

Dispute of a man with his ba

Nederhof - English

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Transliteration and translation for Dialogue of a Man and his Ba, Papyrus Berlin 3024, following the transcription and facsimile in Goedicke (1970). An older transcription can be found in Faulkner (1956) and Barta (1969).

The transliteration throughout follows Hannig (1995).

For published translations, see Barta (1969); Faulkner (1956); Goedicke (1970); Lichtheim (1975), pp. 163-169; Parkinson (1997), pp. 151-165; Simpson (1972), pp. 201-209.

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[...] |¹ t̄n r d̄d [...] |² n nm^c n[s=s̄n]

[...] |¹ you [...] to say: [...] |² their tongues were not partial.

[j]w r h̄³[=sn nb] | d̄b³w n nm^c ns=s̄n

Concerning [their] opposing [a briber], their tongues were not partial.'

jw wp⁴ | n=j r³=j n b³=j wšb=j d̄dt.n=f

I opened my mouth to my soul, that I might answer what he had said:

⁵ | jw n³ wr r=j m mjn n mdw b³=j ⁶ | hn^c=j

⁵ | 'This is much against me today, whereas my soul has not quarrelled ⁶ | with me before.

jw grt wr r^cb^c jw mj wsf⁷=j jm šm b³=j

It is more than exaggeration, it is like I am ignored. May my soul not depart,

ḥ^c=f n=j ḥr=s ⁸ | [...] =f nn^c d̄³=f

may it attend to me in this! ⁸ | [...] He will not be guilty

⁹ | [w³] =f m h̄t=j m šnw nwḥ

⁹ | that he [will distance himself] from my body, from a net of cord,

nn |¹⁰ h̄pr m-^c=f rwj=f hr[w qsnt]

and it will not happen due to him that he flees on the day [of suffering].

¹¹ | m̄tn b³=j ḥr tht=j n s̄dm.n=j ¹² | n=f ḥr s̄b̄=j r mwt

¹¹ | Look, my soul is disobeying me, while I do not listen ¹² | to him, is dragging me toward death,

n jjt(=j) n=f ¹³ | ḥr h̄³(=j) ḥr h̄t r s̄mt=j

before I have come to it, ¹³ | and is throwing me on the fire to burn me up,

¹⁴ | [jw]tt mnt=f [jm] [...] s̄³ [...]

¹⁴ | [without] him suffering [therein]. [...]

[jw]¹⁵ | =f tkn=f jm=j hrw qsnt

¹⁶ | ċḥ^c=f m pf gs

He will stay close to me on the day of suffering. | He should stand on yonder side,

mj jr nḥnw ¹⁷ | p³ js pw prr jn.n=f sw rf

like a praise singer does: | "This is one who goes forth, as he has brought himself!"

b³l=j wh³(.w) r sdḥ 3h ḥr ċnh ¹⁸ jhm ¹⁹ | wj r mwt

My soul is ignorant about easing the misery that is due to life, and restrains | me from death

n jjt=j n=f ²⁰ sndm | n=j jmnt jn-jw qsnt pw

before I have come to it. The west gives me pleasure. Is it suffering?

phrt ²¹ | pw ċnh jw ḥtw ḥr=sn ḥnd rk ²² | ḥr jsft w3ḥ m3r=j

It is a turning-point of life; trees fall. ²² Trample | on evil, and cast aside my misery!

²³ | wd^c wj Dḥwtj ḥtp ²⁴ | nṯrw

²³ | May Thoht declare concerning me: "The gods are satisfied."

ḥsf Ḥnsw ḥr=j ²⁵ | sš m-m³ct ²⁶ sdm R^c mdw|^j sg wj³

May Khons defend me: | "A true scribe." May Re hear my utterance: "Stop the barque!"

ḥsf | Jsds ḥr=j m ²⁷ ct dsr[t] ²⁸ | [ḥr] ntt s3r=j wdn(.w)

May Isdes defend me in the sacred hall. | For my need is heavy

[r] | ²⁹ f3 nf n=j

[to] | ²⁹ to weigh it on my behalf.

ndm ḥsf | ³⁰ nṯrw št3w ḥt=j

It is pleasant that the gods should eliminate the concealment of my body.'

ḏdt.n n=j | ³¹b³=j n ntk js s jw=k tr | ³²ḥ.tj ptr km=k

What my soul said to me: 'Are you not a man? You | ³²are alive! What do you achieve

mḥy=k ḥr ḥḥ | ³³mj nb ḥḥw

if you are concerned about life | ³³like a possessor of wealth?

