Study Guide for the Story of Sinuhe

This presentation of the Middle Egyptian *Story of Sinuhe* is a simple reorganization of material created by Jon J. Hirst, published at Jenny Carrington's web site and used here by their kind permission. The main difference is that the hieroglyphics, transliteration, translation, and footnotes are put together in one place, line by line. This should make it easier to refer back and forth.

The story of Sinuhe takes place during the reign of king Senusret I (approximately 1917–1872 BCE), who had taken the throne-name of Kheperkara, in the Twelfth Dynasty during the Egyptian Middle Kingdom. The earliest surviving manuscript dates from around 1800 BCE. To put that in context, it is 700 years after the great pyramids were built, 470 years before the reign of Tutankhamun, and 1770 years before the death of Cleopatra VII.

The story is told in the first person by the main character (whose name is actually given as more like Senahat, and sometimes you will see this story referred to under that name). It is considered one of the classics of ancient Egyptian literature.

- Paul Dickson

Original notes


Transliteration after Roland Koch, Die Erzählung des Sinuhe, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 17, Brussels 1990, using the two principal sources (Berlin 3022 for the bulk of the text, and Berlin 10499, for the first section, missing in 3022)

The section divisions have been introduced here for convenience, based on those of Stephen Quirke, "Digital Egypt for Universities" Sinuhe pages for the University College London. After each section number are given the corresponding line-numbers in Berlin 10499 for the start, and Berlin 3022 from the point it is preserved Transliteration system following the Manuel de Codage

- **red**: part of the text written in red
- Transliteration and text in ( ), indicates that it exists in B3022 only
1 (Berlin 10499, lines 1-2)

Nobleman and overlord, governor and canal-cutter, sovereign among the Syrians
One known to the king directly, his favourite, the Follower Sanehat
He says:

Nobleman and overlord: this pair of phrases forms the principal expression of higher status among officials in the Middle Kingdom.

Governor and canal-cutter: this pair of phrases is a Middle Kingdom revival from Old Kingdom expressions of high status among administrators.

Sovereign among the Syrians: Egyptians of the time would probably have been startled by the use of the word sovereign for a person other than the king, even though the jolt is then softened by the qualifying phrase 'among the Syrians', removing the expression of sovereignty to a safe distance.

Follower: in accordance with regular Middle Kingdom practice, the official title of the man is placed immediately before his name. Follower is an official title designating a man who literally stood immediately alongside or behind his superior, either as attendant or as bodyguard.
2 (Berlin 10499, lines 2-5)

ink Smsw Sms nb.f bAk n ipt nswt
I am a Follower who follows his lord, a servant of the family-quarters of the king

irt pat wrt Hswt Hmt nswt snwsrt m Xnm-swt
Of the noblewoman, abounding in favour, King's Wife of Senusret in Khenemsut

sAt nswt imn-m-HAt m qA-nfrw nfrw nbt imAx
King's Daughter of Amenemhat in Qaneferu, Neferu, lady of reverence

King's Wife of Senusret in Khenemsut: Egyptian has no single word for queen, using instead the compound phrase 'wife of the king'. Here the queen is identified as wife of king Senusret I, and her special religious status in the system of kingship is emphasised by mention of Khenemsut, the pyramid complex of that king at Lisht.

King's Daughter of Amenemhat in Qaneferu: Senusret I was son of king Amenemhat I, and therefore it seems from this phrase that his wife was his full or half-sister. However, in Egyptian 'daughter' might also designate 'daughter-in-law'. Her eternal religious role is emphasised again by mention of the pyramid complex of the king, in this case Qaneferu, the pyramid complex of Amenemhat I at Lisht.

3 (Berlin 10499, lines 5-11)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hieroglyphs</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rnp-t sp 30 Abd 3 Axt sw 7</td>
<td>Regnal year 30, month 3 of Flood, day 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ar nTr r Axt.f nswt-bity sHtp-ib-ra</td>
<td>The god ascended to his horizon, the dual king Sehetepibra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sHr.f r pt Xnm m itn Haw-nTr Abx m ir-sw</td>
<td>He fared up to the sky, joining with the sun-disk, divine limbs merging with his creator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iw Xnw m sgr ibw m gmw</td>
<td>The Residence was in silence, hearts in sorrow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rwt wrty xtmw</td>
<td>The Double Gate sealed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snyt m tp-Hr-mAsty pat m imw</td>
<td>The court with head on knees, the nobles in lament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dual king:** literally 'he of the sedge and bee', obscure but common title for the king.

