

The Dialogue of Ipuur and the Lord to the Limit

This dialogue is known from a fragmentary 19th Dynasty manuscript (P. Leiden I.344 rto) from Saqqara, containing 17 columns, of c. 14 lines each (c. 660 verses). On the verso is a hymn to Amun (Zandee 1992). Only the top left hand part of column 1 is preserved, but the extant text opens *in media res*, suggesting that at least one further is probably lost (i.e., 40–50 verses). The first extant column of the verso text is apparently the start of that composition (Zandee 1992: 6), however, suggesting that not much of the start of the roll is missing (i.e., only one column from the start of the recto: cf. Fecht 1972: 42). There was presumably either a brief narrative introduction, similar to that of *Neferti* and *Sasobek*, or an extended title, as in *Fowler* and *Renseneb*. It is uncertain how many lines of the poem are lost at the end. After the final extant lines (17.1–3), there is a lacuna of about ten manuscript lines followed by traces in the verso hand (three lines: Zandee 1992: 1083–4, pl. 37–8), so there cannot be much of this copy of the poem lost in the lacuna (at most 25 verses). J. Zandee suggests that the lacuna may have contained the continuation and conclusion of the verso text and that not much of the original roll is lost, but the verso text is too fragmentary to estimate exactly what length of roll is missing at the end.¹³ It is possible that this copy of the poem originally ended shortly after 17.3, but it is also possible that the roll contained an incomplete copy of *Ipuur*, or that it originally contained a complete copy of *Ipuur* on the recto that was partially erased when the papyrus was reused to copy a hymn to Amun which began on the verso but extended onto the recto.

The text is a lament about the state of the land: Ipuur (or ‘Ipu the elder’), who is given no title, is addressing the ‘Lord to the Limit’, who replies with at least two speeches (15.13, 16.11). The Dialogue takes place before an audience – perhaps the Lord’s entourage – that is also addressed (e.g., 7.1). The Lord is apparently the king, rather than a god, although the text’s concerns are theodic.

The date of composition is disputed. As the text stands, internal evidence points to the late Middle Kingdom (e.g., Vernus 1990b: 189–90), but many critics (e.g., Fecht 1972) have made redactionalist studies and dated parts of the composition earlier. Wolfgang Helck (1995: 72–7) has suggested, without any concrete evidence, that the text is not a unity (cf. Quack 1997: 347). The sage is mentioned on the ‘Daressy Fragment’ as ‘the Overseer of Singers, Ipuur’ (cf. L. Morenz 1999a: 131), and he may be included in the list of P. Athens.

¹³ Even if the three lines are the direct continuation of the verso text, the papyrus could have been much longer when *Ipuur* was copied on the recto, and may have been cut down before the verso text was copied.

Text: Gardiner 1909a: 1–95, pl. 1–16; many new readings are supplied by Fecht 1972; Helck 1995 (unreliable); *translation*: Parkinson 1999f: 155–65. *Studies*: Barta 1974a; Faulkner 1964; Fecht 1972, 1974; Franke 1998b; Gilula 1981; L. Morenz 1996: 87–106, 1999a; Otto 1951; Parkinson 1991b: no. xvi; Posener 1951a: no. 8, 1946; Quack 1997; Renaud 1988; Roccati 1994a; Schorr 1974; Spiegel 1975.

The Dialogue of a Man and His Ba

The dialogue is preserved in a papyrus from the second half of the 12th Dynasty ‘Berlin library’ at Thebes (P. Berlin 3024; Burkard and Fischer-Elfert 1994: 113 no. 169; see 4.2). It may have been composed around the middle of the dynasty, not long before the group of manuscripts were written, since colloquialisms and an unusual interrogative nominal construction (20) might suggest a later Middle Kingdom date (cf. Silverman 1980: 85–6), although Vernus’ linguistic analysis (1990b: 185) associates the dialogue with the texts of the early Middle Kingdom. At the beginning of the manuscript, at least half a sheet is lost – perhaps one and a half sheets, which would have contained around 35 lines. 155 lines remain, including the end of the composition (c. 200 verses).

The poem is a dialogue in various literary styles, between a man (the ‘Lebensmüder’ or ‘man tired of life’ of Adolf Erman’s original edition) and his *ba* on the nature of death, which is recounted by the man who is not named in the extant text. It seems to take place before an audience of accessors (addressed in the plural in 1). The composition may have opened with a brief statement as in the New Kingdom dialogue *The Contending of the Belly and the Head* (see p. 218).

The Amherst Papyri included five small fragments (H–L; P. Amherst III) in a hand very similar to those from the ‘Berlin library’, and probably coming from the same source (Newberry 1899: pl.1). Georges Posener judged them to be from a different text from the other Berlin manuscripts,¹⁴ but as Percy Newberry suggested (1899: 9) they are parts of the lost start of *A Man and His Ba*, and not part of an otherwise lost fifth roll in the ‘library’. The fragments preserve parts of at least nine lines (c. 15 verses), some of which (J–K) read ‘[Com]e(?), I shall teach you [. . .] the form (?) of the West [. . .] A man is [. . .]’, another (L) ‘it is the hour’.

Text: Faulkner 1956 (P. Berlin 3024 only); *translation*: Parkinson 1999f: 151–65.

