

than everything else. (135) You shall reach home, you shall be there among your brothers."

Stretched out on my belly I touched the ground before him; then I said to him: "I shall speak of your power to the king, I shall let him know (140) of your greatness. I shall send you *ibi* and *hknw* oils, laudanum, *hsyt*-spice, and the incense of the temples which pleases all the gods. I shall tell what happened to me, what I saw of your power. One will praise god for you in the city before the councillors of the whole land. I shall slaughter (145) oxen for you as burnt offering; I shall sacrifice geese to you. I shall send you ships loaded with all the treasures of Egypt, as is done for a god who befriends people in a distant land not known to the people."

Then he laughed at me for the things I had said, which seemed foolish to him. (150) He said to me: "You are not rich in myrrh and all kinds of incense. But I am the lord of Punt, and myrrh is my very own. That *hknw*-oil you spoke of sending, it abounds on this island. Moreover, when you have left this place, you will not see this island again; it will have become water."

Then the ship (155) came, as he had foretold. I went and placed myself on a tall tree, I recognized those that were in it. When I went to report it, I found that he knew it. He said to me: "In health, in health, fellow, to your home, that you may see your children! Make me a good name in your town; that is what I ask (160) of you." I put myself on my belly, my arms bent before him. Then he gave me a load of myrrh, *hknw*-oil, laudanum, *hsyt*-spice, *tšps*-spice, perfume, eye-paint, giraffe's tails, great lumps of incense, (165) elephant's tusks, greyhounds, long-tailed monkeys, baboons, and all kinds of precious things.

I loaded them on the ship. Then I put myself on my belly to thank him and he said to me: "You will reach home in two months. You will embrace your children. You will flourish at home, you will be buried."⁵

I went down to the shore (170) near the ship; I hailed the crew which was in the ship. I gave praise on the shore to the lord of the island, those in the ship did the same. We sailed north to the king's residence. We reached the residence in two months, all as he had said. I went in to the king; (175) I presented to him the gifts I had brought from the island. He praised god for me in the presence of the councillors of the whole land. I was made an attendant and endowed with serfs of his.

See me after (180) I had reached land, after I saw what I had tasted! Listen to me! It is good for people to listen.

He said to me: "Don't make an effort, my friend. Who would give water at dawn (185) to a goose that will be slaughtered in the morning?"

Colophon: It is done from beginning to end as it was found in writing, by the scribe with skilled fingers, Imenaa, son of Imeny—life, prosperity, health!

NOTES

1. The sentence has been read as: *in ht hw n-t s(t)*, and rendered as "the mast (or, a piece of wood) struck the wave for me," thereby flattening it and thus helping the sailor, while the ship nevertheless sank. But the sense is poor, for the context leads one to expect that the wave hit the ship and sank it. I believe that the element *nt* is not the preposition with suffix but rather the common graphic peculiarity of the spelling of *hwt*, "to strike," and also of *hwt*, "to flood," with an intrusive *nt* (see *Wb.*, III, 49). I also take the *s* to be the suffix referring to the wave; and the dependent pronoun *sw* needs to be added as the object. This admittedly imperfect solution is presented largely in order to emphasize that the passage remains problematic.

2. I.e., unripe and ripe figs; the ripe ones were notched, as was explained by L. Keimer, *Acta Or.*, 6 (1928), 288 ff., and *idem*, *BIFAO*, 28 (1928), 50 ff.

3. The expression "island of the *ka*" is curious. In *ZAS*, 45 (1908), 65, Gardiner rendered it as "phantom island."

4. Egyptian says "to taste" for "to experience."

5. This has been the usual rendering of *rnpy·k m hnw krs·k*, in which *hnw* was taken to mean "home," as it does elsewhere in the tale, and *krs·k* to stand for *krs·tw·k*. Brunner-Traut, *Märchen*, p. 9, now renders: "und wirst dich in deinem Grabe verjüngen." This is grammatically perfect, but I find the older rendering more plausible, since the emphasis of the tale is on the "return home."

