

ARC5 EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE I

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Course Description and Objectives

This paper offers an introduction to Middle Egyptian, the classical phase of the ancient Egyptian language that developed around 2000 B.C. The aim of the course is to provide a firm grounding in the fundamentals of the Egyptian hieroglyphic script and grammar, using a range of set texts drawn from original sources. Additionally, the paper is intended to serve as the foundation for future advanced training in the different stages of ancient Egyptian. The approach to the study of a dead language, such as Egyptian, which belongs to a separate linguistic family than that of western European languages, differs profoundly from the one adopted for the learning of a modern one. Therefore, emphasis will be placed on transliteration, translation, and in-depth grammatical analysis of the texts, without neglecting the cultural framework within which they evolved. At the end of the year the student should be in a position to read straightforward texts in Middle Egyptian, such as many of the ones found in museum collections or carved on the walls of most Egyptian temples and tombs.

Teaching

The course consists of two hour-long classes in every week of teaching, supplemented by supervision sessions, which normally concentrate on reinforcing grammatical points covered by the lectures and/or reading additional texts. Attendance of every lecture and supervision session is an absolute necessity for a successful completion of this module. Please note that this course also meets during Easter term.

The schedule of lectures is as follows:

Mondays, 14:00-15:00.

Thursdays, 9:00-10:00.

Assessment

This paper is assessed through two in-class tests of two hours each. The first one will take place at the end of week six of Lent term, while the second will be conducted at the end of week four of Easter term.

Each test will consist of the transliteration and translation of selections of unseen passages in hieroglyphic Middle Egyptian, appropriate to the expected level of proficiency of the students at the time of each assessment. In addition to the transliteration and translation, the complete grammatical analysis (parsing) of each Egyptian passage will be required. The use of sign lists and glossaries or dictionaries is permitted, and copies will be supplied to the students for the purposes of the test by the course co-ordinator.

Each test will make up 50% of the total mark awarded for the paper.

Set Texts

The set texts are drawn from multiple compositions including, but not limited to, the following. Copies of the texts will be supplied to the students:

1. Selections from:
 - The story of the Shipwrecked Sailor
 - The Eloquent Peasant
 - The tale of Sinuhe
 - King Kheops and the Magicians
2. Reading passages found at the end of the following chapters in Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*:
 - 23: report of a priestly *phyle* from Illahun
 - 25: hymn to Ra
 - 28: inscription from Sehel island
 - 29: medical prescription
 - 30 (iii): excerpt from the Duties of the vizier
3. Boundary stelae from Semna (Berlin 1157 and 14753).

Textbook

James E. HOCH, *Middle Egyptian Grammar*. SSEA Publications XV (Mississauga, 1997). [It is rather difficult and costly to procure this textbook independently through bookstores or online retailers. The University has secured copies from the publisher at a substantial discount, and students may, if they so wish, purchase a copy from the University of Cambridge].

Grammatical, Lexical, and other Tools

Raymond O. FAULKNER, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, reprinted 1991).

Henry G. FISCHER, *Ancient Egyptian Calligraphy: A Beginner's Guide to Writing Hieroglyphs* (New York, 1999). Available as a free and legal download from the Metropolitan Museum of Art:

http://www.metmuseum.org/research/metpublications/Ancient_Egyptian_Calligraphy#