

RECORDS OF THE PAST.

VOL. VIII.

EGYPTIAN TEXTS.

NOTE.

Every Text here given is either now translated for the *first time*, or has been specially revised by the Translator to the date of this publication.

RECORDS OF THE PAST:

BEING

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

OF THE

ASSYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN MONUMENTS.

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VOL. VIII.

EGYPTIAN TEXTS.



Multæ terricolis linguæ, cœlestibus una.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	i
Fragment of the First Sallier Papyrus By Prof. E. L. LUSHINGTON, LL.D., D.C.L.	I
ANNALS OF RAMESES III. :—	
The Great Harris Papyrus By Prof. EISENLOHR and S. BIRCH, LL.D.	5
Abstract of a Case of Conspiracy By P. LE P. RENOUF.	53
Inscription of the Gold Mines at Rhedesieh and Kuban By S. BIRCH, LL.D.	67
Decree of Canopus By S. BIRCH, LL.D.	81
The Great Mendes Stele Translated from BRUGSCH-BEY.	91
The Litany of Ra By EDOUARD NAVILLE.	103
Hymn to Ra-Harmachis By Prof. E. L. LUSHINGTON, LL.D., D.C.L.	129

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Inscription of Darius at El-Khargeh	135
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.	
The Praise of Learning	145
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.	
The Papyrus of Moral Precepts	157
By M. THEOD. DEVERIA.	
Lists of Further Texts, Assyrian and Egyptian ...	161
Selected by the late GEORGE SMITH, and P. LE PAGE RENOUE, F.R.S.L.	

P R E F A C E.

THE Eighth Volume of the "RECORDS OF THE PAST" has been continued on the same principle as its predecessors. A prominence has naturally been given to historical texts, as they are the most important which have been handed down by ancient Egypt. No branch, however, of Egyptian researches has been more minutely explored, and the great historical texts are almost exhausted. In the present volume will be found, a translation of the Sallier Papyrus relating to the Hykshos, the end of the Papyrus comprising the political condition of Egypt in the reign of Rameses III. ; the Case of Conspiracy against the life of the same monarch ; the texts relating to the Gold Mines in the reigns of Seti I. and Rameses II. ; and the decree of Canopus, of the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes II., an inscription throwing great light upon the condition of the Egyptian priesthood under the rule of the Greeks in Egypt.

The subject of mythology is, however, by no means exhausted, and the important texts relating to it are not only beginning to attract attention, but are felt to be necessary for the due comprehension of the religious ideas of the Egyptians. A diversity of opinion, it must be stated, exists amongst scholars as to the value of later inscriptions of the Ptolemaic and Roman period. Some consider these texts to hand down the esoterical notions of ancient Egypt, which, except in the so-called Ritual or Book of the Dead,

scarcely appear in the official monuments, although partly illustrated by the hymns to the gods found at the time of the XIXth. and subsequent Dynasties. The present volume contains one of these earlier litanies, that of Ra; and there are others still untranslated capable of throwing, incidentally, considerable light on the cosmic and demiurgic characteristics of the leading deities of the Pantheon. A hymn to the god Ammon of the Oasis, inscribed on the walls of El-Khargeh and of a nature remarkably Pantheistic, is also included in this collection, it probably is the composition of an eclectic denomination which, at a much earlier age, had attempted to reconcile the polytheism with the monotheistic tendencies of a party once dominant, although ultimately unable to effect a religious reformation.

Of literature, as distinct from mythology or history, there are few remains even amongst the numerous papyri which have been found or explored. A rare example, the Praise of Learning and Literature, a poem exalting the occupation of the scribe above all others, will be found at the end of the volume. The difficulties of translation increase greatly when the subject belongs neither to the domain of mythology nor history, and the language becomes more metaphorical or colloquial. Literary compositions are, however, not the least interesting portion of the subject, as they exhibit a vivid picture of national manners and innate thought.

S. BIRCH.

London,
26th November, 1876.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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