Eloquent peasant

Parkinson (R)
Created on 2009-08-17 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2009-08-18.
Hieroglyphic following Parkinson (1991) for version R from line 1.1 to the point in line 8.5 where version B1, starting at line 33, can be considered to be the 'main' version. After that, only occasional snippets are included where version R differs significantly from the other versions.

Bibliography

Parkinson (B1)
Created on 2009-08-17 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2009-08-30.
Hieroglyphic following Parkinson (1991) for version B1 from line 33 to the end of line 357.

Bibliography

Parkinson (B2)
Created on 2009-08-17 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2009-08-30.
Hieroglyphic following Parkinson (1991) for version B2 from line 91 to the end of line 142.

Bibliography

Nederhof (R) - English
Created on 2006-11-04 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2015-08-06.
Transliteration and translation for The Eloquent Peasant, following the transcription of Parkinson (1991). Version R is given where it is the main version, or where it differs substantially from the other versions.
The transliteration throughout follows Hannig (1995).

Bibliography

Nederhof (B1) - English
Created on 2006-11-04 by Mark-Jan Nederhof. Last modified 2015-08-06.
Transliteration and translation for The Eloquent Peasant, following the transcription of Parkinson (1991). Version B1 is given where it is the main version, or where it differs substantially from the other versions.
The transliteration throughout follows Hannig (1995).

For published translations, see Lichtheim (1975), pp. 169-184; Parkinson (1997), pp. 54-88; Simpson (1972), pp. 31-49. Further, Goedicke (1998) covers the second petition (the text from B1 119 to B1 170); Zonhoven (1992), pp. 271-272, covers the text up to B1 119. Also considered

**Bibliography**


**Nederhof (B2) - English**


Transliteration and translation for The Eloquent Peasant, following the transcription of Parkinson (1991). Version B2 is given where it is the main version, or where it differs substantially from the other versions.

The transliteration throughout follows Hannig (1995).

**Bibliography**

There was a man called Khunanup. He was a peasant of the Wadi Natrun,
2 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).

This peasant said to this wife of his:

'Look, I am going to Egypt to fetch provisions there for my children. Go and measure for me the barley
that is in the barn as the remainder of yesterday's barley.'
Then he measured for her six heqat of barley.

Then this peasant said to this wife of his:

'Look, [...] two heqat of barley for rations to you and your children.

But prepare for me the six heqat of barley as bread and beer for every day,

so that I shall live on it.'

Then this peasant left for Egypt,

after he had loaded his donkeys

1 Uncertain.
| Ne R | 2.2 rdmt | 2.3 ḥsmn | 2.4 ḥmṭ | 2.5 ḥtw 
| Pa R | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 |

1 Uncertain.

| Ne R | purple nutsedge\(^1\), natron, salt, sticks from [...], |

| Ne R | 2.6 awnt nt A-jHw | 2.7 awnt nt bAw |
| Pa R | 2.6 | 2.7 |

| Ne R | pieces of wood from Farafra, |
| Ne R | hides of panthers, |

| Ne R | 3.1 xAwnt wnSw | 3.2 nSAw |
| Pa R | 3.1 | 3.2 |

1 Uncertain.

| Ne R | skins of golden jackals, pondweed, |

| Ne R | 3.3 cnw-stone, tnm-plants, |
| Ne R | wild carrot\(^1\), serpentine\(^2\), |

1 Uncertain.

2 Uncertain.

| Ne R | 3.7 sǐs(sw) | 4.1 mjswt | 4.2 snt | 4.3 [...], |
| Pa R | 3.7 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.3 |

1 Uncertain.
1 Uncertain.
2 Uncertain.

Following Faulkner (1962); not confirmed by Hannig (1995).

Uncertain.
Herakleopolis, and he arrived in the district of Per-Ifefi, to the north of Mednit.

1 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).

He came across a man standing on the embankment.

1 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).
2 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).

His name was Nemtinakht and he was the son of a man called Isry.

1 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).
2 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).

These were liegemen of the high steward Rensi, son of Meru.

1 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).
2 Transcription following Parkinson (1997).

And this Nemtinakht said, when he saw the donkeys of this peasant,
which were desirable to his heart: "Would that I had some divine image

with which I could rob the goods of this peasant!"

Now, the house of this Nemtinakht was at a waterside path

that was narrow, it was not broad:

it measured the width of a loincloth.

Its one side

was under water, the other under barley.
'Hurry, and bring me a cape from my house!' And it was brought to him immediately. Then he spread it out on the waterside path, so that its hem came to rest on the water, and its selvage on the barley. And this peasant came on the public path.
And this peasant said:

'I shall do what you wish; my way is good.'

And he went up higher. Then this Nemtinakht said:

'Is my Upper-Egyptian barley to be a path for you?' And this peasant said:

'My ways are good;

the bank is steep, and the ways are under barley

for you block our path with your clothes!'
Will you then not allow us to pass on the path?

