ERMAN'S EGYPTIAN GRAMMAR

TRANSLATED BY

JAMES HENRY BREASTED.
EGYPTIAN GRAMMAR

WITH

TABLE OF SIGNS, BIBLIOGRAPHY,

EXERCISES FOR READING

AND

GLOSSARY

BY

ADOLF ERMAN.

Translated

by

JAMES HENRY BREASTED.

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Authorized Translation.
AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

As the outgrowth of practical academic instruction, this book is designed to facilitate as far as possible, for the beginner, the acquisition of the Egyptian language and writing, and is also intended for those who must dispense with the assistance of a teacher in the study. It aims to acquaint the learner with those grammatical phenomena which are well established, and which must guide us in the interpretation of texts. It further aims to afford him as correct a picture as possible of the general structure of the Egyptian language.

For those who are familiar with the peculiar situation of Egyptian philology, I need not premise with the remark, that something else is necessary to the study of Egyptian grammar if it is to be at all a fruitful study, viz. the simultaneous acquisition of Coptic. One who is not familiar with this, the only phase of the Egyptian language which we really understand, will never properly comprehend it in its older
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It further behoves me to state, that in this book, much which is not so designated undoubtedly belongs to Steindorff and Sethe. But we have so often discussed these things among ourselves, that we could not separate our "intellectual property" even if we deemed it at all important to do so.

SÜDENDE, August 19th, 1893.

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There were therefore no *termini technici* of Egyptian grammar ready at hand in English. The ready facility with which the German lends itself to the expression of compound ideas in one word, is entirely foreign to English and the peculiar phenomena for which a felicitous compound was always ready in the flexile German were sometimes the despair of the

the particle *in*. Or turn to p. 18 where the absolute pronoun *it* is called a suffix, the author being misled by the confusion purely orthographic in late and corrupt texts, between *it, sn* and *s*, for in the classic language *it* is always used absolutely, i.e. separably. In the same chapter one searches in vain for any paradigm of the old absolute pronouns. Those of the 1 c. and 3 m. s. are incidentally mentioned, the latter being called an "independent personal pronoun", but the 2 m. s., 2 f. s., 3 f. s., and all the plurals are wanting. But to enumerate forms and phenomena unknown to this grammar would be to repeat a large portion of the work here translated. Further, though Mr. Le Page Renouf has stated in his "Concluding Observations" that the Egyptian language suffered many changes during its enormously long history, no hint of these changes appears in the treatment of grammatical forms and syntax. The entire treatise is therefore as reasonable as would be a grammar, which, without any distinction of time, should present the forms of Latin and its offspring Italian in heterogeneous combination from the Augustan age down to the present day. If the end of the period thus included were two thousand years removed from us, the parallel would be complete and it could be stated with impunity that the Latin article was if and that the Italian nouns were comprised in five terminationally inflected declensions. In France the new science is equally disregarded, as the recent "Manuel de la Langue égyptienne" of Victor Loret may testify.
translator. It is hoped, however, that such terms have been made at least intelligible to the English reading student and the indulgence of the reader is craved wherever felicitous English has been sacrificed for the sake of clearness. One word has been coined, viz. "substantivized", being simply the transferred German "substantivirte". With the translation "uninflected passive" for the German "endungsloses Passiv" the writer was not at all satisfied, but could find nothing better and after consultation with the author, it stands. The term "pseudoparticiple" is another directly transferred word for which nothing better could be found; it is, both in conjugation and meaning, very similar to the Assyrian "permansive", but to have used this term would have been a liberty not justified in translating.

It only remains to be hoped that the results, achieved within the last fifteen years, which render the grammatical structure of the ancient Egyptian tolerably intelligible, and which are herewith presented for the first time in English, may be as interesting and instructive to the English and American student as they have been to the translator, from the lips of the man to whom they are almost solely due.

Berlin, Nov. 11th, 1893.

James Henry Breasted.
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GLOSSARY.
ABBREVIATIONS.

