



QUAREIA—THE ADEPT
Module VII—Adept Exorcism
Lesson 7: The Was Sceptre

BY JOSEPHINE MCCARTHY

WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding—everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

For more information and all course modules please visit

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So remember—in order for this course to work, it is wise to work with the lessons in sequence. If you don't, it won't work.

Yours,

Josephine McCarthy



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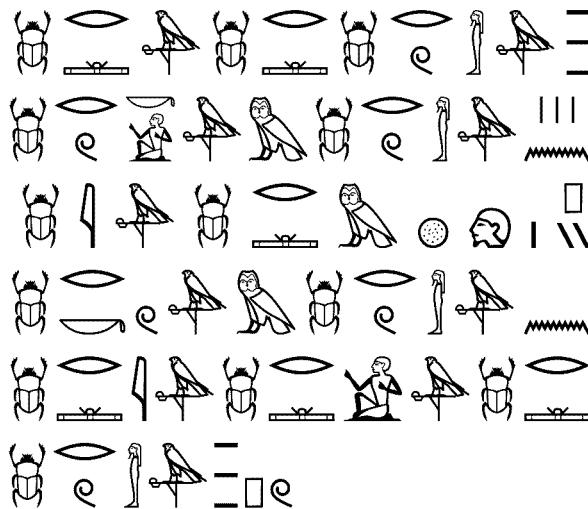


Figure 1: Extract from 28.20–28.21 of the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus (“When I developed... thus developed these developments.”)

The book of knowing Re’s developments, and felling Apep.

Words spoken:

The Lord to the Limit says:

When I developed, development developed. I developed into the development of the Developing One (Khepri), who

developed in the First Instant. I developed into the developings of the Developing One when I developed; thus developed these developments.

I was more original than the original ones that I made: I was the original one amongst the original ones. More original was my name than theirs: I made the original time and the original ones.

I made forms as I desired in this world. I was wide therein. I created my hand, alone, before they were born, before I had spat Shu, before I had expectorated Tefnut. I used my own mouth. This was my name: Magic (Hekaw).

It was I who developed into (further) developments, having already developed into the Developing One (Khepri). I developed amidst the Original Ones. There developed a multitude of developments at the start, before there developed those who developed in this world. I did it all, alone, before there developed any other that could act with me in this place.

I made those who developed there with my very Ba; I created some in the Nu, in inertness, before I could find a place where I could stand.

I was effective in my heart, I measured out with my sight, I did it all, alone. I measured out in my heart and created others who developed. Multitudinous were the developments of the Developing One. Their children developed through the developments (i.e. evolutions) of their children.

It was I, I spat out Shu, I expectorated Tefnut.

I came into being as the One God. Three gods were with me.

Two developed in this world. Shu and Tefnut rejoiced in the Nu, biding therein. It was my Eye who brought them to me after (two) eternities of their being far from me.

I united my members; they came forth from me, myself, after I took pleasure with my phallus in my fist. My heart came in my hand; sperm fell from my mouth. I spat out Shu, I expectorated Tefnut.

(The following repetition is in the original text.)

I came into being as the One God. Three gods were with me.

Two developed in this world. Shu, Tefnut rejoiced in the Nu, biding therein. It was my Eye who brought them to me after (two) eternities of their being far from me.

I united my members; they came forth from me, myself, after I took pleasure with my phallus in my fist. My heart came in my hand; sperm fell from my mouth. I spat out Shu, I expectorated Tefnut.

Indeed my father, the Inert (Nun), spent time with them. My eye was in pursuit of them since eternities... [missing passage]... serpents... when I wept tears over [...]; my [Eye?] planned, and so developed mankind.

I replaced her (the Eye) with the Akhet (determinative here: snake goddess). She (the Eye) raged at me after she returned, another having grown in her place. Her rage fell when she travelled from her eye socket to (another) eye socket; I made a replacement (socket) for her and I smoothed her.

I promoted her place in my face; she governed the world to its limit.

Shu and Tefnut birthed Geb and Nut, (and they birthed) Osiris, Horus the Foremost/Southern Without Eyes (Khenty-en-irty), Set, Isis, and Nephthys. It was they who birthed and formed a multitude of ones who developed in this world, by the development of children and by the development of *their* children.

They made invocation upon my name that they might fell their adversaries; they formed the magical utterances for felling Apep. For he is restrained upon the two arms of Aker. He does not have arms; he does not have legs. He is restrained in his one place accordingly as Re pins him down, for he has commanded that he be felled due to his form/nature, which is evil.

