

THE LORDS PRAYER IN MIDDLE EGYPTIAN

A Translation into the Classical Egyptian Language with Notes by Jordan Furutani

1 Introduction

This document provides a translation with various notes of the Lords Prayer into Middle Egyptian. The English text, as well as Egyptian transliteration, Manuel de Codage, typeset glyphs, and a literal translation of the Egyptian are all included. For each section a discussion of the translation choices is given, with attention primarily to lexical correspondences, but also to syntactic and other structural considerations. The English text is drawn from the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions 100-107. The divisions in which the text is translated are those used in that document. Reference to the Greek text of Matthew 6:9ff. was made throughout using the NA28.¹

2 The Preface

The translation begins with the introductory line. The opening appellation is easy enough, a simple *it.n* suffices. Yet the Egyptian grammar makes the addition of an introductory *i* advisable to ensure that the vocative is clear. While A40 (the seated divinity) is the conventional determinative for a divine name the abstract determinative is used here to reflect the prohibition against an image of God. The masculine relative *nty* matches the use of the English “which” in

¹ Aland, Kurt, Barbara Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th Edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

this case. *m* is the most obvious choice for “in” here, though but to emphasize the idea of superiority, as well as to fit the Egyptian idiom *hr* is used.

“Our Father which art in heaven”

$$i \, it \neq n \, nty \, hr \, pt^2$$

“Oh! Our Father who is in the sky”

3 The First Petition

The petitions are all translated with Egyptian passive prospectives, giving the sense of “may one do...”. This has the advantage of maintaining the ordinary structure for Egyptian prayers. The term *dśr* is the best choice for the Egyptian conception of holiness.³ The term’s usage does not extend to the Pyramid Texts, but nonetheless is often used in the tomb chapels from the Old Kingdom and is used with reference to gods in the New Kingdom.⁴ The use of a prospective form of *wn* creates the sense “may your name be holy” which is effectively equivalent to the English.

$$^2 \text{ i-A2-i-X1:f-A1-n:Z2-n:X1*y-Hr:Z1-p*X1:pt}$$

³ Wb 5, 610-613.5; cf. also Hoffmeier, James Karl 1985. *Sacred in the vocabulary of ancient Egypt: dsr, with special reference to Dynasties I-XX*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 59. Freiburg (Schweiz); Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Orientalistische Literaturzeitung 84 (3), 281-282.

⁴ e.g. BD 133 *wsjr NN m3^c hrw m r^c dsr hpwt m šmsw nw* “Osiris NN, justified, is holy Ra of the steering oars in the wake of Nun”

“Hallowed be thy name”



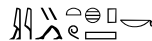
*wnn rn=k dsr*⁵

“May your name be holy”

4 The Second Petition

Here it is the term “Kingdom” that provides the most difficulty. There is no Egyptian term which perfectly translates to the English concept. Two options are readily available: either the term *t3*,⁶ which in its generic sense is functional, or a compound expression such as *w nswy*. The primary issue with *t3* is that it is clearly the best choice for “earth” later in the prayer. A third option may be considered, the sense of the expression is clearly “dominion”, for this we may instead give *hpš*, which is attested in the sense of: “the strength of the King”.⁷

“Thy kingdom come”



*iy hpš=k*⁸

“May your dominion come”

⁵ wn:n:n-r:n:k-D-s-r:D45

⁶ Wb 5, 212.6-216.7.

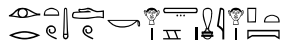
⁷ Merikare E 32.

⁸ ii-i-y:D54-t:Z7-x*p:S-k

5 The Third Petition

The dichotomy between heaven and earth is established in Egyptian cosmology. While “will”, is not a typical translation of *mdw* the sense is clear. In terms of grammar a pair of passive prospectives provide the structure of the verse while a succeeding pair of prepositional phrases joined by *mi* completes the thought.

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”



*ir.tw mdw=k hr t3 mi hr pt*⁹

“May your word be done on earth as in heaven”

6 The Fourth Petition

This petition is easy to translate and would work well in an Egyptian context. The importance of bread in Egyptian funerary cult emphasizes its role. For the expression “daily” a plural nisba is used. It is perhaps preferable to translate “today” as *min*,¹⁰ but the more common expression was selected.

