

Reading Hieroglyphs

Student Work Book

The Eloquent Peasant

PREVIEW

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'For the one who should see, has become blind, the one who should hear, is made deaf.'

'The one who should lead, has become one who has gone astray.'

The Eloquent Peasant 1800 BC Egypt

'The Eloquent Peasant'

Papyrus of the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant

From Egypt

Late 12th Dynasty, around 1800 BC

One of the major literary texts of the Middle Kingdom

The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant is an extremely important poem from the Middle Kingdom (2040-1750 BC), the 'classical' period of Egyptian literature. This papyrus, known as Papyrus Butler, contains part of the opening of the story.

The events are set in the reign of a king of the Ninth/Tenth Dynasties (around 2160-2025 BC). A peasant trader sets out from the area of the Wadi Natrun (west of the Delta) and travels south towards Herakleopolis. A man named Nemtynakht covets the poor man's goods. When one of the peasant's donkeys eats grain from a field for which Nemtynakht is responsible, he cruelly confiscates the goods. The peasant petitions Rensi, the owner of the estate. Rensi is so taken by the petitioner's eloquence that he reports this astonishing discovery to the king. The king realises the peasant has been wronged but delays judgement, so as to hear more of his eloquence. The peasant makes a total of nine petitions, each more desperate and more eloquent than the last. Finally, Nemtynakht is punished, and the peasant's goods are returned.

The irony of the plot, and of the situation (the contrast between the social status of the peasant and his elaborate discourse), were part of the appeal to the original élite audience. The text is a questioning of social and divine justice.

Guideline Example of Trasliteration and Transalation:

1. Identify words using a red pen (as the ancient scribes): phonograms usually start a word and determinatives end the word, as does the single, dual and plural strokes or the feminine ending **t** or the abstract sign of a papyrus scroll.

2. Write out the phonetic transliteration (how it sounds in ancient Egyptian minus the vowels).

Golden Rule: transliterate in groups of a maximum of three words, the word groups oftern start with a preposition such as: **r, n, m** 'to, for, in' etc and end with a suffix pronoun, such as: **.f** 'he'

This is done for you in light grey, but still confirm.

3. Using a hieroglyphic dictionary* write out the literal translation of each word with alternative meanings - maintain the same word order.

4. Put into English word order - this step may be ommitted depending on the difficulty of the text.

5. Write out the full English translation:

<p>s pw, wn-inpw-xw.n, rn.f, sxt pw, n sxt-HmAt</p>
<p>man this, Wen-Inpu-Khu-en, name.his, peasant this, of Sekhet-Hemat (Wadi Natron)</p> <p>this man Wen-Inpu-Khu-en this peasant of Wadi-Natron</p>
<p>'This man's name is Khu-en-wen-Inpu, he was a peasant of Wadi Natron.'</p>

* *Sign List & Vocabulary Extended Edition - Learning to Read Hieroglyphs and Ancient Egyptian Art* by Bernard Paul Badham ISBN-10: 1508549990 ISBN-13: 978-1508549994 280 pages, 4000 entries.

THE TEXT



r int, aqw im, n Xrdw, Sm swt, xA n.i, nA n it



nty m, pA mXr, m DAt, it n sf



aHa.n, xA.n.f, n.s, it HqAt 6

Note: 1 heqat = 4.8 litres, therefore 6 heqat = 28.8 litres (6.34 gallons)



awAw.i, Hnw, n sxtj, pn, im.f



ist rf, pr nmtj-nxt pn, Hr smA-tA, n r-wAt



Hns pw, n(n) wsx, is pw, qnn.f, r sxw, n dAiw

Note: the word:  is enclitic particle 'after all, indeed, even, in fact'

USEFUL VOCABULARY

 **Xr** 'under, carrying, holding, possessing, at head or foot, through of means, subject to someone's actions'

 **Dr** 'end, since, before, until'

 **ntt** 'that'

 **wn mAa** 'true being, reality, true-right'

 **aHa** 'stand, stand by, stand erect, raise oneself, stand up, rise up, arise, attend, wait, lifetime'

 **sp** 'time, period, times, twice, matter, affair, deed, act, misdeed, fault, occasion, chance, venture, success'; note: **spt** 'threshing floor'

 **Hr** face, sight; (preposition with suffixes) 'upon, in, at, from, on account of, concerning, through, and, having on it, because'

 **Hr-awy** 'immediately'

 **Hr-m** 'why?'

 **Hr-sA** 'upon, outside, after, in turn'

 **ti** phonetic sound **ti**, enclitic particle: **yes, yeah**

 **ti** phonetic sound **ti**, enclitic particle: **yes, yeah**

 **aHa.n** introduces narrative past tense: 'pay attention to this, listen to this'

 **tr** 'forsooth, pray'

 **A** enclitic particle, with exclamatory force 'A!'

 **nA** 'this, these, here, the, hither'

 **ist** 'lo'

 **rf** 'now, then'

 **iry** 'thereof, thereto'

 **ir** 'as to, if'

 **iry** 'thereof, thereto'

 **tw** 'you, your, one, this, that'

 **is** 'after all, indeed, even, in fact'

 **iw** 'is, are, behold' starts a sentence

 **tp-Hsb** 'reckoning, standard, rectitude (high moral standard)' lit. in front of reckoning

 **pw** 'It is, They are, this, who? what? whichever?'

 **ix** 'then, therefore, what?'



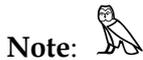
xr non enclitic particle: 'and, further'; auxillary verb: 'so says'; preposition: 'with, near, under (a king), speak (to), by (of agent)'



rk 'but, now'



xft (preposition) 'in front of, in accordance with, as well as, corresponding to'; when, according to, at the time of, when, (speech) to (someone)



Note: **m** enclitic particle (not translated); 'behold'; preposition 'in the hand, possession, charge of, together with, from'; imperative 'take'; interrogative 'who, what'

END OF PREVIEW



'May you be given: Life - Prosperity - Health Forever and Ever'

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