THE PRAISE OF LEARNING.

TRANSLATED BY
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THIS composition is found on two papyri in the British Museum, Sallier II., pl. iii., l. 9–pl. xi., l. 4, and Anastasi VII., pl. i. l. 1–pl. vii. l. 4, Select Papyri, pl. xv.–xx., cxxviii.–cxxxiv., and also on a slice of calcareous stone in the same institution, published in Inscriptions in the Hieratic and Demotic Characters published by the British Museum, pl. xi. It has long attracted the attention of students; a precis of the contents and translation of a small portion having been given by Mr. Goodwin in the Cambridge Essays, 1858, p. 272–275; but the first critical translation of the whole has been given by M. Maspero, Le Genre Epistolaire chez les Anciens Egyptiens, 1872, p. 48. The present translation is made after that of M. Maspero, and follows it in nearly all the passages; but the difficult and obscure nature of many sentences is such that they can hardly be interpreted, except conjecturally, owing principally to two reasons, viz., the extreme conciseness of the language in which it is
written, accompanied by the use of colloquial phrases, and the abnormal employment of determinative Hieroglyphs in Hieratic compositions. This long text appears to be a poetical one, and the lines of poetry are indicated by red spots. That these do not mark off sentences is evident from the spots occasionally being placed in the middle of a sentence, the end of which passes into the following line. The composition is attributed to the period of the XIIth Dynasty; but the name of Pepi, the same as that of a monarch of the VIIth Dynasty, may indicate that it is of the earlier period. The manuscripts in which it is found are not older than the age of Rameses II. of the XIXth Dynasty. Two dedications are found on the papyri; that of the Sallier Papyrus is, "To the perfect bard, the very wonderful, the scribe of the treasury, Qakabu, of the treasury of the Pharaoh," while Anastasi VII. has "To the scribe of the treasury, Qakabu, the scribe Paharpet, the scribe Autha, the scribe Rameri, made by the scribe Anna, (or Ann-ann) the master of instructions, in the 6th year the 25th of the month Payni when one was in the house of Rameses (II.). Loving Amen, the Living, the great portrait of Ra-Harmachis," by which last expression is meant the king Rameses II. It should be observed that these dedications are also marked with red spots, but they were also drawn up in poetical form, so as to make the entire composition uniform.
THE PRAISE OF LEARNING.

1 The commencement of the instructions
2 made by a person of Tsaru
3 Tuaufsakhrat is his name
4 to his son Pepi is his name
5 He went to Khenu
6 to place himself in the place of instruction of letters.
7 The children of elders did not surpass him
8 who are in the town of Khenu
9 He was saying to him
10 I have seen violence, I have seen violence
11 give thy heart after letters
12 I have seen one free from labours
13 Consider there is not anything beyond letters
14 As it is done in the water
15 plunge in the bosom of Kami
16 You are finding this sentence in it in words
17 ShoulId there be a scribe whose entire residence is in
   Khenu
18 He is not inactive in it
19 He is giving satisfaction to another
20 He does not come forth an inactive person
21 I have seen labours likewise . . . .
22 the words of this sentence in it

2 Perhaps Tanis, as he evidently was not a native of Silsils. Maspero
   reads "threshing floor," barn.
3 Shows the composition to date from the VIth Dynasty.
4 Rather manual labour.
5 Service.
6 Books.
23 Love letters as thy mother
24 I make its beauty go in thy face
25 it is greater possession than all employments
26 It is not a word on this earth
27 He who has commenced to avail himself is from his
   infancy a counsellor
28 He is sent to perform commissions
29 He who does not go he is in sackcloth
30 I have not seen a blacksmith on a commission
31 a founder who goes on an embassy
32 I have seen the blacksmith at his work
33 at the mouth of his furnace
34 his fingers like things of crocodiles
35 he stinks worse than the eggs of fishes
36 every carpenter carrying tools
37 is he more at rest than the labourers
38 his fields are of wood his tools of metal
39 at night (when) he is free
40 he does in addition of his hands in making
41 at night the lighting of his house
42 The stone cutter he searches for employment
43 in all kinds of hard stones
44 He has made the completion of the things
45 his arms are fatigued, he is at rest
46 seated at the bread of the Sun
47 his knees and his back are broken
48 The barber is shaving till evening
49 when he places himself to eat he places himself on his
   elbows.
50 he places himself at street after street
51 to seek after his shaving