—From the beginning of *The Book of Felling Apep*, in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus. tr. Michael Sheppard, from *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind*, Raymond O. Faulkner, 1933, pp.69–72 (original hieroglyphs), with close reference to *The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: IV* in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1938, pp.41–42 (Faulkner’s translation).

The *Book of Overthrowing Apep* is a collection of spells from Egypt’s Ptolemaic period, circa 305 B.C.. They appear in the Bremner-Rhind papyrus, now in the British Museum, London, under the title ‘The Book of Overthrowing Apophis.’ They are based on much older writings, however, some of them dating back at least to the Middle Kingdom’s Coffin texts. They are thought to have been recited in the temples each

day, and would also have been used to defend the temples and Pharaoh against chaos and destruction.

The list of chapter headings having to do with Apep are:

Spitting on Apep

Trampling on Apep with the left foot

Taking the spear to smite Apep

Binding Apep

Taking the knife to smite Apep

Setting fire to Apep

(as translated by Faulkner in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1937, pp. 167–168)

As you can see from the chapter headings, the Underworld serpent Apep (Greek name: Apophis) was dealt with in a series of different ways to subdue his power.

Why are you looking at this? Because this Underworld destructive serpent power is the root and key to a lot of the very destructive, powerful situations that an adept exorcist may have to deal with.

You already have the skills and keys within you to deal with most exorcism situations. As I have said many times, you will learn as you work to draw that knowledge up to the surface of your mind and apply it. But when there is very serious destruction or death, far beyond anything normal, you as an adept need to reach deeper into the latent powers within magic to deal with it.

Then you have to rise above the presentation, and instead of trying to deal with the details and manifestations, you go straight to the core of the problem. This always tracks back to this Underworld destructive serpent power, and usually it has been triggered either by a natural reaction, or by magic.

To deal with this power, you not only need visionary and ritual skill, but you also need a lens to focus those powers. You need a lens specific to dealing with this destructive power, a lens that is ancient and well-known in Egypt—the *Was* sceptre.

The *Was* is used along with other tools and skills, ones made very apparent in the chapter headings of the Book of Overthrowing Apep:

Spitting on Apep Spitting is not only a sign of contempt; it also mirrors a creative Divine power. It engages that power through bridging, and steps you into the company of the Deities.

Trampling on Apep with the left foot Think about that one, and the adept power of the left foot.

Taking the spear to smite Apep The Was sceptre, and the power of Set.

Binding Apep The weave that binds with the help of the Weaver, and the limiting power of Set.

Taking the knife to smite Apep The use of the Limiter.

Setting fire to Apep The power of Sekhmet through the power of Bast: the cat is a creature that, as well as the blade, becomes a chopper that limits and divides the serpent. There is a reason why magicians live and work closely with cats. The last two, blade and fire, are usually worked together, not separately, and are depicted in tomb paintings as the chopper that is the cat with a blade. By the time the text got to Ptolemaic times, it was badly degraded and likely misunderstood. Don't forget that by this time, the whole magical structure of the temples was breaking down, even though their fragments still held power.

The one thing you have not yet done is work with the Was. You have your serpent staff—your magical companion—but the Was is an adept tool that holds the power of Set and is used specifically to limit the power of chaos that flows from the Underworld serpent when it has been released.

Remember the visionary work where you observed the lightning strike in the land and put the serpent back to sleep? That power is tuned into the Was, the power of the storm, the power of Set, the power of destruction that strikes chaos and puts it back to sleep. Remember, you cannot destroy the serpent, as it is an inherent part of creation, but you can limit it and put it back to sleep when it is causing unnecessary destruction.

Before we move on to the how, let us look at the why. What is it about the Was that makes it a good vessel for such power to flow into? Remember, just making a Was does nothing, it is just an empty vessel. The important thing is what you *bridge into* the Was: the power of the storms, the lightning, the power of Set, and the ability to pin and subdue serpents.

Let us have a look at it. Here is a picture of a Was sceptre.

Note: Special thanks to Joan Lansberry and her research into Set for the references to these images. Her website is <http://www.joanlansberry.com>

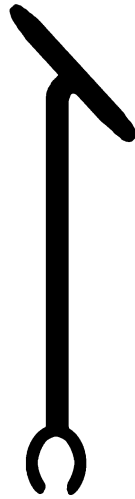


Figure 2: The was sceptre

You know the top of the staff depicts Set, which prepares it for being a good vessel for that power. But what about the bottom?

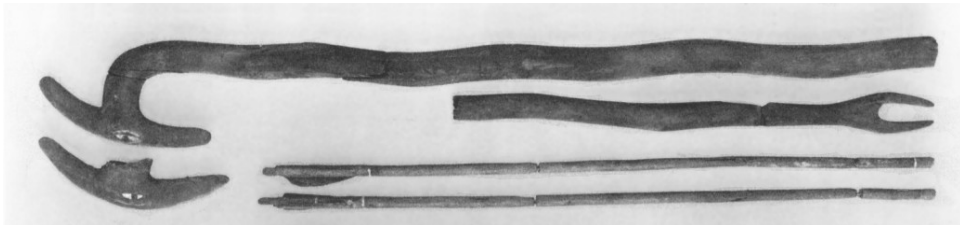


Figure 3: From a late Middle Kingdom burial, Met museum NY. "Identified as coming from Pit 211 of the 'priests' cemetery' at Deir el Bahri, belonging to a certain Snwsrt'-nh, no earlier than the end of the Twelfth Dynasty." from *Notes on Sticks and Staves in Ancient Egypt*, Henry G. Fischer, Metropolitan Museum Journal, 1979—photo ©JAL 2008).

The bottom is a snake catcher. To this day, if you go out in the desert in Upper Egypt, you will see men with forked-bottom sticks. They use the stick's forked bottom to trap snakes behind their heads. This reflects the deeper power in the Was Sceptre.

Over time these sceptres became stylised, particularly the ones left in tombs or depicted on their walls. The further back you go through the dynasties, however, the less stylised and the more practical they become.

So you have a solid stick with the head and eyes of Set, the deity power that can overcome Apep in the Underworld. And the bottom of the stick is shaped so it can pin a serpent...

When you make, then start to work with, such staffs, then you really begin to understand how they work.

In Egyptian history, the Was is held by deities, the king, priests, and so forth in their roles as defenders and protectors. It is a staff of power—indeed, the hieroglyph for ‘power’ is a Was sceptre. The one who can subdue the Underworld power of Apep is one with power over destruction. Such a one can limit, bind, and banish chaotic destructive power to bring harmony to their land, and keep the nation safe.

Remember, this is not about trapping and controlling physical snakes on the land; this is a magical tool that reaches deep into the Underworld and limits chaos from rising.

It was often depicted on tomb walls in the hands of deities: the deity would carry the Was, showing that they would lead the deceased through the trials of death, and keep the power of destructive serpents away from the dead as they travelled through the various stages of the Duat. Here is an image from the tomb of Nefertari in the Valley of the Queens, where Nefertari is guided by the hand of Hathor, holding the Was.

And here is a very unusual and old image of the Was in action from the step pyramid of Djoser, of the third dynasty, in the Old Kingdom, from the twenty-seventh century B.C..

In this scene, set geographically in Upper Egypt, we see Djoser doing probably one of the first acts of his Jubilee feast: the ritual of *Hed Seb* or the *Sed*. The king, wearing the white crown, walks to the temple of Horus of Behedet—now Edfu—to worship a form of Horus who is the protector of the throne of Egypt.

Note that Djoser is striding forward right leg first, as he is walking through death, not life. Just behind his right leg—and remember that under the right foot is the Threshing Floor—you will see the spirit of a Was in action. Let us take a closer look at it.

You will see that the Was spirit is grappling with a two-headed serpent-thing. The thing’s two heads have eyes, so they are serpents, but the strange shape could be anything. Note the pinning on the necks of both snakes, and the being’s distorted body. Also note that the Was has arms: it is not the depiction of a power tool, but the depiction of a being



Figure 4: Nefertari guided by Hathor

that flows through the tool.

And this is also something you should keep in mind: a staff is a window that a power can work through, and at times, the magician becomes the staff that a deity can work through. We see this concept in Egypt in some inscriptions, for example in that of a physician buried at Giza, who described one of his roles as that of $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆑}$ *shym srkt* “staff of Selket”: “Physician at the palace, staff of Selket, and head physician, Iri.”

So when you are looking at staffs like the Was, remember that they are bridges for power. The beings that operate with that power will flow through the staff. This is often depicted as the staff having arms: a being is working through the staff to achieve something.



Figure 5: Niche with panel showing the king Netjerykhet—Djoser—walking towards the shrine of Horus of Behedet. From Saqqara, Djoser pyramid complex, blue underground chambers, reproduction now in the Imhotep Museum. Image credit: Juan R. Lazaro

Another thing to file away in the back of your head is the place considered the magical home of the Was sceptre: Waset, known later by its Greek name, Thebes. We know that Thebes was a very old and respected centre of magical, mystical, and spiritual learning and practice. It was the home of Karnak, and the surrounding area is the oldest centre of the spiritual life of Egypt.

It is also the earliest known home of the deity Set. An early temple on the west bank of the Nile, from c. 3500 B.C., was at *Nebwet*, also known as Naqada, whose Greek name was Ombos, in what is now called the area of the Qena Governorate. Set and the Was were born out of a very special cauldron in Upper Egypt. This also tells us that the magical knowledge within the Was is very ancient indeed.

So we know why the Was looks as it does. Now let us look at the how, and how the Was is relevant to magical exorcists today.

You should have realised by now that you do not have to immerse yourself in the religious structure of Egypt as a devotee to tap into its magic: it is a strong, knowledgeable pattern, and we can look at, and work with, that pattern to learn and develop work that is relevant and workable today.

In some regions of the world you can stay with the pattern of Set to work with the Was, but in other areas, I suspect particularly the southern



Figure 6: Close-up of the strange was from Djoser's Step Pyramid

hemisphere, you may need to do things differently. Either stay with the purely natural expressions, or work to find the southern equivalent of the power that expresses in the northern hemisphere as Set. You will have to experiment.

So you have choices: either stay with the expression of the natural powers that you observed in the vision of the storm subduing the serpent, or work with a known deity like Set. Your choice; your work. You may find the natural elements too feral, or persuading nature beings to express through the staff without deity formations too difficult—I tend to go with what works in the most balanced way regardless of its expression. Hence I work with the Was as the bridge of Set, but you may choose differently.

When we get to the how, the first question to be answered is what form and substance you should use. Was sceptres were made from wood, usually gathered from a tree by water. (See the letter from Amenhotep II to User-Satet instructing the official to search for wood by a pond for a staff.) Or they had a wooden body, and a bronze head and fork (Third Intermediate Period). Small staffs carried, worn, or positioned in tombs as amulets were made from faïence or stone, sometimes bronze.



Figure 7: Was with arms, from the Victoria and Albert Museum, UK

As a modern magician, using wood taken from a tree near water—and if you really wanted to specialise and didn't mind the expense, having the head and fork made from iron or bronze—would be effective. The head would have eyes to see, a snout to smell, and ears to hear. The staff's forked bottom must not be stylised, but be an effective fork-shape to 'pin' the head of the snake.

If you take wood from a tree, it should be a solid hardwood, and not thin or brittle. The staff needs to be strong enough to do the job. Work with the tree, and with the tree in the temple egregore, so that you make the right choice. And do not shock a living tree too much. Approach the tree and ask if you can take a branch. If you look closely, you will find a branch with a strong fork and the snout shape where it attaches to the tree. Or you may find an appropriate windblown branch nearby after a storm—those are the best ones.

If all else fails, make your Was staff by carving it. The traditional wood to use is acacia, but that can be tough to find outside Australia and Africa. Other woods capable of holding this power are oak, elm, ash, and yew. Both elm and ash have an affinity to the Underworld, as they do not degrade easily underground, but any wood you use should be properly seasoned if you intend to carve it.

Sometimes you just find suitable branches if you wander enough around woodland. I came across one years ago. It was a small staff with

a snakelike body, a snout head with eyes, and a forked bottom. I found it at the foot of a tree by a natural spring—perfect! And I did not need to work it magically: it slowly sprang to life of its own accord, and now works very powerfully. So do not assume that you always have to work them magically: with some staffs you do, but others come home with you and start to form themselves.

Remember, the form and image is an empty vessel unless you are lucky enough to find a ready-working one. With an empty vessel, its power comes from what you bridge into it, then what you do with it, not what it looks like. So let us go through the steps of bringing a Was staff to life, and then we will look at how to use it.

Enlivening the Was Sceptre

The enlivening method uses visionary ritual, which prepares the vessel and introduces it to the inner contacts and powers in the directions. The ritual takes the staff from the depths of the Underworld through the stages of power, and ends up back in the north.

Prepare your work space as usual, and have the scales on the western altar. Also have the vessel there, and fill it with rainwater. If you live in a desert region, go to the nearest spring that emerges from the ground: this will be ancient rainfall. Don't use tap water. You need water clear of chemicals, that originated (at any time) as rain. This may take some doing for some people, and you may need to travel to get the water.

Have the stone shield in the north, and place the Was on the central altar. Also on the central altar, have a small bowl with some frankincense oil in it, and a small bowl with Galbanum oil in it. Both will be used to seal and consecrate the object. Place your regular staff in the south, on the left side of the altar.

