

A short note about *The Admonitions of Ipuwer* and the work of Alan Gardiner

Pablo Martín ROSELL

Universidad Nacional de La Plata
pabломartinrosell@yahoo.com.ar

The *Admonitions of Ipuwer* is a literary text preserved on the recto of a single papyrus (Papyrus Leiden I 344) which belongs to the collection of the *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*, Leiden (National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden). Despite the fact that the papyrus is from the New Kingdom, the poem preserved on it is supposed to be from the Middle Kingdom (Parkinson 1991: 60).

The papyrus is in appalling conditions. Its beginning and its end are completely lost (Faulkner 1973: 210), however we can understand the story. A man, called Ipuwer, appeared in the court of an unnamed pharaoh and described the chaotic state of Egypt which could probably refer to the memory of the events that had occurred in the First Intermediate Period. The order is disturbed by a social revolution, the rich become poor and the poor rich, foreign people invade Egypt from the delta, nomes are destroyed and wasted and social anarchy is spreading all over the land, while cultural values are broken under the indifferent gaze of society.

The first full comprehensive publication of the entire text -*The Admonitions of an Ancient Egyptian Sage, from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden (Pap. Leiden 344 recto)*- was made and published by the Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner in 1909. He was also the first scholar who translated the papyrus from hieratic to English. The work of Gardiner consists of a full translation with notes and comments about the text of *The Admonitions of Ipuwer* and it also has an appendix with the translation of another text from the same period known as *The Complaints of Khakheperresenebu*. Gardiner (1909: 111) has interpreted the chaotic events and social anarchy that appear in this composition, as a reflection of a concrete historical situation that had occurred in the Tenth Dynasty, during the First Intermediate Period, according to the similarities that it has with the historical background of that period. Although, from the parallels that the text has with other texts from the Middle Kingdom, such as *The Dialogue of a man with his ba* and *The Instruction of Amenemhat I*, Gardiner (1909: 112) considered and concluded that the text of *The Admonitions of Ipuwer* could have been produced during the Twentieth Dynasty. In other words, he claimed that the text is a literary work of the Middle Kingdom whose story and plot elapse in the First Intermediate Period.

In such a way, as it will be shown in our article, “*Mira, los pobres de la tierra se han convertido en ricos (y) el (que poseía) cosas, (ahora) no tiene nada*”, it is claimed that the text is a merely fictional piece of work produced during the Middle Kingdom which includes a literary description of social revolution (Rosell, *Enfoques sobre la revolución social en las Admoniciones de Ipuwer* [in:] *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie* 18, 2014 :133).

On the whole, Gardiner's work and translation have been the basis of subsequent studies and was the starting point of a series of publications containing the partial or total translation of *The Admonitions of Ipuwer* along with comments and some explanatory notes. Among these publications we can find: Erman (1927: 92-108); Faulkner (1964: 24-36; 1973: 210-229); Lichtheim (1973: 149-163); Serrano Delgado (1993: 80-84); Parkinson (1991: 60-61; 121-122; 1998: 166-199; 2002: 204-216); Helck (1995); Quirke (2004: 140-150) and Enmarch (2005; 2008).

Bibliography

- Enmarch, R. 2005. *The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*. Oxford: Griffith Institute Publications. Alden Press.
- Enmarch, R. 2008. *A world upturned: Commentary and analysis of the Ancient Egyptian Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*. London: British Academy Postdoctoral Monograph Series. British Academy.
- Erman, A. 1927. *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: poems, narratives and manuals of instruction from the third and second millennia B.C.* (A.M.Blackman, transl.). London: Methuen.
- Faulkner, R. 1964. “Notes on the Admonitions of an Egyptian sage”. *JEA* 50: 24-36.
- Faulkner, R. 1973. “The Admonitions of an Ancient Egyptian Sage”. [in:] W. K. Simpson (ed.). *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*. London: Yale University Press: 210-229.
- Gardiner, A. 1909. *The Admonitions of an Ancient Egyptian Sage, from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden (Pap. Leiden 344 recto)*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.
- Helck, W. 1995. *Die “Admonitions” Pap. Leiden I 344 recto*. KÄT 11. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Lichtheim, M. 1973. *Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings. The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. Vol 1. California: University of California Press.
- Parkinson, R.B. 1991. *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings*. London: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Parkinson, R.B. 1998. *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940-1640 BC*. Oxford University Press.
- Parkinson, R.B. 2002. *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt. A Dark Side to Perfection*. London: Continuum.
- Quirke, S. 2004. *Egyptian literature 1800 BC, questions and readings*. Londres: Golden House Publications, Egyptology 2.
- Rosell, Pablo Martín. 2014. “Enfoques sobre la revolución social en las Admoniciones de Ipuwer” [in:] *CCdE* 18 :127-142.
- Serrano Delgado, J.M. 1993. *Textos para la Historia antigua de Egipto*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra.