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ANCIENT RECORDS OF EGYPT

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ANCIENT RECORDS OF EGYPT

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PERSIAN CONQUEST, COLLECTED
EDITED AND TRANSLATED WITH COMMENTARY

BY

JAMES HENRY BREASTED, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF EGYPTOLOGY AND ORIENTAL HISTORY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

VOLUME I

THE FIRST TO THE SEVENTEENTH DYNASTIES

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PREFACE

In no particular have modern historical studies made greater progress than in the reproduction and publication of documentary sources from which our knowledge of the most varied peoples and periods is drawn. In American history whole libraries of such sources have appeared or are promised. These are chiefly in English, although the other languages of Europe are of course often largely represented. The employment of such sources from the early epochs of the world's history involves either a knowledge of ancient languages on the part of the user, or a complete rendition of the documents into English. No attempt has ever been made to collect and present all the sources of Egyptian history in a modern language. A most laudable beginning in this direction, and one that has done great service, was the *Records of the Past*; but that series never attempted to be complete, and no amount of editing could make consistent with themselves the uncorrelated translations of the large number of contributors to that series.

The author is only too well aware of the difficulties involved in such a project. In mere bulk alone it has been a considerable enterprise, in view of the preliminary tasks made necessary by the state of the published texts. These I have indicated briefly in the chapter on the sources herein (Vol. I, §§ 27-32). Under these circumstances, the author's first obligation has been to go behind the publications to the original documents themselves, wherever necessary. The method pursued has also been indicated herein (Vol. I, §§ 33-37). The task has consumed years, and demanded protracted sojourn among the great col-

lections of Europe. In this work a related enterprise has been of the greatest assistance. A mission to the museums of Europe to collect and copy their Egyptian monuments for a commission of the four Royal Academies of Germany (Berlin, Leipzig, Göttingen, and Munich), in order to make these documents available for an exhaustive *Egyptian Dictionary* endowed by the German Emperor, enabled the author to copy from the originals practically all the historical monuments of Egypt in Europe. The other sources of material, and particularly the papers of the *Dictionary* just mentioned, have enabled the author to base the translations in these volumes directly, or practically so, upon the originals themselves in almost all cases.

Unfortunately, the possession of these materials is but the beginning of the difficulties which beset such an enterprise. In the preface to the first edition of his *English Dictionary*, Noah Webster complains of the difficulties caused by the new meanings taken on by English words as they are modified by the new environment which envelops them in America. If such changes are involved in the voyage across the Atlantic, and the lapse of a few generations, how much wider and deeper is the gulf due to the total difference between the semitropical northern Nile valley of millenniums ago, and the English-speaking world of this twentieth century! The psychology of early man is something with which we have as yet scarcely begun to operate. His whole world and his whole manner of thinking are sharply differentiated from our own. His organization, socially, industrially, commercially, politically; his tools, his house, his conveniences, constantly involve institutions, adjustments, and appliances totally unknown to this modern age and this western world. In the translation of the New Testament for the tribes of Alaska, I am

told, there has been great difficulty in the rendition of the term "Good Shepherd," for the reason that many of these people never saw a sheep and never heard of a shepherd. Similarly, how shall one rehabilitate this ancient world of the Nile-dweller, and put his documents into intelligible English, when the ideas to be rendered are often unknown to the average modern and western reader, and, needless to say, there are no corresponding terms in the English language?

Another constant source of difficulty has been the lack of those indispensable helps, the legion of concordances, glossaries, handbooks, and compilations for ready reference, which the worker in Greek or Hebrew has constantly at his hand. In spite of the colossal industry of Brugsch, we are still without a dictionary of Egyptian to which one can turn with any hope of finding other examples of a rare word. Hardly any Old Kingdom documents at all were employed by Brugsch in the compilation of his dictionary, and, grateful as we are for what he was able to furnish us, we must still await the great Berlin *Dictionary* before we shall possess an exhaustive compendium of the language. I was able to employ the alphabetically arranged materials of the *Dictionary* here and there, but the compilation was not sufficiently far advanced at the conclusion of my work to be of much service. Wherever I have drawn examples from it, they are carefully acknowledged in the footnotes. A good many distinctions in the meanings of words have become evident to me in the course of the work upon the documents. Wherever such have become clear late in the progress of the work, it was impossible to go through the translations and revise the entire manuscript for the sake of such words alone. I have tried to control these cases as far as possible in the proofs, but I am confident that some such

changes have been overlooked as the accumulation of alterations demanded in the proofreading was quite beyond my powers of observation in so large a mass of materials. Thus, for example, the common word *sr* is usually translated "prince," and this is undoubtedly sometimes the meaning of the word; but it very frequently means "official," a fact which I did not observe until far along in the progress of the work.