As he had finished saying words, Then one of the donkeys filled its mouth with a wisp of barley. And this Nemtinakht said:

'But look, your donkey is eating my barley! Look, I shall take away your donkey, peasant, because it ate my barley.'

It will tread (grain) for its offence.' This peasant then said:
'My ways are good! A single thing has been destroyed;

What Parkinson (1991;1997) reads as 10 is here taken as $=s$.

I will buy my donkey back for 10 times the value

if you take it away for filling its mouth with a wisp of barley.

Now, I know the lord of this district;

it belongs to the high steward Rensi, son of Meru.

He is the one who restrains every thief in this entire land.

Shall I now be robbed in his district?'
Then this Nemtinakht said:

"Is this not the proverb that people say: "One mentions the name of a commoner only on account of his lord."

I am the one who is speaking to you, and it is the high steward whom you are referring to."

Then, he took a rod of fresh tamarisk and he thrashed all his limbs with it,
Pa B1

Ne B1 nḥm 3w=f

Ne B1 took his donkeys away

l sᶜ q r sp³t=f

l and drove them to his district.

Pa B1

Ne B1 wn.jn shtj pn ḥr

Ne B1 Then this peasant proceeded to wail very loudly

l rmyt 3w wrt

Pa B1

Ne B1 n-mr-n jrryt r=f

Ne B1 on account of the wickedness of what was done to him.

Pa B1

Ne B1 ḏḍ.jn Nmtj-nḥt pn

m qꜣ ḥrw=k sḥtj

Ne B1 But this Nemtinakht then said: ‘Do not raise your voice, peasant,

₁ The following ☞ in Parkinson (1991) is an erratum, confirmed by p.c. with the author on Sep 4 2000.

Pa B1

Ne B1 mk ḏw r dmj n nb sgr

Ne B1 or you will go to the abode of the Lord of Silence.’

Pa B1

Ne B1 ḏḍ.jn sḥtj pn

l ḥw=k wj c³w³=k ḥnw=j

Ne B1 Then this peasant said: l ‘You beat me, you rob my goods,
Ne B1 nhm=k rf

Ne B1 and you even deprive me of the lament from my mouth!

Ne B1 nb sgr dj=k rk n=j

Ne B1 Lord of Silence, may you give me back my things, so that I need not scream

Ne B1 nr=k

Ne B1 to startle you.'

Ne B1 hr spr n

Ne B1 pleading with this Nemtinakht, but he did not pay attention to it.

Ne B1 šmt pw jr.n sḥṯj pn m ḫntyty

Ne B1 This peasant then went south

Ne B1 šmt pw jr.n sḥṯj pn r Nnj-nsw r spr

Ne B1 This peasant then went to Herakleopolis in order to plead
Pa B1

Ne B1 n jmj-r3 pr wr

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I Mrw s4 Rnsj

Ne B1 with the high steward

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I Rensi, son of Meru.

Ne B1 He found him emerging from the door

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I of his house,

Ne B1 to step into his official boat.

Ne B1 And this peasant said: 'May I be allowed to inform you

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And this peasant said: 'May I be allowed to inform you

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about this grievance.

Ne B1 Perhaps

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one may have a servant of your choice

Ne B1 come to me, so that I may have him report to you about it.'
And the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, had a servant of his choice go to him, and this peasant had him report back about this entire matter. Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, accused this Nemtinakht to the officials who were with him. But then they said to him: ‘Perhaps it is a peasant of his who went to someone else beside him.
Look, that is what they do to peasants of theirs. They have gone to others beside them. That is what they do.

Is this a cause for punishing this Nemtinakht, on account of a little natron and a little salt?

If he is ordered to replace it, then he will replace it.' But the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, remained silent.
He did not answer these officials, nor did he answer this peasant.

Then this peasant came to plead with him.

Then this peasant came to plead with

for the first time.

the high steward Rensi, son of Meru. He said:

'High steward, my lord, great one, lord of the great,

'High steward, my lord, greatest of the great,

leader of all that is not and all that is,
if you go down to the Lake of Truth, you will sail on it with a fair wind,

the bunt will not strip away your sail,

your ship will not lag, no disaster will befall your rudder stock,

your yards will not break, you will not founder when you land,

no wave will carry you off,

you will not taste the evil of the river,
ne B1 you will not see the face of fear, but shy fish will come to you

ne B1 and you will catch fatted fowl. For you are a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a brother to the divorced

ne B1 and an apron to the motherless.

ne B1 Let me make your name in this land according to every good rule: leader free of greed, great one free of arrogance,
Pa B1 | destroyer of falsehood, creator of truth,

Ne R \[ jm bw-dw r | t^3 \] Cast evil on the ground!

Ne B1 \[ jj hr \] one who comes at the voice of the caller.