THREE TALES OF WONDER

From Papyrus Westcar (= P. Berlin 3033)

This important papyrus, the beginning of which is lost, contains a series of tales woven together by a narrative frame. The whole cycle consisted of at least five tales. Of the first, only the last words are preserved. The second has large lacunae, while the third, fourth, and fifth are complete except for the abrupt ending of the fifth tale. The three complete tales are translated here. The works are written in classical Middle Egyptian; the papyrus dates from the Hyksos period.

The setting of the tales is the Old Kingdom, specifically the time of the Fourth Dynasty: King Khufu is being entertained by his sons. First each son in turn tells a marvelous event that happened in the past. Then, when it is the turn of Prince Hardedef, instead of telling a story of past wonders,

he asks permission to introduce a living magician. When the magician is brought to the court, he impresses everyone by his wonders, and, in conversation with the king, proceeds to prophecy the wondrous birth of the kings who were to found the next dynasty. This shift of focus from the present to the future provides the transition to the last tale, which describes the wondrous birth of the triplets who were to be the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty.

Publication: Erman, *Papyrus Westcar*. Sethe, *Lesestücke*, pp. 26-36. *Idem, Erl.*, pp. 32-45.

Translation: Erman, *Literature*, pp. 36-47. Lefebvre, *Romans*, pp. 70-90. Schott, *Liebeslieder*, pp. 176-187. Brunner-Traut, *Märchen*, pp. 11-24. For additional references see Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 73. The third tale begins on p. 4, line 17 of the papyrus.

The Boating Party

(4, 17) Baufre stood up to speak, he said: "I shall let your majesty hear a wonder that happened in the time of your father Snefru, the justified, a deed of the chief lector-priest (20) Djadja-em-ankh, [a thing] that illuminates the past ----- which had never happened before -----.

["One day King Snefru wandered through all the rooms] of the palace in search of [relaxation and found none. Then he said]: 'Go, bring me the chief lector-priest, the scribe of books, Djadja-em-ankh!' He was brought to him straightway. His majesty said to him: ['I have gone through all the rooms] of the palace in search of (5, 1) relaxation and found none.' Djadja-em-ankh said to him: 'May your majesty proceed to the lake of the palace. Fill a boat with all the beautiful girls of your palace. Your majesty's heart will be refreshed by seeing them row, a rowing up and down. (5) As you observe the fine nesting places of your lake, as you observe its beautiful fields and shores, your heart will be refreshed by it.'

"Said his majesty: 'Indeed, I shall go boating! Let there be brought to me twenty oars of ebony plated with gold, their handles of sandalwood plated with electrum. Let there be brought to me twenty women (10) with the shapeliest bodies, breasts, and braids, who have not yet given birth. Also let there be brought to me twenty nets and give these nets to these women in place of their clothes!'¹ All was done as his majesty commanded.

"They rowed up and down, and his majesty's heart was happy (15) seeing them row. Then the one who was at the stroke oar fingered her braids, and a pendant of new turquoise fell into the water. Then she stopped rowing, and her side of women stopped rowing. Said his majesty: 'Why don't you row?' Said they: 'Our leader (20) has stopped

rowing.' Said his majesty to her: 'Why have you stopped rowing?' Said she: 'Because the pendant of new turquoise fell into the water.' [Then his majesty said to her: 'Row! I shall replace it for you!'] Said she: 'I prefer my thing to one like it.' Said [his majesty: 'Go, bring me the chief] lector-priest [Djadja-em-ankh! He was brought to him straightway].

"Said (6, 1) his majesty: 'Djadja-em-ankh, my brother, I did as you had said. My majesty's heart was refreshed seeing them row. Then a pendant of new turquoise of one of the leaders fell into the water. She stopped rowing and thereby spoiled her side. I said to her: (5) "Why have you stopped rowing?" She said to me: "Because the pendant of new turquoise fell into the water." I said to her: "Row! I shall replace it for you!" She said to me: "I prefer my thing to one like it."'

