

This is the sad story of Sassaššaš and Nešemmi.

A long time ago, when the sun and the moon were young, Sassaššaš and Nešemmi loved each other very much. He thought that Nešemmi was as beautiful as the liana flower. She thought that Sassaššaš was as sturdy as the umbrella tree. Their mothers and maternal aunts had arranged a marriage. The wedding would happen tomorrow.

Sassaššaš walked into the forest. Up high in a tree he saw a hummingbird's nest. He thought: Beautiful Nešemmi would surely like some hummingbird's eggs. Sassaššaš climbed high in the tree and he took the eggs. He brought them to Nešemmi.

Nešemmi said: Thank you, O my Love. Sassaššaš grinned. She opened the eggs to cook them. Inside there were baby hummingbirds.

Nešemmi grasped her stomach in fear. She said: Inside my womb our baby is growing. Because you took these eggs, the baby hummingbirds have died. Now our baby will die at birth the same! Now I shall never marry you!

Sassaššaš's heart was filled with sorrow. He ran into the forest and he climbed the high tree. He threw himself down onto the rocks and he died.

Helpful Notes

Everything about the Beltös language can be found here:

<https://www.temenia.org/Beltos/index.html>

What you will need to perform the translation:

1. The grammar of the language is complex and not entirely regular, resembling as much as possible a natural language's grammar. It will be helpful if you skim the entire grammar before you begin. Not every grammatical feature is represented in the text, but many of them are, and it would be difficult for me to attempt to extract only the relevant bits into a grammar primer.
2. Every natural language has a particularly complicated aspect, and for Beltös it is the pronouns. Because of diachronic fusion with the honorific particles, as well as other assimilative changes, there are a huge number of forms. There are so many forms that the pronouns have been split off into a separate web page. You will need to reference this page a lot.
3. The phonological assimilation is extensive, and in some cases unattested in the real world. The rules can be found in the "Assimilation" section of the Phonology web page. Most useful will be the Prefix Table and the Suffix Table of that section, which summarize all the rules (except for stress and revoicing, which you don't care about). Note that: "The assimilation is already represented in the written form of the language." This means that you have to run the tables in reverse, to figure out what the stems and affixes were before they became fused together.
4. The entire lexicon is online and is heavily cross-linked. It is alphabetized by root, with each stem having its own entry. This might seem like it would be hard to find a particular word, but it is online and searchable, so it's not as bad as it sounds.
5. For the culture, you will find the sections on "Beltös Culture", "Myths of the Beltös People", and "Beltös Idioms" all helpful.

Beltös is a highly inflected language with agreement, evidentiality, honorifics, and a lot of phonological assimilative changes. Translating it might be a lot of work. Or perhaps a lot of fun. Good luck!

Jeffrey

Nizë ja tájazja pádeli ‘emSassaššašom ‘en ‘eNepemmisson sesë.

Gojezgojezme, ‘emmenzem ja ‘oponnam ‘en ja ‘ófaš šetamkan zillažžä, ‘eSassaššaš ‘en ‘eNepemmi šetëdagäžmamsömilmabimma ‘azamdaš baz. Ši šannel ‘iğ ‘eNepemmi žalsi‘ali zos ja ‘ilemgos ja ‘igežželäm. Ti tánnel ‘iğ ‘eSassaššaš žalžgibali zos ja ‘o‘i‘äh. Ja zemammäh ‘en ja zemammähban titima ja tánšanzašën zetëdadaž‘an‘iłos. Ja tázeššam kégazdoš goja-bimbe.

‘eSassaššaš šežbäzbin ‘ižbi ja ‘ibelpábazjamëš. Žeš kídlözzal žeš ‘itajem ‘ižbi ‘iböhzanáš ‘a‘azzali baz ké‘a‘ol šin. Ši šannel ‘iğ tedezezma pazzazdali ‘eNepemmi si‘ali žeš sidazzosän žeš ‘itajem. ‘eSassaššaš šižbäs ‘a‘azzali baz ‘ižbi ‘iböhšanáš ‘en ši šipa žeš sidazzosän. Ši šembidim ‘eNepemmin ‘ozzen žetiš.

‘eNepemmi tízпам ‘iğ diznaš gäzmamsömazma-o ‘em. ‘eSassaššaš šezožbadäx tápim. Téjašpëzjö ti žeš sidazzosän pannimpa teme ti žetitin. Šetëdafiš ‘ižbi žeš sidazzosáš žeš šeždi šitajem.

‘eNepemmi témal‘až zgabom ‘imo‘anën tim. Ti ‘izпам ‘iğ ‘ezdi dam šelammam ‘ižbi ‘ikelzimëš ‘em. Ždonnis ‘e šipa žeš sidazzosän niz, žeš šeždi šitajem šetëdiglibapos. Žbäs‘inna ‘ezdi dam šetëdigliba kennaž ‘enöjanož žalna! Žbäs‘inna ‘e den tédlambammäh ‘ilzazzim!

Ja ‘edekäzma ‘emSassaššašom tépade ‘azamdaš baz. Ši šebeždal ‘ižbi ja ‘ibelpábazjamëš ‘en ši šižbäs ‘iböhzanän ‘a‘azzali baz. Ši šezäx‘ennabilba dajannali ‘ižbi žeš síkimlamáš ‘en ši šedigliba.

Cultural Notes about the Story of Sassaššaš and Nešemmi

The culture of the Beltös people is in transition from gathering to agriculture. People live in extended families together in longhouses. Cooperation and tranquility is highly valued because everyone must work together in order to have enough food to survive; independent thought is not encouraged; and conflict and anger and passion are despised. The Beltös are vegetarians for the most part; they do eat eggs. They eat meat rarely but carnivory is scorned.

What's happening in this story? Like most stories in the Beltös culture, it is a morality tale.

Everything starts out fine. Sassaššaš and Nešemmi are in love and about to get married. But then Sassaššaš climbs a tall tree for some hummingbird eggs. He is stealing the eggs of the weakest animal in the forest, and even worse, he is being foolhardy in doing so. [oh, oh!]

Then, Nešemmi calls him, “my Love.” This is hard to translate. Literally “gäzmamsömazma” means something like “embodiment of my lust” – so perhaps “my Loverboy” would have been a better choice. In any case, the word has a clear sexual connotation. No wonder Sassaššaš responds with a big grin. [oh, oh!]

Next, hummingbird embryos are found in the eggs. This is a horrible omen! We discover that Nešemmi is pregnant. Now she is afraid for her baby and furious with Sassaššaš. She cancels the wedding! [so much passion]

Sassaššaš is so brokenhearted and distressed that he hurls himself to his death! [yet more passion]

The moral lesson: Passion leads to sorrow and regret and tragedy. Be serene.