ÄZ.: Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache (Bibliography C.)
Br. Wb.: Brugsch, Wörterbuch (Bibliography Ab).
Butler: Papyrus Butler (Exercises for Reading p. 28*).
C.: Steindorff, Coptic Grammar.
Copt.: Coptic.
Eb.: Papyrus Ebers (Bibliography Be).
f.: Feminine.
LE.: Late Egyptian.
L.D.: Lepsius, Denkmäler (Bibliography Ba).
Leps. Ausw.: Lepsius, Auswahl (Bibliography Ba).
M. or Merenre*: Pyramid of Merenre (Bibliography Bf).
m.: masculine.
Mar. Ab.: Mariette Abydos (Bibliography Bd).
Mar. Cat. d'Ab.: Mariette, Catalogue des monuments (Bibliography Bd).
Mar. Mast.: Mariette, Mastabas (Bibliography Bd).
m. e.: Middle Empire.
n. e.: New Empire.
o. e.: Old Empire.
Peasant: Story of the Eloquent Peasant (Exercises for Reading p. 28*).
P. I., or Pepy I.: Pyramid of Pepy I. (Bibliography Bf).
Prisse: Papyrus Prisse (Bibliography Be).
Pyr.: Pyramid Texts (Bibliography Bf).
RHF.: Rougé, Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques (Bibliography Ba).
Sin.: Sinuhe (Exercises for Reading p. 17*).
Sût: Griffith, Inscriptions of Sût (Bibliography Bd).
Tob.: Totenbuch, ed. Naville (Bibliography Bf).
Usa.: Inschrift des Wni (AZ. 1882, 1sq.).
Westc.: Papyrus Westcar (Bibliography Be).
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James Henry Breasted.
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ABBREVIATIONS.

Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache (Bibliography C.)
Dr. W.: Brugsch, Die ägyptische Gräberwelt, Leipzig 1868.
Vb.: Brugsch, Wörterbuch (Bibliography Ab).
Dr.: Papyrus Butler (Exercises for Reading p. 28*).
teindorff, Coptic Grammar.
: Coptic.
Papyrus Ebers (Bibliography Be).
eminine.
Late Egyptian.
Lepsius, Denkmäler (Bibliography Ba).
Ausz.: Lepsius, Auswahl (Bibliography Ba).
`Merenre': Pyramid of Merenre' (Bibliography Bf).
masculine.
Ab.: Mariette Abydos (Bibliography Bd).
Cat. d'Ab.: Mariette, Catalogue des monuments (Bibliography Bd).
Mast.: Mariette, Mastabas (Bibliography Bd).
: Hdb.: Eisenlohr, Mathemat. Handbuch (Bibliography Be).
: Middle Empire.
: New Empire.
: Old Empire.
:ct: Story of the Eloquent Peasant (Exercises for Reading p. 28*).
or Pepy I.: Pyramid of Pepy I. (Bibliography Bf).
: Papyrus Prisse (Bibliography Be).
Pyramid Texts (Bibliography Bf).
: Rougé, Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques (Bibliography Ba).
Sinuhe (Exercises for Reading p. 17*).
Griffith, Inscriptions of Siut (Bibliography Bd).
: Totenbuch, ed. Naville (Bibliography Bf).
Inskrift des Wni (AZ. 1882, 1sq.).
: Papyrus Westcar (Bibliography Be).
INTRODUCTION.

The Egyptian language is related to the Semitic languages (Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic &c.), to the East-African languages (Bischari, Galla, Somali and others), and to the Berber languages of North-Africa. The language of its oldest monuments belongs as far back as the fourth millennium B.C. and did not entirely die out until three centuries ago.

We distinguish the following chief periods of the language:

1. The Old-Egyptian, the oldest language treated in this book, the employment of which as the learned, literary language continued into Roman times. Peculiarities of its oldest form (found in the so-called "pyramid texts") are noted in the remarks "A" under the different paragraphs.

2. 3. The Middle-Egyptian, the popular language of the middle empire and the Late-Egyptian, the popular language of the new empire; the most important divergences found in this period are noted in the re-

Ermann, Egypt. gramm.
marks “B”. It is more fully treated in: Erman Sprache des Papyrus Westcar (Göttingen 1889) and Erman, Neuägyptische Grammatik (Leipzig 1880).

4. The Demotic, the popular language of the last pre-Christian centuries, written in a peculiar orthography. Cf. “Grammaire démotique”, Brugsch (Berlin 1855)—of course obsolete.

