Dispute of a man with his ba

Nederhof - English

Created on 2006-11-04 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2009-06-08.

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.

Bibliography


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Created on 2014-12-11 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2014-12-23.

Transcription of The Debate between a Man and his Soul, using the photographs from Erman (1896), on the basis of transcriptions by Faulkner (1956) and Allen (2011).

Thanks go to Hany Mohamed Ali Rashwan for making an initial MdC encoding available to me.

For contentious readings, we follow Allen, pp. 262-311, with the following exceptions:

• Line 17: Transcribed is 𓊟, the sign that is meant, rather than 𓊔, the sign that appears to be written.

• Line 26: Transcribed is 𓊮 rather than 𓊜, as it concerns the word wj³.

• Lines 50, 138: Transcribed is 𓊬 followed by 𓊟 rather than the reversed order.

• Line 53: The fourth sign is transcribed as 𓊬 rather than 𓊞.

• Line 65: The more conventional transcription 𓊟 is used.
Lines 66, 87, 89, 91, 93, 96, 98, 99, 101: Transcribed is (generic fish determinative) rather than .

Line 111: Transcribed is rather than the reversed order.

Line 141: Transcribed is in front of .

As in Allen’s transcription, omitted are all (potential) occurrences of in front of .

Bibliography

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

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

This is much against me today,

whereas my soul has not quarrelled with me before. It is more than exaggeration,

it is like I am ignored. May my soul not depart, may it attend to me in this!
He will not be guilty.

That he [will distance himself] from my body, from a net of cord,

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

Look, my soul is disobeying me, while I do not listen to him,

is dragging me toward death, before I have come to it,

and is throwing me on the fire to burn me up,
[jw]tt mnt=f [jm] [... s3 [...]

[without] him suffering [therein]. [...]

[jw]=f tkn=f jm=j hrw qsnt

He will stay close to me on the day of suffering.

[qh]=f m pf gs mj jr nhnw

He should stand on yonder side, like a praise singer does:

"This is one who goes forth, as he has brought himself!"

Appearance as  .

My soul is ignorant about easing the misery that is due to life, and restrains me from death before I have come to it.
The west gives me pleasure. Is it suffering?

It is a turning-point of life; trees fall.

Trample on evil, and cast aside my misery!

May Thoth declare concerning me: "The gods are satisfied."

May Khons defend me: "A true scribe."

May Re hear my utterance: "Stop the barque!"

snðm n=j jm njnt nj-w qsnt pw

phrt pw cnh jw ḥtw ḥr=sn

ḥnd rk ḥr jsft wishly mḥr=j

wd c wj ḏḥwtj ḥtp nṯrw

ḥsf Ḥnsw ḥr=j sš m-m³t

sdm R³ mdw=ḥ sg wj³
May Isdes defend me in the sacred hall.

For my need is heavy

to weigh it on my behalf.

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

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

What do you achieve if you are concerned about life like a possessor of wealth?'
I would say to someone who is about to go: "As to that burial,
you are taken away from leaping around. Without your taking care,
every criminal will say: "I will take you!" When you are dead,
but your name still lives, that is a resting-place.

attractive to the heart. The west is a harbour,
If my soul listens to me,
a voyage [...]."
my [neglectful] [brother], with his heart in accord with mine, he will prosper.

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

to whose burial a survivor has attended.

I will create a breeze [over] your corpse,

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

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

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

and you will make another soul who is hungry envious.

But if you restrain me from a death in this form,

you will not find a place on which you can rest in the west.

Be favourable, my soul, my brother, to what will happen!
An heir who will make offerings

and stand at the tomb shaft on the day of burial will wish a bier

My soul opened his mouth to me

that he might answer what I had said: 'If you would call burial to mind,

it is heartache, it is bringing of tears, making a man sad,

it is taking a man from his house, left on a hill. You cannot come up
Não vi o sol.

Nesses que construíram em granito,

que construíram e completaram belas pirâmides, em perfeita realização,

quando os construtores se tornaram deuses, seus altares estavam vazios,

como dos cansados que morreram na margem do rio

por falta de um sobrevivente.

Após o rio ter tomado seu preço,

After the water has taken its toll,
Ne ḥw m-mjt-ḥr j
and sunlight as well,

Ned

Ne mḏ n=sn rmw spt n mw.  ṣḏ n k n=ḥ
the fish of the waterside speak to them.

Ned

Ne mk nfr ṣḏ n rmṯ šms ḥrw nfr  ṣmh ḥḥ
as it is good to listen to people!

Ned

Ne jw nḏš sk=f ṣḏ=f
A commoner cultivates his plot,

Ned

Ne jw=f ḫp=f  ṣmwl=f r-ḥnw ḏpt
he loads his harvest into a boat,

Ned

Ne ṡḏ=f sqd wt ḫb=f tkn(.w)
and tows the transport, as his feast is near

Ned

11
and he sees the darkness of a north wind arise. He waits for a boat.

as the sun sets and rises,

and meanwhile his wife and his children

perish in a pond surrounded at night by crocodiles.

