

## V. Didactic Literature

### THE INSTRUCTION OF PRINCE HARDJEDEF

#### *Fragment*

This is the earliest known example of the genre *Instruction*. As yet only the beginning of the text has come to light, pieced together from nine ostraca of the New Kingdom and one wooden tablet of the Late Period.

The problem of establishing the date of this *Instruction*, and of the related works—*Kagemni* and *Ptahhotep*—has been discussed in my Introduction. Briefly restated, the tentative conclusions outlined above are: (1) All three *Instructions* are pseudepigraphical works. (2) The most plausible date for the *Instruction of Hardjedef* is the time of the Fifth Dynasty, and for *Kagemni* and *Ptahhotep* the latter part of the Sixth Dynasty.

Publication: E. Brunner-Traut, *ZAS*, 76 (1940), 3-9 and pl. I (the Munich ostrakon). G. Posener, *RdE*, 9 (1952), 109-117, and *idem*, *RdE*, 18 (1966), 62-65.

On the tomb of prince Hardjedef and the worship of his person: Brunner-Traut, *op. cit.* H. Junker in *Studi Rosellini*, pp. 133-140. Junker, *Giza*, VII, 26-27 and 114. H. Goedicke, *ASAE*, 55 (1958), 35-55.

Beginning of the *Instruction* made by the Hereditary Prince, Count, King's Son, Hardjedef, for his son, his nursling, whose name is Au-ib-re. [He] says:

Cleanse yourself before your (own) eyes,  
Lest another cleanse you.  
When you prosper, found your household,  
Take a hearty wife,<sup>1</sup> a son will be born you.  
It is for the son you build a house,  
When you make a place for yourself.<sup>2</sup>  
Make good your dwelling in the graveyard,  
Make worthy your station in the West.<sup>3</sup>  
Given that<sup>4</sup> death humbles us,  
Given that life exalts us,  
The house of death is for life.  
Seek for yourself well-watered fields,<sup>5</sup>  
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Choose for him<sup>6</sup> a plot among your fields,

Well-watered every year.

He profits you more than your own son,

Prefer him even to your [heir].

## NOTES

1. *Hmt nbt ib*, a woman who is "mistress of (her) heart."
2. Posener made two emendations and rendered: "Tu bâtiras une maison pour ton fils, tandis que j'ai fait pour toi le lieu où tu habites(?)."
3. This advice recurs in *Merikare*, line 127, and elsewhere; see H. Brunner, *MDIK*, 14 (1956), 17-19 and *MDIK*, 19 (1963), 53.
4. The iterated *šp* may of course have the literal meaning, "accept," and it is so taken by Posener who rendered: "Adopte (cette règle), car la mort pour nous est décourageante (?), adopte (cette règle), car la vie pour nous est exaltante (?): la maison de la mort sert à la vie." I suspect, however, that it has an idiomatic meaning comparable with our "granted that."
5. Fields that are inundated by the annual overflowing of the Nile.
6. The funerary priest is meant. He should be well endowed, so that he will perform the cultic services for the dead.