιμων* (a deity which stands higher than humans, but lower than gods), a guarding spirit (Videnov 1992: 164).

According to A. Gardiner this was ‘one of the two names, which Ptolemy gave to the Kanopi sleeve’ (Gardiner 1947: II, 155). There is similarity in the use of *ka* in Sh. S.

After the translation of V. Golenischeff the understanding about *ka* in the context of the concepts regarding the otherworld becomes a common territory in the research efforts of generations of egyptologists. G. Maspero considered that it was a phantom island of the dead (Maspero 1911: LXIII).

E. Maksimov fully embraces G. Maspero’s ideas, adding to them additional momentum. He thinks that this is an island of Ghosts, and that the Egyptian is not conversing with the Serpent-Lord of the island, but with his Spirit (Literally: ‘with his eternal soul *ka*’) (Maksimov 1967: 102). An opposing point of view belongs to J. Frantsev. He notes that the text in Sh. S. does not make mentioning of any dead persons guarded by the Serpent (Frantsev 1929: 189). In Erman’s understanding *ka* is ‘food’ (Erman, 1906: 14). G. Lefebvre leaves *ka* without translation (Lefebvre 1949: 36). G. Lanczkowski explains that in the name of the island one should see ‘the transcendental root of overarching abundance in the form of a divine live-providing power’ (Lanczkowski 1953: 365 ff.). W. Simpson also leaves *ka* without translation but in the footnote, he provides an explanation: ‘island of the Spirit or enchanted island’ (Simpson 1972: 52). Also, in I. Livshits’ translation no translation for *ka* is provided (Livshits 1979: 33), while I. Katsnelson suggests the translation ‘spirit’ (Katsnelson 1958: 24). M. Korostovtsev makes a step back to the old formula – ‘this ghostly island’ (Korostovtsev 1978: 42).

Nonconventional – as usually – is H. Goedicke’s approach. Following the traditional formula *n k3 n* ‘for the *ka* of..’, he comes up with the following translation: ‘...You were brought by him to this island. For your *ka* – there is no such thing that does not exist on it.’ (Goedicke 1974: 41-43).

I will conclude the short overview of the ways of interpreting *ka* in the expression *jw pn n k3* with the opinion of the founder of St. Petersburg’s Department of Egyptology, Professor B. Turaev – ‘this island of the Spirit’ (Turaev 1936: I, 250).

The analysis of opinions demonstrates that to most Egyptologists the ‘island’ is connected to the outerworld. This conclusion is the result of the interpretation of the substance of *ka* (Wb. V 86 ff.; Bolshakov 2001). However, the context of the ‘Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor’ is not linked to the world of the dead. Here is what the Lord of the island says about himself: *jnk js hq3 pwnt* ‘It is me who is the Ruler of Punt’ and not *dw3t, jmnt* or *hr(j)t-ntj*. I think that the sense and substance of Sh. S. are contained in the context.

*jw pn n k3 nn ntt nn st m hnw.f.jw.f mh(.w) hr nfirt nbt*

From the description of the island it could be seen that its main characteristic is abundance. This fact is of extreme importance to the author of Sh. S. and therefore he has inserted the description of the island in the mouths of antagonists: the Serpent, the Master of the island, and the Egyptian man (Sh. S. 51-52 = Sh. S. 115). In this sense V. Golenischeff is right in saying that this is a biblical saga about paradise on earth' (Stasov 1882: 595). Dictionaries do not contain such a meaning about *ka*, yet it is encoded in the text of Sh. S.

One of the most complicated issues in the analyzed text is the question about the island of *ka*, because the answer contains the key to the Egyptian world vision. This is what we know about the island:

*...mk ntr...jn.n.f tw r jw pn n k3 nn ntt nn st m hnw.f.jw.f mh hr nfirt nbt*  
*... jw pn n w3d-wr ntj gs.(wj).ff m nwj*  
*nn sp m33.k jw pn hpr(.w) m nwj*  
*jnk js hq3 pwnt*

First, it is necessary to emphasize the point of view of the Lord of the island, namely that it was god who has brought the Egyptian to the island of *ka*. Secondly, it is of uppermost importance to underline the use of the verb *ph* in Sh. S. 113 – 'you have reached me'. The verb *ph* shows that a final place or destination has been reached, which is the point that is being made in the text of Sh. S. These are the two terminal points in the vision of the world during the classical epoch. In the very center of this picture is Egypt, the core of which is *hnw* – the king's habitual palace.