**Sehetepibra:** the throne-name taken by king Amenemhat I at his accession, and used here to identify him in preference to the ambiguous Amenemhat (there were four kings named Amenemhat in the Twelfth Dynasty).

**Residence:** the place from which the king ruled. The Residence of the Twelfth Dynasty was at Itjtawy, not identified on the ground, but probably at Lisht, where the pyramids of the first two kings of the Dynasty are sited. Itjtawy was founded by Amenemhat I, and its full name was Itjtwyamenemhat 'Amenemhat (I) has taken the Two Lands' i.e. Egypt.

### 4 (Berlin 10499, lines 12-16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hieroglyphs</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ist rf sb.n Hm.f mSa r tA-timHw</td>
<td>Now His Majesty had sent an army against the Land of the Timehu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sA.f smsw m Hry iry</td>
<td>With his eldest son as its commander,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nTr nfr snwst</td>
<td>The good god Senusret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti-sw hAb r Hw xAswt r sqrH imyw THnw</td>
<td>He was sent to smite the hill lands, to quell the inhabitants of Tjehenu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti-sw Hm iy.f in.n.f sqrw-anx n THnw</td>
<td>He was just on his return, and had brought the captives of Tjehenu,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mnmnt nbt nn Drw.s</td>
<td>And all the limitless herds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timehu, Tjehenu:** terms for the regions and peoples inhabiting the deserts to the west of the Nile Valley.
The courtiers of the Palace despatched to the Western reaches,
To inform the King's Son of the turn of events in the Chamber
The envoys found him on the road,
And had reached him at the time of dusk
Not a slight moment did he delay,
The falcon, he flew off with his followers,
Without having his army informed of it

The Story of Sinuhe

5 (Berlin 10499, lines 17-22)

6 (Berlin 10499, lines 22-25, second half corresponding to Berlin 3022, 1-2)
Now there was a dispatch with regard to the King's children who were following him in this army. One of them was summoned. Now I was up, and heard his voice. When he was speaking - I was a short distance away.

My heart stopped, my arms crossed, trembling fell through my whole body. I slipped back in starts to seek out a hiding-place, To place myself between the bushes, to remove the way and its farer. I made my way south, without thinking of approaching this Residence. I imagined there would be bloodshed, and I denied I could survive it.
The Story of Sinuhe

8 (Berlin 3022, 8-11)

\[
nm_{ni} n_{i} mA_{aty} m h_{A}w nh_{At} \quad \text{I negotiated the Sea of Truth in the area of the Sycamore,}
\]

\[
smA_{.n}i m iw-snfrw \quad \text{And I made it to the Island of Sneferu}
\]

\[
wrS_{.n}i m aD n sxt \quad \text{I rested on the curb of the fields,}
\]

\[
HD_{.n}i wn hrw \quad \text{And moved on when it came to day.}
\]

\[
xp_{.n}i s aHa m r-wAt \quad \text{I crossed a man standing at a fork in the road:}
\]

\[
tr_{.n}f wi snd n.f \quad \text{He hailed me, but I feared him}
\]

The place-names in this part of the account of the flight have not been identified on the ground, and may be literary expressions for places given other names in non-literary sources. The Island of Sneferu might relate to Meydum or Dahshur, where there stand the pyramids built by king Sneferu of the Fourth Dynasty.
Evening fell as I trod on to the mooring-point of the horned bull
I ferried across in a cargo-boat without a rudder, thanks to a breeze from the west
I crossed by the east of the quarry in the ascent of the Goddess of the Red Mountain
I forced my legs to move on northwards
I reached the Walls of the Ruler, made to repel the Syrians and trample on the nomads
I took my shelter in the bush
From fear of being seen by the guard on the wall who was on duty
And made my way at night

Red Mountain: Gebel Ahmar (Arabic for 'red mountain'), the quartzite outcrops north-east of modern Cairo.

Walls of the Ruler: military defence installations along the land roads to Sinai, perhaps a single fortress, not identified on the ground.
The Story of Sinuhe

10 (Berlin 3022, 20-24)

At daybreak I reached Peten
And alighted at the land of the Great Black Water
Thirst struck, it overwhelmed me
I panted, my throat parched
I said, this is the taste of death,
Binding my heart and my body

Great Black Water: logically this would be the Bitter Lakes on the road from the Nile Delta into Sinai. The sight of a great tract of salt water would have been a natural stimulus to the thirst of Sinuhe in this section.

11 (Berlin 3022, 24-28)
I heard the sound of lowing of cattle
And sighted Syrians
I was spied out by one of their scouts who had been in Egypt
Then he gave me water, and milk was cooked for me
I went with him to his people. What they did was good.