Ne B1 \[ dd=j sd=m=k \] jr m^f_t hsl y hss hsyw

Ne B1 I speak so that you will hear. Do justice, praised one whom the praised praise!

Ne R \[ dr sir=j mk wj \] \[ tp.kw \[ m \] j^nw \] I am laden with sorrow

Ne B1 \[ dr sir mk wj \] \[ tp.kw \] I faint from it!

Ne R \[ mk wj \] fn.kw hr=f

Ne R and I faint from it!
Examine me, I am at a loss!'

Now, this peasant said these words

Justified. The high steward Rensi, son of Meru, then went before His Majesty and said:

'My lord, I have found one of these peasants who is truly eloquent.
by a man who is my peer,

His goods have been robbed.

And His Majesty said: As you wish to see me in health,

you will delay him here without answering anything he says.

So that he keeps speaking, remain silent.
Pa  B1  n-mrwt  jn.tw  n=n  mdw=f  m  sš

Ne  R  so that his speech will be brought to us in writing.

Ne  R  jh  jn.tw  n=n  m  sš  sdm=n  st
Ne  B1  Then it will be brought to us in writing so that we may hear it.

Pa  B1  jr  swt  cnh  hmt  shšj  pn

Ne  R  But provide sustenance for the wife of this peasant

Ne  B1  jr  swt  cnh  hmt=f  hnc  hrwd=f 112
Ne  B1  But provide sustenance for his wife and children.

Pa  B1  mk  jw  wc  m  nšj  n  shšj  r  swt  pr=f  r  tš
Ne  B1  That one of these peasants comes here is because his house is empty.

Pa  B1
Ne  R  [...]  hnc  swt  jrt  cnh  shšj  pn  hr  hšw=f
Ne  R  [...] Furthermore, provide sustenance for this peasant himself.
Ne  B1  jr  grt  cnh  shšj  pn  m-hšw=f
Ne  B1  Furthermore, provide sustenance for this peasant himself.

Pa  B1  wnn=k  hr  rdjt  dj.tw  n=f  cqw  nn  rdjt  rh=f
Ne  B1  You will let the provisions be given to him without letting him know

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They were given to friends of his,

and his friends gave them to him.

And he was given ten loaves of bread and two jars of beer every day.

The high steward Rensi, son of Meru, gave them,

but he gave them to a friend of his, and it was he who gave them to him.

Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, sent a message
Ne B1 n ëq-j-ëwt n | Sjt-ëhm’t
Ne B1 to the mayor of the Wadi Natrun

Ne B1 hr jrt çqw n ëmt shtj pn
Ne B1 about making provisions for the wife of this peasant,

Ne B1 m jt ëq’t 3 r ç nb
Ne B1 consisting of three gallons of barley every day.

Ne R 19.4 wn.jn jmj-r3 pr wr Mrw s3 Rnsj hr rdjt | çqw
Ne R 19.4 Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, gave | provisions

Ne R 19.5 n shtj pn m hnqt [ds] [...] | t 50
Ne R 19.6 to this peasant, consisting of [...] [jars] of beer | and fifty loaves of bread.

Ne R 19.7 dd=f st n ëhmsw=f | jn ëhmsw=f dd n=f st
Ne R 19.7 He gave them to friends of his, | and his friends gave them to him.

Ne B1 19.8 jw.jn rf shtj pn r spr n=f sp 2
Ne B1 Then this peasant came to plead with him for a second time,

Ne R 20.2 gm.n=f sw | m prt m [...]
and said: 'High steward, my lord, greatest of the great, richest of the rich,

whose great ones have one greater, whose rich ones have one richer,

rudder of heaven, beam of earth,

plumb-line that carries the weight! Rudder, do not deviate!

Beam, do not tilt! Plumb-line, do not swing awry!

A great lord takes what is without owner

and robs only that. Your possessions are in your house.
Half a litre of beer and three loaves of bread,

What is it you expend to satisfy your dependants?

A mortal man dies along with his underlings, or will you be a man of eternity?

Is it not wrong, a balance that is crooked, the pointer of a balance that errs,

A truly correct man who strays? Look, justice is fleeing from you,

expelled from its place. Officials are doing evil,

the norm of speech is biased
and judges are carrying off what it seizes.

This means that he who twists speech from its correct sense

is acting corruptly thereby.

He who should give breath is suffocating on the ground,

the arbitrator is a cheat,

he who should relieve distress is ordering its creation,

the harbour is flooded,

he who should punish injustice is doing evil.'
Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, said:

Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, said:

But this peasant said:

But this peasant said:

He who measures heaps (of corn) is pilfering for himself;

He who should govern according to the laws is ordering theft.