Studies: J. Assmann 1996: 199–210; Barta 1969; Bolshakov 1985; Brunner-Traut 1967; Depuydt 1993; Fecht 1991; Goedicke 1970a; Hannig 1991;

¹⁴ 1951a: no. 32; followed by Parkinson 1991b: no. ix (‘The Amherst Wisdom Text’), 1991c: x–xi.

Letellier 1991; Lohmann 1998; Menu 2000; Osing 1977a; Parkinson 1991b: no. xvii, 1991d, 1996c; Posener 1951a: no. 7; Renaud 1991; Schenkel 1973; Tobin 1991; Welsh 1978; R. J. Williams 1962.

A.1.3 OTHER WISDOM TEXTS

The Oxford Wisdom Text

A fragmentary writing board in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1964.489a,b), probably from Thebes, has seven lines of text on each side (c. 50 verses). The hand is possibly the same as that of Tablets Carnarvon I and II from Deir el-Bahri and dates to the start of the 18th Dynasty (Vernus 1984: 706, no. 8). One side concerns the relationship of the 'god' (king) with the duties of an official, to whom the text is addressed; the lines on the other side are more didactic and less reflective. Both sides were written by the same hand, and both presumably contain the same text, which seems to be either a discourse or a teaching. The language is classical Middle Egyptian. The date of composition is uncertain.

Text and translation: Barns 1968.

Studies: Parkinson 1991b: no. x.

The Maxims of P. Ramesseum II

P. Ramesseum II (= P. BM EA 10755), from the late Middle Kingdom 'Ramesseum library' at Thebes (see 4.2), comprises two fragments containing six columns which seem from the hand to have been copied at different times (c. 115 verses). The text is a loose collection of reflective maxims of a generally pessimistic nature; it is unlikely to be an abstract of a single unitary text. On the recto, each maxim is written on a separate line, while from the second column of the verso onward the writing is continuous. On the verso, the divisions between maxims (not metrical verses) are marked by red verse-points (see 6.3).

Text: Barns 1956: 11–14, pl. 7–9.

Studies: L. Morenz 1997a; Parkinson 1991b: no. xviii; Posener 1951a: no. 59.

The Ramesseum Wisdom Fragment

A small fragment now mounted together with *The Discourse of Sasobek* (P. BM EA 10754, 'Frgs.D') seems to be in a distinct, though similar, hand. This is presumably from the 'Ramesseum library', and is apparently part of an otherwise unknown text, not mentioned by Barns (1956) or Gardiner (1955a). Parts of three lines are preserved, with rubrics and verse-points; l.x+1 mentions 'officials' (in a rubric) and x+3 reads '[he

who makes] an end for himself – he is an ignoramus'. This phrase suggests that it is part of a discourse or teaching.

Unpublished; Parkinson 1991b: no. xib; mentioned by Quirke as a teaching (1996b: 387 [M10]; number misquoted as EA 10770).

Excursus: The el-Lahun Wisdom Text

P. UCL 32106C rto contains 7 vertical lines in black with red verse-points to the lower right of each section of text; on the verso are 6 partly erased vertical lines. One line on the recto (6) has a line number (either 60 or 80), suggesting a text of some length, although the fragment seems to include the start of the roll. Other fragments that Stephen Quirke considers to be parts of the same manuscript are P. UCL 32107H (2 vertical lines with verse-points; 32107E may belong to this fragment), 32110F (2 fragments, with 3 horizontal lines with verse-points); 32117E (ends of 3 vertical lines with no surviving verse-points; a medical text (?) on the verso). It is uncertain what type of text this is: the proposed identification as a wisdom text (Quirke 1996b: 387) rests in part on the literary-sounding word *ȝjr* 'oppress' in 32110F, but this word occurs in other types of text (e.g., CT III, 358c, VI 293k, 406t), and an identification as a ritual text is more likely.¹⁵

Unpublished.

A.1.4 COMPOUND GENRES

*The Account of the Sporting King*¹⁶

A late 18th Dynasty manuscript contains parts of 18 columns; it is uncertain how much is lost at each end (P. Moscow, unnumbered; c. 455 verses). The papyrus was purchased at Thebes (Camino 1956: vii), and may derive from a Theban library of manuscripts comprising copies of *Ptahhotep* (L2), *Sinuhe* (G), *Merikare* (M), *Fishing and Fowling* and the New Kingdom *Mythological Tale* (Quirke 1996b: 390 suggests Saqqara as the findspot for unstated reasons). The fragments reveal a narrative interspersed with long eulogizing speeches made by the King's Sealbearer Sehotepibreankh, an official otherwise unknown, to a king who is playfully titled 'Two Ladies: Fisher and Fowler' (B1.3, C1.12). There is mention of Amenemhat II (E2.10), who is presumably the king who requests these speeches during a court hunting trip (A2.1–3). The text

¹⁵ Other possibly related el-Lahun fragments with verse-points are: 32152D (2 vertical lines with a verse-point on the recto, with one vertical line on the verso); 32110G (3 vertical lines; epistolary formula on verso).

¹⁶ Since the relationship between narrative and discourse in the genre of the text as a whole is not certain, I have used the neutral term 'account'.