ḏd=j n šm=j | ³⁴jr nḥ r ḥ

'I would say to someone who is about to go: | ³⁴"As to that burial,

nḥm.nj ḥr ḥr tfyt nn | ³⁵nwt=k ḥnr nb ḥr ḏd

you are taken away from leaping around. Without | ³⁵your taking care, every criminal will say:

³⁶| jw=j r jtt=k jw grt=k mwt(.tj) rn=k ³⁷| ḥ(.w) st nḥ nt ḥnt

³⁶'I will take you!' When you are dead, but your name | ³⁷still lives, that is a resting-place

ḥfd | ³⁸nt jb dmj pw jmnt ḥnt n sl[...] ḥr jr sḏm n=j b³=j

attractive | ³⁸to the heart. The west is a harbour, a voyage [...]." If my soul listens to me,

[s]n|⁴⁰j [b]t twt jb=f ḥnḥ=j jw=f | ⁴¹r mḥr

my [neglectful] [brother], with his heart in accord with mine, he | ⁴¹will prosper.

rdj=j pḥ=f jmnt mj | ⁴²ntj m mr=f

I will make him reach the west, like | ⁴²someone in his pyramid,

ḥḥ.n ḥrj-ḥr | ⁴³qrs=f jw=j r jrt njj [ḥr] ⁴⁴| ḥḥt=k

to whose burial a survivor has attended. I will create a breeze [over] | ⁴⁴your corpse,

sḏdm=k ky b³ | ⁴⁵m nnw jw=j r jrt njj

and you will make another soul in weariness envious. I will create a breeze,

jh⁴⁶ | tm=f ḥsw sḏdm=k ky b⁴⁷ | ntj t³.w

so that⁴⁶ | it will not be freezing, and you will make another soul who is hot envious:

swr=j mw ḥr⁴⁸ | b³b³t ṭsy=j šwy

'I will drink water at⁴⁸ | the watering-place.' I will heap up hay,

⁴⁹ | sḏdm=k¹ ky b³ ntj ḥqr(.w)

⁴⁹ | and you will make another soul who is hungry envious.

¹ Written sḏm=k.

jr jhm⁵⁰|=k wj r mwt m p³ qj

But if you restrain⁵⁰ | me from a death in this form,

nn | gm=k ḥnt=k ḥr=s m jmnt w³[ḥ] | jb=k b³=j⁵²
you will not find a place on which you can rest in the west. Be favourable, my soul,

sn=j r ḥprt jw^cw | drp.tj=fj⁵³

my brother, to what will happen! An heir⁵³ | who will make offerings

ḥ^c.tj=fj ḥr ḥ³t hrw | qrs s³ry=f ḥnk^yt | n ḥrt-ntr⁵⁵

and stand at the tomb shaft on the day⁵⁴ | of burial will wish a bier⁵⁵ | at the necropolis.'

jw wp.n n=j b³=j r³=f wš^b=f ddt.n=j⁵⁶

My soul opened his mouth to me that he might answer what I had said:

jr sh³=k qrs n^ḥ³t-jb pw jnt rmyt pw m sjnd s⁵⁸

'If you would call burial to mind, it is heartache, it is bringing of tears, making a man sad,

šdt s pw m pr=f ḥ³^c(.w) ḥr | q³ nn pr.n=k r ḥrw m³=k | r^c⁶⁰

it is taking a man from his house, left on⁵⁹ | a hill. You cannot come up to see⁶⁰ | the sun.

qdw m jnr n | mṯ⁶¹ ḥws qn mr nfrw

Those who built in granite, who constructed and completed beautiful pyramids,

m | kṯt nfrt⁶² ḥpr sqdw m | nṯrw ᶜbṯw jrj wš(.w)⁶³

in | perfect realization, when the builders became | gods, their altars were bare,

mj nnw | mwt.w ḥr mryt⁶⁴ n gṯw ḥrj-tṯ

like those of weary ones | who are dead on a riverbank for lack of a survivor.

| jṯ.n nwy ph=fj⁶⁵ ṯḥw | m-mjtt-jrj⁶⁶

| After the water has taken its toll, and sunlight | as well,

mdw n=sn rmw | spt n mw.⁶⁷ sdm rk n=j mk nfr sdm n rmt

the fish of the waterside speak to them. Listen to me, as it is good to listen to people!

| šms hrw nfr smḥ mḥ⁶⁸ jw nḏs | skṯ=f šdw=f⁶⁹

| Have a good time and forget worries! A commoner | cultivates his plot,

jw=f ṯp=f šmw|=f r-ḥnw dpt sḏ=f sqd|wt⁷⁰ ḥb=f tkn(.w)⁷¹

he loads his harvest into a boat, and tows the transport, as his feast is near

mṯn=f prt wh|ṯt nt mḥyt⁷² rs=f n dpt

and he sees the darkness of a north wind arise. He waits for a boat

| rᶜ ḥr ᶜq prt⁷³ ḥnᶜ ḥmt=f⁷⁴ | msw=f

| as the sun sets and rises, and meanwhile his wife | and his children

ṯq(.w) tp š šn m | grḥ ḥr-mryt⁷⁵ ḏr.jn=f ḥms(.w)

perish in a pond surrounded at | night by crocodiles. At last he sits down,

76 | psš=f m ḥrw ḥr ḏd n rm=j 77 | n tḥ mst

76 | and argues¹: "I do not weep | for that mother,

¹ Exact meaning is unclear.