*ph.n.n hnw*  
*ph.n.n ph.wj W3w3t...t3.n ph.n sw*

And the counterpoint is:

*ph.n.kwj (= hf3, = jw pn n k3)*

From Sh. S. 172-174 it follows that the Serpent's island is to the south of Egypt at a distance that could be covered in two months' time (sailing on the Red Sea, crossing the Eastern Desert, and navigating along the Nile up to the king's Residence).

*n<sup>c</sup>jt pw jr.n.n m hdj r hnw n jtj spr.n.n r... 3bd 2...*

Numerous attempts have been made to define the geographical location of the island of *ka*. The linking of the island with the country Punt can be seen as a start-

ing point in disclosing the query. B. Piotrovski after having taken part in an expedition in the region of Wadi Alaki notes that even ‘until our days several islands in the southern part of the Red Sea are called ‘Serpent’s’ (Piotrovski 1983: 11). The main analyses of possible analogies are collected in researches by K. Sethe, G. Wainwright, and E. Maksimov.

In K. Sethe’s opinion the island of *ka* did not interconnected in its lower underwater part with the seabed and because of that the island was drifting, which then made it possible for it to disappear amidst the waves (Sethe 1907-1908: 84). G. Wainwright makes a parallel between the island of *ka* and the ‘island of St. Joan’ (Wainwright 1946: 32-33). He refers to legends from Antiquity about the island of Ophiodes, where dragons are guarding topaz stones. The Arab name of this island is *Zeberget*. A legend has it that in older times the island was inhabited by snakes, which later on went extinct. The surrounding sea of the island was very stormy so the island had to be literally searched for. Somewhat later in another publication G. Wainwright announces one more interesting fact: not far from Aden existed a small island which the Arabs used to call ‘Father Serpent’ (Wainwright 1948: 119).

There are numerous examples of this kind. The Arabs have stories about an island in the Red Sea that was inhabited by the monster Djassasa – ‘the apocalyptic monster’, which should appear together with the Satan before the end of the world (Maksimov 1967: 102).

G. Maspero writes about the Island of the Dead, which according to Plinii was known to the Antique world. This island was in the Red Sea, not far from the island of Topazon (Maspero 1915: LXXII). G. Maspero believes it to be a remnant from a large country, the land of the Doubles, which according to the Egyptians from the Memphis Empire, was in the neighborhood of Punt, and in the region of the land of perfumes (Maspero 1915: LXXII-LXXIII). Maspero’s opinion is based on analysis of the inscription of Hufhor, without indicating more precisely the relevant lines in the text.

In Hufhor’s inscription there is a reference to the land of Akhtiu: *t3 3htjw* (Urk. I, 128, 130). The land of Akhtiu is to a certain extent a parallel to the island of *ka* from Sh. S. 114. Akhtiu (*3htjw*) is the plural for *3htj* – inhabitant of Akhet, which is an epithet of god (Wb. I, 18), and for example, *ntrw-3htjw* are the gods that inhabit Akhet (Urk. IV 142, 13; 1779, 16). The land of Akhtiu in the text of Hufhor is interpreted as the pygmy land, the land of the distant small people due to the mentioning of a dwarf which was brought from that country. These are however contemporary interpretations. Unaltered remain the origin from ‘Akhti’ of ‘Akhtiu’ (inhabitant of the Akhet) and the references to ‘The Land of Akhtiu’, which is situated to the south of Egypt and draws the line of the picture of the world of the ancient Egyptians.

To the south of Egypt is the Land of Akhtiu; to the south-east is the island of *ka* (the Double). Both names of regions expand the imagination to events that sur-

pass everyday activities and are characterizing the territories to the south of the First Cataracts of the Nile.

The 'Land of Akhtiu' is parallel to Punt, not only due to the linking of 'Akh-Akhet-Akhtiu' and *ka* as describing a world and a way of life beyond our own existence, but also due to mentioning dwarfs brought from these countries to Egypt.

