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**DFG-Projekt "Digitalisierung und Erschließung des Nachlasses des
Ägyptologen Adolf Erman (1854-1937)"**

**Brief von Battiscombe Gunn an Adolf Erman an Misr /
Maslahat al-Atar**

Gunn, Battiscombe

Saqqarah, el Badrashein, 02.08.1924

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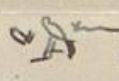
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2. August, 1924.

Service of Antiquities,
Saqqarah, El Bedrashein,
Upper Egypt.

Dear Professor Erman,

Very many thanks for your long and most interesting letter about my book. I am, I need hardly say, extremely gratified that your opinion of it should be so favourable, and I feel much honoured that you should have given yourself the trouble to approve or criticize much of it in detail instead of ~~only~~ merely expressing a general opinion.

I quite agree with you that language and logic are two different things, and that Egyptian, like other languages, often wrote incorrectly from the standpoint of formal grammar. Indeed, we must expect this in Egyptian more than in many other languages, firstly from what we know of the great carelessness of the Egyptian character, and secondly from the fact that the language they wrote was almost always an antiquated one which it must have been very difficult to maintain pure in the absence of any systematic tradition either of grammar or of the pronunciation of obsolete forms. But what I do claim is that they made many temporal distinctions which we have not yet given them credit for. On the other hand I have shown, for instance in my study of *mn* , to what varied uses a single form may be put. I began by thinking that this form was used only for the past, but on closely studying the hundreds of examples that I had collected I found that this was by no means the case.

I am afraid it is partly my fault that you ~~find~~ find the book somewhat difficult to understand; for I have often found it necessary to invent new grammatical terms. I believe that every one of these new terms are defined somewhere in the volume, but it would perhaps ~~have~~ have been better to have drawn up a glossary of them.

As to the sentence on p. 110 which you quote: "It is used with virtually unlimited time-field in generalisations of the widest kind, in which the singular subject connotes a whole category", I mean that there is no restriction, ~~is~~ expressed or implied, as ~~time~~ ^{to} time ^{except} (and this is why I inserted "virtually") the finite duration of the category connoted by the subject; thus, in the examples which follow, ~~the time to which~~ the statements ~~apply~~ are meant to hold good as long as "one" and "well-to-do men" and "affronted hearts" and "Asiatics" exist. In these examples the subject is singular, but stands for a whole class of persons the existence of which extends through practically unlimited time.

I must ask your pardon for not having previously acknowledged the receipt of your two very interesting articles - "Das Weisheitsbuch des Amen-em-ope" from O.L.Z., and "Eine ägyptische Quelle der 'Sprüche Salomos'". The latter especially seems to me extraordinarily interesting, and of course has an importance extending far beyond technical Egyptology. It is really bahnbrechend, as the first convincing demonstration that any part of the Old Testament is derived directly from Egyptian sources.

I expect to leave Saqqarah shortly. I have had a busy time since my arrival in January, and have prepared a quantity of material for publication. This material is mostly from the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period. I hope the volume will appear in the early part of next year. Most of the material is of a very conventional nature, but here and there are some interesting things.

Please give my kindest regards to Professor Sethe next time you see him; I hope he received the copy of my book which I told the publisher to send him.

With best greetings, I am

Yours very sincerely,

Bathcumber Gunn