nn n=s prt m jmnt 78 | r kt ḥr tḥ

for whom there is no escape from the west | for another term on earth.

mḥy=j ḥr msw=s 79 | sḏ.w m swḥt mḥ.w ḥr n Ḥntj

But I will grieve for her children, | who were crushed in the egg, who saw the face of Khenty

80 | n ḥnt=s n 81 | jw nḏs dbḥ=f mšr|wt jw ḥmt=f ḏd=s n=f

80 | before they had lived." A commoner asks for dinner. His wife says to him:

jw r msyt 82 | jw=f pr=f r¹ ḥntw r sst²

"It will be supper." | He goes outside to [???

¹ Erroneously omitted in the transcription by Goedicke (1970).

² Unknown causative verb. Barta (1969), note 65 on p. 35, suggests this verb may be related to wst. Goedicke (1970), p. 141, suggests a connection to, amongst others, sḥt.

r ḥt 83 | ḥnn=f sw r pr=f jw=f mj ky

83 until the moment | that he returns to his house. He is like another man.

ḥmt=f | ḥr sš3 n=f n sḏm.n=f n=s st.n=f¹

84 His wife | pleads with him but he can't hear her, after he has [???

¹ Unknown verb, likely the simplex of the verb in line 82.

85 | wš(.w) jb n wpwtjw 86 | jw wp.n=j | rḥ=j n bḥ=j

85 | incapable of communication.' I opened 86 | my mouth to my soul,

wšb=j ḏdt.n=f 87 | mk | bḥ rn=j m-c=k

that I might answer what he had said: 'My name reeks through you

r sṭ ʒsw ⁸⁸ | m hrww šmw pt ṭ.tj

more than the smell of bird droppings | on summer days when the sky is hot.

⁸⁹ mk | b^cḥ rn=j m-^c≠k šsp sbnw ⁹⁰ | m hrw rsf pt ṭ.tj

My name reeks through you, a haul of catfish | on a fishing day when the sky is hot.

⁹¹ | mk b^cḥ rn=j m-^c≠k r sṭ ⁹² | ʒpdw¹

⁹¹ | My name reeks through you, more than the smell | of ducks,

¹ Written ʒpsw.

r bwʒt nt twr ⁹³ | ḥr msyt mk b^cḥ rn=j | m-^c≠k ⁹⁴

more than a covert of reeds | full of fowl. My name reeks | through you,

r sṭ ḥʒmw r ḥʒsw ⁹⁵ | nw sšw ḥʒm.n≠sn

more than the smell of fishermen, more than the creeks | of marshes they have fished.

⁹⁶ mk | b^cḥ rn=j m-^c≠k r sṭ mshw

My name reeks through you, more than the smell of crocodiles,

⁹⁷ | r ḥmst ḥr spʒt¹ ḥr-mryt ⁹⁸ mk | b^cḥ rn=j m-^c≠k

⁹⁷ | more than sitting on sandbanks² of crocodiles. My name reeks through you

¹ Uncertain.

² Following Faulkner (1956).

r sṭ ḥmt ⁹⁹ dd gr|g r≠s n ʒy

more than the smell of a wife about whom a lie has been told involving a man.

¹⁰⁰ mk b^cḥ | rn=j m-^c≠k r ḥrd qn

My name reeks through you more than a diligent child

ḏḏ r=f jw=f | {jw=f} n msḏw=f mk b^cḥ rn=j | m-^c=k

about whom is said "He belongs to his rival."¹ My name reeks | through you,

¹ I.e. "he is an illegitimate child".

dmj n jty šnn bštw ¹⁰³
| m³ s³=f

city of a sovereign that conspires to rebel | when his back is turned.

ḏḏ=j n-m mjn snw bjn(.w) | ¹⁰⁴ ḥnmsw nw mjn n mr.nj

Whom can I talk to today? Brothers are evil | and friends of today don't love each other.

¹⁰⁵ ḏḏ=j | n-m mjn ^cwn jbw

Whom can I talk to today? Hearts are greedy

s nb ḥr jtt ¹⁰⁶ | jḥt snnw=f ¹⁰⁷ | jw sf³q(.w)

and every man is stealing | things from his fellow. | Kindness has vanished

nḥt-ḥr ḥ³.w n ¹⁰⁸ bw-|nb ḏḏ=j n-m mjn

and rudeness has descended upon everyone. Whom can I talk to today?