*dd.n.k r md3t.k tn wnt jn.n.k dng jb3w ntr m t3 3htjw mjt dng jn sd3wtj (Thtmw) ntr b3-wr-dd m Pwnt m rk jssj (Urk. I, 128-129)*

In this message of yours I tell you that you have brought a dwarf (pygmy) [for] the divine dances from the country of Akhtiu, which is similar to the dwarf (pygmy) delivered by the treasurer of God Baurdjet from Punt at the time of Isesi.'

It would be appropriate to emphasize the connection of the country of Akhtiu with Punt as regions inhabited by pygmies. In Africa, pygmies populate the equatorial regions, and this fact is the probable reason for the Egyptian name 'The Land of Akhtiu', i.e. 'The Land of those who populate Akhet'. Akhet is the place, where the sun dwells, while the Equator is characterized as the latitude with the strongest sunshine.

The publisher of the text, V. Golenischeff, presumes that it was possible that the island from Sh. S. corresponds to the Island of Socotra, located in the Indian Ocean. The country Punt, which was visited by Egyptians, was close to the Island of Socotra (Stasov 1882: 590). V. Golenischeff's presumption is logical, because the Island of Socotra, due to its ellipse-like form, resembles very much the island from Sh. S., which is described as an island of two coasts: *gs(wj).ff* – 'coasts' (in plural, literally: 'two coasts').

In the island's description, V. Golenischeff discovers features from the 'Biblical legend about paradise on earth' (Stasov 1882: 595 = Maksimov 1967: 105). Also E. Maksimov shares this opinion – 'classical image of one of the many 'inhabited lands'.. It is worthless identifying the island of the Spirit with any other island in the Red Sea' (Maksimov 1967: 106).

Yet, the text refers to Punt as the kingdom where the Serpent from the island reigns, and this renders an opportunity to point to and to outline the broader boundaries, to which the ancient Egyptians fared at sea.

Egypt's relations with Punt are documented from the epoch of the Old Kingdom up to the end of the reign of Ramessess IV of the Twentieth Dynasty of the New Kingdom.

In the comment to Sh. S. 23-28, the question was raised that what was meant in Sh. S. 23-24 under the expression 'the mines of the Sovereign' *bj3 n jtj* were the mines in Punt (Ignatov 2004: 219-255), while the mentioning of *w3d-wr* 'The Great Greenness' (the sea) shows that Egyptians were heading to Punt mainly by sea. Below is the chronology of ties with Punt during the Old and the Middle Kingdom:

1. Sahure, Palermo Stone (Schaefer 1902: 38).
2. Pioppe II, biography of Hufhor (Urk. I, 128 (17), 129 (1), 130 (14-15)).
3. Pioppe II, biography of Piopenaht (Urk. I, 134 (13-15)).
4. Dynasty VI, Hui's tomb (Urk. I, 140 (16-17)).
5. Mentuhotep III, Henenu (Golenischeff 1884-85).
6. Middle Kingdom, Isheru's stela (Sayed 1977).
7. Senwosre I, sanctuary of Ankhu (Sayed 1977).
8. Senwosre I, stela of Iniotef-Iqr (Sayed 1977).
9. Amenemhe II, Hentihetur's stela (see: Sh. S. 23-24).
10. Amenemhe II, Nebsu's stela (Pirelli 2007: 87-109).

Not just Punt, but actually the mine in Punt where the bad-luck expedition from Sh. S. 23-24 was sent, appears for the first time in Egyptian texts in Hufhor's autobiography, Dyn. VI, Old Kingdom.

*mrj ḥmw(.j) m3 dng pw r jnw bj3 Pwnt* (Urk. I 130, 14-15)

My hemu wishes to see this dwarf more than the gifts of the mine in Punt.

Findings from the mid-seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century along the coastal line of the Red Sea at the gateway of Wadi Gazis, situated to the north of el-Kuseir show, that during the epoch of the Middle Kingdom the missions to Punt were seaborne (Sayed 1977). From the stela of Iniotf-Iqr, who lived in the time of Senwosre I, it becomes clear that the king had sent him to Koptos, in order to build ships with which to sail and to send them to the pits in Punt. On the stela discovered at the coast of the Red Sea a straightforward message is inscribed:

*bj3 Pwnt, ph m ḥtp r jj.tw m ḥtp* (Sayed 1977: 170-171)

The mine in Punt to be reached in piece and you to return in piece!

Expeditions to Punt were sent by sea route as early as the beginning of the mentioning of Punt during the second half of the Old Kingdom.