1 Dignities or honours.  2 A mere word.  3 A counsellor, a not net.
4 Receives a civil employment.  5 So black and hard.
6 Cutting wood or torches.  7 Obscure.
52 he wearies his hands to fill his belly
53 as bees feed by their labours.
54 The boatman⁴ he navigates to
55 At'hu³ that he may have taken his price
56 he has done beyond the power of his hands in doing
57 to kill geese and flamingoes
58 he has suffered his suffering
59 he approaches his orchard⁵
60 he approaches his house at night
61 for he must go⁶
62 The little labourer having a field
63 he passes his life amongst rustics⁷
64 he is worn down for vines and pigs
65 to make his kitchen of what his fields have
66 his clothes are heavy with weight
67 he is tied as a forced labourer⁸
68 he goes into the air he suffers
69 coming forth well from his fireplace
70 He is bastinadoed by a stick on his legs
71 He saves himself
72 Shut against him is the hall of every house
73 drawn are the chambers,⁷
74 I tell you also of the builder of precincts
75 Disease tastes him
76 For he is in draughts of air
77 He builds in slings
78 Tied as the lotus⁸ of the houses

¹ A rare word, bu-ti, apparently the poulterer or preparer of birds.
² The marshlands. Delta, or Fayoum.
³ Or avenue of trees before the house.
⁴ Again to his labours.
⁵ Axyu, either “natives” or “beasts.”
⁶ Sāhešu, “one selected” to do work for nothing.
⁷ Bolts or doors of the rooms against his entry.
⁸ Obscure phrase, either as a lotus is tied to a house, or to the “lotus of
   the house,” perhaps the roof. Cf. l. 88.
To go along to his end
his hands are worn with labour
Disordered are his clothes
He eats himself, the bread his fingers
He washes himself at one time only
He lowers himself to examine all directions
His passage is from place to place
which is from ten to six cubits
his passage is from month to month
upon the beams of the lotuses of the houses
doing all its work
Should there be bread for him, he gives it his house
Exhausted are his children.
The gardener brings me gazelles
all his yokes have weight
His hands are chiefly on his neck
when he has done the manuring
He passes the morning watering vegetables
The evening vines
He has done every day
his belly is wretched
Ignorant of his mother is his name
more tranquil than any employment
The farmer his garments are for eternity
He elevates his voice like a bird
His fingers aid me for his arms are dry in the wind

1 Maspero, l. c. p. 54 n. 3, reads, "he is a pawn (senen) from square to square."
2 Or "beaten are his children," i.e., his children are starved; it can hardly be that he beats them because he has obtained bread.
3 Mahtu, probably for mahu "wreaths," as the gazelle was not under the charge of a gardener.
4 Ignorant of literature, "an ignoramus."
5 He wears the same clothes a very long time.
6 "As a bird," or "to the birds." To drive them away.
He reposes at the middle of the marshes
For he is a forced labourer
He is in good health with the beasts
Illness tastes him
he resides amongst them
He arrives at his garden
He comes to his house in the evening
He must go out
The weaver inside the houses
is more wretched than a woman
his knees are at the place of his heart
he has not tasted the air
Should he have done little in a day of his weaving
he is dragged as a lilly in a pool
he gives bread to the porter
that he may be allowed to behold the light
The maker of weapons suffers extremely
going forth to foreign countries
he gives a great deal for his asses
more than the labours (of his hands)
he gives a great deal for their being in a field
He gives on the road
He arrives at his garden
he reaches his house at night
he must be off.
The courier going to foreign countries
bequeathes his goods to his children
because of the fears of beasts and Asiatics
What happens to him when he is in Kam
he arrives at his garden

1 Muḥr, “at a place examined” or “selected.”
2 Sūlāb, “one chosen” or “conscripted” for the service.
3 Or avenues of l. 59. 4 Owing to his being seated on the ground.
5 Either he is overcome or punished. 6 Egypt.
he goes to his house in the evening
he must be off
His heavy bond comes forth
No joys come
The dyer his fingers stink
The smell of bad fish
his two eyes are weary with very fatigue
his hand does not stop
he watches at the rent of the old garment
abominable are the clothes
The sandal maker is very miserable
he is always begging
his health is as my health of a bad fish
he gnaws the leather
The washerman washing on the quay
Traverses the ground approaching the crocodiles
The father of the water brings out the dirt
his hand does not stop
a quiet employment is not before you
easier that any employment.
his draughts are mixed up with his clothes
not a limb of him is clean
there is given to him the bonds of women
For as he is in misfortunes
I lament to thee he passes his time with a bat
I have brought to thee
has been said to him
Shouldst thou delay to bring them
Thy lips will then be struck
The fowler of birds suffers very much