Hill-land passed me to hill-land
I wound up in Byblos, and travelled up to Qedem
I had spent a year and a half there when Amunenshi fetched me,
He being a ruler of the hinterland of Syria

Hill-land: in the Egyptian landscape the flat Nile river valley and Delta lie beneath hilly desert terrain, and the outside world began with those hills. Hill-land thus refers both to the desert heights on either side of the Nile, and by extension to all foreign lands beyond.

Byblos: eastern Mediterranean harbour city in what is now Lebanon.

Qedem: town in the Levant, apparently here expressing the farthest reach of Egyptian knowledge of Syria.
He said to me

You would be well with me, you can hear Egyptian

He said this because he knew my character, and had heard of

my talent

The Egyptians who were there with him had given witness for

me

Then he said to me

How is it that you have reached these parts,

Has something happened in the Residence?
Then I said to him,

The dual king Sehetepibra has gone to the horizon,

How it happened is not known.

But I was told indirectly.

I was coming with the Timehi-land army

When it was reported to me

My heart failed, and brought me on the road of flight

Though I had not been implicated and no accusation had been made against me

(though so slander had been heard, and my name had not been mentioned by the reporter - I do not know what brought me to this hill-land)

It is as if a slight of the god,

As a Delta-man seeing himself in Abu

Or a marsh-man in the Land of the bow

**Delta-man seeing himself in Abu:** Abu is the town on Elephantine island, facing modern Aswan, on the southern border of Egypt with Nubia, at the opposite end of the land to the Delta in the north.

**Or a marsh-man in the Land of the bow:** the Land of the bow refers both to Nubia and to the first province of Upper Egypt, centred on Abu. This phrase reinforces the preceding.
Then he said to me

How will that land be now, without that effective god

Whose fear permeated the hill-lands like Sekhmet in a year of plague.

Sekhmet in a year of plague: Sekhmet is the destructive goddess, who attacks enemies of Ra the sun-god. She is seen at work in the devastation caused by plague.
Then I addressed myself to him in reply to him
Why, his son is entering the palace
And has taken up the inheritance of his father
He is a god without equal, with no other existing before him
He is a master of far-sightedness, excellent in planning, effective in decrees
Coming and going follow his decrees
He is the one suppressing the hill-lands while his father was within his palace
And reporting to him that whatever he ordained has come to pass
He is truly a strong man made by his strong arm,
A man of action - noone comes close to him
He is to be seen as he descends for archery,
Joining the fray,
He is one who takes the horn, wearing down all hands
so his enemies cannot gather their forces
He is one cleansed in sight, cleaving foreheads,
So noone can stand in his way
He is one who strides ahead to shoot down those in flight
Giving no quarter to the man who turns tail
He is the stout-hearted in the moment of the charge
He is the turner who never turns tail
He is the broad-hearted one when he sees the multitude,
Who never places rest behind his heart
He is the forward mover when he descends to the Easterners,
His delight is the plunder of archery,
He takes his shield, tramples underfoot,
He never raises his arm twice for the kill
(his arrow never strays, his bow never strains)
The nomads are routed before him as at the might of the Great Goddess
He fights and plans the outcome,
He never guards, without event
He is a lord of mercy, full of kindness,
He has conquered by love, his citizens love him more than themselves
They rejoice over him more than over their god
Women surpass men in extolling him
As he is king, and he had conquered still in the egg,
His face was set to it from the moment he was born
With him comes the increase in births
He is the sole one of the gift of god,
How joyful is this land that he has come to rule -

Still in the egg: that is, while still in the womb of his mother.
swsx tASw pw  He is one who extends the borders
iw.f r iTt tAw rsw  He will seize the southern lands,
nn kA.f xAswt mHtt  Before considering the northern lands
ir.n.tw.f r Hw styw r ptpt nmiw-Sa  He has been made to smite the Syrians and trample the nomads
hAb n.f imi rx.f rn.k  Send to him and let him know your name
m Sn wA r Hm.f  Do not plot anything against His Majesty
[xt] nbt ir.f n.k [irt it.  He will do everything for you that his father did
[f] nn tm.f ir bw nfr n xAst wnnty.sy  He will not fail to do good for the hill-land that will be loyal to him
Hr mw.f
He spoke before me:
Then fair Egypt, she is indeed the land that knows his firmness
You are here, though, and will be with me.
What I do for you will be good
He placed me at the head of his children
He settled me with his eldest daughter
And let me choose for myself from his hill-land,
From the choicest of his surrounds on the border of the next hill-land
It was a fair land, called Iaa
There were figs there and grapes.
It had wine more abundant than water
Its honey was plentiful, its plant-oil innumerable
On its trees were all kinds of fruit
There was barley there and wheat,
And unlimited cattle of every kind
aA grt dmit r.i m ii n mrt.i
rdi.n.f wi m HqA wHy m stp n xAst.f
ir.n.i aqw m mint irp m Xrt-hrw
iwf psw Apd m Asr Hrw r awt
iw grg.tw n.i iw wAH.tw n.i
Hr r inw n Tsmw.
i iw ir.tw n.i ... aSAw irtt m pst nbt

