

10. *Šdw* is an object on which one can lie down and on which a load can be placed; hence "board" seems to me more suitable than "raft."

11. Emending *gd-i* to *gd-s*; ladies are made to labor and no longer have the use of their palanquins, or the service of their butlers.

12. *Hs3*, "unanointed," rather than Gardiner's restored *hsst*, "spices(?)"

13. The passage recurs in the *Instruction of Amenemhet*; see there n. 12.

14. This passage has always been rendered: "The secret of the land whose limits were unknown is divulged, and the Residence is thrown down in a moment." But the first sentence, besides being overlong, has an abnormal word order. Moreover, the sense is poor; for the text nowhere implies that the residence is threatened. I divide: *sšts n ts hnm grwff* *ššw hntw hn'f n wmut*.

15. On *stf mw* see *Amenemhet*, n. 6.

16. The *krht*-serpent was a guardian spirit.

17. I.e., to acquire goods for himself by robbing.

18. There is no need to emend the text when *hprw* is understood as "transformations, changes," as in *Khakheperre-sonb*, recto 10.

19. Meret, the goddess of song, as in 4, 13.

20. Again reading *špsst*, "noblewoman," rather than *špswt*, "riches"; see above, n. 3.

21. This sentence has been misunderstood by all translators. Gardiner read it as: *Mtn nsutyw hr knkn m ihw m3[rw]* --- *h3kyw*, and rendered, "Behold, butchers transgress(?) with the cattle of the poor . . . . plunderers," a rendering that all have retained with minor variations. It should be observed that, first, *m3rw* is the subject of the second sentence; second, that "poor people" do not own cattle; third, that *nsutyw*, which stands in parallelism with *m3rw*, means "serfs," or the like (see S. Wenig, *ZAS*, 88 (1962), 67-69, and P. Kaplony, *ZAS*, 88 (1962), 73-74), and last, that *knkn* is a spelling of *wnm*, "to eat." The preposition *m*, unintelligible after *knkn*, is in perfect order after *wnm*. In 8, 12, the *nsutyw* eat geese, and in 9, 1-2, they have appropriated the food destined for noblewomen.

22. *H3b'tw hr's* looks like an idiom for "errand, commission."

23. *Contra* Gardiner and Faulkner, Wilson was surely right in taking this section not as "exhortations to pious conduct," but as a recalling of the past when the right order prevailed.

24. This section is interesting for being a criticism of the sun-god, the creator of gods and men, who is chided for passively permitting people to kill each other, instead of intervening. It also offers confirmation for the point of view expressed in CT 1130: the evil in men's natures is not the work of the creator.

25. This section appears to be an address to the king, rather than to the sun-god.

26. Hu, Sia, and Maat.

27. *Šnt*, "overstep," rather than *smf*, "imitate." Ipuwer is not reproaching the king with committing crimes but with allowing them to happen.

28. I divide: *hr k3 wd-k tr-tw/ šb n mrwt is pw/ w' msd ky*. *Šbt* = "change, exchange."

29. The king is now speaking. What is left of his speech indicates that he places the blame for the disorders on the people themselves and maintains that Egypt has nothing to fear from foreigners.

30. The *f* of *smg-f* can only refer to "the land." J. Van Seters, *The Hyksos* (New Haven, 1966), p. 117, saw in the passage a reference to

"a new independent power in the Delta," i.e., the Hyksos. When the sentence is correctly translated, however, it contains nothing to promote that conclusion. Van Seters's attempt to date the *Admonitions* to the Hyksos period is based on historical and archaeological considerations which are, however, inconclusive.

## THE DISPUTE BETWEEN A MAN AND HIS BA

Papyrus Berlin 3024

This famous text is preserved in a single manuscript which dates from the Twelfth Dynasty. The first portion is missing. In its present form it consists of 155 vertical columns, broken by a number of lacunae. An exceedingly difficult and intriguing work, it has engendered a great deal of controversy. In translating it for this anthology I had two choices: to provide sentence-by-sentence summaries and discussions of the widely diverging translations and interpretations—this would have required many pages of annotations—or to dispense with notes altogether. I have chosen the latter course. Scholars familiar with the text know its problems. Those unfamiliar with it who wish to study it in detail are advised to consult all translations and commentaries.

My translation owes much to that of Faulkner, though I differ from him on a number of points, especially on the rendering of the crucial word *thm*, where I hold with those scholars who take it to mean "lead toward," not "hold back from."

Given the great variety of interpretations, I also refrain from a general discussion of the meaning of the work and content myself with a bald and brief sketch of what I believe to be its plot.

A man who suffers from life longs for death. Angered by his complaints, his *ba* threatens to leave him. This threat fills the man with horror, for to be abandoned by his *ba* would mean total annihilation, instead of the resurrection and immortal bliss that he envisages. He therefore implores his *ba* to remain with him, and not to oppose him in his longing for death, a death that he does not appear to contemplate as a suicide but rather as a natural, though greatly welcomed, death, to be followed by a traditional burial. The *ba* counters his pleas by telling him that death is a sad business, and that those who have fine tombs are no better off than those who have none. It urges him to stop complaining and to enjoy life. And it tells two parables designed to drive home the point that life is worth living. The man's final answer is delivered through four exquisite poems, in which he deplores the miseries of life and exalts death and resurrection. In a brief concluding speech the *ba* agrees to remain with him.

As I see it, the work is composed of a mixture of the three main styles of Egyptian literature: prose, symmetrically structured speech, and lyric poetry.

Publication: A. Erman, *Gespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele*, APAW (Berlin, 1896). R. O. Faulkner, *JEA*, 42 (1956), 21-40. W. Barta, *Das Gespräch eines Mannes mit seinem Ba*; Münchner ägyptologische Studien, 18 (Berlin, 1969). H. Goedicke, *The Report about the Dispute of a Man with His Ba* (Baltimore, 1970).

Translation: Erman, *Literature*, pp. 86-92. J. A. Wilson in *ANET*, pp. 405-407. Bissing, *Lebensweisheit*, pp. 124-128.

Commentaries and comments: A. Scharff, *SBAW*, 1937, Phil.-hist. Abt., Heft 9 (Munich, 1937). A. Hermann, *OLZ*, 42 (1939), 141-153. A. de Buck, *Ex Oriente Lux*, 7 (1947), 19-32. R. Weill, *BIFAO*, 45 (1947), 89-154. H. Junker, *AOAW*, Phil.-hist. Kl., 1948, No. 17 (Vienna, 1949). H. Jacobsohn, in *Zeitlose Dokumente der Seele*, Studien aus dem C. G. Jung Institut, Zürich, vol. 3 (Zurich, 1952), pp. 1-48. S. Herrmann, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 62-79. G. Thausing, *MDIK*, 15 (1957), 262-267. R. Williams, *JEA*, 48 (1962), 49-56. E. Brunner-Traut, *ZAS*, 94 (1967), 6-15.

Additional references will be found in the works cited.

----- (1) your ---- in order to say ----- [their tongue] is not partial ----- payment; their tongue is not partial.

I opened my mouth to my *ba*, to answer what it had said:

(5) This is too great for me today,

My *ba* will not converse with me!

It is too great for exaggeration,

It is like deserting me!

My *ba* shall not go,

It shall attend to me in this!

-----  
---- in my body with a net of cord.

(10) It shall not be able to flee on the day of pain!

Look, my *ba* misleads me—I do not listen to it—

Drags me toward death before <I> come to it,

Casts <me> on fire so as to burn me!

-----  
(15) It shall be near me on the day of pain!

It shall stand on that side as does a . . .

It is he who comes forth,

‘He has brought himself.’

My *ba*, too ignorant to still pain in life,

Leads me toward death before I come to it!

Sweeten (20) the West for me!

Is that difficult?

Life is a passage; trees fall.

Tread on the evil, put down my misery!

May Thoth judge me, he who appeases the gods!

May Khons defend me, (25) he who writes truly!

May Re hear my speech, he who calms the sun-bark!