Light the lights, open the gates, and commune with the contacts, telling them what you are about to do. Then circle a few times. As you circle, be aware of the contacts of the Gathering Place slowly appearing and circling with you. Once that circling has built up, stand by the central altar, facing south, close your eyes, and merge into the Inner Temple. Spend some time in stillness in the Inner Temple, and circle in vision a few times.

As you circle, be aware of the northeast wall becoming transparent, and see deities standing on the other side of the wall. Be aware of the

stars appearing across the ceiling, and the whole Inner Temple coming alive with power. Now open your eyes, but keep an awareness of the Inner Temple as you work: work in both places at once.

Pick up the staff and circle the directions a few times, pausing at each threshold and holding out the staff horizontally in silence. When you have finished circling, go to the north altar. Hold the staff up, using both hands, and say:

“Mother of the darkness, Mother of silence, here is your child.”

Lower the staff to the stone so that it is lying across the stone but you are still holding it. Say:

“I lay your son on the stone that he may be awakened. In the depths of the cave he sleeps on your body. Your son, he who houses the storms, he who directs the lightning, he who subdues chaos, and pins the great serpent of destruction, here he is, here is your son.”

Close your eyes and see the staff laid across the Stone in the deep Cave of the Four Winds, at the centre of everything. See the wind blow from the four directions. Out of the cave entrances in the directions come four old women, the Sisters who direct the four winds.

Watch as, one by one, they come forward and blow across the staff. Then the four begin to sing and weave a pattern in the air above the staff, preparing the vessel’s inner pattern. Once the pattern is complete, the old women step back and leave the pattern suspended in the air above the staff.

Reach up with your right hand and lower the pattern into the staff. Do the same action with your physical hand. Rest your right hand on the staff and feel the staff ‘breathe’ beneath your hand.

Now you must bring the staff out of the Underworld. In your mind, see yourself ascend the steps out of the cave. At the same time, physically bow to the powers of the north, turn, and go to the west altar. When you stand before the west altar, in your mind see yourself standing on the threshold between the steps down to the cave, and the temple room.

Hold the staff out with both hands again and say:

“Powers of the storms, powers of the lightning, here is the staff. Pass through the Scales of Ma’at and flow into the staff, so that the storms within the staff will be governed by the laws of Ma’at.”

In your mind’s eye, see great storms gather beyond the west threshold. Out of the storm walks a deity. The deity walks up to the threshold and steps through it and into the scales, then reaches out to touch the staff. As they touch it, you see the power of the storms pass through the deity and into the staff.

When they withdraw, dip your hand in the water in the vessel and wipe it down the staff. Water the eyes, ears, and nose of the staff, and its forked bottom.

As you wash it, be aware of the air in the east in the direction behind you. Say:

“I cleanse and open your eyes so that you may see; I cleanse and open your ears so that you may hear; I cleanse and open your nose so that you may smell; and I cleanse and open your fork so that you may trap and subdue the serpent of chaos.”

As you finish, you feel something withdraw from you. You realise that as you were speaking, something was speaking through you, adding to the power of the words. Bow to the powers of the west, turn, and go to the south.

Hold up the staff. In your mind’s eye, see the road ahead. Out of the bright sunlight walks a deity. As it gets closer, you recognise Set. His skin glows red, his hair is wild and flowing in the winds that surround him, and his eyes fix on you, challenging you with his power. Feel his power flow to you, threatening you, and exposing any chaos within you. Have no emotion, stand your ground, and be silent. Bow to him, and while you physically hold out the staff, in vision see yourself handing the inner staff to him over the threshold.

Say to him:

“This is a Was, a staff to direct your power in the land to pin the serpent of destruction, Apep. I, (say your name), honour your power, and will carry your staff of power with honour and integrity. I carry this staff only to subdue the power of

the destructive serpent of chaos, and should I use this staff for any other reason, or raise it in anger, in power-lust, or in any way that dishonours your power, may you strike me down.”

Watch as Set breathes the power of the hot winds across the staff. Watch as he spits on the staff to give it life. Watch as he shouts the storms into the staff to direct them. And watch as he touches the staff with his finger, sending a bolt of lightning into it.

He whispers something to the staff, directing it, focusing it, and telling it to strike you should you misuse it. He then reaches over the threshold and touches you on the forehead, sending a pain into your brain to remind you of his power and how he will strike you should you pervert his gift.

Then Set hands the power of the staff back over to you, turns, and vanishes into a whirlwind.