Much also accrued to me as coming for love of me
He made me ruler of a clan from the most select of his hill-land
I acquired food, jars and wine in the course of a day
Meat was cooked, ducks roasted, as well as the livestock
They laid snares for me, and laid down the catch for me,
As well as the goods of my hounds
They made for me numerous [foods?] and milk in every kind of dish
I spent many years,
And my children had grown to adults.
Each man of them in control of his own clan,
And any envoy on his way to or from the Residence, he stopped by me
I sheltered everyone, I gave water to the thirsty,
I placed the man who went astray back on the road, I rescued the afflicted,
Any Syrians who fell to fomenting strife and disturbing the rulers of hill-lands,
I challenged their movements

25 (Berlin 3022, 99-109)
This ruler of Syria made me spend many years as commander of his army

Every hill-land I moved against,

I ensured I prevailed over it,

Removing down to the plants at its wells,

I captured its cattle, brought away its servants, removed their food

And slew its inhabitants,

by my right arm, by my bow, by my movements, by my excellent plans

I became invaluable to him, and he loved me, for he know how valiant I was

He placed me at the head of his children,

For he saw the firmness of my arms
There came a hero of Syria who challenged me in my tent.
He was an unrivalled champion, who had prevailed over the entire region.
He said he would fight me,
He intended to smite me,
He planned to carry off my cattle before the council of his clan.
Hqa pf nDnD.f Hna.i Dd.kA.i n rx.i sw
n ink tr smA.f wstn.i m afAi.f
in nt pw wn n.i sA.f snb.n.i inbwt.f
rqt-ib pw Hr mAA.f wi Hr irt wpwt.k
nHmn wi mi kA n Hww m-Hr-ib ky idr
hd sw kA n awt ngA Hr Am rf
in iw wn twA mrrw n SA n tp-Hr

That ruler was consulting with me, so I said I did not know the man,
That it was not I who went to him and strode into his tent,
Or was it I who opened his gate, and moved past his walls?
He must have been tempted to it when he saw me carrying out your missions

Well, I am like a bull of the strikers amid another herd of cattle
The bull of the herd smites him, the horned bull assails him
Does a lowly man become loved when fate makes him a master?
There is no desert-nomad who befriends a marshman.

Does a marsh-reed flourish on the mountain-side.

Does a bull love to fight?

Then should a herd-leader like to turn back in fear of being matched?

If he wishes to fight, let him be told his wish.

Does a god not know what he ordained? Or a man who knows how it will be?

28 (Berlin 3022, 127-134)

I went to rest, tied my bow, sharpened my arrows,

Whetted the blade of my dagger, arrayed my weapons.

At dawn Syria came, it roused its people,
It assembled the hill-lands on either side,
For it knew of this fight
He came toward me as I stood
And I placed myself next to him
Every heart was burning for me
Women and men pounding
Every mind was willing me on,
'is there any hero that can fight against him?'
And then his shield, his dagger, his armour, his holder of spears fell, As I approached his weapons I made my face dodge And his weapons were wasted as nothing Each piled on the next
Then he made his charge against me
He imagined he would strike my arm
As he moved over me, I shot him,
My arrow lodged in his neck,
He cried out, and fell on his nose,
I felled him with his dagger
I uttered my war-cry on his back,
Every Asiatic lowing
I gave praise to Mont
As his servants mourned for him

**Mont:** a deity with temples in the province of Thebes in Upper Egypt, home of the first Middle Kingdom rulers. The Egyptians used the falcon to depict Mont in formal art: he is associated with kingly power over the neighbours of Egypt.

30 (Berlin 3022, 142-149)

This ruler Amunenshi took me into his embrace,
Then I brought away his goods, I carried off his cattle,
What he had planned to do to me, I did to him,
I seized what was in his camp, and uncovered his tent
There I was in greatness, I was broad in my standing,
I enjoyed wealth in cattle,
Thus the god acted to make peace for the one he had cursed,
The one he had led away to another hill-land
Today his heart is appeased

The fugitive flees from his surrounds, but my right place is in the Residence,
The deserter deserts from hunger, but I can give bread to my neighbour
A man abandons his land from nakedness, but I, I own white linen, finest cloth,
A man runs away for lack of one to send, but I, I own many servants
My estate is fine, my place is broad, my renown is in the palace
nTrw nb SA wart tn
Htp.k di.k wi r Xnw
smwn.k r rdit m.A.i bw wrS ib.i im
ptr wrt r abt XAt.i m tA ms.kwi im.f

mi m sA.i pw xpr sp nfr di.n.i Htp nTr

ir.f mi xt r smnx pHwy n sfm.n.f
ib.f mr n dqr.n.f r anx Hr xAst
in min rf ntf Htp

Whichever god ordained this flight
Be at peace, give me back to the Residence
Have mercy on me and let me see the place where my heart resides
See how great it is to wrap my corpse in the land in which I was born
Come in my defence, then, a good event has occurred, I have appeased the god
May he act so as to bring right the end for one he afflicted
May his heart ail for the one he excluded to live on the hill-land
Today at last he is appeased
sDm.f nH n wA
Let him hear the prayer of the exile,

wdb.f a r Hw.n.f tA im.f
May he bring back his arm for the one he forced over the land

r bw in.n.f sw im
Back to the place he brought him from

33 (Berlin 3022, 165-173)

Htp n.i nswt n kmt anx.i m Htpt.f
May the king of Egypt be content with me, may I live in his pleasure

nD xrt Hnwt ntt m aH.f
Greeting the lady who is in his palace

sDm.i wpwt nt Hrdw.s ix rnpy Haw.i
May I hear the missions of her children, that my body be young

nt tf iAw hAw
For now old age has descended

wgg As.n.f wi
Sloth has overwhelmed me

irty.i dns awy.i nw
My eyes are heavy, my arms slack

rdwy.i fnx.sn Sms ib wrd
My legs are unstable, my heart seeks rest

tkn wi n wDA sb.sn wi r niwt n nHH
I am drawn close to departure, when they will bear me to the city
May I follow the Lady of All that she may tell me what is good for her children

May she draw eternity over me

Now report was made to the Majesty of the dual king Kheperkara justified
Concerning this condition I was suffering
Then His Majesty sent to me largess of before the king He extended his heart to this servant as to a ruler of any hill-land
And the king's children who were in his palace let me hear their commissions

Kheperkara: the throne-name taken by king Senusret I at his accession, and used here to identify him in preference to the ambiguous Senusret (there were three kings named Senusret in the Twelfth Dynasty).

Of before the king: the extra preposition 'before' reinforces the separateness of the king.
mity n wD iny n bAk im Hr int.f r kmt.

Hr anx mswt nbty anx mswt

nswt-bity xpr-ka-ra sA ra imn-m-

HAt anx Dt r nHH

wD nswt n Smsw sA-nhAt

Copy of the decree brought to this servant concerning bringing him to Egypt

The Horus living of births, he of the Two Ladies living of births,
The dual king Kheperkara son of Ra of Amenemhat living forever eternally

Decree of the king to the follower Sanehat
See this decree of the king is brought to you
To inform you that you have travelled the hill-lands
Going from Qedem of Syria
Hill-land gave you to hill-land following the counsel of your heart to yourself
What was it you had done, or had been done to you?
You did not say wrong that your words be punished
You did not speak in the council of officials that your statements be bound
This matter, it carried off your heart - there was nothing in my heart against you
This your heaven who is in the palace, she is well and strong today
Her head is adorned with the kingship of the land
Her children are in the inner palace

Horus … He of the Two Ladies: these are two of the five formal titles taken by each king at his accession. In the case of Senusret I, the first three of the five titles were followed by the same name, 'living of births' (the third kingly title, not given in this manuscript, was Horus of Gold).