Who then will repel evil?
Pa B1 dr
Ne B1 He who should dispel weakness is acting corruptly;

Pa B1 ctest ky ḫr ḫb nb
Ne B1 he who should correct another is being crooked;

Pa B1 wfb ky jr jyt
Ne B1 he who should reproach another is an evildoer. Do you find anything for yourself?

Pa B1 hwcl ḫsf ḫw jyt
Ne B1 Redress is short but evil is long. A good deed returns to its place of yesterday.

Pa B1 wdl rf pw jr n jrr
Ne B1 This is the precept: act for him who acts, l to make him act;

Pa B1 dwjntr n=f pw ḫr jrrt=f njt ḫjt pw tpcl
Ne B1 it is thanking him for what he does; it is parrying a thing before shooting;

Pa B1 wdl ḫjt pw n nb ḫnt
Ne B1 it is commissioning something from a craftsman.
Ne B1 Would that a moment would destroy, havoc in your vineyard,

Ne B1 decimation of your birds, destruction among your water-fowl!

Ne B1 He who should see has turned blind, one who should hear deaf,

Ne B1 I and one who should lead has gone astray.

Ne B1 Basket¹! Have you (not) gone too far?

¹ Uncertain, but not altogether implausible if meant figuratively as "someone accumulating wealth"; cf. B1 164.

Ne B1 Look, you are strong and powerful, your arm is strenuous,
but your heart is greedy and mercy has left you.

How lamentable is the poor man you ruin!

You are like the messenger of Khenty.

Look, you surpass the Lady of Pestilence;

if something is not for you, it is not for her;

if something is not against her, it is not against you;

if you won't do it, she won't do it. Who possesses bread should be merciful.
Ne B1 whereas brutality is for the criminal. Theft suits those without belongings,

Ne B1 things are robbed by a criminal.

But an evil act of someone without need, is he not to be rebuked?

It is self-seeking. But you are sated with your bread

and drunk with your beer, and you are rich in every respect.

While the face of the helmsman is forward, the ship deviates as it pleases.
While the king is in the stateroom and the helm is in your hand,

evil is placed near you.

My plea is long, and the division is difficult.

"What's with him there?" people say.

Create shelter so that your shore will be safe,

for look, your harbour is surrounded by crocodiles! May your tongue be truthful

so that you won't go astray! That organ in a man is his canker-worm.
Pa B1 𓊨ღ𓈭𓊫𓁆𓊢𓁃𓊧𓊕
Ne B1 m ḏd grg 𓊰w srw
Ne B1 Don't speak falsehood! Beware of officials!

Pa B1 𓊨𓈭𓊫𓁆𓊢𓁃𓊧𓊕
Ne B1 mnḏm pw cwdw sḏmyw
Ne B1 The judges are a fattened basket;
1 Meant figuratively: "rich from bribes".

Pa B1 𓊨𓈭𓊫𓁆𓊢𓁃𓊧𓊕
Ne B1 smw=sn 𓊰w ḏd grw wn=f js.w ḥr ḣb=sn
Ne B1 speaking falsehood is their herbage, it lies light on their hearts.

Pa B1 𓊨𓈭𓊫𓁆𓊢𓁃𓊧𓊕
Ne B1 rh-jḥt 𓊱 n rmṯt nbṯ
Ne B1 O wisest of all mankind,

Pa B1 𓊨𓈭𓊫𓁆𓊢𓁃𓊧𓊕
Ne B1 jn ḫm=k m ḥw=j 𓊱 dr sꜣr n mw nb
Ne B1 are you unaware of my case? Relieve all distress on the water!

Pa B1 𓊨𓈭𓊫𓁆𓊢𓁃𓊧𓊕
Ne R mk wj ḣp.kw m 𓊱 j’nw mk wj m ḫ=k
Ne R Look, I am laden with sorrow. Look, I am in your hands,
26.4 26.5
Ne B1 mk wj ḥr 𓊱 mṯnw jw
Ne B1 Look, I am under way without a ship.
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Ne R  so you should take account of me! Look, I am in distress.

Ne B1  Rescue all who are drowning,

Ne R  save me | in the domain within your reach!'

Ne B1  rescue me in the domain | that is within your reach!'

Ne B1  And this peasant came to plead with him for a third time.

Ne B1  He said: I 'High steward, my lord, you are Re, lord of heaven, with your courtiers.

Ne B1  Everyone has a need for you, like | water.

Ne B1  You are Hapi, who makes the meadows green
and restores mounds that have been ravaged. Punish theft and protect the poor! Don't become a flood against the suppliant!

"Doing justice is breath for the nose."

Inflict punishment on him who ought to be punished,

and none will surpass your rectitude. Does the 'hand'-balance err?

1 "Handwaage".
Pa B1

Ne B1 jn-jw

mḥꜳꜳ t ḫr ṣḏ ṣḥ ḫr ṣs

Ne B1 Is

l. the 'stand'-balance\(^1\) biased?