To the dyer.
Or invalid of some kind.
One text reads, "in many approaches."
Shah, applied to draught of water.
Tie or affliction.
To ful the linen.
Doubtful reading.
165 The confines of Num⁴ are before thee
166 when he says “Let the net refuse”
167 The god wills not to show his forms
168 vain are his⁵ plans
169 I tell you the fisherman
170 suffers more than any employment
171 consider is he not toiling on the river
172 he is mixed up with the crocodiles
173 Should the clumps of papyrus diminish
174 Then he is crying out for help
175 If he has not been told a crocodile is there
176 Terrors blind him
177 Comes forth the father out of the waters⁶ it is the net
178 Then like the spirits⁷ which are from god
179 Consider there it is not an employment destitute of
superior ones
180 Except the scribe who is the first
181 For he who knows letters
182 he then is better than thee
183 Not so the employments before thee
184 Consider a companion despises his companion
185 It has not been said Labour for that person
186 Do not transgress that which said to thee
187 Consider I made it in going up to Khennu⁸
188 Consider I made it out of love for thee
189 (If) thou hast profited a day in the school
190 It is for ever its works are mountains
191 they are my precepts⁹ which I let you know

¹ There are different readings in the versions of this line: as, “he does not see the birds (ari-em-fc) should Num pass to the upper heaven.”
² The fisher’s plans or skill.
³ “The father makes to come the net out of the water.” Maspero.
⁴ His destiny is in the hands of God. Maspero.
⁵ Silsils.
I let you love them they drive away worms,¹
I tell thee some other words
for thy instruction and knowledge
so that thou art not opposed
Thou art of those who are weighty in plans
Should the weight of my precepts be taken away
There is not known anything of counsel
When in the hands (is) lapis lazuli for beasts²
Vain replies are made to him
Should thou walk after great men
Thou art to proceed with good knowledge
if thou goest in is the master³ in his house
the hands of another are not before thee
Fit thy hand in thy mouth
do not ask any thing for thee
Who has done as to say give
Is as breaking a switch against a stake⁴
Irritating against thee the master of good
Do not speak words of dissimulation
He who dissimates his heart acts against it
Do not say proud words
Be sealed in thyself that is alone
When you come out of school
Should you have been told it is now
To pay respects in the halls
I recommend to thee do not go in their places
If a master comes to thee on a mission
What he says let it be as he says it
Do not detract about what has been laid down
When he has left after paying respects
He has not laid aside his heart

¹ *Tennu* "enemy, opponents," Maspero; perhaps "cares."
² Like pearls before swine.
³ One version, "mistress, lady."
⁴ Or, "pen."
He is full of all his admiration
Nothing is hidden from him
None of all his places holds him
He does not tell lies to his mother
Against the wishes of that Chief.
After things come to (hand)
The hands of a person will be strengthened his trouble soothed
Do not let it be about those with thee that is to say alone
Are they kept low
the bowels, thou hast been heard.
When three loaves have been eaten
and two pots of beer swallowed
(If) thy stomach is not full, contend against that.
Should another be satiated with it do stand
as if breaking a pen against a pike
Consider thou passest (by) multitude
Thou hearest the words of chiefs
Ah could I make like thee the children of men
Thou goest to receive them.
The scribe who listens is seen
Those who are attentive are heard
Combat the words which are against them
Hasten thy feet, thou hast gone

1 A very obscure passage, apparently to respect the tutor or master.
2 Letters or literature.
3 Old person or instructor. Maspero refers this to Osiris.
4 Very difficult passages, apparently referring to the unremunerative nature of literature.
5 I.e. could the children of common people do as thou doest through literature.
6 He wishes to make the ignorant like him.
7 Attentive.
8 Conspicuous.
246  Do not turn back thy heart
247  Uniting the road to it
248  The elder of a (another) person are thy juniors
249  Consider RANEN is on the road of the god
250  RANEN a scribe (has) on his shoulder
251  The day of his birth.¹
252  He approaches the halls
253  of the assembly² men have made.
254  Truly no scribe is without eating
255  The things of the royal palace of the king
256  MESCHENT³ supplies a scribe
257  Placed at the head of the assembly⁴
258  Adores RA⁵ the father his mother⁶
259  Those placed on the path of the living
260  Consider what I have placed before thee
261  The children of his children
262  Happily finished.⁶

¹ That he is destined or has the goddess as his good genius.
² Jury or council.
³ The goddess of new birth or the metempsychosis.
⁴ Maspero reads, "Duau (Tuau) is his father and mother." Tuau is the morning.
⁵ His mother literature.
⁶ It has gone out well in peace.
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