

1.E4 The scribal art

- (a) The scribal art is the mother of orators, the father of masters,
The scribal art is delightful, it never satiates you,
The scribal art is not (easily) learned, (but) he who has learned it need no longer
be anxious about it.

Strive to (master) the scribal art and it will enrich you,
 Be industrious in the scribal art and it will provide you with wealth and
 abundance,
 Do not be careless concerning the scribal art, do not neglect it,
 The scribal art is a 'house of richness', the secret of Amanki,
 Work ceaselessly with the scribal art and it will reveal its secret to you,
 If you neglect it, they will make malicious remarks about you.
 The scribal art is a good lot, richness and abundance.
 Since you were a child it causes you grief, since you have grown up [it ...],
 The scribal art is the 'bond' of all ... [...] ...
 Work hard for it [and it will ... you] its beautiful prosperity,
 To have superior knowledge in Sumerian, to learn ... , [to learn] Emesal,
 To write a stele, to draw a field, to settle accounts, [...],
 ... the palace ... ,
 The scribe may be its (of the scribal art) servant, he calls for the corvée basket,
 [...].

- (b) 'I neglected the scribal art, [I forsook] the scribal art,
 My teacher did not ... ,
 ... d me his skill in the scribal art.
 The ... of words, the art of being a young scribe,
 the ... of the art of being a big brother, let no one ... to school.'
 'Give me his gift, let him direct the way to you,
 let him put aside counting and accounting;
 the current school affairs
 the schoolboys will ... , verily they will ... me.'
 To that which the schoolboy said, his father gave heed.
 The teacher was brought from school;
 having entered the house, he was seated in the seat of honor.
 The schoolboy took the ... , sat down before him;
 whatever he had learned of the scribal art,
 he unfolded to his father.
 His father, with joyful heart
 says joyfully to his 'school-father':
 'You "open the hand" of my young one, you make of him an expert,
 show him all the fine points of the scribal art.
 You have shown him all the more obvious details of the tablet-craft, of counting
 and accounting, [or 'Of the mathematical tablets, of counting and accounting,
 you explain their solution to him,']
 you have clarified for him all the more recondite details of the ...'
 'Pour out for him ... like good wine, bring him a stand,
 make flow the good oil in his ... -vessel like water,
 I will dress him in a (new) garment, present him a gift, put a band about his hand.'
 They pour out for him ... like good date-wine, brought him a stand,
 made flow the good oil in his ... -vessel like water,
 he dressed him in a (new) garment, gave him a gift, put a band about his hand.
 The teacher with joyful heart gave speech to him:
 'Young man, because you did not neglect my word, did not forsake it,

May you reach the pinnacle of the scribal art, achieve it completely.
Because you gave me that which you were by no means obliged (to give),
you presented me with a gift over and above my earnings, have shown me great
honor,
may Nidaba, the queen of the guardian deities, be your guardian deity,
may she show favor to your fashioned reed,
may she take all evil from your hand copies.
Of your brothers, may you be their leader,
of your companions, may you be their chief,
may you rank the highest of (all) the schoolboys.