⁹ *ir:r-t:Z7-md-d:Z7-k-Hr:Z1-tA:N23*Z1-mi-i-Hr:Z1-p*t:pt*

¹⁰ GEG § 205.1, Wb 2, 43.1-5, Sin. B189.

“Give to us our daily bread on this day”

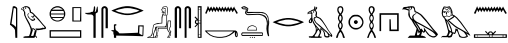
This petition raises difficulties. The Coptic expression for forgiveness ⲕⲁⲁ <something>, meaning “to release <something>”,¹² from this idea we can use the Middle Egyptian *sfh*.¹³ The best word for debts is probably *wḏ-dbh*,¹⁴ a rare expression literally meaning something like “invoice” or “order for payment.” The expression debtors is impossible to render simply, the easiest way to keep the original style is to reuse the idea of the invoice with an additional prepositions phrase.

“Release from us our invoices, as we release invoices for us”

¹⁵ s-f:x-V12-m-n:Z2-wD-D&Z2-d-b-H-Z7-A2-n:Z2-s-f:x-V12-n:Z2-wD-D&Z2-d-b-H-Z7-A2-n:n:Z2

19 ΖΑΜΗΝ.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen”

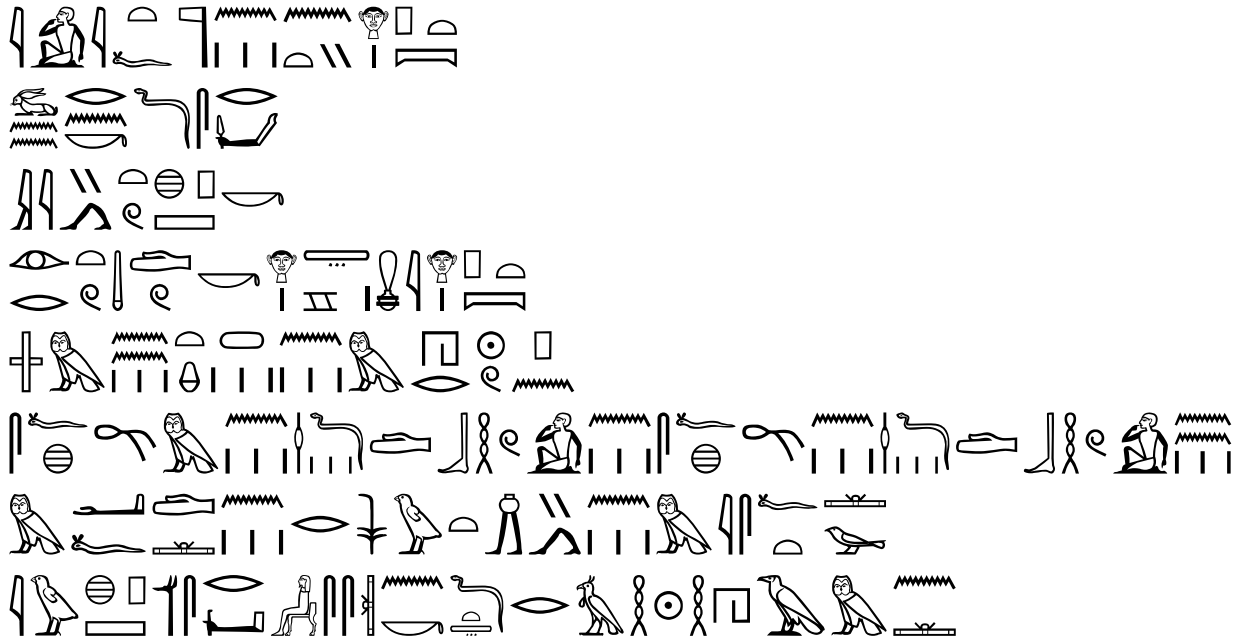


*iw ḥpš wsr špss nꜥk dt r nhḥ h3mn*²⁰

“The dominion and the power and the glory are to you, forever and ever, Amen.”

10 The Complete Hieroglyphic Text

Here follows the entire translated text in hieroglyphics.



²⁰ i-w-x*p:S-wsr-s-r:D40-A50-s-s-Y1v-n:k-D&&&(t:N16)-r-nH-H-ra-H-h-A-m-n:Y1