"Then the chief lector-priest Djadja-em-ankh said his say of magic. He placed one side of the lake's water upon the other; and he found the pendant (10) lying on a shard. He brought it and gave it to its owner. Now the water that had been twelve cubits deep across² had become twenty four cubits when it was turned back. Then he said his say of magic and returned the waters of the lake to their place. His majesty spent the day feasting with the entire palace. Then he rewarded the chief lector-priest (15) Djadja-emankh with all good things.

"This is the wonder that happened in the time of your father, King Snefru, the justified, the deed of the chief lector-priest and scribe of books, Djadja-em-ankh."

Said the majesty of King Khufu: "Let there be given an offering of a thousand loaves, a hundred jars of beer, an ox, and two measures of incense to the majesty of King Snefru, the justified. (20) And let there be given one loaf, one jug of beer, and one measure of incense to the chief lector-priest and scribe of books, Djadja-em-ankh, for I have seen his display of skill." One did according to his majesty's command.

The Magician Djedi

Now Prince Hardedef³ stood up to speak and said: ["So far you have heard examples] of the skills of those who have passed away, and one cannot tell truth from falsehood. [But there is a subject] of your majesty in your own time, (25) unknown to you [who is a great magician."'] Said his majesty: "What is this about, Har[dedef, my son?"] [Said Prince Har]dedef: "There is a man (7, 1) named Djedi who lives

in Djed-Snefru. He is a man of a hundred and ten years who eats five hundred loaves of bread, half an ox for meat, and drinks one hundred jugs of beer to this very day. He can join a severed head. He can make a lion (5) walk behind him, its leash on the ground. And he knows the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth."

Now the majesty of King Khufu had been spending time searching for the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth in order to copy them for his temple. Said his majesty: "You yourself, Hardedef, my son, shall bring him to me!"

Ships were made ready for Prince Hardedef. He journeyed (10) upstream to Djed-Snefru. After the ships had been moored to the shore, he traveled overland seated in a carrying chair of ebony, the poles of which were of *ssndm*-wood plated with gold.

Now when he had reached Djedi, the carrying chair was set down. Having got up to greet him, he found (15) him lying on a mat in the courtyard of his house, with a servant beside him anointing him and another rubbing his feet. Said Prince Hardedef: "Your condition is like that of one who lives above age—for old age is the time for death, enwrapping, and burial—one who sleeps till daytime free of illness, without a hacking cough. Thus greetings (20) to a venerable one! I have come here to summon you, commissioned by my father Khufu. You shall eat the delicacies that the king gives, the food of those who are in his service. He will convey you in good time to your fathers who are in the necropolis."

Said this Djedi: "In peace, in peace, Hardedef, king's son, beloved of his father! May your father, King Khufu, praise you. May he advance (25) you to rank among the elders. May your *ka* prevail over your enemy. May your *ba* know the way that leads to the portal that conceals the dead. Thus greetings (8, 1) to a prince!"

Then Prince Hardedef held out his hands to him and helped him up. He proceeded with him to the shore, holding his arm. Then Djedi said: "Let me have a barge to bring me my children and my books." Then two vessels and their crews were put in his service. Djedi journeyed (5) downstream in the ship in which Prince Hardedef was.

After he had reached the residence, Prince Hardedef entered in to report to the majesty of King Khufu. Said Prince Hardedef: "O king, my lord, I have brought Djedi." Said his majesty: "Go, bring him to me!" His majesty proceeded to the great hall of the (10) palace. When Djedi had been ushered in to him, his majesty said: "How is it, Djedi,

that I never got to see you?" Said Djedi: "He who is summoned comes, O king, my lord. I was summoned, and I have come."