\(^1\) “Standwaage”.

Pa B1

Ne B1 jn-jw ḫw sḏw t jn

sfn=f ḫj r{r}\(^1\) jr=k jyt

Ne B1 Is Thoth

l. lenient? Then may you do evil!

\(^1\) To be emended to [\(\text{\textcopyright}\)] (Parkinson, 1991).

Pa B1

Ne B1 ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs tw sḏw n

3 pn

Ne B1 You should set yourself equal to these three;

Pa B1

Ne B1 ḫr sfn 3 ḫr=k sfn=k m

wšb nfṛt ṭ m bjnt

Ne B1 if the three are lenient, then you must be lenient. Do not l. answer good with bad.

Pa B1

Ne B1 ṭ ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs ṭ ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs ṭ ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs

Ne B1 Do not put one thing in place of another.

Pa B1

Ne B1 ḫw ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs ṭ ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs ṭ ṣḏ ṣḥ ṣs

Ne B1 l. rwd\(^1\) mḏ ṭ ṣmṭ ṣmṭ

Ne B1 l. The spoken word is more persistent than weed\(^2\),

\(^1\) Or ṭḏ, “grow”.

\(^2\) Lit. “ṣmṭ-plants”.

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Pa B1

Ne B1 r dlmj n ḥnm m wšb=š

Ne B1 to I reach the smellwr with its retort.

Pa B1

Ne B1 ntf jyt l r rdjt rd ḥbsw

Ne B1 The one who waters mischief l to make deception\textsuperscript{1} grow,
\textsuperscript{1} Uncertain.

Pa B1

Ne B1 spw 3 l pw r rdjt jr=f jr rk ḥmw r ndbyt

Ne B1 this is three times l to induce him to act\textsuperscript{1}
\textsuperscript{1} Steer according to the sail.
I.e. "this is already the third time that I induce him to act!"

Pa B1

Ne B1 šd wdnw r jrt m\textsuperscript{3}t

Ne B1 I Withdraw the flood, so as to do justice.

Pa B1

Ne B1 sŵ l ḥš=k rk ḥr nfryt

Ne B1 Be careful that l you do not run aground, while at the tiller.

Pa B1

Ne B1 çqyt nt tô l jrt m\textsuperscript{3}t \{w\}

Ne B1 To straighten out the land l is to do justice.
Ne B1 m ḏḏ grḏ jw=k wr.tj
Ne B1 Do not speak falsehood, for you are mighty.

Ne B1 m js jw=k dns.tj
Ne B1 Do not be light-hearted, for you are weighty.

Ne B1 m ḏḏ grḏ ntk jwsw
Ne B1 Do not speak falsehood, for you are the balance.

Ne B1 ḏḏ ḏḏ ntk tp
Ne B1 Do not be careless, for you are the key.

Ne B1 mk ḏw m tp ṭw jwsw
Ne B1 You are just like the balance:

Ne B1 jr gs₃=f ḥr=k g{w}s₁=k
Ne B1 if it is crooked, then you must be crooked.

Ne B1 m sbn jr ṭḥ nfr ṭḥ
Ne B1 Do not deviate, but operate the rudder, pull on the tiller rope.
Pa B1  m jṯ jr rk r jṯw
Ne B1 Do not rob, but act against the robber.

Pa B1  n wr js pw wr jm ḫwn-jb
Ne B1 A great one who is greedy is not (really) great.

Pa B1  th pw ns=k
Ne B1 Your tongue is the pointer (of the balance),

Pa B1  dbn pw jb=k rmnw=f pw ṣptj=kj
Ne B1 your heart is the weight, and your lips are its arms.

Pa B1  jr ḫbs=k ḫr=k r ḥḥt-ḥr
Ne B1 But if you shut your eyes to the impudent,

Pa B1  mk ḫw m ḫwrw n ḥḥtj
Ne B1 Look, you are a dishonourable washerman

Pa B1  ḫwn-jb ḫr ḫḥṭ ḫnms
Ne B1 who is keen on destroying friendship,
one who wrongs his confidant for his client;

anyone who comes and supplies to him is his brother.

Look, you are a ferryman who ferries across anyone who has the fare,

a righteous man whose righteousness has crumbled.

Look, you are the chief of a workhouse

Look, you are a hawk to the people,
Ne B1  one who lives on defenceless birds.

Ne B1  Look, you are a cook whose joy is to slaughter,

Ne B1  and who is not touched by the gruesomeness thereof. Look, you are a herdsman;

Ne B1  is it not bad for me then that you cannot be prudent?

Ne B1  May you become less like a ravenous crocodile,

Ne B1  for shelter has vanished from the harbour of the entire land.

Ne B1  Hearer, you do not really hear. But why do you not hear?
Now I have spoken out against the aggressor, and the crocodile retreats. But what is the gain thereof to you?