*jw gr h3b n w(j) ḥmw n nb(.j) r ḥ3st ʕ3m r jnt n.f.smr wʕtj jmj-r ʕprw jmj-r3 ʕw ʕnmʕnḥt wn ḥr spt kbnt jm r pwnt* (Urk. I, 134, 13-15)

Behold, sent me the hemu of my master to the country of the Asians, to bring him (the body) of the only comrade, the captain of the ships, the head of the caravans An-ankhet, who was there to build a ship for Punt...'

The quoted fragments show that during the Old and the Middle Kingdom the expeditions to Punt were organized and sent by sea. A. Sayed quotes P. Monte:

...the country Punt was indeed in Africa, because according to a stela from the Sais period, when it was raining in the mountain of Punt, conditioned to that rain was the region of the Nile. The region of Punt continued into Asia, because Punt of Asia was a geographical name – the unique and still unpublished example was discovered in Soleb. In view of these two references it is possible to identify the two coasts of god's country with the two coasts of the strait Babel-Mandeb (The Gate of Tears in the southern part of the Red Sea). As an additional proof, one can refer to the fact that the odoriferous trees grow both in the Arabian Felix (Literally: 'Fortunate Arabia', today's Yemen) and in Africa' (Sayed 1981: 145 ff.).

This opinion is not shared by K. Kitchen, the reason being that in the list of animals brought from Punt were included giraffes (Sayed 1981: 146).

There are evidences of trade in the Red Sea ports between Egyptians and Puntians, as well as about the transportation by land of goods from Punt from the Red Sea to the Nile Valley (Amun-mose's tomb in Thebes, also tomb No. 143) (Sayed 1981: 148).

The first phase of connections between Egypt and Punt is modestly informative and precedes the renowned expedition ordered by Queen Hatshepsut. Judging by the sources from that time, Egyptians possessed limited information about Punt. They were receiving fragrances mainly through intermediaries, who were telling tall stories and legends. The few Egyptians who had successfully travelled to Punt were indeed courageous men and adventurers. Emblematic is the example of one Egyptian from the region of today's Asuan, who has made eleven times the route to Byblos and Punt. This happened during the second half of the third millennium B.C. in the epoch of the Old Kingdom. The text is from the late days of the Sixth Dynasty, belongs to Hnumhotep, and is from the tomb of Hui in Kubelet-Haua (Elephantine).

*jw pr.kwj hn<sup>c</sup> nb.j h<sup>c</sup>tj-<sup>c</sup> sd3wtj (Thtmw) ntr ttj h<sup>c</sup>wj r kbnt pwnt [11 (?)] sp jw.j jn.k(wj) m htp jr.n.j h3swt jptn (Urk. I 140-141)*

I headed with the (two) masters of mine, hatia and treasurer of god Chechi and the hatia and treasurer of god Hui towards Byblos and towards Punt [11(?)] times. And I returned in piece after I visited (literally: made) these countries. (In a similar context the verb jr 'make' appears in the biographies of Uni and Hufhor.

The second period in the links between Egypt and Punt begins with the reign of Queen Hatshepsut, when a fleet of five ships was sent to Punt to bring back fragrant trees and other gifts. By the end of the reign of Ramessess IV, the exchanges

with Punt come to an end, but the memories of Punt remain in the minds of the Egyptians.

We could eventually add to the list of evidences of these ties the fact that the head-rest (analogous to pillow) in today's Somalia is called 'barchi' or 'barki', which is similar to its name in ancient Egypt.

Furthermore, Somalis call their New Year the Fest of the Pharaoh (Sayed, 1984: 148).

The mechanism of organizing and conducting the missions to Punt is described in details in 'The Testament of Ramesses III (papyrus Haris)':

1. Building the navigation vessels.
2. Establishing the crews and the accompanying persons.
3. Appointing the captains of the ships and of authorized officers of the king and seniors to overview the captains' performance.
4. Loading of the ships with Egyptian goods.
5. Sailing off of the ships into the open sea.
6. Arrival in Punt after a danger free journey.
7. Loading of the ships with gifts from Punt (God's Country), making emphasis on the holy oil of Punt.
8. Return of the expedition which reaches the Coptic Desert and successfully anchors ashore.
9. Transportation of the gifts from Punt by land – the goods are loaded on donkeys and people.
10. Arrival to the Nile Valley in Coptus.
11. Uploading of the goods onto river navigation vessels.
12. Departure to the south to Thebes.
13. Solemn offering and conveying of the presents from Punt to the king.
14. The children of the lords of Punt pay respect to the king.
15. The king hands over the gifts from Punt unto the nine gods, reigning and governing Egypt, in order to make sacrificial offering to them on the next morning (See: Erichsen 1933: 94-95 (77, 8-17; 77, 1)).