His majesty said: "Is it true, what they say, that you can join a severed head?" Said Djedi: "Yes, I can, O king, my lord." (15) Said his majesty: "Have brought to me a prisoner from the prison, that he be executed." Said Djedi: "But not to a human being, O king, my lord! Surely, it is not permitted to do such a thing to the noble cattle!"⁴

A goose was brought him and its head cut off. The goose was placed on the west side of the great hall, its head on the east (20) side of the great hall. Djedi said his say of magic: the goose stood up and waddled, its head also. When one had reached the other, the goose stood cackling. He had a "long-leg"-bird brought him, and the same was done to it. His majesty had an ox brought to him, (25) and its head was cut off. Djedi said his say of magic, and the ox stood up. -----⁵

(9, 1) Then the majesty of King Khufu said: "It was also said that you know the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth." Said Djedi: "Please, I do not know their number, O king, my lord. But I know the place where it is." Said his majesty: "Where is that?" Said this Djedi: "There is a chest (5) of flint in the building called 'Inventory' in On. It is in that chest." Said his majesty: ["Go, bring it to me!"] Said Djedi: "O king, my lord, it is not I who shall bring it to you." Said his majesty: "Who then will bring it to me?" Said Djedi: "It is the eldest of the three children who are in the womb of Ruddedet who will bring it to you." Said his majesty: "I want it; but say: who is this Ruddedet?" Said Djedi: "She is the wife of a priest of Re, lord of Sakhbu, (10) who is pregnant with three children of Re, lord of Sakhbu.⁶ He has said concerning them that they will assume this beneficent office in this whole land, and the eldest of them will be high priest in On."

His majesty's heart grew sad at this. Said Djedi: "What is this mood, O king, my lord? Is it because of those three children? I say: first your son, then his son, then one of them." Said his majesty: (15) "When will Ruddedet give birth?" [Said Djedi]: "She will give birth on the fifteenth day of the first winter month." Said his majesty: "Just when the sandbanks of the Two-Fish Channel are dry! I would have crossed over myself, so as to see the temple of Re, lord of Sakhbu." Said Djedi: "Then I shall make four cubits of water over the sandbanks of the Two-Fish Channel."

His majesty went into his palace. His majesty said: "Let Djedi be assigned to the house of Prince Hardedef, to live (20) with him. Make

his rations a thousand loaves of bread, a hundred jugs of beer, one ox, and a hundred bundles of vegetables." One did all that his majesty commanded.

The Birth of the Royal Children

On one of those days Ruddedet felt the pangs and her labor was difficult. Then said the majesty of Re, lord of Sakhbu, to Isis, Nephthys, Meskhenet, Heket, and Khnum: "Please go, deliver Ruddedet of the three children who are in her womb, who will assume (25) this beneficent office in this whole land. They will build your temples. They will supply your altars. They will furnish your libations. They will make your offerings abundant!"

These gods set out, having changed their appearance (10, 1) to dancing girls, with Khnum as their porter. When they reached the house of Rawoser, they found him standing with his loincloth upside down. They held out to him their necklaces and sistra. He said to them: "My ladies, look, it is the woman who is in pain; her labor is difficult." They said: (5) "Let us see her. We understand childbirth." He said to them: "Come in!" They went in to Ruddedet. They locked the room behind themselves and her.

Isis placed herself before her, Nephthys behind her, Heket hastened the birth. Isis said: "Don't be so mighty in her womb, you whose name is 'Mighty.'" The child (10) slid into her arms, a child of one cubit, strong boned, his limbs overlaid with gold, his headdress of true lapis lazuli. They washed him, having cut his navel cord, and laid him on a pillow of cloth. Then Meskhenet approached him and said: "A king who will assume the kingship in this whole land." And Khnum gave health to his body.

Isis placed herself before (15) her, Nephthys behind her, Heket hastened the birth. Isis said: "Don't tread in her womb, you whose name is 'Tread-of-Re!'" The child slid into her arms, a child of one cubit, strong boned, his limbs overlaid with gold, his headdress of true lapis lazuli. They washed him, having cut his navel cord, and laid him on (20) a pillow of cloth. Then Meskhenet approached him and said: "A king who will assume the kingship in this whole land." And Khnum gave health to his body.

