

LETTER OF PANBESA,

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF RAMESES,

XIXth DYNASTY.

 TRANSLATED BY

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IN the *Anastasi Papyrus III.*, Plate I, line 11, is preserved the following letter containing a description of the town of Rameses, near to the fortress of Aanechtu, built by Rameses II, on the confines of Egypt and Canaan.

This town has been recently supposed to be Zoan or Tanis and the point of departure of the Exodus. The letter has been partly translated by the Rev. I. Dunbar Heath, *Exodus Papyri*, 8vo., Lond., 1855, p. 73. This letter is of great interest, giving in poetic strain the account of the city, and the sentences as is usual in poems, have red dots placed above them to show the lines. Many of the names of fruit and fish are

obscure, although the document throws great light on their nature, whether of the aquatic kind of plants or else from trees in the arboreta or Egyptian orchards. As there is a considerable demand for explanatory notes a few have been added to assist the reader about the obscurer words, phrases and places which are mentioned in it. Many of the things were brought from distant places as far as the Euphrates and other foreign lands and it would seem to have been one of the most flourishing cities of Egypt at the time. The document is unfortunately much mutilated and the only parts untranslated are those which have suffered from worms or from being torn.

S. B.



LETTER OF PANBESA.

- 1 THE CLERK PANBESA salutes his Lord,
 2 the Clerk AMENEMAPT. Long live the King !
 3 This is sent for the information of My Lord.
 4 Again I salute My Lord.
 5 I proceeded to PA-RAMESSU MEIAMEN¹
 6 I found it flourishing in² good things without a rival,
 7 like the foundations of Thebes³
 8 the abode of felicity.
 9 Its meadows are filled with all good things,
 10 it is well-provisioned daily.
 11 Its pools (are filled) with fish, its ponds with fowl ;
 12 its fields are verdant with grass,
 13 the *Ates*-flower⁴ is in its ;⁵
 14 the *Tenraka*-plant⁵ whose taste is like honey
 15 is in the fields of the tubs.⁶
 Its threshing-floors are full
 16 of barley and wheat
³ towards the sky ;
 17 bunches of leeks in the beds ;
 18 gourds in the arbour ;
anhamaa-fruit,⁷

¹ City named "House of Ramessu-Meiamen."

² Abounding in.

³ Lacuna.

⁴ Unknown plant. S.B.

⁵ Edible plant, perhaps cucumber or melon kind. S.B.

⁶ Watering-machines.

⁷ Sometimes written *Anruhama* or *Aluhama* ; supposed grapes or raisins. S.B.

- 19 *Tephu*-fruit, called¹³;
 20 *Teb*-fruit² from the arboretum;
 21 sweet wine of the produce of Egypt
 22 which is superior to honey.
 23 Red *Utu*-fish from the river of³ lilies;
 24 *Baran*-fish from the river Haruma;
 25 *Barai*-fish mixed with *Baka*-fish
³ fish
 26 from the river Puharta⁴
Atu-fish³ from the river³;
 27 *Hanata*-fish from³ of Aa-nechtu.⁵
 28 The pool of HORUS furnishes salt,
 29 the Pahura lake furnishes nitre;⁶
 30 its³ for the going and coming.⁷
 31 There is a supply of provisions there daily.⁸
 32 Gladness dwells within it,
 33 none speaks scorn of it.
 34 The little ones in it are like the great ones
 35 (They say) Come let us celebrate its heavenly festivals
 36 and the season feasts.
 37 The papyrus-marsh is adorned with *Menhu*-flower⁹
 38 the pool of HORUS with the *Asi*-flower;¹⁰
 39 there are *Sabara*-flowers from the arboretum,
 40 festoons from the vineyards³
 41 fowls in flocks, to adorn³

¹ Perhaps *tet*, olives. S.B.

² Supposed to be figs or dates. S.B.

³ Lacuna.

⁴ Euphrates.

⁵ The frontier fortress.

⁶ One of the natron or bitter lakes near the Isthmus of Suez.

⁷ Of boats.

⁸ Market.

⁹ A flower of red and violet colour. S.B.

¹⁰ Apparently another kind of water plant. S.B.

- 42 The sea abounds with *Baka*-fish¹ and *Atu*-fish.
 43 It . . .² their boundaries.
 44 The virgins of Aa-nechtu are well appalled every
 day ;
 45 sweet oil is on their heads, with new curls.
 46 They stand at their doors,
 47 their hands adorned with nose-gays,
 48 with bouquets of *Pa-Hathor*,
 49 garlands of the lake *Pahura*,
 50 on the day of the arrival of
 51 RA-USER-MA SOTEP-EN-RA,³
 52 the war-god⁴ of the world,
 53 the morning of the feast of *Ka-ha-ka* ;
 54 all assemble one with another
 55 to recite their petitions.
 56 There are sweet drinks in Aa-nechtu ;
 57 its liquors are like sugar,
 58 its syrups like the taste of
 59 caroobs⁵ surpassing honey.
 60 Beer of Kati comes from the port ;
 61 wine from the vineyards ;
 62 sweet refreshments from the lake
 63 Sakabaima ;⁶ garlands from the harbours.
 64 The sweet singers of Aa-nechtu
 65 are of the school of Memphis ;⁷

¹ The locust tree of the desert, *Ceratonia siliqua*.

² Lacuna.

³ The prenomen of Ramses II.

⁴ Mentu or Mentu Ra, the Egyptian war-god. S.B.

⁵ The fishes and plants here named have not as yet been certainly identified.

⁶ Unknown locality. S.B.

⁷ The *Memphitides puellæ* of the Latin authors. S.B.

- 66 joy remains there prolonged, unceasing.
67 RA-USER-MA SOTEP-EN-RA,
68 the war-god of the world,
69 RAMESSU MELAMEN, is its god.



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