Hold the Was in your right hand. Reach out with your left hand and pick up your staff. Stand facing the south threshold, your arms outstretched to your sides, your staff in your left hand and the Was in your right. Say:

“My staff which holds the snakes that open the way; my Was which subdues the serpent of chaos. I am the fulcrum in the middle of these two powers. Through my actions I keep the two powers in balance. The power in my left hand opens the way, the power in my right hand strikes chaos. I am the vessel through which these two powers pass.”

Stand in silence and see the adept pattern begin to form around you. The light behind your left shoulder casts forward and lights the path ahead, your left arm limiting that power and focusing it in the staff. The sword behind your right shoulder is poised to protect you or strike you depending on your actions, and the light in your right hand is the wisdom you must draw on should you use the Was. If you misuse it, the power of the sword will fall on you and the power of Set will pin you as the Was turns on you.

Once you feel these powers around you, bow, put your regular staff back on the side of the south altar, step back, and go to the east.

See the threshold of the east, and see beyond the threshold the Inner Library, the contacts of the Gathering, and an angelic being that steps forward to the threshold.

Hold up the staff in both hands. The angel takes the staff and breathes into its eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and across its fork, while uttering something to the staff. Then the angel puts the inner staff back into the outer staff and places a hand on your head.

Hold up the staff so it is before you, its face level with your face, and see its eyes looking at you. While the angel is bridging its power to you, you must instruct the Was.

Say to the staff:

“Eyes, I see you. You have the power to look down into the land to see the serpent of chaos. You have the power to see the chaos when it surfaces in this world. Ears, you have the power to hear the rumblings of the serpent deep in the land when it wakes and tries to rise. You have the power to hear the voice of the serpent as it tries to speak through the people and creatures on the land. Nose, you have the power to smell the storm of chaos as it releases in the world.

“Mouth, you have the power to tell me when the serpent has woken, and to utter the voice of Set that casts the serpent back to sleep. You can call the lightening that strikes the serpent to sleep, and call the storms that bring the power of necessary destruction. Your fork pins the serpent of chaos, taking its power and holding it while your voice calls the fire that burns the serpent. Was, I honour you, I will protect you, and may the power of Set strike me down if I misuse you.”

The angel withdraws its hand and vanishes back into the Inner Library. Step back, bow to the contacts, and go to the central altar. Stand in silence and stillness. Hold the staff in your right hand and feel the stillness within you flow into the staff. As you stand in the stillness, listen: hear the Was breathing. Hear its voice, and be aware of the sword behind your right shoulder, poised to strike you if you misuse this power.

When you are ready, place the staff on the central altar and dip your right fingers in the Galbanum oil. Anoint the staff by first rubbing the oil over the heart area of the staff, so that its heart spirit is cleansed of anything that could contaminate it. Then rub the Galbanum on its fork, working the oil right into the substance of the fork. As you rub, say:

“With this oil I cleanse you now and for the future. May the power of this oil stay with you and prevent any power contaminating you.”

Now dip your left fingers in the frankincense. Smear it across the eyes, nose, ears, and mouth of the Was, saying:

“I anoint you to the service of the gods. May your sight be blessed, may your hearing be sharp, may your nose be keen, and may your mouth always speak the truth.”

Step out of the room, leaving the Was on the altar and the lights going. Let the room’s tuning flow into the Was and strengthen it. You will feel when to go back in and close everything down.

When you close, do it with both staffs in your hands: the Was in your right hand and the staff in your left. Stand before each direction with the staffs, bow, and blow out the light.

When you come to the central altar, be aware of the powers of above and below flowing through the central axis of the space, and stand before that power. Say:

“I stand as the fulcrum between creation. . .

Raise up the staff on your left.

. . .and destruction. . .

Raise up the Was on your right.

May I never falter in the face of destruction, nor flinch in the face of creation.”

Bow, blow out the central light. Place the staff in the south and the Was in the north. Leave them there for at least twenty-four hours before putting them away.

Storing and protecting

The Was sceptre has very defined actions used only to suppress the serpent power of chaos and destruction when it begins to surface. Because of this, it is only used under certain circumstances: in action or as a passive working presence. Therefore most of the time the Was is 'sleeping,' and is kept wrapped up and stored. It only comes out when needs must.

To keep the Was in sleep mode, it is wrapped in a cloth of deep lapis blue. The blue counters/contains the power of the red in the staff. On the cloth is either an image or hieroglyphs to remind the Was of its purpose. Because it is so easy to get words wrong if you do not fully understand a language or how it is used, then if you are not fluent in hieroglyphs, use an image.