May Isdes defend me in the sacred hall!

For my suffering is ‘too heavy a burden to be borne by me’. May it please that the gods (30) repel my body’s secrets!

What my *ba* said to me: “Are you not a man? Are you not alive? What do you gain by complaining about life like a man of wealth?” I said: “I will not go as long as this is neglected. Surely, if you run away, you will not (35) be cared for. Every criminal says: “I shall seize you.” Though you are dead, your name lives. Yonder is the place of rest, the heart’s goal. The West is a dwelling place, a voyage -----.

If my *ba* listens to me ‘without (40) malice’, its heart in accord with me, it shall be happy. I shall make it reach the West like one who is in his tomb, whose burial a survivor tends. I shall make a ‘shelter’ over your corpse, so that you will make envious another *ba* (45) in weariness. I shall make a ‘shelter’—it shall not be freezing—so that you will make envious another *ba* which is hot. I shall drink water at the pond over which I made shade, so that you will make envious another *ba* that hungers.

But if you lead (50) me toward death in this manner, you will not find a place on which to rest in the West. Be patient, my *ba*, my brother, until my heir comes, one who will make offerings, who will stand at the tomb on the day of burial, having prepared the bier (55) of the graveyard.

My *ba* opened its mouth to me, to answer what I had said: If you think of burial, it is heartbreak. It is the gift of tears by aggrieving a man. It is taking a man from his house, casting (him) on high ground. You will not go up to see (60) the sun. Those who built in granite, who erected halls in excellent tombs of excellent construction—when the builders have become gods, their offering-stones are desolate, as if they were the dead who died on the riverbank for lack of a survivor. (65) The flood takes its toll, the sun also. The fishes at the water’s edge talk to them. Listen to me! It is good for people to listen. Follow the feast day, forget worry!

A man plowed his plot. He loaded his harvest into (70) a boat. He towed the freight. As his feast day approached, he saw rising the darkness of a north wind. Watching in the boat, as the sun went down, (he) came out with his wife and children and foundered on the lake infested at (75) night with crocodiles. When at last he sat down, he broke out saying: “I do not weep for that mother, for whom there is no coming from the West for another being-on-earth. I grieve for her children broken in the egg, who have seen the face of the Crocodile (80) before they have lived.”

A man asked for an early meal. His wife said: "It is for supper."  
He went outdoors to . . . a while. When he came back to the house  
he was like another (person). His wife beseeches him and he does not  
listen to her. He . . . (85) heedless of the household.

I opened my mouth to my *ba*, to answer what it had said:

## I

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than carrion smell  
On summer days of burning sky.

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than a catch of fish  
(90) On fishing days of burning sky.

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than ducks smell,  
More than reed-coverts full of waterfowl.

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than fishermen smell,  
More than the (95) marsh-pools where they fish.

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than crocodiles smell,  
More than a shore-site full of crocodiles.

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than that of a wife  
About whom lies are told to the husband.

Lo, my name (100) reeks  
Lo, more than that of a sturdy child  
Who is said to belong to one who rejects him.

Lo, my name reeks  
Lo, more than a king's town  
That utters sedition behind his back.

## II

To whom shall I speak today?  
Brothers are mean,  
The friends of today do not love.

To whom (105) shall I speak today?  
Hearts are greedy,  
Everyone robs his comrade's goods.

<To whom shall I speak today?>  
Kindness has perished,  
Insolence assaults everyone.

To whom shall I speak today?  
One is content with evil,  
Goodness is cast to the ground everywhere.

To whom shall I speak (110) today?  
He who should enrage men by his crimes—  
He makes everyone laugh <at> his evildoing.

To whom shall I speak today?  
Men plunder,  
Everyone robs his comrade.

To whom shall I speak today?  
The criminal is one's intimate,  
The brother with whom one dealt is (115) a foe.

To whom shall I speak today?  
The past is not remembered,  
Now one does not help him who helped.

To whom shall I speak today?  
Brothers are mean,  
One goes to strangers for affection.

To whom shall I speak today?  
Faces are blank,  
Everyone turns his face from (120) his brothers.