Isis placed herself before her, Nephthys behind her, Heket hastened the birth. Isis said: "Don't be so dark in her womb, you whose name is 'Dark!'" The child slid into (25) her arms, a child of one cubit, strong boned, his limbs overlaid with gold, his headdress

of true lapis lazuli. They washed him, having cut his navel cord, and laid him on a pillow of cloth. Then Meskhenet approached him (11, 1) and said: "A king who will assume the kingship in the whole land." And Khnum gave health to his body.

These gods came out, having delivered Ruddedet of the three children. (5) They said: "Rejoice, Rawoser! Three children are born to you." He said to them: "My ladies, what can I do for you? Please give this sack of barley to your porter and take it as payment for beer." Then Khnum loaded himself with the sack of barley. They proceeded toward the place (10) they had come from. Then Isis said to these gods: "What is it we came for if not to do wonders for those three children, to report to their father who made us come?" So they made three royal crowns and placed them in the sack of barley. Then they let a sky of storm and rain come up (15) and they returned to the house. They said: "Please put the sack of barley here in a sealed room, until we come back from dancing in the north." Then they put the sack of barley in a sealed room.

Ruddedet cleansed herself in a cleansing of fourteen days. She said to her maid: "Has the house (20) been made ready?" She said: "It is ready with everything good except beer jugs. They were not brought." Said Ruddedet: "Why have the beer jugs not been brought?" Said the maid: "There is nothing here for making (it) except the sack of barley of those dancers, which is in the room under their seal." Said Ruddedet: (25) "Go down, bring some of it. Rawoser shall give them its equivalent when he comes." The maid went, (12, 1) opened the room, and heard the sound of singing, music, dancing, and shouting—all that is done for a king—in the room. She went and told all that she had heard to Ruddedet. She then went around in the room without finding the spot in which it was done. Then she laid her cheek against the sack of barley and found it was done inside it. Then she put it (5) in a box, placed it in another container, bound it with a leather strap, placed it in a room containing her belongings, and locked it up. When Rawoser came, returning from the field, Ruddedet told him the matter. Then his heart was happy beyond everything, and they sat down to a day of feasting.

Now after days had passed, Ruddedet had a quarrel with her maid, (10) and had her punished with a beating. Then the maid said to the people in the house: "How could she do this? She has born three kings! I will go tell it to the majesty of King Khufu!" She went and found her older half-brother binding bundles of flax on the threshing

floor. He said to her: "Whereto, little girl?" (15) Then she told him the matter. Her brother then said to her: "Is this a thing to do, to come to me, so as to involve me in your tattle?" He tore off a strand of flax and dealt her a bad blow. Off went the maid to draw a bucket of water, and a crocodile snatched her.

Now her brother went to tell it to Ruddedet. (20) He found Ruddedet sitting, her head on her knee, her heart sore beyond anything. He said to her: "My lady, why is your heart thus?" She said: "It is the little girl who grew up in the house. Just now she went off saying, 'I will go tell.'" Then he hung his head and said: "My lady, she did in fact come to tell me about it. (25) As she stood beside me I dealt her a bad blow. She went off to draw a little water, and a crocodile snatched her. -----

NOTES

1. These were nets made of pearls which ladies liked to wear over their dresses. Here they are to be worn in place of dresses. On these pearl-nets see E. Staehelin, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Tracht im alten Reich*, Münchner ägyptologische Studien, 8 (Berlin, 1966), p. 169.

2. The expression *hr ist:f*, "on its back," has been rendered as "in its middle." I translate it as "across," and mean to show elsewhere that this is its true meaning.

3. Prince Hardedef is of course the famous sage and author of an Instruction. In P. Westcar and in the *Intef Song* the name is written as Hardedef, rather than Hardjedef. The actual reading may have been Djedef-Hor. It is an open question how names of this type are to be read; there are good arguments for either reading.

4. The "noble cattle" is mankind. See the hymn to the creator in the *Instruction to Merikare*, line 131.

5. The sentence "his leash trailing on the ground," which follows here, probably belonged to the demonstration of taming a lion which the scribe of P. Westcar omitted.

6. The location of the town of Sakhbu was discussed by S. Sauneron in *Kemi*, 11 (1950), 63-72; see *Merikare*, n. 10.

7. The triplets whom the goddesses deliver are the kings Userkaf, Sahure, and Neferirkare, the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty. The words that Isis addresses to them are wordplays on their names.

THE STORY OF SINUHE

The numerous, if fragmentary, copies of this work testify to its great popularity, and it is justly considered the most accomplished piece of Middle Kingdom prose literature.

The two principal manuscripts are: (1) P. Berlin 3022 (abbr. B) which dates from the Twelfth Dynasty. In its present state, it lacks the beginning of the story and contains a total of 311 lines; (2) P. Berlin 10499 (abbr. R)

which contains 203 lines and includes the beginning. It dates to the end of the Middle Kingdom.

A third major copy is on a large ostrakon in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which gives 130, partly incomplete, lines. It is, however, an inferior copy, dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty. Its principal value lies in the detailed commentary of its editor, J. Barns. In addition, small portions of the text are preserved on papyrus fragments and on numerous ostraca.

The present translation uses as principal manuscripts the text of R for the beginning and of B for the bulk, and incorporates an occasional variant from other manuscripts.

The list of publications, translations, and studies given below, while ample, is not comprehensive.

Publication: A. H. Gardiner, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe und die Hirten-geschichte*, in A. Erman, *Literarische Texte des mittleren Reiches*, Hieratische Papyrus aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin, Bd. V/2 (Leipzig, 1909). A. M. Blackman, *The Story of Sinuhe*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, II (Brussels, 1932), pp. 1-41. J. W. B. Barns, *The Ashmolean Ostrakon of Sinuhe* (London, 1952). Sethe, *Lesestücke*, pp. 3-17 (abridged). *Idem*, *Erl.*, pp. 5-21.

Translation with commentary: A. H. Gardiner, *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe* (Paris, 1916) (an expansion of Gardiner's articles in *RT*, Vols. 32-34, 36). H. Grapow, *Der stilistische Bau der Geschichte des Sinuhe*, Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Stilistik, I (Berlin, 1952).

Translation: Erman, *Literature*, pp. 14-29. Lefebvre, *Romans*, pp. 1-25. J. A. Wilson in *ANET*, pp. 18-22 (abridged). E. Edel in *Textbuch zur Geschichte Israels*, ed. K. Galling, 2. Aufl. (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 1-12 (slightly abridged).

Analysis and evaluation: Posener, *Littérature*, pp. 87-115.

Comments (selection): A. Alt, *ZAS*, 58 (1923), 48-50. *Idem*, *Pj*, 37 (1941), 19 ff. A. M. Blackman, *JEA*, 16 (1930), 63-65. *Idem*, *JEA*, 22 (1936), 35-40. A. de Buck, *Griffith Studies*, pp. 57-60. J. Clère, *JEA*, 25 (1939), 16-29. *Idem*, *Mélanges Dussaud*, II, 829 ff. H. Brunner, *ZAS* 80 (1955), 5-11. *Idem*, *ZAS*, 91 (1964), 139-140. H. Goedicke, *JEA*, 43 (1957), 77-85. *Idem*, *JEA*, 51 (1965), 29-47. J. Yoyotte, *Kemi*, 17 (1964), 69-73. G. Lanczkowski, *MDIK*, 16 (1958), 214-218. J. W. B. Barns, *JEA*, 53 (1967), 6-14. W. Westendorf, *Schott Festschrift*, pp. 125-131.

(R, 1) The Prince, Count, Governor of the domains of the sovereign in the lands of the Asiatics, true and beloved Friend of the King, the Attendant Sinuhe, says:

I was an attendant who attended his lord, a servant of the royal harem, waiting on the Princess, the highly praised Royal Wife of King Sesostris in Khenemsut, the daughter of King Amenemhet in Kanefru, Nefru, the revered.¹

Year 30, third month of the inundation, day 7: the god ascended to his horizon. The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Sehetepibre*, flew to heaven and united with the sun-disk, the divine body merging with its maker. Then the residence was hushed; hearts grieved;