36 (Berlin 3022, 187-199)
May you add the riches of their gift to you, that you may live by their offerings

Prepare your return to Egypt, that you may see the Residence where you were born

That you may kiss the ground at the Great Double Gate, and join the courtiers

Today now you have begun to age

You have unravelled virility

You are reminded of the day of burial, of passing to reverence

A night is cut for you with oils and wrappings from the Goddess Linen

A procession of passing is made for you, on the day of rejoining the earth

A case of gold, a mask of lapis lazuli, the sky over you, placed in the bier

The oxen drawing you, chanters in front of you

Dances are made by the sacred dancers at the door of your tomb

Offerings are pronounced for you, meat is butchered at the door of your chapel

Your columns are enriched with silver in the midst of the king's children
nn wn mwt.k Hr xAt nn bs tw aAmw
You will not die upon the hill-land, the Asiatics will not inter you

nn dit.k m inm n sr.tw Dr.k
You are not to be placed in a sheepskin as your enclosure is made

iw nA Aw r Hwt tA mH Hr xAt iwt.k
It is too long for wandering the land, think of the corpse and return

spr.n wD pn r.i aHa.kwi m Hr-ib wHt.i
This decree reached me as I stood among my clan
Sd.n.tw.f n.i
It was read out to me
di.n.i wi Hr Xt.i
And I placed myself on my belly
dmi.n.i sAtw
I touched the ground
di.n.i sw sn Hr Snby.i
And put it strewn over my chest
dbn.n.i n.i afAy.i Hr nhm r Dd
I went around my camp shouting aloud
How is this done for a servant whose heart led him astray to foreign lands
This is utter good, the mercy that rescues me from death
Your spirit will let me spend the end of my bodily days in the Residence

Copy of the report to this decree
The servant of the palace Sanehat says
In peace very greatly
Concerning this flight made by the humble servant in his ignorance
It is your ka, good god, lord of the two lands,
Whom Ra loves, praised by Mont lord of Thebes and Amun lord of
the thrones of the two lands,
By Sobek-Ra, Horus, Hathor, Atum and his nine gods
Soped perfect of Might of Semseru, Horus the easterner
The lady of the cavern - may she join your brow, the tribunal at the
front of the flood
Min-Horus amid the hill-lands, the great goddess, lady of Punt, Nut,
Horwerra
All the gods of Egypt, of the hill-land, of the islands of the Great
Green
May they give life and power to your nostrils
May they join you in their giving
May they grant you eternity without end and unbounded time
Fear of you rebounds through lands and hill-lands, you grasp what the
sun-disk circles
This is a prayer by the humble servant to his lord for rescue from the
west

Ra: the sun-god

Amun lord of the thrones of the two lands: Amun, god of Thebes, first important under the Middle Kingdom, with this
title at his main temple at Karnak. His name means 'hidden', expressing the presence of divinity everywhere, seen or not,
complementing the sun in the sky as a visible source of life and light.

Sobek-Ra: Sobek is the crocodile god, especially important in the late Middle Kingdom, as recognised in this fused form
Sobek-Ra, divinity perceived simultaneously in Sobek and in the sun Ra.

Horus: god of kingship.

Hathor: god of sensual love.

Atum and his nine gods: the creator in his form before fissioning, with his 'nine gods', an expression for all the deities
worshipped in his temple complex (nine being 3 times 3, and 3 being used graphically for plural in Egyptian writing: so 9
is 'plural of plural', beyond number).

Soped perfect of Might of Semseru: Soped is god of the east, here with an unclear epithet.

Horus the easterner: the god of kingship Horus, in his aspect as ruler of the east.

The lady of the cavern: goddess of flood waters? Uncertain.

the tribunal at the front of the flood: primeval gods and goddesses.
Min-Horus: Min is god of male potency, here combined with Horus god of kingship.

the great goddess, lady of Punt: possibly Ipy, the goddess of childbirth depicted as hybrid crocodile-hippopotamus, and known in the New Kingdom as Taweret 'the great goddess' - Punt is a land south of Egypt from which the Egyptians procured exotic materials including incense - it has not yet been identified.

Nut: goddess of the sky.

Horwerra: 'Horus the elder - Ra', fusing Horus god of kingship and Ra the sun-god.

the islands of the Great Green: originally the northern Delta areas of land among marshy waters, and by extension islands in the Mediterranean beyond the northern Delta shores.

39 (Berlin 3022, 214-223)

\[ \text{nb siA siA rxyt siA.f m Hm n stp-sA} \]
\[ \text{wnn bAk im snd Dd st} \]
\[ \text{iw mi xt aA wHm st} \]
\[ \text{nTr aA mitw ra Hr sSa bAk.n.l Ds.f} \]

Lord of insight, who perceives the populace, whose insight is the Majesty of the palace

This humble servant is in fear of saying it

It is like a matter too great to be repeated

Great god, equal of Ra, in informing the one who has worked for him himself
iw bAk im m-a nD-r Hr.f  This humble servant is in the hand of the one consulting about him
di.tw A Xr sxr.f  It has to be placed under his care
iw Hm.k m Hr iT nxt awy.ky r tAw nbw  Your Majesty is Horus who seizes, your arms are stronger than all lands
wD grt Hm.k rdit int.f  Now your Majesty decrees that he be brought,
mki m qdm xntyw-s m xnt kS mnws m  And Meki in Qedem, the mountain-men leading Kesh, Menus
   tAw fnxw  from the land of Fenkhu,
HqAw pw mtrw rnw xprw m mrwt.k  These are the rulers by their exact names who have come into your affection
Nn sxA rtnw n.k im.s mitt Tsmw.k  Without mentioning Syria, as much yours as are your dogs

**Meki in Qedem, … Kesh, Menus … Fenkhu:** Qedem and Fenkhu are names of places in the Levant, Kesh presumably also; as names for rulers in the area, Meki and Menus are perhaps literary fictions to give a precise flavour to the passage, rather than historical persons, though that is also possible.
is wart tn irt.n bAk
n xmt.s nn s m ib.i n qmd.i s
r rx.i iwd.i r st.i iw mi sSm rswt

As for this flight made by this servant
It was not planned, it was not in my heart, I did not plot it
I do not know what separated me from my place, it was like a
dream
It is as if a Delta-man saw himself in Abu, a marsh-man in the
Land of Nubia
I did not fear, I was not persecuted, I heard no accusation
My name was not heard in the mouth of the reporter
And yet my limbs went cold,
The Story of Sinuhe

Legs panicked, my heart took hold of me

The god who decreed this flight led me away: I am not the arrogant, not I

The man who knows his land, he fears

Ra has set fear of you throughout the land, the dread of you in every hill-land

Place me in the Residence or in this place,

You are still the one who clothes this horizon

The disk shines for love of you, water is in the river to be drunk at your desire

The air in the sky, it is breathed in when you say so

41 (Berlin 3022, 234-241)

This humble servant is to hand over the staff acquired by this servant in this place

Then this servant will be returned as your Majesty permits in his desire

We live by the breath of your gift, as Ra, Horus and Hathor love this your noble life

As Mont lord of Thebes wishes that it live forever

I was permitted a day in Iaa to hand over my things to my children
With my eldest son in charge of my clan, my clan and all my things in his hands,
My servants, all my cattle, my fruits, all my sweet trees

This servant arrived south,
I touched on the ways of Horus,
And the commander there who was organising patrols
Sent a message to the Residence to inform them
Then his Majesty sent the good overseer of foragers of the King's House. Followed by ships laden with the gifts of before the king. For the Syrians who came along with me to bring me to the ways of Horus. I pronounced each of them by his name. All the cupbearers were busy at their tasks. I received and the captain loaded for me, And there was kneading and straining beside me until I reached the landing of Itj(tawy).

**Overseer of foragers:** this is the official apparently entrusted with guaranteeing palace supplies of the materials brought in from outside the agricultural economy. The title is relatively rare in sources for the Twelfth Dynasty administration.

43 (Berlin 3022, 248-256)
Very early at daybreak there came the summons for me
Ten men coming, ten men going to lead me to the palace
I touched the ground between the dawn rays
As the king's children stood on the walls at the conduct of
my approach
The courtiers were led to the audience hall as I was placed
on the way to the inner palace
I found His Majesty on the great throne on a podium of
electrum
Then I was stretched out on my belly
I lost myself in his presence,
This god addressed me friendlily
As I was like a man seized in pitch black
My soul had gone, my body trembled
My heart was no longer in my body - could I know life from
death?
Then His Majesty said to one of those courtiers
Raise him and let him speak to me
Look at you, on return from travelling the hill-lands
The flight has worked its impact on you, you are grown old
You have reached old age
It is no trifle that your body will be purified,
That you will not be interred by nomads - do not, do not be silent
You have not spoken, though your name is pronounced
Fearing the hand of punishment, I answered with the answer of the fearful

What has my lord said to me

That I might answer it - there is no slight to the god in this

It is terror that resides in my body

Just as the fated flight came to be

See me before you - you are life, may your Majesty do as he desires

See me before you - you are life, may your Majesty do as he desires
Then the king's children were brought in
And His Majesty said to the king's wife
Here is Sanehat, returned as an Asiatic, remade as a Syrian
She uttered a very great cry, and the king's children in one outburst
They said before His Majesty
It cannot truly be him, sovereign my lord
And His Majesty said, it is truly he
At that they brought their counterpoises, their images, their sistra in their hands

They waved them at His Majesty

Your arms are for the good, O king enduring

The adornments of the lady of heaven

The goddess Gold gives life to your nose

The lady of the stars unites with you

The south crown fares north, the northern south, united as one in the way of your Majesty