The secret of the truth will be found, and falsehood will be cast on the ground.

Do not make provision for the following day before it has come, since one cannot know what is going to happen in it.'

When this peasant had said these words, the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, went to the entrance of the portal,
and made two guards turn against him with whips.

Then this peasant said:

'So the son of Meru must go astray, since his face is blind to what he sees and deaf to what he hears, and is straying from what it is reminded of.

Look, you are a town without a mayor, like a meeting without a chairman,
Ne B1 mj dpt nn šhr jm=f
Ne B1 like a ship without a captain,

Ne B1 smyt nn ssms=f
Ne B1 like a gang without a leader.

Ne B1 mk tw m šnt jɛ hqf-hwt šspw
Ne B1 Look, you are a policeman who steals, a major who accepts (bribes),

Ne B1 jmj-rw hsf ḫfj
Ne B1 a district overseer who should restrain robbery

Ne B1 hpr m jmj-ḫt n jrr
Ne B1 but who has become a pattern for the criminal.

Ne B1 jw.jn rf šhtj pn r spr n=f 4nw sp
Ne B1 And this peasant came to plead with him for a fourth time,

Ne B1 gm.n sw hr prt m sbi n ḫwt-ntr nt Ḥrj-fš
Ne B1 and found him emerging from the gate of the temple of Arsaphes.
He said: 'Praised one,

may Arsaphes, from whose temple you have come, praise you!

Goodness has been harmed; there is no accumulation of it,

nor is there casting of falsehood on the ground. Has the ferry sunk?

Who can be ferried across

when the one who should bring about the deed is unwilling?

Crossing the river on foot: a good crossing, or not?
Now, who can sleep till dawn?

For obstructed are going by night, travelling by day,

and letting a man attend his truly good cause.

Look, it is no use to tell you this,

for mercy has left you. How lamentable is the poor man you ruin!

Look, you are a hunter who slakes his desire,
Ne B1 wdd r jrt mrt=f ĥɔ dbw
Ne B1 bent on doing what he wants, who harpoons hippopotami,
Ne B1 st smw
Ne B1 shoots wild bulls,

Ne B1 ph rmw shalt
Ne B1 ḫpdw
Ne B1 catches fish and snares
Ne B1 birds.

Ne B1 nn ḫḥ ršw m wcrw
Ne B1 Yet there is none hasty of speech who is free of spluttering,

Ne B1 nn js-jb dns shr ht
Ne B1 and none light of heart who is weighty of thought.

Ne B1 wjh
Ne B1 jk=kh mh=kh mct
Ne B1 Be tender-hearted, so that you will learn justice!

Ne B1 dɔr stpt=k r
Ne B1 nfr bss grw
Ne B1 Suppress your choice for
Ne B1 the good of him who enters
Humbly. For there is no brute who attains excellence, and there is no impatient man whom one turns to.

Don't be haughty in proportion to your might, so that evil doesn't reach you. Tolerate one misdeed, and it will become two.

It is the eater who tastes, so one who is questioned replies; it is the sleeper who dreams.
As for a judge who ought to be punished, he is a pattern for the criminal. Fool, look, you are found out! Ignoramus, look, you are questioned! Bailer of water, look, you are noticed! Helmsman, don't let your ship go off course! Giver of life, don't let people die!

1 Meant figuratively: "someone urinating".
Ne B1 sḥtmw m rdj
Ne B1 Destroyer, don't let people perish!

Ne B1 šwyt m jr m św
Ne B1 Shade, don't be as the blazing sun!

Ne B1 jbw
Ne B1 m rdj jt mšḥ
Ne B1 Shelter, I don't let the crocodile snatch!

Ne B1 4nw sp 3 m spr n=k
Ne B1 The fourth time already of pleading with you; I shall I spend all day at it?

Ne B1 jw.jn rf sḥtj pn r
Ne B1 And this peasant came to plead with him for a fifth time.

Ne B1 dd=f jmj-r pr wr nb=j
Ne B1 He said: 'High steward, my lord, the netter is [...] [mḥyt]\(^1\)]

\(^1\) Following the suggestion by Parkinson (1991).
259
Pa B1

Ne B1
nly1 hr smJy

the nyw-fisherman2 is killing jy-fish,

1 Uncertain.
2 Uncertain.

260
Pa B1

Ne B1
st
rmw hr hị ḫwbbw

the fish-spearer is harpooning ḫwbbw-fish,

261
Pa B1
dibhw

Ne B1
r pqrw

the dibhw-fisherman

is after pqr-fish.

262
Pa B1

Ne B1
jw wh ḥb=f

jtrw mk tw m mnt-qrj

The fisherman ravages the river.

Look, you are the same.

263
Pa B1

Ne B1
m ḡwn ḥwrw

hr jḥt=f

Do not defraud a poor man

of his property,

264
Pa B1

Ne B1
fn rh.n=k sw ḏw pw n

mir jḥt=f

a slight man whom you know. The belongings of a pauper are his breath,
to take them away is to stop up his nose.

You were appointed to hear cases, to judge between litigants,

and to punish the robber.

But look, what you are doing is supporting the thief.

You are trusted, yet you have become a transgressor.

You were appointed to be a dike for the pauper,

so take care that he doesn't drown!
But look, you are the lake that pulls him under.'

And this peasant came to plead with him for a sixth time, and he said: 'High steward, my lord, lord who eradicates falsehood, who creates truth and creates all goodness, who destroys [evil],

like when satiety comes and ends hunger,

and clothes end nakedness,
like when the sky becomes calm after a heavy storm

and warms all who are chilled,

like fire that cooks what is raw,

like water that quenches thirst! See with your own eyes:

the arbitrator is a cheat,

the appeaser is causing misery,

and he who should mitigate is causing suffering.

Cheating diminishes justice, so render good account,
n hqs n wbn ṃt

and justice will be neither insufficient nor excessive.

jr twt

So act accordingly!

If you acquire, then give to your fellow man, for chewing is without merit.

wght šw.tj m ʾq̄

and your share of the cargo will be what you seize,

My anguish leads to separation

My accusation brought departure;

one cannot know what is in the heart.

Don't be negligent, act at the accusation! If you sever, who will join?
The sounding rod is in your hand,
a rod that makes waters accessible that have stayed behind (during low tide).

If a ship goes down, it is looted and its cargo perishes on the ground

at every embankment.

You are educated, enlightened
and accomplished,

but not for cheating! You act the same as everyone,
Ne B1 I and your environment is corrupt.

Ne B2 jw h₉w=k m nwdw l q3 n bw-nb
Ne B2 and every man in your environment is corrupt.

Ne B1 Molester of the entire land!

Ne B1 The cultivator of wickedness is watering his garden with falsehood,

Ne B1 evil, to make his garden grow
Ne B1 and to water everlasting doom.'
and he said: 'High steward, my lord, you are the helm of the entire land, you are the equal of Thoth, who judges without being partial. My lord, may you condone that a man calls upon you concerning his just cause. Don't be outrageous, it is not for you! One who was happy becomes anxious. Do not scheme for what has not yet come,
I do not rejoice in what has not yet happened! Considerateness extends friendship.

And dismisses an offence that happens;

One cannot know what is in the heart.

Subverter of the law, destroyer of rectitude!

There will be no poor man alive.

If justice does not attend to him when he is robbed.

Now, my body is full (of misery) and my heart is laden (with grief).

It comes from my body because of the condition thereof:
Pa  B1  "It is the breach of a dike, its waters pouring through, as my mouth opens to speak."

Ne B1  It is the breach of a dike, its waters pouring through, as my mouth opens to speak.

Ne B1  So, I have now plied my sounding rod, bailed my water,
given vent to what was on my mind and washed my dirty linen.

Ne B1  My speech is done and my misery has ended up before you,
what (more) do you need? Your neglect will lead you astray,
your avarice will befool you and your greed will make you acquire enemies.

Ne B1  and your greed will make you acquire enemies.
Pa B1 | Ne B1 | Will you even find another peasant like me?

Pa B1 | Ne B1 | Or will the lazy petitioner be waiting at the door of his house?

Pa B1 | Ne B1 | There is none silent whom you let speak, none sleeping whom you roused,

Ne B2 | none sleeping whom you roused,

Pa B1 | Ne B1 | none downcast whom you enlivened,

Pa B1 | Ne B1 | none speechless whose mouth you opened,

Pa B1 | Ne B1 | none ignorant whom you let know, none foolish whom you educated.

Ne B2 | none ignorant whom you let know, none foolish whom you educated.

Ne B2 | uneducated whom you instructed.
Yet officials should be people who dispel injustice, lords of goodness,

Craftsmen in creating what is, people who mend a severed head.'

And this peasant came to plead with him for an eighth time,

A greedy man is without achievement,

He achieves only failure. You are greedy but it does nothing for you,

You steal but it's of no benefit to you.
You who should let a man attend his truly good cause!

In fact, your possessions are in your house and your stomach is full;

The barley brims over since it is so abundant

and its excess perishes on the ground.

The officials who were appointed to repel evil

1 Error by Parkinson (1991) or scribal error?

I assume the repetition of the is an error by Parkinson (1991).
the officials who were appointed to eradicate falsehood!

And the fear of you wouldn't permit appealing to you?

You do not perceive my heart! The humble man who returns

to make a complaint to you, he cannot fear him to whom it is submitted,

you cannot fear him who submits it to you.

though no brother of his can be fetched to side against you in the street.