Some danger of confusion also arises from the fact that titles indicative of rank or office suffer great change in meaning in the lapse of several thousand years. Thus the *h³ty* or "count" of the feudal and pre-feudal ages becomes a mere magistrate or town-mayor in the Empire, although in sporadic cases the word still retains its old meaning. The translation of titles has perhaps been the greatest source of difficulty in the entire course of the work. Many of the offices found cannot be determined with precision. We have as yet no history of titles—one of the most needed works in the entire range of Egyptian studies. Under these circumstances, it has been impossible always to define with precision the range and scope of a given office. Even when these were determinable, the corresponding term was often wanting in English, and could not be devised without the use of a whole phrase. In some cases awkward combinations have been necessary in the renderings of titles. Thus the compound "king's-son" was adopted because it is occasionally followed in the original by a pronoun referring to "king," which made the rendering "royal son" impossible. For this reason a series of such compounds has been employed: "king's-son," "king's-daughter," "king's-wife," "king's-mother," "king's-scribe," and the like. It is hoped to render all such matters clear in the index.

In general, the effort has been to render as literally as

possible without wrenching English idiom. In this latter particular I probably have not always succeeded; but I have deliberately preferred this evil to a glib rendering which reads well and may be a long distance from the sense of the original. We have had so much of so-called "paraphrasing," which does not even remotely resemble the purport of the original, that I have felt justified in gratifying a righteous horror of such romancing, even at the cost of idiomatic English. The reader has a right to expect that the subjective fancies of the translator have been rigidly excluded, and a right to demand that he may put implicit dependence both upon the individual words and the general sense of the renderings. At the same time, the author would distinctly disclaim any desire to give to these translations the authority of monographs. The extent of the materials, and the amount of time expended in the collection, collation, and correction of the original texts before doing anything toward a formal version, have made it impossible to devote to the translation of each document as much time as one would deem necessary for the production of a monograph upon it. While the most conscientious attention has been given to the versions, and they have sometimes been revised three times (always once), yet it is undoubtedly the case that, in the course of rendering such a mass of materials, errors have crept in. Notice of any that may be observed by my fellow-workers in this field will be gratefully received, and utilized should a future edition of these volumes ever appear.

For the benefit of the general reader, it should be noted that a complete revolution in our knowledge of the Egyptian grammar has taken place in the last twenty-five years. The exhaustive study of syntax and of verbal forms which has been in progress for generations in the classic languages,

or even in the Semitic group, has been going on for only a little over a quarter of a century in Egyptian. This is no reflection on the work of the first two generations of Egyptologists, for such work was impossible in their day. In this quarter-century, immense progress has been made and certain definite results have been attained. It cannot be said that these results have yet been applied to the understanding of the historical documents of Egypt as a whole. One of the main purposes of this work has been the attainment of this end. Indeed, its chief object may be indicated in this connection as: first, the attainment of copies which in correctness adequately reproduce the original document; and, second, an English version which shall embody our modern knowledge of the language. Every effort has been made to realize these two aims, and only in such degree as they may have been attained will these volumes form a contribution to knowledge.

In the selection of documents there has sometimes been difficulty in deciding what should and what should not be included by the term "historical document." All purely religious compositions, as well as all exclusively literary documents (*belles-lettres*), all science, like mathematics and medicine, and in most cases all business documents, have been excluded. In the Old Kingdom, however, the last have been included, in view of the limited materials surviving from that distant age. It is hoped that these other classes of documents will appear in further volumes of this series. In all cases, however, where the other classes of documents were of vital historical importance—that is, bore directly on events and conditions closely touching the career of the Egyptian state—they have been included here. These volumes, therefore, include the entire series of written documents from which we draw our knowledge

of the career of the Nile valley peoples as a nation, until the beginning of permanent foreign domination at the advent of the Persians in 525 B. C.