The cobra is set at your brow, you have removed the weak from evil

Ra lord of the two lands is pleased with you, praise to you as to the Lady of All

Rest your bow, untie your arrow, give breath to the one in lifelessness

Allow us this good turn

This wayfarer, son of the north wind,

The nomad born in Egypt

He took flight for fear of you, he abandoned the land in dread of you

There will be no destruction for the face that sees your face

There will be no fear for the eye that looks at you
Counterpoises, images, sistras: the counterpoise was originally a functional ornament used to weigh down a heavy necklace at the back, and it became a symbol of beauty and the sensuous, and thus a separate religious emblem in its own right; the meaning of images in this context is not certain; the sistrum is a rattle with metal bands or disks on bands, used to provide a rhythm to chanting, like the modern metronome and base beat.

Goddess Gold: a reference to Hathor, goddess of sensual love.

Lady of All: a reference to the king's wife, as the king might be called Lord of All, a title of the creator.
Then His Majesty said
He shall not fear, nor be given over to terror
He is to be a courtier among the officials,
He may be placed in the midst of the court
Proceed to the inner palace,
The Story of Sinuhe

For instruction in appointing his standing
So I went inside the inner palace
The king's children giving me their arms
I went then to the Great Double Gate
I was installed at the house of a king's son, full of riches
With a bathroom, and images of the horizon
With valuables from the treasury
- clothing of royal linen
and ointment of the first for the king's officials whom he loves
Every cupbearer was busy at his task

Images of the horizon: phrase of uncertain meaning, interpreted by some commentators as a term for 'mirrors'.

49 (Berlin 3022, 290-300)

Years were made to fall from my body, as I was shorn, my hair combed
The load was returned to the hill-land, the garments to the

nomads,

I was arrayed in fine linen, and anointed with first quality oil

I lay down on a bed, and returned the sand to its dwellers

And the tree-oil to those who anoint themselves with it

I was given the house of a lord of an estate, as a gift from a courtier

Numerous craftsmen built it up, everything was strengthened anew

Foods were continually delivered to me from the palace, 3 or 4 times a day

Besides the gifts of the king's children without a moment of pausing

A pyramid-chapel of stone was built for me amid the pyramids
The overseer of glazeworkers of the pyramid procured its ground,

The overseer of sealers did the drawing, the sculptors did the cutting,

The overseers of works who were at the pyramid temple ferried for it.

Every tool that is set to the temple-terrace, it found its task there.

I was given spirit-servants, and I made an estate for the cult,

Containing fields as endowment at the landing-stage as is done for the foremost official

My image was adorned with gold, its kilt in electrum,

It is His Majesty who had it done. No poor mortal ever received such treatment

I am in the favour of before the king

Until the coming of the day to moor

**pyramid-chapel**: in the Middle Kingdom there are no examples of pyramidal monuments for persons other than the king and women of his family. There appear to be two ways of explaining the term here: (1) the chapel of Sinuhe is of pyramid form, a claim that would have struck the Middle Kingdom audience as hard as the title sovereign in section 1, (2) the chapel is not 'of pyramid form' but 'of the pyramid' in the sense that it was constructed in the pyramid complex.

**The overseer of glazeworkers of the pyramid procured its ground**: the title here is unclearly written, and the sole New Kingdom source for this passage gives the title as 'necropolis-workers sculpting the pyramid'. If the Middle Kingdom papyrus Berlin 3022 is taken at face value at this point, it would be a reference to the use of artificial blue or green paste ('ground') to fill hieroglyphs and figure outlines on white limestone.

**The overseer of sealers did the drawing**: the New Kingdom parallel gives the title as 'draughtsman', reasonably enough. However the Middle Kingdom manuscript Berlin 3022 may also provide a reasonable reading, if the overseer of sealers was in charge of the artists and treasury equipment needed for drafting designs and inscriptions. If this and the preceding point are accepted, the focus of the final passage would fall on the inscription on the tomb-chapel walls - possibly intended as a self-reference to the composition itself, as the Tale of Sinuhe is introduced as if a tomb-chapel inscription.

**Every tool that is set to the temple-terrace**: a reference to hieroglyphic monuments at temple precincts, most famously that of Osiris, god of the dead, at Abydos.

**spirit-servants**: regular title for a person employed in making food and drink offerings in the cult of a specific dead person.

**Image**: cult-statue as the focus for making food and drink offerings to the dead.

**Electrum**: alloy of silver and gold.
End note in Berlin 3022, line 311

This is its completion from its start to its finish as found in writing