ḥtp ḥr bjn ¹⁰⁹ | rdj rf¹ bw-nfr r t³ m st nbt

One is contented with evil | and goodness is cast on the ground everywhere.

¹ I see no grammatical justification for the reading rd¹.t.f of Goedicke (1970), on p. 161. Hence I adopt here the transcription by Faulkner (1956).

ḏḏ=j n-m ¹¹⁰ | mjn šḥ^cr s m sp=f bjn

Whom can I talk to | today? Who should enrage a man by his ill deed

¹¹¹ ssbt|=f bw-nb jw=f ḏw ḏḏ=j n-m ¹¹² | mjn jw ḥ^cḏ³.tw

makes everyone laugh by his evil wrongdoing. Whom can I talk to | today? One steals,

s nb ḥr jtt ¹¹³ snnw|=f ḏḏ=j n-m mjn bṭw m ¹¹⁴ | ^cq-jb

every man is robbing his fellow. Whom can I talk to today? The villain is | an intimate friend

nf ḥw t̃ ¹³⁰ | nn wn pḥwj=fj jw mwt m-ḥr=j m mjn

The evil that scourges the earth | is without end. Death is in my sight today,

snb ¹³¹ | mr mj prt r ḥntw ¹³² r-s̃ jhm|t jw mwt m-ḥr=j mjn

a cure | of a sick man, like going outside after confinement. Death is in my sight today,

mj st̃ ¹³³ ḥn|tjw mj ḥmst ḥr ḥt̃w ¹³⁴ | hrw ḫw jw mwt m-ḥr=j mjn

like the smell of myrrh, like sitting under a sail | on a windy day. Death is in my sight today,

¹³⁵ | mj st̃ s̃šnw ¹³⁶ mj ḥmst ḥr mryt | nt th̃t

¹³⁵ | like the smell of lotus flowers, like sitting on the shore of ¹³⁶ | drunkenness.

jw mwt m-ḥr=j mjn mj ¹³⁷ | w̃t ḥwyt

Death is in my sight today, like ¹³⁷ | a path washed by rain,

mj jw s m mš^c | r pr=s̃n ¹³⁸ jw mwt m-ḥr=j mjn

like a man's coming home from an expedition. Death is in my sight today,

mj ¹³⁹ | kft pt mj s ¹⁴⁰ sht¹ | jm r ḥmt n=f

like ¹³⁹ | the sky's clearing, like a man's grasping ¹⁴⁰ | thereby what he didn't know before.

¹ Read  as .

jw mwt m-ḥr=j mjn ¹⁴¹ | mj ḳbb s m̃ḳ pr=s̃n

Death is in my sight today, ¹⁴¹ | like a man's longing to see home

jr.n=f rnpwt ḥš̃t ¹⁴² jt̃(.w) | m nḏrt wnn ms ntj jm m nṯr ḥñ(.w)

after he has spent many years in captivity. But, who is there is a god who lives,

¹⁴³ | ḥr ḥsf jw n jrr sw ¹⁴⁴ wnn ms | ntj jm ḥḥ(.w) m wj̃

¹⁴³ | because of punishing the evil of one who does it. But, who is there stands in a barque,

ḥr rdjt dj.tw stpt | jm¹⁴⁵ n rʔw-prw
because of letting its¹ choice offerings be given to the temples.

¹ It is unclear what this refers back to.

wnn ms ntj jm m rh-ljht¹⁴⁶ n ḥsf.n.tw=f
But, who is there is a wise man who cannot be turned away,

ḥr spr n | R^c ḥft mdw=f¹⁴⁷ ddt.n n=j | bʔ(=j)¹⁴⁸
because of appealing to | Re following his word.' What my soul said to me:

jm rk nhwt ḥr ḥʔ¹⁴⁹ nj-s|w=j pn sn=j wdn=k ḥr ḥ
'Put whining on a peg, o my comrade, my brother! May you give offerings upon a brazier,

150 | r mḥʔ=k ḥr ḥnh mj dd=k mr wj | ḥ¹⁵¹ wjn n=k jmnt
150 | in order to reach for a life as you described. Desire me | here and dismiss the west!

mr ḥm | pḥ=k jmnt sʔḥ ḥ^cw=k t¹⁵²
But desire | to reach the west when your body is buried.

153 | ḥny=j r-sʔ wrd=k 154 | jḥ jr=n dmj n sp
153 | I will alight when you become weary, | and then we'll make harbour together.'

155 | ḥʔt=f r pḥ=fj mj gmyt m sš
155
This was copied | from start to finish as found in writing.