To whom shall I speak today?  
Hearts are greedy,  
No man's heart can be relied on.

To whom shall I speak today?  
None are righteous,  
The land is left to evildoers.

To whom shall I speak today?  
 One lacks an intimate,  
 One resorts to an unknown (125) to complain.

To whom shall I speak today?  
 No one is cheerful,  
 He with whom one walked is no more.

To whom shall I speak today?  
 I am burdened with grief  
 For lack of an intimate.

To whom shall I speak today?  
 Wrong roams the earth,  
 (130) And ends not.

## III

Death is before me today  
 <Like> a sick man's recovery,  
 Like going outdoors after confinement.

Death is before me today  
 Like the fragrance of myrrh,  
 Like sitting under sail on breeze day.

Death is before me today  
 (135) Like the fragrance of lotus,  
 Like sitting on the shore of drunkenness.

Death is before me today  
 Like a well-trodden way,  
 Like a man's coming home from warfare.

Death is before me today  
 Like the clearing of the sky,  
 As when a man discovers (140) what he ignored.

Death is before me today  
 Like a man's longing to see his home  
 When he has spent many years in captivity.

## IV

Truly, he who is yonder will be a living god,  
 Punishing the evildoer's crime.

Truly, he who is yonder will stand in the sun-bark,  
 Making its bounty flow (145) to the temples.

Truly, he who is yonder will be a wise man,  
 Not barred from appealing to Re when he speaks.

What my *ba* said to me: "Now throw complaint on the 'wood-pile', you my comrade, my brother! Whether you offer on the brazier, (150) whether you bear down on life, as you say, love me here when you have set aside the West! But when it is wished that you attain the West, that your body joins the earth, I shall alight after you have become weary, and then we shall dwell together!"

*Colophon*: It is finished (155) from beginning to end, as it was found in writing.

## THE ELOQUENT PEASANT

This long work is preserved in four papyrus copies, all dating from the Middle Kingdom. The individual copies are incomplete, but together they yield the full text, which comprises 430 lines. The three principal copies are P. Berlin 3023 (B1), P. Berlin 3025 (B2), and P. Berlin 10499 (R); the fourth is P. Butler 527 = P. British Museum 10274.

The text consists of a narrative frame and nine poetic speeches. It is both a serious disquisition on the need for justice, and a parable on the utility of fine speech. The connection between the two themes is achieved by means of an ironic device in the narrative frame: after the peasant has been robbed and has laid his complaint before the magistrate in a stirring plea, the latter is so delighted with this unlearned man's eloquence that he reports it to the king; and on the king's orders the magistrate goads the peasant to continue pleading until the poor man is completely exhausted. Only then does he receive justice and ample rewards.

The tension between the studied silence of the magistrate and the increasingly despairing speeches of the peasant is the operative principle that moves the action forward. And the mixture of seriousness and irony, the intertwining of a plea for justice with a demonstration of the value of rhetoric, is the very essence of the work.

Publication: F. Vogelsang and A. H. Gardiner, *Die Klagen des Bauern*, Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches, I (Berlin, 1908). F. Vogelsang, *Kommentar zu den Klagen des Bauern*, Untersuchungen, 6 (Leipzig, 1913; reprint, Hildesheim, 1964).

Excerpts: de Buck, *Readingbook*, pp. 88-99. Sethe, *Lesestücke*, pp. 17-25. *Idem*, *Erl.*, pp. 21-32.

Translation: A. H. Gardiner, *JEA*, 9 (1923), 5-25. Erman, *Literature*, pp. 116-131. F. Lexa, *Arch. Or.*, 7 (1935), 372-383. Lefebvre, *Romans*, pp. 41-69. J. A. Wilson in *ANET*, pp. 407-410 (excerpts). Bissing, *Lebensweisheit*, pp. 155-170.

Comments: F. Lexa, *RT*, 34 (1912), 218-231. A. H. Gardiner, *PSBA*, 35 (1913), 264-276. E. Suys, *Étude sur le conte du fellah plaideur*