At last he sits down, and argues:

"I do not weep for that mother,
for whom there is no escape from the west for another term on earth.

But I will grieve for her children, who were crushed in the egg,

who saw the face of Khenty before they had lived."

A commoner asks for dinner. His wife says to him:

"It will be supper."

He goes outside to ???

He is like another man. His wife pleads with him but he can't hear her, incapable of communication.'

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

'My name reeks through you more than the smell of bird droppings on summer days

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

on a fishing day when the sky is hot.
My name reeks through you, more than the smell of ducks,
more than a covert of reeds full of fowl.
My name reeks through you, more than the smell of fishermen,
more than the creeks of marshes they have fished.
My name reeks through you, more than the smell of crocodiles,
more than sitting on sandbanks$^2$ of crocodiles. My name reeks through you

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

My name reeks through you more than a diligent child

about whom is said "He belongs to his rival."$^1$

I.e. "he is an illegitimate child".

My name reeks through you, when his back is turned.

1 Uncertain.
2 Following Faulkner (1956).
Whom can I talk to today? Brothers are evil

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

Hearts are greedy and every man is stealing things from his fellow.

Kindness has vanished and rudeness has descended upon everyone.

Whom can I talk to today? One is contented with evil

and goodness is cast on the ground everywhere. Whom can I talk to today?

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

Who should enrage a man by his ill deed
Neb	ssbt=f bw-nb jw=f ḏw
Neb makes everyone laugh by his evil wrongdoing.

Ned ḏōd=f jn-m mjn jw ḡḏḏ.tw
Neb Whom can I talk to today? One steals,

Neb s nb ḫr jtt snnw=f ḏōd=f jn-m mjn
Neb every man is robbing his fellow. Whom can I talk to today?

Neb bṭw m ḝq-jb sn jrr ḫn=f
Neb The villain is an intimate friend and the brother with whom one dealt

Neb ḡpr(.w) m ḫt ḏōd=f jn-m mjn ṣn ḡḏḏ.tw sf
Neb has become an enemy. Whom can I talk to today? Yesterday is not remembered,

Neb n jr.tw n jr m ḫṭ ḏōd=f jn-m mjn
Neb one does not help now who has given help. Whom can I talk to today?
Brothers are evil and one turns to strangers for honesty.

Whom can I talk to today? Faces are blank,

every man has his face downcast concerning his brothers.

Whom can I talk to today? Hearts have become greedy and there is no man's heart

on which one may rely. Whom can I talk to today? None are righteous

and the land is left to evildoers. Whom can I talk to today?
An intimate friend is lacking and one turns to a stranger.

Who can I talk to today? None is content there.

And he with whom one walked is no more.

I'm laden with misery for lack of an intimate friend.

Whom can I talk to today? The evil that scourges the earth is without end.

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

like the smell of myrrh, like sitting under a sail

on a windy day. Death is in my sight today,

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

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

like a man's coming home from an expedition. Death is in my sight today,
like the sky's clearing, like a man's grasping thereby

what he didn't know before. Death is in my sight today,

like a man's longing to see home after he has spent many years

But, who is there stands in a barque,

because of punishing the evil of one who does it.

But, who is there stands in a barque,
Ne ḫr rḏjt Ḥj.tw stpt
145 jm n ḫw-prw
Ne because of letting its\(^1\) choice offerings be given to the temples.

\(^1\) It is unclear what this refers back to.

Ne wnn ms ntj jm m ḫh-ḥḥt n ḥṣf.n.tw=f
146
Ne But, who is there is a wise man who cannot be turned away,

Ne ḫr spṛ n ḫḥ mdw=f ḫd.t.n n=j
147 bḥ(=j)
Ne because of appealing to Re following his word.' What my soul said to me:

Ne jm rk nhwt ḫr ḫj
149 nj-sḥw=j pn sn=j
Ne 'Put whining on a peg, o my comrade, my brother!

Ne wdn=k ḫr ḫḥ
150 ḫ ṭ mḥḥ=k ḫ ḫ ṭ nḥ mj ḫd=k
Ne May you give offerings upon a brazier, in order to reach for a life as you described.

\(^1\) Sign should represent a brazier.

Ne mr wj wjn n=k jmnt
151
Ne Desire me here and dismiss the west!

Ne

23
mr ḫm pẖ=kJ mnt sẖ ḫw=k tō

But desire to reach the west when your body is buried.

But desire to reach the west when your body is buried.

I will alight when you become weary,

and then we’ll make harbour together.’

This was copied from start to finish as found in writing.