

## Silent Struggles: Unveiling Linguistic Insights into Poverty in Ancient Egypt

**Authors :** Hossam Mohammed Abdelfattah

**Abstract :** In ancient Egypt, poverty, recognized as the foremost challenge, was extensively addressed in teachings, wisdom, and literary texts. These sources vividly depicted the suffering of a class deprived of life's pleasures. The ancient Egyptian language evolved to introduce terms reflecting poverty and hunger, underscoring the society's commitment to acknowledging and cautioning against this prevalent issue. Among the notable expressions, *iwty.f* emerged during the Middle Kingdom, symbolizing "the one without property" and signifying the destitute poor. *iwty n.f* traced back to the Pyramid Texts era, referred to "the one who has nothing" or simply, the poor. Another term, *iwty-sw* emphasized the state of possessing nothing. *rA-awy* originating in the Middle Kingdom Period, initially meant "poverty and poor," expanding to signify poverty in various texts with the addition of the preposition "in," conveying strength given to the poor. During the First Intermediate Period, *sny -mnt* denoted going through a crisis or suffering, possibly referencing a widespread disease or plague. It encompassed meanings of sickness, pain, and anguish. The term *.sq-sn* introduced in Middle Kingdom texts, conveyed the notion of becoming miserable. *sp-Xsy* represented a temporal expression reflecting a period of misery or poverty, with *Xsy* indicating distress or misery. The term *qsnt* appearing in Middle Kingdom texts, held meanings of painful, difficult, harsh, miserable, emaciated, and in bad condition. Its feminine form, *qsn* denoted anxiety and turmoil. Finally, *tp-qsn* encapsulated the essence of misery and unhappiness. In essence, these expressions provide linguistic insights into the multifaceted experience of poverty in ancient Egypt, illustrating the society's keen awareness and efforts to address this pervasive challenge.

**Keywords :** poverty, poor, suffering, misery, painful, ancient Egypt

**Conference Title :** ICA 2024 : International Conference on Archaeology

**Conference Location :** Dublin, Ireland

**Conference Dates :** August 29-30, 2024