The image is drawn or painted on the cloth to wrap the Was, and reminds the Was of its action. This acts as a subtle 'Limiter' to the Was and instructs it about its primary purpose. Here is an example of a correct image that could be painted onto a Was cloth.

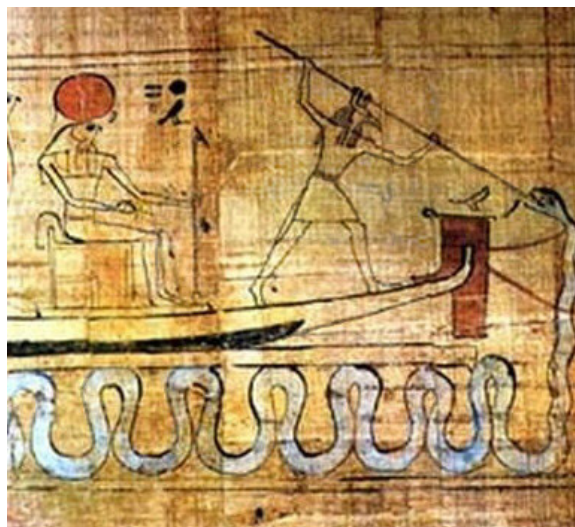


Figure 8: Set spearing Apep

This image is not of a Was sceptre, but of the power that flows through the sceptre: the power of Set subduing Apep. The Was holds the power of Set in his role of suppressing Apep, a specific element of the power of Set relevant to the Was.

In practical terms for applying the image, stretch the cloth out and use a permanent marker or acrylic paint and a fine brush. The image does not

need colour or detail, nor does it need the barque: the keys are Set with his spear, and the serpent Apep.

Once the cloth is dry, wrap it around the Was and store it somewhere in a cupboard or large box. Do not have it out around the house. That power belongs in the Underworld, not in everyday life. If possible, store it beneath the living space. Underneath is best, a cupboard in the living space is okay, the attic is not so good. Think about why that should be.

Working with the Was

The Was can be worked with in a number of ways depending on the situation and how much intervention is needed. If you need to work passively with it, for instance in a destructive tide, then it is unwrapped and placed in the west or north of a space with instructions to “suppress the serpent of chaos and destruction.” It can also be used this way if the magician is staying on, or living in, an area where “the black snake rises.” It will add a layer of filter to the situation, and while it will not fully banish the serpent power, it will divert and filter it.

It can also be used out in a passive way if a destructive Underworld tide is rising or has surfaced, and is doing a necessary job. Though you should not interfere with the tide in general if it has risen naturally as opposed to being triggered by a magician, you can use the Was staff to shield yourself and your family by unwrapping it and leaving it out. There are rare instances when you can actively use a Was staff on a natural tide, but check the consequences first by using divination.

If the tide has risen as a result of a stupid magical act, then the Was is used more actively to send the tide back to sleep and let the remnants of the tide fade away. It is really important to distinguish between a natural rising of serpent power, and one triggered by a magical act.

Some cultures have methods of permanently ‘pinning’ such powers to stop them rising. Such pinning is done dogmatically and regularly with each new temple or monastery building, as well as any new civic buildings. This creates a slow, pressurised build-up of imbalance that eventually starts to come out ‘sideways’ instead of a natural power of necessary destruction surfacing to do its cleaning job.

This is why the Was is only used in very specific circumstances, and a great deal of responsibility goes with using it. The Egyptians understood

this: mostly the Was sceptre was used as a passive presence, or wielded by the gods. Once you start to use it for agendas, no matter how good you may think they are, then you start a process of imbalance which can cause the scales of humanity and the inner environment to swing wildly out of control.

When a serpent tide rises naturally, you work to keep everything as balanced as possible, so that it has no job to do around you. When it rises from being triggered by magic then, as an adept, you would use the Was.

So let us look at the inner triggering of the Was, which will teach you how to use it.

Was sceptre: triggering the inner power

When using the Was, remember it is a worker, a power that works with you to focus and dispense power. What you do and how you do it defines what the Was will achieve. Using visionary work primes and brings the tool into focus, and ritual action externalises that action, bringing all the powers together.

Eventually, as a mature adept, you will not need the visionary aspect. Once you have worked with it in vision a few times, it becomes primed for action, and you also become an extension of the Was. From that point on, simply using the ritual action will be enough to trigger it. This goes for a lot of the adept visionary work that uses tools, utterance, or physical action. Once you mature in your power, you only need externalise that power through a ritual or focused action, and everything switches on.