Contemporary science accepts that the land of Punt was located in the region of Somalia. Some scientists presume that Punt extends over to the opposite coast of Arabia. Somewhere in that region was 'to be found' the island of the Serpent from the 'Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor'.

All known numerous opinions about the island of *ka* connect to some degree *ka* with the notion about the otherworld, with the world of the dead. In the Sh. S. text there are no specific mentions of such perceptions. The Lord of the island speaks about the death of the ship wreckage survivor, but in the future tense, when



he would already have returned to Egypt. All opinions, interpretations and the bibliography concerning *ka* are collected in the already quoted works of A. Bolschakov and T. Lekov.

In the context of Sh. S., the word *ka* (if it has been ever used in the sense of the island's name!) incorporates within itself the idea of abundance. It is not accidental that representatives of two different worlds, the Egyptian and the divine Serpent, emphasize twice:

*nn ntt nn st m hnw:f* (Sh. S. 51-52=115)

There is no such thing that does not exist on it.

And as if wishing to explain these words the Serpent adds:

*jw.f mh(.w) hr nfrt nb(w)t* (Sh. S. 116)

It is abundant of all good things, various.

The idea of abundance is supported also by the Serpent's statement that he is the Lord of Punt – the country which in the Egyptians' consciousness is associated with exotic riches. The Serpent notes that he is ruling Punt, but without even a hint that he is the lord of the world of the dead, or that he is the Creator himself.

Therefore, the meaning and sense of the word *ka* in the context of Sh. S. is abundance and this meaning is not strange to *ka* (Ignatov 1983: 1988; 1994; Ignatov 1991: 360-361; 1994: 195-198; Vandersleyen 1990, II: 1022).

In the island of *ka* is embodied the idea of the limits of the inhabited world. In the first place, this notion is specifically expressed through the verb *ph*, which fixes the boundaries of the world of Sh. S.: Egypt is the north; the serpent is the south, as already has been said. The idea of the bounds of the world should not be mixed with the ideas of the ancient Egyptian eschatological notions, which Egyptologists discovered in sentence 1130 of 'The Coffin Texts' and in chapter 175 of 'The Book of the Dead' (Baines 1990: 63).

It is known that the southern mythological boundary of Egypt is guarded by a Serpent. This is how, for example, the sources of the Nile are depicted, which according to the Egyptians are inside a cave and are guarded by a Serpent (Matie 1956: 43; Champollion 1833: 92).

It is also known that the bounds through which the deceased transcend to the Otherworld are guarded by Serpents (as per chapter 108 of 'The Book of the Dead'), at Mount Bahaw, which separates the world of the living in our world from the world of the transcendent to the afterworld.

From what has been said so far, the impression is created that in the ancient Egyptians vision of the world the Serpent, which is guarding bounds, boundaries,



is a defined symbol, perception. The careful analysis of Sh. S. shows that the Serpent's island is not simply a boundary of the inhabited world, of the world of man, but that it is the boundary between the human world and another world inhabited by deities, i.e. it is not the world of the dead. It is not accidental that the text contains the specific detail of the Serpent taking the shipwrecked sailor to the place where he dwells, and where his family used to live before the calamity. This fact is of significance in respect to the suggested interpretation of the island of *ka* (See: Sh. S. 77). The place was inhabited by gods, and after the tragedy one of them had survived. Nowhere in the text are mentioned people living on the island. There have been no humans here, there were none also during the shipwrecked sailor's arrival, but his very appearance on the island is a proof of such a possibility. The Egyptian's appearance in the world of gods is a god's gift. The text is explicit: 'God has Granted you with your life! He has brought you to this island of *ka*' (Sh. S. 113-114). The arrival of the Egyptian seamen after some months is also prophetic, i.e. it is conceived by the deity. An important element of the story is that the sailors from the Egyptian ship remain on shore, do not pervade into the interior of the island, and do not come into contact with its divine master. Only the shipwrecked sailor communicates with the Serpent, only he is admitted to the place where the Serpent dwells. It is namely here that one can find the peculiarity of the ultimate boundary land. Egyptians could meet with a deity only in 'frontier' regions, or in sleep, and the best description of such a situation is 'The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor' (compare Hornung 1982: 128). This text throws light on one hard to understand fragment in Sinuhe B 206-214, where the gods 'representatives of various parts of Egypt and of the neighboring countries' are named as has already been noted in the comments by W. Simpson with reference to J. Yoyot (Kemi 17 (1964): 69-73) (Simpson 1972: 69). In these divine powers is incorporated the idea of the inhabited world, ruled by Senwosre I. Below is the picture of the inhabited world, as presented in Sinuhe:

*jn k3.k ntr nfr nb t3.wj*  
*mrw r<sup>c</sup> hsw mntw nb w3s.t*  
*jmn nb nst-t3.wj*  
*sbk r<sup>c</sup> hr ht-hr*  
*jtmw hn<sup>c</sup> psd.t.f*  
*spdw nfr-b3.w*  
*smsr.w hr-j3b.tj*  
*nb.t jmh.t hnm.s tp.k*  
*d3d3.t tpj.t nw*  
*mn hr hrj-jb h3s.wt*  
*wrr.t nb.t pwn.t*

*nw.t hr-wr r<sup>c</sup>*  
*ntr.w nb.w t3.mrj jw.w nw w3d-wr* (Sin. B 205-211)

...for your *ka*, *ntr nfr*; He who reigns over the two lands, beloved by Re and supported by Montu, the Lord of Thebes, assisted also by Amun, the Lord of the thrones of the two lands, Sobek-Re, the Master of Sumenu, Horus, Hathor, Atum and his Enead, Sopdu, Neferbau, Semseru, the Eastern Horus, the She Ruler of Yemet, let her embrace your head, the counsel of gods which is above the water of the Flood, Min-Hor, who is amidst the desert, Uereret, the She Master of Punt, Nut, Haoreis-Re and the gods lords of the Beloved country and the islands of the sea.

A careful study of documented events shows that the limit south - southeast of the world passes in the region of Punt, in which the ancient Egyptian perceptions had interwoven also the island of *ka*. According to the vision of the world from that epoch, this should be to the left side of the legs of the cow with its head turned southwards. From here, the word for 'horns' began to indicate 'south', while for 'behind' – 'north' (Berlev 1959: 167).

Part of the text still remains unclear in Sh. S. 84-85

*jw pn n w3d-wr nt jgs(.wj).fj m nwj*

This island of the Great Greenness, the two sides of which are in the waves.

What is problematic is that the description of the island includes explicit mentioning of two coasts, two sides. E. Maksimov discusses E. Debo's position, who is of the opinion that if the author speaks of 'two sides' ('two coasts') instead of sides (coasts), then that is a synecdoche which can easily be understood if we look at the way in which Egyptians depict an island in their scriptures: the author has simply disregarded the short sides, i.e. under 'sides' he meant only the longer parts (Maksimov 1967: 103).

The basic meaning of the word *gs* is 'boundary', 'side' (Faulkner 1988: 291) and should not be mixed with the word for coast – *mrjt* (Faulkner 1988: 112). This distinction was done by the author of Sh. S., who alternates the words with the aim of better sounding, because they are not synonyms.

Compare: *h<sup>c</sup>.n h3.kwj r mrjt m h3w dpt tn*

I descended to the shore, where this ship was (Literally: 'in the vicinity of').

The interpretation which we present, that the island is a boundary, limit, place of contiguity of two worlds, helps in understanding the dualism in the word *gs*. If it

is a boundary, then it has two sides. In the region of the ancient country Punt, opposite the Horn of Somalia is the island of Socotra (Yemen). The island resembles elongated ellipse, and along its length it has actually only two coasts. It resembles the hieroglyphic symbol for island.

In Sh. S. 154 the Serpent mentions that after the Egyptian leaves the island, it will be transformed into waves.

*n sp m33.k jw pn hpr(.w) m nwj*

You shall never see this Island, which will be converted into waves.