5. The Coptic, the language of the Christian Egyptians written with Greek letters. Cf. the Coptic grammar, parallel with this book, by Steindorff, which I hereafter cite as “C”.

3. Since the idioms cited, from 1—4, are all written without vowels, (cf. § 14) the Coptic affords the only possibility of understanding the structure of the Egyptian language. It is therefore necessary, even for the beginner, to acquire a knowledge of Coptic.—Only one who is already proficient in Old-Egyptian and Coptic should venture into Late-Egyptian or Demotic.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND PHONETICS.

1. IN GENERAL.

*4. Hieroglyphic writing consists of pictures of men, animals, plants, &c.; their number is very large, though only about 500 are in frequent use. The alphabetic and syllabic signs of §§ 13, 33—35, and the determinatives of § 47 are sufficient at the start for
ne beginner; the other signs he will best learn through usage.

The writing properly runs from right to left, and only exceptionally (when employed for certain decorative purposes) from left to right; nevertheless, for reasons of convenience we always write it in the latter direction. Whether an inscription is to be read from right or the left, is easily determined by the eads of the animal and human figures, which always seat toward the beginning.

The signs stand in part vertically as $\frac{1}{2}$, 6. part horizontally $\rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$; almost the only ones used in both positions are the especially equent signs $\leftarrow$ or $\rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$ “great” and $\leftarrow$ or $\rightleftarrows$

Sf. § 47). The frequent abbreviation $\leftarrow \frac{m}{\theta} \hrw \leftarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$ justified” is preferably written $\leftarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$ or $\leftarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$.

Caligraphy demanded that a number of continuous signs should together form an approximate rectangle. Hence the words $rp\text{\textsuperscript{C}}\text{\textsuperscript{I}}$ “hereditary prince”, $mr \text{\textsuperscript{C}}\text{\textsuperscript{I}}$ “nearest friend” and $\text{\textsuperscript{C}}\text{\textsuperscript{I}}$ “praise”, could only be written as follows $\frac{1}{2}$; arrangements like $\leftarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$ would be barbarous.—At the present day we do not always exactly follow this caligraphic law; but to the Egyptian
it was so important, that out of respect for it, sometimes departed from the correct orthography. For example, in almost all cases he wrote for "prince", $hcb$ "to play" and $rm\ell$ "man" $\frac{\overline{\frown}}{\overline{\frown}}$ $shc$, $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ $hbc$, $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ $nt$, because the correct writings $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ were unpleasing. Similarly $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ is often written for the more correct but unpleasing $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ $nt$ and $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ for $\overline{\overline{\frown}}$ $nt$.

8. It is customary to sketch the hieroglyphs exactly only in large ornamental inscriptions; in most cases it is regarded as sufficient to outline them in a conventional manner with a few strokes. The beginner should take as his pattern practically the writing in Brugsch's Dictionary, and should especially familiarize himself with the abbreviations for the different bishop there employed.

9. From the earliest times the individual signs were very much shortened and rounded off, when written upon Egyptian paper. We have accustomed ourselves to contrast these abbreviated hieroglyphs as a separate writing—the so-called "hieratic"—with the writing of the monuments. This is however correct, for they have no other points of distinction than are presented by our printed and written letters.
A knowledge of the Hieratic is not an immediate necessity for the beginner.

The hieratic writing is subdivided further into two varieties, a more angular uncial, in which the individual signs remain for the most part separated, and a more rapid cursive, which often contracts an entire word into one ligature. It was this cursive writing, out of which the Demotic (cf. § 2, 4) finally grew.

The hieroglyphic signs fall into three classes according to their meaning:

1. Phonetic signs, which are alphabetic or syllabic.
2. Ideograms, which represent a certain word, but are also very often employed for another word having the same consonants as the first.
3. So-called determinatives, i.e. signs placed after a word, to indicate its meaning in a general way.

As may be seen from the table of signs these classes are often not to be sharply defined, for original determinatives pass over into ideograms and original ideograms into syllabic signs.

2. PHONETIC SIGNS.

a. THE ALPHABET.

The alphabet (the arrangement of which is modern) is as follows:
2. PHONETIC SIGNS.  a. THE ALPHABET. 14.

To these are further to be added two second signs:

B. Since the new empire e is also written for w, \( m \) and \( n \).