Your plots of land are in the country, your earnings are in the estate
Ne B1 jw $qw=k m $n
Ne B1 and your provisions in the storehouse. Officials are giving to you,

Ne B2 $hr rdjt jn n=k
Ne B2 I am giving gifts to you,

Ne B1 I and you are still robbing. Are you a thief? People are ushered in to you,
Ne B2 jn-jw=k rf m $w\dot{y} jn-jw $t\dot{i}.tw n=k
Ne B2 Are you a thief then? Are people ushered in to you,

Ne B1 skw $hn=k r ps\dot{t} $d\dot{w}wt
Ne B1 troops being with you, for the division of plots of land.
Ne B2 skw $hn=k r ps\dot{t} m $d\dot{w}wt
Ne B2 troops being with you, for the division of plots of land?

Ne B1 jr m$ct n
Ne B1 Do justice for the Lord of Justice,

Ne B1 ntj wn m$ct nt m$ct=f
Ne B1 whose justice has justice!
Ne B1 I Pen, papyrus, palette of Thoth, 
I beware of doing evil!

Ne B1 nfr nfrt nfr r=f 
I jw swt mꜣꜣ t r nhḥ

Ne B1 The goodness of a good man is good to him, 
I but justice is for eternity.

Ne B2 nfr nfrt nfr rf nfrt
Ne B2 When goodness is good, goodness is good indeed,

Ne B1 hꜣꜣ=s 
I m-c jrr sj r ḫrt-nfr

Ne B1 It goes down 
I with him who does it to the necropolis.

Ne B1 jw qrs.tw=f 
smꜣ tꜣ jm=f
Ne B1 When he is buried, and earth envelops him,

Ne B1 n sјn.tw 
I rn=f tp tꜣ
Ne B1 his name is not effaced on earth

Ne B1 {jw=f} jw šhꜣ.tw=f ḫr
Ne B1 and he is remembered on account of the goodness.
This is the norm of the divine word. If it is a 'hand'-balance,

The norm of the divine word:

then it is not crooked. If it is a 'stand'-balance,

then it is not biased. Look, I will come, and another will come,

so you should inquire!

But do not respond as one who questions a humble man.

Do not attack one who cannot attack. You show no mercy, you are not troubled,
you do not destroy,

you do not flee,

nor do you give me a reward for this good speech

that comes forth from the mouth of Re himself!

Speak justice and do justice!

For it is mighty,

Do justice to me!

it is great, it is enduring, one will find its trustworthiness,
It will lead to blessedness. Can a balance be crooked?

A balance cannot be crooked.

When it is its pans that weigh things?

There can be no excess of rectitude.

An evil deed cannot reach harbour, but the hindermost will reach land.'
and said: 'High steward, my lord, the tongue of people is their 'stand'-balance,

and it is the 'hand'-balance that detects deficiency

and inflicts punishment on him who ought to be punished.

One sets the standard after you. Falsehood [...] when its need arises,

but the truth returns to correct it. Truth is an aspect of falsehood,

which means it is made to thrive but it is not gathered in.

When falsehood sets out, it goes astray.
It cannot cross in a ferry and it cannot row.

1 Restored as proposed in the note by Parkinson (1991).

As for him who is enriched by it,

he has no children and no heirs on earth.

As for him who sails with it, he cannot reach land,

his boat cannot moor in its harbour.

Don't be heavy, you haven't been light!
Don't delay, you haven't been swift! Don't be partial!

Don't listen to the heart! Don't disregard someone you know!

Don't be blind to someone who looks to you!

Don't fend off someone who appeals to you! May you abandon this neglect,

and may your verdict be accounced! Act for him who acts for you

and don't listen to anyone who is against him!
Summon a man concerning his just cause! There is no yesterday for the negligent, no friend for him who is deaf to truth and no holiday for the greedy.

The accuser becomes wretched, wretched to be a suppliant, and the opponent becomes a murderer.
Look, I am pleading with you but you do not hear it.

I will go and plead concerning you with Anubis.'

Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, sent two guards to bring him back.

And this peasant was afraid,

thinking it was done to punish him.

on account of these words that he had said. And this peasant said:
A thirsty man's approach of water,

the reach of a nurseling's mouth for milk,

such is death for him who prays to see it come

when his death comes tardily for him.'

Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, said: 'Don't be afraid, peasant!

Look, you will arrange the matter with me.' But this peasant swore an oath:
Now wait here and hear your petitions!

Then the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, delivered them according to its content.

To the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Nebkaure, justified,
and they pleased his heart more than anything in this entire land.

Then His Majesty said: 'Pass judgement yourself, son of Meru!'

And the high steward Rensi, son of Meru, sent two guards to [fetch Nemtinakht].

Then he was brought and an inventory was made of [...]

He found six persons

as well as [...]
his swine, [his] small cattle, [...]

this Nemtinakht [...] to this peasant [...] [...] [...] all his [...]

of this Nemtinakht [...]