But first you must also work on the visionary side to imprint the pattern within you. It is this need that separates the student adept from the mature adept—and that maturity is not about age, but practical experience. Eventually, all you will need to do in any working of this type is to focus, tune in, then execute an outer action that turns everything on and makes it work.

Let us get to the visionary side of the work.

Rather than outline the vision and ritual in detail, which would not be a good idea in case beginners read this lesson and decide to have a go, I will outline the key aspects and you can figure out the rest yourself.

The work is initially done in the ritual space, and is done while fusing the Inner Temple and the outer temple together temporarily. The Was is

presented to the contacts in the direction, both physically and in vision in the Inner Temple. The outer presentation of the Was is connected to by the work space's inner contacts and threshold powers, and the inner presentation of the Was is worked on by the deity powers and angelic powers around the Inner Temple. While going around the directions in the Inner Temple, the adept walks in the water that runs around the edges of the space. Think about why that should be.

The Was is then taken in vision to the egregore and presented to the tree. The contact in the tree works with the Was, it is bathed in the lake, and it is uttered at by the threshold keepers. Then you walk through the trees/forest of the egregore, through the Inner Library, and out into the Desert. When you are out in the Desert, you call on the balanced destructive power of Set to fill and trigger the Was: you call the storm.

Stand in the face of the storm without emotion and let it barrel over you and through you and the Was. Out of the storm will walk a deity. Hold out the Was and the deity will strike it with lightning. Once struck, plunge the Was into the sands of the Desert, and feel the ground beneath you move as the great serpent withdraws.

Walk across the Desert towards life and death—opposite direction to the Abyss—and step over the threshold into your work space. Before you come out of vision, stand in your work space and turn the face of the Was to your face. Open your eyes, look into the eyes of the Was, and see the eyes of Set looking back at you. His consciousness can peer through the eyes of the Was, just as his power can flow through it when needed.

When ready, wrap up the Was immediately, and go put it in its storage area.

By doing that work, you will have found a pattern of key elements that make up the process of triggering the Was to life and action. You may have also found a contact to work with you in times of need, advising you on the use of the Was.

When it comes time to use the Was, you will, at least for the first couple of times, have to work in vision and outer ritual action at the same time. You will need to be outside on the land, where the Was needs to be used, so that its bottom fork touches or goes into the ground.

If you are called to work for a land you cannot visit physically, then you have to work in vision while holding the Was. This is a less efficient method, but it is better than nothing. If it does not work, then go over your steps to see what you were missing.

You may only ever have to use the Was staff a few times in your life, or you may have to use it a lot. It all depends on where you live, what is happening on that land, and what magic is being done at that time on the land. Always check with divination about whether it is the right thing to do, and look at the effect that the Was will have on the land and everything that lives there. Sometimes appearances can be deceptive: be especially aware of parasitical beings trying to get you to use the Was staff to stop a natural tide sweeping them away. As with all adept exorcist work, you have to look at many variables when considering doing work that can have far-reaching consequences.

Making a Was staff

Make a Was staff. If you have a metal head and fork made, ensure you make and prepare the wooden staff part yourself. You need to be involved in its 'creation.' If you cannot get a metal head/fork made, then look at carving one yourself out of wood. You could also make a head from any substance that sets hard and will not chip or crumble, like resin, or a sculptor's putty that sets hard when fired. Remember, the head needs eyes, ears, a mouth, and a snout with nostrils, all done in the traditional style of the Was. Do not dress it up or make it fancy, fashionable, or different. The head is the major filter for the staff.

The body of the staff must be strong, preferably hardwood, and the fork really has to be strong: it has to withstand being shoved in the ground. If your Was's fork is wooden then loosen the ground before you ritually fork it. Now you can see why metal would be good for the forked end. I have seen a magician use a small pitchfork with a Was head that he made and placed on it. Once he worked it magically and switched it on, it worked very well.

Once you have made it, do the ritual work with it to prepare the vessel, make the cloth to wrap it in, then do the visionary work to enliven it. While you are doing all this, keep a record of your dreams, of events that happen around you, and any strange things you come across. Also keep a record of the events in the visionary work, any new contacts that came forward, and your interactions with the deity in the Desert.

I should not have to remind you, but I will...*don't* have the Was hanging around where people can touch it, handle it, or play with it. Never get it out to show it off, and never, ever, let someone borrow it. When it is out in passive mode in a tide or disruptive time, again put it

somewhere where it cannot easily be seen or touched. Mine has been out recently, just doing its job in the corner of a room. So far, four visiting magicians have walked right past it without spotting it: Was staffs can merge into the walls when needed!

QUAREIA

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