This evidence almost fully repeats the description of the eschatological end of the world as per chapter 175 of the ‘Book of the Dead’, according to which at the end of the world the earth will be engulfed by waters.

When the Egyptian who had trespassed into the otherworld asked Atum how long his longevity would be, Atum responded: ‘...I shall destroy everything that I have created!’

*jw t3 pn r jj m Nw m hhw mj tp.f-ꜥ* (BD 175, pap. Ani = Naville 1886)

And this land shall return to Nun, in the swelling waters so as it was in the beginning...

Definitive eschatological moods are conveyed by a sentence 1130 from ‘The Coffin Texts’, which is reflected in J. Baines’s analysis (Baines 1990: 63). It is precisely due to the dialogue in these texts, that many Egyptologists see in the ‘Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor’ a text, the central idea of which is the end of the world, linking it to the mentioning of the perished family of the Serpent, which on its part, in the researchers’ understanding, corresponds to the seventy-four forms of the solar god. The line of these interpretations is long, starting with Lanczkowski and passing through the research efforts of Derstein-Urtel and H. Goedicke, reaching its pick by J. Baines (Baines 1990). In accordance to this line of interpretations of the ‘Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor’, the text is loaded with enciphered data and ideas, belonging to a ‘closed society’, i.e. it is hidden knowledge. The evidences provided by these authors are emotionally loaded and are not very convincing (Baines 1990). We have to admit however that the description of the disappearance of the island among the waves and the termination of the world are depicted in an amazingly similar way.

The island as the place of contiguity of the two worlds possesses the characteristics of the eschatological end. The Serpent stresses that the man has found himself in that place by god’s will, and that after he had already been here once, it does not mean that the doorway would remain constantly open for him to return again and again.

Man does not encounter daily a deity of flash, and also does not visit its place of rest every day. This has become possible because God had granted the life of the Egyptian.

And if at the eschatological end of the world the earth will turn into sea, and the supreme deity transforms into a Serpent, then in a similar way, when the Egyptian leaves the island of *ka*, the island will transform (i.e. will sink) into the waves and at the end of the world only the Serpent will remain. When the Serpent predicted to the Egyptian what was about to happen to the island, his prophecy was understandable to the man. He knew very well, i.e. was conscious, that he had reached the end of the world and that namely it was the Serpent who was the central figure here. That would be understandable also to the ancient readers of the 'Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor'; to whom the expression *ph.n.k wj* 'you have reached me' is 'primary' in respect to the riches and the exotics of the island, as well as of the accompanying events. The 'Tale' keeps silent about the Serpent's faith following the disappearance of the island, yet invisible threads link the prophecy about the disappearance of the island in the waves with the desire of the Serpent that the Egyptian makes his name *nfr* in the central city of Egypt.

Attempts were undertaken to estimate the distance to the island of *ka*. The four months, mentioned by the Serpent which the Egyptian man should spend on the island (Sh. S. 117-120), provoke an association with Herodotus's announcement that the southernmost point of the world is known to be at a distance which could be covered in four months of sailing and journey by land (Herodotus, II, 31). This is the number of months that are needed for a journey from Elephantine to the country of 'these fugitives'.

Here is what is said about the location of this country:

From this city (i.e. Meroe) one can reach the fugitives by sailing for time equal to the time to travel from Elephantine to the main city of the Ethiopians... The Nile, if we exclude its course in Egypt, is known by a distance of four months of navigation or voyage by land. These are the needed months for you to reach these fugitives, when you start from Elephantine. (Herodotus II, 30-31)

These four months long journey to the south was bringing the Egyptians closer to the northern latitudes of Punt.

Even the discoverer of the 'Tale of the Shipwrecked sailor' was engaged in the issue of the two months of sailing from the island to Egypt (Sh. S. 168; 174) (Golenischeff 1906: 110), pointing to Herodotus's information that a journey from Memphis to the country of fragrances takes two months. We will only note that Herodotus's reference (Herodotus II, 8) is not very clear:

There, where the longest part is, as I have learned, the distance from dawn to dusk is two months of travel. Its bounds to the east are the source of uncertainty.

If we were to accept that the unfortunate Egyptian mission sailed off from el-Koseir, then from that harbor city to the country of Punt, which supposedly was located somewhere around the Bab-el-Mandet Strait in today's Somalia, the distance was around 1300 nautical miles.

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