Besides furnishing an English version of these documents, the scope of this work also includes the proper introduction of the reader to their intelligent study; hence the versions are accompanied by notes and introductions. These are threefold in character. Firstly, in a footnote appended to the title of each document, the reader will find a brief description of it, indicating whether it is of stone or papyrus, a stela, a relief, an obelisk, or whatever it may be, with statement of its size and material whenever the data were obtainable. The state of preservation is noted, and then all the publications in which the text of the monument has appeared. In a word, this footnote contains the *lower* criticism of the document. No attempt has been made to add to the bibliography the various treatments and discussions of the monument which have at various times appeared. The bulk of these essays are long since obsolete, and the time has certainly come when we can detach our usable bibliography from this incumbering inheritance, without at the same time failing to recognize with gratitude the great service which it once rendered to the science. Furthermore, it has seemed a duty to indicate to the reader in this footnote, the comparative value of the more important publications of the text. If an edition of the text has proved inaccurate and untrustworthy, it is but right that it should be known as such. In a purely objective and impersonal manner, therefore, such materials have been characterized in these introductory footnotes.

Secondly, each monument is supplied with a usually short introduction, setting forth the historical significance of the document, its character, and, where necessary, a

résumé of its content. It therefore contains in brief compass the *higher* criticism of the document. Much of the historical background, and literary value of the more important documents will be found set forth more fully in the author's *History of Egypt*,^a which is based upon the documentary sources in these volumes. As a further aid in gaining a comprehensive idea of the content, the version of each document itself has been divided into logical paragraphs, each with a subtitle. It is intended that by this plan a given passage of the document may be referred to by number, thus furnishing a very brief system of reference to all the monuments, by means of the volume number (Roman) followed by the paragraph number (Arabic).

Thirdly, the version of each monument is accompanied by running footnotes explaining obscure matters in the text as far as possible. It has been impossible to make these any fuller, although the author is quite aware that many details requiring explanation have been left without comment. It has been his especial endeavor to adduce in the footnotes, or at least call attention to, all related matter, whether in this series of translations or elsewhere among the monuments of Egypt. It has often been more convenient to introduce a very brief or fragmentary inscription of a few words in a footnote attached to a related passage in some larger document, than to give such flotsam and jetsam independent heads as separate documents. It is expected to render these all easily discoverable in the index. The maps necessary to an understanding of the geography of the monuments will also appear with the index.

I have attempted to solve the unwelcome problem of the transliteration of Egyptian words and names by giving

^a*A History of Egypt*, large 8vo, 640 pp., 200 illustrations, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1905.

the proper names where necessary in two forms: first, a vocalized form for the layman; and, second, a purely consonantal transliteration placed after it in parentheses. As the layman for whom the first is intended knows nothing of Egyptian orthography, it is not important that he shall be able to recognize in the forms the consonants of the original. This vocalized form should, however, as nearly as possible reproduce the consonants upon which it is based, without introducing elements unintelligible to the layman. Hence I have ignored ³ and ^c, *y* becomes *i* or *γ*, and *w* is indicated by *u* or *w*. The consonantal transliteration adopted is the most nearly satisfactory system yet evolved, viz., that of the Berlin school, with some slight modifications. It is as follows:

³ = Semitic א	<i>n</i> = Semitic נ	<i>š</i> = Semitic ש
<i>y</i> = " י	<i>r</i> = " ר or ל	<i>k</i> = " ק
<i>w</i> = " ו	<i>h</i> = " ה	<i>k</i> = " כ
<i>c</i> = " ע	<i>h</i> = " ה, ח	<i>g</i> = " ג
<i>b</i> = " ב	<i>h</i> = " ה, ח, כ	<i>t</i> = " ת
<i>p</i> = " פ	<i>h</i> = " ה, ח, כ	<i>t</i> = " ט
<i>f</i> = our f	<i>s</i> = " s ^a	<i>d</i> = " ד
<i>m</i> = Semitic מ	<i>s</i> = " ש	<i>q</i> = " ז

In the so-called "syllabic orthography" employed by the Egyptians in writing foreign words, only the first consonant of each biconsonantal sign has any significance. The second has no phonetic value in such words.

This is not the place to discuss the closer equivalences of these consonants. It is probable the ³ (Eagle) diverges

^aThe nature of the difference between this and the following *š* is entirely obscure. From the Middle Kingdom on, they represent the same sound. Herein the distinction has been consistently indicated only in the Old Kingdom.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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