

## **ARC5/G13 EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE I**

Coordinator: Dr. Hratch Papazian (hp363@cam.ac.uk)

### **Aims and objectives**

This paper offers a first-year introduction to Egyptian hieroglyphs. The aim is to acquire knowledge of the fundamentals of the script and grammar of Middle Egyptian, the classical phase of the language that gradually came into use at around 2000 B.C. and which the Egyptians themselves considered canonical; additionally, the course is intended to provide a foundation for future advanced training in Egyptian language. The approach to the study of a dead language such as Egyptian, which belongs to a very different linguistic family than that of most European languages, remains quite different from the one adopted for the learning of a modern one. Emphasis will be placed on reading, comprehension and translation techniques, without neglecting the cultural framework within which the texts were composed. Given that approaches to the study of ancient Egyptian and certain aspects of its grammar continue to evolve, the course will make use of a combination of resources and tools, ranging from seminal works to more recent publications. 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 in museum collections or found on the walls of most Egyptian temples.

### **Teaching**

The course consists of two hour-long classes in every week of teaching. Supervisions will vary according to the supervisors available at any one time, but they normally concentrate on reinforcing grammatical points covered by the lectures and/or reading texts which are not set for the examination. Attending every lecture and supervision session is an absolute necessity for a successful completion of the course.

### **Assessment**

This paper is assessed through a three-hour written examination, which consists of three passages for transliteration and translation from hieroglyphic Middle Egyptian. All questions are of equal value. Two of these are taken from texts read in class, and a third passage is selected from an unseen text of comparable level. In addition, students are required to answer all questions of grammatical and/or historical nature included within each of the three sections of the exam.

The set texts are derived from the following:

1. The story of the Shipwrecked Sailor. A.M. Blackman. *Middle-Egyptian Stories - Part I* (Brussels, 1932), 41-48.
2. A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Third edn. Oxford 1957), reading passages found at the end of chapters 17, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30 (ii-iii), 31.
3. K. H. Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke. Texte des mittleren Reiches* (Third edn. repr.

- Hildesheim 1959). Some of the following may be read from epigraphic copies:
- Boundary stela from Semna (text 23, pp. 83-5 = Berlin 1157 and 14753).
    - W. K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (Third edn. New Haven & London, 2003), 337-8 (for Berlin 1157) and 580-1 (for bibliography, especially C. J. Eyre); commentary in W. Y. Adams, *Nubia. Corridor to Africa*, 185 ff.
  - Stela of Khusobek/Sobekkh, also named Djaa (text 22, pp. 82-3 – this is only a portion of the original).
    - For a more recent commentary, see J. Baines, “The Stela of Khusobek: Private and Royal Military Narrative and Values,” in *Form und Mass: Beiträge zur Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten* (Wiesbaden, 1987), 43-61.
  - Stela of Ikhnofret (text 14, pp. 70-71).
    - Simpson, *Literature*, 425-7 and 563 (for bibliography). Parallels and background are discussed by M. A. Leahy, “A Protective Measure at Abydos in the Thirteenth Dynasty,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 75 (1989), 41-60.

### **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 discounts, and students may, if they so wish, purchase a copy from the University of Cambridge].

### **Grammatical and Lexical Tools**

A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Third edn. Oxford 1957); very detailed sign list and fairly extensive glossary included.

R. O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, repr. 1991).