The Admonitions of Ipuwer: Difficult version

The text was composed during the Middle Kingdom, but the surviving manuscript is Papyrus Leiden 344, dating to the 19th dynasty. Our excerpt begins at line 2.3 due to the fragmentary nature of the previous lines.

ỉwms ḥʿpy ḥr ḥwỉ

Surely/indeed, Hapy/the Nile is overflowing;

Sentence structure: Subject + *ḥr* + infinitive (present tense)

n skɜ.tw n=f s nb ḥr ḏd

one does not plough for it/him. Every man is saying:

Sentence structure: *n* + *sḏm.tw=f* (negation); *ḥr* + infinitive

n rḫ=n ḫprwt ḫt tɜ ỉwms ḥmwt wšr

'We do not know what has happened/is happening throughout the land. Indeed, women are barren.

Sentence structure: *n* + *sḏm=f*; plural feminine participle; subject + stative

n ỉwr.n.tw n ḳd.n ḫnmw m-ᶜ sḫrw tɜ

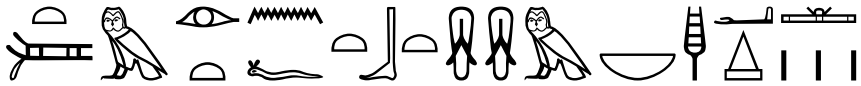
One cannot conceive; Khnum cannot build because of the condition of the land.

Sentence structure: *n* + *sḏm.n.tw=f* (passive; inability to do something)

ỉwms šwɜww ḫpr(.w) m nbw špssw

Indeed/surely, poor men have become lords/owners of riches/wealth/possessions.

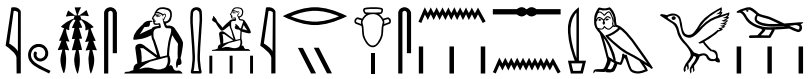
Sentence structure: Subject + stative; construct state (two nouns together to produce a possessive effect)



tm ỉrt n=f tbty m nb ꜥḥꜥw

The one who could not make for himself a pair of sandals (is) the lord/owner of riches/wealth/heaps/tombs.

Sentence structure: Ambiguous verb construction (perhaps negated participle)



ỉwms ḥmw ỉry ỉb(w)=sn snm.w

Indeed, their servants, their hearts/minds are sad.

Sentence structure: Subject + stative; *ỉry* seems to substitute a possessive suffix pronoun

n snsn.n wrw rmṯ=sn nhmw

The notables/seniors cannot/do not fraternise with their people who are rejoicing.

Sentence structure: Negated *sḏm.n=f*; noun + participle

ỉwms ỉb sḫm.w ỉ3dt ḫt t3

Indeed, the heart is violent, (and) pestilence (is) throughout the land.

Sentence structure: Subject + stative; noun + prepositional phrase

is obscure; Gardiner suggests ‘to lack’.

snf m st nbt n nḳꜣn.n mwt

Blood (is) everywhere, (and) death is not lacking.

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (noun + prepositional phrase); negated *sḏm.n=f*

wnḫyt ḥr ḏd n tkn ỉm=st

The mummy-cloth is speaking (before one) has approached it.

Sentence structure: Subject + *ḥr* + infinitive; negated *sḏm=f* with no articulated subject

ỉwms mwwt ʿšɜ ḳrs.w m ỉtrw

Indeed, many dead are buried in the river.

Sentence structure: Subject + stative

nwy m ḥɜt

The flood (is) a tomb,

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (noun + prepositional phrase)

ḫpr ỉs wʿbt m nwy

(and) the tomb/chapel has become a flood.

Sentence structure: Past *sḏm=f*

ỉwms špsw m nḫwt

Indeed, nobles (are) in mourning/lamentation;

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (noun + prepositional phrase)

šwɜww ḫry ršwt

(and) the poor (are) joyful.

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (noun + prepositional phrase); the *y* in *ḫry* may be superfluous

nỉwt nbt ḥr ḏd

Every city is saying:

Sentence structure: Subject + *ḥr* + infinitive

ỉmỉ dr=n ḳnw mm=n

‘Let us drive out the great ones among us’.

Sentence structure: Imperative + future *sḏm=f* + object (noun)

ỉwms rmṯ mỉ gmw

Indeed, people (are) like black ibises.

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (subject/noun + prepositional phrase)

sbw ḫt tꜣ

Squalor (is) throughout the land.

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (subject/noun + prepositional phrase)

nn ms ḥḏ ḥbsw m pȝ rk

Indeed, garments (are) not white in this time.

Sentence structure: Negated adjectival sentence (non-verbal sentence; adjective + subject/noun)

ỉwms tȝ ḥr msnḥ mỉ ỉr nḥp

Indeed, the land is turning backwards as does a potter's wheel.

Sentence structure: Subject + *ḥr* + infinitive; present *sḏm=f*

[…] We pick up at 2.10 due to lacunae in the text.

ꜥwȝy m nb ꜥḥꜥw

The robber (is) the lord/owner of riches/wealth […]

Sentence structure: Non-verbal sentence (subject/noun + prepositional phrase)

ỉwms ỉtrw m snf swrỉ.tw ỉm=f

Indeed, the river (is) blood, (but) one drinks from it.

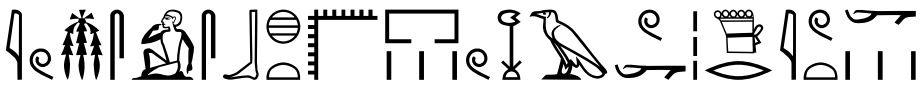
Sentence structure: Subject/noun + prepositional phrase; present *sḏm.tw=f*

is of uncertain meaning; Gardiner suggests ‘to shrink’.

nỉw.tw m rmṯ ỉb.tw mw

One shrinks away from people (when) one thirsts after water.

Sentence structure: Present *sḏm=f*; the second example used in a circumstantial meaning



ỉwms sbḫwt wḫɜw ḏrỉwt

Surely, gates, columns and walls

ꜣmm(.w) ḏrwt nt pr-nsw ꜥnḫ wḏꜣ snb

are consumed by flame; the walls of the palace (life, prosperity and health)

Sentence structure: Subject-stative

mn(.w) rwḏ(.w) swhꜣ dpt rs(y)w

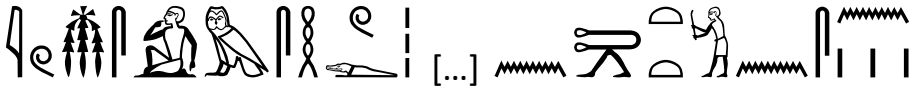
are established/firm (and) flourishing; the ship of the South/Southerners is broken/adrift.

Sentence structure: Subject-stative; present *sḏm=f*

ḫbꜣ(w) nỉwwt šmꜥw ḫpr(.w) m […] *šwyw*

Towns/cities have been destroyed; Upper Egypt has become […] dry/empty.

Sentence structure: *sḏmw=f* (passive); subject-stative



ỉwms msḥw […] *n ỉṯṯ.n=sn*

Indeed, crocodiles […] of what they have seized/captured.

Sentence structure: Relative *sḏm.n=f*